



# Lupton Road, Wallingford Oxfordshire

## Archaeological Evaluation Report

February 2020

**Client: Location 3 Properties Limited**

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## Lupton Road, Wallingford, Oxfordshire

### *Archaeological Evaluation Report*

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## Summary

Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Location 3 Properties Limited to undertake archaeological trial trenching on land off Lupton Road, Wallingford, Oxfordshire. The work was undertaken in advance of determination of a planning application for commercial development at the site. This was an additional evaluation stage to an earlier phase that was completed in 2012 where only limited access was possible.

The evaluation comprised the excavation of three trenches and was carried out in January 2020. This recorded shallow linear ditches and pits in all trenches. Artefactual evidence was entirely absent.

The arrangement of linear features is suggestive of field boundaries or enclosures. The absence of artefacts and any obvious settlement-related features, such as postholes or penannular gullies, suggest that the site is located away from its contemporary areas of occupation.

## Acknowledgements

Oxford Archaeology would like to thank Richard Moon of Location 3 Properties Ltd for commissioning this project. Thanks are also extended to Robert Masefield of RPS for monitoring and advising on the work on behalf of the client, and to Richard Oram and Hugh Coddington, who monitored the work on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council.

The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology by Steve Lawrence. The fieldwork was directed by Robert McIntosh, who was supported by Charlie Cox. Survey and digitising were carried out by Conan Parsons and Simon Batsman and report graphics were produced by Charles Rousseaux. Thanks are also extended to the OA staff that prepared the archive under the supervision of Nicola Scott.



## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Project background and scope of work

1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Location 3 Properties Limited (L3P) to undertake a trial trench evaluation on the site of a proposed redevelopment of land off Lupton Road, Wallingford.

1.1.2 The evaluation was undertaken prior to the formal determination of the planning application (planning ref: P19/S2539/FUL). Richard Oram, planning archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), advising the local planning authority (LPA), recommended the inclusion of the following conditions for the planning permission:

Prior to any demolition and the commencement of the development a professional archaeological organisation acceptable to the local planning authority shall prepare an archaeological written scheme of investigation, relating to the application site area, which shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To safeguard the recording of archaeological matters within the site in accordance with the NPPF (2019).

Following the approval of the written scheme of investigation referred to in condition 1, and prior to any demolition on the site and the commencement of the development (other than in accordance with the agreed written scheme of investigation), a staged programme of archaeological evaluation and mitigation shall be carried out by the commissioned archaeological organisation in accordance with the approved written scheme of investigation. The programme of work shall include all processing, research and analysis necessary to produce an accessible and useable archive and a full report for publication which shall be submitted to the local planning authority

Reason – To safeguard the identification, recording, analysis and archiving of heritage assets before they are lost and to advance understanding of the heritage assets in their wider context through publication and dissemination of the evidence in accordance with the NPPF (2019).

1.1.3 The LPA did not set a brief for the work, although a scope of works to adequately evaluate the site was agreed between Robert Masefield, RPS Group, acting as archaeological consultant to L3P, and the planning archaeologist. The evaluation scope comprised the excavation of 65m of linear trench measuring 1.8m wide to supplement the results of the 2012 evaluation. Combined, the trenches represent a 4% evaluation sample of the site by area. During this phase, the 65m of linear trench was excavated as three trenches between 20-25m long to fit within the boundary and arranged to provide a good overall coverage of the site (Fig. 2).

1.1.4 Prior to the start of the fieldwork, OA produced and issued a written scheme of investigation (WSI) outlining how OA would undertake the agreed scope of works and fulfil the requirements of this investigation (OA 2019). This document was specific to OA's methods and procedures and was approved by Richard Oram.

1.1.5 All work will be undertaken in accordance with local and national planning policies, and regional and industry best practise guidelines.

## 1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The site boundary encloses approximately 0.64ha and is located off Lupton Road within the south-western industrial expansion of Wallingford (Fig. 1). The site is bounded by Lupton Road to the west, industrial developments to the north and south and the Cholsey and Wallingford Railway line to the east, and is centred on SU 5993 8902.
- 1.2.2 The topography of the site is level at approximately 47.5-47.7m aOD and comprises rough grassed areas and scrub.
- 1.2.3 The solid geology of the site is mapped as glauconitic sandstone (glauconitic marl member). This is overlain by sand and gravel (Northmoor sand and gravel member, upper facet) (BGS nd).

## 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The following is a verbatim reproduction of the advice and information provided by Mr Oram as part of the County Council's response to consultation on the development by South Oxfordshire District (OCC 2019). This provides background information and an assessment of the potential offered at this location.

"The site is located in an area of archaeological potential 480m SW of the Saxon defences of Wallingford (SM 234). Recent archaeological investigations, consisting of a trenched evaluation and geophysical survey, 180m SE of the site, recorded a Bronze and Iron Age settlement (PRN 26339). Further Iron Age and Roman settlement was recorded during a small excavation 400m north of the application site (PRN 26221). In addition, a Roman burial and pottery was recovered from a gas pipe trench within the fields to the south during the 1940s (PRN 2992). Three Roman lamps were also recovered from an allotment area 200m NW of the proposal area (PRN 7969).

A Neolithic or Bronze Age barrow was recorded, along with early Iron Age settlement 380m east of the site during the development of a housing estate (PRN D2227). Iron age settlement evidence has also been recorded from cropmarks 1km west of the site (PRN 15383) and 760m NW during recent archaeological evaluation (PRN 26344). Medieval and early post medieval settlement has been recorded 380m NE (PRN 10595) and 570m NE (PRN 12425) of the site and there are a number of findspots from the Bronze Age through to the medieval period recorded for the immediate vicinity (PRNs 15257, D2225, 2711, 2993 and 7920).

An archaeological evaluation has confirmed the presence of archaeological features on the wider site in the form of a number of undated linear features and pits. This evaluation was limited by the current use of the site. Further features can be expected to survive on the site which will be disturbed by this development.

It is therefore possible that further archaeological deposits related to the Iron Age and Roman settlement could survive on the site."

- 1.3.2 The site was partly evaluated in November 2012 (PCA 2012). This identified three linear ditches, three small pits and a posthole across three trenches. None of the features produced artefactual material or other dating evidence.

1.3.3 An area to the immediate north was also evaluated prior to recent redevelopment (Border Archaeology 2018). This produced few archaeological features, although Trench 2, positioned just to the north of the boundary, did identify curving and linear gullies of a similar appearance to those within the site. No dating evidence was recovered from these features and the authors assign a post-medieval date to the features based on the inclusion of minute fragments (<2mm) of probable post-medieval materials in the environmental samples.

## **2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 General**

2.1.1 The aim of the evaluation was to identify any archaeological deposits and the potential impacts upon these. To do this, the aims were to:

- i. establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains,
- ii. determine and confirm the character of any remains present, without compromising any deposits that may merit detailed investigation or preservation,
- iii. determine or estimate the date range of any remains from artefacts or otherwise,
- iv. characterise any underlying archaeological strata down to undisturbed geology without significantly impacting upon younger (overlying) deposits where possible,
- v. determine the geo-archaeological and palaeo-environmental potential of any archaeological deposits encountered where appropriate,
- vi. recover suitable materials for scientific dating where appropriate,
- vii. make available the results of the investigation to inform subsequent development designs, planning decisions or mitigation strategies,
- viii. produce a factual report, full archive and HER data submission, and
- ix. disseminate the results of the investigation at a level appropriate to their importance.

### **2.2 Specific aims and objectives**

2.2.1 The specific aims and objectives are:

- x. to identify the continuation or other of the features recorded in the 2012 evaluation, and
- xi. to provide additional levels of evaluation sample to adequately cover the area of the application boundary.

### **2.3 Methodology**

2.3.1 All trenches were located using GPS survey immediately prior to excavation at the locations defined within the WSI revised layout. Following survey, machine excavation was undertaken by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. All machine excavation was completed under strict archaeological supervision. All overburden deposits were removed down to the level of the natural geology or archaeological deposits depending on which were encountered first. The overburden deposits were present to depths of 1-1.1m. The sides of each trench were stepped where these coincided with the archaeological features and access was needed to ensure safe access for staff to excavate and record the deposits.

2.3.2 Following machine excavation, all trenches were assessed for the presence or absence of archaeological deposits. Identified archaeological features were appropriately sample hand excavated and all trenches were fully recorded before the results were conveyed to RPS and OCC. The results were monitored by Rob Masefield (RPS) and discussed with Richard Oram (OCC). Monitoring was undertaken at the end of Monday 27th January 2020. The evaluation was completed in a single attendance between the 24th and 25th January 2020.

## **3 RESULTS**

### **3.1 Introduction and presentation of results**

- 3.1.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below, and include a stratigraphic description of each trench. The full details of all trenches with dimensions and depths of all deposits can be found in Appendix A.
- 3.1.2 The excavated trench layout and recorded features are presented in Figures 2, 3, 5 and 7. Sections from the trenches are shown in Figures 4, 6 and 8. Views of Trench 6 and section 601 are also included as plates at the end of this report.
- 3.1.3 Context numbers reflect the trench numbers unless otherwise stated (eg pit 510 is a feature within Trench 5, while ditch 710 is a feature within Trench 7). The trenches were numbered 5-7 to follow consecutively with the trenches excavated within the site boundary in 2012 (PCA 2012, Trenches 1-4).

### **3.2 General soils and ground conditions**

- 3.2.1 The general sequence of soils and other deposits overlying the natural geology within the trenches was fairly uniform across the site. The natural geology comprised mottled yellow to reddish brown sand with gravel and was overlain by a reddish brown to grey brown subsoil. This was overlain by former topsoil horizon and a sequence of made ground deposits variably comprising rubble, tarmac, concrete and silty soil deposits. The combined depth of the overburden deposits was 1-1.1m.
- 3.2.2 Ground conditions throughout the evaluation were generally good and the little rain that fell during the fieldwork easily drained without any negative impact on the exposed archaeological features. Archaeological features were easy to identify against the underlying natural geology.

### **3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits**

- 3.3.1 Archaeological features were present in each of the trenches in low quantities. Two linear features and a pit were encountered in Trench 5 and Trench 6 and three ditches were present in Trench 7.

### **3.4 Trench 5**

- 3.4.1 A ditch (505) and a ditch terminal (508) were cut into the natural sand geology (504). Both were aligned approximately north-south and had shallow rounded profiles up to 0.12m deep and 0.65m wide containing unremarkable single fill of sterile silt (Figs 3 and 4). Fill 511 of ditch 505 was cut by a well-defined oval pit (510). This contained a sequence of two fill (506 and 507). No artefactual evidence was encountered within the pit fills despite the excavation of the greater part of the deposits.

### **3.5 Trench 6**

- 3.5.1 A ditch (609) and a ditch terminal (604) were cut into the natural sand and gravel geology (611) (Plate 1). Both were aligned approximately east-west, although the dimensions and profiles varied between the two (Figs 5 and 6). Ditch 609 was 0.26m deep, with steep sides and a flat base. Ditch 604 was shallow and rounded and

comparable to the ditches encountered in Trench 5. Both ditches contained unremarkable single fills of sterile silt (605 and 610).

- 3.5.2 A large pit (606) was present between the ditches. This was a maximum of 1.95m across, 0.26m deep, rounded in plan and contained two fills (607 and 608). The main fill, 607, did contain charcoal and burnt clay flecks, although both this and fill 608 failed to produce any artefactual remains (Plate 2).

### **3.6 Trench 7**

- 3.6.1 Three ditches (707, 709 and 710) were revealed in Trench 7, of which two were sample-excavated (707 and 710) (Fig. 7). Both ditches displayed similar characteristics with well-defined U-shaped profiles up to 0.26m deep and containing single greyish brown silting fills lacking any artefactual evidence (Fig. 8). The fill of ditch 709 had a similar appearance to the fills of ditches 707 and 710. Examination of the exposed deposit also suggested that this lacked artefactual evidence.

### **3.7 Finds and environmental evidence summary**

- 3.7.1 No artefacts were encountered within any of the excavated or examined deposits.
- 3.7.2 Similarly, visual examination of all the feature fills with the exception of pit fill 607, suggested that these deposits lacked the potential to contain charred plant remains. Charcoal was noted in deposit 607, although no artefactual material was present within this pit despite excavating all of the available feature within the trench. Following discussions on the potential of the site between Rob Masefield and Richard Oram, and considering the absence of dating material across the whole evaluation, no sampling was undertaken of the pit fill.

## 4 DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 4.1.1 A number of factors provide reassurance that the results of this evaluation stage are a very reliable indicator on the potential of this site. These are:
- i. the archaeological features and deposits were easily identifiable within the excavated trenches,
  - ii. the presence of a buried former subsoil across the site overlain by made ground deposits indicates that limited or no modern truncation of the deposits has occurred,
  - iii. when considered with the previous evaluation phase the combined sample of the application area is approximately 4%,
  - iv. and a high percentage of the features and the exposed fills of those features were hand excavated in an attempt to recover artefactual evidence.

### 4.2 Evaluation objectives and results

- 4.2.1 The evaluation successfully addressed the aims of the project where possible or applicable. It successfully identified and characterised the archaeological remains and, although dating evidence was lacking, a high percentage of the deposits were examined to provide a reliable level of interpretation on the absence of dating evidence.
- 4.2.2 The results of the evaluation will be disseminated through this report, which will in due course be uploaded to the OA digital library for public access. Following final issue and approval of the report through OOC, the results will be submitted to the Historic Environment Record for Oxfordshire and the archive will be submitted to the local receiving museum.

### 4.3 Interpretation and discussion

- 4.3.1 The number of ditches and pits encountered in combination with the results of the 2012 evaluation phase reflects moderate level of human activity at the site. However, none of the features produced any artefactual evidence in the current phase, and only a single abraded sherd of dating after c AD 43 was recovered in the 2012 phase. This distinct paucity of artefacts strongly suggests that the features relate to boundary arrangements or other ditched features (ie enclosures) that were situated away from a settlement focus. Alternatively, it is possible that other factors contributed to the absence of artefacts, such as soils conditions in which animal bone may not have survived, or cultural reasons that precluded the deposition of pottery or other artefacts. The latter would be an unusual scenario for this setting in the Thames Valley, where artefact assemblages in relation to all periods of settlement are normally identifiable.
- 4.3.2 In the absence of dating evidence, there is little that can be interpreted on this site other than the probability that the ditches form part of an enclosure field system situated some distance from a settlement.



## APPENDIX A TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 5						
General description					Orientation	E-W
The trench revealed yellow sand geology cut by two ditches and a pit. None of the feature fills yielded any artefactual evidence.					Length (m)	20.50m
					Width (m)	1.60m
					Avg. depth (m)	1.05m
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
500	Layer		0.25	Tarmac surface	-	
501	Layer		0.05	Concrete	-	
502	Layer		0.15	Tarmac	-	
503	Layer		0.50	Subsoil. Sandy silt, greyish brown	-	
504			-	Natural geology, sand and gravel	-	
505	Cut	0.55	0.12	Ditch	-	
506	Fill	0.70	0.07	Fill of 510	-	
507	Fill	0.62	0.13	Fill of 510	-	
508	Cut	0.65	0.06	Ditch	-	
509	Fill	0.65	0.06	Fill of 508	-	
510	Cut	0.70	0.20	Pit	-	
511	Fill	0.55	0.12	Fill of 505	-	

Trench 6						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE
The trench revealed mottled reddish brown to yellow sand geology cut by a pit, a ditch and a possible terminal ending of a ditch. None of the feature fills yielded any artefactual evidence.					Length (m)	22.10m
					Width (m)	1.60m
					Avg. depth (m)	1.10m
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
600	Layer		0.22	Made ground. Silt and rubble	-	
601	Layer		0.13	Gravel and sand made ground	-	
602	Layer		0.45	Made ground. Rubble including brick	-	
603	Layer		0.322	Buried top/subsoil. Reddish brown	-	
604	Cut	0.60	0.15	Ditch	-	
605	Fill	0.60	0.15	Single sterile silty fill of 604	-	
606	Cut	1.94	0.26	Pit, large and well-defined	-	
607	Fill	1.64	0.26	Upper fill of 606	-	
608	Fill	0.60	0.25	Primary fill of 606	-	
609	Cut	0.88	0.32	Ditch	-	
610	Fill	0.88	0.32	Single fill of 609	-	
611	Layer			Natural geology, sand and gravel	-	

<b>Trench 7</b>						
<b>General description</b>					<b>Orientation</b>	NE-SW
The trench revealed mottled reddish brown to yellow sand geology cut by three ditches and a modern geotechnical trial pit. One of the ditches was not excavated. None of the feature fills yielded any artefactual evidence.					<b>Length (m)</b>	24.30m
					<b>Width (m)</b>	1.60m
					<b>Avg. depth (m)</b>	1.10m
<b>Context No.</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Width (m)</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Finds</b>	<b>Date</b>
700	Layer		0.19	Made ground with rubble inclusions	-	
701	Layer		0.05	Made ground. Dark reddish black silt and sand	-	
702	Layer		0.03	Redeposited sand and gravel	-	
703	Layer		0.26	Made ground. Clayey silt and rubble	-	
704	Layer		0.13	Dark brown clayey silt possible former soil horizon	-	
705	Layer		0.16	Dark brown clayey silt buried possible former soil horizon	-	
706	Layer		0.16	Reddish brown silty subsoil	-	
707	Cut	0.45	0.21	Ditch	-	
708	Fill	0.45	0.21	Single sterile fill of 707	-	
709	Cut	0.40	-	Unexcavated ditch	-	
710	Cut	0.64	0.26	Ditch	-	
711	Fill	0.64	0.26	Single sterile fill of 710	-	
712	Layer			Natural geology, sand and gravel		

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## APPENDIX B      BIBLIOGRAPHY

Border Archaeology, 2018 Land at Hithercroft Road/ Lupton Road, Wallingford: archaeological field evaluation, report reference BA1747LRW, unpublished report issued May 2018

BGS, nd Geology of Britain Viewer, British Geological Survey  
<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> accessed 23/12/19

NPPF, 2019 *National Planning Policy Framework*, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

OA, 2020 Lupton Road, Wallingford, Oxfordshire. Written scheme of investigation: archaeological evaluation, unpublished document by Oxford Archaeology, January 2020

OCC, 2019 County Council's response to consultation on the following development proposal Application no: P19/S2539/FUL. Unpublished planning document by Oxfordshire County Council, dated 9th September 2019

PCA, 2012 Hithercroft Estate, Lupton Road, Wallingford, OX10 9WA: an archaeological evaluation, PCA Report No. R11349, unpublished report issued December 2012, revised January 013

## APPENDIX C      SITE SUMMARY DETAILS

<b>Site name:</b>	Lupton Road, Wallingford, Oxfordshire
<b>Site code:</b>	WALU 20
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SU 5993 8902
<b>Type:</b>	Evaluation
<b>Date and duration:</b>	27th and 28th January 2020
<b>Area of Site</b>	0.64ha
<b>Location of archive:</b>	The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, Oxfordshire, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museum Service in due course.
<b>Summary of Results:</b>	<p>Oxford Archaeology (OA) were commissioned by Location 3 Properties Limited to undertake archaeological trial trenching on land off Lupton Road, Wallingford, Oxfordshire. The work was undertaken in advance of determination of a planning application for commercial development at the site. This was an additional evaluation stage to an earlier phase that was completed in 2012 where only limited access was possible.</p> <p>The evaluation comprised the excavation of 3 trenches and was carried out in January 2020. This recorded the presence of shallow linear ditches and pits in all trenches. This also confirmed the absence of artefactual evidence from the range of features.</p> <p>The arrangement of linear features is suggestive of field boundary or enclosure arrangements. The absence of artefacts and any obvious settlement-related features such as postholes or penannular gullies suggests that the site is located away from its contemporary areas of occupation.</p>



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

Figure 1: Site location

- Site Boundary
- OA Evaluation Trench
- Feature
- Section
- Previous Trench



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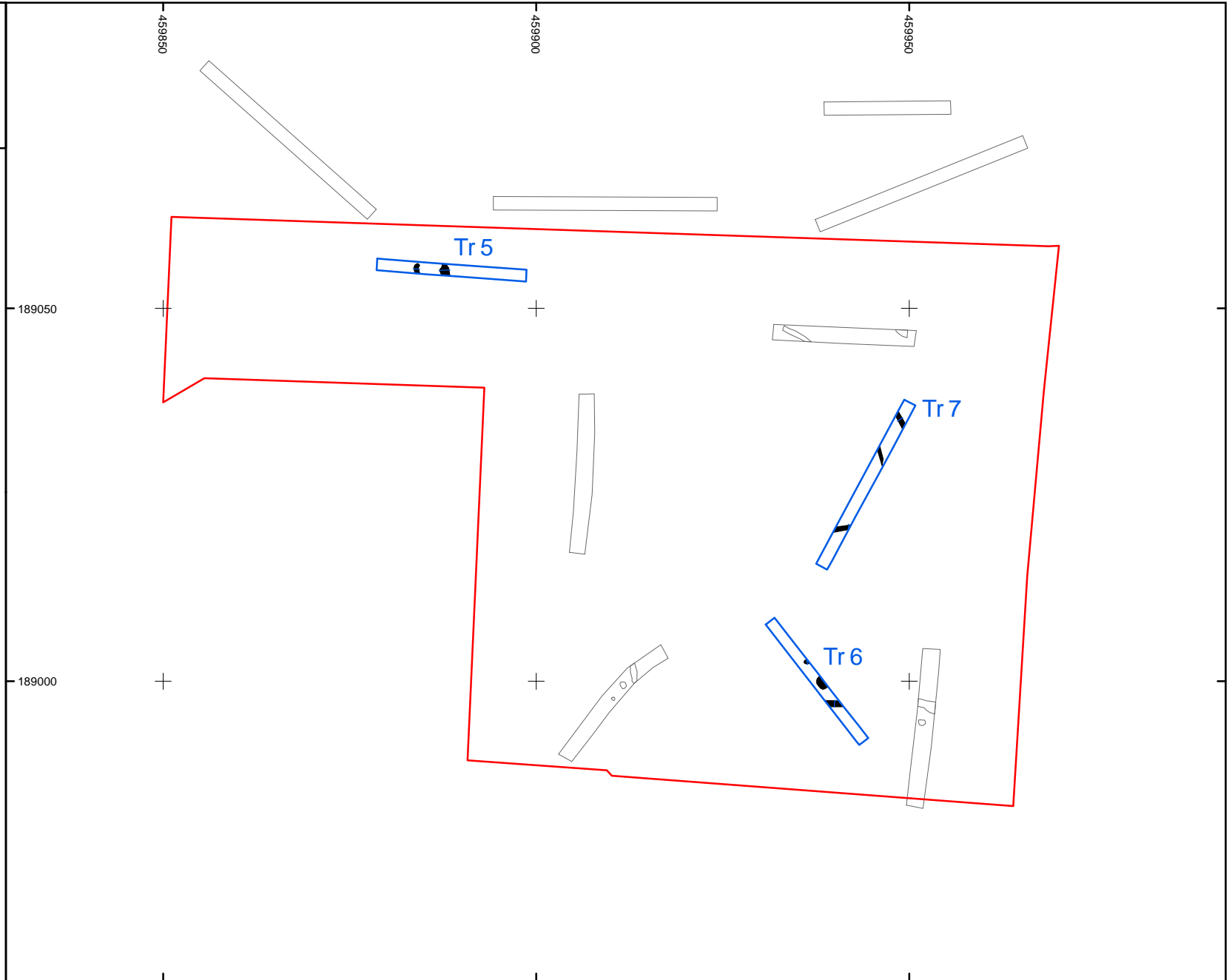


Figure 2: Trench locations

- Site Boundary
- OA Evaluation Trench
- Feature
- Intervention
- Section



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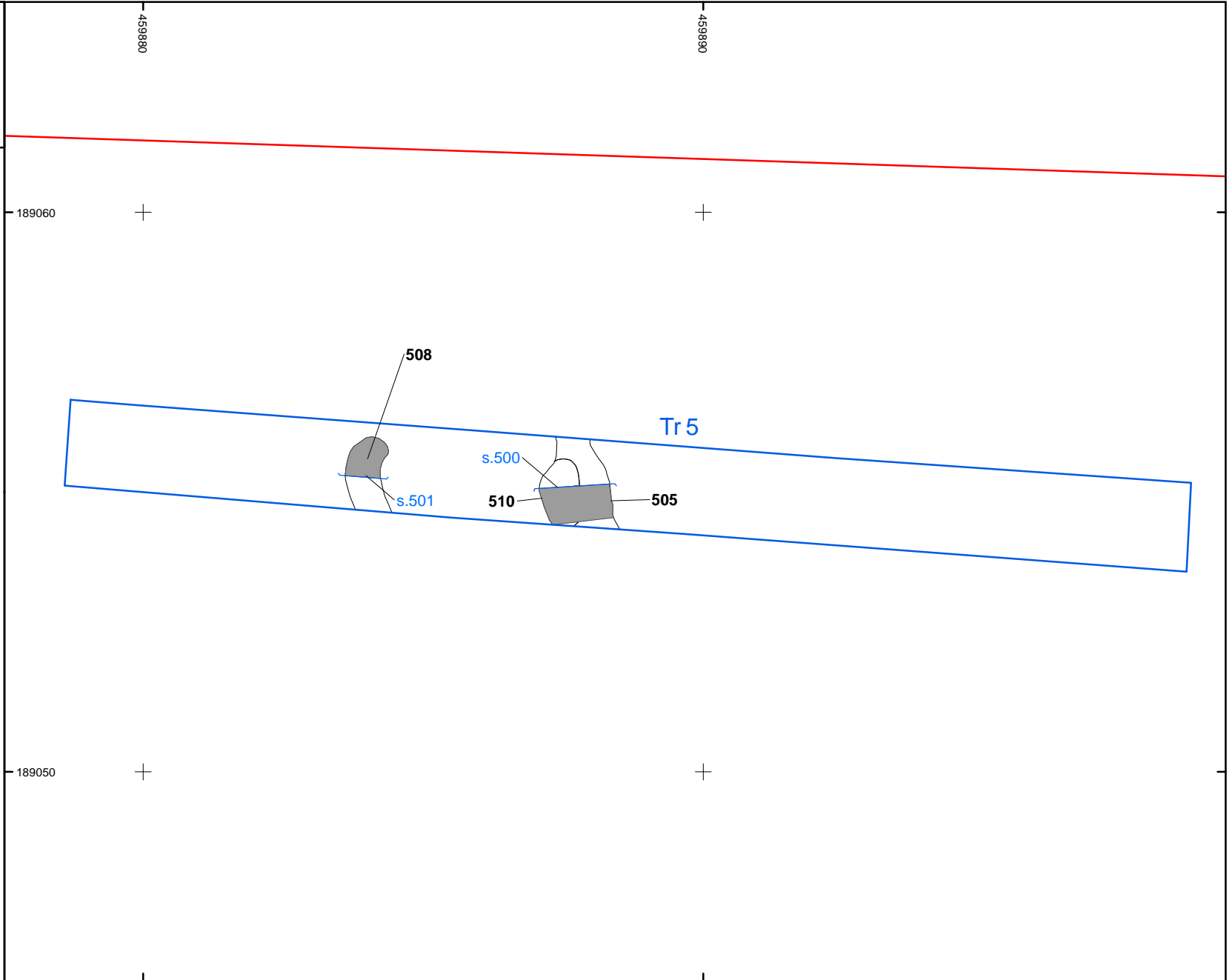


Figure 3: Trench 5

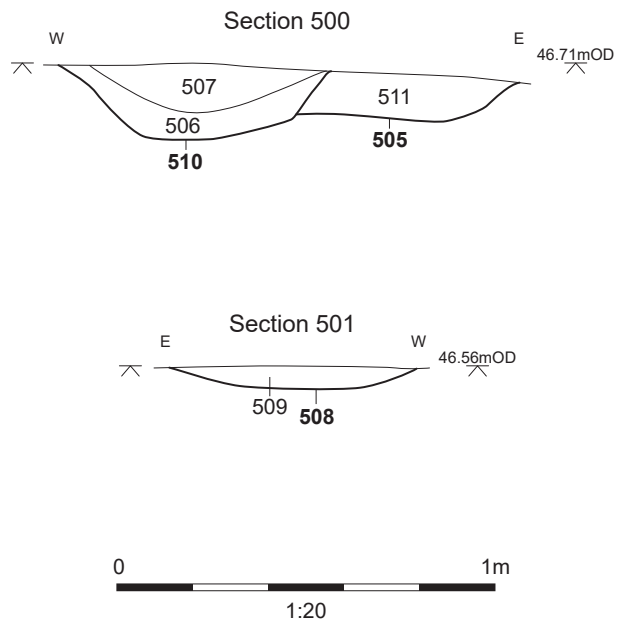
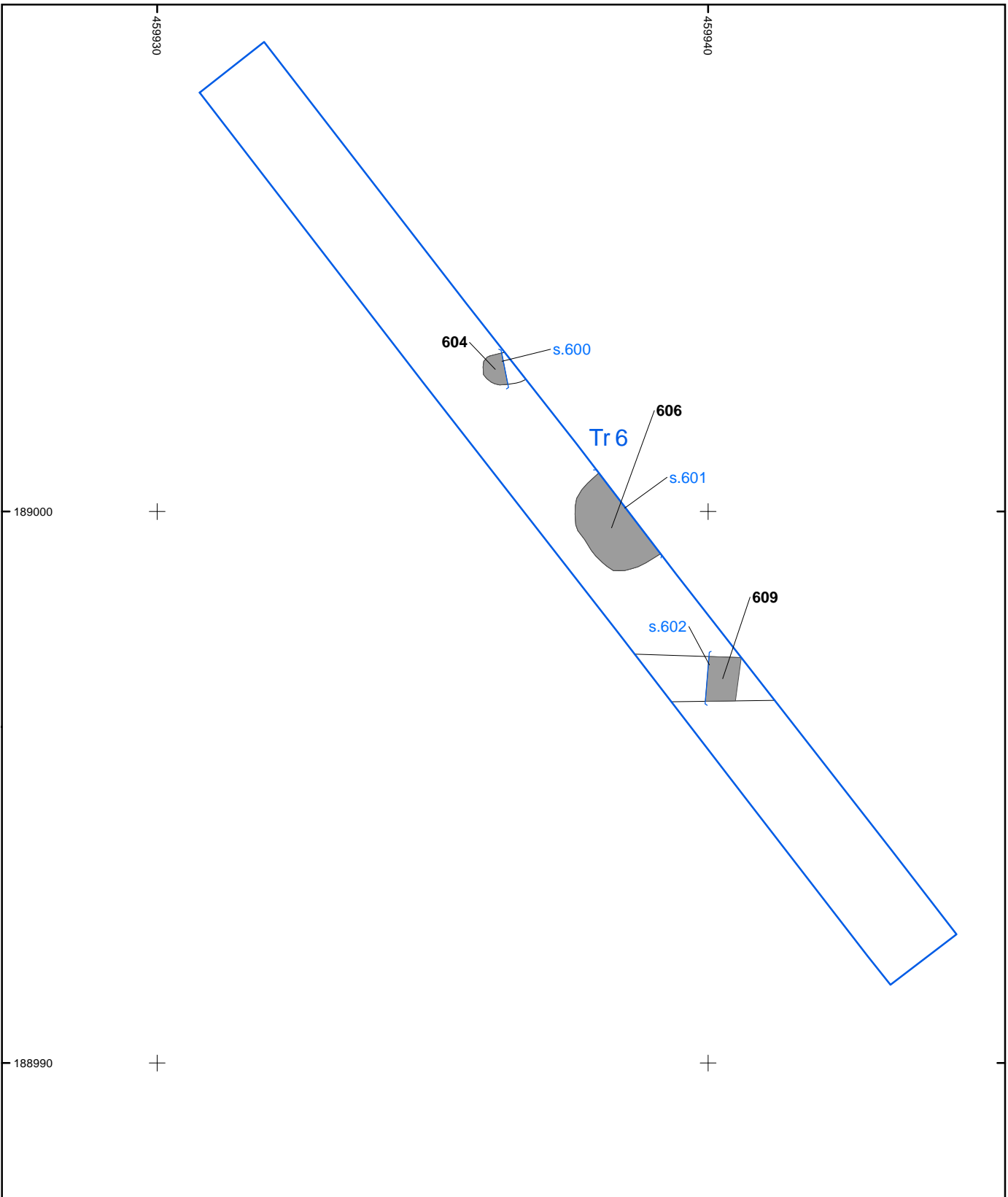







Figure 4: Trench 5 sections



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 OA Evaluation Trench
 Feature
 Intervention
 Section

0  3m

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Figure 5: Trench 6

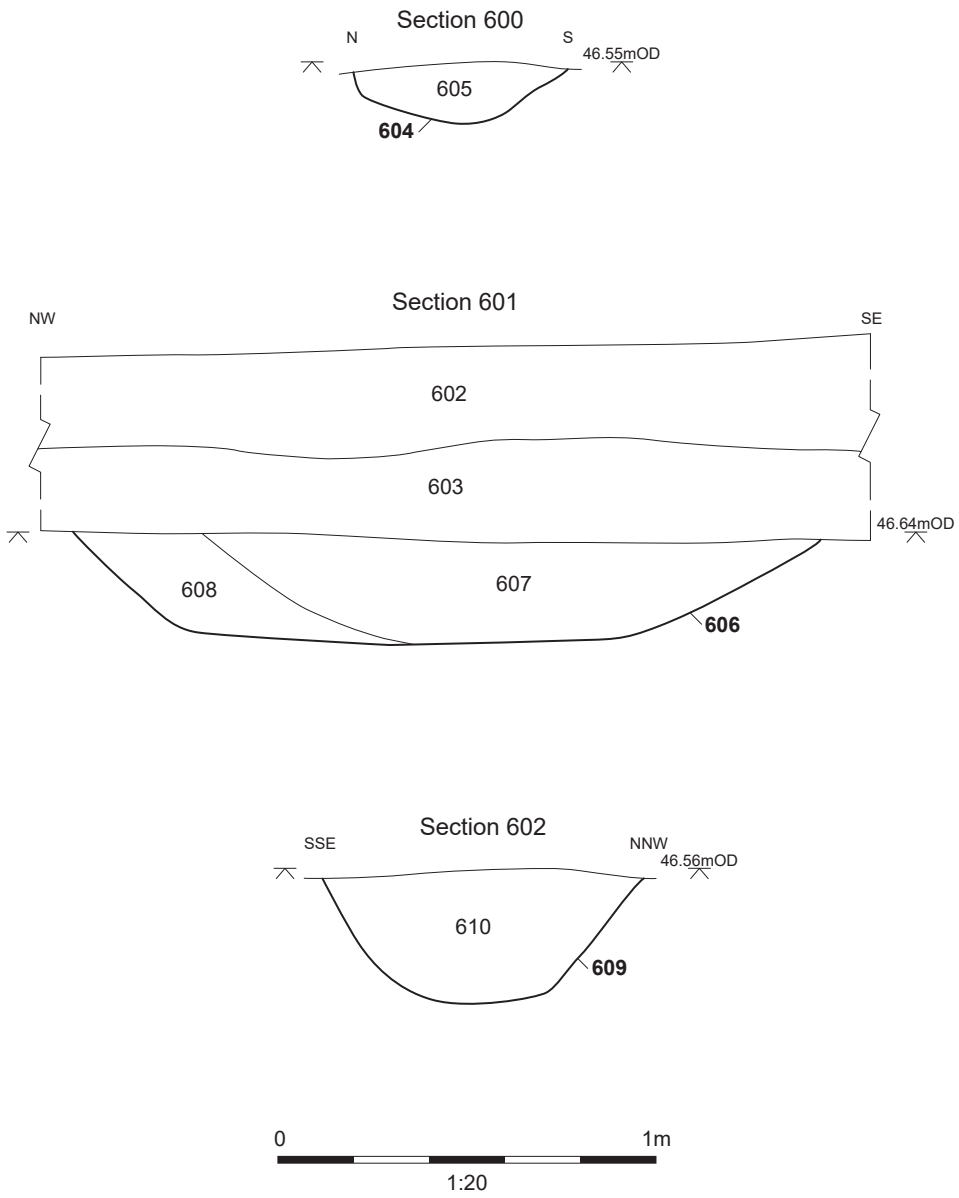
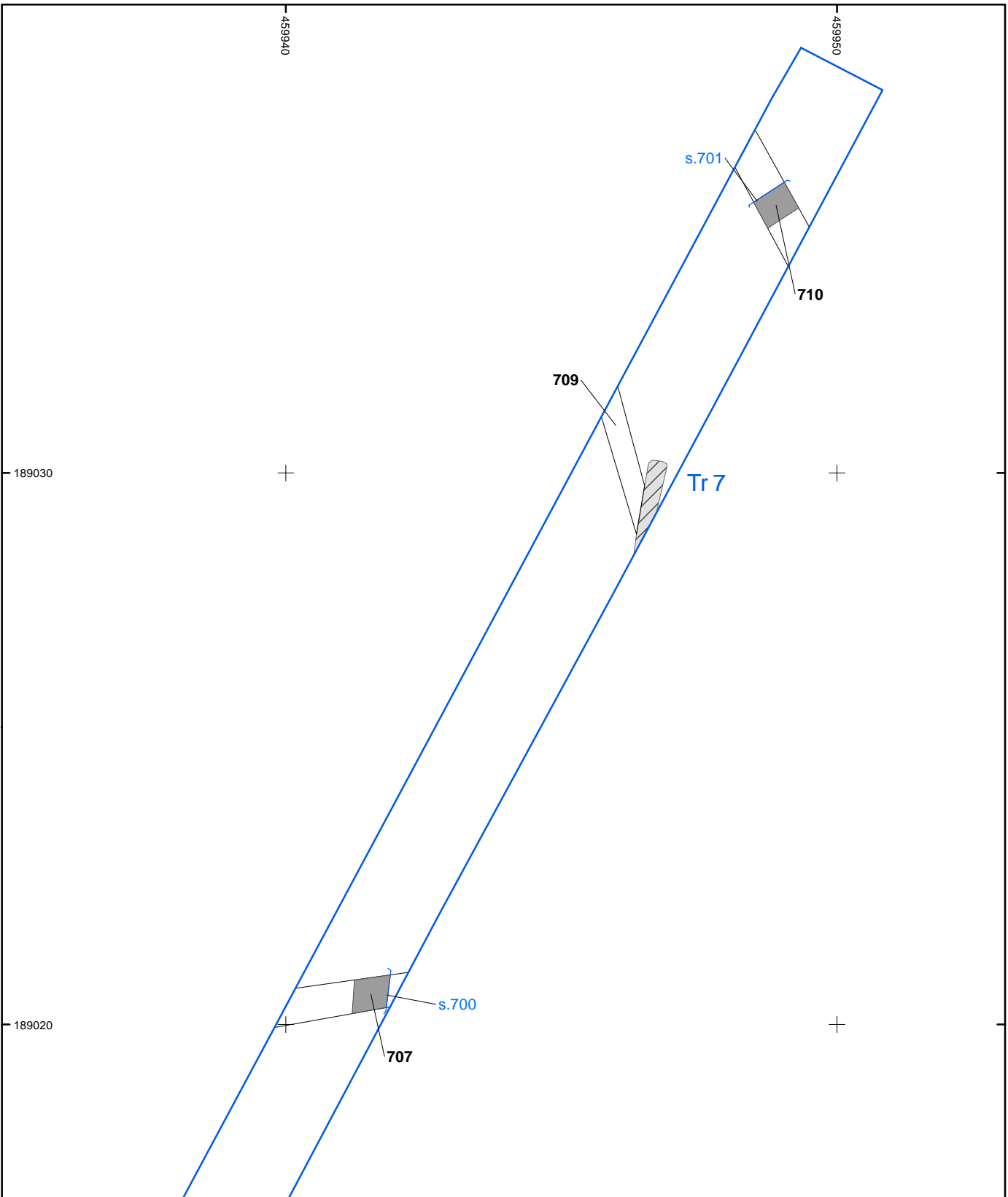


Figure 6: Trench 6 sections

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- OA Evaluation Trench
- Feature
- Intervention
- Section
- Truncation

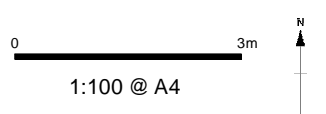


Figure 7: Trench 7

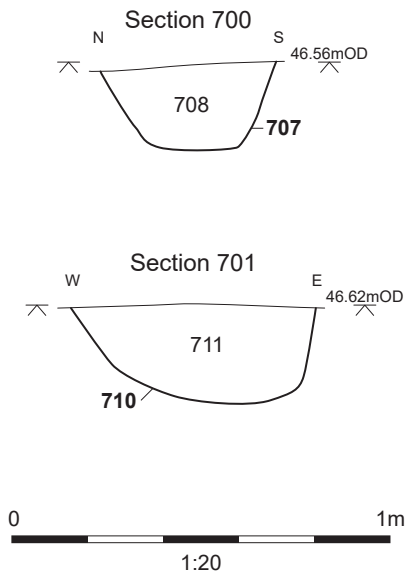


Figure 8: Trench 7 sections



Plate 1: Trench 6 view north-west



Plate 2: Section 601



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