LITTLE ABINGTON (CA)

ABFWW
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Four Wentways (A11/A604),

Little Abington, Cambridgeshire

NGR TL 523 498

Archaeological Evaluation

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

October 1994

THE LITTLE CHEF (A11/A604), FOUR WENTWAYS, LITTLE ABINGTON, CAMBRIDGESHIRE (TL 523498)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Summary

In October 1994 a field evaluation was undertaken by the Oxford Archaeological Unit on behalf of John Ward Associates. The work was carried out in accordance to a brief set by the Archaeology Section, Cambridgeshire County Council on behalf of John Ward Associates as a requirement for planning permission to develop land for the Forte Development at Four Wentways. Thirteen trenches were excavated in a field known to contain cropmarks of part of a barrow cemetery. The evaluation demonstrated that two ring ditch cropmarks were ploughed out Bronze Age barrows. Other cropmarks, the 'banana-shaped' feature and the linear ditch, could not be closely dated although the former is likely to be prehistoric. The environmental assessment indicates that the barrows originally stood in open grassland (pasture). No funerary evidence associated with the barrows was found during the evaluation. Both barrow ditches produced evidence for in situ flint working and for the testing of flint nodules. Small quantities of Iron Age and Roman sherds from the barrow ditches indicate later activity.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The archaeological evaluation was carried out in accordance with a brief set by the Archaeology Section, Cambridgeshire County Council on behalf of John Ward Associates as a requirement for planning permission to develop land for the Forte Development at Four Wentways (NGR TL 523 498). This brief required a programme of work in three separate phases, consisting of the reassessment and replotting of relevant aerial photographs, a field evaluation and the implementation of a mitigation strategy. This report only covers the first two stages since the necessity for and detailed requirements of the third stage are dependant upon the results of the evaluation.

The archaeological evidence from the cropmark site and evaluated ring ditches represents a small ritual-funerary monument complex on the edge of the Chalk. Numerous ring ditches (levelled barrows) are recorded along the south Cambridgeshire Chalk ridge (Taylor 1981, Fox 1923) and few standing barrows (tumulus) survive in the immediate area (see Fig. 1). A Roman road (beneath the A11) runs just to the west of the development area (Fig. 1; Fox 1923, map IV).

1.2 Geology and topography

The site, situated at a height of between 31 and 33 m OD, is on a Chalk ridge 4 km south of the Gog Magog Hills and overlooks the valley of the River Granta (Fig. 1). The immediate underlying solid geology consists of Middle Chalk which superficially has been disturbed by periglacial action and by a series of periglacial features which appear as distinct cropmarks (*cf* Palmer 1994; section 2). The topsoil across the site is a mid-brown silty loam and varies in depth from 0.15-0.30 m. The site has previously been ploughed but was presently overgrown with vegetation. In places a layer of light brown silt loam, interpreted as an earlier ploughsoil, was stratified below the existing topsoil. This layer was not encountered in all of the trenches, especially on the higher western part of the site where the natural chalk was directly overlain by the modern ploughsoil.

1.3 Purpose of the evaluation

The overall purpose of the evaluation was to establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains, to determine the extent, condition, character and quality of the archaeology, to establish the environmental potential and to appraise the likely impact of the proposed development on any archaeology located.

Following the plotting of aerial photographic evidence (below) the specific aim was to establish the character of the known cropmark features.

1.4 Evaluation methodology

The evaluation was undertaken by machine excavation, using a JCB 3CX, of thirteen 1.5 m wide and (mostly) 30 m long trenches, representing a 2% sample of the main development site (Fig. 2). Small additional trenches were excavated to answer specific questions, for example the extent of major features. All trenches were mechanically excavated to the first significant archaeological horizon, in most instances this was the natural chalk substrate. All trenches were planned at a scale of 1:100 and sample sections of the stratigraphy of each trench and sections of features were drawn at a scale of 1:20. Written recording was in accordance with the standard OAU method (Wilkinson 1992) and the methodology set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (OAU 1994). Environmental samples (20-30 litre bulk soil and 1 litre molluscan) were taken from significant dateable contexts to assess the potential for further work. For health and safety reasons no trenches were excavated within *c.*9 m of the overhead power cables and where Trench 8 exceeded 1.2 m in depth below the natural only limited recording was undertaken.

All trenches were backfilled, and where possible compacted by the JCB with the spoil that had been removed.

2 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHIC ASSESSMENT

The aerial photographic assessment of the development area and a 1:2500 plot and report have been produced by Air Photo Services (Palmer 1994). The cropmark evidence reveals both natural and archaeological features (Fig. 2). Extending across the eastern part of the evaluation site is an area of patterned soil probably caused by periglacial features in the subsoil. Towards the western edge of the site two ring ditches, one possible small segmented ring ditch, a 'banana-shaped' feature and a linear ditch were recorded. Outside the evaluation area a further two ring-ditches and a possible Neolithic long barrow were recorded. The cropmarks in the evaluation area form part of a small monument complex, potentially consisting of a Neolithic long barrow and at least five round barrows.

3 THE EVALUATION TRENCHES (Fig. 2)

3.1 Trench descriptions

The following is a brief summary of the main features located within each trench. Descriptive details of each context and the artefacts appear in the Archaeological Context Inventory - Section 5.

Trench 1

10.5 m long - aligned WNW-ESE

Trench 1, sited to the west of Barrow A (Fig. 2), was originally intended to evaluate a small 'tongue' of land between the Little Chef restaurant and the Lorry Park. It was found that the car park of the Little Chef had recently been extended. Consequently the trench as originally proposed had to be repositioned and shortened.

No archaeological features were observed in this trench.

Trench 2

30 m long - aligned NNE-SSW

Trench 2 (Fig. 3) was positioned to investigate the extent of the linear cropmark thought to be a ditch. At the northern end of the trench the ditch (2/4), was found to continue in a north-west direction. It had a shallow U-shaped profile, cut the natural Chalk to a depth of 0.4 m and had a single silty fill. A fragment of an iron nail came from the top of the ditch fill. Overlying the ditch fill and extending across the trench was the modern ploughsoil (2/1). A number of modern plough marks and possible tree-throw pits were also visible in the surface of the chalk.

Trench 3

30 m long - aligned NNE-SSW

Trench 3 (Fig. 4) was sited to locate the northern section of one of the ring ditches (Fig. 2 - Barrow A) and to establish the nature and dimensions of the linear ditch. The linear ditch (3/4) was sectioned at the northern end of the trench and was found to have a similar profile and fill to the other sections excavated across it in Trenches 2 (2/4) and 12 (12/4). At the southern end of the trench the barrow ditch (3/5) was located but not excavated since another section across the ditch had already been excavated by hand in Trench 4. No evidence was found for either a barrow mound, associated funerary deposits or a pre-mound ground surface. A deposit of silt loam with a little gravel and chalk (3/2), interpreted as an old ploughsoil, overlay both the linear and barrow ditches and extended across the trench. Stratified above this was the modern ploughsoil (3/1).

Cleaning of the barrow ditch fill (3/6) produced two flint flakes and a decorated late Iron Age sherd (see section 5 context inventory).

Trench 4

28 m long - aligned WNW-ESE

Trench 4 (Fig. 5) was sited to locate the western section of the barrow ditch were it appeared substantially wider as a cropmark. It was originally intended to be 20 m long but was extended 8 m ESE to investigate the interior of the ring ditch. In section the barrow ditch (4/4) had an asymmetrical U-shaped profile with a sloping berm 8 m wide and 1 m deep (Fig. 5: section reversed). The ditch contained a primary fill of chalk (4/10) and a secondary fill (4/9) of silty loam. Layers 8 and 7 associated with small quantities of Iron Age and Roman pottery respectively may represent ploughsoils. The sloping berm may be a deliberate feature or may be the result of plough disturbance. The berm also coincides with the 'shadow' noted on the June 1976 aerial photograph (Palmer 1994, 2) which was interpreted, prior to the evaluation, as an area of slightly deeper soil. Hypothetically, the slightly higher level chalk east of the berm may mark the original position of the covering mound. The only internal feature was an undated tree-throw hole. No evidence was found for either a barrow mound, associated funerary deposits or a pre-mound ground surface.

The ditch section produced worked flint and pottery (see section 5 Context Inventory)

Trench 5

30 m long - aligned WNW-ESE

Trench 5 was sited between Barrows A and C (Fig. 2). No archaeological features were observed in this trench.

Trench 6

30 m long - aligned E-W

Trench 6 was sited to the east of Barrow A. No archaeological features were observed in this trench.

Trenches 7 and 13

Trench 7 was 27.5 m long and aligned E-W. It could not be excavated to its full proposed length (40 m) at the east end owing to the close proximity of overhead power cables. A 14 m long trench, aligned N-S, was excavated at a right angle to the south of the east end of the main trench.

An additional 9 m long NNE-SSW aligned Trench (13) was excavated to the south of Trench 7 (Fig. 2)

Trench 7 (Fig. 6) was sited to investigate two cropmark features interpreted as a 'banana-shaped' feature and a small segmented ring ditch. However, the segmented ring ditch was located under overhead cables and for reasons of health and safety the trench could not be extended sufficiently far east to confirm or refute it existence. In order to examine the extent and character of the 'banana-shaped' feature Trench 7 was extended 14 m south and another small trench (13) was machine excavated (Fig. 2) to substantiate the existence of the feature as indicated on the aerial photograph plot.

In section the 'banana-shaped' feature (7/4) had a wide U-shaped profile (Fig. 6). The feature was deeper at the western end, where it cut natural chalk. The shallower eastern end appeared to cut naturally disturbed chalk. The deeper western end and bottom of the feature contained a primary fill of silty loam (7/10 & 7/13). The middle (7/9) and upper fill (7/8) consisted of silt loam with chalk fragments. Deposit 7/9 contained significantly more chalk than the other fills and 7/8 is interpreted as an old ploughsoil which fills the top of the feature. Stratified above 7/8 was a further ploughsoil 7/2 and the modern ploughsoil 7/1.

The 'banana-shaped' feature was found to extend south-east beyond Trench 13 but did not continue into the southward extension of Trench 7.

The excavated section across the 'banana-shaped' feature produced two flint flakes (see section 5 Context Inventory)

No other features apart from several possible small tree-throw pits were located.

Trench 8

25 m long - aligned WNW-ESE

Trench 8 was sited to investigate the cropmark of a large ring ditch (Fig. 2 - Barrow C). The trench extended from the approximate barrow centre eastward across the barrow ditch. Within the barrow interior natural chalk, cut by ploughmarks was overlain by ploughsoil. The west end of the trench was expanded slightly to investigate the barrow centre (Fig. 5). An irregular feature was investigated and found to be a tree-throw hole. No evidence was found for either a barrow mound, associated funerary deposits or a pre-mound ground surface. The barrow ditch (8/15) cut the natural chalk to at least a depth of 1.9 m. It was not possible to excavate a full cross-section across the ditch owing to its considerable depth. A small *sondage* in the base of the section may have located the ditch bottom, although this cannot be confirmed.

The ditch contained a primary fill of silt and chalk (8/14 = ?10-13) which was overlain by a layer of silty chalk (8/9). The interface between Layers 9 and 14 could be a recut, as on the western side the former overlaid natural chalk (Fig. 5). Stratified above Layer 9 was a thick deposit of silt with little chalk (8/7). Above this a thick deposit of silty chalk (8/6), accumulated from the outer edge, could represent the collapse of an outer earthwork. The upper fills (8/4-5) consisting of chalk silt were overlain by a sequence of ploughsoils (8/1-3). A shallow gulley (8/17), filled with a chalky silt and sealed beneath the Roman ploughsoil (8/2), was located on the outer lip of the ditch.

The molluscan evidence (specifically samples 1 [8/7] and 4 [8/14]) indicates that the barrow stood in short-turfed grassland possibly during the Bronze Age, and this is supported by the pottery recovered from Layers 5 and 7. This implies that the possible disturbance layer (8/6) also accumulated during this period. The digging of the concentric gulley (8/17) could be contemporary with the deposition of Layer 6 and may indicate further modification to the existing barrow.

A significant quantity of flint was recovered from the single excavated section. The assemblage indicates the working and testing of nodules presumably from the eroding barrow earthwork, although some material could have been redeposited. Two fragments of human femur from Layer 5 could have derived from a disturbed burial. Roman and Iron Age sherds from the ploughsoil Layers 2 and 3 respectively provide a *terminus ante quem* for this activity and for the change of landuse.

Trench 9

30 m long - aligned E-W

Trench 9 was sited to investigate part of the patterned soil area (Fig. 2). No archaeological features were observed in this trench.

Trench 10

26 m long - aligned N-S

The full length could not be excavated because of overhead cables at the north end. The trench was extended 2 m further south than originally proposed.

Trench 10 was sited to investigate part of the patterned soil area (Fig. 2). The trench contained a tree-throw hole and a modern borehole. No archaeological features were observed in this trench.

Trench 11

16.5 m long - aligned E-W

The full length not excavated because of overhead cables at the west end.

The trench was sited in order to investigate part of the patterned soil area. Overlying the natural chalk substrate (11/3), and extending throughout the trench, was a layer of light brown silty loam subsoil (11/2). Above 11/2 was the modern ploughsoil 11/1.

No archaeological features were observed in this trench.

Trench 12

6 m long - aligned NNE-SSW

This was an additional trench positioned to investigate the eastern extent of the linear ditch. Cut into the natural chalk was a continuation of the linear ditch recorded in Trenches 2 (2/4) and 3 (3/4). The ditch had an irregular profile (Fig. 7) and could have been recut. Overlying the ditch and the natural chalk substrate were an old (12/2) and a modern ploughsoil (12/1), respectively.

Trench 13

See Trench 7 description above.

3.2 The Finds

3.2.1 *Human bone* by Angela Boyle

Two conjoining fragments of probable human bone were recovered from ditch fill 8/5 representing the upper fill of the ditch of Barrow C. The bone has been identified as a length of femur shaft measuring approximately 175 mm. It is probably that of an adult. The surface of the bone is extremely degraded and it may have been exposed for a lengthy period.

3.2.2 *Flint* by Philippa Bradley

A small assemblage of 133 pieces of struck flint and three burnt unworked flints was recovered from the evaluation. The raw material is fairly good quality, dark brown to black in colour. The cortex is thin and abraded. The flint is generally very heavily corticated.

The assemblage consists of flakes (including primary trimming flakes), core fragments, tested nodules and chips. A single retouched flake was found. The assemblage seems to represent primary working of flint nodules presumably as they were encountered during ditch-digging. There are three tested nodules and three core fragments. The fragmentary cores all seem to be simple types although not enough survived to classify them. The chips recovered indicate *in situ* knapping. Flakes from several contexts, for example, 8/4, 8/6 and 7/1, were struck from the same raw material. Although from the brief examination carried out no refits could be found, it is possible with further work that some of this material may refit.

Dating the material is somewhat hampered by the lack of diagnostic retouched forms. The retouched flake is a relatively undiagnostic form and may be Neolithic or Bronze Age in date. Both hard- and soft-hammers appear to have been used. Butts tend to be plain or cortical and there is little evidence for core preparation. Two core rejuvenation flakes indicate some attempts at reworking cores by removing unworkable platforms. Technologically this material would not be out of place in a Bronze Age context.

The assemblage is summarised by context below:

Context	*Type*
3/6	1 flake, 1 retouched flake
4/7	8 flakes, 1 irregular waste, 2 chips (1 burnt), 2 pieces of burnt unworked flint
4/9 <5>	4 flakes, 1 irregular waste, 4 chips, 1 core

	rejuvenation flake (face/edge), 1 tested nodule
4/10	6 flakes, 1 irregular waste
7/1	9 flakes, 1 irregular waste
7/4	2 flakes
7/10 <6>	2 chips
8/2	1 flake
8/3	6 flakes, 1 core rejuvenation flake (face/edge)
8/4	17 flakes, 1 burnt unworked flint
8/5	15 flakes, 2 core fragments
8/5 <4>	5 flakes, 4 irregular waste, 1 core fragment, 10 chips (1 burnt)
8/6	12 flakes (1 burnt), 1 irregular waste
8/7	2 flakes
8/7 <1>	1 tested nodule
8/14	4 flakes
8/14 <2>	2 flakes, 1 tested nodule

Flints from contexts marked < > derived from the wet sieving of the numbered soil samples.

3.2.3 ***Prehistoric and Roman pottery*** by Alistair Barclay

Three evaluation trenches (3, 4 & 8) produced a total of sixteen sherds of pottery. The pottery ranges in date from early Bronze Age through to Roman as listed below. With the exception of two decorated Iron Age sherds the assemblage is characterised by plain body sherds. The sherds were concentrated in Trenches 3, 4 & 8 positioned across two of the known ring ditches and were found stratified above the barrow ditches and from the ditch fills.

Quantification	*Number of sherds*
Early Bronze Age	3
Middle-late Bronze Age	4
Middle-late Iron Age	7
Roman	2

Early Bronze Age
A total of three grog tempered sherds, of probable early Bronze Age date, came from the middle (8/7) and upper (8/5) fills of barrow ditch 8/15 (Barrow C).

Middle-late Bronze Age
Four sherds characterised by flint tempered fabrics could be of this date. Three refitting sherds (fresh breaks) and a small number of crumbs recovered from environmental sample <5> came from the middle fill of barrow ditch 4/9 (Barrow A). A single sherd came from the upper fill 8/5 of barrow ditch 8/15 (Barrow C).

Middle-late Iron Age
Four sherds in a sandy fabric from context 4/8 are probably mid-late Iron Age. Two of the three sherds from Contexts 3/6 and 8/3, in sand and fine flint fabrics with deep grooved decoration, could be late Iron Age in date.

Roman
Two Roman sherds came from layers 4/7 and 8/2 overlying barrow ditches 4/4 and 8/15.

Discussion
All of the pottery derives from ploughsoils and upper ditch fills and is likely to be residual or redeposited. The early Bronze Age sherds from the upper ditch fill are likely to be contemporary in date with the construction of the barrow. Their small size and high stratigraphic position within the ditch suggests that they are redeposited. It is possible that at least some of Bronze Age sherds derive from plough damaged funerary vessels, especially as both barrow mounds appear to have been levelled.

3.3.4 *Miscellaneous finds* by Alistair Barclay

Metalwork
A fragment of iron nail came from the extreme upper fill (2/5) of the linear ditch in Trench 2.

Fired clay
Small quantities of fired clay came from contexts 4/8, 7/1 (tile fragment) and 8/3.

3.4 **The evaluation of macroscopic plant and invertebrate remains** by Mark Robinson

The Bronze Age barrow cemetery at Four Wentways, Cambs., is situated on the Middle Chalk, which has well-drained calcareous soils. Ploughing had entirely removed the barrow mounds and any palaeosol which might have been sealed beneath them. It was therefore decided that the main potential of the site for environmental archaeology would be in the form of charred plant remains, mollusc shells and bones from the fills of the barrow ditches. Bulk samples of sediment were taken for charred plant remains and sequences of smaller samples were taken for molluscan analysis from the following contexts:

Context 4/9 Pale brown chalky silt loam. Lower fill of ditch to Barrow A.

Context 7/10 Brown chalky silt loam. Lower fill of possible 'banana-shaped' prehistoric ditch (7/4).

Context 8/5 Brown chalky silt loam. Upper fill of Barrow ditch C, above the chalk layer.

Context 8/7 Pale brown chalky silt loam. Middle fill of Barrow ditch C, sealed beneath a chalk layer perhaps derived from the slighting of an outer bank.

Context 8/14 Pale brown chalky silt loam with some chalk rubble. Bottom fill of Barrow ditch C.

Charred Plant Remains

Samples of 10 litres from Contexts 8/14 and 8/7, and of 20 litres from each of the remaining contexts were floated onto a 0.5mm mesh. The flots were dried and scanned under a binocular microscope for charred remains. Charred seeds were entirely absent and although small fragments of charcoal were present in all the samples, it was extremely sparse. *Quercus* sp. (oak) could be identified from amongst the charcoal from Context 8/7 while Context 8/5 produced some possible *Prunus* sp. (sloe etc.) charcoal.

Molluscs

Samples of 200g from each of the contexts were wet sieved over a 0.5mm mesh. The residues were dried and scanned under a binocular microscope. The abundance of snail shells was recorded by species. The flots for charred plant remains were also examined so that the presence of additional species could be recorded. The results are given in Table 1.

All the samples yielded xerophile faunas which are strongly suggestive of dry open conditions. Shells were very abundant in all the samples except that from Context 8/14, the primary silting of Barrow ditch C. Two of the species from Context 8/14, *Punctum pygmaeum* and *Nesovitrea hammonis*, are particularly favoured by scree conditions and the deposit contained some chalk rubble. The other samples were all from sediments which probably accumulated much more slowly, which probably explains the higher concentrations of shells. All these faunas were dominated by *Pupilla muscorum* and *Vallonia costata*, but *Truncatellina cylindrica* was also present. Such a combination suggests short-turfed grassland, possibly with breaks in the vegetation cover (Evans 1972, 148-9). The similarity of the faunas from above and below the layer of chalk (8/6) in the Barrow ditch C in Trench 8 (Contexts 8/7 and 8/5) would suggest this deposit to have been the result of Bronze Age activity

followed by a return to more stable conditions, rather than much later ploughing slighting of the monument.

Truncatellina cylindrica is now very rare in Britain and has a disjoint distribution. However, there are many records of it from the Wiltshire Chalk, where it is now extinct, dating from the early second millennium BC (Evans 1972, 140) and it still survives in Cambridgeshire not far from the site (Kerney 1976, 65). Very similar molluscan faunas, including *T. cylindrica*, were recovered from the Bronze Age barrows on calcareous substrates in Norfolk and Suffolk, where *T. cylindrica* no longer occurs (Murphy 1984, 16).

Table 1: **Molluscs**

	8/14	8/7	8/5	4/9	7/10
Cochlicopa sp.	+	++	+	++	+
Truncatellina cylindrica	+	+	+	+	+
Vertigo pygmaea	-	+	+	-	+
Pupilla muscorum	+	+++	+++	+++	+++
Vallonia costata	+	+++	+++	+++	+++
V. excentrica	+	++	++	++	++
Punctum pygmaeum	+	-	+	-	-
Arion sp.	+	+	+	+	+
Nesovitrea hammonis	+	-	-	-	-
Cecilioides acicula	+	+	+	+	+
Helicella itala	+	+	+	+	+

\+ present, ++ several, +++ many

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability of methodology

The evaluation strategy was successful in locating, dating and examining the character of the cropmark features. The depth of the ditch of Barrow C in Trench 8 prevented the excavation of a full cross section, although this has not affected the overall understanding of the feature.

4.2 Interpretation

The cropmarks in the evaluation area form part of a small monument complex, potentially consisting of a Neolithic long barrow and at least five round barrows (section 2; Palmer 1994). Excavation of Trenches 3, 4 and 8 revealed that the two ring ditches, which fall within the proposed development site, are ploughed out round barrows (Fig. 2: Barrows A & C). Another almost certain round barrow (Fig. 2: Barrow C) now lies beneath the northern side of the lorry park. The existence of the much smaller segmented circular feature to the east of the 'banana-shaped' feature could not be confirmed as it lay beneath power lines which prevented the safe excavation of trenches. The environmental assessment indicates that the barrows originally stood in short turfed grassland (pasture).

The cropmark of Barrow A has an internal diameter of at least 25 m. In section the barrow ditch had a weathered U-shaped profile approximately 1 m deep. No surviving evidence for a mound or for a pre-mound ground surface (palaeosol) was found, as modern ploughsoil immediately overlay the natural chalk substrate. However, close examination of the section and the profile of the natural chalk across the ring ditch interior may indicate something of the original barrow structure (Fig. 5). Palmer (1994) suggestion that the wider western part of the ring ditch was due to spreading of the ditch fill was supported by the evaluation. On excavation this feature appears as a gentle even slope extending for 4 m down to the inner edge of the ditch and beyond the top of the slope the chalk natural is relatively level. The cause of this slope could have either been the result of subsequent ploughing or more likely it could be the original berm to the barrow (*cf* Ashbee 1960, figs 3 & 19). Tentatively it can be suggested that the barrow mound extended up to the berm slope, covering the area of level chalk natural. The original barrow may have been of the bell barrow type.

The cropmark of Barrow C has an internal diameter of 27 m. As with Barrow A excavation revealed that there is no *in situ* evidence for a barrow mound or a pre-mound ground surface (palaeosol), as modern ploughsoil overlay natural chalk. The barrow ditch was more substantial than the Barrow A ditch, 1.9 m deep and 5 m wide. Fig. 5 illustrates that a thick deposit of chalky material (Layer 6) had accumulated and derived from the outer edge. It can tentatively be suggested from the diameter of the ditch and the possible presence of an outer earthwork that the form of this barrow was originally of disc or bell-disc form (Ashbee 1960, fig. 3).

Both barrow ditches produced Bronze Age pottery and significant quantities of worked flint. The character of the flint assemblage seems to indicate primary working and testing of nodules during the construction of the barrow ditches. The early Bronze Age pottery could also be contemporary with the primary use of the barrows. However, most of this material occurred in the upper ditch fills and therefore, is likely to have been redeposited. Alternatively, both the flint and pottery could also indicate secondary domestic activity, with the working of flint nodules obtained from an extant barrow mound.

Neither barrow produced evidence for *in situ* burials, although two fragments of human femur, recovered from the upper fill of the Barrow C ditch, could derive from a disturbed burial. The evidence for the total destruction of both barrow mounds and the absence of any palaeosols suggests that any shallow pits containing funerary deposits may have been disturbed.

Barrow A seems to have a single phase of construction with no evidence for recutting of the ditch (Fig. 5). Barrow C could be a multiphase monument. The asymmetrical profile of Barrow C ditch could indicate a recut although this is not entirely clear from the excavated section and a shallow gully (8/17), concentric with the barrow ditch, could indicate further modification to the existing barrow.

The 'banana-shaped' feature had a similar sequence of fills to the barrow ditches. This feature was difficult to excavate as the eastern edge consisted of naturally disturbed chalk. Dating evidence is inconclusive although layer 7/10 produced a similar molluscan assemblage to the barrow ditches. On balance this feature is likely to be prehistoric and its proximity and concentric spatial association with the cropmark of a possible smaller segmented ring ditch increases the possibility. Unfortunately during the evaluation it was not possible to test this assumption.

The upper fills of the ditches of both Barrows A and C contained probable ploughsoils (Fig. 5: Layers 4/7 and 8 and 8/2, 3 and 4). These deposits produced small quantities of Iron Age and Roman sherds which provide a *terminus post quem* (earliest date) for this activity. Probable ploughsoil recorded in the upper fill of the banana shaped feature could on appearance be of similar date.

The linear ditch (2/4, 3/4 & 12/4) could not be closely dated, the only find, an iron nail, is from the top of the ditch fill and could be intrusive. However, the difference in the ditch fill from the known prehistoric features may indicate a different (later?) date. Its alignment with the east to west (A604) Abington Road could indicate a Roman or Medieval date.

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Oxford Archaeological Unit
October 1994

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context No.	*Context Type*	*Width (m)*	*Thickness (m)*	*Comments*	*Finds*
Trench 1					
1/1	Layer		0.25-0.3	Modern ploughsoil	
1/2	Fill/ layer		0.05-0.1	Fill of natural features	
1/3	Natural				
Trench 2					
2/1	Layer		0.2-0.3	Modern ploughsoil	
2/2	Layer		0.2	Old ploughsoil	
2/3	Natural				
2/4	Cut	2.6	0.15	Linear ditch same as 3/4 & 12/4	
2/5	Fill			Fill of ditch 2/4	Fe nail
Trench 3					
3/1	Layer		0.22	Modern ploughsoil	
3/2	Layer		0.2	Old ploughsoil	
3/3	Fill		0.18	Fill of 3/4	
3/4	Cut	2.6	0.18	Linear ditch same as 2/4 & 12/4	
3/5	Cut	2.4		Barrow ditch	
3/6	Fill			Unexcavated ditch fill	Two flakes, one retouched. Decorated LIA sherd
3/7	Layer/ deposit				
Trench 4					
4/1	Layer			Modern ploughsoil	
4/2	Layer			Old ploughsoil	
4/3	Layer				
4/4	Cut	3.2	1	Barrow ditch same as 3/5	
4/5	not used				
4/6	Layer			Ploughsoil same as 4/2	

Context No.	*Context Type*	*Width (m)*	*Thickness (m)*	*Comments*	*Finds*
4/7	Fill		0.2	Upper ditch fill-ploughsoil?	8 flakes, 1 irregular waste, 2 chips (1 burnt), 2 unworked & burnt. Roman sherd
4/8	Fill		0.38	Upper ditch fill	Fired clay & four IA sherds
4/9	Fill		0.4	Lower ditch fill. Environmental sample <5>	4 flakes, 1 irregular waste, 4 chips, 1 core rejuvenation flake, 1 tested nodule. Three Bronze Age sherds
4/10	Fill		0.4	Primary ditch fill	6 flakes, 1 irregular waste
Trench 5					
5/1	Layer		0.25-0.3	Modern ploughsoil	
5/2	Layer		0.05-0.1	Old ploughsoil	
5/3	Natural				
Trench 6					
6/1	Layer		0.15-0.2	Modern ploughsoil	
6/2	Layer		0.05	Old ploughsoil	
6/3	Natural				
Trench 7					
7/1	Layer		0.25-0.3	Modern ploughsoil	9 flakes, 1 irregular waste. Ceramic tile
7/2	Layer			Old ploughsoil discontinuous across trench 7/3 Layer Natural	
7/3	Natural				
7/4	Cut	8	1.2	Banana-shaped feature, probably prehistoric	
7/5	Layer			Upper fill of 7/4, same as 7/8	2 flakes
7/6	Cut			Tree/animal disturbance	
7/7	Fill			Fill of 7/6	
7/8	Layer		0.2	Upper fill of 7/4	

Context No.	*Context Type*	*Width (m)*	*Thickness (m)*	*Comments*	*Finds*
7/9	Layer		0.15	Lower fill of 7/4	
7/10	Layer		0.15	Lower fill of 7/4	2 chips
7/11	Layer		0.1-0.15	Natural or redeposited natural forming the primary fill of 7/4	
7/12	Layer		0.1	Fill of animal/root disturbance	
7/13	Layer		0.1	Fill of animal/root disturbance	
Trench 8					
8/1	Layer		0.22	Modern ploughsoil	
8/2	Layer		0.16	Old ploughsoil	1 flake Roman sherd
8/3	Fill		0.16	Old ploughsoil	6 flakes, 1 core rejuvenation flake Five fragments of fired clay and two Iron Age sherds.
8/4	Fill		0.22	Old ploughsoil-truncated	17 flakes, 1 burnt unworked flint
8/5	Fill		0.2	Upper ditch silt containing fragments of human femur. Environmental sample <4>.	20 flakes, 3 core fragments, 4 irregular waste, 10 chips (1 burnt). A late Bronze Age sherd and an early Bronze Age sherd
8/6	Fill		0.3	Collapsed external bank material?	12 flakes (1 burnt), 1 irregular waste
8/7	Fill		0.33	Environmental sample <1>.	2 flakes. Two early Bronze Age sherds
8/8	Fill		0.22	Same as 9?	
8/9	Fill		0.3	Same as 8?	
8/10	Fill		0.2	Part of primary fill	
8/11	Fill		0.1	Part of primary fill	
8/12	Fill		0.08	Part of primary fill	
8/13	Fill		0.1	Part of primary fill	

Context No.	*Context Type*	*Width (m)*	*Thickness (m)*	*Comments*	*Finds*
8/14	Fill		0.4	Undifferentiated primary fill (=8?,10-13)	6 flakes, 1 tested nodule.
8/15	Cut	5.2	2	Barrow ditch	
8/16	Fill		0.14	Fill of gully	
8/17	Cut	0.8	0.12	Gully concentric with barrow ditch	
8/18	Plough marks			Modern ploughmarks cutting natural chalk (19). Filled with 8/1.	
8/19	Natural			Disturbed in places	
Trench 9					
9/1	Layer		0.26	Modern ploughsoil	
9/2	Layer		0.14	Old ploughsoil	
9/3	Natural				
Trench 10					
10/1	Layer		0.1-0.2	Modern ploughsoil	
10/2	Layer		0.1-0.2	Old ploughsoil	
10/3	Fill			Fill of Tree root disturbance	
10/4	Tree throw hole	1.6	0.25	Tree root disturbance	
10/5	Natural				
Trench 11					
11/1	Layer		0.3	Modern ploughsoil	
11/2	Layer		0.1	Old ploughsoil	
11/3	Natural				
Trench 12					
12/1	Layer		0.2	Modern ploughsoil	
12/2	Layer		0.08	Old ploughsoil	
12/3	Fill		0.2	Fill of 12/4	
12/4	Cut	3	0.2	Linear ditch same as 2/4 & 3/4	
12/5	Natural				

Context No.	*Context Type*	*Width (m)*	*Thickness (m)*	*Comments*	*Finds*
Trench 13					
13/1	Layer		0.2	Modern ploughsoil	
13/2	Layer		0.5	Old ploughsoil	
13/3	Cut			Banana-shaped feature	
13/4	Fill			Unexcavated fill of 13/4	
13/5	Natural				

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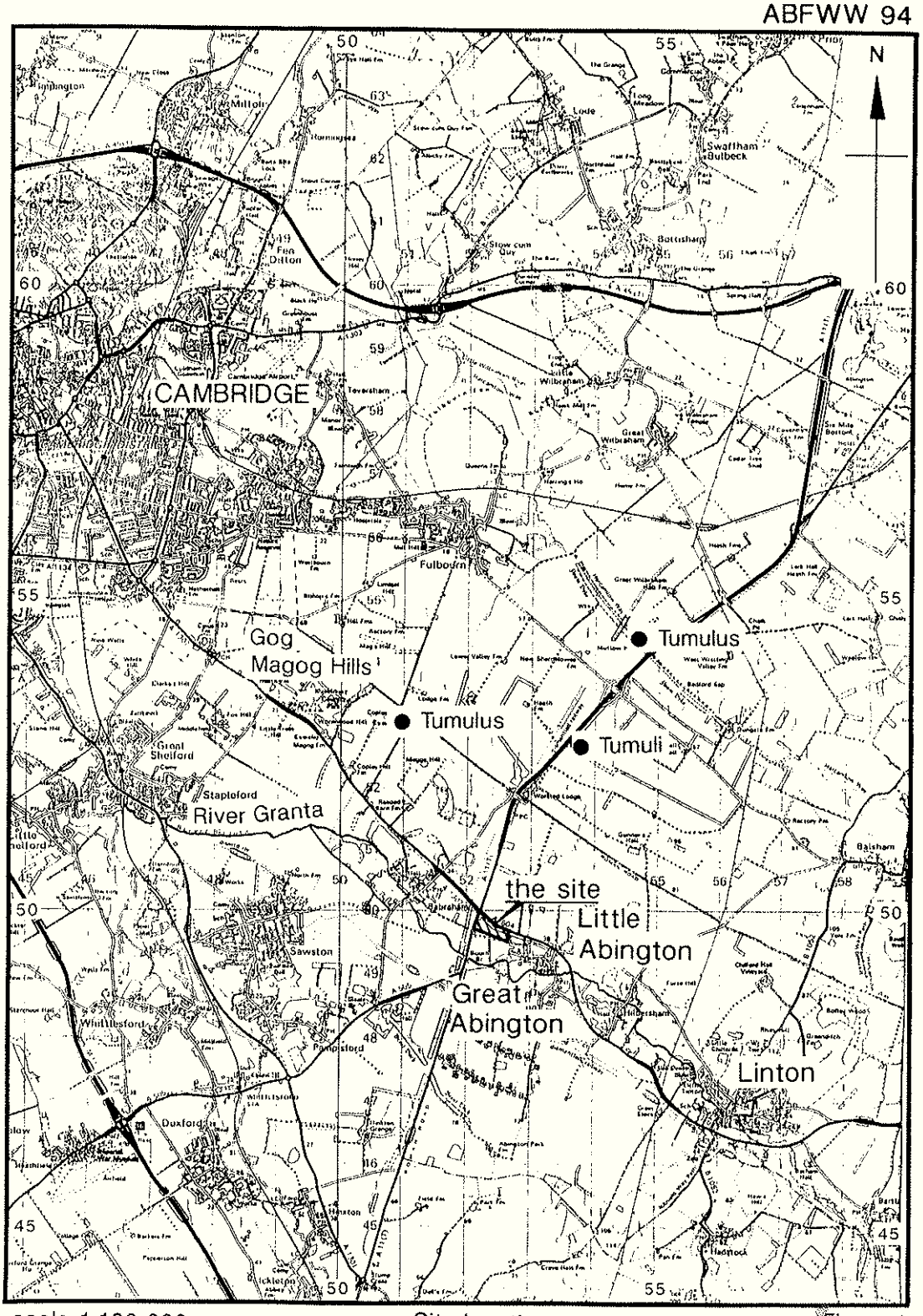

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Site location

Figure 1

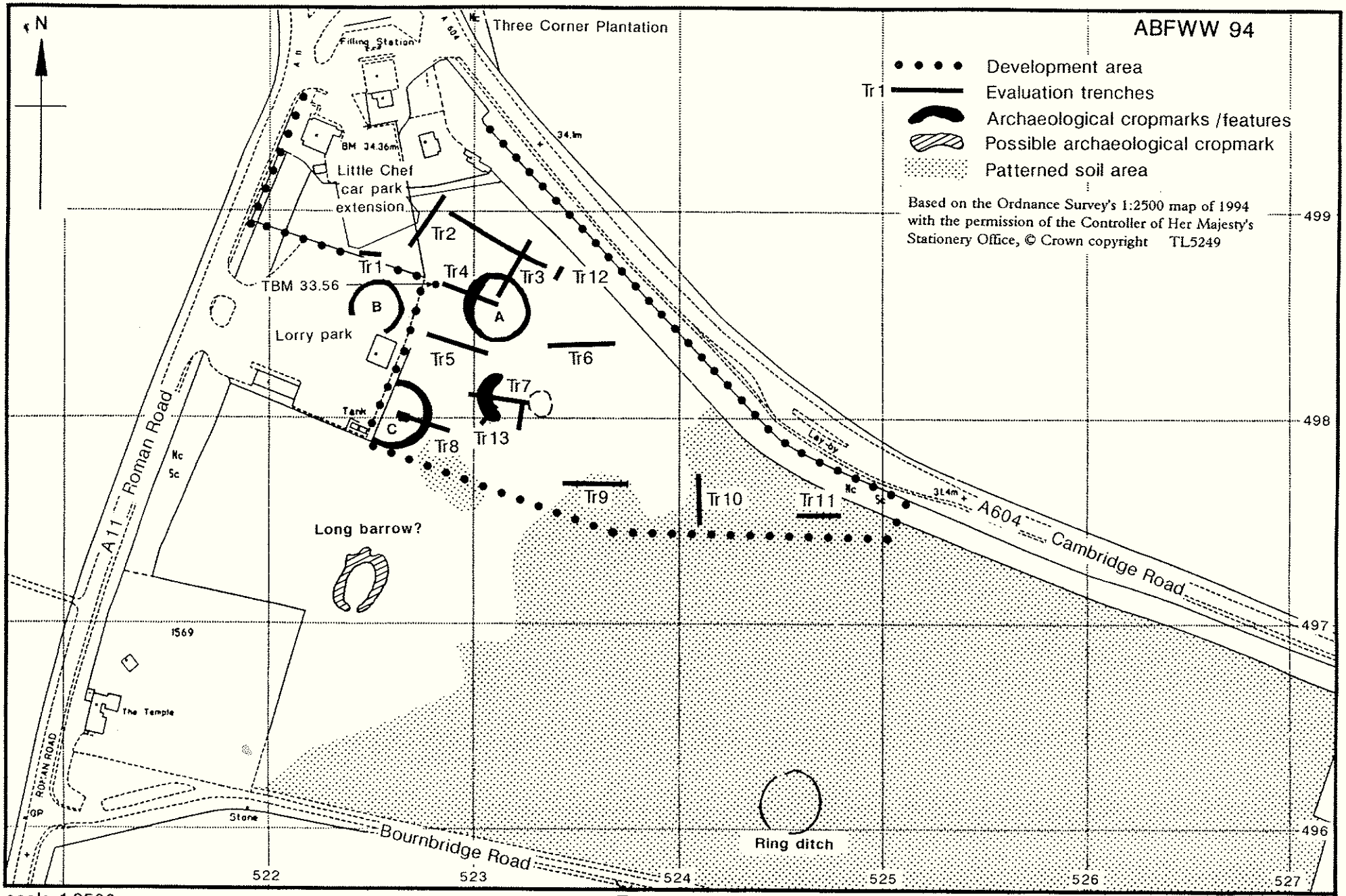
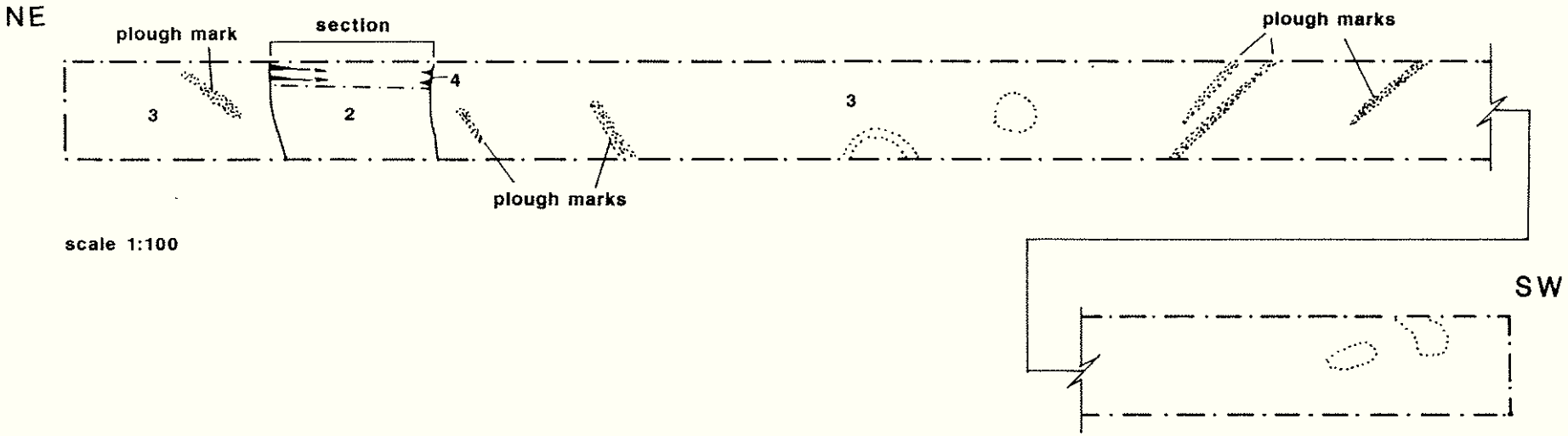

N
ABFWW 94
Development area
Tr1
Evaluation trenches
Archaeological cropmarks /features
Possible archaeological cropmark
Patterned soil area
Based on the Ordnance Survey's 1:2500 map of 1994 with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown copyright TL5249
Three Corner Plantation
Filling Station
BM 34.36m
Little Chef car park extension
TBM 33.56
Lorry park
Tank
Tr1
Tr2
Tr3
Tr4
Tr5
Tr6
Tr7
Tr8
Tr9
Tr10
Tr11
Tr12
Tr13
A
B
C
A11 — Roman Road
A604 — Cambridge Road
Bournbridge Road
Long barrow?
Ring ditch
The Temple
ROMAN ROAD
GP
Stone
1569
34.4m
34.1m
499
498
497
496
522
523
524
525
526
527
scale 1:2500
Trench location

Figure 2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plough mark
section
plough marks
plough marks
3
2
4
3
SW
scale 1:100

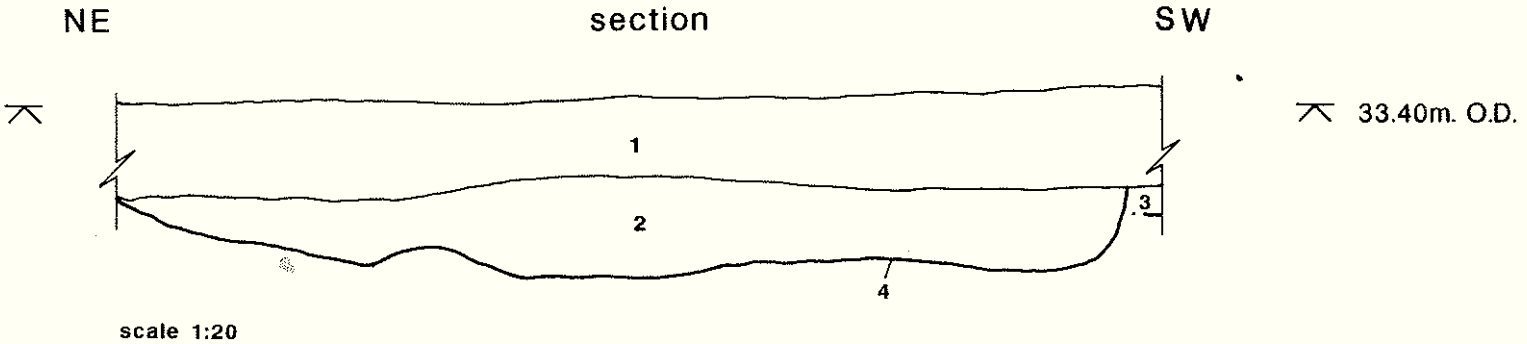
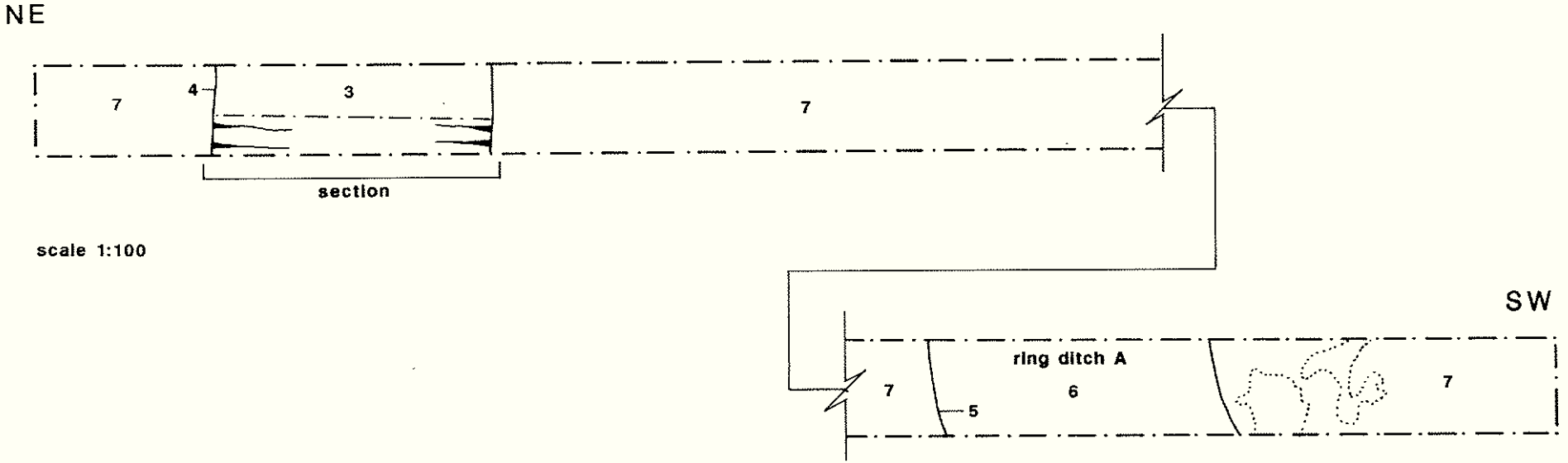

NE
section
SW
33.40m. O.D.
1
2
3
4
scale 1:20

Figure 3

trench 3



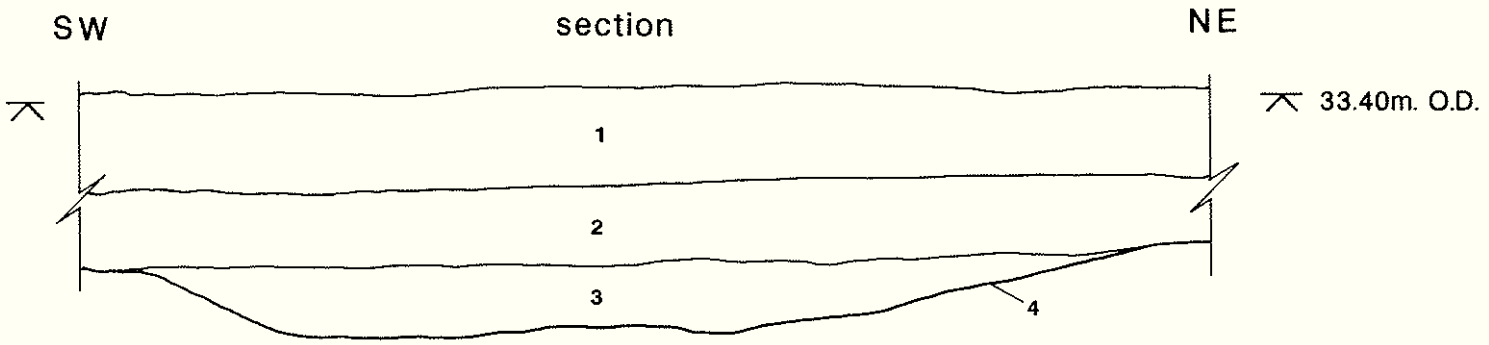
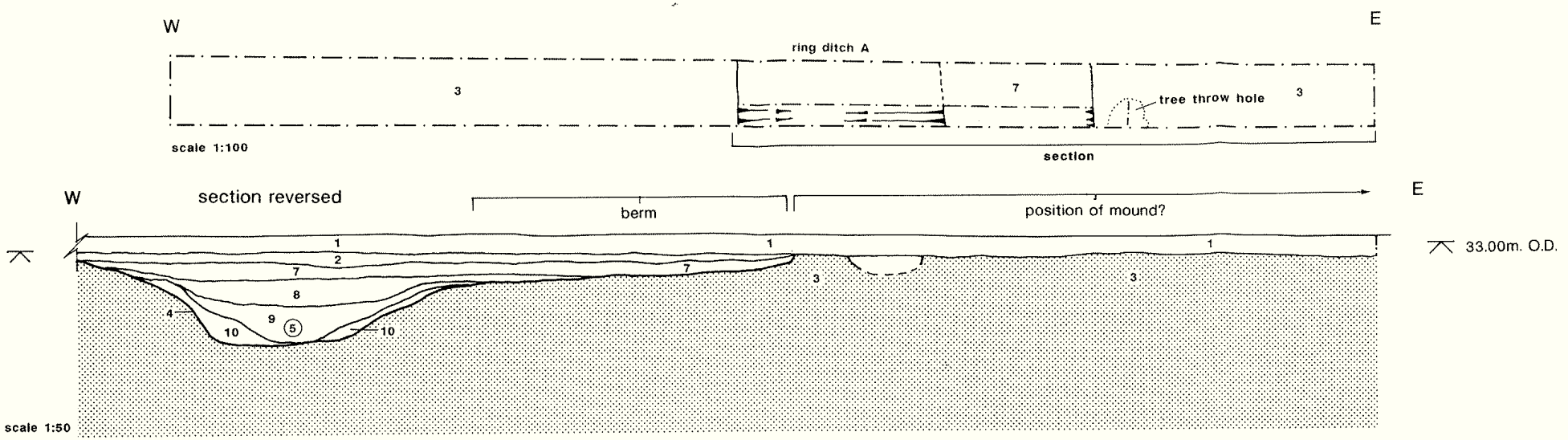
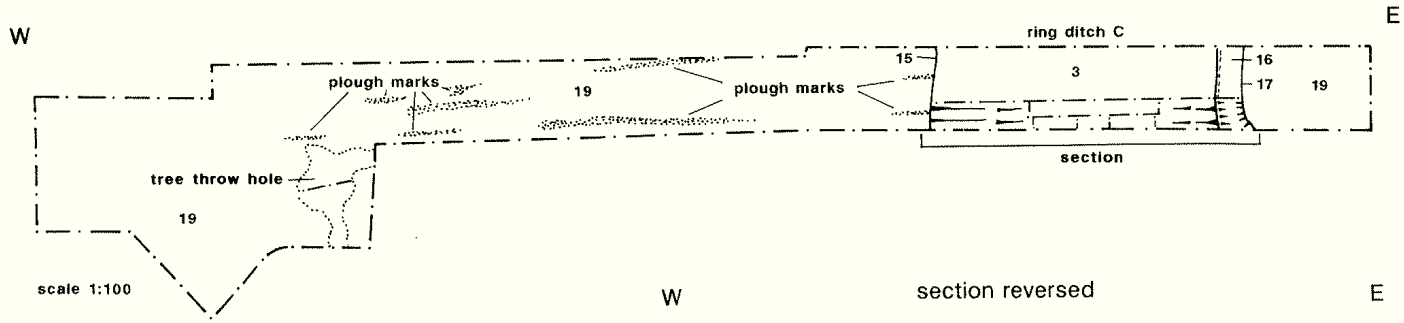


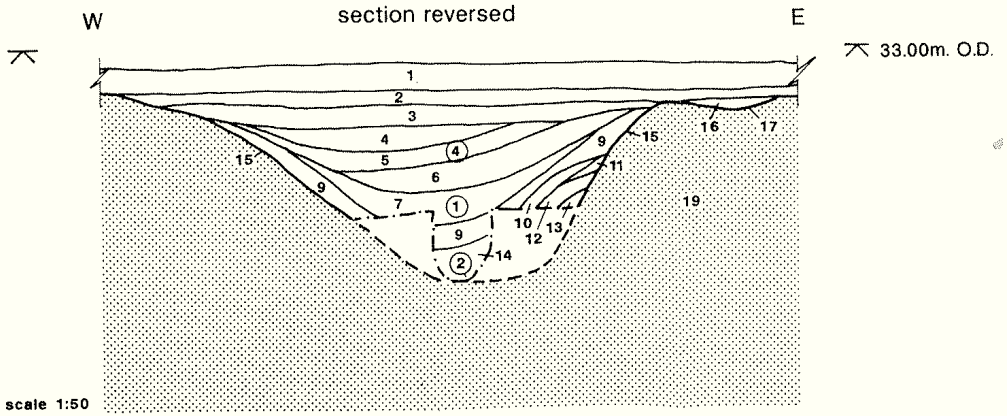
Figure 4

trench 4



trench 8





② position of environmental sample and sample number

Figure 5

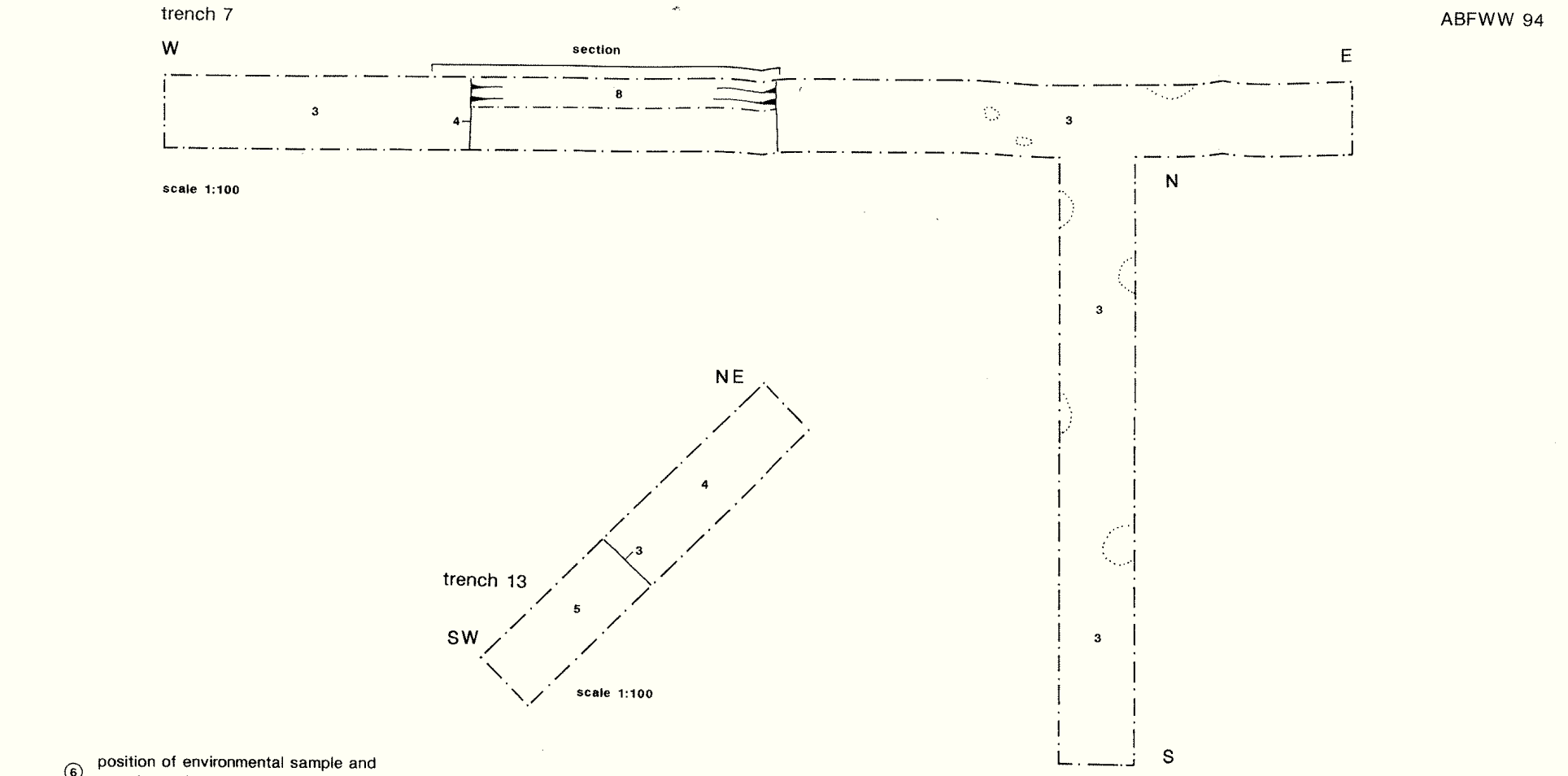
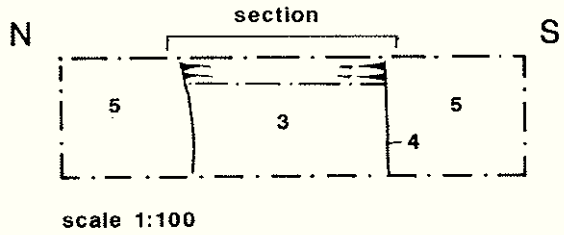

trench 7
W
section
E
3
8
4
3
scale 1:100
N
3
3
NE
4
3
trench 13
5
SW
scale 1:100
S
⑥ position of environmental sample and sample number
W
section
E
33.00m. O.D.
1
2
9
8
4
9
⑥ 10
13
scale 1:50

Figure 6

trench 12



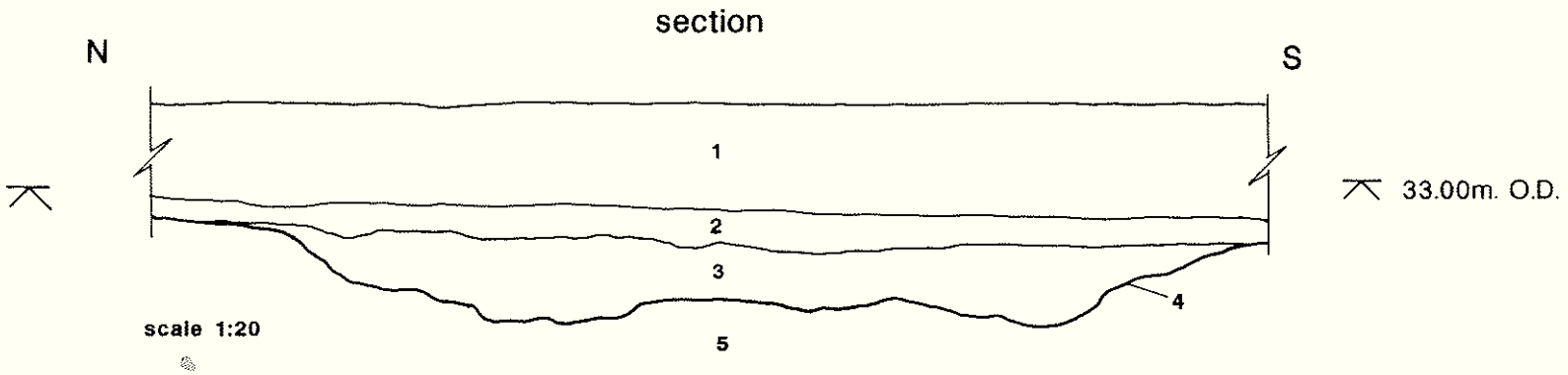


Figure 7

ABFWW 94

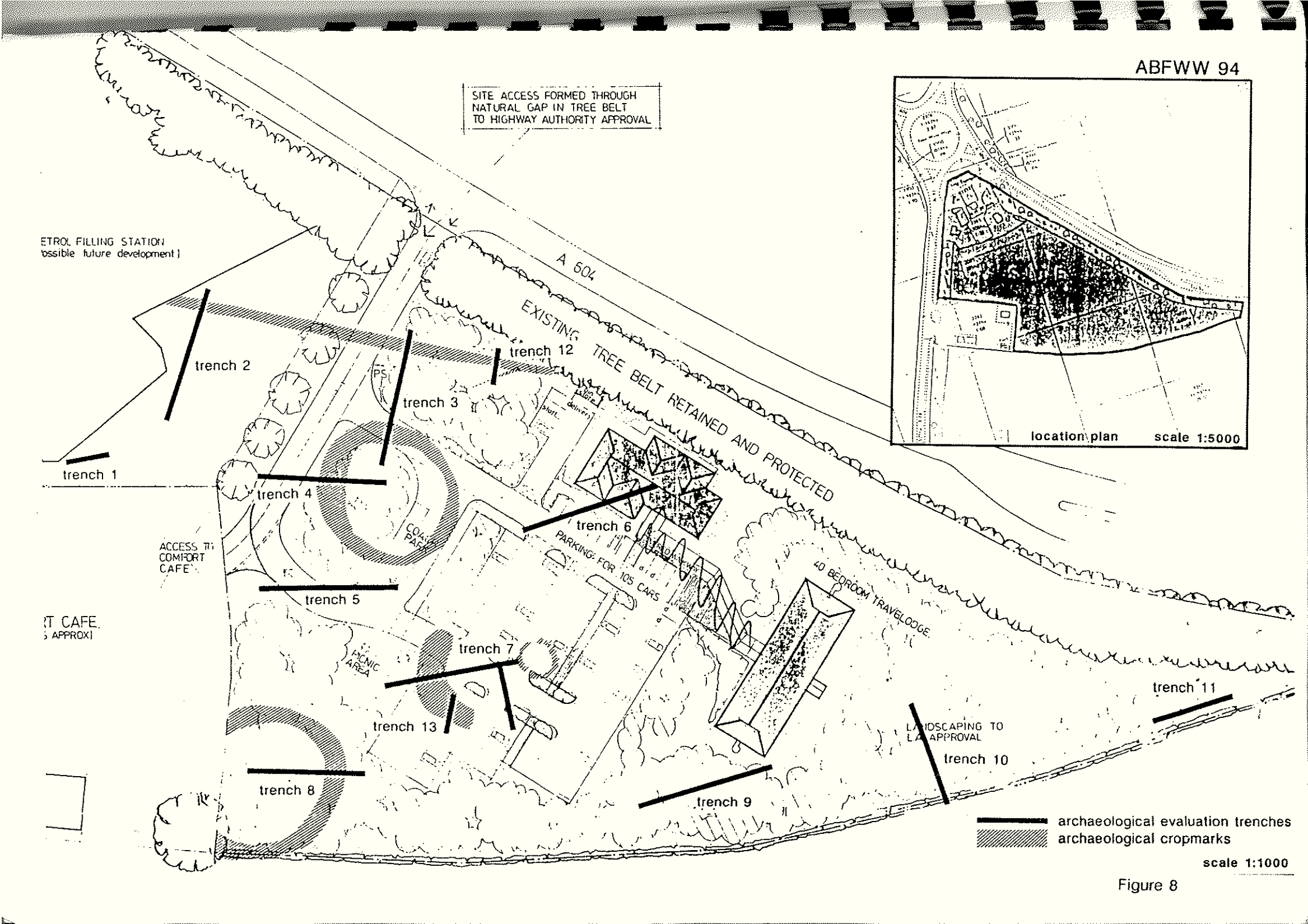


Figure 8

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