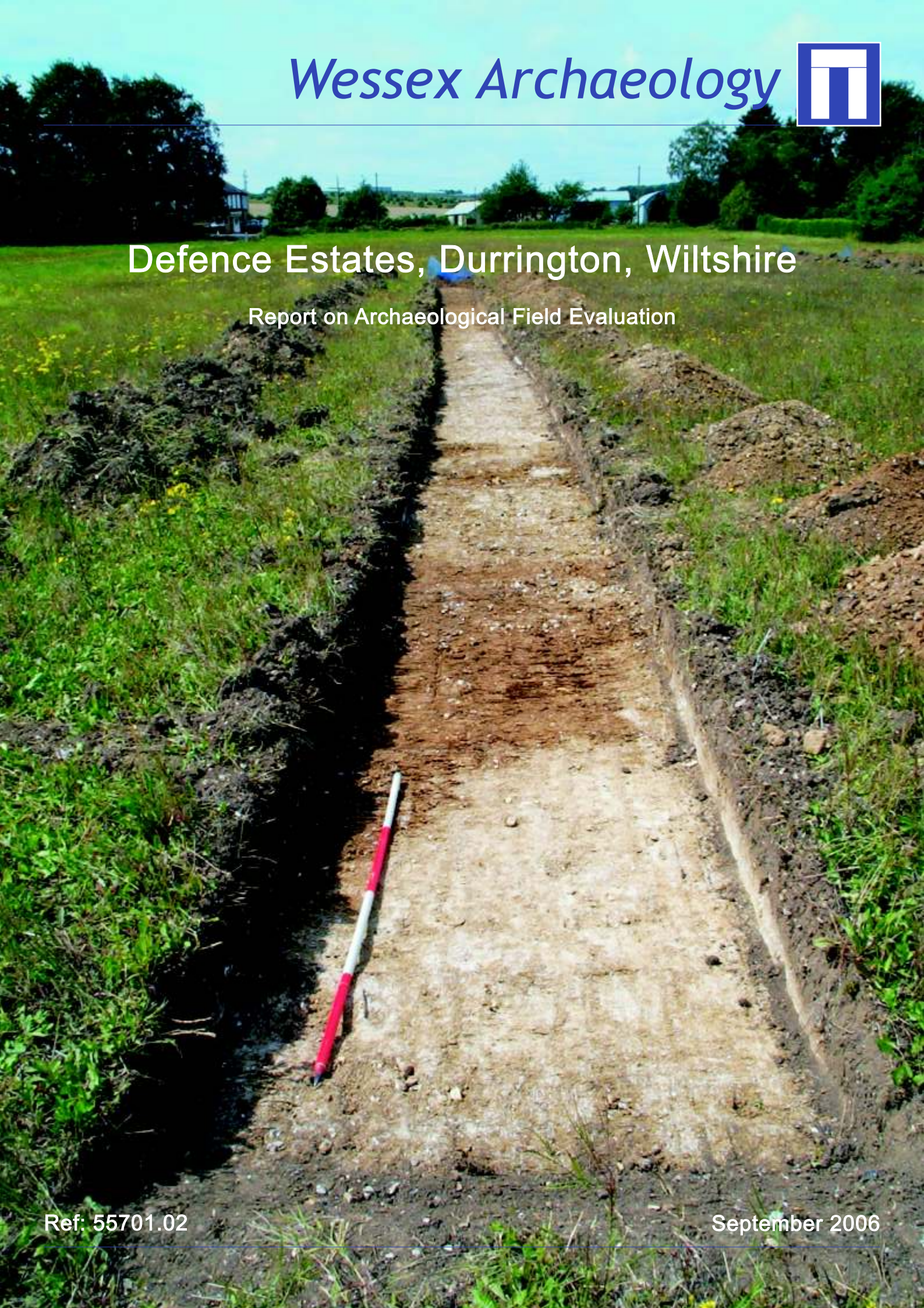
Wessex Archaeology

Defence Estates, Durrington, Wiltshire

Report on Archaeological Field Evaluation



Ref: 55701.02

September 2006

DEFENCE ESTATES, HIGH STREET, DURRINGTON, WILTSHIRE

REPORT ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION

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September 2006

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DEFENCE ESTATES, HIGH STREET, DURRINGTON, WILTSHIRE

REPORT ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Hyder Consulting (UK) Ltd (the Client) to undertake an archaeological evaluation of land at the former Defence Estates Head Quarters, High Street, Durrington, Wiltshire NGR 415400 144700, hereafter referred to as the Site.

The Site is proposed for residential development with the western part of the area left as open space. Twelve trenches were excavated, varying between four and thirty metres long.

Archaeological features were found in five of the trenches, in the north of the Site, two of these trenches were located in a paddock, the other three were located to the north of the trackway bisecting the field to the rear of the Red House. The recorded features consisted of pits and ditches primarily of Iron Age and Romano-British date. The same area of the Site was found to contain extensive deposits of colluvium, or hillwash, that was deposited between different periods of human activity on the Site.

A sondage excavated at the end of Trench 4, using a machine, revealed that the hillwash in the west of the Site extended to a depth of 1.8 m below the present ground surface. A soil horizon, man-made or post-glacial, was observed at this depth.

The trenches opened to the south of the track and within the utility yard yielded no evidence for human activity on the Site other than post-medieval construction of the yard and associated buildings.

Due to the presence of the features recorded in the paddock and the northern part of the Site, the manner in which the hillwash was cut by a chronological range of features, and because further earlier phases of occupation may be 'masked' by the lower hillwash deposits, Wiltshire County Archaeological Service has advised that further work is required in this area.

DEFENCE ESTATES, DURRINGTON, WILTSHIRE

REPORT ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Douglas Picken of Hyder Consulting (UK) Ltd for commissioning the project, and also to thank Helena Cave-Penney of Wiltshire County Archaeological Service for monitoring the fieldwork. The on-site assistance of Alison Williams and Lindsey Warren of Defence Estates is also gratefully acknowledged.

The fieldwork was carried out by Cornelius Barton and Lucy Oglesbee. Peter Reeves managed the project for Wessex Archaeology. This report was compiled by Cornelius Barton with contributions by Michael Allen, Chris Stevens and Lorraine Mepham, and illustrations by Kitty Brandon.

DEFENCE ESTATES, DURRINGTON, WILTSHIRE

REPORT ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Hyder Consulting (UK) Ltd to carry out an archaeological field evaluation on land at the former Defence Estates Head Quarters, High Street, Durrington, Wiltshire (NGR 415400 144700, hereafter 'the Site', **Figure 1**). A Planning Application is to be lodged proposing mixed style residential development with associated carparking and landscape. The Red House, a Listed Building, and its associated curtilage is to be retained.

1.1.2 The Site has been the subject of a Desk Based Assessment (DBA) which included consideration of Cultural Heritage issues (Wessex Archaeology, 2004). Although no known archaeological sites and finds were indicated from the Site itself, its location and topography suggested archaeological potential for remains from the prehistoric and Medieval periods.

1.1.3 Therefore, in view of the proposed development of the Site, the Archaeological Officer for Wiltshire County Council advised the local planning authority that further information on the archaeological implications of the proposed development was required prior to determination of a planning application for the proposed development. This work would consist of trial trenching sampling 2% of the proposed development area along the courses of the proposed building footings.

1.1.4 The Site is situated to the north west of Durrington village centre, in the parish of Durrington. The site is bounded by Durrington High Street to the east and by Netheravon Road to the west. The Site comprises an approximately rectangular plot of land extending east west between the aforementioned roads. The Site is currently occupied by open fields and pasture to the west, approximately 70% of the area, with the remainder given over to car parks and yards.

1.1.5 The Site lies on a gentle slope, rising from west to east; the medial height is around 82m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). Geological maps indicate that the Site lies on Middle Chalk overlain by drift deposits of Coombe Rock/Coombe Deposits (periglacial solifluction material).

1.1.6 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared (Wessex Archaeology 2006) and submitted to, and subsequently approved by, Wiltshire County Archaeological Service before the commencement of fieldwork.

1.1.7 This document records the results of the evaluation which was undertaken in August 2006.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Desk-based Assessment

2.1.1 A desk-based assessment of the Site area and surroundings to a distance of 1 Km was previously produced (Wessex Archaeology, 2004). A summary of the findings of this assessment follows.

2.2 Palaeolithic (*c.* 500,000-8,500 BC)

2.2.1 No material of this date has been recovered from within the defined Study Area.

2.3 Mesolithic - Neolithic (*c.* 8,500-2,400 BC)

2.3.1 No material of Mesolithic date has been recorded within the Study Area, although a flint axe of this period was found just outside the Study Area at Durrington Walls (located to the south within the Stonehenge and Environs World Heritage Site).

2.3.2 A more significant quantity of Neolithic sites and findspots has been identified. The large henge of Durrington Walls (see Figure 1) lies at the southern edge of the Study Area, and this appears to have been a focus for activity commencing during the Neolithic period and continuing, with increased activity for a considerable time after.

2.4 Bronze Age (*c.* 2,400 - 700 BC)

2.4.1 There are a number of round barrows and ring ditches recorded within the Study Area; most of which are likely to be of Bronze Age date. One of these lies just to the south of the Site, whilst another is not far to the north. A further two barrows are located on the western edge of the Study Area.

2.4.2 Within the Durrington Walls henge a double ring ditch of possible Bronze Age date has been identified, and settlement activity of this date has also been found within the henge.

2.5 Iron Age (*c.* 700 BC - AD 43)

2.5.1 The Durrington Walls henge (see Figure 1) also contains evidence for settlement activity during the Iron Age and to the north of the henge is a substantial settlement enclosure of late Iron Age date known as the Packway Enclosure.

2.6 Romano-British (*c.* AD 43 – 410)

2.6.1 There is some evidence for Romano-British activity within the Study Area, including the findspot of a *sestertius* (coin) of Marcus Aurelius (AD 161-80)

in the southern part of the village. There is also evidence of activity from the areas around Durrington Walls and the Packway Enclosure.

2.7 Saxon (*c.* AD 410 – 1066)

2.7.1 The Study Area contains two finds of Saxon (Early Medieval) date. A bronze bookend bearing a design of possibly two animals was found to the north of the village, whilst a gilded copper alloy brooch in the form of a bird was recovered from the east side of the River Avon.

2.8 Medieval (*c.* AD 1066-1499

2.8.1 There is evidence of medieval settlement within the immediate vicinity of the Site. Durrington Parish church was originally built in the 13th century, but substantially remodelled in 1851. Outside the church is a remnant of the village cross. Just to the south of the Site is Pinckney Farm, a farmstead with documented medieval origins.

2.8.2 To the north of the village is the Scheduled Monument of Knighton Farm, a medieval farmstead with a dry moat and a number of house platforms visible as earthworks. East of Durrington village, and close to the River Avon, a millstone of 15th-16th century date was found in a water meadow, and timber uprights suggested the location of a former mill.

2.8.3 The assessment concluded that there was a low to moderate potential for archaeological remains from this period to exist along the High Street frontage.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims and objectives

3.1.1 The objectives of the evaluation were to determine, as far as reasonably possible; the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological remains within the Site.

3.2 Trial trenching methodology

Machine excavation

3.2.1 The Site has an area of approximately 4.5ha. Twelve trenches, representing a 2% sample of the Site were mechanically excavated by a JCB excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision (**Figures 1** and **2**). All trenches were excavated with ramped ends, to allow access for wildlife.

3.2.2 Topsoil was removed first and stored separately from any subsoils/non-humic horizons that were subsequently removed. Mechanical excavation continued to the top of archaeological horizons. A small sample of identified archaeological remains was excavated by hand.

3.2.3 All trenches were backfilled upon completion of fieldwork. Subsoils and topsoils were reinstated in their original order and compacted as well as possible using the mechanical excavator.

3.2.4 All features and deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's standard methods and *pro forma* recording system, with all features and deposits being assigned a unique number. A full graphic record was maintained. Plans and sections were produced at a scale of 1:20 and 1:10, where appropriate. The Ordnance Datum (OD) height of all principal features and levels was calculated, with plans and sections annotated with OD heights. A full photographic record was maintained, using digital cameras, colour transparencies and black and white negatives (on 35mm film).

3.2.5 Following the Site monitoring visit by Wiltshire County Archaeological Service it was agreed that trenches containing features that had yet to be sampled should be minimally disturbed. The conclusion had been reached that the archaeology revealed by the opening of the trenches was extensive and complicated and it was agreed that investigation of the exposed features within the confines of the trench would not reveal the true extent and function of the site overall and the evaluation might compromise its eventual interpretation.

3.2.6 The site methodology was adapted to plan and photograph all exposed features but to only sample areas where features of a date and type not previously recorded were observed. Wiltshire County Archaeological Service also requested a sondage to determine the depth of the hillwash that had been exposed and to stop where a clearly identifiable deposit of different material was encountered.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Archaeological features were found in five of the twelve trenches (**Figure 2**). The features were generally either pits or larger linear features such as ditches, on a variety of alignments.

4.2 Trench 1

4.2.1 The trench contained four archaeological features. At the west end was a shallow, sub-oval feature **104**. This is interpreted as either, the terminal of a shallow, north-south oriented ditch or the southern half of a small oval pit. No dating evidence was retrieved from this feature.

4.2.2 In the centre of the trench another possible ditch terminus (**106**) was recorded (**Figures 2** and **4**). This feature was 0.85m deep, on a rough northeast-southwest alignment and contained pottery of Romano-British date and one sherd of medieval pottery.

4.2.3 A further two possible linear features **111** and **113** were identified at the east end of the trench, each on a rough northeast-southwest alignment. Both contained pottery of Romano-British date. These were not excavated, at the instruction of Wiltshire County Archaeological Service.

4.3 Trench 2

4.3.1 Three unexcavated archaeological features **204**, **206** and **208** were observed in this trench. The similarity of fill, form and alignment to the features recorded in Trench 1 suggests that they date to the prehistoric period. Due to the confines of the trench width it could not be determined whether these features represent segments of linear ditches or segments of pits. A single deposit of hillwash was present in this trench to a depth of 0.25-0.40m overlying the features.

4.4 Trench 3

4.4.1 The trench contained a section of ditch **309** on a northeast-southwest alignment. The segment may represent a continuation of either of the linear features **106** (Trench 1) or **1204** observed in Trench 2. Two discrete features **305** and **307** were also recorded of unknown function within the trench. Features **305** and **307** were dated to the Romano-British period by association with pottery found in the surrounding subsoils. As discussed above (paragraphs 3.2.5 and 3.2.6) none of the features were excavated.

4.4.2 Hillwash deposits were also present in this trench, consisting of two separate layers **302** and **303**, the latter overlying the former (see sections **Figure 3**).

4.5 Trench 4

4.5.1 The trench contained two layers of hillwash, **402** and **403**. Cut into the lower of these (**403**) was a small, truncated pit **405. T**his was apparently excavated for the deposition of a Late Iron Age or Romano-British vessel **406** (see section 5 below).

4.5.2 At the western end of the trench a sondage was cut for the purpose of determining the depth of the lower hillwash layer **403** (**Figure 4**). The sondage revealed the edge (**408**) of a pronounced interface between coombe-rock and clay deposits at the north and hillwash deposits on the south. It could not be determined whether this interface represented the edge of a natural feature such as a glacial channel or the edge of a large pit or ditch, since neither the bottom nor the full extent of the feature could be determined within the confines of the trench. Environmental samples from the lower fills of this feature were taken and are discussed more fully in section 6 below. Dating material retrieved from the environmental samples suggest these fills might be Romano-British in date.

4.6 Trench 12

4.6.1 The trench contained four features. **1204** and **1210** were linear features on a similar alignment to those observed in Trench 1, and may be continuations of

106 and **113** respectively, as illustrated on **Figure 2**. Also present in the trench were features **1206** and **1208**, both apparently discrete in nature but were unexcavated. The full extents of these features could not be determined as they exceeded the dimensions of the trench.

4.6.2 All the features in this trench were overlaid by a deposit of colluvial hillwash **1202**. The hillwash increased in depth from 0.05m at the east end of the trench to 0.40m at the west end (see **Figure 3**).

5 FINDS

5.1.1 A small quantity of finds was recovered during the evaluation, deriving from five trenches (1, 2, 3, 4 and 12) and including a restricted range of material types, mainly pottery, animal bone and burnt, unworked flint. The date range is predominantly Romano-British, with some potentially pre-conquest pottery, and some later (medieval) finds.

5.1.2 All finds have been quantified by material type within each context, and the results are presented in **Table 1**.

5.1.3 Table 1: All finds by context (number / weight in grammes)

CBM = ceramic building material; cu alloy = copper alloy

Context	Animal Bone	Burnt Flint	Pottery	Other Finds
30			17/339	
107	306/484	124/2284	11/261	1 iron; 2 fired clay
111	1/82		4/158	
113	3/180	28/320		
205			12/157	
302			6/184	1 stone
304			10/123	
401			6/78	
403		5/101	24/322	1 CBM
406		1/119	41/963	
1205			8/432	1 cu alloy
TOTAL	**310/746**	**158/2824**	**139/3017**	

5.2 Pottery

5.2.1 Pottery provides the primary dating evidence for the site, and was the most commonly encountered material type. The condition of the ceramic assemblage retrieved is relatively good, and the sherds have suffered little abrasion.

5.2.2 The overwhelming majority of the assemblage is of Romano-British date. Predominant within the assemblage are coarsewares, including greywares originating from various sources (potentially including north Wiltshire and

the New Forest), oxidised wares, Black Burnished ware (BB1) from south Dorset, grog-tempered wares belonging to the Savernake tradition of north Wiltshire and the surrounding region, and flint-tempered wares. The grog-tempered and flint-tempered ware traditions of the region both originated in the Iron Age, continuing in use after the conquest at least into the early 2nd century AD. In this instance their associations with 'Romanised' wares in nearly every context confirm a post-conquest date, although a flint-tempered bead rim jar from context **111** has no other associations and could, therefore, be pre-conquest.

5.2.3 The coarse greywares also occur in both early and late Roman jar forms (contexts **107** and **205** respectively), while Black Burnished ware appears to have been supplying the site only in the late Roman period (later 3rd/4th century), on the basis of the dropped flange bowl and everted rim jar forms, and obtuse burnished lattice decoration seen here (contexts **30**, **107**, **302** and **304**).

5.2.4 Finewares are restricted to three sherds of late Romano British finewares, two from Oxfordshire and one from the New Forest (contexts **205** and **401**).

5.2.5 One medieval sherd was identified (context **107**), a Laverstock-type coarseware from the Salisbury area, probably of 12th or 13th century date.

5.3 Burnt Flint

5.3.1 Burnt, unworked flint is intrinsically undatable, although often associated with prehistoric activity. In this instance it occurred largely in association with Romano-British pottery.

5.4 Animal Bone

5.4.1 A very fragmentary cattle skull was recovered from context **107**, together with a few other cattle bones, and single examples of sheep and pig. Context **111** produced a single cattle bone, while context **113** contained horse, sheep and cattle.

5.5 Other Finds

5.5.1 Other finds comprise a Romano-British copper alloy coin, part of a Romano-British rotary quernstone, a fragment of medieval ceramic roof tile, a small iron object, possibly a nail shank (unknown date), and two small pieces of undiagnostic fired clay (unknown date).

6 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 Two bulk samples were taken during the evaluation. Both came from the lower fills (**407** and **409**) of a colluvial fill within a large natural or man made feature at the west end of Trench 4. Colluvium elsewhere on the site is undated but at least Roman or earlier and possibly Bronze Age in date. In the

middle of Trench 4 a Romano British vessel was inserted into the shallow colluvium, but this discrete feature has no clear stratigraphic relationship with the deeper colluvial sequence. The samples were processed for the recovery and assessment of charred plant remains and charcoals.

6.2 Assessment Results, Methods and Data

6.2.1 Bulk samples were processed by standard flotation methods and the results are presented in **Table 2**. Preliminary identifications of dominant or important taxa are noted below, following the nomenclature of Stace (1997).

6.2.2 Table 2. Assessment of the charred plant remains and charcoal

				Flot						Residue
Feature type/no	Context	Sample	size litres	flot size ml	Grain	Chaff	Weed seeds uncharred charred	Charcoal >4.0mm	Other	Charcoal >5.6mm
Colluvial deposits (in natural depression)										
pit depression	407	1	8.5	20 [0]	-	-	-	-	moll-t (A*)	-
pit depression	409	2	8	20 [3]	C	C	c	C	moll-t (A*)	-

KEY: A** = exceptional, A* = 30+ items, A = ≥10 items, B = 9 - 5 items, C = < 5 items, (h) = hazelnuts, smb = small mammal bones; Moll-t = terrestrial molluscs Moll-f = freshwater molluscs; Analysis: C = charcoal, P = plant, M = molluscs, C14 = radiocarbon suggestions

NOTE: [1]flot is total, but flot in superscript = ml of rooty material. [2]Unburnt seed is in lower case to distinguish it from charred remains

6.2.3 The flots were generally small, with little charcoal and mainly mollusc shells. The upper sample (**407**) had no roots or modern seeds that may be indicative of stratigraphic movement, reworking or the degree of contamination by later intrusive elements. Unusually the lowest sample (**409)** did have a single seed of *Picris* (bristly oxtongue – dandelion type) and several uncharred stems, although these may have come in during the samples collection, given the difficulty of safely obtaining this lower sample. Significantly there are no shells of *Cecilioides acicula,* the burrowing snail which is a medieval introduction and can be indicative of biotic intrusion, might suggest that biotic mixing and intrusion is quite minimal.

6.3 Charred Plant Remains and Charcoals

6.3.1 The sample from the upper layer of fill sampled (**407**) contained no charred macroscopic remains. That from the lowest sampled (**409**), however, produced a single grain of probable barley (cf. *Hordeum vulgare* sl), four very degraded glume bases, and a fourth almost certainly of spelt wheat (*Triticum* cf. *spelta*). The sample also produced two grass rootlets and a possible large grass grain, probably oats (*Avena* sp).

6.3.2 The material may be intrusive or reworked, but the small number of roots may be indicative of little biotic intrusion, unless it occurred in antiquity. The entire sequence contained large (greater than 0.5mm diameter) vertical

macropores stained with more humic material from later deposits suggesting that significant earthworm-working to at least 1.2m did occur. While barley may date from the Neolithic to the present, spelt wheat only first appears in southern England in the Middle to Late Bronze Age (Greig 1991), and within Wessex its remains are most commonly recovered from Iron Age and Romano-British sites (Campbell 2000a; Ede 1993; Hinton 1999). Their very presence within the colluvial layer is indicative of settlement waste, and settlement from this period is assumed within the general vicinity of the site during the formation of this deposit.

6.3.3 Charred rootlets are often associated with cremation burials, in particular within the Bronze Age. However, they are also commonly found upon Iron Age sites in the Wessex region (de Moulins 1995; Ede 2001; Campbell 2000b).

6.3.4 Charcoal was noted from the flots of the bulk samples and is recorded in **Table 2**. The upper sample (**407**) contained very little charcoal, with no fragments larger than 2mm. That from the lower sample (**409**) contained slightly more charcoal that looked relatively fresh, rather than reworked or intrusive. However, there were no pieces larger than 4mm and relatively few larger than 2mm in size.

6.4 Land Molluscs

6.4.1 Within the field and during the assessment for charred remains, snails were noted in the flots and recorded (**Table 2**). The dominant species were identified where possible following the nomenclature is according to Kerney (1999). The shells within both samples were well preserved, comprising mainly of *Trichia hispida, Hellicella itala*, *Vallonia* sp. and *Pupilla muscorum*. These are assemblages of open country typically grassland or arable, and typical of colluvial assemblages. The lack of the burrowing medieval introduction *Ceciliodes acicula* is noteworthy the it was only present in very low numbers in hillwash at Figheldean (Allen and Wyles 1993), and Durrington Walls (Allen unpubl.).

6.5 Small Animal Bones

6.5.1 Small animal bones were also noted, and recorded (**Table 2**), in the flots. These included a medium sized mammal phalange, an eel bone (*Anguilla anguilla*), and two to three small mammal bones.

6.5.2 There is no indication that the deposit has other fluvial components (e.g. water snails) and so probably represents waste from the exploitation or consumption of such fish. While fish bones are occasionally recovered from British Neolithic sites, fish bones in general are rare after the Mesolithic and usually absent from later prehistoric sites. They only become commonplace within the 1st century AD and it is probable that after the Mesolithic period they were only commonly consumed again within the Romano-British period. While the bone may be intrusive and post-Saxon in date there are no snails of the medieval introduced burrowing snail *Cecilioides* in the sample that might be expected if this was the case. Eel vertebra have, however, been

found elsewhere in the Durrington environs, in the lower and upper fills of a Late Bronze Age ditch at Earls Farm Down (Hamilton-Dyer in Cleal *et al.* 2004).

6.6 Summary

6.6.1 While the upper sample was generally devoid of remains the lower sample did produce some material. Given the small quantities of material it may be reworked or intrusive. However, if it was all of a single phase then it most probably would seem to be Romano-British. The glumes of spelt wheat could be later Bronze Age, but are most likely to be Iron Age or Romano-British in date. The bones of eel are less common in deposits earlier than the Romano-British period, becoming commoner on Saxon and medieval sites, but are present in late Bronze Age sites in the Durrington environs.

7 GEOARCHAEOLOGY

7.1 Geology and Topography

7.1.1 The area is mapped as Middle Chalk and lies in a gently undulating chalk landscape locally with the drift deposits comprising Coombe Rock/Coombe Deposits (periglacial solifluction material) with evidence of relict cappings of Tertiary deposits (clay-with-flints *sensu lato*) in the vicinity. No solid chalk is exposed by trenching. The area of the Site is relatively level, but slight and significant relief is present. The ground rises to the east forming the edge of the chalk plateau beyond, or the edge of a very broad shallow dry valley within the Site. The land also gradually descends northwards.

7.2 Present Day Soils

7.2.1 The present day soils (as observed in the field) are thin brown rendzinas to the east at the top of the slope of the Andover 1 association giving way to colluvial rendzina and colluvial brown earths downslope to the west. These are formed on periglacial solifluction deposits (Coombe Deposit) and colluvium.

7.3 Geoarchaeology: Soils and Sediments

7.3.1 The topography does not form a simple valley or foot slope profile, and the periglacial solifluction deposits are masked with patches of varying colluvial deposits; some derived from soils over the Coombe Deposit and some derived from soil over Tertiary (clay-with-flint) drift deposits.

7.3.2 The eastern edges of many trenches expose Coombe Deposits and thinner (rendzinaform) soils. The centre of most trenches contains a colluvial brown earth (that is a soil formed on colluvium) and calcareous to weakly calcareous colluvium. The western ends of the trenches were predominantly soils over flinty or clayey colluvium (or relict Drift).

7.3.3 The colluvium topographically lies either at the foot of the gentle slope, or in the centre of a broad gentle valley. Both topographical forms are now almost

invisible as they have been infilled by the shallow colluvium. The maximum depth of the colluvial deposit has not been determined.

7.3.4 In Trench 3 (second in from the track) two north-south running ditches were sealed by silty weakly calcareous colluvium. They cut, or were sealed by, a buried soil, or re-worked buried soil, with weak blocky structure near the base of the colluvium. This soil contained visible charcoal fragments.

7.3.5 Finds have been recorded on the surface of the colluvium (i.e. at the topsoil/colluvial or A horizon/B horizon) interface, and within the colluvium, and within features cut into and sealed by the colluvium.

7.3.6 In an attempt to determine the typical likely depth of colluvium, an exploratory sondage was opened at the west end of Trench 4. Machine excavation was halted at a depth of 1.8m due to health and safety concerns. Photographs of this sondage revealed colluvium in a well defined natural or man-made feature. The colluvial infill was a typical weakly calcareous hillwash to a depth of at least 1.8m, the lower portion containing a darker (possibly more humic) horizon which might relate to erosion, or the presence of, topsoil material. A thin lens of possible topsoil derived material can be detected on the photograph (context 40*), beneath which a sample (1) of context **407** allows description of the a dark yellowish brown (10YR 5/4) calcareous silty clay loam colluvium with many/common small and very small rounded chalk pieces and rare small and medium flints, and a dark yellowish brown (10YR 4/4). This is probably colluvium derived from a colluvial brown earth. Beneath this (photograph and sample 2) is context **409** which is a dark brown silty clay with common small and very small chalk pieces and rare small and medium flints, with several very small fragments of charcoal noted in the sample, and evidence of some ?vertical macropores 0.5mm in diameter, presumably fossil earthworm burrows. Again this is probably topsoil derived colluvial material but does contain charcoal.

7.3.7 The colluvium was contained by steep sided edge of the Coombe Deposit, suggesting that this is either within an archaeological feature, or that this edge represents a glacial channel cutting through the Coombe Deposits that has been filled by Holocene (archaeological) colluvium. The sondage unfortunately does not, therefore, clearly determine the likely depth of colluvium in the area. The fills are entirely colluvial, with little normal ditch (primary and secondary) or pit fills, suggesting this is either the upper colluvial infill of a large feature such as a ditch, or the infill of a natural channel feature.

7.4 Late Glacial Sequence

7.4.1 Other important and significant deposits were noticed when the Coombe Deposits were sectioned in Trench 4. The first was a greyish brown band (colours from photo) about 0.1 to 0.15m thick within the Coombe Deposit and which *may* represent a lens of clay or a very rare presence of an Allerod (late glacial *c.* 12,0000 BP), buried soil in southern England. No other such soils have been recorded in the Wiltshire chalk, though one has been recorded at Burleston, Dorset, and one at Westhampnett, W. Sussex, and the

latter with evidence of human activity. Several exposures are known in Kent. The second was dark yellowish red (colours from photograph) weakly calcareous deposits within the Coombe Deposits at *c.* 1.8m which may represent typical non-calcareous silty or clay-rich deposits within the periglacial solifluction material.

7.4.2 This possible 'soil' lies over both chalky marl (periglacial solifuction material) and Pleistocene clays, possibly indicating fluvial facies with the periglacial solifluction debris.

7.5 Colluvial Deposits in the Area

7.5.1 Over 2 metres of hillwash occur within the major monument of Durrington Walls. These seal the Neolithic southern circle for instance, but also were probably about 0.7m thick when the Iron Age activity at the Packway occurred. The colluvium contains a buried soil from which it is presumed that the V-shaped Iron Age ditches were dug. At the top of the hill, towards the Packway the V-shaped ditches are 0.7 - 1m deep, and the base of the slope only 0.05m cut the chalk bedrock. Colluvium has also been recorded extensively within Durrington Walls, and has been sectioned at Figheldean (see Graham & Newman 1993).

7.5.2 Hillwash is recorded in valley bottoms, floot slope locations and dry valleys across southern England (Bell 1983), and have been demonstrated to seal, contain and bury archaeological sites (Allen 1988; 1991; 1992; 1995), most notables a series of Beaker settlements (Allen 2005a; 2005b; 2005c). This does not indicate that Beaker sites may be buried here, but that archaeologically sites in and under colluvium are relatively common.

7.6 Context of Archaeological Features

7.6.1 The archaeological features have been demonstrated to cut into the Coombe Deposits and the colluvium, but are also sealed by the colluvium and in places are cut into the colluvium, and elsewhere may, potentially, be wholly contained within the colluvium.

7.6.2 The nature of the colluvium here is locally complex and <u>not</u> immediately straightforward. The variation in the colluvium from a dark yellowish brown calcareous silt loam with common medium chalk pieces, to a dark brown non-calcareous silty loam, to a dark reddish brown flinty non-calcareous silty clay is largely a consequence of the variation in the local former soils and drift deposits, and the age of the colluvium. The more calcareous and chalky colluvium tending to be the younger.

7.6.3 The presence of colluvium in these shallow gradients, however, suggests <u>significant</u> archaeological activity (occupation, clearance, tillage) in the past to destabilise and erode soils on the shallow, short and gradual slopes.

7.6.4 Some colluvium of substantial thickness may be present in large archaeological features or glacial relict palaeochannels. All of the hillwash

can be attributed indirectly to human activity, and is a consequence of past land use.

7.6.5 The Roman vessel was cut into hillwash / colluvial deposits indicating colluviation had occurred before this time. The hillwash may therefore mask, seal and contain archaeological features.

7.6.6 At least one buried soil has been detected associated with late prehistoric/Romano-British ditches.

7.6.7 The discovery of the level from which archaeological features are cut may be difficult. Features cut into and filled by colluvium, but which do not penetrate the Coombe Deposits, can be exceptionally difficult to locate.

7.6.8 The possibility of the presence of an Allerod soil is significant and intriguing.

7.7 Conclusion and Comments

7.7.1 The comprehension of the colluvium and entwined archaeological events (ditches, pits, buried soils) is almost impossible to determine in these narrow trenches.

7.7.2 There are clearly a multitude of archaeological features and finds in all trenches, and that in most classes they extend beyond the width of the trench. Pits of the Grooved Ware phase (Durrington) to the Iron Age (Packway Enclosure and Avon valley) can be several metres across and it is not possible to always to determine whether they are pits or ditch terminals in evaluation trenches or footing-restricted trenches.

8 CONCLUSION

8.1.1 The evaluation of the Site identified significant archaeological remains in the five trenches in the northern area of the Site, comprising the paddock and the area in the field between the paddock and the road (see **Figure 1**). The precise nature of these features or their relationship to one another cannot be established due to the constraints of the evaluation trenches. In almost all cases the width of the trench is too narrow to fully determine the extent of the features.

8.1.2 Evidence suggests Roman ditches and pits containing finds representative of settlement. Early indications are of a farmstead or similar. No prehistoric material has been recovered but there is potential.

8.1.3 The datable material recovered from the trenches indicates a Romano-British date for the features with a possible Late Iron Age date for some material. However these features are only the uppermost of potential features on site and are cut into or partially overlain by the latest hillwash event.

8.1.4 The presence of the stratified hillwash deposits makes archaeological remains more difficult to detect than would normally be the case. It is

possible that in some areas there are further, earlier archaeological deposits below the exposed layers.

8.1.5 It has therefore been recommended by Wiltshire County Archaeological Service that an open-area excavation be carried out on the areas outlined above and in **Figure 1**.

8.1.6 The trenches excavated to the south of the track bisecting the western field, and those trenches excavated within the utility yard demonstrated no evidence of archaeological activity.

8.1.7 The nature and specification to which the yard hard surfacing has been constructed would have removed any archaeological remains that may have been present.

8.1.8 The siting of the evaluation trenches along the lines of the foundation trenches for the proposed buildings yields a **high** confidence level for reporting on the impact that development will have on the archaeological remains that have been encountered.

8.1.9 Within the area of the paddock and the north part of the field the potential for development to encounter and truncate archaeological remains is regarded as **very high**.

8.1.10 The only area of proposed development that was not evaluated and on which it is proposed to erect residential units was that covered by the allotments. Political expediency dictated that no ground disturbance should occur on this area. The allotments are located adjacent to the eastern edge of the paddock and therefore the potential for archaeological remains to be encountered in this area must be regarded as **high**.

8.1.11 The potential for discovering previously unrecorded archaeological features within the utility yard is regarded as **very low**.

8.1.12 An archaeological condition will be appended to planning permission, this is likely to take the form of a Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Investigation (Area Excavation) to be submitted and agreed with the regional curator and the fieldwork undertaken prior to development.

8.1.13 The potential for findings from such an investigation to prohibit development, that is a request for preservation of archaeological remains in situ, is **low**.

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Appendix I – Trench Summary Table

Trench: 1			
Length: 50m	**Width:** 1.8m	**Depth:** 0.45m	
Context Number	**Description**		**Depth**
101	Mid grey-brown silty clay topsoil		0.15m
102	Pale grey brown silty clay with chalk hillwash/ subsoil		0.40m
103	Mottled grey-brown chalk with reddish-brown clay patches- coombe-rock natural		0.40m+
104	Terminus of shallow n-s linear or small oval pit		0.45m
105	Mid red-brown silty clay fill of **104**		0.45m
106	Cut of possible linear		0.85m
107	Upper fill of **106**		0.75m
108	Lower fill of **106**		0.85m
109	Small circular feature		N/E
110	Mid grey-brown silty clay fill of **109**		N/E
111	n-s linear		N/E
112	Mid grey-brown silty clay fill of **111**		N/E
113	n-s linear		N/E
114	Mid grey-brown silty clay fill of **113**		N/E

Trench: 2			
Length: 30m	**Width:** 1.8m	**Depth:** 0.45m	
Context Number	**Description**		**Depth**
201	Mid grey-brown silty clay topsoil		0.25m
202	Pale grey brown silty clay with chalk hillwash/ subsoil		0.41m
203	Mottled grey-brown chalk with reddish-brown clay patches- coombe-rock natural		0.40m+
204	Cut of pit		N/E
205	Mid grey-brown silty clay fill of 204		N/E
206	Ne-sw linear feature		N/E
207	Mid grey silty clay fill of 206		N/E
208	n-s linear		N/E
209	Mid grey-brown silty clay fill of 208		N/E

Trench: 3			
Length: 50m	**Width:** 1.8m	**Depth:** 0.40m	
Context Number	**Description**		**Depth**
301	Mid grey-brown silty clay topsoil		0.20m
302	Pale grey brown silty clay with chalk hillwash/ subsoil		0.40m
303	Mid grey silty clay with chalk- hillwash/subsoil		0.40m
304	Mottled grey-brown chalk with reddish-brown clay patches- coombe-rock natural		0.40m+
305	Sub-circular feature		N/E
306	Mid grey brown silty clay fill of 305		N/E
307	Nw-se linear		N/E
308	Mid grey brown silty clay fill of 307		N/E
309	Sub-circular feature		N/E
310	Mid grey brown silty clay fill of 309		N/E

Trench: 4			
Length: 50m	**Width:** 1.8m	**Depth:** 0.60m	
Context Number	**Description**		**Depth**
401	Mid grey-brown silty clay topsoil		0.30m
402	Pale grey brown silty clay with chalk hillwash/ subsoil		0.60m
403	Mid-to-dark grey-brown silty clay with chalk – hillwash		0.35m+
404	Small circular cut for vessel		0.41m
405	Fill of 404		0.41m
406	Fill of 408		1.8m+
407	Fill of 408		1.8m+
408	Large feature		1.8m+
409	Basal fill of 408		1.8m

Trench: 5			
Length: 50m	**Width:** 1.8m	**Depth:**	
Context Number	**Description**		**Depth**
501	Mid grey-brown silty clay topsoil		
502	Pale grey brown silty clay with chalk hillwash/ subsoil		
503	Mottled grey-brown chalk with reddish-brown clay patches- coombe-rock natural		

Trench: 6			
Length: 50m	**Width:** 1.8m	**Depth:**	
Context Number	**Description**		**Depth**
601	Mid grey-brown silty clay topsoil		
602	Pale grey brown silty clay with chalk hillwash/ subsoil		
603	Mottled grey-brown chalk with reddish-brown clay patches- coombe-rock natural		

Trench: 7			
Length: 50m	**Width:** 1.8m	**Depth:**	
Context Number	**Description**		**Depth**
701	Mid grey-brown silty clay topsoil		
702	Pale grey brown silty clay with chalk hillwash/ subsoil		
703	Mottled grey-brown chalk with reddish-brown clay patches- coombe-rock natural		

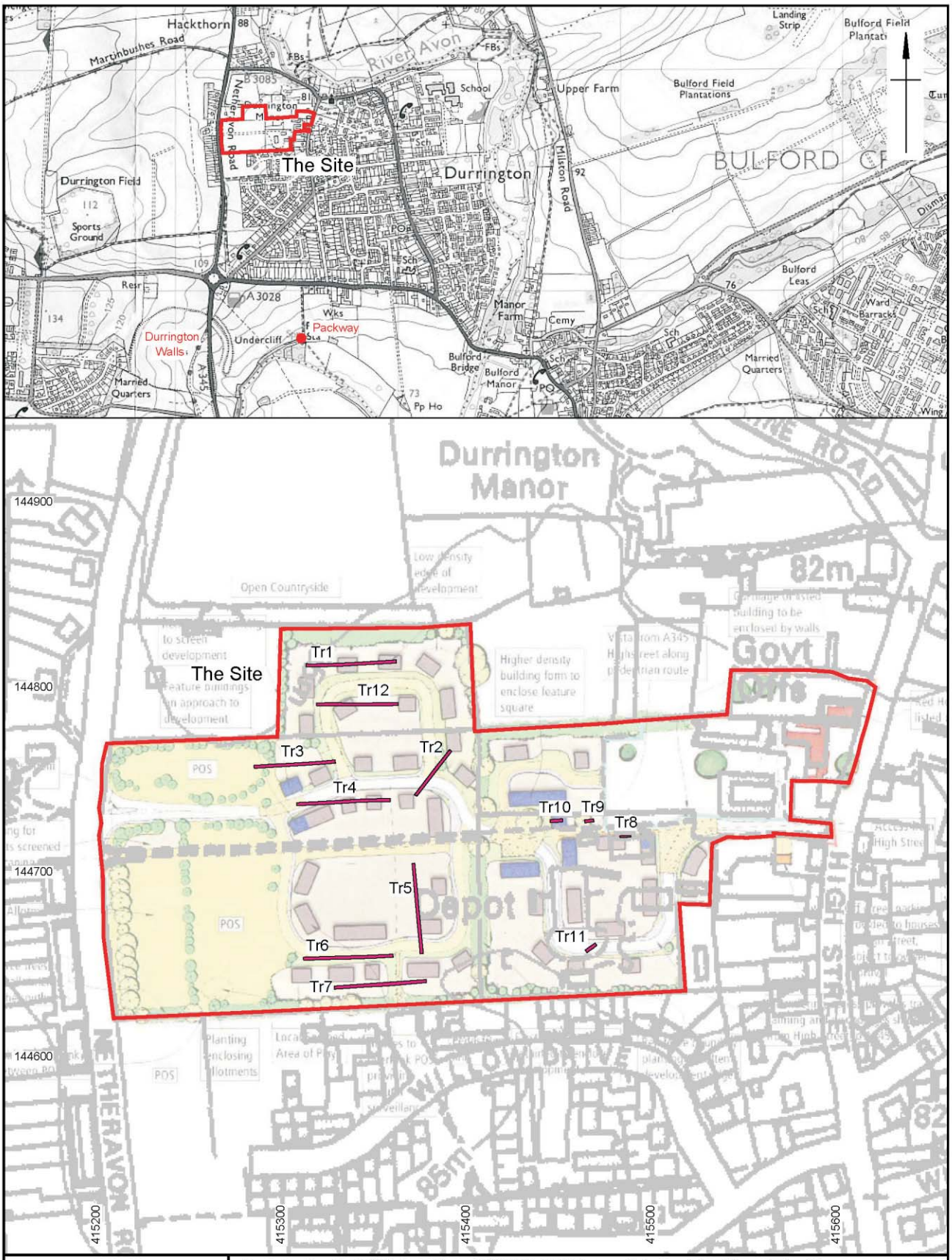
Trench: 8			
Length: 6m	**Width:** 1.8m	**Depth**: 0.80m	
Context Number	**Description**		**Depth**
801	Mid grey-brown silty clay topsoil		0.20m
802	Made ground deposits- mixed clay, building rubble and gravel		0.80m

Trench: 9			
Length: 30m	**Width:** 1.8m	**Depth:** 1.1m	
Context Number	**Description**		**Depth**
901	Mid grey-brown silty clay topsoil		0.15m
902	Made ground deposits- mixed clay, building rubble and gravel		1.1m+

Trench: 10			
Length: 6.8m	**Width:** 1.8m	**Depth:**	
Context Number	**Description**		**Depth**
1001	Mid grey-brown silty clay topsoil		0.11m
1002	Made ground deposits- mixed clay, building rubble and gravel		1.10m

Trench: 11			
Length: 8m	**Width:** 1.8m	**Depth:** 1.05m	
Context Number	**Description**		**Depth**
1101	Mid grey-brown silty clay topsoil		0.15m
1102	Made ground deposits- mixed clay, building rubble and gravel		1.05m+

Trench: 12			
Length: 50m	**Width:** 1.8m	**Depth:**	
Context Number	**Description**		**Depth**
1201	Mid grey-brown silty clay topsoil		0.15m
1202	Pale grey brown silty clay with chalk hillwash/ subsoil		0.40m
1203	Mottled grey-brown chalk with reddish-brown clay patches- coombe-rock natural		0.40m+
1204	n-s linear feature		N/E
1205	Mid grey-brown silty clay fill of 1204		N/E
1206	n-s linear		N/E
1207	Mid grey-brown silty clay fill of 1206		N/E
1208	Circular feature		N/E
1209	Mid grey brown silty clay fill of 1208		N/E
1210	Nw-se linear		N/E
1211	Mid grey-brown silty clay fill of 1210		N/E



Proposed trench

Buildings

Multi-level buildings

POS Public Open Space

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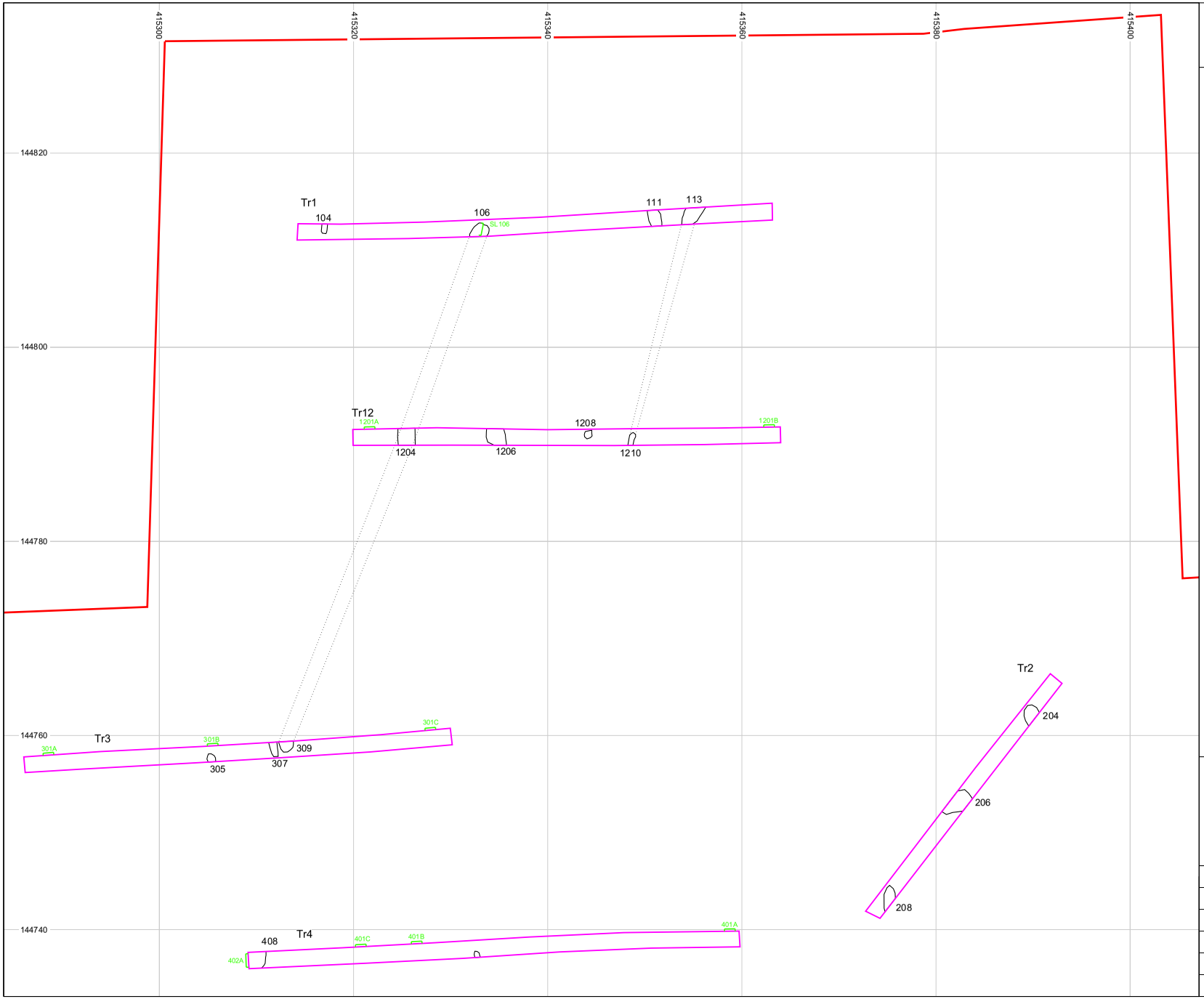
Site location and Site Plan with proposed development scheme

Figure 1



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Site outline
Trench
Section line
Possible alignments

0 10 20m

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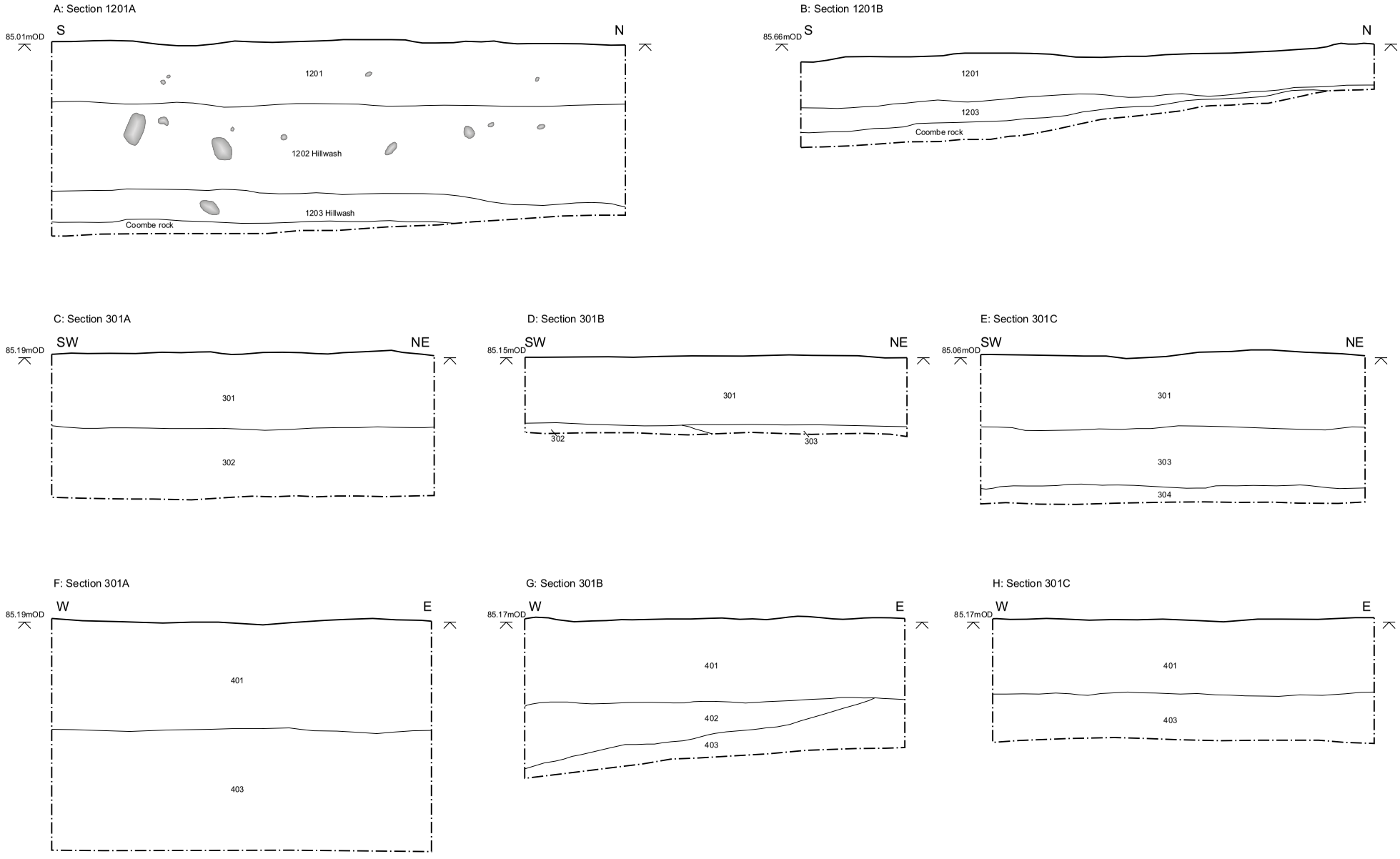
Plan of trenches 1-4 and 12

Figure 2



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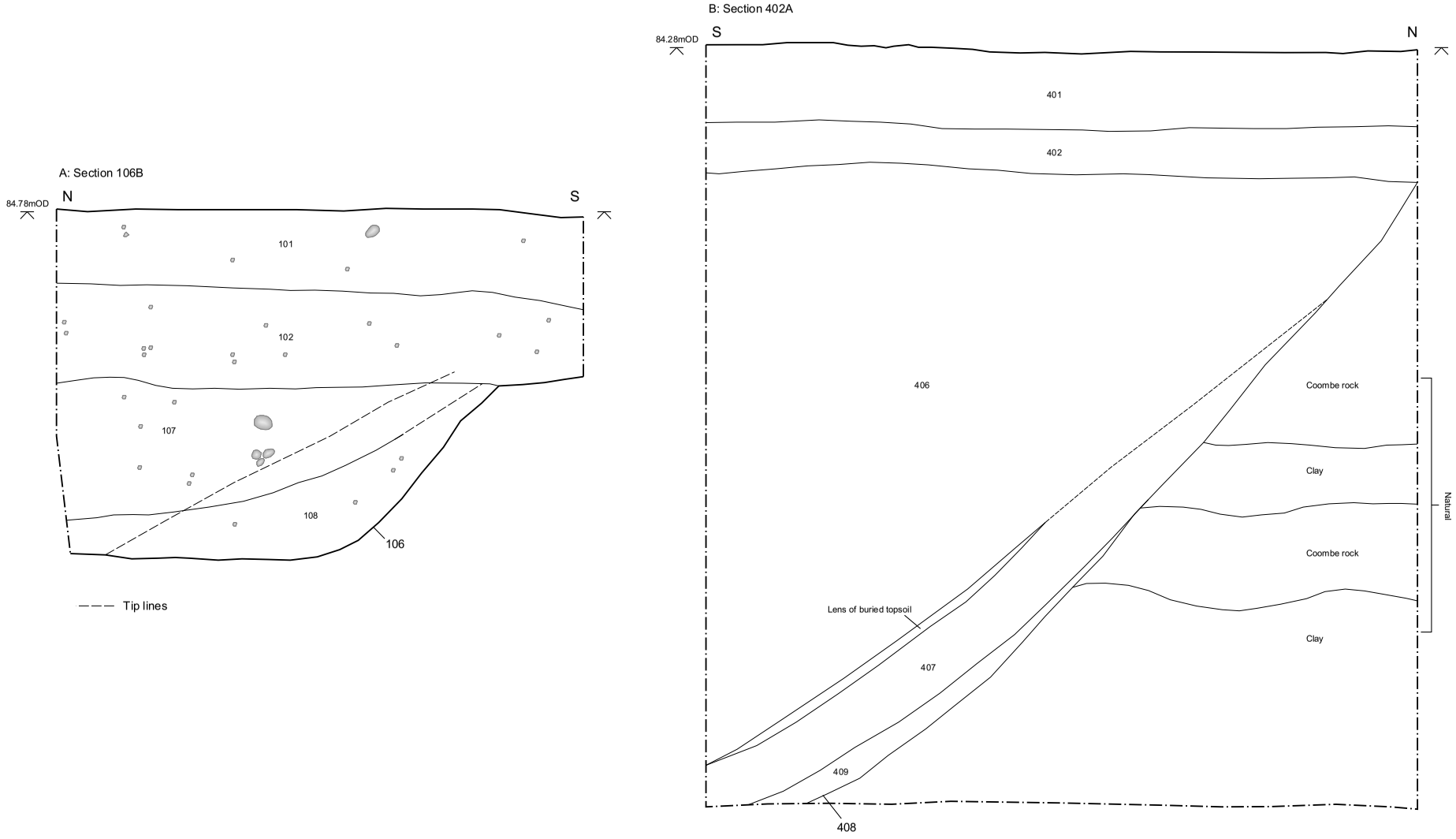
Sections

Figure 3



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Sections

Figure 4

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