

Boys Hall Moat, Sevington, Kent
Scheduled Ancient Monument No.146

Archaeological Investigation
Interim Report

Oxford Archaeological Unit

June 1993

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION AT BOYS HALL MOAT, SEVINGTON,
ASHFORD, KENT, MARCH / APRIL 1993.**



SUMMARY OF RESULTS

1 Introduction

- 1.1 In March / April 1993 the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) conducted a two week rescue excavation at Boys Hall Moat, a scheduled ancient monument (S.A.M. 146 Kent) centred at NGR TR 0300 4075.
- 1.2 The excavation work was commissioned by British Rail (Network South-East) in advance of construction work on the main Folkestone to London line. The area of proposed development consisted of a linear strip of land, measuring approximately 200m in length and 4m in width, fronting the existing railway line, at the north eastern margins of the scheduled area.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Moat originally formed part of Sevington manor. The Barry family are thought to have been resident at the Moat during the 14th and 15th centuries. The house was rebuilt as Boys Hall in or around 1632 by Thomas Boys of Willesborough. The surviving earthworks show evidence of a rectangular moat and surrounding formal gardens including raised terraced walks and water features. There is no indication that the site extends under the railway, though cropmarks of a trackway leading towards Boys Hall have been recorded to the north east (OAU 1991, 165).
- 2.2 Previous sample excavation work, conducted by the Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit (Philp 1991), within the immediate vicinity of the moated enclosure produced evidence to suggest the presence of a possible Belgic farmstead, a Romano-British farmstead and an Iron Age enclosure. Other areas of Roman and Medieval activity were also recorded (Wilson 1990).
- 2.3 Two additional areas of Late Iron Age settlement activity were identified by the Canterbury Archaeological Trust some 400m to the south east of Boys Hall during groundworks at the Ashford Rail Terminal (Bennett 1988, 2-4).
- 2.4 The scheduled area, sited at between 40 and 45m OD, is at present surrounded by pasture and set-aside. Geology consists mainly of Atherfield Clay.

3 Aims

- 3.1** The aims of the excavation were, within the area of proposed development, to investigate, record and date any archaeological remains associated with the scheduled monument, hoping to clarify the nature of the indistinct series of recorded earthworks, and to investigate and record any additional areas of subsurface archaeology.

4 Method

- 4.1** All topsoil overburden was stripped down to undisturbed archaeological horizons by a 360° excavator using a 1.2m wide ditching bucket and removed from the site by a dumper truck.
- 4.2** All archaeological features were then investigated and recorded by hand.

5 Results

- 5.1** All surface features within the area of proposed development had unfortunately been levelled prior to the excavation. Clarification of the date and nature of the earthworks therefore proved impossible.
- 5.2** Six distinct areas of modern disturbance, 5, 16, 35, 38, 39 and 43 were detected at the south eastern end of the site. 5 and 16 appeared to have formed a hedge line running parallel with the southern most edge of the railway. A 19th century drainage channel, 79, was observed at the north western end of the trench. Three tree hollows of uncertain date, 40, 56 and 77, were also recorded.
- 5.3** A roughly linear, NE - SW aligned, cut, 36, measuring between 7.5 and 9m in width, exposed for a length of 8m and traced to a maximum depth of 2m, was recorded from the south eastern end of the excavated area. The feature appeared to be running into the scheduled area, towards the eastern corner of the square moat. Evidence from the latest fills, 10 and 18, suggested that the final levelling of this feature had occurred at the time as the construction of the railway. 36 may represent either the original position of a stream "feeder" to the square moat, or an integral part of the later 17th century gardens.
- 5.4** A discrete series of linear cuts were recorded from the approximate centre of the excavated area. Three of these cuts, 45, 47 and 75, were aligned north - south, while a fourth, 47, was set 90° to feature 45 on an east - west alignment. The remaining features, 64 and 65, may be interpreted as a single discontinuous, irregularly shaped, NE - SW aligned cut. Large quantities of Late Iron Age pottery (provisionally dated to the first century BC), animal

bone and two possible fragments of quern were recovered from the fills of feature 49. Late Iron Age pottery was also retrieved from features 47 and 75.

- 5.6 A small number of Neolithic / Bronze Age worked flints were recovered from various features and in association with more recent material. All pieces are therefore considered to be residual.

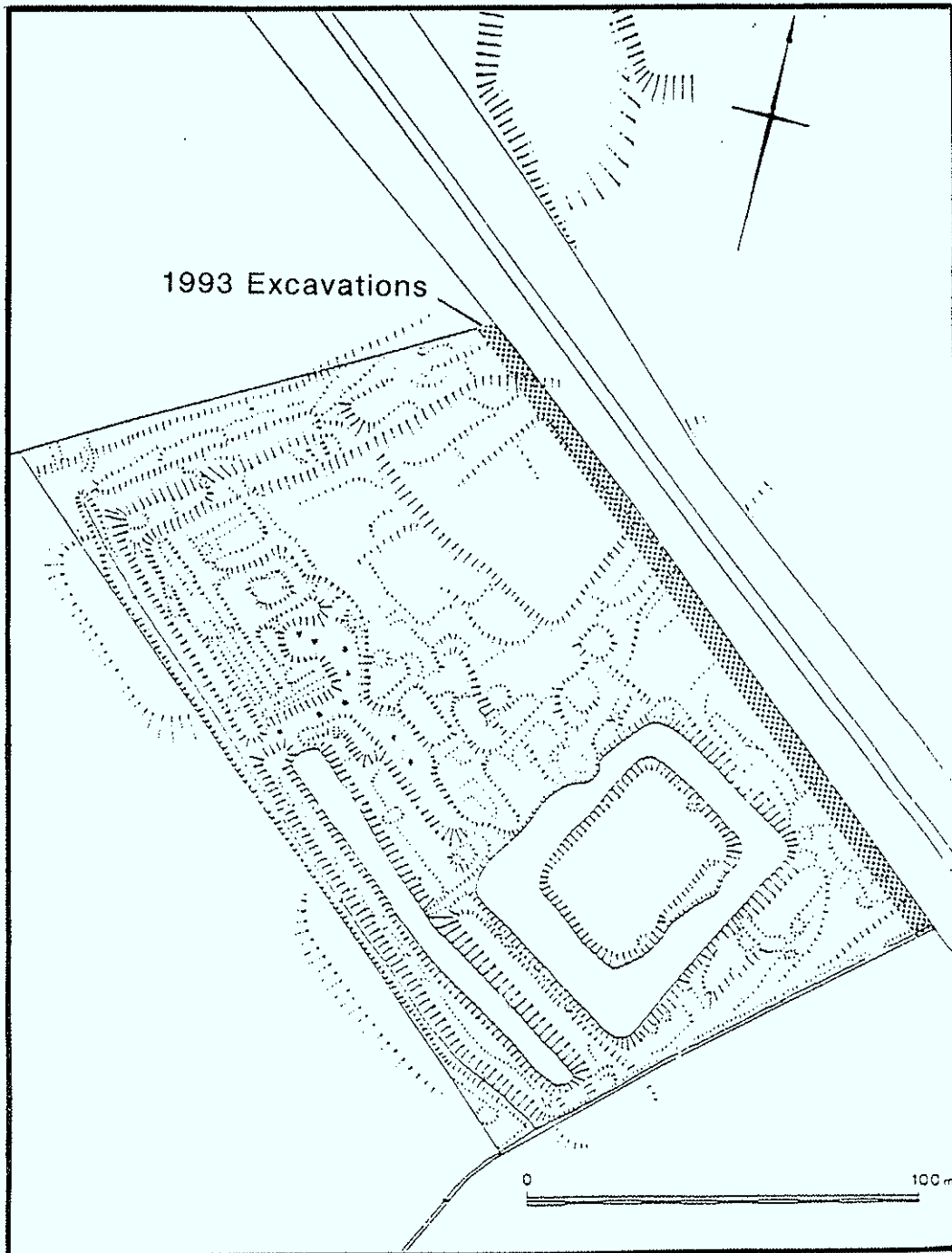
6 Conclusions

- 6.1 The few residual worked flints recovered from across the trench suggest the presence, within the immediate vicinity, of an area of Neolithic or Bronze Age activity.
- 6.2 The discrete series of linear cuts recorded from the central portion of the trench may relate either to a zone of Late Iron Age / Belgic settlement, similar to, or a continuation of, that recorded to the immediate north east of Boys Hall (Philp 1991, 74), or to an area of Late Iron Age arable cultivation. Either way it is clear that, when combined with the results of the earlier evaluations (Bennett 1989; Philp 1991), the area of Late Iron Age / Belgic activity to east of present day Sevington originally covered an extensive area.
- 6.3 No features of securely Medieval date were recorded from the excavations, though it should here be re-stressed that all surface features within the area of proposed development had been levelled prior to the commencement of excavation.
- 6.4 Linear feature 36 may represent an integral part of the later 17th century formal gardens. In this respect it may be interpreted as either a natural or man-made stream "feeder" to the square moat of Boys Hall.

Miles Russell
OAU JUNE 1993

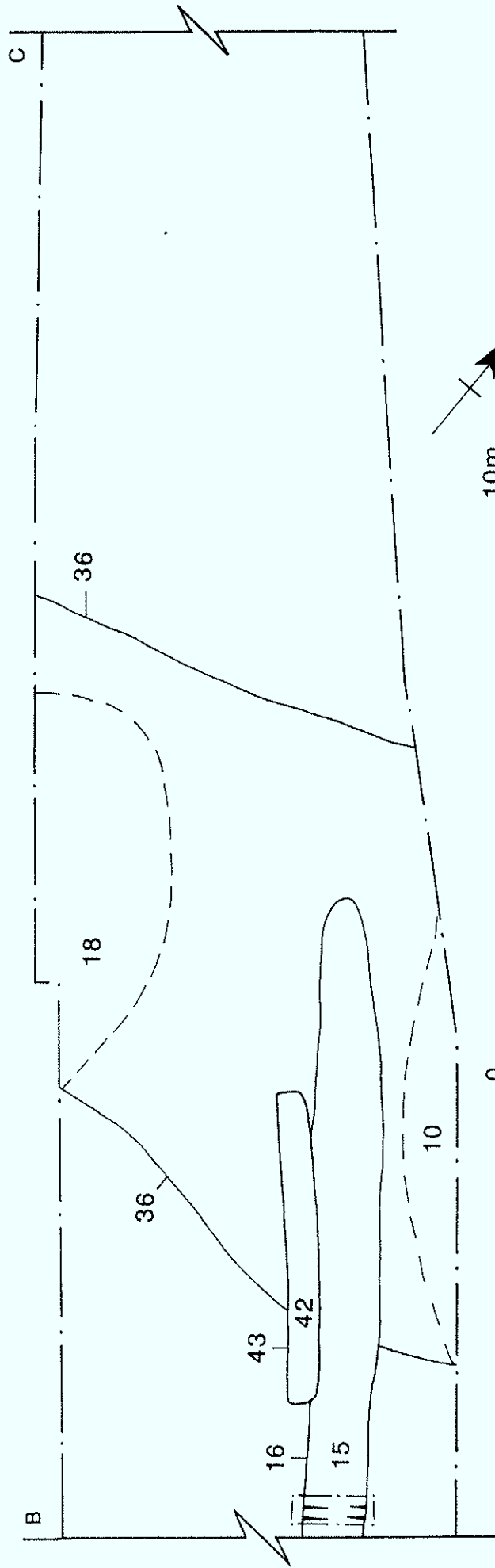
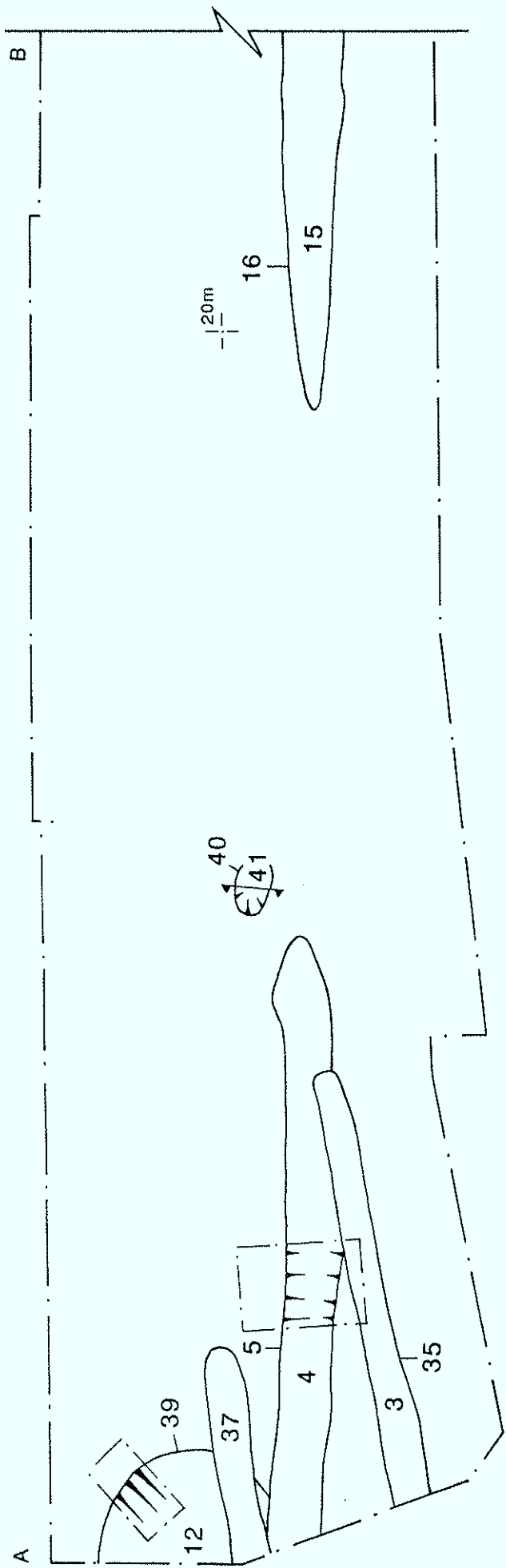
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Plan of Boys Hall Moat, Sevington
(after RCHME)

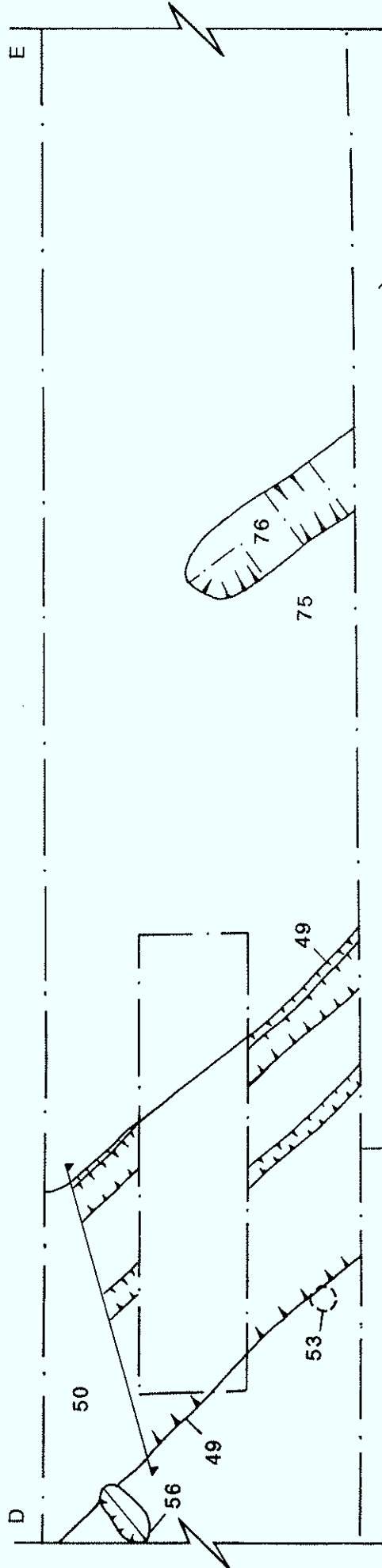
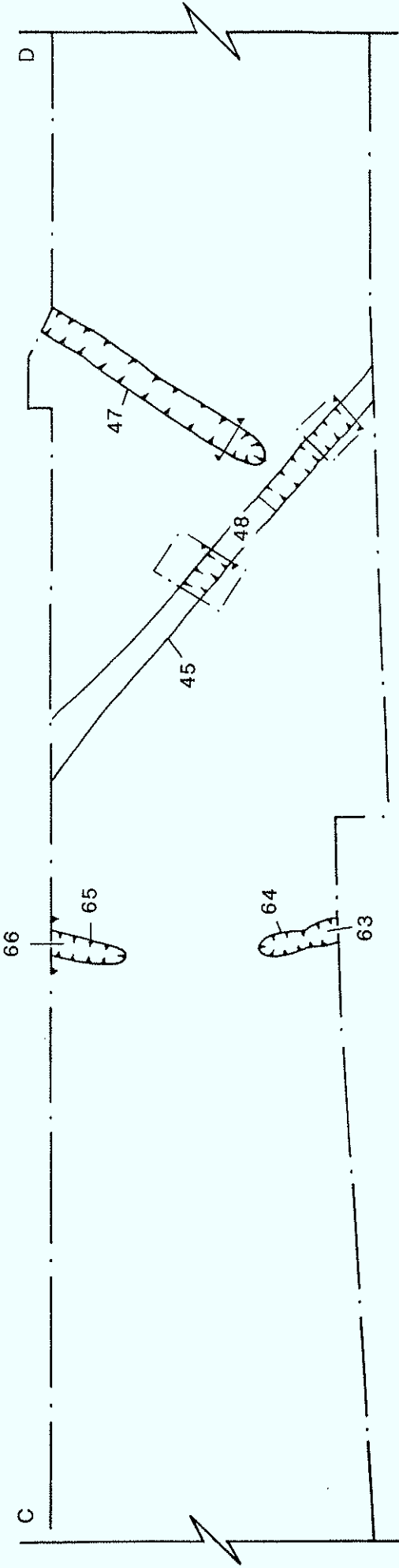
Figure 1



Trench Plan, part 1
Scale 1:100

Figure 2

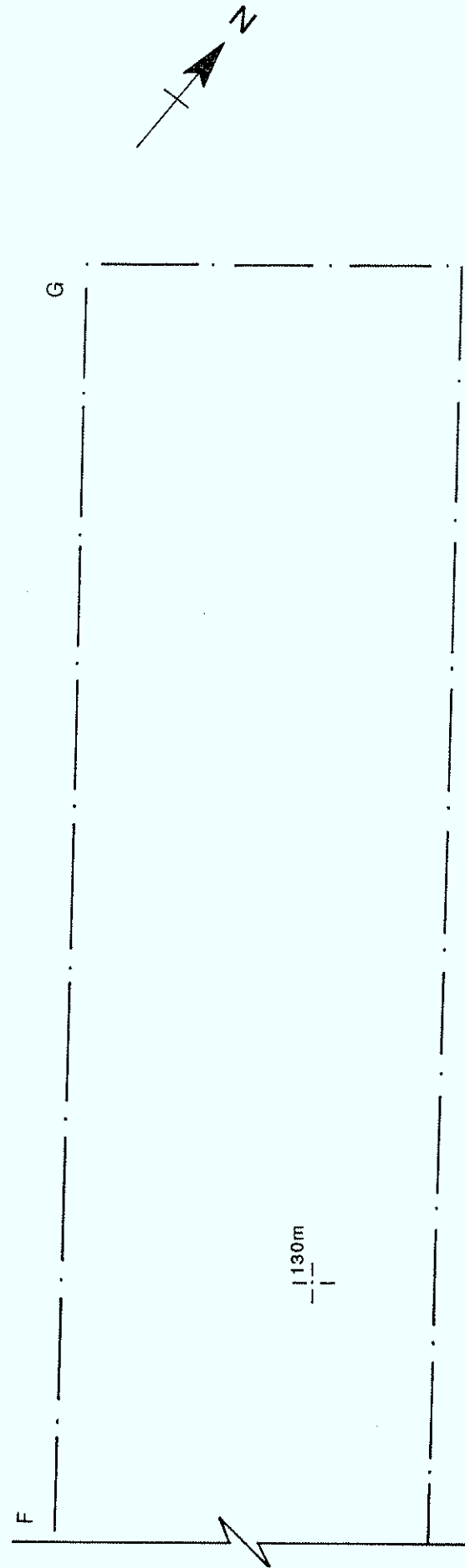
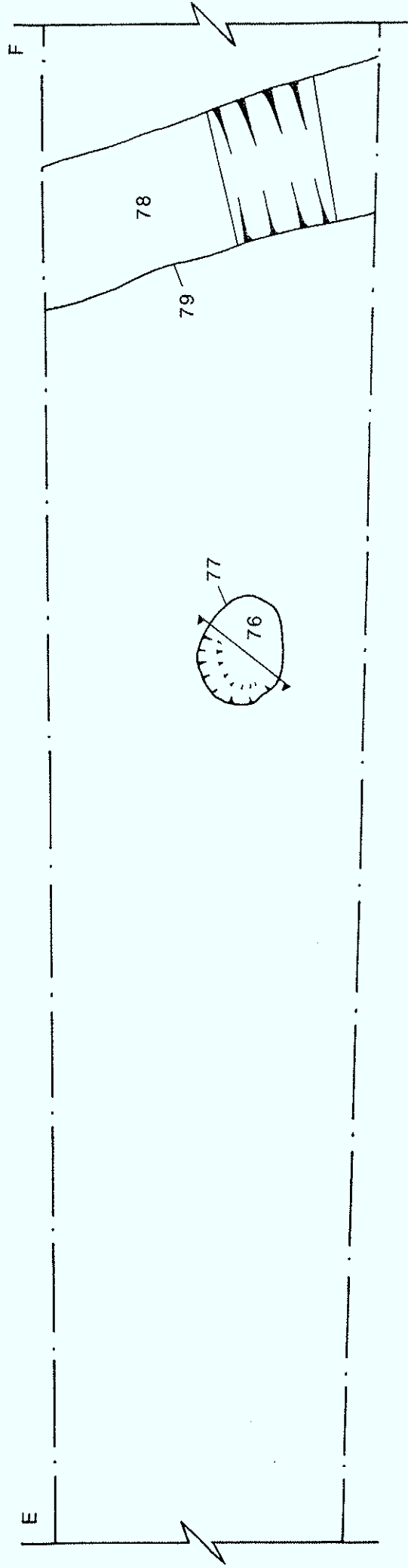
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Trench Plan, part 2
Scale 1:100

Figure 3

SEV BHM 93



Trench Plan, part 3
Scale 1:100



Figure 4

