

# Morris Motors Sports and Social Club Barracks Lane



## Archaeological Evaluation Report



**Oxford Archaeology**

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**H N Edwards and Partners Ltd**

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# Barracks Lane Morris Motors Sports and Social Club Evaluation

NGR SP 547 048

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

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## Summary

*In April 2005, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at the Morris Motors Sports and Social Club, Barracks Lane, Oxford (NGR SP 547 048) on behalf of H. N. Edwards and Partners Ltd.. Two ten metres trenches were excavated but revealed no evidence of archaeological remains.*

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In April 2005, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at the Morris Motors Sports and Social Club, Barracks Lane, Oxford (NGR SP 547 048) on behalf of H. N. Edwards and Partners Ltd. Phase 1 of the proposed development consists of the construction of a new Sports Centre site fronting Barracks Lane (Planning ref: 98/1742/NO). The site location is shown on Figure 1.

1.1.2 The site lies in an area of archaeological potential, and therefore Oxford's City Archaeologist, Brian Durham has requested a programme of trial trenching for this work. A Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared by OA detailing how it would meet the requirements of the City Archaeologist with regard to the Phase 1 works (OA 2005).

#### 1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The proposed development site is located on the frontage of Barracks Lane, approximately 100m east of the Barracks Lane Hollow Way junction. The site is situated opposite Southfield Golf Course and to the rear of the current Morris Motors bowling green (NGR SP 547 048).

1.2.2 The site is currently occupied by three squash courts and a gardeners storage shed which are to be demolished prior to the new development. The land lies at approximately 85 m OD and the geology is Upper Jurassic Oxfordian, Temple Cowley Member comprising sandstones and siltstones with overlying deposits of Oxford Clay (Institute of British Geological Sciences). The Phase 1 site is approximately 0.14 hectares in area.

#### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 Roman occupation and activity is known in the vicinity of Barracks Lane with burials, pottery and a spiked mace head being recorded from 1898 quarrying at Cowley Barracks Quarry (SMR no. PRN 3818 & 9932). Romano-British Kilns and occupation at Temple Cowley (SMR 3817) and a kiln site at the Boys School (SMR 3630). It is possible that the alignment of Barracks Lane from the Hollow Way may be based over an earlier Roman route. As there is reasonable evidence in the area for pottery and ceramic production, it would seem probable that associated settlement would be close by. However, as burials were encountered during quarrying at the

Cowley Barracks Quarry it would seem unlikely that settlement contemporary with these exists on site due to cemeteries normally being located away from inhabitation areas.

- 1.3.2 The place name Cowley is derived from the Anglo-Saxon meaning Cufa's wood or clearing. The main focus of medieval activity in this area was based around Temple Cowley and the associate church. It would seem that during this period (post-Roman to Medieval) that much of this area was agricultural land moving away from the wooded and marsh areas to the west. St Bartholemew's Chapel and hospital were founded in 1126 by Henry I for the physical and spiritual care of lepers. The site of the hospital was located approximately 1 km to the west of the Barracks Lane site and it was initially known as the Bartlemas. In 1329, Edward III transferred ownership[ to Oriel College, who remain the landlords today. During the Civil War, the hospital was burnt to the ground and was rebuilt by Oriel in 1649. The associated chapel is thought to date from the 14th century.
- 1.3.3 The main route into Oxford Town has always been the Cowley Road, part of which was known as Berrye Lane in 1605. This crossed the marsh as a causeway, past St Bartholemew's and on to Magdalen Bridge. By 1763, this causeway route had mostly fallen out of use and the course more commonly taken was across Headington Fields and along Mud Lane, now known as Barracks Lane.
- 1.3.4 The settlements of the Cowleys and the other peripheral villages to Oxford Town such as Littlemore, were agricultural based settlements. The open fields of Cowley were finally enclosed in 1856 with many of the freeholds being shared out between various Oxford colleges. This enclosure award set aside three one acre plots for quarries for the surveyor of highways, and although the quarries within the immediate area are considered to be Post-medieval, there is a possibility for these to be of an earlier origin

## 2 EVALUATION AIMS

- 2.1.1 To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the proposal area.
- 2.1.2 To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present.
- 2.1.3 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features.
- 2.1.4 To make available the results of the investigation.

## 3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

- 3.1.1 Two trenches were excavated by a mechanical excavator (JCB) under archaeological supervision, supplemented by limited hand excavation of archaeological deposits for their initial dating and characterisation. The trenches were located to obtain a

representative sample of the site (Fig. 2), and were agreed with the Oxford City Archaeologist prior to the start of the evaluation.

- 3.1.2 The trenches measured 10 m x 2 m. This represents an approximate 3% sample of the proposed area of the Phase 1 development. The trenches were excavated to the top of the 'natural' or to the top of any significant archaeological level, whichever was higher.
- 3.1.3 The stratigraphy of the trench was recorded even where no archaeological deposits were identified.
- 3.1.4 Spoil heaps were monitored to allow analysis of the spatial distribution of artefacts.
- 3.1.5 A project supervisor and an archaeologist, under the supervision of a project manager undertook the fieldwork. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992) and in the IFA guidance for archaeological evaluations (IFA 1999).
- 3.1.6 Monitoring of the evaluation was undertaken by Mr Brian Durham, Oxford City Archaeologist (Oxford City Council)

## 4 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

### 4.1 Description of deposits

#### *Trench 1 (Fig. 3)*

- 4.1.1 Trench 1 was excavated down to a depth of 0.7 m onto natural 104, a loose, light yellowish orange sand with frequent sub-angular sandstone fragments ranging in size between 0.05-0.2 m. Also occurring in this material were pockets of a darker clayey sand, one of which was excavated in a sondage at the eastern end of Trench 1 to check that it was not the fill of a large feature such as a quarry pit. However, on closer inspection, the clean nature of this material and its presence elsewhere within the natural sand suggested that it was a naturally occurring inclusion within the geology.
- 4.1.2 Overlying the natural was a stony subsoil (103), a thin layer approximately 0.1 m thick comprising a mixture of overlying buried ploughsoil (102) and underlying natural (104), and almost certainly a product of ploughing disturbing the top of the natural. Buried ploughsoil 102 consisted of a dark greyish brown sandy silt, occurring throughout Trench 1 and was approximately 0.32 m thick. Overlying this was a layer of redeposited natural sand and sandstone (103), ranging in thickness from 0.1 to 0.3 m, and which contained fragments of brick and concrete. This appeared to be a levelling layer for the existing sports field, the topsoil and turf of which constituted the overlying layer (100).

#### *Trench 2 (Fig. 4)*

- 4.1.3 Trench 2 consisted of the same stratigraphy as Trench 1. Excavated to a depth of 0.65 m onto the natural (204), which was overlain by a stony subsoil (203). Buried

ploughsoil 202 varied in depth across the trench from 0.2 m at the eastern end to 0.3 m at the western end, which may be accounted for by medieval ridge and furrow. Modern levelling layer 201 which covered the ploughsoil 202 was overlain by existing topsoil and turf (200).

#### 4.2 Finds and environmental deposits

4.2.1 No archaeological finds were recovered from the site.

4.2.2 No deposits were identified that warranted environmental sampling.

### 5 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

5.1.1 The evaluation results show the absence of any archaeological evidence in the area of Phase 1 of the proposed development. It may be assumed that the development area is not within the area of Roman activity discussed above (1.3.1). It would seem that from the post-Roman period up until recent times, most of this area was agricultural land and located at some distance from any settlement.

## APPENDIX 1 TABLE OF CONTEXT INFORMATION

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Ctx No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Thick. (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i> Finds</i>
<b>001</b>	100	Layer		0.12	Topsoil and turf	-
	101	Layer		0.25	Levelling layer	-
	102	Layer		0.25-0.3	Buried ploughsoil	
	103	Layer		0.12	Subsoil	
	104	Layer		>0.7	Natural	-
<b>002</b>	200	Layer		0.1-0.2	Topsoil and turf	-
	201	Layer		0.28	Levelling Layer	-
	202	Layer		0.2-0.3	Buried ploughsoil	
	203	Layer		0.1	Subsoil	
	204	Layer		-	Natural	-

## APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

BGS Geological Survey of England and Wales sheet 201

OAU, 1992 Fieldwork Manual (1st edition, August 1992 ed. D Wilkinson)

IFA, 1999 *Standard and Guidance for archaeological evaluations*



### APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

**Site name:** Barracks Lane Morris Motors Sports and Social Club Evaluation

**Site code:** OXMMSS 05

**Grid reference:** SP 547 048

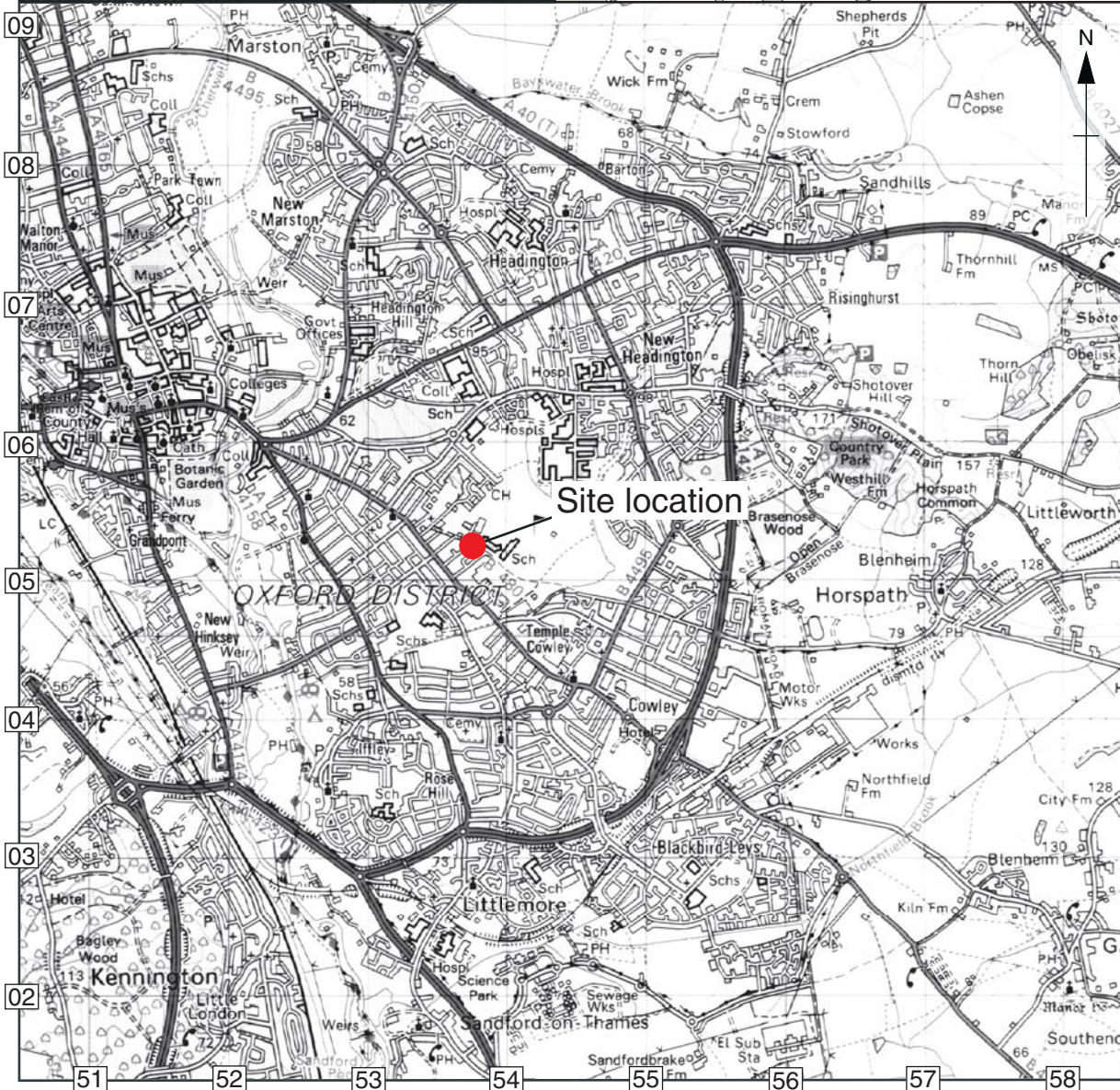
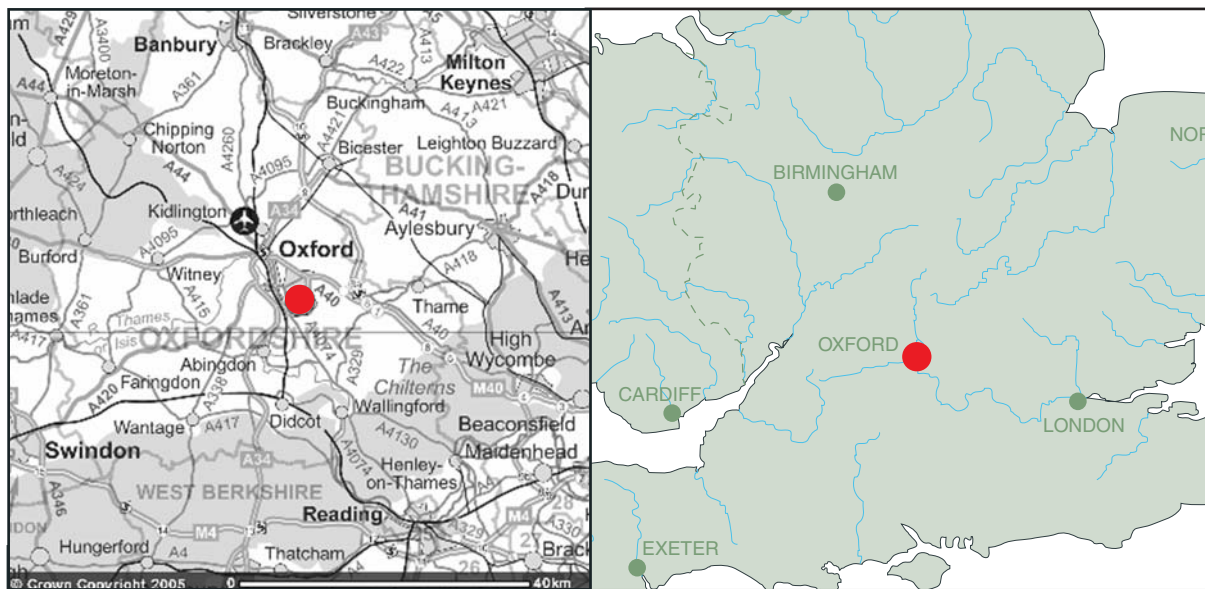
**Type of evaluation:** Two 10m trial trenches

**Date and duration of project:** 4 April 2005, 1 Day

**Area of site:** c. 0.14 Ha

**Summary of results:** No evidence of archaeological remains.

**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museum Services, in due course. The accession number is OXCMS2005.40.



Scale 1:50,000

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Figure 1: Site location

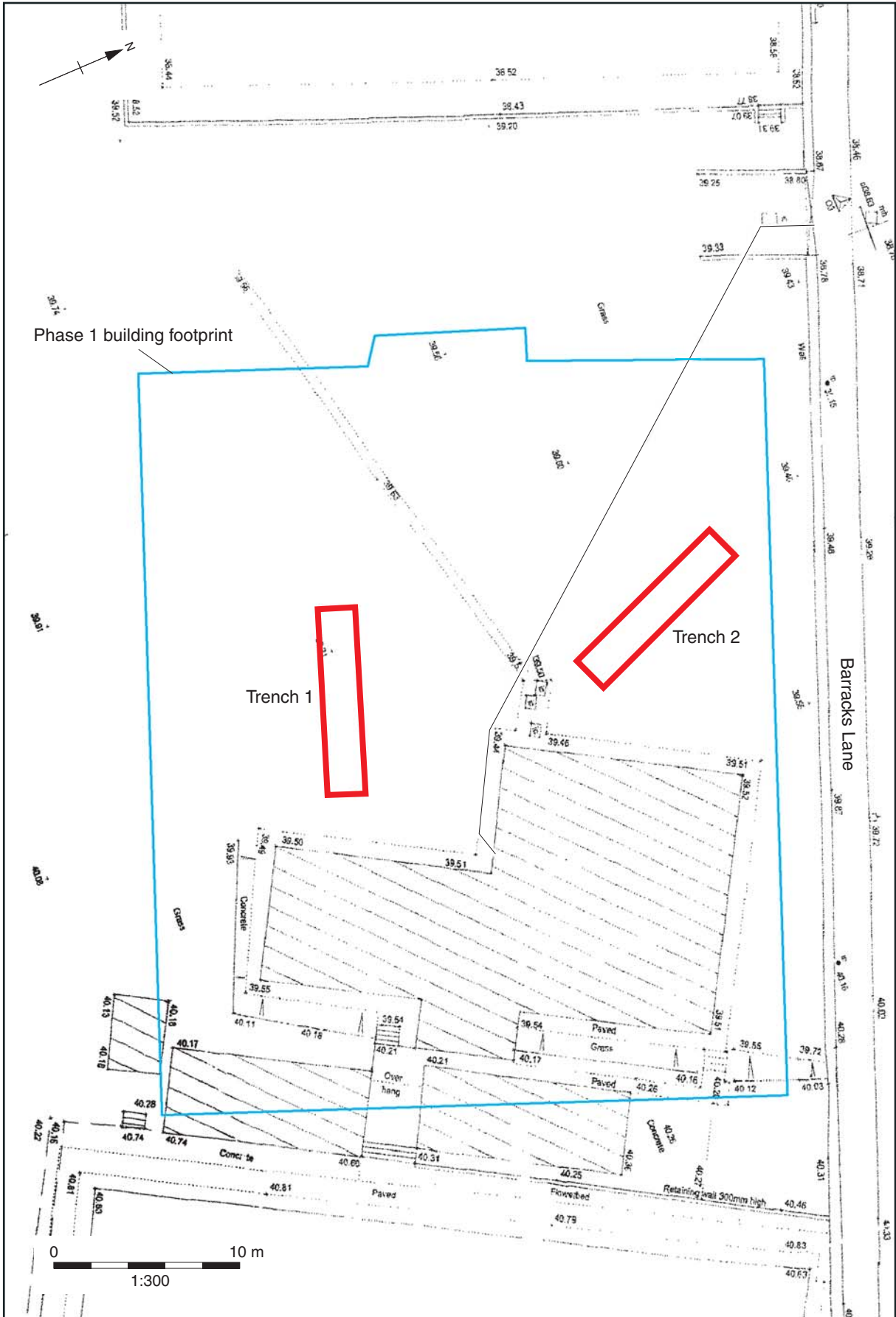


Figure 2: Trench layout

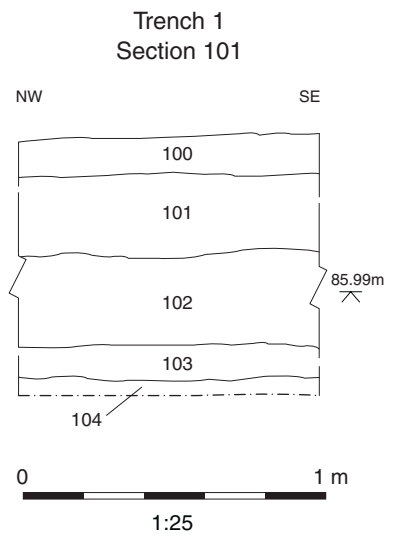
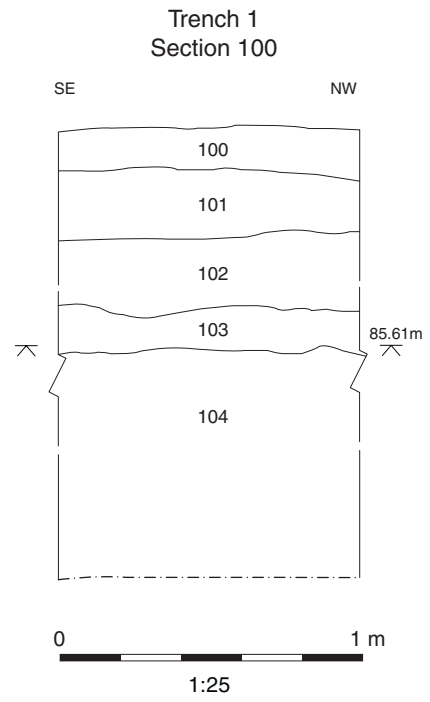
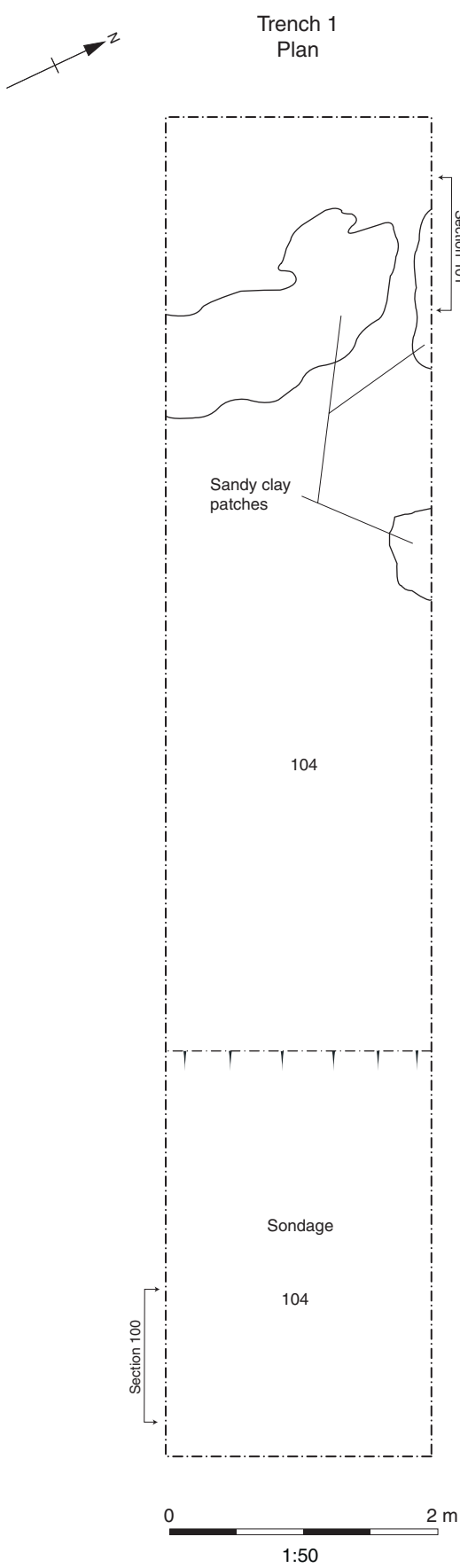


Figure 3: Trench 1, Plan and Sections

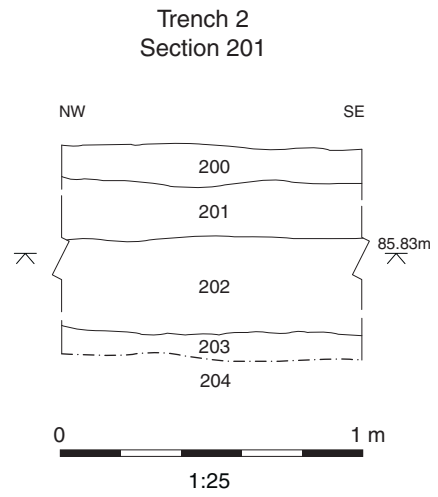
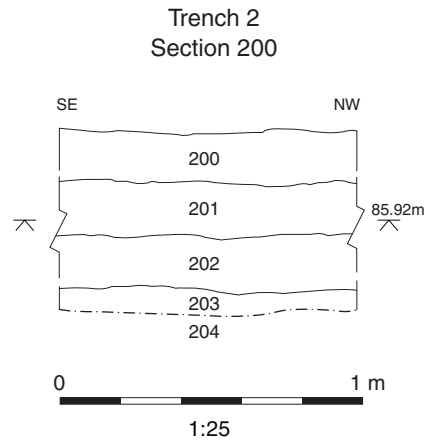
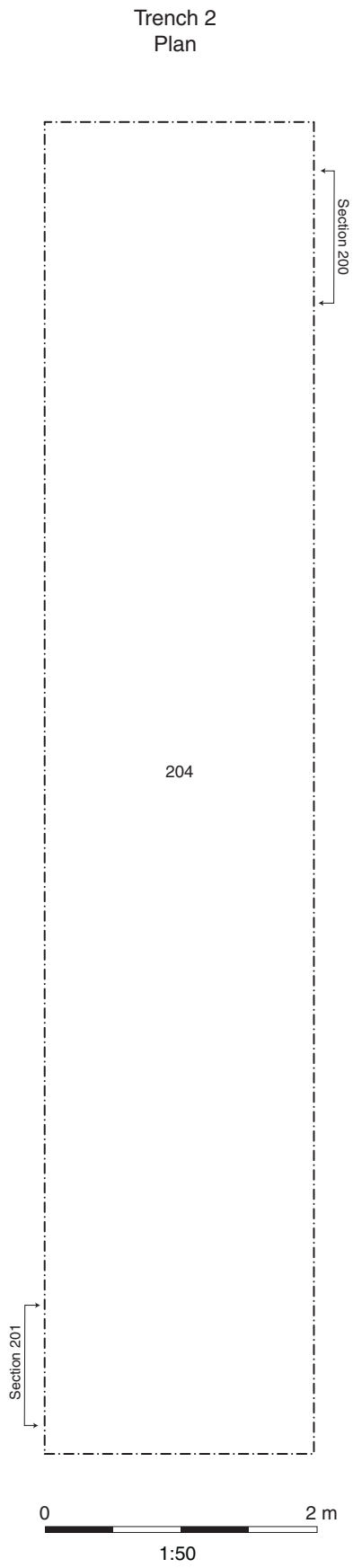


Figure 4: Trench 2, Plan and Sections