

Woodholm and Welham Farms East Sussex (Phase 1)



Archaeological Evaluation Report



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**Woodholm and Welham Farms
Hailsham, East Sussex
Phase 1**

NGR TQ 577 107

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

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SUMMARY

Between the 29th of September and the 3rd of October 2008 Oxford Archaeology carried out a field evaluation at Woodholm and Welham Farms, Hailsham, East Sussex (NGR TQ 577 107) for CgMs on behalf of Taylor Wimpy PLC. The evaluation revealed a ditch, which was shown to be of a recent date, and a small pit containing burnt material of uncertain date. No other archaeological features were revealed in the trenches: natural gravel was overlain in places by an undated ploughsoil.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 Between the 29th of September and the 3rd of October 2008, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out Phase I of a field evaluation at Woodholm and Welham Farms, Hailsham, East Sussex (Fig. 1) on behalf of CgMs Consulting for Taylor Wimpy PLC. The work was undertaken in respect of a planning application for residential development (Planning Application WD/2005/3100/MEA).

1.1.2 A brief was set by CgMs Consulting (CgMs 2008) and a Project Design (OA 2008) was agreed with Greg Chuter of East Sussex County Council. The development site is centred on NGR TQ 577 107 and lies to the east of the A22 and west of Hailsham. The area of the proposed development (Phase I) is c 3 ha. Phase 2 will follow at a later date. All evaluation trench locations are presented in Fig. 2

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site is currently under pasture and is relatively flat, lying between 15 m OD and 25 m OD. The underlying geology is terrace gravel.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The site has been subject to an Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Environmental Statement (ES - by AF Howland Associates 2005) and a geophysical survey was carried out here (Stratascan 2008).

1.3.2 The ES concluded that no archaeological remains have been recorded within the proposed development area, however there was a moderate potential for prehistoric remains within the phase I area, a low-moderate potential for Romano-British occupation or kiln sites and a moderate potential for medieval ceramic production.

1.3.3 The geophysical survey identified a number of anomalies within the development area including several circular features of possible archaeological origin. To the west of the proposed development area, a square enclosure was also detected, possibly a medieval moated site.

2 EVALUATION AIMS

2.1.1 The aims and objectives of the evaluation were to:

- establish the presence/absence of any archaeological remains.
- determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains.
- determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and vertical stratigraphy present.
- determine the potential of the site to provide palaeo-environmental and/or economic evidence and the forms in which such evidence may be present.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork

3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of nineteen trenches, each measuring 40 m by 2 m, which equated to a 5% sample of the proposed development area. The trench locations (Figs 2 and 3) were targeted on the anomalies revealed by the geophysical survey, or laid out on a standard grid. Trench positions were agreed with Rob Bourn of CgMs Consulting and Greg Chuter of East Sussex County Council, prior to work commencing on site.

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

3.2.1 The overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision by a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. Once removed, topsoil and underlying soils were stored separately. After completion of the works the trench spoil was backfilled in reverse order of excavation.

3.2.2 Trenches were backfilled prior to each weekend that OA was on site, to avoid trapping newts.

3.2.3 The trenches were cleaned by hand and the revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds and environmental samples. All archaeological features were planned and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20. All features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OA Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

3.3 Finds

3.3.1 Finds recovered during the course of the evaluation were bagged by context.

3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence

3.4.1 No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling were encountered during the course of the evaluation.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Soils and ground conditions

4.1.1 The natural geology was mottled orange-brown/grey sandy clay. In the majority of the trenches this was overlain by an orange-brown silty clay - a buried plough soil - with a thickness of between 0.08 m and 0.2 m. This was overlain by turf covered topsoil, with a thickness of between 0.1 m and 0.35 m. In Trenches 5, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16 and 17 there was no ploughsoil and the natural geology was directly overlain by topsoil.

4.2 Description of deposits

4.2.1 Of the nineteen trenches excavated in this Phase of the evaluation, twelve were devoid of archaeological features or modern drain/services (Fig. 3) and displayed clean undisturbed natural geology along their entire lengths. These were Trenches 1-9; Trenches 10, 12, 15 and Trench 16.

4.2.2 A possible pit was located within Trench 9 (pit 903, Figs 3 and 4; Plate 1), which was 0.96 m wide with a depth of 0.26 m and contained burnt material (904). It was unclear whether this represented *in situ* burning which had modified the geology, or if it was a cut feature backfilled with burnt clay and charcoal. The feature, initially half-sectioned, was fully excavated within the confines of the trench at the request of the Curator: no finds were recovered.

4.2.3 A ditch was observed within Trenches 11, 13 and 14, aligned north-east/south-west (Figs 3 and 4; Plate 2). The ditch had a shallow 'U'-shaped profile and measured 0.46 m to 0.6 m wide and had a depth of up to 0.3 m. It is likely to have been a former field boundary, or hedge line. The ditch contained up to three fills and was observed to cut the buried ploughsoil. Within Trench 14, modern glass and metal finds were recovered from the ditch fills.

4.2.4 Running approximately north-south along the east side of the site was a cut for a foul drain. This was observed in Trenches 17, 18 and 19 (Fig. 3).

4.3 Finds

4.3.1 Finds were only recovered from one feature during this phase of the evaluation (Ctx 1404) and all were of recent date comprising glass fragments and metal.

5 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

5.1.1 Despite the moderate potential for prehistoric archaeology identified in the Environmental Statement and in the light of the potential anomalies noted by the geophysical survey (Fig. 3), little significant archaeology was found. The only notable feature was the burnt 'pit' located in Trench 9, which was undated. The ditch in Trenches 11, 13 and 14 was shown by finds to be of recent date.

5.1.2 There is a disparity between the results from these evaluation trenches compared to the geophysical survey interpretation. However, it was noted during the excavations that adjacent to the site was a wooded area where patches of recent burning were

present. It is therefore possible that recent activity and fires on the site perhaps contributed to these geophysical anomalies.

- 5.1.3 This was certainly the case in Trench 3, where the topsoil was significantly darker in the location of the anomaly shown by the geophysical survey, but no archaeological feature was present below it. However, the burnt 'pit' in Trench 9 corresponded precisely with a geophysical anomaly (and is marked as 'uncertain' Fig. 3). Further anomalies of this nature were present across the evaluation area.

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>Date</i>
1							
	101	Layer		0.20	Topsoil		
	102	Layer		0.20	Ploughsoil		
	103	Layer		-	Natural		
2							
	201	Layer		0.18	Topsoil		
	202	Layer		0.16	Ploughsoil		
	203	Layer		-	Natural		
3							
	301	Layer		0.24	Topsoil		
	302	Layer		0.12	Ploughsoil		
	303	Layer		-	Natural		
4							
	401	Layer		0.21	Topsoil		
	402	Layer		0.13	Ploughsoil		
	403	Layer		-	Natural		
5							
	501	Layer		0.19	Topsoil		
	502	Layer		-	Natural		
6							
	601	Layer		0.20	Topsoil		
	602	Layer		0.20	Ploughsoil		
	603	Layer		-	Natural		
7							
	701	Layer		0.20	Topsoil		
	702	Layer		0.15	Ploughsoil		
	703	Layer		-	Natural		
8							
	801	Layer		0.30	Topsoil		
	802	Layer		0.10	Ploughsoil		
	803	Layer		-	Natural		

9							
	901	Layer		0.15	Topsoil		
	903	Cut	0.96	0.26	Pit		
	904	Fill	0.96	0.26	Fill of Pit 903		
	905	Layer		-	Natural		
10							
	1000	Layer		0.18	Topsoil		
	1001	Layer		-	Natural		
11							
	1100	Layer		0.10	Topsoil		
	1101	Layer		0.08	Ploughsoil		
	1102	Layer		-	Natural		
	1103	Cut	0.46	0.15	Ditch		
	1104	Fill		0.04	Fill of Ditch 1103		
	1105	Fill		0.11	Fill of Ditch 1103		
12							
	1201	Layer		0.23	Topsoil		
	1202	Layer		-	Natural		
13							
	1301	Layer		0.35	Topsoil		
	1302	Layer		0.12	Ploughsoil		
	1303	Layer		-	Natural		
	1304	Fill		0.22	Fill of Ditch 1305		
	1305	Cut	0.60	0.30	Ditch		
	1306	Fill		0.08	Fill of Ditch 1305		
14							
	1401	Layer		0.25	Topsoil		
	1402	Cut	0.60	0.26	Ditch		
	1403	Fill		0.18	Fill of Ditch 1402		
	1404	Fill		0.14	Fill of Ditch 1402	Glass Metal	Modern Modern
	1405	Fill		0.08	Fill of Ditch 1402		
	1406	Layer		-	Natural		
15							
	1501	Layer		0.24	Topsoil		
	1502	Layer		0.08	Ploughsoil		

	1503	Layer		-	Natural		
16							
	1601	Layer		0.30	Topsoil		
	1602	Layer		-	Natural		
17							
	1701	Layer		0.21	Topsoil		
	1702	Layer		-	Natural		
18							
	1801	Layer		0.30	Topsoil		
	1802	Layer		0.11	Ploughsoil		
	1803	Layer		-	Natural		
	1804	Fill		>1.20	Fill of Modern Service Trench 1805		
	1805	Cut	3.6	>1.20	Modern Service Trench		
19							
	1901	Layer		0.32	Topsoil		
	1902	Layer		0.11	Ploughsoil		
	1903	Layer		-	Natural		
	1904	Cut	0.60	0.35	Geological		
	1905	Fill		0.35	Geological		

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

AF Howland Associates 2005 *Welham and Woodholm Farms Archaeology and Cultural Heritage Environmental Statement*

CgMs 2008 *Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation: Land at Woodholm Farm and Welham Farm, Hailsham, East Sussex.*

Oxford Archaeology 1992 *Field Manual* (ed. D. Wilkinson)

Oxford Archaeology 2008 *Woodholm and Welham Farms, Hailsham, East Sussex. Project Design for an Archaeological Evaluation*

Stratascan 2008 *Woodholm and Welham Farms, Hailsham, East Sussex. Geophysical Survey.*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Woodholm and Welham Farms, Hailsham, East Sussex (Phase 1).

Site code: HAWWF08.

Grid reference: TQ 577 107.

Type of evaluation: Nineteen trenches measuring 40 m by 2 m.

Date and duration of project: The fieldwork was carried out between 29/9/2008 and 3/10/2008.

Area of site: *c* 3 ha.

Summary of results: The evaluation revealed a ditch of recent date and a burnt 'pit' of uncertain date. Ploughsoil of uncertain date overlay the natural gravel in places.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Lewes Castle and Barbican Museum under an Accession number to be confirmed in due course.

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Figure 1: Site location

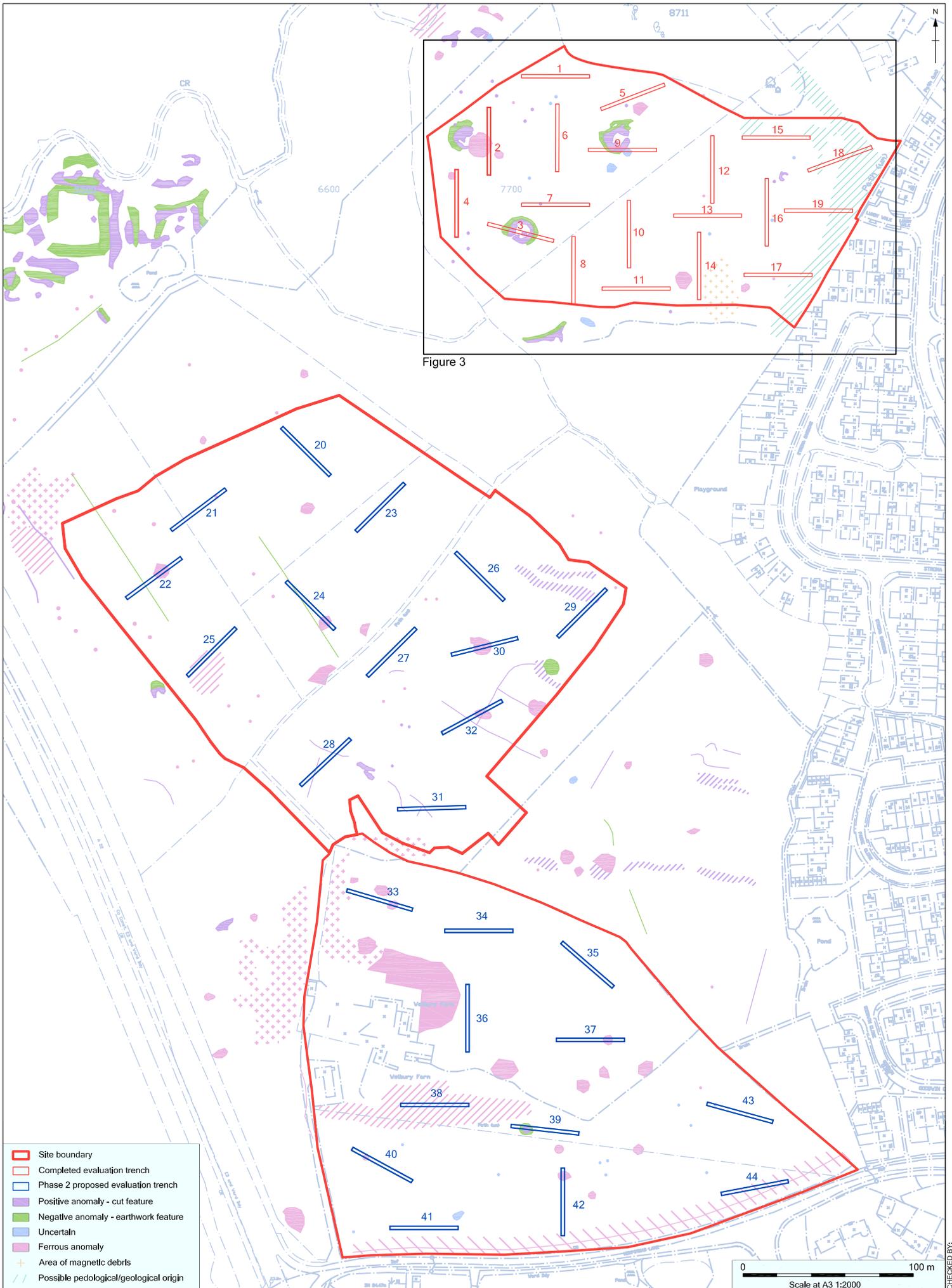


Figure 3

Figure 2: Trench layout, including proposed Phase 2 Trenches

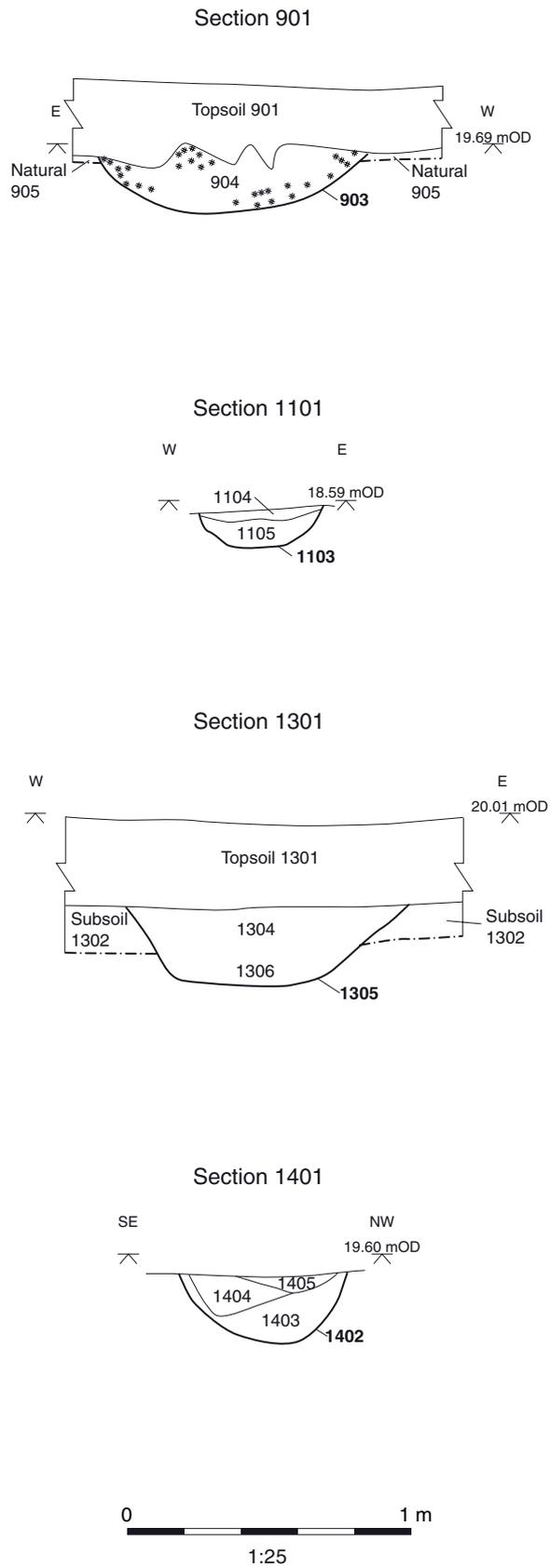


Figure 4: Sections 901, 1101, 1301 and 1401



Plate 1: Burnt pit 903



Plate 2: Ditch 1305



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