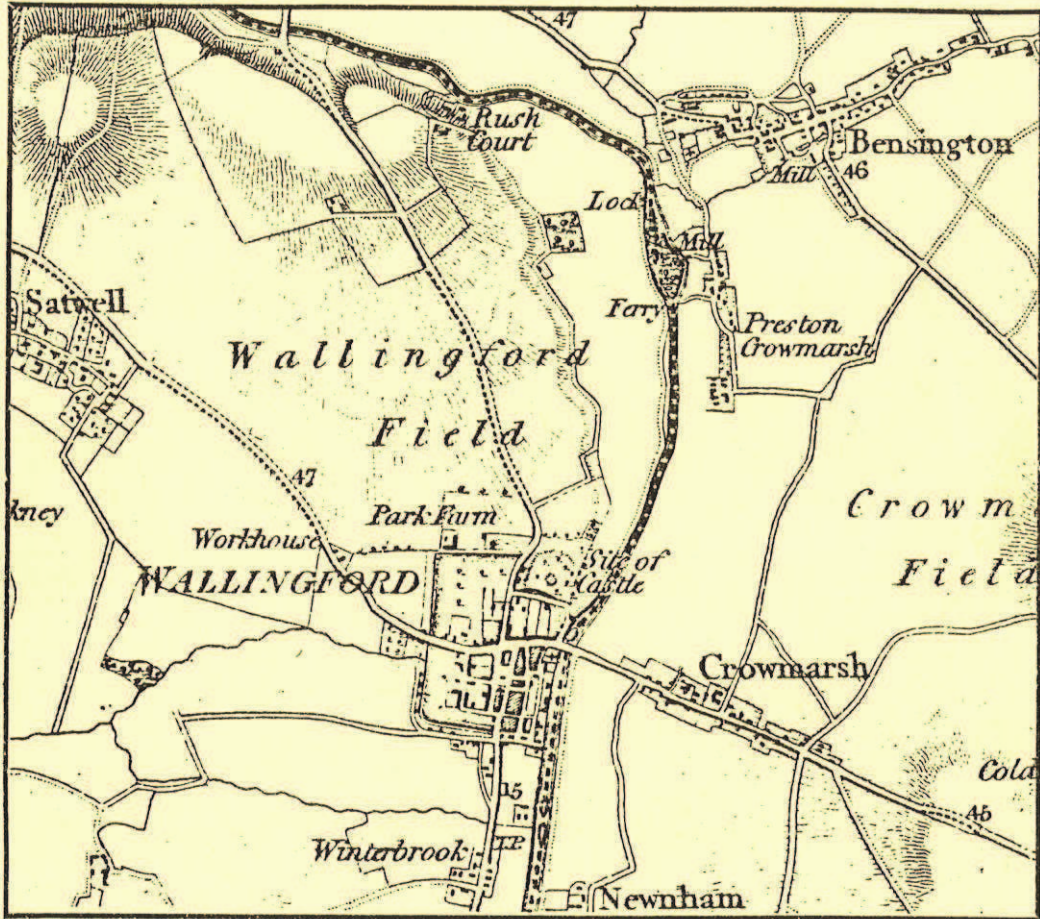


CASTLE FARM, WALLINGFORD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT



Castle Farm, Wallingford, Oxon.
Archaeological Watching Brief / Excavation

SU 6090589620

Oxford Archaeological Unit
February 1992

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Castle Farm, Wallingford
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Introduction

The Oxford Archaeological Unit was asked to carry out a watching brief / small scale excavation at Castle Farm Wallingford on behalf of Mr E.G. Ryall. The archaeological work was a planning condition attached to the planning permission granted for the installation of slurry and dirty water collection tanks at Castle Farm (SU 60905/89620).

Summary

The buildings to the northwest of Castle Farm overlie a small area of medieval pits. This is evident in the south and east sections (see Fig. 3). The bailey ditch may extend under the milking parlour and under the yard beyond.

Archaeological background

The early Norman Motte and Bailey castle was built some time between AD 1066-1086. The Bailey ditches have yet to be found on the southwestern side of the castle.

Topography

Wallingford is situated on a gravel terrace with a ford crossing the Thames. The castle motte is approximately 110 m west of the river. The proposed slurry tank is to the northwest of the existing farm buildings, some 15 m southeast of the motte. The ground level is at 46.0 m OD, rising to 47.50 m OD in the east.

Strategy

A trench 16 m x 9 m was machine-excavated using a 360 degree excavator to a depth of 44.95 m OD, and then planned (Fig. 2).

An area 6 m x 9 m was then lowered to a depth of 44.77 m OD. Several sections of the trench were cleaned by hand, to establish the density of archaeology.

Results

Natural sands and gravels were encountered at a depth of 46.0 m OD, on the eastern side of the trench. A thin layer of yellow/white sand overlay a thicker, silty green/grey compact sand.

Most of the features were filled with a sandy, silty loam. To the south various layers were seen to be tipping from east to west, thus indicating that the ground had been built up (perhaps prior to the farm being constructed; see Fig. 3).

A large ditch-like feature [5], was recorded in section and plan. This was interpreted as the bailey ditch, but its width and depth are unknown (see Fig. 2). This feature had several layers, most of which contained large amounts of redeposited building material, tipping in from the south. A small amount of pottery was recovered from these layers, and the earliest layer encountered [5/4] contained three sherds of late 12th- to early 13th-century pottery. The only other feature to produce dating evidence was a pit [11]. This was seen in the south section, and dated to the 12th century. This pit cut through what was thought to be an old ground surface [13], but unfortunately no finds were recovered to establish a date.

Various other pits were seen in south and east sections, along with a possibly Victorian water pipe trench. Due to the instability of the soils, not all the features were recorded. All the features in the south end of the trench had been truncated by layer [9]. This may have something to do with the construction of the path, which goes from the High Street under Castle Lane and out into the fields beyond the castle ruins. A small rectangular feature [15], originally thought to be a grave, was seen to be overlain by the edge of [5]. This feature did not contain any inhumation or dating.

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Scale 1:500

Figure 1

section 1

610/896

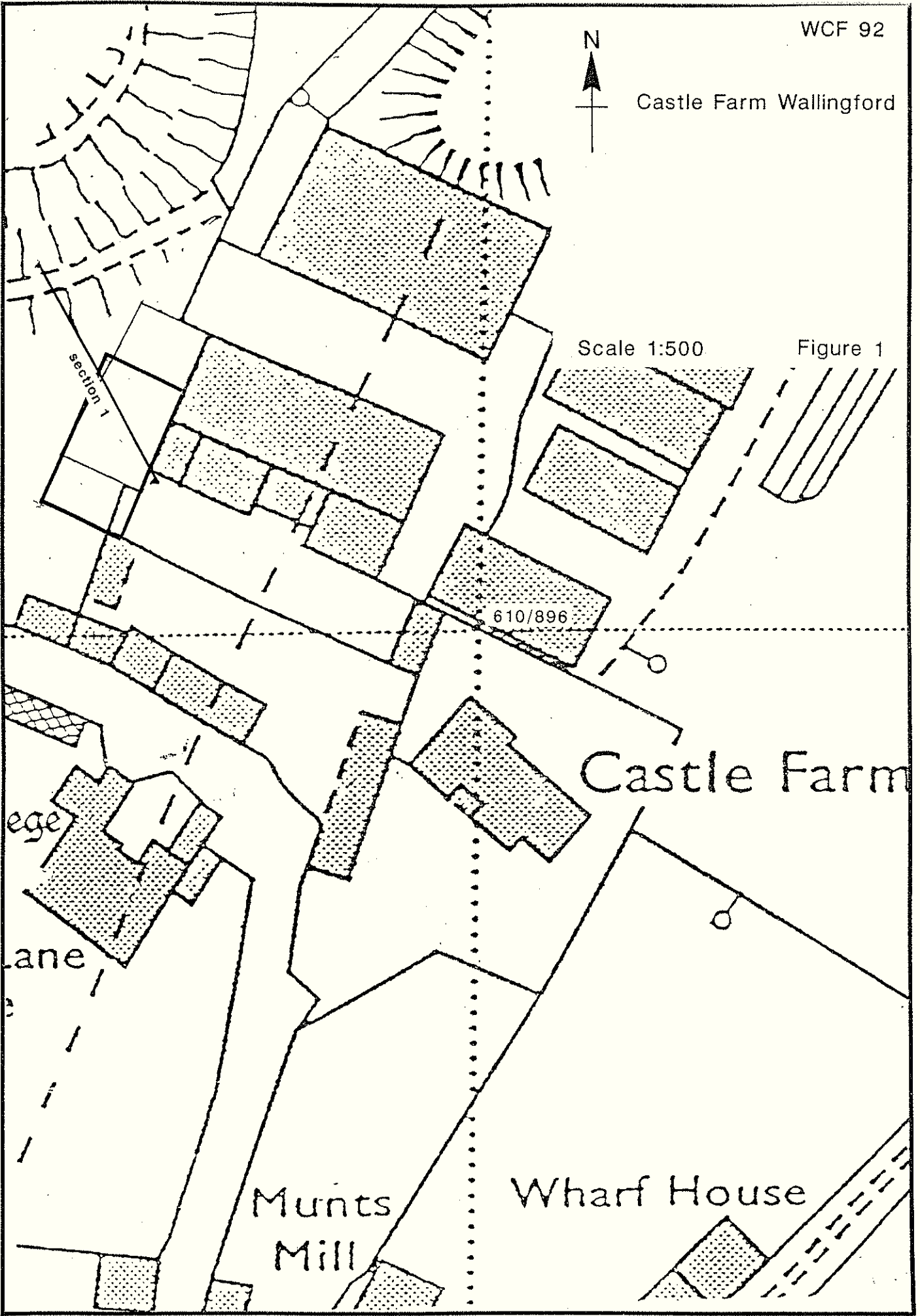
Castle Farm

edge

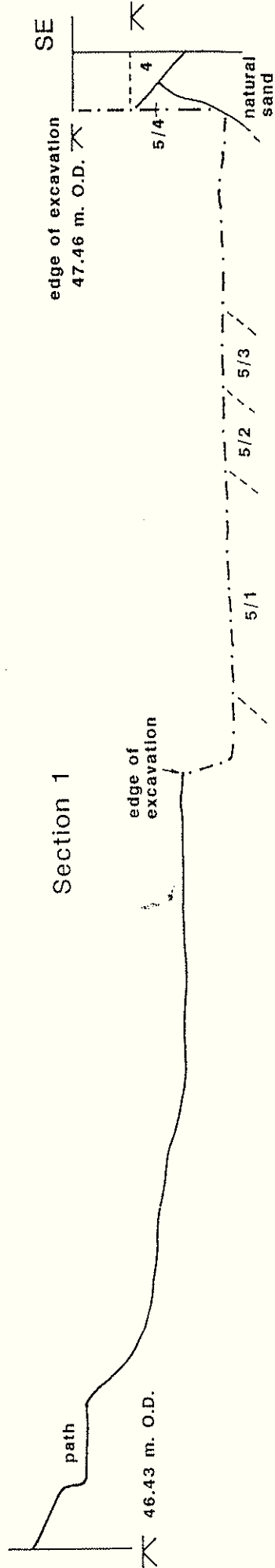
lane

Munts Mill

Wharf House



NW



10 m.

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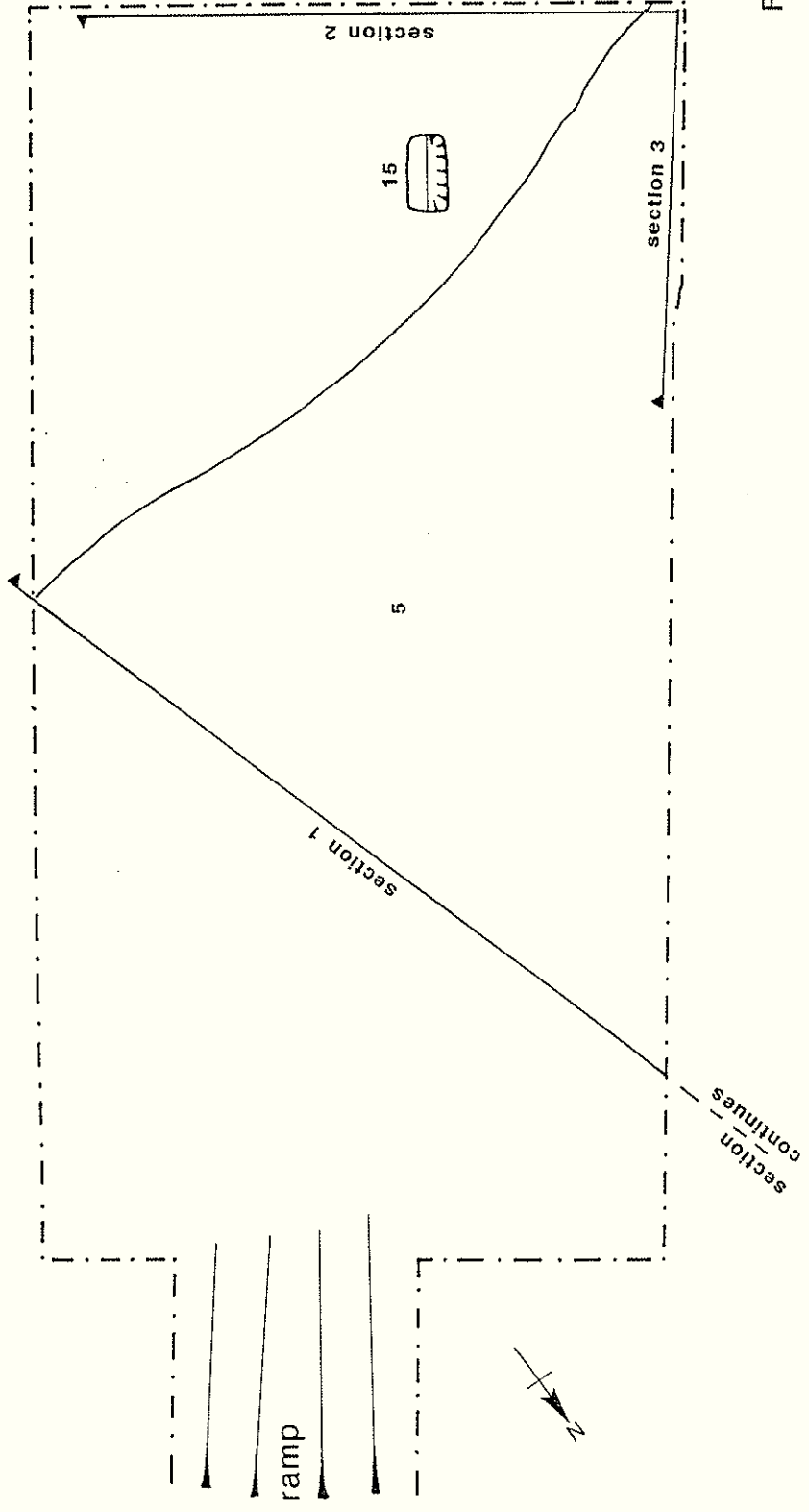
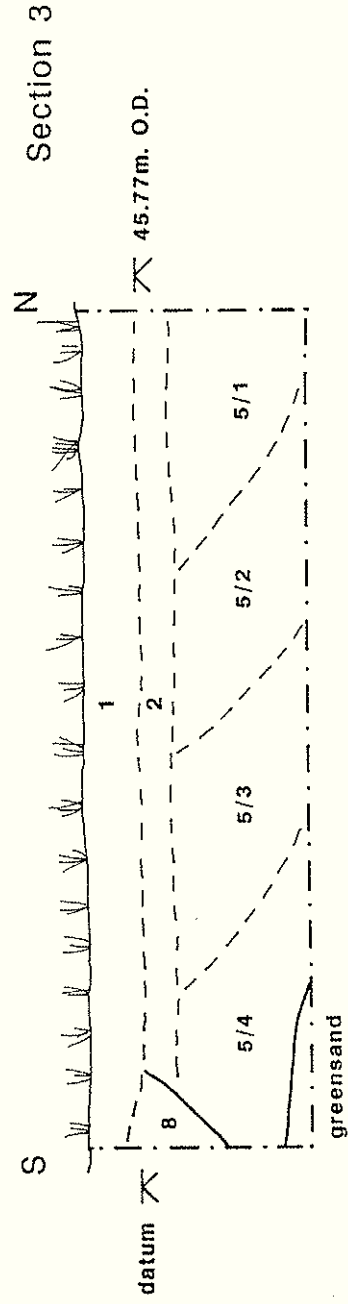
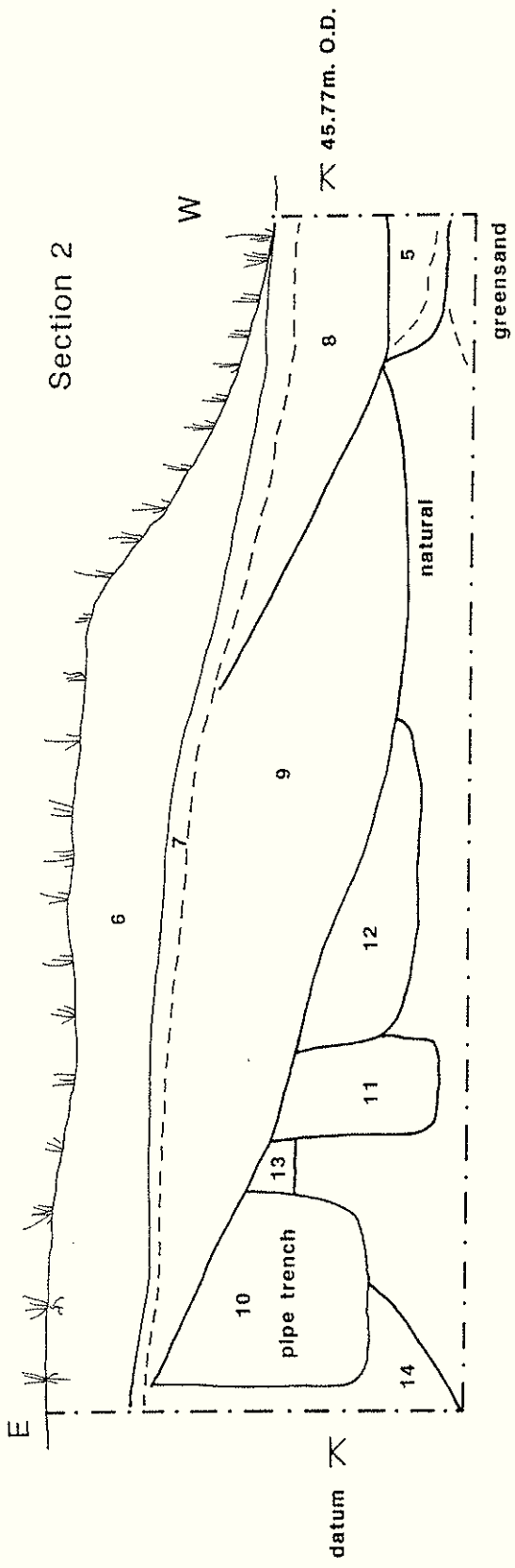


Figure 2



Scale 1:50

Figure 3



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