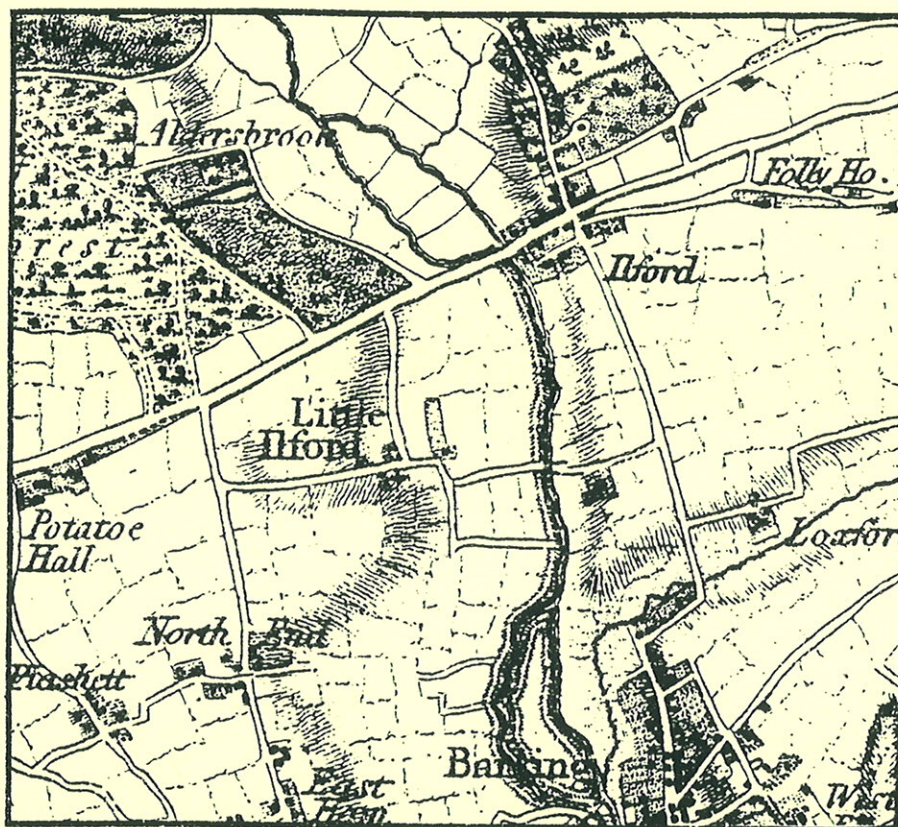


Land at Ilford Lane, Victoria Road and Roman Road, Barking, London

Archaeological Evaluation



Oxford Archaeological Unit

1994

LAND AT ILFORD LANE, VICTORIA ROAD AND ROMAN ROAD,
BARKING, LONDON

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INTRODUCTION

The Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out a small scale evaluation in Ilford, in the London Borough of Redbridge. The work was undertaken between 15th and 22nd of June 1994 for Chelsteen Homes Ltd. Four trenches were positioned within the area of 27 proposed flats (planning application 0185/94).

TOPOGRAPHY

The site is situated on a floodplain gravel terrace E of the River Roding between Ilford and Barking (see fig. 2). The area evaluated was formerly a recreational park area of just over 3ha, centred at NGR TQ 44091 84940. To the E the site is bound by Ilford Lane, to the N by Roman Road, and to the S by Victoria Road. The ground slopes gently away to the E and S. The highest point being the NW corner of the site at about 7.07m above ordnance datum (OD) and the area to the S adjacent to Victoria Road being about 5.50m OD.

STRATEGY

A total of four trenches were machine excavated to archaeological levels using a JCB (see fig. 3). Archaeological deposits were hand dug to establish their character, extent, condition and dates. Trenches 1, 2 and 3 were located within an area for proposed building while Trench 4 occupied an area of proposed car parking. The depth and loose nature of the modern deposits necessitated that the sides of each trench were stepped to maintain safe working conditions.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The site is situated adjacent to the SE corner of Uphall Camp, a middle Iron Age univallate fort (TQ 437 851). The extent of the fort clearly shows on the 1898 six inch map (see fig. 1). On the 1898 map the earthworks survives to the NE but the southern extent of the earthworks is probably represented by the parish boundary between Ilford and Barking, just N of Victoria Road (see fig. 2). The area enclosed by the fort totals about 19.40ha (Wilkinson 1978).

The Rev. P. Morant in 'History and Antiquities of Essex', 1768, notes that the side running parallel to the road on the E side 'has been almost destroyed by cultivation, though evident traces of it are still discernible'. Crouch (1893) describes the earthworks in the SE as becoming 'more indistinct each year.', and the earthworks were being further levelled by infilling of gravel working depressions.

Excavations by the Passmore Edwards Museum in 1983, 1984, and 1987 revealed penannular gullies of at least eight round buildings, four post structures as well as small pits and boundary/enclosure ditches. The discovery of three potin coins suggest the fort functioned as a market focus. A rectangular or square enclosure

with V-shaped ditches appeared to be a Roman military structure (Greenwood 1988).

Prehistoric activity is indicated by Palaeolithic flakes from Uphall Brickfield (TQ 4381 8526) and a Palaeolithic scraper from Uphall Farm (TQ 437 853). A scatter of Neolithic artifacts and a Bronze Age burial were located during excavations at Uphall Camp (TQ 4383 8508).

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SUMMARY

A 1.00m to 1.50m dump of modern brick rubble was encountered throughout the site. The loose condition of the rubble and high water table in Trenches 1 and 2 prevented any detailed evaluation of the bottom of the trenches.

Trench 3 located a ditch cut and possible slighted rampart deposits. The ditch fill and earlier deposits contained Saxon/Early Medieval pottery.

Trench 4 contained a modern feature and an undated feature possibly associated with a tree throw pit.

RESULTS

TRENCH 1 (for section see fig. 4)

Orientated NNW-SSE

Length 6.00m

Width 2.30m-3.00m

Depth 2.65m

Trench 1 was positioned within the footprint of a proposed building, at the S end of the site 14m from Victoria Road.

Natural sand was located at approximately 3.28m above Ordnance Datum (OD).

The inflow of water prevented any detailed examination for archaeological features and the exact level of the natural sand was unclear.

The natural sand appeared to be overlaid by a mid grey sandy silt, 106, which contained up to 30% gravel. The lower 0.30m of this layer were not seen in detail due to the soft and fluid nature of the deposit. A single sherd of glazed 17th to 19th century pottery was recovered from within layer 106.

Layer 106 was overlaid by a dark grey silt loam, 105, with up to 15% rounded gravel. The top of layer 105 occurred at 4.28m OD, 1.70m below the present ground surface. No finds were recovered from 105, but this deposit was identified as a soil horizon throughout the site and occurred in the other trenches as contexts 204, 306 and 403.

Layer 105 was overlaid by 1.40m of loose brick rubble and concrete. Above this was a layer of mid grey silt mixed with brick fragments, 102. Layer 102 was overlaid by the present day topsoil.

TRENCH 2 (for section see fig. 5)

Orientated ENE-WSW
Length 3.80m
Width 2.90m
Depth 2.60m

Trench 2 was positioned within the footprint of a proposed building, in the middle of the site 10m W from Ilford Lane.

Natural sand/gravel was located at approximately 3.48m OD. The adverse conditions in Trench 2 were similar to Trench 1, so the inflow of water prevented any detailed examination for archaeological features and the exact level of the natural sand and gravel was unclear.

The natural sand appeared to be overlaid by a mid grey sandy silt, 205, which contained up to 30% gravel. The bottom of this layer was not seen in detail due to the inflow of water.

Layer 205 was overlaid by a dark grey silt loam, 204, with up to 15% rounded gravel. The top of layer 204 occurred at 4.30m OD, 1.80m below the present ground surface. Finds from layer 204 include a sherd of 17th-19th century glazed earthenware and a clay pipe stem. This deposit was identified as a soil horizon throughout the site and occurred in the other trenches as contexts 105, 306 and 403.

The soil horizon 204 was overlaid by 1.50m of loose brick rubble, 203. Above the brick rubble a layer of grey silt loam, 202, which contained fine brick fragments. Layer 202 was overlaid by the present topsoil 201.

TRENCH 3 (see fig. 6 and 7)

Orientated NNW-SSE

Length 4.00m

Width 2.00m

Depth 2.68m

Trench 3 was positioned within the footprint of a proposed building, at the N end of the site 10m S from Roman Road.

The trench was machine dug down to the top of layer 308 and a 2m² by 0.80m deep hand dug box section was dug within the middle of the trench. The inflow of water through the sides and bottom of the trench prevented any further safe excavation below the level of 3.69m OD.

Hand dug box section

The earliest deposit was a mid-brown sandy silt, 315 which contained 10% gravel. Deposit 315 was seen on the W side of the trench within the hand dug section. Deposit 315 sloped down to the E giving a convex upper surface, which was truncated by a later cut 311.

Deposit 315 was overlaid by a loose thin gravel deposit, 314, which contained 15% silt and sand inclusions. Deposit 314 also sloped down to the E with a convex upper surface. Although also truncated by cut 311 the steep fall in slope suggest it may have once dipped down into an earlier cut.

Deposit 314 was overlaid by mid to light brown silty sand, 313, which contained 20%-30% gravel inclusions. A single sherd of pottery was recovered from context 313, the sherd had a slightly sooted exterior and probably dates from the mid 11th to early 13th century. As with contexts 315 and 314, deposit 313 sloped down to the E, where it was cut by 311.

The linear cut 311 ran NNW-SSE, the width exceeded 2.00m and the depth exceeded 0.50m. The edge for 311 was clearly identified on the W side of the trench; the edge on the E side laid beyond the limits of the trench. The convex edge of the W side reflected the shape of contexts 315, 314 and 313.

Cut 311 was filled by a mid to dark grey sandy silt, 310, which contained 20%-30% gravel. The fill 310 appeared fairly homogenous at the S end, although towards the N it contained large patches of mid brown silt within it. The top of the fill occurred at 4.14m OD and 0.50m was excavated until the water prevented further safe excavation. Finds from 310 include two tile fragments, one pot sherd which probably dates from mid 11th-early 13th as well as two St Neots type ware dated late 11th-early 12th century.

Fill 310 was overlaid by a mid to light brown silty sand, 312, which contained 20%

gravel. Deposit 312 sloped down towards the E and only slightly impinged over 310 on the W side, before it petered out.

Deposit 312 was overlaid by a layer of mid brown sandy silt, 309, which contained 10%-20% gravel. The top of layer 309 formed a level deposit which sealed 312 and 310, although the layer thinned out above 312. Finds from 309 included two brick fragments, a post medieval tile fragment, a St Neots type ware pot sherd and a sherd from the shoulder of a large jar with a vertical applied thumbed strip, dated ?mid 11th-early 13th century.

Layers exposed along the whole trench

Layer 309 was overlaid by a mid brown sandy silt, 308, which contained 30%-40% gravel. This layer was similar in character to layer 309 and seen over the whole of the trench; it contained two sherds of early medieval pottery. The post medieval finds in 309 indicate that these two sherds are residual.

Layer 308 was overlaid by a mid brown sandy silt, 307, which contained 15% gravel. Layer 307 produced two clay pipe stems a brick fragment and English 18th-19th century stoneware pottery.

Layer 307 was overlaid by a dark brown silty loam, 306, which contained 15% gravel inclusions. The top of 306 occurred at 5.22m OD, 1.42m below the present ground surface. This deposit was identified as a soil horizon throughout the site and occurred in the other trenches as contexts 105, 204 and 403.

Above layer 306 were a sequence of dumped layers: 305, 304, 303 and 302. Layer 306 was overlaid by a dark brown sandy silt, 305, which contained occasional brick fragments. This layer was similar in character to 306 and it gave the impression of a loose dumped redeposited soil. Layer 304, although lighter in colour, was similar to 305, representing a redeposited soil.

Layer 304 was overlaid by a rather more mixed layer, 303, a mid brown sandy silt with areas of brick and mid brown to yellow clay within it. The final dumped layer 302 was a similar mix of material to 303. The present topsoil overlaid 302.

TRENCH 4 (see fig. 8 and 9)

Orientated NNW-SSE

Length 4.60m

Width 2.50m

Depth 1.48m

Trench 4 was positioned just E of the entrance off Victoria Road within the area of a proposed car park.

Natural gravel, 408, was located at approximately 4.11m OD. The gravel was

overlaid by a thin layer of orange to yellow natural sand, 407. The natural sand 407 was overlaid by a grey brown silty sand, 406 which contained only occasional gravel. The top and bottom of layer 406 undulated slightly.

Layer 406 was overlaid by a rather mixed layer of light brown to yellow sandy silt with occasional patches of fine gravel and a light brown clay silt. To the S this layer sloped down, probably due to disturbance by a later feature, 410.

Where layer 405 slopes away the top of the layer consists of a lense of fairly clean yellow sand, 411. The sandy lense 411 was cut by a linear feature 410. Feature 410 orientated ENE-WSW, although clear in section it proved difficult to see in plan due to the inflow of water. It appeared to exceed 1.40m in width (estimated width probably 1.50m). The depth measured 0.36m and to the N the bottom was 45° and at the top it flared out to 20° from the horizontal. The S side although not clear, in contrast to the N side, appeared to slope quite steeply. Only a one metre length showed in plan; to the E it was truncated by a later feature 413. Feature 410 was filled by a mid to light brown sandy silt, 409.

Fill 409 was overlaid by a dark greenish brown sandy silt, 404, which appeared as a thin layer in the main section but becomes deeper as it sloped down to the E where it was truncated by feature 413.

Layer 404 was overlaid by a dark soil horizon 403, the top of this deposit occurred at 4.56m OD and was identified throughout the site as contexts 105, 204 and 306.

Feature 413 measured at least 1.20m x 0.60m and occupied a large area of the trench. The feature was cut into the natural gravel and it was recorded as cutting 409. It also cut a later deposit 404 but its relationship with 403 was unclear as the two deposits were identical in character. Finds from 412 included modern glass, tile and brick fragments.

Layer 403 was overlaid by up to 1.20m of brick rubble, 402. Above this occurred the present topsoil, 401.

POTTERY ASSESSMENT

Lucy Bown

A total of 16 sherds recovered from this site include 8 Late Saxon/Early Medieval Wares and 8 Post Medieval sherds, in mutually exclusive contexts.

Contexts 308, 309, 310 and 313 contain the eight wheel thrown Late Saxon/Early Medieval Wares. Four of these sherds are of St Neots-type Ware from which the calcareous inclusions have leached out. One diagnostic simple everted rim is from a jar typical of the Late Saxon/Early Medieval part of this tradition, dating from the late 11th to early 12th century. St Neots-type ware is common in the area, for example, at Waltham Abbey where it is dated generally as A.D. 850-1200.

The remaining 4 early medieval sherds are in a slightly harder fired, quartz tempered fabric with the occasional calcareous inclusion also leached out of the surfaces. The external surfaces are reduced and some slightly sooted. One diagnostic sherd is from a large jar decorated with a thumbed strip. This has been applied at the shoulder and runs vertically down the body of the vessel. The occurrence of this ware in the same contexts as the St Neots-type Ware suggests they are of a contemporary date. Similar early medieval wares, including wheel thrown cooking pots in a quartz fabric with coarse shell tempering, are known at Waltham Abbey where they are dated as A.D.1060-1200.

Eight post medieval sherds of 17th to 19th-century date are found in contexts 106, 204, 307, 403, 412 and 414. Four sherds are in glazed red Earthenware fabrics dating from the 17th to 18th centuries. One of these sherds is a pulled handle from a frying pan or dripping dish which could date from the late 15th century to the 17th or early 18th century. Two sherds of enamel painted Creamware date from the mid 18th century and two sherds of English yellow and white Stoneware date from the 18th to 19th centuries.

INTERPRETATION TRENCH 1

The dump of brick rubble encountered in the trench and throughout the site appears to represent a build up and levelling of the site to provide hard standing for the construction of a number of post second world war pre-fabricated buildings (information from the developer Mr A Poulton). The condition of the site prior to this build up was indicated by the soft dark humic soil horizon 105. The wet nature of the site necessitated such a large build up of material. Although the Iron Age fort occupies an area of higher gravel terrace the area to the S between the river Roding and Loxford Water was mainly low lying. The Rev S. Lysons in the 'Environs of London' (1796) describes the S side of Uphall Camp as a "deep morass...".

Pottery from 106 suggest a date of 18th century or later. This layer was fairly homogenous in character although the bottom of the layer could not be examined in any detail. The composition did not suggest a colluvial deposit although it could represent material from the rampart which had been subsequently reworked. A thin layer 403 in Trench 4 to the W possibly represents the western limit of the same layer. If this is the case it suggests layer 106 and by implication layer 205 in Trench 2, is situated in a wide 'depression' running approximately parallel to Ilford Lane.

The adverse conditions due to the water inflow and soft material prevented any safe examination of the bottom of the trench, consequently the exact nature of the deposits below 106 remains unclear although the natural sand appeared to be at 3.39m OD.

INTERPRETATION TRENCH 2

The conditions and sequence of layers recorded in Trench 2 was similar to those

encountered in Trench 1. The earliest layer identified, 205 almost certainly is the same layer as the post medieval layer 106 recorded in trench 1. The bottom of the trench could not be examined for any archaeological features due to the adverse conditions encountered and referred to above.

INTERPRETATION TRENCH 3

Trench 3 was the nearest trench to the supposed line of the rampart of the Iron Age fort, represented by the Ilford Barking parish boundary (see fig. 2). This boundary passes through the NW corner of the site orientated approximately NNW-SSE and corresponds to a broad ridge of higher ground, which also shows as a slight rise in Roman Road which then slopes down to Ilford Lane (Pamela Greenwood pers. comm.). The ditch 311 would correspond to an area just on the outside edge of the rampart.

The pottery from the ditch fill 310 indicates an early medieval date of the late 11th to early 12th century and residual sherds of a similar date occurred in later layers.

A sample of ditch fill 310 was assessed for environmental purposes. Although the deposit was anaerobic, twigs appeared to be the only preserved material, and it was felt that there was no potential for further work (Dr M Robinson pers. comm.)

The deposits to the W of ditch 311 (315, 314, 313) all slope down to the E suggesting layers on the edge of a bank. Pottery from one of the deposits, 313, appeared to be a similar date to those of the ditch fill 310.

Within the restricted area of the trench and due to the difficult conditions interpretation is limited. The amount and condition of pottery indicates early medieval activity nearby and the ditch probably represents the continuation of a boundary along the bottom of the rampart.

Layers 309, 308 and 307 which seal ditch 311 probably represent successive denuding of material from the rampart due to later ploughing. The Rev S. Lysons in the 'Environs of London' (1796) describes the E side of Uphall Camp as dry and level from frequent ploughing which had filled most of the outer works.

INTERPRETATION TRENCH 4

Layer 406 probably represents an earlier soil, possibly a ploughsoil. Layers 405 and 411, both mixed layers do not represent a cultivated soil and may be disturbance associated with feature 410. No finds were recovered from these layers although an unstratified Redware frying pan handle dated from the late 15th to early 17th century.

Feature 410 although well defined in section, did not give the appearance of a dug feature and possibly represents the disturbance caused by a tree-throw-pit.

Layer 404, although thin in section appears to deepen to the E and possibly

represents the western limit of layer 106 seen in trench 106.

CONSIDERATION OF THE RESULTS

The depth of loose rubble and high water table made ground conditions in Trench 1 and Trench 2 too unstable to examine the archaeological levels in plan. The loose brick rubble was too unstable to be shored and the sides of each trench were stepped to provide safe access.

The water flowed readily through the loose brick rubble and also pored in through the loose sand at the bottom of the trench. Pumping of the water with two pumps only had a limited affect on the water level; any layers at this level quickly turned to slurry. Consequently in Trench 1 and 2 only the sequence of later deposits could be established and recorded.

The more gravelly nature of the deposits in Trench 3 and 4 meant the deposits were more stable. Hand digging of a 2m² area in Trench 3 was possible with the sides supported by steel sheet shoring. Despite pumping, the inflow of water into the trench prevented any lower deposits being excavated to an adequate standard while maintaining conditions for safe excavation.

CONCLUSION

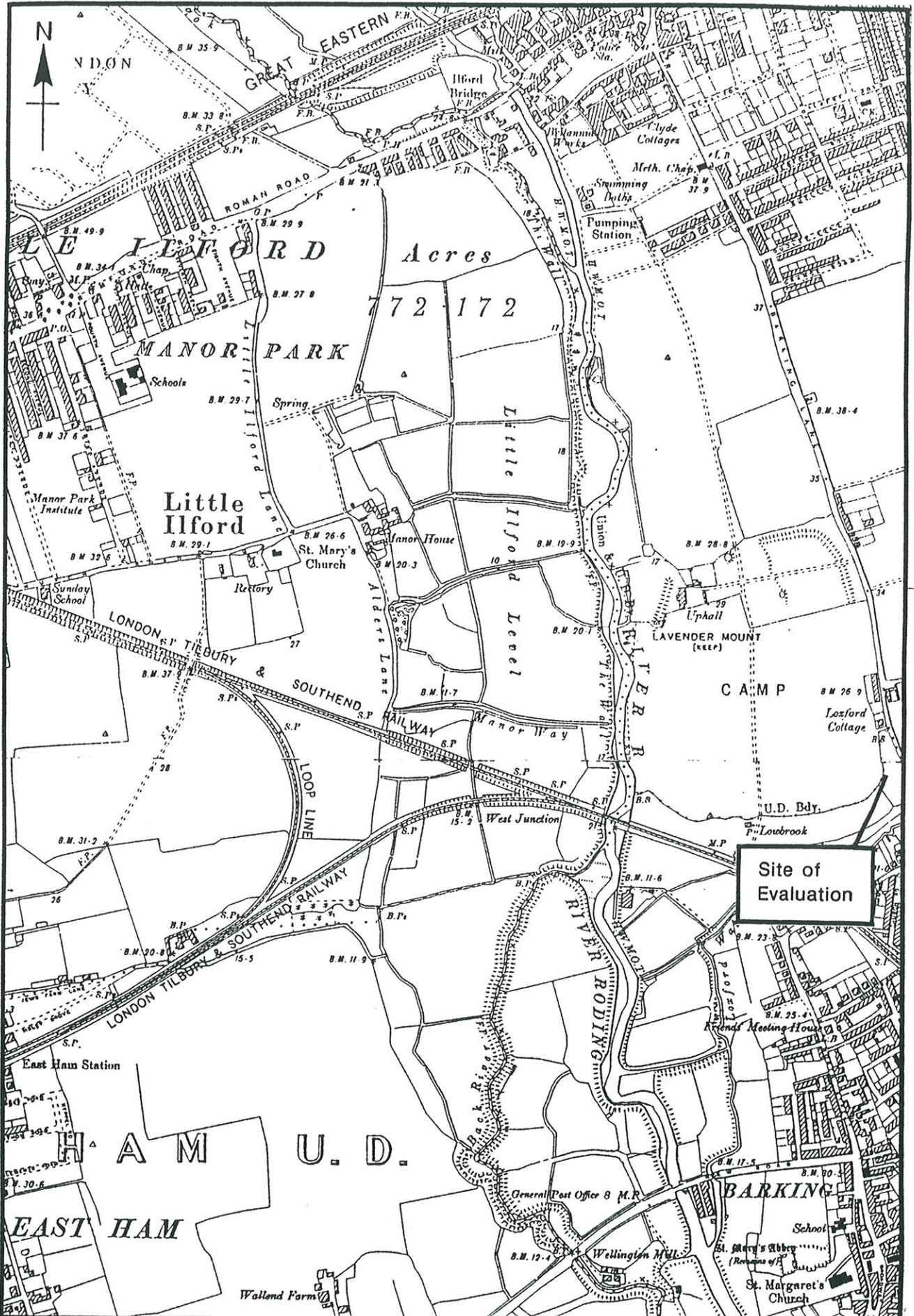
In the opinion of the Oxford Archaeological Unit the line of the south eastern edge of the fort lies to the west of this application site. In all probability based on the topography and its results of the evaluation the line is represented by the parish boundary. In addition no Iron Age artefacts were recovered during the evaluation. The medieval ditch found in Trench 3 may well be an attempt to drain the low lying area in order to cultivate the land.

Appendix 1 Summary of contexts and finds

LAND AT CORNER OF ILFORD LANE, VICTORIA ROAD AND ROMAN ROAD, LONDON (IG-RO 94 LDPEM \ACIG \284)					
CXT	TYPE	WIDTH (m)	DEPTH (m)	COMMENTS	FINDS
TRENCH 1					
101	Layer		0.10-0.17	Topsoil	
102	Layer		0.08-0.10		
103	Layer		0.12-0.48	Brick rubble	
104	Layer		0.90-1.20	Brick rubble and concrete	
105	Layer		0.28	Soil horizon	1 Clay pipe stem
106	Layer		?0.68		1 post medieval pot sherd
107	Layer			Natural sand	
TRENCH 2					
201	Layer		0.11	Topsoil	
202	Layer		0.15-0.20		
203	Layer		1.50	Brick rubble	
204	Layer		0.30-0.40	Soil horizon	1 Clay pipe stem, 1 post medieval pot sherd
205	Layer		?0.52		
206	Layer			Natural gravel	
TRENCH 3					
301	Layer		0.03-0.08	Topsoil	
302	Layer		0.60	Dumped material to level site	1 decorated clay pipe bowl with letters H and B
303	Layer		0.20-0.32	Dumped material to level site	
304	Layer		0.08-0.30	Dumped material to level site	
305	Layer		0.12-0.30	Dumped material to level site	
306	Layer		0.25-0.32	Soil horizon	
307	Layer		0.20-0.25	Probable ploughsoil, denuding ramparts	2 Clay pipe stems, 1 brick fragment, 3 18th-19th century pot sherds
308	Layer		0.10-0.18	Probable ploughsoil, denuding ramparts	2 early medieval pot sherds
309	Layer		0.08-0.18	Probable ploughsoil, denuding ramparts	2 brick fragments, 1 post medieval tile fragment, 2 early medieval pot sherds

LAND AT CORNER OF ILFORD LANE, VICTORIA ROAD AND ROMAN ROAD, LONDON
(IG-RO 94 LDPEM \ACIG \284)

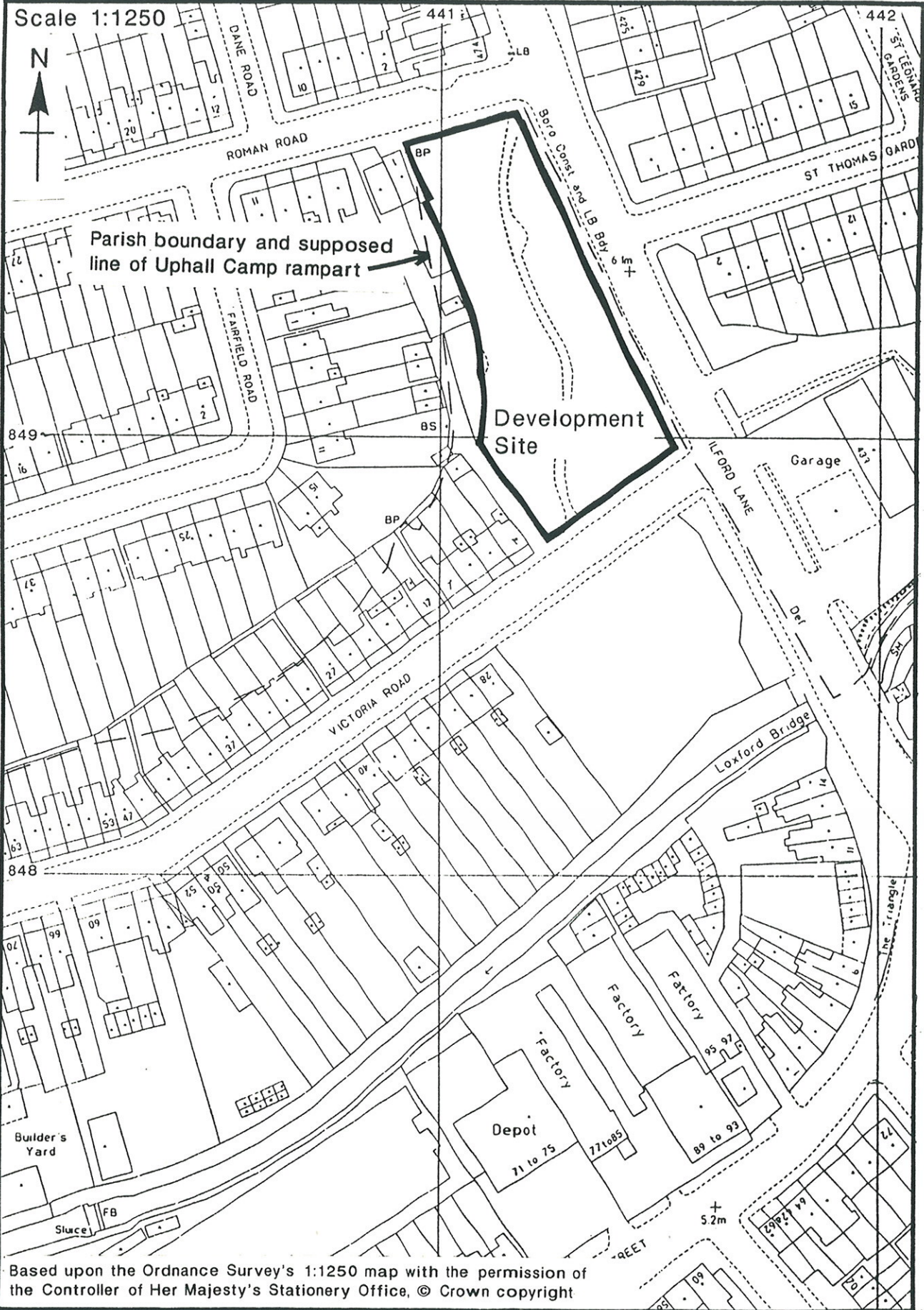
CXT	TYPE	WIDTH (m)	DEPTH (m)	COMMENTS	FINDS
312	Fill		0.08	Fill of ditch 311	
313	Layer?		0.10	Deposit to W of ditch 311	1 early medieval pot sherd
314	Layer?		0.06	Deposit to W of ditch 311	
315	Layer?		0.23+	Deposit to W of ditch 311	
TRENCH 4					
401	Layer		0.08-0.10	Topsoil	
402	Layer		0.94-1.20	Brick rubble	
403	Layer		0.10-0.20	Soil horizon	oyster shell fragment, 1 Clay pipe stem, 1 post medieval pot sherd
404	Layer		0.06-0.08		
405	Layer		0.06-0.08		
406	Layer		0.08-0.22		
407	Layer		0.06	Natural sand	
408	Layer			Natural gravel	
409	Fill	1.40+	0.36		
410	Cut	1.40+	0.36		
411	Layer		0.08		
412	Fill		0.40+		1 nail, modern glass, 1 tile, 1 brick fragment, 1 post medieval pot sherd
413	Cut	N/S = 1.20 E/W=0.60+	0.40+		
414	Finds ref.			Unstratified pottery	1 Clay pipe stem, 1 late medieval pan handle



Site location
OS 6 inches to 1 mile map of 1898

Figure 1

Scale 1:1250



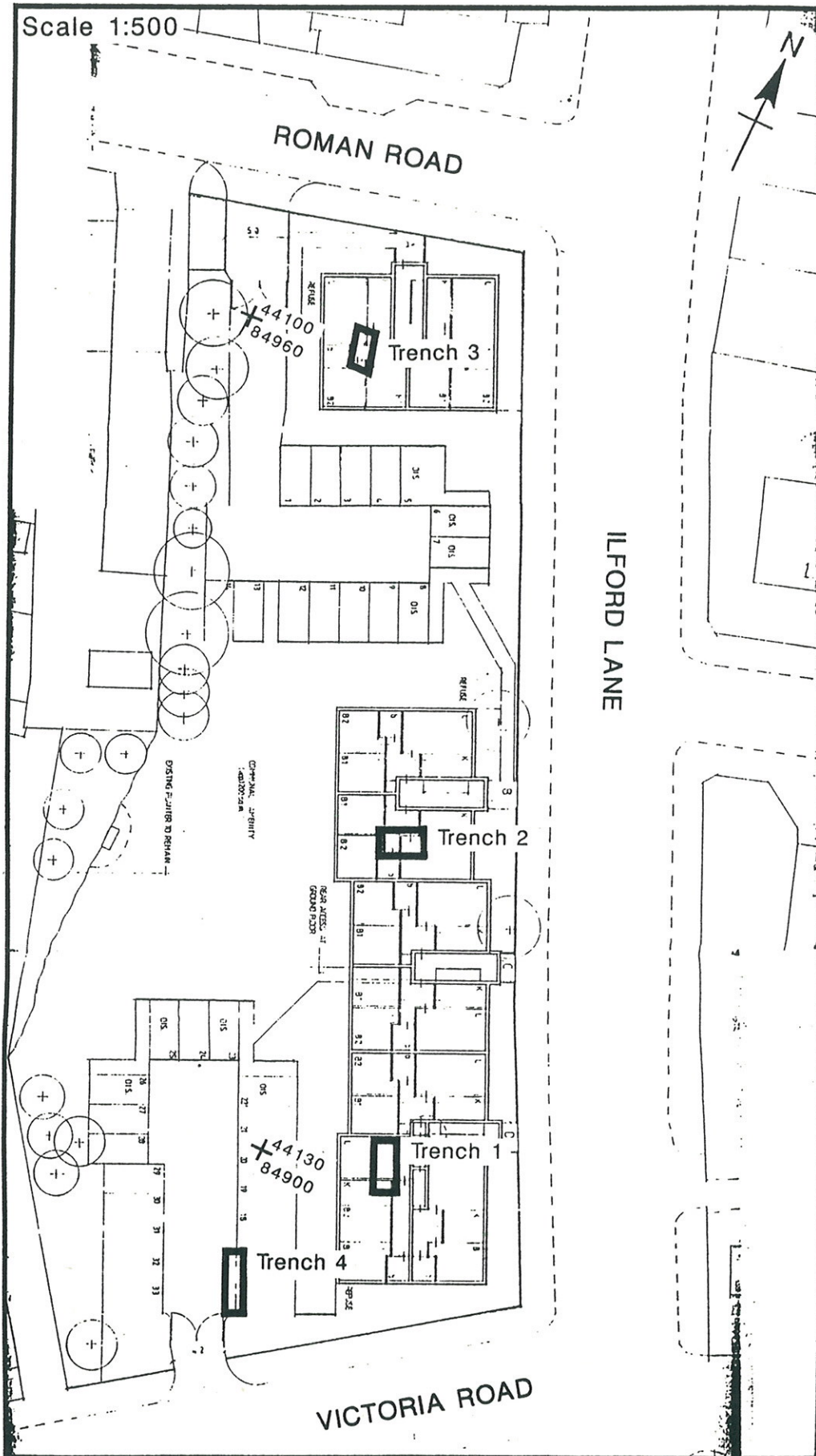
Parish boundary and supposed line of Uphall Camp rampart

Development Site

Based upon the Ordnance Survey's 1:1250 map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown copyright

Location of Development Site

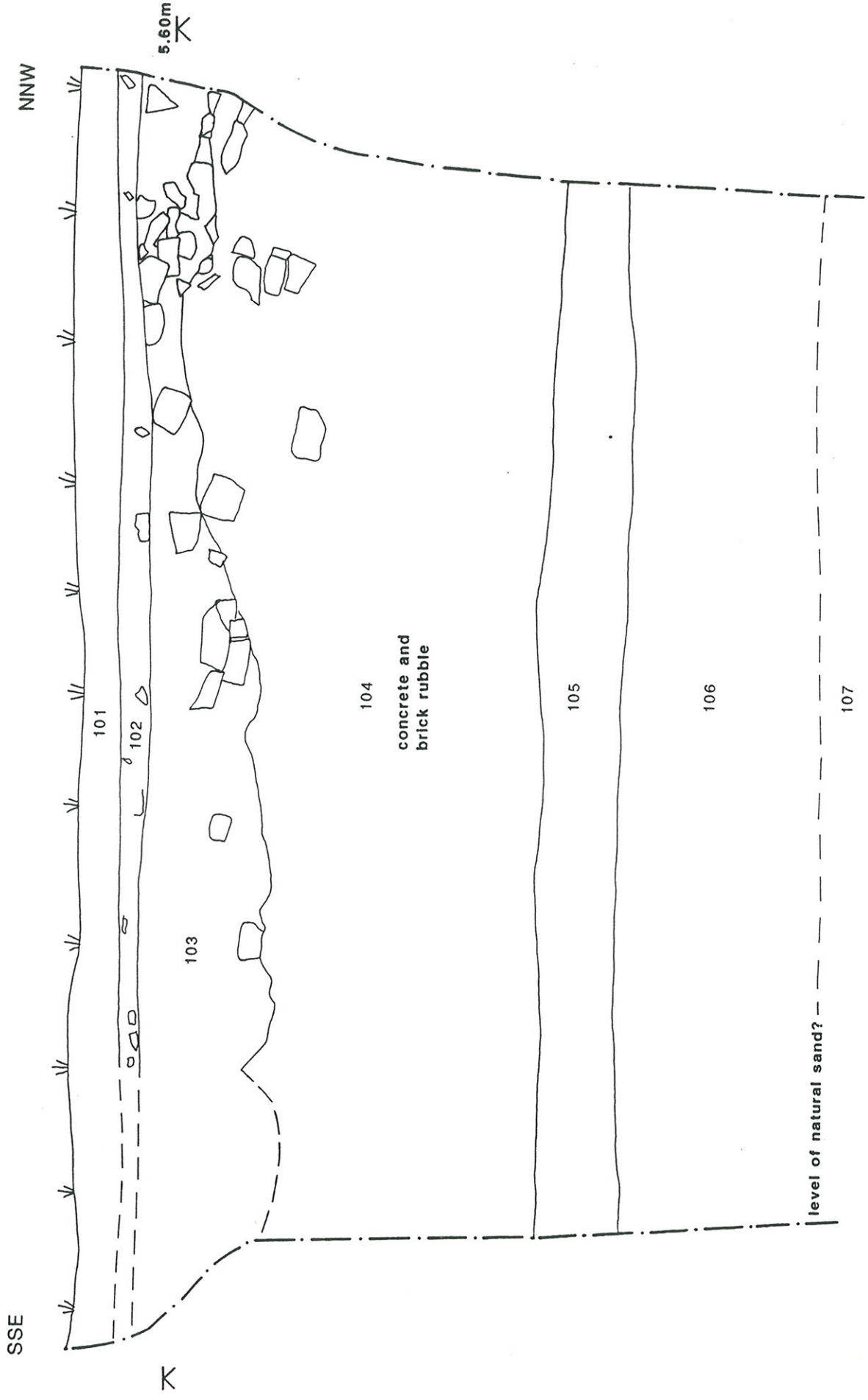
Figure 2



Location of Trenches in relation to Proposed Buildings

Figure 3

Trench 1
Section

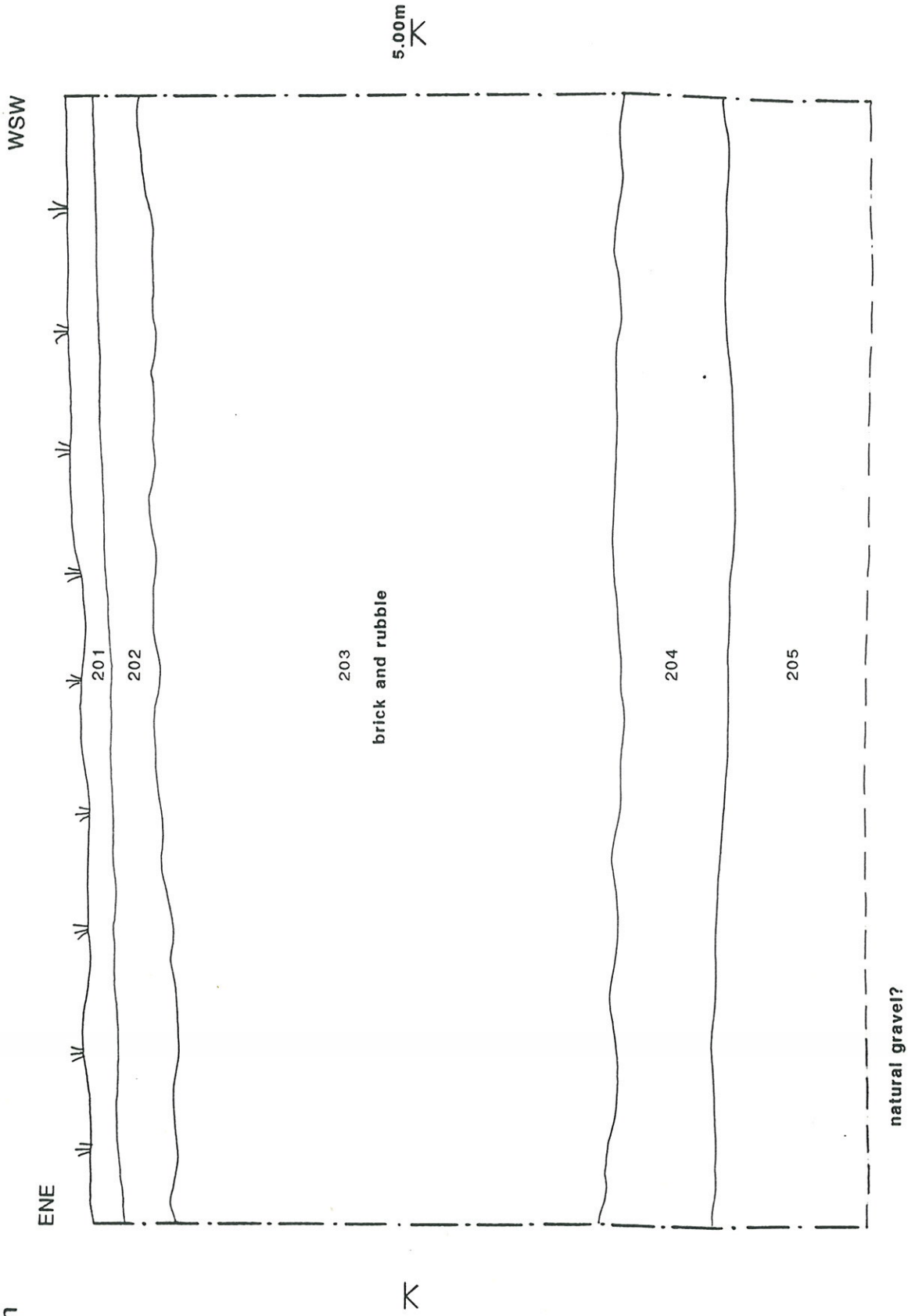


Levels in metres O.D.



Figure 4

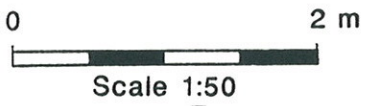
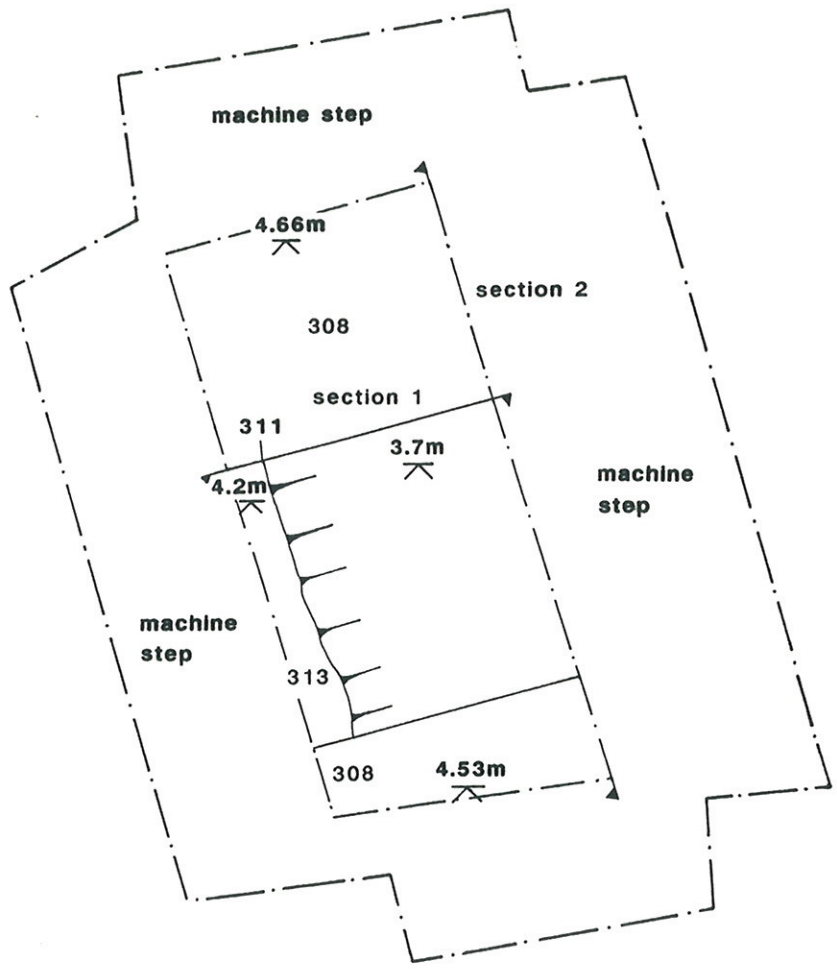
Trench 2
Section



Levels in metres O.D.

Figure 5

Trench 3
Plan



Levels in metres O.D.

Section 1

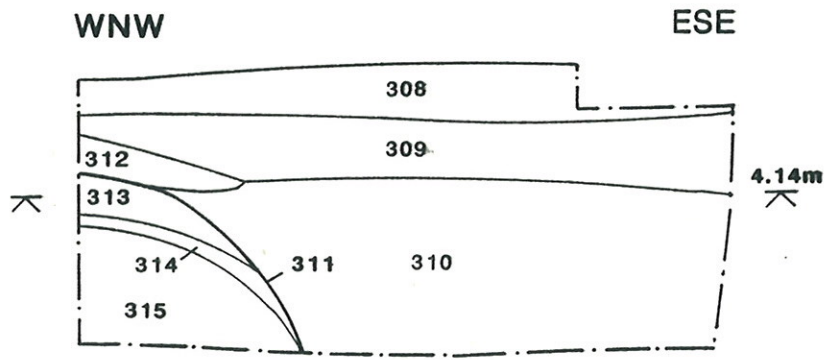


Figure 6

Trench 3

Section 2

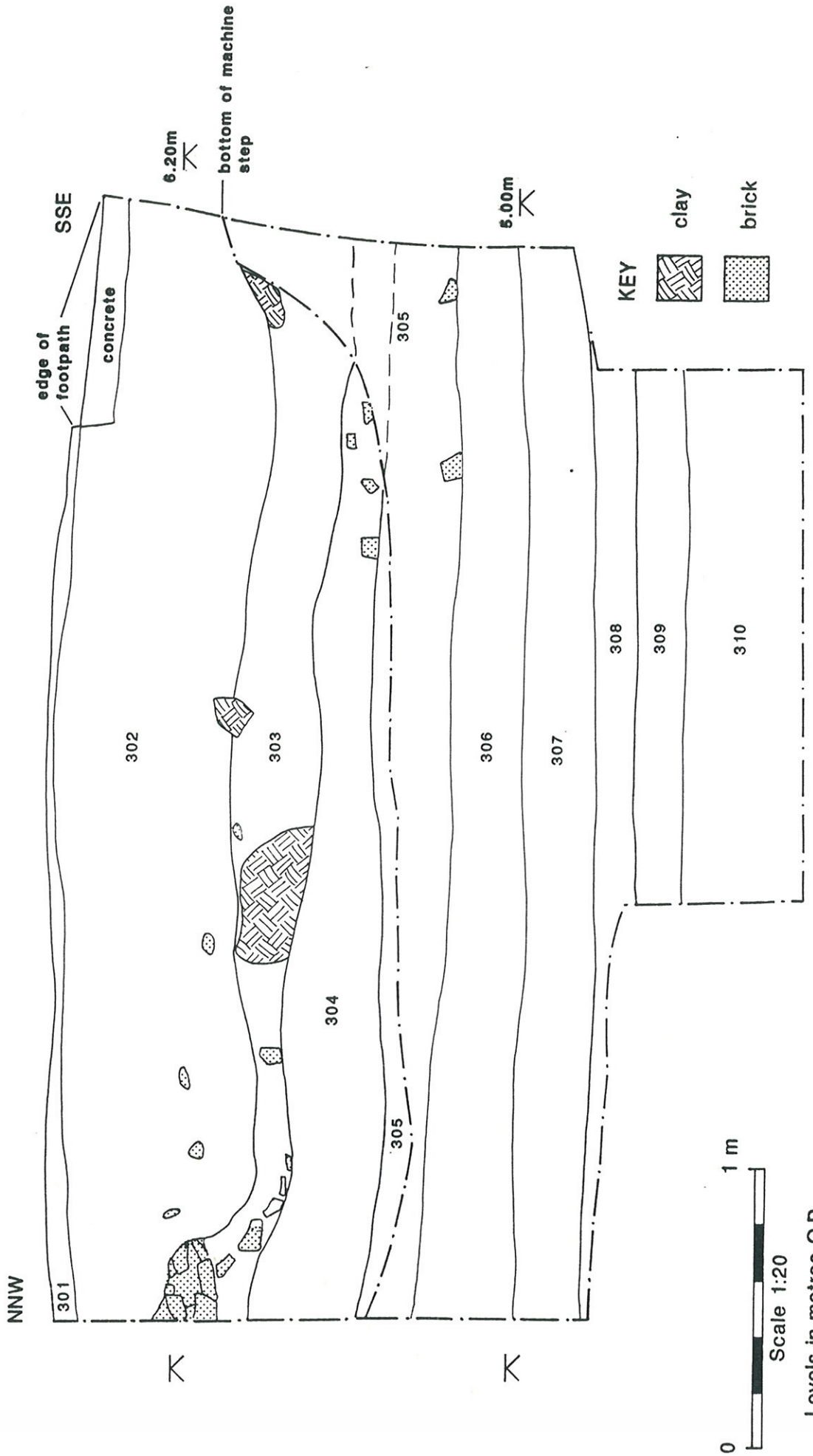
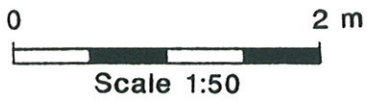
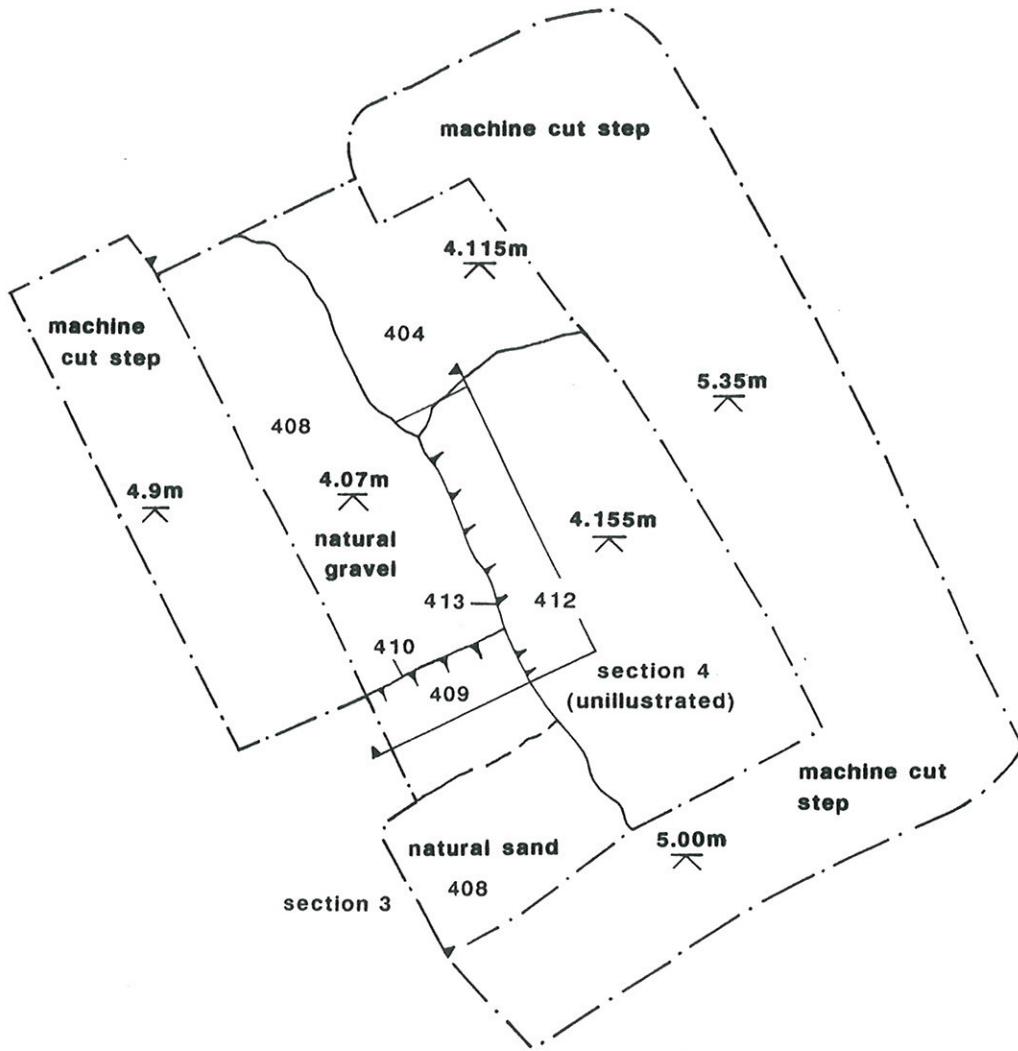


Figure 7

Trench 4
Plan



Levels in metres O.D.

Figure 8

Trench 4
Section 3

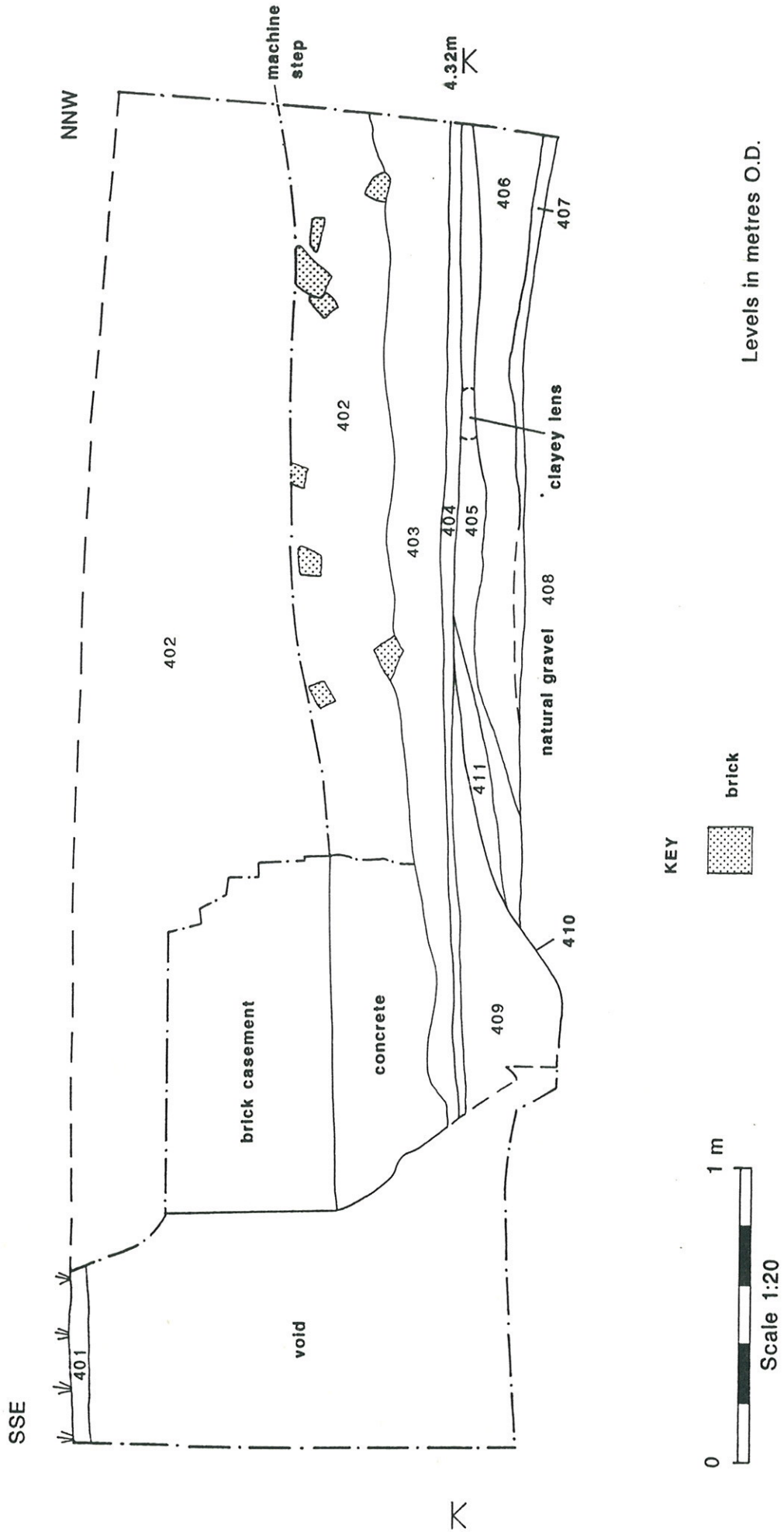


Figure 9



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