

GROVEWOOD HOUSE AND 2 MANOR ROAD,  
WOODFORD BRIDGE, CHIGWELL

Archaeological Evaluation

Oxford Archaeological Unit

December 1993



# **GROVEWOOD HOUSE AND 2 MANOR ROAD, WOODFORD BRIDGE:**

**Archaeological evaluation of the site of a proposed housing development.**

## **Summary**

Trial trenching at the above site revealed no archaeological features or deposits dating from earlier than the Victorian period.

## **Introduction**

The site (centred at NGR TQ429919) covered an area of 2.35 acres on the west side of Manor Road, Woodford Green (fig.1). Formerly consisting of a betting shop, lock-ups and a private house, the site is now derelict. The evaluation took the form of 7 trenches. The work was carried out by the Oxford Archaeological Unit on behalf of Laing Homes Ltd. The project was supervised by Colm Moloney and the site code was WO-GW93 LDPEM/ACWO/246. The work was monitored by Louise Austen on behalf of Essex County Council.

## **Topography**

The site is located to the east of the River Roding and the underlying geology consists of London Clays with a gravel island at the southern end of the site. The ground at the west is level at 48m OD while the northeast end slopes down sharply to 38.5m OD. The northern end of the site is covered by dense woodland with a series of concrete lock-ups and an associated driveway at the extreme northeast of the area. The southwest and central areas consist of a burnt out betting shop, concrete lock-ups and a detached house and related gardens.

## **Archaeological Background**

The development area contains part of the site of Woodford Manor House which dates from the 11th or 12th century. A deskbased assessment, undertaken by the Passmore Edwards Museum, suggested that a Roman Road may have crossed the southeastern area of the site. Woodford Bridge was a settlement by 1429, having developed around the home of Thomas de Pont de Woodford known to date from 1238.

## **Evaluation Objectives**

The objectives of the evaluation were to locate and identify, as far as reasonably possible,

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the extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of surviving archaeological remains within the development area, and to establish the ecofactual/environmental potential of any archaeological deposits.

### Evaluation Strategy

A series of 7 trenches was excavated down to the top of the natural clay and gravel using a JCB 3CX with a 1.65m ditching bucket. The trenches were then cleaned by hand and investigated for archaeological activity. The position of the trenches was dictated by the findings of the deskbased assessment. The trenches measured 30m in length by 1.65m in width with the exception of trenches 5, 6 and 7. Trench 5 was abandoned due to diesel contamination and a live gas main after 21m. Trench 6 was located in the dense, marshy woodland and could only be excavated for 25m. Trench 7 measured 4m by 2m due to restrictions caused by a live foul sewer and the concrete lock-ups. The total sample measured 282 sq m which resulted in a 3% sample.

### Evaluation Results

**Trench 1** was aligned northwest to southeast at the extreme west end of the site. The overburden, consisting of tarmac on a foundation of hardcore, measured 0.45m in depth. This sealed a modern pit with a diameter of 1.2m and which measured 0.70m in depth. The feature broke sharply from surface, had vertical sides and a flat base. This pit cut a layer of friable, dark grey-brown, clay loam which contained c. 0.05% gravel and 10% charcoal flecks. This layer was 0.30m deep at maximum and directly overlay the natural clay and gravel.

**Trench 2 (fig.2)** ran from east to west parallel and adjacent to Manor Road. The western end of the trench cut a tarmac surface while the eastern end truncated a garden area. The topsoil/tarmac and hardcore overburden was 0.55m deep at maximum. This overlay a thin layer (0.12m) of black, clay-loam which contained approximately 25% charcoal. This possibly indicates that the site was cleared by fire prior to constructing the modern building complex. Two features were identified at the west end of the trench. A large, modern pit was located at the extreme west of the trench. It was a minimum of 2.6m in diameter and had a maximum depth of 0.80m. The upper fill consisted of dark brown clay loam, with modern brick and tile making up 2% of the deposit. This deposit was 0.25m thick at maximum. The lower fill consisted of fine gravel. The second feature consisted of a thin lens of black silty sand of which approximately 0.50% consisted of charcoal. Both these features were directly above the natural clay and gravel.

**Trench 3** was aligned northwest to southeast to the north of the lock-ups at the west end of the site. The overburden, consisting of loose, grey, clay loam with modern brick and tile inclusions, was 0.64m thick. This overlay a small spread of dark brown clay loam which contained brick and tile dating to the Victorian period. This feature was directly above the natural clay.

**Trench 4 (fig.3)** was aligned northwest to southeast to the east of the betting shop. Beneath the topsoil and subsoil, which was 0.60m deep at maximum, five pits were identified. Excavation demonstrated that these were post-Victorian dog burials. These features cut the natural clay and gravel.

**Trench 5** was aligned southwest to northeast in the garden to the north of Grove house. The topsoil in this trench measured 0.50m deep and overlay a deposit of modern deliberate build up consisting of clay, broken tarmac and brick which was 0.90m deep at maximum. This deposit overlay natural clay. The lower deposits of this trench were contaminated with diesel at the northeast end and a live gas main crossed the trench at the extreme northeast end.

**Trench 6** was located in dense woodland and had to be angled to avoid destroying some of the larger trees. It measured 15m aligned from southwest to northeast where it turned north for a further 10m. At this point the roots of a large tree were encountered and the trench had to be abandoned. The topsoil was 0.12m thick at the southwest end and 0.25m thick at the north end. No archaeological features were identified in this trench.

**Trench 7** was located between the lockups at the extreme northeastern corner of the site. A foul sewer restricted the trench to this corner. The tarmac and hardcore overburden overlay the natural clay and no archaeological features were identified.

## **Discussion**

No evidence was recovered for any activity on site prior to the Victorian period. The complete finds assemblage was Victorian or later in date. No isolated unstratified finds from other periods were recovered. This sample is undoubtedly characteristic of the entire site and indicates that it is sterile of significant archaeological remains.

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## SUMMARY OF DEPOSITS

### Trench 1

cxt	type	width	depth	finds	comments
1/1	Tarmac and hardcore	-	0.45m	-	-
1/2	Topsoil	-	0.30m	-	Buried topsoil
1/3	layer	-	0.40m	modern pottery, brick and tile	subsoil
1/4	Fill	1.22m	0.76m	Modern pot, brick, tile and glass	Fill of 1/5
1/5	Cut	1.22m	0.76m	-	Modern pit
1/6	natural	-	-	-	-

### Trench 2

cxt	type	width	depth	finds	comments
2/1	topsoil/ tarmac/ hardcore	-	0.50m	-	-
2/2	Layer	-	0.12m	-	burnt deposit
2/3	Layer	-	0.55m	-	old topsoil
2/4	Fill	-	0.25m	-	Fill of 2/9
2/5	fill	-	0.45m	-	Fill of 2/9
2/6	fill	-	0.10m	-	Fill of 2/9
2/7	fill	-	0.20m	modern pot	Fill of 2/9
2/8	Natural	-	-	-	-
2/9	cut	-	0.80m	-	Large modern feature
2/10	cut	0.90m	0.03m	-	badly truncated pit
2/11	fill	0.90m	0.03m	-	fill of 2/10

Trench 3

cxt	type	width	depth	finds	comments
3/1	topsoil	-	0.64m	-	-
3/2	layer	8.30m	0.12m	Vitorian pot	Modern spread of debris
3/3	Natural	-	-	-	-

Trench 4

cxt	type	width	depth	finds	comments
4/1	topsoil	-	0.35m	-	-
4/2	fill	-	0.20m	Modern pot and animal bone	fill of 4/3
4/3	cut	0.85m	0.20m	-	dog burial
4/4	fill	-	0.45m	Modern pot and animal bone	fill of 4/4
4/5	cut	1.10m	0.45m	-	dog burial
4/6	fill	-	0.40m	Modern pot and animal bone	fill of 4/7
4/7	cut	1.10m	0.40m	-	dog burial
4/8	fill	-	0.10m	Modern pot and animal bone	fill of 4/9
4/9	cut	1m	0.10m	-	dog burial
4/10	fill	-	0.09m	Modern pot and animal bone	fill of 4/11
4/11	cut	0.50m	0.09m	-	dog burial
4/12	fill	-	0.20m	Modern pot and animal bone	fill of 4/13
4/13	cut	0.40m	0.20m	-	dog burial
4/14	layer	-	0.20m	modern brick and tile	buried soil

### Trench 5

cxt	type	width	depth	finds	comments
5/1	topsoil	-	0.50m	-	-
5/2	layer	-	0.40m	-	re-deposited natural
5/3	layer	-	0.06m	-	sandy layer
5/4	layer	-	0.04m	-	broken tarmac deposit
5/5	layer	-	0.03m	modern pot	re-deposited natural
5/6	layer	-	0.30m	-	buried topsoil

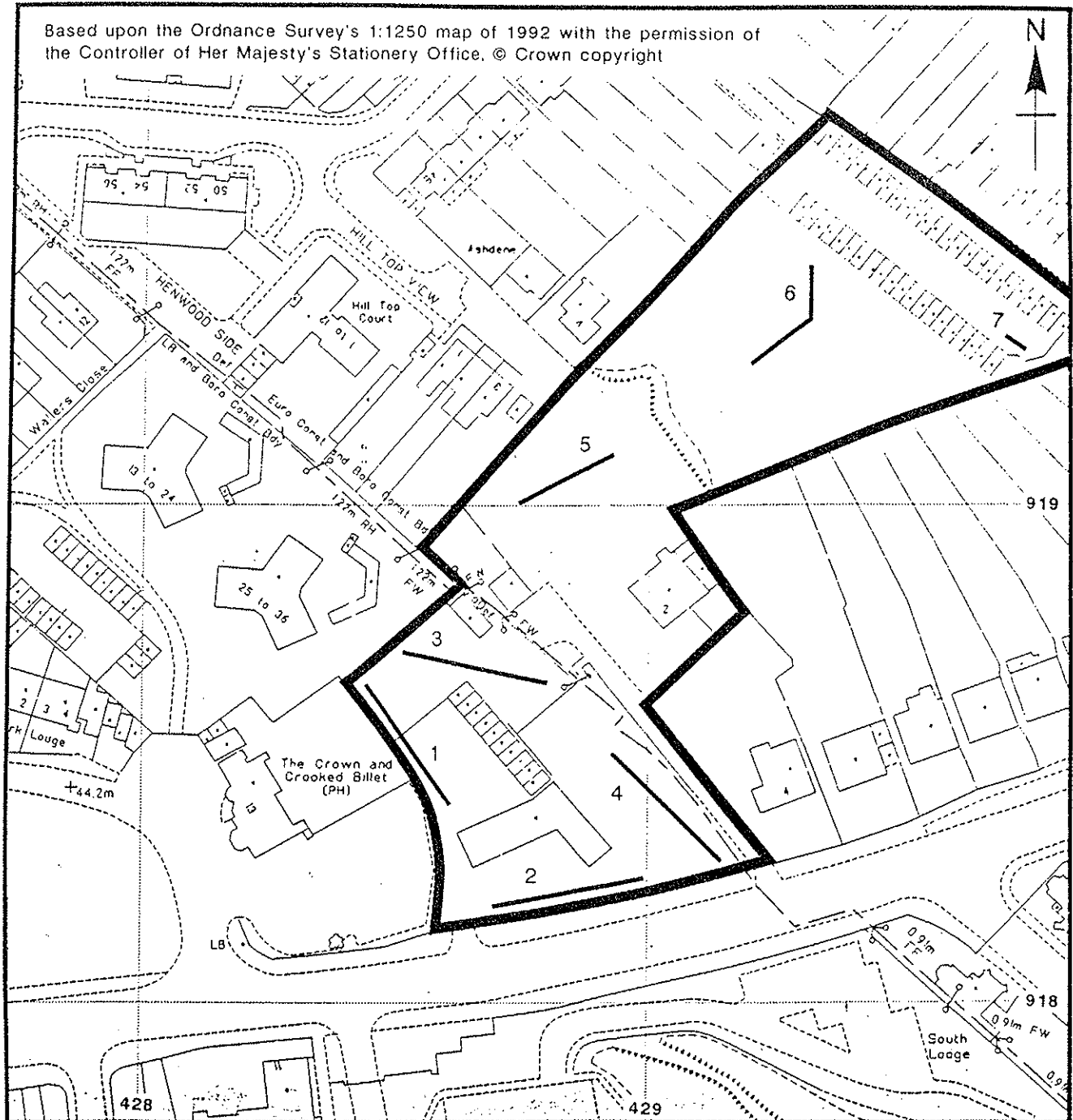
### Trench 6

cxt	type	width	depth	finds	comments
7/1	topsoil	-	0.25m	-	-
7/2	natural	-	-	-	-

### Trench 7

cxt	type	width	depth	finds	comments
7/1	concrete	-	0.15m	-	-
7/2	layer	-	0.15m	-	rubble foundation for 7/1
7/3	topsoil	-	0.25m	-	-
7/4	layer	-	0.22m	modern brick	modern disturbance
7/5	natural	-	-	-	-
7/6	natural	-	-	-	-





Scale 1:1250

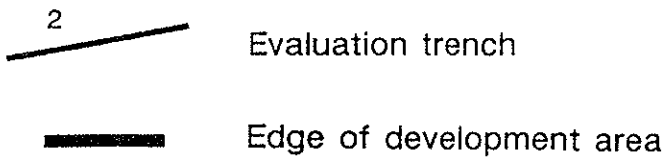


figure 1

# Trench 2, plan and section

pathway and walls  
not trenched.  
Modern walls rise  
o.40m from tarmac

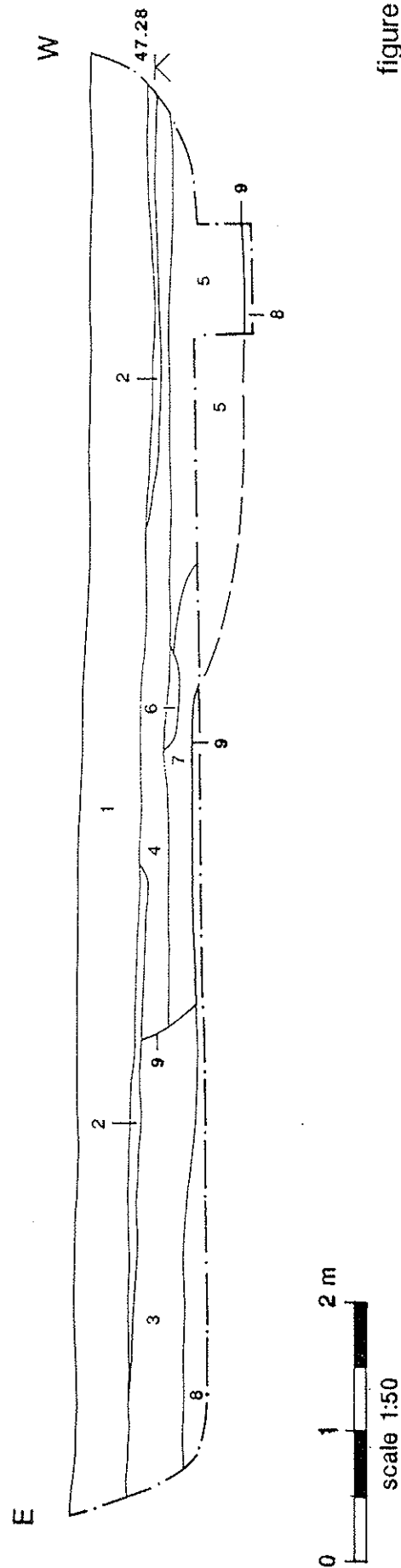
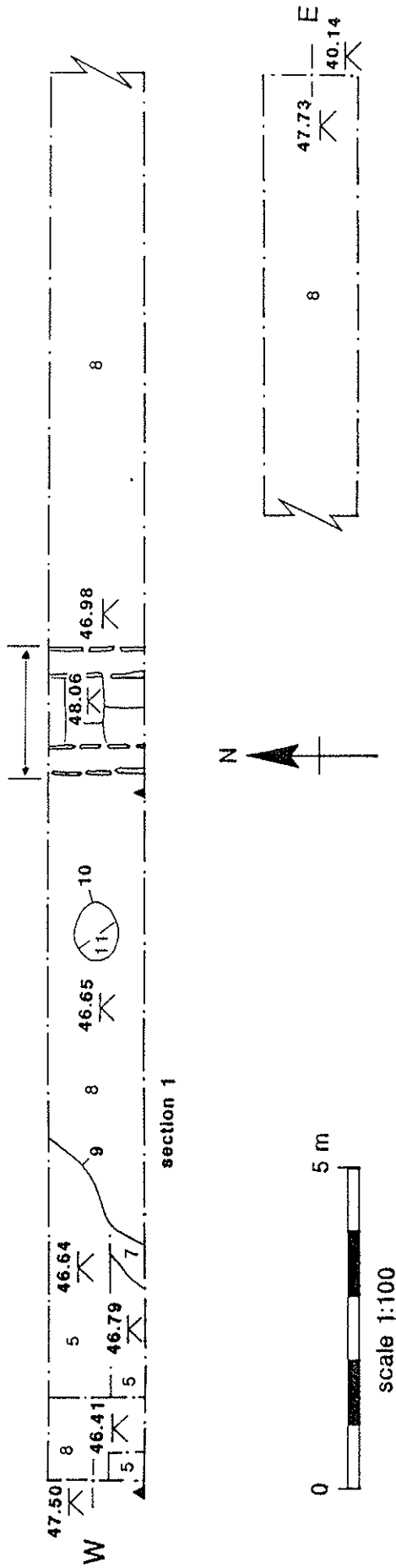


figure 2

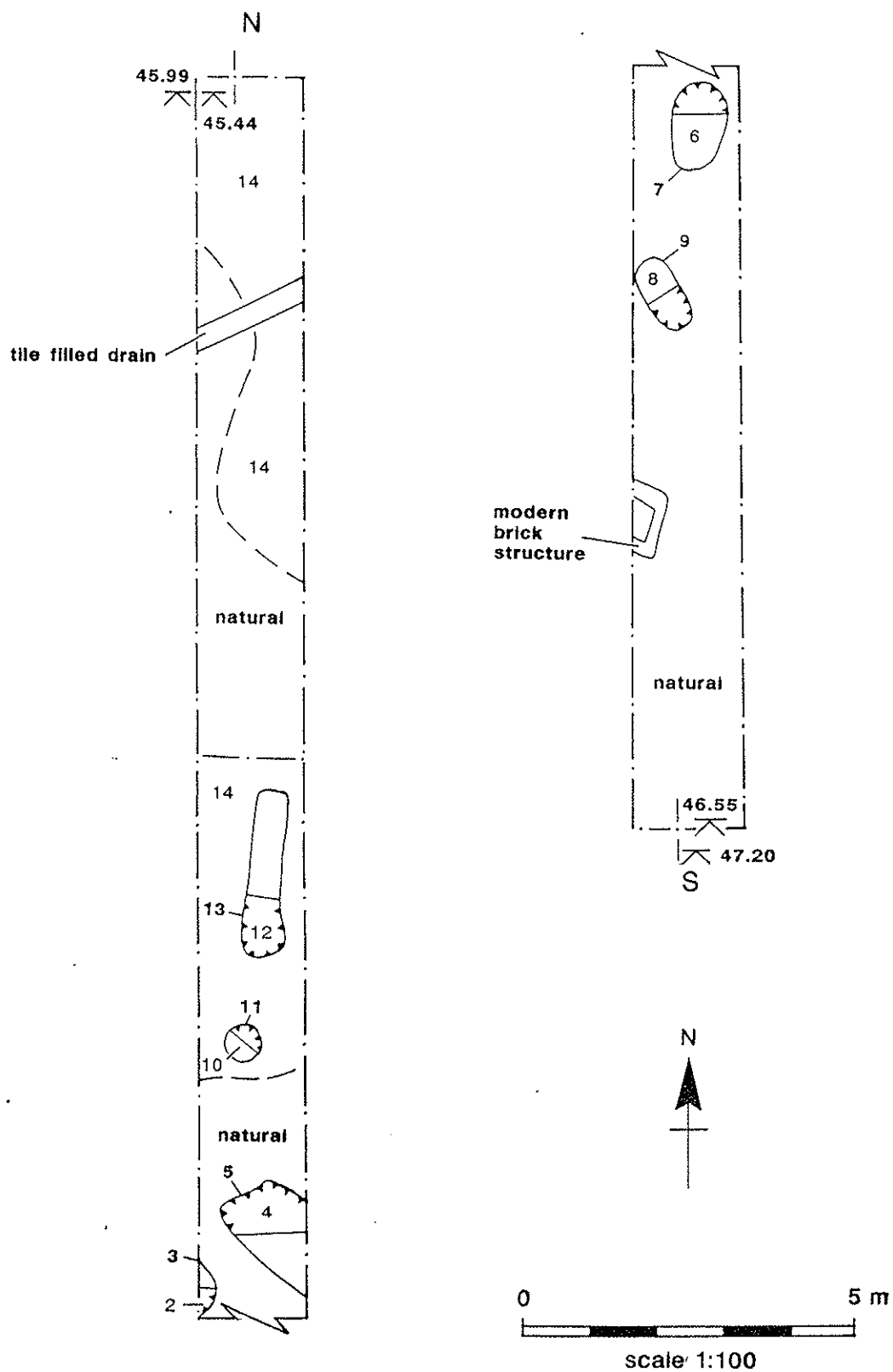


figure 3