

GREEN LANE, MAIDENHEAD, BERKSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT FOR
STARTREES PROPERTIES LIMITED

20-23rd. April 1988

Oxford Archaeological Unit
D. Miles Director
R. A. Chambers
Senior Field Officer

Green Lane, Maidenhead, Berkshire
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Summary

Ten trenches in this 1.41 ha field revealed the former edge of a water course cutting into the gravel terrace. There were no deposits of archaeological significance.

Location and Previous Land Use

This site (centred SU 895 806) occupied a 1.41ha. rough pasture field on level ground on the flood plain of a minor branch of the Thames. This branch, a willow lined stream, was widened and straightened in the early 1960s to form a flood channel which now forms the eastern boundary of the field. Prior to the Thames Conservancy flood prevention programme the field was liable to serious flooding (local information). In earlier times the field appears to have been part of a common (local information) and several characteristic plant species surviving in the coarse grass would appear to confirm local accounts that the field had not been cultivated for at least the last 60 years. There was no evidence of cultivation prior to this date.

The Assessment Trenches

Ten 1m. wide trenches were excavated by machine using a toothless bucket. Trenches I-IV crossed the field in a N-S line whilst the remaining five E-W trenches explored the land to either side. The N-S trenches followed a line just inside the former edge of the water channel (Fig. 3) which was confirmed by E-W trenches VI, VII and X. The former high ground represented by the uneroded surface of the sandy gravel terrace lay at a depth of 0.7-0.8m. (Figs. 3 and 4) fell sharply away initially to a depth of 1.4-1.5m. along the edge of the former channel. The channel rapidly deepened (Trenches IV and V) and no attempt was made to excavate down to the bottom at over 2m. in trench IX.

During this archaeological assessment attention was focused particularly along the channel edge which would have presented a favourable position for Mesolithic (middle stone age) settlement with sediments at the edge of the channel providing conditions suitable for the preservation of domestic refuse, and most importantly, organic material ranging from wooden artefacts to food remains. The E-W trenches were spaced less than 30m. apart to ensure that no such habitation site had existed here. The trenches were not extended further E. and deeper into the channel than necessary because of the soft and exceptionally sticky nature of the sediments which made even machine excavation slow and arduous.

Lithology

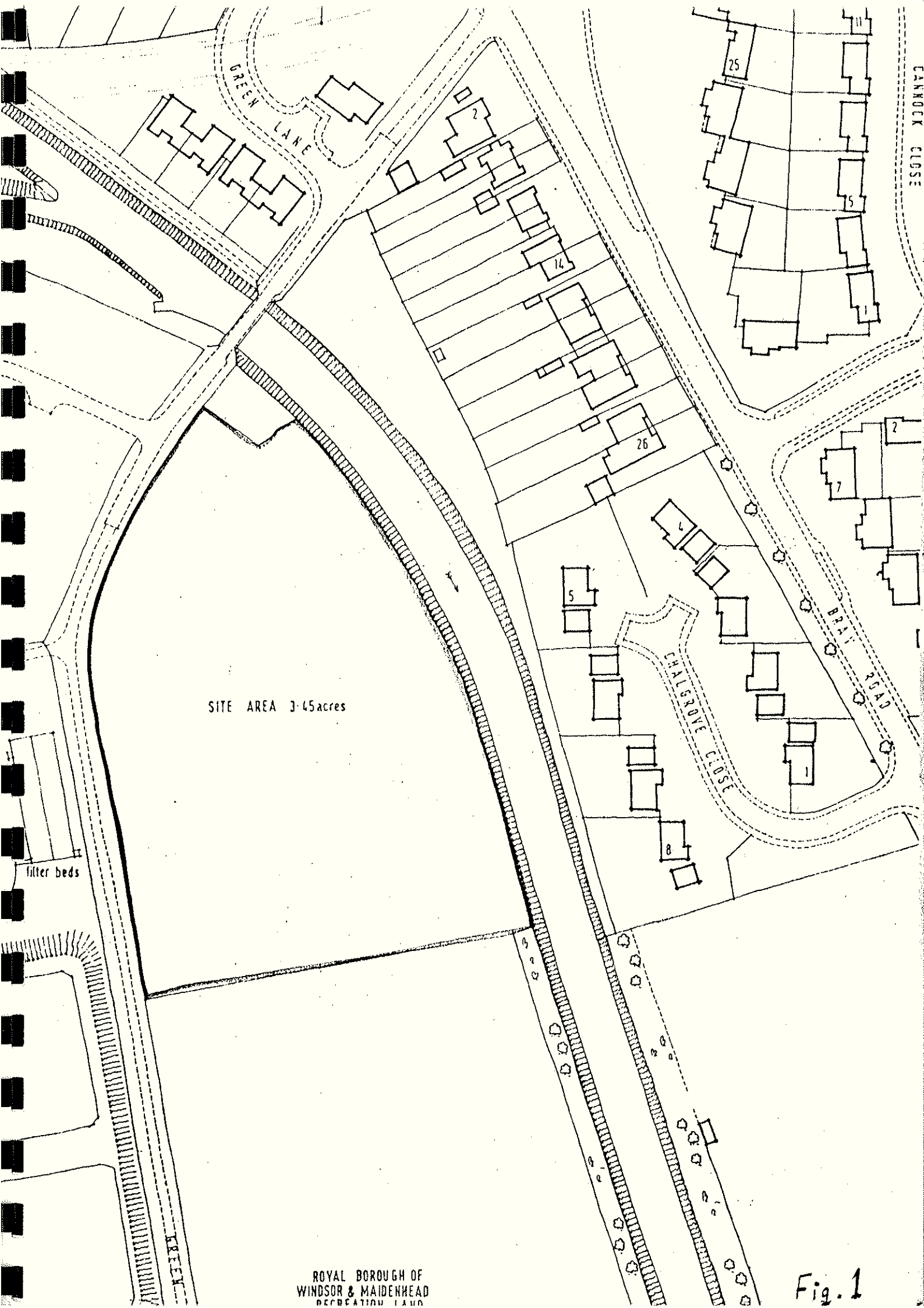
The channel bed had silted up rapidly at first with sandy silts and subsequently with clayey silts leaving only a small relict water channel which was realigned and enlarged during the flood prevention programme. Subsequent to the silting of the channel to the level of the surrounding gravel terrace, flood silts were deposited evenly over the entire area. Consequently each of the ten trenches revealed a similar sequence of alluviation with the earliest deposits, chiefly sand, in the deeper parts of the former channel (trenches V and VI).

The sequence of alluviation illustrated below occurred evenly across the site both as the upper filling of the channel and beyond the channel edge, the lithology being entirely related to depth.

Conclusion

Although this site includes gravel terrace there has been no previous human settlement in the immediate vicinity because of the previously wet nature of the site and because of the constant heavy flooding.

The river/stream channel appeared to contain no archaeological artefacts. The trial trenches revealed nothing of archaeological significance and the site will not require any further archaeological attention should building development take place.



SITE AREA 3.45 acres

filter beds

KRECH

GREEN LAKE

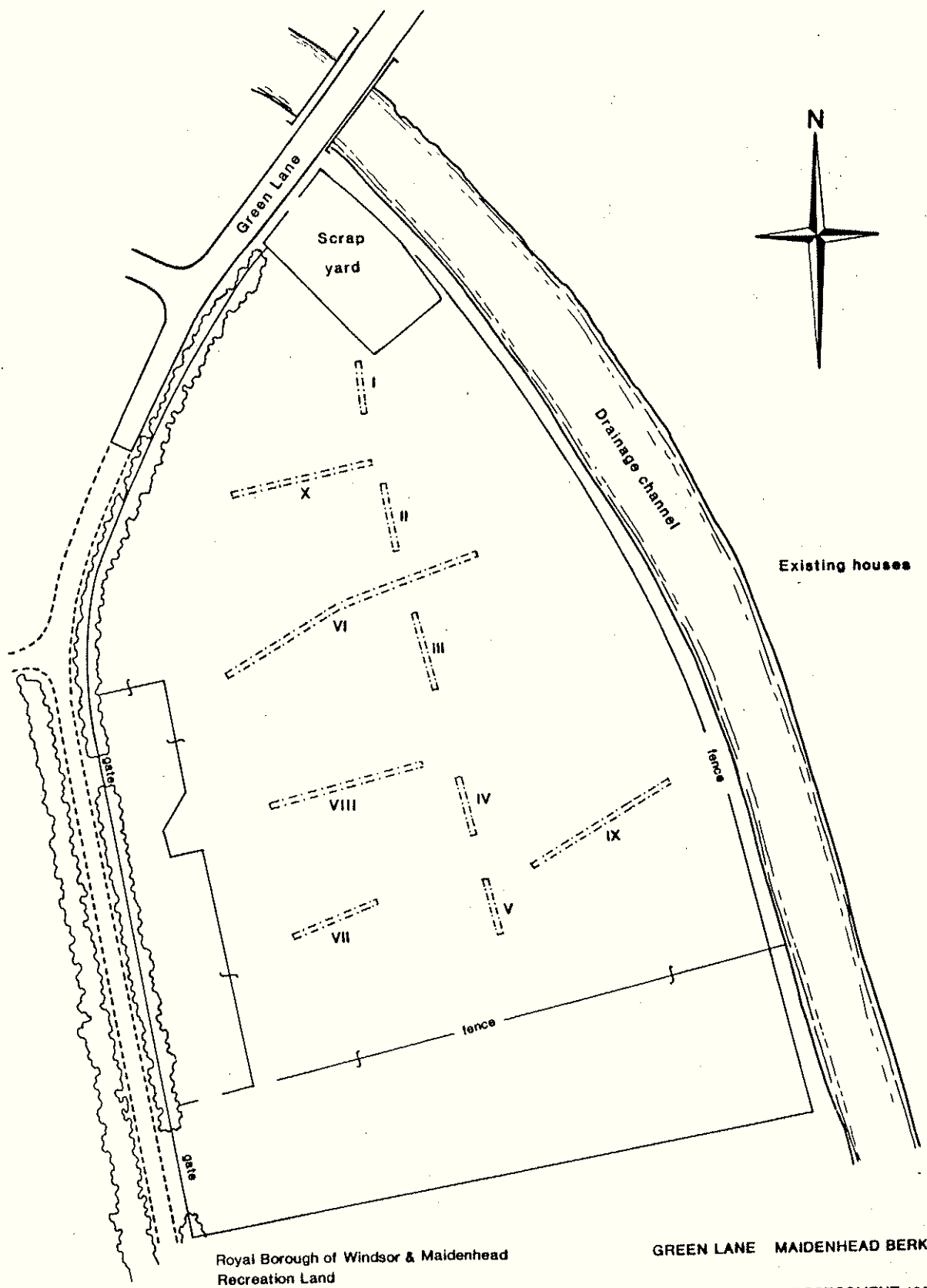
CHAL GROVE CLOSE

BRAI ROAD

CANNOCK CLOSE

ROYAL BOROUGH OF
WINDSOR & MAIDENHEAD
RECREATION LAND

Fig. 1



Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead
Recreation Land

GREEN LANE MAIDENHEAD BERKS
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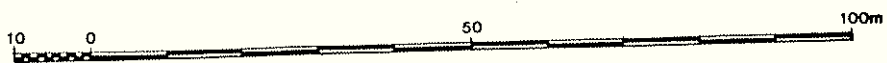


Fig 2

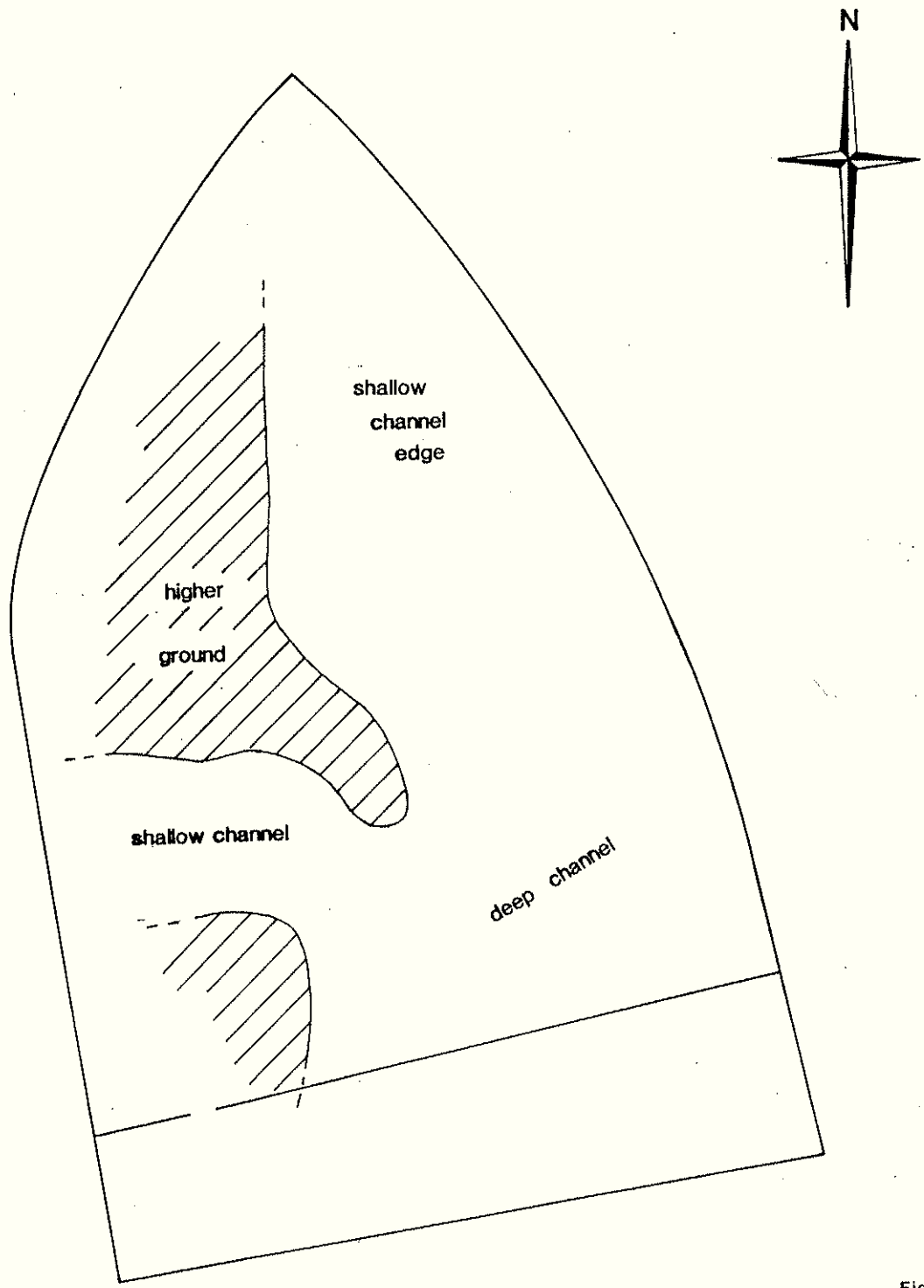


Fig 3

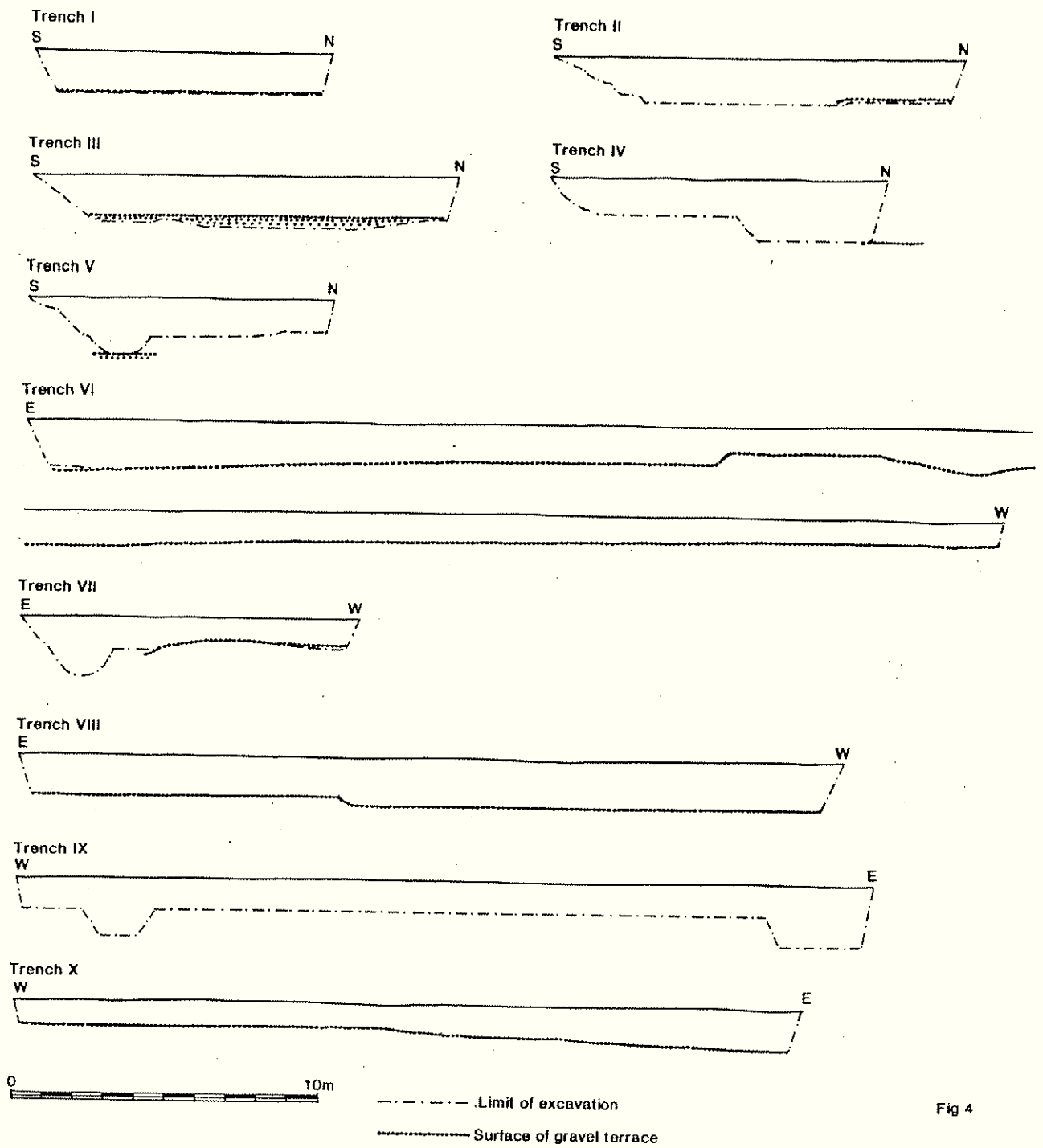


Fig 4

Section at north end of Trench II

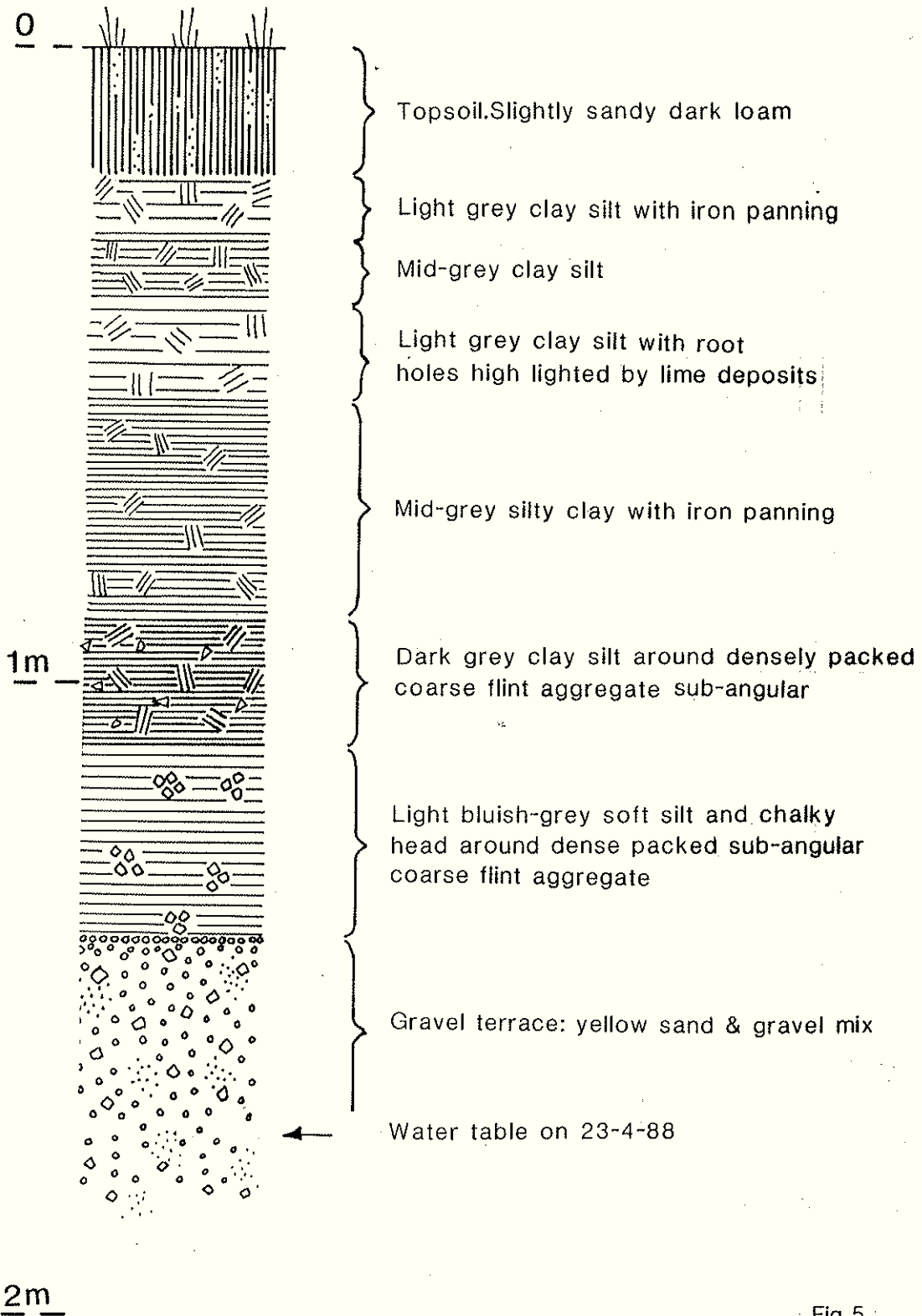


Fig 5