

Hall Farm Arborfield Berkshire



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Oxford Archaeology

September 2005

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SUMMARY

In July 2005 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Hall Farm, Arborfield, Berkshire (NGR SU 7496 6798). The work was commissioned by Exoteric Gas Solutions Ltd in advance of excavation of new gas pipe trench to several residential properties. The watching brief revealed a number of undated features and two late 19th century features.

INTRODUCTION

Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In July 2005 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Hall Farm, Arborfield, Berkshire (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Exoteric Gas Solutions Ltd in respect of excavation of new gas pipe trench to several residential properties.
- 1.1.2 A project brief has been attached to planning permission by Fiona Macdonald, the Principal Archaeologist for Reading District Council (BA 2004).
- 1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief.

Geology and topography

- 1.1.4 The site lies at approximately 50 m OD and the underlying geology bounds both London Clay and Bagshot Beds. The site is located a short distance south of Hall Farm, north-west of the village of Arborfield, on working farmland, and centred on NGR SU 7496 6798.

Archaeological and historical background

- 1.1.5 The archaeological background to the watching brief was prepared for the WSI for the project (OA 2005) and is reproduced below.
- 1.1.6 The site lies in an area of archaeological potential. It is immediately adjacent to the site of the ruined Church of St Bartholomew, a flint and mortar construction of possible 13th century date. Other later additions are also visible, including one extension which appears to re-use an original window. The church was superceded by the current parish church in the 1860s and is in a state of serious disrepair. It is legally designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Berkshire SAM 154).
- 1.1.7 In addition the medieval village of Edburgfeld is noted to have existed adjacent to the church. Possible low earthworks have been observed in grassland in this location although archaeological fieldwork to identify the scope and scale of the survival of archaeological deposits has been carried out.

PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

Aims

- 1.1.8 To identify and record the presence/absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development. In particular, to preserve by record features and deposits associated with the 13th century church and the village of Edburgfeld.
- 1.1.9 To signal, before the destruction of the material in question, the discovery of a significant archaeological find, for which the resources allocated are not sufficient to support a treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.
- 1.1.10 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

Methodology

- 1.1.11 A trench 200 m long, 0.40 m wide and 0.90 m in depth and was excavated along the north side of the roadway using a small mini-excavator. The archaeological watching brief started from small gateway to west of church and continued along around to the cross roads south-east of the church (Fig. 2).
- 1.1.12 All archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:100 and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20. All excavated features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. A general photographic record of the work was made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

RESULTS

Description of deposits

- 1.1.13 The trench cut into a natural (4) of reddish brown silt sand with flinty gravel, which was overlain by a mid grey brown silty sand (3) plough soil horizon. This did not start right at the end of the trench, but appeared at nine to ten metres from the end. In the first 16 m from the start of the trench a number of features were exposed (Fig. 3). These were a possible pit/ditch (6) seen only in section with steep sloping sides and concave base. It measured 0.4 m x 1.2 m x 0.44 m and was filled by a light grey brown silty sand (5) with a fragment of CBM (Fig. 4, section 1). To the south east of this was a ditch (8) with very steep sloping sides rounding to a flat base. It measured 0.4 m x 1.2 m x 0.45 m and was filled by a light grey brown silty sand (7) and contained fragments of CBM.
- 1.1.14 Further along the trench was a possible pit/ditch feature (10) with steep sloping sides and concave base. It measured 0.4 m x 1.4 m x 0.6 m and was filled with a mid grey brown silty sand (9). To the south-east of this was another cut (12) with vertical sides, but base below impact level of the trench. This was probably a machine trench and only 0.4 m x 1.08 m x 0.56 m was exposed with a fill of dark grey brown silty sand (11). Sealing all of these features was a 0.40 m to 0.80 m thick layer of redeposited

natural gravel mixed with modern building debris (2) and was from the construction of the road. This was sealed by a 0.08 m thick layer of dark grey brown silty sand topsoil (1).

Finds

- 1.1.15 A number of fragments of late 19th century and early 20th century brick and tile was recovered from contexts 2, 5 and 7 and relate to construction work to the nearby farm and church.

Palaeo-environmental remains

- 1.1.16 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified during the watching brief.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 1.1.17 The watching brief did reveal a number of features at the western end of the trench, which consisted of a number pits and ditches. Two were undated and others dated from the late 19th century and could relate to works carried out at Hall farm after the church went out of use. No other features or deposits were noted along the rest of the trench.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Length</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i> Finds</i>
1	Layer	0.08			Topsoil	
2	Layer	0.40 - 0.80 m			Modern made ground	CBM
3	Layer	0.30 m			Plough soil/ Furrow	
4	Layer				Natural	
5	Fill				Fill of pit/ditch	CBM
6	Cut	0.44 m	1.20 m	0.40 m	pit/ditch	
7	Fill				Fill of pit/ditch	CBM
8	Cut	0.45 m	1.20 m	0.40 m	pit/ditch	
9	Fill				Fill of pit	
10	Cut	0.60 m	1.40 m	0.40 m	Pit	
11	Fill				Fill of ditch	
12	Cut	0.58 m	1.08 m	0.40 m	Modern ditch	

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

OA 2005 *Hall Farm, Arborfield, Berkshire Written Scheme of Investigation*

BA, 2004 *Hall Farm, Arborfield: Brief for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

OAU, 1992 *Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson)

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Hall Farm, Arborfield, Berkshire

Site code: ARBHF 05

Grid reference: NGR SU 7496 6798

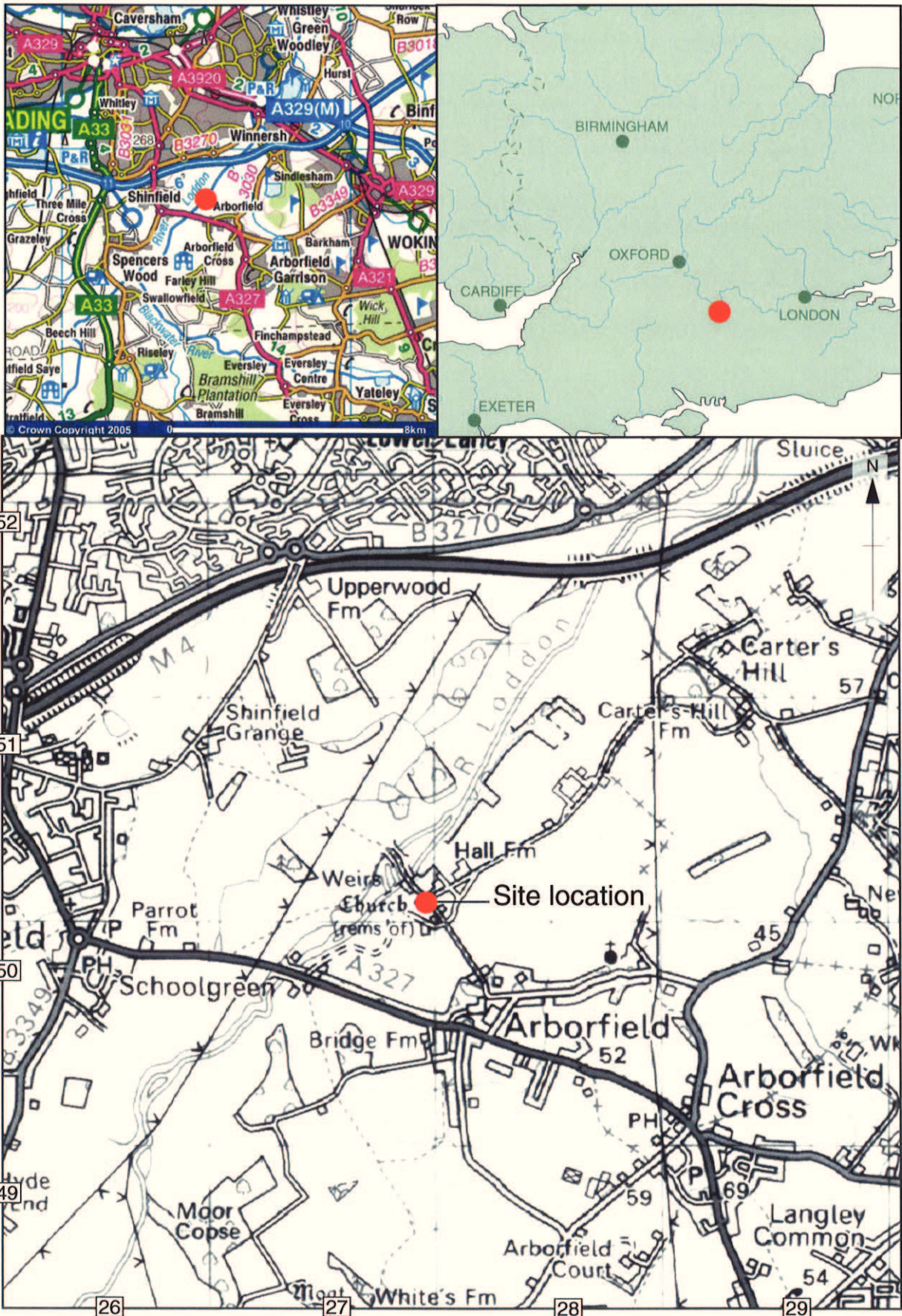
Type of watching brief: Excavation of new gas pipe trench.

Date and duration of project: Three site visits from the 05/07/05 to the 08/07/05.

Area of site: 200 m x 0.40 m x 0.90 m

Summary of results: The watching brief revealed a number of undated features and two late 19th century features.

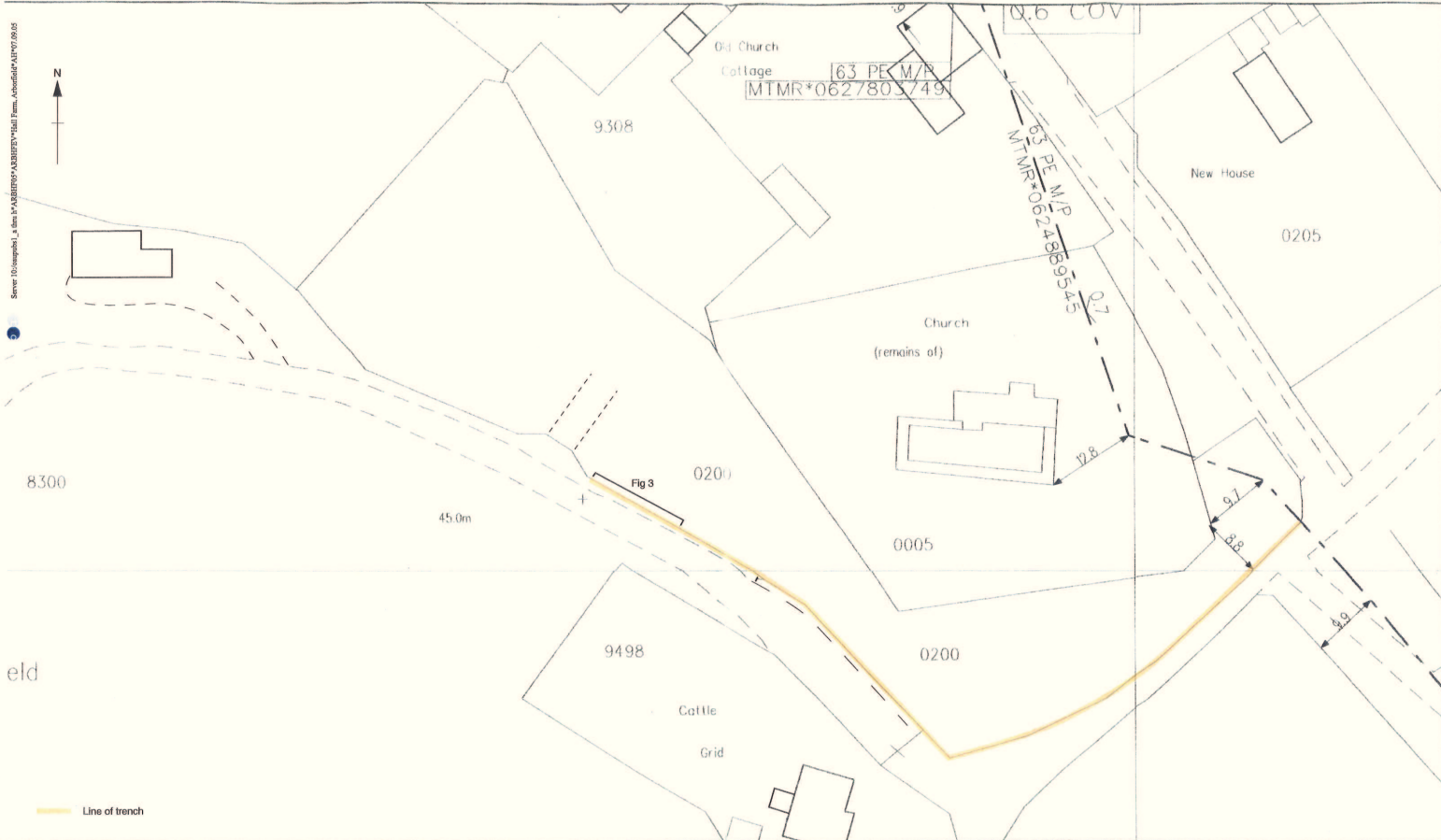
Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Reading Museum in due course, under the following accession number: REDMG 2005.81



Scale 1:25,000

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Figure 1: Site location



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Figure 2 : Location of trench and features in Figure 3
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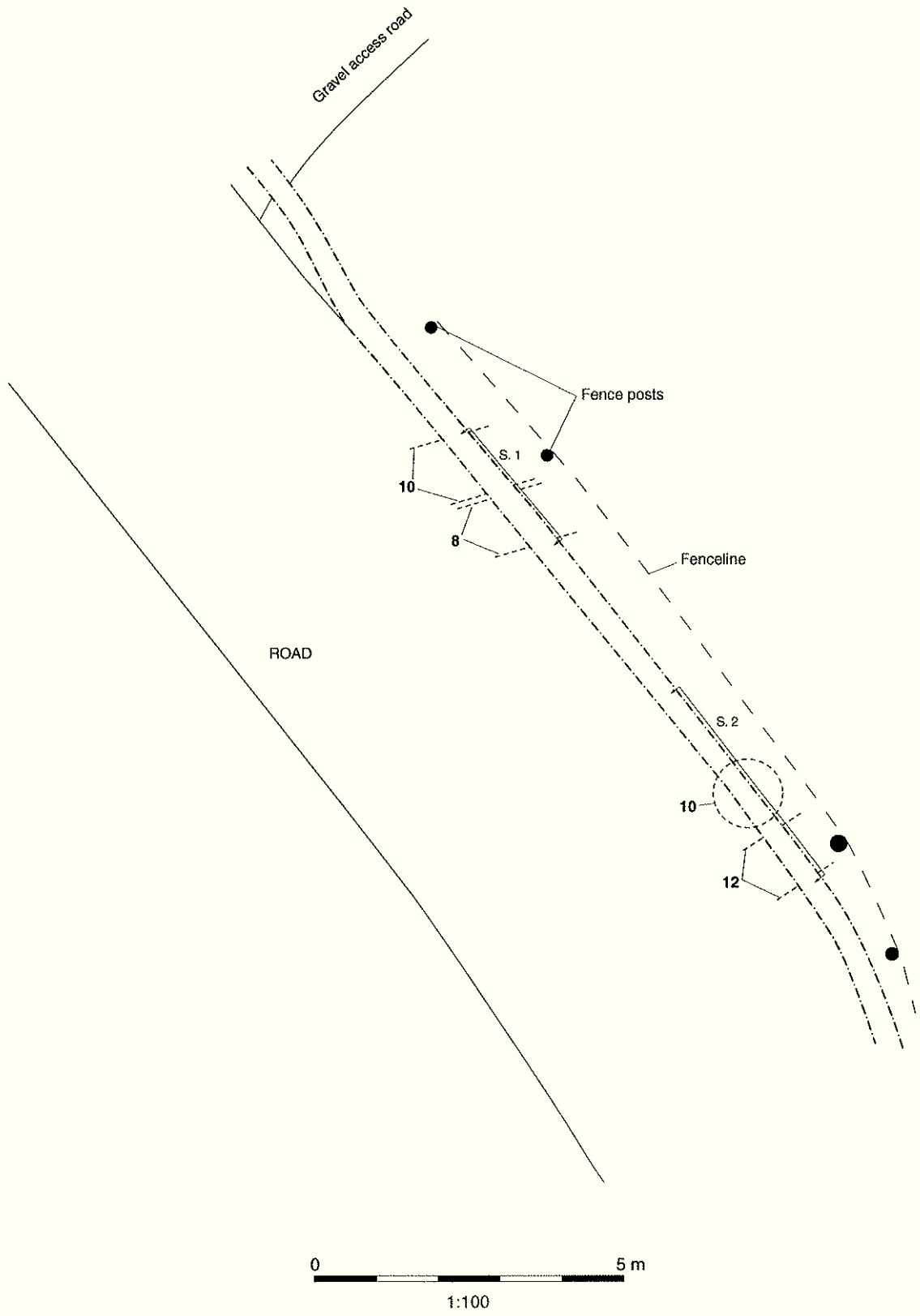
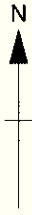
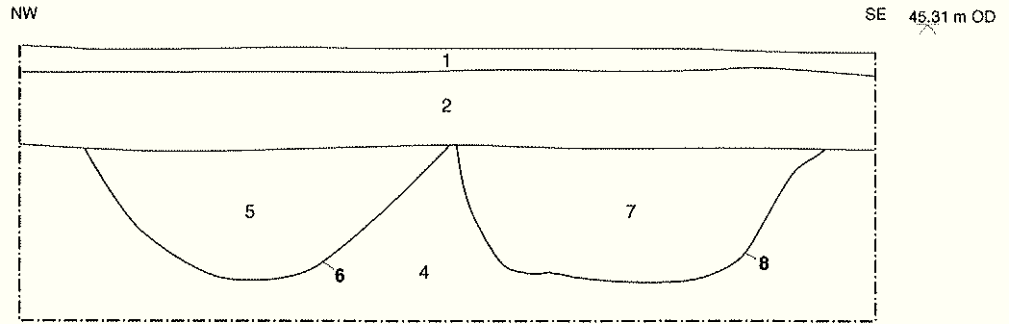


Figure 3 : 1:100 plan of features



Section 1



Section 2

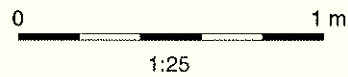
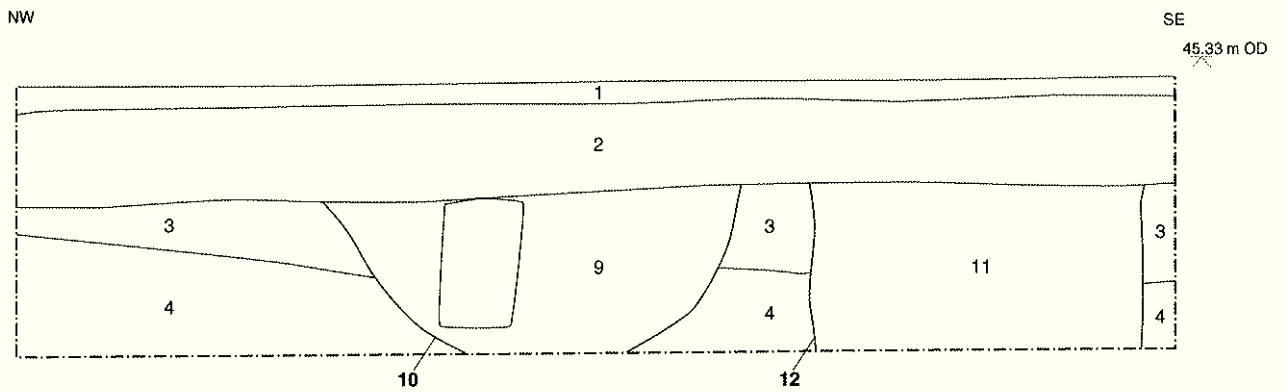


Figure 4 : Sections 1 and 2



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