



Monitoring Report No. 128

**Site 80m north of 35 Lisdown Road
Lisdown
Co. Armagh**

AE/07/138

Brian Sloan

Site Specific Information

Site Address: 80m north of 35 Lisdown Road, Co. Armagh

Townland: Lisdown

SMR No.: ARM 011:017

State Care *Scheduled* *Other* ✓

Grid Ref: H 8260 4642

County: Armagh

Excavation Licence No: AE/07/138

Planning Ref / No.: O/2004/0695/O

Date of Monitoring: 25th July 2007

Archaeologist Present: Brian Sloan

Brief Summary:

The supervision of the mechanical excavation of seven test trenches was carried out at an application site 80m north of 35 Lisdown Road, Co. Armagh. The site lies in a rectangular shaped field and is adjacent to a Rath (ARM 011:017). This evaluation was prompted by the proximity of the Rath to the application site. A simple stratigraphy was observed in all the trenches which were excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil. Three sherds of Post-Medieval glazed ceramics were recovered during the evaluation and their presence probably relates to the manuring of the field with kitchen midden material prior to cultivation. Nothing of archaeological significance was encountered in the evaluation and it is recommended that no further archaeological programme of works is carried out at the application site.

Type of monitoring:

Excavation of seven test trenches by mechanical excavator equipped with a smooth-edged 'sheugh' bucket under archaeological supervision.

Size of area opened:

Seven trenches, each measuring 30m in length by 2m in width, aligned roughly east/west in the area of the application site and access route.

Current Land Use: Pastoral agricultural

Intended Land Use: Residential

Brief account of the monitoring

Introduction

The application site is located 80m north of 35 Lisdown Road, Lisdown, Co. Armagh (Fig. 1). The site lies approximately 6km north-west of the city of Armagh, approximately 2.5km north-west of Navan Fort (ARM 012:015), and at a height of approximately 50m above sea level. The surrounding area is rich in archaeological sites (Fig. 3). The site lies approximately 50m north-east of a Rath which dates to the Early Christian period. The surrounding landscape consists of both pastoral and arable land, interspersed with dwelling houses.

The application site is located in a rectangular shaped field, the boundaries of which are delineated by a post and wire fence interspersed with mature trees and hedgerows. The trenches were aligned roughly east/west across the application site (Fig. 3) and were requested by Edith Gowdy (Case Officer Environment and Heritage Service: Built Heritage).

Excavation

Trench 1 was positioned approximately 10m from the northern boundary of the application site and measured 30m by 2m. The trench was excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil, which was encountered at a depth of 0.35m (Plate 2).

The sod and topsoil layer in Trench 1 (Context No. 101) consisted of a mid to dark brown sandy loam with few inclusions of small rounded and sub-angular stones (average size: 40mm x 20mm x 10mm). This layer had an average depth of 0.05m.

Below the sod and topsoil layer (Context No.101) was a relatively compact mid to dark brown silty loam deposit (Context No. 102). Infrequent inclusions of small angular stones (average size: 30mm x 20mm x 20mm) were observed in this deposit. A single sherd of black glazed earthenware was recovered from the cultivation soil (Context No. 102). The cultivation soil was on average 0.3m thick. Directly below the cultivation soil (Context No. 102) lay the natural subsoil (Context No. 103) (Plate 3). This consisted of glacially derived orange gritty clay. There were no finds or features of an archaeological nature encountered in this trench.

Trench 2 was located approximately 6m south of Trench 1 and measured 30m by 2m. The trench was excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil, which was encountered at a depth of 0.25m (Plate 4).

The sod and topsoil layer in Trench 2 (Context No. 201) consisted of a mid to dark brown sandy loam with few inclusions of small rounded and sub-angular stones (average size: 40mm x 20mm x 10mm). This layer had an average depth of 0.10m.

Below the sod and topsoil layer (Context No.201) was a relatively compact mid to dark brown silty loam deposit (Context No. 202). Infrequent inclusions of small angular stones (average size: 30mm x 20mm x 20mm) were observed in this deposit. The cultivation soil (Context No. 202) was 0.15m thick and overlay the natural subsoil (Context No. 203) (Plate 5). This consisted of orange gritty clay. There were no finds or features of an archaeological nature encountered in this trench.

Trench 3 was located approximately 5m south of Trench 2 and measured 30m by 2m. The trench was excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil, which was encountered at a depth of 0.35m (Plate 6).

The sod and topsoil layer in Trench 3 (Context No. 301) consisted of a mid to dark brown sandy loam with few inclusions of small rounded and sub-angular stones (average size: 40mm x 20mm x 10mm). This layer had an average depth of 0.15m.

Below the sod and topsoil layer (Context No.301) was a relatively compact mid to dark brown silty loam deposit (Context No. 302). Infrequent inclusions of small angular stones (average size: 30mm x 20mm x 20mm) were observed in this deposit. The cultivation soil (Context No. 302) was 0.2m thick and overlay the natural subsoil (Context No. 303) (Plate 7). This consisted of orange gritty clay. There were no finds or features of an archaeological nature encountered in this trench.

Trench 4 was located approximately 10m south of Trench 3 and measured 28m by 2m. The trench was excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil, which was encountered at a depth of 0.3m (Plate 8).

The sod and topsoil layer in Trench 4 (Context No. 401) consisted of a mid to dark brown sandy loam with few inclusions of small rounded and sub-angular stones (average size: 40mm x 20mm x 10mm). This layer had an average depth of 0.15m.

Below the sod and topsoil layer (Context No.401) was a relatively compact mid to dark brown silty loam deposit (Context No. 402). Infrequent inclusions of small angular stones (average size: 30mm x 20mm x 20mm) were observed in this deposit. The cultivation soil (Context No. 402) was 0.15m thick and overlay the natural subsoil (Context No. 403) (Plate 9). This consisted of orange gritty clay. There were no finds or features of an archaeological nature encountered in this trench.

Trench 5 was located approximately 5m south of Trench 4 and measured 30m by 2m. The trench was excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil, which was encountered at a depth of 0.28m (Plate 10).

The sod and topsoil layer in Trench 5 (Context No. 501) consisted of a mid to dark brown sandy loam with few inclusions of small rounded and sub-angular stones (average size: 40mm x 20mm x 10mm). This layer had an average depth of 0.15m.

Below the sod and topsoil layer (Context No.501) was a relatively compact mid to dark brown silty loam deposit (Context No. 502). Infrequent inclusions of small angular stones (average size: 30mm x 20mm x 20mm) were observed in this deposit. The cultivation soil (Context No. 502) was 0.13m thick and overlay the natural subsoil (Context No. 503) (Plate 11). This consisted of orange gritty clay. There were no finds or features of an archaeological nature encountered in this trench.

Trench 6 was located approximately 5m south of Trench 5 and measured 27m by 2m. The trench was excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil, which was encountered at a depth of 0.30m (Plate 12).

The sod and topsoil layer in Trench 6 (Context No. 601) consisted of a mid to dark brown sandy loam with few inclusions of small rounded and sub-angular stones (average size: 40mm x 20mm x 10mm). This layer had an average depth of 0.15m.

Below the sod and topsoil layer (Context No.601) was a relatively compact mid to dark brown silty loam deposit (Context No. 602). Infrequent inclusions of small angular stones (average size: 30mm x 20mm x 20mm) were observed in this deposit. A sherd of transfer printed glazed ceramic and black glazed ceramic were recovered from the cultivation soil (Context No. 603). The cultivation soil (Context No. 502) was 0.15m thick and overlay the natural subsoil (Context No. 603) (Plate 13). This consisted of orange gritty clay. There were no finds or features of an archaeological nature encountered in this trench.

Trench 7 was located in the area of the proposed access route to the application site. The trench measured 26m and was orientated roughly north/south. The trench was excavated to the surface of the natural subsoil, which was encountered at an average depth of 0.25m. (Plate 14)

The sod and topsoil in Trench 7 (Context No. 701) consisted of a mid to dark brown sandy loam with few inclusions of small rounded and sub-angular stones (average size: 40mm x 20mm x 10mm). No cultivation soil was observed in this area of the application site.

The sod and topsoil (Context No. 701) directly overlay the natural subsoil (Context No. 702) (Plate 15).

The natural subsoil in this area consisted of an orange gritty clay. Disturbance from numerous active tree roots was observed at this level due to the proximity of the trench to the westernmost field boundary. The presence of these tree roots may explain the lack of a differentiation between the topsoil and any surviving cultivation deposit. There were no finds or features of archaeological significance observed in this trench.

Nothing of archaeological significance was noted during the evaluation. It is recommended that no further archaeological fieldwork is carried out at the development site. No publication is required, apart from a short summary in the annual bulletin of excavations.

Archive:

Finds: The sherds of Post-Medieval glazed ceramics are held by the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast.

Photographs: 27 digital images, held by the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, Queen's University Belfast.

Plans / Drawings: n/a

Signed: _____ Date: _____

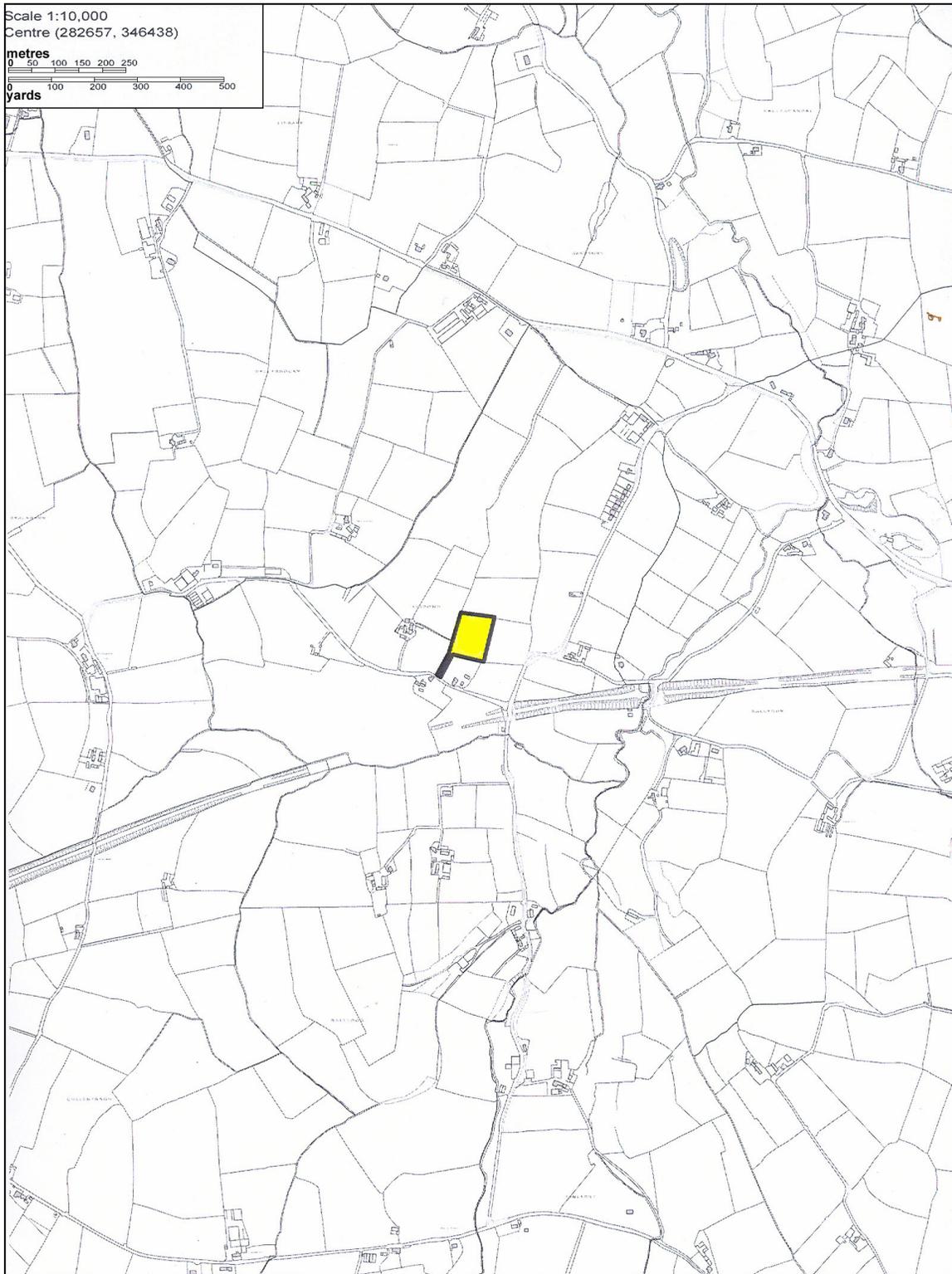


Fig. 2: Detailed location map showing application site (highlighted in yellow).

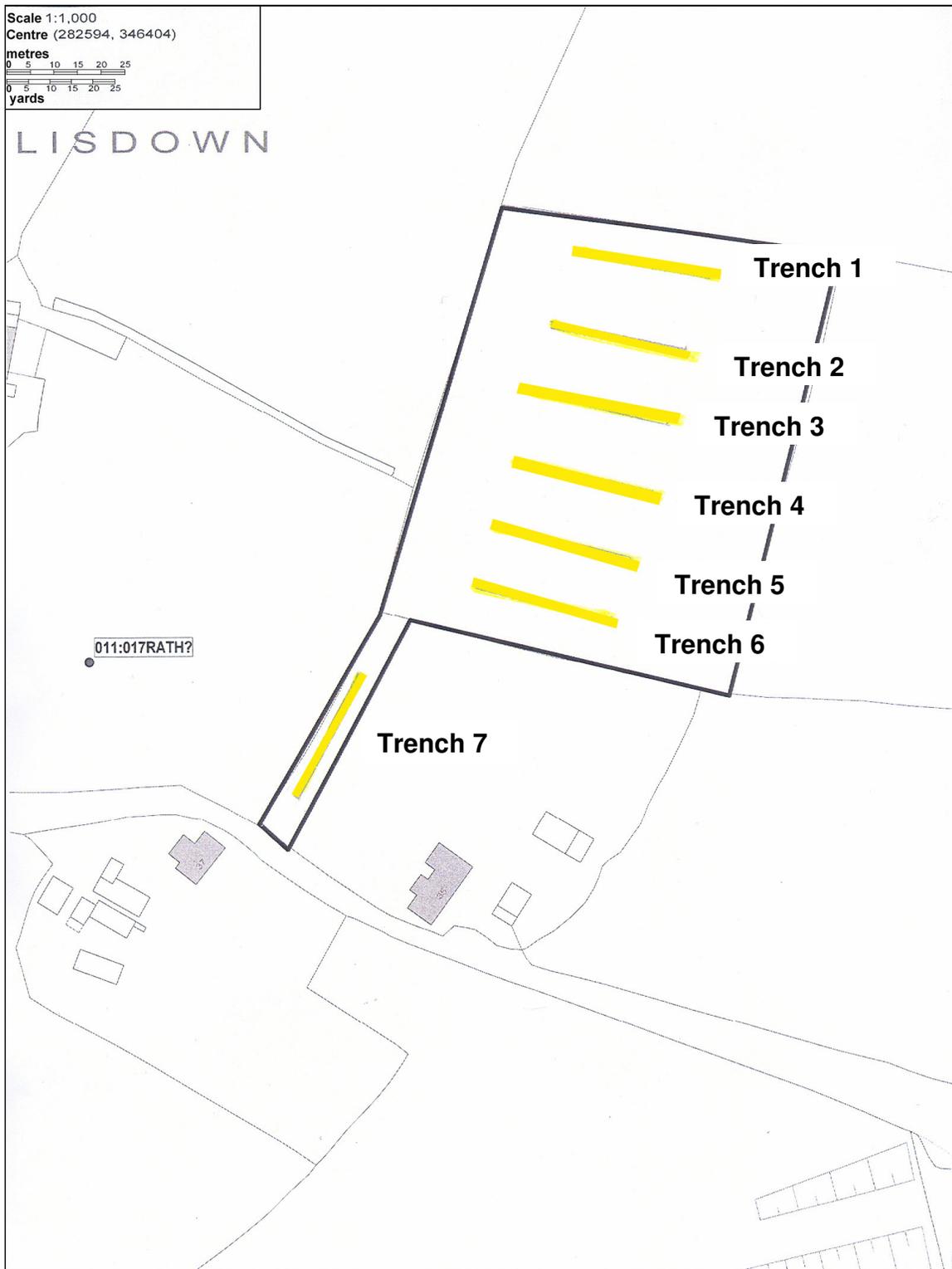


Fig. 3: Detailed location map showing location of the seven test trenches.



Plate 1: Application site prior to the excavation of the test trenches, looking north.



Plate 2: Trench 1 following excavation to the surface of the natural subsoil (Context No. 103), looking east.



Plate 3: North facing section of Trench 1.



Plate 4: Trench 2 following excavation to the surface of the natural subsoil (Context No. 203), looking east.

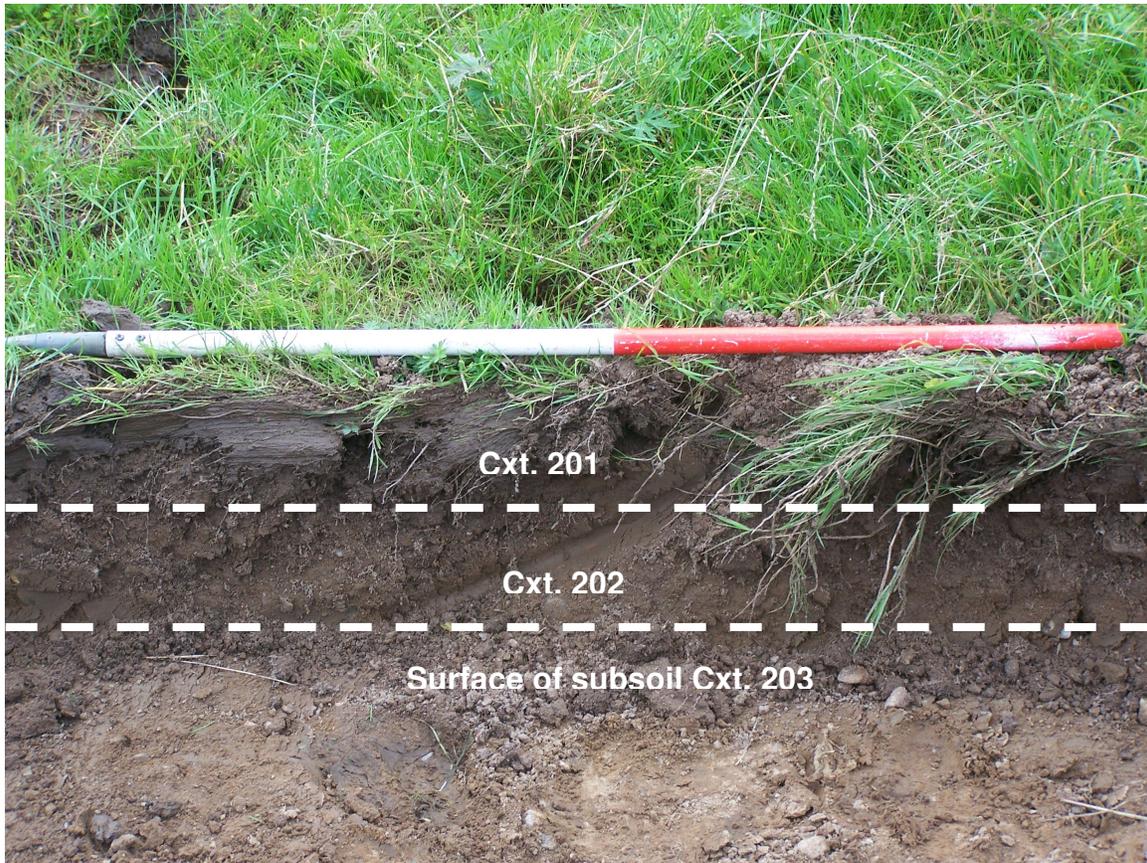


Plate 5: North facing section of Trench 2.



Plate 6: Trench 3 following excavation to the surface of the natural subsoil (Context No. 303), looking east.



Plate 7: South facing section of Trench 3.



Plate 8: Trench 4 following excavation to the surface of the natural subsoil (Context No. 403), looking east.

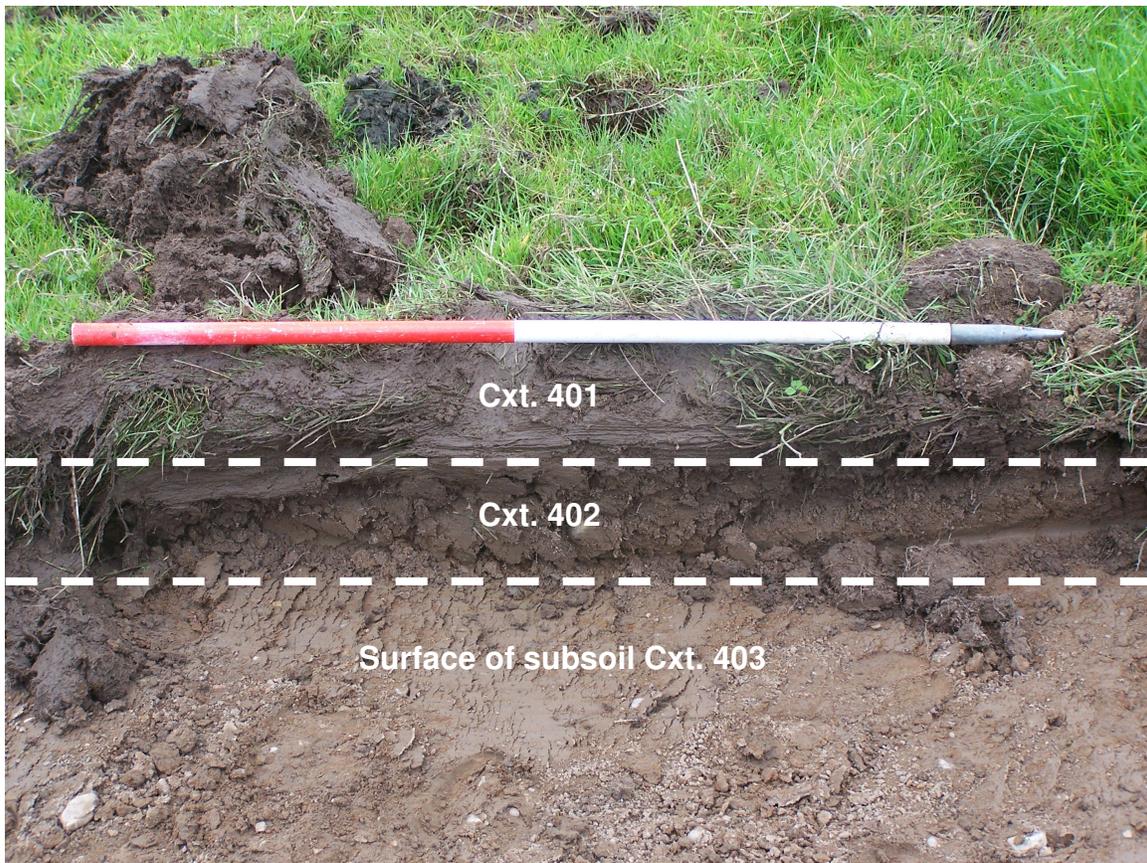


Plate 9: North facing section of Trench 4.



Plate 10: Trench 5 following excavation to the surface of the natural subsoil (Context No. 503), looking east.

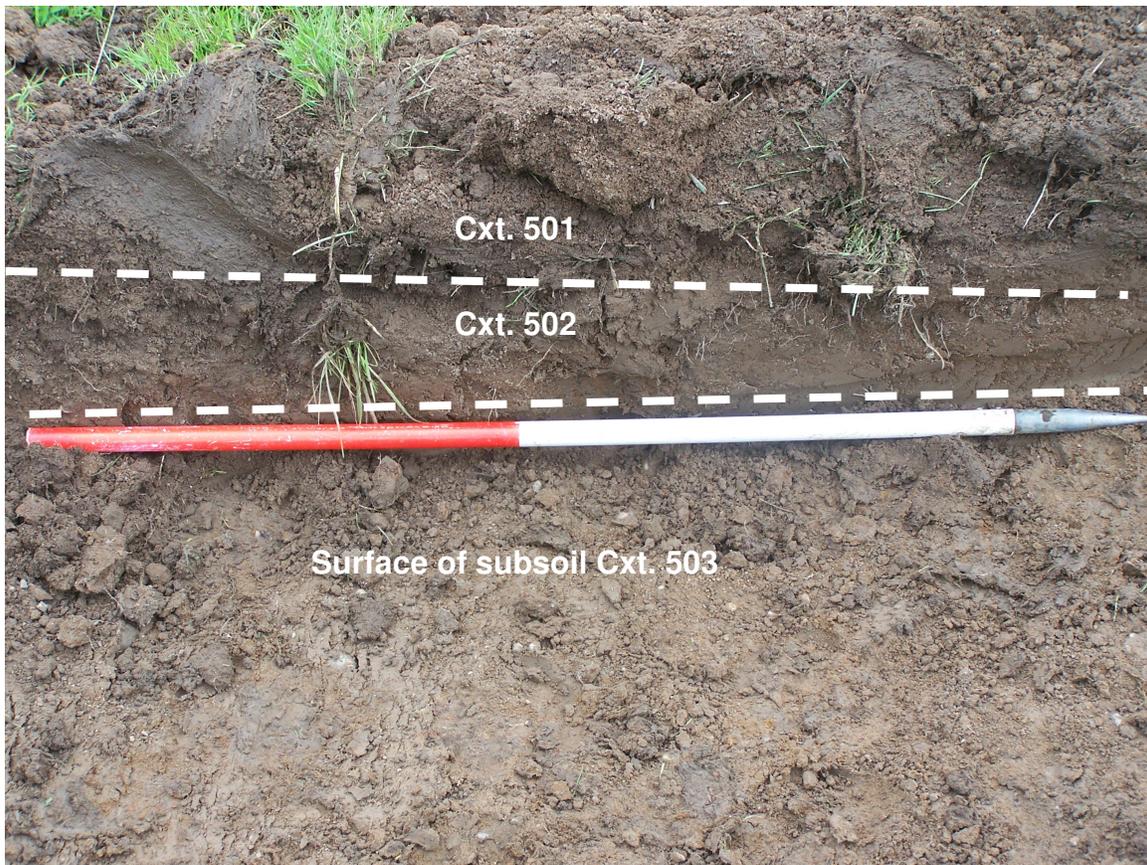


Plate 11: South facing section of Trench 5.



Plate 12: Trench 6 following excavation to the surface of the natural subsoil (Context No. 603), looking east.

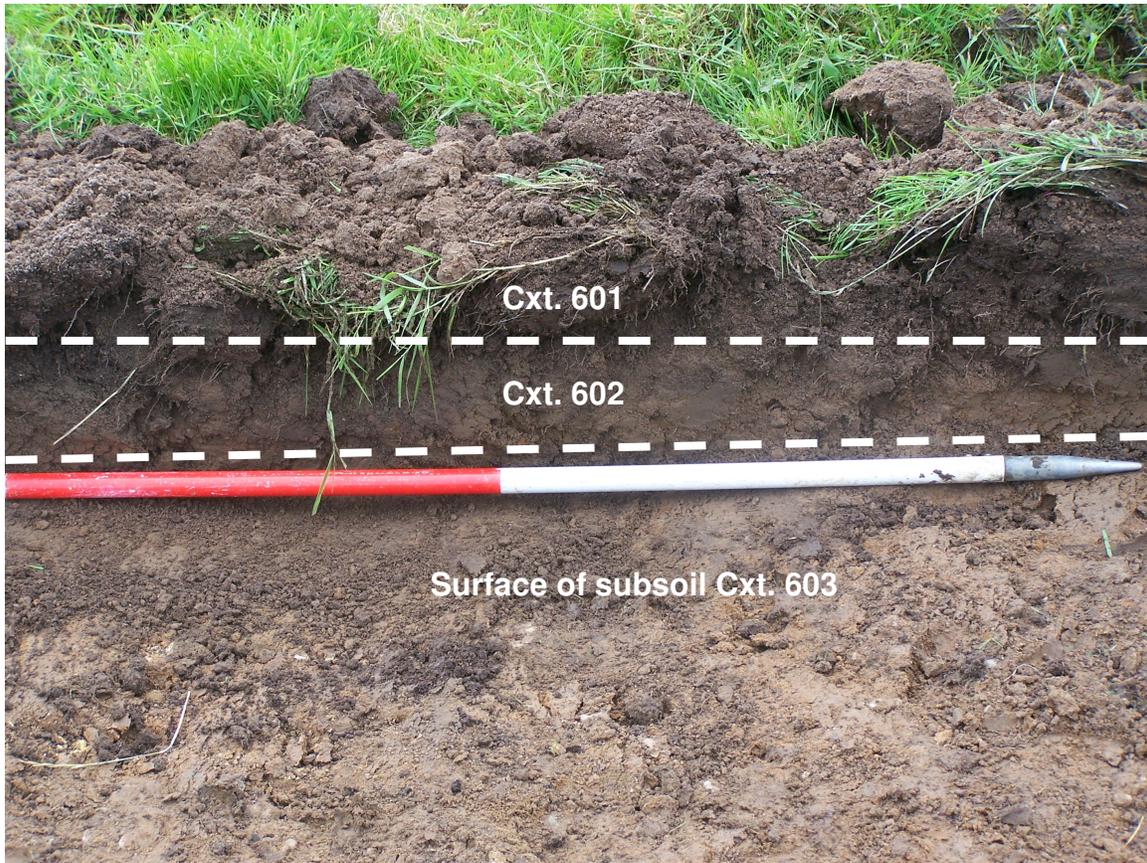


Plate 13: North facing section of Trench 6.



Plate 14: Trench 7 following excavation to the surface of the natural subsoil (Context No. 702), looking south. (Note discolouration of the subsoil due to active tree roots from westernmost field boundary).



Plate 15: West facing section of Trench 7.