



Archaeological Evaluation at the former
Ordnance Wharf Site, Flood Lane,
Faversham, Kent

Contents

1	INTRODUCTION.....	4
1.1	Project Background.....	4
1.2	Site Description and Topography	6
2	ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	7
2.1	Introduction	7
2.2	Overview (SWAT Archaeology 2018).....	7
3	AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	8
3.1	Specific Aims (KCC 2018)	8
3.2	General Aims.....	8
4	METHODOLOGY	9
4.1	Introduction	9
4.2	Fieldwork	9
4.3	Recording	9
5	RESULTS.....	10
5.1	Introduction	10
5.2	Stratigraphic Deposit Sequence.....	10
5.3	Overview	10
6	FINDS.....	10
6.1	Introduction	10
7	DISCUSSION	11
7.1	Archaeological Narrative	11
7.2	Conclusions	11

8	ARCHIVE	13
8.1	General.....	13
9	ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	13
10	REFERENCES.....	14
11	KCC HER FORM.....	15

Figures

- Figure 1 Site location maps
- Figure 2 Trench location plan
- Figures 3-5 Plans and sections

Plates

- Plate 1 Aerial photograph of the site
- Plate 2 General view of the site (looking NNW)
- Plate 3 Trench 1 Stub wall and Section 1(looking NNE)
- Plate 4 Trench 1 View of stub wall
- Plate 5 Trench 2 View of section 2 (looking NNE)
- Plate 6 View of Trench 2 (looking E)
- Plate 7 Trench 3 View of Section 3 (looking SSW)
- Plate 8 Trench 3 View of Section 4 (looking SW)
- Plate 9 View of Site (looking N)

Summary

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) was commissioned by Kent Properties Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at the former Ordnance Wharf site, Flood Lane, Faversham in Kent. The archaeological works were monitored by Simon Mason the Kent County Council Principal Archaeological Officer.

The fieldwork was carried out in 20th to 25th April 2017 in accordance with an archaeological specification (KCC Heritage) submitted to the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of works.

The Archaeological Evaluation consisted of three trenches, which encountered a relatively complex stratigraphic sequence comprising concrete overlaying made up ground laid on top of concrete overlaying rubble and even more made up ground. Remains of brick built buildings were recorded which date from the late 19th to early 20th century and may have been part of the former gunpowder mills or later boat building facility (front cover).

Archaeological Evaluation at the former Ordnance Wharf Site, Flood Lane, Faversham, Kent

NGR Site Centre: 601320 161570

Site Code: FLA-EV-18

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) was commissioned by Kent Properties Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at the former Ordnance Wharf Site, Flood Lane, Faversham, Kent (**Figures 1-2**).

1.2 The site was the subject of a development proposal in 2003 that was refused by Swale Borough Council and that decision upheld at Appeal (ref APP/V2233/A/04/1143949). The Inspector commented in his Decision Letter that:

“31...there is good reason to believe that the site is within an area of known archaeological importance, and may contain archaeology of at least regional significance, dating back to medieval or Saxon time, when early mills might have been situated on the land.”

“32 – The evidence to this effect, despite powerful documentary clues is, however, unsubstantiated. It was agreed that the only way for the definitive and decisive confirmation of the importance of the site was via professional archaeological investigation and recording”

“33 – On this basis and in light of the clear advice contained within PPG16, I am not content that these potential conflicts have been satisfactorily resolved so that planning permission could be granted with confidence.”

1.3 Subsequently SWAT Archaeology undertook an evaluation of available areas of the site in March 2005. The evaluation was undertaken in response to a specification provided by KCC Heritage Conservation and involved the excavation of 6 evaluation trenches. The report dated April 2005 was subsequently submitted with further planning applications for the site in 2005 and 2006 (Appendix 2).

1.4 In response KCC advised (in summary) that:

- The evaluation was constrained at the flood lane end of the site by the presence of the standing oil tanks:
- That much of the southern end of the site had been affected by 20th century development associated with the former gas works. Contamination was evident in a number of trenches.
- No evidence of the medieval Flood mill was discovered;
- The 18th century gunpowder wharfage replaced previously marginal land;
- It appeared that the channel in the area had been subject to remodelling to service the wharfage;
- The single trench that was achieved at the Flood Lane end of the site did reveal significant archaeological deposits associated with construction and use of the gunpowder wharf including stone walls connected with a square structure possibly a crane base, steps and stone wharfage wall.
- The facing of Ordnance Wharf is mainly brick dating to c1899. The area of stone facing that is visible appears to continue behind the brick in the location trenched.

1.5 KCC advised that further works could be addressed through conditions on any planning consent and should cover:

- Evaluation within the northern half of the development following demolition and clearance of the tanks:
- Following evaluation design measures to enable preservation of significant archaeological remains;
- That structural remains and features of the gunpowder wharf should be retained;
- Subsequent further investigation as required to mitigate impacts on archaeology;
- Recording of the facing of the wharf wall prior to repair work;
- That archaeological review of any proposals for remediation works is essential.

1.6 Standard conditions for archaeological evaluation and mitigation; agreement of foundations and below ground works; and building recording works were advised. The applications were withdrawn prior to determination. The KCC advice was reconfirmed in 2011 (KCC WSI).

1.1.1 The fieldwork was carried out in April 2018 in accordance with an archaeological specification prepared by KCC Heritage (2018), prior to commencement of works, and in discussion with Simon Mason, the Principal Archaeological Officer, at KCCHC. A copy of the Specification is provided in **Appendix 2**.

1.2 Site Description and Topography

1.2.1 The site is centred on NGR 601320 161570 and bounded to the west by Flood Lane and extends into Faversham Creek. To the west is located one of the remaining Faversham Gas Works building, the Purifier Building now partly restored and used as a training centre for students in marine studies. To the north are located sluices which control water levels to the allotments. Downstream are the sluices and lifting bridge to allow entry to the tidal basin which surrounds the site on three sides. The site itself had been used in recent years as a fuel depot with surface oil tanks located on the NW area of the proposed development area (PDA).

1.2.2 According to the British Geological Society (BGS Sheet 273, 1974) shows the Quaternary geology as Head Brickearth overlaying Tertiary Sands of the Thanet Beds over Upper Chalk.

1.2.3 Geo-environmental site investigation in October 2002 by Ground Solutions Group Ltd indicate made ground, generally mid brown sand and gravel fill comprising variable quantities of flint, brick, and concrete from 0.7m to 3.00m below ground surface overlaying Alluvium usually soft to firm becoming very soft to soft clay with occasional gravel, shell fragments and variable quantities of organic matter to 4.5m. Thanet Beds consisting of Sandy Clays were encountered from 9.8m to 11.5m overlaying Upper Chalk from 17.5m.

1.2.4 Ground levels are approximately 3.98m aOD at the northern of the site and 3.56m aOD at the south area of the site (SWAT Archaeology 2018).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Further details of previous discoveries and investigations within the immediate and wider area may be found in the Kent County Council Historic Environment Record and have been summarised in the Specification produced by Simon Mason KCC (**Appendix 1**). In addition a comprehensive historic background is contained within the SWAT Archaeology Evaluation report of March 2005 (**Appendix 2**) which in turn is based on a PhD dissertation of the Port of Faversham (Wilkinson 2000).

2.1.2 In consultation with KCC, the Principal Archaeological Officer advised that;

- *Evaluation within the northern half of the development following demolition and clearance of the tanks;*
- *Following evaluation design measures to enable preservation of significant archaeological remains;*
- *That structural remains and features of the gunpowder wharf should be retained;*
- *Subsequent further investigation as required to mitigate impacts on archaeology;*
- *Recording of the facing of the wharf wall prior to repair work;*
- *That archaeological review of any proposals for remediation works is essential.*

(Reference: Specification for archaeological evaluation at the former Ordnance Wharf site, Flood Lane, Faversham, Kent, undated and Appendix 1)

2.2 Overview (SWAT Archaeology 2018)

2.2.1 The potential of this area has been assessed in relation to the proximity of known archaeological remains revealed in the SWAT Archaeology evaluation of March 2005. The archaeological and historical background to the historical development of the former Ordnance Wharf site is covered in the KCC Archaeological Specification (**Appendix 1**) and the SWAT Archaeology evaluation report dated March 2005 (**Appendix 2**).

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Specific Aims (KCC 2017)

3.1.1 The specific aims of the archaeological fieldwork are set out in the KCC Specification **(Appendix 1)**. These were to:

“To determine the potential for archaeological remains to be present within the area of proposed development groundwork and how they would be affected by such works. The location, nature, significance and condition of any archaeological remains present should be assessed and clearly set out in the evaluation report.

6.2 In particular the evaluation has been designed to assess the potential impact of the development proposals upon the potential remains of the former gunpowder wharf and to clarify the extent and nature of already identified features.

6.3 As well as assessment of the potential gunpowder structures and features the evaluation seeks to determine the potential for earlier archaeological remains on the site and how they may be affected by development. In particular the potential for remains of the medieval Flood Mill. It is important however that significant structural remains are not removed to evaluate lower deposits without agreement of the County Archaeologist.

6.4 Archaeological remains associated with the post gunpowder use of the site are of industrial archaeological interest and should be fully assessed”.

3.2 General Aims

3.2.1 The general aims of the archaeological fieldwork were to;

- establish the presence or absence of any elements of the archaeological resource, both artefacts and ecofacts of archaeological interest across the area of the development;
- ascertain the extent, depth below ground surface, depth of deposit if possible, character, date and quality of any such archaeological remains by limited sample excavation;

- determine the state of preservation and importance of the archaeological resource, if present, and to assess the past impacts on the site and pay particular attention to the character, height/depth below ground level, condition, date and significance of any archaeological deposits.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 All fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the methodology set out in the Specification (KCC 2018) and carried out in compliance with the standards outlined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standards Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations (CIfA 2014).

4.2 Fieldwork

4.2.1 A total of three evaluation trenches were proposed within the extents of the Site (Fig. 2).

4.2.2 Excavation was carried out using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted initially with a hydraulic pecker and then with a toothless ditching bucket, removing the overburden to the top of the first recognisable archaeological horizon, under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist.

4.2.3 Where appropriate, trenches, or specific areas of trenches, were subsequently hand-cleaned to reveal features in plan and carefully selected cross-sections through the features were excavated to enable sufficient information about form, development date and stratigraphic relationships to be recorded without prejudice to more extensive investigations, should these prove to be necessary. All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with KCC and CIfA standards and guidance. A complete photographic record was maintained on site that included working shots; during mechanical excavation, following archaeological investigations and during back filling.

4.3 Recording

4.3.1 A complete drawn record of the evaluation trenches comprising both plans and sections, drawn to appropriate scales (1:20 for plans, 1:10 for sections) was undertaken. The plans and sections were annotated with coordinates and aOD heights.

4.3.2 Photographs were taken as appropriate providing a record of excavated features and deposits, along with images of the overall trench to illustrate their location and context. The record also includes images of the Site overall. The photographic record comprises digital photography. A photographic register of all photographs taken is contained within the project archive.

4.3.3 A single context recording system was used to record the deposits. A full list is presented in the report. Layers and fills are identified in this report thus (100), whilst the cut of the feature is shown [100]. Context numbers were assigned to all deposits for recording purposes. Each number has been attributed to a specific trench with the primary number(s) relating to specific trenches (*i.e.* Trench 1, 101+, Trench 2, 201+, Trench 3, 301+ etc.).

5 RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 A total of three evaluation trenches were mechanically excavated under archaeological supervision.

5.2 Stratigraphic Deposit Sequence

5.2.1 A relatively consistent stratigraphic sequence was recorded across the majority of the Site comprising concrete sealing other previous concrete surfaces overlaying made up ground.

5.2.2 Figures 1-2 provide a site plan and trench location plan and Figures 3-5 show plans and sections while Plates 2-9 include selected site photographs.

5.3 Overview

5.3.1 Late 19th century brick building features and modern construction features were recorded within the three trenches.

6 FINDS

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 Victorian and Modern pottery was retrieved from the made up ground.

6.1.2 Context-based quantification and dating:

6.1.3 The assemblage is typical of many Victorian and Modern-period deposits – a few fragments of mid nineteenth century table and bedroom wares - pale blue, standard deeper blue, black or green transfer-printed plates, basins or ewers, a few fragments of the latter type just plain white with mould-decorated rims, few pieces of pantry and kitchen Staffordshire/Derby Yellow Ware and James Keiller, Dundee, marmalade pot and a few of the ubiquitous English stoneware blacking bottles and vitreous-glazed jars and tubs. Of the three contexts producing such material two, *Contexts 103* and *201*, are of late nineteenth century or later date. *Context 302* contained a small and battered fragment of Later Staffordshire blue colour-bodied earthenware, which has a production start-date no earlier than c.1875 or 1900 AD.

Analyst: N.Macpherson-Grant (2018)

7 DISCUSSION

7.1 Archaeological Narrative

The archaeological investigation was programmed to build on the archaeological investigation by SWAT Archaeology in March 2005, in particular, the finding of brick and stone structures and staircase in Trench E.

The present evaluation (Trench 1) located a wall [102] and concrete foundations [101] of to the north of the 2005 structure but similar in build and depth but with made up ground of demolition material (103) between them.

Trench 2 showed a sequence of concrete surfaces, demolition and made up ground as did Trench 3.

Trench 1

Located in the NE area of the site (Figure 2, Plates 1, 2 Section 1) and orientated NNW and measures 11.20m by 2.00m. The lowest strata at 2.58m aOD exposed was a sandy silty soil mixed with rubble and stone and included some inclusions of pottery fragments dating to the late 19th century (103). Above a thin layer of broken concrete pieces about 10cm thick [104] overlaid by a red brick rubble layer with grey sticky clay some 48cm thick

(105) topped by another layer of crushed concrete (106) and capped by a modern concrete [107].

The remains of a substantial wall [102] of yellow stock bricks laid in a English Bond with lime mortar on a concrete foundation [101] was exposed and recorded (Plates 3, 4, and Section 1).

Trench 2

Located in the SE area of the site (Figure 4, Plates 5, 6 Section 2) and orientated NW SE and measures 10.40m by 2.00m. The lowest strata at 2.56m aOD is a mix of sandy silt mixed with brick rubble and flint nodules with late 19th century pottery inclusions (201). Above a thin layer of broken concrete about 10cm thick [202] overlaid by a red brick rubble layer with grey sticky clay some 51cm thick (203) topped by another layer of crushed concrete (204) and capped by a modern concrete [205].

Trench 3

Located in the W area of the site (Figure 5, Plates 7, 8 Sections 3 & 4) and orientated NS and measures 13.25m by 2.00m. The lowest strata at 2.49m aOD is a sandy silt green black re-deposited Creek mud (301). Above a thin layer of sandy silty soil mixed with red brick rubble and small concrete pieces plus pottery inclusions dating from 1875-1900 (302) about 50cm thick and overlaid a thin layer of crushed concrete (303) overlaid by a red brick rubble layer with grey sticky clay some 21cm thick (304) topped by another layer of modern concrete [305].

7.2 Conclusions

- 7.2.1 The archaeological evaluation has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification. Brick structures have been found in the north area of the site dated by brick style and associated pottery to the late 19th century but no additional evidence of a crane base initially postulated in the 2005 investigation has been found. Additional mapping has been sourced (Figures 6-10 in appendices) which indicates no structures were built on the PDA prior to the late 18th century.
- 7.2.2 The location, nature and significance of the archaeological remains have been assessed.
- 7.2.3 Already identified archaeological features from the March 2005 evaluation were not exposed in the present evaluation and may require small scale strip, map and sample to

expose sufficient areas of these known archaeological features to be able to understand their function and chronology.

- 7.2.4 No evidence was found of the medieval water mill called Flood Mill.
- 7.2.5 No exposed structures were removed to evaluate lower deposits.
- 7.2.6 Archaeological remains of a possible post gunpowder use of the site were identified in the north end of Trench 1 and have been assessed.
- 7.2.7 Further archaeological mitigation, should it be necessary, will need to be determined in consultation with the Kent County Council and local planning authority.
- 7.2.8 This evaluation has, therefore, assessed the archaeological potential of land intended for development. The results from this work will be used to aid and inform the Principal Archaeological Officer (KCC) of any further archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary in connection with any future development proposals.

8 ARCHIVE

8.1 General

- 8.1.1 The Site archive, which will include; paper records, photographic records, graphics and digital data, will be prepared following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2009; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).
- 8.1.2 All archive elements will be marked with the site/accession code, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive comprises 1 file/document case of paper records & A4 graphics

9 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- 9.1.1 SWAT would like to thank Kent Properties Ltd for commissioning the project. Thanks are also extended to Simon Mason, Principal Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council, for his advice and assistance.

9.1.2 Paul Wilkinson supervised the archaeological fieldwork; illustrations were produced by Bartek Cichy. The report was written by Dr. Paul Wilkinson (MCIfA).

10 REFERENCES

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11 A KCC HER FORM

Site Name: Archaeological Evaluation at the former Ordnance Wharf Site, Flood Lane, Faversham, Kent

SWAT Site Code: VF-FLA-EV-18

Site Address: As above

Summary:

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) were commissioned by Kent Properties Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at the former Ordnance Wharf Site, Flood Lane, Faversham in Kent. The archaeological works were monitored by the Kent County Council Principal Archaeological Officer.

The fieldwork was carried out in April 2018 in accordance with an archaeological specification (KCC 2018) submitted to the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of works.

The Archaeological Evaluation consisted of three trenches, which encountered a relatively complex stratigraphic sequence comprising concrete overlaying made up ground laid on top of concrete overlaying rubble and even more made up ground. Remains of brick built buildings were recorded which date from the late 19th to early 20th century and may have been part of the former gunpowder mills or boat building facility.

District/Unitary: Swale Borough Council

Period(s): Late 18th early 19th century

NGR (centre of site to eight figures) NGR 601320 161570

Type of Archaeological work: Archaeological Watching Brief

Date of recording: April 2018

Unit undertaking recording: Swale and Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology)

Geology: Made up ground

Title and author of accompanying report: SWAT Archaeology (2017) Archaeological Evaluation at the former Ordnance Wharf Site, Flood Lane, Faversham, Kent

Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate)

See above

Location of archive/finds: SWAT. Archaeology. Graveney Rd, Faversham, Kent. ME13 8UP

Contact at Unit: Paul Wilkinson **Date:** 16/05/2018



Figure 1: Site location map, scale 1:10000.

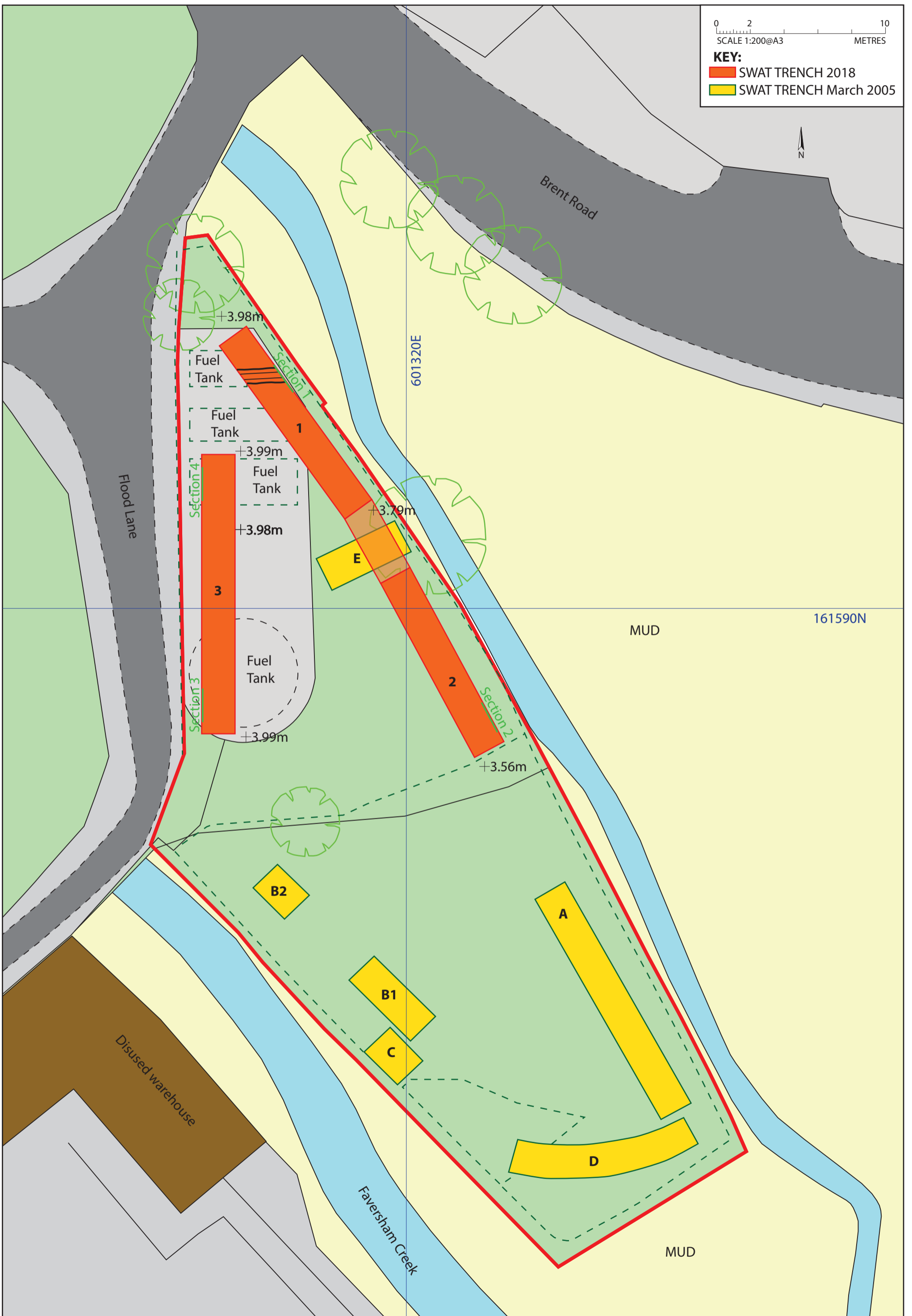
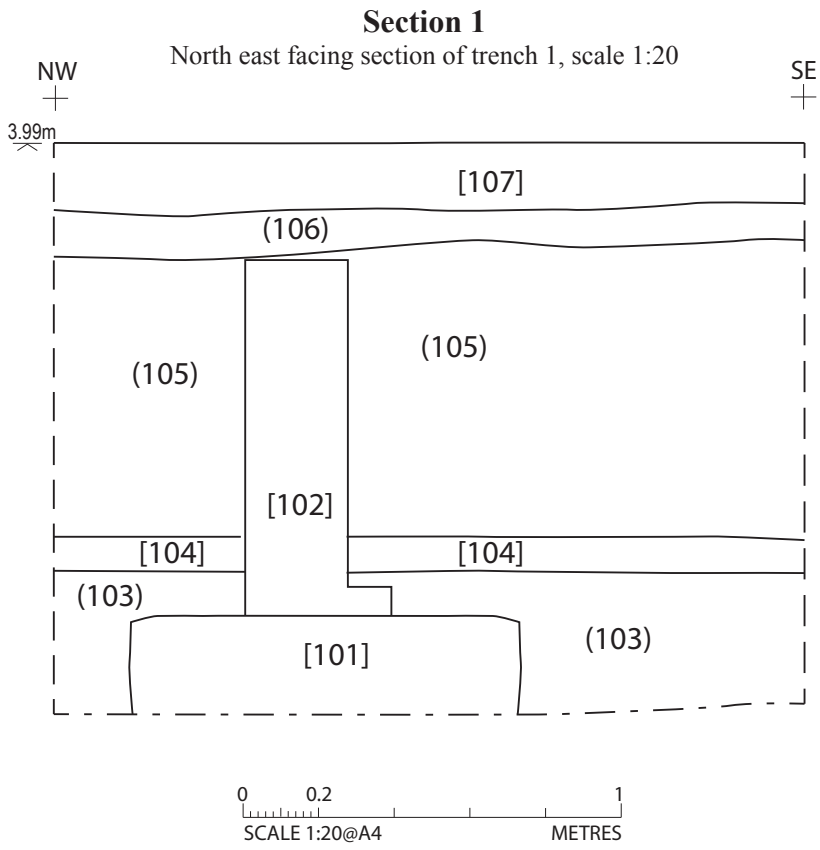


Figure 2: Evaluation trench location, scale 1:200@A3



Plan 1
Plan of trench 1, scale 1:50

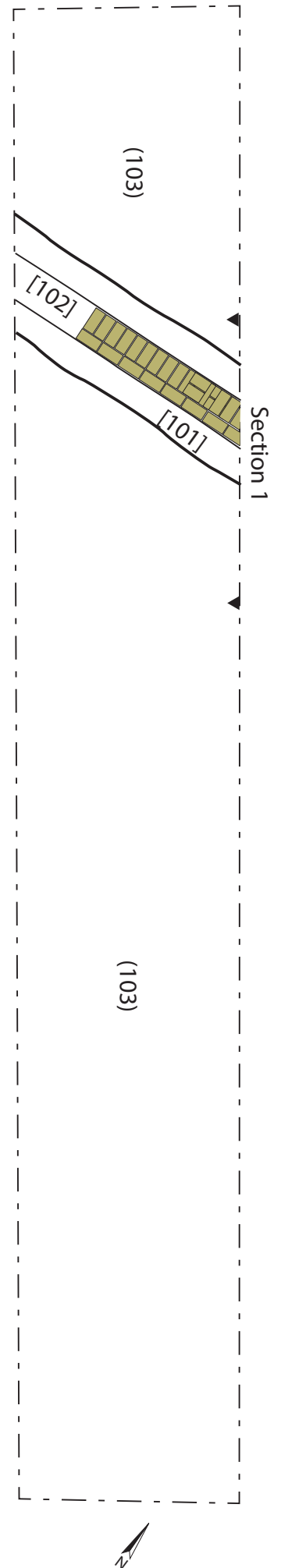
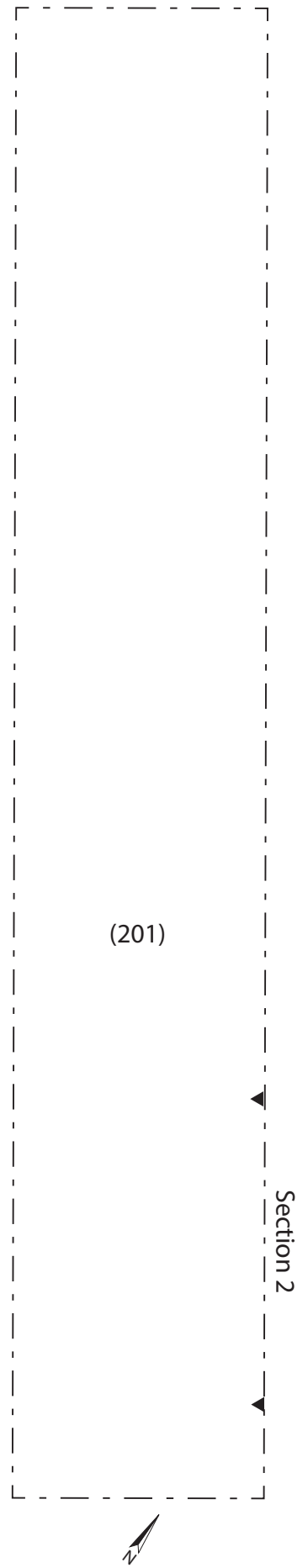
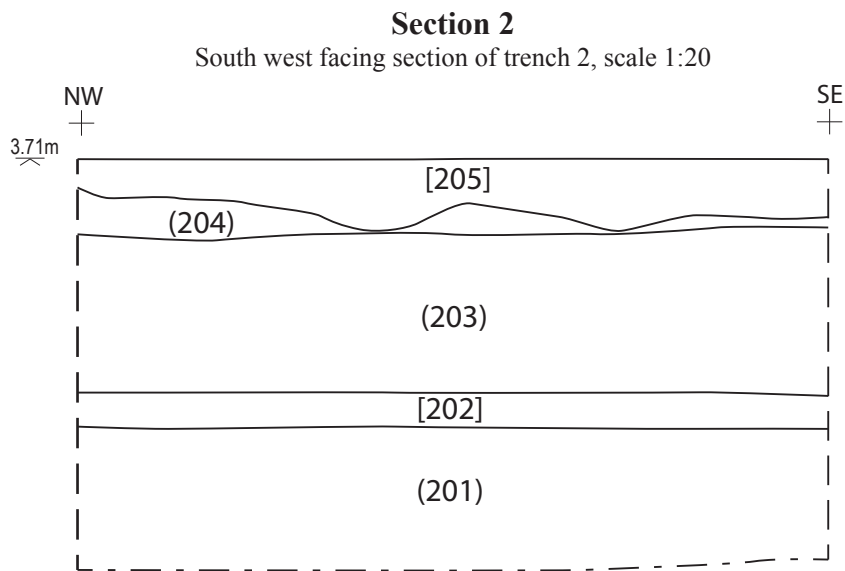


Figure 3: Plan and section of Trench 1



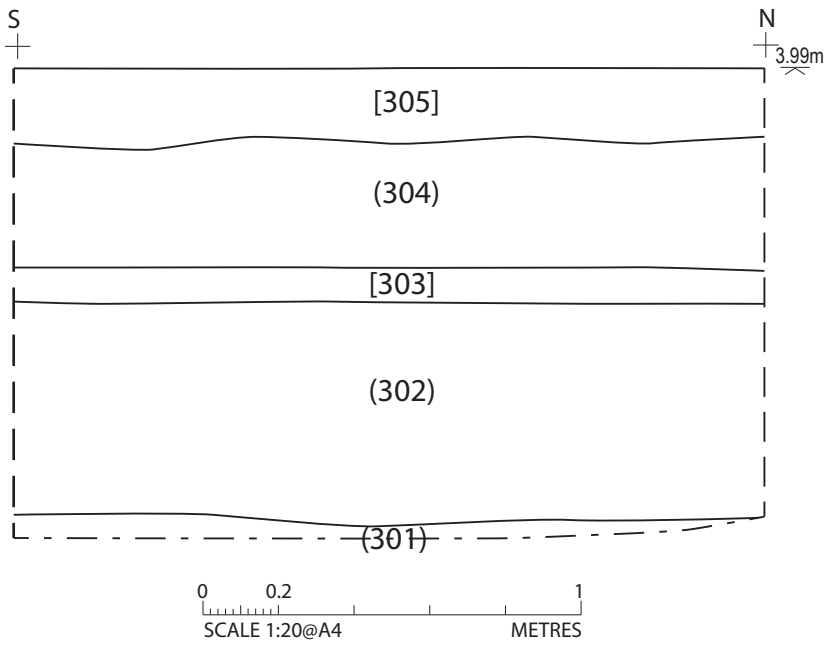
Plan 2
Plan of trench 2, scale 1:50



Figure 4: Plan and section of Trench 2

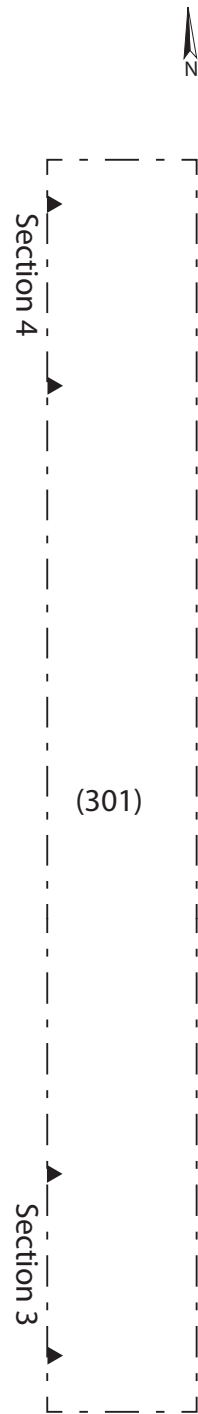
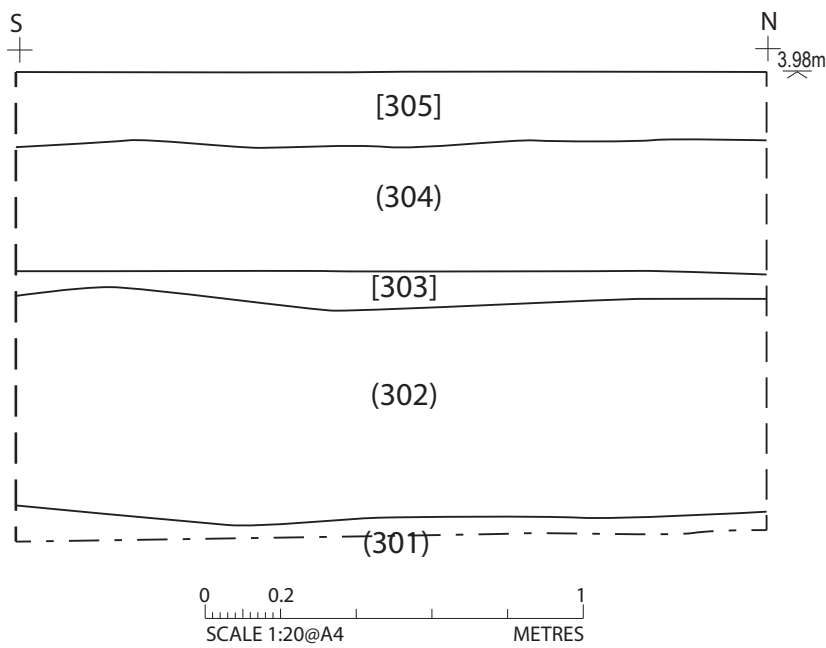
Section 3

East facing section of trench 3, scale 1:20



Section 4

East facing section of trench 3, scale 1:20



Plan 3

Plan of trench 3, scale 1:50

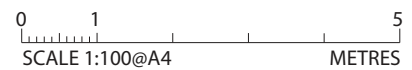


Figure 5: Plan and sections of Trench 3



Plate 2. General view of site (looking NNW)



Plate 3. Trench 1 Stub of wall and Section 1 (looking NNE)



Plate 4. Trench 1 view of stub wall (looking N)



Plate 5. Trench 2 view of section 2 (looking NE)



Plate 6. View of Trench 2 (looking E)



Plate 7. Trench 3 view of section 3 (looking SSW)



Plate 8. Trench 3 view of section 4 (looking SW)



Plate 9. View of site (looking N)