

Land adjacent to Rose Villa,  
122 Abingdon Road,  
Standlake, Oxfordshire

NGR SP 391 021

Archaeological Evaluation Report



Oxford Archaeological Unit

July 1996

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## *1 Introduction*

The Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out an evaluation on land adjacent to Rose Villa, 122 Abingdon Road, Standlake in June of 1992. The evaluation took place in advance of a proposed development by The Bradley Burrell Partnership which was to comprise the construction of new access and the erection of two detached dwellings (Planning Ref. 1596/91).

## *2 Site location and background*

The site is situated on the south-west side of Abingdon Road, Standlake and is centred on SP 391 021 (see figure 1). The proposed development area is not known to contain any archaeological features or cropmarks. This fact need not be seen as significant as features may be masked by alluvial overburden from the nearby river Windrush or land use may not have been conducive to aerial photographic coverage. A number of extensive cropmark sites are known in the immediate vicinity. Ring ditches, enclosures and linear features can be clearly identified to the north-east and south-west. The cropmarks to the south-west are thought to date to the Bronze Age, Iron Age and Romano-British period and pottery of the latter two periods has been recovered. The area is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (County No. 140, PRN 2450-2) and as such is of national importance. The area to the north-east also contains extensive cropmark features. The two areas of cropmarks are undoubtedly related as shown by the orientation of the features and their overall characteristics.

## *3 Evaluation aims*

to establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the proposed development area

to determine the extent, condition, nature, quality and date of any archaeological remains present

to establish the ecofactual/environmental potential of any archaeological features

## *4 Evaluation strategy*

It was determined in the brief set by the County Archaeologist that the area evaluated should comprise 3% of the proposed development. This initially took the form of three machine excavated trenches (Trenches 1-3) although subsequently two additional trenches were evaluated (Trenches 4-5). Trench 5 comprised the foundation trenches for proposed house 1 (see figure 2). In each case topsoil and overburden were removed down to natural. Suspected archaeological features were half sectioned and excavated by hand. The recording of trench 5 was carried out as a watching brief.

## *5 Results*

### *5.1 Trench 1 (see figure 3)*

Trench 1 measured 10 m in length and 1.68 m in width. It was aligned approximately north-

west - south-east and was located *c* 2 m to the south-west of the westernmost proposed building. Natural (1/4) was a mixed gravel and sand first seen at 0.69 m below the surface. Three possible tree-holes (1/5, 1/6 and 1/7) were seen to cut natural (1/4). Each of these were half-sectioned though no finds were recovered. All were overlain by a mid-brown slightly clay silt loam with occasional charcoal flecks and a maximum thickness of 0.34 m (1/3). It extended throughout the trench. Layer (1/2) was a silty loam with a maximum thickness of 0.10 m. It extended throughout the trench. The uppermost layer (1/1) was a mid grey-brown silty loam with a maximum thickness of 0.25 m which extended throughout the trench. Twelve medieval and two post-medieval sherds were recovered from the spoil heap.

## 5.2 *Trench 2* (see figure 3)

Trench 2 measured 10 m in length and 1.68 m in width. It was aligned approximately north-west - south-east and was located *c* 2 m to the south-west of the easternmost proposed building. The sequence of layers and their composition was identical to that identified in trench 1. Layer (2/3) overlaid natural (2/4) and measured 0.24 m in thickness. Layer (2/2) overlaid (2/3) and measured 0.07 m in thickness. Layer (2/1) overlaid (2/2) and measured 0.20 m in thickness. Three suspected features all cutting natural were excavated and two of these (2/5 and 2/7) were believed to be natural. Feature (2/6) was a linear feature aligned approximately north-east - south-west. It had irregular sloping sides and a rounded bottom. The fill was a mid dark grey slightly clay silt. The feature measured 0.44 m in width and 0.23 m in depth. A single sherd of medieval pottery was recovered and the feature was interpreted as a possible gully. Unstratified pottery comprised three medieval and two post-medieval sherds.

## 5.3 *Trench 3* (see figure 4)

Trench 3 measured 10 m in length and 1.68 m in width. It was aligned approximately north-west - south-east and was located *c* 5 m to the north-east of the proposed buildings, within the area of the proposed driveway. Natural (3/10) was overlaid by (3/9) a grey-brown clay silt with a maximum thickness of 0.22 m. It was seen in section only at the north-west end of the trench and was overlaid by layer (3/2). A group of four linear features (3/5, 3/6, 3/7 and 3/8) was seen to cut natural.

Linear feature (3/5) was aligned approximately north-west - south-east and was parallel to linear feature (3/8). The ditch profile was partially obscured by the uncertain relationship with features (3/6 and 3/7). The fills of the three features are indistinguishable. The visible side was near vertical and the bottom of the feature was flat. The fill was a mid grey clay silt. The feature measured 0.72 m in width and 0.23 m in depth. Seven medieval sherds were recovered from the fill of (3/5).

Linear feature (3/6) was aligned west-north-west - east-south-east. The sides of the feature sloped gently to a flat bottom. It measured 0.34 m in width and 0.12 m in depth and was filled by a mid grey clay silt. Two medieval sherds were recovered from the fill of (3/6).

Linear feature (3/7) was aligned parallel to (3/5) and was filled by a mid grey clay silt. It measured 0.06 m in depth. The relationship of this feature to (3/5 and 3/6) was uncertain.

Linear feature (3/8) was aligned north-west - south-east. The sides of the feature sloped gradually and it measured at least 4.5 m in length, 1.2 m in width and 0.27 m in depth. The fill was a pale grey clay silt. Eight sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from the fill of (3/8).

Linear features (3/5, 3/6 and 3/7) were overlaid by a layer of mid brown clay silt with a maximum thickness of 0.21 m (3/4). This layer was seen at the south-east end of the trench only. Feature (3/8) was overlaid by layer (3/9) (see above).

Layer (3/3) was a band of gravel seen in the section towards the south-east end of the trench only. It may represent upcast from linear feature (3/8). It overlaid layer (3/4) and measured 0.06 m in thickness. Layers (3/2) and (3/1) were identical to the uppermost layers in trenches 1 and 2. Unstratified pottery comprised 11 medieval and 9 post-medieval sherds.

#### 5.4 Trench 4 (see figure 4)

Trench 4 measured 12 m in length and 1.65 m in width. It was located at a right angle to trench 3 and ran in a south-westerly direction within the proposed driveway area and extended between the two proposed buildings.

The natural sand and gravel (4/14) was overlaid by a layer of grey brown clay silt loam (4/4) with a maximum thickness of 0.12 m. This layer was the same as (3/4) seen in trench 3. It was seen only in the north-eastern third of the trench. A possible tree-hole (4/6) cut natural and was cut by a possible ditch (4/5) aligned south-east - north-west. Although the area directly above the ditch was heavily disturbed by recent activity it appeared to be overlaid by layer (4/3). Pottery of both medieval (two sherds) and post-medieval (two sherds) date was recovered from the fill which was a mid-dark grey brown silty clay loam. The post-medieval pottery may be intrusive and relate to the disturbance immediately above.

Probable ditch (4/7) cut natural (4/14) and a possible tree-hole (4/13). It was aligned north-west - south-east and ran through the centre of the trench. Only the upper 0.20 m of the feature was excavated. Seven sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from the fill which was a mid grey brown silty clay loam with occasional small pieces of charcoal.

A small pit or posthole (4/8) cutting natural was located immediately north-east of ditch (4/7) and the relationship between the two was unclear. The sides of the posthole sloped gradually to a rounded bottom and it was filled by a mid grey brown silty clay loam. It measured 0.50 m in width and 0.15 m in depth. A sherd of medieval pottery was recovered from the fill.

Layer (4/9) was an area of pale grey brown sandy clay silt which extended throughout the north-east third of the trench. It was not excavated although pottery and bone were recovered. Layer (4/11) was a large spread of pale grey brown sandy clay silt which was differentiated from (4/9) only by the variation in gravel size. It was partially excavated and may along with (4/9) and (4/10) have been the fills of one very large feature. It is quite likely that 4/9 and 4/11 represent a single fill. Three medieval sherds were recovered from (4/11). Layer (4/10) was an area of light grey brown silty clay loam with occasional small pieces of charcoal. It overlaid layers (4/9) and (4/11). A possible feature (4/12) located at the north-east end of the trench cut (4/14) and (4/11). It was filled by a fairly grey brown silty clay loam which

produced two medieval and one post-medieval sherd.

Layer 4/4 was overlaid by a thick band of medium grey brown silty loam (4/3) which extended throughout the trench. It had a maximum thickness of 0.30 m though became thinner at the south-west end of the trench where it had been fairly disturbed by modern activity. Layer (4/3) was overlaid by a mid grey brown silt loam (4/2) which extended throughout the trench and had a maximum thickness of 0.10 m. Layer (4/1) was a mid grey silt loam which extended throughout the trench and measured 0.12 m in thickness. Unstratified pottery comprised 14 medieval and 16 post-medieval sherds.

### 5.5 Trench 5 (see figure 5)

Trench 5 was the foundation trench of the building located furthest west. It was machine excavated down to the top of the natural gravel which was cut by a group of six features. Feature (5/1) was large and fairly shallow with a maximum depth of 0.50 m. It was filled by a dark grey sandy clay loam with occasional charcoal flecks. Linear feature (5/3) was aligned north-west - south-east and was filled by a medium grey brown sandy clay loam with occasional flecks of charcoal. It produced three sherds of medieval pottery measured 3.50 m in width. A possible gully (5/4) was aligned north-west - south-east and was filled by a mid to dark grey sandy clay loam with occasional charcoal flecks. It had steep sides and a flat bottom and measured 0.40 m in diameter. Three medieval sherds were recovered from its fill. Feature (5/5) was large and irregular with a very mixed fill comprising an olive grey-brown very sandy clay loam with patches of clay and gravel. Feature (5/6) was a probable gully aligned east-west and was filled by an olive grey brown sandy clay loam. Feature (5/7) was a large irregular probable tree-hole.

Layer 5/10 was a medium-dark grey brown sandy clay loam which measured 0.20 m in thickness. It overlaid (5/1, 5/3, 5/4, 5/5, 5/6 and 5/7) and has been interpreted as a possible old ground surface. It was overlaid by a layer of medium brown silty clay loam (5/9) which measured 0.18 m in thickness. It probably represents an old ploughsoil (equivalent to 4/2). Layers (5/10) and (5/9) were cut by a modern feature (5/2). Feature (5/1) was also cut by (5/2). The uppermost layer (5/8) was a modern topsoil which extended throughout the trench and was a mid dark grey brown silty loam with occasional charcoal and small pieces of gravel. It had a maximum thickness of 0.20 m and overlaid (5/2) and (5/9).

## 6 Conclusions

No evidence of either prehistoric or Roman activity was recovered. However, a number of ditches, all probably dating to the medieval period, were identified. There were four in trench 3, two in trench 4 and two in trench 5 and all were aligned north-west - south-east. The ditches identified in watching brief trench 5 were almost certainly a continuation of those seen in trench 4. A further linear feature (2/6) which was aligned north-east - south-west also contained a medieval sherd, as did posthole (4/8). Only the west-east aligned gully (5/6) did not contain any datable evidence.

## Appendix 1: the pottery assemblage

Context	Context type	Pottery quantification and date
Tr. 1	unstratified	12 medieval sherds 2 post-medieval sherds
Tr. 2	unstratified	3 medieval sherds 2 post-medieval sherds
2/6/1	gully fill	1 medieval sherd
Tr. 3	unstratified	11 medieval sherds 9 post-medieval sherds
3/5/1	ditch fill	6 medieval sherds 1 post-medieval sherd
3/6/1	ditch fill	2 medieval sherds
3/8/1	ditch fill	5 medieval sherds
Tr. 4	unstratified	16 post-medieval sherds 14 medieval sherds
4/5/1	ditch fill	2 medieval sherds 2 post-medieval sherds
4/7/1	ditch fill	7 medieval sherds
4/8/1	pit/posthole fill	1 medieval sherd
4/11/1	layer	3 medieval sherds
4/12/1	?feature fill	3 medieval sherds
5/3/1	ditch fill	3 medieval sherds
5/4/1	ditch fill	3 medieval sherds



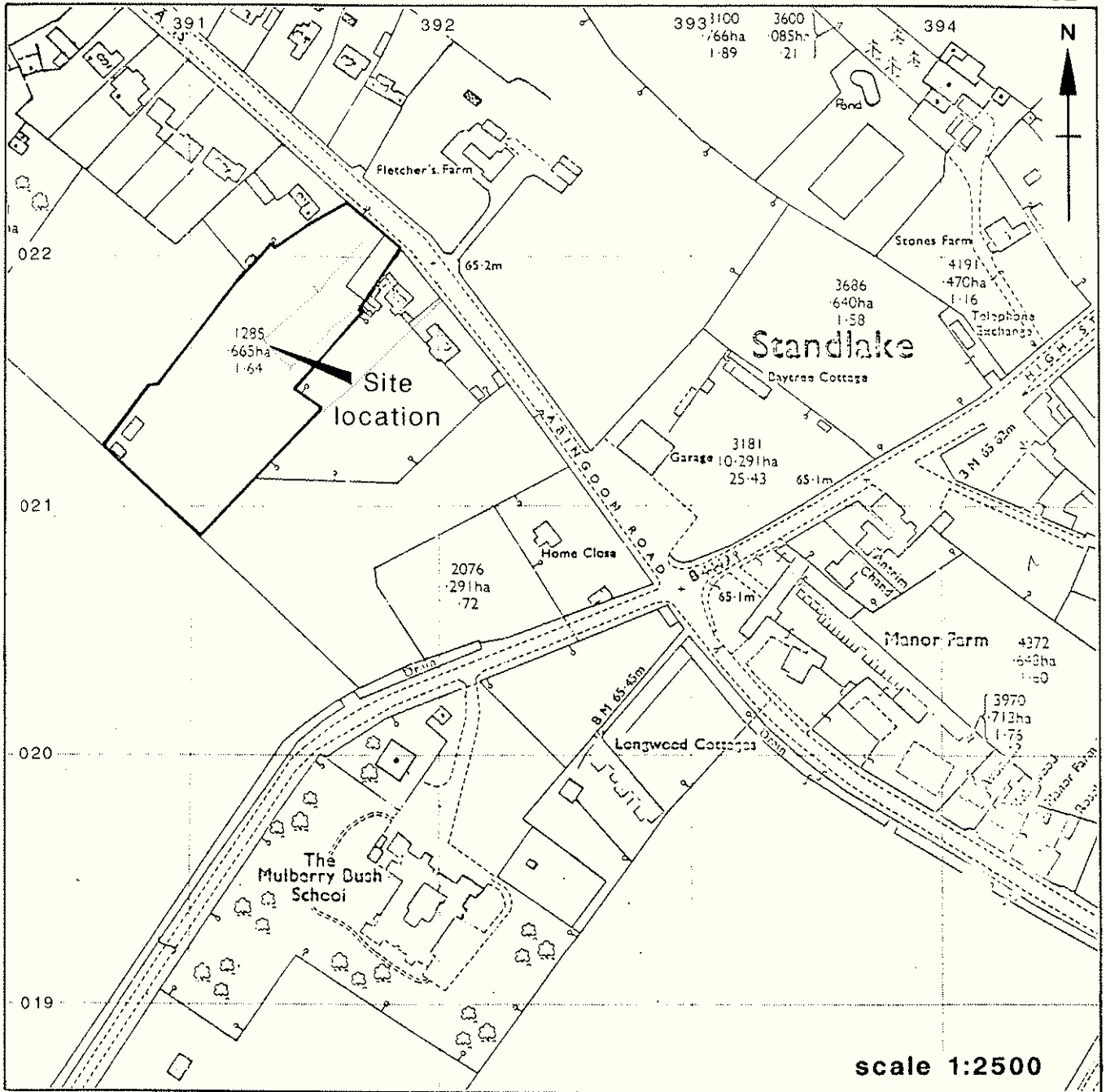
## Appendix 2: context summary

Trench number	Context number	Context type
Trench 1	1/1	topsoil
	1/2	subsoil
	1/3	old ploughsoil?
	1/4	natural
	1/5	?treehole
	1/5/1	?treehole fill
	1/5/2	treehole fill
	1/6	?treehole
	1/6/1	?treehole fill
	1/6/2	?treehole fill
	1/7	natural disturbance
Trench 2	2/1	topsoil
	2/2	subsoil
	2/3	old ploughsoil
	2/4	natural
	2/5	?treehole
	2/5/1	?treehole fill
	2/6	gully
	2/6/1	gully fill
	2/7	?treehole
	2/7/1	?treehole fill
	2/7/2	?treehole fill
Trench 3	3/1	topsoil
	3/2	subsoil
	3/3	layer
	3/4	layer
	3/5	ditch
	3/5/1	ditch fill
	3/6	ditch

Trench number	Context number	Context type
	3/6/1	ditch fill
	3/7	ditch
	3/7/1	ditch fill
	3/8	ditch
	3/8/1	ditch fill
	3/9	layer
	3/10	natural
<hr/>		
Trench 4	4/1	topsoil
	4/2	subsoil
	4/3	ploughsoil
	4/4	layer
	4/5	ditch
	4/5/1	ditch fill
	4/6	feature
	4/6/1	feature fill
	4/7	ditch
	4/7/1	ditch fill
	4/8	pit/posthole
	4/8/1	pit/posthole fill
	4/9	?layer
	4/10	?layer
	4/11	?layer
	4/12	feature
	4/12/1	feature fill
	4/13	?treehole
	4/13/1	?treehole fill
	4/14	natural
<hr/>		
Trench 5	5/1	feature
	5/1/1	feature fill
	5/2	feature

Trench number	Context number	Context type
	5/2/1	feature fill
	5/2/2	feature fill
	5/3	ditch
	5/3/1	ditch fill
	5/4	gully
	5/4/1	gully fill
	5/5	feature
	5/5/1	feature fill
	5/6	ditch
	5/6/1	ditch fill
	5/7	feature
	5/7/1	feature fill
	5/7/2	feature fill
	5/8	topsoil
	5/9	?ploughsoil
	5/10	layer

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Figure 1

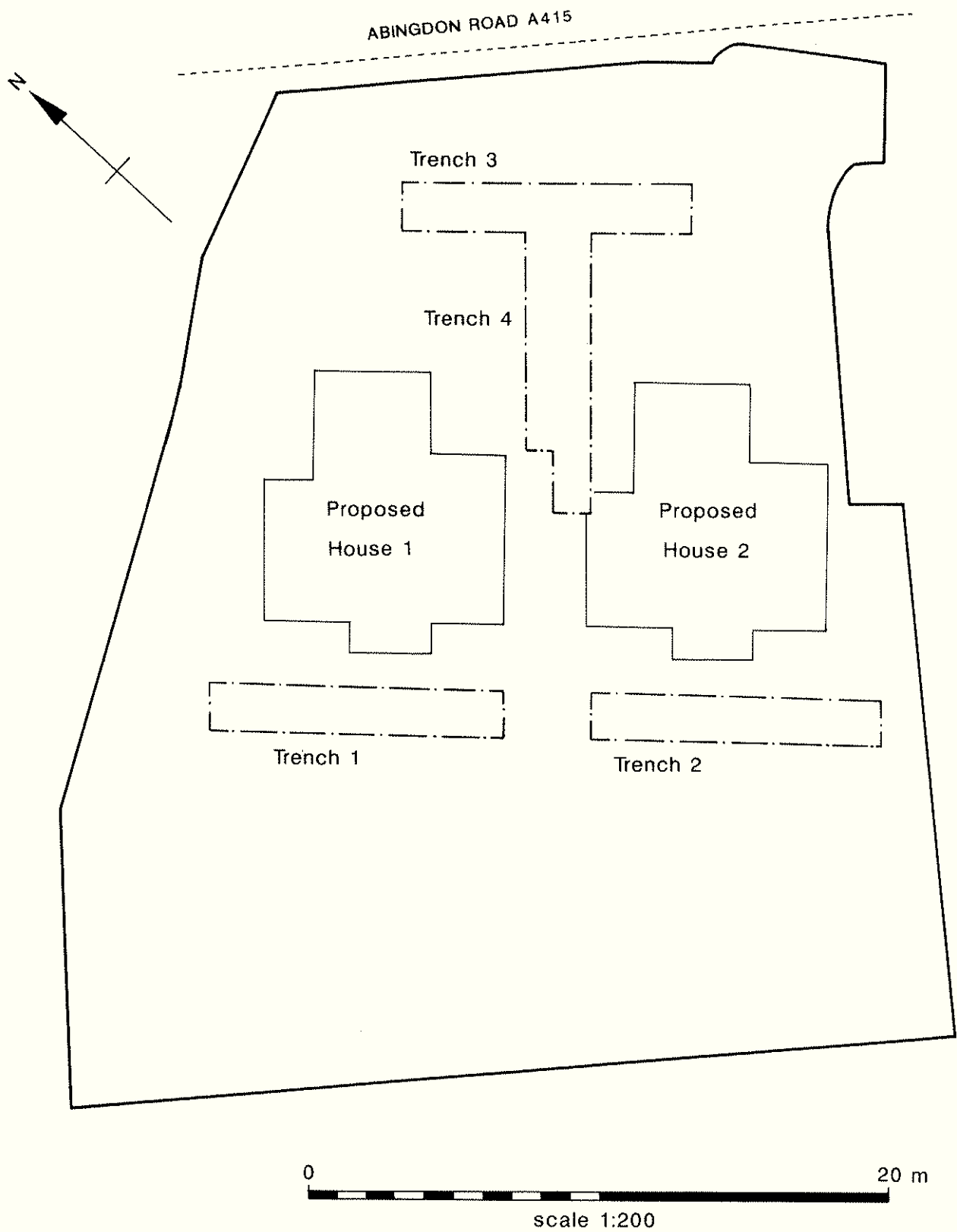
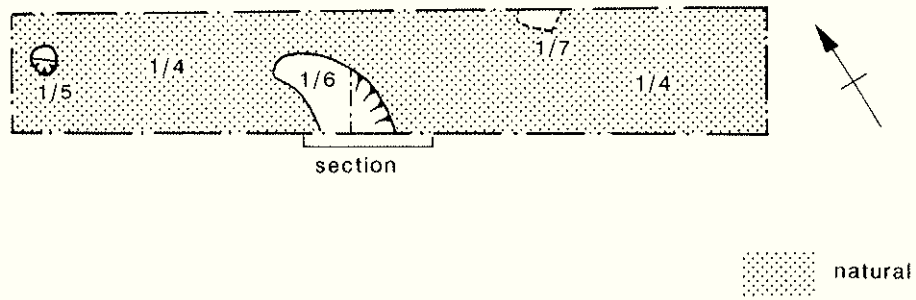


Figure 2

Trench 1 plan



Trench 2 plan

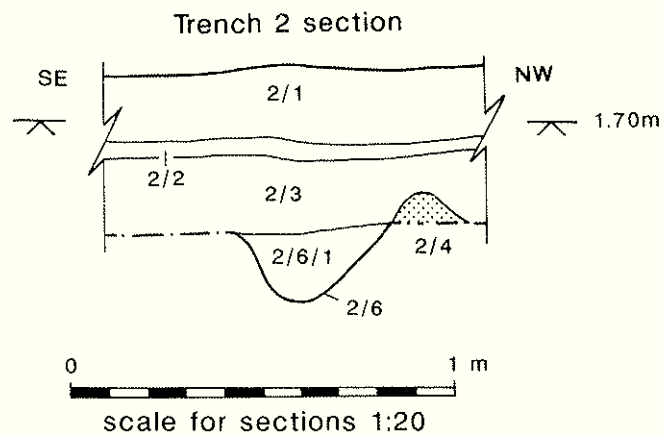
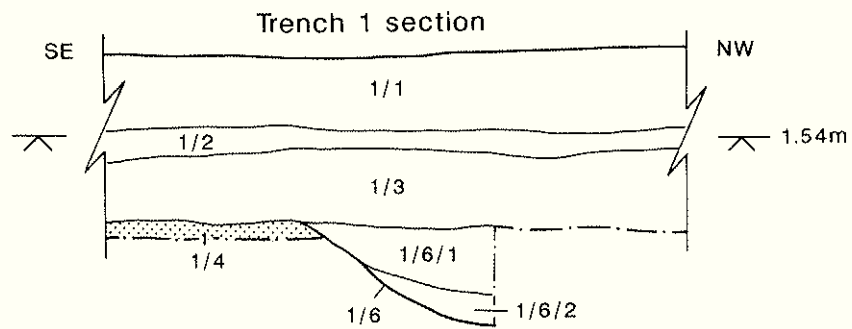
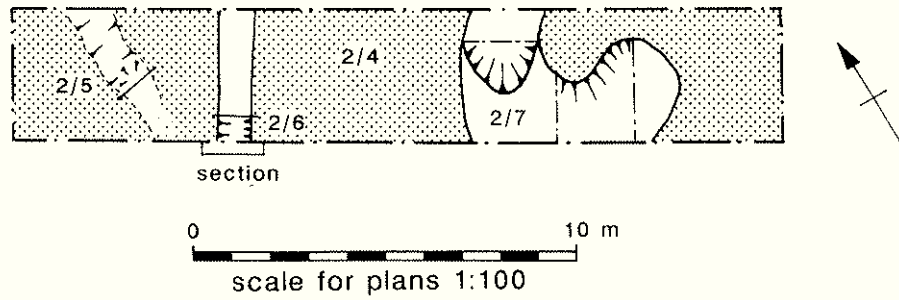


Figure 3

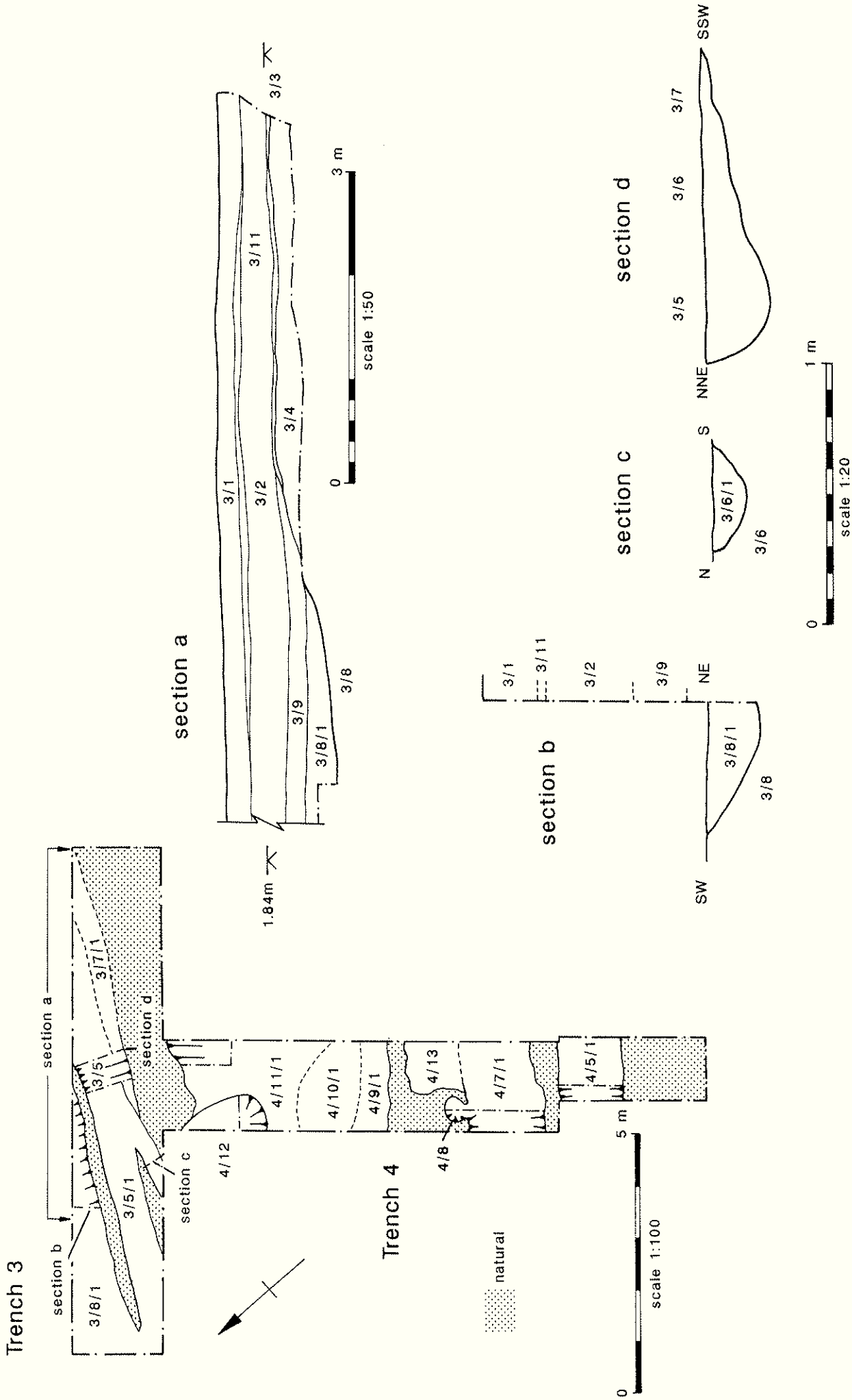


Figure 4

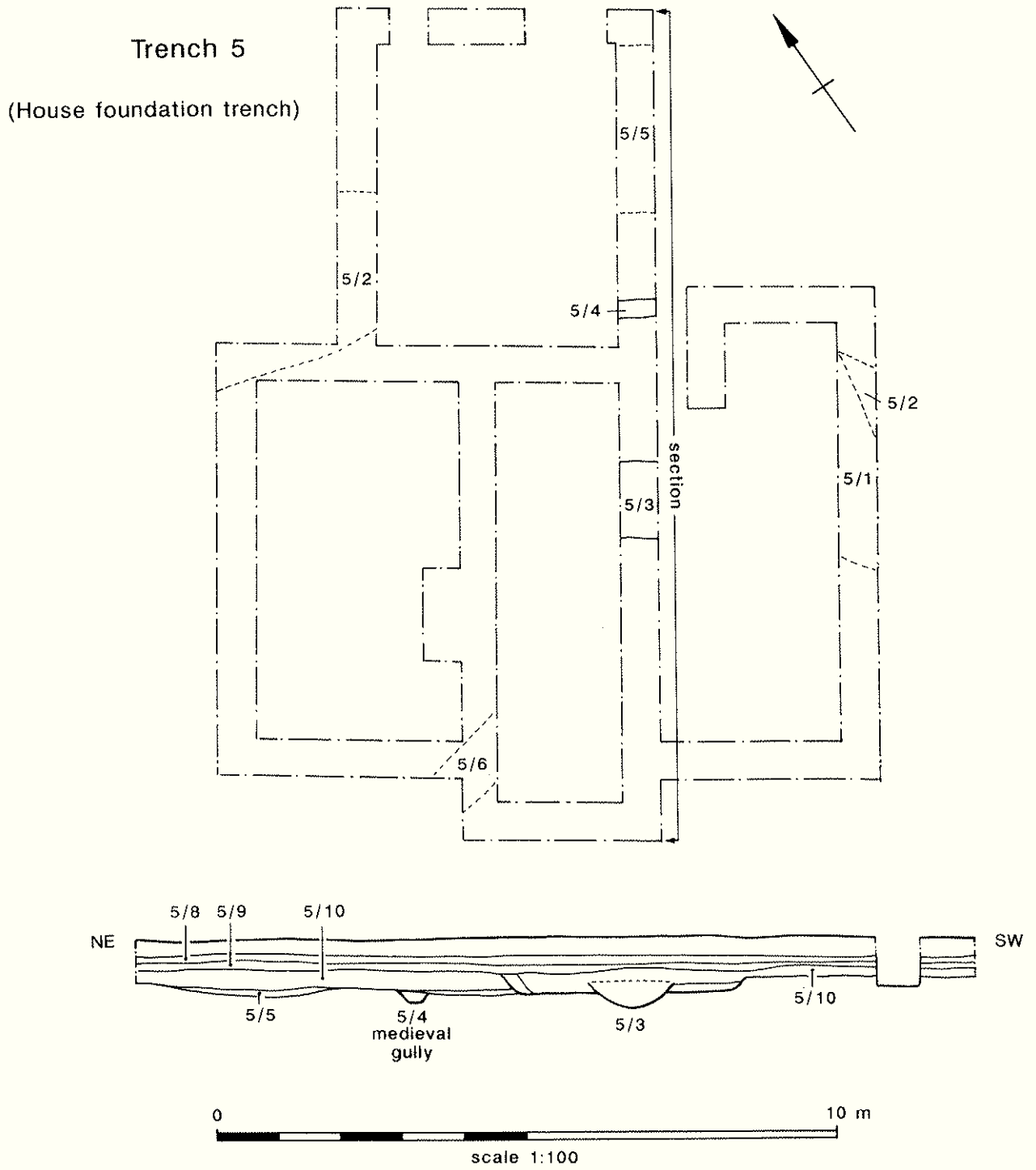


Figure 5





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