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Green Park Areas 9 & 10, Reading, Berkshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

SU 697 696

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August 2000

Caversham Project Management/Prudential

Green Park Areas 9 & 10, Reading, Berkshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

SU 697 696

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Date: 25 August 2000	
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Contents

Summary 1
1 Introduction 1
1.1 Location and scope of work 1
1.2 Geology and topography 1
1.3 Archaeological and Planning background 1
2 Evaluation Aims 3
2.1 Aims as outlined by the method statement: 3
3 Evaluation Methodology 3
3.1 Scope of fieldwork (Fig. 3) 3
3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording 3
3.3 Finds 3
3.4 Palaeo-environmental Evidence 3
3.5 Presentation of results 4
4 Results: General 4
4.1 Soil and ground conditions 4
4.2 Distribution of archaeological features 4
5 Results: Descriptions 4
5.1 Trench 1 (Fig. 4) 4
5.2 Trench 2 (Fig. 10) 5
5.3 Trench 3 (Fig. 5) 5
5.4 Trench 4 (Fig. 6) 6
5.5 Trench 5 (Fig. 10) 7
5.6 Trench 6 (Fig. 7) 7
5.7 Trench 7 (not illustrated) 8
5.8 Trench 8 (Fig. 10) 8
5.9 Trench 9 (Fig. 10) 8
5.10 Trench 10 (Fig. 10) 9
5.11 Trench 11 (Fig. 8) 9
5.12 Trench 12 (Fig. 10) 10
5.13 Trench 13 (Fig. 10) 10
5.14 Finds 11
5.15 Palaeo-environmental remains 12
6 Discussion And Interpretation 12
6.1 Reliability of field investigation 12
6.2 Overall Interpretation 12
Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory 14
Appendix 2 Bibliography and references Pottery assessment/ spot dating 20
Appendix 3 Summary of Site Details 20

List of Figures

Fig. 1 Site Location
Fig. 2 Archaeological background and previous archaeological fieldwork
Fig. 3 Trench Location Plan

Fig. 4 Trench 1: plan and sections
Fig. 5 Trench 3: plan and sections
Fig. 6 Trench 4: plan and section
Fig. 7 Trench 6: plan and sections
Fig. 8 Trench 11: plan and sections
Fig. 9 Trench 12: plan and sections
Fig. 10 Trenches 2, 5, 8, 10 and 13: plans

SUMMARY

The Oxford Archaeological undertook a field evaluation between 7th-11th August 2000 of Green Park areas 9 and 10, south-west of Small Mead Farm, Berkshire, on the border of West Berkshire and Wokingham Districts, on behalf of Caversham Project Management acting for Prudential. Previous low level test pit and trial trench evaluation work across the site by the Trust for Wessex Archaeology in 1986 identified Bronze Age and Roman finds scatters associated with probable field boundaries and settlement.

The current trial trench evaluation provided further information as to the level of this activity and the quality of preservation of the archaeological remains. A number of ditch alignments were encountered concentrated in the SE and W parts of the site. Isolated pits and postholes also suggests that low level occupation may be present associated with the ditch boundaries. A number of tree-throw holes were found across the site. The finds recovered were very limited in quantity and quality. Most of the small quantity of Romano-British pottery was found in the SE part of the site. This was close to finds of Romano-British features and pottery made in the 1986 evaluation. Most significant were sherds of middle Bronze Age Deverel-Rimbury type Bucket Urn from a ditch in Trench 12 in the W part of the site. The burnt flint recovered from the site came mainly from the W part and in particular from Trench 13. Again the finds were from close to the location of an inhumation burial, possibly Bronze Age in date, found in the 1986 evaluation

Although waterlogged deposits with preserved wood had been previously encountered, none of the archaeological deposits and features found in the present field evaluation was waterlogged, and all had a low potential for palaeo-environmental analysis.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 Between 7th-11th August, the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) carried out a field evaluation of the Green Park development (formerly Reading Business Park) areas 9 and 10, on behalf of Caversham Project Management acting for Prudential. The work was undertaken as part of the third stage of an ongoing programme of works agreed in 1988 (see Paragraph 1.3.3 below). The c.3 hectares of the Green Park development is located to the immediate south-west of Small Mead Farm and bounded immediately to the south by the M4 motorway, and by the Basingstoke to Reading railway line on the west and the minor road between Shinfield and Burghfield to the east (Fig. 1).

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site is situated on the first terrace gravel of the River Kennet at *c.* 39 metres above OD. The site is level and currently under arable cultivation.

1.3 Archaeological and Planning background

1.3.1 The site is located in an area proven to be rich in archaeological remains. Work in the other parts of the Reading Business Park have indicated multi-period activity. In

1983-84 a programme of fieldwalking was undertaken as part of the Kennet Valley Survey funded by English Heritage. Fieldwalking produced finds dating to the prehistoric, Roman and medieval periods. Finds from the fieldwalking combined with evidence from aerial photographs which revealed potentially extensive buried archaeological landscapes, including settlements, trackways and enclosures.

1.3.2 The current development area was subject to a limited evaluation, undertaken by the Trust for Wessex Archaeological, in 1986 (Wessex Archaeology 1986). Subsequently 31 hand-dug test pits were excavated, twelve of which contained archaeological features (*ibid.* fig. 3). In addition five extended trenches were also excavated, all of which contained archaeological features. The largest of these trenches, A32, contained a crouched inhumation of likely Bronze Age date and a 'pond' or pit which demonstrated organic preservation and included a wooden bowl and two sharpened stakes in the base (*ibid.*, 6-7, fig. 4, F 222 and finds 20-21 and 25). Unfortunately few of the excavated features were securely dated within the 2m x 2m test pits. More reliable dating evidence was retrieved from the larger trenches. These demonstrated that the ditches represent the Bronze Age, Roman and medieval periods. This reflects the date range of the finds recovered from the surface collection of the area in 1983 and 1984.

1.3.3 In 1986, following the Wessex Archaeology evaluation, the OAU was commissioned by Bucknell Brothers (Holdings) Ltd to undertake a second phase of evaluation. This involved the machine excavation of a number of 30 m trenches. As a result of this evaluation development was made conditional on further excavation and archaeological recording. A proposal for further work was prepared by the OAU and agreed with the County Archaeologist (OAU 1988). This documentation formed the basis of a legal agreement for archaeological work (under the then Section 52 of the Town and Country Planning Act).

1.3.4 The first stage of work under the agreement was the excavation of selected areas around Small Mead Farm undertaken by the OAU in 1987-88. This examined seven areas (Fig. 2, Trenches 5, 2000, 3000, 4000, 5000, 6000 and 7000) (Moore and Jennings 1992). Evidence for late Neolithic and early Bronze occupation was revealed in area 7000, extensive Bronze Age settlement was found in areas 5, 3000, 5000 and 6000. Romano-British settlement evidence was recovered primarily from Area 2000. This ranged in date from the 1st to 4th centuries. The evidence from Area 4000 was very limited, with small numbers of late Bronze Age and Romano-British features

1.3.5 The second stage of the work to be undertaken under the Section 52 agreement was carried out in 1995, when the OAU undertook further excavation around Small Mead Farm: Trench 3000B adjacent to 1987 area 3000, and Trench 3017 to the S of 1987 area 7000 (Fig. 2). Area 3017 revealed further evidence for Neolithic occupation and more limited evidence for Late Bronze Age activity and medieval pits and linear features. The Late Bronze Age settlement part investigated in 1987-88 (Moore and

Jennings 1992) was further explored in Area 3000B and evidence for middle Bronze Age occupation was uncovered.

2 EVALUATION AIMS

2.1 Aims as outlined by the method statement:

2.1.1 To further establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the proposal area.

2.1.2 To further determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present.

2.1.3 To further establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork (Fig. 3)

3.1.1 The evaluation comprised 13 machine-excavated trenches The trenches were all 30 m long and 1.6 m wide.

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

3.2.1 The overlying ploughsoil layers were removed to the first archaeological horizon or surface of the underlying natural silts and gravel by a JCB mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. The work was carried out under close archaeological supervision.

3.2.2 Following machine-excavation of the overlying ploughsoil layers, limited hand cleaning of the resultant surface and exposed features was undertaken to define the archaeological deposits prior to excavation. Subsequent sample excavation of the features determined their extent and nature, and recovered finds. Each deposit was assessed during excavation, for the potential survival of environmental data.

3.2.3 All archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:50, and excavated sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20. All trenches and features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures defined in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

3.3 Finds

3.3.1 Finds were generally sparse although where encountered were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and bagged by context. A few individual finds of special interest were encountered during the course of the evaluation.

3.4 Palaeo-environmental Evidence

3.4.1 No archaeological deposits suitable for the preservation of environmental data were encountered in the evaluation. The large majority of the excavated features were less than 0.25m below the level of the gravel surface. As a result all of the deposits encountered were in aerobic conditions and organic remains were not preserved. However, the Wessex Archaeology evaluation demonstrated the potential survival of waterlogged features and deposits (Wessex Archaeology 1986, 7), and so there is a strong possibility that waterlogged deposits do survive

3.5 Presentation of results

3.5.1 The general results are followed by descriptions of individual trenches. These are followed in turn by a brief description of the finds and a discussion of the results. A separate table giving detailed information on individual contexts is to be found in Appendix 1.

4 RESULTS: GENERAL

4.1 Soil and ground conditions

4.1.1 The site is located on gravels and sands of the first gravel terrace in the valley of the River Kennet. The ground conditions during fieldwork were dry.

4.2 Distribution of archaeological features

4.2.1 The features located in the evaluation comprised primarily ditches and were concentrated in Trenches 1, 3 and 4 in the south and east corner of the site, and in Trenches 6, 11, 12 and 13 in the western part of the site. Trenches 2, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10 contained only natural features including a number of tree-throw holes.

4.2.2 Trenches 1 and 3 contained a number of linear features some aligned broadly N-S others broadly E-W. Trench 4 revealed a single pit. The finds were limited to few sherds of Romano-British pottery, fired clay and a single cattle metacarpal from Trench 3. There was also a few pieces of fired clay from Trench 4.

4.2.3 Trenches 6, 11, 12 and 13 all contained ditches. Some ditches were aligned N-S, others E-W and a few NE-SW. Trench 11 had the greatest density of features and these included pits and possible post-holes as well as ditches. However, there are no datable finds from Trench 11. Trench 6 produced a little middle to late Bronze Age pottery from a NE-SW-aligned ditch. There was also Romano-British pottery from a N-S ditch. A residual Iron Age sherd came from another ditch. The most interesting finds are a small number of sherds of a middle Bronze Age Deverel-Rimbury type Bucket Urn from a ditch in Trench 12.

5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

5.1 Trench 1 (Fig. 4)

5.1.1 The trench contained a number of linear features (104, 106, 108 and 112) and a shallow irregular feature (110). No datable finds were recovered from contexts in this trench.

5.1.2 The natural geology (103) comprised yellow brown silty sand overlying flint gravel and was sealed beneath 0.4 m of overburden. This comprised between 0.15 and 0.2 m of buried ploughsoil (mid-brown gravelly silt loam; 102) sealed beneath 0.2 to 0.25 m of topsoil (grey brown silt loam; 101).

5.1.3 The natural geology was cut by ditches 104 and 106 and an irregular shallow feature 110. These features were sealed by the buried ploughsoil (102). Ditches 104 and 106 were aligned NNE to SSW. Ditch 104 was a filled with orange/brown silt and clay (105), and was either a recut of ditch 106 or the upper part of the same ditch. Ditch 106 was filled with light grey brown silt (107). Feature 110 was filled with orange brown silty clay (111) and was cut by ditch 112.

5.1.4 Ditches 108 and 112 cut the buried ploughsoil and their fills were sealed by the modern topsoil. Ditch 108 was aligned NE - SW and terminated within the trench. Its fill was a grey brown silty clay (109) and contained a cattle metacarpal. Ditch 112 was aligned E-W and filled with dark brown silt clay (113).

5.2 Trench 2 (Fig. 10)

5.2.1 The trench contained a number of irregular hollows (206, 208, 210 and 212) interpreted as natural hollows or tree-holes. No datable finds were recovered.

5.2.2 The natural geology (203) comprised orange sandy silt overlying compact flint gravel. It was sealed beneath c. 0.3 m of overburden comprising between 0.08 and 0.1 m of buried ploughsoil (202) below 0.16 to 0.2 m of topsoil (201).

5.2.3 The natural gravel was cut by all four tree-holes which were distinguished by their irregular outlines and distinctive grey silty clay fills: 206 contained light brown clay (205) sealed by dark grey silty clay (204); 208 was filled with dark grey clay silt (207) and contained a single piece of burnt flint; 210 was filled with very dark grey silty clay (209); and 212 with dark grey silty clay (211).

5.3 Trench 3 (Fig. 5)

5.3.1 The trench contained at least three ditches aligned broadly E-W (312, 314, and 317), a further ditch aligned NE - SW (306=308), and a number of pits (304, 319 and 321). Feature 319 may be the terminal of a ditch running N. In addition there was an irregular hollow interpreted as a tree-hole (310). A small number of Romano-British sherds were recovered from fills of ditches 308 (=306) and 312.

5.3.2 The natural geology (303) comprised mainly dark yellow sandy silt overlying compact flint gravel. At the N end of the trench was a patch of stony mid grey brown silt clay (316) which is interpreted as a variation in the natural geology. Layers 303

and 316 were sealed beneath c. 0.35 m of overburden comprising between 0.05 and 0.08 m of buried ploughsoil (302) below 0.25 to 0.3 m of topsoil (301).

5.3.3 The natural gravel was cut by four ditches. Ditches 306 and 308 appear to be parts of the same feature. Ditch 306 (=308) was a broad shallow ditch filled with dark grey brown silty clay (307=309). Context 309, which was the fill of 308 and was not fully excavated, produced two sherds of Romano-British pottery, probably of late 1st- to early 2nd-century date and 9 fragments of burnt or fired clay. N of ditch 306 were ditches 312 and 314. Ditch 312 had a flat bottom and gently sloping sides and was filled with grey brown silty clay with some stone inclusions (313). This ditch produced 3 sherds of Romano-British pottery of 2nd-century or possibly later date, and 13 pieces of fired clay. Ditch 314 was small shallow flat bottomed ditch, filled with stony orange brown silt clay. Some metres north and approximately parallel to 314 was a ditch 317, which was cut into the disturbed area of natural 316. It was not excavated. The fills of all the ditches were sealed by the buried ploughsoil 302.

5.3.4 The three pits revealed in the evaluation were all cut into natural 303. Pit 304 near the S end of the trench was round bottomed and quite shallow. It was filled with orange brown silt clay (305). At the N end of the trench pit 321 was shallow and round bottomed and filled with very dark brown silt clay (322). Immediately adjacent to it was feature 319, which may have been a ditch terminus. It had a similar dark brown silt clay fill (320) to pit 321. The fills of all the pits were sealed by the buried ploughsoil 302

5.4 Trench 4 (Fig. 6)

5.4.1 The trench contained a single pit (404) and 3 tree-holes (408, 410 and unnumbered). A number of pieces of fired clay were recovered from the fill (411) of one of the tree-holes.

5.4.2 The natural geology (403) comprised gravel in a silt matrix with patches of yellow sandy silt. Overlying the gravel were patches of compact yellow silt (406) and brown yellow silt clay (407). These layers were sealed beneath c. 0.30 to 0.35 m of overburden comprising c. 0.1 m of buried ploughsoil (302) below 0.2 to 0.25 m of topsoil (301).

5.4.3 The natural gravel was cut by a single pit (404) at the E end of the trench. This was round-bottomed and filled with grey brown silt clay (405). The fill was sealed by the buried plough soil 402.

5.4.4 Three tree-holes were revealed, two of which (408 and 410) were investigated. The fill of tree-hole 408 was a yellowish grey silt clay (409), whereas the fill of 410 was a black brown silt clay (411). The latter produced 10 pieces of fired clay. All were sealed by the buried ploughsoil 402.

5.5 Trench 5 (Fig. 10)

5.5.1 The trench contained two tree-holes (504 and 508) and a possible posthole or tree-hole (506). No finds were recovered from Trench 5.

5.5.2 The natural geology (503) comprised gravel with patches of yellow sandy silt. This layer was sealed beneath c. 0.30 to 0.33 m of overburden comprising between 0.05 and 0.08 m of buried ploughsoil (502) below 0.25 m of topsoil (501).

5.5.3 The tree-holes cut the natural gravel. Tree-hole 504 was an irregular broadly linear feature filled with dark brown silt clay (505). Feature 506 was a small round-bottomed feature, which may have been a posthole and was filled with dark grey brown silt clay (507). Tree-hole (508) was an irregular oval feature with an irregular profile. It was filled with dark red brown silt clay loam (509). The fills of all three features were sealed by the buried ploughsoil 502.

5.6 Trench 6 (Fig. 7)

5.6.1 The trench contained four ditches (605, 607, 609 and 622) and three areas of tree disturbance (611, 615 and 618). A number of datable finds were recovered, including a worn mid to late Bronze Age sherd (606) and a Romano-British sherd (604). An abraded probable Iron Age sherd was found with a small worn Romano-British or medieval sherd (608).

5.6.2 The natural geology (603) comprised gravel with patches of yellow silt. This layer was sealed beneath c. 0.4 to 0.46 m of overburden comprising between 0.20 and 0.24 m of buried ploughsoil (602) below 0.18 to 0.25 m of topsoil (601).

5.6.3 Ditches 622 and 609 were aligned N - S, were approximately parallel and c. 8 m apart and cut the natural geology (603). The ditches were similar in width but ditch 622 was deeper and their fills differ. The fill of ditch 609 was light grey clay silt (608) and produced an abraded Iron Age sherd (see Paragraph 5.14.2 below) a small worn Romano-British or medieval sherd and two pieces of burnt flint. The fills of ditch 622 comprised dark brown clay silt (621), overlain by mid brown clay silt (620) and sealed by light brown clay silt (619). There were no finds. The fills of the ditches were sealed by the buried ploughsoil 602.

5.6.4 Ditch 605 was located adjacent to ditch 609 and parallel to it. It was similar in width to the latter, but shallower. Its fill was mid brown silt clay (604) and produced a burnt Romano-British sherd (Oxford mortarium of c. AD 180-240). The fill of ditch 605 was sealed by the buried ploughsoil. Ditch 605 cut an earlier ditch (607) which was on a NNE-SSW alignment. This ditch was filled with light grey clay silt (606) and produced a worn sherd of mid-late Bronze Age date and two pieces of burnt flint. It cut the natural gravel 603.

5.6.5 Between ditches 622 and 609 were two areas of tree disturbance, 618 and 615. Tree-hole 618 was an irregular linear feature filled with light brown silt clay (617) beneath

dark brown silt clay (616). Adjacent to feature 618 was a shallow irregular hollow (615) filled with very dark grey silt clay (614) sealed by light brown grey silt clay (613) and light grey silt clay (612). There are no finds. The fills of both features were sealed by the buried ploughsoil 602.

5.7 Trench 7 (not illustrated)

5.7.1 The trench contained no archaeological features. Two areas of tree disturbance (707 and 709) were located. Two pieces of ceramic building material were recovered from the buried ploughsoil 702.

5.7.2 The natural geology (703) comprised gravel with overlain by patches of silt, including an area of light grey silt (704). The natural gravel was sealed beneath c. 0.3 to 0.4 m of overburden comprising between 0.13 and 0.20 m of buried ploughsoil (602) below 0.12 to 0.3 m of topsoil (601).

5.7.3 Two areas of tree disturbance, 707 and 709 cut the natural gravel. Tree-hole 707 was filled with dark brown silt clay (706), while feature 709 was filled with red brown silt clay (708). The fills were sealed by the buried ploughsoil 702. No finds were recovered.

5.8 Trench 8 (Fig. 10)

5.8.1 The trench contained no archaeological features. Two areas of tree disturbance (804 and unnumbered) were located.

5.8.2 The natural geology (803) comprised yellow/grey gravel in a sandy matrix. The natural gravel was sealed beneath c. 0.37 m of overburden comprising c. 0.07 of buried ploughsoil (802) below 0.3 m of topsoil (601).

5.8.3 Both areas of tree disturbance cut the natural gravel and their fills were sealed by the buried ploughsoil. One of the two areas of tree disturbance (804) was investigated, and was found to contain a stony fill in a mixed black and yellow silt clay matrix (805). No finds were recovered.

5.9 Trench 9 (Fig. 10)

5.9.1 The trench contained no archaeological features. A number of areas of tree disturbance were located, but only one (904) was investigated.

5.9.2 The natural geology (903) comprised compacted mid-grey gravel in a sandy silt matrix. The natural gravel was sealed beneath c. 0.30 to 0.35 m of overburden comprising between 0.06 and 0.08 m of buried ploughsoil (902) below 0.24 to 0.27 m of topsoil (901).

5.9.3 A number of areas of tree disturbance cut the natural gravel and their fills were sealed by the buried ploughsoil. One of the areas (904) was investigated, and was filled with dark grey brown clay silt and sand. No finds were recovered.

5.10 Trench 10 (Fig. 10)

5.10.1 The trench contained no archaeological features. A number of areas of tree disturbance were located, but none was investigated.

5.10.2 The natural geology (1003) comprised compacted mid-grey gravel in a sandy silt matrix. The natural gravel was sealed beneath c. 0.36 to 0.40 m of overburden comprising between 0.06 and 0.1 m of buried ploughsoil (1002) below 0.27 to 0.3 m of topsoil (1001).

5.10.3 A number of areas of tree disturbance were identified through the length of the trench. They were irregular in outline and cut the natural gravel; their fills were sealed by the buried ploughsoil. No finds were recovered.

5.11 Trench 11 (Fig. 8)

5.11.1 The trench contained a large number of archaeological features, including a very shallow early linear feature (1127), two pits (1104 and 1118), six post holes (1106, 1108, 1110, 1116, 1120 and 1122) and three ditches (1112, 1114 and 1124). A probable quarry pit (1129), was a late feature and occupied much of the centre of the trench. No datable finds were recovered from Trench 11.

5.11.2 The natural geology (1103) comprised pale yellow sandy silt. The natural silt was sealed beneath c. 0.5 m of overburden comprising between c. 0.1 m of buried ploughsoil (1102) below c. 0.4 m of topsoil (1101).

5.11.3 The earliest feature in the trench was a very shallow linear feature (1127) located towards the E end of the trench and aligned approximately E-W. This was filled with yellow brown silt clay with some sand (1128). It was cut by two ditches (1112 and 1114) aligned N - S and by a large pit 1118. It produced no finds.

5.11.4 There were two substantial pits (1104 and 1118) at the E end of the trench. Pit 1104 was flat-bottomed and had two fills: the lower fill was light orange brown silt clay (1126) and was sealed by grey brown silt clay (1105). Pit 1118 was shallower and filled with yellow brown sandy silt clay (1119). The fills of both pits were sealed by the buried ploughsoil 1102.

5.11.5 Two N-S aligned ditches (1112 and 1114) were located between the two pits. Both cut the early shallow linear feature 1127 (see Paragraph 5.11.3) and both were shallow and filled with yellow brown silt clay (1113 and 1115 respectively). There were no finds.

5.11.6 Four small pits or possible postholes were located at the E end of the trench. Immediately adjacent to pit 1104 was posthole 1106, which was filled with light yellow brown sandy silt (1107). Just W of posthole 1106, were two intercutting pits or postholes; posthole 1108 was cut by feature 1110. Both features were shallow and filled with yellow brown sandy silt (respectively 1109 and 1111). Apparently cutting the edge of ditch 1114 was a fourth posthole 1116. This was smaller in diameter than

the other postholes but was filled with similar yellow brown silt clay (1117). There were no finds from these postholes.

5.11.7 At the W end of the trench and separated from the features already discussed by the late quarry pit were a N-S aligned ditch 1124 and two postholes (1120 and 1122). The ditch was flat bottomed and filled with orange brown silt clay (1125). A single piece of burnt flint was recovered from its fill. Just E of this ditch were two postholes. The larger posthole (1120) was quite shallow and filled with yellow brown silt clay (1121). Next to it was a very small shallow pit 1122, which contained a yellow grey silt clay fill (1123). There were no finds from these postholes.

5.11.8 The quarry pit (1129) was cut through the subsoil layer (1102) and its mixed fills (1130 and 1131) were sealed by topsoil (1101).

5.12 **Trench 12 (Fig. 10)**

5.12.1 The trench contained a number of archaeological features, including three ditches (1206, 1209 and 1211) and a recut ditch (1204). A tree-throw hole (1214) was also recorded. Finds include middle Bronze Age pottery (1207) and burnt flint (1202, 1205 and 1207).

5.12.2 The natural geology (1203) comprised compacted grey gravel with patches of orange silt. The natural gravel was sealed beneath c. 0.3 to 0.33 m of overburden comprising between 0.05 and 0.08 m of buried ploughsoil (1202) below c. 0.25 m of topsoil (1201).

5.12.3 Ditches 1211 and 1209 were aligned E-W and approximately parallel to one another. They lay at the centre of the trench. Both were round bottomed in profile. Ditch 1209 had two fills: the lower fill was a grey brown clay silt (1208), and the upper fill was a light grey brown sandy silt (1207). Finds from the upper fill comprised sherds from middle Bronze Age Bucket Urn of Deverel-Rimbury type (see Paragraph 5.14.2 below) and pieces of burnt flint. Ditch 1211, which was c. 6 m from feature 1209, had a single fill of light grey brown sandy silt (1210). It produced no finds.

5.12.4 Ditch 1206 was at the SW end of the trench and aligned N-S. The ditch was shallow and rounded in profile. Its fill was a light grey sandy silt with red brown mottles (1205) and produced a single piece of burnt flint.. The ditch appears to have been recut (1204) on the same alignment. The fill (1215) of the recut was similar to the fill (1205) of the original ditch: grey sandy silt with red brown mottling. There were no finds from layer 1215.

5.12.5 A tree-hole (1214) was found at the NE end of the trench. It was irregular in outline and filled with dark grey silty clay (1213). There were no finds.

5.13 **Trench 13 (Fig. 10)**

5.13.1 The trench contained a single possible archaeological feature. This was a possible ditch (1304) at the SE end of the trench. This feature produced a quantity of burnt

flint (1305); more burnt flint was found in the buried ploughsoil layer (1302) in the SE half of the trench. The spread of burnt flint in layer 1302 extended over about 16 or 17 m.

5.13.2 The natural geology (1303) comprised compacted gravel in a yellow sand matrix. The natural gravel was sealed beneath c. 0.30 to 0.40 m of overburden comprising between 0.1 and 0.2 m of buried ploughsoil (1302) below c. 0.2 m of topsoil (1301).

5.13.3 Ditch 1304 was ill-defined and shallow. Its fill comprised yellow brown sand silt (1305) and produced a number of pieces of burnt flint.

5.14 Finds

5.14.1 The finds from the site were limited in quantity and quality. The main finds numerically were burnt flints, followed by fired clay. There are some very small fragments of animal bone from context 608, found with abraded pottery sherds, one of Iron Age date, and one Roman or medieval in date. Larger pieces of animal bone came from contexts 109 and 305. A single iron object (a nail fragment) was found in context 604. The finds are listed in the Context register (Appendix 1). The most interesting finds are the very small quantities of Bronze Age and Romano-British pottery.

Prehistoric Pottery by Alistair Barclay

5.14.2 A total of six sherds of hand-made prehistoric pottery was recovered from three contexts. Context 606 contained a single very worn sherd of flint-tempered pottery that is of probable mid-late Bronze Age date. Context 608 contained a single worn sherd tempered with sand, ferruginous pellets and rare flint. It is more likely to be of Iron Age date. This was found with a small abraded sherd of Romano-British or medieval date (see next paragraph). The largest group of pottery (4 sherds) came from context 1207 and included a rim and a cordon-decorated sherd from a middle Bronze Age Bucket Urn of Deverel-Rimbury type.

Roman Pottery

5.14.3 Six, or seven, sherds of Romano-British pottery were recovered from three, or four, contexts. Context 309 contained two sherds of 1st- to 2nd-century date; context 313 produced three sherds of 2nd-century, or possibly later date and context 604 produced a large burnt sherd of Oxford mortarium of a type dating to c. AD 180-240. Finally a small abraded sherd perhaps Romano-British, but possibly medieval, in date was found with an worn Iron Age sherd in context 608. (Identifications by Paul Booth.)

Burnt Flint

5.14.4 Burnt flint was recovered from a number of contexts, but most significantly from Trench 13, in buried ploughsoil (1302) and from a ditch fill (1305) beneath the ploughsoil. Also of interest, was the burnt flint from Trench 12, in ditch fill (1207) in

association with Deverel-Rimbury Bucket Urn sherds. Again burnt flint also came from the buried ploughsoil (1202).

Fired Clay

5.14.5 Fired clay was recovered from a small number of contexts: in Trench 3 from a pit or ditch fill (305) and from ditch fills (309 and 313); in Trench 4, from a tree-hole (411).

5.15 Palaeo-environmental remains

Animal Bone

5.15.1 The quantity of animal bone was strictly limited. Trench 1: metacarpal from a cow from a ditch fill (109); Trench 3: pig humerus from ditch or pit fill (305); Trench 6: tiny fragments of long bone (unidentifiable) from a ditch fill (608). (Identifications by Nicky Scott.)

6 Discussion And Interpretation

6.1 Reliability of field investigation

6.1.1 The evaluation revealed limited evidence for truncation of features and no evidence for major ground disturbance beyond a single large pit in Trench 11. The trenching was positioned in such a way as to locate linear features, and this it successfully did. The absence of linear features from a number of trenches can be taken as reliable, given that other features, mainly tree-throw holes, were located.

6.2 Overall Interpretation

Summary of results

6.2.1 The evaluation confirmed the presence of the linear features, probably enclosure ditches and other boundaries, revealed by aerial photography. Two concentrations of archaeological features and deposits were located, one in the S and E of the site and the other in the W part of the site. Given the results of the 1986 evaluation by Wessex Archaeology more significant archaeology might have been expected.

6.2.2 In the SE part of the site, the features comprise for the most part ditches which probably defined enclosures. These produced few datable finds. The very limited quantity of finds from the SE part of the site includes a small number of Romano-British pottery sherds. The 1986 evaluation by Wessex Archaeology revealed Romano-British features and produced some pottery (*ibid.*, fig. 5) from trench A.34 which was located in the E part of the present evaluation site (Fig. 2; cf. *ibid.* fig. 2).

6.2.3 The evidence from the W part of the site again comprises mainly ditches, but includes also pits and some postholes. The main concentration of features was in Trench 11 which revealed at least two phases of activity. Unfortunately there were no datable finds from this trench. Trench 12 contained a single feature and a substantial

spread of burnt flint. The sherds of middle Bronze Age Bucket Urn came from a ditch fill in Trench 12. In 1986 an inhumation burial, probably of Bronze Age date, and waterlogged deposits with surviving wooden artefacts (Wessex Archaeology 1986, 6-7 and fig.4) were found together with linear features. These were in Trench A.32, which was located close to the W end of the area of the present evaluation (Fig. 2; cf. *ibid.*, fig. 3).

Significance

6.2.4 The results of the present field evaluation appear to be of limited significance. The evaluation provides confirmation of the existence of the linear features known from air photographs. These almost certainly formed settlement and enclosure boundaries.

6.2.5 The discovery of a small number of sherds from a middle Bronze Age Bucket Urn in the W part of the present site indicates that this area may contain archaeology of some significance. Given the results of the 1986 evaluation by Wessex Archaeology more significant archaeology might have been expected, but the fact that the Bronze Age material was found in an area close to the finds made in the 1986 evaluation suggests that the apparent concentration of prehistoric material here may be meaningful.

6.2.6 The small quantity of Romano-British material was recovered from the E end of the site and taken together with the finds from the 1986 evaluation indicates that finds and features of this period occur mainly in the S and E part of the site.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench	*Ctxt No*	*Type*	*Length (m)*	*Width (m)*	*Thick (m)*	*Comment*	*Finds*	*No/ wt*	*Date*
001									
	101	Layer			0.25	Modern ploughsoil			
	102	Layer			0.15	Buried ploughsoil			
	103	Layer				Natural sand, silts and gravel			
	104	Cut		0.93	0.15	NE-SW aligned shallow ditch (Probably the same as 106)			
	105	Fill		0.93	0.15	Single fill of 104			
	106	Cut		0.44	0.2	Possible earlier cut of ditch 104 (Probably the same as 104)			
	107	Fill		0.44	0.2	Single fill of 106			
	108	Cut		0.75	0.23	Ditch terminal			
	109	Fill		0.75	0.23	Single fill of 108	animal bone	1	
	110	Cut		0.90	0.18	Irregular treehole			
	111	Fill		0.90	0.18	Single fill of 110			
	112	Cut		1.60	0.5	SE-NW aligned ditch cut through the buried ploughsoil level			
	113	Fill		1.60	0.5	Single fill of 112			
002									
	201	Layer			0.2	Modern ploughsoil			
	202	Layer			0.1	Buried ploughsoil			
	203	Layer				Natural sand, silts and gravel			
	204	Fill			0.21	Upper fill of 206			
	205	Fill			0.10	Redeposited natural fill of 206			
	206	Cut	2.50	1.60	0.21	Irregular treehole			
	207	Fill			0.15	Single fill of 208	burnt flint	1	
	208	Cut	2.50	1.00	0.15	Irregular treehole			
	209	Fill			0.22	Single fill of 210			
	210	Cut	2.00	0.75	0.22	Irregular treehole			
	211	Fill			0.40	Single fill of 212			
	212	Cut	2.00	0.80	0.40	Irregular treehole			
003									
	301	Layer			0.30	Modern ploughsoil			
	302	Layer			0.08	Buried ploughsoil			
	303	Layer				Natural sand, silts and gravel			
	304	Cut		1.08	0.24	Pit or ditch terminal			

Trench	*Ctxt No*	*Type*	*Length (m)*	*Width (m)*	*Thick (m)*	*Comment*	*Finds*	*No/ wt*	*Date*
	305	Fill			0.24	Single fill of 304	fired clay bone fragts	4 3	
	306	Cut		2.47	0.46	NE-SW aligned broad ditch			
	307	Fill			0.46	Single homogenous fill of 306			
	308	Cut				Not excavated ?same as 306			
	309	Fill				Not excavated ?same as 307	pottery fired clay	2 9	RB
	310	Cut		1.78	0.10	Irregular treehole			
	311	Fill			0.10	Single fill of 310			
	312	Cut		1.25	0.38	E-W aligned ditch			
	313	Fill		1.25	0.38	Single fill of 312	pottery fired clay	3 13	RB
	314	Cut		0.47	0.10	Shallow gully aligned WSW-ESE converging on ditch 312			
	315	Fill		0.47	0.10	Single fill of 314			
	316	Layer				Silty/clay variation of the surface natural			
	317	Cut		0.5		Possible NW-SE aligned gully. Not excavated			
	318	Fill		0.5		Surface fill of 317. Not excavated			
	319	Cut		0.40	0.20	Possible pit or ditch terminal			
	320	Fill		0.40	0.20	Single fill of 319			
	321	Cut		0.80	0.20	Possible pit or ditch terminal			
	322	Fill		0.80	0.20	Single fill of 321			
004									
	401	Layer			0.25	Modern ploughsoil			
	402	Layer			0.1	Buried ploughsoil			
	403	Layer				Natural sand, silts and gravel			
	404	Cut		1.00	0.35	Circular pit			
	405	Fill		1.00	0.35	Single fill of 404			
	406	Layer		1.50	0.04	Silt deposit overlying natural gravel			
	407	Layer		0.50	0.04	Silt/clay deposit overlying natural gravel			
	408	Cut		0.60	0.10	Irregular arc of a treehole			
	409	Fill		0.60	0.10	Single fill of 408			
	410	Cut		0.37	0.07	Irregular treehole			
	411	Fill		0.37	0.07	Single fill of 410	fired clay	10	
005									
	501	Layer			0.25	Modern ploughsoil			
	502	Layer			0.08	Buried ploughsoil			

Trench	*Ctxt No*	*Type*	*Length (m)*	*Width (m)*	*Thick (m)*	*Comment*	*Finds*	*No/ wt*	*Date*
	503	Layer				Natural sand, silts and gravel			
	504	Cut	1.05	0.45	0.11	Irregular Treehole			
	505	Fill	1.05	0.45	0.11	Single fill of 504			
	506	Cut		0.24	0.08	Isolated posthole or roothole			
	507	Fill		0.24	0.08	Single fill of 506			
	508	Cut	1.10	0.40	0.10	Irregular Treehole			
	509	Fill	1.10	0.40	0.10	Single fill of 508			
006									
	601	Layer			0.25	Modern ploughsoil			
	602	Layer			0.24	Buried ploughsoil	burnt flint	7	
	603	Layer				Natural sand, silts and gravel			
	604	Fill		1.10	0.23	Single fill of 605	pottery iron nail	1 1	RB
	605	Cut		1.10	0.23	N-S aligned ditch truncating ditch 607 and located parallel to ditch 609			
	606	Fill		0.89	0.24	Single fill of 607	pottery burnt flint	2 2	M/LBA
	607	Cut		0.89	0.24	NE-SW aligned ditch			
	608	Fill		1.10	0.30	Single fill of 609	pottery bone fragts burnt flint	2 n/a 2	IA & ?RB
	609	Cut		1.10	0.30	N-S aligned ditch parallel to ditch 605			
	610	Fill	0.90	0.50	0.12	Single fill of 611			
	611	Cut	0.90	0.50	0.12	Irregular treehole			
	612	Fill			0.10	Gravelly upper fill of 615			
	613	Fill			0.20	Secondary sterile fill of 615			
	614	Fill			0.08	Primary fill of 615			
	615	Cut		1.70	0.30	Irregular treehole			
	616	Fill			0.23	Upper fill of 618			
	617	Fill			0.10	Primary fill of 618			
	618	Cut		0.80	0.22	Probable treehole although appears regular and linear in plan			
	619	Fill		1.20	0.22	Upper fill of 622			
	620	Fill		1.00	0.18	Secondary fill of 622			
	621	Fill		0.90	0.14	Primary fill of 622			
	622	Cut		1.20	0.52	NNW-SSE aligned ditch			
007									
	701	Layer			0.30	Modern ploughsoil			
	702	Layer			0.20	Buried ploughsoil	Brick/tile	2	Post-med

Trench	*Ctxt No*	*Type*	*Length (m)*	*Width (m)*	*Thick (m)*	*Comment*	*Finds*	*No/ wt*	*Date*
	703	Layer				Natural sand, silts and gravel			
	704	Fill		2.00	0.10	Sterile silt fill of 705			
	705	Cut		2.00	0.10	Geological variation			
	706	Fill		0.80	0.07	Single fill of 707			
	707	Cut	2.10	0.80	0.07	Irregular treehole			
	708	Fill		0.90	0.22	Single fill of 709			
	709	Cut		0.90	0.22	Irregular treehole			
008									
	801	Layer			0.30	Modern ploughsoil			
	802	Layer			0.07	Buried ploughsoil			
	803	Layer				Natural sand, silts and gravel			
	804	Cut		0.60	0.13	Irregular treehole			
	805	Fill		0.60	0.13	Single fill of 804			
009									
	901	Layer			0.27	Modern ploughsoil			
	902	Layer			0.08	Buried ploughsoil			
	903	Layer				Natural sand, silts and gravel			
	904	Fill/Cut				Single number issued to an irregular treehole			
010									
	1001	Layer			0.30	Modern ploughsoil			
	1002	Layer			0.10	Buried ploughsoil			
	1003	Layer				Natural sand, silts and gravel			
011									
	1101	Layer			0.40	Modern ploughsoil			
	1102	Layer			0.10	Buried ploughsoil			
	1103	Layer				Natural sand, silts and gravel			
	1104	Cut		0.93+	0.47	Pit or ditch terminal partly exposed at the eastern end of the trench			
	1105	Fill			0.20	Upper fill of 1104			
	1106	Cut		0.36	0.09	Shallow posthole			
	1107	Fill		0.36	0.09	Single fill of 1106			
	1108	Cut		0.37	0.07	Shallow posthole			
	1109	Fill		0.37	0.07	Single fill of 1108			
	1110	Cut		0.52	0.10	Shallow posthole			
	1111	Fill		0.52	0.10	Single fill of 1110			
	1112	Cut		0.60	0.06	N-S aligned shallow ditch parallel to ditch 1114			
	1113	Fill		0.60	0.06	Single fill of 1112			

Trench	*Ctxt No*	*Type*	*Length (m)*	*Width (m)*	*Thick (m)*	*Comment*	*Finds*	*No/ wt*	*Date*
	1114	Cut		0.70	0.06	N-S aligned shallow ditch parallel to ditch 1112			
	1115	Fill		0.70	0.06	Single fill of 1114			
	1116	Cut		0.23	0.05	Posthole			
	1117	Fill		0.23	0.05	Single fill of 1116			
	1118	Cut		1.10	0.15	Probable pit			
	1119	Fill		1.10	0.15	Single fill of 1118			
	1120	Cut		0.30	0.10	Posthole			
	1121	Fill		0.30	0.10	Single fill of 1120			
	1122	Cut		0.19	0.03	Possible posthole			
	1123	Fill		0.19	0.03	Single fill of 1122			
	1124	Cut		0.80	0.30	NE-SW aligned ditch			
	1125	Fill		0.80	0.30	Single fill of 1124	Burnt flint	1	
	1126	Fill		0.50	0.27	Primary fill of 1104			
	1127	Cut		0.60+	0.04	Shallow ESE-WNW aligned ditch			
	1128	Fill			0.04	Single fill of 1127			
	1129	Cut		7.50	0.50	Probable gravel Quarry			
	1130	Fill			0.50	Gravelly infill of 1129			
	1131	Fill			0.30	Silting infill of 1129			
012									
	1201	Layer			0.25	Modern ploughsoil			
	1202	Layer			0.08	Buried ploughsoil containing high densities of burnt flint	burnt flint	13	
	1203	Layer				Natural sand, silts and gravel			
	1204	Cut		0.90	0.20	N-S aligned ditch truncating ditch 1206			
	1205	Fill		1.20	0.28	Single fill of ditch 1026	burnt flint	1	
	1206	Cut		1.20	0.28	N-S aligned ditch			
	1207	Fill		1.10	0.24	Upper fill of 1209	pottery burnt flint	4 14	MBA
	1208	Fill		1.00	0.18	Primary fill of 1209			
	1209	Cut		1.20	0.42	E-W aligned ditch parallel to ditch 1211			
	1210	Fill		0.85	0.18	Single fill of 1211			
	1211	Cut		0.85	0.18	E-W aligned ditch parallel to ditch 1209			
	1212	Fill			0.20	Upper fill of 1214			
	1213	Fill			0.10	Primary fill of 1214			
	1214	Cut	2.50	0.70	0.30	Irregular treehole			
	1215	Fill		0.90	0.20	Single fill of 1204			

Trench	*Ctxt No*	*Type*	*Length (m)*	*Width (m)*	*Thick (m)*	*Comment*	*Finds*	*No/ wt*	*Date*
013									
	1301	Layer			0.20	Modern ploughsoil			
	1302	Layer			0.20	Buried ploughsoil containing high densities of burnt flint	burnt flint	56	
	1303	Layer				Natural sand, silts and gravel			
	1304	Cut		1.50	0.23	NE-SW aligned ditch			
	1305	Fill		1.50	0.23	Single fill of 1304	burnt flint	13	

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES POTTERY ASSESSMENT/ SPOT DATING

Moore, J, and Jennings, D, 1992 *Reading Business Park: a Bronze Age Landscape*, (Thames Valley Landscapes: the Kennet Valley, Volume 1) OAU and OUCA, Oxford

OAU 1988 'Reading Business Park: Axiom 4 - Proposals for Archaeological Investigation', (unpublished report)

Wessex Archaeology 1986 'Reading Business Park: Axiom 4 - Archaeological Evaluation 1986', (Trust for Wessex Archaeology, unpublished client report)

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: **Green Park Areas 9 & 10, Reading Business Park**
Site code: **BUGP 00**
Grid reference: **SU 697 696**
Type of evaluation: **Thirteen 30m trenches**
Date and duration of project: **7th-11th August 2000**
Area of site: ***c.*3 hectares**

Summary of results: The evaluation identified a number of ditches together with a small number of pits and postholes. The features were concentrated in two areas of the site. One concentration was centred on the S and E corner of the evaluation area, the other concentration was in the W part of the site adjacent to the location of the human burial and waterlogged deposits located in an evaluation by Wessex Archaeology in 1986. The finds recovered were very limited in quantity. Some sherds of Romano-British sherds came from contexts in the SE part of the site and a small quantity of Bronze Age sherds, including middle Bronze Age Bucket Urn from the W part of the site.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OAU, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course, under the following accession number:

Illustrations

Fig. 1 Site Location
Fig. 2 Archaeological background and previous archaeological fieldwork
Fig. 3 Trench Location Plan
Fig. 4 Trench 1: plan and sections
Fig. 5 Trench 3: plan and sections
Fig. 6 Trench 4: plan and section
Fig. 7 Trench 6: plan and sections
Fig. 8 Trench 11: plan and sections
Fig. 9 Trench 12: plan and sections
Fig. 10 Trenches 2, 5, 8, 10 and 13: plans

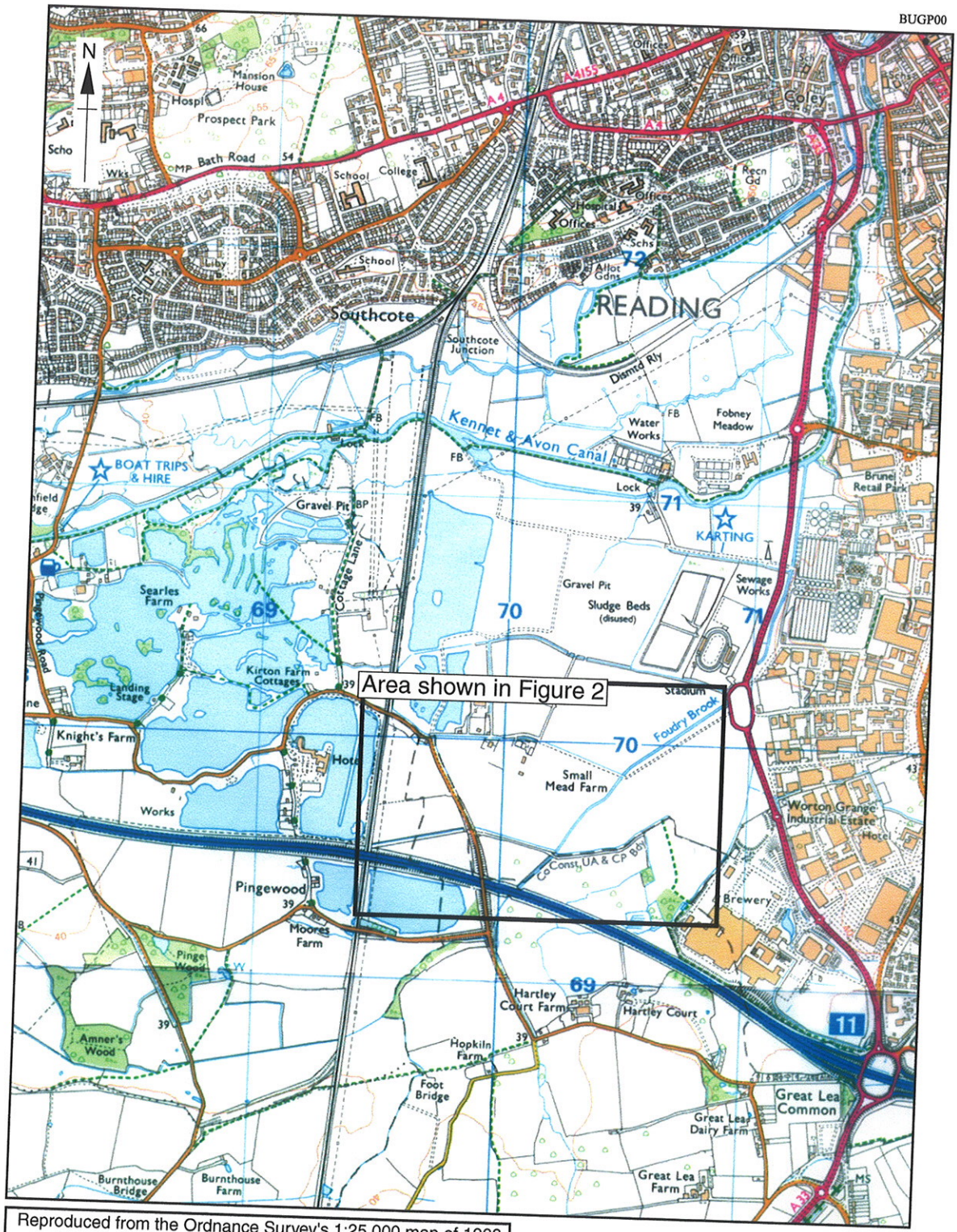

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Figure 1: Site location plan

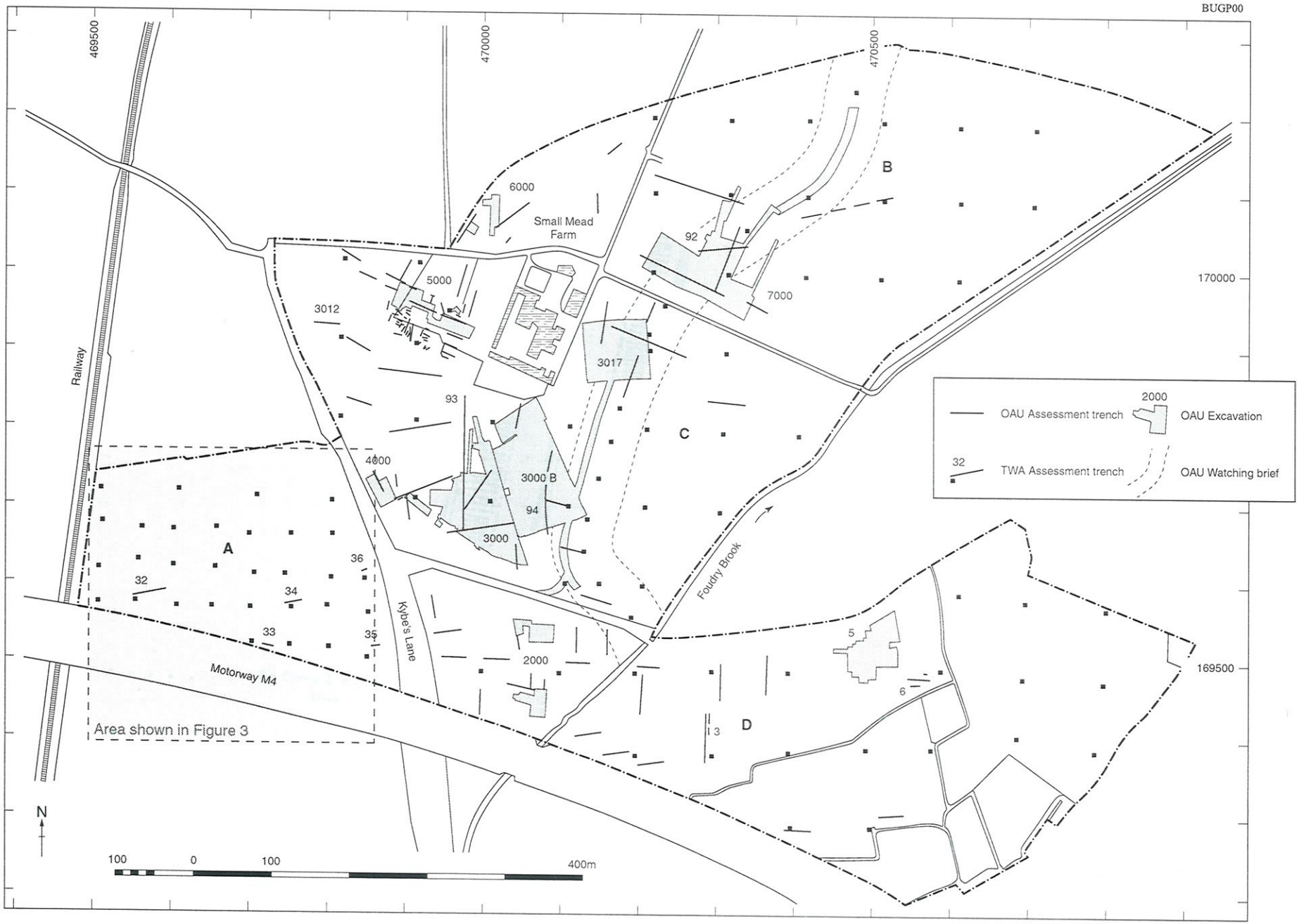

Figure 2: Archaeological background

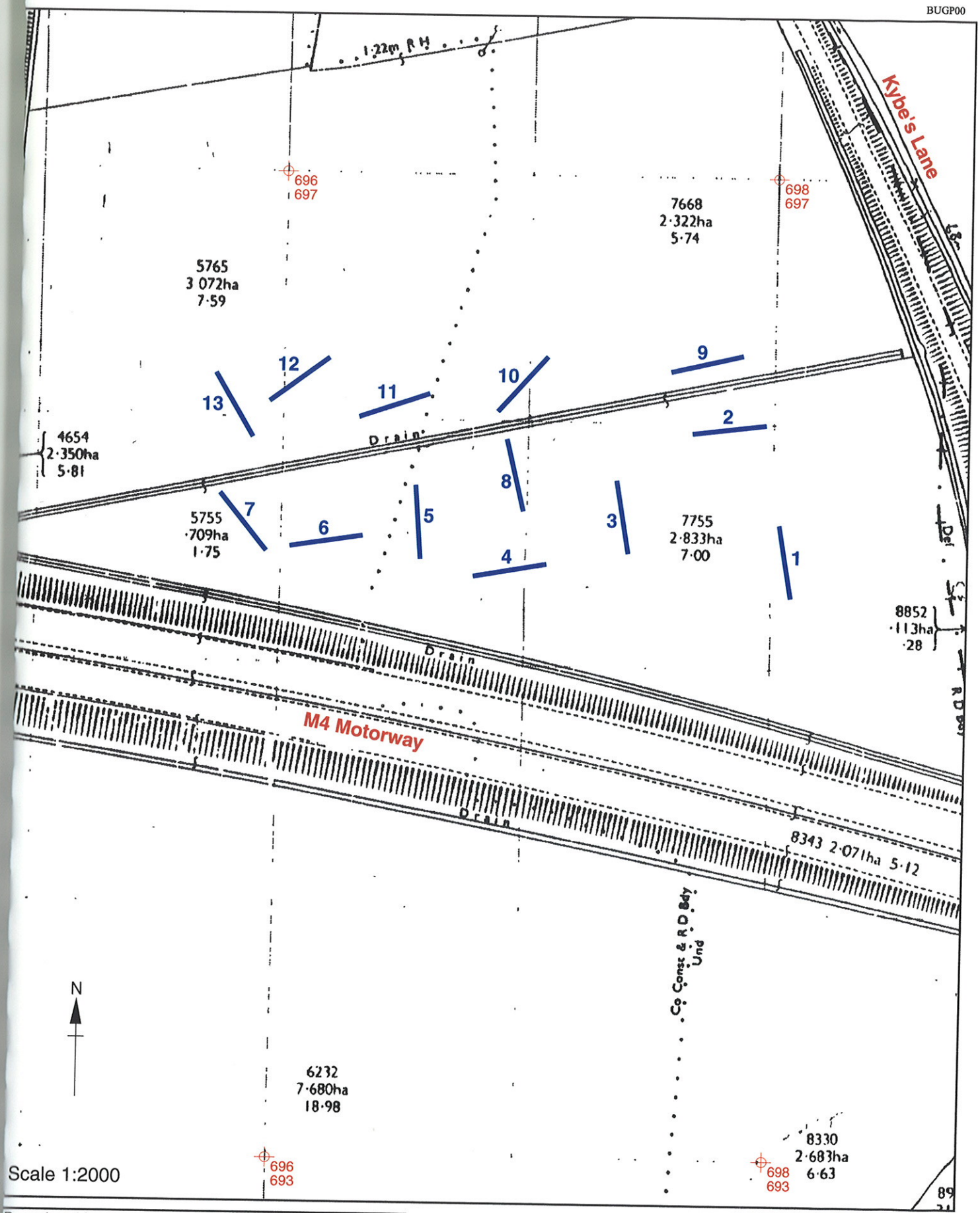

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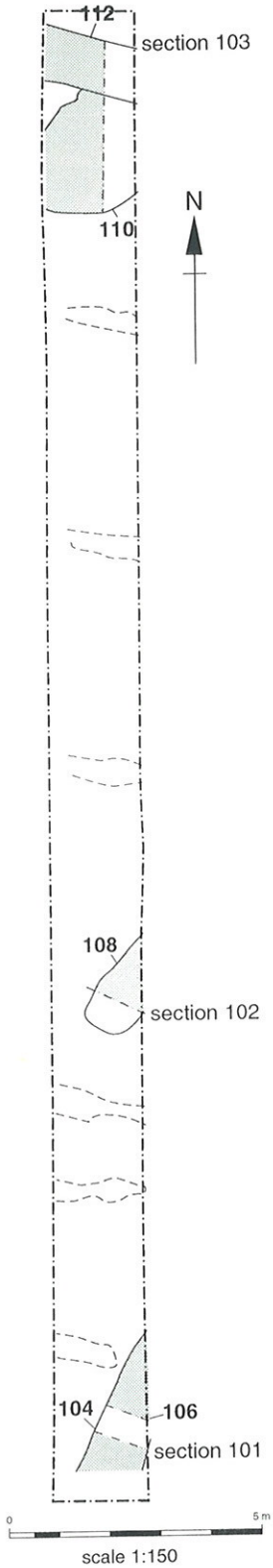
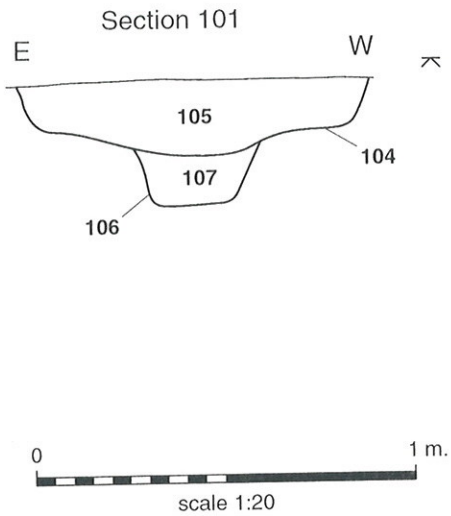
Figure 3: Trench location plan





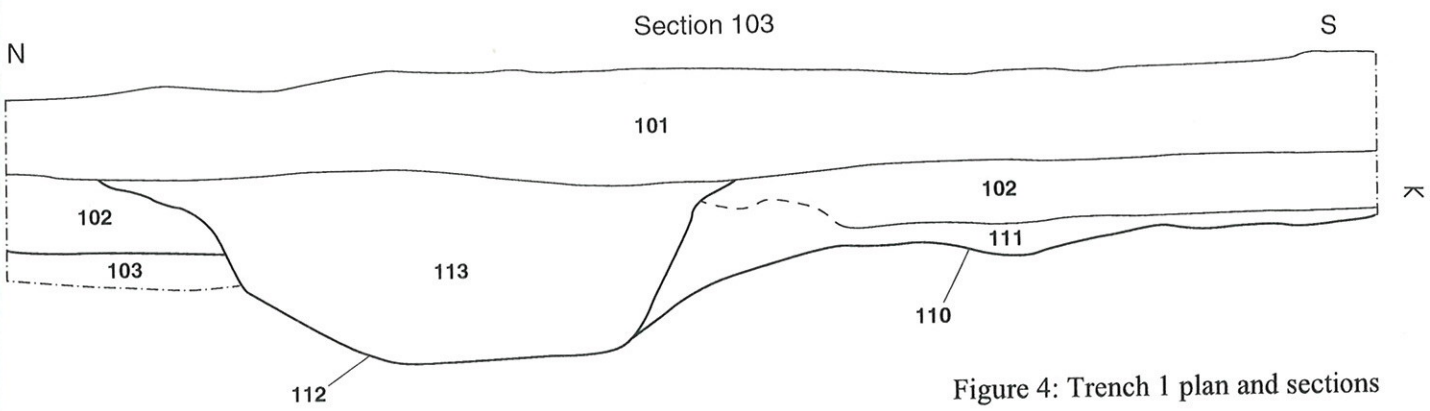
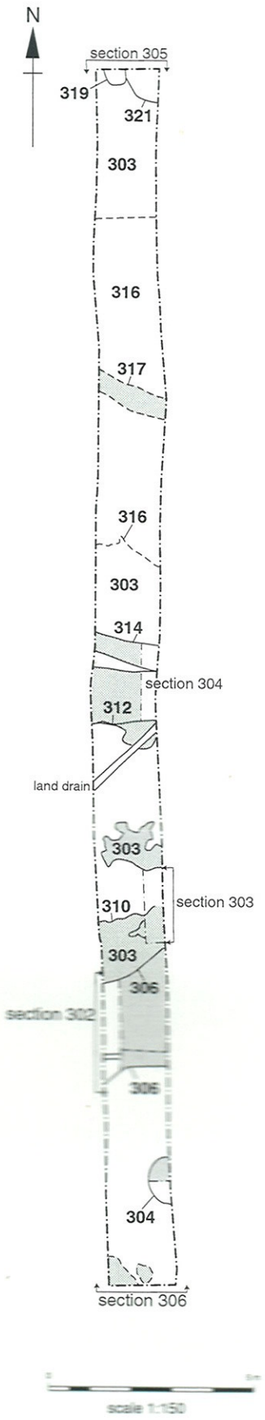
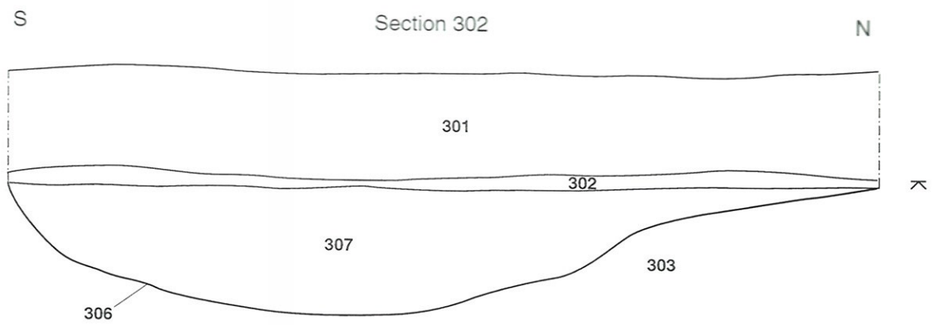
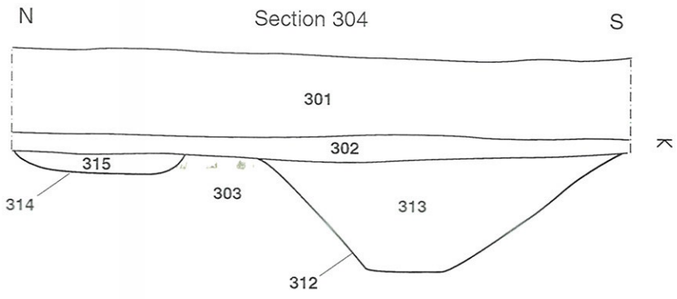


Figure 4: Trench 1 plan and sections







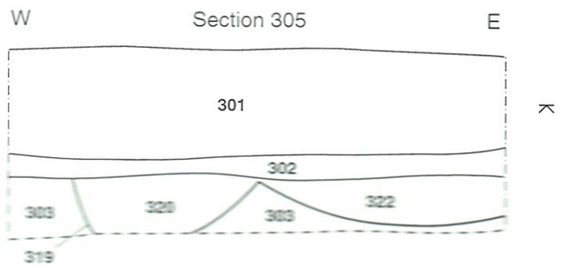
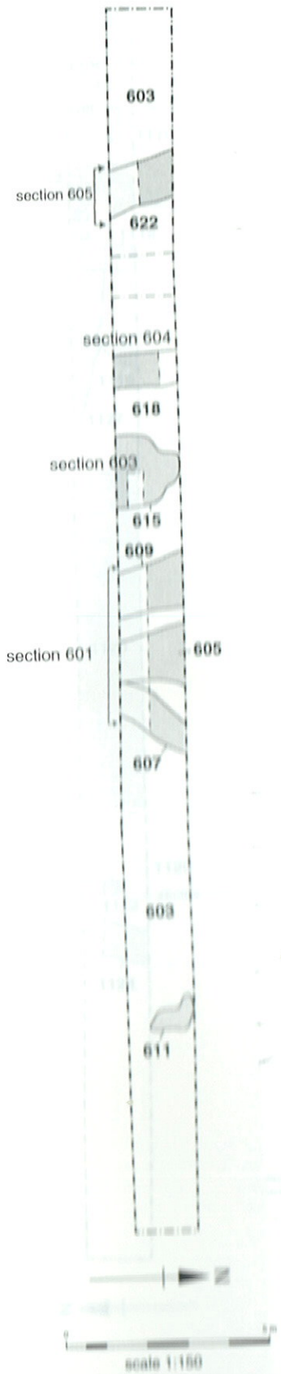
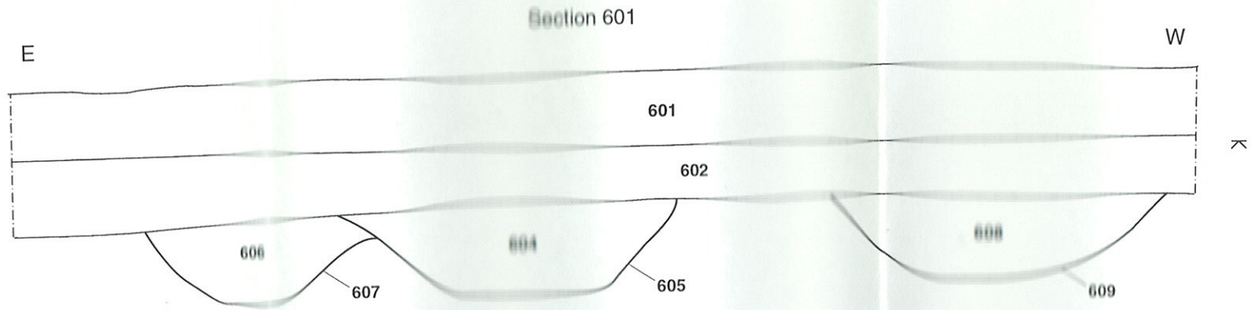
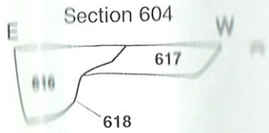
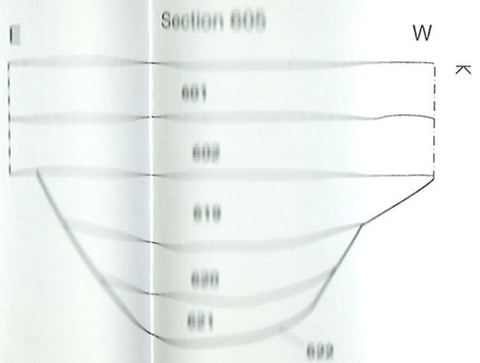


Figure 5: Trench 3 plan and sections









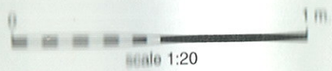
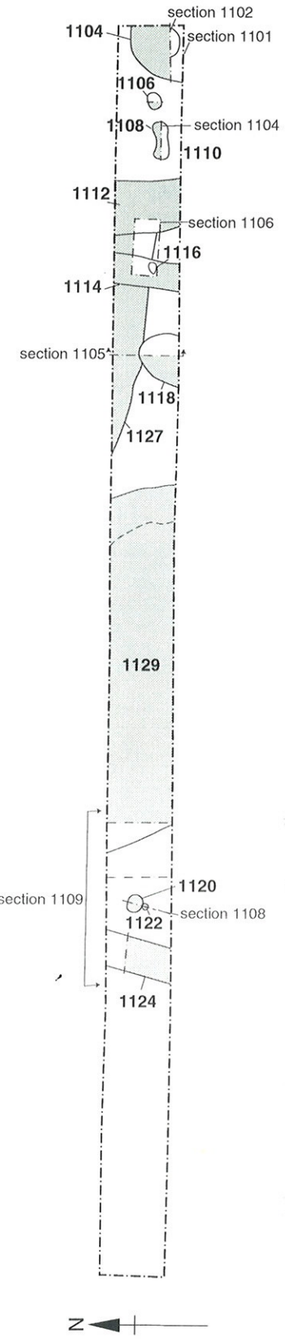
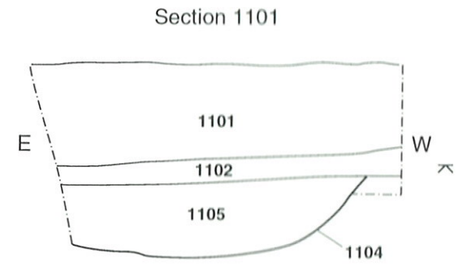
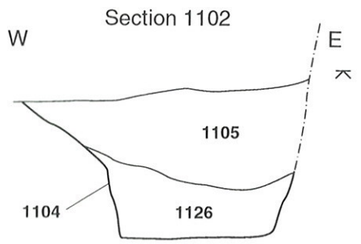
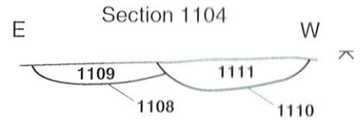


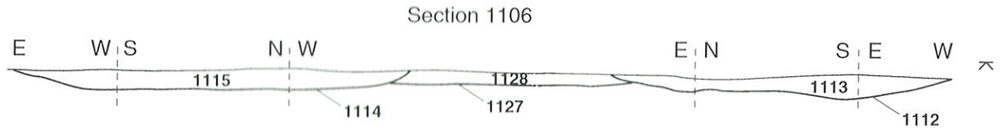
Figure 7: Trench 6 plan and sections

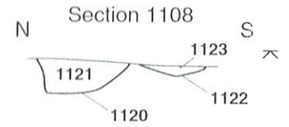












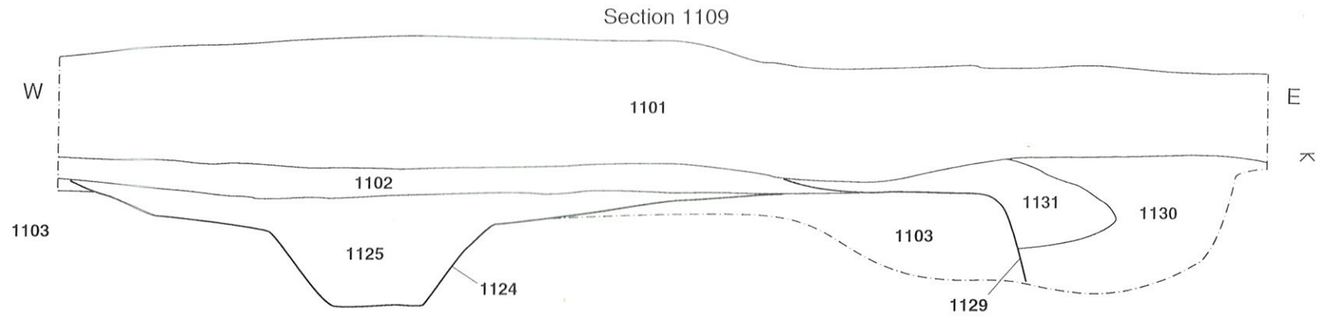


Figure 8: Trench 11 plan and sections

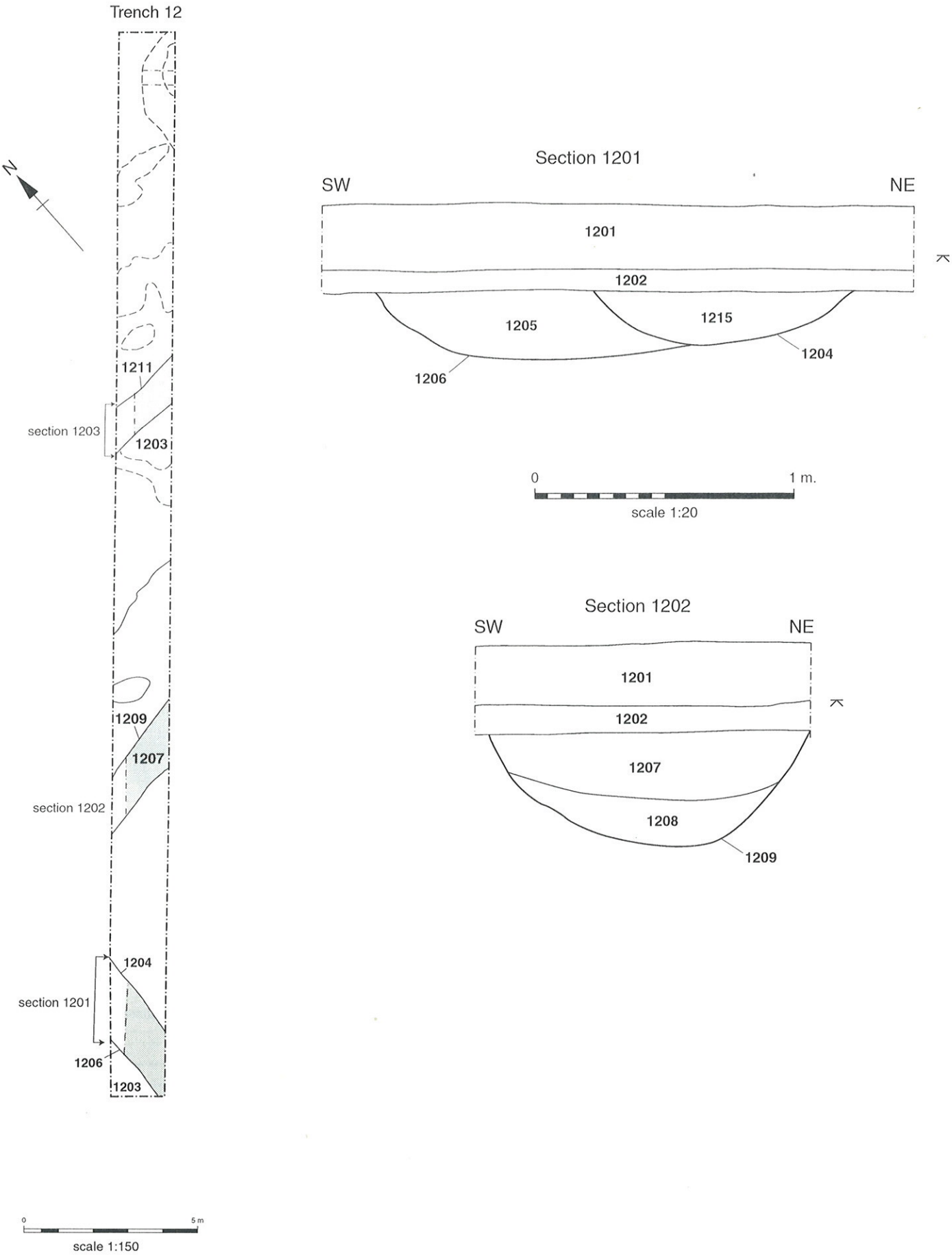


Figure 9: Trench 12 plan and sections

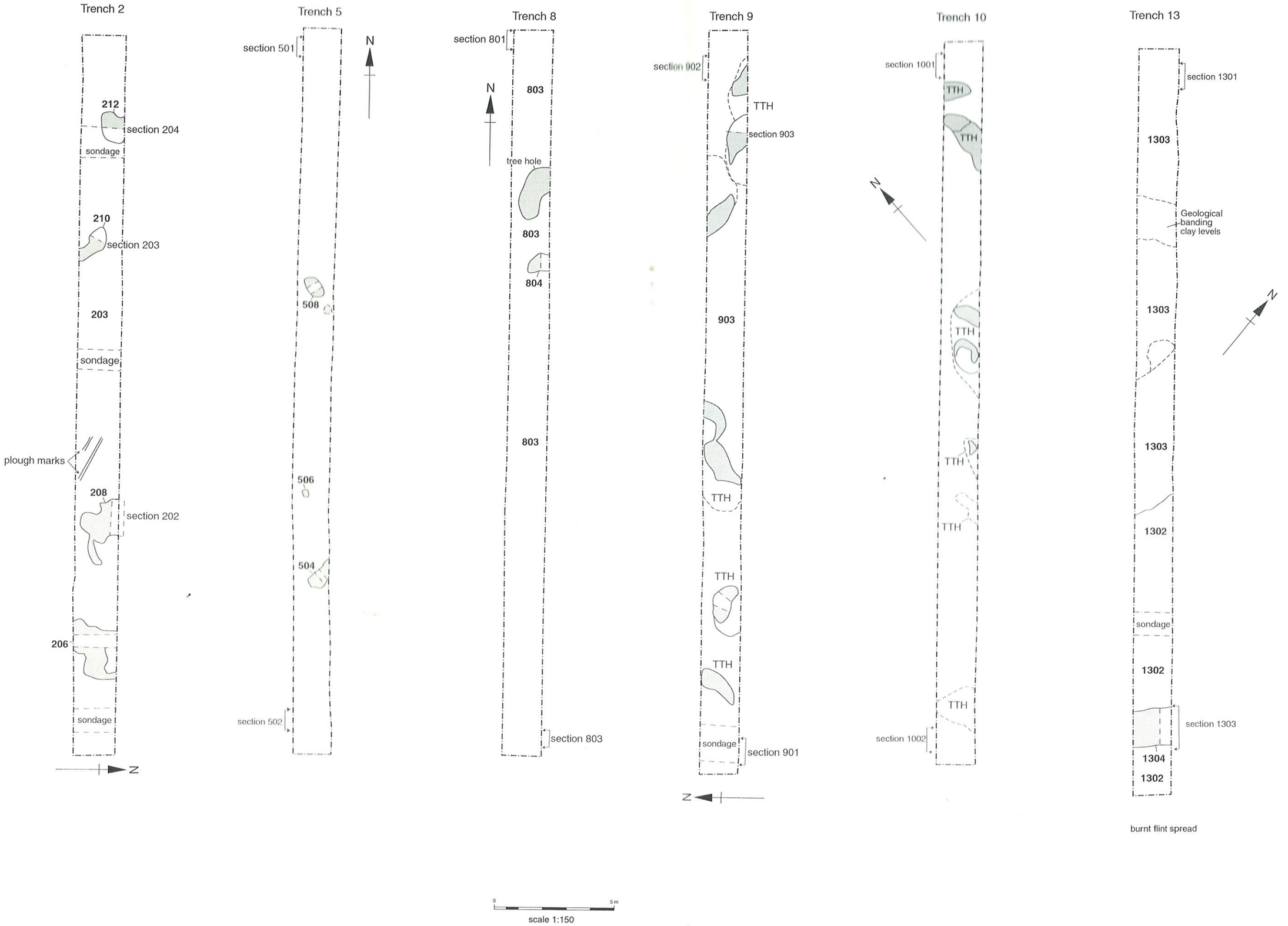


Figure 10 : Plans of trenches 2, 5, 8, 9, 10, 13

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