

ARCHAEOLOGICAL POST EXCAVATION ASSESSMENT REPORT

Northern Arc, Burgess Hill (Phase 1 East, P1.5 and 1.6)

Planning Reference: DM/18/5114

Site Code: ARC22

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Abstract

This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation and small strip, map and sample excavation carried out by Archaeology South-East at the Burgess Hill Northern Arc, Plots 1.5 & 1.6 between 04/04/23 and 4/11/2024. The fieldwork was commissioned by RPS on behalf of their client Bellway Homes in advance of mixed-use development at the site.

The clay geological substrate was recorded at 28.54m AOD in the south of the site and 33.34m AOD in the north. This was seen to be sealed by intact subsoil and topsoil deposits with minor damage to the geological horizon noted in the form of agricultural land drains. Significant truncation / obstruction in the location of proposed Trenches 33, 35-38 from the construction of a large pond in the east of site meant that these trenches could not be excavated. The area surrounding the earthwork was also truncated and reshaped to create banks and bunds of spoil.

A total of 27 evaluation trenches were excavated at the site along with a small excavation area in the centre of the site. Four ditches of varying depths and alignments were recorded hinting at a system of land division pre-dating the current field system. Pits containing a similar charcoal rich basal fill as noted in the previous phases of work along the Northern Arc were recorded. The exact function of these pits still remains opaque. A single pit [25/004] excavated in the north-east was the only dated feature and contained Late Iron Age/early Roman pottery.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.0.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE) was commissioned by RPS on behalf of their client Bellway Homes to undertake archaeological excavations on land forming part of the Phase 1 East of the Burgess Hill Northern Arc scheme, West Sussex, hereafter 'the site' (centred on NGR 531143 121155; Figure 1). The trial trench evaluation took place between then 4th of April and the 13th of April 2023. The strip map and sample (SMS) took place between the 15th and the 18th of May 2023. The continuation of the evaluation (Trenches 32 and 34) took place on the 4th of November 2024.

1.1 Site Location

- 1.1.1 The site consists of four parcels of land situated to the east of Isaacs Lane (A273).

1.2 Geology and Topography

- 1.2.1 The site itself is situated on a distinct slope from northeast to the southwest. The land also fell away to the east into a valley cut by a small water course.
- 1.2.2 According to the British Geological Survey (BGS 2023) the site sits on Weald clay Formation (Mudstone) with no superficial deposits recorded. To the immediate south of the site deposits of Weald Clay Formation clay and ironstone and Horsham Stone Member – Sandstone are recorded. Alluvium is mapped to the east of the site in the river valley.

1.3 Scope of the Project

- 1.3.1 Mid-Sussex District Council have granted planning permission for mixed-use development of the wider Burgess Hill Northern Arc site subject to conditions (DM/18/5114). Condition 11 is for archaeology:

11. No development shall take place within a reserved matters area until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation for that reserved matters area, to be first submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To identify and to secure the appropriate level of work that is necessary before commencement of the development in respect of protecting archaeological heritage assets, and also what may be required after commencement and in some cases after the development has been completed, and to accord with Policy DP34 of the Mid Sussex District Plan 2014 - 2031.

- 1.3.2 In accordance with this Archaeology South-East was commissioned by RPS on behalf of their client Bellway homes to undertake excavations and produced a Written Scheme of Investigation (ASE 2023). The first phase of work comprised a 25-trench evaluation. Based on the results of this work Phase 2 consisted of a small SMS area targeted on Trenches 24 & 25. Further trenching was undertaken in November in the east of site.

- 1.3.3 The fieldwork was undertaken by ASE between April and May 2023 and again in November 2024. The site was staffed by Dave Brown, Alex Budau and Wiktoria Krazoska, project managed by Paul Mason and directed by Chris Russel and Jake Wilson. Survey was undertaken by Callum McKinnon and Tom Simms.

1.4 Dates of Work

- 1.4.1 Evaluation April 2023
SMS May 2023
Further Evaluation November 2024

1.5 Archaeological methodology

- 1.5.1 All excavation areas were stripped using a tracked mechanical 360° excavator with a toothless ditching bucket under the supervision of an experienced archaeologist. Overburden deposits (e.g. demolition material, modern made ground) were first removed. Machine excavation was then carried out to the surface of natural geology whereupon archaeological features were exposed. Care was taken not to machine off seemingly homogenous layers that might have been the upper parts of archaeological features. The resultant surfaces were cleaned as necessary and a pre-excavation plan prepared using Global Positioning System (GPS) planning technology in combination with Total Station surveying. This was made available to the project manager, the supervisor and to Mark Baister, Essex Place Services immediately, or at the latest the day after the recording had taken place.
- 1.5.2 This pre-excavation plan was made available in Autocad and PDF format and printed at a suitable scale (1:20 or 1:50) for on site use. The plan was updated by regular visits to site by Archaeology South-East surveyors who plotted excavated features and recorded levels in close consultation with the supervisors.
- 1.5.3 All excavation work was carried out in line with Standards for Archaeological Fieldwork, Recording and Post-Excavation Work in Sussex (ESCC/WSCC 2019).
- 1.5.4 After the cleaning and planning of the excavation areas the following sampling strategy was employed:
- *ditches and gullies had all relationships defined, investigated and recorded. All terminals were excavated. Sufficient of the feature lengths were excavated to determine the character of the feature over its entire course; the possibility of recuts of parts, and not the whole, of the feature were considered.*
 - *Discrete features were subject to 50% excavation and suitable fills were collected as bulk environmental samples.*
 - *post and stake holes were fully excavated ensuring that all relationships were investigated.*
- 1.5.5 All excavated deposits and features were recorded according to current professional standards using the standard context record sheets used by ASE.
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- Scale section drawings of recorded features were produced at 1:10 on plastic draughting film.
- 1.5.6 A full digital photographic record of all features was maintained. The photographic record also includes working shots to represent more generally the nature of the fieldwork.
 - 1.5.7 All finds recovered from excavated deposits were collected and retained in line with the ASE artefacts collection policy.
 - 1.5.8 A standard bulk sample size of 40litres (or 100% of small features) was taken from suitable dated/datable sealed contexts to recover environmental remains such as fish, small mammals, molluscs and botanicals. Larger samples of 80-100 litres were taken from some contexts, rich in large mammal bones and shell.
 - 1.5.9 Groundworks related to the construction of a large pond were encountered on site, over the proposed locations of Trenches 33, 35 – 38. The works included the excavation of a deep pit for the pond and the construction of various banks and spoil heap bunds. It was not possible to excavate the proposed Trenches 33, 35 - 38 due to these groundworks. Additionally, proposed Trenches 39 & 40 lay outside the area of excavation and were still in a heavily wooded area. It was not possible to excavate these two trenches at the time of the works. In the event only Trenches 32 and 34 could be excavated (Figure 2).

1.6 Organisation of the Report

- 1.6.1 This post-excavation assessment (PXA) has been prepared in accordance with the guidelines laid out in Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE), Project Planning Notes 3 (PPN3): Archaeological Excavation (English Heritage 2008). The report seeks to place the results from the site (hitherto referred to together as ‘the site’) within the local archaeological and historical setting; to quantify and summarise the results; specify their significance and potential, including any capacity to address the original research aims, and to act as a final report on the work.

1.7 The Archive

- 1.7.1 The finds and environmental samples ultimately deposited as part of the archive are dependent on specialist recommendations and regional archive requirements.

Context sheets	30
Section sheets	2
Plans sheets	0
Colour photographs	0
B&W photos	0
Digital photos	211
Context register	2
Drawing register	2
Watching brief forms	0
Trench Record forms	27

Table 1: Quantification of site paper archive

Bulk finds (quantity e.g. 1 bag, 1 box, 0.5 box 0.5 of a box)	1 Bag
Registered finds (number of)	0
Flots and environmental remains from bulk samples	0
Palaeoenvironmental specialists sample samples (e.g. columns, prepared slides)	0
Waterlogged wood	0
Wet sieved environmental remains from bulk samples	0

Table 2: Quantification of artefact and environmental samples

- 1.7.2 The site archive will be assembled in accordance with the guidelines set out in: '*Archaeological Archives. A guide to best practice*' (AAF 2011); '*A Standard and Guide to best practice for Archaeological Archiving in Europe*' (EAC 2013); and '*Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections*' (SMA 2020).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Below is a summary of the pertinent findings of recent fieldwork in and around the excavation area, undertaken as part of the Northern Arc archaeological survey.
- 2.2 Trial trench evaluation on land at the Northern Arc Eastern Bridge and Link Road identified a number of undated fire pits, post-holes and pits, probable post-medieval field boundary ditches, a deposit of colluvium and a palaeochannel. In addition, early prehistoric flintwork was recovered from the topsoil and subsoil horizons. Subsequently, two areas totalling c.2.04ha were mechanically stripped including the link road where it passes between the P1.5 & P1.6 areas (ASE 2021b).
- 2.3 The earliest evidence of activity consisted of a background scatter of flintwork and a shallow spread, both of Mesolithic date. Neolithic flintwork, including an unfinished arrowhead, demonstrated exploitation of the resources of this part of the Weald. However, the first clear alterations to the landscape dated from the Middle Iron Age. Pits containing burnt clay, and clusters of post-holes suggest slightly more intensive occupation than in previous periods, although with no evidence of agricultural activity. The most interesting features encountered consisted of a thin scatter of remarkably similar pits/hearths showing evidence of *in situ* burning and primary fills rich in oak charcoal. These somewhat enigmatic features were spread across both examined mitigation areas. Limited pottery finds and radiocarbon dating suggest these were created in the Romano-British era. Although their function remains unproven, it is suggested they represent the scant remains of woodland clearance although alternative interpretations, such as charcoal production are also considered.
- 2.4 Evidence for medieval activity consisted of abraded pottery recovered from the overburden, and possible field boundaries close to Isaacs Lane, although their date remains unconfirmed. Post-medieval activity was more clearly represented in a varied assemblage of artefacts from the topsoil, and clear land division in the form of substantial ditches corresponding to field boundaries shown on cartographic sources.
- 2.5 Recent evaluation of Plot 1.1, to the immediate north of the excavation area, revealed archaeological features consisting of several pits and ditches. The ditches are likely to be field boundaries of fairly recent date, however, the nature, date and significance of the pits in the south-eastern part of the site remains unknown (ASE 2022).

3.0 ORIGINAL RESEARCH AIMS

3.1 The general aims of the archaeological investigation were:

- *To excavate and record all archaeological remains and deposits exposed with a view to understanding their character, extent, preservation, significance and date before their loss through development impacts.*
- *To understand to what extent the features exposed during the evaluation can be explained through excavation of the wider area.*
- *To refine the dating, character and function of the landscape features at this site.*
- *To make the results of the investigation publicly accessible through submission of a report to the County Historic Environment Record and the project archive to the local museum*

3.2 The site specific aims of the archaeological investigation are:

- *Can further evidence be gathered to establish the date and function of the pits that have characterised the archaeology found during previous investigations*

3.3 The project also has the potential to inform on the following areas of research from the South-Eastern Research Framework (SERF; KCC 2023);

- *The use of the Weald in later prehistory (SERF Middle Bronze Age – Iron Age Periods)*
- *Agricultural economy – structural aspects; animal and plant remains (SERF Roman Period)*
- *To what extent and in what ways have developments in agricultural technology and demand influenced historic landscape development? (SERF Historic Landscapes)*
- *To what extent and in what ways can past landscapes and their components (prehistoric onwards) be understood in the present landscape? (SERF Historic Landscapes)*
- *An understanding of the multifaceted landscape (SERF: Post-medieval and modern period)*

4.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

EVALUATION (Figure 2)

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 A total of 27 trial trenches were excavated at the site. Trenches 3 & 5 were shortened due to their proximity to a boundary fence and overhead power cables and Trench 20 was shortened to avoid services. The remainder of the trenches were 30m long and 1.80m wide. A total of 11 features were recorded across 8 trenches (7 pits, 4 ditches).

4.1.2 Due to onsite constraints (see 1.5.9/1.5.10) trenches 33, 35-40 could not be excavated.

4.2 Trench 2 (Figure 3)

Context	Type	Interpretation	Length m	Width m	Thickness m	Height m AOD
2/001	Layer	Topsoil	30	1.8	0.18-0.33	30.56-30.72
2/002	Layer	Subsoil	30	1.8	0.08-0.14	30.28-30.39
2/003	Layer	Natural	30	1.8		30.20-30.26
2/004	Cut	Pit	1.39	1.39	0.16	30.2
2/005	Fill	Fill, basal	1.39	1.39	0.05	30.25
2/006	Fill	Fill, upper	1.39	1.39	0.11	30.36

Table 3: Trench 2 list of recorded contexts

4.2.1 Trench 2 was situated in the north-west of the site and orientated north-south. The geological substrate [2/003] consisted of yellow brown silty clay and was recorded at around 30.20m above ordnance datum (AOD). This was overlain by a shallow subsoil made up of yellow grey silty clay [2/002]. The trench sequence was capped by 0.18-0.30m of mid grey brown sandy silt topsoil [2/001].

4.2.2 A single pit was recorded mid trench made up of a steep sided cut [2/004] with a rounded base filled by two fills. The basal fill [2/005] was rich in charcoal and made up of black silty clay whilst the upper fill [2/006] consisted of grey brown silty clay with charcoal inclusions. No finds were recovered from this feature. A bulk sample recovered from this feature did not yield fragments of charred oak..

4.3 Trench 7 (Figure 4)

Context	Type	Interpretation	Length m	Width m	Thickness m	Height m AOD
7/001	Layer	Topsoil	30	1.8	0.15-0.28	28.95-29.44
7/002	Layer	Subsoil	30	1.8	0.10-0.16	28.75-29.16
7/003	Layer	Natural	30	1.8		28.59-29.00
7/004	Cut	Ditch	5	0.55	0.1	28.86
7/005	Fill	Fill, single	5	0.55	0.1	28.86
7/006	Cut	Pit	1	1	0.16	28.6
7/007	Fill	Fill, basal	0.76	0.76	0.05	28.6
7/008	Fill	Fill, upper	1	1	0.11	28.65

Table 4: Trench 7 list of recorded contexts

- 4.3.1 Trench 7 was situated in the north-west of the site and orientated north-south. The geological substrate [7/003] was encountered at between 28.50-29.0m AOD. This was overlain by a shallow subsoil [7/002] and topsoil [7/001]. These deposits were as described for Trench 2.
- 4.3.2 A small pit was recorded in the south of the trench. This was made up of a shallow cut with a rounded base [7/006] which contained two fills. The basal fill [7/007] was charcoal rich. This was overlain by grey brown silty clay [7/008]. No finds were recovered from this feature
- 4.3.3 To the north, approximately mid trench, a shallow gully was seen. This consisted of a steep sided cut [7/004] with a rounded base filled by orange brown silty clay [7/005]. This shallow gully ran E-W and no finds were recovered from its fill.

4.4 Trench 12 (Figure 5)

Context	Type	Interpretation	Length m	Width m	Thickness m	Height m AOD
12/001	Layer	Topsoil	30	1.8	0.25-0.31	29.15-29.91
12/002	Layer	Subsoil	30	1.8	0.09-0.17	28.83-29.66
12/003	Layer	Natural	30	1.8		28.66-29.57
12/004	Cut	Pit	0.74	0.74	0.07	28.78
12/005	Fill	Fill, single	0.74	0.74	0.07	28.78
12/006	Cut	Ditch	3	0.79	0.21	28.77
12/007	Fill	Fill, single	3	0.79	0.21	28.77
12/008	Cut	Ditch	2	1.8	0.29	28.86

Table 5: Trench 12 list of recorded contexts

- 4.4.1 Trench 12 was situated in the middle of the site and was orientated east-west. The geological substrate [12/003] was encountered at between 28.65m-29.90m AOD. This was overlain by a shallow subsoil [12/002] and topsoil [12/001]. These deposits were as described for Trench 2.
- 4.4.2 Three features were recorded in Trench 12 and these were concentrated in the east of the trench. The eastern-most feature was a shallow ditch running roughly north-south and consisting of a straight sided cut [12/006] with a flat base filled by dark brown silty clay [12/007]. A shallow pit was cut into the top of the ditch which was made up of a shallow subcircular cut [12/004] filled by

charcoal rich brown silty clay [12/005]. No finds were recovered from either of these features.

- 4.4.3 To the immediate west of these features was a second ditch running north-west to south-east. This consisted of a moderate sided cut [12/008] with a rounded base filled by dark brown silty clay [12/008]. No finds were recovered from this ditch.

4.5 Trench 13 (Figure 6)

Context	Type	Interpretation	Length m	Width m	Thickness m	Height m AOD
13/001	Layer	Topsoil	30	1.8	0.14-0.38	28.87-29.30
13/002	Layer	Subsoil	30	1.8	0.09-0.11	28.49-29.16
13/003	Layer	Natural	30	1.8		28.40-29.07
13/004	Cut	Pit	1.08	1.08	0.16	28.66
13/005	Fill	Fill, single	1.08	1.08	0.16	28.66

Table 6: Trench 13 list of recorded contexts

- 4.5.1 Trench 13 was situated in the north of the site and was orientated north-west to south-east. The geological substrate [13/003] was encountered at between 28.40m-29.07m AOD. This was overlain by a shallow subsoil [13/002] and topsoil [13/001]. These deposits were as described for Trench 2.
- 4.5.2 A single pit or tree throw was recorded in the west of the trench made up of a shallow sub-circular cut [13/004] with an irregular base. This was filled by a charcoal rich brown silty clay [13/005]. No finds were recovered from this feature.

4.6 Trench 14 (Figure 7)

Context	Type	Interpretation	Length m	Width m	Thickness m	Height m AOD
14/001	Layer	Topsoil	30	1.8	0.34-0.37	29.69-30.11
14/002	Layer	Subsoil	30	1.8	0.11-0.18	29.42-29.76
14/003	Layer	Natural	30	1.8		29.24-29.64
14/004	Cut	Ditch	2	0.76	0.25	29.16
14/005	Fill	Fill, single	2	0.76	0.25	29.16

Table 7: Trench 14 list of recorded contexts

- 4.6.1 Trench 14 was situated in the north of the site and was orientated north-west to south-east. The geological substrate [14/003] was encountered at around 29.50m AOD. This was overlain by a shallow subsoil [14/002] and topsoil [14/001]. These deposits were as described for Trench 2.
- 4.6.2 A single ditch was recorded towards the south-east of the trench made up of a steep sided cut [14/004] with a flat base filled by dark brown silty clay [14/005]. This ditch ran from north-east to south-west. No finds were recovered from this feature.

4.7 Trench 18 (Figure 8)

Context	Type	Interpretation	Length m	Width m	Thickness m	Height m AOD
18/001	Layer	Topsoil	30	1.8	0.27-0.31	28.29-28.94
18/002	Layer	Subsoil	30	1.8	0.12-0.19	27.95-28.64
18/003	Layer	Natural	30	1.8		27.77-28.45
18/004	Cut	Pit	0.2	0.2	0.03	28.42-28.45
18/005	Fill	Fill, single	0.2	0.2	0.03	28.42-28.45

Table 8: Trench 18 list of recorded contexts

- 4.7.1 Trench 18 was situated mid-site and was orientated north-west to south-east. The geological substrate [18/003] was encountered at between 27.77 and 28.45m AOD. This was overlain by a shallow subsoil [18/002] and topsoil [18/001]. These deposits were as described for Trench 2.
- 4.7.2 A single shallow pit was recorded towards the west of the trench. This consisted of a sub-circular cut [18/004] with a concave base filled by charcoal rich silty clay [18/005]. No finds were recovered from this feature.

4.8 Trench 24 (Figure 9)

Context	Type	Interpretation	Length m	Width m	Thickness m	Height m AOD
24/001	Layer	Topsoil	30	1.8	0.12-0.23	32.33-33.36
24/002	Layer	Subsoil	30	1.8	0.07-0.11	29.70-33.04
24/003	Layer	Natural	30	1.8		29.59-32.95
24/004	Cut	Pit	0.7	0.7	0.08	33.29-33.37
24/005	Fill	Fill, basal	1.6	1.6	0.15	32.66-32.81
24/006	Fill	Fill, upper	1.6	1.6	0.07	32.81-32.88

Table 9: Trench 24 list of recorded contexts

- 4.8.1 Trench 14 was situated in the north-east of the site and was orientated north-east to south-west. The geological substrate [24/003] was encountered at between 29.59 and 32.95m AOD. This was overlain by a shallow subsoil [24/002] and topsoil [24/001]. These deposits were as described for Trench 2.
- 4.8.2 A single pit was observed mid trench. This consisted of a sub-circular cut [24/004] with steep sides and a rounded base. This contained two fills; the basal fill [24/005] was charcoal rich silty clay. The upper fill [consisted of dark brown silty clay. No finds were recovered from this feature. A bulk sample taken from the basal fill revealed it contained fragments of oak.

4.9 Trench 25 (Figure 10)

Context	Type	Interpretation	Length m	Width m	Thickness m	Height m AOD
25/001	Layer	Topsoil	30	1.8	0.15-0.17	33.20-33.79
25/002	Layer	Subsoil	30	1.8	0.04-0.07	33.05-33.47
25/003	Layer	Natural	30	1.8		32.98-33.41
25/004	Cut	Pit	0.7	0.7	0.08	33.29-33.37
25/005	Fill	Fill, single	0.7	0.7	0.08	33.29-33.37

Table 10: Trench 25 list of recorded contexts

- 4.9.1 Trench 25 was situated in the north-east of the site and was orientated north-east to south-west. The geological substrate [25/003] was encountered at between 32.98 and 33.41m AOD. This was overlain by a shallow subsoil [25/002] and topsoil [25/001]. These deposits were as described for Trench 2.
- 4.9.2 A single pit was observed towards the north of the trench. This consisted of a sub-circular cut [24/004] with steep sides and a rounded base. This was filled by orange brown silty clay [25/005] from which late Iron Age/early Roman pottery was recovered. A bulk environmental sample taken from the fill of this feature yielded fossilised sedge.

4.10 Trenches 1, 4, 5, 6, 8-11, 16-17, 19-23, 32 and 34 (Figure 12)

- 4.10.1 The majority of the trenches did not contain archaeological features. These revealed the geological horizon at a minimum of 28.54m AOD in the south and a maximum of 33.34m in the north. This was overlain by subsoil which was between 0.05 and 0.25m deep and topsoil which was between 0.25-0.40m deep. These deposits are as described above for Trench 2. No disturbance to these deposits was noted. Individual trench data is tabulated below in Appendix 1.

4.11 Unexcavated Trenches.

- 4.11.1 Groundworks related to the construction of a large pond were encountered on site, in the proposed locations of Trenches 33, 35 – 38. The works included the excavation of a deep pit for a pond and the construction of various banks and spoil heap bunds (Figure 2). It was not possible to excavate Trenches 33, 35 - 38 as a result.
- 4.11.2 Additionally, proposed Trenches 39 & 40 lay outside the area of excavation in a heavily wooded area. It was not possible to excavate these two trenches at the time of the works.

The Strip Map and Sample Excavation (Figure 11)

5.11 Introduction

5.11.2 A small strip map and sample (SMS) was undertaken in the area around evaluation Trenches 24 and 25 (Figure 2). The actual size of the area was reduced with consent from the proposed (ASE 2023) as on site obstructions (a fence and spoil heaps from early excavations) were present in the east of the area.

5.12 Results

5.12.2 The SMS excavation revealed yellow clay geology [102] at between 29.59m AOD in the south and 33.41m in the north. This was overlain by yellow grey brown silty clay subsoil [101] which was around 0.10m deep. The sequence was capped by 0.15-0.20m of grey brown silty clay topsoil [100].

5.12.3 A single irregular pit or tree throw was recorded in the middle of the area. This was made up of a cut [103] with irregular sides and an irregular base and filled with dark grey silty clay [104] with a high percentage of burnt clay inclusions. A bulk environmental sample taken from this fill contained fragments of hazel nut shell, an indeterminate tuber and a fruit stone. No finds were recovered from this feature despite 100% excavation.

5.12.4 The two pits recorded during the evaluation phase were also 100% excavated for finds retrieval but none were recovered.

5.0 THE FINDS

5.1 Summary

- 5.1.1 A small assemblage of pottery was hand-collected and was washed and air dried, then quantified by count and weight, and bagged by material and context (Table 11). No further finds were hand-collected but small amount of magnetic material and fired clay, quantified in Appendices 2-4, was recovered from the residues of environmental samples. All finds have been packed and stored following ClfA guidelines (2014).

Context	Pottery	Weight (g)
25/005	15	38

Table 11: Quantification of hand-collected bulk finds

5.2 The Pottery by Anna Doherty

- 5.2.1 A small group of 15 sherds of pottery, weighing 38g, was recovered from context [25/005]. All are featureless body sherds in typical 'East Sussex Ware' grog-tempered fabrics, probably representing around five different vessels. Although grog-tempering can occur throughout the Late Iron Age and Roman periods in the Weald, assemblages from central Sussex, like that from Mackie Avenue, Hassocks (Biddulph 2010), tend to feature a significant proportion of Roman sandy wares by the end of the 1st century AD. Taken together with the reasonably low-fired nature of the sherds in [25/005], this appears more likely to represent a Late Iron Age/early Roman assemblage than a more developed Roman one.

5.3 The Fired Clay by Stephen Patton

- 5.3.1 A total of 240 very abraded and amorphous pieces of fired clay (302g) were recovered during the evaluation and subsequent mitigation. All of the material is from bulk environmental samples, with 61 pieces (105g) being from sample <3> taken from burnt pit [24/004], fill [24/005], and 176 pieces (197g) being from sample <500> taken from pit [103], fill [104]. All of the fragments are made from a fine silty clay with ferrous inclusions, typical of clay from the Weald. They are most likely the remains of heated geology from the fire in the pit and are of no archaeological significance.

5.4 The Magnetic Material by Luke Barber

- 5.4.1 A very small quantity of material identified as potential slag was recovered from the site. All was recovered as the magnetic fraction from four environmental samples. Each of these was carefully examined under x10 magnification to establish the presence/absence of micro slags. Due to the small size of the particles involved the material was quantified by weight only. The material is listed in Table 12 as part of the visible archive.
- 5.4.2 In all cases no micro slags were noted – the magnetic fraction being composed of only 'magnetic fines'. These mainly consist of granules of ferruginous siltstone, sandstone or burnt clay that either have their own inherent magnetism or, more often, have had that magnetism enhanced through burning. They are not diagnostic of any industrial activity as such heating can occur in a domestic

hearth or bonfire. As such there is currently no evidence for metal working having occurred close to the evaluation site in the past.

- 5.4.3 The assemblage is not considered to hold any potential for further analysis and has been discarded.

Context	Sample	Fraction	Type	Weight
2/005	1	Magnetic	Magnetic fines	1g
24/005	3	Magnetic	Magnetic fines	1g
25/005	2	Magnetic	Magnetic fines	<1g
104	500	Magnetic	Magnetic fines	29g

Table 12: The 'slag' assemblage

6.0 The Environmental Samples by Elsa Neveu and Mariangela Vitolo

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 Three bulk samples were collected during the evaluation and one sample was taken during the excavation phase of fieldwork at the site, in order to retrieve dating evidence and environmental remains, such as charcoal and charred plant macrofossils. This report will examine the evidence for crop, fuel use and local vegetation environment.

6.2 Methodology

- 6.2.1 All samples measured 40L in volume and were processed by flotation using a 500 µm mesh for the heavy residues and a 250 µm mesh for the retention of the flots. Residues and flots were air dried and were passed through 8, 4 and 2mm sieves. The residues were sorted for artefacts and ecofacts quantified in Appendix 2. A stereozoom microscope at 7-45x magnifications was used in order to scan the flots and identify the botanical remains, which are recorded in Appendix 3. Identification of the charred plant macrofossils was based on observations of gross morphology and surface cell structures. Remains were compared to a botanical modern reference collection and a published atlas (Cappers et al. 2006) was also consulted. Nomenclature follows Stace (2010).
- 6.2.2 Charcoal fragments were fractured by hand in order to get three sections: transverse, tangential longitudinal and radial longitudinal according to standard procedures described by Gale and Cutler (2000), Hather (2000) and Leney and Casteel (1975). Charcoal fragments were observed with the use of a metallurgical reflected light microscope at magnifications up to 400X and reference atlases (Hather 2000, Schoch et al. 2004, Schweingruber 1990) were consulted to refine identifications. Nomenclature follows Stace (2010) and taxonomic identification of charcoal were recorded in Appendix 4.

6.3 Results

- 6.3.1 All sampled features consisted in undated pits, containing burnt material. An array of archaeological remains were noted, including charcoal, charred plant remains, fired clay, slag and magnetic material, which may be of natural or industrial origin. These finds have been incorporated into the relevant finds reports and the following text summarises the results regarding the archaeobotanical material.
- 6.3.2 All samples revealed variable quantities of uncharred material, seeds of weeds, fungi sclerotia and rootlets, which indicate a moderate level of disturbance. No charred plant remains were retrieved from [2/004] and [24/004], while pit [25/005] yielded a sole plant macrofossil identified as sedge family (Cyperaceae). Charred nutshell fragments of hazel (*Corylus avellana*), an indeterminate tuber and a possible fruit stone were recovered from [103].
- 6.3.3 Charcoal preservation tended to be poor. Fragments presented radial cracks, which could indicate the presence of moisture in the wood, while others showed signs of encrustation or vitrification. This phenomenon occurs when the wood anatomy fuses and appears glossy; McParland *et al* (2010) examined factors that could provoke vitrification of charcoal concluding that vitrification is not caused only by exposure to high temperatures. Experiments suggest it may be

a result of several factors in combination such as the type and age of wood, dynamics of the depositional environment prior to, during and after charring. Assemblages <1> [2/005] and <3> [24/005] only produced fragments of oak (*Quercus* sp.), cf. oak (cf. *Quercus* sp.) and unidentified charcoal.

- 6.3.4 Sediment encrustations were also evident on the charcoal fragments. These are a result of percolation, which is due to fluctuations in the ground water levels. Sediment-laden water infiltrates the archaeological deposits, leaving traces on the charcoal fragments and making them brittle.

6.4 Discussion

- 6.4.1 Charred plant remains were scarce in the fill of these features. This could be partly explained by the poor conditions of preservation and the infrequency of activities related to crop husbandry and processing near these contexts. The carbonised remains recovered from these burnt pits are of a natural origin and are likely to have been accidentally become part of the charred fuel assemblage. The nutshells, fruitstone and tuber were probably accidentally cut off from branches or uprooted whilst collecting wood for fuel.
- 6.4.2 However, these features yielded large assemblages of charcoal fragments that were dominated by oak. This species is commonly used as fuel, which is not surprising since oak wood makes an excellent fuel although it is also commonly use as timber or for joinery (Taylor 1981). Charcoal preservation was poorly affected by pre and post-depositional conditions.

7.0 POTENTIAL & SIGNIFICANCE OF RESULTS

7.1 Realisation of the original research aims

7.1.1 The two phases of archaeological fieldwork at the Burgess Hill Northern Arc successfully fulfilled the general aims and objectives set for the site. All archaeological features identified during the excavations were defined in terms of dating, character and function. This report makes the results of the excavation accessible publicly.

7.1.2 In relation to the site specific aims:

- *Can further evidence be gathered to establish the date and function of the pits that have characterised the archaeology found during previous investigations*

7.1.3 The only dating evidence recovered during both phases of work came from pit [25/004] fill [25/005]. This feature produced pottery dating to the late Iron Age/early Roman period. The majority of the features were undated however and not able to add any real information with which to date or explain other similar features found in earlier phases of work.

7.1.4 In relation to the SERF research questions:

- *The use of the Weald in later prehistory (SERF Middle Bronze Age – Iron Age Periods)*

7.1.5 The recovery of Late Iron Age pottery from the pit in Trench 25 does indicate late prehistoric activity at the site but the evidence recovered is too little to contribute meaningfully to the body of evidence relating to The Weald in this period. The paucity of evidence recovered also made the results of the fieldwork unable to contribute towards answering any of the other research questions set out in section 3.3.

7.2.1 Significance and potential of the individual datasets

The Stratigraphic sequence

7.2.1.1 The stratigraphic sequence is not considered to be worthy of further analysis

The Finds

7.2.1.2 No further analysis is recommended for the small finds assemblage recovered from the site

The Environmental samples

7.2.1.3 No further analysis of the environmental samples is recommended.

7.2.2 Updated Research Agenda

7.3.1 In common with earlier work on the Northern Arc link road a number of undated pits with charcoal rich fill were recorded at the site. The pits recorded in the

earlier work were dated to the Roman-British era but it is not clear if the pits seen in this phase of work were contemporary.

- 7.3.2 The one pit that did produce dating evidence seems to have been from the late Iron Age/early Roman period, slightly earlier than those recorded on the link road.
- 7.3.3 The ditches recorded during the evaluation phase do not appear to be represented on historic maps and relate to an early system of land division or field system.

8.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Overview of stratigraphic sequence

- 8.1.1 The geological substrate consisting of yellow brown silty clay was observed at 28.54m AOD in the south of the site and at 31.34m in the north. It was recorded to be consistent across the site. The geological substrate was overlain by a shallow yellow grey brown subsoil which was 0.05-0.25m deep and a dark grey brown topsoil 0.25-0.40m deep.
- 8.1.2 A total of 12 archaeological features were recorded, 8 pits and four ditches. These were scattered sparsely across the site with the greatest concentration occurring in the centre of the site (Trenches 7, 12, 13 & 14). A small cluster of pits were seen in the north-east.

8.2 Deposit survival and existing impacts

- 8.2.1 Both phases of work revealed little or no disturbance in the west of site. Generally, the overburden sequence seemed intact and the only disturbance to the geological horizon noted was in the form of agricultural land drains. Significant disturbance was recorded in the east of site.
- 8.2.2 Significant truncation was observed in the east of site in the location of proposed Trenches 33, 35-38 (see Figure 2) from the construction of a large pond. The area surrounding the earthwork was also truncated and reshaped to create banks and bunds of spoil.
- 8.2.3 Modern impacts were recorded at the north-east end of Trench 32. This area of disturbance measured at least 2m x 1.8m and extended north-east outside of the limit of excavation. This modern disturbance was observed truncating the geological layer of Weald Clay.
- 8.2.4 Proposed Trenches 39 and 40 were located beyond the current boundaries of site, within a heavily wooded area and could not be excavated.
- 8.2.5 The archaeological features were sealed by between 0.09 and 0.50m of subsoil and topsoil and were not visible in the subsoil.

8.3 Discussion of archaeological remains by period

- 8.3.1 Only one feature produced dating evidence. Pit [25/004] in the north-east of the site contained pottery dating to the late Iron Age/early Roman period. It was seen in physical association with two other pits with similar fills but it cannot be stated with a degree of certainty that they are contemporary.
- 8.3.2 Trenches 7, 12 and 14 contained ditches hinting at an early system of land division but did not produce dating evidence. The ditches recorded during the evaluation phase do not appear to be represented on historic maps and relate to an early system of land division or field system.
- 8.3.3 Trenches 2, 7, 12, 24, 25 and the SMS phase all recorded pits. These contained similar charcoal-rich basal fills as recorded in earlier phases of work along the Northern Arc but shed no further light on their function.

8.4 Conclusions

- 8.4.1 A total of 27 evaluation trenches were excavated at the site along with a small excavation area in the centre of the site. Four ditches of varying depths and alignments were recorded hinting at a system of land division pre-dating the current field system. Pits containing a similar charcoal rich basal fill as noted in the previous phases of work along the Northern Arc were recorded. The exact function of these pits still remains opaque. A single pit [25/004] excavated in the north-east was the only dated feature and contained Late Iron Age/early Roman pottery. No further analysis of the site data set is recommended.

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Appendix 1: Archaeologically negative trenches: list of recorded contexts

Trench	Context	Type	Interpretation	Thickness m	Height m AOD
1	1/001	Layer	Topsoil	0.21-0.25	30.27-30.80
1	1/002	Layer	Subsoil	0.10-0.13	30.10-30.72
1	1/003	Layer	Natural	0.01+	29.90-30.51
3	3/001	Layer	Topsoil	0.25-0.37	30.62-30.74
3	3/002	Layer	Subsoil	0.07-0.12	30.21-30.55
3	3/003	Layer	Natural	0.01+	30.14-30.42
4	4/001	Layer	Topsoil	0.24-0.29	29.50-29.95
4	4/002	Layer	Subsoil	0.09-0.10	29.59-29.66
4	4/003	Layer	Natural	0.01+	29.17-29.56
5	5/001	Layer	Topsoil	0.20-0.23	29.25-29.47
5	5/002	Layer	Subsoil	0.07-0.11	29.09-29.14
5	5/003	Layer	Natural	0.01+	29.02-29.03
6	6/001	Layer	Topsoil	0.25-0.35	28.89-29.37
6	6/002	Layer	Subsoil	0.05-0.10	28.59-29.08
6	6/003	Layer	Natural	0.01+	28.54-28.98
8	8/001	Layer	Topsoil	0.31-0.35	29.32-30.30
8	8/002	Layer	Subsoil	0.14-0.18	28.97-29.99
8	8/003	Layer	Natural	0.01+	28.81-29.94
9	9/001	Layer	Topsoil	0.28-0.38	29.07-29.55
9	9/002	Layer	Subsoil	0.09-0.14	28.70-29.03
9	9/003	Layer	Natural	0.01+	28.70-29.03
10	10/001	Layer	Topsoil	0.27-0.28	28.84-28.87
10	10/002	Layer	Subsoil	0.09-0.12	28.56-28.60
10	10/003	Layer	Natural	0.01+	28.44-28.50
11	11/001	Layer	Topsoil	0.26-0.38	28.98-29.06
11	11/002	Layer	Subsoil	0.11-0.14	28.68-28.72
11	11/003	Layer	Natural	0.01+	28.55-28.58
15	15/001	Layer	Topsoil	0.32-0.35	28.72-28.98
15	15/002	Layer	Subsoil	0.10-0.29	28.44-28.60
15	15/003	Layer	Natural	0.01+	28.34-28.47
16	16/001	Layer	Topsoil	0.34-0.36	28.85-29.40
16	16/002	Layer	Subsoil	0.10-0.14	28.53-29.10
16	16/003	Layer	Natural	0.01+	28.43-28.96
17	17/001	Layer	Topsoil	0.38-0.40	28.52-28.82
17	17/002	Layer	Subsoil	0.10-0.20	28.13-28.42
17	17/003	Layer	Natural	0.01+	27.93-28.26
19	19/001	Layer	Topsoil	0.32-0.40	28.43-28.82
19	19/002	Layer	Subsoil	0.13-0.25	0.13-0.20
19	19/003	Layer	Natural	0.01+	27.84-28.33
20	20/001	Layer	Topsoil	0.19-0.33	27.46-27.90
20	20/002	Layer	Subsoil	0.10-0.14	27.27-27.54
20	20/003	Layer	Natural	0.01+	27.13-27.54
21	21/001	Layer	Topsoil	0.19-0.34	26.72-27.49
21	21/002	Layer	Subsoil	0.12-0.15	26.42-27.16
21	21/003	Layer	Natural	0.01+	26.30-27.01
22	22/001	Layer	Topsoil	0.22-0.34	27.83-29.65
22	22/002	Layer	Subsoil	0.05-0.22	27.67-29.31
22	22/003	Layer	Natural	0.01+	27.62-29.23
23	23/001	Layer	Topsoil	0.15-0.22	29.97-31.61
23	23/002	Layer	Subsoil	0.05-0.15	29.70-31.49
23	23/003	Layer	Natural	0.01+	29.57-31.34
32	32/001	Layer	Topsoil	0.26-0.32	26.36-29.41
32	32/002	Layer	Subsoil	0.1-0.19	28.21-29.15

32	32/003	Layer	Natural	0.01+	27.77-28.84
	32/004	Layer	Made Ground	0.3+	28.07-29.14
34	34/001	Layer	Topsoil	0.22-0.27	26.75-27.14
34	34/002	Layer	Subsoil	0.14-0.18	26.48-26.91
34	34/003	Layer	Natural	0.01+	26.30-26.87

Appendix 2: Residues quantification (* = 1-10, ** = 11-50, * = 51-250, **** = >250) and weights in grams**

Sample Number	Context	Parent	Context Type	Sample Volume (L)	Charcoal >4mm	Weight (g)	Charcoal 2-4mm	Weight (g)	Charred Botanicals	Weight (g)	Identifications	Other (eg. pot, cbm, etc.) (quantity/ weight)
1	2/005	2/004	Pit	40	****	281	****	372				Mag. Mat. <2mm (****/2g); Mag. Mat. >2mm (*/<1g)
2	25/005	25/004	Pit	40	**	2	***	5				Slag >2mm (<1g/*)
3	24/005	24/004	Pit	40	****	102	****	112				FC >8mm (107g); Mag. Mat. >2mm (<1g/**); Mag. Mat. <2mm (<1g/****)
500	104	103	Pit	40	***	15	****	5	**	2	<i>Corylus avellana</i> nutshell fragment, indeterminate tuber, possible fruitstone indeterminate	FC >8mm (***/199g); Mag. Mat. <2mm (****/22g); Mag. Mat. >2mm (**/4g); Slag >2mm (**/3g)

Appendix 3: Flot quantification (* = 1-10, ** = 11-50, *** = 51-250, **** = >250) and preservation (+ = poor, ++ = moderate, +++ = good)

Sample Number	Context	Weight (g)	Flot volume (ml)	Volume Scanned	Uncharred (%)	Sediment (%)	Seeds Uncharred	Charcoal >4mm	Charcoal 2-4mm	Charcoal <2mm	Charred Botanicals	Identifications	Preservation
1	2/005	367	1050	25	2	10	* Polygonaceae	***	****	****			
2	25/005	2.2	28	100	0	20				*	*	Cyperaceae (1)	+
3	24/005	13	50	100	0	80		**	**	***			
500	104	4	50	50	70	5	* <i>Stellaria media</i>	*	**	***			

Appendix 4: Charcoal identifications. Key: cf – compares with

Sample Number	Context	Context type	Charcoal Identifications
1	2/005	Burnt pit	<i>Quercus</i> 6, cf. <i>Quercus</i> 1, unidentified 3
3	24/005	Burnt pit	<i>Quercus</i> 8, unidentified 2

Appendix 5: HER Summary

Site code	ARC 22					
Project code	220105/230215					
Planning reference	DM/18/5114					
Site address	Burgess Hill Northern Arc, land east of Isaacs Lane, Burgess Hill, West Sussex					
District/Borough	Mid-Sussex					
NGR (12 figures)	531143 121155					
Geology	Weald clay Formation (Mudstone)					
Fieldwork type	Eval	Excav				
Date of fieldwork	04/04/2023-13/052023					
Sponsor/client	RPS on behalf of Bellway Homes					
Project manager	Paul Mason					
Project supervisor	Chris Russel/Jake Wilson					
Period summary					Iron Age	
	Roman					
Project summary	A total of 27 evaluation trenches were excavated at the site along with a small excavation area in the centre of the site. Four ditches of varying depths and alignments were recorded hinting at a system of land division pre-dating the current field system. Pits containing a similar charcoal rich basal fill as noted in the previous phases of work along the Northern Arc were recorded. The exact function of these pits still remains opaque. A single pit [25/004] excavated in the north-east was the only dated feature and contained Late Iron Age/early Roman pottery.					

Finds summary

Find type	Material	Period	Quantity
Bulk	Pottery	LIA/ERB	1 Bag

Appendix 6: OASIS Summary

OASIS ID (UID): archaeol6-518957

Project Name: Trial Trench, Strip Map And Sample at Burgess Hill Northern Arc PLots 1.5 & 1.6

Activity type: Strip Map And Sample, Trial Trench

Sitecode(s): ARC 22

Project Identifier(s): Burgess Hill Northern Arc Plots 1.5 & 1.6

Planning Id: DM/18/5114

Reason for Investigation: Planning: Post determination

Organisation Responsible for work: Archaeology South-East

Project Dates: 04-Apr-2023 - 18-May-2023

HER: West Sussex HER

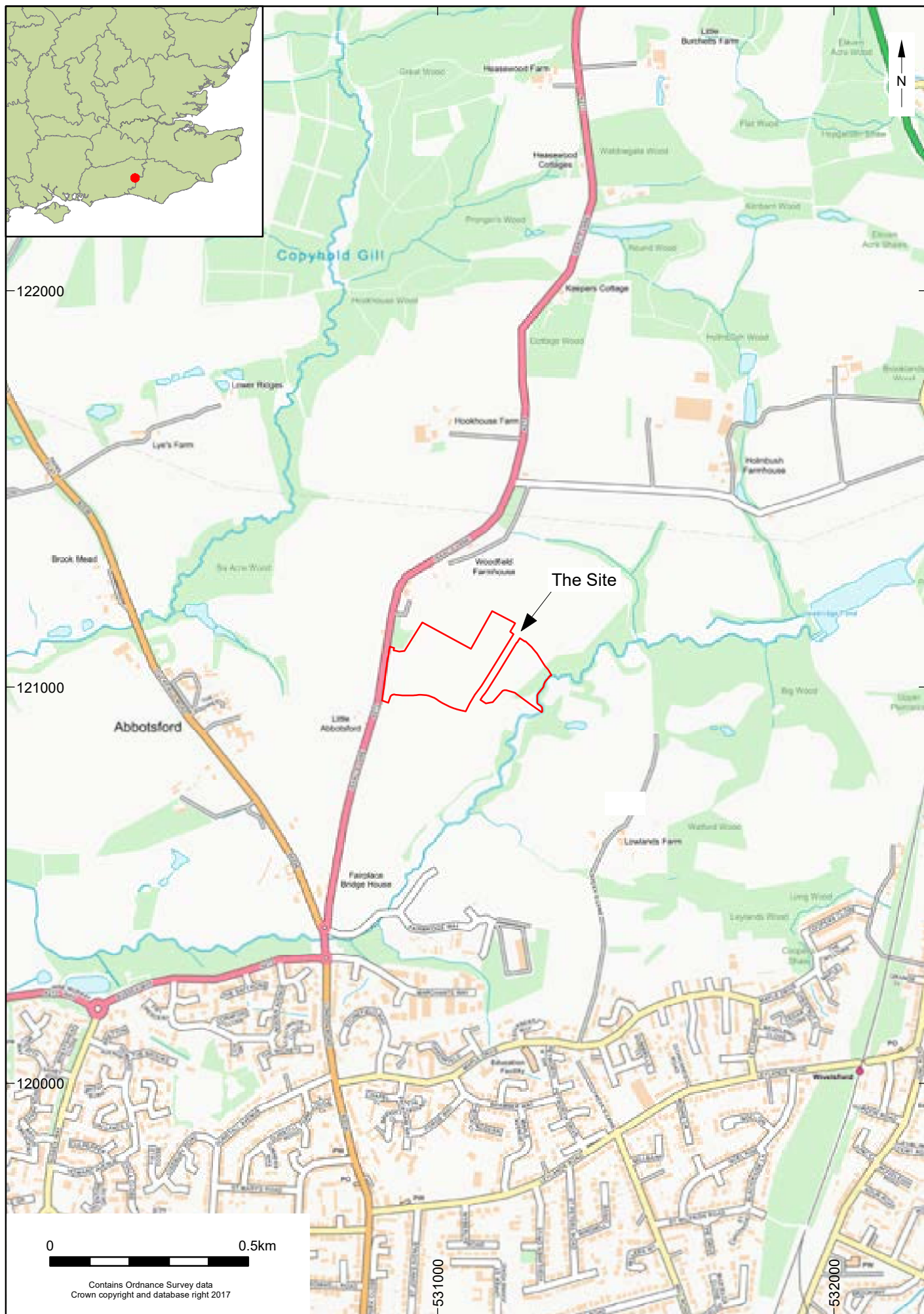
Project Methodology: 27x30m Trial Trenches. Small SMS in north-east of site targeted on Trenches 24 & 25.

Project Results: A total of 27 evaluation trenches were excavated at the site along with a small excavation area in the north-eastern part of the site. Four ditches of varying depths and alignments were recorded hinting at a system of land division pre-dating the current field system. Pits containing a similar charcoal rich basal fill as noted in the previous phases of work along the Northern Arc were recorded. The exact function of these pits still remains opaque. A single pit [25/004] excavated in the north-east was the only dated feature and contained Late Iron Age/early Roman pottery. No further analysis of the site data set is recommended.

Keywords: Subject/Period: Rubbish Pit: LATE IRON AGE

Reports in OASIS:

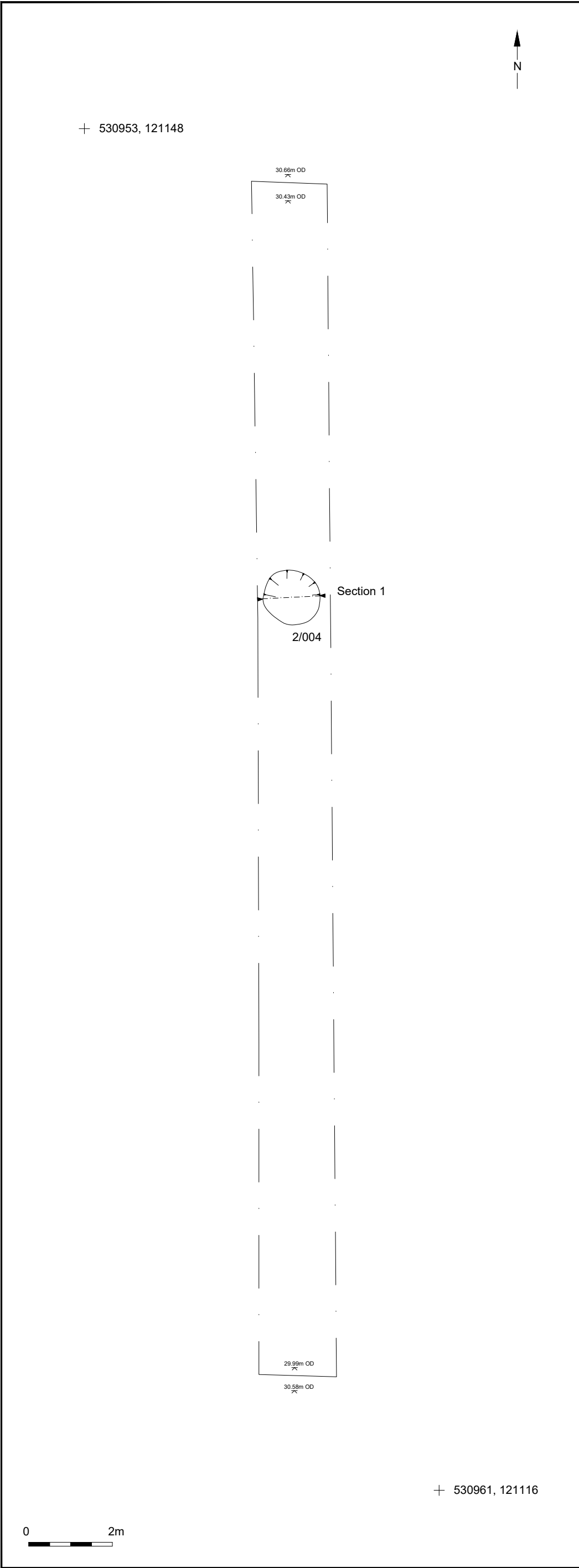
Russel, C., (2023). *Trial Trench, Strip Map And Sample at Burgess Hill Northern Arc PLots 1.5 & 1.6*. Portslade: Archaeology South-East. 2023223.



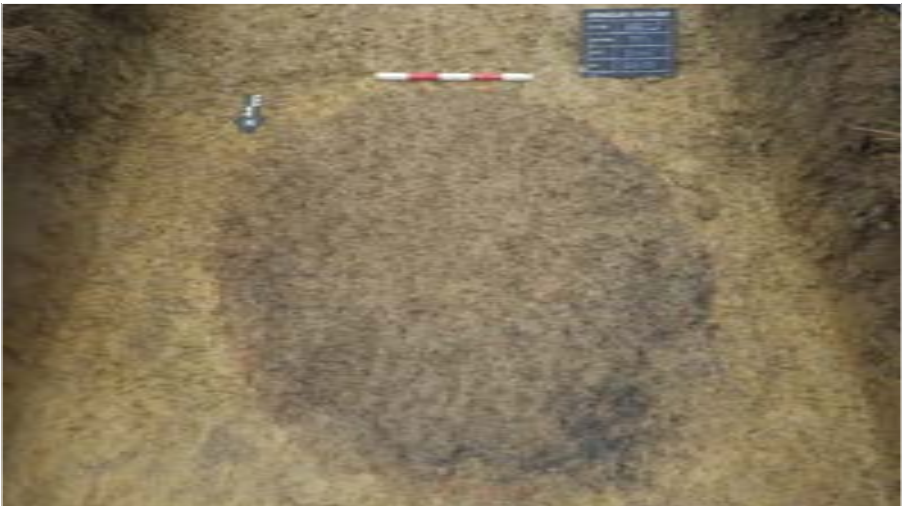
		Northern Arc P1.5 and P1.6, Burgess Hill	Fig. 1
		Site Location	



Northern Arc P1.5 and P1.6, Burgess Hill		Fig. 2
Site Plan showing Evaluation Trenches and Mitigation Area		



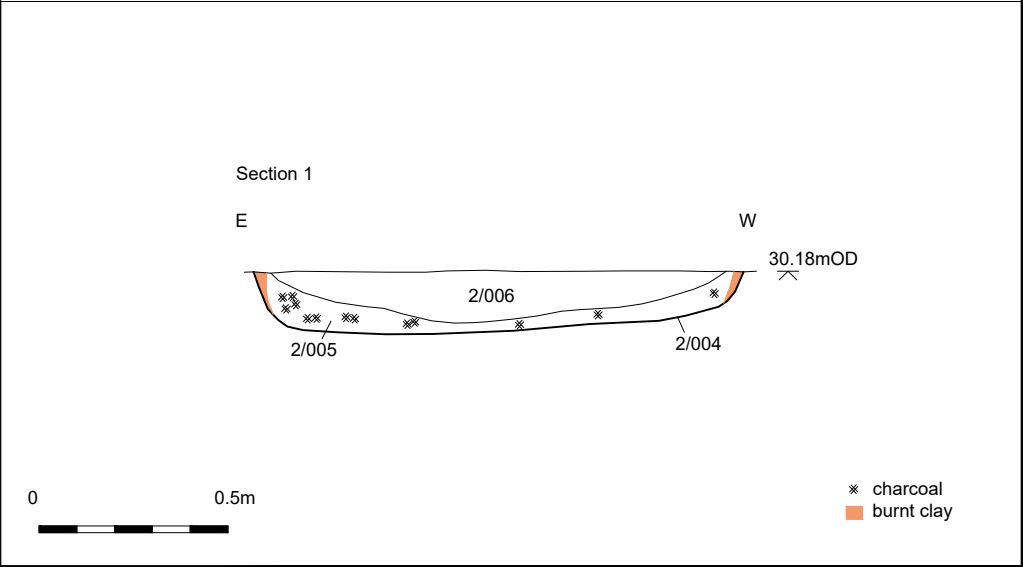
Trench 2 looking north (North arrow in photo incorrect)

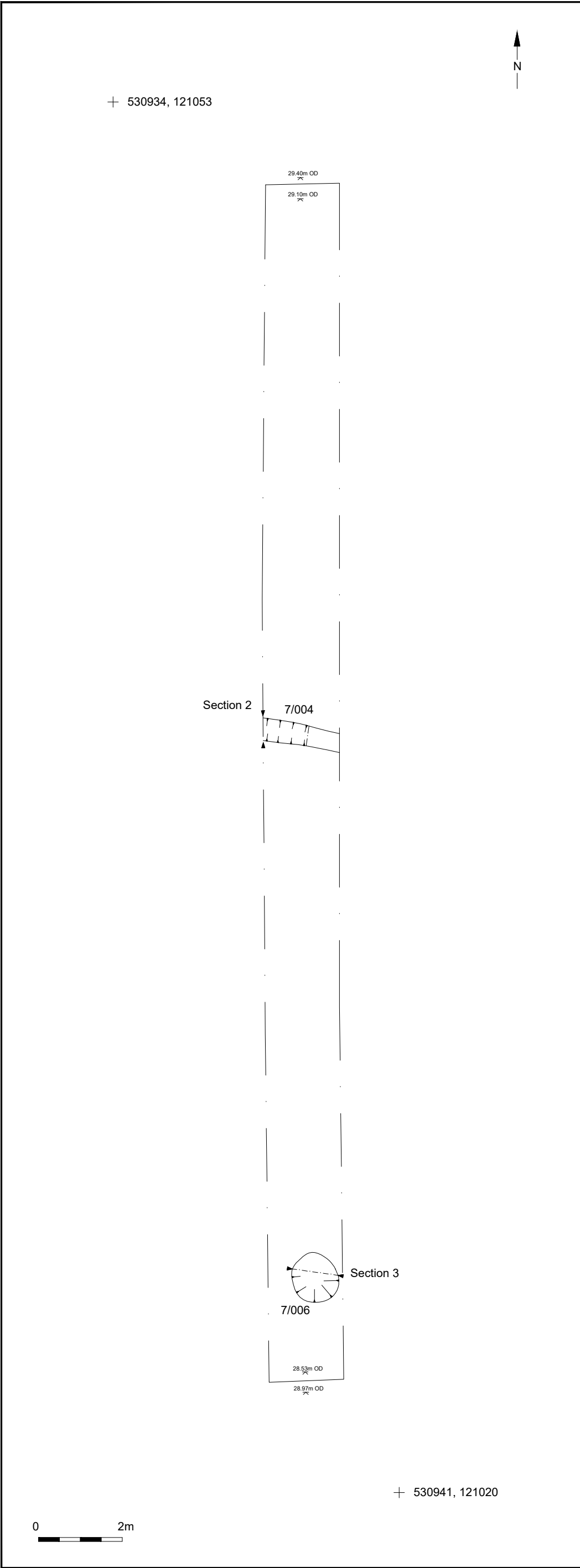


2/004 pre excavation looking south



2/004 looking south





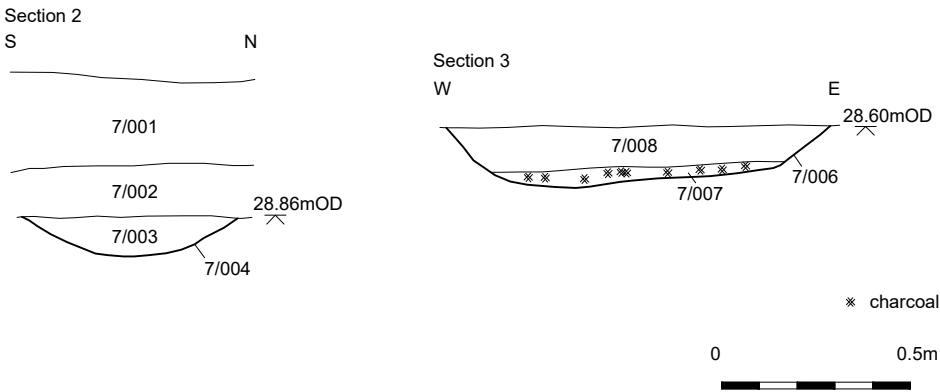
Trench 7 looking South



7/004 looking West (North arrow in photo incorrect)

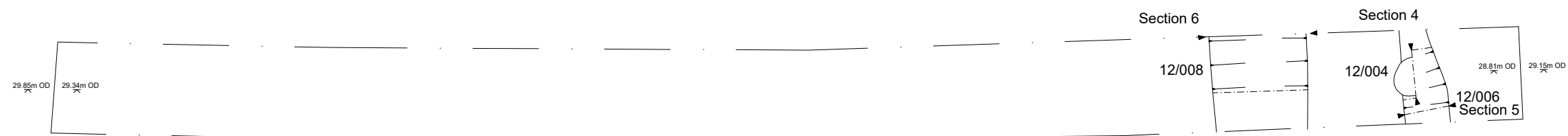


7/006 looking North (North arrow in photo incorrect)



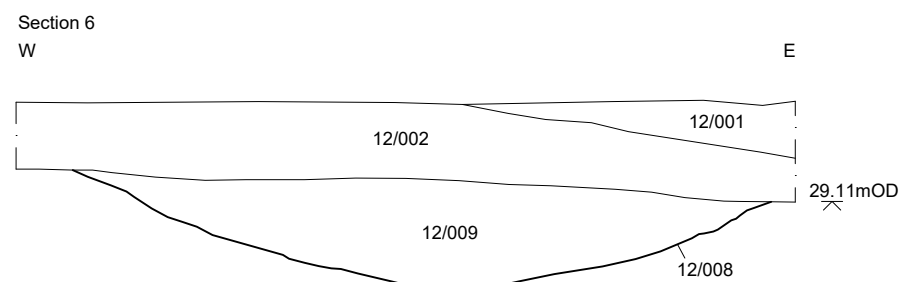
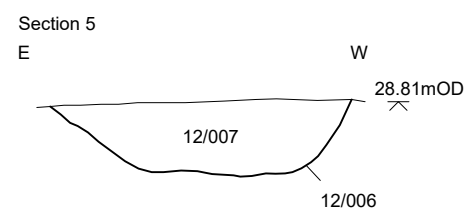
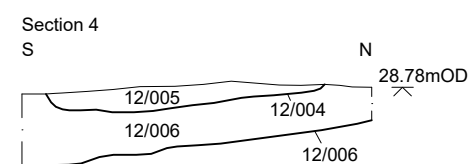


+ 530982, 121065



+ 531011, 121057

0 2m



0 0.5m



Trench 12 looking West



12/004 and 12/006 looking West (North arrow in photo incorrect)



12/004 and 12/006 looking South-East (North arrow in photo incorrect)



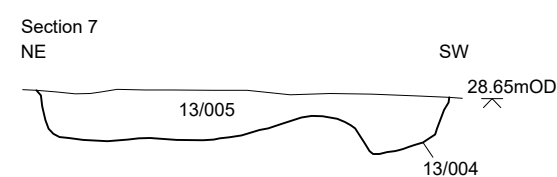
12/008 looking North



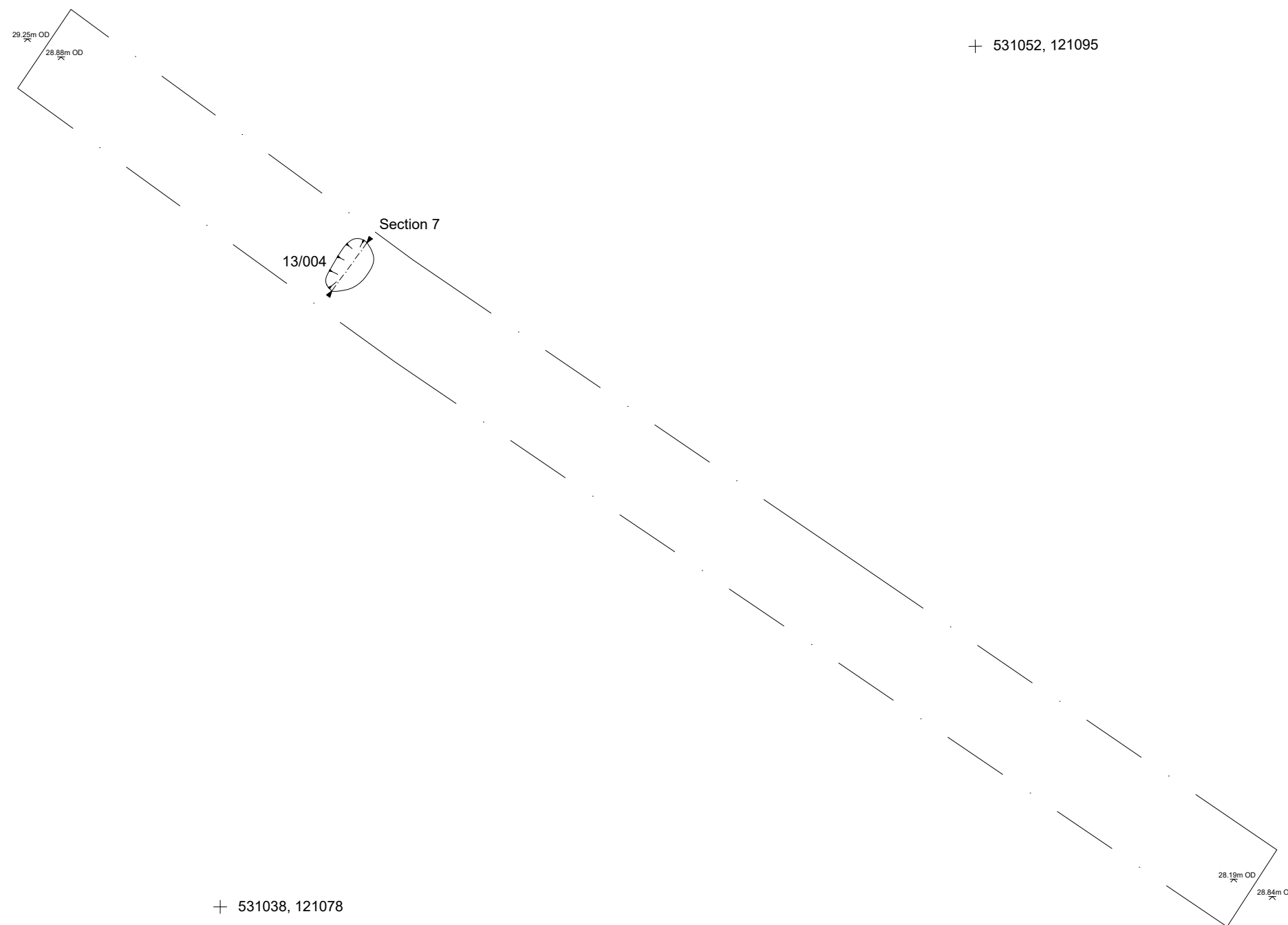
Trench 13 looking North-West



13/004 looking South-East (North arrow in photo incorrect)



0 0.5m



0 2m



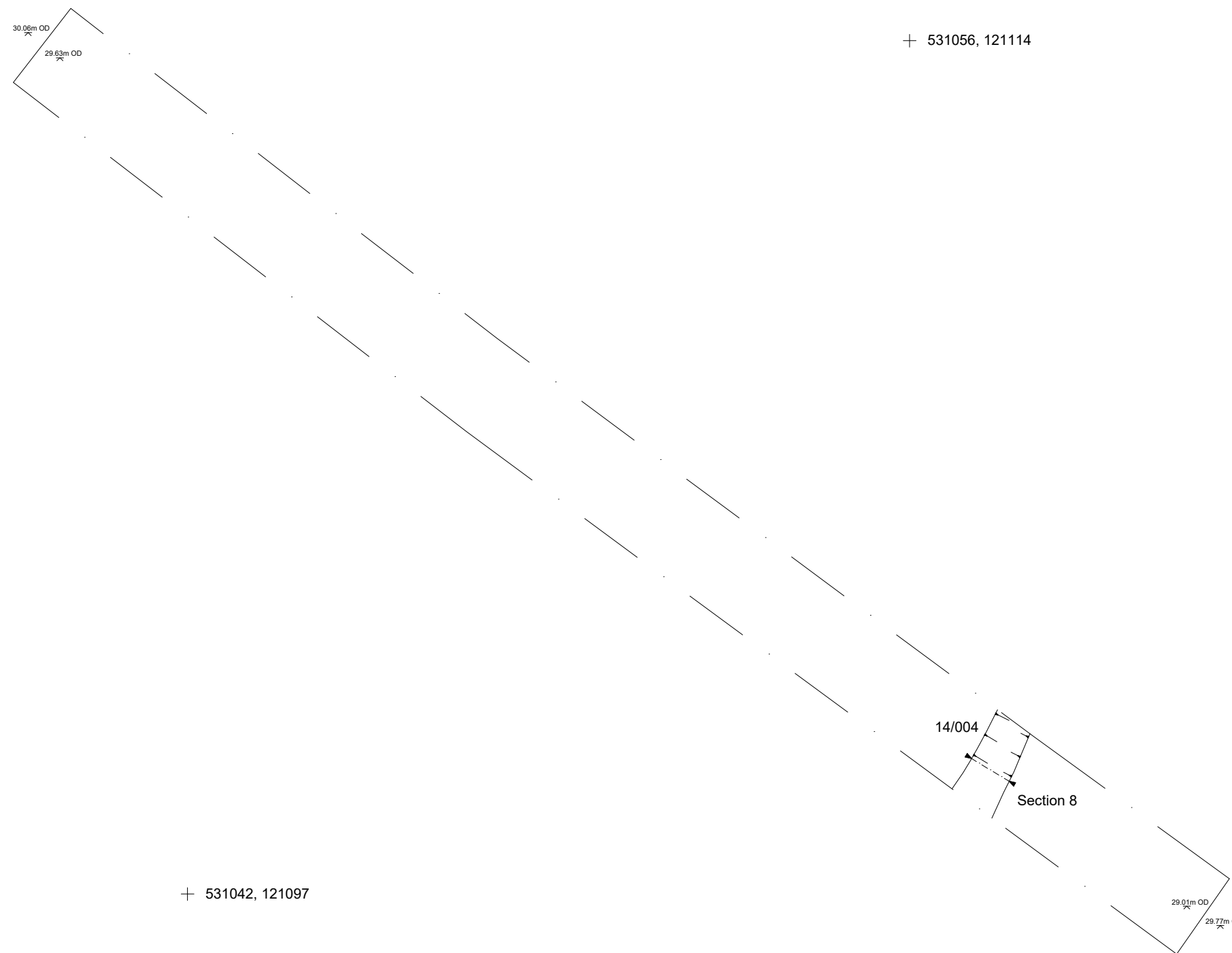
Trench 14 looking South-East



14/004 looking South-West (North arrow in photo incorrect)



0 0.5m



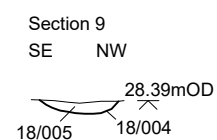
0 2m



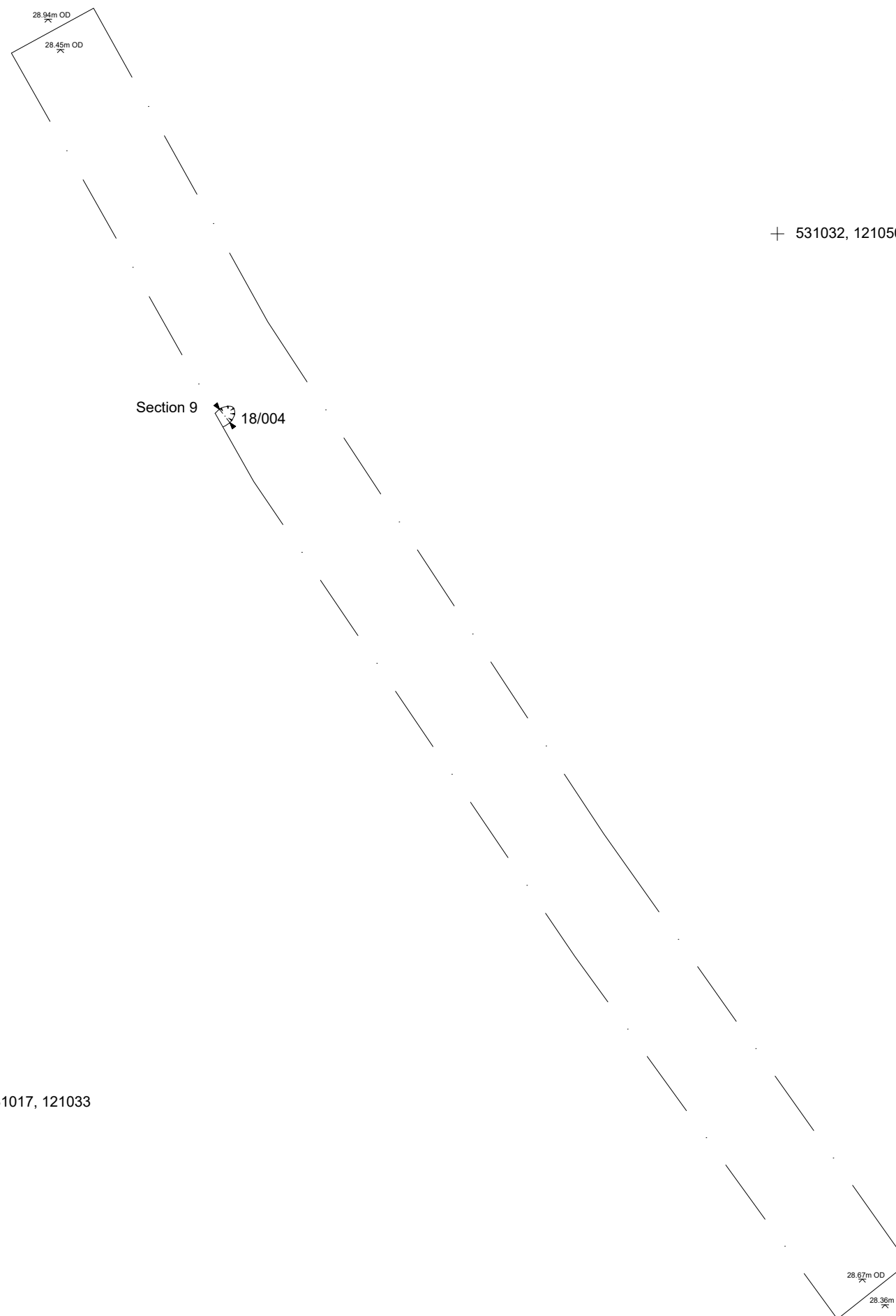
Trench 18 looking South-East



18/004 looking South-West (North arrow in photo incorrect)

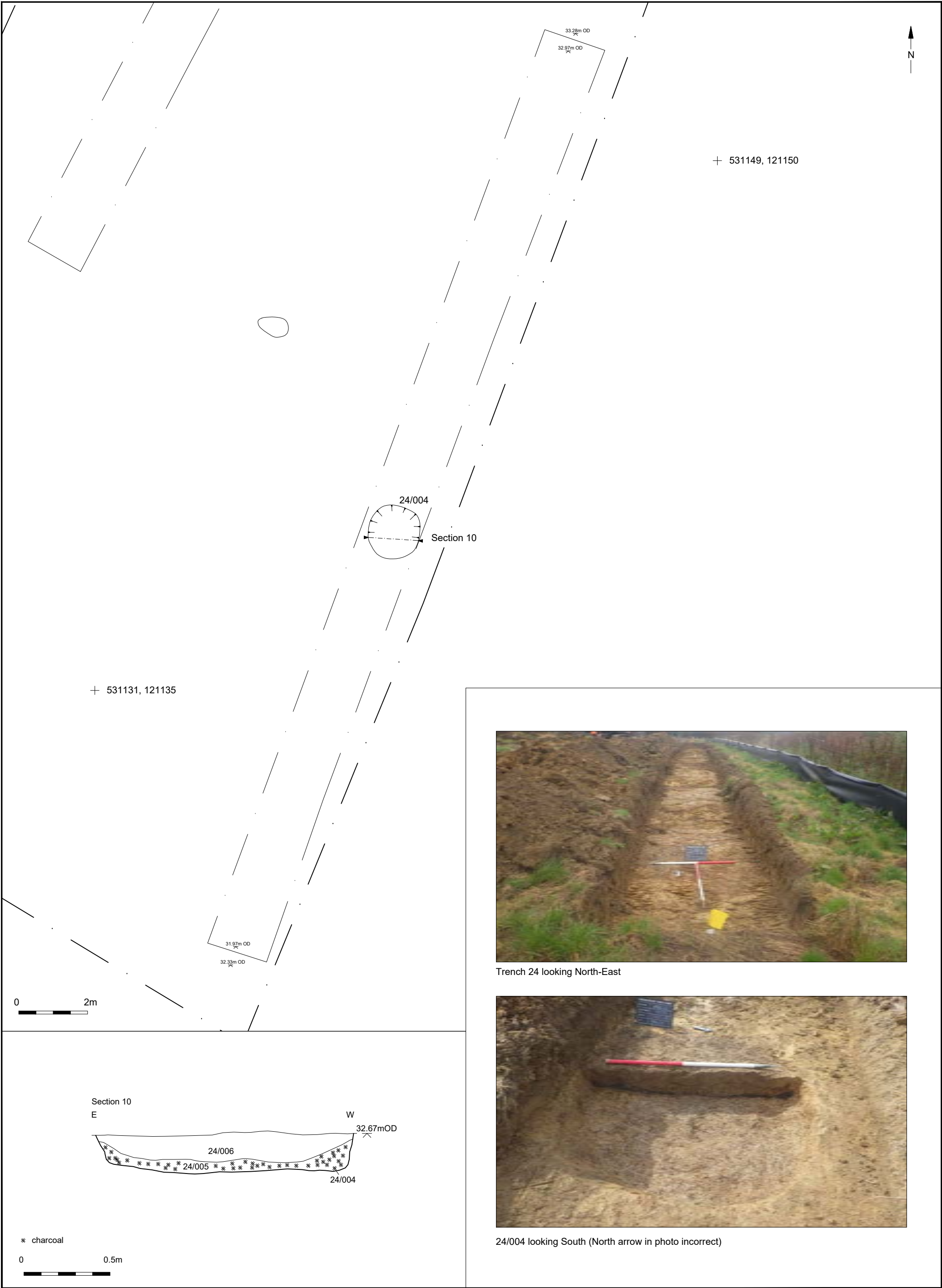


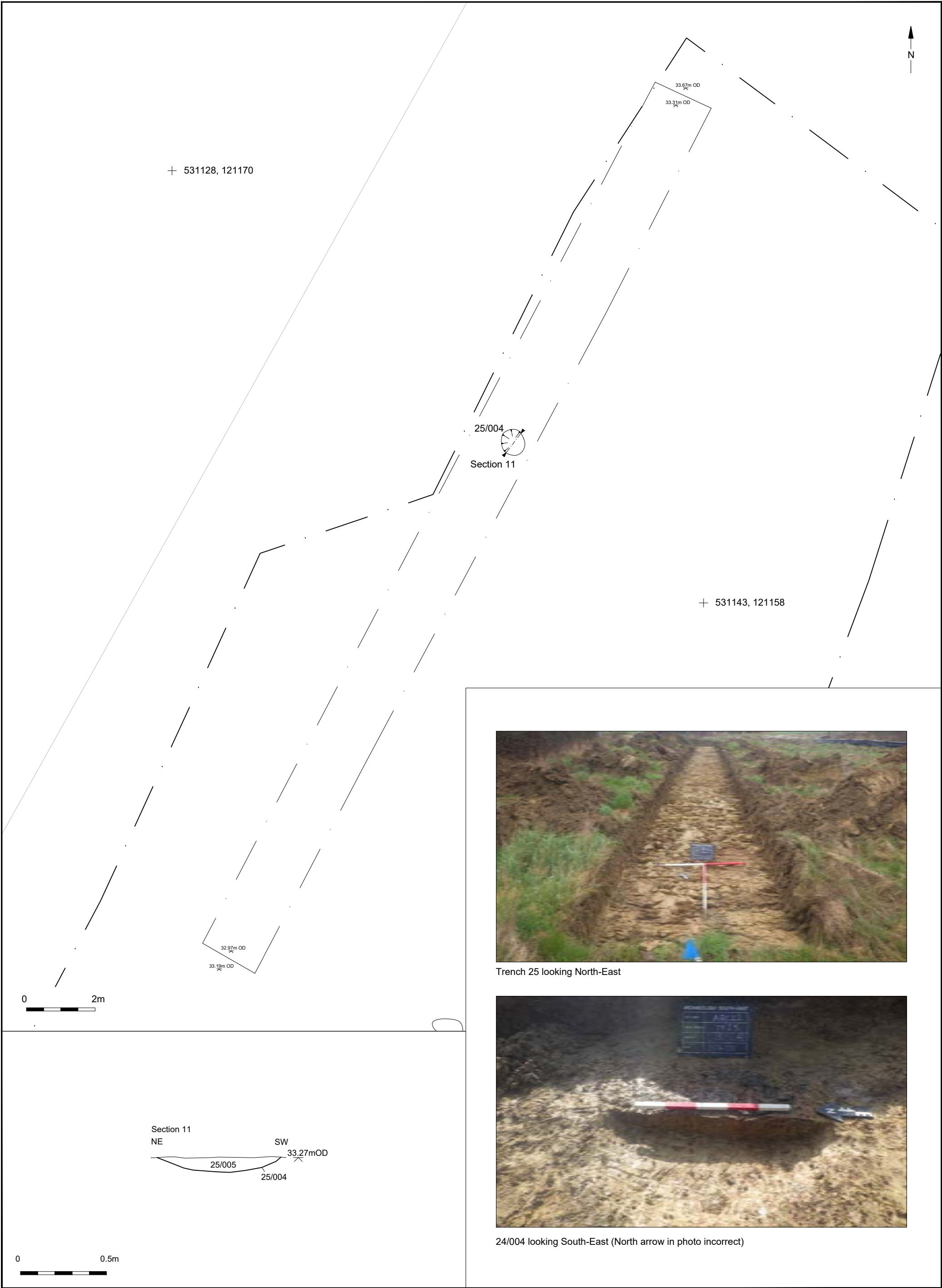
0 0.5m



0 2m







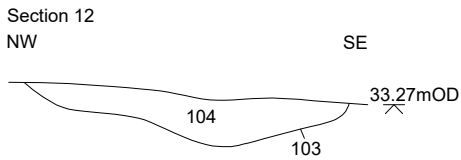
	Northern Arc P1.5 and P1.6, Burgess Hill	Fig. 10
	Trench 25 - Plan, section and photographs	



Mitigation area looking South-West

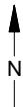


103 looking North-East



+ 531117, 121167

+ 531151, 121131





	Northern Arc P1.5 and P1.6, Burgess Hill	Fig. 12
	Blank trench photographs	



Trench 32 looking south-east



Trench 34 looking north-west



Onsite Groundworks

	Burgess Hill, Northern Arc	Fig.12
	Selected Photographs	



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