

An Undated Ditch and Furrows, Landscape and Ecological Mitigation (LEM) Area, West of Longstanton Road, Over



Archaeological Evaluation Report



November 2010

**Client: Cambridgeshire County
Council**

OA East Report No: 1224

OASIS No: oxfordar3-84909

NGR: TL 3754 6907

**An Undated Ditch and Furrows, Landscape and Ecological Mitigation (LEM)
Area, West of Longstanton Road, Over**

Archaeological Evaluation

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Report Date: November 2010

Report Number: 1224

Site Name: Landscape and Ecological Mitigation (LEM) Area, West of Longstanton Road, Over

HER Event No: ECB 3329

Date of Works: October 2010

Client Name: Cambridgeshire County Council

Client Ref: N/A

Planning Ref: N/A

Grid Ref: TL 3754 6907

Site Code: OVELEM10

Finance Code: OVELEM10

Receiving Body: CCC Stores

Accession No: OVELEM10

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Date: November 2010
Signed:

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Summary

An evaluation comprising eleven 50m-long trenches was carried out by Oxford Archaeology East on land to the south of the village of Over in Cambridgeshire (TL 3754 6907). The evaluation, which was undertaken in late October 2010, was located within an area encompassing c.2ha to the north of and adjacent to the route of the Guided Busway which utilises a former railway line. Cambridgeshire County Council commissioned the work in advance of a proposed Landscape and Ecological Mitigation (LEM) scheme.

The trenches revealed limited evidence comprising probable furrows and an undated ditch that may be part of a post-medieval field system. The paucity of finds that pre-date the post-medieval period suggests that this lower-lying part of the landscape may have been restricted to pastoral use or ephemeral fen-edge activity, with settlement during the Roman period being focused on the higher ground to the north and east.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted by Oxford Archaeology East (OA East) on land to the south of the village of Over, Cambridgeshire (centred on grid reference TL 3754 6907). The work was commissioned by Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) in advance of a proposed Landscape and Ecological Mitigation (LEM) scheme.
- 1.1.2 An initial phase of fieldwalking was carried out prior to evaluation on land adjacent to Longstanton Road (Fig. 1, centred on TL 3793 6892; ECB3484), however due to unforeseen circumstances this field became unsuitable and a new area for development was identified the west. This c.2ha area, located to the north of the former Cambridge to St Ives railway line (now the route of the Guided Busway), was subsequently evaluated by trenching in mid-late October 2010. The results of the field walking will be presented in a separate report.
- 1.1.3 This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Andy Thomas of CCC, supplemented by a Specification prepared by OA East.
- 1.1.4 The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed development area, in accordance with the guidelines set out in *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (Department for Communities and Local Government 2010). The results will enable decisions to be made by CCC, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.
- 1.1.5 The site archive is currently held by OA East and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site is located 1km south of the village of Over, on a gentle rise (Plate 2). The highest point (10.20m AOD) is towards the north-east part of the site, dropping to 5.70m at the lowest point in the south-west. The southern boundary of the site is formed by the former railway line embankment and that to the east by a farm track; fields extend to the north and west.
- 1.2.2 Superficial geology in this area comprises Ampthill Clay (BGS 1978), however at the lowest point of the field, alluvial gravels were observed intermixed with clay seams.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The site lies to the west of an area of Late Iron Age and Roman settlement uncovered during previous investigations, immediately to the north of Longstanton Road (ECB 2516; Collins and Dickens 2009), undertaken in advance of construction of the Cambridge Guided Busway. This was part of a wider landscape of Iron Age and Roman activity identified as cropmarks on aerial photographs to the south-east of Over (CHER 7718, 7720).
- 1.3.2 To the immediate east of the site, test pits excavated in advance of the construction of the Cambridge Guided Busway revealed two undated ditches and a pit (MCB 18476 (ECB2309); Jones 2006). Similar somewhat limited remains were recorded during subsequent excavation adjacent to the former railway embankment (MCB 18476 (ECB 2521); Collins and Dickens 2009).

- 1.3.3 An evaluation at Norman Way Industrial estate (ECB3228; House 2009), c.400m to the north-east of the current site, identified two phases of Roman settlement activity, interrupted by an episode of flooding; evidence indicative of primary crop-processing was also uncovered. There are a number of other Roman settlement sites known in the vicinity (e.g. MCB9332, 13733, 13073, not illustrated). A small number of undated post holes and a ditch were recorded to the south-east of the site (CB15759), most of which were thought to be modern in date. Cropmarks of former field boundaries and a possible trackway (CHER 08301) aligned east-west have also been identified on aerial photographs to the south-west of the site. Subsequent watching brief during the construction of a new water main identified possible ridge and furrow, although the remains could equally be the result of 19th century traction ploughing rather than a medieval field system.
- 1.3.4 Domesday records Over in 1086 as “Ouere” meaning “the bank of the river” (Reaney 1943, 169) presumably referring to the river Ouse (or Old West River). Over was prosperous during medieval times and stood at the junction of several major routes, including the road between two important markets (Cambridge and St Ives). Ramsey Abbey built a church here and attempted to organise the village around it (Taylor 1998, 69). Medieval remains are known in the area, e.g. MCB9333 (not illustrated); post-medieval sites of note in the vicinity include Over windmill, a Victorian tower mill which stands to the east of Longstanton Road (Plate 2) and was restored in the latter part of the 20th century (<http://www.engineering-timelines.com>; accessed 4/11/10)

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 The author would like thank Chris Poultney and CCC who respectively commissioned and funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by James Drummond-Murray and the illustrator was Andy Corrigan, with Jonathan House, Tom Lyons and Michael Green as the on-site staff; Rachel Clarke carried out the site survey and also edited this report. The project was monitored by Kasia Gdaniec and Andy Thomas of CCC.

2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The objective of this evaluation was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The Brief required that all archaeological deposits should be investigated, and recorded.
- 2.2.2 Machine excavation was carried out under constant archaeological supervision with a tracked excavator using a toothless ditching bucket.
- 2.2.3 The site survey was carried out by Rachel Clarke using a Leica 1200GPS with Smartnet onboard.
- 2.2.4 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using OA East's *pro-forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.
- 2.2.5 No environmental samples were taken from the site, as no suitable deposits were identified during the investigations.
- 2.2.6 The site conditions and the weather did not inhibit the archaeological work.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of eleven 50m-long trial trenches aligned approximately north-east/south-west, the results of which are presented in Appendix 1 in trench order.; a summary is included below. Topsoil and subsoil layers were generally consistent in nature and thickness in all of the trenches, despite the slight slope being present. Generally topsoil measured between 0.18m and 0.23m thick and subsoil between 0.22m and 0.29m (Fig. 3; Appendix 1).
- 3.1.2 All the trenches contained land drains; these were orientated on an approximate north-south alignment consistent with the natural slope of the site.
- 3.1.3 Trenches 1-9 all revealed a mixed clay geology, which changed to mixed alluvial gravels and clay in trenches 10-11 in the lowest part of the site.

3.2 Trenches 1-11 (Figs 2-3; Plates 1-2)

Trenches 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9

- 3.2.1 No archaeological features were recorded within these trenches.

Trench 2, 4, 6 and 9

- 3.2.2 Probable furrows were recorded in these trenches, the more definable of which are shown on Fig. 2. In trenches 2 and 4 these were on a west/north-west to east/south-east alignment, whilst in trench 6 (and 8) they were orientated slightly more north-south.

Trench 8

- 3.2.3 This trench contained a possible post-medieval ditch **103** (Fig. 3, section 1; Plate 1) running north-south and filled by (104), a light brown sandy clay with some coal inclusions. The ditch, which was sealed below the subsoil, was orientated on the same alignment as the furrows within the trench, and could also be a furrow .

3.3 Finds Summary

- 3.3.1 No finds were recovered from within the trenches, although a consistent scatter of post-medieval finds was noted on the surface of the field, dominated by land-drain fragments. Occasional small, abraded pottery fragments, including a single Roman grey ware rim sherd (not closely datable) were also noted.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Discussion

- 4.1.1 The current site is located on the edge of habitable land, which rises to the north and east. The results of this evaluation, combined with the work carried out by the Cambridge Archaeological Unit immediately to the east and by OA East to the north, suggest that settlement during the Roman (and possibly earlier) period was concentrated on the higher ground with, presumably, the lower ground being utilised for agriculture, although this may have been prone to flooding.
- 4.1.2 If the site had use prior to the post-medieval period, no physical remains have survived; use of this part of the landscape may have been restricted to pastoral or more ephemeral fen-edge activity. The notable paucity of residual finds would appear to support this interpretation.
- 4.1.3 The land management and draining of the fenland surrounding Over would have made agricultural practices more viable in the later medieval and post-medieval periods. The ditch and probable ridge and furrow may represent this, although the furrows could conceivably be the result of 19th century traction ploughing as was recorded on the opposite side of the Swavesey Brook near to Lairstall Pond (see Section 1.3 above).

4.2 Significance

- 4.2.1 The site is of low archaeological significance.

4.3 Recommendations

- 4.3.1 Recommendations for any future work based upon this report will be made by the County Archaeology Office.

APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
General description				Orientation		NE-SW
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of Amphill clay.				Avg. depth (m)		0.5
				Width (m)		2.1
				Length (m)		50
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
100	Layer	-	0.19	Topsoil	-	-
101	Layer	-	0.29	Subsoil	-	-
Trench 2						
General description				Orientation		NE-SW
Furrows seen in trench running NW-SE. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of Amphill clay.				Avg. depth (m)		0.45
				Width (m)		2.1
				Length (m)		50
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
100	Layer	-	0.18	Topsoil	-	-
101	Layer	-	0.25	Subsoil	-	-
Trench 3						
General description				Orientation		ENE-WSW
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of Amphill clay.				Avg. depth (m)		0.5
				Width (m)		2.1
				Length (m)		50
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
100	Layer	-	0.2	Topsoil	-	-
101	Layer	-	0.28	Subsoil	-	-

Trench 4						
General description				Orientation		NNE-SSW
Furrows seen in trench running NW-SE. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of Amphill clay.				Avg. depth (m)		0.45
				Width (m)		2.1
				Length (m)		50
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
100	Layer	-	0.18	Topsoil	-	-
101	Layer	-	0.26	Subsoil	-	-

Trench 5						
General description				Orientation		E-W
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of Amphill clay.				Avg. depth (m)		0.4
				Width (m)		2.1
				Length (m)		50
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
100	Layer	-	0.21	Topsoil	-	-
101	Layer	-	0.22	Subsoil	-	-

Trench 6						
General description				Orientation		WNW-ESE
Furrows seen in trench running N-S. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of Amphill clay.				Avg. depth (m)		0.4
				Width (m)		2.1
				Length (m)		50
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
100	Layer	-	0.2	Topsoil	-	-
101	Layer	-	0.23	Subsoil	-	-

Trench 7						
General description				Orientation		NNE-SSW
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of Amphill clay.				Avg. depth (m)		0.45
				Width (m)		2.1
				Length (m)		50
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
100	Layer	-	0.19	Topsoil	-	-
101	Layer	-	0.22	Subsoil	-	-

Trench 8						
General description				Orientation		NE-SW
Trench Contained a Single post med ditch, furrows runing N-S. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of Amphill clay.				Avg. depth (m)		0.45
				Width (m)		2.1
				Length (m)		50
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
100	Layer	-	0.21	Topsoil	-	-
101	Layer	-	0.24	Subsoil	-	-
103	Cut	1.75	0.36	Ditch	-	-
104	Fill	1.75	0.36	Fill of Ditch	-	Post Med

Trench 9						
General description				Orientation		WNW-ESE
Furrows seen in trench running N-S. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of Amphill clay.				Avg. depth (m)		4.5
				Width (m)		2.1
				Length (m)		50
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
100	Layer	-	0.2	Topsoil	-	-
101	Layer	-	0.25	Subsoil	-	-

Trench 10						
General description				Orientation	NE-SW	
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of Alluvial Gravels.				Avg. depth (m)	0.5	
				Width (m)	2.1	
				Length (m)	50	
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
100	Layer	-	0.21	Topsoil	-	-
101	Layer	-	0.24	Subsoil	-	-

Trench 11						
General description				Orientation	WNW-ESE	
Furrows seen in trench running N-S. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural of Alluvial Gravels.				Avg. depth (m)	0.5	
				Width (m)	2.1	
				Length (m)	50	
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
100	Layer	-	0.23	Topsoil	-	-
101	Layer	-	0.25	Subsoil	-	-

APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- | | | |
|---------------------------|------|--|
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| Reaney, P.H. | 1943 | <i>The Place-Names of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely,</i> Cambridge |
| Taylor, A | 1998 | <i>Archaeology of Cambridgeshire Vol 2: South East Cambridgeshire and the Fen Edge</i> CCC |

Online resources

<http://www.engineering-timelines.com>; accessed 4/11/10

APPENDIX D. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-84909		
Project Name	LEM Longstanton Road, Over		
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start	18-10-2010	Finish	20-10-2010
Previous Work (by OA East)	No	Future Work	Unknown

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	OVELEM10	Planning App. No.	-
HER No.	ECB 3329	Related HER/OASIS No.	-

Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt	Planning condition
Development Type	Amenity Area (e.g. public open space)

Please select all techniques used:

<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - interpretation	<input type="checkbox"/> Grab-Sampling	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote Operated Vehicle Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Gravity-Core	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sample Trenches
<input type="checkbox"/> Annotated Sketch	<input type="checkbox"/> Laser Scanning	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure
<input type="checkbox"/> Augering	<input type="checkbox"/> Measured Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Targeted Trenches
<input type="checkbox"/> Dendrochronological Survey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Metal Detectors	<input type="checkbox"/> Test Pits
<input type="checkbox"/> Documentary Search	<input type="checkbox"/> Phosphate Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Topographic Survey
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental Sampling	<input type="checkbox"/> Photogrammetric Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Vibro-core
<input type="checkbox"/> Fieldwalking	<input type="checkbox"/> Photographic Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Visual Inspection (Initial Site Visit)
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysical Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Rectified Photography	

Monument Types/Significant Finds & Their Periods

List feature types using the [NMR Monument Type Thesaurus](#) and significant finds using the [MDA Object type Thesaurus](#) together with their respective periods. If no features/finds were found, please state "none".

Monument	Period	Object	Period
Furrow	Post Medieval 1540 to 1901	Ceramic	Roman 43 to 410
ditch	Post Medieval 1540 to 1901		Select period...
	Select period...		Select period...

Project Location

County	Cambridgeshire	Site Address (including postcode if possible)
District	South Cambs	Longstanton Road Over, Cambs. CB24 5PR
Parish	Over	
HER	Cambridgeshire County Council	
Study Area	2ha	National Grid Reference
		TL 3754 6907

Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	Cambridgeshire County Council
Project Design Originator	James Drummond Murray
Project Manager	James Drummond Murray
Supervisor	Jonathan House

Project Archives

Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
CCC Stores	OA East Bar Hill Office	CCC Stores
N/A	OVELEM10	OVELEM10

Archive Contents/Media

	Physical Contents	Digital Contents	Paper Contents
Animal Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Glass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leather	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Metal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stratigraphic		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Survey		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Textiles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Bone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Stone/Lithic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Digital Media	Paper Media
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Database	<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photos
<input type="checkbox"/> GIS	<input type="checkbox"/> Context Sheet
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysics	<input type="checkbox"/> Correspondence
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<input type="checkbox"/> Illustrations	<input type="checkbox"/> Drawing
<input type="checkbox"/> Moving Image	<input type="checkbox"/> Manuscript
<input type="checkbox"/> Spreadsheets	<input type="checkbox"/> Map
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Matrices
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Text	<input type="checkbox"/> Microfilm
<input type="checkbox"/> Virtual Reality	<input type="checkbox"/> Misc.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Research/Notes
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photos
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plans
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sections
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Survey

Notes:

An Evaluation was carried out 1km south of the village of Over at grid reference TL 3754 6907. The evaluation consisted of eleven 50m trenches located within the development area. The trenches revealed evidence of ridge and furrow farming and post medieval field system, the site had a distinct lack of finds prior to this period, suggesting the landscape may have been restricted to pastoral use or ephemeral fen edge activity, if the had seen any use at all.

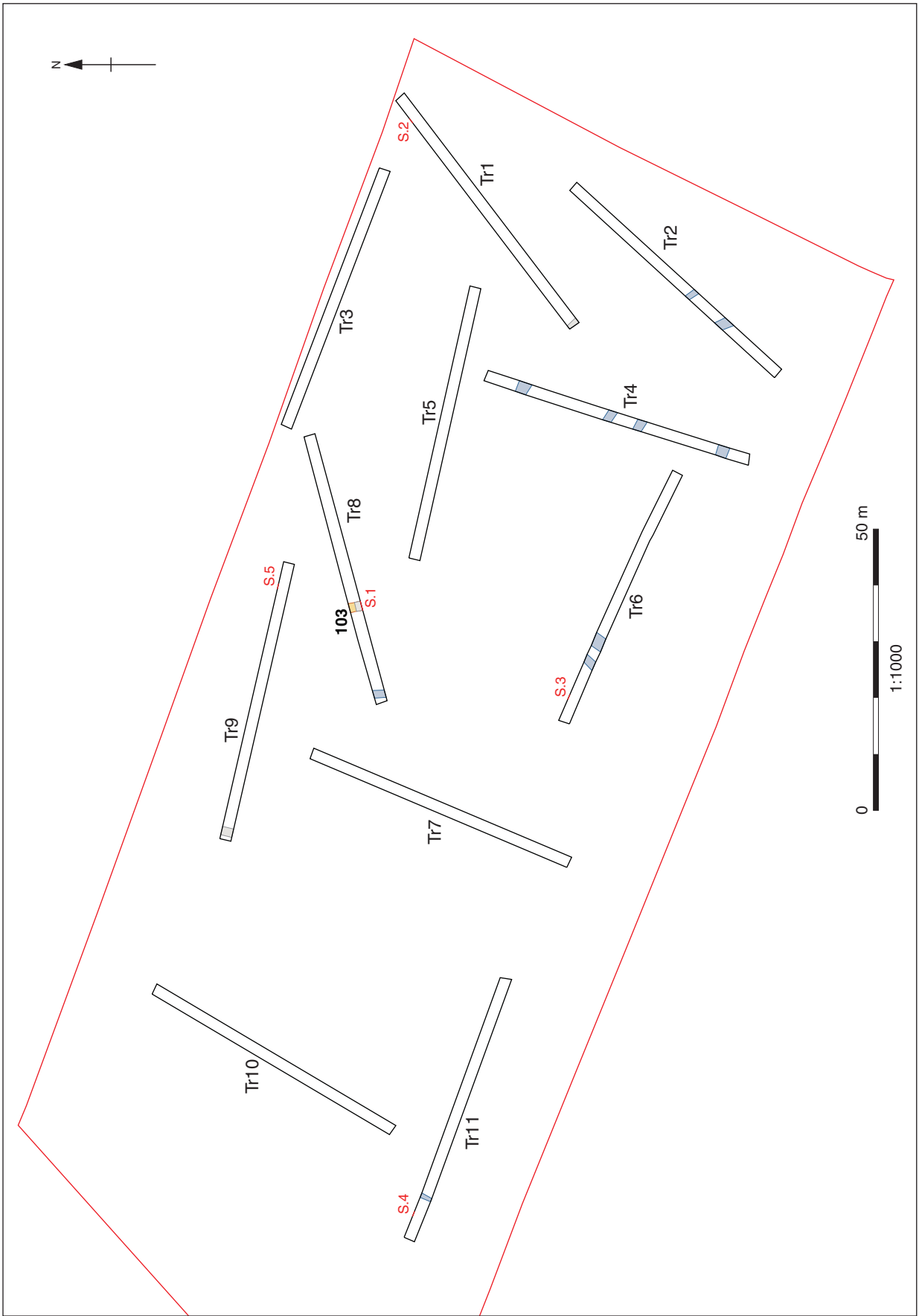


Figure 2: Trench plan

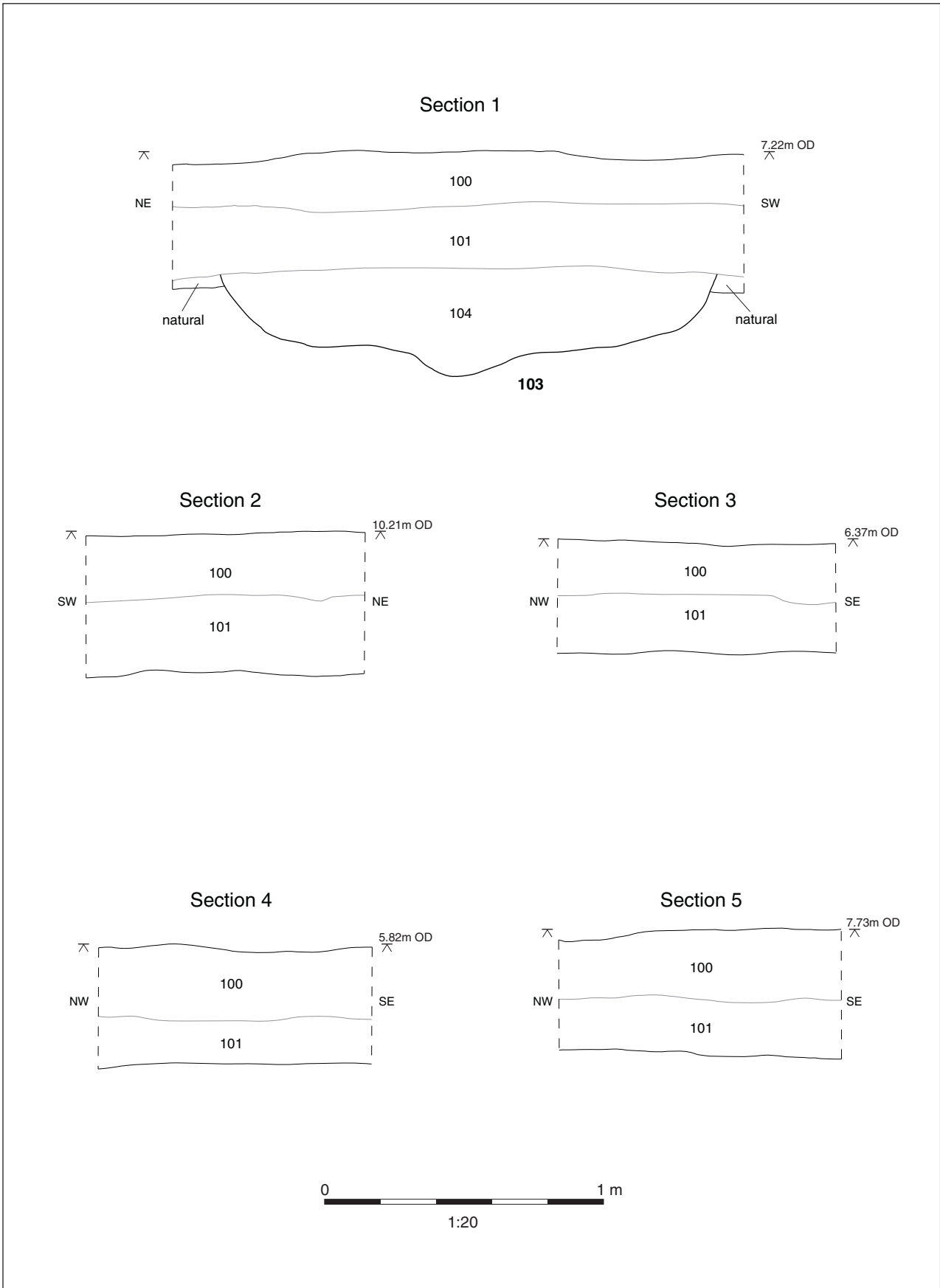


Figure 3: Sections



Plate 2: Trench 9 showing the gently-rising topography of the site with the windmill in background. Direction of view: SE



Plate 1: Trench 8 showing Ditch 103 and mixed clay and gravel natural. Direction of view: NE



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