Whitstable Community College

Whitstable

Kent

Archaeological Evaluation Report

oxfordarchaeology

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Client: Kent County Council/ Willmott Dixon Construction

Client Ref No: BSF Schools Programme
Issue No: Final Report (1)
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Whitstable Community College, Whitstable Kent

NGR TR 116 657

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

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SUMMARY

Between 19th and 23rd August 2008, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at Whitstable Community Collage, Kent on behalf of Kent County Council and Willmott Dixon Construction. The evaluation consisted of six trenches and revealed a modern sand-filled service trench and a small shallow feature, probably a modern post-pad for a scaffold formed during construction of the school. No significant features were revealed in the course of the work.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In August 2008, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at Whitstable Community College, Kent on behalf of Willmott Dixon Construction in respect of a planning application for redevelopment of the existing school and a brief set by and agreed with Kent County Council (KCC 2007). The development site is within the administrative area of Canterbury City Council. The planning application reference is CA/08/271.

1.1.2 The development site is centred on grid reference TR 116 657, within the parish of Whitstable and encompasses 5.3 hectares of school buildings and recreation areas (Fig. 1).

1.2 BSF Schools Project Background

1.2.1 The Kent Schools 2008 Project involves the assessment and recording of ten schools in the County of Kent, prior to commencement of redevelopment works under the Government's Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme.

1.2.2 Through the BSF programme, significant investment in buildings and in Information and Communications Technology is being made to support the Government's educational reform agenda. Funds are intended to be devolved to Local Authorities and schools throughout England to spend on maintaining and improving their school buildings and in some cases for major rebuilding and remodelling projects.

1.2.3 Archaeological investigation in the form of trial trenching has been incorporated into this programme, in order to mitigate any damage to the archaeological resource present at the any of the schools currently under redevelopment.

1.3 Geology and topography

1.3.1 The underlying geology of the site is Eocene blue grey clay (GSGB, 1974, Sheet 273) and it is located at an approximate height of 30 m OD. The site slopes slightly from west to east.

1.4 Archaeological and historical background

1.4.1 The archaeological background to the evaluation has been the subject of a separate desk-based study (OA 2007), the results of which are summarised below.

1.4.2 There have been two previous archaeological investigations within the vicinity of Whitstable Community College. One of these recorded no remains of archaeological significance, while the other recorded limited Iron Age and Roman activity.

1.4.3 The desk-based assessment concluded that the potential was low for prehistoric remains, moderate for Roman remains, low for medieval, and reasonably high for post-medieval. This is mainly based upon the potential remains of three buildings dating from the 18th century known to have existed on the site.

2 EVALUATION AIMS

2.1.1 The principal objective of the evaluation was to determine the quality, character, date and extent of any archaeological remains present on the site, to supplement information gathered during the desk-based archaeological assessment.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork

3.1.1 The evaluation was originally intended to comprise six trenches. Trenches 1 and 4 were machine excavated and Trenches 2, 5 and 6 were hand-dug. One of the hand excavations (Trench 3) was not completed, by agreement with the County Archaeological Officer (see section 4.1.5 below and Figure 2).

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

3.2.1 Trenches 1 and 4 were excavated using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. Working under close archaeological supervision the overburden was removed to the first archaeological horizon or to undisturbed natural geology, whichever was encountered first. The layers of overburden were kept separate from each other so that they could be replaced in the correct stratigraphic sequence during the backfilling.

3.2.2 Trenches 2, 5 and 6 were hand excavated by to the first archaeological horizon or to undisturbed natural geology, whichever was encountered first. All the trenches were then cleaned by hand and the revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds and environmental samples.

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

3.3 Finds

3.3.1 No archaeologically significant finds were recovered during the course of the evaluation.

3.4 Palaeo-environmental remains

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

4 RESULTS:

4.1 Description of Trenches

4.1.1 The six trenches were located at various points across the site within the proposed new building footprints (Fig. 2). The trenches were intended to ascertain the density of the archaeological features and their overall condition in terms of survival and potential for further study. Below is a summary of each trench detailing the excavated stratigraphic sequence of deposits:

Trench 1

4.1.2 Trench 1 measured 18.5 m by 1.65 m. It was excavated to an average depth of 0.3 m where natural was encountered. In this trench, this consisted of a layer (103) of firm green / orange mixed gravel and clay. Directly above this was a makeup layer of loose light pink grey type one aggregate sub-base (102), with a thickness of 0.2 m. This was overlain and sealed by a solid black tarmac layer (101), with a thickness of 0.08 m, which formed the current car-park ground surface (Fig. 3).

Trench 2

4.1.3 Trench 2 was hand excavated in a narrow strip between two existing buildings. It measured 2 m by 2 m and was excavated to an average depth of 0.5 m where natural was revealed. This consisted of a firm mid slightly orange brown clay containing rare flints (202). The surface of the natural in this trench sloped down slightly, from west to east. It was overlain by (201), a very compact mid brown silty clay with frequent brick rubble inclusions and a thickness of 0.2 m. This was sealed by a very compact dark brown silty clay turf- covered topsoil (200) with a thickness of 0.3 m (Fig. 3).

4.1.4 Crossing this trench from N-S was a modern sand-filled service trench, indicating considerable disturbance to the ground in the narrow strip between the two existing buildings.

Trench 3

4.1.5 With agreement with the Kent County Council County Archaeological Officer, this trench was not excavated, as it was felt that no further information would be obtained that had not already been recovered from Trench 2. It was clear that the modern service exposed in Trench 2 continued through this location.

Trench 4

4.1.6 Trench 4 measured 22 m by 1.65 m. It was machine excavated to an average depth of 0.6 m where natural was identified. In this trench, the natural consisted of a layer (404) of soft yellow brown silty clay, with patches of flint gravel. This was directly overlain by, a soft light grey silty clay makeup layer (403) containing building rubble. Overlying this was a rubble makeup layer (402) with an average thickness of 0.35 m, consisting of red bricks, concrete and broken tarmac. Above this was a makeup layer of loose light pink grey type one aggregate sub-base (401), with a thickness of 0.1m. This was overlain and sealed by a solid black tarmac layer (400), with a thickness of 0.08 m, which formed the current car-park ground surface.

Trench 5

4.1.7 Trench 5 was hand excavated. It measured 1.5 m by 2.67 m and was excavated to an average depth of 0.27 m where natural (502) was encountered. The natural consisted of a layer of firm mid orange brown clay with occasional flint inclusions. Above this was a firm mid grey brown silty clay makeup layer (501), containing brick rubble and flints, with a thickness of 0.18 m. This was sealed by a turf-covered mid grey brown silty clay topsoil (500), which was 0.1 m thick.

Trench 6

4.1.8 Trench 6 (Fig. 3) was hand excavated. It measured 2 m by 2 m and was dug to an average depth of 0.34 m to natural. In this trench, the natural (604) was a firm mid brown clay with flint inclusions. It was overlain by a green grey silty clay makeup layer (601) containing stones and ceramic building material, with a thickness of 0.29 m. This was overlain and sealed by a firm, turf-covered, dark grey brown silty clay topsoil (600) with a thickness of 0.05 m.

4.1.9 Cut into the natural (604) and sealed by the makeup layer (601) was a small square feature (602). This was filled by a green grey silty clay (603). While no finds were recovered from this feature, its very regular shape and near-vertical sides suggest it is most likely to be of modern date. It was also filled with the same material as the makeup layer (601).

5 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 Archaeology

5.1.1 Despite the relatively high potential for post-medieval remains, suggested by the desk-based assessment, no archaeologically significant features were found within any of the trenches during this evaluation. During the entire evaluation only two features were uncovered and these, being of modern date had no archaeological significance.

5.1.2 In Trench 2, a clearly modern sand-filled service trench was exposed. The only other feature was uncovered along the northern edge of Trench 6. This was a relatively small, square and shallow feature 602. No finds were recovered from this feature but its shape and profile suggested a recent date. Its fill comprised the same material as the overlying makeup layer (601). The most logical conclusion is therefore that this feature was a post-pad, perhaps for scaffolding, created during the construction of the existing school buildings. It is likely to have become filled at the same time as makeup layer (601) was brought in prior to the laying of the present turf.

5.2 Potential impact of the development

5.2.1 The results of the evaluation have shown that where new building work is to be carried out on the site, the potential to disturb existing archaeological remains is low. This is partly due to the fact that previous construction has already impacted the level of any potential archaeological levels. In addition, areas where recent disturbance has not occurred were found to be archaeologically sterile.

5.3 Recommendations for further work

5.3.1 Despite the absence of significant archaeological features or finds within any of the trenches, and the extensive evidence for ground disturbance, a watching brief is recommended on groundworks associated with construction of the new buildings, including the new building footprints, landscaping and car parks, where these have potential to expose archaeology. A watching brief is recommended because the trenching sample was not as extensive as could have been wished in the present enclosed courtyard area, where access by a mechanical excavator was not possible. There remains, therefore, the possibility that isolated archaeological remains survive in areas between the evaluation trenches.

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench	*Ctx No*	*Type*	*Width (m)*	*Thick. (m)*	*Comment*	*Finds*
1						
	101	Layer		0.08	Tarmac	
	102	Layer		0.20	Sub-base	
	103	Layer			Natural	
2						
	200	Layer		0.30	Topsoil	
	201	Layer		0.20	Makeup	
	202	Layer			Natural	
3					Not Excavated	
4						
	400	Layer		0.04	Tarmac	
	401	Layer		0.10	Sub-base	
	402	Layer		0.35	Rubble Makeup	
	403	Layer		0.15	Makeup	
	404	Layer			Natural	
5						
	500	Layer		0.10	Topsoil	
	501	Layer		0.18	Makeup	
	502	Layer			Natural	
6						
	600	Layer		0.05	Topsoil	
	601	Layer		0.29	Makeup	
	602	Cut	0.34	0.12	Modern post-pad	
	603	Fill	0.34	0.12	Post-pad Fill	
	604	Layer			Natural	

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

KCC 2007 *Specification for archaeological evaluation at the Community College, Whitstable, Kent*

OAU 1992 *Fieldwork Manual* (1st edition)

Oxford Archaeology 2007 *The Community College, Whitstable, Kent. Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Whitstable Community College, Whitstable, Kent
Site code: KS6WCC08
Grid reference: NGR TR 116 657
Type of evaluation: 6-trench archaeological field evaluation
Date and duration of project: 19th and 23rd August 2008
Area of site: 5.3 hectares
Summary of results: The evaluation revealed a modern sand-filled service trench and a small shallow feature, probably a post-pad for a scaffold formed during construction of the school. No significant features were located.
Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with a suitable local museum in due course.

Scale: 1:10,000

Figure 1: Site location

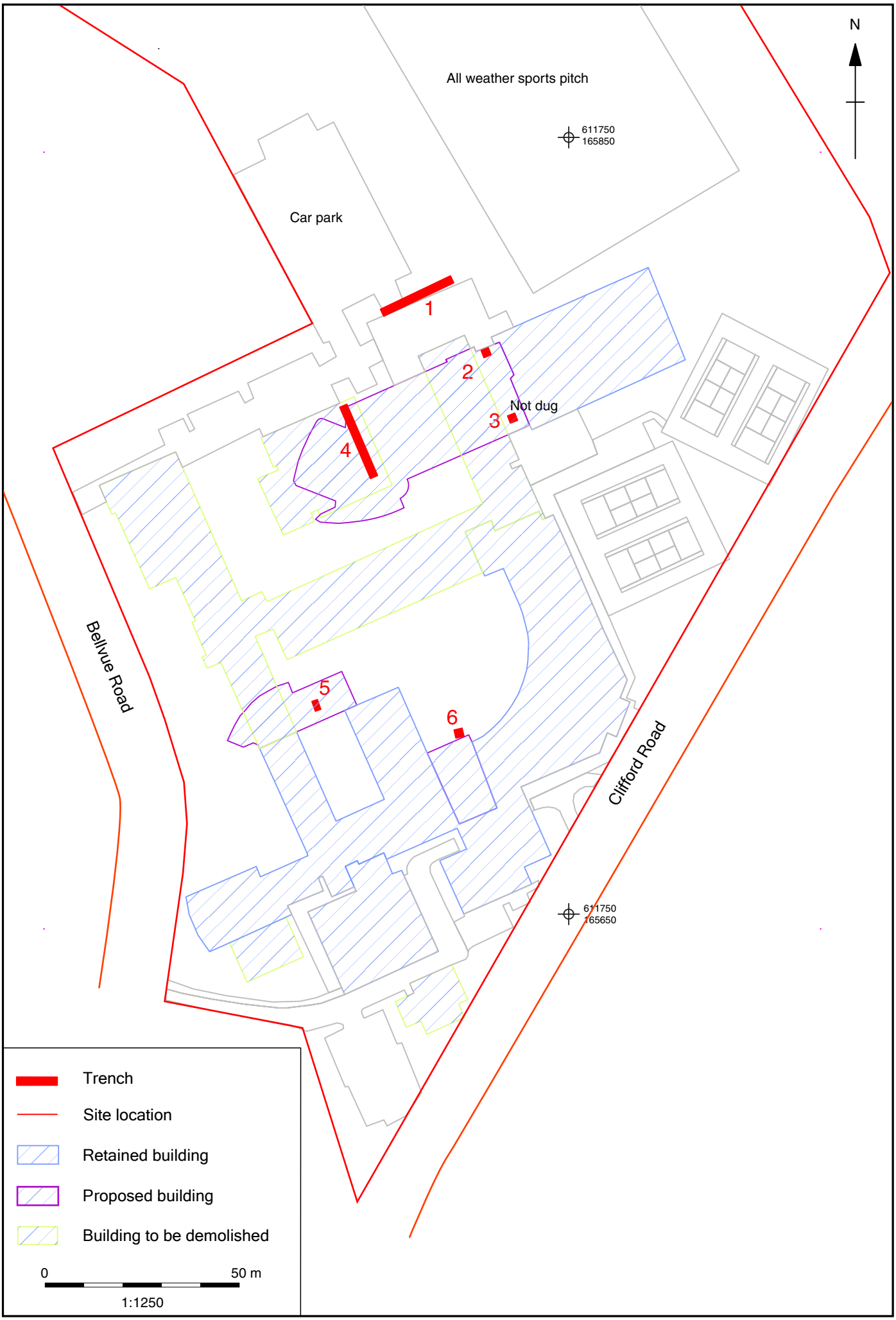

Figure 2: Trench location plan

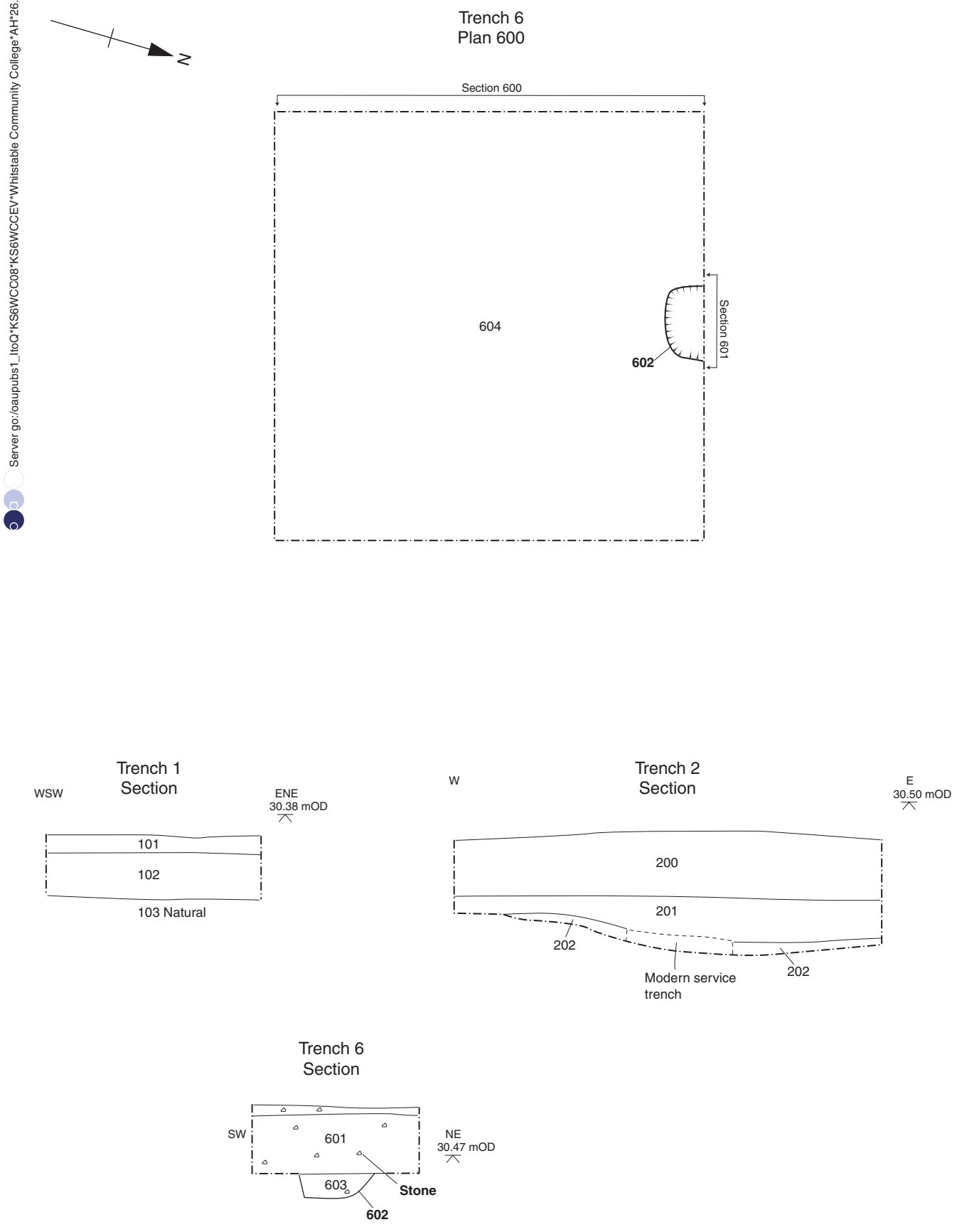

Figure 3 : Plan of trench 6 and sample sections

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