



Croxton & Garry Site, London Road Swanscombe, Kent

Archaeological Evaluation



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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Heritage (Part of RPS) ('the client'), to undertake an archaeological evaluation of land located north of London Road, Swanscombe, Kent, centred on NGR 559703 175017.

The evaluation was conducted in advance of the redevelopment of the site for residential purposes and was undertaken as part of a condition placed on the planning application.

Only two of the proposed nine trenches were excavated during this phase of works, with the remaining seven trenches to be undertaken at a later date. Both trenches contained made ground deposits directly overlying the natural geology, indicating the area had been truncated likely during previous chalk quarrying activity, with no archaeological finds or features recorded.

The evaluation took place parallel to a Pleistocene geoarchaeological deposit investigation of the site and was undertaken between 28th May 2019 and 31st May 2019. The Pleistocene results will be produced in a separate report.

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank CgMs Heritage (Part of RPS), for commissioning the archaeological evaluation, in particular Richard von Kalinowski-Meager. Wessex Archaeology is also grateful for the advice of the Lis Dyson and Wendy Rogers, County Archaeologists for Kent County Council, who monitored the project for Dartford Borough Council.

The fieldwork was directed by Mark Denyer. This report was written by Andrew Souter and edited by Rob De'Athe. The project was managed by Rob De'Athe on behalf of Wessex Archaeology.



Croxton & Garry Site London Road Swanscombe, Kent

Archaeological Evaluation

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project and planning background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CgMs Heritage (Part of RPS) ('the client'), to undertake an archaeological evaluation of land located north of London Road, Swanscombe, Kent, centred on NGR 559703 175017 (**Fig. 1**).

1.1.2 The proposed development comprises the construction of up to 220 residential dwellings including new vehicular access to Tiltman Avenue, creation of a development platform and associated works. Outline planning permission (EDC/17/0110) was granted on the 31st August 2017, subject to conditions. Condition 5 relates to archaeological work.

Prior to submission of the detailed Masterplan required pursuant to condition 6, and prior to implementation of any interim groundworks approved pursuant to condition 4, the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, shall undertake a phased programme of geo-archaeological, palaeo-environmental and archaeological work in accordance with a written specification and timetable that has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that features of geoarchaeological, palaeoenvironmental and archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded, in accordance with adopted Dartford Local Plan Core Strategy Policy CS6 and adopted Dartford Development Policies Plan Policies DP12 and DP13.

1.1.3 All works were undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) which detailed the aims, methodologies and standards to be employed in order to undertake the evaluation (Wessex Archaeology 2019). The County Archaeologist for Kent County Council (KCC) approved the WSI, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority (LPA), prior to fieldwork commencing.

1.1.4 The previously submitted WSI (WA 2019) comprised a proposal for evaluation comprising nine trial trenches within the northeastern part of the site. This report details the results of two trenches, within the northeastern part of the site, which was the only accessible area of the site at the time of evaluation. The footprint of the further 7 trenches currently lie within areas of trees and substantial undergrowth, which will need to be removed prior to the evaluation works progressing (**Figure 2**).

1.1.5 The evaluation was undertaken between the 28th and 31st May 2019.

1.2 Scope of the report

1.2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a detailed description of the results of the evaluation, to interpret the results within a local, regional or wider archaeological context and assess whether the aims of the evaluation have been met.



- 1.2.2 This is an initial phase of fieldwork, the presented results will provide further information on the archaeological resource that may be impacted by the proposed development and facilitate an informed decision with regard to the requirement for, and methods of, any further archaeological mitigation.

1.3 Location, topography and geology

- 1.3.1 The site lies across the south-western part of the Swanscombe Peninsula, a neck of low-lying marshland extending across the floodplain and defined by a tight meander of the Thames. It is a triangular-shaped area (covering c.5.18ha) located immediately north of London Road in the small town of Swanscombe, in the Borough of Dartford in Kent. The site was formerly used as an industrial chalk quarry and is currently undeveloped with extant buildings, although some areas of hardstanding are located where buildings once stood. It is bounded by Tiltman Avenue to the north, Manor Way Business Park to the east, the A226 London Road to the south and Lover's Lane (a pedestrian path) to the west. There is a small area (c 0.7ha) of potentially unquarried ground in the eastern part of the site.
- 1.3.2 The current topography is extremely varied due to quarrying activities, but generally the site is set much lower than London Road (south) and Lover's Lane (west) with deep quarry faces along the western and southern boundaries. A roughly east-west aligned footpath crosses the site in the north (from London Road to Lover's Lane), running parallel to the road situated along the northern boundary (Tiltman Avenue). This footpath remains on an island of raised ground with evidence of quarrying on either side (in the north-west).
- 1.3.3 According to the British Geological Survey mapping (BGS online viewer), the basal geology underlying the site consists of Upper Cretaceous deposits of the Seaford Chalk Formation (89.8-86.3 mya). Much of the site has no mapped superficial deposits, but Pleistocene Head deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel, are recorded in the north-east. Infilled artificial ground is also recorded across much of the site.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The geoarchaeological, archaeological, and historical background was assessed in a prior desk-based assessment and Written Scheme of Investigation (ASE 2017, Wessex Archaeology 2018a). The relevant information is summarized below, with additional information included as appropriate.

2.2 Previous investigations related to the proposed development

Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment (ASE 2017)

- 2.2.1 In general terms the assessment found that the Site lies in an area considered to have a low archaeological potential for most periods, primarily a result of the significant truncation of the archaeological horizon across most of the area by quarrying activities.
- 2.2.2 While no finds have been identified on the site, finds of Palaeolithic date are known to exist both within the study area used as part of the assessment and further afield, principally being recovered from quarries. The assessment concluded that the Head / Coombe deposits that infill the dry valley upon which the site lies may include material and artefacts of Palaeolithic origin.
- 2.2.3 The only area that was still considered to have some potential was identified in the east of the site. A tunnel was located during the walkover along the western boundary in the south-west of the Site that was not recorded on the HER. This tunnel is proposed for infilling as

part of the redevelopment of the Site. The Historic Building Recording (below) recorded this structure as part of that phase of work.

Historic Building Recording (ASE 2019)

- 2.2.4 In early 2019 a programme of historic building surveying was undertaken on extant structures within the site. The survey comprised the recording of an extant tramway tunnel located along the western site boundary with Lover's Lane, a footpath bridge in the north along Tiltman Avenue and areas of hardstanding related to former buildings. All structures were recorded to level 2 standard.

Pleistocene Geoarchaeological sections investigation (WA 2019)

- 2.2.5 The geoarchaeological investigation assessed nine upstanding sections for potentially intact Quaternary stratigraphy. These investigations established that intact Quaternary stratigraphic was present within two areas, designated Areas A and B. Pleistocene solifluction deposits and colluvial deposits are present in both areas; the latter are likely to have aggraded from the late Pleistocene to Holocene. These deposits are located at the distal end of a dry valley cut through chalk bedrock. This ran from south-west to north-east through the investigation area prior to quarrying. The deposits are likely to be a lateral continuation of deposits identified to the north on Craylands Lane (Wessex Archaeology 2018b), within the Craylands Gorge (Wessex Archaeology 2004) and at Knockhall Road, Greenhithe (ASE 2012, Wessex Archaeology 2016).
- 2.2.6 A sequence of fine-grained alluvial sands and silts were identified in Area A. These likely equate to the Tilbury Marshes Member of the River Thames terrace sequence. The East Tilbury Marshes Member is thought to have aggraded between late MIS 6 and early MIS 2 (~160-25,000 BP; Bridgland 2006). They have the broad potential to contain late Middle and early Upper Palaeolithic archaeological material, along with Ipswichian (MIS 5e; ~123-110,000 BP) and/or Devensian (MIS 5d-2; ~110-11,700 BP) geoarchaeological and paleoenvironmental datasets.
- 2.2.7 The assessment found that the solifluction and colluvial deposits have the potential to contain Palaeolithic and Holocene artefacts and ecofacts, though they are likely to be reworked. They also have the broad potential to preserve buried stratigraphy that could include stabilisation horizons/land-surfaces associated with minimally disturbed archaeological evidence and paleoenvironmental datasets. Units within the solifluction deposits and alluvial deposits may also have the potential to preserve paleoenvironmental dataset and horizons were identified which could be suitable for OSL dating.
- 2.3 Previous investigations within the immediate vicinity of the site**
- 2.3.1 In 2018 Wessex Archaeology undertook a trial trench and Pleistocene Geoarchaeological test pit evaluation on land to the immediate south of the site at Craylands Lane. The trial trench evaluation comprising 5 trenches found no archaeological finds or features.
- 2.3.2 The Pleistocene Geoarchaeological test pit evaluation comprised the excavation of 13 machine-excavated test pits. The investigations were designed to investigate the sub-surface deposits, establish their stratigraphy, their extent, and to evaluate their potential to contain Palaeolithic remains.
- 2.3.3 The evaluation established that Quaternary deposits are confined to two areas in the south-west portion of evaluation area. The deposits preserved in these areas consisted of material infilling a valley cut through the chalk. This ran approximately south-west to north-east

through the evaluation area prior to quarrying. The sequence reflects material deposited by slope process over an extended period, likely from the Late Pleistocene to the Holocene.

- 2.3.4 The potential for the deposits to preserve artefacts and ecofacts was assessed. Gravelly horizons within the Holocene colluvium contained reworked lithic artefacts; such evidence was absent from all other deposits. Environmental evidence was present in some deposits, in all cases this either resulted from, or has been heavily impacted by recent bioturbation.
- 2.3.5 Deposits have been correlated with the upper part of a sequence identified 150m to the south-west in Craylands Gorge (Wessex Archaeology 2004) and with Phase V of a sequence previously identified 400m to the south-west at Knockhall Road, Greenhithe (ASE 2012, Wessex Archaeology 2016, 2017). The latter have been equated to the late Devensian and early Holocene.
- 2.3.6 Based on the results of the evaluation the Pleistocene and Palaeolithic potential of the deposits across the Craylands Lane site was identified as low to none and no further work was recommended.

2.4 Archaeological and historical context

Prehistoric (970,000 BC – AD 43)

- 2.4.1 Palaeolithic evidence is abundant in Kent, and the majority of the sites are in the Swanscombe area. Most evidence is from fluvial terrace deposits that are composed on a combination of silt, sand and gravel layers.
- 2.4.2 Barnfield Pit to the south of the site is recognised as being of international significance with artefactual and faunal remains recovered including an early human fossil skull, one of only two sites in England with Lower or Middle Palaeolithic hominid skeletal evidence. Several other sites in the vicinity have produced the same series of deposits. Four records of Palaeolithic finds were identified within the study area, consisting of surface finds and finds recovered during gravel extraction.
- 2.4.3 While Kent continued to be occupied throughout the period between the end of the Palaeolithic (9500 BC) until the start of Roman Britain (AD 43), there is only a single Neolithic site within the Study Area relating to ten miscellaneous worked flints from the Swanscombe area.

Romano-British to Medieval (AD 43 – 1500)

- 2.4.4 A quantity of human and animal bones, along with 2nd/3rd century Romano-British pottery was recovered from a cavity in New Craylands Lane pit 200m south of the site. No other Romano-British, Anglo-Saxon or medieval evidence is recorded within the Study Area.
- 2.4.5 The settlement of Swanscombe appears in the Domesday book as consisting of 33 villagers with 3 smallholders, 13 ploughs, 1 man at arms and 10 slaves. The origins of the towns name dates back to at least AD 695 when it was known as Svanescamp. A medieval manor was located northwest of the site and was granted to the priory of Dartford in 1363 until the dissolution.

Post-medieval and modern (AD 1500 - present)

- 2.4.6 During the post-medieval period the area around Swanscombe became increasingly industrialised, with a largescale increase in chalk and gravel extraction. The site was undisturbed until the 20th century, at which point it became a chalk quarry, with associated infrastructure, which left the site in its current heavily truncated state. Several of the quarry



buildings remain standing and, while not considered to be overly valuable from an architectural standpoint, they do provide a degree of context to the industrial heritage of the area.

- 1.1.1 The site is surrounded by former military heritage relating to the defence of the United Kingdom during the Second World War and includes two air raid shelters (one within the site itself), an air raid siren, com shelter and a temporary mortuary located directed directly west of the site.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 General aims

- 3.1.1 The general aims of the evaluation, as stated in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2019) and in compliance with the ClfA's *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014a), were:

- To provide information about the archaeological potential of the site; and
- To inform either the scope and nature of any further archaeological work that may be required; or the formation of a mitigation strategy (to offset the impact of the development on the archaeological resource); or a management strategy.

3.2 General objectives

- 3.2.1 In order to achieve the above aims, the general objectives of the evaluation were:

- To determine the presence or absence of archaeological features, deposits, structures, artefacts or ecofacts within the specified area;
- To establish, within the constraints of the evaluation, the extent, character, date, condition and quality of any surviving archaeological remains;
- To place any identified archaeological remains within a wider historical and archaeological context in order to assess their significance; and
- To make available information about the archaeological resource within the site by reporting on the results of the evaluation.

3.3 Site-specific objectives

- 3.3.1 Following consideration of the archaeological potential of the site, site-specific objectives defined in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2019) were to:

- Confirm the impact and extents of the previous quarrying within the site
- Assess the potential for artefactual evidence in the unquarried areas

4 METHODS

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with the detailed methods set out within the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2019) and in general compliance with the standards outlined in ClfA guidance (ClfA 2014a). The methods employed are summarised below.

4.2 Fieldwork methods

General

- 4.2.1 The trench locations were set out using GPS, in the approximate positions as those proposed in the WSI. However, both trenches had to be moved from their original positions because of on-site obstacles such as trees and live services (**Fig. 1**). Trench 8 was moved approximately 26m northeast of its original location, and Trench 9 was moved 16m to the north and rotated from a northeast/southwest alignment to a north/south alignment.
- 4.2.2 Two trial trenches, one measuring 6 m in length and 1.8 m wide and another measuring 12 m long by 1.8 m wide, were excavated in level spits using a 360° excavator equipped with a toothless bucket, under the constant supervision and instruction of the monitoring archaeologist. Machine excavation proceeded until either the archaeological horizon or the natural geology was exposed.
- 4.2.3 A geoarchaeological test pit was excavated within each trench, under the supervision of a geoarchaeologist. In Trench 1 an additional test pit was excavated at the opposite end of the trench in order to confirm natural deposits had been truncated.
- 4.2.4 Where necessary, the base of the trench/surface of archaeological deposits were cleaned by hand.
- 4.2.5 Spoil derived from both machine stripping and hand-excavated archaeological deposits was visually scanned for the purposes of finds retrieval. Where found, artefacts were to be collected and bagged by context.
- 4.2.6 Following completion of all relevant recording, the trenches were backfilled to the satisfaction of the developer using excavated materials in the order in which they were excavated, and left level on completion. No other reinstatement or surface treatment was undertaken.

Recording

- 4.2.7 All exposed archaeological deposits and features were to be recorded using Wessex Archaeology's pro forma recording system. A complete drawn record of excavated features and deposits was to be made including both plans and sections drawn to appropriate scales (generally 1:20 or 1:50 for plans and 1:10 for sections), and tied to the Ordnance Survey (OS) National Grid. The Ordnance Datum (OD: Newlyn) heights of all principal features would have been calculated, and levels added to plans and section drawings.
- 4.2.8 A Leica GNSS connected to Leica's SmartNet service surveyed the location of the evaluation trenches. All survey data is recorded in OS National Grid coordinates and heights above OD (Newlyn), as defined by OSGM15 and OSTN15, with a three-dimensional accuracy of at least 50 mm.
- 4.2.9 A full photographic record was made using digital cameras equipped with an image sensor of not less than 10 megapixels. Digital images have been subject to managed quality control and curation processes, which has embedded appropriate metadata within the image and will ensure long term accessibility of the image set.

4.3 Artefactual and environmental strategies

- 4.3.1 Appropriate strategies for the recovery, processing and assessment of artefacts and environmental samples were in line with those detailed in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2019). The treatment of artefacts and environmental remains was in general accordance



with: *Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014b) and *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation* (English Heritage 2011).

4.4 Monitoring

- 4.4.1 KCC County Archaeologist, on behalf of the LPA, monitored the evaluation. Any variations to the WSI, if required to better address the project aims, were agreed in advance with both the client and the KCC County Archaeologist.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 None of the excavated trial trenches contained archaeological features and deposits, and instead revealed evidence of truncation across the evaluated area, with man-made deposits directly overlying the natural chalk geology (**Fig. 1**).
- 5.1.2 The following section presents the results of the evaluation.
- 5.1.3 Detailed descriptions of individual contexts are provided in the trench summary tables (**Appendix 1**). **Figure 1** shows the location of the excavated evaluation trenches.

5.2 Soil sequence and natural deposits

- 5.2.1 The stratigraphic sequence of the site was consistent between the two trenches, although Trench 8 featured significantly higher levels of truncation.
- 5.2.2 Between 0.1 and 0.2m of mid grey brown sandy silt topsoil, of modern origin, overlaid multiple layers of made ground to a depth of 1.6m and 2.6m below ground level (bgl). The layers of made ground comprised building rubble to a depth of 0.56m bgl, overlying 0.24m of a concrete slab, which in turn overlaid between 0.8 and 1.8m of made ground.
- 5.2.3 The made ground deposits overlaid natural weathered chalk deposits. In Trench 8 these deposits were encountered at a depth of between 1.6m and 2m bgl while in Trench 9 they were recorded at a depths of 2.6m to 4m bgl. The weathered chalk deposits overlaid a further chalk deposit.

6 ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE

- 6.1.1 No artefactual evidence was recovered during the evaluation.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

- 7.1.1 No archaeological features or deposits warranting environmental sampling were recorded within the evaluation.

8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1.1 During the course of the evaluation, and the associated geoarchaeological investigations, it appeared that the land directly outside of the previously quarried area had been severely truncated, with made ground directly overlying the truncated surface of colluvial and alluvial deposits, Pleistocene solifluction gravels or chalk bedrock. Given these circumstances, and

the results of this evaluation, it is highly unlikely that Holocene archaeological remains are present within the site.

- 8.1.2 The evaluation was hampered by extensive known or possible underground services, that heavily constrained the potential locations for the trenches.

9 ARCHIVE STORAGE AND CURATION

9.1 Museum

- 9.1.1 The archive resulting from the evaluation is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Maidstone. The site falls within the collecting area of Dartford Museum. The museum is not currently accepting archaeological archives. Every effort will be made to identify a suitable repository for the archive resulting from the fieldwork, and if this is not possible, Wessex Archaeology will initiate discussions with the local planning authority in an attempt to resolve the issue. If no suitable repository is identified, Wessex Archaeology will continue to store the archive until a suitable repository to archive the fieldwork results is identified. Deposition of any finds with the museum will only be carried out with the full written agreement of the landowner to transfer title of all finds to the museum.

9.2 Preparation of the archive

- 9.2.1 The archive, which includes paper records, graphics, artefacts, ecofacts and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Dartford Museum, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014c; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).
- 9.2.2 All archive elements are marked with the **site code 206891**, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive currently comprises the following:

- 01 files/document cases of paper records and A3/A4 graphics;

9.3 Selection policy

- 9.3.1 Wessex Archaeology follows national guidelines on selection and retention (SMA 1993; Brown 2011, section 4). In accordance with these, and any specific guidance prepared by the museum, a process of selection and retention will be followed so that only those artefacts or ecofacts that are considered to have potential for future study will be retained. The selection policy will be agreed with the museum, and is fully documented in the project archive.

9.4 Security copy

- 9.4.1 In line with current best practice (eg, Brown 2011), on completion of the project a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file. PDF/A is an ISO-standardised version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for the digital preservation of electronic documents through omission of features ill-suited to long-term archiving.

9.5 OASIS

- 9.5.1 An OASIS online record (<http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main>) has been initiated, with key fields and a .pdf version of the final report submitted. Subject to any contractual requirements on confidentiality, copies of the OASIS record will be integrated into the relevant local and national records and published through the Archaeology Data Service ArchSearch catalogue.



10 COPYRIGHT

10.1 Archive and report copyright

- 10.1.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative/digital archive relating to the project will be retained by Wessex Archaeology under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved. The client will be licenced to use each report for the purposes that it was produced in relation to the project as described in the specification. The museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use conforms to the *Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003*. In some instances, certain regional museums may require absolute transfer of copyright, rather than a licence; this should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.
- 10.1.2 Information relating to the project will be deposited with the Historic Environment Record (HER) where it can be freely copied without reference to Wessex Archaeology for the purposes of archaeological research or development control within the planning process.

10.2 Third party data copyright

- 10.2.1 This document and the project archive may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (eg, Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which Wessex Archaeology are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferable by Wessex Archaeology. Users remain bound by the conditions of the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of such material.



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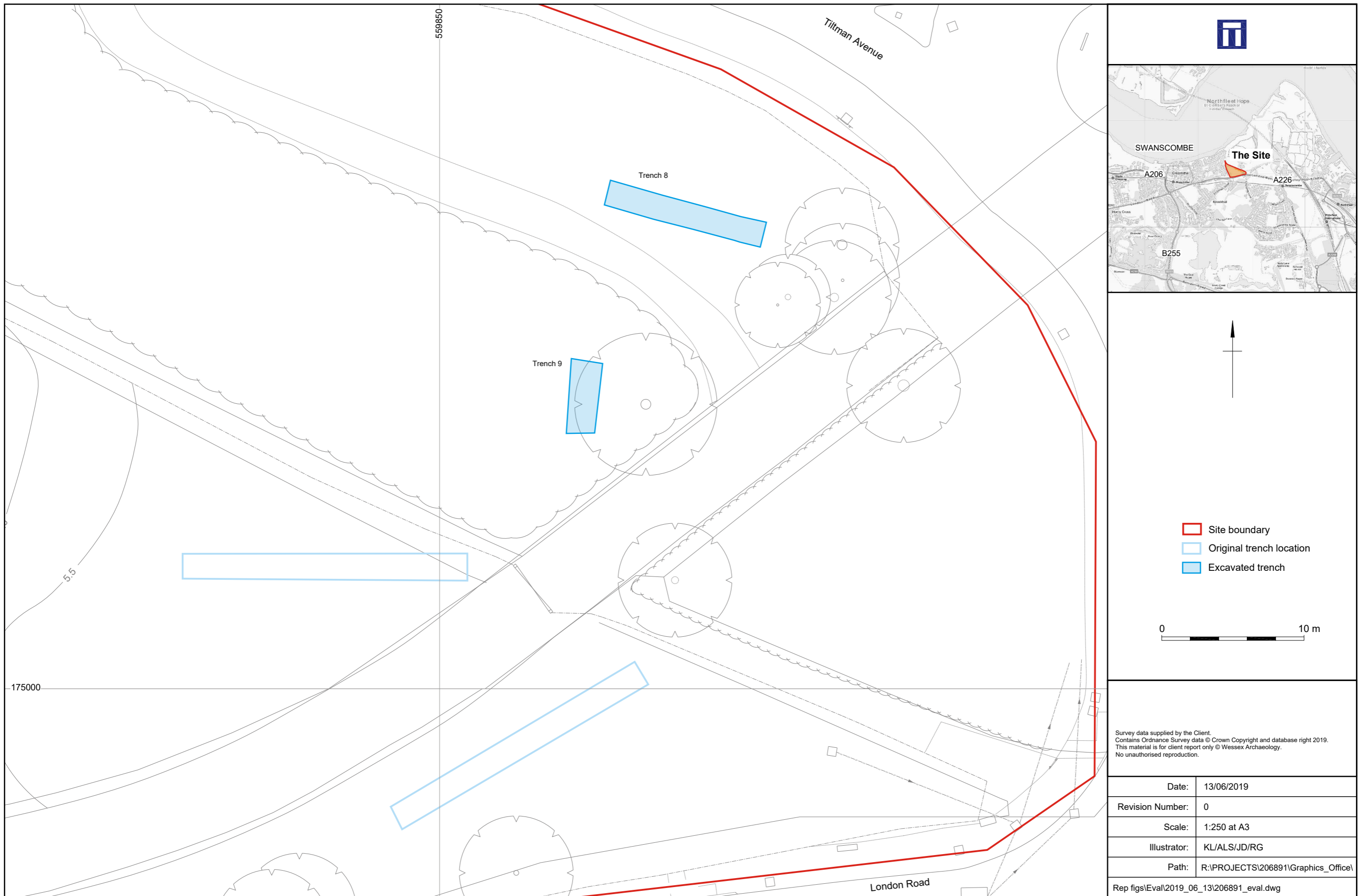
APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Trench summaries

NGR coordinates and OD heights taken at centre of each trench; depth bgl = below ground level

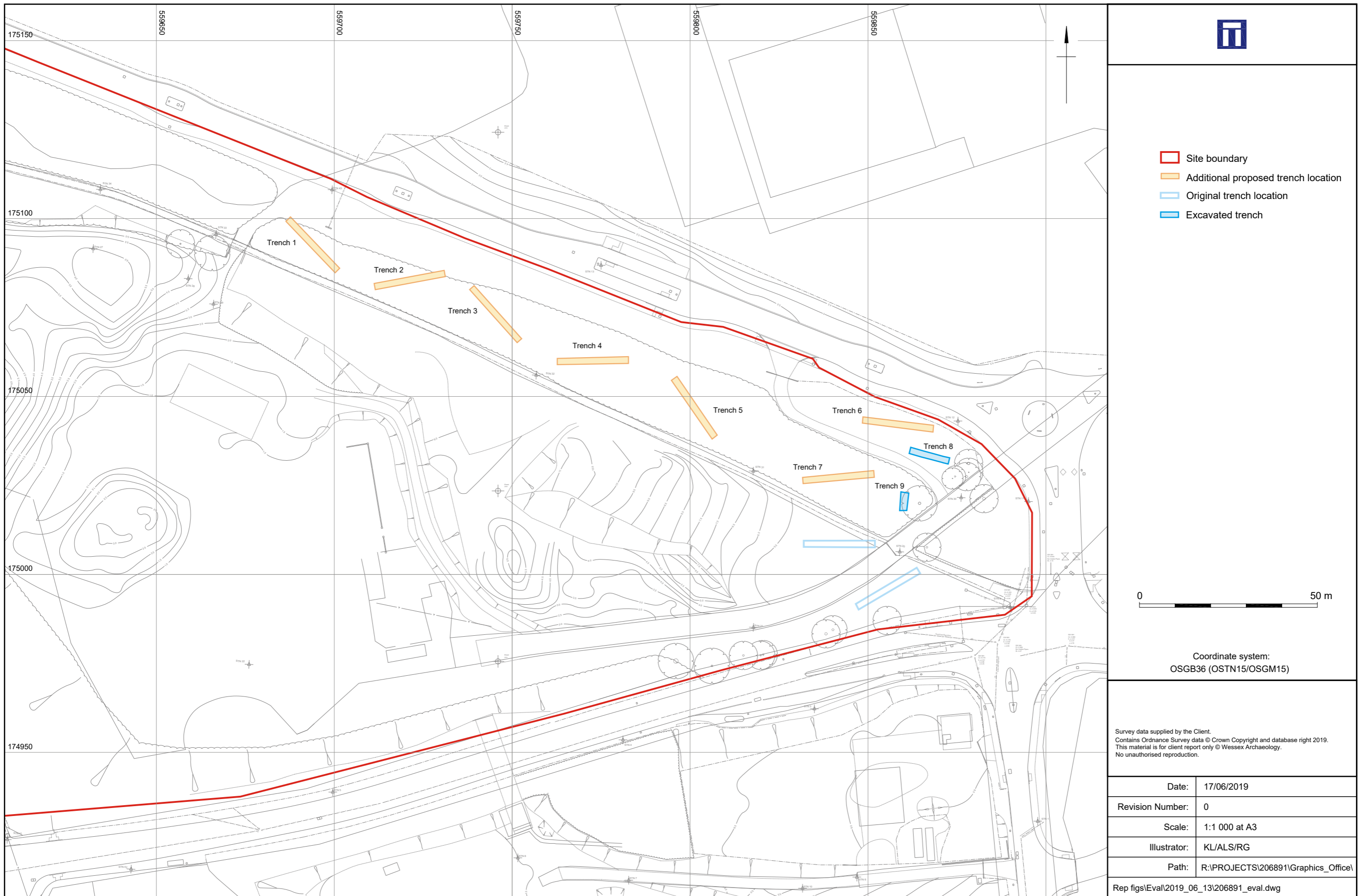
Trench No 8		Length 12m	Width 1.80m	Depth 2.90m
Easting 559864.39		Northing 175031.92		MaOD 4.71
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL
801		Topsoil	Mid brown grey to yellowish at base silty clay. Rooted. Modern.	0-0.2
802		Made ground	Greyish silty clay. Common metal, brick rubble, concrete frags, plastic. Modern.	0.2-0.56
803		Concrete slab	Modern. Regular channels approximately 3m apart.	0.56-0.8
804		Made ground		0.8-1.6
805		Natural	White. Top of weathered chalk	1.6-2
806		Natural	White. Chalk with flints	2-2.9+

Trench No 9		Length 6m	Width 1.80m	Depth 4.00m
Easting 559858.91		Northing 175018.46		MaOD 4.77
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth BGL
901		Topsoil	Mid brown grey sandy silt.	0-0.1
902		Made ground	Building rubble etc.	0.1-0.56
903		Concrete slab	Made ground	0.56-0.8
904		Made ground	Made ground.	0.8-2.6
905		Natural	Weathered chalk	2.6-4
906		Natural	Chalk.	4m+



Site location, trench layout and original trench location

Figure 1



- Site boundary
- Additional proposed trench location
- Original trench location
- Excavated trench

0 50 m

Coordinate system:
OSGB36 (OSTN15/OSGM15)

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Trench layout, original trench locations and additional proposed trenches

Figure 2



Plate 1: Trench 8, viewed from the east



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Plate 2: South facing representative section of Trench 8



Plate 3: East facing representative section of Trench 9

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