# Belvedere Nurseries
# Bow Brickhill
# Nr Fenny Stratford
# Milton Keynes
# Buckinghamshire

## Archaeological Evaluation

Oxford Archaeology

January 2005

Dobbies Garden Centre plc

Issue No: 1
OA Job No: 2478
NGR: SP 8874 3395

| | |
|---|---|
| **Client Name:** | Dobbies Garden Centres Plc. |
| **Client Ref No:** | |
| **Document Title:** | Belvedere Nurseries, Bow Brickhill, near Fenny Stratford, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire |
| **Document Type:** | Evaluation |
| **Issue Number:** | 1 |
| National Grid Reference: | SP 8874 3395 |
| Planning Reference: | Pre-planning application |
| OA Job Number: | 2478 |
| Site Code: | FESTBN 04 |
| Invoice Code: | FESTNEV2 |
| Receiving Museum: | Buckinghamshire County Museums Service |
| Museum Accession No: | AYBCM,2000.24 |
| Prepared by: | Bryan Matthews |
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| Date: | 21st January 2005 |
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| Position: | Head of Fieldwork |
| Date: | 24th January 2005 |
| Document File Location | X:\FESTBN04_Fenny_Stratford_Belvedere Nurseries Milton K evaluation\FESTBN report |
| Graphics File Location | Server 4(W)oaupubs*A-H*FESTBNEV*LK*21.1.05 |
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# Belvedere Nurseries, Bow Brickhill Near Fenny Stratford, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire

NGR 8874 3395

## *ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT*

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SUMMARY

*In December 2004, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological field evaluation at Belvedere Nurseries, Bow Brickhill near Fenny Stratford, Buckinghamshire (NGR 8874 3395). The work was carried out on behalf of Dobbies Garden Centres Plc. in advance of new planning proposals for a garden centre at the site.*

*The evaluation followed on from previous archaeological investigations of the site, including geo-physical survey, trenched evaluation and an extended watching brief in respect of an earlier planning application here. The present evaluation took place to the north and east previous archaeological works, incorporating an area of land belonging to Dropshort Farm.*

*The trenches revealed systems of field ditches and possible domestic rubbish pits in the south and east of the evaluated area and evidence in the form of large irregular shaped pits for possible gravel quarrying. Ditches were revealed in the area of land belonging to Dropshort farm. All of these features can be assigned to the early Roman period (1st-2nd centuries AD) on ceramic grounds. There was no further evidence of the Roman inhumation cemetery previously located alongside Watling Street, suggesting that it may not have extended further to the north and east than previously defined. A post-medieval boundary ditch ran across the northern part of the proposed development area. To the north and north-west of the site under consideration for development, very little archaeological activity was found.*

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In December 2004, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological evaluation at Belvedere Nurseries, Bow Brickhill, near Fenny Stratford, Buckinghamshire (NGR 8874 3395), on behalf of Dobbies Garden Centres Plc. The evaluation was undertaken in advance of a new planning application to redevelop the site as a garden centre and followed on from previous archaeological surveys at the site (OA 2001, 2004a).

1.1.2 The site lies just to the south of Fenny Stratford near Milton Keynes at National Grid Reference SP 8874 3395, and occupies a parcel of land between the existing A5(T) and the old course of the A5, Roman Watling Street.

1.1.3 The evaluation comprised nineteen trenches, positioned within fields to the east of Belvedere Nurseries and within one field north-west of Dropshort Farm (Fig.2).

1.1.4 This report should be read in conjunction with the desk-based assessment and Project Design prepared by OA for Dobbies Plc and submitted to Milton Keynes City Council (OA 2004b) and must be considered as a continuation of previous reports on investigations in the area (See Archaeological Background below).

1.1.5 Brian Giggins, Archaeological Officer for Milton Keynes City Council set a formal project brief for this phase of evaluation and following discussions with Mr Giggins, it was agreed that OA would carry out the evaluation in accordance with the

methodology for investigation of the site outlined in the desk-based assessment and Project Design prepared by OA on behalf of Dobbies Garden Centres Plc.

## 1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The underlying geology according to the British Geological Survey is Oxford Clay with overlying alluvium in the valley of the River Ouzel, which lies *c* 80 m to the west of the development area (BGS sheet 220). The 1st and 2nd terrace Gravels were identified on the site, overlying the Oxford Clay, during the course of previous archaeological work on the site (OA 2001). Within this evaluation, the underlying geology was found to consist of gravel terrace deposits to the south and alluvial clays to the north.

1.2.2 The site is generally flat, at *c* 67 m OD, but slopes down gently into the valley of the River Ouzel, which lies to the south-west.

1.2.3 The site comprises three fields within grounds to the east of the Belvedere Nurseries, and one field to the north-west of Dropshort Farm (Fig.2). The site is generally flat, but a ridge and furrow field system was noted within the field belonging to Dropshort Farm. The fields to the north-west and south-east were under grass. The central/northern field has been a plantation, with a small group of sapling trees still standing (in between Trenches 6 and 7).

1.2.4 The large field to the south-west of the development has been the subject of a previous evaluation (OA 2001) and a separate watching brief and features mapping exercise during the removal of the topsoil and subsoil (OA 2004a). The work was undertaken for Conserve-A-Tree, current owners of the majority of the development area. The field subject to topsoil stripping has been subsequently raised and levelled up with a thick deposit of clay, which overlies the previously revealed archaeological horizon.

## 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background to the site has been the subject of a separate and extensive desk-based assessment (DBA - OA 2004b) and this is briefly summarised below. OA numbers (e.g. OA 6, 16 etc) refer to sites or archaeological findspots entered on a gazetteer and features map in the DBA.

1.3.2 The possibility of Neolithic and Bronze Age activity within the valley of the River Ouzel has been highlighted by an excavation at Fenny Lock. However the probability of Neolithic or Bronze Age occupation within the proposed development area was considered to be low.

1.3.3 A number of Iron Age sites have been identified in on gravel terraces overlooking the Ouzel valley (OA 6, 16, 24, 36) and from the immediate vicinity of *Magiovinium* itself (OA 5), indicating that the area was fairly intensively settled in the later Prehistoric period. An Iron Age ditch has been identified at Dropshot Farm (OA 24) immediately adjacent to the proposed development and the possibility of features

attributable to the late prehistoric period extending into the development area was considered a possibility.

1.3.4 The site lies on the north side of Watling Street Roman Road and to the north of the former Roman settlement of *Magiovinium*. The settlement comprised a nucleus incorporating a defensive perimeter bank straddling the Watling Street with ribbon settlement extending along the road to the south east and north west.

1.3.5 Excavations preceding the construction of the present A5(T) demonstrated there to be extensive roadside settlement and industry associated with this settlement. Evidence was also found for some Iron Age activity on the site (Neal 1989).

1.3.6 An excavation at Dropshort Farm uncovered a Roman Inhumation burial and an Iron Age ditch (Griffiths, 1965). Roman burials and artefacts have also been noted during ploughing at the farm.

1.3.7 Two geophysical surveys were undertaken of the area to the north of the proposed development (Bartlett 1994) and the development area itself (Bartlett 1999a/99b) prior to the commencement of intrusive archaeological works. The results of these surveys revealed many linear features and enclosures usually aligned north-south or east-west (see Fig. 2, this report). The density of these features declined to the north of the development area (away from Watling Street) and appeared to end at a major roughly east-west aligned anomaly that may have represented the northern extent of activity.

1.3.8 OA has undertaken a previous evaluation (OA 2001) just to the south/south-west of the present evaluation. This investigation and subsequent ones were carried out for Conserve-A-Tree, landowners of part of the Belvedere Nurseries site. High groundwater levels hampered this investigation but Roman features and deposits were identified in all of the evaluation trenches. The 2001 evaluation located a number of ditches and gullies that probably formed boundaries of a field system lying between *Magiovinium* and Watling Street to the south. These could be associated with allotments identified by the excavations preceding the construction of the A5(T).

1.3.9 A subsequent watching brief and features mapping exercise was undertaken on the development area during topsoil stripping (OA 2004b) and identified numerous ditch and pit features as well as at least 23 human inhumations. The Watching Brief also confirmed the existence of a series of enclosures identified by the previous geophysics and evaluation phases on the site. The presence of up to 23 inhumations indicated the presence of a sizeable Roman cemetery associated with *Magiovinium*. The full extent of the cemetery was not elucidated by the features mapping exercise, owing to time and financial constraints. Dates from the limited finds recovered from this phase of work indicated a 3rd-4th century date for the use of the cemetery. Earlier pottery in the area of the cemetery was thought to be residual. Metal working slag was also found, suggesting some form of industry close by.

1.3.10 Excavations (Neal 1978-80) have revealed Roman road within 65-m of the present development site that may relate to the layout of the cemetery, and to the layout of

the field enclosures in this area of the extra-mural settlement (Brian Giggins, *pers comm.*). The enclosures are noticeably at a different angle to the line of Watling Street. It is possible that this road related to the establishment of the cemetery, as Watling St would probably have been principally utilised for main road traffic rather than for local traffic.

1.3.11 A study of maps of the area shows that a boundary ditch visible at the time of the current evaluation across the northern field of the development site is post-medieval in date (Brian Giggins, *pers comm.*).

### 1.4 Acknowledgements

1.4.1 OA extends its thanks to Brian Giggins, Milton Keynes Archaeological Officer for advice and patience throughout the project and for information regarding previous fieldwork in the area of the development.

1.4.2 Peter Hewitson at Belvedere Nurseries and the owner of Dropshort Farm are thanked for allowing access to all areas of the site, enabling OA to complete its investigation without delay. Thanks are due also to Stuart Wright at Dobbies Plc and Paul Rounce at GVA Grimley for providing plans of the development and advice about the new building design.

## 2 EVALUATION AIMS

2.1.1 To determine and confirm the general form and function of any archaeological remains present and to determine and confirm the approximate date or date range of any remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence.

2.1.2 To determine or confirm the approximate extent and depth below ground level of any remains and to determine the condition and state of preservation of any remains.

2.1.3 To determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present and to determine or confirm the likely range, quality and quantity of any artefactual evidence present.

2.1.4 To determine the potential for palaeo-environmental and/or economic evidence and the forms in which such evidence may be present and to make available the results of the investigation.

2.1.5 Specific were to identify and record evidence for any prehistoric activity on the gravel terrace through the retrieval and examination of artefacts and eco-facts within the trenches and test pits.

2.1.6 To establish phased evidence for the evolution, longevity and character of activity represented on the site and to recover ceramic evidence to help develop pottery chronology and typology.

2.1.7 To identify local and non-local resources, e.g. pottery, for indications of resource exploitation and trade.

2.1.8 In general the work was to investigate the anomalies indicated by the geophysical survey, and to provide further information on the extent and nature of activity associated with the Roman town, and in particular to identify the extent of the Roman cemetery identified during the previous watching brief.

## 3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Scope of fieldwork methods and recording

3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of nineteen trenches located across four fields, targeted on plotted geophysical anomalies. The trenches were typically 30 m long by 1.6 m wide, although a number of shortened trenches were excavated within the corners of two fields (Trenches 1, 5, 11 & 12). This represents approximately a 2 % sample of the total area evaluated at this stage.

3.1.2 At the time of the evaluation (December 2004), the level of the local water table was fairly high. Although some trenches remained relatively dry (Trenches 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 14, 15), where features were excavated, these gradually filled with water. Within the smaller features, hand bailing was sufficient to allow excavation and subsequent recording.

3.1.3 The larger features (particularly the larger ditches) required pumping out to allow proper excavation. Within the east of the site, the opened trenches (Trenches 10, 11, 12 and 15 – 19) gradually flooded. This meant that these trenches needed to be pumped out before the excavation of revealed features could commence.

3.1.4 All of the trenches were planned shortly after excavation, and where practicable, photographed before flooding occurred. The trenches were planned at a scale of 1:50, and sections of the excavated features drawn at scales of 1:20 or 1:10. All trenches and features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OA Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

3.1.5 Each trench was allocated a unique block of contexts in order to separate this phase of works from previous OA work on the site.

### 3.2 Finds

3.2.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and bagged by context. Finds of special interest were given a unique small find number, plotted, and bagged individually.

### 3.3 Environmental sampling

3.3.1 Samples were taken from two pits, one of which was thought to contain prehistoric pottery, which subsequently proved to be a Roman feature. The other was investigated, as it may have been a possible grave and may therefore have contained human remains. Both features proved to be Roman-period pits and therefore these samples were not subsequently processed. They will be retained by OA should the need for further work be required on these.

### 3.4 Presentation of results

3.4.1 A general description of soils and ground conditions is given and the distribution of archaeological deposits stated. Empty trenches are noted but not otherwise described. A description of archaeological features and deposits is given within individual trenches and is followed by an interpretation and discussion of the results.

3.4.2 A table of contexts giving further details of deposits and features is given within Appendix 1. Appendix 2 gives details of the finds assessment.

## 4 RESULTS: GENERAL

### 4.1 Soils and ground conditions

4.1.1 Within the north of the site (Trenches 1 to 10, Fig. 2) the underlying natural consisted of alluvial orange-brown silty clay, with local variations to patchy sandy clay and sandy gravel. To the south the natural was predominantly coarse sandy gravel. This is gravel terrace associated with the nearby River Ouzel.

4.1.2 Trenches 13 and 14 were both located within a field that had been previously stripped and back-filled. Here the overburden consisted of a thin layer of buried topsoil beneath a thick deposit of grey-brown stony clay. Elsewhere the natural was overlain by orange-brown silty clay subsoil and the present topsoil. The thickness of these deposits are given within the table of contexts (Appendix 1).

4.1.3 Unless otherwise stated, all of the features found were cut from the level of the underlying natural deposits.

### 4.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits

4.2.1 Systems of Roman ditches and pits were found at the south of the present evaluation site, together with possible evidence of gravel quarrying. An 18th century field boundary crossed the northern field evaluated and was seen in Trenches 9, 10, 11 and 12. There was very little archaeological activity to the north of this probable field boundary.

## 5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

### 5.1 Description of deposits

***Trenches 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9 and 15 (Figs 3, 4, 5 and 6)***

5.1.1 Trenches 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9 and 15 revealed no archaeological features or deposits. These trenches were excavated to depths of 0.45 m to 0.7 m and revealed natural gravel terrace deposits capped by natural or alluvial subsoil deposits unaffected by human activity. Topsoil covered these deposits - in general vegetation cover comprised mixed grass, weeds and small shrubs.

***Trench 7***

5.1.2 Trench 7 revealed a single NNE-SSW aligned ditch, (2704 - Figs. 3 and 5). The ditch measured 1.5 m wide by 0.18 m deep. A notable feature of the ditch was that it contained a low central stone wall or revetment, (2706). This feature consisted of large rounded and sub-angular stones roughly placed along the centreline of the ditch, to a height of 0.2 m. These were backed by a slightly lower stony in-filling to the east. To the west of 2706, the ditch was filled by a pinkish-grey silty clay, 2705. No finds were recovered from the ditch or its fills. The rough 'construction' of the wall and in filling suggests that this was possibly an agricultural feature.

***Trench 8***

5.1.3 Trench 8 revealed a large east-west aligned boundary ditch, 2813. This ditch was also seen within Trenches 10, 11 & 12, and is shown clearly on the geophysical survey of the site (Figs. 2 and 3).

5.1.4 Ditch was cut from beneath a soil layer (2801, probably a former ploughsoil of uncertain date). The feature was 3.4 m wide by 0.7 m deep. It contained a shallow primary fill of dark brown clay loam (2812) and a more substantial upper brown silty clay fill (2811). No finds were recovered from these fills.

5.1.5 A smaller parallel ditch, (2805) was located approximately 5 m north of ditch 2813. This ditch had a rounded profile and measured 1.05 m wide by 0.24 m deep. It was filled by an orange-brown silty clay (2804). This feature was undated.

5.1.6 Between ditches 2805 and 2813, a smaller but parallel aligned ditch (2805) was also investigated. This proved to be of modern origin and certainly post-dated a ceramic land-drain that runs along the northern edge of ditch 2813.

***Trench 9***

5.1.7 Trench 9 revealed no archaeological features or deposits, only natural gravel capped by subsoil beneath the present topsoil.

***Trench 10***

5.1.8 Trench 10 revealed a single east-west aligned ditch, 3008. The northern edge of this ditch had been disturbed by the insertion of a later land-drain and this is almost certainly the same ditch was seen within trenches 8, 11 & 12. Within Trench 10, ditch 3308 was seen to cut a soil layer above the natural deposits (3003), indicating that this feature may probably be post-Roman in date. The historical background to the site indicates this was an 18th century boundary ditch (*pers comm.* Brian Giggins). Within Trench 10, the ditch measured 3 m wide by 0.5 m deep. No dateable finds were recovered from its fills.

***Trench 11***

5.1.9 The continuation of ditch 2813/3008 was seen within the southern end of Trench 11, but not excavated here due its oblique angle across the trench and because of localised flooding. Approximately 8 m to the north of this ditch, a smaller parallel

ESE-WNW ditch, 3104, was excavated (Figs. 3 and 5). Ditch 3104 was cut from beneath soil layer 3101. It had a broad, gently rounded, base with steep sides, and measured 0.9 m wide by 0.3 m deep. It contained three fills: a shallow primary fill of dark grey loamy clay (3107); a small slippage of sand on the southern side of the ditch (3106) and a grey-orange sandy silt upper fill, 3105. Fill 3107 contained fragments of animal bone and fill 3105 contained a single sherd of late 1st-2nd century pottery.

***Trench 12***

5.1.10 Trench 12 was a short trench placed within the south-east corner of the central field (Fig. 2). It revealed the continuation of ditch 2813/3008/3108, running obliquely across the western end of the trench. Because this ditch had already been sectioned within Trenches 8 & 10, it was not excavated here.

***Trench 13***

5.1.11 Trenches 13 and 14 were both located in the south-western field. This area has been the subject of a previous watching brief and features mapping exercise that had located a Roman cemetery due south adjacent to Watling Street. The revealed features were overlain by a patchy spread of buried topsoil and a thick deposit of greyish brown clay. Trench 13 revealed a two inter-cutting pits (3303/3307) and two ditches, 3300 and 3309 (Figs. 3 and 5).

5.1.12 Ditch 3309 extended north-south within the east end of the trench. It measured 4.3 m wide by at least 1.35 m deep, but was not bottomed because of safety considerations. Its east edge was almost vertical, whereas its western side was more gradually sloping, becoming steeper with depth. Its lower fills, grey clay 3312 and greyish brown clay loam (3311) lay beneath a thicker, dark grey sandy clay upper fill, 3310. This fill contained animal bone, and 1st-3rd century Roman pottery.

5.1.13 Approximately 5 m to the north-west of ditch 3309, an irregular group of inter-cutting pits, was sectioned as contexts 3303 & 3307. The pits ran beneath the southern trench baulk but as excavated measured up to 6 m long by 1.02 m wide. They were generally rounded in profile and measured up to 0.6 m deep. The pits were filled by a thin primary deposit of brownish grey clay (3306), brown-grey sandy clays (3305 & 3308) and an upper, brown-grey silty clay (3304). Fills 3304, 3305 and 3308 contained animal bone. Fill 3305 contained a single sherd of early Romano-British (Flavian) pottery - *c* 69-96 AD - a small metal strip and an Fe knife blade. Fill 3304 contained 1st century Roman pottery.

5.1.14 Within the north-western end of the trench, a small ditch, (3300), ran NE-SW across the trench. It had a broad, flat base and evenly sloping 45° sides and measured 0.73 m wide by 0.22 m deep. Orange-brown sandy clays 3301 & 3302 filled the ditch. This feature was undated.

***Trench 14***

5.1.15 Trench 14 revealed five ditches, a large pit, 3406, and a probable tree-hole, 3423, (Figs.4&5).

5.1.16 Four of the ditches, 3402, 3411, 3415, 3419, were aligned north-south and one, (3421), was aligned east-west.

5.1.17 The largest of the ditches, 3415, measured 2 m wide by 0.6 m deep. The ditch had a generally rounded profile, but was slightly stepped on the western side. It contained a dark grey-brown sandy gravel primary fill (3418); a dark grey brown silty clay secondary fill, 3417, and a brown-grey clay tertiary fill, 3416. Fill 3417 contained a single large sherd of 1st-2nd century Roman pottery.

5.1.18 Ditch 3411 crossed the east end of the trench. It had a rounded base and sides, and measured 1.1 m wide by 0.5 m deep. It contained three fills: silty sand slippage material (3414), a silty clay lower fill (3413) and a clay upper fill (3412). Fill 3412 contained animal bone and 2nd century Roman pottery.

5.1.19 Ditches 3419 and 3421 were smaller, measuring 0.9 m wide by 0.2 m deep and 0.3 m wide by 0.1 m deep respectively. They were both filled by similar sandy loam deposits (3420 & 3422); neither fill produced any finds.

5.1.20 East-west aligned ditch 3402 had a rounded profile, measuring 1.08 m wide by 0.24 m deep. It was filled by sandy clays (3403 & 3404). No finds were recovered.

5.1.21 Pit 3406 was located near the middle of the trench and ran beneath its southern baulk. The visible extent of the pit was rounded in shape, with steep, rounded sides and a broad flat base. It measured 2.03 m wide by 0.38 m deep. The pit was filled by slippage deposits (3407, 3408) and silty sand fills (3409, 3410). The uppermost fill, (3410), contained 1st century Roman pottery.

5.1.22 A shallow, irregular feature, 3423, was investigated within the western end of the trench, and is thought to be the result of tree root disturbance.

***Trench 15***

5.1.23 A pattern of north-south aligned ridge and furrow cultivation was apparent across the area of Trenches 15 to 19. The undulations of this field system were most apparent within Trench 15, but no other features were revealed within this trench. The average depth of the topsoil and ploughsoil over-burden within this field was between 0.4 m – 0.6 m.

***Trench 16***

5.1.24 Two inter-cutting pits (3603 and 3612) were located within the centre of Trench 16 (Figs. 4 and 5). These were partly disturbed by a crossing pattern of land-drains, but were sectioned at their western end. The section revealed a shallow pit (3612), which was truncated to the south by a larger cut feature, 3603. The top of cut 3603 sloped down gradually but became noticeably steeper with depth. It was not bottomed due to restricted space and incoming water. As excavated, it measured at least 1.5 m wide by 0.55 m deep. No finds were recovered.

***Trench 17***

5.1.25 Trench 17 revealed a large NW-SE aligned ditch or pit, 3708, and two adjacent smaller pits within its western end, and two shallow inter-cutting ditches or shallow pits (3712 and 3714) to the east (Figs. 4, 5 and 6). A partial section was excavated across feature 3708, revealing a fairly shallow, gently rounded cut measuring only 0.2 m deep. It was filled by a brown-grey clay that contained small amounts of animal bone and mid-2nd century pottery. Two small pits, 3704, 3705, just to the east of cut 3708, were also sectioned. Their fills contained animal bone and 1st-2nd century Roman pottery.

5.1.26 Features 3712 and 3714 were similar, with gently rounded profiles measuring 1.72 m wide by 0.3 m deep and 1.5 m wide by 0.2 m deep respectively. Cut 3714 appeared to partially truncate feature 3712. Its fill (3713) contained a single sherd of 1st-2nd century Roman pottery. Both of these features lay just to the west of an area of sandy gravel, and may be associated with quarrying activity.

***Trench 18***

5.1.27 Trench 18 revealed two large east-west aligned linear features (3802, 3809) and two smaller north-south aligned ditches or gullies (3805 and 3812). Cut 3805 truncated an earlier pit, 3807 - (Figs 4 and 6). A partial section across 3809 revealed a gradually sloping cut that became steeper with depth. This feature measured 2.4 m wide by at least 0.6m deep. Its upper fill, 3810, contained 1st century pottery. It was not clear whether this feature was a large ditch or pit.

5.1.28 Feature 3802 ran parallel to 3809, and measured 1.8 m wide by at least 0.6 m deep. Due to persistent flooding, it was not bottomed. It contained a brown clay loam fill, 3803, beneath a black/brown silty clay, 3801. The upper fill contained bone and 11 sherds of 3rd century pottery. Subsoil horizons, apparent across the rest of the site, were not visible above fill 3801. Instead a thick, dark brown 'topsoil' was noted. The organic nature of this deposit may indicate that this area is continuously wet and therefore boggy.

5.1.29 To the east of the trench, a rounded, steep sided pit, 3807, was truncated by ditch 3805. The pit was roughly round in plan, and measured 1.54 m wide by 0.52 m deep. It was filled by a grey-brown clay loam, which contained 1st century pottery. The later ditch was relatively shallow, measuring 1 m wide by only 0.16 m deep. Its fill, a brown clay loam, also contained 1st century Roman pottery.

5.1.30 A narrow linear feature, (3812,) lay just to the west of an area disturbed by the insertion of a land-drain. This feature was not excavated.

***Trench 19***

5.1.31 Trench 19 revealed two ditches (3904, 3907) and a pit (3909 - Figs. 4 and 6). Ditch 3907 ran north-south across the south-west end of the trench. It measured 1.7 m wide by 0.3 m deep and contained a dark brown clay loam primary fill, 3906 and a yellow-brown clay loam upper fill, 3905. Fill 3905 contained animal bone and 1st century pottery.

5.1.32 A shallower, NW-SE aligned ditch, 3904, crossed the northern end of the trench. This feature was 0.6 m wide by only 0.1 m deep. Its fill, a dark grey-brown silty clay, contained no finds.

5.1.33 Pit 3909 ran beneath the south-eastern baulk of the trench. As seen, it appeared to be roughly rectangular in shape, and was initially thought to be a possible grave. However as excavation progressed, it became apparent that this was more likely to be a small pit. The pit was 0.75 m wide by 0.35 m deep and had a rounded profile. It contained a grey-brown gravely clay loam primary fill, 3910, and a similar, charcoal flecked upper fill, 3908. The upper fill contained a mixture of scattered animal bone and 17 sherds of 1st-2nd century Roman pottery. A possible knife blade made of iron (OA Small Find 1) and part of a copper strip whose function is uncertain were also recovered from this deposit.

5.1.34 Also within this fill were fragments of human bone from a skull probably from one individual. No further bones were recovered from the feature. It is possible that the human bone derives from ploughing into the top of the feature, given the known presence of inhumations in the general area. However, the possibility that this material represents a deliberately placed deposit cannot be discounted.

## 6 FINDS

### *The Pottery Assemblage by Paul Booth (OA)*

6.1.1 Some 99 sherds (1971 g) of late Iron Age and Roman pottery were recovered from the evaluation. The material was scanned rapidly and recorded in terms of broad fabric group using the standard OA system for pottery of this date. The pottery was in moderate condition.

6.1.2 A high average sherd weight (19.9 g) was boosted by the presence of a few sherds of amphorae and very large jars, but surface condition was variable and some sherds were quite abraded. There were no large context groups. Quantification by context, with likely ceramic dates (i.e. the date range within or after which the material is likely to have been deposited) is given in Table 1.

*Table 1: Quantities of pottery by context*

| Context | No. sherds | Weight (g) | Ceramic date | Comment |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3105 | 1 | 228 | ?late 1-2C | |
| 3304 | 6 | 56 | mid-late 1C (+) | |
| 3305 | 1 | 14 | Flavian | |
| 3310 | 2 | 112 | 1-3C | |
| 3410 | 6 | 84 | 1C | Pre- or post-Conquest |
| 3412 | 2 | 5 | ?2C (+) | |
| 3417 | 1 | 22 | 1-2C | |
| 3702 | 11 | 156 | late 1C (+) | |
| 3706 | 8 | 165 | ?early-mid 2C+ | |
| 3709 | 9 | 70 | mid 2C (+) | |
| 3710 | 1 | 20 | late 1-2C | |
| 3801 | 11 | 286 | late 3C+ | |
| 3806 | 5 | 106 | late 1C+ | |
| 3808 | 11 | 160 | mid-late 1C | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3810 | 2 | 7 | late 1C+ | |
| 3905 | 5 | 266 | late 1C (+) | |
| 3908 | 17 | 214 | early-mid 2C+ | Mostly *c* mid 1C |
| ***Total*** | *99* | *1971* | | |

6.1.3 The following fabrics or fabric groups were noted:

S20. South Gaulish samian ware. 6 sherds, 128 g.
S30. Central Gaulish samian ware. 6 sherds, 24 g.
F50. Red-brown colour-coated ware, uncertain source. 1 sherd, 4 g.
A10. Amphora fabric uncertain. 1 sherd, 14 g.
A11. South Spanish olive oil amphora fabrics. 1 sherd, 96 g.
W10. Fine white ware fabrics. 2 sherds, 39 g.
W21. Sandy white ware, Verulamium region. 3 sherds, 77 g.
E20. Fine sand-tempered 'Belgic type' fabrics. 4 sherds, 42 g.
E30. Coarse sand-tempered `Belgic type' fabrics. 11 sherds, 180 g.
E80. Grog-tempered `Belgic type' fabrics. 28 sherds, 674 g.
O30. Fine sandy oxidised coarse wares. 2 sherds, 32 g.
O81. Pink grogged ware. 4 sherds, 272 g.
R10. Fine reduced `coarse' wares. 1 sherd, 6 g.
R30. Moderately sandy reduced coarse wares. 19 sherds, 279 g.
R50. Black surfaced sandy reduced coarse ware. 3 sherds, 19 g.
C10. General shell-tempered wares. 7 sherds, 85 g.

6.1.4 A substantial proportion of the assemblage consisted of sherds in fabrics and forms broadly attributable to the 'Belgic' tradition (*sensu* Thompson 1982, 4). These could have been of pre- and/or post-Conquest date. The dividing line between the sand-tempered components of this tradition (E20 and E30 wares) and the 'Romanised' reduced wares R30 and R50 was not always very clearly defined. Another early coarse ware component in the assemblage comprised channel rim jars in (generally leached) shell-tempered fabrics, although most of these sherds were found in context groups associated with Roman fabrics and at least one may have been of later Roman date.

6.1.5 Samian ware was quite well-represented, although the Central Gaulish sherds were small. Amphorae were also present, two separate vessels (one probably a Dressel 20 olive oil amphora) being indicated. There were no other imported wares, and only a single sherd of fine ware - a small red-brown colour-coated sherd from an indented beaker. This was not assigned to a known source; it is possible that it was a Nene Valley product, but the fabric is not very typical of this industry. Fine and sandy white wares, the latter probably from the Verulamium region industry, were also present in small quantities. The Verulamium fabric (W21) was one of the few that can be assigned to a known source. Pink grogged ware (O81) is another - being produced at Stowe Park and therefore a relatively local fabric. Most if not all of the remaining coarse wares were probably locally produced.

6.1.6 As already indicated, the earliest pottery, the 'Belgic-type' material, could indicate activity of the late Iron Age, although at least some of it is probably of post-Conquest date on the basis of its associations. The remaining pottery indicates activity on the site in the later 1st and 2nd centuries, with only one context group (3801) fairly

certainly later in date. This group contained the indented beaker sherd already mentioned, as well as hooked rims from jars in pink-grogged ware and shell-tempered ware and a simple straight-sided dish in fabric R30. A late 3rd century (or possibly later) date seems likely for this group.

6.1.7 It is possible that some of the other groups were also of 3rd century date and simply lacked diagnostic pieces because of their generally small size, but on balance a 1st-2nd century date seems likely for most of the pottery and, by implication, the activity which led to its deposition.

***Human bone (Context 3908) by Ceri Boston (OA)***

6.1.8 Eight fragments of human cranium were recovered from context 3908, the upper fill of a pit, dated to the early mid-1st century, together with animal bone and pottery. The bone is part of the parietal bone of a single individual.

6.1.9 Preservation is good although the sex cannot be determined, the age was broadly estimated to between 20-40 years old, on the basis of ectocranial suture closure (Meindl and Lovejoy 1985).

***Animal Bone by Emma-Jane Evans (OA)***

6.1.10 The majority of the animal bones from the site were in reasonably good condition, with a large proportion scoring 2 using Lyman's grading (see Appendix 2). Although the condition of the bones is reasonable, much of the bone has fresh breaks. Of the bones recovered 51.6% were identifiable to species, a list of which is given in Table 2 below.

*Table 2. Total number of fragments identifiable to species (MNI in brackets)*

| | Horse | Cattle | Pig | Unidentified | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Total*** | 23 (2) | 7 (1) | 2 (1) | 30 | 62 |

6.1.11 Unfortunately there is little that can be said about the animal bones from this assemblage, due to the very small number of bones that are present. Although from the above table it may appear that horse is present in much greater numbers that cattle or pig, the majority of the horse remains are teeth, which may all originate from one animal.

6.1.12 Two unidentifiable fragments have butchery marks, one bone could be measured, a single pig mandible gave an age at death of one individual as sub-adult, and several loose horse teeth suggest that at least one horse died aged 8½ - 11½ years. Although this sample is small, any further excavation may uncover more bones of similar condition, which may increase our knowledge of the use and importance of animal bones at this site.

***Other Finds by Leigh Allen (OA)***

6.1.13 Ceramic building material was recovered from contexts 3304, 3305, 3806 and 3908, in total seven pieces. None of the sherds is diagnostic, but a Roman date is assigned to these on ceramic evidence.

6.1.14 Context 3908 produced the corroded remains of what appears to be an iron knife, and a copper alloy strip of unknown function. Both are dated to the Roman period in association with the pottery.

## 7 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

### 7.1 Reliability of field investigation

7.1.1 Conditions at the south-east of the site in the field belonging to Dropshort Farm were difficult for excavation, owing to persistent flooding of some trenches here. Elsewhere conditions were better: some trenches remained relatively dry (Trenches 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 14) and where the smaller features filled with water, hand bailing was sufficient to allow excavation and subsequent recording. The larger features required pumping out, which allowed for a reasonably clear level of excavation and recording. At the east of the site Trenches 10, 11, 12 and 15 – 19 gradually flooded. This meant that these trenches needed to be pumped out before the excavation of revealed features could commence. These trenches were planned shortly after excavation and before the trenches filled with water. The nature of the conditions therefore means that it is possible that discrete features were missed.

7.1.2 Nonetheless, the majority of features seen were sampled. Given the nature of the archaeology known from previous work at the site, emphasis was placed on identifying and investigating possible grave cuts and the of dating the larger features. Although no graves were found, this might mean that the evaluation trenches missed these features, or more likely is that the cemetery area lay beyond the bounds of the present investigation areas - see also below. In the main, the results obtained from the evaluation trenches were consistent with the earlier evaluation (OA 2001) and the results of the geophysical survey feature plots.

### 7.2 Discussion and interpretation

7.2.1 This evaluation broadly confirms the results of earlier work on the site, with a fairly dense pattern of Roman features in the more southerly of the present trenches excavated, while further to the north and north-west, the density of features diminishes markedly towards the valley and terrace adjacent to the river. There are several instances of ditches and pits, which are only dated by finds from their upper fills. This indicates that these features had or were going out of use when the finds were deposited. Given that most of the recovered finds date to the 1st and 2nd centuries, it is probable that these features date to the early Roman period or just conceivably date to the late Iron Age Period.

7.2.2 Two metal small finds were recovered from pit 3303 within Trench 13. These may indicate that there was nearby metalworking (possibly corroborated by the limited amount of metal waste recorded in the 2003 features mapping exercise - OA 2004 a), with metal objects being broken up or collected for reuse. However, no slag deposits or other indications of in-situ metalworking processes were evident at this time. The objects may otherwise simply represent use of tools by people farming the fields.

7.2.3 The overall pattern of results broadly conforms to what was previously known about the site, with north-south and east-west aligned field ditches, enclosures and sub-divisions, together with intermittent pit workings that relate closely to the previously plotted features identified by geophysical survey. The fact that virtually all of the recovered pottery dates from the 1st and 2nd centuries may indicate that this field pattern was going out of use by this time, or that the fields were still in use but not necessarily being redefined with boundary ditches. Within Trench 11, a small east-west aligned ditch was found to contain 1st-2nd century pottery. This ditch seems to demarcate the northern extent of the Roman extra-mural settlement at this time.

7.2.4 No inhumations/grave cuts were found during evaluation, indicating that the main cemetery area probably lies to the south adjacent to Watling Street. However, the possibility of further graves lying within the evaluation area cannot entirely be discounted. The relationship, if any, with the road suggested by Neal (B Giggins, *pers comm*) to lie to the SE of the development area was not established - no evidence for a road was recovered from any of the evaluation trenches. Skull fragments found within pit fill may hint a funerary activity in the early Roman period, although with so few fragments it is difficult to be certain that the bones are of significance. Ploughing of the known inhumations to the west could account for these pieces being moved from their original location.

7.2.5 During the Roman period the practice of inhumation generally occurred from the 3rd century onwards. Therefore it is likely that there was a general change of use in this outlying area of *Magiovinium*, with the agricultural field system going out of use and the establishment of a cemetery.

7.2.6 A larger, undated ditch, 2813, 3008, 3108, 3204, within Trenches 8, 10, 11 & 12, appears as a later (18th C.) boundary ditch on maps of the area. The geophysical survey of the site shows that the boundary between the two southern fields originally extended northwards to join this boundary, suggesting these boundaries are all relatively modern.

7.2.7 A shallow ditch containing a low stone wall or revetment within Trench 7, were the only features found within the north of the site. The function of the stonework is uncertain but it might represent a fording point across the ditch.

7.2.8 The finds assemblage is limited and at this stage only hints at the type of activities and status of material on the site being considered for development.

***Summary of results***

7.2.9 The pattern of north-south and east-west ditches found within the earlier evaluation and watching brief continued within the south of this evaluation, and are probably field boundaries with smaller plot sub-divisions. A number of smaller pits and possible gravel quarrying workings were also identified. No graves or buildings were found.

7.2.10 It seems likely that the found features form part of an agricultural subdivision of the area during the first half of the Roman period. This area seems to have changed in

use by the 3rd century, with the ditches not being redefined. Presumably the fields were used for grazing or the location of the cemetery prompted a change in land use here anyway. The absence of graves and the dating obtained suggests that the inhumations uncovered during the earlier watching brief lay within a later cemetery area to the south.

7.2.11 The Roman extra-mural settlement area was roughly demarcated by a later, 18th century boundary ditch which was aligned east-west across the middle of the site. There was very little archaeological activity of any period to the north and north-west of this feature.

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

| **Trench 1** | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Context | Type | Description | Depth (m) | Width (m) | Finds | Date |
| 2101 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.54 | | | |
| 2102 | Layer | Subsoil | 0.25 | | | |
| 2103 | Layer | Natural | | | | |
| 2104 | Layer | Natural | | | | |

| **Trench 2** | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Context | Type | Description | Depth (m) | Width (m) | Finds | Date |
| 2200 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.15 | | | |
| 2201 | Layer | Subsoil | 0.15 | | | |
| 2202 | Layer | Natural | | | | |
| 2203 | Layer | Natural | | | | |
| 2204 | Layer | Natural | | | | |
| 2205 | Layer | Natural | 0.25 | | | |
| 2206 | Layer | Natural | | | | |
| 2207 | Layer | Natural | | | | |

| **Trench 3** | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Context | Type | Description | Depth (m) | Width (m) | Finds | Date |
| 2300 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.3 | | | |
| 2301 | Layer | Subsoil | 0.4 | | | |
| 2302 | Layer | Natural | 0.06 | | | |
| 2303 | Layer | Natural | | | | |

| **Trench 4** | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Context | Type | Description | Depth (m) | Width (m) | Finds | Date |
| 2400 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.1 | | | |
| 2401 | Layer | subsoil | 0.15 | | | |
| 2402 | Layer | natural | | | | |
| 2403 | Layer | natural | | | | |
| 2404 | Layer | natural | | | | |

| **Trench 5** | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Context | Type | Description | Depth (m) | Width (m) | Finds | Date |
| 2500 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.2 | | | |
| 2501 | Layer | subsoil | 0.15 | | | |
| 2502 | Layer | Natural | | | | |
| 2503 | Layer | Natural | | | | |

| **Trench 6** | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Context | Type | Description | Depth (m) | Width (m) | Finds | Date |
| 2600 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.1 | | | |
| 2601 | Fill | subsoil | 0.1 | | | |
| 2602 | Fill | natural | | | | |

| **Trench 7** | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Context | Type | Description | Depth (m) | Width (m) | Finds | Date |
| 2700 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.18 | | | |
| 2701 | Layer | Subsoil | 0.3 | | | |
| 2702 | Layer | Natural | | | | |
| 2703 | Layer | Natural | | | | |
| 2704 | Cut | Ditch | 0.18 | | | |
| 2705 | Fill | Fill of 2704 | 0.18 | | | |
| 2706 | Structure | Wall? | 0.2 | | | |

| **Trench 8** | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Context | Type | Description | Depth (m) | Width (m) | Finds | Date |
| 2800 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.22 | | | |
| 2801 | Layer | Subsoil | 0.16 | | | |
| 2802 | Layer | Natural | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2803 | Layer | Natural | | | | |
| 2804 | Fill | Fill of 2805 | 0.24 | | | |
| 2805 | Cut | Ditch | 0.24 | | | |
| 2806 | Fill | Fill of 2807 | 0.07 | | | |
| 2807 | Cut | Ditch | 0.2 | | | |
| 2808 | Fill | Land drain | | | | Modern |
| 2809 | Fill | Land drain | | | | Modern |
| 2810 | Cut | Land drain | | | | Modern |
| 2811 | Fill | Fill of 2813 | 0.5 | | Bone | |
| 2812 | Fill | Fill of 2813 | 0.2 | | | |
| 2813 | Cut | Ditch | 0.7 | | | |

**Trench 9**

| Context | Type | Description | Depth (m) | Width (m) | Finds | Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2900 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.15 | | | |
| 2901 | Layer | Subsoil | 0.3 | | | |
| 2902 | Layer | Natural | | | | |
| 2903 | Layer | Natural | | | | |

**Trench 10**

| Context | Type | Description | Depth (m) | Width (m) | Finds | Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3000 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.2 | | | |
| 3001 | Layer | Subsoil | 0.3 | | | |
| 3002 | Layer | Natural | | | | |
| 3003 | Layer | Subsoil | 0.1 | | | |
| 3004 | Fill | Fill of 3008 | 0.4 | | | |
| 3005 | Fill | Fill of 3008 | 0.2 | | | |
| 3006 | Fill | Fill of 3008 | 0.5 | | | |
| 3007 | Fill | Fill of 3008 | | | | |
| 3008 | Cut | Ditch | 0.5 | | | |

**Trench 11**

| Context | Type | Description | Depth (m) | Width (m) | Finds | Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3100 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.25 | | | |
| 3101 | Layer | Subsoil | 0.22 | | | |
| 3102 | Layer | Natural | | | | |
| 3103 | Layer | Natural | | | | |
| 3104 | Cut | Ditch | 0.3 | | | |
| 3105 | Fill | Fill of 3104 | 0.45 | | Pot | Roman |
| 3106 | Fill | Fill of 3104 | 0.1 | | | |
| 3107 | Fill | Fill of 3104 | 0.15 | | Bone | |
| 3108 | Cut | Ditch | | | | |
| 3109 | Fill | fill of 3108 | | | | |

**Trench 12**

| Context | Type | Description | Depth (m) | Width (m) | Finds | Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3200 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.25 -0.35 | | | |
| 3201 | Layer | Subsoil | 0.2 | | | |
| 3202 | Layer | Natural | | | | |
| 3203 | Layer | Natural | | | | |
| 3204 | Cut | Ditch | | | | |
| 3205 | Layer | Natural | | | | |

**Trench 13**

| Context | Type | Description | Depth (m) | Width (m) | Finds | Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3300 | Cut | Ditch | 0.22 | | | |
| 3301 | Fill | Fill of 3300 | 0.08 | | | |
| 3302 | Fill | Fill of 3300 | 0.14 | | | |
| 3303 | Cut | Pit | 0.6 | | | |
| 3304 | Fill | Fill of 3303 | 0.2 | | Pot, Bone | Roman |
| 3305 | Fill | Fill of 3303 | 0.2 | | Pot, Bone, Metal | Roman |
| 3306 | Fill | Fill of 3303 | 0.1 | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3307 | Cut | Pit | 0.2 | | | |
| 3308 | Fill | Fill of 3307 | 0.2 | | Bone | |
| 3309 | Cut | Ditch | | | | |
| 3310 | Fill | Fill of 3309 | 0.7 | | Pot, Bone | Roman |
| 3311 | Fill | Fill of 3309 | 0.4 | | | |
| 3312 | Fill | Fill of 3309 | 0.1 | | | |

**Trench 14**

| Context | Type | Description | Depth (m) | Width (m) | Finds | Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3400 | Layer | Made Ground | 0.6 | | | |
| 3401 | Layer | Buried Soil | 0.2 | | | |
| 3402 | Cut | Ditch | 0.24 | | | |
| 3403 | Fill | Fill of 3402 | 0.14 | | | |
| 3404 | Fill | Fill of 3402 | 0.06 | | | |
| 3405 | Layer | Natural | | | | |
| 3406 | Cut | Ditch | 0.38 | | | |
| 3407 | Fill | Fill of 3406 | 0.22 | | | |
| 3408 | Fill | Fill of 3406 | 0.12 | | | |
| 3409 | Fill | Fill of 3406 | 0.2 | | | |
| 3410 | Fill | Fill of 3406 | 0.21 | | Pot | |
| 3411 | Cut | Ditch | 0.5 | | | |
| 3412 | Fill | Fill of 3411 | 0.2 | | Pot, Bone | Roman |
| 3413 | Fill | Fill of 3411 | 0.2 | | | |
| 3414 | Fill | Fill of 3411 | 0.1 | | | |
| 3415 | Cut | Ditch | 0.6 | | | |
| 3416 | Fill | Fill of 3415 | 0.2 | | | |
| 3417 | Fill | Fill of 3415 | 0.5 | | Pot | Roman |
| 3418 | Fill | Fill of 3415 | 0.2 | | | |
| 3419 | Cut | Ditch | 0.2 | | | |
| 3420 | Fill | Fill of 3419 | 0.2 | | | |
| 3421 | Cut | Ditch | 0.1 | | | |
| 3422 | Fill | Fill of 3421 | 0.1 | | | |

**Trench 15**

| Context | Type | Description | Depth (m) | Width (m) | Finds | Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3500 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.4 | | | |
| 3501 | Layer | Subsoil | 0.2 | | | |
| 3502 | Layer | Natural | | | | |

**Trench 16**

| Context | Type | Description | Depth (m) | Width (m) | Finds | Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3600 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.24 | | | |
| 3601 | Layer | Natural | 0.25 | | | |
| 3602 | Layer | Natural | | | | |
| 3603 | Cut | Pit | | | | |
| 3604 | Fill | Fill of 3603 | 0.2 | | | |
| 3605 | Fill | Fill of 3603 | 0.12 | | | |

**Trench 16**

| Context | Type | Description | Depth (m) | Width (m) | Finds | Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3606 | Fill | Fill of 3603 | 0.13 | | | |
| 3607 | Fill | Fill of 3603 | 0.04 | | | |
| 3608 | Fill | Fill of 3603 | 0.25 | | | |
| 3609 | Fill | Fill of 3603 | 0.02 | | | |
| 3610 | Fill | Fill of 3603 | 0.15 | | | |
| 3611 | Fill | Fill of 3612 | 0.25 | | | |
| 3612 | Cut | Pit | 0.25 | | | |

**Trench 17**

| Context | Type | Description | Depth (m) | Width (m) | Finds | Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3700 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.57 | | | |
| 3701 | Layer | Natural | | | | |
| 3702 | Fill | Fill of 3704 | 0.26 | | Pot | Roman |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3703 | Fill | Fill of 3704 | 0.08 | | | |
| 3704 | Cut | Pit | 0.34 | | | |
| 3705 | Cut | Pit | 0.3 | | | |
| 3706 | Fill | Fill of 3705 | 0.3 | | Pot, Bone | |
| 3707 | Fill | Fill of 3705 | 0.1 | | | |
| 3708 | Cut | Ditch | | | | |
| 3709 | Fill | Fill of 3708 | | | Pot, Bone | |
| 3710 | Fill | Fill of 3712 | 0.2 | | | |
| 3711 | Fill | Fill of 3712 | 0.1 | | | |
| 3712 | Cut | Ditch | 0.3 | | | |
| 3713 | Fill | Fill of 3714 | 0.2 | | Pot | |
| 3714 | Cut | Ditch | 0.2 | | | |

**Trench 18**

| Context | Type | Description | Depth (m) | Width (m) | Finds | Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3800 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.4 | | | |
| 3801 | Fill | Fill of 3802 | 0.66 | | Pot, Bone | |
| 3802 | Cut | Ditch | 0.6 | | Pot, Bone | |
| 3803 | Fill | Fill of 3802 | 0.35 | | | |
| 3804 | Layer | Natural | | | | |
| 3805 | Cut | Ditch | 0.16 | | | |
| 3806 | Fill | Fill of 3805 | 0.16 | | Pot | |
| 3807 | Cut | Pit | 0.52 | | Pot | |
| 3808 | Fill | Fill of 3807 | 0.52 | | Pot | |
| 3809 | Cut | Ditch | | | | |
| 3810 | Fill | Fill of 3809 | 0.4 | | | |
| 3811 | Fill | Fill of 3809 | | | | |

**Trench 19**

| Context | Type | Description | Depth (m) | Width (m) | Finds | Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3900 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.8 | | | |
| 3901 | Layer | Subsoil | 0.3 | | | |
| 3902 | Layer | Natural | | | | |
| 3903 | Fill | Fill of 3904 | 0.05 | | | |
| 3904 | Cut | Ditch | 0.2 | | | |
| 3905 | Fill | Fill of 3907 | 0.3 | | | |
| 3906 | Fill | Fill of 3907 | | | Pot, Bone | |
| 3907 | Cut | Ditch | 0.28 | | | |
| 3908 | Fill | Fill of 3909 | 0.3 | | Pot, Bone | |
| 3909 | Cut | Pit | 0.4 | | | |
| 3910 | Fill | Fill of 3909 | 0.3 | | | |

## APPENDIX 2 ANIMAL BONE REPORT METHODOLOGY

**Animal Bone by Emma-Jane Evans (OA)**

The evaluation recovered 62 pieces (1939g) of animal bone excavated from the site at Fenny Stratford.

**Methodology**

Identification of the bone was undertaken at Oxford Archaeology with access to the reference collection and published guides. All the animal remains were counted and weighed, and where possible identified to species, element, side and zone (Serjeantson 1996). Also, fusion data, butchery marks, gnawing, burning and pathological changes were noted when present. Undiagnostic bones were recorded as small (small mammal size), medium (sheep size) or large (cattle size). The condition of the bone was graded using the criteria stipulated by Lyman (1996), grade 0 being the best preserved bone and grade 5 indicating that the bone had suffered such structural and attritional damage as to make it unrecognisable. The quantification of species was carried out using the total fragment count, in which the total

number of fragments of bone and teeth was calculated, and this figure broken down to the total number of fragments identifiable to each species. In addition the minimum number of individuals (MNI) was calculated using the zoning method (Serjeantson, 1996). The elements used for working out MNI do not include ribs, vertebra, loose teeth, tarsals and carpals unless these are the only elements present. Tooth eruption and wear stages were measured using a combination of Halstead (1985) and Grant (1982), and fusion data was analysed according to Silver (1969). Measurements of adult, that is, fully fused bones were taken according to the methods of von den Driesch (1976), with asterisked (*) measurements indicating bones that were reconstructed or had slight abrasion of the surface.

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## APPENDIX 4 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

**Site name:** Belvedere Nurseries, Bow Brickhill, Fenny Stratford, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire.
**Site code:** FESTBN 04
**Grid reference:** SP 8874 3395
**Type of evaluation:** 19-trench field evaluation, across four fields, just to the north-west of the Roman town of *Magiovinium*. Trenches were targeted at plotted geophysical results.
**Date and duration of project:** Three weeks, in December 2004
**Summary of results:** The results broadly confirm previous findings from across the site. The pattern of north-south and east-west Roman ditches found within the earlier evaluation and watching brief continued within the south area of this evaluation, and are probably field boundaries with smaller plot sub-divisions. A number of smaller pits and possible gravel quarrying workings were also identified. No graves or buildings were found. It seems likely that the found features form part of an agricultural subdivision of the area during the first half of the Roman period. There was limited evidence of possible metalworking and gravel quarrying. This area seems to have gone out of use by the 2nd century. The absence of graves and the dating obtained suggests that the inhumations uncovered during the earlier watching brief lay within a later cemetery area to the south near Watling Street. The Roman extra-mural settlement area was roughly demarcated by a later, 18th century boundary ditch which was aligned east-west across the middle of the site. There was very little archaeological activity to the north of this.
**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with the appropriate Museum (Milton Keynes Council or Buckinghamshire Museums Service) in due course, in accordance with the Project Brief.

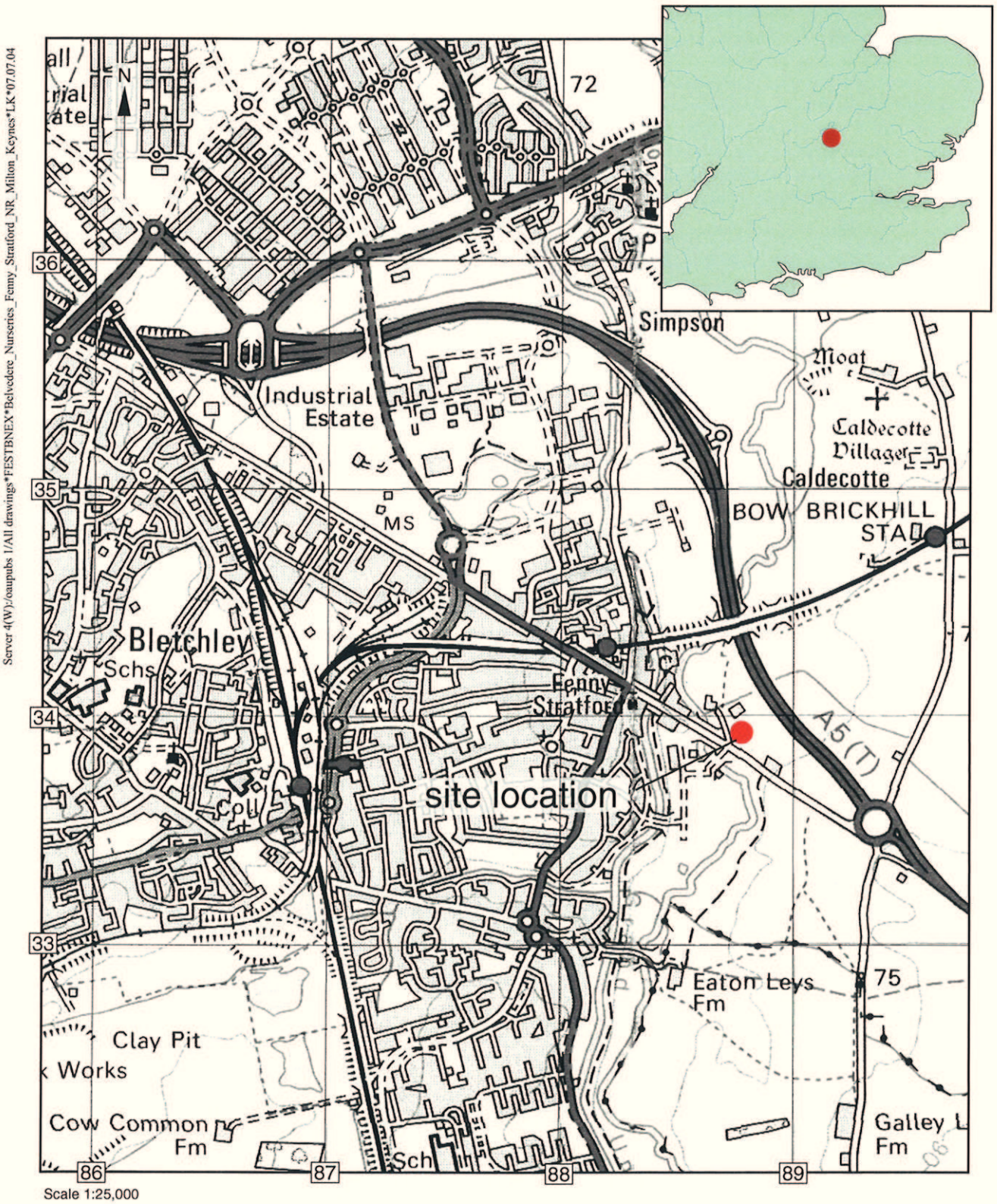




Figure 1: Site Location

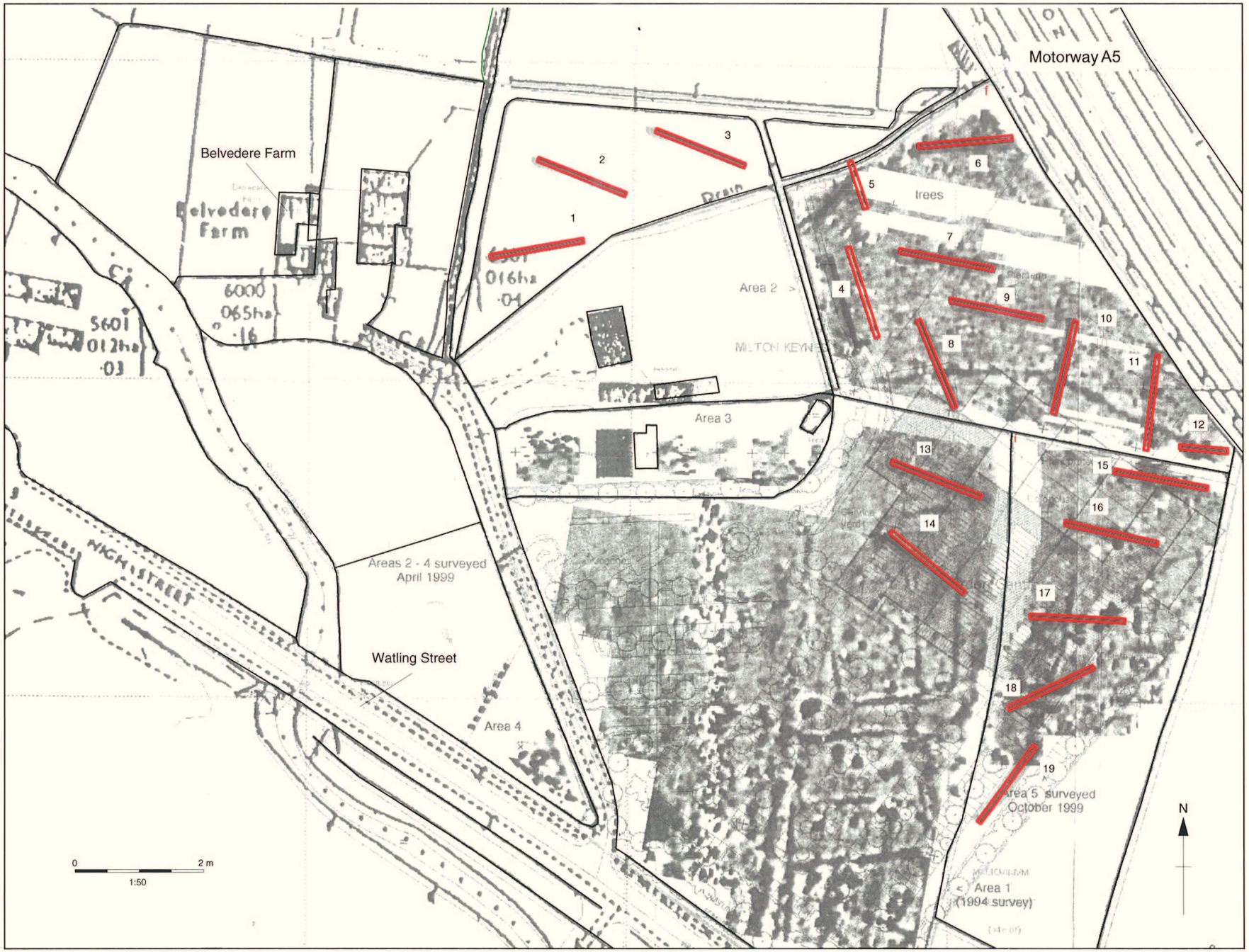


Figure 2: Trench locations superimposed on Geo-physical survey

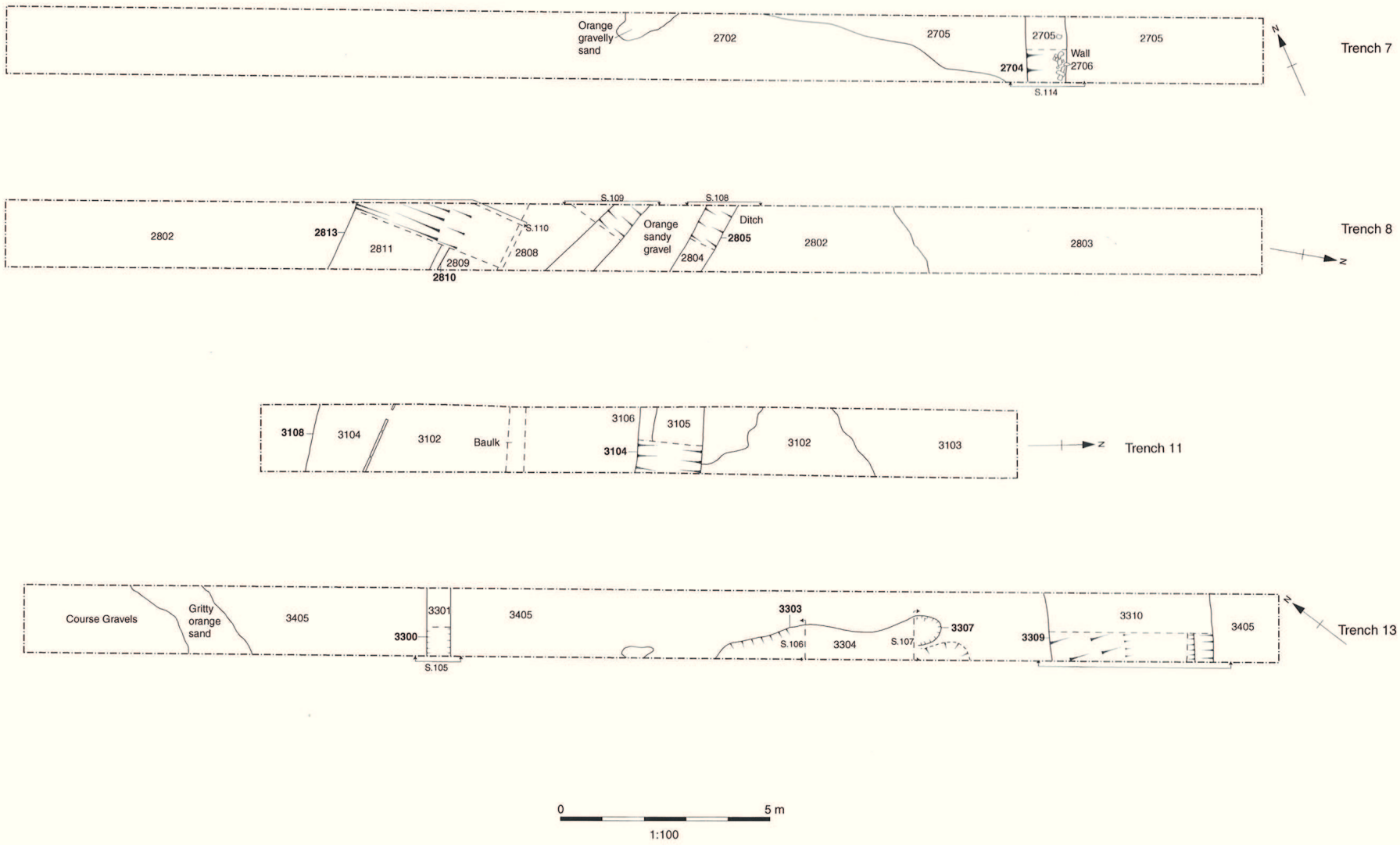


Figure 3 : Trench plans

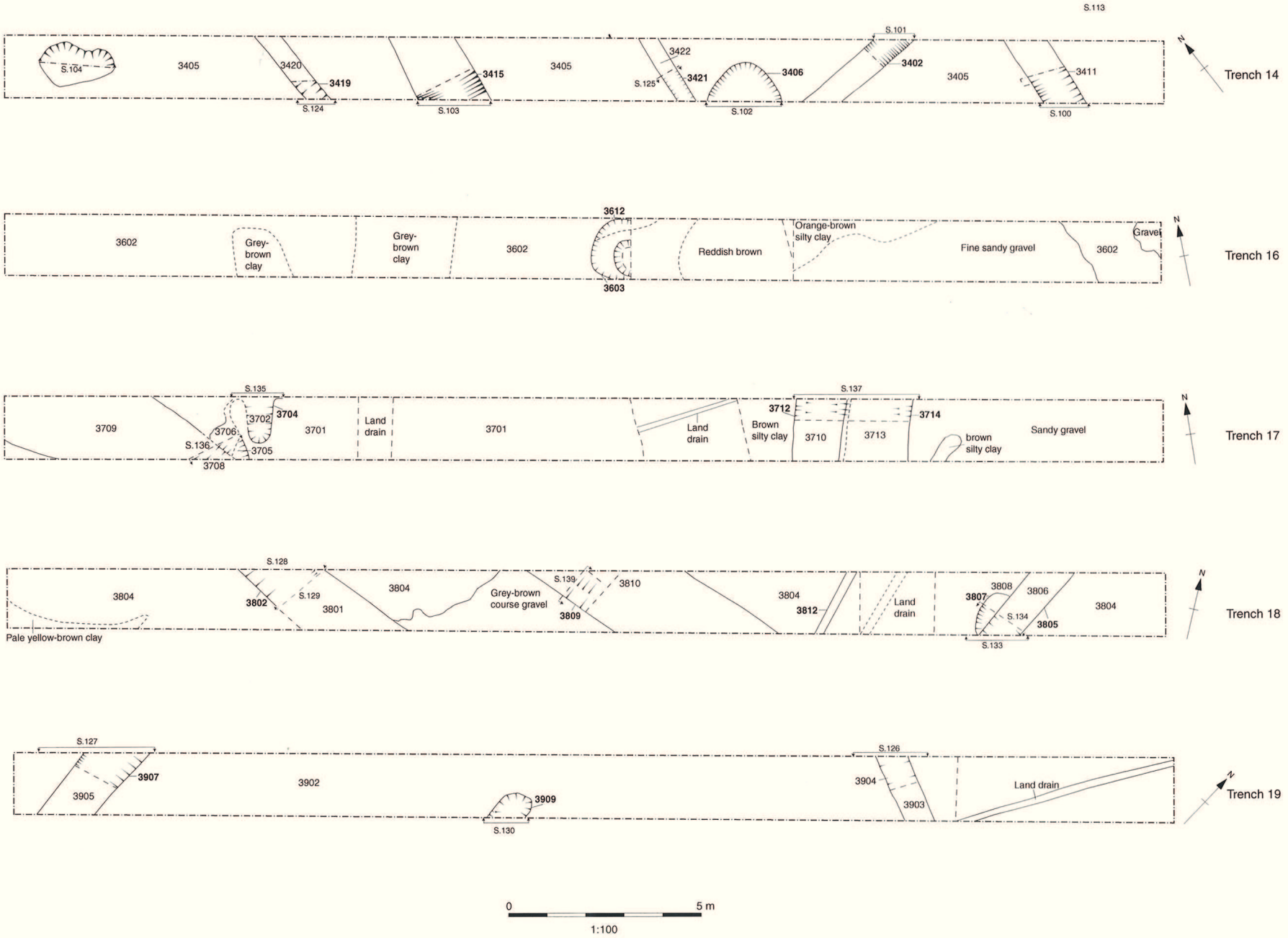


Figure 4 : Trench plans

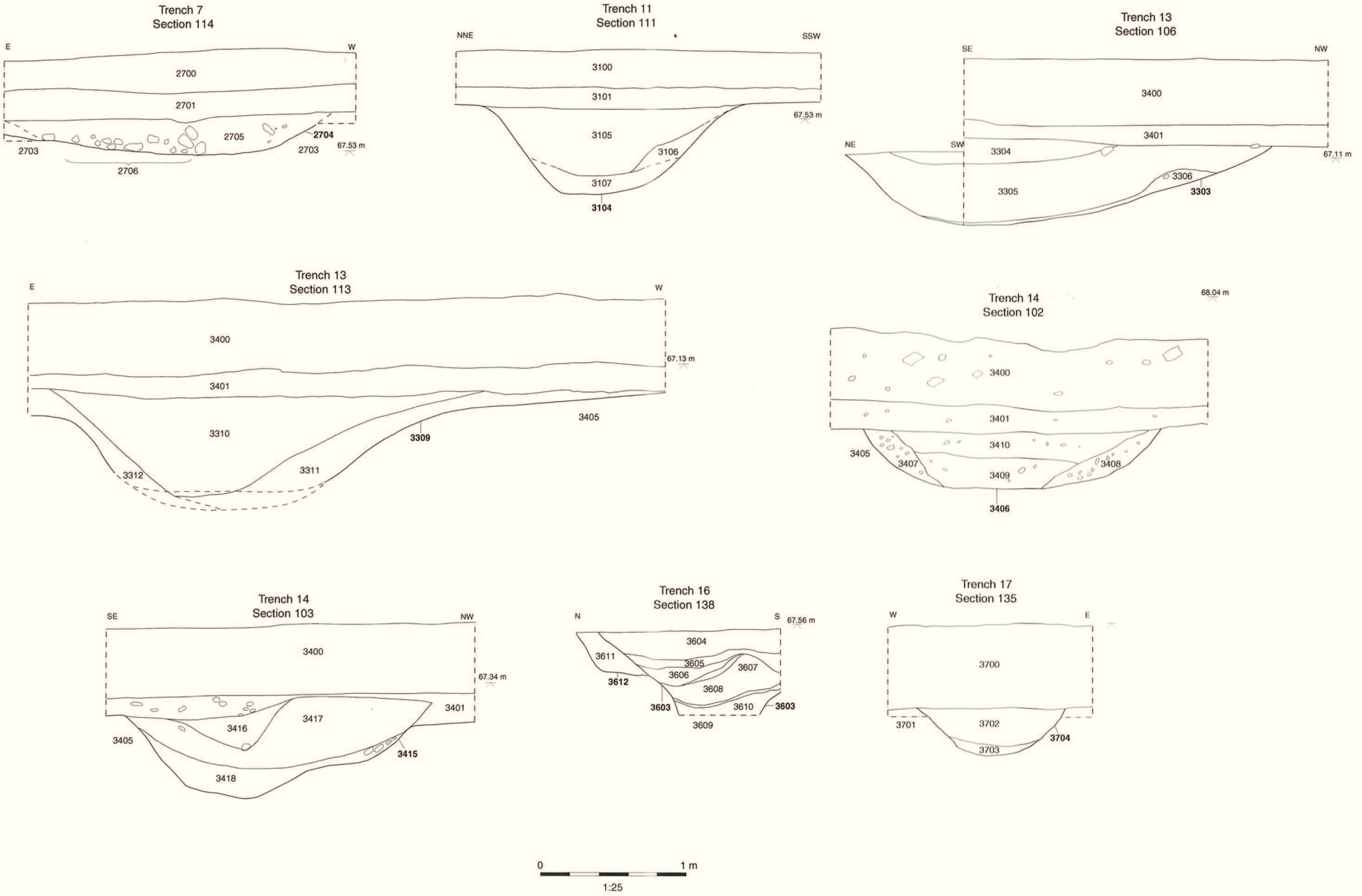


Figure 5 : Sections

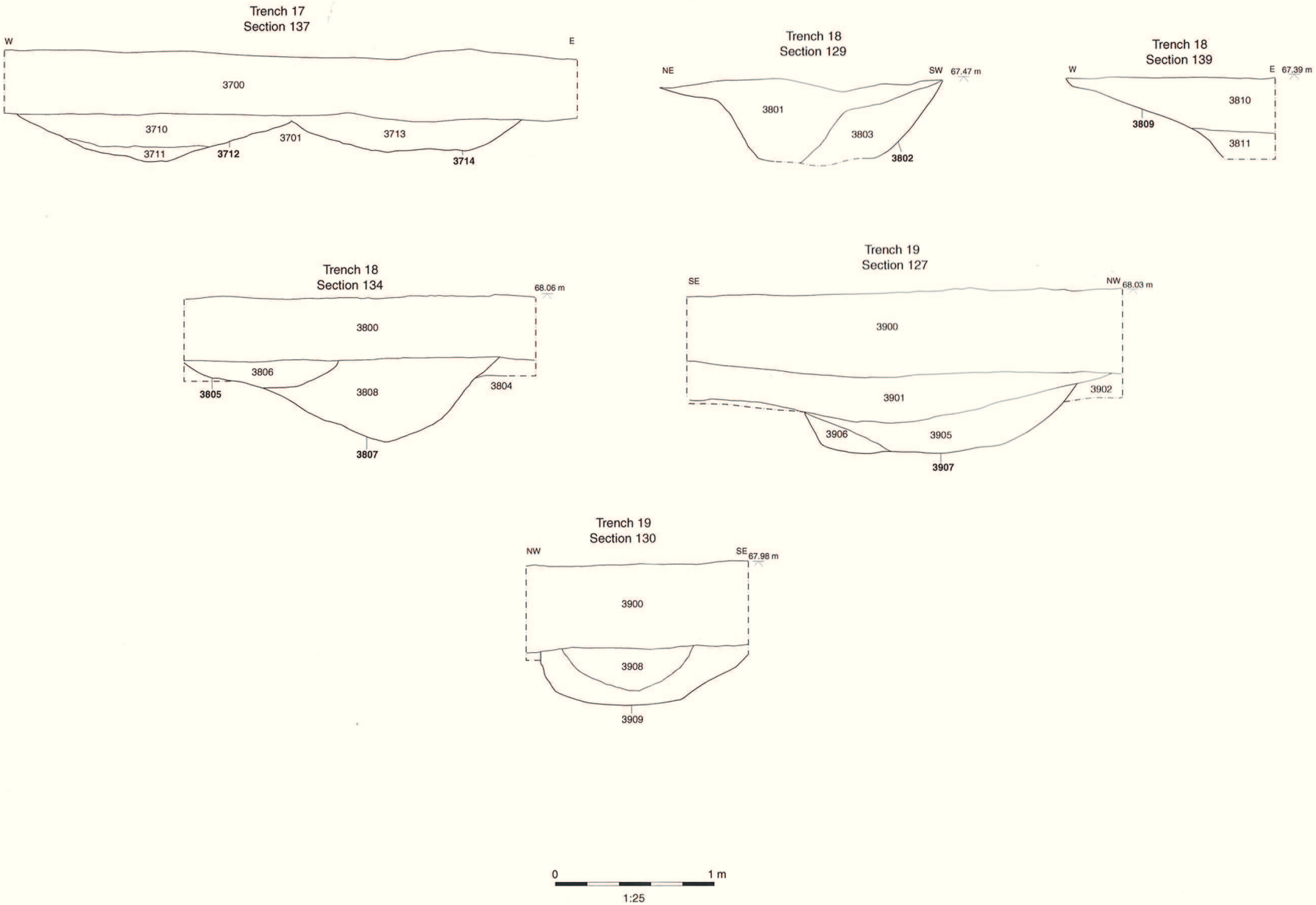


Figure 6: Sections

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