

Land at Bromsash, Nr. Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire Archaeological Evaluation

Date: March 2020
By: Rachel Morgan
Client: Mrs. Woodman and Mr. Tedds
Project Code: RRHB20
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**Red River
Archaeology**

Land at Bromsash, Nr. Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire

Archaeological Evaluation

Client	Mr. Tedds
Project Code	RRHB20
Prepared By	Rachel Morgan
Fieldwork Directed By	Rachel Morgan
Illustrated By	Hannah Sims
Approved By	

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1.1 This report presents the results of a programme of archaeological evaluation on Land at Bromsash, Nr. Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire (NGR SO 64754 24247), prepared for Wye Planning on behalf of Mrs. Margaret Woodman and Mr. John Tedds.
- 1.1.2 Site work was carried out on 16th March 2020. The archaeological evaluation revealed the remains of a modern French drain in one trench, and a small pit containing a modern canine burial in the other trench. No further archaeological features were identified.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Project Background

2.1.1 Red River Archaeology Ltd. was commissioned by Mrs. Margaret Woodman on behalf of Mr. John Tedds to undertake a programme of archaeological evaluation trenching associated with the proposed development of a single dwelling on land at Broomsash, Nr. Ross-on-Wye Herefordshire (NGR SO 64754 24247) (Fig.1).

2.1.2 The archaeological evaluation consisted of two trenches which were positioned within the approximate location of the footprint of the building in the south of site. The investigation was undertaken on 16th March 2020 in fine weather with good visibility.

2.2 Site Location & Description

2.2.1 The village of Broomsash is located c.4km to the east of Ross-on-Wye on the eastern side of the River Wye valley. The village is located at the crossroads of an east-west road and a northwest-southeast road, and the site is located in the north-western quadrant of the village to the north of the east-west road. The Site is approximately 1400m² in area and comprises a former vegetable plot to the rear of a private garden. It is bounded to the west by farm buildings, south by an arable field, and to the north and east by private gardens to residential houses.

2.2.2 The Site lies on relatively flat ground at an elevation of around 119mAOD.

2.2.3 The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as Brownstones Formation – Sandstone, Micaceous, a sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 393 to 419 million years ago in the Devonian Period, in a local environment previously dominated by rivers (BGS 2020). No superficial deposits are recorded.

2.3 Proposed Development and Planning Background

2.3.1 Advice has been sought prior to the submission of a planning application for a single storey residential unit of c.100m² with a c.25m² garage building (193680/CE). It was recommended that a programme of trial trench evaluation equal to a 3% sample of the site be carried out prior to determination. The scope of the archaeological evaluation works required was defined during discussions between Red River Archaeology and Julian Cotton as Archaeological Advisor to the Local Planning Authority.

2.3.4 A *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) was submitted to Herefordshire Council in February 2020 (Red River Archaeology Ltd. 2020) and approved by Julian Cotton as Archaeological Advisor to the Local Planning Authority.

3. AIMS & METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims of Works

3.1.1 The aims of the archaeological works were to:

- Determine the extent, condition, nature, character, date and significance of any archaeological remains encountered.
- Establish the nature of the activity on the site.
- Identify any artefacts relating to the use of the site.
- Provide further information on the archaeology of the site from any archaeological remains encountered.
- Determine the geological and soil formation at the site and establish the depths of topsoil.
- To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

3.2 Scope of Works

3.2.1 The scope of the work was to carry out a programme of archaeological evaluation which comprised 2 x 12m long by 1.8m wide evaluation trenches. The overall objectives were to:

- Establish the presence and condition of potential features identified from the previous desk-based assessment.
- identify all archaeological remains revealed during the excavation of the evaluation trenches;
- ensure the preservation by record of all archaeological remains revealed during the course of the evaluation trenching;
- prepare an appropriate archaeological archive of the site, including the treatment and preservation of any finds, and an appropriate report describing the results and their significance.

3.3 Methodology

3.3.1 All fieldwork was undertaken in accordance with current best practice and the CIfA's *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014a). All invasive ground-breaking works were monitored by a suitably experienced and qualified archaeologist.

3.3.2 The ground-work was undertaken by JCB 3CX Sitemaster equipped with a flat bladed grading bucket, under archaeological supervision. Overburden was removed in shallow spits until the

first archaeological horizon or undisturbed geological levels were exposed. Any identified deposits were cleaned by hand to define their extent, nature, form and, where possible, date.

3.3.3 Where potential archaeology was encountered the mechanical excavator was halted in the affected area to allow appropriate investigation by hand.

3.3.4 All information identified in the course of the site works was recorded stratigraphically, with sufficient pictorial record created to identify and illustrate individual features, had any been encountered. It should be noted that, where possible, data will be collected and stored digitally and in a format suitable for long term storage by the Archaeological Data Service (Richards et al, 2000). Primary records are available for inspection at all times.

3.3.5 All potential archaeological deposits encountered were planned and recorded. The work included, as a minimum, the recording of individual contexts on appropriate pro-formas; plan and section drawings of appropriate single contexts and features (at 1:20 and 1:10 scales, as deemed commensurate with the subject); photographs and other appropriate drawn and written records.

3.3.6 The recording included where appropriate:

- The recording of individual contexts on pro-formas
- Overall excavation plans at 1:50 scale; planning and section drawing of single contexts and features (usually at 1:20 scale for plans and 1:10 scale for inhumations and sections)
- Photographs; and other drawn and written records.

3.3.7 Site photography was by high resolution (12 megapixel or greater) colour DSLR photography. Photography includes general site shots, shots of each trench, and shots of individual features and groups of features. All photographs were recorded on a photographic register detailing as a minimum the subject, feature number, location and direction of each shot.

3.3.8 A monitoring visit was conducted by Julian Cotton as Archaeological Advisor to the Local Planning Authority on 16th March 2020.

Reporting and Archiving

3.3.9 The preparation of the report follows the standard and guidance published by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014a). Details of style and format were determined by Red River Archaeology Ltd.

3.3.10 The results of the archaeological work form the basis of a full archive to professional standards, prepared in accordance with the CIfA *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (CIfA 2014b), *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-Term Storage* (United Kingdom Institute for Conservation, 1990), the *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections* (Museums and Galleries

Commission, 1994) and the Archaeological Archives' Forum (AAF) *Archaeological Archives: a best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation* (AAF 2011), as well as current Historic England guidelines (Historic England 2015). It has been compiled in line with ADS digital records.

- 3.3.11 The archive from the archaeological works carried out on the scheme and will be deposited with the artefacts (subject to the agreement of the legal landowner) with the Hereford Museum and Art Gallery. A copy of the final report will be submitted to the regional HER, and a summary of information from the project will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE BASELINE

4.1 Historic Baseline Data

- 4.1.1 The site has not been subject to any previous archaeological investigation. The information in this section is largely drawn from data held by the local HER and the ADS. In addition, LIDAR data available from DEFRA was consulted but no useful coverage of the Site area or its immediate environs was available. A summary of this data can be found below:

Undated

- 4.1.2 No undated remains are known within the immediate vicinity of the site.

Prehistoric

- 4.1.3 No prehistoric remains are known within the immediate vicinity of site.

Romano-British

- 4.1.4 The site lies to the north of the Scheduled Monument of the Roman town of Ariconium which includes (text taken from the Historic England National Heritage List entry) part of a small Roman town at the junction of two known Roman roads situated on the gentle west facing slopes of a ridge between the Rudhall Brook and the Wye Valley. First discovered by chance in 1758 the town has been the subject of several excavations, field walking and aerial reconnaissance over many years. It is known to occupy a roughly rectangular area and includes domestic houses, streets, industrial premises (including iron works), shops, civic and commercial premises and burial sites which all survive as buried structures, layers and deposits many visible as crop and soil marks on aerial photographs. The settlement is known from several excavations, from 1804, 1963 and 1968 for example, to have commenced in the Iron Age and had its origins in the trading links with the iron producing areas of the Forest of Dean. Domestic settlement, with finds including pottery and tesserae from the early 2nd century, continued into the 3rd century and thereafter steadily declined with few artefacts from domestic situations known after 350 AD. The iron working which began in the north and continued in the south western part of the town did continue well into the 4th century and furnaces are known. Field walking in 1986 produced over 2000 artefacts including pottery and iron slag. Roads, buildings, enclosures and ditches have all been identified on various aerial photographs. The town is mentioned in the Antonine Itinerary (XIII).

- 4.1.5 An evaluation and watching brief undertaken by Rubicon Heritage in 2017 and 2018 on land at Fairfields to the south of Site revealed the northern extent of an occupation layer and features likely associated with the Roman town of Ariconium, which was known as an ironworking centre. Numerous finds of Roman pottery, slag and animal bones were recovered dating from

the 1st to early 3rd centuries AD which aligned with the known development of the Roman town (Rubicon Heritage 2017, 2018).

- 4.1.6 Two archaeological evaluations have been carried out by Headland Archaeology to the east of the site, at land opposite Laburnam Cottage, Bromsash, which revealed a single pit containing abraded Romano-British pottery and evidence of ironworking from the same period (Headland Archaeology 2016a) and on land south of Pinford Lane, Bromsash which uncovered no archaeological features, although ironworking residues indicative of bloomery furnace production were recovered from ploughsoils (Headland Archaeology 2016b).
- 4.1.7 Work carried out to the north of Ariconium revealed a number of rock-cut hollows with the remains of iron smelting furnaces and slag pits (SMR 42706).
- 4.1.8 Other isolated finds from the area have been associated with the Roman town and range from a spearhead to a harness fitting, although the dating of some of the artefacts is contentious (SMR 21725).

Early Medieval

- 4.1.9 No early medieval remains are known within the immediate vicinity of site, and the village itself does not appear to be listed in the Domesday Book although the Hundred of Bromsash contained 23 places.

Medieval

- 4.1.10 No medieval remains are known within the immediate vicinity of site. A possible medieval spearhead is recorded as being found at Bromsash (SMR 21725).

Post-medieval and Modern

- 4.1.11 The first edition 1887 Ordnance Survey map of Herefordshire (Sheet LII.NW) shows the Site as lying within a large, triangular field to the northwest of the village of 'Brooms Ash'. The 'site of Ariconium (Roman Station)' is labelled to the southwest of Site. Subsequent Ordnance Survey maps show very little development within the village, with the Site remaining part of a field until at least 1948.
- 4.1.12 An 18th or 19th century boundary wall, which was identified as being depicted on the 1891 OS map, was found in a pit to the front of Ivylea House (SMR 46667).

5. RESULTS

5.1 Summary results

- 5.1.1 One modern French Drain was revealed in Trench 1 and a canine burial was revealed in Trench 2. No other archaeological features were present, and no finds were retrieved from the top or subsoils. The superficial geology was uniform across Site and consisted of a red-brown silt-sand with sandstone inclusion and patches of bedrock. The topsoil across Site consisted of a dark brown-grey friable sand-silt with rare small sandstone inclusions, between 0.13 and 0.25m thick. The subsoil consisted of a mid-brown-red friable silt-sand with occasional small sandstone inclusions between 0.12 and 0.33m thick. A sondage was excavated at the southwest end of Trench 1 to a depth of 0.5m, and the natural was seen to extend beyond the limit of excavation. The topsoil, subsoil and natural in both trenches were visually inspected, but nothing significant was found.

Trench 1

- 5.1.2 Excavation of Trench 1 revealed the presence of a modern north-south French-style drain c.0.6m wide. The drain had been filled with rock and covered with plastic. No other features were found within the trench.

Trench 2

- 5.1.3 Trench 2 revealed a shallow pit [203] which contained the skeleton of a small dog (204). Pit [203] was cut through the subsoil. It had gradual concave sides to a gradual concave base and measured 0.8m long to the limit of excavation, by 0.87m wide and 0.3m deep. It contained a modern canine burial (204) which was overlain by deliberate backfill (205), a dark grey-brown friable sand-silt with occasional small stones, derived from the top and subsoils. No other features were found within the trench.

5.2 Finds

Faunal Bone

- 5.2.1 The animal bone assemblage consisted of a small, modern canine burial (204) within pit [203]. The canine was likely of terrier-type breed which may have died in whelp as the mandible of a neonate canine was also present.

6. DISCUSSION

6.1 Evaluation Results

- 6.1.1 The archaeological evaluation on land at Broomsash, Nr. Ross-on-Wye, revealed a single modern dog burial and a modern French-style drain. The topsoil and subsoil contained no artefactual material which was not modern in date. The land is currently in use as an allotment and had reportedly been so for at least the past fifty years (Mr. Tedds, *pers. comm.*). During this time the land had been continuously cultivated so that the topsoil had been picked over and stones etc. removed. The Site was depicted as part of a large triangular field on the 1887 1st Edition 6-inch Ordnance Survey (OS) map of Herefordshire (sheet LII.NW) and remained so at least up until 1948 as shown on the 6-inch OS map of Herefordshire (sheet LII.NW). The Site was likely incorporated within the garden of a house built to the southeast during the 1950s.
- 6.1.2 No evidence of activity was identified connected to the Roman town of Ariconium which lies southwest of Broomsash, or of any subsequent activity associated with the village. Evidence of Roman activity was found in a previous evaluation of land at Fairfields, Broomsash which lies c.125m southwest of Site, to the immediate south of the western road into Broomsash (Rubicon Heritage 2017). The absence of any archaeological features within Site could indicate the settlement of Ariconium did not extend this far northeast and the Site formed part of the hinterland of the Roman settlement and the later village.
- 6.1.3 The absence of iron working residues from the Site appears slightly incongruous compared with other sites north and northeast of Ariconium where residues were located within the ploughsoils. The depth of top and subsoil is shallower than that recorded in evaluation trenching 125m to the southwest of Site (Rubicon Heritage 2017), however, the Site was located on slightly elevated ground formerly at the southeast corner of a large field therefore ploughing could have gradually denuded the Site of top and subsoils. The recent use of the land for horticulture could have replenished some of the soil depth and could also explain the lack of artefacts or residues due to stone etc. being removed from the area over time.

7. ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

7.1 Known Heritage Resource

- 7.1.1 The Site had not been subject to any previous recorded archaeological investigation. The nearest known remains from the immediate vicinity are Roman features connected with the settlement of Ariconium located southwest of Site. The boundaries of the settlement do not appear to be well defined, with Roman features and iron working debris located within the immediate vicinity of Bromsash. Other archaeological remains are limited to stray finds which could indicate medieval activity in the area. The origins of the modern settlement appear unknown, although the village is depicted on the first edition 1887 Ordnance Survey map and a boundary wall which could date from the 18th century was located by Ivylea House.

7.2 Potential Archaeological Resource and Significance

- 7.2.1 The results of the archaeological investigations identified a single modern French-style drain and a modern dog burial, with no archaeological features or stray finds.
- 7.2.2 The results of the evaluation suggest the Site has low potential for archaeological remains, although the intensive horticultural activity on the Site in recent years could skew the results of the relative density of artefactual evidence in the upper soil sequence compared with other areas of the village.
- 7.2.3 The sample rate (3%) for archaeological evaluation of the Site could result in undiscovered features being present on the Site. However, the targeting of the evaluation trenches within the approximate footprint of the building resulted in a higher sample proportion of the area of the Site likely to be disturbed by the proposed development. Therefore, it is unlikely any archaeological features would be present within the proposed footprint of the development.

7.3 Impact of Development

- 7.3.1 The proposed development will impact on the features identified during the course of the archaeological investigations. However, as these are modern in date, of negligible local significance and have been recorded in line with the WSI for this project, the predicted impact has been mitigated.

8. REFERENCES

Archaeological Archives' Forum 2011 *Archaeological Archives: a best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation. Second Edition*

CIfA 2014a *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*

CIfA 2014b *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials*

Headland Archaeology 2016a *Land opposite Laburnam Cottage, Bromsash, Ross-on-Wye. Archaeological Evaluation. Typescript report LCBH/01*

Headland Archaeology 2016b *Land to the south of Pinford Lane, Bromsash, Ross-on-Wye. Archaeological Evaluation. Typescript report ref. SABH*

Historic England 2015 *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide*

Museums and Galleries Commission 1994 *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections*

Richards, J.D. et al. 2000 *Digital Archives from Excavation and Fieldwork: A Guide to Good Practice (Second Edition)*

Rubicon Heritage 2017 *Fairfields, Bromsash, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire. Archaeological Evaluation.*

Rubicon Heritage 2018 *Fairfields, Bromsash, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire. Archaeological Watching Brief.*

UKIC 1990 *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage*

Online Sources

British Geological Survey online viewer <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>
(accessed 17-03-20)

Appendices

APPENDIX 1 ARCHIVE STATEMENT

The site archive is comprised of the following materials:

Item	Quantity
Field recording sheets	5
Plans	GPS
Sections	2
Photographs	32
Registers (Context, finds, drawing, sample, photo)	1
Notebooks	0

The archive material is contained within one box.

The archive is currently stored in the offices of Red River Archaeology Ltd, Unit 3, Ringside Business Park, Heol Y Rhosog, Cardiff, CF3 2EW, Wales.

APPENDIX 2 CONTEXT REGISTER

Context No.	Type	Fill of:	Filled by:	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Interpretation
100	Layer	-	-	>15	>1.8	0.25	Dark brown-grey friable sand-silt with rare sandstone inclusions and moderate rooting	Topsoil
101	Layer	-	-	>15	>1.8	0.16	Mid-brown-red friable silt-sand with sparse small sandstone inclusions	Subsoil
102	Layer	-	-	>15	>1.8	>0.52m	Red-brown friable silt-sand with patches of sandstone bedrock	Natural
200	Layer	-	-	>15	>1.8	0.16	Dark brown-grey friable sand-silt with rare sandstone inclusions and moderate rooting	Topsoil
201	Layer	-	-	>15	>1.8	0.33	Mid-brown-red friable silt-sand with sparse small sandstone inclusions.	Subsoil
202	Layer	-	-	>15	>1.8	0.4	Red-brown friable silt-sand with moderate sandstone inclusions	Natural
203	Cut	-	204, 205	0.8	0.87	0.3	Sub-circular pit with gradual concave sides to a concave base.	Pit for dog burial
204	Deposit	203	-	-	-	-	Modern canine skeleton	Dog burial
205	Deposit	203	-	0.8	0.87	0.3	Dark grey-brown friable sand-silt with occasional small stones	Deliberate backfill over dog burial

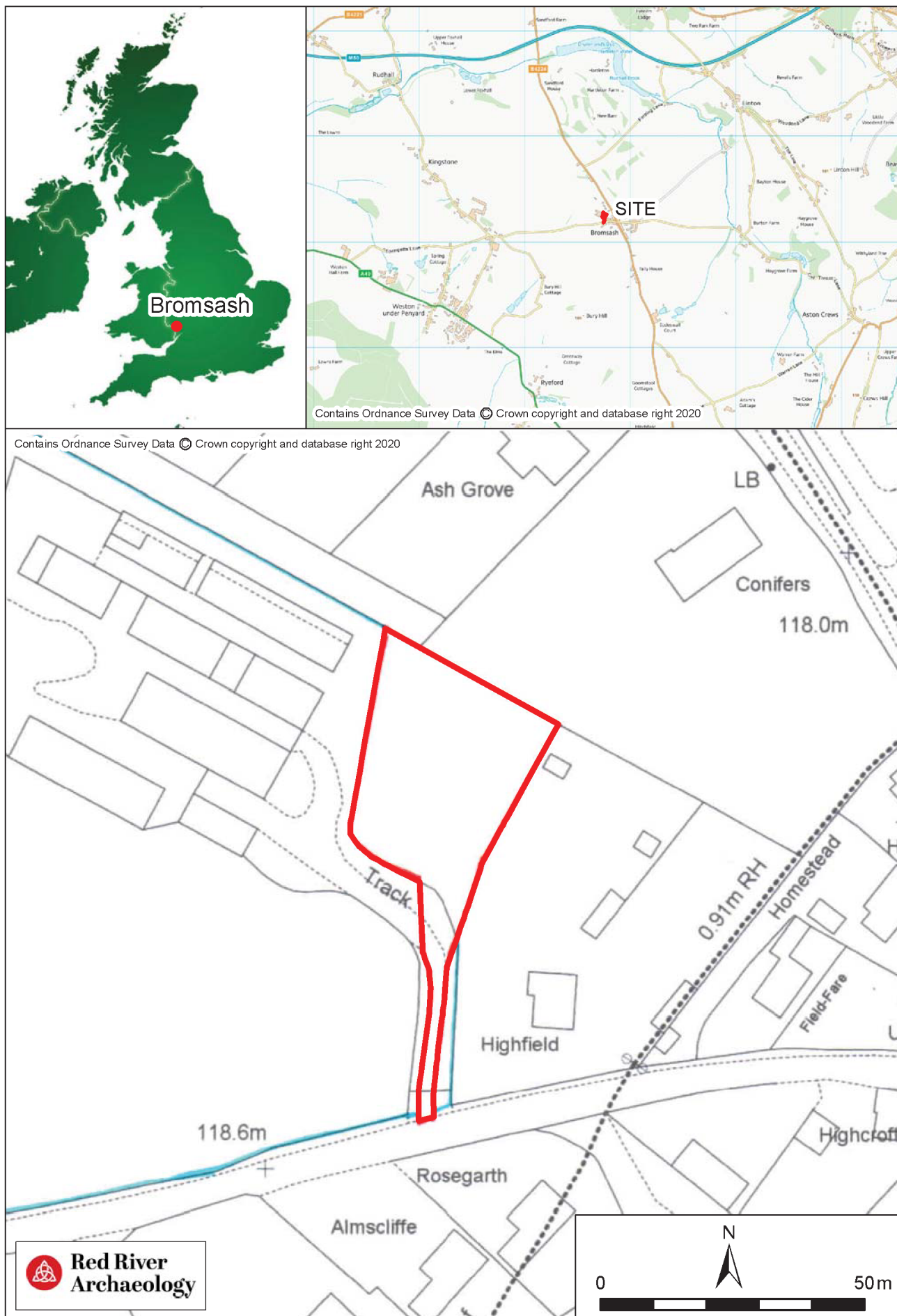


Figure 1 - Land at Bromsash, Nr Ross on Wye, Herefordshire: Site location.

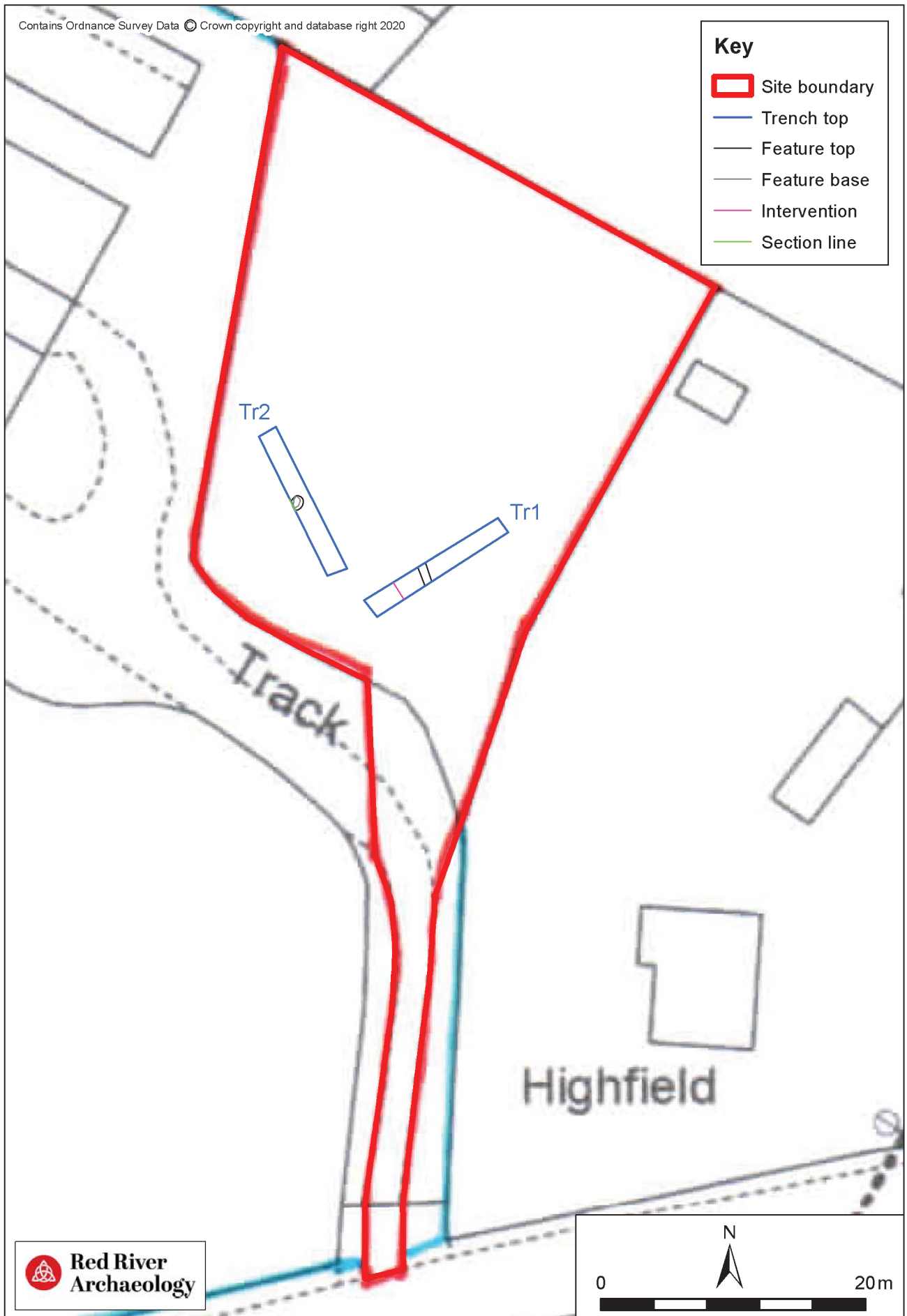


Figure 2 - Excavated evaluation trench layout.

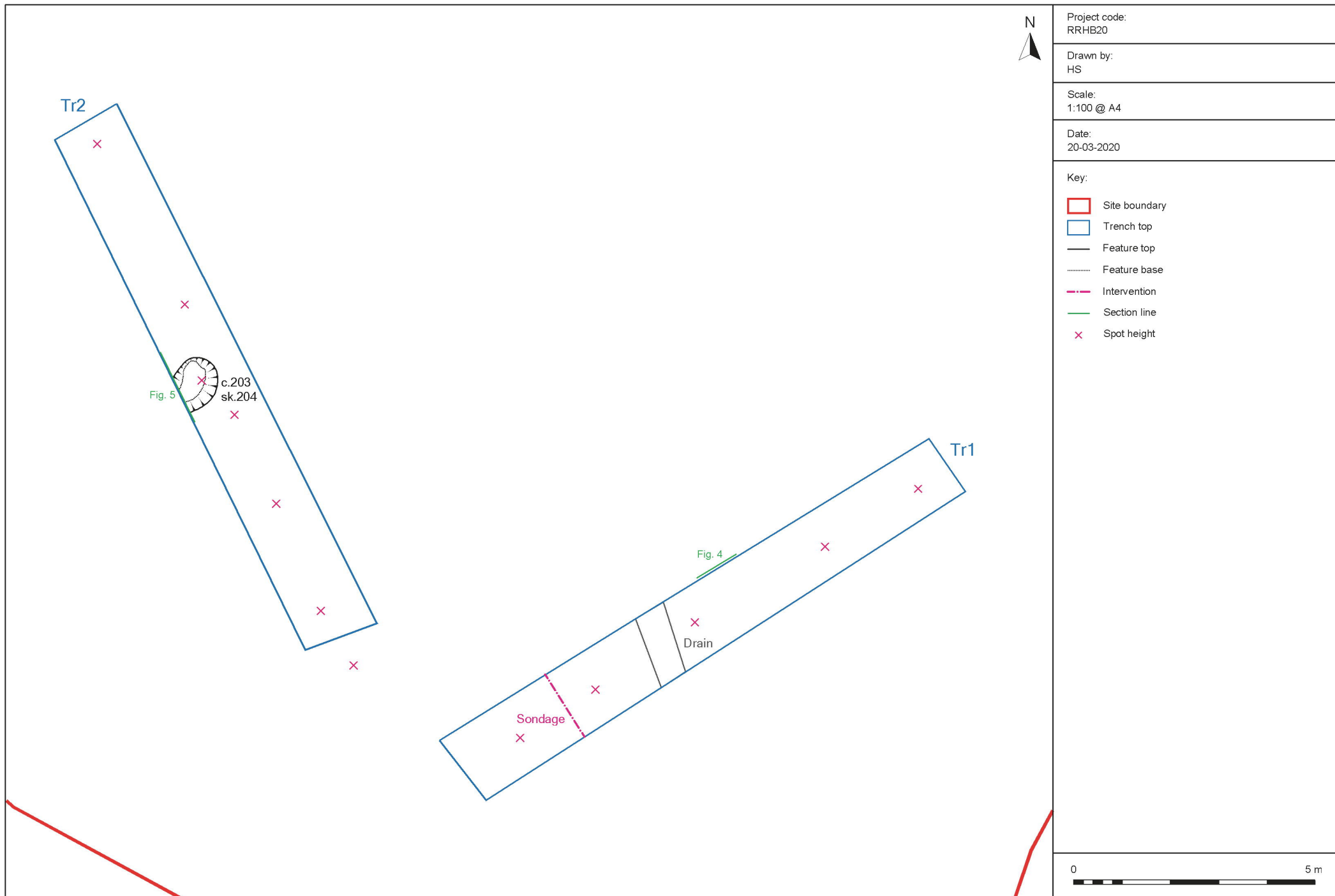


Figure 3 - Plan of excavated evaluation trenches.

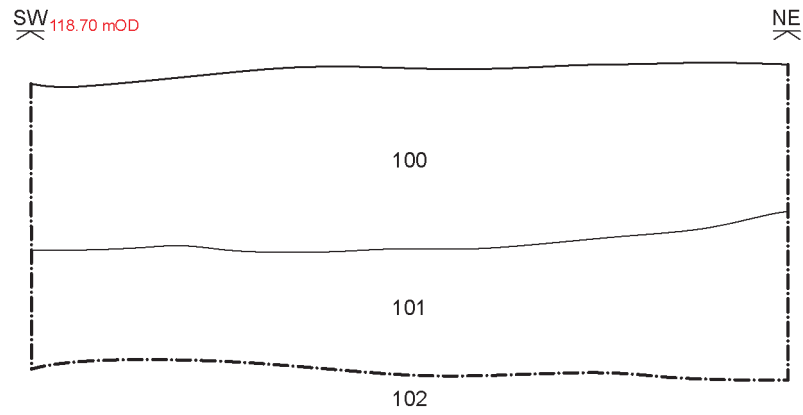


Figure 4 - Southwest-facing representative section of Trench 1.

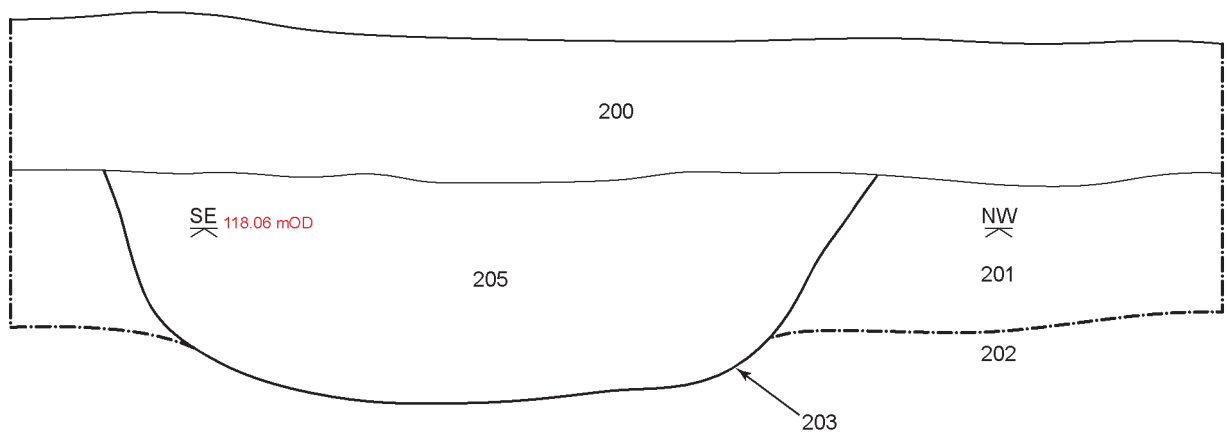


Figure 5 - Northeast-facing section through pit 203, Trench 2.



Plate 1 - Overview of Site, looking southwest.



Plate 2 - Overview of Trench 1, looking northeast



Plate 3 - Overview of Trench 2, looking southwest



Plate 4 - Overview of pit [203] with canine skeleton (204), looking northeast