

Land At Fossett's Farm "Link Road" Southend-on-Sea Essex



Archaeological Evaluation Report



Oxford Archaeology

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LAND AT FOSSETT'S FARM, "LINK ROAD", SOUTHEND-ON-SEA, ESSEX

NGR: TQ 888 881

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

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SUMMARY

Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at Fossett's Farm "Link Road", Southend-on-Sea, Essex on behalf of CgMs Consulting. This evaluation followed on from the previous 24 trench evaluation on the site of the proposed retail unit to the south-east. The Link Road evaluation found negligible evidence for previous occupation on the site. This was limited to two Roman ditches and a series of demolished modern farm buildings and associated features. A Pillbox was also noted located in the north-east corner of the site.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 Conditional planning permission has been granted for the construction of a Link Road to the north and west of the proposed B & Q site at Fossett's Farm by Southend Borough Council subject to completion of a Section 106 Agreement. An archaeological evaluation of the proposed site has been undertaken in order to discharge the planning condition.
- 1.1.2 Paul Chadwick of CgMs Consulting prepared a Specification for the work on behalf of Lansbury Developments Ltd. (CgMs, 2003).

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The proposed development lies to the north of the town of Southend-on-Sea (NGR: TQ 888 881) and occupies an area of approximately 3 hectares. The current land-use is unmanaged farmland, which extends beyond The Waitrose Store and associated access lie to the south. The underlying geology consists of London Clay overlain by third terrace gravels, which in turn is overlain by loam (BGS Map 258/259). The area designated for the Link Road had a slight slope from the south.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The following archaeological background is a brief summary of information contained within CgMs's Specification for the Field Evaluation and Oxford Archaeology's evaluation report on land at Fossett's Farm, Southend-on-Sea, Essex and should be read in conjunction with these documents (CgMs 2003 and OA 2003).
- 1.3.2 Prittlewell Camp, interpreted as a prehistoric/ Iron Age lowland 'hillfort' is the only substantial remains of prehistoric activity in the area. The clear lack of finds from this site and from fieldwalking in the locality suggested that the development site had a low potential for encountering remains of Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze Age or Iron Age date. OA undertook a 24-trench evaluation on the site of the proposed retail unit to the south-east of the link road. This uncovered an alignment of pits, field ditches and an isolated posthole and pit. The pit alignment was tentatively dated to the Iron Age.

- 1.3.3 Extensive fieldwalking within areas close to the development have produced no evidence for Roman period remains. A small quantity of Anglo-Saxon ceramic were discovered at Fox Hall Golf Course (Essex County Council 1992) to the east of the development site. Subsequent excavation revealed a Saxon Sunken Floored Building. Apart from these remains no further finds of this date have been encountered and accordingly there was a low potential for encountering remains of this date within the site.
- 1.3.4 Medieval pottery from Fox Hall Golf Course and the Waitrose site (Essex County Council 1993a) adjacent to the development site are believed to be the result of plough/manuring activity and therefore again there was anticipated to be a low potential for encountering remains of this period on site.
- 1.3.5 Post-medieval activity within the site appears to have been limited to arable cultivation, although there was a potential to encounter Second World War defences in the form of anti-glider or anti-tank features as the area is recorded as having been strongly defended during this time.

2 EVALUATION AIMS

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

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork

- 3.1.1 A total of sixteen 25 m x 3 m trenches were excavated, representing a 4% sample of the development area (1,200 m²). The locations of the trenches were targeted as per the *Specification*, and their locations are shown in Figure 2. Trench 8 was shifted 10 m to the east to avoid working near overhead powerlines and Trench 10 was rotated by 90° on its west end to avoid a trees within a small copse.

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

- 3.2.1 The trenches were excavated using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket and directed by an archaeological supervisor. Excavation proceeded to the first significant archaeological horizon, which in this case coincided with the surface of the natural geology.
- 3.2.2 A representative sample of the features thus revealed was excavated by hand to determine their depth, extent and nature, and to retrieve finds and environmental

samples. Where finds were visible in the surface of unexcavated features these were retained. All features and deposits encountered were issued a unique context number. A plan was drawn of each trench at a scale of 1:50, and each excavated feature was recorded in section at 1:20. Colour transparency and black-and-white photographs were taken of each feature, as well as more general shots of each trench. All recording was conducted in accordance with the practices detailed in the OA Fieldwork Manual (OAU 1992).

- 3.2.3 The trenches were surveyed in by Mouchel Ltd. using a GPS total station. Levels were taken relative to Ordnance Datum utilising the survey stations left in place by Mouchel after their layout of the site.

3.3 Finds

- 3.3.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and bagged by individual context.

3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence

- 3.4.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified during the course of the evaluation.

3.5 Presentation of results

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

4 RESULTS: GENERAL

4.1 Soils and ground conditions

- 4.1.1 The underlying geology was fairly uniform over the evaluated area comprising the river brickearth with some gravel outcroppings. The subsoil was shallower than that encountered in the previous evaluation to the south and east of the site, although again this subsoil was very similar to the underlying natural. Both the plough soil and upper horizon of the subsoil contained quantities of charcoal and chalk flecks indicative of agricultural liming.

4.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits

- 4.2.1 Only four trenches (Trs 5, 6, 10 and 11) contained archaeological features and deposits within the proposed development site. Trenches 5 and 6 produced ditches dating to the Roman period, while Trenches 10 and 11 identified the remains of modern farm buildings and associated features including a post-medieval brick well. A Pillbox was also noted, located on the trackway between Trenches 6 and 7.

5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

5.1 Description of deposits

Trenches 5 and 6 (Figs 2, 3 and 4)

- 5.1.1 Two small ditches aligned north-south (504) and east-west (604) were encountered in Trenches 5 and 6 respectively. Both ditches 504 and 604 had concave sides and rounded bases measuring between 0.6 and 0.8 m wide and up to 0.28 m deep. They were filled by a similar orange-grey clay silt (505/605). Their orientation and nature indicated they were contemporary with each other and may have joined to form a right angle to the west of Trenches 5 and 6. Fill (605) produced two sherds of undiagnostic Roman pottery. A second feature, possibly the remains of a heavily truncated ditch or gully was also noted in Trench 6. This feature (606) lay roughly parallel with ditch 604, measuring 0.7 m wide by 0.10 m deep. All three features were sealed by the subsoil (502/602) consistent with the ditch fills, measuring up to 0.18 m thick. This was in turn overlain by a c 0.35 deep modern topsoil.

Trenches 10 and 11 (Figs 2 and 5)

- 5.1.2 Trenches 10 and 11 crossed an area previously occupied by modern farm buildings, which had since been demolished. Three brick walls (1104-6), a service trench (1107) and modern trackway (1108) were identified in Trench 11. In Trench 10 a modern ditch (1005) and waste pit (1007) and a post-medieval brick well (1004) measuring 1.7 m in diameter. Of interest was a large fragment of finely worked ashlar that had been placed upright in the modern service trench (1007). This masonry was dated to the medieval period.

Trenches 1 - 4, 7 - 9, 12 - 16 (Fig. 2)

- 5.1.3 All these trenches were void of archaeological features or deposits and consisted of a subsoil measuring an average of 0.12 m deep, overlying which was the present topsoil up to 0.40 m deep. A WWII Pillbox was noted incorporated into the hedgeline on the east side of the trackway lying between Trenches 6 and 7. It had a crawlway access with grenade wall on its northern side and firing slits to south-east, east and south-west.

5.2 Finds

Roman Pottery

- 5.2.1 A total of two sherds of pottery were recovered from ditch 604 in Trench 6. Both pieces were body sherds and could only be dated broadly to the Roman period.

Masonry

- 5.2.2 A single large fragment of finely worked limestone ashlar was recovered from modern service trench (1107) in Trench 11. This finely hewn stone was part of a late medieval window ledge complete with notch for securing a window bar. It is possible that this fine example of medieval masonry could have originally belonged to

Prittiwell Priory, which lies 1 km to the south west, and which would have afforded such architecture as this.

6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

- 6.1.1 The field evaluation demonstrated that there was a very low level of archaeological activity on the site. The evidence clear shows a division between later modern activity associated with Fossett's Farm and early Roman activity. The latter was restricted to a Roman ditch (604) found in Trench 6 and a similar but undated ditch (504) identified in Trench 5. It is possible that these two ditches join at right angles to the south-west of Trench 5 to form a field enclosure. Although these ditches were found to be on a different alignment from those found at the proposed B&Q site to the south, the evidence from both sites indicates an area of agricultural enclosures on the edge of settlement.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
Trench 1						
101	Layer	-	0 - 0.24	Topsoil		
102	Layer	-	0.30 - 0.42	Subsoil		
103	Layer	-	0.42	Natural		
Trench 2						
201	Layer	-	0 - 0.40	Topsoil		
202	Layer	-	0.40 - 0.46	Subsoil		
203	Layer	-	0.46	Natural		
Trench 3						
301	Layer	-	0 - 0.38	Topsoil		
302	Layer	-	0.38 - 0.50	Subsoil		
303	Layer	-	0.50	Natural		
Trench 4						
401	Layer	-	0 - 0.30	Topsoil		
402	Layer	-	0.30 - 0.40	Subsoil		
403	Layer	-	0.40	Natural		
Trench 5						
501	Layer	-	0 - 0.34	Topsoil		
502	Layer	-	0.34 - 0.44	Subsoil		
503	Layer	-	0.44	Natural		
504	Cut	0.60	0.18	Ditch		Undated
505	Fill	0.60	0.18	Fill of 504		Undated
506	Feature	0.50	0.08	Glacial scar		
507	Deposit	0.50	0.08	Natural		
Trench 6						
601	Layer	-	0 - 0.36	Topsoil		
602	Layer	-	0.36 - 0.52	Subsoil		
603	Layer	-	0.52	Natural		
604	Cut	0.80	0.28	Ditch		Roman
605	Fill	0.80	0.28	Fill of 604	Pottery	Roman
606	Cut	0.70	0.10	Ditch/gully		Undated
607	Fill	0.70	0.10	Fill of 606		Undated
Trench 7						
701	Layer	-	0 - 0.30	Topsoil		
702	Layer	-	0.30 - 0.56	Subsoil		
703	Layer	-	0.56	Natural		
Trench 8						
801	Layer	-	0 - 0.20	Topsoil		
802	Layer	-	0.20 - 0.32	Subsoil		
803	Layer	-	0.32	Natural		
Trench 9						
901	Layer	-	0 - 0.40	Topsoil		
902	Layer	-	0.40 - 0.50	Subsoil		
903	Layer	-	0.50	Natural		
Trench 10						
1001	Layer	-	0 - 0.20	Topsoil		

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i> Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
1002	Layer	-	0.20 - 0.42	Subsoil		
1003	Layer	-	0.42	Natural		
1004	Cut	1.70	-	Well		
1005	Cut	0.90	0.28	Ditch		
1006	Fill	0.90	0.28	Fill of 1005		
1007	Cut	1.40 x 1.60	-	Waste Pit		
Trench 11						
1101	Layer	-	0 - 0.36	Topsoil		
1102	Layer	-	0.36 - 0.50	Subsoil		
1103	Layer	-	0.50	Natural		
1104	Structure	3 x 0.20	>0.25	Brick Wall		
1105	Structure	3 x 0.50	>0.25	Brick Wall		
1106	Structure	4 x 0.40	>0.25	Brick Wall		
1107	Cut	-	-	Service Trench	Ashlar window ledge	Medieval
1108	Surface	3 x 2	-	Trackway		
Trench 12						
1201	Layer	-	0 - 0.24	Topsoil		
1202	Layer	-	0.24 - 0.46	Subsoil		
1203	Layer	-	0.46	Natural		
Trench 13						
1301	Layer	-	0 - 0.26	Topsoil		
1302	Layer	-	0.26 - 0.50	Subsoil		
1303	Layer	-	0.50	Natural		
Trench 14						
1401	Layer	-	0 - 0.26	Topsoil		
1402	Layer	-	0.26 - 0.46	Subsoil		
1403	Layer	-	0.46	Natural		
Trench 15						
1501	Layer	-	0 - 0.30	Topsoil		
1502	Layer	-	0.30 - 0.80	Subsoil		
1503	Layer	-	0.80	Natural		
Trench 16						
1601	Layer	-	0 - 0.24	Topsoil		
1602	Layer	-	0.24 - 0.60	Subsoil		
1603	Layer	-	0.60	Natural		

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

CgMs, 2003 *Specification for a Field Evaluation. Land at Fossett's Farm (B&Q Site)*, Southend on Sea, Essex

Essex County Council, 1992 *Fox Hall Farm, Southend, Essex. Archaeological Assessment Report*

Essex County Council, 1993 *Land East of Francis Sports Ground, Southend, Essex*

IFA, 1992 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations*

OA, 2003 *Land at Fosset's Farm, Southend-on- Sea, Essex. Archaeological Evaluation Report*

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

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Fossets Farm, "Link Road", Southend-on-Sea, Essex.

Site code: SOSLR 03

Grid reference: TQ 888 881

Type of evaluation: 16 machine excavated trenches 25m x 3m.

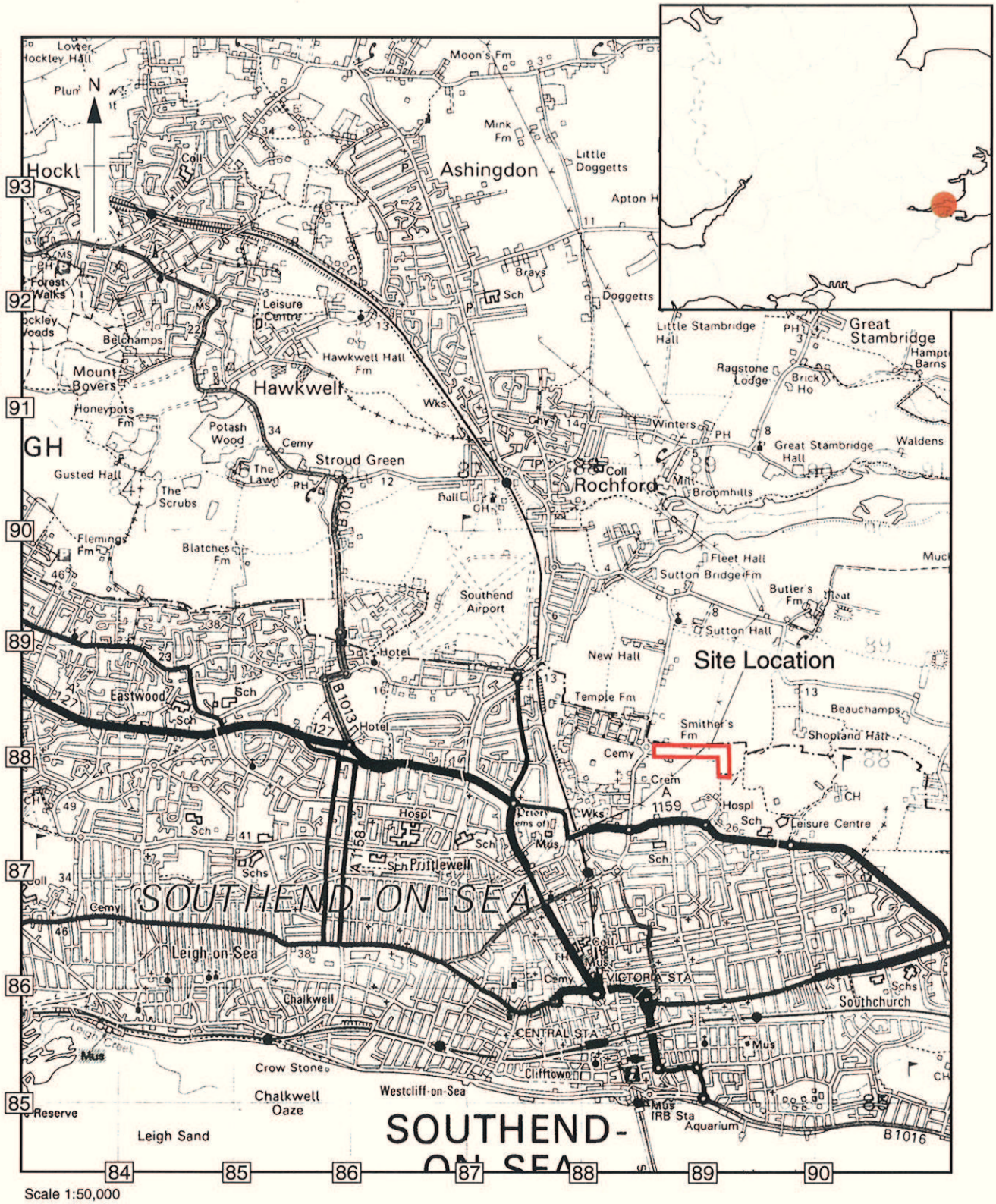
Date and duration of project: 03/11/2003 - 07/11/2003

Area of site: 4.5 hectares.

Summary of results: Two possible Roman ditches and a range of modern farm related features. Indicative of a low intensity agricultural area.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Southend-on Sea Museum service in due course, under the following accession number: SOUMS: A2003.19

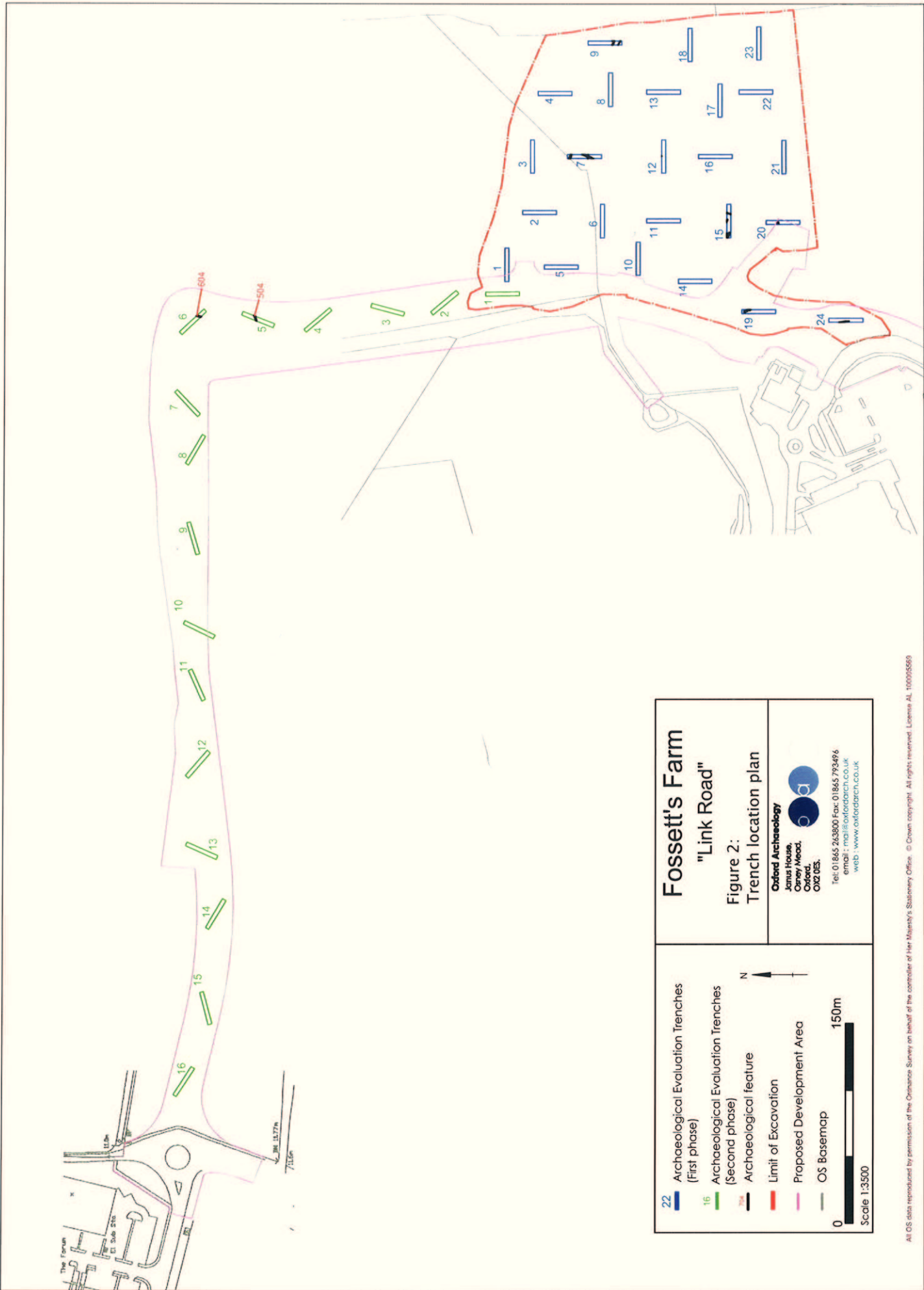
Server 10:\oupubs\I\RioZ\SOSLREV\Fossel's Farm*RU*18.11.03.



Scale 1:50,000

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Figure 1: Site location



<p>Fosssett's Farm "Link Road"</p> <p>Figure 2: Trench location plan</p> <p>Oxford Archaeology Janus House, Caney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0BS. Tel: 01865 203800 Fax: 01865 793486 email: mail@oxfordarch.co.uk web: www.oxfordarch.co.uk</p>	<p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 22 Archaeological Evaluation Trenches (First phase) 16 Archaeological Evaluation Trenches (Second phase) Red dashed line Archaeological feature Red solid line Limit of Excavation Pink dashed line Proposed Development Area Grey line OS Basemap <p>0 150m Scale 1:3500</p> </p>
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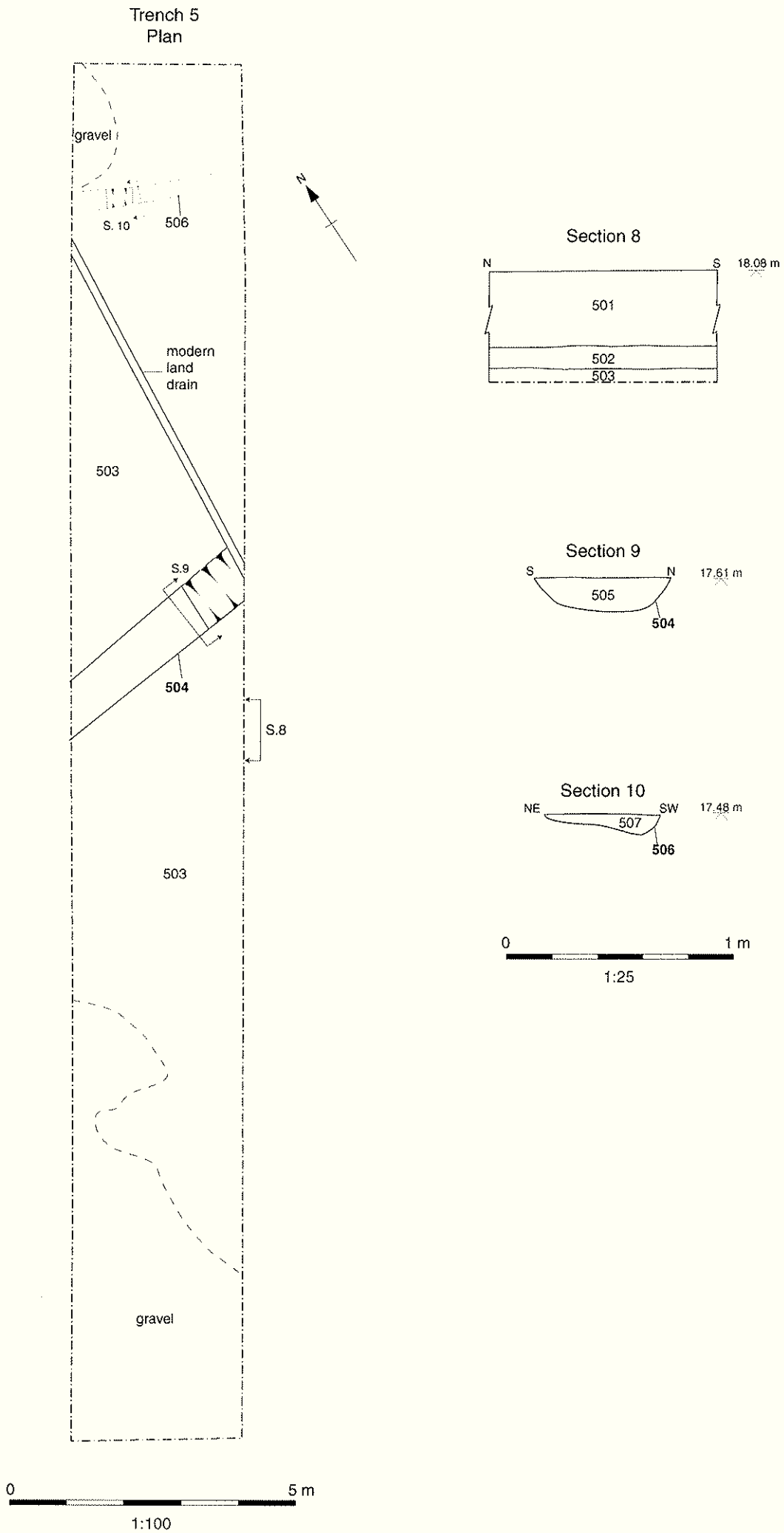


Figure 3: Trench 5, plan and sections

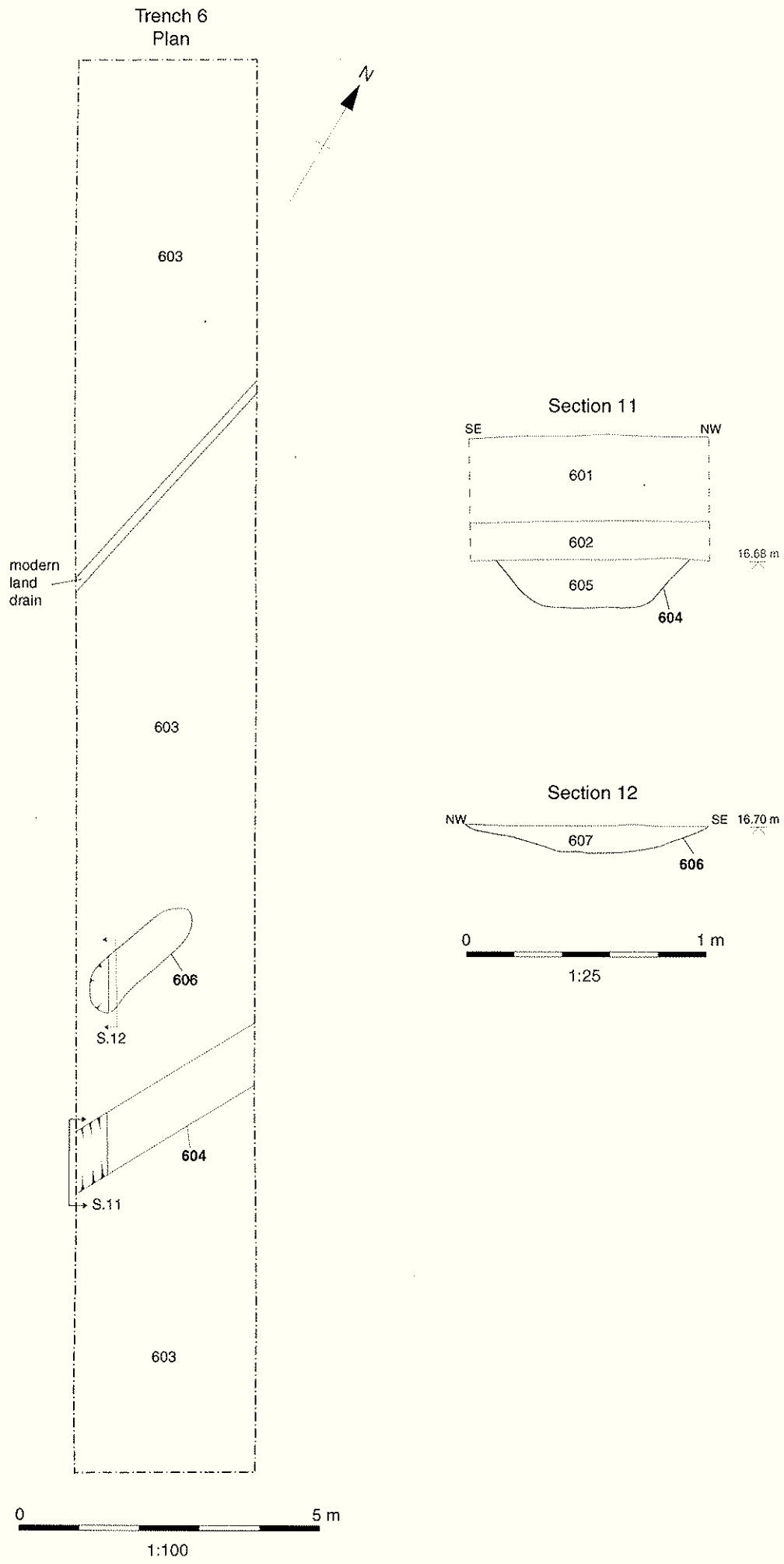


Figure 4: Trench 6, plan and sections

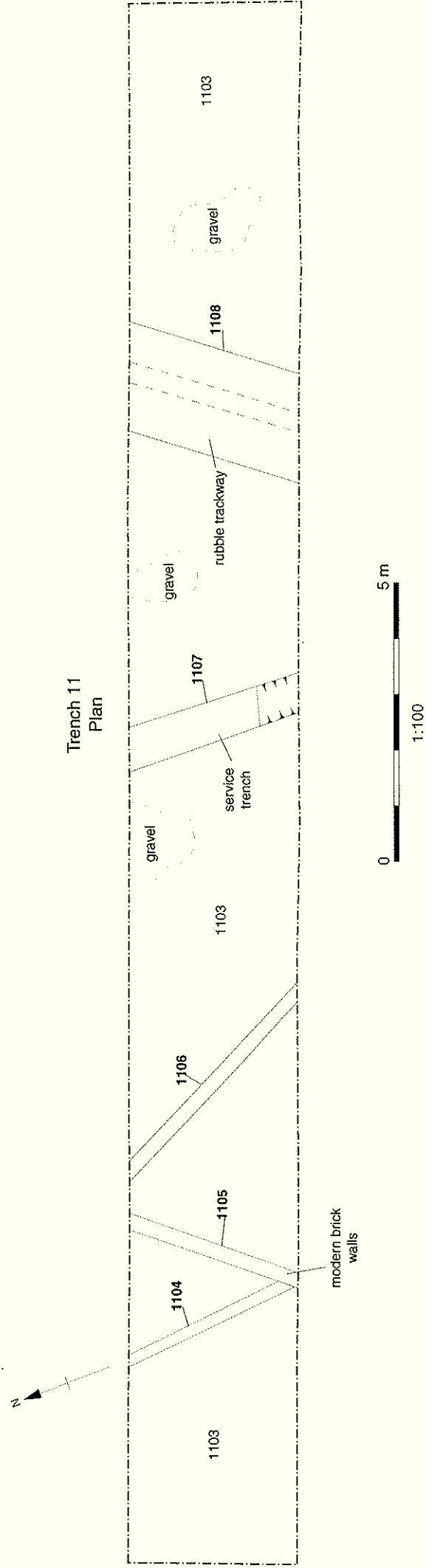
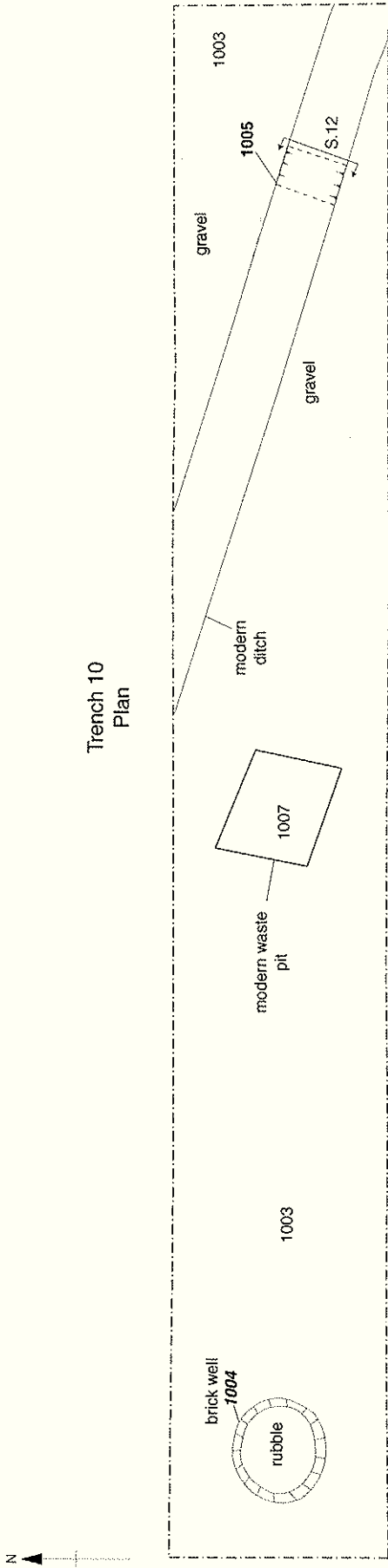


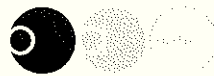
Figure 5: Trenches 10 and 11, plans



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