

Vale Park West Evesham Worcestershire



Archaeological Excavation Report



January 2008

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UK1 Limited**

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**Vale Park West, Evesham,
Worcestershire**

NGR SP 0419 4157

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SUMMARY

Between the 12th and 21st of November 2007 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological excavation at Vale Park West, Evesham, Worcestershire on behalf of LaSalle UK Ventures Property UK1 Limited. The excavation revealed a series of furrows that cut what appeared to be Romano-British field or drainage system, as well as the base of an undated pit.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 Between the 12th and 21st of November 2007, Oxford Archaeology carried out a field excavation at Vale Park West, Evesham, Worcestershire on behalf of LaSalle UK Ventures Property UK1 Limited in respect of planning approval (W/06/1254/OU), for the proposed construction of a B1, B2 and B8 commercial development, as an extension to the existing Vale Business Park (Fig. 1).

1.1.2 The site is located at NGR SP 0419 4157 to the south of the A46 and the west of Millennium Road. The excavation area is surrounded by farmland, with industrial units to the east.

1.1.3 As part of the planning process a staged archaeological mitigation was required. Oxford Archaeology (OA) undertook a programme of archaeological works (Desk based assessment, field-walking, metal detecting survey and evaluation) to inform this process.

1.1.4 Subsequent to this process Wychavon District Council (WDC) requested limited archaeological excavation, targeted at evaluation trench 127 OA (OA 2005c). The excavation covers an area of 0.36 ha (60 m x 60 m).

1.1.5 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation acting on behalf of of LaSalle UK Ventures Property UK1 Ltd to meet the requirements of a brief prepared by Mike Glyde, Historic Environment Planning Advisor for Worcestershire County Council (WCC 2006). OA confirmed that the brief, issued on the 8th August 2006, was still valid.

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site lies on geology of Lower Lias overlain with grey-blue to brown-orange calcareous boulder clay. It is c. 32.50 m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) and is generally flat although it begins to gently slope up towards the south-west.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological background to the excavation has been the subject of a separate desk based assessment by OA (OA 2005a), subsequent field-walking/metal-detecting

survey (OA 2005b), and evaluation (OA 2005c). A brief summary is reproduced below.

- 1.3.2 The development site itself has produced limited archaeological evidence, although there are some known archaeological sites close by.
- 1.3.3 Immediately to the north of the proposed development an evaluation at Crab Farm in October 1988 (HWCM 7852) revealed few archaeological remains. However, surface artefacts included a flint scatter and a flint concentration that suggested prehistoric and Mesolithic activity. These flint scatters were situated directly to the north-east of the present proposed development site.
- 1.3.4 The development site lies 700 m north-east of a nationally significant Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM). This is a Romano-British settlement north of Grenvill Hall Farm (SAM number 30098).

2 EXCAVATION AIMS

- 2.1.1 The general aims were to identify and determine the character, function, form and longevity of any occupation or other human activity on the site and place it within its local regional and national context.
- 2.1.2 To examine the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features
- 2.1.3 To make available the results of the excavation.

3 EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork methods and recording

- 3.1.1 An area 60 m x 60 m was stripped, under constant archaeological supervision, using a 20-tonne tracked excavator with toothless ditching bucket. The excavation was focused on evaluation trench 127 (OA 2005c), which contained three linear features. The surface stripping of the site was carried out under constant archaeological supervision. Topsoil was monitored to retrieve finds.
- 3.1.2 All revealed features, that is, linear features and pits were recorded in plan at a scale of 1:200 and where excavated sections were drawn at scales of 1:20. All archaeological features were photographed using colour digital and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (Wilkinson 1992) and appendix 9 of the WSI (OA2007).

3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and generally bagged by context.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Description of deposits

4.1.1 The site was covered by a mid grey/brown silt clay topsoil (22000) with evidence of bioturbation and occasional small stones. The topsoil overlaid a mid orange/grey brown clay subsoil layer (22001).

4.1.2 The natural layers (22002) mainly consist of a mix of stiff orange/brown and blue/grey clays with intervals of compact light orange/brown and grey sand. Manganese is present within the clays. The clays could mainly be found to the west of the site whilst the sand was seen towards the east.

4.2 Description of archaeological features

(Fig. 2 and 3)

4.2.1 Four furrows were noted running approximately ESE to WNW. It is likely that linear 12708 noted in evaluation trench 127 was in fact the remains of a furrow. One of the furrows obscures the two linears (12706 and 12708) noted at the east end of trench 127. The north-south orientated linear seen at the west end of trench 127 could not be identified. Modern ceramic land-drains were observed cutting and running along the length of the furrows.

4.2.2 A north-south orientated curvilinear was observed towards the eastern edge of the site curving slightly towards the north, where it was truncated by a furrow and could be traced no further. This ditch (22007 and 22009) was observed to be 1.58 m wide x 0.5 m deep and contained a single mid-reddish brown clay fill (22008/22010). It was allocated group number 22013.

4.2.3 A further north-south orientated linear was given group number 22018. The ditch extended northwards where it was truncated by a furrow and could be traced no further. This feature (22011 and 22016) was 0.7 m wide x 0.3 m deep and contained a yellowish-brown clay fill (22012/22017). Pottery was retrieved from both fill 22012 and 22017. A broad Roman date between the middle 1st century AD and the late 4th century AD can be attributed to this pottery.

4.2.4 The relationship between these two features 22013 and 22018 is unclear; the excavated section where the ditches intersected could not provide confirmation of the relationship.

4.2.5 Immediately to the east of cut 22016 the remains of what appears to be the base of a circular pit was seen. However, truncation meant that a use could not be attributed to this feature. The lack of finds from the feature also meant that it could not be dated.

4.2.6 At the southern edge of the site the remains of a N-S orientated ditch, 22003, were observed running into the edge of a furrow. Investigation revealed that this ditch cuts

the furrow. However, no finds were recovered from the fill therefore neither a date or use could be assigned to this feature.

- 4.2.7 Due to the paucity of pottery, its fragmentary and abraded condition, it is suggested that this feature is associated with agricultural rather than settlement/domestic activity.

4.3 **Finds**

- 4.3.1 Four pieces of pottery were recovered from two features and were given a broad Roman date between the middle of the 1st century AD and the late 4th century AD.

Roman Pottery

by Kate Brady

- 4.3.2 Four sherds (21 g) of pottery were recovered from two contexts (22012 - 1 sherd and 22017 - 3 sherds). All the sherds were very abraded. All sherds were of local oxidised ware (O20), one of which (from 22012) was micaceous. Only a broad Roman date can be attributed to these sherds.

5 **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1.1 The excavation was carried out prior to the proposed construction of a B1, B2 and B8 commercial development, as an extension to the existing Vale Business Park.
- 5.1.2 The reduction of the ground level came down onto natural clay and sand levels which revealed a series of furrows as well as a series of linear features and what appeared to be the base of a pit. Dating recovered from two of the linears suggests a broad Roman date between the 1st century and 4th century AD.
- 5.1.3 The furrows were of a later date, suggested by the fact that they appear to cut the Roman ditches. No archaeological finds were recovered from the furrows and therefore no secure date can be attributed to these features.
- 5.1.4 A ditch, 22003, was seen to cut one of the furrows. However, no archaeological material was recovered from the ditch, and therefore no date could be attributed to this feature.
- 5.1.5 The base of the pit, 22014, appears to be heavily truncated and no finds were recovered from the fill, and the feature could not be dated.
- 5.1.6 In conclusion it would appear that the linear features are most likely to be field boundary/drainage ditches that are associated with Roman farming practices.
- 5.1.7 The furrows overlying the Romano-British features are probably of medieval date and associated with land-management, although no definite dating was recovered from any of these features.

5.1.8 Whilst little was revealed during the excavation, it does indicate that land-management associated with the settlement at Grenvill Hall Farm extended well beyond the limits of the settlement, which is situated *c* 700 m to the south-west.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Ctxt No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Thick. (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Date</i>
	22000	Layer	-	0.4 m	Topsoil	-	-	-
	22001	Layer	-	0.3 m	Subsoil	-	-	-
	22002	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-	-
	22003	Cut	2.9 m	0.33 m	Ditch	-	-	-
	22004	Fill	2.9 m	0.33 m	Ditch Fill	No	-	-
	22005	Cut	2.4 m	0.06 m	Furrow	-	-	-
	22006	Fill	2.4 m	0.06 m	Furrow Fill	No	-	-
	22007	Cut	1.58 m	0.5 m	Ditch Cut	-	-	-
	22008	Fill	1.58 m	0.5 m	Ditch Fill	No	-	-
	22009	Cut	1.55 m	0.36 m	Ditch Cut	-	-	-
	22010	Fill	1.55 m	0.36 m	Ditch Fill	No	-	-
	22011	Cut	1.34 m	0.38 m	Ditch Cut	-	-	-
	22012	Fill	1.34 m	0.38 m	Ditch Fill	Pot	1	1st-4th C.
	22013	Group	-	-	Ditch Group	-	-	1st-4th C.
	22014	Cut	0.44 m	0.10 m	Pit Cut	-	-	-
	22015	Fill	0.44 m	0.10 m	Pit Fill	-	-	-
	22016	Cut	0.7 m	0.3 m	Ditch Cut	-	-	-
	22017	Fill	0.7 m	0.3 m	Ditch Fill	Pot	3	1st-4th C.
	22018	Group	-	-	Ditch Group			1st-4th C.

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

Wilkinson, D (ed.) 1992 OAU *Fieldwork Manual*,

OA, 2005a *Vale Park, Evesham, Archaeological Desk Based Assessment for*

OA, 2005b *Vale Park, Evesham, Field-walking and Metal detecting Survey*

OA, 2005c *Archaeological Evaluation Report for Vale Park, Evesham*

OA, 2007 *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Excavation*

WCC, 2005 *Requirements for an Archaeological Evaluation for Phase II of Vale Park, Evesham, Worcestershire*

WCC 2006 *Programme of Archaeological Work at Vale Park Phase II Adjacent, Millennium Way, Evesham, Worcestershire*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Vale Park West, Evesham, Worcestershire

Site code: WSM 34763

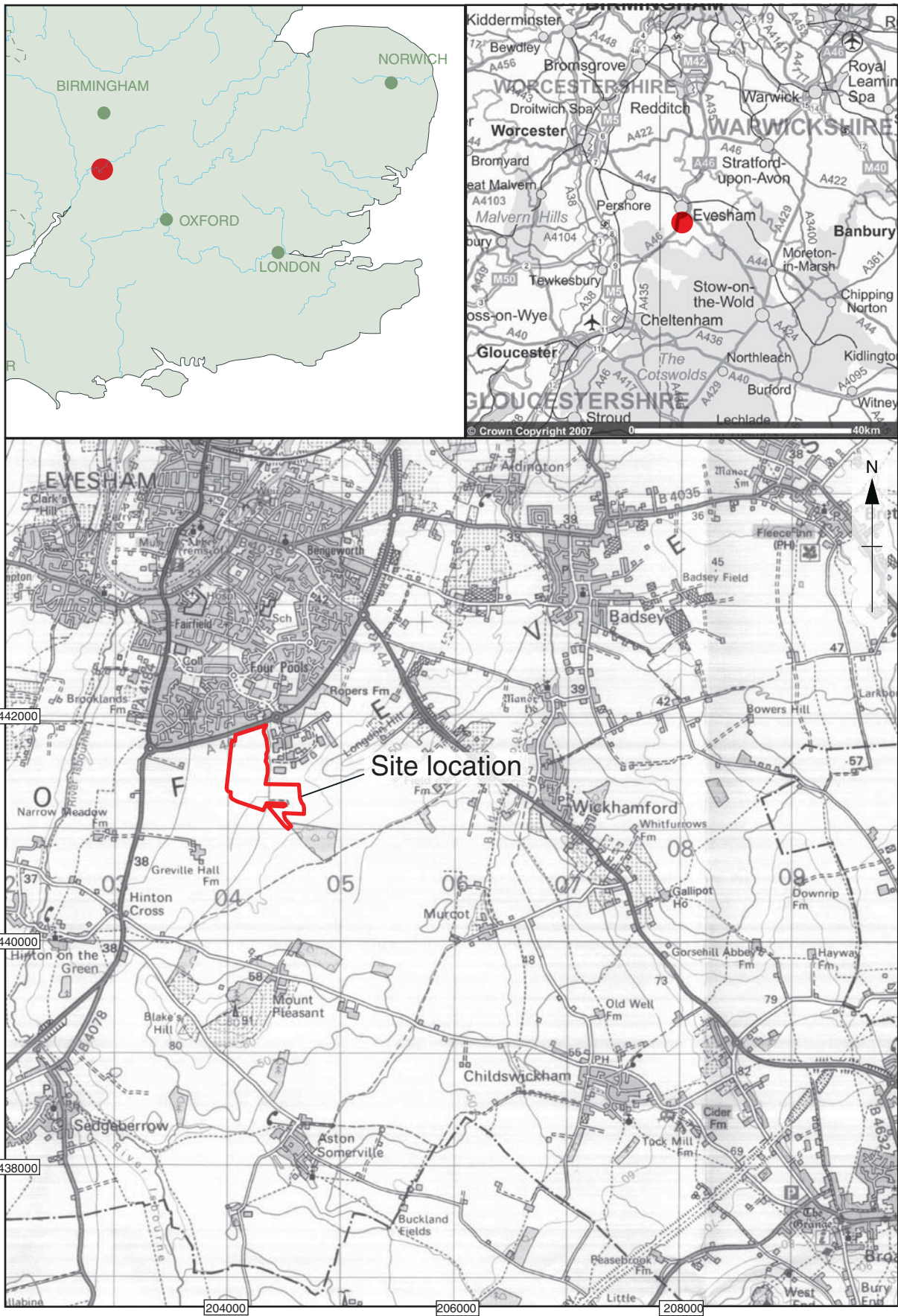
Grid reference: NGR SP 0419 4157

Type of Mitigation: Archaeological Excavation

Date and duration of project: 12th November 2007 to 21st November 2007

Summary of results: Linear features of a Roman date were revealed and interpreted as field system/drainage ditches as well as furrows and the base of a pit.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with the Worcester County Museum under Accession Number WSM 34763 in due course.



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Figure 1: Site location

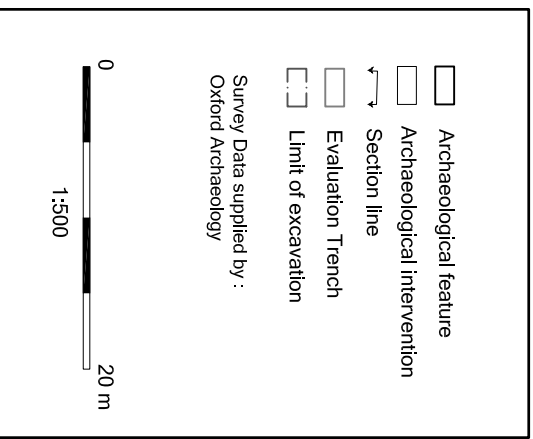
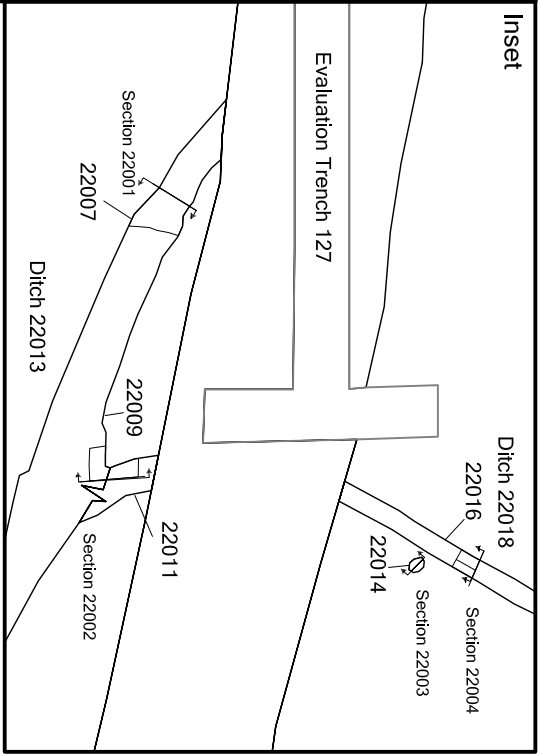
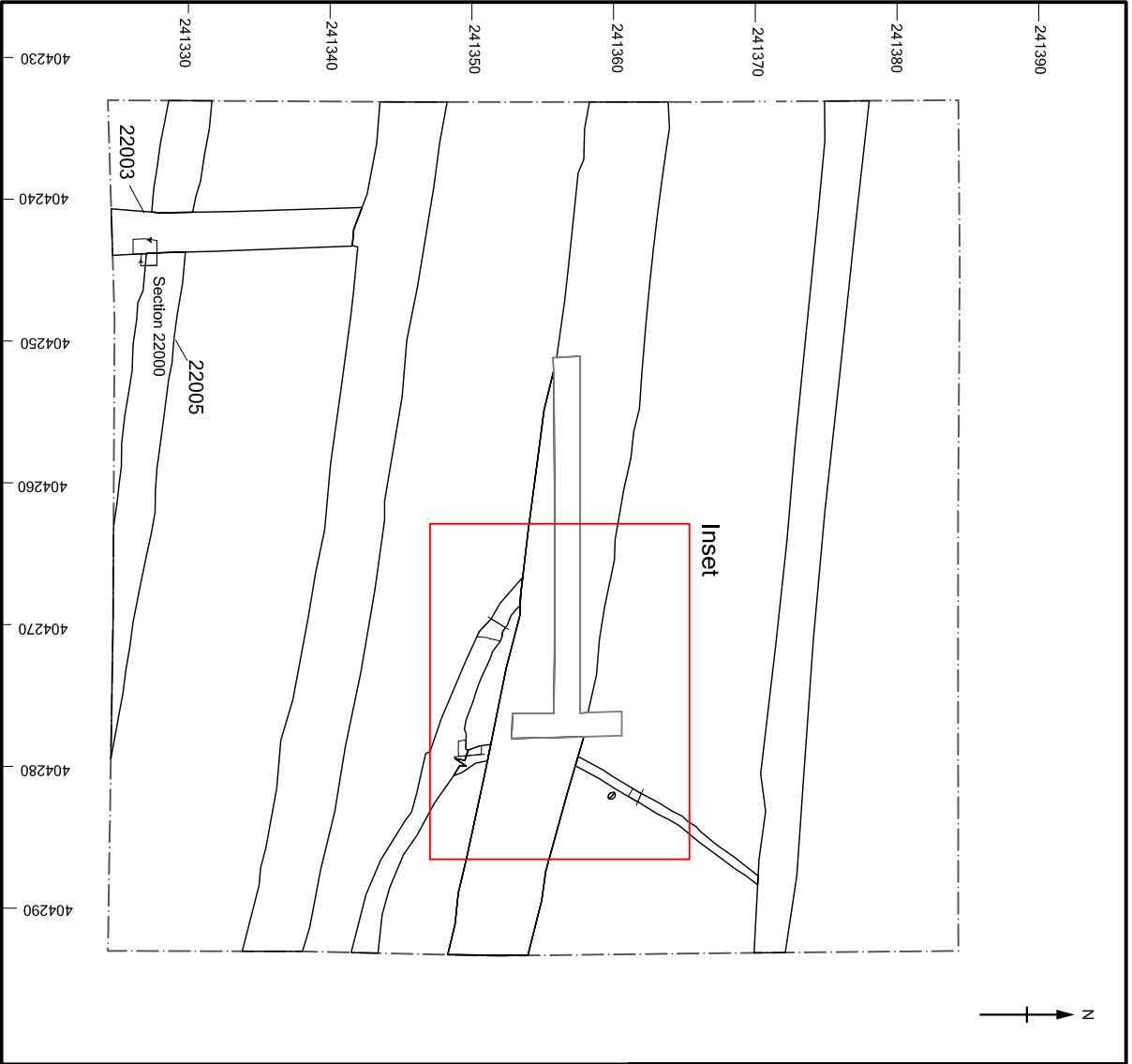


Figure 2: Site plan

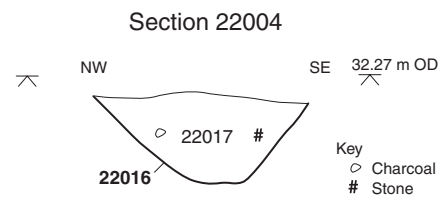
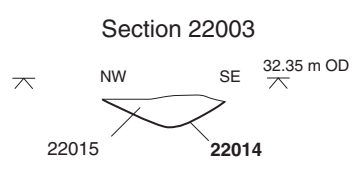
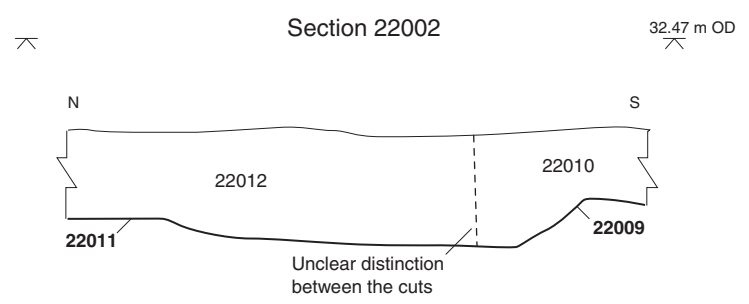
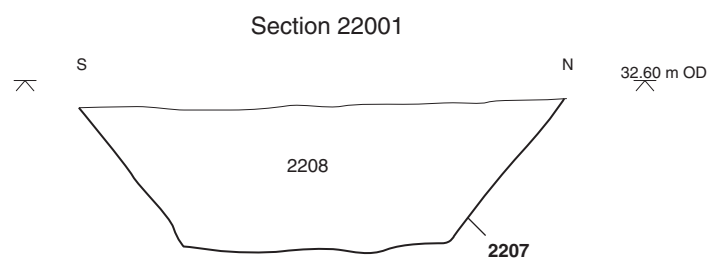
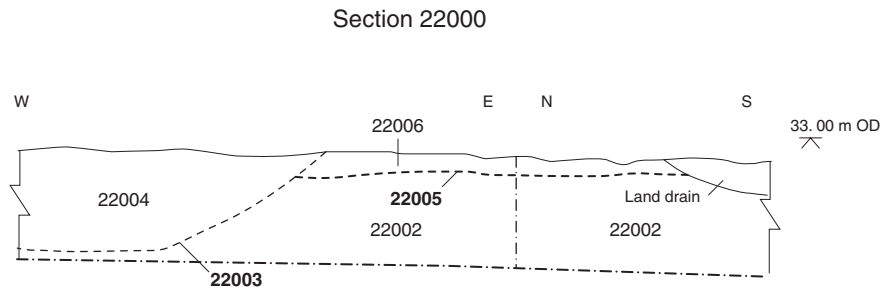


Figure 3: Sections



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