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DUNTHORNE PARKER ARCHITECTS

Daisy Meadows, Vicarage Road, Egham, Surrey.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

NGR TQ 01457129

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

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SUMMARY

In October 1999, the Oxford Archaeological Unit undertook a field evaluation at Daisy Meadows, Vicarage Road, Egham, on behalf of Dunthorne Parker Architects, in advance of proposed development of the site. The evaluation revealed a single shallow, linear feature which contained modern ceramic building material and a single prehistoric worked flint. No significant archaeological deposits were discovered.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site location

In October 1999 the Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out a field evaluation at Daisy Meadows, Egham, Surrey on behalf of Dunthorne Parker Architects in respect of a draft planning condition issued by Runnymede Borough Council, relating to the proposed construction of an office building and surface level car parking. The work was conducted in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by OAU and approved by the Surrey County Archaeologist.

The development site is located to the east of the historic core of Egham (Fig. 1) and is bordered by the M25 to the east, the Egham-Waterloo railway line to the south, Manor Farm Lane to the west and Vicarage Road to the north. The site covers an area of c.1.2 ha in total, of which the compound area forms c.0.32 ha.

1.2 Geology and topography

The geology of the site consists of sandy gravel beneath up to 1.5 m of brickearth. The brickearth is typically a stoneless loam and alluvial deposit which is mainly derived from London clay.

The evaluation took place inside an enclosed compound in the north-east quadrant of the development area (Fig. 2). The compound consisted of grass-covered level ground, extensively overgrown with scrub and small trees, particularly in the northern part. Parts of the compound had been recently used as a contractors storage area. The remainder of the development area were excluded from the evaluation on the recommendation of a desk-top assessment by Surrey County Archaeological Unit which concludes that the southern part of the site, occupied by an electricity depot, has been extensively disturbed by the construction of office buildings and levelling associated with the laying of concrete hardstanding.

1.3 Archaeological background

The archaeological background to the evaluation has been the subject of a separate desk study by Surrey County Council Archaeological Unit (Shaikhley 1999), the results of which are summarised below:

There is substantial evidence for activity from the Neolithic to the post-medieval period within the surrounding area.

Prehistoric activity appears to be limited, with archaeological evidence confined to stray finds including flint flakes found next to the development site during the construction of the M25. Roman activity is better represented: A site indicating military activity was located at Petters Sports Field (some 250 m to the north of the development). A section of the London to Silchester Roman road has also been identified adjacent to Petters Sports Field and a 4th century Romano-British farmstead has been identified just to the south of the development site, beyond the railway line.

The earliest historical reference to Egham is a charter of 666-667 AD by Frithuwold, a sub-king of Mercia, in which it forms part of the original endowment of Chertsey Abbey. By the time of

the Domesday Survey of 1086 the settlement was assessed at 40 hides and had a population of 57. Archaeological evidence of the Saxon period is limited to pottery sherds, again found at Petters Sports Field. The medieval development of Egham occurred during the 12th century and was focused on the church founded by Chertsey Abbey. The causeway, which lies on the north edge of the town, is 13th century in date. A 15th century building known as 'Manor Farm' is thought to have been located immediately to the west of the development. However an archaeological evaluation of this location revealed nothing of archaeological interest.

A trial excavation just to the north of the present evaluation (Surrey Sites and Monuments Record no. 2932) undertaken by D.M.Longley, for Surrey Archaeological Society and the Department of the Environment, revealed only one sherd of Romano-British pottery and no features.

Rocques map of 1768 and early Ordnance Survey Maps shows the area of the evaluation was formerly arable or meadow land which remained undeveloped at least until the late 19th century.

2 EVALUATION AIMS

The aims of the evaluation were as follows:

- ◆ To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the proposed development area,
- ◆ To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present;
- ◆ To determine the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features;
- ◆ To make available the results of the investigation.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Sample size and scope of fieldwork

The desk-top study concluded that the potential for the survival of archaeological deposits was greatest in the area of the 'compound', an undisturbed and enclosed part of the former Meadow, in use as a storage area (Fig. 2). The remainder of the site was thought to have been disturbed by previous development and was not recommended for further investigation. The evaluation was therefore restricted to three trenches, located in the compound, representing a 4 % sample of the compound site. Two of the trenches were 20 m long and 1.6 m wide and the third was 30 m long and 1.6 m wide. The trenches were located to provide a representative sample of the evaluation area.

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

The overburden was removed by a JCB mechanical excavator under close archaeological supervision.

The exposed surfaces and sections were closely inspected and hand cleaned as required.

Test pits were excavated in all trenches to the level of the gravel underlying the brickearth, to confirm that no archaeological features were present within or beneath the brickearth.

Recording methods were as specified in the WSI, following procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

3.3 Finds

Spoil tips were monitored and the machined surface was inspected during and after machining for the presence of archaeological finds. Modern finds from the topsoil were noted but generally not retained. The only artefacts recovered were from a single shallow feature found within Trench 1.

3.4 Environmental data

No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified.

4 RESULTS: GENERAL

4.1 Soils and ground conditions

The general soil type was a soft, friable loam or silt-clay brickearth. Ground conditions were dry.

The underlying water-table was encountered at a depth of approximately 1.2m beneath the present ground level, within the level of underlying natural gravel.

4.2 Distribution of Archaeological Deposits

A single, east-west aligned, modern linear feature was found crossing Trench 1. No other features were present.

4.3 Presentation of Results

The sequence of deposits and any archaeological features present are described by individual trench in stratigraphic sequence. The finds are briefly described in a separate section.

5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

5.1 Description of deposits

5.1.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 was aligned NNW to SSE, and located close to the north-western corner of the compound area. It was 20m long by 1.6m wide (Fig. 3).

The natural subsoil in the northern part of the trench was tested by machining down to a maximum depth of 1.2 m into underlying sandy gravel. The water-table was encountered at this level.

The stratigraphic sequence within the trench consisted of a sandy gravel found at a depth of 0.8 m beneath the present ground level, overlain by up to 0.7 m of undisturbed brickearth and 0.1 m of topsoil.

A single shallow linear feature (104) was noted cutting from beneath the level of the present topsoil. It was on an east-west alignment, measured 1.7 m wide by 0.4 m deep and had a concave base and sides (Fig. 4). The cut of this feature was poorly defined and its fill, a dark greyish brown sandy silt, was similar to the overlying topsoil. A small fragment of modern ceramic building material and a single worked flint were recovered from the fill (105).

5.1.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 was aligned approximately north-west to south-east and was located close to the north western corner of the compound. The trench was 23m long by 1.6m wide and was machined to a maximum depth of 0.56m .

No archaeological features or deposits were identified and natural gravel was identified at a depth of 0.5m beneath the present ground level.

The stratigraphic sequence consisted of natural gravel overlain by at least 0.4 m of brickearth, (202 and 201). The uppermost of these layers (201) was heavily disturbed by localised root activity and lay beneath a thin tarmac surface (200). It contained obviously modern finds.

5.1.3 Trench 3

Trench 3 was aligned ESE to WNW and was located to the south-east of the site. The trench was 27.5 m long by 1.6 m wide and was machined to a maximum depth of 1.1 m (Fig. 3).

No archaeological features or deposits were identified and natural gravel was identified at a depth of 0.96 m beneath the present ground level.

The stratigraphic sequence consisted of natural gravel (303) overlain by up to 0.5m of undisturbed brickearth (302) and an interface of up to 0.5 m of partially disturbed brickearth with modern inclusions (301) beneath the present topsoil.

5.2 Finds

All of the finds recovered consist of modern tile and brick with the exception of a single piece of residual struck flint found within the fill of shallow linear feature 104.

5.2 Environmental data

No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified.

6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Reliability of field investigation

The reliability of the field investigation is thought to be good. There was some question as to whether the brickearth was an undisturbed natural subsoil or a re-deposited layer. This deposit was extensively tested and examined within the evaluation trenches and no finds or features were discovered within or beneath it.

The only feature identified contained modern ceramic building material which is likely to be a true reflection of the date of the feature. The single piece of worked flint also found within the fill is almost certainly re-deposited.

6.2 Overall interpretation

6.2.1 *Summary of Results*

A single shallow east-west aligned linear feature was located within Trench 1. This is thought to be a modern ditch or gully as its fill was similar to the modern topsoil and contained a fragment of modern ceramic building material. A single prehistoric worked flint that was also found within the fill is thought to have been re-deposited.

No other evidence of archaeological activity was found within the evaluation trenches.

6.2.2 *Significance*

No significant archaeological finds or deposits were discovered. The single prehistoric worked flint may have been re-deposited from the surrounding area but is insufficient evidence to suggest significant prehistoric activity.

Bibliography and references

Shaikhley, N 1999 *A preliminary archaeological assessment of proposed development on land at Daisy Meadows, Vicarage Lane, Egham (September 1999)*.

Wilkinson, D (ed.) 1992 *Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual*, (First edition, August 1992)

Appendix 1: Archaeological Context Inventory: EDMVR 99

Trench 1							
Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Date
100	Layer	Topsoil	0.1				
101	Layer	Natural (brickearth)	0.7				
102	Layer	Natural (sandy grave)	0.3				
103	Layer	Natural (gravel)					
104	Cut	Modern linear	0.4	0.8	1.7+		
105	Fill	Fill				CBM, flint	Modern
Trench 2							
Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Date
200	Layer	Topsoil	0.09				
201	Layer	Subsoil	0.4			CBM, glass	Modern
202	Layer	Natural	0.15				
203	Layer	Natural					
Trench 3							
Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Date
300	Layer	Topsoil	0.15				
301	Layer	Subsoil	0.35			CBM	Modern
302	Layer	Natural	0.5				
303	Layer	Natural					



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figure 1: site location

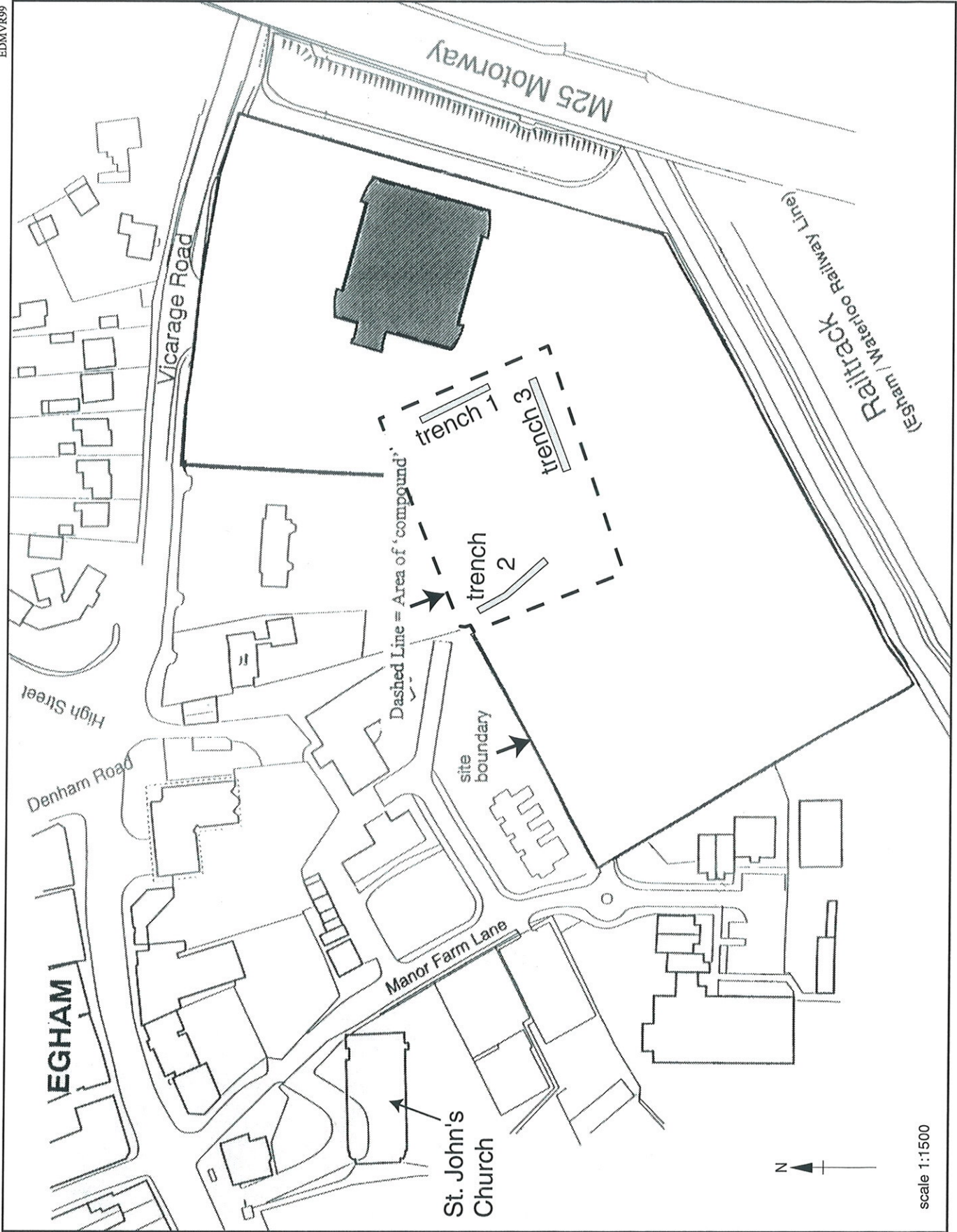


figure 2: trench location plan

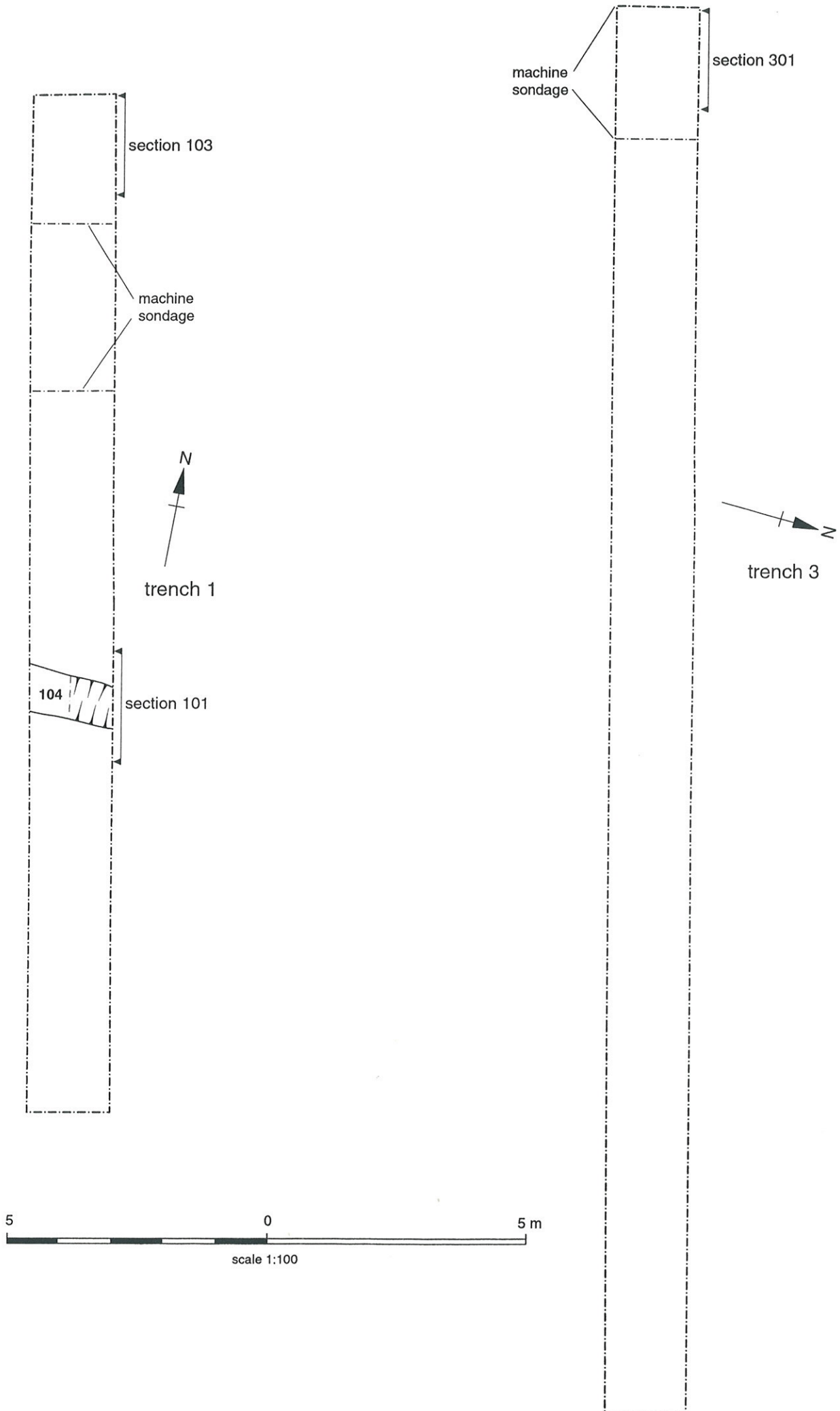


figure 3: trench plans

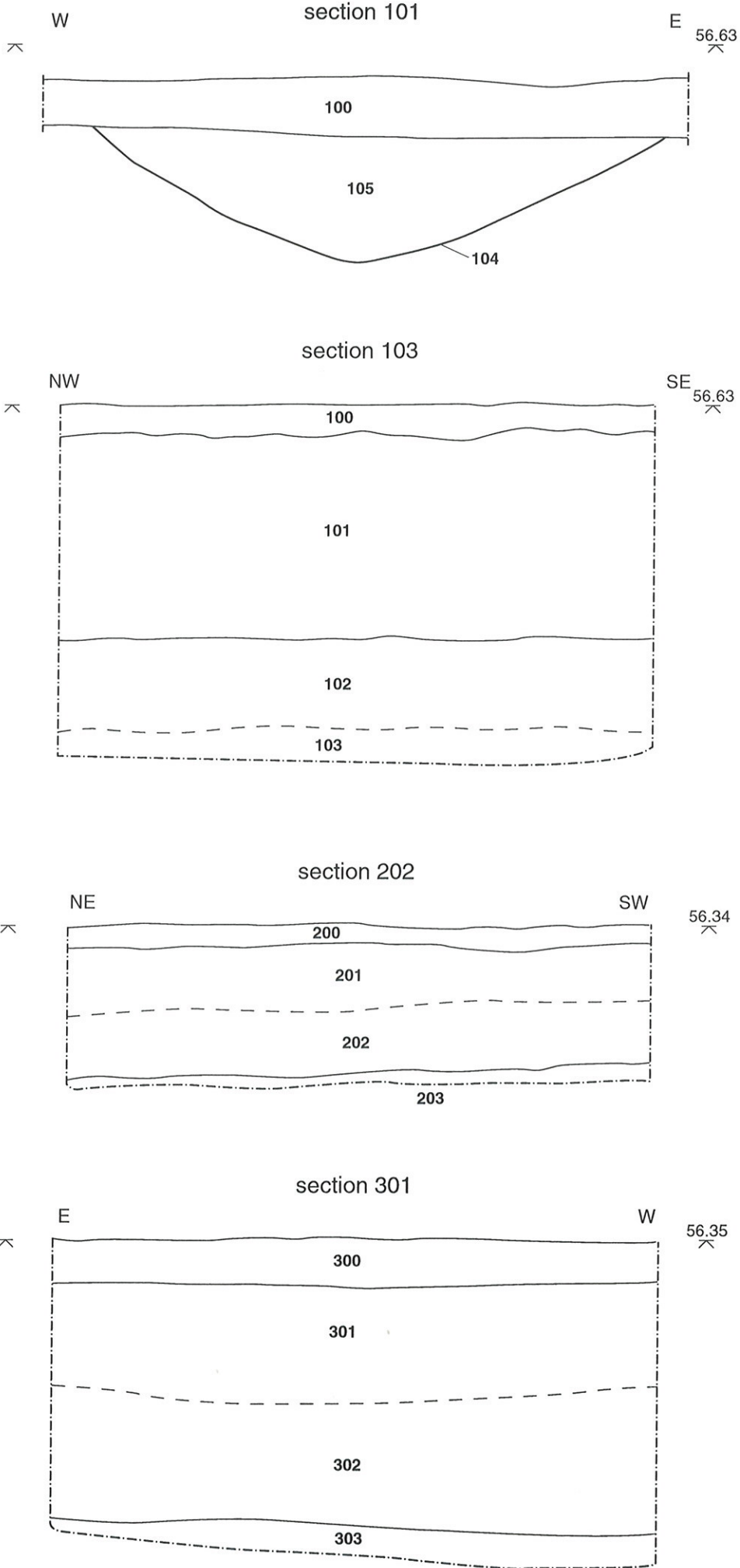


figure 4: sections



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