

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF A PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT  
AT THE COLDSTREAM DAIRY, MILBORNE ST ANDREW, DORSET  
(NGR SY80659780)**

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## 1. SUMMARY

*The archaeological evaluation of a proposed redevelopment at the Coldstream Dairy, Milborne St Andrew, involved the machine excavation of three trenches on the fringes of the site. Two trenches (1 and 2) were located in the north-west corner at the rear of the dairy, with a single trench (3) located on the east side. Trenches 1 and 2 contained archaeological features likely to be of late Iron Age/Romano-British date, predominantly consisting of a sequence of linear features all east to west aligned. It was not possible to hand-excavate any substantial depth of these deposits due to their identification at around 1.50m below the current ground surface, largely sealed by relatively modern (post 1929) infilling. Sufficient artefacts were recovered from the upper fills of some features to enable an informed opinion as to their likely nature and date. Any potential disturbance to these deposits from the redevelopment of the site is largely dependant on the nature and depth of future groundworks. There were no archaeological deposits present in Trench 3, although there is the potential for the survival of deposits, as this area has not been subjected to extensive truncation during the initial construction of the dairy and subsequent groundworks. The presence of a number of service trenches may, however, have removed some evidence. The evaluation has confirmed the likelihood that archaeological deposits have possibly been removed from a large part of the dairy complex, with survival limited to the areas around the fringes of the site.*

## 2. INTRODUCTION

**2.1** This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation of a proposed redevelopment at the Coldstream Dairy, Milborne St Andrew, Dorset (Planning Application NDDC 2/96/0020/39). The location of the site is shown on Fig. 1.

**2.2** The work has been commissioned by Paul Michelmore Associates on behalf of clients, and carried out by AC *archaeology* during early July 1996. The work was requested by NDDC Planning Department, as advised by the County Archaeological Officer as part of the planning condition for the site. This evaluation constitutes Stage 2 of an agreed written scheme of investigation.

**2.3** The proposed development area occupies the southern side of a prominent hilltop, which is part of the North Dorset Downs, at around 100mOD. It overlooks the Milborne Brook, with the underlying geology consisting of chalk.

**2.4** This evaluation follows on from a detailed archaeological and historical largely desk-based study (Cox *et al* 1996), which has identified the potential for archaeological deposits being present in the area, although the level of preservation is likely to have been severely reduced as a result of landscaping during the initial construction of the dairy complex.

### 3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 The principal archaeological interest in the site was the discovery in 1929, during the original construction of the dairy, of an extensive Iron Age and Romano-British settlement close to the proposed redevelopment area (Pleydell-Railston 1930). The archaeological deposits comprised a number of pits, hearths, masonry footings and a small cemetery containing at least six human burials. Artefacts recovered included Bronze Age, late Iron Age and Romano-British pottery, animal bone, flint implements and oyster shells. The date range for the site was assessed to be c. 50BC - 4th-century AD.

3.2 Three additional sites are recorded within 500m of the dairy, all are cropmarks of possible round barrow sites; one lies c. 300m to the north of the present study area (DCC SMR Milborne St Andrew 48: NMR SY89NW; 87), and two lie 200m and 350m south-west (DCC SMR Milborne St Andrew 45 and 46: NMR SY89NW; 56A and 56B).

### 4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 The evaluation comprised the machine excavation of three trenches, with their positions shown on Fig. 2. The work conformed to a specification provided by AC *archaeology* which was approved by the Dorset County Council Archaeological Officer. The specification is included with this report as Appendix 1. There were minor on-site amendments to the specification; Trench 2 was moved further to the south-west to avoid an area of concrete hard standing, and Trench 3 was shortened due to the presence of service trenches within that area.

4.2 The trenches were positioned in areas likely to be affected by the proposed redevelopment, where there was the greatest likelihood of good preservation of deposits. This meant the positioning of trenches on the fringes of the site, in areas unlikely to have been adversely affected by original and subsequent building work and terracing.

4.3 Topsoil and modern overburden were removed by mechanical excavator. The presence of modern hard standing and large concrete blocks necessitated the use of a toothed bucket, with the trenches then subsequently hand-cleaned. During the initial machining, the clarity of features was generally poor as a result of the use of a toothed bucket and the undulating nature of the modern deposits.

4.4 It was not possible to hand excavate any archaeological features due to the depth of trenches being below the safe working limit. Work was therefore limited to cleaning, recording and the collection of surface artefacts to confirm the date of deposits.

4.5 All recording was carried out using the AC *archaeology* recording system, comprising written, photographic and graphic records.

## 5. RESULTS

The evaluation confirmed the presence of archaeological features in Trenches 1 and 2, with detailed plans and sections included as Figs. 3 - 5. There were no features present in Trench 3. A summary of each trench is given below in Sections 5.1 - 5.3.

### 5.1 Trench 1

This trench was aligned north-east to south-west, with a length of 19m and a varying width (1.00-1.50m) due to the use of a narrower bucket to remove modern rubble. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.50m. The sequence of deposits is shown on Figs. 3 and 4 and is described below.

#### *5.1.1 Iron Age/Romano-British or uncertain*

Prehistoric activity in this trench is represented by a single, approximately east to west aligned, probable ditch (F127), which was partly truncated by machine. It had a width of around 3m and an excavated depth of 600mm, but was not bottomed. The profile in the exposed section showed as initially moderately sloping on its north side, with the southern edge truncated by modern activity. The ditch contained at least eight fills, and was cut by a modern service trench (F109) in its centre. The majority of fills appear to be silted from the north side of the ditch, although the truncation by modern disturbance on the south side may have masked a similar effect. All the fills were composed of very light greyish-brown chalky silts containing varying proportions of pea grit. The fills are all likely to have been formed as a result of natural silting and weathering processes over a prolonged period, rather than deliberate deposition, as there were no obvious dumped deposits usually associated with nearby settlement activity. Artefacts recovered from cleaning the exposed surface include worked flint and a single piece of late Iron Age or Romano-British, Black Burnished Ware pottery.

There was a second probable east to west aligned ditch (F115) appearing to cut F127 towards its south side, with its complete profile revealed in section. This showed as moderate to steep sided onto a flattish base, with width of 2.25m and depth of 700mm. Its fill (context 114), was composed of a light yellowish brown chalky silt containing occasional flint fragments. No artefacts were revealed during cleaning.

#### *5.1.2 Modern*

The extent and depth of modern activity is shown on Figs. 3 and 4. There are modern cut features, including a large pit towards the south-west end of the trench (F105) and two service trenches (F107 and F109), which have certainly removed and disturbed archaeological deposits. The large pit (F105) was excavated by machine to a depth of 1.50m, but the presence of large concrete blocks meant it was not possible to reveal its full depth.

Other modern deposits present in this trench were layers associated with the modern hardstanding currently occupying this area of the site, including the tarmac and hardcore layers, which were overlying a redeposited chalk and soil layer (context 129), likely to have been a temporary surface prior to the deposition of the later tarmac and hardcore.

### 5.2 Trench 2

This trench was north-west to south-east aligned, with a length of 14m and a varying width (1.00-1.50m) due to the use of a narrower bucket to remove modern rubble. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.60m. The sequence of deposits is shown on Figs. 3 and 5 and described below.

### 5.2.1 Iron Age/Romano-British or uncertain

F208 was an approximately east to west aligned ditch around 1.50m. It remained unexcavated to its full depth due to its presence below the safe working limit. Its principal fill (context 207) was composed of a dark brown silty clay containing occasional natural flint fragments and nodules and rare chalk fragments. Artefacts recovered from the hand cleaning of the ditch were a small fragment of late Iron Age or Romano-British pottery and worked and burnt flint.

Immediately to the south-east of F208, was a parallel, narrow gully (F210) with width of 300mm. It again remained unexcavated, with its fill (context 209) composed of a dark brown silty clay containing occasional flint fragments and rare chalk fragments. No artefacts were recovered during the surface cleaning.

To the north-west of F208 was a shallow, probable post-hole (context 212), only visible in the south-east facing section. The profile showed as moderately sloping onto a rounded base, with width of 400mm and depth of 250mm. Its fill was composed of a dark brown silty clay containing rare flint fragments and rare pea grit. No artefacts could be shown to be present.

### 5.2.2 Modern

At the north-west end of the trench, the continuation of pit F105 from Trench 1 was present (allocated context F203 for this trench). It was again not possible to determine its full depth due to the presence of large concrete blocks within the fill.

Throughout the remainder of the trench, the modern depositional sequence is described in Table 1 below.

Context	Depth below ground surface	Description	Interpretation
202	0 - 300mm	Mixed greyish-brown silty clay containing frequent flint and gravel, frequent tarmac, occasional brick	Foundation layer and modern tarmac surface
204	300 - 900mm	Very mixed layer of dark brown silty clay and large dumps of redeposited chalk	Probable make up layer for levelling area to make flat hardstanding
205	940 - 1000mm	Very dark greyish-brown humic silty clay containing rare chalk and natural flint fragments	Buried land surface / leaf litter horizon of likely 20th-century date
206	1000 - 1500mm	Very dark brown silty clay containing occasional natural flint fragments and rare chalk fragments	Buried topsoil layer of 20th-century date, sealed by recent infilling
211	1500mm +	Weathered chalk	Upper levels of natural chalk bedrock

Table 1 : The Modern Depositional Sequence for Trench 2

## 5.3 Trench 3

This trench was positioned on the east side of the present dairy complex (Fig. 2), immediately above where the original ground surface has been cut away to form a level hardstanding. It was positioned in an area known to contain buried electricity, water and gas services, with its planned length of 15m consequently reduced to 2.60m. Machine excavation of this trench failed to reveal buried archaeological deposits, with the depositional sequence comprising 400mm of dark brown silty clay topsoil overlying natural chalk bedrock. Artefacts were recovered from spoilheap collection, comprising small quantities of worked and burnt flint (context 302).

## 6. THE FINDS

6.1 Modern artefacts such as concrete, brick, plastic tyres and ceramics were present in most overburden and make-up deposits. Their presence was recorded but none were retained.

6.2 The limitations to hand excavation caused by the depth below ground surface of archaeological features in trenches 1 and 2, is likely to have reduced the total quantity of artefacts recovered from the evaluation. Dateable material was recovered from only one key deposit (context 207). Table 2 quantifies all finds.

Trench	Context	Iron Age/ Romano British pottery		Worked Flint		Burnt Flint		Animal Bone	
		No.	Wt. (g)	No.	Wt. (g)	No.	Wt. (g)	No.	Wt. (g)
1	100	0	0	4	92	1	8	1	7
1	101	1	4	6	89	1	68	0	0
2	207	1	1	2	35	1	374	0	0
3	302	0	0	2	1	1	33	0	0
<b>Totals</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>483</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>

**Table 2 : Summary of Finds from all Trenches**

6.3 Two small fragments of Black Burnished Ware pottery of unknown form were recovered from hand cleaning of ditches in trenches 1 and 2. It is, however possible to attribute a late Iron Age / Romano-British date to both pieces.

6.4 Worked flint was recovered from all trenches, with all pieces showing a bluish-grey patina and thick white cortex, indicating that all is derived from a local chalk source. There are no diagnostic elements within the assemblage, but all can be attributed to a flake industry, not incompatible with a later prehistoric, probable Iron Age date.

## 7. PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

7.1 Column soil samples have been collected from the stratigraphical sequence of archaeological features and deposits in trenches 1 and 2 for the purpose of retrieving palaeoenvironmental information for possible future analysis. Limited macroscopic examination has confirmed the presence of low to moderate quantities of snail shells and charcoal.

## 8. CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Although it was only possible to investigate areas on the fringes of the redevelopment, the evaluation has confirmed that archaeological deposits, as identified during the original construction of the dairy, extend into other areas of the site. An attempt has been made to establish the original profile of the hilltop prior to the construction of the dairy (Fig. 2), using existing ground surfaces and excavation evidence. This suggests that much of the archaeological evidence in the central zone has already been removed, with survival of deposits likely to be limited to the west side of the dairy, as well as any areas around the perimeter of the dairy where major truncation has not occurred.

8.2 Iron Age / Romano-British deposits in the north-west area of the proposed redevelopment are generally present at a depth of between 0.50 and 1.50m below the existing ground surface. The extent of potential damage to these deposits caused by redevelopment on the site may only be limited. However, deposits at the south-east end of Trench 1, where soil cover is as little as 500mm are at greater risk.

8.3 The excavation of the small exploratory Trench 3 revealed no archaeological deposits. This is not entirely unexpected given the small area investigated. However, the trench has shown that intact chalk bedrock exists at the east and north-east side of the site, and that any deposits in this area are likely to be well-preserved. The discovery of small quantities of artefacts within the topsoil also suggests that archaeological deposits may be present within the immediate area.

8.4 In conclusion, the evaluation has confirmed the presence of archaeological deposits beneath infilling in the area of trenches 1 and 2, and the likelihood, if present, of good survival in the area around trench 3. Over much of the site redevelopment is unlikely to affect significant archaeological features, unless very deeply cut (eg. storage pits >3m), except on the south-west and north-east fringes.

## 9. REFERENCES

Cox, P.W., Chandler, J. and Valentin, J., 1996, *A Preliminary Archaeological Assessment of a Proposed Redevelopment at the Coldstream Dairy, Milborne St. Andrew, Dorset*, Unpublished client report, ref. 3096/2/0

RCHM, 1970, *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in the County of Dorset*, Vol. III, Central, Part 2

Pleydell-Railston, Mrs, 1931, Iron Age and Romano-British Settlement at Milborne St. Andrew, in *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society*, vol. 52, pp. 10-18



Fig. 1 : Location of site.

Extract taken from 1968 6"O.S. map.

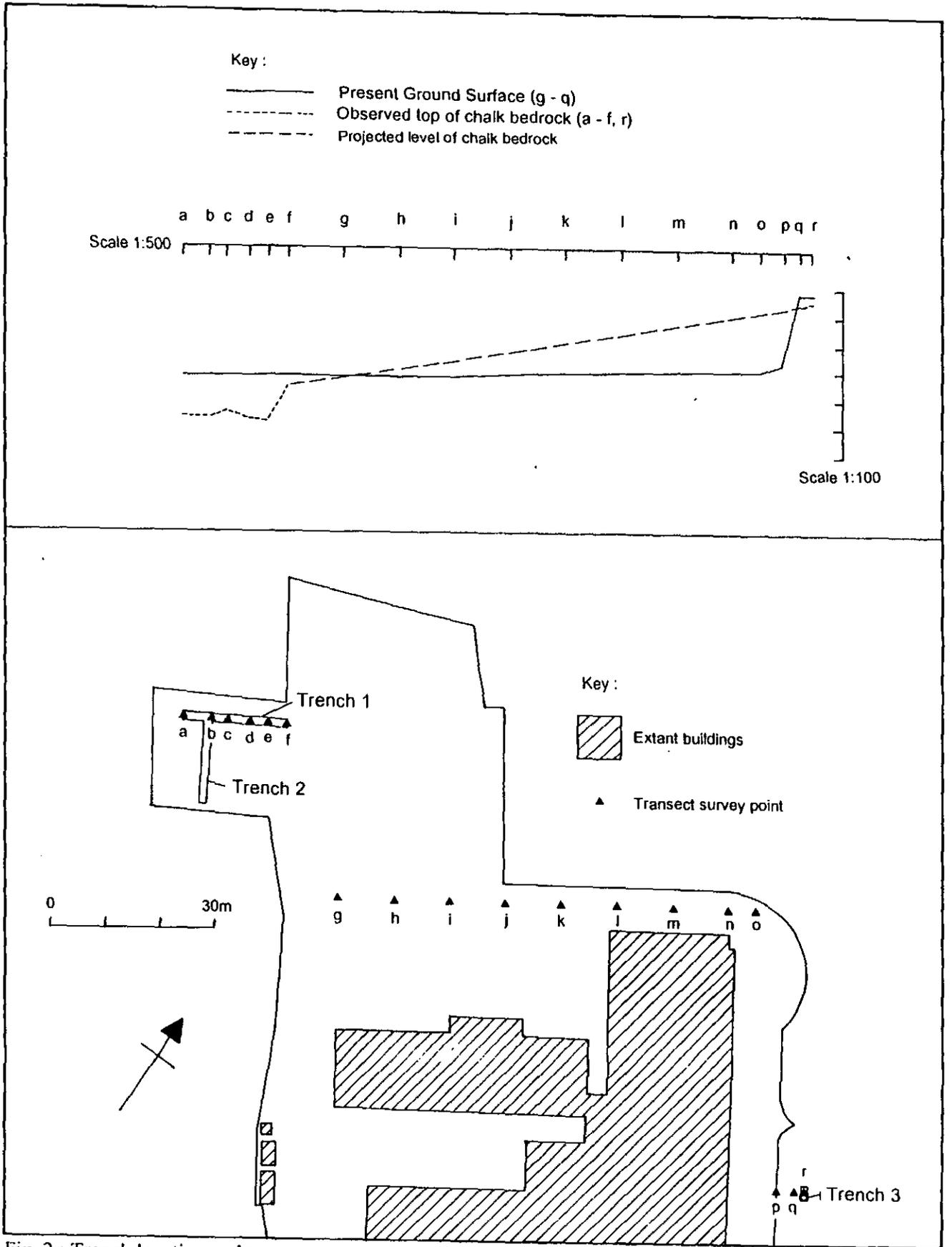


Fig. 2 : Trench location and transect across site.

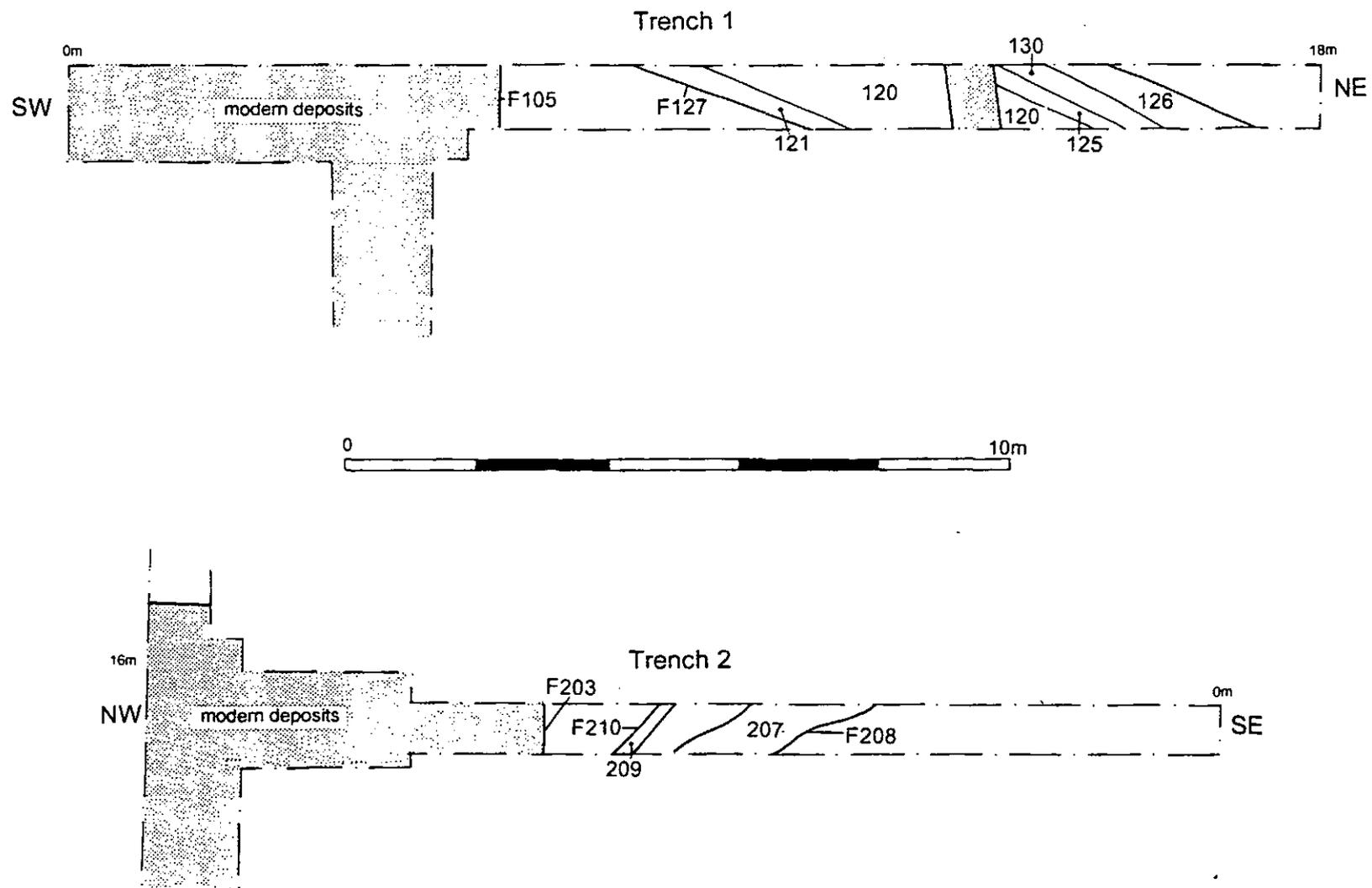


Fig.3 : Plan of trenches 1 and 2.

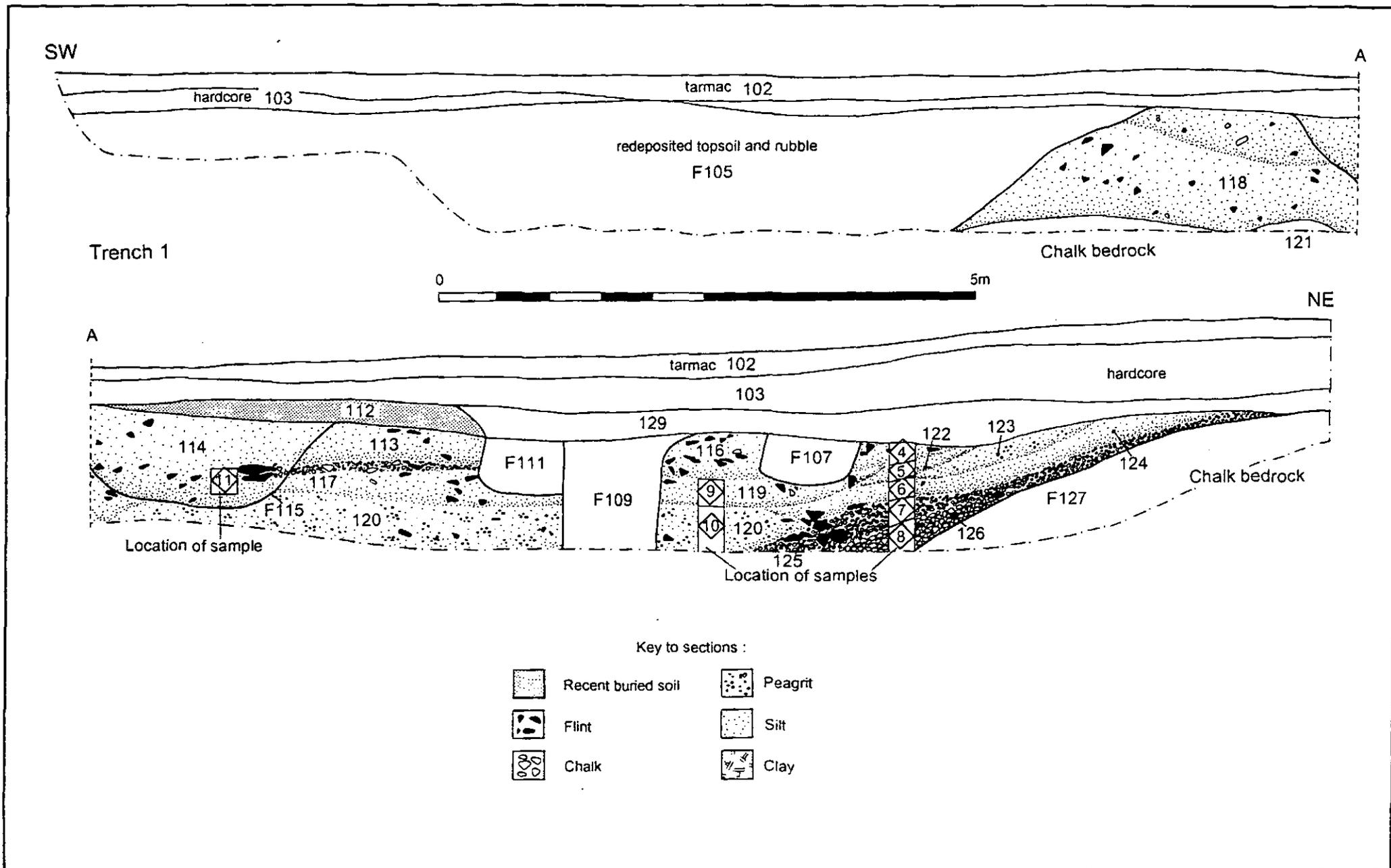


Fig.4 : Trench 1 - south east facing section.

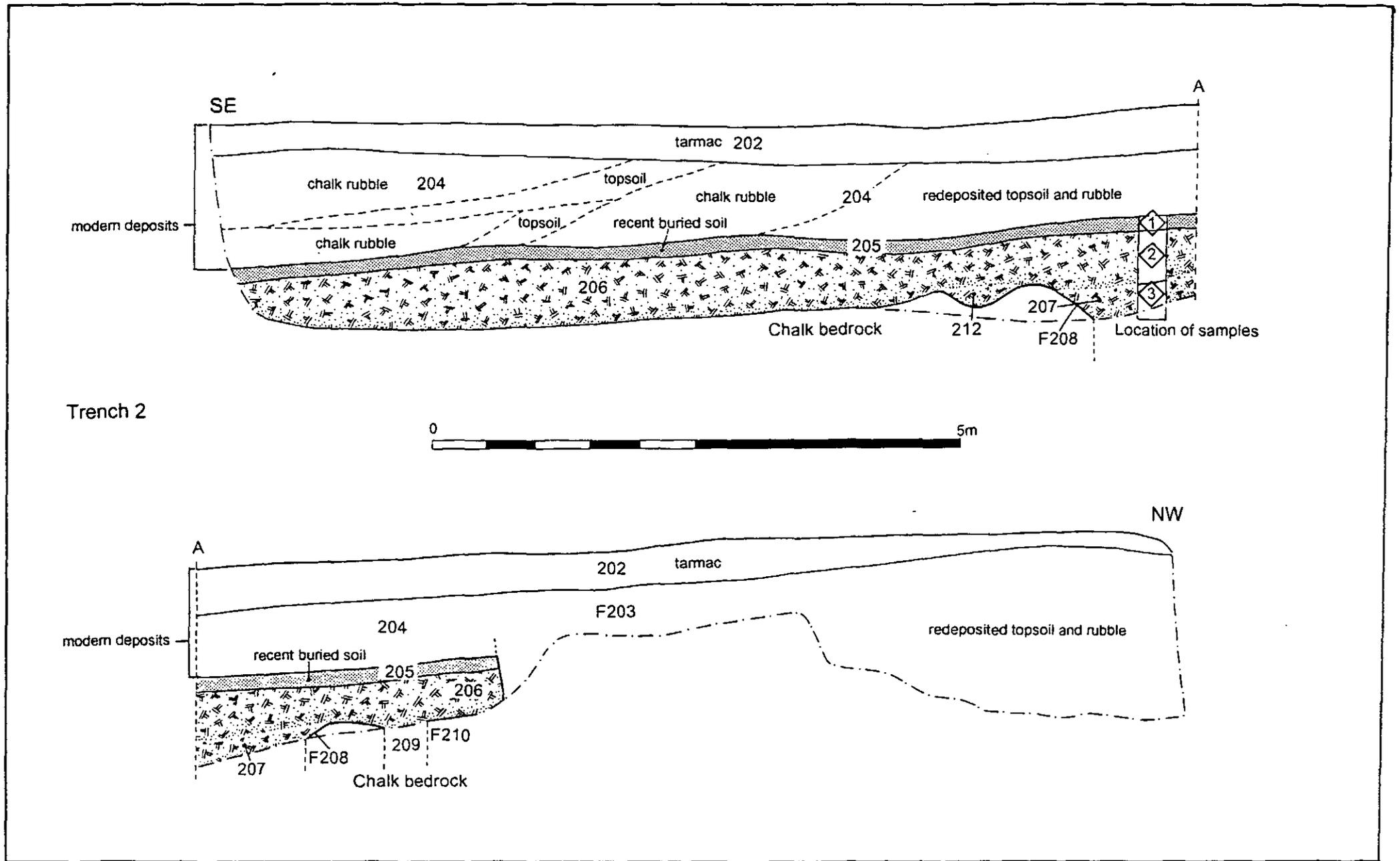


Fig. 5 : Trench 2 - north east facing section.

# **SPECIFICATION FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF A PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT AT THE COLDSTREAM DAIRY, MILBORNE ST. ANDREW, DORSET (NGR SY 8065 9780)**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This specification sets out proposals for an archaeological field evaluation of the site of a proposed redevelopment at the Coldstream Dairy, Milborne St. Andrew, Dorset. The site is the subject of a planning application for redevelopment, with the evaluation requested by the Chief Planning Officer, North Dorset District Council, as advised by the County Archaeological Officer. This specification comprises Stage 2 of a written scheme of investigation required in the planning permission for the site.

## **2. PURPOSE OF WORK**

2.1 The work is to be carried out in order to provide archaeological information in advance of the proposed redevelopment of the site. The results will assist in determining the character and extent of any archaeological constraints which need to be included during the subsequent development of the site.

2.2 The work will seek to identify the physical archaeological potential of the application area by the least destructive means and will therefore only involve the disturbance of sufficient buried deposits or finds as is considered appropriate to determine the nature, date and degree of survival of any deposits present on the site.

## **3. THE DEVELOPMENT AREA**

3.1 The extent of the proposed redevelopment in the areas of archaeological potential is shown on Fig. 1 (enclosed).

## **4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

4.1 A Stage 1 desk-based study and site visit was carried out for this proposed redevelopment site in May 1996, to assess the archaeological potential. The principal interest in the site is the discovery and partial excavation in 1929, when the original dairy was constructed, of a late Iron Age and Romano-British settlement close to the proposed redevelopment area. Further archaeological deposits are likely to exist on the site, although the quality and degree of survival of these deposits are likely to have been adversely affected by original and subsequent building work and terracing. In certain zones on the fringes of the site good preservation may be anticipated.

## 5. TRENCH EXCAVATION

5.1 The position of trenches (TR1 - TR3) is shown on Fig. 1. The presence of buildings and concrete hard standing, as well as probable landscaping during the original construction of the dairy, has meant that the trenches have been positioned in areas on the fringes of the site. These were approved in advance during a site meeting attended by the County Archaeologist's representative, Steven Wallis. Trench 1 will be 20m in length, with Trenches 2 and 3 each 15m in length. Each trench will be excavated to a nominal width of 1.5m.

5.2 Topsoil and modern overburden and deposits which can be shown to be of post-Medieval date only will be removed by mechanical excavator under constant archaeological supervision. All trenches will be excavated to a maximum depth of 1.2m, or to the top of the natural subsoil, whichever is less. All spoil heaps will be scanned for archaeological artefacts.

5.3 If a substantial number of Iron Age or Romano-British features are encountered, then a selection only will be hand excavated, by agreement with the County Archaeological Officer, to a sufficient depth to determine their nature, date and function.

5.4 Soil samples will be collected from features where considered appropriate, for example, from Iron Age storage pits.

5.5 On completion of the work all trenches will be backfilled with the excavated material, compacted by digger bucket, where possible, and left level with the surrounding ground surface.

5.6 Any structural remains encountered in the trenches will be cleaned and planned at an appropriate scale but not further excavated.

## 6. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING

6.1 All artefacts or deposits revealed will be recorded using the standard **AC archaeology** pro-forma recording system, with appropriate scale plans and section drawings, photographs and finds records.

6.2 Any human remains encountered during the work will be recorded in situ, but not removed at this stage.

## 7. REPORT

7.1 Four copies of the evaluation report, summarising the results of the work, will be submitted to the Employer within two weeks of completion of the fieldwork. The report will be accompanied by plans with OS levels and section drawings as appropriate.

## 8. FINDS AND ARCHIVE

8.1 All finds will be catalogued and suitably packaged in accordance with currently approved methods and as required by any recipient museum. Subject to the approval of the landowner, and the laws of treasure trove, it is proposed that all finds should be deposited in the Dorset County Museum, Dorchester, along with the archive of site records.

## 9. PERSONNEL

9.1 The work will be directly supervised by a Member or Associate of the Institute of Field Archaeologists with suitable experience in this type of investigation.

## 10. ACCESS AND HEALTH AND SAFETY

10.1 Access to the site will be by arrangement with the Employer or their representative. During the course of the work the County Archaeological Officer will be invited to inspect the work on at least one occasion. The contractor will ensure that arrangements for site safety are carried out during the course of the work. Any deep excavations will be surrounded with a barrier of high visibility fencing.

## 11. INSURANCE

11.1 **AC archaeology** carries Employers and Public Liability Insurance cover to £2,000,000 and Professional Indemnity cover to £500,000.

## 12. COPYRIGHT

12.1 On written request **AC archaeology** will assign to the employer the copyright of all documents and other records created during the course of the work.

## 13. PROGRAMME

13.1 It is proposed that the archaeological evaluation will commence on 1 July 1996.

Peter W. Cox  
**AC archaeology**

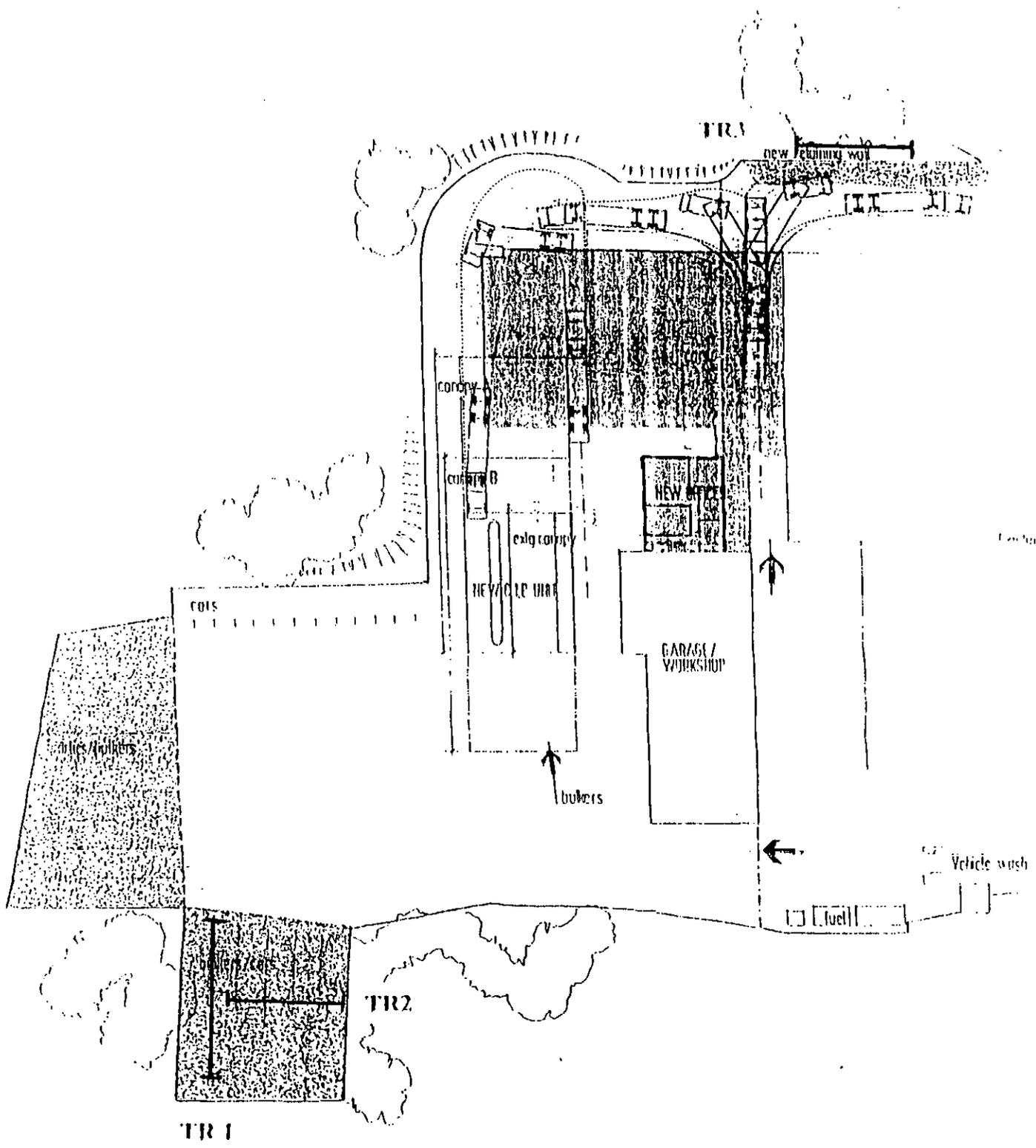


FIG. 1 : LOCATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRENCHES