

Eltham Palace
London Borough of Greenwich
Archaeological Evaluation

Oxford Archaeological Unit
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Summary

Excavations by the Oxford Archaeological Unit to the east and south-east of the moated site of Eltham Palace revealed a number of post-medieval features and one possible prehistoric ditch. The possible prehistoric ditch, which was identified in the two northernmost evaluation trenches (trenches 9 & 11), may represent the remains of a rectilinear boundary. Alternatively it may have formed one side of an enclosure. If so its topographical position suggests that the interior would have lain on the upper northern side and will not be affected by the proposed development. There is no evidence of associated settlement activity.

The evaluation also identified three post-medieval ditches (ditches 303, 615 & 1003). Ditches 303 and 1003 are clearly marked, as field boundaries, on 19th century maps of the site. Ditch 615, which is not marked on any of the 18th and 19th century maps examined, was interpreted as an early post-medieval drainage or boundary feature. Across the site generally the absence of pottery or other finds predating the 18th century from superficial or stratified contexts suggests that the site was peripheral to any occupation throughout much of its history. There was no evidence of medieval or early post-medieval garden features.

Introduction

An archaeological field evaluation and desk-top study was undertaken by the Oxford Archaeological Unit on behalf of WS Atkins Landscape and English Heritage on c 2.3 ha of land at Eltham Palace, London Borough of Greenwich (NGR TQ425739). The work was carried out to assess the potential impact of proposals by English Heritage to improve visitor facilities at Eltham Palace and provide car-parking and vehicle access. The work was conducted to a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by the OAU and approved by English Heritage (*Eltham Palace, London Borough of Greenwich: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*, OAU 25 Jan 1996). The work took place over two weeks in February 1996.

Topography

Eltham Palace lies on a prominent hilltop at 60 m OD on Claygate Beds. The development site lies in grounds southeast of the palace itself, outside the moat, on a

gently sloping hillside. The water-table is high across the site and the ground prone to wetness. A pond occupies an area on the southern perimeter of the site and a former pond (now infilled) the extreme south-east corner of the site by Court Road. Most of the land is given over to lawns and gardens, with an area of greenhouses, tennis courts, workshops and a 'school block' towards the northern end. Trees now occupy the area of the former pond with an empty office block adjacent.

Archaeological and Historical Background

The Greater London Sites and Monuments Record (GLSMR) indicates no recorded pre-medieval archaeology in the immediate vicinity of the development site. However it is possible that the prominent hilltop site could have attracted settlements or activity in the prehistoric or Roman periods, although no such remains were identified during the series of excavations on the site in the 1950's and 1970's. The Eltham area does show evidence of Roman activity: what was probably the remains of a small Roman farmstead, which produced finds of a coarse pottery, samian a bronze pin as well as the possible remains of hut floor, was uncovered in the 1920's 900m NE beyond Eltham High Street. The area to the north and east of the development site has also produced chance finds of Roman burial urns.

The Medieval Palace

Although the first substantial stone-built remains on the site of the palace belong to the late 13th century palace of Anthony Bek, the Bishop of Durham, settlement on the site from at least the eleventh century onwards can be demonstrated from archaeological and historical sources. Eltham is first mentioned in Domesday Book (1086) as being held by Alwold from Edward the Confessor before 1066. After the Conquest it is recorded that the manor was held by Haimo, the Sheriff of Kent, on behalf of Odo, the Bishop of Bayeux and Earl of Kent. After the exile of Odo in 1088 the estate passed to the Earl of Gloucester and in 1216 passed to the De Clare family.

In 1278 Gilbert De Clare granted the Eltham estate to John de Vesci and in 1295 his heir William conveyed the manor to Bishop Bek. The earliest recorded structure on the site, identified by Wood's excavations between 1975 and 1979 (Woods 1982 215-65) was a timber-built building of uncertain size and function, dated by Woods to the late 11th century and considered by him probably to belong to the early Norman manor held by Haimo. Two further phases of wooden building, dating from the late 12th and early 13th centuries were identified on the site during the 1970's excavations and these remains were sealed by a layer of mid to late 13th century soil suggesting that the area was under cultivation during the second half of the century. This soil was overlain by a layer of West Country blue roof slates, interpreted by Wood (1983 218) as probably coming from a substantial house, possibly the home of John de Vesci, which appeared to lie just to the north of the excavation area in the area later crossed by the northern arm of the moat.

Little now remains of Bek's stone built manorial complex although the excavations in the 1950's revealed the western perimeter wall and two towers at its north-west and south-west corners and Woods 1970's excavations revealed remains of possible

chapel and hall structures. Bek passed the newly built, and probably moated, stone manor house to Edward II in 1305 although he appears to have continued to live there until his death in 1311.

In 1311 Edward's Queen Isabella took up residence staying there frequently during the reigns of Edward II and of their son Edward III. It was used extensively as a royal palace for the next 200 years with much rebuilding and many additions and there are accounts for many royal buildings (now gone) erected in the 14th century. The principal surviving late medieval building on the site, the Great Hall, was begun by Edward IV in 1475. Edward probably also built the stone moat bridge and is known to have built a range of new lodgings at the west side of the Great Court. Henry VII added further buildings (now gone) and Henry VIII rebuilt the chapel, whose foundations now lie beneath the North Lawn. At the end of the 16th century the palace consisted of the Great Court, containing the royal apartments and the Great Hall, court by the moat from the two outer courtyards, Green Court and Outer Court, which were divided by the gatehouse between them.

The Medieval Park

During the medieval occupation of the Palace the lands to the south formed part of the Royal Park, which was probably used primarily for hunting and was almost certainly heavily wooded. The parkland at this time was divided into three separate areas: Horn Park to the west, Middle Park to the south and Great Park to the east. To the north of the palace lay the main road and what would appear to be the medieval focus of settlement. This relict medieval field pattern is probably most clearly marked on Holmes' 1749 map of Eltham which shows both Middle Park and Horn Park still retaining their characteristic round shape, girdled by roads. The 18th century boundary between Middle Park and Great Park, which may reflect the medieval boundary between sections of park runs along the track that leads down to Chapel Farm. The names of both Middle Park and Horn Park are still retained in the names of the postwar housing developments that now occupy their sites. The site of Great Park is now occupied by the Blackheath Royal Golf Course.

The Post-Medieval Palace and Landscape

From the middle of the 16th century onwards the importance of the palace declined and by the end of the century it appears to have become little more than a hunting lodge for the still extensive parks that surrounded it on three sides. The palace fell into heavy disrepair in the early 17th century: James I last stayed in it in 1612 and after this date it appears to have suffered much neglect. The account for 1617-18 mentions a number of rooms either collapsed or about to collapse and by 1627 the house was being propped up in various places. In 1632 parts of it are recorded as having blown down and a parliamentary survey of 1649 declared the house to be 'much out of repair and so not tenantable'. During the Commonwealth the manor and palace were sold to Colonel Nathaniel Rich who appears to have demolished most of the buildings with the exception of Great Hall. During this period the parks were also heavily plundered with much of the timber going to Cromwell's shipyards: the 1649 survey records that Middle Park contains '333 acres of woodland, the trees marked for the navy being 1000, the rest, old and fit only for the fire being 324'. In

April 1656 the diarist John Evelyn wrote: 'Went to see his Majesty's house at Eltham, both Palace and Chapel in miserable ruins, the noble wood and park destroyed by Rich the rebel'.

With the resumption of the monarchy the land returned to the ownership of the king and in 1663 Charles II leased the palace and its land to Sir John Shaw, a supporter of the king during his exile. Shaw did not use the old palace as his residence but heavily rebuilt the old Lodge in the centre of Great Park to its east and laid out large and ornate gardens to the south. The palace continued in great disrepair with the Great Hall, by now the only substantial remaining building, used as a barn and the former parkland in use as farmland.

Cartographic Evidence

The first detailed maps of the area, Rocque's 1746 survey of London and Holmes' 1749 survey of Eltham show the decline of the old palace eloquently. Rocque's map clearly shows the elaborate avenues, gardens and pools of Shaw's new house while to the west of it lies the old palace set among rough meadows and orchards. Holmes' 1749 survey, which gives the names and holdings of the tenants (the land was still nominally in the possession of the King) also demonstrates this and shows that the land around the palace was divided into a number of separate holdings at this time. The land to the east is taken up by two orchards: Kings Orchard occupying the site of the Royal Tiltyard and Wiltons Orchard lying to its south, in part of the area of the proposed car park. To the south of this lie open, probably pastoral, fields.

The second half of the 18th century and the early 19th century saw an increasing interest in the 'romantic ruins' of the site and this period has produced a wealth of prints, sketches and watercolours of the site, including notable ones by Turner and Sanby, as well as a number of contemporary descriptions. This interest did not lead to an immediate improvement in the condition of the hall, which at this time appears to have still been in use as a barn. In 1827 the building is recorded as having become so dilapidated that it was recommended by the Crown that it be demolished and the hammerbeam roof moved for re-use at Windsor Castle, which was being heavily rebuilt at the time. Only a spirited campaign, culminating in a debate in the House of Lords, prevented this action from being undertaken.

The site was however becoming more gentrified: in 1818 Moat Court, a large 'modern house' incorporating part of the old gatehouse was constructed in the inner courtyard just to the south of the moat. The 1844 tithe map shows the increasing development of the site. The area of the palace was now occupied by the new Moat Court, its gardens and outbuildings while to the south lie the buildings of Court Farm. The Great Hall is still marked as a barn. The land to the north and east is now occupied by gardens and pleasure grounds associated with houses that have begun to spring up along Court Road and Court Yard Road. In 1859 Court Farmhouse was improved and extended. It is recorded at this time that the old Court Farmhouse contained portions of the Tudor lodgings, and converted into a private house (Eltham Court). It was at this time that the livestock were finally moved from the Great Hall

and the hall was cleared and converted to a tennis court. By the time of the 1st edition OS 25" (1864) the division of the area within the moat into two separate holdings (Eltham Court and Moat Court) can be clearly seen. This map also shows the continuing development of the area to the east of the moat with the construction of a house and further gardens. By the time of the OS 2nd edition (1897) the area had become further built up with houses within the triangle formed by Court Yard, Court Road and Tilt Yard Approach and almost complete development of the west side of Court Road. This basic pattern is also reflected on the 1916 OS 25", the last detailed map of the palace and its surroundings before the changes undertaken by Stephen Courtauld in the 1930's.

In 1933 Stephen Courtauld obtained the lease of Eltham Palace and its remaining grounds from the Crown. He completed the restoration of the Great Hall, already begun by renovations by the crown in 1822 and 1912, swept away the 19th century tenements to construct new Eltham Hall, extended the moat (then confined to the north side) along the east and part of the west sides and laid out new gardens, tennis courts and greenhouses.

Potential Impacts of Development

Consideration is being given to the setting up of an access road from Court Road, car and coach parking, lavatories and ticket office. The car parks will consist of new hard standing and overflow parking on grass areas (possibly reinforced). Subsoil drainage will be required in the overflow areas.

The proposed development will affect an area to the east and south-east of the moated area. No detailed plans of this area earlier than Rocque's 1741 and Holmes 1749 survey have been located, although Thorpe's 1603 survey, which has been used by most commentators to describe the layout of the buildings within the moated area, suggests that the area to the east of the palace was occupied by a tilt yard and an orchard. The site of the Tilt yard, now occupied by a modern house is still marked by high brick walls, considered by the Greater London Sites and Monuments Record to be 16th century. To the south of this, in part of the area proposed for car parking, lay an orchard, mentioned in surveys of 1603 and 1649 and probably occupying mostly the same area as the 18th century orchard marked by Rocque and Holmes. Holmes marks it as 'Wilton's Orchard'. Little is known of the 17th century form of area to the south of this, which will also be affected by the proposals. The first detailed map to show it is Holmes 1749 survey which marks it as an area of rough meadowland, called 'Pond Fields'. The pond to the south-east of the palace, although clearly marked on Rocque, does not appear on Holmes although the designation of the field to its south as 'Pond Fields' probably indicates that it existed at this time.

By the time of the 1844 Tithe survey both this pond, clearly recognisable by the island in its middle, and the pond to the west of Court Road, in the area to the east of the present Institute of Army Education building are clearly marked. The most clear change from the 1749 layout of the site is the increasing development of the site: the site of the palace is now occupied by at least two separate houses with outbuildings,

yards and gardens. Much of the area immediately to the east of the palace is taken up by gardens and pleasure grounds although to the south of this the land is still meadowland. The northernmost extent of the development area (*Trenches 8-11 & 13*) lie within an area marked as 'Kitchen Garden' and belonging to the house immediately to its east fronting onto Court Road. To the south of this (*Trenches 4-7 & 12*) the land is pasture, called 'Meadow and Archery Ground' in 1844. Trenches 2 & 3 lie within a field called simply 'Meadow' in 1844. By the time of the 1869 Ordnance Survey 25" the northern portion of the development site has become wooded and possibly landscaped gardens and two buildings, possibly a house and outbuildings have been constructed to the south. By the time of the 2nd edition 25" most of the west side of Court Road has been developed although the development site itself is still open fields.

By the 3rd edition OS 25" in 1916 the development of the west side of Court Road is complete. Most of the modern features of the development site would appear to be products of Courtauld's 1930's gardens designs and, as such, can be seen on the 1935 Ordnance Survey 25" (LCC edition) which shows the location of the tennis courts, greenhouses and (now infilled) swimming baths.

Oblique and vertical Air photographs of the site, dating the 1940's to the 1980's, held by the Royal Commission for the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME) were examined. The earliest photographs located dated from 1946 and clearly show what is probably the layout of buildings, gardens and footpaths as laid out for Courtauld in the 1930's (see Figure 10). Later photographs (such as Figure 11, which dates from 1967) shows very much the same layout of the gardens and grounds but demonstrates the continuing build up of the area facing onto Court Road and marks the construction of the Institute of Army Education building (constructed in 1960) and the new access road from Court Road to the greenhouses.

Aims

The aim of the evaluation was to establish the extent, nature, date and quality of any archaeological deposits within the development area. An appraisal of the evidence was to be sufficient to enable informed decisions to be taken regarding the impact of development proposals and options for any mitigation measures required.

Methods

The evaluation took the form of fifteen trenches excavated using a JCB equipped with a toothless bucket. There was some variation from the strategy proposed in the WSI in respect of the locations and dimensions of the trenches, due principally to constrictions imposed by existing services and structures. Modifications were adopted with the agreement of Ken Whittaker of English Heritage and/or Kathy Mackie of WS Atkins Landscape. Details of these modifications are included under individual trench descriptions.

In addition to the excavations a systematic auger survey was attempted in the wooded

area of the former pond in order to establish the potential for archaeological activity and associated environmental remains here. However, this was abandoned when it became clear that an impenetrable deposit of brick rubble infilled most of the former pond. Instead, two small test-pits (Trenches 14 and 15) were excavated by JCB to clarify the nature and depth of these deposits.

Excluding Trenches 14 and 15 in the former pond, a total of 260 m of trench were excavated, representing approximately 2% of the area under investigation.

Excavation and recording were carried out in accordance with the OAU Standard Fieldwork Methodology for Machine Excavated Trenches (Annexe 2 of WSI) and English Heritage, London Region Archaeological Guidance Paper (AGP) 3 (Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork) Nov. 1992.

This report follows the standard content and format of OAU evaluation reports (Annexe 8 of WSI) and AGP 5 (Archaeological Assessment and Evaluation Reports - Guidelines) Nov. 1992.

Presentation of Results

A general summary of the results is followed by more detailed descriptions of individual trenches.

A summary of the context record and associated finds is presented in Table 1. Blocks of context numbers were allotted to each trench, the 100's to Trench 1, 200's to Trench 2 etc.

A tabular summary of the (abandoned) auger survey is contained in Appendix 1.

General Results

Trench 9, positioned close to the wall at the northern edge of the site, revealed a probable prehistoric ditch running east-west. It was also examined in Trench 11 without its form or date being clarified, but was not found in any of the other trenches.

Most of the other trenches showed little or nothing of archaeological interest. Post-medieval ditches, probably enclosures and drainage features, were found in Trenches 2, 3, 6, and 10. A large ditch in Trench 13 may have been a similar feature, or a more recent service trench. A large feature in Trench 8 may have been a tree hole.

The former pond appears to have been infilled with building debris and clay. There was no indication of undisturbed bottom sediments.

The undisturbed geology was a tenacious clay or silt-clay with occasional pebbles and normally, though not everywhere, a yellow-brown colour. Land drains were ubiquitous. Groundwater flooding occurred in Trench 6 and to a lesser extent in

Trench 10.

Trench Descriptions

Trench 1

10 m x 1.7 m. Repositioned to the north of the office block as its original location was clearly within modern terracing. About 450 mm deep. Without features.

Trench 2

50 m x 1.7 m. Averaging about 500 mm deep. Two features were encountered; 203, a possible pit in the trench edge, and 205, an east-west gully. Both were sealed by the subsoil and contained chalk fragments. 203 also contained brick/tile. Both are likely to be post-medieval in date.

Trench 3

50 m x 1.7 m. Averaging about 500 mm deep. An east-west ditch (303) cutting the subsoil, and containing a dark fill and 19th century finds, was examined but not bottomed. Otherwise the trench was extremely clean.

Trench 4

20 m x 2 m. About 500 mm deep. Without archaeological features.

Trench 5

10 m x 2 m. About 500 mm deep. Positioned within the hard tennis court. Superficial deposits appeared largely to be related to the laying out of the courts, although there was some suggestion of an earlier subsoil (505) beneath the disturbed deposits (504 upwards). There were no archaeological features.

Trench 6 (Figure 3)

30 m x 2 m. Positioned within the grass court. A shallow, active land drain was encountered running most of the length of the trench which inconvenienced excavation to a considerable degree. The drain was left *in situ* and excavation both mechanical and manual was carried out around it. Despite this precaution the groundwater maintained a consistent level at about the base of the trench and it was only possible to examine deeper deposits selectively. A further 6 ceramic land drains were found at varying depths (context 605 collectively). Two of these were associated with small brick/brick and stone structures. In addition a probable land drain 606 was filled with pebbles, representing either the backfill of a pipe trench, or the drain itself. This appeared to be associated with a spread of pebbles and crushed brick probably representing a contemporaneous surface.

Pre-dating these features was a layer of yellowish brown silty clay subsoil (609). This contained occasional fragments of brick/tile. It sealed an partially filled an earlier ditch (615) running approximately north-south which was examined in two sections. The lower ditch sediment was a mid grey fine sandy silt. While there was no dating evidence from the lower ditch fills, its final infilling and abandonment seems to have taken place in the post-medieval period, and is considered likely that the ditch had an origin as an early post-medieval drainage/boundary feature.

Trench 7

10 m x 2 m. Located on the hard court. This showed tennis court make up directly over disturbed natural clay without surviving soil, suggesting that the land had been terraced in this area. No archaeological features.

Trench 8 (Figure 4)

7 m x 2 m. Located in the garden border and shorter than originally intended due to a shortage of space for spoil. About 600 mm deep. At the northern end was found the edge of a large, flat-based feature (806). Its middle fill contained abundant building rubble and other finds. It may have been a post-medieval ditch, although information from one of the garden staff indicated that it may rather have been the root-hole of a large tree which was blown over in 1987, demolishing part of the Tilting Yard wall. The hole was subsequently infilled.

Trench 9 (Figure 4)

8 m x 1 m. Located behind the 'school block' and constrained considerably by the present building, the Tilting Yard wall and nearby electricity cables. The modern garden soils were 400-700 mm deep and overlay a uniform deposit of light reddish brown sandy silt (905) containing small fragments of brick/tile. This was probably a post-medieval dump. It was similar to 1103 (Tr 11) which was interpreted as relating to the repair of the Tilting Yard wall.

Under 905 was a clean mottled yellow silt (907) which had an edge with a darker olive brown silt (906) on the southern side. Upon excavation both these sediments were found to be fills of a large east-west ditch (909) whose edges were not recoverable within the confines of the trench. The lowest excavated fill (908), a clean mid grey-brown sandy silt, contained occasional burnt flints and two flint flakes. It is possible that the ditch deepened further on the southern side of the trench. The ditch was traceable into Trench 11 (1113) and is considered likely to be of prehistoric date.

Trench 10

13 m x 1.7 m. Located in the NE corner of the site, but shortened and moved from its intended position due to the presence of drains. Further constraints emerged in the course of machine excavation in the form of large tree stump and roots which were impossible to grub out. Archaeological examination was therefore effectively

limited to the northern 5 m of the trench.

Here a deep ditch (1003) contained a ceramic drain at the bottom. The lower part of the ditch rapidly flooded. The ditch fill (1002) was a dark loam which extended away from the ditch proper to fill a levelled or truncated area on the northern side. On the southern side, the subsoil (1005) was a greenish grey silt which was sample excavated by hand and yielded pottery and clay pipe. This overlay natural clay.

Trench 11 (Figure 5)

2 m x 1.7 m. Excavated as an addition to Tr 9 due to the latter's limited size and excavated up against the northern perimeter brick wall (context 1106) which, at this point was leaning southward. The trench was positioned between two buttresses, the eastern one integral to the wall and the western one (1114) a later addition to arrest the wall's collapse. Excavation established that the wall had also been underpinned with concrete blocks (1107).

Under modern garden soil (1101) was a silt layer containing large quantities of brick/tile fragments (1103), which appeared to be an extension of layer 905 in Trench 9. This layer abutted both the wall and buttresses and seems likely to have been associated with the later buttresses (1114). Alternatively the layer may have post-dated the concrete underpinning, but had none of the characteristics or finds of a 20th century soil, and it is possible that the underpinning was carried out from the other side of the wall.

Layer 1103 sealed two nebulous post-medieval hollows, 1109 and 1110 and another band of brick fragments (1108) running parallel to the wall. This was seen to underlie the concrete underpinning, and may have been related to early repairs to the wall.

Layer 1108, the wall and the buttresses overlay ditch 1113, which ran approximately parallel to the wall, but whose overall form and dimensions were not recoverable within the confines of the trench. This was almost certainly the same as ditch 909 in Trench 9. The upper fill (1111) was a yellow-brown silt and the lower one (1112) a rather darker silt. Both were very clean and without finds.

Trench 12

29m x 1.7 m. Positioned in the area of the potential overflow car park. It averaged about 500 mm deep. Without archaeological features. The natural yellow clay showed regular patches of more mottled grey clay which may have been tree-holes or geological variations.

Trench 13

A T-shaped trench 21 m E-W and 7.5 m N-S x 1.7 m. Positioned in the lawn next to Trench 11 to explore the extent of the probable prehistoric ditch and any associated

features. The presence of an electricity cable between Trenches 11 and 13 prevented the further definition of the prehistoric ditch in that location. Excavations were also constrained by a modern drain crossing the trench.

The only feature encountered was a large ditch (1309) which was excavated in a small stepped-in slot to a depth of about 2 m without the bottom being found. The lower fills, 1306, 1307 and 1308 contained modern brick. The purpose of this ditch was not resolved, but it runs in the direction of a brick inspection chamber to the west and it may well contain a drain. The direction and dimensions of the ditch suggest that it would have truncated the prehistoric ditch (1113 and 909) to some extent, although this could not be demonstrated.

The rest of the trench was without features. The topsoil (1301) and subsoils (1310 & 1311) yielded post-medieval finds to a depth of 700-800 mm. It is unclear why there was so much modern soil build-up in this area.

Trench 14 (Figure 6)

A small trench (3 m x 1.7 m) excavated in the former pond now occupied by trees. The trench was cut from the bottom of a hollow in the southern part of the pond, essentially creating a face to expose the stratigraphy within the pond.

The exposed face showed 1.6 m of compact modern dumping overlying very stiff natural clay (1410). Towards the SW a clean re-worked silt-clay (1409) which overlay the undisturbed geology may have been derived from erosion/slumping at the edge of the pond, or represent a weathered interface with the base of the pond. It was without laminations or any other indication that it represented a water-lain accumulation, and it seems that *in situ* pond sediments were absent from this section.

Trench 15 (Figure 6)

Another small trench (7 m x 1.7 m) excavated in the former pond to expose its eastern edge. It was dug to confirm that the dumped deposits found in Tr. 14 were indeed infilling the pond, rather than being more extensive.

The stratigraphy showed modern topsoil and rubble (1501 & 1502) overlying a buried turf/topsoil and subsoil (1503 & 1504) which were cut by the pond edge. The pond here was infilled with a loose mixture of clays and loams, unlike the infilling in Tr. 14. The lower fill (1508), like 1409, appeared to be reworked natural clay. It was unclear whether the true base of the pond was reached.

The trench showed that the pond edge coincided with the scarp on the ground, which can therefore be taken to indicate the perimeter of the pond on its northern, eastern and southern sides.

Finds

Quantification and provisional analysis of the finds from the site has been carried out by the OAU. The flint assemblage comprised three struck flints (from contexts 804, 908 and 1005) and 32 pieces of burnt flint (from contexts 604, 906, 908). One piece was identified as being of some interest: the flint flake from context 908 was provisionally identified as a Mesolithic microlith. Its damaged nature precluded more detailed analysis.

The pottery assemblage comprised 50 sherds from 18 contexts. These consisted mainly of post-medieval red earthenware types and factory produced late 18th-19th century works. The assemblage did however contain some probable medieval or early post-medieval types. Contexts 401, 804, 1105 and 1311 produced sherds of late medieval pottery and context 1105 also produced some early post-medieval material.

Interpretation and Discussion

The probable prehistoric ditch (Trenches 9 & 11)

This east-west ditch (features 909 and 1113) could not be thoroughly defined due to the restrictions to the excavation imposed by standing structures and current services. Approximately the northern half of the feature appears to have been defined in both trenches. The northern edge runs more or less under the later Tilting Yard wall, and it seems probable that this ditch is responsible for the wall's subsidence. The ditch sections in Trs. 9 and 11 are mutually consistent and suggest an overall width of 2.0-2.5 m and a depth of around 700 mm (below present truncation levels) or perhaps a little more. However, these limited investigations may produce a misleading picture since it is commonly found that ditches hold clean primary silts which can only be examined satisfactorily by a complete cross-section. On present evidence, however, the ditch would appear to be relatively shallow for its breadth.

The ditch fills contained few inclusions or finds. The lowest fill yielded some struck and burnt flints which in the absence of later finds, and given the distinctively clean nature of the sediments, points to a prehistoric origin for the feature. A date in the later Bronze Age would seem plausible since activity in this period produces notoriously little artefactual evidence, and frequently takes the form of extensive ditch digging and boundary demarcation.

The upper fill (907 and 1111) was a clean yellow-brown clayey silt which appeared to be fairly rapidly redeposited 'natural'. It may represent a deliberate infilling of the ditch, and conceivably derived from an associated earthwork bank.

The course of the ditch beyond these two trenches is uncertain. It may have continued in a straight line as a rectilinear boundary. Alternatively, it may have formed one side of an enclosure. If so, its topographic position suggests that the interior would have lain on the northern side. There is no evidence of associated

settlement activity.

Tilting Yard wall (Trench 11)

The brick wall, which forms the northern perimeter of the site, may be of Tudor origin, although the excavation examining the sediments abutting it failed to clarify this. Layer 1103, which abutted both the original wall and the later triangular buttress (3114), may have been deposited as a low bank immediately after the addition of the buttress in order to protect the wall and buttress foundations. It is not clear whether the work associated with the later buttresses would have involved the removal of the original ground surface, and hence any evidence of a wall foundation trench. On the whole it seems that such extensive earth-moving would have been unnecessary. If this is the case, it appears that the wall was built directly upon the fill of the underlying prehistoric ditch without a foundation trench, at least one of any substance - surely a factor in the wall's instability. On the other hand, it is unclear how far the modern concrete underpinning has obscured level of the original wall foundation here, and it remains a possibility that all the deposits abutting the wall can be attributed to these 20th century repairs.

Post-medieval ditches

Two of the ditches found in the evaluation can be interpreted as field boundaries as shown on the 1st edition OS (1:2500) map of 1869 (Figure 9) and the Tithe Map of 1844 (Fig 8). These are ditch 303 and ditch 1003 which represent enclosure boundaries on both maps. Ditch 303 appears to be a major boundary feature also shown on the Ordnance Surveyors' Drawing of 1799-1805. Ditch 1003 appears to form the boundary between the gardens and pasture/parkland on the Tithe map, which would help explain the difference in deposits found on either side of the ditch. On the OS map it formed the boundary of a trackway leading south. Interestingly, it is possible that the large tree found just to the south of the ditch is also depicted on the OS map.

The lack of a cartographic representation of ditch 615 supports the impression gained from the excavation that this was an early post-medieval feature. The sparseness of finds from this ditch suggests that contemporaneous occupation was not particularly close by. Indeed, the absence of pottery or other finds predating the 18th century from superficial or stratified contexts in this evaluation would indicate that the site was rather peripheral to any occupation throughout much of history.

Former Pond (Trenches 14 & 15)

The former pond in the south-east area was shown to have been deliberately filled in with clay and building rubble (rather than 'silted over', as suggested by Camilla Beresford). There was, in fact, no indication from the two trenches of any survival of pond sediments and both trenches were completely dry. It can be noted that although mollusc shells were present in some of the sediments here, these can be

accounted for by redeposition from the natural clay which contained an extremely fossiliferous horizon (context 1507). It was unclear from an inspection of the trenches and general topography how the pond had been filled since it appears to have been sited on a hillslope, rather than a natural hollow (as occupied by the present ponds to the north-west). Presumably there was a small water catchment which is no longer viable or evident.

The evaluation did not help elucidate the pond's origin or refine the dating of its abandonment. Cartographic sources are still the best evidence and indicate that it was dug in the late-18th/early 19th century and filled in shortly before 1960. It is possible that it was effectively abandoned before this date and more than one phase of infilling is not unlikely. The basal rubble fill (1408) may have derived from the former boat house or 'Moat Cottage' referred to in Camilla Beresford's report.

Conclusions

The evaluation did not indicate that the area of the proposed development contained significant archaeological remains. The location of the one prehistoric feature identified, and the topography of the site, suggested that any possible focus of prehistoric activity might lie to the north of the development site. No Anglo-Saxon or medieval features were identified. Across the site generally the absence of pottery or other finds predating the 18th century from superficial or stratified contexts suggests that the site was peripheral to any occupation throughout much of its history. This conclusion is supported by the desk-top research which further indicates that the site lay within the area of the medieval park and was generally marginal during the 18th and 19th centuries.

However the presence of a prehistoric feature and of prehistoric material from other areas on the site, coupled with the generally high archaeological potential of the moated site of Eltham Palace to the west raises the possibility that hitherto undetected archaeological remains may exist within undisturbed areas of the site. It is therefore recommended that the topsoil stripping be monitored by an archaeologist and a Watching Brief and recording action be undertaken during the development of the site.

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Table 1: Context Information

Context	Type	W (L) m	D mm	Finds (no.)	Comment
100	topsoil		300	none kept	
101	subsoil		240	pot cbm	post-med. ploughsoil?
102	natural				
200	topsoil		300	none kept	
201	subsoil		150-200		post-med. ploughsoil?
202	fill of 203	0.8	200	cbm mortar	
203	pit?	0.8	200		post-med.
204	fill of 205	0.45	150	none	
205	gully	0.45	150		post-med.?
206	layer		50-100	cbm	interface with natural
207	natural				
300	topsoil		300	none kept	
301	subsoil		150	cbm	post-med. ploughsoil?
302	fill of 303	2.0	?	pot cbm	
303	ditch	2.0	?		19th cent. (not fully excavated)
304	natural				
400	topsoil		300	none kept	
401	subsoil		150	pot	post-med. ploughsoil?
402	natural				
501	tarmac		40		tennis court surface
502	layer		160		cinder make-up
503	layer		100	none	redeposited natural
504	layer		220	none kept	disturbed natural clay
505	layer		80	none	truncated subsoil?
506	layer		20	none kept	disturbed natural clay
507	natural				
601	topsoil		300	none kept	
602	layer		50	none	tennis court make-up
603	layer		50	none	tennis court make-up
604	layer		200	pot	buried topsoil?
605	land drains				20th cent.
606	layer		40	cbm	post-med. pebble spread
607	fill of 608	0.30 (0.36)	180	none	

Context	Type	W (L) m	D mm	Finds (no.)	Comment
608	hollow	0.30 (0.36)	180		post-med. feature
609	subsoil		200-300	cbm	post-med. ploughsoil?
610	layer		80 max.	none	post-med. spread
611	structure within 613	0.30+ (0.70)	400	none	post-med. drain support
612	fill of 613	?	400	none	
613	cut	0.30+ (0.9)	400		pit for 611
614	fill of 615		250-300		lower fill
615	ditch	1.2-1.5	450 max.		post-med. drainage ditch?
616	fill of 615		160 max.		middle fill
617	natural				
700	layer		300	none	tarmac surface and clinker make-up for tennis court
701	layer		150	none	disturbed natural clay
702	natural				
801	topsoil		220	none kept	garden soil
802	layer		220	none	disturbed topsoil
803	fill of 806		310	none kept	upper fill of redeposited clay
804	fill of 806		200	pot cbm bone flint	rubble infill
805	fill of 806		300	none	primary fill
806	feature	2.5+	650		post-med. ditch or tree hole
807	natural				
808	fill of 809		220	none	
809	pit?	1.0	220		modern feature
900	layer		300 max.	none	garden soil in modern service trench
901	layer		280 max.	none	garden soil in modern service trench
902	layer		400	none	modern garden soil
903	fill of 904	1.05	140	pot cbm	
904	ditch?	1.05	140		post-med. feature
905	layer		100-160	pot cbm	post-med. dump
906	fill of 909	?	260 max.	burnt flint	tertiary fill
907	fill of 909	?	220 max.	none	secondary fill

Context	Type	W (L) m	D mm	Finds (no.)	Comment
908	fill of 909	?	300 max.	flint burnt flint	primary fill
909	ditch	1.0+	600+		prehistoric? ditch
910	natural				
1000	layer		200-250	none kept	car park surface & make-up
1001	layer		200-240	none kept	truncated garden soil
1002	fill of 1003	3.0+	1000	pot clay pipe	
1003	ditch	3.0+	1000		post-med. ditch with land drain
1004	layer		300	cbm	poss. fill of a feature
1005	layer		500	pot bone flint cbm	post-med. soil
1006	natural				disturbed by roots
1101	topsoil		400	none kept	modern garden soil
1102	layer	0.5 (1.0)	100	clay pipe cbm	post-med. rubble
1103	layer	?	500 max.	pot clay pipe	post-med. dump
1104	fill of 1109	0.30 (0.40)	130	clay pipe	
1105	fill of 1110	1.0 (2.0)	160	pot clay pipe cbm nail	
1106	brick wall		c. 3.5 m		17th cent. wall forming boundary of Tilting Yard
1107	concrete blocks		400		underpinning to wall 1106
1108	layer	0.50	50	none kept	brick & mortar fragments
1109	depression	0.30 (0.40)	130		post-med.
1110	depression	1.0 (2.0)	160		post-med.
1111	fill of 1113		300	none	upper fill
1112	fill of 1113		300	none	lower fill
1113	ditch	1.0+	700+		possible prehistoric ditch
1114	wall buttress				support to wall 1106
1115	natural				
1201	turf & topsoil		220-240	none kept	
1202	subsoil		60-120	none	possible ploughsoil
1203	natural				
1204	natural				possibly root-disturbed
1301	turf & topsoil		100-400	none kept	

Context	Type	W (L) m	D mm	Finds (no.)	Comment
1302	fill of 1309		260	none	upper fill
1303	fill of 1309		120	none	
1304	fill of 1309		250	none	
1305	fill of 1309		380	none	
1306	fill of 1309		640	pot cbm bone clay pipe	largely brick rubble
1307	fill of 1309		800	cbm	
1308	fill of 1309		100+	cbm	lowest excavated fill
1309	ditch	2.0+	2000+		post-med. ditch
1310	layer		100	none	subsoil
1311	layer		320	pot bone	post-med. subsoil
1312	natural				
1401	topsoil		200	none	
1402	layer		340	none	post-med. dump
1403	layer		400	none	post-med. dump
1404	layer		600 max.	none	post-med. dump
1405	layer		340	pot	post-med. dump
1406	layer		40	cbm	post-med. dump
1407	layer		60	pot	post-med. dump
1408	layer		260	none kept	post-med. brick rubble dump
1409	layer		380 max.	none	pond fill weathered natural clay?
1410	natural clay				
1501	topsoil		100-250	none	
1502	layer		250	none kept	modern rubble dump
1503	layer		120	none	buried topsoil?
1504	layer		500 max.	none	pond infill
1505	layer		100	none	buried subsoil
1506	natural clay				
1507	natural clay				contains 50% fossil shell

APPENDIX 1

Auger Survey Results

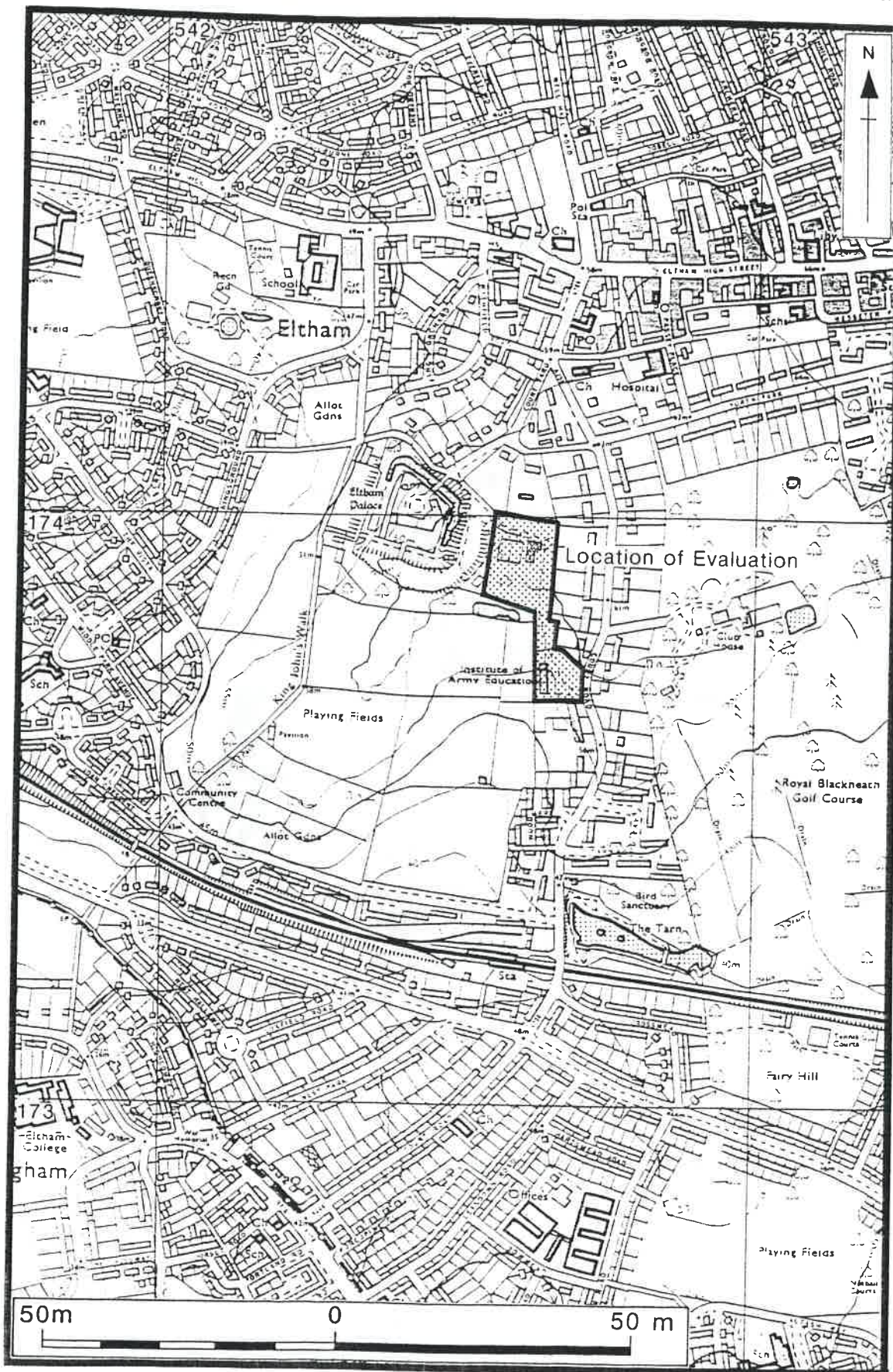
An auger survey was conducted in the wooded area of the former pond in the south-east corner of the site. It was intended to establish the position and form of the pond and to examine any pond deposits which might be present. The survey was not completed due to the presence of brick rubble within the pond fill which could not be penetrated in any of the locations where the auger was positioned. The survey was abandoned with the advice of Ken Whitaker of English Heritage. The nature and depth of the pond infill was later established from Trenches 14 and 15.

An 80 mm hand-auger was used to sample the area at 10 m intervals in transects 10 m apart. The transects were labelled A, B, C etc. with a numerical suffix to denote the distance in metres from the Court Road perimeter fence.

Auger point	Depth m	Soil description and comments
A5	0-0.4	Friable mid grey clay loam. Topsoil.
	0.4-0.6	Light yellow-brown fine sandy silt. Natural.
	0.6-0.7+ ...	V light yellow-brown silty sand. Natural.
A15	0-0.45	Topsoil.
	0.45-0.7+ ...	Bright yellow mottled sandy clay-silt. Natural.
A25	0-0.2	Topsoil.
	0.2-0.6	Soft yellow-brown clay-silt. 40% fine shell, occasional burnt? clay, freq. mottled grey clay. Becoming firmer with depth. Probably natural below c 0.4.
	0.6-0.7+ ...	HOLE STOPPED DUE TO OBSTRUCTION.
A35 (at 37 due to tree)	0-0.05	Topsoil.
	0.05-0.3	Firm mixed yellow-brown & grey clay with freq. fine shell & friable grey-brown clay loam. Occ. charcoal & red burnt? clay.
	0.3-0.5	Firm yellow-brown fine sandy clay-silt. Redeposited natural.
	0.5-0.6+ ...	Friable light brown sandy silt with brick & mortar frags. HOLE STOPPED DUE TO OBSTRUCTION.
A45	0-0.1	Topsoil.
	0.1-0.2	Mod. firm mixed yellow-brown & grey clay.
	0.2-0.4+ ...	Friable light brown sandy silt with pebbles, brick & mortar frags. HOLE STOPPED DUE TO OBSTRUCTION.
A55	0-0.1	Topsoil.
	0.1-0.5	Soft light grey-brown clay with up to 20% fine shell.
	0.5-0.6+ ...	Friable dark brown sandy loam, occ. brick & charcoal. HOLE STOPPED DUE TO OBSTRUCTION.
B5	0-0.3	Topsoil.
	0.3-0.6+ ...	Soft yellow-brown fine sandy silt, occ. pebbles. Becoming firmer with depth. Probably natural from c 0.4.

Auger point	Depth m	Soil description and comments
B15	0-0.1	Topsoil.
	0.1-0.5	Soft yellowish grey-brown clay-silt with brown loamy patches. glass frag. at 0.2.
	0.5-0.7+ ...	Soft becoming firm bright yellow clay-silt with light grey mottles. Natural.
B25	0-0.1	Topsoil.
	0.1-0.4	Soft yellowish brown clay-silt with brown loam patches. mod. freq. fine shells.
	0.4-0.6	Soft mid brown clay loam. 20-30% fine yellow sandy silt patches.
	0.6+ ...	HOLE STOPPED DUE TO BRICK.
B35	0-0.1	Topsoil.
	0.1-0.6	Soft mixed grey & yellow-brown clay-silt. freq. fine shell. occ. loam patches.
	0.6-0.8	Soft becoming firm yellow-grey clay. occ. fine shell. Redeposited natural.
	0.8+ ...	Friable brown silt with brick & mortar frags. HOLE STOPPED DUE TO BRICK.
B45	0-0.1	Topsoil.
	0.1-0.6	Soft yellow-brown & yellow-grey silt-clay. freq. fine shell. occ. dark brown loam. Dumping.
	0.6+ ...	Friable brown silt with brick & mortar frags. HOLE STOPPED AT 0.65 DUE TO OBSTRUCTION.
C5	0-0.15	Topsoil.
	0.15-0.45	Friable light yellow-brown sandy silt.
	0.45-0.5+ ...	Stiff light yellow-brown clay-silt. Natural.
C15	0-0.05	Topsoil.
	0.05-0.5	Soft yellowish brown clay-silt. occ. fine shell & loam patches. HOLE STOPPED DUE TO OBSTRUCTION.
C25	0-0.06	Topsoil.
	0.06-0.7	Soft mid brown clay-silt. freq. fine shell. Becoming friable & sandier.
	0.7+ ...	Soft mid brown clay-silt. patches of loam. brick & mortar. HOLE STOPPED AT 0.8 DUE TO OBSTRUCTION.
C35	0-0.06	Topsoil.
	0.06-0.68	Mixed brown clay-silt with cultural material. HOLE STOPPED AT 0.68 DUE TO OBSTRUCTION.
C45	0-0.15	Topsoil.
	0.15-0.6+ ...	Mixed yellow-brown silt-clay with cultural material. HOLE STOPPED DUE TO BRICK.
D5	0-0.3	Topsoil
	0.3-0.45	Soft yellowish brown sandy clay.
	0.45-0.65+ ...	Firm yellow sandy clay. Natural.
D15	0-0.10	Topsoil.
	0.10-0.35+ ...	Yellow-brown clay with cultural material. HOLE STOPPED DUE TO BRICK.
D25	0-0.15	Topsoil.

Auger point	Depth m	Soil description and comments
	0.15-0.7+...	Mixed yellow-brown clay with cultural material. HOLE STOPPED DUE TO BRICK.



Based on the Ordnance Survey's 1:25000 map of 1992 with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown copyright. Licence No. AL 854166

figure 1

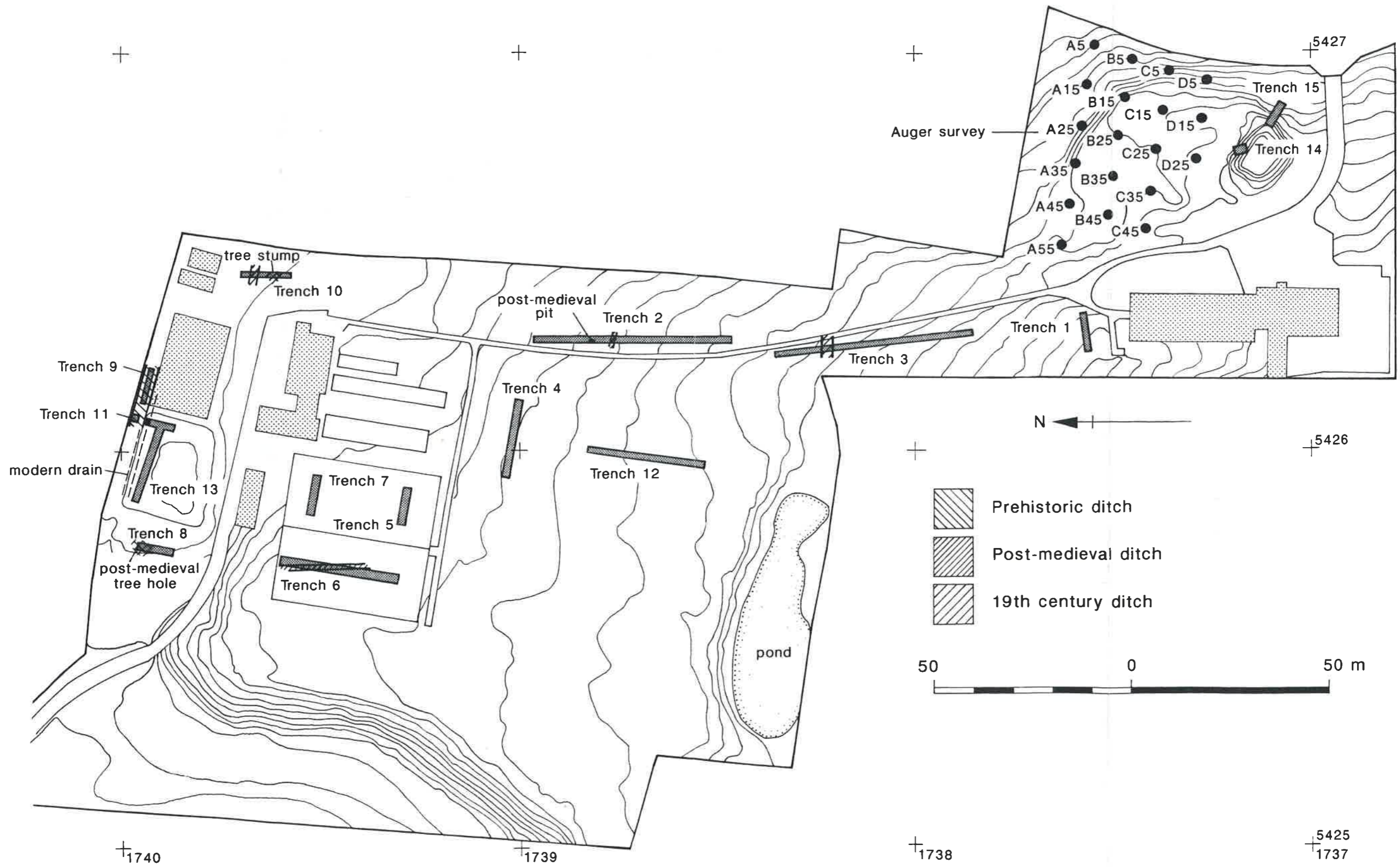
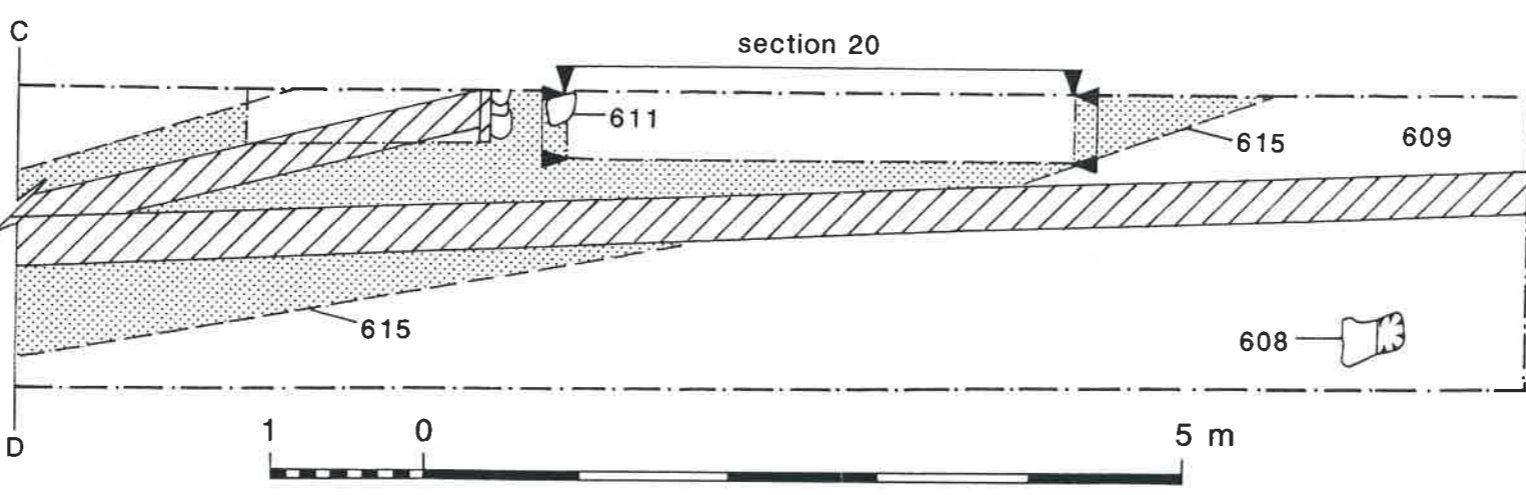
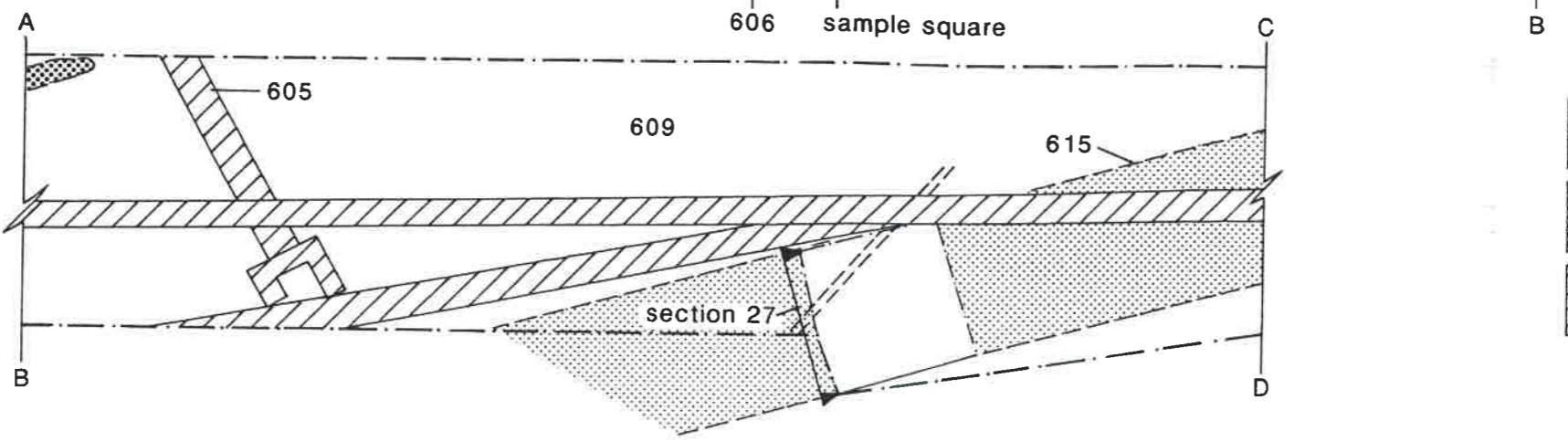
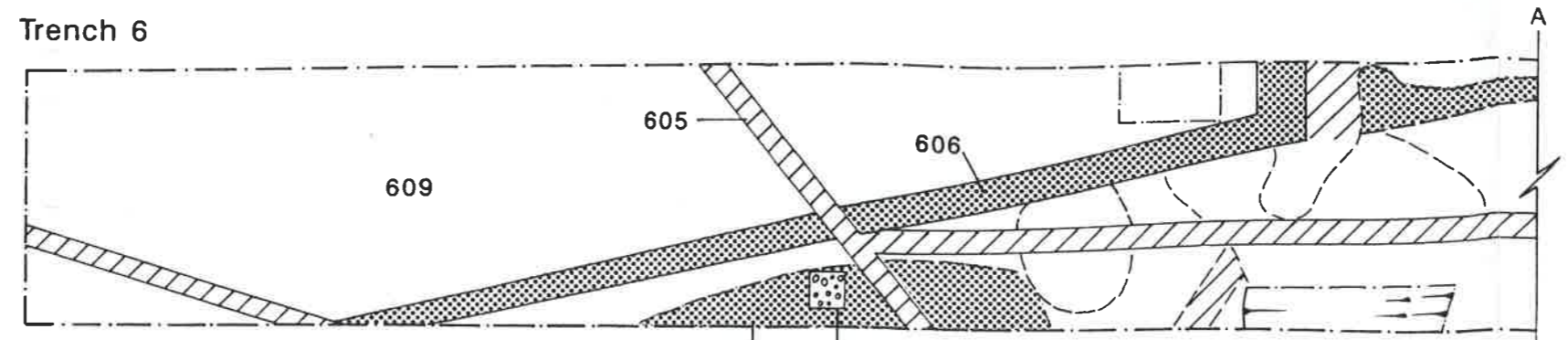





Figure 2: Location of trenches and auger survey

figure 2

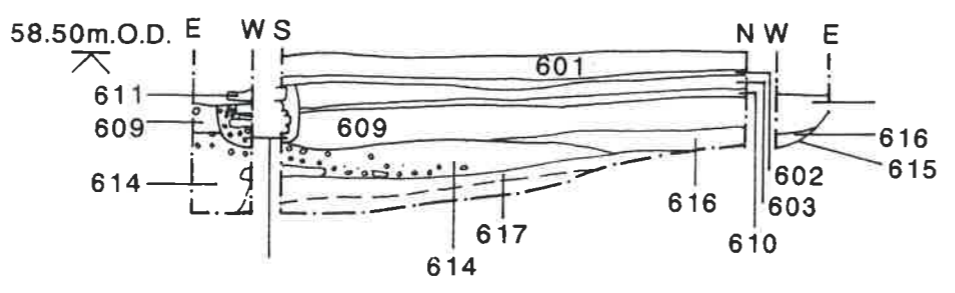
Trench 6



-  Early post-medieval ditch and projection
-  Pebble-filled land drain
-  Modern land drain

scale 1:50

Trench 6 section 20



section 27

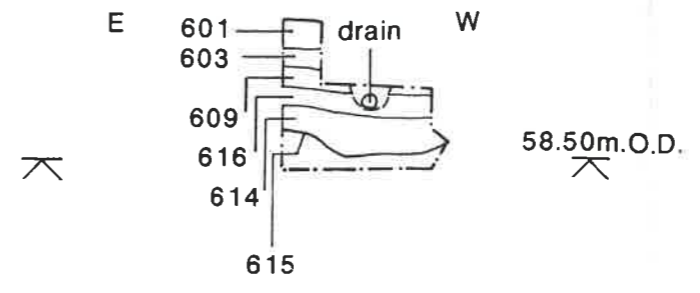


figure 3

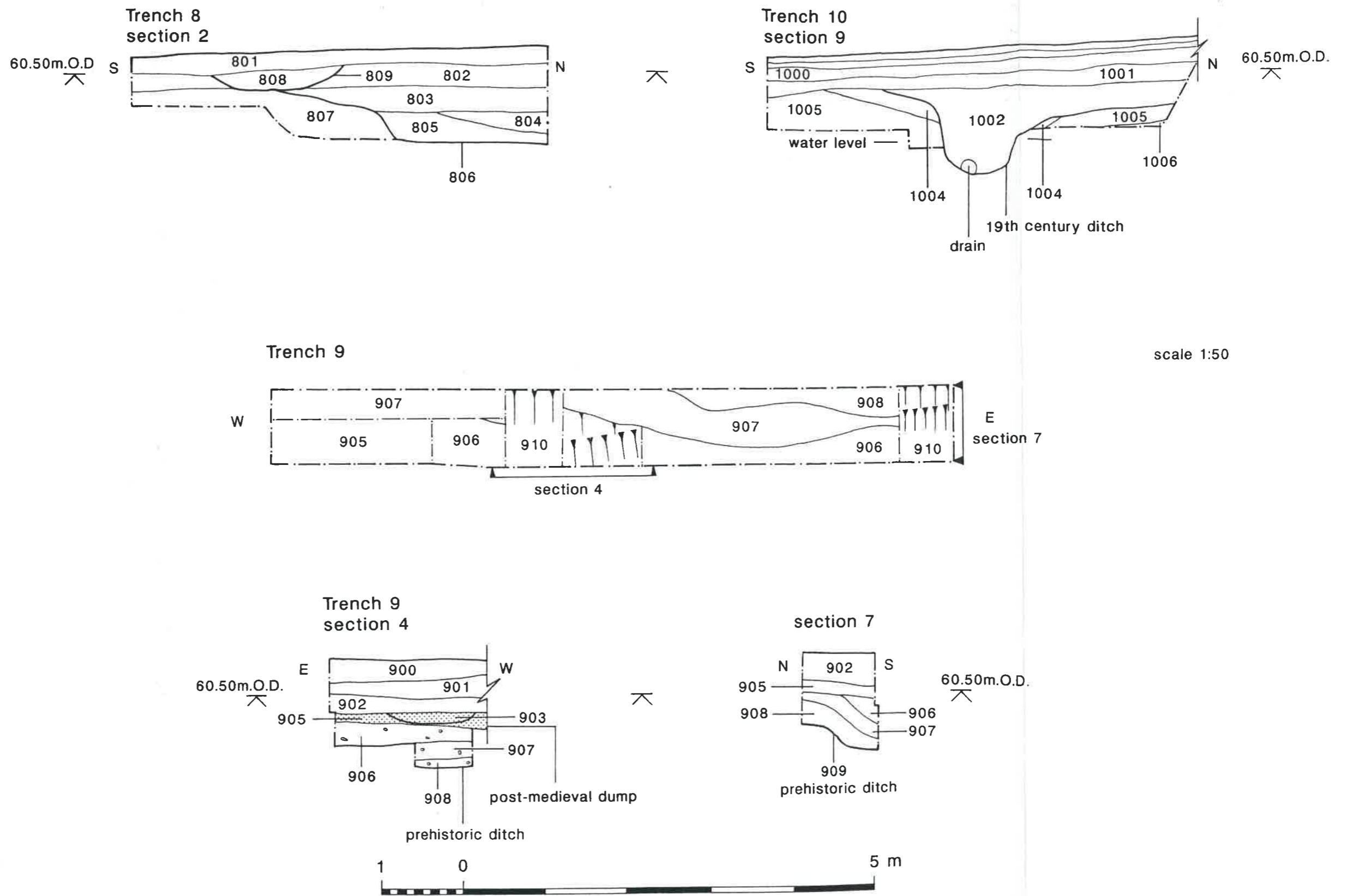
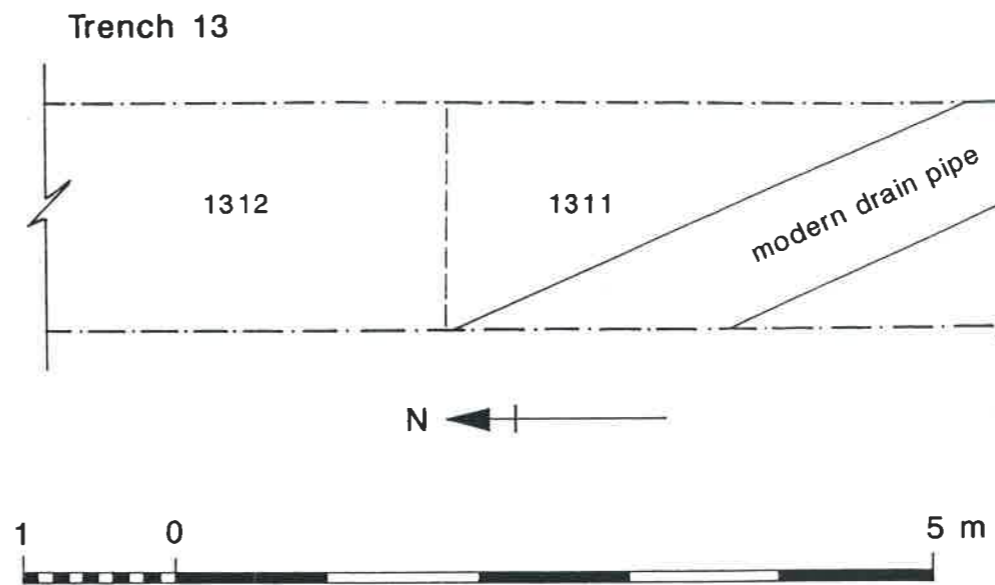
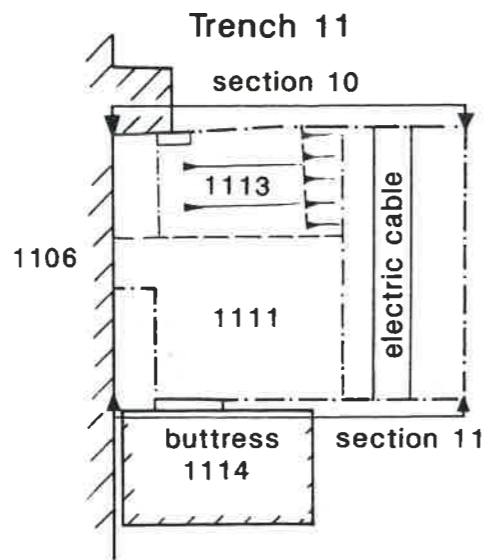
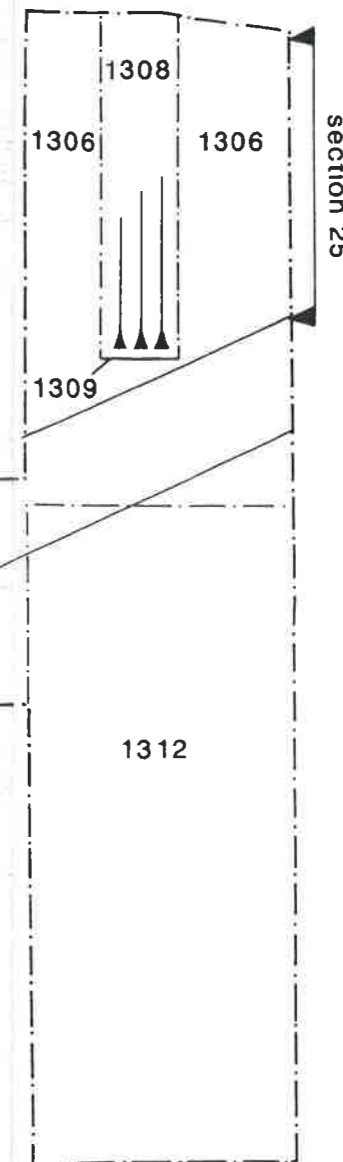
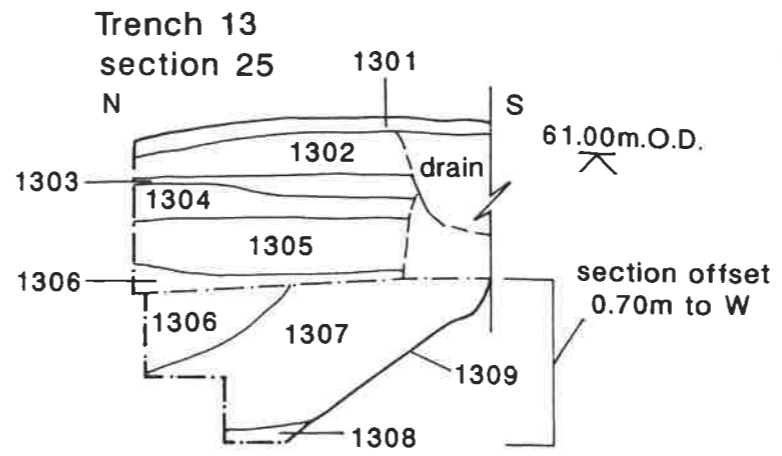
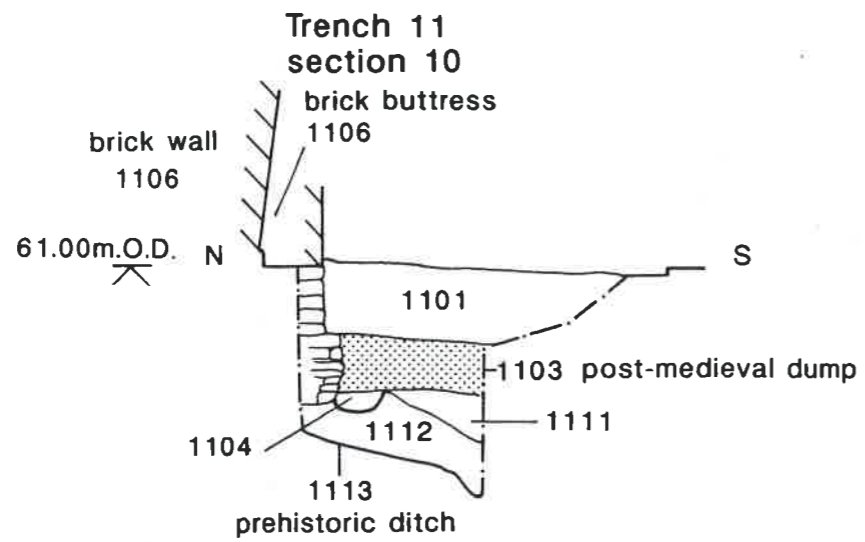


figure 4



scale 1:50

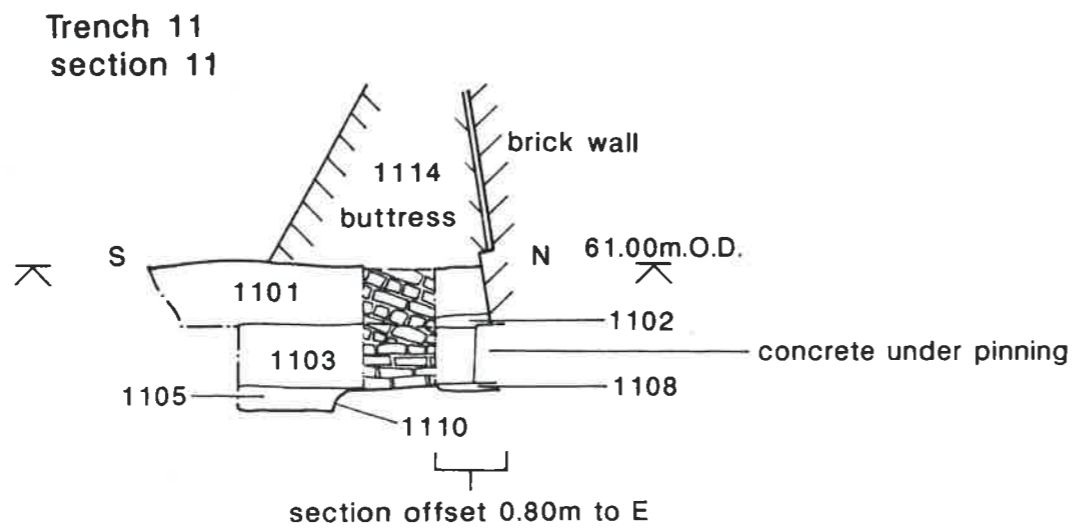
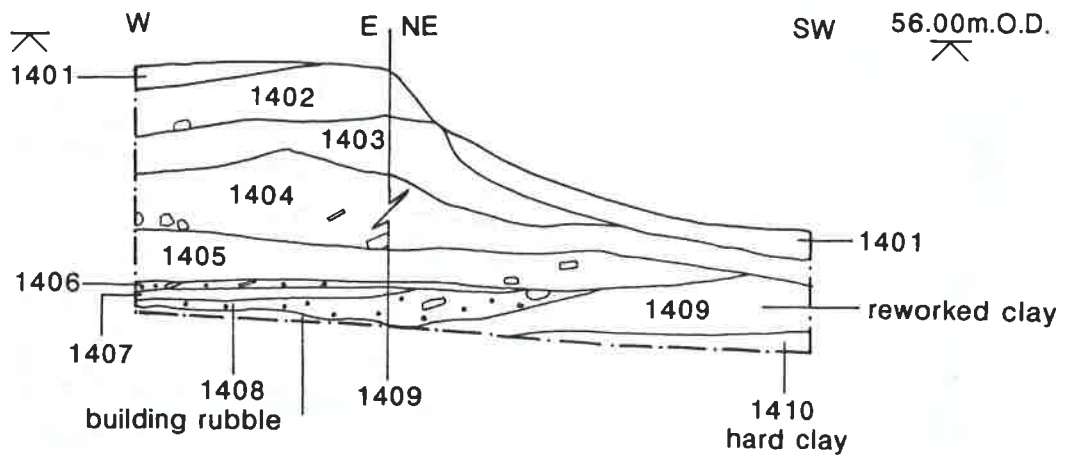


figure 5

Trench 14 section



Trench 15 section

scale 1:50

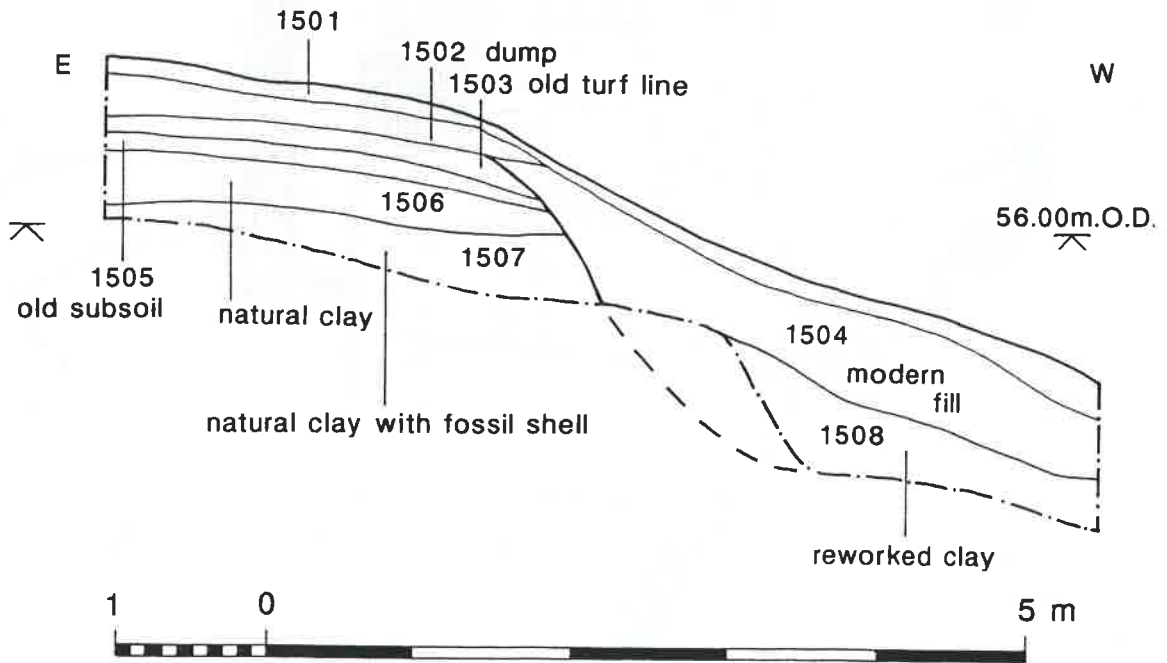
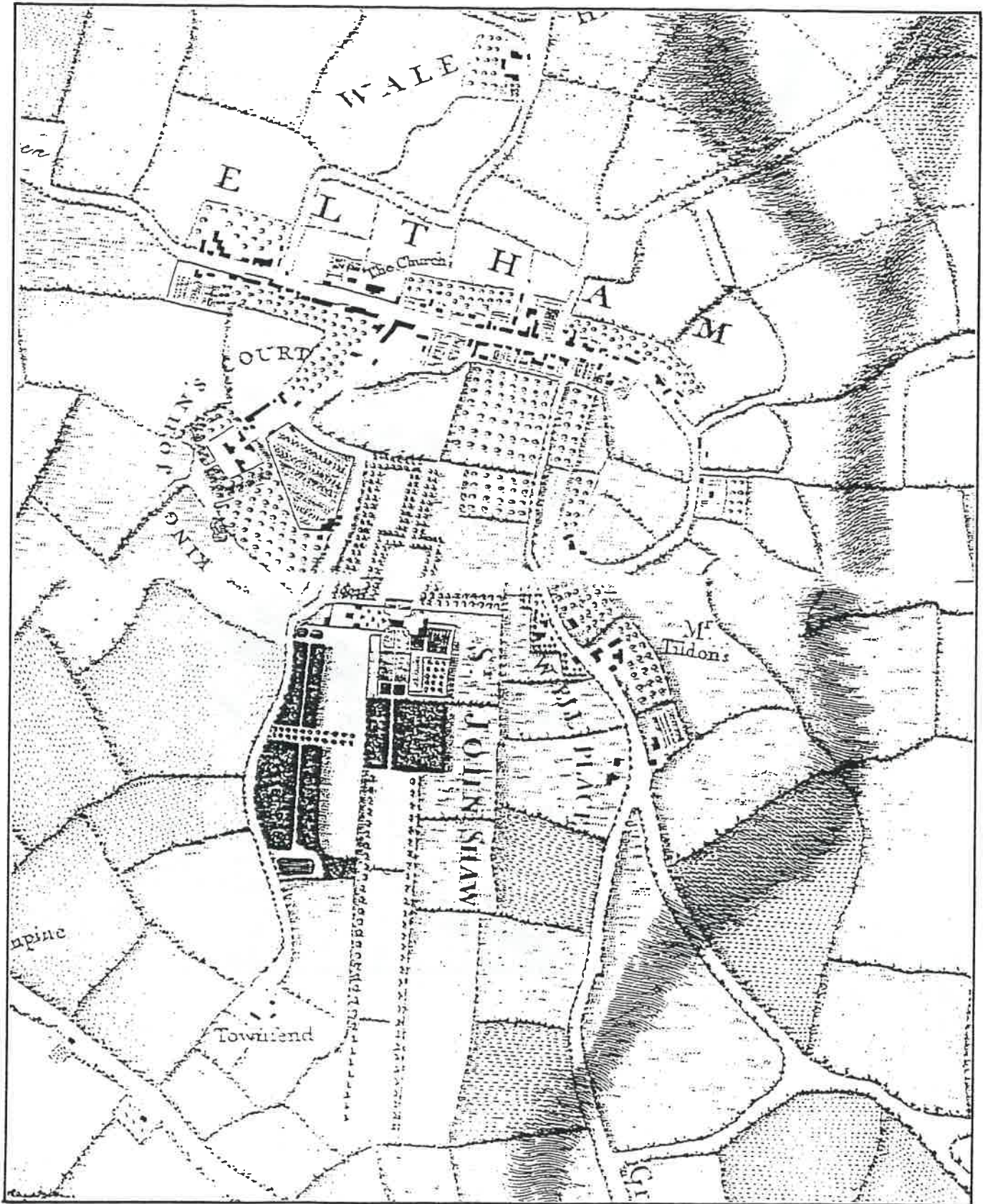


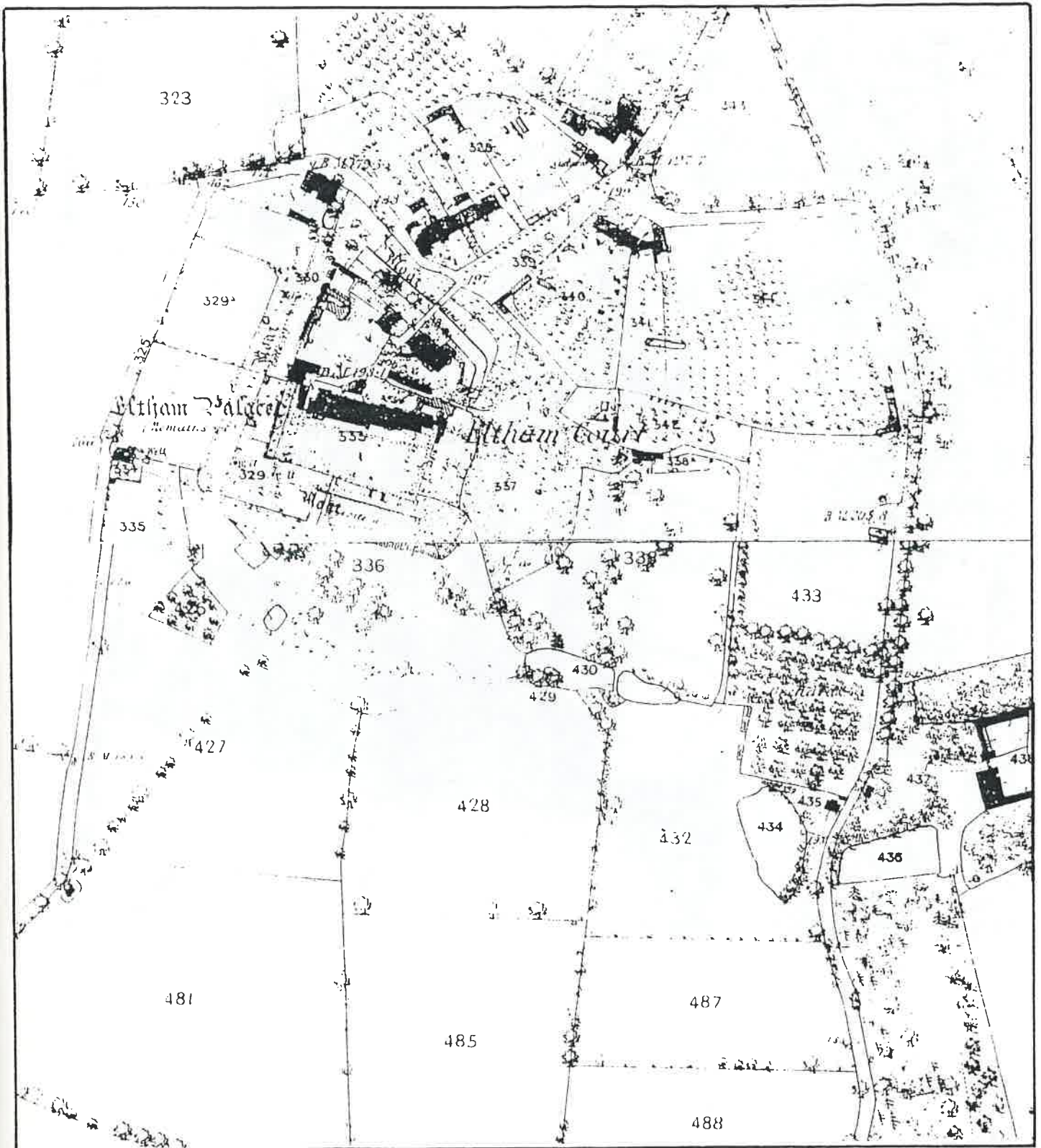
figure 6



Rocques map of London (1746)



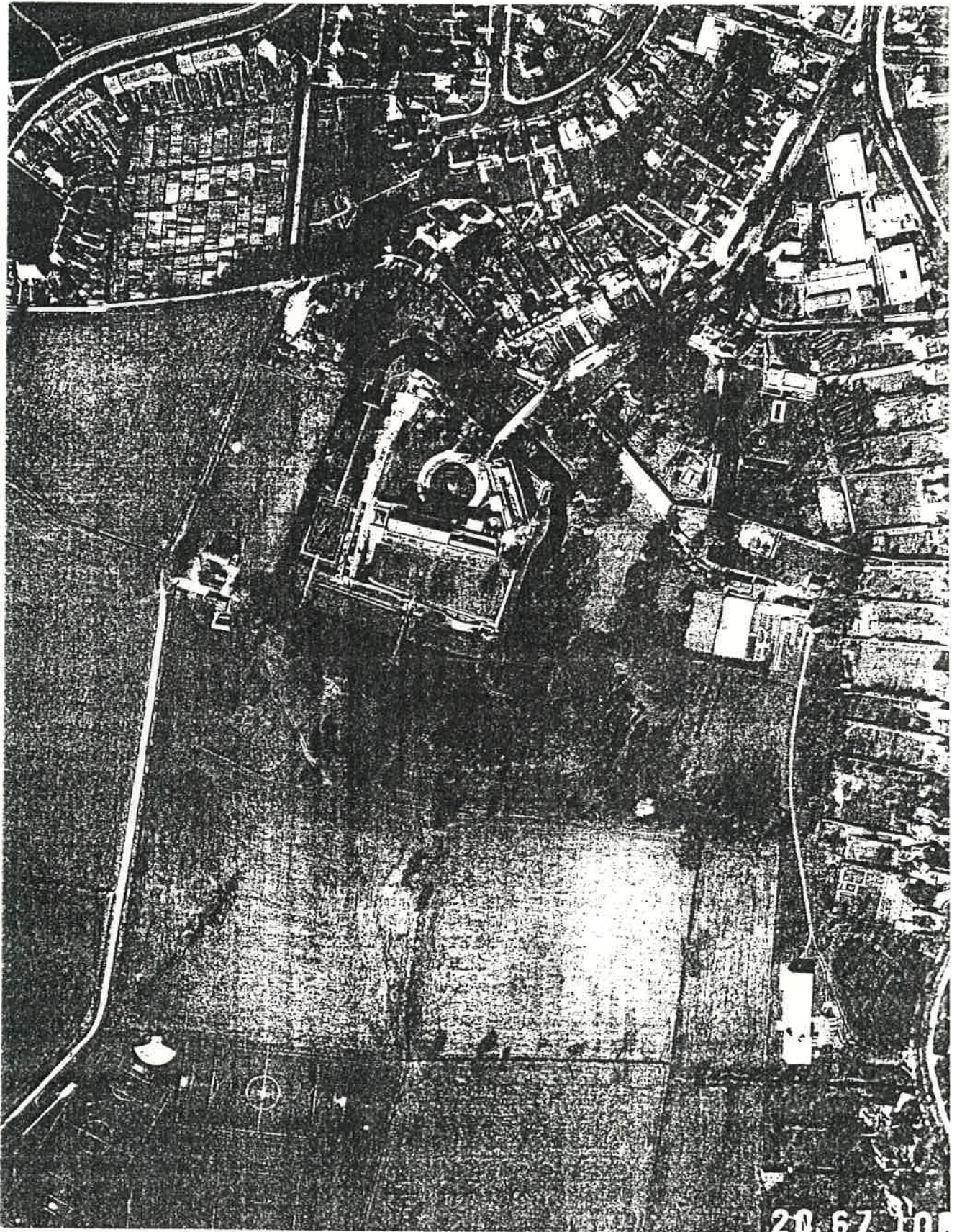
Eltham Tithe map (1844)



1st edition O.S. 25" map (1869)



Extract from 1946 air photograph showing approximate layout of Courtauld Garden



Extract from 1967 air photograph

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