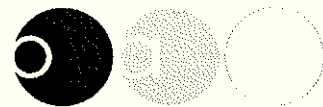


# North West Tip Extension at Cloud Hill Quarry Leicestershire



## Archaeological Evaluation Report



**Oxford Archaeology**

April 2005

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**Ennstone Johnston Ltd**

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***North West Tip Extension at Cloud Hill Quarry, Leicestershire***  
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

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## SUMMARY

*Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at land north-west of Cloud Hill Quarry on behalf of Ennstone Johnston Ltd. The evaluation revealed two post-medieval or later field boundary ditches and two very recent burning spreads. The layout of trial trenching was based on the results of a geophysical survey conducted by Northamptonshire Archaeology on behalf of OA. All targeted anomalies have proved to be either modern features or geological limestone outcrops.*

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In March 2005 OA carried out a field evaluation at land north-west of Cloud Hill Quarry on behalf of Ennstone Johnston Ltd in respect of a planning application for the extension of the existing Northwest Tip (Planning Application No. 04/1394/7). A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI, OA 2005) was agreed with Richard Clark, Senior Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council. The development site is centred on NGR: SK 408 221 and is 5.37 hectares in area.

1.1.2 The proposed development site is an irregular triangular area of approximately 5.37 hectares, measuring approximately 200 m x 400 m at its greatest extent. The site is currently disused but has been cultivated as arable land in the recent past. It borders the southern edge of the A42, south of Nottingham and north-west of Leicester. The village of Breedon on the Hill and the Scheduled Monument of Breedon Hill are located *c* 1 km to the north (Fig. 1).

#### 1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site lies at *c* 80m above OD with a mildly undulating topography forming a low lying spur, sloping slightly to the north-east. Boden Brook flows to the east of the site on the opposite side of the existing tip.

1.2.2 The borehole survey data collected during geological investigations, indicates that the site is underlain by a sequence of red clays and marls (Mercia Mudstone) of Triassic age, approximately 25 m thick. The drift geology is that of glacial clay deposits.

1.2.3 The proposed development site is enclosed on the north-eastern side by a recently constructed wooden fence backed by a hawthorn hedge / screen which runs along the top of the cutting of the A42. The south-eastern boundary is also a wooden fence backed by a hawthorn hedge, fronted by a shallow ditch. Beyond this boundary lies the existing tip which stands as a raised mound along the extent of this border. The south-western boundary is a hedge dividing the site from the adjoining field.

### 1.3 Archaeological [and historical] background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the evaluation has been the subject of a separate desk based assessment (OA 2004) the results of which are summarised below. The site itself has previously produced no significant archaeological evidence.
- 1.3.2 Some archaeological work has been undertaken within the study area. This has mainly been concerned with the known multi-period site of Breedon Hill. Excavations have been undertaken ahead of quarrying since the 1940s in this area and include the excavation of a Saxon cemetery involving the exhumation of over 180 bodies. A recent excavation by Oxford Archaeology in March 2004 uncovered scatters of Neolithic worked flints and pottery further adding to the evidence for activity during this period on the site.
- 1.3.3 A desk based assessment and fieldwalking survey have been undertaken by the University of Leicestershire Archaeological Services in 1995 ahead of the proposed Cloud Hill Quarry extension. The fieldwalking revealed a scatter of Prehistoric material and medieval / post-medieval squatter cottage remains c. 1 km to the south of the current proposed development area. In 1996 a trial trench evaluation was conducted as a follow up to the fieldwalking carried out by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services on the previously detected concentration of prehistoric material. No archaeology apart from a post-medieval linear feature was uncovered.

#### ***Prehistoric Period 500,000BP - 43AD***

- 1.3.4 The proposed development site contains a number of features which suggest that it would have been amenable to settlement from the prehistoric period onwards. These features include an easily accessible water supply, raised ground and workable soils. The focus of activity in the area during this period is likely to have been the prominent hill top of Breedon Hill, which from its array of remains can be seen to be a multi-period site of considerable archaeological interest spanning the prehistoric periods through to present. The main period of known activity on the hill dates to the Iron Age, with various phases of occupation and fortification having taken place during this period. It is likely that the proposed development site lay within the territory of this major hillfort and thus it might be expected that there would be further more widespread small scale farmstead occupation in the area.

#### ***Roman Period 43AD - 410 AD***

- 1.3.5 There is little evidence of Roman activity within the study area other than the Roman findspots on Breedon Hill, which include coins and pottery. The two coins found are of 4th century date, and the pottery was found during one of the excavations on the hill. The nearest known occupation site from the Roman period is a probable villa site 1 km to the west of the proposed development site.

***Early Medieval Period 410 AD - 1066 AD***

- 1.3.6 The extent of early medieval settlement within the study area is uncertain, although the core of the Anglo-Saxon village of Breedon on the Hill (OA10) has been indicated by the SMR as being located within the southern extent of the existing settlement. There was also a Saxon monastery founded on the hill between 675 and 704 with a related early Christian cemetery, dating from 650 AD and seeing continued use up to 1099 AD. The village is likely to have prospered by serving the monastery, and acting as a focal point for a small rural hinterland.

***Later Medieval Period 1066 AD - 1550 AD***

- 1.3.7 Some understanding of the likely medieval layout of the proposed development area and its surroundings can be obtained from the range of historic maps consulted. Medieval / early Post-medieval layout of the area shows that the proposed development area is situated across what looks to be a largely uncultivated land named Great Meadow and A Flat of Land. The proposed development site looks to lie within the meadow land on the southern edge of the parish. This may be further indicated by the map / plan supplied by the Leicestershire SMR which shows the extent of ridge and furrow in the area. Although the ridge and furrow remains are very extensive in the area the proposed development site appears free of any such remains.

***Post-Medieval Period 1550AD +***

- 1.3.8 The Parish was enclosed in 1759. The enclosure map is dated 1761 and shows a typical enclosure landscape of small hedged fields (Fig. 5). However the areas of Great Meadow and A Flat of Land have largely remained unchanged without further segmentation probably being retained as meadow common land used for grazing on the southern marginal edge of the parish. The 1836 edition 1" OS shows the first indication that the limestone outcrop on which the present quarry is active is being exploited with the presence of Cloud Hill Lime Works just to the south of the site. The proposed development site itself appears free from any alteration.

**2 EVALUATION AIMS**

- 2.1.1 To investigate the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the proposed development area by a staged approach commencing with a geophysical survey.
- 2.1.2 To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present, with particular reference to landscape development that may be associated or contemporary to the multi-functional Breedon Hill.
- 2.1.3 To establish any requirements for a mitigation strategy.
- 2.1.4 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features.
- 2.1.5 To make available the results of the investigation.

- 2.1.6 To define any relevant research priorities if additional archaeological investigation proves necessary.

### **3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Scope of fieldwork**

- 3.1.1 Mr Richard Clark, Senior Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council, has specified a phased approach to evaluating the area of the proposed tip extension. Stage 1 took the form of a geophysical survey of the 5.37 ha area. Dependant upon the results of the geophysical survey, Stage 2 comprised a targeted phase of trial trenching.
- 3.1.2 Methodology regarding the geophysical survey of the site has been outlined in the WSI (OA 2005) and the results are described below, as presented in the report submitted by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA 2005).
- 3.1.3 The evaluation consisted of nine trenches measuring 30 m x 2 m (Fig. 2). The overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision by a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket.

#### **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 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 OAU Fieldwork Manual (ed D Wilkinson, 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 There were no suitable archaeological deposits encountered during the fieldwork that had any potential for palaeo-environmental evidence.

#### **3.5 Presentation of results**

- 3.5.1 In the following sections the deposits are described by trench. Trenches containing no archaeological remains have been described and discussed as a group. There is additional comment on the finds and reliability of the results. This is followed by a discussion, interpretation and conclusion. The results of the geophysical survey have also been included. A context inventory, including finds lists is included in Appendix 1.



## 4 RESULTS: GENERAL

### 4.1 Soils and ground conditions

4.1.1 The site incorporates mildly undulating landscape with higher ground at the southern part of the site at *c* 80 m above OD. The ground slopes towards the north-east reaching the lowest part of the site at *c* 74m above OD. The soils consisted of dark topsoil, which was evidently arable in recent times, overlying sporadically present clay-silt subsoil and finally reaching reddish brown clay natural with occasional limestone solifluction outcrops.

### 4.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits

4.2.1 Only trenches 1 and 6 contained archaeological features albeit post-medieval field boundaries and recent burning spreads.

### 4.3 Geophysical survey results (Fig. 2)

4.2.2 The entire survey area was covered in a scatter of magnetic 'ferrous litter' and larger sources of ferrous noise.

4.2.3 Regular linear anomalies were visible across the entire site, both in the results and in the field. These were initially interpreted as wheel ruts (NA 2005), but the field excavation proved them to be land drains.

4.2.4 On the east side of the survey area there was an area of positive and negative magnetism. This indicated a former road that ran along the edge of the field and has since been partially buried with soil from the quarry.

4.2.5 Several small discrete positive anomalies were identified in the northern part of the survey area. The initial interpretation was that these could be small pits or possibly buried pieces of magnesian limestone from the local quarries. These proved to be natural geological limestone outcrops.

4.2.6 An area of negative magnetism was also evident on the east side, thought to be the effect of ferrous anomalies within a fenceline, but more likely represented a signal given by an underground service cable located during the trial trenching.

## 5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

### 5.1 Description of deposits

#### *Trench 1*

5.1.1 Trench 1 (Fig. 3) was orientated east-west. It was excavated down to a maximum depth of 0.50 m and the reddish clay natural (100) was reached at *c* 0.35m. SW-NE orientated ditch 101 cut the natural in the eastern part of the trench. The ditch was filled with loamy clay fills and overlain by a layer of redeposited natural (107). The



lowest fill (103) contained a rim sherd of Nottingham stoneware storage jar dating to c. 1780-1900. The ditch is in alignment with the kink in the hedgerow along the western edge of the site and is also visible as a field boundary on the OS maps (Fig. 2). It appears to represent a field boundary prior to the construction and cutting of the A42. The only other deposit present within the trench was a spread of recent burning (102) mixed in with the topsoil, which accounts for the geophysical anomaly targeted by Trench 1.

### ***Trenches 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7***

- 5.1.2 These five trenches contained no archaeological features and were characterised by the same stratigraphic sequence.
- 5.1.3 Trench 2 was situated on the highest part of the site and was orientated north-south. It was excavated down to a maximum depth of 0.40 m and the reddish clay natural was reached at c 0.20m. Natural clay was directly overlain by the topsoil.
- 5.1.4 Trench 3 (Fig. 4) was situated to the north-east of Trench 2 and was orientated east-west. It was excavated down to a maximum depth of 0.40 m and the natural clay was reached at c 0.25 m to the west and 0.40 m to the east. The reason for this fluctuation in depth of the natural was the presence of a subsoil layer (302) in the eastern part of the trench. Judging by the topography of the site and the observations in the other trenches, it is most likely that this subsoil layer is of colluvial origin. A very abraded rim sherd of a simple form of early medieval jar or a cooking pot was found within the subsoil (302), dating to c 11th - 13th century.
- 5.1.5 Trench 4 was orientated north-south and excavated to a maximum depth of 0.40 m. Natural clay was reached at c 0.30-0.40 m and it was overlain by a layer of light reddish brown clay-silt subsoil. The subsoil was marginally thicker at the lower northern part of the trench and thus supporting the evidence from Trench 3 that this is essentially a colluvial deposit.
- 5.1.6 Trench 5 was also orientated north-south. The trench contained the same stratigraphic sequence as Trench 4 with slightly thicker layer of subsoil, probably due to being further down the slope.
- 5.1.7 Trench 7 was situated north-east of Trench 5 and was orientated east-west. It contained exactly the same stratigraphic sequence as Trenches 4 and 5 with subsoil layer being slightly thicker in the eastern part of the trench. An area of negative magnetism shown on the geophysical plot has been targeted by this trench, but proved to be an underground service trench.

### ***Trench 6***

- 5.1.8 Trench 6 (Fig. 5) was orientated east-west. It was excavated down to a maximum depth of 0.40 m and the clay natural was reached at c 0.25m. The colluvial subsoil described above ( Trenches 3, 4, 5 and 7) was not present in this trench.

- 5.1.9 Linear feature 602 was aligned NW-SE and cut the clay natural obliquely across the trench. This field boundary contained a plastic cartridge case and a piece of modern glass in its top fill (603), neither of which have been retained, but suggest that the final silting of the ditch has occurred fairly recently. Ditch 602 ran roughly perpendicular to post-medieval ditch 101 in Trench 1 and was likely to be of similar date or even later.
- 5.1.10 Ditch 602 has been truncated at its most south-western extent by modern feature 606, which contained a recent burning debris full of charred hedgerow remains. This modern feature was to account for the geophysical anomaly targeted by Trench 6. The burning (605) within this feature (606) was overlain by topsoil (600).

### ***Trenches 8 and 9***

- 5.1.11 Trenches 8 and 9 were the two most northerly positioned trenches and have been grouped together for description due to similar stratigraphic sequence. Neither of the two trenches contained any archaeological remains. Trenches 8 and 9 were positioned so that they target several discrete magnetic anomalies indicated by the geophysical survey and had been interpreted prior to the trial trenching as possible pits or even limestone dumps from the local quarry works.
- 5.1.12 Trench 8 (Fig. 6) was orientated north-south. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.60 m at the north end of the trench in order to investigate a magnetic anomaly. This positive magnetic signal probably originated from a natural limestone outcrop (803), which is overlain by limestone solifluction and clay mix (802), which is in turn overlain by red clay natural (801). This sequence is overlain by topsoil (800).
- 5.1.13 Trench 9 (Fig. 7) was positioned east-west, perpendicular to Trench 8, in order to target potential discrete features identified by the geophysical survey as positive magnetic anomalies. The results have proved to be similar to those in Trench 8, with localised limestone solifluction matching the indicated position of the geophysical anomaly at the western end of the trench.

## **5.2 Finds**

- 5.2.1 Only two sherds of pottery have been retrieved during the evaluation. A Nottingham stoneware storage jar rim dating to c 1780-1900 has been retrieved from fill 103 of ditch 101 in Trench 1 and a jar/cooking pot rim dating to c 11th - 13th century from the subsoil layer (302) in Trench 3. The identification has been conducted by John Cotter (Oxford Archaeology).

## **6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION**

### **6.1 Reliability of field investigation**

- 6.1.1 The conditions in the field were generally dry. There was a medium level of intrusion by post-medieval and more recent agricultural activity, including ploughing and

especially the extensive field drainage system, which is also clearly visible on the geophysical survey plot (Fig. 2).

- 6.1.2 The results of the geophysical survey have been closely matched by the results of the trial trenching and all targeted geophysical anomalies have been explained by the excavation to a high level of confidence.

## 6.2 Overall interpretation

- 6.2.1 Archaeological features were revealed in two out of nine trenches. Trenches 1 and 6 have revealed the traces of a post-medieval field system in the form of linear field boundary ditches, which have probably survived until the construction of the A42 has altered these boundaries. Both ditches seem to be accompanied by later burnt debris, quite possibly an evidence for the burning of the associated hedgerows that have been removed. Furthermore, these spreads of burning are clearly the cause for the geophysical anomalies targeted by Trenches 1 and 6.
- 6.2.2 It was also possible to interpret the other geophysical anomalies targeted by the trial trenching. Trench 5 confirmed the hedgerow disturbance within the topsoil horizon and Trench 7 revealed that the negative magnetic signal originated from the underground service trench containing an electricity cable, both situated along the eastern edge of the proposed development area.
- 6.2.3 Trenches 8 and 9, situated at the northern extent of the area were set to examine several discrete anomalies, thought to be potential pits, that proved to be an area of localised geological outcrops, specifically limestone and limestone solifluctates.
- 6.2.4 **Conclusion**
- 6.2.5 The evaluation revealed low potential for archaeological remains on site. Combined results of the geophysical survey (Stage 1) and trial trenching (Stage 2) were consistent and have proved that the targeted magnetic anomalies were either areas of modern disturbance or a product of localised variation in geological sequence.
- 6.2.6 The only two linear features on site were interpreted as the field boundaries in use until the construction of the A42, with associated burning of the hedgerows which accompanied them. Exactly the same process has been observed during the field evaluation in relation to the removal of the hedgerow along the eastern edge of the trench bordering the current extent of the Cloud Hill Quarry.
- 6.2.7 The presence of a single rim sherd recovered from the colluvial subsoil layer in Trench 3 and dating to c 11th -13th century, might indicate the date for the formation of this deposit, possibly as a result of change in the agricultural practices. For example a switch from grazing to arable could easily result in increased movement of the soil in the form of hillwash. Nevertheless, the pottery could just as easily be a residual find.

## APPENDICES

## Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory

Trench	Ctxt no	Type	Width (m)	Thick. (m)	Comment	Finds	No./Wt	Date
001								
	100	Layer			Natural clay			
	101	Cut	1.40		Ditch			
	102	Layer	1.90	0.25	Burning spread			
	103	Fill	1.40	0.30	Fill of 101	Pot	1	c 1780-1900
	104	Void						
	105	Fill	1.00	0.10	Fill of 101			
	106	Fill	0.45	0.05	Fill of 101			
	107	Layer		0.30	Redeposited natural clay			
	108	Layer		0.15	Topsoil			
	109	Layer		0.34	Redeposited natural clay and topsoil mix			
002								
	200	Layer			Natural clay			
	201	Layer			Topsoil			
003								
	300	Layer			Natural clay			
	301	Layer			Topsoil			
	302	Layer			Colluvial subsoil	Pot	1	c 11th-13th c.
004								
	400	Layer			Colluvial subsoil			
	401	Layer			Topsoil			
	402	Layer			Natural clay			
005								
	500	Layer			Natural clay			
	501	Layer		0.25	Topsoil			
	502	layer		0.25	Colluvial subsoil			
006								
	600	layer		0.25	Topsoil			
	601	layer			Natural clay			
	602	cut	0.60		Ditch			
	603	fill	0.60	0.08	Fill of 602			
	604	fill	0.60	0.20	Fill of 602			
	605	fill	4.00		Fill of 606			
	606	cut	4.00		Modern pit			
007								
	700	layer		0.30	Topsoil			
	701	layer		0.20	Colluvial subsoil			
	702	layer			Natural clay			
008								
	800	layer		0.25	Topsoil			
	801	layer		0.25	Natural clay			
	802	layer		0.12	Limestone solifluction			
	803	layer			Limestone outcrop			
009								
	900	layer		0.20	Topsoil			

Trench	Ctxt no	Type	Width (m)	Thick. (m)	Comment	Finds	No./Wt	Date
	901	layer			Natural clay			

## Appendix 2 Bibliography and References

- EH, 2002 Guidelines Environmental Archaeology
- IFA, 1999 Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations
- NA, 2005 Geophysical Survey on Land to the North West of Cloud Hill Quarry, Leicestershire (Northamptonshire Archaeology, Northamptonshire County Council)
- OA, 1992 Fieldwork Manual (ed. D. Wilkinson, first edition, 1992)
- OA, 2004 Cloud Hill Quarry Tip Extension: Archaeological Desk Based Assessment
- OA, 2005 Northwest Tip Extension at Cloud Hill Quarry, Leicestershire: Written Scheme of Investigation

## Appendix 3 Summary of Site Details

**Site name:** Northwest Tip extension at Cloud Hill Quarry

**Site code:** X.A15.2005

**Grid reference:** NGR: SK 408 221

**Type of evaluation:** 9 trenches (1% sample) following geophysical survey

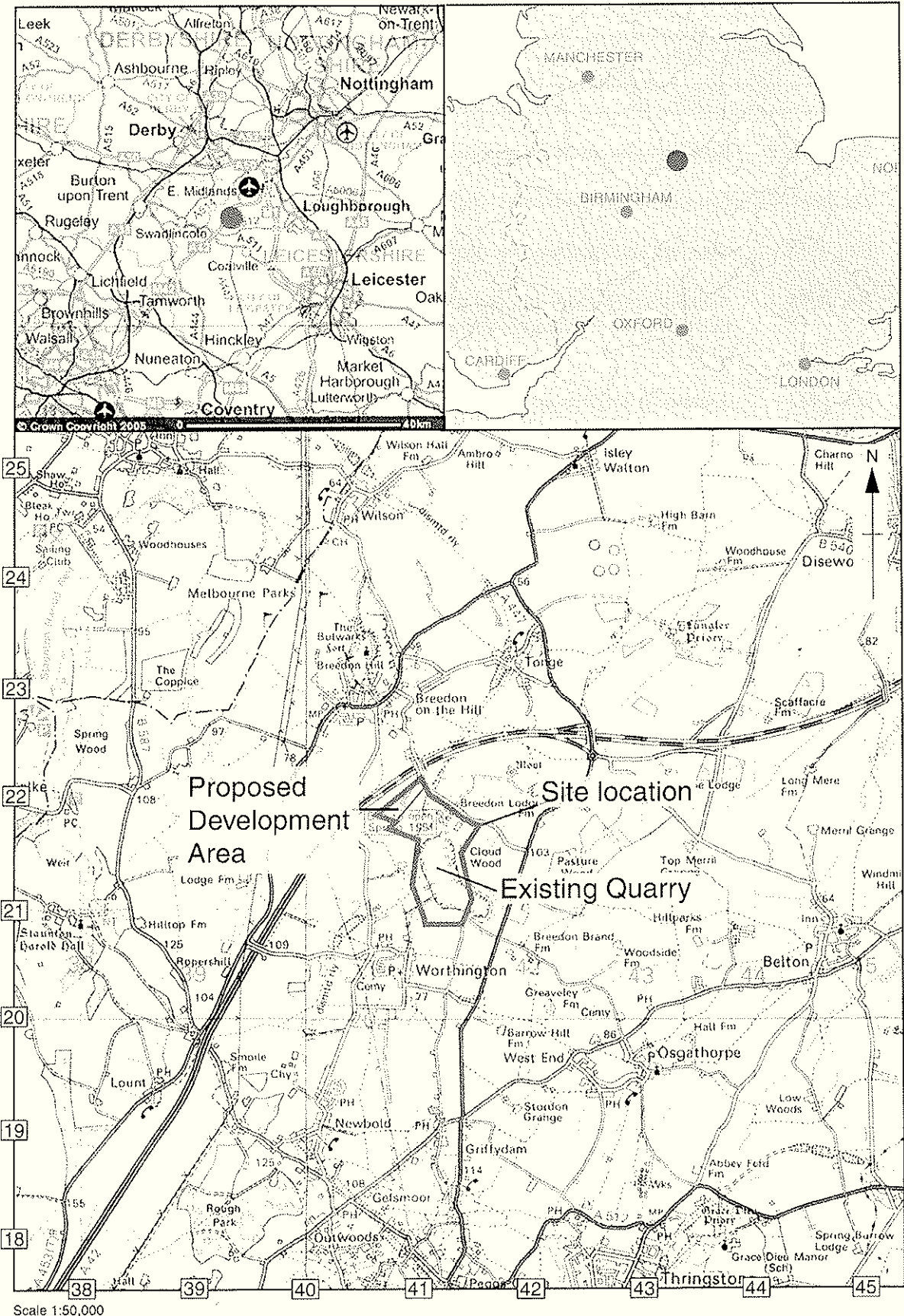
**Date and duration of project:** 4 days from 21st to 24th March 2005

**Area of site:** 5.37 ha

**Summary of results:** two post-Medieval field boundaries and recent burning spreads

**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Leicestershire Heritage Services in due course, under the following accession number: X.A15.200





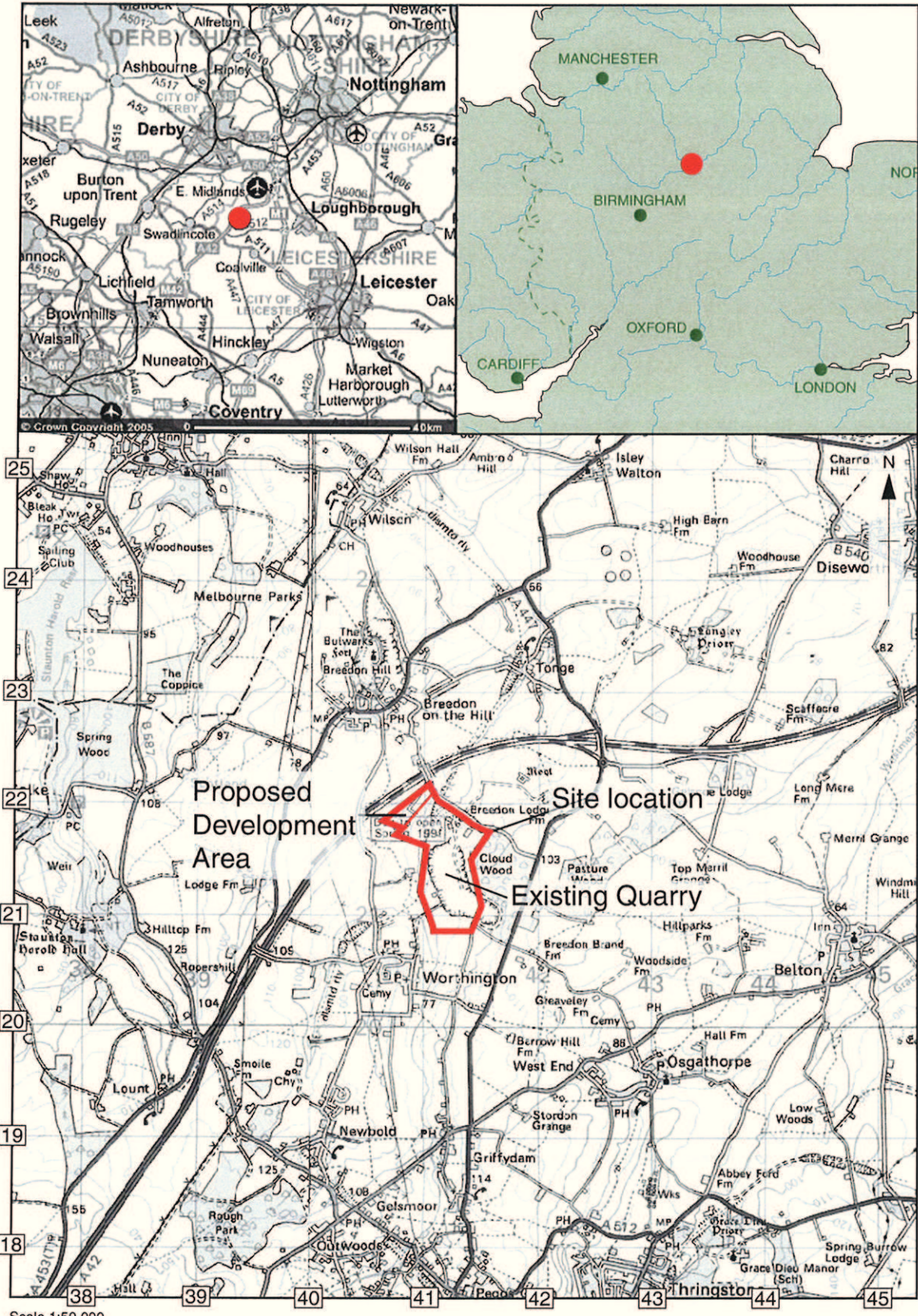
Scale 1:50,000

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Figure 1: Site location



Server:geopubs1\_AltH\*H\*X\_A15.2005\*WOCOEY\*Northwest\_Tip\_Extension\_Cloud\_Hill\_Quarry\_Leicestershire\*GS\*08.04.05



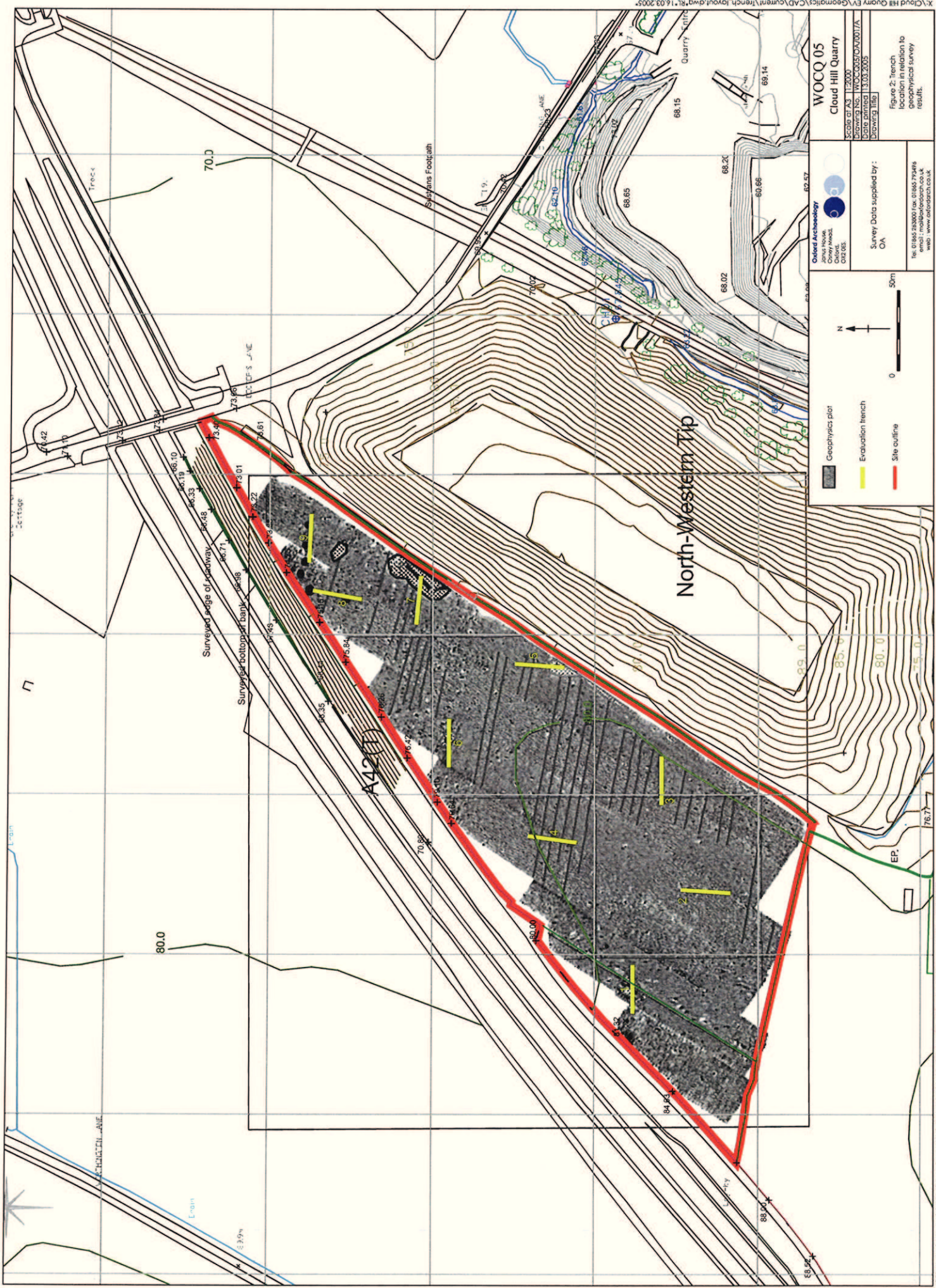
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Figure 1: Site location







**WOCQ 05**  
**Cloud Hill Quarry**

Scale at A3: 1:2000  
 Drawing No: WOCQ05/000017A  
 Date printed: 13.03.2005  
 Drawing Title:

Figure 2: Trench location in relation to geophysics survey results.

Checked By: MB

**Oxford Archaeology**  
 200a Howe Road, Oxford, OX1 0EE

Survey Data supplied by: OA

Tel: 01865 206000 Fax: 01865 779494  
 Email: oxford@oxford-archaeology.co.uk  
 Web: www.oxford-archaeology.co.uk

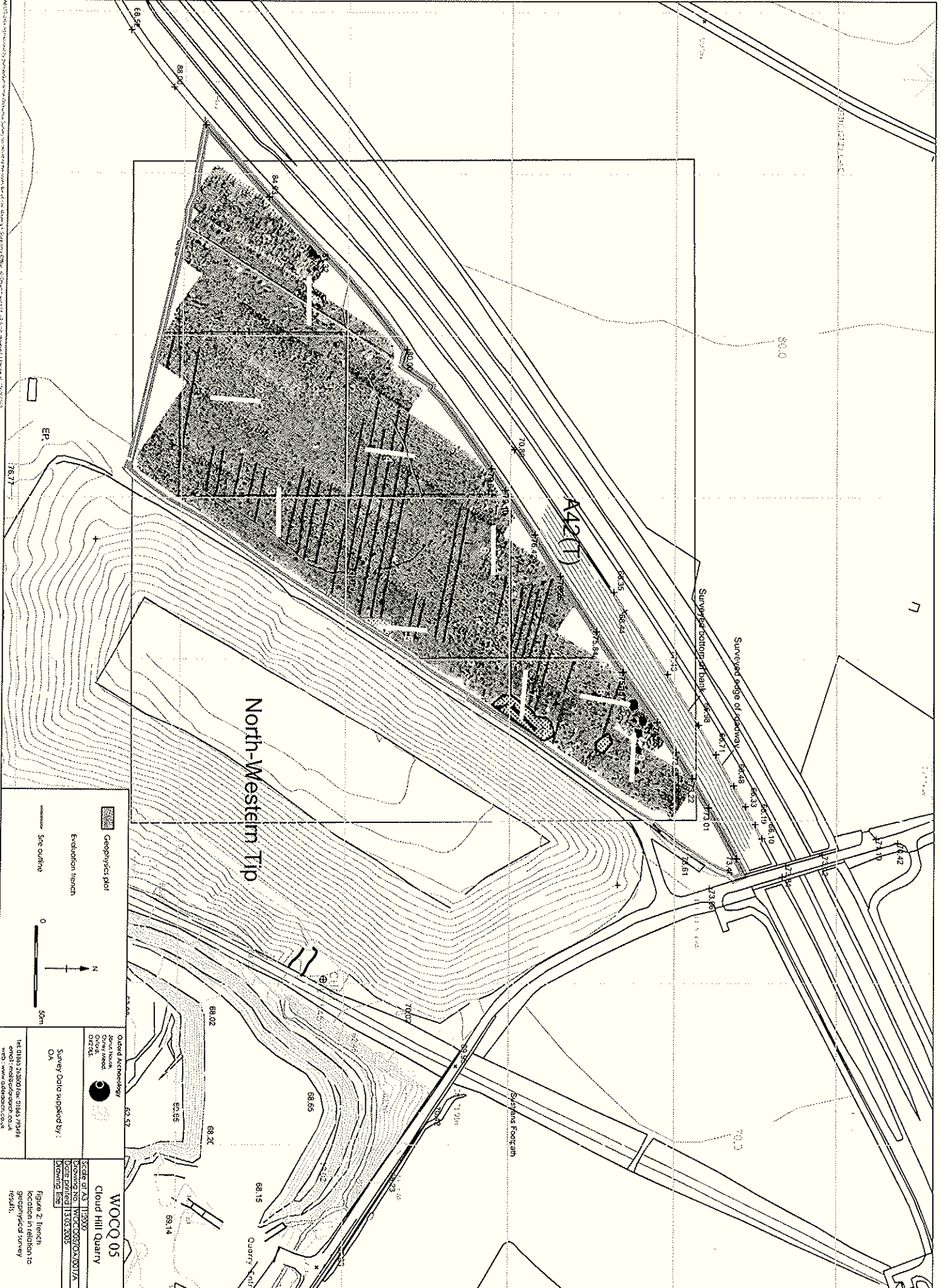
Geophysics plot  
 Evaluation trench  
 Site outline

0 50m

Legend

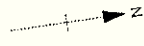




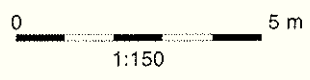
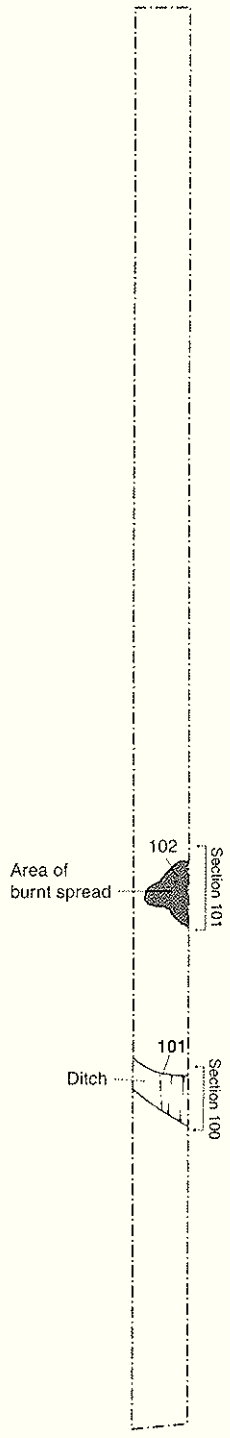


Cloud Hill Quarry EV\Geomatics\CAD\current\trench\_layout.dwg\*16.03.2006\*

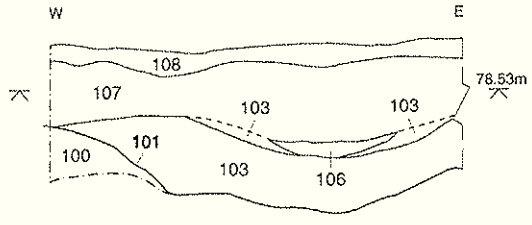
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### Trench 1 Plan



### Trench 1 Section 100



### Trench 1 Section 101

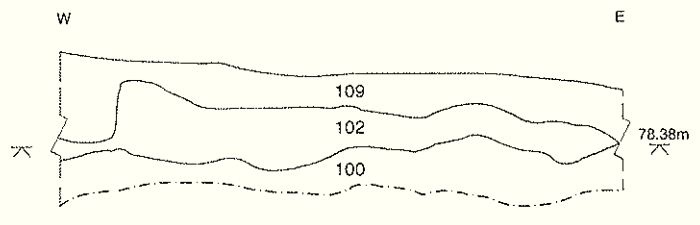


Figure 3: Trench 1, Plan and Sections

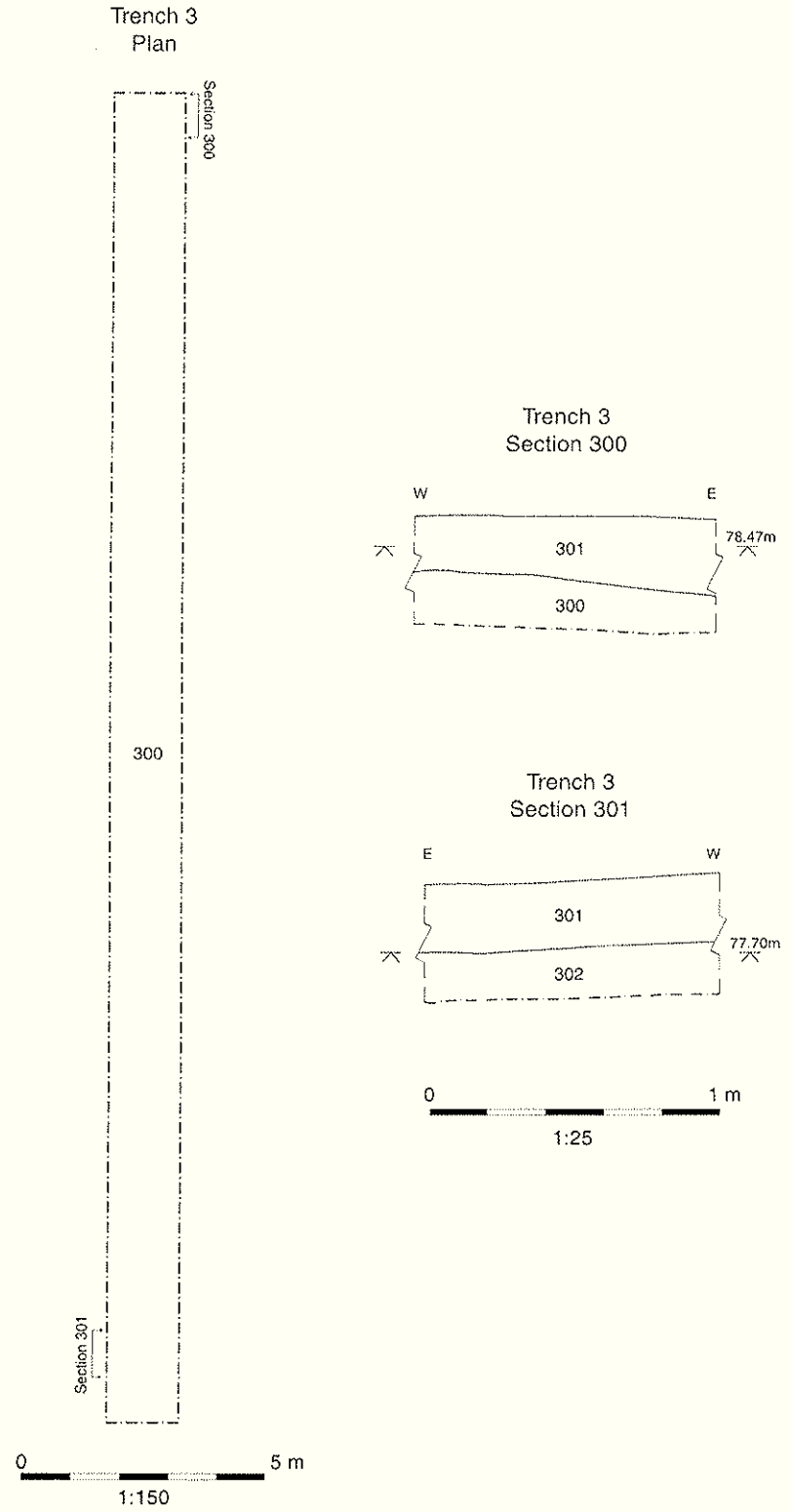
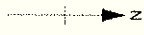


Figure 4: Trench 3, Plan and Sections

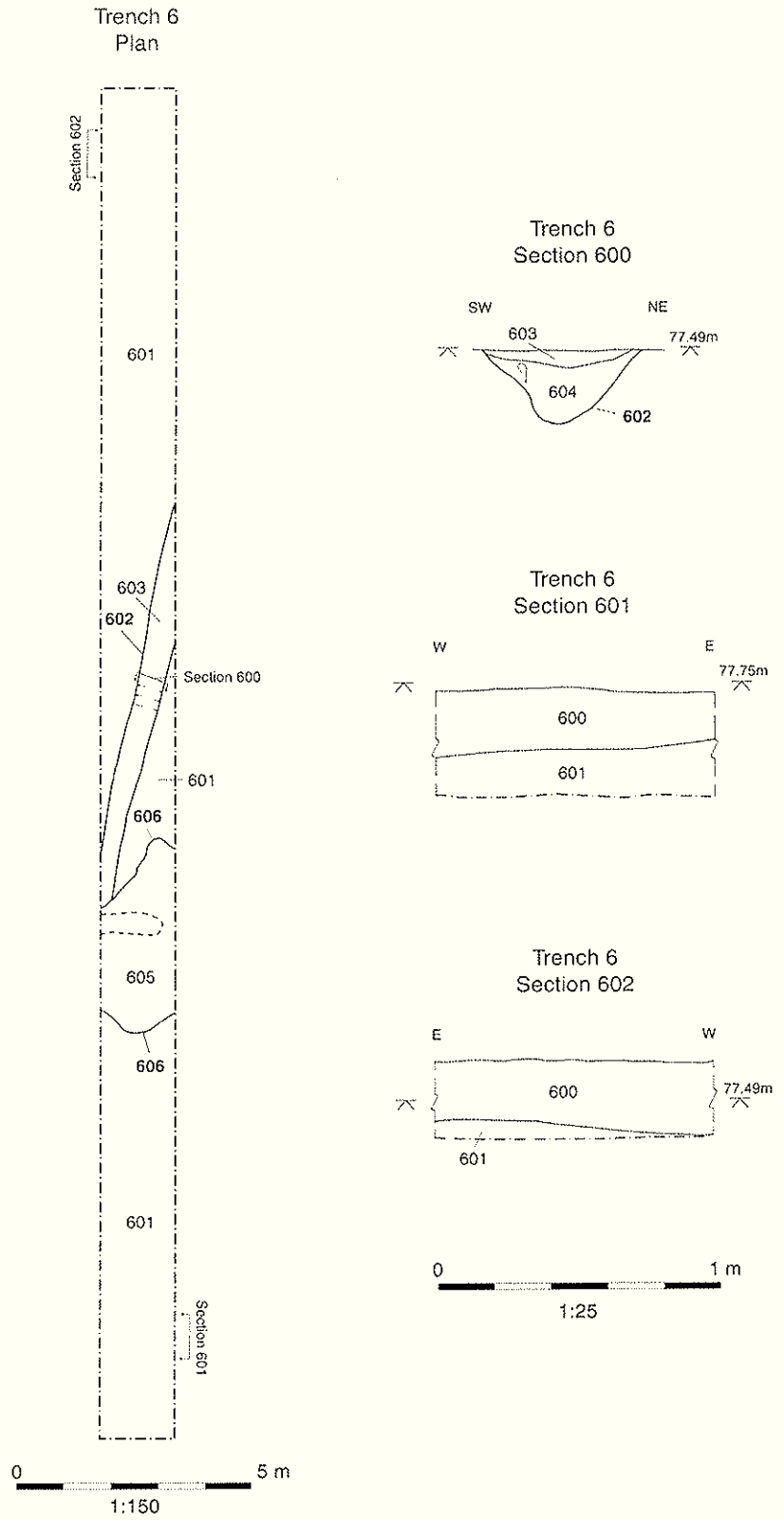


Figure 5: Trench 6, Plan and Sections



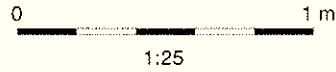
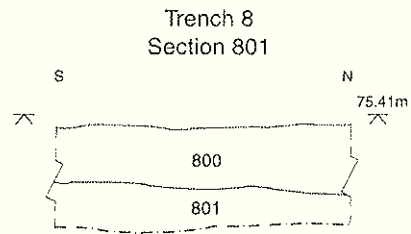
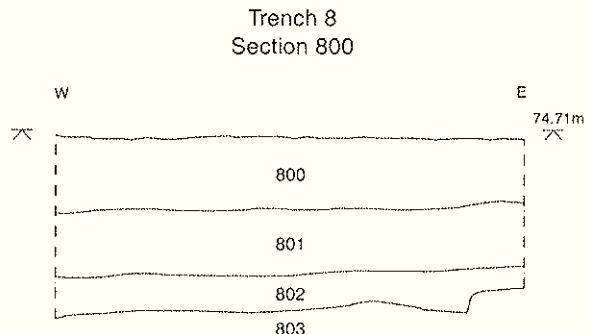
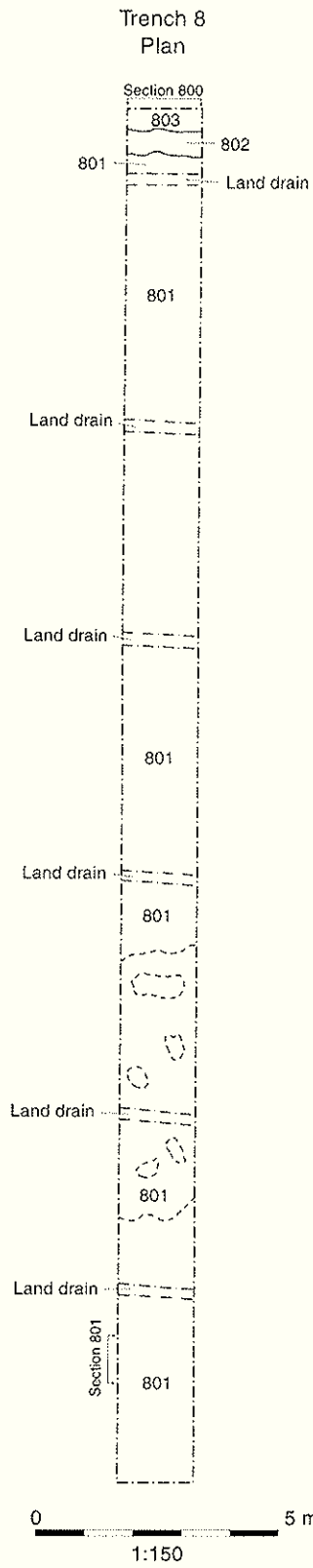
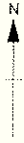
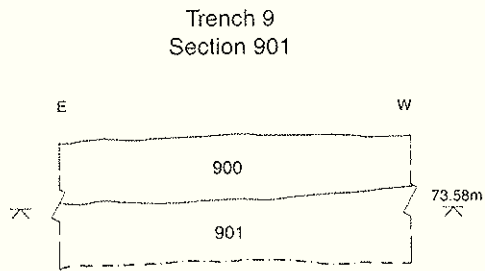
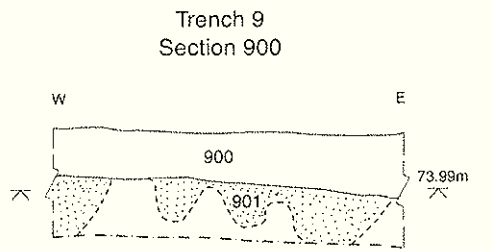
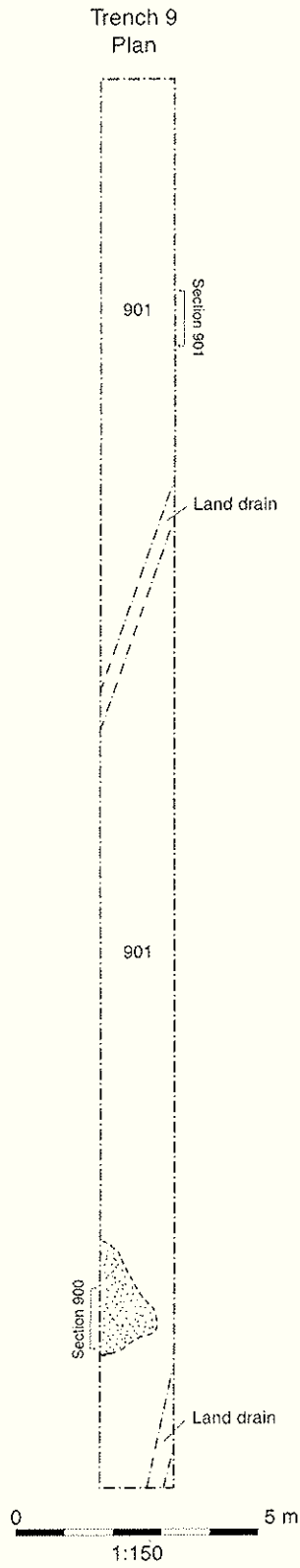
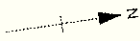


Figure 6: Trench 8, Plan and Sections

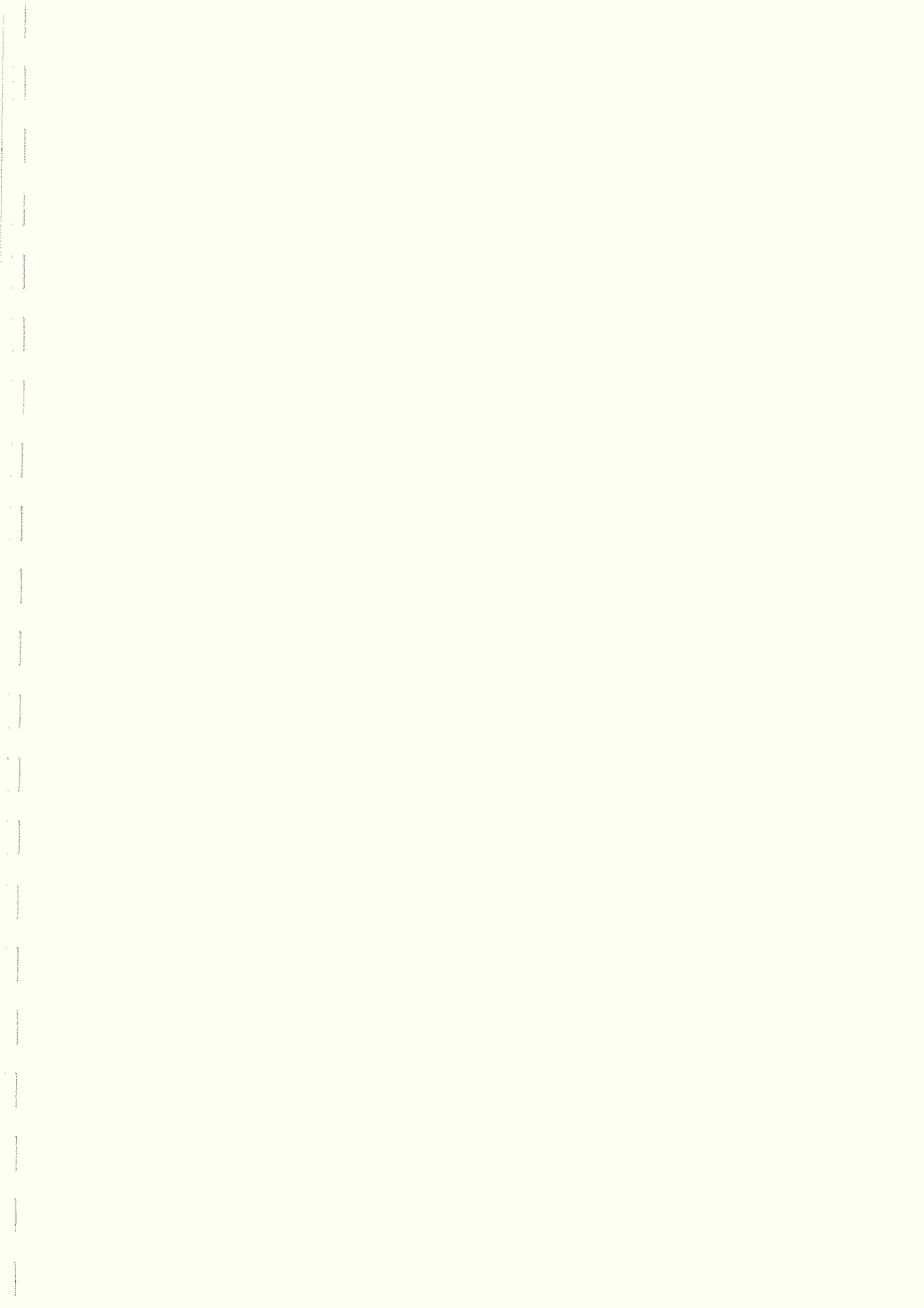


KEY



Limestone solifluction (weathering)

Figure 7: Trench 9, Plan and Sections





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