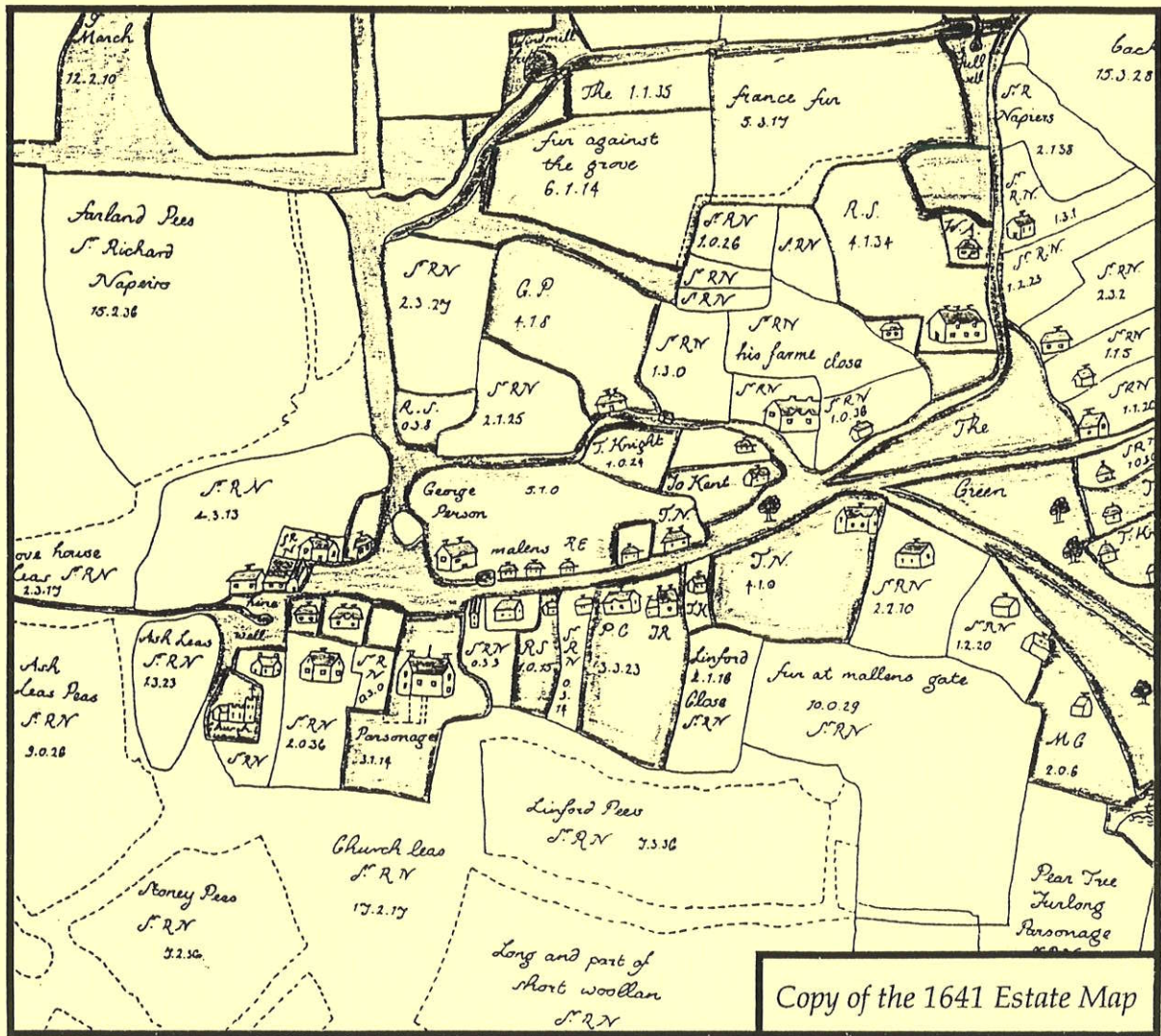


THE OLD RECTORY, GT LINFORD MILTON KEYNES (BUCKS)

Archaeological Evaluation & Earthwork Survey



OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

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THE OLD RECTORY, GT LINFORD, MILTON KEYNES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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THE OLD RECTORY, GT LINFORD, MILTON KEYNES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

SUMMARY

A field evaluation and earthwork survey was undertaken by the Oxford Archaeological Unit on a parcel of land to the south of The Old Rectory, Gt Linford on behalf of Derek Walker Associates between 30th August and 1st September 1994. The work was carried out in accordance with a brief set by the Buckinghamshire County Archaeologist on behalf of Milton Keynes Borough Council as a requirement for planning permission to develop the land for four residential properties. Four machine trenches were excavated on the sites of three of the proposed houses and through a low platform between the pond and the derelict dovecote. A large linear pond, at least 27 m long, over 8 m wide and 2 m deep, was located to the west of the existing pond. The pond was not dated but its proportions and the deposits sealing it suggest that it may have been a fishpond of possible medieval date. A large late 17th or early 18th century square pit had been dug through the north end of the pond. Both the pond and pit had been covered by a substantial layer of redeposited building materials in the middle of the 18th century when the area may have undergone major landscaping. A stone-built 'oven' of probable medieval date was located to the west of The Old Rectory. Traces of mortar around it suggest that it may originally have been contained within a small stone structure.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The archaeological evaluation was carried out in accordance with a brief set by the Buckinghamshire County Archaeologist on behalf of Milton Keynes Borough Council, as part of an application for planning permission for the erection of three new houses and associated garages, the renovation of, and the extension to an existing barn on land adjacent to The Old Rectory, Gt Linford.

Gt Linford has been the subject of intensive archaeological study (Mynard and Zeepvat 1992), resulting in a wealth of information on the medieval and later settlement pattern.

The proposed development site lies in the grounds of The Old Rectory. The existing building is a seventeenth century building, possibly incorporating part of an earlier structure (Woodfield 1986, 55). It is clearly shown on the 1641 Great Linford estate map (BAS 623/43) marked as 'The Parsonage'. The medieval church, sited less than 200 m to the north, has produced evidence of middle Saxon activity, raising the possibility that the north end of the village may have been founded in the mid to late Saxon period (Williams 1992, 95). Excavation in 1980 confirmed that the medieval manor house lay between the church and the rectory in the area behind the two

eighteenth century pavilions. No work has been carried out in the field known as ‘The Orchard’, to the immediate north of The Old Rectory, which may contain the remains of medieval ancillary buildings. The main development area to the south of The Old Rectory contains a pond shown on the 1678 estate map (BAS 633/43) with a drain running north-east towards the a spring known as the ‘Hine Well’. An earlier earthwork survey (Mynard and Zeepvat 1992, fig. 5) indicates a ditch running into the pond from the south and another running north-west before turning north towards the church. It has been suggested that this ditch may have been the rear property boundary of medieval tofts fronting the High Street, which originally extended further north across what is now the grounds of the manor. Open fields may have existed to the west of this boundary. Neither of the seventeenth century estate maps show any properties in the development area apart from the extant Old Rectory, the long stone barn to be converted into a dwelling and those surviving on the High Street frontage, although a seventeenth century dovecote survives between The Old Rectory and the Nag’s Head Public House.

1.2 Geology and Topography

The proposed development site lies in the north-western corner of the village of Great Linford, a former small rural settlement now entirely surrounded by modern housing developments (Fig. 1). It consists of a single parcel of land covering approximately 0.35 ha (centred SP 8513 4211) sited to the immediate south of The Old Rectory, to the east of a new housing development known as Parklands and 60 m to the west of the High Street (Fig. 3).

The ground slopes very gently from west to east (but see earthwork survey 2 below). The western half of the site was, at the time of the evaluation, very overgrown making access even by machine very difficult. While this may have adversely affected the earthwork survey, every effort was made to establish whether any earthworks existed in the overgrown parts of the site. The OS geological survey map (1:25000) shows the site to be on a mixture of Cornbrash and Kellaways Beds. This was confirmed in the trenches although, where deeper sondages were excavated Blisworth Clay was also encountered.

1.3 Purpose of the evaluation

To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains in the development area.

In particular to:-

- i.* Determine whether the Saxon occupation recorded to the north around the church extended further south.
- ii.* Determine whether any structures associated with the earliest rectory exist in the development area.

- iii. Determine whether the main development area was open land between the medieval crofts fronting the High Street and the open fields to the west.
- iv. Determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present.
- v. Establish the ecofactual/environmental potential of archaeological features.
- vi. Survey any visible earthworks in the development area to the south of The Old Rectory
- vii. Prepare a report on the findings for inclusion in an appropriate publication.

1.4 Evaluation methodology

Trenches

The evaluation was undertaken by machine excavation of four trenches 1.50 m wide and 12.5, 17.5, 15.0 and 18.5 m long. An additional 9 m long trench was excavated across the centre of, and perpendicular to the line of, Trench 4 giving a total length of trenches of 72.5 m representing a c. 3% sample of the main development site. The trenches were excavated by a JCB 3cx wheeled excavator using a 1.50 m wide toothless ditching bucket. It was originally intended that six trenches would be excavated, targeted on the main areas to be disturbed by house and driveway construction, but Trenches 1 and 2 (Fig. 3) were not excavated for reasons given below. Trenches 3 and 4 were relocated from their intended positions to avoid damage to an existing gravel driveway and a semi-mature tree respectively. Trenches 5 and 6 were located as near to their intended locations as was possible in the heavily overgrown area.

All trenches were planned at a scale of 1:100 and samples sections of the stratigraphy of each trench and sections of features were drawn at a scale of 1:20 or, in several instances, at 1:50. Written recording was in accordance with the standard OAU method (Wilkinson 1992) and the methodology set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (OAU 1994). For reasons of Health and Safety, where Trenches 3 and 4 were excavated deeper than 1.4 m, only very limited recording was undertaken and no additional excavation by hand was possible.

All the trenches were backfilled, and where possible compacted by the JCB, with the spoil that had been removed. The north end of Trench 6, containing the stone-built 'oven', was covered with a 6 m long polythene sheet to facilitate the removal of the backfill in the event that further work is required in the future.

Survey

Following the backfilling of the trenches a survey of the extant earthworks was undertaken at a scale of 1:200 as part of the brief set by the County Archaeologist. The purpose of the survey was threefold:

- i.* To place the archaeological findings within the trenches into context.
- ii.* To confirm the extent of the earthworks recorded in the earlier survey of the entire village.
- iii.* To record any surviving earthworks or other landscape features before they are destroyed by the housing development.

2. THE EARTHWORKS (Fig. 2)

The main earthwork survey of the village (Mynard and Zeepvat 1992, fig. 5) shows a pond in the approximate centre of the development site. A large 'drain' is shown linking this pond to three others to the south, and a large ditch is shown running away from the north-west corner of the pond in a NWW direction before turning due north to run across the rear garden of The Old Rectory. Ridge and furrow aligned east to west is also shown butting up to the west side of this boundary. The Gt Linford Estate map of 1678 (BAS 633/43) clearly shows the pond with a watercourse leaving the north-east end of the pond running in a north-east direction before turning north to join the Hine Well (Mynard and Zeepvat 1992, 13), a spring located 75 m east of the church.

No evidence for the ditch, supposedly located to the west side of The Old Rectory, could be seen (Fig. 2). There is, however, a scarp created by a cutting into which The Old Rectory appears to have been constructed. Alternatively the scarp could have been created by a build up of material, although examination of the surrounding topography suggests that the former interpretation is the more likely. This scarp, which is aligned north-south, becomes less pronounced in a southern direction and disappears where it meets the south end of the pond.

The watercourse shown on the 1678 is no longer visible, although it is reputed to run in a stone-built culvert across the front of The Old Rectory. A stone man-hole cover (which was not investigated) and a slight dip in the lawn in front of the rectory correspond with its suggested alignment.

The pond itself is clearly of some antiquity having been shown on the 1678 map. Although it is now very overgrown and heavily silted it is still 22 m long and up to 16 m wide. Traces of a drystone lining, visible up to five courses high, remain at the base of its west and south sides. While they appear to be straight, insufficient was either visible or has survived to determine the shape and dimensions of the original stone lining. A 3 m wide drainage ditch connects the south-east corner of the pond

with a 2.5 m wide ditch forming the southern boundary of the development site. To the immediate north of the latter a 3.8 m wide section of the open drain has been culverted, presumably for ease of access to the south-west part of the garden. The culvert, which is constructed of bricks of 18th or even 19th century type is arched, 0.60 m wide and 0.40+ m high (it is now heavily silted), with vertical brick cheeks at either end. On the southern side of the east-west boundary ditch a simple brick structure has been constructed at the point at which the open drain to the south enters the ditch.

A small mound in the north-west corner of the garden may be a modern landscape feature and another in the south-east corner, against the east brick boundary wall, may be a midden. Another low mound to the north-west of the pond is almost certainly an ash dump and low earthworks to either side of the metal railings to the south of the house may be associated with the large conifers growing on them. A pronounced platform, 18 x 10 m across, between the pond and the dovecote proved on excavation (Trench 3) to have been created by the dumping of ash, cinders and modern rubbish.

The remainder of the area was for the most part either level or very gently sloping from west to east.

3 THE EVALUATION TRENCHES (Figs 3-7)

3.1 Trench Descriptions

Trench 1

Trench 1, sited in the south-east corner of the Orchard to the north of The Old Rectory (Fig. 3), was intended to investigate an area proposed for car parking. Since this carpark was not included in the formal planning application the trench was not excavated.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was intended to investigate the site of a proposed extension to the existing stone barn (Fig. 3). It was decided, principally on Health and Safety grounds, that it would be dangerous to excavate this trench. A c. 3.5 m high unsupported wall would have overlooked the trench and it is believed that below-ground services run across the proposed trench location.

Trench 3

This 12.5 m long trench (Fig. 4), aligned approximately E-W and sited between the 17th century dovecote and the north end of the pond (Fig. 3), was relocated at the request of the County Archaeologist to investigate a possible platform. It was found that the platform had been created by a 0.40 m thick deposit of ash and cinders which

overlay a 0.45 m thick layer of very loose black garden loam (Layer 3/1). The topsoil had accumulated, or more likely had been deposited, over a thick deposit of clayey rubble (3/2) containing fragments of roof tile, brick and small pieces of stone. Mixed in with the deposit were fragments of wine bottle and pottery of mid 18th century date. This deposit which extended along the entire length of the trench sloped from 0.18 m thick at the west end to 1.15 m thick towards the south end, where it had been dumped into the top of a late 17th or early 18th century pit (3/6).

Only two sides of this steeply sloping straight-sided pit were located, but originally it must have been at least 3 m across. Its depth is more difficult to estimate since it had been partially infilled with the rubble. Its base was located at 2.40 m below present day ground level but when dug it would have been c. 1.50 m deep from the contemporary ground surface. No hand excavation was possible owing to its depth but two layers were visible. The upper layer (3/7), a mid brown clayey silt, also contained some building materials in its matrix and two wine bottle of early to mid 18th century date. The lower even more clayey primary layer (3/9) contained a wine bottle of late 17th or very early 18th century date.

This large pit (3/6) had been dug through the partially silted up northern end of a very large linear feature (3/5). Insufficient of this feature was excavated in this trench for its overall dimensions or form to be intelligible, but a complete cross-section was excavated in Trench 4 and has been described below. In this Trench only the western side of the feature and parts of its fill (Layers 3/4 and 3/10) were located, sealed beneath what is thought to be the pre-18th century topsoil (Layer 3/3).

Trench 4

This 17.5 m long trench (Fig. 5), aligned approximately N-S, revealed the eastern edge of a very large linear feature interpreted as a pond. Since the alignment of the trench and the feature were very similar another 9 m long trench was dug at right angles to the first to determine the width of the feature and to reveal a cross section. The pond (4/4) was found to have been up to 8.0 m wide and at least 18 m long since it extended along the entire length of the trench. Its full depth was not ascertained but part of the trench was excavated to a depth of 2.0 m below the modern ground surface and there was no sign of its base. The sides of the feature sloped down at an angle of only about 25 degrees, having been dug through a superficial yellow clay deposit into the deeper blue, totally impermeable, Blisworth clay. It is probable that the centre of the pond flattened off at about 2.5 to 3 m deep.

The lower fill (4/11) consisted of a mottled reddish-brown and grey silt which was similar to an alluvium and had clearly been water deposited. The thickness of this layer was not ascertained but it was at least 0.50 m thick and probably considerably more. A 0.25 - 0.30 m thick deposit of even redder silt (4/5) overlay the primary silt (4/11) and followed the contour of the feature. The consistency of Layers 4/11 and 4/5 was near identical but the more reddish hue of the latter had undoubtedly resulted from a greater degree of oxidation. Running parallel with, and just within, the east side of the feature was a later shallow cut (3/9) only 1.20 m wide and 0.30 m deep,

filled with a darker grey silt (4/10), sealed by the oxidised layer (4/5).

A 0.30 m thick layer of clayey rubble (4/2), identical to that found in Trench 3 (3/2), had been dumped over and was entirely sealing the naturally deposited layers in the pond. This deposit had been covered with a 0.65 m thick layer of very dark topsoil (3/1). It was noticeable that the rubble deposit dipped down into the narrower cut (3/9) in the already substantially silted up pond.

A possible pit (4/7) filled by a silt (4/8), similar to the oxidised layer (4/5), was noted to the east of the large feature. A remnant of the pre-18th century topsoil (4/3), similar to 3/3 in Trench 3, was also noted slumping into the eastern edge of the pond.

The lowest layer (4/11) contained bone but no dating evidence. The upper oxidised layer (4/5) contained a decorated 17th century tin-glazed sherd. The rubble deposit (4/2), which is clearly a continuation of that (3/2) noted in Trench 3, also contained 18th century finds.

The interpretation of this feature is discussed more fully below but it is believed to be a large pond, which had substantially silted up by the 17th century but would have been clearly visible as a marshy hollow. The 18th century rubble had been used to fill in the pond. The narrower channel along its east side was not dated, but may have been a late attempt to either drain the feature, or to allow water to flow through it.

Trench 5

This 15 m long trench, aligned approximately NW-SE, was excavated to an average depth of 0.60 m down to a yellowish brown clay. A 0.25 m thick modern topsoil (5/1) overlay a thin layer of mortary rubble (5/2), which in turn sealed a 0.25 m thick browner topsoil (5/3). The rubble deposit was much thinner than in Trenches 3 and 4 and was only intermittently visible along the trench, having been used to fill in slight hollows in the ground surface sometime in the 18th century.

The only feature was a 0.60 m diameter bowl-shaped pit (5/4) near the centre of the trench. The pit, filled with a dark brown clayey silt (5/5), was only 0.20 m deep and contained finds of 19th or 20th century date.

Trench 6

This 18.5 m long trench (Fig. 6), aligned approximately N-S, was excavated to an average depth of 0.55 m down to a yellow clay, through which several outcrops of weathered limestone projected. A modern pet burial (6/9), probably of a cat, was noted but not excavated towards the south end of the trench. A stone-lined drain (6/6) ran across the trench on an approximate east to west alignment, probably emptying into the north end of the pond. The drain had been constructed of limestone slabs laid on edge in a narrow trench only 0.15 m wide. A flat capping stone had been laid over the lower stone forming a 'T' shape and the remainder of the upper construction trench had been filled with smaller stones. A shallow 'ditch' (6/5), 1.1 m wide but

only 0.15 m deep, on an identical alignment to the drain was located 1.5 m further north. Neither the drain or the ditch produced any dating evidence.

A stone-built structure (6/4) interpreted as an 'oven' was partially exposed in the north end of the trench (Fig. 6 and Plate 1). Once the structure had been recognised the remaining overburden was excavated by hand. Although the construction cut (6/11), filled by Layer 6/10, was identified no attempt was made to either remove its fill or to dismantle the structure. Only the fill of the chamber (6/14) and that of the flue (6/13) were removed. The machine trench had cut obliquely across the line of the 'oven' revealing part of what may have been a circular chamber c. 1.30 m diameter and a narrow flue at least 1.70 m long. The chamber, which was filled with a rubble deposit (6/14), had been lined with small stones, surviving to two courses and 0.14 m high, all of which showed evidence of having been burnt on their inner face. The chamber floor had been constructed of limestone slabs up to 0.35 m across which also retained evidence of having been exposed to burning.

The flue, which was clearly an integral component of the structure, was 0.25 m wide and up to a maximum of 0.18 m deep. It was at least 1.7 m long although its north-east end extended into the east side of the trench. It had been constructed of slightly larger stones, also surviving to two courses high, overlying the floor slabs. The sides of the flue showed little evidence of having been burnt, although the stone floor, made of slabs up to 0.50 m long, had been burnt nearest the 'oven' chamber and the fill (6/13) contained more ashy material than that of the chamber.

Four stony mortary deposits (6/16-19) were noted in the trench sections to either side of the 'oven'. At the time of machine excavation these were thought to have been parts of the 18th century rubble spreads noted elsewhere on the site. However, with the recognition of the stone-built 'oven' it is more likely that they relate to this period and may even be the remnants of 'robbed-out' walls, although this interpretation is highly speculative. One of the mortary deposits (6/19) overlay the flue and this relationship, together with the form of the other three deposits, suggests that whatever they represent has been badly disturbed.

Both the 'oven' and the mortary deposits had been sealed beneath a brownish-grey buried soil (6/15) which may be the same as the pre-18th century soil horizons noted in Trenches 3 and 4. This had been covered by a darker soil (6/2) and a very humic soil (6/1), almost certainly derived from both recent gardening activities and leaf matter from the under growth and nearby trees.

The soil horizon 6/15 contained a small sherd of probable 17th century date and the construction trench 6/10 contained two fragments of clay peg tile. Unfortunately the latter could date from any time after the 14th century (Mynard and Zeepvat 1992, 207). No other artefacts were recovered from the 'oven' to give any indication of its date, although on its general analogy with other similar circular stone ovens found during excavations elsewhere at Gt Linford it is likely to be of medieval date.

3.2 The Finds

Pottery by Lucy Bown

Two medieval sherds and 103 sherds of post medieval date, weighing 1.8 Kg, were recovered from the four trenches.

Medieval pottery

One medieval grey sandy ware sherd - type MS3 (Mynard and Zeepvat 1992, 260) was found in the spoil from Trench 4.

One sherd of Olney Hyde 'B' ware - type MSC6 (*ibid.*, 259) was found in Layer 3/2 and is certainly residual.

Post-medieval pottery

Staffordshire Manganese Speckled Ware

Three sherds from the simple everted rim of the same cup or bowl, dating from the mid to late 18th century, were found in the upper fill (3/7) of Pit 3/6.

Glazed Red Earthenware

Three types of earthenware were found:

1) Plain lead glazed: Nine sherds from various vessels found in Layers 3/2, 3/7, 4/2 and 5/2 have a brick red earthenware type fabric and plain internal lead glaze. Two rim fragments, from the same pancheon in Layer 3/2, are the only diagnostic sherds present.

2) Slip decorated red earthenware: Seven sherds in a brick red earthenware have a distinctive style of decoration which uses areas of marbled white slip coloured by different glazes to produce a marbled pattern of green, yellow and brown. These are likely to be examples of Northamptonshire marbled slipwares (type PM37 - Mynard and Zeepvat 1992, 340). Five sherds are from the same pancheon (found in Layers 3/2 and 3/7). Two sherds, found in the buried topsoil (Layer 6/15) sealing the stone-lined oven, are from a flanged dish or plate decorated carefully with white slip on the interior of the flanged rim which is scored with fine incised lines. This particular vessel is reminiscent of the Rhenish Werra Slipware products of later 16th or early 17th century date.

3) Cistercian-type: Two sherds, from Layers 3/2 and 4/2, in a dark brick red earthenware glazed with brown lead glaze on both internal and external surface are copies of the earlier 16th/17th century Cistercian ware industry. Both sherds are from finely thrown cups and are likely to be 18th century copies made in the local industry at Potterspury/Yardley Gobion.

Staffordshire Brown-slipped Ware

Thirty sherds, from Layers 3/2, 3/7 and 5/2, are characterised by the mixed red and white firing body clay and an internal underglaze red/brown slip painted on the internal surface producing a dark brown colour under the clear lead glaze. These sherds are from a minimum of two vessels which are shallow open bowls with an inturned rounded rim deep bowls/pancheons with a squared rim. All are typical mid to late 18th-century products of Staffordshire.

Staffordshire Comb-decorated Slipware

Three thick sherds, from Layer 3/7, are from a press-moulded shallow dish decorated with feathered brown slip trailing and are typical of 18th-century Staffordshire products.

Staffordshire White Salt-glazed Ware

Thirty sherds from Layers 3/2 and 3/7 derive from two plates with diaper and seed/barley decoration on the rim, one straight sided jar and three bowls. Such vessels date to the period 1720-70.

Tin-glazed Earthenware

Five sherds of varying date are in tin glazed earthenware were found. The earliest are two sherds, from the upper fill 4/5 of Pond 4/4, are from a drug jar painted with cobalt blue and manganese purple decoration and are likely to of mid to late 17th century date. The remaining three sherds, from Layers 3/2 and 3/7, have either a plain white tin glaze or pale blue glaze which is characteristic of 18th century tin glazed products.

Chinese Porcelain

Four sherds, from Layer 3/7, reconstruct the profile of a small tea cup with footring base probably of early 18th-century date.

Nottingham Stoneware

Two sherds, from Layer 3/7, are from the base of an early 18th century tankard.

Pearlware/Transfer Printed Ware

Eight sherds from the topsoil (5/1) in Trench 5 are from cups, saucers and small bowls. Such products, decorated with transfer prints, are of 19th-century date.

Glass

Trenches 3 and 4 produced a number of fragments of wine bottle, the diagnostic pieces of which are listed in more detail below. All are made of a mid-green glass and two from Layers 3/2 and 3/7 still retained their corks. The earliest examples showed little evidence of corrosion having been made of a different metal.

- 3/2 Rim, neck and part of shoulder of onion-shaped bottle c. 1680-1720.
Neck and shoulder of 18th century bottle - rim missing.
- 3/7 Rim, neck and shoulder of onion-shaped bottle c. 1700-30.
Two rims and necks of upright bottles c. 1730-60.
Fragments of three bases with rounded kick-ups, one is 92 mm diameter.
- 3/9 Neck, shoulder and upper body of onion-shaped bottle of late 17th or very early 18th century date.
Three bases with rounded kick-ups - 95, 101 and ? mm diameter.
- 4/2 Rim and upper neck of mid 18th century upright bottle.
- 5/2 Two fragments of undatable wine bottle base.
- 5/5 Fragment of light green angular-sided bottle of 19th or 20th century date.

Animal bone/shell

Very small amounts of animal bone were collected from Layers 3/2, 3/7, 4/4 and 4/11. A more significant amount was recorded from the reddish silt layer (4/3) in the top of the pond (4/4). No attempt has been made to identify the bone. Several oyster shells were collected from Layers 3/7 and 4/2.

Tile

Several contexts contained small fragments of undiagnostic orange sandy roof tile. Only the construction trench fill (6/10) around the 'oven' contained any sizeable pieces. None were sufficiently complete to measure but one fragment retained two circular peg holes only 60 mm apart (measured between centres).

Other

One iron nail was found in the fill (5/5) of Pit (5/4)

One claypipe stem was found in the upper fill (3/7) of Pit 3/6.

One plain bone knife handle was found in the rubble Layer 3/2.

3.3 Environmental Evidence

A 15 litre soil sample was taken from the fill (6/13) of the 'oven' flue for future flotation and wet-sieving for carbonised plant remains and other finds which may indicate the function of the structure.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability of methodology

No significant problems were encountered with any of the trenches apart from the considerable depth of Trenches 3 and 4 which prevented any additional excavation by hand. The sample size, comprising c. 3% of the proposed development area, with the trenches targeted on the main areas of disturbance, is believed to have been sufficient to have provided an assessment of the level of archaeological activity which existed on the site.

4.2 Interpretation

The discovery of a large pond, at least 27 m long, over 8 m wide and over 2 m deep, to the immediate east of the existing pond was unexpected. Since only the existing pond is shown on the estate map of 1678, which has been shown to be a reasonably true representation of the village at this period, it must be concluded that the filled in pond was either only a marshy hollow by this period or had been entirely filled in. The discovery of a 17th century sherd in its upper fill, sealed beneath the 18th century rubble deposited dumped in the top of the pond, suggests that the pond is of either of medieval or very early post-medieval date. Ponds of this linear form (Aston 1988), when connected with sites of relatively high prestige (Steane 1985, 171), in this instance a parsonage/rectory and manor only 120 m to the north, were frequently used as fishponds rather than as waterholes for stock. Although highly speculative, it is possible that both the infilled pond and the extant pond were contemporary and that when the grounds were landscaped in the 18th century only one pond was retained. Whether the stone lining in the existing pond dates to this period of activity or is a survival of a much earlier phase remains uncertain.

The discovery of a very large late 17th or early 18th century pit, only a short distance to the west of the 17th century stone dovecote, is also surprising. Unfortunately, owing to its considerable depth, it was not possible to investigate it thoroughly and its original function is unknown.

In the early to middle 18th century considerable quantities of building rubble and domestic refuse were dumped into any hollows on the site, presumably to create a more level surface. This may have occurred at the same time as the grounds of the recently built manor were also being landscaped and the stone pavilions were built over the former site of the medieval manor house. It has previously been noted (Mynard and Zeepvat 1992, 134) that the slope in front of the two pavilions was

'smoothed out' by the addition of building rubble, including quantities of medieval window glass removed from the nearby church during restoration work. While the origin of the building rubble is unknown, the demolition of the entire medieval manor house in the late 17th century, the rebuilding of the chancel and major renovations of the church in the early 18th century and the construction of the new manor house, pavilions, almshouses, and otterhound kennels, would undoubtedly have generated an enormous quantity of unwanted rubble. Consequently it is not improbable to believe that some of this was used during the 18th century in the grounds of The Old Rectory to fill in a number of unwanted and probably unsightly hollows.

No evidence of any medieval structures was found to the south-east of The Old Rectory at the nearest point to the High Street. However, the discovery of a stone-built 'oven', possibly contained within a small structure, sited to the rear of The Old Rectory was even more unexpected. This is all the more surprising since it is sited over 100 m from what is believed to have been the main medieval street frontage and at the very rear of any property boundaries. Consequently it seems more likely that it was associated with a substantial medieval building around which the surviving rectory was constructed in the 17th century. Without further work it is impossible to establish whether this is an isolated structure or part of a larger complex of ancillary structures/buildings.

Although the 'oven' remains undated it is likely to be of later medieval date by analogy with other circular examples found during previous excavations in Gt Linford (Mynard and Zeepvat 1992). This example is of identical proportions to a 13th to early 15th century example found in the bakehouse complex in Croft G (*ibid.* 75) but which only had a short 0.30 m wide flue. Circular oven bases are a comparatively common feature on medieval sites where the buildings are built of stone such as Lyveden, Northants. (Steane and Bryant 1975) where they also ranged from *c.* 1 to 1.6 m in diameter. The example at The Old Rectory, however, differs from all those known to the writer in that it has an exceptionally long narrow flue. The flue seems unnecessarily long to have served a stoking purpose. Since only part of the circular chamber was revealed, it is possible that a more conventional stoke hole exists and that the narrow flue served an alternative purpose, perhaps sharing the heat with an another adjacent structure. It has also been previously demonstrated that such ovens are frequently associated with circular copper bases and malting kilns further raising the possibility that this 'oven' is not isolated.

Robert J Williams
Oxford Archaeological Unit
September 1994

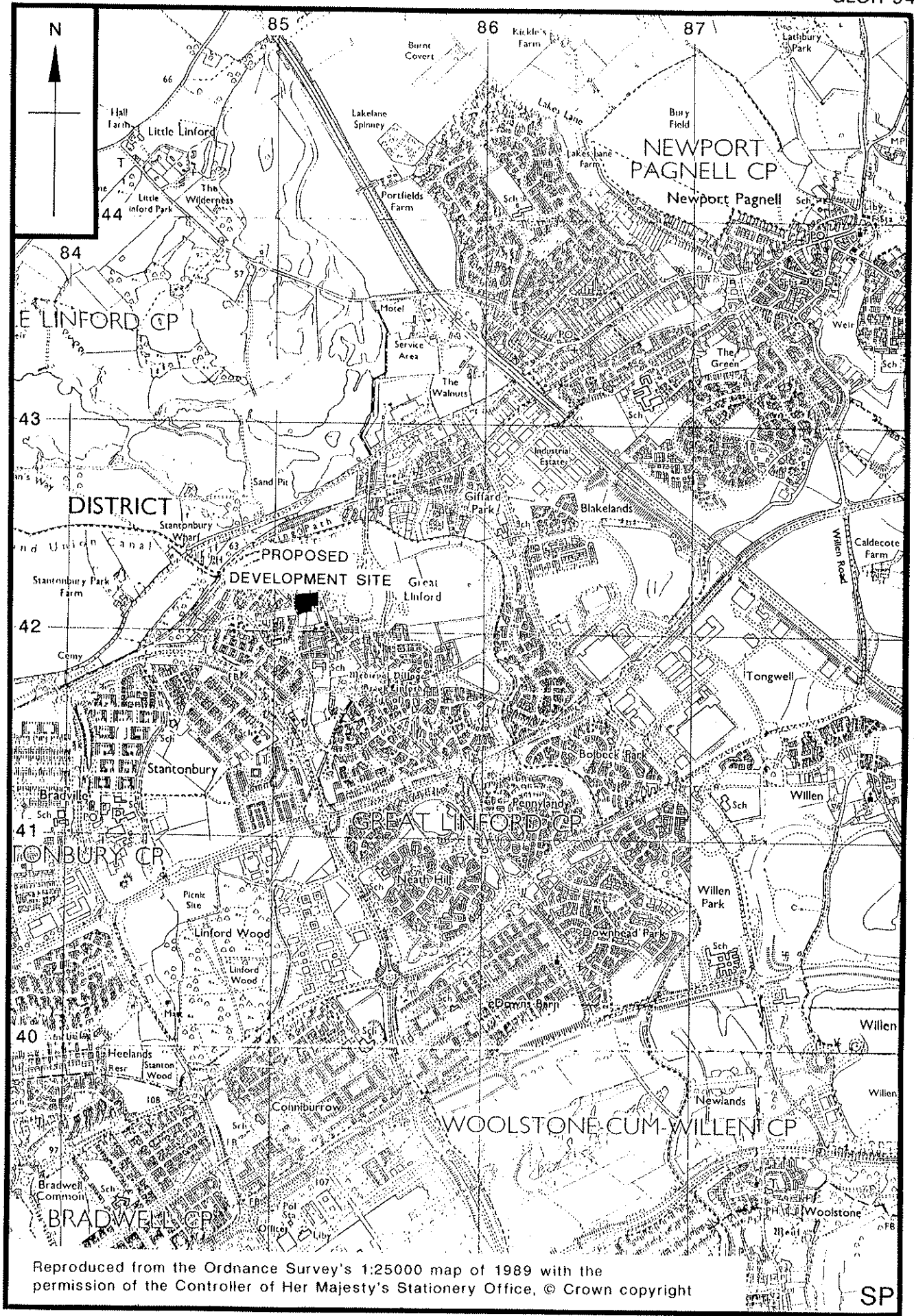
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5. ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context No.</i>	<i>Context Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comments</i>
3/1	layer	-	0.50	Modern topsoil/ash midden
3/2	layer	-	1.10	18th cent. rubble deposit
3/3	layer	-	0.35	? pre-18th cent. topsoil
3/4	fill	-	0.25	Upper fill of 'pond' 3/5
3/5	pond	?	?	? Northern extension of pond 4/4
3/6	pit	3.30	2.40	18th cent. square pit
3/7	fill	-	0.45	Upper fill of Pit 3/6
3/8	natural	-	-	Natural substrate
3/9	fill	-	0.40	Lower fill of Pit 3/6
3/10	fill	-	0.40+	Lower fill of Pond 3/5
4/1	layer	-	0.65	Modern topsoil
4/2	layer	-	0.30	18th cent rubble deposit
4/3	layer	-	0.25	? pre-18th cent. topsoil
4/4	pond	c.8.0	2.10+	? Southern extension of 3/5
4/5	fill	-	0.25	Upper fill of pond 4/4
4/6	natural	-	-	Natural substrate
4/7	cut	1.50+	0.20	Possible shallow pit
4/8	fill	1.50+	0.20	Fill of 4/7
4/9	cut	1.20	0.30	Recut channel in pond 4/4
4/10	fill	1.20	0.20	Fill of recut channel 4/9
4/11	fill	c.8.0	0.90+	Primary fill of pond 4/4
5/1	layer	-	0.24	Modern topsoil
5/2	layer	-	0.14	18th cent. rubble deposit
5/3	layer	-	0.24	?pre-18th cent. topsoil

<i>Context No.</i>	<i>Context Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comments</i>
5/4	pit	0.60	0.20	Post medieval pit
5/5	fill	0.60	0.20	Fill of Pit 5/4
5/6	natural	-	-	Natural substrate
6/1	layer	-	0.10	Recent humic topsoil
6/2	layer	-	0.22	Modern topsoil
6/3	natural	-	-	Natural substrate
6/4	'oven'	1.30	0.15	Circular oven with long flue of ? medieval date
6/5	cut	1.20	0.16	Shallow ditch
6/6	drain	0.30	0.50	Narrow stone-lined drain
6/7	fill	1.20	0.16	Fill of Ditch 6/5
6/8	fill	0.30	0.50	Fill of stone-lined Drain 6/6
6/9	burial pit	0.40	-	Modern pet burial
6/10	fill	-	-	Fill of construction trench around 'oven' 6/4
6/11	cut	-	-	Construction trench around 'oven' 6/4
6/12	stone lining	-	-	Structural lining of base and walls of 'oven' 6/4
6/13	fill	0.25	0.16	Fill of the narrow flue of 'oven' 6/4
6/14	fill	1.30	0.14	Fill of the chamber of 'oven' 6/4
6/15	layer	-	0.20	Stony layer beneath topsoils 6/1 & 6/2
6/16	layer	2.30	0.08	Stony mortar deposit (same as 6/17)
6/17	layer	2.50	0.10	Stony mortar deposit (same as 6/16)
6/18	layer	1.70	0.25	Stony mortar deposit (same as 6/19)
6/19	layer	2.11	0.14	Stony mortar deposit (same as 6/18)



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figure 1: Site location

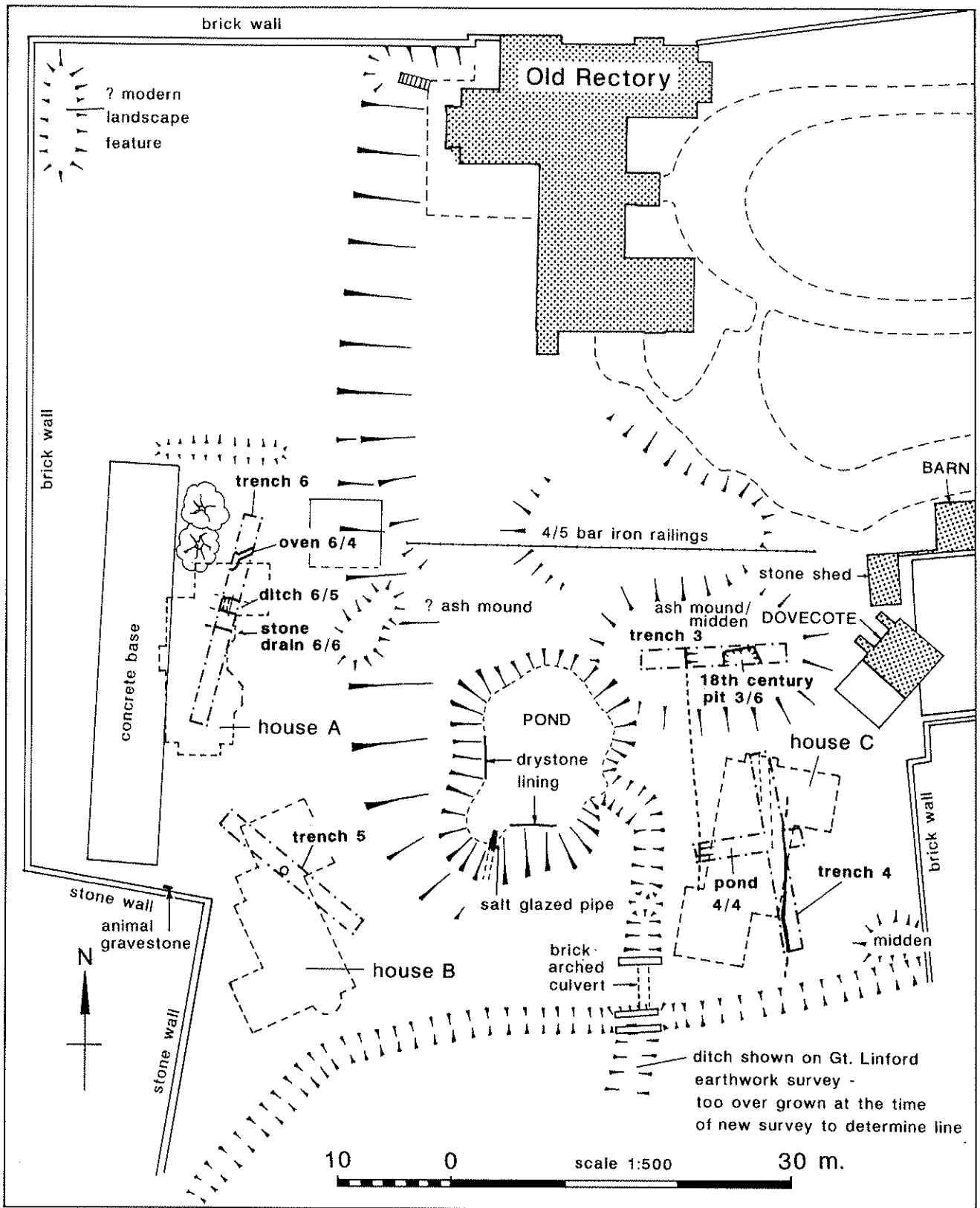


figure 2: Earthwork survey

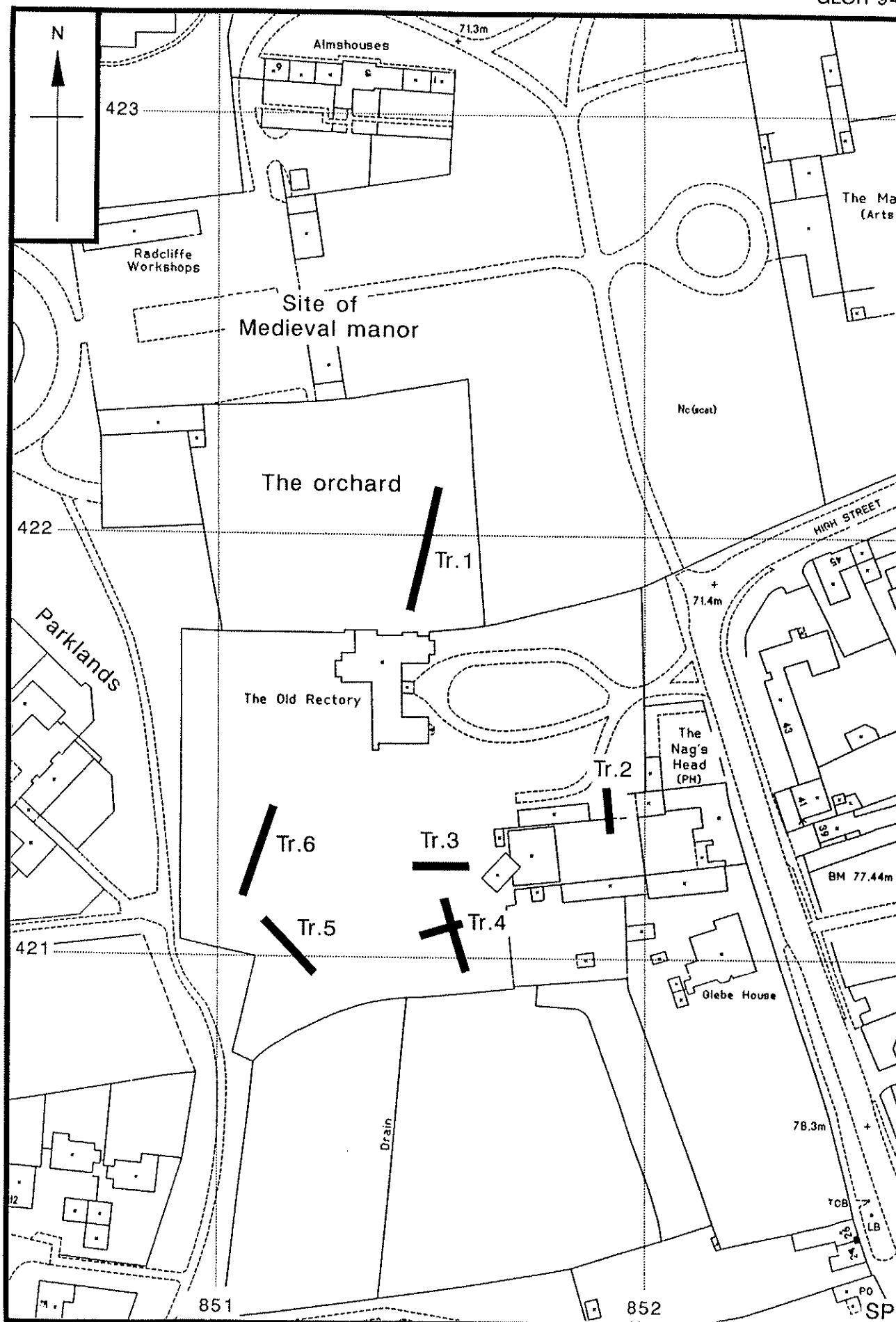


figure 3: Trench location

Trench 3

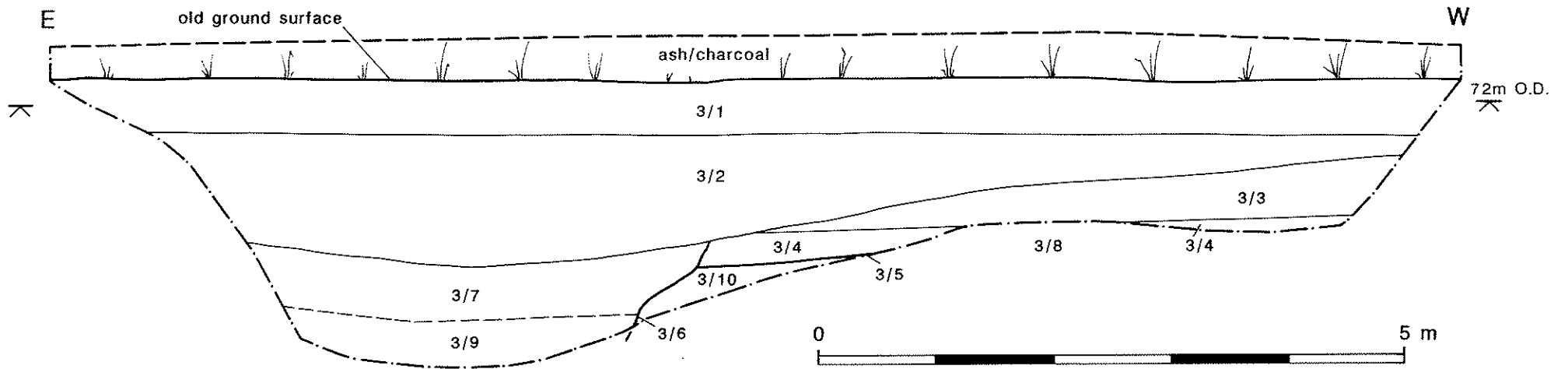
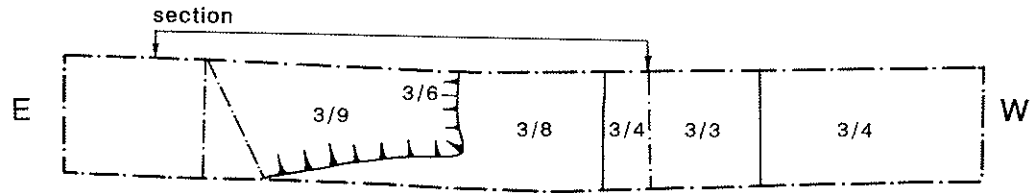


figure 4: Trench 3 plan & section

Trench 4

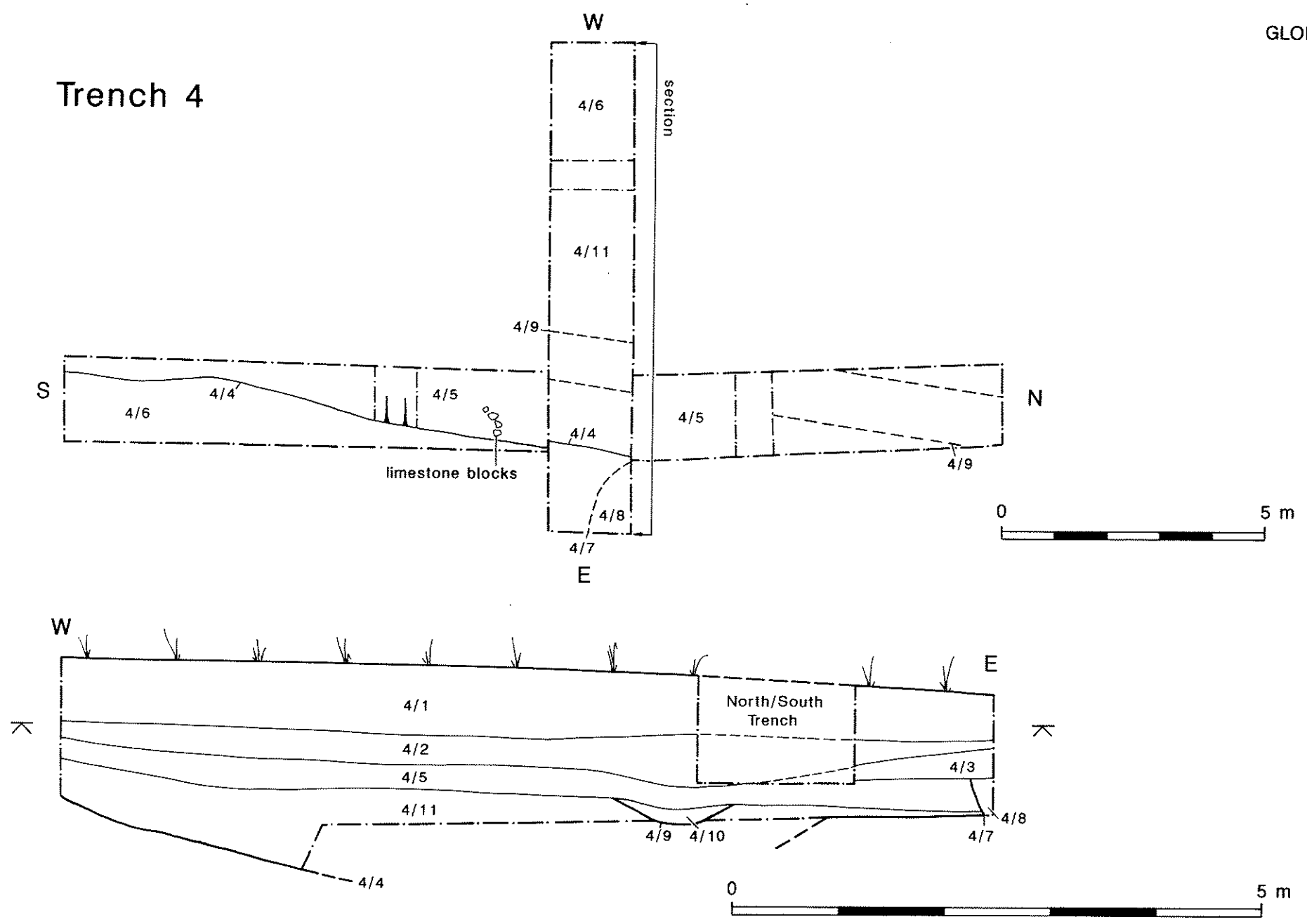


figure 5: Trench 4 plan & section

Trench 6

GLOR 94

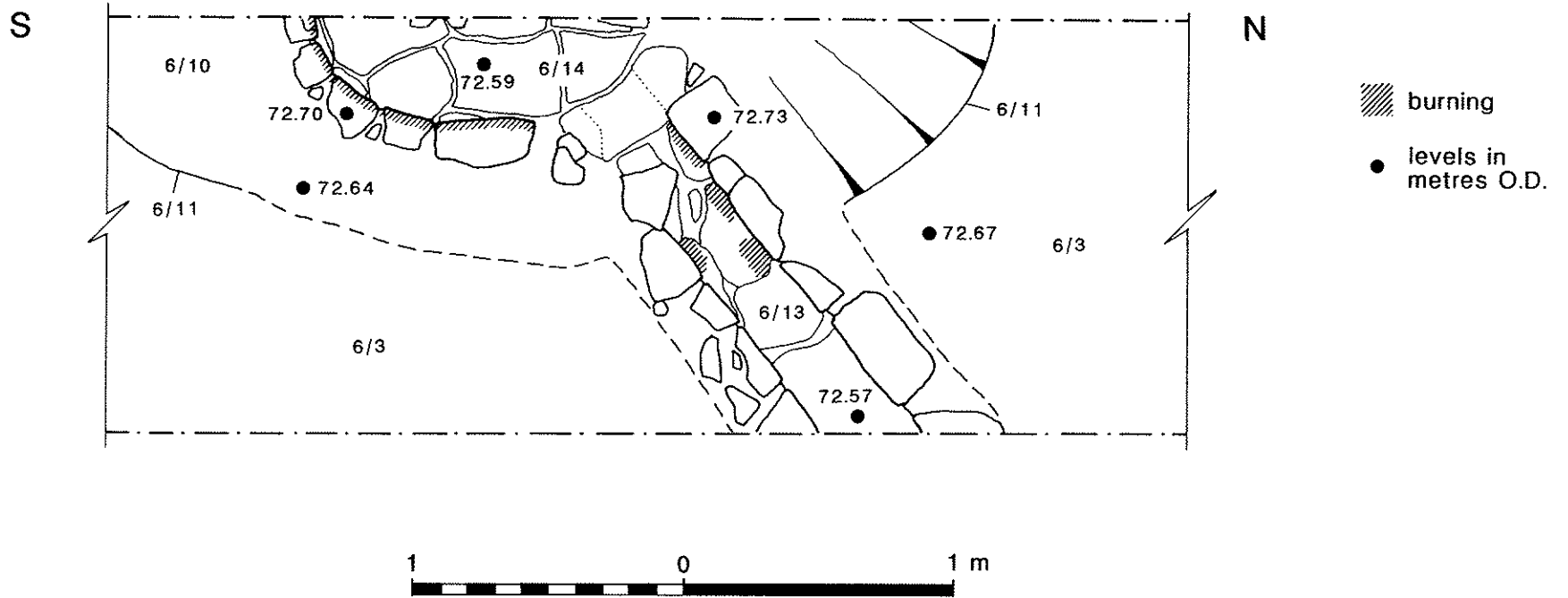
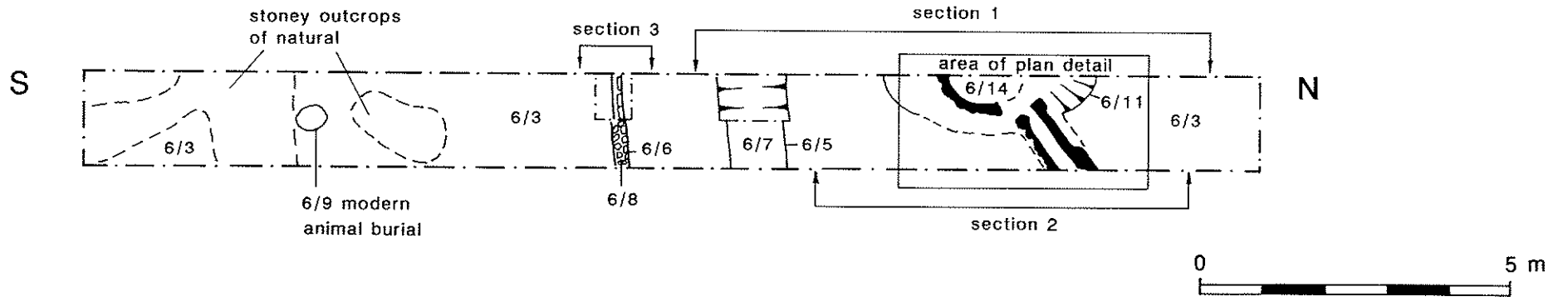
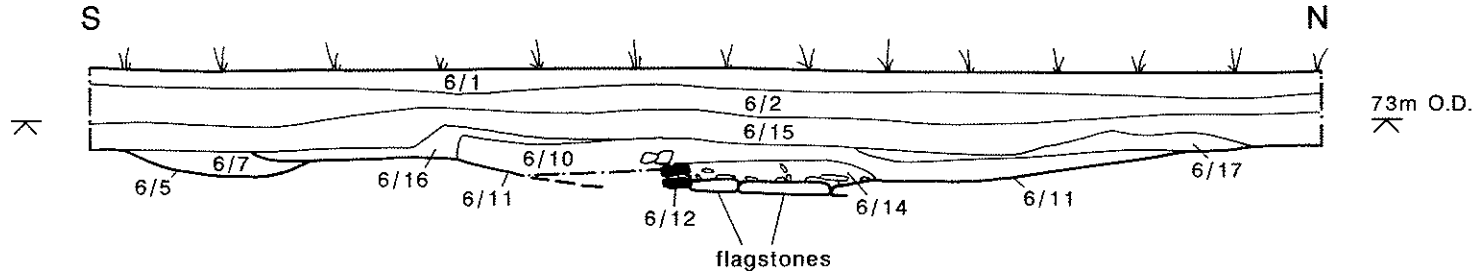


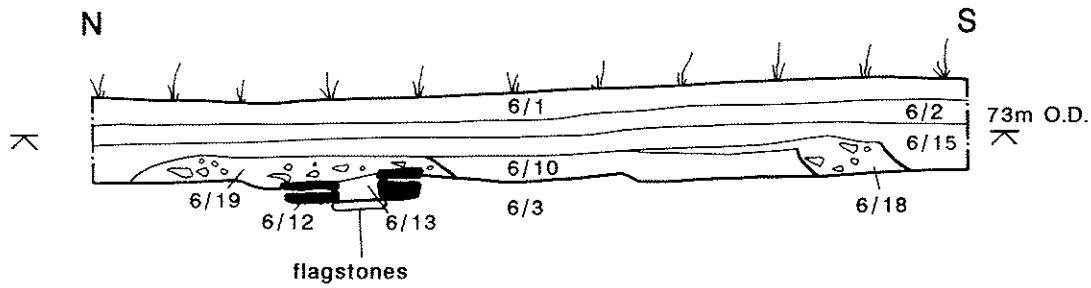
figure 6: Trench 6 plan & detail plan of stone-lined oven

Trench 6

section 1



section 2



section 3

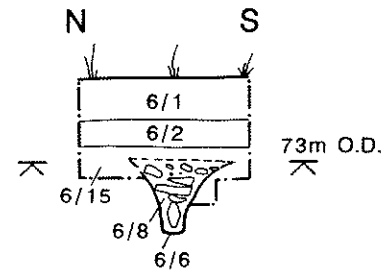


figure 7: Trench 6 sections



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