Gibraltar Barracks & Hawley Hard Minley Hampshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Atkins Heritage

Royal School of Military Engineering

Gibraltar Barracks and Hawley Hard, Minley, Hampshire

NGR: SU 823 583

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

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SUMMARY

In December 2006, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at the Royal School of Military Engineering (RSME), Gibraltar Barracks and Hawley Hard, Minley, Hampshire (NGR: SU 823 583, centred) on behalf of Atkins Heritage. Five evaluation trenches and 11 Test Pits were excavated in the course of the work. The evaluation revealed a series of layers relating to mature woodland and landscaping during the current use of the barracks site. These deposits overlay naturally deposited soils. No archaeological deposits were found with the exception of a ditch to the north of the site, which was not datable but is probably of recent date. Modern made ground layers were observed within the test pits and modern construction features were noted across the site.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In December 2006 and Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at Royal School of Military Engineering (RSME), Gibraltar Barracks and Hawley Hard, Minley, Hampshire (Fig. 1) on behalf of Atkins Heritage. The work was carried out in respect of a planning application for the demolition of several modern military buildings and a programme of refurbishment and new building work.

1.1.2 A brief was prepared by Atkins Heritage detailing the requirements for the evaluation and the methods to be employed (Atkins 2006). OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for Atkins Heritage in response to the brief. At the time of the evaluation, the site contained three areas for proposed development: two at Gibraltar Barracks and one at Hawley Hard. In the event (and owing to continued use of the site as a parade ground) the trenches at Hawley Hard were not opened.

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site overlies London Clay and the Reading Beds supporting coarse loamy and acid sandy soils between 80-100 m OD. It is situated on sloping ground running from open heath at the north to Hawley Lake at the south but has undergone terracing in many places associated with the barracks construction and is also disturbed by military training areas.

1.2.2 The site is bordered by the A327 to the west, the A30 to the north and the M3 passes to the south. The towns of Blackwater, Hawley and Frimley are to the east.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological background to the evaluation has been the subject of a separate study (Cultural Heritage Appraisal, Atkins, 2005), the results of which are summarised

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below. There are several known locations with archaeological remains in the vicinity of the site.

1.3.2 Two Bronze Age Barrows designated as Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM) are situated towards the northern boundary of Gibraltar Barracks. A nearby ring ditch has been identified from aerial photographs and possibly surrounds a third Barrow. Prehistoric activity in the form of flint scatters and burnt mounds is known from Yateley Common.

1.3.3 Documentary sources indicate a deserted medieval settlement nearby. The precise location is unclear, though earthworks in the vicinity have been detected by geophysical survey and could be a part of the settlement. The site of a medieval farmstead first documented in the 12th century and appearing on historic and OS maps until 1973 lies due east of Gibraltar Barracks.

1.3.4 Of nine listed Historic Park and Gardens related to Minley Manor, one (Hawley Lake) falls within the site boundary. `Hawley Hard` is located within a designated Historic Park or Garden though Minley Manor itself is located outside of the site boundary. Several listed buildings lie just outside of the site boundary.

1.3.5 All of the buildings and structures associated with the military development of Gibraltar Barracks and Hawley Hard date from the 1960s onwards; none of these are listed.

2 EVALUATION AIMS

2.1.1 The aims of the evaluation were to determine the extent, date, character, quality, significance and state of preservation of the archaeological remains surviving on the site.

2.1.2 To assess the impact of the development on any significant archaeological remains and assess the need for further mitigation before and/or during construction.

2.1.3 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features and to make available the results of the investigation.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork

3.1.1 The evaluation (Figs 2a and 2b) consisted of five trenches in the northern part of the site. Trenches 1 and 2 were located on a lawn area south-west of the barracks main car park and measured 20 m x 2 m and 10 m x 2 m respectively.

3.1.2 Trenches 3, 4 and 5 were located on the opposite side of a road within sparse woodland, positioned to avoid trees, and measured 10 m x 2 m, 15 m x 2 m and 10 m x 2 m respectively. The overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision by a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket.

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3.1.3 The second evaluation area was to the south-west of the main barracks buildings on an assault course in dense woodland Test Pits 1 to 8 were located to avoid trees, within the proposed building footprint and all measured 1 m square. The overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision by a small 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket.

3.1.4 Two proposed trenches (Nos. 6 and 7) just north of Hawley Lake on the site of a gravel and concrete training square/parade ground were not excavated in this phase of work: they may be excavated at a later date and would thus be the subject of a separate report.

3.1.5 Three additional Test Pits (Nos. 9, 10 and 11) were located to the rear of barrack block GIBO10C just south of Trenches 1 to 5. These were excavated alongside the current building to determine the foundation construction.

3.1.6 Although these Test Pits were not excavated in areas where archaeology was likely, they were archaeologically recorded whilst open. They measured 1.3 m x 1 m, 1.6 m x 1 m and 1.7 m x 0.8 m respectively. The excavation was carried out under close archaeological supervision by a small 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket.

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

3.2.1 After excavation of the overburden the trenches were cleaned by hand and the revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature and to retrieve finds and environmental samples. All excavated trenches and pits were planned at 1:50 and where features were excavated, their sections drawn at a scale of 1:20.

3.2.2 Sample sections of each trench were drawn at 1:20 and for test pits at 1:10. All excavations and features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

4 RESULTS

4.1 Soils and ground conditions

4.1.1 The majority of the site is located on gently sloping ground consisting of modern landscaped deposits overlying natural Trenches 1, 2, 6 and 7 and Test Pits 9, 10 and 11 were located in these areas. The weather conditions varied from sunshine to heavy rain showers.

4.1.2 The locations of Trenches 3, 4, and 5 and Test Pits 1 to 8 comprised woodland soils overlying natural. These were very heavily disturbed by root action and modern pits dug as part of recent military exersises. The weather conditions varied from sunshine to heavy rain showers.

4.2 Trench descriptions

Trench 1

4.2.1 Trench 1 (Fig. 3, plan 4) was located on a lawn area adjacent to the barrack buildings. Ground surface level was approximately 101.23 m OD and natural mixed gravel and orange sand (103) was reached at a depth of 0.7 m. The natural contained numerous root holes and disturbances, which were filled by a black silty, degraded wood (102). Overlying natural was a layer of mixed brown grey sandy subsoil (101). This contained modern building debris and polythene with lenses of clean yellow sand. The deposit was contaminated with diesel and clearly represented a modern landscaping layer. From the top of this deposit at 0.3 m below ground surface, two features were cut. The first was a linear feature containing polythene and brick and the second a square pit with modern kerbstone debris. Both these features were investigated but contamination by diesel meant neither was fully excavated and neither was assigned context numbers. Overlying these was a layer of dark brown sandy loam topsoil with some gravel (100). This contained modern concrete and engineering brick, presumably from the construction of nearby buildings. The fact that tree roots only appeared in the natural suggests heavy truncation of the area changing it from woodland to barrack buildings.

Trench 2

4.2.2 The stratigraphy in this trench was very similar to that of Trench 1. Ground surface level was approximately 101.25 m OD with natural orange sand and gravel (203) reached at 0.5 m. The eastern end of the trench was not fully excavated due to an electric cable but a layer of contaminated grey sandy natural was present containing modern building materials (201).. Topsoil (200) was to a depth of 0.2 m from the ground surface and also contained modern debris. Black silt filling root holes were also common in this trench, as with Trench 1 only cutting the natural deposits supporting the theory that the area was cleared of trees to construct barrack buildings. At the west end of the trench a small sondage was excavated to ensure gravel layers were truly natural. At a depth of 1.06m it was clear that this was natural gravel and sand although it remained very mixed.

Trench 3

4.2.3 Trench 3 was located in a sparse wooded area used for military training. Ground level was approximately 101.1 m OD with natural yellow grey gravel and sand (303) reached 1 m from ground surface level. Natural deposits were very mixed due to root action, some areas were inclusion free yellow sand and others 50% gravel in grey sand. Across the trench base and sides, running through all layers were black silt and degraded wood filled holes (302). Subsoil in this trench was comprised of disturbed grey sand with some gravel (301) and was overlain by a dark brown/black layer of leaf litter and peat like material (300). This was 0.15m thick but variable depending on proximity to trees. It appeared that this woodland was undisturbed below topsoil level and potential features excavated were concluded to be tree root systems.

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Trench 4

4.2.4 The stratigraphy of Trench 4 (Fig. 3, plan 2 & sections 13 and 15) was similar to that of Trench 3, being located within the same wood. Ground level was approximately 100 m OD with natural sand and gravel (403) reached at 0.6 m. This was variable from orange sand with 80% gravel to inclusion free yellow sand. Within this deposit were numerous root disturbance holes filled with black silty soil (402) with some gravel. Above this was a grey sandy subsoil with common gravel and heavy root disturbance (401). Cut from the top of the subsoil in the northern end of the trench was a ditch running diagonally north-west/south-east (404). The profile of this feature followed a steep concave pattern on the north edge but was almost vertical, and in some places undercutting on the south side. The ditch had an homogenous grey sand fill (405) which contained fir cones and lumps of redeposited topsoil and suggests that the feature is modern in date, although its function was unclear.

Trench 5

4.2.5 The stratigraphy in Trench 5 was also similar to Trench 3. Ground level was at approximately 101 m OD with natural yellow grey gravel and sand (503) reached 0.55 m from ground surface level. Natural deposits were very mixed due to root action but ranged from inclusion free yellow sand to 30% gravel in grey and orange sand.

4.2.6 Across the trench base and sides, running through all layers were the same black silt and degraded wood filled holes (502) found elsewhere. Subsoil in this trench comprised disturbed grey sand with 30% gravel (501) and was overlain by a dark brown/black layer of leaf litter and peat like material (500). This was 0.2 m thick but variable depending on proximity to trees. It appeared that this woodland was undisturbed and potential features are probably tree root systems.

4.3 Test Pit descriptions

Test Pit 1

4.3.1 Test pit 1 was located in a heavily wooded area currently used as a training assault course. As a result the upper layers were cut by modern activity and all layers were heavily disturbed by root action from the encircling trees. Ground surface was at 82.1 m OD with natural yellow sand (03) at a depth of 0.4 m. Above natural was a fine grey sand subsoil with some gravel (02). The woodland topsoil layer (01) comprised leaf litter over a dark grey peaty leaf mould and sand reaching a depth of 0.2 m.

Test Pit 2

4.3.2 Ground level lay at 85.57 m OD. Yellow root disturbed sand (22) was reached at 0.55 m depth. Grey sand subsoil (21) and dark grey leaf mould (20) measuring 0.16 m in depth overlay this.

Test Pit 3

4.3.3 Stratigraphy in Test Pit 3 was identical to Test Pit 1. Ground level was at 84.23 m OD and natural sand with pockets of gravel (32) reached at 0.45 m. The same grey sand subsoil (31) and dark grey topsoil (30) 0.15 m deep overlay this.

Test Pit 4

4.3.4 Ground level was at 84.85 m OD and eastward sloping natural sand (42) uncovered at 0.55 m. Grey sandy subsoil (41) and dark grey topsoil (40) overlay this, the latter being 0.3 m deep.

Test Pit 5

4.3.5 Ground level was at 83.89 m OD and clean natural sand and gravel (52) at a depth of 0.3 m. Grey/brown sand (51) overlay this and above that a thin layer of leaf litter (50) 0.1 m deep.

Test Pit 6

4.3.6 Ground surface level was at 85.09 m OD and natural at 0.55 m below this. Natural comprised fine yellow sand (62) with small flint inclusions. This was overlain by grey brown sand (61) and grey brown leaf litter up to 0.25 m deep (Fig. 3, section 3).

Test Pit 7

4.3.7 Test pit 7 was at 84.98 m OD and natural orange sand with some gravel (72) at a depth of 0.6 m. Over this lay a deposit of grey brown sand subsoil (71) and a layer of dark grey sand and leaf litter (70) 0.3 m thick.

Test Pit 8

4.3.8 Ground surface was at 83.1 m OD and natural mixed yellow and orange sand (82) was reached at 0.4 m. Overlying this was a layer of brown and grey sand subsoil (81) and a 0.18 m thick deposit of sandy leaf litter (80).

Test Pit 9

4.3.9 Test Pit 9 was located in a gravel pathway to the rear of barrack building GIBO10C. No benchmark was available but measurements were taken from the base of the adjacent brickwork. The pit was excavated to orange natural gravel at 1.25 m where the top face of the building foundation was uncovered.

4.3.10 This stepped out from the substructure blockwork by 0.25 m. Above this was a grey sandy gravel and orange gravel which both formed a make up layer for the path around the building perimeter. These were very unstable and restricted excavating to any greater depth. The area was topped by 0.1m of washed shingle.

Test Pit 10

4.3.11 Stratigraphy in the pit (Fig. 3, test pit 10) was identical to Test Pit 9. A depth of 1.5 m was reached excavating alongside the concrete building foundation, which stepped

out from the substructure blockwork by 0.25 m. Mixed layers of grey and orange gravel formed a thick make up for the pathway which comprised washed gravel 0.2 m deep

Test Pit 11

4.3.12 Test Pit 11 at 2 m was the deepest of the pits in this area but did not reach the base of the modern foundation. Above 0.6 m of natural orange gravel was a thick make up layer of orange and grey sandy gravel. A layer of clean gravel 0.1 m deep topped the pathway.

4.4 Finds and palaeo-environmental

4.4.1 No finds were recovered during the evaluation. No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling were encountered during the course of the evaluation.

5 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 Reliability of field investigation

5.1.1 The evaluation trenches were positioned in two different areas: open areas close to existing buildings with modern truncation removing the potential for archaeological layers and wooded areas where tree root disturbance reduced the potential for finding any discrete features.

5.2 Overall interpretation

5.2.1 Trenches in the built up areas of the barracks revealed truncation of former ground levels to natural. The survival of decayed tree roots at the base of the trenches suggests that the entire area was previously woodland. All negative features were modern, most likely dating from 1960s onwards and suggest that previous activity in the area was limited; no archaeology was revealed.

5.2.2 Trenches in woodland areas did display original subsoil layers although modern military training features were cut into upper layers. With the exception of ditch 404, which contained pine cones at the base (and is therefore of recent date), no features were located.

5.2.3 No finds were recovered from any of the test pits or trenches. A few modern features containing building rubble were noted but no otherwise investigated.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

N.B. Contexts were issued as a block for each test pit or trench but no context numbers were assigned to the additional Test Pits 9, 10 and 11 as all deposits encountered were modern and related to the adjacent 1960s building.

Trench/ test pit no.	***Context no.***	***Type***	***Width***	***Thickness***	***Comment***	***Finds***	***No./ Wt.***	***Date***
Test pit								
1								
	01	layer	1 x 1m	0.19m	Topsoil	-		
	02	layer	1 x 1m	0.2m	Subsoil	-		
	03	layer	1 x 1m	>0.15m	Natural	-		
2								
	020	layer	1 x 1m	0.16m	Topsoil	-		
	021	layer	1 x 1m	0.39m	Subsoil	-		
	022	layer	1 x 1m	>0.11m	Natural	-		
3								
	030	layer	1 x 1m	0.16m	Topsoil	-		
	031	layer	1 x 1m	0.29m	Subsoil	-		
	032	layer	1 x 1m	>0.26m	Natural	-		
4								
	040	layer	1 x 1m	0.21m	Topsoil	-		
	041	layer	1 x 1m	0.35m	Subsoil	-		
	042	layer	1 x 1m	>0.14m	Natural	-		
5								
	050	layer	1 x 1m	0.08m	Topsoil	-		
	051	layer	1 x 1m	0.16m	Subsoil	-		
	052	layer	1 x 1m	>0.3m	Natural	-		
6								
	060	layer	1 x 1m	0.13m	Topsoil	-		
	061	layer	1 x 1m	0.32m	Subsoil	-		
	062	layer	1 x 1m	>0.08m	Natural	-		
7								
	070	layer	1 x 1m	0.2m	Topsoil	-		
	071	layer	1 x 1m	0.32m	Subsoil	-		
	072	layer	1 x 1m	>0.1m	Natural	-		
8								
	080	layer	1 x 1m	0.16m	Topsoil	-		
	081	layer	1 x 1m	0.21m	Subsoil	-		
	082	layer	1 x 1m	>0.25m	Natural	-		
Trench								
1								
	100	layer	20 x 2m	0.3m	Topsoil	-		Modern
	101	layer	20 x 2m	0.38m	Subsoil	-		Modern
	102	layer	20 x 2m	0.08m	Subsoil	-		
	103	layer	20 x 2m	>0.18m	Natural	-		
2								
	200	layer	10 x 2m	0.14m	Topsoil	-		Modern
	201	layer	10 x 2m	0.26m	Subsoil	-		Modern

	202	layer	10 x 2m	0.09m	Subsoil	-		
	203	layer	10 x 2m	>0.18m	Natural	-		
3								
	300	layer	10 x 2m	0.28m	Topsoil	-		Modern
	301	layer	10 x 2m	0.57m	Subsoil	-		
	302	layer	10 x 2m	0.16m	Subsoil	-		
	303	layer	10 x 2m	>0.2m	Natural	-		
4								
	400	layer	15 x 2m	0.34m	Topsoil	-		Modern
	401	layer	15 x 2m	0.25m	Subsoil	-		
	402	layer	15 x 2m	0.1m	Subsoil	-		
	403	layer	15 x 2m	>0.25m	Natural	-		
	404	cut	2 x 0.71m	0.6m	Ditch cut	-		Modern
	405	fill	2 x 0.71m	0.6m	Ditch fill	-		Modern
5								
	500	layer	10 x 2m	0.1m	Topsoil	-		Modern
	501	layer	10 x 2m	0.24m	Subsoil	-		
	502	layer	10 x 2m	0.09m	Subsoil	-		
	503	layer	10 x 2m	>0.15m	Natural	-		

APPENDIX 2 REFERENCES

Atkins Heritage 2005 *Gibraltar Barracks and Hawley Hard, Minley – Cultural Heritage Appraisal*

Atkins Heritage 2006 *Gibraltar Barracks and Hawley Hard, Minley – Brief for an Archaeological Evaluation.*

OAU 1992 Fieldwork Manual (1st edition, August 1992)

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Gibraltar Barracks and Hawley Hard, Minley, Hampshire.
Site code: A2006.69
Grid reference: SU 823 583
Type of evaluation: Three 10 m x 2 m, two 15 m x 2 m, one 20 m x 2 m and one 30 m x 2 m trenches and eleven 1 m square test pits.
Date and duration of project: 4th - 8th December 2006
Area of site: 10 ha.
Summary of results: One undated NW/SE ditch, probably modern. Truncation of site during construction of the Barracks in the 1960s; modern features with building debris.
Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Hampshire County Museum Service in due course, under the following accession number: A.2006.69

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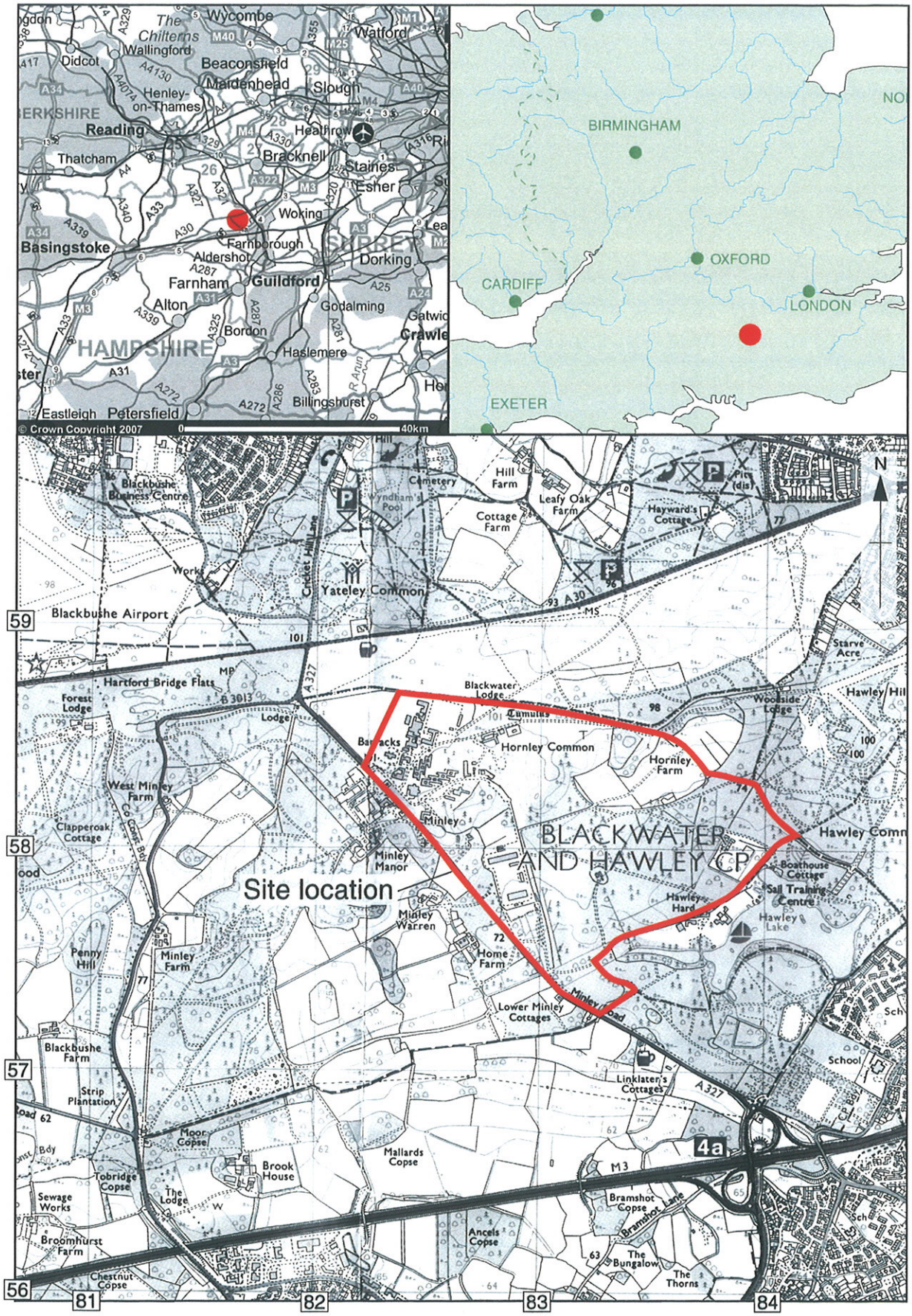

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Figure 1: Site location

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Figure 2a: Trench and test pit locations

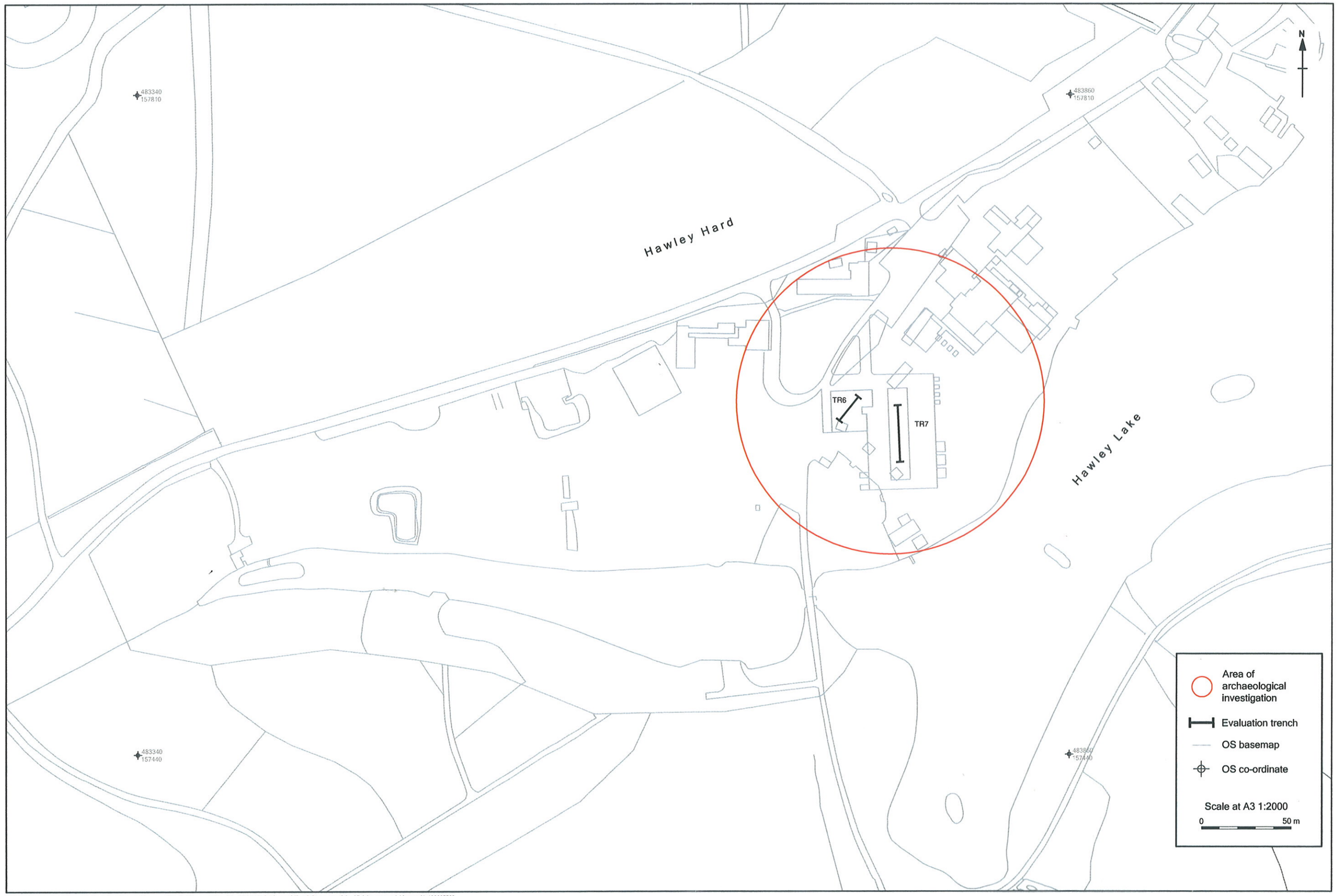

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Figure 2b: Trench and test pit locations

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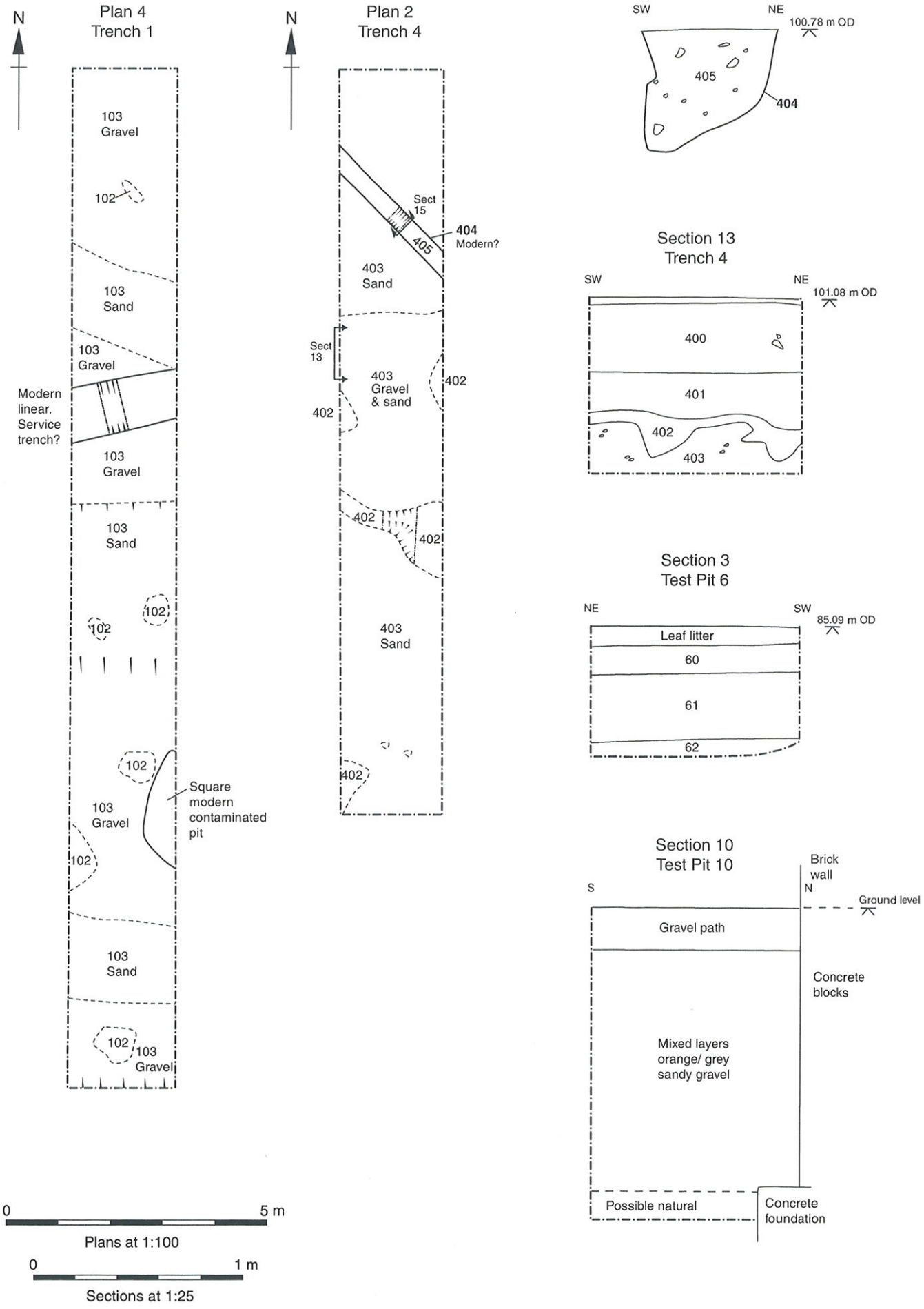

Figure 3 : Plans of Trenches 1 and 4, sections 13, 15, 3 and 10

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