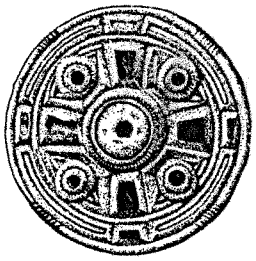

Archaeological Field Unit

A11 Stump Cross to Four Went Ways Road Improvement Scheme: Romano-British and Undated Features Recorded During Archaeological Evaluation

R Heawood and B Robinson

1997

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No A118

Commissioned by The Highways Agency

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SUMMARY

The Department of Transport commissioned Cambridgeshire County Council's Archaeological Field Unit to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of the A11 Stump Cross to Four Went Ways Road Improvement Scheme. This report considers the last phase of archaeological evaluation, which took place on land between Stump Cross and Hinxton Grange (TL 503/436 - 511/464). The programme of fieldwork included provision for monitoring visits after the onset of the roadworks, together with a contingency to allow the salvage excavation of hitherto undiscovered remains. The results of the evaluation and monitoring are presented here; a further salvage excavation did take place, and is published separately (Heawood and Robinson forthcoming).

The density of archaeological remains recorded was low. Evaluation revealed the presence of four parallel gullies east of Stump Cross. These are probably indicative of multiple phases of a Romano-British field boundary or track way. Ephemeral plough marks recorded nearby may be roughly contemporary. To the north, c 1km from Stump Cross, a ditch aligned north-west to south-east lay approximately on the orientation of elements of an adjacent crop mark enclosure, and may be late Iron Age or early Romano-British. Other ditches were parallel to the line of the Roman Road, which the A11 here follows, and appeared to be both earlier and later than this feature. One of the later ditches contained a ?third century Roman coin. Immediately north of Stump Cross, a further ditch lying parallel to the A11 may either be contemporary with the Roman road, or a later field boundary. Elsewhere, only a very small number of isolated post holes or pits were found. The later monitoring work led to the discovery of a Roman building near Hinxton Grange, apparently standing alone, which became the subject of a further salvage excavation. No other remains of significance were located.

The evidence recovered during evaluation is largely limited to roadside ditches, field boundaries, and evidence for agriculture, probably mostly from the Roman period and later. Contemporary settlements are thought to have been located beyond the road corridor.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Archaeological evaluations were carried out during October 1993 in advance of the A11 Stump Cross to Four Went Ways Road Improvement Scheme, at several locations between TL 503/436 and TL 511/464. The scheme involved the dualling of the present road along its length between the two locations mentioned above, and the construction of an elaborate system of link roads, roundabouts, and bridges at Stump Cross and Four Went Ways, together with associated landscaping, construction compounds, and service trenches. The construction works obviously presented a potentially severe threat to the archaeology of the area. This series of evaluations was preceded by excavation in advance of A11 widening at Flame Dyke (Wait 1991), Worsted Street Roman Road (Wait 1992), and Brent Ditch (Robinson 1992). The excavations were carried out on known sites. There was no prior evaluation or assessment of areas of general potential between these sites.

The Department of Transport (Eastern Construction Programme Division) commissioned Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit (AFU) to undertake a further programme of fieldwork, of which the evaluations formed the first stage. The second stage of fieldwork was to comprise any investigations necessitated by areas of potential located by evaluation, and a further investigation of Brent Ditch.

The initial project design was formulated by Dr Tim Reynolds (19/9/93), but was subsequently modified by the author to incorporate a recording brief and a contingency for the salvage excavation of hitherto undiscovered remains, located as roadworks progressed. The intended excavation of a further section at Brent Ditch was abandoned when it became clear that the construction scheme would not allow us to get any closer to the present A11, the putative line of the Roman Road, than was achieved during previous investigations. The former hedged northern boundary of the A11 in the area of Brent ditch was to be retained as the central reservation of the new road. Thus, the chief objective for carrying out further work, namely, to establish the relationship of this monument to the Roman road was unobtainable.

This report describes the results of the evaluations carried out in advance of the roadworks, and the results of monitoring during the construction programme.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

As already mentioned, this sector of the A11 follows the presumed course of a Roman road, although there are no recorded instances of test excavation along this part of its

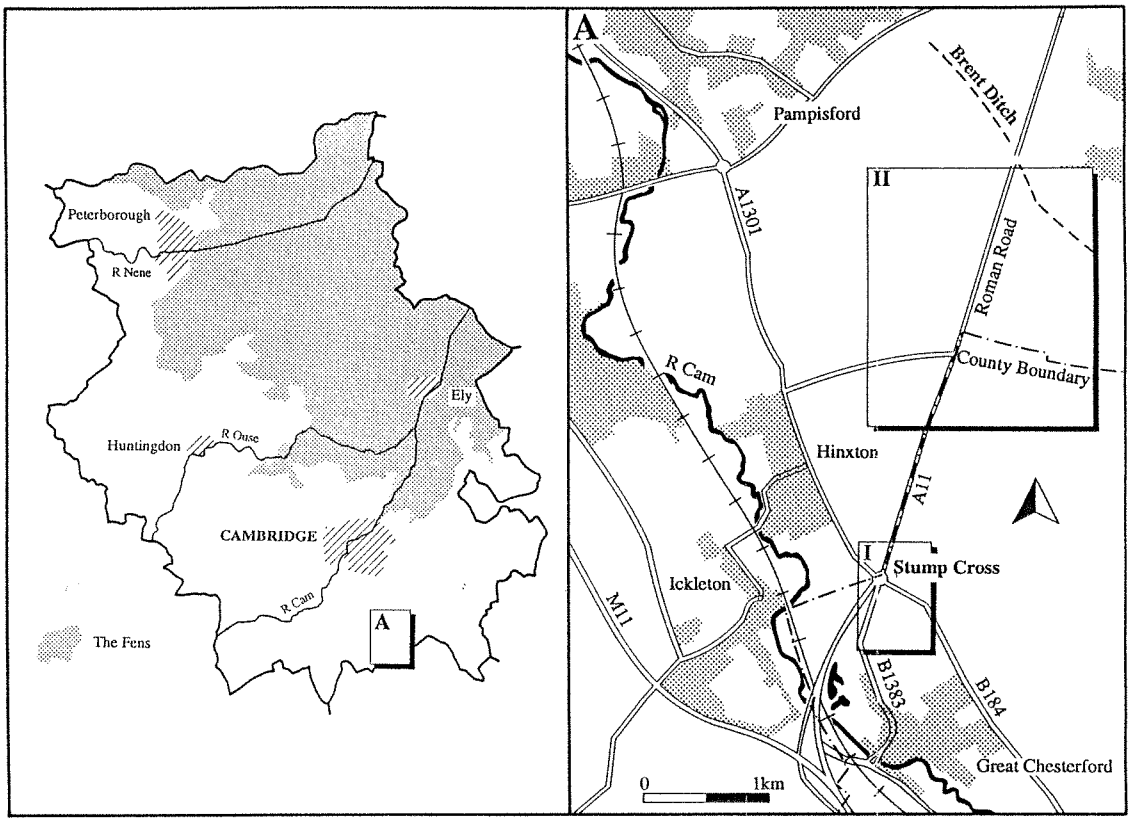

Figure 1 *Site location plan*

route (Wilkes and Elrington 1978, 24; Margary 1967, 200). The road seems to originate in Braughing, Essex and then runs north-east through Great Chesterford (fording the Cam) and on towards a crossing point with Worsted Street Roman road at Worsted Lodge. It is likely that its course represents a 'Romanised' length of an Icknield Way track and that it forms part of a route which turns northwards at Thetford and terminates at the north-west Norfolk coast near Hunstanton (Margary 1967, 200; 262-263). The Icknield Way, prior to its formalisation during the Roman period probably consisted of a series of trackways, or a broad route way. The area through which it passed in this area was bounded by the low ground of river valleys or the fen edge to the north and the Boulder Clay capped chalk 'uplands' to the south.

The importance of this corridor as a route from the northern East Anglian coast to the Thames valley (and vice versa) is indicated by a series of linear earthworks which traverse the corridor on north-west / south-east alignments. Of the four within Cambridgeshire , all 'face' south-west, that is to say that their ditches are located on the south-west, their banks on the north-east. This suggests that they were designed to control or impede movement from the south-west into East Anglia, or to state an unequivocal territorial message to those in the south-west. Each dyke begins in low fenny ground, crosses the south Cambridgeshire Middle Chalk zone and terminates on the Boulder Clay plateau on the Cambridgeshire/Essex border. Devil's Ditch, Fleam Dyke and Bran Ditch have been dated by controlled excavation to the late or post-Roman period. Brent ditch has recently been demonstrated to post-date the late 2nd century AD (Robinson 1992).

A fort was established at Great Chesterford in the 1st century AD to protect the ford and, presumably, to control movement along the Icknield Way corridor and the Cam valley. The town which grew up outside the fort became the only walled settlement, apart from Colchester, to be established in the Trinovantian region during the Roman period (Going undat). It was re-fortified at the end of the 4th century and may have formed part of system of strong points to counteract early Saxon colonisation.

Prehistoric activity in the area was largely concentrated on the terrace gravels of the Cam valley (Evans 1991, Evans 1993, Spoerry 1994). Although ring ditches and a sherd of ?Bronze Age pottery indicate barrow clusters on the Middle Chalk at Abingdon Farm (SMR 06190). Archaeological background specific to the discussion of results in each evaluation area is detailed below.

3 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

As the evaluation covered a relatively large area, the geology and topography are discussed below on a field by field basis.

4 METHODS

Given the lack of direct archaeological evidence within most of the areas that were to be subject to evaluation, and the very short time available before roadworks commenced, the aims of the exercise were simple: to rapidly sample reconnoitre the areas in question and provide information of the character, extent and potential of archaeological remains therein.

The initial project design had not included a provision for fieldwalking or geophysical prospection. Advanced crop growth over field A and C ruled out the possibility of effective rapid surface scanning, but this was carried out on fields B and D. The extremely tight fieldwork schedule dictated that the best approach was to open up trial trenches to provide a reasonable overall assessment of the areas in question. Whilst this left the possibility of missing the more subtle 'sites' it was thought sufficient to locate areas of concentrated activity.

All features encountered were planned at 1:50, those excavated were planned at 1:20 with sections recorded at 1:10 or 1:20. A representative sample of the encountered features from each site were sectioned in order to obtain dating information and to determine their state of preservation. Colour and monochrome photographs supplemented the written and drawn record. The archive is held at the AFU offices at Fulbourn.

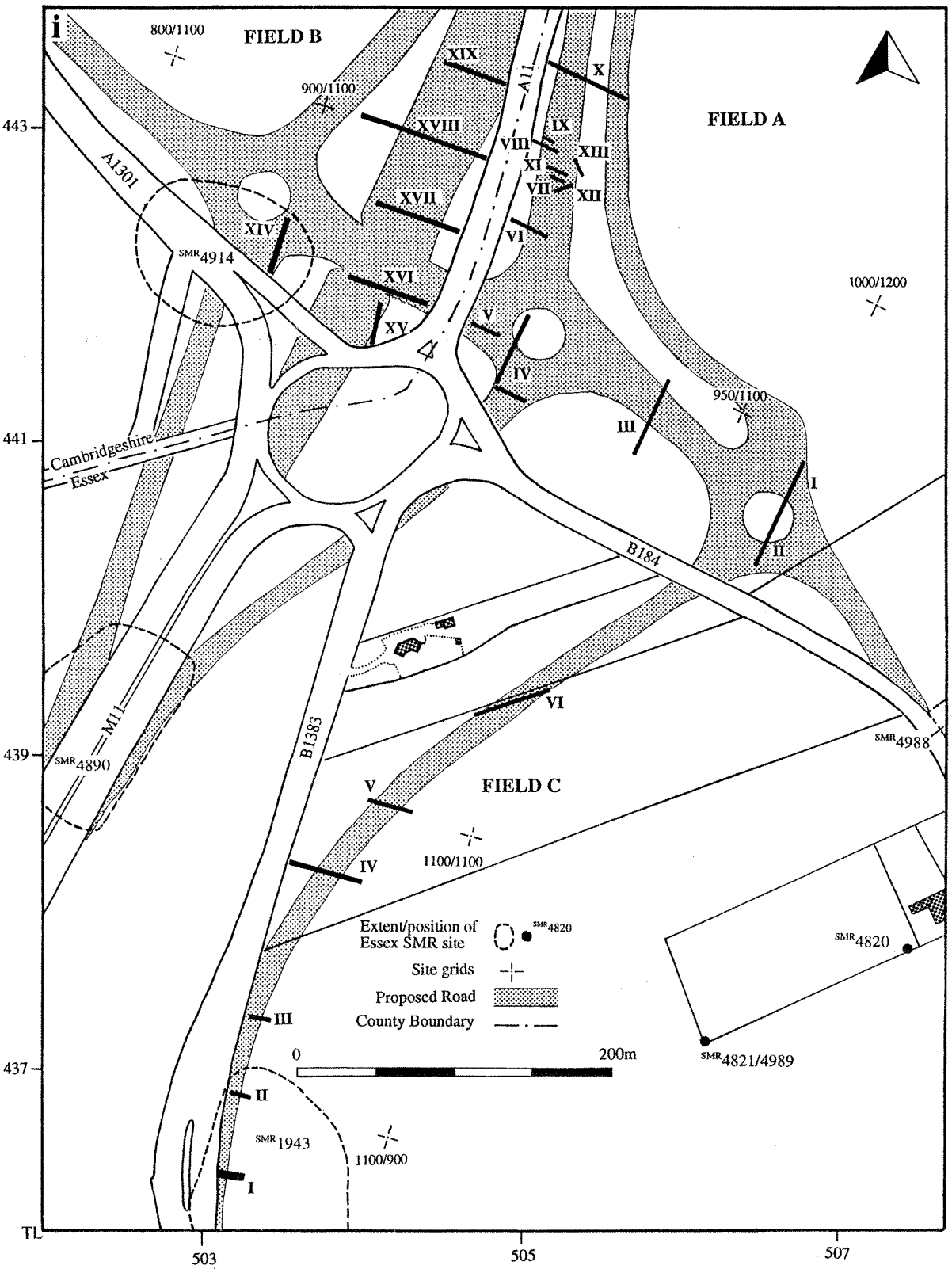

Figure 2 Location of Trenches, Fields A, B, and C

5 RESULTS OF EVALUATION TRENCHING

Field A, Stumps Cross (Centre TL 5052/4412)

This field, largely on Middle Chalk, is bordered by the A11 to the west and by the B184 to the south. The area subject to evaluation sloped very gently from 55m to 50m OD towards the south-west but was overlooked by an Upper Chalk rise (of up to 85m) to the north-east.

Previous finds in the immediate vicinity include a fragment of Roman monumental sculpture, recovered from a spot (not precisely located) somewhere near to the east boundary of the field (Essex SMR 4988).

Trenches were initially placed to provide general cover of the roadworks corridor (50m trenches on a 100m grid). Further trenches were opened to test for the presence of Roman roadside features adjacent to the A11. A total of thirteen trenches were opened within Field A.

All trenches were excavated through 0.25 - 0.30m of ploughsoil. Below, a mid brown colluvial silt was found in many locations across the field. This was at its deepest (up to 0.80m) where it had been trapped by the hedged field boundary, or its precursor, to the west. Brick or tile fragments (not securely dated but thought to be post-medieval) were found within the upper 0.25m of the colluvium. Where present the colluvium sealed all archaeological features.

Periglacial features were apparent in plan at the surface of the middle chalk across the site. These were of two basic 'stripe' types. The first were 1-2m wide and looked like irregularly shaped ditches in plan. Sections revealed that they were filled with a mid brown silt with occasional sub-angular flints. Bottoms were extremely irregular in depth and regularity. The second type were much slighter (0.10-0.15m in width), though similarly oriented (approximating the direction of slope) and 'v' shaped with tapering bottoms, often undercutting the chalk.

Trench I: Trench I was cut through the ploughsoil and *c* 0.10-0.15m of colluvium to a chalky subsoil at a depth of *c* 0.40m. Plough marks, 50mm wide and variably spaced, were recorded on a north-south orientation. They were not aligned with either the present axis of cultivation or present day field boundaries. No other features were observed.

Trenches II, III, IV, and V:. No archaeological features were observed in these trenches.

Trench VI: Trench VI contained a shallow ditch, **F130**, aligned north-west / south-east (ie down slope). It was 1.2m wide and 0.3m deep, with moderately steep sides and a roughly flat base. The single fill contained occasional fragments of hand made post-medieval brick. The feature was sealed by the colluvial silt, which was up to 0.40m thick where apparently trapped by the hedge boundary at the north-west end of the trench.

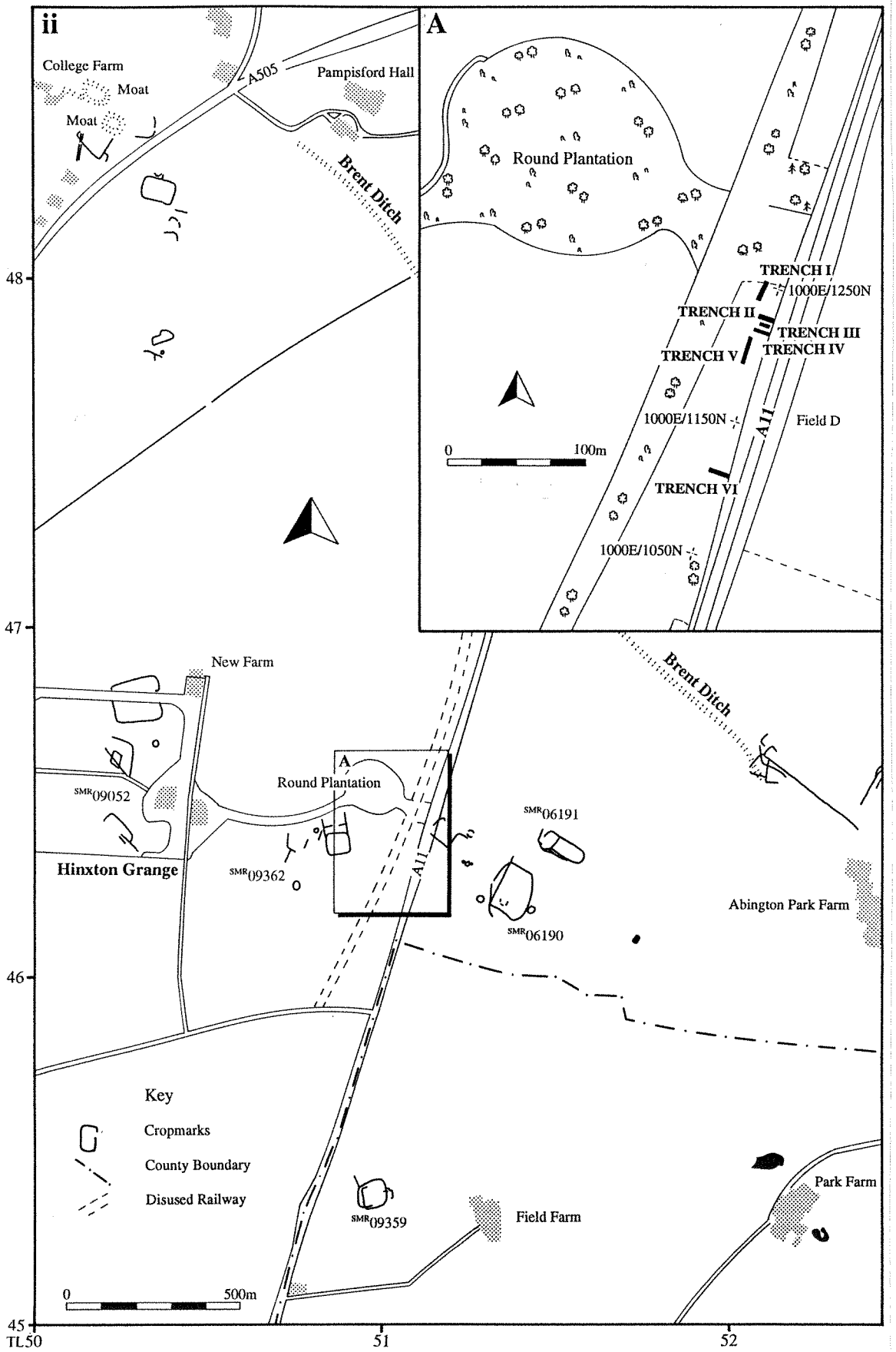

Figure 3 Location of Trenches, Field D

Trench VII: Trench VII contained two parallel linear features, **F100** and **F102**, oriented north / south. These features were also revealed extending into four nearby trenches, VIII, IX, XI, and XII: they were not excavated within Trench VII. A possible pit was recorded at the north-west end of the trench, extending into the trench edge. The visible portion measured c 2m x 1m, and was drawn in plan but not excavated.

Trench VIII: Linear features **F100** and **F102** were again present, but a third narrower parallel linear feature, **F101**, was recorded between them.

A section was excavated across **F100**, which was here 1.0m wide x 0.36m deep. Two dark bands had been observed extending along the eastern edge of the fill in plan, but no recut or post pipe could be seen in section within the single fill. The west side had a gradient of 4:3 (y:x), the east side of 1:1, both sides being slightly concave. The base was flat. No finds were recovered.

A section was also excavated across **F101**, here 0.32m wide x 0.12m deep. The sides were concave, with a gradient of *c* 1:1, and a gradual break of slope to the rounded base. No finds were recovered.

A further feature, **F136**, was also excavated. It was truncated by **F100**, but appeared to be subrectangular in plan. It measured 1.10m x >0.30m, with sides of varying gradient, but generally concave with a gradual break of slope to the rounded base. No finds were recovered, and it remained uncertain whether this was a natural feature or a small pit.

Trench IX: Linear features **F100** and **F102** were again recorded. Linear feature **F101** appeared to be present but was poorly defined in plan and seemed to reach a northern butt end. No further sections were excavated across these features.

To the east, a section was excavated across a subrectangular feature, Cut **143**. It measured *c* 1.4m x 1.2m x 0.15m deep. The sides sloped at a very gentle angle to a flat base. It was thought possible that this feature was a natural depression which had filled with colluvium, rather than the base of a small pit. No finds were recovered.

Trench X: The thickness of colluvial silt within this trench varied from 0.06m at the eastern end, to 0.80m close to the hedge line to the west. The colluvium sealed a series of irregular, narrowly spaced plough marks, on two roughly perpendicular orientations, north-east / south-west and south-east / north-west. The marks do not respect either the hedge or the line of the road, but are aligned up and down and across the slope.

The plough marks are recorded as cutting a wide but relatively shallow ovoid feature, **F156**. This possible pit measured 2.40m x 2.20m x 0.37m deep. The sides were gently inclined and concave, with a gradual break of slope to the roughly flat base. In places, the base was pitted with small holes, possibly root derived. The feature overlaid a silt filled periglacial channel, and may have been natural in origin. No finds were recovered.

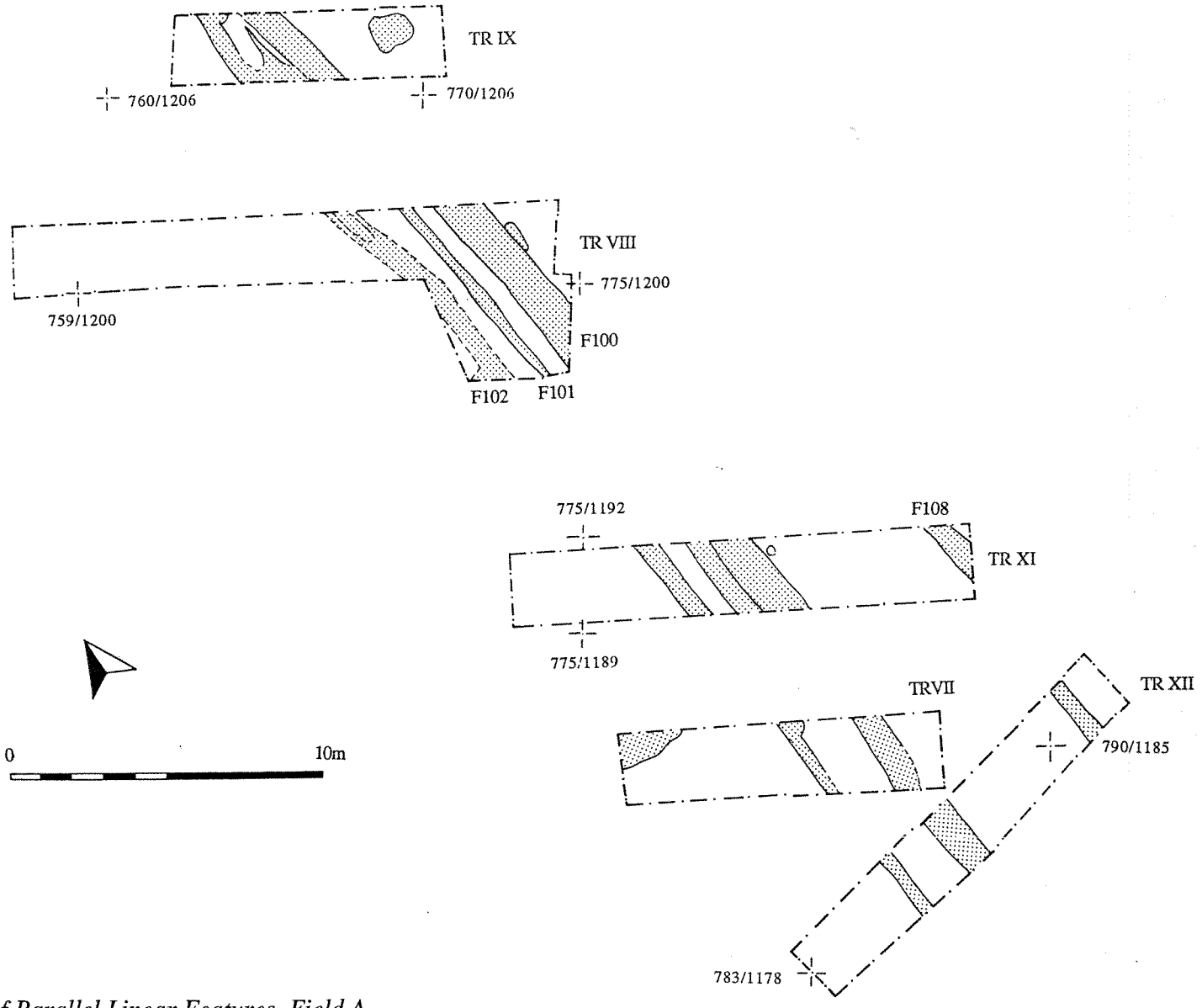

Figure 4 *Plan Of Parallel Linear Features, Field A*

Trench XI: All the features in this trench were sealed by *c* 0.22m of colluvium.

Linear features **F100**, **F101**, and **F102** were again present, and a further linear feature, **F108**, was also recorded. Sections were excavated across all these features, contributing significant additional information.

Linear feature **F100** here showed a complex profile. The sides were steep at the top, then sloped more gradually, particularly to the east where there was a pronounced step. They then dropped sharply again to the flat base, which was at a depth of 0.55m. In the centre, context (119) formed a vertical sided post pipe. This appears to represent infilling of a void after a post had been removed or rotted in situ.

Linear feature **F101** had a similar profile here to that revealed in Trench VIII. The sides were gently inclined and concave, and the base was rounded. The cut was here 0.60m wide x 0.16m deep.

Linear feature **F102** measured 0.65m wide x 0.35m deep. It had relatively steep, straight sides and a flat base.

Linear feature **F108** lay c 4.5m to the north-east of **F100**, on the same south-east / north-west orientation as **F100**, **F101**, and **F102**. It measured 0.70m wide x 0.31m deep, with slightly convex sides of gradient *c* 1:1, and a sharp break of slope to the flat base. Two sherds of Roman pottery were recovered from the lower fill.

A small post hole, Cut **123**, was recorded on the north-east edge of **F100**, *c* 0.10m from the linear feature. It was 0.28m in diameter and 0.35m deep, circular in plan, with steep sides, near vertical to the north. The compact fill suggested that the post or stake had been removed rather than rotting in situ.

Trench XII: Further sections were excavated across linear features **F100** and **F102**, and across a linear feature which was probably part of **F108**. Two periglacial features were also sample excavated. All the features were sealed by *c* 0.10 - 0.20m of colluvial silt.

F100 was here 1.0m wide and 0.49m deep. It had a similar profile to that revealed when the feature was investigated in Trench XI, with sides steep at the top, then forming a near horizontal step, before dropping sharply again to the base. Again there was a central fill with vertical sides, but in this instance it was 0.46m wide, and it was uncertain whether it represented a post pipe.

F102 was here 0.45m wide and 0.15m deep. It again had steep though irregular sides, and a roughly flat base.

Linear Cut **107** appeared to align roughly with linear feature **F108** recorded in Trench XI. It was 0.47m wide and 0.23m deep, but its profile was very different. It had concave sides with a gradient of *c* 1:1 and a gently rounded base.

Trench XIII: The only features observed in the trench were of natural periglacial origin. They appeared to extend downslope to Trench XI.

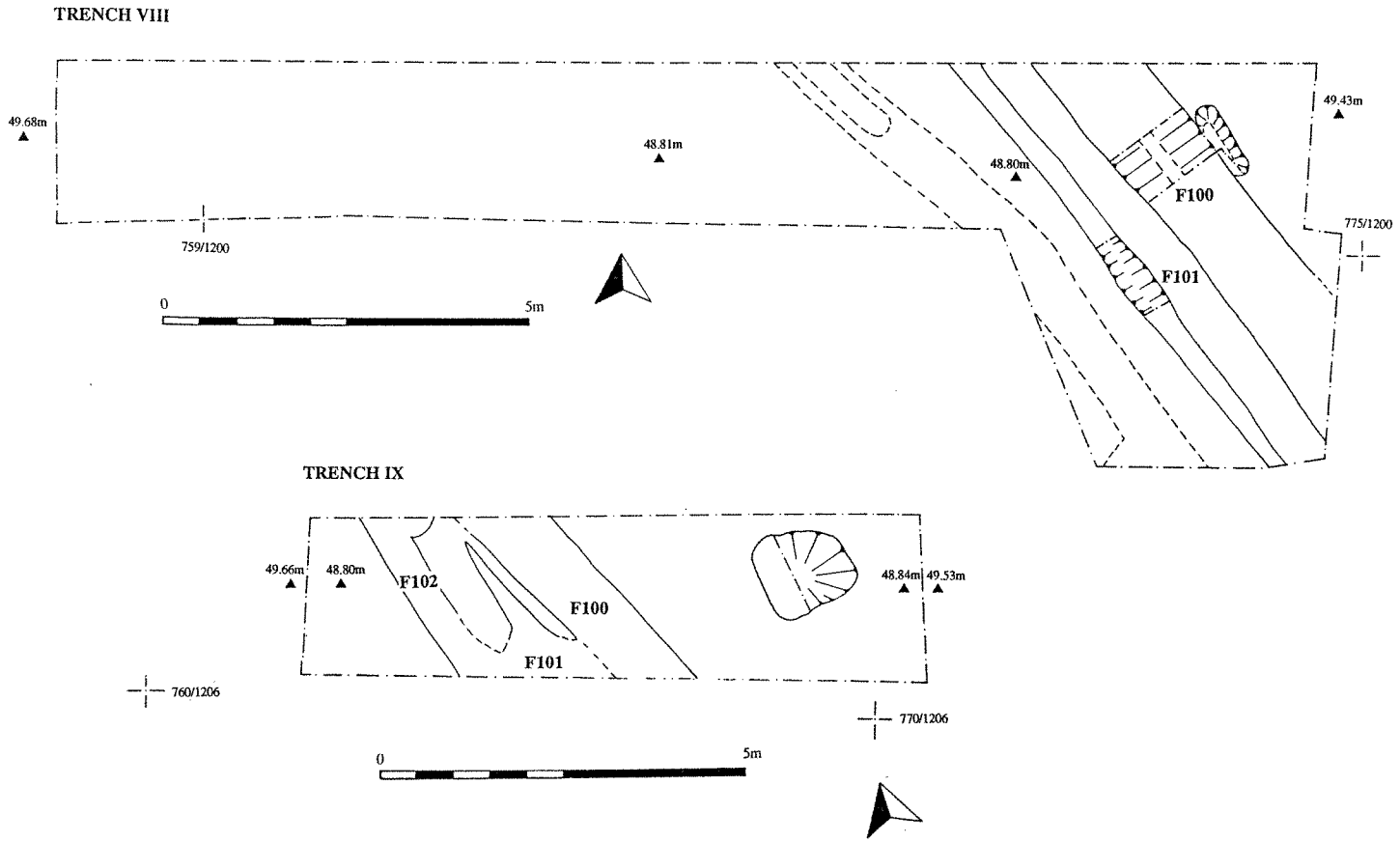

Figure 5 Plans Of Trenches Viii And IX, Field A

Field B, Stumps Cross (Centre TL 5043/4422)

Field B lay on Middle Chalk to the north of the Stump Cross roundabout. The evaluation area was bounded by the cutting of the abandoned Great Chesterford to Newmarket railway to the west, by the A1301 to the south and the A11 to the east. The evaluation area sloped gently north-east to south-west from 55m to 40m OD, a continuation of the slope described under Field A above.

A stone wayside marker of unknown date is recorded to the south of the evaluation area (Essex SMR 4914). No other entries (apart from the railway cutting) were recorded on either Cambridgeshire or Essex SMRs in the immediate area.

Trenches were once again sited to test for the presence of the Roman road or associated features. Six trenches were opened in all.

Once again a colluvial silt (up to 0.35m thick) was revealed beneath the ploughsoil (0.35m thick) in trenches abutting the field boundaries. The large periglacial features described under Field A above were again encountered and followed the same alignment.

Trench XIV: The depth of colluvium recorded in the trench varied from 0.25m at the north end to 0.35m to the south. Four periglacial channels extended from north-east to south-west, but no archaeological features were present.

Trench XV: Colluvium was present towards the southern end of the trench, to a maximum depth of 0.25m. There were no archaeological features.

Trench XVI: The ploughsoil lay directly over the chalk and no colluvium was present. Periglacial channels were visible running from east to west. No archaeological features were present.

Trench XVII: The ploughsoil again lay directly over the chalk. A single wide ditch, **F127**, was observed in plan close to the eastern field boundary and parallel to it. It extended into trench XVIII where a section was excavated across it.

Trench XVIII: Colluvium was present towards the east end of the trench, with a maximum depth of 0.30m close to the hedged field boundary.

At the eastern end of the trench, the colluvium sealed a wide shallow ditch, **F127**. The ditch was 2.50m wide and 0.25m deep, with gently sloping concave sides and a slightly rounded base. It ran parallel to the present field boundary, and to the A11 road and therefore to the postulated line of the Roman road.

To the west, *c* 30m away, a single possible post hole was recorded, Cut **161**. It had steep sides and a flat base, a diameter of 0.29m, and a depth of only 90mm. If this represents the remains of a post hole it seems to have been heavily truncated.

Other features were recorded but appeared to be natural in origin. Cut **155** measured 2.0m x 0.80m x 0.65m, but was amorphous in plan. The sides appeared to be steep

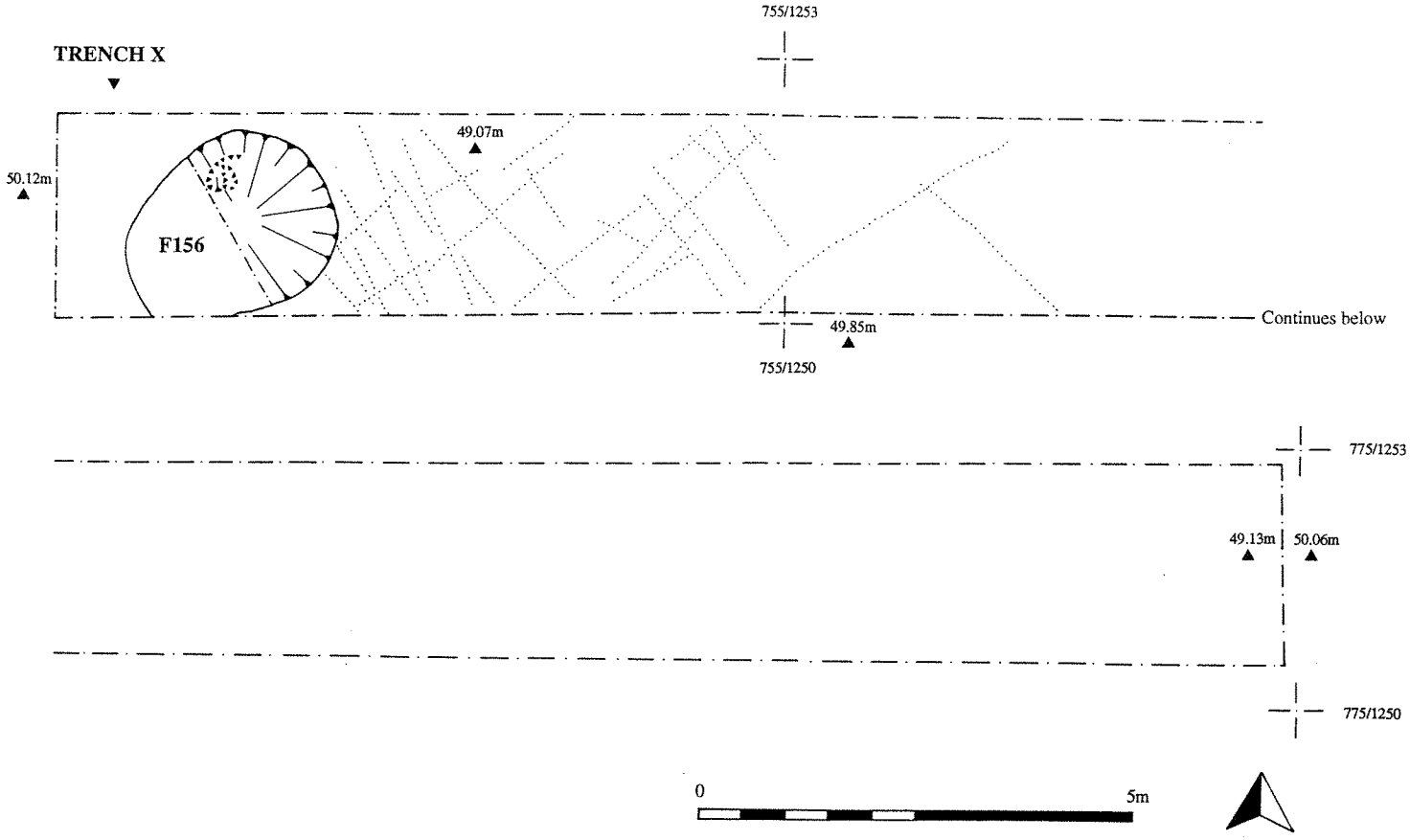

Figure 6 Plan Of Trench X, Field A

and the base gently rounded, but both were very diffuse and difficult to define. The high organic content of the fill further suggested that the feature was a tree throw hole of natural origin.

A cluster of near-circular features was revealed in plan within the upper fill of a wide periglacial channel, and some were excavated and recorded (Cuts **145**, **147**, and **149**). They were discernible in plan only as patches of very small charcoal flecks, but had better defined edges where penetrating re-deposited chalk or sand within the periglacial feature. Whilst some appeared regular enough to be post-holes, others were less well-defined. They were confined, without exception, to the peri-glacial features (none cut the chalk). It seems probable that they result from the root action of vegetation which was either concentrated exclusively on the silts of these features, or whose roots could not penetrate the surrounding chalk natural to the same extent, and thus left no trace elsewhere.

Trench XIX: Along most of the trench, the ploughsoil lay directly over the chalk. Colluvium was present towards the east end, where it reached a maximum thickness of 0.30m.

A single shallow gully, **F174**, was recorded oriented north-east / south-west. It was 0.30m wide and 70mm deep, with gentle concave sides and a rounded base. It remained uncertain whether this was a truncated gully of man-made origin, or a periglacial feature.

Field C Stump Cross (Centre TL 5040/4385)

The evaluation area was bounded by the B1383 to the north-west and by the B184 to the north-east. It sloped from north-east to south-west 50m to 40m OD (continuing the slope described under Field A above) towards the Cam valley.

Romano-British ditches had previously been revealed in section on the face of a quarry pit a few hundred metres to the south of the evaluation area (Essex SMR 4943). Essex SMR maps a scatter of mesolithic worked flint a few hundred metres to the south-east of the evaluation area (Essex SMR 4947). A windmill site is recorded near Mill House Farm to the east (Essex SMR 4821, 4820, 4989). The southern edge of the evaluation area came within 300m of the postulated line of the circuit of the 1st century fort at Great Chesterford (Going undat). Trenches were sited to test for features in this location and to pick up any features associated with the Roman road.

Six trenches were opened. The periglacial features were again apparent and the natural chalk became more mixed with patches of chalk-flecked yellowish brown silt towards the interface with the upper terrace gravels of the Cam to the south-west. Up to 0.35m of colluvium was encountered beneath recent ploughsoil against the west hedged boundary of the field.

Trench (C) I: A depth of 0.18 - 0.35m of colluvium was recorded in the most southerly of evaluation trenches. A single post-hole, **F184**, was located, sealed

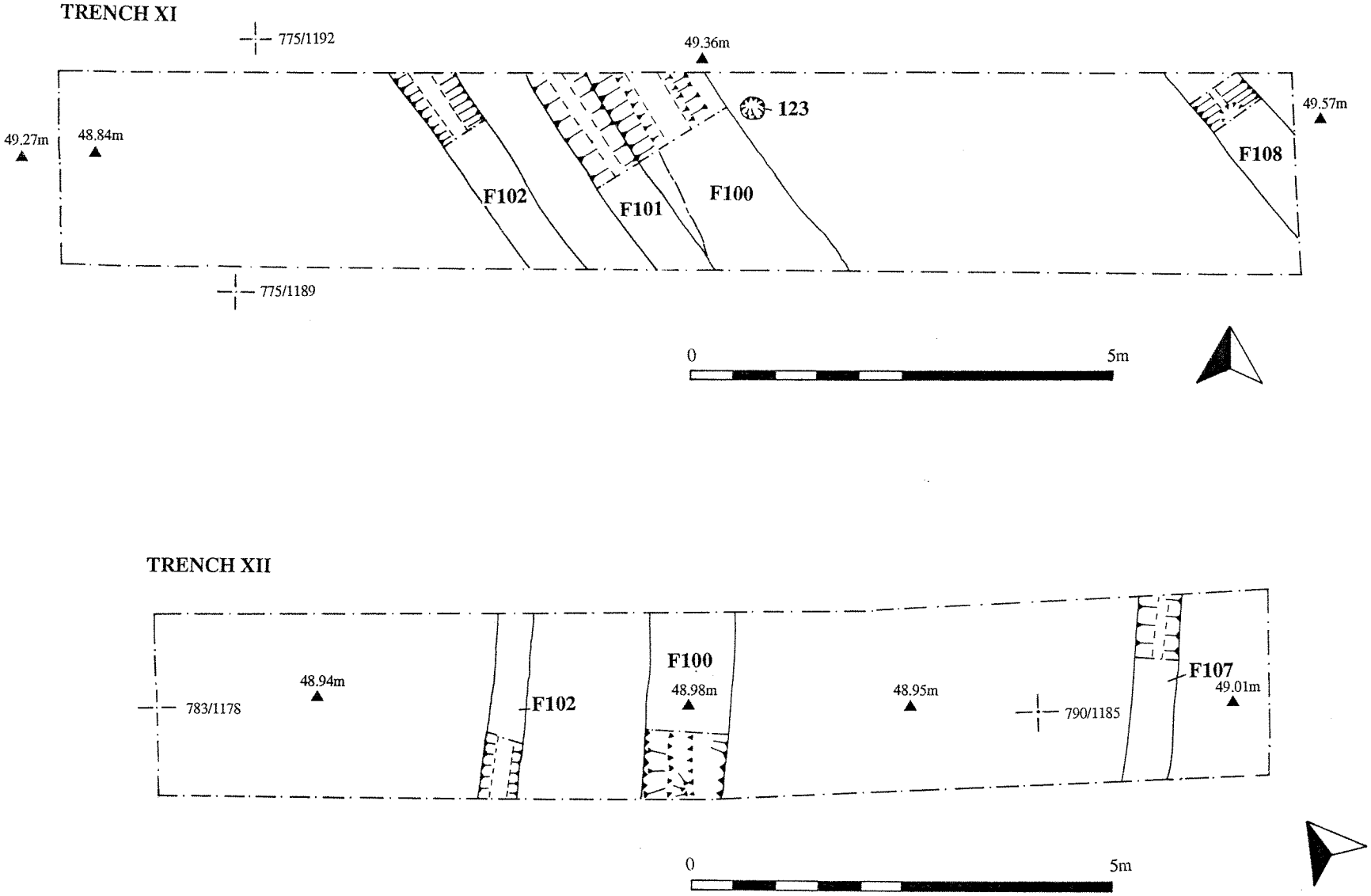

Figure 7 Plans of Trenches XI and XII, Field A

beneath the colluvium. It was 0.30m in diameter and 0.17m deep, circular in plan, with steep sides and a flat base. No finds were recovered.

Trench (C) II: No archaeological features were present.

Trench (C) III: The depth of colluvium varied between 0.16m and 0.18m. No archaeological features were present.

Trench (C) IV: The depth of colluvium varied between 0.16m and 0.30m. No archaeological features were present.

Trench (C) V: The depth of colluvium varied between 0.08m and 0.16m. No archaeological features were present.

Trench (C) VI: The depth of colluvium varied between 0.13m and 0.30m. A series of parallel linear features or fragments of linear features were sealed below the colluvium, and were collectively numbered **F173**. They were all *c* 0.70m wide, but were very shallow, and are thought to have been post-medieval or modern agricultural features.

In addition, a single subcircular pit, **F170**, was present at the western end of the trench, also sealed by the colluvium. It was lined with small to medium subangular flint pebbles, fill (168). Above, fill (167) contained frequent charcoal fragments, whilst the top fill, (169), was composed of much cleaner sandy silt. The cut measured 0.90m in diameter and was 0.39m deep, with steep sides and an irregular base. No dateable material was recovered from the feature, and its function remained uncertain. No other features were encountered.

Field D, Hinxton Grange (Centre TL 5110/4640)

Field D was situated on the crest of a Middle Chalk rise (*c* 69m OD) at Hinxton Grange. The field formed a triangle, bounded on the west by the deep cutting of a disused railway (abandoned by the mid-nineteenth century) and to the east by the cutting of the A11. The rise was to be levelled and the A11 widened to the west between the railway and former road cuttings as part of the present roadworks scheme.

The evaluation site lay in the midst of a cropmark complex (Fig 3). The cropmarks to the west of the site (SMR 09362) comprise a neat rectilinear enclosure with an annex, two ring ditches and short lengths of linear features which possibly form another enclosure. Those to the east consist of three rectilinear enclosures and at least six ring ditches (SMR 06190, 06191). Feature alignments offer few clues as to the relationship of cropmark elements, or indications of the presence or absence of multiple structural phases. A fragment of Bronze Age pottery, however, has been found in the ploughsoil in the vicinity of SMR 06190, whilst a large quantity of Romano-British material, indicative of buildings, has been found at SMR 06191.

It would seem probable therefore that the ring ditches represent a ploughed out round barrow cemetery and at least some of the rectilinear and linear features are Romano-British; others may be prehistoric.

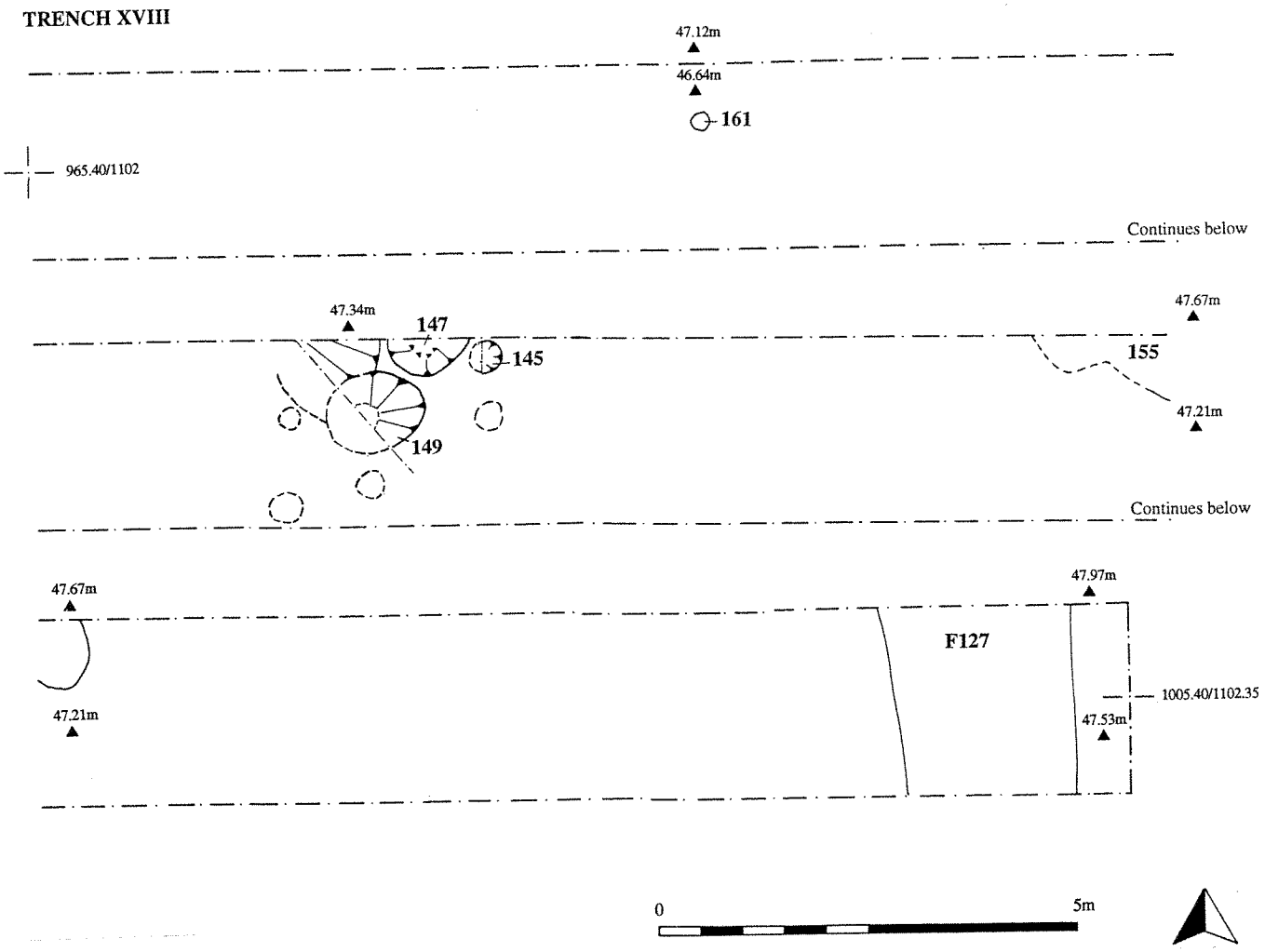

Figure 8 *Plan of Trench XVIII, Field B*

No cropmarks had been recorded within the evaluation area though the alignment of some cropmark features suggested that they might in fact continue into the area. Evaluation trenches were, therefore, initially sited in order to test this. Subsequently, trenches were opened to clarify the alignments of the ditches revealed. It was considered that the resulting trench layout represented an adequate sample of the area to be affected by roadworks. Trenches were of variable length but of a consistent 2 metre width.

The whole site was under cultivation at the time of excavation and a modern ploughsoil of *c* 0.30m overlaid all features described below. At the eastern boundary of the site a yellowish brown compact silt was encountered beneath the ploughsoil. It was at its thickest against the hedged boundary bordering the A11 road cutting to the east and thinned out gradually to extinction a few metres into the field. The natural chalk was common to all trenches. Most features had been truncated by recent ploughing. The surface of the natural chalk bore plough score lines of 2 or 3 cm in depth.

Trench (D) I: A mid brown silty deposit immediately below the ploughsoil (and truncated by it) was encountered. It contained large fragments of undated tile. .A single post hole was recorded, sealed by the mid brown silt. It measured 0.30m x 0.28m and was not excavated.

Trench (D) II: Yellowish brown silty subsoil was recorded below the ploughsoil towards the eastern part of the trench and was up to 0.12m thick.

It sealed a shallow ditch, **F1003**, oriented north-east / south-west, roughly parallel to the modern eastern field boundary and road, and therefore the postulated line of the Roman road. The ditch was 1.28m wide and 0.30m deep, with straight, gently sloping sides and a rounded base. Cut **1017** was a recut of the ditch 0.90m wide and 0.16m deep, also with gentle concave sides and rounded base. A Roman coin thought to date to the third century AD was recovered from the fill

A second ditch, **F1002**, was recorded to the west, oriented roughly north / south. It was not excavated within this trench, but continued south into Trenches III and IV.

At the extreme south-west end of the trench, a deposit of sandy silt was recorded lying over the chalk. This was not investigated further, and may represent a natural feature.

Trench (D) III: Ditches **F1002** and **F1003** extended into this trench, sealed directly by the ploughsoil. The two features intersected, and both were excavated at this point.

Ditch **F1003** truncated **F1002**, and was the later feature. **F1003** was at least 0.96m wide and 0.38m deep, and again had concave sides and a gently rounded base, though the north-western side was steeper than in Trench II, with a gradient of *c* 2:1. The recut, here recorded as Cut **1011**, was also present, and again had gentle concave sides and rounded base.

Ditch **F1002** was 1.18m wide and 0.28m deep. It had gently sloping concave sides, with a rounded gully at the base measuring *c* 0.30m wide x 0.10m deep. No other features were present.

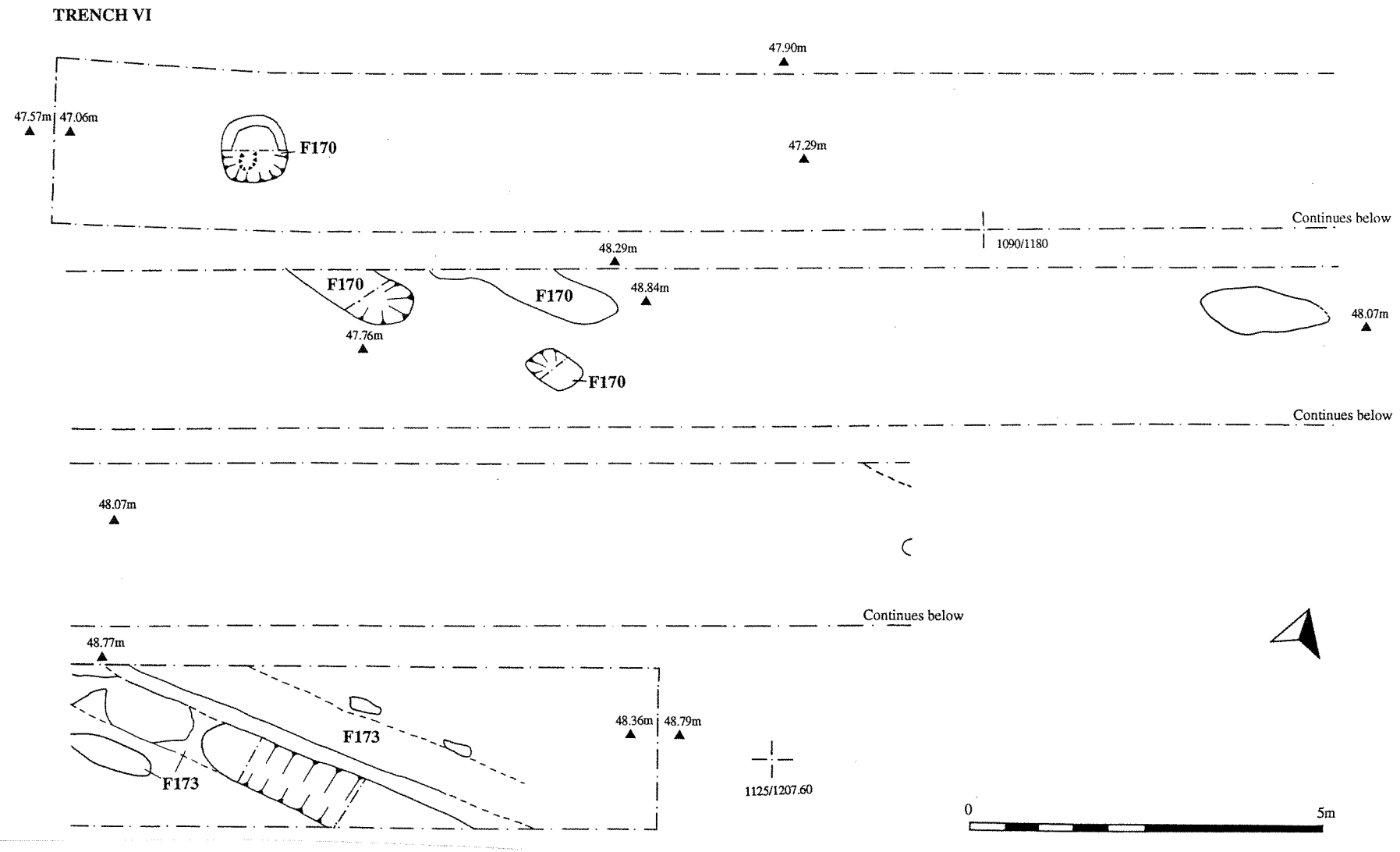

Figure 9 Plan of Trench VI, Field C

Trench (D) IV: All the features within this trench were sealed by a sandy silt subsoil which was thickest towards the eastern field boundary.

Ditch **F1003** continued into the trench, >0.80m wide and 0.30m deep, with gentle concave sides and rounded base. The recut was again recorded, here 0.90m wide x 0.20m deep.

A further section was excavated across ditch **F1002**. It was here 1.40m wide and 0.38m deep, with a 'v' shaped profile and sides with a gradient of *c* 1:1. It was recorded as **F1004**, and a sherd of Roman pottery in an oxidised fabric was recovered from the fill. The ditch was cut through a natural deposit of silty sand, a probable periglacial feature with one edge aligned north-east / south-west.

A small curvilinear gully, **F1006**, was truncated by ditch **F1003**. It measured > 1.6m long x 0.32m wide x 0.12m deep with gentle concave sides and a gently rounded base.

Trench (D) V: A very shallow, wide feature, **F1005**, was recorded at the northern end of the trench, oriented west-north-west / east-south-east. It measured 2.2m wide x 0.30m deep, with gently inclined sides and an uneven, possibly wheel-rutted base. Its fill contained (unworked) burnt flint, but no datable artefacts. Colluvium was not generally present in the central part of the field where this trench was located, but a colluvial deposit appeared to have formed in a hollow above this feature where its fill had settled.

A shallow gully measuring > 6m long x 0.30m wide x 0.12m deep was recorded oriented north-east / south-west. This appeared to be a continuation of **F1006** which was present in Trench IV. The sides were concave with variable gradient, and the base was almost flat. No finds were recovered.

Trench (D) VI: A maximum depth of *c* 0.18m of colluvial subsoil was recorded. This sealed a linear feature, **F1028**, which was oriented roughly north-east / south-west. It was *c* 1.0m wide x 0.34m deep, with gently angled sides and a rounded base.

It was trucated to the south-east by a feature which extended beyond the limit of the trench (Cut **1031**). This may have been a wide recut of the ditch on the same north-east / south-west orientation.

Ditch **F1028** is aligned roughly with ditch **F1003** in Trenches II - IV some 100m to the north-north-east. They may be parts of the same feature.

Further work was carried out just to the north of the evaluation site after the clearance of a copse during preparation for roadworks. The results of this work have been published separately (Heawood and Robinson 1997).

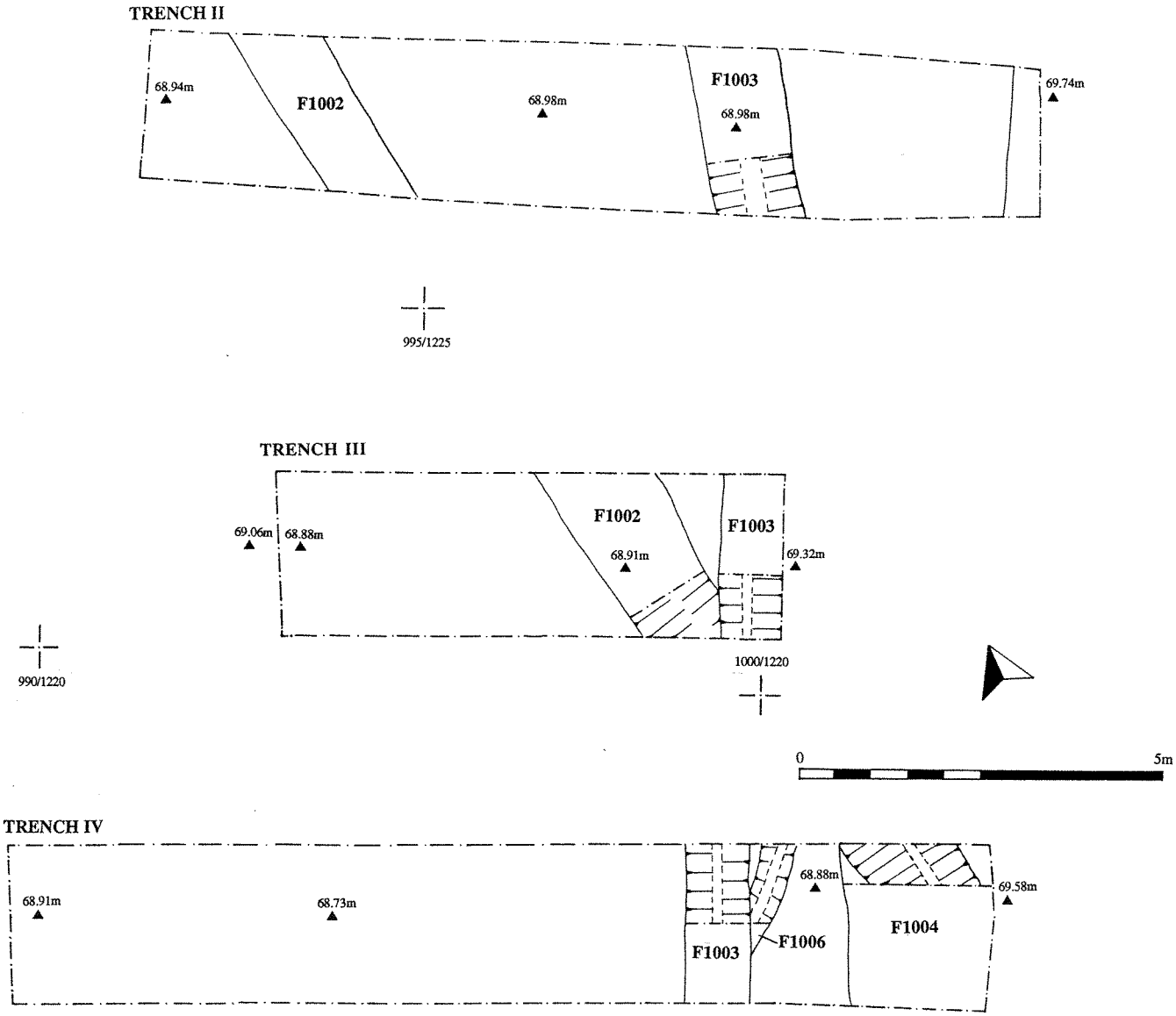

Figure 10 Plan of Trenches II, III, and IV, Field D

6 RESULTS OF MONITORING

Intermittent monitoring visits were carried out during the stripping of the road easement between the M11 and the Four Went Ways roundabout. Results from a selection of the areas of archaeological potential are given below.

M11 adjacent to Anglo-Saxon cemetery site (TL 501/436 - TL 503/440)

The road easement tapered to meet the M11 within *c* 100m of the northern boundary of the excavated area of the Great Chesterford Anglo-Saxon cemetery (Evison 1994). The observed stretch of the easement revealed a disturbed subsoil which was probably associated with the construction of the embanked M11. No archaeological features were observed. Further, none were revealed at TL 502/439 where the Essex SMR notes features of vague origins.

Stump Cross (TL 506/442)

A single feature, corresponding to one of the ditches located by evaluation, was observed in the face of the new road cutting. There were reports of Romano-British detector finds in the vicinity, including third and fourth century AD coins, brooches, and pottery (TL 5052/4425). A hoard of late Bronze Age socketed axes was also recovered (also *c* 5052/4425).

Bourn Bridge (TL 517/494 and TL 5182/4948)

There were reports of detector finds, including two fragments of possible Bronze Age weapons, at *c* TL 517/494. Parts of a Saxon small long brooch and ?cruciform brooch, of a decorated wrist clasp, and a late Saxon strap end were also found at a similar location. A separate report concerned 'several small long brooches', some bones, and dark brown/black pottery sherds from 'dark soil next to the river' at TL 5182/4948. These finds were made close to, or within, the site of a subsequent excavation by Cambridge Archaeological Unit (Evans 1994; Pollard 1996), which did indeed produce Bronze Age features and Anglo-Saxon settlement remains (sunken featured buildings), although the latter were originally interpreted as Iron Age (Evans 1994, 14).

Brent Ditch (TL 514/475)

A service trench was dug through the ditch alongside the hedged boundary, close to where a section had already been excavated archaeologically. It did not encounter the basal deposits of the ditch, or reveal anything not already encountered in the section recorded in 1992.

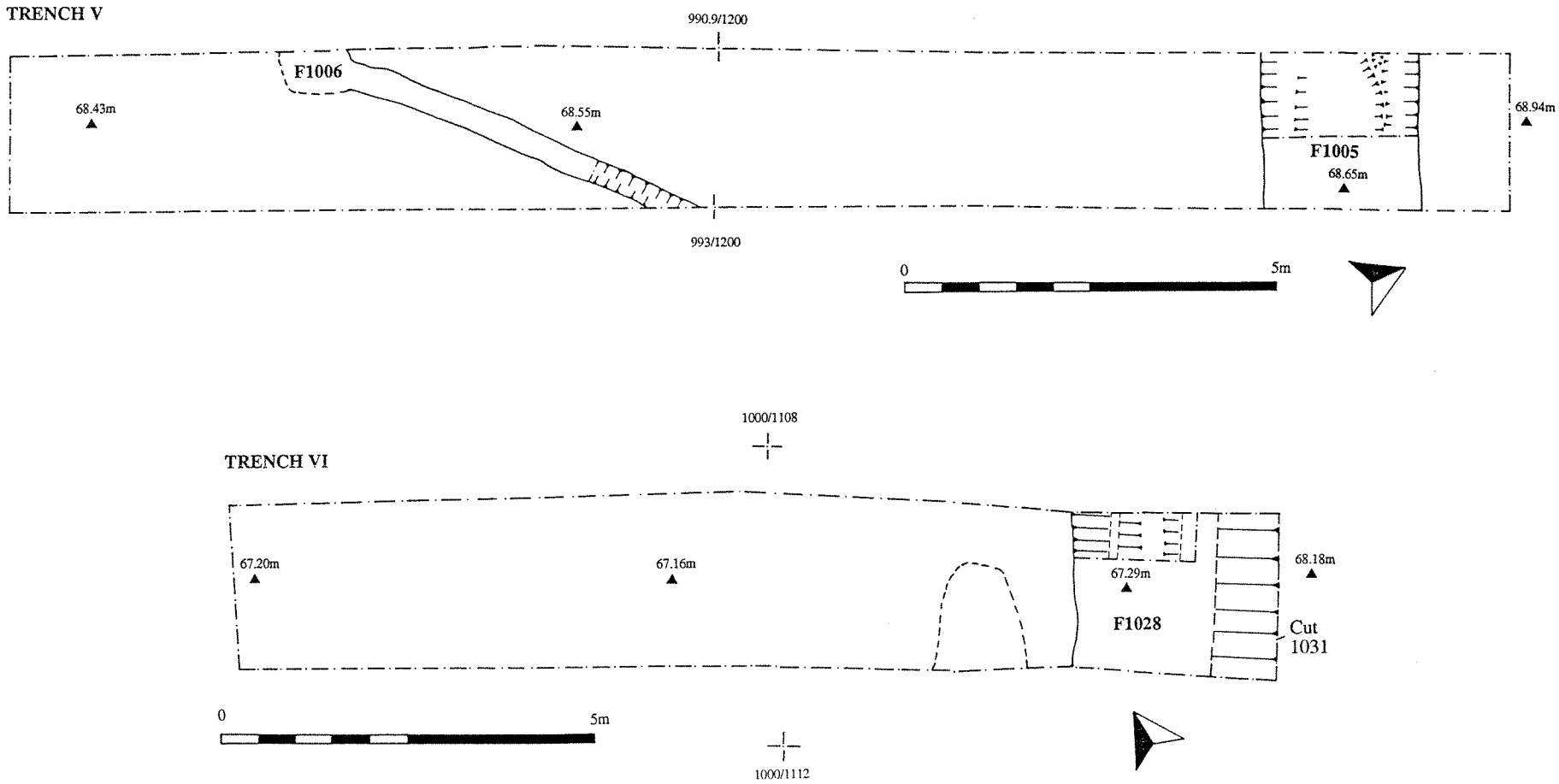

Figure 11 Plans of Trenches V and VI, Field D

7 DISCUSSION

Field A

A low density of archaeological features was recorded. The four parallel gullies located towards the western boundary of the field may represent either the shifting boundary of a slope-oriented field, or drainage features adjoining a narrow track. The features are not oriented with the presumed line of the Roman road, and therefore were probably not laid out from it. They may represent the later phases of fields or other features that pre-date Roman rule. One of these gullies showed evidence that it had held vertical timbers: one phase may represent a palisaded stock enclosure or similar structure. Occasional finds of abraded pottery suggest a possible Roman date, but the very small number of finds should not be regarded as constituting secure dating evidence. The paucity of finds does, however, suggest that the gullies are not closely linked with settlement.

The plough marks recorded in Trench X may derive from the same period as these gullies. The gullies did not correspond with the line of the Roman Road or contemporary field boundaries, but were aligned roughly across the slope of the field, which became more pronounced to the north-east. Similarly, the plough marks were aligned roughly across the slope, and also roughly up and down it. The plough marks contained no artefactual dating evidence, but were ephemeral and irregular in nature, and were sealed by the colluvium, which contained probable post-medieval brick and tile. They may, therefore, relate to Romano-British cultivation, but if field alignments reflecting relief were of earlier derivation, the plough marks may also be earlier. Trench I contained plough marks on a different, north / south alignment, also not adequately dated. Again, they appeared to be sealed by the post-medieval colluvium.

A ditch in Trench VI contained post-medieval brick fragments. It was aligned with the slope and with field boundaries which still survive, suggesting that the Roman road followed by the A11 was not a major influence on enclosed field alignment in this area.

Field B

Again, very few features were apparent. Apart from a single truncated post hole, the only feature thought to be of archaeological origin was a wide shallow ditch which was sealed by colluvium and which ran parallel to the line of the A11. It may be a remnant of a Roman roadside ditch, but could equally represent a later field boundary. No finds were recovered from it.

Field C

Despite the fact that five trenches were opened adjacent to the line of the Roman road, only 300m north of the postulated circuit of a first century fort at Great Chesterford, the only archaeological features located were a post hole, a pit of uncertain date, and probable post-medieval cultivation features. It does not appear that any extra mural

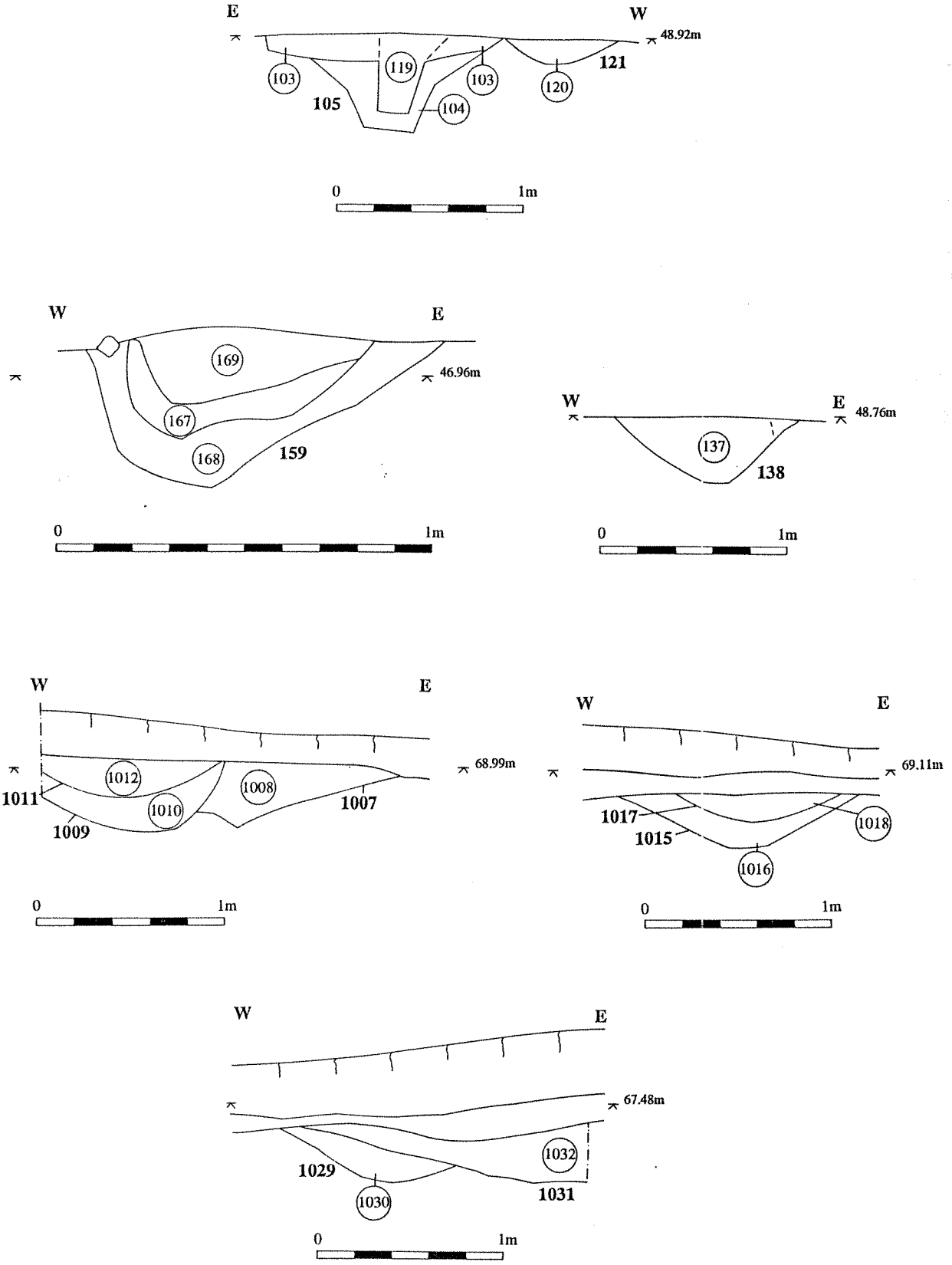

Figure 12 *Sections across selected features. Cut numbers relate to features described in the text as follows:* ***105, 138 =F100; 121 =F101; 159 =F170; 1009, 1011, 1015, 1017 =F1003; 1029, 1031 =F1028***

Roman settlement or cemeteries extended along the road this far north of the enclosed Roman town.

Field D Hinxton Grange

The ditches orientated with the A11 may have been associated with the Roman road, though very little positive dating evidence was obtained from them. The ditches aligned north-west to south-east approximate the orientation of one linear element in an adjacent three-sided cropmark enclosure. The paucity of artefacts within the sectioned features led to the conclusion that the evaluation site was not near to the settlement nucleus, which was probably represented by the cropmarks and find scatter to the east, but had instead revealed elements of an associated field system, and possibly features ancillary to the Roman road or a similarly aligned field.

As stated in the results above, further fieldwork was carried out at the northern end of Field D during the road construction programme. The findings have been published separately, but necessitate some revision of the interpretation proposed here.

8 CONCLUSION

Evaluation trenches were concentrated on the line of the proposed new road, and in particular on the site of the major intersection planned to replace the Stump Cross roundabout. Priority was given to this area because of the proximity of Great Chesterford to the south Thus, although Fields A-D as a whole were only rapidly evaluated due to the permitted schedule and previously agreed format of archaeological works, it was intended that trenching should be sufficient to determine the presence of significant archaeological remains in the areas of greatest potential disturbance.

The evaluation suggested that significant remains were not present on the site of the proposed new road and roundabouts. Remains encountered suggested the presence of a low density of archaeological features spanning a long period. The features contained low densities of artefactual finds, and were impossible to date accurately. The paucity of finds and occupation features suggested that the evaluation area lay away from any major focus of prehistoric, Roman, or medieval settlement.

Subsequent discoveries during road building necessitated some revision of these findings. The recovery of a hoard of socketed axes from Field A indicated early prehistoric activity in the area, but does not provide evidence for agriculture or settlement. Finds suggestive of Romano-British settlement were said to have been made within the same field. Given the total evaluation trench cover, and nature of those features encountered, it is tempting to wonder whether the grid references given for these finds are strictly accurate. To the north of Field D, rumoured detector finds of Roman coins led to the discovery by the Archaeological Field Unit (AFU) of evidence for a small high status Roman building with plastered walls and a tiled roof

and Robinson, forthcoming). Evidence for the building had been largely destroyed by a former quarry, and had been obscured by trees during evaluation. However, again, there was no conclusive evidence that this had been the site of habitation. The paucity of finds suggested that this was a shrine, temple, or other non-domestic roadside building occupying a relatively isolated hilltop location. Evidence for settlement, in the form of cropmarks of enclosures, may be found to the east and west of Field D. To the east, one enclosure system was associated with a large quantity of Romano-British finds indicative of domestic buildings (SMR 06191). The situation of the apparently non-domestic building excavated by the AFU, and of the Romano-British settlement remains known nearby, is reminiscent of the villa and associated shrine/temple at Reach and Swaffham Prior (Bray forthcoming).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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APPENDIX A LIST OF FINDS

Field	Trench	Context	Feature	Description
A	XI	104	F100	2 sherds Roman pottery, greyware
A	XI	110	F108	2 sherds Roman pottery
C	VI	194	F173	2 frags ?post-medieval peg tile
C	VI	195	F173	1 sherd post-medieval pottery
C	VI	196	F173	3 frags ?post-medieval peg tile
D	II	1018	F1003	Roman coin (?3rd century radiate copy a)
D	IV	1021	F1004	1 sherd Roman pottery, oxidised ware
-	-	-		2 flint frags (including ?neolithic blade) found during monitoring at TL 5190/4935

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