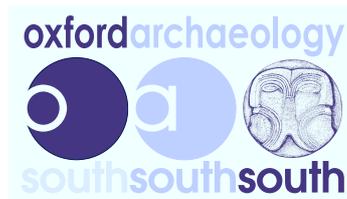


Winnall Fire Station Winchester Hampshire



Archaeological Evaluation Report



February 2010

Client: Hampshire County Council

Issue No: 1
OA Job No: 4478
NGR: SU 4928 3015

Client Name: Hampshire County Council

Client Ref No:

Document Title: Winnall Fire Station, Winchester, Hampshire

Document Type: Archaeological Watching Brief and Evaluation Report

Issue Number: 1

National Grid Reference: SU 4928 3015

Planning Reference: 09/00704/FUL

OA Job Number: 4478

Site Code: WINCMAY:411

Invoice Code: WIWIFSEV

Receiving Museum: Winchester City Museum

Museum Accession No: WINCMAY:411

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Date: 21st January 2010

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Date: 23rd February 2010

Document File Location W:PROJECTS\Hampshire HA\Winchester WN\10711
Winnall Fire Station\evREP.doc

Graphics File Location Servergo:/oaupubs
1_RtoZ*WINCMAY*WIWIFSEV*Winnall Fire Station,
Winchester*MD*25.01.10

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AND EVALUATION REPORT

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SUMMARY

Between October and November 2009, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief and field evaluation at Winnall Fire Station, Winchester, Hampshire (centred at NGR: SU 4928 3015) on behalf of Hampshire County Council. Both the watching brief and the evaluation observed an undated buried soil horizon overlying natural deposits. No other significant archaeology was observed.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

1.1.1 Between October and November 2009, OA carried out an archaeological watching brief and field evaluation at Winnall Fire Station, Winchester, Hampshire (centred at NGR: SU 4928 3015) on behalf of Hampshire County Council. The work was undertaken in respect of a proposal to redevelop the site, previously occupied by workshops belonging to the Fire Service.

1.1.2 A brief was set by the Winchester City Council Historic Environment Officer (Archaeology), Tracy Matthews, requiring that archaeological evaluation be undertaken prior to development of the site (WCCHEO 2009). OA produced a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) showing how it would meet the requirements of the brief (OA, 2009) – the methodology proposed was to maintain a watching brief during reduction of the ground level by the demolition contractors, and during removal of wall foundations. Following this, either sample excavation (if suitable areas of the natural chalk were exposed, with possible archaeology) or evaluation trenches were to be carried out. In the event, evaluation trenches were excavated.

1.2 Location, geology and topography

1.2.1 The development area is located on the eastern edge of Winchester (Fig. 1). The site lies immediately to the east of Easton Lane and is bounded to the west by Winnall Manor Road and to the south by Winnall Close. The site is at c. 55 m OD, and although it lies on the southern side of the valley of the River Itchen (the nearest channel of the river is c. 300 m to the north) the site itself slopes gently from north to south. The site was originally occupied by a number of industrial buildings with areas of hard standing between them. Two buildings, the Appliance Storage Room and the Paint Spray Shop, will be retained (see Fig. 2).

1.2.2 The geology of the site is Chalk (BGS Sheet 299) and soil investigations have shown the upper surface of the chalk at between 0.3 and 0.45 m below the current ground surface (WYG November 2008).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background of the site has been outlined in the brief provided by Winchester City Council (November 2008). This has been used in compiling the background below, together with Heritage Environment Record information supplied by Winchester City Council. Other sources used are referenced.
- 1.3.2 The historic Roman, Saxon and Medieval town of Winchester lies to the south-west of the site and Easton Lane, which borders the north-western boundary of the site, follows the line of a route which is Roman or possibly earlier in origin.
- 1.3.3 About 0.5km to the north-east, major excavations at Winnall Down (Fasham 1985) and Easton Lane (this site name referred to the area of the M3 interchange; Fasham et al. 1989) revealed evidence which can be summarised thus:
- Winnall Down – Neolithic circular feature of the fourth millennium BC; Later Bronze Age occupation with post-built circular and other structures; Early Iron Age enclosed settlement of sixth and fifth century BC date; Middle Iron Age open settlement; conjoined enclosures linked with a ditched track of late Iron Age origin, lasting into the 2nd century AD; traces of Bedieval field ditches
 - Easton Lane – Neolithic structure with a burial and conical pits; early Bronze Age cemeteries; Middle Bronze Age settlement and ditch system, Early Middle Iron Age open settlement, Romano-British burials and enclosures; ditched Saxon enclosure
- 1.3.4 A Bronze Age ring ditch lay 750m south-east of the site at St Swithun's School and three surviving round barrows lie a further 500km to the south-east. Iron Age and Roman features were observed 600 m south-west of site during the building of the Winnall housing estate, and Roman burials were found close to the Winnall I Saxon cemetery (see below).
- 1.3.5 Opposite the site, at the Mildmay Veterinary Clinic, investigations showed a number of ditches and postholes cut into the chalk, interpreted as a late prehistoric settlement. Roman pottery was also found.
- 1.3.6 In summary, the Roman and earlier evidence shows the site to be within a well-used landscape and situated along a route which linked settlement and areas of activity in the Roman period but also probably in the Iron Age and earlier. Roman burials exist along the route.
- 1.3.7 The site is very close to two known Anglo-Saxon cemeteries. Winnall I was discovered during construction of the railway in the late 19th century and its location is believed to be about 150 m south west of the site, just north of Easton Lane; Winnall I was a pagan cemetery dating to the 6th century. Winnall II is thought to be a later (Christian) cemetery, and is only 150 metres east of the site under discussion here. At least one Anglo-Saxon burial is known from St Giles Hill, 1km south of the site, and an enigmatic Saxon enclosure was excavated at Easton Lane (Fasham et al. 1989: 151).

- 1.3.8 The general density of Saxon finds in the Itchen valley area, many probably from cemeteries, is now being shown by metal detector finds to be far higher than previously thought (Biddle and Kjolbye-Biddle 2007: 208-211).
- 1.3.9 A spread of medieval pottery was found east of the site, close to the line of the M3 motorway.
- 1.3.10 Most of the area remained agricultural land until the construction of 20th century suburbs brought it within the city.

2 EVALUATION AIMS

2.1 *The general aims of the investigation were;*

- 2.1.1 To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the area designated for archaeological evaluation.
- 2.1.2 To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present.
- 2.1.3 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features.
- 2.1.4 To increase our understanding of this area of the hinterland of an internationally important historic city.
- 2.1.5 The evaluation results will enable informed decisions to be made on a strategy for mitigating the potential negative affects of the proposed design on the archaeological resource identified,

2.2 *Specific aims of both the watching brief and the evaluation are;*

- 2.2.1 To seek evidence for how the site fitted into the prehistoric landscapes known from the significant amount of previous archaeological work in the area (see Section 3).
- 2.2.2 To look for evidence of Roman activity, with the presence of burials being possible, alongside the Roman route which is now Easton Lane.
- 2.2.3 To determine whether Anglo-Saxon burials, or any other Anglo-Saxon activity, took place at the site.
- 2.2.4 To find evidence of any post Anglo-Saxon use of the site.
- 2.2.5 To make available the results of the investigation.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 **Scope of fieldwork**

The watching brief

- 3.1.1 An archaeological watching brief was maintained during the removal of the concrete floors of the demolished buildings, the hard standing between the buildings affected by the development and the reduction in ground level down to impact level (this included the removal of foundations where necessary). This material was removed under archaeological supervision using a tracked excavator fitted with a 1.5 m bucket fitted with guarded teeth.

The evaluation trenches

- 3.1.2 The evaluation consisted of three trenches, one 5 m long, one 10 m long and the third 15 m long, all measuring 2 m wide, located within the footprint of the northern range of buildings (Fig. 2). The overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision by a mechanical excavator fitted with a 2 m wide toothless grading bucket. Excavation proceeded in spits down to either the top of the underlying natural geology or to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon, whichever was encountered first.

3.2 **Fieldwork methods and recording**

- 3.2.1 The trenches were cleaned by hand and any revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds and if possible, environmental samples. A plan showing the extent of the watching brief, the location of the evaluation trenches and the location of any sections, deposits or features was drawn at a scale of 1:100 (Fig. 2) and any recorded sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20. The trenches, any features and the recorded sections were photographed using digital photography, colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OA Field Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

3.3 **Finds**

- 3.3.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and bagged by context.

3.4 **Palaeo-environmental evidence**

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

3.5 **Presentation of results**

- 3.5.1 The results of the evaluation are presented by a written description of the features and deposits observed, followed by an overall discussion and interpretation.

4 **RESULTS: GENERAL**

4.1 **Soils and ground conditions**

4.1.1 There was evidence of the original topsoil having been stripped or reduced in height within the footprint of both the central and northern range of buildings. This was probably done as part of the original building work. The foundations for the internal walls and other features such as the inspection pits and the hydraulic hoist had further disturbed areas within the northern range. The evaluation trenches were excavated down to undisturbed natural deposits throughout their lengths. Ground conditions were dry during the course of the investigation and groundwater was not encountered.

4.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits

4.2.1 No archaeologically significant deposits were encountered during the course of the investigation.

5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

5.1 Description of deposits

The watching brief

5.1.1 This was undertaken during the ground reduction within the footprint of the new development and was combined with the breaking up and removal of the concrete floor slabs for the demolished buildings. An underground fuel tank and its associated enclosure had been removed during the demolition and the stratigraphy exposed was also recorded.

5.1.2 The underlying natural, a blocky chalk with sub-angular flint inclusions (4) was encountered at a depth of between 0.4 m and 0.5 m below the current ground level (Fig. 2, Site Plan and Fig. 4, Section 1). Overlying this was a 0.15 m deep layer of fractured chalk with a pale brown clay silt washed into the void (3), and overlain by a 0.28 m deep layer of light grey brown clay silt (2). Both of these deposits were exposed both within the void left by the underground tank and during the ground reduction within the northern range of buildings. To the north of the demolished building layer 2 was overlain by a 0.2 m layer of dark grey-brown clay loam (1).

5.1.3 Within the footprint of the buildings two rectangular brick lined pits each measuring 7 m in length, 1.5 m wide and 1.5 m deep were observed (Fig. 2). The presence of lighting fittings and steps suggest that they were inspection pits associated with the workshops. A brick-built cellar measuring 7 m by 5 m was also observed within the northern range of buildings. The presence of a flue and pipes suggests that this was a boiler room. Within the footprint of the demolished ranges of buildings the soil horizon 2 was covered by a deposit of mixed chalk rubble and building debris (6), measuring 0.2 m deep at the western edge of site, increasing in depth towards the east. Within the central and southern ranges of demolished buildings the depth of this deposit was such that the underlying deposits were not exposed. The concrete floor slabs (5) had been cast directly upon this deposit.

- 5.1.4 As part of the ground reduction concrete foundations for some of the internal walls were also removed.

The evaluation trenches

Trench 10

- 5.1.5 This was located between the two inspection pits observed during the watching brief phase (Fig. 2). NB. The numbering of the trenches from ten and the use of context numbers from 1000 has been used to differentiate the trenches from the watching brief, therefore trench nos 1-9 are unused.
- 5.1.6 The underlying natural chalk (1000) was encountered at a depth of 0.5 m below the original floor level of the buildings. Exposed within the surface of this deposit was a semi-circular feature (1001), approximately 1.8 m in diameter (Fig. 3, Plan 10). This measured 0.7 m deep and was filled by a grey-brown clay silt (1002). It was covered by a layer of mixed blocky chalk and building debris (1003) measuring 0.25 m in depth.

Trench 11

- 5.1.7 This was located between the two inspection pits observed during the watching brief (Fig. 2).
- 5.1.8 The area had been stripped down to the underlying natural chalk (1100) during the course of the ground reduction (Fig. 3, Plan 11). The surface of this deposit was reduced by a further 0.08 m within the area of the trench in order to determine if it was an in-situ deposit rather than redeposited material (Fig. 4, Section 10).

Trench 12

- 5.1.9 This was sited across the eastern end of the demolished northern range of buildings (Fig. 2).
- 5.1.10 The natural chalk (1200) was encountered at a depth of 0.5 m below the hardstanding to the east of the northern range of buildings. Showing within the surface of this deposit was a semi-circular feature (1201) (Fig. 3, Plan 12). This was an irregular bowl shaped depression approximately 0.9 m diameter by 0.2 m deep filled by a grey-brown silt with chalk flecking (1202) (Fig. 4, Section 12). Also cutting this deposit were the foundation trenches for the concrete foundations for the eastern and internal walls for this range of buildings. These were overlain by a 0.4 m deep layer of modern made ground composed of chalk and construction debris (1203). The tarmac hardstanding layer had been laid directly on top of this deposit.

5.2 Finds

- 5.2.1 Numerous fragments of 20th-century brick and roofing tile were observed within the deposits of made ground (1, 6, 1003 and 1203). Fragments of metal pipe and window

glass were also recorded. No other dating evidence was recovered from any of the other deposits.

6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Reliability of field investigation

6.1.1 The watching brief was conducted throughout the period of ground reduction and any deposits exposed were closely examined to determine their archaeological potential. The trenches represents a trial trenching sample of 6% which is considered to be a good representation of the site as a whole, while the location of the trenches provided a sample across the width of the proposed development area. The stratigraphy observed was similar throughout the trenches suggesting that it would be similar within the unexcavated area. The underlying natural was exposed throughout the length of the trenches, showing that there were no earlier buried archaeological horizons.

6.2 Overall interpretation

Summary of results

- 6.2.1 Layers 4, 1000, 1100 and 1200 are all part of the same underlying natural chalk deposits. Outside the footprint of the demolished buildings (and also at the western edge of the northern range of buildings) this was overlaid by a mixture of weathered chalk and washed in silts, layer 3. Features 1001 and 1201 both represent probable tree throw holes which were not datable. Layer 2 was a buried soil horizon, possibly the original topsoil. This was observed outside the footprint of the demolished buildings, but was only seen in truncated form at the western edge of the central and northern building ranges. It is probable that the topsoil was stripped within the footprint of the buildings prior to their construction.
- 6.2.2 Layers 6, 1003 and 1203 are deposits of modern build-up composed of redeposited chalk and construction debris. It is likely that the chalk was generated during the excavation of the foundations for the original buildings and was used, together with waste material from their construction, to raise the internal level of the buildings in order to provide a level base for the casting in situ of the concrete floor slabs, 5.
- 6.2.3 No evidence for any activity, either in the form of features, deposits or residual finds, predating the post-medieval (20th century) was observed during the course of either the watching brief or evaluation.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i> Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	Layer	-	0.2 m - 0.25 m	Landscaping layer of topsoil and turf	Iron, tile, glass	C20th
2	Layer	-	0.2 m - 0.3 m	Buried soil horizon, probable original topsoil	-	-
3	Layer	-	0.12 m	Transition layer of weathered chalk	-	-
4	Layer	-	> 0.8 m	Natural blocky chalk	-	-
5	Layer	-	0.15 m - 0.2 m	Concrete floor slabs for the demolished buildings	-	C20th
6	Layer	-	0.2 m - > 0.4 m	Modern made ground-levelling layer under the concrete floor slabs	Brick, iron, glass, plastic	C20th
1000	Layer	-	> 0.2 m	Natural chalk	-	-
1001	Cut	1.4 m	0.7 m	Tree throw hole	-	-
1002	Fill	1.4 m	0.7 m	Fill of tree throw hole	-	-
1003	Layer	-	> 0.25 m	Modern made ground same as Layer 6	Brick, iron, glass	C20th
1100	Layer	-	> 0.2 m	Natural chalk	-	-
1200	Layer	-	> 0.2 m	Natural chalk	-	-
1201	Cut	1.4 m	0.7 m	Tree throw hole	-	-
1202	Fill	1.4 m	0.7 m	Fill of tree throw hole	-	-
1203	Layer	-	> 0.25 m	Modern made ground, same as Layer 6	Brick, iron, glass	C20th

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

Biddle, M and Kjolbye-Biddle, B 2007 'Winchester: from Venta to Wintancaestir', in Gilmour (ed.) *Pagans and Christians – from Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, BAR (IS) 1610, pp 189-214.

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Fasham, P J, Farwell, D E, and Whinney, R J B 1989 *The archaeological site at Easton Lane, Winchester*, Hampshire Field Club Monograph 6, Gloucester.

IFA 1992, *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations*

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WCCHEO, 2009 Winchester City Council, *Brief for Archaeological Field Evaluation, new Fire Station at Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service Workshop, Winnall Manor Road, Winchester, CWC867* (Tracy Matthews).

WYG, November 2008, *Ground Condition Assessment Report – Winnall Fire Station*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Winnall Fire Station, Winchester, Hampshire

Site code: WINCMAY:411

Grid reference: SU 4928 3015

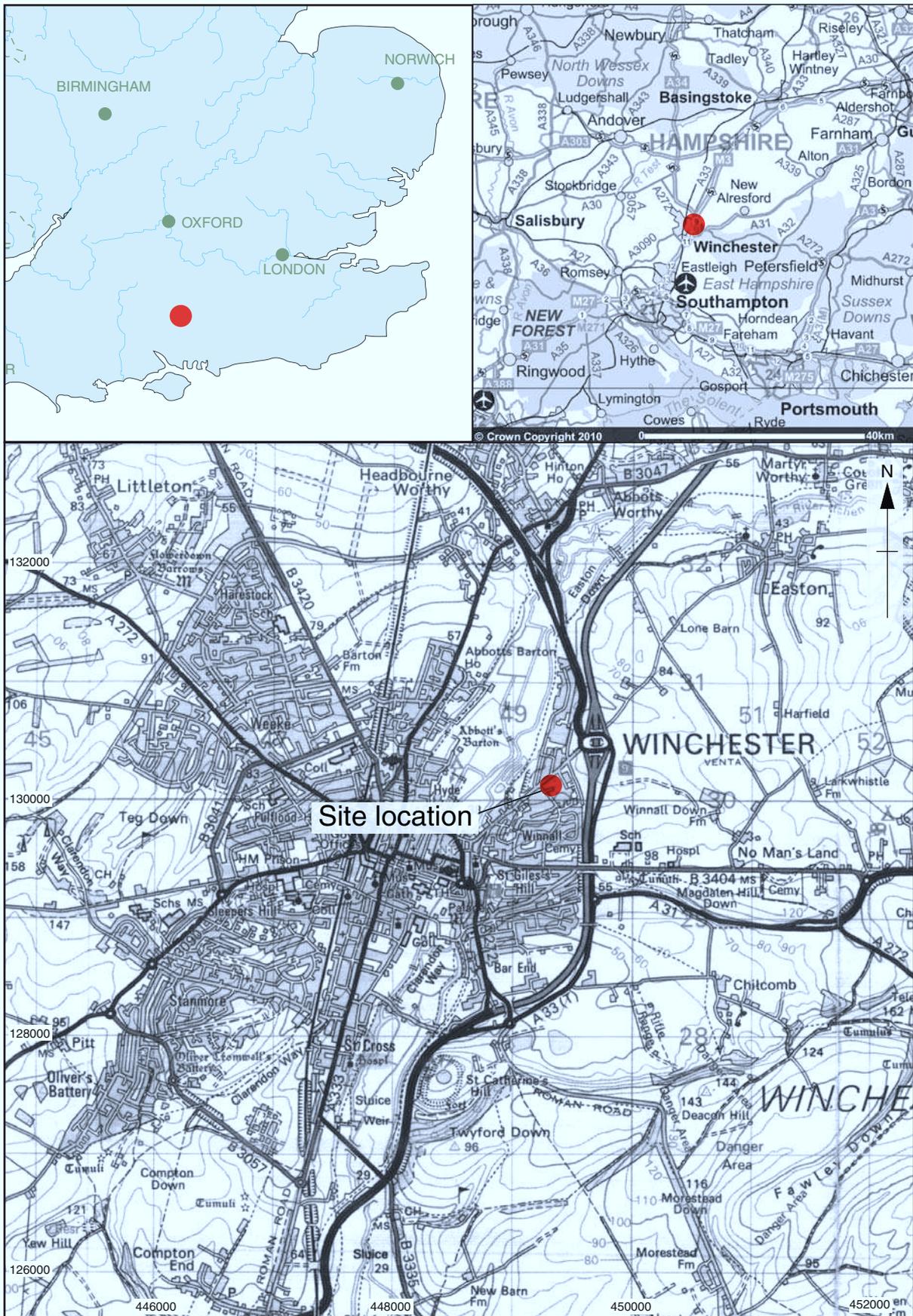
Type of investigation: Watching brief on the ground reduction within the footprint of the development and 3 machine dug trenches, one 5 m long, one 10 m long and the 3rd 15 m long, all 2 m wide

Date and duration of project: October and November 2009, 2 weeks on site

Area of site: 8000 m²

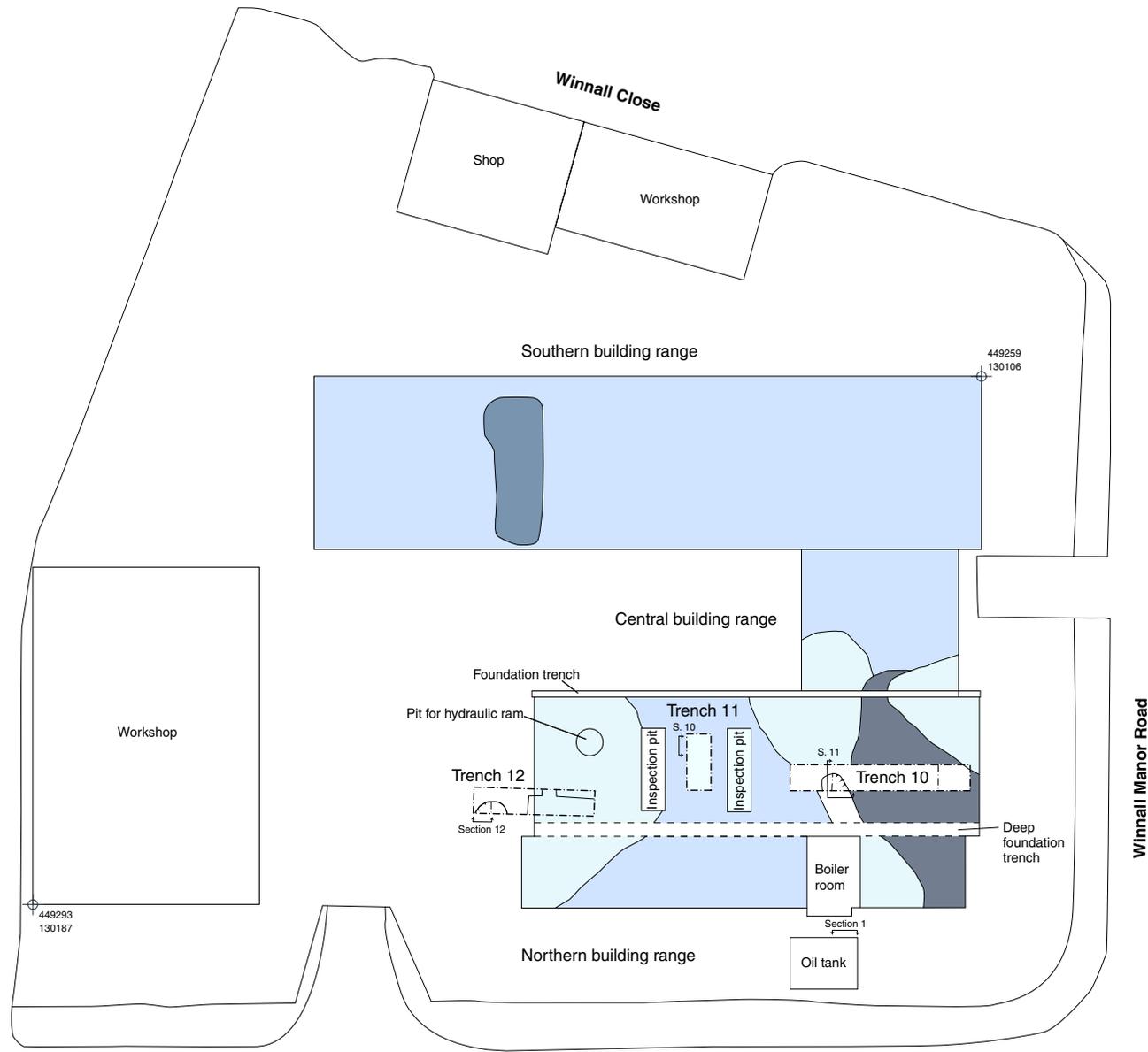
Summary of results: The investigation observed two tree throw holes and an undated buried soil horizon overlying natural chalk. No significant archaeology was encountered.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Winchester City Museum in due course, under the following accession number: WINCHAY:411

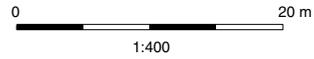


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Figure 1: Site location



- Base of topsoil (2)
- Chalk (3)
- Made ground (6)
- Concrete



Easton Lane

Winnall Manor Road

Figure 2: Site plan

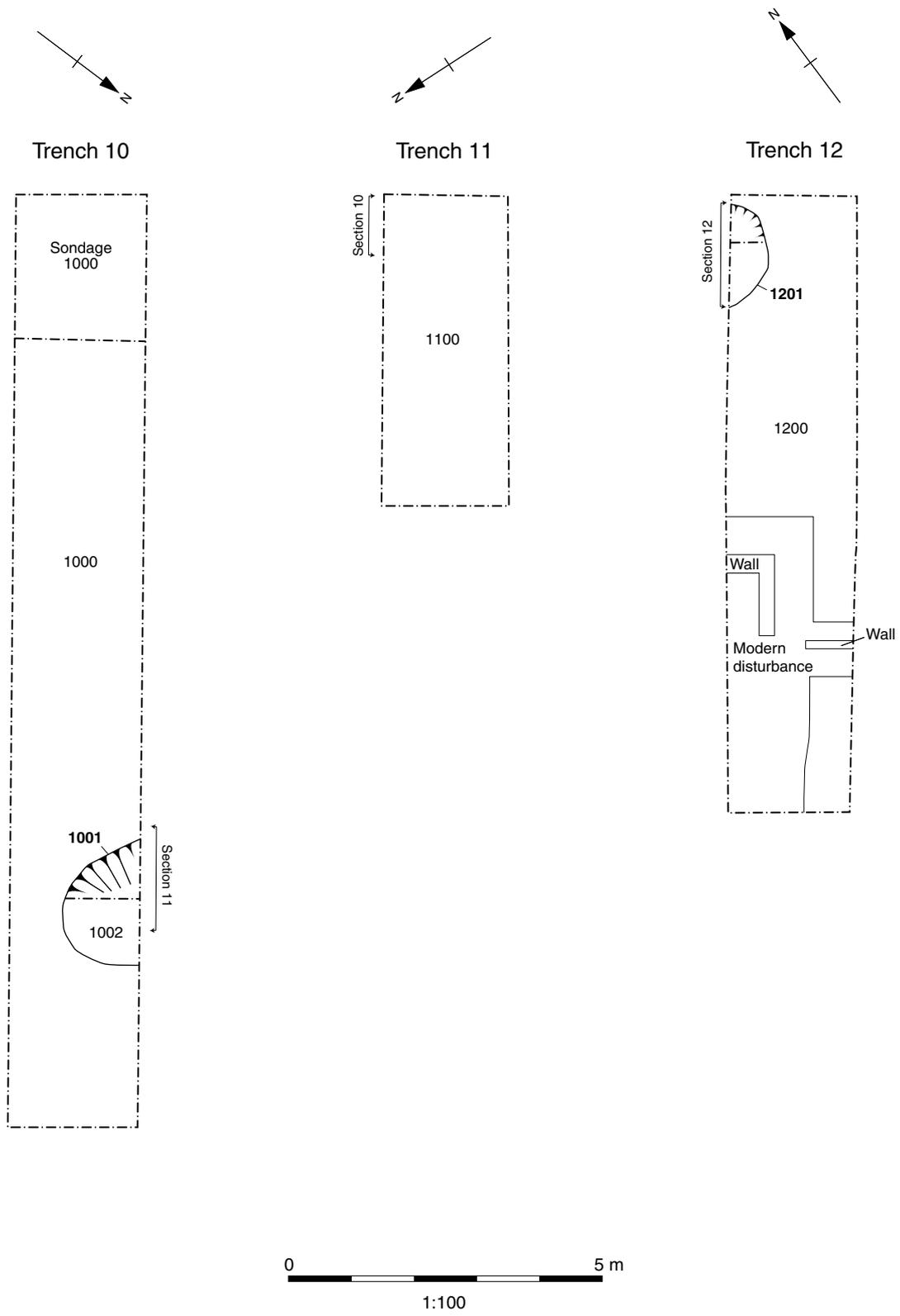


Figure 3: Trench plans

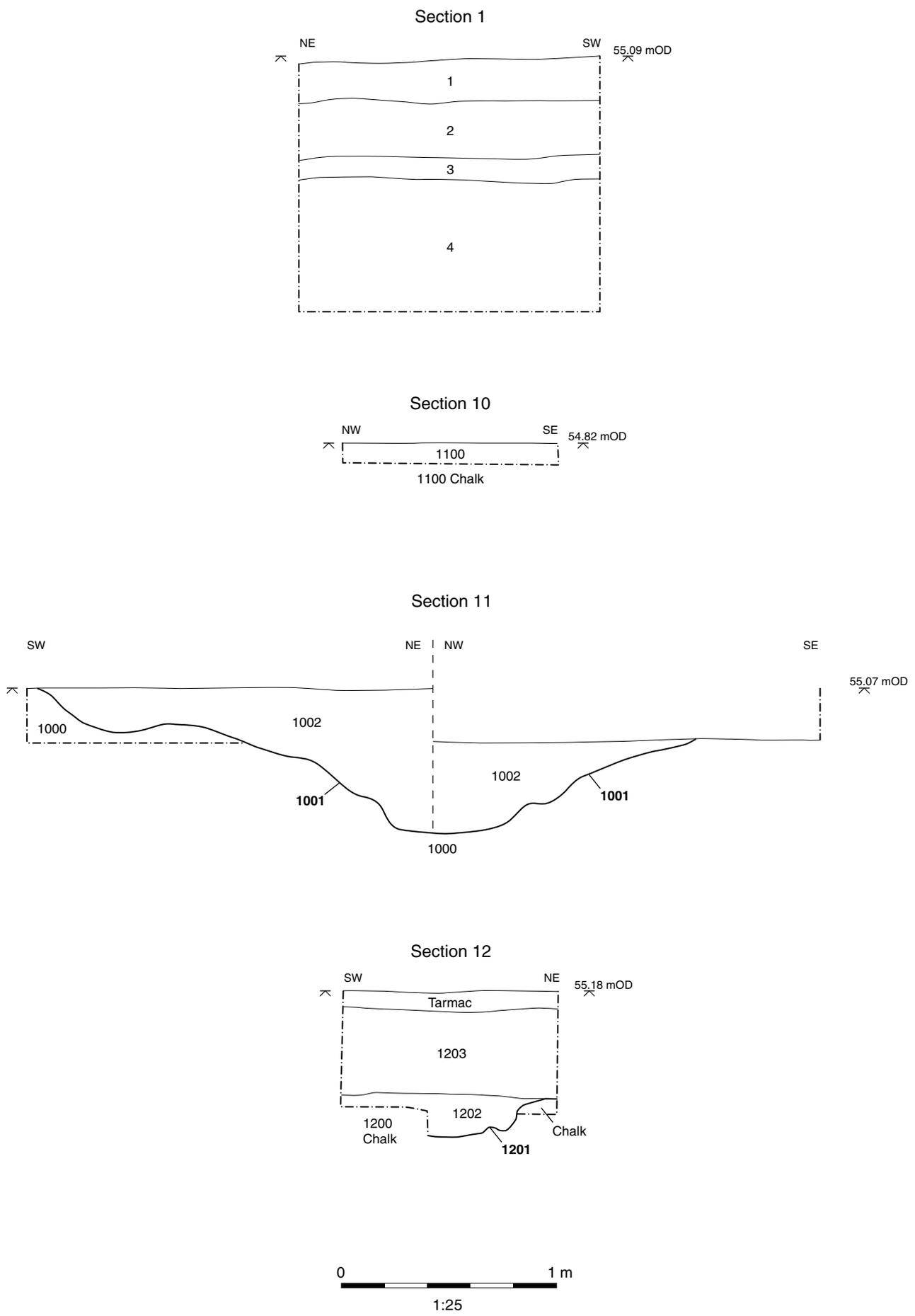


Figure 4: Sections



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