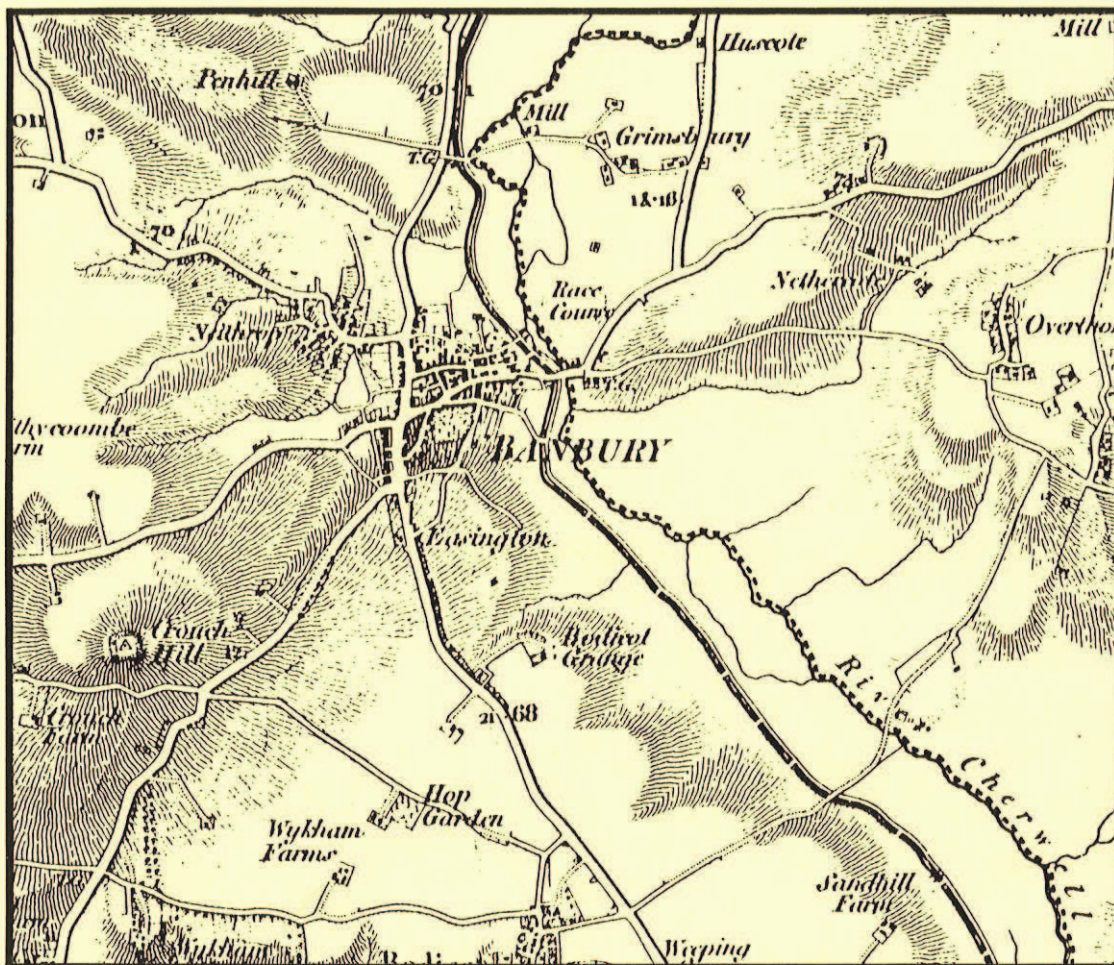


LAND ADJOINING OVERTHORPE ROAD
INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, CAUSEWAY, BANBURY, OXON.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT



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**ECHO PARK: LAND ADJOINING OVERTHORPE ROAD INDUSTRIAL
ESTATE, CAUSEWAY, BANBURY, OXON.**

SP 471407

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

MAY 1992

ECHO PARK: LAND ADJOINING OVERTHORPE ROAD INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, CAUSEWAY, BANBURY, OXON.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was carried out on land adjoining Overthorpe Road Industrial Estate, Causeway, Grimsbury, Banbury, Oxon. (SP 471407). Shallow earthworks visible in the north field represented ridge and furrow cultivation and a possible field boundary. These were also detected in the evaluation trenches. Modern deposits, ditches and a pit were also detected, as were three undated shallow cuts; other than this no archaeological features or deposits were located. Much of the subsoil had been disturbed by the laying of land drains, water pipes and ditches. Several sherds of post-Medieval pottery were recovered from the subsoil, these were not retained, one medieval sherd was discovered in a post-Medieval context.

Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was carried out at Echo Park: land adjoining Overthorpe Road Industrial Estate, Causeway, Grimsbury, Banbury, Oxon (Fig. 1) during April 1992, for Cherwell District Council. Planning permission had been sought for the development of industrial/office units and associated services. The evaluation was requested by the County Archaeological Service, and was carried out under a negative condition attached to the planning consent.

The aim of the evaluation was to establish whether any archaeological deposits were present, and if so, to define their extent, character, quality, date and state of preservation.

Topography

The area subject to evaluation covers 5.447 ha. It is located on the Liassic Clay lowlands to the east of Banbury. The site lies at 90 m OD. The land consists of two fields separated by a hedged field boundary, it is presently under pasture. Shallow earthworks visible in the north field represent earlier ridge and furrow cultivation (Fig. 2). Extensive modern drainage has taken place in the southern field. The southernmost portion of the site has been used for sewage waste disposal and is fenced off from the remainder of the area.

Archaeological Background

The site lies to the north east of Spital Farm, a medieval holding belonging to St. Leonards Hospital (PRN 1794). To the north west, in an area centred around Old Grimsbury (PRN 11,470), previous archaeological excavation, particularly along the

line of the Banbury east-west link road, had produced evidence for extensive pre-historic and Saxon settlement, and some slight evidence of Romano-British activity. There was no record of previously known archaeology within the application area.

Strategy

Twenty trenches were dug, each measuring 1.8m wide x 30m long, these formed a 2% sample of the application area (Fig. 2). In addition, two smaller trenches, 1.8m wide x 5m long and 1.8m wide x 3.8 m long, were dug to clarify visible earthworks. The trenches were machine excavated down to natural deposits, all features were sampled by hand excavation. Trench plans were drawn at 1:200 and soil profiles at 1:20.

Results

The topsoil was typically a dark grey-brown silty clay loam varying between 0.13-0.26m deep, at the southern end of the site it was darker with a higher humic content. In all trenches the topsoil overlay light yellowish brown silty clay loam subsoil varying between 0.12-0.28m deep, this contained occasional sherds of modern pottery and pieces of brick. The subsoil within trenches 6-8 and 11-20 was disturbed by the insertion of land and mole drains, there were also indications of sub-soiling. In trenches 1 and 6 a second subsoil layer was present, defined by its lighter colour, this possibly represents an earlier ploughsoil. The natural was typically a mottled light grey silty clay with frequent lenses of orange brown sandy clay and sandy gravelly clay. The features detected in trenches 1-5, 8, 11-13 and 21-22 are described below.

Trench 1 (Fig.2)

A sandy clay bank (context 10), 1m wide and up to 0.5m high, ran roughly north-south along the trench for a distance of 16m from the north end of the trench, south of this it lay beyond the western edge of the section. The west edge of the bank had been cut by a ditch which ran parallel to it (context 3). This ditch was 0.7m deep and at least 0.8m wide (the west edge lay beyond the limit of excavation), the slides sloped at an angle of approximately 45 degrees to a rounded irregular bottom. The ditch fill contained charcoal and crushed brick.

The top of context 10 (the bank) was cut by a 2m wide east-west running cut (context 14), the straight sides sloped at an angle of 40 degrees to a flat bottom. The bottom of context 14 was cut by two parallel east-west running vertical sided cuts 0.1m wide and 0.35m deep, these may have been mole drains. Context 14 was one of three equidistant shallow cuts (contexts 14, 15 and 16) which ran east-west across the bottom of the trench. They were spaced at 6m intervals and coincide with visible earthworks which appear to represent ridge and furrow cultivation. Modern pottery came from the ploughsoil layers immediately above these cuts.

Two deposits of material lay above the subsoil and against the east edge of context 10. A layer of burnt material (context 4) containing charcoal, clinker, bone, glass and modern pottery, lay against and over the top of the bank in a continuous layer.

A second deposit (context 5) at the south end of the trench was detected in section, this comprised very loose dark loam supported from behind by sheets of corrugated iron. This layer, dated by a 1940 Canadian cent, was cut by a semi-circular feature (context 6), 0.26m in diameter.

Continuations of contexts 3, 4 and 10 were detected in Trench 2.

Trench 2 (Fig. 2)

A clay bank ran north-south across the trench. The west edge of this bank was cut by a ditch 1.2m wide and 0.4m deep (context 3). The top of the bank was covered by a layer of mixed burnt material, including charcoal, glass, clinker and glazed china. This was laid as a level spread, possibly to form a path.

These features are a continuation of contexts 3, 4 and 10 discovered in Trench 1.

Trench 3 (Fig. 2)

An east-west running ditch 0.29m deep (context 5) was detected at the south end of the trench. It lay immediately to the north of the existing hedged field boundary and appears to be associated with this boundary. A continuation of this ditch was also detected in Trench 5 (context 5/3).

A number of modern features were cut from below the topsoil. Context 3 was a north-south running cut, 0.2m wide and 12.5m long, it contained modern brick and pipes. A 2.7m wide ditch (context 4) ran east-west across the trench, this was 0.65m deep with sloping sides and a rounded bottom, it contained modern brick, glass and a metal knife. A continuation of this ditch was found in Trench 21 (context 21/3).

The east edge of the trench was extended to allow examination of an ovoid cut 1.2m in diameter, this contained a medieval sherd and modern material, it was not excavated.

Trench 4 (Fig. 2)

A north-south running water pipe trench cut the subsoil approximately mid-way along the trench. This trench (context 3) was 0.56m wide and 0.95m deep. It was visible above ground as a shallow earthwork connecting water troughs in adjacent fields.

Trench 5 (Fig. 2)

A ditch (context 3) ran east-west across the south end of the trench. This lies immediately to the north of the present hedged field boundary and is a continuation of the boundary ditch detected in Trench 3 (context 3/5).

Trench 8 (Figs. 2 & 3)

A ditch (context 4) cut from a second subsoil (context 3) ran east-west across the south end of the trench. This was 0.9m wide and 0.3m deep, the sides sloped at approximately 45 degrees into a rounded bottom. There were no finds from this feature. A cut (context 6) ran parallel to context 4 at a distance of 3.5m. This cut

was 2.4m wide and 0.18m deep, it had gently sloping sides and a flat bottom. There were no finds from this feature, it is similar in form to cuts discovered in Trench 1 which have been interpreted as furrows (contexts 1/14; 1/15; 1/16).

Trench 11 (Fig. 2)

The subsoil was cut by a modern pit, 0.45m wide and 0.41m deep (context 4). The fill contained white glazed china.

Trench 12 (Figs. 2 & 3)

A shallow cut orientated WNW-ESE ran across the north east corner of the trench. The north edge of the cut lay beyond the edge of the trench, it was at least 0.75m wide and 0.10m deep, the sides sloped shallowly into a round bottom. A land drain lay within this cut and may be associated with it.

Trench 13 (Fig. 2)

An east-west running gully (context 5) ran across the trench. It was 0.54m wide and 0.16m deep, the sides sloped gently into a rounded bottom. The fill contained occasional charcoal flecks but no finds. Immediately to the north of context 5 was a shallow, discontinuous gully running north-south along the middle of the trench (context 4). This was 0.29m wide and 0.07m deep, it ran northwards for 9.5m, the sides were gently sloping with a rounded bottom. The fill contained no finds.

Trench 15 (Fig. 2)

The west end of the trench was cut by a feature (context 4) running NNE-SSW. The fill contained modern material including bricks.

Trench 21 (Fig. 2)

An east-west running ditch which showed on the ground as a visible earthwork was detected in the trench. This ditch (context 3) was 0.78m wide and 0.22m deep. It appears to be a continuation of the ditch system detected in Trench 3 (context 3/4) and Trench 22 (context 22/3). The fill contained modern glass and brick.

Trench 22 (Fig. 2)

A ditch (context 3) ran north south across the trench, it was 1.4m wide and 0.3m deep. It appears to be part of the ditch system detected in Trench 3 (context 3/4) and Trench 21 (context 21/3), both of which contained modern material.

Confidence Rating of Results

Although a 2% sample is not guaranteed to locate low concentrations of discrete features, the complete absence of occupation debris from the topsoil and subsoil would indicate that the results of the evaluation are representative of the area as a whole. The subsoil has been disturbed by modern activity but there is nothing

to suggest that any activity has occurred which would have resulted in truncation or removal of deposits.

The natural geology of the area was consistent between trenches.

Weather conditions were not consistently good, with some heavy showers, however, all trenches were cleaned and examined before they became waterlogged.

Conclusion

Insubstantial traces of undated archaeological activity were represented by the cut in trench 12, the gulleys in trench 13 and the ditch and shallow cut in trench 8 (Fig. 3). The lack of any associated finds suggest that this area was not used for settlement purposes.

Earlier agricultural activity in this area was represented by visible ridge and furrow earthworks in the northern field; traces of what appear to be furrows were detected in trench 1, as was a clay bank which may represent an earlier field boundary. This particular area appeared to be free from the modern disturbance found in other areas of the site, therefore the modern material from layers immediately above these furrows suggests they were ploughed until comparatively recently.

Modern activity, consisting of the dumping of material and the laying of ditches, drains and water pipes, was noted in all parts of the evaluation area.

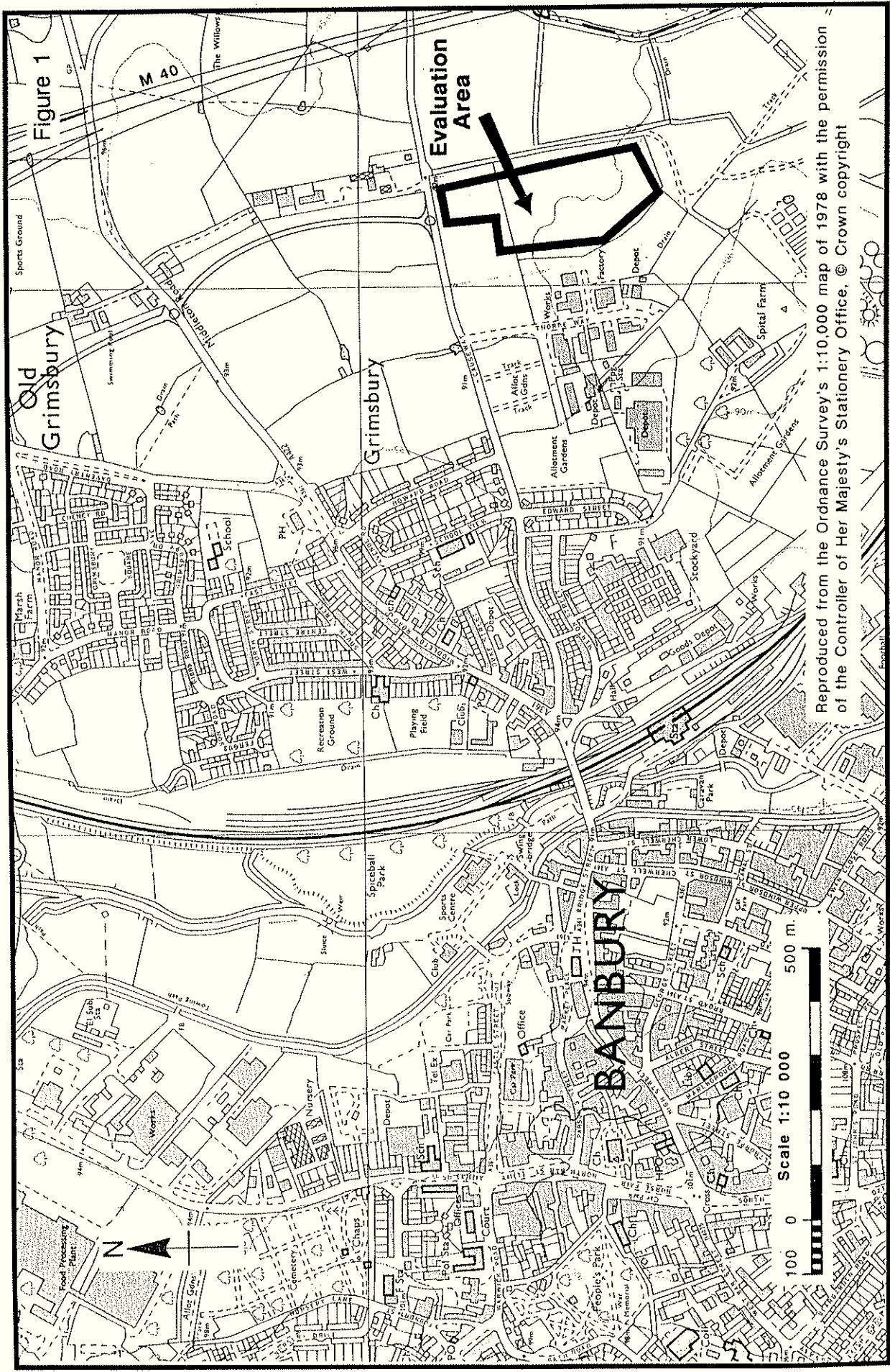


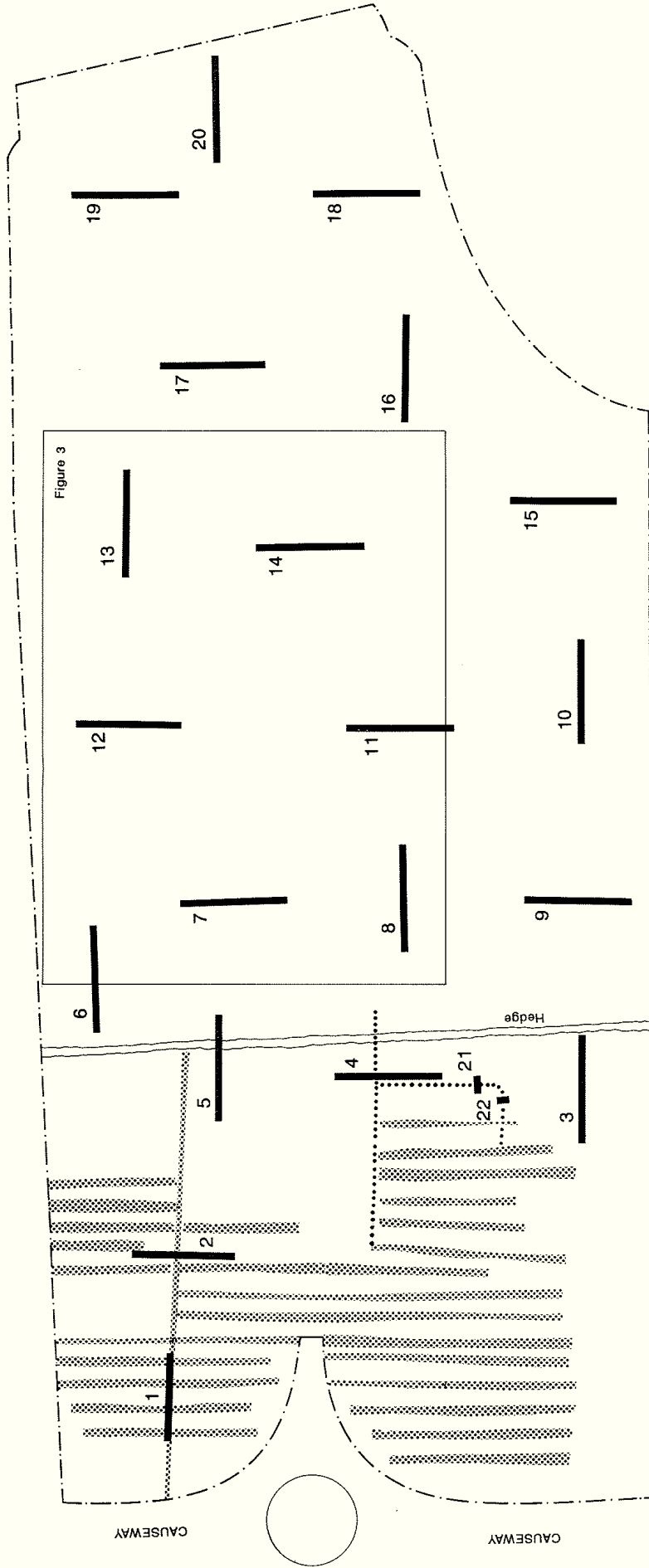
Figure 1

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Figure 2

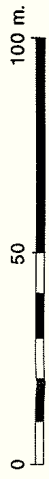


Echo Park
Trench Location Plan



KEY

- Evaluation Trenches
- ▣ Ridge and furrow
- Modern Features

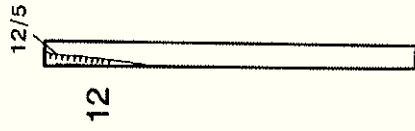


Echo Park
Excavated Features

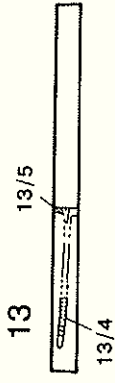
Figure 3



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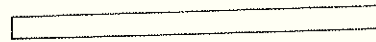
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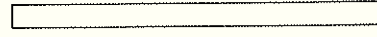
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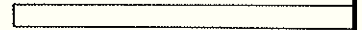
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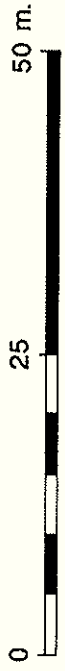
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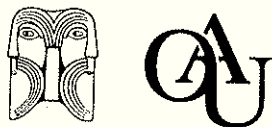
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