

Archaeological Evaluation of Land at Boughton Lane, Boughton Monchelsea, Maidstone, Kent



NGR 57666mE 152235mN
Site Code: BORT/EV/13
Date of report: 06/10/2013

Report for
Persimmon Homes (South-East)

SWAT. ARCHAEOLOGY

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SUMMARY

In September 2013 Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out an archaeological evaluation of land at Boughton Lane, Boughton Monchelsea in Kent. Some years ago the site was highlighted during consultation on the Local Plan (Residential Representation No. 63 1995) and following advice on the archaeological implications of residential development here, a predetermination archaeological evaluation was recommended by the County Archaeologist. Subsequently in 1998 RPS Clouston undertook an archaeological evaluation in the north area of the site. Results included field systems dated to about the Late Bronze Age/ Early Iron Age and in addition evidence of smelting with the retrieval of slag.

This present work in the southern area of the site (Plate 1, Fig. 1), and was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (SWAT 2013) and in discussion with the Archaeological Heritage Officer, Kent County Council. The Archaeological Evaluation consisted of 33 trenches which encountered a number of archaeological features, dated by pottery sherds from the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age. These are clustered in the north-east area of the site (Plate 1, Fig. 2). The Archaeological Evaluation has therefore been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification.

INTRODUCTION

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) was commissioned by Persimmon Homes (South-East) to carry out an archaeological evaluation and assessment at the above site. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (SWAT 2013) and in discussion with the Archaeological Heritage Officer, Kent County Council. The evaluation was carried out from the 23rd September to the 2nd October 2013.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND TOPOGRAPHY

The archaeological potential is based on the proximity of archaeological remains presently recorded in the HER. The site lies c.550m north of Boughton Quarry Camp (HER TQ 75 SE 4). A Roman walled cemetery is recorded at Lockham, c.800m to the east (HER TQ 75 SE 2), and there are a number of Roman buildings within the general vicinity indicating Roman occupation and land-use of the area. Clouston's undertook an archaeological evaluation in the north area of the site in 1998. Results included field systems dated to about the Late Bronze Age/ Early Iron Age and in addition evidence of smelting with the remains of a furnace and associated slag. The proposed development is situated on the site of a relict orchard- the

present crop is pumpkins- which appears to have been maintained as agricultural land since at least the early 19th century. The site itself is located south of Maidstone towards the areas of Loose and Boughton Monchelsea. It is bounded to the north and west by Boughton Lane, to the south by a track leading off from Cliff Hill Road and to the east by houses and works fronting Pickering Street.

According to the British Geological Survey the site lies on a bedrock geology comprising Hythe Beds including sandy limestone and calcareous sand.

PLANNING BACKGROUND

Persimmon Homes (South-East) are preparing for the development of this land to be a mix of housing and public open space which would complement the existing 'setting' of the area. Headland Archaeology Ltd has recently prepared a Desk-based Assessment which indicates that the setting of built heritage assets in the vicinity would be largely unchanged by the addition of housing within a portion of the site. The proposal is to include a large portion of public open space which would preserve the relatively rural feel on the southern and eastern edges of the development area. To manage their risk and to inform the Local Planning Authority Persimmon Homes (South-East) have commissioned an Archaeological Evaluation from SWAT Archaeology. Requirements for the archaeological evaluation comprised trial trenching targeting a representative 5% sample of the impact area with 33 trenches (Fig. 2) designed to establish whether there were any archaeological deposits at the site that may be affected by the proposed development. The results from this evaluation will be used to inform KCC of any further archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary in connection with the development proposals.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL and HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The northernmost part of the application site has been previously evaluated (HER: TQ 75 SE123) and found to contain late Bronze Age to early Iron Age activity represented by postholes, ditches and gullies with possible iron smelting activity. Such remains are indicative of 'rural' type late Bronze Age/Iron Age settlement (farming community). Other undated ditches identified on the site probably represent field systems which although undated are likely to be of Late Iron Age to medieval in date. This field system extends towards the south east of the development site and was thought that they may extend into the south west of the development site. The majority of the recorded heritage assets within the study area are post-medieval buildings (including 23 farmsteads and six mills) however, there are also a number of Iron Age and Roman sites to the east of the Roman road between Rochester and Hastings (HER: TQ 75 SE36), including settlement (HER: TQ SE19, 89, 127, 128 and 131) and a walled cemetery (HER: TQ 75 SE2). A prehistoric settlement was found at Furfield Quarry in 2006 (HER: TQ 75 SE139), and Anglo- Saxon pottery was found during an evaluation to the east of the walled cemetery (HER:TQ 75 SE130).

The Kent HER records 33 stray finds and finds from archaeological investigations across the study area ranging from Neolithic flint tools to post-medieval artefacts; the majority are Iron Age and Roman coins. The Iron Age and Roman artefacts have come mainly from the south-east of the study area, to the west of the projected line of the Roman road around the site of the Boughton Monchelsea Roman Villa (HER: TQ 75 SE1). An extensive review of the archaeological and historical background is contained in the Archaeological Desk-based Assessment by Headland Archaeology (2013).

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the evaluation, as set out within the Archaeological Specification (2013) was to determine if any significant archaeological remains survived and to ascertain the extent, depth below ground surface, depth of deposit, character, significance and condition of any archaeological remains on site.



Plate 2. View of site to the south-west

METHODOLOGY

Trial trenching was carried out from 23rd September to 2nd October 2013 with the excavation of 33 trenches. Trench location was agreed prior to the excavation between KCC and SWAT. Excavation was carried out using a tracked 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, removing the overburden to the top of the first recognisable archaeological horizon, or natural, under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist. All

trenches measured about 30-35m in length and 2m wide. The trenches were subsequently hand-cleaned and photographed. All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the specification. A single context recording system was used to record the deposits, and context recording numbers were assigned to all deposits for recording purposes. These are used in the report and shown in bold. All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with KCC and IFA standards and guidance.

MONITORING

Curatorial monitoring was carried out during the site evaluation work.

RESULTS

Most trenches were devoid of any archaeological features and cultural material. The only man made 'artefacts' seen in most trenches were sherds of modern ceramic field drain and galvanised piping for a field watering system.

However, Trenches 10, 14, 25 and 26 clustered in the north-east area of the evaluation site (Fig. 2) did reveal archaeological features. A common stratigraphic sequence was identified within the trenches consisting of the natural geology of deposits of Hythe Beds including sandy limestone and calcareous sand. **(003)**. The natural was sealed by a thin agricultural subsoil of mid grey brown sandy silty clay **(002)** up to 0.11m thick, but averaging around 0.08m. Above the subsoil was a covering of topsoil **(001)** approximately 0.23m thick.

Trench 10 (Fig. 4)

Situated in the north-east area of the site (Fig. 1) at about 30m in length and aligned north west-south east. Removal of the topsoil **(1001)**, a dark grey clayey silt with moderate organic content and about 23cm thick and overlaying a thin layer of slightly darker subsoil **(1002)** revealed the natural geology of pale orange sandy silt with moderate sandstone fragments **(1003)**. Cut into the natural was a single feature **[1004]** (Fig. 7: Section 2) situated in the north-west end of the trench infilled with dark grey clayey silt with occasional sandstone fragments **(1005)**. The feature a possible post-hole was about 40cm in diameter and with a maximum depth of 12cm.

Trench 14 (Fig. 3)

Located in the north-east area of the site at about 30m in length and aligned north west-south east. Removal of the topsoil **(1401)**, a dark grey clayey silt with moderate organic content and about 26cm thick and overlaying a thin layer of subsoil **(1402)** about 11cm thick revealed the natural geology of pale orange sandy silt with moderate sandstone fragments **(1403)**. Cut into the natural was a single feature **[1404]** (Fig. 7: Section 1) situated in the north-west end of the trench and infilled with a firm, dark orange grey clayey silt with occasional sandstone **(1405)**. The feature a possible tree bole was about 1.75m in length and about 1.50m width and about 29cm deep. The fill **(1405)** was well disturbed by root action.

Trench 25 (Fig. 5)

Located in the north-east area of the site at about 30m in length and aligned north east-east and south west-west. Removal of the topsoil **(2501)**, a dark grey clayey silt with moderate organic content and about 22cm thick and overlaying a thin layer of subsoil **(2502)** about 9cm thick revealed the natural geology of pale orange sandy silt with moderate sandstone fragments **(2503)**. Cut into the natural were nine features **[2504, 2506, 2508, 2510, 2512, 2514, 2516, 2518, 2520]** (Figs. 7-9: sections 3-11) situated in the mid to south area of the trench. Feature **[2510]** aligned north-east, south-west with a sub-oval cut (S6) with steep sides and mainly flat bottom. Infilled **(2511)** with a firm grey, clayey silt with infrequent sandstone fragments which included five pottery sherds dating from the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age. Complete excavation of the feature was undertaken to ensure the maximum opportunity for dating the prehistoric storage pit. Three smaller pits **[2516, 2518, 2508]** were of similar type but no pottery sherds were retrieved. Five linears were also revealed, again dated by pottery **[2504, 506, 2512, 2514, 2520]**. Feature **[2504]** was aligned south east-north west a linear cut with shallow sides and concave bottom and infilled **(2505)** with firm grey, clayey silt with infrequent sandstone fragments. A single sherd of well-worn prehistoric pottery was retrieved from the base of the linear and dated to the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age. The feature is probably part of a possible prehistoric field system. Running parallel to this feature was an almost identical linear **[2506]** and likely to be part of the same postulated field system. No pottery was retrieved from this feature. At the south end of the evaluation trench and running parallel to the linears **[2504, 2506]** were three more parallel linears **[2512, 2514, 2520]** with the same characteristics and at a distance of about 11m from **[2504, 2506]**. Additional sherds of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery were retrieved from linear **[2514]**.

Trench 26 (Fig. 6)

Located in the north-east area of the site at about 30m in length and aligned north north-east and south south-west. Removal of the topsoil **(2601)**, a dark grey clayey silt with moderate organic content and about 30cm thick and overlaying a thin layer of subsoil **(2602)** about 15cm thick revealed the natural geology of pale orange sandy silt with moderate sandstone fragments **(2603)**. Cut into the natural were two features **[2605, 2608]** infilled **(2604, 2607)** with a firm grey, clayey silt with infrequent sandstone fragments which included modern glass in **(2604)** and in **(2607)** modern button, pipe stem and blue/white pottery. Both features are identified as tree boles.

FINDS

Eight pottery sherds found in the evaluation were examined by Nigel MacPherson-Grant:

Context 2505 1 sherd (weight: 3gms) of LBA/EIA flint-tempered ware dating to c.700-600BC

Context 2511 5 sherds (weight: 19 gms) of LBA/EIA flint-tempered ware c.700-600BC

Context 2514 2 sherds (weight: 5gms) of LBA/EIA flint-tempered ware c.700-600BC

DISCUSSION

The evaluation site (Fig. 2) adjacent to Boughton Lane produced some evidence of prehistoric activity in the north-east area of the evaluation site. This activity seems to be a continuation of the Bronze Age/iron Age farming activity found in an earlier archaeological evaluation in the north field by RPS Clouston in 1998. There is no evidence for extensive field systems or settlement activity in the present investigation. Field work produced two worked flints dating from the Late Neolithic/early Bronze Age which is a very low count for such a large area. A metal detector sweep of spoil from the evaluation trenches did not produce any significant finds. Environmental samples were taken from the storage pit **(2511)** and will be processed in due course.

CONCLUSION

The archaeological evaluation has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification. A common stratigraphic sequence was recognised across the site comprised of the natural Head geology **(003)** sealed by an agricultural subsoil **(002)** under a covering of topsoil **(001)**.

Some archaeological activity was found during the evaluation, and this will help inform the Archaeological Officer of the archaeological potential of site. The evaluation has, therefore, assessed the archaeological potential of land intended for development.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SWAT would like to thank Persimmon Homes for commissioning this project. Thanks are also extended to Wendy Rogers, Archaeological Heritage Officer, Kent County Council for her advice and assistance. Simon Holmes, Peter Cichy, Robert Bylett, Dan Quintain and Paul Wilkinson undertook the fieldwork. Illustrations were produced by Jonny Madden for *Digitise This*. The project was managed by Dr Paul Wilkinson.

Dr Paul Wilkinson FRSA, MifA

06/10/2013

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Institute for Field Archaeologists (IfA), Rev (2008) *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation*.

Hasted, E. 1798. *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent, Volume 4*.

Headland Archaeology Ltd. 2013. *Boughton Lane, Maidstone, Kent. Desk-based Assessment*

RPS Clouston (1998) *Land at Boughton Lane, Maidstone, Kent. An Archaeological Evaluation*

SWAT Archaeology, (2013) *Specification for an Evaluation of Land at Boughton Lane, Boughton Monchelsea, Kent*.

Kent County Council (KCC) (2013) *Kent County Council Monument Full Report* for site centred at NT 7670 5230

Maps

Ordnance Survey 1st Edition (1871-1890)

Ordnance Survey 2nd Edition (1897-1900)

Ordnance Survey 3rd Edition (1907-1923)

Ordnance Survey 4th Edition (1929-1952)

Websites

Kent Landscape Information System <http://extranet7.kent.gov.uk/klis/home.htm>

Exploring Kent's Past <http://www.extranet7.kent.gov.uk/ExploringKentsPast/>



Plate 3. View of site looking south, trench 13 is in front



Plate 4. View of typical trench devoid of archaeological features (Trench 18)



Plate 5. Trench 26, context 2605-cut of modern tree bole



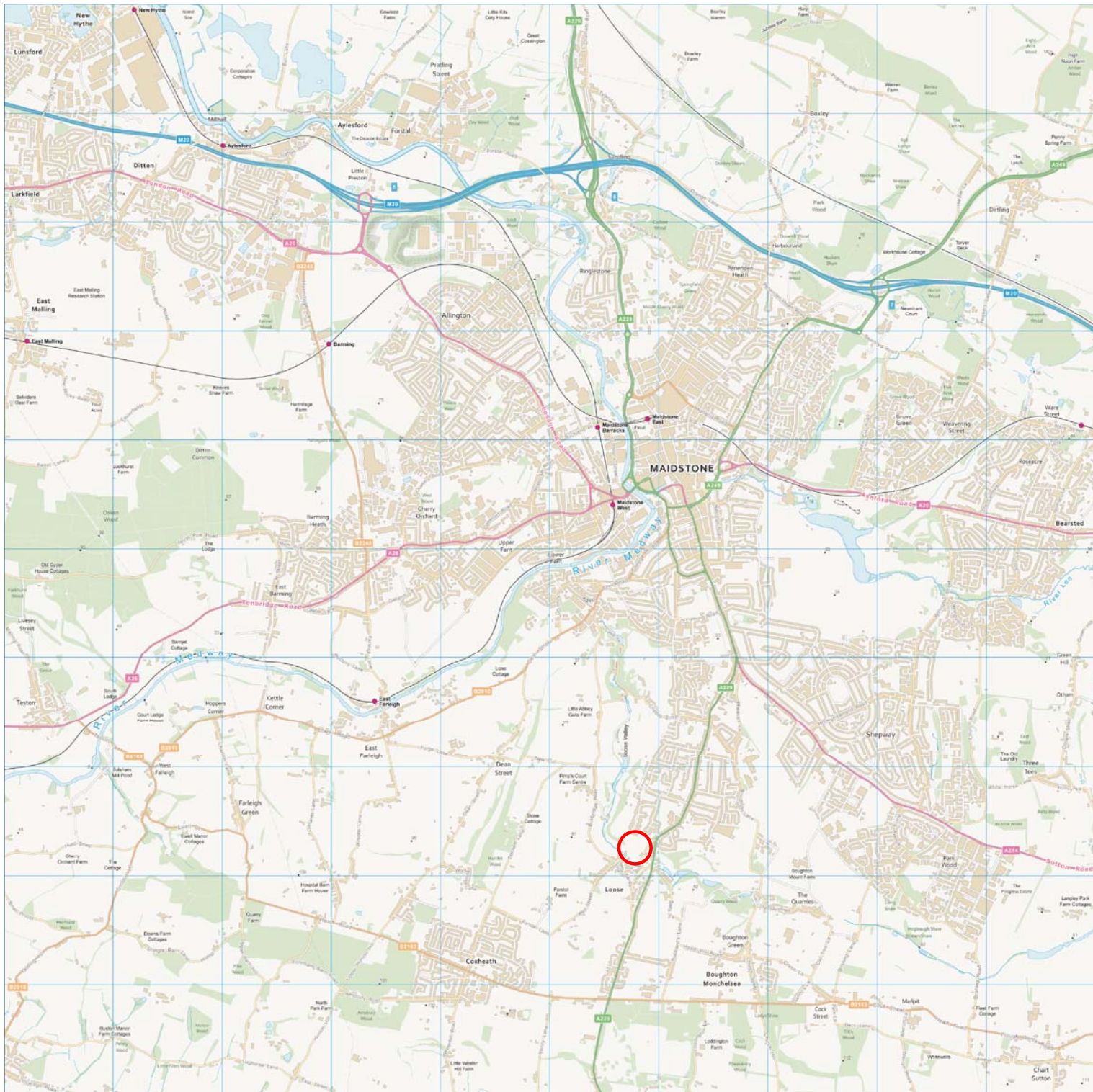
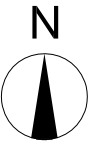
Plate 6. Trench 25, context 2508- cut of circular pit



Plate 7. Trench 25, context 2510- storage pit

APPENDIX 1 – KCC HER Summary Form & OASIS Summary

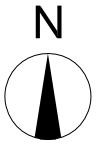
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SWAT Site Code: <i>BORT/EV/13</i>	
Site Address: <i>Land adjacent to Boughton Lane, Boughton Monchelsea, Maidstone, Kent</i>	
Summary: <i>Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at Boughton Lane, Maidstone, An Archaeological Evaluation was carried out to inform the client of the implication and extent of archaeology on the proposed development site. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (SWAT 2013) and in discussion with the Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council.</i> <i>The Archaeological Evaluation consisted of thirty three (33) trenches which encountered some features dating to the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age.</i>	
District/Unitary: <i>Maidstone</i>	Parish: <i>Boughton Monchelsea</i>
Period(s): Tentative: <i>LBA/EIA</i>	
NGR (centre of site : 8 figures): (NB if large or linear site give multiple NGRs): <i>NGR 57666mE 152235mW</i>	
Type of archaeological work (delete) <i>Evaluation</i>	
Date of Recording: <i>September 2013</i>	
Unit undertaking recording: <i>Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT)</i>	
Geology: <i>Hythe Beds including sandy limestone and calcareous sand</i>	
Title and author of accompanying report: <i>Wilkinson, P. An Archaeological Evaluation on land at Boughton Lane, Boughton Monchelsea, Kent</i>	
Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate) <i>As above</i> <p style="text-align: right;">(cont. on attached sheet)</p>	
Location of archive/finds: <i>SWAT</i>	
Contact at Unit: <i>Paul Wilkinson</i>	Date: <i>06/10/2013</i>



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Figure 1: Location of Site

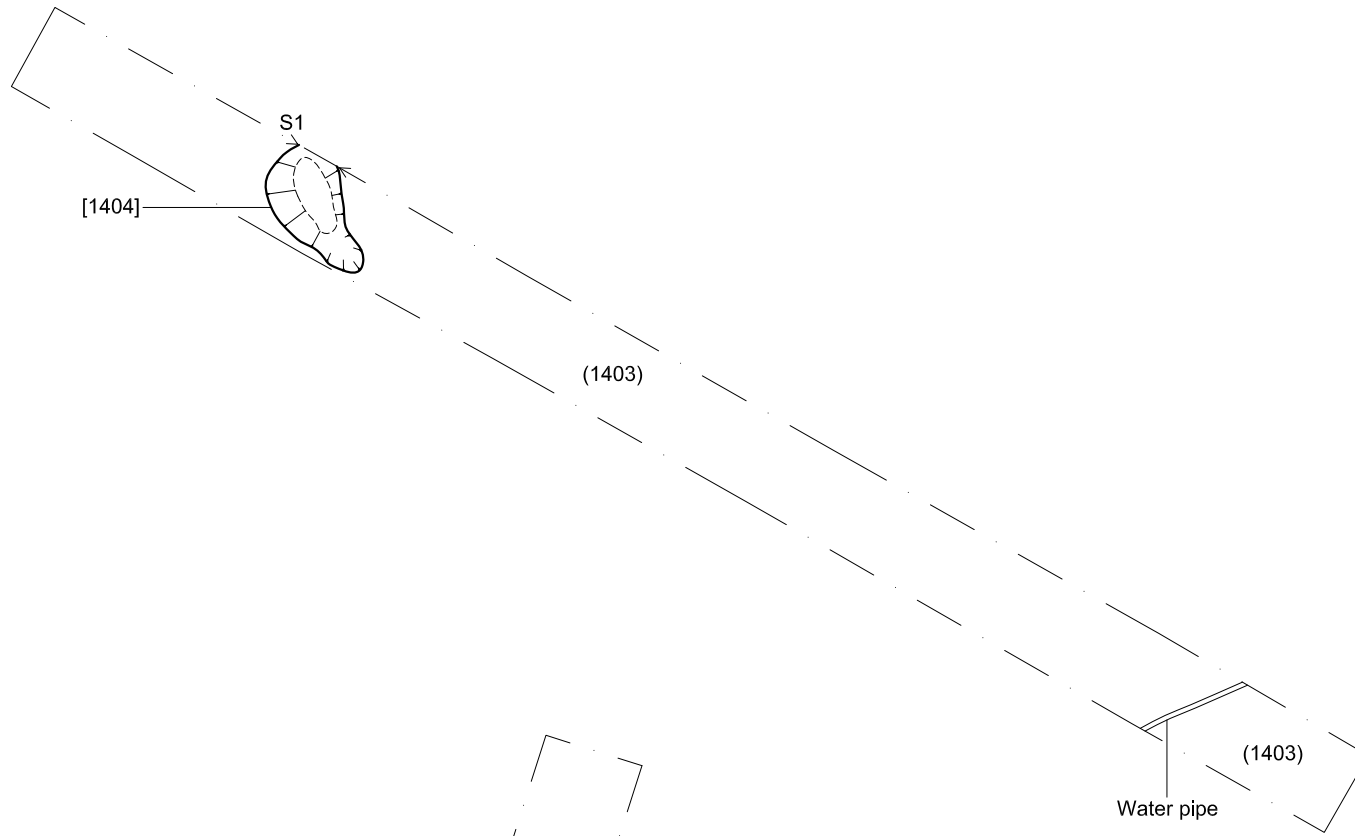
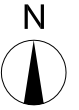


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Figure 2: Location of evaluation trenches

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152232.0mN



576842.0mE
152209.0mN

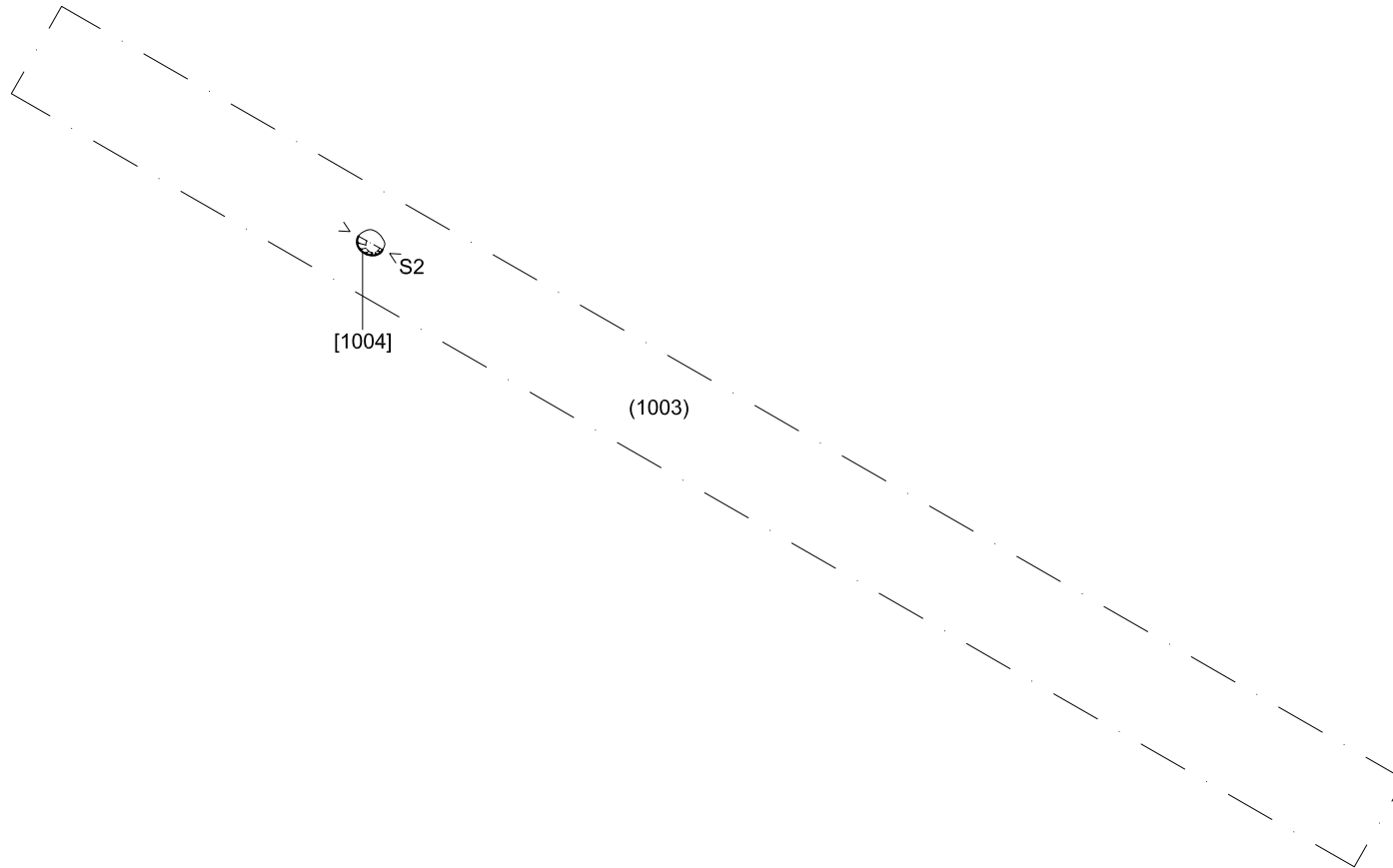
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0m

15m

Figure 3: Plan Trench 14

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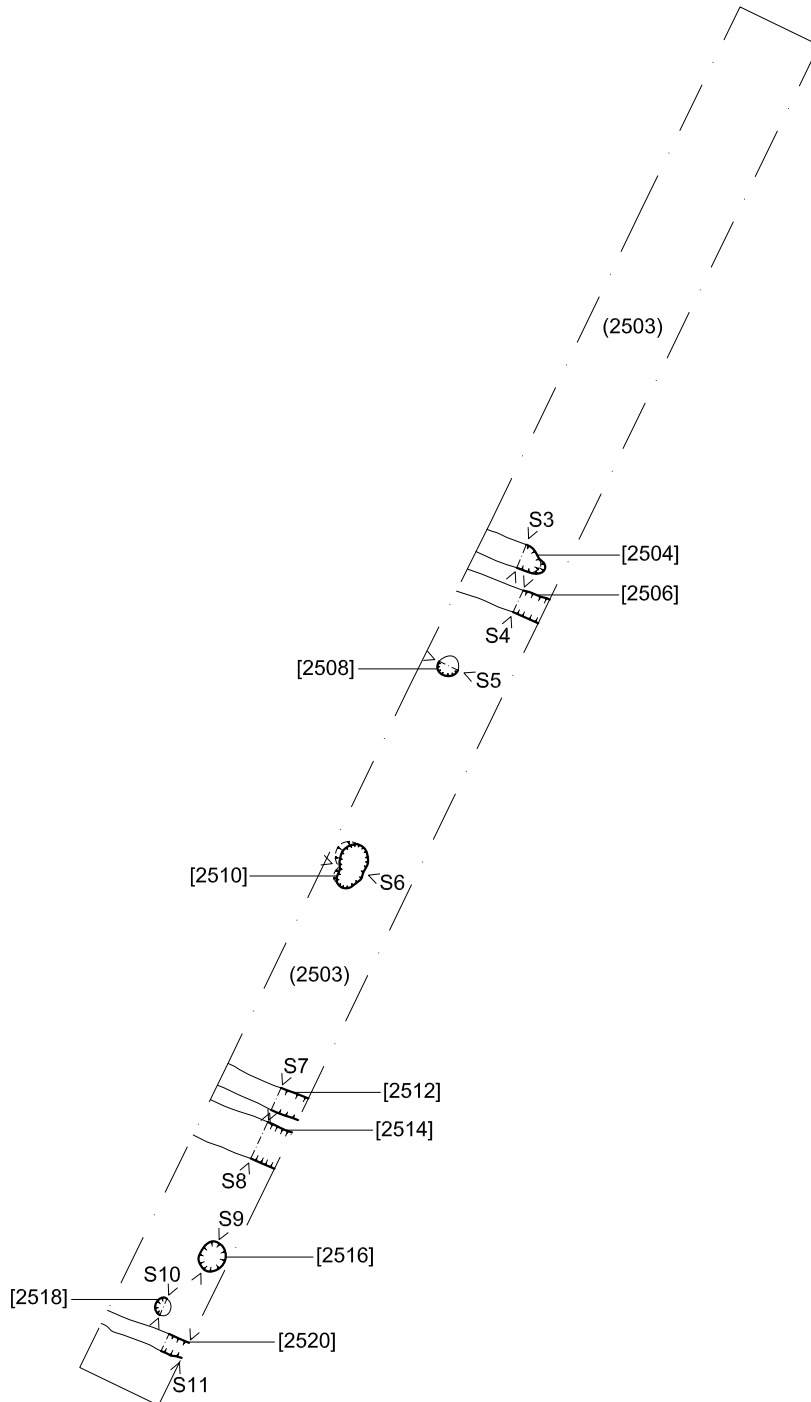
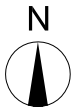
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Figure 4: Plan Trench 10

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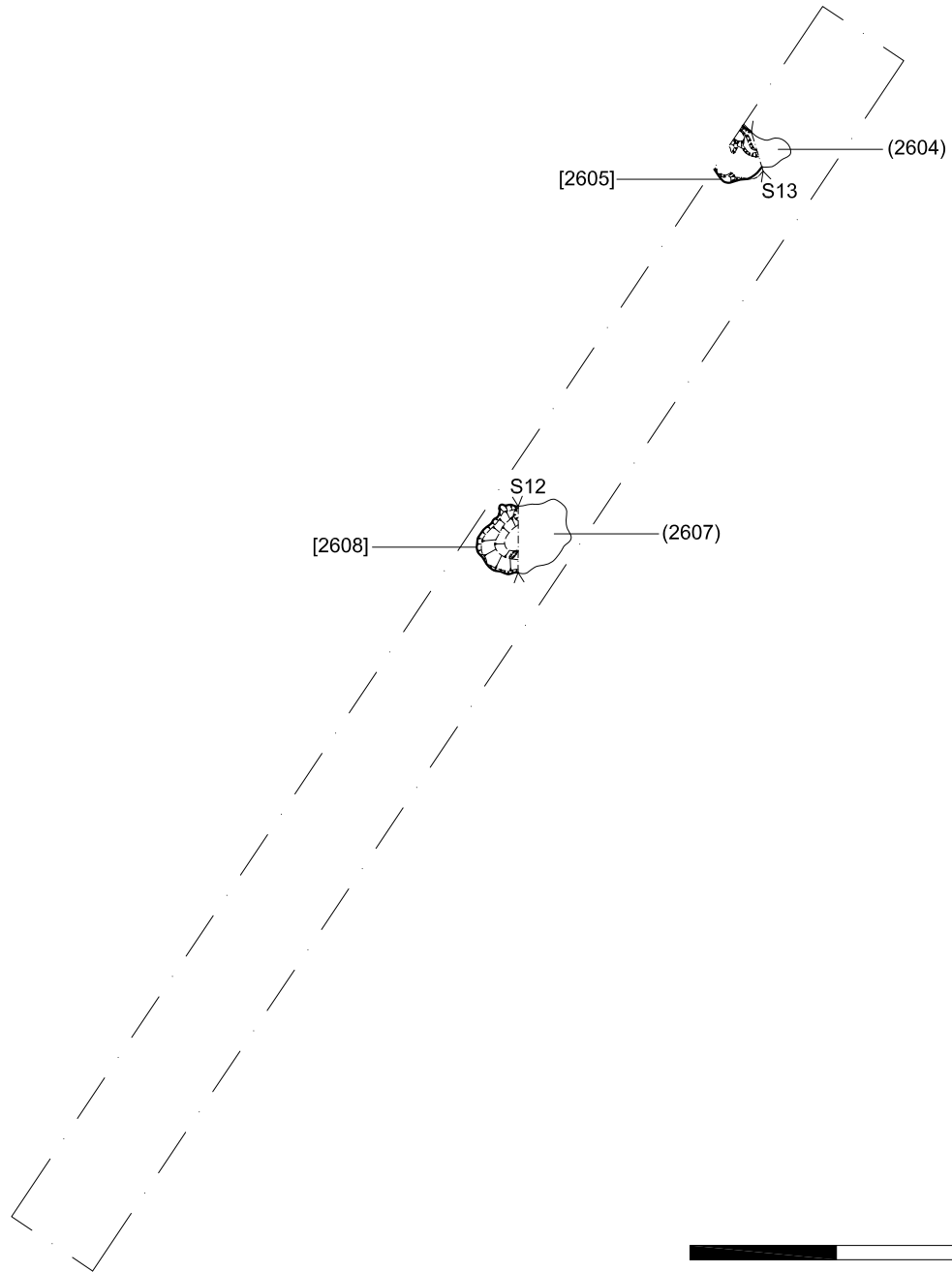
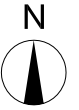


Figure 5: Plan Trench 25

0m

15m

⊕ 576783.0mE
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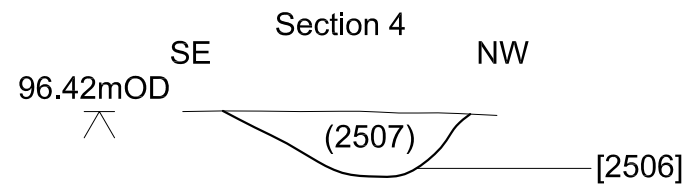
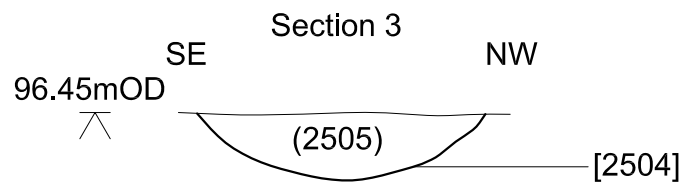
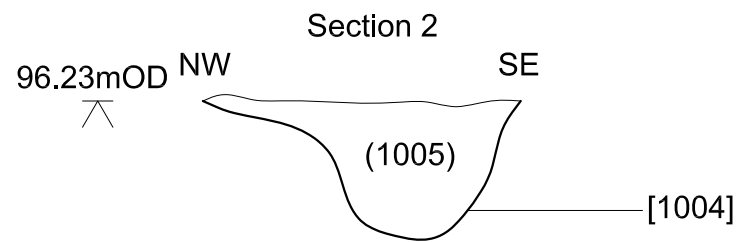
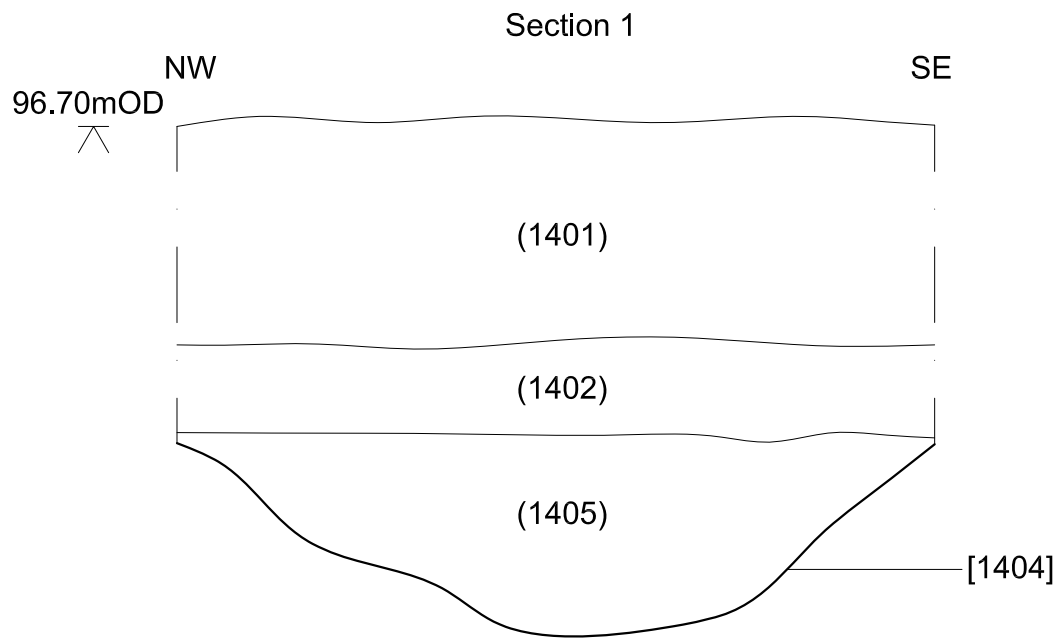
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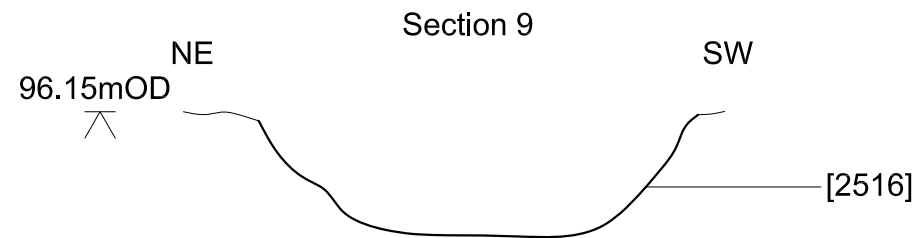
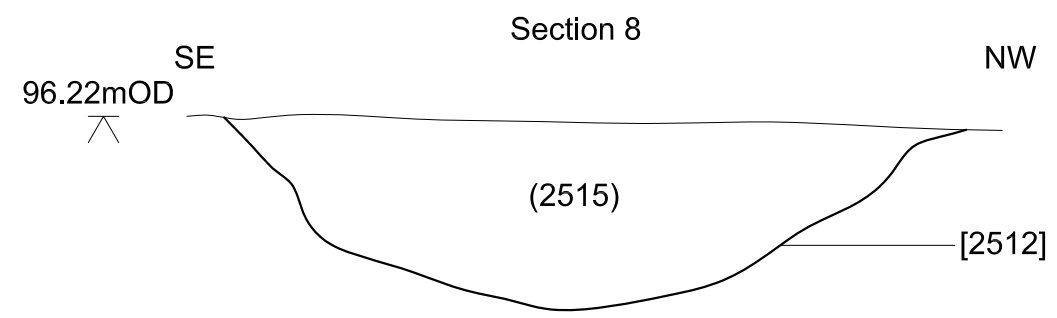
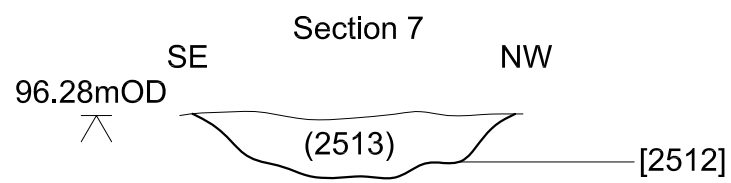
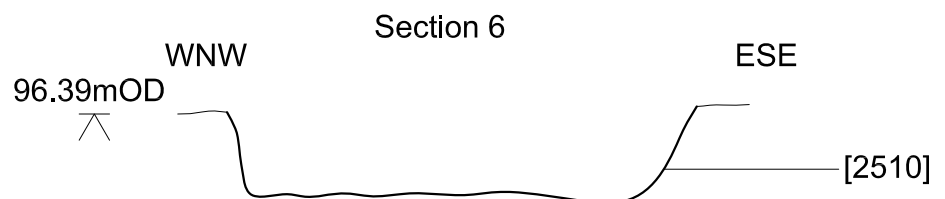
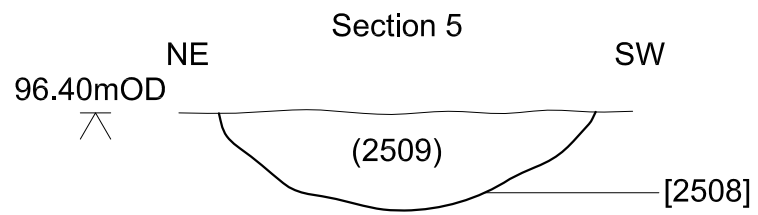
Figure 6: Plan Trench 26



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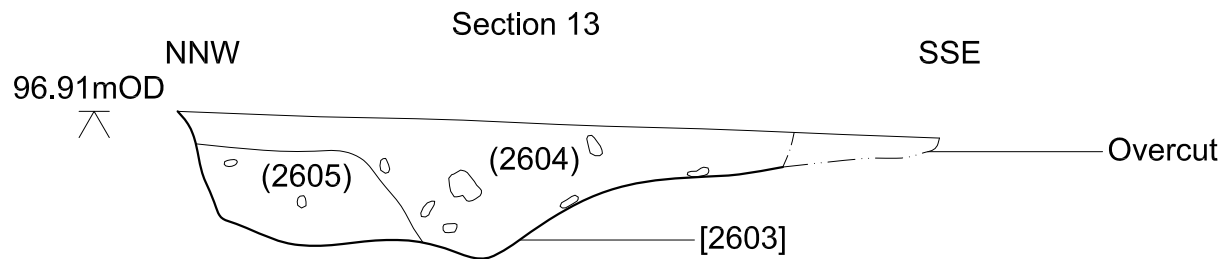
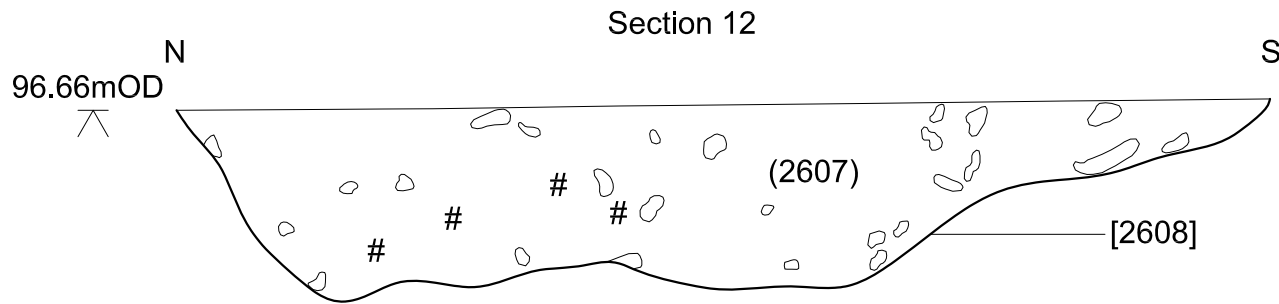
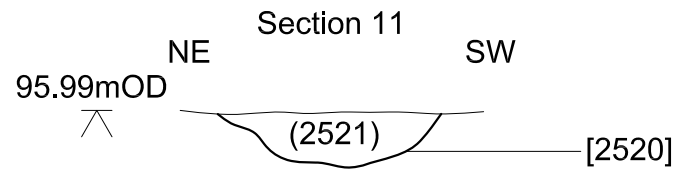
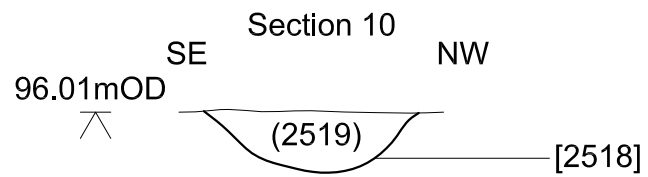
Figure 7: Sections



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Figure 8: Sections



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Figure 9: Sections