

Land at
Noverton Lane
Mill Lane
Prestbury
Gloucestershire



Archaeological Evaluation Report



Oxford Archaeology

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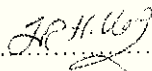
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**LAND AT NOVERTON LANE, MILL LANE, PRESTBURY
GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

NGR: SO 977 238

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Cover Plate: Working shot of Trench 8 from the south-west.

SUMMARY

In July 2004 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at land at Noverton Lane, Prestbury, Gloucestershire (NGR SO 977 238) on behalf of CPM Environmental Planning and Design Ltd. The evaluation revealed a general paucity of archaeological activity in the area. A gully located in the southern portion of the site yielded a sherd of pottery that suggests Roman activity in the area. Elsewhere, a boundary ditch recorded in the south-east corner of site appears to be a former post-medieval field boundary.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 The site is being considered for the construction of residential buildings. An archaeological evaluation was required prior to the determination of the planning application submitted by George Wimpey UK Ltd (Planning Ref: 01/01487/OUT).
- 1.1.2 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Oxford Archaeology (OA) and agreed with Charles Parry of Gloucestershire County Archaeological Service (CAS), (OA 2004).

1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The development site is situated on the eastern fringe of Prestbury, immediately north of Noverton Lane. The site is *c* 5 ha. in area and is centred on NGR SO 977 238, lying at approximately 95 m OD.
- 1.2.2 The underlying natural geology of the site is Jurassic and Cretaceous clay with Evesham 2 soil overlying this. The site is two fields currently under pasture (Geological survey of Great Britain (England and Wales) 1983).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 A desk-based assessment was produced by CPM Ltd. and a geophysical survey of the site was carried out by Archaeological Services WYAS. Below is a summary of their findings.
- 1.3.2 The development area contains no known archaeological remains within its boundary. However, prehistoric activity and remains of Noverton medieval settlement were discovered during works on a pipeline south of the proposed development. The land appears to have been in agricultural use for the past one hundred and fifty years according to the earliest Tithe maps, with the northern half being pastoral and the southern arable (CPM 2004). This has subsequently been supported by the results of the geophysical survey, which only identified ridge and furrow ploughing signatures (WYAS 2004).

2 EVALUATION AIMS

- 2.1.1 The aims of the evaluation were to determine the location, extent, date, character, and state of preservation of any archaeological remains surviving on the site.
- 2.1.2 Attention was to be given to remains of all periods. This was to include evidence for past environments, with provision for environmental sampling included.
- 2.1.3 The results of the evaluation were to be made available in the form of a written report.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork

- 3.1.1 The evaluation comprised the excavation of eight trenches each measuring 50 m by 2 m. A contingency for a further two trenches was included in the event that additional trenching was required. The exact location of the trenches is shown in Figure 2.

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

- 3.2.1 The trenches were excavated under archaeological supervision by a mechanical 360 excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket. Excavation proceeded to the natural geology or the top of the first archaeological horizon, whichever was encountered first.
- 3.2.2 Archaeological features were hand sampled. All excavation was undertaken with a view to avoiding damage to archaeological features that appeared to be worthy of preservation *in situ*.
- 3.2.3 All features and deposits were issued with unique context numbers, and context recording was undertaken in accordance with the established OA *Field Manual* (OAU 1992). Bulk finds were collected by context.
- 3.2.4 Colour transparency and black-and-white negative photographs were taken of all trenches and archaeological features. Site plans were drawn at 1:100 for trenches in which no archaeology was encountered and 1:50 for trenches in which features were identified. Section drawings of features and sample sections of trenches were drawn at a scale of 1:20

3.3 Finds

- 3.3.1 Finds were recovered and recorded by context. The single sherd of pottery from the gully in trench 7 is of Roman origin and may be attributed a 2nd-4th century date. Finds from the boundary ditch in trench 8 were of post-medieval date and included 2 pottery sherds, a single fragment of clay pipe stem, 8 pieces of animal bone, 2 nails and an arrowhead of uncertain date.

3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence

3.4.1 No features or deposits were encountered that would have produced any environmental data.

3.5 Presentation of results

3.5.1 A general description of the soils and ground conditions is given. This is followed by descriptions of the individual trenches, with a brief discussion of the results. Details of individual contexts are given in Appendix 1.

4 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

4.1 Description of deposits

4.1.1 A description of deposits is given 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.

4.2 Trench 1

4.2.1 The natural subsoil (102) was encountered at a depth of 0.42 m and was predominantly grey clay at the eastern end of the trench turning orange and stonier to the west. This was overlain by an orangey-brown clay silt subsoil (101) with occasional charcoal inclusions and small stones, 0.3 m thick. The uppermost deposit recorded was 0.23m of topsoil (100) consisting of a dark brown silty-loam with occasional small stone inclusions. No archaeology was encountered in the trench.

4.3 Trench 2

4.3.1 The natural subsoil (203) consisted of predominantly orangey-brown, stony clay-silt with lenses of grey clay and was located at a depth of 0.45 m. This was sealed by a 0.24m thick layer of orangey-brown clay-silt subsoil (202). A layer of 0.4 m thick modern rubble (201) containing concrete, brick and limestone overlaid the subsoil and was in turn overlaid by a 0.24m thick silty-loam topsoil (200). Two modern field drains were observed in the base of the trench.

4.4 Trench 3 (Fig. 3)

4.4.1 The natural subsoil (302) was encountered at a depth of 0.5 m and consisted of orangey-brown silty-sand with frequent limestone fragments. This was sealed by a 0.42 m thick layer of orangey-brown clay-silt (301). This in turn was overlaid by 0.24 m of topsoil (300) consisting of dark brown silty-loam. The remains of three probable plough furrows, aligned E-W, were observed in the base of the trench, as well as a modern land drain.

4.5 Trench 4 (Fig. 3)

4.5.1 The natural subsoil (402) was encountered at a depth of 0.5 m and consisted of orange clay-silt and sand with frequent limestone fragments. The overlying subsoil

(401) was an orangey-brown clay-silt, 0.22 m thick. The topsoil consisted of dark brown silty-loam (400).

- 4.5.2 Three features were investigated in trench 4. Plough furrow (407) was 1.5 m wide, 0.38 m deep and filled with redeposited natural (406). It shared an E-W alignment with a 0.35m wide, 0.88m deep land drain (409) that was filled with an orangey-brown clay-silt (408). Pit (404) was 0.5 m wide, 0.8 m long, 0.28 m deep and contained a grey-brown silty-clay fill (403) with occasional charcoal flecks and small stones. No finds were recovered from any of these features.

4.6 Trench 5

- 4.6.1 The natural subsoil (503) was recorded at a depth of 0.4 m and varied between a grey clay and orangey-brown clay-silt with limestone inclusions. Subsoil (501) overlaid the natural and consisted of a 0.25 m thick layer of orangey-brown clay-silt with frequent limestone fragments and charcoal inclusions. The topsoil (500) was 0.22 m thick and comprised dark brown silt. A 2.35m wide plough furrow (502) cut the natural and was filled with subsoil. A modern land drain was also observed in the base of the trench.

4.7 Trench 6

- 4.7.1 The natural subsoil (602) was encountered at a depth of 0.46m and consisted of an orange clay-silt with occasional patches of grey clay and sandier lenses of degraded stone. This was overlaid by a 0.24 m thick layer of orangey-brown clay-silt subsoil (601) with frequent limestone fragments. The topsoil (600) consisted of a 0.25m thick layer of dark brown silty-loam. Several modern features were encountered in the base of the trench and included land drains and a service trench.

4.8 Trench 7 (Fig. 4)

- 4.8.1 The natural subsoil (702) was encountered at a depth of 0.45m and comprised degraded limestone within patches of orange silty-sand and clay-silt. The overlying subsoil (701) was 0.2 m thick and consisted of a mid-orangey-brown clay-silt with frequent limestone fragments and rare charcoal inclusions. The topsoil was a 0.28m thick layer of dark brown clay-silt. An E-W aligned gully (704) cut the natural and was a fairly steep sided feature with a slightly concave base; it ran for 2.5m across the trench and was 0.8 m wide and 0.44 m deep. It was filled with a mid-orangey-brown clay-silt with frequent limestone fragments and rare charcoal flecks (703). A single sherd of pottery was recovered.

4.9 Trench 8 (Fig. 4)

- 4.9.1 The natural subsoil (804) consisted of sandy-silt with fragmented limestone and was encountered at a depth of 0.45 m. The 0.2 m thick subsoil layer (801) was cut by a large boundary ditch (802). This curvilinear, flat based, steep-sided feature was 3.2 m wide and 1.02 m deep. It was filled by a fairly loose orangey-brown sandy-silt (803) containing frequent inclusions of charcoal and limestone. Finds recovered from

the fill included pottery, bone, clay pipe and metal. Topsoil (800) overlaid the ditch and was 0.26 m thick.

5 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 Reliability of field investigation

5.1.1 Overall, the good spatial distribution of trenches qualified this site as having a low density of archaeology. The results of the evaluation are therefore considered to be a good representation of the archaeological potential of this site.

5.2 Overall interpretation

5.2.1 The finds from within the boundary ditch located in trench 8 suggest a post-medieval date for the feature. Its NE-SW alignment suggests that it may have been a continuation of a similarly aligned field boundary to the south of Noverton Lane, identified on the 1842 Tithe map for Prestbury. This boundary still exists but is now shown to kink NNW a few metres short of Noverton Lane.

5.2.2 The single find from the gully in trench 7 suggests a Roman date for the feature; a Romano-British farmstead was perhaps situated in the vicinity.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i> Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
Trench 1						
100	Layer		0.20 m	Topsoil		Modern
101	Layer		0.20 - 0.54 m	Subsoil		
102	Layer		0.54 m	Natural		
Trench 2						
200	Layer	-	0.10 m	Topsoil		Modern
201	Layer	-	0.10 - 0.30 m	rubble layer		Modern
202	Layer		0.30 - 0.40 m	Subsoil		
203	Layer		0.40 m	Natural		
Trench 3						
300	Layer		0.20 m	Topsoil		Modern
301	Layer		0.20 - 0.50 m	Subsoil		
302	Layer		0.50 m	Natural		
Trench 4						
400	Layer		0.24 m	Topsoil		Modern
401	Layer		0.24 - 0.46 m	Subsoil		
402	Layer		0.46 m	Natural		
403	Fill	0.50 x 0.80	0.46 - 0.74 m	Fill of 404		
404	Cut	0.50 x 0.80	0.46 - 0.74 m	Pit?		
405	Fill	1.30	0.46 - 0.66 m	Fill of 407		
406	Fill	1.00	0.46 - 0.66 m	Fill of 407		
407	Cut	1.50	0.46 - 0.66 m	Furrow?		
408	Fill	0.35	0.24 - 1.14 m	Fill of 409		Modern
409	Cut	0.35	0.24 - 1.14 m	Field drain		Modern
410	Layer		0.80 m+	Rubble		Modern
Trench 5						
500	Layer		0.10 m	Topsoil		Modern
501	Layer		0.10 - 0.22 m	Subsoil		
502	Cut	2.35		unexcavated Furrow		
503	Layer		0.22 m	Natural		
Trench 6						
600	Layer		0.20 m	Topsoil		Modern
601	Layer		0.20 - 0.42 m	Subsoil		
602	Layer		0.42 m	Natural		
Trench 7						
700	Layer		0.26 m	Topsoil		Modern
701	Layer		0.26 - 0.44 m	Subsoil		
702	Layer		0.44 m	Natural		
703	Fill	0.80	0.44 - 0.86 m	Fill of 704		
704	Cut	0.80	0.44 - 0.86 m	Ditch		
Trench 8						
800	Layer		0.30 m	Topsoil		Modern
801	Layer		0.30 - 0.60 m	Subsoil		
802	Cut	3.20	0.30 - 1.30 m	Ditch		Post-medieval
803	Fill	3.20	0.30 - 1.30 m	Fill of 802		Post-medieval
804	Layer		0.60 m	Natural		

APPENDIX 2 REFERENCES

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

CPM, 2004 *Land at Noverton Lane, Prestbury, Gloucestershire*. Archaeological Assessment

WYAS, 2004 *Land at Noverton Lane, Prestbury, Gloucestershire*. Geophysical Survey.

OA, 2004 *Land at Noverton Lane, Mill Lane, Prestbury, Gloucestershire*. Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Noverton Lane, Mill Lane, Prestbury, Gloucestershire

Site code: SONL 04

Grid reference: NGR S0 977 238

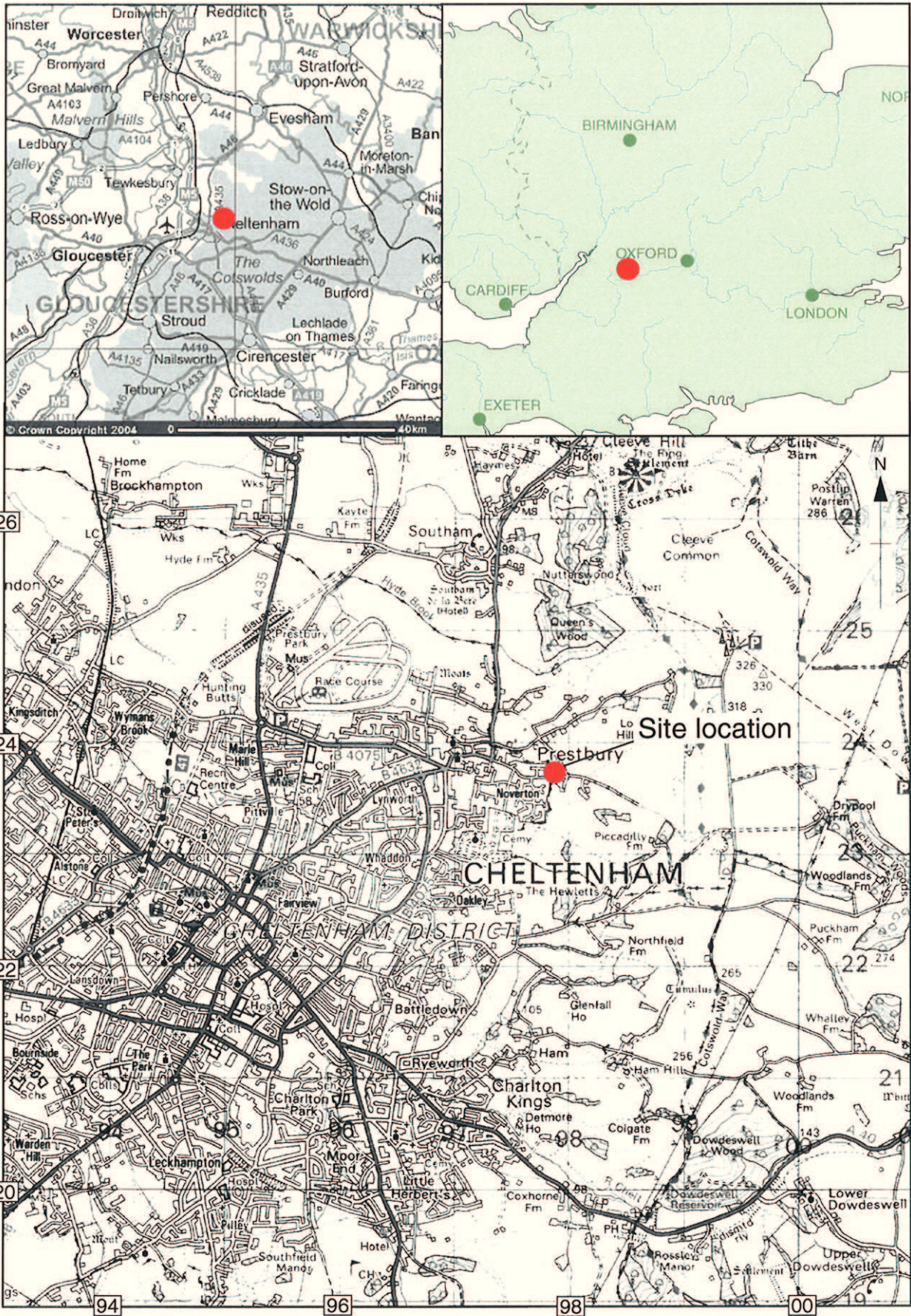
Type of evaluation: Eight machine excavated trenches 50 m x 2 m

Date and duration of project: One week, 26th-30th July 2004

Area of site: 5 hectares

Summary of results: A number of remnant furrows and a post medieval boundary ditch.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Cheltenham Museum & Art Gallery in due course, under the following accession number: CAGM: 2004.143



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Figure 1: Site location

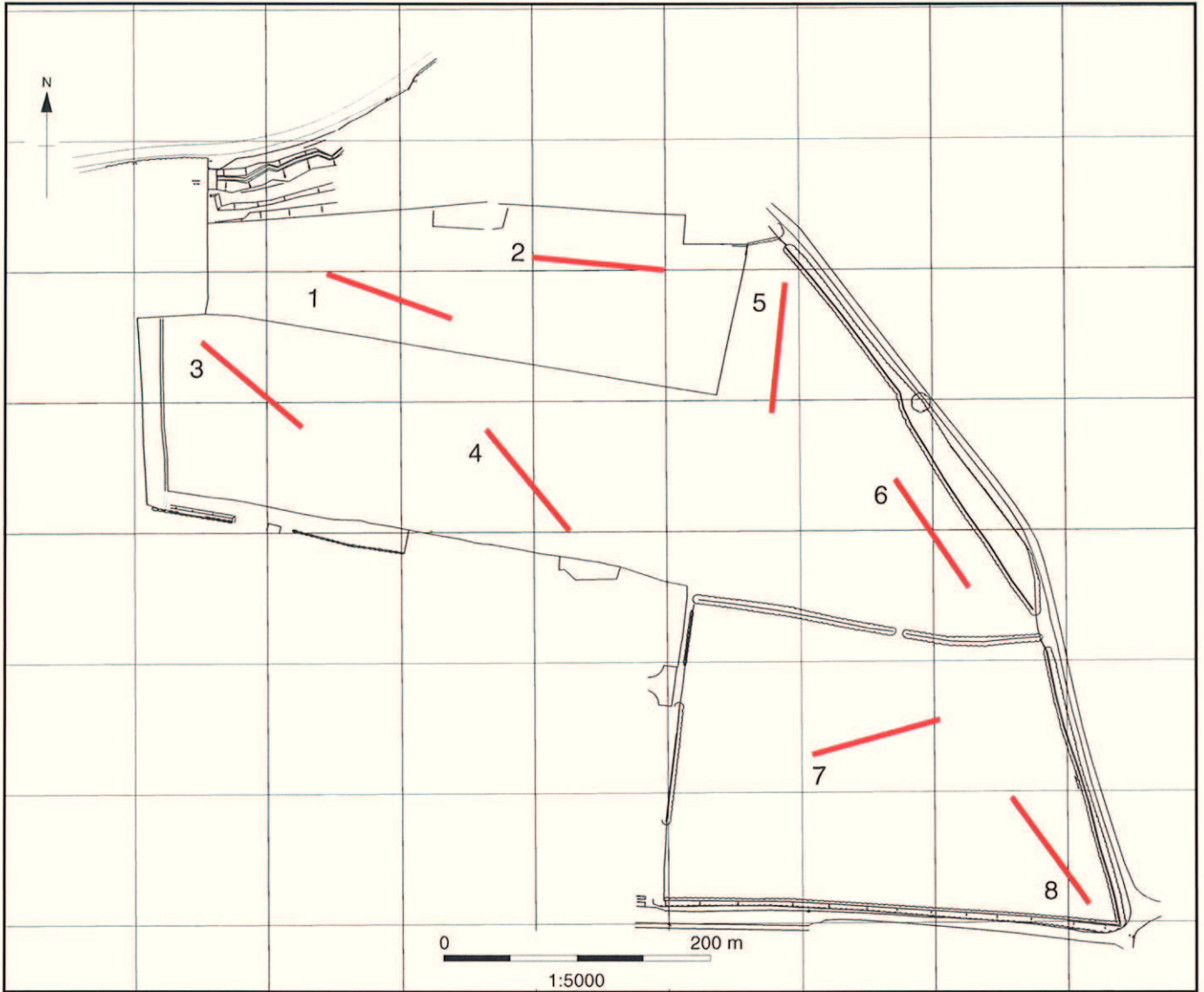


Figure 2: Trench location plan

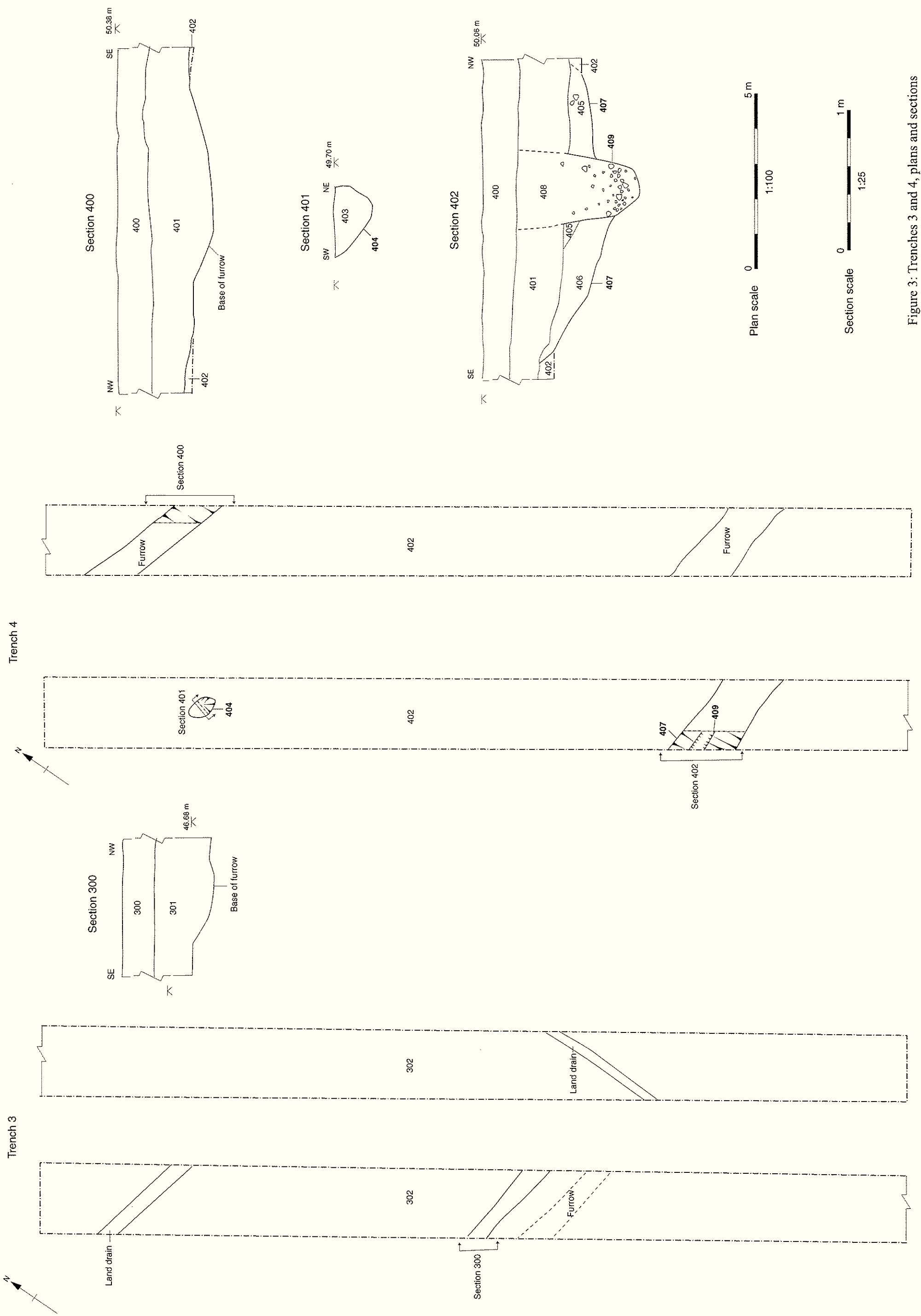
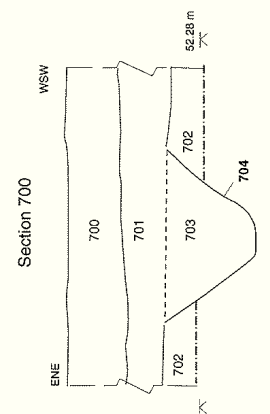
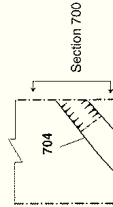
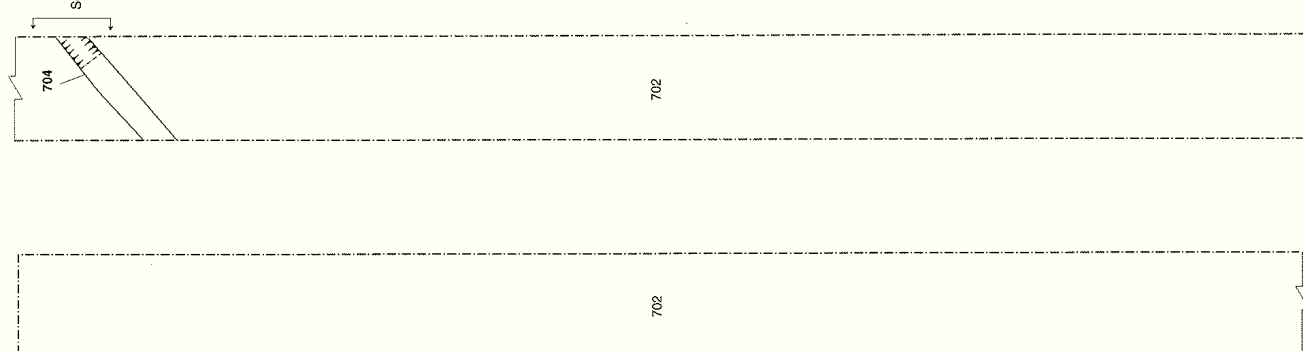
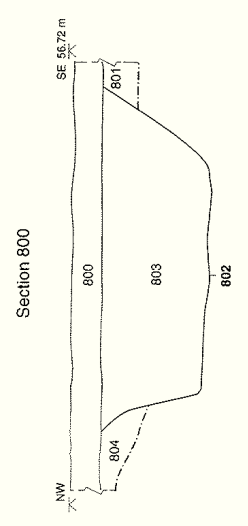
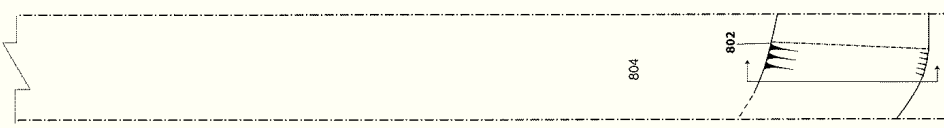
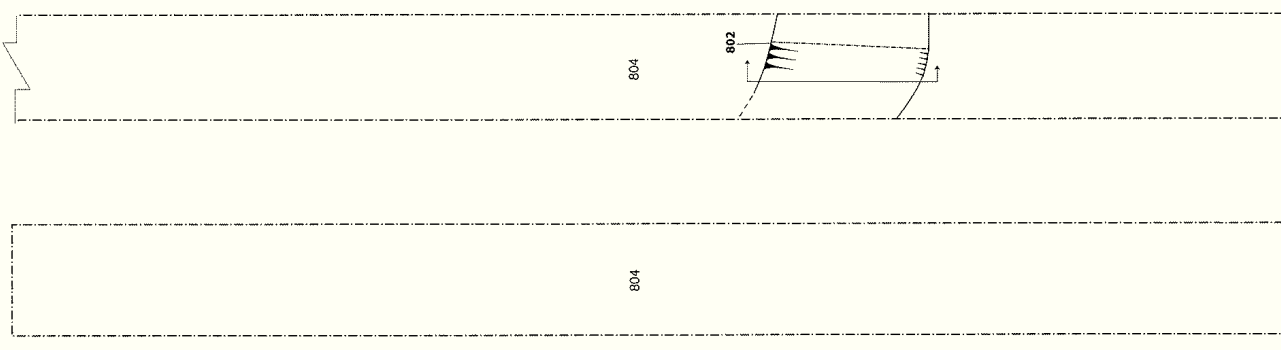


Figure 3: Trenches 3 and 4, plans and sections

Trench 7



Trench 8



Plan scale 0 5m 1:100



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