

COVER CONSTRUCTION CO. LTD

**LAND AT THE REAR OF THE EAGLE,  
CHURCH VIEW,  
BAMPTON, OXON**

NGR SP 3129 0316

Planning Application No. W99/0208

**Archaeological Evaluation Report**

Oxford Archaeological Unit  
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# LAND AT THE REAR OF THE EAGLE CHURCH VIEW, BAMPTON

## Archaeological Evaluation Report

### *Summary*

*An archaeological evaluation on land at the rear of the Eagle, in Bampton, Oxon, demonstrated the presence of late Saxon and early Medieval deposits and features, principally a series of ditches, one of which was up to 6 m wide, and a later stone wall footing. At least some of the features could relate to the Minster precinct, known to have occupied land around St Mary's Church to the north.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) was commissioned to undertake a field evaluation on land to the rear of the Eagle public house, in Bampton, Oxon (NGR SP 3129 0316), on behalf of Cover Construction Co. Ltd, in advance of a proposed development of six dwellings (Planning Application No. W99/0208). The archaeological evaluation was required in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG16) because of the presence of known sites of archaeological interest in the immediate vicinity of the development. The evaluation brief was set by, and a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) agreed with, the Deputy County Archaeological Officer Hugh Coddington.

### 2. TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 2.1 The historic core of Bampton, of which the development site is a part, lies on a gravel terrace on the north bank of the upper Thames, in a bend of the Shill Brook. The geology is loams overlying limestone gravels.

### 3. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The small market town of Bampton has its origins as an Anglo Saxon religious community with royal connections, whose importance continued into the medieval period. Work by the Bampton Minster Research Project (Blair 1986, 1988, 1994) has established that a Minster church stood at the site of the extant medieval Church of St Mary. The Minster Church stood within a large precinct defined by a substantial boundary ditch, the northern part of which has been reasonably well defined, and is still echoed by the line of some roads, particularly Landells.
- 3.2 The development site itself lies some 200 m south of the church, and does not appear to have suffered from modern intrusions, although the presence of small areas of contamination (see below) indicates that there may have been some medieval or post-medieval activity in the vicinity. More recently the site was a school playing field.

#### **4. GEOTECHNICAL SURVEY**

- 4.1 A preliminary survey of the site was undertaken by The Geotechnical Services Practice in April 1998 (GSP Report No C/277). A series of boreholes established the general stratigraphy of the surface deposits on the site, being terrace gravels overlaid by ploughsoil and topsoil, although there was some evidence of modern disturbance and dumping in the eastern part of the site. There was also some evidence of contamination, particularly in the north-west part of the site.

#### **5. AIMS**

- 5.1 The aim of the archaeological evaluation was, as specified in the WSI, to establish the presence/absence, extent, condition, character and date of any archaeological deposits within the area affected by the proposed invasive development, and, on the basis of the results in the field, define any relevant research priorities should further investigation be required.

#### **6. METHODOLOGY *Fig 2***

- 6.1 Four trenches were sited to target the areas of proposed invasive development. The trenches were excavated using a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket. Each trench was excavated down to the highest significant archaeological horizon or natural gravel, whichever came first. Exposed archaeological features were manually cleaned and recorded, and a representative sample of features was partially excavated, to assess the character of the deposits and recover dating evidence.

- 6.2 Archaeological recording of the deposits was in accordance with standard OAU procedures (Wilkinson 1992).

##### **6.3 Finds**

- 6.3.1 The machined overburden was examined for finds during the excavation process. Obviously modern finds were noted but not retained.

##### **6.4 Environmental Data**

- 6.4.1 No deposits revealed during the evaluation were determined to have significant potential for the preservation of environmental data.

## 7. RESULTS

### 7.1 General

The overburden was stripped by machine. In section it was seen to be a loamy topsoil overlying a varied depth of ploughsoil. The general depth of the overburden was in the region of 0.50 – 0.60 m. It was clear that the tops of the revealed archaeological features had therefore been truncated to some degree by the ploughing. Sherds of late- and post-medieval pottery were recovered from the machined material.

### 7.2 Trench 1. N-S 19.4 m x 1.60 m *Figs 2 & 3*

7.2.1 The natural gravel was identified at a minimum level of 69.24 OD at the northern end of the trench.

7.2.2 The earliest feature identified was a west-east oriented ditch [16] at the north end of the trench which measured up to 6.00 m wide in plan. A sample excavation of its northern side showed a depth of at least 1.3 m and a profile slope of around 45°. Against the north side of the cut was a deposit of mixed gravel and reddish brown silty clay (15), possibly the slumped remains of a bank which may have been thrown up on the northern side of the ditch. The rest of the exposed lower fill (14) was a dark grey silty clay with charcoal flecking, which produced two sherds of 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century pottery, bone fragments and a fragment of an iron spur.

7.2.3 In the southern half of the trench was a north-south oriented 0.40 m wide x 0.40 m deep gully [69] with near vertical sides. The gully was truncated by later features, but appeared to have been at least 7.3 m in length. Its fill (70) produced 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century pottery.

7.2.4 Ditch 6 was situated 1 m to the south of and parallel to ditch 16, and was 1.10 m wide and up to 0.38 m deep, and was seen to be cutting the north-south gully [69]. Its grey/brown silty clay fill (7) produced no finds. A possible gully [8] was identified on the north side of ditch 6, apparently extending across the line of ditch 6. Although it could represent a continuation to the north of gully 69, it was on a noticeably different alignment, and had a significantly less vertically sided profile.

7.2.5 South of ditch 6 the edge of a shallow irregular feature [33] oriented north-east – south-west, was defined. This had been partly infilled (34) and then cut through by the construction trench [35] for a west-east stone wall (17).

7.2.6 The construction of the wall was indicated by evidence in section of a construction cut [35] against the west-east part of the wall, cutting through the lower fill (34), of a possibly natural hollow [33]. Further evidence of a construction cut [66] was seen in section on the west side of wall 17. The wall itself (17) was roughly faced on both north and south sides and survived as up to five courses of unmortared limestone slabs in a silty clay matrix. Most of

the 9 m long return wall to the north was marked by a robber trench [10], the fill of which (11) produced some residual 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century pottery. A 1.7 m length of wall (12) at the northern end survived over the infilled ditch [16], and appeared to be returning once more to the north, along the line of the ditch.

- 7.2.7 At the southern end of the trench two large features were identified [52] and [53], but were not excavated.

**7.3 Trench 2.** W-E 15.2 m x 1.60 m *Figs 2 & 4*

- 7.3.1 Four north-south linear features were identified, [55], [56], [57], and [42]. The first three were truncated by a west-east feature [40] which contained a dark reddish brown sandy silt fill (39), which yielded a single sherd of 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century pottery. Only feature 42 was excavated, revealing a 'V' shaped ditch, with a lower fill of reddish brown gravelly silt [63] and an upper fill of mid-grey brown silty clay [41], which produced a single sherd of 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century pottery. A further large feature [58] was partially revealed immediately west of ditch 42, but not excavated.

**7.4 Trench 3** N-S 19.1 m x 1.60 m *Figs 2 & 5*

- 7.4.1 Two substantial west-east linear features were identified in the southern half of the trench, both oriented west-east. Ditch 44 was partially revealed at the southern end of the trench, measuring at least 2.5 m wide and 0.75 m deep in the excavated part. The lower fill was a reddish brown sandy silt (68), containing 11<sup>th</sup> century pottery. The upper fill (43) was very similar to the overlying ploughsoil, being a grey brown sandy silt. The single fill (47) of ditch 48, situated 3.0 m to the north, was very similar in character to the lower fill of ditch 44. Both ditches showed a stepped 'V' shaped profile.
- 7.4.2 A shallow gully [46] was revealed between the two ditches, oriented north-east – south-west and possibly cutting the southern edge of ditch 48.
- 7.4.3 At the southern end of the trench one pit [50] and two possible postholes [61] and [62] were located. The shallow pit was excavated, and contained 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century pottery in a reddish brown silty clay fill (49).

**7.5 Trench 4** W-E 14.2 m x 1.60 m *Fig 2*

- 7.5.1 A spread of amorphous soil marks was revealed at the level of the natural gravel, overlaid by a ploughsoil (31) and topsoil. A series of sample excavations of these features at various points failed to demonstrate that any were of archaeological origin, and the conclusion is that the area had been subject to considerable disturbance, by tree roots and/or animals.



- 7.5.2 At the eastern end of the trench a modern wall footing (20) which was clearly cut through the ploughsoil, was noted, but not recorded in detail.

## **8. FINDS**

- 8.1 The overburden yielded a scatter of medieval and post-medieval pottery, and a modest assemblage of mainly 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century pottery was recovered from the excavated features. A small quantity of animal bone was also present, mainly consisting of butchery waste, and a dog skull from the fill (14) of the large ditch (16). The bone was in a good state of preservation.
- 8.2 A corroded iron spur (Small Find No.1), with most of one arm missing was also recovered from the fill (14) of ditch 16. It is very typical of late Saxon 'prick' spurs, with a short plain goad extending from the spur body. By the 12<sup>th</sup> century 'prick' spurs tended to have longer and more elaborate goads, and by the 13<sup>th</sup> century they had been largely superseded by rowel spurs (Ellis 1995, 126-7)

## **9. DISCUSSION**

### **9.1 Reliability of field investigation**

- 9.1.1 Conditions were good during the fieldwork and archaeological features were generally distinct in plan against the natural gravel, although where features intercut (as in Trench 1) the edges of cuts were difficult to distinguish. There was little evidence of disturbance of the medieval and earlier features by modern intrusive activity, although some truncation by ploughing had evidently taken place. Therefore there is a reasonable level of confidence in the stratigraphic integrity of the archaeological features and deposits revealed.

### **9.2 Overall interpretation**

#### *9.2.1 Summary of results*

In general the trenching confirmed the lack of recent activity on the site, and no evidence was found pointing to a source for the contamination found by the geotechnical test pits.

The relatively narrow date range of the pottery assemblage from the feature fills suggests that such archaeological features as were found represent a relatively brief period of activity, from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Such post-12<sup>th</sup> century pottery as there was generally came from the overlying ploughsoils, and the infilling dump or accumulation layer 38 against the west side of wall 17. There appeared to have been little or no intrusion of later medieval or post-medieval material into the feature fills, possibly indicating that the area was disused for some time after the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

The earliest feature in Trench 1, ditch 16, is potentially the most significant. The finds evidence does suggest that this is likely to have been a substantial late Saxon ditch and bank landscape feature. The presence of apparently stratified 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century pottery in the fill, is not necessarily conclusive, but its stratigraphy integrity is supported by the fragment of a spur from the same layer..

It is not possible, on the basis of the evaluation results, to ascertain whether ditch [6], which is parallel to the large ditch [16] in Trench 1, is contemporary, or serving a similar function. However, results from excavations in the western part of St Mary's churchyard do suggest a possible link.

A section excavated in the 1980's through the putative Minster boundary west of the church revealed a 4 m wide ditch containing 11<sup>th</sup> century pottery. Three smaller near-parallel ditches were also identified close by, suggesting that the Minster boundary was redefined by a new ditch or ditches on more than one occasion.

The well defined gully [69], although truncated in places, suggests the possibility of occupation and maybe timber structures close to the large ditch.

On the present evidence, the partly robbed wall (17) may represent a fairly modest building. The stones are not mortared, nor are the foundations dug very much deeper where the wall crosses the infill of the ditches, which would be the case for a substantial building of more than one storey. There were no signs of domestic activity in the vicinity of the wall, nor traces of floor surfaces, so the wall is unlikely to represent an occupied building. There was no clear dating evidence for the structure, and such pottery as was recovered from the robber trench fill is likely to be residual. One might tentatively propose a medieval or even post-medieval date for the structure, for want of firm evidence to the contrary.

The arrangement of ditches in Trenches 2 and 3 are more evidence of a methodical process of land or property division. On the present evidence it is impossible to link any of these ditches with the activity in Trench 1, but the lack of dating evidence later than the 11<sup>th</sup> century from the fills of these features does suggest that they broadly fit into the same time period.

### 9.2.2 *Research potential*

The work of the The Bampton Minster Research Project has gone far to establish the probable line of the Minster boundary ditch on the north side of the site of the church (see *Fig 2* and Blair 1986, 1988, 1994). So far there has been no opportunity to establish the southern extent of the enclosure, or attempt to establish if any contemporary activity took place within its confines, and if so what that activity was.

How far the organisation of Minster enclosures can be seen as prototypical of later (and far better understood) monastic precincts, is at present very difficult

to assess. In general the debate has been starved for want of evidence. Recent excavations on the site of the Saxon and Medieval Abbey at nearby Eynsham produced evidence of the preceding Minster church enclosure, suggesting that at least parts of Minster enclosures were subdivided into individual plots for the canons. However, the site at Eynsham occupied only a very small area of the enclosure, and was heavily disturbed by later (monastic) building activity, so conclusions are tentative at best (Hardy *et al.* forthcoming). The evaluation at Bampton appears to show that a sizeable area, possibly within the Minster enclosure, may have survived relatively unscathed by later activity.

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# APPENDIX 1

## Table of Archaeological Contexts

CONTEXT	TRENCH	TYPE	WIDTH (m)	DEPTH (m)	FINDS	COMMENTS
1	All	Deposit	-	<0.40	Pot/Bone	Topsoil in all trenches
2	1	Deposit	-	<0.35	Pot/Bone	Ploughsoil
3	2	Deposit	-	<0.30	-	Ploughsoil
4	3	Deposit	-	<0.41	Pot	Ploughsoil
5	All	Deposit	-	-	-	Natural gravel
6	1	Ditch	0.96	0.38	-	
7	1	Fill	0.96	0.38	-	Fill of ditch 6
8	1	Gully	0.60	0.40	-	Continuation to N of 69?
9	1	Fill	0.60	0.40	-	Fill of gully 8
10	1	Robber Trench	0.44	0.38	-	Robbing of wall 12
11	1	Fill	0.44	0.38	Pot/ Bone	Fill of 10
12	1	Wall	>0.25W x 1.6 m L	0.40	-	
13	1	Fill	<6.0	<0.49	Bone	Top fill of ditch 16
14	1	Fill	>2.0	>0.90	Pot/Bone/Metal	Lower fill of ditch 16
15	1	Fill	0.7	<0.24	-	Primary siling of ditch 16
16	1	Ditch	<6.0	>2.20	-	W-E ditch
17	1	Wall	0.55	0.45	-	Part of same structure as 12?
18	4	Fill	0.74	>0.45	-	Fill of ditch 19
19	4	Ditch	0.74	>0.45	-	N-S Ditch
20	4	Wall	0.80	-	-	Modern wall footing
21	4	Fill	>0.40	>0.20	-	Fill of ditch 23
22	4	Fill	>0.08	0.12	-	Fill of ditch 30
23	4	Ditch	>0.40	>0.20	-	Same as 19
24	4	Fill	0.31	0.08	-	Fill of gully 25
25	4	Gully	0.31	0.08	-	NW-SE gully terminus
26	4	Fill	0.07	>0.21	-	Fill of Gully 27
27	4	Gully	0.07	>0.21	-	NE-SW gully
28	4	Fill	0.22	0.08	-	Fill of Gully 29
29	4	Gully	0.22	0.08	-	NE-SW gully terminus
30	4	Feature	0.50	0.12	-	
31	4	Deposit	-	<0.30	-	Ploughsoil (same as 2)
32	4	Deposit	-	-	-	Natural (same as 5)
33	1	Ditch	>0.80	0.28	-	NE-SW ditch
34	1	Fill	>0.80	0.28	-	Fill of ditch 33
35	1	Cut	0.08	0.26	-	Construction of 1?
36	1	Fill	0.08	0.26	-	Fill of 35
37	1	Feature	2.60	0.30	-	NE-SW aligned
38	1	Fill	2.60	0.30	Pot/Bone	Fill of 37
39	2	Fill	>0.60	>0.79	-	Fill of 40
40	2	Ditch	>0.60	>0.79	-	W-E ditch
41	2	Fill	>1.60	0.41	Pot/Bone	Fill of 42
42	2	Ditch	1.15	0.36	-	NE-SW ditch
43	3	Fill	0.43	0.40	Pot	Fill of 44
44	3	Ditch	>1.3	>0.80	-	W-E ditch
45	3	Fill	1.40	0.40	-	Fill of 46
46	3	Gully	1.40	0.40	-	SW-NE gully
47	3	Fill	2.70	<0.80	-	Fill of 48
48	3	Ditch	2.00	0.80	-	W-E ditch
49	3	Fill	0.62	0.22	Pot	Fill of posthole 50
50	3	Posthole	0.62	0.22	-	
51	1	Deposit	-	0.35	-	Same as 2
52	1	Feature	3.00 N-S	-	-	Not excavated
53	1	Feature	>3.5 N-S	-	-	Not excavated
54	1	Pit	0.85	-	-	Not excavated
55	2	Feature	>0.80	-	-	N-S ditch -- not excavated
56	2	Feature	0.80	-	-	N-S ditch -- not excavated
57	2	Feature	2.5 m	-	-	N-S ditch -- not excavated
58	2	Feature	>2.8 W-E	-	-	Not excavated
59	2	Feature	0.50	-	-	Possible posthole -- not excavated
60	3	Feature	0.50	-	-	Possible posthole -- not excavated
61	3	Feature	0.45	-	-	Possible posthole -- not excavated

CONTEXT	TRENCH	TYPE	WIDTH (m)	DEPTH (m)	FINDS	COMMENTS
62	3	Feature	0.20	-	-	Possible posthole – not excavated
63	2	Fill	1.00	0.40	-	Lower fill of 42
64	1	Feature	1.10	0.16	-	Truncated by 33
65	1	Fill	1.10	0.16	-	Fill of 64
66	1	Cut	0.06	0.30	-	Construction cut for 17
67	1	Fill	0.06	0.30	-	Fill of 66
68	3	Fill	>0.37	0.50	Pot	Lower fill of 44
69	1	Gully	0.35	0.35	-	Continuation of 8
70	1	Fill	0.35	0.35	Pot	Fill of 69
71	4	Fill	0.92	0.12	-	Fill of 72
72	4	Ditch	0.92	0.12	-	N-S ditch
73	4	Fill	1.00 N-S	0.21	-	Fill of 74
74	4	Feature	1.00 N-S	0.21	-	Tree hole

## APPENDIX 2

### *The Post-Roman Pottery*

*By Paul Blinkhorn*

#### *Introduction*

The pottery assemblage comprised 63 sherds with a total weight of 594 g. The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. The assemblage spanned the early Saxon to early post-medieval periods and suggests that, assemblage size notwithstanding, there was virtually unbroken activity in the vicinity of the site during that time, although the stratigraphy suggests that, from the 12<sup>th</sup> century onwards that activity was not intensive, and possibly did not involve occupation.

#### *Fabrics*

The range of fabrics present are all well-known in Oxfordshire. Where appropriate, the coding system of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1994) has been used.

#### *Early/Middle Saxon handmade wares:*

*F1: Sand and chaff.* Sparse, sub-rounded quartz up to 1 mm, rare limestone of the same size and shape, occasional flecks of silver mica. Moderate chaff-voids up to 5 mm. 1 sherd, 3 g.

*F2: Fine Sand.* Moderate, sub-angular quartz up to 0.2 mm. Single flint fragment c 3 mm. One sherd in this fabric had incised decoration, indicating a fifth or sixth century date, although the sherd was too small to allow any refinement of this chronology. 2 sherds, 5 g.

OXR: *St. Neots Ware type* (Denham 1985), wheel-turned shelly ware. c AD800-1200. Two sherds, 9 g.

OXBF: *South-West Oxfordshire ware.* Flint and limestone gritted ware, handmade, wheel-finished. c mid 11<sup>th</sup> – early 13<sup>th</sup> century. Four sherds, 49 g.

OXAC: *Cotswold-type ware.* Limestone-gritted ware, c AD975-1350. 39 sherds, 330 g.

OXAQ. *East Wiltshire ware.* Flint and limestone-tempered ware, c mid 12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> century. Two sherds, 31 g.

OXAM: *Brill/Boarstall ware.* Sandy ware, glazed and unglazed, c AD1200 – 1600. Ten sherds, 110 g.

OXBB: *Minety-type ware*. Limestone-gritted glazed ware, probably from a Cotswolds source. Early 13<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> century in Oxford. One sherd, 10 g.

*Cistercian Ware*. Hard, smooth fabric, usually brick-red, but can be paler or browner. Vessels are inevitably covered with a thick, glossy, purplish-black or brown glaze. Range of vessel forms somewhat specialized, and usually very thin-walled (c 2 mm). c AD1470-1550. One sherd, 15 g.

*Red Earthenwares*: Fine sandy earthenware, usually with a brown or green glaze, occurring in a range of utilitarian forms. Such 'country pottery' was first made in the 16<sup>th</sup> century in Oxfordshire, and in some rural areas it continued in use until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. One sherd, 32 g.

*Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type*

	E/MS		OXR		OXAC		OXBF		OXAQ		OXAM		OXBB		Cistercian		RE		DATE
Cntxt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
2	1	3			22	219	1	11			4	33	1	10	1	15	1	32	16thC
3	1	3			5	41													10/11thC
4											1	37							13thC
11					2	13													10/11thC
14			2	9															9/10thC?
34					1	2													10/11thC
38					2	8			2	31	1	7							13thC
39					1	4													10/11thC
41					1	4													10/11thC
43											4	33							13thC
47					1	12	1	4											M11thC
49					1	5													10/11thC
68					2	20	1	27											M11thC
70	1	2			1	2	1	7											M11thC
Total	3	8	2	9	39	330	4	49	2	31	10	110	1	10	1	15	1	32	

### *Chronology*

The small size of this assemblage, as is often the case with those from evaluation excavations, makes chronological refinement very difficult, but general patterns can be discussed. The presence of the three redeposited Anglo-Saxon handmade sherds, particularly the decorated sherd from context 70, indicates that there was early Saxon settlement in the immediate vicinity of these excavations. Whether this is related to the known Anglo-Saxon cemeteries, or the result of settlement, is impossible to say at this stage. The other two handmade sherds, being undecorated, could be contemporary or later, perhaps 7<sup>th</sup> century, although there is some evidence that such wares were in use during the 9<sup>th</sup> century in certain parts of Oxfordshire (Mellor 1994, 36).

There is no ceramic evidence for middle Saxon activity at this site, despite the strong case for a prestigious settlement of that site being in the vicinity (Blair 1986, 87), but recent excavations at Yarnton and Eynsham Abbey (Blinkhorn in press a) and b))



have shown that there is good reason to suspect that in at least some parts of Oxfordshire, handmade pottery was not used during the eighth century, with the only certain evidence of middle Saxon activity being small assemblages of imported Ipswich ware. In an assemblage of this size, it is highly unlikely that such pottery would occur, even if it was being used at the site during the middle Saxon period. Thus, middle Saxon activity cannot be totally discounted, especially with early and late Saxon wares (below) being present at the site.

There is some evidence for 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> century activity in the form of the two apparently stratified sherds of St. Neots ware (OXR). The sherds are both Denham's T1(1) type, which can be dated to AD850-1100 in Northampton (ibid. 1985, 47). The material was not in widespread use in Oxford and its surrounding region until the earlier part of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, but it has occurred in contexts in Oxford as early as the early 10<sup>th</sup> century (Mellor 1994, 57). In Northampton and its surrounding region, it can be dated to the 9<sup>th</sup> century. It is therefore possible that the context which produced the two sherds of the ware at Bampton could be early as the 9<sup>th</sup> century, as later assemblages tend to have at least a few sherds of OXAC present. However, the small size of the assemblage means that the given dating in this case must be regarded very much as a *terminus post quem*.

Similar remarks apply to the groups from this site which comprise a few sherds of OXAC. At this time, the earliest date for the material comes from Fairford, Gloucestershire, where it was found in association with a coin dated to AD875-80 (Mellor 1994, 51). In Oxford, it did not occur in quantity until around the middle of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, although it has occurred in reliably-dated early tenth century contexts (ibid.). Thus, as with the St. Neots ware, the dating given here should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*, although it is entirely possible that it is an accurate reflection of the chronology of the sampled features.

The same comments broadly apply to the medieval contexts, but the range of pottery types present means that there is little doubt that there was activity at the site during the period AD1050-1600, with the medieval assemblages being of broadly the same date as the excavated parts of the church, cemetery and associated enclosure immediately to the north of this site (Blair 1988;1992).

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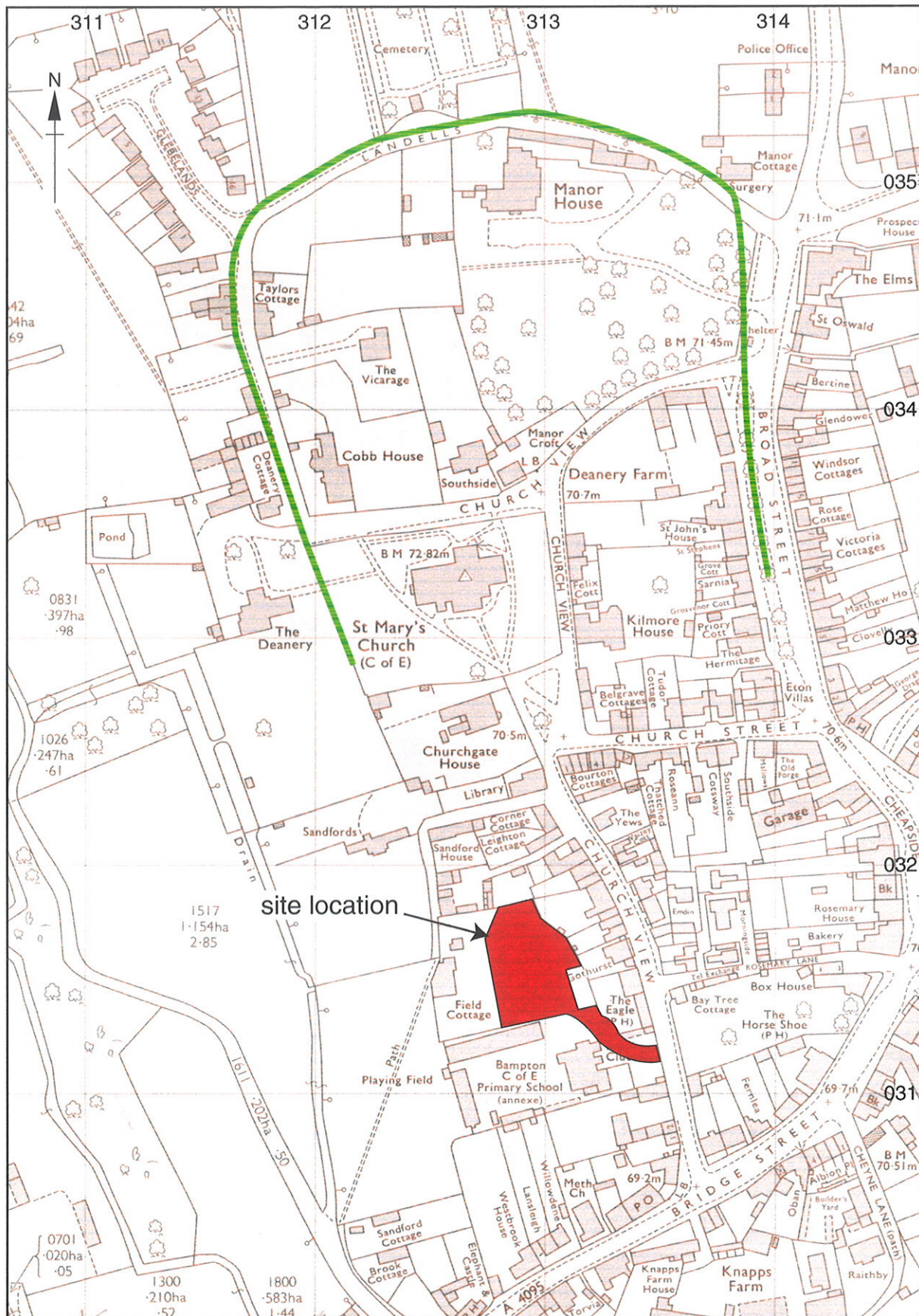
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Suggested Northern Part of Minster Boundary (after Blair 1988, p. 90 fig 1)

figure 1: site location

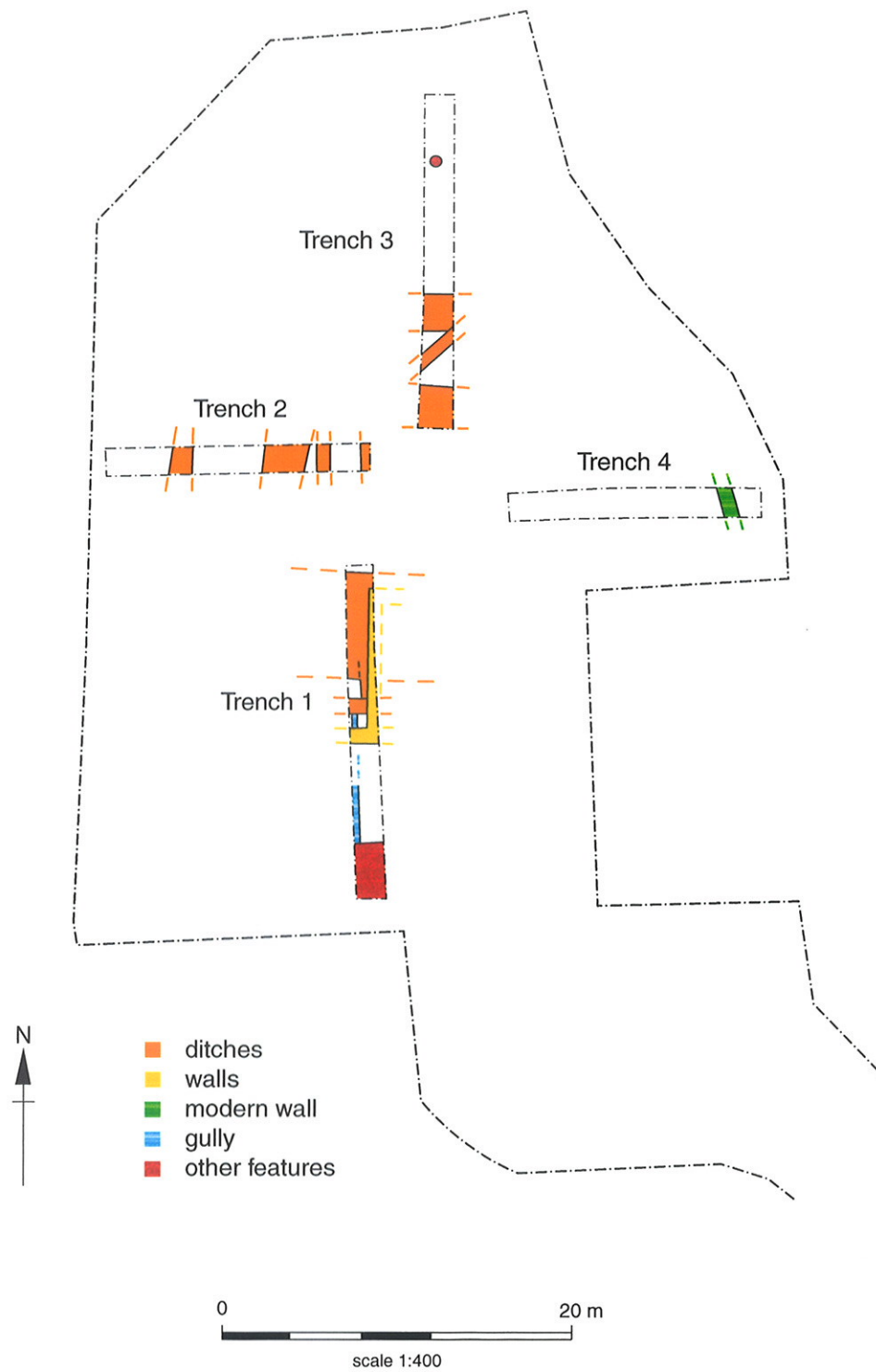


figure 2: trench locations showing principal archaeological features



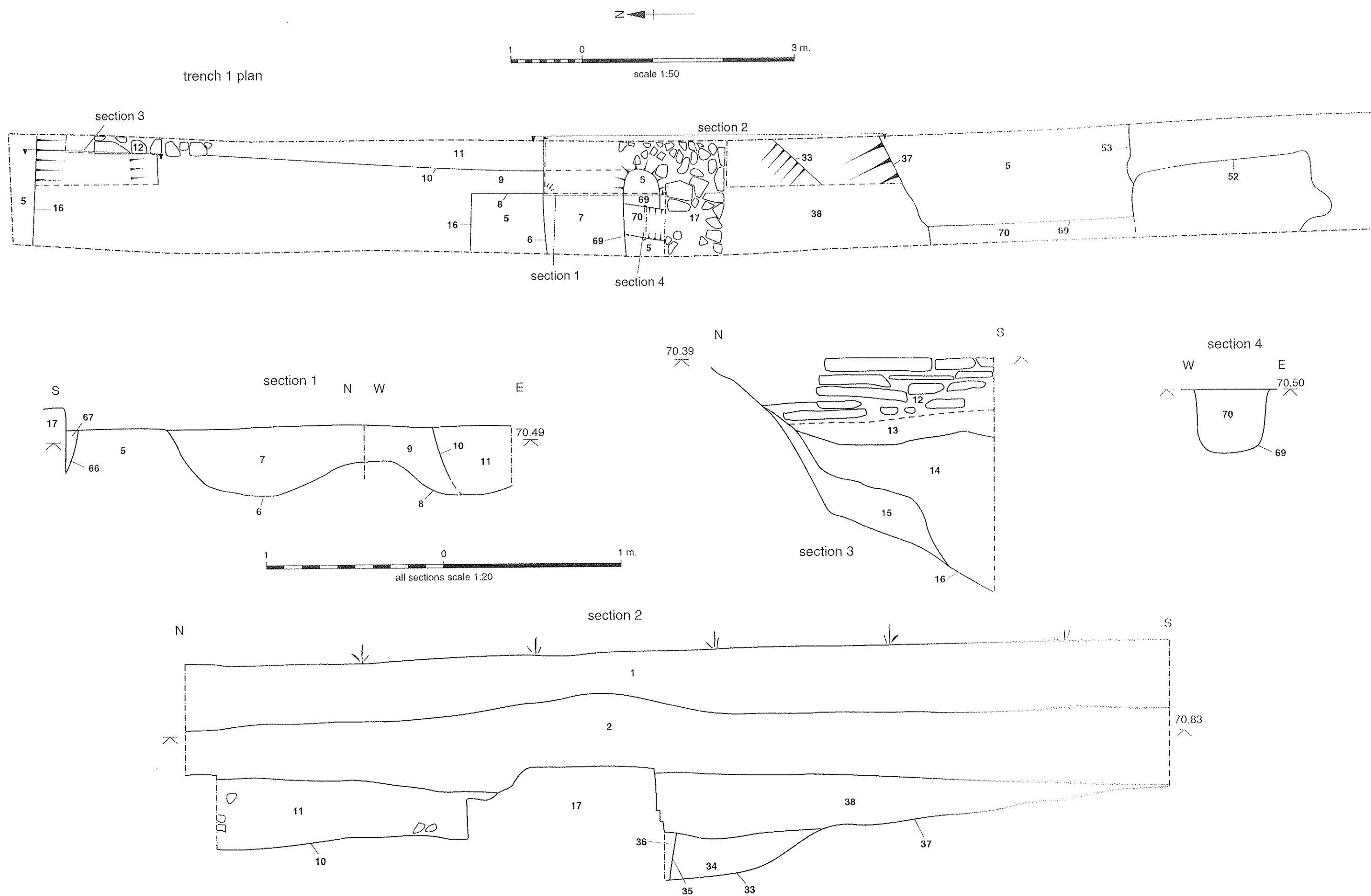


figure 3: trench 1 plan and sections

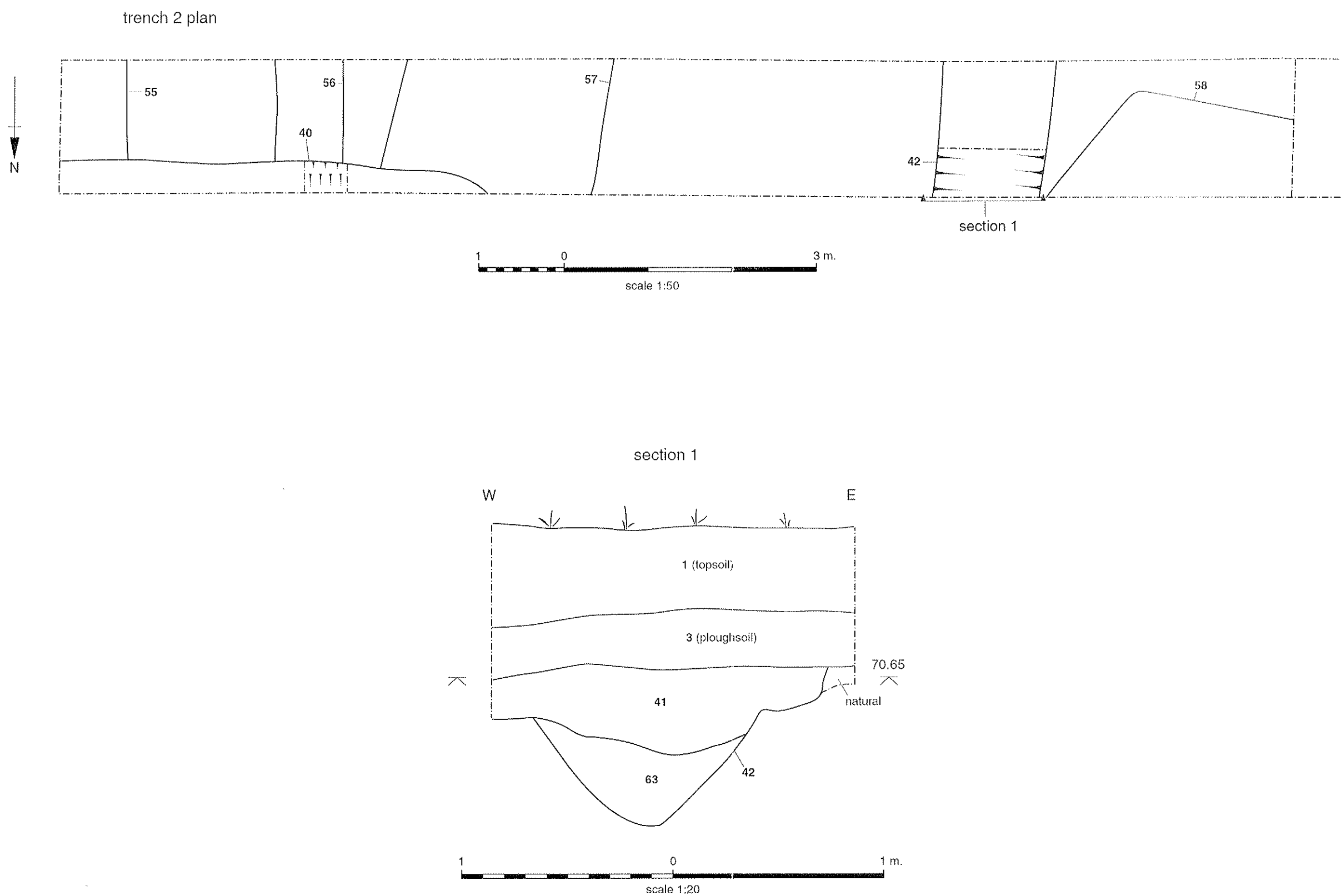


figure 4: trench 2 plan and section

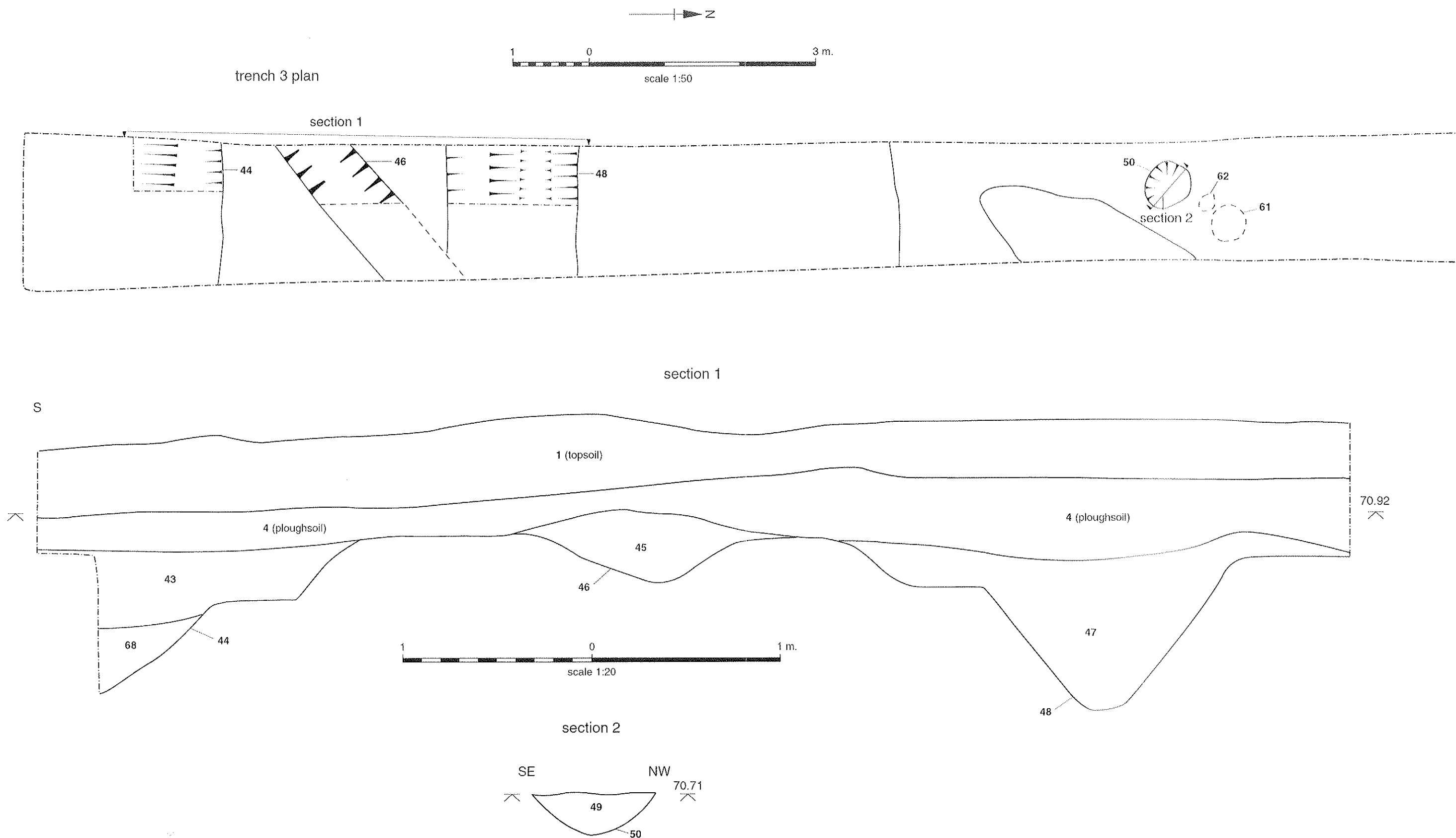
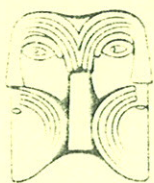


figure 5: trench 3 plan and sections



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