

Chelsea Academy Training Ground Cobham, Surrey

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Wessex Archaeology

Ref: 56710.01

July 2004

**CHELSEA ACADEMY TRAINING GROUND
COBHAM, SURREY**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

**Prepared on behalf of
RPS Planning, Transport and Environment
and
Chelsea Village PLC**

**by
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Report reference: 56710.01

July 2004

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Summary

In June 2004 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by RPS Planning, Transport and Environment on behalf of Chelsea Village PLC to undertake an archaeological evaluation comprising 53 trenches at the Chelsea Academy Training Ground at Cobham in Surrey, centred on NGR 512520, 158850. The 6.5 hectare Site comprised two separate areas which were the proposed location for six new football pitches and an associated drainage system.

The evaluation located a concentration of possible Bronze Age archaeological activity comprising at least five separate ditches at the eastern end of the Site. A further two isolated ditches with similar characteristics were found towards the centre and western end of the Site. The lack of finds from these features suggests that they were probably not located in the vicinity of a settlement and may therefore have functioned as field boundaries.

A single ditch containing medieval pottery and two undated postholes were also found at the western end of the Site.

An assemblage of probable Bronze Age flint artefacts was recovered from the subsoil at the western end of the Site. Although few archaeological features of that date were found in this area they do confirm the presence of Bronze Age activity in the area and also point towards a possible focus of this activity to the west of the Site.

The overall lack of topsoil across the majority of the evaluation area, in particular the western half of the Site, suggests that some landscaping or levelling has occurred in the past. This may have resulted in the destruction of archaeological remains and could explain the dearth of prehistoric features in the vicinity of the spread of flint artefacts recovered from the subsoil.

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank RPS Planning, Transport and Environment and Chelsea Village PLC for commissioning the project. In particular we would like to thank Alan Shaw and Chris Gleeson of Chelsea Village PLC for their assistance throughout.

Thanks are also due to Gary Jackson of Surrey County Council for monitoring the work on behalf of Elmbridge Borough Council and Mark Turner of RPS Planning, Transport and Environment for his advice and support during the course of the project.

David Godden, Doug Murphy, Francesco Trifilo and Howard Brown carried out the fieldwork. The report was prepared by David Godden with contributions from Matt Levers and Lorraine Mephram (Finds) and Mark Roughly (Illustrations). The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Robert Wardill.

CHELSEA ACADEMY TRAINING GROUND
COBHAM, SURREY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by RPS Planning, Transport and Environment on behalf of Chelsea Village PLC (the Client) to carry out the archaeological evaluation of approximately 6.5 hectares of land proposed as the location for six new football pitches and associated drainage located at Cobham, Surrey (the Site). These six pitches are part of a larger c.17ha scheme of development that comprises a further 8 pitches, associated buildings, car parking and improved access.
- 1.1.2 The works were commissioned in response to a condition attached to planning permission granted by Elmbridge Borough Council (Condition 13, Application number 2003/1633). This condition required the Client to secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological works as the proposed development lay within area considered to be high in archaeological potential.
- 1.1.3 The evaluation was carried out in June 2004 and consisted of 53 trenches which were excavated in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (RPS 2004) which was approved by the Surrey County Council Archaeological Officer.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1.1 The Site (centred on National Grid Reference 512500, 158800) is situated on the edge of the River Mole valley, to the south of Cobham and to the west of the A245 Stoke D'Abernon Road (**Figure 1**). It is bounded to the north-west by a railway line and beyond this and to the south-west and south-east of the Site is the River Mole itself.
- 2.1.2 Prior to the Chelsea Academy development, the Site was in use as a sports and recreation ground with ancillary buildings and car parking areas.
- 2.1.3 The evaluation area comprised two separate fields located to the east and west of two existing structures, a stand of trees and parking area. The Site as a whole sloped slightly towards the west with the level varying between 28m and 23m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).
- 2.1.4 The geology of the region consists of River Terrace Gravel over London Clay. On site this was found to be a stoney, mid orange brown clayey silt.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1.1 A study of early maps carried out for a Desk-Based Assessment of the Site (PCA 2003) found it to have been largely in agricultural use prior to its utilisation as a sports ground.
- 3.1.2 The study found that the nearest record of prehistoric activity in the area was approximately 500m to the south-east of the Site. Despite this, the potential for such remains to be found at the Site was considered to be moderate to high because of an observed trend for settlement of this period favouring terrace edge locations in river valleys.
- 3.1.3 Remains of the Romano-British period in the area comprise of a putative Roman camp 300m to the north-east and considerable quantities of Romano-British building material identified in the fabric of the nearby St Mary's Church. The Desk-Based Study considered the potential for remains of this period to be found at the Site to be moderate.
- 3.1.4 There is little evidence for Anglo-Saxon activity in the area and the potential for remains from this period at the Site was low. The potential for medieval remains was a little higher because of the presence of two churches and a manor house in the vicinity.
- 3.1.5 The cartographic evidence mentioned above indicated that the Sites potential for the presence of Post-medieval activity was low.

4 PROJECT AIMS

- 4.1.1 The aims of the evaluation were to establish, as far as reasonably possible, the presence or absence, location, extent, date, character, condition and potential of any archaeological or environmental remains surviving at the Site.
- 4.1.2 The results of the trenching would be used to inform decisions regarding the need for further mitigation measures.

5 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

5.1 Health and Safety

- 5.1.1 All works were carried out in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety regulations 1992 and all other relevant Health and Safety legislation and regulations and codes of practice in force at the time.
- 5.1.2 Prior to the commencement of each phase of works a risk assessment was carried out and staff were briefed about site health and safety requirements. A copy of the risk assessment was kept on site.

5.2 Fieldwork

- 5.2.1 All works were conducted in accordance with the guidance and standards outlined the Institute of Field Archaeologists' Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations (as amended 1994).
- 5.2.2 The evaluation comprised 53 machine-dug trenches divided between the eastern and western fields (**Figure 1**). The trenches, generally 30m by 1.8m in plan, were evenly distributed over the Site to maximise the possibility of revealing archaeological remains.
- 5.2.3 Due to Health and Safety considerations, no trenches were excavated beneath or beyond an overhead powerline that crossed the north-eastern corner of the Site.
- 5.2.4 The trenches were aligned south-west to north-east in the eastern field and north-west to south-east in the western field. These alignments were at right angles to the planned pitch drainage system and were imposed so as not to impede its later installation.
- 5.2.5 Prior to the commencement of the evaluation, turf and topsoil had been removed from all of the eastern field and the northern half of the western field.
- 5.2.6 The evaluation trenches were excavated down to archaeological/geological levels by supervised 180-degree wheeled machines, equipped with toothless ditching buckets.
- 5.2.7 To gain more information about the extent of archaeological features discovered in Trenches 43 and 50 in the eastern field, two additional Trenches (54 and 55) were excavated. Trench 43 was also extended and widened in places to clarify the nature of the remains.
- 5.2.8 All revealed archaeological features were investigated by hand and recorded on Wessex Archaeology *pro forma* sheets. A monochrome and colour 35mm photographic record was also maintained.
- 5.2.9 A digital survey, linked to the Ordnance Survey National Grid, was made of the trenches and all archaeological features.
- 5.2.10 All the trenches were backfilled at the end of work following an inspection by the Surrey County Council Archaeological Officer.

6 RESULTS

6.1 General

6.1.1 Of the 53 trenches excavated, only 6 (Trenches 1, 2, 36, 43, 50 and 54) were found to contain archaeological features.

6.1.2 The typical stratigraphic sequence across the Site comprised a very thin layer of turf/topsoil (0.10-0.15m) followed by a 0.10m layer of subsoil consisting of a mid orange brown fine sandy silt with occasional sub-angular flints.

6.1.3 The undisturbed geology was found to be a mid orange brown clayey silt with common sub-angular flints.

6.2 Artefacts Found in the Subsoil

6.2.1 The exposed subsoil in both fields was inspected for finds.

6.2.2 The northern half of the western field showed a scatter of burnt and worked flint over its whole area. This was given the general context number **1**. The frequency of the finds increased towards the west with the highest density being in the vicinity of Trenches 2 and 3. The 26 pieces of worked flint recovered were probably of Bronze Age date and included cores and a scraper.

6.2.3 Although no archaeological features can be directly associated with these artefacts, their presence confirms Bronze Age activity in the area and also points towards a possible focus of this activity to the west of the Site.

6.2.4 Two sherds of probable 12th/13th century pottery were also recovered from the western field.

6.2.5 The eastern field had a much lower concentration of struck and burnt flint and this was centred around the Trench 43 area. It was given general context number **2**. Two probable Bronze Age cores and a Mesolithic microlith were recovered.

6.3 Archaeological Features in the Eastern Field

6.3.1 Three straight ditches were recorded in Trenches 43, 50 and 54 (**Figure 2**). All were on a similar south-east to north-west orientation. Although no datable finds were recovered from any of the ditches, the nature of their fills and the presence of occasional pieces of burnt flint suggested they were of prehistoric origin. They were intercutting and therefore could not all be contemporary. Stratigraphically the earliest is ditch **4312/5007/5405** which is cut by ditch **4308/5003/5403** which in turn cut by ditch **4306/5005/5407**.

6.3.2 A larger but less well defined feature (**4304**) was cut by two of the above-mentioned ditches. It was irregular in plan and its alignment was perpendicular from the others. No finds were recovered from its fill (**4305**) but it probably represented a prehistoric ditch.

6.3.3 A section of a curvilinear ditch (**4310**) was recorded apparently turning to the south and petering out against large natural feature (**4303**). Again no finds were recovered but its pale coloured fill was suggestive of a prehistoric feature.

6.3.4 A ditch (**3603**) was found in the centre of the field (**Figure 3**). The nature of its fill and presence of one fragment of burnt flint suggested it was a prehistoric feature.

6.4 Archaeological Features in the Western Field

6.4.1 A large ditch (**107**) measuring 1.3m wide and 0.5m deep and two postholes, **103** and **105**, were revealed in Trench 1 (**Figure 4**). The ditch contained a piece of medieval pot as well as a few pieces of possibly residual burnt flint. The ditch did not continue through the adjacent Trench 2. The undated postholes contained a few pieces of burnt flint.

6.4.2 Trench 2 revealed shallow ditch **207** (**Figure 4**). The fill (**208**) contained a piece of burnt flint and a probable Bronze Age flint flake. The fill was similar to that found in other ditches proposed as prehistoric.

7 THE FINDS

7.1.1 A small quantity of finds was recovered during the evaluation, from two Trenches (1 and 2), and from unsystematic surface collection over the exposed subsoil in both fields (contexts **1** and **2**).

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

Location	Context	Worked Flint		Pottery	
		No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.
W Field	1	26	502	2	69
E Field	2	3	50		
Tr 1	111	1	5	3	7
Tr 2	208	1	1		
	TOTAL	32	734	5	76

7.2 Pottery

7.2.1 All of the pottery is of medieval date, and comprises sherds in coarse, sandy fabrics, almost certainly of relatively local manufacture, and including one rim sherd from a dish or skillet with a pulled lip (subsoil context **1** in western field). The likely date range for these sherds is 12th/13th century.

7.3 Worked Flint

- 7.3.1 Worked flint was the most numerous find from the Site, most of it deriving from surface collection in the western field (subsoil context 1). All pieces are in locally available gravel flint, and most pieces (in particular those from the subsoil) have suffered varying degrees of edge damage.
- 7.3.2 Apart from one Mesolithic microlith from the eastern field (subsoil context 2), all of the flint could fit within a Bronze Age date range, as demonstrated by the use of hard hammer technique and the presence of mutli-directional cores (of which there are a relatively high proportion). There is only one formal tool (scraper); two other pieces are retouched, and three pieces have edge damage resulting from utilisation – all six pieces came from the western field.

8 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

- 8.1.1 Due to the absence of any suitable deposits within the features or trenches, no samples were taken for environmental analysis.

9 CONCLUSION

- 9.1.1 The evaluation located a concentration of archaeological activity comprising at least five ditches at the eastern end of the Site. A further two isolated ditches with similar characteristics were also found at the western corner of the Site. All of these features contained similar fills and this, coupled with the limited finds evidence, suggests they are prehistoric and probably Bronze Age in origin. The paucity of finds within the features suggests that they were probably not located in the vicinity of a settlement and may therefore have functioned as boundaries in an arable environment.
- 9.1.2 A Bronze Age date for these features is supported by the recovery of an assemblage of flint artefacts from the subsoil of the Site. The distribution of these artefacts also suggests a possible focus of Bronze Age activity towards the western corner of the Site.
- 9.1.3 A single ditch containing medieval pottery and two undated post holes were also found at the western end of the Site. The postholes could be prehistoric in origin but their proximity to the medieval ditch casts doubt upon this supposition. As with the fill of the prehistoric ditches, the contents of the medieval ditch did not indicate the presence of a settlement nearby.
- 9.1.4 The overall lack of topsoil across the majority of the Site, and in particular to the west of the evaluation area, suggests that some landscaping or levelling of the Site has occurred in the past, prior to the Chelsea Academy development. This may have resulted in the destruction of archaeological remains and could explain the dearth of prehistoric features in the vicinity of the spread of flint artefacts recovered from the subsoil.

10 ARCHIVE

- 10.1.1 The project archive, consisting of an A4 lever-arch file, one box of finds and a collection of monochrome and colour 35mm photographs, is currently being held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology at Old Sarum, Salisbury, Wiltshire under the project code 56710. In due course the archive will be deposited with the appropriate museum.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- | | | |
|---|------|--|
| RPS
Planning, Transport
and Environment | 2004 | <i>Chelsea Academy Training Ground: Written Scheme of Investigation.</i> Unpublished |
| PCA (Pre-Construct
Archaeology) | 2003 | <i>Archaeological Desktop Assessment of Land on the Site of the Proposed Chelsea Academy Training Ground, Cobham, Surrey.</i> Unpublished. |

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

N.B. Only trenches containing features are listed below.

Western field

Context	Type	Description	Depth m	Finds
1	Subsoil	Mid orange brown sandy silt. General number given to the subsoil in the NW half of the W field. This contained both struck and burnt flint. The frequency of the finds increased slightly towards the NW with the densest area centred around Trenches 2 and 3. The burnt flint was not retained.	0-0.10+	Worked flint, burnt flint

Eastern field

Context	Type	Description	Depth m	Finds
2	Subsoil.	Mid orange brown sandy silt. General number given to the subsoil in the NE half of the E field. This contained occasional struck and burnt flint approximately centred on Trench 43. The burnt flint was not retained.	0-0.10+	Worked flint, burnt flint

Trench 1 30x1.8x0.3m deep

Context	Type	Description	Depth m	Finds
101	Subsoil.	Mid orange brown sandy silt.	0-0.10	
102	Natural	Mid orange brown clayey silt.	0.10-0.25+	
103	Posthole	Oval 0.45x0.30x0.2m deep. Vertical sides and a concave base. Contained 104.	0.25-0.45	
104	Fill of 103	Mid greyish brown sandy clay.		Burnt flint
105	Posthole	Oval 0.45x0.30x0.10m deep. Moderate-sloping concave sides and a concave base. Contained 106.	0.25-0.35	
106	Fill of 105	Mid greyish brown sandy clay.		Burnt flint
107	Ditch	Aligned SW-NE. Concave profile with moderate-sloping sides. 1.4m wide and 0.7m deep. Contained 108, 109, 110 and 111.	0.25-0.95	
108	Lower fill in 107	Pale brown sandy clay with occasional sub-angular stones.		
109	Lower fill in 107	Pale brown sandy clay with occasional sub-angular stones.		
110	Lower fill in 107	Pale greyish brown sandy clay.		Burnt flint
111	Top fill in 107	Mid greyish brown sandy clay.		Pot, burnt flint

Trench 2 30x1.8x0.3m deep

Context	Type	Description	Depth m	Finds
201	Subsoil	Mid orange brown sandy silt.	0-0.10	
202	Natural	Mid orange brown clayey silt.	0.10-0.30+	
207	Ditch.	Aligned NW-SE. Asymmetric concave profile with shallow-sloping sides. 0.75m wide and 0.15m deep. Contained 208.	0.30-0.45	
208	Fill of 207	Pale orange yellow silt.		Worked flint, burnt flint

Trench 36 30x1.8x0.2m deep

Context	Type	Description	Depth m	Finds
3601	Subsoil	Mid orange brown sandy silt.	0-0.10	
3602	Natural	Mid orange brown clayey silt.	0.10+	
3603	Ditch	Aligned WSW-ENE. U-shaped profile with vertical sides. 0.55m wide and 0.50m deep. Difficult to see. Contained 3604.	0.10-0.60	
3604	Fill of 3603	Pale yellowish brown silt.		Burnt flint

Trench 43 30x1.8x0.3m deep

Context	Type	Description	Depth m	Finds
4301	Subsoil	Mid orange brown sandy silt.	0-0.20	
4302	Natural	Mid orange brown clayey silt.	0.20-0.45+	
4303	Natural	Mid greyish brown clayey silt with more manganese staining and sub-angular stones than 4302. Seemed to be a geological feature.	0.20-0.45+	
4304	Ditch	Aligned SW-NE but with an irregular line. The NE end was uncertain. Concave profile with moderate-sloping sides. 0.9m wide and 0.45m deep. Contained 4305.	0.20-0.65	
4305	Fill of 4304	Mid greyish brown clayey silt containing occasional sub-angular stones.		
4306	Ditch	Aligned NW-SE. Shallow concave profile with moderate-sloping sides. 0.65m wide and 0.2m deep. Contained 4307.	0.20-0.40	
4307	Fill of 4306	Mid greyish brown clayey silt.		
4308	Ditch	Aligned NNW-SSE. Shallow concave profile with shallow-sloping sides. 0.35m wide and 0.05m deep. Contained 4309.	0.20-0.25	
4309	Fill of 4308	Mid greyish brown clayey silt.		
4310	Ditch	Aligned NW-SE but with W end curving round to S and tapering. Concave profile with moderate-sloping sides. 0.5m wide and 0.15m deep. Contained fill 4311.	0.20-0.35	

4311	Fill of 4310	Pale greyish orange clayey silt containing occasional sub-angular flints.		
4312	Ditch	Aligned WNW-ESE. Concave profile with shallow-sloping sides. 0.6m wide and 0.20m deep. Contained 4313.	0.20-0.40	
4313	Fill of 4312	Pale orange grey clayey silt containing occasional sub-angular flints.		Burnt flint

Trench 50 30x1.8x0.3m deep

Context	Type	Description	Depth m	Finds
5001	Subsoil	Mid orange brown sandy silt.	0-0.10	
5002	Natural	Mid orange brown clayey silt.	0.10-0.25+	
5003	Ditch	Aligned NNW-SSE. Flat-based profile with straight steep-sloping sides. 0.5m wide and 0.25m deep. Contained 5004.	0.25-0.50	
5004	Fill of 5003	Mid greyish brown clayey silt.		Burnt flint
5005	Ditch	Aligned NW-SE. Concave profile with shallow-sloping sides. 0.7m wide and 0.05m deep. Contained 5006.	0.25-0.30	
5006	Fill of 5005	Mid greyish brown clayey silt.		
5007	Ditch	Aligned WNW-ESE. Concave profile with shallow-sloping sides. 0.75m wide and 0.10m deep. Contained 5008.	0.25-0.35	
5008	Fill of 5007	Pale greyish brown clayey silt.		

Trench 54 15x1.8x0.3m deep

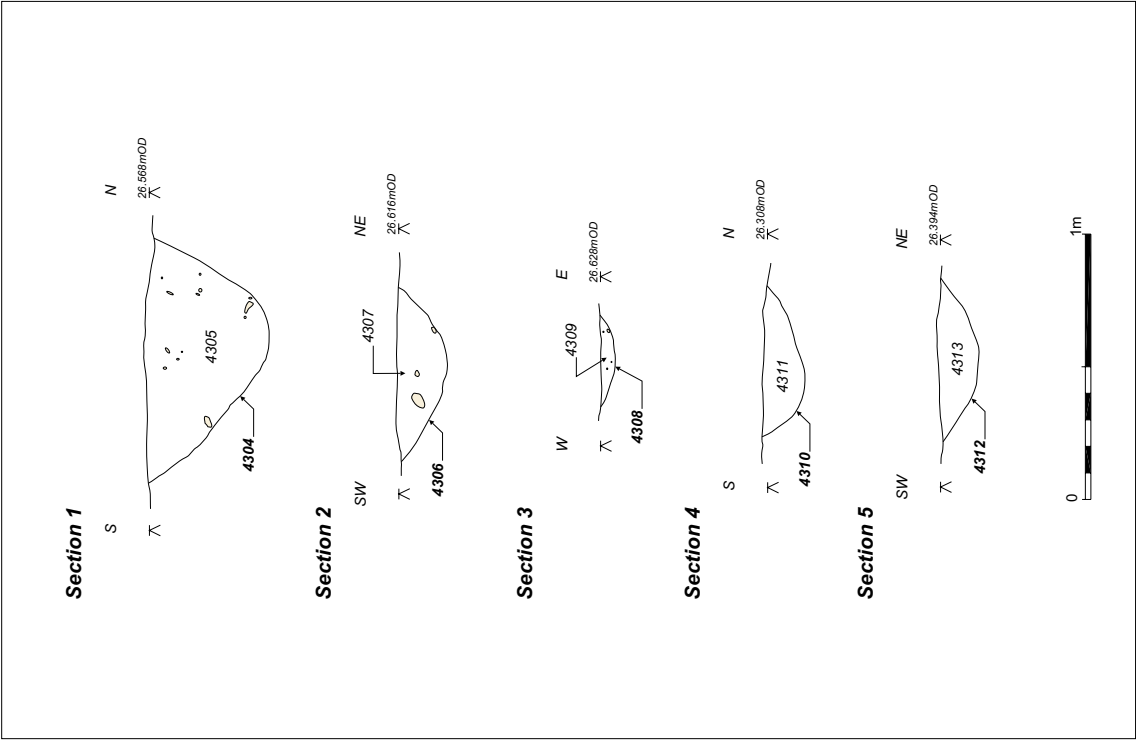
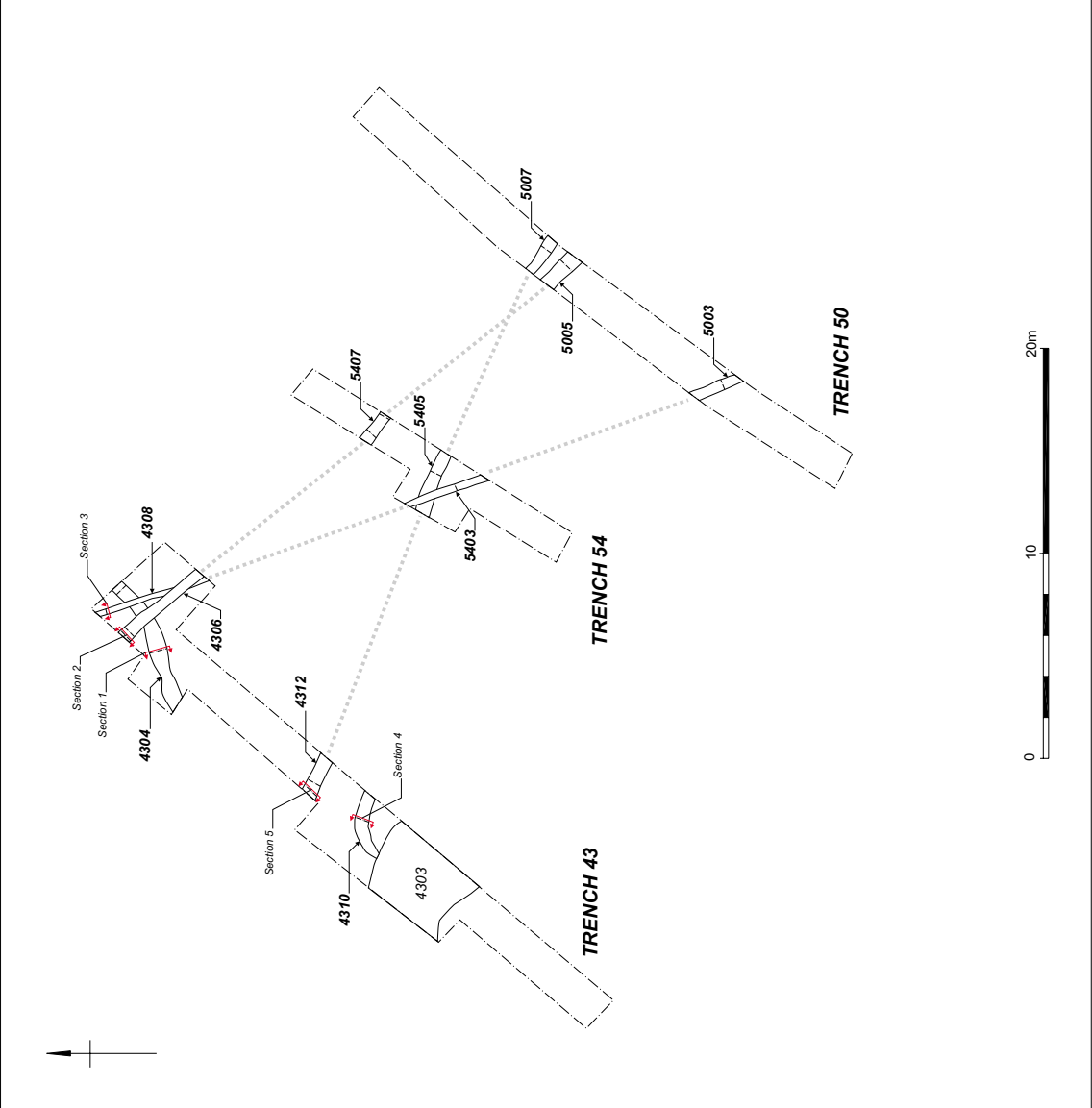
Context	Type	Description	Depth m	Finds
5401	Subsoil	Mid orange brown sandy silt.	0-0.10	
5402	Natural	Mid orange brown clayey silt.	0.10-0.20+	
5403	Ditch	Aligned NNW-SSE. Concave profile with moderate-sloping sides. 0.4m wide and 0.20m deep. Contained 5404.	0.20-0.40	
5404	Fill of 5403	Mid greyish brown clayey silt.		
5405	Ditch	Aligned NW-SE. Concave profile with shallow-sloping sides. 0.5m wide and 0.05m deep. Contained 5406.	0.20-0.25	
5406	Fill of 5405	Mid greyish brown clayey silt.		
5407	Ditch	Aligned NW-SE. Flat-based profile with straight moderate-sloping sides. 0.6m wide and 0.20m deep. Contained fill 5408.	0.20-0.40	
5408	Fill of 5407	Pale greyish brown clayey silt.		

APPENDIX 2: SURREY SMR REPORT FORM

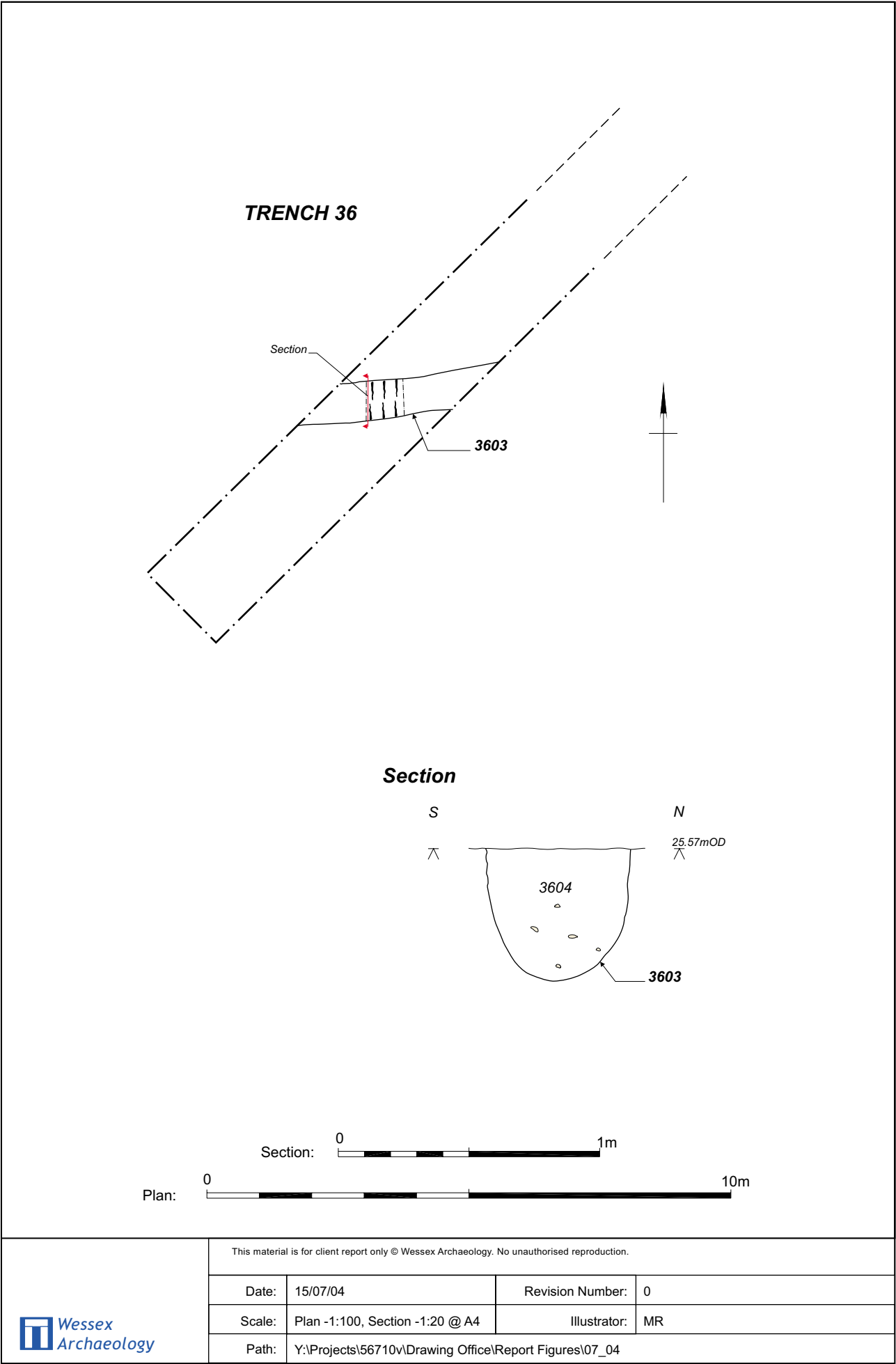
Surrey Sites and Monuments Record : Report Form				
Your Details				
Name of archaeological company	Wessex Archaeology			
Address	Unit 701, The Chandlery, Westminster Bridge Road, London, SE1 7QY			
Director/Supervisor	David Godden			
Project Manager	Robert Wardill			
Funded By	RPS Planning, Transport and Environment and Chelsea Village PLC			
Location of Site/Find				
District	Elmbridge	Parish	Stoke D' Abernon	
Site address (including site name)	Chelsea Academy Training Ground, Cobham, Surrey (west of the A245)			
NGR	512500, 158800			
The Fieldwork				
Type of Fieldwork (please tick box)	Excavation	Evaluation √	Watching Brief	Other (specify below)
Dates of Fieldwork	7-18 June 2004			
Type of Soil (e.g. sand, clay etc. State if observed. Please do not leave blank)				
Type	stone, mid orange brown clayey silt			
Height above Ordnance Datum	23-27m			
The Archaeology (tick where represented)				
Palaeolithic		Saxon (pre AD1066)		
Mesolithic		Medieval (AD 1066-1485)	√	
Neolithic		Post Medieval		
Bronze Age	√	Unknown Period		
Iron Age		Negative Evidence		
Roman				
Location of Site Archive and Finds				
Location of Archive	Wessex Archaeology, Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wilts. SP4 6EB			
Location of Finds	As Above			
Bibliography/References				
RPS Planning, Transport and Environment	2004	<i>Chelsea Academy Training Ground: Written Scheme of Investigation.</i> Unpublished.		
PCA (Pre-Construct Archaeology)	2003	<i>Archaeological Desktop Assessment of Land on the Site of the Proposed Chelsea Academy Training Ground, Cobham, Surrey.</i> Unpublished.		

Details of Archaeology/Find (use headings for each period and continue on additional sheet if necessary)				
<p>Bronze Age</p> <p>The evaluation located a concentration of possible Bronze Age archaeological activity comprising at least five ditches at the eastern end of the Site. A further two isolated ditches with similar characteristics were also found towards the centre and western end of the Site. The lack of finds from these features suggests that they were probably not located in the vicinity of a settlement and may therefore have functioned as field boundaries.</p> <p>An assemblage of probable Bronze Age flint artefacts was recovered from the subsoil at the western end of the Site. Although few archaeological features of that date were found in this area they do confirm the presence of Bronze Age activity in the area and also point towards a possible focus of this activity to the west of the Site.</p> <p>Medieval</p> <p>A single ditch containing medieval pottery and two undated postholes were also found at the western end of the Site.</p>				
Signed		R. Wardill	Dated	
			19/07/04	
<p>Please return to the Surrey Sites and Monuments Record, Environment, Room 408, County Hall, Penrhyn Road, Kingston-upon-Thames, KT1 2DT. Tel: 020 8541 9083 Fax: 020 8541 9021</p> <p>Alternatively, e-mail the completed form to smr@surreycc.gov.uk</p>				
<i>SSMR Staff Use Only</i>		SMR number(s)	WINGS	
Initials and date entered			Maps	



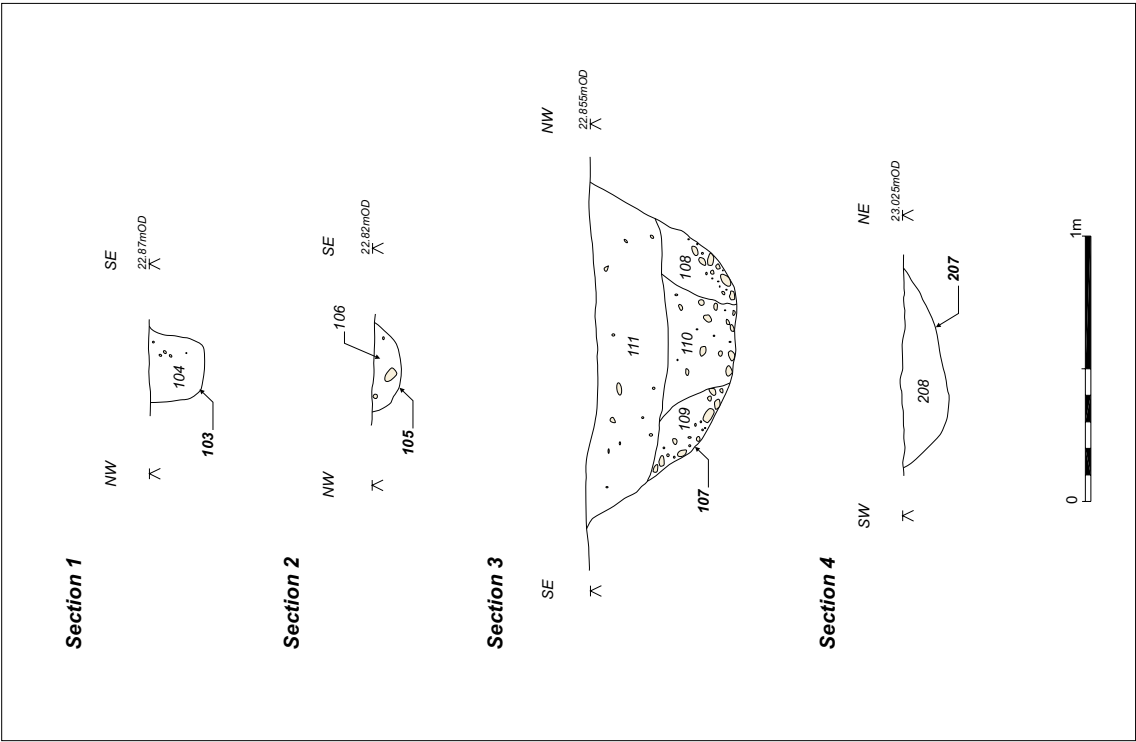
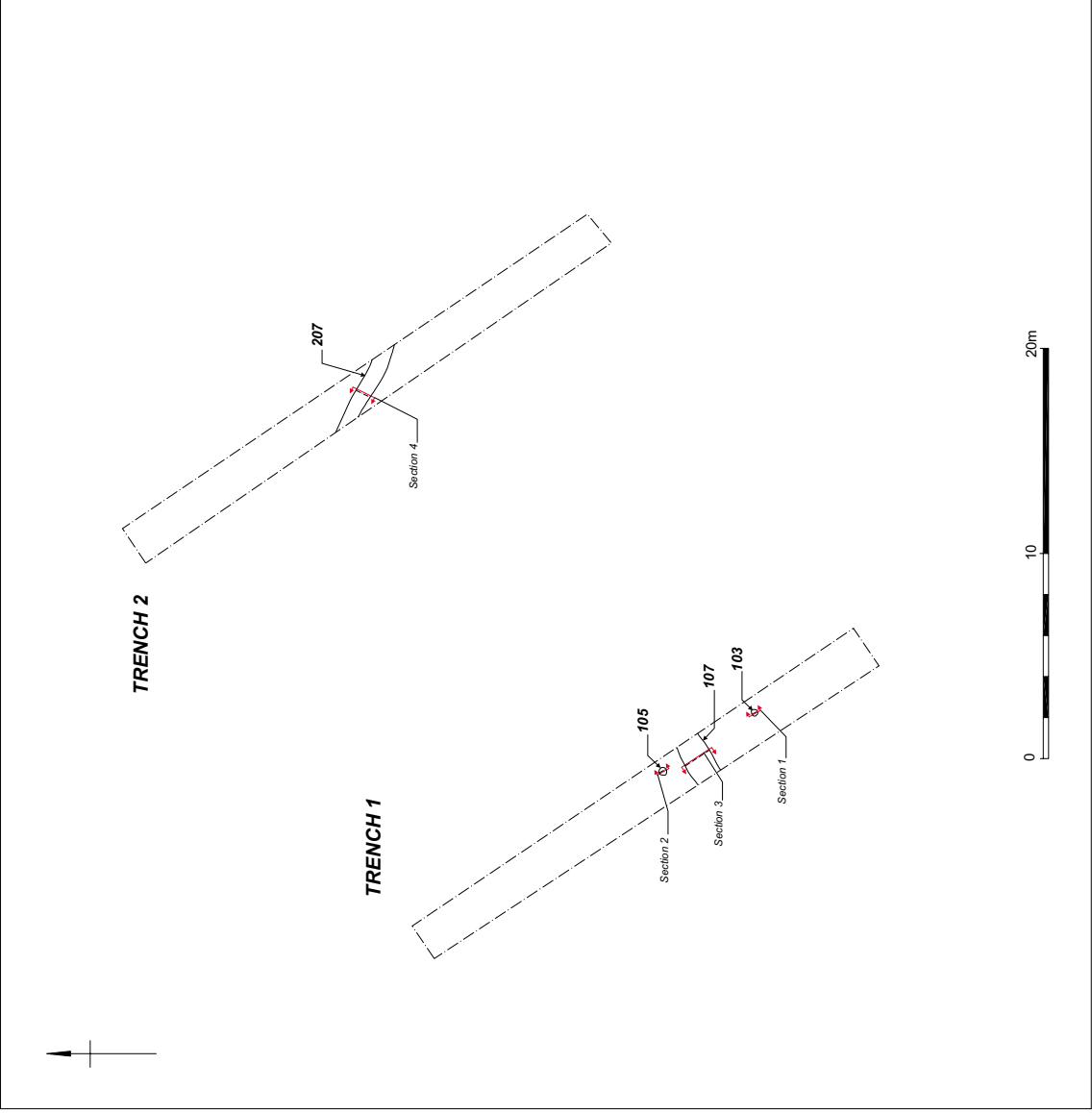


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Plan of Trench 36 showing Feature and Section

Figure 3



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Date:	15/07/04	Revision Number:	0
Scale:	Plans - 1:250, Sections - 1:20 @ A3	Illustrator:	MR
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Plan of Trenches 1 and 2 showing Features and Sections

Figure 4



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