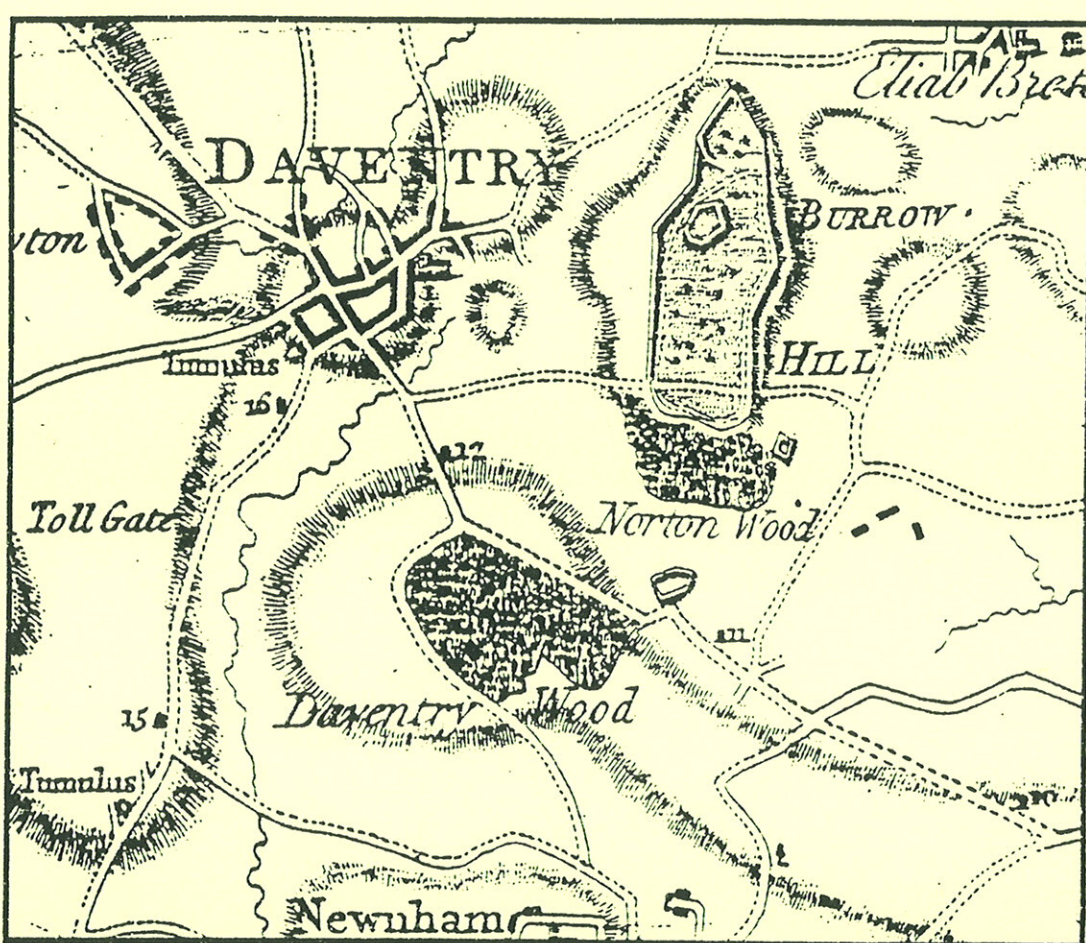


# PROPOSED TESCO SITE, LONDON ROAD, DAVENTRY

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SP 58356125



OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

March 1994

**PROPOSED TESCO SITE, LONDON ROAD DAVENTRY  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION  
Planning Application DA93/1088  
SP 58356125**

**SUMMARY**

The Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out a field evaluation at London Road, Daventry on behalf of Tesco Stores Ltd. A 19th-century stone track rested on old ploughsoil next to the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Burnt Walls. The trackway and the old ploughsoil had been buried by terracing when the recent industrial estate was built to the N of the site. The site had also been truncated in some areas, perhaps as a part of the terracing.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In late February 1994 a field evaluation was carried out by the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) on behalf of Tesco Stores Ltd in respect of an application for planning permission for supermarket, petrol station and associated car parking. The site lies to the E of Daventry at grid reference SP 58356125 (Fig.1).

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

A desk-top appraisal carried out by the OAU is summarised here. Borough Hill, an Iron Age contour hillfort with evidence for prehistoric to Saxon activity, lies 700 m to the N (OAU 1993, fig. 1). The site lies between Burnt Walls (possibly a Norman earthwork) and the site of John of Gaunt's Hunting Lodge (a later medieval ?royal centre). Deer hunting in the parish of Daventry is known from Saxon charters (Brown 1991, 82) and John of Gaunt owned part of the parish in the late 14th century and the other part was sold to his son (later to be Henry IV) in 1398 under whom the various parts of the manor, which had been divided, were united becoming part of the Duchy of Lancaster estates (Brown 1991, 15-16).

A pattern of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation has been recreated from RAF aerial photographs (Brown 1991, 40, fig. 16). This shows ridge and furrow cultivation on the site aligned NW-SE. By the 16th century the area of Borough Hill and Burnt Walls seems to have been uncultivated. In the 18th century the N part of the area between Borough Hill and Burnt Walls was Norton Wood (Earye map, later 18th century, see report cover), perhaps a remnant of Hackwood deer park which surrounded John of Gaunt's Hunting Lodge and which had been deforested and used for agriculture in the 12th century (Brown 1991, 81-2).

The London Road may have led to a SE entrance of Burnt Walls (cover). The S half of the interior of Burnt Walls and substantial parts of John of Gaunt's Hunting Lodge have been quarried out.

## **TOPOGRAPHY**

The site lies on the SE edge of the ancient parish of Daventry on a ridge of Upper Lias Clay in an E-W valley between two larger hills.

The site covers approximately 2.5 hectares at a height of 145 m O.D. and had recently been used as a sports field.

## **ASSESSMENT STRATEGY (FIG. 1)**

The assessment strategy was based on an agreed 2% sample of the E area next to Burnt Walls. The sample consisted of four 30 m long and one 20 m long trenches, all 1.6 m wide, dug by a JCB mechanical excavator (see Fig. 1).

Trench 1 was placed to determine the nature of any outer defences of Burnt Walls. Trench 2 was placed to locate any track outside the W entrance of Burnt Walls and to determine the presence or absence of associated features outside the entrance which was of unknown date. The other trenches were placed to cover a sample of the rest of the area and to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains.

The soils were machine excavated to either the natural subsoil or archaeological deposits which were then hand excavated. For safety reasons Trench 1 was only machine excavated to the natural subsoil at either end in deep

test pits which were inspected and immediately backfilled. For the same reason Trench 4 was only excavated to a length of 20 m once the stratigraphy of the deposits was understood. The archaeological features encountered were sampled to determine their nature and depth and to recover dating evidence. The features were planned at a scale of 1:100 and their sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20 where they were excavated.

## RESULTS

### Soils

The general soil type was a slightly silty clay.

### Archaeology (Fig. 1)

There were four elements to the archaeological deposits: tree-throw pits, an old ploughsoil, a 19th-century track, and modern terracing (see table for details of contexts).

Tree-throw pits, from uprooted trees, were located and excavated in Trenches 3 and 5. The tree-throw pits in Trench 5 were very much shallower than that in Trench 3. The shallow tree-throw pits and virtual absence of old ploughsoil in Trench 5 may indicate that the clay subsoil has been truncated, perhaps when the playing field was levelled. There was an NW-SE aligned ridge of natural limestone in Trench 3. Old ploughsoils were recognised in Trenches 2, 3 and 4 (202, 302 and 406) of which Trenches 2 and 3 were the only trenches to have been relatively unaffected by terracing. The old ploughsoils were dated by late 19th-century brick in Trench 4 and 19th-century glass (which came from under the trackway) in Trench 2.

A layer of stones overlay the old ploughsoil in Trench 2 (203) (Fig. 2). This may have been a track leading from extensive quarrying within the S half of Burnt Walls to the kiln shown to the S of the site on the 1884 O.S. map. The stones were present in a depression (205) which extended to the E and may have been part of a hollow way leading into the W entrance of Burnt Walls.

Trenches 1 and 4 showed truncated clay subsoil (104 and 407) which was overlain by grey clay up to 1.35 m deep. At the S end of Trench 4 untruncated old ploughsoil (406) and old topsoil forming the pre-dump surface (405) were present under the dump and on the subsoil. The clay deposit shows that the top of the W bank of Burnt Walls would have been only slightly higher than the area to the W of the earthwork. This assumes, however, that the truncation of the topsoil before the clay was dumped was minimal and that the bottom of the clay observed in the test pits in Trench 1 represents the approximate level of the old ground surface (Fig. 3). A similar deposit (204) filled the depression in Trench 1 and contained wood and modern iron work including an uncorroded galvanized mop-bucket (204 and 207, Fig. 2). The N of the nearby industrial estate has been built c3.5 m into the side of Borough Hill. The material from this excavation is probably that used to level up the lower part of the valley in which Burnt Walls lies.

### **Finds<sup>1</sup>**

One sherd of abraded unidentifiable fired clay (which was not pottery) came from the top of the natural subsoil in Trench 3. One hard hammer-struck flint flake came from the topsoil of Trench 5 which may have been imported to the site. One sherd of medieval pottery, dated to the 12th to 13th centuries or perhaps slightly earlier, came from the lower dump layer in Trench 2 (207). Five sherds of 19th-century pottery and two pieces of glass were identified (see table). More modern material (golf balls, mop buckets and cloth) was also present in the recent layers of dumping and topsoil.

### **Environmental**

No deposits which would have yielded environmental information were encountered so no soil samples were taken.

## **COMMENTS ON THE RESULTS**

### **Reliability of field investigation**

The sample size is considered, in the opinion of the OAU, sufficient to define and interpret the archaeology adequately.

### **Overall Interpretation**

There were no significant archaeological deposits. The old ploughsoil which may be a result of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation contained 19th-century finds suggesting agriculture in the 19th century. A track which is later than the 19th-century ploughsoil may be associated with the quarrying inside Burnt Walls. The late date of this track is supported by the alignment of the ridge and furrow on the site which could be expected to respect the line of a track leading to a ?medieval W entrance of Burnt Walls. The construction of the nearby industrial estate and the levelling of the site for a football pitch has partly truncated the original ground surface and buried, with the material brought in to level the site, the horizon where archaeological deposits could be expected. The only finds indicating pre-19th-century activity (the flint flake and the sherd of medieval pottery) were residual in the modern dumped layers.

M R Roberts MIFA  
March 1994

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<sup>1</sup>Fired clay identified by P Booth, OAU; flint identified by P Bradley, OAU; pottery identified by L Bown, OAU

## APPENDICES

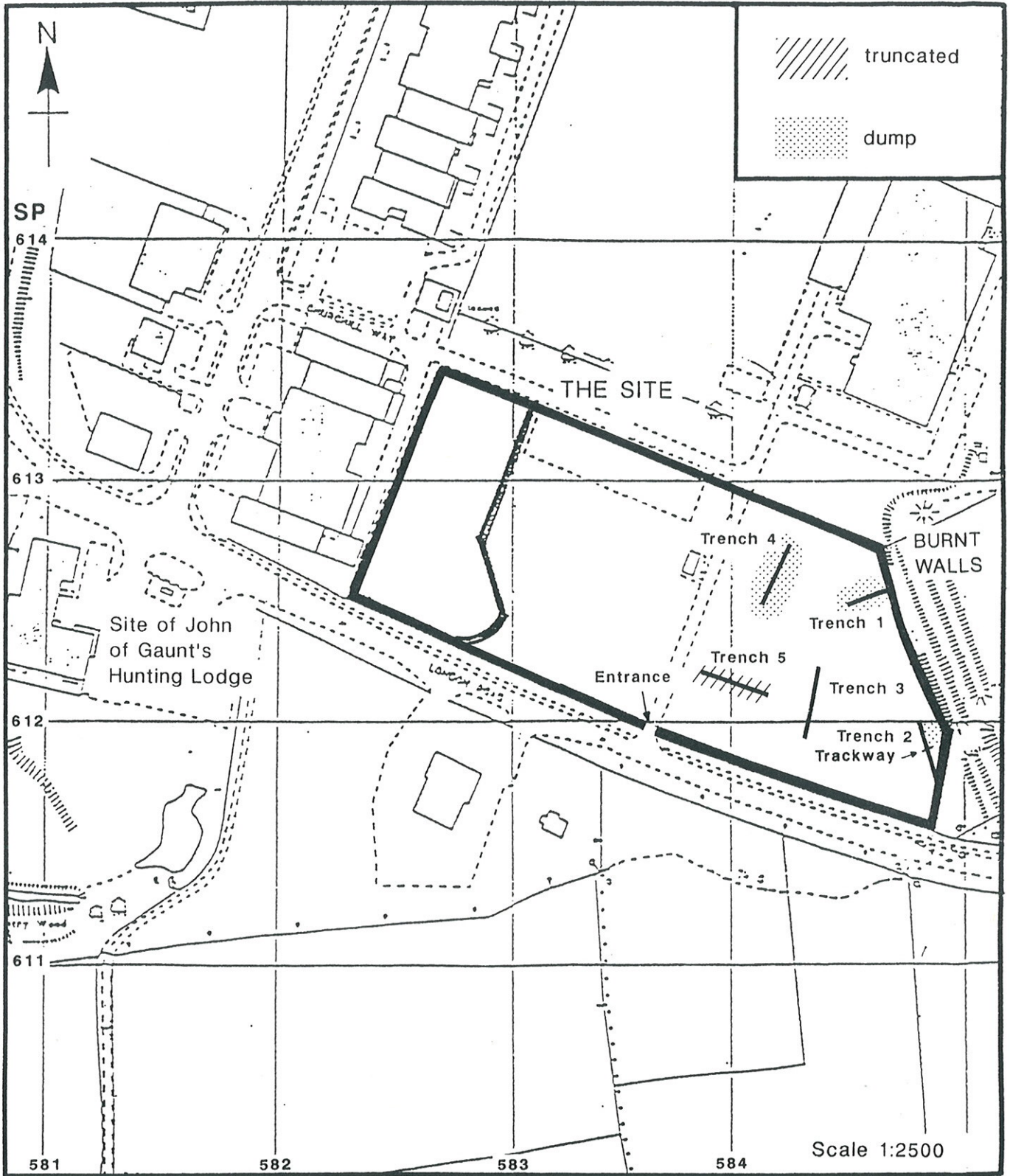
### Bibliography

Brown A E Early Daventry An Essay in Early Landscape Planning, Univ of Leicester 1991

OAU London Road, Daventry: An Archaeological Appraisal 1993

**TABLE 1**  
**CONTEXTS AND FINDS**

Trench	Context	Type	width (m)	Depth (m)	dated by:-
1	101	topsoil		0.25	modern cloth
1	102	grey clay dump		>1.35	
1	103	?old ground surface		0.1	
1	104	buff clay subsoil		-	
2	201	topsoil		0.22	
2	202	old ploughsoil		0.22	1 piece of glass
2	203	limestone layer			
2	204	grey clay dump		0.3	modern ironwork (not retained)
2	205	surface of depression	8	-	
2	206	buff clay subsoil	-	-	
2	207	lower fill of depression		0.2	1 piece glass, 1 sherd of ?12th- to 13th-century pottery
3	301	topsoil		0.2	3 sherds of 19th-century pottery 1 clay pipe and 1 brick
3	302	old ploughsoil		0.08	
3	303	decayed limestone			1 piece of fired clay impressed into surface
3	304	?cut assigned to 303			
3	305	fill of tree-throw pit			
3	306	cut for tree-throw pit	1.2	0.6	
3	307	outcrop of limestone			
4	401	topsoil		0.32	
4	402	grey clay dump		1.2	
4	403	redeposited topsoil part of 402		0.16	
4	404	redeposited topsoil part of 402		0.08	
4	405	old ground surface/topsoil (pre-dump)		0.2	2 sherds 19th-century pottery
4	406	old ploughsoil		0.3	brick
4	407	buff clay subsoil			
5	500	topsoil		0.2	1 hard hammer struck flint flake
5	501	old ploughsoil		0.05	
5	502	buff clay subsoil			
5	503	group number for tree-throw pits		0.12	



Trench location plan

Figure 1

Trench 2, section 1

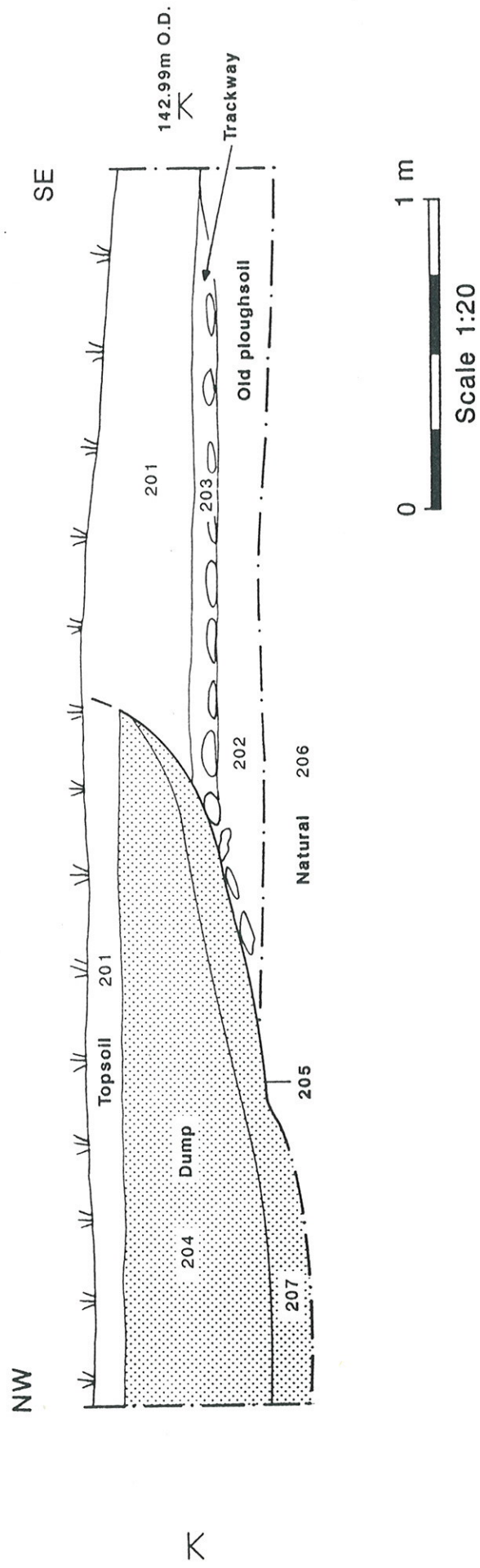


Figure 2



Levels of profile through west of Burnt Walls earthwork on alignment of Trench 1.

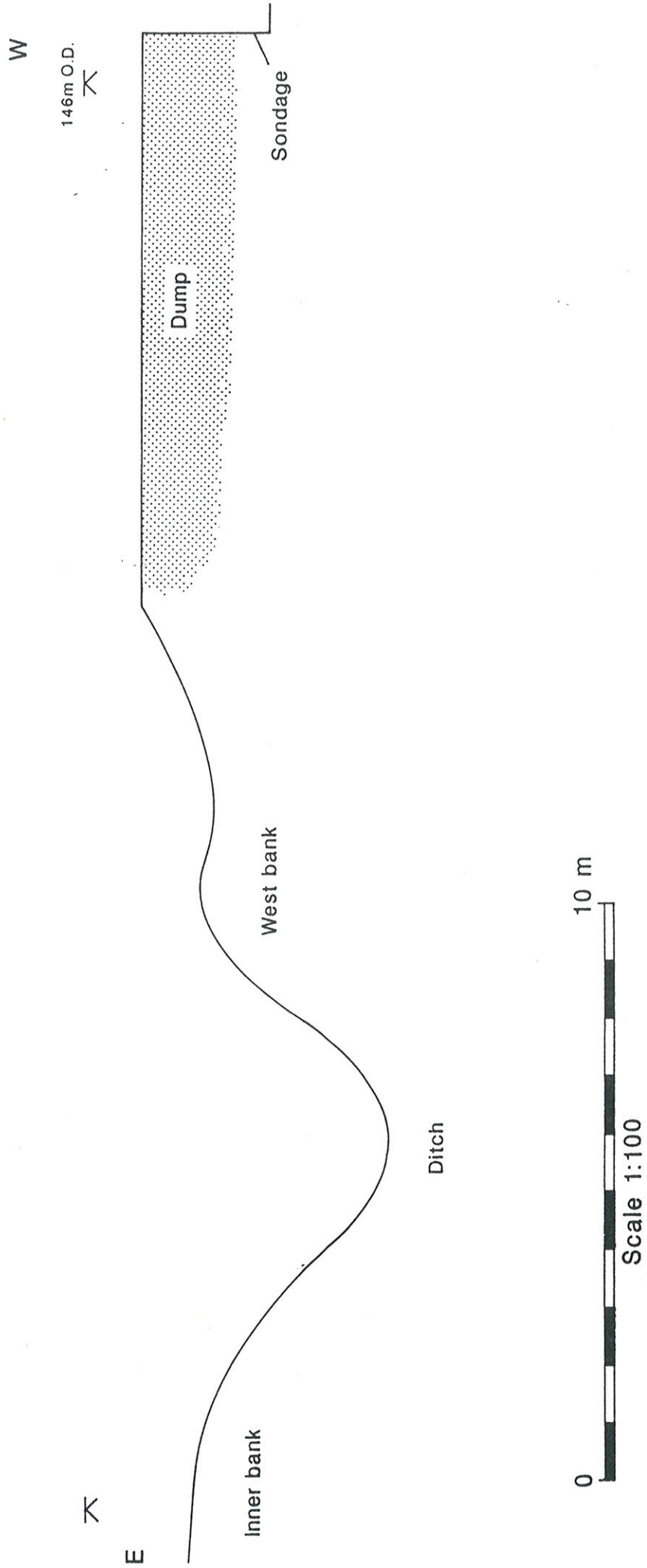


Figure 3

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