

Banbury Flood Alleviation Scheme Oxfordshire



Archaeological Evaluation Report



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SUMMARY

In June 2003 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological field evaluation of the proposed development site near Little Bourton, north east of Banbury, Oxfordshire for Black and Veatch Consulting Ltd on behalf of the Environment Agency. Seventy-three trenches were excavated across the development area. Archaeological evidence was concentrated in the central part of the site and dated principally to the Neolithic and Roman periods. A middle to late Neolithic pit was exposed in one trench. In others, a number of ditches were tentatively dated to the Neolithic period on the basis of the finds, including a rare sherd of Peterborough Ware. An extensive system of Roman-period ditches and gullies was uncovered, representing a farmstead or other small settlement spanning the 1st to 3rd centuries AD. The evaluation also revealed a cremation burial and possible placed deposit. More linear features were uncovered in the eastern and northern parts of the site. These were generally undated or isolated, but may have been associated with the concentration of dated archaeology. The archaeological remains, especially those of Neolithic date, are potentially very significant, given the paucity of comparable sites in the region.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In June 2003 OA carried out a field evaluation on land near to Little Bourton, Banbury, Oxfordshire for Black and Veatch Consulting Ltd on behalf of the Environment Agency (Fig. 1). The investigation was undertaken in respect of the Environment Agency's code of best practice prior to determination for a Flood Alleviation Scheme. The works conform to the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI; OA 2003), which was agreed by Environment Agency's Archaeologist for the Thames Region, Phil Catherall, and Paul Smith representing Oxfordshire County Archaeology Services (OCAS). The development site is situated at NGR SP 465 430, covering an area of 8.8 hectares.

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The development site is currently a set aside field and is bordered by the M40 to the south-west, the mainline Birmingham to Banbury railway to the west and the Oxford Canal to the east. The site occupies a low plateau on its W side at 100 m OD. The field slopes down to the north, east and south towards the River Cherwell at heights of 94.60 m, 95.20 m and 95.00 m above OD respectively. The underlying geology is Lower Lias clay with a small area of Middle Lias silts and clays in the north-western corner of the site (BGS *Soil Survey of England and Wales* sheet 201).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 Although the development area has not been investigated previously for archaeological remains, its proximity to the River Cherwell and the fertile soil of this region would have attracted settlers during the prehistoric period. Prior to sedentary societies, mobile hunting communities would also have been drawn to this landscape that could support both freshwater and land-based animals. An Archaeological Constraints Area, designated by the Oxfordshire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), covers the SE part of the site due to the discovery of prehistoric flints and Iron Age pottery. There are also indications of two concentric cropmarks to the north.

1.3.2 The site is set within a medieval landscape. Hardwicke Farm lies SW of the site, where extensive investigations have revealed evidence of a moat, pond and enclosure and the remains of a medieval hamlet. Multi-phase field systems of national importance have also been found in this area.

2 EVALUATION AIMS

- 2.1 To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the development area.
- 2.2 To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, date and depth of any archaeological remains.
- 2.3 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features.

2.4 To make available the results of the investigation.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork

3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of 73 trenches measuring 30 m x 1.8 m (Fig. 2), representing a 5% sample of the proposed development site. The trenches were distributed evenly across the site. The overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision by a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. Excavation proceeded to the natural geology or the top of the first archaeological horizon, whichever was encountered first.

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

3.2.1 The trenches were cleaned using hand tools. Archaeological features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds. Recording methods followed procedures laid down in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (Wilkinson 1992). All features and deposits were issued with unique context numbers. Trench plans were drawn at a scale of 1:100. Sections of excavated deposits were drawn at a scale of 1:20. A photographic record comprising colour slide and black and white print film was maintained.

3.2.2 The work was undertaken during June 2003 by a team comprising a Project Supervisor and five technicians under the direction of Project Manager Andrew Holmes. The project was under the overall direction of Nick Shepherd (Head of Fieldwork).

3.3 Finds

3.3.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and bagged by context. Finds of special interest were given a unique small find number.

3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence

3.4.1 Where suitable, deposits were sampled for ecofacts, including carbonised plant remains.

3.5 Presentation of results

3.5.1 In the following sections the results of the evaluation are described in chronological sequence. There are additional comments on the material evidence and reliability of results. Overall interpretation and conclusions then follows. Detailed finds reports are presented as appendices. Throughout the report, individual features are referred to by their context numbers. Significant contexts are illustrated in plan and/or section with all contexts tabulated in Appendix 1.

4 RESULTS: GENERAL

4.1 Soils and ground conditions

- 4.1.1 A mid brown to orange grey silty clay topsoil was encountered across the site. It extended to an average depth of 0.31 m from ground level. Removal of the topsoil exposed a silty clay ploughsoil (subsoil). Averaging 0.24 m thick, the subsoil varied in colour across the site, but was generally orange or yellow brown. The subsoil occasionally yielded prehistoric worked flint flakes, although these were likely to be residual, incorporated through ploughing, since the deposit sealed all cut features, including those of Roman date. The subsoil tended to be thicker towards the base of the slope through colluvial accumulation. Features were cut into the natural Lias clay. Alluvial deposits were recorded in Trenches 1 and 2.

4.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits

- 4.2.1 Twenty-three trenches yielded features or material of archaeological interest. The densest concentration of evidence was uncovered in the central part of the site, and largely comprised sections of NW-SE or NE-SW orientated ditches and gullies. Features excavated on the eastern side of the site tended to be devoid of artefacts. Those located towards the south-west were, in contrast, materially richer. Archaeological features were also seen in the northern part of the site.

5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTION OF DEPOSITS

5.1 Prehistoric

- 5.1.1 A single prehistoric feature was recorded in Trench 46. However, possible prehistoric features (that is, those yielding prehistoric, but potentially residual, material alone, were uncovered in Trenches 12, 25, 42 and 55.
- 5.1.2 Pit 4604 in Trench 46 (Fig. 5) was 1.26 m in diameter and 0.22 m deep. It contained a single clay silt fill from which a comparatively large pottery and flint assemblage was retrieved. This material may be dated provisionally to the middle to late Neolithic period. Posthole 4610 was found to the south of the pit, but was isolated and contained no dating evidence. Other features within the trench yielded prehistoric flintwork, although this may have been redeposited. Ditch 4607 was orientated NE-SW and extended from the north-western corner of the trench. It contained a 0.5 m thick silty clay soil. Ditch 4612, was located in the centre of the trench and orientated NNW-SSE, from which a single Mesolithic microlith was recovered. This ditch cut an earlier E-W orientated ditch 4619. Another ditch (4621) yielded no finds, but shared alignment with 4619, and may be related to it. One of these may have extended as far as Trench 48, in which another E-W ditch (4820) was uncovered (see below).
- 5.1.3 A complex sequence of linear features was revealed in Trench 42 (Fig. 5). Towards the north end were E-W ditches 4212 and 4214. In terms of size, both were significant features at over 1.5 m wide and 0.6 m deep. Each contained silty clay fills that yielded pottery (including one sherd of Peterborough ware from 4212) and worked flint, providing a middle Neolithic date for deposition. Ditch 4212 also contained a burnt deposit of bone, stone and charcoal. Gully 4210 ran parallel with 4212. It yielded a small sherd of somewhat undiagnostic prehistoric pottery. Ditch 4204, near the south end of the trench, was aligned E-W. It contained indeterminate flint and pottery. This linear feature was truncated by ditch 4208, whose projected course on a NW-SE alignment argues for a Roman date (see below).
- 5.1.4 Overall, the material evidence from Trench 42 is prehistoric in character, but only small amounts were recovered from each feature. The assemblage may be residual, with the features remaining largely undated within a period spanning the later Neolithic and Roman periods.
- 5.1.5 More prehistoric material was recovered from Trenches 12, 25 and 55, but the problem of residuality undermines its reliability, preventing proper understanding of the cut features from these trenches.
- 5.1.6 Removal of the subsoil in Trench 12 (Fig. 6) revealed two NW-SE aligned ditches. Ditch 1206 was located towards the southern end of the trench. It was 0.7 m wide and 0.32 m deep and contained a single, silty clay fill, which yielded five flint flakes. More flintwork, possibly deriving from the ditch and including a scraper, was found in the subsoil. Ditch 1205, located at the northern end of the trench, may date to the Roman period, although no finds were recovered.

- 5.1.7 Trench 25 (Fig. 6) exposed an isolated feature, NW-SE ditch 2504. It yielded a flint flake, providing a possible early prehistoric date for infilling. The feature may connect with 1206, although no evidence of a ditch was seen in intermediate trench 18. A flint flake, not closely datable within the early prehistoric period, was recovered from pit 5511 in Trench 55 (Fig. 4). Another pit (5505) and ditch (5507) were also observed, but no finds were recovered.
- 5.1.8 Worked flint was collected from Trenches 11, 24, 28, 33, 42, 47 and 48, but was residual either within the subsoil or in Roman-period features.

5.2 Roman-period

- 5.2.1 The Roman-period archaeology was concentrated in the central and south-west part of the site in Trenches 41, 47, 48, 49, 54 and 59. A ditch (4105) was uncovered in Trench 41 (Fig. 4), which was aligned NE-SW and measured 0.8 m wide by 0.12 m deep, and yielding a single sherd of undiagnostic Roman grey ware. Pit 4107, situated immediately east of the ditch, yielded no finds. If projected along their alignments, 4105 may have met at right angles with 4208 (see above).
- 5.2.2 A series of NW-SE orientated ditches or gullies were observed in Trench 47 (Fig 7). Ditch 4721, slightly curving and located near the western end of the trench, was 1.8 m wide and 0.4 m deep. A handmade bead-rimmed jar of late Iron Age date was recovered from its silty clay fill (4720), dating deposition to the first half of the 1st century AD or later. Cut 4719, 1.3 m wide and 0.1 m deep and east of 4721, was interpreted as a ditch terminus. Its lowest fill (4723) was devoid of obvious archaeological material, but the upper fill (4718), or perhaps the fill of a separate cut, contained a deposit of burnt human bone, representing the cremated remains of a single adult individual. Gully 4717 was located immediately east of 4719. The shallow feature (0.1 m deep) probably filled before or during the second half of the 1st century AD. It was cut by pit 4715, which was much deeper at 0.45 m and remarkably did not extend beyond the sides of the gully. The pit yielded a near-complete red ware beaker and 'Belgic'-type shell-tempered ware, suggesting a mid 1st century AD or later date for deposition. Given its completeness, and the careful positioning of the pit, the pottery may have been deliberately placed.
- 5.2.3 Ditch 4713 was located east of 4717. Only the northern edge of the feature was exposed, but it was truncated by ditch 4711 and may have connected with NE-SW ditch 4707, although their alignments do not exactly match. Ditch 4711 was orientated NW-SE. It was 0.1 m deep and at least 1 m wide. It yielded four sherds of poorly-dated Roman pottery. The ditch was itself cut by ditch 4709. This feature lay on the same alignment as 4711, probably forming a recut, but was much deeper at 0.25 m. Ditch 4707, possibly a continuation of 4713, was, in contrast, very shallow at 0.08 m. It was cut by later ditch 4705 that ran parallel with 4709. No finds were recovered from 4709, 4707 or 4705, but both 4709 and 4705 are likely to be of Roman or later date on the basis of stratigraphic association or shared alignment with ditch 4711.
- 5.2.4 Trench 48 contained a number of ditches and gullies (Fig. 7). A ditch (4809) that had undergone two phases of re-cutting (4807 and 4804) over a period of some 100 years

was found at the northern end of the trench. All three cuts had V-shaped profiles; 4809 and 4804 appeared to fill in two stages. Black-burnished ware from the secondary fill of 4809 dated this phase of use to the second half of the 2nd century. This ditch was cut by 4807. This was 0.8 m deep and contained broadly dated Roman pottery. Ditch 4807 was in turn cut by 4804. The sequence of re-cutting ended with the deposition of the secondary fill of 4604 during the mid to late 3rd century. The original ditch [4809] truncated earlier gully 4812, which was aligned differently and had filled by the later 2nd century. Ditch 4816, a short, N-S orientated, feature, may have continued as cut 4818. The segments shared dimensions of 1 m wide by 0.3 m deep, and yielded pottery consistent with a 2nd century date. A later ditch 4818 truncated E-W aligned ditch [4820]. This feature may relate to either ditch 4619 or 4621 in Trench 46, with which it shares alignment. Shallow feature 4822, located in the south-western corner of the trench, was interpreted as a drip gully for a structure. It was 0.5 m wide and 0.2 m deep and contained black-burnished and white wares dated to the second half of the 2nd century.

5.2.5 Two linear features were seen in Trench 49 (Fig. 4). Ditch 4907 was orientated NE-SW and contained a single silty clay deposit from which late 2nd or early 3rd century pottery was recovered. Gully 4905, uncovered in the central part of the trench, yielded no finds.

5.2.6 Trench 54 (Fig. 4) revealed a single ditch (5406), which was orientated N-S and measured 1 m wide by *c* 0.5 m deep. The lower of its two fills (5405) yielded undiagnostic Roman pottery. Another ditch (5905), this time NE-SW aligned, was seen in Trench 59 (Fig. 4), and measured 1.7 m wide by 0.36 m deep. A large, well-preserved bowl rim was recovered from its silty clay fill (5904). The form, itself not closely datable, was nevertheless consistent with a 2nd or 3rd century date.

5.2.7 Much of the Roman-period evidence was concentrated in the central part of the site. Features peripheral to the main activity were located at the northern end of the site. Trench 6 (Fig. 3) exposed a NW-SE aligned linear feature of probable Roman date. Ditch 609 was up to 0.2 m deep and contained two fills; Roman pottery was recovered from the upper fill. The ditch had been re-cut (607) during or after the Roman period and, sharing alignment with it, may have been associated with ditch 1205 in Trench 12. Two gullies were seen in Trench 24 (Fig. 3). Both cuts (2404 and 2406) were orientated NW-SE, up to 0.4 m wide and 0.2 m deep, and contained Roman grey wares. A sherd from 2405 was characteristic of a 2nd century drinking vessel.

5.3 Post-Roman

5.3.1 Medieval pottery was recovered from E-W linear feature 5509 (Fig. 4), probably representing a furrow cut during ploughing, the plough having scraped the natural clay below the subsoil. Crucially, a layer of subsoil sealed the furrow, suggesting that the subsoil seen across the site accumulated during or after the medieval period. The

occasional presence of redeposited worked flint in the subsoil attests to continued ploughing from this date onwards. Plough marks were observed across the western side of the site where the ploughsoil was thinnest.

- 5.3.2 Trenches 6 and 10 revealed a deposit of made ground. Brick fragments from 1005 date this deposit anytime from the 18th century onwards.

5.4 Undated

- 5.4.1 Linear features, generally NE-SW or SW-SE aligned, were seen in a number of trenches towards the east (Figs 2-4). These contained no finds and are therefore undated, but may be associated with the Roman-period features.
- 5.4.2 Pits and postholes were seen in trenches in the south-eastern corner of the site. These features were also undated, but may represent an area of occupation enclosed by the ditches further north and again may be dated to the Roman period.

5.5 Finds

Pottery

- 5.5.1 A total of 277 sherds, weighing 1608 g, was recovered from the site. The majority of the pottery dated to the Roman period, although the Neolithic, late Iron Age and medieval periods were also represented.
- 5.5.2 A total of 25 sherds (110 g) of prehistoric pottery were recovered from the site, including one (20 g) possible Peterborough Ware (4213) and 19 (68 g) prehistoric (4605) sherds. These were in an abraded condition and may be residual. The Peterborough ware sherd, dating to the middle to late Neolithic period, is a rare and very important find for this area.
- 5.5.3 The remaining pottery, with the exception of two medieval sherds from Trench 55, dated to the Roman period, although a few sherds in grog- and shell-tempered fabrics recovered from ditches 4715 and 4721 may have belonged to the Late Iron Age. Pottery dating to the second half of the 1st century and the 2nd century AD was strongly represented; 3rd century pottery was also present. The assemblage was generally in poor condition and probably redeposited, although large, fresh, pieces were occasionally collected.

Worked flint

- 5.5.4 A total of 49 struck flints and four pieces (17 g) of burnt unworked flint was recovered from the site (Table 2). The presence of a broad blade microlith indicates a limited early Mesolithic component, although the majority of the flints probably date broadly to the Neolithic period. Datable types include a polished axe and a flake from another polished implement, although neither was found *in situ*. Several of the rejuvenation flakes, serrated flakes and scrapers are also technologically consistent with a Neolithic industry.

Ceramic building material

- 5.5.5 Five pieces of ceramic building material were recovered from two contexts. Context 1005 yielded four recent brick fragments, while 4704 contained a single Roman-period tile fragment

Stone

- 5.5.6 A total of 37 fragments of stone were recovered from the site (Table 3). These were very small, weathered and largely burnt. Most were too small to retain any evidence of having been worked, though lava fragments such as those found from Trench 42 (located on the edge of the Roman-period concentration), are usually taken as evidence for lava rotary querns.

Animal bone

- 5.5.7 A total of 38 fragments of unidentifiable fragments of burnt animal bone and horse teeth were recovered from Trench 42.

Human bone

- 5.5.8 Cremated human remains (4178) were recovered from the terminal of a shallow ditch (4719). The quantity of bone present within the sample was estimated to be between 300 and 400 g. Identifiable fragments were from the cranial vault, ulna, tibia, fibula, femur and a metatarsal. The cremated bone is likely to be from a single adult individual of unknown sex.

5.6 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 5.6.1 A total of 8 samples from a selection of features were made available for the assessment of the preservation of palaeo-environmental indicators (Table 4). They derive from pits and ditches tentatively dated to the Neolithic period. One ditch was undated but thought to date to the early Roman period and contained a cremation deposit.
- 5.6.2 Charred plant remains were very poorly preserved and dominated by wood charcoal, the majority of which was too comminuted to be identified. Non-wood remains were very sparse consisting of occasional (1-5 items) cereal grain. Molluscs were present in some of the flots, though in very low numbers considering the volume of sediment processed.

6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 6.1.1 The 5% sample of the study area by trial trenching has demonstrated to be of sufficient size to locate Roman-period linear features and to provide strong indications of their extent. The location of prehistoric features is reasonably effective at the 5% level, and the features discovered here, coupled with the retrieval of a well-preserved and diagnostic artefactual assemblage, should be regarded as indicators of significant prehistoric activity. The evaluation revealed potential for the recovery of further ecofactual evidence. The preservation of archaeological remains was generally good, although some agricultural and modern disturbance was apparent. Overall, the reliability of the evaluation was good.

6.2 Overall interpretation

Summary of results

- 6.2.1 Seventy-three trenches were excavated across the development area. A little over 30% yielded evidence of archaeological interest. This evidence was concentrated in the central part of the site and dated principally to the Neolithic and Roman periods. The Mesolithic, late Iron Age and medieval periods were also represented through artefactual evidence.
- 6.2.2 A middle to late Neolithic pit was uncovered in Trench 46. Contemporaneous material was recovered from ditches within the trench, but this might be residual. More linear features exclusively containing probable Neolithic flintwork or pottery were exposed in a further three trenches. Perhaps most significantly, Peterborough Ware, a rare find in the region, was retrieved from Trench 42. However, ditches are atypical of archaeology of this period within the region, and material recovered from them may be entirely residual. Redeposited worked flint, including an axe and arrowhead, was also found in Roman-period or later features in an additional 7 trenches.
- 6.2.3 The evaluation revealed extensive systems of Roman-period ditches and gullies. These tended to follow NW-SE or NE-SW alignments, appearing to follow the natural slope. The features were accompanied by occasional pits and possible structural gullies. A Late Iron Age or early Roman ditch was seen in Trench 47. In the same trench, the cremated remains of an adult individual were uncovered in a ditch terminal, while a pottery vessel may have been deliberately placed inside a defunct gully. Both were of probable early Roman date. Later evidence was revealed in trenches 48 and 49. In the former, a ditch with multiple recuts spanned a period of more than 100 years from the later 2nd to later 3rd centuries. Another 2nd or 3rd century ditch was seen in the latter.
- 6.2.4 More linear features were uncovered in the eastern and northern parts of the site. These were generally undated or isolated, but may have been associated with the concentration of dated archaeology in the west. The site was given to over agricultural activities, such as ploughing, from the medieval period onwards.

Significance

- 6.2.5 The Neolithic remains, although limited, are nevertheless very significant. The features assigned to this period are likely to represent a settlement and possible land boundaries (although some of the finds may be residual in otherwise undated features). In any case, the artefactual evidence sets the prehistoric activity provisionally within the middle to late Neolithic period.
- 6.2.6 Very little is known about this period of the region's past. Pottery and cut features, such as pits and ditches, of this date are commonly found on gravel terraces in the Upper Thames Valley (Barclay 2002) but are rarely found in this region. This rarity is due to a bias in the archaeological record, rather than to an absence of prehistoric activity around Banbury. Additional evidence of Neolithic activity, although rare, has been found at, for example, Old Grimsbury (Barclay 2000) and Briar Hill (Barclay 2000; Bamford 1985) in the Nene Valley (30 km NE from Banbury), and Heineff Way in Banbury (John Moore pers. comm.). The more evidence that can be recovered from the region, the greater chance there is of building local chronologies and relating these to archaeologically well researched areas such as the Oxford region.
- 6.2.7 The Roman-period evidence is likely to represent an enclosed farmstead or other small rural settlement spanning the 1st to 3rd centuries. The area of activity was extensive: the focus of the evidence was in the central part of the site, but outfield enclosures were located further north. As with the prehistoric site, this type of evidence has been well investigated in the Upper Thames Valley, but sites in the Banbury region are less well-known. A middle to late Iron Age settlement, with very limited Roman-period activity, was recently uncovered by John Moore Heritage Services at Manor Park, Banbury. A high-status site at nearby Croughton, Northamptonshire, is attested by a late Roman mosaic (Henig and Booth 2000, 147), while a major settlement is known at King's Sutton, also in Northamptonshire (*ibid*, fig 2.1).
- 6.2.8 Preservation of the artefactual evidence was generally good, while that of the environmental evidence, including animal bone, was poor. Charred plant remains are usually better preserved in the Roman and later periods. Given the rarity of good plant remains from the Neolithic period in the Banbury region, future ecofactual evidence from the site is potentially very significant.
- 6.2.9 The medieval or post-medieval agricultural activity is of low significance, being well documented throughout the region.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench	Ctxt No	Type	Width (m)	Thick. (m)	Comment	Finds	No.	Date
1								
	101	Layer		0.30	Topsoil	-		
	102	Layer		0.30	Subsoil	-		
	103	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
	104	Layer	15 m	0.15	Alluvium	-		
2								
	201	Layer	0.29		Topsoil	-		
	202	Layer		0.35	Subsoil	-		
	203	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
	204	Layer		0.50	Alluvium	-		
	205	Layer	6.5 m	0.23	Organic /alluvium	-		
3								
	301	Layer		0.26	Topsoil	-		
	302	Layer		0.30	Subsoil	-		
	303	Layer		0.55	Natural silt clay	-		
	304	Layer			Natural silt clay sand	-		
4								
	401	Layer		0.27	Topsoil	-		
	402	Layer		0.27	Subsoil	-		
	403	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
5								
	501	Layer		0.32	Topsoil	-		
	502	Layer		0.65	Subsoil	-		
	503	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
6								
	601	Layer		0.38	Topsoil	-		
	602	Layer		0.28	Subsoil	-		
	603	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
	604	Layer		0.30	Made ground	-		
	605	Fill		0.30	Fill of ditch 607	-		
	606	Fill		0.20	Fill of ditch 609	Pot	1	Roman
	607	Cut	0.65	0.30	Ditch	-		
	608	Fill		0.15	Fill of ditch 609	-		
	609	Cut	1 m	0.30	Ditch	-		
7								
	701	Layer		0.28	Topsoil	-		
	702	Layer		0.30	Subsoil	-		
	703	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
8								
	801	Layer		0.35	Topsoil	-		
	802	Layer		0.22	Subsoil	-		
	803	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
9								
	901	Layer		0.45	Topsoil	-		
	902	Layer		0.33	Subsoil	-		
	903	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
10								
	1001	Layer		0.33	Topsoil	-		
	1002	Layer			Subsoil	-		
	1003	Layer			Natural	-		
	1004	Layer			Natural	-		
	1005	Layer		1 m	Made ground	CBM	4	PM

Trench	Cxt No	Type	Width (m)	Thick. (m)	Comment	Finds	No.	Date
11								
	1101	Layer		0.32	Topsoil	-		
	1102	Layer		0.40	Subsoil	Flint	1	Meso/Neo
	1103	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
	1104	Fill		0.28	Fill of ditch 1105	-		
	1105	Cut	0.32	0.28	Ditch	-		
	1106	Fill		0.24	Fill of pit 1107	-		
	1107	Cut	0.76	0.24	Pit	-		
	1108	Layer	4 m	0.11	Made ground	-		
12								
	1201	Layer		0.42	Topsoil	-		
	1202	Layer		0.14	Subsoil	Flint	4	Prehistoric
	1203	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
	1204	Fill		0.32	Fill of ditch 1205	-		
	1205	Cut	0.80	0.32	Ditch	-		
	1206	Cut	0.70	0.32	Ditch	-		
	1207	Fill		0.32	Fill of ditch 1206	Flint	6	Prehistoric
13								
	1301	Layer		0.30	Topsoil	-		
	1302	Layer		0.29	Subsoil	-		
	1303	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
	1304	Cut	0.70	0.20	Ditch	-		
	1305	Fill		0.20	Fill of ditch 1304	-		
14								
	1401	Layer		0.65	Topsoil	-		
	1402	Layer		0.46	Subsoil	-		
	1403	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
15								
	1501	Layer		0.28	Topsoil	-		
	1502	Layer		0.23	Subsoil	-		
	1503	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
	1504	Layer		0.52	Natural silt clay	-		
	1505	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
16								
	1601	Layer		0.28	Topsoil	-		
	1602	Layer		0.20	Subsoil	-		
	1603	Layer		0.08	Natural silt clay	-		
	1604	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
17								
	1701	Layer		0.23	Topsoil	-		
	1702	Layer		0.25	Subsoil	-		
	1703	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
18								
	1801	Layer		0.28	Topsoil	-		
	1802	Layer		0.36	Subsoil	-		
	1803	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
19								
	1901	Layer		0.30	Topsoil	-		
	1902	Layer		0.40	Subsoil	-		
	1903	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
20								
	2001	Layer		0.40	Topsoil	-		
	2002	Layer		0.30	Subsoil	-		
	2003	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
21								
	2101	Layer		0.28	Topsoil	-		
	2102	Layer		0.20	Subsoil	-		

Trench	Ctxt No	Type	Width (m)	Thick. (m)	Comment	Finds	No.	Date
	2103	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
	2104	Layer		0.30	Natural	-		
22								
	2201	Layer		0.27	Topsoil	-		
	2202	Layer		0.20	Natural	-		
	2203	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
23								
	2301	Layer		0.28	Topsoil	-		
	2302	Layer		0.30	Subsoil	-		
	2303	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
	2304	Fill		0.19	Fill of posthole 2305	-		
	2305	Cut	0.40	0.19	Posthole	-		
24								
	2401	Layer		0.40	Topsoil	-		
	2402	Layer		0.20	Subsoil	-		
	2403	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
	2404	Cut	0.40	0.17	Gully	-		
	2405	Fill		0.17	Fill of gully 2404	Pot Flint	1 1	AD120-200 Neolithic
	2406	Cut	0.38	0.10	Gully	-		
	2407	Fill		0.10	Fill of gully 2406	Pot Stone	1 1	Roman
25								
	2501	Layer		0.50	Topsoil	-		
	2502	Layer		0.15	Subsoil	-		
	2503	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
	2504	Cut	0.93	0.20	Ditch	-		
	2505	Fill		0.20	Fill of ditch 2504	Flint	1	Prehistoric
26								
	2601	Layer		0.42	Topsoil	-		
	2602	Layer		0.20	Subsoil	-		
	2603	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
	2604	Cut	0.76	0.25	Ditch	-		
	2605	Fill		0.25	Fill of ditch 2604	-		
27								
	2701	Layer		0.28	Topsoil	-		
	2702	Layer		0.38	Natural	-		
	2703	Layer		0.30	Natural silt clay	-		
	2704	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
28								
	2801	Layer		0.30	Topsoil	-		
	2802	Layer		0.22	Subsoil	Flint	2	Prehistoric
	2803	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
	2804	Layer		0.60	Natural	-		
29								
	2901	layer		0.27	Topsoil	-		
	2902	Layer		0.30	Subsoil	-		
	2903	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
30								
	3001	Layer		0.27	Topsoil	-		
	3002	Layer		0.28	Subsoil	-		
	3003	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
31								
	3101	Layer		0.32	Topsoil	-		
	3102	Layer		0.24	Subsoil	-		
	3103	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		

Trench	Ctxt No	Type	Width (m)	Thick. (m)	Comment	Finds	No.	Date
32								
	3201	Layer		0.30	Topsoil	-		
	3202	Layer		0.25	Subsoil	-		
	3202	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
33								
	3301	Layer		0.33	Topsoil	-		
	3302	Layer	23 m	0.20	Subsoil	Flint	3	Neolithic
	3303	Layer		0.37	Natural	-		
	3304	Layer		0.28	Natural	-		
	3305	Layer			Natural	-		
	3306	Layer			Natural	-		
	3307	Layer			Natural	-		
34								
	3401	Layer		0.28	Topsoil	-		
	3402	Layer		0.22	Subsoil	-		
	3403	Layer		0.46	Natural silt clay	-		
	3404	Layer		0.10	Natural	-		
	3405	Layer			Natural	-		
35								
	3501	Layer		0.27	Topsoil	-		
	3502	Layer		0.33	Subsoil	-		
	3503	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
36								
	3601	Layer		0.40	Topsoil	-		
	3602	Layer		0.30	Subsoil	-		
	3603	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
	3604	Fill		0.08	Fill of ditch 3605	-		
	3605	Cut	0.16	0.08	Ditch	-		
	3606	Fill		0.20	Fill of ditch 3607	-		
	3607	Cut	0.90	0.20	Ditch	-		
37								
	3701	Layer		0.30	Topsoil	-		
	3702	Layer		0.20	Subsoil	-		
	3703	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
	3704	Fill		0.20	Fill of ditch 3705	-		
	3705	Cut	0.44	0.20	Ditch	-		
38								
	3801	Layer		0.30	Topsoil	-		
	3802	Layer		0.20	Subsoil	-		
	3803	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
	3804	Fill		0.26	Fill of ditch 3805	-		
	3805	Cut	1 m	0.26	Ditch	-		
	3806	Fill		0.20	Fill of ditch 3807	-		
	3807	Cut	0.50	0.20	Ditch	-		
39								
	3901	Layer		0.30	Topsoil	-		
	3902	Layer		0.22	Subsoil	-		
	3903	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
	3904	Fill		0.16	Fill of 3905	-		
	3905	Cut	0.60	0.16	Natural feature	-		
40								
	4001	Layer		0.30	Topsoil			
	4002	Layer		0.18	Subsoil			
	4003	Layer			Natural silt clay			
41								
	4101	Layer		0.28	Topsoil	-		

Trench	Ctxt No	Type	Width (m)	Thick. (m)	Comment	Finds	No.	Date
	4102	Layer		0.33	Subsoil	-		
	4103	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
	4104	Fill		0.12	Fill of ditch 4105	Pot	1	Roman
	4105	Cut	0.80	0.12	Ditch	-		
	4106	Fill		0.20	Fill of pit 4107	-		
	4107	Cut	0.6x0.45	0.20	Pit	-		
42								
	4201	Layer		0.45	Topsoil			
	4202	Layer		0.18	Subsoil			
	4203	Layer			Natural silt clay			
	4204	Cut	1.2 m	0.70	Ditch			
	4205	Fill		0.30	Fill of 4204	Pot Flint Bone Stone	15 1 2 6	Prehistoric Prehistoric
	4206	Fill		0.14	Fill of 4204	Bone	11	
	4207	Fill		0.14	Fill of 4204			
	4208	Cut	0.90	0.35	Ditch			
	4209	Fill		0.35	Fill of 4209			
	4210	Cut	0.41	0.40	Gully			
	4211	Fill		0.40	Fill of 4210	Pot Flint Bone	1 2 15	?Neolithic ?Neolithic
	4212	Cut	1.32	0.62	Ditch			
	4213	Fill		0.62	Fill of 4212	Pot Flint Bone Stone	1 2 10 9	Neolithic Prehistoric
	4214	Cut	1.5 m	0.76	Ditch			
	4215	Fill		0.76	Fill of 4214	Pot Flint	2 3	?Neolithic ?Neolithic
43								
	4301	Layer		0.36	Topsoil	-		
	4302	Layer		0.12	Subsoil	-		
	4303	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
	4304	Fill		0.16	Fill of gully 4305	-		
	4305	Cut	0.40	0.16	Gully	-		
	4306	Fill		0.30	Fill of ditch 4307	-		
	4307	Cut	0.76	0.30	Ditch	-		
44								
	4401	Layer		0.22	Topsoil	-		
	4402	Layer		0.26	Subsoil	-		
	4403	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
	4404	Cut	0.70	0.22	Ditch	-		
	4405	Fill		0.22	Fill of ditch 4404	-		
	4406	Cut	0.56	0.14	Ditch	-		
	4407	Fill		0.14	Fill of ditch 4406	-		
45								
	4501	Layer		0.38	Topsoil	-		
	4502	Layer		0.55	Subsoil	-		
	4503	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
	4504	Fill		0.14	Fill of ditch 4506	-		
	4505	Fill		0.16	Fill of ditch 4507	-		
	4506	Cut	0.56	0.14	Ditch	-		
	4507	Cut	0.45	0.16	Ditch	-		
46								
	4601	Layer		0.35	Topsoil	-		

Trench	Cxt No	Type	Width (m)	Thick. (m)	Comment	Finds	No.	Date
	4602	Layer		0.45	Subsoil	Flint	8	Prehistoric
	4603	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
	4604	Cut	1.26x0.45	0.22	Pit	-		
	4605	Fill		0.22	Fill of pit 4604	Pot Flint Stone	19 6 25	Neolithic Prehistoric
	4606	Fill		0.50	Fill of ditch 4607	Flint	3	Prehistoric
	4607	Cut	0.89	0.50	Ditch	-		
	4608	Cut	0.47	0.18	Gully	-		
	4609	Fill		0.18	Fill of gully 4608	-		
	4610	Cut	0.22	0.17	Posthole	-		
	4611	Fill		0.17	Fill of posthole 4610	-		
	4612	Cut	0.64	0.28	Ditch	-		
	4613	Fill		0.24	Fill of ditch 4612	Flint	1	Mesolithic
	4614	Fill		0.28	Fill of ditch 4612	-		
	4615	Cut	0.62	0.30	Ditch	-		
	4616	Fill		0.08	Fill of ditch 4615	-		
	4617	Fill		0.26	Fill of ditch 4615	-		
	4618	Fill		0.14	Fill of ditch 4615	-		
	4619	Cut	0.78	0.18	Ditch	-		
	4620	Fill		0.18	Fill of ditch 4619	-		
	4621	Cut	0.40	0.30	Ditch	-		
	4622	Fill		0.30	Fill of 4624	-		
	4623	Fill		0.30	Fill of ditch 4621	-		
	4624	Cut	0.32x0.4	0.30	Tree-throw hole	-		
	4625	Cut	0.46	0.26	Ditch	-		
47								
	4701	Layer		0.30	Topsoil	-		
	4702	Layer		0.20	Subsoil	-		
	4703	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
	4704	Fill		0.37	Fill of ditch 4705	CBM	1	Roman
	4705	Cut	1.1 m	0.37	Ditch	-		
	4706	Fill		0.08	Fill of ditch 4707	-		
	4707	Cut	0.70	0.08	Ditch	-		
	4708	Fill		0.25	Fill of ditch 4709	Flint	1	Prehistoric
	4709	Cut	0.90	0.25	Ditch	-		
	4710	Fill		0.10	Fill of ditch 4711	Pot	4	Roman
	4711	Cut	1 m	0.10	Ditch	-		
	4712	Fill		0.10	Fill of ditch 4713	-		
	4713	Cut	0.50	0.10	Ditch	-		
	4714	Fill		0.27	Fill of pit 4715	Pot Flint	25 1	AD40-80 Prehistoric
	4715	Cut	0.7x 0.45	0.27	Pit	-		
	4716	Fill		0.10	Fill of ditch 4717	-		
	4717	Cut	0.60	0.10	Ditch	-		
	4718	Fill		0.08	Fill of ditch 4719	Cremat ed bone		
	4719	Cut	1.3 m	0.10	Ditch terminus	-		
	4720	Fill		0.40	Fill of ditch 4721	Pot	27	LIA
	4721	Cut	1.8	0.40	Ditch	-		
	4722	Fill			Pot in pit 4714	Pot	86	AD40-120
	4723	Fill		0.10	Fill of ditch 4719	-		
48								
	4801	Layer		0.25	Topsoil	-		

Trench	Cxt No	Type	Width (m)	Thick. (m)	Comment	Finds	No.	Date
	4802	Layer		0.20	Subsoil	-		
	4803	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
	4804	Cut	0.80	0.55	Ditch	-		
	4805	Fill		0.38	Fill of ditch 4804	Pot	1	AD40-300
	4806	Fill		0.18	Fill of ditch 4804	Pot	11	AD240-400
	4807	Cut	0.50	0.56	Ditch	-		
	4808	Fill		0.56	Fill of ditch 4807	Pot Flint Stone	11 2 3	Roman Prehistoric
	4809	Cut	0.80	0.80	Ditch	-		
	4810	Fill		0.50	Fill of ditch 4809	Pot Flint	22 2	AD140-300 Neo/BA
	4811	Fill		0.35	Fill of ditch 4809	-		
	4812	Cut	0.50	0.20	Gully	-		
	4813	Fill		0.20	Fill of gully 4812	Pot Flint	4 1	Roman Prehistoric
	4814	Cut	1 m	0.20	Ditch	-		
	4815	Fill		0.20	Fill of ditch 4814	-		
	4816	Cut	1 m	0.30	Ditch	-		
	4817	Fill		0.30	Fill of ditch 4816	Pot	4	AD40-120
	4818	Cut	1 m	0.30	Ditch	-		
	4819	Fill		0.30	Fill of ditch 4818	Pot Flint	28 1	AD120-200 Neo/BA
	4820	Cut	1.4 m	0.15	Ditch	-		
	4821	Fill		0.15	Fill of ditch 4820	-		
	4822	Cut	0.50	0.20	Gully	-		
	4823	Fill		0.20	Fill of gully 4822	pot	6	AD140-200
49								
	4901	Layer		0.26	Topsoil	-		
	4902	Layer		0.20	Subsoil	-		
	4903	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
	4904	Fill		0.08	Fill of gully 4905	-		
	4905	Cut	0.20	0.08	Gully	-		
	4906	Fill		0.42	Fill of ditch 4907	Pot Flint	7 1	AD170-240
	4907	Cut	1.2 m	0.42	Ditch	-		
50								
	5001	Layer		0.23	Topsoil	-		
	5002	Layer		0.54	Subsoil	-		
	5003	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
51								
	5101	Layer		0.30	Topsoil	-		
	5102	Layer		0.50	Subsoil	-		
	5103	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
52								
	5201	Layer		0.30	Topsoil	-		
	5202	Layer		0.12	Subsoil	-		
	5203	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
	5204	Cut	0.50	0.24	Ditch	-		
	5205	Fill		0.24	Fill of ditch 5204	-		
53								
	5301	Layer		0.20	Topsoil			
	5302	Layer		0.20	Subsoil			
	5303	Layer			Natural silt clay			
54								
	5401	Layer		0.26	Topsoil	-		
	5402	Layer	15 m	0.20	Subsoil	-		

Trench	Cxt No	Type	Width (m)	Thick. (m)	Comment	Finds	No.	Date
	5403	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
	5404	Fill		0.22	Fill of ditch 5406	-		
	5405	Fill		0.27	Fill of ditch 5406	Pot	1	Roman
	5406	Cut	1 m	0.55	Ditch	-		
55								
	5501	Layer		0.26	Topsoil	-		
	5502	Layer		0.20	Subsoil	-		
	5503	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
	5504	Fill		0.18	Fill of pit 5505	-		
	5505	Cut	0.9x 0.85	0.18	pit	-		
	5506	Fill		0.10	Fill of ditch 5507	-		
	5507	Cut	1.1 m	0.10	Ditch	-		
	5508	Fill		0.14	Fill of ditch/furrow 5509	Pot	2	Medieval
	5509	Cut	1.4 m	0.14	Ditch/furrow	-		
	5510	Fill		0.12	Fill of pit 5511	Flint	2	Prehistoric
	5511	Cut	0.40	0.12	pit	-		
56								
	5601	Layer		0.26	Topsoil	-		
	5602	Layer		0.20	Subsoil	-		
	5603	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
57								
	5701	Layer		0.14	Topsoil	-		
	5702	Layer		0.24	Subsoil	-		
	5703	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
	5704	Cut	0.47	0.14	Posthole	-		
	5705	Fill		0.14	Fill of posthole 5704	-		
58								
	5801	Layer		0.34	Topsoil	-		
	5802	Layer		0.14	Subsoil	-		
	5803	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
59								
	5901	Layer		0.30	Topsoil	-		
	5902	Layer		0.20	Subsoil	-		
	5903	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
	5904	Fill		0.36	Fill of ditch 5905	Pot	17	100-400
	5905	Cut	1.7 m	0.36	Ditch	-		
60								
	6001	Layer		0.28	Topsoil	-		
	6002	Layer		0.24	Subsoil	-		
	6003	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
	6004	Fill		0.35	Fill of posthole 6005	-		
	6005	Cut	0.22 dia	0.35	Posthole	-		
61								
	6101	Layer		0.25	Topsoil	-		
	6102	Layer		0.15	Subsoil	-		
	6103	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
62								
	6201	Layer		0.32	Topsoil	-		
	6202	Layer		0.30	Subsoil	-		
	6203	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
63								
	6301	Layer		0.37	Topsoil	-		
	6302	Layer		0.46	Subsoil	-		
	6303	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		

Trench	Ctxt No	Type	Width (m)	Thick. (m)	Comment	Finds	No.	Date
64								
	6401	Layer		0.26	Topsoil	-		
	6402	Layer		0.40	Subsoil	-		
	6403	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
	6404	Fill		0.30	Fill of ditch 6405	-		
	6405	cut	1.25 m	0.30	Ditch	-		
	6406	Fill		0.17	Fill of pit 6407	-		
	6407	cut	0.6x 0.4	0.17	Pit	-		
65								
	6501	Layer		0.28	Topsoil	-		
	6502	Layer		0.24	Subsoil	-		
	6503	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
66								
	6601	Layer		0.27	Topsoil	-		
	6602	Layer		0.22	Subsoil	-		
	6603	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
	6604	Fill		0.22	Fill of pit 6605	-		
	6605	Cut	1.2 x 0.5	0.22	Pit	-		
67								
	6701	Layer		0.34	Topsoil	-		
	6702	Layer		0.18	Subsoil	-		
	6703	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
68								
	6801	Layer		0.28	Topsoil	-		
	6802	Layer		0.15	Subsoil	-		
	6803	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
69								
	6901	Layer		0.27	Topsoil	-		
	6902	Layer		0.18	Subsoil	-		
	6903	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
70								
	7001	Layer		0.34	Topsoil	-		
	7002	Layer		0.24	Subsoil	-		
	7003	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
71								
	7101	Layer		0.26	Topsoil	-		
	7102	Layer		0.31	Subsoil	-		
	7103	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
72								
	7201	Layer		0.33	Topsoil	-		
	7202	Layer		0.22	Subsoil	-		
	7203	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		
73								
	7301	Layer		0.25	Topsoil	-		
	7302	Layer		0.22	Subsoil	-		
	7303	Layer			Natural silt clay	-		

Table 1. Context inventory

APPENDIX 2 POTTERY ASSESSMENT**Introduction**

A total of 277 sherds, weighing 1608 g, was recovered from the site. The majority of the pottery dated to the Roman period, although the Neolithic, late Iron Age and medieval periods were also represented. The assemblage was rapidly scanned and assessed to determine the range of forms and fabrics present using the standard Oxford Archaeology recording system.

Prehistoric pottery by Alistair Barclay and Emily Edwards

A total of 25 sherds (110 g) of prehistoric pottery were recovered from the site, including one (20 g) possible Peterborough Ware (4213) and 19 (68 g) prehistoric (4605). These were in an abraded condition and may be residual but are a rare and very important find for this area.

Methodology

The assemblage is quantified by weight and sherd number. The pottery is characterised by fabric, form, surface treatment, decoration and colour. No burnt residues were present. The sherds were analysed using a binocular microscope (x 20) and were divided into fabric groups by principal inclusion type. OA standard codes are used to denote inclusion types: G = grog, R = rock (limestone, sandstone and granite). Size range for inclusions: 1 = <1 mm fine; 2 = 1-3 mm fine-medium and 3 = 3 mm < medium-coarse.

Fabrics

The Banbury area sits on Liassic clays. The pottery was manufactured from a clay containing naturally occurring sand, iron pellets and mica, which are likely to be naturally occurring in the clay around Banbury as similar fabrics have been noted at Old Grimsbury (Barclay 2000).

- Grog tempered
G1 - Soft poorly sorted fabric with sparse grog, coarse sand, mica and iron pellets.
- Leached Shell
DS1 - Soft leached fabric containing sparse sand and mica.
- Fabric containing no opening material
NAT - A relatively clean clay containing only sparse, small leached shell voids and no opening material.

Manufacture and decoration

These sherds were all typically handmade and open fired. Diagnostic decoration on the sherds from context 4213, consisting of haphazardly applied whipped cord maggots, suggests a middle Neolithic date (the impressions were very abraded). One sherd from context 4605 was thought to bear the remnants of a plasticated cordon and fingernail decoration but is far too abraded for this to be clear.

Discussion

The grog tempered (G1) sherd from context 4213 was tentatively dated as Peterborough Ware due to the whipped cord decoration and fabric. Grog has been noted in middle Neolithic fabrics at Yarnton (Barclay and Edwards, forthcoming) and the sparse distribution of grog within this sherd is consistent with pottery of such a date. The decoration could, if more densely or evenly applied, indicate an early Bronze Age date but grog fabrics of this date are usually more densely tempered. This is a very rare find for the Banbury region; no Peterborough Ware has yet been recovered from Banbury.

The 19 (68 g) prehistoric sherds (DS1) recovered from context 4605 were very broken and abraded body sherds, with the possible exception of fragments of a base. The apparent decoration had led to an initial late Neolithic spot date but further analysis proved a specific date to be impossible as the sherd is far too abraded for this to be clear. One sherd differed from this description and may be Iron Age. This pottery was found in conjunction with middle to late Neolithic flint, which would be a credible date for this material.

Pottery of such date is common in pits and ditches on gravel terraces in the Upper Thames Valley (Barclay 2002) but is rarely found in this region. This rarity is due to a bias in the archaeological record, rather than to an absence of prehistoric activity around Banbury, as these few sherds demonstrate. Sites rich in early prehistoric pottery in the Upper Thames region tend to be large projects carried out, for example, on gravel extraction quarries where archaeology has been preserved under flood plain alluvium.

Additional evidence of Neolithic activity, although rare, does exist. Sites from which Neolithic pottery has been recovered include the Grooved Ware from Old Grimsbury (Barclay 2000) and from Briar Hill (Barclay 2000; Bamford 1985) in the Nene Valley (30 km NE. from Banbury). A mid to late Bronze Age pottery assemblage has been recovered from a ditch feature at Heineff Way in Banbury (John Moore pers. comm.)

Very little is known about this period of the region's past and the more we can recover from such projects, the more chance we have of building local chronologies and relating these to archaeologically well researched areas such as the Oxford region. This pottery is very tentatively dated, so any chance to recover more evidence in the future should be encouraged. Previous finds of this date have been isolated features containing abraded material. This project may present the opportunity to significantly add to the record and opportunities to recover more information should not be missed. This pottery is, therefore, of regional significance.

Roman-period pottery by Edward Biddulph

Pottery dating to the first half of the 1st century AD was recovered from Trench 47. Shell-tempered (E40) with occasional grog inclusions made a significant contribution to the group from this trench. Forms in this fabric included a bucket-shaped jar and an everted-rim jar. These typically date to the late Iron Age, but associated with post-conquest, sandy tempered fabrics and forms, their use appears to have continued into the Roman period. A butt-beaker in a fine sandy red ware (O10) was also recovered from Trench 47, apparently confirming a later 1st century date for deposition. Overall, mid Roman pottery (mid 2nd to mid 3rd century) dominated. Trenches 48 and 49 yielded pottery particularly characteristic of this period, including bag-shaped and poppy-headed beakers, a black burnished ware (B11) dish from Dorset, an Oxfordshire white ware jar (Young 1977, type W33), and sand and grog-tempered grey ware R37. The pottery from Trench 24 was less diagnostic, but a body sherd decorated with barbotine dots was consistent with a 2nd century date. The end of Roman activity on the site is uncertain, but the absence of typically late Roman wares (eg Oxfordshire red colour-coated ware) suggests that occupation had ceased by the mid/late 3rd century, although a grey ware flagon or handled jar from Trench 48 is consistent with a late Roman date.

The condition of the pottery was variable. Overall, sherds were small and worn, suggesting a level of disturbance and relocation prior to final burial. Much larger, fresher, pieces (for example from trenches 48 and 59) were occasionally recovered, however, indicating that the focus of occupation was nevertheless close-by.

APPENDIX 3 CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL

By Edward Biddulph

Five pieces of ceramic building material were recovered from two contexts. Context 1005 yielded four fragments (2674 g), representing a minimum of two bricks of post-medieval date, while 4704 contained a single tile fragment (80 g) dating possibly to the early Roman period.

APPENDIX 4 WORKED FLINT

By Kate Cramp

Introduction

A total of 49 struck flints were recovered from 21 contexts in the course of the evaluation (table 1). Contexts 1207, 4205, 4211 and 4215 each produced a single fragment of burnt unworked flint, weighing a total of 17 g.

Category:	110	120	120	240	250	2801	280	330	420	4211	421	421	460	460	460	461	471	4808	481	481	481	481	551	Total:
Flake	2	5		1		2				1	5	4	2		1	2					1	1		27
Blade-like flake		1												1										2
Irregular waste										1														1
Core face / edge rejuvenation flake																					1			1
Rejuvenation flake tablet											1													1
Flake from polished implement				1																				1
Unclassifiable blade core	1																							1
Microolith																1								1
Unclassifiable / fragmentary arrowhead																				1				1
End scraper		1				1							1											3
End and side scraper							1																	1
Serrated flake								1	1			1												3
Retouched flake											1	1	2							1				5
Axe							1																	1
Burnt unworked flint			1					1	1		1													4
Total:	1	4	6	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	2	3	8	6	3	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	53

Table 2. Flint by type and by context

Methodology

All the struck flints within the assemblage were individually examined and catalogued according to broad debitage or tool type. Further details, including information about the condition, degree of cortication and type of raw material, were recorded consistently throughout the analysis. Technological attributes were also commented on where appropriate, particularly where such data contributed to the dating and characterisation of the assemblage. Cores/core fragments were classified according to the organisation and types of removals exhibited, and were individually weighed. Burnt unworked flint was quantified by piece and by weight.

Condition

In general, the struck assemblage is in a fresh, uncorticated condition and as such is likely to derive mainly from *in situ* contexts. A total of 43 flints (87.8%) were recorded either as fresh or as minimally damaged. The remaining six pieces (contexts 1102, 2802, 3302, 4606 and

4808) exhibit moderate degrees of post-depositional damage suggesting that some redeposition has occurred.

Raw material

For the most part, the raw material used in the manufacture of the debitage and implements consists of a gravel-derived flint, which contains few thermal fractures and is probably of a good flaking quality. The cortex is generally thin and abraded, and varies in colour from light cream to a dark, iron-stained buff. The interior of the flint is relatively fine-grained, usually brown or grey-brown in colour, and contains the occasional lighter-coloured cherty inclusion.

Chalk flint nodules also appear to have made a significant contribution to raw material supplies. These pieces are distinguished by their fine-grained, homogenous composition and tend to be light grey or dark brown in colour. Where present, the cortex is thick, fresh and minimally abraded. The side-trimming flake from context 1202 and the serrated flake from context 4602 are almost certainly of chalk flint manufacture, while the polished axe (context 3302) and the flake from a polished implement (context 2405) probably represent the use of mined chalk flint sources.

An end scraper manufactured on a secondary flake of bullhead flint was recorded from context 1202. Bullhead flint, which is characterised by a green-black cortex and an underlying orange band, occurs in the Bullhead bed at the base of the Reading beds (Dewey and Bromehead, 1915; Shepherd 1972, 114).

Technology and dating

The assemblage is composed mainly of unretouched flakes, of which a total of 27 were recovered. The low proportion of blades and blade-like flakes in the assemblage implies that the material is largely post-Mesolithic in date (Pitts and Jacobi 1979; Ford 1987).

The presence of a broad blade microlith, comparable to Jacobi's type 1ac (Jacobi 1978, 16), nonetheless indicates a limited early Mesolithic component. The microlith has been obliquely blunted with inverse retouch to the left-hand edge.

A small, partially polished axe of probable mid or later Neolithic date was recovered from context 3302. The implement, which is manufactured from a light grey-brown chalk flint, is finely ground at the blade end with a much more cursory polish over the rest of its surface. The flake from a polished implement (context 2405) can also be dated to the Neolithic.

Context 4810 produced the tip of an arrowhead, of either early Neolithic leaf shaped form or early Bronze Age barbed and tanged form (Green 1984, 19). The fragment has been very finely and invasively retouched on both faces and exhibits possible impact damage to the tip (Odell and Odell-Vereecken 1981, 100).

The assemblage contains three serrated flakes. The example from context 4211 consists of a slender, curving, distal-trimming blade with serrations and ventral gloss on the left-hand edge. The serrated tool from context 4602 has also been manufactured on a blade, and exhibits serrations along the length of both lateral margins and ventral gloss on the right-hand edge. The tool terminates in a retouched point. Context 3302 produced the proximal end of a broken serrated flake, made on a tertiary blank with a faceted platform. The relatively high proportion of serrated edges within the assemblage may indicate the performance of specialised activities, perhaps concerned with working silica-rich plant materials implied by the presence of edge gloss on two of the flakes (Unger-Hamilton 1988, 60-1).

Discussion and potential

The assemblage probably dates mainly to the Neolithic period, although the presence of a broad blade microlith attests to limited Mesolithic activity. In addition to closely datable types such as the axe, several of the rejuvenation flakes, serrated flakes and scrapers are also technologically consistent with a Neolithic industry. With the possible exception of the

arrowhead fragment, the Bronze Age seems under-represented in terms of chronologically diagnostic pieces. Whilst it is possible that some of the undiagnostic flake material derives from this period, the apparent paucity of Bronze Age flintwork would seem to suggest a decline in activity in this period when compared to the Neolithic.

APPENDIX 5 WORKED STONE

By Ruth Shaffrey

All the fragments of stone recovered were very small, weathered and largely burnt. Most were too small to retain any evidence of having been worked, though lava fragments, such as those found here, are usually taken as evidence for lava rotary querns on or near the site.

Context	Description
2407	* Tiny fragment of ironstone, from Lias, unworked
4205	* 1 fragment of ironstone and 4 of burnt limestone as in 4808. Non worked but all weathered and small fragments * 1 burnt quartzite pebble fragment, unworked.
4213	* 9 tiny fragments of very weathered lava. Two may have the remains of a worked surface. Lava degrades very easily and this may be all that is left to indicate the use of lava for rotary querns on, or near, the site.
4605	* 21 weathered and burnt fragments of limestone. Unworked. Possibly resulting from some sort of industrial process. * 4 fragments of burnt firecracked pebbles. Unworked but resulting from human use (usually used in cooking)
4808	* 3 small fragments of ironstone, unworked. Locally available within the Lias

Table 3. Catalogue of worked stone

APPENDIX 6 ANIMAL BONE

By Emma-Jayne Evans

A total of 38 fragments of bone and teeth, all from Trench 42, were analysed, 30 fragments of which were small, unidentifiable fragments of burnt bone. The remaining 8 fragments were horse teeth, which may have originated from the maxilla of one animal. The small quantity of bone recovered from the site is likely to be due to differential preservation: teeth tend to survive much better than other bones.

APPENDIX 7 HUMAN BONE

By Annsofie Witkin

Cremated remains (4178) were recovered from the terminal of a shallow ditch [4719] of possible 2nd-3rd century AD date.

In excavation, the cremation contexts were subject to 50% recovery as whole-earth samples and subsequently wet sieved. The cremated remains (4178) were retained as unsorted residue. These have been subdivided into 10-4 mm and 2-4 mm categories. The residues were scanned to ascertain the quantity of bone present and their suitability for sorting of cremated bone fragments and full analysis.

The quantity of bone present within the sample was estimated to be between 300 and 400 g. All fragments were in good condition with some abrasion present. The largest fragment measured 42.76 mm. Most of the fragments were however between 10 and 20 mm.

Identifiable fragments were from the cranial vault, ulna, tibia, fibula, femur and a metatarsal. The cremated bone is likely to be from a single adult individual of unknown sex.

An average adult cremation can weigh between 1000-2400 g if complete (McKinley 1997, 68). Considering that only 50% of the deposit were recovered, it is likely that the whole cremation may have weighed between 800 and 1000 g. This therefore indicates that the deposit is likely to have represented a more or less complete individual.

APPENDIX 8 PALAEO-ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

By E C Stafford

Introduction

A total of 8 samples from a selection of features were made available for the assessment of the preservation of palaeo-environmental indicators. They derive from pits and ditches dated tentatively to the Neolithic period. One ditch was undated but thought to date to the early Roman period and contained a cremation deposit.

Methodology

The soil samples, ranging in size from 6 to 40 litres, were processed by mechanical flotation in a modified Siraf-type machine, with the sample held on a 500µm and the flot collected on a 250µm mesh. The flots were then air-dried and a brief assessment was carried out. The flots were scanned under a binocular microscope at x10 and x20 magnification. Any seeds, chaff or molluscs were noted and an estimate of abundance made. Charcoal caught on the 2mm sieve was considered identifiable and quantified. The heavy residue fractions from the samples were also air-dried and scanned for abundance of charred material and artefacts.

Results

Table 4 is a summary of the results of the assessment. Modern contamination, in the form of roots, weed seeds and pupa cases, were present in all the flots. In addition the majority of the flots contained moderate amounts of modern unburnt straw and cereal chaff, intrusive from probable recent ploughing. Charred plant remains were very poorly preserved and dominated by wood charcoal, the majority of which was too comminuted to be identified. Only sample <3>, the cremation deposit, contained large quantities of >2mm charcoal. Non-wood remains were very sparse consisting of occasional (1-5 items) cereal grain including *Triticum sp.*, and weed seeds including *Galium sp.* and Polygonaceae. Molluscs were present in some of the flots, though in very low numbers considering the volume of sediment processed. The assemblages consisted entirely of open country grassland species including *Vallonia sp.* and *Pupilla muscorum*.

Discussion

Of the Neolithic feature fills examined, charred plant remains were poorly preserved and no further work is recommended for these samples. However, ditches in particular do not usually produce rich assemblages. The only sample to produce large quantities of identifiable charcoal was the possible early Roman cremation deposit within ditch [4719]. Molluscs are poorly preserved on site within the Neolithic features. The numbers were small, considering the relatively large volume of sediment processed and the assemblages very low in species diversity. It is possible given high occurrence of roots etc. that a considerable intrusive element is present.

The samples from tentative Neolithic features suggest potential for further charred remains, which would be significant given the rarity of good plant remains assemblages from this period in the Banbury region. Charred plant remains assemblages are usually better preserved in the later periods.

Feature no.	Feature type	Date	Sample no.	Ctx no.	Vol. processed (Litres)	>10mm residue	Flot vol. (ml)	Charcoal	Grain	Chaff	Nut shell	Weeds	Molluscs
5505	Pit	?NEO	1	5504	6		15	---	-	-	-	-	-
	Pit	?NEO	2	5505	40	Pottery, Flint	50	+++	-	-	-	-	<i>Papilia muscorum, Vallonia sp., Ferrissia pygmaea, Trichia hispida</i>
4719	Crem	?EROM	3	4718	19	Cremated bone, charcoal	20	+++	-	-	-	-	-
4204	Ditch	?NEO	4	4205	20		2	-	-	-	-	-	<i>Vallonia sp.</i>
4204	Ditch	?NEO	5	4206	20		2	-	-	-	-	-	<i>Vallonia sp.</i>
2305	UD	?NEO	6	2304	10		10	++	-	-	-	-	<i>Vallonia sp.</i>
4212	Ditch	?NEO	7	4213	20	Flint	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
4204	Ditch	NEO	8	4216	6		2	-	-	-	-	-	-

+ 1-5

++ 6-25

+++ 26-50

++++ >50

Samples have been dated provisionally on the basis of artefactual and stratigraphic associations

TABLE 4: ASSESSMENT RESULTS

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APPENDIX 10 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS**Site name:** Banbury Flood Alleviation Scheme, Oxfordshire**Site code:** BAFLA 03**Grid reference:** NGR SP 465 430**Type of evaluation:** Seventy-three 30 x 1.8 m trial trenches**Date and duration of project:** 2nd-19th June 2003**Area of site:** 8.8 ha

Summary of results: Archaeological evidence was concentrated in the central part of the site and dated principally to the Neolithic and Roman periods. A middle to late Neolithic pit was exposed in one trench. In others, a number of ditches were tentatively dated to the Neolithic period on the basis of the finds, including a rare sherd of Peterborough Ware. An extensive system of Roman-period ditches and gullies was uncovered, representing a farmstead or other small settlement spanning the 1st to 3rd centuries AD. The evaluation also revealed a cremation burial and possible placed deposit. More linear features were uncovered in the eastern and northern parts of the site. These were generally undated or isolated, but may have been associated with the concentration of dated archaeology. The archaeological remains, especially those of Neolithic date, are potentially very significant, given the paucity of comparable sites in the region.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course under the following accession number: BAFLA 03.



Scale 1:25,000

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Figure 1: Site location

Banbury Flood Scheme

Oxford Archaeology



Janus House,
Osney Mead,
Oxford,
OX2 0ES.

Key



Edge of Evaluation



Trench



Prehistoric features



Roman Features



Medieval features



Undated

0 100m

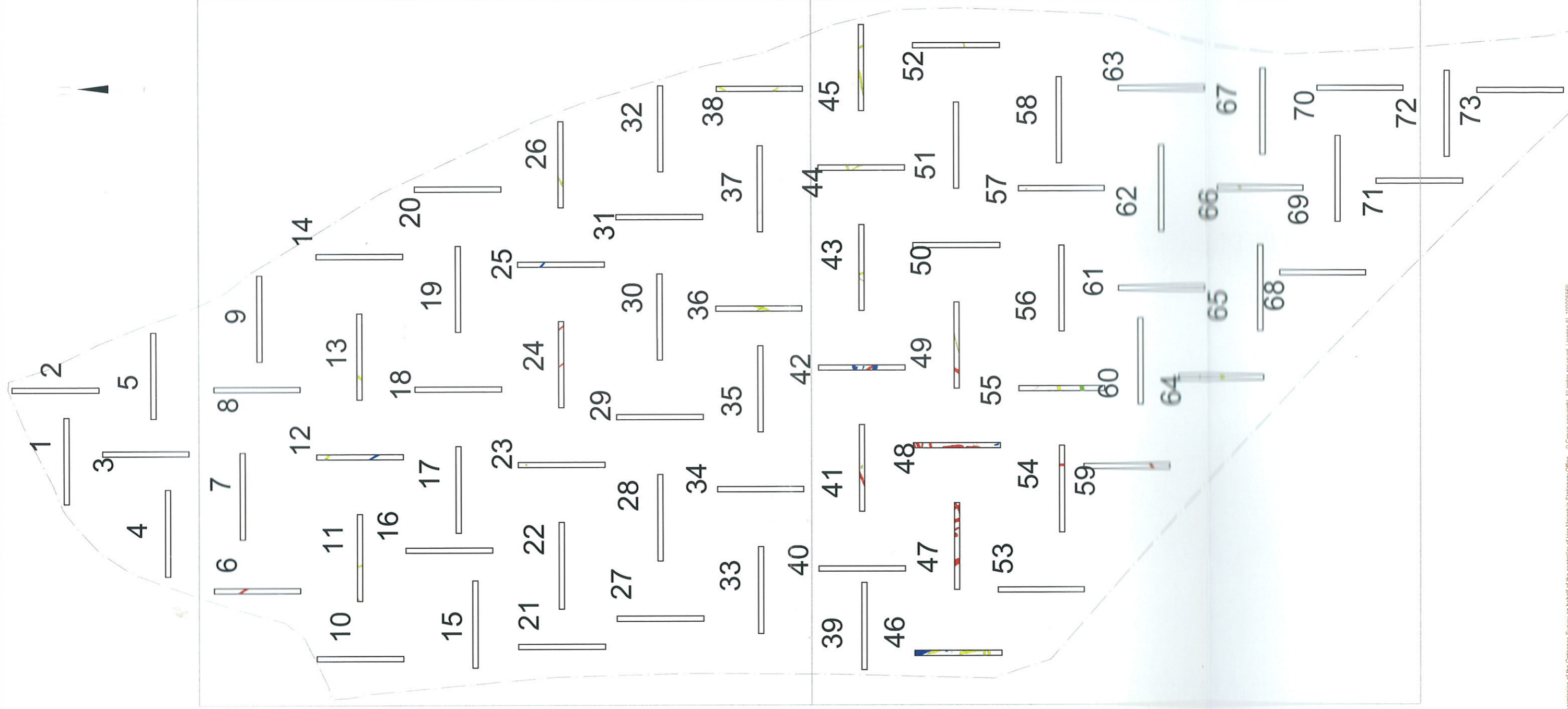
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Drawing No. Figure 2

Drawing Title

Archaeological Features

Tel: 01865 263800 Fax: 01865 793496
email: mail@oxfordarch.co.uk
web: www.oxfordarch.co.uk



Detail Fig. 3

Detail Fig. 4







Banbury Flood Scheme

Oxford Archaeology

Janus House,
Osney Mead,
Oxford,
OX2 0ES.



Key

-  Edge of Evaluation
-  Trench
-  Prehistoric features
-  Roman Features
-  Medieval features
-  Undated

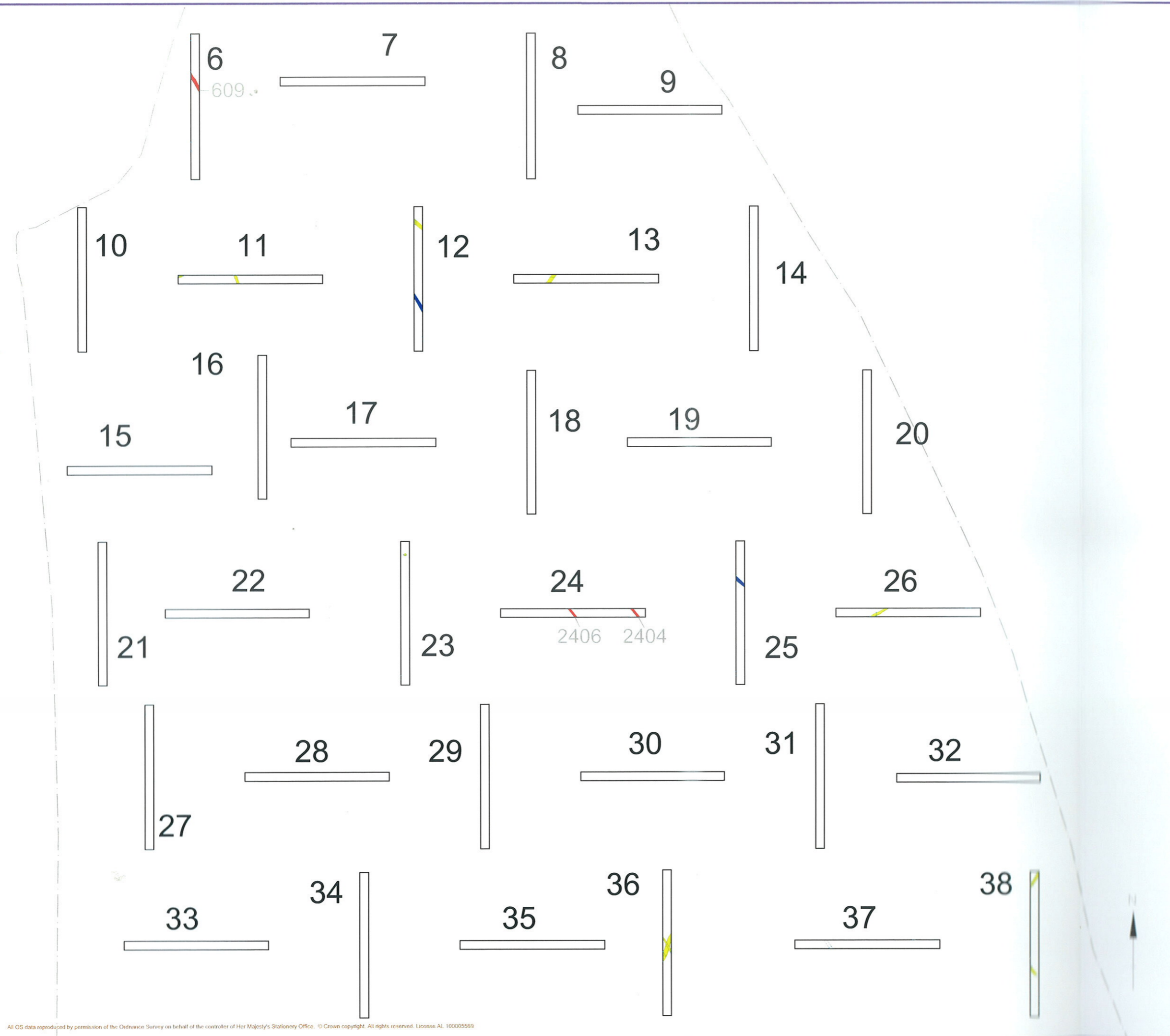
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Scale at
A3 1:750

Drawing
No. Figure 3

Drawing
Title Archaeological
Features -
Northern Half

Tel: 01865 263800 Fax: 01865 793496
email : mail@oxfordarch.co.uk
web : www.oxfordarch.co.uk



Banbury Flood Scheme

Oxford Archaeology

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Osney Mead,
Oxford,
OX2 0ES.



Key

-  Edge of Evaluation
-  Trench
-  Prehistoric features
-  Roman Features
-  Medieval features
-  Undated

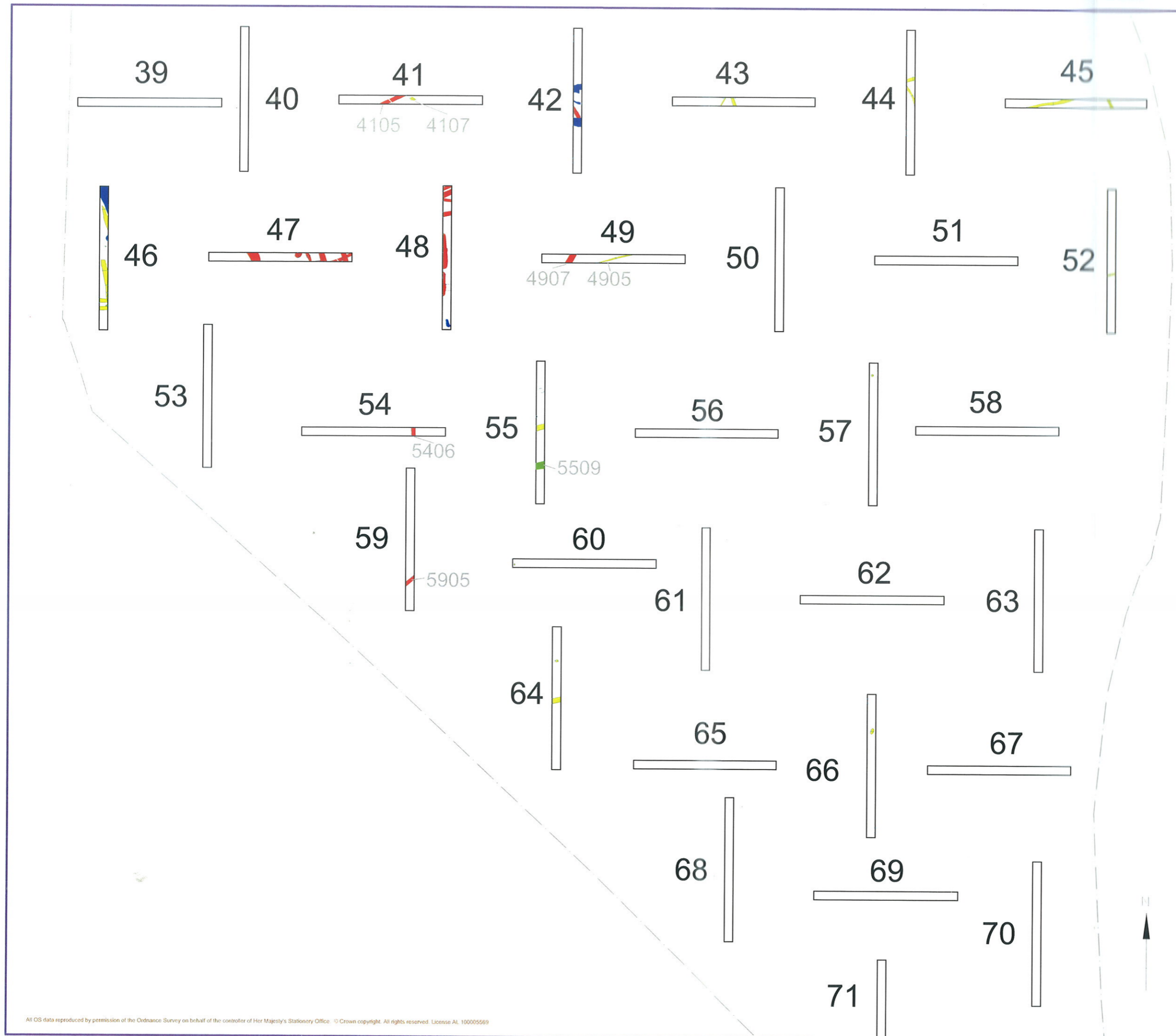
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Scale at
A3 1:750

Drawing
No. Figure 4

Drawing
Title Archaeological
Features -
Southern Half

Tel: 01865 263800 Fax: 01865 793496
email : mail@oxfordarch.co.uk
web : www.oxfordarch.co.uk



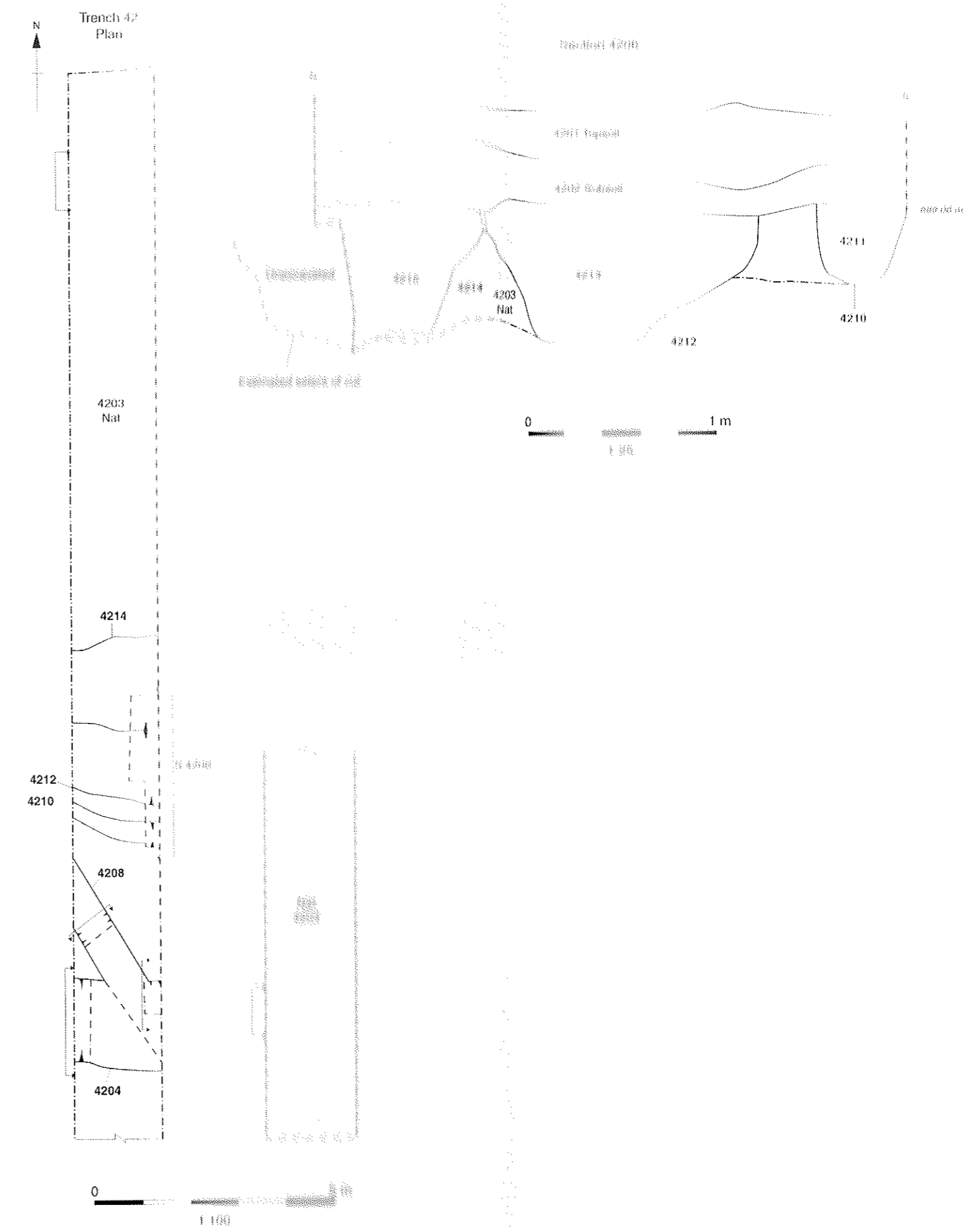
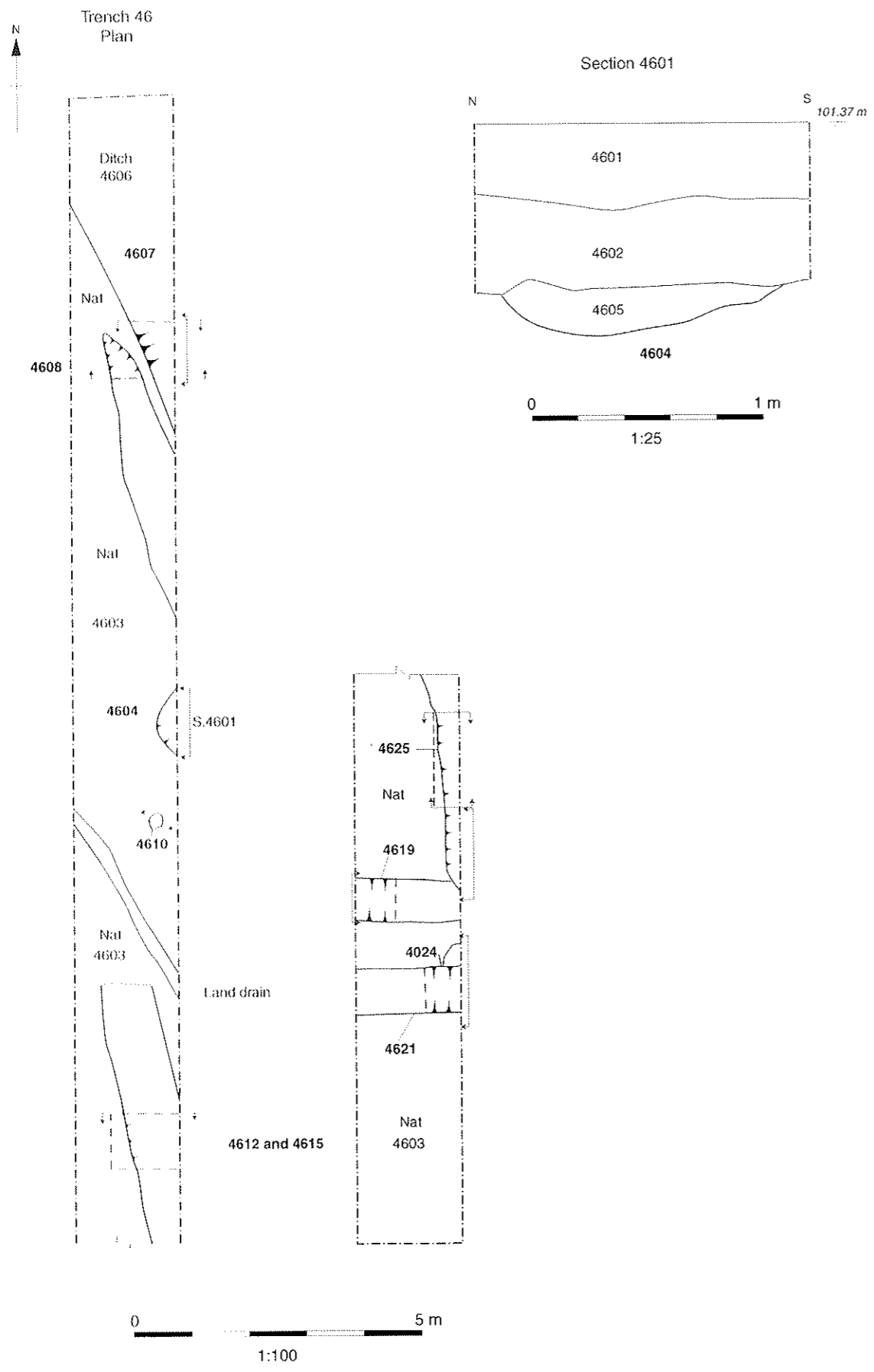


Figure 5: Trenches 46 and 42, plans and sections

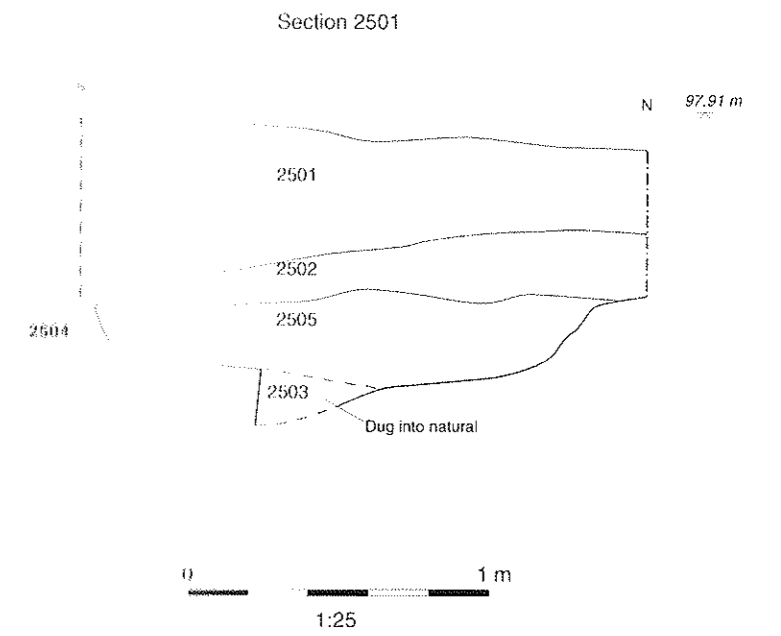
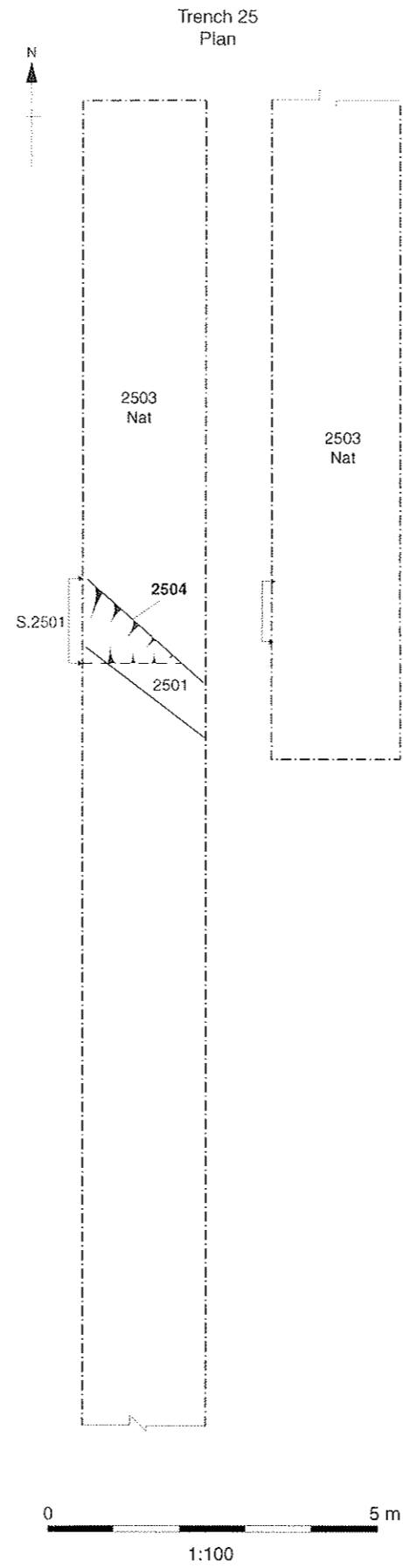
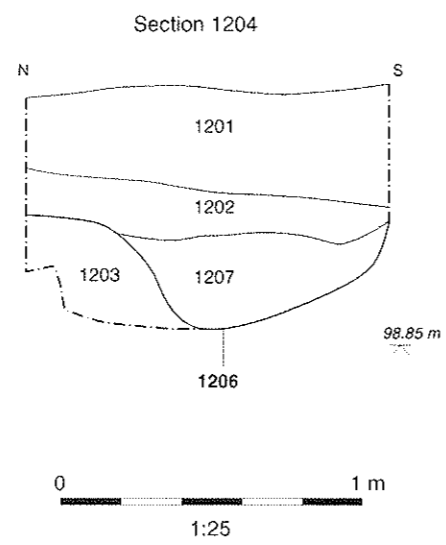
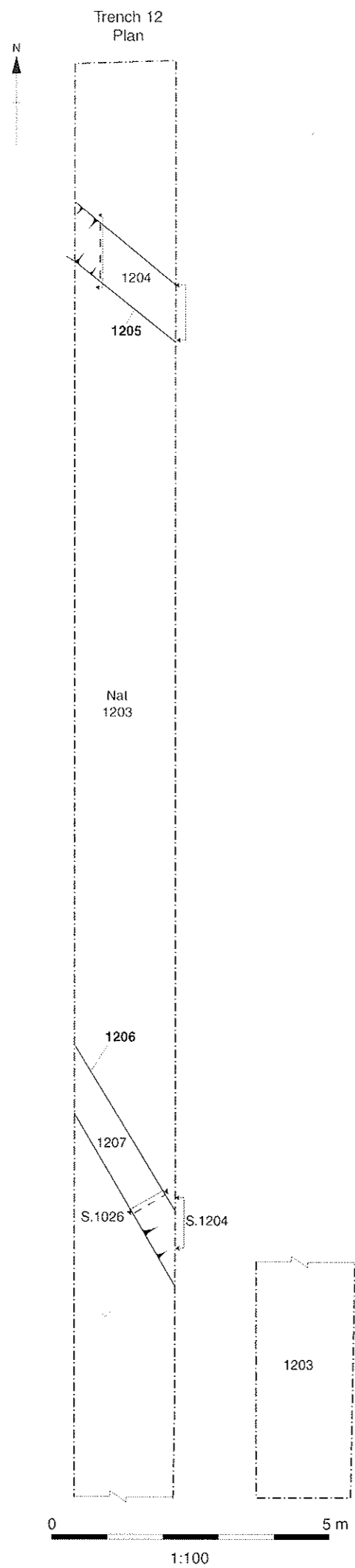


Figure 6: Trenches 12 and 25, plans and sections

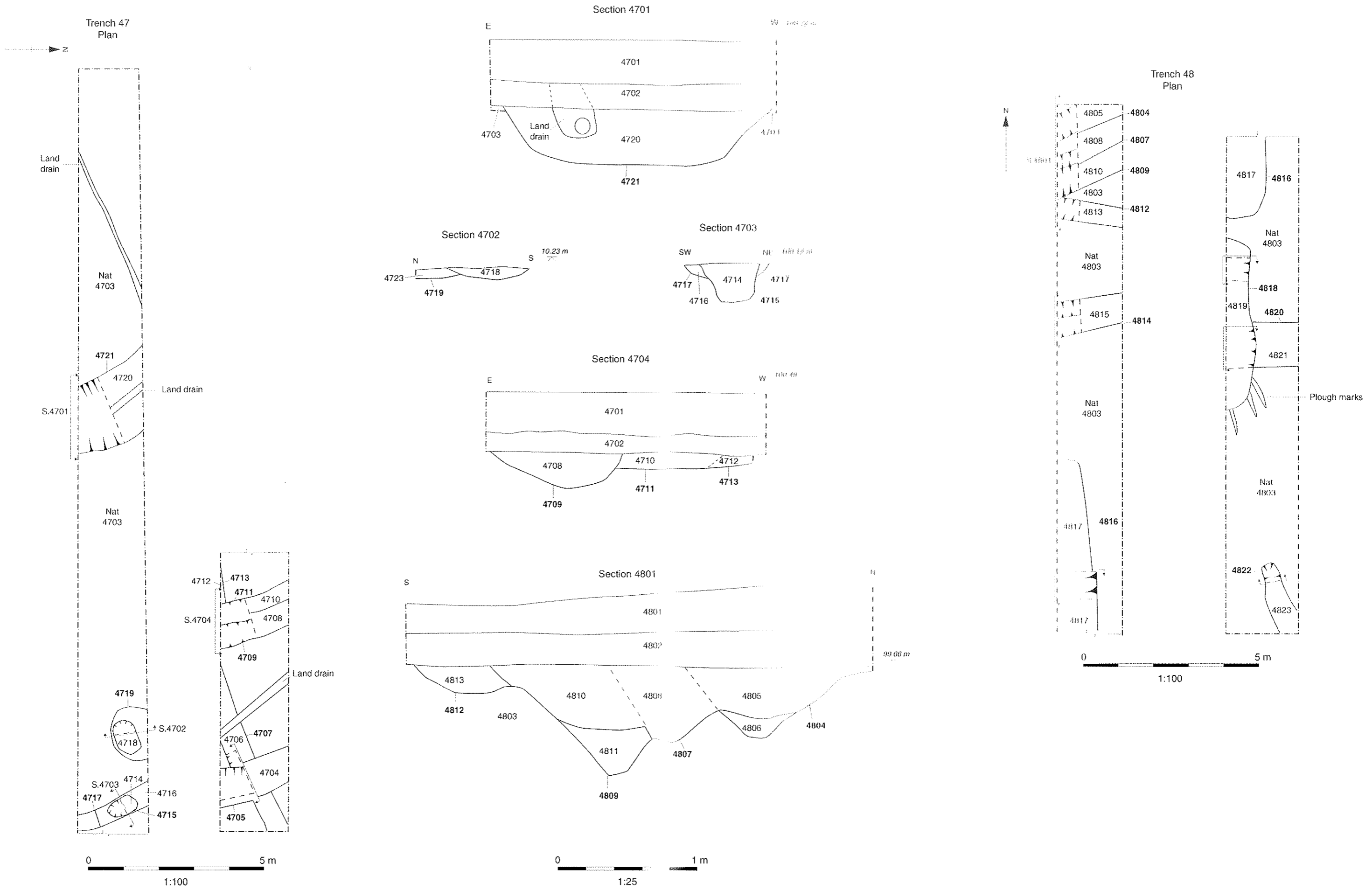


Figure 7: Trenches 47 and 48, plans and sections