

Archaeological Evaluation Report

HOLT ROAD WREXHAM

For RPS Group

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L~P:ARCHÆOLOGY

Archaeological Evaluation Report

HOLT ROAD, WREXHAM

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Crynodeb

Gwnaed Gwerthusiad Archaeolegol ar dir oddi ar Ffordd Holt yn Wrecsam. Roedd hyn yn cynnwys cloddio pedair ffos ar ddeg, wedi'u lleoli uwchben anomaleddau a adnabuwyd yn ystod arolwg geoffisegol a gynhaliwyd ar y safle; nod y gwerthusiad oedd adnabod a disgrifio unrhyw olion tanddaearol posibl yn gysylltiedig â'r anomaleddau hyn. Cynhaliwyd y gwaith maes ar 23 Mawrth a 3 Ebrill 2020 gan L – P: Archaeology ar ran RPS Group.

Nid yw'r safle wedi'i leoli o fewn unrhyw Ardal Gadwraeth, ac nid yw'n cynnwys Henebion Cofrestredig nac Adeiladau Rhestredig. Darganfuwyd un ased treftadaeth heb ei ddynodi, cloddfa glai ôl-ganoloesol yn hanner gorllewinol y safle. Mae'n bosib hefyd fod safle damwain awyren yn eistedd ar y ffin.

Yn ystod y Gwerthusiad Archaeolegol adnabuwyd nodweddion crwn cyn-hanesyddol gyda darnau o grochenwaith o'r cyfnod Neolithig Hwyr neu'r Oes Efydd Gynnar yn Ffos 1, dehonglwyd y rhain fel pydewau a ffyrnau clamp, tebyg i'r rhai hynny a adnabuwyd yn safle cyfagos, Chwarel Borrás. Adnabuwyd manylion toredig sylweddol posibl yn Ffos 2 a 10 hefyd, fodd bynnag, nid oedd modd dyddio'r rhain ac maent ar wahân o'i gymharu â Ffos 1.

Adnabuwyd crochenwaith ôl-ganoloesol yn Ffos 8, y credid ei fod yn gysylltiedig gyda meddiannaeth Bryn Estyn Court. Roedd Ffos 11 yn nodwedd chwarel bosib na chafodd ei nodi ar y map hanesyddol, a oedd yn cynhyrchu crochenwaith yn dyddio i oddeutu 1680+.

Ni ddaethpwyd o hyd i nodweddion archaeolegol yn y 9 ffos arall, gyda naill ai daeareg naturiol neu nodweddion a gwasanaethau modern yn bresennol.

Yn dilyn trafodaethau gyda RPS (ymgyngorydd archaeolegol) a'r archaeolegydd

cynllunio (CPAT), cytunwyd bod darganfyddiad nodweddion cyn-hanesyddol yn mynnu rhagor o waith wedi'i raglennu.

Abstract

An Archaeological Evaluation was carried out on land off Holt Road in Wrexham. This comprised the excavation of fourteen trenches, located over anomalies identified from a geophysical survey undertaken on the site; the evaluation was to identify and characterise any potential below ground remains associated with these anomalies. The fieldwork was carried out 23rd March and 3rd April 2020 by L – P : Archaeology on behalf of the RPS Group.

The site does not lie within any Conservation Area, contains no Scheduled Monuments or Listed building. A single non-designated heritage asset, a Post Medieval marl pit is identified in the western half of the site. A possible aircraft crash site may also straddle the boundary.

The Archaeological Evaluation identified Prehistoric circular features with fragments of Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age pottery in Trench 1, these were interpreted as pits and clamp ovens, similar to those identified at the neighbouring site of Borrass Quarry. Trenches 2 and 10 also identified potentially significant cut features, however, these were undated and isolated by comparison with Trench 1.

Some Post Medieval pottery was identified in Trench 8 which was thought to be associated with the occupation of Bryn Estyn Court. Trench 11 was a possible quarry feature not noted on the historic mapping, which produced pottery dated c.1680+.

The remaining 9 trenches produced little in the way of archaeological features, with either natural geologies or modern features and services present.

Following discussions with RPS (archaeological consultant) and the planning archaeologist (CPAT) it is agreed that the discovery of the Prehistoric features necessitates further conditioned work.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report details the results of an Archaeological Evaluation carried out on the site at Holt Road, Wrexham, on behalf of RPS Group.
- 1.2. The fieldwork was managed by Dan Garner of L – P : Archaeology and carried out by Chris Matthews and Matthew Thomas of L – P : Archaeology between 23rd March and 3rd April 2020. This report was written by Chris Matthews of L - P : Archaeology.
- 1.3. The site is located at land off Holt Road, Wrexham LL13 9SB. (FIGURE 1). The National Grid Reference is SJ 36133, 51489.
- 1.4. A series of fourteen trenches were excavated across the site at pre-defined locations as agreed in the written scheme of investigation (FIGURE 2). A number of the trenches were moved slightly to avoid overhead HV cables which criss-crossed the site. Trench 3 was relocated with the agreement of Mark Walters (CPAT) and an additional Trench 14 was excavated to test an area of high ground located in the middle southern field. The site code allocated by L – P : Archaeology is LP3525C.
- 1.5. All works were carried out in accordance with the approved written scheme of investigation (TONG J 2020) and in conjunction with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Evaluation (CIFA 2014B).

2. Site Background

2.1.PLANNING

2.1.1. The Historic Environment (Wales) Act (2016) is the most recent legislation for the management of the Historic Environment in Wales and amends two pieces of UK legislation — the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The Act has three main aims:

- ◆ to give more effective protection to listed buildings and scheduled monuments;
- ◆ to improve the sustainable management of the historic environment; and
- ◆ to introduce greater transparency and accountability into decisions taken on the historic environment.

2.1.2. When considering a planning application, Wrexham County Borough Council is bound by Welsh Government Planning Policy (10TH EDITION, 2018) Section 6 and Tan 24: the Historic Environment (MAY 2017) from Planning Policy Wales.

2.1.3. Currently Wrexham County Borough Council (WCBC) abide by the policies laid out in the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011 regarding archaeology and planning, in this case Policy EC11.

2.1.4. On matters concerning archaeology and the historic environment WCBC take impartial advice from the Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT).

2.1.5. The works form part of a phased approach, as recommended by Mark Walters of CPAT. A geophysical survey of the site was undertaken in May 2019 by Magnitude Surveys (KESTERTON 2019), which identified potential areas of archaeological interest. An Archaeological Evaluation was instructed to investigate these anomalies, prior to the determination of a planning application.

2.1.6. The event number assigned to this project by CPAT Historic Environment Records is: Event PRN 164331.

2.1.7. The site is not within any Conservation Areas. There are no Scheduled Monuments, Registered Battlefields, Historic Parks and Gardens or World Heritage Sites within the site.

2.2.GEOLOGY

2.2.1. The British Geological Survey GeoIndex for the site records the superficial deposits of Devensian over a bedrock of Salop formation mudstone, sandstone (BRITISH GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, 2017).

2.2.2. This data is at relatively low resolution and does not give site specific data.

2.3.TOPOGRAPHY

2.3.1. The site is located to the east of Wrexham town centre, outside of the historic Medieval core. It lies to the south of the A534 Holt Road and Borrass Quarry, with housing to the west, a large house to the south and further agricultural fields to the east.

2.3.2. The site is located over eight undeveloped fields, divided by trees and hedgerows. A small coppice lies within the western are, in the location of the historic marl pit (HER 82623).

2.3.3. The site is an irregular polygon in shape covering 28.52ha of undulating land, at its highest point the height is 76m OD.

2.4.ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

2.4.1. The aim of this section is not to give an entire history of Wrexham but to highlight the heritage assets and periods of time with potential archaeological remains specific to the site. A Heritage Assessment was submitted by CgMs Consulting in August 2018 (MERCER, R 2018), this section represents a summary of that research.

2.4.2. 500m to the north of the site is Borrass Quarry, it has under gone multiple events primarily by Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust and include both non intrusive assessments and archaeological investigations. Work here has uncovered evidence of mid Neolithic settlement activity, extending into the early Bronze Age period (GRANT I 2013). Features have included linears, ditches,

pits and oven, with fragments of Prehistoric ceramic including grooved ware and Irish sea ware, as well as, environmental evidence of hazelnuts and charred grains.

- 2.4.3. Mesolithic flints, a Neolithic stone axe and Bronze Age hoard consisting of bronze palstaves and chisels have been discovered between 1-1.9km to the north of the site.
- 2.4.4. Isolated Roman finds from the HER coins, spindle whorls and a bow broach. A farmstead is known at Plas Coch 3.2km to the west and a tile and pottery works at Holt, 5km to the northeast.
- 2.4.5. The site lies outside of Wrexham historic Medieval core, however, Borrass Hall 1.15km to the northwest is believed to date to the early 14th century, with a seal of Madog found nearby. Other evidence in a 1km radius of the site include ridge and furrow, holloways and a buckle.
- 2.4.6. Historic mapping shows the site has remained a system of agricultural fields from 1879 (FIGURE 3, FIGURE 4) to present day, with tree and hedgerow boundaries. Some of these boundaries have changed over time, however, no other change is identified.
- 2.4.7. A marl pit is recorded (82623) within the site and a possible WWII air crash site (86023) to the northwest boundary. Borrass air field lay to the north of the site during the 1940s and the crash is associated with period in time. Surrounding the site are multiple Post Medieval houses and Farmsteads dating from c1800 onwards.

3. Aims and Objectives

3.1.The general aims of the Archaeological Evaluation were:

- ◆ To determine the presence or absence of archaeological deposits or remains,
- ◆ to record the character, date, location and preservation of any archaeological remains by record,
- ◆ to record the nature and extent of any previous damage to archaeological remains on the site.

3.2.The specific aims of the Archaeological Evaluation were:

- ◆ To investigate the anomalies identified by the geophysical survey and
- ◆ to identify whether there are any other unrecorded archaeological features or deposits within the site.

4. Methodology

- 4.1. All works were carried out in accordance with the approved written scheme of investigation (TONG J 2020), the Code of Conduct as set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIFA 2014A) and Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for Archaeological evaluation (CIFA 2014B).
- 4.2. Archaeological features encountered were appropriately excavated and recorded, with site code LP3525C allocated by L – P : Archaeology. This site code was used on all documentary archive.
- 4.3. A small assemblage of finds were retained and assessed in accordance with the Guidelines for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials (CIFA 2014C).
- 4.4. Gaining the consent of the landowner, the finds assemblage will be retained for deposition with the site archive to the appropriate Museum.
- 4.5. The project archive will be prepared in line with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives (CIFA 2014D) and in consultation with Wrexham Museum.

5. Results

5.1. The results of the Evaluation are given below, trench by trench. Not all context numbers referred to in the text are illustrated, but all are in the archive. Deposit and masonry numbers are given in (parentheses) and cut numbers are given in [square brackets].

5.2. The Archaeological Evaluation consisted of fourteen trenches, each was 1.8m wide and varied from 15m to 55m in length targeting features identified from the geophysical survey.

TRENCH 1

5.3. Trench 1 was located in the northwest area of the site, 1.8m wide and 30m in length and in a west to east alignment (FIGURE 5).

5.3.1. **Summary:** This trench identified 9 cut features all of which have potential archaeological significance. Four of these features, pits [107], [117], [110] and [114] contained evidence of burning with rich charcoal deposits and fire-cracked stone, the latter two also producing Prehistoric pottery with a preliminary date of Late Neolithic to Early Bronze Age. The features follow a similar pattern to Prehistoric activity identified by the Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust at Borrás Quarry located less than 1km to the north. The linear features targeted from the geophysical survey data were not identified in the trench.

5.3.2. The stratigraphy in this trench consisted of a topsoil made up of modern agricultural soils (101) overlaying a reddish brown coarse sandy soil (102), with a combined depth of 0.45m. Below this was a natural yellow fine grain sand (103), cut into which several pit features were identified (PLATE 1).

5.3.3. At the western end of the trench were two small pit features. The larger measured 0.4m wide and 0.35m deep [124] (PLATE 2), with a single fill of greyish brown sand (125). The second smaller feature was immediately east, this was not fully excavated, seen as a sub circular feature [126] measuring 0.26m wide and containing a similar greyish brown sandy fill (127).



Plate 1- Overview of Trench 1.
Facing east, 1m scale.

5.3.4. In the centre of the trench was a large pit [104], measuring 3.4m wide (extending into the southern section) and 0.6m deep. This feature contained two fills, an upper dark orangey brown organic sandy soil (106) and a lower fill consisting of greyish-brown sand (105), discernible with a greater moisture content than the surrounding natural buff sand (103).



Plate 2- Trench 1, east facing section of [124]. 0.5m scale.

5.3.5. Approximately 6m to the east of [104], was a cluster of several pit features. Oval pit feature [110] located centrally within the trench, measured 0.75m wide and 0.52m deep. It contained an upper grey sandy deposit with charcoal flecks (111) overlaying a dark charcoal rich sand (112) with inclusions of fire-cracked stone (40%) and small fragments of Prehistoric pottery, this was interpreted as a tipping layer (PLATE 3). A 5L sample of this charcoal rich material (112) was obtained from this feature (Sample 001). At the base of the feature was greyish brown sand (113) (FIGURE 6).



Plate 3- Trench 1 southeast facing section of feature [110].
0.5m scale.

5.3.6. Adjacent to [110] extending into the north section, was part of a small oval pit [107], 0.47m wide and 0.36m deep (PLATE 4). This contained a greyish brown upper sandy fill with charcoal flecks (108) overlaying a dark charcoal rich sand with fire-cracked stones (20%) (109).



Plate 4- Trench 1, south facing section of [107]. 0.5m scale.

- 5.3.7. Opposite this feature against the southern section was a small irregular square pit feature [120], 0.33m wide and 0.18m deep which consisted of a single greyish brown sandy fill (121). Directly east of this was a second square feature [122] extending into the south section; it was 0.64m wide and 0.23m deep, containing a single fill of greyish brown sand (123). Neither feature contained finds.
- 5.3.8. To the east of the cluster were two intercutting circular pits, the earlier oval pit [114] was 0.9m wide, 1m long and 0.3m thick. This consisted of two fills, an upper charcoal rich sandy fill (113) with inclusions of fire-cracked stone (30%) and small fragments of Prehistoric pottery. The lower was a greyish brown sand (116) with charcoal flecks, fire-cracked stone (10%) and large fragments of Prehistoric pottery, which appeared to be laying flat on the base of the cut. At the base was several intrusions identified as animal burrowing, visible as circular intrusions and meandering channels in the surrounding sand. A second circular pit [117] was cutting [114], which was partially extending into the south section and consisted of an upper charcoal rich fill (118) overlaying a greyish brown sand (119) (PLATE 5).



Plate 5- Trench 1 overview of feature [114] and [117].
Facing east, 0.5m scale.

TRENCH 2

5.4. Trench 2 was located towards the centre of the site and in the northern half. It was 1.8 by 45m in size in a northwest to southeast alignment (FIGURE 7).

5.4.1. The trench was targeting a magnetic anomaly identified by the geophysical survey data, however, in the field this was identified as disturbance generated by a modern pylon 4m to the northeast of the trench. To avoid this the excavation was moved 1.6m to the southwest, maintaining a safe distance from the pylon.

5.4.2. **Summary:** There were two undated features identified in this trench that may have archaeological potential given the Prehistoric activity identified in Trench 1. The third feature consisted of a 20th century pit and is likely to be associated with either modern agricultural activity or potentially the previous location of a pylon given its proximity to an active overhead line.

5.4.3. The trench consisted of a modern agricultural topsoil (201) overlaying reddish brown coarse sandy soil (202), the same as Trench 1. The natural was encountered at 0.54m below the surface, as a mixture of natural yellow fine grain sand and a wide seam of gravel (203) (PLATE 6).



Plate 6- Overview of Trench 2, facing southeast. 1m scale.

5.4.4. At the northern end of the trench was an east to west linear, between 1.4m and 1.8m wide [204]. This contained a single fill of reddish dark brown silty sand (205).

5.4.5. In the centre was a large oval pit [208], 2m wide and containing a mixed fill (209) of dark brown silty sandy gravel with inclusions of lignite and charcoal. This feature produced 20th century ceramics.

5.4.6. Cut into the natural gravel deposits at the southern end of the trench, was a small oval pit [106] 0.92m long, 0.64m wide and 0.2m deep; it contained a single reddish mid-brown silty sand (207) with sub angular stone inclusions.

TRENCH 3

5.5. Trench 3 was 1.8m wide and 30m in length in a northwest to southeast alignment. The trench was originally located to the east of Trench 2, however, the magnetic disturbance was caused by two extant pylons, one crossed over the trench and the second 1.5m to the east. The trench was moved 13m to the northwest of its original location.

5.5.1. **Summary:** This trench produced two features, one of which was a modern service pipe (likely water). The other was a single undated featured identified in this trench that may have archaeological potential given the Prehistoric

activity identified in Trench 1. No datable artefacts were obtained from the trench and the only additional feature was a modern plastic service pipe (FIGURE 8).

5.5.2. The upper topsoil (301) and reddish brown coarse sandy soil (302) was the same as the previous trenches. The yellow sandy natural (303) was identified at 0.48m below the surface (303); evidence of animal burrowing were seen as patches of dark brown deposits (PLATE 7).



Plate 7- Overview of Trench 3, facing north. 1m scale.

5.5.3. Running through the centre of the trench was a service cut [304] containing a modern black plastic pipe, though to be water.

5.5.4. At the southern end of the trench was an irregular shaped pit feature [305] with a light greyish brown fill measuring 0.41m wide, 0.63m long and 0.11m deep (306) (PLATE 8). The feature may be related to nearby burrowing but its greyish fill could indicate archaeological origins.



Plate 8- Trench 3, pit feature [305], southwest facing section. 1m scale.

TRENCH 4

5.6. Trench 4 was located towards the centre of the site, 1.8m by 45m in size, northwest to southeast aligned (FIGURE 9).

5.6.1. **Summary:** This trench produced a single linear feature similar to a linear identified in Trench 2 that may have archaeological potential given the prehistoric activity identified in Trench 1. The results of this trench suggest that the linear striations shown in the magnetic survey data are a combination of plough scars occurring within the top 30cm of the soil and lower geological seams of clay within the natural sand at around 0.5m below the surface.

5.6.2. The upper topsoil (401) and coarse sandy deposit (402) were the same as the previous trenches, within (402) were visible plough scars which followed a similar orientation as the modern cultivation. At a depth of 0.5m and 0.6m below the surface was the natural yellow sand (403), with linear seams of red gritty clay in the southern half of the trench (PLATE 9).

5.6.3. Cut into the natural in the north end, was a shallow V shaped linear [404] running east to west and measuring 0.7m wide with a depth of 0.25cm. It had a single mid orangey brown silty sand fill (405) (PLATE 10).



Plate 9- Oblique view of Trench 4,
facing south. 1m scale

2.



Plate 10- Southwest facing section of linear [404]. 1m scale.

TRENCH 5

5.7. Trench 5 was located to the east of trench 4, in a northeast to southwest alignment, 1.8m wide and 55m long.

5.7.1. **Summary:** Plough scars were the only archaeological features identified in this trench. The linear striations shown in the magnetic survey data are likely the result of a combination of plough scars occurring within the top 30cm of the soil and lower geological seams of clay within the sand at around 0.5m below the surface (PLATE 11).

5.7.2. The stratigraphy was the same as Trench 4, with agricultural topsoil (501), coarse sandy soil (502) and yellow sand and gritty clay natural (503) at a depth of 0.5m (PLATE 12). Within (502) were visible plough scars following the same orientation the modern cultivation running northeast to southwest.



Plate 11- Overview of Trench 5. Facing southwest, 1m scale.



Plate 12- Representative section. Facing southeast, 1m scale.

TRENCH 6

5.8. Trench 6 was located to the south between Trenches 3 and 4, it was 1.8 by 15m in length.

5.8.1. **Summary:** This trench produced a single rectangular pit feature, seen as a magnetic anomaly in the survey data. This pit feature is likely to relate to agricultural activity or the overhead power line (FIGURE 10).



Plate 13- Overview of Trench 6, facing northwest. 1m scale.

5.8.2. It had the same topsoil (601) and sandy soils (602) as the rest of the site; the natural (603) was a mixture of gritty sand in the southern half of the trench and red gritty clay in the northern half (PLATE 13).

5.8.3. In the middle of the trench a rectangular pit [604] was cut into the subsoil (602), measuring 1.6m wide and 0.6m deep. It contained a mixed fill of re-deposited clay, sand and topsoil with inclusions of lignite (605).

TRENCH 7

5.9. Trench 7 was located in the centre of the eastern side of the site, the trench was northeast to southwest aligned at 25m long and 1.8m wide.

5.9.1. **Summary:** This trench produced no significant features, minor disturbances in the natural sand were attributed to pockets of lignite.



Plate 14- Trench 7 overview. Facing south, 1m scale.

5.9.2. The stratigraphy in this trench consisted of a topsoil made up of modern agricultural soils (701) overlaying a reddish brown coarse sandy soil (702). The underlying natural was at a depth of up to 0.6m and consisted of gritty and fine grain sand with concentrations of naturally occurring lignite (703) (PLATE 14).

TRENCH 8

5.10. Trench 8 was located south of Trench 7, in the centre of the eastern side of the site, it was northeast to southwest aligned 1.8m by 30m in size. The magnetic anomaly in the survey data, could on site be identified as disturbance from a pylon 1.6m to the southeast of the trench and also a surrounding waterlogged basin. The excavation was therefore moved 16.5m to the west of the original location.

5.10.1. **Summary:** The 19th and 20th century material in the topsoil is likely due to the proximity of Bryn Estyn Hall and its former estate buildings, there were no significant archaeological features identified in this trench.

5.10.2. The topsoil as made up of modern agricultural soils (801), which containing 18th to 20th century domestic material such as ceramics, clay pipe and glass. This overlay the reddish brown coarse sandy soil (802), with the natural fine sands (803) at 0.6m depths (FIGURE 11), with concentrations of naturally occurring lignite (PLATE 15).



Plate 15- Overview of Trench 8. facing southwest, 1m scale.

TRENCH 9

5.11.Trench 9 was located adjacent to the centre of the western boundary, it was 1.8m by 20m in size in a slightly off east to west alignment.

5.11.1.**Summary:** Similar to Trench 7, this trench produced no significant features with the exception of minor disturbances in the natural sand attributed to pockets of lignite and a geological seam of gravel running north to south at the eastern end of the trench (PLATE 16).

5.11.2.The stratigraphy reflected the rest of the site, agricultural topsoil (901) and coarse sandy soil (902) overlying sand and gritty natural (903). The natural was encountered at depths of 0.6m (FIGURE 11), with concentrations of naturally occurring lignite and a gravel seam running along the eastern end of the trench.



Plate 16- Overview of Trench 9.
Facing east, 1m scale.

TRENCH 10

5.12.Trench 10 was located adjacent to the centre of the eastern boundary, it was 1.8m by 30m in size in a north to south alignment. This trench produced a single undated large pit feature cut into the natural sands, no other features identified (FIGURE 12).

5.12.1.**Summary:** The undated pit identified in this trench may be associated with a positive anomaly on the magnetic data and has the potential to be of archaeological significance. Other than naturally occurring features within the sand geology, there were no further significant archaeological features identified in this trench.

5.12.2.Modern agricultural soils (1001) overlay a reddish brown coarse sandy soil (1002), with the underlying natural (1003) at a depth of up to 0.6m (PLATE 17).

5.12.3.Cut into the natural in the southern half of the trench, was a bowl shape pit [1004], 2.6m wide and excavated to a depth of 0.45m. This pit contained a single fill of greyish dark brown silty sand (1005).



Plate 17- Overview of Trench 10. Facing north, 1m scale.



Plate 18- Southwest facing section of pit [1004]. 1m scale.

TRENCH 11

5.13. Trench 11 was located in the northeast corner, it was 1.8m by 25m in size in a northeast to southwest alignment. The magnetic anomaly targeted from the survey data was identified as disturbance from a modern pylon 1.2m to the southeast. The excavation was moved 17m to the north of the original location.

5.13.1. **Summary:** This trench produced possible evidence of Post Medieval gravel extraction, identified from a large cut feature which covered 50% of the trench

and consisted of layers of grit and organic material, which formed a series of tipping fills.

5.13.2. In the southern half of the trench agricultural topsoil (1101) directly overlaid natural gravels (1103).



Plate 19- Trench 11 overview. Facing northeast 1m scale.

5.13.3. In the centre of the trench was a cut [1105] with an upper fill of consisting of an upper fine gravel or gritty sand (1102) overlaying a dark orangey brown silty sand which contained a single sherd of Post Medieval pottery dated c.1680+ (1106) (FIGURE 13). At the northern end of the trench this deposit was excavated to a depth of 2m at which point the trench became unsafe.

TRENCH 12

5.14. Trench 12 was located in the southwest corner, it was 1.8m by 25m in size in a northeast to southwest alignment. A single linear feature was present, with concentrations of lignite in the natural (FIGURE 14).

5.14.1. **Summary:** A single undated linear feature was identified within this trench running northwest to southeast at the northern end of the trench. The southern half of the trench revealed large quantities of naturally degraded lignite which is likely to be the cause of disturbances in the magnetic survey.

5.14.2. Modern agricultural soils (1201) overlaying a reddish brown coarse sandy soil

(1202). The natural sands (1203) was encountered at 0.5m to 0.6m below the surface, with concentrations of degraded lignite running in seams northwest to south east across the trench (PLATE 20).



Plate 20- Overview of Trench 12. Facing northeast, 1m scale.

5.14.3. In the northern end of the trench a shallow square cut linear [1204] cut in to the natural sands. It was east to west aligned, measuring 0.37m wide with a depth of 0.2cm; it had a greyish brown silty sand fill (1205) (PLATE 21).



Plate 21- Elevation of linear [1204]. Facing southeast, 1m scale.

TRENCH 13

5.15. Trench 13 was located in the northwest corner, it was 1.8m by 30m in size in an east to west alignment. Two features were identified, a modern ceramic service pipe and a modern oval pit feature containing metallic and plastic debris (FIGURE 15).

5.15.1. **Summary:** All features identified within this trench were modern and included a ceramic drain not identified on the geophysical survey and a large pit containing metallic debris which is likely to be the magnetic disturbance targeted from the survey data.

5.15.2. It was recorded with an agricultural topsoil (1301), a coarse sandy soil (1302) and natural sands (1303) at 0.5m below the surface and extending to 0.8m at the eastern end with patches of naturally occurring lignite (PLATE 22).

5.15.3. Running through the centre of the trench was a service cut [1304] containing a modern black plastic pipe likely to be water.

5.15.4. In the south section an oval pit feature [1305] was identified, with a dark greyish brown fill (1306), 2m wide and 0.3m deep. This feature contained metallic objects, plastic, painted wood and glass (PLATE 23).



Plate 22- Overview of trench 13. Facing east, 1m scale.



Plate 23- Northwest facing section of pit [1305]. 0.5m scale.

TRENCH 14

5.16.Trench 14 was located towards the centre of the south part of the site, it was 1.8 by 40m in size in a northeast to southwest alignment. This trench was added to test the potential of the high ground located in the middle southern field.

5.16.1.**Summary:** Plough scars were identified in deposit (1402), however, no other significant archaeological features were in the trench.

5.16.2.Modern agricultural soils (1401) overlaid the same sandy soil (1402) within which were plough scars following a different orientations from east to west and north to south (1402). At 0.5m below the surface was a fine yellow natural sand (1403) with seams of red grits and fine grain gravel.



Plate 24- Overview of Trench 14. Facing northeast, 1m scale.

6. Finds

6.1. A small assemblage of artefacts were recovered from the Archaeological Evaluation at Holt Road. The assemblage is too small to warrant any detailed statistical analysis but serves to demonstrate small scale disposal within pits dating to the late Neolithic or early Bronze Age period and a spread of Post Medieval ceramic

POTTERY (BY DAN GARNER)

6.2. A total of 15 sherds of Prehistoric pottery weighing 148g were recovered from pit fills (112), (115) and (116) in Trench 1. The pottery is broadly dated to the late Neolithic or early Bronze Age and appears to have been used for a domestic rather than cinerary function:

6.2.1. The 7 sherds from contexts (112) and (115) were small and abraded with an average weight of 2g and no indication of form or surface treatment.



Plate 25- Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age pottery from fill (116). Scale 5mm grid squares.

6.2.2. In contrast, the 8 sherds from context (116) were larger with an average weight of 16.75g and one instance of conjoining sherds. Evidence of surface decoration in the form of comb and whipped cord impressions was present on 7 of the sherds forming both encircling horizontal lines and zones of vertical chevron motifs (PLATE 25). The decorative style can be broadly related to later Neolithic impressed wares, Beaker ware and early Bronze Age food vessels and

collared urns (GIBSON A & WOODS A 1990).

6.2.3. One small body sherd in the group has traces of burnt residue on the internal surface.

6.2.4. The group from fill (116) included one rim sherd (PLATE 26) which had whipped cord maggot impressions running along the top of the rim and comb impressed horizontal lines on the external surface. The diameter of the rim is c.200 to 300mm which would indicate a large vessel such as a collared or food vessel urn. One body sherd indicates a form suggestive of the shoulder to an urn or bowl decorated with comb impressed horizontal lines.



Plate 26- Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age rim sherd from fill (116). Scale 5mm grid squares.

6.2.5. Pottery of comparable date has been recovered from the nearby site at Borrás Quarry (GRANT I 2013); however, in general non-cinerary pottery assemblages of this period are rare in northeast Wales. The regional research framework for northeast Wales concluded that:

“The region is poor in comparison to other areas of the country in terms of Neolithic and Bronze Age material culture ... There has been an emphasis on the burial archaeology of the period. This is part of a national trend and is also a result of the high visibility of monuments of this type. Settlement archaeology, particularly of the earlier Bronze Age, has been comparatively poorly studied” (CADW

2004).

6.2.6. The small assemblage recovered from the evaluation indicates the potential for the recovery of a significant pottery group from the vicinity of Trench 1; which would be of regional significance. The regional research framework for Wales recommends that “Material culture studies should focus on current weaknesses, such as our lack of understanding of Neolithic pottery” (PANNETT A 2017).

6.3. A total of six Post Medieval sherds of pottery weighing 85g were recovered from the evaluation, with items recovered from Trenches 8 and 11. The pottery consisted of small assemblages of material which do not lend themselves to detailed statistical analysis. The primary function of the pottery is in providing a chronological framework to the structural narrative. As such the wares and suggested dating of the pottery are summarised by context below:

6.3.1. Topsoil (801) produced 5 sherds of pottery weighing 76g which included: a rim sherd of a 19th century+ stoneware dish with blue transfer printed decoration; the base and rim of a 19th century+ porcellaneous bodied ware dish; 1 burnt body sherd of pearl glaze ware and a red earthenware handle coated in an iron-rich slip of 18th/19th century date. The group can be broadly dated to the 18th/19th century.

6.3.2. A single sherd of Mottled ware came from context (1106) weighing 9g, recovered from Trench 11. Glazed internally and externally with a mottled glaze and having a handle scar, it is probably derived from a drinking cup/tankard and can be dated from c.1680+.

6.4. CLAY TOBACCO PIPE

6.4.1. 1 fragment of clay tobacco pipe weighing 7g was recovered from contexts (801) in Trench 8. There is no sign of stamps or decoration, the fragment is from part of a bowl with a spur, dating to the 19th century.

6.5. GLASS

6.5.1. A single fragment of Post Medieval vessel glass was retrieved from context (801) weighing 14g. The fragment was from the neck and shoulder of a small

mould-blown bottle, in a pale blue glass. Evidence of an imprinted pattern remains on the shoulder. It is of later 19th/20th century date.

7. Environmental Sampling

BY MATTHEW LAW

7.1. Introduction and Methods

- 7.1.1. One bag of dried flot, from a 5 litre sample of a charcoal-rich pit fill, context (112), was presented for assessment.
- 7.1.2. The flot was sorted into fractions using a nest of sieves (4mm, 2mm, 1mm, 500µm, 250µm) before being scanned under a low power microscope.
- 7.1.3. The quantity of intrusive, modern root material was estimated. Charcoal characteristics were recorded in transverse section under a low power microscope, and provisional identifications made following the criteria in Hather (HATHER 2000) and Schoch *et al.* (SCHOCH ET AL. 2004). Ring curvature was assessed following the criteria in Marguerie and Hunot (MARGUEIRE & HUNOT 2007).

7.2. Results and Discussion

- 7.2.1. Charcoal was the only class of biological remain preserved in the sample. It was largely highly fragmented (<2mm), although some fragments larger than 4mm persisted.
- 7.2.2. Broadly, three groups of charcoal were present in the sample (TABLE 1). The first, and least common of these was semi ring porous charcoal with strong ring curvature. These had vessels in long radial files, comparable to *Alnus* (alder), *Carpinus* (hornbeam) or *Corylus* (hazel). The second, and most common, group was similar but diffuse porous, and comparable to the same group of taxa. The third group was ring porous, and comparable to *Quercus* (oak) sp. This type was only found in pieces of maximum dimension 4mm or smaller. This accords with the experimental findings of Chrzazvez *et al.* (CHRZAZVEZ ET AL. 2014), who observed that oak charcoal is more prone to fragmentation. Strong ring curvature was common throughout, which suggests the use of branches, or perhaps coppiced stands.
- 7.2.3. There were very few modern roots in the sample, which suggests that the risk

of modern intrusions into the assemblage is likely to be low.

7.3.Statement of Potential and Recommendations

7.3.1. The samples provide a limited insight into fuel acquisition, suggesting that small branches or coppiced stems of oak and another species (most likely hazel) were favoured.

7.3.2. No further work is judged necessary for this assemblage.

Context Number	112
Sample Number	1
Context Description	Charcoal rich sand in pit
Sample volume (L)	5
Weight after processing (g)	11
Estimated % modern roots	20
CHARCOAL	
>4mm	
Semi-ring porous, strong ring curvature cf. <i>Alnus/ Carpinus/ Corylus</i> sp.	+
Diffuse porous, strong ring curvature. cf. <i>Alnus/ Carpinus/ Corylus</i>	++
2mm - 4mm	
Ring porous cf. <i>Quercus</i> sp. Oak	+++
Diffuse porous, strong ring curvature. cf. <i>Alnus/ Carpinus/ Corylus</i>	++++
Charcoal <2mm indeterminate	++++

Table 1- Contents of sample. Scale of estimated abundance: + = 1-10 items; ++ = 11-20 items; +++ = 21-50 items; ++++ >50 items

8. Discussion and Conclusions

- 8.1. An archaeological Evaluation was carried out at land off Holt Road in Wrexham in February 2020 by L – P : Archaeology, on behalf of RPS Group. The works were carried to an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (TONG J 2020) and in consultation with Mark Walters (CPAT) acting on behalf of Wrexham County Borough Council.
- 8.2. The site had previously undergone a geophysical survey by Magnitude surveys, and resulting data determined the location of 13 trial trenches, which had been agreed upon with CPAT. A fourteenth trench was added during site works, as agreed by Mark Walters.
- 8.3. The natural sands and gravels were encountered in all trenches at a depth between 0.5m and 0.6m from ground level.
- 8.4. Trench 1 identified significant prehistoric archaeology including: an oval pit with evidence of burning and fire cracked stone, interpreted as a clamp oven/earth oven; and a shallow feature containing fragments of decorated Late Neolithic to Early Bronze Age pottery. These features are comparable to Prehistoric features identified at Borrass Quarry (PLATE 27) less than 1km to the north of the site (GRANT I 2013), where archaeological dates from the Prehistoric and Romano British period. Other undated features within this trench may also be of a similar time period and therefore show a significant concentration of features within this area.
- 8.5. The trench is situated on raised ground that falls on all 4 sides towards what may be a former kettle hole in the north and a Post Medieval marl pit to the east (PRN 82623). This follows a similar pattern to the results of excavations by Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust at Borrass where Prehistoric activity appeared to be clustering in areas around existing and former kettle holes (GRANT I 2013).
- 8.6. Trenches 2 and 10 also identified potentially significant cut features, however, these were undated and isolated by comparison with trench 1.
- 8.7. Trench eight encountered fragments of 19th and 20th century ceramics within the topsoil, these were thought to be associated with the construction of the adjacent hall and housing estate.

8.8. In Trench 11 was a possible quarry feature not noted on the historic mapping, however, there are several Post Medieval gravel pits within the immediate locality suggesting that this could be a pre-19th century extraction pit.

8.9. The Prehistoric features identified during this evaluation did not appear on the geophysical survey results and therefore it is possible that other concentrations may exist in areas that were not tested.



Plate 27- East facing section of earth oven from Borras Quarry excavations (Grant, 2013)

8.10. The remaining 9 trenches produced little in the way of archaeological features, with either natural geologies or modern features and services present.

8.11. Following discussions with RPS (archaeological consultant) and the planning archaeologist (CPAT) it is agreed that the discovery of the features necessitates further conditioned work.

9. Trafodaeth a Chasgliadau

- 9.1.1. Gwnaed Gwerthusiad Archaeolegol ar dir oddi ar Ffordd Holt yn Wrecsam ym mis Chwefror 2020 gan L – P: Archaeology ar ran RPS Group. Cynhaliwyd y gwaith yn unol â Chynllun Ymchwilio Ysgrifenedig (TONG J 2020) cymeradwy ac mewn ymgynghoriad â Mark Walters (CPAT) yn gweithredu ar ran Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Wrecsam.
- 9.1.2. Cynhaliwyd arolwg geoffisegol ar y safle yn y gorffennol gan Magnitude surveys, ac yn sgil data'r arolwg pennwyd lleoliad 13 ffos brawf, a gytunwyd gyda CPAT. Ychwanegwyd pedwaredd ffos ar ddeg yn ystod gwaith ar y safle, fel y cytunwyd gan Mark Walters.
- 9.1.3. Daethpwyd ar draws tywod a cherrig mân naturiol ym mhob ffos ar ddyfnder rhwng 0.5m a 0.6m o'r ddaear.
- 9.1.4. Adnabuwyd archaeoleg gyn-hanesyddol sylweddol yn Ffos 1, gan gynnwys: pydew hirgrwn gyda thystiolaeth o gerrig wedi cracio a llosgi, a ddehonglwyd fel ffwrn glamp/ffwrn ddaear; a nodwedd fas yn cynnwys darnau o grochenwaith wedi'u haddurno o'r cyfnod Neolithig Hwyr neu'r Oes Efydd Gynnar. Mae'r nodweddion hyn yn debyg i nodweddion cyn-hanesyddol a adnabuwyd yn Chwarel Borrás (PLÂT 27) llai nai 1km i'r gogledd o'r safle (GRANT I 2013), lle mae nodweddion archaeolegol yn dyddio o'r cyfnod cyn-haneysddol a Brythonaidd-Rufeinig. Mae'n bosib bod nodweddion eraill na ellid bod yn sicr o'u dyddiad yn y ffos hon yn dyddio o'r un cyfnod ac felly dengys hyn fod crynodiad sylweddol o nodweddion yn yr ardal hon.
- 9.1.5. Mae'r ffos hon wedi'i lleoli ar dir uwch sy'n disgyn ar bob un o'r 4 ochr tuag at yr hyn a all fod yn hen bwl tegell yn y gogledd a chloddfa glai ôl-ganoloesol i'r dwyrain (PRN 82623). Mae hyn yn dilyn patrwm tebyg i ganlyniadau cloddiadau gan Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Clwyd-Powys yn Chwarel Borrás, lle'r oedd gweithgarwch cyn-hanesyddol yn cronni, i bob golwg, mewn ardaloedd o amgylch hen byllau tegell, a rhai presennol (GRANT I 2013).
- 9.1.6. Adnabuwyd manylion toredig sylweddol posibl yn Ffos 2 a 10 hefyd fodd bynnag, nid oedd modd dyddio'r rhain ac roeddent ar wahân o'i gymharu â

Ffos 1.

- 9.1.7. Daethpwyd ar draws darnau o serameg o'r 19eg a'r 20fed ganrif yn ffos wyth yn yr uwchbridd, credid bod y rhain yn gysylltiedig ag adeiladu'r neuadd a'r ystad dai gyfagos.
- 9.1.8. Yn Ffos 11 roedd nodwedd chwarel bosib nad oedd wedi'i nodi ar y map hanesyddol, fodd bynnag mae sawl grobwl ôl-ganoloesol o fewn yr ardal gyfagos sy'n awgrymu y gallai'r nodwedd hon fod yn bwl echdynnu o'r cyfnod cyn y 19eg ganrif.
- 9.1.9. Ni ymddangosodd y nodweddion cyn-hanesyddol a nodwyd yn ystod y gwerthusiad hwn ar ganlyniadau'r arolwg geoffisegol ac felly mae'n bosib bod crynodiadau eraill yn bodoli mewn ardaloedd na phrofwyd.



Plât 27- Toriad yn wynebu tua'r dwyrain o ffwrn ddaear o gloddiadau yn Chwarel Borrás (Grant, 2013)

- 9.1.10. Ni ddaethpwyd o hyd i nodweddion archaeolegol yn y 9 ffos arall, gyda naill ai daeareg naturiol neu nodweddion a gwasanaethau modern yn bresennol.
- 9.1.11. Yn dilyn trafodaethau gyda RPS (ymgyngorydd archaeolegol) a'r archaeolegydd cynllunio (CPAT), cytunwyd bod darganfyddiad nodweddion yn mynnu rhagor o waith wedi'i raglennu.

10. Archive

10.1.The paper archive consists of:

- ◆ 1 x Drawing Register
- ◆ 5 x Drawing Film
- ◆ 4 x Photographic Register
- ◆ 153 x Colour Digital photographs
- ◆ 1 x Context Register
- ◆ 14 x Trench Recording Sheets

10.2.The finds archive consists of:

- ◆ 1 x box of artefacts as described in Section 6.

10.3.The archive is to be deposited with Wrexham Museum.

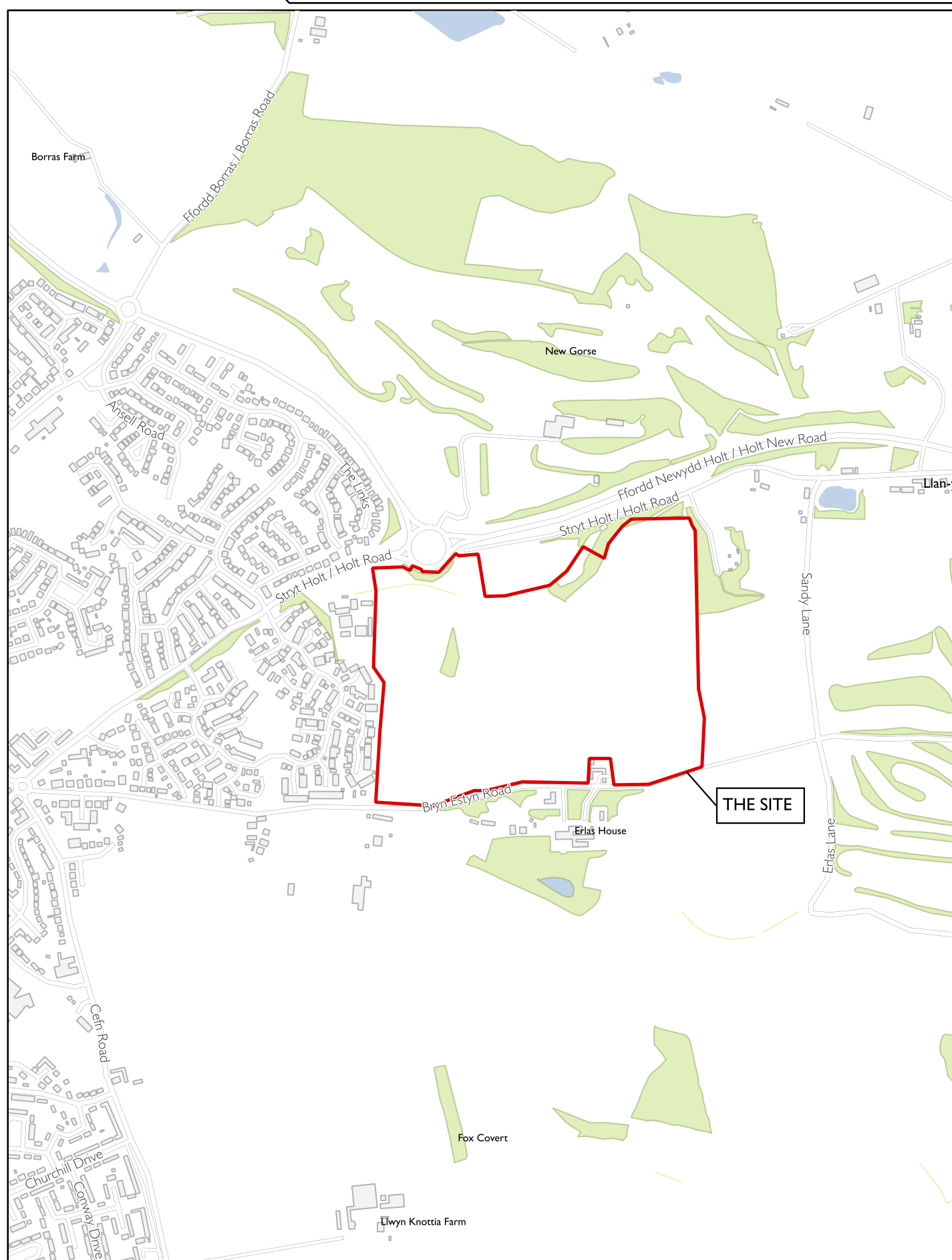
SOURCES CONSULTED

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FIGURES

FIGURE I // Site Location - General



0 500 m



PROJECT // 3525C - Holt Road, Wrexham

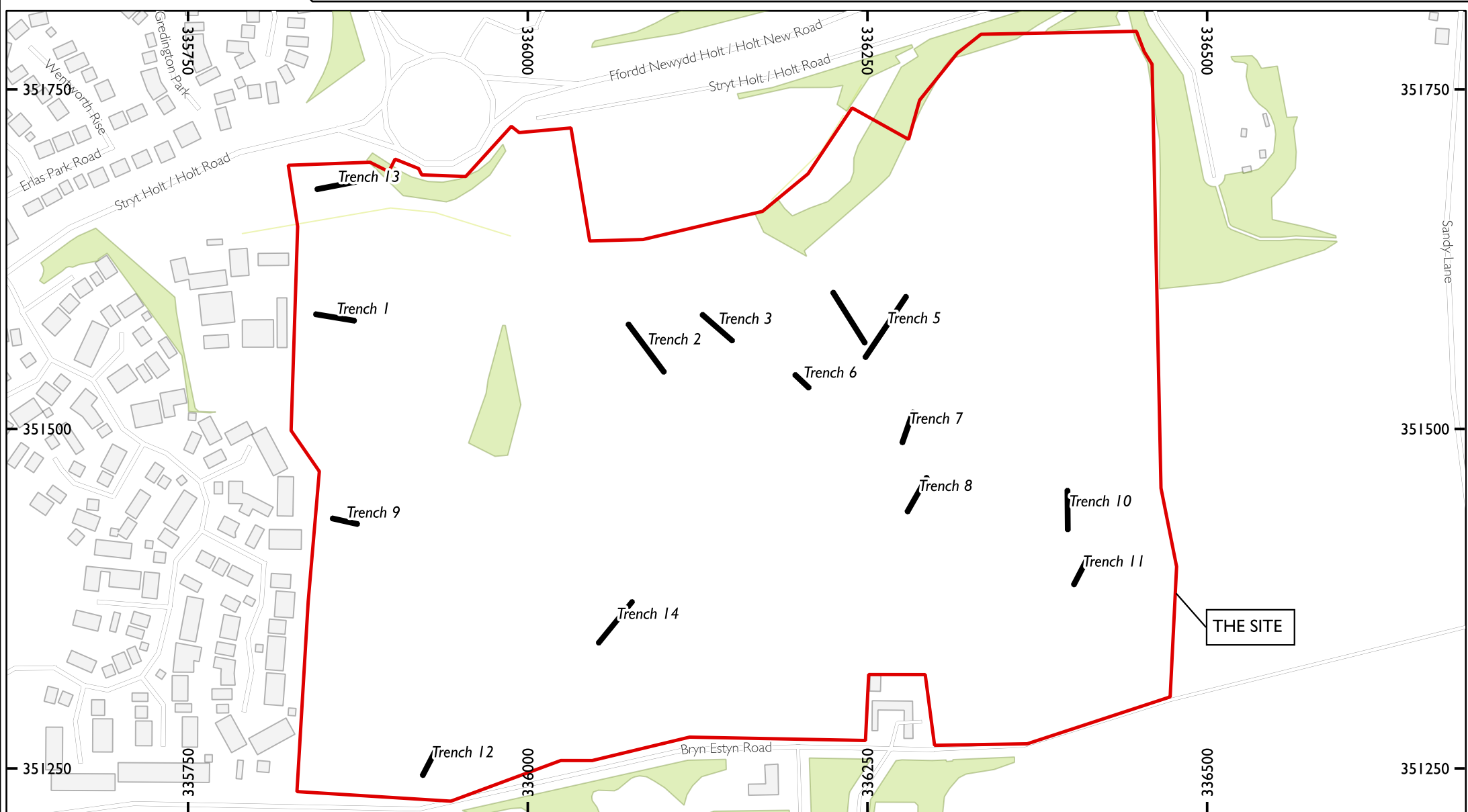
DESCRIPTION // Site Location

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FIGURE 2 // Trench Locations



0 100 m



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DESCRIPTION // Trench Locations

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FIGURE 3 // 1879 Denbighshire XXIX 6 Inch



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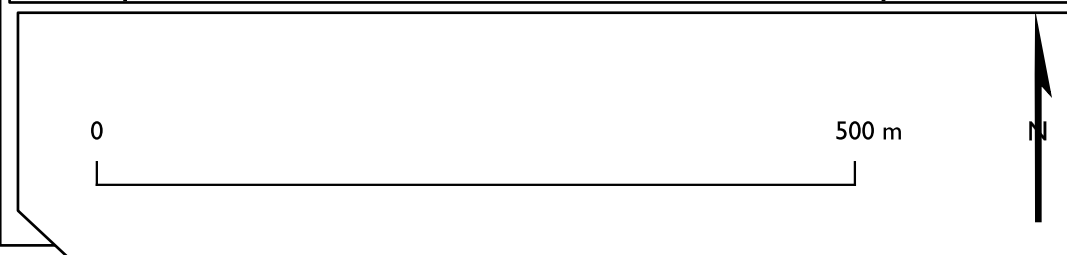
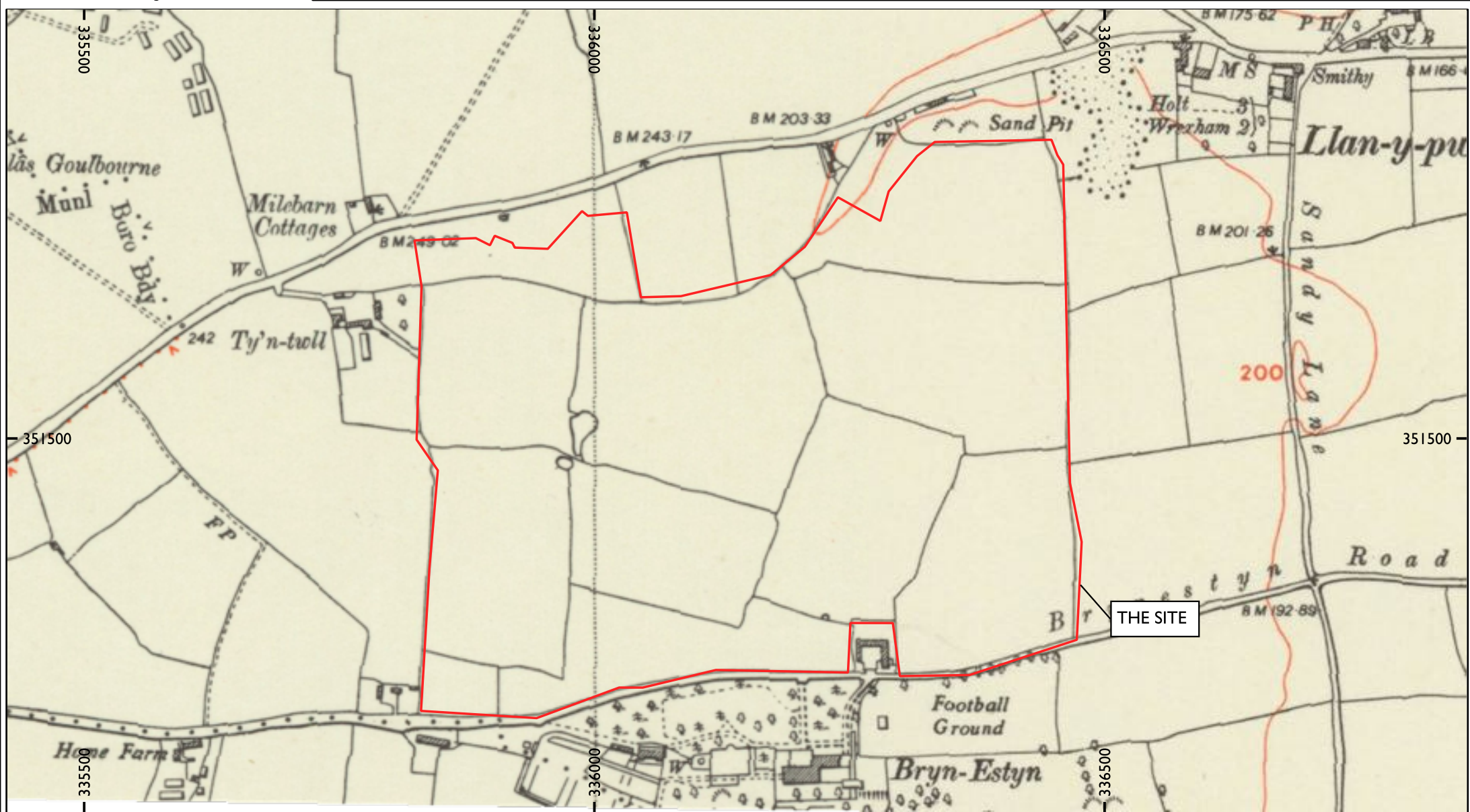
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FIGURE 4 // 1954 Denbighshire XXIX.NW 6 Inch



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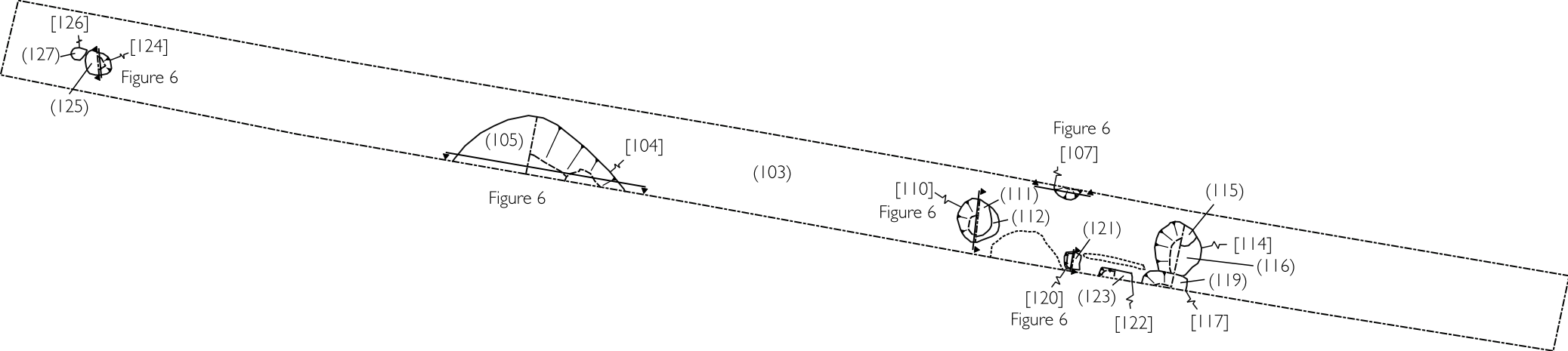
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FIGURE 5 // Trench I Plan



0 5 m



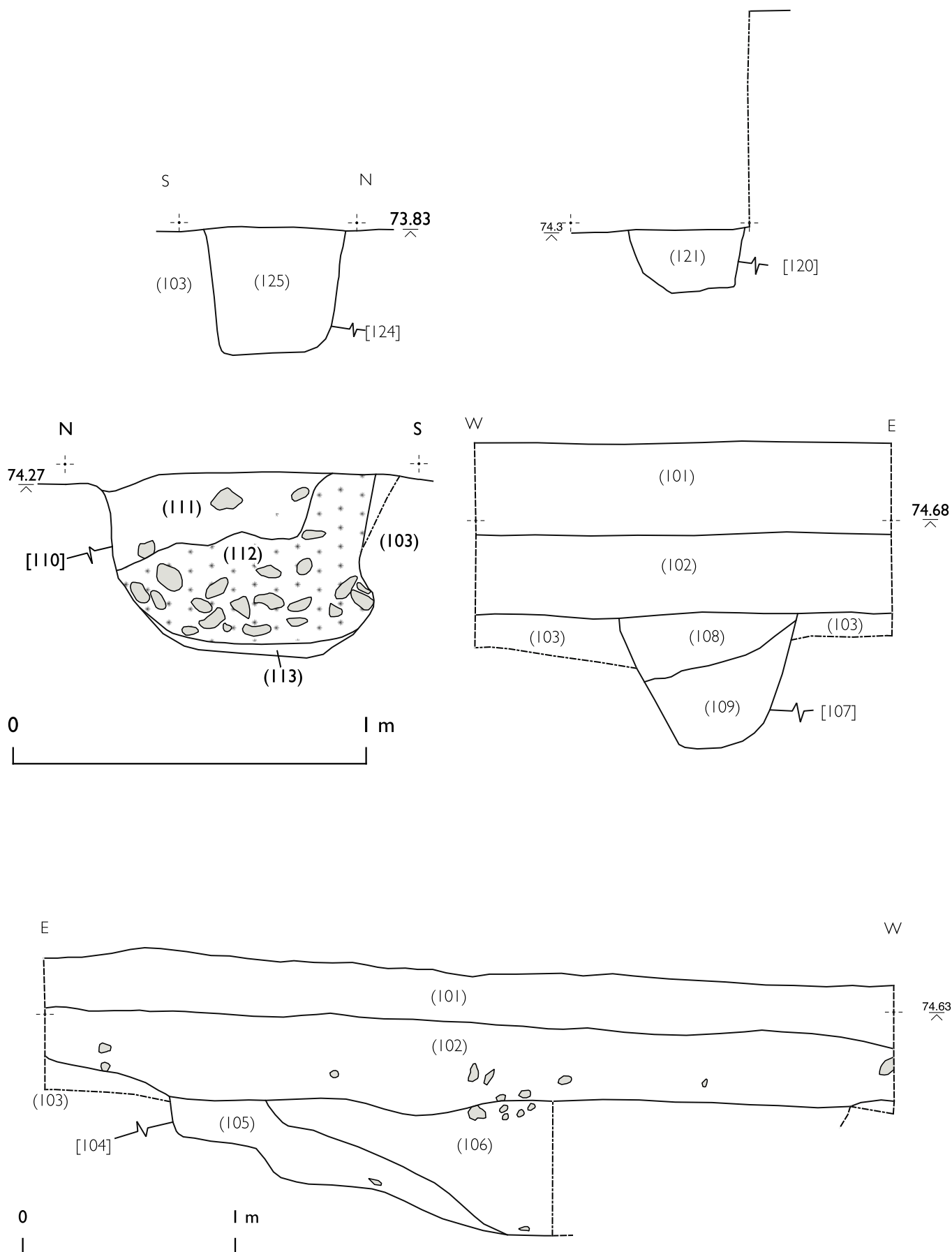
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DESCRIPTION // Trench I Plan

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FIGURE 6 // Trench I Sections



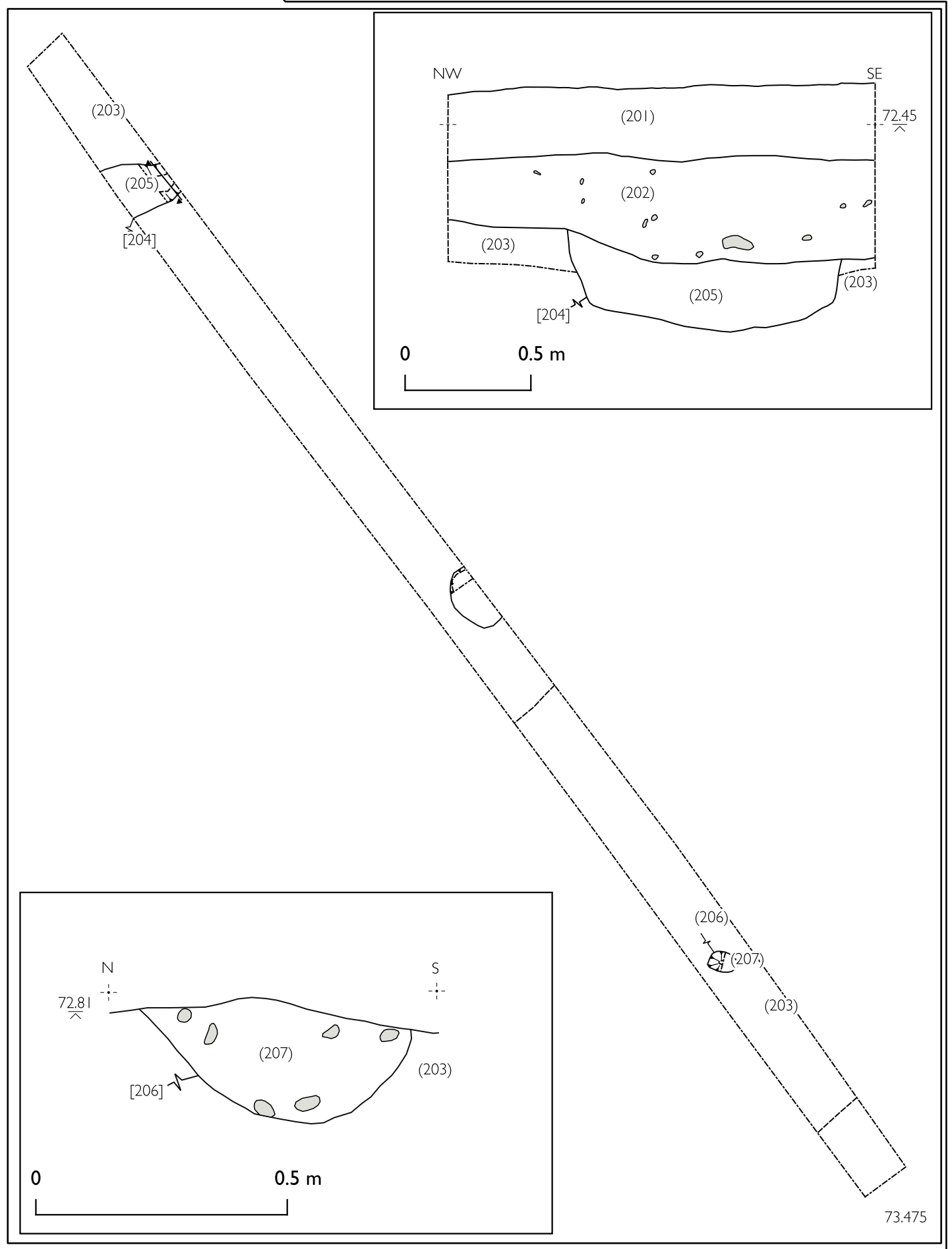
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DESCRIPTION // Trench I Sections

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L-P:ARCHAEOLOGY

FIGURE 7 // Trench 2



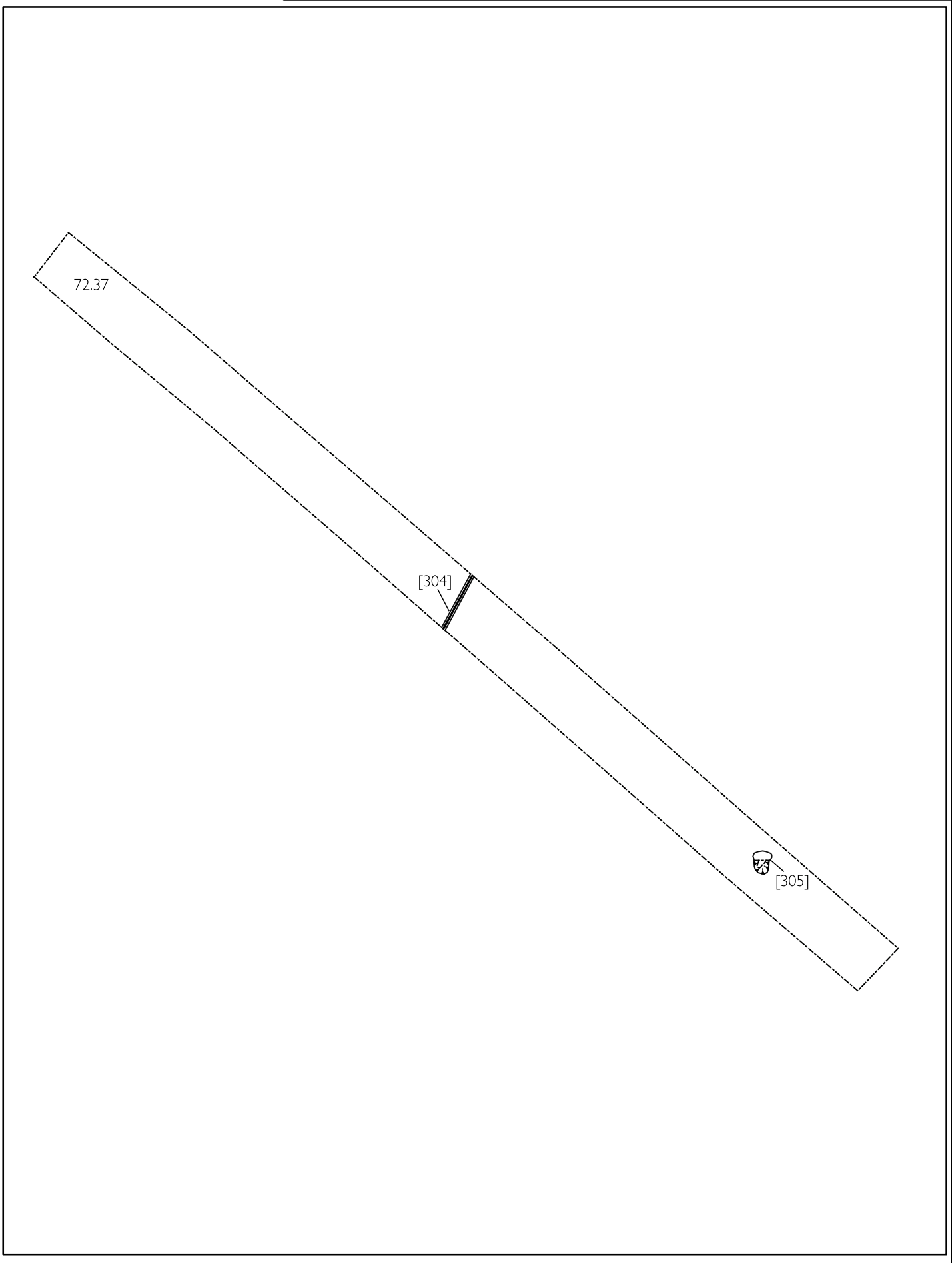
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DESCRIPTION // Trench 2

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FIGURE 8 // Trench 3 Plan



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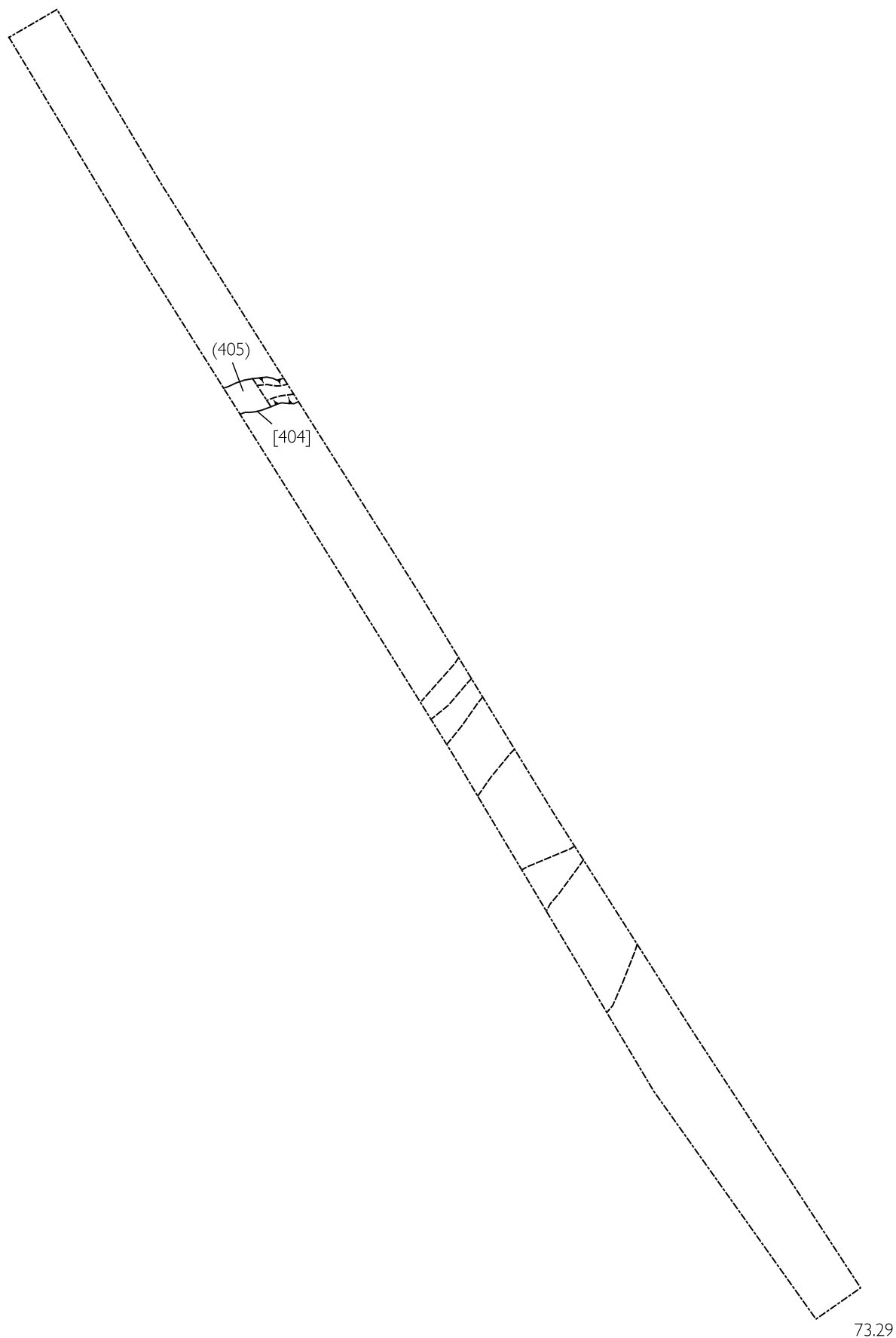
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FIGURE 9 // Trench 4 Plan



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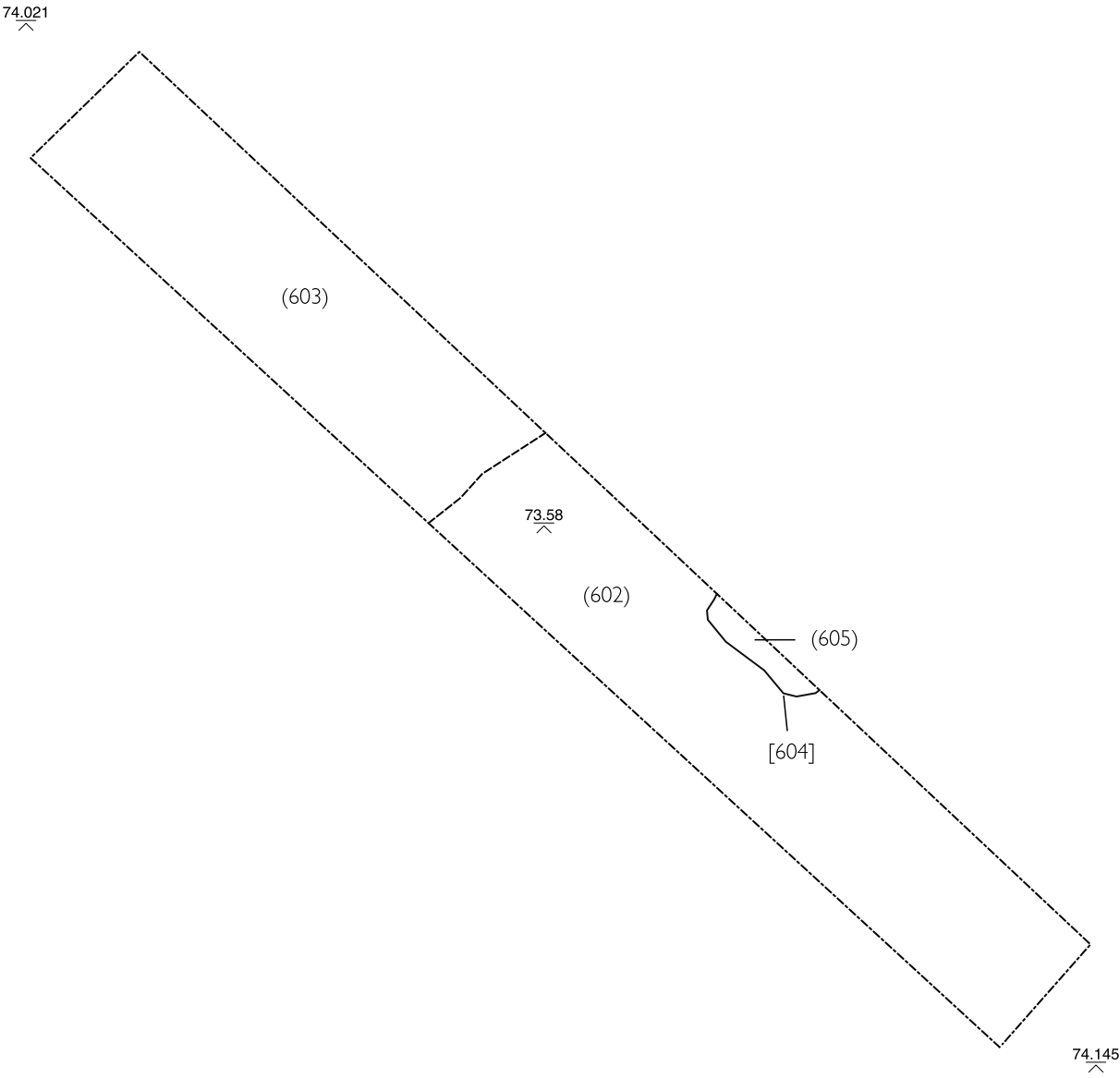
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DESCRIPTION // Trench 4 Plan

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FIGURE 10 // Trench 6 Plan



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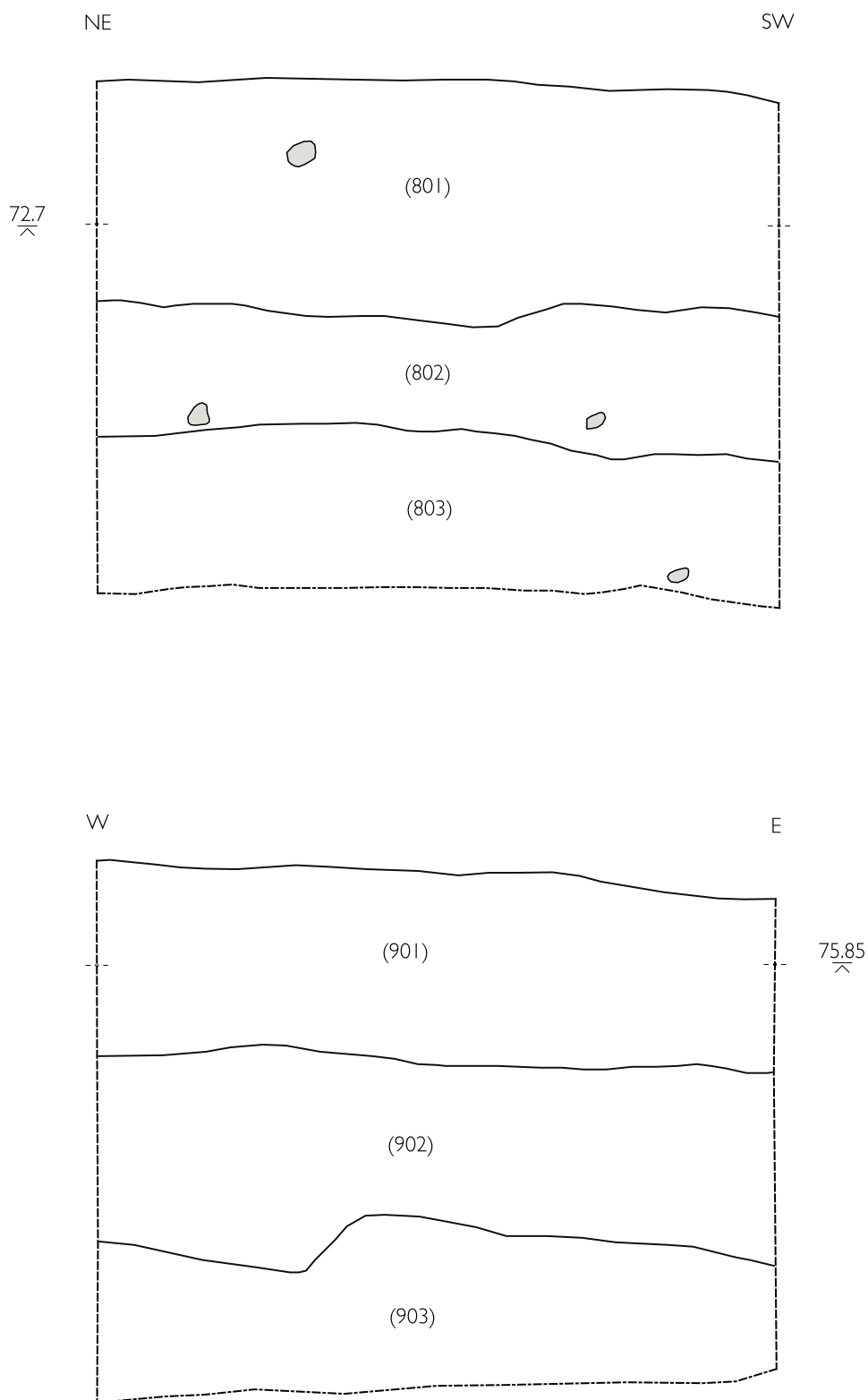


PROJECT // 3525C - Holt Road, Wrexham

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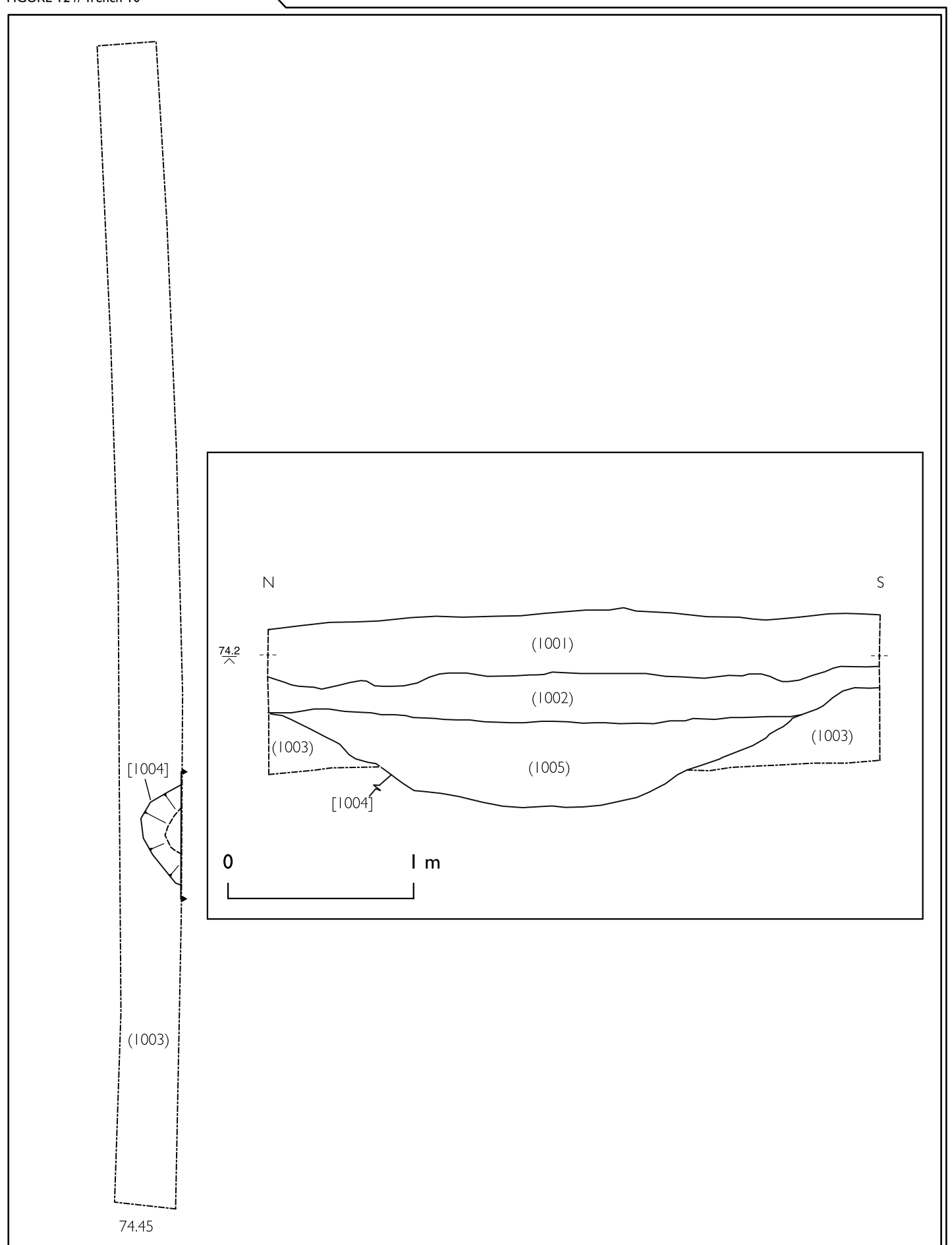
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DESCRIPTION // Trench 8 & 9 Sections

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FIGURE 12 // Trench 10



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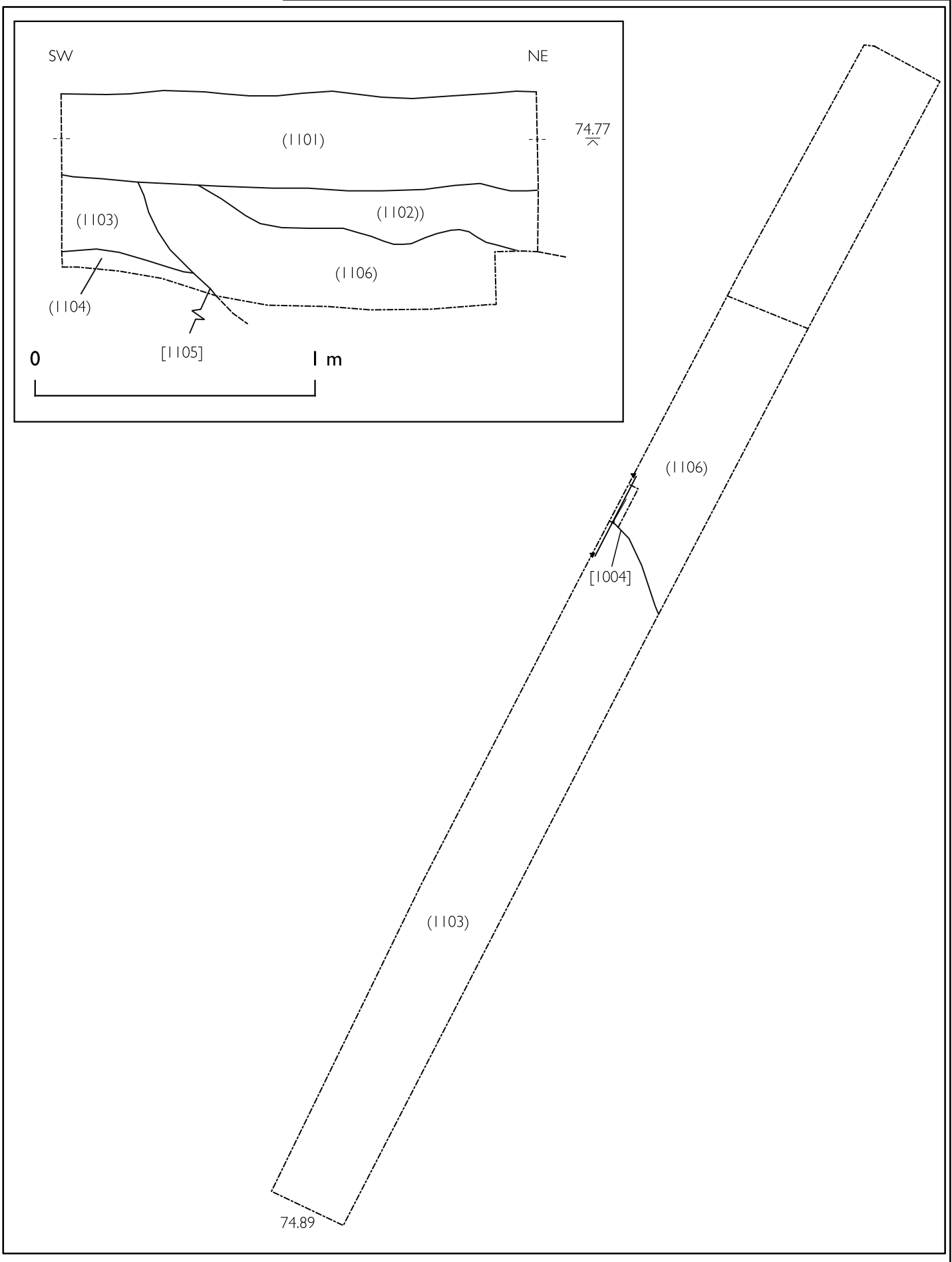
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DESCRIPTION // Trench 10

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FIGURE 13 // Trench 11



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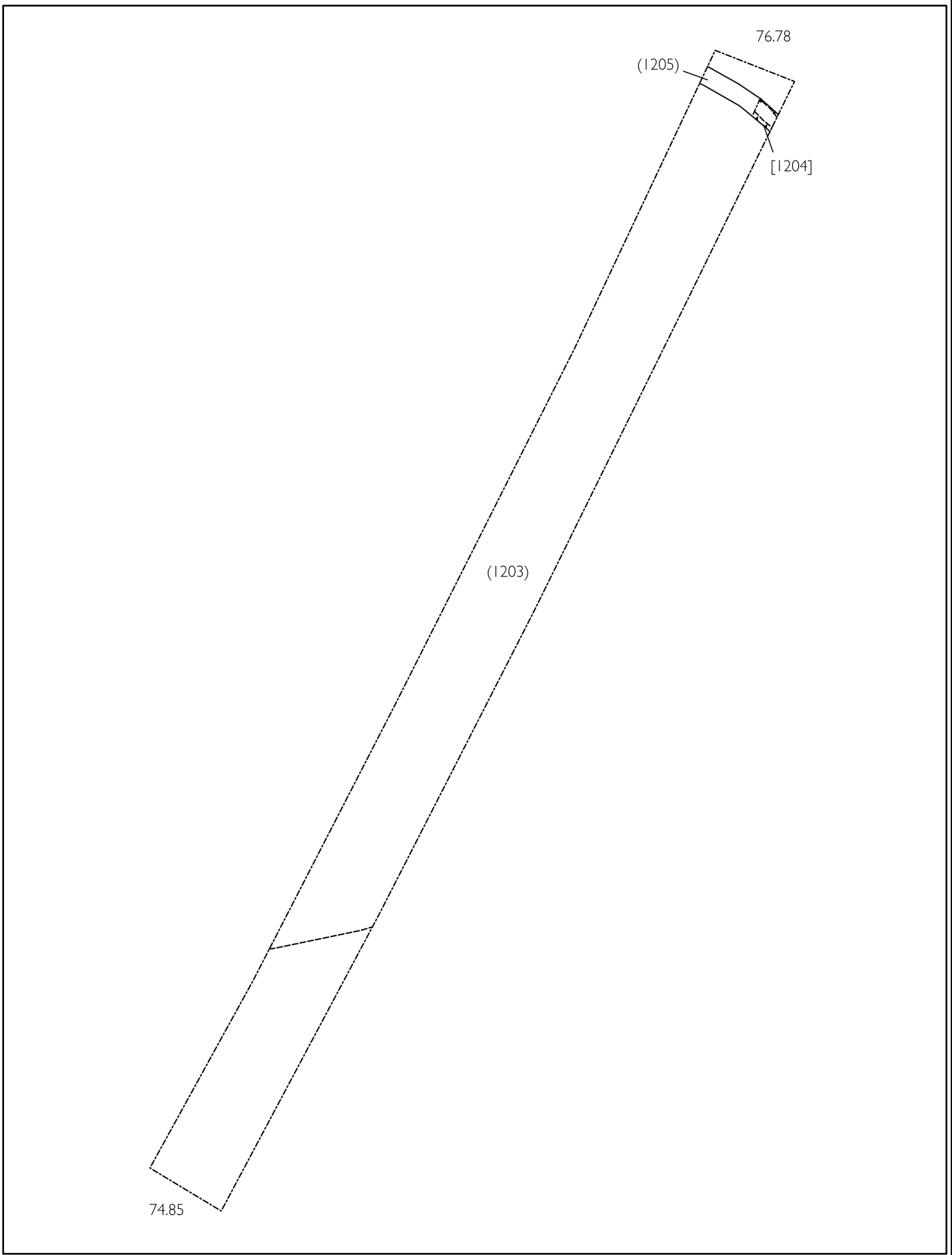
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DESCRIPTION // Trench 11

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FIGURE 14 // Trench I2 plan



0 5 m



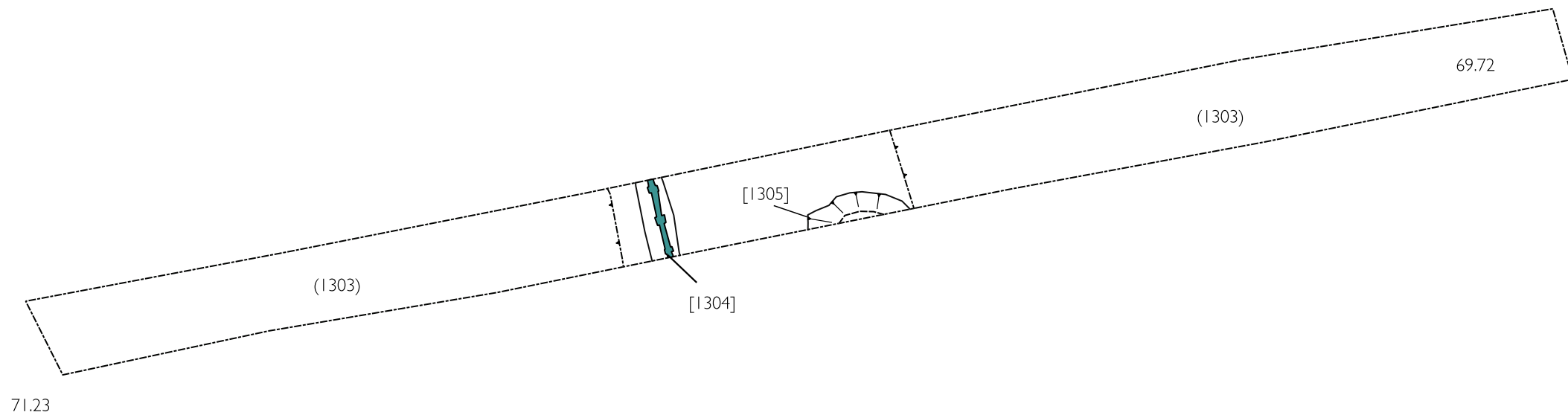
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DESCRIPTION // Trench I2 Plan

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FIGURE 15 // Trench 13 Plan



0 5 m



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DESCRIPTION // Trench 13 Plan

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