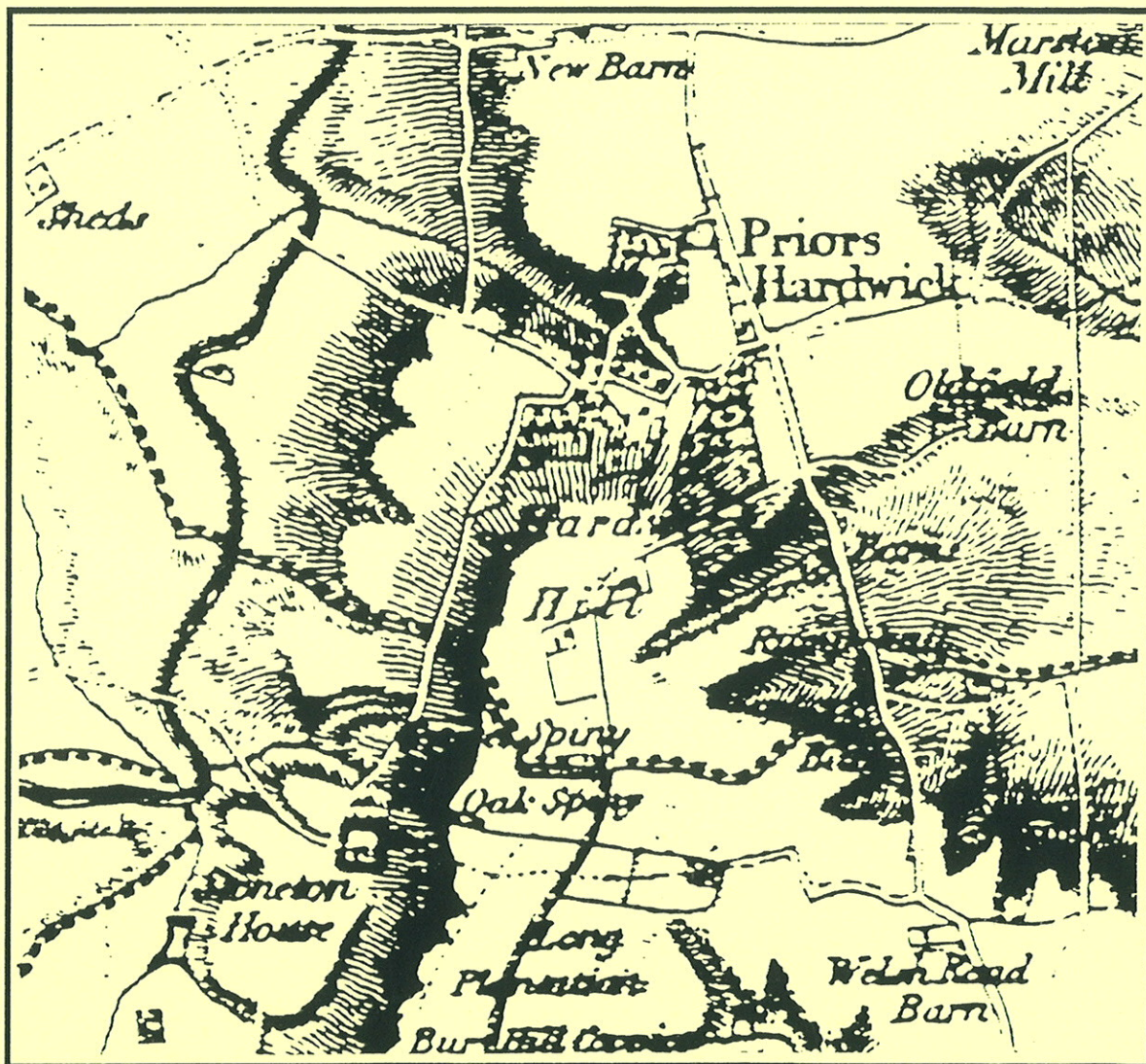


Smith Woolley

# New Farmhouse at Hill Farm, Priors Hardwick, Rugby, Warwickshire

NGR SP 4660 5660

Archaeological Recording Action Report



Oxford Archaeological Unit

February 1997

**New Farmhouse at Hill Farm,**  
Priors Hardwick, Rugby,  
Warwickshire

***ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING ACTION REPORT***

**NGR SP 4660 5660**

**planning ref S92/1363**

Prepared by:  Granville Laws
Checked by:  <i>Jan Scott</i>
Approved by:  <i>U R Roberts</i>

**OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT**  
**January 1997**



# Priors Hardwick Archaeological Recording Action

## LIST OF CONTENTS

1	SUMMARY.....	2
2	INTRODUCTION.....	2
2.1	Topography and Geology.....	2
2.2	Archaeological and Historical background.....	2
2.3	Archaeological Methodology.....	2
3	RESULTS AND DESCRIPTIONS.....	3
3.1	Finds.....	4
4	DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION.....	5

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

## LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Context Inventory

## LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 1:	Site location map
Fig. 2:	Trench plan and furrows
Fig. 3:	Section 1
Fig. 4:	Section 2
Fig. 5:	Section 3

## 1 SUMMARY

*An Archaeological Recording Action was carried out to the east of a narrow strip of land on Hill Farm which lies to the south-west of Priors Hardwick. No significant archaeological features or deposits were located. Three plough furrows were identified and a small quantity of Post-medieval pottery and a single sherd of Roman pot were recovered. Besides the pottery, a few pieces of post-medieval glass and clay pipe were also retrieved.*

## 2 INTRODUCTION

On 23rd and 24th January 1997 the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) undertook an Archaeological Recording Action as a condition of Planning Consent. The work was undertaken on behalf of Smith Woolley in advance of the building of a new farmhouse (planning ref. S92/1363) and was carried out in accordance with a brief set by the Warwickshire County Council Planning Archaeologist and a WSI from the OAU.

### 2.1 Topography and Geology.

The site lies at 137 m OD on Lower Lias Clay and is presently used for pasture. The trench was situated on the side of a valley which slopes down hill from north to south. Pronounced ridge and furrow, aligned on an east-west axis, was evident in the field. To the west of the trench, the land gently levels towards the western field boundary. To the east, the land gently rises to existing farm buildings. To the north of the field the land levels out with ridge and furrow aligned on an east-west axis. To the south of this field, partitioned by a ditch and fence line, the land gently rises to form a small hillock. This in effect creates a small valley which runs east-west and within which the site was located.

### 2.2 Archaeological and Historical background

The site lies south-west of the parish of Priors Hardwick (Fig. 1). To the south of the proposed site, on the opposite side of the valley, human and animal bone and Romano-British pottery (local manufacture and dated to the 3rd to 4th century) was recovered after ploughing (Warwickshire Sites and Monuments Record Nos WA 731, WA 6300 and WA 6301). About 300 m to the east of the site a Romano-British trackway oriented NNE - SSW, has been recorded (WA 4650). The Romano-British finds and the recorded trackway, suggest nearby settlement, possibly a farmstead.

### 2.3 Archaeological Methodology

Both the machine excavated top soil, 0.10-0.13 m in depth, and the spoil heap were archaeologically monitored. An area of 0.1 hectare, measuring 20 x 27 m overall was

stripped to the top of the natural or archaeological horizons. No archaeological features or deposits were located apart from three medieval ridge and furrows. To the north-east of the trench a machine slot excavated two of the three furrows (Fig.2). The section was hand-cleaned and a further section was hand-excavated. Finds were retrieved from the excavated sections and from the surface of the other furrows. Recording was carried out in accordance with standard OAU procedures. A table listing the contexts and finds data is presented in Appendix 1.

### 3 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

The natural (8) was a compact yellow light brown clay located at a level of 134.38 m OD north and 132.80 m OD to the south. The natural was cut by plough furrows (4, 6) and (10)

#### **Furrows**

The three furrows were aligned east-west and varied in width from 4 to 5 m and were set approximately 5 m apart. All furrows cut the natural (8). The furrows each were filled by deposits of similar composition (5, 7 and 9). These were all a compacted mid grey yellowish brown silt clay. A north-south oriented machine slot was dug which cut furrows (4 and 6) (Figs. 2 and 3).

Furrow (4) was only partially within the area of investigation. It was seen in the eastern section of the trench (Figs. 2, 3, 4 and 5), and was filled by deposit (5) and varied in depth 0.35 m - 0.43 m from the base of layer (2).

Furrow (6) was located in plan and section (Figs. 2 and 3) in the middle of the trench. This furrow was filled by deposit (7) and measured 5.8 m in width. The maximum depth of deposit (7) was not recorded due to the incomplete excavation of the furrow, but it was at least 0.50 m below the surface of the natural.

Furrow (10) was located to the south of the trench and ran parallel and south of furrow (6). The furrow was filled by deposit (9) and measured 4 m in width (Fig. 2).

Layer (3) was located between furrows (4 and 6) and comprised a friable dark yellow/brown silt clay and measured 0.15 m in depth. It sealed the natural and was overlaid by layer (2). It was the direct result of ploughing of the ridge between the furrows.

Layer (2) was a loose dump of gravel and pebbles, measuring 0.08 m in depth and observed across the whole of the trench. Layer (2) was the result of recent farming activity to improve drainage in this field. Layer (2) overlaid plough furrow fills (5, 7 and 9) and the natural (8).



Layer (1) was a top soil, a loose mid grey/brown silt loam and varied from 0.10 m to 0.13 m in depth.

### 3.1 Post-medieval pottery

The post-Roman pottery assemblage from PHNFHF comprised thirteen sherds with a total weight of 123g. In addition, there are five fragments from two clay pipes, with a total weight of 19g. These are of 17th century type.

Table 1: Fabric occurrence by number of sherds and weight in grammes

Context	Midland Purple Ware F408	Cistercian Ware F404	Manganese Ware F414	Brill Yellow Ware F431	Red earthen-ware F457	Agate Ware F458
5	1 (3)		2 (6)		1 (13)	
7	1 (44)	2 (2)		2 (14)		1 (41)

### Description of pottery and chronologies

#### *Cistercian wares (F404):*

Cistercian wares are characterised by a smooth red fabric with a dark brown/black glaze. The sherds in this assemblage have yellow slip decoration, possibly cordons. The tradition has a date range of c. 1475 - 1550.

#### *Midland Purple wares (F408)*

Hard fired reddish-brown fabric with occasional marl streaks, sparse and black mica inclusions up to 0.2mm. Internally black-glazed rim from a large storage jar. This ware was produced at Brill and Potterspury from c. 1400 to c. 1700.

#### *Staffordshire Manganese wares (F414)*

This ware is distinguished by its rilled incised decoration, usually underneath the rim or just above the base, a buff bodied reduced fabric and the brown 'tiger striped' manganese glaze. The predominant forms are mugs, tankards, cups, chamber pots and conical pots (Gooder 1984, 173-181). Dateable to c. 1680+.

#### *Brill Yellow wares (F431)*

Uniform buff fabric. The fabric is the same as that of the vessels produced at Brill (Farley 1979). Sparse sub-rounded red ironstone up to 0.5 mm, black ironstone up to

0.2 mm and occasional mica fragments up to 0.1 mm. The sherd is from a base of a mug and covered in a yellow glaze. 17th century.

*Red Earthenware (F457)*

Pinkish oxidised fabric. Moderate sub-rounded red and white quartz up to 0.3 mm, rounded calcareous inclusions up to 0.5mm and occasional sub-rounded black ironstone up to 0.3 mm. Internal black/purple variegated glaze, external light brown glaze. Date range of c. 1500 to 1700.

*Staffordshire Agate Wares (F458)*

Buff-bodied fabric. Occasional sub-rounded red and black ironstone inclusions up to 0.3mm with sparse sub-rounded to rounded voids. Variegated white and brown slip and has a 17th century date range.

#### 4 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

There were no significant archaeological deposits or finds observed within the trench. However, three plough furrows were located and a small quantity of Post-medieval pottery, dating to the 17th century or later and a single sherd of Roman pot, of the 1st to 2nd century were recovered. As only a small area was excavated, 0.1 hectare, it would be hard to suggest that there was a lack of archaeological activity within the general area. Reference to the Warwickshire S.M.R plotting of finds and a trackway would suggest otherwise.

#### Bibliography and references

Farley, M.

1979 'Pottery and pottery kilns of the post-medieval period at Brill, Buckinghamshire' Post-Medieval Arch, 13, 127-153

Gooder, E.

1984 'The finds from the cellar of the Old Hall, Temple Balsall, Warwickshire' Post-Medieval Arch, 18, 149-251

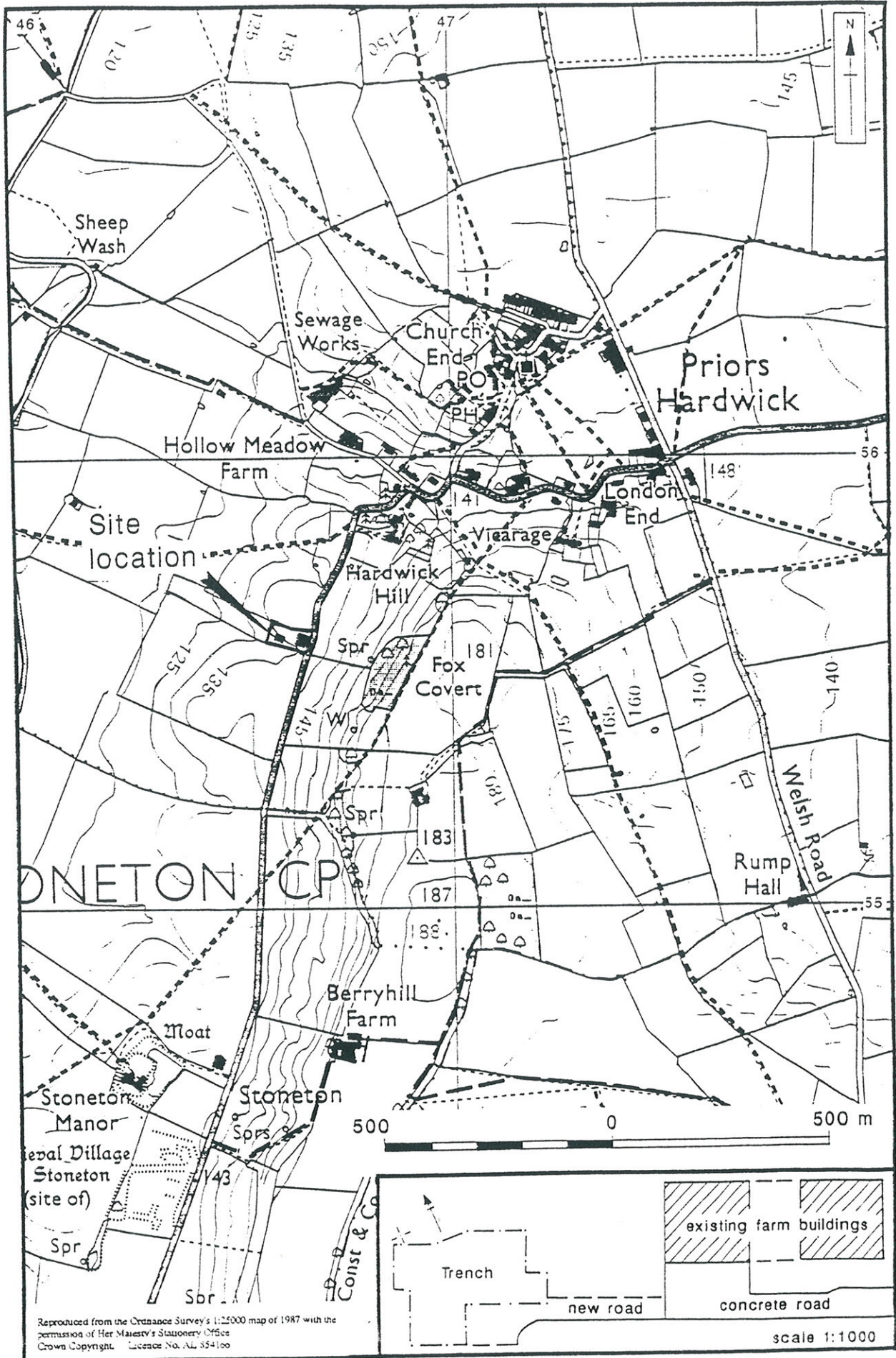
Wilkinson, D. (ed)

1992 *Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual*, (First edition, August 1992)

## Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory

Trench	Ctxt	Type	width (m)	thick (m)	Comment	Finds	No.	Date
001								
	1	layer		0.13	Top soil			
	2	layer		0.05	drainage layer			
	3	layer		0.15	ploughed ridge			
	4	cut		0.45	Furrow			
	5	fill		0.45	Furrow fill	pot	4	PM
	6	cut	4 m	0.50	Furrow			
	7	fill		0.50	Furrow fill	pot	10	PM
	8	layer			Natural			
	9	fill	4 m		furrow fill	pot	1	Roman
	10	cut	4 m		Furrow			

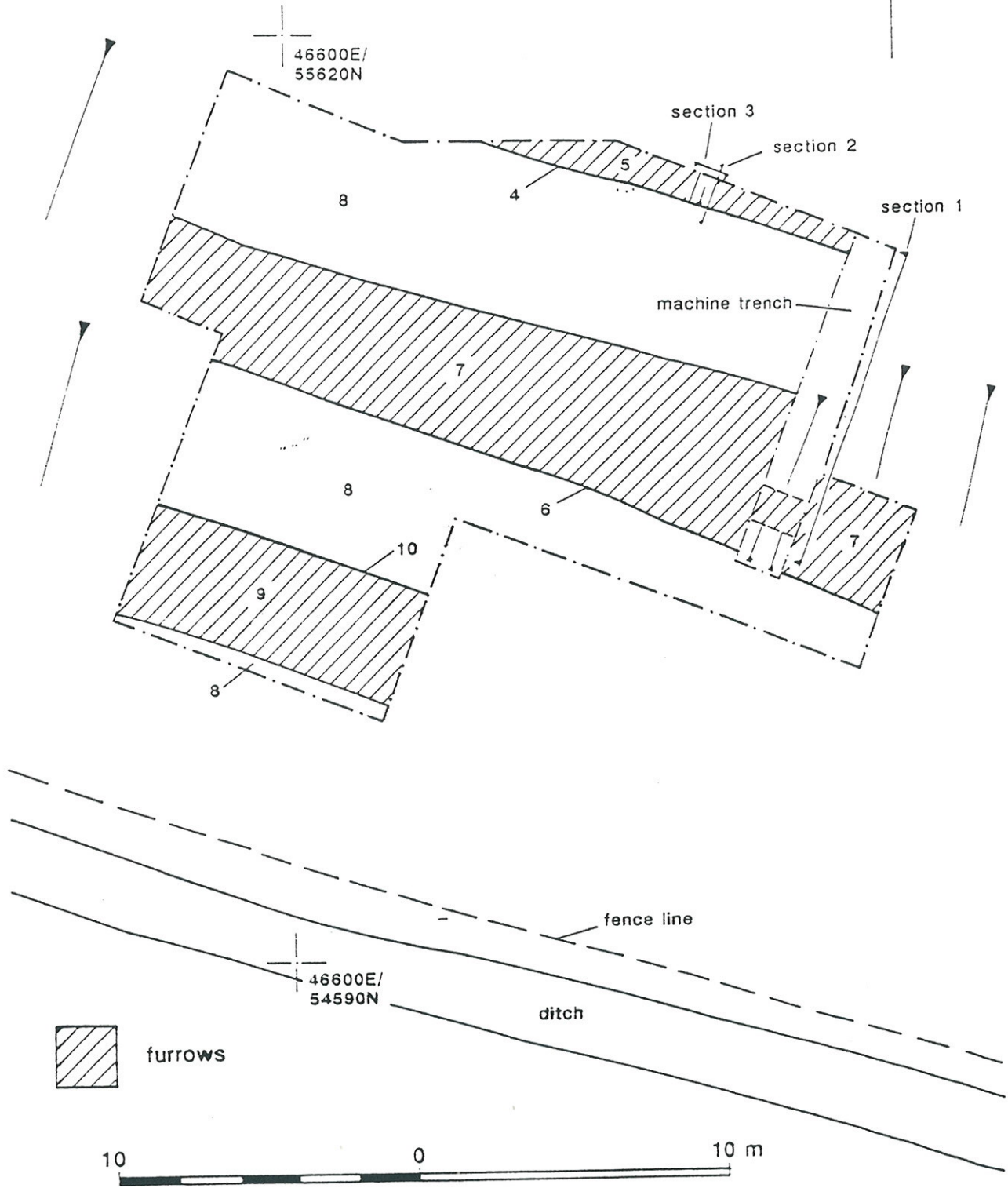




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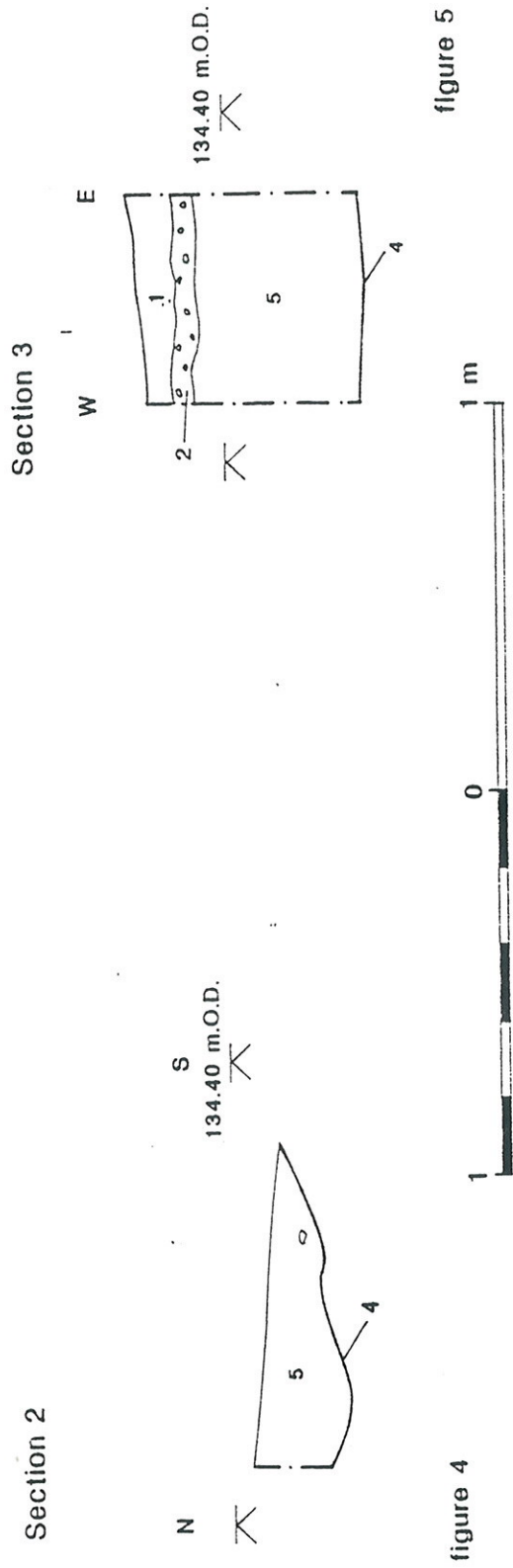
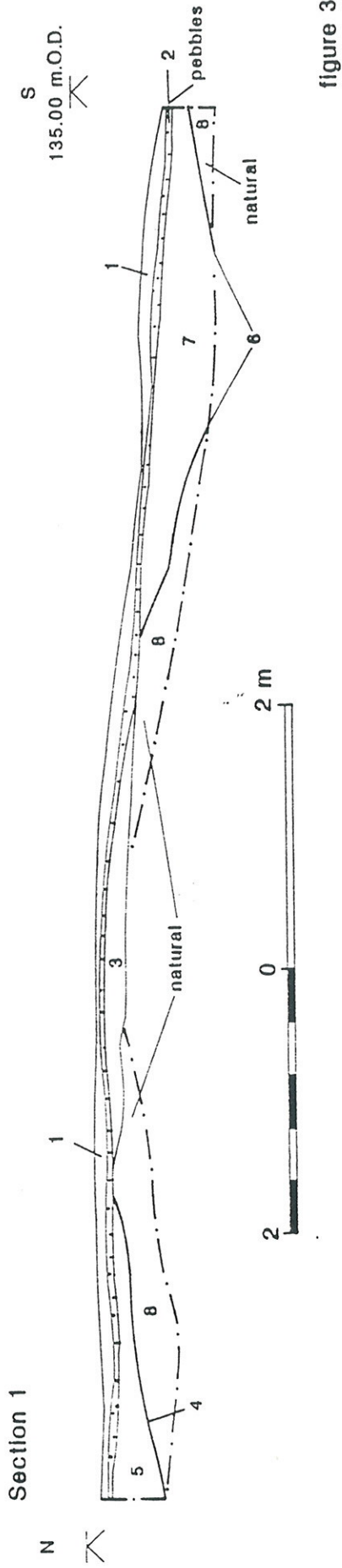
Location of site

figure 1



Trench location and plan

figure 2



Sections 1,2 and 3 through furrows 4 and 6





## OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES  
Telephone: 01865 243888 Fax: 01865 793496



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Director: David Miles B.A., F.S.A., M.I.F.A.  
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