The Bungalow Ickford Road Shabbington Buckinghamshire



**Archaeological Evaluation Report** 



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# The Bungalow, Ickford Road, Shabbington Buckinghamshire

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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#### **SUMMARY**

In March 2004 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at the Bungalow, Ickford Road, Shabbington on behalf of Banner Homes Ltd. The evaluation revealed a medieval boundary ditch of 11th to 13th century date forming a possible rectangular enclosure and two probable later medieval pits.

#### 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In March 2004 OA carried out a field evaluation at The Bungalow, Ickford Road, Shabbington, Buckinghamshire on behalf of Banner Homes Ltd in respect of a planning application for the construction of three new dwellings (Planning Application No 03/2477). A brief was set by David Radford of Buckinghamshire County Archaeology Service (CAS), (a WSI was agreed.) The development site is situated on the north side of Ickford Road, within the village of Shabbington (NGR: SP 665 069) and is 0.25 hectares in area.

## 1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site lies on a ridge sloping to the west and is mainly underlain by the Kimmeridge Clay Formation, composed of grey mudstone (BGS 1994) between c.68.5 m and 66.5 m OD. The land evaluated forms the residential gardens of the property, which had previously been used for agriculture.

## 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The development area has been the subject of a desk based assessment. The results of which are summarised below (OA 2003).
- 1.3.2 Before the conquest of AD 1066 Shabbington was held by Wigod of Wallingford. At the time of the Domesday survey the settlement was held by Miles Cripspin and comprised of 12 villagers, 7 smallholders and 6 slaves, a fishery with 100 eels and a mill. From 1299 onwards the medieval manor was held by numerous owners including the Knights Hospitallers until the 14th century.
- 1.3.3 Extensive medieval village earthworks survive south and east of the church in Shabbington. A further four house platforms and a street north-east of the church was also surveyed prior to the land being developed in the 1960s. This work produced a number of finds including pottery dating from the Roman period and from the 13th century and later. In respect to the Roman finds, these may be associated with the projected route of a Roman Road thought to run through, or close by, the village.
- 1.3.4 The medieval manor is likely to have been located on the south side of the churchyard where three fishponds are still located and where stone and tile has also been noted. The proposed development is therefore likely to have been on the western edge of, or outside of the early medieval settlement.

1.3.5 The post-medieval town appears to have developed along the Long Crendon Road area, c 200 m north-west of the later medieval settlement core. Between 1683 and 1814 a water-mill is known to have operated on the possible former site of a late medieval wind-mill (OA 2003).

#### 2 EVALUATION AIMS

- 2.1.1 To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the proposal area, in particular any remains of Saxon, medieval or post medieval settlement.
- 2.1.2 To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present.
- 2.1.3 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features.
- 2.1.4 To make available the results of the investigation

#### 3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Scope of fieldwork

3.1.1 The evaluation comprised the excavation of four trenches measuring a total of 30 m. Trenches 1 and 4 were located within the proposed footprint of Unit 1 and measured 11 m and 5.5 m respectively, Trench 2 spanned the proposed footprint of unit 2 at 8.5 m and Trench 3 covered the area of the proposed new garages at a length of 5 m. All trenches were 1.6 m in width.

## 3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

- 3.2.1 The trenches were excavated under archaeological supervision by mechanical excavator using a toothless ditching bucket, to the natural geology or the first archaeological horizon. 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.
- 3.2.3 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 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 The preservation of the charred plant remains on this site is reasonable, and this sample has the potential for further analysis. Any future excavations on this site should consider a wider environmental sampling strategy

## 3.5 Presentation of results

3.5.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below, with stratigraphic accounts of each trench described individually, followed by an overall discussion and interpretation.

#### 4 RESULTS: GENERAL

## 4.1 Soils and ground conditions

4.1.1 The site is covered by a turfed top-soil over a cultivation sub-soil. The weather conditions allowed for good visibility and no flooding of the trenches occurred.

# 4.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits

4.2.1 Archaeological features were encountered in all four trenches comprising a possible boundary ditch and two pits. Finds were recovered from three of the four trenches with dating evidence in the form of pottery in all three.

#### 5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

## 5.1 Description of deposits

5.1.1 A description of deposits is given trench by trench below. This is followed by an interpretation of the archaeological features. A full list of features and deposits encountered can be found in Appendix 1.

## Trench 1

5.1.2 Natural clay was encountered at a depth of 68.43 m OD. This was cut by linear (104), which entered the trench diagonally from the north-east and terminated after 2.2 m. Linear 104 was 0.7 m deep by 1.6 m wide and filled with a dark greyish green silty clay (105). Fill 105 contained 12th century pottery and a soil sample taken of this deposit revealed remains of wheat seeds and charcoal. This feature was truncated by pit 103, which was seen to cut from above the subsoil (101). This was filled by (106) which contained a quantity of modern bricks. The archaeological features were sealed by the subsoil (101), which was in turn overlain by the topsoil (100).

#### Trench 2

- 5.1.3 The natural clay was encountered at 68.77 m OD. The earliest feature in Trench 2 was a linear (202) measuring 1.6 m wide by 0.24 m deep, which ran east-west across the northern end of the trench. This was filled with a greyish brown silty clay (203), which contained pottery dating to the mid 13th century. A pit (204) measuring 1.12 m in diameter by 0.2 m deep was located at the northern limit of the trench and cut linear 202. This was filled with a mid-greyish brown silty clay containing fragments of 13th century pottery and bone.
- 5.1.4 A second undated pit (200) with a diameter of 1.2 m and a depth of 0.26 m was located to the south of linear 202. It was filled with a greyish brown silty clay (201) and contained a few fragments of animal bone. The south end of the trench was heavily disturbed by roots from one of the trees recently felled in the area. The archaeological

features were all sealed by the sub-soil (207), which in turn was overlain by the topsoil (208).

## Trench 3

5.1.5 In Trench 3 the natural lay at a depth of 69.18 m OD, and had been disturbed by roots in a number of places. An east west aligned linear (303) was located on the southern limit of the trench running east-west. It was 0.3 m wide by 0.16 m deep and filled by a greyish brown silty clay (304) which had some charcoal flecking and was sealed by the sub-soil (301) and then the topsoil (100).

#### Trench 4

5.1.6 In this trench the natural was encountered at a depth of 67.86 m OD and had been subject to considerable root disturbance along the length of the trench. A shallow linear (400) crossed the eastern end of the trench running north-south. This was filled by a greyish brown silty clay (401) containing a few fragments of late 11th century pottery and bone. This was then sealed by the sub-soil (403), which was in turn overlain by the topsoil (402).

#### 5.2 Finds

## Pottery

5.2.1 The pottery assemblage comprised 91 sherds with a total weight of 1650 g. All the pottery was medieval apart from a single (20g) redeposited and heavily abraded Romano-British sherd. The bulk of the pottery came from a single context, 105, which produced a number of very large sherds, including a largely complete small jar which was reconstructed to a full profile. This, and the range of pottery types present generally, indicates that there was medieval activity in the vicinity of these excavations throughout the later 11th to later 13th centuries.

#### Animal bone

5.2.2 The bone assemblage although small, is in good condition, clearly displaying butchery and gnawing evidence. The species representation provides a good example of animal utilisation, food and butchery waste from the site. In the event of further excavation the good preservation suggests that any faunal remains recovered would provide meaningful insight into the animal economies, diversity of diet and local environment (see Appendix 3).

## Other finds

- 5.2.3 Fragments of petrified bone were recovered from deposit (105), which filled ditch terminus 104 in Trench 1. This bone was later identified by Paul Jefferey at the Oxford Natural History Museum as part of an Ichthyosaur vertebra.
- 5.2.4 The Ichthyosaur was a sea-dwelling reptile from the Jurassic which evolved from earlier land-dwelling reptile called the Saurian and measured up to 18 m in length. The Ichthyosaur developed over time from a reptile like creature with fins to a fish like creature, during which time the back bone changed from long slender lizard-like vertebra to a squat disc like vertebra. This development corresponded to a change in body mass from a slender frame to a much bulkier frame. This study is based on a

- comparison with sharks. The fragments from Trench 1 are of the latter type of vertebra indicating that the Ichthyosaur was of the later Jurassic type.
- 5.2.5 The natural clay on site is Kimmeridge Clay Formation which belongs to the late Jurassic, and is in accordance with the Ichthyosaur vertebra being of the later type. It appears that either the excavation of the boundary ditch clipped the top of remains within the clay or that the fragment had been brought in with the fill from somewhere in the locality.
- 5.2.6 A small amount of iron slag was recovered from the boundary ditch, indicating that iron working was being carried out in the vicinity.

#### 5.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 5.3.1 During the evaluation a soil sample, was taken from fill (105) from within the terminus of a 12th-13th century boundary ditch. The sample was processed in a modified Siraf machine, with the flot retained onto a 250µm mesh. The flot was looked at under a binocular microscope at x10 magnification.
- 5.3.2 The flot is large in size (130ml), with abundant charred material, including cereal grain and wood charcoal. The preservation of the grain was variable but appeared to be dominated by *Triticum* sp. (wheat). Edible legumes and some *Corylus avellana* (hazel) nutshell fragments were also present. Weed seeds, including *Bromus* sp. (brome grass), were noted in small quantities. The flot also contained a high proportion of modern roots and plant material. The residues contained pottery and animal bone fragments. It seems likely that this sample has been taken from a dump of domestic refuse.
- 5.3.3 The preservation of the charred plant remains on this site is reasonable, and this sample has the potential for further analysis. Any future excavations on this site should consider a wider environmental sampling strategy Presentation of results

#### 5.4 Reliability of field investigation

5.4.1 Although the shallow depth of the features indicates the site has previously suffered plough damage the survival of the features and deposits is good and likely to reflect survival elsewhere on the site. This distribution of trenches is believed to have given a reliable indication of the archaeological potential within the site.

#### 6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

- 6.1.1 Linears 104, 202 and 400 appear to form part of a shallow rectangular boundary ditch presumably enclosing some form of settlement. Linear 304 may also form part of this enclosure, although with the limited extent of this feature revealed in Trench 3 combined with a lack of dating evidence, this may equally be unrelated both in date and function.
- 6.1.2 The earliest pottery recovered from the boundary ditch were Medieval Oxford ware and Medieval Grey Sandy ware, dating to the 11th century. The latest material recovered consisted of forms of Potterspury-ware, Brill/Boarstall ware, Newbury-type ware and Medieval Oxford ware dating to the mid 13th century. This shows that

pottery came from Buckinghamshire and neighbouring Shires to the south; Oxfordshire and Berkshire. Buckinghamshire was one of the largest producers of tiles and pottery in the medieval period and therefore, not surprisingly, was well represented within features on site. The presence of wares from Oxfordshire and Berkshire also indicates trade across the South.

- 6.1.3 The low density of finds from Trenches 2, 3 and 4 in contrast with the quantity recovered from within terminus 104 in Trench 1 indicates this may be the entrance to an enclosure (the concentration of finds within the terminus may be the result of a high level of traffic passing through the entrance and discarding domestic waste on an ad hoc basis). It is clear though from the desk based assessment that the focus of the medieval settlement was to the east of this site (OA 2003). In light of this and the relatively small size of the boundary ditch(es), it is more likely that this enclosure was agricultural in function, possibly used for cattle or in-field plots rather than for settlement.
- 6.1.4 Pit 204 (and possibly pit 200) observed in Trench 2 belongs to later activity, after the boundary ditch was at least partially infilled. Pit 200 contained a very small quantity of bone but no dating material, while pit 204 contained a small quantity of 13th century pottery. Due to their shallow nature, presumable related to ploughing activity in this area, it is difficult to determine their function as this point.
- 6.1.5 Animal bone recovered from the site showed evidence of butchery, adding to the domestic picture of the settlement, revealing a diversity of diet and evidence for animal husbandry. Evidence of industry can also be inferred from the small quantity of slag recovered from the possible enclosure entrance, suggesting iron-working was being carried out in the vicinity.
- 6.1.6 The archaeology encountered during the evaluation indicates that the site has a good level of preservation and therefore a potential for further remains to exist within the proposed development. Although it is unlikely that the ditches once enclosed houses or a manor house, it does add to the overall picture of medieval Shabbington and its socio-economic position within the wider landscape.

## **APPENDICES**

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench	Ctxt No	Туре	Width (m)	Thick. (m)	Comment	Finds	Date
1							
	100	Layer	-	0.3	Topsoil	-	-
	101	Layer	-	0.4	Subsoil	Pottery	12th century
	102	Cut	-	-	Natural	-	
	103	Cut	-	-	Modern soakaway and field drain.	<u>.</u>	-
	104	Cut	1.6	0.79	Ditch terminus.	-	-
	105	Fill	1.6	0.79	Fill of ditch terminus.	Pottery, Fe, bone	12th century
	106	Fill	-	-	Fill of soakaway.	-	-
2					-		,
	200	Cut	1.2	0.26	Pit.	-	-
	201	Fill	1.2	0.26	Fill of pit.	Bone	-
	202	Cut	1.6	0.24m	Ditch.	-	-
	203	Fill	1.6	0.24	Fill of ditch.	Pot, bone	Mid 13th century
	204	Cut	1.12	0.2	Pit.	-	_
	205	Fill	1.12	0.2	Fill of pit.	Pot, bone	13th century
	206	Layer	-	-	Natural.	-	-
	207	Layer	•	0.27	Subsoil.	-	
	208	Layer	•	0.2	Topsoil.	-	-
3		***************************************					
	300	Layer	-	0.53	Topsoil	-	-
	301	Layer	-	0.25	Subsoil	-	-
	302	Layer	-		Natural		-
	303	Cut	0.3	0.15	Ditch	-	-
	304	Fill	0.3	0.15	Fill of ditch		-
4		Į.		······································			
	400	Cut	1.1	0.4	Ditch.	_	-
	401	Fill	1.1	0.4	Fill of ditch.	Pot, bone	Late 11th century
	402	Layer	-	0.2	Subsoil.	-	-
	403	Layer	-	0.2	Topsoil	-	-
	404	Layer	-	_	Natural.	-	-

## APPENDIX 2 POTTERY ASSESSMENT

The location of the site means that the medieval assemblage comprised some types which are well-known in Buckinghamshire and others which are common finds in Oxfordshire. Consequently, the Buckinghamshire types were recorded using the coding system of the Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit type-series (e.g. Mynard and Zeepvat 1992; Zeepvat et al. 1994), here prefixed with 'MK', whereas the Oxfordshire types utilized the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994), prefixed with 'OX'.

MK MS3: Medieval Grey Sandy Wares, Mid 11th - late 14th century. 51 sherds, 554g.

MK MSC1: Sandy and shelly ware, late 11th - mid 13th century. 19 sherds, 697g.

MK MC1: Shelly Coarseware AD1100-1400. 3 sherds, 249g.

MK MC6: Potterspury Ware. AD1250 - 1600. 2 sherds, 7g.

MK MC9: Brill/Boarstall Ware. 1200-?1600. 4 sherds,, 15g.

OXAC: Cotswold-type ware, AD975-1350. 1 sherd, 2g.

OXBF: Newbury-type ware, AD1050 - 1400. 6 sherds, 43g.

OXY: Medieval Oxford ware, AD1075 - 1350. 4 sherds, 63g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*.

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

	R	В	02	ΚAC	N	1C1	M	SC1	N	1S3	02	ΥΥ	ОΧ	BF	M	C9	М	C6	
Context	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	Date
101					1	26													12thC
105					2	223	4	697	48	535	2	51	3	26					12thC
203	1	20									1	2	3	17	2	10	2	7	M13thC
205							15		2	9					2	5			13thC
401			1	2					1	10	1	10							L11thC
	1	20	1	2	3	249	19	697	51	554	4	63	6	43	4	15	2	7	

## APPENDIX 3 ANIMAL BONE.

The bone assemblage although small, is in good condition, clearly displaying butchery and gnawing evidence. The species representation provides a good example of animal utilisation, food and butchery waste from the site. In the event of further excavation the good preservation suggests that any faunal remains recovered would provide meaningful insight into the animal economies, diversity of diet and local environment. (see Appendix 3)

- (104) 2 Sheep/goat teeth lower M1 and M2
- (205) medium mammal long bone
- (201) large mammal long bone
- (401) highly fragmented horse mandible, 1 fragment of sheep/goat innominate
- (105) 1 cattle metacarpal R, gnawed,
  - 1 cattle phalanx I, R, gnawed,
  - 1 cattle tibia L
  - 5 large mammal long bone
  - 1 cattle metapodial condyle
  - 1 sheep/goat scapula with cut marks
  - 12 unidentified fragments

#### APPENDIX 4 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

Mellor, M, 1984 A summary of the key assemblages. A study of pottery, clay pipes, glass and other finds from fourteen pits, dating from the 16th to the 19th century. TG Hassall, CE Halpin and M Mellorl, Excavations at St Ebbe's Oxoniensia 49, 181-219

Mellor, M, 1994 Oxford Pottery: A Synthesis of middle and late Saxon, medieval and early post-medieval pottery in the Oxford Region Oxoniensia 59, 17-217

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OA, 2003 The Bungalow, Shabbington, Buckinghamshire. Desktop Asssessment

OAU, 1992 Field Manual (ed. D, Wilkinson)

Zeepvat, R, J, Roberts, J, S and King, N, A, 1994 Caldecotte, Milton Keynes. Excavation and Fieldwork 1966-91. Buckinghamshire Archaeology Society Monograph Series

#### APPENDIX 5 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: The Bungalow, Ickford Road, Shabbington, Buckinghamshire

Site code: SHAB 04

Grid reference: NGR SP 665 069

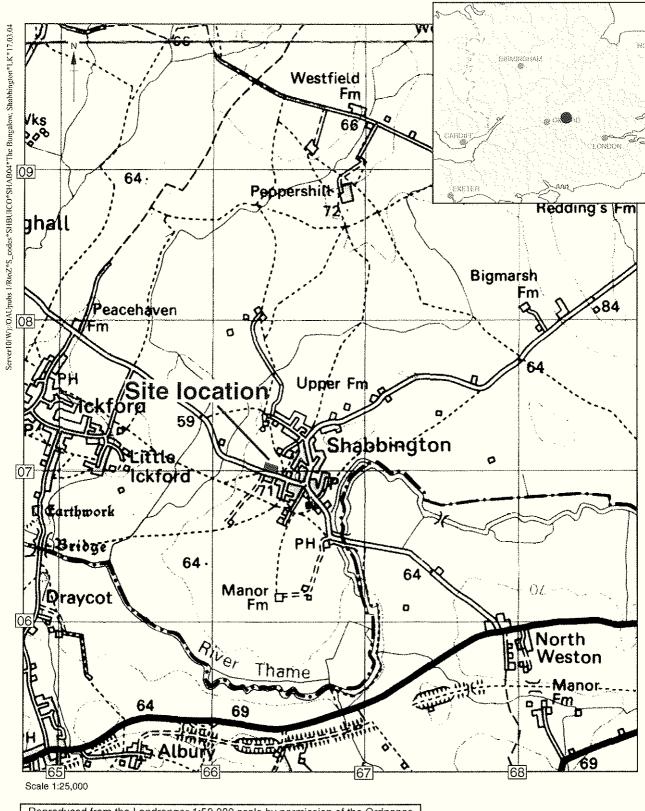
Type of evaluation: Four trenches, 30 m in total. Date and duration of project: 3rd-4th March 2004

Area of site: 0.25 hectares

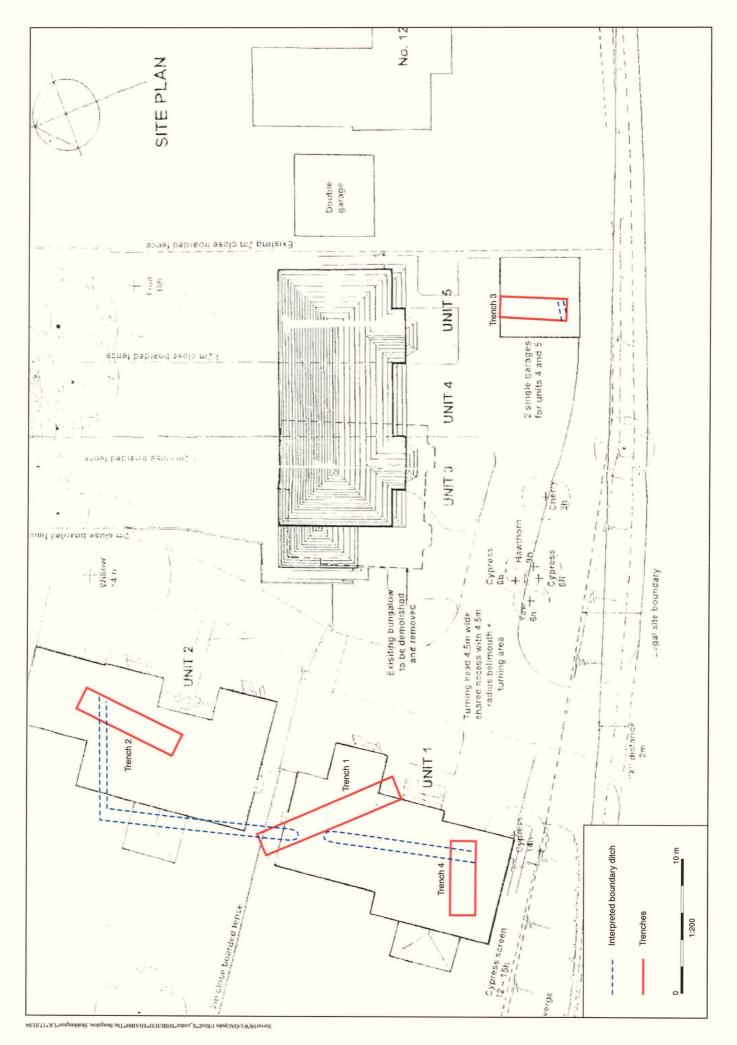
Summary of results: 11th to 13th century boundary ditch for possible enclosure and two

later medieval pits.

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



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S.13

S.10

Trench 1

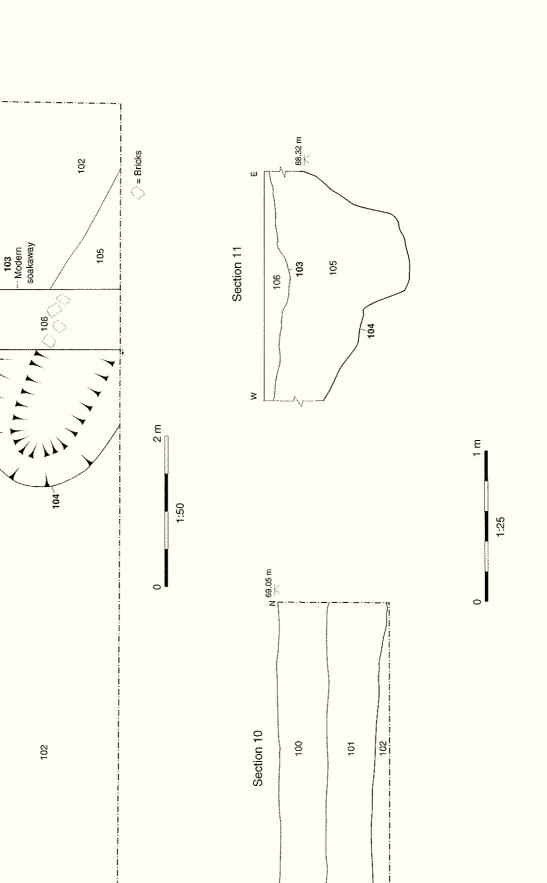
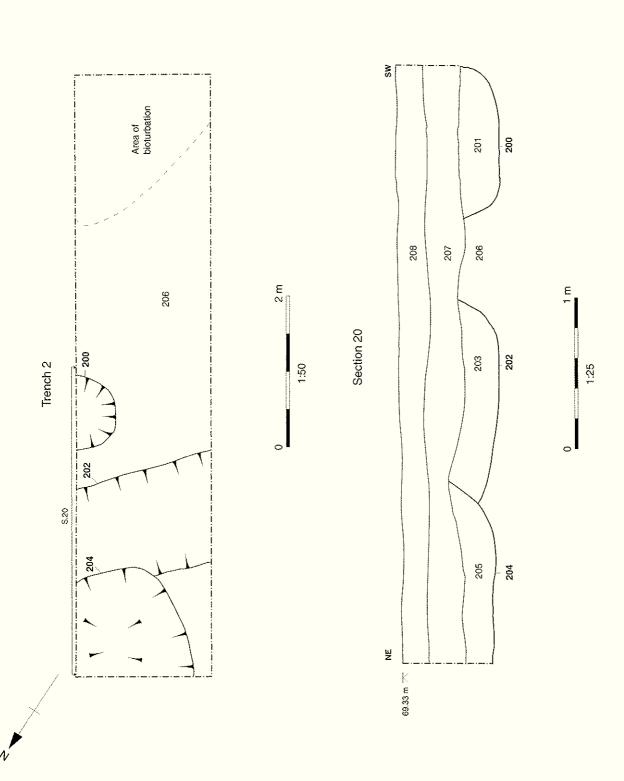


Figure 3: Trench 1, plan and sections



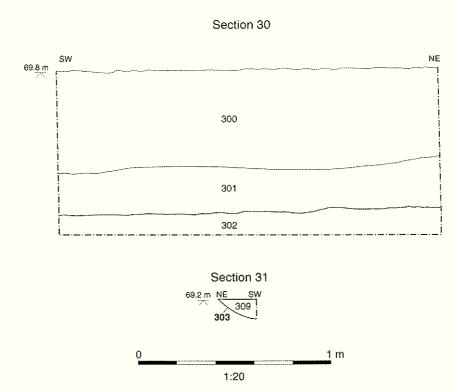
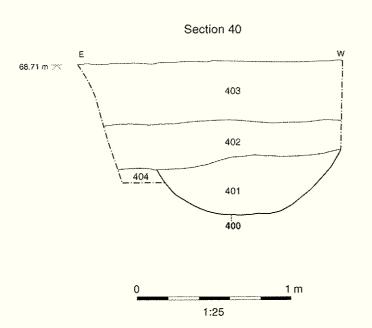


Figure 5: Trench 3, plan and section

Trench 4



404

1:50

2 m

Figure 6: Trench 4, plan and section



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