

Chapter 3: The archaeological results

INTRODUCTION

Phasing

A single phasing framework has been applied to all of the Saxon, medieval and post-medieval archaeology within the ten relevant sites. The prehistoric and Roman settlement archaeology – predominantly located on Sites 9 and 10 – is excluded from this framework, although the Roman trackway features found in Sites 4 and 6 are shown on the general Phase plan (Fig. 3.1).

The phasing comprises six periods, broadly divided by interpreted changes in site use. Phase 2 is subdivided further into three, although the chronology of those subdivisions is very tentative:

Phase 1:

Early Saxon: 5th century to late 6th century

Phase 2:

Middle Saxon: late 7th century to early 9th century

Phase 2a: 7th century to early 8th century

Phase 2b: early 8th century to late 8th century

Phase 2c: late 8th century to early 9th century

Phase 3:

Late Saxon: mid 9th century to 12th century

Phase 4:

Early medieval: 12th century to 14th century

Phase 5:

Late medieval: 14th century to mid 15th century

Phase 6:

Post-medieval: mid 15th century to 20th century

The overall phasing chronology has been determined by a combination of artefactual and scientific dating, where possible in conjunction with stratigraphy and spatial relationships. Inevitably, there are parts of the whole project area where significant stratigraphy was non-existent and spatial relationships were too vague to be useful. This is particularly the case with the western part of Site 2, to the west of the enclosure ditch, and – on the same site – in the area to the south of the buildings. Apparent features were recorded on plan as soil marks but the lack of resources precluded excavation. Therefore it was felt that to place them in a phase would be a speculative step too far. It is almost certain that most of the unexcavated post holes to the south of the buildings are associated with them in some way, but not so clear as to allow confident phasing.

General site conditions

The definition of cut features varied considerably across the eastern sites (Sites 1-8), depending upon subsoil type, and weather conditions. In general, where small features – postholes or shallow gullies, were cut into ironstone or limestone bedrock, they were difficult to define; similarly, where features were cut through silty clay subsoil, their visibility was often extremely variable. As can be seen from Plate 3.6, even large features like the enclosure ditch were virtually invisible in plan in places – indeed, one of the early evaluation trenches was cut across the largest enclosure ditch and failed to identify it. The following summary outlines the circumstances of excavation on each site, in terms of prevailing weather conditions and available resources, and in the light of the overall research priorities (Fig. 3.1).

Sites 1 and 2

These were excavated in the winter of 1994-95. While features were reasonably well-defined after topsoil stripping – despite the low winter light levels – the financial constraints meant that time and material resources had to be targeted on the basis of what appeared to be important at the time. Inevitably, with hindsight, post-excavation has sometimes arrived at different priorities, although overall there is confidence in the interpretation of the archaeology on these sites. Context numbers in the ranges 1200-1400 (Site 1) and 2000-2999 (Site 2).

Site 3

This site was stripped and subject to a very rudimentary evaluation in the winter of 1994-95, and the conclusions drawn from that work were inevitably very provisional and tentative. As nearly all the site falls within the footprint of Site 8, fully excavated in 2003, the latter represents the definitive interpretation of the archaeology of this part of the site complex. Context numbers in the range 3000-3500.

Site 4

Excavated in 2001, this site was the largest single area excavation of the 8 sites. The weather conditions were generally good, although definition of the features after topsoil stripping was still very variable. Context numbers in the range 6000-7999.

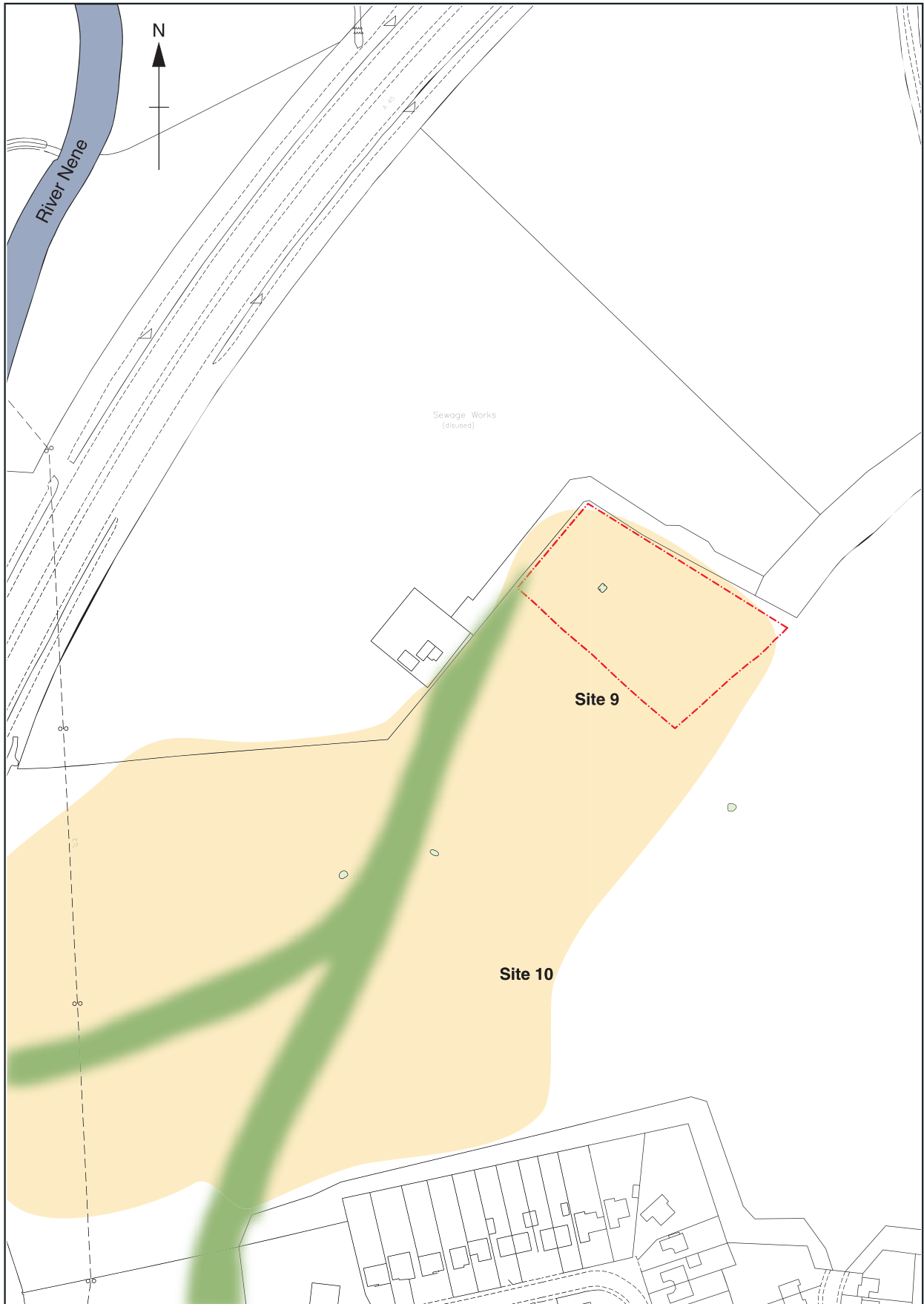


Fig. 3.1a Phase plan: all Phases

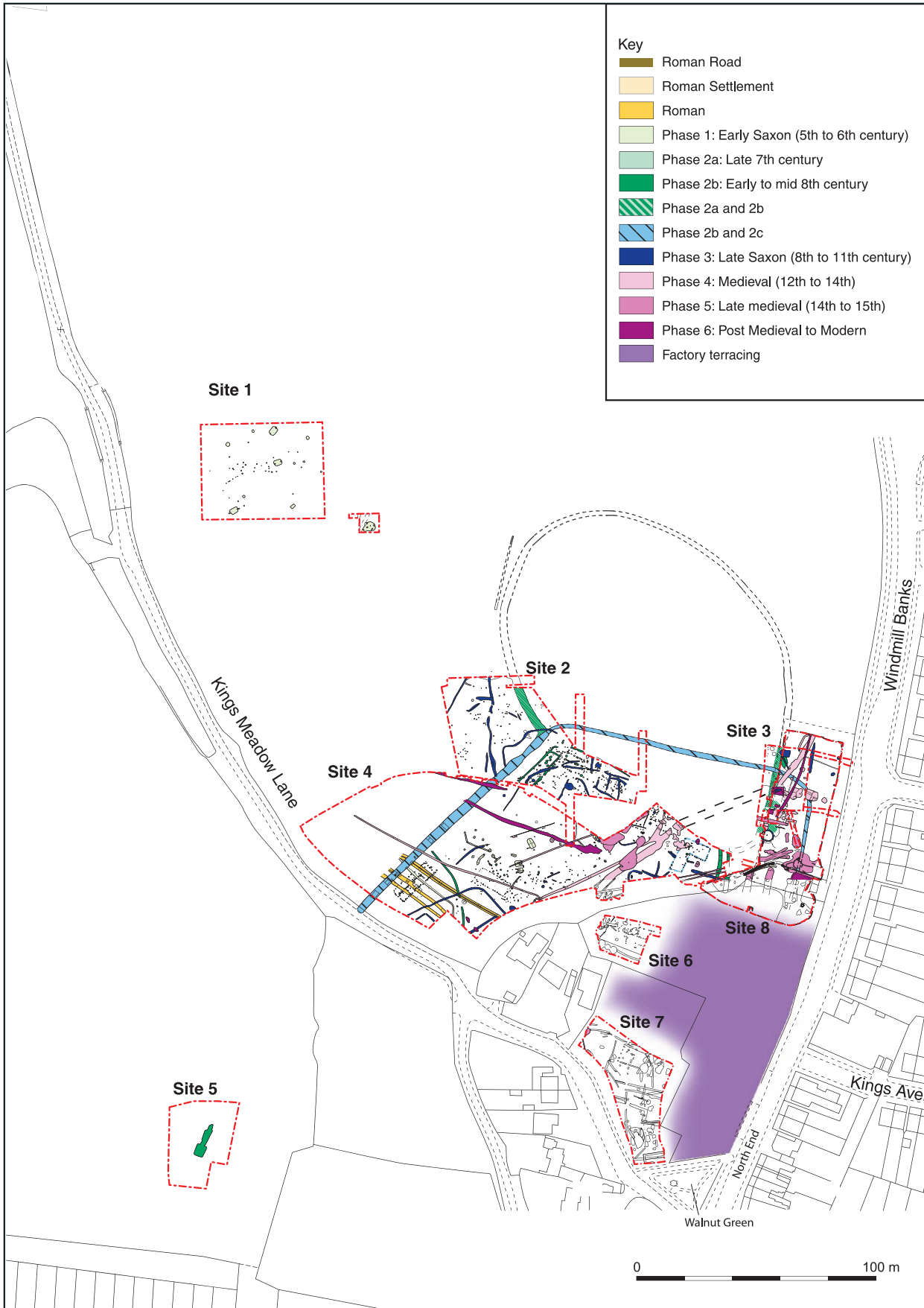


Fig. 3.1b Phase plan: all Phases

Site 5

Excavated in 2000, this was the expansion of the evaluation trench that first revealed the malting oven. As part of the following year's fieldwork, further trenches were excavated to the north and west of the oven, in an attempt to identify associated features and/or structures. Context numbers in the range 4000-5999.

Sites 6 and 7

These two sites were excavated in 2002, after the demolition of the factory buildings and petrol station on the eastern side of the development area. The weather conditions were good at the time of excavation, but it became increasingly clear that there had been considerable petroleum and/or diesel contamination from the petrol station that had been sited immediately to the north-east of the Site 7 (the corner of one of the backfilled storage tank pits was exposed in the north-east corner of the site). The fumes from the contamination, and the consequent Health and Safety risk, meant that the southern part of Site 7 was abandoned after the initial planning and a small amount of investigative excavation.

While the amount of excavation achieved on Site 7 was less than intended, there is reasonable confidence in the interpretation of the archaeology. The broad layout of the land division from the medieval period onwards is understood, and, given the generally low priority accorded by the research aims to this period, the absence of recovered data is not thought to be critical.

Context numbers in the ranges 9000-9499 (Site 6) and 9500-9999 (Site 7).

Site 8

Excavated in 2003, this site reopened the area first investigated as Site 3 eight years previously (see above). Conditions were generally good, although it was clear that the area had suffered some damage from post-medieval ploughing. In addition the south end of the site had been completely destroyed by terracing for the construction of the 20th-century factory complex (see Fig. 3.1). Context numbers in the range 15000-15999.

Sites 9 and 10

Sites 9 and 10 are produced evidence for Romano-British occupation, which is reported on separately (Lawrence and Smith forthcoming). However a number of sunken feature buildings (SFBs) were found that are reported below (Phase 1). Context numbers in the ranges 8000-8499 (Site 9) and 10000-14999 (Site 10).

PHASE 1 (MID 5th CENTURY TO MID-LATE 6th CENTURY) (Figs 3.2-3.3)

The Phase 1 evidence tended to be concentrated in discrete areas across the sites.

Four SFBs were found on Site 1 together with two pits and a scatter of post holes (Fig. 3.3). Site 4 contained four SFBs and associated features including ditches and pits. To the east isolated SFBs were located on sites 9 and 10.

The features are described by site, but this should not be taken as the chronological order of their construction. The chronology of the settlement is discussed in Chapter 5. All of the SFBs were fully excavated, and environmental samples recovered from the pit fills of those on Sites 1 and 4.

Site 1 (Fig. 3.3)

Three sunken featured buildings were identified in the excavation area along with a single associated pit, and together with another SFB in the small trench to the south-east.

SFB 1253 (Fig. 3.4)

The feature was situated in the small extension area immediately east of Site 1, and was defined by a sub-rectangular pit (1258) oriented W-E, although it became evident on cleaning the area that the north-west corner of the feature had been entirely removed by a modern service trench. The presence of this service trench was not in doubt, but the exact edges of the cut were hard to define, with the result that the stratigraphy of the western end of the section excavated through the SFB was not clear. From the undamaged part of the SFB, the depth of the feature averaged 0.35 m, with a flat base and sharply sloping sides. Two fills were evident: the lower fill (1254) and upper fill (1255), both comprised silty loams with ironstone fragments and inclusions of burnt stone.

Structural postholes – There appeared to be two phases of postholes. At the eastern end were two postholes, 1259 and 1261, of similar dimensions and depths. Two postholes (1278 and 1280) were located near the centre of the SFB. Posthole 1280 cut posthole 1278.

Subsidiary postholes – Five postholes were identified at points around the perimeter of the SFB pit. With one exception (1327), they were noticeably narrower in diameter than the ridge postholes, although they were dug to approximately the same depth. One further small posthole (1284) was located within the north-east quadrant.

Pottery (Fig. 4.1, 7), along with animal bone and burnt stone were recovered from layer 1254. Layer 1255 produced pottery (Fig. 4.1, 6, 8, and 10), animal bone, burnt stone, (SF 57 – NI) and a Cu Alloy and Fe fitting (SF 58 – Fig.4.22, 51)

SFB 1256 (Fig. 3.5)

The feature was defined by a sub-rectangular flat-bottomed pit, oriented NE-SW, measuring approximately 2.6 m long x 2.5 m wide. The maximum depth of the pit was 0.09 m, and the edges of the pit were very shallow and poorly defined. The fill (1257) was a reddish brown silty loam with occasional charcoal flecking and small pieces of ironstone. The environmental sample from this

material was the only one from all the Site 1 SFBs worthy of analysis (see Moffett, Chapter 4).

Structural postholes – At the southern end was one large posthole (1275), measuring 0.75 m wide x 0.50 m deep containing two apparent postpipes, one large (1274) and one small (1288), both surrounded by a mix of silty clay and ironstone fragments. At the northern end was an elongated double posthole



Fig. 3.2a Phase 1a Early Saxon

(1273) measuring 1.0 m long x 0.50 m deep, which was situated partly within the area of the pit itself. The posthole contained at least two, and possibly three postpipes. Immediately to the north and beyond the pit edge was another posthole (1295), measuring 0.32 m wide x 0.42 m deep. The very shallow depth of the pit meant that there was no clear stratigraphic relationship between the pit fill

and the postholes. Finds including pottery (Fig. 4.1.1), animal bone, and a fragment of Copper Alloy (SF88 – not illustrated) were recovered from the pit fill.

Another substantial posthole (1354) was situated approximately 2.3 m north-east of posthole 1295, along the axis of the SFB. Its possible structural association with the SFB is discussed in Chapter 5.

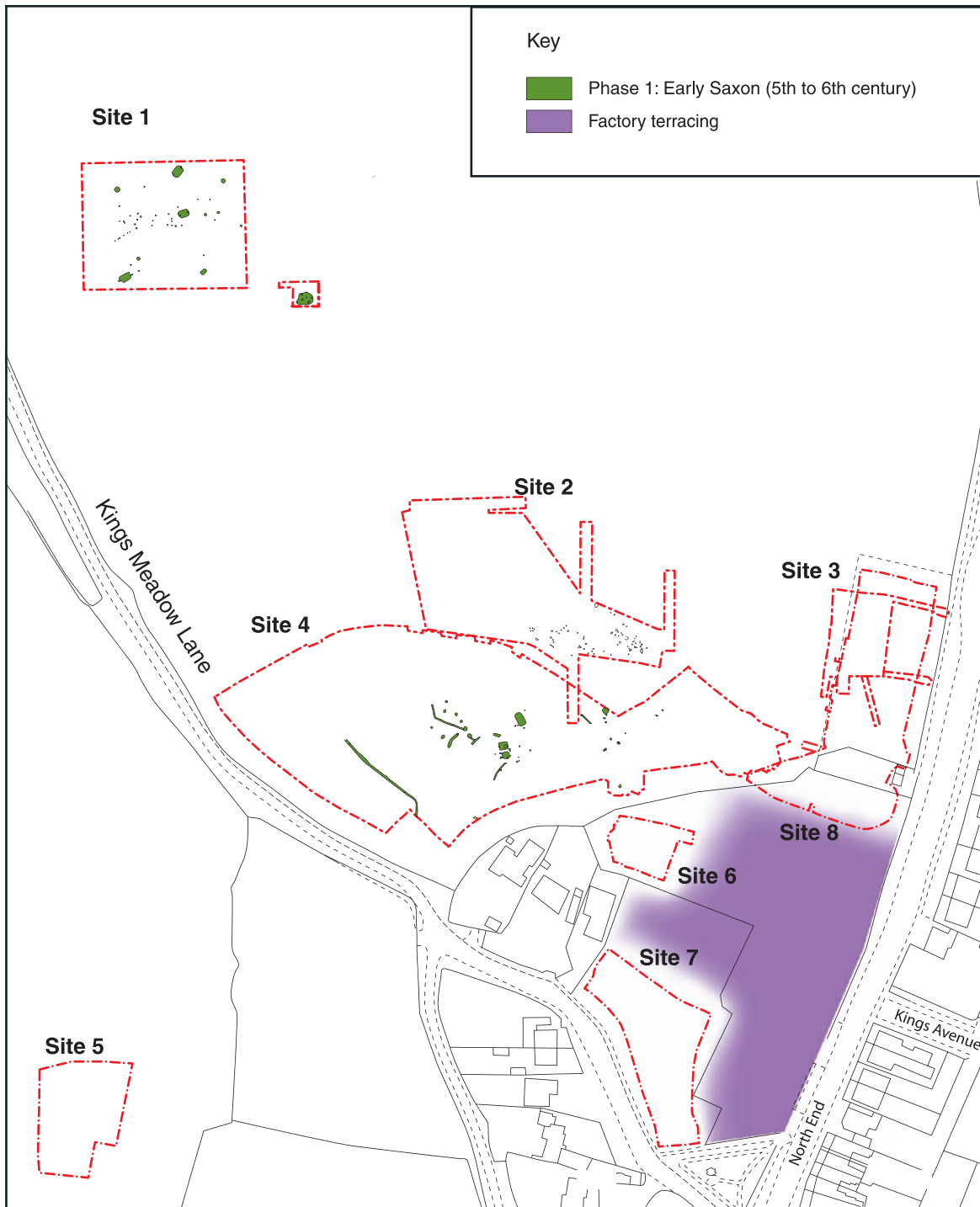


Fig. 3.2b Phase 1a Early Saxon

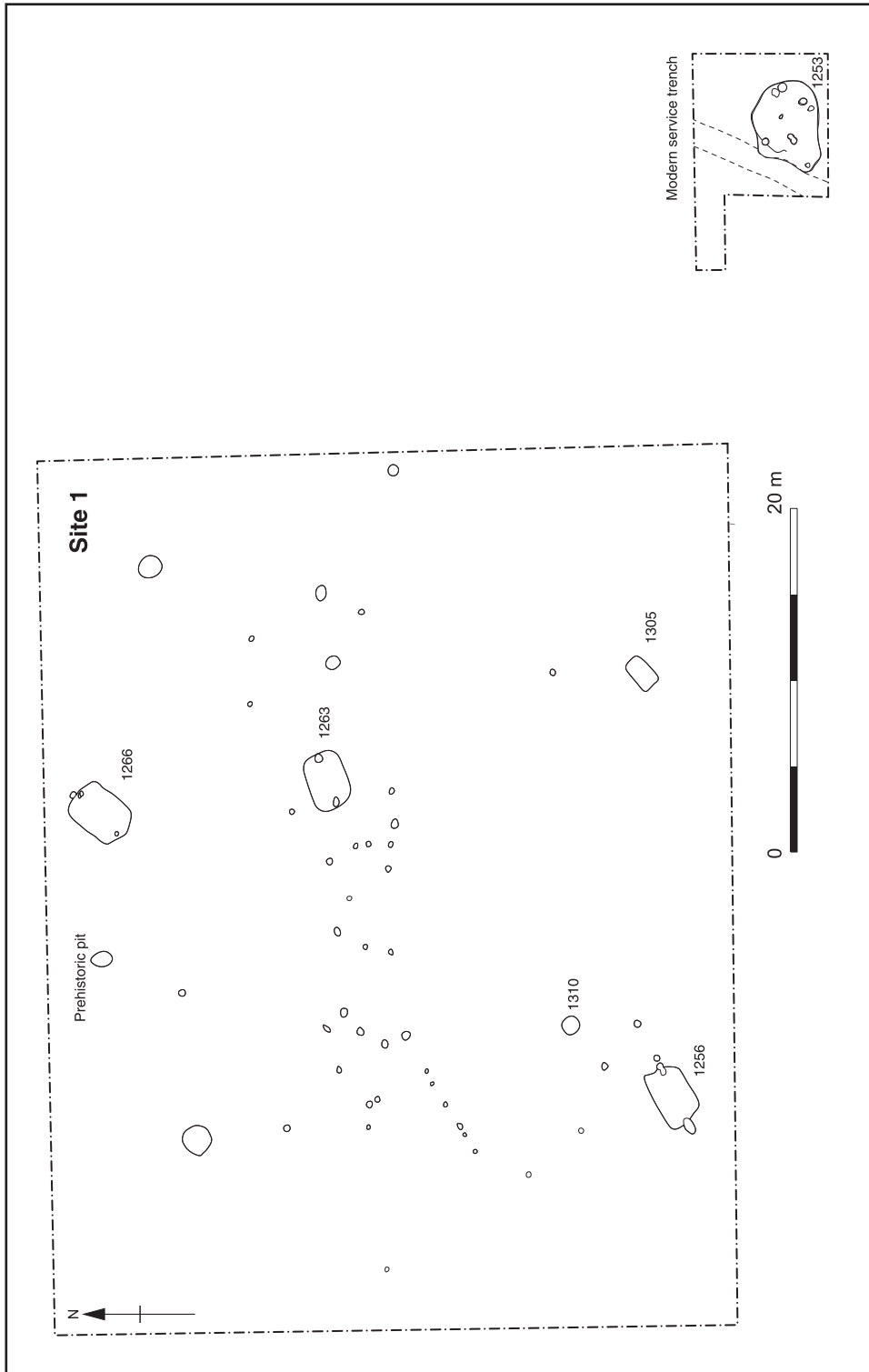


Fig. 3.3 General plan of features Site 1

SFB 1263 (Fig. 3.6, Pl. 3.1)

The feature was defined by a sub-rectangular pit (1264), oriented west-east and measuring 3.5 m long x 2.3 m wide, with a consistent depth of 0.50 m to a flat base. The SFB fill was a silty clay (1268) – with charcoal flecking (1271) in its upper part – mixed with ironstone rubble, which may be evidence of

deliberate backfilling. A clay silt layer (1265) overlay fill 1268. A small quantity of animal bone and early Saxon pottery was recovered from all three fills. Layer 1268 produced part of a knife blade (SF 61 – NI) and a Cu Alloy edge binding (SF74 – Fig. 4.17, 50). Another fragment possibly of the same object was recovered from fill 1265 (SF 73 – Fig. 4.17, 49).

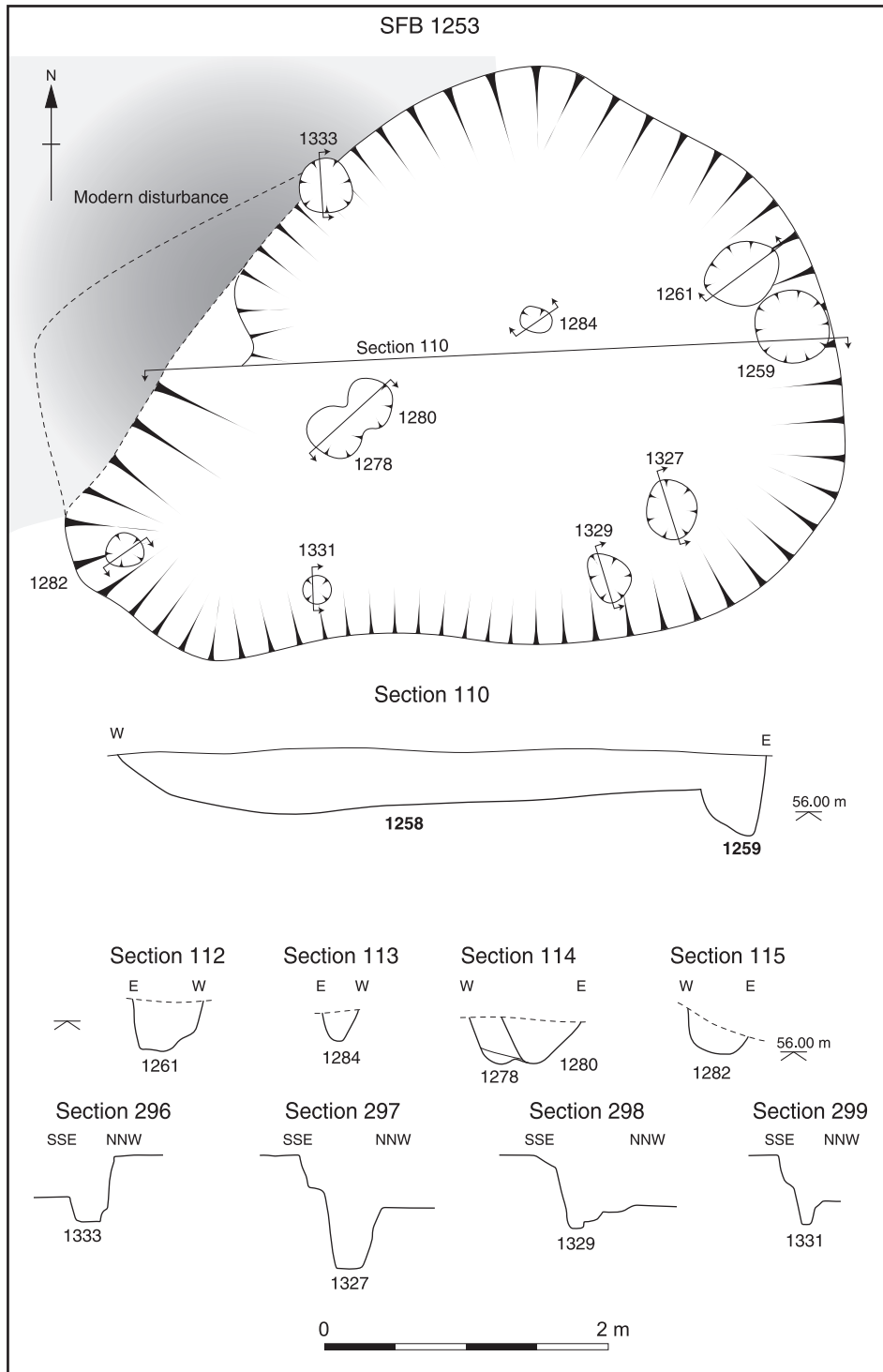


Fig. 3.4 Site 1 SFB 1253

Structural postholes – Two postholes (1276 and 1322) were identified at the west and east ends respectively. Each posthole was cut into the steeply sloping side of the pit and measured 0.35 m wide x 0.90 m deep. Ironstone posthole packing was noted in the western hole.

SFB 1266 (Fig. 3.7)

The feature was defined by a sub-rectangular pit (1270) oriented NE-SW and measuring approximately 3.3 m long x 2.8 m wide. The pit was flat-bottomed, with a maximum depth of 0.32 m. Two fills were recorded in the pit, a 0.08 m deep layer of brownish yellow clay (1297) with occasional charcoal flecks, which the excavator considered to be possibly the disturbed upper surface of the natural subsoil. This was overlaid by layer 1269, a 0.30 m deep layer of grey brown silty clay, very similar to the fills of the three postholes associated with the structure.

Structural postholes – Within the pit, two postholes were identified, cut through the pit's lower fill. The western posthole (1293) was 0.62 m deep x 0.25 m wide. The eastern posthole was 0.24 m wide x 0.64 m deep. A further posthole (1301) was situated just beyond the eastern edge

of the pit, measuring 0.30 m deep x 0.38 m wide.

Finds – From layer 1269 a small quantity of pottery (see Fig. 4.1, 9, 12, and 14) and animal bone was recovered, along with an iron nail (SF64 – NI). The fill (1300) of posthole 1301 also produced pottery (Fig. 4.1, 5, 13, and 17)

Other features in Site 1 (Fig.3.3)

Pit 1305 – This was situated in the south-eastern corner of Site 1. It was sub-rectangular in plan, oriented NE-SW, and measured approximately 2.3 m long x 1.5 m wide. The flat base was overlain by three fills. 1308 was a 0.14 m deep layer of mixed ash and silt, with bone and charcoal fragments. This was overlain by a 0.10 m deep layer of silty clay and ironstone fragments, with some burnt stone inclusions (1325). Sealing 1325 was the 0.20 m deep upper fill of slightly stony silty loam (1304). The upper fill 1304 produced a possible Fe pin fragment (SF 78 – NI).

Pit 1310 – The feature was a shallow dish-shaped pit containing a fill (1309) of silty clay with a high proportion of burnt stone and charcoal, and unidentifiable tree or shrub buds. A small assemblage of pottery and animal bone was also recovered from

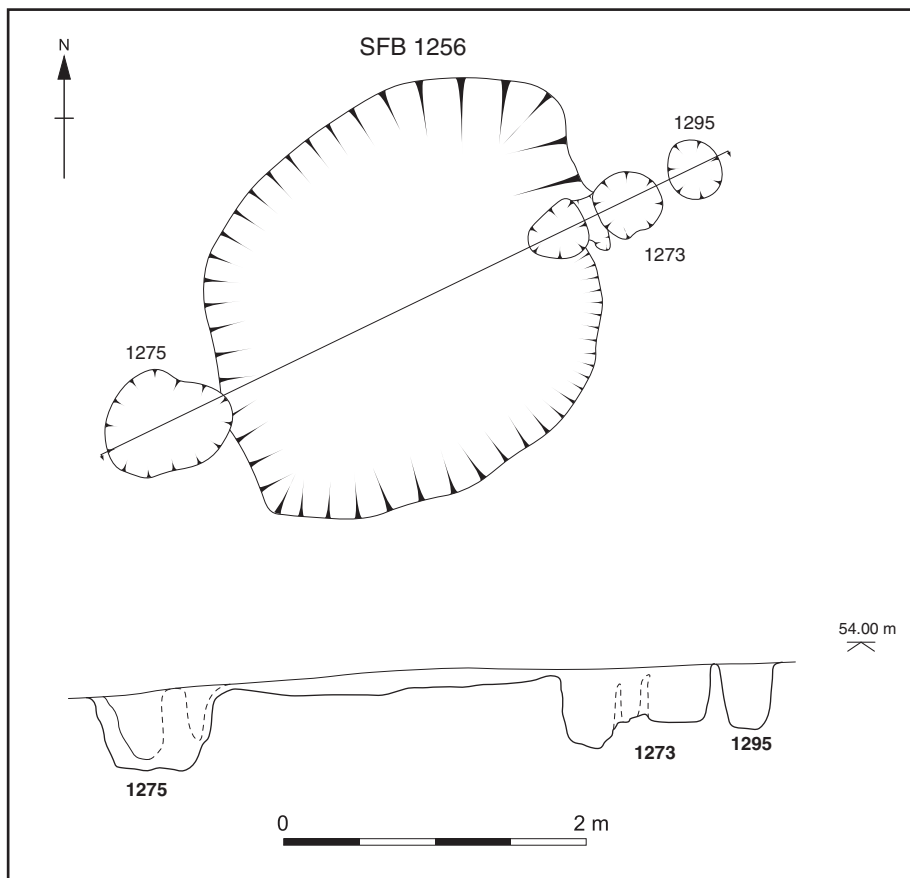


Fig. 3.5 Site 1 SFB 1256

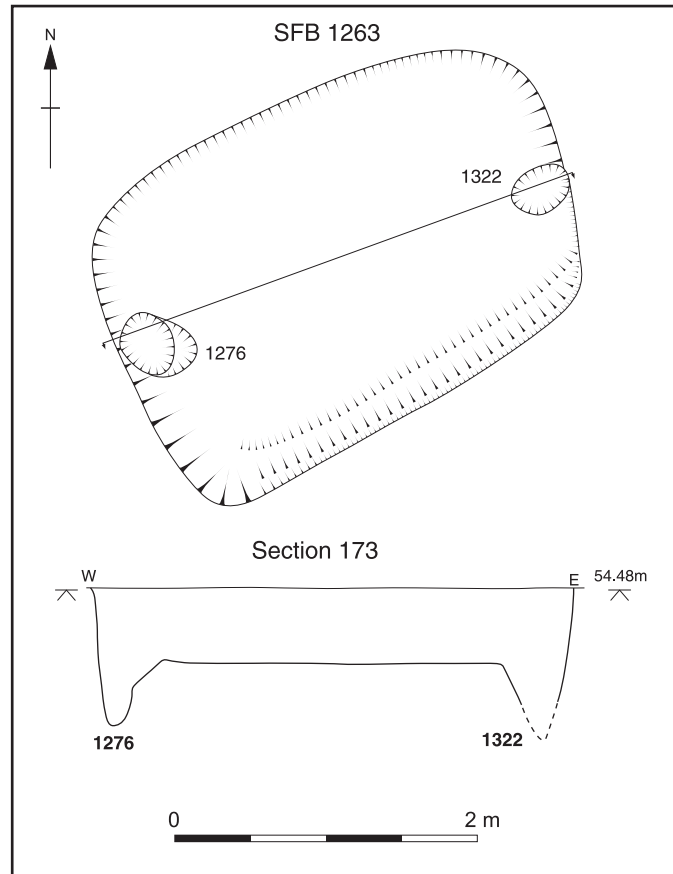


Fig. 3.6 Site 1 SFB 1263



Plate 3.1 SFB 1263 Site 1

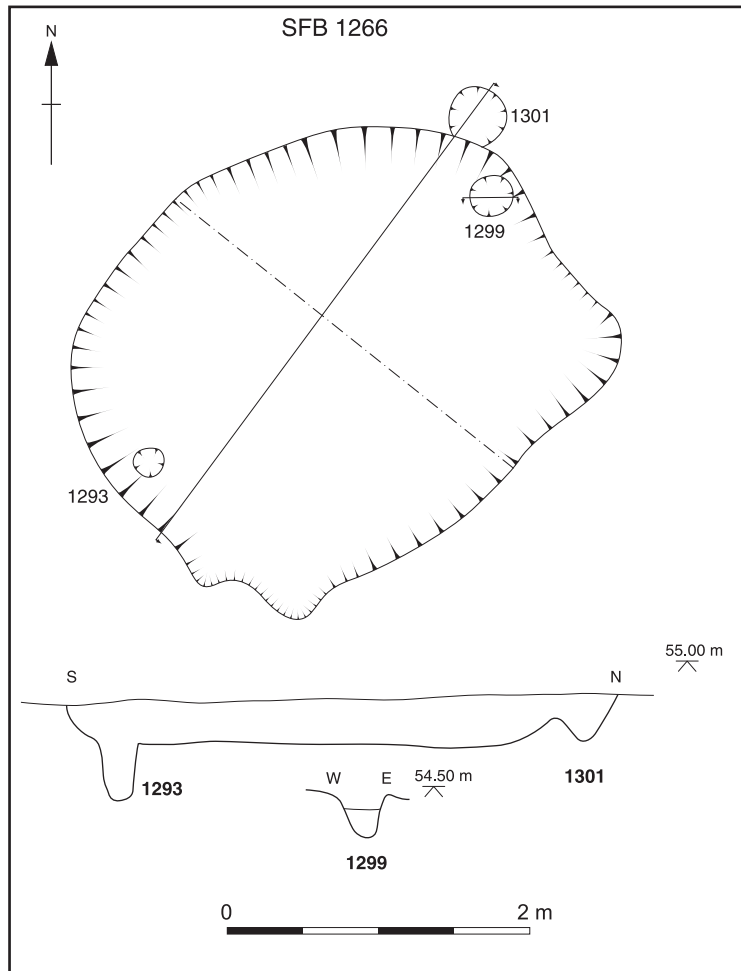


Fig. 3.7 Site 1 SFB 1266

the fill. The pit cut a substantial isolated posthole (1315).

A scatter of discrete features – probably postholes – was identified within the area of Site 1. Only those already cited were investigated; it is assumed that at least some of the rest are associated with the SFBs.

Site 4 (Fig. 3. 2)

Three sunken featured buildings (SFB's) were revealed in the central area of the site, along with a number of associated ditches, pits and postholes.

SFB 6057 (Fig. 3.8, Pl.3.2)

This feature was defined by a sub-rectangular flat-bottomed pit with near vertical sides. It was oriented W-E, measuring approximately 2.9 m long by 2.4 m wide. The maximum depth of the pit was 0.43 m and the fill consisted of dark grey brown sandy loam with charcoal inclusions (6058). The upper fill of the pit was cut by Phase 4 gully 7311. An environmental sample from the undisturbed fill 6058 produced barley and flax seeds.

Structural postholes – A single posthole was revealed at either end of the pit. In the centre was a group of flat limestone pieces, forming a possible postpad. Two more stones were placed on top of the main pad, possibly representing a later adjustment. There were several other similar stones removed from the pit fill in the NW corner of the SFB, which may also represent disturbed elements of the postpad. Recovered finds included 88 sherds of early/mid Saxon pottery (Fig. 4.1, 3, 4, and 15), a bone comb (SF 298 – Fig. 4.19, 36), two Fe nails (SF 351 and 352 – NI), along with 62 g of slag, animal bone and burnt stone.

SFB 6356 (Fig. 3.9, Pl. 3.2)

The feature was defined by a sub-rectangular flat bottomed pit (6356), situated immediately south of, and adjacent to SFB 6057. It was oriented WSW-ENE, measuring approximately 2.3 m long and 2.18 m wide. The maximum depth of the pit was 0.12 m. The fill consisted of dark brownish/grey silty loam (6357). An environmental sample produced a few grains of tetraploid wheat, not normally seen in this

country until the medieval period. Given the very shallow depth of the SFB pit in this instance, as Moffett says (Chapter 4), there is a strong likelihood of intrusive later material. A total of 35 sherds of pottery, along with a bone comb (SF 324 – Fig. 4.19, 41), a bone pin (SF 325 -Fig. 4.16, 8), and a small quantity of slag and animal bone, were recovered from the SFB pit.

Structural postholes – A number of postholes, possibly denoting at least one episode of rebuilding, were identified in the pit or close to it.

A pair of postholes (6347, 6358) was excavated at the eastern end of the pit, straddling the pit edge. At the edge of the south west quadrant of the pit four postholes are clustered together. A degree of symmetry is evident in the posthole arrangement at the west end of the SFB pit. Two pairs of intercutting postholes (6419/6421, and 6526/6528) extend from the north-west and south-west corners respectively. Beyond these pairs, two more postholes (6524 and 6364) one on either side were identified. Just to the east of 6524 another posthole 6502 was revealed.

To the east and between SFBs 6057 and 6353 was a series of four intercutting postholes (6564, 6566, 6568 and 6570). Their alignment in relation to the

SFBs, and the presence of a sherd of 5th-century pottery in one of the posthole fills suggest that they are related to the SFBs.

Associated features (Fig. 3.35)

To the south and west of the two SFBs 6057 and 6356 were features which appeared to be contemporary.

Group 7326 – The main group of features comprised 5 pits – roughly equally spaced and extending to the north-west from close to the pair of SFBs 6057 and 6356. Each pit contained a high proportion of charcoal flecks in their fills, although they produced very little datable material apart from 7 sherds (41g) of early to mid Saxon pottery found in fill 6344 of pit 6343. Two of the large pits (6343 and 6168) situated close together are both at the termination of two shallow gullies (6255 and 6352) and may form part of an entrance. Neither gully produced any contemporary dating material. Gully 6352 links to another gully 6522, which also contained a noticeable percentage of charcoal in its fill. The charcoal fill (6344) of pit 6343 was sampled, revealing that the charcoal was exclusively oak (see Thompson and Francis, Chapter 4)

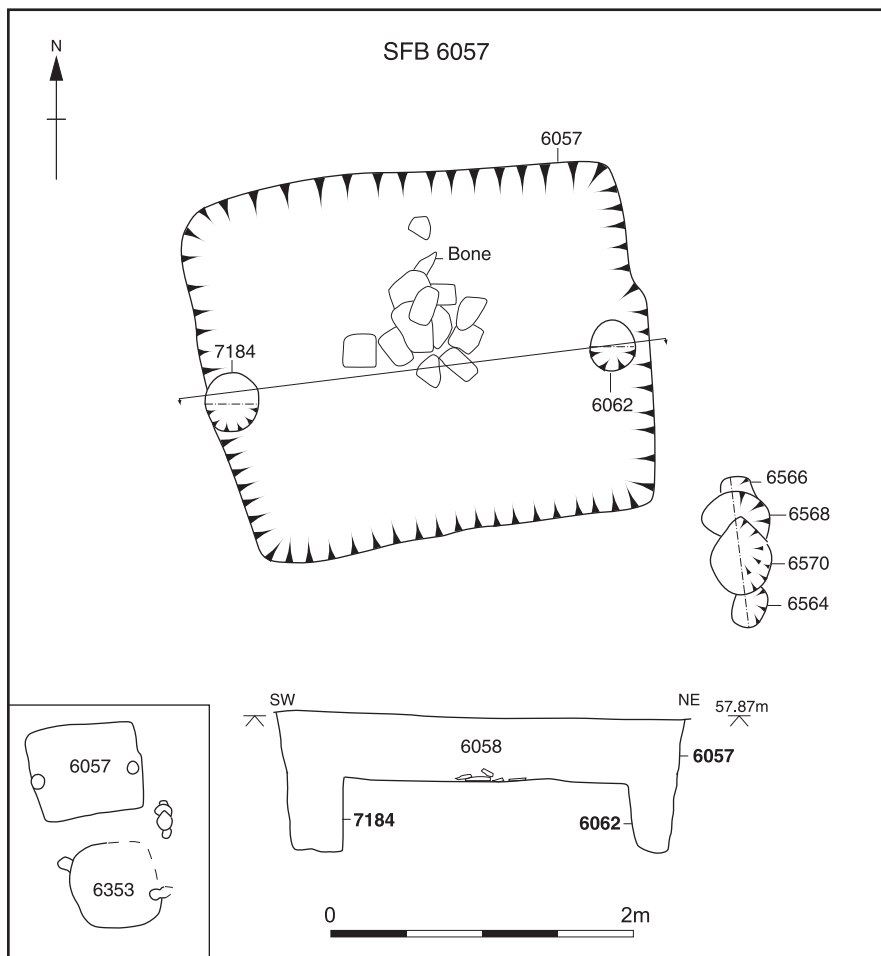


Fig. 3.8 Site 4 SFB 6057



Plate 3.2 SFBs 6057 & 6356 Site 4

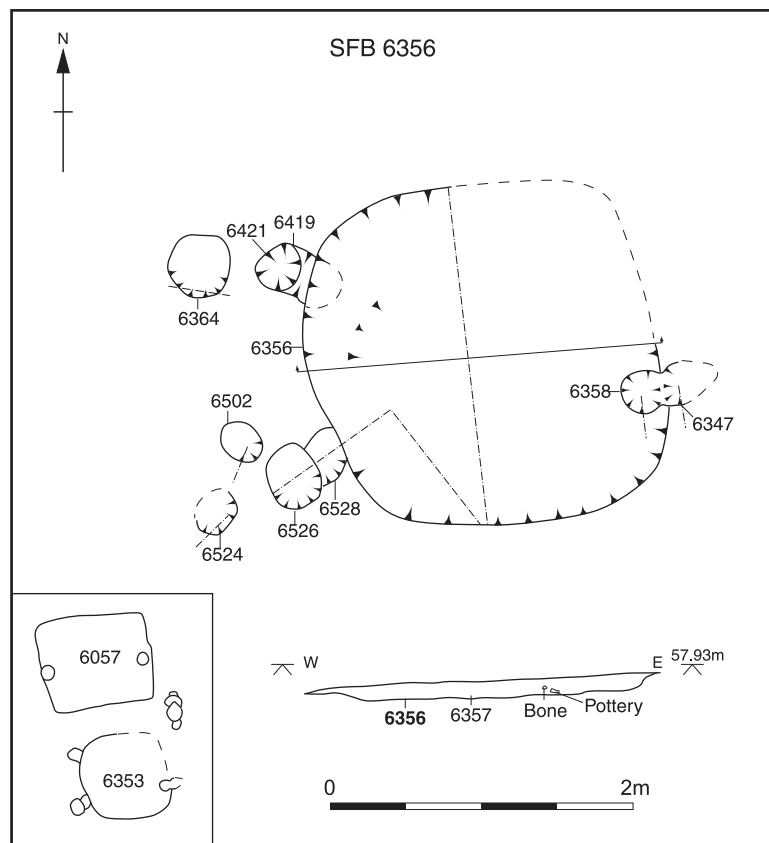


Fig. 3.9 Site 4 SFB 6356

Ditch 7328 – A short curving gully (7328) is considered to belong to this group of features on the basis of its spatial relationship, not its stratigraphy.

Ditch 7306 – Ditch 7306 is located in the south west end of Site 4, emerging from the southern limit of the site on a north south alignment for approximately 5 m before it turns north-west on a NW-SE alignment for 26 m where it is cut by the Phase 2b enclosure ditch. The ditch appeared to run beyond the enclosure ditch to the north-west, but was indiscernible after a few metres. On stratigraphic grounds it must date to Phase 2a or earlier, and its fill was distinct from that of the Roman features in the vicinity. No other Phase 2a features exist in the area, and therefore, it is tentatively assigned to Phase 1.

SFB 6345 (Fig.3.10)

The feature was defined by a sub-rectangular flat-bottomed pit oriented NW-SE, and situated approximately 10 m north of the SFB pair 6057 and 6356. The pit displayed sloping sides, and measured approximately 4.5 m long by 2.35 m wide, with a maximum depth of 0.22 m. The pit fill (6346) was a

mid-orange/brown silty loam with occasional charcoal flecking, which produced a few mixed cereal grains from an environmental sample.

Structural postholes – No postholes were identified in the pit, although in close proximity to the pit were four very shallow post holes 6369, 6343, 6367 and 6371 that may relate to the structure, containing mid greyish brown silty clay fills. No datable finds were recovered from these features. A total of 80 sherds of pottery were recovered from the SFB pit fill (6346), along with a bone comb (SF 326 – Fig. 4.19, 37), and fragments of animal bone.

SFB 6630 (Fig. 3.11)

Partly exposed under the northern baulk of Site 4 (and originally exposed – but not recognised – in an evaluation trench), was a probable SFB (6630) with one internal posthole (6641) and a cluster of five others to the south. The recovered early/middle Saxon pottery from the pit fill (6631) and the stratigraphy suggests the feature is of a Phase 1 date, and its depth and shape is consistent with the form of an SFB.

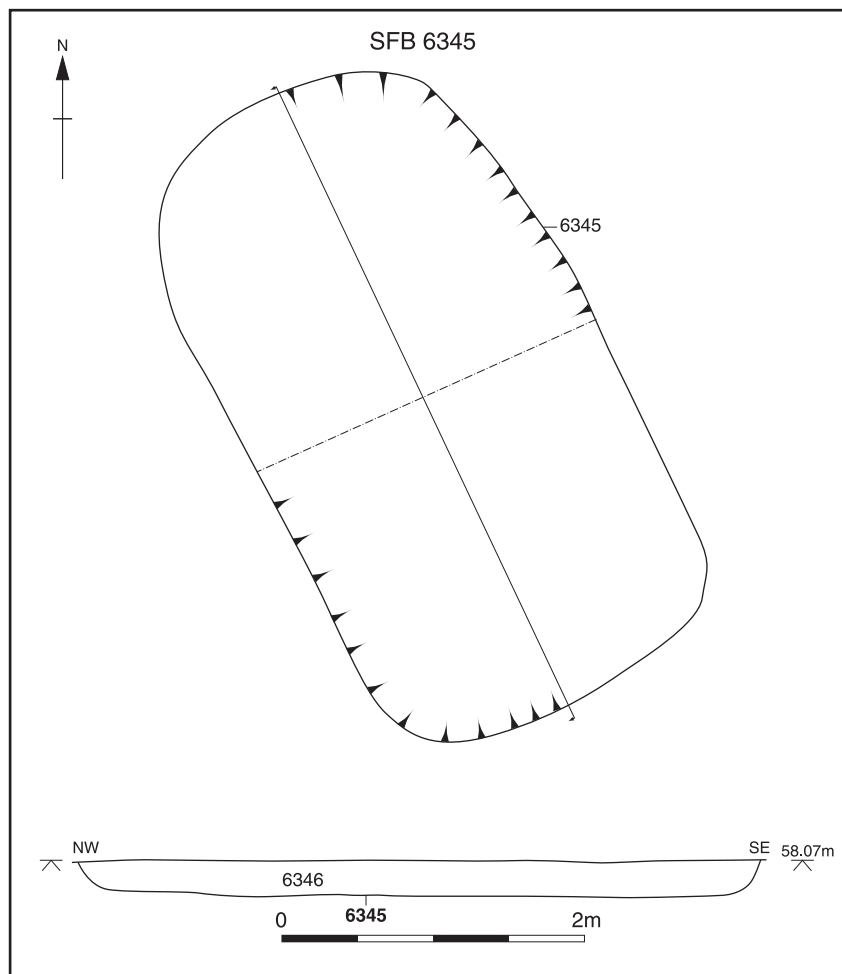


Fig. 3.10 Site 4 SFB 6345

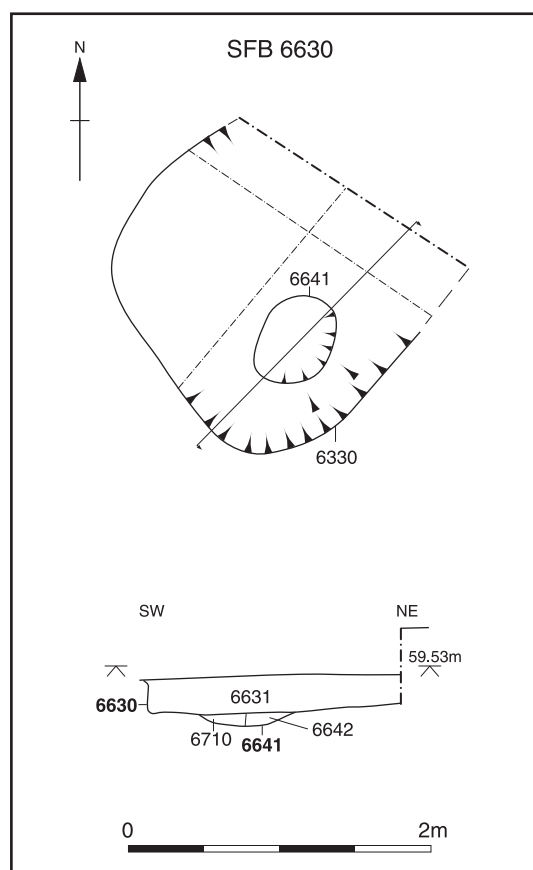


Fig. 3.11 Site 4 SFB 6630

A scatter of small features was identified to the south of SFB 6630, including a truncated gully (7182), and pits 7243 and 7038. Pit 7243 produced sherds of early/mid Saxon pottery, and the fill (7037) of pit 7038 yielded a few mixed cereal grains. It is reasonable to suggest that these features could be associated with SFB 6630.

Sites 9 and 10 (Fig. 3.2)

A scatter of dated Phase 1 features, including three definite and one probable SFBs and a single pit, were identified during the evaluations and excavations that took place in areas of the Roman settlement.

While the presence of complex Roman stratigraphy in some instance made the definition of the Saxon features problematic, there is a high degree of confidence that no significant Anglo-Saxon features have been mistakenly phased as Roman, or vice versa.

SFB 8222 (Site 9) (Fig. 3.12)

A single SFB (8222) and a possibly associated pit were identified within the area of Roman features interpreted as a temple complex. The SFB

comprised a subrectangular pit 8222, flat-bottomed and with moderately sloping sides, oriented SW-NE and measuring 3.12 m long x 2.87 m wide x 0.28 m deep. Two opposing quadrants were excavated, revealing patches of compacted natural on the pit base, and two gable postholes – 8262 at the south-west end and 8251 at the north-east end.

The lower fill (8223) of the SFB pit was a brownish grey silty clay containing stone pieces and charcoal flecks. It sealed the fills of both postholes. A significant quantity of 6th-century pottery was recovered from both the lower fill and the upper fill (8256) of the SFB pit (Fig. 4.1, 18, 19, 20). Quantities of similar pottery were found in isolated sections dug into nearby Roman ditches 8292 and 8294. In both cases these are interpreted as shallow pits or depressions in the upper fills of the Roman ditches, but not recognised as such during excavation.

Structural postholes – posthole 8262 measured 0.36 m in diameter by 0.42 m deep, with near vertical sides and a concave base, and posthole 8251 measured 0.24 m in diameter x 0.42 m long x 0.42 m deep. Both postholes contained brownish grey silty clay fills (8263 and 8252 respectively) and remains of limestone packing against the hole edges.

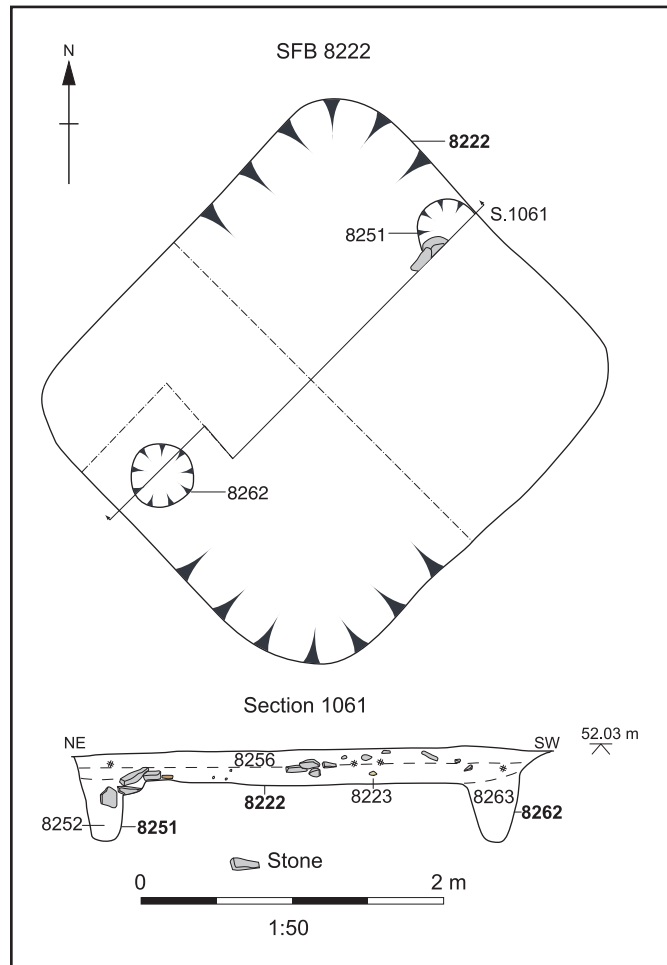


Fig. 3.12 Site 9 SFB 8222

SFB 10212 (Site 10) (Fig. 3.13)

SFB 10212 was revealed in an evaluation trench situated on the NE-facing slope of the Kings Meadow Lane dry valley extending to the east of the Roman settlement. The poorly defined sub-rectangular pit (10206) of the SFB was oriented W-E and measured approximately 3.25 m long x 2.5 m wide x 0.30 m deep. A quantity of 6th-century pottery was recovered from the fill of the SFB pit.

Structural postholes – Two gable postholes were revealed, 10224 to the west, and 10209 to the east. The former measured approximately 0.35 m wide x 0.44 m deep; the latter 0.30 m wide and 0.40 m deep. The postpipe fill (10208) of posthole 10209 was visible in the surface of the SFB pit fill (10205), suggesting that the post was in place during the infilling of the pit. By contrast, the fill of posthole 10224 was only visible after the pit fill had been removed. Both postholes contained a similar fill, a brownish grey sandy silt, with some small ironstone rubble inclusions.

SFB 12740 (Site 10) (Fig. 3.14)

SFB 12740 consisted of an ill-defined sub-rectangular, or oval, pit (12731), situated on the east side of the Roman road, set within a small courtyard and alongside the remains of a stone building, both of which dated to the 3rd century. The SFB pit was oriented W-E and measured approximately 3.97 m long x 2.14 m wide x up to 0.22 m deep. It was excavated in quadrants producing a single dark grey brown sandy silt fill with occasional limestone/ironstone inclusions. A large quantity of 6th-century pottery was recovered from the fill.

Structural postholes – no structural postholes were found within or in close proximity to the SFB pit. While this fact, along with the generally poor definition of the feature, undoubtedly raises some doubts over its identification as an SFB, its overall (if ill-defined) proportions and the presence of a large assemblage of Early/Middle Saxon pottery lends at least some confidence to the identification.

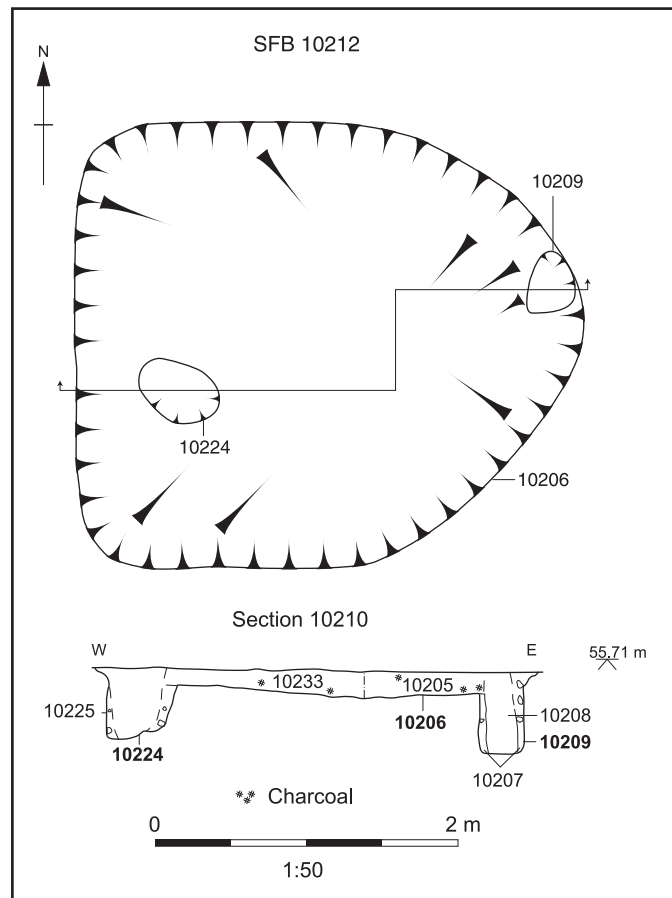


Fig. 3.13 Site 10 SFB 10212

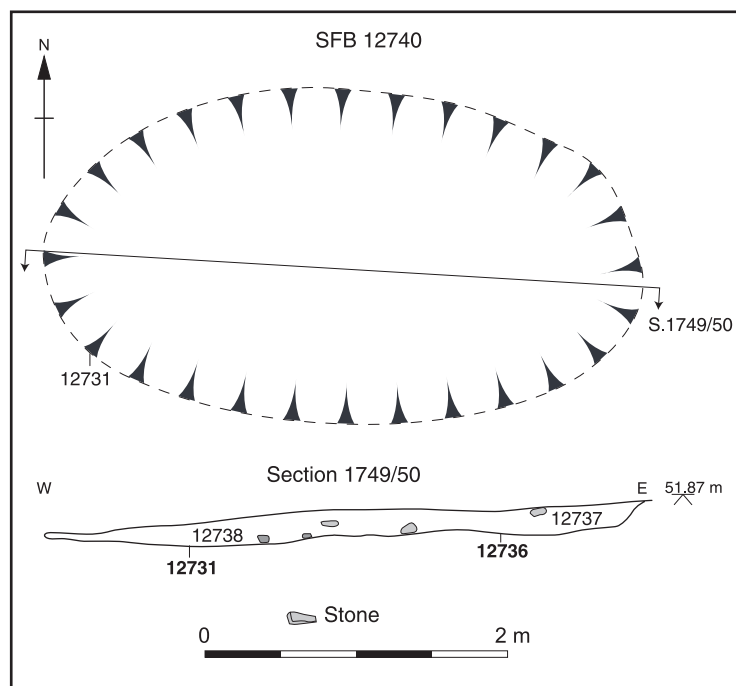


Fig. 3.14 Site 10 SFB 12740

SFB 12800 (Site 10) (Fig.3.15)

SFB 12800 was situated on the western side of the Roman road, within the Roman 'shrine area'. It consisted of a sub-rectangular flat-bottomed pit (12795) oriented NW-SE and measuring 3.84 m long x 3.04 m wide x up to 0.32 m deep.

Structural postholes – a single posthole (12797) was revealed in the south-east end of the pit, set in by 0.70 m from. It measured 0.38 m in diameter x 0.39 m deep. Against the north-west end of the SFB pit was a double posthole (12891/12893). Each part measured 0.28 m in diameter x 0.40 m deep. No postpipe was visible in the fill of the SFB pit, so it is considered that the posts were removed before the pit was infilled.

The fills of the postholes and SFB pit were similar, a mid-brown sandy silt with occasional ironstone inclusions. Significant quantities of 6th-century pottery were recovered from the pit fill and the fill (12894) of one of the north-eastern postholes (12893).

Other Phase 1 features on Site 10 (Fig. 3.2)

Two pits excavated on Site 10 were assigned to Phase 1.

Pit 10521, a shallow feature measuring 1.20 m long x 0.62 m wide x 0.12 m deep was identified close to the eastern side of the Roman road, approximately midway between SFB 12800 and SFB 8222. Its fill (10522) produced a single sherd of Early/Middle Saxon pottery.

Pit 10221 was shallow and flat-bottomed and measuring 1.80 m x 1.10 m x 0.30 m deep. It was found a short distance south of SFB 10210. The fill of the pit (10220) contained a high proportion of burnt stone and charcoal, and the underlying natural ironstone showed signs of burning in situ. The fill produced no artefactual dating evidence, but, given the absence of Roman features in the vicinity, it would be reasonable to cautiously suggest that this feature is contemporary with nearby SFB 10210.

PHASE 2 (EARLY 8th CENTURY TO EARLY 9th CENTURY)

The main features of this Phase are the horseshoe-shaped enclosure and associated buildings. As already noted, Phase 2 can be divided into three sub-phases. The start and end dates for Phase 2 are based upon the ceramic evidence and radiocarbon dating which suggests a start date of no earlier than

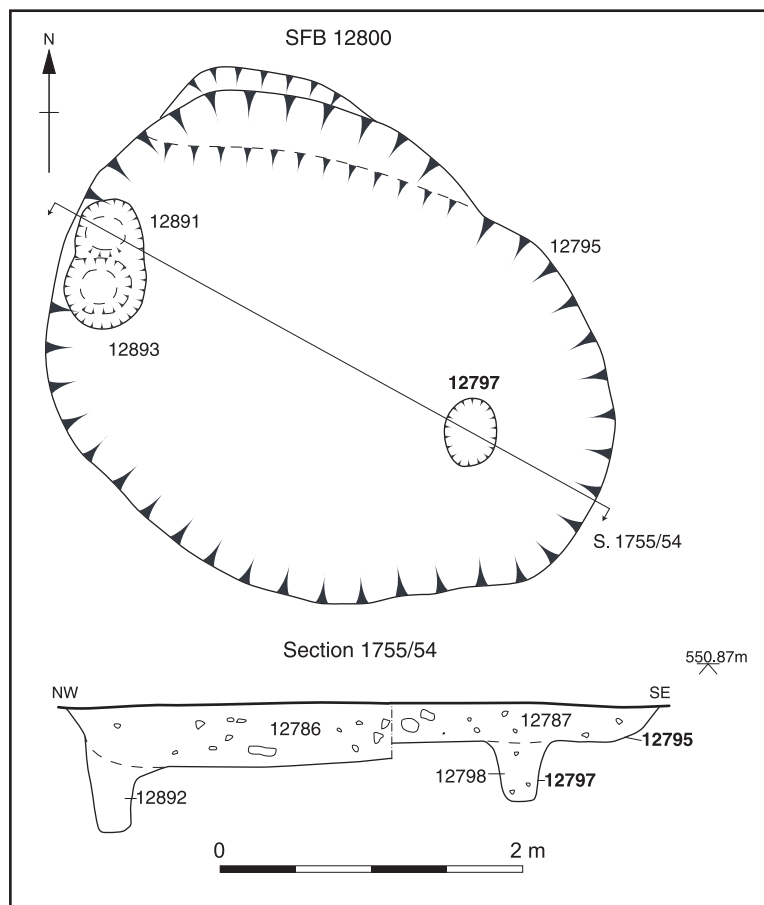


Fig. 3.15 Site 10 SFB 12800

the second half of the 7th-century, but more probably the early 8th century, and an end date of the early 9th century.

The three sub-phases reflect the episodic development of the features comprising Phase 2. They relate to structural changes and were identified stratigraphically. The chronology of the sub-phases is imprecise and more open to variation than that of the overall Phase.

Phase 2a (early to mid 8th century) (Fig. 3.16)

This sub-phase comprises the horseshoe-shaped enclosure (2658 – Site 2 = 15370 – Site 8) in its earliest form, with a rectangular timber building 2664, which is sited in the open mouth of the enclosure. This sub-phase is tentatively dated early to mid 8th century.

Enclosure ditch (Sites 2 and 8) (Figs 3.17-3.18)

The horseshoe-shaped enclosure (2658 – Site 2 = 15370 – Site 8), which was first identified by aerial photography, enclosed an area of around 0.8 ha (2.2 acres). In the initial evaluation, the area was tested by 18 trenches (Fig. 3.17). Eight trenches were sited over the horseshoe ditch, and ten trenches within the enclosed space. None of the latter revealed any contemporary features, and – except for the far south western corner – no contemporary artefacts. The ditch itself showed slight alteration in depth, although this is likely to be due to later variable truncation by ridge-and-furrow cultivation. The original ditch profile, where the recut had not obscured it, tended towards a shallow 'V' shape, and in most sections two or three fills were discerned – of silty clay with varying proportions of

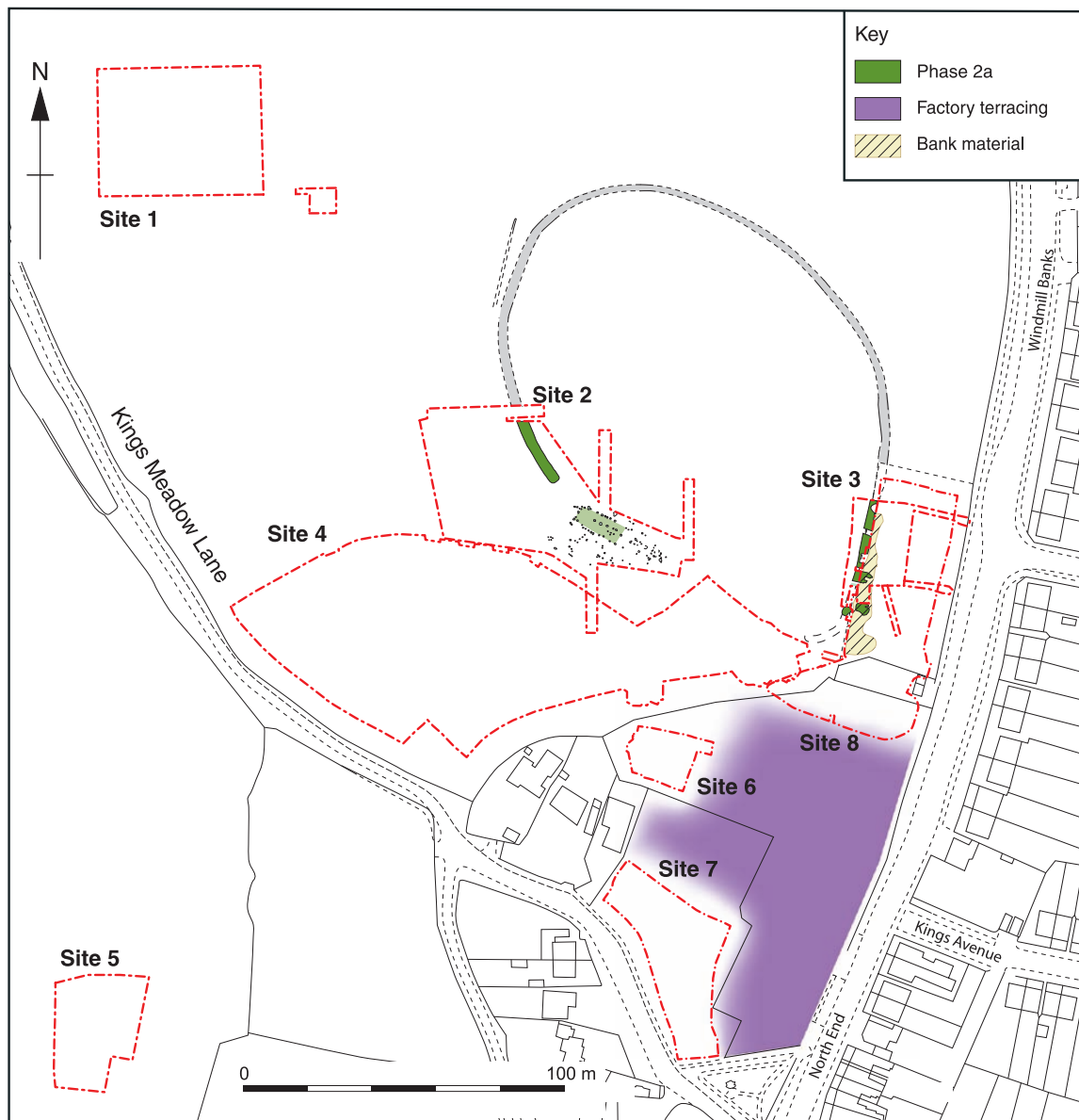


Fig. 3.16 Phase 2a Middle Saxon enclosure

ironstone fragments, depending on the subsoil character in the vicinity.

Only on the eastern side of the enclosure – within the area of Site 8 – was there any evidence of a bank associated with the enclosure ditch. This was characterised as a thin layer of redeposited natural subsoil (15423) up to 0.10 m deep, laying against the outside edge of the ditch, and forming the top fill (Fig. 3.18, Section 2088). A copper alloy dress fitting (SF 4038 – Fig. 4.22, 59) was recovered from this possible bank residue. The object is probably later in date and intrusive. Due to the constraints of the site boundary, only three small sections were excavated into the ditch, and no other finds were recovered.

The western terminus of the horseshoe enclosure was revealed in Site 2. The eastern terminus is inferred to lie within in the unexcavated area between Sites 4 and 8 (see Figure 3.17). Evidence of a possible fence line across the open ‘mouth’ of the horseshoe enclosure is suggested by a line of postholes extending east from the western ditch terminus, to the north of Building 2664.

Building 2664 (Fig. 3.19)

This building was assigned to Phase 2a as it is stratigraphically the earliest building of the group of three close to the enclosure mouth, although it is accepted that it could belong to Phase 2b.

The rectangular structure measured 12.0 m x 6.0 m in plan, and was defined by a total of 50 postholes. It was oriented WNW-ESE, and situated east of the western terminus of the horseshoe enclosure (see below). The definition of the line of both north and south walls was reasonably clear, with spacing between posts of between 1.6 and 2.2 m and an apparent doorway defined by the space between postholes 2115 and 2117 in the south wall. Definition of the end walls is problematic; a scatter of mostly unexcavated posthole-like soil marks lies to the east of the identified building footprint. Within this scatter it is possible to devise a number of hypothetical end walls. However, not only were many of these soil marks unexcavated, but it is questionable whether they were contemporary,

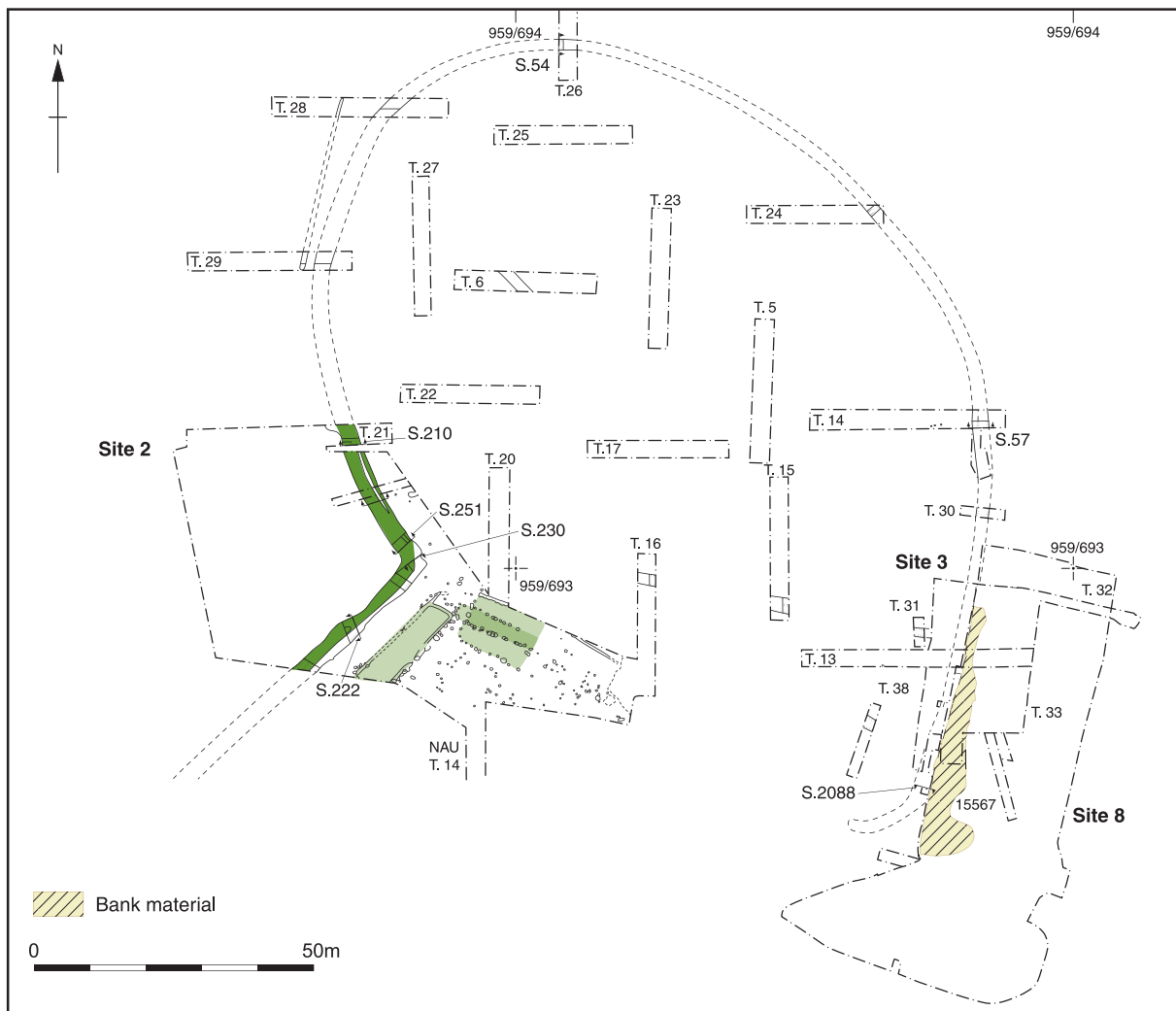


Fig. 3.17 Phase 2 Sites 2 and 8 Enclosure 2658 and evaluation trenches

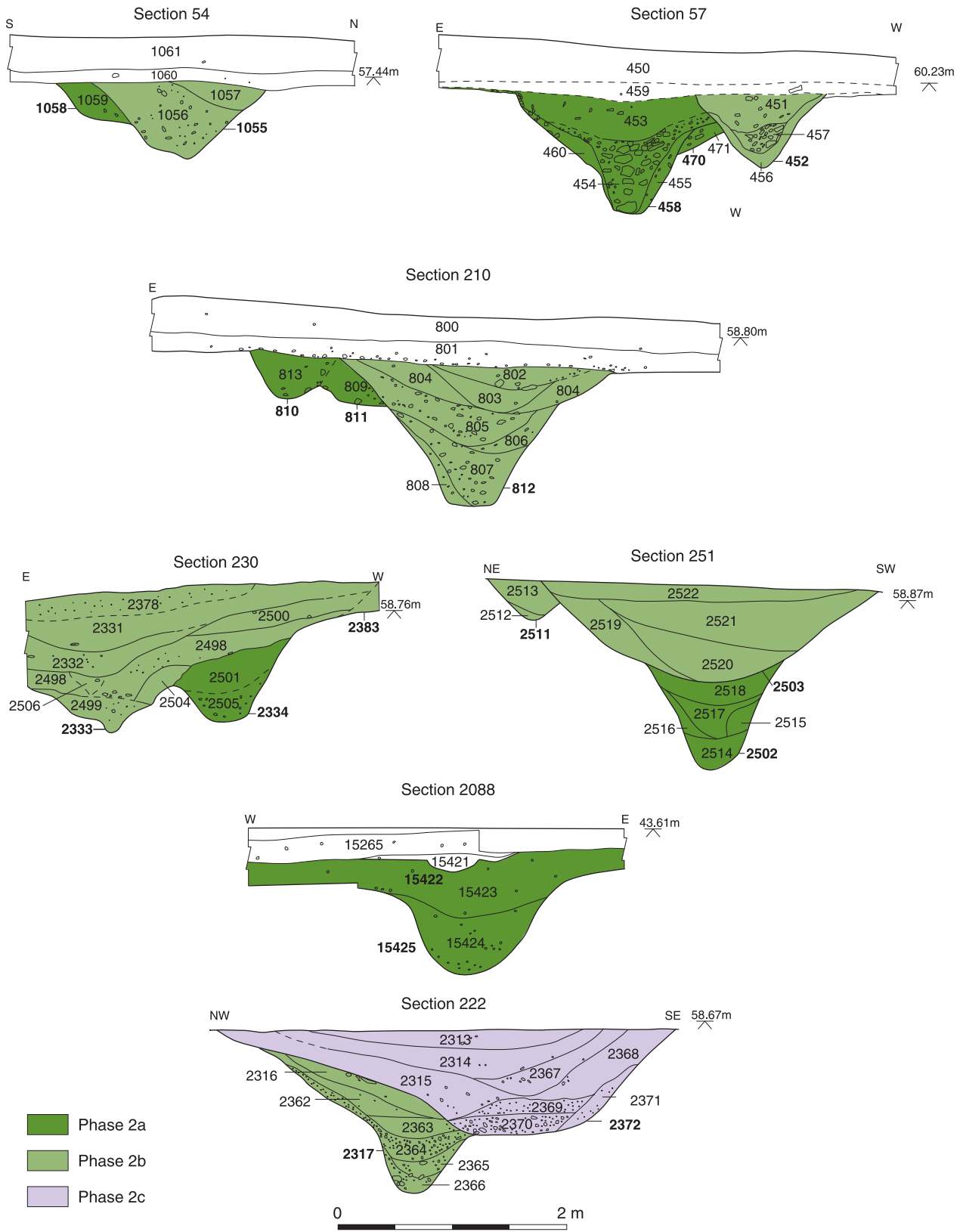


Fig. 3.18 Phase 2a/b Enclosure sections

considering the proximity of considerable Phase 3 activity in the area. On balance, this eastern area lacks the regular intervals between posts and central aisle posts recorded in the western part, of the building. The interpretation of these features as part of a long building of consistent build is far from convincing. While it is not impossible that Building 2664 could have been some 25 m in length, the irregularity of the posthole scatter makes it more likely that the building was nearer 12 m in length.

Separating the postholes of the west end of the building from those of the two later structures was also difficult. The layout depicted suggests a straightforward end wall, with a possible short extension, perhaps a fence?

Internal features – A line of 6 postholes defined what

appeared to be a central ridge support, and a group of four small postholes formed a T-shaped arrangement to the south of the central line, although its purpose is unclear. No hearth or area of burning was evident. The presence of a quantity of charred grain in one of the postpipe fills (2154) was noted (see Moffett Chapter 4).

Phase 2b (mid to late 8th century) (Fig. 3.20)

The structural changes assigned to this sub-phase comprise the recutting of the original horseshoe ditch together with extensions to the ditch (2317 – Site 2, 7234 – Site 4), to form an extended enclosed space. Associated with this work was rectangular timber building 2665, which replaced building 2664, and timber buildings 2666, 7023 and 7237, and

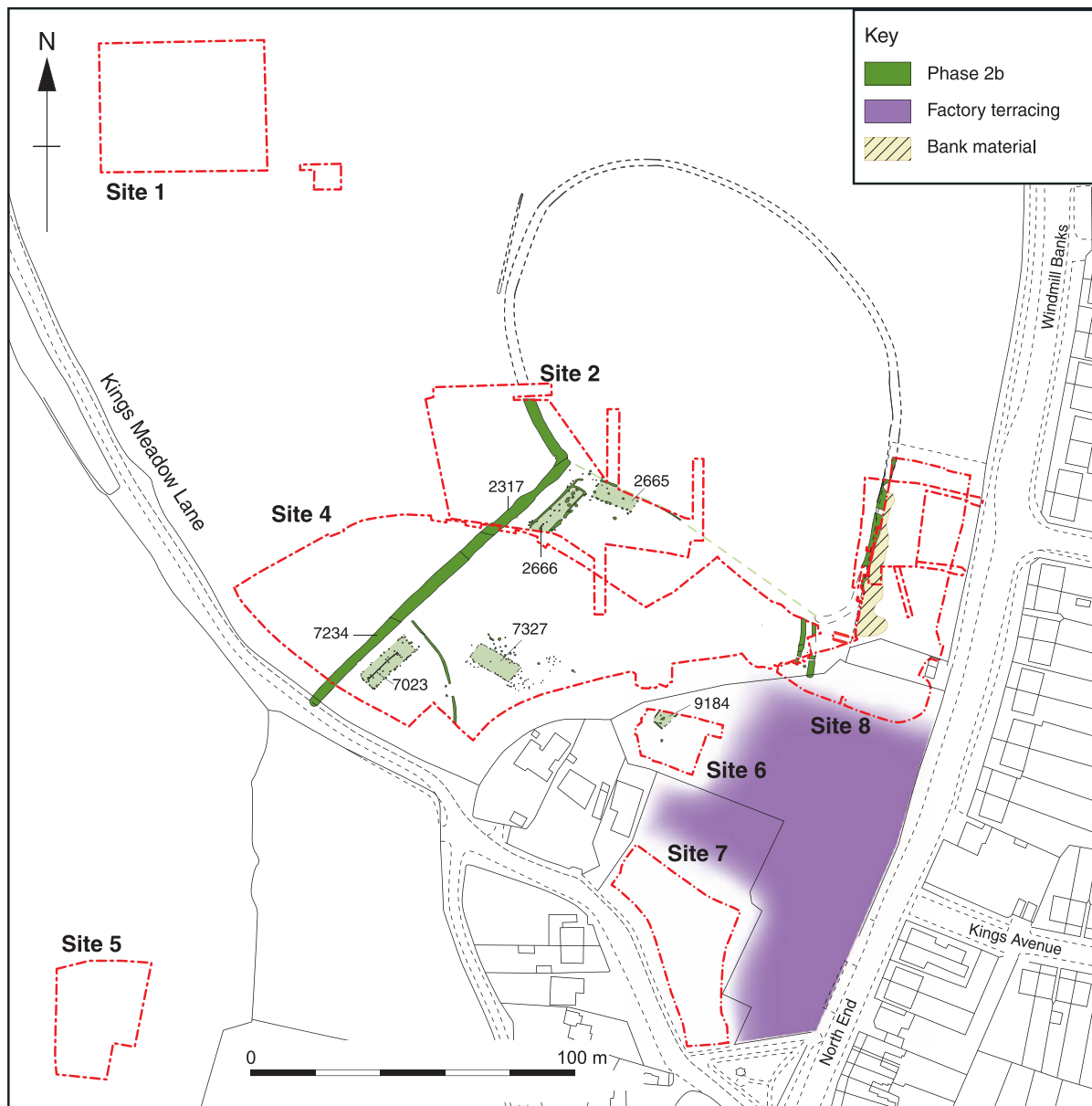


Fig. 3.20 Phase 2b Middle Saxon enclosure extensions

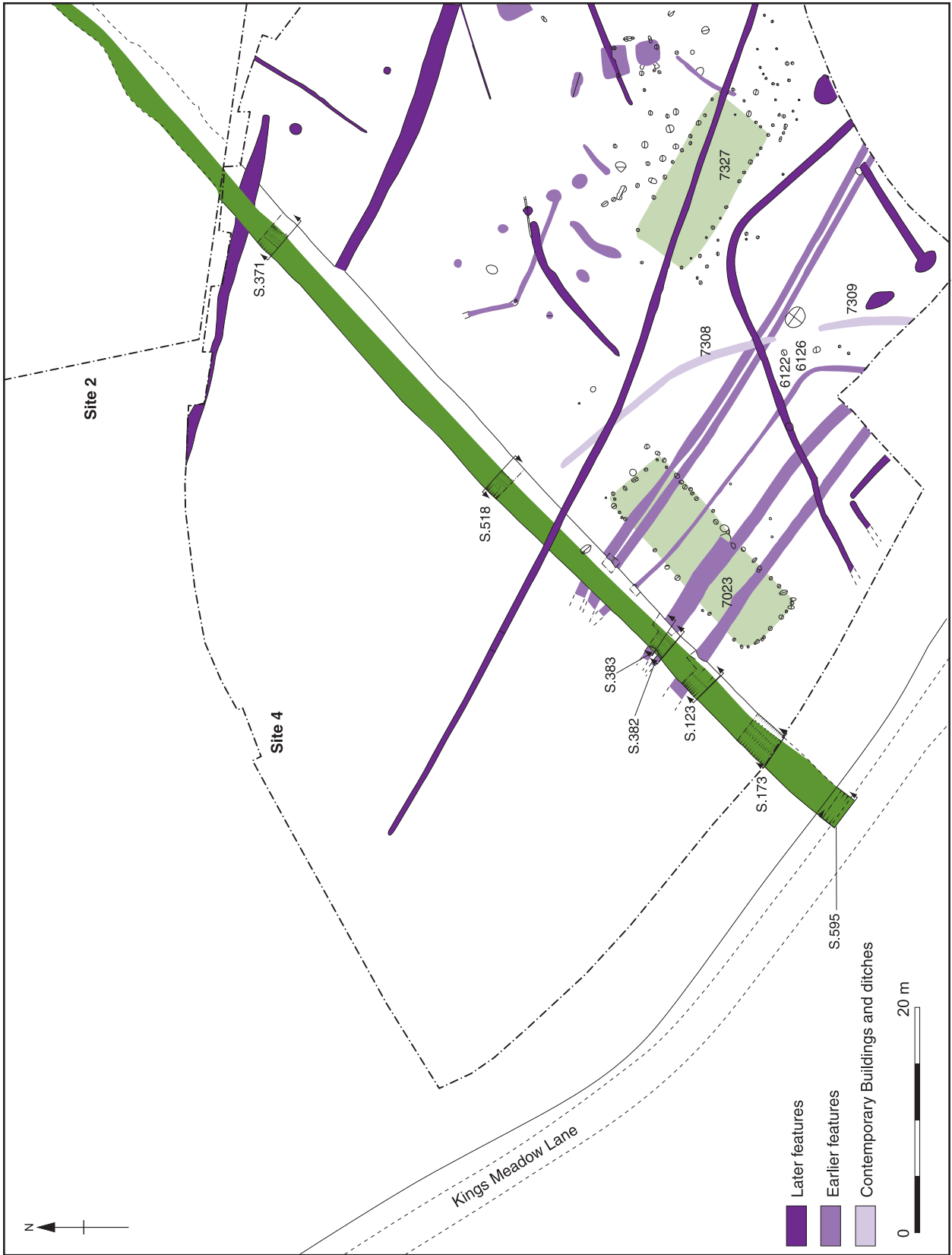


Fig. 3.21 Phase 2b Site 4 Enclosure extension plan

9184. Buildings 2665 and 2666 were set almost at a right angle to one another in the original entrance to the horseshoe enclosure. Buildings 7023 and 7237 were both rectangular, again set at a right angle to one another, and were sited further out from the enclosure, between the extended entrances ditches. Building 9184 was only partially explored and lay some way to the south of the other buildings between the extended entrances ditches. This sub-phase is dated to the mid to late 8th century.

Enclosure ditch (Figs 3.21-23)

Re-cutting of enclosure ditch

At least one recut was evident in all sections of the horseshoe ditch. Generally the sections showed that – where the recut did not exactly match the original ditch line – it was cut along the inside edge of the original. The existence of an external bank in the first phase would clearly encourage the digging of any recut to take place on the opposite side of the ditch.

The recut ditch profile was more variable than the original profile, but in general it was cut deeper. Again, the fills were varying mixes of silty clay and ironstone fragments, with evidence of subsidence of the upper layers, allowing the levelling accumulation of later ploughsoil. Again, finds were conspicuous by their absence from the interior of the enclosure, except in the south-west corner near the building group, and from a single section of the eastern side of the enclosure ditch. At this point (Trench 14, fill 451 – see Fig. 3.18, Section 57), a significant assemblage of mid-7th to mid-8th-century pottery was recovered, along with a notable quantity of cereal remains and relatively numerous fragments of lava quern.

Extensions to enclosure ditch (Fig. 3.21-3.23)

The evidence shows that, at the time the horseshoe enclosure was recut, the opportunity was taken to extend the enclosed area with two straight ditches, one fully revealed running from the western end of the original ditch in a south-west direction towards Kings Meadow Lane. There is evidence that a similar extension ditch ran from the eastern terminus of the horseshoe ditch southwards.

The western extension (2317/7234) was revealed in its entirety, extending from the terminus of the Phase 2a horseshoe enclosure (Site 2) to the edge of Kings Meadow Lane (Site 4) (Fig. 3.21). Nine full sections and one half section were hand excavated through the ditch, representing a 17% sample, and other small sections were excavated to confirm the ditch's relationship with linear features to the east. A selection of the excavated sections is illustrated in Figure 3.22.

Despite its size, the definition of the ditch in plan was extremely unclear. This is considered to be principally because of the similarity between the fill of the ditch and the surrounding subsoil, a

similarity that supports the contention that the ditch (in its last phase) was backfilled with the banked upcast from its construction.

For most of its length, the earliest cut of the ditch displayed a marked 'V' shaped profile, with typical dimensions being approximately 2.5 m – 3.0 m wide x 1.0 m – 1.2 m deep. The lower fills of the ditch appeared to be erosion deposits from the upcast, comprising brown or light brown silty clays, with varying proportions of ironstone fragments, depending upon the character of the natural through which the ditch was cut at that point. Near the south-western end of Site 4, section 173 revealed three distinct cuts to the ditch (Fig.3.22). The second cut in the sequence (6327) corresponds most closely to the profile of the original cut elsewhere, and displays the same fill characteristics. The earliest cut (6196) in the sequence does not appear anywhere else, and its single ironstone rich fill suggests it was backfilled soon after its excavation. It may be suggested that this feature is either an early and aborted ditch, or possibly an earlier and unrelated feature.

Generally, finds from the lower fills of the first phase of the ditch were scarce, and comprise a small quantity of bone and a few sherds of early/middle Saxon pottery. The secondary (upper) fills of the first cut of the ditch were generally very mixed deposits, characteristic of backfill. In the sections close to the horseshoe enclosure and in proximity to Building 2666 (Site 2), the fill contained bone, pot and charcoal flecks, reminiscent of dumped domestic debris. Elsewhere the secondary ditch fills contained a few sherds of early to middle Saxon pottery and occasional fragments of animal bone.

The relationship of the western extension ditch with the present line of Kings Meadow Lane was investigated so far as was possible by a narrow section dug against the north-east side of the Lane (Fig.3.22, section 595). This revealed a sequence of post-medieval and modern surfaces and make-up layers over the fills of the enclosure ditch. It was not possible to investigate the stratigraphy under the central part of the Lane, nor on the Lane's south-western side. Consequently, while it is clear that the enclosure ditch extended beyond the extant hedged boundary to the edge of the Lane, it is debatable whether it originally crossed the line of the Lane. This issue is considered further in Chapter 5.

The area to the south of the eastern terminus of the horseshoe enclosure (Site 8) was heavily truncated by the factory terracing and other modern disturbance. Two short lengths of parallel N-S oriented ditch (7317) and (7318/15165) – the latter identified on both Site 4 and Site 8 – were located (Fig. 3.23). Both ditches belong stratigraphically to Phase 2, and it is suggested that at least one, and possibly both of these ditches represented the extension of eastern enclosure ditch, and could have extended as far south as the junction of Kings Meadow Lane and Windmill Banks. A small

Death and Taxes

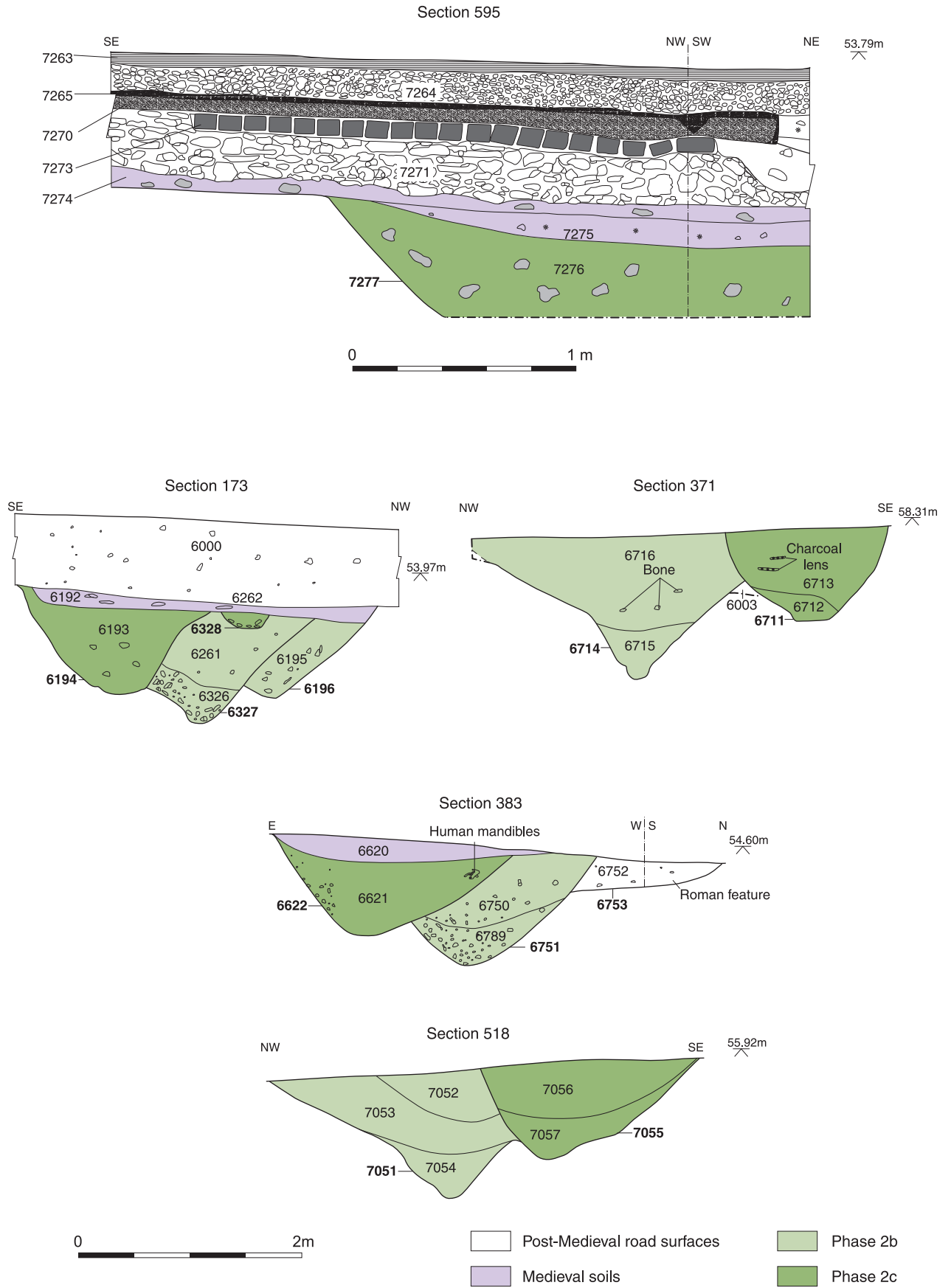


Fig. 3.22 Phase 2b Site 4 Enclosure extension: ditch sections

amount of 8th-century pottery was recovered from the ditch fills, but perhaps of more interest was a group of 9 bone needles (SFs 4003 – 4011 inclusive; Fig. 4.16, 11,12, and 15), three of them broken but complete, found in the base of ditch 15165. From

their position (Pl. 3.4) it would appear that these needles were strung together when deposited. Whether they represent a termination deposit or, more prosaically, were simply thrown away or accidentally dropped is unclear.

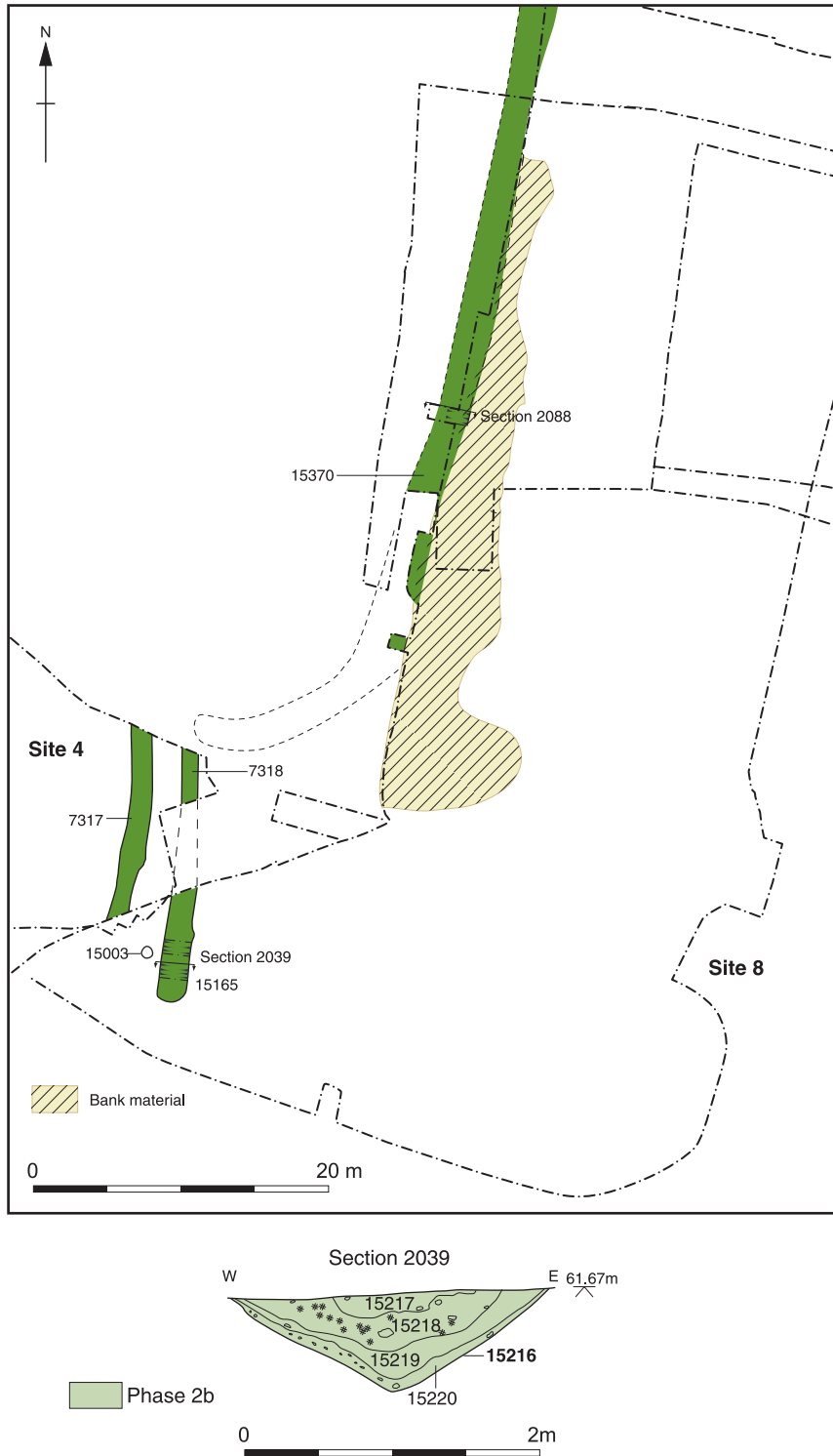


Fig. 3.23 Phase 2b Site 8 Enclosure extension plan and section



Plate 3.3 Building 7023 postholes under excavation

Building 2665 (Fig. 3.24)

The structure was defined by a total of 21 postholes, representing a rectangular building that, by its position, was evidently a rebuild of Building 2664 (Phase 2a). The building footprint was shifted to the north-east, possibly to utilise the wall or aisle timbers of the earlier building and to make room to the west for Building 2666 (see below).

The disposition of the postholes in Building 2665 suggests an overall length of 12.0 m x 6.0 m wide, with a 1.0 m wide doorway on the south side, defined by postholes 2179 and 2248). Two substantial interior postholes (2019, 2161) appeared to represent ridge supports. The south, west and east walls were defined by earthfast posts; the partially exposed north wall, by contrast, was represented by an arrangement of a beamslot and postholes (see Figure 3.24 detail). The difference might be due to a variation in design, but it is perhaps more likely that the variable truncation caused by the post-medieval ridge-and-furrow is responsible for this apparent difference. The depth of postholes on the south wall averaged at least 0.20 m less than those in the north wall beamslot, showing that any evidence for a beamslot gully along the south wall could well have been completely removed. As with Building 2664, there was no evidence of an internal hearth within the footprint of Building 2665.

Building 2666 (Fig. 3.25)

This structure was on the same alignment as the enclosure extension ditch (2317) and was sited immediately west of Building 2665. Unlike Buildings 2664 and 2665, the structure was defined by an approximately rectangular arrangement of beamslots and incorporated postholes, giving a total footprint size of 20 m x 5 m. While the south-western end wall was not fully exposed, the terminus of the western wall allows the position of the end wall to be confidently extrapolated. A single doorway was evident in the middle of the eastern side of the structure, defined by an interruption in the beamslot, and at least one large posthole (2330) on the northern side. A noticeable feature was the large disparity in the measurements of depth and width between the beamslots and postholes of the west (back) and east (front) walls of the building respectively. The east wall beamslots were generally 0.10 m–0.15 m deeper, and substantially wider than those of the west or back wall. The line of the ridge and furrow truncation runs across the northern part of the building, so is unlikely to be the cause of this disparity, which is discussed further in Chapter 5.

A scatter of postholes was identified in the building's interior. A central line of aisle posts can be inferred, although there is some doubt which postholes belong to the building, and which postholes belong to Phase 3 (see below). An area of

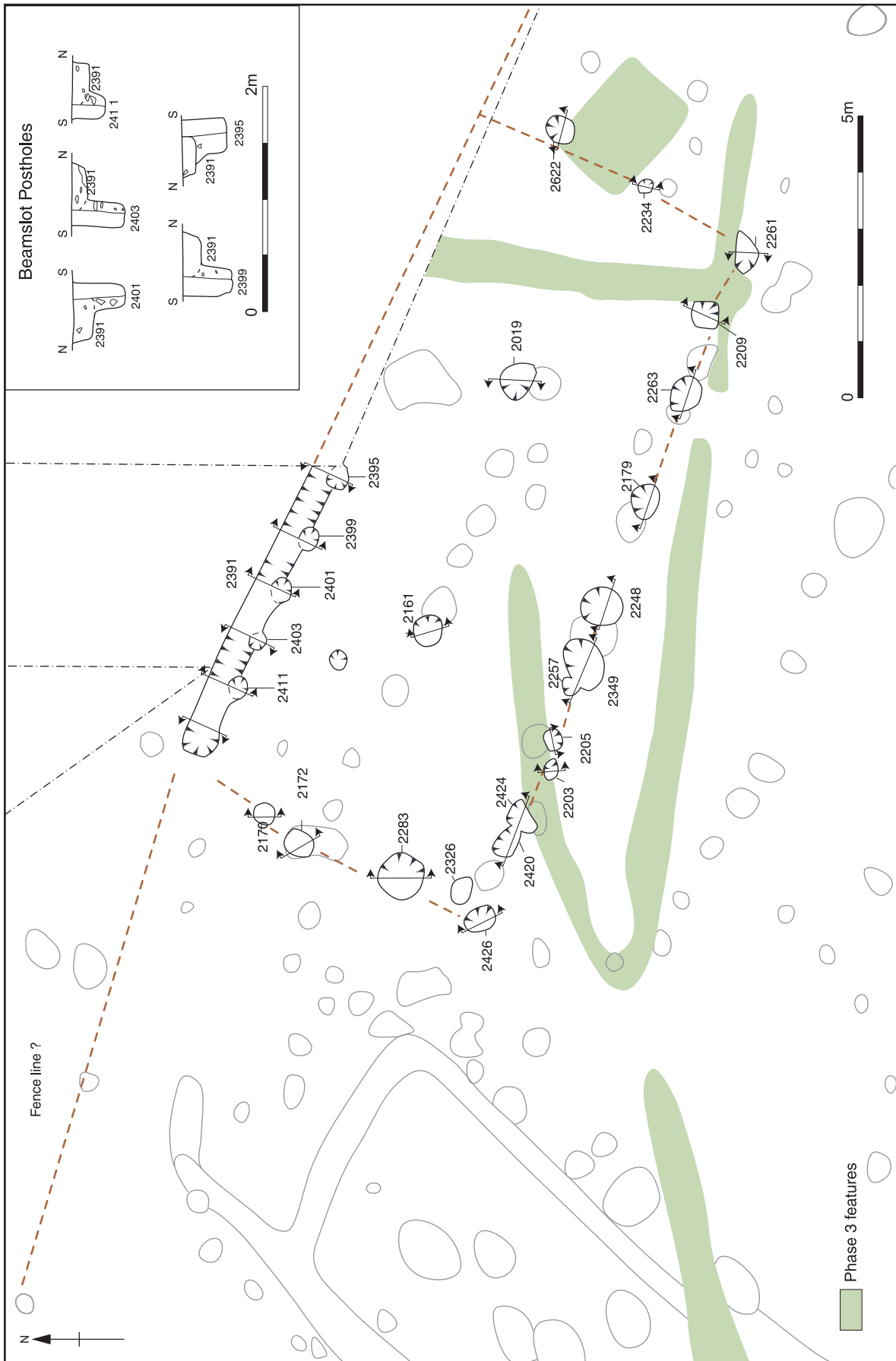


Fig. 3.24 Phase 2b Site 2 Building 2665

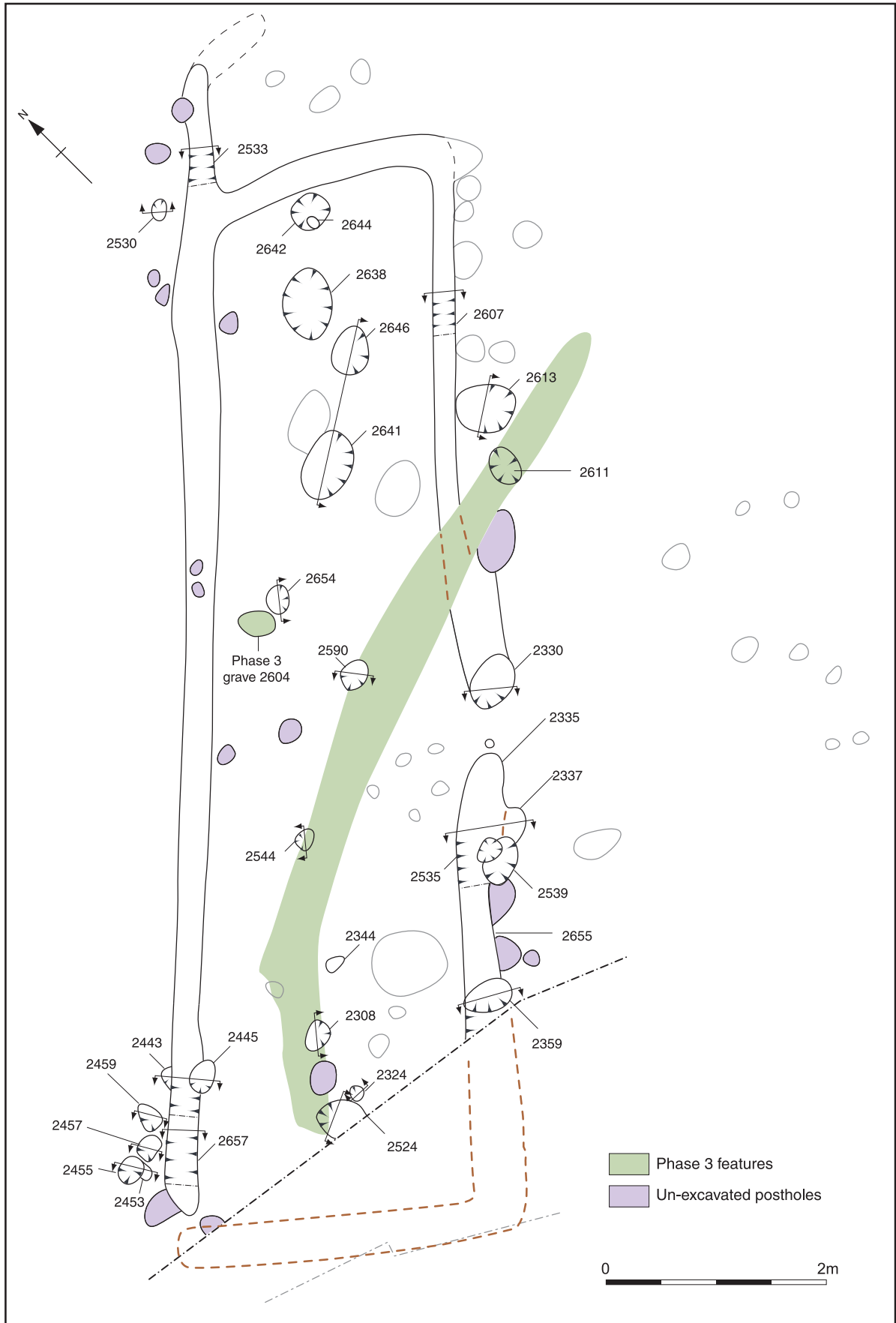


Fig. 3.25 Phase 2b Site 2 Building 2666

burnt subsoil was revealed in the northern part of the building, suggesting the likely position of a hearth. Support for the domestic function of this building comes from the bone, pottery and charcoal flecks in the upper layers of the first cut of the enclosure extension ditch to the west (2317). Grain processing or storage is also suggested by the charred remains from one of the postpipes (2644), at the northern end of the building.

Other structures

In the open area formed by the angle between Buildings 2665 and 2666, a scatter of probable postholes was identified and planned as soil marks, but most were not excavated due to lack of resources (Fig. 3.26). While some alignments with the buildings 2665 and 2666, and the earlier building 2664, are apparent, no clear building outline is evident, although subsidiary structures are implied. However, it should be born in mind that some of these features almost certainly relate to activity in Phase 3, and possibly to later activities.

Building 7023 (Figs 3.27, 3.21, Pl.3.4)

The structure was located close to, and aligned with, the enclosure extension ditch (7234) in the south-west corner of Site 4 (Fig. 3.21). The building was identified by 52 external postholes, defining a rectangular structure measuring 19 m x 6.5 m. Within this footprint were a further 20 postholes and one central beamslot. It is presumed that the west (back) wall originally consisted of more regularly spaced postholes, but that those cut into the fill of earlier linear features were often impossible to see or excavate.

The postholes were of a fairly uniform diameter, averaging 0.40 m, and their depth varied within a range 0.15 m–0.30 m. This variation did not relate to the position of the posthole within the building, but is thought to be due either to the difficulty of digging the posthole in the variable subsoil (a mix of silty clay and ironstone) at this point on the site, or to the variable length of the timbers to be set into the postholes. It was noted that the building was set on a site with a pronounced slope down to the south-west. After initial topsoil stripping, the level

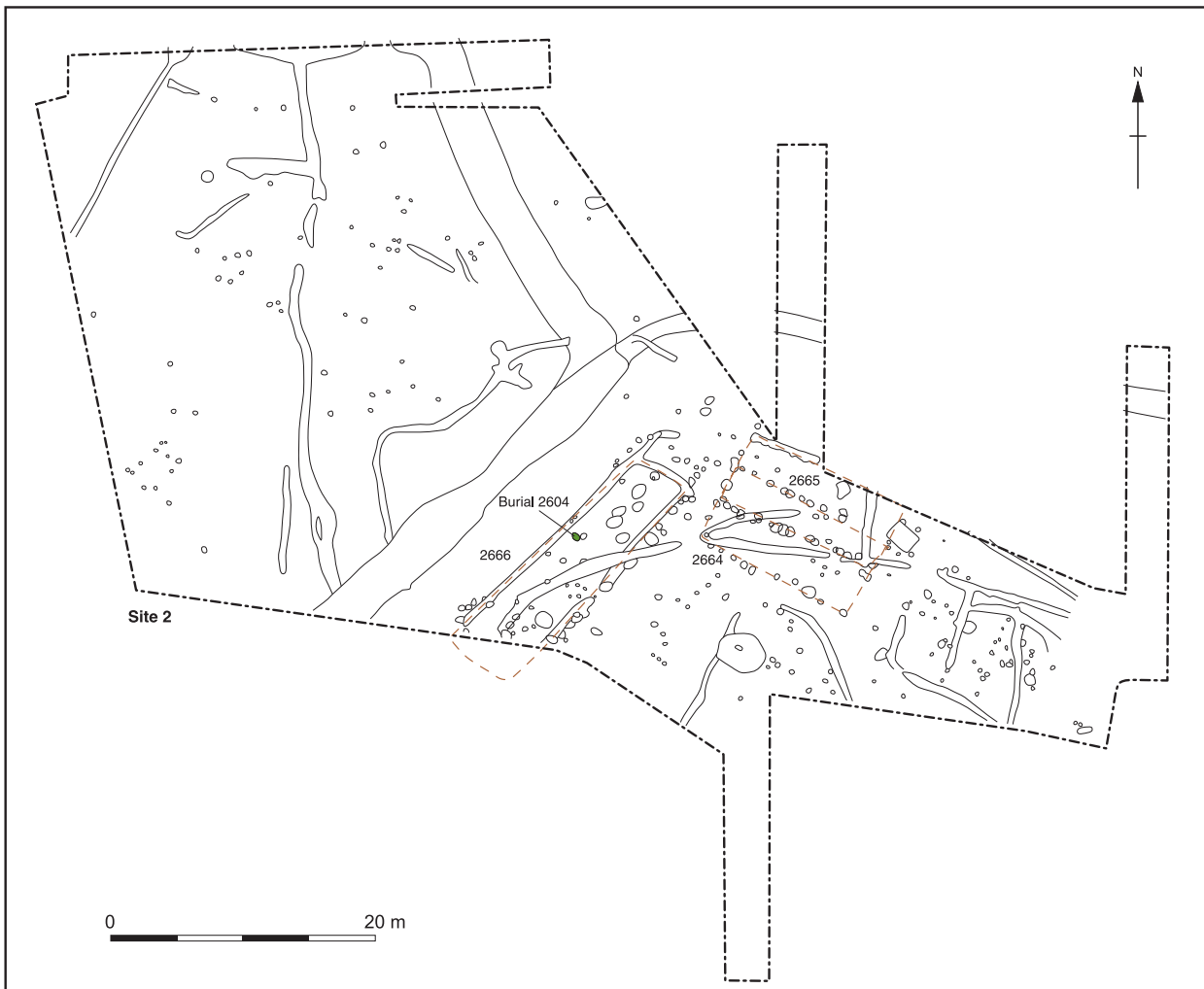


Fig. 3.26 Site 2: General plan of features



Plate 3.4 The set of bone needles in the enclosure ditch Phase 2b

at the highest (north-east) corner of the building was 55.85 m OD whereas the level at the lowest (south-western) corner of the building of 54.67; a difference of 1.18m. This characteristic is discussed further in Chapter 5.

No finds were recovered from the building footprint, and the posthole fills produced just two sherds of residual 6th-century pottery (Fig. 4.1, 16) along with one early 8th-century sherd.

The internal layout of the building suggested some complexity in construction. The southern two-thirds of the building was bisected longitudinally by a 12.5 m long beamslot (7019), averaging 0.20 m wide. A number of interior postholes seem to occur in pairs, straddling the beamslot, for instance 6994 and 6996, and 7008 and 7010. A doorway on the eastern side is suggested by a gap between postholes 6918 and 6920.

By contrast, the northern third of the building's length was evidently different in construction, with no central beamslot, and a generally closer spacing of the postholes, particularly apparent along the front or east wall. Three postholes situated beyond the end wall (6942, 6952 and 6956) possibly represent additional support or bracing for the structure. Only one interior posthole (6980) was identified. A possible doorway for this end 'room' might be defined by the gap between postholes 6934 and 6936.

Neither part of the building revealed any evidence for a hearth, although two small pits (6978 and 7229), both situated just beyond the northern end of the building, contained charcoal-rich fills, indicating that hearth debris was dumped in the area. Charcoal and burnt stone was also noted in the upper fills of the Phase 2b enclosure ditch (7234) to the north of Building 7023.

Associated features

To the north-west of Building 7023 and arcing from the enclosure extension ditch and extending to the south baulk of Site 4 was a ditch (7308/7309) with a gap forming an entrance (Fig.3.21). Both parts of the ditch varied between approximately 0.60 m and 1.0 m wide and averaged approximately 0.20 m deep, with a shallow 'U' shaped profile. Both ditches contained a mid orange brown silty clay fill. A single sherd of early/middle Saxon pottery was recovered from the fill of one of the ditch termini. The gap between the termini of the two ditches contained two postholes (6122 and 6126), 2.4 m apart and apparently defining an entrance into the area containing Building 7023. Both postholes were approximately 0.40 m wide x 0.20 m deep and contained a single silty clay fill, devoid of finds.

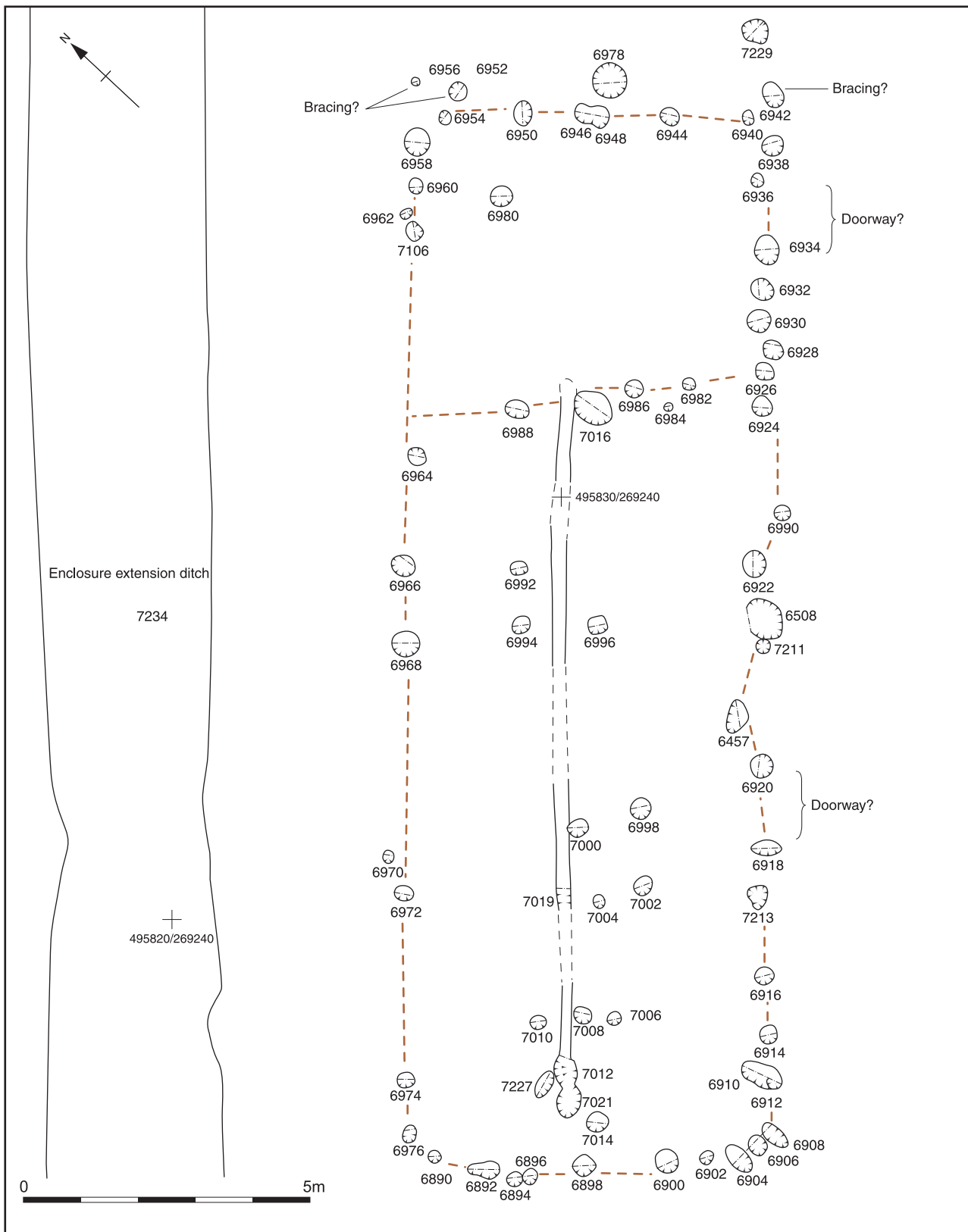
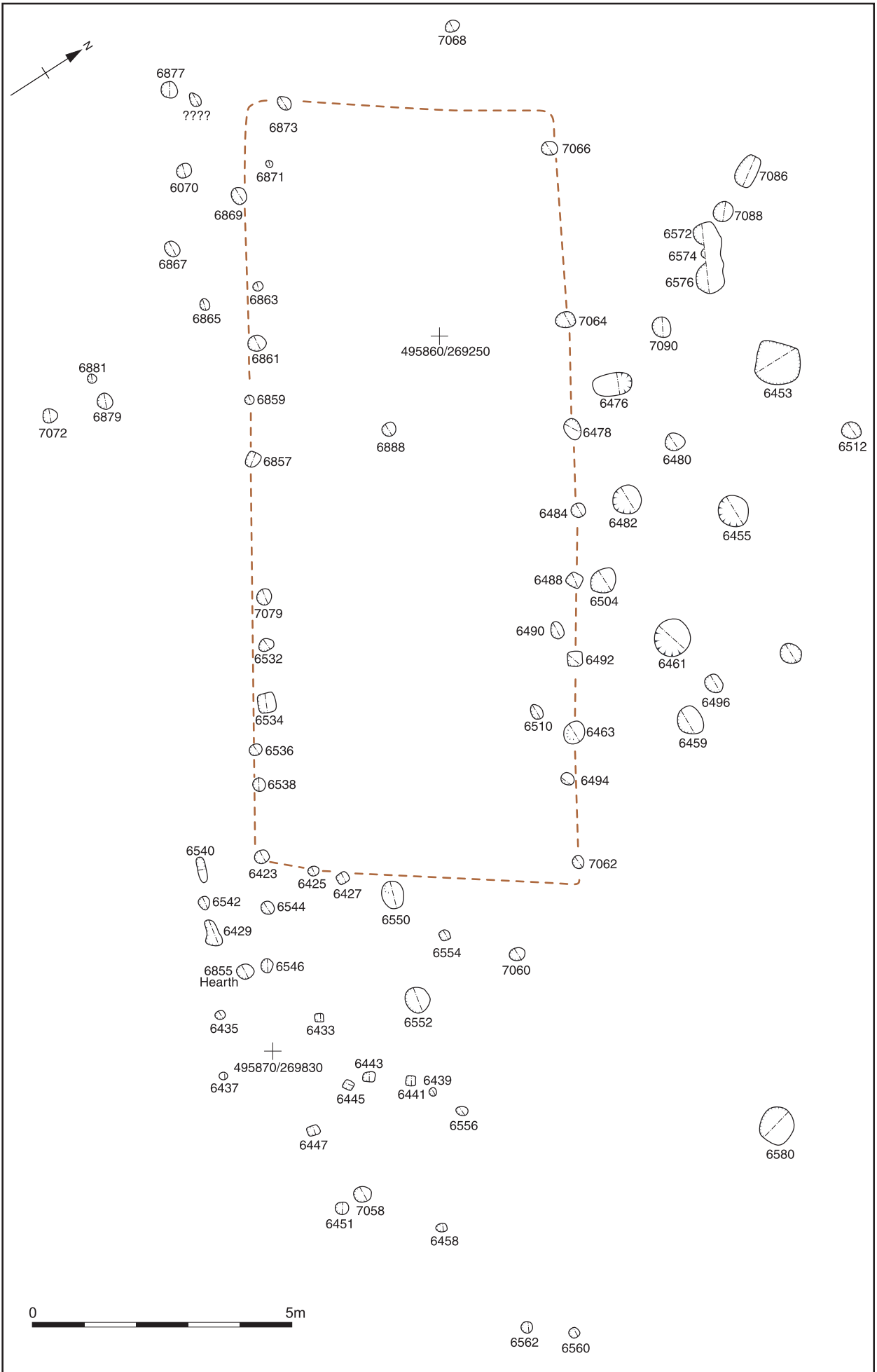


Fig. 3.27 Phase 2b Site 4 Building 7023



Building 7237 (Fig. 3.28)

This was situated north-east of Building 7023, and aligned approximately at right angles to it. It comprised a total of 26 postholes, defining a rectangular structure approximately 18.0 m long x 6.5 m wide. The truncation by later activity was variable; the north-west end of the building in particular was almost completely truncated. The postholes that survived varied from 0.2 m to 0.3 m in diameter and 0.1 m to 0.2 m in depth, and contained similar fills of brown/grey silty clay. A possible doorway approximately 2.6 m wide was defined by a gap in the otherwise well-defined posthole line along the south-west wall. A single interior posthole was identified, probably representing a central ridge post, and three others were identified within the building's footprint, close to the line of the north-east wall. These latter features may be associated with the building but equally may relate to the Phase 1 activity to the north (see above).

Datable artefacts from the building were scarce. Only two fragments (7g) of pottery were recovered from the main section of the building. These came from postholes 6484 and 6873 and one fragment dating to the early/mid Saxon period and one to the late Saxon period. A further two fragments (3g) were recovered from posthole 6447 just to the south, and posthole 6476 just to the east of the main building structure. This pottery dates to the early mid Saxon period. Given the proximity of two Phase 1 SFBs, the occurrence of early middle Saxon pottery in the area is no surprise. More significantly, a substantial quantity of grain – principally barley – was recovered from a sample of the fill (6617) of one of the postholes (6616).

A scatter of 22 postholes was identified to the south-east and north-east of the building. Some appear to define a curving fence-line attached to the building's east end. Close to the south corner of the structure was a small hearth (6855) measuring 0.26 m in diameter and 0.02 m in depth. The feature had evidence of in situ burning and contained a charcoal filled deposit and stones reddened by fire. To the north-east of the building was a scatter of post holes and small pits. There is no obvious regularity in the positioning of these features, although the presence of another small hearth, and the overall distribution of the features – respecting the building's footprint – suggests they are more likely to be contemporary with the building than features associated with earlier or later occupation.

Building 9184 (Fig. 3.29)

This structure was partly revealed in Site 6, approximately 60 m south-east of Building 7327. It was oriented NE-SW, approximately in line with the western enclosure extension ditch, and was identi-

fied by postholes and a beamslot. These features defined a building 4.3 m wide x at least 6.5 m long. The south-west end wall comprised a beamslot and incorporated postholes spaced at approximately 1.0 m intervals. The north-west wall was identified only by a vestige of a beamslot, and the south-east wall comprised a line of postholes and a poorly defined beamslot. A possible doorway on this wall is suggested by a gap 1 m wide between two postholes, one of which (9131) was substantial in size and contained limestone packing. If it is presumed that the doorway was located at the mid-point of the building, as is the case on all but one of the other buildings in this phase, then the original length of Building 9184 would have been at approximately 9 m.

A single internal feature was identified – a shallow gully oriented on the centre line of the building, possibly representing a beamslot that – as with Building 7023 – could infer a load-bearing ceiling. Interestingly, an environmental sample from the end wall beamslot fill (9060), revealed another similarity with Building 7023, in the make up of the charred plant remains (see Moffett, Chapter 4). A small posthole (9113) was identified close to the west wall, although the presence of a sherd of 12th-century pottery in its fill raises a question mark over its assignment to this Phase.

A single pit (9106) situated approximately 4 m to the south-west of the building produced a sherd of mid Saxon pottery from its fill 9149 and on this basis can be tentatively associated with the building.

Phase 2c (Figs 3.30-3.31)

In Phase 2c the horseshoe enclosure was abandoned. The enclosure extension to the south-west was recut (2653/7330) and extended to the east (2655) and then continued curving more towards the south (15190). The buildings of Phase 2b seem to have continued in use. A malting oven identified some way to the south-west on Site 5 is assigned to this phase. This sub-phase is dated late 8th century to early 9th century.

Enclosure ditch (Sites 2, 4, 8) (Figs 3.31-3.32)

The recut of the south-west ditch extension was fully revealed in plan (Sites 2 and 4) and seen to cut the Phase 2b ditch on the east side, supporting the idea that any bank associated with the ditch would have been on the west side. Where it was examined in the excavated sections, the recut displayed a shallower 'U' shaped profile than its predecessor, around 0.80 m deep rather than over 1.0 m deep, and between 1.6 m and 2.0 m wide. The northern end of the recut extension ditch (2653) now extended to the north and east of Site 2 (as context 2655), and was picked up in two evaluation

Fig. 3.28 (facing page) Phase 2b Site 4 Building 7327

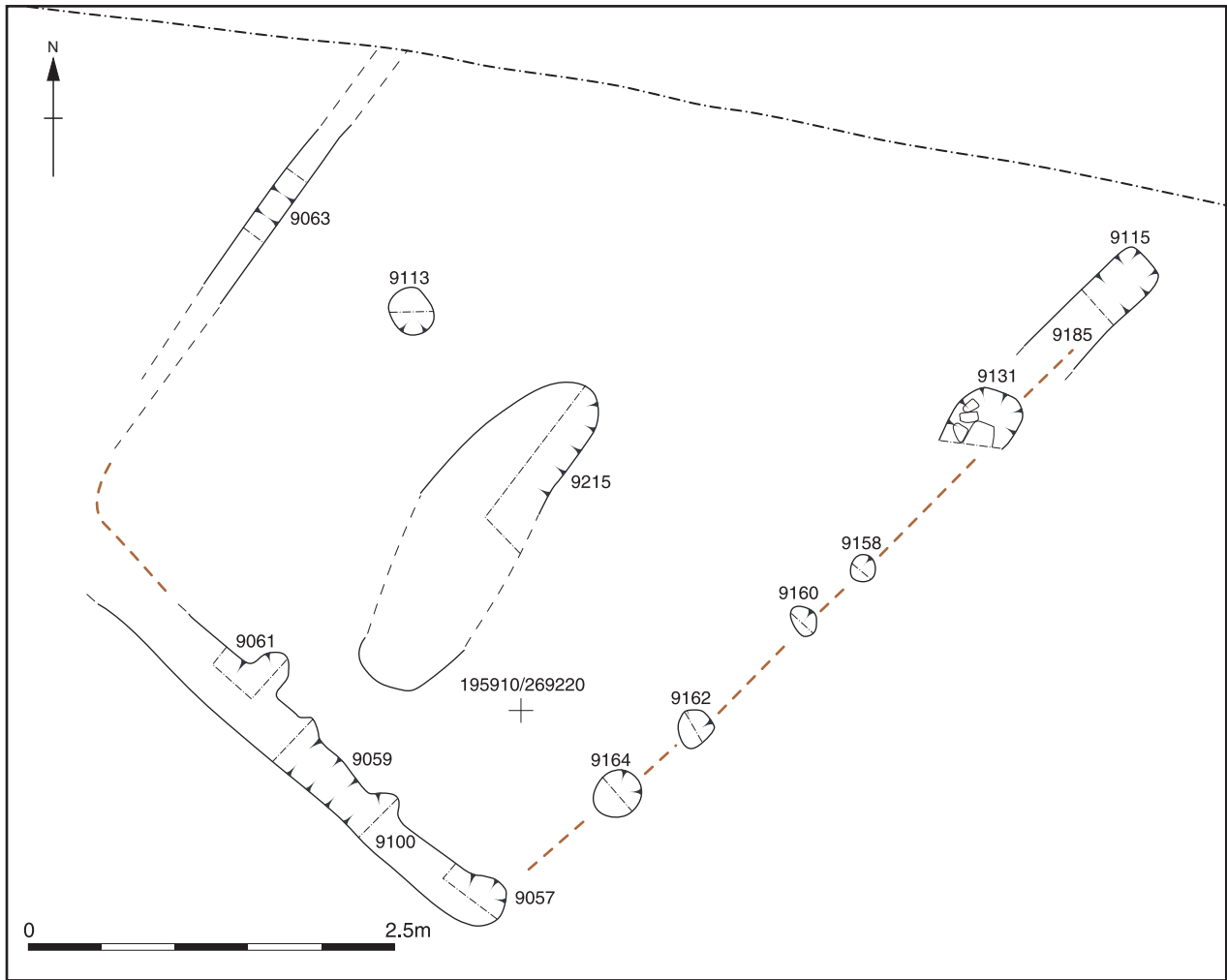


Fig. 3.29 Phase 2b Site 6 Building 9184

trenches that extended north of the site (Fig. 3.32, Section 76). The ditch profile at this point was smaller than that of the western ditch, being 1.5 m wide x 0.70 m deep, although this may be due to the severity of the truncation caused by the post-medieval ridge-and-furrow in this area, perhaps exacerbated by the less-than-ideal excavation conditions on Site 2.

The recut ditch was identified emerging from the west baulk of Site 8 (context 15190), cutting the backfilled Phase 2a/b horseshoe ditch and the associated bank residue (15423). It then curved evenly to the south and, despite severe truncation and disturbance from medieval and later activity, was traced to the edge of the factory terracing (Fig. 3.31). Its profile displayed relatively modest dimensions, being no more than 1.4 m wide x 0.80 m deep (Fig. 3.32, sections 2045 and 2027). The fills of the ditch were in places well stratified, and showed signs of subsidence, so that upper fills, (for instance context 15028 of ditch 15190, which produced a high grain content) are probably Phase 3 accumulations.

The evidence of material culture recovered from the 15 sections cut through the 260 m length of the

Phase 2c ditch varied considerably across the enclosure complex. Finds from the eastern part of the ditch in Site 8 were very sparse, with no contemporary pottery, very little animal bone, and no metal finds. To the north of Site 2, the ditch (Fig. 3.31, Section 76) produced a significant quantity of cattle and pig bone; this may be related to the proximity of buildings 2665 and 2666, or to a building or activity in an adjacent unexcavated part of the area. Where the ditch passed alongside Buildings 2666 and 7023, there were considerable concentrations of domestic debris, broadly in the interface between the lower erosion fills of the ditch and the final backfilling material. In particular, in the ditch alongside Building 7023, finds included a dump of animal bones (principally cattle), and skeletal remains of at least three humans (Pl. 3.5; human bone report Witkin, Chapter 4, and discussion Chapter 5).

Malting oven (Site 5) (Figs 3.33, Pl. 3.6)

The other major structure assigned to this phase is the malting oven (4010), situated on the south-west

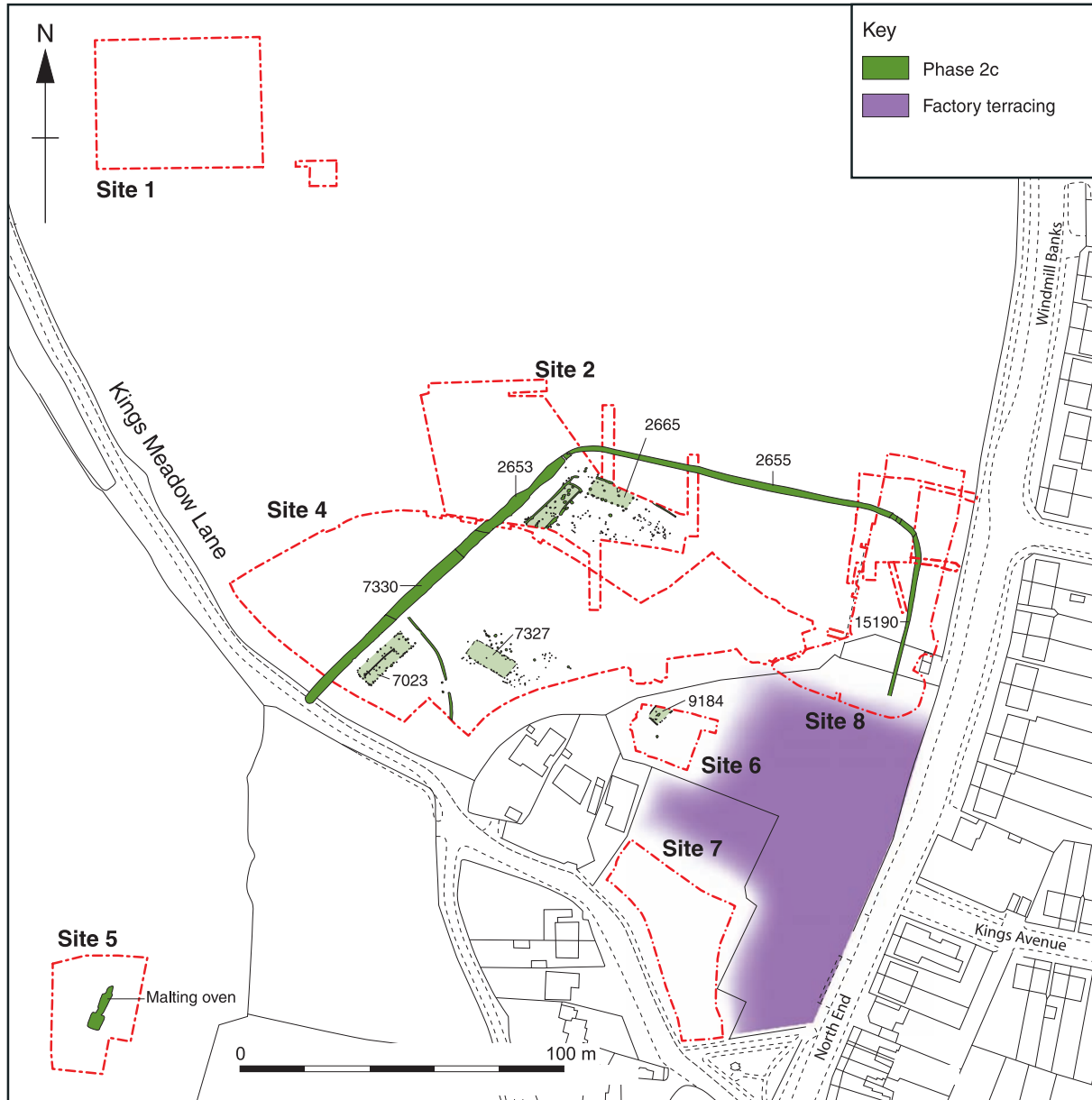


Fig. 3.30 Phase 2c Middle Saxon enclosure, and location of malting oven

side of Kings Meadow Lane, on the ridge extending north-west towards the site of the Roman settlement. The structure was first revealed in an evaluation trench, and later fully revealed by excavation. After examination the complete structure was reburied under a protective layer of gravel and the housing development in this area was redesigned to avoid impacting on the oven remains.

The surviving oven structure comprised a rectangular flat-bottomed pit (4023) cut into the silty clay and ironstone natural (4001) and measuring 2.7 m wide x 3.1 m long x 0.75 m deep. The pit sides were fully lined with coursed rubble walling (4019, 4020, 4021, 4022) averaging 0.4 m wide. The exposed wall faces showed evidence of being subjected to considerable heat. The pit was floored with irregularly

sized stone slabs (4016, 4044). These were sealed by a layer of heavily burnt clay (4017, 4043) from which two small fragments of Early/middle Saxon pottery were recovered. From the north-east end of the rectangular pit extended a 4 m long channel (4023) measuring from 1.2 m wide, where it exited from the pit, to 2.0 m wide at its furthest extent. As with the pit, the sides of the channel were lined with coursed rubble walling (4030, 4031) and again showed evidence of burning. The channel depth averaged 0.45 m to the point where the stone lining ceased; beyond this it decreased to nothing over a further 2.2 m. There was no evidence of stone flooring; the subsoil surface (4028) fire reddened at the pit end, appeared to have represented the floor of the channel. A single large slab of limestone was found

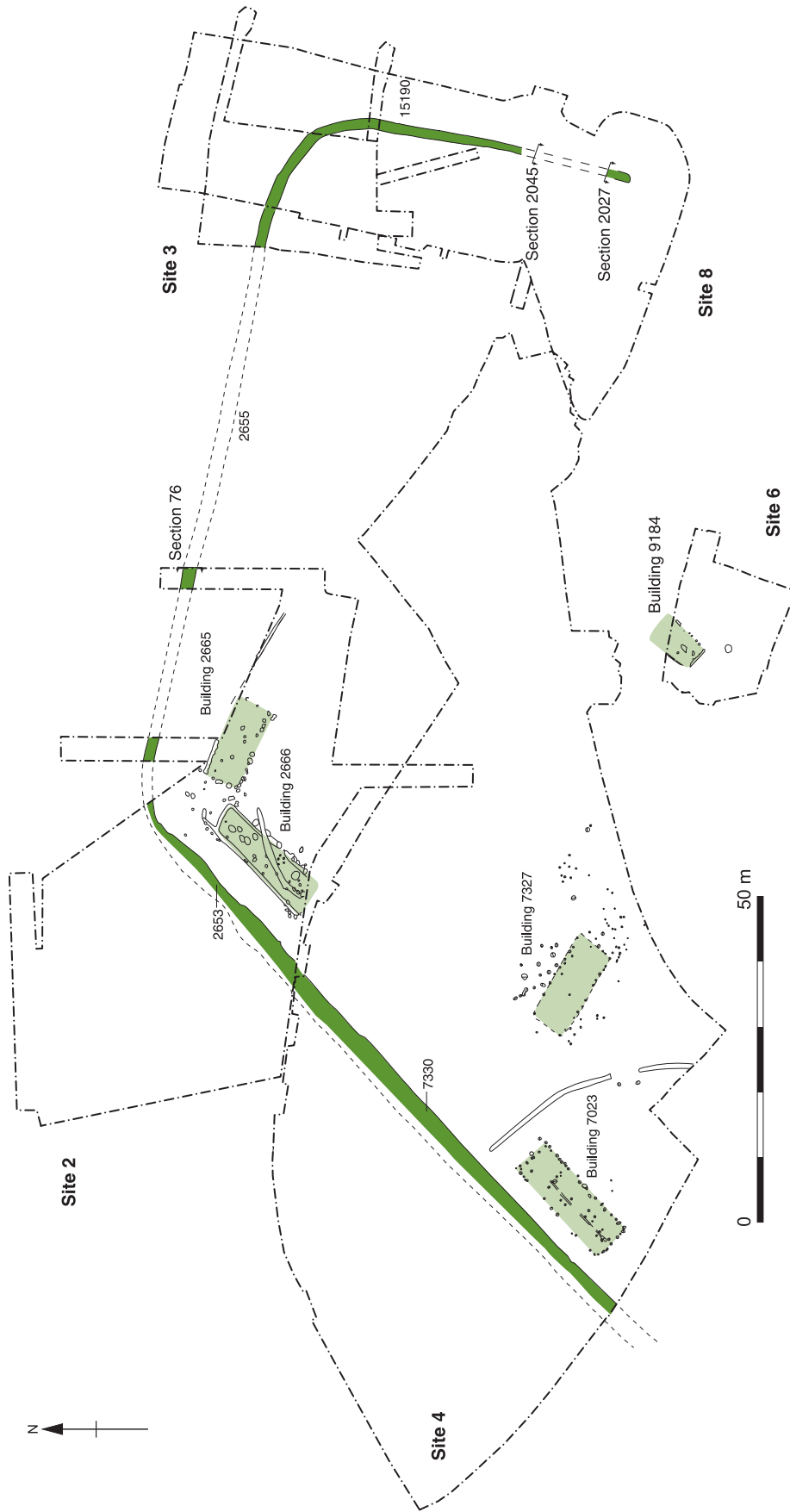


Fig. 3.31 Phase 2c Sites 2, 4, 6 and 8: Enclosure and contemporary buildings

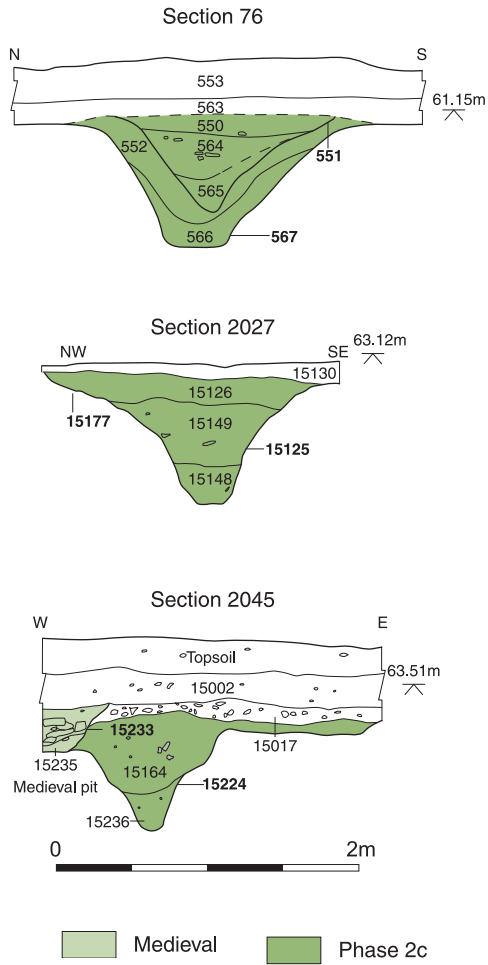


Fig. 3.32 (left) Phase 2c Enclosure ditch sections



Plate 3.5 (above and below) The malting oven and detail of flue Phase 2c



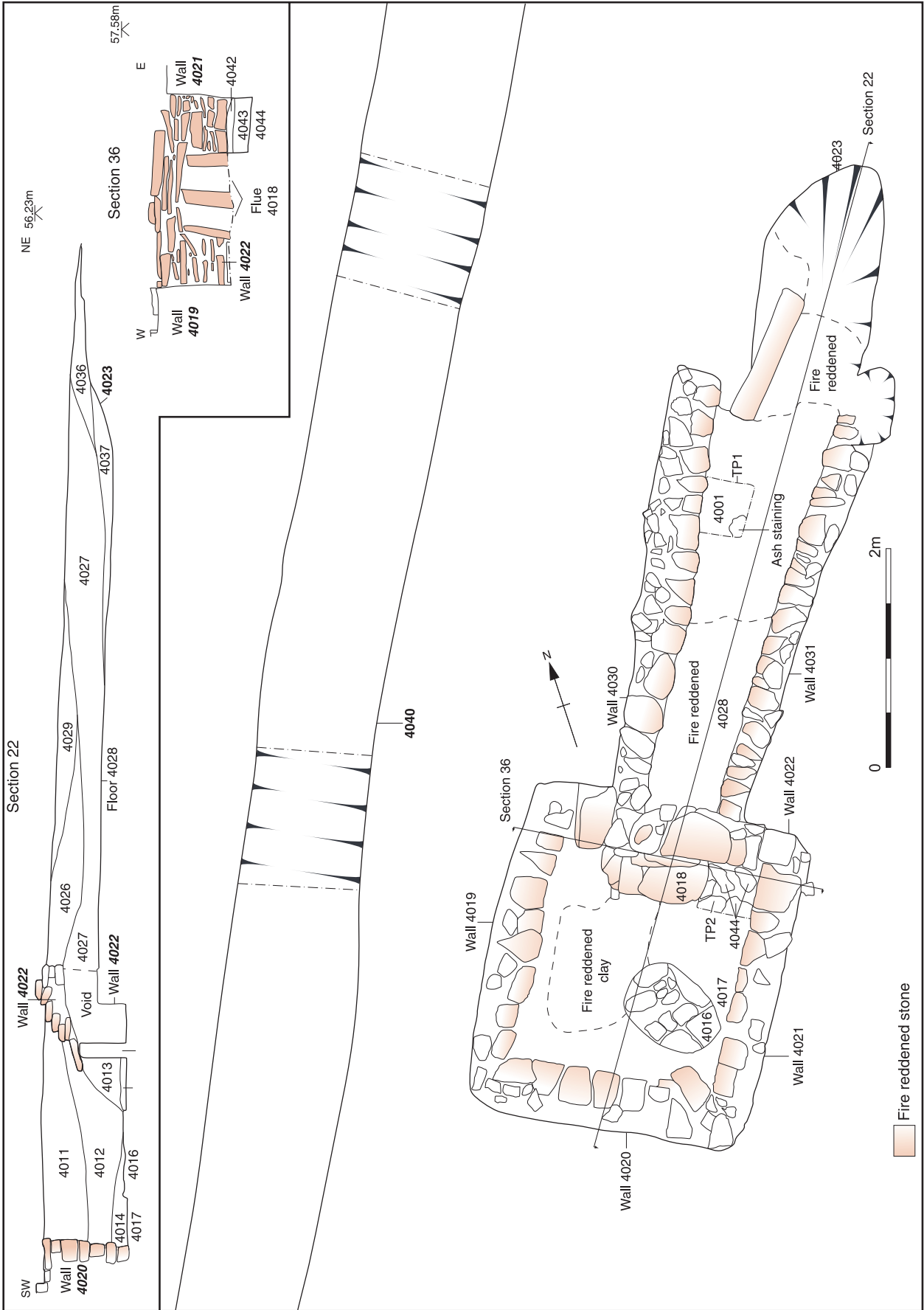


Fig. 3.33 Phase 2c Site 5 Malting oven plan and section

at the open end of the channel. Where the channel entered the pit, the overlying end wall (4022) was supported on three upright stone slabs. These extended into the chamber of the pit itself and were roofed with flat stone slabs (4018) (see detail Pl. 3.5).

The primary infilling deposits in the pit were two layers (4014 and 4015) of ashy silt, both containing a high concentration of charred cereal grain. A sample of this material was taken for environmental analysis (see Moffet, Chapter 4). Sealing deposit 4015 was layer 4013, a sandy silt, that extended into the 'tunnel' linking the pit with the channel and merged with layer 4027 (see below). A small fragment of Middle Saxon pottery was recovered from layer 4013. In the pit layers 4013 and 4014 were overlaid by layer of grey brown silty clay (4012)

containing a large proportion of substantial fragments of structural fired clay. The final layer in the pit filling was 4011, a more silty version of layer 4012, containing a lesser proportion of fired clay fragments. Sample of the fired clay material from layers 4011 and 4012 was recovered for analysis (see below Chapter 4).

A sample of the charred grain from context 4015 within the pit was subjected to radiocarbon dating and produced an AMS date of cal 710 AD–963 AD at 68% confidence, or 662 AD–1014 AD at 95% confidence. This date range fits into the timeframe of the enclosure complex, and suggests that the oven's final use (producing the charred grain) could well have taken place just before the complex was dismantled.



Plate 3.6 Skeleton 6678 in the enclosure ditch backfill Phase 2c

The primary fill of the channel at its open end was an ashy lens (4037). This was overlaid by a sandy silt layer (4036), and both were covered by a layer (4027) of silty clay which extended the entire length of the channel and merged with layer 4013. In turn this was overlaid by layers 4026 and 4029 of mixed orange and brown silty clay. These deposits appear to be the result of deliberate deposition, perhaps the final backfill of the disused feature.

(For a full analysis of the oven's structural clay, and a discussion of the construction, use and abandonment of the oven, see Edwards *et al*, Chapter 4; and for analysis of the charred grain, see Moffett, Chapter 4.)

Associated features

No evidence was found of any structural features within a radius of approximately 5 m from the oven structure. A very shallow NE-SW oriented gully (4032=4040) was revealed running alongside and parallel to the west side of the oven. A possible continuation of this feature (7524) was identified in evaluation Trench 3 (not illustrated) situated 10 m to the north of the oven, which was targeted on two possible linear features identified from the magnetometer survey (Fig. 2.2). The dating of this shallow gully is uncertain, despite its similar alignment to the oven's axis. The few sherds of pottery from the fill are a mix of Roman, late Saxon and medieval. If it is associated with the oven, it does not appear to have had a structural function.

A further evaluation trench (Tr. 2, not illustrated), situated some 10 m to the west of the oven revealed a large, shallow quarry pit (7516). Sample excavation of its fill (7517) produced pieces of fired clay very similar to the oven fabric within the oven chamber, and showing similar wattle impressions. However, these pieces were all very abraded, suggesting they had been weathered before deposition in the pit. A few sherds of late medieval pottery were also recovered from the fill.

PHASE 3 (MID 9th CENTURY TO 11th CENTURY) (FIG. 3.34)

With the demise of the enclosure complex at the end of Phase 2c, the landscape once more became open ground. The evidence for the occupation and activity that developed in the succeeding two centuries is much more scattered and seems to be characterised by a much more modest scale of enterprise in terms of the division of the landscape.

The evidence is for at least two *foci* of settlement or activity. One focus ('South-west group') was represented by a self-contained ditch and gully group at the south-edge of Site 4. To the east of this group is a small scatter of features including beam slots and postholes ('Central group'). To the north and east is a more widespread, but diffuse spread of features across Site 2, the east part of Site 4, and encroaching onto Site 8 ('Northern group').

South-west group (Fig. 3.35)

To the south-west, in Site 4, the evidence was largely contained within a shallow ditch (7307) that extended from the south-west baulk of Site 4 and curved to enter the south east side. Within the enclosure defined by ditch 7307 was an interrupted gully (6017), which seemed to echo the orientation of the 7307, and in the southern corner of the site, a straight gully (7310). A small assemblage (15g) of early mid Saxon pottery and animal bone was recovered from the fills of these features. These gullies varied in size from 0.6 m to 0.9 m in width and 0.20 m to 0.5 m deep.

Immediately outside the enclosure ditch (7307) to the north-east was an irregular shaped flat-bottomed pit (6279) partially exposed against the baulk. The pit measured 1.8 m long x 2.5 m wide x 0.15 m deep, and there was a possible posthole in the base of the pit. The size of the pit, the possible presence of a posthole, all suggest that the feature could have been an SFB similar to those to the north. A small assemblage of late Saxon pot and bone was recovered from the pit fill (6280), along with some animal bone.

Central group (Fig. 3.35)

The scatter of features in this group has little cohesion, and reveal no clear patterns. To the north of ditch 7307 on a rough south-west to north-east alignment was a curvilinear ditch 7325. The ditch measured approximately 15 m long and was between 0.4 m and 0.7 m wide and 0.16–0.45 m deep, and contained a mid grey brown silty clay fill. A total of 10 sherds (43g) of pottery, dated to between 850–900AD were recovered from the fill, in addition to some animal bone.

To the southwest of ditch 7325 and the north and east of enclosure 7307 was a small scatter of postholes and beamslots possibly representing one or more structures. The principal feature is a beamslot (7324) 5.8 m in length, 0.40 m in width and 0.08 m in depth with sheer sides and a flat base. Two fragments of 9th-century pottery were recovered from the fill of the feature. A second beam slot (7142) thought to relate to this feature was identified immediately to the south on a NW-SE alignment. This was approximately 2.0 m in length with squared ends, 0.32 m in width and 0.05 m in depth containing a mid-orange brown silty clay fill.

A small group of shallow pits to the south and west, and postholes to the east of these features, may be related to this focus of activity. They have similar fills (mid to dark brown silty clay) which differ from those of the postholes thought to relate to Phase 2b building group 7327 further to the west. However, given the variable nature of the subsoil in this area, reliance upon the characteristics of fills alone is perhaps not advisable; it is quite possible that some of the features assigned

to this group may belong to Phase 2b, or even Phase 1.

A little to the north of beamslot 7324 was a circular, flat-bottomed pit (6054) with straight sides, measuring 0.2 m in diameter and 0.3 m in depth. The feature contained a single fill of mid grey brown sandy silt from which 23 sherds (108g) of pottery dated to the 10th century was recovered, in addition to a quantity of animal bone.

Northern group (Fig. 3.26, 3. 36)

The main evidence for Phase 3 occupation extends across Site 2, the eastern part of Site 4 and into Site 8. It comprises ditches and gullies, buildings and associated features.

Gullies and associated features (Site 2) (Figs 3.26, 3.34-3. 38)

An irregular and extensive complex of gullies and associated features were identified across most of Site 2, clearly post-dating the enclosure ditch and the buildings of Phase 2. Due to lack of resources attention was focussed on the features to the east of the enclosure ditch extension. Features to the west were planned as soil marks but remained largely unexcavated. They are assigned to Phase 3 by virtue of their similarity in form and layout to features to the east assigned on the evidence of stratigraphy and finds to Phase 3.

The central element of the group of linear features was a curving, interrupted ditch (2650/

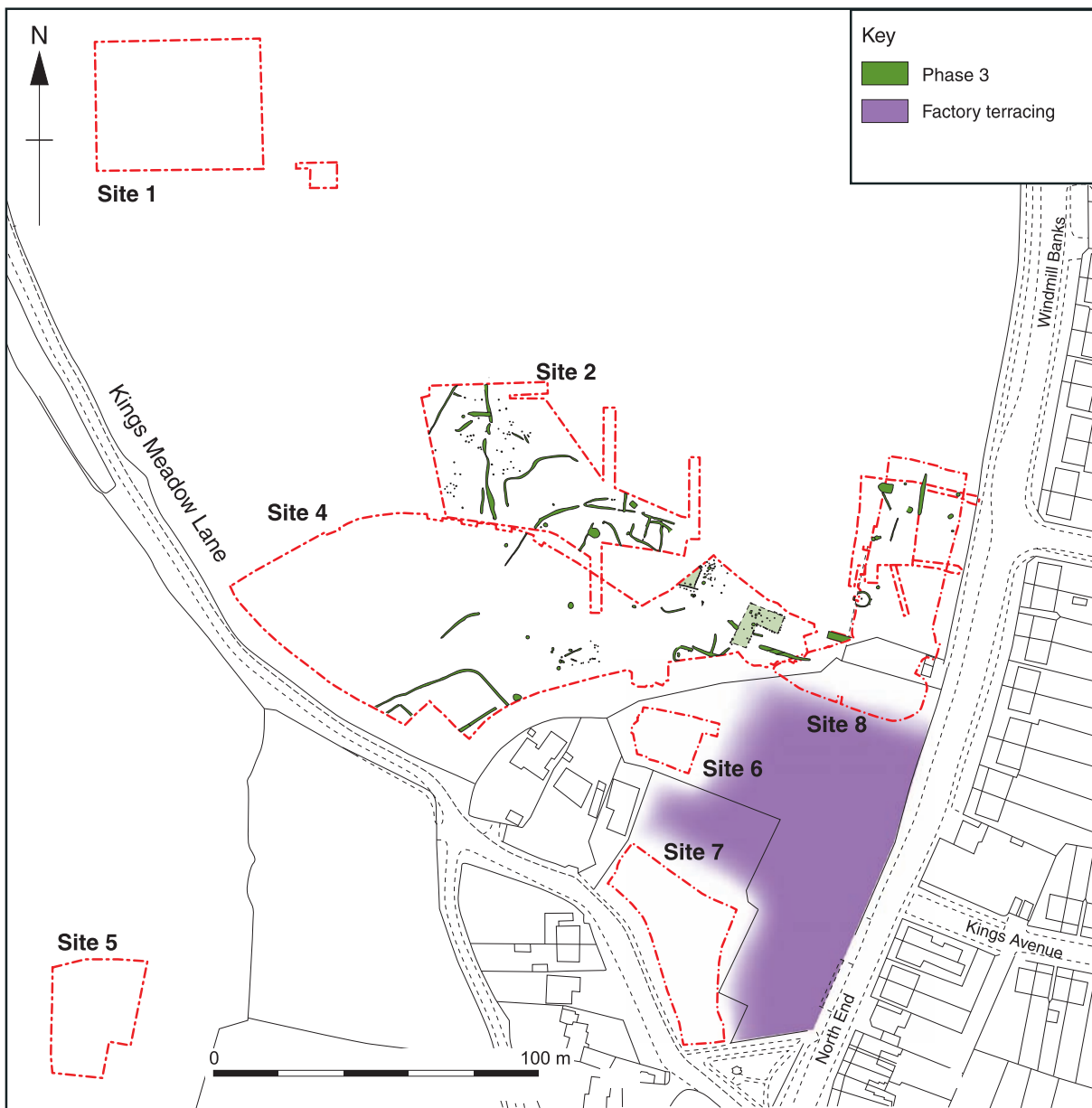


Fig. 3.34 Phase 3 Late Saxon activity

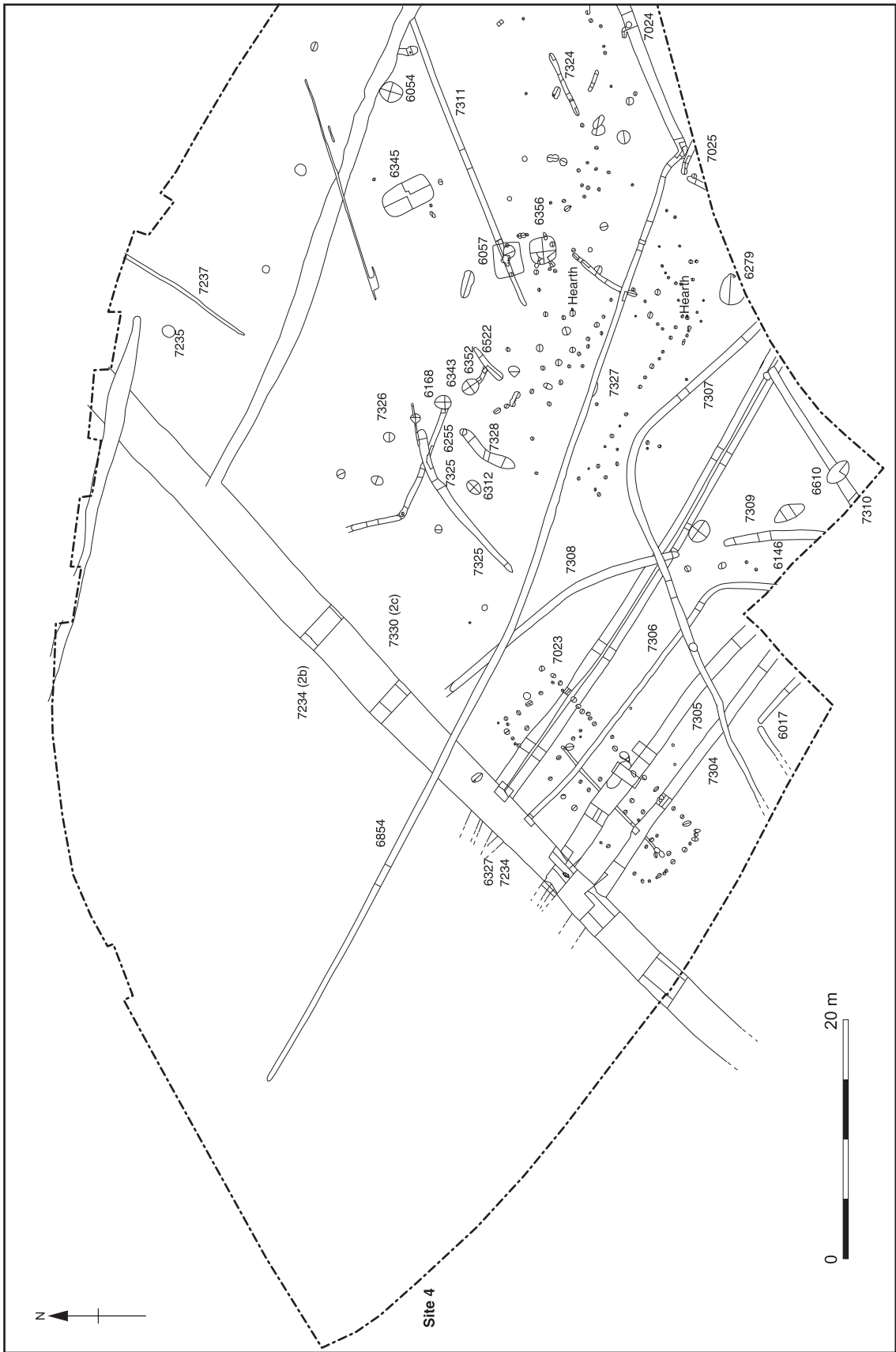


Fig. 3.35 Site 4 (W): General plan of features

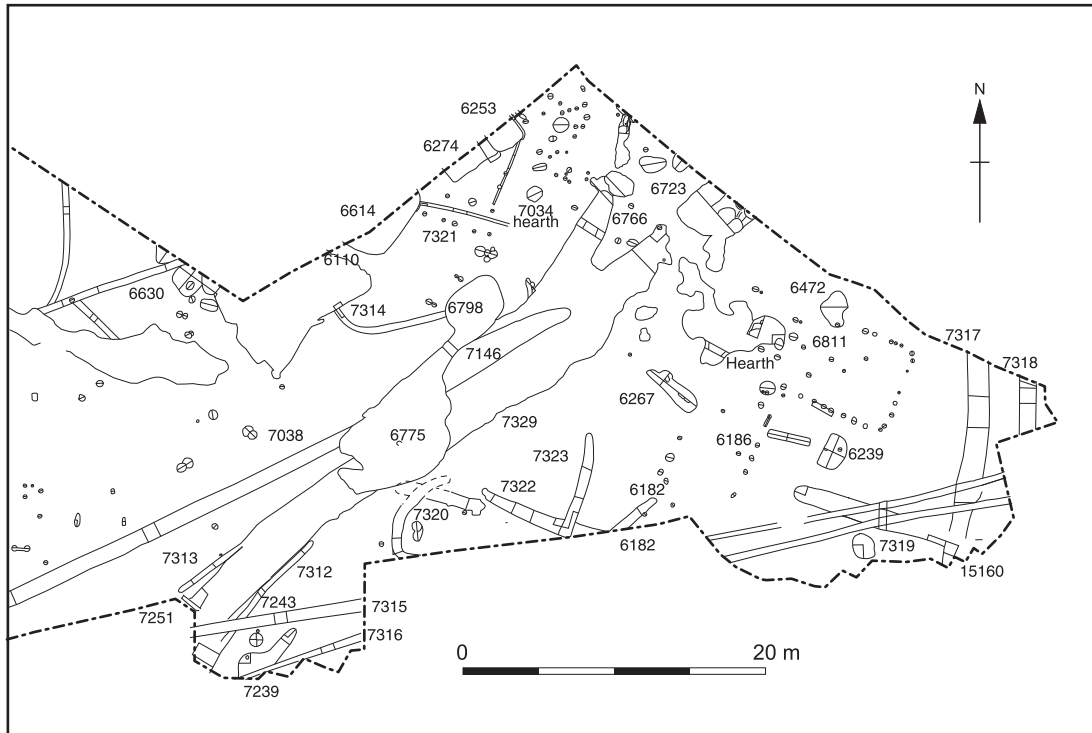


Fig. 3.36 Site 4 (E): General plan of features

2077/2109/2547), running across the site from east to south-west and probably extending into Site 4 in the form of the narrow gully 7237 (Fig. 3.35). The central part of the linear feature (context 2109) appears to represent two divergent stretches of gully, and two postholes 2145 and 2174 continue the line of the northern arm of 2109 to the east. Approximately 4 m to the west of ditch 7237 in Site 4, was an isolated pit (7235) measuring 1.05 m in diameter and 0.2 m in depth containing a quantity of oak charcoal (see Thompson and Francis, Chapter 4), along with fragments of fired clay, animal bone (including pig and horse bones), burnt stone and fragments of an iron knife blade (not illustrated, Cat No. 27), which is a post-medieval form and probably intrusive.

The gap between ditch 2077 and 2650 could represent access into an enclosure, and slightly to the north was a flat-bottomed pit (2008), measuring approximately 2.2 m long x 1.45 m wide x 0.25 m deep. The fill was a sequence of burnt clay deposits and soil, and produced a small assemblage of animal bone, but only one sherd of redeposited 3rd-century pottery. The sides of the pit were cut to form a ledge in places, prompting the suggestion that the pit had been used as an exterior hearth, covered by some form of superstructure. A simpler, and arguably more convincing, explanation is that the pit represents the site of a bonfire, probably repeatedly used. The heat from the fire would have discoloured and granulated the underlying clay subsoil, giving the impression, when revealed in excavation of a shallow pit filled with layers of burnt clay and ash.

To the south of the main enclosure line were a number of small gullies (2010, 2013, 2165, 2651 and 2652) apparently defining small enclosures. Also identified was a large shallow pit (2009), irregular in plan, with a maximum diameter of 3.62 m and a maximum depth of 0.30 m. Despite the fact that the pit fill (2006) produced a similar assemblage of charred plant remains to the gullies to the north, and a single sherd of pottery, it seems most likely that this feature represents a contemporary tree throw. A similar, but smaller pit (2346) was identified to the

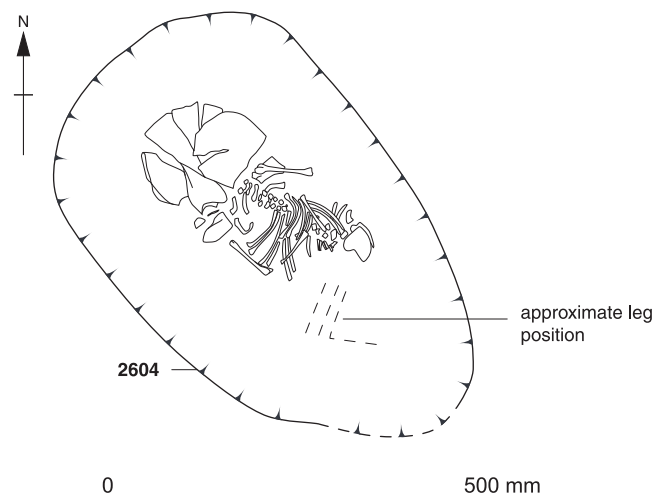


Fig. 3.37 Phase 3 Site 2 Child burial 2591

west, close to ditch 2547. A significant assemblage of charred grain was recovered from fill 2004 of gully 2010.

On the west side of ditch 2547 the rudimentary and disturbed grave (2604) of a child burial (2591) was identified (Fig. 3.37 and Pl. 5.5). The grave was cut was a very shallow oval pit with a rounded base, measuring no more than 0.70 m long x 0.40 m wide x 0.14 m deep. The site of the burial was under an area of post-medieval plough disturbance, which possibly accounts for at least part of the disturbance of the grave and its contents and lay within the footprint of the demolished Phase 2b structure 2666. The burial is described in detail by Witkin in Chapter 4.

Building 7321 (Site 4) (Fig. 3.38)

To the south-east of the pattern of ditched enclosures just described and located against the north baulk of Site 4, was a group of postholes and beamslots defining part of a rectangular structure or building and associated structures or features. Approximately 12 m to the south-east on the same NE-SW alignment is another building 6811 (see below).

The eastern wall of building 7321 was defined by a beamslot (6300) approximately 5 m long and incorporating two postholes (6308 and 6302). The north end of the beamslot was truncated by late medieval quarrying, but posthole 6306 could represent the original northern terminus of the slot. Similarly, the south end of the slot could be indicated by posthole 6594. The northern wall of Building 7321 was represented by a short length of slot (6304) emerging from the west baulk and terminating close to posthole 6306.

The south side of the structure was represented by beamslot 6582, which measured at least 6 m long. Its western end was truncated by late medieval quarrying, and its eastern end was very indistinct due to post-medieval ploughing, although it was still evident that beamslot 6582 continued beyond the junction with beamslot 6300. On either side of beamslot 6582 was a series of postholes – five to the south, two to the north (in addition to posthole 6594). The southern group may have been external to the structure and could very well represent bracing struts for the southern wall.

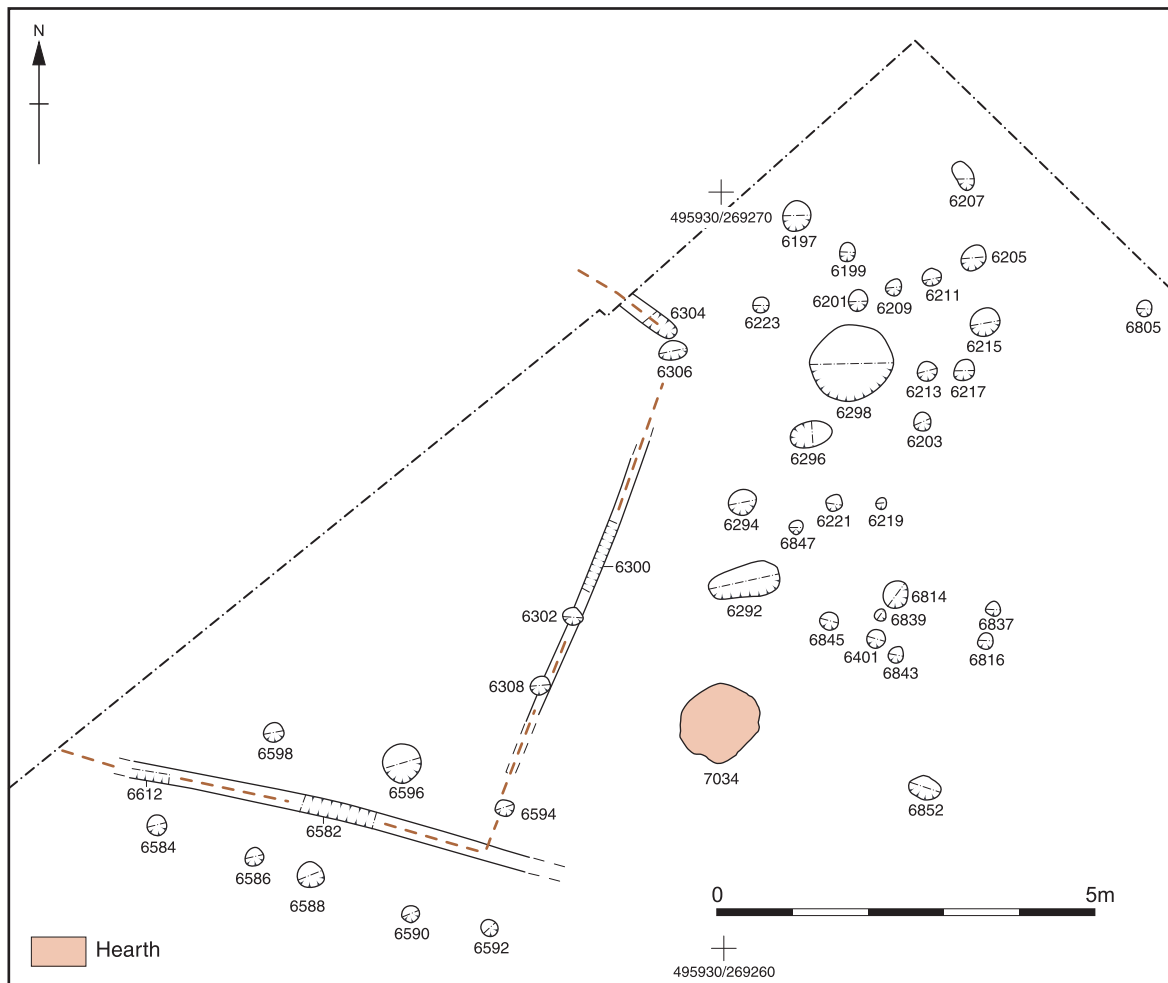


Fig. 3.38 Phase 3 Site 4 Building 7321

Associated features

A number of post holes to the east of this structure are also thought to be related. However, no discernible pattern could be seen. The fill of the postholes was identical to that of the building beam slot and postholes, and three postholes close to the north east corner of the structure contained pottery dated to the late Saxon period. A sub-circular area of burnt subsoil (7034), probably representing a hearth base, was identified near the east side of the building. A sample from the hearth material revealed evidence of barley (see Moffett Chapter 4). Finds recovered from the hearth included burnt stone and pottery dated to the 10th century.

Further to the south of this area were the remains of a curving gully (7314) measuring 0.42 m in width and 0.14 m. Both ends of the ditch were truncated by late medieval quarrying. Eight fragments of 9th- to 10th-century pottery were recovered from its fill. It is possible that this ditch relates to the complex of gullies on Site 2 to the north-west. Two pairs of closely spaced postholes between ditch 7314 and Building 7321 may also be elements within this phase.

Building 6811 (Site 4) (Fig. 3.39- 3.40)

The structure was situated at the east corner of Site 4, and was identified as an arrangement of postholes apparently defining an 'L' shaped structure, although truncation by later ploughing was particularly severe over the north-western part of the structure. The main W-E wing of the building measured approximately 12.0 m x 6.0 m and consisted of 23 postholes, mostly circular, averaging 0.25 m wide and 0.12 m deep. Internally nine postholes and remains of three hearths, defined by shallow depressions in the subsoil (7026, 7076, 7049), were identified. Environmental samples were retrieved from the ashy material (7027, 7077) of two of these hearth features (see Moffett Chapter 4). Hearth 7076 was the only feature to contain finds including a small quantity of burnt stone, slag, fired clay, flint, animal bone and a lead sheet fragment.

A possible annex or additional wing to the building was suggested by an arrangement of 13 postholes and one short gully extending at 90° to the main structure. The fill of these features was different from the fills of main structure and consisted of mid to dark brown silty clay, suggesting that they parts of a separate building episode. The clearest surviving wall line, on the east side of the 'annexe', included a 1.0 m wide gap suggestive of a doorway, between posthole 6096 and gully 6792. In the interior of this wing there were three postholes, two of which (6092, 6098) could relate to the suggested doorway, as they are situated close to either side. A small amount of pottery (3 sherds) from three of the postholes (6092, 6094 and 6096) was dated to the late Saxon period.

Associated features

In the angle formed by the two wings of Building 6811 was a short linear feature (6186), possibly a beamslot. Its fill produced 10th-century pottery, an awl (SF 319 – Fig. 4.16, 2) and a small quantity of iron slag and burnt stone. Further to the east a ditch (7319) was identified, extending for 14 m to the eastern baulk of Site 4, a further 5 m length of the same feature was identified on Site 8 (context 15160). The ditch was up to 1.32 m in width and 0.34 m in depth and contained a mid grey brown silty clay fill. Finds included 9th- to 10th-century pottery and animal bone.

Paddock complex (Site 4) (Fig. 3.40)

To the south-west of Building 6811 was a complex of linear features possibly defining a series of paddocks or small enclosures represented by 4 separate ditches dated from the 11th to the 12th century. The western side of the enclosure was formed by a curving ditch (7320) that contained 22 sherds of 12th century pottery. In close proximity was a short NW-SE ditch (6115), part of which had been identified in an NAU evaluation trench. The relationship between these two features was not clear. Continuing to the south-east from ditch 6115 was ditch 7322, which also produced 9th- to 12th century pottery. Running north off ditch 7322, and towards Building 6811 was a short gully (7323), which produced nearly 400g (61 fragments) of pottery of a similar date. In addition to the pottery and animal bone was a pair of bone handle plates held together with iron rivets (SF310 Fig. 4.22, 63), and a knife blade (SF 318 – Fig. 4.18, 26). To the east of 7323, another small ditch (6182) was identified, which appeared to extend the north-east from 7322 for a distance of 6 m. In contrast to the others features in this group, this gully produced bone but no pottery.

To the north and east of Building 6811 a small group of features was identified on Site 8, north of the line of the Phase 2c enclosure ditch, and this group is assigned to Phase 3. The features included an SFB, and possibly associated ditches and pits.

SFB 15300 (Site 8) (Fig. 3.41, Pl. 3.7)

This was first revealed, but only partially excavated during the evaluation of this area (Site 3). The shape in plan of the SFB pit (15296) as depicted (Fig. 3.41) is a composite; only the eastern part was fully excavated in Site 8, while the western end of the pit was defined approximately in the evaluative work on Site 3. The feature measured approximately 5 m long x 2.8 m wide in total, with near vertical sides sharply rounding to a near flat base. A single posthole (15297) measuring 0.12 m diameter x 0.26 m deep was identified, located against the eastern end of the pit, at its mid-point.

The single grey brown silty fill (15305) of the pit

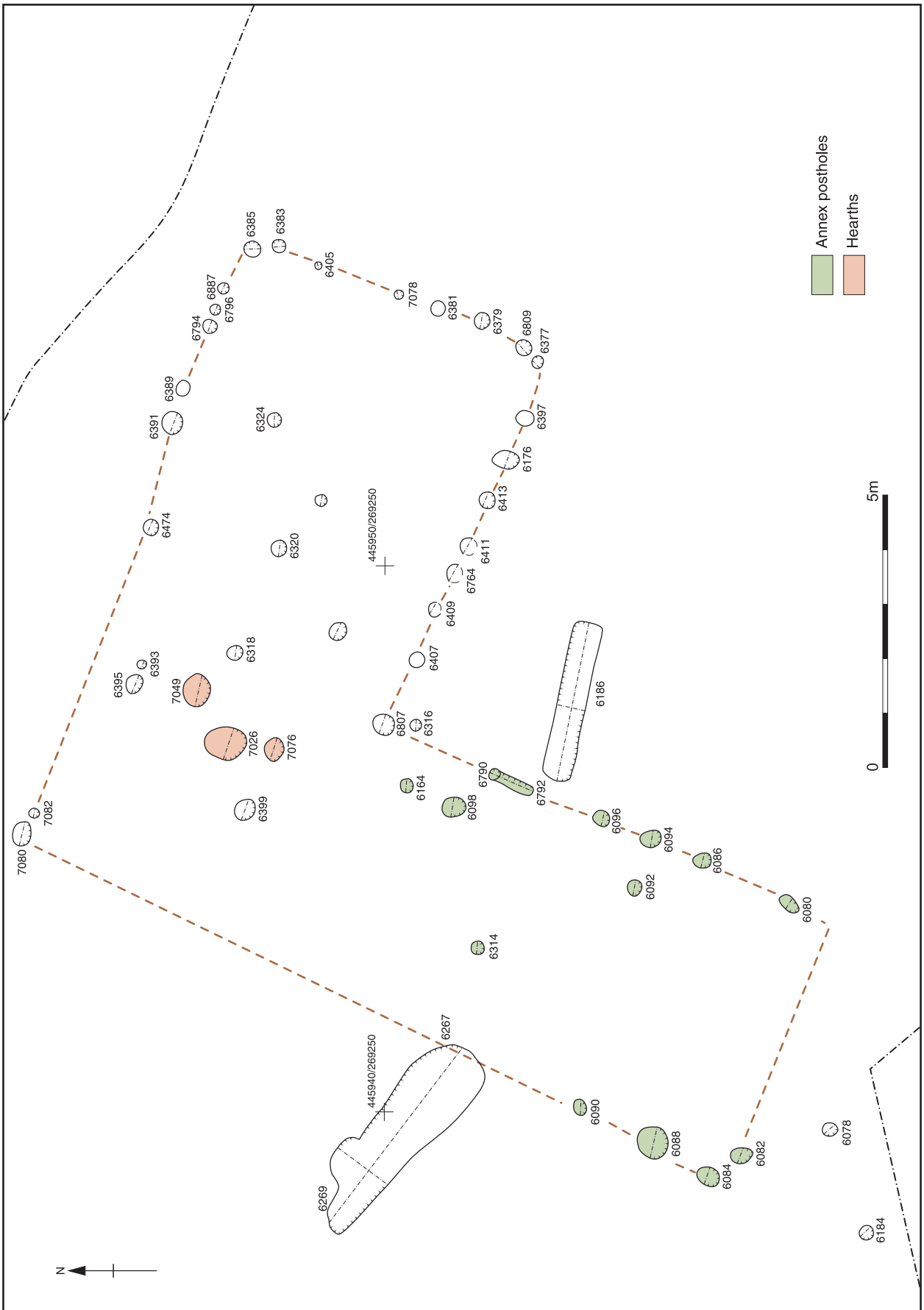


Fig. 3.39 Phase 3 Site 4 Building 6811

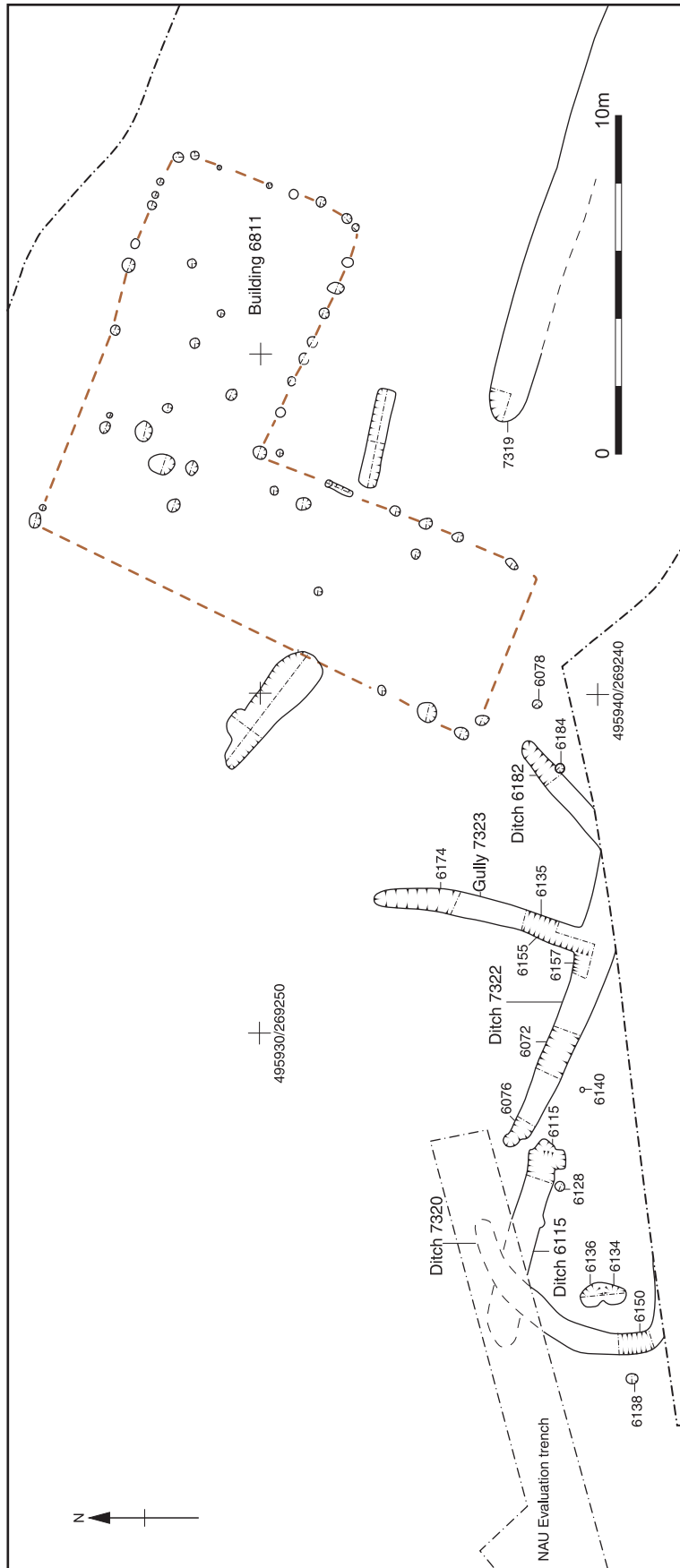


Fig. 3.40 Phase 3 Site 4 Paddock complex 7320 and Building 6811

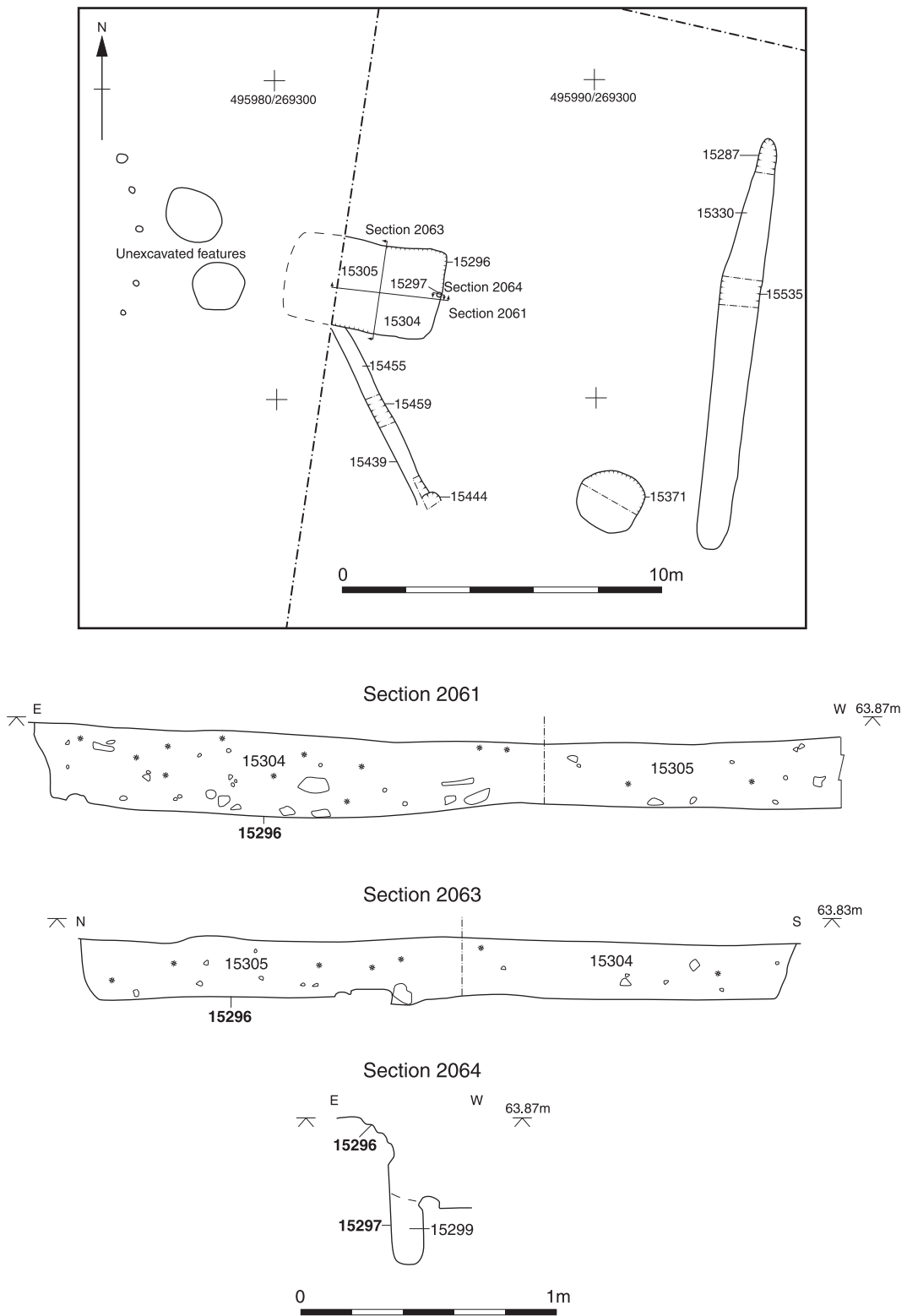


Fig. 3.41 Phase 3 Site 8 Building 15300 and associated features

produced modest quantities of animal bone and late 10th-century pottery, and a single iron object (Fig. 4.22, 64), whose function is unclear. A sample of the pit fill produced a mixed charred plant assemblage, which may well be indicative of later (possibly Phase 4) domestic waste.

Features possibly associated with the SFB included a shallow gully (15455) extending to the south-east, and truncated by later features. The fill of the gully (15460) also produced pottery of the late 10th century. A similar shallow gully (15410), oriented N-S was detected to the south of 15455, and may also be associated. To the east, a 13.5 m long north-south oriented ditch (15330) was identified, measuring 0.60 m wide x a maximum of 0.20 m deep. Its fill contained a small quantity of St Neots Ware.

A number of pits were identified in the vicinity of the SFB; circular pit 15371 was located to the south-east, and produced animal bone, pottery and burnt stone from its three layered fills. A scatter of soil marks, possibly representing two large pits and five postholes, were recorded to the west of the SFB during the Site 3 evaluation, but were not excavated. The north-eastern part of Site 8 was conspicuously empty of features, except for three pits (15256, 15258, 15261), all of which produced 10th-century pottery. While they may be associated with the domestic focus of the SFB pit, it is recog-

nised that they could relate to another focus off-site to the north or east.

Ring gully (Fig. 3.42)

Towards the southern part of Site 8 a ring gully 15365 was identified, close to the western baulk. Posthole 15359, sited at the approximate centre of the ring gully would appear to be associated. Two postholes of similar size (15352 and 15357) were located against the outside of the gully on the eastern side. A small assemblage of late Saxon pottery was recovered from the gully fill. A possible contemporary pit (15462) was identified to the north-east of the ring gully. Its fill contained a piece of daub displaying one crudely smoothed face, but no wattle marks. Given the fact that the pit was cut by a later (Phase 4) drain, the daub may be intrusive.

PHASE 4 (11th -13th CENTURY) (Fig. 3.43)

There appears to be some migration or nucleation of the Phase 3 settlement *foci*, both southwards towards the junction of Kings Meadow Lane and Windmill Banks, and eastwards towards the main N-S road at Windmill Banks. Whereas in Phase 3 the settlement is not sharply focused, in Phase 4 there are two distinct areas of settlement: to the south in

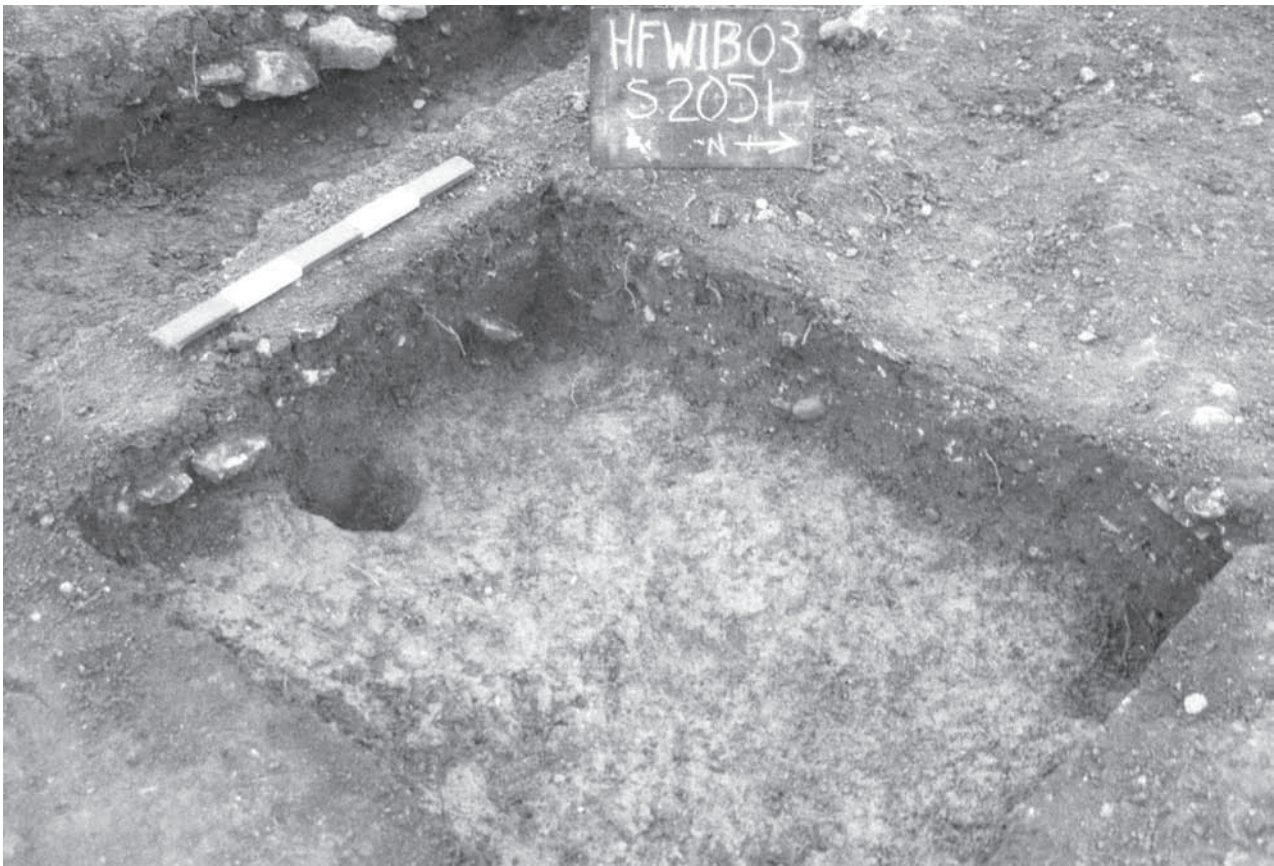


Plate 3.7 Late Saxon SFB Site 8 Phase 3

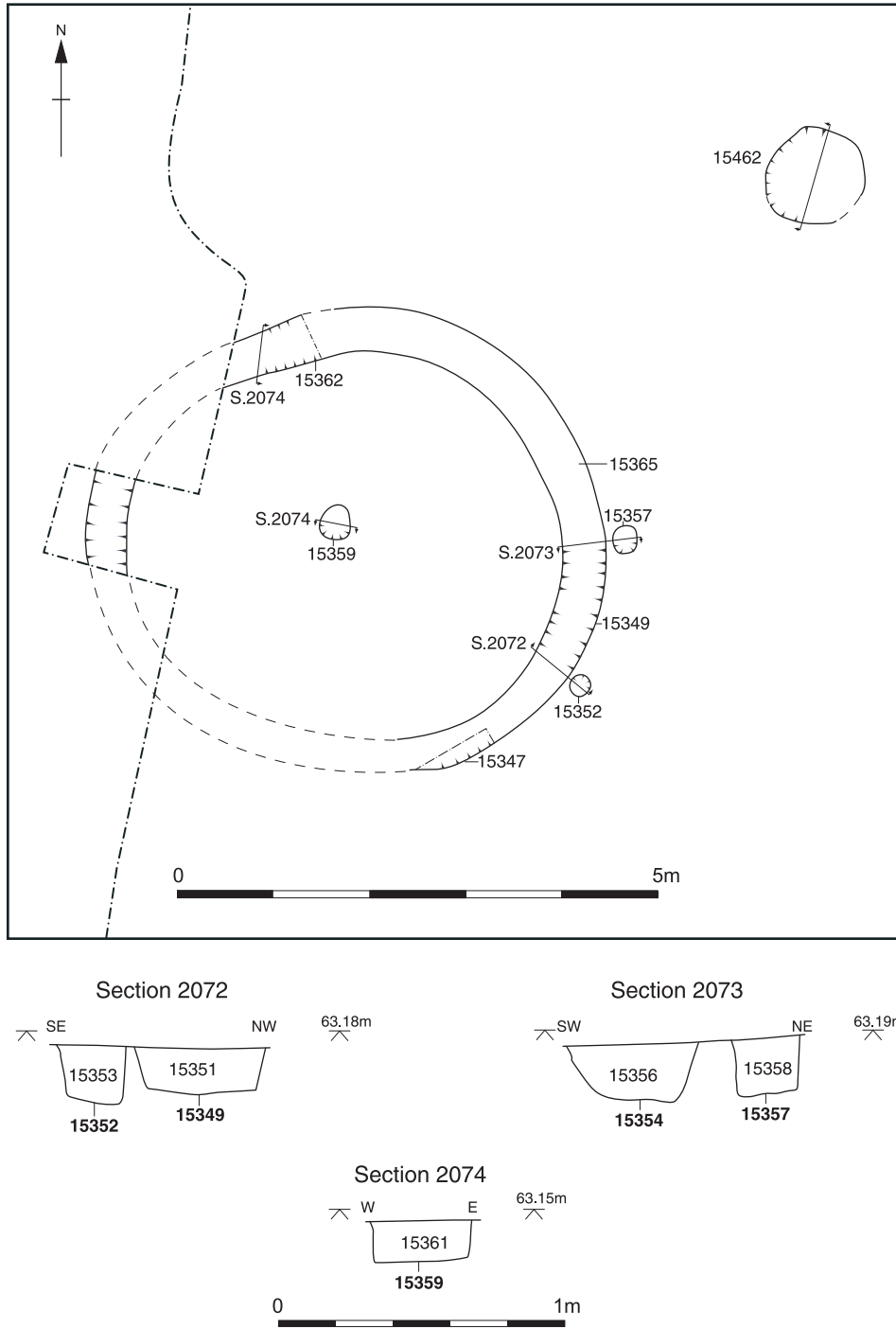


Fig. 3.42 Phase 3 Site 8 Structure 15365 and associated features

Site 7, where the evidence suggests a modest settlement, and to the north, at the east end of Site 4 and in Site 8, where more elaborate structures were found.

Between the two *foci*, plough furrows and field boundaries respect and echo an boundary leading from the Lane in a north-easterly direction towards the N-S road. It is during this phase that the land divisions evident in their developed form in the 1737 map (see Pl.1.3) are first identified archaeolog-

ically. From this point on there is a clear distinction between the agricultural land to the west and settlement (of whatever character) to the east and south.

Southern settlement (Site 7) (Figs 3.44)

The earliest phase of activity comprised an arrangement of linear and curvilinear ditches along with a number of pits. The ditches were principally orientated NE-SW and NW-SE and were relatively

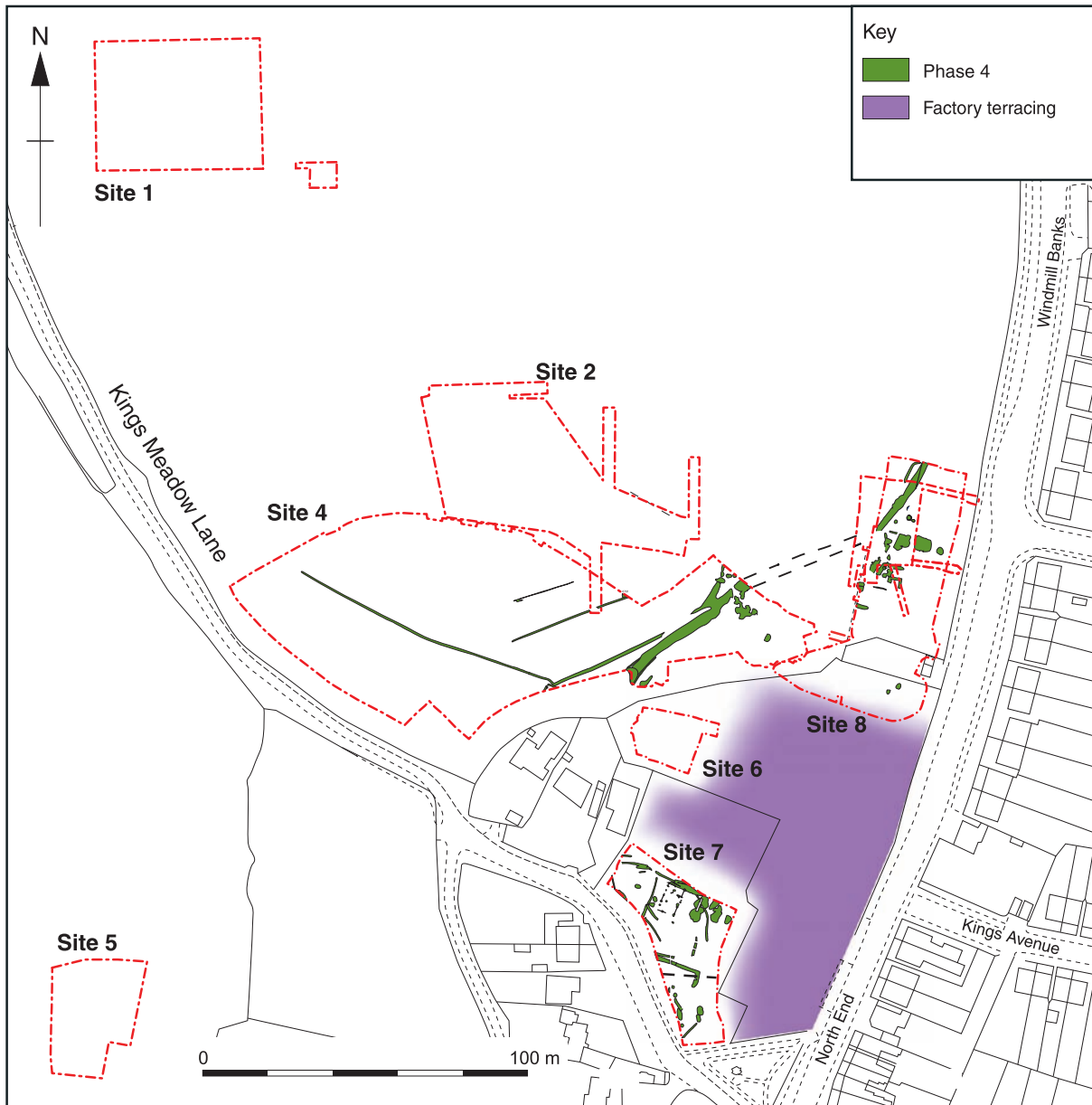


Fig. 3.43 Phase 4 Medieval activity

shallow. They appear to form the remains of two sub-rectangular enclosures orientated NE-SW. Pottery assemblages from the ditch fills were dominated by early medieval sherds. These along with stratigraphic and spatial relationships suggest an early medieval date.

Building 9528 (Site 7) (Fig. 3.45)

Within the westernmost enclosure 11 post-holes and a shallow gully, orientated NE-SW may represent a structure. Sherds of 11th- to 12th-century pottery from these and nearby features suggest an early medieval date for the building. The postholes that were excavated were generally shallow, having suffered considerable truncation. Four postholes

within the building footprint were identified, but their arrangement did not suggest they represented internal aisle posts.

Immediately to the north of building were at least two gullies (9385 and 9389), which may have curved around the east side of the building. To the east of the Building 9528 was a narrow curving gully (9517), which probably represents a continuation to the south-east of ditch 9385. Also to the east were some large pits (9342, 9344 9358, 9515). The pits were sample-excavated, and in general produced modest amounts of pottery and bone. It is suggested that they represent backfilled clay quarry pits, and that the occupational debris they contained was derived from redeposited midden material.

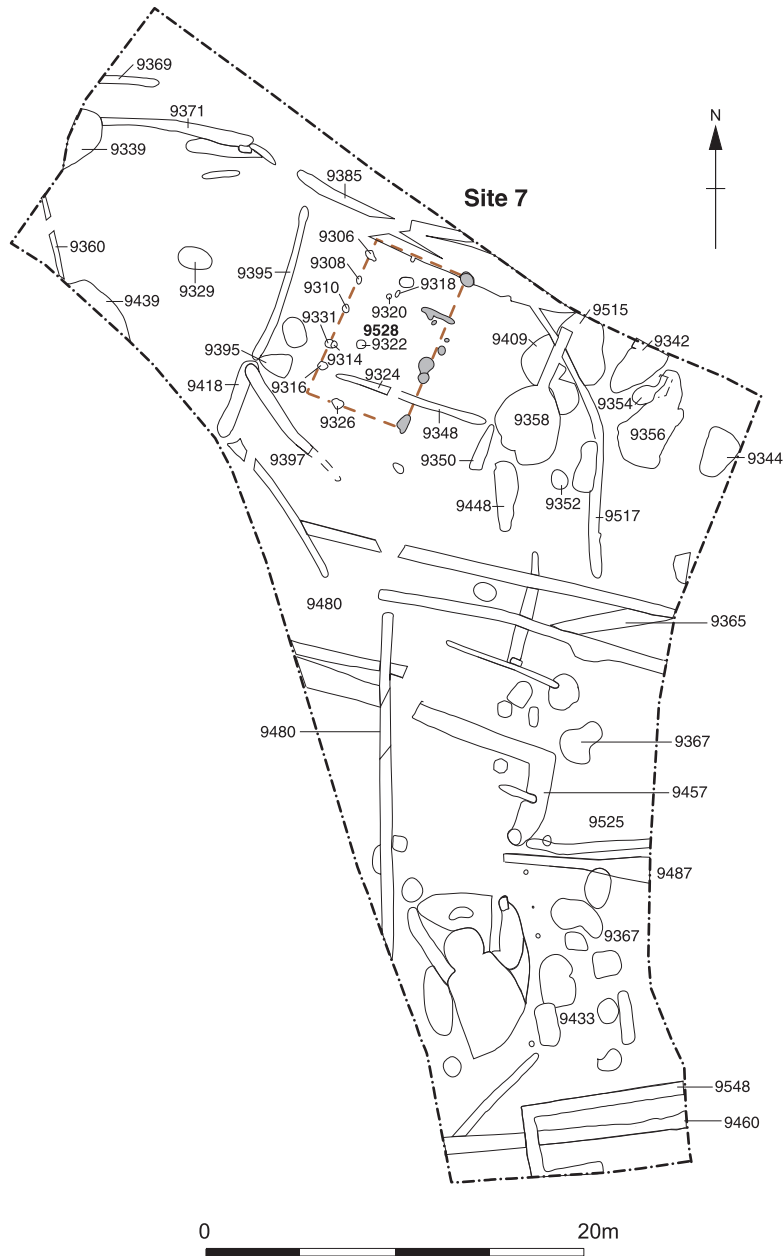


Fig. 3.44 Site 7: General plan of features

To the south-east of Building 9528, a substantial L-shaped ditch (9457) was identified. This was aligned WNW-ESE and had a right angle turn at the SE end. Finds included early medieval pottery and some bone. To the south of ditch 9457 a number of features – principally pits – were identified and assigned to this phase on the grounds of their stratigraphic relationships or the similarity of their fills with excavated features of this phase.

Eastern settlement (Site 8) (Fig. 3.46, Pl. 3.8)

The division between settlement and agricultural land is clearly shown in Site 8, where a large boundary ditch (15320) extends from the northern

baulk, curving south-west, away from the line of the north-south road, possibly to reappear in Site 4 as ditch 7329. Ditch 15320 had a fairly steep sided U-shaped profile, and averaged 1.4 m wide x 0.40 m deep. Its fill, 15279, produced a quantity of generally 12th-century pottery along with some animal bone.

An area of concentrated domestic activity was identified immediately to the east of ditch 15320. Unfortunately this was also an area that appears to have suffered considerable truncation by later ploughing, making the reconstruction of the domestic activity unusually difficult. There are numerous structural elements, but not a clear structural pattern.

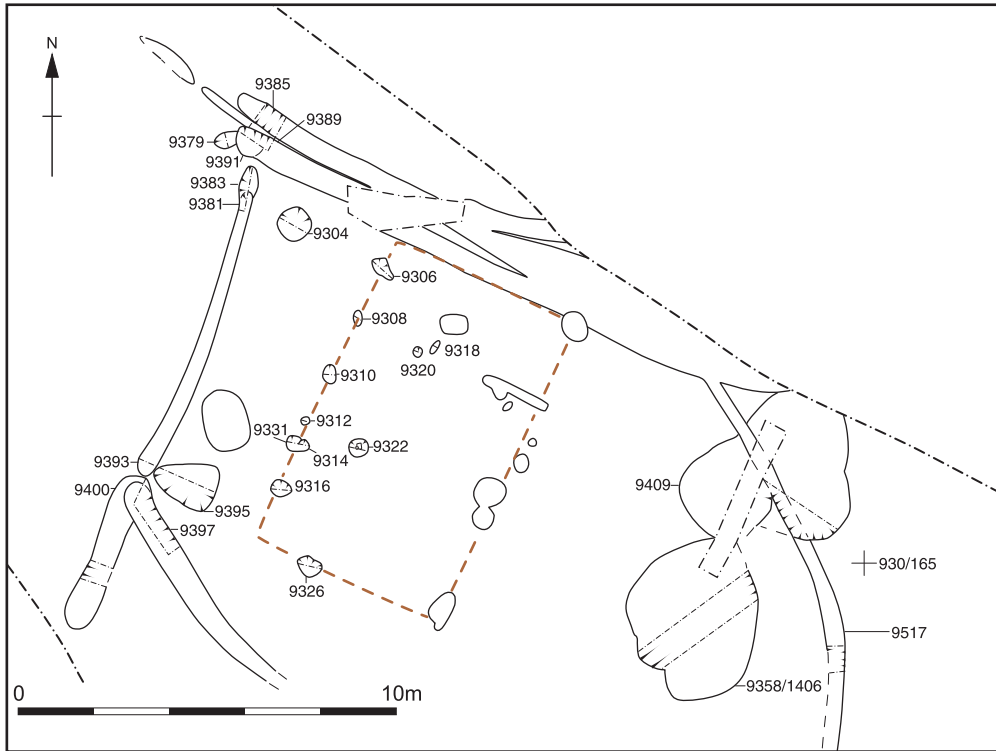
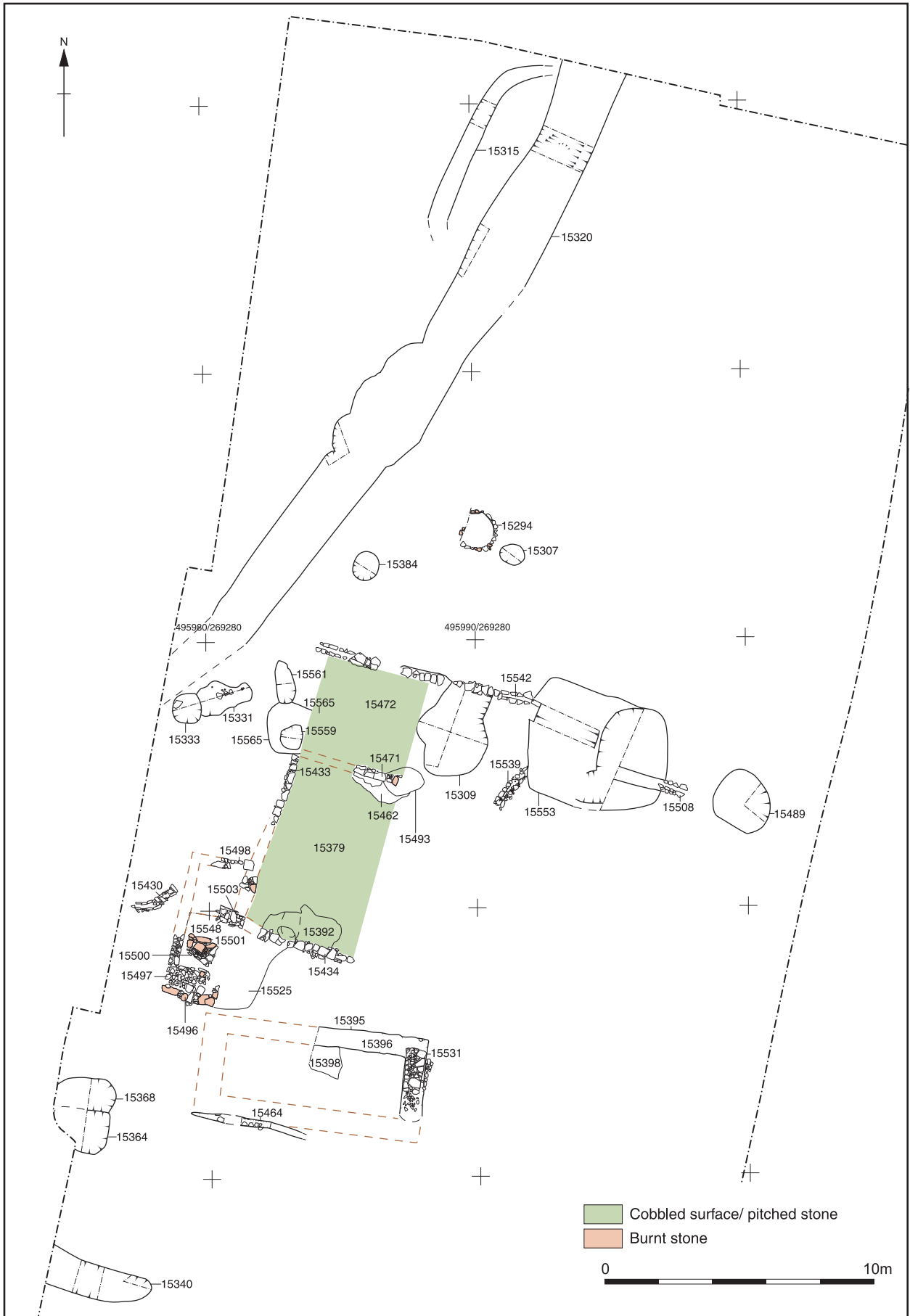


Fig. 3.45 Phase 4 Site 7 Building 9528



Plate 3.8 Structural remains Site 8 Phase 4

Death and Taxes



The earliest activity is represented by a scatter of large deep pits (15553, 15489, 15309, 15563), possibly originally dug as quarries, and either backfilled in one operation or used as rubbish pits and filled in episodically. Finds in these fills included modest assemblages of animal bone and 12th- to 13th-century pottery, and inclusions of daub fragments. The focus of this activity was located in the middle of the site, with a group of at least three vertically sided or undercut pits (including pits 15309 and 15553) each at least 0.90 m deep. For safety reasons none were bottomed. The presence of domestic rubbish in the pits, albeit not in large quantities, implies a settlement focus nearby.

The quarrying activity in the central part of the site gave way to a complex of structural elements, seemingly related but difficult to understand as a group. The activity focussed around a well-used pitched limestone yard surface (15379), which sealed some of the infilled quarry pits. The northern edge of the yard surface was bounded by a stone-sided and stone-capped drain (15542) which extended for a distance of approximately 9.2 m. The drain was constructed within a shallow trench, so that the stone capping was flush with the yard surface. It was noted that there was no stone floor to the drain. To the west, the drain structure petered out, but to the east it appeared to run into the western side of a large pit (15553). The pit remained largely unexcavated, but it appears to have served as a sump for two other drains (15539 and 15508).

A circular stone-lined oven base (15294) measuring 1.3 m in diameter and 0.10 m in depth was located to the north of the drain. The interior of the oven base was formed of hard-packed and burnt clay (15303). Another oven (15493) was situated on the southern side of the yard surface and survived as a sub-circular spread of superimposed layers of ash and hard-packed burnt clay. An Edward I penny (SF 4032 – not illustrated) dating to AD 1278-1307 was found in this material, and an environmental sample produced fairly abundant cereal remains (see Moffett Chapter 4).

The southern element of this settlement focus was represented by a small rectangular structure (15495) and possibly related surfaces, drains and walls. Structure 15495 was oriented NNE-SSW and measured approximately 5.6 m long x 2.2 m wide. Its walls (where they had survived later truncation) were defined by unmortared limestone rubble footings surviving to a maximum of three courses, averaging 0.40 m wide. The south and west wall footings (15496 and 15497) were reasonably intact. The north wall (15498) was heavily damaged. The east wall was only suggested by short returns of the north and south walls, and it is by no means clear if it extended the length of the building, or if the building was open-fronted to the east. Any clarifying evidence was destroyed by the post-medieval ditch (15283; Fig. 3.53) at this point.

Within the footprint of structure 15495 were the partial remains of a hearth floor of pitched stone and limestone slabs (15500), extending over much of the southern part of the structure. Many of the slabs displayed evidence of burning. Crossing the northern part of the structure's footprint was a stone built drain (15503), which appeared to run to a point coincident with the line of the west wall of structure 15495. At this point a further short length of drain (15430) curved away to the south-west. The construction of the two drains differed slightly, suggesting they were not built at the same time, although their location suggests they were part of the same drainage system. Drain 15430 was V shaped in profile, the sides formed of slabs of unworked limestone, with a flat stone capping. In contrast, drain 15503 was box-shaped in profile, with a flat stone-slab floor, vertical stone sides and a stone-capped roof. Where drain 15503 passed through structure 15495, it was noted that the level of the drain roof was some 0.22 m higher than that of the hearth base.

To the east of structure 15495, and butting against both sides of drain 15503 were the remains of a pitched stone surface (15525, 15392) which showed signs of being patched at least once, and levelled with a spread of yellow clay (15527) which showed signs of burning. To the south-east the yard surface butted against the line of a short length of wall footing represented by a very shallow robber trench (15395). This extended east for a distance of approximately 4.5 m, before turning to the south for a distance of 2.5 m in the form of surviving limestone rubble footings 15531, bonded with a lime mortar. No continuation of the wall line was seen beyond what is evident in Figure 3.46, although a very truncated west-east oriented length of stone sided drain (15464) was revealed approximately 3 m to the south of robber trench 15395, and may have run alongside a wall to the north.

Evidence of a later programme of consolidation of these yard areas was found to the north and northeast of Structure 15495. A short length of NE-SW oriented wall (15433) was revealed, comprising a single course of unworked stone slabs, roughly faced to the east. Its appearance suggests it may have revetted a raised area or platform to the west. To the north-east a short length of stone slabs were identified (15471), oriented west-east. This feature was faced to the south and to the north appeared to represent a revetment to a pitched stone surface extending to the north (15472). In the evaluation of this area these two features were linked as one L-shaped feature – the evaluation backfilling and overburden re-stripping appeared to have damaged the fragile remains.

Linear features and Building 7025 (Site 4)

The evidence for occupation in Phase 4 on Site 4

Fig. 3.46 (facing page) Phase 4 Site 8 Buildings and associated features

comprises almost exclusively shallow linear features, representing land divisions or possibly individual plough furrows. The corner of a possible building was also exposed. It would seem that the area between the settlement *foci* of Sites 7 and 8 reverted to ploughland.

The phasing of the features in this area is uncertain. While their fills produced small quantities of late Saxon (Phase 3) pottery, their stratigraphy, such as it was, and their characteristic straight lines, is in contrast to the less orderly, but more confidently phased Phase 3 features on Site 2 for example. It is quite possible that the late Saxon pottery could be residual, and no surprise that no Phase 4 pottery is present, given the absence of a nearby domestic focus.

A shallow ditch (6854) oriented WNW-ESE appears to have defined the southern extent of the land divisions. It was traced for approximately 80 m from close to the western baulk to a terminus at the eastern side of the site. The terminus of 6854 appeared to have been cut by the terminus of ditch 7024 of similar proportions to 6854 which was oriented WSW-ENE-(7024) and which extended towards the northern baulk, although its northern end was heavily truncated. Ditch 6854 contained a few sherds of, presumably residual, late Saxon pottery, and ditch 7024 produced both a residual sherd of early Saxon pottery (Fig. 4.1.21), and intrusive sherds of late medieval pottery.

Building 7025 (Fig. 3.35)

Just south of the junction of ditches 6854 and 7024 the north-west corner of a possible building or structure (7025) was exposed. The evidence comprised the termini of two shallow flat-bottomed beamslots (6695 and 6699). The end of 6695 was abutted by a posthole (6697) and another posthole (6707) was situated against the east side of 6699. The only dating evidence from any of the features was a single piece of abraded Roman roof tile. It is arguable that the proximity of the proposed Building 7025 to the junction of ditches 6854 and 7024 is unlikely to be coincidental, and suggests they are part of the same phase of activity.

Parallel to ditch 7024 and approximately 17 to 18 m from was another ditch 7311. This extended from the northern baulk for approximately 39 m towards ditch 6854. The ditch measured approximately 0.5 m in width with a general depth of between 0.09 m and 0.13 m becoming deeper to a recorded 0.23 m at its south-western terminus. Finds included Late Saxon pottery in addition to a quantity of animal bone.

Ditch 7329 (Fig. 3.36), which was a shallow and indistinct feature on a SW-NE orientation, extended across the eastern part of Site 4 for approximately 44 m. At its southern end the ditch was flanked either side by gullies 7312 and 7313, was shallow and had been re-cut on the north western side. Its fill, a dark orange brown silty clay, produced a small quantity

of animal bone and 8 sherds (39g) of Shelly and Sandy Coarseware dated to between 1100 – 1150, slag and a horseshoe fragment (SF 311 – not illustrated). Towards the north-eastern limit of the site the feature became less clear in plan, and its fill, a mid brownish grey silty clay, contained pottery dating to between 1100-1150, animal bone, a further horseshoe fragment (not illustrated) and flint. Any potential stratigraphic relationship between ditches 7329 and 7024 had been destroyed by Phase 5 quarrying (context 6775), but it is believed that ditch 7329 is later in date than 7024. Against the north baulk, ditch/feature 6723 appeared to continue the line of 7239 into the northern baulk, and onwards towards Site 8.

In the north-eastern part of Site 4 two other irregular features (contexts 7146 and 6766) appeared to merge with ditch 7329 from the west. Both 7146 and 6766 were no more than 0.15 m deep with poorly defined edges and furrowed bases. They appeared to be the result of episodic ploughing along the same line, rather than a single construction episode. Along with some animal bone, a range of pottery dating from the 10th to the 12th centuries was recovered from their fills. Other finds from these Site 4 ditch fills included a Clay Spindle Whorl (SF339 – Fig. 4.16, 19), nail fragments (SF 337 & 338 – not illustrated) and an iron plate fragment (SF350 – not illustrated).

In the eastern corner of the excavation area a shallow, flat-bottomed pit (6239) sub-rectangular in plan was identified. It had two finds-rich fills of mid to light greyish brown silty clay. Finds included pottery dated to between 1100 and 1150, along with animal bone, ceramic building materials and two pieces of iron (SF 320 and 321 – not illustrated). The truncated bases of two postholes (6242 and 6244) were identified in the floor of the pit, and may have been functionally related to it.

PHASE 5 (14th CENTURY TO MID 15th CENTURY) (FIG. 3.47)

The later medieval period saw intense industrial activity in Sites 4, 6 and 8, but otherwise the spread of settlement appears to be further confined to only the area near the junction of Kings Meadow Lane and Windmill Banks (Site 7), perhaps reflecting the late medieval contraction of the borough (see Chapter 1).

Site 6 contained the well-preserved remains of Kiln 1 with associated structures, including stone wall footings, stone surfaces and posthole structures, possibly drying sheds. A second, less well-preserved kiln (Kiln 2) was found to the north-east of Kiln 1 on Site 8. This was associated with ditches and a possible limestone rubble surface. To the north of the kiln was a probable boundary ditch 15283, which cut the Phase 4 boundary ditch 15320 and was probably its replacement. To the west of Kiln 2 and north of Kiln 1 a number of quarry pits were located on Site 4. These have been assigned to Phase 5.

Pottery kilns and associated structures

Two kilns were found within the project area, although there is evidence suggesting that there may have been more. Kiln 1 on Site 6 was sufficiently intact and sufficiently fully excavated to allow detailed analysis of the structure (see Chapter 5). The structure of Kiln 2 on Site 8 was heavily truncated but its structure was similar to Kiln 1. An excavation in 1965 immediately to the west of the location of Site 8 revealed a large quantity of wasters and features interpreted at the time as a medieval kiln. This evidence is reconsidered in Chapter 5.

Kiln I (Site 6) (Figs 3.48-3.49, Pls 3.9-3.10)

The kiln (context 9200) was sited in the south-western corner of Site 6, and consisted of a trench that measured 8.20 m long x 3.60 m wide x 0.85 m deep overall. The trench was divided into three sections by thick clay and stone linings (9227 and 9228). The three sections were the central firing chamber and the two stoke pits (9072 and 9082). The central firing chamber (9092) was oval in shape, with an arched flue made from clay (9080 and 9091) at each end. The flues opened into the two stoke pits, (9072 and 9082). Within the firing chamber was a central flat-topped pedestal made of a core of sandy clay with some ironstone rubble. Sealing the

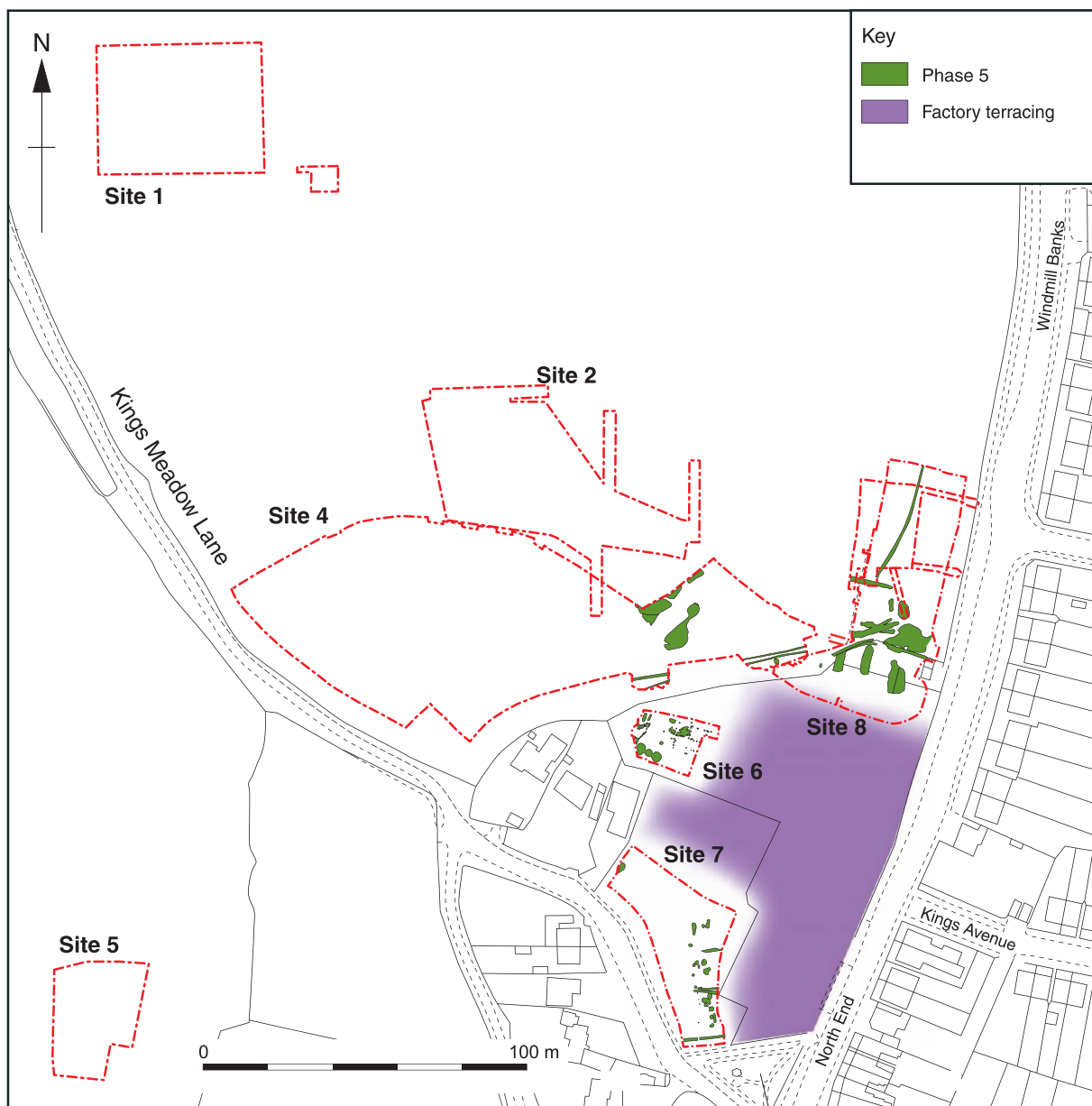


Fig. 3.47 Phase 5 Late medieval activity

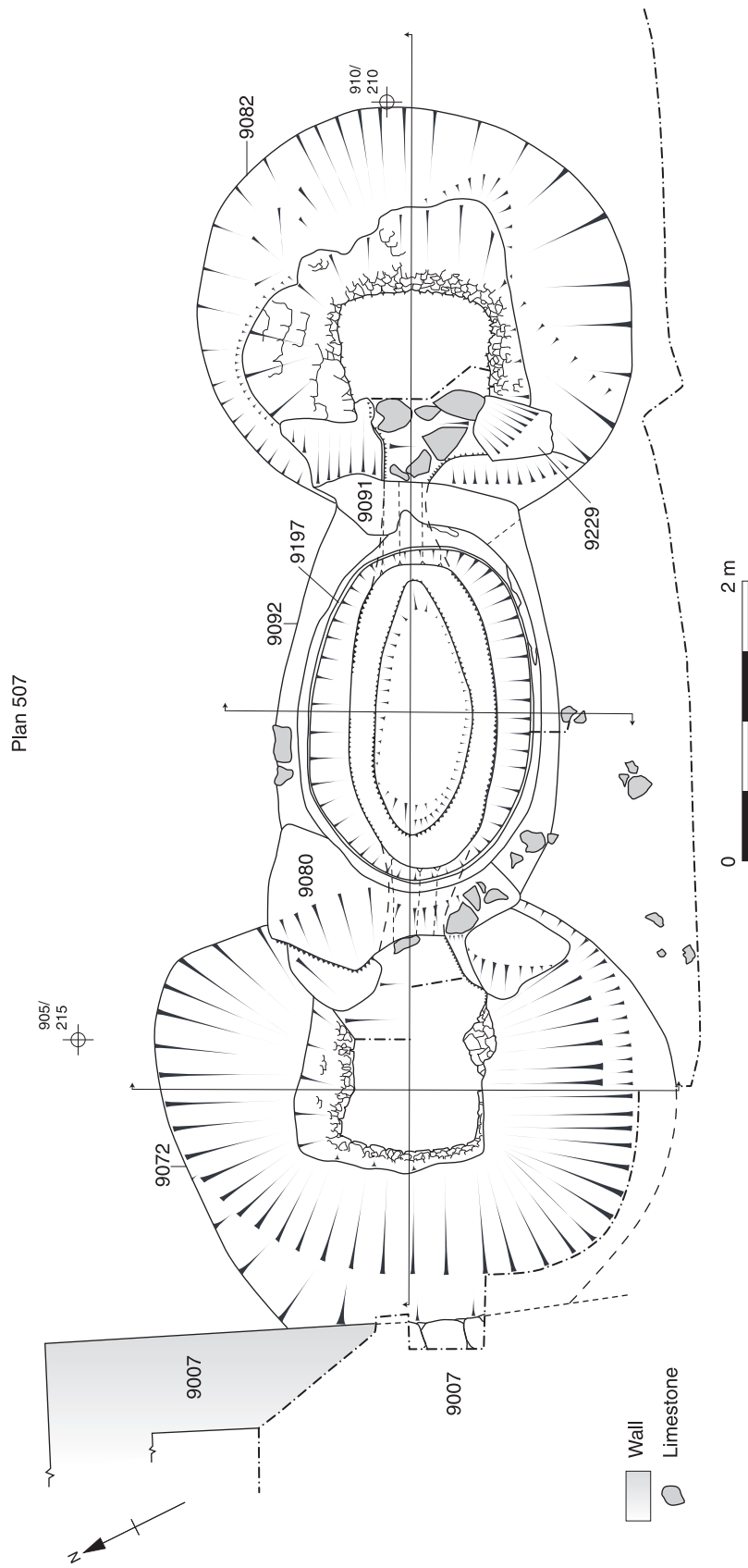


Fig. 3.48 Phase 5 Site 6 Kiln 1 plan

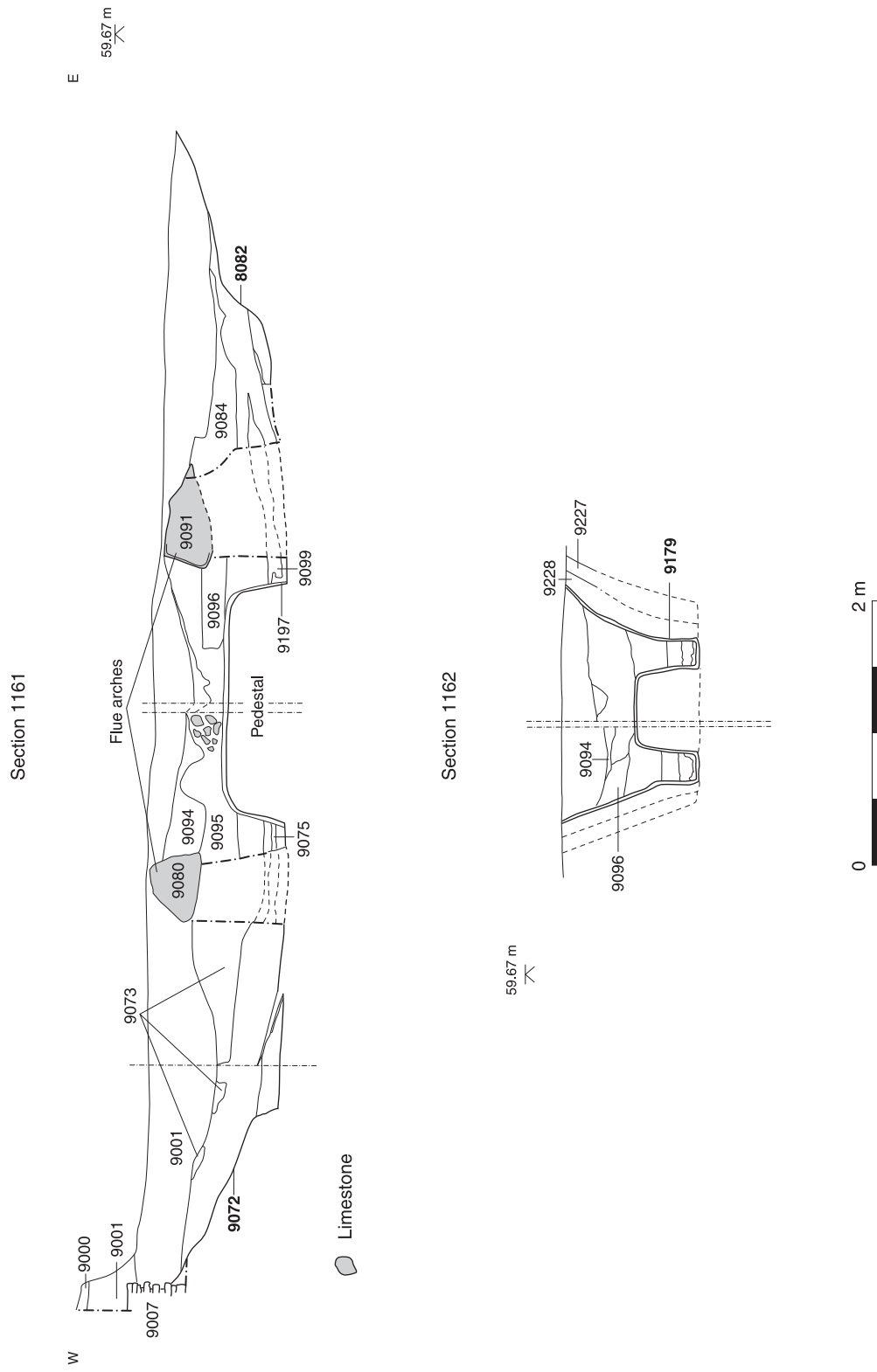


Fig. 3.49 Phase 5 Site 6 Kiln 1 section



Plate 3.9 (above and below) Kiln 1 on Site 6 after full excavation, and detail of finger marks on chamber wall



inside of the central chamber and the surface of the pedestal was a clay coating between 5–10 mm thick. This appeared to have been applied and smoothed by hand, as finger marks were discernible in places (Pl.3.9). The southern wall of the eastern flue revealed what appeared to be a repair patch of clay lining (9229), presumably replacing a part of the original lining that had fallen away. Further evidence of lining repairs was noted in the central firing chamber. (For consideration of the superstructure and operation of the kiln see Chapter 5.)

Ashy deposits in the base of the chamber and the two flues represented the last use(s) of the kiln. Samples were taken from two of these deposits (9099, 9075; see Moffett Chapter 4). The firing chamber and the two stoke pits were backfilled with a sequence of dumps of dark grey sandy silt with a very high proportion of ‘waster’ sherds of coarse grey Late medieval Reduced Ware (see Blinkhorn Chapter 4). Within the backfill material were fragments – some substantial – of the collapsed kiln superstructure (eg. contexts 9096, 9073, 9084, 9094). The dumped wasters not only filled the kiln chamber and flue pits, but also extended as a substantial layer over most of the western part of Site 6. The total weight of recovered wasters exceeded 440 kg.

Archaeomagnetic dating – A programme of sampling for archaeomagnetic dating was carried out on the intact central pedestal of the firing chamber of Kiln 1 by Paul Linford of English Heritage (Pl 3.10). A date range of 1395 to 1425 AD (63% confidence), and 1385 to 1435 AD (95% confidence) was obtained for the last kiln firing. This compares with a date range for the pottery typology of AD 1350 to AD 1550. (The full report on the archaeomagnetic dating is included in Chapter 4, together with the associated analytical figures in Appendix 3.)

Features associated with Kiln 1 (Site 6) (Figs 3.50-3.51)

Three limestone rubble footings (9005, 9007 and 9008) were exposed. probably represent parts of two possible buildings. Two footings (9007 and 9008) were partially exposed at the western edge of the site (Fig. 3.51). Each appeared to represent the north-east corner of a structure, and could either represent two separate structures or, less probably, parts of a single structure.

Wall 9008 was situated immediately north-west of Kiln 1 and survived to a height of 0.70 m (7 courses). A small sondage excavated within the exposed building corner revealed a possible shallow NE-SW ditch (9192), pre-dating the wall. Two layers of silty clay (9196 and 9190) sealed the ditch and appeared to represent make-up for the internal floor, which was represented by a trampled surface containing a high proportion of waster sherds (9212). This in turn was sealed by a looser accumulation of kiln waste (9189).

Wall 9007, 3.0 m to the north, survived to a height of only one partially truncated course, and appeared to be set on top of a levelling deposit (9009) of silty clay over compacted layers of pot wasters (9010/9011). This suggests that wall 9007 represents a much less substantial structure, later in date than context 9008, although there is no reason why they should not be broadly contemporary.

The third limestone footing (9005) lay to the east of structure 9007 on a similar alignment. It survived to a length of approximately 5 m, but had clearly been truncated. Like wall 9007 it was insubstantial in build, and only one course in depth. It may represent a boundary wall separating the workshop area to the west from the drying and firing area to the east. Between walls 9007 and 9005 was spread of limestone rubble, representing either demolition of the walls or a rough yard surface.

(Consideration of the features associated with the kiln site found in 1965 immediately north-west of Site 6 can be found in Chapter 5.)

Building group 9230 (Site 6) (Figs 3.50-3.51)

To the north and east of Kiln 1 was an irregular stone surface (9006/9065) associated with up to 40 post holes. The post holes were largely found to the east and south of the stone surface. Apparently associated with the stone surface was a line of four rectangular postholes (9023, 9025, 9052, 9054), with a spacing between centres of 3.0 m. This line of postholes appeared to coincide with the southern edge of the stone surface 9006, which suggests that the posts and surface represents a drying platform sheltered by an open-sided timber superstructure, where newly made pots were dried prior to firing.

The rest of the postholes were circular or sub-circular in plan, and averaged around 0.15 m in diameter x 0.20 m deep. Their arrangement suggests either a single timber structure with defined rooms, or an agglomeration of small sheds or lean-tos, all generally respecting the same NW-SE alignment as the kiln and main workshop buildings.

Kiln 2 (Site 8) (Fig. 3.52; Pl.3.11)

The pottery kiln (15275) was represented by the very truncated remains of a central chamber, with a freestanding oblong pedestal, and two opposed flues, the whole structure oriented WNW-ESE. The structure measured approximately 5.1 m long x 1.6 m wide, which broadly corresponds to the dimensions of the base of kiln 9200 (see Figure. 3.44). The material remains of the firing chamber consisted of little more than a reddening of the natural silty clay defining the shape of the chamber and the outside edge of the base of the central pedestal. Both stokeholes were defined by shallow depressions, each with the remains of a lining formed by unworked limestone blocks (15491, 15492). The eastern stokehole was partly cut away by ditch 15350 (see below). A residue of a dark grey silt with a high percentage of ash and pottery sherds

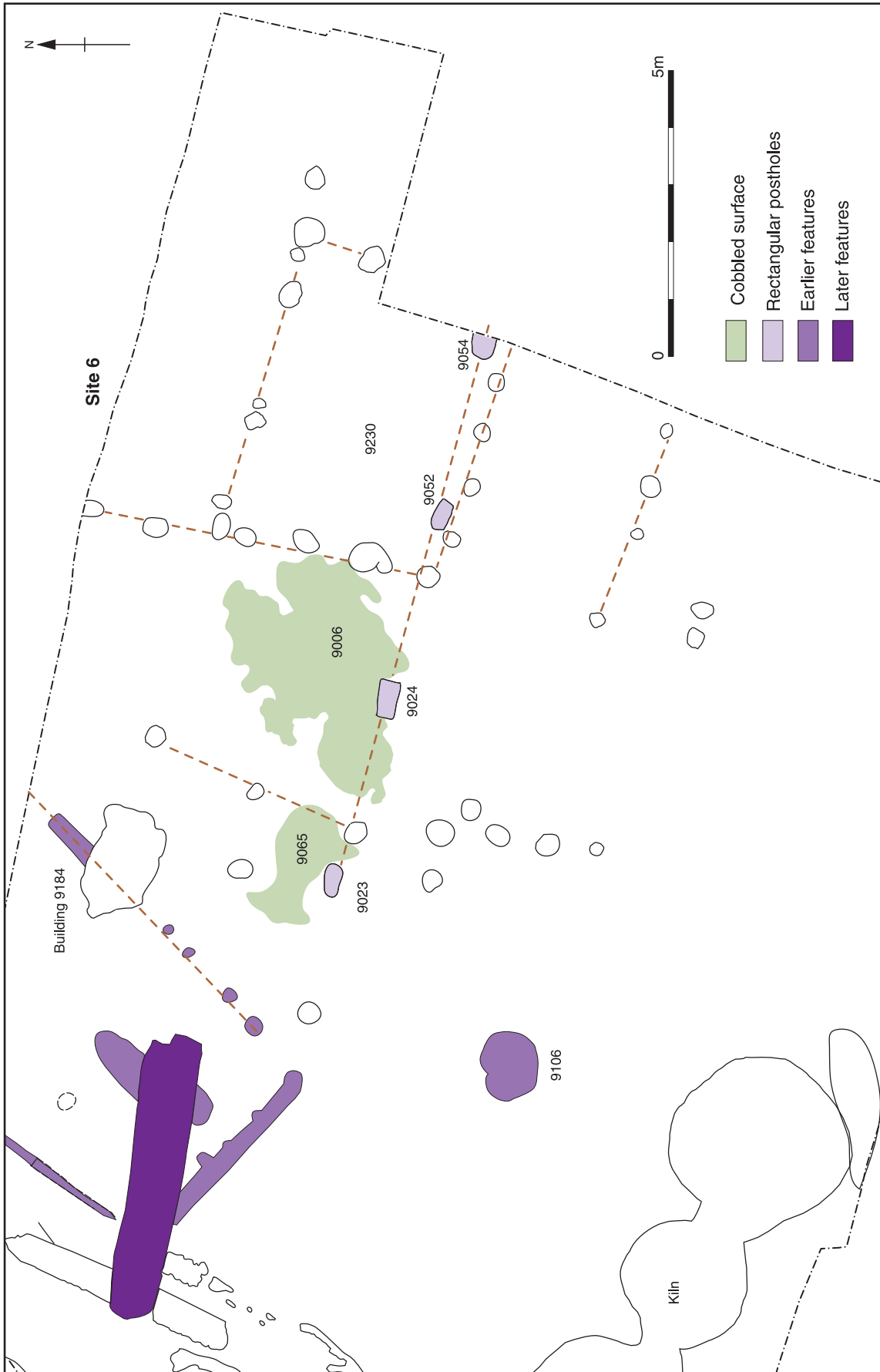


Fig. 3.50 Phase 5 Site 6 Kiln 1 associated building 9230

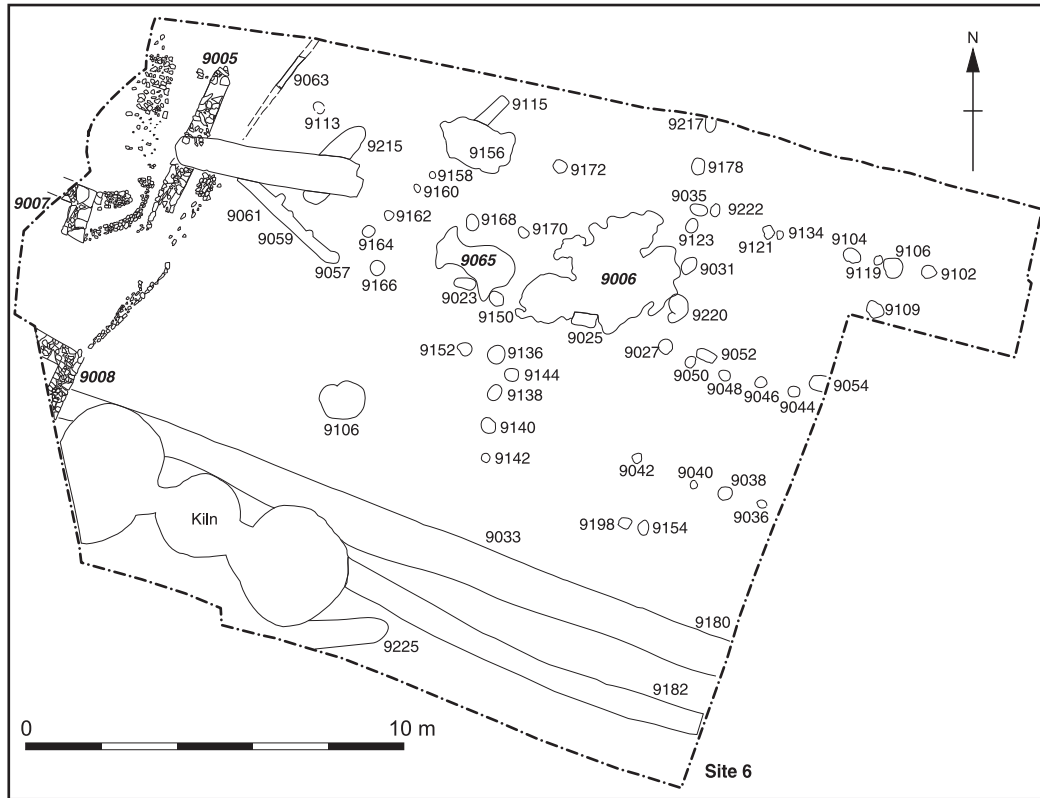
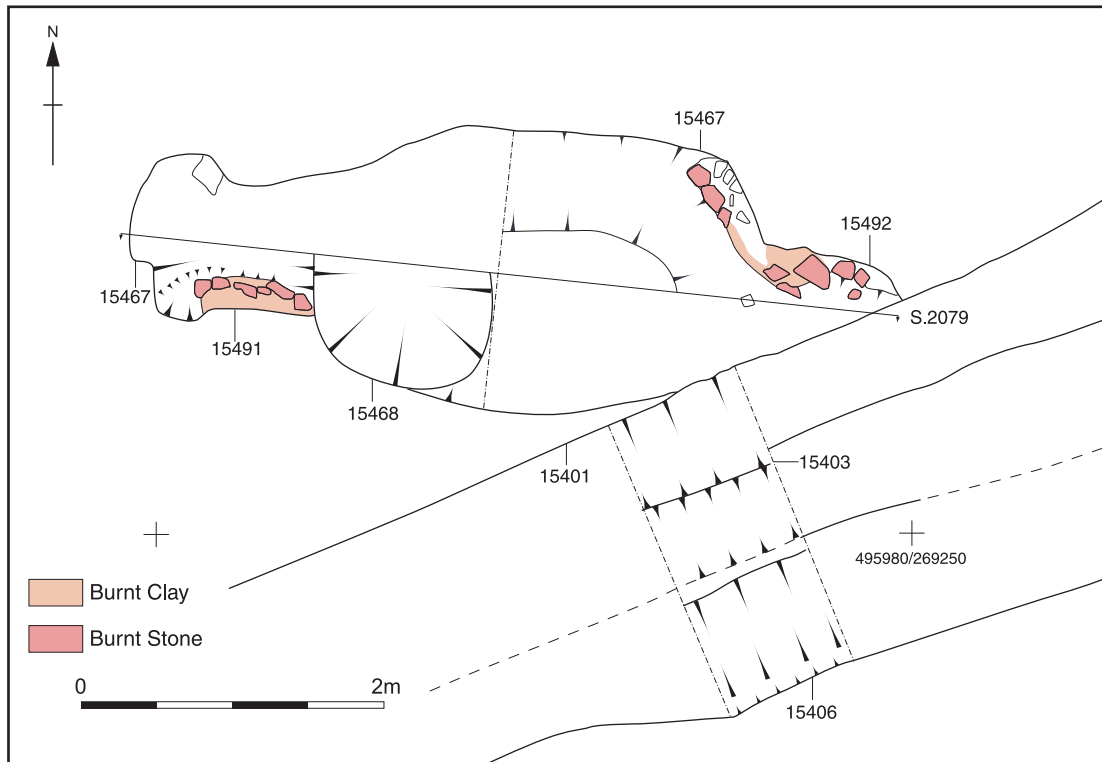
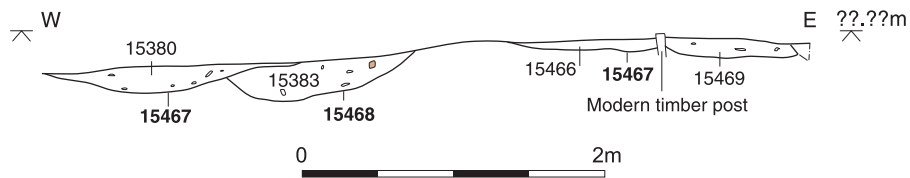


Fig. 3.51 (above) Site 6: General plan of features

Fig. 3.52 (below) Phase 5 Site 8 Kiln 2



Section 2079



15380, 15469) – was recorded in the surviving bases of both of the stoke holes. A shallow circular feature (15468), measuring 1.2 m in diameter x 0.25 m deep was revealed under the south-west part of the chamber, pre-dating the construction of the kiln. The feature could be unrelated, or possibly a consequence of the kiln's construction.

Associated features (Site 8) (Fig. 3.53)

To the north of the kiln, only two features could be associated with the kiln in terms of stratigraphy. A shallow U shaped ditch (15393) extended west from the baulk for a distance of 10.1 m to a terminus. A very ephemeral linear feature (15323) extended for a distance of 3.5 m between the terminus of 15393 and ditch termini to the east of the kiln. Finds from the feature fill include a Roman coin (SF 4030) and fragments of Reduced Ware pottery. To the north of feature 15393 a narrow curving ditch (15283) extended from the west baulk north-east into the northern baulk. This may be a later redefinition of a boundary first defined by Phase 4 ditch 15320, which was cut by 15283.

An area of approximately 23 sq m of compacted limestone rubble (15523) was exposed to the east of the kiln; set onto this was two small areas of pitched limestone (15222). It is likely that the pitched limestone originally covered all the rubble, and has been truncated by later activity. Although no associ-

ated postholes were found, it is reasonable to suggest that this represents a drying platform, presumably sheltered by an open-sided timber superstructure – fulfilling the same function as platform 9006/9065 on Site 6.

To the south of the kiln were the termini of two parallel ditches (15070 and 15180), oriented north-south and spaced 4.5 m apart. Their surviving depth was approximately 0.40 m. The lower fills of the ditches contained reduced ware sherds, suggesting they were open when the kiln was active. The ditches clearly would have continued to the south, and possibly define an access way to the kiln. South of the stone platform and north-east of ditch 15070 was a large clay quarry pit (15197). The absence of cereal remains in a sample of the lower fill (15199) probably reflects the absence of agricultural activity in the vicinity at this time. The backfill of pit 15197 had been repeatedly capped by further material, evidently because of subsidence.

This subsidence may have been due to the use of the area immediately south of the kiln as a trackway, giving access onto Windmill Banks. The trackway ran WSW-ENE and was bordered by a sequence of boundary ditches to the north (15350, 15355 and 15360), and to the south two ditches (15047, 15086) – later replaced by limestone walls (15009 and 15010). A gap between these two walls would have allowed access from the trackway defined by 15180 and 15070 to the south. The later



Plate 3.10 Archaeomagnetic sampling in progress on Kiln 1

phase of the trackway appears to post-date the kiln activity, as the northernmost track boundary ditch (15350) cuts the base of the kiln, and the southern ditch and wall sequence cuts ditch (15180). However, as all of these boundary ditches contain large amounts of reduced wares, which are also present in the matrix of the trackway surface, it is reasonable to conclude that the trackway was intended to facilitate the kiln's operation.

Quarry pits (Site 4) (Figs. 3.36, 3.47)

Two linear features (7315 and 7316) oriented SSW-ENE were revealed at the south edge of Site 4 and are assigned to Phase 5. To the north of the ditches was a scatter of deep, steep-sided (or over-cut) pits, concentrated in an area of clay subsoil. These features appear to represent clay quarrying in the later medieval period, although their proximity to one of the denser areas of Phase 3 activity meant that the fills of the pits contained pottery dating

from the 11th century through to the 15th century. The earlier pottery is clearly residual. Some subsidence of the fills evidently took place, because some post-medieval finds were also evident in the upper fills.

In the centre of the site, and partly obscured by later ridge-and-furrow, was one series of pit cuts (6775), extending over an area of approximately 8 m x 5 m. Sample excavation revealed steep or overcut sides and a flat base at a average depth of 1.2 m. A single posthole was exposed in the base of 6775, which must relate to the original excavation of the pit, perhaps supporting an A-frame hoist. Finds included early and late medieval pottery, animal bone, and in the upper fill two fragments of clay pipe. To the north of pit 6775 was a smaller quarry pit 6798 which also produced both early and late medieval pottery and a horseshoe nail from fill 6800 (SF 342 – not illustrated)

To the north of this group of pits a further cluster of quarry pits (6110, 6614, 6274) was partially



Plate 3.11 Kiln 2 on Site 8

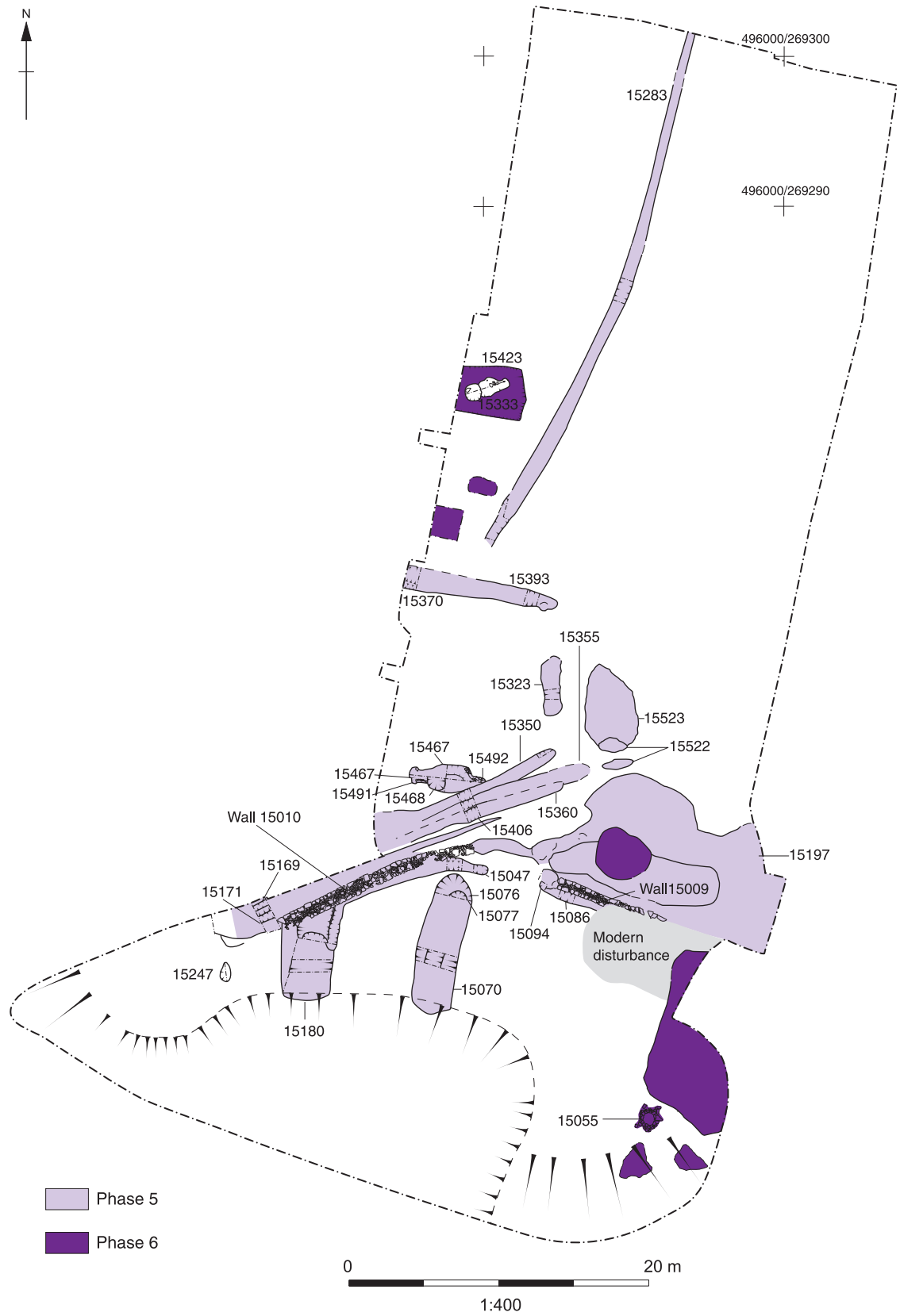


Fig. 3.53 Phase 5 and 6 Site 8 Features

revealed under the northern baulk. Sample excavation produced quantities of redeposited early medieval and Late Saxon pottery and bone, not surprising given the proximity to intense Phase 3 activity.

Pits and linear features (Site 7) (Figs 3.55, 3.44, 3.47, Pl. 3.12)

The corner formed by Kings Meadow Lane and Windmill Banks contained a scatter of pits and linear features that appear to belong to this phase. Only sample excavation was undertaken due to the severe contamination of the area (see above). The spread of activity was characterised by a number of linears (9365, 9525, 9487, 9460), all oriented approximately W-E and extending from the eastern baulk. They appear to define boundaries, possibly for properties fronting onto Windmill Banks. A broad N-S swathe of pits extended from the southern site boundary, broadly defining a western limit to these linears.

Among these pits was a stone-lined oven base (9367 – Pl. 3.12) surviving as a square stone feature constructed within a flat-bottomed pit approximately 1.8 m wide and 0.34 m deep, with a floor of yellowish clay. A number of the stones within the structure were burnt, but not all of the burnt faces faced inward. This suggests that structure 9367 is the rebuild of an earlier feature, and it is probably not a coincidence that a heavily disturbed and burnt depression was revealed approximately 1 m to the

north-west. An environmental sample from the fill of structure 9367 revealed a mix of wild and cultivated plant species, deriving possibly from a managed meadow, the material presumably representing the residue of the oven fuel (see Moffett Chapter 4).

PHASE 6 (MID 15th CENTURY TO 20th CENTURY) (FIG. 3.54)

With the end of the pottery industry, the archaeological evidence indicates that the area reverted to farmland. There was limited evidence of occupation from Sites 7 and 8. On site 7, close to Kings Meadow Lane, there were the stone footings of a small building (9548) and associated boundaries and pits. On Site 8, bordering the main N-S road, a well (15155) and cobbled surfaces were found. On Site 4 two linear features, possibly remnants of ridge and furrow, were found together with two pits, one of which contained modern rubbish.

Building 9548 (Site 7) (Fig. 3.55)

Stone footings (9548) of a post-medieval brick and stone cottage were revealed at the south end of Site 7. This one of the cottages that would have fronted onto Walnut Tree Green, a triangular open space in the angle formed by Kings Meadow Lane and Windmill Banks. The building was defined by 0.70 m wide coursed rubble footings measuring (exter-



Plate 3.12 Oven base 9367 Site 7 Phase 5

nally) 4.2 m wide x at least 8.7 m long. A doorway c. 1.4 m wide formed the entrance on the south side of the building. No evidence was found of accumulated internal surfaces, and it is therefore likely that the ground floor was flagged, and that the flagstones were salvaged before demolition. Alternatively, (although less likely), there could have been a suspended wooden floor.

To the north of the cottage a shallow depression (9433) covered an area of approximately 9 m x 6 m. Sample excavation was minimal, but recovered pottery dating from the mid-18th century, along

with many cattle horn cores in a matrix of clay and stone rubble, which spread to the south to form a yard surface abutting the building 9548. To the north, property boundaries possibly relating to Building 9548 were found. These comprised 9480 to the west and aligned approximately north-south, and two unexcavated parallel linears extending to the eastern baulk and forming an angle with 9480. To the north of these features, two shallow linears (9348 and 9350) were found. These formed a right angle and may also be related to this phase of activity, although neither feature produced any finds.

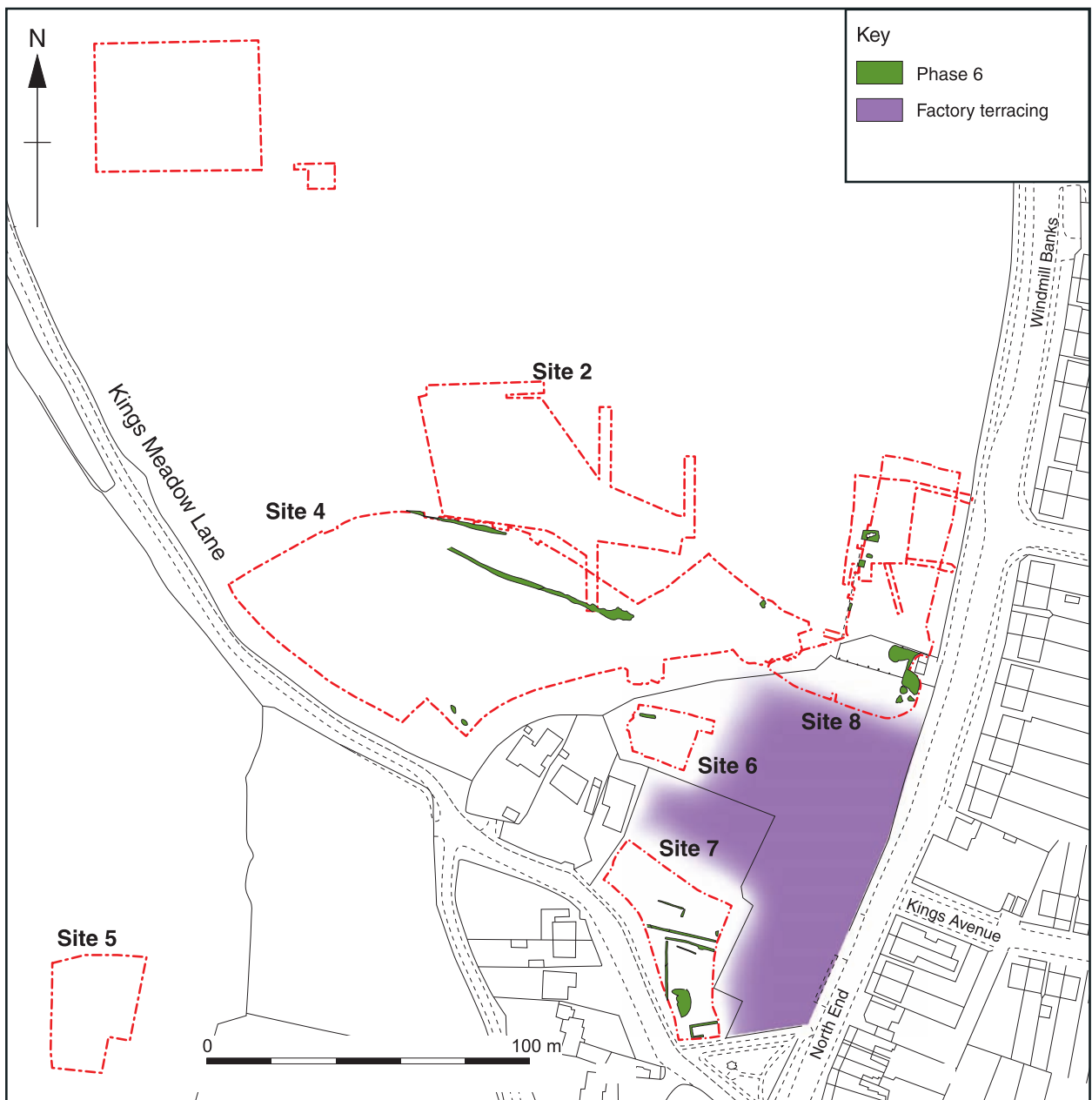
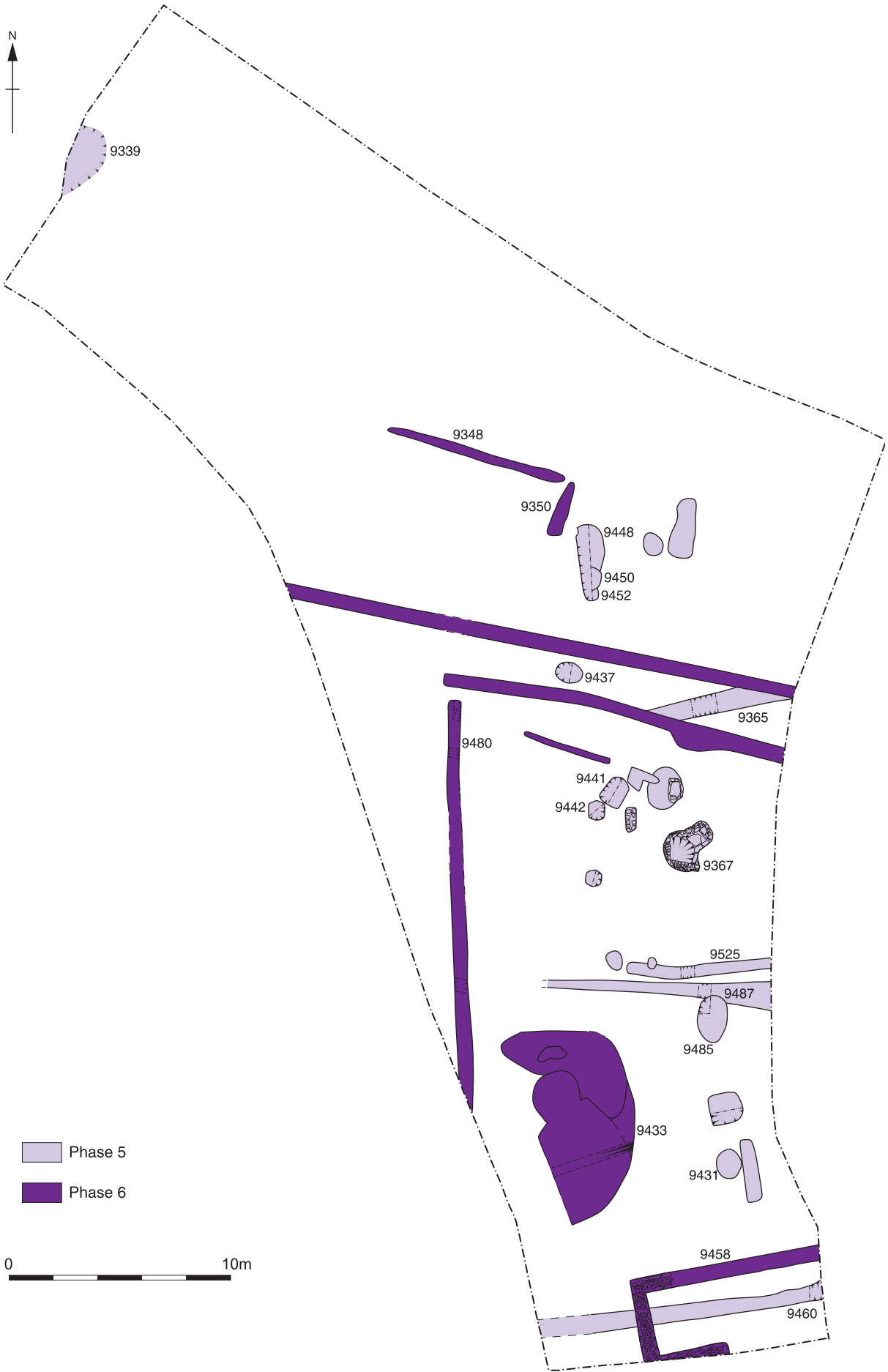


Fig. 3.54 Phase 6 post-medieval

Fig. 3.55 (facing page) Phase 5 and 6 Site 7 Features



***Well 15155 and associated surfaces (Site 8)
(Fig.3.53)***

In the south-east part of Site 8 a stone-lined well (15155) and associated surfaces 15090, were revealed. Finds from the top fill of the well and the cobbled surface dated to the 19th century, although the construction of both features may have been earlier. The area immediately north of surface 15090 was occupied by a 20th-century electricity substation, and two recent geotechnical pits were revealed against the western baulk. The southern part of the site revealed the northern limit of the 20th-century factory terracing, confirming that at this point the ground level had been lowered by at least 1.5 m, removing all archaeological features and deposits.

Site 4 (Fig. 3.9, 3.35-6)

Two shallow W-E linear features were identified crossing the centre of the site. From their stratigraphy and uneven and indistinct definition, it is reasonable to suggest that they represent remnant ridge-and-furrow of the post-medieval Townend Furlong (see Chapter 2, and Pl.5.6). Near the south-west edge of the site, two pits (6610 and 6146) were found. One (6610) contained a silty loam fill, but no finds; pit 6246 had signs of intense burning around the pit rim, and was filled with modern rubbish including an aluminium watering can. Both features appear to relate to 20th-century bungalows that used to stand along the north side of Kings Meadow Lane; their footprints were not revealed in the excavation area.