(AM)

# Land West of Hockley Lane Ettington, Warwickshire

Archaeological Evaluation

SP 2720 4890

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

February 1995

# LAND WEST OF HOCKLEY LANE, ETTINGTON, WARWICKSHIRE.

#### ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

NGR SP27204890.

SUMMARY.

The Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out a field evaluation at Hockley Lane, Ettington, Warwickshire on the behalf of Townfield Estates, in advance of a proposed residential development. The evaluation consisted of twelve trenches. Nearly all of the trenches in the larger field revealed medieval ditches, including a small number of probable early (from 10th century) ones. The trenches in the paddock again contained medieval features, mainly pits, and a possible pond. The trenches nearest the main road revealed evidence of a possible medieval buildings. Due to the wet weather and the rising water table, not all the features seen were investigated thoroughly, but finds were collected from their uppermost fills where possible.

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

Allocation of land west of Hockley Lane, Ettington for residential and associated uses (Ref H.Ett.1) has been proposed in the Stratford - on - Avon District Local Plan. The site of the proposed housing may lie within the area of medieval settlement of Ettington. The Warwickshire Museum has advised that the archaeological implications of the proposal could not be adequately assessed on the basis of the available information, therefore an archaeological evaluation was undertaken by the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) to a written scheme of investigation approved by Warwickshire Museum. The work took place from the 23rd of January to the 1st of February 1995.

## 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

An assessment of the archaeological background to the site was based upon consultation of the Warwickshire Sites and Monuments Record and historic maps held in the County Record Office. A list of the sources and copies of relevant maps is contained in Appendix 1.

Interpretation of the aerial photographic evidence has suggested that the site might lie within the medieval settlement of Ettington (SMR no. WA 6457) which is thought to have shrunken in post-medieval times. Evidence for this comes from the extent of ridge-and-furrow cultivation which can be traced (even though not currently extant) in most of the fields around the village but is absent from the proposed development site. However, there are

various other features in this area, including an apparent subrectangular? earthwork enclosure appearing as a parchmark on aerial photographs and four possible boundary features. These are not visible on the ground. The historic maps consulted did not aid their interpretation and added little to an understanding of the village's development.

Sites and finds in the immediate area are few but may have some significance. A single medieval glazed tile (WA 5664), a sherd of Roman Severn Valley ware (WA 2443) and a collection of flints "which may or may not be of archaeological significance" (WA 5665) were reported from the Telephone Exchange site on Hockley Lane (see Fig. 1). The remains of a medieval chantry chapel (WA 1287) lies about 100 m to the SE and may suggest the focus of medieval 'Upper Ettington' (as distinct from 'Lower Ettington' which had a church dedicated to St Thomas a Becket close to the present by-pass - WA 1264). The wider picture includes the Roman 'Foss Way' within a kilometre to the SE. Stray Roman coins have been found at the edge of the village (WA 1279 & 1280) but no evidence of settlement.

#### 3 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY.

The site is centred around national grid reference SP 27204890, in the parish of Ettington. The total area of the current proposal (Ref H.Ett 1) affects some 2.6 hectares, which is presently pasture.

The approximate height of the site is 103.82 mod at the southern end adjacent to the road (A422), and 100.15 mod at the northern end where the land adjoins a small stream. The land is fairly level without earthworks. The underlying geology of the site is clay of the Lower Lias series.

## 4 AIMS.

The principle aims of the evaluation were to establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the proposed development area, to determine the extent, condition, character, quality and date of any remains and to establish the environmental/ecofactual potential of any features or deposits. The trenches were positioned in particular to investigate the various features identified on aerial photographs.

#### 5 METHODOLOGY.

An approximate 2% sample of the area was investigated by excavating twelve evaluation trenches. Eleven were excavated using a JCB equipped with a 1.55 m wide ditching bucket. Where possible the trenches were 30 m long and were mechanically excavated to the first archaeological horizon. Eight trenches each 30 metres long were located within the large field West of

Hockley Lane, and two within the small paddock to the south. One 8 m trench was excavated behind the village hall, and a small trench  $(2 \times 3 \text{ m})$  was hand dug in the garden of Dairy Farm.

All trenches were planned at appropriate scales 1:100, 1:50 or 1:20, and sample section of the stratigraphy of each trench and sections of features were drawn at a scale of 1:20. Written recording was in accordance with the standard OAU method (Wilkinson 1992).

#### 6 RESULTS.

The following is a brief summary of the main features and deposits encountered within each trench. Information on all excavated contexts is presented in Table 1. A detailed report on the pottery is contained in Appendix 2.

TRENCH 1 (Fig. 2) 8.0 m long - aligned NE-SW

This trench was located behind the Village Hall, positioned to investigate possible street frontage settlement, and was restricted in its length by the location of modern services. Below the modern tarmac and carpark make-up was a deposit of tenacious dark grey clay loam [1/3], which possibly relates to the cottage gardens. This in turn overlay a dark grey clay, [1/4] which was 0.22 m thick and contained quantity of pottery dating to the 13th-14th centuries. It sealed all lower features.

A small gully [1/5] aligned E-W was seen in the southern end of the trench. This stopped just within the limits of trench and cut another very similar gully [1/15] aligned N-S. These were interpreted as possible beam-slots. [1/15] was seen to cut across three ditches, [1/9], [1/11] and [1/13]. These were all aligned NW-SE. A single sherd of pottery was retrieved from the fill of [1/11] and suggests a date in the 12th-13th century for its backfill. Also seen in this trench was a small pit [1/7], this was seen to cut the small gully [1/5]. No dating evidence was recovered from the fill.

TRENCH 2 (Fig. 3) 30 m long - aligned NW-SE

This trench was located within the small paddock. At the western end of this trench the topsoil consisted of material in-filling the "old farm yard" (circa 1950 - information from land owner). Two small post-med post holes/pits were seen in the western end of the trench. These were not excavated.

Four other pits were also encountered. Pit [2/7] was in the western half of the trench and contained the articulated skeletal remains of a sheep/goat, along with a few sherds of 12th and 14th century pottery. Pit [2/9] was seen in the centre of the trench

and contained large quantity of butchered ox/cow? bones.

It cut a large feature [2/6], which has been interpreted as a pond. The pond was seen to be at least 12 m wide and about 0.55 m deep. Pottery recovered from the uppermost fill [2/5] has been dated to the 14th century.

Two other pits were recorded in the eastern end of the trench. Pit [2/11] was excavated and a small amount of pottery was recovered dating to the 14th century. The other pit [2/13] was not excavated but finds were recovered from its uppermost fill. These date from the 11th to 14th centuries.

TRENCH 3 30 m long - aligned NW-SE.

This trench was also within the small paddock. Beneath the modern topsoil, two separate soil horizons were identified, possibly related to episodes of ploughing. The earlier, [3/2], was seen to be cut by the only feature seen in the trench, [3/6]. This ditch was 2.50+ m wide, aligned N-S, and was recorded in plan only due to the rising water level. No finds were recovered from any of the deposits encountered in this trench.

TRENCH 4
30 M long - aligned NE-SW.

This trench had a single feature within it - a ditch, [4/6], approx 0.85 m wide and aligned N-S. It was on the same alignment as [3/6] and might have been the same feature. This ditch seems to have been a boundary between adjoining land uses. To the east of [4/6] were two very distinct soil layers, neither of which appear to the west of the ditch.

It is possible that this ditch was related to the field boundary shown on the 1886 OS map, but if so, the projected alignment through to Trench 3 (illustrated on Fig. 1) would be wrong. Alternatively, it could mark an earlier boundary shown as a line of trees on the 1886 map. Its coincidence with the feature visible on aerial photographs is noteworthy.

TRENCH 5 (Fig. 3) 30 m long - aligned NE-SW

In this trench various soil layers were seen under 0.32 m of modern topsoil. Some 0.40 m of possible ploughsoils (layers [5/2] [5/3] [5/4]) overlay a dark grey silty clay [5/5]. This was interpreted as a possible occupation layer. Four gullies, two ditches and one pit were seen in this trench and were all sealed by [5/4] which yielded a handful of 13th-14th century sherds.

Due to water levels in the trench it was only possible to record

these features in plan, and recover finds from the top fills.

A large ditch [5/18] was seen in the southern end of the trench. It was at least 3.0 m wide, and aligned E-W. Pottery from the upper fill suggests a 13th-14th century infilling.

Another ditch [5/10] was seen in the middle of the trench. This was 4.0 m wide and pottery recovered from its top fill has been dated to the 10th-12th centuries.

A group of three gullies, two aligned E-W ([5/14] and [5/16]), and the other, [5/12], aligned NW-SE, were also seen. These features were planned before they disappeared below the water. No finds were recovered from their surfaces.

Further towards the north in the trench, a small gully [5/22] was seen. This again produced no dating evidence. At the far northern end of the trench was a small circular pit [5/8]. Although no dating was recovered from its fill it was clearly sealed by layer [5/4].

TRENCH 6 20 m long - aligned NW-SE

No archaeological features were seen in this trench, although a series of soil layers were recorded which were very similar to those seen in Trench 5, further to the east.

TRENCH 7 (Fig. 3) 30 m long - aligned NE-SW

Only two features were present in the southern end of the trench. These were [7/4] and [7/6]. Feature [7/4] was a large ditch, 4.0 m wide and aligned NW-SE, the upper fill of which contained quantity of animal bone. The other ditch, [7/6], was 2.40 m wide and 0.50 m deep, and aligned ESE-WNW. One piece of struck flint was recovered from its lower fill.

[7/4] cut a possible medieval ploughsoil, [7/2], and ditch [7/6], was clearly overlain by the ploughsoil.

TRENCH 8 (Fig. 4)
30 m long - aligned NE-SW

This trench was excavated on the slightly higher ground to the east, adjacent to Hockley lane. Below the 0.50 m of modern and ?medieval ploughsoils were seen three ditches and a pit.

Ditch [8/6] was the only feature excavated. It was located in the far north end of the trench. Only its southern edge was visible. It was 3.00+m wide and 0.35+m deep and a substantial sherd of pottery recovered from its upper fill suggests it is a 10th-12th century feature. The other two ditches seen in this

trench were both aligned NW-SE. They were recorded in plan only.

TRENCH 9 (Fig. 5) 2.0  $\times$  3.0 m - aligned NE-SW

This trench was hand excavated in the garden of Dairy Farm. Below some 0.30 m of garden soil, a small post-medieval pit [9/8] was seen. This cut into a re-deposited clay and rubble layer [9/7], which was 0.22 m thick. This layer overlay and abutted a wall foundation [9/12] aligned NE-SW. The wall was constructed of roughly hewn yellow Lias blocks two courses thick, faced on its eastern side and with a rubble core. The western side was not seen but probing with a steel rod outside the limits of the trench suggested that it was no more than 0.80 m wide. No dating was recovered from the wall or from its construction cut [9/13] (fill [9/14]).

A shallow ditch [9/5] was seen along the eastern edge of the trench. This was sealed by layer [9/7]. The feature was cut through a layer of gravely clay silt [9/15], which overlay the natural clay [9/16] and also the construction cut [9/13] for the wall.

Cut into the natural was a small pit [9/10], the fill of which [9/11] was cut by [9/13], Finds recovered from [9/11] have been dated to the 12th to 14th centuries.

TRENCH 10 30 m long - aligned NW-SE

This trench was located in the far north western corner of the site. No archaeological features were seen. A similar soil profile to those in Trenches 5 and 6 was recorded.

TRENCH 11 (Fig. 4)
30 m long - aligned NW-SE

In this trench five distinct soil layers were recorded, the earliest of which [11/4], sealed a ditch [11/7] and was cut by another ditch [11/9].

Ditch [11/7], the earlier of the two, was 3.0 m wide and aligned ENE-WSW. Due to the rising water level this trench was recorded in plan and section only. A sherd recovered from its top fill [11/8] has been dated to the 12th century.

The other ditch, [11/9] was 0.50 m wide and aligned NE-SW. No dating evidence was recovered from its surface.

TRENCH 12.
30 m long - aligned NE-SW

This trench was recorded as having the same soil profile as Trench 8 further to the northeast.

Only one feature was seen and recorded - ditch [12/4]. The ditch was 0.50 m wide and aligned NE-SW. Again due to the water levels in the trench it was not possible to excavate this feature. No dating evidence was recovered from its surface.

#### 7 CONCLUSIONS.

## 1 General

Archaeological features, the majority being ditches, were discovered in all the trenches with the exception of Trenches 6 and 10 in the NW corner of the site. Problems with drainage meant that many could not be excavated thoroughly and interpretations and dating remain insecure. However, it is noteable that, with the exception of modern finds (18th-20th centuries), the pottery recovered from the site dates broadly between the 10th and 14th centuries. This suggests that the activity here belongs to the medieval period and that the area was effectively abandoned thereafter.

### 2 Occupation fronting A422

Abundant 13th-14th century pottery from a lower soil layer in Trench 1 strongly indicates medieval occupation here. There appeared to be no surviving stratigraphy but several intercutting features, including possible constructional ones, were present. Finds from the features themselves were scarce although a 12th-13th century date may be suggested for the earliest occupation.

The stone wall in Trench 2 is of uncertain function. If, as seems likely, layer [9/15] represents a surface contemporary with it, it was set in quite a shallow foundation. Layer [9/15] yielded 13th-14th century pottery and sealed a pit containing a pottery assemblage spanning the 12th to 14th centuries. A medieval date for the wall therefore seems a reasonable assumption and, given the rudimentary construction techniques for minor houses at that time, there seems no reason to suppose it could not have been a domestic building.

# 3 10th-12th century occupation

Pottery dating to this period was sparse but its presence in large ditches in the NE area of the site ([8/6] & [5/10]) suggests (a) substantial ?boundary ditch(es) in this area, possibly associated with settlement.

It is unclear whether or not the two ditches are the same feature. They appear to be on slightly different alignments within a general NW-SE orientation, but this could be explicable in a single curving feature.

Two other large ditches may relate to this phase of occupation. [11/7] was stratigraphically early and yielded a 12th century sherd. Its alignment would suggest that it predated the possible parchmark enclosure. [7/6] was also stratigraphically early.

Pottery of this period was also recovered, in presumably residual contexts, from Trench 2. It is unclear whether this indicates occupation in this area.

## 4 Later Medieval occupation - 13th-14th centuries

The large number of ditches and gullies on the site are thought to belong to this and, to a limited extent, the post-medieval period. It is not clear to what extent they are peripheral features (field boundaries and paddocks) associated with the street frontage, or were part of a separate focus of settlement. The density of features in Trench 5 might support the suggestion of occupation in the northern part of the field, perhaps with an access from Hockley Lane. However, it is possible that the intensive ditch digging merely represents persistent efforts to drain the land. It can be noted that a dark possible occupation layer was recorded in this trench although no finds were Generally the quantity of finds was not retrieved from it. limited hand-excavation. great, but this may be due to Occupation in this area is therefore considered likely and perhaps continued directly from earlier occupation. This would explain the absence of evidence for medieval ploughing in this plot of land.

The ditches were on slightly varying alignments but, given the difficulty of determining precise alignments in trenches of narrow width, it does not seem useful to attempt a phasing based on ditch orientations. A general NW-SE and NE-SW orientation can be seen for most of them.

#### 5 The 'pond'

A possible pond was located in Trench 2. Medieval pottery spanning the 11th/12th to 14th/15th centuries was recovered from associated deposits although it is uncertain whether this is a guide to the date of the pond's use. Its absence from the first edition 6-Inch OS map (surveyed 1885) suggests that there was no trace of it then. A medieval date seems a possibility.

## 6 Cropmark 'enclosure'

No trace of a bank was found in Trenches 4 and 11 to indicate the cause of the parchmark visible on aerial photographs. However, ditches [4/6] and [11/9] were seen to define the enclosure quite closely. Both were of similar width but yielded no finds. No trace of occuaption came from within the enclosure. There was some suggestion that [4/6] demarcated cultivated land to the east from uncultivated land within the enclosure.

#### 7 Post-medieval land use

The ditches were largely abandoned in the post-medieval period although a few may have survived. It is uncertain whether the 19th century boundary dividing the field was defined by a ditch. Ditch [4/6] could be associated but is considered more likely to define a more ancient boundary surviving as a line of trees in the 19th century. It might have marked the eastern side of the cropmark enclosure.

It appears that medieval features were truncated by ploughing before the modern era. Several possible ploughsoils have been recorded, although admittedly soil profiles, particularly on clay, are difficult to interpret that specifically. However, it is notable that several distinct soil layers were observed, sometimes with pottery well within them (eg. [5/4]).

The current land use is pasture although it is not permanent and has been periodically ploughed and reseeded. It is possible that recent ploughing has destroyed any physical evidence for the enclosure bank.

MICK PARSONS & ANDY MUDD 7/2/95

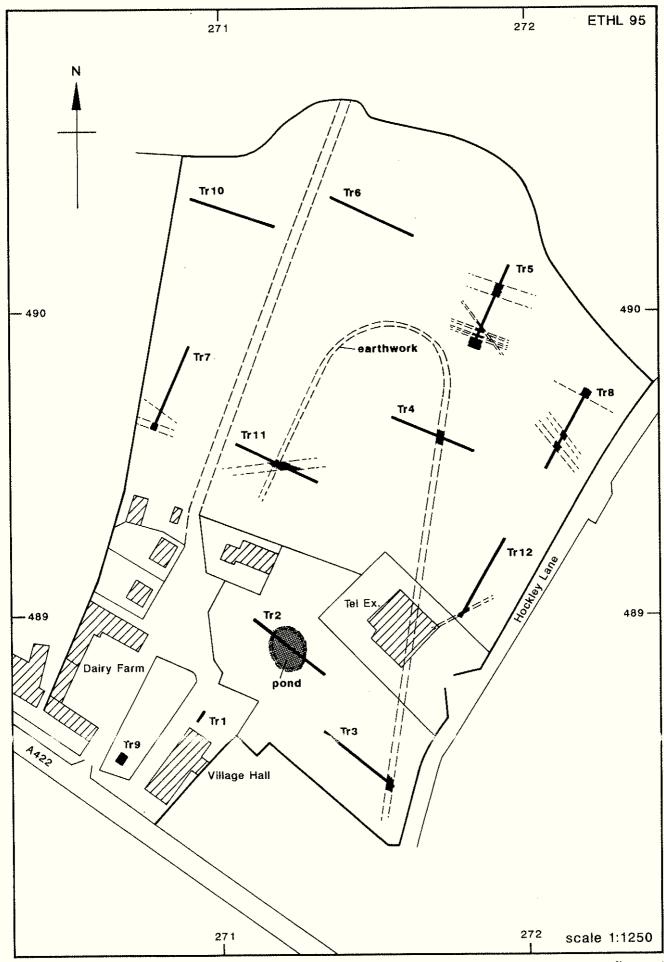
Table 1: Contextual Information

TR	CTX	TYPE	WIDTH m (LENGTH)	DEPTH	FINDS (NO.)	DATE	COMMENTS
1	1	TARMAC		0.04		MODERN	
	2	LAYER		0.25		MODERN	MAKE- UP
	3	LAYER		0.15		POST-MED	GARDEN SOIL ?
	4	LAYER		0.22	POT (64)	C 13-14	
	5	GULLY	0.36	0.24			BEAM-SLOT?
	6	FILL OF		0.24			
	7	PIT?	0.52 (1.75)	0.11			CUTS 1/5
	8	FILL OF 7		0.11			
	9	DITCH	0.88	0.20			CUT BY 1/15
	10	FILL OF		0.20	-		
	11	DITCH	0.80	0.48			CUT BY 1/15
	12	FILL OF		0.28	POT (1)	C 12-13	
	13	DITCH	1.20	0.30			CUT BY 1/15
	14	FILL OF		0.30			
	15	GULLY	0.20	0.14			BEAM-SLOT?
	16	FILL OF 15		0.14			
	17	FILL OF 18		0.40			
	18	CUT	0.70	0.40			TREE DIST
	19	NATURAL					
	20	FILL OF		0.18			
2	1	LAYER		0.50	POT GLASS	C 19	DUMPING IN 1950'S
	2	LAYER		0.40			BURIED TOPSOIL
	3	LAYER		0.10			PLOUGHSOIL?
	4	LAYER		0.16	POT (1) POT (1) POT (1)	C 11-12 C 13-14 C 14-15	PLOUGHSOIL?
	5	FILL OF		0.30	POT (1)	C 14	
	6	POND?	12.0	0.55+			
	7	PIT	0.54	0.42			SHEEP GRAVE
	8	FILL OF		0.42	POT (3) POT (3)	C 12 C 14	
	9	PIT	0.60	0.34			CUTS 2/6

TR	CTX	TYPE	WIDTH m (LENGTH)	DEPTH	FINDS (NO.)	DATE	COMMENTS
	10	FILL OF 9		0.34	POT (1)	C 14-15	LARGE QUANTITY OF BOVINE BONES
	11	PIT	0.32	0.18			
	12	FILL OF 11		0.18	POT (3)	C 14	
	13	PIT	0.80				
	14	FILL OF 13			POT (2)	C 11-14	
	15	PIT				POST-MED	
	16	PIT				POST-MED	
	17	NATURAL					
	18	FILL OF		0.20			
3	1	TOPSOIL		0.28			
	2	LAYER		0.20			PLOUGHSOIL?
	3	LAYER		0.30			PLOUGHSOIL?
	4	NATURAL					
	5	FILL OF					
	6	DITCH	2.50+				CUTS 3/2
4	1	TOPSOIL		0.25			
	2	LAYER		0.10+			PLOUGHSOIL?
	3	FILL OF 6		0.20+			
	4	LAYER		0.20			PLOUGHSOIL?
	5	NATURAL					
	6	DITCH	0.85	0.20+			ENCLOSURE BOUNDARY?
5	1	TOPSOIL		0.36		MODERN	
	2	LAYER		0.10			INTERFACE
	3	LAYER		0.18			PLOUGHSOIL?
	4	LAYER		0.12	POT (3)	C 13-14	PLOUGHSOIL?
	5	LAYER		0.18			OCCUPATION?
	6	LAYER		0.10			INTERFACE/BURIED SOIL
	7	NATURAL					
	8	PIT	1.10				
	9	FILL OF					
	10	DITCH?	4.00				?LATE SAXON FEATURE
	11	FILL OF			POT (1)	C 10-12	FO 5/10
	12	GULLY	0.30				
	13	FILL OF 12	0.30		:		
	14	GULLY	0.30				

TR	CTX	TYPE	WIDTH m (LENGTH)	DEPTH	FINDS (NO.)	DATE	COMMENTS
	15	FILL OF					
	16	GULLY	0.30				
	17	FILL OF 16					
	1.8	DITCH	1.50				
	19	FILL OF 18			POT (3) POT (1)	C 13-14 C 10-12	
	20	DITCH(ES	6.0?				POSSIBLE MULTIPLE FEATURES
	21	FILL OF 20			POT (2) POT (1)	C 12-13 C 13-14	
6	1	TOPSOIL		0.24			
	2	LAYER		0.26			PLOUGHSOIL?
	3	LAYER		0.32	POT (1)	C 14	PLOUGHSOIL?
	4	LAYER		0.20			PLOUGHSOIL?
	5	NATURAL					
7	1	TOPSOIL		0.20		MODERN	
	2	LAYER		0.14			PLOUGHSOIL?
	3	NATURAL					
	4	DITCH	4.50	0.70			
	5	FILL OF		0.70			
	6	DITCH	2.25	0.45			
	7	FILL OF		0.45			
8	1	TOPSOIL		0.30			
	2	LAYER		0.30			PLOUGHSOIL?
	3	LAYER		0.15			SUBSOIL
	4	NATURAL					
	5	FILL OF		0.40+	POT (1)	C 11-12	
	6	DITCH	3.00+	0.35+			? LATE SAXON FEATURE
	7	DITCH					UN EX
	8	DITCH					ON EX
	9	DITCH					ON EX
9	1.	TOPSOIL		0.20	POT (25)	C 18-19+	MODERN GARDEN SOIL
	2	LAYER		0.06	POT (2)	C 18	POST MED GARDEN SOIL
	3	ROOT HOLE?	0.12	0.10			
	4	FILL OF		0.10			
	5	DITCH	0.40	0.30			SEALED BY 9/7

TR	CTX	TYPE	WIDTH m (LENGTH)	DEPTH	FINDS (NO.)	DATE	COMMENTS
	6	FILL OF 5		0.30			
	7	LAYER		0.22			DUMPING
	8	PIT	0.65	0.18		POST-MED?	CUTS 9/7
	9	FILL OF 8		0.18			
	10	PIT	0.80	0.22			SEALED BY 9/15
	11	FILL OF 10		0.22	POT (2) POT (2)	C 12-13 C 14	
	12	WALL	0.65+	0.32			STONE WALL FOUNDATION
	13	WALL TRENCH		0.32			CUTS 9/10
	14	FILL OF 13					
	15	LAYER		0.14	POT (3)	C 13-14	LAID SURFACE?
	16	NATURAL					
10	1	TOPSOIL		0.30		MODERN	
	2	LAYER		0.26			PLOUGHSOIL?
	3	NATURAL					
11	1.	TOPSOIL		0.30			
	2	LAYER		0.24			PLOUGHSOIL?
	3	LAYER		0.28			PLOUGHSOIL?
	4	LAYER		0.34			PLOUGHSOIL?
	5	NATURAL					
	6	LAYER		0.20			
	7	DITCH	3.00				SEALED BY 11/4
	8	FILL OF			POT (1)	C 12	
	9	DITCH	0.80				POSSIBLE ENCLOSURE DITCH
	10	FILL OF 9					
12	1	TOPSOIL		0.25		MODERN	
	2	LAYER		0.30			PLOUGHSOIL?
	3	FILL OF					
	4	DITCH	0.50				
	5	NATURAL					



Trench location plan



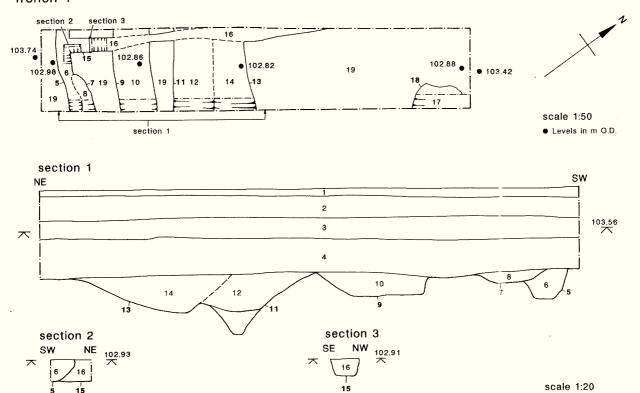
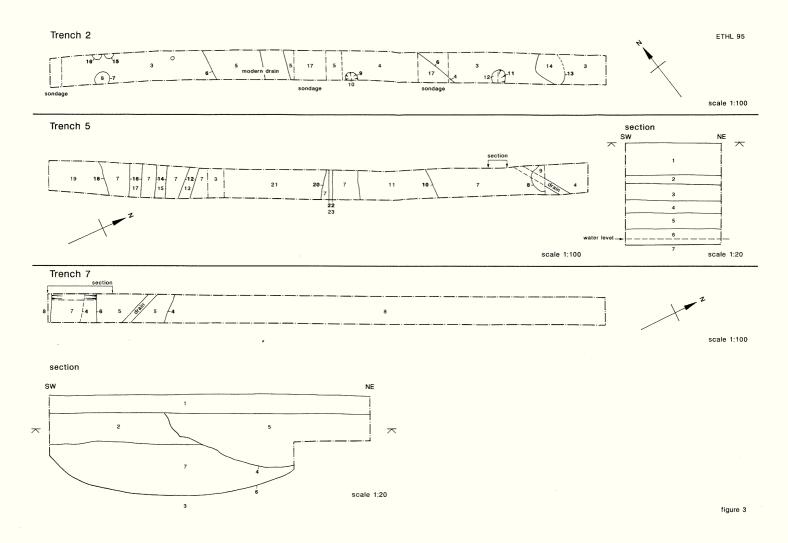


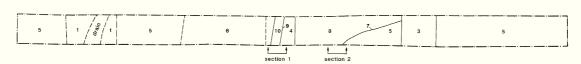
figure 2





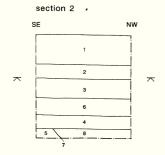
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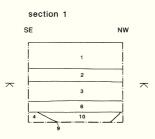






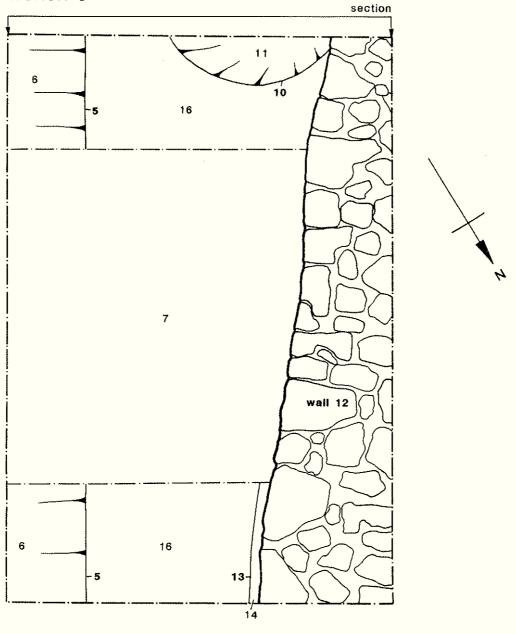
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scale 1:20





scale 1:20

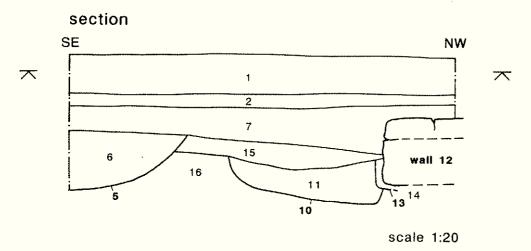


figure 5

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