

Tumbling Fields Stinchcombe Gloucestershire



Archaeological Evaluation Report



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Tumbling Fields, Stinchcombe, Gloucestershire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

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SUMMARY

On November 27th 2006, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at Tumbling Fields, Stinchcombe, Gloucestershire (NGR: ST 728 988) on behalf of Mr and Mrs Baker. The evaluation revealed evidence of post-medieval ridge and furrow and a backfilled post-medieval field boundary ditch. No evidence for any earlier archaeology was observed.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

1.1.1 On November 27th 2006 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at Tumbling Fields, Stinchcombe, Gloucestershire NGR: ST 728 988) on behalf of Mr and Mrs Barker in respect of a proposed planning application for development of the northern area of land known as Tumbling Fields. A brief requiring that an archaeological evaluation be undertaken before determination of the planning application was set by Charles Parry, Archaeological Officer for Gloucestershire County Council (GCC, 2006).

1.1.2 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief (OA, 2006).

1.2 Location, geology and topography

1.2.1 The village of Stinchcombe is located approximately 24 km south-west of Gloucester, on the edge of the Cotswold Hills (Fig. 1). The site is situated on the north-western edge of the village, south of Echo Lane at a height of 73.5 m above OD and is currently used as a private garden. The underlying geology is Lias over Brownstone deposits (Geological Survey of Great Britain, Sheet no 251).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological background to the evaluation was prepared for the WSI for the project (OA, 2006) and is reproduced below. The site itself has produced no archaeological evidence. There are no known locations with archaeological remains adjacent to the development site.

1.3.2 The present village of Stinchcombe dates from the 17th century with a number of buildings from that period. The church dates from 1638 and was remodelled in 1855, the tower being rebuilt in 1884 after a lightning strike. Melksham Court in the village is 17th century in date, but incorporates earlier building features. This belonged to the Tyndale family for 300 years. Earlier archaeological evidence around Stinchcombe is in the form of a rectangular enclosure and lynchet cropmarks to the north of the village seen in aerial photographs. A number of medieval pottery sherds were recovered during work on the M5 junction north-west of the village and some Romano-British pottery and flint was recovered during drainage work in playing field

next to the church. To the south-east of Stinchcombe in the grounds of Stancombe Park is the site of a Roman villa, where a tessellated floor was found and is now on display in the Gloucester Museum (GCC 2006 and Pevsner 1974).

2 EVALUATION AIMS

- 2.1.1 To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the proposed development area.
- 2.1.2 To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present. A specific aim will be to establish the potential for earlier archaeological evidence pre-dating the present village buildings from the late 17th century.
- 2.1.3 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of any archaeological deposits and features.
- 2.1.4 To make available the results of the investigation

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork

- 3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of one trench measuring 30 m long by 1.7 m wide (Fig. 2), positioned running approximately north-south down the centre of the development area. The overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision by a mechanical excavator (JCB) fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Excavation proceeded in level spits down to the top of the natural geology or to the top of the first archaeological horizon, whichever was encountered first.
- 3.1.2 Because of the presence of a live service detected prior to excavation, a bulk measuring 1.5 m wide was left undisturbed approximately in the centre of the trench.

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

- 3.2.1 The trench was cleaned by hand and any revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and if possible, to retrieve finds and environmental samples. The trench was planned at a scale of 1:50 (Fig. 3) and any recorded sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20. All features and sections were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OA Field Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

3.3 Finds

- 3.3.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and bagged by context.

3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence

3.4.1 No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling were encountered during the course of the evaluation.

3.5 Presentation of results

3.5.1 The results of the evaluation area presented below, starting with the stratigraphic account followed by an overall discussion and interpretation.

4 RESULTS: GENERAL

4.1 Soils and ground conditions

4.1.1 The site is located on level ground, with some evidence of intrusion by modern features such as services, particularly at the northern end. The boundaries of the layers and edges of the cut feature were well defined. Soil conditions were wet, with some ground water encountered in the deeper parts of the trench.

4.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits

4.2.1 The stratigraphy was constant throughout the length of the trench with only the one archaeological feature noted, at the northern end of the trench.

5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

5.1 Description of deposits

5.1.1 The underlying natural, a yellow-brown lias clay (3) was encountered at a depth of between 0.45 m and 0.7 m below the current ground level (Fig. 4, sections 1-3). At the northern end of the trench this was cut by a east-west aligned, parallel sided feature (4). This measured 2.9 m wide by 0.55 m deep, with a shallow “bowl” shaped profile (Fig. 4, section 3). This feature was filled with a pale grey clay silt (5) which contained numerous fragments of stone and produced many examples of 18th century and early 19th century pottery and 2 fragments of clay pipe stem.

5.1.2 Sealing this feature, and running the length of the trench was a layer of light brown clay silt (2) measuring between 0.25 m and 0.4 m deep. This layer produced examples of pottery and animal bone. This was overlaid by a layer of dark brown clay loam (1), 0.25 m deep, the present day topsoil and turf.

5.2 Finds

5.2.1 Fragments of post-medieval pottery and animal bone were recovered from layers 1 and 2, and from fill 5. Fragments of tile and 2 fragments of clay pipe stem were also recovered from this context.

6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 6.1.1 The percentage sample of the site (4%), the location of the trench, and the consistency of the stratigraphy gives a high confidence that the interpretation of the results will apply throughout the development area.
- 6.1.2 The stratigraphy displayed on either side of the baulk left above the service was consistent suggesting that the unexcavated material would not have contributed further to the understanding of the site.

6.2 Overall interpretation

- 6.2.1 The evaluation showed that there were deposits of exclusively post-medieval origin throughout the site. Feature 4 has been interpreted as an old field boundary ditch backfilled with a mixture of 18th and early 19th century domestic refuse. This was sealed by a layer of ploughsoil 2, probably 19th century in origin. The undulating nature of its base suggest that it formed part of a ridge and furrow system orientated east-west and based on approximately 9 m wide centres. Layer 1 is a later agricultural soil reused as the present day garden soil.
- 6.2.2 No evidence for any earlier archaeology was observed during the course of the evaluation. There is the possibility that later cultivation of the site may have truncated any such evidence, however the absence of deeper features cut into the natural, or of residual earlier finds would mitigate against this.
- 6.2.3 From the evidence accrued during the evaluation it would appear that this area had always been agricultural in nature prior to the present development.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Ctxt No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Thick. (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i> Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	Layer	-	0.25 m	Present day topsoil and turf	Pottery	C20th
2	Layer	-	0.25 m - 0.4 m	Earlier ploughsoil, evidence of ridge and furrow	Pottery, animal bone	C19th
3	Layer	-	> 0.1 m	Natural lias clay	-	-
4	Cut	2.9 m	0.55 m	Field boundary/ drainage ditch	-	C18th/ early C19th
5	Fill	2.9 m	0.55 m	Backfill, mixture of stone, silts and domestic refuse	Pottery, animal bone, tile, clay pipe stem	C18th/ early C19th

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

GCC 2006 *Brief for an Archaeological Field Evaluation*

GCC 2006 *Sites, Monuments and Records Search (SMR)*

IFA, 2001 *Standard and Guidance for archaeological watching briefs*

Nickolaus Pevsner, 1970, *The buildings of England: Gloucestershire: The Cotswolds.*

OAU, 1992 *Fieldwork Manual (ed. D Wilkinson)*

OA, 2000 *Oxford Archaeology Environmental Sampling Guidelines*

OA, 2006 *Tumbling Fields, Stinchcombe, Gloucestershire : Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Tumbling Fields, Stinchcombe, Gloucestershire

Site code: STIF 06

Grid reference: ST 728 988

Type of evaluation: One machine dug 30 m trench

Date and duration of project: 27th November 2006, one day

Area of site: c.1200 m²

Summary of results: Late post-medieval ridge and furrow and a late post-medieval field boundary ditch. No earlier archaeology was observed.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Stroud District Museum in due course



Scale 1:25,000

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Figure 1: Site location

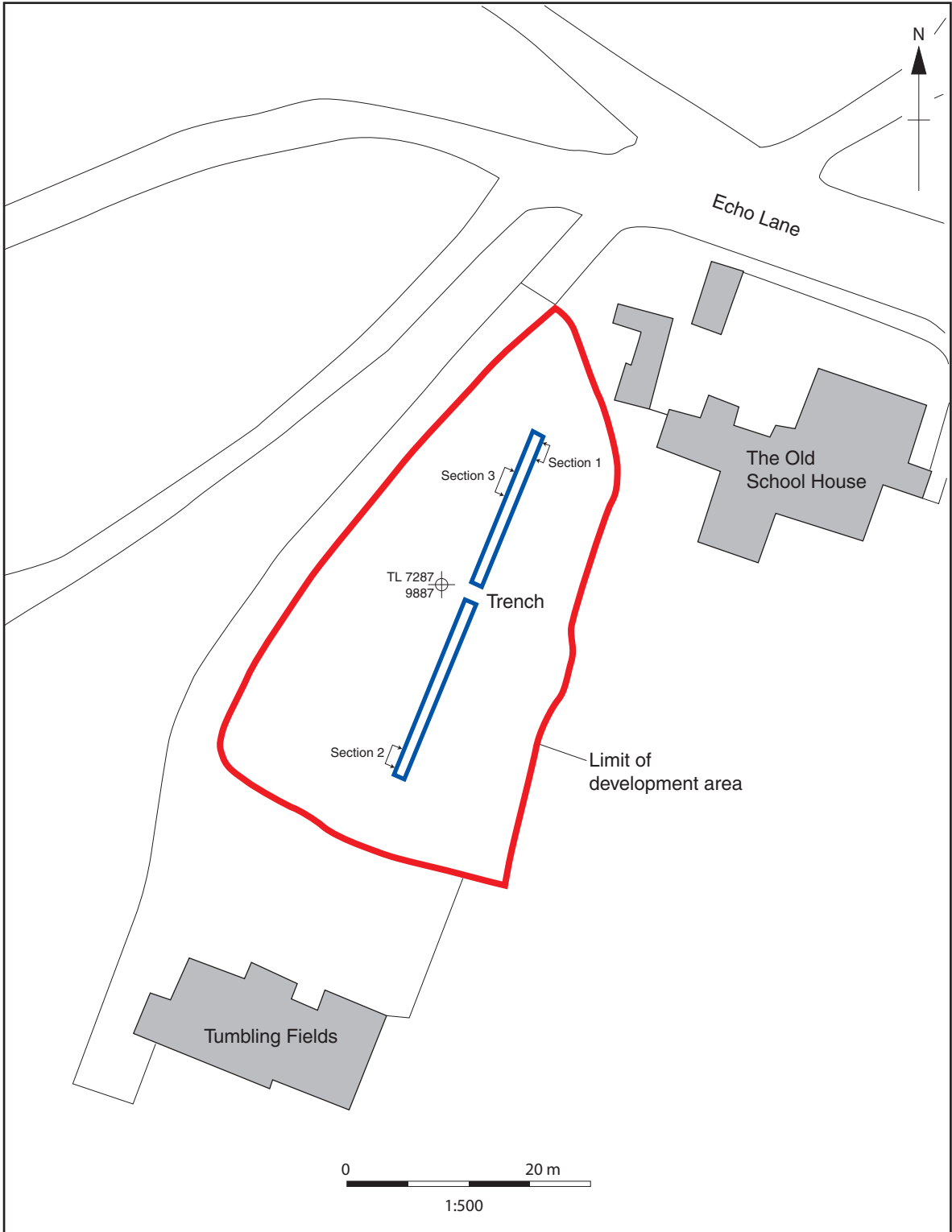


Figure 2: Trench location

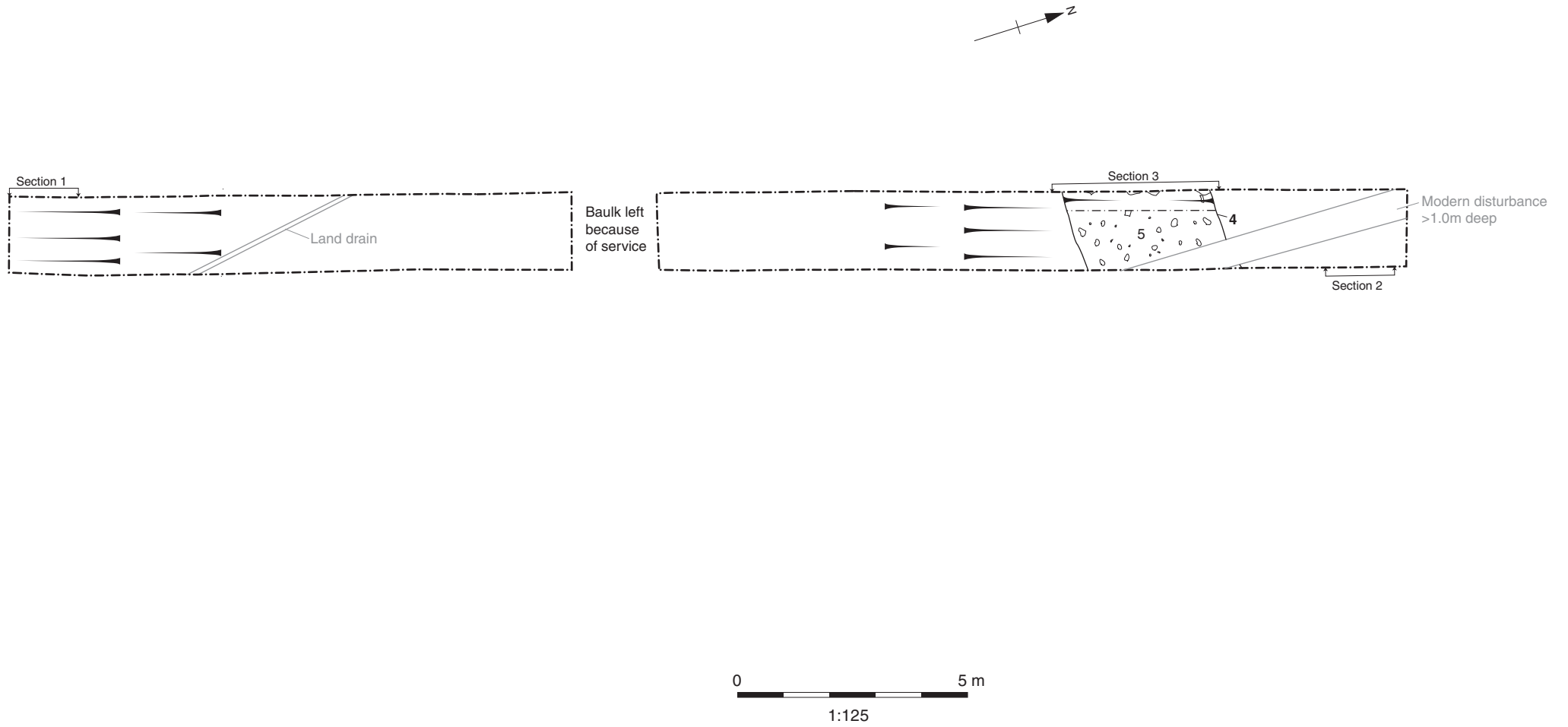


Figure 3: Trench plan

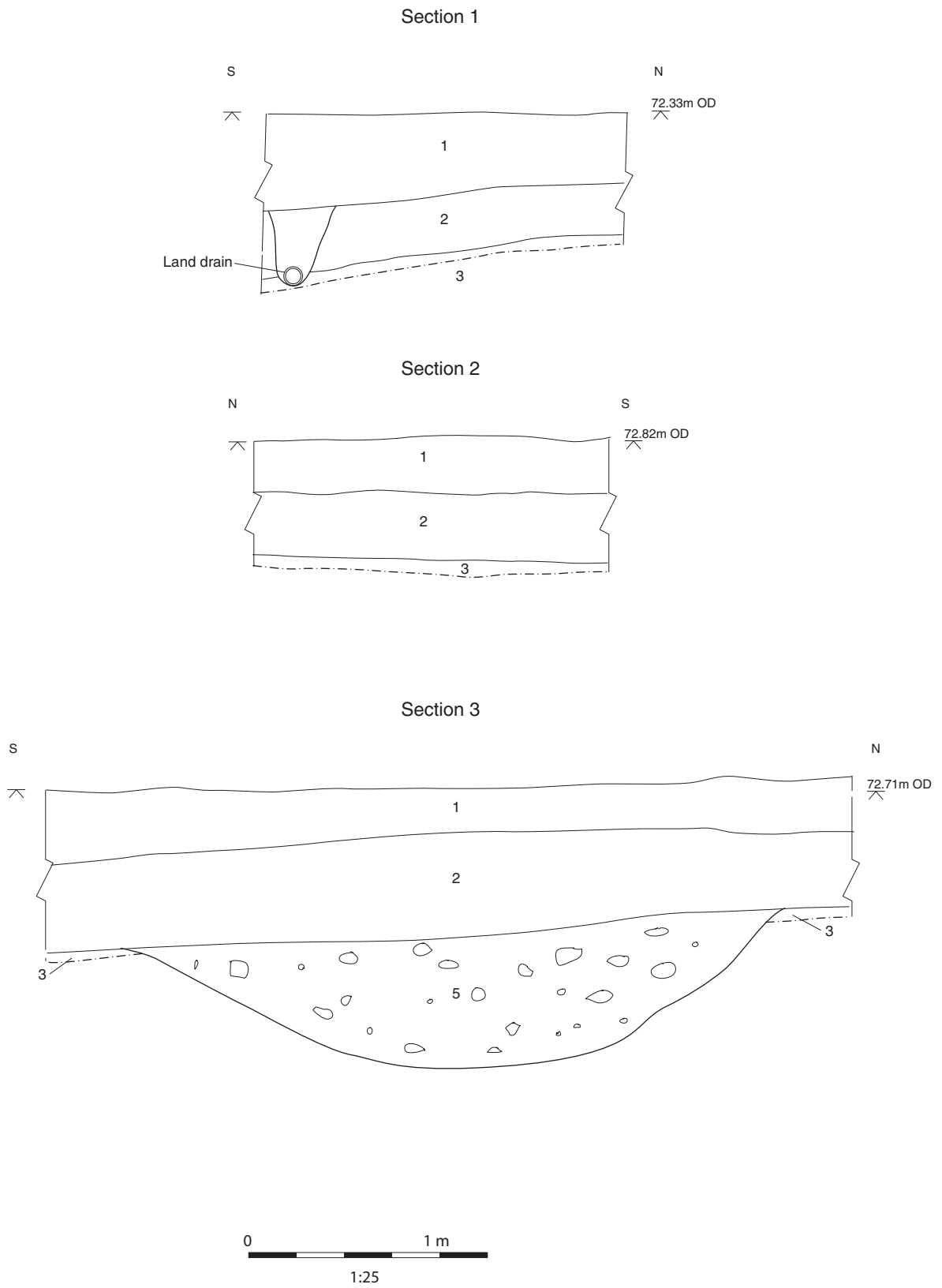


Figure 4: Sections 1-3