

Land at  
The Railway Hotel  
Bridge Street  
Buxton  
Derbyshire



**Archaeological Evaluation Report**



**Oxford Archaeology**

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**Infrastructure Investments Ltd**

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# Land at the Railway Hotel, Bridge Street, Buxton, Derbyshire

NGR 40624 37365

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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## SUMMARY

*In July 2004 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation on land adjacent to the Railway Hotel, Bridge Street, Buxton, Derbyshire (NGR 40624 37365) on behalf of John Samuels Archaeological Consultants for Infrastructure Investments Ltd.*

*The evaluation revealed that the site had been truncated by 19th century activity, probably related to industry. Three ditches, probably for drainage, and dating to the 19th century were seen.*

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 Between the 13th and 14th July 2004 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at Bridge Street, Buxton, Derbyshire (NGR 40624 37365) (Fig.1) on behalf of John Samuels Archaeological Consultants for Infrastructure Investments Ltd.
- 1.1.2 The site is to be redeveloped for Derby University and the archaeological work was undertaken in respect of a planning application for the construction of student accommodation (Planning Application No. HPK/2001/0236).
- 1.1.3 A brief was set by and a Specification (JSAC 2004) agreed with Andrew Myers the Development Control Archaeologist for High Peak Borough Council. The development site is situated adjacent to the Railway Hotel, Buxton and is 0.4151 hectares in area.

#### 1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies on silty clay overlying fragmented shale at 288 m above OD. The site is situated on a level surface the western half being tarmac and the eastern waste ground.

#### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background was prepared by JSAC and is summarised here.
- 1.3.2 The Roman spa town of Buxton was known as *Aquae Arnemetiae*, though the baths are almost certainly covered by the town centre Georgian crescent building.
- 1.3.3 Roman building remains and lead-lined baths are known from St. Anne's Well in the 17th and 18th centuries. The nearby mound has been interpreted as a classical temple and demolition of a modern swimming pool revealed a range of finds including 232 Roman coins.
- 1.3.4 The development site is situated within 400 m of the Crescent where Roman remains were exposed. The site itself has produced no archaeological evidence.
- 1.3.5 A series of geotechnical test pits were excavated by Howard Stanley Pratt (2001) revealing a soil sequence of solid rock beneath shale, then clay beneath topsoil.

## 2 EVALUATION AIMS

- 2.1.1 The purpose of the field evaluation was to gain information about the archaeological resource within the given area or site, in order to make an assessment of its merit in the appropriate context, leading to one or more of the following:-
- 2.1.2 The formulation of a strategy to ensure the recording, preservation or management of the resource
- 2.1.3 The formulation of a strategy to mitigate a threat to the archaeological resource
- 2.1.4 The formulation of a proposal for further archaeological investigation within a program of research.

## 3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Scope of fieldwork

- 3.1.1 The evaluation comprised the excavation of seven trenches measuring between 9 m and 12 m in length by 1.8 m in width (Fig. 2). The trenches were located within the perimeter of the proposed development site.
- 3.1.2 All trenches were excavated by a 360°-type excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under close archaeological supervision. Excavation proceeded to the top of the natural geology or to the top of the first archaeological horizon, whichever came first.

### 3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

- 3.2.1 The trenches were cleaned by hand and the revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds and environmental samples. All archaeological features were planned and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20.
- 3.2.2 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 As all finds dated to the 19th century or later it was decided following consultation with the Development Control Archaeologist for High Peak Borough Council that it would not be necessary to retain the finds for further analysis.

### 3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence

- 3.4.1 No deposits of Palaeo-environmental significance were encountered on the site.

## 4 RESULTS: GENERAL

### 4.1 Soils and ground conditions

- 4.1.1 The site is located on an area of land that has a tarmac surface to the west while the eastern half was waste ground, with dumps of car tyres and rubbish. Problems with the depth of some trenches were encountered but this was dealt with by stepping the sides of relevant trenches

#### 4.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits

- 4.2.1 All deposits and features were dated to the 19th century or later. Three ditches were located, all in the eastern half of the site.

### 5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

#### 5.1 Trenches 2, 4, 6 and 7

- 5.1.1 These four trenches contained no features of archaeological significance. Deposits relating to 19th century or later activity were seen to lie directly above the natural geology. These deposits included bands of ash and charcoal, re-deposited clay and buried soils of recent date. All these deposits were dated from pottery found within or above and below each layer to the 19th century.

#### 5.2 Trench 1

- 5.2.1 Trench 1 (Fig. 3) was located in the eastern half of the site. It measured 10 m in length by 1.8 m wide and was dug to a depth of 0.86 m, where the natural clay (104) was seen.
- 5.2.2 A possible shallow ditch (105) cut 104 running on an east to west alignment down the northern half of the trench. This ditch had a depth of 0.12 m. Its exposed width was 0.85 m but would be greater than this as the ditch was not fully exposed within the confines of the trench. It was filled by a single fill (106) of dark brown clay silt, which contained fragments of 19th century pottery, glass and building rubble.
- 5.2.3 Overlying the ditch and extending the length of the trench was a thin band of light grey ash (103), 0.05 m in depth. No finds were recovered from this deposit. This in turn was overlain by a deposit of loose dark silt (102), which is possibly buried topsoil. It contained fragments of 19th century pottery and had a depth of 0.19 m. Above this layer was a deposit of disturbed material (101) containing recent modern rubbish and building rubble to a depth of up to 0.36 m.

#### 5.3 Trench 3

- 5.3.1 Trench 3 (Fig. 4) measured 11 m by 1.8 m and had a depth of 1.3 m. Due to its depth the sides of the trench were stepped. It was aligned east to west in the eastern half of the site. The natural clay (306) at the base of the trench was seen to be sloping down toward the east, at a distance of 4.1 m from the east end of the trench.
- 5.3.2 Above 303 at the eastern end of the trench, a deposit of mid-brown silty clay (305) was observed and pottery from this layer was of 19th century date. This deposit had a depth of 0.4 m.

- 5.3.3 Cutting 305 was a ditch (303) that was 3.6 m wide with a depth of up to 0.25 m. It followed the sloping natural along its western edge, but the eastern side was seen to have a steeper gradient where it cut through earlier deposit 305. The ditch had one fill (304) of compact blue/black clay. No finds were recovered from the fill.
- 5.3.4 Sealing the ditch and above 305 was a layer of mid grey silty clay (302). This deposit had a depth of 0.1 m at the western end of the trench and increased to 0.5 m as the slope increased the depth of the trench.
- 5.3.5 Layer 302 was directly below the present disturbed ground of the site, which was 0.6 m in depth.

#### 5.4 Trench 5

- 5.4.1 This trench (Fig. 5) had a length of 10.5 m and a width of 1.8 m. Natural clay (506) was seen in the base of the trench at the southern end, at a depth of 0.6 m. The base of the trench at the northern end was occupied by fragmented shale at a depth of 0.8 m. The natural shale is known to underlie the clay so its exposure, together with the slope of the base of the trench, may point to truncation of the natural deposits.
- 5.4.2 The earliest feature within the trench was located toward the northern end and took the form of a linear ditch (502). It crossed the trench on an alignment of NNW to SSE. Its full width was not seen due to later truncation, but it had a depth of 0.48 m. It contained two fills. The lowest was a compact mid-grey clay silt (503), 0.36 m in depth. No finds were recovered from this deposit. The upper fill (504) was a compact red brown silt and contained 19th century pottery. The ditch did not continue along the length of the trench beyond the cut for a land drain (510).
- 5.4.3 A buried soil (505) of mid grey silty clay overlay the natural at the southern end of the trench. It had been truncated by land drain 510. 19th century pottery was recovered from this layer. Sealing both the ditch and 505 was a layer of disturbed ground including dumps of modern material. This had a depth of up to 0.6 m.

### 6 DISCUSSION

- 6.1.1 The evaluation showed that the site appears to have undergone massive truncation during the 19th century with the removal of all earlier deposits down to the natural, which in Trench 5 had also been truncated.
- 6.1.2 The three ditches identified all date from this period but their exact function is unknown. It may be that they are associated with drainage for an industrial site.
- 6.1.3 Given the location of the site, with the large railway embankment to the east and the railway viaduct overhead, this truncation may have occurred as a direct result of the construction of these features in an area of industrial activity.
- 6.1.4 No residual evidence of any earlier activity was observed, either in terms of deposits or finds.

## 7 APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

|                 | <i>Cxt No</i> | <i>Type</i> | <i>Width (m)</i> | <i>Depth (m)</i> | <i>Comment</i>   | <i>Finds</i>    | <i>Date</i> |
|-----------------|---------------|-------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| <b>Trench 1</b> |               |             |                  |                  |                  |                 |             |
|                 | 101           | Layer       |                  | 0.36             | Disturbed ground | Modern pot      | 19C to 20C  |
|                 | 102           | Layer       |                  | 0.19             | Buried soil      | Pottery         | 19C         |
|                 | 103           | Layer       |                  | 0.05             | Industrial layer |                 | 19C         |
|                 | 104           | Layer       |                  |                  | Natural clay     |                 |             |
|                 | 105           | Cut         | >0.85            | 0.12             | Shallow ditch    |                 | 19C         |
|                 | 106           | Fill        | >0.85            | 0.12             | Fill of 105      | Pottery         | 19C         |
| <b>Trench 2</b> |               |             |                  |                  |                  |                 |             |
|                 | 201           | Layer       |                  | 0.13             | Disturbed ground | Pottery         | 19C to 20C  |
|                 | 202           | Layer       |                  | 0.2              | Hardcore         |                 |             |
|                 | 203           | Layer       |                  | 0.23             | Made ground      | Pottery         | 19C         |
|                 | 204           | Layer       |                  | 0.1              | Buried soil      | Glass           | 19C         |
|                 | 205           | Layer       |                  |                  | Natural clay     |                 |             |
| <b>Trench 3</b> |               |             |                  |                  |                  |                 |             |
|                 | 301           | Layer       |                  | 0.6              | Disturbed ground | Pottery         | 19C to 20C  |
|                 | 302           | Layer       |                  | 0.1-0.5          | Buried soil      | Pottery         | 19C         |
|                 | 303           | Cut         | 3.8              | 0.3              | Ditch            |                 | 19C         |
|                 | 304           | Fill        | 3.8              | 0.3              | Fill of 302      |                 | 19C         |
|                 | 305           | Layer       |                  | 0.4              | Buried soil      | Pottery         | 19C         |
| <b>Trench 4</b> |               |             |                  |                  |                  |                 |             |
|                 | 401           | Layer       |                  | 0.1              |                  | Pottery         | 19C         |
|                 | 402           | Layer       |                  | 0.25             |                  | Pottery         | 19C         |
|                 | 403           | Layer       |                  |                  | Natural clay     |                 |             |
|                 | 404           | Layer       |                  |                  | Natural shale    |                 |             |
| <b>Trench 5</b> |               |             |                  |                  |                  |                 |             |
|                 | 501           | Layer       |                  | 0.6              | Disturbed ground | Pottery Plastic | 19C to 20C  |
|                 | 502           | Cut         |                  | 0.48             | Ditch            |                 | 19C         |
|                 | 503           | Fill        |                  | 0.36             | Fill of 502      |                 |             |
|                 | 504           | Fill        |                  | 0.12             | Fill of 502      | Pottery         | 19C         |
|                 | 505           | Layer       |                  | 0.15             | Buried soil      | Pottery         | 19C         |



|                 |     |         |  |      |                             |           |     |
|-----------------|-----|---------|--|------|-----------------------------|-----------|-----|
|                 | 506 | Layer   |  |      | Natural clay                |           |     |
|                 | 507 | Layer   |  |      | Natural shale               |           |     |
|                 | 508 | Deposit |  |      | Land drain.                 |           |     |
|                 | 509 | Fill    |  |      | Fill of 510 plus land drain |           |     |
|                 | 510 | Cut     |  |      | Cut of land drain           |           |     |
| <b>Trench 6</b> |     |         |  |      |                             |           |     |
|                 | 601 | Layer   |  | 0.07 | Tarmac                      |           | 20C |
|                 | 602 | Layer   |  | 0.35 | Hardcore                    |           | 20C |
|                 | 603 | Layer   |  | 0.2  | Industrial layer            | Pottery   | 19C |
|                 | 604 | Layer   |  | 0.13 | Industrial layer            | Pottery   | 19C |
|                 | 605 | Layer   |  | 0.16 | Buried soil                 | Pottery   | 19C |
|                 | 606 | Layer   |  |      | Natural Clay                |           |     |
| <b>Trench 7</b> |     |         |  |      |                             |           |     |
|                 | 701 | Layer   |  | 0.06 | Tarmac                      |           |     |
|                 | 702 | Layer   |  | 0.15 | Hardcore                    |           |     |
|                 | 703 | Layer   |  | 0.48 | Buried soil                 | Pottery   | 19C |
|                 | 704 | Layer   |  | 0.15 | Industrial layer            | Pottery   | 19C |
|                 | 705 | Layer   |  | 0.25 | Industrial layer            |           |     |
|                 | 706 | Layer   |  | 0.15 | Redeposited natural         |           |     |
|                 | 707 | Layer   |  | 0.3  | Buried soil                 | Stoneware | 19C |
|                 | 708 | Layer   |  |      | Natural shale               |           |     |

## 8 APPENDIX 2 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

**Site name:** Land at the Railway Hotel, Bridge Street, Buxton

**Site code:** BUBR 04

**Grid reference:** NGR 40624 37365

**Type of evaluation:** Trial Trenching - 7 trenches.

**Date and duration of project:** 13th to 14th July 2004

**Area of site:** 0.4151 ha

**Summary of results:** Three 19th century ditches plus truncation of all earlier deposits, probably in the Victorian period.

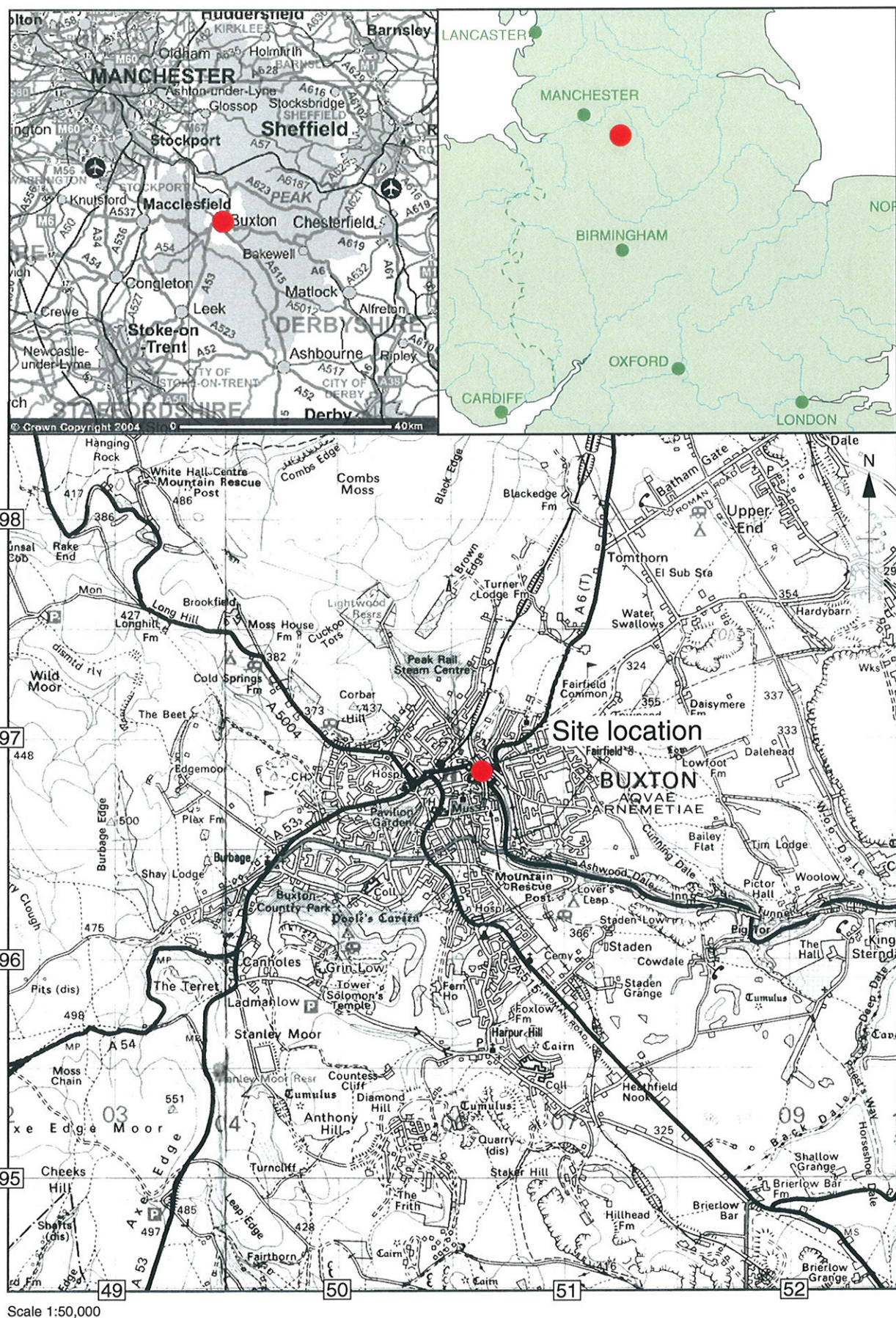
**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Buxton Museum and Art Gallery in due course, under the following accession number: DERSB: 2004.22.

## 9 APPENDIX 3 REFERENCES

OAU, 1992 *OAU Field Manual*, (ed. D. Wilkinson), Oxford Archaeological Unit

John Samuels 2004 *A Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation of land at the Railway Hotel, Bridge Street, Buxton, Derbyshire*, John Samuels Archaeological Consultants





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Figure 1: Site location



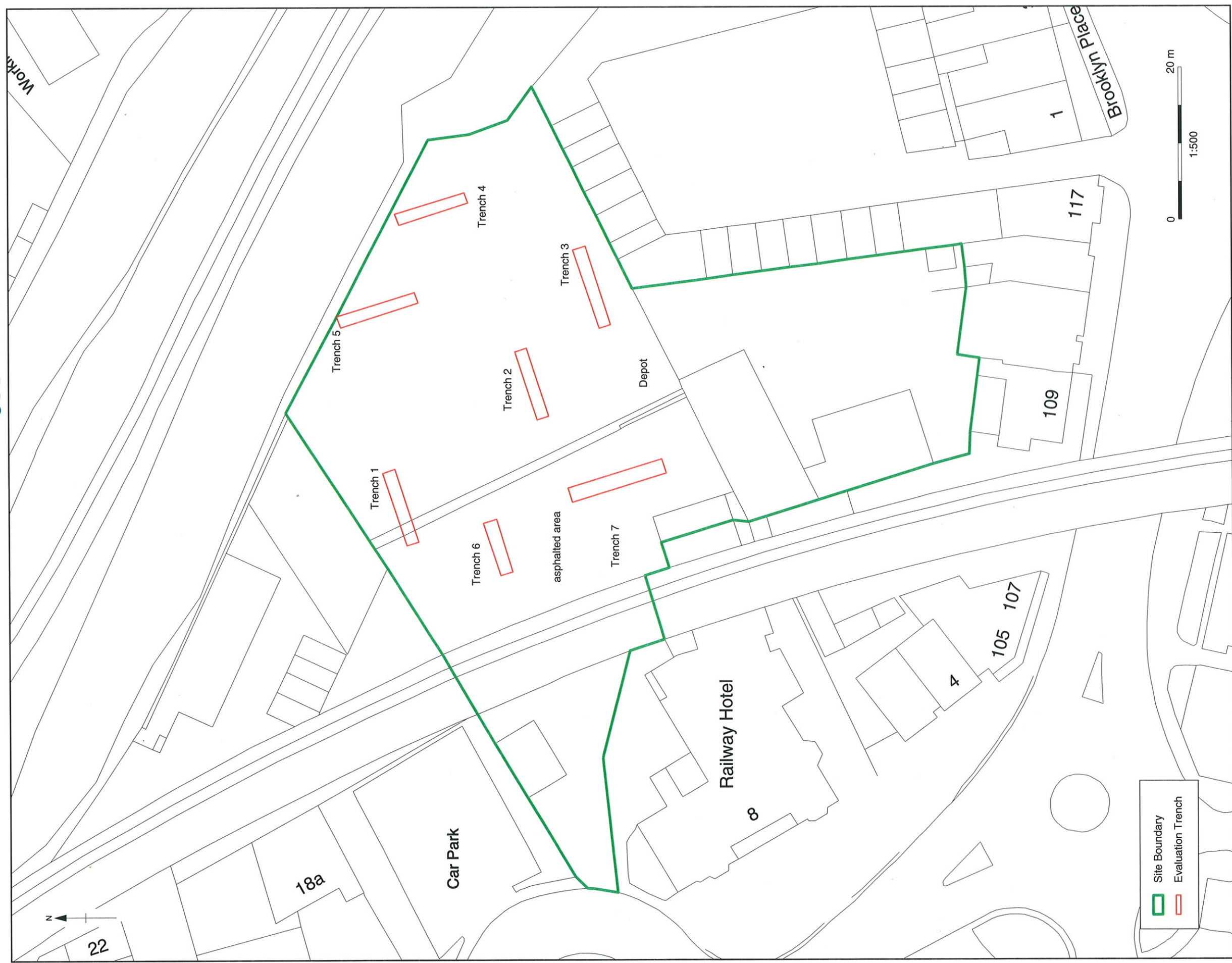


Figure 2: Trench Locations

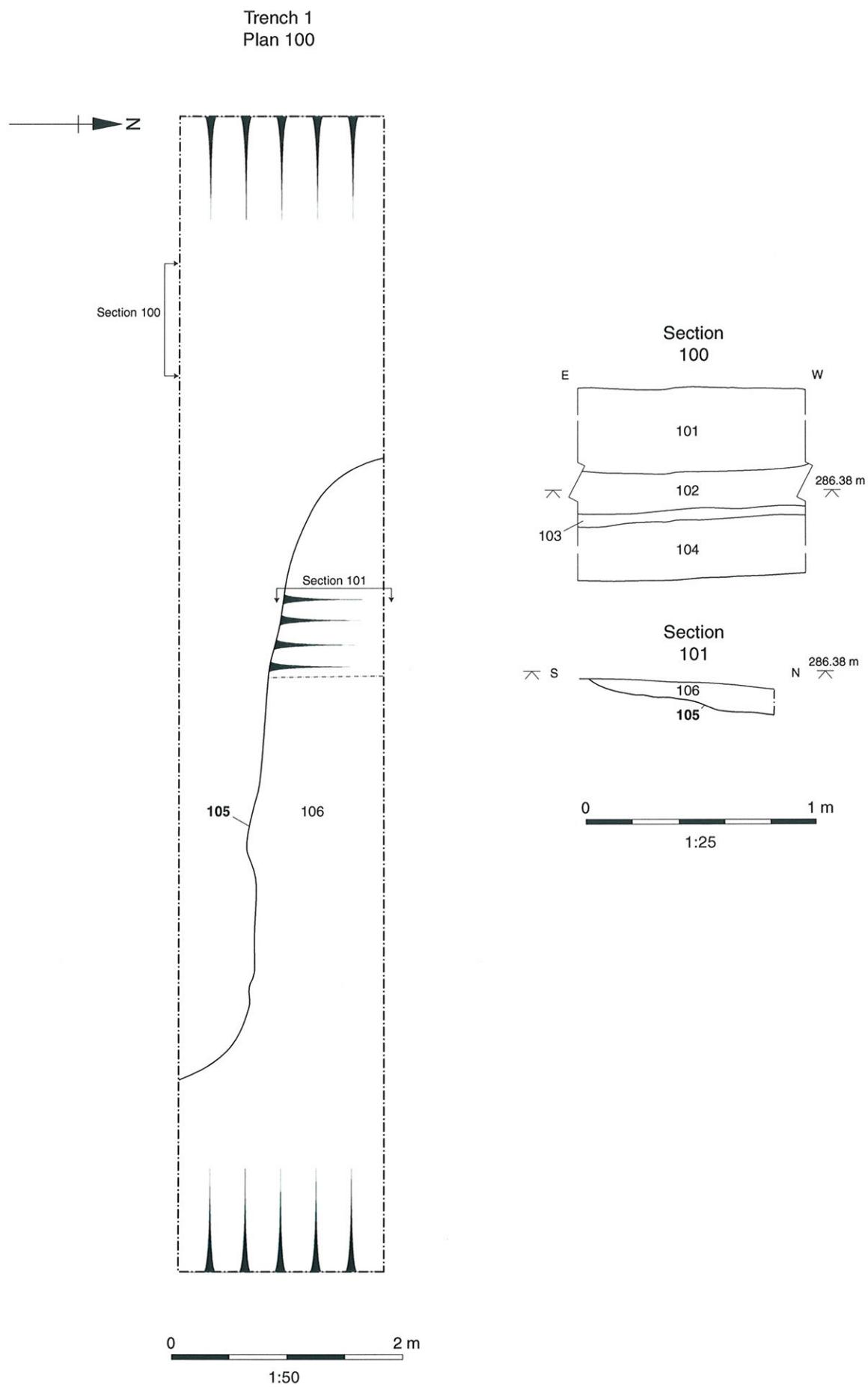


Figure 3: Trench 1, plan and sections

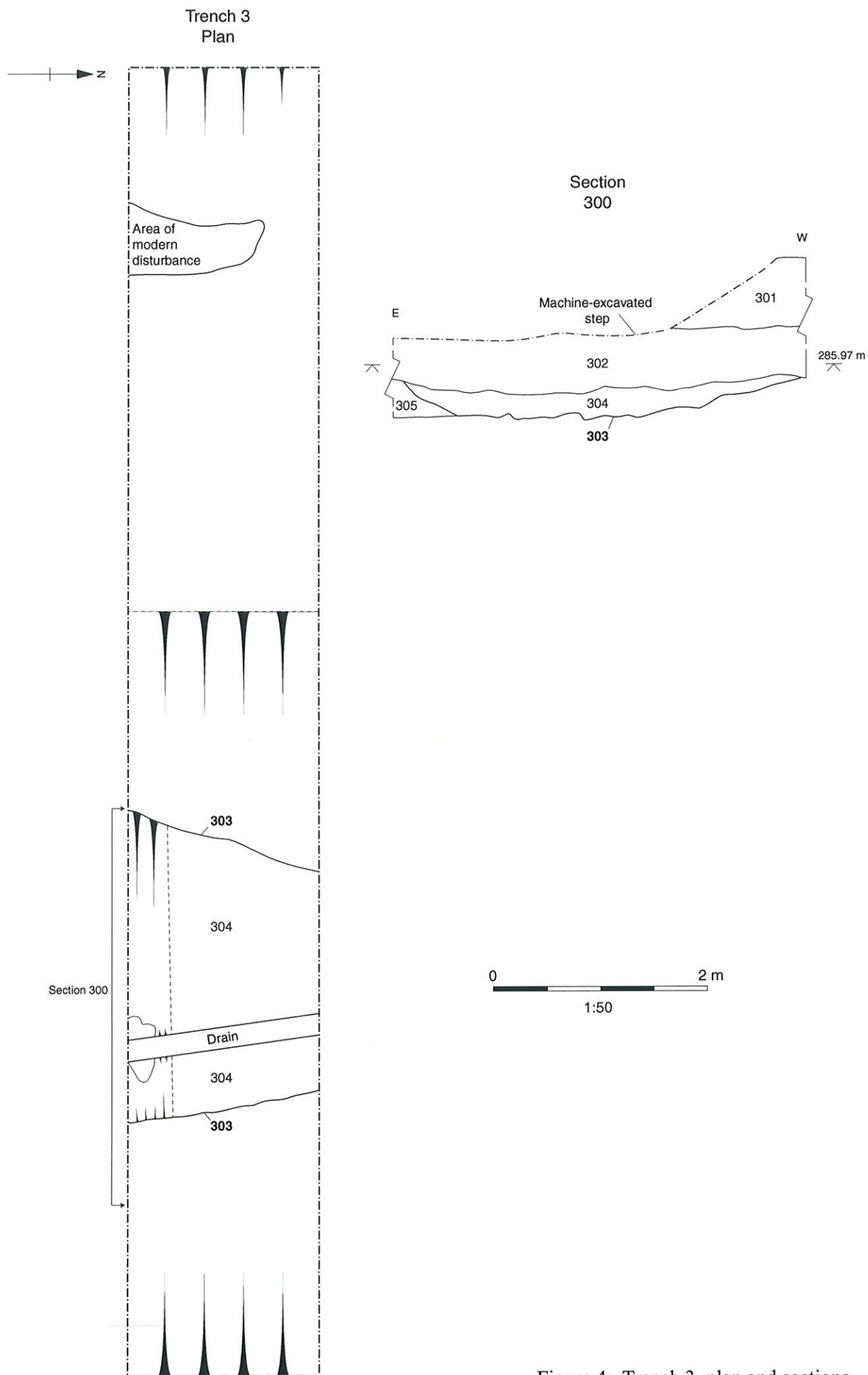


Figure 4: Trench 3, plan and sections

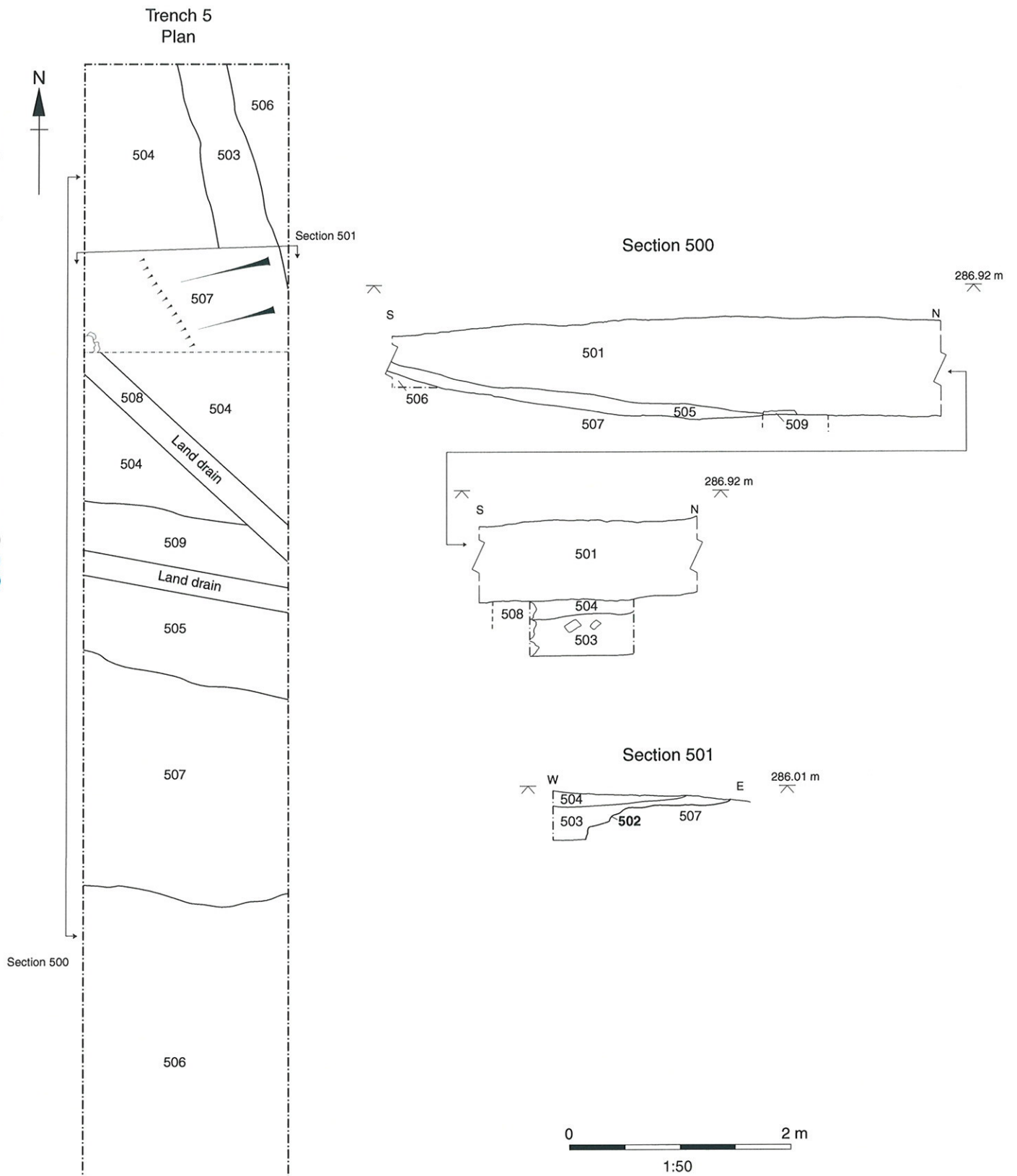
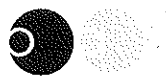


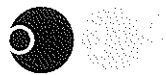
Figure 5: Trench 5, plan and sections



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