APPLEFORD SIDINGS

near Didcot Oxfordshire.

Archaeological Evaluation

Oxford Archaeological Unit

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT APPLEFORD SIDINGS, NR DIDCOT, OXFORDSHIRE, 1993

SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by the Oxford Archaeological Unit for ARC on land to the SW of Appleford Crossing in advance of the consideration of a proposal for extension of the gravel extraction area and associated works. In the southern part of the site surface collection failed to demonstrate the existence of significant artefact scatters, and subsequent trenching showed only a low density of archaeological features, mostly of linear character and undated. In the northern part of the site aerial photographs showed a substantial ditched enclosure with related ditch sytems. These features were not detected in a geophysical survey, but were located in trenching. Relatively high densities of archaeological features existed but were very localised. Almost all the finds were of early Roman date.

INTRODUCTION

The area examined (centred c SU 522926) covers some 11 ha situated SW of Appleford Crossing, lying W and S of the present ARC access road to the Sutton Courtenay quarry (Fig. 1). It covers most of the ground within phases 1 and 2 of the present application. Land immediately to the W of the northern part of the area has already been extracted and backfilled. The area is an important one archaeologically. The archaeological background has already been reviewed in the Archaeology and Heritage statement contained in the original planning application, and is not repeated here. It should be noted, however, that the arrangement of linear boundaries detected in the aerial photographs of the northern part of the site extended to the E well beyond the area of interest. In addition an area of trackways and settlement excavated only c 500 m N of the present site almost certainly included elements of the same Iron Age and Roman landscape.

Before work commenced the potential archaeological importance of this part of the application area was indicated solely by the evidence of the aerial photographic cover for the north field. This showed an arrangement of roughly N-S and E-W aligned boundaries relating to a double-ditched rectilinear enclosure with an entrance in its S side. The regularity of this feature is unusual and prompted its tentative interpretation as a Roman ville enclosure. The principal objective of the evaluation was to test this hypothesis and to examine the field to the S, for which there was no photographic evidence, to see if the 'villa complex' extended into it.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The selection of appropriate evaluation techniques was conditioned by the requirements of the archaeological brief established by the Archaeology Section of Oxfordshire County Council, and also in part by the agricultural regime - both fields being under arable. In this connection the cooperation and forbearance of the present farmers, Mr Pat Gale and Mr Paul Caudwell, is gratefully acknowledged.

The S field was ploughed in order to allow fieldwalking. This produced very little evidence so the subsequent evaluation trenching was of a 1% sample of the field, with the trenches laid out on a random basis to provide optimum coverage of the area.

The N field was not harvested until rather later and was not ploughed before archaeological work. A geophysical (magnetometer) survey was carried out over the field after the crop had been removed. This, however, failed to locate the linear features identified from the air. The locations of the

subsequent trenches were therefore determined on the basis of the photographic evidence, unsupported by data from geophysics or fieldwalking. The excavated sample of the northern field was c 2% of the total area, taking account of the potential for the presence of archaeological features indicated by the aerial photographs.

FIELDWALKING

The southern part of the site was walked after ploughing. Transects were aligned N-S and spaced at 20 m intervals on the national grid. Stints (collection units within each transect) were also of 20 m length. All artefact classes encountered were picked up. Even so, the results were meagre considering that conditions for recovery were generally reasonable.

Only one flint flake was recovered, amongst a small number of fragments the remainder of which were probably not struck. Quantities of pottery were also small. Five Roman sherds were recovered, 26 sherds were assigned to the medieval period and two sherds, one tempered with flint and one with fine shell, were undated. The remainder of the material (69 sherds) was of post-medieval date. The most common finds were fragments of brick and tile (including field drain fragments), either of post-medieval/modern date or uncertain pieces which are also likely to have been of this date. There were only three fragments of tile which might have been of Roman date. Other finds (glass, iron nails and objects, clay pipe etc) were scarce and most if not all are likely to have been of post-medieval/modern date. There were no concentrations of artefacts of any material class or period, except for clusters of fragments of ceramic pipes where field drains, perhaps of Victorian date, had been disturbed by recent ploughing.

GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY

The geophysical survey was carried out by Alister Bartlett of Bartlett-Clark consultancy. His report is presented in its entirety as Appendix 2 (below) and only the main results are outlined here.

A fluxgate gradiometer was used for the basic magnetometer survey, supplemented by soil magnetic susceptibility measurements. Neither of these techniques produced evidence of significant levels of ancient activity. In particular, the magnetometer survey failed to pick up the ditches seen so clearly from the air, although a number of possible geological features were located towards the eastern edge of the survey area. Discrete modern features and an area of more intensive modern disturbance in the NW corner of the area were also identified.

TRENCHING

A total of 35 trenches were excavated, using a JCB fitted with a 1.55 m toothless ditching bucket. Most of the trenches were 30 m long, and machined down to the archaeological horizon, or the natural subsoil, whichever came first. Trench 22 was extended by 5 m and Trenches 34 and 35, 20 m and 10 m respectively, were additional to the initial trenching scheme, intended to clarify questions raised by features in adjacent trenches.

All man-made features revealed in the trenches were recorded, and some were excavated, and any dating evidence recovered. The depths of the topsoil and underlying ploughsoil(s) was recorded at each end of each trench.

Persistent heavy rain and periodic flooding in some of the trenches made anything more than the most basic recording extremely difficult, and precluded altogether the excavation of some features. Nevertheless, while there may be doubts about the character and date of some individual features, the general pattern of development of the site as a whole is clear.

The south field: phase 1 and the south end of phase 2

The overburden was in general a layer of modern ploughsoil, /1, between 0.25 and 0.40 m deep, over a medium/pale yellowish brown silty clay ploughsoil, /2, varying from 0.03 m to 0.52 m. The greater depths were noted in the N end of Trench 3 and in both Trenches 15 and 16. The underlying natural subsoil varied in character from fairly clean gravel in the N trenches to silty clay alluvial deposits overlying gravel in the S trenches.

Except where stated below, all features were sealed by the ploughsoil /2. No dating material was obtained from any of the features identified or excavated. Summary descriptions of the trenches are given below and details of each context are tabulated in Appendix 1. Selected illustrations (both plans and sections) are provided for trenches where appropriate.

Trench 1. W-E.

The trench contained one irregular NNE-SSW linear feature, 1/6, up to c 1.80 m wide and 0.70 m deep, into the fill of which was cut a possible posthole 1/4. 1/6 appeared to have cut the ploughsoil 1/2, which might suggest that it was of relatively recent date. Three N-S aligned field drains were found towards the W end of the trench and a further field drain lay adjacent and parallel to 1/6

Trench 2. W-E. (Fig. 2)

Ten N-S aligned linear features were observed in this trench. Four of these contained field drains and most of the remainder were very shallow, with profiles consistent with their interpretation as being caused by ploughing. A ?pit 2/12, 1.07 m across and 0.46 m deep, lay partly beneath the N baulk of the trench.

Trench 3. N-S. (Fig. 3)

The trench contained a 0.50 m wide gully 3/11, oriented NNE-SSW. A short length of a parallel feature (3/9) was cut by a shallow W-E ?ditch 3/5. The fill of this feature was cut by a possible posthole (3/7). The depth of the ploughsoil 3/2 beneath the modern topsoil increased greatly at the N end of the trench, up to c 0.50 m.

Trench 4. W-E.

A shallow N-S feature 1.10 m wide (4/7) may have been the base of a plough furrow. The N edge of a large, shallow feature of irregular outline also occurred. This may have been a natural hollow. Tree root disturbance was particularly noticeable in this trench.

Trench 5. W-E.

The trench contained a very shallow gully, 5/5, oriented N-S, with a field drain running parallel to it some 2.20 m distant. A further disturbance aligned NNW-SSE was very shallow and may have been caused by root activity.

Trench 6. N-S.

Two shallow gullies 6/8 and 6/4, oriented NE-SW and ENE-WSW resectively, were identified in the trench, along with one irregular feature, 6/6, probably a tree hole.

Trench 7. W-E.

The trench contained a NE-SW ditch, 7/6, apparently cutting the ploughsoil 7/2. This feature was c 1.70 m wide and 0.52 m deep, with a steep sided and fairly flat bottomed profile. At the E end of the trench was a small N-S gully, 7/5, sealed by 7/2.

Trench 8. N-S.

The trench contained a very shallow W-E gully, 8/4. A further parallel gully 8/8 was very poorly defined. N of this was a 4.0 m long N-S gully 8/10 with very indistinct termini. This may have been a modern plough scar.

Trench 9. N-S.

The trench contained a shallow W-E gully 9/4 at its N end, a narrow NNE-SSW gully 9/6, and a possible small pit 9/8.

Trench 10. W-E.

Two shallow gullies 10/4 and 10/7 were revealed at the E end of the trench. 10/4 was aligned N-S and 10/7 was closer to NNE-SSW. Two N-S field drains also occurred.

Trench 11. W-E.

The trench contained a shallow N-S gully 11/4 at its extreme W end. Two field drains aligned c NNE-SSW occurred 10 m apart, the westerly of the two being c 10 m from 11/4.

Trench 12. N-S. (Fig. 4)

Two shallow gullies were identified, 12/8 oriented E-W and 12/4 oriented NNE-SSW. Also recorded were a posthole 12/10, and a possible E-W gully terminal 12/6.

Trench 13. N-S. (Fig. 5)

Three ditches were identified. 13/4 and 13/8 were oriented WNW-ESE, and 13/6 was oriented almost WSW-ENE. Both 13/4 and 13/8 appeared to cut the ploughsoil 13/2. A modern land drain aligned at right angles to 13/4 and 13/8 occurred at the N end of the trench. This was contained in a shallow ?furrow 13/10.

Trench 14. N-S.

The only feature observed in this trench was a NNE-SSW aligned field drain.

Trench 15. N-S.

Two ditches were recorded in this trench, 15/5, 0.42 m deep, oriented NE-SW, and 15/7, 0.23 m deep, oriented W-E. Both ditches were sealed by 15/3, a silty clay layer up to c 0.25 m thick and slightly lighter in colour than the overlying ?ploughsoil 15/2. Layer 15/2 was considerably deeper than usual in this trench, up to 0.60 m, and was separated from the natural subsoil by 15/3.

Trench 16. W-E.

There were no archaeological features evident in this trench, but as with Trench 15, an unusually deep ?ploughsoil layer 16/2 overlay a paler silty clay layer 16/3. The depth from ground surface to the natural subsoil was approximately 0.90 m.

The north field (the north end of Phase 2)

The overburden consisted of a layer of ploughsoil, /1, averaging c 0.25 m in depth, overlying a medium brown silty clay /2, varying in depth from 0.06 m to 0.20 m and interpreted as an earlier ploughsoil. Features were either cut through or sealed by this layer. The natural subsoil varied from sandy gravel at the S to sandy alluvium, overlying gravel, in the N.

Trench 17. NNE-SSW. (Fig. 6)

Two WNW-ESE aligned ditches, 17/3 and 17/5, were identified. Both appearing to cut the ploughsoil 17/2 and 17/5 also impinged marginally on a probable treehole 17/8 which was sealed beneath 17/2. 17/5 may have been a plough furrow. A further feature interpreted as a furrow was located at the N end of the trench

Trench 18. NNE-SSW.

The trench revealed three very shallow WNW-ESE aligned gullies, 18/3, 18/5, and 18/7. None of these was seen to cut layer 18/2, but all may nevertheless have been plough furrows.

Trench 19. WNW-ESE. (Fig. 7)

Three NNE-SSW aligned ditches, 19/6, 19/10 and a recut 19/8, were revealed at the W end of the trench. 19/10 was a relatively slight feature and had been partly removed by 19/8. 19/6 and 19/8 were both c 0.68 m deep and had very similar profiles. They were respectively c 1.60 m and 1.40 m across and lay about 3.0 m apart. Late 1st-2nd century Roman pottery was recovered from the fill (19/7) of 19/6.

At the E end of the trench a WSW-ENE ditch (19/4), c 0.95 m wide and 0.20 m deep, was recorded. This produced a sherd of late Iron Age-early Roman pottery from the top of its fill 19/5. All the features in this trench appeared to be sealed by the ploughsoil 19/2.

Trench 20. WNW-ESE. (Fig. 8)

At the E end of the trench was a substantial NNE-SSW aligned ditch, 20/5, (c 2.0 m wide and 0.65 m deep) with a little early Roman pottery in its fill. In the W part of the trench, a roughly NNW-SSE aligned ditch, 20/3, with a possible recut 20/12, cut through a small, slightly curving gully, 20/8, which ran along the trench for a distance of some 7.0 m. The fill (20/4) of 20/3 also produced early Roman pottery and while no dating evidence came from the fill of 20/8, a pit, 20/10, which cut part of the gully, produced a further sherd of 1st century pottery. Ditch cut 20/3 appeared to cut the ploughsoil 20/2.

Trench 21. WNW-ESE.

There was no archaeological features in this trench, although three modern land drains were recorded. These were all aligned NNE-SSW.

Trench 22. NNE-SSW. - 35 m long (Fig. 9)

This trench contained the greatest density of features revealed in any part of the site. All were sealed by the probable ploughsoil layer 22/2. In the N half of this trench 22/2 was comparatively thin and overlaid a grey/brown silty clay, 22/31, into which were cut two slots, 22/24 and 22/22. 22/24 was 0.20 m wide and 0.10 m, with steep sides and a flat bottom. 22/22 was slightly wider (0.27 m) and deeper (c 0.20 m) but had an identical profile to 22/24. These formed a right angle to the W (with the line of 22/22 apparently continued by a small post hole) and presumably carried structural elements - probably horizontal timbers. 22/32, a silty clay layer similar to 22/31 but slightly darker in colour, was contained within the slots. Beam slot 22/24 was truncated to the N by two WNW-ESE ditches, 22/26 and 22/28.

To the S of the beam slots three narrow gullies, 22/14, 22/16, and 22/20, emerged from the W section and curved S along the trench for approximately 5.5 m. In the E section a series of closely set postholes (22/35, 22/37, 22/39, 22/41, 22/43, and 22/45) were identified. These were not clear in plan but were evident in section. All cut through layer 22/31, except 22/39, which appeared possibly to have been sealed by it. It is most likely, however, that all these features were contemporary.

To the S lay a series of WNW-ESE ditches. The two most northerly of these, 22/8 and 22/12, were seen to cut through layer 22/31. Further S, layer 22/31 was indistinguishable from 22/2, which was the only layer with which the remaining ditches (22/4, 22/6, and 22/10) had an observed relationship (being sealed by 22/2). Ditches 22/8 and 22/10 were respectively c 2.00 m x c 0.70 m deep and c 2.20 m x 0.65 m deep. 22/12, between these two ditches, was of very similar to 22/8 in general dimensions but its profile was less even, being very steep sided on the N and more gently sloping on the S side. The intercutting ditches 22/4 and 22/6 at the S end of the trench were much less substantial. Neither they nor 22/12 produced finds, unlike most of the other major features in the trench.

A reasonable quantity of pottery was recovered from the trench. All was of 1st-early 2nd century date. Much the largest individual group came from 22/9, the fill of ditch 22/8. This group (of c 167 sherds) was datable to the early years of the 2nd century AD.

Trench 23. W-E.

No archaeological features were evident in this trench.

Trench 24. N-S.

A wide, flat bottomed, WNW-ESE aligned ditch (24/6),c 2.20 m across and c 0.50 m deep, was revealed at the S end of the trench. A very shallow gully (24/4) was identified further N, running parallel to 24/6. Just N of this was a field drain running E-W. Both 24/4 and 24/6 were apparently sealed by layer 24/2.

Trench 25. WNW-ESE. (Fig. 10)

None of the features revealed in this trench were excavated because of constraints of time and weather conditions.

A linear feature, 25/6, running exactly parallel to the line of the trench lay partly beneath the S baulk. 25/6 appeared to terminate approximately 4.0 m from the W end of the trench, just beyond where it seemed to cut a large, possibly linear feature, 25/4, aligned c NNE-SSW. Two further linear features, possible gullies 25/8 and 25/10, were roughly parallel to 25/4 and like it may have been cut by 25/6. Only 25/4 appeared to be sealed by the ploughsoil 25/2.

Trench 26. WNW-ESE.

No archaeological features were evident in this trench.

Trench 27. NNE-SSW.

Like trench 25, and for the same reasons, features in this trench were not excavated. They were, however, quite clear in plan after the initial machining. A partly revealed linear feature, 27/3, extended for approximately 22 m along the E side of the trench. Two metres N of the point at which it disappeared into the trench side was an E-W aligned gully, 27/5. Both features appeared to be sealed by the ploughsoil 27/2.

Trench 28. NE-SW. (Fig. 10)

The trench contained four linear features 28/4, 28/6, 28/8, and 28/10, all aligned c WNW-ESE and all apparently sealed by ploughsoil 28/2. Of these, 28/4 at the NE end of the trench and 28/10 at the SW end were wide features, respectively c 2.0 m + and 2.30 m across. 28/6 and 28/8 were both 0.70-0.80 m wide. None of the features in this trench were excavated.

Trench 29. WNW-ESE.

The trench contained two ditches. 29/5, 1.50 m wide and 0.80 m deep, was oriented roughly NNW-SSE, and appeared to cut layer 29/2. A smaller ditch (29/3) at the E end of the trench, 0.30 m deep and of irregular width (average c 0.90 m) was oriented NNE-SSW and was apparently sealed by 29/2. A single sherd of pottery from the top of the fill of 29/3 was in a coarse flint tempered fabric, possibly of Late Bronze Age date.

Trench 30. N-S.

The trench contained a single WNW-ESE aligned linear feature (30/4), 2.0 m wide, sealed by ploughsoil 30/2. It was not excavated.

Trench 31. WNW-ESE.

A partly revealed linear feature, 31/3, ran along the entire length of the trench in its northern part. It was at least 1.0 m wide. A smaller gully, 31/5, c 0.75 m across, ran at right angles from 31/3 to the SSW. The two features appeared to be contemporary and sealed by layer 31/2. Neither was excavated.

Trench 32. NNE-SSW. (Fig. 11)

Five possible parallel WNW-ESE aligned ditches (32/3, 32/5, 32/7, 32/9, and 32/11) were revealed. All except the last of these were closely grouped at the S end of the trench. Of these ditches, 32/7 and 32/11 were very shallow, though apparently reasonably defined in plan. The largest feature was 32/5,

1.50 m across and 0.80 m deep. It (and 32/7) were cut by 32/3 (c 1.10 m wide and 0.40 m deep) which was similar in size to 32/9. The fills of 32/3 and 32/5 produced 1st-2nd century sherds. All the features were apparently sealed by ploughsoil layer 32/2.

Trench 33. NNE-SSW.

Three adjacent WNW-ESE linear features were identified in the middle of the trench. 33/7 to the N was c 1.50 m across, 33/5 was 1.30 m wide and 33/3 1.20 m wide. The relationship between 33/7 and 33/5 is uncertain. 33/3 appeared to be a modern feature, cut from within layer 33/1, whereas 33/5 and 33/7 were sealed by ploughsoil 33/2. The features were not excavated.

Trench 34. NNE-SSW. 20 m long.

This extra trench was machined to determine the W extent of the intensive archaeological activity revealed in Trench 22. A dark grey/brown silty clay layer, 34/3, underlying the ploughsoil layer 34/2, probably corresponded to layer 22/31 in Trench 22. The only archaeolgocal feature observed was a WNW-ESE linear feature, 34/4, a ditch c 1.95 m wide, which cut 34/3. This must have corresponded to one (or more likely both) of ditches 22/26 and 22/28. It was not excavated.

Trench 35. NE-SW. 10 m long.

This trench was machined to ascertain the E extent of the archaeological deposits revealed in Trench 22. Two WNW-ESE linear features were identified, 35/4 and 35/6. These corresponded to ditches 22/8 and 22/12 in Trench 22 and were not excavated. Both appeared to cut at least the lower part of 35/2, but although the colour of layer 35/2 darkened very slightly from top to bottom, this change was insufficiently distinct to justify the subdivision of the layer in recording.

Finds

Quantities of finds from the trenching were very small, as they had been in the fieldwalking. There were no finds from the S field and finds from features in the N field were entirely confined to (some of) those related to the ditched enclosure. The only significant artefact class was pottery. Small quantities of fired clay (including a possible loomweight fragment from context 19/7) and animal bone were found, along with single pieces of post-medieval brick, shell, iron slag and two iron nails.

There were 269 sherds of pottery; one each of uncertain, ?Late Bronze Age, middle Iron Age, medieval and post-medieval date and the rest datable to the 1st-mid 2nd centuries AD (hereafter described as 'Roman' for convenience). 197 of the Roman sherds came from features in Trench 22.

The majority of the Roman pottery was in reduced coarse wares of Romanised type dating from the mid-late 1st century onwards, and of less Romanised 'Belgic type' fabrics, some of which may have been produced before the Roman conquest but which continued in use at least up to c AD 70. The Romanised fabrics were generally sand tempered. The 'Belgic type' products included sand and grog tempered fabrics. Most of these vessels would have been produced relatively locally. The reduced wares, for example, include distinctive late 1st-early 2nd century products of the Oxfordshire industry. From the middle of the 1st century AD white wares appeared, and fine oxidised and a number of imported fabrics were added to the range a little later. The imported material consisted principally of samian ware, several vessels of which were present, but aso included a colour-coated beaker from ?Central or NE Gaul and amphora sherds. Considering the size of the assemblage the presence of all these types in the late 1st-early 2nd century is noteworthy and contrasts markedly with assemblages from other rural sites of this date in the Upper Thames Valley.

Interpretation.

Interpretation of the results of the trial trenching is difficult because of the limitations imposed on the recording by the weather conditions but particularly because of the lack of dating material from the vast majority of the features examined. The latter problem may have been exacerbated by the failure to section features in some of the trenches, but the general lack of material even from the topsoil in both fields suggests that any addition to the artefact record from the unexcavated trenches would have been at best very slight. Since the great majority of features located were linear ditches/gulleys the interpretation of the site has to be based principally on the consideration of the size, form and alignments of these features. The recording of the relationships of the fills of linear features to one of a number of probable ploughing horizons cannot be regarded as sufficiently secure to allow this attribute to be a major consideration in interpretation.

In the S field there was evidence for three major alignments of features, and a number of other minor ones (for a summary graphical representation of the orientation of the linear features see Fig. 1). The commonest alignments were N-S, NNE-SSW and E-W. In the N field the situation was rather different. Here the principal alignments were NNE-SSW and WNW-ESE at right angles to it. NNW-SSE and E-W alignments were each recorded only twice here. If the deep drainage ditch between the two fields is a long-established feature then the history of their development in agricultural use, at least in the postmedieval period, may be quite different. This might explain (inter alia) the relative absence of field drain pipes in the N field in contrast to their frequent appearance (on more than one alignment) in the S field. It is possible, therefore, that there is little if any connection between the aligments of linear features in the two halves of the site. This can be demonstrated in part by a consideration of the only significant alignment common to both - NNE-SSW. In the N field some of the features on this alignment belong to the rectilinear enclosure evident on the aerial photographs. This can now be shown to be probably of late Iron Age to early Roman date. It is likely that most of the ditches on this alignment in the N field can be related to the regular scheme of boundaries connected to the enclosure, and therefore by inference also late Iron Age-early Roman. By contrast, in the S field the NNE-SSW alignment can be shown to be associated with relatively modern field drains in a number of trenches. This does not necessarily mean that all the features on this alignment in the S field are necessarily post-medieval, but many of them may be.

The drains in the S field suggest two possible campaigns of drainage, one on a N-S and one on the NNE-SSW alignment. There are enough correlations between field drains and shallow, wide linear features to suggest that drains of both alignments may have followed (as is commonly the case) the line of possible medieval plough furrows (though not all the NNE-SSW features were of this character). All surface evidence of medieval ploughing, with the exception of a possible E-W headland (see below), has now been removed.

Identification of furrows on contrasting alignments presents a potential problem of interpretation, but there is some evidence that the distributions of N-S and NNE-SSW aligned field drains are mutually exclusive, the latter being confined to the E end and SE quarter of the S field. NNE-SSW aligned features do occur further W, in the area where N-S field drains are common, but none of these were accompanied by drains, and it is possible that they are earlier features, perhaps forming part of the system centred on the enclosure in the N field.

In summary, therefore, the former existence of two slightly different alignments of ridge and furrow is postulated in the S field, the more extensive of these being on a N-S alignment and perhaps relating to a wide, low E-W bank still evident on the surface of the field at the S end of the examined area. This feature is reflected by the greatly increased depth of the ploughsoils at the S end of Trench 15 and in Trench 16, and may have been a headland. It is possible that all the N-S aligned features in this field related to the similarly aligned ridge and furrow, but it is more likely that some of them formed part of a different system in which E-W linear features (all undated) were also incorporated. Such a system overlapped with elements of one consisting principally (exclusively?) of NNE-SSW alignments, which is likely, if associated with the similarly aligned scheme in the N field, to be of early Roman date. The date of the N-S/E-W aligned scheme remains unknown.

In the N field the great majority of the linear features were aligned NNE-SSW and WNW-ESE and probably belonged to the ditched enclosure and its apparently related field system. Not all features on this alignment were of this date, however, since the alignment was shared by three parallel field drains located in Trench 21, within the area of the enclosure. Away from the enclosure area, however, the absence of dating material makes confident attribution of features to the early Roman or the later phase impossible.

The principal rectilinear enclosure seen on the aerial photographs was successfully located. The ditches forming this enclosure were up to c 2.0 m across and 0.80 m deep. The evidence of Trench 32 suggested that the ditch sequence may have been more complex than appears from the air, since four (and possibly five) ditches were located here rather than the two suggested by the photographs. In Trench 22 there were also more ditches than show on the aerial photographs, and again a hint of more than one phase of activity with one the ditches being recut. This trench also provided the greatest concentration of dating evidence and the only clear evidence of occupation, with a dense cluster of features which suggested a timber structure, with associated fences and gullies to the S. The survival of defineable archaeological deposits above the subsoil (at least in the northern part of this trench) enables these featurse to be related to at least part of the ditch complex. These is no doubt that the two are at least broadly contemporary.

The lack of evidence of occupation in the supplementary Trenches 34 and 35 could suggest that area of actual building was small, and possibly short-lived, but it may also reflect differences of preservation of deposits.

Trenches 20, 19 and 29 contained features on a NNW-SSE and ENE-WSW alignment which contrasts with the principal one. The features in Trench 20, however, produced finds contemporary with those from the main enclosure and the anomalously aligned ditch here may be one which appears on the aerial photgraphs to link into the system associated with the principal enclosure. The only dating evidence from the other features on these alignments is, however, contradictory. Feature 19/4 produced an early Roman sherd and might therefore also be part of the same scheme if a piece of modern slate from its fill can be seen as intrusive. The only find from 29/3, however, was a single ?Late Bronze Age sherd from the top of the fill. The significance of this piece for the dating of the feature is highly quastionable.

There were only two features alignmed E-W. These may have related to the N-S/E-W alignment(s) seen in the S field. An E-W field drain at the N end of Trench 24 might possibly have marked the northern limit of the suggested N-S aligned medieval ploughing.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation has produced evidence of only one significant phase of archaeological activity which can be closely dated. This is assigned to the late Iron Age to early Roman period (roughly 1st-mid 2nd centuries) and comprises a rectilinear ditched enclosure (initially located from the air) with an extensive system of (field) boundaries apparently associated with it. There was limited evidence for domestic activity within the enclosure, but the pottery finds from this area suggest that the settlement was of significantly above average status by contrast with other contemporary rural settlements in the region. There is no evidence of late Roman activity in the area, not even amongst the very limited surface finds, nor does the latter include building material. It is likely, therefore, that when occupation of the site ceased (probably by the middle of the 2nd century AD at latest) there were no Romanised structures present, despite the inferences of relatively high status which can be drawn from the ceramics. The site was initially interpreted (on the basis of the aerial evidence alone) as a possible villa enclosure. While it is now clear that this is not so it can nevertheless be suggested that the site was potentially of this class, but that it never developed in this way because it was abandoned (for whatever reason) jsut before the point at which such development might have taken place. The early Roman farmstead at Barton Court Farm provides an interesting parallel, with the difference that this

site did eventually develop as a (modest) villa, but only apparently after a break of a century or more in the occupation sequence.

At Appleford the rectilinear scheme of the crop marks suggests a carefully laid out pattern of landscape organisation which must have been imposed on the existing landscape (whatever that may have been). The NNE-SSW element of the scheme extended into the field S of the enclosure. In this field a constrasting scheme of layout, with a N-S/E-W alignment, is undated and its relationship to the early Roman scheme is unknown. Other features in this field share the early Roman and alignments but are likely to be of medieval and later date on the basis of their association with field drains. There is otherwise no dating material.

Paul Booth
Alan Hardy

Oxford Archaeological Unit, November 1993

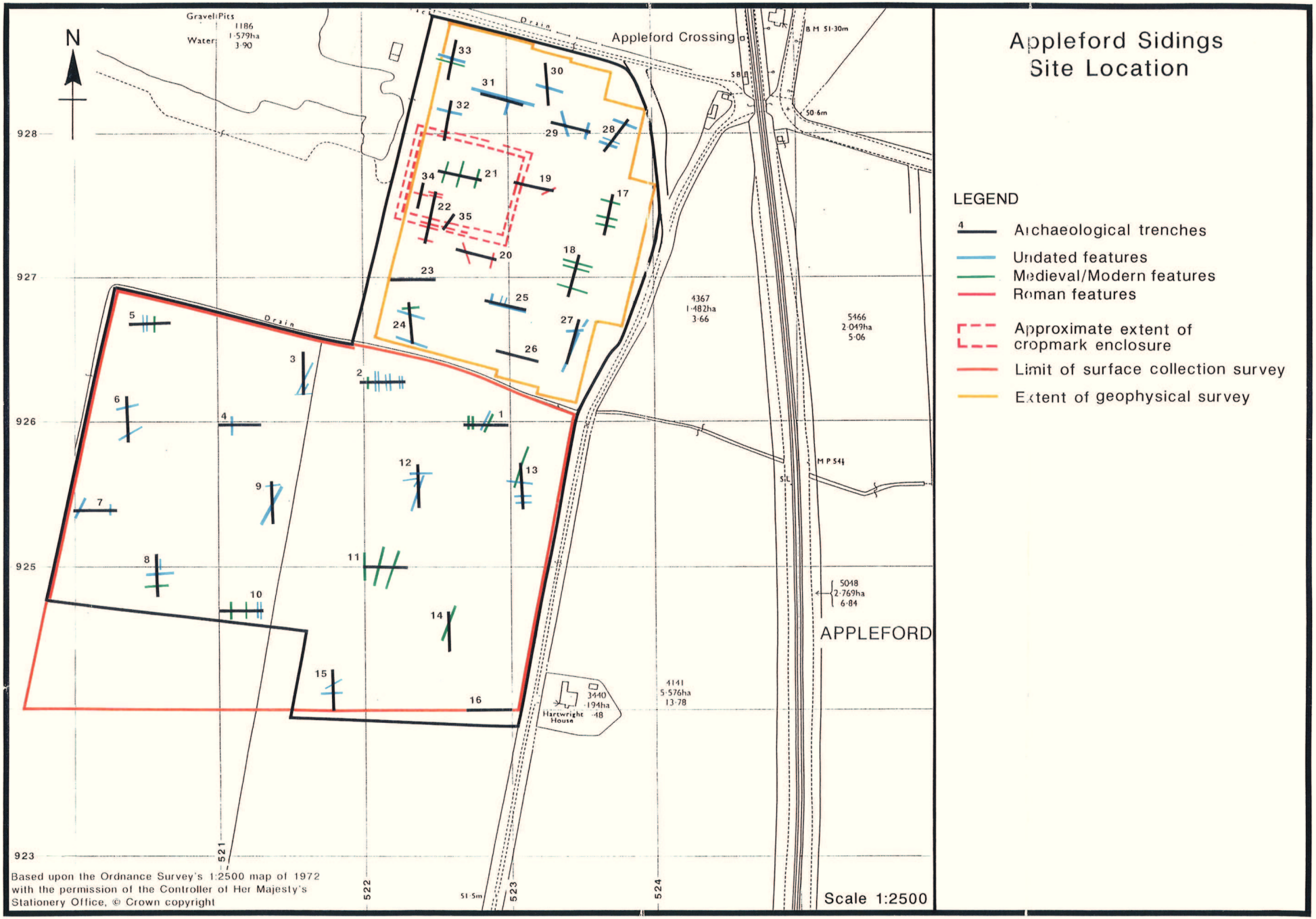
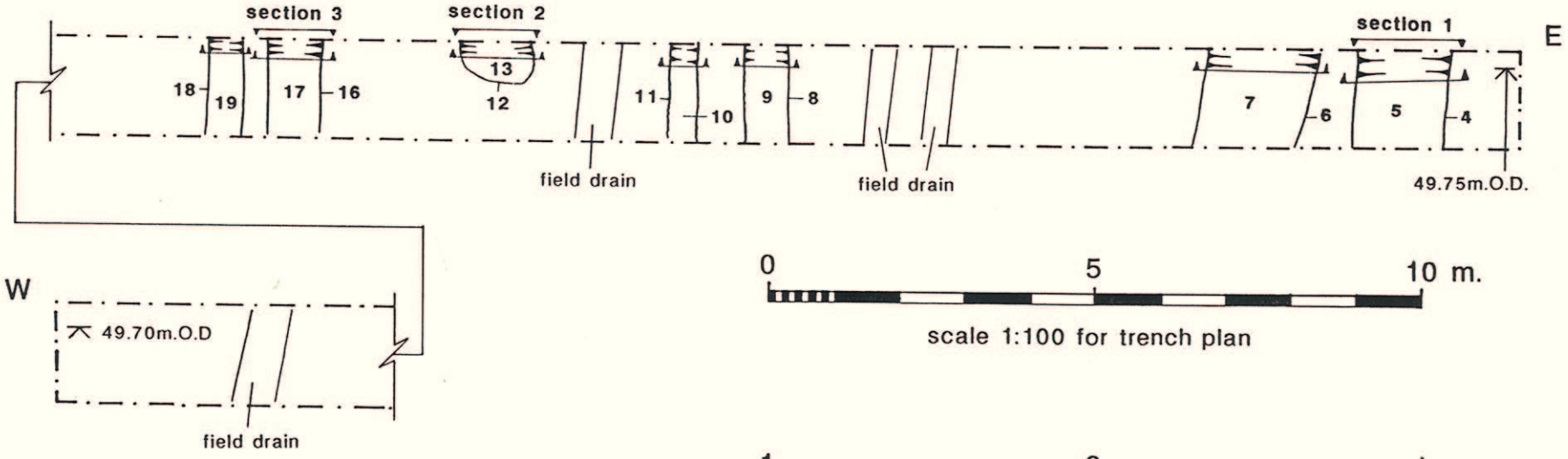

Appleford Sidings
Site Location
LEGEND
Archaeological trenches
Undated features
Medieval/Modern features
Roman features
Approximate extent of cropmark enclosure
Limit of surface collection survey
Extent of geophysical survey
N
Gravel Pits
Water
1186
1·579ha
3·90
Drain
Appleford Crossing
B M 51·30m
50·6m
928
927
926
925
923
4367
1·482ha
3·66
5466
2·049ha
5·06
5048
2·769ha
6·84
APPLEFORD
4141
5·576ha
13·78
3440
·194ha
·48
Hartwright House
M P 541
S.L.
521
522
523
524
51·5m
Scale 1:2500
Based upon the Ordnance Survey's 1:2500 map of 1972 with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown copyright

figure 1.

Trench 2

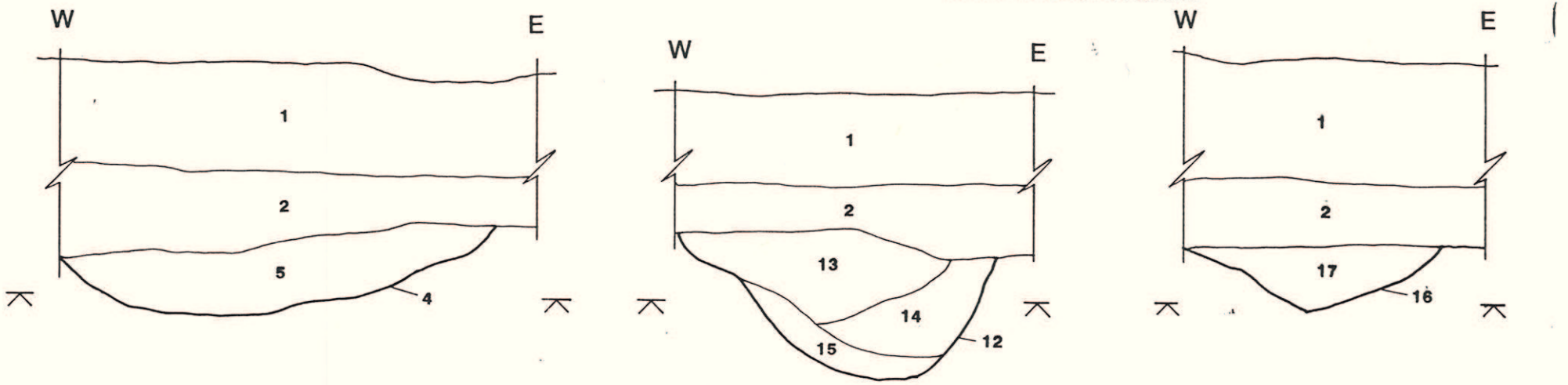


0 5 10 m.

scale 1:100 for trench plan

1 0 1 m.

scale 1:20 for sections



section 1

section 2

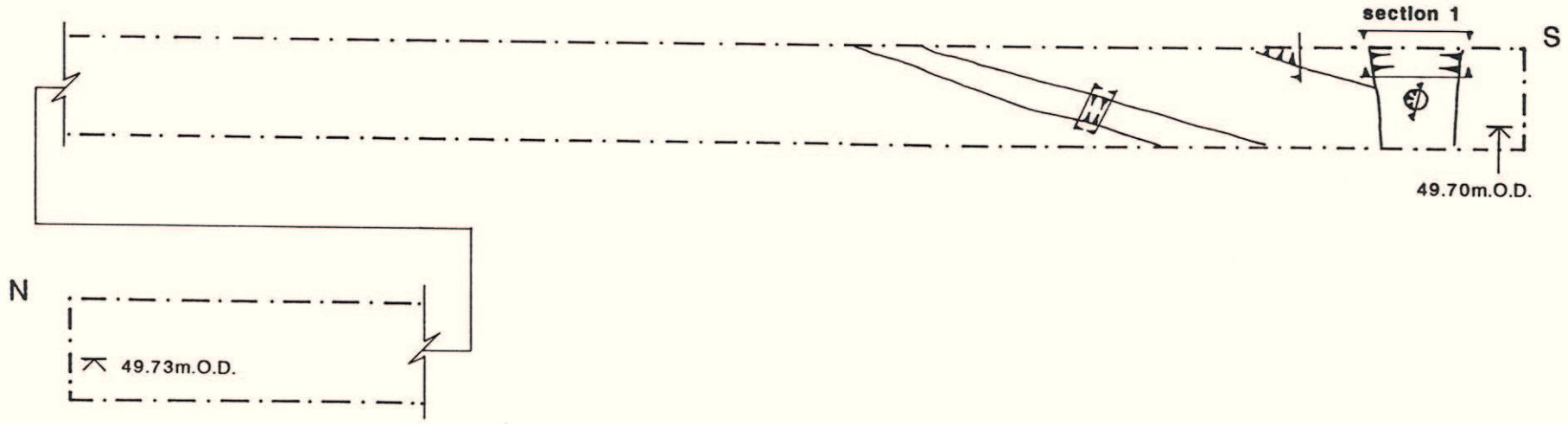
section 3

datum shown on sections at 49.50 m.O.D.

figure 2.

Trench 3

APPS 93

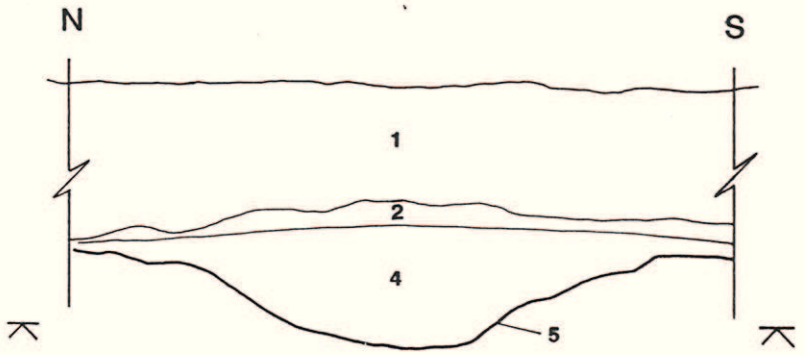


0 5 10 m.

scale 1:100 for trench plan

1 0 1 m.

scale 1:20 for sections



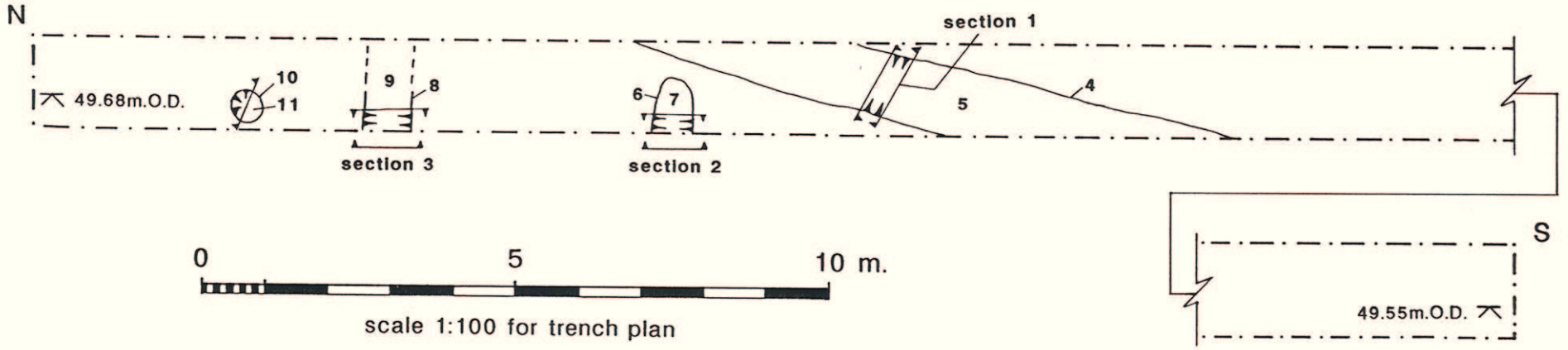
section 1

datum shown on sections at 49.50 m.O.D.

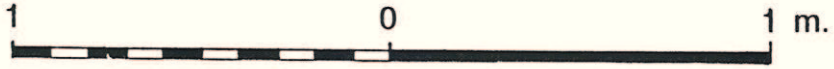
figure 3.

Trench 12

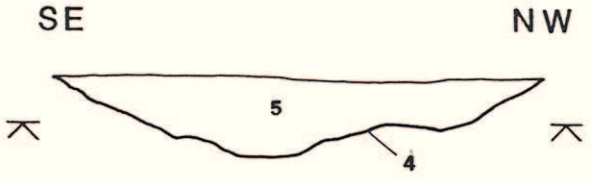
APPS 93



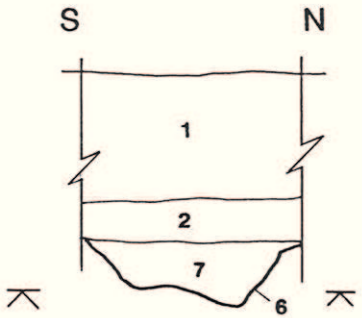
scale 1:100 for trench plan



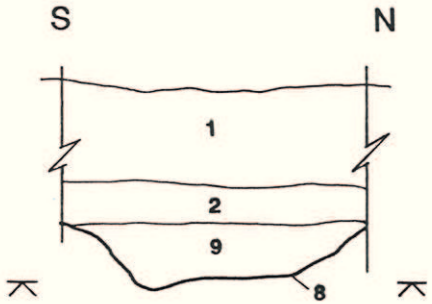
scale 1:20 for sections



section 1



section 2



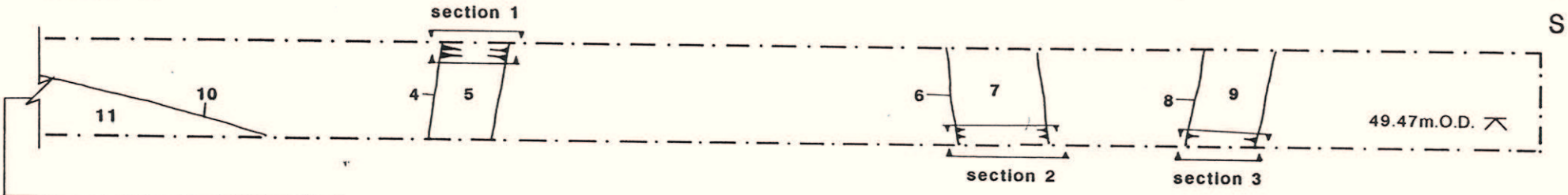
section 3

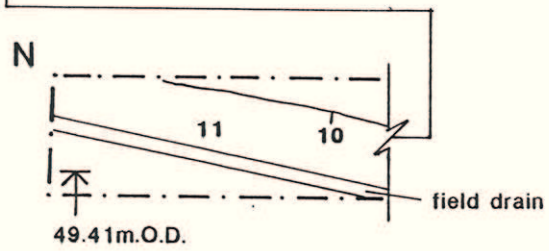
datum shown on sections at 49.50 m.O.D.

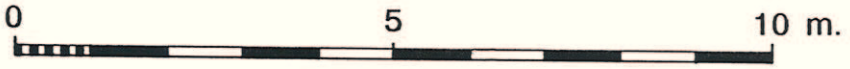
figure 4.

Trench 13

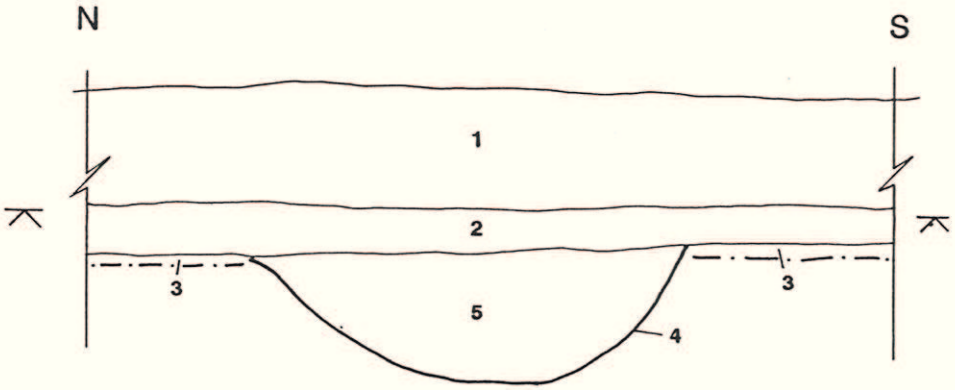
APPS 93



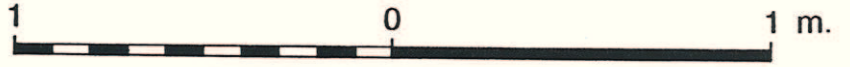




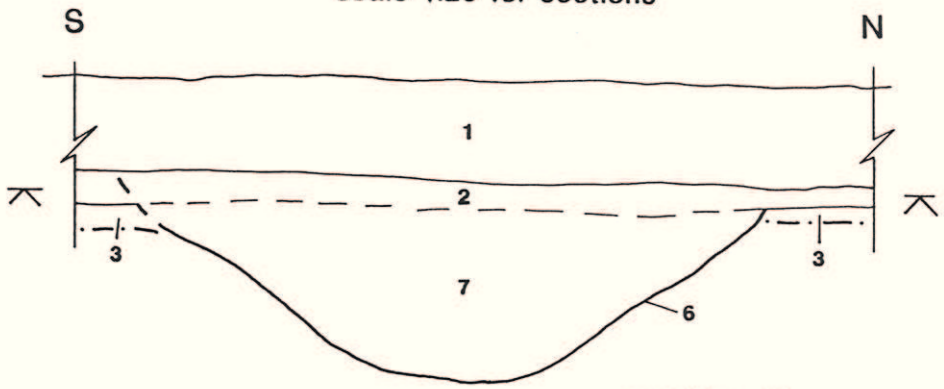
scale 1:100 for trench plan



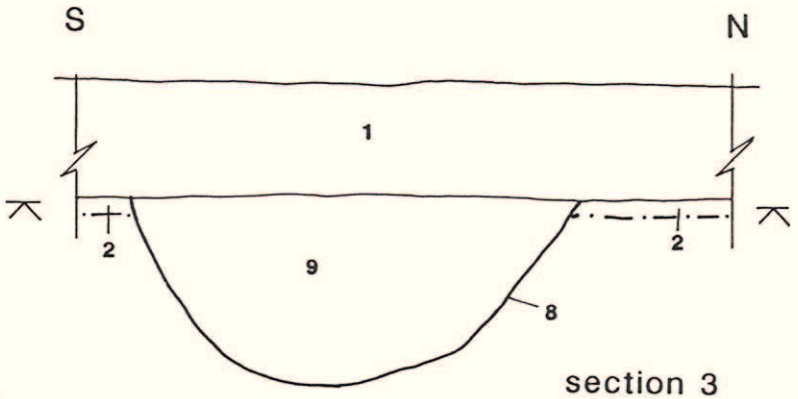
section 1



scale 1:20 for sections



section 2



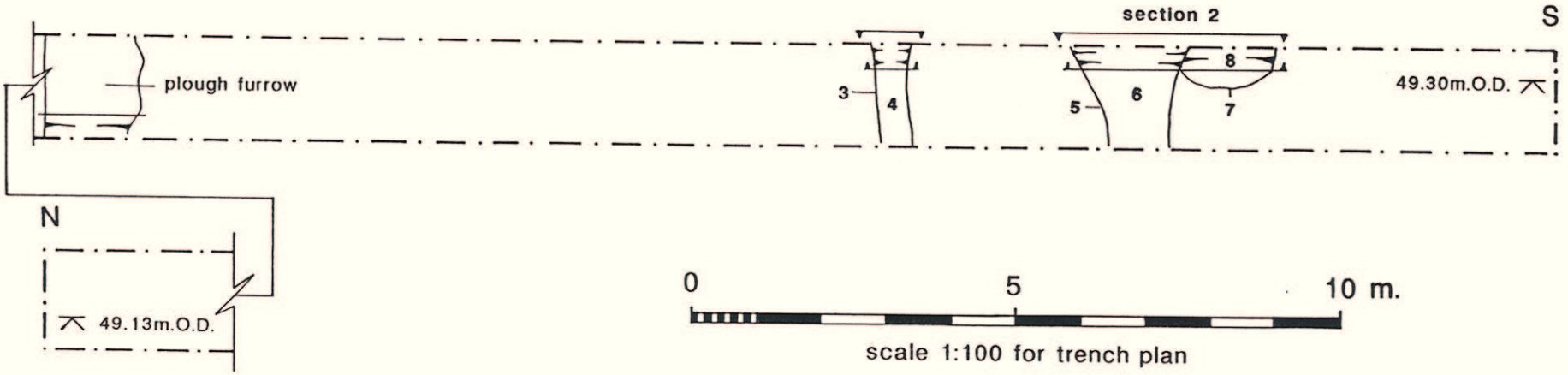
section 3

datum shown on sections at 49.50 m.O.D.

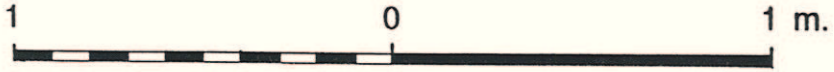
figure 5.

Trench 17

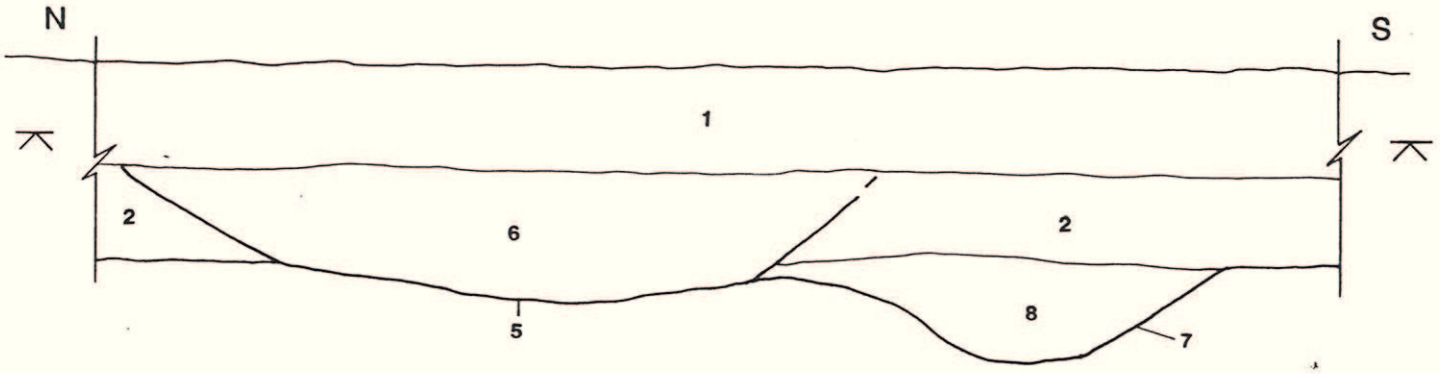
APPS 93



scale 1:100 for trench plan



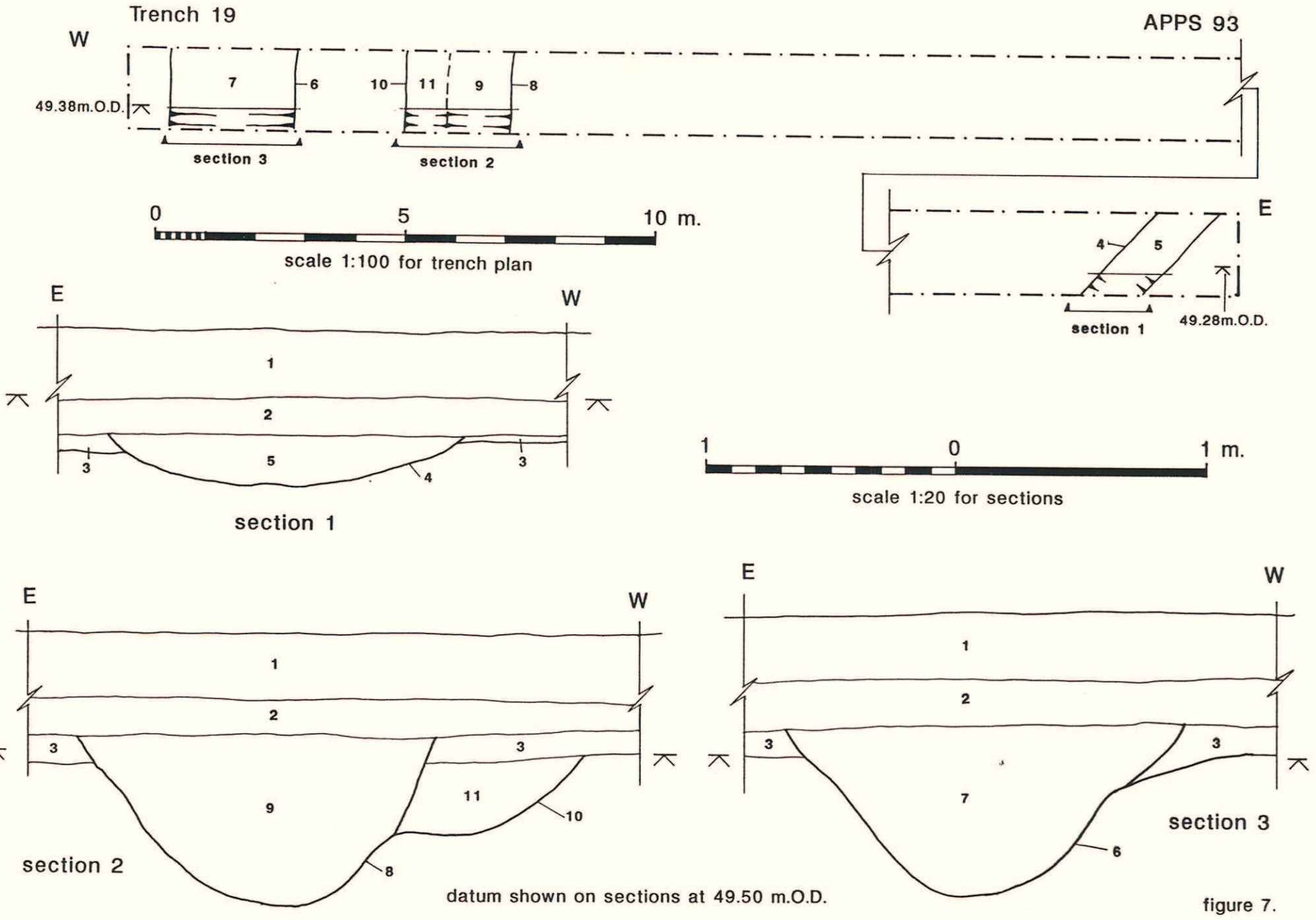
scale 1:20 for sections



section 2

datum shown on section at 49.50 m.O.D.

figure 6.



datum shown on sections at 49.50 m.O.D.

figure 7.

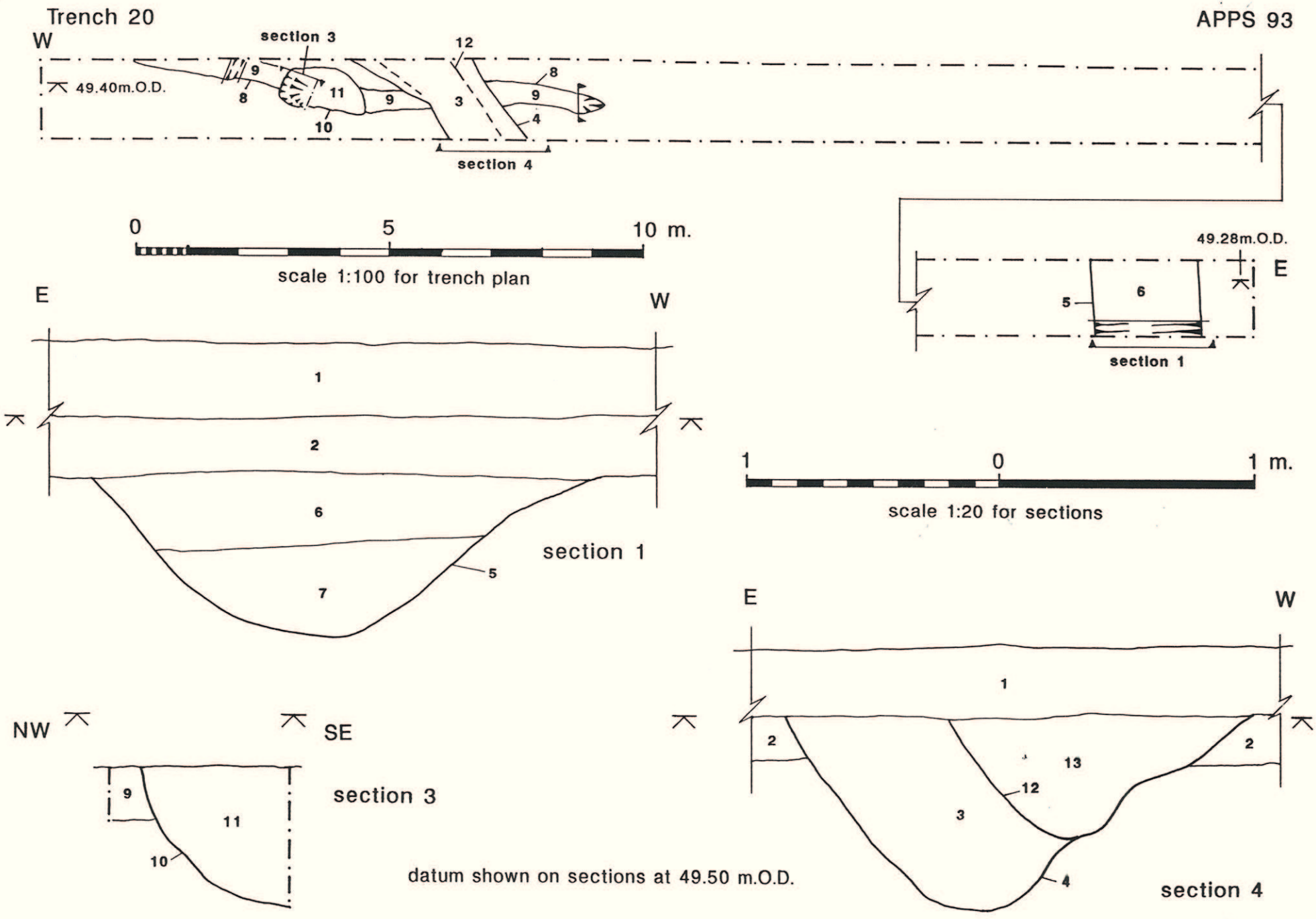
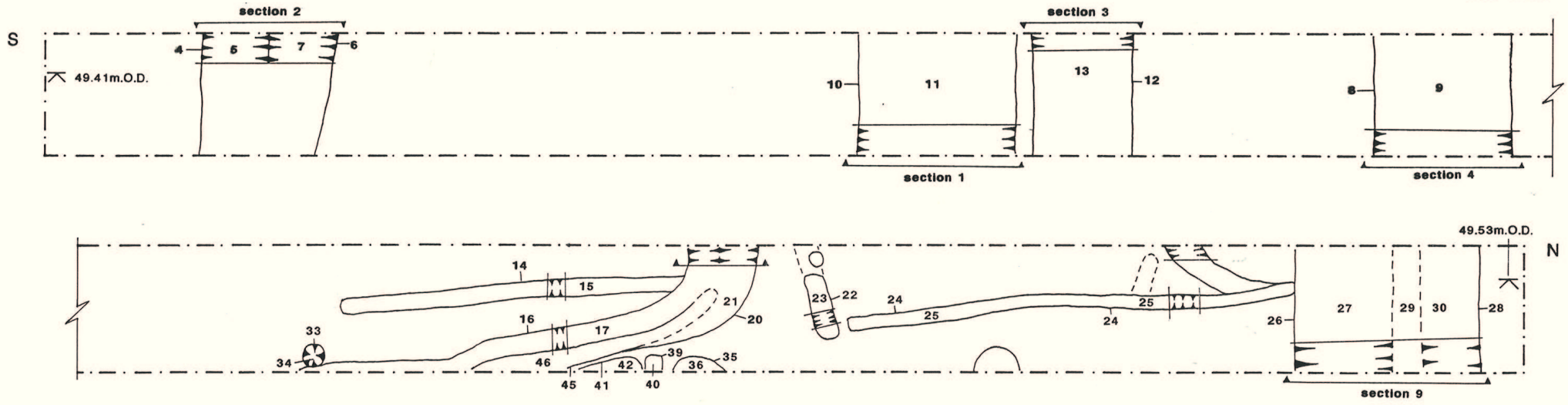
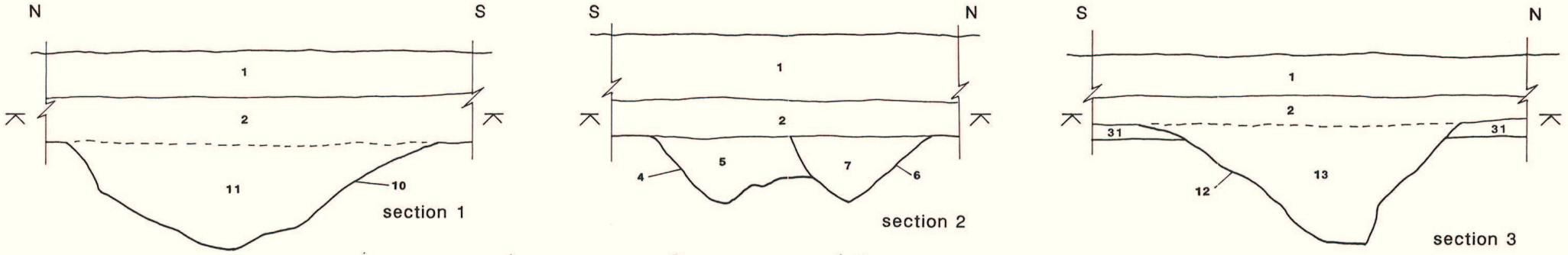

Trench 20
APPS 93
W
section 3
12
49.40m.O.D.
9
8
11
9
3
8
9
4
10
section 4
0
5
10 m.
scale 1:100 for trench plan
49.28m.O.D.
E
6
5
section 1
E
W
1
2
6
7
5
section 1
1
0
1 m.
scale 1:20 for sections
E
W
1
2
2
13
12
3
4
section 4
NW
SE
9
11
10
section 3
datum shown on sections at 49.50 m.O.D.

figure 8.



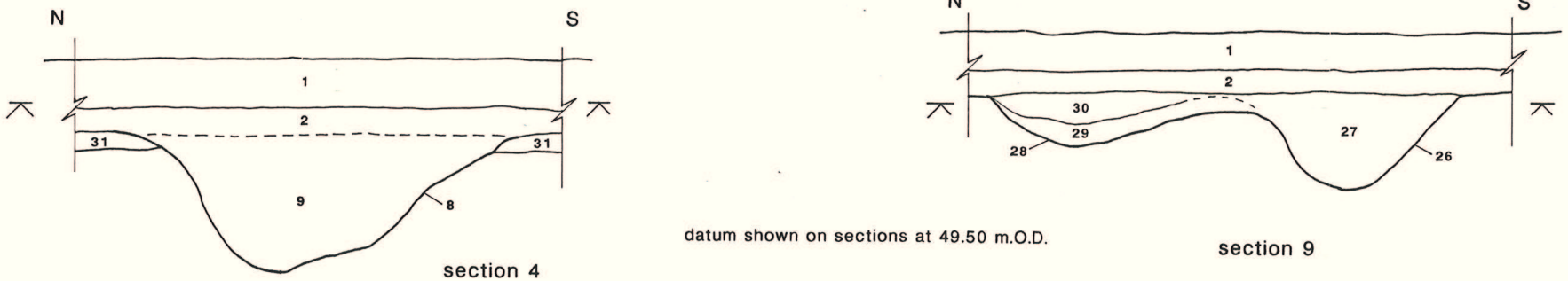
0 5 m.

scale 1:50 for trench plan



1 0 1 m.

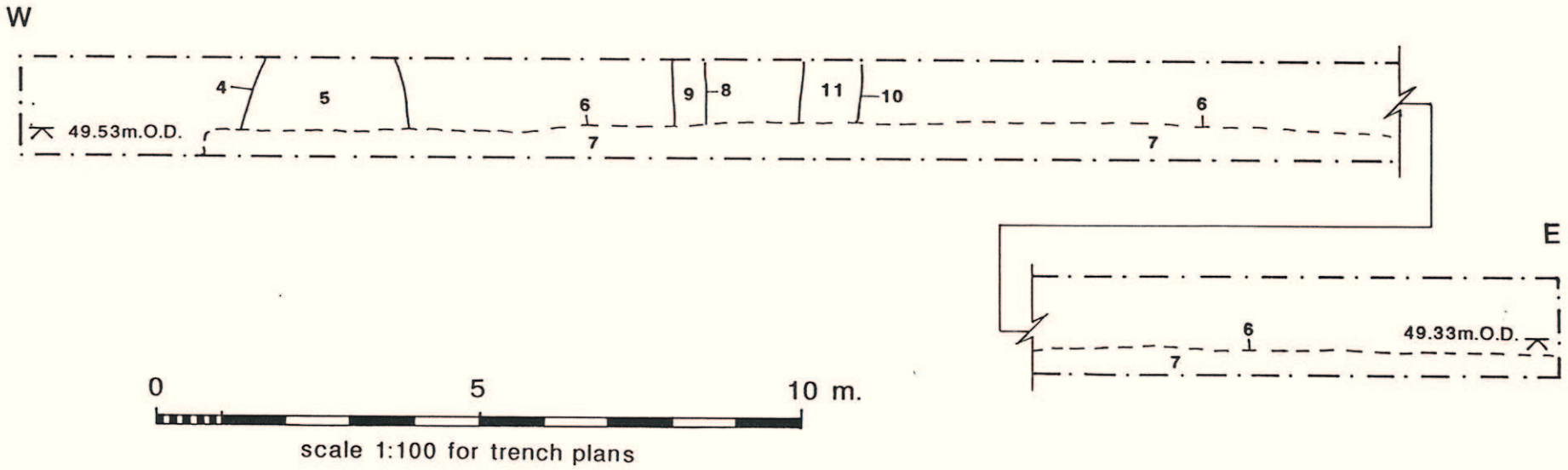
scale 1:25 for sections



datum shown on sections at 49.50 m.O.D.

figure 9.

Trench 25



scale 1:100 for trench plans

Trench 28

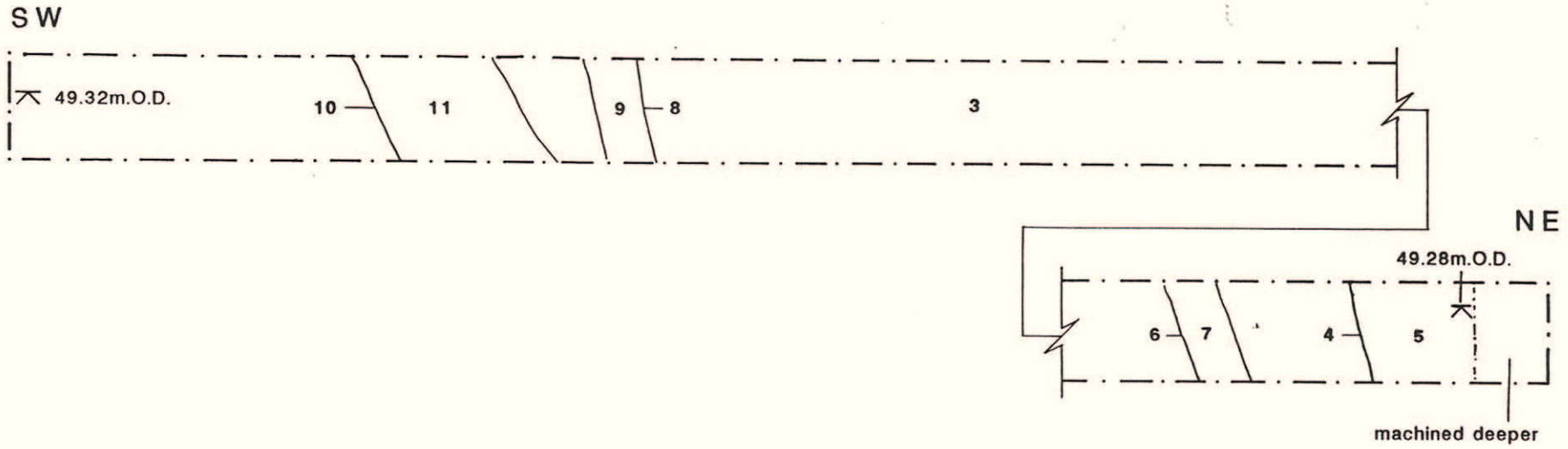
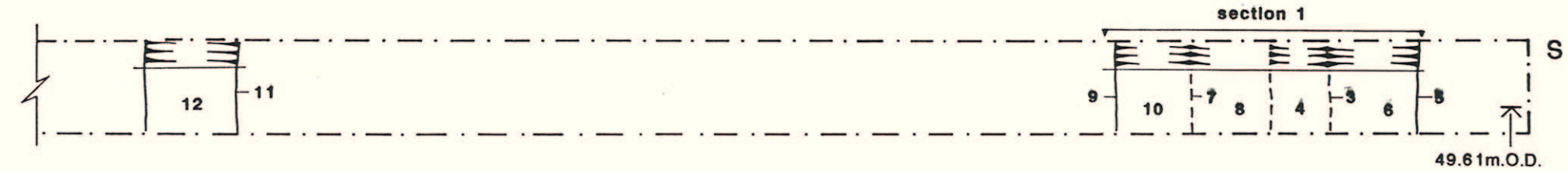
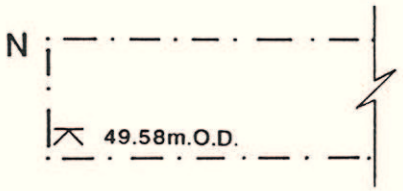
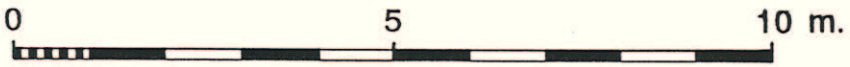


figure 10.

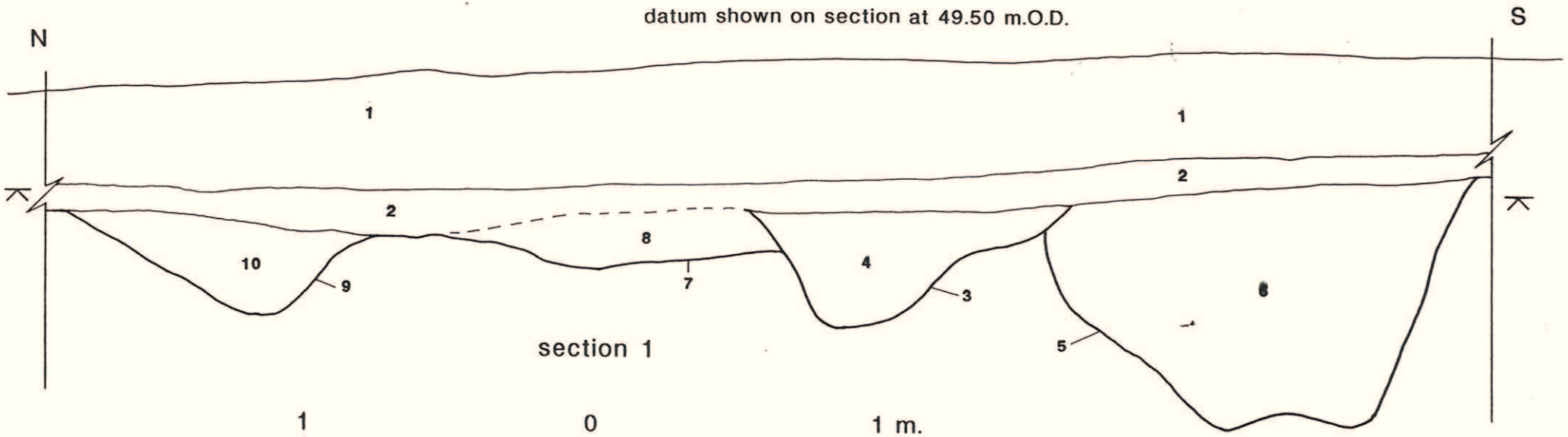






scale 1:100 for trench plan

datum shown on section at 49.50 m.O.D.



scale 1:20 for section

figure 11.

APPENDIX 1

APPLEFORD SIDINGS, NEAR DIDCOT, OXON (APPS 93): TABLE OF CONTEXTS.

Abbreviations in 'Finds' column:

LBA = Late Bronze Age; MIA = middle Iron Age; ERB = Late Iron Age-early Roman; MED = medieval; PM = postmedieval

FC = fired clay

CONTEXT	TYPE	WIDTH	DEPTH	FINDS	DATE	COMMENTS
Trench 1						
1/1	LAYER	-	<0.30		MOD	TOPSOIL
1/2	LAYER	-	<0.32		?	PLOUGHSOIL
1/3	NATURAL					SANDY SILT
1/4	P/HOLE	0.20	0.10		?	
1/5	FILL	0.20	0.10	Animal bone	?	OF 1/4
1/6	DITCH	1.82	0.70		?	N-S
1/7	FILL	1.82	0.50		?	OF 1/6
1/8	FILL	-	0.20		?	OF 1/6
Trench 2						
2/1	LAYER	-	<0.28		MOD	TOPSOIL
2/2	LAYER	-	<0.24		?	PLOUGHSOIL
2/3	NATURAL					SAND/GRAVEL
2/4	GULLY	1.50	0.20		?	N-S PLOUGH FURROW?
2/5	FILL	1.50	0.20		?	OF 2/4
2/6	GULLY	1.82	0.13		?	N-S PLOUGH FURROW?
2/7	FILL	1.82	0.13		?	OF 2/6
2/8	GULLY	0.50	0.07		?	N-S PLOUGH FURROW
2/9	FILL	0.50	0.07		?	OF 2/8
2/10	GULLY	0.48	0.07		?	N-S PLOUGH FURROW
2/11	FILL	0.48	0.07		?	OF 2/10
2/12	FEATURE	1.07	0.46		?	TREE HOLE
2/13	FILL	-	0.28		?	OF 2/12
2/14	FILL	-	0.24		?	OF 2/12
2/15	FILL	-	0.14		?	OF 2/12
2/16	GULLY	0.84	0.20		?	N-S PLOUGH FURROW
2/17	FILL	0.84	0.20		?	OF 2/16
2/18	GULLY	0.60	0.06		?	N-S PLOUGH FURROW?
2/19	FILL	0.60	0.06		?	OF 2/18
Trench 3						
3/1	LAYER	-	<0.27		MOD	TOPSOIL
3/2	LAYER	-	<0.52		?	PLOUGHSOIL

3/3	NATURAL					SANDY SILT
3/4	FILL	1.27	0.50		?	OF 3/5
3/5	DITCH	1.27	0.50		?	W-E
3/6	FILL	0.20	0.09		?	OF 3/7
3/7	FEATURE	0.20	0.09		?	ANIMAL DISTURB?
3/8	FILL	>0.44	>0.17		?	OF 3/9
3/9	DITCH	>0.44	>0.17		?	N-S.PART REVEALED
3/10	FILL	0.50	0.15		?	OF 3/11
3/11	DITCH	0.50	0.15		?	NE-SW
Trench 4						
4/1	LAYER	-	<0.28		MOD	TOPSOIL
4/2	LAYER	-	<0.17		?	PLOUGHSOIL
4/3	NATURAL					SANDY GRAVEL
4/4	FILL	-	0.14		?	OF 4/5
4/5	FEATURE	2.95	0.14		?	TREE HOLE?
4/6	FILL	-	0.10		?	OF 4/7
4/7	FEATURE	1.10	0.10		?	N-S PLOUGH FURROW?
Trench 5						
5/1	LAYER	-	<0.30		MOD	TOPSOIL
5/2	LAYER	-	<0.37		?	PLOUGHSOIL
5/3	NATURAL					SILTY GRAVEL
5/4	FILL	1.00	0.24		?	OF 5/5
5/5	GULLY	1.00	0.24		?	N-S
Trench 6						
6/1	LAYER	-	<0.28		MOD	TOPSOIL
6/2	LAYER	-	<0.24		?	PLOUGHSOIL
6/3	NATURAL					SILTY GRAVEL
6/4	GULLY	0.80	0.10		?	W-E PLOUGH FURROW?
6/5	FILL	0.80	0.10		?	OF 6/4
6/6	FEATURE	-	0.44		?	TREE HOLE
6/7	FILL	-	0.44		?	OF 6/6
6/8	GULLY	1.00	0.14		?	W-E PLOUGH FURROW?
6/9	FILL	1.00	0.14		?	OF 6/8
Trench 7						
7/1	LAYER	-	<0.29		MOD	TOPSOIL
7/2	LAYER	-	<0.20		?	PLOUGHSOIL
7/3	NATURAL					CLAYEY GRAVEL
7/4	GULLY	0.60	0.12		?	N-S
7/5	FILL	0.60	0.12		?	OF 7/4

7/6	GULLY	1.70	0.52		?	NE-SW
7/7	FILL	-	0.08		?	SAME AS 7/2?
7/8	FILL	-	0.36		?	OF 7/6
Trench 8						
8/1	LAYER	-	<0.24		MOD	TOPSOIL
8/2	LAYER	-	<0.20		?	PLOUGHSOIL
8/3	NATURAL					SILTY SAND
8/4	GULLY	1.30	0.18		?	W-E PLOUGH FURROW?
8/5	FILL	1.30	0.18		?	OF 8/4
8/6	FEATURE	0.55	0.35		?	TREE HOLE
8/7	FILL	0.55	0.35		?	OF 8/6
8/8	GULLY	>0.40	0.26		?	W-E PART EX.
8/9	FILL	>0.40	0.26		?	OF 8/8
8/10	GULLY	0.50	0.09		MOD?	PLOUGH SCAR?
8/11	FILL	0.50	0.09		MOD?	OF 8/10
Trench 9						
9/1	LAYER	-	<0.27		MOD	TOPSOIL
9/2	LAYER	-	<0.24		?	PLOUGHSOIL
9/3	NATURAL					SILTY GRAVEL
9/4	GULLY	0.50	0.14		?	W-E PLOUGH FURROW?
9/5	FILL	0.50	0.14		?	OF 9/4
9/6	DITCH	0.70	0.20		?	NE-SW
9/7	FILL	0.70	0.20		?	OF 9/6
9/8	PIT	0.40	0.12		?	OR TREE HOLE
9/9	FILL	0.40	0.12		?	OF 9/8
Trench 10						
10/1	LAYER	-	<0.27		MOD	TOPSOIL
10/2	LAYER	-	<0.22		?	PLOUGHSOIL
10/3	NATURAL					SILTY SAND
10/4	GULLY	0.60	0.10		?	N-S PLOUGH FURROW
10/5	FILL	0.60	0.10		?	OF 10/4
10/6	GULLY	0.70	0.06		?	N-S PLOUGH FURROW
10/7	FILL	0.70	0.06		?	OF 10/6
Trench 11						
11/1	LAYER	-	<0.40		MOD	TOPSOIL
11/2	LAYER	-	<0.20		?	PLOUGHSOIL
11/3	NATURAL					SILTY SAND
11/4	GULLY	0.87	0.19		?	N-S PLOUGH FURROW
11/5	FILL	0.87	0.19		?	OF 11/4

Trench 12						
12/1	LAYER	-	<0.38		MOD	TOPSOIL
12/2	LAYER	-	<0.12		?	PLOUGHSOIL
12/3	NATURAL					SANDY CLAY
12/4	GULLY	1.30	0.20		?	NE-SW
12/5	FILL	1.30	0.20		?	OF 12/4
12/6	FEATURE	0.56	0.16		?	W-E TERMINUS
12/7	FILL	0.56	0.16		?	OF 12/6
12/8	GULLY	0.80	0.16		?	W-E PLOUGH FURROW
12/9	FILL	0.80	0.16		?	OF 12/8
12/10	FEATURE	0.40	0.05		?	ANIMAL DISTURBANCE
12/11	FILL	0.40	0.05		?	OF 12/;10
Trench 13						
13/1	LAYER	-	<0.28		MOD	TOPSOIL
13/2	LAYER	-	<0.12		?	PLOUGHSOIL
13/3	NATURAL					SILTY SAND
13/4	DITCH	1.10	0.38		?	WNW-ESE
13/5	FILL	1.10	0.38		?	OF 13/4
13/6	DITCH	1.70	0.42		?	W-E
13/7	FILL	1.70	0.42		?	OF 13/6
13/8	DITCH	1.20	0.50		?	WNW-ESE
13/9	FILL	1.20	0.50		?	OF 13/8
13/10	DRAIN	1.10	-		MOD	LAND DRAIN
13/11	FILL	1.10	-		MOD	OF 13/10
Trench 14						
14/1	LAYER	-	<0.35		MOD	TOPSOIL
14/2	LAYER	-	<0.20		?	PLOUGHSOIL
14/3	NATURAL					SILTY SAND
Trench 15						
15/1	LAYER	-	<0.40		MOD	TOPSOIL
15/2	LAYER	-	<0.60		?	PLOUGHSOIL
15/3	LAYER	-	<0.25		?	PLOUGHSOIL
15/4	NATURAL					CLAYEY SAND
15/5	DITCH	1.20	0.42		?	W-E BOUNDARY
15/6	FILL	1.20	0.42		?	OF 15/5
15/7	DITCH	1.10	0.20		?	W-E
15/8	FILL	1.10	0.20		?	OF 15/7
Trench 16						
16/1	LAYER	-	<0.35		MOD	TOPSOIL

16/2	LAYER	-	<0.25		?	PLOUGHSOIL
16/3	LAYER	-	<0.22		?	PLOUGHSOIL
16/4	NATURAL					SILTY CLAY
Trench 17						
17/1	LAYER	-	<0.25		MOD	TOPSOIL
17/2	LAYER	-	<0.16		?	PLOUGHSOIL
17/3	DITCH	0.80	0.40		RB	W-E
17/4	FILL	0.80	0.40		RB	OF 17/3
17/5	GULLY	1.80	0.28		RB	W-E
17/6	FILL	1.80	0.28		RB	OF 17/5
17/7	FEATURE	1.20	0.25		?	TREE HOLE
17/8	FILL	1.20	0.25		?	OF 17/7
Trench 18				1 RB sherd		unstratified
18/1	LAYER	-	<0.25		MOD	TOPSOIL
18/2	LAYER	-	<0.16		?	PLOUGHSOIL
18/3	GULLY	0.42	0.05		RB?	W-E PLOUGH FURROW
18/4	FILL	0.42	0.05		RB?	OF 18/3
18/5	GULLY	1.40	0.05		RB?	W-E PLOUGH FURROW
18/6	FILL	1.40	0.05		RB?	OF 18/5
18/7	GULLY	0.55	0.04		RB?	W-E PLOUGH FURROW
18/8	FILL	0.55	0.04		RB?	OF 18/7
Trench 19						
19/1	LAYER	-	<0.19		MOD	TOPSOIL
19/2	LAYER	-	<0.10		?	PLOUGHSOIL
19/3	LAYER	-	<0.06		?	PLOUGHSOIL/NATURAL
19/4	DITCH	0.85	0.18		RB?	NE-SW
19/5	FILL	0.85	0.18	1 ERB sherd animal bone 1 slate frag	RB?	OF 19/4
19/6	DITCH	1.60	0.70		RB	N-S. SAME AS 20/5
19/7	FILL	1.60	0.70	4 ERB sherds animal bone FC - poss. loomweight frag.	RB	OF 19/6
19/8	DITCH	1.45	0.70		RB?	N-S
19/9	FILL	1.45	0.70		RB?	OF 19/8
19/10	DITCH	>0.70	0.30		RB?	N-S. CUT BY 19/8
19/11	FILL	>0.70	0.30		RB?	OF 19/10
Trench 20						
20/1	LAYER	-	<0.27		MOD	TOPSOIL
20/2	LAYER	-	<0.20		?	PLOUGHSOIL

20/3	DITCH	1.00	0.65		RB?	NW-SE
20/4	FILL	1.00	0.65	5 ERB sherds FC - i frag.	RB?	OF 20/3
20/5	DITCH	2.25	0.70		RB	N-S. SAME AS 19/6
20/6	FILL	2.25	0.30	4 ERB sherds	RB	OF 20/5
20/7	FILL	-	0.40		RB	OF 20/5
20/8	GULLY	0.30 x 7.00	0.20		RB?	W-E.
20/9	FILL	-	0.20		RB?	OF 20/8
20/10	PIT	1.65 x 0.65	0.45		RB?	CUTS 20/8
20/11	FILL	-	0.45	1 ERB sherd	RB?	OF 20/10
20/12	DITCH	1.20	0.40		RB?	RECUT OF 20/3
20/13	FILL	1.20	0.40		RB?	OF 20/12
Trench 21						
21/1	LAYER	-	<0.31		MOD	TOPSOIL
21/2	LAYER	-	<0.14		?	PLOUGHSOIL
21/3	NATURAL					SANDY CLAY
Trench 22				1 MIA sherd 2 ERB sherds FC - 2 frags.		unstratified
22/1	LAYER	-	<0.31		MOD	TOPSOIL
22/2	LAYER	-	<0.24	1 MED sherd FC - 2 frags	?	INC. 22/31,22/32
22/3	NATURAL					SILTY GRAVEL
22/4	DITCH	0.80	0.36	1 ERB sherd animal bone	RB?	W-E. CUT BY 22/6
22/5	FILL	0.80	0.36		RB?	OF 22/4
22/6	DITCH	0.80	0.35	1 ERB sherd	RB?	W-E. CUTS 22/4
22/7	FILL	0.80	0.35		RB?	OF 22/6
22/8	DITCH	1.65	0.64		RB	W-E
22/9	FILL	1.65	0.64	167 ERB sherds animal bone FC - 1 frag.	RB	OF 22/8
22/10	DITCH	2.00	0.77		RB	W-E
22/11	FILL	2.00	0.77	FC - 6 frags.	RB	OF 22/10
22/12	DITCH	1.52	0.78		RB?	W-E
22/13	FILL	1.52	0.78		RB?	OF 22/12
22/14	GULLY	4.20 x 0.20	0.18		RB	N-S.CUT BY 22/16
22/15	FILL	-	0.18	1 ERB sherd animal bone	RB	OF 22/14
22/16	GULLY	>6.00 x 0.25	0.11		RB	N-S CUTS 22/14
22/17	FILL	-	0.11	1 ERB sherd	RB	OF 22/16

22/18	VOID					
22/19	VOID			1 ERB sherd		
22/20	GULLY	>4.50 x 0.45	0.20		RB	RELATED TO 22/16
22/21	FILL	-	0.20	5 ERB sherds FC - 1 frag.	RB	OF 22/20
22/22	GULLY	0.75 x 0.27	0.20		RB	W-E BEAM SLOT
22/23	FILL	-	0.20	2 ERB sherds animal bone FC - 1 frag	RB	OF 22/22
22/24	GULLY	5.40 x 0.20	0.10		RB	N-S BEAM SLOT
22/25	FILL	-	0.10	3 ERB sherds	RB	OF 22/24
22/26	DITCH	1.20	0.48		RB?	W-E
22/27	FILL	1.20	0.48	9 ERB sherds FC - 1 frag.	RB?	OF 22/26
22/28	DITCH	0.70	0.20		RB?	W-E
22/29	FILL	-	0.10		RB?	OF 22/28
22/30	FILL	-	0.10		RB?	OF 22/28
22/31	LAYER	>14.0 N-S	<0.12	4 ERB sherds	RB	ARCH. HORIZON. INC IN LAYER 22/2
22/32	LAYER	-	<0.15		RB	W OF /22. =/31
22/33	P/HOLE	0.30	0.10		RB	
22/34	FILL	0.30	0.10		RB	OF 22/33
22/35	P/HOLE	0.20	0.22		RB	
22/36	FILL	0.20	0.22		RB	OF 22/35
22/37	P/HOLE	0.12	0.21		RB	
22/38	FILL	0.12	0.21		RB	OF 22/37
22/39	P/HOLE	0.18	0.20		RB?	SEALED BY /31
22/40	FILL	0.18	0.20		RB?	OF 22/39
22/41	P/HOLE	0.09	0.25		RB	
22/42	FILL	0.09	0.25		RB	OF 22/41
22/43	P/HOLE	0.23	0.22		RB	
22/44	FILL	0.23	0.22		RB	OF 22/43
22/45	P/HOLE	0.30	0.22		RB	
22/46	FILL	0.30	0.22		RB	OF 22/45
Trench 23				slag fragment?		?unstratified
23/1	LAYER	-	<0.34		MOD	TOPSOIL
23/2	LAYER	-	<0.10		?	PLOUGHSOIL
23/3	NATURAL					SANDY SILT
Trench 24						
24/1	LAYER	-	<0.38		MOD	TOPSOIL

24/2	LAYER	-	<0.20		?	PLOUGHSOIL
24/3	NATURAL					SILTY SAND
24/4	GULLY	0.65	0.12		RB?	W-E
24/5	FILL	0.65	0.12		RB?	OF 24/4
24/6	DITCH	2.50	0.50		RB?	W-E
24/7	FILL	-	0.12		RB?	OF 24/6
24/8	FILL	-	0.44		RB?	OF 24/6
24/9	FILL	-	0.12		RB?	OF 24/6
24/10	FILL	-	0.10		RB?	OF 24/6
Trench 25						
25/1	LAYER	-	<0.35		MOD	TOPSOIL
25/2	LAYER	-	<0.14		?	PLOUGHSOIL
25/3	NATURAL					SILTY SAND
25/4	DITCH	2.50	-		RB?	N-S. NOT EX.
25/5	FILL	2.50	-		RB?	OF 25/4
25/6	DITCH	>25.00 x >0.50	-		RB?	W-E. NOT EX.
25/7	FILL	-	-		RB?	OF 25/6
25/8	GULLY	0.50	-		RB?	N-S. NOT EX.
25/9	FILL	0.50	-		RB?	OF 25/8
25/10	GULLY	1.00	-		RB?	N-S. NOT EX.
25/11	FILL	1.00	-		RB?	OF 25/10
Trench 26						
26/1	LAYER	-	<0.30		MOD	TOPSOIL
26/2	LAYER	-	<0.10		?	PLOUGHSOIL
26/3	NATURAL					CLAYEY SAND
Trench 27						
27/1	LAYER	-	<0.26		MOD	TOPSOIL
27/2	LAYER	-	<0.26		?	PLOUGHSOIL
27/3	DITCH	>20.00	>0.80		RB?	N-S. NOT EX.
27/4	FILL	-	-		RB?	OF 27/3
27/5	GULLY	0.60	-		RB?	W-E. NOT EX.
27/6	FILL	0.60	-		RB?	OF 27/5
Trench 28						
28/1	LAYER	-	<0.28		MOD	TOPSOIL
28/2	LAYER	-	0.11		?	PLOUGHSOIL
28/3	NATURAL					CLAYEY SAND
28/4	DITCH	2.00	-		RB?	W-E. NOT EX.
28/5	FILL	2.00	-		RB?	OF 28/4

28/6	GULLY	1.00	-		RB?	W-E. NOT EX.
28/7	FILL	1.00	-		RB?	OF 28/6
28/8	DITCH	1.10	-		RB?	W-E. NOT EX.
28/9	FILL	1.10	-		RB?	OF 28/8
28/10	DITCH	2.30	-		RB?	W-E. NOT EX.
28/11	FILL	2.30	-		RB?	OF 28/10
Trench 29						
29/1	LAYER	-	<0.28		MOD	TOPSOIL
29/2	LAYER	-	<0.15		?	PLOUGHSOIL
29/3	DITCH	<1.00	0.30		?	N-S
29/4	FILL	<1.00	0.30	1 ?LBA sherd	?	OF 29/3
29/5	DITCH	1.45	0.80		RB?	NW-SE
29/6	FILL	-	0.60		RB?	OF 29/5
29/7	FILL	-	0.22		RB?	OF 29/5
Trench 30						
30/1	LAYER	-	<0.32		MOD	TOPSOIL
30/2	LAYER	-	<0.15		?	PLOUGHSOIL
30/3	LAYER	-	<0.09		?	NATURAL/PLOUGHSOIL
30/4	DITCH	2.00	-		RB?	W-E. NOT EX.
30/5	FILL	2.00	-		RB?	OF 30/4
Trench 31						
31/1	LAYER	-	<0.30		MOD	TOPSOIL
31/2	LAYER	-	<0.15		?	PLOUGHSOIL
31/3	DITCH	>30.00 x >0.7	-		RB?	W-E. NOT EX.
31/4	FILL	-	-		RB?	OF 31/3
31/5	GULLY	0.80	-		RB?	N-S. NOT EX.
31/6	FILL	0.80	-		RB?	OF 31/5
Trench 32						
32/1	LAYER	-	<0.42		MOD	TOPSOIL
32/2	LAYER	-	<0.16	1 PM sherd 1 frag PM tile FC - 1 frag. 1 Fe nail	?	PLOUGHSOIL
32/3	DITCH	1.12	0.35		RB	W-E
32/4	FILL	1.12	0.35	12 ERB sherds 1 ?ERB sherd 1 Fe nail	RB	OF 32/3
32/5	DITCH	1.50	0.80		RB	W-E
32/6	FILL	1.50	0.80	29 ERB sherds animal bone 1 oyster shell	RB	OF 32/5

32/7	GULLY	1.20	0.20		RB?	W-E
32/8	FILL	1.20	0.20		RB?	OF 32/7
32/9	DITCH	1.10	0.32		RB?	W-E
32/10	FILL	1.10	0.32		RB?	OF 32/9
32/11	GULLY	1.80	0.16		RB	W-E
32/12	FILL	1.80	0.16		RB	OF 32/11
Trench 33						
33/1	LAYER	-	<0.25		MOD	TOPSOIL
33/2	LAYER	-	<0.15		?	PLOUGHSOIL
33/3	DITCH	1.20	-		MOD?	W-E. NOT EX.
33/4	FILL	1.20	-		MOD?	OF 33/3
33/5	DITCH	1.30	-		RB?	W-E. NOT EX.
33/6	FILL	1.30	-		RB?	OF 33/5
33/7	DITCH	1.50	-		RB?	W-E. NOT EX.
33/8	FILL	1.50	-		RB?	OF 33/7
Trench 34						
34/1	LAYER	-	<0.27		MOD	TOPSOIL
34/2	LAYER	-	<0.12		RB?	RB GROUND SURFACE?
34/3	LAYER	-	0.14		RB?	EARLY PLOUGH/NAT?
34/4	DITCH	1.40	-		RB?	W-E. NOT EX.
34/5	FILL	1.40	-		RB?	OF 34/4
Trench 35						
35/1	LAYER	-	<0.45		MOD	TOPSOIL
35/2	LAYER	-	<0.20		?	PLOUGHSOIL
35/3	NATURAL					CLAYEY SAND
35/4	DITCH	2.20	-		RB	W-E. =22/8?
35/5	FILL	2.20	-		RB	OF 35/4
35/6	DITCH	>1.00	-		RB	W-E. =22/12
35/7	FILL	>1.00	-		RB	OF 35/6

APPENDIX 2

DIDCOT, OXFORDSHIRE

Report on Archaeogeophysical Survey of Site at Appleford Crossing

1993

A.D.H. Bartlett

Bartlett-Clark Consultancy

Didcot, Oxfordshire

Report on Archaeogeophysical Survey of site at Appleford Crossing

NGR: SU 522927

Introduction

This survey was carried out at the request of the Oxford Archaeological Unit to investigate the significance of cropmarks in this field, which adjoins an area of former gravel workings north of Didcot. The cropmarks are indicated approximately in relation to the survey outline on plan 1. They include a double ditched rectangular enclosure which could be of Romano-British date, but could also perhaps be a relatively modern field boundary or enclosure. The survey was carried out on 16-18 September 1993, and a preliminary summary of the results was supplied for use during subsequent trenching.

Survey procedure

The location of the survey is shown in outline on an enlarged map extract on plan 1. The survey grid, as indicated by crosses on the plan, was tied in to the site by means of measurements to the signal box and cottage at the NE corner, and to the field boundaries and road at the SE corner. Details of these measurements can be supplied on request. A new road, not shown on the map, now crosses the NE corner of the field, which was not surveyed.

The survey was carried out using a Geoscan FM18 fluxgate gradiometer with readings recorded at a rate of 3 per metre along traverses 1m apart. The results are presented both as a graphical or trace plot, and as a half tone plot on plan 2. High readings are represented by dark shading on the half tone plot.

The plots included here are based on a processed version of the data in which high readings (usually caused by buried iron) have been truncated, irregularities in line spacing caused by variations in the instrument zero setting have been corrected, and the results smoothed to reduce background noise levels and emphasise the broader features which may be archaeologically significant.

The magnetometer survey was supplemented by soil magnetic susceptibility measurements taken using a Bartington MS2D field coil at 20m intervals across the survey area. These are plotted in the form of shaded squares on plan 3.

Additional magnetic susceptibility measurements were taken for comparison with the field readings from soil samples collected at 40m intervals from the locations marked by crosses on plan 3. The low frequency magnetic susceptibility was measured for each sample after drying and sieving to provide an accurate control value. These readings produced results largely consistent with those from the more intensive field coil survey, as noted below.

Results

It is clear from the plots shown on plan 2 that the survey has produced only very limited findings. The features causing the cropmarks have not been detected, and there is no sign of magnetic activity from within the area of the enclosure that would suggest it was the site of a settlement. A number of features have been detected elsewhere in the survey, some of which may be of possible archaeological interest, although others are not.

Magnetic disturbances visible in the plots include a number of isolated narrow magnetic anomalies, most of which are likely to be caused by iron. These are particularly concentrated in the NW corner where there may be a spread of debris from the material used for filling the former gravel pit which adjoins the survey on the west. There is another cluster of iron anomalies at the SE corner of the field, and there is an anomaly probably representing a pipe at the SW. Other features include broad undulating anomalies of a kind likely to be caused by natural variations in the depth of soil cover above the relatively non-magnetic gravel. These are most noticeable to the east of the field, although they are faintly visible throughout.

Only a few magnetic anomalies can be identified which may be worth investigating in case they are of any archaeological significance, and these are outlined on plot 2(i). Some of these could represent pits, especially those labelled A and B, which are relatively strong and distinct. Others are broad and irregular, and may be only natural hollows in the subsoil. A curving ditch-like feature (C) has been outlined, but this is probably only a rather more sharply defined version of the wider natural anomalies noted above and visible elsewhere in the survey.

The topsoil magnetic susceptibility readings, as seen on plan 3, show only limited variation, with no clearly defined area of enhancement except at the west side of the survey, where the readings are likely to be affected by soil spread from the raised filling of the neighbouring landfill site. There is also a slight increase in readings at the north end of the field near the road. The high sensitivity measurements taken from the soil samples show a similar pattern, although with some enhancement in the NE corner of the field where nothing of significance can be seen in the magnetometer survey.

Conclusions

Other previous surveys of cropmark sites on Thames gravels in South Oxfordshire have proved productive, and the fact that in this case slight natural geomorphological disturbances have been detected also suggests that the site should be reasonably responsive to a magnetometer survey. The lack of any substantial findings from both the magnetometer and the magnetic susceptibility surveys of this field does probably therefore indicate a genuine absence of any concentrations of archaeological features.

The lack of response from the enclosure ditches, and other cropmark features, suggests that they may be shallow with little magnetic contrast between the filling and the natural gravel. It is also unlikely that they are contemporary with any significant occupation of the site, and so there has not been any magnetic suceptibility enhancement of the soil making up the fill.

It therefore appears unlikely that the field was the site of substantial or prolonged settlement activity, or of industry which usually creates considerable magnetic disturbance. Some small scale archaeological activity, limited in intensity or duration, could however have taken place here, as indicated by the few magnetic anomalies which were detected.

A. Bartlett BSc MPhil

Unit 2
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20 October 1993

B.Y. Turton MA and A. Gilbert BA assisted with the fieldwork for this survey. Dr A.J. Clark FSA has advised on interpretation.

20 x 10 $^{-8}$ SI/kg

0

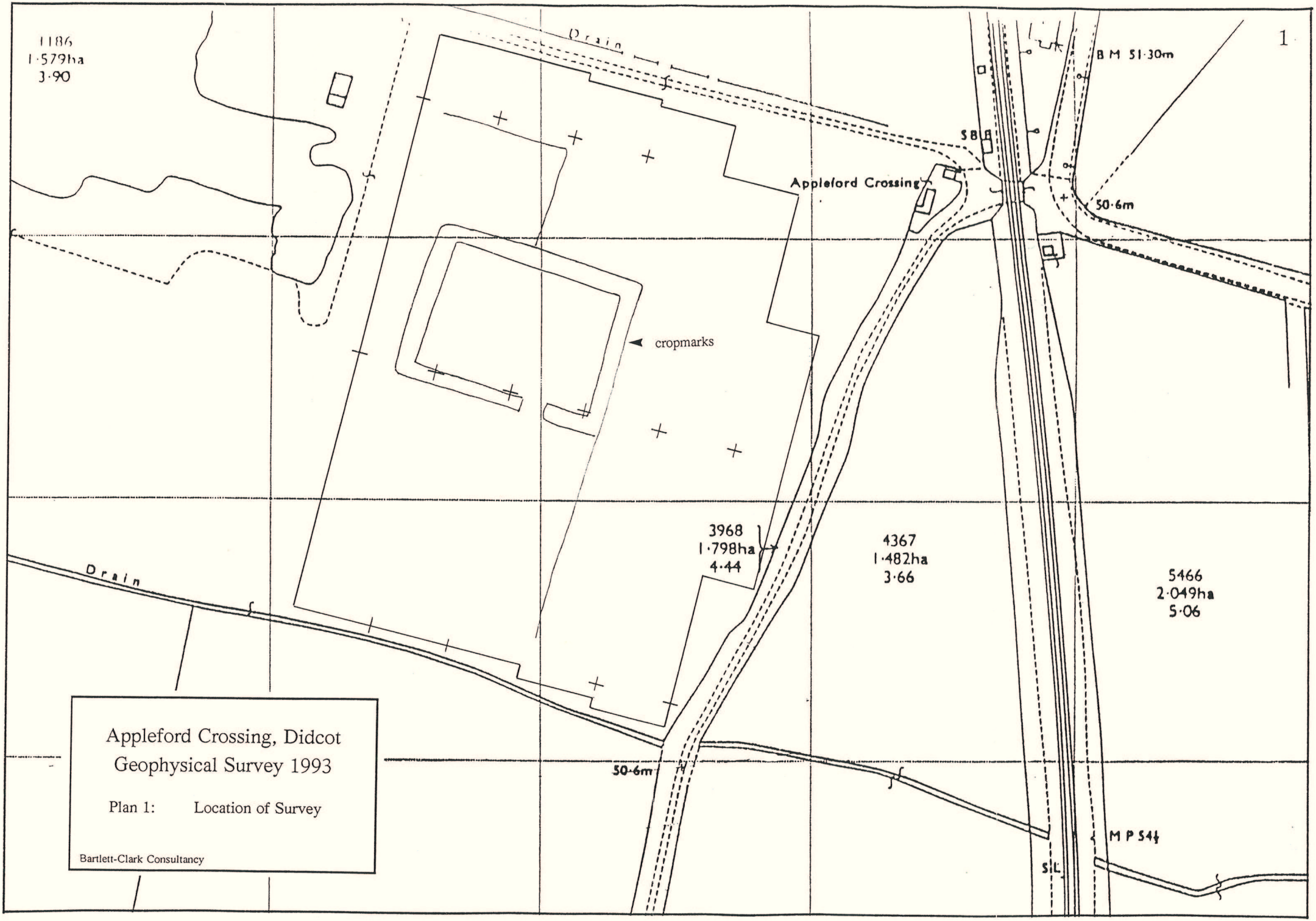
Magnetic Susceptibility Survey

0 1:2500 100m

\+ soil sample location

Bartlett-Clark Consultancy

Appleford Crossing, Didcot
Geophysical Survey 1993: Plan 3

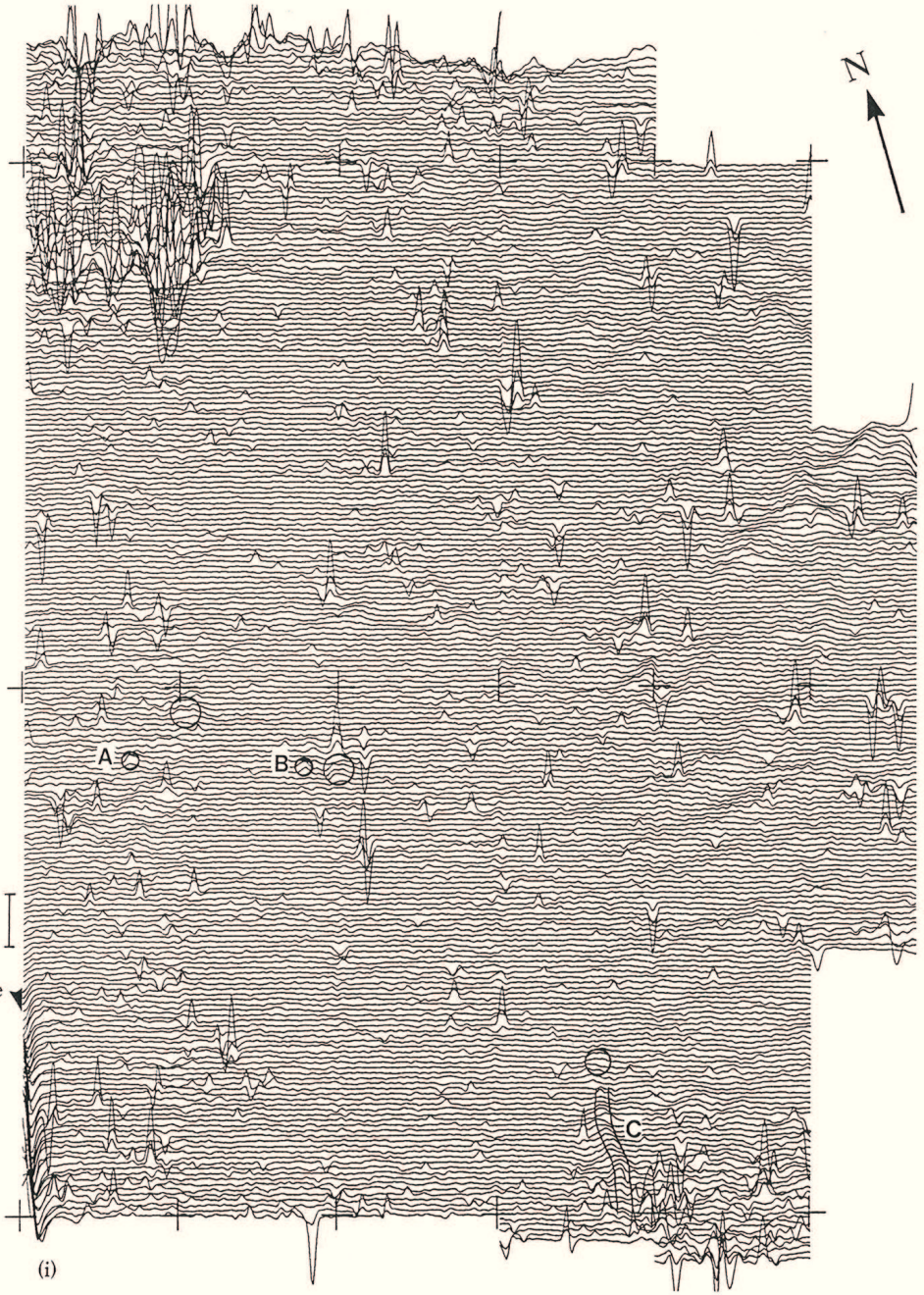


1

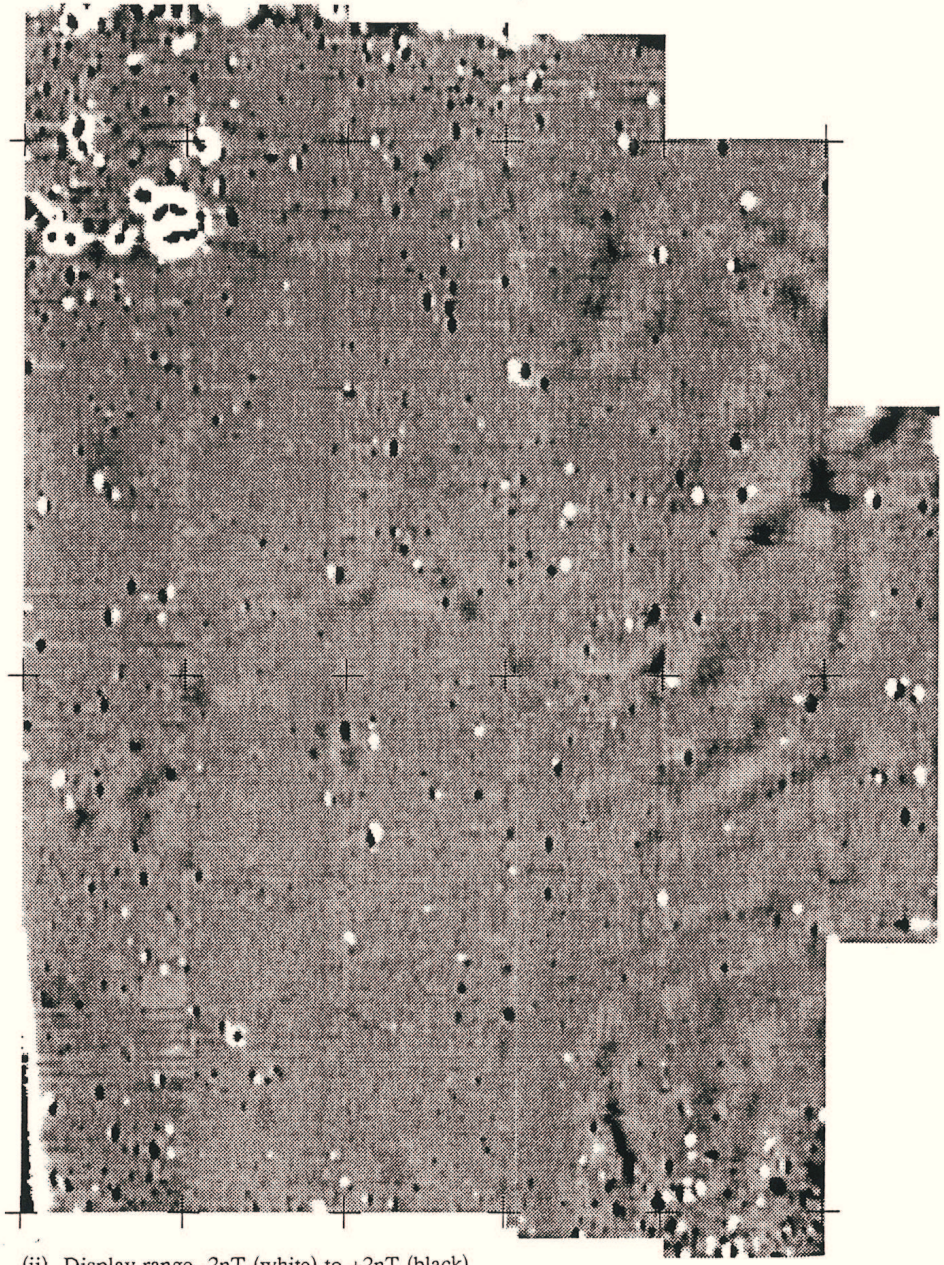
Appleford Crossing, Didcot
Geophysical Survey 1993

Plan 1: Location of Survey

Bartlett-Clark Consultancy



(i)



(ii) Display range -2nT (white) to +2nT (black)

0 1:1000 30m

○ magnetic anomalies

Magnetometer Survey

Bartlett-Clark Consultancy

Appleford Crossing, Didcot
Geophysical Survey 1993: Plan 2

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