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The archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Arran Ferguson assisted by Jess Opie and Jon Onraet. The report was written by Arran Ferguson and Paul Clark, and the finds analysis was by Ian Miller. The illustrations were carried out by Emma Carter and Adam Parson. The project was managed by Emily Mercer who also edited the report together with Jamie Quartermaine.

SUMMARY

In July and August 2003 Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) undertook an archaeological evaluation on behalf of Sinclair Knight Merz Ltd (SKM) as part of a Stage 3 DMRB Environmental Assessment of the impact of the proposed Middlewich Eastern Bypass. The area of the proposed route under archaeological investigation starts at SJ 713656 and ends at SJ 723638 to the south-east of Middlewich.

The evaluation comprised a programme of trial trenching and was informed by earlier investigations. In March 2003 a magnetometer survey was undertaken along the route corridor (GSB 2003) wherein dense concentrations of potentially archaeologically significant anomalies were located in Areas 6 and 9. Other features of possible interest were also seen in Areas 1, 3 and 4. Features or areas of archaeological potential have also been identified from a desk-based assessment carried out by Oxford Archaeology (OAU 2001). These features within the proposed route corridor were earmarked for trial trenching together with those from the geophysical survey in order to provide a maximum coverage of 5% of the total area to be impacted by the proposed route. The evaluation originally comprised a series of 54 evaluation trenches measuring 20m in length and 2m wide, designed to determine the nature and extent of the surviving archaeological resource. These were located on features of possible significance identified from previous investigations.

Due to access constraints the trial trenching was limited and only 30 of the proposed 54 trenches were evaluated. The trenches in the geophysical survey from Area 2 northwards could be investigated. However, trenching to the south of Area 2 was limited to a small number of trenches in Areas 3, 4, 6 and all of those outlined in Area 9.

Area 1 was targeted due to the presence of an east-west linear anomaly seen in the magnetometer results, of which the origin was uncertain. No evidence of this feature was located in the trial trenches. However, during the evaluation a north-south aligned linear was located running through Trenches 4, 6, 7 and 8 wherein, a probable re-deposited, Roman pottery sherd was recovered. Although dating was inconclusive it may relate to Roman field systems previously recorded 1.5km to the north-west (Gifford 2001).

Within Area 6 features of archaeological potential, including the possible remains of field boundaries and pits, were located during the magnetometer survey. These were targeted with seven proposed trenches. However, only three were available for evaluation and no evidence of the features was seen, although there was probable evidence of land clearance.

The geophysical survey in Area 9 located a complex of anomalies reminiscent of a ditched enclosure with possible pits, which were targeted with numerous trial trenches. Trench 46 failed to locate the ditch on the western side. Nevertheless, Trenches 47, 48 and 49 confirmed the location of the north, east and south sides of the possible enclosure ditch. Throughout the topsoil and upper fills of the subsoil a quantity of post-medieval pottery fragments was recovered. Modern land drains truncated the lower fills of the ditches, and, in areas outside of the modern disturbance, there was a lack of any diagnostic material.

The archaeological evaluation along the route of the proposed Middlewich Eastern Bypass has located possible evidence of a ditch relating to the Roman field systems to

the north-west of the study area. Its morphology was seen to be consistent with Roman field boundary ditches previously recorded in the area. The rectilinear enclosure with associated pits in Area 9 produced no dating material from secure contexts but it is possible that the enclosure may well be prehistoric or Roman in origin. A large quantity of post-medieval pottery was recovered from the surface of the natural sub-soil and the upper layers of the ditch fills in the trial trenches which may relate to an earlier farmstead located on the site of the current New Farm.

The linear feature in Area 1 will be directly impacted upon by the development and therefore mitigative measures are necessary in the form of a watching brief or more extensive excavation. Mitigative measures are also required in Areas 4 and 6 as many of the features identified in the geophysical survey are yet to be examined. The proposed route will not directly affect the rectilinear enclosure in Area 9, but its proximity to the road would mean that any associated archaeological features or remains to the west of the enclosure will be directly affected. Therefore, it is recommended that the site be avoided and the bypass re-routed in this area or else close archaeological supervision, preferably an extensive mitigation excavation over the site, be undertaken.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF PROJECT

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) was invited by Sinclair Knight Merz Ltd (SKM) (hereafter the 'client') to submit a project design for an archaeological evaluation along the corridor of the proposed Middlewich Eastern Bypass, Middlewich, Cheshire (SJ 713656 to SJ 723638; Fig 1). This follows on from, and was informed by, an archaeological desk-based assessment of the proposed development area undertaken by Oxford Archaeology (OA), previously known as Oxford Archaeological Unit, (OAU 2001) and a geophysical survey conducted by GSB Prospection (2003) (Figs 2a-c). The project design (*Appendix I*) was prepared in accordance with a verbal brief from the Planning Archaeologist at Cheshire County Council. Following acceptance of the project design OA North was commissioned by SKM to undertake the archaeological evaluation in July and August 2003.
- 1.1.2 This report outlines the methodology and results of the evaluation, in context with the results of the geophysical survey along the proposed route. A total of 54 trial trenches were proposed in the project design. Problems encountered with access during the fieldwork resulted in only 30 trenches being investigated (Figs 3a-c) between 31st July 2003 and 22nd August 2003.
- 1.1.3 To the north of Area 1 a total of three evaluation trenches were excavated in order to locate the remains of a farming building known from the desk-based assessment (OAU 2001). A further seven trenches were positioned in Area 1 in to investigate magnetometer anomalies which may be of an archaeological origin. Between Areas 1 and 2 a number of trenches were positioned on an approximate north-south alignment. The aim of these was to investigate whether any remains of a Roman field system exist in the form of parallel east-west ditches as seen 1.5km to the north (Giffords 2001).
- 1.1.4 In Areas 3 and 4 the evaluation trenches were located over responses identified by the magnetometer survey of possible archaeological origin including pits. Limited access resulted in only two trenches in Area 3 (T15 and T19) and three trenches in Area 4 (T23, T25 and T26) being evaluated. Between the two areas of geophysics, three additional trenches were proposed (T20, T21 and T22). These were located around the site of a farm identified from the desk-based assessment; however, these could not be excavated due to access restrictions.
- 1.1.5 In Area 5 two trenches were proposed (T29 and T30) which were positioned over parallel responses of unknown origin seen in the results of the magnetometer survey. Neither of these trenches could be accessed.
- 1.1.6 The magnetometer survey showed a complexity of linears and possible pits in Area 6 which were intended for evaluation. Of the seven outlined trenches only three were investigated (T31, T32, T36), again due to limited access.
- 1.1.7 Of the remaining areas surveyed with magnetometry (Areas 7, 8, 9, 10) access was permitted for Area 9 only. Areas 7, 8 and 10 were outlined for trial trenching for verification purposes and the magnetometer results did not show any anomalies of potential archaeological interest. In addition, T38, located to

the north of Area 7 and positioned over the possible township boundary, and T43 positioned over ridge and furrow both identified in the desk-based assessment (OAU 2001) could not be excavated.

- 1.1.8 The evaluation trenches in Area 9 were intended to confirm the nature and extent of a large rectilinear ditched enclosure identified in the geophysical survey results. A total of eight evaluation trenches were excavated (T45-T51) together with T44 to the west located over a marling pit.
- 1.1.5 This report sets out the results of the work, followed by a statement of the archaeological potential of the area available for evaluation, an assessment of the impact of the proposed development and recommendations for further work.

1.2 TOPOGRAPHICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

- 1.2.1 Two small streams, Sanderson's Brook and its tributary, Small Brook, flow along the length of the study area from south-east to north-west. The land lies between 32m OD and 50m OD. It is predominantly flat, with the exception of an area to the west and north west of Cledford Hall, where the ground rises sharply to the east of Sanderson's Brook.
- 1.2.2 The drift geology consists almost exclusively of boulder clay. Small exceptions occur, firstly at the northern extremity of the study area, where localised deposits of sands and gravels can be found lying between Sanderson's Brook and the River Croco. Secondly, alongside Sanderson's Brook, which runs north-west/south-east through the area of concern, there is a band of alluvial clay fringed with sand and gravel, no more than 50m wide, which can be found intermittently along the length of the watercourse (OAU 2001).
- 1.2.3 The modern landscape is divided by the railway, aligned south-east/north west. To the west of the tracks the landscape is dominated by several chemical factories and settling beds. To the east the land is currently in agricultural use, being both arable and pastoral. The railway mirrors the approximate line of the Trent and Mersey Canal, which lies between 150 and 450m further west of the railway line. The centre of the town of Middlewich lies to the north-west of the end of the proposed route.

1.3 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 1.3.1 The central and northern areas of Middlewich town have seen considerable archaeological excavation, primarily in the 1920s, and between 1960 and the present day. The town is rich in archaeological remains. However, there has been little archaeological investigation within the section of the proposed route corridor within this evaluation. Therefore, there is a scarcity of known sub-surface archaeological sites. Whilst archaeological watching briefs associated with the recent construction of Pochin Way, just outside the north end of the study area, produced no significant remains (NMR 1335013), the investigation of land to the north of the A54 has provided abundant new evidence for Roman activity in the area (NMR 1076485, 1329737; Shaw and Clark 1999; Giffords 2001; EAS forthcoming).

- 1.3.2 These factors mean that, although few subsurface archaeological remains have been located to date, it is possible that hitherto unknown sites may be present within the working widths of the three proposed route options and across the study area as a whole.
- 1.3.3 **Prehistoric period:** no finds or sites of prehistoric date have been made within the section of proposed route corridor of the bypass. The general pattern of prehistoric occupation in Cheshire is only partially understood at present, primarily due to a lack of information, which has been taken by authors such as Higham (1993), to indicate that the region was only sparsely populated and utilised in the early prehistoric periods.
- 1.3.4 Occupation during the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods appears to have focused along the fringes of the Cheshire plains, although there is also some evidence for limited activity within meres and other wetland sites (Leah *et al* 1997). This is likely to be associated with sporadic, and potentially seasonal, occupation and utilisation of hunting grounds, with pockets of lighter gravels being used for agricultural purposes.
- 1.3.5 Bronze Age activity seemingly continues this pattern with the major concentrations of burial mounds being found on the uplands to the east of the Cheshire Plain and also on the upland spur running north-south through mid-Cheshire (Higham 1993). A small number of tangible sites also appear on the Cheshire plains, including burial mounds (Carrington 1994). Findspots of metal axes (Shaw and Clark 1999), together with 16 worked flints, a single fishing net weight, and stone axe recovered from the town of Middlewich (Giffords 1997), suggests possible settlement within the wider area during the Bronze Age.
- 1.3.6 Recent discoveries of small c1ha sub-rectangular enclosures on aerial photographs in the north of Cheshire have been taken to indicate the presence of late-Iron Age/Romano-British farmsteads within the Cheshire Plain. These sites are primarily situated upon lighter gravel soils within expanses of heavy boulder clay deposits (Leah *et al* 1997). Deposits of sand and gravels lies underneath the town of Middlewich, and perhaps account for the location of the early settlement at this point. The location of the town at the junction of two major watercourses (the Rivers Dane and Wheelock) would have also been a spur to development.
- 1.3.7 The area is known for its brine springs. However, no clear evidence exists as to whether the brine springs were being exploited prior to the Roman period, although the discovery of the remains of salt containers (briquetage) on Iron Age sites in the Welsh Marches makes this a possibility (Shaw and Clark 1999). Within Middlewich itself there is little evidence for pre-Roman activity. Settlement was probably focused on the more amenable gravels, river terraces and fluvio-glacial deposits alongside the River's Dane and Wheelock's junction as oppose to the heavy boulder clays. However, the area was probably utilised to some extent during the prehistoric period and the possibility for the discovery of finds and other remains such as field systems and possibly settlement sites should not be discounted.
- 1.3.8 **Roman period:** to the north of the study area, a wealth of evidence for Roman activity demonstrates that Middlewich, referred to as *Salinae* in contemporary

documentary sources, was an important industrial and regional trading centre from as early as cAD 60 and seemingly continued to be so until the late fourth century AD when it had probably begun to decline (Burnham and Wachter 1990).

- 1.3.9 The earliest known Roman occupation, within the vicinity of Middlewich, is the Roman Fort at Harbut's Field (SAM 12615) which lies approximately 1.2km north-west of the study area. The entire plan of the fort was revealed by geophysical survey and tested by selective trial trenching between 1993 and 1996 (Giffords 1997). The recovery of tile and brick demonstrates that this was not a temporary encampment and was probably constructed with the aim of supplying a base for a permanent garrison. However, it appears to have been occupied for a relatively short time from the late AD 50s to the late AD 70s due to small quantities of pottery recovered (Giffords 1997). The fort lies 100m west of the line of King Street, the Roman road leading north towards Wilderspool, and would have been accessible by road from the early legionary base at Wroxeter.
- 1.3.10 It is clear, from both archaeological and documentary sources that Roman Middlewich (*Salinae*) remained important after the early military presence had departed. Extensive evidence of salt production has now been recovered and evaporating kilns, brine storage pits, lead salt pans, and briquetage have all been found (Shaw and Clark 1999). These have been primarily in the centre of Middlewich town but recent development-led investigations have also revealed unmistakable signs of salt production further east in the vicinity of Kinderton Hall, 1km north of the study area (EAS 1997) and over the Mid-Point 18 Industrial Estate (EAS forthcoming).
- 1.3.11 Evidence for domestic occupation has been found in Middlewich during, currently unpublished, excavations conducted in the 1960s and 1970s focussed to the west of King Street. These exposed, amongst other remains, a row of timber shops dating from the late first century AD to early second century, overlain by third to fourth century structures including a timber corridor house. All the buildings had workshops at the rear, indicating that a variety of trades were practised, including metal, glass, and leather working (NMR 74685).
- 1.3.12 As well as demonstrating extensive evidence for salt production and other industries, Middlewich was also located on the junction of two Roman roads, which potentially linked Middlewich with Northwich, Stoke-on-Trent and Whitchurch. Recent investigations immediately north of Holmes Chapel Road (A54) and east of the railway have produced evidence for another Roman road, with an associated cremation, 500m north of the study area. This site may represent a hitherto undiscovered road to Manchester, and probably joined King Street (the road to Northwich) at a crossroads close to the north-west corner of the study area (OAU 2001).
- 1.3.13 Close to the proposed route corridor is the route of the Roman road from Middlewich to Chesterton and Stoke-on-Trent which has been identified some 5km to the south-east of Middlewich, at Elworth (SMR 436/1/9). The road was developed in the late nineteenth century when salt and alkali works were built, and it is uncertain what evidence remains (OAU 2001).

- 1.3.14 Adjacent to the route corridor is an extremely significant ‘small’ Roman town with extensive evidence for major industrial and craft activity throughout the Romano-British period. The roads leading to and from the town have been partially identified and there is a high potential that further ribbon development dating to this period could have been sited alongside any of these roads, for example cemeteries, ‘guest’ houses and villas, the former often being located to the south of a town, although a cremation burial has been discovered at Kinderton, to the north of the town (Gifford 1997). However, the unplanned nature of the Roman settlement has been noted by previous investigations (EAS 1997) and this is felt to make the reliable prediction of the location of outlying settlement, cemeteries and other remains extremely difficult.
- 1.3.15 In addition, a recent evaluation and subsequent excavation undertaken on the Mid-Point 18 Industrial Estate to the south of the Holmes Chapel Road (A54) located evidence of a Roman field system, many of which were empty but some contained briquetage and pottery kilns. The extent of the field system was not located during the excavations and it is expected that they continued east and southwards (EAS forthcoming). Therefore, there is potential for evidence of the field system, in the form of ditched boundaries extending eastwards from the town, within the area of the proposed route.
- 1.3.16 It is also possible that elements of the Roman land divisions have influenced later features. An evaluation off Centurion Way, north of the A54, uncovered a ditched trackway or possible droveway running east-west with numerous associated subsidiary ditched enclosures. It was seen to cut a Roman brine kiln suggesting a later date. In addition, the moated site at Kinderton Hall can also be seen to run parallel (Giffords 2001)
- 1.3.17 **Early medieval period:** there are no known records of archaeological evidence relating to this period in the Middlewich area. However, documentary references clearly indicate that by 1066, Middlewich was one of the three most productive salt ‘wiches’, the others being Nantwich and Northwich. The Cheshire Domesday contains a detailed account of salt production and distribution in these places, indicating that Nantwich was then the most valuable salt-wich, at farm for £21, with Middlewich and Northwich both at farm for £8 (Harris 1987) (‘at farm’ refers to the lease of the site, hence Middlewich was being leased for £8 a year).
- 1.3.18 Middlewich was also a hundredal centre, suggesting that it could be regarded as a town with administrative functions, rather than merely a manufacturing enclave (*ibid.* 329). It remains unclear if salt production and/or occupation had continued unbroken since the Roman period, or had been re-established after an interruption (OAU 2001).
- 1.3.19 **Later medieval period:** Middlewich town and hence parish were held by the Earls of Chester, and therefore the crown, and seems to have been regarded as a borough, despite the lack of a surviving borough charter. It was granted a market in 1260 (Shaw and Clark 1999). The economy continued to be dominated by salt, with salt production concentrated on the banks of the River Croco; a number of brine pits are named in documentary sources.

- 1.3.20 Away from the town, a moat 1km north of the study area probably represents the site of Old Kinderton Hall (NMR 74705), and possible deserted medieval villages have been identified from historical references close to this site, but also to the west of the study area in 1km grid square SJ 7064, and to the north-east, in 1km grid square SJ 7366 (SMR 74733, 74734, and 74788).
- 1.3.21 Although the existence of medieval settlement focii cannot be absolutely demonstrated within the study area, it is nevertheless likely that medieval farmsteads were present. Several dispersed farmsteads have been identified on the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century maps and the locations of these and the many areas of ridge and furrow, would perhaps point to the farmsteads being the original medieval or perhaps post-medieval occupation centres.
- 1.3.22 These sites include amongst others, Cledford Hall with areas of associated ridge and furrow. Other associated features include a marling pit, New Farm with areas of associated ridge and furrow and other features such as plough banks, a former field boundary. It is possible, however, that New Farm is a later farmstead situated within a relict medieval field system, as its name suggests.
- 1.3.23 The medieval pattern of occupation and utilisation seems likely to be one of dispersed settlement with extensive agricultural field systems. Although the study area is situated away from the core settlements of Middlewich, Warmingham and Sandbach it is associated with the transport corridor linking Middlewich to Sandbach and beyond. It is probable that some small settlement focii existed with the most likely examples being situated in the vicinity of Cledford Hall, Briar Pool Farm, Curtishulme Farm and perhaps New Farm. The agricultural regime was probably mixed in nature with the ridge and furrow attesting to the practice of strip field agriculture.
- 1.3.24 **Post-medieval period:** Middlewich town continued to be an important centre of salt production in the post-medieval period, but also retained a role as a market centre for the surrounding agricultural region. A seventeenth century account describes brine being distributed from pits to salt houses (*wych houses*) in overhead wooden troughs, then being boiled in lead pans so that salt crystals could be raked off and dried (Shaw and Clark 1999). The brine salt industry survived the discovery of rock salt in the Northwich area in 1670 (Dore 1977), and Middlewich began producing salt on a factory scale following the construction of the Trent and Mersey Canal in the late eighteenth century.
- 1.3.25 The study area continued to be extensively utilised and occupied throughout the post-medieval period. Its importance as a transport corridor grew with the construction of the canal and later the railway. Significant industrial works were established and the agricultural regime seems to have continued outside of these areas. Outside of the transport corridor there has been little settlement growth and many of the field boundaries and road patterns seem to have remained virtually unchanged over the last 200 years.
- 1.3.26 The canal runs roughly north-west to the west of the proposed route corridor, and its route has been designated as a Conservation Area. It is probable that Booth Lane, which follows the canal, was designated as a turnpike road in the

late eighteenth or early nineteenth century (Giffords 1997), and an early nineteenth century Listed milepost stands by the roadside.

- 1.3.27 The North Western Railway line was constructed 150-400m east of the canal after 1840. Cartographic evidence indicates that four factories were built in the corridor between canal and railway in the period 1874-1911. The Murgatroyd's Salt Works and the Mid-Cheshire Salt works had both been built by 1899. An SMR record (SMR 1083/3/4) states that the Murgatroyd brine shaft was dug by hand in 1889 to a depth of *c*280 feet, being extended to *c*350 feet by boring, but gives a grid reference some 200m north of the works, perhaps in error. By 1911, the Electrolytic Alkali Works and Bowfield and Tetton Salt Works had been constructed to the south (OAU 2001).

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

2.1.1 A project design (*Appendix 1*) was submitted by OA North in accordance with a verbal brief by Mark Leah, Planning Archaeologist, Cheshire County Council. Following acceptance of the project design OA North was commissioned by SKM to undertake the work. The project design was adhered in so much as only 30 of the original trenches were available to OA North. The work was consistent with the relevant standards and procedures of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, and generally accepted best practice.

2.2 TRIAL TRENCHING

2.2.1 The program of trenching aimed to establish the presence or absence of suspected archaeological deposits and, if established, to determine their nature and extent as well as determine dates if possible. The evaluation assessed the character of all archaeological deposits to the depth of natural subsoils.

2.2.2 The trenching was aimed at examining numerous anomalies of possible archaeological potential located in the results of the geophysical survey (GSB 2003) and investigating features or areas of archaeological significance within the proposed route corridor identified from the desk-based assessment (OAU 2001). A total of 54 trenches were proposed in order to obtain a coverage of 5% of this section of the proposed bypass. The layout of the trenching was agreed with SKM and Cheshire County Council in advance of the evaluation. However, due to unforeseen access restrictions only 30 of these trenches were available for exploration.

2.2.3 The evaluation trenches were typically 20m long by 2m wide, although some were shortened due to constraints such as standing fences (Trench 53). Topsoil and subsoil were stripped under archaeological supervision by a mechanical excavator with a ditching bucket to the top of natural subsoil deposits, or the first significant archaeological deposits, to an average depth of between 0.2m and 0.5m. All features and deposits of archaeological interest were manually cleaned and investigated by limited excavation (typically by 0.5m slots) in order to establish their date, character and extent. All trenches were excavated stratigraphically, whether by hand or machine. The trenches were accurately located by a Global Position System, which provides accuracies of up to $\pm 0.25\text{m}$.

2.2.4 **Recording:** where access was not limited, information identified in the course of the site works was recorded stratigraphically, with sufficient pictorial record (plans, sections and both black and white and colour photographs) to identify and illustrate individual features.

2.2.5 Results of the field investigation, where available to OA North, were recorded using a system adapted from that used by the Centre for Archaeology of English Heritage. The archive includes both a photographic record and accurate large-

scale plans and sections at an appropriate scale (1:20 and 1:10). Recording was principally in the form of *pro forma* Trench Sheets for each trench, which recorded the orientation, location length and depth of machining and described the nature of topsoil, subsoil and geological deposits. Features of archaeological importance were recorded using *pro forma* context sheets.

2.3 FINDS

2.3.1 *Artefacts:* all finds recovered were bagged and recorded by context number; all finds were retained for analysis and were recorded and have been processed and temporarily stored according to standard practice (following current Institute of Field Archaeologists guidelines). The finds have been analysed by the OA North in-house specialist (*Section 3.3; Appendix 4*).

2.3.2 *Ecofacts:* samples were collected for palaeoenvironmental and chronological analysis as appropriate. No charcoal samples were recovered for dating purposes.

2.4 ARCHIVE

2.4.1 A full, professional archive has been compiled for this phase of the evaluation, in accordance with the project design and with current Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) and English Heritage (EH) guidelines (English Heritage 1991).

3. RESULTS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.1.1 The majority of the evaluation trenches were positioned along the proposed route corridor of the bypass across the geophysical survey anomalies and features identified in the desk-based assessment. The trenches in Area 9 positioned outside of the proposed route corridor were excavated on request of Mark Leah, Planning Archaeologist of Cheshire County Council. Of the original 50 trenches outlined for investigation, only 30 were available to OA North during the fieldwork due to access restrictions. The results of those excavated are summarised below. A full individual trench description is also provided in *Appendix 2*.

3.2 TRENCHING RESULTS

3.2.1 Trenches 1-3 were located to the north-west of Area 1 (Fig 3a) at the extreme north of the proposed route. The trenches were excavated to an average depth of 0.3m to the level of the natural boulder clay, **3**, no deposits, features or finds of an archaeological nature were identified. This was consistent with geophysical data recorded in this area.

3.2.2 Area 1 comprised seven evaluation trenches on approximate north-south/east-west alignments (Fig 3a). The magnetometer survey over the area had located an east-west anomaly interpreted as a possible ditch (GSB 2003). Trench 5 was located on a north-south alignment perpendicular to this anomaly, but no features, finds or deposits of an archaeological nature were identified. Trenches 4, 6, 7 and 8 (Fig 4), all aligned on an approximate east-west axis, were excavated to an average depth of 0.3m. Within these trenches a linear feature (**5**; Fig 5), was uncovered running on a north-south axis (Fig 4). It was approximately 1.8m wide and between 0.4m and 0.75m deep, with gradual sloping sides and a flat base. A single sherd of probable re-deposited Roman pottery was located within the fill (**4**) of ditch **5** within trench 4. However, the precise nature of the ditch is still uncertain, particularly in relation to the Roman field systems located approximately 1.5km to the north-east of this development (Gifford 1997) and will require further investigation.

3.2.3 A further two trenches, 11 and 12, were excavated to a depth of 0.35m, and were positioned to the south of Area 1 and north of Area 2 and adjacent to Sanderson's Brook (Fig 3a). Neither of these trenches produced any finds, features or deposits of an archaeological nature.

3.2.4 A single evaluation trench in Area 2, trench 13, was excavated to a depth of 0.25m (Fig 3a). It was situated on a north-south alignment to target a possible east-west linear anomaly. This trench did not locate any features, finds or deposits of an archaeological nature, although a series of land drains in this area may explain the anomalous readings.

- 3.2.5 **Putative Enclosure Site:** the geophysical survey undertaken in Area 9 had identified a large rectangular enclosure measuring approximately 23m north-south by 45m east-west. Also identified were a complex of pit-type responses within and immediately north of the enclosure. Trench 47 (Fig 3c), excavated to a depth of 0.35m, located the north side of the possible enclosure ditch (**I8**), measuring 1.8m in width and was partially excavated to a depth of 0.6m. The ditch had gradually sloping sides and there was no discernible break of slope at the base though the lower fill was not excavated due to poor working conditions. A quantity of post-medieval pottery was recovered from the surface of the natural subsoil as well as from the upper 0.1m of the ditch, **I9**. No dating material was recovered from lower deposits suggesting a date, potentially earlier than the post-medieval period for this feature. Towards the north baulk a small pit, **I20**, was a subject to limited excavation, to a depth of 0.2m. Similarly to the upper fill of the ditch, a small quantity of post-medieval pottery was recovered from the upper fill, **I21**, although the lower fill produced no dating material. The pit had steeply sloping sides to a depth of 0.2m, which was the limit of excavation.
- 3.2.6 Trench 48 (Fig 3c), was sited to the south-east of Trench 47. Within this the eastern side of the possible enclosure ditch (**I7**) was located, which truncated the natural boulder clay at a depth of 0.24m. The morphology of the ditch, with gradually sloping sides and a rounded base, strongly suggests it was contemporary with the ditch, **I8**, located in Trench 47 and part of the same enclosure ditch. The surface of the subsoil in this trench as well as the upper fill of the ditch, **I6**, contained a quantity of post-medieval pottery. The lower fill produced no dating material. A modern land drain truncated the ditch at this point and a single sherd of post-medieval pottery was recovered from this intrusive cut.
- 3.2.7 Trench 49 (Figs 3c and 6), aligned on a roughly north-south axis, targeted the south side of the enclosure ditch, to the south-west of Trench 48. Excavated to a depth of 0.35m, it revealed two cut features which were interpreted as a ditch, **I5**, and the terminus of a ditch, **I3**. Both features were located towards the north end of the trench and it seems likely that ditch **I3** was the terminus of the ditch, **I7**, located in Trench 48 based on their similar dimensions, morphology and alignment. No dating material was recovered from the fill of the southern ditch, **I4**. A piece of modern glass and a single sherd of post-medieval pottery were recovered from the upper layer of the fill of the ditch terminus, **I2**, a mid orange-grey silty clay. Ditch **I5** was 2.1m wide at this point with steep sides and a flat base, and a maximum depth of 0.3m. A quarter section of the ditch terminus revealed steeply sloping sides to a rounded base, it was 1.2m wide with a maximum depth of 0.72m.
- 3.2.8 Trench 46 (Fig 3c) was intended to locate the west side of the enclosure, but did not do so, which may be the result of modern land drains that cross the trench towards the east baulk which have affected the responses plotted by the geophysical survey. A quantity of modern debris may also have produced anomalous data that masked the ditch during the initial geophysical survey.
- 3.2.9 Trenches 45, 50, 51 and 53 (Fig 3c) were excavated to a depth of between 0.2m and 0.35m, all were positioned in areas outside the limit of the enclosure defined

by geophysical survey. No finds, features or deposits of an archaeological nature were encountered in these trenches.

3.3 FINDS

- 3.3.1 **Introduction:** in total, 22 fragments of artefacts were recovered from the evaluation. The bulk of the assemblage comprised ceramic vessel fragments (18 sherds), and also included clay tobacco pipe (one sherd), glass (one fragment), iron (one fragment), and ceramic building material (two fragments). Other finds categories such as animal bones and industrial residues were absent. Catalogues of the artefacts have been included in *Appendix 3* in Trench Number order. All finds were treated in accordance with standard OA North practice.
- 3.3.2 For the most part the finds were in a good condition, although a few fragments were clearly quite abraded and displayed some surface erosion, suggesting a degree of post-depositional disturbance. The material was collected from general layers and ditch fills. The majority of the assemblage derives from the post-medieval period, although the Roman period was also represented as a minor element.
- 3.3.3 **Pottery:** fragments of pottery, which included material of Roman and post-medieval date, dominated the finds assemblage. Analysis of the pottery was based solely on visual inspection of individual sherds, and has been described using the terminology developed by Orton *et al* (1993).
- 3.3.4 A single sherd of Roman pottery was recovered from the evaluation. This was produced from the fill **4** of ditch **5**, within Trench 4. The sherd was a small rim fragment of a fineware vessel, possibly a Colour Coated ware. It was somewhat abraded and displayed surface erosion, suggesting some post-depositional disturbance. A late first to early second century date may be ascribed to this fragment.
- 3.3.5 The remainder of the pottery assemblage (17 sherds) was post-medieval, ranging in date from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, and the majority was recovered from stratified contexts. In general terms, the stratified material was in good condition; it was neither abraded nor rolled, suggesting that it not been disturbed subsequent to deposition. A range of fabric types and vessel forms was represented, including Staffordshire Blackware, Midlands Yellow ware, Midlands Purple ware, Metropolitan-type slipware, dark-glazed earthenware, creamware, and stoneware.
- 3.3.6 The earliest of the post-medieval pottery within the assemblage was recovered from the fill, **14**, of ditch **15**, Trench 49. The small group from this deposit comprised two adjoining sherds of a Staffordshire Blackware vessel, and a single body sherd of Midlands Yellow ware vessel. Blackware has its origins in Cistercian wares of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Ford 1995), and has been recognised in Staffordshire from deposits of the mid-seventeenth century onwards. The production and use of Blackwares declined during the mid-eighteenth century (Barker 1986). The two sherds recovered from fill **14** comprised the base and part of the side wall of a seemingly large jar, with

distinct horizontal bands visible on the internal surface of the vessel wall. These bands were a deliberate form of decoration, known as turning, and was particularly common on straight-sided vessels. The fragment of Midlands Yellow ware comprised a body sherd with a slip decoration and a lead glaze. It is generally recognised as a distinct ware from the sixteenth century, and seems to have ceased production during the seventeenth century (Ford 1995). It thus seems likely that fill **14** was deposited during the seventeenth century.

- 3.3.7 A single sherd of a Midlands Purple ware vessel was recovered from the fill (**16**) of ditch **17**, within Trench **48**. The fragment comprised the rim of a vessel, possibly a bowl, with a splash of a lead glaze coloured with iron that appeared to represent a glaze scar. This ware originated in the late medieval period, probably the late fifteenth of early sixteenth centuries (Ford 1995), and continued in production in Staffordshire until the early eighteenth century. The other pottery recovered from ditch fill **16** included a single sherd of Metropolitan-type slipware, four fragments of dark-glazed earthenware, a single sherd of stoneware, and a single sherd of creamware. In broad terms, this group may be dated typologically to the eighteenth century, although creamware was not widely produced until 1760 (Barker 1999). However, the paucity of fragments with under-glaze painted decoration, which was extremely fashionable during the 1770s (*ibid*), and transfer printing in under-glaze blue, common by c1810, was notable, suggesting a deposition date of fill **16** during the 1760-80s.
- 3.3.8 A single rim sherd of a Metropolitan-type slipware vessel, possibly a flatware, was also recovered from an unstratified context within Trench 4. This was found in association with two fragments of dark-glazed earthenware vessels, one of which represented a large storage jar. It is conceivable that these may have been manufactured at Prescott, Merseyside, where such wares were produced from the early eighteenth century (Davey 1987). Similar dark-glazed earthenware was produced from the topsoil within Trench 1.
- 3.3.9 **Clay tobacco pipes:** a single fragment of a clay tobacco pipe stem was retrieved from an unstratified context within Trench 4. This fragment did not incorporate a makers stamp, and it is difficult to ascribe a date with confidence, although it seems unlikely to be earlier than the late eighteenth century.
- 3.3.10 **Glass:** a single small fragment of green bottle glass was retrieved from the fill (**14**) of ditch **15**, within Trench 4. It is possible to ascribe a late seventeenth/eighteenth century date for this fragment.
- 3.3.11 **Iron:** a single iron object was recovered from layer **2** within Trench 32. This represented part of a bolt, presumably of late post-medieval date.
- 3.3.12 **Ceramic building material:** the assemblage contained a single fragment of ceramic field drain and a single fragment of ceramic tile. Both date to the late post-medieval period and can add little to the interpretation of the site.
- 3.3.13 **Discussion:** the artefact assemblage produced from the evaluation is of limited significance. The single fragment of Roman pottery was small and abraded, and

may have been transported accidentally to the site subsequent to its deposition elsewhere in the vicinity. The post-medieval pottery represents some continuity of activity within the area since the seventeenth century. The range of vessels forms indicated domestic use, with no evidence of any specialist function, and the assemblage as a whole appears to represent domestic refuse, possibly as a result of Night Soiling.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

- 4.1.1 The archaeological evaluation along the route of the proposed Middlewich Eastern Bypass located a single linear feature aligned on a north-south axis in Area 1. Despite a single Roman pottery sherd being uncovered within the fill it is possible that this has been redeposited. However, it cannot be discounted that the ditch may relate to the Roman field systems to the north-west of the study area. A large rectilinear enclosure identified in the geophysical survey results, was located in Area 9. A large quantity of post-medieval pottery was recovered from the surface of the natural sub-soil and the upper layers of the ditch fills in the trial trenches. An earlier date cannot be discounted for this site as the lower fills produced no secure dating material.
- 4.1.2 A single linear feature located in Area 1 may be associated with Roman field systems located to the north-west of the proposed road scheme (Gifford 1997 and 2001). No precise dating material was recovered from the feature, but its morphology was consistent with Roman field boundary ditches previously recorded in the area (*ibid*).
- 4.1.3 The trenching over the 'putative rectilinear enclosure' identified from the magnetometer survey in Area 9 confirmed the presence and position of the magnetic anomalies as a cut-featured enclosure. The general plan of the geophysical survey results suggests that this enclosure should be regarded as a site of importance. In the absence of any dating material it is not certain exactly what period it originates, but it is reminiscent of prehistoric or Romano-British. Suffice to say it appears to pre-date the post-medieval period.
- 4.1.4 No features of a medieval or post-medieval origin were identified in this phase of the evaluation. However, the quantity and variety of post-medieval artefactual evidence recovered in Area 9 indicates that it may relate to an earlier farmstead located on the site of the current New Farm. This is further attested to by the presence of ridge and furrow in the surrounding fields that may be of medieval or post-medieval date. No other areas known to contain post-medieval sites were investigated at this stage of the evaluation.

5. IMPACT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 IMPACT

- 5.1.1 The single linear feature located in Area 1 at the northern end of the proposed route will be adversely affected by the development as it lies in the centre of the proposed road.
- 5.1.2 Areas 4 and 6, which showed potential for archaeological remains in the results of the geophysical survey, could not be evaluated to any satisfactory level due to the access restrictions. Both areas lie within the proposed route corridor and will be directly affected.
- 5.1.3 The enclosure and associated features in Area 9 at the southern end of the proposed bypass route lie on the very edge and immediately adjacent to the proposed route and will be infringed upon by the development.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.2.1 As the linear feature in Area 1 will be directly impacted upon by the development it is recommended that further archaeological works be undertaken to fully establish its extent, nature and date as well as to establish the presence or absence of associated features. Mitigative measures are necessary in the form of a watching brief or more extensive excavation.
- 5.2.2 Areas to the north and south of Area 1 and Area 2 produced no finds, features or deposits of an archaeological nature and it is therefore recommended that no further archaeological works are required in this area.
- 5.2.3 In Areas 4 and 6 many of the features identified in the geophysical survey are yet to be examined, Therefore, it is recommended that mitigative measures be taken in the form of a more extensive excavation. This may take the form of a watching brief and if significant finds are recovered after the initial topsoil strip the areas should be subjected to an open area excavation.
- 5.2.4 The proposed route affects the south-western corner of the rectilinear enclosure in Area 9, and any associated archaeological features or remains to the west of the enclosure will also be directly affected. Therefore, it is recommended that the site be avoided and the bypass re-routed in this area, preferably an extensive mitigation excavation over the site. Even if the bypass is re-routed to the west of the enclosure this area should be subject to mitigation recording. During construction in this area, any ancillary works, such as deployment zones, site offices, would need to be restricted from this area. Likewise any alteration to the proposed route towards the north and east would require further archaeological investigation as, to date, only a limited amount of data has been recorded from the site and its nature, extent (to the north and east) and date remain uncertain.

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APPENDIX 1: PROJECT DESIGN

**Oxford
Archaeology
North**

August 2003

MIDDLEWICH EASTERN BYPASS

Proposals

The following project design is offered in response to discussions with Mark Leah of Cheshire County Council for an archaeological evaluation of the proposed Middlewich Eastern Bypass.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTRACT BACKGROUND

1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) has been invited to submit a project design and costs for an archaeological evaluation of approximately 5% of the total lands affected by the proposed bypass. This follows on from and is informed an archaeological assessment of the overall study area undertaken by A. Plummer in January 2002 (Plummer 2002). The project design has also been influenced by a geophysical survey of the route that was undertaken by GSB Prospection in March 2003 (anon 2003).

1.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

1.2.1 This assessment, which represents the first phase of evaluation, was centred on two areas of the proposed bypass, the north and south ends of the development, and identified two areas of archaeological potential. Towards the northern extremity of the proposed development, within area 1 (fig.) a possible Roman field boundary was located, aligned on a north south axis. Towards the southern end of the development and outside the selected route of the road trial trenching established the extent of the rectilinear enclosure identified by subsurface survey. The lack of any diagnostic finds from a secure context makes dating of the site difficult but does not preclude a possible prehistoric date for the feature. Should the current route be altered further archaeological works may be required in this area.

1.3 OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY NORTH

OA North has considerable experience of the evaluation and excavation of sites of all periods, having undertaken a great number of small and large-scale projects during the past 19 years. Evaluations and assessments have taken place within the planning process, to fulfil the requirements of clients and planning authorities, to very vigorous timetables.

2 OBJECTIVES

2.1 The following program of trial trenching will be undertaken across the site and will specifically target areas of high archaeological potential as identified by geophysical survey. The required stages to achieve these ends are as follows:

2.2 **Targeted Trenching:** a program of trial trenching will be undertaken across the site and will be targeted on those features that have been identified by sub-surface survey. The intent is to inform the sub-surface survival of the identified features and also to clarify the lines of these features.

2.3 **Evaluation Report :** a written evaluation report will assess the significance of the data generated by this phase of trial trenching within a regional and local context. It will advise on the requirements for further archaeological works or recording measures where necessary.

3 METHOD STATEMENT

3.1 The following work programme is submitted in line with the stages and objectives of archaeological work summarised above.

3.2 EVALUATION TRENCHING

3.2.1 **Access:** liaison for basic access will be arranged by SKM. The precise location of any services will also be established.

3.2.2 **Targeted Trenching:** this phase of trial trenching aims to establish the presence or absence of suspected archaeological deposits and, if located, to test their nature, extent and where possible date. Excavation will assess the character of all archaeological deposits and will be continued to the depth of the natural sub-soils. This element of the trial trenching is invaluable in order to assess those parts within the study area where there is the potential for archaeological deposits to survive.

3.2.3 The trenches will be targeted on areas identified by geophysical survey as being of high archaeological potential. Trial trenching will also target known sites that are listed in the Gazetteer of Archaeology, though these are of limited archaeological significance and are of

modern or post-medieval origin. Further trenches will be excavated as a representative sample (5%) of the route selected as a whole. It has been agreed, after consultation with Mark Leah, that the number of trenches may be reduced in certain areas should access be denied or where it is felt that the potential for archaeological activity is deemed to be low.

- 3.2.4 **Methodology:** to maximise the speed and efficiency of the operation the removal of overburden will be undertaken by machine using a standard 1.7m grading bucket. Deposits and features of archaeological importance will be cleaned and examined by hand. All trenches will be excavated stratigraphically, whether by machine or by hand. Trenches will be accurately located GPS, accurate to within 1m.
- 3.2.5 **Recording:** all information identified in the course of the works will be recorded stratigraphically, with sufficient pictorial record (plans, sections and photographs) to identify and illustrate individual features. Primary records will be available for inspection at all times.
- 3.2.6 The results of the field investigation will be recorded using a system adapted from that used by the Centre for Archaeology of English Heritage. The archive will include both a photographic record and accurate large-scale plans and sections at an appropriate scale (1:50, 1:20 and 1:10). All artefacts and ecofacts will be recorded using the same system and will be handled and stored according to standard practice (following current Institute of Field Archaeologists guidelines) in order to minimise deterioration. Samples will be collected for technological, pedological, palaeoenvironmental and chronological analysis as appropriate, but it is only intended to process such material for assessment at this stage. If necessary, access to conservation advice and facilities can be made available. OA North maintains close relationships with Ancient Monuments Laboratory staff at the Universities of Durham and York and, in addition, employs artefact and palaeoecology specialists with considerable experience in the investigation, excavation and finds management of sites of all periods and types, who are readily available for consultation.

3.3 EVALUATION REPORT

- 3.3.1 **Archive:** the results of the above will form the basis of a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (Management of archaeological projects, 2nd edition, 1991). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project. The deposition of a properly quantified, ordered and indexed project archive in an appropriate repository is considered an essential and integral element of all archaeological projects by the Institute of Field Archaeologists in that organisations Code of Conduct. This archive will be provided in the English Heritage Centre for Archaeology format, as a printed document, and a synthesis (the evaluation report and index of archive) will be submitted to the relevant Sites and Monuments Record. The archive will be deposited with the County SMR within six months of the end of fieldwork.
- 3.3.2 The archive will be formed of all the primary documentation, including the following:
- Survey information
 - Context records
 - Finds records
 - Sample records
 - Field/inked drawings and digital copies of CAD data
 - Photographic negatives, prints and colour transparencies
 - Written report
 - Administrative records
 - Conservation records
- 3.3.3 **Report:** two copies of a written synthetic report will be submitted to the client and a further copy to the SMR. The report will present, summarise and interpret the results of this phase of the programme detailed in stages 3.1-3.3 above and will include an index of archaeological features

identified in the course of the project with an assessment of the sites development. It will incorporate appropriate illustrations including location maps, copies of site plans, section drawings and trench location plan, all reduced to an appropriate scale. The report will consist of a list of contents, summary, introduction summarising the brief and project design and any agreed departures from them, methodology, interpretation of the archaeological stratigraphy and details of the features and stratigraphy of each trench excavated., table of contexts, list of finds, a complete bibliography and a list of further sources identified during the course of works. If required the report will make recommendations for further mitigative recording.

3.4 GENERAL CONDITIONS

3.4.1 **Access:** liaison for basic site access is being co-ordinated through SKM and it is understood that access for both pedestrian and plant traffic will be allowed.

3.4.2 **Health and Safety:** full regard will be given to all constraints (services) during the survey, as well as to all Health and Safety considerations. The OA North Health and Safety Statement conforms to all provisions of the SCAUM (Standing Conference of Unit Managers) Health and Safety manual. Risk assessments are undertaken as a matter of course for all projects. The Unit Safety Policy Statement will be provided to the client if required. As a matter of course the Unit uses a U-scan device prior to excavation to test for services. It is assumed the client will provide any available information regarding services in the study area.

3.4.3 **Confidentiality:** the report is designed for the use of the client for the particular purpose as defined in this project design and should be treated as such. Any requirement to revise or reorder the material for the submission or presentation to third parties or for any other explicit purpose can be fulfilled, but will require separate discussion and funding.

3.4.4 **Insurance:** the insurance in respect of claims for personal injury or death of any person under a contract of service with the unit and arising in the course of such persons employment shall comply with the employers' liability (Compulsory Insurance Act, 1969) and any statutory orders made there under. For all other claims to cover the liability of OA North, in respect of personal injury or damage to property by negligence of OA North or any of its employees, there applies the insurance cover of £10m for any one occurrence or series of occurrences arising out of one event.

3.4.5 **Reinstatement:** it is understood that all trenches will be back-filled so that the topsoil is laid on the top and the ground will be roughly graded and compacted to avoid later subsidence. No trenches will be left open to avoid possible risk to animals.

3.5 PROJECT MONITORING

SinclairKnight Merz: OA North will consult with the client regarding access to land within the study area. This consultation will include, if required, the attendance of a representative of SKM.

Cheshire County Council: Any proposed changes to the project design or project brief will be agreed with Cheshire County Council in conjunction with the client.

4. WORK TIMETABLE AND RESOURCES

4.1 It is envisaged that the first phase of the evaluation will take place during the last week of July and the first week of August 2003. This work would comprise:

4.1.1 Trial Trenching

4 days on site

4.1.2 Evaluation Report

4 days (desk based)

4.2 The remainder of the evaluation will be conducted at the convenience of the client and landowners along the proposed development. This second and final phase would comprise:

4.2.1 Trial Trenching

9 days on site

- 4.2.2 Evaluation Report
 - 8 days (desk based)

APPENDIX 2: TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS

Trench: 1
Area: North of Area 1
Alignment: North west/South east
Length: 20m
Depth: 1.0m

The topsoil (1) in this trench was 0.40m in depth, and overlay 0.30m of moderately compacted light brown silty subsoil (2) containing small sub-rounded stones (5%). This overlay a light greyish blue natural boulder clay (3) with occasional inclusions of small and medium rounded stones. North of the centre of the trench, two modern land drains crossed the trench on an east, west axis. No finds or features of an archaeological nature were located in this trench.

Trench: 2
Area: North of Area 1
Alignment: East/West
Length: 20m
Depth: 0.8m

The topsoil in this trench was 0.30m in depth, and overlay 0.30m of moderately compacted light brown silty subsoil containing small sub-rounded stones (5%). This overlay a light greyish blue natural boulder clay with occasional inclusions of small and medium rounded stones. No finds or features of an archaeological nature were located in this trench.

Trench: 3
Area: North of area 1
Alignment: North west/South east
Length: 20m
Depth: 0.9m

The topsoil in this trench was 0.35m in depth, and overlay 0.30m of moderately compacted light brown silty subsoil containing small sub-rounded stones (5%). This overlay a light greyish blue natural boulder clay with occasional inclusions of small and medium rounded stones. No finds or features of an archaeological nature were located in this trench.

Trench: 4
Area: Area 1
Alignment: East/West
Length: 20m
Depth: 0.85m

This trench was located in the north end of area 1, as defined by the geophysical survey. The topsoil in this trench was 0.20m in depth, and overlay 0.75m of moderately compacted light greyish brown silty subsoil containing small sub-rounded stones (5%). This overlay a light greyish blue natural boulder clay with occasional inclusions of small and medium rounded stones. A linear feature, [5], ran across the trench 10m from the west baulk on a north south axis. Several sherds of post medieval pottery were recovered from the surface of this feature, though excavation of a section of the ditch produced no further dating material. The ditch was 3.2m wide (max.) with a depth of 0.8m with steeply sloped sides and a flat base and filled by a light, brownish, grey silty sand (4) with very occasional flecks of charcoal.

Trench: 5
Area: Area 1

Alignment: North west/South east
Length: 20m
Depth: 1.05m

The topsoil in this trench was 0.45m in depth, and overlay 0.30m of moderately compacted light brown silty subsoil containing small sub-rounded stones (5%). This overlay a light greyish blue natural boulder clay with occasional inclusions of small and medium rounded stones. No finds or features of an archaeological nature were located in this trench.

Trench: 6
Area: Area 1
Alignment: East/West
Length: 20m
Depth: 0.95m

The topsoil in this trench was 0.25m in depth, and overlay 0.7m of moderately compacted light brown silty subsoil containing small sub-rounded stones (5%). This overlay a light greyish blue natural boulder clay with occasional inclusions of small and medium rounded stones. A linear feature, [7], most likely to be a continuation of the ditch located in trench 4, crossed this trench on a north south alignment 7.3m from the west baulk. The ditch was slightly denuded by machine and measured 1.5m in width with steeply sloped sides and a flat base, approximately 0.8m deep. No finds were recovered from the fill of this feature, (6), a light brownish grey silty sand with rare charcoal inclusions.

Trench: 7
Area: Area 1
Alignment: East/West
Length: 20m
Depth: 0.9m

The topsoil in this trench was 0.25m in depth, and overlay 0.4m of moderately compacted light brown silty subsoil containing small sub-rounded stones (5%). This overlay a light greyish blue natural boulder clay with occasional inclusions of small and medium rounded stones. A linear feature, [9], a continuation of the ditch located in trenches 4 and 6, crossed this trench 7.3m from the west baulk. At this point the ditch had gradually sloped sides and a rounded base, measuring 2.14m wide with a maximum depth of 0.75m. The fill, (8), remained consistent with the previous sections, a light grey silty sand with rare charcoal inclusions. No artefactual evidence was recovered from the ditch.

Trench: 8
Area: Area 1
Alignment: East/West
Length: 20m
Depth: 0.8m

The topsoil in this trench was 0.30m in depth, and overlay 0.2m of moderately compacted light brown silty subsoil containing small sub-rounded stones (5%). This overlay a light greyish blue natural boulder clay with occasional inclusions of small and medium rounded stones. A linear feature, [11], most likely to be a continuation of the ditch located in trenches 4, 6 and 7 crossed this trench on a north south alignment 10m from the west baulk. The ditch measured 1.25m in width, with a steeply sloped eastern side, a rounded base approximately 0.95m deep, and a gradually sloped western side. No finds were recovered from the fill of this feature, (10), a light grey silty sand with rare charcoal inclusions.

Trench: 9
Area: Area 1

Alignment: North west/South east
Length: 20m
Depth: 0.5m

The topsoil in this trench was 0.25m in depth, and overlay 0.2m of moderately compacted light brown silty subsoil containing small sub-rounded stones (5%). This overlay a light greyish blue natural boulder clay with occasional inclusions of small and medium rounded stones. No finds, features or deposits of an archaeological nature were located in this trench.

Trench: 10
Area: Area 1
Alignment: North west/South east
Length: 20m
Depth: 0.6m

The topsoil in this trench was 0.2m in depth, and overlay 0.25m of moderately compacted light brown silty subsoil containing small sub-rounded stones (5%). This overlay a light greyish blue natural boulder clay with occasional inclusions of small and medium rounded stones. No finds, features or deposits of an archaeological nature were located in this trench.

Trench: 11
Area: South east of area 1
Alignment: North west/South east
Length: 20m
Depth: 0.5m

The topsoil in this trench was 0.15m in depth, and overlay 0.35m of loose, light brownish grey silty subsoil containing small sub-rounded stones (5%). This overlay a light greyish blue natural boulder clay with occasional inclusions of small and medium rounded stones. No finds, features or deposits of an archaeological nature were located in this trench.

Trench: 12
Area: South east of area 1
Alignment: North west/South east
Length: 20m
Depth: 0.7m

The topsoil in this trench was 0.15m in depth, and overlay 0.3m of loose, light brown silty subsoil containing small sub-rounded stones (5%). This overlay a light greyish blue natural boulder clay with occasional inclusions of small and medium rounded stones. No finds, features or deposits of an archaeological nature were located in this trench.

Trench: 13
Area: Area 2
Alignment: North/South
Length: 20m
Depth: 0.8m

The topsoil in this trench was 0.2m in depth, and overlay 0.4m of loose light brown silty sand subsoil containing small sub-rounded stones (5%). This overlay a light greyish blue natural boulder clay with occasional inclusions of small and medium rounded stones. No finds, features or deposits of an archaeological nature were located in this trench.

Trench: 15
Area: Area 3
Alignment: North east/South west
Length: 10m
Depth: 0.2m

The topsoil in this trench was 0.2m in depth, and directly overlay natural boulder clay with occasional inclusions of small and medium rounded stones. No finds, features or deposits of an archaeological nature were located in this trench.

Trench: 19
Area: Area 3
Alignment: East/West
Length: 10m
Depth: 0.35m

The topsoil in this trench was 0.35m in depth, and directly overlay natural boulder clay with occasional inclusions of small rounded stones. No finds, features or deposits of an archaeological nature were located in this trench.

Trench: 23
Area: Area 4
Alignment: North east/South west
Length: 20m
Depth: 0.5m

The topsoil in this trench was 0.2m in depth, and overlay up to 0.3m thickness of subsoil. This in turn overlay the natural boulder clay which contained inclusions of small and medium rounded stones. In the middle of the trench an area of redeposited natural, **23**, was observed associated with the installation of two land drains. It contained modern tile fragments and modern window glass. No finds, features or deposits of an archaeological nature were located in this trench.

Trench: 25
Area: Area 4
Alignment: North/South
Length: 20m
Depth: 0.56m

The topsoil in this trench was 0.25m in depth, and overlay a maximum of 0.31m of subsoil. The subsoil directly overlay natural boulder clay containing inclusions of small and medium rounded stones. No finds, features or deposits of an archaeological nature were located in this trench.

Trench: 26
Area: Area
Alignment: East/West
Length: 20m
Depth: 0.2m

The topsoil in this trench was 0.2m in depth, and directly overlay natural boulder clay with occasional inclusions of small rounded stones. No finds, features or deposits of an archaeological nature were located in this trench.

Trench: 31
Area: Area 6
Alignment: North east/South west
Length: 20m
Depth: 0.59m

The topsoil in this trench was 0.3m in depth, and overlay a brownish clay subsoil, which had a maximum depth of 0.29m. This subsoil directly overlay the natural geology which was a mixture of clays and sandy clays. A spread of burnt material, **22**, was located in the south-westernmost portion of this trench. It measured c12m in length and had a maximum depth of 0.1m. No finds were recovered from it and it seems most likely that it relates to an episode of land clearance. No further finds, features or deposits of an archaeological nature were located in this trench.

Trench: 32
Area: Area 6
Alignment: North east/South west
Length: 20m
Depth: 0.46m

The topsoil in this trench was 0.3m in depth, and overlay a maximum of 0.16m thickness of brown clay subsoil. The subsoil overlay natural boulder clay with occasional inclusions of small and medium rounded stones. In the southernmost part of the trench, a further spread of burnt material, **22**, was observed, measuring 3.15m in length. This material was identical to that observed in trench 31 and presumably represents part of the same spread. Beyond a solitary land drain, no further finds, features or deposits of an archaeological nature were located in this trench.

Trench: 36
Area: Area 6
Alignment: North/South
Length: 20m
Depth: 0.45m

The topsoil in this trench was 0.3m in depth, and overlay a maximum of 0.2m thickness of brownish grey clay subsoil. The subsoil overlay natural boulder clay with occasional inclusions of small sub-rounded and rounded stones. No finds, features or deposits of an archaeological nature were located in this trench.

Trench: 44
Area: North-west of Area 9
Alignment: North west/South east
Length: 10m
Depth: 0.83m

The topsoil in this trench was 0.15m in depth, and overlay a maximum of 0.3m thickness of brown clay subsoil. The subsoil overlay natural light brown boulder clay with occasional inclusions of small and medium rounded stones. Beyond the remains of a modern cess pit, no finds, features or deposits of an archaeological nature were located in this trench.

Trench: 45
Area: Area 9
Alignment: North/South
Length: 20m
Depth: 0.7m

The topsoil in this trench was 0.2m in depth, directly overlying a light reddish brown natural boulder clay with occasional (1%) inclusions of small and medium rounded stones. A series of modern land drains crossed this trench typically on an east west axis. Modern debris was evident in the north end of the trench. No finds, features or deposits of an archaeological nature were located in this trench.

Trench: 46
Area: Area 9
Alignment: North west/South east
Length: 20m
Depth: 0.3m

The topsoil in this trench was 0.2m in depth, directly overlying a light reddish brown natural boulder clay with occasional (1%) inclusions of small and medium rounded stones. A modern land drain crossed the trench north of the south baulk. Several sherds of post medieval pottery were recovered from the southern end of the trench as well as modern debris. No further features or deposits of an archaeological nature were located in this trench.

Trench: 47
Area: Area 9
Alignment: North west/South east
Length: 20m
Depth: 0.35m

The topsoil in this trench was 0.2m in depth, directly overlying a light reddish brown natural boulder clay with occasional (1%) inclusions of small and medium rounded stones. A large linear, [18], crossed the trench approximately 4.2m from the south baulk aligned approximately east west. The linear feature was 1.8m wide at this point and partially excavated to a depth of 0.6m. This possible ditch had steeply sloped sides with a flat base. The fill, (19), comprised a mid-grey clayey sand similar to (14), possibly a continuation of the suspected enclosure ditch located in trench 49 and 48. A sub-circular pit, [20], with steep sides, approximately 3m from the northern baulk, was also partially investigated to a depth of 0.2m. A dense concentration of post medieval pottery was recovered from both the surface of these features and the surface of the natural boulder clay though limited excavation of the pit revealed no diagnostic finds. Similarly, the ditch, which was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.6m, produced no dating material indicating a possible early date for both features subject to later backfilling.

Trench: 48
Area: Area 9
Alignment: North west/South east
Length: 21.5m
Depth: 0.24m

The topsoil in this trench was 0.24m in depth, directly overlying a light reddish brown natural boulder clay with occasional (1%) inclusions of small and medium rounded stones. A linear feature, [17], crossed the trench approximately 6m from the north, west baulk on a south west, north east alignment. The feature had gradually sloped sides and a rounded base, measuring 1.6m wide and 0.58m deep, filled by, (16), a mid-orangey grey silty clay. This feature seems likely to be a continuation of the suspected enclosure ditch identified by geophysical survey and located in trenches 47 and 49. A quantity of post-medieval pottery was recovered from the surface of the trench and one sherd from the lower fill of the ditch, though a modern land drain truncated the feature at this point.

Trench: 49
Area: Area 9
Alignment: North/South

Length: 21m
Depth: 0.6m

The topsoil in this trench was 0.3m in depth, directly overlying a light reddish brown natural boulder clay with occasional (1%) inclusions of small and medium rounded stones. A linear feature, [I3], enters the trench from the north east corner and terminates approximately 3m from the north baulk, in the centre of the trench. A quarter section of this feature was excavated at its terminus, which had gradually sloped sides and a rounded base. The feature at this point measured 1.12m wide and 0.75m deep and was filled by (I2), a mid-orangey grey silty clay with rare inclusions of charcoal. No dating material was recovered from this feature. 2m to the south of the terminus a second linear feature, [I5] crosses the trench on a north east, south west alignment. The feature had gradually sloped sides with a flat base measuring 2.1m wide and 0.3m deep, filled by, (I4), a mid-grey clayey sand with rare charcoal inclusions and several pieces of post-medieval pottery. The alignment and location of these features relates closely to the rectangular enclosure identified by the geophysical survey of the area.

Trench: 50
Area: Area 9
Alignment: East/West
Length: 20m
Depth: 0.65m

The topsoil in this trench was 0.3m in depth with occasional inclusions of small rounded stones directly overlay a light reddish brown natural boulder clay with frequent inclusions of small and medium rounded stones. No features, finds or archaeological deposits were located in this trench.

Trench: 51
Area: Area 9
Alignment: North west/South east
Length: 20m
Depth: 0.5m

The topsoil in this trench was 0.25m in depth with occasional inclusions of small rounded stones directly overlay a light reddish brown natural boulder clay with frequent inclusions of small and medium rounded stones. No features, finds or archaeological deposits were located in this trench.

Trench: 53
Area: East of area 9
Alignment: East/West
Length: 17m
Depth: 0.45m

The topsoil in this trench was 0.25m in depth with occasional inclusions of small rounded stones directly overlay a light orange grey natural boulder clay. No features, finds or archaeological deposits were located in this trench.

APPENDIX 3: CONTEXT LIST

Context	Trench	Description
<i>1</i>	All	Top Soil
<i>2</i>	All	Sub Soil
<i>3</i>	All	Natural
<i>4</i>	4	Fill of Ditch <i>5</i>
<i>5</i>	4	Cut of Ditch
<i>6</i>	6	Fill of Ditch <i>7</i>
<i>7</i>	6	Cut of Ditch
<i>8</i>	7	Fill of Ditch <i>9</i>
<i>9</i>	7	Cut of Ditch
<i>10</i>	8	Fill of Ditch <i>11</i>
<i>11</i>	8	Cut of Ditch
<i>12</i>	49	Fill of Ditch <i>13</i>
<i>13</i>	49	Cut of Ditch
<i>14</i>	49	Fill of Ditch <i>15</i>
<i>15</i>	49	Cut of Ditch
<i>16</i>	48	Fill of Ditch <i>17</i>
<i>17</i>	48	Cut of Ditch
<i>18</i>	47	Cut of Ditch
<i>19</i>	47	Fill of Ditch <i>18</i>
<i>20</i>	47	Cut of Pit
<i>21</i>	47	Fill of Pit <i>20</i>
<i>22</i>	31	Spread of Burnt Material
<i>23</i>	23	Redeposited natural

APPENDIX 4: FINDS LIST

Trench	Context	Material	Category	No. frags	Description	Date
1	Topsoil	Ceramic	Vessel	2	Dark-glazed earthenware	Early Eighteenth century
4	Unstratified	Ceramic	Vessel	2	Dark-glazed earthenware, one representing large storage jar	Early Eighteenth century
4	Unstratified	Ceramic	Vessel	1	Rim shard of Metropolitan-type slipware possibly flatware	Early eighteenth century
4	Fill 4, ditch 5	Ceramic	Vessel	1	Rim fragment of fineware vessel, possible colour coated ware	Late first – early second century
48	Fill 16, ditch 17	Ceramic	Vessel	1	Bowl rim with splash of lead glaze	mid-late sixteenth century
48	Fill 16, ditch 17	Ceramic	Vessel	1	Metropolitan-type slipware	mid-late sixteenth century
48	Fill 16, ditch 17	Ceramic	Vessel	1	Creamware	mid-late sixteenth century
48	Fill 16, ditch 17	Ceramic	Vessel	4	Dark-glazed earthenware	mid-late sixteenth century
48	Fill 16, ditch 17	Ceramic	Vessel	1	Stoneware	mid-late sixteenth century
49	Fill 14, ditch 15	Ceramic	Vessel	2	Adjoining base and side wall fragments of a large Staffordshire Blackware jar	Seventeenth century
49	Fill 14, ditch 15	Ceramic	Vessel	1	Body fragment Midlands Yellow ware with slip decoration and a lead glaze	Seventeenth century
4	Unstratified	Ceramic	Clay tobacco Pipe	1	Clay tobacco pipe stem, unmarked	Unlikely to be earlier than late eighteenth century
4	Fill 14, ditch 15	Glass	Vessel	1	Green bottle glass	Late seventeenth-early eighteenth century
32	Layer 2	Iron	Bolt	1	Part of an iron bolt	Late post-medieval

		Ceramic	Field drain	1		Late post-medieval
		Ceramic	Tile	1		Late post-medieval

ILLUSTRATIONS

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Figure 2a: Gazetteer and geophysical survey plan (mid section)

Figure 2a: Gazetteer and geophysical survey plan (southern section)

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Figure 3b: Trench location plan (mid section)

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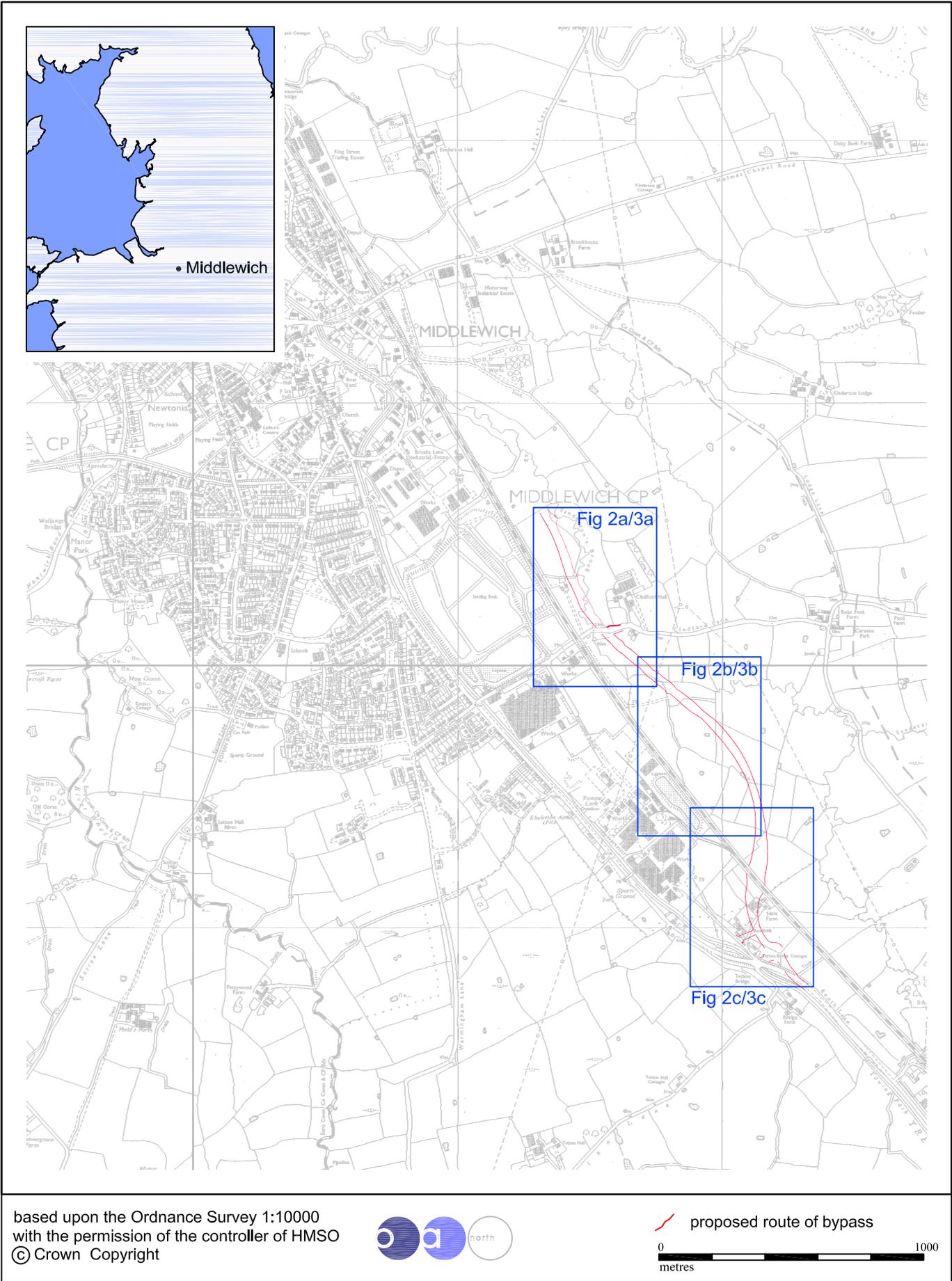


Figure 1: Location Map

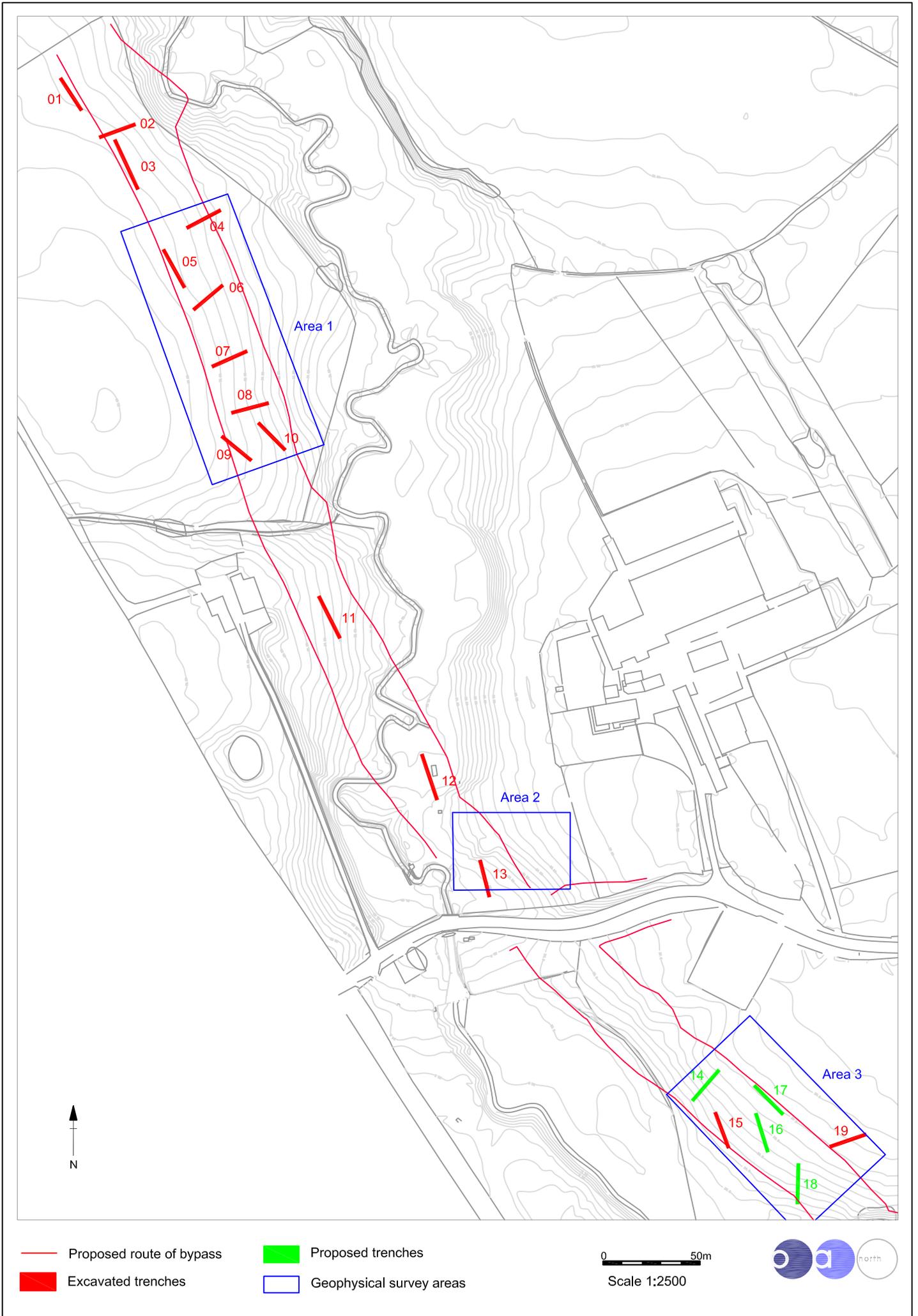


Figure 2a : Trench location plan (northern section)

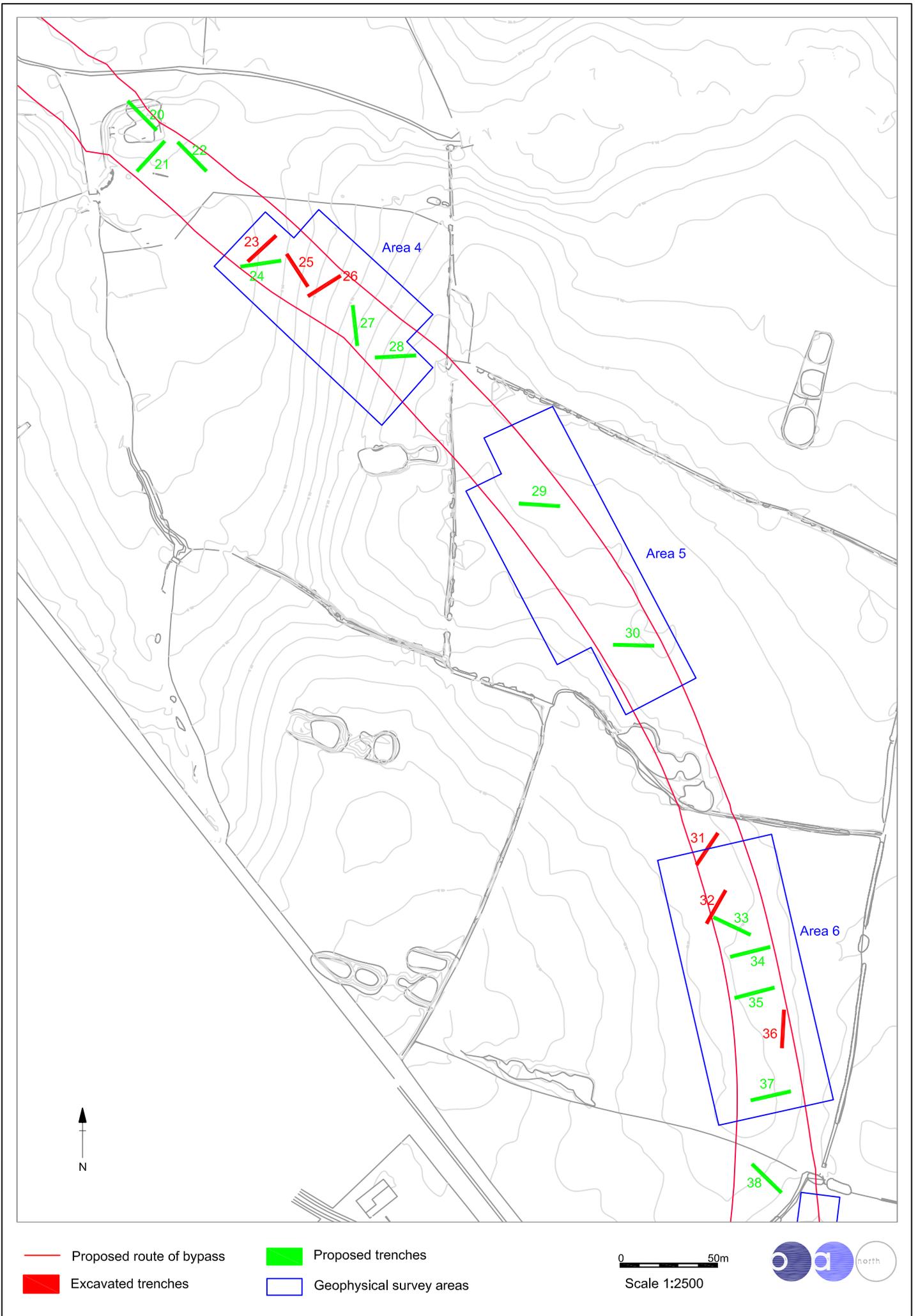


Figure 2b : Trench location plan (mid section)

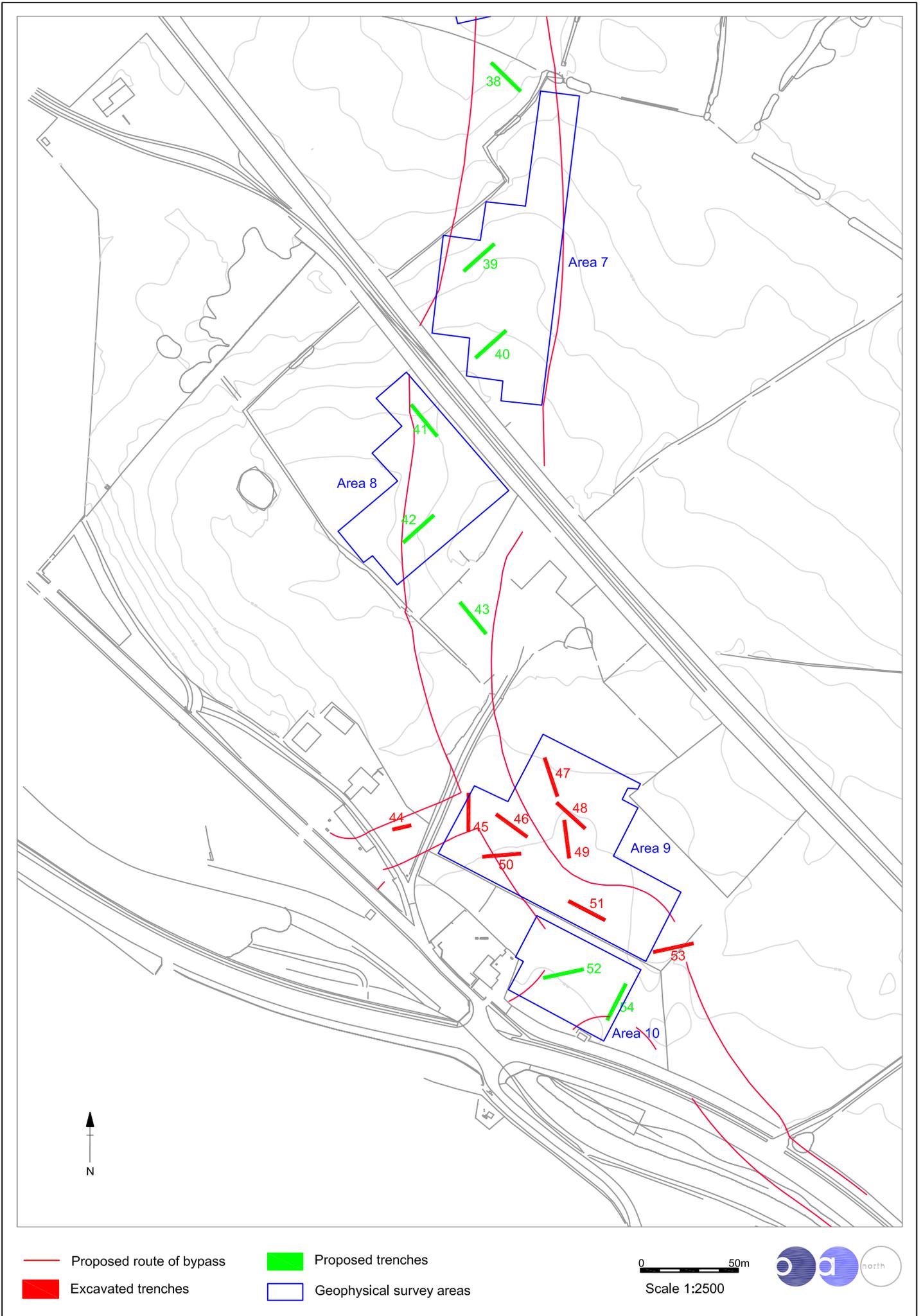
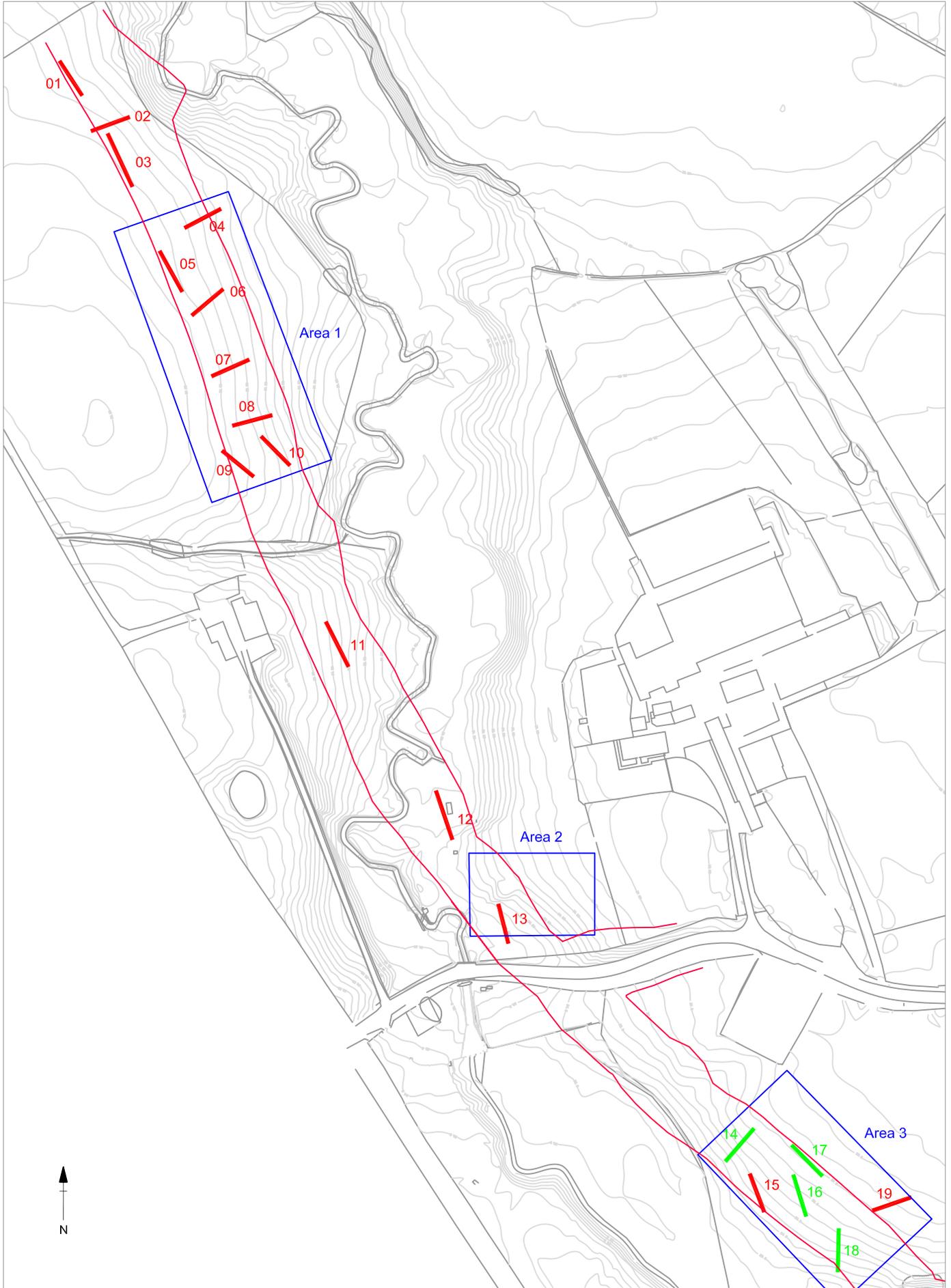


Figure 2c : Trench location plan (southern section)



— Proposed route of bypass
 Excavated trenches

Proposed trenches
 Geophysical survey areas

0 50m
 Scale 1:2500



Figure 3a : Trench location plan (northern section)

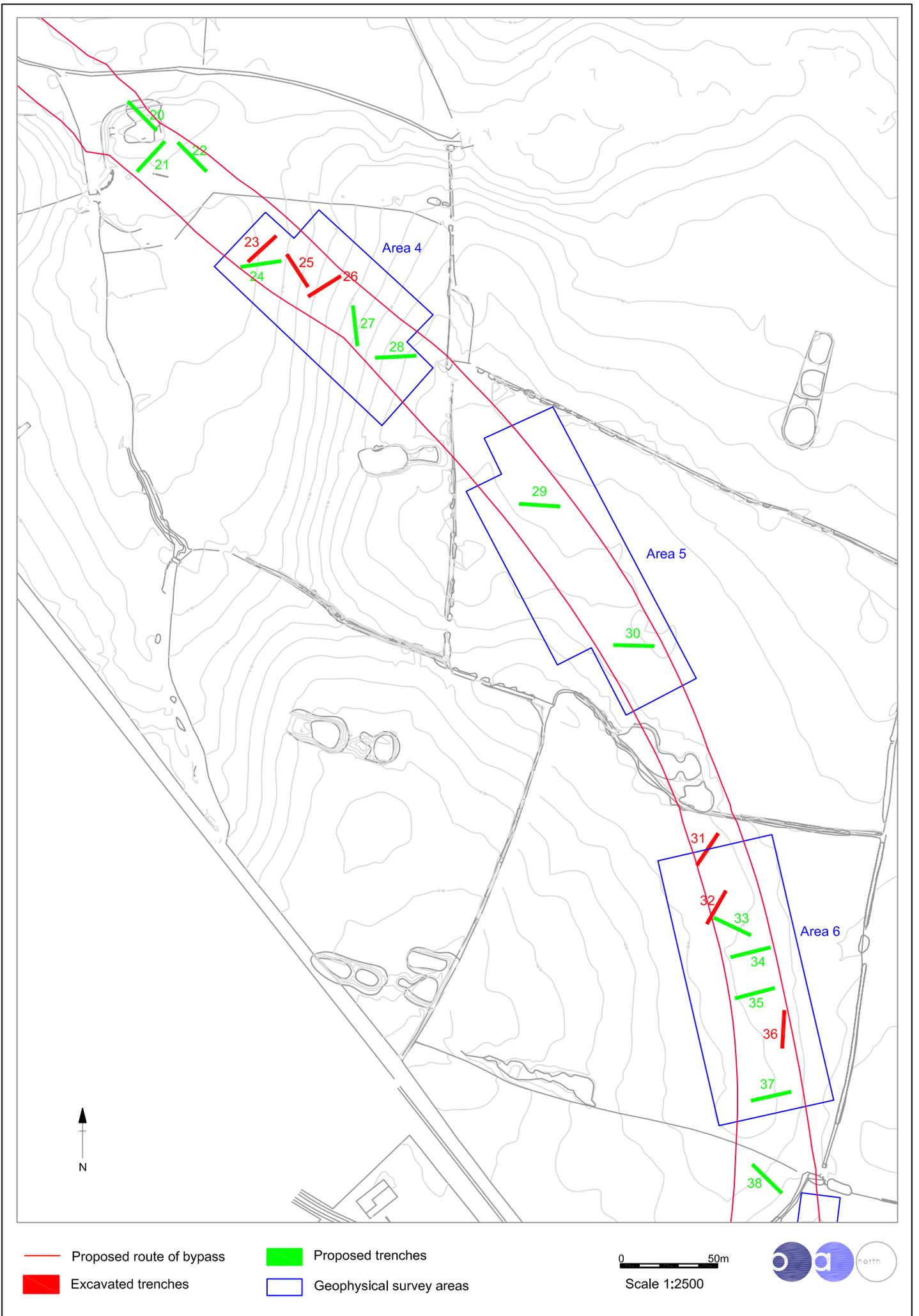


Figure 3b : Trench location plan (mid section)

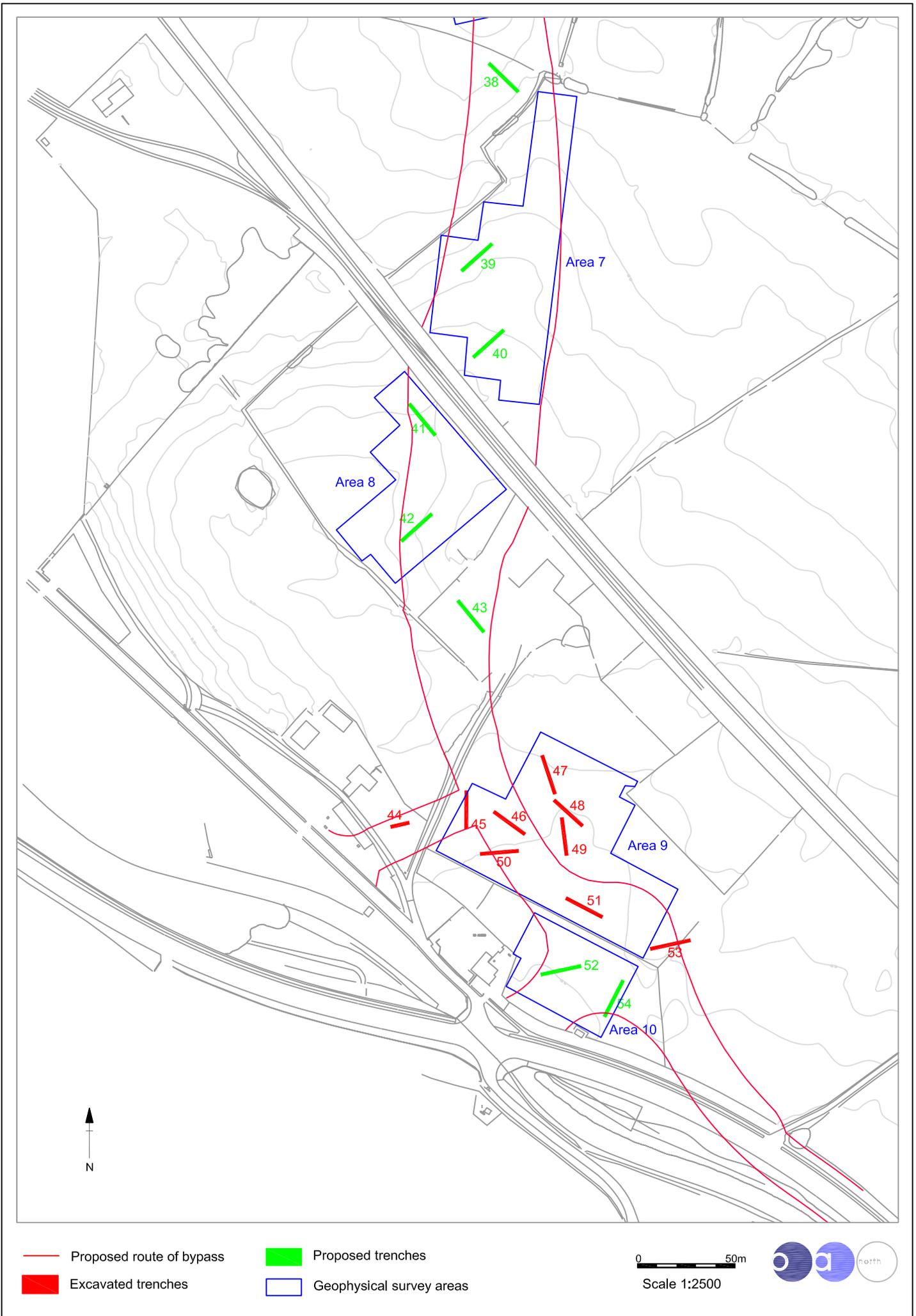


Figure 3c : Trench location plan (southern section)

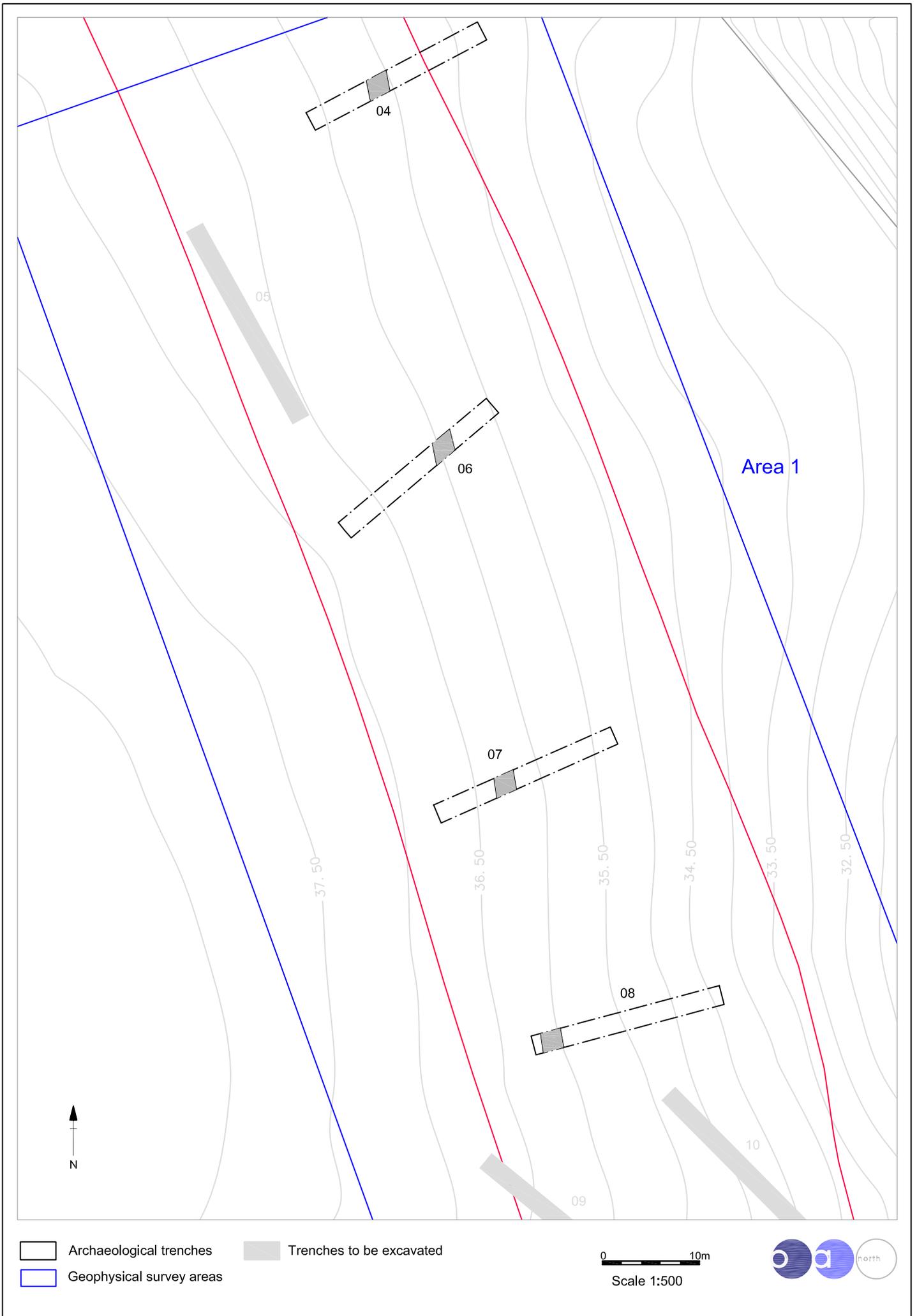
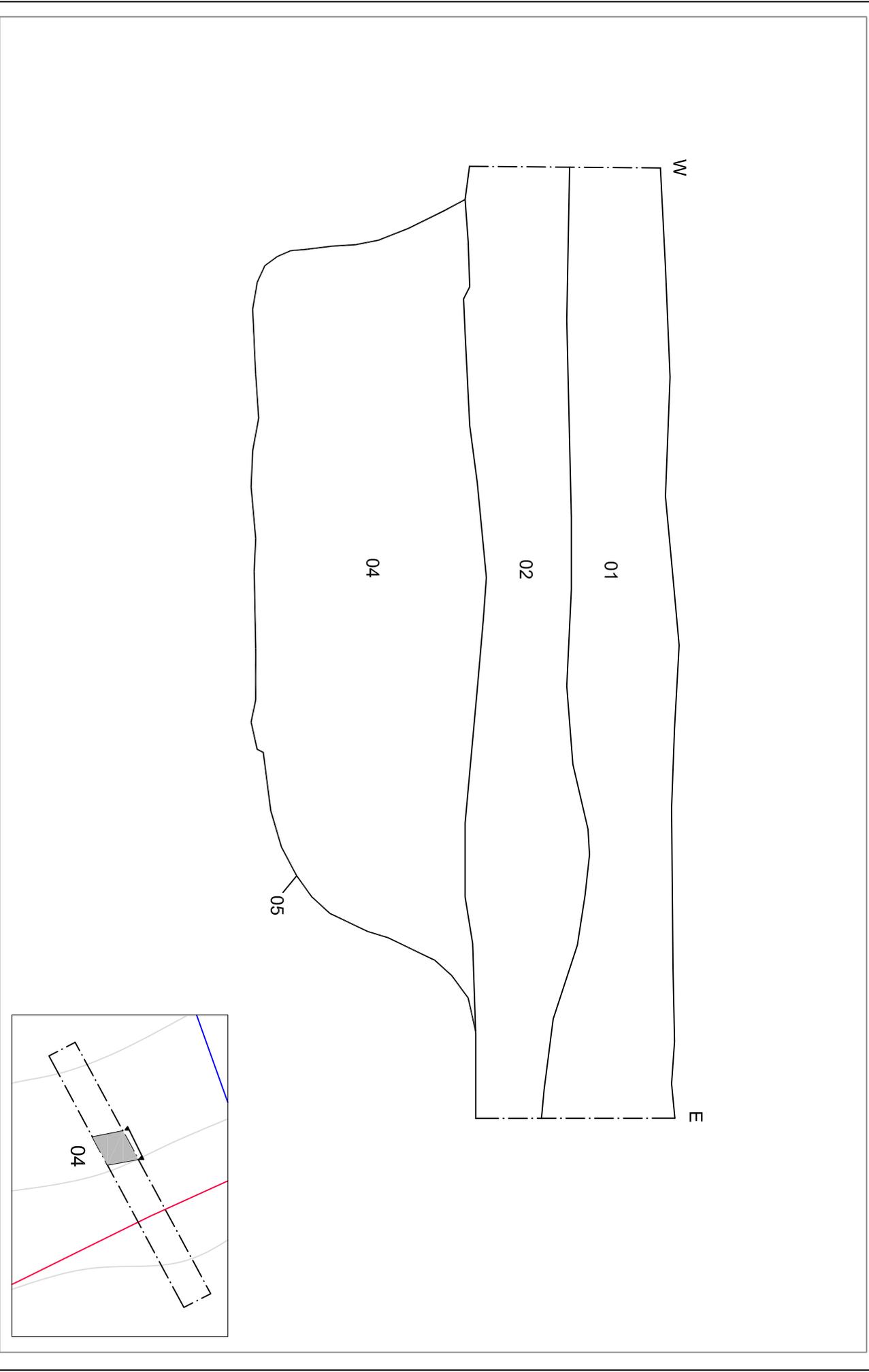


Figure 4 : Linear feature in Trenches 4,6,7 and 8



Scale 1:20

0 0.5m



Figure 5 : South facing section of linear in trench 4

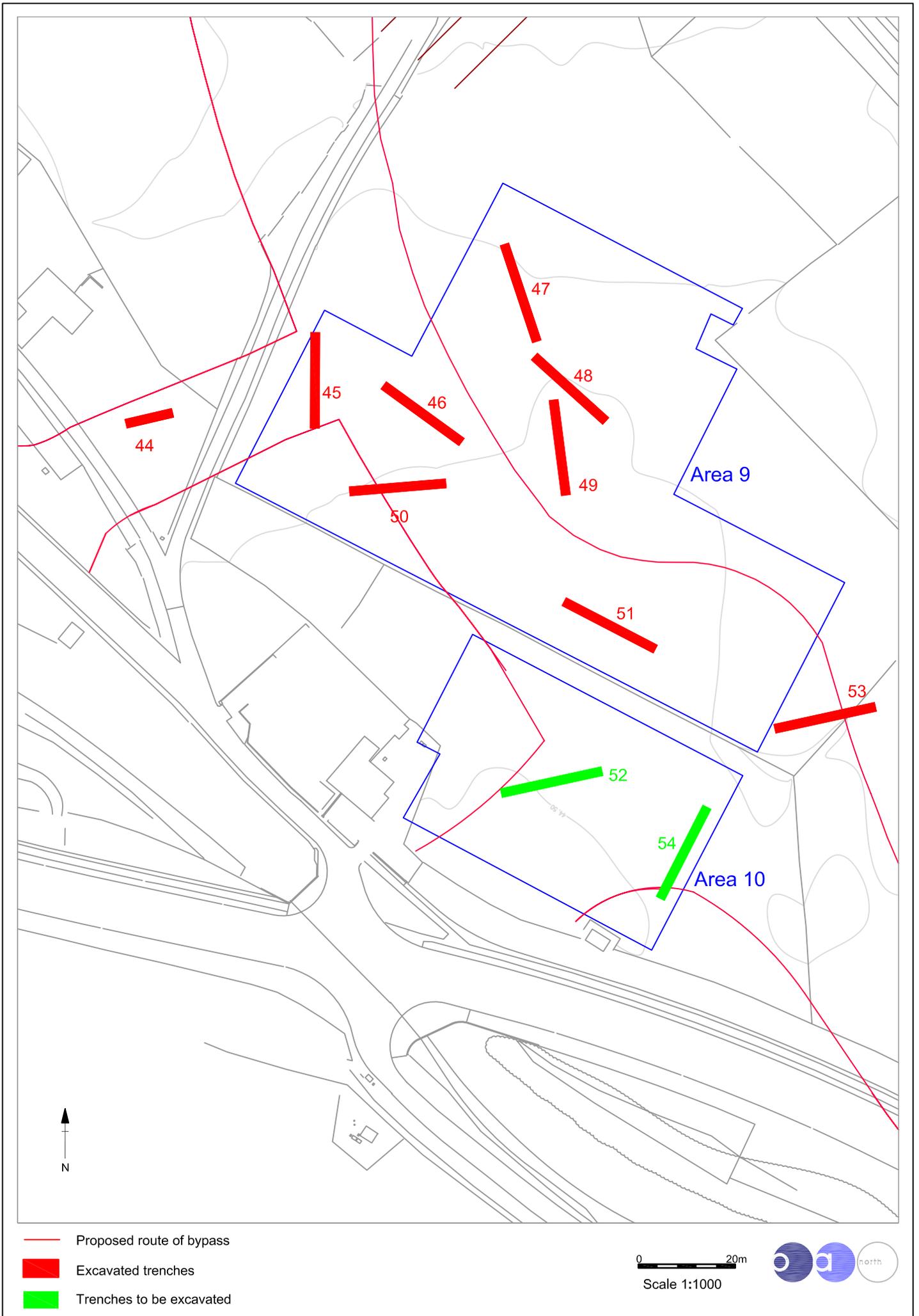


Figure 7 : Area 9 showing excavated trenches overlying geophysical anomalies



Plate 1: General View of Trench 4

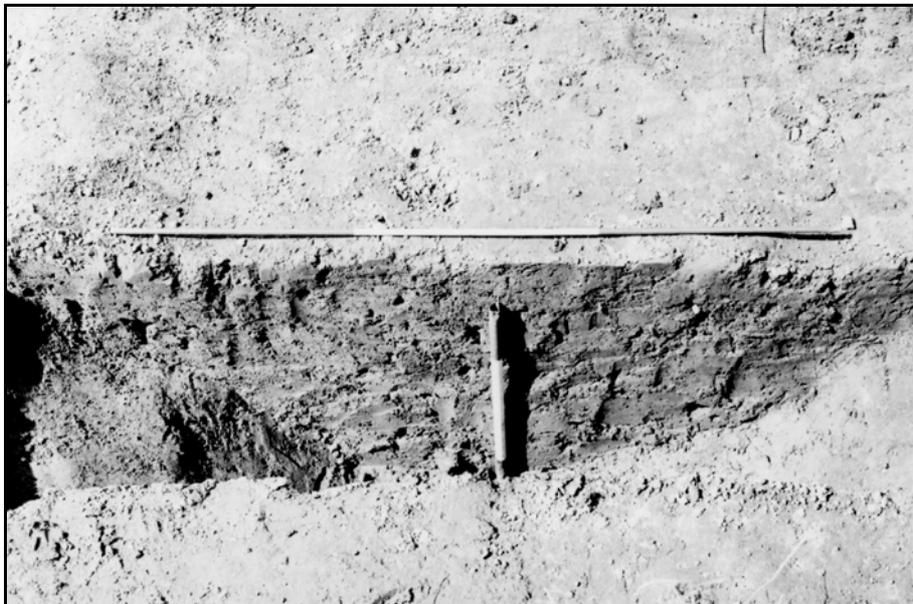


Plate 2: View of the section of ditch 9 located in trench 7



Plate 3: View of ditch *15* located in trench 49



Plate 4: View of the section through an enclosure ditch *17* located in trench 48

The Finds

- x.x.1 **Introduction:** in total, 22 fragments of artefacts were recovered from the evaluation. The bulk of the assemblage comprised ceramic vessel fragments (18 sherds), and also included clay tobacco pipe (one sherd), glass (one fragment), iron (one fragments), and ceramic building material (two fragments). Other finds categories such as animal bones and industrial residues were absent. Catalogues of the artefacts have been included in *Appendix X* in Trench Number order. All finds were treated in accordance with standard OA North practice.
- x.x.2 For the most part the finds were in a good condition, although a few fragments were clearly quite abraded and displayed some surface erosion, suggesting a degree of post-depositional disturbance. The material was collected from general layers and ditch fills. The majority of the assemblage derives from the post-medieval period, although the Roman period was also represented as a minor element.
- x.x.3 **Pottery:** fragments of pottery, which included material of Roman and post-medieval date, dominated the finds assemblage. Analysis of the pottery was based solely on visual inspection of individual sherds, and has been described using the terminology developed by Orton *et al* (1993).
- x.x.3 A single sherd of Roman pottery was recovered from the evaluation. This was produced from the fill (4) of ditch 5, within Trench 4. The sherd was a small rim fragment of a fineware vessel, possibly a Colour Coated ware. It was somewhat abraded and displayed surface erosion, suggesting some post-depositional disturbance. A late first to early second centuries may be ascribed to this fragment.
- x.x.4 The remainder of the pottery assemblage (17 sherds) was post-medieval, ranging in date from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, and the majority was recovered from stratified contexts. In general terms, the stratified material was in good condition; it was neither abraded nor rolled, suggesting that it not been disturbed subsequent to deposition. A range of fabric types and vessel forms was represented, including Staffordshire Blackware, Midlands Yellow ware, Midlands Purple ware, Metropolitan-type slipware, dark-glazed earthenware, creamware, and stoneware.
- x.x.5 The earliest of the post-medieval pottery within the assemblage was recovered from the fill (14) of ditch 15, Trench 49. The small group from this deposit comprised two adjoining sherds of a Staffordshire Blackware vessel, and a single body sherd of Midlands Yellow ware vessel. Blackware has its origins in Cistercian wares of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Ford 1995), and has been recognised in Staffordshire from deposits of the mid-seventeenth century onwards. The production and use of Blackwares declined during the mid-eighteenth century (Barker 1986). The two sherds recovered from fill 14 comprised the base and part of the side wall of a seemingly large jar, with distinct horizontal bands visible on the internal surface of the vessel wall.

These bands were a deliberate form of decoration, known as turning, and was particularly common on straight-sided vessels. The fragment of Midlands Yellow ware comprised a body sherd with a slip decoration and a lead glaze. It is generally recognised as a distinct ware from the sixteenth century, and seems to have ceased production during the seventeenth century (Ford 1995). It thus seems likely that fill **14** was deposited during the seventeenth century.

- x.x.6 A single sherd of a Midlands Purple ware vessel was recovered from the fill (**16**) of ditch **17**, within Trench **48**. The fragment comprised the rim of a vessel, possibly a bowl, with a splash of a lead glaze coloured with iron that appeared to represent a glaze scar. This ware originated in the late medieval period, probably the late fifteenth of early sixteenth centuries (Ford 1995), and continued in production in Staffordshire until the early eighteenth century. The other pottery recovered from ditch fill **16** included a single sherd of Metropolitan-type slipware, four fragments of dark-glazed earthenware, a single sherd of stoneware, and a single sherd of creamware. In broad terms, this group may be dated typologically to the eighteenth century, although creamware was not widely produced until 1760 (Barker 1999). However, the paucity of fragments with under-glaze painted decoration, which was extremely fashionable during the 1770s (*ibid*), and transfer printing in under-glaze blue, common by c1810, was notable, suggesting a deposition date of fill **16** during the 1760-80s.
- x.x.7 A single rim sherd of a Metropolitan-type slipware vessel, possibly a flatware, was also recovered from an unstratified context within Trench 4. This was found in association with two fragments of dark-glazed earthenware vessels, one of which represented a large storage jar. It is conceivable that these may have been manufactured at Prescott, Merseyside, where such wares were produced from the early eighteenth century (Davey 1987). Similar dark-glazed earthenware was produced from the topsoil within Trench 1.
- x.x.8 **Clay tobacco pipes:** a single fragment of a clay tobacco pipe stem was retrieved from an unstratified context within Trench 4. This fragment did not incorporate a makers stamp, and it is difficult to ascribe a date with confidence, although it seems unlikely to be earlier than the late eighteenth century.
- x.x.14 **Glass:** a single small fragment of green bottle glass was retrieved from the fill (**14**) of ditch **15**, within Trench 4. It is possible to ascribe a late seventeenth/eighteenth century date for this fragment.
- x.x.15 **Iron:** a single iron object was recovered from layer **2** within Trench 32. This represented part of a bolt, presumably of late post-medieval date.
- x.x.18 **Ceramic building material:** the assemblage contained a single fragment of ceramic field drain and a single fragment of ceramic tile. Both date to the late post-medieval period and can add little to the interpretation of the site.
- x.x.19 **Discussion:** the artefact assemblage produced from the evaluation is of limited interest. The single fragment of Roman pottery was small and abraded, and may have been transported accidentally to the site subsequent to its deposition

elsewhere in the vicinity. The post-medieval pottery represents some continuity of activity within the area since the seventeenth century. The range of vessels forms indicated domestic use, with no evidence of any specialist function, and the assemblage as a whole appears to represent domestic refuse, dumped during the reclamation works

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APPENDIX 3: FINDS CATALOGUE

Trench	Context	Quantity	Material	Date
4	4	1	Ceramic - pottery vessel	Roman
4	Unstrat.	3	Ceramic - pottery vessels	C18th
4	Unstrat.	1	Clay tobacco pipe - stem	C18th/C19th
23	23	2	Ceramic building material - tile	C19th
32	2	1	Ceramic - pottery vessel	Late C18th
32	2	1	Iron - bolt	Post-medieval
48	16	8	Ceramic - pottery vessels	C18th
49	14	3	Ceramic - pottery vessels	C17th
49	14	1	Glass - vessel	Post-medieval
51	1	1	Ceramic - pottery vessel	C18th/C19th