

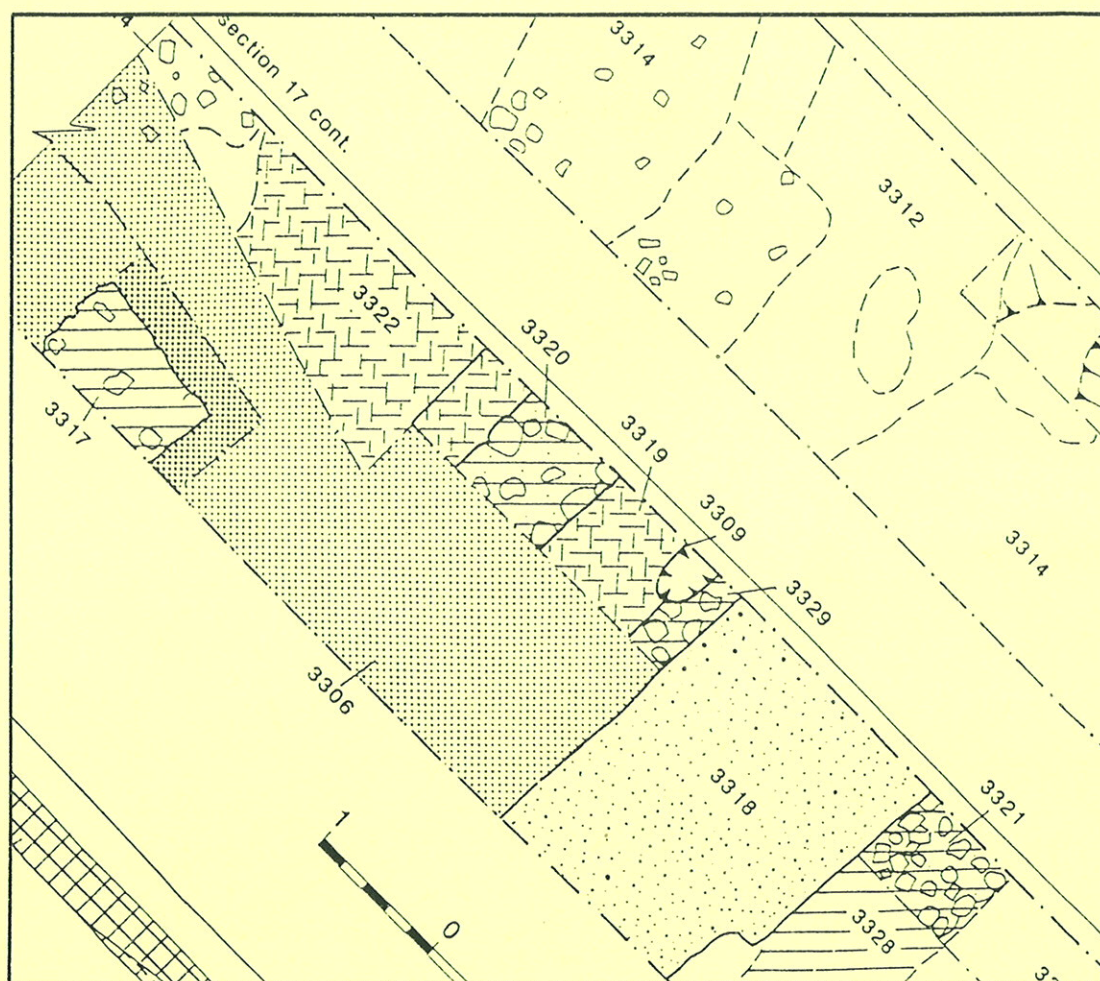
Channel Tunnel Rail Link  
Union Railways Ltd

# Thurnham Roman Villa and Land South of Corbier Hall, Thurnham, Kent

ARC THM 96

## Archaeological Evaluation Report

Contract No. 194/838



Oxford Archaeological Unit  
March 1997

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THURNHAM ROMAN VILLA AND LAND SOUTH OF  
CORBIER HALL, THURNHAM, KENT

ARC THM 96

*ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION*

Contract No. 194/838

FINAL REPORT

Volume 1 of 1

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## THURNHAM ROMAN VILLA AND LAND SOUTH OF CORBIER HALL

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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# THURNHAM ROMAN VILLA AND LAND SOUTH OF CORBIER HALL, THURNHAM, KENT

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

### SUMMARY

*As part of a larger programme of archaeological investigation along the route of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, Union Railways Ltd commissioned the Oxford Archaeological Unit to undertake a field evaluation of 4 ha of land north of the M20 at Thurnham, near Maidstone. The site of the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Thurnham Roman Villa was examined together with a corridor to the south-east which included land close to the Scheduled Ancient Monument of medieval Corbier Hall. The wall footings of the villa were exposed under the modern ploughsoil, together with the footings of an aisled building 50 m to the east and evidence of other structures in adjacent trenches. Archaeological deposits, including ditches, pits, cobbled spreads and building debris, were widespread in an area extending for 200 m NW-SE and the 90 m width of the evaluation corridor, both on the knoll on which the villa stood and off the slope to the south-east. Intact floor surfaces associated with the villa were not present although plough-damaged remnant surfaces possibly survived elsewhere, including the aisled building. Stratified deposits were found under the villa and aisled building, and in other areas on the slope of the knoll, but were generally absent elsewhere. The pottery was nearly all dateable to the 1st and 2nd centuries, with a pre-conquest component almost certainly present. It is possible that later Roman deposits had been lost to the plough. There were no medieval remains associated with Corbier Hall. The 'moat' of Corbier Hall was revealed. It had been levelled in the 1950s and any earlier underlying sediments were not examined. A 19th century brick structure within the valley was enigmatic but possibly a small ice-house.*

### SECTION 1: FACTUAL STATEMENT

#### 1 BACKGROUND

##### 1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 The Oxford Archaeological Unit undertook an archaeological evaluation (Fig. 1), between 11th and 28th November inclusive, on behalf of Union Railways Ltd (URL) on land north of the M20 at Thurnham, near Maidstone, Kent (TQ 58001572 approx.). The evaluation forms part of a programme of archaeological investigation along the line of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, the aim of which is to assess the effect of the construction of the new railway upon the cultural heritage. An Environmental Assessment has been prepared (URL 1994).

1.1.2 The work was carried out according to a Written Scheme of Investigation, prepared

by URL, detailing the scope and methods of the evaluation, including this report. The area of the evaluation is shown in Fig. 2. The site includes the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Thurnham Roman Villa (KE 299) and land south of the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Corbier Hall (KE 309). Plates 1 and 2 are aerial photographs of these monuments.

- 1.1.3 The villa was 'discovered' in 1833 when much structural stone was being removed. The present evaluation is the third recorded examination of the site by excavation. In 1933 Paul Ashbee conducted small scale excavations on the site of the villa (Ashbee 1986), and in 1958 Elizabeth Pirie undertook the excavation of the southern end of the villa (Site A) and an adjacent building (Site B) on behalf of the Ministry of Works (Pirie 1960) in advance of the construction of the Maidstone By-pass (now M20). Aerial photographs commissioned by the OAU for the CTRL EA in 1990 (RCHM AP TQ4569/9 - Plate 1) amplified the picture of the site by indicating the plan of the villa building examined in 1933. The presence nearby of an aisled building, and possibly other features was confirmed by a geophysical survey over the villa area in 1995 (Stratascan 1995), conducted as a preliminary to the present evaluation (Fig. 21). A further geophysical survey (Fig. 22) was conducted on the site of Corbier Hall (URL 1996a). An interpretative summary of the aerial photography, geophysical surveys and evaluation results are shown in Fig. 18. The air-photographic plots are approximate.

## 1.2 Geology, Landscape and Landuse

- 1.2.1 The site is located at the foot of the North Downs. The solid geology is Gault Clay, although a drift deposit of yellowish silty clay with varying amounts of flint was encountered over the whole of the evaluation area. In some locations this was seen to be underlain by Chalk Head.
- 1.2.2 The site of the Roman villa lies on a slight knoll (*ca.* 75.5 m OD) with a noticeable dip towards a dry valley in the centre of the site (*ca.* 67.5 m OD). This was once occupied by a stream flowing south-west from Parsonage Farm (now Court Farm). Honeyhills Wood partly encloses the villa site to the north and west. Early maps show that the boundary of this wood has remained substantially the same for at least 300 years, as it is depicted on a 1709 map of Thurnham Manor by John Watts (Ashbee 1986, 144).
- 1.2.3 In 1833 the site was described as "a damp clayey meadow" (Ashbee 1986, 142). The land was being broken up for hop cultivation at that time and the area where the remains were discovered appears to have remained in arable use until the end of the 1914-18 war. In 1933 Ashbee excavated in a "rough, rabbit-ridden, pasture, victim of the agricultural depression" but the land returned to arable in the 1940s. The Ordnance Surveyors' Drawing of 1797 and the Tithe Map (1825) depict a belt of trees to the SE of the villa, which by the time of the first edition of the 6-inch series (1869) had grown to become a block of woodland (Corbier Hall Wood) almost linking Honeyhills Wood with Corbier Hall (Fig. 19). These woods and the remaining field boundaries were removed from the 1950s onwards. At the time of the evaluation the



entire site was a single arable field which had recently been sown with grass.

## **2 AIMS**

2.1 The Written Scheme of Investigation outlined seven aims of the evaluation which are re-iterated below.

2.1.1 To determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains within the evaluation area.

2.1.2 To determine the presence and potential of environmental and economic indicators preserved in any archaeological features or deposits.

2.1.3 To determine the local, regional, national and international importance of such remains, and the potential for further archaeological fieldwork to fulfil local, regional and national research objectives.

2.1.4 To examine the extent of truncation of archaeological deposits by modern agricultural practices and other landuses.

2.1.5 To examine the nature and character of buildings and other structures associated with the main villa building.

2.1.6 To examine the presence/absence and character of any post-Roman use associated with the villa buildings.

2.1.7 To examine the character of potential features recorded during the geophysical survey to the south of Corbier Hall.

## **3 METHODS**

### **3.1 General**

3.1.1 A detailed specification for the evaluation was agreed by Union Railways Limited with the County Archaeologist and English Heritage. The following is intended only to amplify certain aspects of the evaluation methodology.

### **3.2 Survey**

3.2.1 The trench locations were surveyed by P H Matts, Building & Civil Engineering Land Survey (Reading) based on the trench location plan provided by URL. Trenches 1130, 1131 and 1141 were repositioned in the field to avoid disturbing a public footpath. The trenches have been plotted (Fig. 2) from digital information provided by URL using AutoCAD graphics programme with manual adjustments to the trenches indicated. The overall site plan shows the URL local site grid which is different to

the National Grid. The National Grid co-ordinates were provided for each trench and are shown on the individual trench plans (Figs. 4 - 16). Individual trenches were planned in the field at a scale of 1:50 or 1:100.

### **3.3 Excavation**

3.3.1 Scheduled Monuments Consent was obtained by London and Continental Engineering from the Secretary of State for National Heritage.

3.3.2 An array of 23 trenches were excavated over the 4 ha site, representing a sample of about 3%. Soil was removed mechanically generally to the top of archaeologically significant deposits. In Trenches 1133 and 1127 deposits which were partly truncated by machine may have been archaeologically significant in the light of later evidence. It is also possible that some of the colluvial deposits partly removed by machine in Trench 1128 were of some archaeological significance. In cases where fragile archaeological deposits such as cobbled surfaces were suspected, machining was carried out conservatively to avoid pulling up surfaces and associated finds. The definition of some deposits was therefore tentative.

3.3.3 Trenches were excavated to a depth not exceeding 1.2 m, the maximum permitted depth for the trench width. This was sufficient to examine deposits of archaeological interest. In Trenches 1142 and 1145 the bottom of the 'moat' ditch was not reached, but in view of the low archaeological significance of the upper deposits, which were modern, further excavation was not carried out. This decision was made with the agreement of the LCE Director's Representative.

3.3.4 The trenches were hand-cleaned except in cases where hand-cleaning was judged to be unproductive, either because a combination of wet ground conditions and fragile evidence made interference with archaeological deposits potentially destructive, or when archaeological deposits were clearly absent. Individual trenches are discussed below.

3.3.5 In view of the extensive archaeological deposits encountered, many of them stratified, archaeological excavation was limited to assessing the horizontal and vertical extent of the deposits and examining sufficient features to enable the site to be characterised and the other aims of the evaluation to be addressed (Section 2).

### **3.4 Recording**

3.4.1 Recording followed the standard OAU single context recording system (Wilkinson ed. 1992). Each context was given an individual context number prefixed with the last two digits of the CTRL trench number (eg. Trench 1133 contained contexts 3301, 3302 ... etc.). Context numbers are in italics throughout the text of this report. All evaluation records were prefaced by the site code ARC THM 96.



## **4 RESULTS: GENERAL**

- 4.1 Remains of the Roman villa were found in Trenches 1132 and 1133. An interpretation of the walls found in the evaluation in relation to the geophysical survey and the results of the 1933 and 1958 excavations are shown in Fig. 3.
- 4.2 The aisled building was located in Trenches 1128 and 1134. Archaeological deposits of Roman and Late Iron Age date were found in all the remaining trenches at the NW end of the site viz. 1131, 1130, 1129, 1127, 1135 and 1976, and a scatter of features probably of this date were found in Trenches 1138, 1139 and 1141.
- 4.3 Trenches south of Corbier Hall revealed two arms of a large ditch, provisionally interpreted as the 'moat' and associated drainage ditch, in Trenches 1142, 1143 and 1145. It had been infilled and levelled recently. There were no medieval finds from this area (or anywhere on the site) and no features which appeared to be related to medieval Corbier Hall.
- 4.4 The main components of the trenches are described below. A summary of all the archaeological contexts and associated finds appear in the Archaeological Context Inventory (Section 6). Detailed reports on the pottery, tile, animal bone, environmental remains, flint and iron and stone objects are contained in Appendices 1 - 6.
- 4.5 The site archive has been compiled in accordance with the specification agreed with English Heritage and the County Archaeologist. It includes six electronic Datasets for the fieldwork Event, Contexts, Bulk Finds, Finds, Environmental Samples and Graphical Output.

## **5 TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS**

### **5.1 Roman occupation area**

#### **Trenches across villa (1133 and 1132)**

##### *Trench 1133 (Fig. 4)*

- 5.1.1 Archaeological deposits were encountered directly under the modern ploughsoil, which was 200-350 mm deep. The trench was cleaned by hand and excavations limited to establishing the depth of surviving stratigraphy and retrieving dating evidence.
- 5.1.2 The villa foundation walls 3315, 3316 and 3321 were immediately evident under the modern soil. A further parallel wall (3320) and a cross-wall (3317) were revealed after the excavation of deposit 3306 (Plate 4). This was a quite compact, mixed, stony brown silty clay which was interpreted as backfill of the 1933 excavation trench. Deposits 3302 and 3304 were interpreted in the same terms and their partial removal

clarified the disposition of the structural features here.

- 5.1.3 There was no evidence of surviving floor surfaces. However, layer 3318 was a plough-scored deposit of clean orange fine gravel and silt lying between walls 3320 and 3321 which was interpreted as a floor foundation layer. Spreads of relatively clean clay (3313, 3319 and 3322), brown or greenish grey in colour, also suggested floor foundation layers. Patches of chalk with flints (3324) and flints within a darker silty matrix (3329) may also have been related to floor make-up.
- 5.1.4 The non-survival of floor surfaces indicates that the surviving 'walls' represent only the wall-footings. All the wall-footings were of a superficially similar appearance, consisting of flint and /or ragstone rubble in an orange sandy mortar. Wall 3321 had a darker silty matrix with orange mottling. Walls 3315, 3316 and 3321 were of flint construction, 3320 had a flint core with facing stones of ragstone, and the cross-wall 3317 was of ragstone. The upper surfaces of the walls, as exposed, tended to be quite loose with inclusions of darker soil. It was tentatively suggested that shallow robber trenches could be identified (Cuts 3311 and 3331) but it is possible, and perhaps more likely, that this was the result of superficial plough disturbance allied to natural weathering.
- 5.1.5 Three of the walls (3315, 3320 and 3321) were examined with slots excavated up against them. Walls 3320 and 3321 were only 200 mm and 100 mm deep respectively. The base of 3315 was, however, not reached within the excavation which stopped at the natural clay (3326) about 300 mm down. No clear wall foundation trenches were found (even where the wall cut the natural) so it seems that the foundation trenches were cut precisely to the width of the foundations. The alternative explanation, that the foundations were built first and infill material later added to raise the floor level seems less likely given the variable depth of the wall foundations and the nature of the underlying deposits (see para. 7.2), which do not appear to be the result of dumping. However, the excavations were of an insufficient scale to be sure of the constructional technique, and it is furthermore intrinsically likely that several phases of construction are present and that more than one technique might have been employed.
- 5.1.6 Walls 3315, 3320 and 3321 cut through a dark grey-brown clayey silt layer 200-300 mm thick (Layers 3314, 3323 and 3330 respectively). These seemed to represent a general soil development pre-dating the construction of the villa. No finds came from these deposits. They overlay a mid brown silt-clay 3325 which was interpreted as an *in situ* Roman subsoil. West of Wall 3315 this occupied a natural hollow in the underlying light brown clay.
- 5.1.7 At the western end of the trench the modern ploughsoil overlay a dark greyish brown clay loam 3312 containing abundant tile as well as flecks of mortar and other cultural material. It was initially interpreted as an accumulation post-dating the abandonment of the villa. Since machine-stripping started at this end of the trench it was at the time unclear how this layer related to the surviving villa deposits and the layer was largely



machine-excavated. However, the surface of the layer lies at the same level as the Roman layers relating to the building itself, so it is clear that 3312 is archaeologically significant if not necessarily contemporary with the use of the villa.

*Trench 1132 (Fig. 5)*

- 5.1.8 An earlier post-Roman soil 3208 (possibly a ploughsoil) was encountered under the modern ploughsoil. This was thin or non-existent at the southern end of the trench, but deepened towards the north. This sealed earlier features and was also removed by machine. A similar soil, 3207, filled the top of wall-trench 3204. It yielded a post-medieval sherd and may have been related to the robbing of the wall.
- 5.1.9 As in Trench 1133, there was no evidence of floor surfaces, but irregular spreads of greenish grey clay (3227), brown clay (3229) and yellowish brown clay (3212) may represent floor foundations. Layer 3212 actually lay beyond what was interpreted as the N wall of the villa (3205) and may rather be upcast from the excavation of the wall foundation trench (3204).
- 5.1.10 The probable wall foundation 3205 was examined by excavation. It was found to consist exclusively of flint nodules filling a trench 700 mm deep. Although originally thought to be a possible drainage feature or robber trench, it appears to be of the same character as the 'early phase' of villa construction identified by Pirie (Pirie 1960, 142). The other walls were bonded with orange sandy mortar and appeared similar to those in Trench 1133. Wall 3232 was the only one examined by excavation and was shown to consist of a single course of ragstone rubble overlying a flint rubble base (3233) of the same width. The depth of the foundation was about 300 mm, reaching natural clay. Wall 3226 also had a ragstone surface, while 3238 was flinty.
- 5.1.11 There were a few other discrete features revealed under the machine-excavated overburden. A cluster of sherds from a single 1st-century pot lay atop a patch of light grey mortar, 3220. This may represent the truncated remains of a small pit (apparently cut by wall foundation trench 3204) with a receptacle placed in it. Two circular charcoal patches, 3223 and 3224, may have been post-holes.
- 5.1.12 Under clay layers 3231/3227 and 3212 was a relatively clean, homogeneous, dark clay silt, 3213, which directly overlay the natural clay (3214). This layer was 100-150 mm thick in the slots where it was examined, and contained no building debris or other finds. It seems to represent a soil accumulation pre-dating the construction of the villa, or, perhaps less likely, a layer deposited to level the ground.
- 5.1.13 Beyond the villa building to the north, a uniform spread of dark grey-brown clayey silt containing building debris, 3219, was interpreted as relating to the abandonment and destruction of the villa although no dating evidence was retrieved. The deposit was examined with a single slot at the northern end which revealed the edge of a possible ditch, 3202, overlain by a deposit of flint nodules, 3218. These features were undated. Ditch 3202 cut an earlier gully, 3201, which yielded 1st-century pottery.

## Trenches across aisled building (1134 and 1128)

### *Trench 1134 (Figs. 6 & 7)*

- 5.1.14 The trench was positioned across the width of the aisled building. Archaeological deposits were revealed directly under the modern ploughsoil which was 400 mm thick. The trench was hand-cleaned and two slots excavated.
- 5.1.15 The trench was crossed by two wall-footings of flint nodules in an orange sandy mortar matrix (walls 3406 and 3411), each about 0.8 m wide and 12 m apart. The rest of the trench showed a mosaic of soil differences which could not be readily interpreted within the limits of the trench. It is suggested that the dark grey deposits containing relatively large quantities of flint cobbles (3405 3412) were plough-damaged remnant floor surfaces. This interpretation is perhaps supported by an *in situ* patch of horizontally laid tiles (3414) within the building. Spreads of greenish grey silty clay (3413) may represent floor foundation or surface layers, but it should be noted that both these, and the 'cobbled' surfaces lay both within and to the south of the building.
- 5.1.16 Other soil variations, including patches of creamy yellow and grey clay, crushed chalk, orange sand and dark grey/black silt could not be interpreted within the limits of the trench, but suggested some complexity to the structure.
- 5.1.17 A slot excavated to examine the northern wall 3406 showed that beneath a thin weathered deposit of orange sandy mortar (3410) the footing itself was constructed of tightly-packed angular flints 200 mm deep. There was no indication of a construction trench cut, but similarly dark clayey silts on either side of the foundation (Layers 3403 and 3405) suggest that the foundation trench was cut through earlier soil deposits and the flint packed in to fill the trench. Both these layers contained pot, tile and bone, and directly overlay a mid brown subsoil 3404. Layer 3405 contained a noticeable, though hardly marked, distribution of cobbles towards the top of the layer, but otherwise there was no suggestion of a floor or floor foundation.
- 5.1.18 The wall foundation was set in the fill of an earlier feature, Gully 3407. This was filled with a greenish grey silty clay 3408 yielding 1st-century pottery and bone. The gully appeared to be cutting a layer of flint nodules 3409, but the archaeological significance of this deposit remains unclear.
- 5.1.19 At the southern end of the trench a small slot showed 100 mm of mixed pebbly deposits overlying natural subsoil.

### *Trench 1128 (Figs. 6 & 7)*

- 5.1.20 Trench 1128 was positioned along the length of the aisled building, running from a junction with Trench 1134 down the slope of the knoll. The modern ground surface fell from *ca.* 74.80 to *ca.* 72.50 m OD from NW to SE.
- 5.1.21 Under 350 mm of modern ploughsoil was a uniform mid greyish-brown clayey silt,



2802, containing relatively abundant flint fragments, charcoal and cultural debris. This deposit was very thin at the NW end of the trench, but deepened to about 250 mm at the SE end. It was initially interpreted as plough-disturbed post-Roman colluvium but the pottery recovered proved to be of 2nd century date and it is unclear whether the deposit was of later date (see Section 7.2). The SE 20 m or so was largely removed by machine to clarify the underlying features. The SE end of the trench was machine-excavated to natural clay (2809).

5.1.22 2802 appeared to overlie a wall foundation (2804) consisting of flint nodules within an orange sandy mortar, probably the eastern end of the aisled building. This was not excavated. A possible small pit (2811) lay to the north-west of the wall and a small concentration of ragstone and flint (2805), tentatively interpreted as a post-setting, lay to the south-east.

5.1.23 Towards the north-west end of the trench 2802 appeared to be cut by a shallow charcoal-rich pit 2808 which yielded pottery dateable to the late 1st century or later and small amounts of charred cereals and wood (Sample 2). It is unclear what this feature represents and whether related to the use of the aisled building. However, it does suggest that 2802 is of archaeological significance.

5.1.24 Layer 2803, a lighter greyish brown clayey silt, appeared to represent the interface of 2802 with the natural 2809. Patches of this material were examined at the SE end of the trench but appeared to fill natural hollows.

#### **Other trenches in the villa area (1131, 1130, 1127 and 1129)**

##### *Trench 1131 (Fig. 8)*

5.1.25 The trench was positioned between the villa and the aisled building. The modern ploughsoil, 400 mm deep, directly overlay archaeological deposits. The central part of the trench showed patches of cobbling (3104) which were thought to represent the damaged remnants of a Roman surface. Machine-stripping proceeded conservatively and although it was hand-cleaned, the cobbled surface was not well-defined.

5.1.26 The cobbled surface was reasonably clear in the central part of the trench (3104) where it was quite tightly packed in a greyish brown silt matrix with abundant tile fragments. Further NE the layer became more patchy, probably both because it was obscured by superficial deposits and because it had suffered more plough-damage. However, the deposit appeared to spread for about 14 m. It was possibly defined on each side by gullies running NNW-SSE (3110 and 3111).

5.1.27 It was unclear whether the cobbled surface had been cut by anything other than some possible minor features. However, at each end of the trench a series of seven or eight linear features running approximately NW-SE were evident. At the SW end the features cut natural clay (3109) and were quite clear, but rather less so at the NE end, where they appeared to cut a patchy mid brown and grey-brown flinty subsoil (3108). Pottery was retrieved only from 3102. This was dateable to the 1st century. Later



1st/2nd century sherds came from the cobbled surface and topsoil.

*Trench 1130 (Fig. 9)*

- 5.1.28 The trench was in two sections bisected by the public footpath. The modern ploughsoil, 300 mm deep, directly overlay the natural clay-silt which was heavily plough-scored. The trench was hand-cleaned to define a complex of intercutting features, a sample of which were examined by excavation.
- 5.1.29 Ditch 3006 crossing the NW end of the trench appears to have been quite a long-lived Roman feature, with two recuts 3019 and 3020 identified. Dating evidence from fills 3003 and 3004 suggest a 1st century date. Deposit 3016 immediately to the SE may indicate a parallel ditch of similar width which was not examined.
- 5.1.30 Ditch 3010, which was cut by 3020, was a smaller feature running north-south. No dating evidence was retrieved. A parallel ditch, located 4 m to the east, was not examined.
- 5.1.31 Two sections of curving ditch were revealed, one of which was investigated. Ditch 3024 yielded 1st century pot from the upper fill. It was cut by two features, 3027 and 3031, which had notably flinty fills. 3031 contained up to 80% flint nodules, but was quite ill-defined and, although without finds, was thought to be relatively modern. 3027 contained flint and ragstone rubble but was also without finds. Its full extent was not revealed and its nature and date are uncertain.
- 5.1.32 Two small gullies aligned N-S, 3022 and 3030, were cut by Ditch 3024. 3022 was examined but was without finds. 3030 was not excavated.
- 5.1.33 A number of possible pits and post-holes were revealed and two were examined. Feature 3012 was the edge of a probable pit cut by Ditch 3019. Its single fill was a mid orange-brown clayey silt, unlike the mid brown or greyish fills of the 1st and 2nd century features, suggesting a possible prehistoric origin. It yielded a flint flake. Feature 3015 was a possible post-hole but without finds.
- 5.1.34 Three unexcavated pits 3017, 3030 and 3033 were also noted. The surface of 3017 comprised a deposit of flint nodules from among which a quernstone fragment was retrieved. Pot and bone were recovered from the surface of 3030. 3033, at the extreme SE end of the trench contained no surface finds.

*Trench 1127 (Fig. 10)*

- 5.1.35 The trench was located at the NE edge of the evaluation area running down slope. The modern land surface dropped from about 74 m OD at the NW end to 72.7 m OD at the SE end.
- 5.1.36 The modern ploughsoil (2701) was 300-360 mm deep overlying a mid greyish-brown clayey silt (2702) about 200 mm thick. At the NW end of the trench the deposit was quite clean and interpreted as an earlier ploughsoil/colluvial accumulation. It was

excavated by machine for the first 10 m. However, a deposit of ragstone (2704 and 2705) was then encountered immediately under the modern soil. This was left to be examined by hand, and machining continued at the surface level of 2702 for the remainder of the trench.

- 5.1.37 The area of rubble was cleaned by hand and two slots excavated to examine it and the associated stratigraphy. Deposit 2704 consisted of a roughly linear spread of unworked ragstones which may originally have formed a dry-stone wall. Its derivation was probably similar to rubble spread 2705 to the SE which filled the width of the trench and may have formed another wall running at right-angles. To the SE of 2705 a horizontal spread of roof tiles (2712) appeared undisturbed and was interpreted as part of a collapsed roof (Plate 5).
- 5.1.38 The gap between 2704 and 2705 was occupied by two intercutting ditches, 2710 and 2707. It appeared from the surface that the ditches were cutting the rubble layers, but excavations were less conclusive and it appeared that both the ditch edges underlay the rubble to some degree. Ditch 2710, the later of the two was 350 mm deep with a flattish base. 2707, on the same alignment, was slightly shallower but wider. Its upper fill, 2709, contained a thin deposit of natural flint nodules which may have been intended as ground consolidation. Tile from 2709 and 2711 was not diagnostic of date but bones of a sheep from 2711 appeared from their size and condition to be post-Medieval (see Appendix 3).
- 5.1.39 A slot excavated through 2702 to the SE of the rubble deposits exposed natural clay immediately beneath. Pottery from 2702 is dated to the later 1st century or later. At the NW end of the trench patches of mid grey silt suggested the presence of three or four features cutting the natural, but these were not examined.

*Trench 1129 (Fig. 11)*

- 5.1.40 The trench was excavated running down slope from 73.37 m OD at the NW end to 72.22 m at the SE end. The modern ploughsoil was 300-370 mm deep, directly overlying archaeological deposits. The NW half of the trench generally showed features cutting natural clay, although traces of a light grey silt subsoil 2902 was also exposed. This appeared to be more extensive at the SE end of the trench, although only 120 mm thick. Some pot and tile were recovered from an excavated slot, dateable to the late 1st to 2nd centuries.
- 5.1.41 In the central portion of the trench the modern soil overlay spreads of dark grey-brown clayey silts containing Roman cultural debris, particularly tile (2904 and 2905). Where examined they were thin layers (100-150 mm) and concealed further archaeological deposits, including an area of stonework 2909/2917.
- 5.1.42 A slot excavated through 2904 against the stonework revealed a ditch or pit 2912 whose form was elsewhere concealed. 2909 appeared to form an infill of ragstone rubble in the top of the ditch, although it was considered possible that it was packed into a discrete feature cut into the top of the ditch. The ditch cut another deposit of



ragstone, 2917. This was 300 mm thick and, although without coursing or facing identifiable within the limited exposure, may have been the truncated remains of a dry-stone wall. Finds of pottery of the late 1st to 2nd centuries came from ditch 2912.

- 5.1.43 A slot excavated through 2905 revealed a flint cobbled surface 2913, thought to be of archaeological significance. Its extent possibly corresponds to layer 2905, though this is uncertain.
- 5.1.44 Two intercutting ditches towards the NW end of the trench were examined. The later cut 2916 was a shallow feature with a single dark fill, 2915. Ditch 2908 curved to a northwestern terminal and was more substantial. The fills 2906, 2907 and 2919, yielded sherds of 1st-century pottery with some tile and bone.

### **Trenches marginal to the villa area (1976 and 1135)**

#### *Trench 1976 (Fig. 12)*

- 5.1.45 The trench was located on a slight slope which dropped from 71.8 m OD at the NW end to 70.42 m OD at the SE end. The modern ploughsoil was 400 mm deep, directly overlying archaeological deposits. The trench drained poorly and standing water was permanently present at the downslope end. Hand-cleaning was therefore limited to those areas excavated.
- 5.1.46 The exposed deposits showed extensive spreads of dark, mottled greyish clayey silt (7604, 7612) with abundant Roman cultural debris, particularly tile. Three slots were excavated to examine possible discrete features. Features 7603, 7606 and 7608 turned out to be fills of very shallow scoops containing 2nd-century pottery.
- 5.1.47 The edge of a ditch 7611, running east-west, was uncovered and excavated to a depth of 300 mm. It contained 1st-century pottery. A post-medieval tile may have been intrusive but this is uncertain. The width of the ditch was unclear due to obscuring deposit 7612, but it possibly coincided with the extent of 7612 (ie. 3-4 m wide). It appeared to be cut by a narrow gully containing flint and ragstone rubble, but it is possible that this was a field drain with an unusual fill.

#### *Trench 1135 (Fig. 13)*

- 5.1.48 This trench was on approximately level ground. The modern ploughsoil was 300 mm deep and directly overlay archaeological deposits. The trench was extensively hand-cleaned. Generally, archaeological features directly cut the natural flinty clay/Chalk Head and it appears that modern ploughing has removed superficial Roman deposits. However, layer 3511 was a thin dark pebbly deposit concealing pit 3505. There was no trace of an underlying buried soil and the interpretation of this layer is uncertain. It is possible that it was a plough-disturbed capping to the pit.
- 5.1.49 Pit 3505 was circular 0.85 m in diameter with almost vertical sides. The water-table was reached at 650 mm although the basal break of slope could be detected lower down and it was felt that the bottom had almost been reached. The three fills, 3506,



3507 and 3508 were all dark greyish brown and contained abundant cultural remains with the pottery suggesting a late 1st/2nd century infilling. Carbonised plant remains from 3507 and 3508 (Samples 3 and 4) proved to be exceptionally common and well-preserved (see Appendix 4).

5.1.50 Feature 3503 was a small, circular, stone-filled pit. It had an unclear relationship with gully 3502 which appeared to run into it. Pot was recovered from both features and was datable to the 1st century.

5.1.51 A further six possible pits/post-holes were revealed, in addition to two larger sub-circular possible pits. These were not examined.

## 5.2 Trenches in central area

### Ditch (1138), trackway (1139) and pit (1141)

#### *Trench 1138 (Fig. 14, section 40)*

5.2.1 A broad ditch (3804) was located at the NW end of the trench running approximately north-south. It was 2.3 m wide and 600 mm deep with rather irregular edges. 1st-century pottery was recovered from the upper fills 3805 and 3806. Charred remains were absent from 3806 (Sample 6). The sample was contaminated with modern straw, but this is not thought to indicate that the feature itself was modern.

#### *Trench 1139 (Fig. 15)*

5.2.2 A metalled surface (3910), about 6 m wide, was found running across the trench (Plate 3). It was constructed of subangular flint nodules lying directly on the natural clay, and was 140 mm thick. A pair of wheel-ruts cut the surface running at a slightly more east-west angle. The overlying layers comprised the modern ploughsoil and an earlier ploughsoil (3902), both of which were removed by machine, and a mid grey-brown silt (3911 and 3909) which was hand-excavated in a slot.

5.2.3 On the SW side of the trackway were two ditches running approximately parallel to each other. The larger ditch, 3908, was without finds, but the smaller one, 3904, yielded 2nd-century pottery, tile and bone. It is unclear whether the ditches were directly associated with the trackway, and there was some stratigraphic suggestion that they might be later. There were no corresponding features on the NE side of the trackway.

5.2.4 A third ditch, 3915, was sealed by the trackway. Its alignment was at variance with that of the other two. It was without finds.

#### *Trench 1141 (Fig. 14, section 38)*

5.2.5 A single archaeological feature in this trench was a circular pit 1.3 m in diameter and 260 mm deep (4104). A few sherds of 1st-century pot were recovered from the upper fill (4102). Charred remains were absent from the lower fill (4103 - Sample 5) and straw fragments indicated some modern contamination.

### **Blank trenches (1136, 1137 and 1140)**

- 5.2.6 These trenches showed no archaeological features. Probable tree-holes were recorded in 1136 and 1140. Burnt flint within the topsoil of 1140 did not relate to any subsoil features.

### **5.3 South of Corbier Hall**

#### **'Moat' Trenches (1145, 1143 and 1142)**

##### *Trench 1145 (Fig. 16 plan & sections 7, 10)*

- 5.3.1 The trench was machine-excavated to the natural clay-silt. The modern ploughsoil, a chalky dump deposit 4509 and a clean greyish brown subsoil 4507 were removed. 4507 was homogeneous and well mixed with flint, suggesting an earlier, though undated, ploughsoil. It was cut by two ditches, the large 'moat' ditch 4506, and a smaller ditch 4512 running parallel to it.
- 5.3.2 Ditch 4506 was 6.5 m wide. The upper fill, 4502, was a recent dump of grey flinty clay which was partly removed by machine to the level of the rest of the trench. A slot through the ditch was hand-dug to a depth of about 1 m without the base being reached. All the fills appeared to be modern, and post-medieval tile was recovered from 4503. The lowest fill reached, 4504, was a friable dark greyish brown silt loam containing decayed wood fragments. It was tentatively interpreted as a stable A horizon of a soil containing the remains of hedge/scrub roots which had developed within the partly infilled ditch.
- 5.3.3 Ditch 4512 had a clean silt silty lower fill (4511) and appeared to have been subsequently levelled with a dumped deposit 4510 which was probably contemporary with the upper fills of 4506.

##### *Trench 1143 (Fig. 16 plan & section 16)*

- 5.3.4 Both the ditches from Trench 1145 were traced into Trench 1143. A section through the smaller ditch, 4306, produced very similar results to the section in Trench 1145 without clarifying the dating. The large ditch, 4312, was not examined.

##### *Trench 1142 (fig. 16 plan & section 13)*

- 5.3.5 The trench was excavated across the shallow dry valley specifically to examine a possible ditched trackway visible on air-photographs. Of the trackway there was no trace, and it was considered possible that it lay further to the NW.
- 5.3.6 The trench was machine-excavated to the natural clay silt which contained discrete patches of flint. The stratigraphic sequence was similar to that in Trenches 1143 and 1145. Under the modern ploughsoil was a heterogeneous dumping layer 4206, partly filling ditch 4204, overlying a clean mid brown subsoil 4202, which 4204 cut.
- 5.3.7 Ditch 4204 was 6.5 m wide and contained exclusively modern fills, 4205 and 4207,



which were compact flinty clay dumps with modern brick, as well as 4206. The ditch was excavated by machine to a depth of about 1 m without a trace of the bottom. The ditch was probably a continuation of 4506 and 4312 on a different alignment.

#### **Post-medieval brick structure (Trench 1977) (Fig. 17)**

- 5.3.8 The trench was dug within the dry valley. Two re-alignments were made to avoid disturbing a field drain and to expose the brick structure more completely. The structure was cleaned and the fill excavated to a depth of 0.6 m where the water-table was reached. The base of the structure was not found.
- 5.3.9 The structure, 7707, was encountered directly under the modern ploughsoil. It comprised a circular chamber, 1.6 m in internal diameter, and an entrance corridor paved with ragstone, 7706 (Plate 6). Around the structure was an uneven floor, 7704, of tightly-packed ragstone and flint. Two *in situ*, semi-rotten, charred wooden posts, 7708 and 7709, were uncovered, apparently driven into the floor surround.
- 5.3.10 The fill of the structure, as far as excavated, was similar to the modern ploughsoil and contained modern finds, including barbed wire and a charred wooden post.
- 5.3.11 The structure itself was of 'modern' (ie. frogged) brick, bonded with soft yellowish brown sandy mortar which had also been used for a light interior rendering. The coursing was flat-bedded except the surviving uppermost course which was laid on edge nearly all the way round, leaving a shallow (4-5 cm deep) recess on the NE side. The chamber was constructed with a slight but notable curve towards the base. The ragstone-paved corridor was in the form of a shallow-stepped ramp.
- 5.3.12 It is unclear whether or not the structure had been roofed. The absence of brick rubble, the flat surface of the upper course of bricks, laid on edge and without adhering mortar, and the position of the wooden post (which may have supported a rudimentary covering), all suggest that a brick superstructure never existed. However, against this is the contrary evidence of a slight recess on the NE side suggesting the remains of a window light. The absence of rendering on the upper surface of the wall could be taken to indicate that upper courses had been removed, although, that said, it is clear that had any dismantling of a superstructure taken place it must have been very carefully done.

#### **Miscellaneous features (Trenches 1144, 1146 and 1147)**

- 5.3.13 These trenches in the southern corner of the evaluation area revealed little except minor features and possible plough furrows. The machine-excavated overburden generally consisted of 350-400 mm of modern ploughsoil directly over the natural clay-silt with gravelly patches. A thin subsoil (earlier ploughsoil?) was also removed in Trench 1144.
- 5.3.14 Two probable medieval plough furrows were revealed at the northern end of 1144.



One was excavated and was shown to be 3.1 m broad and just 230 mm deep with an uneven, scored base. No finds were retrieved. The second one, 4 m to the S was not excavated. A similar, though slightly narrower and deeper feature (2.8 m x 350 mm) was examined in Trench 1146. It was adjacent to a possibly similar feature at the extreme eastern end of the trench. They may have been medieval furrows but ran approximately at right-angles to those in Trench 1146.

- 5.3.15 Two small ditches of approximately the same dimensions were examined in Trenches 1144 and 1147 (features 4413 and 4705). They are likely to have been field boundaries/drains. A single sherd of possibly 2nd century pot came from 4413.
- 5.3.16 In Trench 1144, two small intercutting pits, 4410 and 4408 were also examined. The earlier of the two yielded a small sherd of possibly 1st century pot and an iron arrowhead which may be of post-medieval date. In Trench 1147 a shallow, irregular pit, 4703, contained charcoal and burnt flint. The charred remains were indeterminate (Sample 1).

## 6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Column 1: Trench no.

Column 2: Context no.

Column 4: Stratigraphic relationships. o/l = overlies; c/by = cut by; f/o = fill of

Column 5: pot is 1st-2nd century unless otherwise stated; tile is Roman tile unless otherwise stated; bone is animal bone

Column 6: No. of finds. Res. = residual; Intr. = intrusive

Column 7: ceramic spot-date with stratigraphic interpretation. late c.1+ = late 1st century or later.

TR	CXT	TYPE	ASSOC.	FINDS	NO.	DATE
1127	2701	topsoil	o/l 2711 & 2712	-		modern
	2702	plough/colluv.	under 2706	pot tile	8 2	late c.1st+ ?
	2703	natural deposit	under 2702	-		
	2704	stone wall	c/by 2707	-		later Rom.?
	2705	stone wall	c/by 2710	-		later Rom.?
	2706	group no.	=2704 & 2705	-		
	2707	ditch	cuts 2704 c/by 2710	-		Rom.?
	2708	fill	f/o 2707	-		
	2709	fill	f/o 2707	tile	5	
	2710	ditch	cuts 2705 2707	-		post-medieval?

TR	CXT	TYPE	ASSOC.	FINDS	NO.	DATE
	2711	fill	f/o 2710	tile bone	5 (res.) 25	post-medieval?
	2712	layer	o/l 2705	tile	8	later Rom?
1128	2801	topsoil	o/l 2807	pot tile	4 3	modern
	2802	layer	c/by 2808	pot tile bone	28 14 2	?early-mid c.2 soil/colluv.
	2803	layer	c/by 2804 2805 2806?	-		
	2804	wall?	f/o 2810	-		Rom.
	2805	post-pad?	o/l 2803	-		Rom.
	2806	fill	f/o 2811	-		Rom.?
	2807	fill	f/o 2808	pot tile bone flint flake	4 3 1 2 (res.)	late c.1+ ?
	2808	post-hole?	cuts 2802	-		late c.1+ ?
	2809	natural	under 2803	-		
	2810	wall cut	cuts 2803	-		Rom.
	2811	post-hole?	cuts 2803	-		Rom.?
1129	2901	topsoil		-		modern
	2902	layer	c/by 2908?	pot tile bone	7 26 2	late c.1-2
	2903	natural				
	2904	layer	o/l 2909	tile bone	2 4	later Rom.?
	2905	layer	o/l 2913	pot tile bone Fe hay fork?	4 12 5 1	late c.1+ ?
	2906	fill	f/o 2908	pot bone	8 7	c.1
	2907	fill	f/o 2908	pot tile bone	4 2 5	c.1
	2908	ditch	c/by 2916 f/by 2906 2907 2919	-		c.1
	2909	fill (rubble)	f/o 2912	-		
	2910	fill	f/o 2912	pot tile bone Fe nail	13 17 13 1	late c.1-2



TR	CXT	TYPE	ASSOC.	FINDS	NO.	DATE
	2911	fill	f/o 2912	pot tile bone Fe nails	26 4 6 2	late c.1-early/mid c.2
	2912	pit or ditch	cuts 2917	-		late c.1-2
	2913	cobbled layer	under 2905	-		early Rom.?
	2914	fill	f/o 2912	pot tile	1 1	c.1
	2915	fill	f/o 2916	pot quernstone	7 1	c.1?
	2916	gully	cuts 2902 2908	-		c.1?
	2917	wall?	c/by 2912	-		Rom.
	2918	layer	under 2917	-		Rom.
	2919	fill	f/o 2908	pot	1	c.1
1130	3001	topsoil		pot P-M pot	1 (res.) 1	modern
	3002	fill	f/o 3020	-		
	3003	fill	f/o 3020	pot tile bone	6 1 2	c.1
	3004	fill	f/o 3006	pot	3	c.1
	3005	fill	f/o 3006	-		c.1?
	3006	ditch	c/by 3020	-		c.1?
	3007	fill	f/o 3010	-		
	3008	fill	f/o 3010	-		
	3009	fill	f/o 3010	-		
	3010	ditch	c/by 3020	-		early? Rom.
	3011	fill	f/o 3012	flint flake	1	prehist.?
	3012	pit?	c/by 3019	-		prehist.?
	3013	fill	f/o 3015	-		
	3014	fill	f/o 3015	-		
	3015	post-hole		-		undated
	3016	deposit unexc.		-		Rom.?
	3017	deposit unexc.		quernstone	1	Rom.?
	3018	fill	f/o 3019	-		
	3019	ditch	cuts 3012 3020	-		later Rom.?
	3020	ditch	cuts 3006 3010 f/by 3002 3003	-		Rom.

TR	CXT	TYPE	ASSOC.	FINDS	NO.	DATE
	3021	natural		-		
	3022	gully	c/by 3024	-		Rom.
	3023	fill	f/o 3022	-		Rom.
	3024	ditch	cuts 3022 c/by 3027	-		Rom.
	3025	fill	f/o 3024	pot bone Fe nails	11 3 2	c.1
	3026	fill	f/o 3024	-		Rom.
	3027	ditch/gully	cuts 3024	-		modern?
	3028	fill	f/o 3027	-		modern?
	3029	deposit unexc.		pot bone	1 4	c.1
	3030	deposit unexc.	c/by 3024?	-		Rom.?
	3031	fill	f/o 3032	-		modern drain?
	3032	ditch	cuts 3024	-		modern drain?
	3033	deposit unexc.		-		Rom.?
1131	3101	topsoil		pot	2 (res.)	modern?
	3102	fill	f/o 3103	pot	1	c.1
	3103	ditch		-		Rom.
	3104	cobbled surface?		pot tile	15 2	late c.1+
	3105	deposit unexc.	cuts 3104?	pot	3	c.1
	3106	deposit unexc.	o/l 3104?	-	-	Rom.?
	3107	flinty deposits	under 3101	-		Rom.?
	3108	subsoil	under 3104?	-		Rom.
	3109	natural				
	3110	gully fill? unexc.		-		Rom.?
	3111	gully fill? unexc.		-		Rom.?
1132	3201	gully	cuts 3216 c/by 3202 f/by 3203	-		c.1
	3202	ditch?	cuts 3201 f/by 3211 3218	-		Rom.?
	3203	fill	f/o 3201	pot	5	c.1
	3204	wall trench	cuts 3212	-		
	3205	wall foundation	f/o 3204	tile	6	



TR	CXT	TYPE	ASSOC.	FINDS	NO.	DATE
	3206	layer	o/l 3210 under 3208?	tile	5	
	3207	fill	f/o 3204	P-M pot tile bone	1 6 1	as 3208
	3208	layer	o/l 3204 3206? 3218	-		post-Rom.?
	3209	topsoil		-		modern
	3210	clay layer	o/l 3203 under 3206	-		Rom.
	3211	fill	f/o 3202	-		Rom.?
	3212	floor prep. layer?	o/l 3213 c/by 3204 under 3219	-		Rom.
	3213	layer	under 3212	-		early? Rom.
	3214	natural		-		
	3215	fill	f/o 3216	-		unknown
	3216	pit/tree-hole?	f/by 3215 c/by 3201	-		unknown
	3217	natural		-		
	3218	fill	f/o 3202	-		Rom.?
	3219	layer	under 3208 o/l 3212 abuts 3238	-		late Rom.?
	3220	fill?/pot deposit	f/o 3235	pot	16	c.1
	3221	layer	o/l 3227 abuts 3238 under 3208?/3209	-		later Rom.?
	3222	layer	o/l 3227 = 3221?	-		later Rom.?
	3223	charcoal fill	f/o 3236	-		later Rom.?
	3224	charcoal fill	f/o 3237	-		later Rom.?
	3225	sandy deposit	o/l 3227	-		later Rom.?
	3226	ragstone wall	abutted by 3227 3228	-		Rom.
	3227	clay layer	abuts 3226 = 3231	-		Rom.
	3228	layer	abuts 3226 3232	-		Rom.
	3229	clay layer	under 3209	-		Rom.
	3230	NOT USED		-		
	3231	clay layer	= 3227	-		Rom.

TR	CXT	TYPE	ASSOC.	FINDS	NO.	DATE
	3232	ragstone wall	= 3234 abutted by 3231 3228 o/l 3233	-		Rom.
	3233	flint wall	= 3234 abutted by 3213?	-		Rom.
	3234	wall group no.				Rom.
	3235	pit?	f/by 3220 cuts 3212	-		Rom.
	3236	pit/p-h	f/by 3223 cuts 3222	-		later Rom.?
	3237	pit/p-h	f/by 3224 cuts 3227	-		later Rom.?
	3238	flint wall	abutted by 3221 3219	-		Rom.
	3239	foundation cut	DISCOUNTED			
1133	3301	topsoil		-		modern
	3302	fill	f/o 3303	-		1933
	3303	exc. trench	f/by 3302	-		1933
	3304	fill	f/o 3305	-		1933
	3305	exc. trench	f/by 3304	-		1933
	3306	fill	f/o 3307	pot tile nail	1 (res.) 3 (res.) 1	1933
	3307	exc. trench	f/by 3306	-		1933
	3308	fill	f/o 3309	-		1933
	3309	gully	f/by 3308	-		1933 or Rom.
	3310	fill	f/o 3311	-		post-Rom.?
	3311	robber trench?	cuts wall 3315	-		post-Rom.?
	3312	layer	c/by 3311 over 3314	pot tile	1 15	later Rom.?
	3313	floor foundation layer	c/by 3311 o/l 3314	-		Rom.
	3314	layer	c/by wall 3315? o/l 3325	-		early Rom.?
	3315	flint wall	abutted by 3313 cuts 3314?	-		Rom.
	3316	flint wall	cut/abutted by 3303	-		Rom.
	3317	ragstone wall	c/by 3307	-		Rom.
	3318	floor prep. layer	o/l 3329 butts wall 3321?	-		Rom.
	3319	floor prep.? layer	butts wall 3320	-		Rom.



TR	CXT	TYPE	ASSOC.	FINDS	NO.	DATE
	3320	flint & ragstone wall	abutted by 3322 o/l 3323	-		Rom.
	3321	flint wall	abutted by 3318 o/l 3325	-		Rom.
	3322	floor prep.? layer	butts wall 3320 o/l 3323	-		Rom.
	3323	layer	under 3320 o/l 3325	-		early Rom.
	3324	flint & chalk deposit	under 3301	-		unknown
	3325	subsoil	under 3314 3322	-		pre-Rom.?
	3326	natural clay	under 3325	-		
	3327	layer	under 3301	-		unknown
	3328	fill?	f/o 3331	tile	1 (res.?)	robber trench?
	3329	flint deposit	unclear	-		unknown
	3330	layer	c/by 3321? c/by 3307	-		Rom.
	3331	cut	f/by 3328	-		robber trench?
1134	3401	topsoil		-		modern
	3402	natural				
	3403	layer	c/by wall 3406 o/l 3404	pot tile	5 4	c.1
	3404	layer	under 3403 o/l 3402	pot	3	c.1 soil?
	3405	layer	c/by wall 3406	pot tile bone	14 4 52	late c.1+
	3406	flint wall	under 3410 o/l 3404 3408	-		Rom.
	3407	gully	f/by 3408 under 3406 cuts 3404	-		c.1/L Iron Age?
	3408	fill	f/o 3407	pot bone	13 2	c.1/ L Iron Age?
	3409	flint deposit	c/by 3407?	-		uncertain
	3410	layer	o/l wall 3406	-		weathered wall?
	3411	flint wall	abutted by 3413?	-		Rom.
	3412	cobbled layer	under 3401	-		Rom.
	3413	clay layer	under 3401	-		Rom.
	3414	tile layer	under 3401	-		Rom.
1135	3501	fill	f/o 3502	pot	3	c.1

TR	CXT	TYPE	ASSOC.	FINDS	NO.	DATE
	3502	gully	c/by 3503	-		
	3503	pit	cuts 3502?	-		c.1 ?
	3504	fill	f/o 3503	pot tile	1 1	c.1
	3505	pit	f/by 3511 3506 3507 3508	-		c.2 ?
	3506	fill	f/o 3505	pot tile bone Fe nail	4 6 5 1	late c.1+ ?
	3507	fill	f/o 3505	pot tile	3 10	c.2 ??
	3508	fill	f/o 3505	pot tile Fe nail	3 1 1	late c.1+
	3509	natural				
	3510	weathered natural	c/by 3505			
	3511	fill	f/o 3505	-		later Rom.?
	3512	topsoil		-		modern
1136	NONE					
1137	3701	topsoil		flint flake	1 (res.)	modern
	3702	earlier plough?		-		unknown
	3703	natural		-		
1138	3801	topsoil		-		modern
	3802	natural				
	3803	natural				
	3804	ditch	f/by 3805 3806 3807	-		c.1/ L Iron Age?
	3805	fill	f/o 3804	pot	1	c.1/ L Iron Age?
	3806	fill	f/o 3804	pot	4	c.1/ L Iron Age?
	3807	fill	f/o 3804	-		c.1/ L Iron Age?
1139	3901	topsoil		-		modern
	3902	ploughsoil	under 3901	-		post-medieval?
	3903	fill	f/o 3904	pot tile	20 28	?early-mid c.2
	3904	gully	f/by 3903	-		?early-mid c.2
	3905	fill	f/o 3908	-		uncertain
	3906	fill	f/o 3908	-		uncertain
	3907	fill	f/o 3908	-		uncertain
	3908	ditch	f/by 3905 3906 3907	-		uncertain



TR	CXT	TYPE	ASSOC.	FINDS	NO.	DATE
	3909	colluv. layer?	o/l cobbles 3910	tile bone flint flake	2 24 1 (res.)	
	3910	cobbled layer	o/l ditch 3915			Rom.?
	3911	layer	c/by 3904? 3908? o/l 3910?	-		Rom.?
	3912	natural		-		
	3913	fill	f/o 3915	-		pre-Rom.?
	3914	fill	f/o 3915	-		pre-Rom.?
	3915	ditch	f/by 3913 3914	-		pre-Rom.?
1140	4001	topsoil		-		modern
	4002	earlier ploughsoil	under 4001	-		medieval?
	4003	subsoil	under 4002	-		uncertain
	4004	fill	f/o 4005	-		
	4005	tree-hole	f/by 4004	-		
	4006	natural		-		
1141	4101	topsoil		-		modern
	4102	fill	f/o 4104	-		c.1
	4103	fill	f/o 4104	pot	8	c.1
	4104	pit	f/by 4102 4103	-		c.1
	4105	subsoil?	o/l 4106	-		modern?
	4106	subsoil?	under 4105	-		modern?
	4107	natural		-		
1142	4201	topsoil		-		modern
	4202	ploughsoil?	under 4206	-		medieval?
	4203	natural		-		
	4204	ditch	f/by 4205 4206 4207 under 4201	-		post-medieval
	4205	fill	f/o 4204	-		modern
	4206	fill	f/o 4204	-		modern
	4207	fill	f/o 4204	P-M pot brick	1 1	modern
	4208	fill	f/o 4209	-		post-med.?
	4209	pit?	f/by 4208	-		post-med.?
1143	4301	topsoil		-		modern
	4302	earlier ploughsoil	c/by 4306 4312 4308	-		medieval?
	4303	natural		-		

TR	CXT	TYPE	ASSOC.	FINDS	NO.	DATE
	4304	fill	f/o 4306	-		post-med.?
	4305	fill	f/o 4306	-		post-med.?
	4306	gully	cuts 4302	-		post-med.?
	4307	fill	f/o 4308	-		post-med.?
	4308	gully	cuts 4302	-		post-med.?
	4309	deposit	?	-		?
	4310	deposit	?	-		?
	4311	fill	f/o 4312	-		post-med.
	4312	ditch	cuts 4302	-		post-med.
1144	4401	topsoil		-		modern
	4402	early ploughsoil	c/by 4404 4408	-		medieval?
	4403	natural		-		
	4404	plough furrow	f/by 4405 cuts 4402	-		medieval
	4405	fill	f/o 4404	-		medieval
	4406	NOT USED				
	4407	NOT USED				
	4408	pit	cuts 4402? c/by 4410 f/by 4409 4412	-		post-medieval?
	4409	fill	f/o 4408	pot bone Fe arrowhead?	2 7 1	post-medieval?
	4410	post-hole?	cuts 4402 4408 f/by 4411	-		uncertain
	4411	fill	f/o 4410	-		uncertain
	4412	fill	f/o 4408	bone Fe nail	14 1	post-medieval?
	4413	gully	f/by 4414	-		??c.2
	4414	fill	f/o 4413	pot	3	??c.2
1145	4501	topsoil		-		modern
	4502	fill	f/o 4506	wood		modern
	4503	fill	f/o 4506	-		modern
	4504	fill	f/o 4506	decayed wood/roots		recent
	4505	fill	= 4503	P-M tile	1	modern
	4506	ditch	f/by 4502 4503 4504 4505	-		post-medieval?
	4507	earlier ploughsoil	c/by 4506 4512	-		medieval?



TR	CXT	TYPE	ASSOC.	FINDS	NO.	DATE
	4508	natural				
	4509	layer	o/l 4512 4506??	-		modern
	4510	fill	f/o 4512	-		modern
	4511	fill	f/o 4512	-		recent?
	4512	ditch	f/by 4510 4511 cuts 4507	-		post-med.?
1146	4601	topsoil		-		modern
	4602	natural				
	4603	ditch	f/by 4604	-		med./post-med.??
	4604	fill	f/o 4603	-		
	4605	ditch	f/by 4606	-		med./post-med.??
	4606	fill	f/o 4605	-		
1147	4701	topsoil		-		modern
	4702	fill	f/o 4703	-		uncertain
	4703	pit/tree hole	f/by 4702	-		uncertain
	4704	fill	f/o 4705	-		uncertain
	4705	gully	f/by 4704	-		uncertain
	4706	natural				
1976	7601	topsoil		-		modern
	7602	natural		-		
	7603	layer	o/l 7604	pot tile bone	11 52 8	?early-mid c.2
	7604	layer	under 7603	-		Rom.
	7605	scoop	f/by 7606	-		Rom.
	7606	fill	f/o 7605	tile bone	3 1	Rom.
	7607	scoop	f/by 7608 c/by 7609 7611	-		Rom.
	7608	fill	f/o 7607	pot tile	5 3	c.2
	7609	gully	f/by 7610 cuts 7607 c/by 7611	-		Rom.
	7610	fill	f/o 7609	-		Rom.
	7611	ditch	f/by 7612 cuts 7607 7609	-		c.1?

TR	CXT	TYPE	ASSOC.	FINDS	NO.	DATE
	7612	fill	f/o 7611	pot tile P-M tile	1 4 1 (intr.?)	c.1?
1977	7701	topsoil	o/l 7702 7705	-		modern
	7702	chalk layer	o/l 7703	-		modern?
	7703	subsoil/colluv.	o/l 7704	-		post-med.
	7704	stone floor	butts brick structure 7707	-		post-med.
	7705	fill	f/o 7707 o/l 7706	barbed wire charred wood		modern
	7706	stone steps	butts 7707 under 7705	-		post-med.
	7707	brick structure	f/by 7705	brick sample	2	post-med. (early 19th?)
	7708	wooden post	cuts 7704	-		19th c. or more recent
	7709	wooden post	cuts 7704	-		as 7708
	7710	subsoil	under 7704	-		



## SECTION 2: STATEMENT OF IMPORTANCE

### 7 CONCLUSIONS

#### 7.1 Extent of archaeological deposits

- 7.1.1 Archaeological deposits were found in the block of 10 evaluation trenches at the NW end of the site (ie. Trenches 1133, 1132, 1131, 1130, 1134, 1128, 1129, 1127, 1135 and 1976), extending for about 200 m NW-SE and the full width of the evaluation site (90 m). Activity appears to have been quite dense, with a thinning out towards the SE (Trenches 1135 and 1976). The finds suggest that nearly all this activity appears to belong to the late Iron Age and early Roman periods - roughly the 1st to 2nd/3rd centuries. In addition, a scatter of features of similar date were found in Trenches 1138, 1139 and 1141.
- 7.1.2 There were no deposits of archaeological significance in the remaining trenches. The large ditch, interpreted as the 'moat' to Corbier Hall, was revealed in Trenches 1142, 1143 and 1145. Excavations to a depth of about 1 m established that these upper fills were quite recent. ..
- 7.1.3 Figure 18 shows the main features found in the evaluation, together with an interpretation of the geophysical and air-photographic evidence.

#### 7.2 Nature of archaeological deposits

- 7.2.1 The evaluation located the main villa building in Trenches 1132 and 1133 as anticipated, and the location of Ashbee's 1933 trench has been tentatively suggested (Fig. 3). It was established that the villa survives as flint and/or ragstone wall footings although there was no evidence of associated floor surfaces. It seems likely that ploughing has removed all the *opus signinum* floor surfaces and overlying deposits of collapsed wall/ceiling plaster and plastered wall bases which Ashbee found in his excavations. However, spreads of sand and clay and occasional patches of flint nodules may be basal remnants of floors whose surfaces has been removed. Ashbee records the *opus signinum* floors as being bedded on rafts of flint nodules, while Pirie found floors both of sand and clay (although these were perhaps not surviving surfaces).
- 7.2.2 While the villa building did not appear to survive above foundation level, the evaluation established that stratified deposits, up to 300 mm thick, survived beneath the villa floor levels, sealing earlier features. These deposits, which on present evidence would seem to pre-date the villa, were not examined in detail in the villa trenches, but it seems that earlier, buried, floor levels are not present. These deposits have some of the characteristics of a topsoil are unlikely to represent dumping to raise the level of the villa floor. Similar dark soils extend the lengths of those trenches and presumably for some distance beyond. The deposits consist of dark grey-brown silts of quite uniform character, but there was insufficient evidence to be sure of their date.

3208 was thought to be post-Roman and 3312, which had abundant tile, may also have been post- or late-Roman. However, this is not entirely clear since evidence from the colluvial soils in Trenches 1127 and 1128 suggests a general build-up of soil (in which tile is present) of 1st-2nd century date which would predate the later Roman structures (see Section 7.4 for dating evidence).

- 7.2.3 The remains of the aisled building was established by Trenches 1134 and 1128. The footings of both side walls and (probably) the eastern end wall were found. It can be noted that the geophysical survey never defined the eastern end of the aisled building clearly, and a linear boundary feature is present in approximately this locality (Fig. 21). It is therefore possible that wall 2804 was not associated with the building itself. Alternatively, it may have served both as an end wall to the building and a boundary wall. The post-settings defining the aisles were not encountered presumably because Trench 1134 had fortuitously passed between them.
- 7.2.4 Spreads of dark pebbly soil immediately beneath the modern ploughsoil in Trench 1134 suggested an eroded remnant floor surface, an interpretation perhaps supported by an *in situ* patch of horizontally laid tile. However, it is possible that the actual floor surface had been ploughed out with only basal layers and the bottoms of cut features remaining. No floor surface was evident in Trench 1128 and it is likely that it had been ploughed away.
- 7.2.5 One of the wall footings was examined in Trench 1134 and was seen to cut through 300 mm of dark grey-brown silt, similar to the deposits underlying the villa, but in contrast to the villa area, abundant pot, tile and bone were recovered. Again, the uniform character of the soil suggested that it was not a levelling-up layer. It sealed an earlier ditch which can reasonably be assumed to be a fragment of a much more extensive complex.
- 7.2.6 In Trench 1128 another uniform dark greyish silt, 2802 underlay the modern ploughsoil. It appeared to seal what was interpreted as the SE wall-footing of the aisled building, suggesting a post-Roman derivation, but was possibly cut at the NW end by a small pit containing 1st century or later pottery. There is no way of being certain whether this pit is contemporary with, pre-dates, or post-dates the building, but at face value it may imply that layer 2802 corresponds to the pre-constructional phase of the building. While the archaeological interpretation of this layer remains unclear, it is possible that it was not as uniform as it seemed. Subtle differences between those deposits relating to the building itself and those which developed after its abandonment may not have been distinguishable under the conditions of the evaluation.
- 7.2.7 In Trench 1127, the horizon of greyish silt 2702 under the modern ploughsoil and extending the full length of the trench seems convincingly to be a Roman deposit. It was overlain by ragstone rubble associated with a spread of Roman tile, suggesting the presence of a rudimentary stone building in this area of the site. As in the area of the villa and aisled building, the building can be interpreted as post-dating a phase of soil accumulation. This appears to have sealed earlier features, although they were not



examined. Two ditches appeared to cut the rubble. Ditch 2710 was probably post-medieval and more or less coincides with a woodland boundary on 19th century maps (Fig. 19).

- 7.2.8 In Trench 1129, a thin layer of dark silt covered much of the trench and concealed a high density of Roman features, including a probable cobbled surface. The trench lay approximately 20 m NE of the building in 'Site B' of Pirie's excavation, and the features are unlikely to be directly connected with it. A truncated dry-stone wall 2917 may have been the linear feature found in the geophysical survey, traceable northeastward across the evaluation site and through Trench 1128.
- 7.2.9 The trenches between the main villa building and the aisled building (1130 and 1131) showed little or no stratigraphy but a great density of archaeological features indicating several phases of late Iron Age/Roman activity. The edge of a possible earlier prehistoric pit (3012) was also examined. The possible remnants of a cobbled surface were exposed in Trench 1131. Linear features were evident at both ends of the trench and may well also have underlain the cobbling.
- 7.2.10 Archaeological features and deposits in Trenches 1135 and 1976 suggest that the occupation was continuous into this area, but petered out between here and Trenches 1136 and 1137.
- 7.2.11 An extensive spread of Roman debris, particularly tile, was revealed in Trench 1976. The presence nearby of a Roman building is indicated, but it appeared that there was in fact no great density of archaeological features here. The character of Ditch 7611 is unclear. It is presumably Roman - the single post-medieval tile from its fill may have been superficial or from an intrusive drain - but it can be noted that various boundary features are shown on 19th century maps precisely in this area (Fig. 19) and it is possible that 7611 may be a post-medieval ditch truncating Roman deposits.
- 7.2.12 The archaeology in Trench 1135 consisted of discrete features directly cutting the natural geology. Roof tiles were present and the features included relatively small pits/post-holes and a gully, perhaps indicating the presence of another structure here.
- 7.2.13 The metallised surface in Trench 1139 has been interpreted as a trackway running approximately SE-NW. There was no dating evidence directly associated with it, but the total absence of medieval finds or features from the evaluation, and the absence of even a hint of it from 19th century maps, would suggest that it was associated with the Roman occupation here. An adjacent, though not necessarily associated ditch contained Roman pottery. The precise alignment of the trackway was difficult to determine within the limits of the trench, and its course uncertain since it was not evident in any of the other trenches. However, if it served the villa there is room for it to have passed between Trenches 1135 and 1976 and north of Trench 1140 in the other direction. The rutting in the surface of the trackway actually follows this slightly more easterly alignment towards the villa than the edges of the trackway appear to, and may indicate the true course of the trackway. The two ditches on the

southern side are even more at variance with the apparent alignment of the trackway and for this reason are suspected to be unassociated with it.

- 7.2.14 The ditch in Trench 1138 and the pit in Trench 1141 yielded small quantities of 1st century pottery. Both features had similar lightish grey fills and there is no reason to suspect that the pottery might be residual in more recent features despite some contamination of the soil samples by modern straw. They were also well-defined suggesting that elements of 1st century occupation extended into this area of the site. The scraps of Roman pot from features in Trench 1144 are considered probably residual.

### 7.3 Character of the site

- 7.3.1 There is little doubt that the site can be called a 'villa', although the term defies precise definition. Villas are normally distinguished from smaller and less opulent farms/farmsteads by the general quality of the building, including the provision of mosaics, plastered walls, tiled roofs and bath-houses. There are many borderline cases, and Detsicas (1983, 84) and Champion and Overy (1989, 42-50) distinguish villas from a category of lower status rural buildings with stone foundations and tiled roofs. The building is described as a villa by Detsicas (1983) and Black (1987) on the basis of the evidence from Ashbee's and Pirie's excavations (Ashbee 1986; Pirie 1960), which included the presence of *opus signinum* floors, painted wall-plaster, and box-flue tiles. Pirie excavated what is almost certainly a bath-house attached to the southern end of the main villa building with "a *caldarium*, a *tepidarium* and a *frigidarium*, each provided with projecting apsidal plunges" (Detsicas 1983, 143), although the excavator interpreted it as a possible kitchen (Pirie 1960, 167). The overall form of the villa-residence can be appreciated from the geophysical survey and air-photographs which show it as a modest-sized building about 15 m wide and 30 m long, (although the length is rather difficult to estimate given the degree of imprecision in the location of the 1958 excavations). It appears to consist of a suite of central rooms flanked by a corridor on the eastern side, with a series of smaller rooms on the western and northern sides. In overall form and dimensions it is not dissimilar to the early phase of Lullingstone (Detsicas 1983, Fig. 21) and Titsey (Black 1987, Figs. 41 & 42). The account of Thomas Charles on the 'discovery' of the villa in 1833 make it plain that the walls were constructed of "pavement" (presumably ragstone - quoted in Ashbee 1986, 142), although there was no rubble to speak of found in the present evaluation.
- 7.3.2 The evaluation has confirmed that the villa residence was but one element in a collection of structures associated with the villa estate. Apart from the building known as 'Site B' in the 1958 excavation, the only reasonably clearly defined structure was the aisled building, although air-photographs do suggest a small stone-based structure to the NE of the main building (Fig. 18). The evaluation also suggested a building in Trench 1127. The function of aisled buildings has been a matter of some debate with little consensus of opinion. It is probable that functions were various - agricultural, industrial and residential (Hadman 1978). Other estate buildings may



have been agricultural outbuildings, stores, barns, stables, workshops or accommodation for labourers. The evaluation has not indicated any particular functions to the structures found. The spreads of building debris, surfaces and other features found in the evaluation trenches do not form a clear plan either individually or collectively. However, the disposition of the aisled building at right-angles to the main building, close to a possible courtyard/enclosure wall suggest that there may be a typical, almost standardised layout to the villa estate (at least in its later phases), which formed an architectural composition designed to show off the main residence.

- 7.3.3 Little can be said concerning the character of the pre-villa settlement on the site, except that, even where very limited excavations through stratified deposits were carried out, earlier features were found, and that in those areas without obscuring stratigraphy, the complexity of features revealed suggest that pre-villa occupation was ubiquitous and dense. Whether uninterrupted continuity of occupation is present or not remains an open question. While intrinsically likely on the pottery evidence, attention can be drawn to the presence of quite uniform dark soil layers underneath the villa, aisled building and possible structure in Trench 1127, suggesting a general horizon of soil development interrupting the occupation sequence.

#### 7.4 Date of occupation

- 7.4.1 The ceramic assemblage from the evaluation broadly dates from the 1st century through to the mid 2nd century, with very little later material. Although the pre-conquest and immediately post-conquest 'unromanised' pottery cannot be distinguished, the high proportion of 'unromanised' fabrics (over 70%) suggest that the settlement was established in the pre-conquest period.
- 7.4.2 The lack of any firm evidence for occupation after the mid 2nd century from this evaluation deserves some comment in view of the results of earlier excavations. Pirie's excavations of the bath-house (Site A) suggested a date for the first phase of construction in the mid 2nd century. The construction was characterised by deep, flint-filled foundations whose plan, interpreted in relation to the discoveries from the present evaluation, suggest that the outer walls of the villa building ought to be of this phase (Fig. 3). However, only feature 3204, the northern most wall of the villa appeared to be of this construction. The addition of the bath-house itself with the three apses was dated to the late 2nd/early 3rd centuries, while the building was destroyed in the later 3rd century. Site B was occupied in the 3rd century.
- 7.4.3 Ashbee's 1933 excavations obtained little dating evidence. A coin of Gallienus (AD 259-268) came from an undisturbed *opus signinum* surface, while coins of Constantine (AD 324-361) and Allectus (AD 293-296) were unstratified. The presence of the villa in the later 3rd, or even 4th century is suggested. He does not appear to have excavated below the level of the villa floor and the date of construction was not established.
- 7.4.4 Virtually all the deposits examined during the present evaluation may therefore belong

to the pre-villa phases of settlement. On present evidence these probably include the soil/colluvial layers 2802 and 2702, as well as those stratigraphically under the villa and aisled building. From this it seems probable that deposits containing roof tile do not necessarily post-date the villa building. An earlier building with a tile roof and perhaps of timber construction may well have existed. It is probably significant that the only pottery from the current evaluation which may be later than the mid 2nd century came from superficial layers, both from fieldwalking and from the topsoil in Trench 1131, suggesting that deposits strictly contemporary with the use and abandonment of the villa and contemporary buildings have largely been lost to modern ploughing.

## **7.5 Environmental evidence**

- 7.5.1 The limited nature of the excavations, particularly of discrete and well-defined features, gave an insufficient sample of charred plant remains and animal bones to indicate the overall economic orientation of the villa site, but indicate that the potential to address such a question exists (see Appendices 3 and 4).
- 7.5.2 Five samples from 1st and 2nd century deposits were taken for charred plant remains. Two of these samples, from Pit 3505, produced an exceptionally high quantity and quality of remains. A further sample from Pit 2808 yielded only moderate results, while samples from Pit 4103 and Ditch 3806 yielded nothing. The general indications are that crop-processing took place on the site.
- 7.5.3 Animal bones were well-represented among the finds. The condition of the bone was only moderate to poor (*ca.* 25% identifiable to species), probably due to soil conditions. It may partly also reflect the depositional environment of the bones, many of which came from layers and are likely to represent 'secondary' rather than 'primary' rubbish deposition.
- 7.5.4 Any further excavation on a larger scale is likely to reveal a range of features/deposition environments commonly found on Iron Age/Roman rural settlements, including storage pits, ovens/hearths and possibly wells, which makes the potential for environmental and economic evidence reasonably high.

## **7.6 Truncation by ploughing and other activities**

- 7.6.1 Roman tile, presumably from the villa, was used in the construction of the nave of St Mary's Church, Thurnham (13th century) and building stone has been plundered from the site since at least 1833. However it seems unlikely that these early depredations would have disturbed anything more than superficial, reasonably accessible material. It is unlikely that robbing would have affected the structural foundations or any archaeological deposits at that level. The present evaluation has indicated that the wall foundations themselves have not been 'robbed'.
- 7.6.2 Modern ploughing over the villa building has removed the floor surfaces and traces



of superstructure which were revealed in 1933. Probable remnant cobbled surfaces were found in Trench 1134 across the aisled building, Trench 1131 and Trench 1129, but these had suffered some degree of modern plough damage and it must be doubted whether much material found in association with these surfaces can be regarded as *in situ*. There was no indication of sealed earlier floor surfaces, but it is possible that some may survive.

- 7.6.3 Stratified deposits survive under the villa and aisled building where the former presence of solid masonry appears to have retarded plough-attrition. They are also present in the slope-edge trenches 1127, 1128 and 1129 where the surviving colluvium appears to be of 2nd century rather than later date:
- 7.6.4 Elsewhere, both on the knoll and down the slope to the south-east, there is little or no surviving stratigraphy. However, given the patchy survival of remnant surfaces and floor make-up layers in other trenches it is probable that plough truncation has not been particularly deep and that minor features, such as post-holes and beam-slots may survive.
- 7.6.5 Modern field drains were found to be dense and disturbances caused by them may be significant. They were not examined rigorously, though recorded where they were clearly present, which would exclude the less obvious cases. Varying alignments of these drains suggest several phases of land drainage. The possible complications caused by intrusive material through unrecognised field drains is something which needs to be recognised, although hardly quantifiable in this evaluation exercise. The problem may be all the more insidious by the general absence of post-Roman material from the area of the archaeological interest, which would otherwise help draw attention to the problem.
- 7.6.6 The presence of possible post-medieval field boundary ditches in Trenches 1127 and 1976 can be mentioned, although generally post-Roman features appear to be sparse in the area of the villa.
- 7.6.7 Possible traces of ridge-and-furrow cultivation were found in Trenches 1144 and 1146. It is possible that this was responsible for the geophysical anomalies in the south-eastern corner of the field (Fig. 22), although flinty bands within the drift geology were also evident running approximately east-west.

## **7.7 'Moat' associated with Corbier Hall**

- 7.7.1 The large ditch in Trenches 1143 and 1145 was unexpected but is, with hindsight, evident on the aerial photograph of Corbier Hall showing as a broad green belt (Plate 2). The ditch in Trench 1142 running down the valley is not evident, probably because the infill was of heavy, compacted clay. Anomalies on the gradiometer and resistivity surveys south of Corbier Hall do appear to correspond to these ditches (Figs. 18 and 22). The NW-SE ditch (interpreted as a possible drain on Fig. 22) appears to terminate before reaching the ditch running at right-angles but this may be misleading

since, if its purpose was drainage, it presumably would have fed into the ditch running down the valley which follows the old stream course. There are two anomalies running down the valley (Fig. 22), both of which are exceptionally broad (*ca.* 15 m) and appears to indicate areas of colluvial fill rather than the ditch itself.

7.7.2 These ditches appear as physical boundaries on 19th century maps (Fig. 19). The 'moat' itself was substantially overgrown at this time and is depicted as a belt of trees (Corbier Hall Shaw). This lends weight to the suggestion that fill 4504 was a buried soil with decayed tree roots. The moat appears to have been infilled in the 1950s (Ashbee 1986, 144) and had completely disappeared by 1961 when the site was inspected by on behalf of the Ancient Monuments Board<sup>1</sup>.

7.7.3 The evaluation produced no evidence of the date of origin of the ditches and it is unclear whether they did originate as a medieval moat. No finds of medieval date were recovered.

## 7.8 Post-medieval brick structure

7.8.1 The brick structure appears to be a 19th century construction. Its fill was quite modern and it must have remained visible until quite recently (possibly until the land was cleared in the 1950s). However, it was not depicted by the Ordnance Survey or the Tithe Map surveyors. Its function is unclear. There was no evidence of internal burning to suggest that it had been a kiln or oven. Its form, with an entrance corridor and a circular chamber, perhaps significantly curving inwards lower down, suggest that it was possibly an ice-house, although an exceptionally small one if so (Beamon & Roaf 1990). Most 'small' ice-houses appear to have had a chamber diameter of 3 m or more. (*ibid.* Part II Gazetteer). Its superstructure would most likely have been a brick dome. These were often buried under soil, although timber and thatch roofs, with or without a brick dome, are also found. A window light would be unusual but by no means unique.

7.8.2 Its location at distance from a domestic residence (it presumably belonged to Parsonage Farm or Thurnham Court at this time) would not be unusual, for ice-houses tended to be located close to a source of ice until imported ice became common in the later 19th century. A pond which may have been an ice source, albeit a small one, used to exist less than 20 m to the north (Fig. 19).

## 8 IMPORTANCE OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS

The importance of the site of the Roman villa in national terms is acknowledged in its status as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. An assessment of villas in Kent for the Monuments Protection Programme in 1989 ranked it 12th out of 35 in terms of the

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<sup>1</sup> Note by C F Wardale on Ancient Monuments Record Form



criteria used for scheduling, confirming its national importance. This was prior to the recognition of the aisled building and other features revealed by air photography and geophysics. The evaluation has enabled some elaboration on this judgement to be made. A summary of the importance of the monument in relation to the non-statutory criteria for scheduling is presented here. No assessment is made of the importance of earthworks known to exist in the adjacent Honeyhills Wood and potentially associated with the Villa.

Significant deposits related to the site of Corbier Hall were not revealed and the following comments are only addressed to the Roman Villa.

## 8.1 Survival/condition

- 8.1.1 The stone foundations of the villa residence and aisled building still survive although the superstructure, floor surfaces and occupation debris associated with the use and abandonment of the villa would appear to have been lost to the plough since 1933. Remnant floor surfaces associated with the aisled building may survive. Stratified deposits survive in areas under the villa and aisled building and on the slope SE of the core area of the villa. This suggests that deposits of 1st and 2nd century date, pre-dating the villa residence itself, are well-preserved. The nature of these deposits is unclear, but if they represent an episode of ploughing prior to the construction of the villa it is possible that earlier features have been truncated. Spreads of cobbling and building debris would appear to indicate the locations of other structures (whether contemporary with the villa residence is uncertain). Cut features (eg. pits, ditches, post-holes) of all phases can be expected to be well-preserved. The overall layout of the villa estate in all its phases, as it existed within the evaluation corridor, would appear to be recoverable.
- 8.1.2 The southern side of the villa and its immediate environs have been lost beneath the M20. However, the information about this area from previous the excavations can add to, or be reinterpreted in the light of, any new evidence and the loss of part of the villa here does not greatly detract from its importance.
- 8.1.3 Palaeoenvironmental evidence has been shown to survive. Well-preserved carbonised remains are present, at least locally. Bone is also present although the slightly acidic nature of the soil means that conditions for its preservation are not ideal and smaller bones may have been lost completely. Molluscs were not evident and cannot be expected. Pollen is unlikely to survive undisturbed unless waterlogging is locally present. If any pollen survives within buried soils it is likely to have been mixed by earthworm activity and the soils are unlikely to provide useful palaeoenvironmental evidence.
- 8.1.4 Cultural remains are present although, to judge from the limited excavations, their range is not prolific. Apart from pottery and roof tile, which is reasonably abundant, the only other finds recovered were a quernstones and a small number of iron objects. Material associated with the more opulent phases of the villa, such as *opus signinum*,

plaster, or glass, was not encountered.

## 8.2 Period

- 8.2.1 The Roman period is well-represented in Kent by site locations, but little is known about the nature and development of such sites. Thurnham is of particular importance in that the occupation appears to span the conquest, with late Iron Age material present and probably quite dense. The nature of the Iron Age occupation in Kent is not well understood, although the frequent coincidence of Iron Age and Roman find-spots has led to the general observation that "the rural settlement of the *civitas* during the Romano-British period developed from the pattern pertaining in the pre-Roman Iron Age" (Detsicas 1983, 83). The excavations at Keston have shown that the Roman villa at that site was preceded by a long sequence of Iron Age occupation (Philp *et al*, 1991) although it was unclear whether this was an uninterrupted development. However, detailed fieldwork in the Darent valley has indicated a change in settlement pattern where late Iron Age settlements near Lullingstone appear to have been abandoned at the same time as the earliest phase of the villa (Black 1987, 22).
- 8.2.2 It is unclear why some settlements apparently prospered after the conquest while others did not. The importance of local marketable resources has often been emphasised, eg. pottery and tile production at Eccles, ragstone quarries near the Maidstone villas, and fulling at Lullingstone and Titsey (Detsicas 1983, 177). The importance of timber has probably been underestimated and may be relevant given Thurnham's location. It has been said that villas in south-east England owed their prosperity more to communications than to the quality of land (Drewett, Rudling & Gardiner 1988, 214), although higher agricultural efficiency, perhaps related to flexibility in land tenure has been suggested for west Kent (Black 1987, 32). There is some suggestion, coming from the plans of a type of Gallic 'hall-villa' that certain villas in the south-east were owned by Gallic immigrants (Smith 1978, 121-6; Black 1987, 25) who may have given impetus to economic development. Any light which the Thurnham villa might shed on this subject would be of national significance.
- 8.2.3 The late Roman phase at Thurnham appears to be limited. This may be due to the modern truncation of later deposits, although the shortage of even superficial finds later than the 3rd century, may indicate that the occupation was light at this time. The general demise of villas in the later 3rd century in south-eastern England has been variously attributed to inflation, usurpation and barbarian attacks (Black 1987, 37), but it is doubtful whether Thurnham could contribute to an understanding of this topic.

## 8.3 Rarity

- 8.3.1 Thurnham is one of 38 villas known from Kent. Villa distribution is mainly in West Kent with distributions being particularly dense in the Darent and Medway valleys, at the foot of the North Downs and on the dip slope of the Downs close to Watling Street. Figure 20 shows the local distribution of Iron Age and Roman sites from the county SMR in relation to the geology. Thurnham may be typical of a modest-sized



villa in many respects, although its situation on clay, rather than Chalk or Greensand, make it slightly unusual. Although villas have received a great deal of antiquarian and archaeological attention, many of the excavations were carried out in the last century and were inadequately recorded and published. Champion and Overy report that of the 20 or so villas in Kent which have been examined to some degree, only eight excavations or re-excavations of villa sites since 1950 have been published (Champion & Overy 1989, 44). In many cases earlier excavations were on a very small scale with only main rooms and bath-houses exposed, often in only their latest phases. There was often a lack of stratigraphic recording and little pottery recovered (Detsicas 1983, 105). There was normally a total lack of the economic and environmental aspects of the villa and a lack of appreciation of timber phases of building. As far as the current state of knowledge is concerned, Drewett, Rudling and Gardiner state that "the study of villa estates is still in its infancy and is a major priority for future research" (Drewett, Rudling & Gardiner 1988, 213).

- 8.3.2 Iron Age sites in Kent are comparatively rare and the quality of the evidence is poor. Champion and Overy state that "there have been few large scale excavations carried out to modern standards, and our knowledge of this period lags far behind most other regions in southern England" (Champion & Overy 1989, 33). The enclosed site at Farningham Hill in the Darent valley is the only major excavation of a late Iron Age settlement although partial examinations of both open and enclosed sites have taken place (op. cit., 44). Drewett, Rudling and Gardiner state that "Iron Age farmsteads .... especially those located in areas away from the Downs, are still a high priority for future research" (op.cit., 145). The development of Thurnham into the 2nd century is of particular interest and may be directly comparable with the development of Keston villa (Philp *et al* 1991). This aspect of the site may now be of greater importance than the villa building itself, which was the original reason for scheduling the site.

#### **8.4 Fragility/vulnerability**

- 8.4.1 The evaluation has confirmed that a substantial part of the Roman villa site would be lost in permanent landtake for the railway formation, bunding, autotransformer site, access road and planting as assessed for the CTRL Reference Design (URL 1994).

#### **8.5 Diversity**

- 8.5.1 The evaluation has made it clear that the scheduled area of the Roman Villa (Fig 18) is but one element of the remains of a villa estate which includes an aisled building and undoubtedly several other structures, ditches, pits and post-holes. There is good reason to suppose the normal range of associated features, possibly including barns, granaries, workshops, ovens and wells to be present. Some villas in Kent are also associated with peripheral features such as temple-mausolea and cemeteries (eg. Borden, Lullingstone, Keston and possibly Boxted), although there is no evidence of such features here. The chronological depth to the site adds to its importance in this respect.

## **8.6 Documentation**

- 8.6.1 Two previous excavations on the villa have been published (Ashbee 1986: Pirie 1960). Prior to this evaluation the site was well documented by air photography, surface collection survey and geophysical survey commissioned by URL. Overall it is probably one of the best documented villa sites in Kent.

## **8.7 Group value**

- 8.7.1 The Late Iron Age/Roman occupation at Thurnham appears to be one of a series of sites at the foot of the Downs of more or less similar date (URL 1994, Vol. 1 Section 5.22 and Vol. 2 Drawings OELK/900-1804/3025-3029). These include sites likely to be directly affected by the railway route, to the west, a multiperiod finds scatter including Iron Age and Roman pottery west of Boxley Road (OAU No. 1339), and a similar scatter west of Boarley Farm (OAU No. 1337). To the east, at Eyhorne Street, is another site already damaged by the M20 (OAU No. 1343) which has been investigated (URL 1996b). The major early villa at Eccles lay about 8 km to the NW. Thurnham villa has additional value when seen in this local setting of other rural settlements in similar topographic locations.

## **8.8 Potential**

- 8.8.1 There appears to be a good potential for examining a range of evidence associated with the villa estate and its predecessor. This includes not only the range of features and structures which might be expected from this type of rural settlement, but also the environmental and economic evidence which is severely lacking for any part of the county. Champion and Overly state (p. 14) "... there has until now been almost no work on human economies, either hunter-gatherer or agricultural, so that any reports of systematically collected and analysed bone and seed material would represent a significant advance ...". The assessment of palaeoenvironmental remains has indicated that charred plant remains exist in a good state of preservation. It is probable that crop-processing was carried out on site, although the settlement's location on clay is of interest and might suggest a non-arable emphasis to the economy. The potential for waterlogged remains in deeper features such as wells must be considered above average. A sequence of environmental/economic data through the duration of the occupation would be of exceptional interest.
- 8.8.2 One of the important research themes which Thurnham has the potential for addressing is the transition between the Iron Age and Roman periods, and the question of why the site became a villa. A range of archaeological evidence would appear to be recoverable, including the development of the structure of the settlement, its status, economic orientation and the patterns of contact and trade. Comparisons both regionally and nationally would be appropriate.



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## APPENDIX 1

### POTTERY

By Paul Booth, Oxford Archaeological Unit

#### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The evaluation produced some 255 sherds (2446 g) of pottery, effectively all of late Iron Age and early Roman date. Two additional post-medieval sherds (5 g) are not commented upon further. The pottery was generally in moderate condition; some sherds had slightly abraded edges and eroded surfaces, and the average sherd weight, a little under 10 g, was not particularly large. The pottery was examined by context group and data recorded on standard record sheets. Sherds were assigned to fairly broad fabric/ware groups, principally using the coding system employed in the Oxford Archaeological Unit's Roman pottery recording system, but with reference to well-defined local terminology where appropriate. Quantification of these fabric/ware groupings was by sherd count and weight. Notes were also made on vessel typology, though many of the surviving rims were small and relatively undiagnostic of specific form.

#### 2 Fabrics

- 2.1 Fabrics/wares were divided into two broad groups. 'Unromanised' fabrics, the most numerous component of the assemblage, were defined in terms of their principal inclusion types but were not, at this stage, divided into tightly-defined individual fabrics. The 'romanised' fabrics were assigned to established major ware groupings, defined and coded on the basis of their principal common characteristic (eg R = reduced coarse wares). The fabric groupings, with quantification, are given below:

##### 2.2 'Unromanised' fabric groups

- A. Sand-tempered fabrics. 10 sherds, 96 g.
- B. Glauconite-tempered fabrics. 68 sherds, 575 g.
- F. Flint-tempered fabrics. 21 sherds, 182 g.
- G. Grog-tempered fabrics. 69 sherds, 832 g.
- S. Shell-tempered fabrics. 13 sherds, 227 g.

##### 2.3 'Romanised' ware groups

- S. Samian ware (all sources). 5 sherds, 40 g.
- M10. Probable imported buff mortarium fabric. 1 sherd, 12 g.
- M29. S.E. England buff mortarium fabric. 1 sherd, 129 g.
- M50. Oxidised (orange-red) mortarium fabric with flint trituration grits. 1 sherd, 3 g.
- M56. ?Canterbury fine oxidised mortarium fabric. 1 sherd, 8 g.
- W (and W10). Fine slightly sandy white fabrics. 2 sherds, 5 g.
- Q. White-slipped fine oxidised fabric. 2 sherds, 7 g.

- O. General oxidised coarse wares. 5 sherds, 19 g.
- O10. Fine oxidised fabrics. 2 sherds, 4 g.
- O50/O52. ?Canterbury sandy oxidised fabrics. 2 sherds, 6 g.
- R. General reduced (usually sandy) wares. 42 sherds, 211 g.
- R10. Fine reduced fabrics. 4 sherds, 21 g.
- R16. ?Upchurch type fine reduced fabrics. 4 sherds, 14 g.

In addition two small fragments (3 g) of possible 'chaff-tempered ware' (*Kent Arch Rev* 61, (1980), 2-3) were present.

- 2.4 Few of the fabrics could be assigned to specific sources. The 'unromanised' fabrics are all typical of traditions established in the region before the Roman conquest (cf Pollard 1988, 31-32). The 'romanised' coarse wares included probable Canterbury products (eg O50/52, some of the sandy reduced wares may also have been from this source) and a small number of sherds probably from the north Kent Upchurch ware industry, though these were scarce and BB2 from the same general area was apparently absent in this assemblage. The 'fine and specialist wares' (samian, mortaria, white wares and white-slipped wares) included typical regional products (such as mortarium fabrics M29 and M56) and a probable import (M10). The only other import was samian ware, the five sherds of which were tentatively identified as South Gaulish (2) and Central Gaulish (3). The few (and very small) white and white-slipped sherds are not assigned to a source at present.

### 3 Forms

- 3.1 Thirty-nine vessels were represented by rim sherds. These comprised a fairly limited range of vessel types, of which jars or uncertain jar/bowl types amounted to 29 of the 39 rims (almost 75%). The numbers of vessels in generalised classes were as follows:

- C. Jars (general). 11
- CH. Bead rim jars. 9
- D. Uncertain jars/bowls. 9
- E. Beakers. 3
- F. Cups. 2
- I. Uncertain bowls/dishes. 2
- J. Dishes. 1
- K. Hook-rimmed mortarium. 1
- L. Lid. 1

- 3.2 The relatively small average sherd size accounts for the high proportion of rims which could not be attributed to precise types (eg jar/bowl, bowl/dish). Many (six out of nine) of the uncertain jar/bowl rims were in glauconite-tempered fabrics. The 'unromanised' fabrics were used exclusively for jars, jar/bowls and the single lid. In addition to the general jar category, nine rims were assigned to the more specific bead rim jar type, a characteristically early form. They were found in 'unromanised' sand and glauconite-tempered fabrics and also in 'romanised' sandy reduced (R) wares.



Probable beaker types occurred solely in reduced fabrics, and the two cups and the dish in samian ware (respectively forms 24/5, 33 and ?18/31).

## 4 Chronology

- 4.1 The great majority of the pottery (71% of sherds, 78% of weight) was in 'unromanised' fabrics in traditions which were well-established before the Roman conquest, though there were no sherds which need have been earlier than the late Iron Age in date. In all cases this material could have continued in use after the conquest, but it seems very unlikely that all this material can have been of post-conquest date. Here, as elsewhere, the Roman conquest is not immediately visible in the archaeological record. The 'romanised' material presumably arrived on the site from the third quarter of the 1st century onwards, so that a number of groups contained fabrics of both 'unromanised' and 'romanised' groups. Only two very small context groups did not contain sherds of the 'unromanised' fabric group, and one of these (3101) was the only group which on ceramic criteria alone looked as if it might have been later in date than the 2nd century AD (in fact it was a topsoil context in Trench 1131). Forty-four context groups were assigned to the late Iron Age-Roman period on ceramic criteria (in some cases there may have been stratigraphic reasons for assigning a later date). Of these groups, 27 contained only sherds in 'unromanised' fabrics and were therefore broadly dated to the 1st century AD (though some could possibly have belonged to the preceding century). Seven groups were dated late 1st century or possibly later, four were dated late 1st century to 2nd century and five were assigned entirely to the 2nd century. The one group which appeared on ceramic grounds to be later has already been mentioned.
- 4.2 The balance of evidence therefore indicates a pre-conquest origin for the site, though the precise date of this is uncertain. The range of fabrics and forms present, and the absence of regionally common fabrics such as BB2 suggests that activity after the middle of the 2nd century AD was very limited.

## 5 Context

- 5.1 Late Iron Age and Roman pottery was recovered from 45 contexts (one ceramically dated to the post-medieval period) in 14 trenches (1127-1135, 1138, 1139, 1141, 1144 and 1976). The quantities of this pottery (and of the associated Roman tile) by trench are tabulated below:

TRENCH	IRON AGE/ROMAN POTTERY			ROMAN TILE		
	NO. CONTEXTS	NO. SH.	WT. (G.)	NO. CONTEXTS	NO. SH.	WT (G.)
1127	1	8	41	4	20	9619
1128	3	35	412	3	19	1460
1129	9	65	527	7	57	3714
1130	5	20	134	-	-	-

1131	4	17	182	1	2	337
1132	3	11	204	3	14	1380
1133	2	2	17	3	19	1191
1134	4	32	216	2	10	456
1135	5	19	363	4	18	569
1138	2	4	19	-	-	-
1139	1	17	179	2	27	536
1141	1	5	8	-	-	-
1144	2	5	14	-	-	-
1976	3	15	130	4	64	2926
TOTAL	45	255	2446	33	250	22188

- 5.2 In general the trenches with the lowest sherd totals (eg 1138, 1141 and 1144) contained little or no tile, the only exception to this being Trench 1133 (associated with the main villa building) and to a lesser extent Trench 1127 which produced relatively little pottery.
- 5.3 The relationship of the present assemblage to the villa is uncertain in the sense that almost none of the pottery derived from contexts which could be shown to be contemporary with the use of the villa buildings. The material from the trenches which examined the villa buildings (Trenches 1132 and 1133 on the main building, and Trenches 1128 and 1134 on the aisled building) was generally from deposits thought to predate the structures, and in any case in Trenches 1132 and 1133 quantities of pottery were minimal. Sherds from 3220, the fill of a small pit probably cut by one of the villa walls, were all in shell-tempered fabric assigned to the 1st century AD. Only in the area of the aisled building was there a deposit (2802) thought to be later than the construction of the building which contained a reasonable amount of pottery (27 sherds). The Romanised grey wares, which suggested a probable early-mid 2nd century date, were notably small in comparison with the earlier (1st century) material contained within the group. The significance of this is uncertain but the group was clearly not homogeneous in its composition. Pottery from trenches lying at some distance from the structures could not be linked with the structures in any way.

## 6 General Comments

- 6.1 The assemblage is drawn from sources whose position in the regional pattern of pottery supply, both before and after the Roman conquest, seems fairly well established. The present material does not extend the chronological range of the site significantly beyond the middle of the 2nd century AD. This is broadly consistent with the evidence from the more limited assemblage gathered from the site in fieldwalking in 1994, though Canterbury type oxidised sandy ware and BB2 were both noted there, as well as a 3rd century Oxford mortarium type, which might indicate a slightly later



component in the assemblage than is evident in the present material. Most of the pottery is not closely associated with the villa buildings, though some of it may provide a *terminus post quem* for these buildings. Stratigraphic evidence and the chronology of the pottery both suggest that much of the material should predate the villa structures. In this regard the association of tile with the pottery groups is of interest. Roman tile, in some cases in reasonable quantity, occurred in a total of 18 of the 44 context groups with 1st and 2nd century pottery. Six of the seven late 1st century or later groups, three of the four late 1st-2nd century groups and four of the five 2nd century groups all contained tile, as did five of the 27 groups assigned on pottery criteria to the 1st century (although two of these groups were probably significantly later in date on other evidence). Unless there is a huge problem with residual pottery and/or intrusive tile, it seems reasonable to take these associations more or less at face value and to suggest that the villa must have been in existence by the middle of the 2nd century AD, was quite probably there in the early 2nd century and could have originated as early as the later 1st century AD. Alternatively, some of the tile and associated pottery may have derived from a Romanised building predating the known villa structures and perhaps to be assigned to the later 1st century. This conclusion is supported by the evidence of tile fragments incorporated in wall foundation 3205 of the main villa building, suggesting the presence of tile on the site prior to the construction of this building.

## **7 Assessment of Potential and further work**

- 7.1 The present assemblage is of crucial importance for understanding the chronology of the site. It is otherwise limited in terms of potential for providing data on trade and status and functional aspects of the site because of its small size, but if further excavation of the site were to take place the present material could form a very useful part of any resulting assemblage and could contribute to the understanding of all these aspects. In the event of further work the principal requirement would be to refine the definition and recording of the range of fabrics present in the assemblage. This should result in improved understanding of the sources of the material, and therefore of such aspects as trade, and should also lead to greater precision in dating both individual groups and the development of the site as a whole.
- 7.2 Should there be no further work on the site it would still be necessary to characterise the fabrics in more detail than at present in order to maximise the potential of the existing material to inform discussion of the chronology and economics of the site.

## APPENDIX 2

### CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL

*By Paul Booth, Oxford Archaeological Unit*

#### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 A total of 254 fragments (27.353 kg) of ceramic building material was recovered in the evaluation. Of this total four fragments (5.165 kg), principally two bricks from the structure in Trench 1977, were of post-medieval date and are not considered further here. The remaining material (250 fragments, 22.188 kg) was of Roman date. The material was scanned briefly by context group and divided into fabrics identified on characteristics visible to the naked eye. Approximate numbers of fragments rapidly assignable to principal tile types were also noted.

#### 2 Fabrics

- 2.1 Three main tile fabrics were defined as follows (with quantities):

Fabric 1. Smooth red-brown fabric with few sand grains. 108 fragments, 4069 g.

Fabric 2. Buff-white fabric with slight-moderate sand grains. 39 fragments, 9793 g.

Fabric 3. Buff-brown sandy fabric. 102 fragments, 8294 g.

Fabric 4. Hard smooth dark grey fabric with few sand grains. 1 fragment, 32 g.

- 2.2 In practise there was a degree of overlap between fabrics 2 and 3, and fabric 4 may simply have been a reduced version of fabric 1. Further work would help to refine these definitions and confirm their validity.

- 2.3 The relatively few fragments of fabric 2 included a group of six large pieces in context 2712, which together amounted to 38.6% by weight of the total tile from the site. Fabric 1 constituted 43.2% of the tile by number but only 18.3% by weight. This is partly because the weight figures are skewed by the large fragments just mentioned, but also reflects the fact that both fabrics 2 and 3 appeared to be used for tegulae of significantly above average thickness, with the result that even small tegula fragments in these fabrics tended to be quite heavy. The sample size is such that the significance of this should not be pressed too far, however.

#### 3 Types

- 3.1 Only tegulae and imbrices are represented in the assemblage, there was no evidence for flue tiles of any kind here. Small fragments of flat tiles might have been missed amongst the thick fabric 2 and 3 tegulae, but this is not thought very likely. Eighty-nine fragments were preliminarily assigned to tile type, of which 60 were tegulae and 29 imbrices: the numbers of tiles represented by these fragments is unknown. The roughly 2:1 tegula:imbrex ratio is observed approximately in all of the three main fabrics (fabric 1 21:10, fabric 2 10:5, fabric 3 29:13). As already indicated, fabrics 2



and 3 are notable for their use in very substantial tegulae. Only a few tiles were measured, but these figures showed a typical fabric 1 tegula thickness of *ca.* 19 mm and a range of thicknesses for fabric 2 and 3 tegulae from 26-36 mm. The only other measurable dimension was a fabric 2 tegula width of *ca.* 330 mm.

#### **4 Context and Dating**

- 4.1 The tile derived from 33 contexts in ten trenches (1127-1129, 1131-1135, 1139 and 1176), a distribution similar to but slightly more limited than that of the pottery (see table above). The 'white' tile fabric 2 had a more limited distribution still (in Trenches 1127-1129, 1134-1135 and 1176), but in view of the total sample size this need not be particularly significant. The association of tile with the pottery, discussed above, suggests that most if not all of the material should be dated within the period from late 1st-mid 2nd century.

#### **5 Assessment of Potential and further work**

- 5.1 The material is of significance in indicating aspects of the character of Roman structures on the site. The presence of distinctive fabric types (fabrics 2 and 3) should also allow assessment of the sources of building material for the site and thus provide information on economic aspects. The total quantity of tile recovered to date is relatively small, and if no further work is undertaken on site the only additional examination of the present material likely to be required would involve more detailed characterisation and definition of the fabrics, in particular to determine if there were significant differences between fabrics 2 and 3, and identification of their probable sources. Such work would clearly also be required in the event of a larger assemblage being available for study, in which case more detailed attention could also be given to tile forms.

## APPENDIX 3

### ANIMAL BONES

*By Adrienne Powell, Centre for Human Ecology and Environment, Southampton*

#### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The condition of the bone, which affects its suitability for further analysis, has been judged for each context on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 applies to bone in excellent condition with little or no post-depositional surface alteration and 5 describes material which is in very poor condition and is only identifiable as 'bone'.

#### 2 Results

- 2.1 There was a total of 227 fragments present, of which 36 fragments came from a partial skeleton of an adult sheep. This group is the only material in the assemblage which is in excellent condition (1). This good preservation and the large size of the animal is consistent with a post-medieval date for the material.
- 2.2 Of the remaining 191 fragments, which are predominantly in moderate to poor condition (condition 3-4), only 45 were identifiable to species. The majority of these are fragments of cattle bone (28), although fragments of sheep/goat (5), pig (7) and horse (4) also occur in small numbers. A mandible from a large canid is present, but the close tooth arrangement suggests dog rather than wolf. The condition and size of animal represented by the bones is consistent with a Late Iron Age/ Early Roman date. Ageable mandibles and a few measurable bones are present, and there is frequent evidence of dog gnawing. However, the poor condition of the bones is more the result of soil environment than the effects of gnawing.

#### 3 Summary

- 3.1 Little can be said of this small assemblage as it stands; even the predominance of cattle fragments may, given the condition of much of the bone, be partly the result of a bias against the preservation of the smaller domestic mammals. However, the character of the material shows that useful information may be gained if a larger assemblage is recovered from further excavation, particularly since there appear to be few published Late Iron Age/Early Romano-British assemblages of any size from Kent. These few potential comparative assemblages include an Iron Age farmstead at Farningham (Locker 1984), and a Roman villa at Keston (Locker 1991).



## APPENDIX 4

### ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS

By Ruth Pelling, University Museum Oxford

#### FACTUAL DATA

##### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Six samples were taken for the assessment of their charred plant content. Sample size ranged from 10 to 20 litres. Five samples were from dated contexts, Sample 2 (2807) a posthole or small pit; two pits (Samples 3 [3507], 4 [3508] and 5 [4103]); and a ditch (Sample 6 [3806]). Dates ranged from the 1st to the 2nd centuries AD. A further undated sample (Sample 1 [4702]) was from the fill of an irregular pit.
- 1.2 The purpose of the assessment was to evaluate the quality of the preservation of the charred material and the potential for further sampling and analytical work.

##### 2 Methods

- 2.1 Soil samples were processed by bulk water separation and floated onto a 0.5mm mesh. The material derives from Gault Clay and was very difficult to break down in flotation. Charred remains were noted in the residues of samples 2 and 4. The residue for sample 4 was therefore re-floated. Flots were then allowed to slowly air dry before being submitted for assessment.
- 2.2 Each flot was put through a stack of sieves and scanned under a binocular microscope. The quantity and quality of charred plant material was noted. Material was provisionally identified and estimates were made of the abundance of grain, chaff, weed seeds, charcoal and other charred items. Abundance was recorded on a three point scale, (+ = 1-10 items, ++ = 10 - 100, +++ = >100 items). This information is tabulated below. Samples which contained no charred plant remains are not included in the results table.
- 2.3 Due to the problems encountered during flotation, the residues were also quickly scanned to establish the quantity of charred material which had not floated.

##### 3 Results

- 3.1 *Posthole/pit 2808* (sample 2 - 10 l): Very occasional cereal grains were noted, including hulled *Triticum* sp. (wheat) and *Hordeum* sp. (barley). The grain was generally distorted and pitted showing signs of notable damage incurred during charring. Occasional flecks of *Quercus* (oak) charcoal were also noted. The residue contained further flecks of charcoal and very occasional grains.
- 3.2 *Pit 3505* (samples 3 & 4) and *Pit 4103* (sample 5): samples 3 (10 l) and 4 (16 l) were taken from successive fills within one pit, sample 4 being the earlier of the two. Both samples produced charred material. Sample 4 contained in excess of 200 glume bases,

the majority of which were identifiable as *Triticum spelta* (spelt wheat). Spelt wheat grain was also noted. The presence of barley was attested by grain and occasional rachis. Occasional grains of *Avena* sp. (oat) and occasional large legumes were also noted. Sample 3 contains a similar range of cereal remains but in smaller quantities. Both samples contained a notable number of small grass seeds and occasional other weed seeds, predominantly of arable/ruderal species such as *Stellaria media* (chickweed) and *Rumex* sp. (docks), while sample 3 also contained several possible leaf tips of gorse (cf. *Ulex* sp.). The preservation of material in both samples was excellent.

- 3.3 The residues of samples 3 and 4 contained charred plant remains. Glume bases appeared to be the most common item, while occasional grain was present in sample 3.
- 3.4 Sample 5 (10 l), taken from a further pit, was conversely devoid of charred remains, but contained modern rootlets and straw fragments. This indicates a degree of modern contamination but is not sufficient to suggest that the feature was modern.
- 3.5 Ditch 3806 (sample 6 - 20 l): Charred remains were absent from the sample. Modern rootlets and straw fragments were noted but do not of themselves indicate that the feature was modern.
- 3.6 Pit 4703 (sample 1 - 10 l): Charred remains were very limited consisting of one indeterminate cereal grain only.

#### 4 A summary of botanical remains noted in the flots.

Sample		1	2	3	4
<i>Triticum spelta</i>	spelt wheat grain	-	-	+	++
<i>T. spelta</i>	spelt wheat glume	-	-	+	+++
<i>T. sp.</i>	hulled wheat grain	-	+	-	-
<i>T. sp.</i>	hulled wheat glume	-	-	+	++
<i>T. sp.</i>	wheat grain	-	-	+	-
<i>Hordeum</i> sp.	barley grain	-	+	+	++
<i>H. sp.</i>	barley rachis	-	-	-	+
<i>Avena</i> sp.	oat grain	-	-	-	+
Cerealia indet	indet grain	+	+	+	++
Legume large		-	-	-	+
Weed seeds		-	-	++	++
<i>Stellaria media</i> agg.	chickweed	-	-	-	+



<i>Stellaria</i> sp.		-	-	+	+
<i>Chenopodium</i> sp.		-	-	-	+
<i>Rumex</i> sp.	docks	-	-	+	+
cf. <i>Ulex</i> sp.	gorse leaf tip	-	-	+	-
Gramineae	small grasses	-	-	++	++
<i>Bromus</i> sp.	brome grass	-	-	-	+
<i>Quercus</i> sp.	oak charcoal	-	+	-	-

### STATEMENT OF POTENTIAL

- 5.1 The pit samples 3 and 4 contain sufficient material to be of potential for further analysis. The species noted are generally in keeping with Roman period charred remains from elsewhere in Southern Britain. Spelt wheat was the dominant cereal, while barley was also present in the assemblage. If more samples from the site become available it will be of interest to establish whether the economy of the site was indeed of a similar nature to that in other regions at this time. On a regional level the samples are significant because there is very little published information on the archaeobotany of the region (Champion & Overly 1989, 11-14). The occurrence of large legumes in pre-medieval samples is not unique, but it is rare enough to be of interest. The preservation of the material from these samples is exceptional and adds to their intrinsic importance.
- 5.2 While deposits of good environmental remains may not be ubiquitous, the quality and quantity of the material from this single pit is sufficient to suggest that the potential for useful material from a larger scale excavation is very high. Given the shortage of published records of charred material from systematically sampled sites in Kent, the potential for significant information to be gained from further sampling of even a limited nature is very high. On a Late Iron Age/Roman rural site such as this a range of features, perhaps including wells and corn dryers might be expected. The potential for waterlogged material from wells may exist.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The assessment of the charred plant remains from the evaluation excavation was intended to serve two purposes. Firstly to establish the potential of the material in the samples themselves. Secondly, the assessment was designed to establish the potential for further sampling for charred plant remains in the event of future excavations.
- 6.2 The present samples do offer some potential for detailed analysis in their own right. If no further excavation and sampling takes place the two richer samples should be analyzed in full. The information gained from two samples will, however, be limited. The samples have indicated the potential of the site in the event of future excavations. Large scale excavation might be expected to expose a range of features of both Iron

Age and Roman date. Given the paucity of published material from the region any such project would be of national significance. It would be especially important to compare the cereal economy of the region with that elsewhere and, for example, investigate the apparent continuation of emmer wheat into the Iron Age, not seen elsewhere in southern Britain, and examine the nature and development of the environment on the clay belt in this part of Kent.



## APPENDIX 5

### FLINT

*By Theresa Durden, Oxford Archaeological Unit*

#### 1 Summary

- 1.1 A total of 16 pieces of flint were collected during the course of the evaluation. Ten were burnt unstruck pieces of flint. The rest of the flint consisted of six flakes.
- 1.2 Two of the flakes were blade-like in character and one had been struck with a soft hammer. One of the broader flakes had also been struck with a soft hammer. The other flakes are unremarkable though one bore some iron-staining.
- 1.3 Some of the flakes were corticated grey and one completely uncorticated piece was of translucent brown/black flint. Cortex, where present, was of a creamy white colour and chalky in appearance.
- 1.4 The flints appear to be redeposited and may form a rather mixed collection, having been recovered from Late Iron Age/Roman layers and features. There was one possible earlier prehistoric pit 3012 of uncertain form which contained a blade-like flake. The blade-like and soft hammer-struck flakes are more typical of earlier Neolithic industries, although bearing in mind the nature and small size of the collection it would be unwise to speculate further on dates. The small collection is unremarkable. It offers no potential for further work and suggests that further excavations on the site are unlikely to yield significant earlier prehistoric deposits.

## APPENDIX 6

### IRON AND STONE ARTEFACTS

By Leigh Allen, Oxford Archaeological Unit

#### 1 Quantification

- 1.1 The following material categories have been assessed in this report: iron (17) and stone (2). The preliminary identification, phase and site details are summarized in the following tables.

##### *Iron*

Object	SF No.	Cxt.	Description	Date
Arrowhead	-	4409	A socketed, leaf-shaped arrowhead. The socket has a rectangular section.	Medieval/post-Med.
Hay fork	3	2905	Shank with rectangular section and one prong remaining.	Romano-British
Wire	1	7705	Sections of wire with barbs.	Modern
Nails	4 - 5 - - - -	2911 3025 2910 3306 4412 3506 3508	A total of 14 nails were recovered, most from Roman contexts.	Romano-British & modern

##### *Stone*

Object	SF No.	Cxt	Description	Date
Quernstone	6	3017	Fragment from a quernstone	Romano-British
Quernstone	7	2915	Fragment from a quernstone	Romano-British

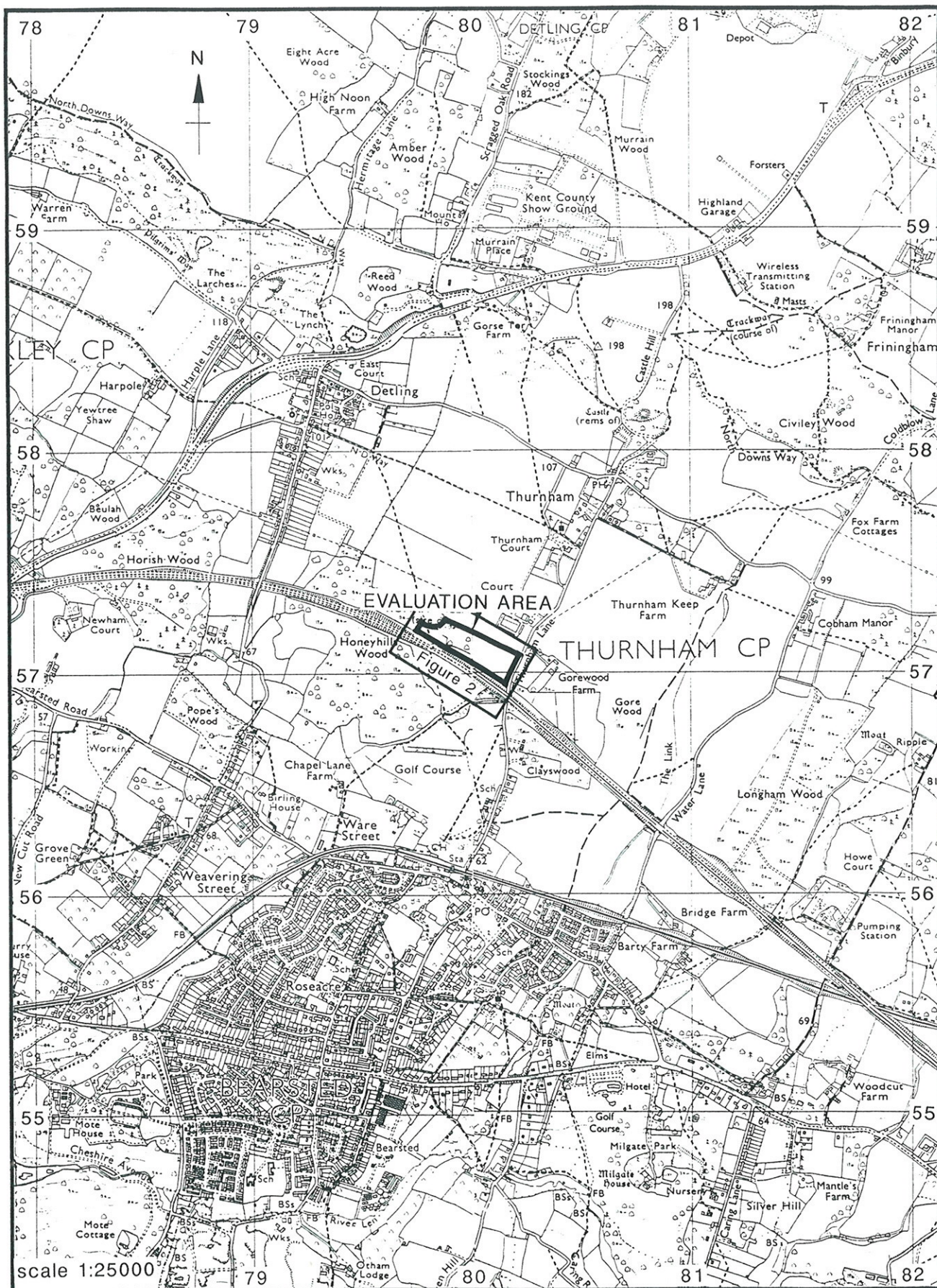
#### 2 Storage and curation

- 2.1 There are no immediate storage requirements other than the maintenance of desiccated conditions for the metal artefacts. The metalwork will require long-term desiccated storage below 15% RH.



### **3 Further work**

- Metalwork to be x-rayed.
- Computerized catalogue of metalwork to be produced.
- Parallels to the sought for iron objects.
- Further description/classification of quernstones and sources. (They are probably of Greensand, but this needs confirmation.)



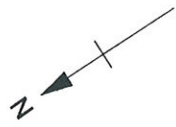
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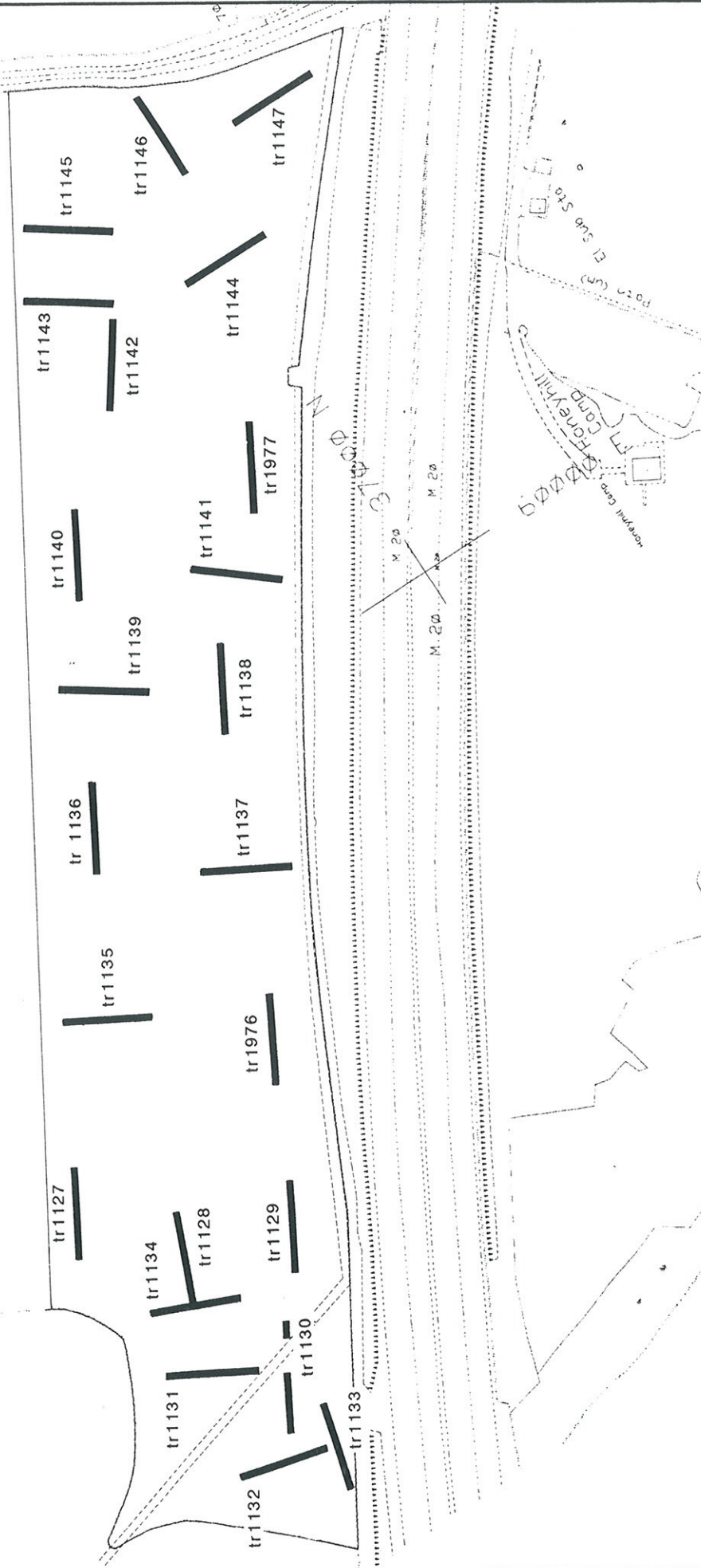
Site location

Figure 1





Corbier Hall  
(site of)



Trench location

scale 1:2000

1958 Excavation



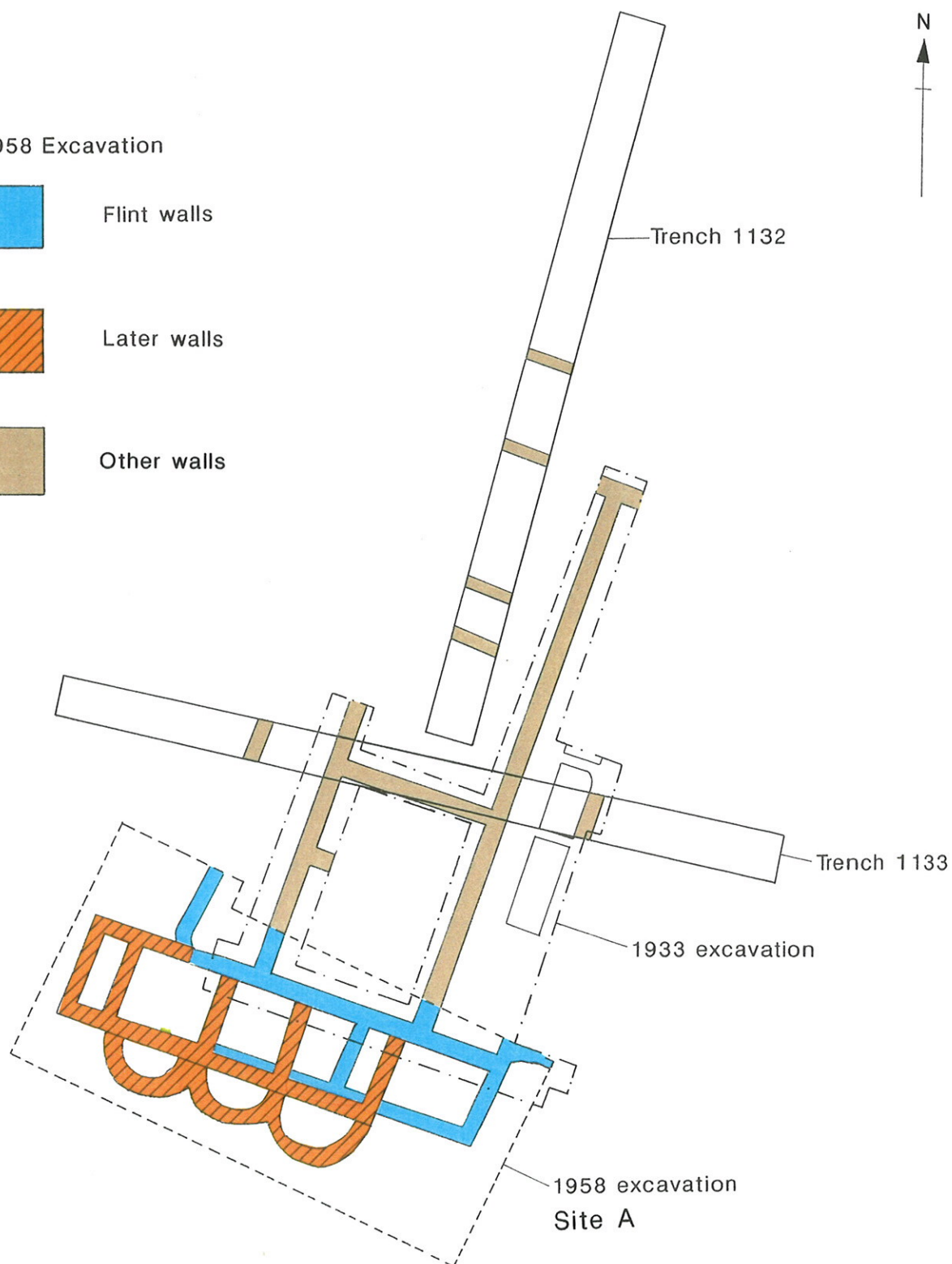
Flint walls



Later walls



Other walls



10 0 10 m.

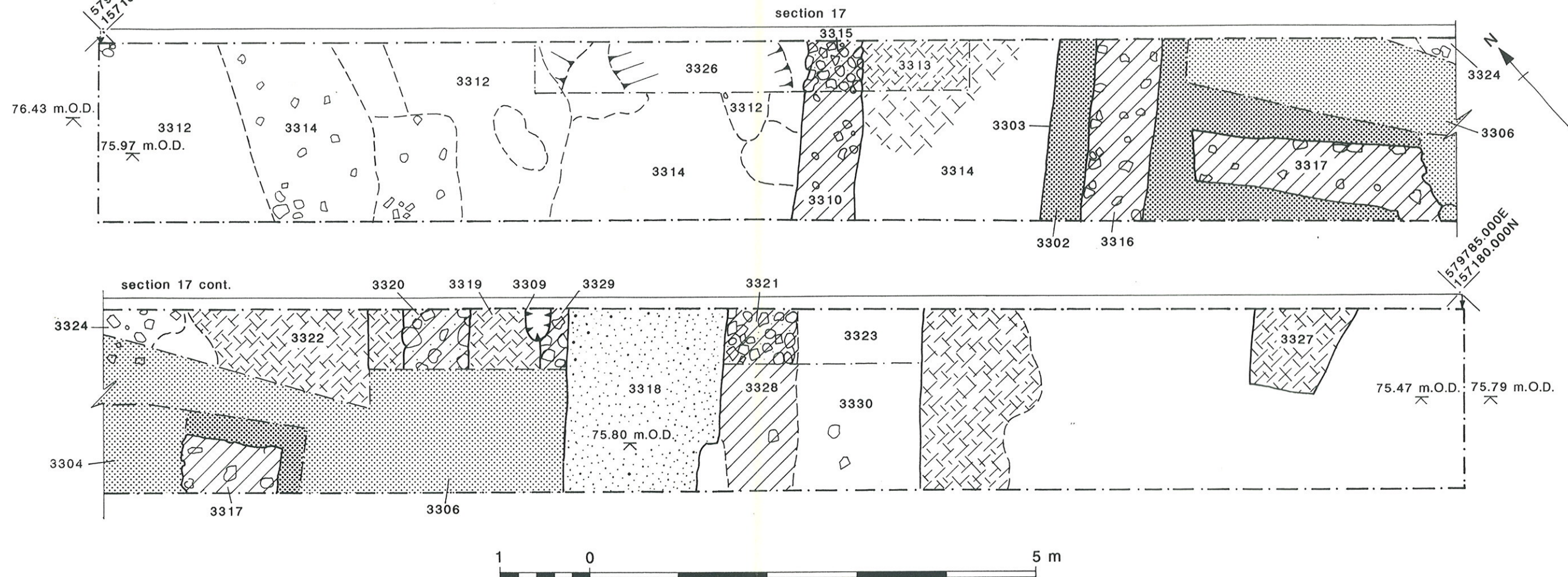
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Figure 3



Trench 1133

ARC THM 96



# Section 17

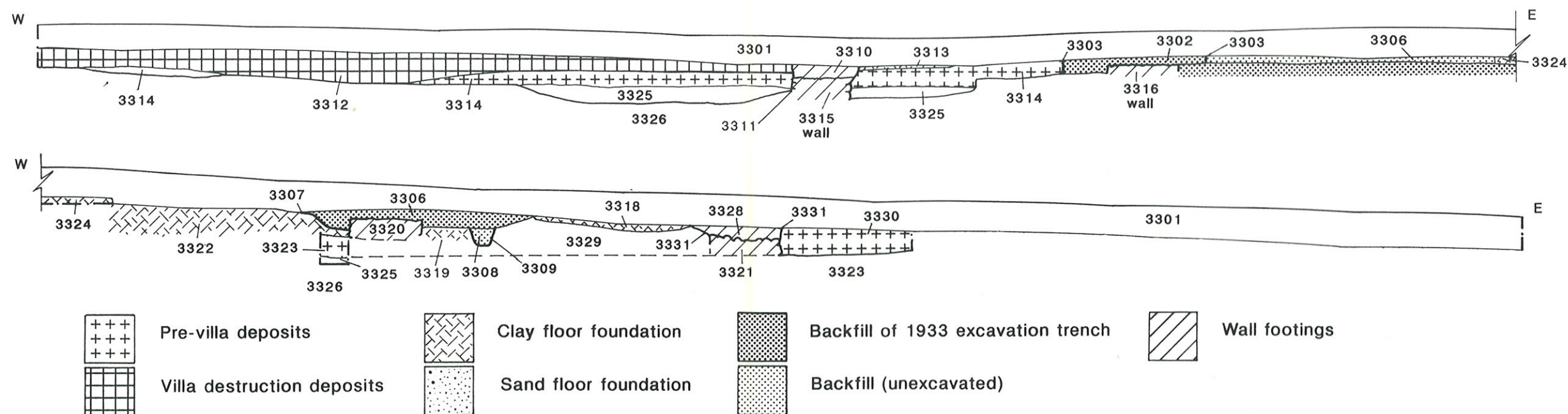


Figure 4



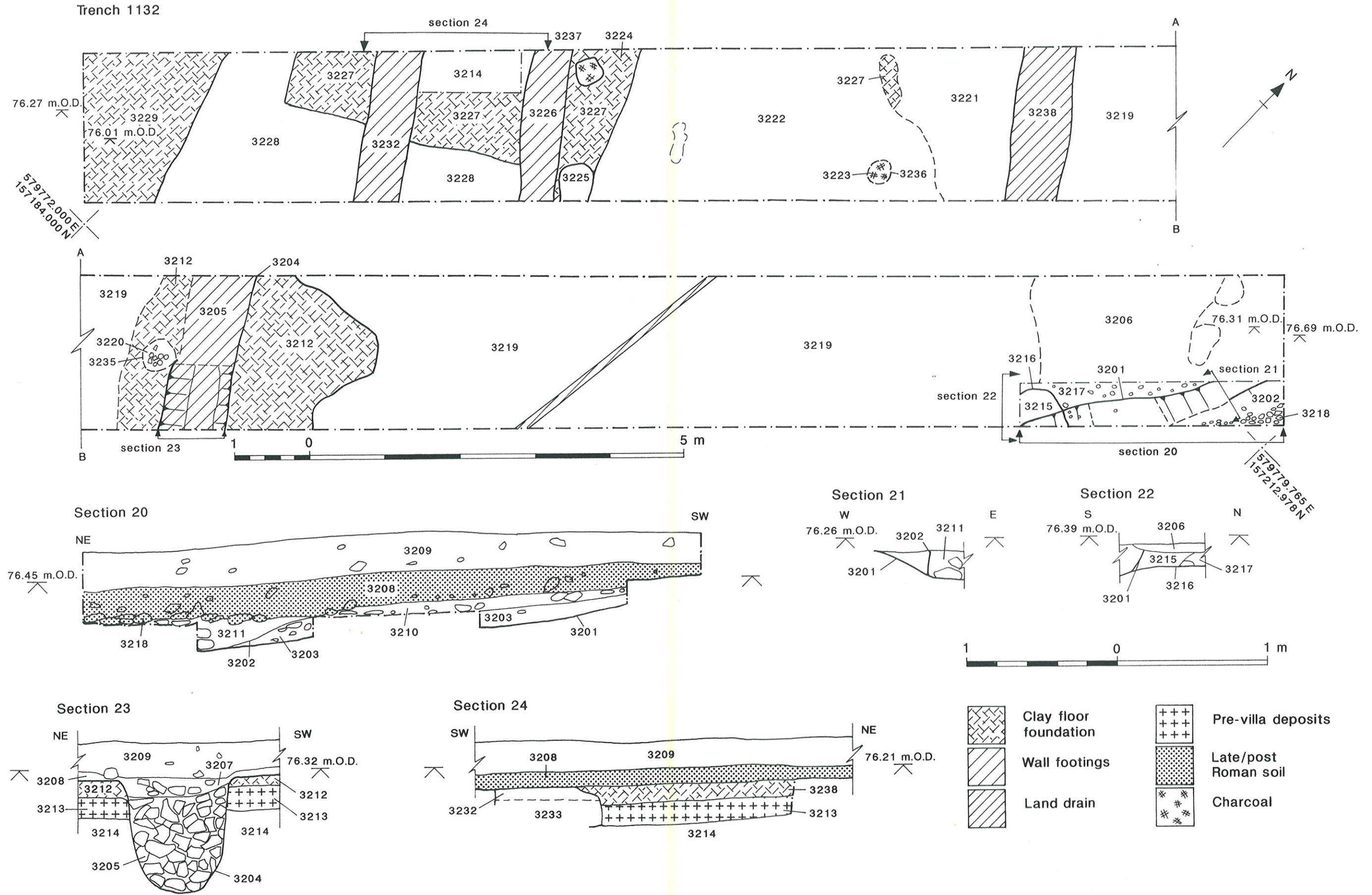


Figure 5



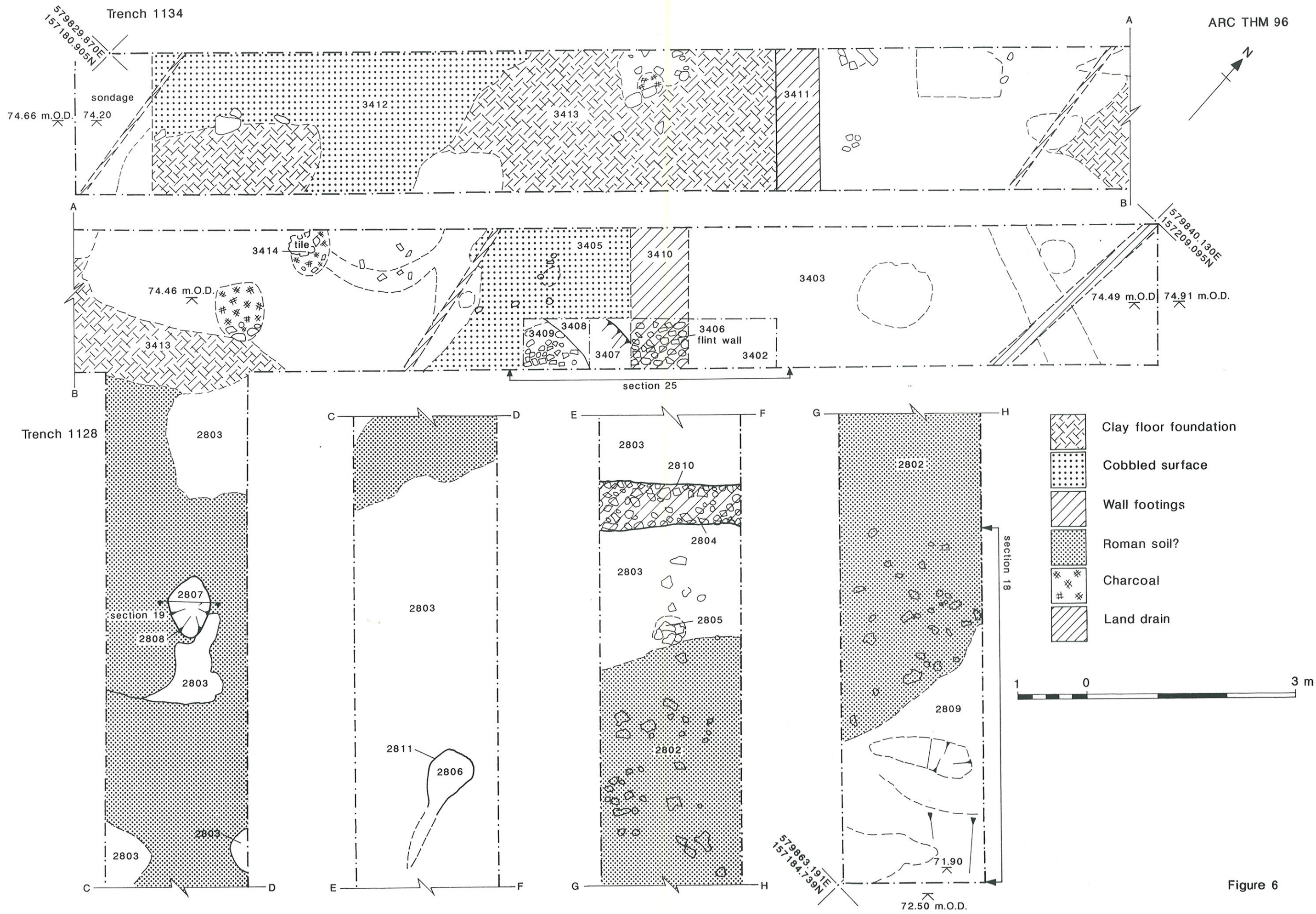
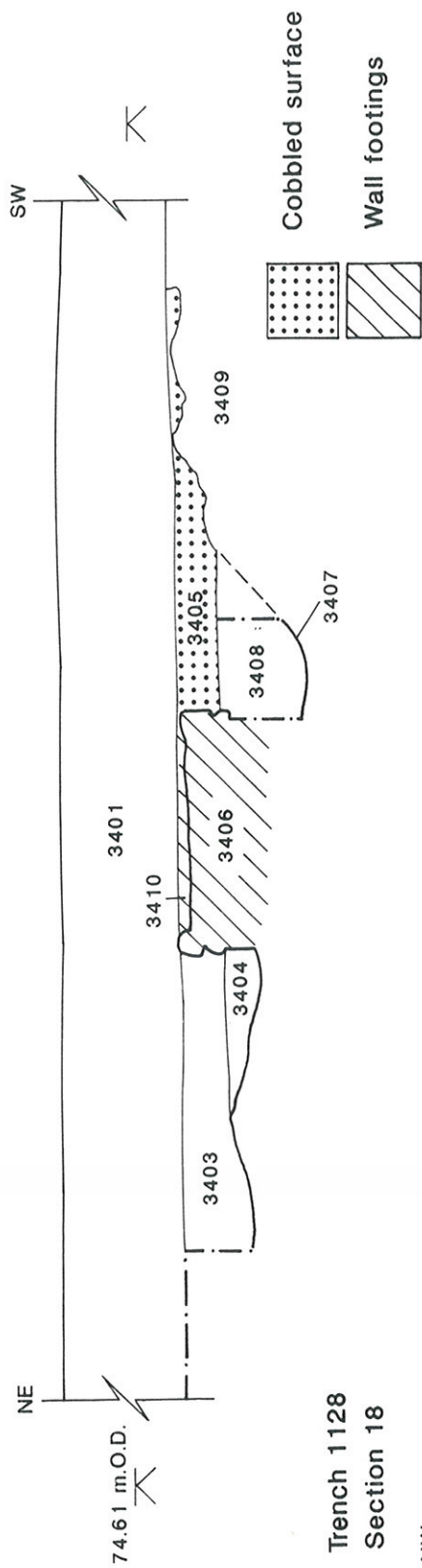


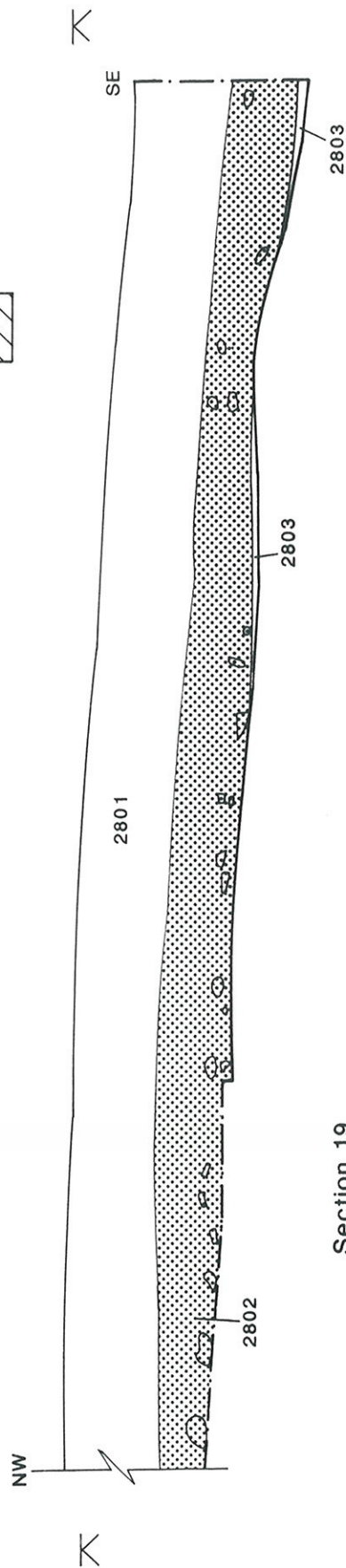
Figure 6



Trench 1134  
Section 25



Trench 1128  
Section 18



Section 19



Figure 7



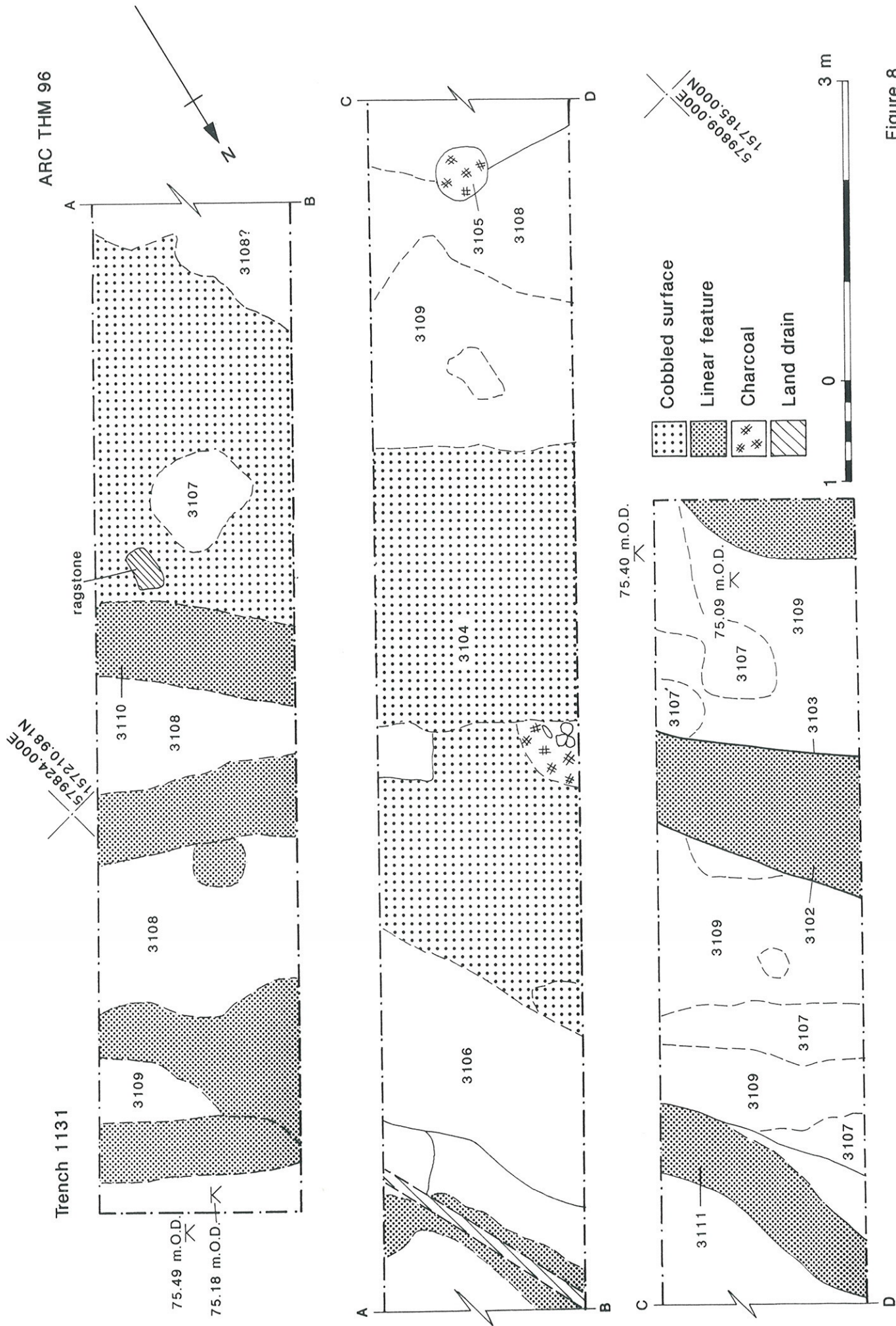
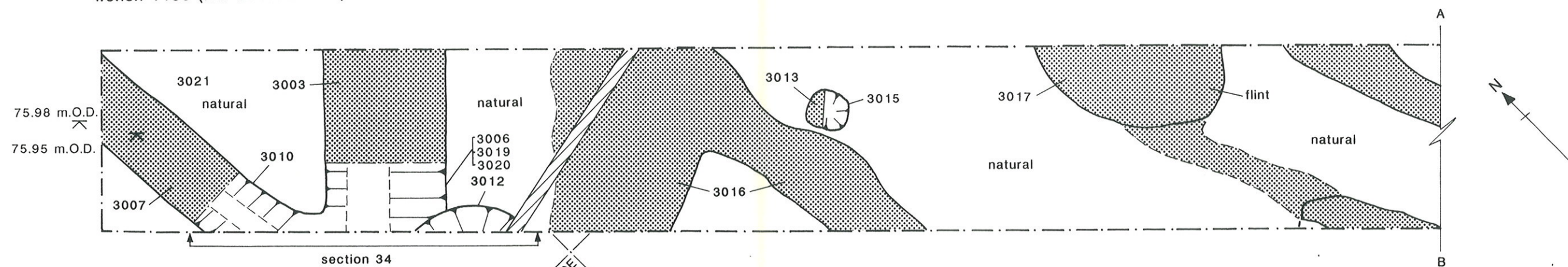


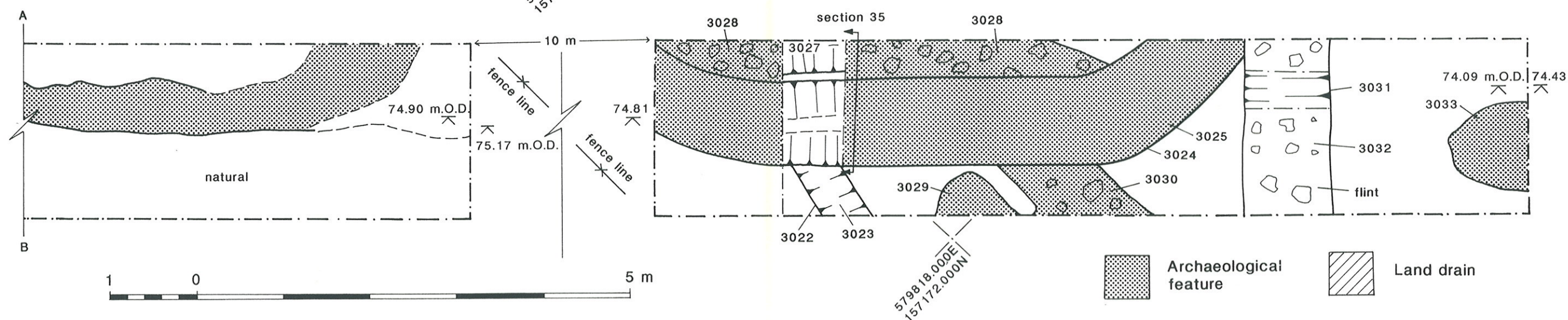
Figure 8



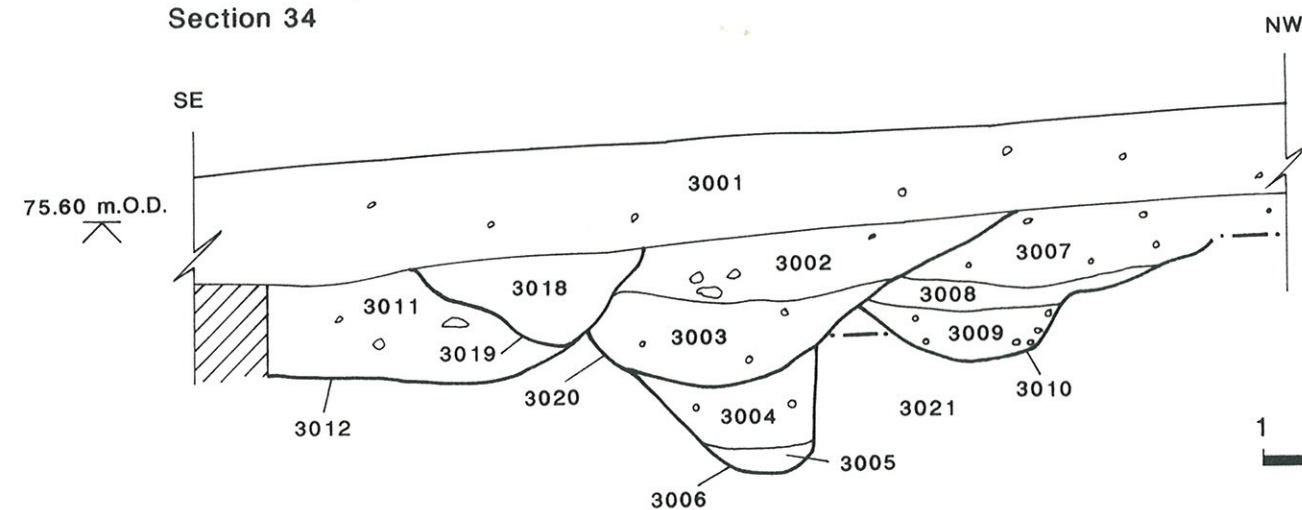
## Trench 1130 (NW of fence line)



## Trench 1130 continued



## Section 34



## Section 35

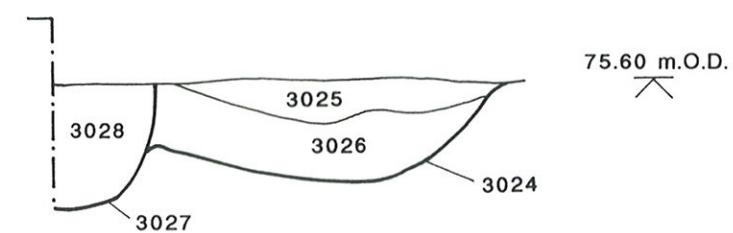
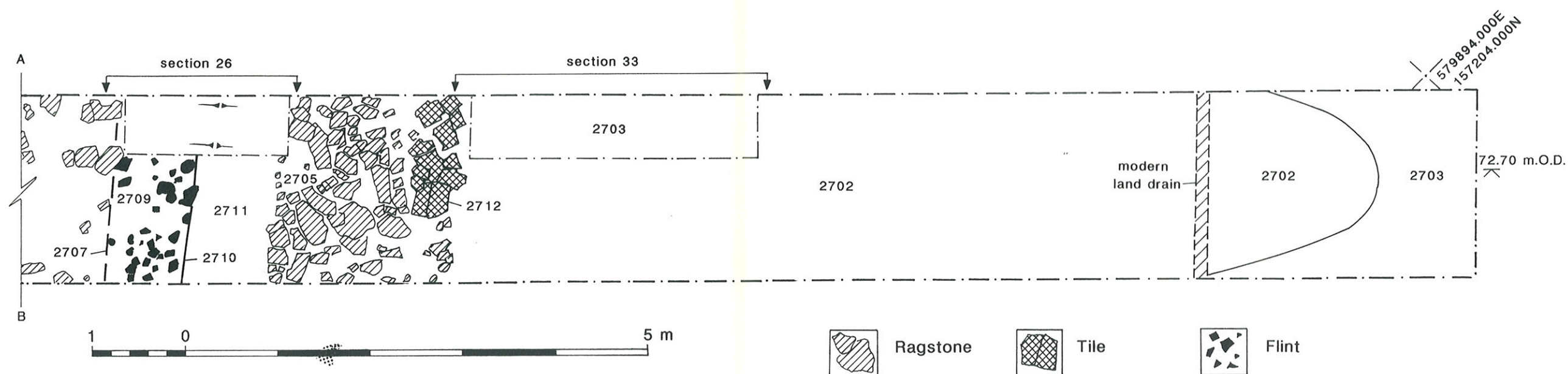
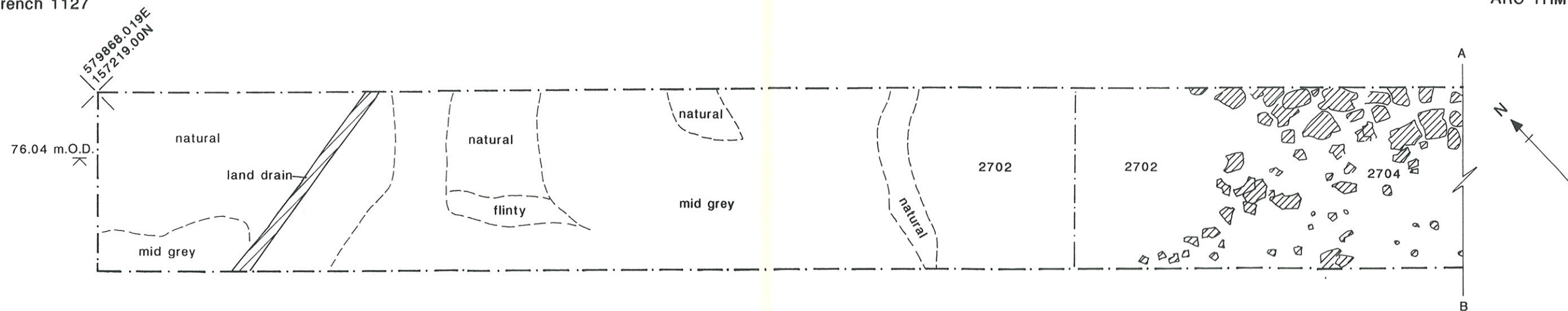


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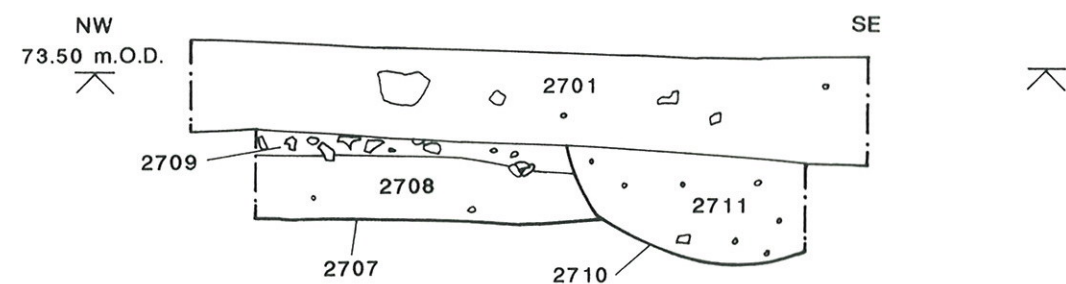


Trench 1127

ARC THM 96



Section 26



Section 33

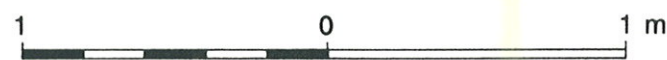
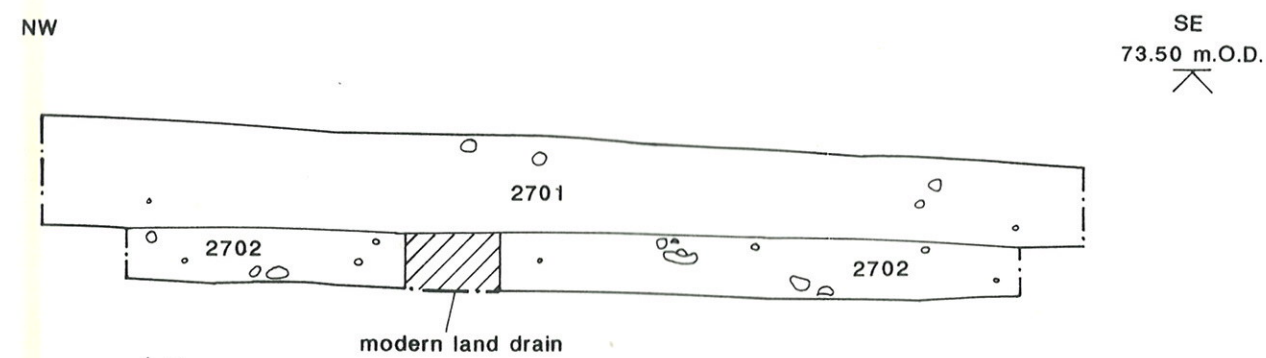
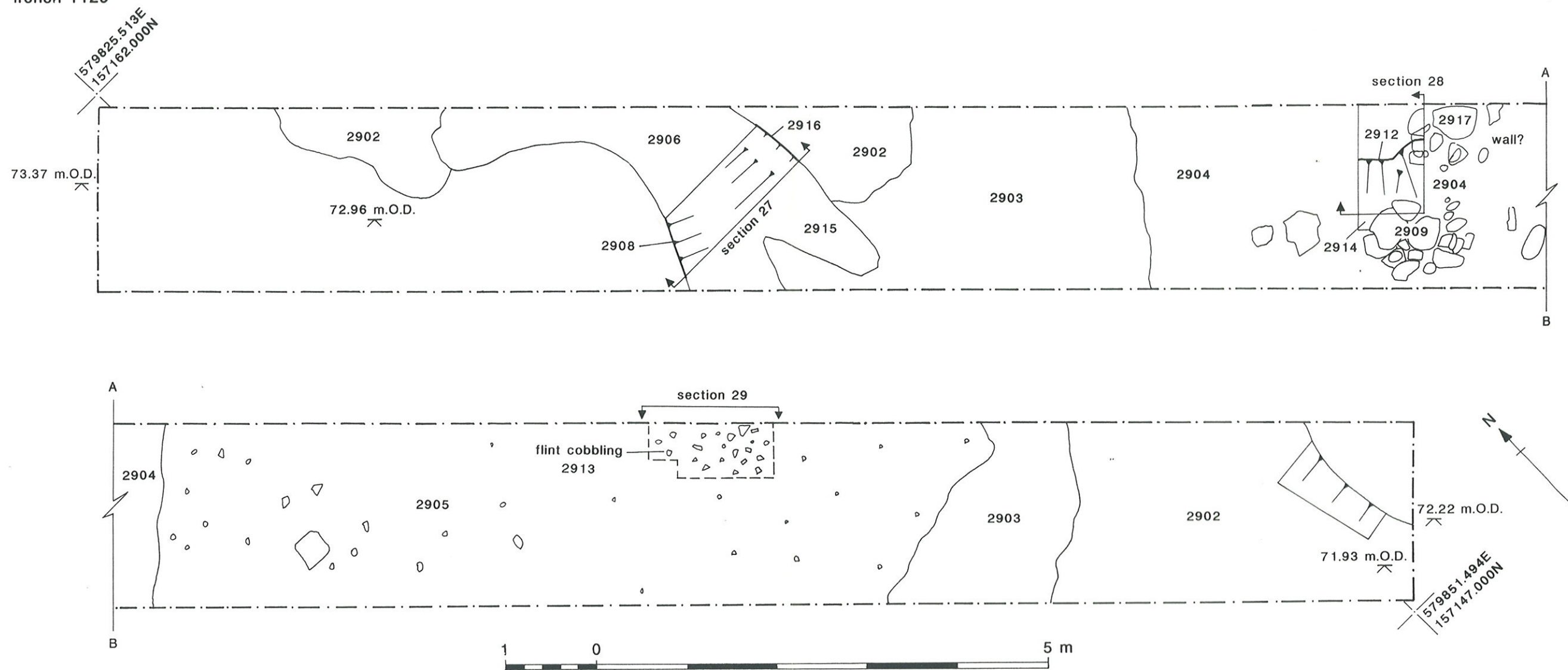
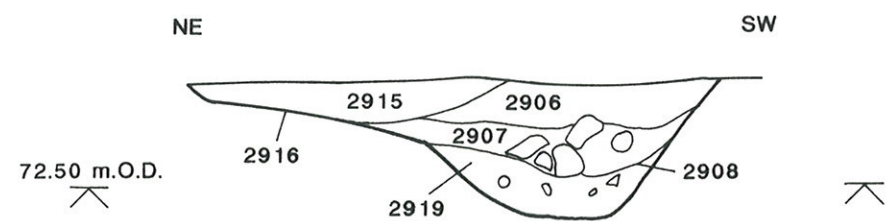


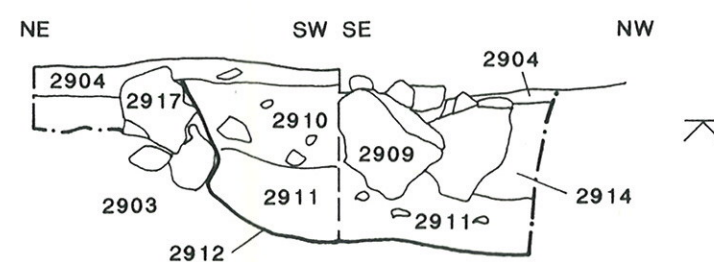
Figure 10



Section 27'



Section 28



Section 29

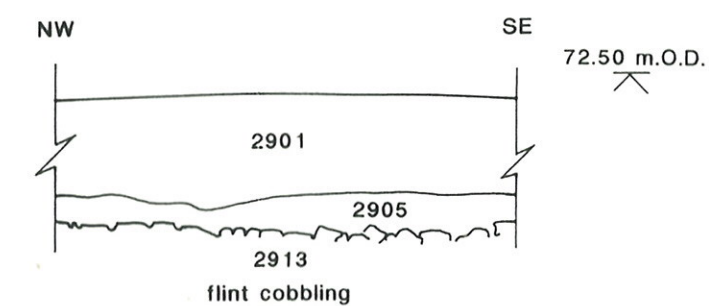


Figure 11





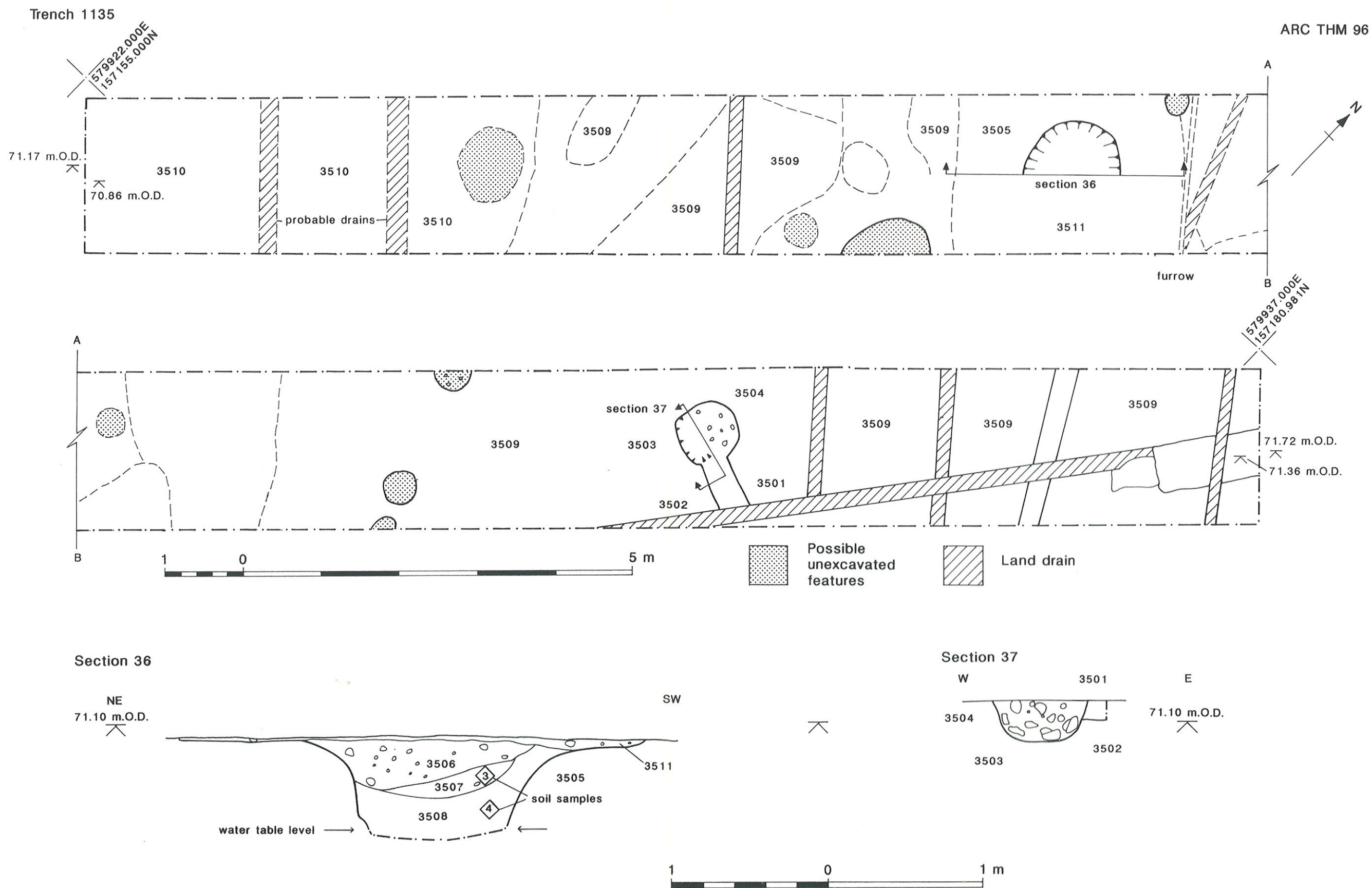
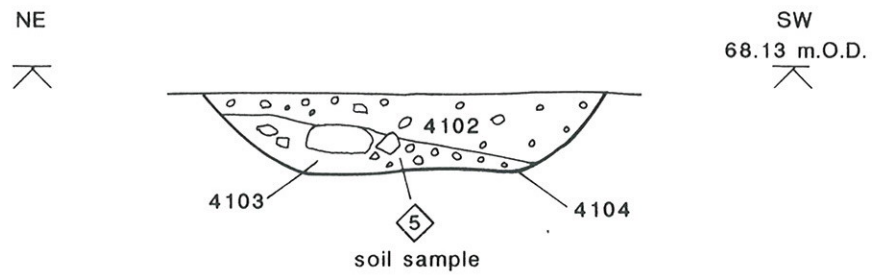


Figure 13



Section 38



Section 40

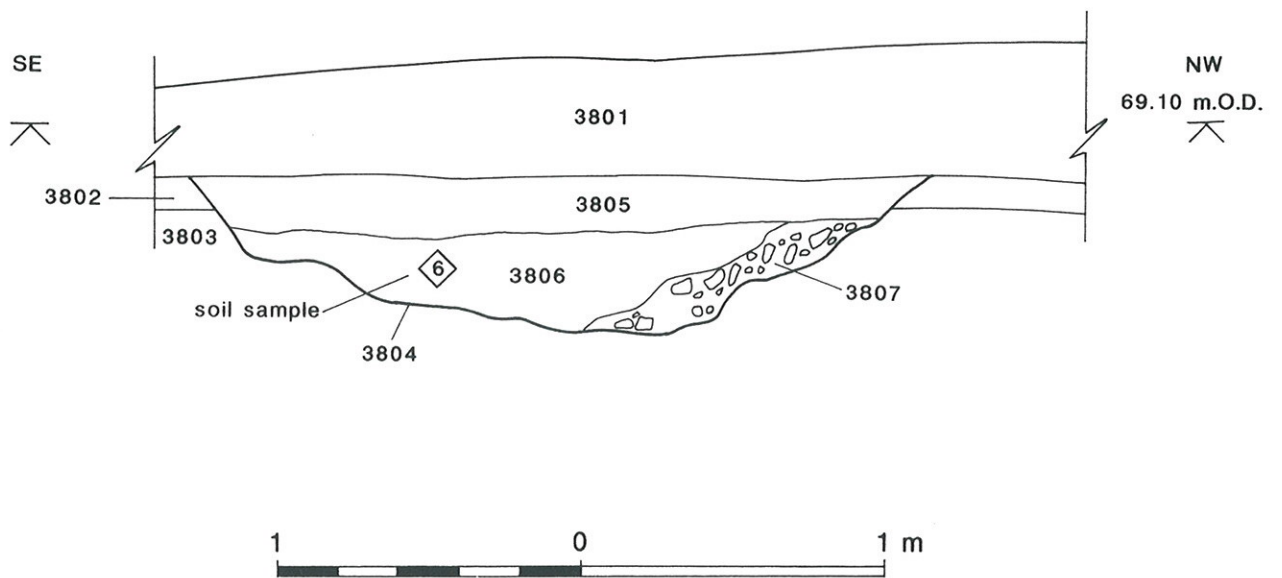


Figure 14

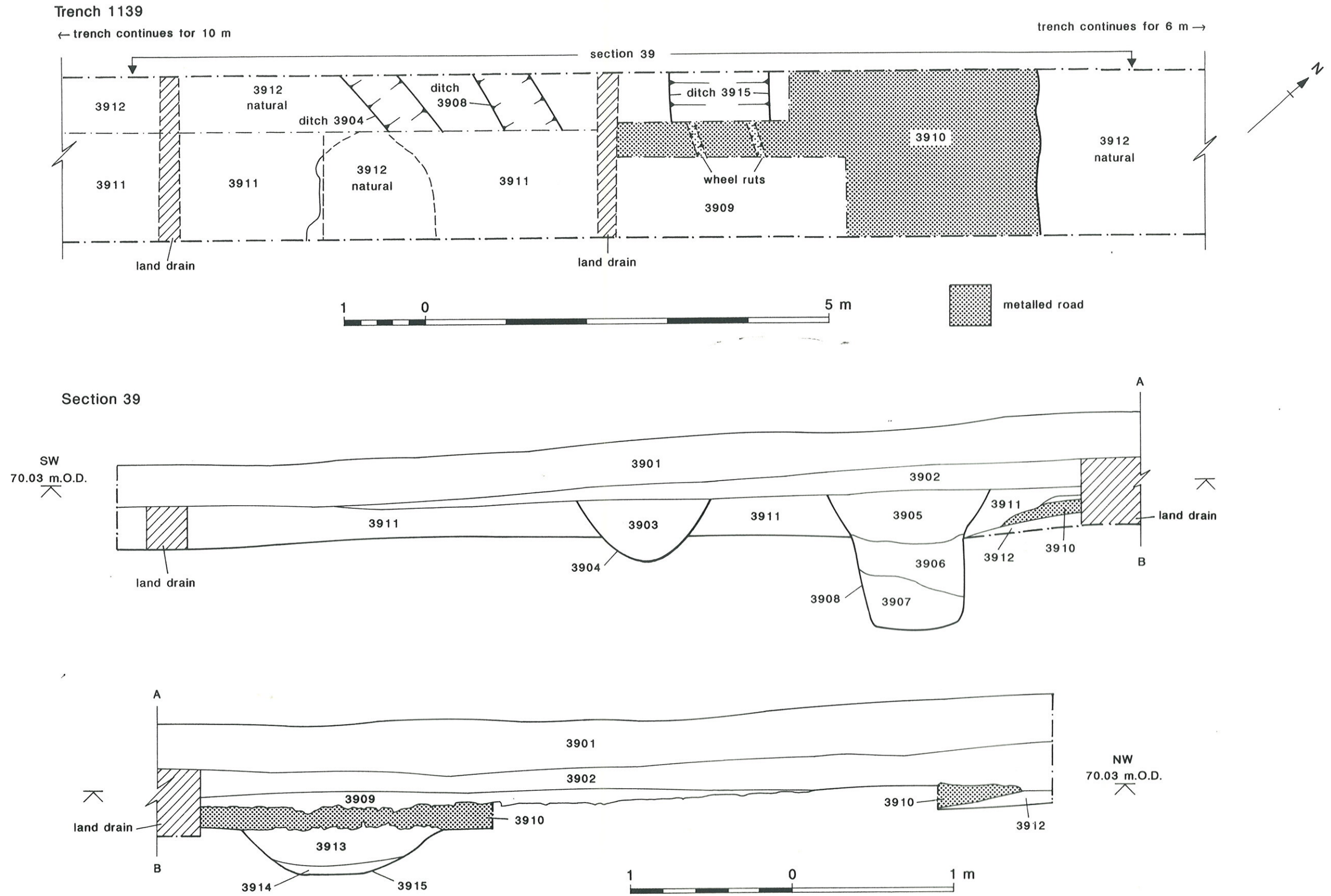


Figure 15



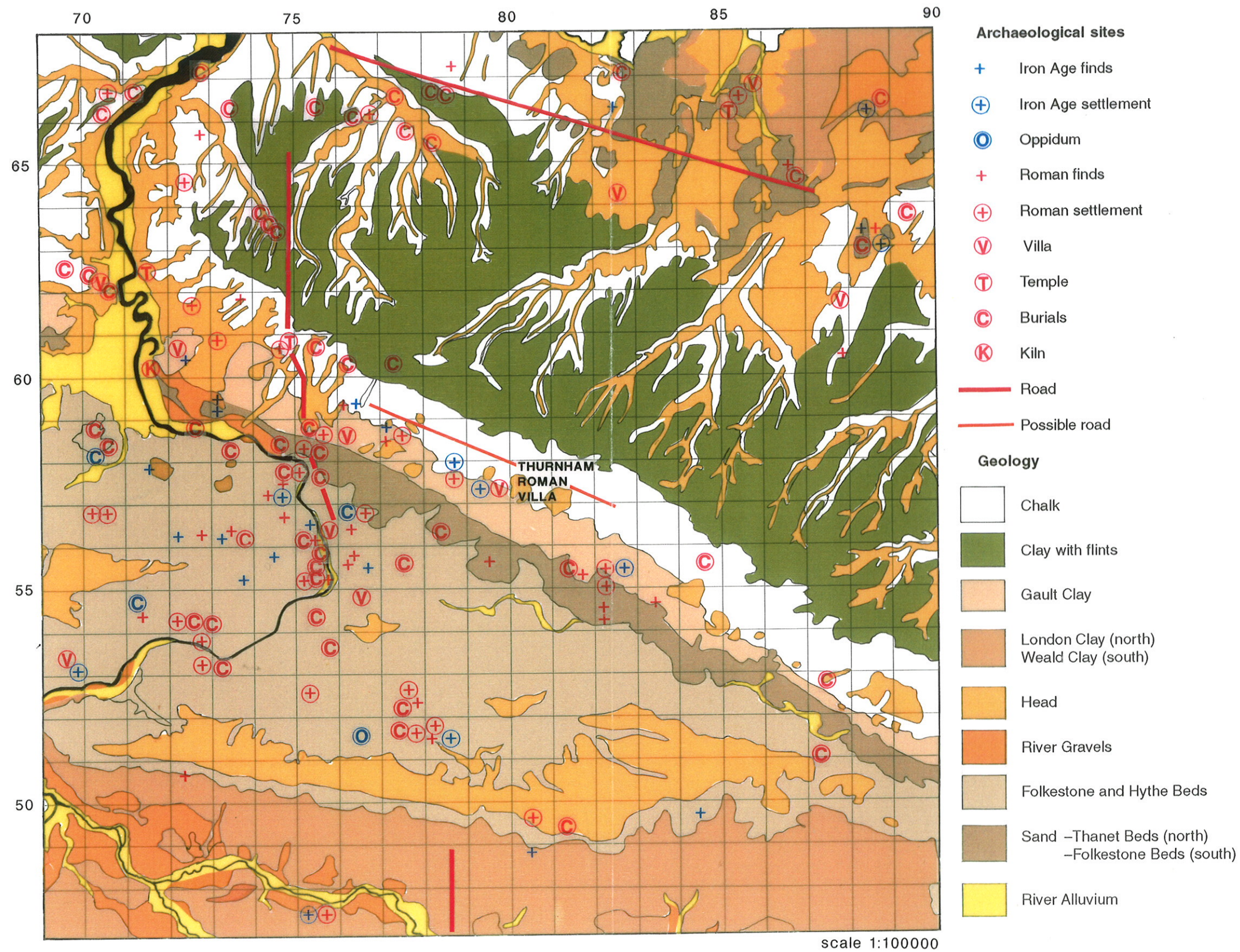


Figure 20



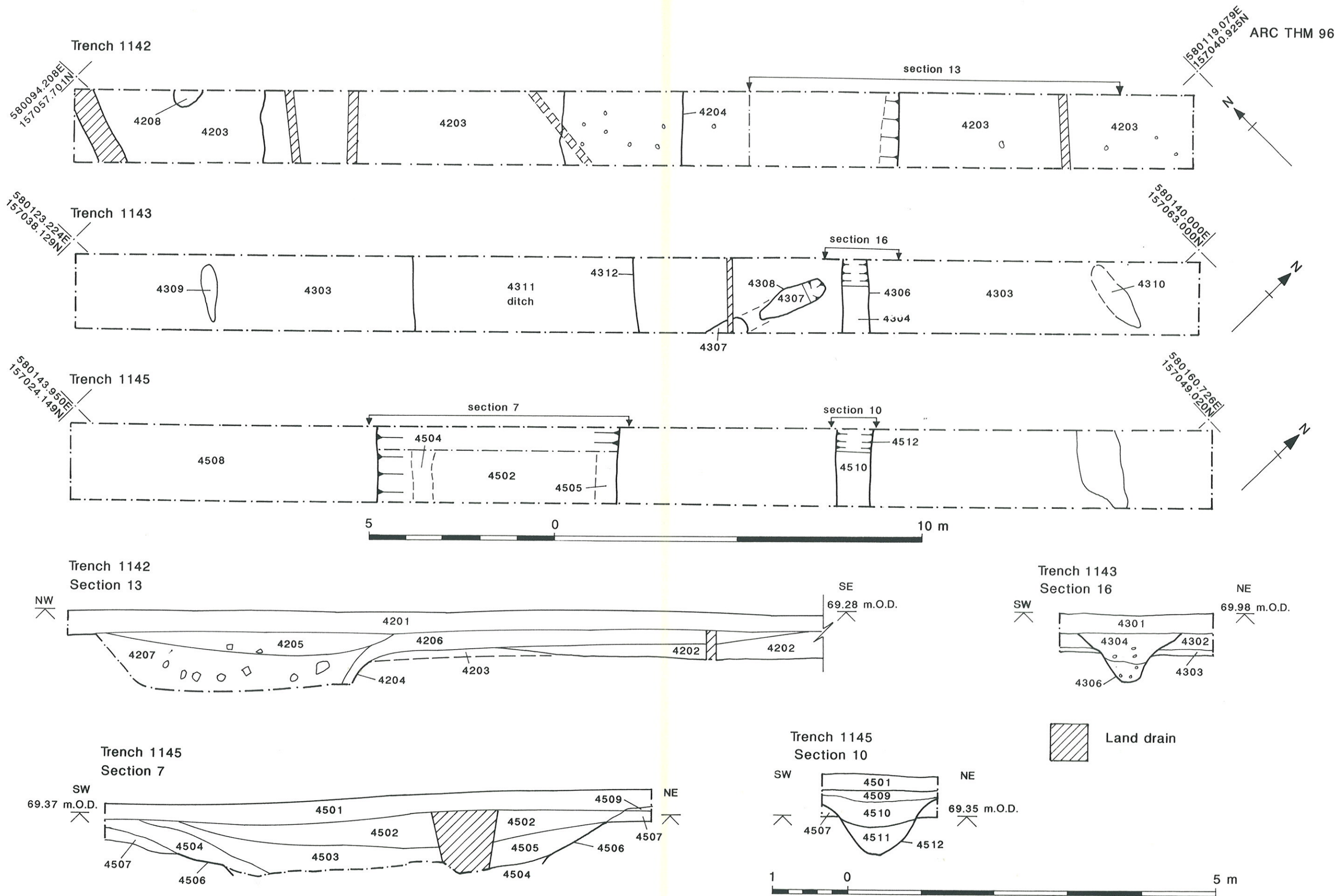


Figure 16



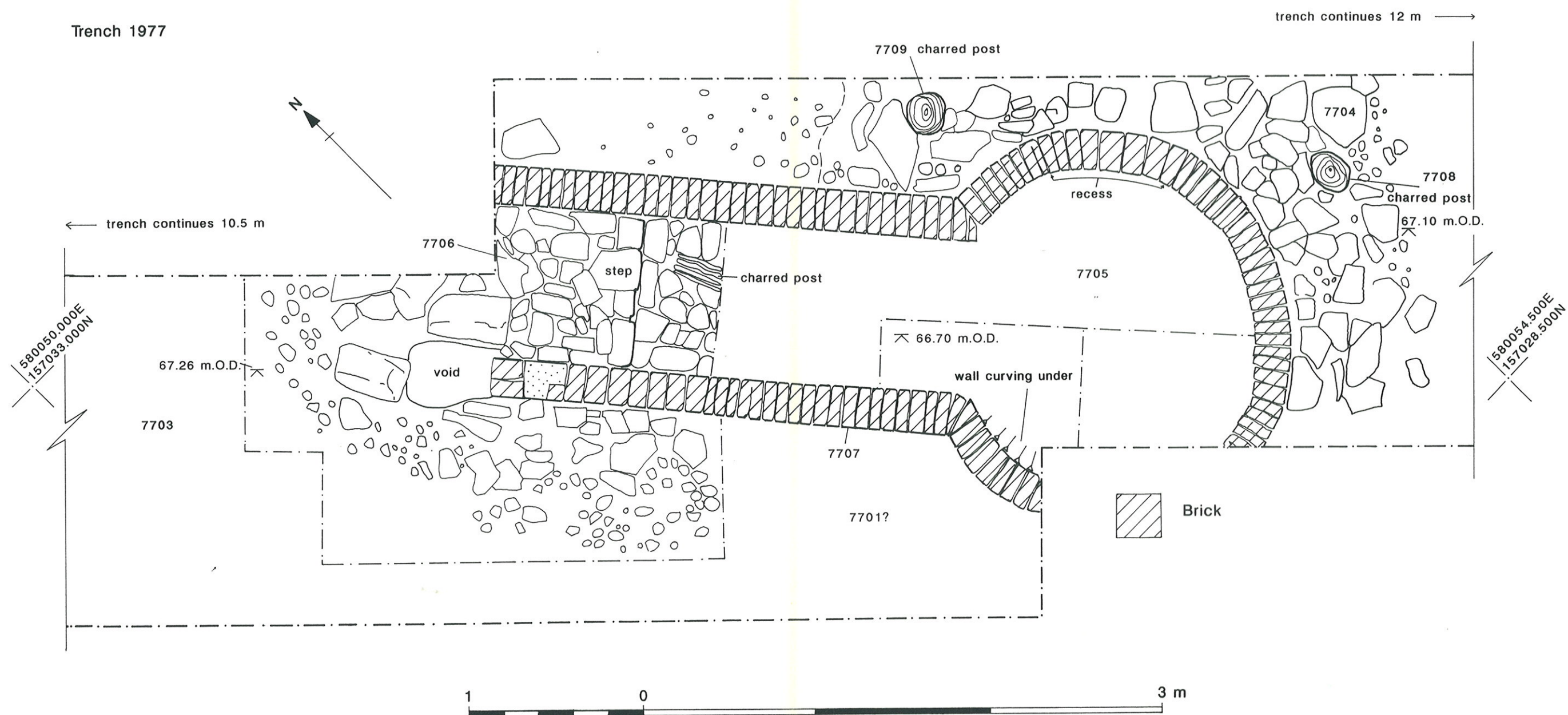
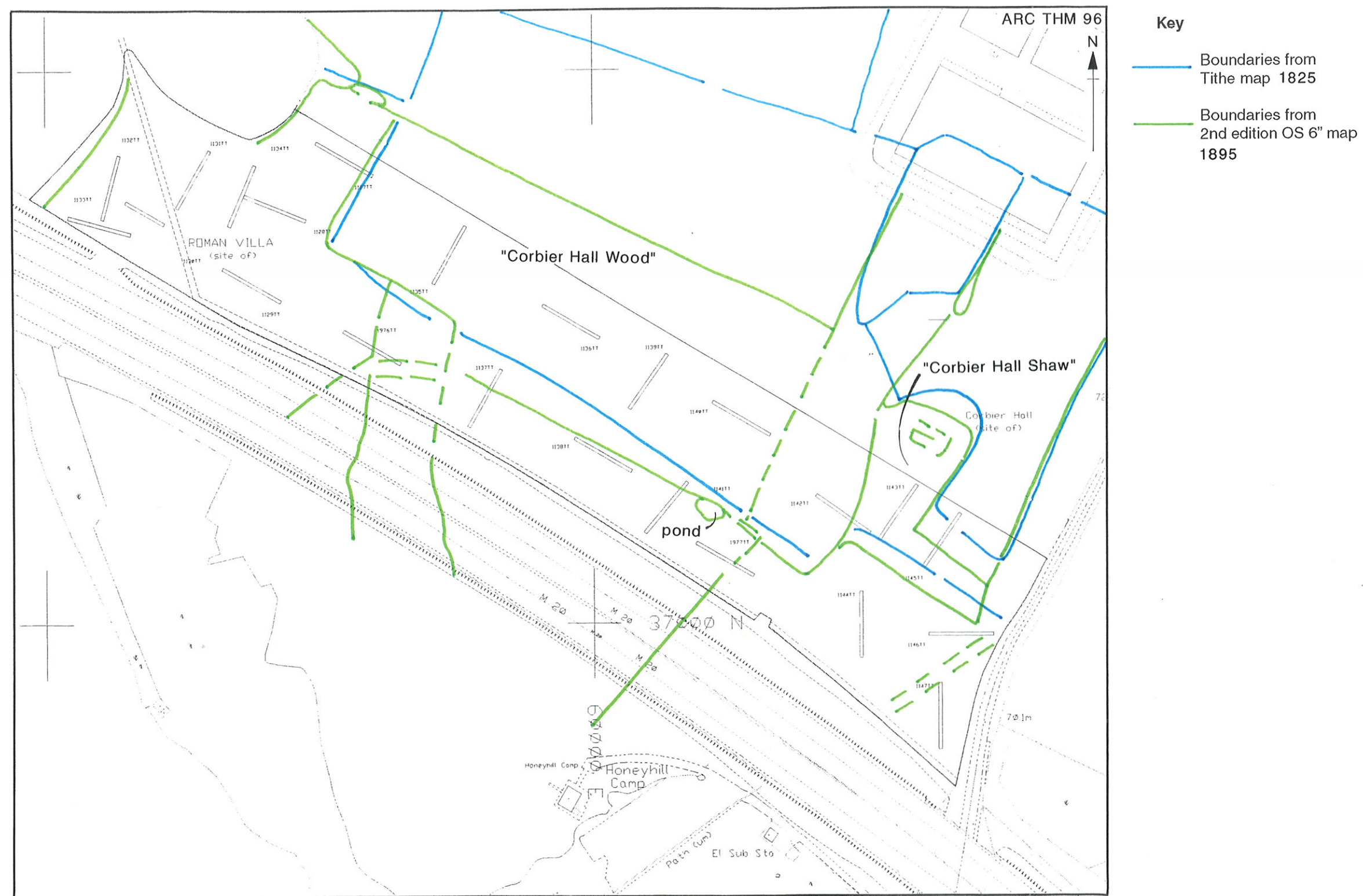


Figure 17



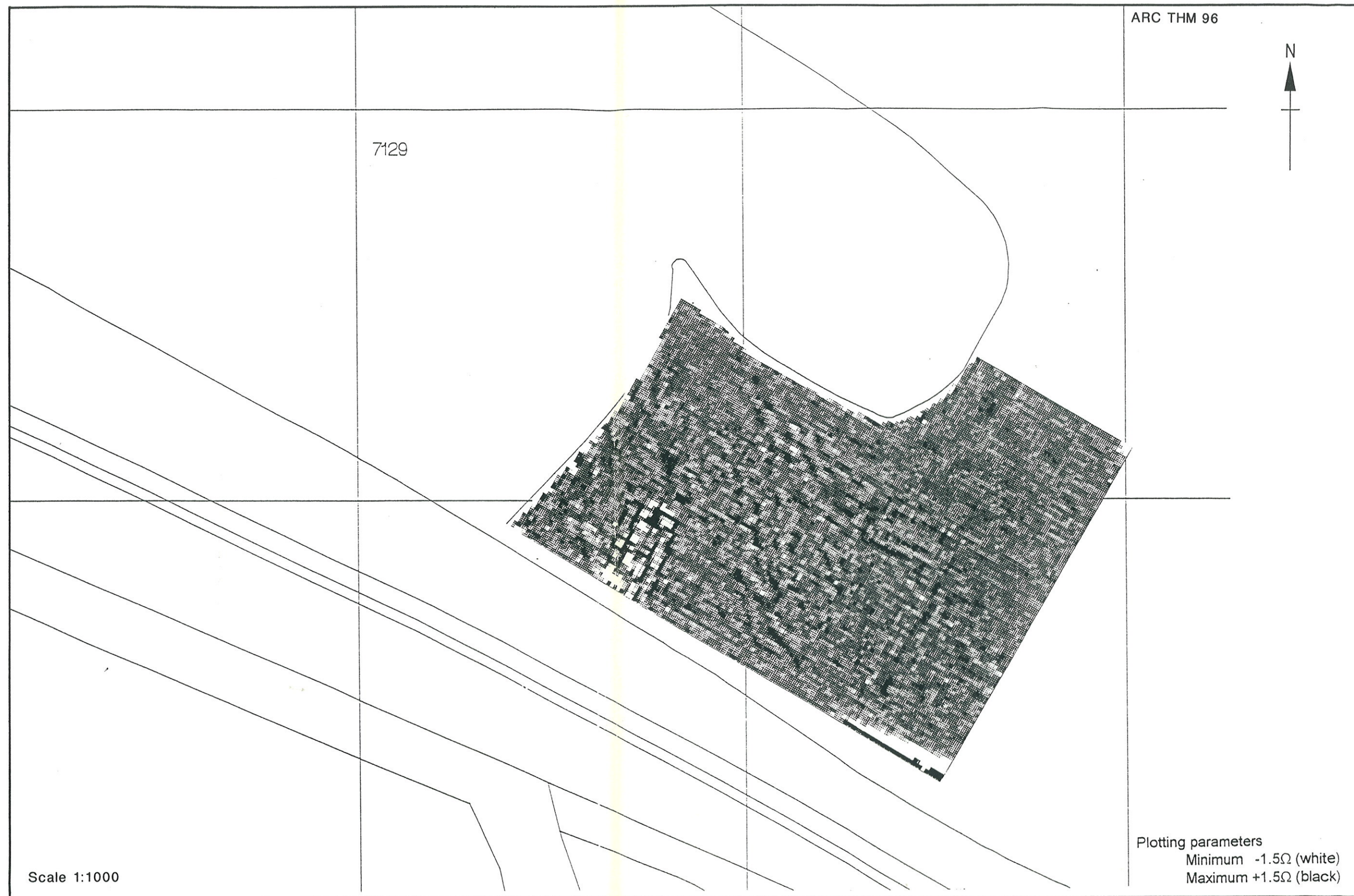




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Figure 19

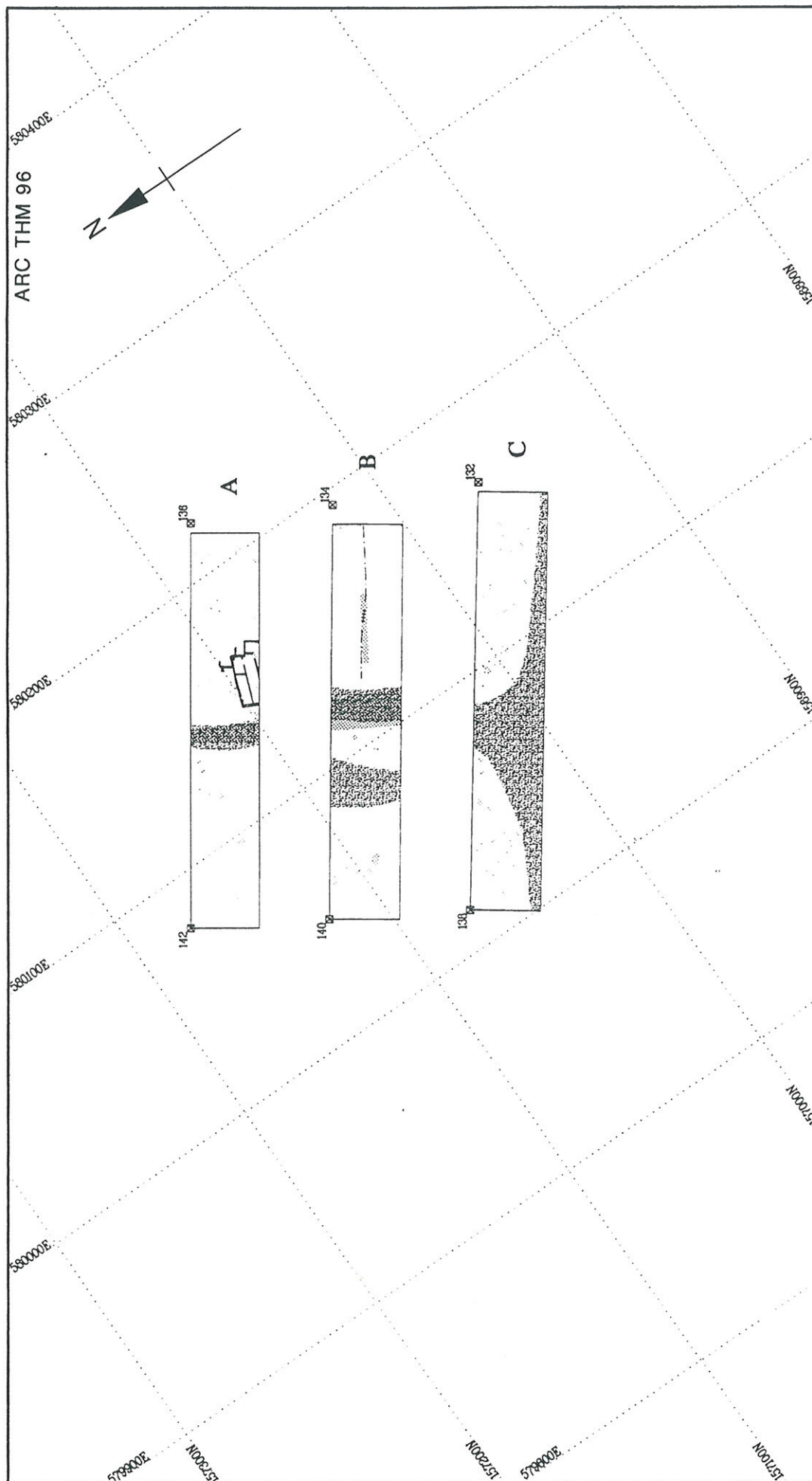




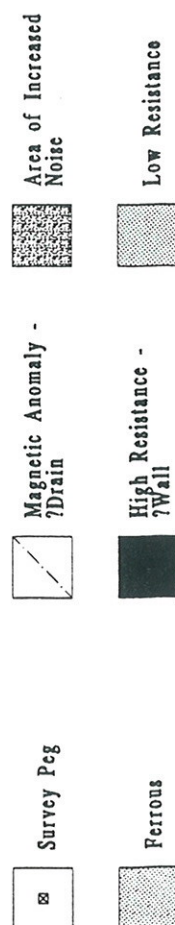
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Figure 21





South of Corbier Hall
ARC CHS95
Summary Interpretation



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Figure 22



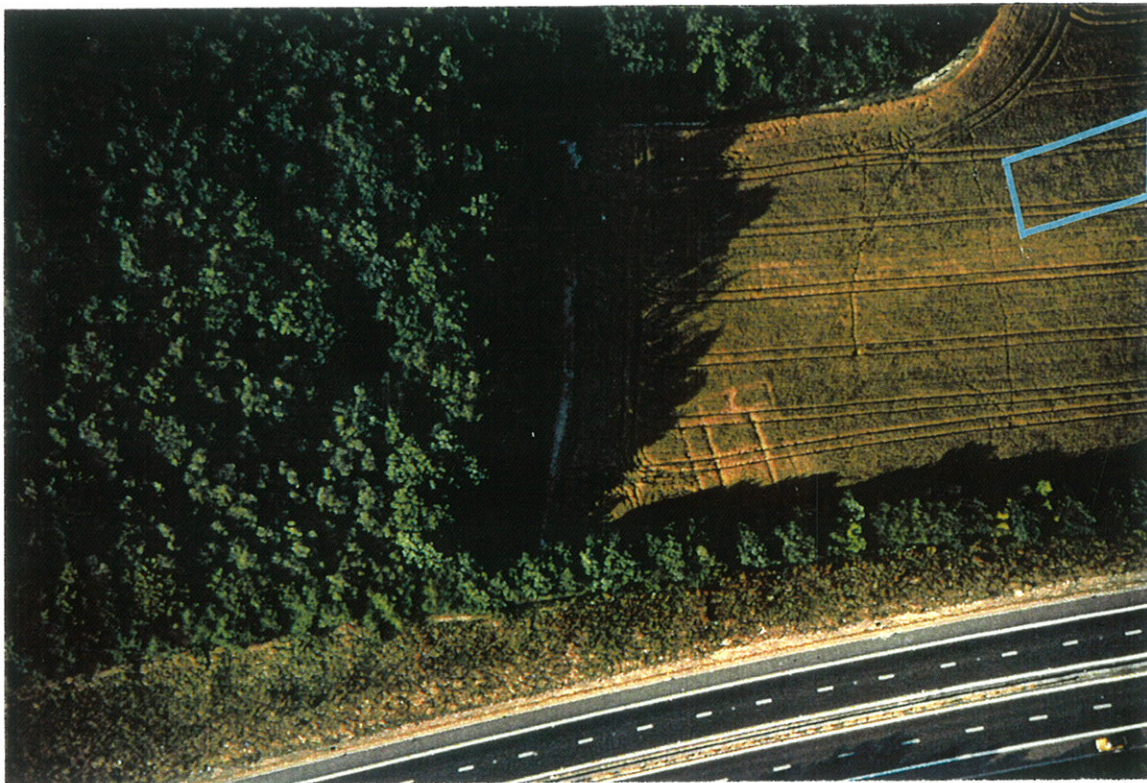


Plate 1. Aerial view of Thurnham Roman Villa cropmark on edge of Honeyhills Wood with aisled building visible top right (indicated by light blue box). North is top left.

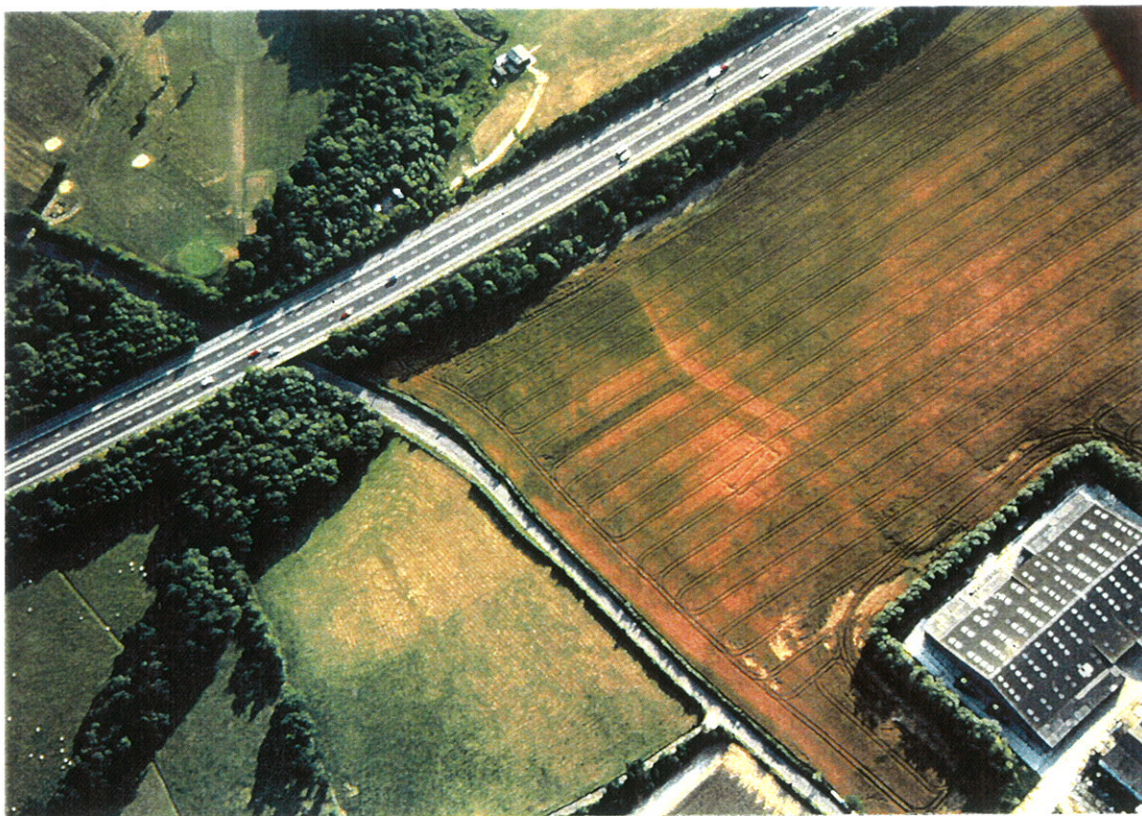


Plate 2. Aerial view of Corbier Hall cropmark (centre). The 'moat' is visible as a dark green band between the building and the M20. North is bottom right.





Plate 3. Cobbled trackway and ditch in Trench 1139 looking NW towards knoll on which the villa is situated.



Plate 4. Villa wall footings in Trench 1133. Scale is between back 'corridor' walls, with cross-wall in foreground.





Plate 5. Stone rubble and tile layer in Trench 1127.



Plate 6. 19th century brick structure in Trench 1977.





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