WYAS Archaeological Services

Land off Woodhead Road, Brockholes, West Yorkshire

Archaeological Mitigation

Report no. 3817
June 2022

Client: BWB Consulting Ltd

Land off Woodhead Road, Brockholes, West Yorkshire

Archaeological Mitigation

Summary

Archaeological Services WYAS (ASWYAS) undertook a scheme of archaeological mitigation at land off Woodhead Road, Brockholes, West Yorkshire. The works comprised the excavation of two areas and was completed between the 15th and 18th of August 2022. No archaeological remains were present, apart from a heavily truncated post-medieval ditch.

WYAS Archaeological Services

Report Information

Client:	BWB Consulting Ltd
Address:	Whitehall Waterfront, 2 Riverside Way, Leeds
Report Type:	Archaeological Mitigation (Strip, Map and Record Excavation)
Location:	Brockholes
County:	West Yorkshire
Grid Reference:	SE 147 111
Period(s) of activity represented:	-
Report Number:	3817
Project Number:	XG29
Site Code:	WRH22
Planning Application No.:	2021/62/92206/W
Museum Accession No.:	tbc
Date of fieldwork:	15/08/22 – 18/08/22
Date of report:	September 2022
Project Management:	Kevin Moon
Fieldwork supervisor:	Josh Wood
Fieldwork:	Josh Wood
Report:	Kevin Moon, Josh Wood
Illustrations:	Kevin Moon
Photography:	ASWYAS staff

Authorisation for distribution: ----------

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Contents

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List of Figures

List of Plates

1 Introduction

Archaeological Services WYAS (ASWYAS) were commissioned by BWB Consulting Ltd (BWB) on behalf of Miller Homes Ltd to undertake a scheme of archaeological mitigation comprising two areas, one measuring 10m by 20m and the other measuring 20m by 20m, at land off Woodhead Road, Brockholes, West Yorkshire (Fig. 1). The work was undertaken between the 15th and 18th of August 2022. The work was undertaken in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by BWB (Appendix 1).

Site location, topography and land use

The site comprises approximately 8.8ha of pasture within an irregular shaped piece of land, across four separate fields. It is situated west of the village of Brockholes and south-east of Honley (SE 147 111; Figs 1 and 2).

The western side of the site is bounded by Woodhead Road (A6024) and the eastern side by the river Holme. Smithy Place Lane passes along part of the site's south-eastern border and Smithy Place currently passes through the southern half of the site in a roughly east-west direction. Houses adjacent to the site are located along Hagg Royd Lane to the south and Smithy Place, Smithy Place Lane and New Mill Road (A616) to the east. Properties are also situated to the immediate northwest of the site, which the site boundary passes around. An industrial estate is situated to the immediate north of the site and Burdwell Works is loacted on New Mill Road to the east. The site boundary is mostly tree-lined, as are the field boundaries within it (Fig. 2).

The site slopes down fairly steeply from 130m AOD in the south-east corner of the site, down to 109m AOD in the northern corner of the site, close to the river Holme which runs along the eastern site boundary.

Soils and geology

Bedrock geology across the site comprises Rough Rock sandstone. This is overlain in the eastern part of the site, near the river Holme, by alluvial clay, slit, sand and gravel (BGS 2022). The soils in the area are freely draining slightly acid loamy soils (Soilscapes 2022).

2 Archaeological and Historical Background

The following section provides a summary of the Heritage Assessment that was undertaken by BWB Consulting (BWB 2021).

Prehistoric

The evidence for prehistoric activity near the site is focused on a cairnfield in Hagg Wood, to the south-east of the site. Cairnfields often consist mostly of clearance cairns and are built with stone cleared from the surrounding land to improve its use for agriculture. Many are also associated with burials. This Cairnfield is made up of nine cairns and includes two circular

features thought to be hut circles, survives well and is similar to two others in the local area. The exact date of origin is unknown, the majority of examples are thought to be the result of field clearance from the earlier Bronze Age to the later Bronze Age (2000-700 BC). Some, however, date from as early as *c.* 3400 BC in the Neolithic period.

A fragment of polished stone axe was also found in Wooldale (PRN 15845), to the south of the site, which dates to the Neolithic period.

Roman

There is little evidence of Roman activity within 1km of the site, although coins and antique remains were said to have been found in 1893 near a property on Northgate Mount, Honley, to the north of the site (Jagger 1914).

Early medieval and medieval

The name 'Brockholes' is Anglo-Saxon in origin, 'Broc' meaning badger and 'Holth' meaning cave or hollow in earth. It is thought that this area would have been part of a vast forest during this period (Jagger 1914). According to a Charter of 1406, John de Brockholes lived in a house at Over Brockholes, now Bank End, and he granted his estates here to John Dyson of Linthwaite (Jagger 1914).

Although the Grade II listed Honley Mill on Huddersfield Road to the north-west of the site dates to the 18th century, there are records of a fulling mill on the site during the medieval period. Similarly, it is thought that the former corn mill south of Mytholm Bridge (PRN 15455), which was located to the south-east of the site, may have been built on the site of a medieval mill (Cross 2015).

Post-medieval and modern

The Grade II listed Bank End farmhouse, situated approximately 900m to the south-east of the site, dates to the 17th or early 18th century, although the adjoining barn is possibly older.

There are twelve Grade II listed buildings which make up a group of designated assets of the Hall Ing estate situated approximately 700m to the north-east of the Site site across the valley. The oldest of these buildings dates to 1663 and a further ten buildings of the estate date from between the 18th to the mid-19th century. An early to mid-20th-century Telephone Kiosk is also situated on Hall Ing Road adjacent to these.

There are six grade II listed buildings situated in Brockholes to the south-east of the site, several of which have intermittent views through towards it. These are the late 18th or early 19th-century Bridge over the Holme at Smithy Place, the Ward Boundary Stone on New Mill Road dating to 1829, Brockholes Village Hall and former Church of England School which dates to 1837, the Gothic revival Church of St George dating to 1861, built at the expense of Marianne Armitage of Honley, the mid-to-late 19th-century Mile Post opposite the junction of Brockholes Lane and the Brockholes War Memorial which was erected after the end of the First World War.

The Smithy Place toll-bar (no longer extant) was situated adjacent to the Bridge over the Holme at Smithy Place, approximately 90m to the east of the Site. The toll-bar was erected in 1823 for the collection of tolls from travellers using the turnpike road between Langsett and Honley. The turnpike road presumably crossed the old Bridge over the Holme.

The textile industry in West Yorkshire boomed in the late 18th century and was of national importance, being fundamental toward the onset of the Industrial Revolution. Evidence of this nearby includes Honley Mill, a former woollen and corn mill of early to mid-18th-century date, noteworthy for being a small, early textile operation in an area dominated by large integrated complexes. Smithy Place Mills was annotated on the 1st edition 6 inch series Ordnance Survey (OS) map (*c.* 1854) approximately 80m to the east of the site on the western bank of the Holme. A late 20th or early 21st-century housing development now occupies the site.

The other former mills in the area are the 19th-century Grove Mills, the site of a corn mill south of Mytholm Bridge, the site of the Crossley and Neighley Mills, the site of the Rock Mills, the site of Lower Mytholm Bridge Mills and the former Upper Mytholme Bridge Mills probably dating to the 19th century. The late 19th-century Bridge Dyeworks in Honley also remains standing today.

In the early 19th century, coal mining would have been one of the chief occupations in Brockholes, and the Haigh family of Hall Ing opened out more collieries around the village. The opening of the railway in 1850 helped the village progress, and by 1870, Rock Mill, a large cotton mill, was constructed along with a large number of terraced houses for workers later in the century (Jagger 1914).

Situated approximately 200m to the north-west of the site, on the eastern side of Woodhead Road, is a Grade II listed Mile Post dating to the mid-19th century.

Geophysical survey

Phase Site Investigations Ltd was commissioned to carry out a magnetic gradient survey within the area (Fig. 2). The survey provided evidence for potential archaeological activity, in the form of boundary ditches and other probable/possible archaeological features and activity, across parts of the survey areas, with the majority evident within the southernmost fields. Possible land drains are visible in the eastern field which run in a northwest-southeast direction. Services are also evident within the southernmost field. There are a number of anomalies of uncertain origin, some of which could be related to agricultural, modern or drainage activity but others could be associated with additional archaeological features/activity. Within the westernmost field is a linear feature which appears to head to the mill pond depicted on early OS editions.

Trial trenching

Between March and April 2022 ASWYAS carried out an archaeological evaluation on the site (Wells 2022). The trenches targeted geophysical anomalies and apparently blank areas of the

site. The results of the evaluation were largely negative with features limited to small pits or post-holes of post-medieval or modern origin (Trenches 7 and 8), a gully (Trench 12) and a ditch (Trench 32) which produced material dating from the 16th to 18th-century. Two flints were also recovered from the subsoil and surface of Trench 12 in the northern corner of the site.

3 Aims and Objectives

The aims of the archaeological mitigation work were as follows:

- To further investigate, characterise and date the features found in Trench 12 and 32;
- To determine the presence of associated featured and flints;
- To further determine the nature, depth, extent, significance and date of the ditch and pits;
- To determine the likely range, quality and quantity of artefactual and environmental evidence present;
- To investigate, sample and record archaeological features, structures and deposits according to the methodology detailed in this WSI;
- To confirm and enhance the results of the evaluation;
- To recover all artefacts and, where appropriate, palaeo-environmental samples from deposits of potential significance.

The objective of the work was to monitor the removal of top and subsoil horizons and assess the resultant areas for their archaeological potential. Any remains were then subject to archaeological excavation. Recovered artefacts were subject to analysis and environmental data were sampled.

4 Methodology

The work involved the excavation of two areas, one of which measured 10m by 20m (Area 1) and the other 20m by 20m (Area 2). The areas were positioned to target potential archaeological features identified during the previous geophysical survey (Phase Site Investigations 2021) and trial trenching (Wells 2022; Fig. 2).

All work was undertaken in accordance with accepted professional standards and guidelines (Historic England 2008; CIfA 2014), in accordance with the ASWYAS site recording manual (ASWYAS 2020) and in compliance with the WSI (Appendix 1).

Both areas were set out and the limits resurveyed using a Trimble VRS differential GPS accurate to +/-0.01m. The areas were opened in a controlled manner using a 360 excavator using a flat-bladed ditching bucket under direct archaeological supervision. All topsoil

deposits were removed in level spits (not more than 0.20m). Machining stopped at the first archaeological horizon or natural deposits, whichever was encountered first. All excavations of archaeological deposits were undertaken manually with the stripped surface being cleaned and investigated for archaeological remains.

Spoil heaps were scanned for both ferrous and non-ferrous metal artefacts using a Nokta Simplex+ metal detector fitted with and 11-inch 12kHz coil, capable of discriminating between ferrous and non-ferrous material and was operated by an experienced metal detector user. Modern artefacts were noted but not retained.

All archaeological features were accurately recorded in plan at a scale of 1:50. All plans include spot heights that relate to Ordnance Datum in metres.

A full written, drawn and photographic record was made of all archaeological work undertaken. An inventory of the primary archive is presented in Appendix 2 and a concordance is given in Appendix 3. ASWYAS currently hold the site archive in a stable and secure location.

5 Results

The mitigation areas were positioned to target both geophysical anomalies and areas deemed significant based on the results of the trial trenching (Fig. 2). Both areas were excavated through a dark black-brown sandy-silt topsoil, measuring on average 0.25m in depth. Beneath the topsoil, a mid-brown sandy-silt subsoil was exposed. It occasionally measured up to 0.30m in depth, but was more commonly between 0.10m and 0.15m deep (Fig. 3, S. 3 and S. 4). Beneath the subsoil, the underlying geology comprised light or mid-yellow or grey-brown fragmented sandstone with occasional patches of silty clay.

Area 1 was positioned to target the area where two flint flakes of late Neolithic date were recovered in the previous trial trench evaluation, one from the surface of a small gully and the other from the subsoil. When stripped, the area was devoid of archaeological remains (Plates 1 and 2), with no evidence for any other small gully-like features or continuations of the feature found in Trench 12.

Area 2 (Fig. 3; Plate 3) contained the ditch which had previously identified in the trial trench evaluation, where material dating from the 16th to 18th centuries was recovered. The ditch ran on an east to west alignment (5003; Plate 4) and measured 1.15m wide. It contained a single fill (5004) consisting of a very dry, loose silty clay with frequent sandstone inclusions of various sizes, presumably to assist drainage, a widely used technique in the 18th century (Harvey 1980). As the ditch continued to the west, it barely survived as a feature, with only a short, barely visible section present in the western side of the area (Plate 5).

Spoil heaps for both areas were scanned for metal objects and flint. None were recovered.

6 Discussion and Conclusion

Overall the open-areas excavated were successful in investigating the potential for archaeological highlighted in the trial trench evaluation.

No archaeological remains were identified in Area 1 and hence no further information relating to the possible gully identified in Trench 12 was identified. It is likely that the interpretation given at the evaluation phase of an isolated natural feature was correct.

The ditch identified in Trench 32 of the evaluation was further exposed in Area 2. It was clearly visible at the eastern end of the area, with its visibility dramatically reducing further to the west, probably due to horizontal truncation by later agricultural activity. This truncation may explain why the feature was not identified in any of the other trenches on site and why is not visible as a geophysical anomaly.

No further flint artefacts were found in the soils excavated from Area 1 or Area 2, suggesting that the flints recovered during the trial trench evaluation were isolated finds, possibly redeposited as a result of bioturbation or recent/modern farming practices.

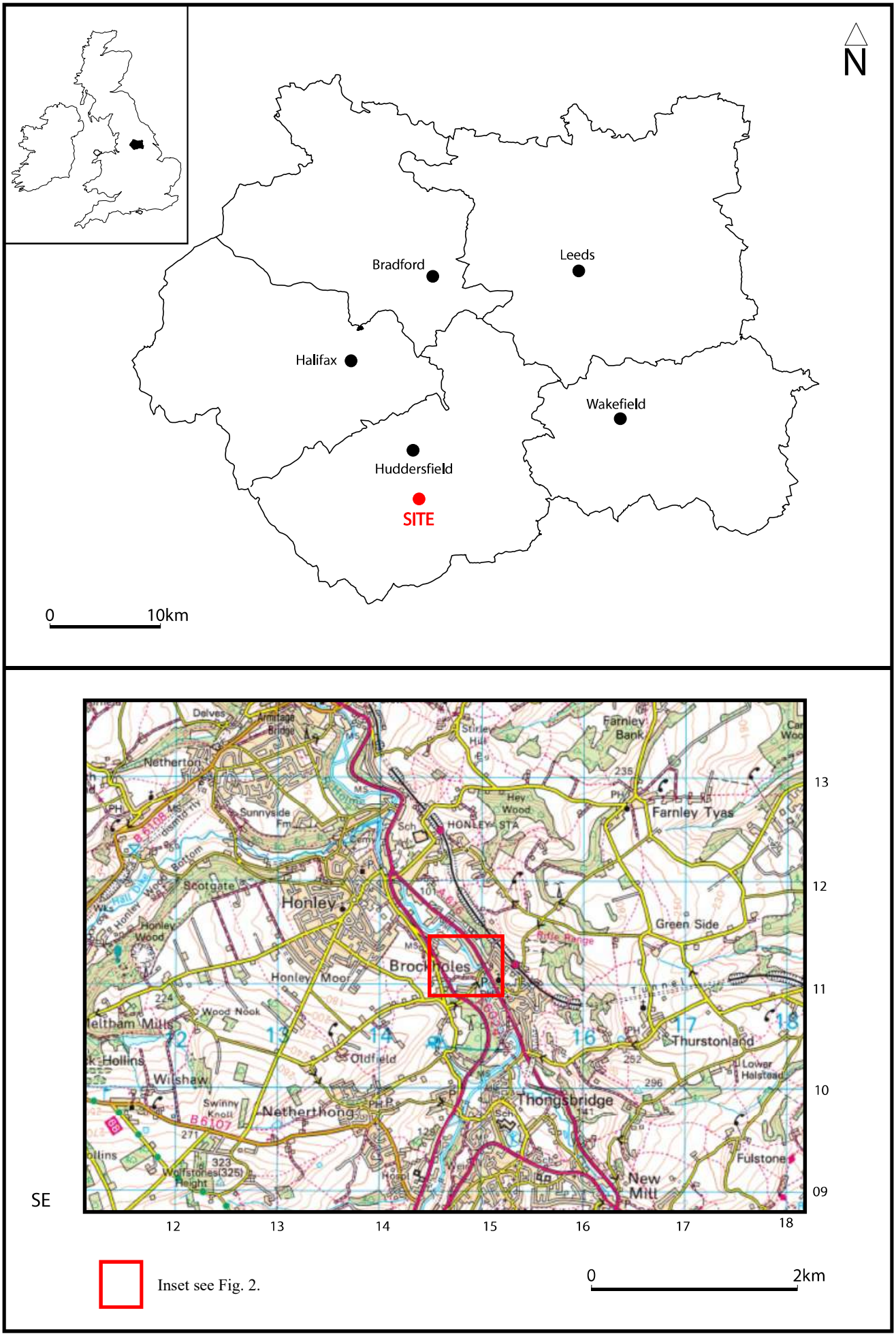

Fig. 1. Site location

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Project No. XG29

Fig. 2.

Site plan showing the location of the trial trenches and mitigation areas overlying geophysical survey results

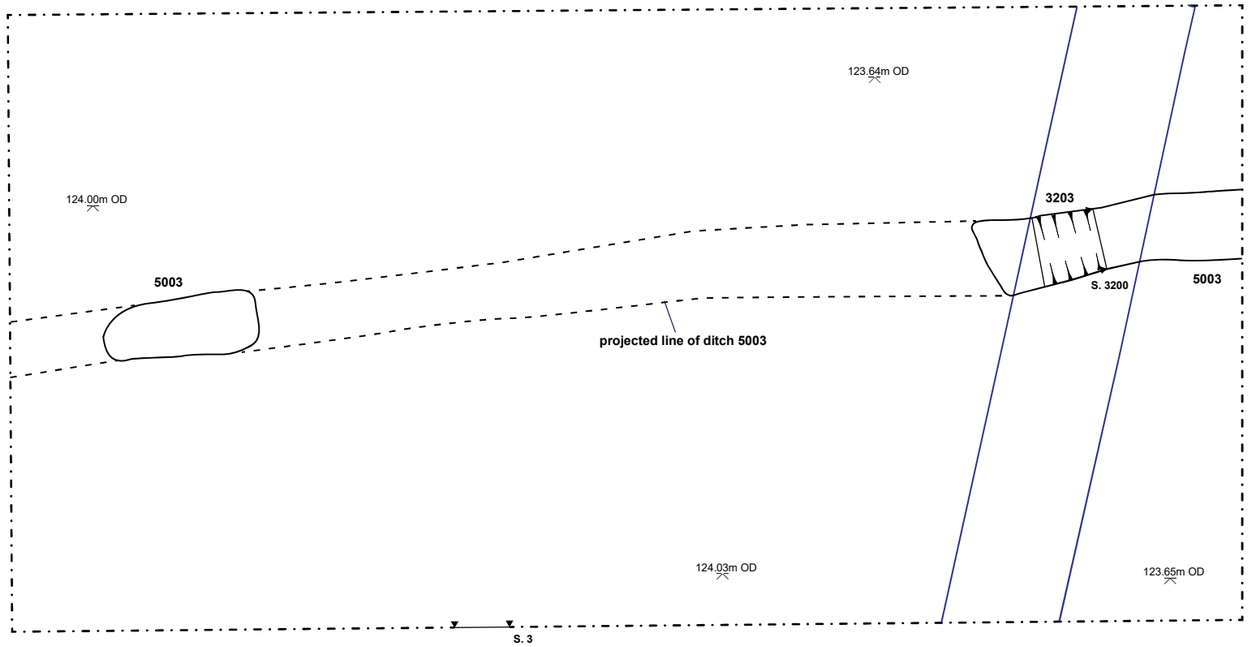
SITE BOUNDARY

TRIAL TRENCH

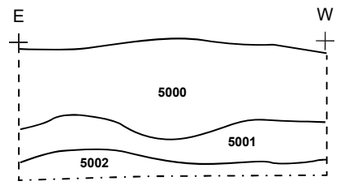
MITIGATION AREA

0 50m

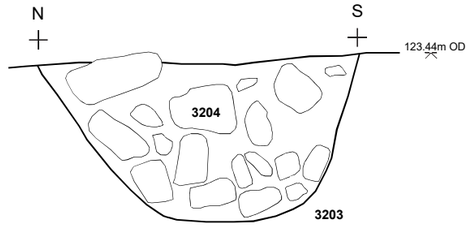
1:1500 @ A3



S. 3



S. 3200



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Project No. XG29	*Project Code: WRH22*
Fig. 3	
Area 2 plan and sections	

Plans 0 4m (1:100)

Sections 0 1m (1:20)

Plate 1. General view of Area 1, looking north

Plate 2. Area 1 section, looking north

Plate 3. General view of Area 2, looking south-west

Plate 4. View of ditch 5003, looking west

Plate 5. View of ditch 5003, looking east

Appendix 1: Written Scheme of Investigation

Appendix 2: Inventory of primary archive

Phase	File/Box No	Description	Quantity
Mitigation	File no.2	Digital photograph record sheet	1
		Drawing sheet register	1
		Drawing register	1
		Context record sheets	8
		Permatrace sheets	3

Appendix 3: Concordance of contexts

Context	Area	Type	Description
5000	2	Layer	Layer of topsoil. Colour: very dark grey. Composition: fine silty sand. Compaction: moist, loose. Inclusions: none. Reliability: good.
5001	2	Layer	Layer of subsoil. Colour: mid-brownish orange. Composition: silty sand. Compaction: dry, friable. Inclusions: rare small angular sandstone, evenly distributed. Reliability: good.
5002	2	Layer	Layer of natural. Colour: mid-orangey yellow. Composition: coarse silty sand. Compaction: dry, firm. Inclusions: moderate medium angular sandstone, evenly distributed. Reliability: good.
5003	2	Cut	Cut of E-W ditch. Shape in plan: regular, linear.
5004	2	Fill	Fill of ditch 5003. Colour: dark grey. Composition: silty clay. Compaction: very dry, loose. Inclusions: frequent large very angular platy sandstone, evenly distributed. Reliability: good.
6000	1	Layer	Layer of topsoil. Colour: very dark grey. Composition: fine silty sand. Compaction: moist, loose. Inclusions: none. Reliability: good.
6001	1	Layer	Layer of subsoil. Colour: mid-brownish orange. Composition: silty sand. Compaction: dry, friable. Inclusions: rare small angular sandstone, evenly distributed. Reliability: good.
6002	1	Layer	Layer of natural. Colour: mid-orangey yellow. Composition: coarse silty sand. Compaction: dry, firm. Inclusions: moderate medium angular sandstone, evenly distributed. Reliability: good.

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