

# 5 Hethe Road Hardwick Oxfordshire



## Archaeological Evaluation Report



June 2007

**Client: Mr Richard Markham**

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## SUMMARY

*On the 2nd of May 2007, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at 5 Hethe Road, Hardwick, Oxfordshire (NGR: SP 580 298) on behalf of Richard Markham as part of conditions attached to the planning permission for a new dwelling. The evaluation revealed deposits consistent with agricultural use of the land overlying natural glaciofluvial deposits. Other than evidence of the original dwelling on the site (demolished c25 years previously) visible on the surface, no other archaeology was encountered. A north-south ridge of ground visible on the surface of the site was composed solely of topsoil and was of modern origin.*

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 On the 2nd May 2007, OA carried out a field evaluation at 5 Hethe Road, Hardwick, Oxfordshire (NGR: SP 580 298) on behalf of Richard Markham in respect of a planning application for construction of a single dwelling (Planning Application No. 06/02442/F).
- 1.1.2 A brief was set by Richard Oram, the planning Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services requiring that a field evaluation consisting of two 10 m trenches be carried at as part of the planning permission (OCAS, 2007).
- 1.1.3 OA produced a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief. (OA, 2007).

#### 1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The village of Hardwick is located approximately 6 km north of Bicester (Fig. 1) The site is situated on the north-eastern edge of the village and forms the last plot on the northern side of the road leading to Hethe to the east. The development area consists of roughly level ground, measuring 600 m<sup>2</sup> lying at 105 m above OD.
- 1.2.2 The site is currently an area of rough ground backing onto arable land to the north, with a concrete pad and rubble relating the previous dwelling visible on the surface. The underlying geology is alluvium over glaciofluvial deposits (British Geological Survey, sheet no 219).

#### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the site has been the subject of a separate desk study (OCAS, 2007), the results of which are presented below.
- 1.3.2 The proposed development is located within the historic core of Harwick. Hardwick itself is first mentioned in the Domesday survey of 1086 and is of probable late Anglo-Saxon origin.

- 1.3.3 The proposal area is situated immediately adjacent to a series of earthworks representing the shrunken medieval settlement of Hardwick. Archaeological Evaluation was undertaken prior to proposed development adjacent to no. 4 Hethe Road, in 1992. The evaluation revealed remarkably well preserved remains of two buildings dating to the 11th and 12th century fronting onto Hethe Road, and in this instance, further mitigation was required which made the proposed development financially unviable.
- 1.3.4 The site has the probability of containing similar well preserved medieval frontages deposits that may be disturbed by the development.

## 2 EVALUATION AIMS

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

## 3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Scope of fieldwork

- 3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of two trenches each measuring 10 m long by 1.6 m wide (Fig. 2). These trenches were originally sited as per the instructions agreed with Richard Oram of OCC, but were moved both to avoid a concrete pad visible within the surface of the plot and to investigate a low raised ridge visible on the surface of the plot. The overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision by a 1.5 tonne tracked excavator fitted with a 1.2 m wide toothless bucket. Excavation proceeded in spits to the top of undisturbed natural or to the top of the highest significant archaeological horizon, whichever was encountered first.

### 3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

- 3.2.1 The trenches were cleaned by hand and any revealed deposits and features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and where possible to retrieve finds and environmental samples. All features and deposits were with unique context numbers. The trenches were planned at a scale of 1:100 and any recorded sections were drawn at scale of 1:20. The trenches and any recorded trenches were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OA Field Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

### 3.3 **Finds**

- 3.3.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and bagged by context. All the finds recovered were of post-medieval origin and were evaluated on site, but were not retained.

### 3.4 **Palaeo-environmental evidence**

- 3.4.1 No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling were encountered during the course of the evaluation.

### 3.5 **Presentation of results**

- 3.5.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below on a trench-by-trench basis followed by an overall discussion.

## 4 **RESULTS: GENERAL**

### 4.1 **Soils and ground conditions**

- 4.1.1 Both the trenches came down onto natural drift geology represented by glaciofluvial deposits of sand and gravel. All the soil divisions were sharply defined with little or no mixing between the contexts. Groundwater was not encountered in either of the trenches.

### 4.2 **Distribution of archaeological deposits**

- 4.2.1 No significant archaeological deposits were encountered in either of the trenches.

## 5 **RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS**

### 5.1 **Description of deposits**

#### ***Trench 1***

- 5.1.1 This trench was aligned east-west and was located on the eastern edge of the site, running parallel to Hethe Road. The trench was sited to cross a slightly raised ridge of ground visible running north-south across the site.
- 5.1.2 The undisturbed natural, a layer of orange-brown clay silt, containing many small pebbles and small sub-angular fragments of limestone (12) was encountered at a depth of between 0.4 m and 0.55 m below ground level (Fig. 3, Sections 11 and 12). This was overlaid by a layer of mid brown sandy clay silt (11) measuring between 0.2 m and 0.3 m in depth. This deposit contained fragments of sub-angular limestone and charcoal flecking suggesting that it was a layer of worked soil, possibly an earlier ploughsoil.
- 5.1.3 This was sealed by a 0.25 m to 0.3 m deep layer of grey-brown silt loam (10). This layer contained numerous modern finds and represents a garden or possible



ploughsoil. This deposit was relatively constant, but increased in depth within the area of the north-south ridge visible upon the surface of the site. This ridge was composed solely of topsoil suggesting that this feature may have a modern origin.

### **Trench 2**

- 5.1.4 This trench was aligned north-south and ran parallel to the building on the adjacent plot. The trench was moved approximately 3 m to the east to avoid a concrete pad probably associated with the earlier dwelling.
- 5.1.5 The undisturbed natural, a layer of orange-brown sandy clay silt (22) was encountered at a depth of 0.6 m below ground level (Fig. 3, Sections 21 and 22). This layer contained many small pebbles and small sub-angular fragments of limestone and represents the underlying glaciofluvial deposits. This was overlaid by a 0.25 m deep layer of dark orange-brown clay silt (21). Within this layer were many small pebbles, sub-angular fragments of limestone and some charcoal flecking suggesting that this was an earlier layer of worked soil, possibly an earlier ploughsoil.
- 5.1.6 This deposit was sealed by a layer of grey-brown silt loam (20), measuring 0.35 m in depth. Numerous modern finds were recovered from this layer suggesting that it was a layer of garden or ploughsoil.

### **5.2 Finds**

- 5.2.1 Fragments of post-medieval (19th and 20th-century) pottery, bottle glass and brick fragments were all recovered from layers 10 and 20. Numerous fragments of agricultural plastic film were also observed within these layers. The presence of this evidence was recorded, but the artifacts were not retained. No earlier dating evidence was encountered.

## **6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION**

### **6.1 Reliability of field investigation**

- 6.1.1 The conditions within the development area were dry and with no intrusion by modern features such as services and land drains. The percentage sample, distribution and positioning of the trenches is believed to have given a good reflection of the overall archaeological potential of the site.

### **6.2 Overall interpretation**

- 6.2.1 The results of the evaluation suggests that little or no archaeological remains are present on the site. The low north-south raised ridge investigated by Trench 1 was wholly contained within the topsoil and was of probable modern origin (possibly spoil from ditch cleaning). While the deposits of worked ground (Layers 10, 11, 20 and 21) lay directly above the natural suggesting that any occupation or construction layers may have been destroyed, the absence of residual finds, or of truncated, deeper features cutting into the natural, would indicate that this area was archaeologically

sparse. There was no evidence for remains of earlier buildings as uncovered during the evaluation on land adjacent to No. 4. It is possible that the location of the site on the eastern extent of the village may indicate that it was a later addition the village and may post-date the medieval extent of the village.

- 6.2.2 It was impossible to investigate the area of the site below the concrete pad (assumed to be the location of the earlier dwelling demolished *c*25 years previously), however the absence of features encroaching in Trench 2 suggests that this area would display similar stratigraphy to the remainder of the site.



## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Ctxt No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Thick. (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i> Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
<b>Trench 1</b>						
10	Layer	-	0.2 m - 0.3 m	Garden or ploughsoil	Pottery, glass, brick, plastic	Modern
11	Layer	-	0.25 m	Earlier ploughsoil	-	-
12	Layer	-	> 0.1 m	Natural glaciofluvial deposits	-	-
<b>Trench 2</b>						
20	Layer	-	0.35 m	Garden or ploughsoil	Pottery, glass, brick, plastic	Modern
21	Layer	-	0.22 m	Earlier ploughsoil	-	-
22	Layer	-	> 0.1 m	Natural glaciofluvial deposits	-	-

## APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

IFA, 2001 *Standard and Guidance for archaeological evaluations*

OA, 2007 *5 Hethe Road, Hardwick, Oxfordshire : Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

OAU, 1992 *Fieldwork Manual (ed. D Wilkinson)*

OCAS, 2007 *06/02442/F - 5 Hethe Road, Hardwick : Design Brief for Archaeological Field Evaluation*

## APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

**Site name:** 5 Hethe Road, Hardwick, Oxfordshire

**Site code:** HA5HER 07

**Grid reference:** SP 580 298

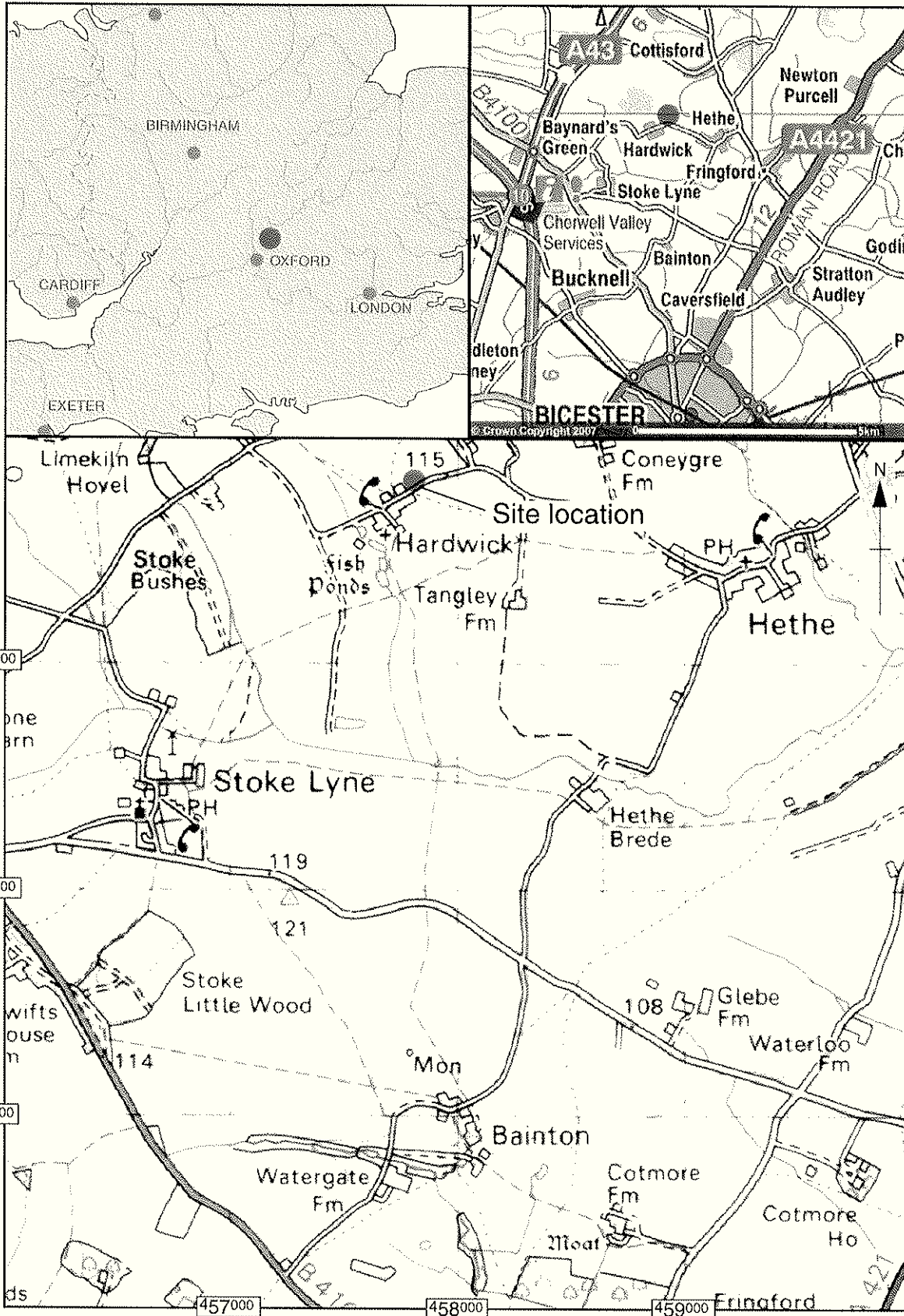
**Type of evaluation:** Two machine dug trenches, each 10 m by 1.6 m

**Date and duration of project:** 2nd May 2007, 1 day

**Area of site:** 600 m<sup>2</sup>

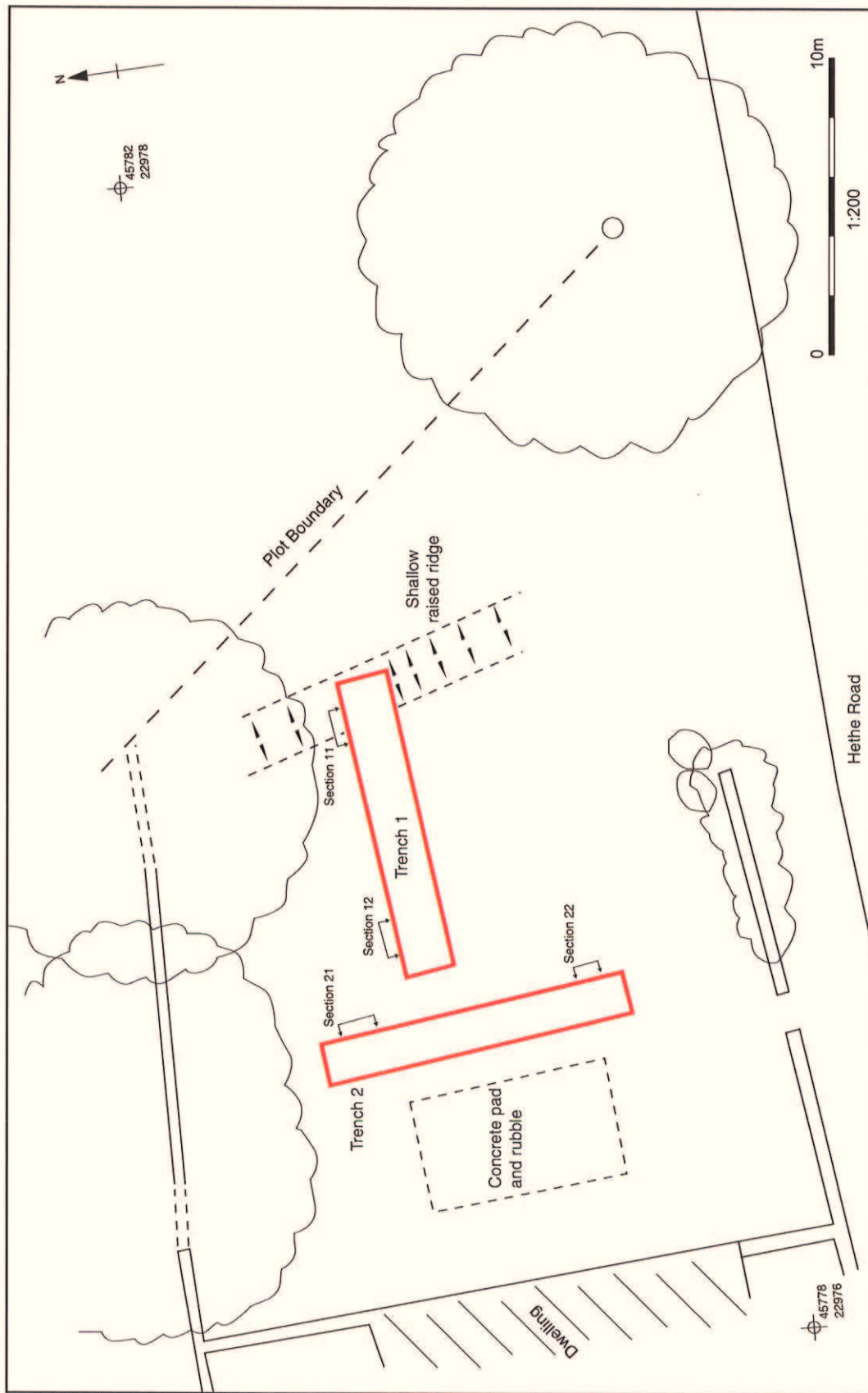
**Summary of results:** Stratigraphy consistent with agricultural and modern domestic use of the development area overlying natural glaciofluvial deposits. No evidence for occupation earlier than the known previous dwelling was encountered.

**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course, under the following accession number: OXCMS: 2007.67



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Figure 1: Site location

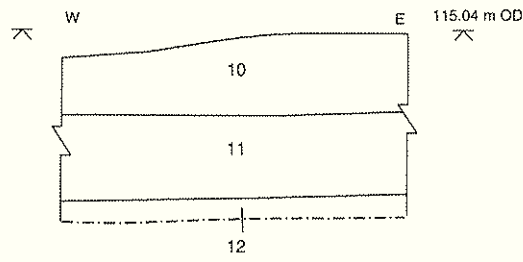


NOTE Coordinates are approximate

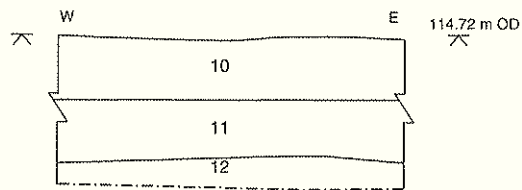
Figure 2: Trench plan



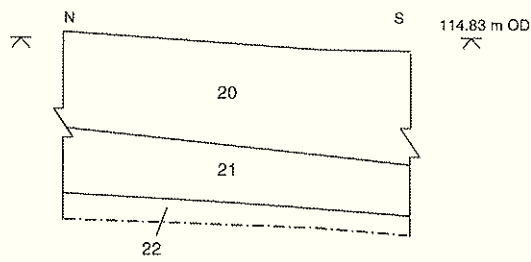
### Section 11



### Section 12



### Section 21



### Section 22

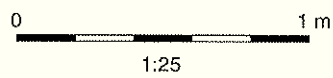
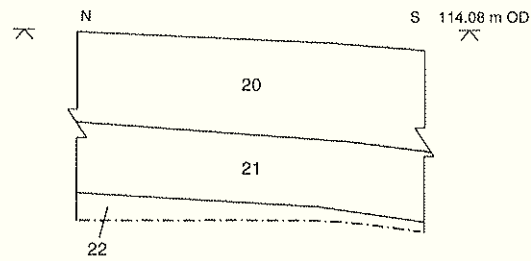


Figure 3 : Sections



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