



# Winneycroft, Matson, Gloucester, Gloucestershire

## Archaeological Evaluation Report

**August 2019**

**Client: RPS Heritage**

Issue No: 1

OA Reference No: 7453

NGR: SO 85271 14517





Client Name: RPS Heritage  
Document Title: Winneycroft, Matson, Gloucester, Gloucestershire  
Document Type: Evaluation Report  
Grid Reference: SO 85271 14517  
Planning Reference: 14/01063/OUT  
Site Code: OAGWIN19  
Invoice Code: OAGWINEV  
Receiving Body: Museum of Gloucester  
Accession No.: GRM:2019.32

OA Document File Location: X:\g\Gloucestershire\_Winneycroft\_Matson\002Reports  
OA Graphics File Location: O:\O\_codes\OAGWINEV\PDFs

Issue No: 1  
Date: 26.06.2019  
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# Winneycroft, Matson, Gloucester, Gloucestershire

## *Archaeological Evaluation Report*

### Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Scope of work.....	1
1.2	Location, topography and geology.....	1
1.3	Archaeological and historical background.....	2
<b>2</b>	<b>AIMS AND METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1	Aims.....	3
2.2	Methodology and programme.....	3
<b>3</b>	<b>RESULTS .....</b>	<b>4</b>
3.1	Introduction and presentation of results.....	4
3.2	General soils and ground conditions.....	4
3.3	General distribution of archaeological deposits.....	4
3.4	Trench 40.....	4
3.5	Trench 41.....	4
3.6	Trench 42.....	4
3.7	Trench 43.....	4
3.8	Finds summary.....	5
3.9	Environmental summary .....	5
<b>4</b>	<b>DISCUSSION .....</b>	<b>6</b>
4.1	Reliability of field investigation.....	6
4.2	Evaluation objectives and results.....	6
4.3	Interpretation.....	6
4.4	Significance .....	6
4.5	Bibliography .....	7
<b>APPENDIX A</b>	<b>TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>APPENDIX B</b>	<b>FINDS REPORTS.....</b>	<b>12</b>
B.1	Pottery.....	12
<b>APPENDIX C</b>	<b>SITE SUMMARY DETAILS / OASIS REPORT FORM.....</b>	<b>13</b>

## List of Figures

- Fig.1            Site location  
Fig. 2            Trench location plan  
Fig. 3            Sections of features 4303 and 4203

## List of Plates

- Plate 1            Trench 42, looking north  
Plate 2            Trench 42, representative section, looking east  
Plate 3            Trench 39, looking south-east  
Plate 4            Trench 43, looking east  
Plate 5            Trench 43, looking west

## Summary

In June 2019 Oxford Archaeology conducted the second phase of archaeological evaluation at the site of a proposed new housing development at Winneycroft, Matson, Gloucester, Gloucestershire. Five 30m x 1.8m trenches were excavated in the vicinity of Trench 26 from the previous phase of evaluation, undertaken in 2014, where several Roman pottery sherds had been recovered from the subsoil. This phase of evaluation was intended to locate and characterise any Roman features that were associated with these finds.

The evaluation uncovered a Roman field boundary ditch running N-S across two of the trenches (the ditches also probably ran across Trench 26). Other features within the trenches included ridge and furrow cultivation, a shallow post-medieval posthole and a row of seven undated postholes most likely representing a former agricultural fenceline.

## Acknowledgements

Oxford Archaeology would like to thank Matthew Smith of RPS Heritage for commissioning this project and to Andrew Armstrong, Planning Archaeologist, who monitored the work on behalf of Gloucester City Council, for their advice and guidance.

The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology by Carl Champness. The fieldwork was directed by Mariusz I Górnjak, who was supported by Katherine Webster. Survey and digitizing were carried out by Dian Chard and Ben Brown. Thanks are also extended to the teams of OA staff that cleaned and packaged the finds under the management of Geraldine Crann and prepared the archive under the management of Nicola Scott.



## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by RPS Heritage to undertake a second phase of archaeological evaluation at the site of a proposed new 20ha housing development at Winneycroft, Matson, Gloucester, Gloucestershire.
- 1.1.2 The development is located within an area of high archaeological potential, on the periphery of Gloucester, formerly the Roman city of Glevum. A geophysical survey had previously identified areas of archaeological potential (ASWYAS 2014), which were later confirmed through a first phase of evaluation trenching (CA 2014). An area of Roman enclosure ditches was identified within the southern part of the development area that will require excavation, as well as a concentration of Roman finds that required greater characterisation through further evaluation. This report presents the results of this second phase evaluation in the area of Trench 26, where Roman pottery was recovered during the first evaluation in 2014 (CA 2014).
- 1.1.3 The work was undertaken in accordance with Condition 21 of Planning Permission (planning ref: 14/01063/OUT). The application was granted in September 2014 for the erection of 420 dwellings and community space/building as well as associated landscaping, public open space, access, drainage, infrastructure, earthworks and other ancillary enabling works. Although the Local Planning Authority has not set a brief for the work, discussions between Matthew Smith of RPS Heritage and Andrew Armstrong, Planning Archaeologist for Gloucester City Council, established the scope of mitigation work required; this document outlines how this further evaluation phase was undertaken.
- 1.1.4 All work was undertaken in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archeologists' 'Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Excavation' (CifA 2014) and local and national planning policies.

### 1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The site lies on the south-eastern edge of the City of Gloucester (Fig. 1). The proposed development area is c 20ha in extent and comprises ten pasture fields that are divided by intermittent hedge boundaries. The site is bounded by the M5 to the south-east, residential development fronting Winneycroft Lane to the north-west and further agricultural land to the north-east and south-west. (Fig. 1; NGR SO 8541 1456). The site lies at c 50m aOD and is relatively flat.
- 1.2.2 The second phase of archaeological evaluation was located in the southern central part of the site – around the 2014 evaluation Trench 26 (Fig. 2)
- 1.2.3 The geology of the area is mapped as Blue Lias Formation and Charmouth Mudstone Formation, Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 183 to 210 million years ago in the Jurassic and Triassic Periods. Superficial deposits of Cheltenham Sand and Gravel formed 3 million years ago in the Quaternary Period are recorded across the site (BGS Online Viewer).

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The current site lies c 4.5km south-east of the Roman city of Gloucester. The Portway, a contemporary road which extended south-east from the town, lies 1.2km to the east of the site. Evidence of a Roman farmstead (dating to the 1st century AD) and a later villa (dating to the 2nd to 3rd centuries AD) was identified 1km to the north-west during an archaeological watching brief undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in 1996.
- 1.3.2 A medieval moated site, recorded c 150m south-west of the site, is protected as a Scheduled Monument (Moated site at Sneedham's Green, 220m north east of Green Farm; List Entry 1019399). Cropmark evidence from aerial photographs indicates that the moat formerly incorporated a causeway to the south. Earthworks on the island are suggestive of the foundations of former structures. The date for the moated site's construction remains undetermined but is most probably dates between the mid 13th and mid 14th century AD (HER ref. 425).

#### *Previous archaeological works*

- 1.3.3 A geophysical survey undertaken in 2014 identified evidence for two distinct areas of archaeological features at the site. The northernmost is the most coherent, comprising a discontinuous linear anomaly representing a D-shaped enclosure measuring c 50m on its longest side. A sub-circular anomaly was identified within the enclosure along with several other discrete anomalies. Approximately 50m to the south-east a second, less coherent cluster of anomalies was identified. To the east of these two geophysical anomalies, two linear anomalies may represent a possible trackway and/or former field boundary. Although currently undated, these features are most probably later prehistoric or Roman in origin. Evidence for former ridge and furrow cultivation was also identified throughout the site (ASWYAS 2014).
- 1.3.4 An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in 2014 by Cotswold Archaeology, confirming the presence of Roman features and enclosures within the southern part of the site, and correlating well with the geophysical survey (CA 2014). The features included linear and curvilinear ditches, truncated pits and postholes, suggesting a settlement focus of mid 1st- to 2nd-century AD occupation. Seven sherds of Roman pottery were also identified in a furrow within Trench 26, further to the north, but no features were identified.

## 2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The general aims and objectives of the evaluation were:

- i. To determine or confirm the general nature of remains present;
- ii. To determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of any remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence;
- iii. To further define the extent, date and nature of the Roman activity that was identified by the evaluation;
- iv. To assess the associations and implications of any remains encountered with reference to the historic landscape;
- v. To determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence and the forms in which such evidence may survive;
- vi. To determine the implications of any remains with reference to economy, status utility and social activity;
- vii. To compare the nature of this activity with the Roman activity located close to the site;
- viii. To consider the site within its local, regional, and national context as appropriate; and
- ix. To produce an archive (finds and records) that will be organised and deposited in a registered museum, to facilitate access for future research and interpretation for public benefit.

### 2.2 Methodology and programme

2.2.1 The second phase of evaluation was undertaken as part of the mitigation phase in order to define and contextualize Roman pottery finds identified within Trench 26 during the first phase of evaluation (CA 2014).

2.2.2 Five trenches (measuring *c* 30m x 1.8m) were excavated in the vicinity of Trench 26 to attempt to identify the source of the Roman finds. The trenches were excavated with a JCB using a toothless ditching bucket under archaeological supervision. The trenches were excavated carefully in spits down to either natural geology or the first archaeological horizon, whichever was encountered first.

2.2.3 All uncovered features within the trenches were recorded and sampled by hand. The features were sampled and recorded in line with the project WSI (CgMs 2019).

## **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 the trenches that contained archaeological remains. The full details of all trenches, with dimensions and depths of all deposits, can be found in Appendix A. Finds data and spot dates are tabulated in Appendix B.

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

3.2.1 The soil sequence in the trenches was fairly uniform (Plate 2). The natural geology of firm mottled slightly silty light grey clay and yellowish light brown clay with no inclusions except for occasional subangular pebbles, was overlain by a 0.15-0.35m thick subsoil. The latter consisted of either B-horizon (greyish-yellow clayey) or remains of furrows (greyish and silty). The current ploughsoil formed the topsoil horizon – a 0.25-0.35m thick, friable, soft, dark brown clayey silt with only very occasional small/medium sized subangular pieces of flint.

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

3.3.1 A ditch of Roman date extended across Trenches 41 and 43. Seven shallow undated postholes were recorded in Trench 40 and a single posthole of post-medieval date in Trench 42.

3.3.2 Furrows aligned N-S and NE-SW were present in Trenches 39, 40, 41, and.

3.3.3 Two stone-filled land-drains ran across Trench 40.

### **3.4 Trench 40**

3.4.1 A row of seven postholes was exposed at subsoil level. The row was aligned N-S. Each posthole was c 0.35m in diameter with a flat base and only 0.01-0.03m deep within the natural geology horizon. Their fills contained no finds.

### **3.5 Trench 41**

3.5.1 A ditch (4103) that was uncovered extending N-S across the trench was interpreted as a continuation of ditch 4301 in Trench 43.

### **3.6 Trench 42**

3.6.1 A posthole (4203; Fig. 3) 0.35m in diameter and 0.03m deep was uncovered and excavated in the southern part of the trench. Its single fill (4204) contained one post-medieval pottery sherd.

3.6.2 A second pottery sherd, dated to the medieval period, was retrieved from subsoil in the southern part of the trench.

### **3.7 Trench 43**

3.7.1 A linear ditch (4303), aligned roughly N-S, was uncovered in the eastern part of the trench. It had moderately steep sides and a concave base and was 0.3m deep (Fig. 3).

Its single fill contained three pieces of Roman pottery. It was truncated partially by a modern pit running across the trench (a geotechnical test pit).

### **3.8 Finds summary**

3.8.1 Six pottery sherds were uncovered from the evaluation. One medieval sherd was recovered from the subsoil within Trench 42, one post-medieval sherd at the basal fill of a shallow posthole in the same trench, and three Roman pieces in the upper part of ditch 4303 in Trench 43.

### **3.9 Environmental summary**

3.9.1 No samples were taken during the evaluation as no suitable deposits were encountered.

## 4 DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 4.1.1 Ground conditions were generally good throughout the evaluation, although persistent rainfalls overnight caused flooding in some trenches. The archaeological features were easy to identify against the underlying natural geology.
- 4.1.2 All of the trenches were dug in their proposed positions and achieved good coverage around Trench 26 and provide adequate sampling coverage of the area. The results are therefore considered to provide a representative sample of this area.

### 4.2 Evaluation objectives and results

- 4.2.1 The trenches identified a Roman ditch (probably a field boundary) that is the most likely the source of the Roman finds recorded in Trench 26 of the original phase of evaluation.

### 4.3 Interpretation

- 4.3.1 The N-S Roman ditch was recorded and excavated across Trenches 43 and 41. This probably represents a field boundary ditch, with a projected line that also crosses the 2014 phase Trench 26.
- 4.3.2 Furrows, aligned N-S, NE-SW, and NE-SW present in four of the trenches contained no finds, but one medieval pottery sherd from the subsoil of Trench 42 could be used as dating evidence for the ridge and furrow.
- 4.3.3 A row of postholes and a single posthole in Trenches 40 and 42 respectively were very similar in size and shape. The posthole in Trench 42 contained at its base a single post-medieval pottery sherd. The posthole bases were shallow and thus it is unlikely they were supporting a substantial structure, more likely representing a former fenceline.
- 4.3.4 Two stone-filled land-drains in one of the trenches confirm the agricultural character of the area in more recent periods.
- 4.3.5 One modern pit from Trench 42, given its poorly mixed fill, may represent a geotechnical test pit.

### 4.4 Significance

- 4.4.1 The evaluation uncovered features and finds suggestive of Roman agricultural activity in the area – probably a field boundary ditch, most likely related to the nearby settlement to the south.
- 4.4.2 The medieval period is represented by ridge and furrow cultivation that crossed the site broadly on a N-S alignment. The line of seven undated postholes and one very similar posthole with one post-medieval pottery sherd might also suggest some type of agricultural activity (a fenceline) of that period rather than representing structural remains.
- 4.4.3 Based on the results of the evaluation this area of the site is considered to have low archaeological potential.

## 4.5 Bibliography

ASWYAS, 2014 Land at Winneycroft Farm, Gloucester: geophysical survey, Archaeological Service WYAS typescript report 2605

BGS Online Viewer, <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>, accessed December 2017

CA, 2014 Winneycroft Matson Gloucester Gloucestershire: archaeological evaluation, Cotswold Archaeology unpublished report

CgMs, 2018 Land at Winneycroft, Matson, Gloucester, Gloucestershire: written scheme of investigation for archaeological evaluation and excavation

CifA, 2014 Standard and guidance for archaeological field excavations, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

## APPENDIX A TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 39						
General description					Orientation	NE-SW
Trench located north of Trench 26. It contained seven furrows aligned NE-SW					Length (m)	33.5
					Width (m)	1.65
					Avg. depth (m)	0.45
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
3900	Topsoil	-	0.25	Friable, soft, dark brown clayey silt with only very occasional small-small/medium sized sub-angular pieces of flint, overlaying subsoil 3901	-	-
3901	Subsoil	-	0.2	B-Horizon and remain of a furrow, friable, light brown clayey silt with very occasional small-small/medium sized sub-angular pieces of flint, overlaying natural geology 3902		
3902	Natural geology	-	-	Firm, mottled slightly silty, light grey clay and yellowish light brown clay, no inclusions, overlain by 3901	-	-

Trench 40						
General description					Orientation	N-S
Trench located west of Trench 26. It contained a row of seven shallow round postholes cutting the subsoil horizon. Also, two furrows aligned NE-SW and two stone-filled land-drains.					Length (m)	33.0
					Width (m)	1.65
					Avg. depth (m)	0.45
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
4000	Topsoil	-	0.25	Friable, soft, dark brown clayey silt with only very occasional small-small/medium sized sub-angular pieces of flint, overlaying subsoil 4001	-	-
4001	Subsoil	-	0.2	B-Horizon and remain of a furrow, friable, light brown clayey silt with very occasional small-small/medium sized sub-angular pieces of flint, overlaying natural geology 4002		
4002	Natural geology	-	-	Firm, mottled slightly silty, light grey clay and yellowish light brown clay, no inclusions, overlain by 4001	-	-



4003	Cut	0.4	0.02	Round, a gently to moderate steep side, a flat base, filled with 4004, cutting lower topsoil 4000 and upper subsoil 4001	-	
4004	Fill	0.4	0.02	Friable, dark brown clayey silt, with blades of grass	-	

Trench 41						
General description					Orientation	E-W
Trench located south of Trench 26. It contained three linear features aligned NW-SE – interpreted as continuation of Roman field boundary ditches and furrows uncovered in Trench 42. A modern feature (test pit?) run diagonally across the central part of the trench.					Length (m)	33.0
					Width (m)	1.65
					Avg. depth (m)	0.45
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
4100	Topsoil	-	0.25	Friable, soft, dark brown clayey silt with only very occasional small-small/medium sized sub-angular pieces of flint, overlaying subsoil 4101	-	-
4101	Subsoil	-	0.15	B-Horizon and remain of a furrow, friable, light brown clayey silt with very occasional small-small/medium sized sub-angular pieces of flint, overlaying natural geology 4102		-
4102	Natural geology	-	-	Firm, mottled slightly silty, light grey clay and yellowish light brown clay, no inclusions, overlain by 4101	-	-
4103	Cut	1.34	+ 0.2	Linear, aligned NW-SE, western edge partly truncated by a modern cut (test pit?) and by a furrow, cutting 4102, filled with 4104		
4104	Fill	1.34	+ 0.2	Friable, light brown clayey silt with only occasional pieces of sub-angular pebbles, fill of 4103		
4105	Cut	1.3	+ 0.1	Linear, aligned NW-SE, western edge partly truncated by a modern cut (test pit?), cutting 4102, filled with 4106		
4106	Fill	1.3	+ 0.1	Friable, light brown clayey silt with only occasional pieces of sub-angular pebbles, fill of 4105		
4107	Cut	0.55	+ 0.15	Linear, aligned NW-SE, cutting 4102, filled with 4108		
4108	Fill	0.55	+ 0.15	Friable, light brown clayey silt with only occasional pieces of sub-angular pebbles, fill of 4107.		

Trench 42						
General description					Orientation	N-S
Trench located south of Trench 26. It contained a shallow round post-hole cutting the subsoil horizon.					Length (m)	34.0
					Width (m)	1.65
					Avg. depth (m)	0.4
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
4200	Topsoil	-	0.25	Friable, soft, dark brown clayey silt with only very occasional small-small/medium sized subangular pieces of flint, overlaying subsoil 4201	-	-
4201	Subsoil	-	0.15	B-Horizon and remain of a furrow, friable, light brown clayey silt with very occasional small-small/medium sized subangular pieces of flint, overlaying natural geology 4202	One pottery sherd	Medieval
4202	Natural geology	-	-	Firm, mottled slightly silty, light grey clay and yellowish light brown clay, no inclusions, overlain by 4201	-	-
4203	Cut	0.4	0.02	Round, a gently to moderate steep side, a flat base, filled with 4204, cutting lower topsoil 4200 and upper subsoil 4201	-	Post-medieval
4204	Fill	0.4	0.02	Friable, dark brown clayey silt, fill of 4203	Pottery sherd	Post-medieval

Trench 43						
General description					Orientation	E-W
Trench located south of Trench 26. It contained three linear features, interpreted as a Roman field boundary ditch and two furrows.					Length (m)	33.5
					Width (m)	1.65
					Avg. depth (m)	0.4
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
4300	Topsoil	-	0.35	Friable, soft, dark brown clayey silt with only very occasional small-small/medium sized sub-angular pieces of flint, overlaying subsoil 4301	-	-
4301	Subsoil	-	0.35	B-Horizon and furrows, friable, light brown clayey silt with very occasional small-small/medium sized sub-angular pieces of flint, overlaying natural geology 4302	-	-

4302	Natural geology	-	-	Firm, mottled slightly silty, light grey clay and yellowish light brown clay, no inclusions, overlain by 4301	-	-
4303	Cut	0.8	0.3	Linear, aligned NW-SE, moderately steep sides, a concave base, cutting 4302, filled with 4304	-	Roman
4304	Fill	0.4	0.02	Light brown clayey silt with very occasional small-small/medium sized sub-angular pieces of flint, fill of 4303	Three pottery sherds	Roman
4305	Cut	1.0	+ 0.12	Linear, aligned NW-SE, cutting 4302, filled with 4306		
4306	Fill	1.0	+ 0.12	Light brown clayey silt with very occasional small-small/medium sized sub-angular pieces of flint, fill of 4305		
4307	Cut	1.0	+ 0.1	Linear, aligned NW-SE, cutting 4302, filled with 4308		
4308	Fill	1.0	+ 0.1	Light brown clayey silt with very occasional small-small/medium sized sub-angular pieces of flint, fill of 4307		

## APPENDIX B FINDS REPORTS

### B.1 Pottery

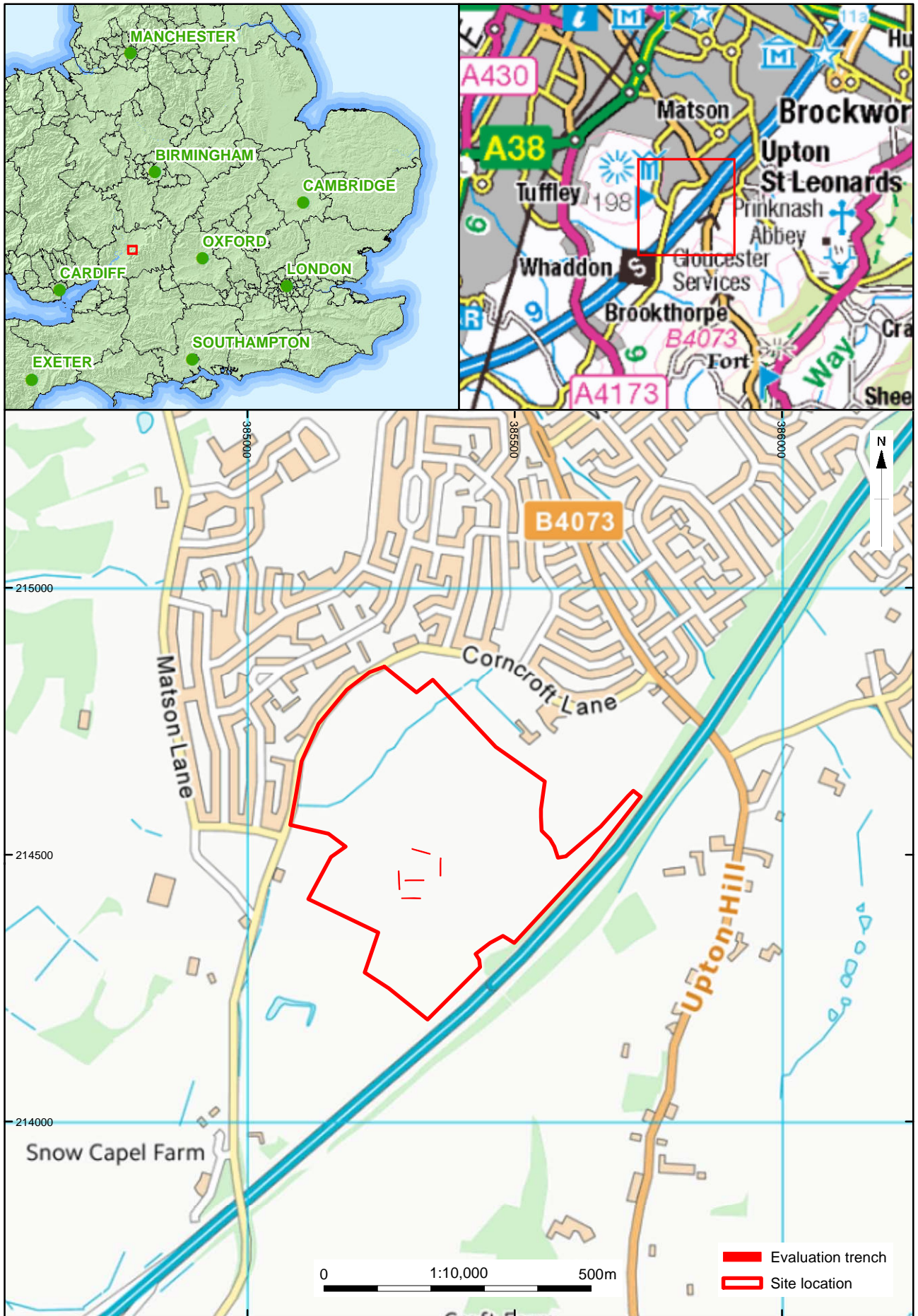
*By John Cotter and Edward Biddulph*

Context	Description	Date
4201	Two very abraded joining sherds Malvernian ware (MALV), 19g	1250 - 1450
4204	One body sherd in post medieval red ware (PMR), 8g	17th – 18th century
4308	Three sherds Severn Valley ware; one sherd limestone tempered with occasional grog, 16g	Early Roman

## APPENDIX C SITE SUMMARY DETAILS / OASIS REPORT FORM

<b>Site name:</b>	Winneycroft, Matson, Gloucester, Gloucestershire
<b>Site code:</b>	OAGWIN19
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SO 85271 14517
<b>Type:</b>	Evaluation
<b>Date and duration:</b>	24th-25th June 2019
<b>Area of Site</b>	0.6ha
<b>Location of archive:</b>	The archive is currently held at OA, (Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES) and will be deposited with the Museum of Gloucester in accordance with the Gloucestershire Archaeological Archives Standards following completion of the mitigation project. in due course, under the following accession number: GRCM:2019.32.
<b>Summary of Results:</b>	<p>In June 2019 Oxford Archaeology conducted the second phase of archaeological evaluation at the site of a proposed new housing development at Winneycroft, Matson, Gloucester, Gloucestershire. Five 30m x 1.8m trenches were excavated in the vicinity of Trench 26 from the previous phase of evaluation, undertaken in 2014, where several Roman pottery sherds had been recovered from the subsoil. This phase of evaluation was intended to locate and characterise any Roman features that were associated with these finds.</p> <p>The evaluation uncovered a Roman field boundary ditch running N-S across two of the trenches (the ditches also probably ran across Trench 26). Other features within the trenches included ridge and furrow cultivation, a shallow post-medieval posthole and a row of seven undated postholes most likely representing a former agricultural fenceline.</p>





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Figure 1: Site location





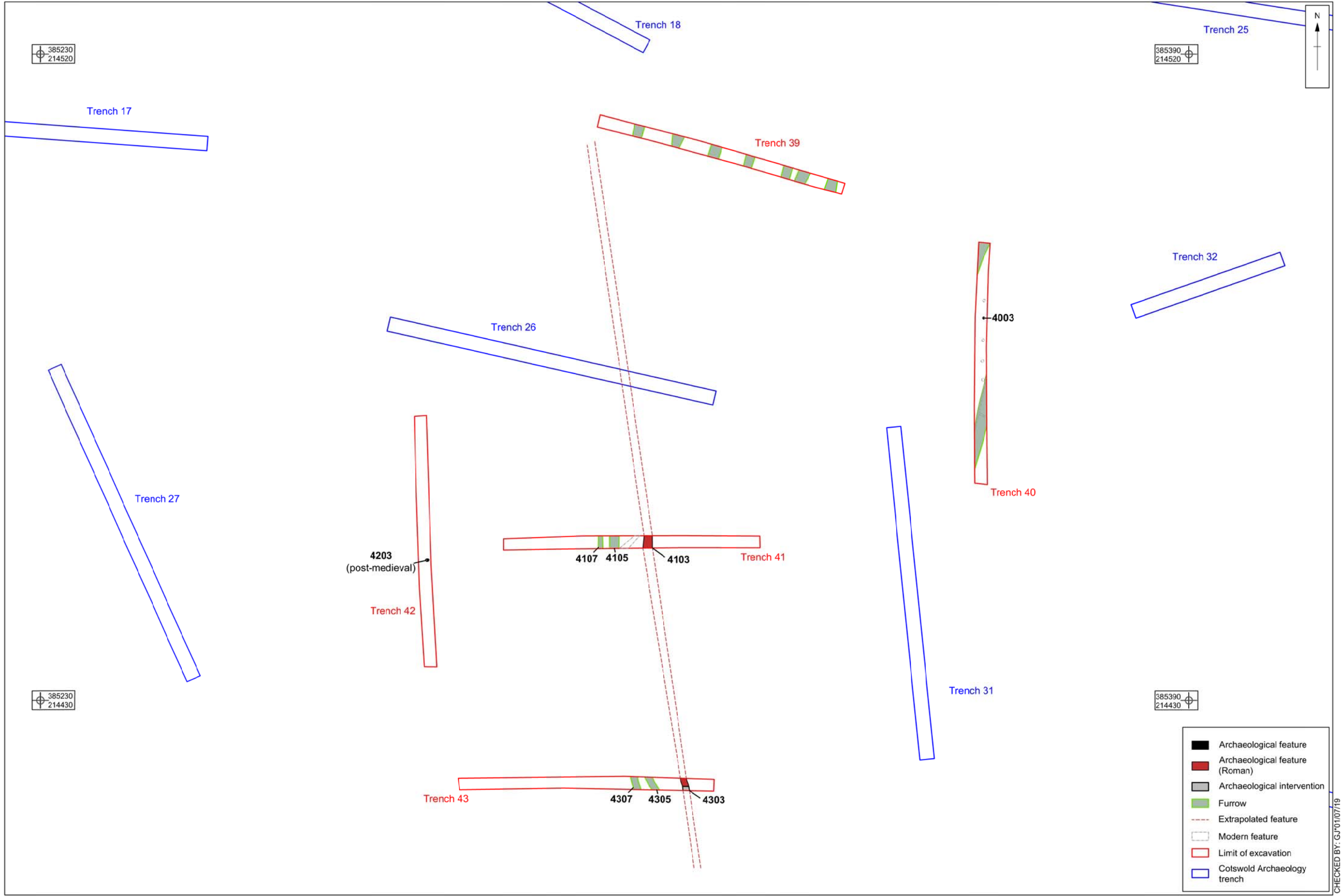


Figure 2: Trench location plan

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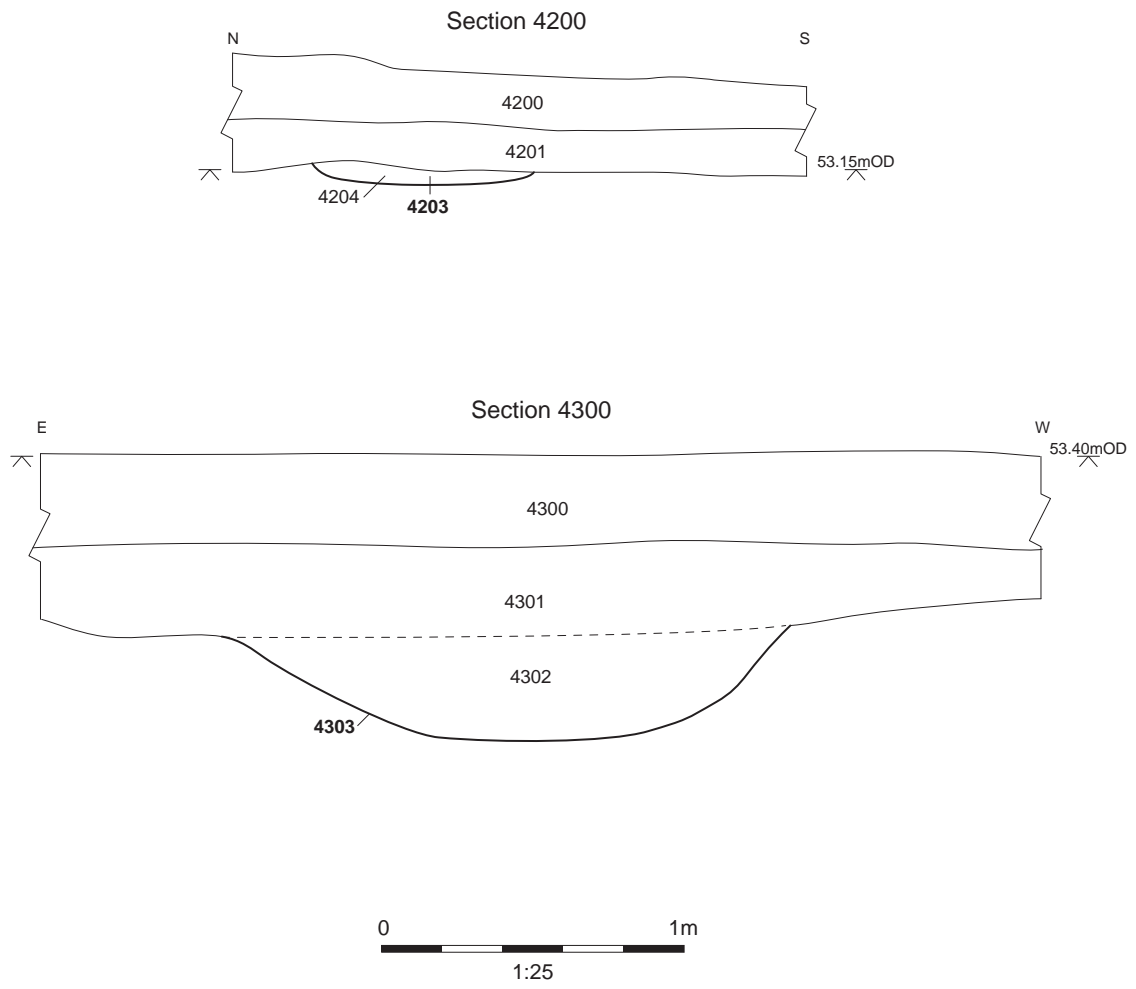


Figure 3: Sections of 4303 and 4203





Plate 1: Trench 42, looking north



Plate 2: Trench 42, representative section, looking east





Plate 3: Trench 39, looking SE



Plate 4: Trench 43, looking east



Plate 5: Trench 43, looking west







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