

# Butlers Court Downington Lechlade Gloucestershire



## Archaeological Evaluation Report



June 2006

**Client: Savills on behalf of  
New College**

Issue N<sup>o</sup>: 1

OA Job N<sup>o</sup>: 6863

NGR: SP 2070 0000

**Client Name:** Savills on behalf of New College, Oxford

**Client Ref No:**

**Document Title:** Butlers Court, Downington, Lechlade, Gloucestershire,  
Archaeological Evaluation Report

**Document Type:** Evaluation

**Issue Number:** 1

National Grid Reference: SP 2070 0000

Planning Reference:

OA Job Number: 6863  
Site Code: LEBUTC 06  
Invoice Code: LEBUTEV  
Receiving Museum: Corinium Museum, Cirencester  
Museum Accession No: tba

Prepared by: A Simmonds  
Position: Project Officer  
Date: 8th June 2006

Checked by: A Norton  
Position: Senior Project Manager  
Date: 12th June 2006

Approved by: J Hiller  
Position: Senior Project Manager  
Date: 13th June 2006

Signed.....  PP. N. SHEPHERD  
HEAD OF  
FIELDWORK.

Document File Location X:\Butlers Court Downington\Report\lebutc evalrep2.doc  
Graphics File Location servergo/ItoQ/LEBUTCEV/Butler's court Farm,  
lechlade/jm/\*02.06.05  
Illustrated by Julia Moxham

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**Oxford Archaeology**

© Oxford Archaeological Unit Ltd 2006

Janus House

Osney Mead

Oxford OX2 0ES

t: (0044) 01865 263800

f: (0044) 01865 793496

e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk

w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk

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**Butlers Court  
Downington  
Lechlade  
Gloucestershire**

***ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT***

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## SUMMARY

*Between 22nd and 26th May 2006 Oxford Archaeology carried out a field evaluation at Butler's Court, Downington, Lechlade, Gloucestershire (NGR SP 2070 0000) on behalf of Savills, representing New College, Oxford. The evaluation comprised nine trenches measuring 30 m x 2 m, one measuring 20 m x 2 m and one measuring 15 m x 2 m, excavated on the site of a farm and adjacent field.*

*Four ditches interpreted as the boundaries of fields or agricultural enclosures were recorded in the field to the north of the existing farm buildings. They were dated to the Roman period on the basis of a sherd of pottery. A single posthole, a plough furrow and a tree throw hole were also recorded. The unusual depth of the subsoil and topsoil in this area was interpreted as being the result of the levelling of former ridge and furrow.*

*No archaeological remains were present in the four trenches excavated within the farm itself, where evidence was found for extensive truncation associated with the construction of the existing farm buildings.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 Between 22nd and 26th May 2006 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at Butler's Court, Downington, Lechlade, Gloucestershire (NGR SP 2070 0000, Fig. 1). The site comprised a farm and adjacent field and was located to the north of the A417 on the western outskirts of Lechlade, c 1 km north of the river Thames. It is surrounded by farmland to the north, east and west and by a new housing development on the south-eastern side.
- 1.1.2 The evaluation was commissioned by Savills on behalf of New College, Oxford to provide information in support of a planning application to be submitted to Cotswold District Council planning authority for the development of the site. The proposed development will comprise the conversion of existing agricultural buildings and the construction of new units.
- 1.1.3 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (OA 2006) produced in response to a recommendation by Charles Parry, Senior Archaeologist for Gloucestershire County Council.

### 1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.1.4 Butler's Court is located on level ground c 500 m outside the western edge of Lechlade. The site lies on the southern edge of the first Thames Gravel Terrace with Thames alluvium to the south.
- 1.1.5 The Lechlade area stands on a confluence of the River Thames with three of its

tributaries: the Rivers Cole, Coln and Leach. The topographical and geological variation in the area, with river valley wetlands on alluvium rising to the relatively free draining gravels of the 1st, 2nd and 4th Thames Terraces and limestone to the north, would have been attractive to settlement from a very early date.

1.1.6 The site is situated on the second gravel terrace of the Thames Valley, the superficial geology ranging from sandy silt to sandy gravel. This is underlain by Oxford Clay, which outcrops in some parts of the site.

1.1.7 The site lies at *c* 74 m OD and is generally flat.

## **2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 General**

1.1.8 Prior to the commencement of the evaluation a rapid desk-based review of the likely potential of the site was carried out by OA's dedicated Heritage Management Services Department. The review consulted the following sources:

- Sites and Monuments Record information as supplied by Gloucestershire County Council Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). Information received included mapping of known sites, detailed SMR information on the site and a range of historic and interpretative maps including 1st, 2nd and 3rd edition Ordnance Survey maps and maps showing the medieval and post-medieval development of the town. OA also received detailed cropmark plots as produced by the RCHME National Mapping Programme.
- Specialist (Oblique) Aerial Photographs of the site as held by the English Heritage National Monuments Record AP Library at Swindon.
- A range of published and unpublished sources, held by Oxford Archaeology, relating to the history and archaeology of the Lechlade area.
- Map and published sources held at the Gloucestershire Record Office.
- Archives held at New College, Oxford. These included sale details and plans from 1841 and 1875.

These sources were examined, reviewed and used to produce the brief archaeological background that follows. Details of the sources are listed in the Bibliography.

### **2.2 Designated Sites**

1.1.9 An extensive Scheduled Monument (County SAM 413) lies *c* 100 m to the north of Butler's Court. The importance of this Scheduled Area was first recognised through aerial photography. The area comprises cropmarks indicative of the presence of a late Neolithic to early Bronze Age Ceremonial Complex, with at least five Ring Ditches or small Henges (SMR 304, 304, 307, 313 and 585) and a Cursus Monument (SMR 316). The cropmarks were also suggestive of the presence of extensive later Bronze Age to Roman settlement activity (SMR 305). This activity included an early to mid Iron Age boundary system (SMR 590/591), an early Iron Age settlement including

round houses and pits and a Romano British Farmstead. The Iron Age and Romano British settlements were both associated with adjoining field systems and trackways. Excavations in 1985, on the eastern margin of the Scheduled Area also demonstrated the presence of a hitherto unrecognised and potentially very extensive Anglo Saxon Cemetery (SMR 586). This cemetery may be unique in the Upper Thames Region through its size, apparent wealth and the fact that it appeared to be in continual use from the later 5th Century to the 7th Century.

## 2.3 Aerial Photographs

- 1.1.10 The Lechlade Area was recognised, from Major Allen's and Crawford's pioneering studies in the 1930s - 60s, to be very rich in sites recognisable through aerial photography. The area has since been included as part of the National Mapping Program since 1993. Extensive cropmarks are present in the area, mainly on the Thames Gravel Terraces and include the Scheduled Complex detailed above as well as numerous other examples of probable Prehistoric to Roman settlement sites (SMR 3170, enclosures (SMR 2493, 3243, 3308, 3321, 3322), round barrows (SMR 26665), field systems (SMR 26664) and trackways (SMR 3060, 3314).

## 2.4 Prehistoric and Roman settlement of the Lechlade area

- 1.1.11 The Lechlade area has seen numerous archaeological investigations since the 1960s which have served to confirm the obvious importance of the area noticed from the air. These have included:

### *Butler's Court (SMR 19961 and 20464)*

- 1.1.12 Two investigations have been undertaken at or in close proximity to Butler's Court before the OA 2006 Evaluation. These demonstrated the presence of probable Saxo-Norman ditches and ridge and furrow associated with the medieval development of the site (SMR 19961), and a number of undated ditches that may be part of a pre-existing Prehistoric or early medieval field system to the west (SMR 20464). A number of sherds of unstratified Roman pottery were also recorded.
- 1.1.13 There is also a record of a find of a number of Neolithic Craig Lwyd type VII polished stone axes from the area of Butler's Court (SMR 4869). Unfortunately their exact provenance is uncertain.

### *Claydon Pike (SMR 4872 and 26691)*

- 1.1.14 This site lies c 1 km to the west of Butlers Court and was first recognised from aerial photography. Excavations between 1979 - 89 demonstrated there to be at least three middle Iron Age farmsteads on gravel islands with an associated system of fields and tracks. Later occupation comprised a nucleated Romano British settlement at a cross roads of trackways.
- 1.1.15 Activity extended westward and was also recorded at Thornhill Farm where a late Iron Age system of paddocks and enclosures with trackways was interpreted as part

of a ranch complex.

***Rough Ground Farm (SMR 3209)***

- 1.1.16 This site lies on the north eastern periphery of Lechlade and was again first noted from the air. Investigations in 1965 noted the presence of late Neolithic to Roman activity comprising late Neolithic/early Bronze Age pits, late Bronze Age pit groupings, an early Iron Age field system aligned on trackways with burials towards the periphery, and an early Roman farmstead which developed later into a Villa with an associated paddock system and burial plots.

***The Lodgers (SMR 3012, 3014, 3016, 3019 and 3362)***

- 1.1.17 Investigations in 1965 at The Lodgers noted the presence of a late Neolithic/early Bronze Age crouched burial and settlement features attributed to the early Iron Age. Unstratified Anglo Saxon pottery was also noted.

***Lechlade Bypass (SMR 17039)***

- 1.1.18 Excavations undertaken in advance of development of the A417 in 1995 demonstrated the presence of a middle to late Iron Age settlement.

***Sherbourne House (SMR 19964)***

- 1.1.19 An evaluation in 1997 to the rear of Sherbourne House noted evidence for a middle Bronze Age field system and late Bronze Age to early Iron Age settlement activity. In addition there was evidence indicating the probable presence of an early Saxon post built hall with associated outlying Sunken Featured Buildings/Grubenhause.

***Lechlade Manor (SMR 20519)***

- 1.1.20 In 1999 - 2000 evaluations and excavations at Lechlade Manor indicated the presence of a probable Iron Age field system, Romano British occupation and Saxon agricultural activity. Medieval village features were also noted including the earthworks of probable tofts.

***Sherbourne Street (SMR 20737)***

- 1.1.21 In 2000 an evaluation and excavation on Sherbourne Street noted the presence of boundary ditches which were in use between the 6th - 9th centuries AD. These continued in use into the medieval period and may indicate that Lechlade had coalesced into a nucleated settlement by the 10th century.

***Great Lemhill farm (SMR 22041)***

- 1.1.22 In 1990 Geophysical Survey and subsequent evaluation noted the presence of a large Prehistoric boundary feature which was cut by Romano British field boundary ditches.

***Lesser Investigations and Chance Finds***

- 1.1.23 There are a number of further records of chance findspots, recorded features and

smaller scale investigations that are indicative of further human activity in the area. These include the recorded finding of a Palaeolithic "*Aecheulian*" hand axe (SMR 2444), records of Neolithic/early Bronze Age (SMR 17204) and possibly Roman and Saxon (SMR 4895) burials, a Ring Ditch (SMR 3307), Neolithic pottery finds (SMR 3377) and undated but possibly Prehistoric or Roman features on Oak Street (SMR 20666) and Gassons way (SMR 27557). In addition the Gloucestershire SMR records the possible presence of a Roman bath house (that may have been identified by Daniel Defoe to the south west of Lechlade), (SMR 2442), a probable Romano British Villa site also to the south west of Lechlade (SMR 3191) and a probable early medieval boundary bank on the south bank of the Thames (SMR 3002).

## 2.5 Summary of Prehistoric, Roman and Saxon settlement in the Butlers Court area.

- 1.1.24 The extensive aerial photographic and excavated evidence clearly indicates that Lechlade lies within an area with a long and complex history of human activity that can be trace back to at least the Neolithic period.
- 1.1.25 Similar areas, where the Thames meets tributaries, in the Upper Thames Region have been shown to attract human activity from at least the Neolithic period onwards. The confluences with the Thames of the Windrush at Stanton Harcourt, Ock at Abingdon and Thame at Dorchester on Thames all attracted complex ceremonial, funerary and settlement activity of Neolithic through to early Saxon Date. Such is also demonstrably the case at Lechlade.

## 2.6 Historic Background

### *Medieval Butler's Court*

- 1.1.26 Lechlade was held by Henry de Ferrars at the time of the 11th-century Domesday survey, but by the early 14th century it had passed to the Talbot family (Wilson 1870-2). The manor of Butler's court is first mentioned in documentary sources in 1304 when it was granted to John Butler. During this period it was the only outlying farm recorded within Lechlade parish (Boyle *et al* 1998, 42). In 1479 Butler's Court passed to John Twyncho of Cirencester and in 1486 to Dorothy Moreton. However, there is no definite evidence to show that the present site of Butler's Court was that of the medieval manor.
- 1.1.27 It is possible that there was an earlier medieval settlement to the north of Butler's Court. Fieldwalking in the early 1980s found 12th-century pottery and some earlier St Neots ware to the north at Rough Ground Farm (Allen 1983, 112) just to the south of the railway line in the field marked on the Tithe Map as *The Twelve Acres*'. Although this might represent evidence for manuring, the limited distribution of the medieval pottery suggests an occupation site (Tim Allen *pers comm*).
- 1.1.28 As discussed above more medieval activity, mainly 11th -13th century in date, was identified immediately west of Butler's Court in archaeological excavations carried out by Cotswold Archaeology in 1997 and 1999. The site of another medieval

settlement, with likely origins in the mid-late Saxon period has been identified at Allcourt Farm. Excavations by OA in 1999 found a complex of features, including buildings dating from the 11th to 13th centuries (OAU 2001). This estate was held by Peter atte Hall until 1326 when it was broken up.

### ***Post-medieval Butler's Court***

- 1.1.29 During the last part of the medieval period and the beginning of the post-medieval period Butler's Court changed hands several times, in 1614 the manor passed to John Gearing and in 1660 to Robert Oatridge. It is probably the latter who was responsible for the construction of the south-west range of the existing house, as well as Butler's Court Cottages. Around 1801 the Matthews family bought the estate, the land of which was leased to William Gearing from 1806. Gearing owned the adjacent Trout House Farm and bought Butler's Court in 1841 (VCH VII, 113).
- 1.1.30 During the 18th and 19th centuries the house was altered and extended. The south-west range is the original 17th-century house with an early 18th-century wing to the south-east and a 19th-century one to the north-west. The stable block to the rear is also of 18th century date. The estate, Butler's Court and Trout House Farm combined, was sold to New College, Oxford in 1875 and remained in their possession into the late 20th century.

## **3 EVALUATION AIMS**

- 1.1.31 The aims of the evaluation, as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation, were:
- to establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the area of the proposed development and to determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any such remains that affect further need for mitigation during the construction process;
  - to establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of any archaeological deposits and features;
  - to make available the results of the investigation.

## **4 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Scope of fieldwork**

- 1.1.32 The evaluation was originally intended to comprise twelve trenches measuring 30 m x 2 m and one measuring 15 m x 2 m, thus providing a 5% sample of the area of the site not occupied by existing farm buildings. In the event, Trenches 1 and 3 were not excavated as they would have extended across an existing boundary and into an arable field that was under crop. In addition, Trench 13 was shortened from 30 m to 20 m in order to preserve the access to the adjacent Butler's Court Farm. The evaluation therefore comprised nine trenches measuring 30 m x 2 m, one measuring

20 m x 2 m and one measuring 15 m x 2 m (Fig. 2).

## **4.2 Fieldwork methods and recording**

1.1.33 The overburden was removed by a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket, working under close archaeological supervision. Excavation proceeded to the first archaeological horizon or to undisturbed natural geology, whichever was encountered first. The trenches were then cleaned by hand and any revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds and environmental samples.

1.1.34 All features and deposits encountered were issued a unique context number. A plan was drawn of each trench at a scale of 1:50, and each excavated feature was recorded in section at 1:20. Colour transparency and black-and-white photographs were taken of each feature, as well as more general shots of each trench. All recording was conducted in accordance with the procedures detailed in the OA Fieldwork Manual (OAU 1992).

## **4.3 Finds**

1.1.35 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and bagged by context.

## **4.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence**

1.1.36 No deposits suitable for sampling for palaeo-environmental evidence were encountered.

## **4.5 Presentation of results**

1.1.37 The stratigraphic sequences recorded in each trench are described individually in section 4.2, followed by summaries of the artefactual evidence in section 4.3. The conclusions are presented in section 5.

# **5 RESULTS**

## **5.1 Soils and ground conditions**

1.1.38 The natural geology was an orange sandy gravel in most of the trenches, except Trenches 2 and 5 in the western part of the site, where an orange sandy silt alluvium was recorded, and Trench 13 where an outcrop of Oxford Clay was identified. This was overlain by sandy subsoil and topsoil deposits. The archaeological features were generally well defined, their fills consisting of orange brown sandy silts that contrasted clearly with the natural geology.

1.1.39 Heavy rain combined with a high water table resulted in the flooding of the bases of Trenches 10 - 13 in the southern part of the site, but fortunately no archaeology was present in these trenches. Flooding also hampered excavation of archaeological

features in Trenches 5 and 7.

## 5.2 Description of deposits

### *General*

- 1.1.40 Many of the trenches displayed similar deposits, and as such not all section drawings have been reproduced for this report. Accordingly context numbers are only referred to in the text if they are shown on a figure. However, a full list of all contexts can be found in Appendix 1.

### *Trench 2*

- 1.1.41 Trench 2 was oriented NE-SW and measured 30 m x 2 m. Natural geology, comprising an orange sandy silt alluvium was encountered at 72.44 m OD, at a depth of 1.5 m below ground level. This was overlain by a subsoil of orange brown sandy silt 0.3 m thick and a former topsoil composed of dark brown loam 0.3 m thick. This sequence of deposits was sealed by a dump of modern refuse up to 0.6 m thick, including stone, bricks, timber, metal cans, and plastic sheeting, covered by a layer of re-deposited topsoil 0.3 m thick.
- 1.1.42 No archaeological features or finds were present.

### *Trench 4*

- 1.1.43 Trench 4 was oriented NE-SW and measured 30 m x 2 m. Natural geology, comprising orange gravel, was encountered at 73.19 m OD, at a depth of 0.8 m below ground level. It was overlain by a subsoil of orange brown sandy silt 0.6 m thick and a topsoil of dark brown loam 0.15 - 0.2 m thick.
- 1.1.44 No archaeological features or finds were present.

### *Trench 5*

- 1.1.45 Trench 5 (Figs. 3 and 4) was oriented NW-SE and measured 30 m x 2 m. Natural geology, comprising a mottled blue and orange sandy silt alluvium was encountered at 72.42 m OD, at a depth of 0.6 m below ground level.
- 1.1.46 The alluvium was cut by two ditches that extended across the north-western end of the trench on parallel NE-SW alignments. Ditch 503 was 2.1 m wide and 0.4 m deep with fairly steeply sloping sides and a flat base. It was filled by a single deposit of firm dark bluish grey silty clay (502). Ditch 505 was V-shaped in profile, and measured 1 m wide and 0.7 m deep. It contained a similar fill (504) from which no finds were recovered.
- 1.1.47 The ditches were sealed by a subsoil layer of dark brownish grey silt 0.6 m thick (501). In the south-eastern part of the trench this was overlain by the modern topsoil, while in the north-western part of the trench this had been removed and a layer of concrete 0.1 m thick laid down (500).

### ***Trench 6***

- 1.1.48 Trench 6 (Figs 3 and 4) was oriented NE-SW and measured 30 m x 2 m. Natural geology, comprising orange gravel, was encountered at 72.8 m OD, at a depth of 0.8 m below ground level.
- 1.1.49 One edge of a ditch was exposed extending NE-SW along the north-western edge of the trench. A section excavated across this feature near the north-eastern end of the trench demonstrated that the ditch was of two phases (Fig. 4 - Section 603). The earlier phase (609) was at least 0.16 m deep with a very gently sloping edge and extended beyond the limits of the trench. It was filled by a deposit of orange brown sandy silt (610). The south-eastern edge of the early ditch was cut by the later phase (607), which had a more U-shaped profile and measured 0.55 m wide and 0.16 m deep. It too contained a fill composed of orange brown sandy silt (608), from which a sherd of Romano-British pottery was recovered.
- 1.1.50 A possible break in this ditch defined by two opposed terminals (Fig. 4 - Section 602) 0.4 m apart (603 and 605) was also investigated. It was found that the ditch was very shallow at this point, with a depth of no more than 0.06 m, and it is likely that the break is the result of truncation of this part of the ditch rather than representing an original part of the feature. The ditches were filled with orange brown sandy silts (604 and 606).
- 1.1.51 A small pit or posthole (601) was also identified in this trench. The feature was circular in plan with a bowl-shaped profile and a concave base, and measured 0.45 m in diameter and 0.12 m deep. It contained a single fill of orange brown silt (602).
- 1.1.52 The features were sealed by a subsoil layer 0.6 m thick composed of orange brown sandy silt which was overlain by the modern topsoil, a layer of dark brown sandy loam 0.2 m thick.

### ***Trench 7***

- 1.1.53 Trench 7 (Figs 3 and 4) was oriented NW-SE and measured 30 m x 2 m. Natural geology, comprising orange gravel, was encountered at 73.01 m OD, at a depth of 0.7 m below ground level.
- 1.1.54 The gravel was cut by ditch 703, which extended across the trench on a NE-SW alignment and is a continuation of ditch 607 or 609 seen in Trench 6. The ditch was 3 m wide with straight sides that sloped at an angle of *c* 45°. Flooding of the feature caused by a combination of rain and the high water table forced the abandonment of excavation at a depth of 0.55 m without reaching the base. The lower part of the ditch was filled by a deposit of mottled blue and orange silty clay (704), overlain by an upper fill of orange brown sandy silt (705). The ditch was sealed by a layer of subsoil 0.4 m thick (702) which was overlain by the modern topsoil, a layer of dark brown sandy loam 0.3 m thick (700).

### ***Trench 8***

- 1.1.55 Trench 8 was oriented NE-SW and measured 30 m x 2 m. Natural geology, comprising orange gravel, was encountered at 72.88 m OD, at a depth of 0.5 m below ground level.
- 1.1.56 The gravel was cut by furrow, which extended across the central part of the trench on a NW-SE alignment. The furrow was 0.95 m wide and 0.1 m deep and was filled by a single deposit of orange brown silt. The furrow was overlain by a subsoil layer composed of orange brown sandy silt 0.35 m thick and the modern topsoil, a layer of dark brown sandy loam 0.15 m thick.

### ***Trench 9***

- 1.1.57 Trench 9 (Figs 3 and 4) was oriented NW-SE and measured 30 m x 2 m. Natural geology, comprising orange gravel, was encountered at 72.86 m OD, at a depth of 0.7 m below ground level. The gravel was cut by two features, a ditch and a tree throw hole.
- 1.1.58 Ditch 903 extended across the south-eastern end of the trench on a NE-SW alignment. It was 0.7 m wide and 0.4 m deep with a V-shaped profile, and was filled by a single deposit of reddish brown silt (904). No finds were recovered from this feature.
- 1.1.59 Tree throw hole 905 was slightly irregular in plan and measured *c* 1 m in diameter and 0.2 m deep. It contained a single fill of brown silty gravel (906) from which no finds were recovered.
- 1.1.60 These features were sealed by a subsoil layer composed of orange brown sandy silt 0.4 m thick (901) and the modern topsoil, a layer of dark brown sandy loam 0.3 m thick (900).

### ***Trench 10***

- 1.1.61 Trench 10 was excavated in a small yard between existing farm buildings. It was oriented NW-SE and measured 15 m x 2 m. The NW end of the trench could not be excavated to full depth due to the presence of a water pipe exposed during machining. Throughout the rest of the trench, natural geology, comprising orange gravel (1002), was encountered at 73.48 m OD, at a depth of 0.7 m below ground level. It was overlain by a layer of made ground 0.2 m thick composed of grey clay containing some gravel and very occasional flecks of charcoal. Above this lay the current yard surface, a layer of limestone rubble 0.45 m thick containing brick fragments and a few pieces of ceramic drainpipe.
- 1.1.62 No archaeological features or finds were present.

### ***Trench 11***

- 1.1.63 Trench 11 was located through a concrete access track, and was oriented NE-SW. The central part of the trench could not be excavated due to the presence of a drain and so the trench was excavated in two separate parts.
- 1.1.64 Natural geology, comprising orange gravel was encountered at 72.88 m OD, at a depth of 1.07 m below ground level, in the north-western part of the trench, rising to 73.03 m OD, 0.82 m below ground level, in the south-eastern part. Over this lay a layer of made ground composed of grey sand 0.2 m thick which contained some small limestone inclusions.
- 1.1.65 In the north-western part of the trench this was overlain by a second layer of made ground 0.3 m - 0.35 m thick, consisting of loose limestone rubble with a black humic sandy matrix. Above this was a layer of more compacted limestone 0.25 m - 0.3 m thick which may have been a former yard surface. This was sealed by a thin layer of sandy gravel make-up and the modern concrete surface.
- 1.1.66 In the south-eastern part of the trench made ground was overlain by a former track or yard surface 0.25 m thick constructed from edge-set limestone blocks each measuring approximately 0.25 m x 0.15 m x 0.1 m. This surface was sealed by make-up and concrete surface.
- 1.1.67 No archaeological feature or finds were present.

### ***Trench 12***

- 1.1.68 Trench 12 was excavated through a concrete access track between existing farm buildings. It was oriented NW-SE and measured 30 m x 2 m. Excavation of the south-eastern end was terminated at a depth of 0.4 m on encountering a concrete surface that extended into the trench for a distance of 5.7 m.
- 1.1.69 In the rest of the trench natural geology, comprising orange sandy silt alluvium, was encountered at 73.22 m OD, at a depth of 1.2 m below ground level. Above this lay a layer of light grey gravelly sand 0.08 m thick that was overlain by a gravel surface, for which it may have been a make-up layer. This surface was contemporary with the concrete surface and the foundation of a modern brick wall that extended across the trench between the two surfaces. These surfaces were overlain by a layer of made ground up to 0.75 m thick consisting of mixed grey and brown sandy material containing limestone rubble and patched of orange sandy gravel and tarmac. Above this lay a make-up layer of orange gravel 0.1 m thick and the modern concrete surface.
- 1.1.70 No archaeological features or finds were present.

### ***Trench 13***

- 1.1.71 Trench 13 (Fig. 4) was oriented NE-SW and measured 20 m x 2 m. Natural geology, comprising Oxford Clay (1304), was encountered at 72.94 m OD, at a depth of 1.45 m

below ground level in a sondage excavated at the north-eastern end of the trench. For health and safety reasons the rest of the trench was excavated to a depth of no more than 1.2 m, exposing only modern deposits. The natural geology was overlain by two layers of made ground comprising a layer of dark brownish grey sandy loam 0.65 m thick (1303) containing fragments of and a layer of limestone rubble and dark grey sandy soil 0.65 m thick (1302) that contained brick fragments, timber and pieces of ceramic drainpipe and emitted a distinct smell of diesel. A manhole sunk into layer 1303 near the south-western end of the trench had been buried by layer 1302. The made ground was sealed by a layer of orange sandy gravel make-up 0.1 m - 0.15 m thick (1301) and a concrete surface 0.1 m thick (1300). No archaeological features or finds were present.

### 5.3 Finds

#### *Pottery*

- 1.1.72 A single sherd of grey ware pottery, dating to the Romano-British period, was recovered from ditch fill 607. The sherd was moderately abraded and formed part of the base of a jug.

## 6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

- 1.1.73 Although the intended amount of trenching was reduced by the removal of Trenches 1 and 3, and the shortening of Trench 13 the evaluation has successfully provided a model of the preservation of archaeological remains within the site. A consistent pattern of preservation of features in the northern part of the site and truncation in the southern part has been demonstrated, and can be generalised with some confidence to those areas which could not be investigated.
- 1.1.74 The evaluation has demonstrated that archaeological remains are present in the field to the north of the farm with features, consisting predominantly of ditches, being recorded in four of the seven trenches excavated in this part of the site. A piece of Romano-British pottery was recovered from ditch 607 and it is likely from the similarity of their alignments and fills that all the ditches are of a similar date. The scarcity of finds indicates that the features lay some distance from contemporary settlement, and that they are likely to be agricultural in origin, forming the boundaries of fields or enclosures. The presence of a single posthole in Trench 6 indicates that there may also be other features or structures present. All these feature had been truncated by post-Roman ploughing. The archaeological remains were sealed beneath an unusually thick subsoil and topsoil, which ranged from 0.5 m to 0.8 m deep. This may be the result of the levelling of ridge and furrow, the former presence of which was indicated by the survival of the base of a furrow (805) in Trench 8.
- 1.1.75 No archaeological remains were present in the trenches within the area of the farm itself. In all four trenches excavated within this part of the site it was found that all deposits above the natural geology had been removed and the ground made up with modern dumped deposits. It is uncertain to what extent this truncation impacted into the natural gravel and any archaeological features that may formerly have been

present. This landscaping was presumably associated with the construction of the existing farm buildings, and the large quantity of limestone rubble within the made ground suggests that this may have involved the demolition of earlier buildings.

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench	Ctxt No	Type	Width (m)	Thick. (m)	Comment
1	Not excavated				
2	200	Layer		0.3	Topsoil
	201	Layer			Natural Alluvium
	202	Layer		0.6	Made ground
	203	Layer		0.3	Buried topsoil
	204	Layer		0.3	Subsoil
3	Not excavated				
4	400	Layer		0.15 - 0.2	Topsoil
	401	Layer			Natural gravel
	402	Layer		0.6	Subsoil
5	500	Layer		0.7	Topsoil
	501	Layer		0.6	Subsoil
	502	Fill		0.4	Fill of ditch 503
	503	Cut	2.1	0.4	Ditch
	504	Fill		> 0.7	Fill of ditch 505
	505	Cut	1	> 0.7	Ditch
	506	Layer			Natural Alluvium
6	600	Layer		0.2	Topsoil
	601	Cut	0.9	0.12	Pit/tree throw hole
	602	Fill		0.12	Fill of 601
	603	Cut	> 0.4	0.07	Ditch
	604	Fill		0.07	Fill of 603
	605	Cut	> 0.5	0.05	Ditch
	606	Fill		0.05	Fill of 605
	607	Cut	0.55	0.16	Ditch
	608	Fill		0.16	Fill of 607
	609	Cut	>0.7	0.16	Ditch
	610	Fill		0.16	Fill of 609
	611	Layer		0.6	Subsoil
	612	Layer			Natural gravel
7	700	Layer		0.3	Topsoil
	701	Layer			Natural Alluvium
	702	Layer		0.4	Subsoil
	703	Cut	3.0	> 0.55	Ditch
	704	Fill		> 0.05	Fill of 703
	705	Fill		0.5	Fill of 703
8	800	Layer		0.13	Topsoil
	801	Layer		0.35 - 0.4	Subsoil
	802	Layer			Natural gravel
	803	Void			
	804	Fill		0.1	Fill of 805
	805	Cut	0.95	0.1	Plough furrow

Trench	Ctxt No	Type	Width (m)	Thick. (m)	Comment
9	900	Layer		0.3	Topsoil
	901	Layer		0.4	Subsoil
	902	Layer			Natural gravel
	903	Cut	0.7	0.4	Ditch
	904	Fill		0.4	Fill of 903
	905	Cut	1.0	0.2	Tree throw holes
	906	Fill		0.2	Fill of 905
10	1000	Layer		0.45	Hardcore surface
	1001	Layer		0.2	Made ground
	1002	Layer			Natural gravel
11	1100	Layer		0.08 - 0.1	Concrete surface
	1101	Layer		0.1	Make-up for 1100
	1102	Layer		0.25 - 0.3	Hardcore surface
	1103	Layer		0.3 - 0.35	Made ground
	1104	Layer		0.25	Cobbled surface
	1105	Layer		0.2	Made ground
	1106	Layer			Natural gravel
12	1200	Layer		0.08 - 0.1	Concrete surface
	1201	Layer		0.1	Make-up for 1200
	1202	Layer		0.75	Made ground
	1203	Layer			Concrete surface
	1204	Wall	0.45		Wall
	1205	Layer		0.15 - 0.2	Gravel surface
	1206	Layer		0.07	Make-up for 1205
	1207	Layer			Natural Alluvium
13	1300	Layer		0.1	Concrete surface
	1301	Layer		0.1 - 0.15	Make-up for 1300
	1302	Layer		0.65	Made ground
	1303	Layer		0.65	Made ground
	1304	Layer			Natural alluvium

## APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

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**APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS**

**Site name:** Butler's Court, Downington, Lechlade, Gloucestershire

**Site code:** LEBUTC 06

**Grid reference:** SP 2070 0000

**Type of evaluation:** Nine trenches measuring 30 m x 2 m, one measuring 20 m x 2 m and one measuring 15 m x 2 m

**Date and duration of project:** 22/5/2006 - 26/5/2006

**Area of site:** c 23 000 m<sup>2</sup>

**Summary of results:** Four ditches interpreted as the boundaries of fields or agricultural enclosures were recorded in the field to the north of the farm buildings and were dated to the Roman period on the basis of a sherd of pottery. A single posthole, a plough furrow and a tree throw hole were also recorded. The unusual depth of the subsoil and topsoil in this area was interpreted as being the result of the levelling of former ridge and furrow.

No archaeological remains were present in the four trenches excavated within the farm itself, where evidence was found for extensive truncation associated with the construction of the existing farm buildings.

**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Corinium Museum, Cirencester in due course.



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Figure 1: Site location

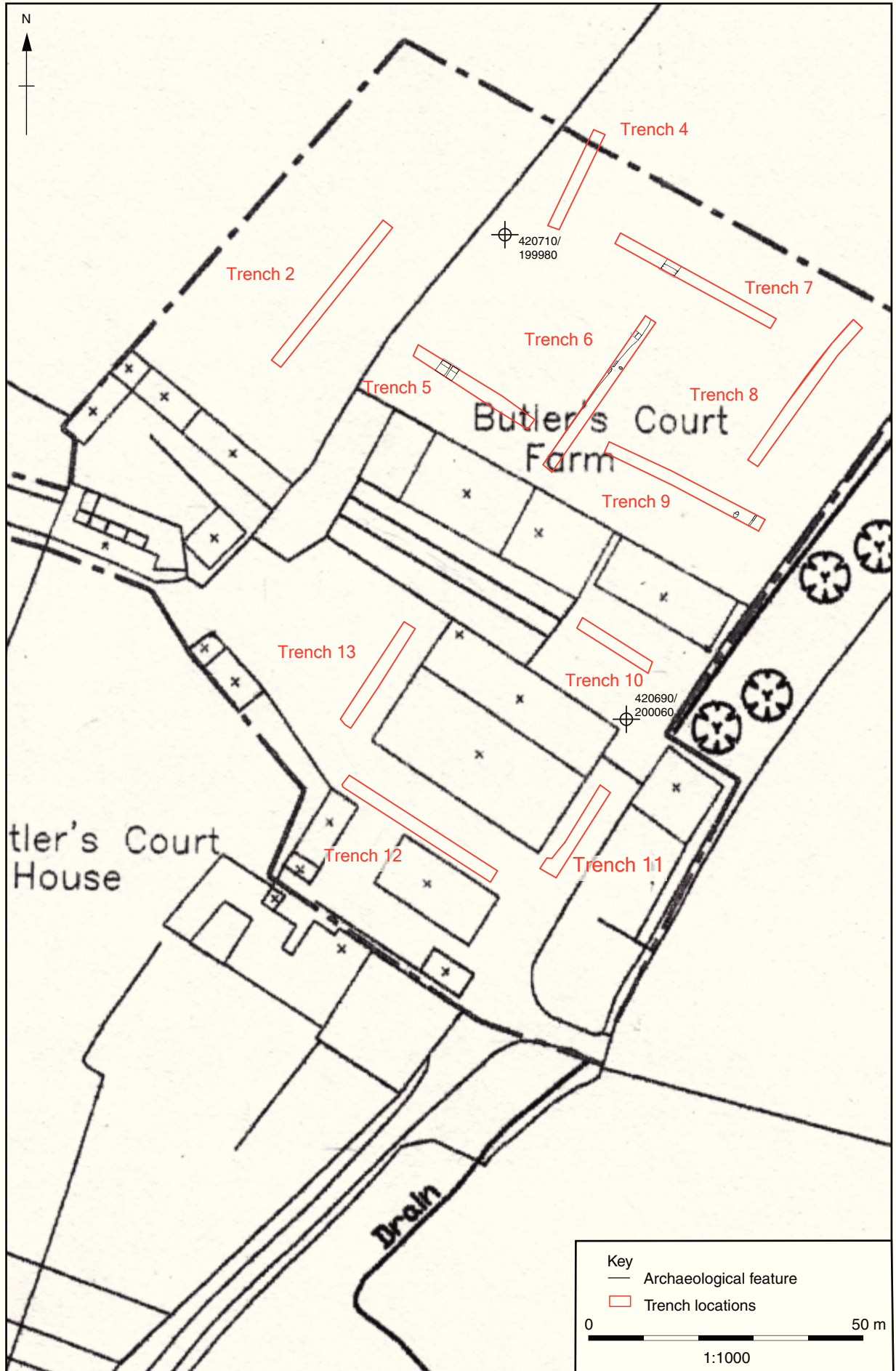


Figure 2: Trench location plan

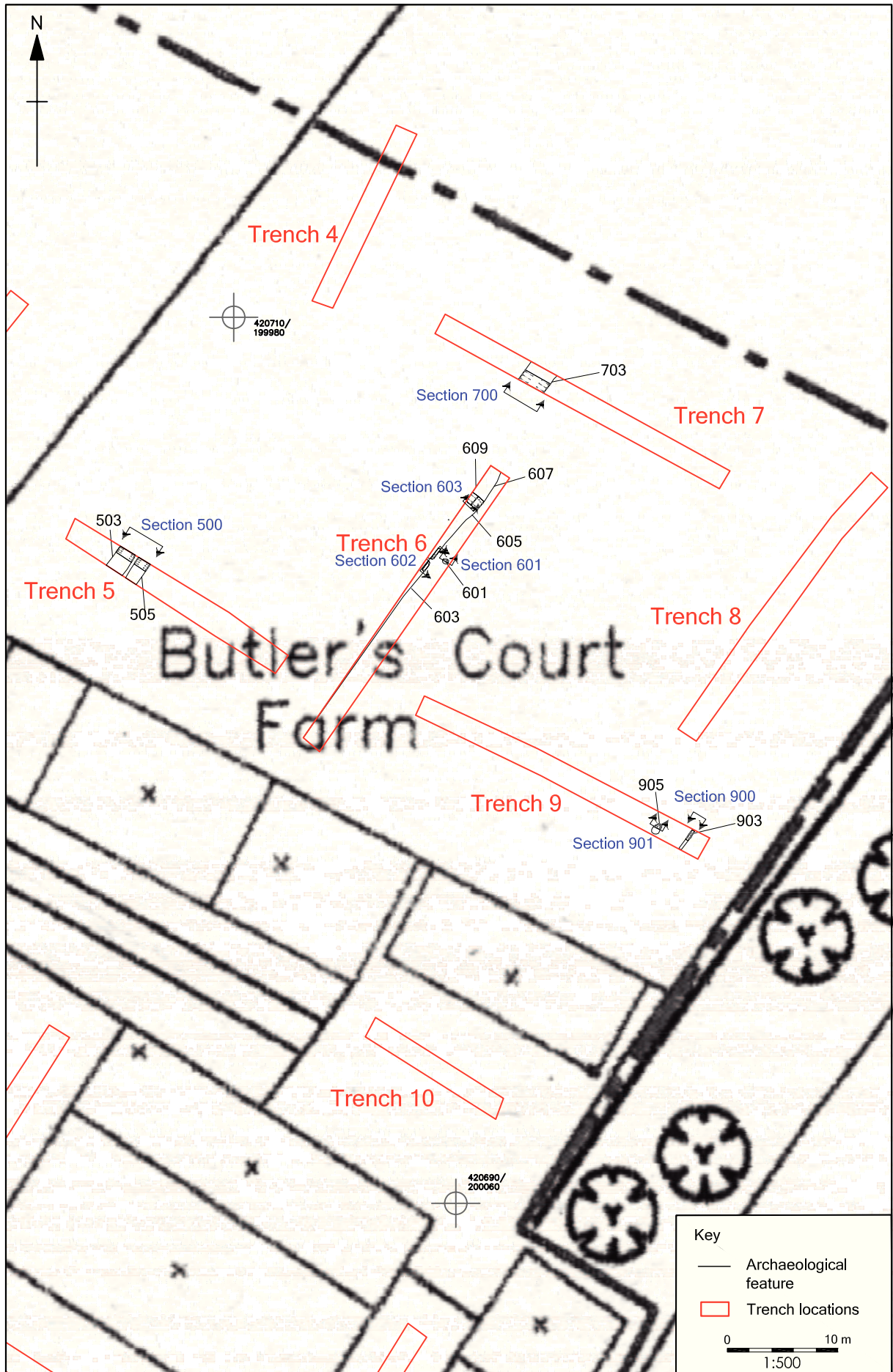


Figure 3: Trench plans

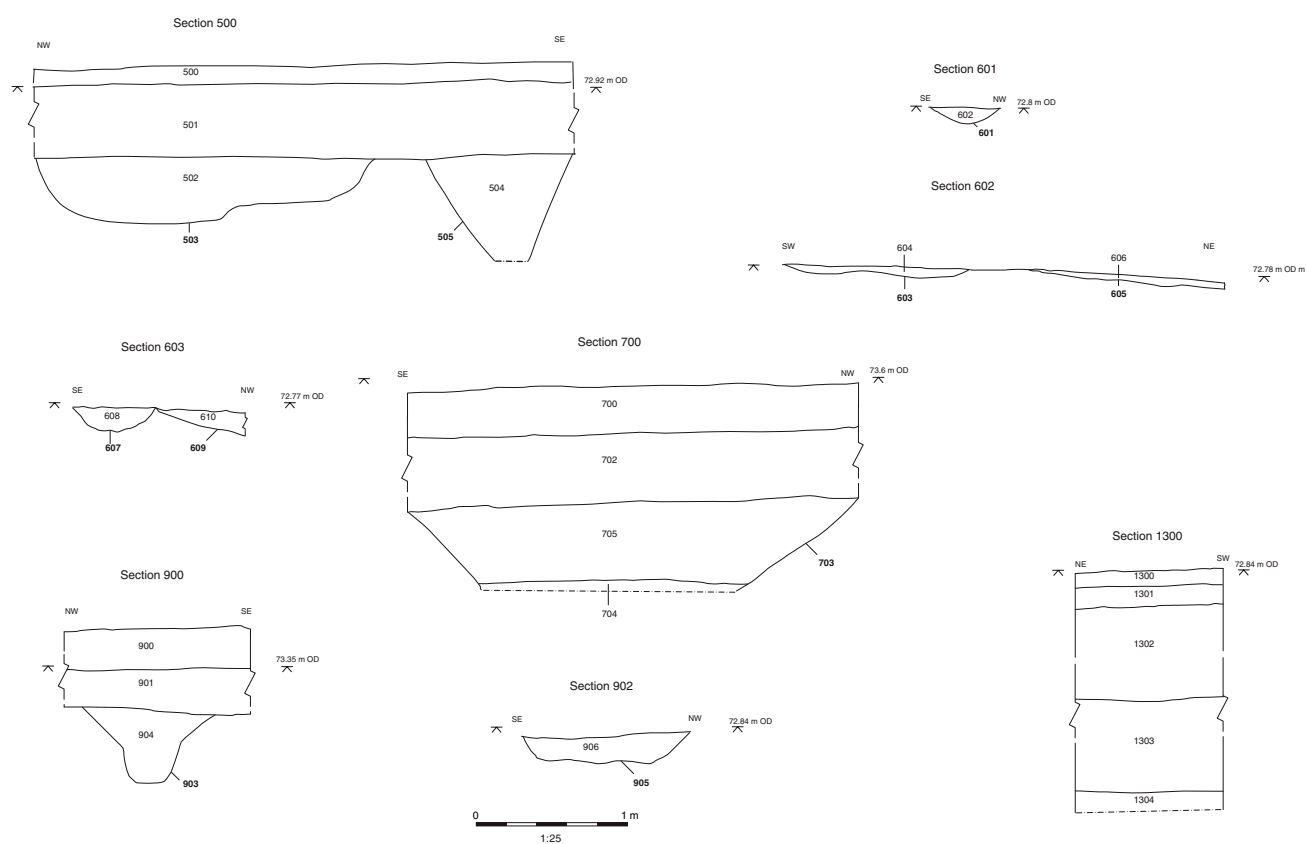


Figure 4: Sections