

SHELLINGFORD QUARRY EXTENSION
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION PHASE II



OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

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Introduction

On the 28th and 29th of October 1992 the last stage of an assessment, started in 1991, was carried out by the OAU on behalf of Multi-Agg Ltd in respect of an application for planning permission for a extension to Shellingford Quarry. Not all of the proposed quarry extension was available for survey in October and November 1991. This report is concerned with completion of the fieldwalking (field C)¹ and excavation of trenches in the areas of struck flint clusters identified in the previous fieldwalking. The site was 800 m E of Shellingford Church at grid reference SU 328 934 (Fig.1).

Assessment strategy

The assessment strategy was based on an initial programme of fieldwalking followed by trenching.

The fieldwalking was based on transects 25 m apart aligned on the Ordnance Survey National Grid and with collection units 25 m long. All relevant artefacts were collected. The finds were washed and catalogued to provide information on their basic type, date and distribution.

Twelve fifteen metre long 1.75 m wide trenches were dug by a 21 ton 360° mechanical excavator. The trenches were set out on the Ordnance Survey National Grid.

Trenches 1 and 2 were dug at the S end of the application area in field C near the enclosure seen on aerial photographs. Trench 1 was also over a concentration of flint and trench 2 was just S of a slight concentration. Trenches 3-7 were dug in field D over areas of concentrations of struck flints and burnt flints located by fieldwalking in late 1991. Three trenches (8-10) were dug in the N of field B and two more (11 and 12) were dug at the SE corner of field A. (see Fig. 2).

Any archaeological features encountered were to be sampled by hand to determine their nature and depth and to recover dating evidence. The features were to be planned at 1:100 and their sections drawn at scales of 1:20 where they were excavated.

¹For field references see Fig. 1 Shellingford Quarry Extension: Archaeological Evaluation (OAU) Nov 1991,

Results

Soils

The trenches were machined down to the natural subsoil. In trenches 1-7 this was forest marble, in trenches 8-10 the subsoil was sand and in trenches 11 and 12 the subsoil was silt. The average depth of the modern ploughsoils was 0.25 m. The general soil type was silt.

Finds

In total 293 sherds of pottery and tile and two pieces of bone were recovered. There was one sherd of prehistoric pottery, 5 sherds of Roman pottery, 13 sherds of medieval pottery and 157 sherds of post-medieval pottery. One piece of daub and five pieces of burnt clay were found. There were 117 pieces of brick and tile. Two pieces of bone, and 5 pieces of iron were recovered. There were 15 pieces of glass, 6 pieces of slate and 3 lumps of metal working debris.

Forty-eight pieces of flint were recovered. Thirty-nine of these were struck. There were 30 flakes and blades, two tools (one side and one end scraper), two pieces of irregular waste and five pieces of burnt flint. As a whole this small assemblage indicated a Neolithic to Bronze Age date. There were no truly diagnostic pieces. Both hard and soft hammer flaking techniques were used.

Archaeology

Fieldwalking (see attached plots)

There is no apparent clustering of the flints although there were two collection units which yielded three struck flints and three that yielded two flints. The total number of flints (39) was significantly greater and denser (c8/Ha) than the previous work (slightly <2/Ha). The distribution plots of the struck flints is very similar to those of the medieval and post-medieval pottery (including those collection units which yielded few finds of any kind) and may be a result of long-term ploughing creating the same distribution of artefacts of different date. The S facing slope of field C may have had an additional effect on the distributions as the artefacts were moved down slope by hillwash caused by ploughing.

The burnt flint was rather more clustered at the top of the field next to the concentration of burnt flint and struck flints in field D and may be a part of the same concentration.

The single sherd of prehistoric pottery was of indeterminate date. It came from a collection unit to the S of one containing a sherd of Roman pottery. The Roman pottery was not clustered and may derive from features or manuring associated with the large enclosure seen on aerial photographs to the S.

The medieval pottery was not clustered and resembled the distribution obtained in 1991 over the rest of the site. The daub presumably came from a structure but is undistinguishable as to date and could be Roman or medieval or later. The same applies to the fired clay. These finds probably reached the site as part of manuring in the same manner as the post-medieval pottery.

Trenching

No archaeological deposits were observed and no finds were recovered from monitoring the excavated soils.

Trenches 1 and 2 were dug across an E-W ridge, in field C, which is probably an old field boundary or headland. The combined depth of the ploughsoils to the forest marble was 0.74 m in trench 1 and 0.41 m in trench 2.

Trench 3 was 0.30 m deep while trenches 4 and 7 were 0.40 m deep to the clean forest marble. Only trenches 5 and 6 (0.43 and 0.45 m deep to the forest marble) in field D showed an old ploughsoil 0.18 and 0.20 m deep respectively. This was because trenches 5 and 6 were aligned across an old field boundary visible as a ridge similar to that in field C.

Trenches 8-10 had modern ploughsoil 0.20-0.23 m deep over an old ploughsoil 0.05-0.16 m deep. There were 5 features visible in the sand. They were filled with a very clean red silt which had obviously not been disturbed by human activity. Two of these features were excavated in trench 8 where they were found to have root holes leading away from the main body of the feature. They were identified as tree throw pits and no more were excavated.

Trenches 11 and 12 were 0.46 and 0.41 m deep. The modern ploughsoil overlies an old ploughsoil which is deeper than seen elsewhere. As these trenches lie at the bottom of a slope this old ploughsoil may well have been partly built up by hillwash.

Environmental

Soil samples were not taken. There were no layers encountered which appeared to be suitable for environmental analysis.

Comments on the results

Reliability of field investigation

The sample size was sufficient to define adequately and interpret the archaeology.

The weather conditions were ideal. There was only one shower during the two days and otherwise the weather was dry with high cloud. This meant that light conditions were good for recovery of finds. The visibility of the soil for fieldwalking was good as 85-95% of the soil surface was visible.

Overall Interpretation

The archaeological artefacts recovered by fieldwalking in field C appear to have been dispersed by ploughing and the relatively denser distribution of artefacts may be due to soil movement (hillwash) caused by ploughing. One of the new clusters of flints (at the SE corner of the site) was trenched and no archaeological deposits were observed although deposits of hillwash were observed.

The finds plotted from the fieldwalking in 1991 do not relate to any features cut into the subsoil. Even the subsoil underneath the old field boundaries in fields C and D had been truncated by ploughing and if there had been any features they would have been destroyed. Although the depth of truncation was not discernible presumably the truncation was greatest on top of the hill in field D and the soil with artefacts moved down the slope into field C. The finds plotted in fields A and C must have been moved downslope in a similar manner as the hillwash built up. The hillwash was thicker further down the slope.

The concentration of flints in fields D and C may have been a site but it is now ploughed out and is only present as a diffuse artefact scatter.

The Roman pottery and perhaps the burnt stone and prehistoric pottery may derive from the large enclosure to the S.

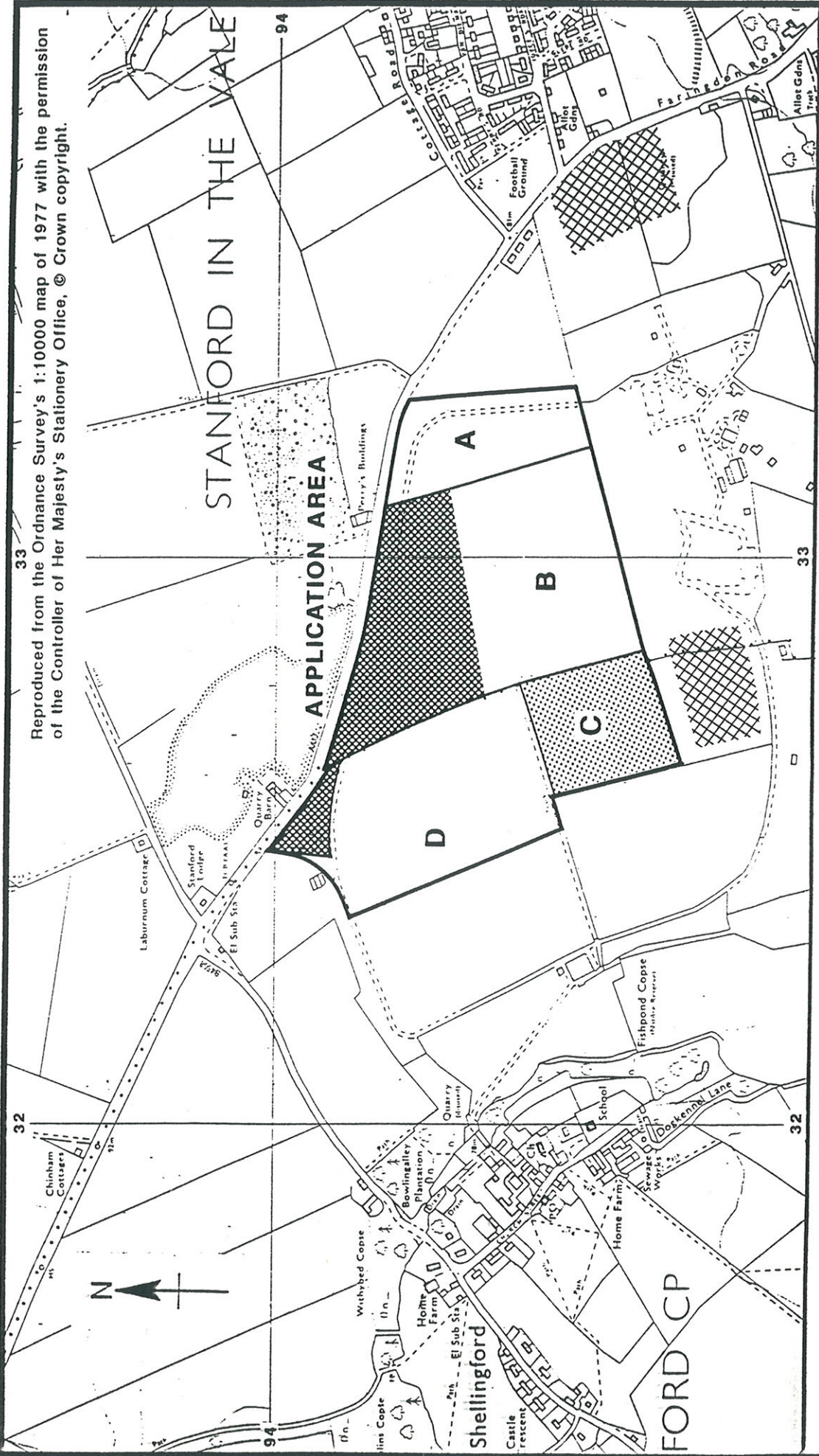
Mark Roberts
OAU
Jan 1993

Appendix

Table of contexts

CTX	in Trench	Depth	Comments
1	1	0.24	ploughsoil
2	1	0.24	old ploughsoil
3	1	0.26	old ploughsoil
4	2	0.19	ploughsoil
5	2	0.22	old ploughsoil
6	3	0.30	ploughsoil
7	3		natural
8	4	0.40	ploughsoil
9	4		natural
10	5	0.25	ploughsoil
11	5	0.18	old ploughsoil
12	5		natural
13	6	0.25	ploughsoil
14	6	0.20	old ploughsoil
15	6		natural
16	7	0.30	ploughsoil
17	7		natural
18	8	0.20	ploughsoil
19	8	0.14	old ploughsoil
20	8	0.32	tree throw pit fill
21	9	0.23	ploughsoil
22	9	0.16	old ploughsoil
23	10	0.22	ploughsoil
24	10	0.05	old ploughsoil
25	11	0.25	ploughsoil
26	11	0.21	old ploughsoil/hillwash
27	12	0.25	ploughsoil
28	12	0.16	old ploughsoil/hillwash

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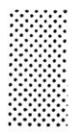


Scale 1:10000

Figure 1



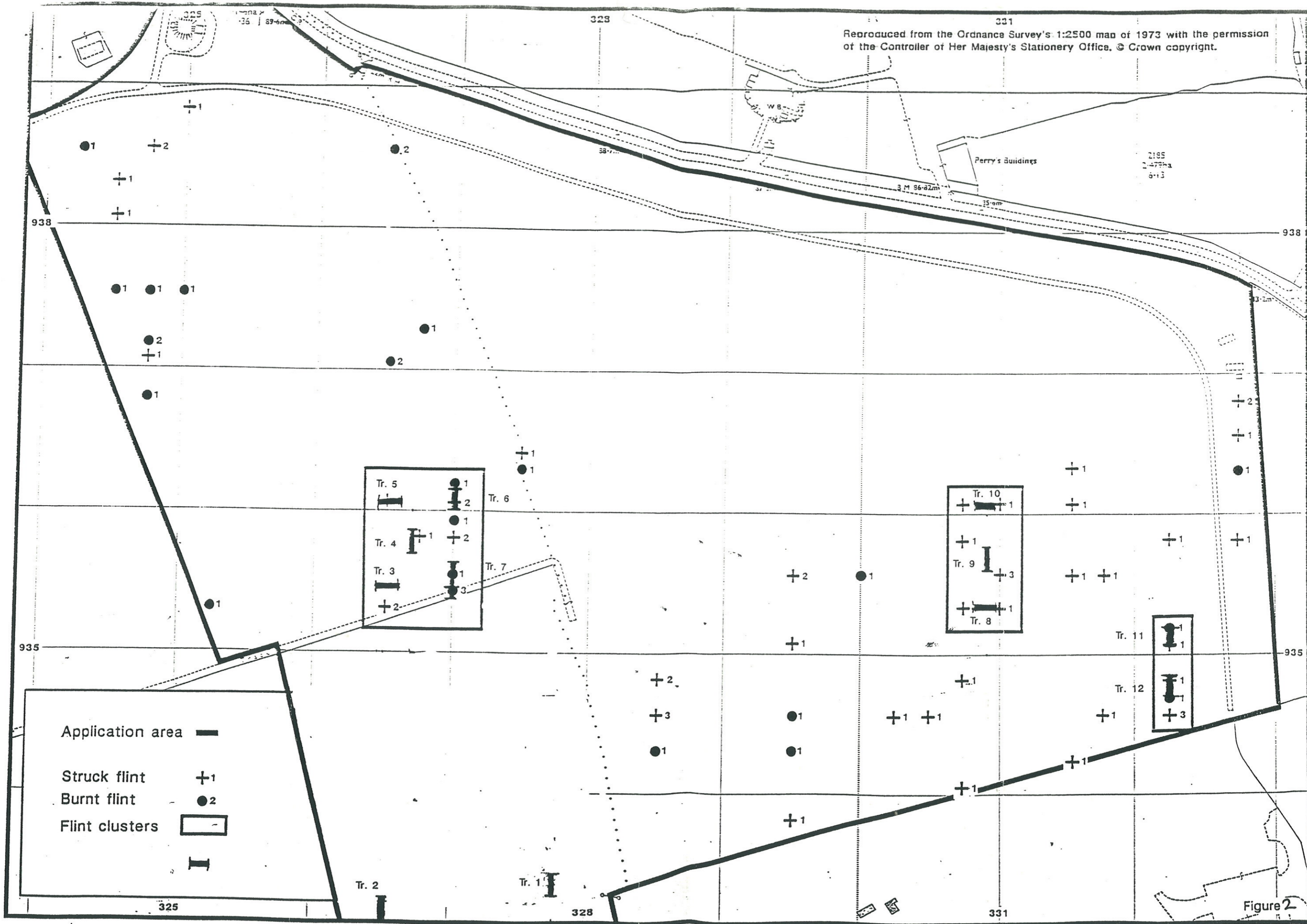
PASTURE



PRESENT CONSENT AREA



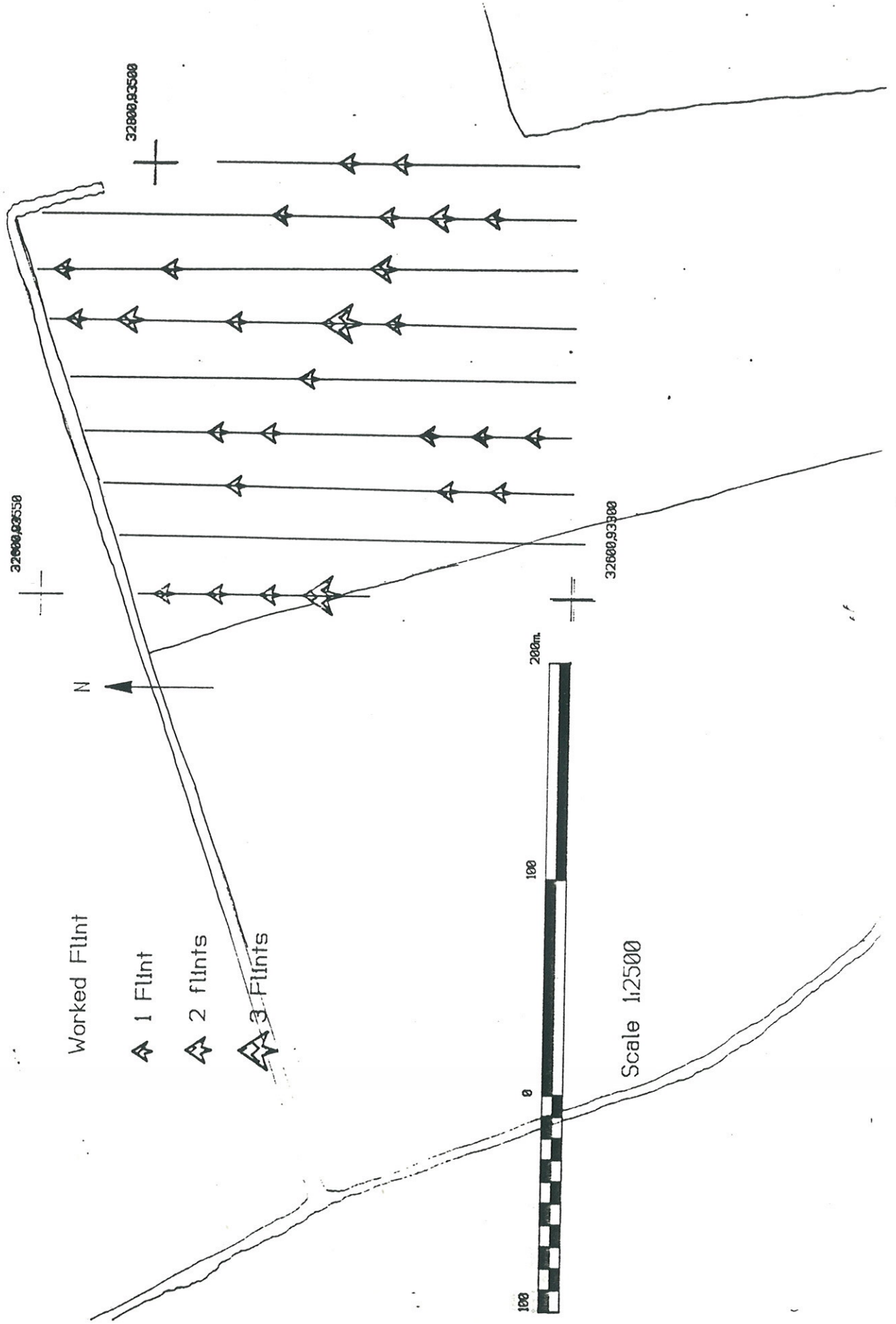
331
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Application area —
 Struck flint +1
 Burnt flint ●2
 Flint clusters []

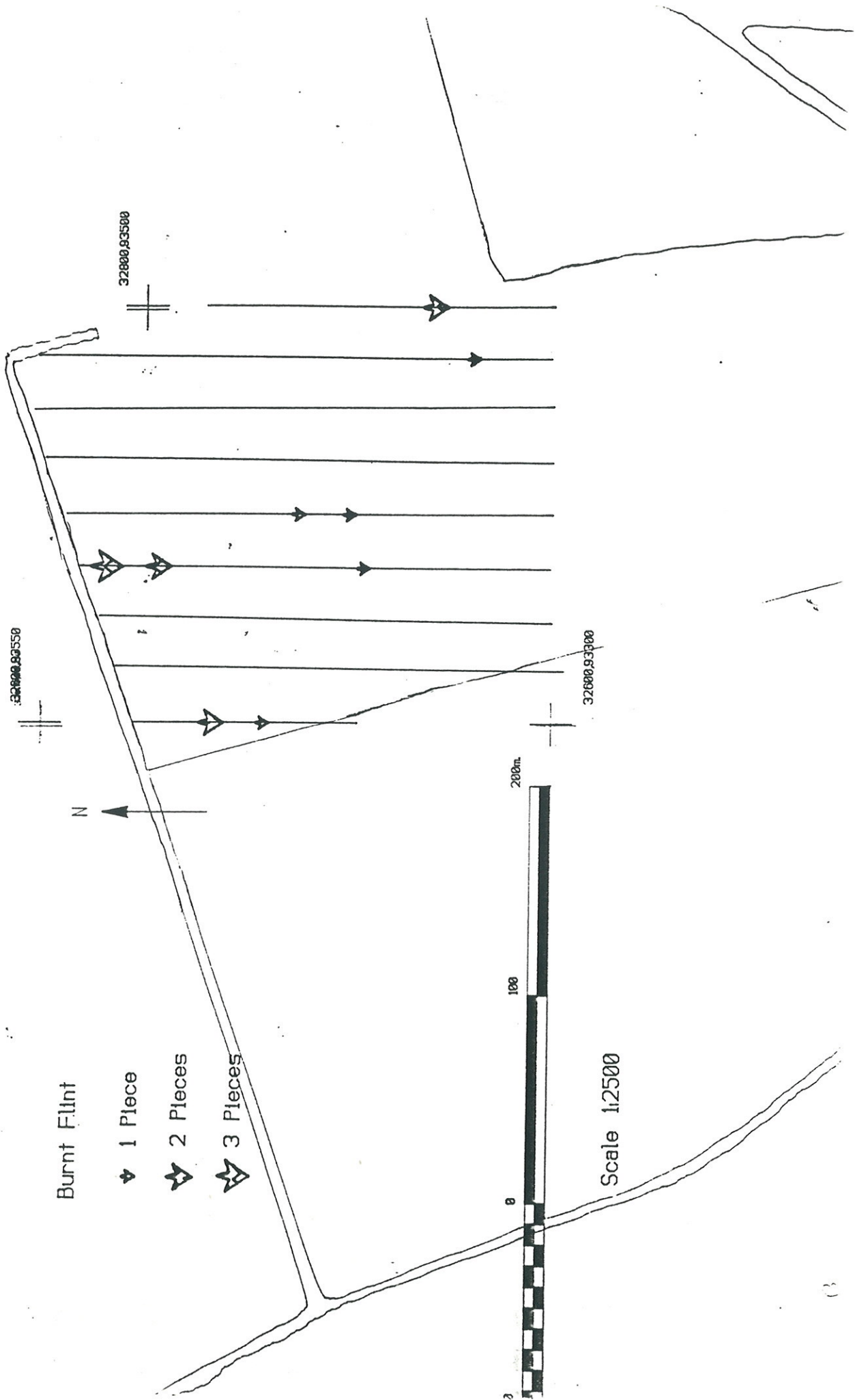
Figure 2

Shellingford Fieldwalking



Scale 1:2500

Shellingford Fieldwalking



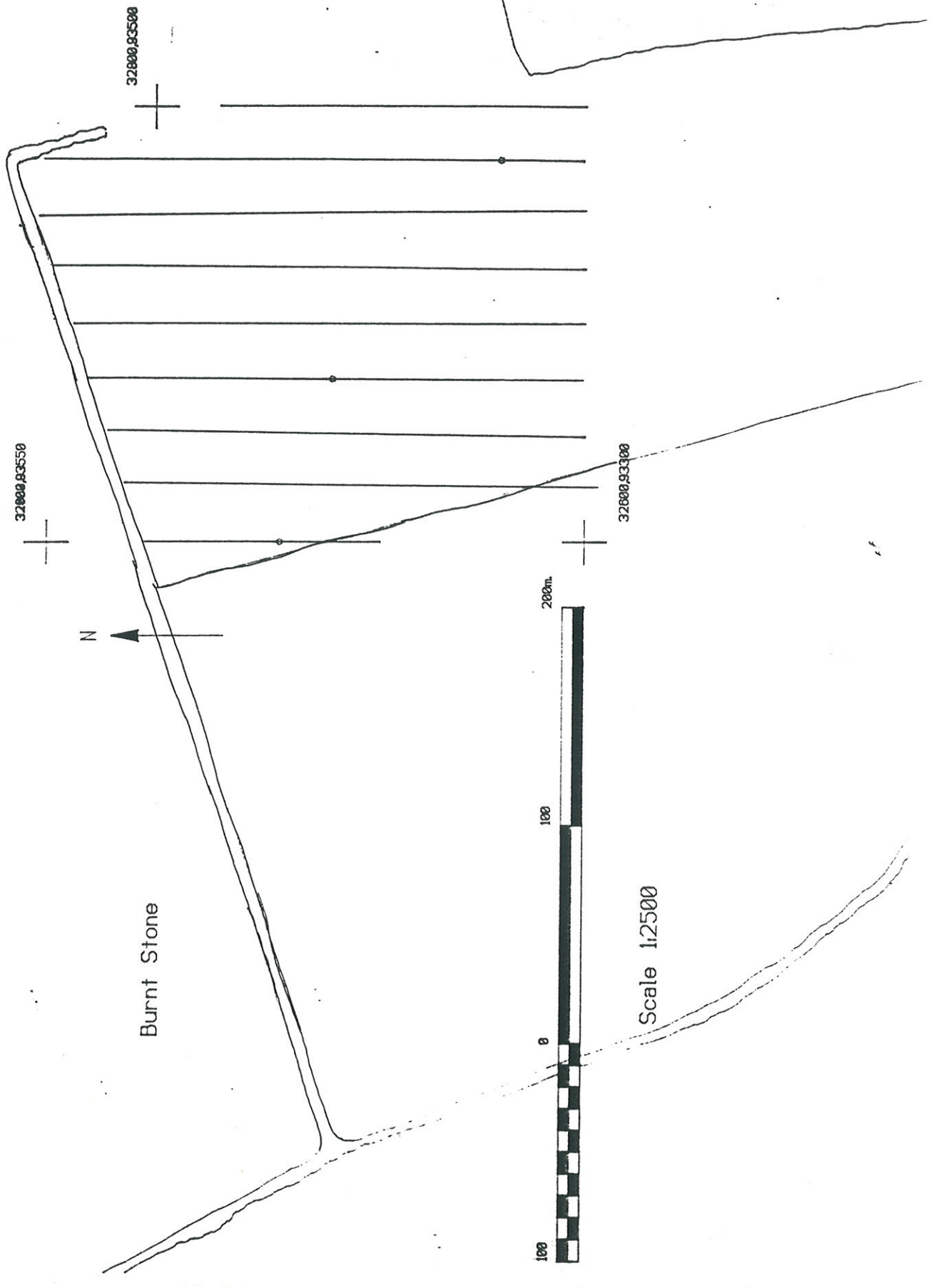
Burnt Flint

- ▼ 1 Piece
- ▼ 2 Pieces
- ▼ 3 Pieces



Scale 1:2500

Shellingford Fieldwalking



32800,93500

32800,93550

32800,93300

N

Burnt Stone

200m.

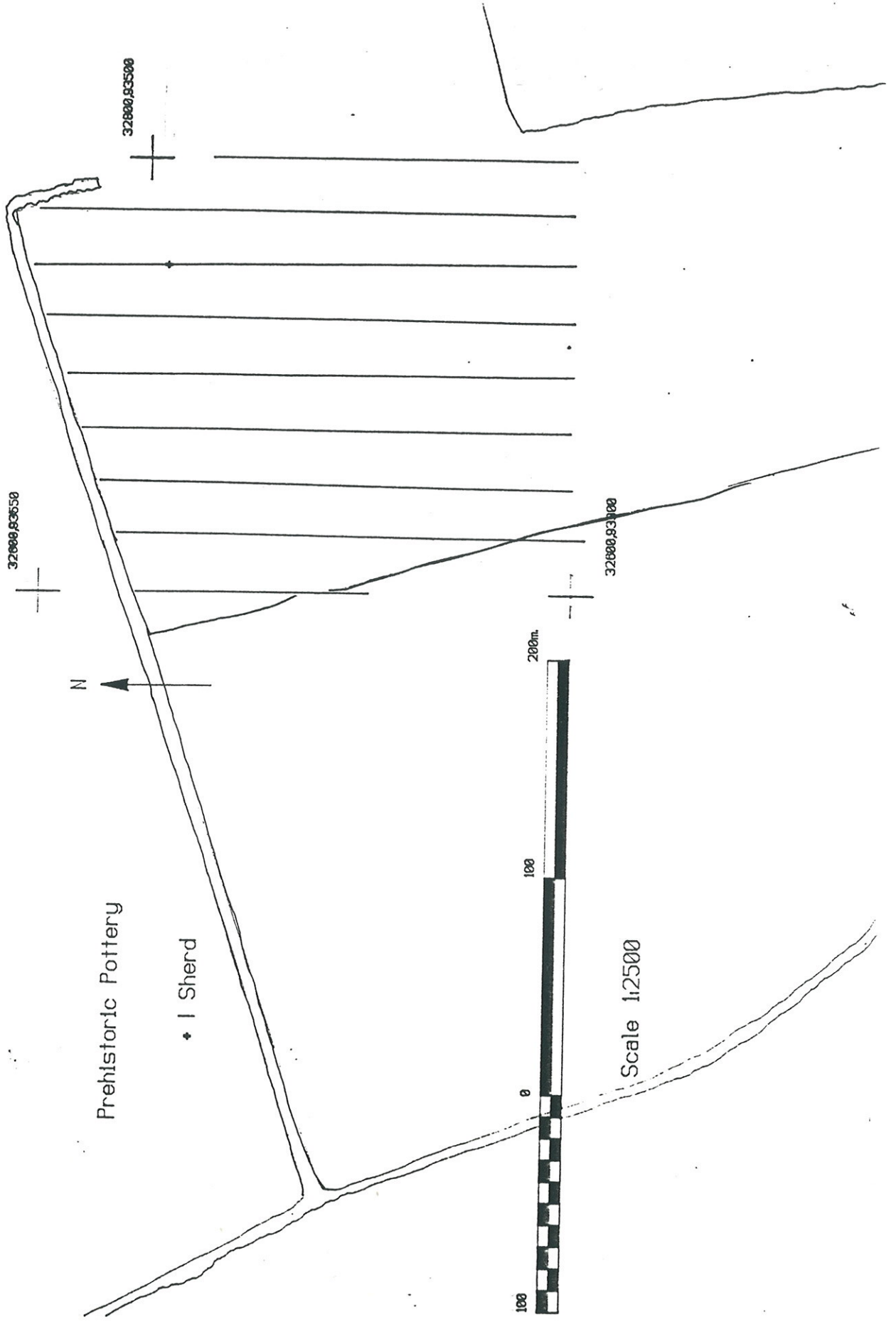
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0

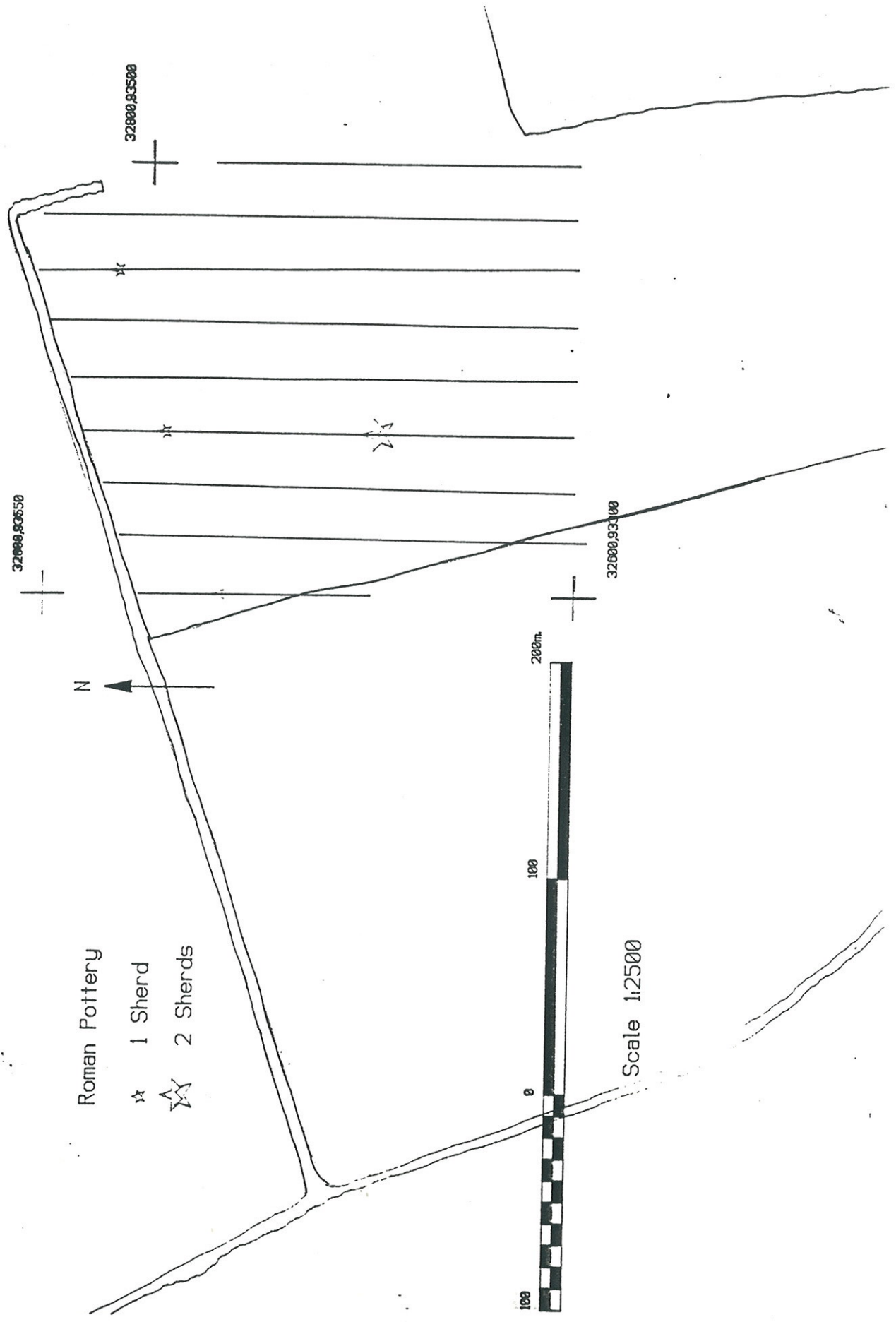
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Scale 1:2500

Shellingford Fieldwalking



Shellingford Fieldwalking



Roman Pottery

☆ 1 Sherd

☆☆ 2 Sherds

N



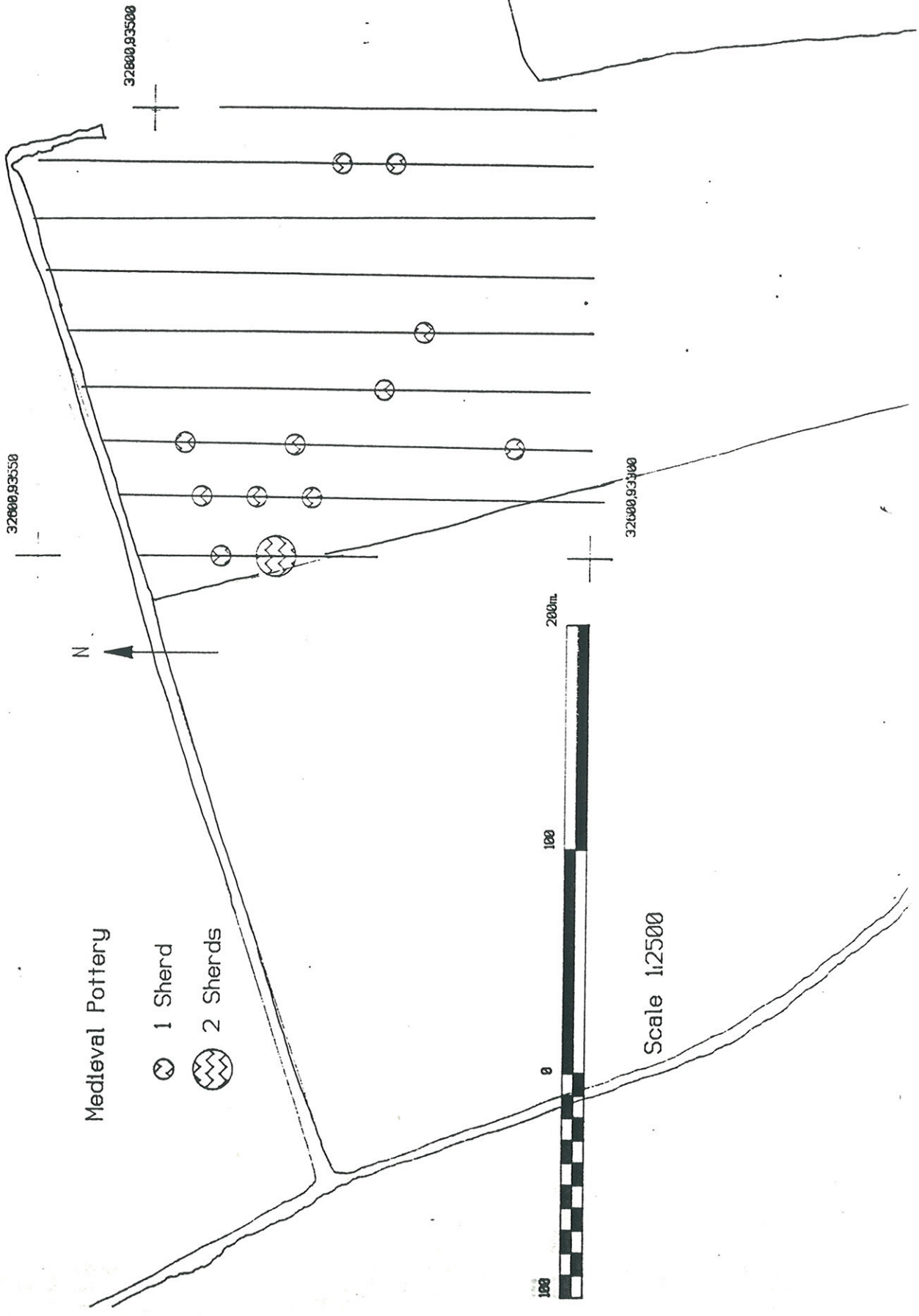
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32000,83550

32000,83500

32000,93100

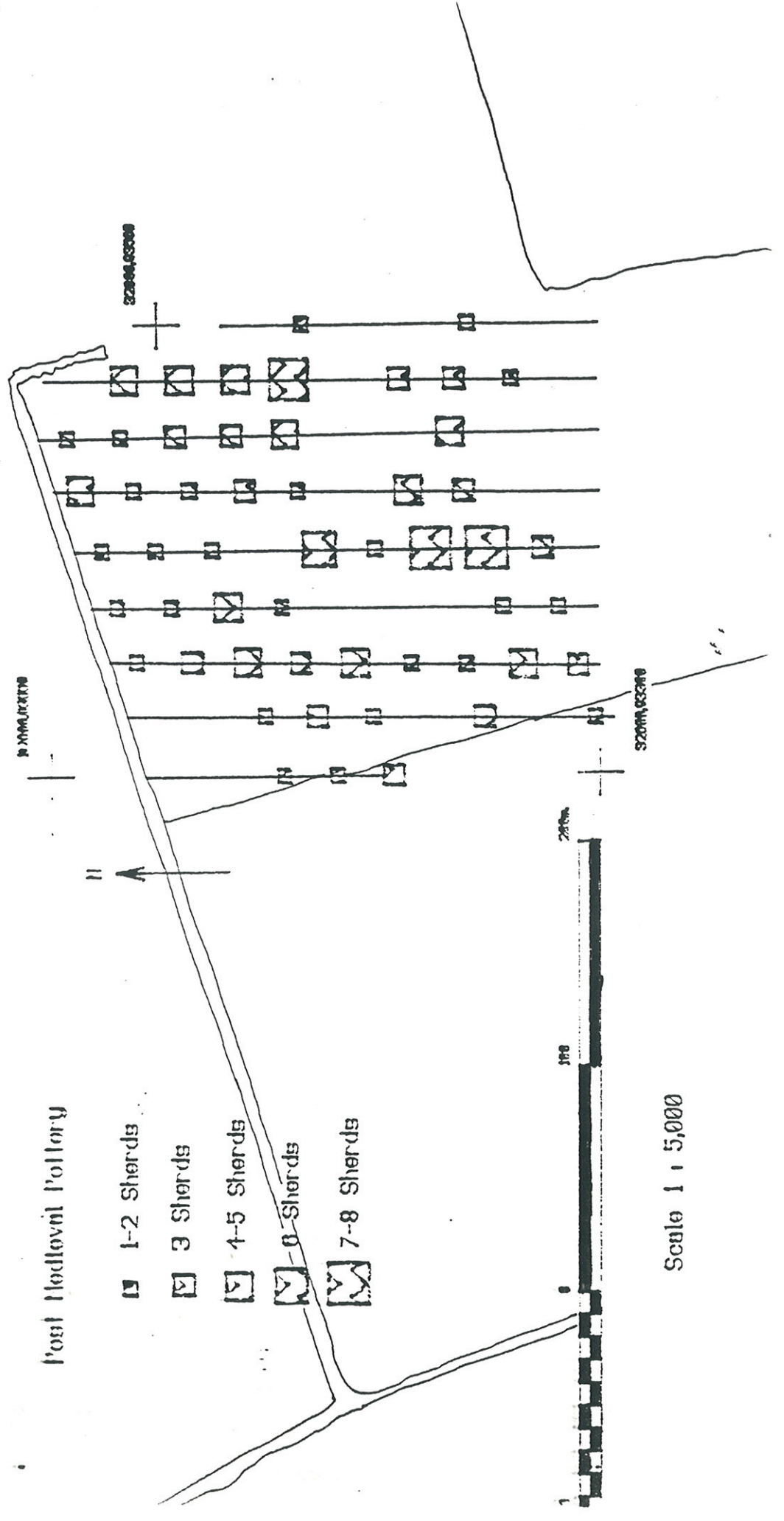
Shellingford Fieldwalking



Shellingford Fieldwalking

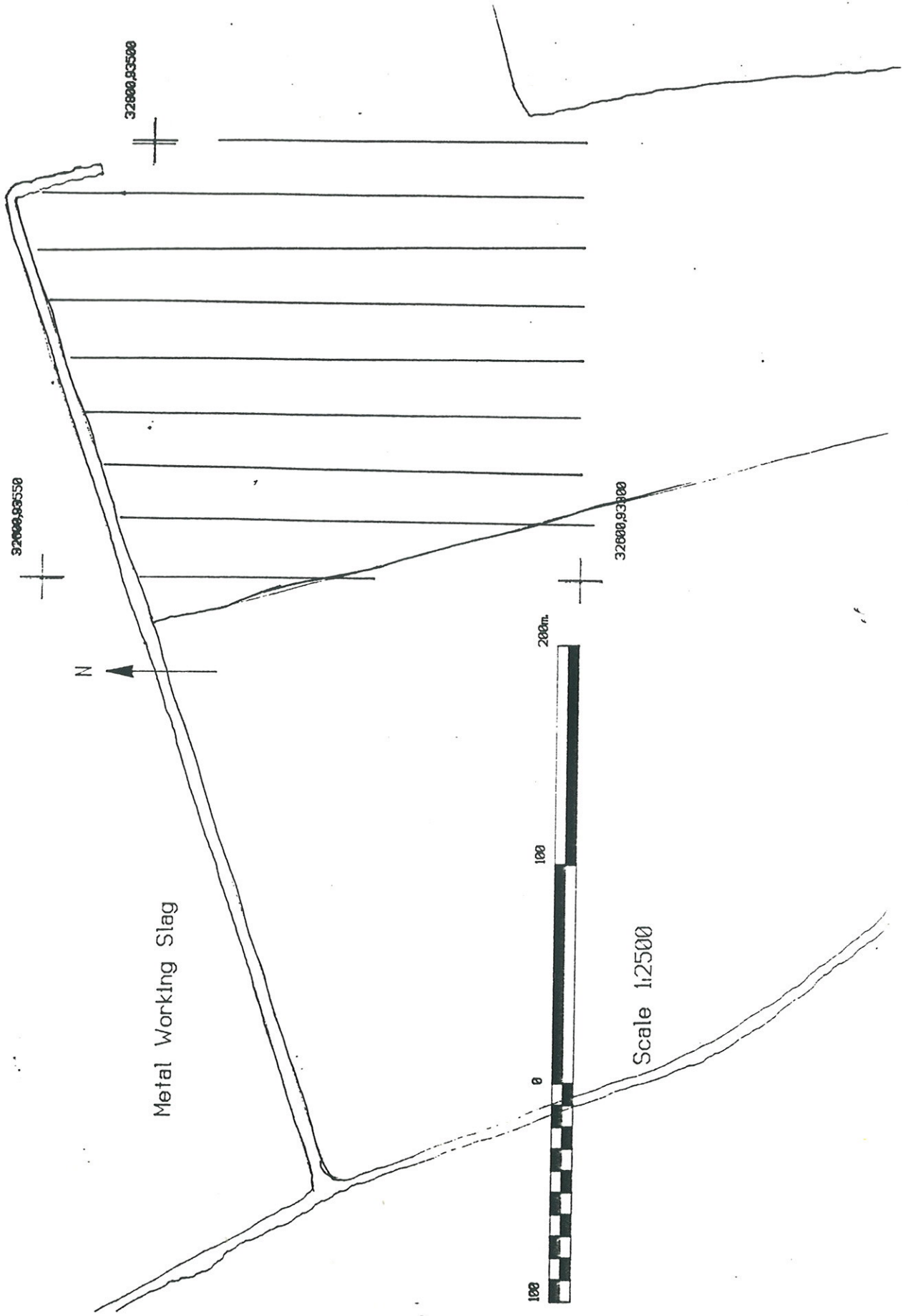
Post Medieval Pottery

- 1-2 Sherds
- ▣ 3 Sherds
- ▤ 4-5 Sherds
- ▥ 6 Sherds
- ▦ 7-8 Sherds



Scale 1 : 5,000

Shellingford Fieldwalking





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