

DEDDINGTON TRANSFER MAIN
WATCHING BRIEF/EVALUATION REPORT

by the
Oxford Archaeological Unit

Introduction

Thames Water proposed to construct a transfer sewer main to run north from SP 469 301 to SP 470 353 between the villages of Deddington and Adderbury in Oxfordshire. The Sites and Monuments Record identified 5 sites of archaeological interest on or close to the line of the pipe. These were (from south to north): PRN 12502, PRN 4157 (The Fishers), SAM 83.2593 (Deddington Castle earthworks), PRN 1737 and PRN 3380 (see Figure 1).

At PRN 12502 a Roman building had been discovered on the N side of a brook, some 200 m E of the pipeline. Deddington is mentioned in Domesday Book as a prosperous settlement, where shortly afterwards the castle was sited. The surviving earthworks of this are scheduled. To the south east are the earthworks known as The Fishers, probably the site of a series of fishponds belonging to the castle. The other major area of interest was at the N end of the line, where two findspots indicate either two or possibly one large Roman site. PRN 3380 reported spreads of Roman building material, suggesting a substantial building, and PRN 1737 a complete pot and a brooch, perhaps indicating a burial site.

Aerial photographs showed that most of the route lay across fields which had been under ridge-and-furrow cultivation in the medieval period. This had masked any evidence of the Roman sites. A programme of archaeological evaluation by fieldwalking and trial trenching was planned to take place before construction work began, but due to unforeseen circumstances this never took place. The OAU was called in to deal with the archaeology when construction work had already commenced.

Acknowledgements

The work was leased to Cherwell District Council's own engineering department, who supervised the work. The actual pipe-laying was carried out by Lean and Higgin Ltd. We would like to thank consulting engineer David Harrison and the site foreman Mel Allum for their co-operation. Thanks are also due to the landowners in the evaluation areas, particularly Alistair Welford, who provided local background which proved very helpful during the field evaluation.

Strategy

Due to the timing of the work it was not possible to evaluate the entire length of the easement. The contractor had divided the work into four sections, (labelled A - D on Figure 1), and these

were stripped in the order A, C, B and D. The archaeological response to each varied depending upon the state of progress when the archaeological mitigation began. In section A, topsoil stripping had already taken place and pipe-laying was underway. This section was therefore simply walked and any visible features recorded. In section C, where topsoil stripping was about to commence, there were no known archaeological sites, so periodic watching brief visits were made to monitor the stripping. In sections B and D, where PRN sites were crossed by the pipe-line, field evaluations were carried out prior to topsoil stripping.

For each site evaluated in the field a series of trenches was dug following the line of the pipe through the area of potential archaeological interest. The trenches were dug with a JCB using a 1.2 m or a 1.5 m toothless bucket, and were generally 15 m long with 15 m intervals between trenches, representing a 50% sample of the bucket-width transect. All trenches were cleaned and archaeological deposits sampled by hand. Machine-excavation often continued some depth into the subsoil to check that archaeological deposits were not buried beneath colluvial soils. All the evaluation trenches were recorded, whether they contained archaeological features or not.

Results

Section A.

Section A stretched from the S end of the pipe-line to Deddington Sewage Works. The southernmost 200 m, as far N as the E-W brook, was not seen. N of the brook this section ran for a distance of approximately 810 metres. The topsoil, a mid brown slightly silty loam 0.10 - 0.15 m thick, had been stripped by machine leaving any features visible in the subsoil in plan. The subsoil comprised a light brown clayey loam with 10% cornbrash fragments. The percentage of cornbrash rose slightly towards the north end. Observation of the sections of the contractor's test pits showed that the subsoil was homogeneous to a depth of approximately 1 metre; below this rising groundwater made investigation impractical.

The only archaeological feature of any antiquity was an unaccompanied cremation (see Fig. 1). It appeared as a circular area of charcoal and burnt bone 0.25 m in diameter. This had been truncated, and survived less than 0.03 m deep. The surrounding area was thoroughly cleaned but no other features were found. The cremation was lifted in a block of soil for excavation in the lab. No identifiable fragments of bone were retrieved by further excavation, and it is not known whether the cremation was human or animal.

598 metres north of the stream was a post-medieval stone spread in the bottom of a valley between two small hills. The stones lay in the top of a hollow running approximately E-W along the valley bottom; this feature is likely to have carried water, at least seasonally, in the past. The main concentration of stones was located 0.45 metres from the west edge of the easement and

measured 3.2 m north-south. This was almost totally destroyed by the pipe-trench, but other scatters of stone lay along the line of the soilmark hollow for the full width of the easement. No finds were recovered, but post-medieval pottery was seen in the soil immediately overlying the stones. This feature is interpreted as a causeway across a wet area.

N of the stone spread three post-medieval ditches were seen on the first site visit. One was a N-S field boundary shown as still existing on Figure 1, and there was a second ditch parallel to this only 1 m away. The third ditch was a continuation of the WSW- ENE field boundary which joins the N-S boundary at SP 4709 3084. None of these ditches was excavated.

By the time archaeological recording began the action of machines tracking up and down had obscured much of the stripped surface. However, the regularly spaced furrows of medieval cultivation were recorded along the majority of section A. The furrows were generally 2-2.5 metres broad and evenly spaced 6 m apart (centre to centre). At the S end of section A the furrows ran NE-SW, but 150 m N of the stream the orientation changed to NW-SE. This orientation was continued up to and beyond the stone spread, but in the field to the N of the WSW-ENE field boundaries reverted to a NE-SW alignment.

Section B

Section B stretched from the Deddington Sewage Works up to the Clifton Road leading E from Deddington, a distance of approximately 800 metres. Two lengths, 100 m alongside the Fishers and 150 m alongside Deddington Castle, were evaluated by trenches 15 m long with 15 metre intervals (see Fig. 2).

The Fishers.

Here there were four trenches, three 15 m long and one 10 m long, numbered 1 - 4 from S to N.

Trench 1 was machined to a depth of 1.02 metres. Topsoil 0.31 m deep overlay a dark red-brown clay loam 0.15 m deep, which in turn overlay undisturbed subsoil. This was a pale orange/brown very sandy clay 0.55 m deep. A sondage at this end found gray/brown clay beneath it. The only finds were from the topsoil; these were modern, mostly brick, and were not kept.

Trench 2 was machined to a maximum depth of 0.57 metres. Topsoil 0.12 m deep overlay a dark brown silty clay 0.18 m deep. This sealed undisturbed subsoil, an orange/brown sandy clay 0.26 m deep. Layer 2 may possibly have been a ploughsoil. Beneath it the subsoil was cut by 2/5, a furrow approximately 2.5 metres wide aligned E-W. No other features were seen and no finds were recovered.

Trench 3 was machined to a maximum depth of 0.58 metres. Topsoil 0.20 m deep overlay a dark brown clay loam containing occasional charcoal flecks 0.07 m deep. This sealed a reddish-brown sandy

clay layer 0.17 m deep, which overlay undisturbed subsoil, mid-dark brown sandy clay. As in Trench 2, layer 2 here may have been a ploughsoil, but no explanation for layer 3/3 is offered. No features were seen and no finds were recovered.

Trench 4, the 10 metre trench, was machined to a maximum depth of 0.54 metres. The stratigraphic sequence was the same as that in Trench 3, topsoil being 0.19 m, layer 4/2 being 0.11 m deep and layer 4/3 being 0.08 m deep. No features were seen and no finds were recovered.

Deddington Castle.

The evaluation consisted of five trenches 15 m long, numbered 5 - 9 from SW to NE. Trench 5 lay just S of the stream running from the castle earthworks, Trenches 6-9 ran N from this up a steep gradient which continued beyond Trench 9.

Trench 5 lay at the bottom of a slope 5 metres S of the castle stream, and was machined to a maximum depth of 1.10 m. Topsoil 0.09 m deep overlay 5/2, a friable dark orange-brown clay loam with occasional charcoal flecks 0.14 m deep. This was probably an earlier ploughsoil. It sealed 5/3, a pale brown slightly sandy friable clay 0.19 m deep, which in turn overlay 5/4, pale gray sandy silt 0.09 m deep. This sealed undisturbed subsoil 5/5, orange sandy clay with occasional manganese staining. Layers 3 and 4 probably represent either overbank alluvial deposits from the stream, or more likely, colluvium resulting from solifluxion.

The N half of this trench was machined into the undisturbed subsoil. 5/5 was only 0.15 m deep, and overlay a mottled light gray/orange/brown clay with occasional cornbrash inclusions, 0.06 metres thick. 5/6 was removed revealing a deposit of mid-dark gray clay containing evidence of root disturbance. No archaeological features were seen and no finds were recovered.

Trench 6 was machined to a maximum depth of 1.20 metres. Topsoil 0.08 m deep overlay 6/2, a layer of light orange/brown stiff slightly silty clay loam up to 1.10 m thick. This layer directly overlay undisturbed subsoil, light yellow/gray sandy clay. Trench 6 lay just N of the castle stream at the bottom of a steep gradient to the N, and layer 6/2 is interpreted as colluvium. The layer decreases in depth towards the N (upslope).

In the northern half of this trench a modern field drain ran E/W cutting through 6/2 at a depth of 0.35 metres below the modern ground surface. Aside from this, no archaeological features were seen and no finds were recovered.

Trench 7 was machined to a maximum depth of 0.85 metres. Topsoil 0.11 m deep overlay 7/2, a friable silty clay loam 0.12 m deep, which in turn overlay 7/3, a light orange-brown silty clay loam 0.48 m deep. 7/3 sealed the undisturbed subsoil, a light mottled yellow/gray sandy clay, which was leached at the top. Layer 7/2 was probably a ploughsoil, and 7/3 colluvium equivalent to 6/2. As in Trench 6 the colluvium decreased in depth on the upslope side.

Two darker bands approximately 2 m apart were seen below 7/3

cutting into the subsoil. Both were oriented roughly E/W and were approximately 2.2 m wide. These probably represent furrows of ridge-and-furrow cultivation, although their definition in the subsoil was very poor and their spacing differs markedly from those seen previously. Neither feature produced any finds.

Trench 8 was machined to a maximum depth of 0.55 metres. Topsoil 0.10 m deep overlay 8/2, dark brown compact clay 0.16 m deep, and this in turn overlay 8/3, a light red-brown clay 0.24 m deep. This sealed undisturbed subsoil, an orange/gray sandy clay. Layer 8/2 is interpreted as a ploughsoil equivalent to 7/2 and 8/3 as colluvium equivalent to 6/2 and 7/3.

Three features were seen in this trench. Towards the S end was 8/5, a modern field drain sealed by 8/2 running E/W. 0.25 m further N was 8/6, a shallow gully infilled with cornbrash running E/W. This was sealed beneath 8/3, and is interpreted as an earlier field drain. 8/7 was another linear feature sealed by 8/3, visible as band of orange-brown loose silty clay 0.85 m wide. This was not excavated, and no finds were recovered.

Trench 9 was machined to a maximum depth of 0.50 metres. Topsoil 0.11 m deep overlay 9/2, brown clay 0.15 m deep. This is equivalent to layer 8/2. It overlay a light orange-brown clay 0.09 m deep, which sealed a darker red-brown sandy clay 0.11 m deep. Both of these soils are probably colluvial in origin, equivalent to 8/3 etc. 8/4 overlay undisturbed subsoil, light gray clay with intermittent orange mottling.

Two features were seen in this trench. 9/6 was a linear feature running E/W located towards the S end. It was 0.77 m wide and was filled with a mixture of orange and gray sandy clay, with occasional cornbrash inclusions. 9/7 was a E/W oriented modern field drain seen in the centre of the trench. No finds were recovered from this trench.

Linear features were observed in trenches 7, 8 and 9, all sealed by colluvium in a similar stratigraphic position. All of these features ran E/W, and this corresponds to the orientation of ridge-and-furrow cultivation visible on aerial photographs in the field crossed by the evaluation trenches. These features are therefore interpreted as furrows, probably medieval but at present without any associated finds.

Section C

This section ran from the Clifton Road E of Deddington to the River Swere. No archaeological sites were known along this section, so topsoil stripping was monitored by a watching brief; apart from the furrows of ridge-and-furrow cultivation no archaeological features were seen. Aerial photographs show that ridge and furrow was running N-S (in line with the pipeline) for most of section C, and the few furrows within the easement were on that alignment. Towards the N end furrows were observed in the subsoil running NE-SW. These were 2 - 2.5 metres wide and were evenly spaced 5.5 - 6 m apart, very similar to those seen in

section A. Approximately 100 - 120 m S of the Swere the ridge and furrow disappeared beneath a layer of alluvium. The only finds were post-medieval, and all were from the topsoil; the most interesting of these was a copper alloy token.

In this section topsoil comprised a mid-brown slightly silty loam, 0.10 - 0.15 m thick. The subsoil was a mottled gray/yellow/orange clay with cornbrash fragments in places. Below this was a deposit of weathered cornbrash up to 1.5 m deep in place, and beneath that a clean orange clay. It was not possible to examine this in detail as the pipe trench was unshored. At the N end adjacent to the river Swere the subsoil and the furrows cutting across it were overlain by a very clayey loam with no brash, predominantly brown in colour but darkening to dark gray in places. This clay appeared to be sterile. This area is very low-lying, bordered on one side by the Swere and on the other by a steep gradient, and the origin of this soil is likely to be either alluvium or colluvium, more probably the former.

Section D

The two Roman areas of activity indicated by Sites and Monuments Record entries PRN 1737 and PRN 3380 were evaluated by a continuous line of trenches (Trenches 10 - 30) over a length of 600 m. The trenches were 15 m long with 15 m intervals, and are numbered in sequence from N to S. In general the trenches were dug on the eastern side of the easement closest to the reported finds spots; where the farm track ran along the eastern side of the easement the trenches were dug W of the track (Fig. 3).

Trench 10 was machined to a maximum depth of 0.92 m. The topsoil was a mid-brown clayey loam 0.24 m deep, and this overlay undisturbed subsoil, a mid orange/brown silty clay with up to 40% large cornbrash inclusions. No archaeological features were seen and no finds were recovered.

Trenches 11 and 12 were machined to a maximum depth of 0.50 m. As in Trench 10 topsoil directly overlay undisturbed subsoil at a depth of just over 0.20 m. Both topsoil and subsoil were identical to those in Trench 10. No archaeological features were seen and no finds were recovered.

Trenches 13 and 14 were machined to a maximum depth of 0.38 m and 0.43 m respectively. The soils were identical to those in Trenches 10 - 12, except that the topsoil contained 5-10% cornbrash inclusions. Undisturbed subsoil was found at a depth of 0.20 m and 0.17 m respectively. No archaeological features were seen and no finds were recovered.

Trench 15 was machined to a maximum depth of 1.30 m in a sondage at its southern end. Topsoil was identical to that in trenches 10-14, and was 0.32 m deep. It overlay undisturbed subsoil, a reddish brown silty clay with 25% small and medium weathered cornbrash inclusions. The sondage revealed two further layers beneath this; 15/3 was a reddish brown silty clay with 5%

cornbrash inclusions, 0.18 metres deep at the north west end of the trench deepening to 0.30 metres at the south east end. This overlay 15/4, a light brown very silty clay. No archaeological features were seen and no finds were recovered.

Twelve flint flakes were found in the ploughsoil in the area to the west of trenches 14 and 15. These are not dateable.

Trench 16 lay astride a hedgerow field boundary. It was machined to a maximum depth of 0.73 m., and the stratigraphic sequence proved to be the same either side of the hedge. Topsoil was a mid brown clay loam 0.16 m deep with 5-10% cornbrash inclusions, and overlay 16/2, a mid brown silty clay with 30% large cornbrash inclusions. This layer was probably a colluvial deposit. 16/2 overlay undisturbed subsoil at a depth of 0.70 m. This was a red/brown silty clay with 25% small and medium cornbrash inclusions. No archaeological features were seen and no finds were recovered.

Trench 17 was machined to a maximum depth of 0.54 m. natural being located at a depth of 0.39 metres. Topsoil was identical to that in trench 16, and was 0.24 m deep. Below this was 17/2, a similar colluvial deposit to 16/2, 0.15 m deep. This overlay undisturbed subsoil, a reddish brown silty clay with 50% cornbrash inclusions, and this sat upon cornbrash. No archaeological features were seen and no finds were recovered.

Trench 18 was machined to a maximum depth of 0.40 m. Topsoil was similar to that in trench 17, and overlay undisturbed subsoil at a depth of 0.19 m. This was orange/brown silty clay with 40% sandstone cornbrash inclusions of variable sizes. No features were seen and no finds were recovered.

Trench 19 was machined to a maximum depth of 0.67 m. Topsoil was as in trench 18, and overlay undisturbed subsoil at a depth of 0.18 m. The subsoil was identical to that in trench 18, and was 0.24 m deep. It overlay 19/3, cornbrash (70%) in a matrix of pale orange/brown sticky silty clay. The maximum excavated depth of this layer was 0.25 metres. No features were seen and no finds were recovered.

Trench 20 was the first to be dug W of the farm track within the easement. It was machined to a maximum depth of 0.44 metres. Topsoil and subsoil were similar to those in trench 19, undisturbed subsoil occurring at a depth of 0.24 metres.

On the W side of the trench the subsoil was cut away by feature 20/3. This feature ran the full length of the trench in plan. Its E edge descended vertically for 0.30 metres, below which it was undercut; in the limited width of the trench it was not possible to excavate any deeper. 20/3 was filled with mid-brown friable slightly silty clay with 30-40% ironstone lumps.

The field to the W of trench 20 was formerly an open-cast quarry for iron ore, and 20/3 appears to be the E edge of this. One flint flake was recovered from the surface of 20/3.

Trench 21 was machined to a maximum depth of 0.65 m. Topsoil and subsoil were the same as in trench 20, undisturbed subsoil

occurring at a depth of 0.28 m. This was cut to the west by 21/3, a continuation of the quarry edge. One flint flake from the surface of 21/3.

Trench 22 was machined to a maximum depth of 1.25 m. Topsoil was the same as in trench 22, and overlay undisturbed subsoil at a depth of 0.28 m. The subsoil was similar to that in trench 21 but contained only 25% cornbrash inclusions. This was cut away to the west by 22/3, a continuation of the quarry edge, which was machined to a depth of 1.25 m. No finds were recovered.

Trench 23 was machined to a maximum depth of 0.49 m. Topsoil was similar to that in trench 22, and was 0.23 m deep. It overlay 23/2, a mottled mid brown/orange sticky silty clay with 15-20% small sandstone/ironstone inclusions. This overlay undisturbed subsoil, pale yellowish/brown silty clay with 40-50% sandstone/ironstone inclusions at a depth of 0.39 metres. 23/2 was cut by 23/4, a continuation of the quarry edge running along the W side of the trench. No finds were recovered.

Trench 24 lay just beyond the SE edge of the quarry. It was machined to a maximum depth of 0.40 m. Topsoil, a mid-brown friable clayey loam with occasional sandstone inclusions, was 0.30 m deep, and overlay 24/2, a pale-mid orange silty clay with 10% sandstone/ironstone inclusions. A fragment of clay pipe was recovered from the top of this, which was noticeably mixed, containing patches of darker soil. One of these patches was excavated but proved to be of negligible depth and irregular profile. No archaeological features were seen and no other finds were recovered.

Layer 24/2 was thought during excavation to be subsoil that had been disturbed by roots, but is in fact equivalent to 25/2 (see below), a soil overlying the undisturbed subsoil, which was not revealed in trench 24.

Trench 25 was machined to a maximum depth of 0.55 m. Topsoil was similar to that in trench 24 and was 0.17 m deep; it overlay 25/2, a pale orange/brown silty clay with 5-10% small-medium sandstone inclusions. This layer was 0.14 m deep, and overlay undisturbed subsoil, mid orange/brown silty clay with 40% mixed sandstone inclusions.

A linear soilmark c. 1.4 m wide was visible in the surface of the subsoil below 25/2 running NE-SW. Excavation of this feature showed that both the edges and bottom were indistinct and irregular. This feature is on the same alignment as an existing hedge some 5 metres to the NE, and is probably caused by root-disturbance from a former hedge. 25/2 is equivalent to 24/2, which contained clay pipe fragments and is thus of relatively recent origin. Aside from this, no features were seen and no finds were recovered.

Trench 26 was machined to a maximum depth of 0.55 m. Topsoil (0.28 m deep) and subsoil were as in trench 25, but were separated by a dark gray organic horizon 26/2 which occurred intermittently along the length of the trench, although seeming to be concentrated more towards the NW. Staining from this

deposit was evident in the subsoil penetrating to the trench bottom.

Below 26/2 and cut into the subsoil was 26/4, a linear soilmark 0.55 m wide aligned NW-SE; this ran from the SE corner and terminated within the trench after 3.6 metres. This feature was at most 0.04 m deep, with gently sloping sides. The fill was mid reddish brown slightly clayey loam with 25-30% small-medium sandstone inclusions. No finds were recovered.

Trench 27 was machined to a maximum depth of 0.50 m. Topsoil was as in trench 26, and was 0.21 m deep, overlying undisturbed subsoil, a pale orange silty clay with 25% ironstone inclusions. No features were seen and no finds were recovered.

Trench 28 was machined to a maximum depth of 0.48 m. Topsoil was subdivided into 28/1 and 28/2, the latter having more gravel and occasional small sandstone fragments. This overlay undisturbed subsoil, orange-brown slightly clayey silt with occasional sandstone inclusions. This contained more cornbrash below the top 0.1 m.

A sub-circular pit 28/5 approximately 0.55 m across and 0.16 m deep was cut into the subsoil in the centre of the trench; the sides sloped gently to an irregular but generally rounded bottom. The fill 28/5/1 comprised a mid brown silty loam with pieces of burnt stone and patches of scorched loam; there was no evidence that the sides of the pit had been burnt, and the burnt material is therefore dumped from elsewhere. No finds were recovered. The trench was extended to either side at right angles to its original alignment, but no further features were seen.

While trenches 20-27 had all been situated on a level plateau, trench 29 lay just off the edge of this at the top of a slope running down to the S, and in consequence undisturbed subsoil was found at a depth of 0.40 m at the NW end but sloped steadily to a depth of 0.63 m at the SE end. The subsoil changed approximately 5 m from the NW end from a red-brown clayey silt with 2% small gravel (as in previous trenches) to a pale yellow-brown very silty clay. Between the topsoil, which was 0.18 m deep and the subsoil was 29/2, a stiff gray/brown silty clay with less than 5% small gravel. This was interpreted as a colluvial deposit.

Three dark brown patches c. 2 m long and 0.7 - 0.8 m wide were seen in the subsoil. The middle and the southernmost of these were extremely shallow, and the latter contained a sherd of modern glass; the northernmost was deeper (c. 0.10 m) but was very irregular. These are interpreted as the result of animal disturbance. This trench was extended NW by 3 m to examine more closely the change in the subsoil and to the north east to expose the dark patches seen.

Trench 30 was machined to a maximum depth of 0.89 m. Topsoil was 0.15 m deep, and overlay 30/2, a gray brown silty clay 0.16 m deep. This layer sealed 30/3, a stiff mottled orange/olive clay equivalent to 29/2. This overlay undisturbed subsoil 30/4, a stiff yellow/white clayey sand. No archaeological features were seen and no finds were recovered.

Comments on the results

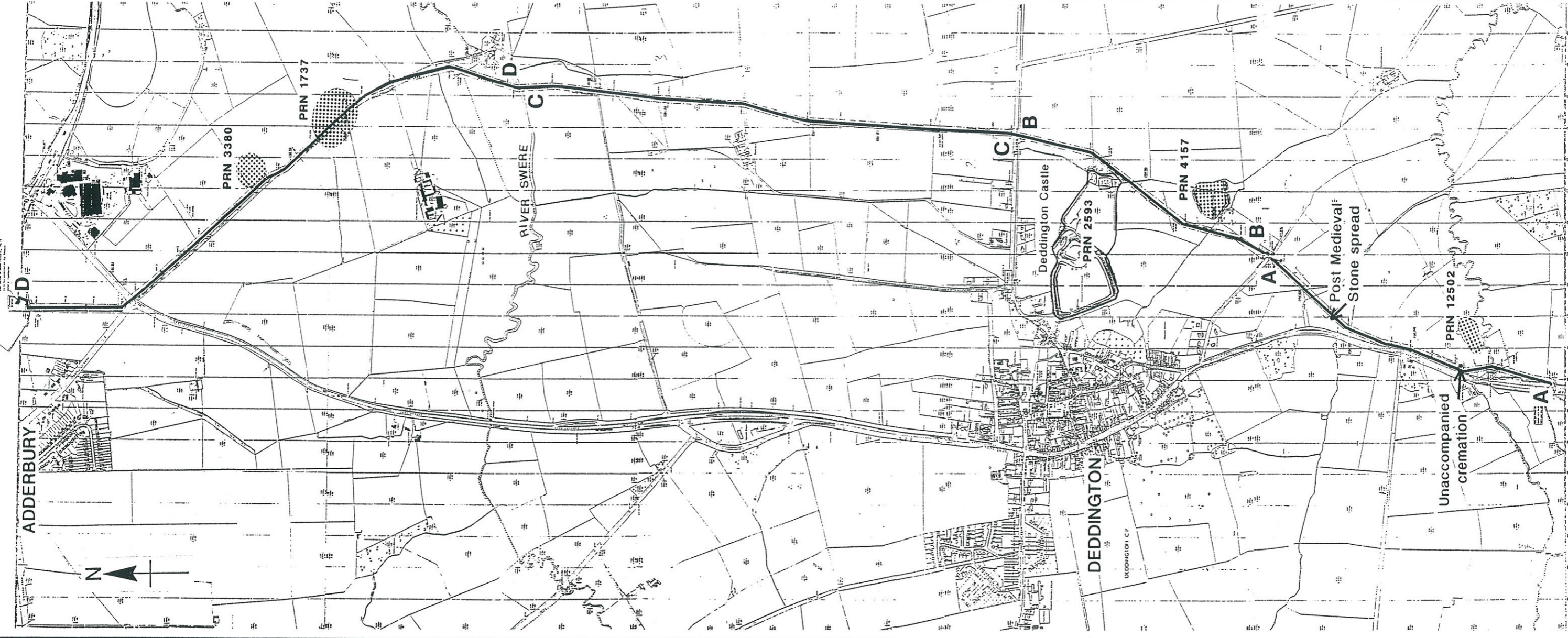
The only archaeological activity is a small scatter of flints recovered from the topsoil in the vicinity of trenches 14-15 and trenches 20-21. No associated features were found. Two further flint chips were recovered from the stripped surface N of the evaluation, bearing out the presence of widespread but very low level activity in this area. The flints are undiagnostic as to date, but possibly indicate Late Neolithic or Bronze Age activity.

The unaccompanied cremation in Section A was in isolation, but probably relates to the Roman settlement indicated by excavation further E in this field (see PRN 12502). The total absence of Roman features or finds in Section D, even as redeposited material in the ploughsoil, would suggest that the Sites and Monuments Record entries for PRN 3380 (and possibly PRN 1737) are incorrectly located.

J.Dalton and T. Allen
OAU

November 1992

**Deddington Transfer
Main 1992
Figure 1.**



Key

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| A A | Operational: Sections |
| — | Pipeline |
| PRN 3380 [Grid Pattern] | Sites & Monuments Record Entry |



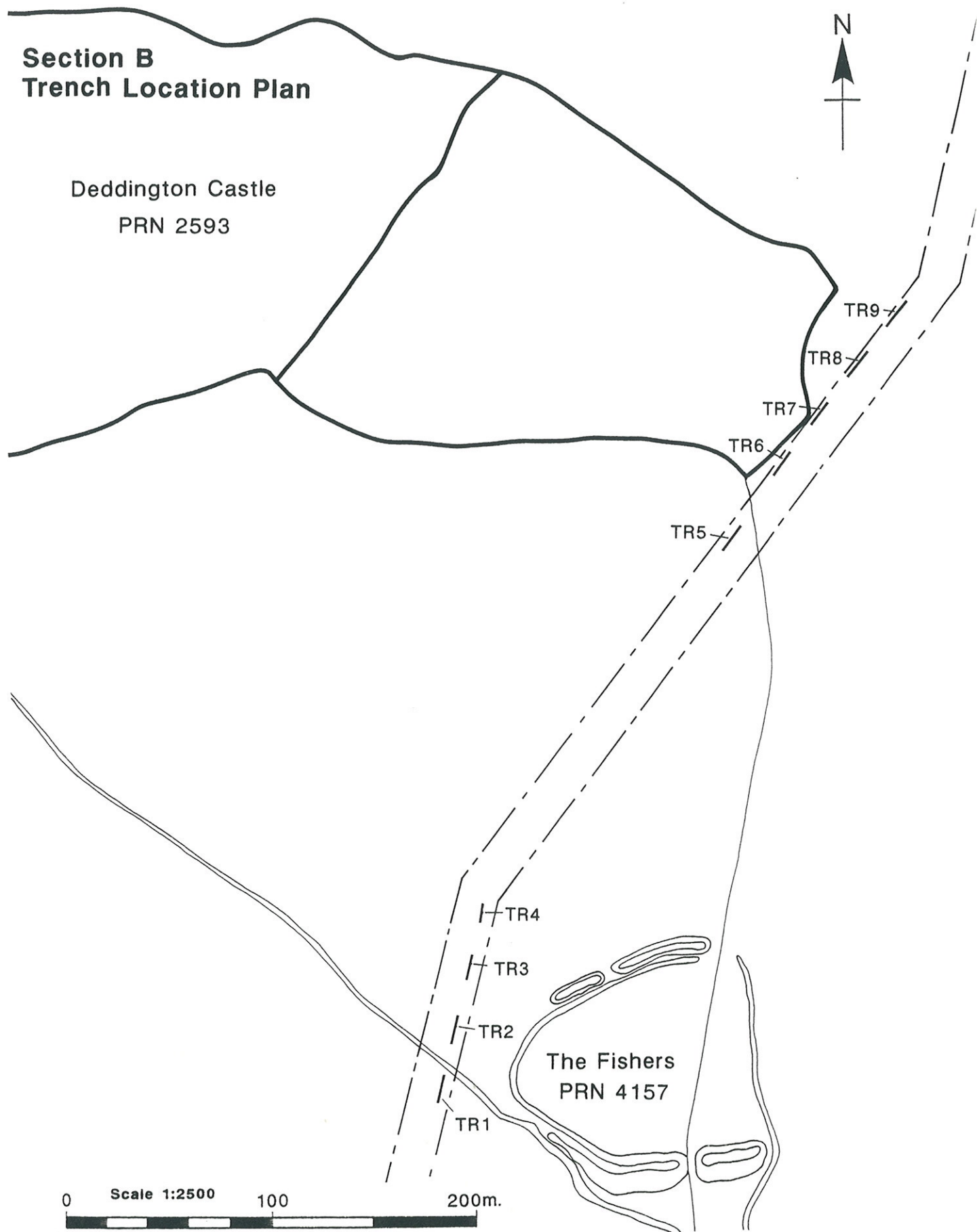


Figure 2.

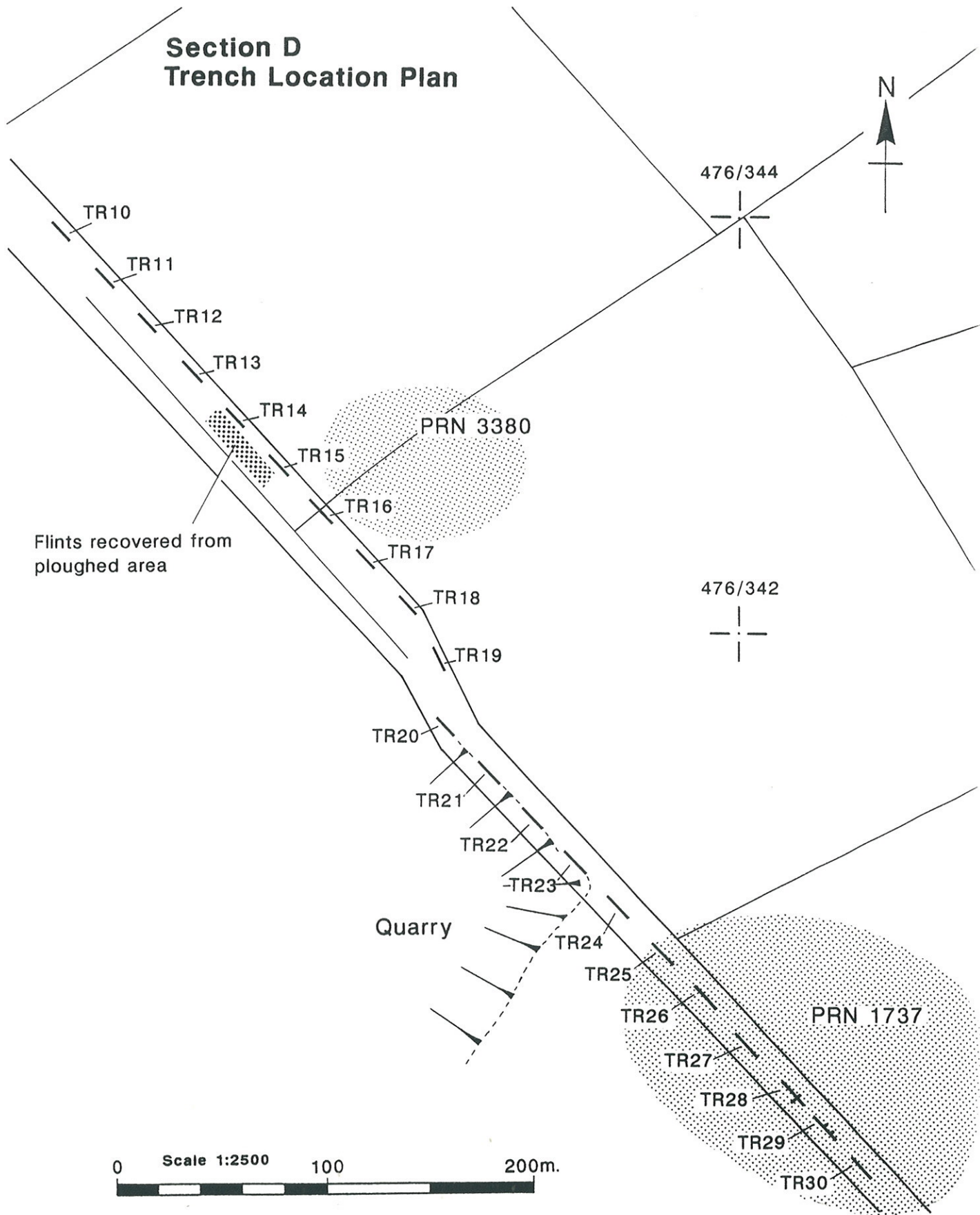


Figure 3.