

The Old Rectory Ludgershall Buckinghamshire



Archaeological Evaluation Report



Oxford Archaeology

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Old Rectory, Ludgershall, Buckinghamshire

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

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SUMMARY

In October 2003 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at the Old Rectory in Ludgershall, Buckinghamshire on behalf of Mr. D Howden. The evaluation revealed extensive deposits of made ground backfilling a deep waterlogged feature possibly representing a medieval leat or fishpond contemporary with the moated site to the south. Made ground also sealed a buried topsoil possible representing an 18th century lawn. The buried topsoil sealed a ditch and small pit or posthole of similar date.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In October 2003 OA carried out a field evaluation at the Old Rectory, Ludgershall, Buckinghamshire on behalf of Mr D. Howden in respect of a planning application for the construction of a garage and the extension of an existing coach house/stables to provide new residential accommodation. In response to this a brief was set by and a WSI agreed with David Radford, the Archaeological Officer for Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The development site lies at 76 m above OD and is situated to the rear of the private property, west of the church at the south-west corner of the village and adjacent to a moated manor site (SAM 32105) to the south (NGR: SP 6590 1720). The underlying geology is Oxford Upper Clay and Kellaway Beds.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the evaluation uses information researched at the Buckinghamshire Sites and Monuments Record Office and is supplemented by previous research by OA in respect of an earlier evaluation at *Land Adjacent to Kya House, Piddington Road, Ludgershall* (OAU, 2000).
- 1.3.2 Ludgershall is recorded in Domesday as two manors (Morris, 1978) and the following entries appear in Domesday Book:
- 1.3.3 *Land of the Bishop of Coutances: Ashendon Hundred: 'The Bishop holds Ludgershall himself. It answers for 9 hides. Land for 8 ploughs: in lordship 4 hides: 2 ploughs there: a third possible. 13 villagers with 4 smallholders have 5 ploughs. 5 slaves; meadow for 8 ploughs; woodland, 40 pigs. The total value is and was 100s: before 1066 6 pounds. Edeva held this manor from/Queen Edith: she could sell.*
- 1.3.4 *Land of William son of Mann: In Ashendon Hundred: William son of Mann holds 2 hides in Ludgershall. Land for 2 ploughs: in lordship 1 hide and 1 virgate; 1 plough there. 3 villagers have 1 plough. Meadow for 1 plough. The value is and always was 20s. Aelfric, King Edward's chamberlain, held this manor; he could sell.*

- 1.3.5 Ludgershall lay at the heart of Bernwood Forest at its greatest in the late Saxon period (Broad and Hoyle, 1997). The forest is mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for AD 921 (ASC). In the early 13th-century Henry II sought but failed to extend forest law into north Buckinghamshire; by the late 13th-century forest law was confined to the Brill/Boarstall/Oakley area south of Ludgershall. Nevertheless, the village remained one of the 'purlieu townships'. In 1363 and 1452, for example, it paid a pasturage fee for the use of the Forest. By c 1561 representations were made on behalf of Ludgershall and other local villages as '*...the commoners of Arcote, Ludgershall, and other towns cannot come into the forest as they have done before by reason of the hedging and ditching.*' (*Op cit.*, 47). Several areas of forest including or adjacent to Ludgershall had been enclosed quite early, including Clear Field Farm south-east of the village that was enclosed in 1305 (*op cit.*, 25). Bernwood Forest ceased to be a legal entity in 1632, but its former existence led to many land disputes.
- 1.3.6 Early maps depict Ludgershall within the much-reduced forest. One of 1590 has the church on the northern margins of Bernwood, with a defined area (*the Brache*) adjoining to the south (BRS 1964, map 2; Broad 1997, 66). This may be the *la Breche* wood, with 100 acres of land adjoining, which John de Moleyns was licensed to impark in 1339 (VCH 1927, 69). A schematic 16th-century map of Wotton Underwood shows Wotton and Ludgershall (Schultz 1939, copy BRO Ma R/7).
- 1.3.7 The parish also contains the hamlets of Tetchwick and Kingswood. Ludgershall comprised 3 tenurial elements (excluding Tetchwick). Two are named 'Ludgershall', the third 'Ludgershall Manor' (VCH 1927, 68-72). The VCH notes that '*there is no manor house, but there is evidence that the capital messuage in Ludgershall was habitable at the end of the 16th century. South-west of the church is a small moated site with the traditional name of King Lud's Hall which was still connected at the end of the 18th century. Bury Court, from which a portion of the tithes were payable to Bermondsey Abbey ... stood on the north-east of the church in the middle 19th century*'. The second manor, over which Brill had over-lordship rights, also had a capital messuage, but '*in the wood of Brill*'. The third 'manor' was apparently not so designated until the 16th or 17th century. This land unit emerged following a grant by Henry II to the brethren of the Holy Trinity, St Inglevert near Picardy. Previously a hospital was built here by 1236 and was still in use in 1348. As an 'alien' house, it is thought to have been suppressed by Henry V in the early 15th-century (Gough, 1878, 359).
- 1.3.8 One or both of the above sites (CASS 0033 and 2134) may have been part of the principal manor. The moated site (CASS 0033 - and see below) is scheduled, and lies near to the medieval church (CASS 0665). The location of the second manor 'in the wood of Brill' implies a location outside the village. The hospital site is unknown, though it may be north of the Rectory.
- 1.3.9 Jefferys' map of 1770 shows the open-plan of the village as a roughly rectangular central core with buildings facing outwards at the periphery. An open band encloses these with buildings facing inwards at the edge of the common. The church is at the south-west of the 'outer' band and buildings are shown on the opposite (west) side of road to church (site of the Rectory and moat). Bryant's map of 1825 is similar to

Jefferys' but names the Rectory and defines its grounds; more buildings are shown on the west side of High Street.

- 1.3.10 Aerial photographs reveal that the village has well-preserved ridge and furrow and therefore direct evidence for medieval open-field cultivation. The furrows stop *c* 100 m west of High Street, south-west of the village (CAS, runs 215 of 23.1.76: 498 of 12.3.85: see also unnumbered Cambridge University/Northants Open Field photos, 1999). Local evidence of this 'blank' area suggests there may be north-south aligned linear boundary features present here, with possibly a platform of a croft. The SMR records other earthworks in the village (e.g. CASS 2332, 2366, and 2331).
- 1.3.11 Archaeological work has recently been undertaken in Duck Lane (TVAS, 2000). A considerable quantity of pottery wasters from discarded pots fired in the Brill-Boarstall tradition was recovered. The material is provisionally of later 15th-century date and indicates a pottery kiln site nearby (Saunders, 2000). Post-medieval finds were recorded at Kya House in the village (OAU, 2000 and OA, 2002).
- 1.3.12 The area of proposed development is located immediately adjacent to a scheduled moated manorial site (SAM 32105) and is situated in land to the rear of a coaching house. The moated site has a leat or extended fishpond that may possibly extend into the rectory grounds. Aerial photographs reveal ridge and furrow nearby and the suggestion of former paddocks/enclosures to the north of the rectory. The 1998 report by Buckinghamshire Museum (No. 508) on Historic Parks and Gardens suggests that the grounds of the rectory are modest with few visual details.

2 EVALUATION AIMS

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence or absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the area affected by the proposed development.
- 2.1.2 To clarify the nature and extent of existing disturbance and intrusion on the site and assess the degree of archaeological survival of all buried deposits and surviving structures of archaeological significance.
- 2.1.3 To make available the results of the investigation.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork

- 3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of two trenches positioned west and south-west of the existing residential property within the footprint of the proposed new building. Trench 1 measured 5 m by 1.8 m and Trench 2 10 m by 1.8 m (Fig. 2). The overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision by a JCB mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. Trench 1 was reduced in length slightly due to a modern pipeline running across its southern most end.

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

- 3.2.1 The trenches were cleaned by hand and the revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds and environmental samples. All archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:50 and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20. All features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OA Fieldwork Manual* (OAU, 1992).

3.3 Finds

- 3.3.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and generally bagged by context. Finds of special interest were given a unique small find number.

3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence

- 3.4.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified during the evaluation.

3.5 Presentation of results

- 3.5.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below, with a stratigraphic account of each trench described in Appendix 1. This is followed by an overall discussion and interpretation of the results.

4 RESULTS: GENERAL

4.1 Soils and ground conditions

- 4.1.1 The site was located on level ground comprising a modern gravel driveway with adjacent lawns and garden. Weather conditions and visibility were good although the water table was encountered in Trench 1, which precluded deeper excavation and exposing of the underlying natural geology.

4.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits

- 4.2.1 Distribution of the archaeological deposits and features was sparse although a large waterlogged feature was encountered in Trench 1. Trench 2 produced a single pit or posthole and a ditch.

5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

5.1 Description of deposits

Trench 1 (Fig.3)

- 5.1.1 Excavation of this trench ceased at a depth of 1.2 m below ground level due to the rising water table. At this point a layer of dark brown silt clay (3) was encountered containing multiple fragments of brick, tile and limestone within mixed lenses of clay. This represents a layer of redeposited material possibly the backfill of an old watercourse or fishpond possibly associated with the moated site to the south of the

development. Overlying this was a 0.3 m thick layer of dark brown silt clay (2), containing fragments of brick and tile, charcoal flecking and gravel, again representing a layer of redeposited material/made ground. This was sealed by a 0.5 m deep layer of a light brown clay (1), containing similar inclusions representing a final levelling layer of made ground. These made ground deposits were then sealed by the present day topsoil and turf.

Trench 2 (Fig. 4)

- 5.1.2 A natural light yellowish brown clay (11) was encountered at a depth of 1.3 m below the present ground level. Cutting into this natural was a sub-circular feature (16) (Fig.5 section 2) approximately 0.2 m in diameter by 0.1 m deep, representing a small pit or post hole. This was filled by a dark grey silty clay (17) containing oxidised fragments of late 18th century window glass. This feature was bisected by a shallow, flat based ditch (14) aligned north-east by south-west (Fig.4, section 2), measuring 0.65 m wide by 0.2 m deep. A dark greyish brown silty clay (15) containing charcoal flecking, stone fragments, pottery dating to between the 11th and 15th century and cattle bone filled the ditch.
- 5.1.3 At the western end of the trench a circular feature measuring 0.45 m in diameter by 0.15 m deep represented tree root disturbance (12), which cut into the top of the natural and was filled by a dark greyish brown silt clay (13) containing residual charcoal flecking and patches of a sandy mortar.
- 5.1.4 Features 12, 14 and 16 were then sealed by a dark greyish brown silty clay (10) up to 0.35 m thick, representing a buried topsoil (Fig.4, section 3). Overlying this was a 0.7 m thick layer of dark brown silty clay (7) containing brick, stone and mortar fragments, representing a layer of made ground. Intruding into the surface of which was an area of root disturbance (8) containing a light brown silty clay (9). These deposits were finally sealed by a 0.14 m thick layer of modern hardcore (6), forming the base for a 0.08 m thick layer of gravel (5) laid for the present driveway.

5.2 Finds

- 5.2.1 Datable finds recovered included pottery, brick, tile and glass. Only the ditch (14) contained pottery of medieval origin, dating to between the 11th and 15th centuries and included *Brill/Boarstall ware*, *Sandy and Shelly ware* and *Oxford ware*. The small pit or post-hole (16) produced late 18th century glass. Fragments of modern brick, tile, mortar and glass also found on site were evaluated but were not retained.

6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 6.1.1 Although it was impossible to excavate Trench 1 down to undisturbed natural it is possible that the backfilled feature, represented by deposit (3), would have had some impact on any archaeological remains, although they may survive at a deeper level and might in itself be interesting if it is a pond associated with the manorial complex. The presence of buried topsoil (10) directly overlying the natural (11) in Trench 2 suggests any remains save those features which cut the natural are unlikely to have

survived. The trenches represent a good sample of each building footprint and therefore a reliable example of the potential deposits and features within this site.

6.2 Overall interpretation

- 6.2.1 Regardless of substantial made-ground deposits encountered within both trenches, evidence for features associated with the land-use and the development of the site still survives. The depth of modern made-ground within Trench 1 may represent backfilling of a substantial feature such as a leat or fishpond contemporary with and extended north of the medieval moated site, evidence for which is noted in the archaeological and historical background. It is impossible to confirm this though without finding the edge and the base of either of these types of features and there is no guarantee that an edge lies within the immediate proposed development.
- 6.2.2 In Trench 2 the shallow ditch produced 11th -15th century pottery, which would be contemporary with the moated site although 18th century glass was retrieved from the pit or posthole cut by this ditch. This confirms that the ditch was in fact constructed after the moated site had fallen out of use. Due to its proximity to the large feature identified in Trench 1 and considering this feature may have been a pond or leat that remained open after the manor had been abandoned, it is possible that this ditch had some later function associated with it, such as for water regulation.
- 6.2.3 The buried soil, which sealed the features identified in Trench 2 may represent a garden lawn contemporary with the construction of the Old Rectory, as this is unlikely to be cultivated due to its proximity to this residential building.
- 6.2.4 It appears therefore that only the feature in Trench 1 was contemporary with the occupation of the moated site to the south of the Rectory, though the potential to confirm this, given the limited development area, is low.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Context No.</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Thick. (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
1						
	1	Layer	0.5 m	Made ground	Brick Fragments	-
	2	Layer	0.4 m	Made ground	Brick fragments	-
	3	Layer	>0.4 m	Made ground	Brick fragments	-
	4	Layer	0.3 m	Landscaping layer, modern topsoil and turf	-	-
2						
	5	Surface	0.08 m	Modern driveway	-	C 20th
	6	Layer	0.15 m	Hardcore base	-	C 20th
	7	Layer	0.7 m	Made ground	Brick fragments	-
	8	Cut	0.5 m	Root disturbance	-	C 20th
	9	Fill	0.5 m	Disturbed soil	-	C 20th
	10	Layer	0.35 m	Buried topsoil	Brick fragments	-
	11	Layer	>0.2 m	Natural clay	-	-
	12	Cut	0.2 m	Root disturbance	-	-
	13	Fill	0.2 m	Fill of (12)	Mortar flecking	-
	14	Cut	0.2 m	Possible boundary ditch	-	
	15	Fill	0.2 m	Backfill of (14)	Pottery, cattle bone	C 11th - C15th
	16	Cut	0.15 m	Posthole/pit	-	
	17	Fill	0.15 m	Fill of (16)	Window glass	C 18th

APPENDIX 2 POTTERY BY PAUL BLINKHORN

The pottery assemblage comprised 6 sherds with a total weight of 91 g. It was all of medieval date, and originated from context 15. Where appropriate, the pottery was recorded using the coding system of the Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit type-series (e.g. Mynard and Zeepvat 1992; Zeepvat et al. 1994), as follows:

MC9: *Brill/Boarstall Ware*, AD1200-?1600. 4 sherds, 36g.

MSC1: *Sandy and shelly ware*, late 11th – mid 13th century. 1 sherd, 39g.

In addition, the following wares, not covered by the type-series, were also noted:

Oxford ware. Oxfordshire fabric OXY (Mellor 1994). c late 11th – 14th century. Abundant sub-angular quartz with some rounded clay pellets and occasional polycrystalline quartz. Handmade and wheel-thrown vessels. 1 sherd, 16g.

Two of the Brill/Boarstall sherds appear to be the same type as the dump of kiln waste which was recently found in Ludgershall (Blinkhorn in print), and give this group a *terminus post quem* of the late 15th century.

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APPENDIX 4 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: The old Rectory, Ludgershall, Buckinghamshire

Site code: LUOR 03

Grid reference:

Type of evaluation: Two trenches measuring 5 m x 1.8 m and 10 m x 1.8m.

Date and duration of project: One day, 30th October 2003

Area of site: Approximately 0.07 ha

Summary of results: The evaluation exposed substantial made ground deposits, a possible backfilled medieval leat or fishpond and an 18th century ditch, pit or posthole and possible buried lawn associated with re-landscaping of the area.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with the Buckinghamshire Museums Service in due course.

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Figure 1: Site location

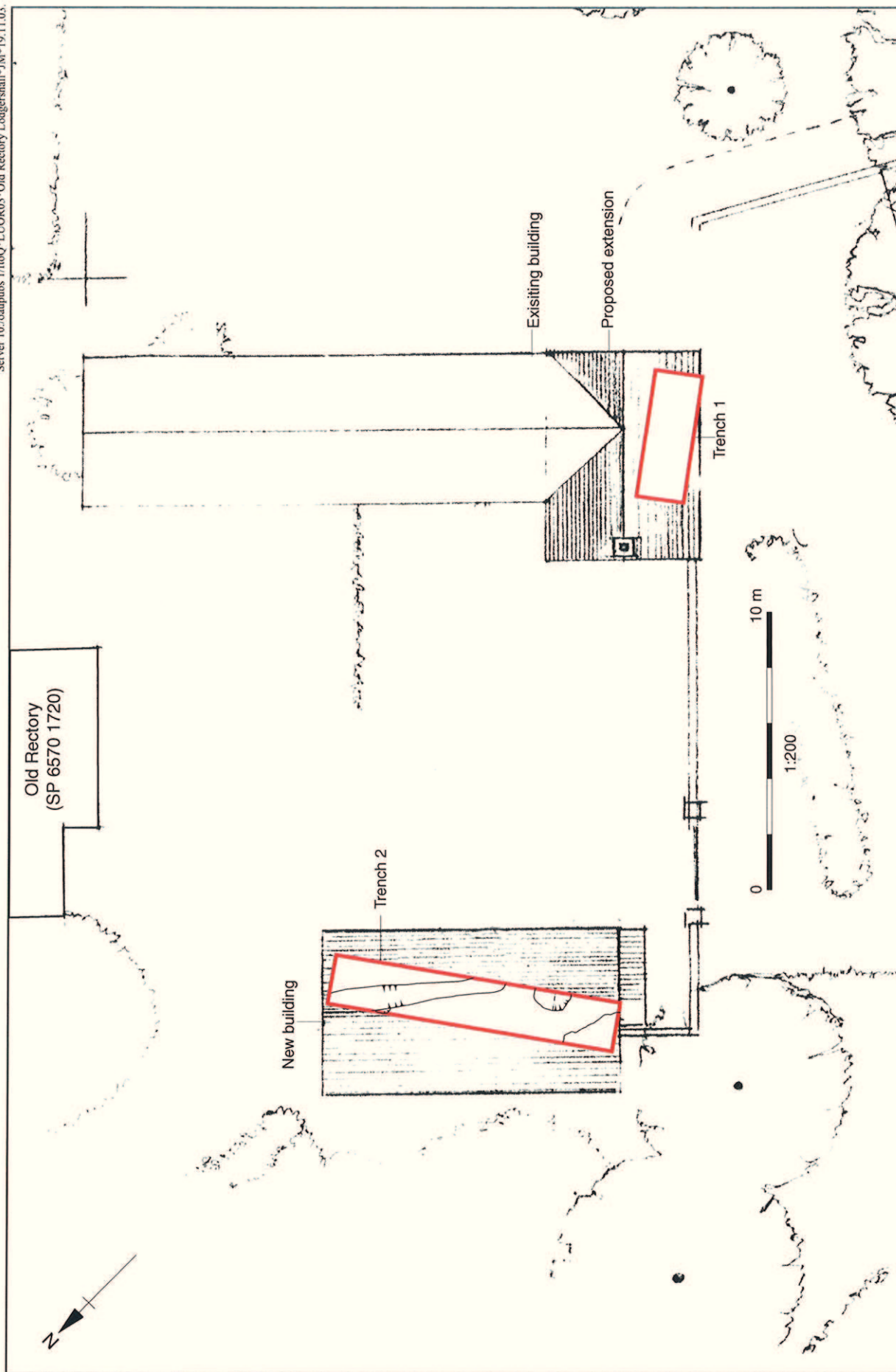


Figure 2: Trench location plan

Figure 1: Site location

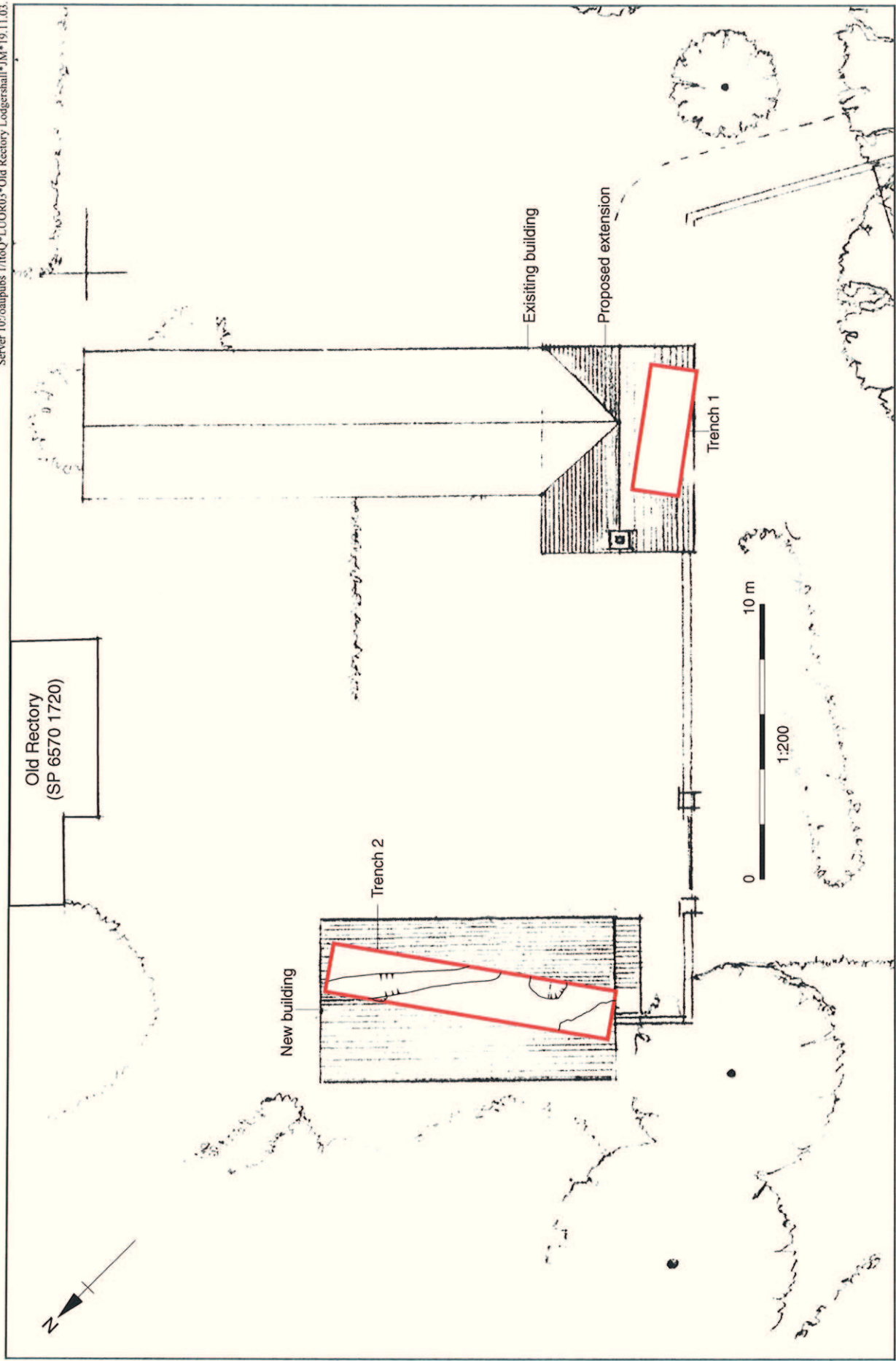


Figure 2: Trench location plan

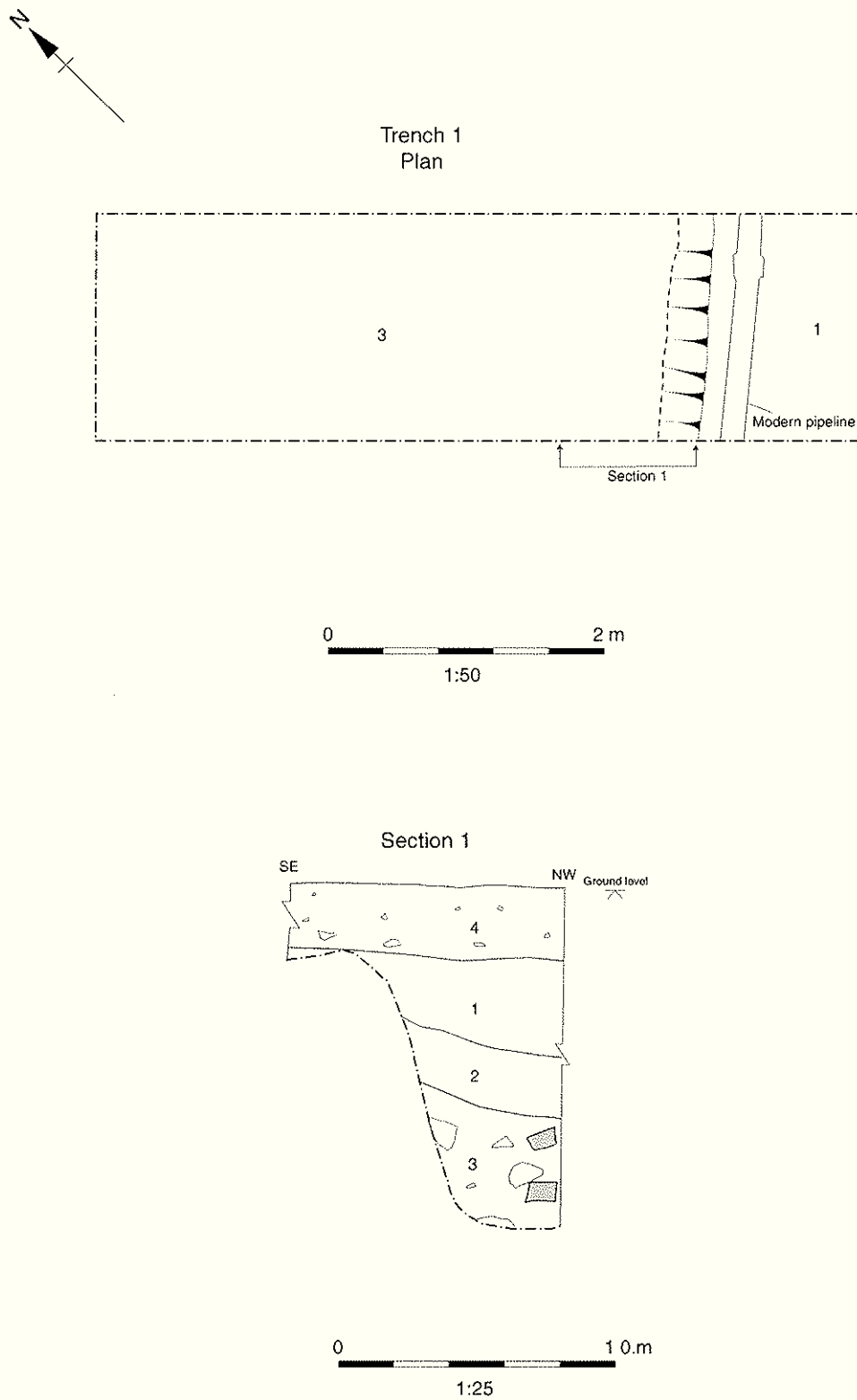


Figure 3: Trench 1, plan and section

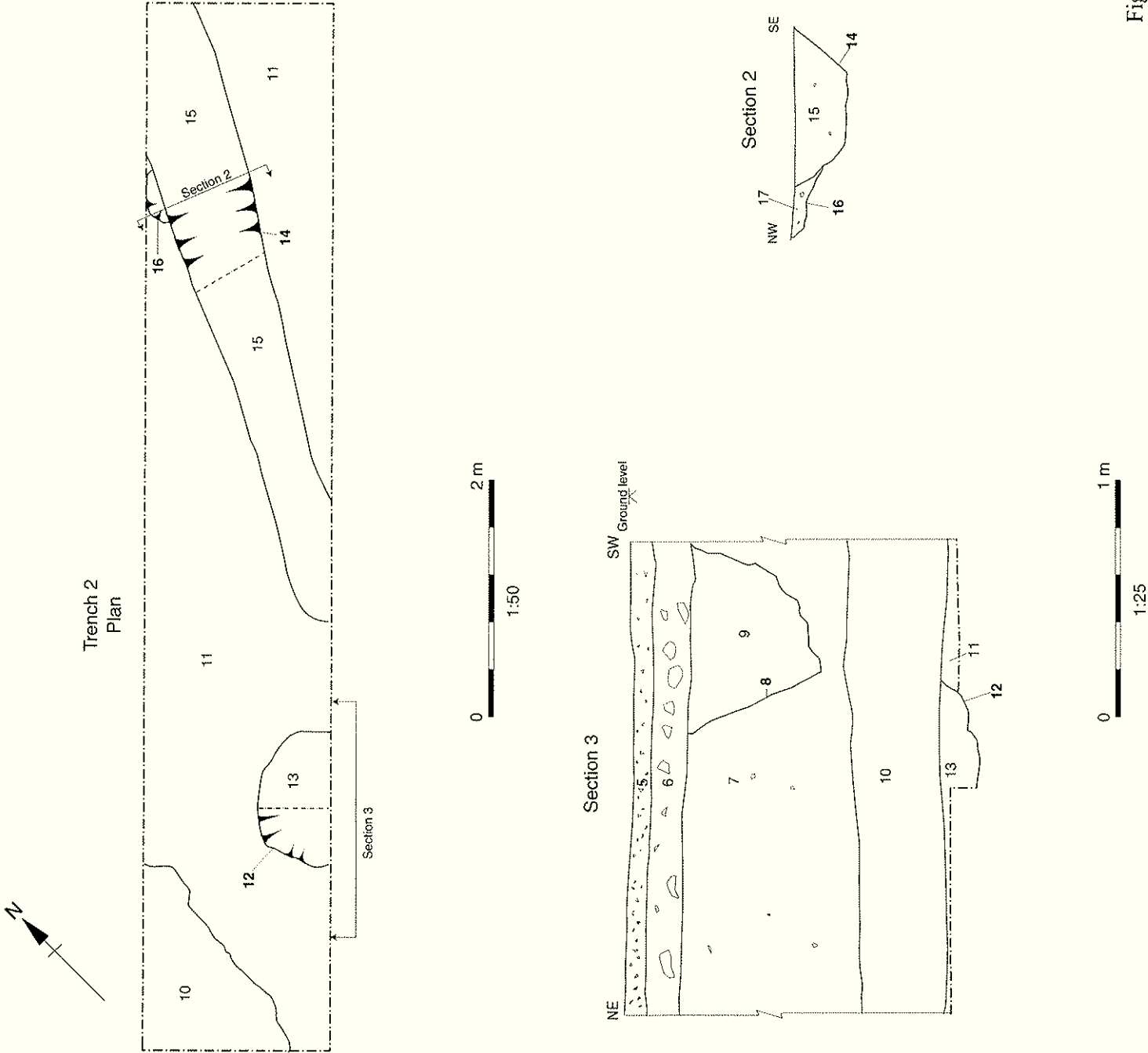


Figure 4: Trench 2, plan and sections

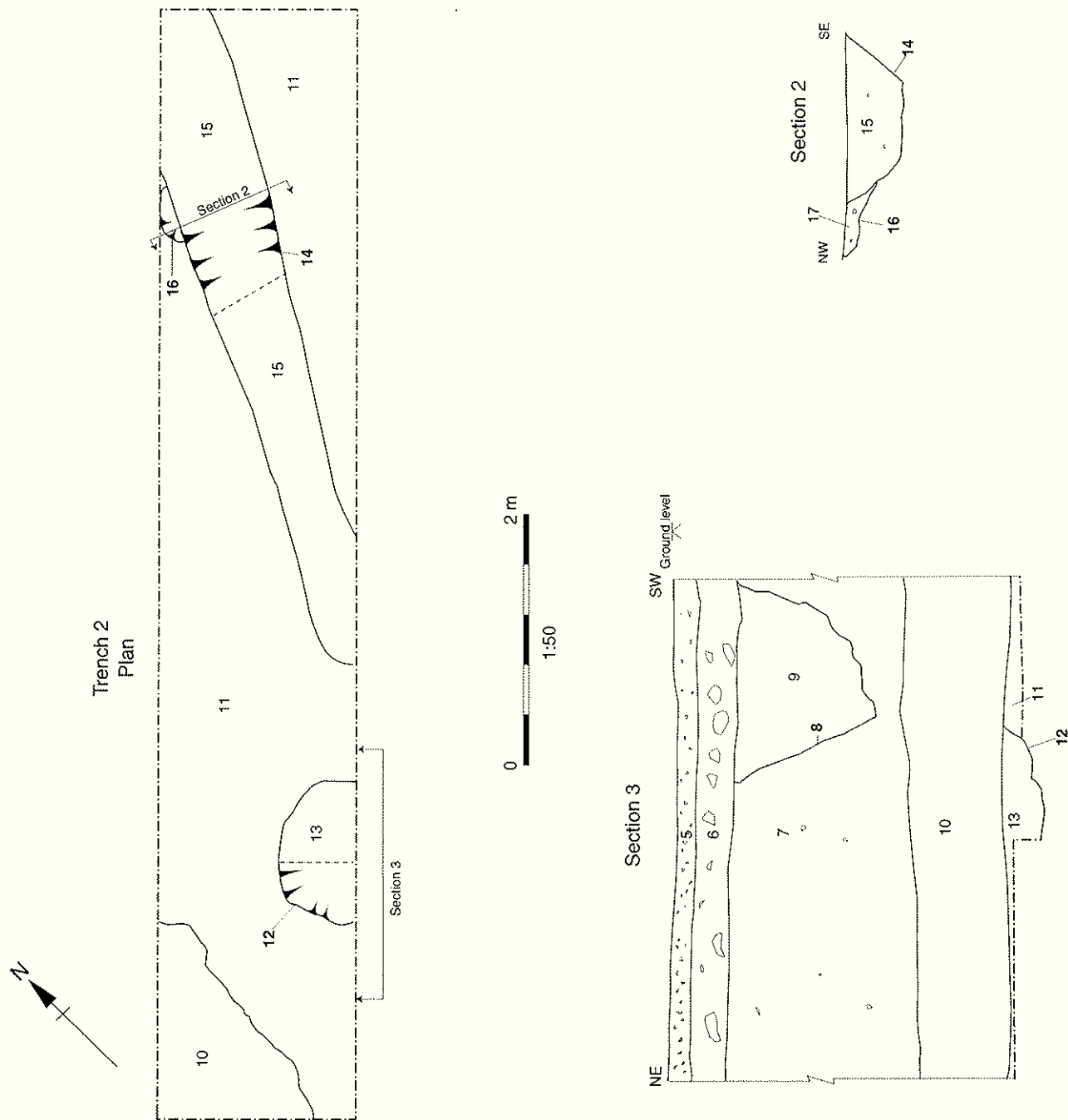
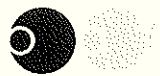


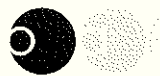
Figure 4: Trench 2, plan and sections



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