KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

LAND AT UNDERDOWN LANE HERNE BAY, EDDINGTON, KENT

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

NGR TR 1800 6690

Planning reference: CA/99/0990 HBA

Site code: CANCM 2000.50

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

APRIL 2000

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Date:	25/4/2000
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Date:	25/4/2000
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Date:	25/4/2000

LAND AT UNDERDOWN LANE, HERNE BAY, EDDINGTON, KENT

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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SUMMARY

The Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out a field evaluation at Underdown Lane, Herne Bay, Eddington, on behalf of Kent County Council.

The evaluation consisted of eleven trenches comprising a 3.65% sample of the development area. Archaeological remains dating from the late Iron Age to early Romano-British period (100 BC-200 AD) were discovered in ten of the trenches, although the pottery from these features was so sparse and abraded that their date must remain in question.

Archaeological remains dating from the late Bronze Age to the Romano-British period were identified, although most of the features can probably be placed in the late Iron Age to early Romano-British period (100 BC-200 AD). Features were discovered in nine of the trenches, but finds were very sparsely distributed and heavily abraded.

The late Iron Age/ early Romano-British features consisted of shallow ditches and pits containing occasional fragments of pottery. These features appear to be traces of agricultural field boundaries, probably forming part of an extensive field system. No evidence of domestic structures were identified although all the features appeared to be severely truncated by ploughing, leaving little chance of shallow features surviving. The sparse finds, including pottery and burnt flint, are likely to derive from a settlement in the general vicinity but there is no indication of occupation within or immediately adjacent to the development area.

Activity in the post-medieval period was restricted to a ploughsoil horizon identified in all trenches.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

In March 2000 the Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out a field evaluation at Herne Bay, Eddington on behalf of Kent County Council in respect of a planning application for a housing development (Planning Application No. CA/99/0990/HBA). The work was carried out in accordance with a specification prepared by the Canterbury City Council Archaeological Advisor. The development site lay south of Underdown Lane and north of Thanet Way at Eddington, Herne Bay, Kent, and is 1.068 hectares in area.

1.2 Geology and topography

The development area lies on Eocene London Clay at 10m above OD (British Geological Survey Sheet 273).

The site is a relatively flat meadow, enclosed by overgrowth, hedges and young trees and appears to have lain uncultivated for some time.

1.3 Archaeological background

The site is situated on the North Kent Coast between Seasalter and the Swale estuary to the west and Broomfield, Chesterfield and Bishopsgate to the east. This area has produced evidence for intensive of later prehistoric and Roman settlement.

The site itself has produced archaeological evidence, although of limited significance. There are some known sites with archaeological finds adjacent to the development site:

(i) The development area lies to the south-east of Underdown House (grade II* listed - TR16 NE6/72) which, together with the late medieval tithe barn (listed - TR16 NE 6/72A) and two other buildings, both listed (TR16 NE6/121 and 6/122) form the focus of the Anglo-Saxon, medieval and early post-medieval settlement at Eddington.

(ii) To the north-east (c. 200m) at the end of Underdown Lane (TR 1777 6696) Iron Age and medieval activity was discovered during an evaluation by Canterbury Archaeological Trust (CAT 1999).

(iii) To the west (c. 500m) a site is currently undergoing excavation by Canterbury Archaeological Trust, on the southern side of the A299 Thanet Way. The excavation has uncovered the presence of a large multi-period settlement site including evidence for late Bronze Age/ early Iron Age Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon occupation (Jarman and Shand 1999).

(iv) An archaeological survey undertaken to the south of Herne Bay Railway Station tentatively identified an area of late Bronze Age/ early Iron Age settlement activity (Macpherson-Grant 1992).

(v) Immediately to the east of the site, Anglo-Saxon finds have been recorded at TR 1895 6770.

(vi) A Roman burial was recorded to the north-east at Blacksoles Farm, TR 18895 66725.

2 EVALUATION AIMS

The principal aims of the archaeological evaluation were:

- to establish the presence or absence of any elements of the archaeological resource within the area of the proposed development.
- to ascertain the depth below ground surface, depth of deposit, character, date and quality of any such archaeological remains by limited sample excavation.
- to determine the state of preservation and importance of the archaeological resource if present.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Sample size and scope of fieldwork

The evaluation was based upon a 3.65% sample of the development area, and consisted of 11 trenches. The overburden was removed by a mechanical excavator (JCB) under close archaeological supervision. The trench dimensions were as follows:

Trench	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)
Trench 1	20	1.6	0.55
Trench 1	20	1.6	0.55
Trench 2	20	1.6	0.6
Trench 3	20	1.6	0.55
Trench 4	20	1.6	0.55
Trench 5	20	1.6	0.5
Trench 6	20	1.6	0.5
Trench 7	20	1.6	0.5
Trench 8	20	1.6	0.55
Trench 9	20	1.6	0.55
Trench 10	20	1.6	0.6
Trench 11	20	1.6	0.4

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

The trenches were cleaned by hand and the exposed 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 1:50 and 1:20. All features

were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

3.3 Finds

During the evaluation 27 sherds of pottery, 2 flint flakes and 8 pieces of burnt flint were recovered by hand excavation from 14 contexts. The pottery consisted entirely of small abraded fragments.

3.4 Environmental data

Due to the severe truncation of features, extensive root disturbance and lack of any deposits that appeared to have any environmental potential, no soil sampling was undertaken.

4 RESULTS: GENERAL

4.1 Soils and ground conditions

The general soil type was clay silt, the acid conditions precluding good preservation of bone. Ground conditions were generally dry and no waterlogged deposits were encountered.

4.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits

The archaeological features were generally evenly distributed throughout the development area, all but two trenches containing archaeological features. The empty trenches were situated in the south-east corner of the evaluation area.

4.3 Presentation of results

In the following sections the deposits are described trench by trench. Comment on the finds and reliability of the results are provided in the sections following. A context inventory is included as Appendix 1. The figures include site and trench location maps based on the Ordnance Survey (Figures 1-2) and a selection of the most significant features are illustrated in Figures 3-9.

5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

5.1 Trench descriptions

5.1.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 was located in the north-east corner of the development area on an east-west alignment. Natural London Clay (104) was encountered at a depth of 0.5m. A linear feature (106) orientated NW-SE, (1m wide and 0.2m deep) was located at the eastern end of the trench. No finds were recovered from this feature. Overlying 105 was a 0.2m thick post-medieval ploughsoil (103) which was overlain by 0.2m of topsoil (102). A 0.2m thick layer of hardcore (101) had been deposited over the topsoil to form a trackway.

5.1.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 was located on the eastern edge of the development area and aligned N-S. Natural London Clay was encountered at a depth of 0.6m. No archaeological features were recovered from this trench. Overlying the natural was a 0.4m thick layer of post-medieval ploughsoil (202) overlain by 0.2m of topsoil (201).

5.1.3 Trench 3

Trench 3 was located on the eastern edge of the development area and aligned NE-SW. Natural London Clay was encountered at a depth of 0.5m. One NW-SE aligned ditch (305), 0.8m wide and 0.25m deep, was identified, and an oval pit (307) measuring 1.2m x 0.9m and 0.35m deep, both of which were filled with a light grey clay. Neither of the features produced any finds. Overlying the natural was a 0.18m thick layer of post-medieval ploughsoil (302), overlain by 0.3m of topsoil (301).

5.1.4 Trench 4

Trench 4 was located in the central part of the development area and aligned N-S. Natural London Clay was encountered at a depth of 0.55m. A shallow pit interpreted as tree throw hole (406) was discovered (0.6min diameter and 0.25m deep) which was filled with grey brown mottled silty clay. This feature contained two sherds of late Iron Age/ early Romano-British pottery. Another area of root disturbance (404) was also investigated. Sealing the features was a 0.30m thick layer of post-medieval ploughsoil (402), this was overlaid by 0.2m of topsoil (401).

5.1.5 Trench 5 (Fig. 3)

Trench 5 was located to the north in the central part of the development area and aligned E-W. Natural London Clay was encountered at a depth of 0.5m. Three shallow ditches (505, 515, 517) were revealed in this trench. Two of the features (505, 517) produced pottery dating from the late Iron Age. Both were filled with a brown silty clay (505 - 0.6m wide, 0.2m deep; 517 - 0.6m wide, 0.09m deep). Ditch 515 produced one sherd dating to the Roman period and was filled with light brown silty clay. Five irregular shallow features were also investigated (507, 509, 511, 513, 519). They measured between 0.04m and 0.15m deep, with an average diameter of 0.7m and all appeared to be the result of root disturbance, although Feature 509 produced two sherds of Iron Age pottery. Sealing all the features was a 0.2m layer of post-medieval ploughsoil (502), overlain by 0.25m of topsoil.

5.1.6 Trench 6 (Fig. 4)

Trench 6 was located on the southern edge of the development area and aligned E-W. Natural London Clay was encountered at a depth of 0.5m. Two features were revealed: Ditch 604 (1.5m wide, 0.15m deep) was aligned N-S and filled with mid-grey silty clay. This feature was probably the same as Ditch 708 located in Trench 7 to the north. A shallow pit filled with grey silty clay (606) was also revealed in this trench (1.2m wide, 0.2m deep). This feature produced two sherds of pottery of late Iron Age/early Roman. These features were sealed by 0.25m of post-medieval ploughsoil (602), which was overlain by 0.25m of topsoil.

5.1.7 Trench 7 (Fig. 5)

Trench 7 was located in the centre of the development area and aligned E-W. Natural London Clay was encountered at a depth of 0.5m. Two linear features were revealed in this trench, both aligned N-S. A shallow ditch (708), measuring 0.7m wide and 0.08m deep and filled with grey brown silty clay, is probably the same as Ditch 604 in Trench 6. Ditch (706) was 1.6m wide and 0.15m deep and filled with grey brown mottled clay. It produced pottery dated to the Iron Age. Two other shallow, irregular pits, interpreted as tree throw holes, both produced pottery dating to the Iron Age; (704 - 0.8m wide, 0.14m deep) (710 - 1.1m wide, 0.25m deep).

5.1.8 Trench 8 (Fig. 6)

Trench 8 was located on the northern edge of the development area and aligned N-S. Natural London Clay was encountered at a depth of 0.55m. One NE-SW aligned ditch (805) was revealed which produced Iron Age pottery. This feature was 0.6m wide, 0.1m deep and filled with grey brown silty clay. Three shallow pits were also revealed (807, 809, 811). Pottery dating to the Iron Age was recovered from 811, which was 0.7m wide and 0.1m deep and contained a fill of grey brown silty clay. All features were sealed by 0.2m of post-medieval ploughsoil, which was overlain by 0.3m of topsoil.

5.1.9 Trench 9 (Fig. 7)

Trench 9 was located on the south-west edge of the development area and aligned N-S. Natural London Clay was encountered at a depth of 0.55m. Two linear features were identified in this trench. Feature 904 was 3m wide and appeared to be a natural depression filled with a grey brown clay loam. Feature 906 was 0.85m wide, 0.12m deep and contained grey brown silty clay. This feature appeared to be a hedge line. No dating evidence was recovered from either of the features. A 0.3m layer of post-medieval ploughsoil sealed the features which was overlain by 0.3m of topsoil.

5.1.10 Trench 10 (Fig. 8)

Trench 10 was located on the north-western edge of the development area and aligned NE-SW. Natural London clay was encountered at a depth of 0.6m. Three pits were revealed in this trench. Pit 1005 was 0.8m in diameter and 0.08m deep and filled with a brownish grey silty clay and produced a sherd of pottery dated to the late Bronze Age/ early Iron Age. Fragments of burnt flint were recovered from Pit 1009 which was 1.1m wide, 0.12m deep. No dating evidence was recovered from Pit 1011 which was 1.1m wide and 0.12m deep and was filled with brownish grey silty clay. Two linear features (1007) and (1013) were also identified in this trench although neither produced any finds. A 0.2m thick layer of post-medieval ploughsoil (1002) which was overlain by 0.32m of topsoil (1001) sealed all the features.

5.1.11 Trench 11 (Fig. 9)

Trench 11, which was aligned N-S, was located on the western edge of the development, in an area of overgrowth and young trees. Natural London Clay was encountered at a depth of 0.4m. One pit (1105), 1.6m wide and 0.2m deep, which was filled with a greyish yellow silty clay, produced a flint flake and a flint end and side scraper as well as one sherd of late Bronze Age/

early Iron Age pottery. Five other features were investigated (1107, 1109, 1111, 1113, 1115), all of which were interpreted as root disturbance.

5.2 Finds

5.2.1 Worked Flint

Two pieces of worked flint were recovered from the fill of Pit 1105 (context 1104), including an undiagnostic flake and an end and side scraper dating from the late Bronze Age.

5.2.2 Later prehistoric and Roman pottery

by A Barclay with P Booth (OAU)

The assemblage includes 26 sherds (58g) of mostly later prehistoric and Roman pottery. Nearly all the sherds were small and worn with an average weight of just over 2 g. There are only two featured sherds: a sand-tempered base (516) and a combed or scored body sherd (607) in a grog-tempered fabric. The former is likely to be of Iron Age date and the latter is late Iron Age/ early Roman. Three other grog-tempered sherds are likely to be of this date (see Table 1). Of the two other sand-tempered sherds, one is wheel-made and probably of Roman date (514), while the other is more likely to be Iron Age (711). A sherd (516) made from a shell-tempered fabric that has been leached could be of early Roman date. The majority of sherds are principally flint-tempered (17, 31g) and are thought to be of Iron Age date, although some could be earlier (late Bronze Age). This includes two sherds with dense fine flint (1004, 1104).

Table 1: A breakdown of the assemblage by context and fabric group (sherd number, weight)

Context	Sand	Flint	Grog	Shell	Total
407		2, 4g	2, 5g		4, 9g
504		2, 4g			2, 4g
508		1, 3g	1,2g		2, 5g
514	1,1g				1, 1g
516	2,8g			1,6g	3, 14g
607		1, 1g	1,3g		2, 4g
705		3, 5g			3, 5g
707		2, 5g			2, 5g
711	1,2g				1, 2g
804		1, 1g			1, 1g
810		1, 1g			1, 1g
905		2, 2g			2, 2g
1004		1, 1g			1, 1g
1104		1, 4g			1, 4g
Total	4,11g	17, 31g	4,10g	1,6g	26, 58g

6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Reliability of field investigation

The abraded state of the pottery suggests that most of the material is residual although the lack of material from other periods indicates that the features discovered are most likely to be of late Iron Age and Romano-British date. Due to the truncation of the features by the post-medieval ploughsoil the average depth of the features was only 0.2m, the deepest being 0.35m. Nevertheless, pottery and burnt flint was recovered from the majority of linear features and some of the pits indicating the presence of a settlement in the vicinity.

6.2 Overall interpretation

6.2.1 Summary of Results

Later prehistoric: late Bronze Age/ Iron Age/ Early Roman

Archaeological remains potentially dating from the late Bronze Age to the Romano-British period were identified. One pit (1105) is tentatively dated to the late Bronze Age or early Iron Age on the basis of a single sherd of pottery and two pieces of worked flint (including an end and side scraper) and other pottery sherds from the site could be of similiar date. However most of the features can probably be placed in the late Iron Age to early Romano-British period (100 BC-200 AD). Features were discovered in nine of the trenches, but artefacts were very sparsely distributed and heavily abraded.

The later prehistoric features consisted of shallow ditches and pits containing occasional fragments of pottery. These features appear to be traces of agricultural field boundaries, probably forming part of an extensive field system. No evidence of domestic structures was identified, but all of the features appeared to be severely truncated by ploughing, leaving little chance of shallow structural features surviving. A number of shallow pits were present, many of which were irregular in plan and profile, suggesting that they are the result of root disturbance even though they contained occasional pottery sherds. It is possible that some of the discrete features identified as pits may also be of natural origin and vice versa. The sparse finds, including pottery and burnt flint, are likely to derive from a settlement in the general vicinity but there is no indication of occupation within or immediately adjacent to the development area.

Post-medieval

Activity in the post-medieval period was restricted to a ploughsoil horizon identified in all trenches. Some of the undated ditches could also belong to this period.

6.2.5 Significance

The evaluation appears to have identified the truncated traces of part of a field system, probably of later prehistoric origin. The features are likely to relate to a wider field system, perhaps associated with a settlement focus centred to the north-east of the development area. The discovery of occasional pits containing abraded pottery and burnt flint, albeit in small quantities and fairly evenly distributed throughout the site, indicates the presence of domestic activity in the general vicinity, but probably not within or immediately adjacent to the site.

The distribution, evolution and function of archaeological activity in this area are at present imperfectly understood. Recovery of a complete plan of the present site would have some limited potential for interpretation of the later prehistoric landscape, particularly with respect to agricultural land-use and organisation in an area of extensive and apparently dispersed later prehistoric and Roman settlement.

Bibliography and references

CAT	1999	*Archaeological evaluation of land to the rear of the Old House, Underdown Lane, Eddington, Herne Bay, Kent.* Canterbury Archaeological Trust
Macpherson-Grant, N	1992	'Eddington Farm' in *Canterbury's Archaeology 1991-1992, 14th Annual Report of the Canterbury Archaeological Trust*, pp.40-41
Jarman and Shand	1999	*Eddington Phase 1 Excavations: Interim Report.* Canterbury Archaeological Trust
Wilkinson, D (ed)	1992	*Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual*, (First edition, August 1992)

Appendix 1: Archaeological Context Inventory

Trench	Ctxt	Type	width (m)	thick. (m)	Comment	Finds	No.	Date
001								
	101	Layer		0.2	Hard Core			
	102	Layer		0.2	Topsoil			
	103	Layer		0.15	Earlier Ploughsoil			
	104	Deposit			Natural clay			
	105	Deposit		0.2	Fill of ditch 106			
	106	Cut	1.0		Ditch			
002								
	201	Layer		0.4	Topsoil			
	202	Layer		0.2	Earlier Ploughsoil			
	203	Layer			Natural Clay			
003								
	301	Layer		0.3	Topsoil			
	302	Layer		0.18	Earlier Ploughsoil			
	303	Deposit			Natural Clay			
	304	Deposit		0.25	Fill of ditch 305			
	305	Cut	0.8		Ditch			
	306	Deposit		0.35	Fill of pit 307			
	307	Cut	1.2		Pit			
004								
	401	Layer		0.2	Topsoil			
	402	Layer		0.30	Earlier Ploughsoil			
	403	Deposit			Natural Clay			
	404	Cut	0.6		Tree throw			
	405	Deposit		0.14	Fill of tree throw 405			
	406	Cut	0.6		Tree throw			
	407	Deposit		0.25	Fill of tree throw 406	pottery	2	LIA/ER
005								
	501	Layer		0.25	Topsoil			
	502	Layer		0.2	Earlier Ploughsoil			
	503	Deposit			Natural Clay			
	504	Deposit		0.25	Fill of ditch 505	pottery	1	IA
	505	Cut	1.25		Ditch			
	506	Deposit		0.1	Fill of tree throw 507			
	507	Cut	0.6		Tree throw			
	508	Deposit		0.1	Fill of 509	Pottery	2	IA/ LIA
	509	Cut	0.8		Tree throw			
	510	Deposit		0.15	Fill of 511			
	511	Cut	0.4		Tree throw			
	512	Deposit		0.04	Fill of 513			
	513	Cut	0.8		Tree throw			
	514	Deposit		0.09	Fill of ditch 515	Pottery		RB
	515	Cut	0.6		Ditch			
	516	Deposit		0.2	Fill of ditch 517	Pottery	3	LIA/ERB
	517	Cut	0.6		Ditch			
	518	Deposit		0.1	Fill of 519			
	519	Cut	0.3		Tree throw			
006								

Trench	Ctxt	Type	width (m)	thick. (m)	Comment	Finds	No.	Date
	601	Layer		0.2	Topsoil			
	602	Layer		0.2	Earlier ploughsoil			
	603	Deposit			Natural clay			
	604	Cut	1.5		Ditch			
	605	Deposit		0.23	Fill of ditch 604			
	606	Cut	1.2		Pit			
	607	Deposit		0.2	Fill of Pit 606	Pottery	2	IA/ ERB
007								
	701	Layer		0.3	Topsoil			
	702	Layer		0.3	Earlier ploughsoil			
	703	Deposit			Natural clay			
	704	Cut	0.8		Tree disturbance			
	705	Deposit		0.14	Fill of 704	Pottery	1	IA
	706	Cut	1.6		Ditch			
	707	Deposit		0.14	Fill of 706	Pottery	2	IA
	708	Cut	0.7		Ditch			
	709	Deposit		0.08	Fill of ditch 708			
	710	Cut	1.1		Tree throw			
	711	Deposit		0.25	Fill of 710	Pottery	1	IA
008								
	801	Layer		0.3	Topsoil			
	802	Layer		0.2	Earlier ploughsoil			
	803	Deposit			Natural clay			
	804	Deposit		0.1	Fill of ditch 805	Pottery	1	IA
	805	Cut	0.6		Ditch			
	806	Deposit		0.1	Fill of pit 807	Burnt flint		
	807	Cut	1.1		Pit			
	808	Deposit		0.1	Fill of pit 809			
	809	Cut	0.9		Pit			
	810	Deposit		0.1	Fill of pit 811	Pottery	1	IA
	811	Cut	0.7		Pit			
009								
	901	Layer		0.3	Topsoil			
	902	Layer		0.3	Earlier ploughsoil			
	903	Deposit			Natural clay			
	904	Cut	3.0		Depression			
	905	Deposit		0.1	Fill of 904	Pot		IA
	906	Cut	0.85		Gully			
	907	Deposit		0.14	Fill of 906			
010								
	1001	Layer		0.32	Topsoil			
	1002	Layer		0.2	Earlier ploughsoil			
	1003	Deposit			Natural clay			
	1004	Deposit		0.09	Fill of pit 1005			
	1005	Cut	1.0		Pit			
	1006	Deposit		0.15	Fill of 1007			
	1007	Cut	0.65		Ditch			
	1008	Deposit		0.12	Fill of 1009			
	1009	Cut	1.1		Pit			
	1010	Deposit		0.11	Fill of pit 1011			
	1011	Cut	0.6		Pit			
	1012	Deposit		0.13	Fill of 1013			
	1013	Cut	1.4		Ditch			
0011								

Trench	Ctxt	Type	width (m)	thick. (m)	Comment	Finds	No.	Date
	1101	Layer		0.2	Topsoil			
	1102	Layer		0.2	Earlier ploughsoil			
	1103	Deposit			Natural clay			
	1104	Deposit		0.2	Fill of 1105	Pottery. Flint	1	IA ? LBA
	1105	Cut	1.6		Pit			
	1106	Deposit		0.15	Fill of 1107			
	1107	Cut	0.55		Tree disturbance			
	1108	Deposit		0.13	Fill of 1109			
	1109	Cut	0.65		Tree disturbance			
	1110	Deposit		0.13	Fill of 1111			
	1111	Cut	0.8		Tree disturbance			
	1112	Deposit		0.1	Fill of 1113			
	1113	Cut	1.2		Tree disturbance			
	1114	Deposit		0.1	Fill of 1115	Flint flake		
	1115	Cut	0.9		Tree disturbance			

Figure 1: site location plan.

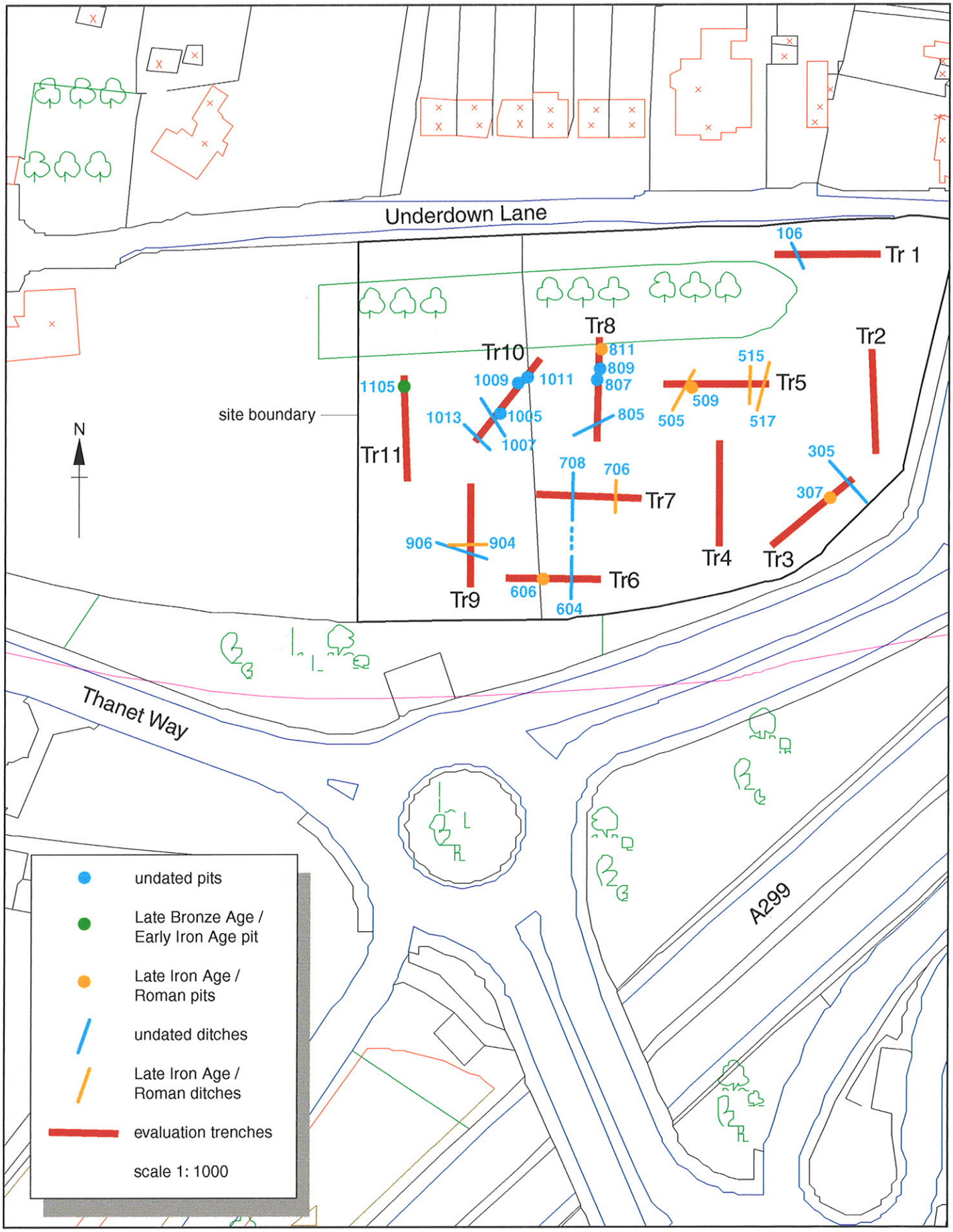


Figure 2: trench location plan with archaeological features.

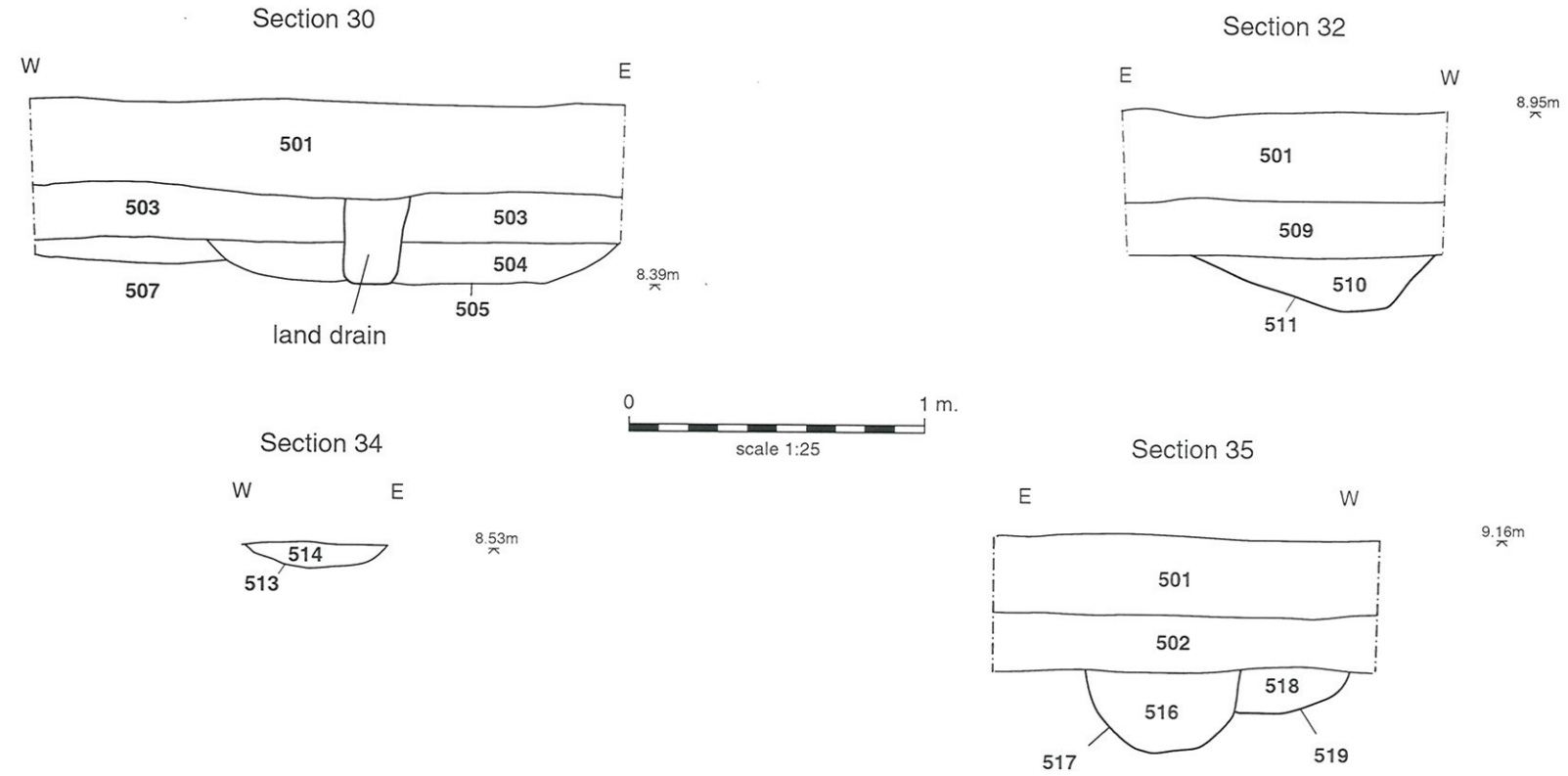


Figure 3: trench 5, plan and sections.

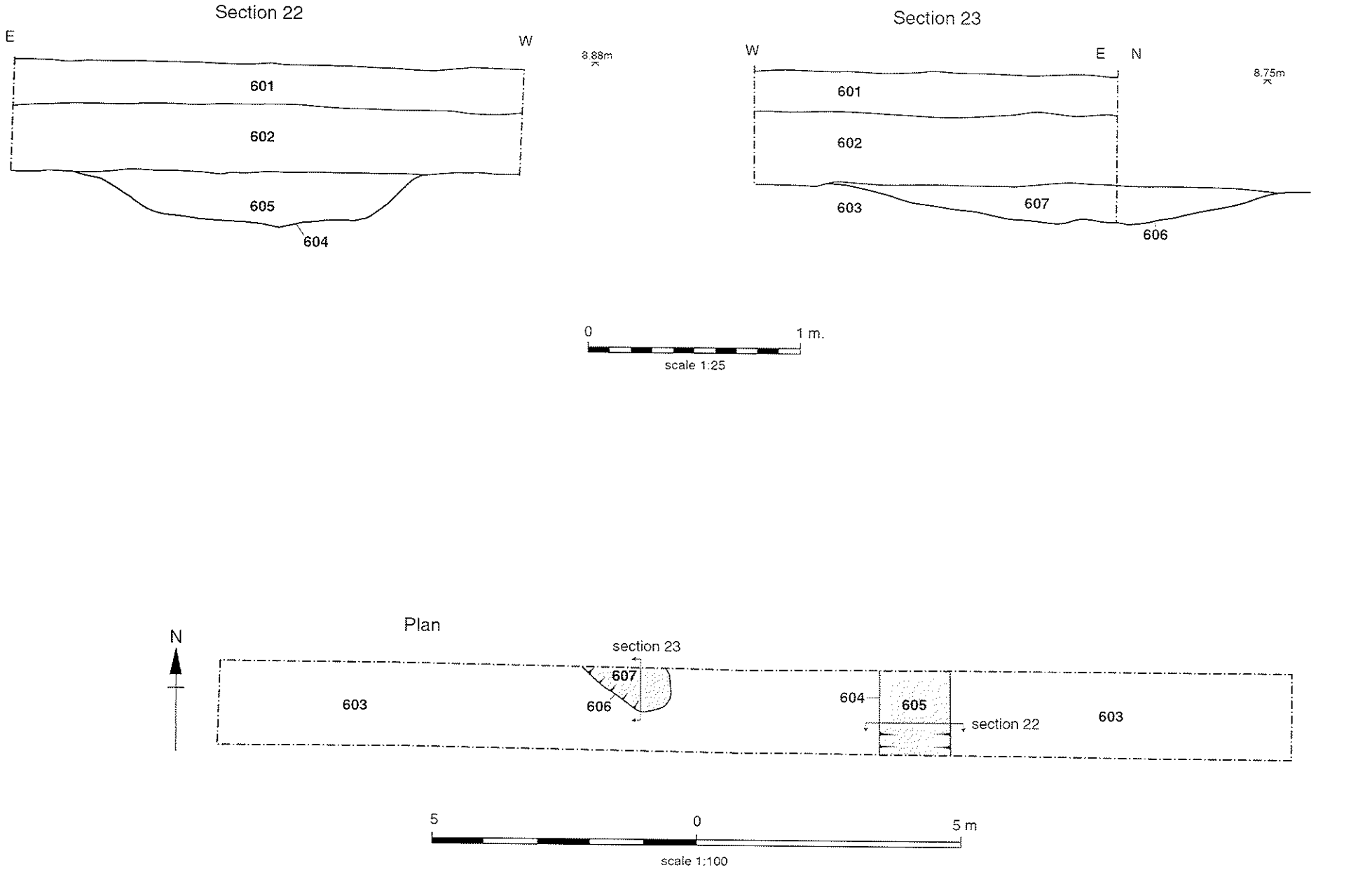


Figure 4: trench 6, plan and sections.

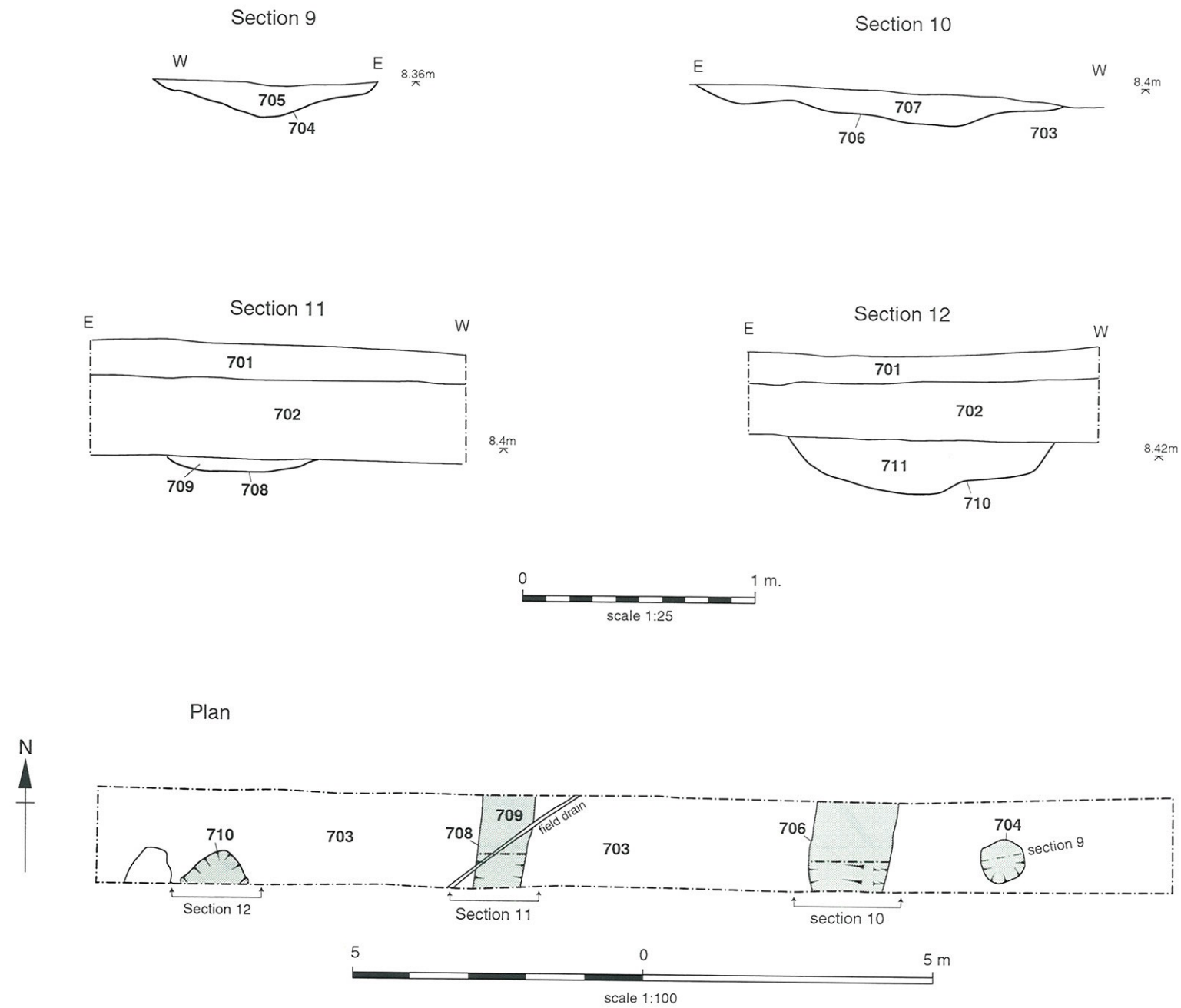
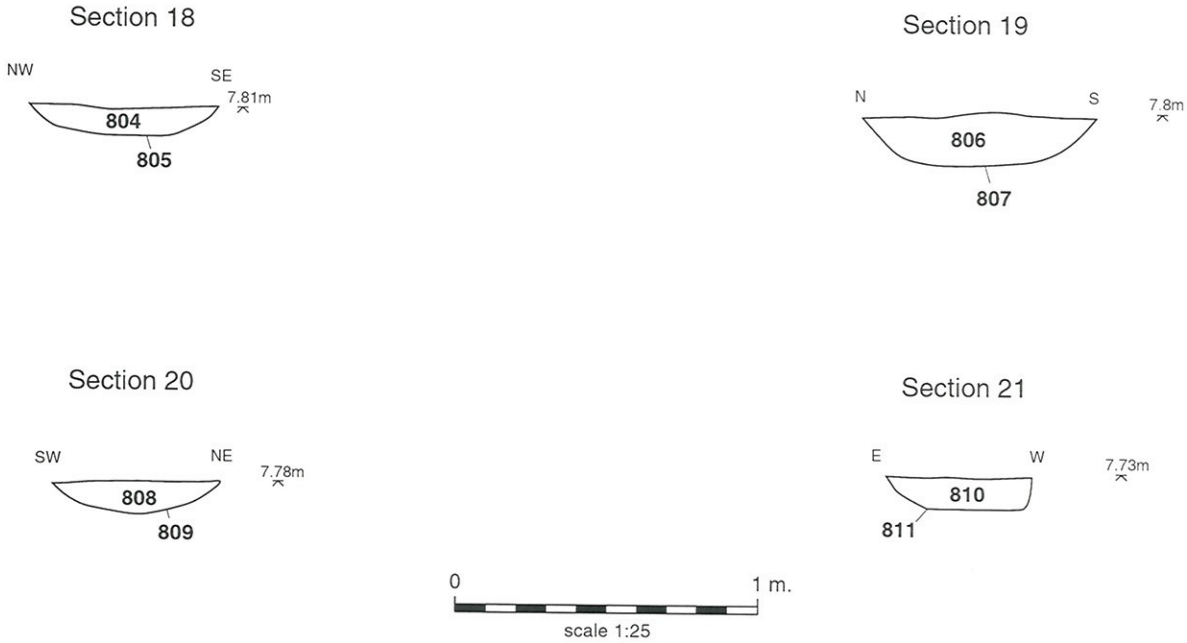


Figure 5: trench 7, plan and section.



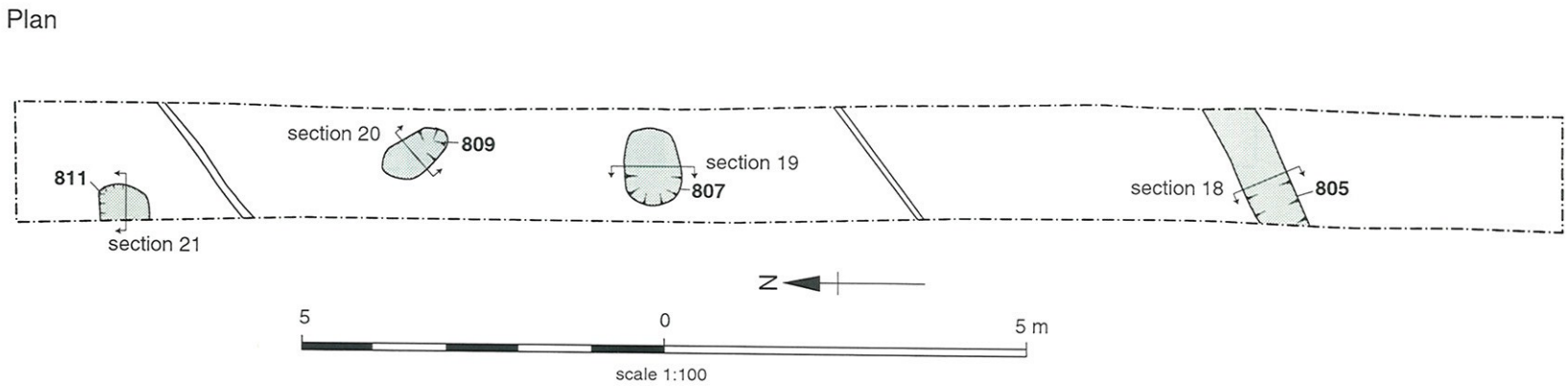


Figure 6: Trench 8, plan and section.

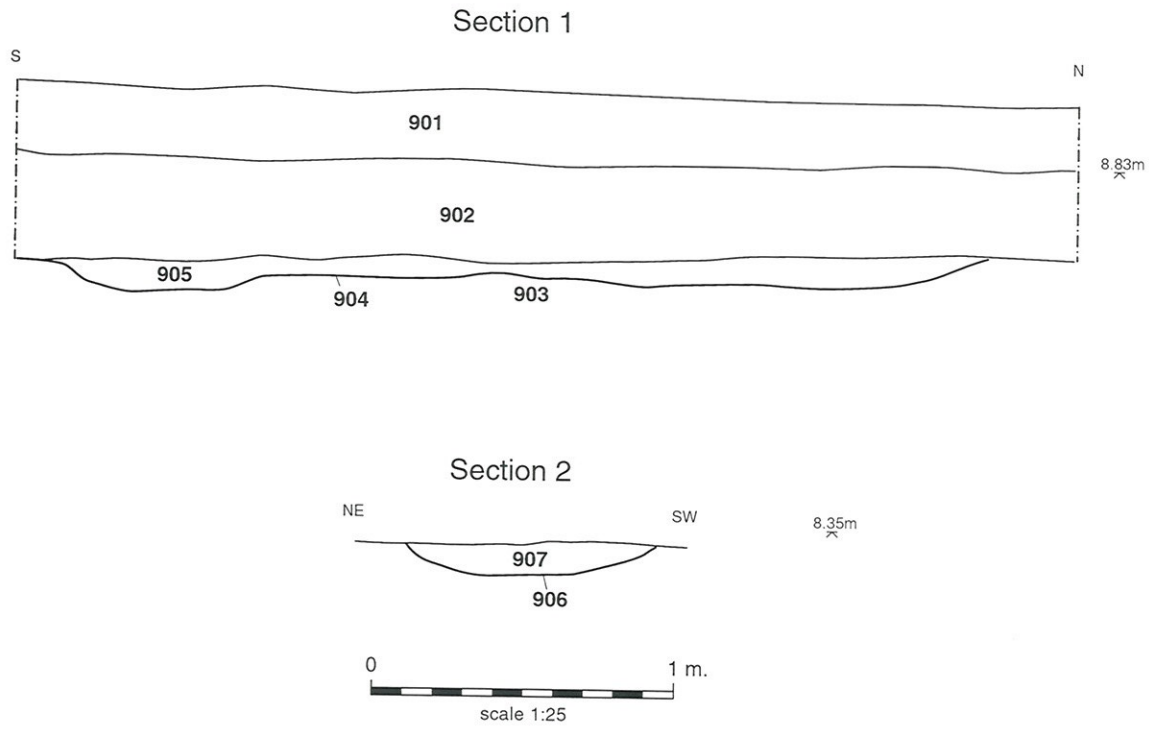


Figure 7: Trench 9, plan and section.

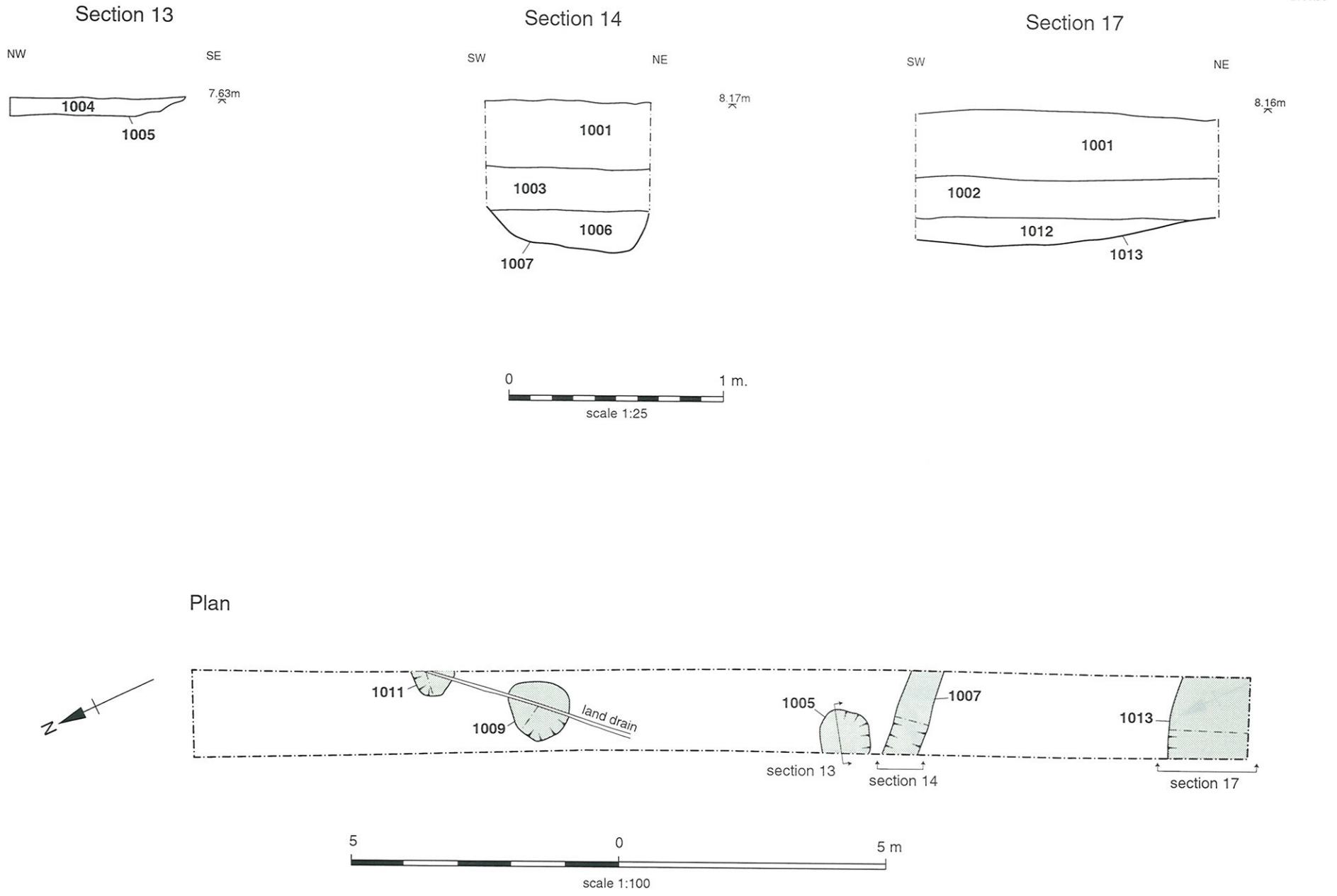
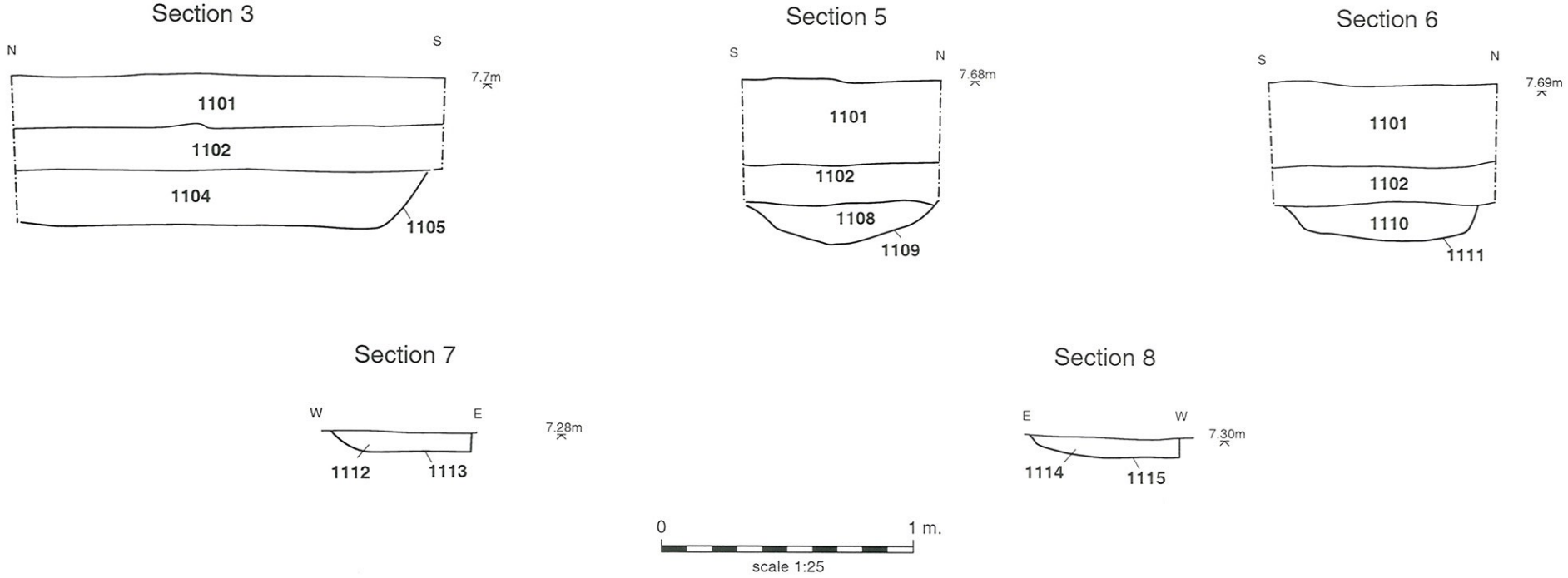


Figure 8: Trench 10, plan and sections.



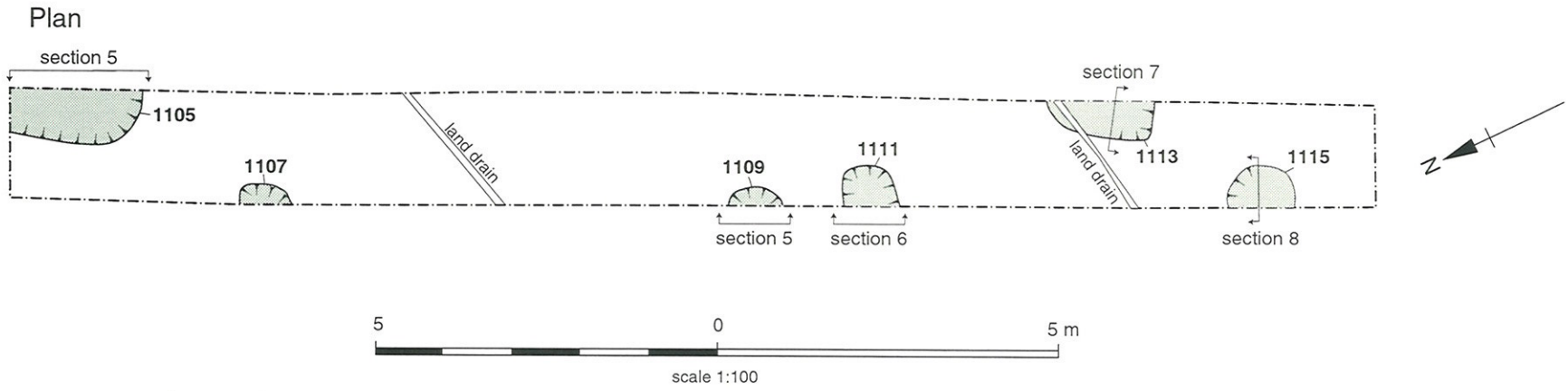


Figure 9: Trench 11, plan and sections.

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