

Land South of  
Cirencester Road  
**Fairford**  
Gloucestershire



**Archaeological  
Evaluation Report**



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## Land South of Cirencester Road, Fairford, Gloucestershire

### *Archaeological Evaluation Report*

*Written by Robin Bashford*

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## **Summary**

*In September 2013, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at Land South of Cirencester Road, Fairford, Gloucestershire (centred on SP 14560 00600). The investigation followed a magnetometer survey which had identified various pit-like and linear magnetic anomalies.*

*Several possible postholes were recorded, predominantly in the south-east corner of the site but also in the north-east corner. Most of these features were fairly slight, and no obvious structural forms were discernible within the confines of the trenches. With the exception of a single abraded sherd of late prehistoric pottery, none of them produced any artefactual material.*

*Four probable sunken-featured buildings were identified - also in the south-east corner of the site - all of which had previously been identified as anomalies by the geophysical survey, and two of which had been interpreted as possible SFBs. Early Anglo-Saxon pottery was recovered from three of these, providing further evidence for the extensive settlement previously identified at Horcott Quarry to the south, and Pip's Field to the north. Animal bone was also recovered from two of these features.*

*Several linear features were recorded, two of which were undated. A linear anomaly identified on the geophysical survey corresponded with a ditch, found in two of the trenches in the south-east corner of the site. On the basis of a single sherd of pottery, the ditch is most likely to be of post-medieval date, although there was some suggestion that it may be earlier in origin. Various other post-medieval ditches were also recorded which correspond to field boundaries shown on 19th and 20th century OS maps.*

*The evaluation revealed a number of geological variations, including outcrops of natural clay to the north and west of the site, overlain by terrace gravels. The interface between these two types of geological deposit was characterised by spreads of orange brown sandy clay, which appear to be geological in origin. Some of these features coincided with geophysical anomalies identified by the magnetometer survey.*





## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA), was commissioned by CgMs Consulting to undertake evaluation trenching on the site of a proposed residential development, promoted by Gladman Developments Limited, on a plot of land approximately 4.3 hectares in extent, situated to the south of Cirencester Road, Fairford, Gloucestershire (NGR 414560, 200600, Fig. 1).
- 1.1.2 The work is being undertaken to provide the Planning Authority with information which is relevant to the determination of a planning application.
- 1.1.3 Although the Local Planning Authority has not set a formal brief for the work, discussions with Charles Parry (Senior Archaeological Officer, Gloucestershire County Council, archaeological advisor to Cotswold District Council) has established the scope of work required in general terms. A Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared by OA and approved by Charles Parry before work started on site, detailing the aims and methods of the evaluation. This report details the results of the investigation.
- 1.1.4 All work was undertaken in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as detailed in the desk-based assessment (DBA), and relevant Institute for Archaeologists guidelines, in particular the '*Standards and guidance for evaluation*' (IfA April 2009).

### 1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The solid geology of the study site comprises limestone of the Cornbrash Formation (Sheet 251, British Geological Survey 1970). Sand and gravel of the Summertown-Radley Sand and Gravel Member is recorded across the study site.
- 1.2.2 The soil sequence recorded during the evaluation consisted of topsoil comprising grey brown silty clay loam to a depth of 200 – 300mm overlying patchy orange brown clay and sand and gravel deposits. The underlying Cornbrash was not recorded in any of the trenches.
- 1.2.3 The study site slopes gradually from NE to SW from 87.85m to 85.00m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). A minor watercourse forms the southern and western boundaries of the study site. The eastern boundary is formed by hedgerows separating agricultural fields, and the northern boundary by Cirencester Road. The River Coln is located approximately 400m to the east of the study site.

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background to the site has been described in detail in the DBA compiled by James Gidman and Paul Chadwick of CgMs (July 2013), from which the following background information is derived. A geophysical survey of the site was completed immediately prior to trenching, and the trench plan was updated in light of the results (Stratascan in prep.).
- 1.3.2 This assessment is based on a consideration of evidence in the Gloucestershire Historic Environment Records (HER), English Heritage's National Monuments Record (NMR) and the National Heritage List (NHL) for the study site and a zone 1km around



it. The Gloucestershire Record Office was also visited in order to examine historic maps relating to the study site. There are no designated heritage assets (scheduled monuments, listed buildings, conservation areas, registered parks and gardens, registered battlefields) within the study site itself. Two scheduled monuments are recorded within 1km of the study site: a Bronze Age hengiform monument with associated ring ditch (NHL 1014394) and a Saxon cemetery (NHL 1003419). In addition, 112 listed buildings are recorded; the closest being the Grade II Claremont House approximately 105m to the south. The majority of the listed buildings lie within Fairford Conservation Area, to the north-east of the study site.

- 1.3.3 A desk-based assessment was carried out in advance of the proposed Fairford Bypass which included the study site (HER 21485). This did not identify any heritage assets within the site and its potential was considered insufficient to justify further evaluation. Geophysical survey (Archaeological Surveys 2010) followed by trial trenching (AC Archaeology 2011) was carried out on land immediately north of Cirencester Road (HER 42779). This area has recently been the subject of two archaeological investigations (1: Pips Field - Foundations Archaeology and 2: Headland Archaeology). An assessment report on the Pips Field excavation (Foundations Archaeology July 2013) has recently entered the public domain, although currently only limited details are available for the Headland Archaeology investigation. A number of archaeological investigations have been undertaken in the wider study area, including work by Oxford Archaeology at Horcott Quarry (HER 42779, 42782, 2505, 20460, 3202, 33416, 2477, 33588, 44513, 42779, 280, 281, 2497, 6998, 2496, 20521).
- 1.3.4 The following sections describe archaeological sites in the vicinity of the study site by period.

## **1.4 Prehistoric (Palaeolithic – Iron Age)**

- 1.4.1 There are no previously recorded Prehistoric sites or finds recorded within the study site. However, prehistoric evidence is recorded on land immediately north of Cirencester Road from geophysical survey, trial trenching and archaeological excavation. The various episodes of archaeological work initially found several sherds of Iron Age pottery, linear ditches and a number of pits, one of which is dated to the Iron Age (HER 42779, 42782); the linear ditch system extends towards the study site. Recent excavation (Foundations Archaeology 2013) has demonstrated that a number of the pit-like features are natural tree root hollows. However, the ditches are now known to form part of an early-mid Iron Age co-axial field system which is associated with small pits and dispersed postholes apparently forming no coherent plan. To the west, the Iron Age ditches extended into the area investigated by Headland Archaeology (Mike Kember pers. comm.).
- 1.4.2 In the wider study area find spots of Neolithic polished flint axes (HER 2490, 3379) have previously been recorded 400m to the south-east and 600m to the north-east of the study site, and evidence of late Neolithic activity was recorded during evaluation work at Lady Lamb Farm, 400m to the west (HER 2505). Residual Neolithic artefacts were also discovered during evaluation work, which identified a concentration of prehistoric activity to the south of RAF Fairford, outside the 1km search radius to the south-east of the study site (HER 20460).
- 1.4.3 Several ring ditches, believed to be Bronze Age barrows, have been identified from cropmarks to the south and east of the study site (HER 3199, 3200, 3201, 7215, 7216). The closest ring ditch to the study site lies 260m to the south and is a scheduled



monument that includes a Bronze Age hengiform monument (HER 3203/NHL 1014394).

- 1.4.4 Early Iron Age activity was identified from excavations at Horcott Quarry, which targeted cropmarks approximately 300m south of the study site (HER 3202, 33416). A multi-period site was identified, the main phase of activity being Bronze Age and early Iron Age, comprising a series of 22 round houses and associated pits and fence lines. Evaluation work at Lady Lamb Farm, 400m west of the study site, also identified multiple periods of occupation, including boundary ditches that were established by the early Iron Age (HER 2505).

## 1.5 Roman

- 1.5.1 Although there is evidence for Roman settlement, focused to the south and south-east of the study site, there is currently no known Roman activity within the study site or in close proximity to it. The evaluation and subsequent excavation at Pips Field (north of Cirencester Road) found only 1 sherd of Roman pottery (Foundations Archaeology 2013). Two stone wells of this period were found approximately 200m south-east of the study site, forming part of a possible farming settlement (HER 2477). Stone structures and associated enclosures were also identified 500m to the south of the study site (HER 3202, 33416). This settlement is considered to represent a reasonably small but wealthy farmstead. A cemetery adjacent to the settlement, which included burials spanning the 2nd – 6th centuries AD, includes a nationally important transitional late Roman/early Saxon burial group (HER 33588). A Roman trackway aligned east-west was identified at Lady Lamb Farm (HER 44513) 400m to the west of the study site, and Roman pottery was recovered during excavations of the Saxon Cemetery (HER 280,281) 600m to the north of the study site. The landscape in the vicinity of the study site was clearly extensively exploited during this period.

## 1.6 Saxon - early medieval

- 1.6.1 Prior to the present evaluation no heritage assets of this period had been recorded within the study site. The village of Fairford, first mentioned in 9th century (Leech 1981) and held by Beorhtric during the time of Edward the Confessor (Williams and Martin 2003, 472), developed around a fording point of the River Coln at the crossing of roads from Cirencester and Gloucester.
- 1.6.2 Saxon settlement activity was recovered to the north of the study site (north of Cirencester Road) comprising 29 sherds of pottery from several large pits and linear ditches, and a possible sunken-featured building (SFB; HER 42779; AC Archaeology 2011). Recent work has found additional Saxon features, including four human burials. Work by Headland Archaeology to the north of Cirencester Road located a low density of Anglo-Saxon activity (Mike Kember pers. comm.). However, investigations at Pips Field found no further Saxon evidence. Extensive Saxon remains have been found within the 1km search area: The settlement at Horcott Quarry, 300m to the south of the study site, includes SFBs and timber halls and is one of the largest Saxon settlements known in the Thames Valley (HER 33416). A Saxon cemetery is located 600m to the north of the study site (HER 280, 281, 2497, 6998, 2496 NHL 1003419). Both sites have shown potential signs of Roman to Saxon continuity. In addition to these sites, an extensive settlement has been identified at Coln House School, on the west of the River Coln in Fairford, contemporary with the cemetery (HER 20521). At least one and possibly two early Saxon buildings were also recorded during an evaluation at Lady Lamb Farm, 400m west of the study site (HER 44513). The area surrounding the study



site thus has exceptionally high potential for early Anglo-Saxon settlements and cemeteries.

## 1.7 Medieval

- 1.7.1 No Medieval heritage assets are recorded by the HER and NMR within the study site. The majority of assets dating to this period relate to the settlements of Fairford, to the east of the River Coln, and Horcott to the south. Fairford was considered prosperous at the start of the 1300s due to woollen cloth manufacture, but declined during the late medieval period due to competition from nearby towns and the outbreak of the Black Death. At this time the study site is likely to have been part of the Medieval open field system surrounding Fairford. However, no evidence of earthwork remains of ridge and furrow was visible on the study site at the time of the investigation.

## 1.8 Post-medieval and modern

- 1.8.1 No post-medieval heritage assets are recorded by the HER and NMR within the study site. A post-medieval field system was identified to the north of Cirencester Road, adjacent to the study site (HER 42779). Adjacent to this site, at Pip's Field, post-medieval drainage ditches and quarry pits were recorded during evaluation trenching (HER 27131). It is likely that the fields were enclosed circa 1800 (Parry 1991). In this period, understanding of settlement, land-use and the utilisation of the landscape is enhanced by cartographic and documentary sources, the earliest of which dates from 1777.
- 1.8.2 The earliest detailed map of the study site is the 1841 Fairford Tithe Map. The study site lies within an agricultural landscape of fields to the south-west of Fairford. It comprises part of three irregularly shaped fields adjacent to Cirencester Road. The southern boundary is defined by a tree lined strip of land. The fields within the study site are named on the tithe apportionment as 'Carters Ground' and were under pasture. The study site remains largely unchanged on the 1886 Ordnance Survey. On this map the south-eastern boundary is defined by a trackway and the eastern field was subdivided by a broken line of trees. The urban limit of Fairford is visible to the north-east.
- 1.8.3 The study site remains relatively unchanged on the 1903 Ordnance Survey map, except that a subdivision in the eastern field has been removed. The study site remains unchanged until the 1977 Ordnance Survey which shows the removal of one of the internal field boundaries (CgMs 2013).

## 2 EVALUATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims

- Investigate the extent, conditions, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological and palaeoenvironmental remains encountered.
- Test and investigate the nature of the geophysical anomalies highlighted in the geophysical survey plot (Stratascan Limited).
- Define the significance of any archaeological features or deposits in order to inform further mitigation measures, which may include preservation *in situ* or by record.



- Assess the presence/absence of localised alluvial deposits associated with the watercourse forming the southern and western site boundaries, which could mask archaeological features. Alluvial deposits may include waterlogged deposits with potential for palaeoenvironmental analysis and/or preserved organic archaeological remains.

## 2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The trenching programme consisted of 11 trenches, the majority measuring 50m x 1.6m in plan, representing approximately a 2% sample of the site area (4.3 hectares). The trenches were located to provide even coverage of the field and to investigate various magnetic anomalies identified by the geophysical survey. Trench locations are shown on Figures 2 and 3.
- 2.2.2 Plough-disturbed soil horizons were removed by a mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless bucket to expose archaeologically significant horizons or the surface of the solid geology, whichever was encountered first. The trenches were excavated to a typical depth of c 0.25 – 0.50m.
- 2.2.3 A summary of OA's general approach to excavation and recording can be found in Appendix A of the WSI (OA 2013). Standard methodologies for geomatics and survey, environmental evidence, artefactual evidence and burials can also be found in that document (Appendices B, C, D and E respectively).

## 3 RESULTS

### 3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

- 3.1.1 The following section summarises the results from the earliest to the latest archaeological deposits. Detailed soil descriptions and the dimensions of features are generally presented in the context inventory (Appendix A). They are included in the following descriptive text and figures only when they contribute to interpretation of the remains.

### 3.2 Trench descriptions

#### *Trench 1 (Fig. 3)*

- 3.2.1 Trench 1 was aligned NE-SW and was 50m long. Natural geology was encountered at c 0.25m below the existing ground level at an average of 87.65m OD. The geological deposits comprised north-south aligned bands of clay (101) overlain by gravel (100). It is possible that these clay spreads account for the linear anomalies visible on the geophysical survey. However, it is more likely that the anomalies reflect the traces of ridge and furrow, which were visible as a series of irregular bands of disturbed natural gravel (102).
- 3.2.2 No archaeology was recorded in this trench.

#### *Trench 2 (Fig. 3)*

- 3.2.3 Trench 2 was aligned NW-SE and was 50m long. Natural geology (201) was encountered at approximately 0.28m below the existing ground level and the surface of it dipped from north to south from 87.85m OD at the northern end of the trench to 86.75m OD at the southern end. The geology comprised natural clay at the north end of





the trench which gave way to predominantly gravel deposits at the south end, although with patches of clay present throughout. Where the clay gave way to the gravel, a number of irregular patches of mid-orangey brown sandy clay were present. Deposits of this description were consistently observed at the interface between natural gravel and clay (see Trenches 4 and 6). They were investigated in a number of locations and appeared to be geological in origin.

- 3.2.4 Slight indications of a possible NE-SW aligned linear feature (203) were recorded but otherwise no significant archaeological features were present.

### ***Trench 3 (Fig. 3)***

- 3.2.5 Trench 3 was aligned NNE-SSW and was 50m long. Natural gravel was encountered at approximately 0.26m below the existing ground level at an average of 87.10m OD. It was cut by four possible postholes (303, 305, 307 and 309) none of which produced any finds. The features were very slight and their identification as archaeological features is uncertain. Otherwise no archaeology was present.

### ***Trench 4 (Fig. 3)***

- 3.2.6 Trench 4 was aligned NW-SE and was 50m long. The natural geology dipped from north to south and was encountered at approximately 0.25m below the existing ground level at between 87.21m OD and 85.81m OD. The geology across the majority of the trench was clay (400), although patches of gravel (401) overlay the clay at the northern end of the trench. As in Trench 2, the interface between the clay and the gravel was characterised by irregular spreads of mid-orange brown sandy clay (402). These were investigated in three locations as they appeared to lie in a roughly linear arrangement. The interventions were excavated through the sandy clay deposits which proved to be either slight and/or very irregular. In addition, the gravel and the silty clay deposits appeared to interleave with each other - rather than being in a clear stratigraphic succession - indicating that they are geological features.

### ***Trench 5 (Figs 4 and 6)***

- 3.2.7 Trench 5 was on a NW-SE alignment and was 50m long. The natural geology (502) throughout the trench consisted of gravel, the surface of which dipped from north to south. The gravel was encountered at 0.27m below the existing ground level, between 86.25m OD and 85.50m OD. Overlying the gravel was a very thin (0.05m) layer of reddish brown silty sand (501) which may represent colluvium or the remnant of an earlier ploughsoil. The relationship between this deposit and the archaeological features described below was uncertain. In other trenches a similar deposit appeared to be cut by archaeological features (eg Trench 7).
- 3.2.8 Six possible postholes were identified in two clusters, although neither of these were in any obvious configuration. Features 504, 506, 508 and 510 were located at the southern end of the trench and 517 and 519 towards the northern end. The fill (516) of posthole 517 produced a single very small and abraded sherd of shell-tempered later prehistoric pottery, but otherwise no artefactual material was recovered from the possible postholes.
- 3.2.9 Near the south end of the trench - immediately to the north of the southernmost cluster of postholes - was a 3.7m wide shallow feature (515) which was 0.2m deep. The location coincides with a discreet magnetic anomaly on the geophysical survey plot which was not interpreted in the survey report as a possible SFB. A single sherd of



early Anglo-Saxon calcareous and organic-tempered pottery was recovered from the fill of this feature (514) along with 8 small sherds of probable Iron Age date (fine fabric with sparse flint tempering) and 1 lump of heavily burnt fired clay (indeterminate date and function). Assuming that the Iron Age sherds are residual this could be an early Anglo-Saxon SFB.

- 3.2.10 A roughly east-west aligned undated gully (521) was identified immediately to the north of a more substantial, steep-sided ditch (513) with very compacted fills (511 and 512). This feature was also identified by the geophysical survey. A very small sherd of 16th-17th century pottery was recovered from the lower fill (512), and a fragment of clay pipe stem was recovered from the surface of the upper fill (511). However, the latter was not securely stratified and may have originated from the topsoil (context 0).
- 3.2.11 The fills of the features and the possible remnant ploughsoil were overlain by an average of 0.22m of topsoil (500).

### ***Trench 6 (Fig. 3)***

- 3.2.12 Trench 6 was aligned NE-SW and was 50m long. Natural geology was encountered at approximately 0.25m below the existing ground level at an average of 86.35m OD. Natural gravel (601) was present at the eastern end of the trench and gave way to clay (600) in the western half of the trench. The interface between the gravel and clay roughly corresponds with a putative linear feature identified by the geophysical survey. There was no sign of a ditch on this alignment within the trench. As with Trenches 2 and 4, patches of mid-orange brown sandy clay (602) were present at the interface between the gravel and clay. Three interventions excavated into the sandy clay deposits confirmed that these are geological features.
- 3.2.13 A NW-SE aligned post-medieval field boundary (603) cut the clay approximately 30m from the north-eastern end of the trench. The fill (604) of this feature and the natural geology were overlain by 0.25m of topsoil (605).

### ***Trench 7 (Figs 5 and 7)***

- 3.2.14 Trench 7 was aligned north-south and was 20m long. The trench was initially excavated to the top of a disturbed greyish brown gravel deposit (701) - similar to that seen in Trench 5. The archaeological features described below initially appeared to be cut through the deposit. However, it seems more likely that the 'dirty' gravel deposit represents the plough-disturbed upper surface of the natural gravel. It is therefore stratigraphically later than the archaeological features. At the northern end of the trench - where no features were present - the 'dirty' gravel was removed by machine and proved to be c 0.1m deep and overlay the undisturbed natural gravel (700). The top of the disturbed gravel was approximately 0.25m below existing ground level and dipped from north to south from 86.05m OD to 85.70m OD. Where deposit 701 was removed by machine, the top of the undisturbed gravel was at an average of 85.77m OD.
- 3.2.15 The trench was located to investigate a discreet geophysical anomaly at the south end of the trench, which was not interpreted in the survey report as a possible Anglo-Saxon SFB. On excavation this was revealed as a shallow (0.3m deep) feature (703), at least 2m x 1.6m in plan, the upper fill of which (706) produced a significant amount of animal bone (mostly cattle with a few sheep/goat bones) and three joining sherds of organic-tempered early Anglo-Saxon pottery, including a rim.



- 3.2.16 The continuation of the steep-sided ditch recorded in Trench 5 was identified (707), crossing the trench on a SW-NE alignment. Once again the alignment of the ditch corresponds exactly with a linear anomaly on the geophysical survey plot. No definite dating evidence was recovered from the ditch in this trench.
- 3.2.17 The fills of the features and deposit 701 were overlain by 0.25m of ploughsoil (702).

#### ***Trench 8 (Figs 4-5 and 8)***

- 3.2.18 Trench 8 was on a NE-SW alignment and was 60m long. The natural in this trench (802) comprised fairly clean gravel across the majority of the trench with occasional 'dirty' patches which may reflect the putative ridge and furrow shown on the geophysical survey plot. The disturbed gravelly deposit recorded in Trenches 5 and 7 was also present within Trench 8 (801) and was 0.05m thick. This was removed by machine to the top of the undisturbed natural gravel which was encountered at 85.24m OD.
- 3.2.19 The trench was placed to investigate two large discreet magnetic anomalies on the geophysical survey which were interpreted in the survey report as potential SFB's. The feature at the NE end of the trench (819) was 0.55m deep and flat-bottomed, with a posthole (821) in the base, all of which supports the interpretation of this feature as an SFB - although no datable artefacts were recovered. Feature 806, at the SW end of the trench was flat-bottomed and 0.8m deep, which is rather deep but still plausible for an SFB. It could alternatively be a pit. A single sherd of organic-tempered early Anglo-Saxon pottery was recovered from the fill of feature 806 (context 805). Animal bone (mainly cattle with a small proportion of sheep/goat fragments) was recovered from the fills of both 806 and 819.
- 3.2.20 Apart from posthole 821, four further possible pits or postholes were excavated in this trench (808, 810, 812 and 814) - none of which produced any finds. One of these (812) was clearly an archaeological feature while the remainder were of doubtful significance.
- 3.2.21 The features and 'dirty' gravel deposit were overlain by 0.24m of topsoil (800).

#### ***Trench 9 (Fig. 3)***

- 3.2.22 Trench 9 was aligned WNW-ESE and was 50m long. Natural gravel (900) was encountered at 85.25m OD. The surface of the gravel dipped slightly from west to east, and was overlain by a 0.25m thick layer of mid orange brown silty clay (901). This subsoil layer differed in thickness and composition from the subsoil in Trenches 5, 7 and 8. It was found in a band at the foot of a gentle slope next to the stream which forms the southern site boundary. The deposit could be of either colluvial or alluvial origin (or a mixture of both). There was no indication of organics in the deposit.
- 3.2.23 A possible north-south aligned linear feature (902) was investigated at the western end of this trench, but was too faint to establish the stratigraphic relationship with the alluvial/colluvial deposit. No dating evidence was recovered.
- 3.2.24 Deposit 901 was overlain by 0.25m of topsoil (904).

#### ***Trench 10 (Fig. 2)***

- 3.2.25 Trench 10 was orientated NW-SE and was 15m long. No archaeology was identified in this trench. A magnetic anomaly on the geophysics plot may result from variations in the natural geology, as an interface between clay (1000) and gravel (1001) occurred at





this location. The natural was encountered at an average of 85.40m OD and was overlain by approximately 0.25m of topsoil/ploughsoil (1002).

***Trench 11 (Fig.2)***

- 3.2.26 Trench 11 was aligned NE-SW and was 15m long. The geology comprised gravel (1100) which was encountered at 85.00 m OD. At the south-west end of the trench the gravel was overlain by a deposit similar in composition to the alluvial/colluvial deposit seen in Trench 9 - although with considerably more gravel inclusions (up to 35%). This petered out at the eastern end of the trench. A NW-SE aligned post-medieval field boundary (1103) was the only archaeological feature present.



## 4 DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Interpretation

#### ***General***

- 4.1.1 As a consequence of the lack of dating evidence from many of the features and deposits revealed during the evaluation, the following interpretation is presented by feature type rather than phase.
- 4.1.2 Excavations immediately to the north of Cirencester Road by Headland Archaeology and c 300m to the south by Oxford Archaeology (at Horcott Quarry) were characterised by extensive arrays of discreet features, such as posthole structures, pits, burials and early Anglo-Saxon SFBs.

#### ***Postholes***

- 4.1.3 A number of possible postholes were identified during the evaluation, the most convincing of which were in Trenches 3, 5 and 8. No obvious structural patterns were discernible within the confines of the trenches. None of the postholes are reliably dated, although a single sherd of abraded late prehistoric pottery from the fill (516) of posthole 517 is consistent with the dating of many posthole structures investigated at Horcott Quarry and north of Cirencester Road.
- 4.1.4 The fact that the majority of the possible postholes were concentrated in the same area of the site as the putative early Anglo-Saxon SFB's in Trenches 5, 7 and 8 may indicate a correlation between the two types of feature - particularly the cluster of postholes at the southern end of Trench 5, which lay immediately to the south of the possible SFB 515. Although the spatial relationship between these features may be of some significance, the stratigraphic relationship between them was not clear within the confines of the trench and consequently any correlation between the postholes and the putative SFBs is necessarily tentative.

#### ***Sunken-featured buildings (SFBs)***

- 4.1.5 Four features have been identified as possible SFBs: one in the southern end of Trench 5, one in the southern end of Trench 7, and one at each end of Trench 8. All but one of these (519, 703, 806) contained organic-tempered early Anglo-Saxon pottery.
- 4.1.6 The undated possible SFB (819) had a posthole in the base (821), a very common feature of this type of building. Due to the limited scope of excavation the arrangement and number of postholes within the feature is not clear.
- 4.1.7 Two of the Anglo-Saxon features (703 and 806 in Trenches 7 and 8 respectively) also contained quantities of moderately well-preserved animal bone, predominantly of cattle, with small amounts of sheep/goat.
- 4.1.8 One possible SFB fill (514) contained both Iron Age and Anglo-Saxon finds, indicating that mixing and residuality are likely to be significant issues on this site.

#### ***Linear features***

- 4.1.9 It seems clear that the undated linear feature in Trench 7 (707) is the western continuation of a boundary ditch excavated in Trench 5 (513) - and that this corresponds with a NE-SW aligned linear anomaly identified by the geophysical survey. The majority of the features revealed within Trenches 5, 7 and 8 (and indeed all of the



identified early Anglo-Saxon SFBs) lay to the south of this ditch, which runs parallel to the Cirencester Road (150m to the north). It was thought during the investigation that the boundary might therefore date back to the Anglo-Saxon period or be even earlier in date. However, a very small fragment of 16th-17th century pottery was recovered from the lower fill (513) which, if it is not intrusive, suggests that the ditch is likely to be of post-medieval or later date. A fragment of post-medieval clay pipe stem was recovered from the surface of the upper fill of ditch 513, but was not securely stratified and may derive from the overlying ploughsoil.

- 4.1.10 The post-medieval boundary feature in Trench 6 was visible on the geophysical survey as a series of magnetic disturbances and clearly coincides with a field boundary shown on 19th-century and later historic maps. It was an extant boundary as late as 1977 (CgMs 2013, fig. 6); A remnant of the boundary survives as a 30m length of hedgerow projecting northwards from the southern boundary of the field.
- 4.1.11 As the ditch in Trench 11 was not excavated, its alignment is uncertain. It was initially assumed to be the southern continuation of the ditch investigated in Trench 6. However, it seems to be located too far to the west and is therefore more likely to be a NW-SE aligned boundary shown on the historic maps up until 1903 (CgMs 2013, fig. 5), which is indicated by a weak linear magnetic anomaly on the geophysical survey. The ditch seems to follow the edge of the floodplain associated with the stream, as alluvial/colluvial deposits in Trenches 9 and 11 were limited to the area south of the ditch.
- 4.1.12 Two undated linear features were recorded in Trenches 5 and 9 (521 and 902 respectively). These did not correspond to any geophysical anomalies or to any boundaries shown on the historic maps. It is therefore possible that they are of some antiquity - although both were very slight features.



## 5 FINDS

### 5.1 Pottery

*John Cotter*

#### ***Introduction and methodology***

- 5.1.1 A total of 28 sherds of pottery weighing 199g was recovered from seven contexts. This comprises a single prehistoric sherd and several sherds of Anglo-Saxon, medieval and post-medieval pottery. For each context the total pottery sherd count and weight were recorded on an Excel spreadsheet, followed by the context spot-date which is the date-bracket during which the latest pottery types in the context are estimated to have been produced or were in general circulation. Comments on the presence of datable types were also recorded, usually with mention of vessel form (jugs, bowls etc.) and any other attributes worthy of note (eg decoration etc.).

#### ***Date and nature of the assemblage***

- 5.1.2 The assemblage is in a fragmentary condition with worn and fresh sherds present. A few rim sherds are present, some of them quite large and fairly fresh. Ordinary domestic pottery types are represented. The pottery is described in detail in the spreadsheet and is summarised below. Anglo-Saxon pottery fabrics are described and cross-referenced to those from the Horcott Quarry report (Cotter forthcoming). Medieval pottery fabric codes are those of the Oxfordshire county type series (Mellor 1994). Post-medieval pottery fabric codes are those of the Museum of London (LAARC 2007) which can be applied to most later post-medieval types in southern England.
- 5.1.3 A single small worn sherd of Iron Age Jurassic limestone-tempered pottery was identified from context 516 (Lisa Brown pers. comm.). This is almost certainly residual. Three contexts (514, 706 and 805) produced large and fairly fresh sherds of Anglo-Saxon pottery, including globular jars in organic-tempered ware (F1), fine quartz-tempered ware (F2) and a single sherd in oolitic limestone- and organic-tempered ware (F5). These are visually identical to fabrics/forms from the large Anglo-Saxon settlement site at nearby Horcott Quarry and can be dated c AD 450-850 at the widest - although a narrower 5th-7th century date is probably more likely (Cotter forthcoming). The 19 Anglo-Saxon sherds comprise the bulk of the 28 sherds from the evaluation. The remaining sherds comprise a single worn sherd of Saxo-Norman Cotswolds-type ware (OXAC) from context 1 (topsoil) - which may be of post-conquest date in view of the medieval ridge tile from the same context (see CBM report below). A single rim sherd, possibly from a drinking vessel, in 16th-17th century glazed red earthenware (PMR), was recovered from 512. The remaining 6 sherds from topsoil contexts comprise a fragmentary collection of 19th-century Staffordshire-type tablewares ('Willow Pattern' etc) and a single sherd of white salt-glazed stoneware of c 1720-1780.



Table 1: Pottery spot-dates

Context	Spot-date	No.	Weight	Comments
0	c 1830-1900	6	36	3x Staffs transfer-printed whiteware (TPW) cup rim & dish rim & base with blue transfer dec. 1x bo Staffs-type mottled brown earthenware (STMO). 1x bo Nottingham brown stoneware (NOTTS). 1x bo Staffs white salt-glazed stoneware (SWSG, c 1720-1780)
1	c 900-1250	1	14	Worn bo Cotswolds-type ware (OXAC). Slight curvature - poss from a sagging base? Oxidised orange-brown with grey core. <b>See CBM from this context c 1170-1325</b>
512	c 1550-1700?	1	2	Small vertical rim sherd probably from a cup/mug in fine grey sandy fabric with reduced greenish glaze allover int and ext. Possibly a reduced local post-med red earthenware (PMR)?
514	c 450-850	9	56	Anglo-Saxon: 1x Horcott Fabric F5 Oolitic limestone-and organic tempered - reduced bo from jar neck. 8x F2 Fine quartz-tempered ware - body sherds prob from a single jar in soft reduced fabric with rare organic inclusions
516	Iron Age	1	4	Small v worn body sherd in fine reduced earthy fabric with brown ext margin. Abundant Jurassic fossil limestone inclusions. Iron Age (Lisa Brown pers. comm.)
706	c 450-850	4	76	Anglo-Saxon: 3 fresh joining sherds from 1 globular/pear-shaped jar with plain upright rim with slight bead (di c 140mm), very crudely formed/finished. Reduced organic-tempered fine sandyware as Horcott F1. 1x scrap (2g) shapeless carbonised wood/bone?
805	c 450-850	6	11	Anglo-Saxon: prob 1 vess. Scrappy sherds incl plain rim in organic-tempered F1, probably from globular jar - different to that in (706)
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>28</b>	<b>199</b>	

**Clay tobacco pipe***John Cotter*

- 5.1.4 A single piece of clay pipe weighing 3g was recovered from the topsoil. It comprises a short worn piece of burnt and blackened pipe stem with a stem bore diameter of c 2mm suggesting an 18th- to early 19th-century date.

**Ceramic building material (CBM)***John Cotter*

- 5.1.5 A single piece of CBM weighing 53g was recovered.

**Context 1 (topsoil) spot-date: c 1170-1325**

- 5.1.6 Description: a very worn fragment from the apex of a medieval ridge tile with part of an applied subrectangular crest and evidence of a circular aperture through the tile apex. Coarse oolitic limestone-tempered fabric similar to Cotswolds-type ware (OXAC). Also known as Oxford tile Fabric IB. The surfaces are brownish with a grey core. Probably originally glazed but this has been worn off. Ridge tiles of exactly this type (with apertures) are common from later 12th- and 13th-century contexts in Oxford but they were probably produced in north-west Oxfordshire or Gloucestershire.



### ***Fired clay***

*John Cotter*

- 5.1.7 A single piece of fired clay weighing 56g was recovered from context 514. The piece comprises a very worn roughly oval or shapeless lump (max. 50mm long x 35mm thick) of dense silty clay fired a light grey colour with a blackened original surface/margin approximately 10mm deep. This was shown to Cynthia Poole who suggested it was probably from an oven but could be of any date from prehistoric to medieval.

## **5.2 Animal bone**

*Lena Strid*

- 5.2.1 A total of 39 hand-collected animal bone fragments were recovered from three SFBs (703, 806 and 819), of probable Anglo-Saxon date (Table below). The bones were in a poor condition, over 97% being graded as poor or very poor. Consequently it was not possible to discern any possible butchery marks or pathologies. A single gnaw mark was noticed on a cattle pelvis, but due to the overall poor bone condition this should be regarded as a minimum.
- 5.2.2 The assemblage contains bones from cattle, sheep/goat and pig. These domestic taxa are common for Anglo-Saxon assemblages, although due to the small sample size it is not possible to comment on the frequency of the three taxa and their contribution to the economy and diet.
- 5.2.3 A small number of bones could be attributed a minimum age at death. Fused cattle bones include one pelvis, one proximal radius and one distal metatarsal, indicating an age at death of at least 7-10 months, 12-15 months and 2-2.5 years respectively (Habermehl 1975, 104-105). A single fused sheep/goat calcaneus suggests that the animal was at least 3 years old when it died (Habermehl 1975, 121). The greatest length of the sheep/goat calcaneus indicates a withers' height of 0.577m (Teichert 1975).
- 5.2.4 No further information can be gained from such small sample of bones. However, if further excavations take place on the site, the bones should be included in the full excavation report.



Table 2: Bone assemblage

	706	804	816	TOTAL
Cattle	7	2		9
Sheep/goat	2			2
Pig	1			1
Medium mammal	2	1	1	4
Large mammal	1	2	3	6
Indeterminate	4	10	3	17
TOTAL	17	15	7	39
Weight (g)	424	52	17	493

### 5.3 Metalwork and Glass

*Ian Scott*

#### ***Metal***

- 5.3.1 A single metal find was recovered from context 511, which was a stem fragment from a hand-made nail. No surviving head. Not closely datable.

#### ***Glass***

- 5.3.2 A single fragment of vessel glass was recovered from context 604. The fragment was from the base and body of a cut glass vessel in colourless glass, possibly lead crystal. The base has a starburst pattern and the surviving lower body has a pattern of small strawberry cut diamonds. The vessel was probably a dish or perhaps a bowl and dates to the early 19th century.



## APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context no.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Comment	Soil Description	Date
0	finds ref			not securely stratified finds from top of ditch 513 in Trench 5		
1	finds ref			unstratified finds from topsoil		
<b>Trench 1</b>						
100	layer			natural gravel	mid yellowish brown sand and gravel	
101	layer			natural clay	mid blueish grey clay	
102	deposit			possibly bases of furrows	mid grey silty variations in composition of natural gravel	
<b>Trench 2</b>						
200	deposit		0.28	topsoil	mid grey brown silty clay	
201	layer			natural clay and gravel	orange brown clay overlain in places by gravel	
202	fill		0.21	fill of dubious ditch	tenacious light brown clay	
203	cut	0.43	0.21	very dubious NE-SW aligned ditch		
<b>Trench 3</b>						
300	deposit		0.26	topsoil	mid grey brown clay silt with 5% gravel	
301	layer			natural gravel	compact yellow sandy gravel	
302	fill		0.16	fill of possible posthole 303	tenacious reddish brown clay	
303	cut	0.42	0.16	possible posthole		
304	fill		0.11	fill of possible posthole 305	friable reddish brown sandy silt with 10% gravel	
305	cut	0.36	0.11	possible posthole		
306	fill		0.16	fill of possible posthole 307	tenacious light brown clay	
307	cut	0.31	0.16	possible posthole		
308	fill		0.12	fill of possible posthole 308	tenacious light grey brown clay	
309	cut	0.26	0.12	possible posthole		
<b>Trench 4</b>						
400	layer			clay natural	predominantly mid blueish grey clay	
401	layer			gravel natural	mid orangey brown sand and gravel	
402	layer			variation in composition of natural geology at interface between clay and gravel	mid orangey brown silty clay	
<b>Trench 5</b>						





Context no.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Comment	Soil Description	Date
500	deposit		0.17	topsoil	mid grey brown sandy silt with 5% gravel	
501	deposit		0.05	subsoil	reddish brown silty sand	
502	layer			natural gravel	yellow sandy gravel	
503	fill		0.04	fill of possible posthole 504	friable mid brown sandy silt with 10% gravel	
504	cut	0.2	0.04	possible posthole		
505	fill		0.06	fill of possible posthole 506	friable mid brown sandy silt with 5% gravel	
506	cut	0.2	0.06	possible posthole base		
507	fill		0.16	fill of possible posthole 508	friable mid brown sandy silt with 3% gravel	
508	cut	0.28	0.16	possible posthole		
509	fill		0.2	fill of possible posthole 510	friable mid brown sandy silt with 5% gravel	
510	cut	0.25	0.2	possible posthole		
511	fill		0.23	upper fill of ditch 513	friable mid brown sandy silt with 5% gravel	
512	fill		0.3	lower fill of ditch 513	compact mid grey brown sandy silt with 30% gravel	post-medieval
513	cut	1.35	0.53	NE-SW aligned ditch		
514	fill		0.2	fill of possible SFB 515	friable mid reddish brown sandy silt	Early Anglo-Saxon
515	cut	3.7	0.2	possible SFB		
516	fill		0.06	fill of possible posthole 517	friable light brown silt	Iron Age?
517	cut	0.16	0.06	possible posthole base		
518	fill		0.23	fill of possible posthole 519	friable mid brown sandy silt with 1% gravel	
519	cut	0.2	0.23	possible posthole		
520	fill		0.31	fill of ditch 521	friable mid brown sandy silt with 10% gravel	
521	cut	0.63	0.31	east-west aligned ditch		
<b>Trench 6</b>						
600	layer			clay natural	predominantly greenish grey clay	
601	layer			gravel natural	patchy sand and gravel	
602	layer			variation in composition of natural geology at interface between clay and gravel	mid orangey brown silty clay	
603	cut	0.8		post-med field boundary		
604	fill			fill of post-med field boundary	mixed but predominantly mid-dark grey silty clay	



Context no.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Comment	Soil Description	Date
605	deposit		0.25	topsoil	mid brownish grey sandy silt with 5% gravel	
606	cut		0.1	possible posthole		
607	fill		0.1	fill of possible posthole	mid reddish brown sandy clay	
<b>Trench 7</b>						
700	layer			natural gravel	orange brown gravel	
701	deposit		c 0.10	subsoil	mid orangey brown silty sand with c 70% gravel inclusions	
702	deposit		0.25	topsoil	mid brownish grey andy silt with 20% gravel	
703	cut	2m+	0.25	possible SFB		
704	fill			primary fill of possible SFB 703	very compacted mixed sandy gravel in matrix of mid-dark grey silt	
705	fill			secondary fill of possible SFB 703	very compacted gravel (large fragments)	
706	fill			tertiary and top fill of possible SFB 703	mid grey brown clay silt with 35% gravel and 3-5% charcoal and burnt clay fragments	Early Anglo-Saxon
707	cut			NE-SW aligned ditch		
708	fill			primary fill of ditch 707	mid reddish brown sandy silt with 40% gravel (pea grit at base)	
709	fill			secondary fill of ditch 707	very compacted gravel in mid brownish grey sandy silt matrix	
710	fill			tertiary and top fill of ditch 707	mid-dark brownish grey clay silt with 5-10% gravel fragments and 2% charcoal	
<b>Trench 8</b>						
800	deposit		0.25	topsoil	mid brownish grey sandy silt with 10-15% gravel	
801	deposit		0.06	subsoil	mid reddish brown silty sand with 50% gravel inclusions	
802	layer			natural gravel	yellow brown sand and gravel	
803	fill		0.2	fill of possible SFB 806	friable light brown sandy silt with 10% gravel	
804	fill		0.26	fill of possible SFB 806	compact light brown sandy silt with 40% gravel	
805	fill		0.3	fill of possible SFB 806	friable light grey brown sandy silt with 20% gravel	Early Anglo-Saxon
806	cut	1.6m+	0.8	possible SFB		
807	fill		0.17	fill of possible pit 808	friable reddish brown sandy silt	
808	cut	0.5	0.17	possible pit		
809	fill		0.12	fill of possible pit 810	friable mid grey brown sandy silt with 5% gravel	
810	cut	0.6	0.12	possible shallow pit		



Context no.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Comment	Soil Description	Date
811	fill		0.2	fill of possible pit 812	friable light reddish brown sandy silt with 5% gravel	
812	cut	0.6	0.2	possible pit		
813	fill		0.12	fill of possible pit 814	friable reddish brown silt with 1% gravel	
814	cut	0.4	0.14	possible pit or southern terminus of a N-S aligned linear feature		
815	fill		0.18	quaternary and top fill of possible SFB 819	friable light brown sandy silt with 5% gravel	
816	fill		0.3	tertiary fill of possible SFB 819	compact mid brown sandy silt with 60% gravel inclusions	
817	fill		0.17	secondary fill of possible SFB 819	friable mid brown silt with concentrations of clay	
818	fill		0.06	primary fill of possible SFB 819	friable light grey sandy silt with dense concentrations of charcoal comprising approximately 20% of the deposit	
819	cut	1.65m+	0.55	possible SFB		
820	fill		0.3	fill of posthole 821	friable mid brown sandy silt with 10% gravel	
821	cut	0.3	0.3	a posthole cut in the base of possible SFB 819		
<b>Trench 9</b>						
900	layer			natural gravel	yellow brown sandy gravel	
901	deposit		0.25	?colluvium	mid-light brown sandy clay	
902	cut	0.8		north-south aligned linear feature		
903	fill			fill of linear 902	very similar composition to ?colluvial deposit 901 but with a lens of gravel within it, possibly suggesting that 902 cut 901	
904	deposit		0.25	topsoil	mid grey brown sandy silt	
<b>Trench 10</b>						
1000	layer			natural clay	mid blueish grey clay	
1001	layer			natural gravel	mid orangey brown gravel	
1002	deposit		0.25	topsoil	mid brownish grey sandy silt with 10% gravel	
<b>Trench 11</b>						
1100	layer			natural gravel	mid yellowish brown sand and gravel	
1101	deposit		0.10 max	subsoil/?colluvium	mid orangey brown sandy clay with 35% gravel fragments	
1102	deposit		0.25	topsoil	mid brownish grey sandy silt with 10% gravel fragments	
1103	cut	0.75		post-med field boundary		



Context no.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Comment	Soil Description	Date
1104	fill			fill of post-med field boundary	mixed but predominantly mid-dark grey clay silt	



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## APPENDIX C. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

**Site name:** Land South of Cirencester Road, Fairford, Gloucestershire

**Site code:** FACS13

**Grid reference:** Centred on SP 14560 00600

**Type:** Evaluation

**Date and duration:** September 2013, 4 days in the field

### **Summary of results:**

In September 2013, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at Land South of Cirencester Road, Fairford, Gloucestershire (centred on SP 14560 00600).

A number of possible postholes were recorded, predominantly in the south-east corner of the site but also in the north-east corner. Many of these features were fairly slight, and no obvious structural configuration was discernible within the confines of the trenches. With the exception of a single abraded sherd of late prehistoric pottery, none of them produced any artefactual material.

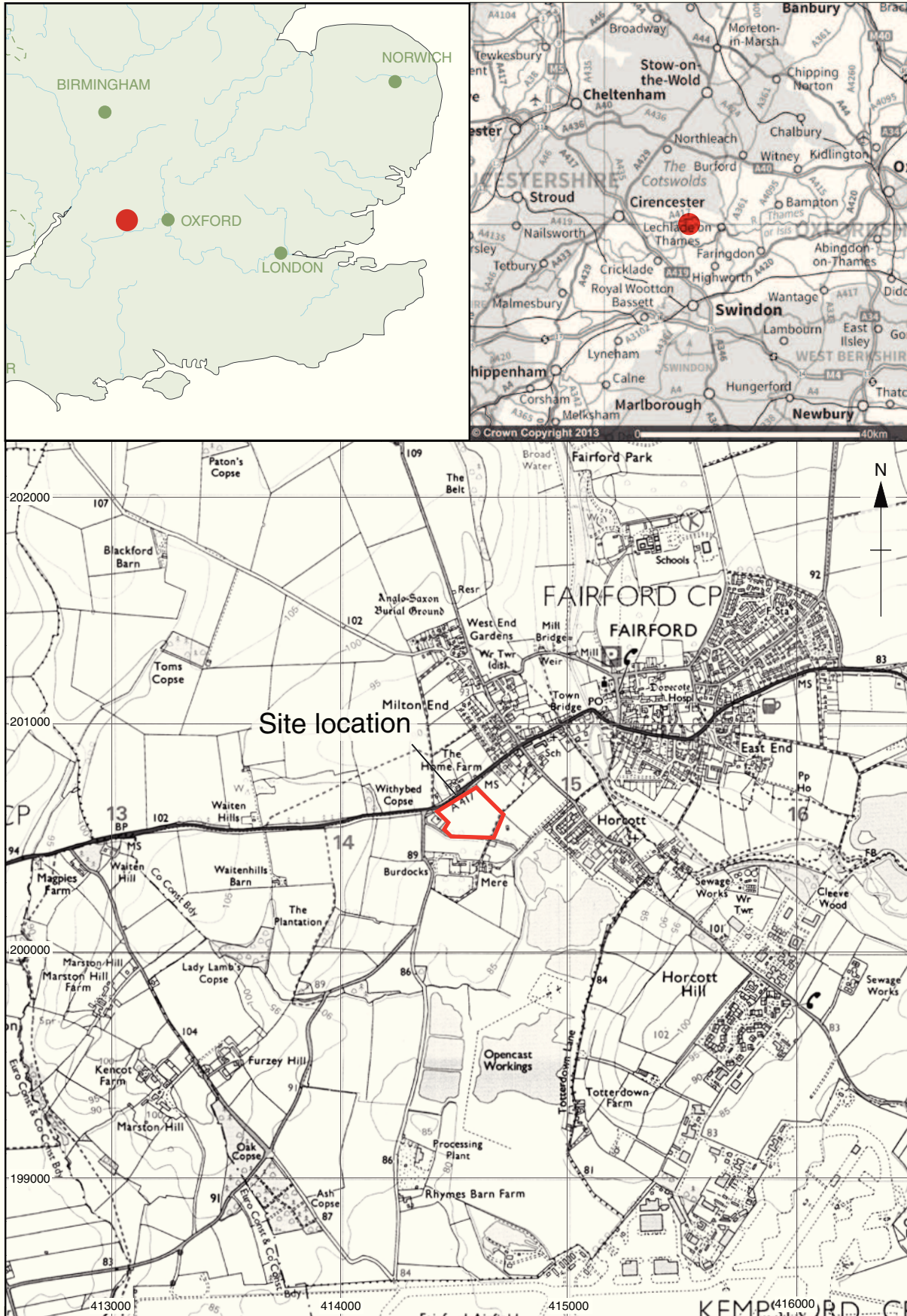
In addition to the postholes, 4 possible SFBs were identified - also in the south-east corner of the site. Early Anglo-Saxon pottery was recovered from 3 of these, perhaps indicating further evidence for the settlement pattern previously identified at Horcott Quarry to the south, and Pip's Field to the north.

A number of linear features were recorded, two of which remain undated. A linear anomaly identified on the geophysical survey was present in two of the trenches in the south-east corner of the site and may represent a medieval field boundary, although there was some suggestion that it may have an earlier origin. Post-medieval ditches were also recorded and corresponded to field boundaries shown on the 20th century OS mapping.

The evaluation revealed a number of geological variations, with outcrops of natural clay to the north and west of the site being overlain by terrace gravels. The interface between these two types of geological deposit was characterised by spreads of orangey brown sandy clay, which are also likely to be geological in origin. A number of features were also recorded, some of which corresponded to geophysical anomalies identified during an earlier survey.

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





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Figure 1: Site location





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Gradiometer Survey Data supplied by :  
Stratascan

0 100 m  
Scale at A4 1:2000

Figure 2: Gradiometer data overlaid by  
evaluation trenches

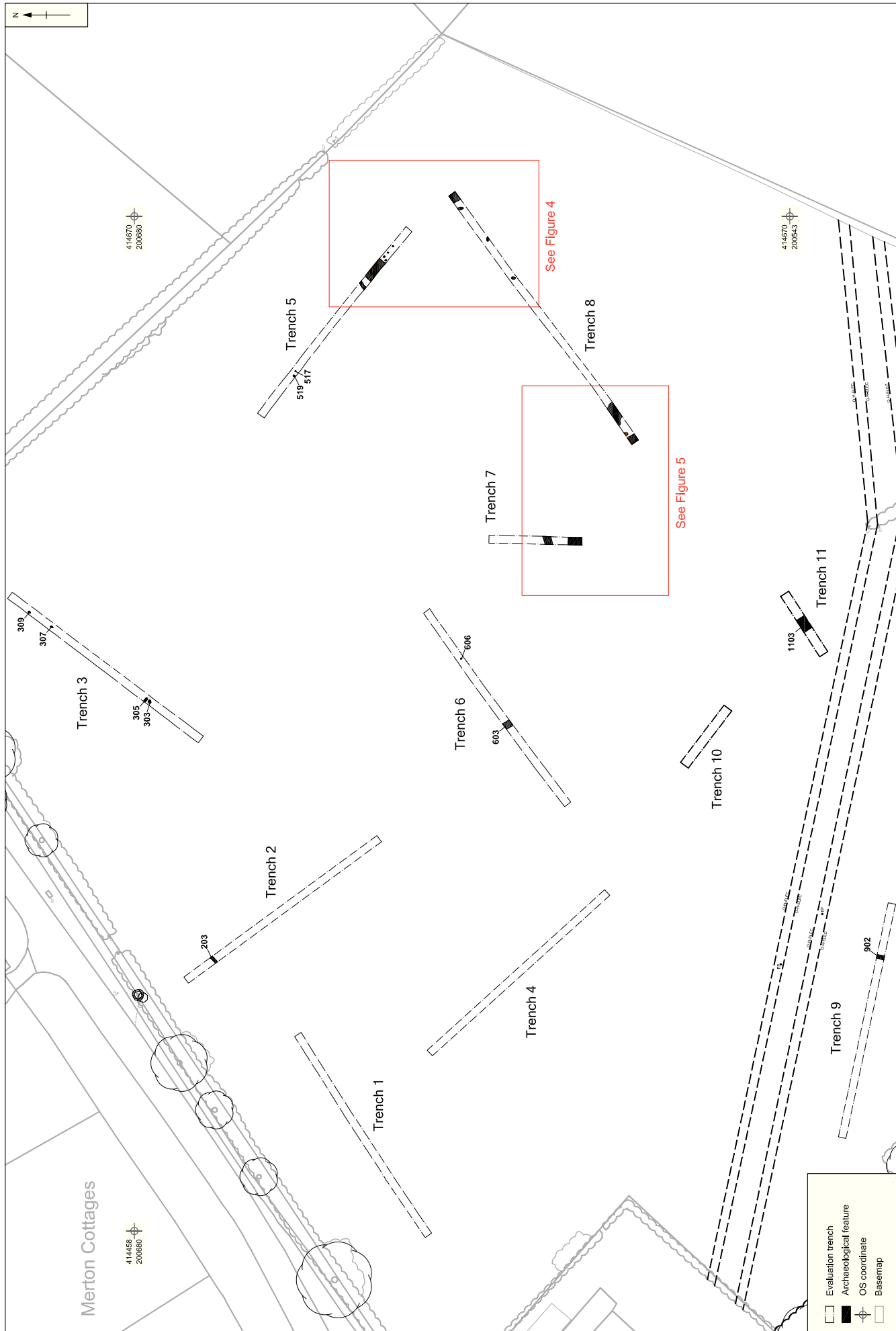


Figure 3: Trench location

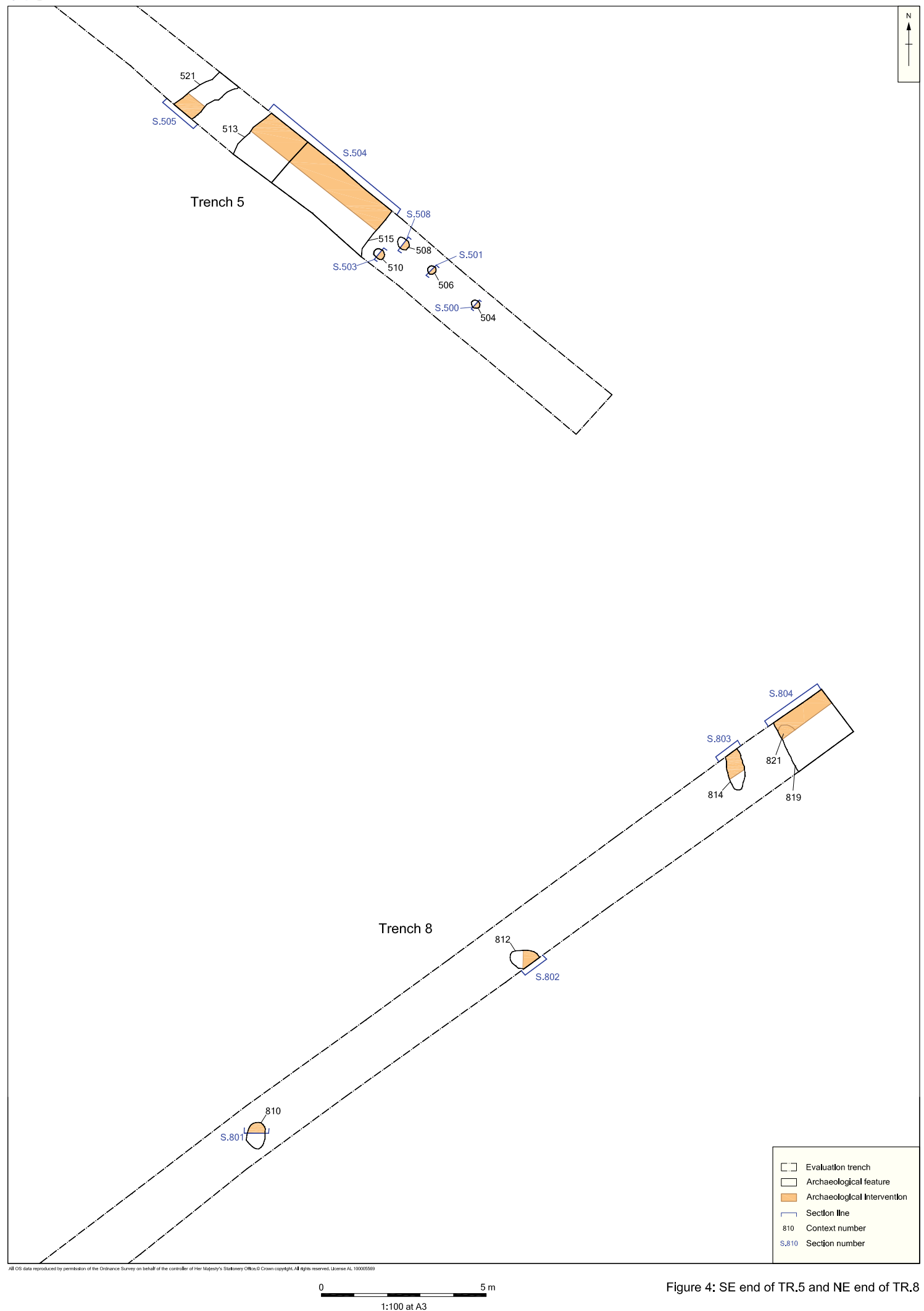


Figure 4: SE end of TR.5 and NE end of TR.8

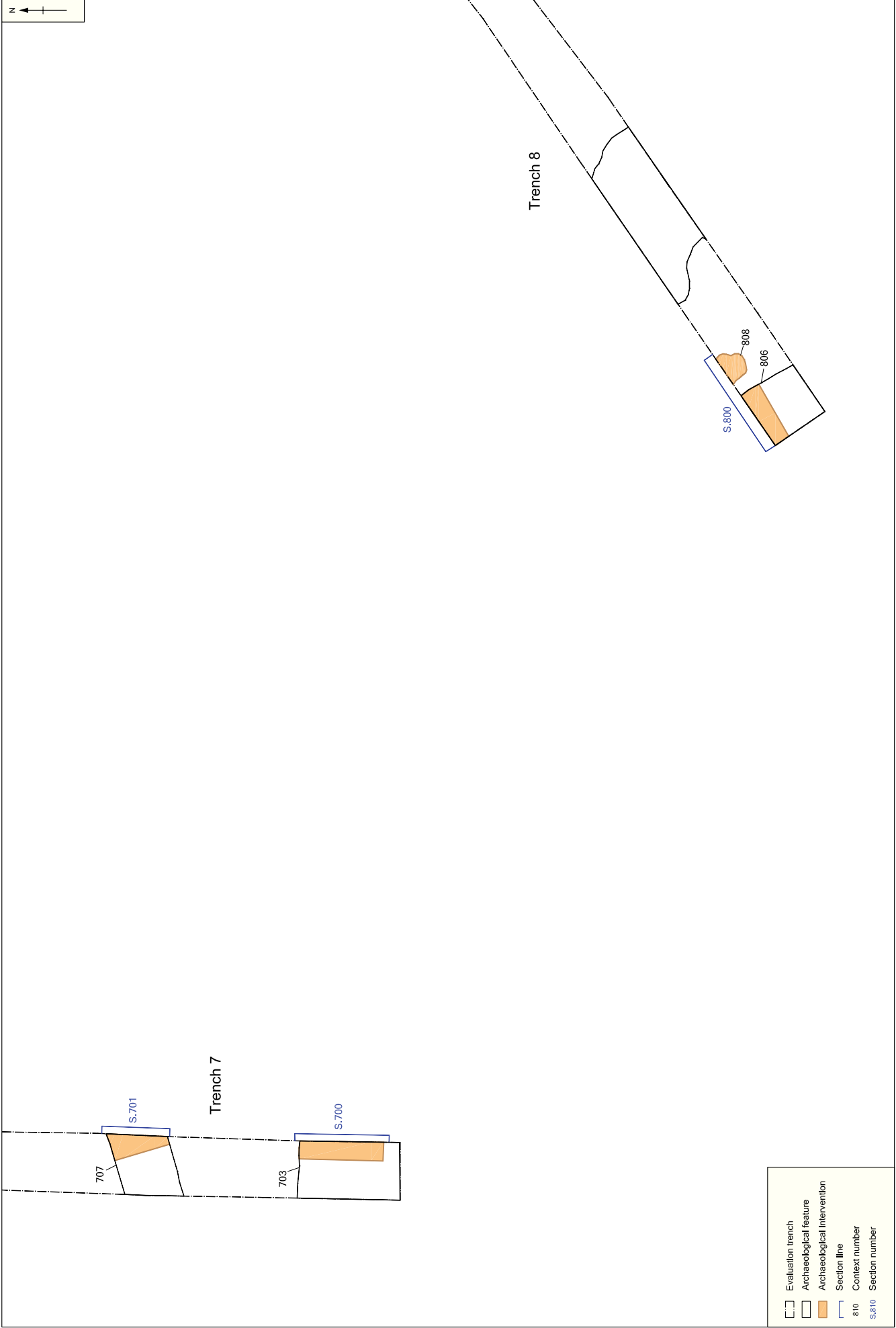


Figure 5: Tr.7 and SW end of Tr.8

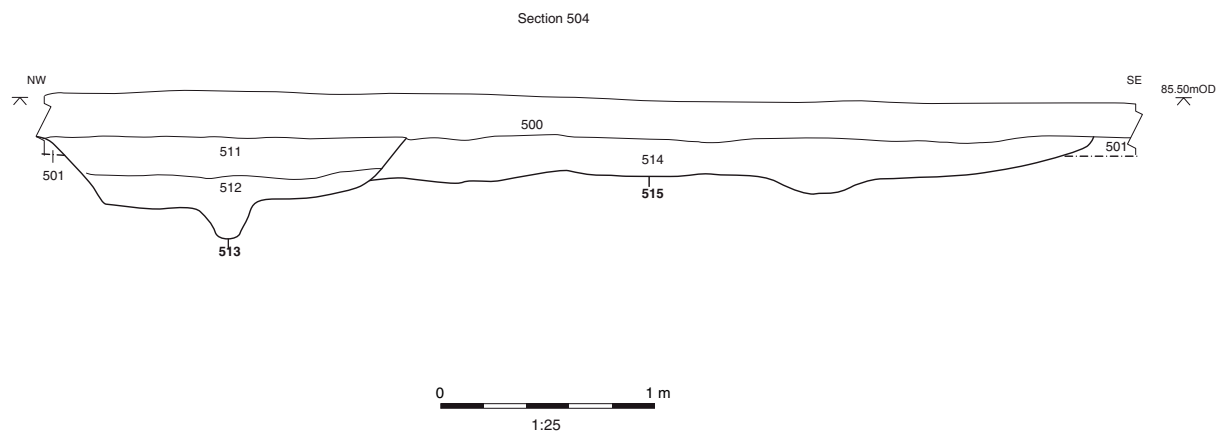


Figure 6: Trench 5, section 504

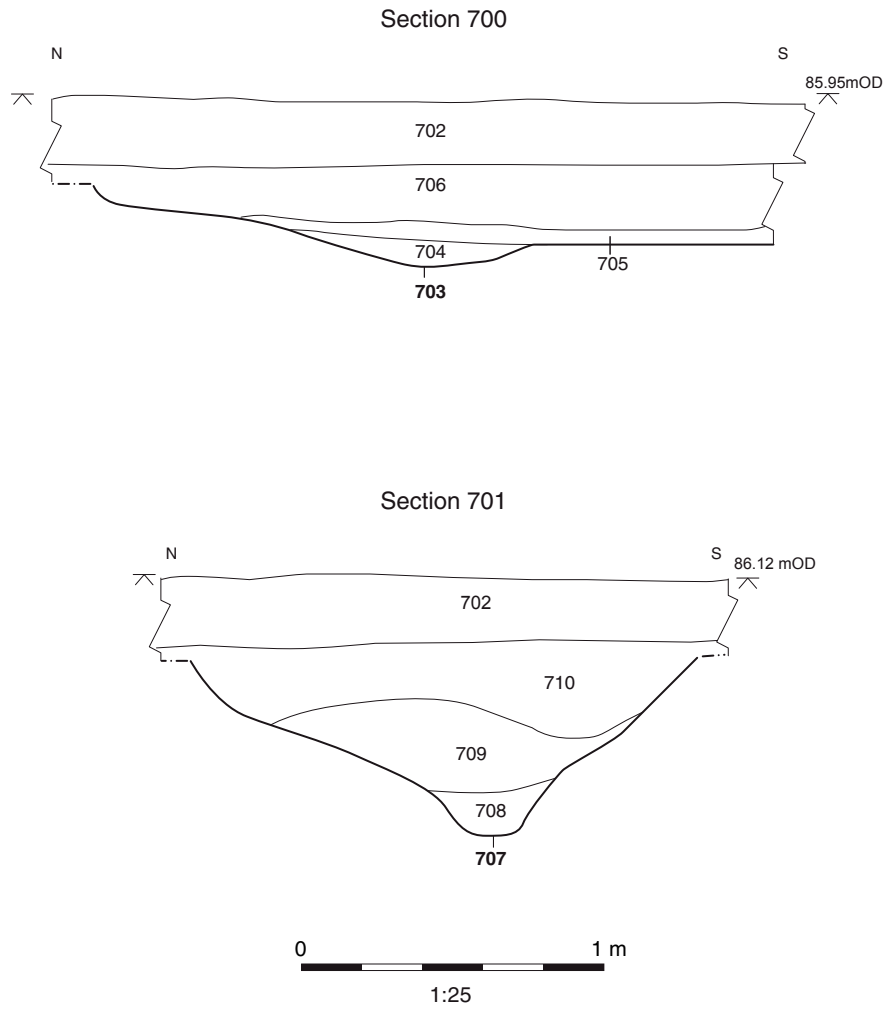


Figure 7: Trench 7, section 700 and 701

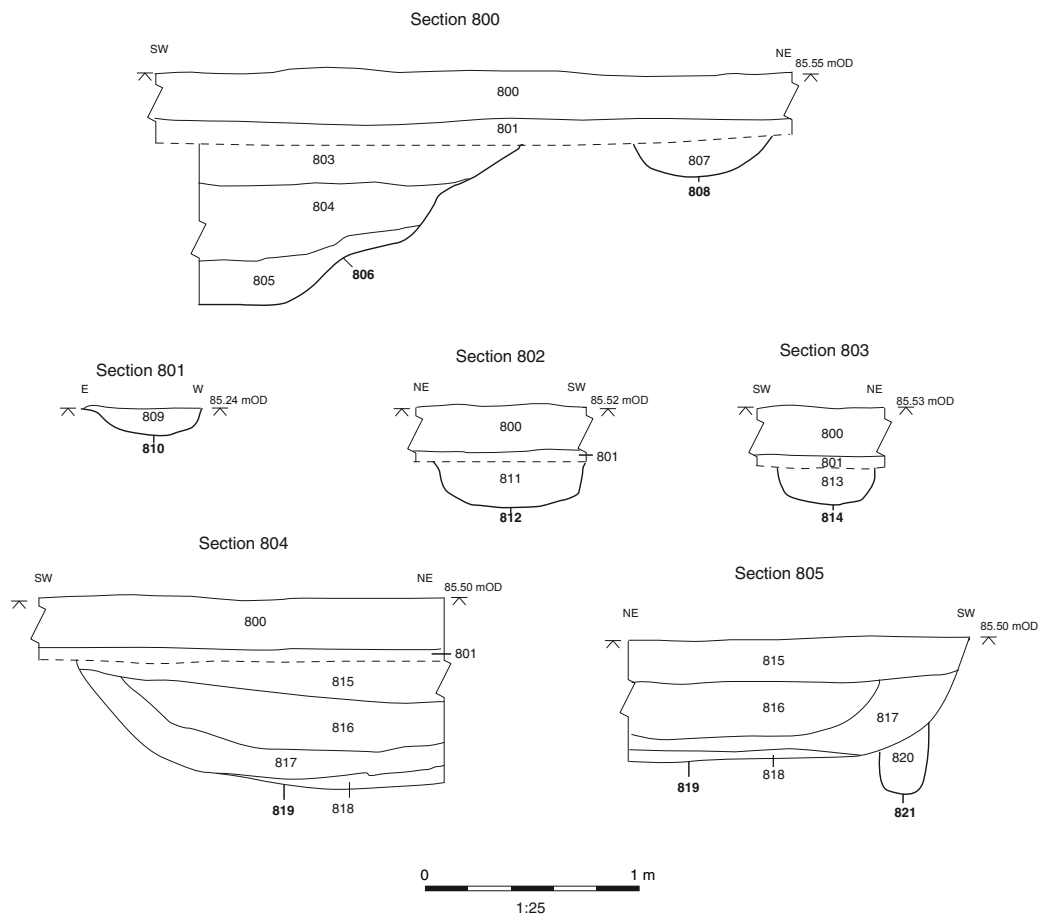


Figure 8: Trench 8, sections 800-805





Plate 1 Trench 5, Postholes 504, 506, 508, 510



Plate 2 Trench 5, SFB 515





Plate 3 Trench 7, SFB 703



Plate 4 Trench 8, SFB 819





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