

FAIRFORD (GL)

CHURCHBERRY MANOR  
FAIRFORD, GLOUCESTERSHIRE  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT  
AUGUST 1989

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

## *FAIRFORD, CHURCHBERRY MANOR*

### INTRODUCTION

An archaeological assessment of the site was undertaken in August 1989 by the Oxford Archaeological Unit, on behalf of ARC, to assess the extent and type of archaeological activity across the area. The application site occupies approximately 13ha and is located on the second gravel terrace west of the River Coln (centred SP145000). Topographically the site consists of a low central gravel plateau, with the ground falling away gently to the east and west. The present land use is arable. The land immediately to the south and east has, or is in the process of, being extracted for gravel.

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The assessment area is situated in a well known area of archaeological remains, identified from aerial photography, extending over the gravel terraces of the Thames, Coln and Leach. In particular aerial photography and fieldwalking undertaken in 1983, as part of the Cotswold Water Park survey, have indicated several areas of potential archaeological interest within the assessment site. These consist of :

- 1 A prehistoric barrow and associated ring ditch in the north west corner of the site. English Heritage are in the process of scheduling these monuments (see plan 1).
- 2 A possible enclosure recognised by aerial photography and associated with some flint in the south west corner of the site.
- 3 A potential Romano-British site, at the south end of the area, observed by both aerial photography and fieldwalking. Small amounts of Romano-British pottery and tile were noted in association with the ploughed foundation of a stone and mortar wall.
- 4 To the north of the assessment area aerial photography had indicated linear features which may have continued into the site.

### STRATEGY

The objective of the exercise was to assess the character, preservation and density of any archaeological remains. Initial sampling consisted of trenches 30m x 1.6m. laid out in a systematic grid over the area, in order to provide a 2% sample of the total site. Supplementary trenches were then placed to establish more precisely the extent of dense areas of archaeological activity. These trenches were excavated using a 360° excavator with a 5 foot ditching bucket.

A sample of archaeological features was excavated by hand to obtain dating evidence and to assess their character and the state of environmental preservation.

## SOILS

The modern ploughsoil consisted of a silty loam containing approximately 20% gravel. It varied in depth between 0.20 - 0.25m. On the gravel plateau this directly overlay the natural gravel. In the rest of the assessment area, beneath the modern ploughsoil, there was a subsoil of clay loam varying in depth between 0.10 - 0.20m.

## RESULTS (Plans 1,2,4,5)

### Relic Stream Course: Trenches 7 and 8 (Plan 3)

In the eastern part of the assessment area a relic water course was located in the southern half of Trench 7, orientated approximately NW - SE. Further south the same water channel was discovered in the centre of Trench 8 running approximately north - south. The channel would have originally contained organic material but this had become desiccated following the lowering or fluctuations of the water table.

### Dated Early Iron Age Activity: Trenches 2,17,18 and 44. (Plans 1,4,5)

Two post holes were located in the eastern half of Trench 2. Post hole 2\3 contained three body sherds of Iron Age pottery.

Trench 17 also contained two postholes, both were located near the centre of the trench and both contained one body sherd of Iron Age pottery. Four postholes were discovered in the eastern half of Trench 18 - 18/7 contained two sherds of Iron Age pottery (one sherd was of diagnostically angular type).

Trench 44 7 postholes were observed, spread over the entire length of the trench but were not excavated. However the similarity of the fills in these features with those mentioned above and the close location of this trench to trenches 2,17 and 18 makes an Iron Age ascription for these features very probable.

## Roman Activity

### 1) Roman Structure: Trenches 31 and 50 (plan 2)

The principal evidence of Roman occupation came from a masonry structure located in Trenches 31 & 50, part of which had been noted, in association with Romano-British pottery and tile, in the fieldwalking undertaken in 1983 and had been indicated by a rubble scatter. Trench 31 was placed in order to transect the area. This revealed several masonry walls orientated approximately NE-SW and NW-SE. Trench 50 was placed at right angles to Trench 31 in order to establish more precisely the extent and character of this structure.

In these two trenches a rectilinear structure was uncovered (plan 2), it was orientated roughly NE-SW and was approximately 10m long and 7m wide. It was characterised on the north and west sides by a double set of walls c.0.20m apart. Stratigraphy at the south west corner indicated that these were of two separate phases.

A wall running NW-SE inside the structure was partly robbed but enough survived to show it overlay the inner of the paired walls. It probably represented an internal division.

All the walls were made of limestone rubble and were only preserved to a maximum of 0.15m above natural, having been damaged by successive ploughing. They were covered by approximately 0.20m of ploughsoil. The state of preservation of the walls was fairly good but with only a single mortared course surviving. Pitched limestone footings were in evidence particularly on the north and east sides.

Evidence of another structure in this area were indicated by two areas of disturbed and burnt wall footing. Similarity of construction and the presence of burning on both suggest they were related. They appeared to form two corners of a structure. One was sited adjacent to the SW corner of the above described structure and the other lay within it c six metres to the NE.

No associated floor levels were discovered, however limited stratigraphy was found in the lee of the walls where it had not been destroyed by ploughing. Finds from this area were sparse and consisted of 12 undiagnostic Roman pottery sherds, three iron nails and one copper alloy broken pin.

### 2) Roman Enclosures: Trenches 13,19,22,28,29 and 49. (Plans 4,5)

In Trench 13 a ditch (13/5) orientated NE-SW and a small pit (13/4) were located 10m from the south end of the trench. A Roman pottery sherd was recovered from the ditch fill.

Trench 19 contained five postholes spread over the eastern half of the trench. They were not excavated. In the western end of the trench a ditch 19/3 was encountered, orientated approximately NW - SE. No finds were recovered, however the close spatial proximity of these features to the masonry remains and the orientation of the ditch, which is on the same axis as the other linear features around the masonry structure and is similar to that of the building itself, ( trenches 22,28,29 and 49) makes a date in the Roman period likely.

In Trench 22 four ditches were located all aligned SW - NE. Only the largest ditch 22/5, ten metres from the south end of the trench was mechanically excavated. No finds were recovered. The other three ditches contained similar fills; the orientation of these ditches leads one to conclude that they are probably of Roman date.

Trench 28 produced a series of features. These included eight postholes, three pits and three ditches concentrated in the northern half of the trench. A Roman date is suggested for these features due to their proximity to the Roman structures. Ditch 28/9 is also aligned on a similar NW - SE axis as the other linear features in the area.

In Trench 29 one ditch was located running approximately NE - SW but was not excavated. Its orientation makes a date in the Roman period likely.

Trench 49 produced three postholes, one pit and a ditch, again aligned NW - SE, at the south end of the trench; they were not excavated. Similar reasons to those outlined above lead to the ascription of a Roman date.

#### Undated Archaeological Features: Trenches 5,16,26,30,36,39 & 41 (Plans 4,5)

Four postholes and a small pit were discovered in Trench 5. At the western end of Trench 16 a linear feature running north - south was located. Trench 26 contained an oval pit, which was not excavated. Four postholes and a ditch orientated north-south recut on its east side, were recorded in the eastern half of Trench 30.

Trench 36 contained, in its eastern half, two intercutting pits, two postholes and the terminal of a ditch or gully. No finds were recovered, however the presence of substantial pits, possibly up to 2.5m in diameter, suggests that these features may belong to the Iron Age. Four postholes, two pits and a ditch, orientated east - west, were found in the south end of Trench 39. Ditch 39/9 produced two sherds of pottery from its upper fill: one was certainly Roman, the other was possible early Saxon (? grass tempered ware). At its north end two further post holes were recorded. A ditch running ESE-WNW and turning south five metres from the east end of Trench 41 was recorded but not excavated.

## SUMMARY (Plan 3)

- 1 No monuments of the early prehistoric period were located that could be associated with the barrows in the NW corner of the assessment area.
- 2 Roman activity, consisting of a masonry structure and associated enclosures, was defined. The stone structure was of at least two phases, although it is not preserved to any great height (maximum 0.15m) and associated stratigraphy is limited in both depth and extent. A further structure was also indicated. The enclosures were demarcated by the various ditches discovered in trenches 13,19,22, 28,29 and 49. Occupation debris (pottery, bone etc.) was extremely sparse and dating of most of the enclosures is by spatial association and alignment. Plan 3 indicates the probable extent of this activity.
- 3 Dated early Iron Age activity was located in a specific area on the central gravel plateau. Further archaeological activity albeit sparse was encountered over the vast majority of the rest of this gravel plateau. The nature of it would be commensurate with the later prehistoric period. Plan 2 shows the extent of the gravel plateau.
- 4 No evidence of occupation was found in the south west corner of the site, to corroborate with the potential enclosure recognised as a cropmark.
- 5 No evidence was found of any linear features continuing in the assessment site from the north as postulated from cropmarks observed to the north of the area.
- 6 The soil preserved pottery, bone and metal work. There seems little potential for the survival of organic remains. Material in the relic water channel was in a very desiccated condition due to recent lowering and fluctuations in the watertable.

Oxford Archaeological Unit  
21 September 1989

## Fairford: Churchberry Manor

## Context Concordance

Context Type	Width	Depth	Findings	Date	Excavated
** Trench = 2					
3 Posthole	0.42	0.09	3-sherds pottery	IA	Yes
4 Posthole?	0.50	0.33	2 pieces bone	IA	Yes
** Trench = 5					
3 Posthole	0.60	0.15			Yes
4 Posthole	0.28	0.11			Yes
5 Posthole	0.42	0.09			Yes
6 Posthole?	0.33	0.07			Yes
7 Pit	0.70	0.19			Yes
** Trench = 13					
4 Pit	0.70	0.10		Roman?	Yes
5 Ditch	3.00	0.70	Fe nail, 2 bones, 1 sherd pottery	Roman	Yes
** Trench = 16					
3 Ditch?	1.50	0.38			Yes
** Trench = 17					
4 Posthole	0.40	0.08	1 sherd of pottery	IA	Yes
5 Posthole	0.50	0.33	1 sherd of pottery	IA	Yes
** Trench = 18					
4 Posthole	0.54	0.20		IA	Yes
5 Posthole	0.40	0.20		IA	Yes
6 Posthole	0.48	0.10		IA	Yes
7 Posthole	0.45	0.24	2 sherds of pottery	IA	Yes
** Trench = 19					
3 Ditch	1.70	0.75		Roman?	Yes
4 Posthole	0.60	0.00		Roman?	No
5 Posthole?	0.76	0.00		Roman?	No
6 Posthole	0.40	0.00		Roman?	No
7 Posthole?	0.90	0.00		Roman?	No
8 Posthole	0.50	0.00		Roman?	No
** Trench = 22					
4 Ditch	1.80	0.00		Roman?	No
5 Ditch	3.00	0.35		Roman?	Yes
6 Ditch	0.60	0.00		Roman?	No
7 Ditch	0.50	0.00		Roman?	No
** Trench = 26					
4 Pit	0.75	0.00			No
** Trench = 28					
3 Posthole	0.40	0.00		Roman?	No
4 Posthole	0.15	0.00		Roman?	No
5 Posthole	0.08	0.00		Roman?	No
6 Posthole	0.45	0.00		Roman?	No
7 Posthole	0.50	0.00		Roman?	No
8 Posthole	0.15	0.00		Roman?	No
9 Ditch	1.35	0.00		Roman?	No
10 Pit	1.45	0.00		Roman?	No
11 Pit	1.50	0.00		Roman?	No
12 Pit?	0.40	0.00		Roman?	No

Context Type	Width	Depth	Finds	Date	Excavated
13 Posthole	0.40	0.00		Roman?	No
14 Posthole	0.45	0.00		Roman?	No
15 Pit??	0.20	0.00		Roman?	No
16 Ditch	0.90	0.00		Roman?	No
** Trench = 29					
3 Ditch	0.95	0.00		Roman?	No
** Trench = 30					
4 Posthole	0.45	0.43			Yes
5 Posthole	0.80	0.70			Yes
6 Posthole	0.43	0.13			Yes
7 Ditch	0.73	0.20		Modern?	Yes
8 Ditch	0.66	0.36		Modern?	Yes
9 Posthole	0.69	0.19			Yes
** Trench = 31					
4 Wall	0.89	0.15		Roman	Yes
5 Layer	1.50	0.15	5 pottery sherds + bone	Roman	Yes
6 Wall	0.90	0.06		Roman	Yes
7 Wall	0.90	0.17		Roman	Yes
8 Layer	0.00	0.08	1 Fe nail	Roman	Yes
9 Layer	0.80	0.15	2 pottery sherds	Roman	Yes
10 Wall	0.83	0.15	1 pottery sherd	Roman	Yes
11 Layer	7.00	0.25	4 pottery sherds, 1 Fe nail	Roman	Yes
12 Wall	0.70	0.08	Cu alloy pin or needle	Roman	Yes
13 Wall	0.75	0.18		Roman	Yes
14 Wall	0.50	0.08		Roman	Yes
15 Layer	4.50	0.20		Roman	Yes
16 Wall	0.55	0.09		Roman	Yes
17 Ditch	1.25	0.00		Roman	No
18 Layer	0.25	0.12		Roman	Yes
19 Wall	0.44	0.08		Roman	Yes
20 Ditch?	2.00	0.25		Roman	Yes
21 Gully?	0.90	0.30		Roman	Yes
22 Layer	1.00	0.15		Roman	Yes
23 Layer	1.50	0.18		Roman	Yes
** Trench = 36					
4 Posthole	0.55	0.60		IA?	Yes
5 Pit	1.80	0.23		IA?	Yes
6 Pit	1.30	0.00		IA?	No
7 Posthole	0.40	0.00		IA?	No
** Trench = 39					
4 Posthole?	0.00	0.00			No
5 Posthole	0.40	0.00			No
6 Posthole	0.40	0.00			No
7 Pit	0.81	0.00			No
8 Posthole	0.31	0.00			No
9 Ditch	4.00	0.00	2 sherds of pottery + bone	L.R/Sxn	No
10 Pit??	1.06	0.65			Yes
11 Posthole	0.31	0.00			No
12 Posthole	0.37	0.00			No
** Trench = 41					
4 Ditch	0.75	0.00			No
** Trench = 44					
4 Posthole	0.37	0.00		IA?	No
5 Posthole	0.45	0.00		IA?	No
6 Posthole	0.42	0.00		IA?	No
7 Posthole	0.47	0.00		IA?	No
8 Posthole	0.40	0.00		IA?	No
9 Posthole	0.50	0.00		IA?	No

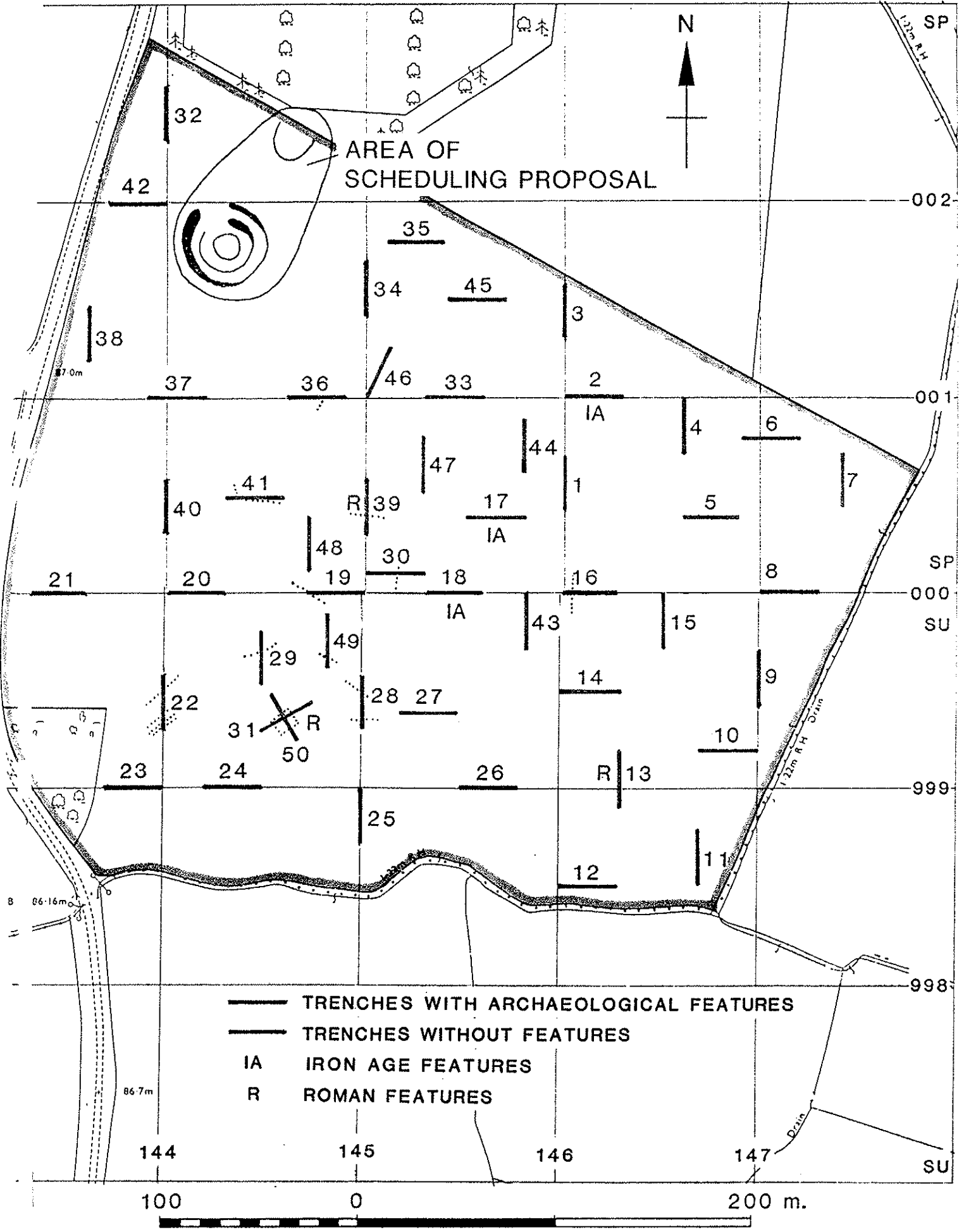


Context Type	Width	Depth	Finds	Date	Excavated
** Trench = 49					
3 Posthole	0.32	0.00		Roman?	No
4 Posthole	0.31	0.00		Roman?	No
5 Pit	0.85	0.00		Roman?	No
6 Ditch	0.90	0.00		Roman?	No
7 Posthole	0.31	0.00		Roman?	No

Fig 1

FCM 89

O.A.U. ASSESSMENT

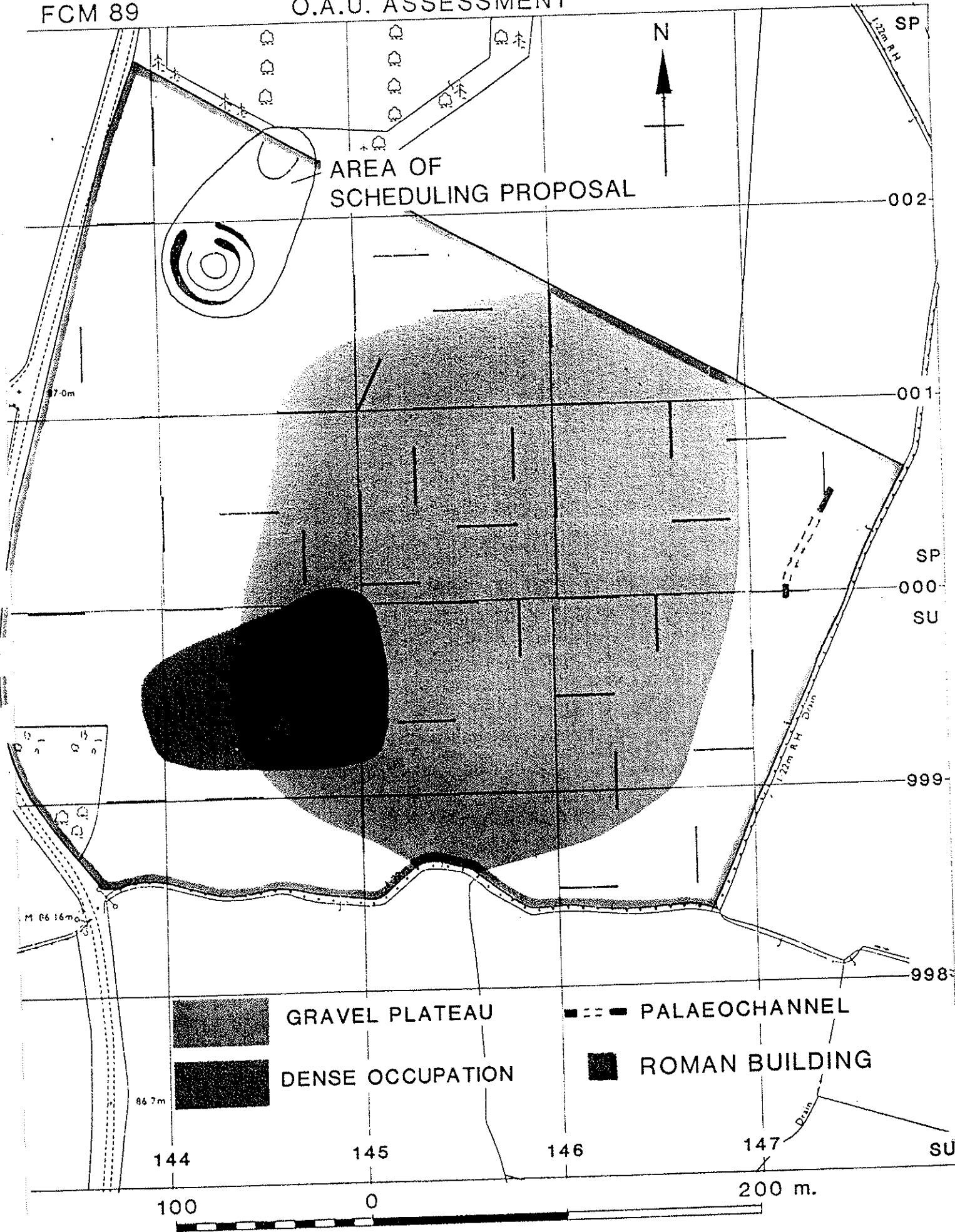


- TRENCHES WITH ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES
- TRENCHES WITHOUT FEATURES
- IA IRON AGE FEATURES
- R ROMAN FEATURES

100 0 200 m.

FCM 89

# O.A.U. ASSESSMENT



AREA OF SCHEDULING PROPOSAL

GRAVEL PLATEAU

DENSE OCCUPATION

PALAEOCHANNEL

ROMAN BUILDING

144

145

146

147

SU

100

0

200 m.

SP

002

001

SP

000

SU

999

998

SU

N

87.0m

M 86 16m

86.7m

122m R.H.

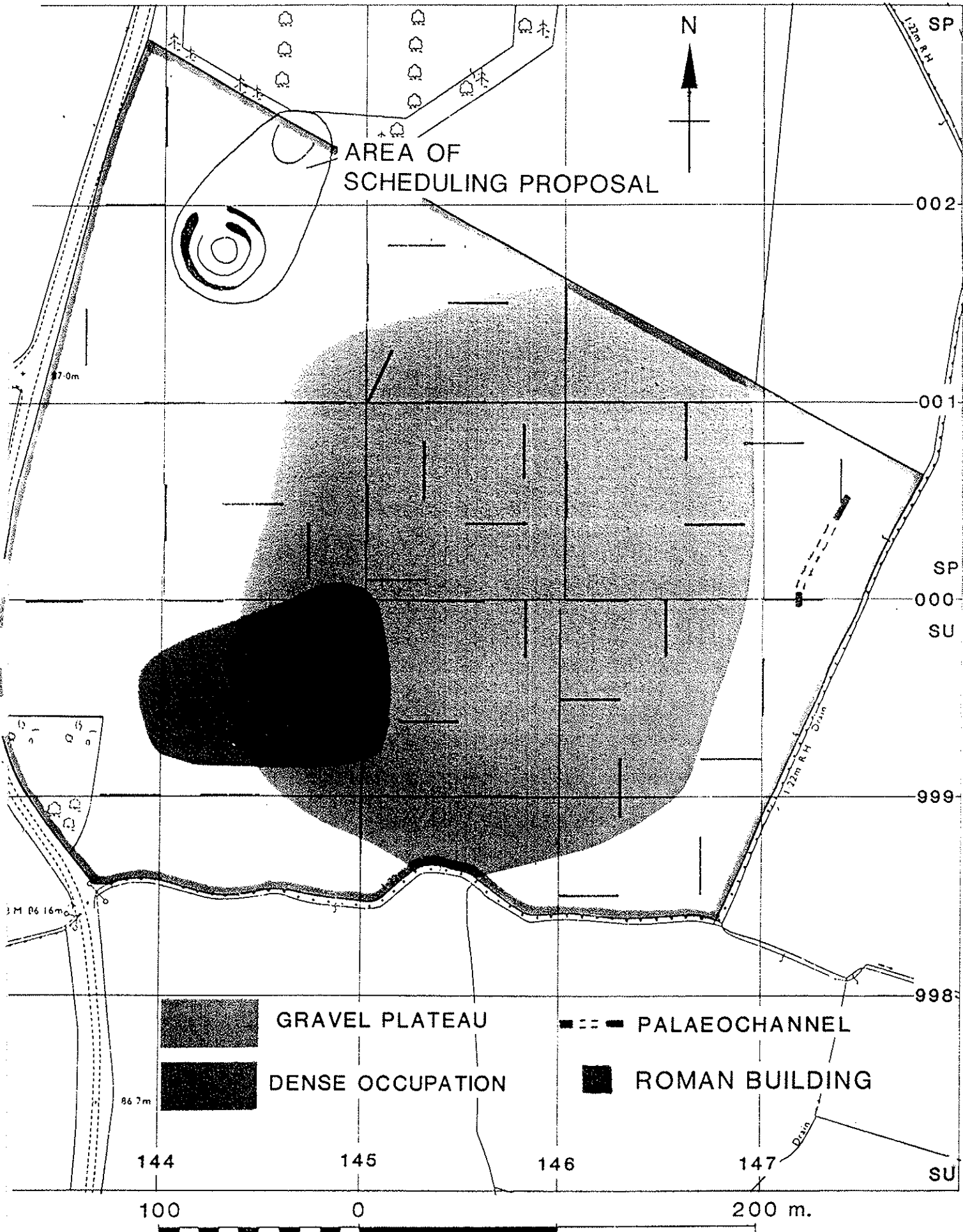
122m R.H. Drain

Drain

Fig 3

FCM 89

O.A.U. ASSESSMENT



AREA OF SCHEDULING PROPOSAL

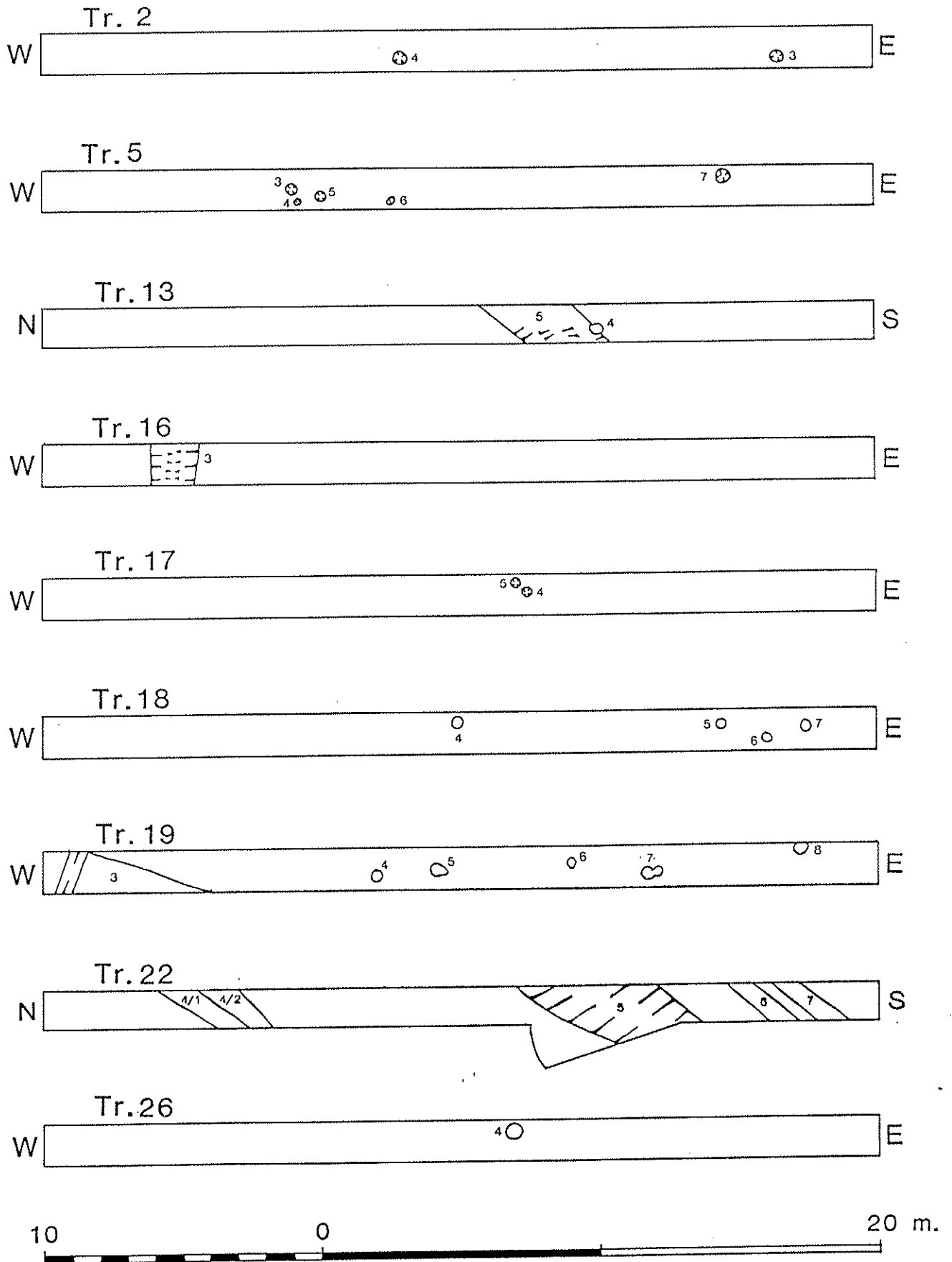


- GRAVEL PLATEAU
- DENSE OCCUPATION
- PALAEOCHANNEL
- ROMAN BUILDING

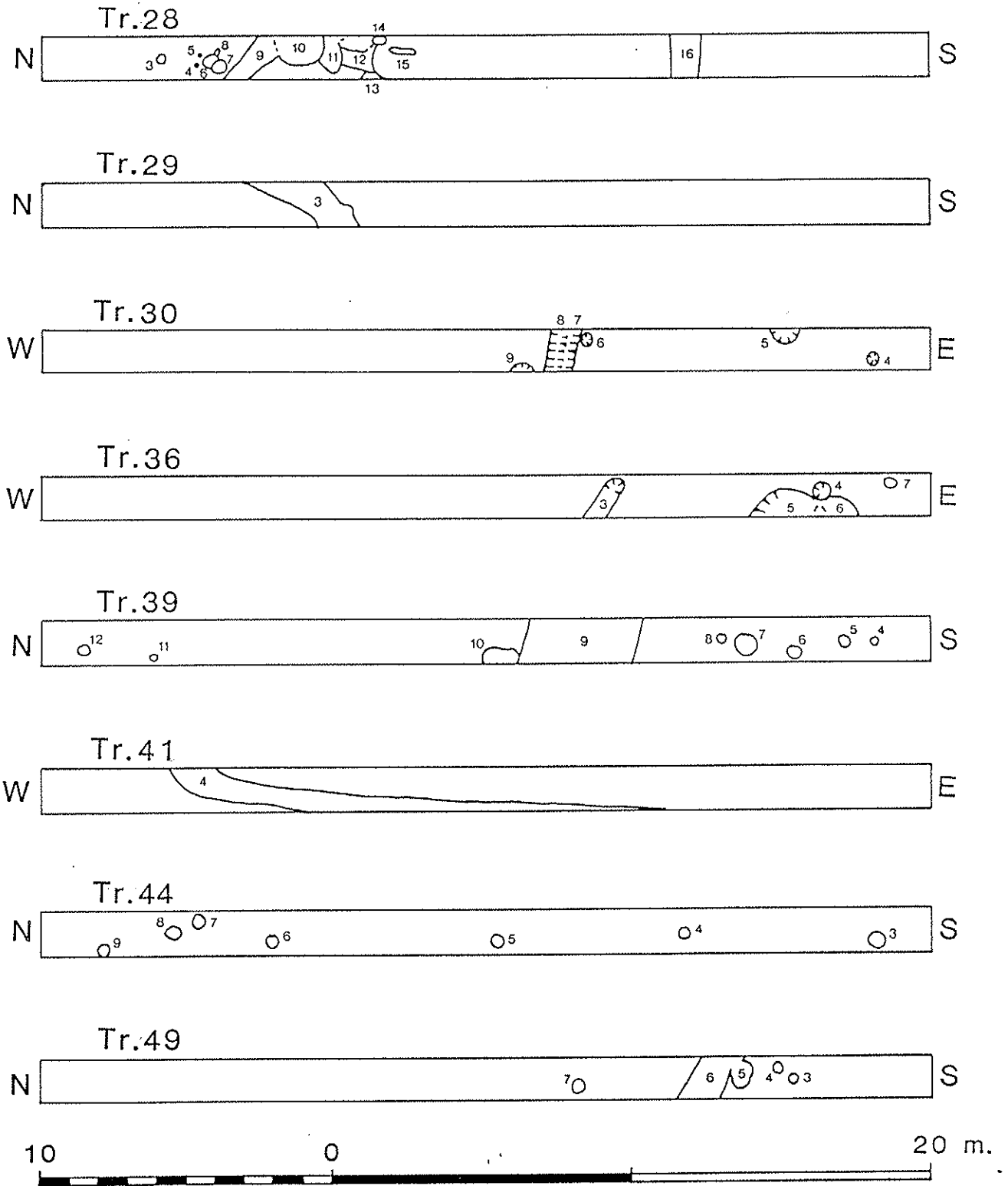
144 145 146 147 SU

100 0 200 m.

FCM 89



FCM 89





## OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES

Tel: 01865 263800 Fax: 01865 793496

email: [postmaster@oau-oxford.com](mailto:postmaster@oau-oxford.com) [www.oau-oxford.com](http://www.oau-oxford.com)



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Director and Chief Executive: David Jennings B.A., M.I.F.A. Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited.  
Private Limited Company Number: 1618597 Registered Charity Number: 285627.  
Registered Office: Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES