

N O R T H A M P T O N S H I R E  
A R C H A E O L O G Y • U N I T

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**Northamptonshire**



**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT  
(Contracts Section)**

**September 1991**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION  
AT EGERTON HOUSE, BRACKLEY**

1991

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT EGERTON HOUSE, BRACKLEY

### ABSTRACT

An archaeological evaluation was carried out in the grounds of Egerton House, Brackley by the Contracts Section of the Northamptonshire Archaeology Unit in May - June 1991. A total of seven trenches were excavated in areas affected by development proposals.

Traces of settlement activity dating to the late Iron Age - early Romano-British period were uncovered. To the north of the house part of a large ditch was discovered. A number of shallow pits, postholes and stakeholes suggest a possible structure immediately south of this ditch. To the east of the house a shallow ditch may mark a boundary of this period. These features were overlaid by a layer of loamy material which may be the remnants of an agricultural soil of late Romano-British - Saxon date.

There was little evidence of Saxon activity, although a small amount of Early/Middle Saxon, Middle Saxon Ipswich ware and late Saxon pottery was present as a residual element in the pottery assemblage. The Ipswich ware sherds are of interest in being possibly the most westerly discovery of this pottery type.

To the north of the house a Medieval boundary ditch was uncovered. It was replaced in the post-Medieval period by a linear stone feature on the same line. To the east of the house the remains of a late Medieval or early post Medieval stone structure and a series of stone surfaces were uncovered beneath a recent embankment. Stone rubble, mortar and wall-plaster found in association with post Medieval material beneath the lawn to the south of the house would appear to be demolition material from an earlier building. A large number of pits of Medieval date were uncovered, especially to the south of the house.

## INTRODUCTION

Egerton House is situated in the Old Town area of Brackley immediately to the north west of St Peters Church. The existing house was built in the 19th century as a vicarage. Subsequently the house was used as a special school and various alterations and additions were made to the building and the grounds. The school was closed down some years ago and has remained vacant since.

The house and grounds are now in the possession of the Midland Counties Autistic Society (MIDCAS) and permission is currently being sought to develop the site to provide sheltered accommodation. The work involves the restoration of the house to its original groundplan, the construction of new accommodation and the alteration of existing ground levels to form secure gardens, parking areas and a driveway (SNDC Planning Application S/90/1369).

The Old Town area of Brackley has been a focus for settlement since at least the Roman period. An extensive settlement of this period is known to the south of St Peter's Church while to the west of the church lies the site of the Medieval well of St Rumbold, a 7th century Saxon saint. In the light of the potential archaeological importance of the area prior archaeological evaluation ahead of the determination of the planning application was called for by the Archaeological Curator of Northamptonshire Archaeology Unit. The Contracts Section of the Northamptonshire Archaeology Unit were commissioned to carry out the evaluation by MIDCAS with the aid of a grant from English Heritage.

## TOPOGRAPHY

Old Town lies to the north-east of the modern town of Brackley on a bluff overlooking the River Great Ouse to the east (fig 1). The grounds of Egerton House cover an area of c 0.5ha. They are enclosed by a stone wall which is surrounded on three sides by roads - Old Town road to the north, St Peter's Road to the west and a lane leading to St Peter's Church to the south - and on the fourth by the churchyard of St Peter's Church and by domestic

buildings. A driveway which approaches the house from the south provides the only access to the grounds; pedestrian gateways in the north and west walls are no longer in use. Where the driveway reaches the east side of the house an area of hardstanding has been created by levelling off the ground and laying a tarmac surface. The upcast from this levelling operation appears to have been placed by the eastern edge of the site to form a low embankment, c 2m high, adjacent to the wall of St Peters churchyard. The west side of the embankment is revetted by a low stone wall.

The grounds (fig 2) are divided into two portions by the south extension of Egerton House and by temporary classrooms which extend almost as far as the western boundary wall. To the south a lawn and gardens reach as far as the south and west boundary walls. The area to the north is chiefly occupied by a tarmac playground, enclosed on two sides by a low wall. Greenhouses and temporary classrooms adjoin the western and northern boundary walls.

#### GEOLOGY

The whole of the area lies on the Northampton Sand Ironstone. This varied from a clayey ironstone in Trench A, to an ironstone with pockets of white, compacted sand in Trench D, to a brown sand in the other trenches.

#### EXISTING INFORMATION

Roman Settlement (centred on SP592372)

Evidence of a Romano-British settlement to the south of St Peter's Church has been uncovered, chiefly from the observation of building work between 1971 and 1974. Wall foundations, a cobbled floor, roof and flue tiles, tesserae, plaster, pottery and coins were recovered. Occupation from the 1st - 4th centuries AD appears to be represented. The extent of the settlement is unknown.

### St Rumbold's Well

The site of St Rumbold's well lies 250m west of the church. St Rumbold is reputed to have been the son of a daughter of Penda, ruler of Mercia in the mid 7th century. The legend of St Rumbold provides an ecclesiastical link between King's Sutton, Buckingham and Brackley and suggests an early religious importance for Brackley.

### St Peters Church

The dedication to St Peter suggests an early foundation for the church. It remained the parish church for Brackley even after the development of the new town by the Oxford - Northampton road in the 12th century and is likely to have originated as a minster church serving a wide area.

### Late Saxon Settlement

A late Saxon settlement, possibly a minor estate centre, can be anticipated around St Peter's church.

### Medieval Settlement

Old Town continued as an agricultural settlement separate from the new town. Old Town road and St Peter's Road are likely to have formed part of the Medieval road pattern and farms or cottages fronting on to them are a possibility.

## SPECIFICATION

A specification was prepared to meet the requirements of the archaeological evaluation brief issued by the County Curator (dated 13.3.1991). The scheme of work involved trial trenching to ascertain the nature, date and state of preservation of any surviving archaeological deposits of Roman, Saxon or Medieval date in those areas which would be affected by the proposed

development.

The outline proposal comprised seven trenches positioned in three separate areas around the house; to the east, in front of the house, to examine the embanked area which it is proposed to level to provide car-parking space; to the south and west of the house, on the line of the proposed new driveway and on the site of the proposed respite accommodation; and to the north, on the site of the proposed long stay accommodation block. Four of the trenches were extended and/or widened during the evaluation mainly for safety reasons but also to clarify the nature of the archaeology. An overall total of c 150m<sup>2</sup> was investigated.

All of the trial trenches were excavated down to the top of the archaeological levels using an Ackerman H3b 360<sup>0</sup> degree mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.5m wide toothless bucket. The sides and the bottom of the trench were then trowelled clean and any surviving archaeological features were sampled, photographed and recorded on scaled drawings and written record forms. The archaeological layers, features and deposits within features (collectively known as contexts) were numbered in a separate sequence for each trench. The numbers given in brackets within the following text refer to the original context numbers used on site.

#### THE EXCAVATIONS

Trench A (figs 3,4) was positioned to investigate the embankment to the east of the house. It extended from the driveway of the house eastwards into the embankment for a distance of 12.5m. Topsoil and layers of modern build-up were machined off to a depth of up to 1.75m at the eastern end of the trench. Constraints of space and the presence of trees on the embankment precluded the widening of this end of the trench in order to allow the removal of the earlier layers in safety. The western end was, however, excavated in detail down to the natural subsoil and subsequently extended north to investigate a larger area of the early levels.

The earliest features were cut directly into the natural subsoil which was located at  $\underline{c}$  116.4m above OD,  $\underline{c}$  0.7m below the present ground level. A heavily truncated ditch (46) aligned north-west - south-east was traced over a length of  $\underline{c}$  5m across the trench. It was 0.6m wide and 0.1m deep with sloping sides and a flattened bottom. Pottery sherds of late Iron Age or early Roman (Belgic) type dating to the 1st century AD were recovered from the infill of this ditch. Two shallow postholes (33, 43),  $\underline{c}$  0.2m in diameter, were also cut into the natural subsoil. The infilling of these early features appeared to derive from a layer of dark yellowish brown sandy clay loam (41) up to 0.2m thick, which directly overlaid the natural subsoil. Seventeen pottery sherds of Iron Age - Romano-British, 1st-2nd century AD, date were found in this layer which may be the remnant of a former agricultural soil. A post-hole/pit (45) cut through this layer to a depth of 0.3m, contained no dating evidence.

Layer (41) was overlaid by a layer of very dark greyish brown, sandy clay loam (37) up to 0.3m thick. Pottery sherds of late Medieval (post-1350) date were recovered from this layer along with residual Romano-British, early-middle Saxon and late Saxon sherds.

Part of a stone wall (31) aligned northeast-southwest was uncovered by the northern edge of the trench. It was founded on limestone slabs up to 0.4m across, laid directly on top of layer 37. The wall was built from roughly dressed limestone blocks, laid two abreast, bonded with sandy clay. At least five courses of stone survived to a height of  $\underline{c}$  0.5m. Wall 31 did not appear to extend beyond the southern edge of the trench. In the north facing section, layers abutting the wall seem to respect a feature 0.3m wide and 0.4m deep on the projected line of the wall. It is possible therefore, that wall 31 terminated at roughly this point. To the west of wall 31, a similar wall (48), apparently on a south-east - north-west alignment, was observed in the south facing section. This wall may have conjoined with wall 31 to form the corner of a building. No trace of this second wall was discovered when the trench was extended.



A further possible wall (40) was partially uncovered to the east of wall 31. A layer of brownish yellow mortar up to 0.25m deep appeared to abut the eastern edge of 31. A single line of flat limestone pieces on a roughly north-west - south-east alignment were laid on top of this layer and partly overlaid the foundations of wall 31. Smaller pitched limestone pieces were unevenly set within the mortar. The function of this feature is unclear; possibly it represents an extension to the structure formed by walls 31 and 48. The mortar layer was cut by a shallow pit (38)  $\approx$  0.75m in diameter. Animal bone and late Medieval pottery sherds were recovered from the brown sandy clay loam infill (39).

Structure 40 and the infilled pit 38 were overlaid by a layer of yellowish brown sandy clay loam (36) up to 0.3m deep, which abutted the east face of wall 31. Layer 36 was overlaid by layers of limestone and mortar (35) and loam with limestone (17) which also abutted wall 31. A substantial amount (28 sherds) of late Medieval pottery was recovered from layer 36, while layer 35 contained six Medieval and one post-Medieval sherd. The layers abutting the north face of the wall (36A, 17A) were similar to 36 and 17 respectively but contained little, if any, limestone.

The layers abutting the wall were overlaid by a layer of sandy clay loam, containing mortar, brick and tile (30) which formed a level surface. This was in turn overlaid by a surface of limestone pieces (27). These layers were cut by a shallow pit? (16) which was itself overlaid by further surfaces of sand and gravel (24, 26) and limestone pieces (25). Further east, surfaces of limestone pieces (28, 22) and loam (20) were located. They were revealed and planned but do not appear on the section drawing as they were not removed. The function of these surfaces is unclear. Possibly they formed yard surfaces, though it should be noted that the upper surfaces are  $\approx$  0.4m above the current ground surface. Sherds of late Medieval pottery were recovered from 28 and a sherd of post-Medieval date from 22. A posthole? (34) was cut through layer 22.

At the western end of the trench the surfaces were cut back and faced with a stone revetment wall (47). Layers of hardcore and aggregate (19, 46) were laid directly on top of layer 37 and topped with a tarmac surface (18).

To the eastern end a series of layers of loam, gravel and rubble (2-15) were dumped to form the embankment. They were in turn overlaid by topsoil (1).

Trench B, an L-shaped trench, was positioned at right angles and parallel to the northern site boundary wall. At its west end it conjoined with Trench C. Concrete slabs, topsoil and recent build-up were removed by machine to a depth of  $\approx$  0.5-0.7m below the present ground surface. The remaining levels were removed by hand down to the natural subsoil which was located at 117.45m above OD,  $\approx$  0.75m - 1m below the present ground surface. A layer of yellowish brown sandy loam (25) overlay the natural subsoil. The features recovered from the trench have been divided into two phases according to whether they were sealed by or cut through this layer.

Phase 1 (fig 5). A substantial ditch (33) following an east - west alignment parallel to the northern boundary wall, was uncovered at the northern edge of the trench. A small extension was made to the north of the trench in an attempt to recover the full width of the ditch but this proved impossible as the ditch ran too close to the boundary wall. The ditch (fig 7) proved to be more than 2.2m wide and 0.6m deep with gently sloping sides. In the base of the ditch there was a narrow channel (55)  $\approx$  0.35m wide with vertical sides 0.45m deep. This was infilled with layers of brown silty loam (54) and very dark greyish brown loam (53). The upper part of the ditch was infilled with layers of predominantly yellowish brown sandy loam (32, 51, 50) and brownish yellow sandy clay loam (49). A single sherd of Iron Age pottery was recovered from the upper fill of the ditch and part of a kiln bar from the fill of channel 55.

A number of small post-holes and/or stake-holes (27, 35, 37, 39, 41) were cut into the natural subsoil to the south of ditch 33. They may have formed part of some sort of structure but the small area excavated precludes further

interpretation. An oval pit (29), c 1m long and 0.5m wide, was partly cut into the fill of ditch 33 and partly into the natural subsoil. It was c 0.4m deep with steep, almost vertical, sides and a flat bottom. Part of a further small pit (31), at least 0.5m across, cut into the fill of ditch 33, was uncovered in the north-west corner of the trench. No dating evidence was recovered from any of these features.

The backfilled features were overlaid by a layer 25 which was up to 0.25m thick. A single sherd of Romano-British pottery of 1st-2nd century date and a fragment of box flue tile were recovered from this layer. It probably represents a former agricultural soil similar to layer 41 in Trench A.

Phase 2 (fig 6) A number of features - all probably of late Saxon or later date were cut through layer 25.

The major feature was a ditch of U-shaped section (14) aligned north - south and set at a right angle to the northern boundary wall. It was 1.1m wide, with steep sides 0.5m deep. A narrow channel, 0.2m wide, in the base of the ditch may have been the result of recutting, but this could not be identified in the sections. The ditch was infilled with a dark brown silty clay loam (13) from which five potsherds of Medieval date were recovered.

Subsequently a linear stone feature (10), c 0.5m wide and 0.3m high, set into a shallow foundation trench (12), cut into the infill of ditch (14). It comprised limestone pieces, both pitched and laid flat, which were bonded with clay loam but not coursed. It most closely resembled a drain. Potsherds of post-Medieval date were recovered from its fill.

The linear ditch and the stone feature which replaced it would appear to mark the course of a long-lived boundary.

To the west of this boundary feature a large sub-circular pit (21), c 2.5m in diameter was located. The sides of the pit sloped evenly and gently to a depth of c 0.4m and then dropped vertically to meet a flattened bottom at a

depth of  $\underline{c}$  0.9m. The primary fills of this feature, comprising layers of dark yellowish brown loam (23) and dark greyish brown loam (22), contained limestone blocks and pieces. They were overlaid by a layer of black ash and charcoal (20) up to 0.1m thick. The final infill of the pit was composed of a layer of dark brown loam (19).

Possibly the lower fills should be regarded as a separate feature. Hence layers 22 and 23 would form a regular, vertical-sided pit (24) containing a substantial quantity of stone which was cut by a later shallow pit (21) infilled with layers 19 and 20. One sherd of Medieval pottery was recovered from layer 23 and a further sherd from layer 19.

To the north-west, two possible pits were observed in section (fig 7) when the trench was extended. Pit 45 was at least 0.9m across, with sloping sides 0.4m deep and a rounded bottom. It was infilled with a layer of brown sandy clay loam (44). The north edge of this infill was cut by pit 43 which was infilled with a layer of very dark grey silty clay loam (42) which contained late Medieval pottery sherds.

To the east of the boundary feature, by the eastern edge of the trench, a shallow, sub-circular pit (9),  $\underline{c}$  0.75m in diameter, was uncovered. The sloping sides survived to a depth of no more than 0.1m. A single sherd of late Saxon pottery was recovered from its fill of brown sandy clay loam (8).

All of the Medieval or earlier features were overlaid by a layer of dark yellowish brown sandy clay loam (3), up to 0.5m thick, which appeared to abut stone feature 10. A number of postholes (5, 7, 16, 18) were not recognised until layer 3 had been removed but all had probably been cut through it. They were square in shape and  $\underline{c}$  0.2m across, with brick fragments included in the post-packing.

Trench C was positioned parallel to the north-west site boundary, on the same alignment as, but slightly offset from, Trench B. Again two phases of activity, separated by a layer of yellowish brown sandy loam (30), could be

recognised.

Phase 1 (fig 5) At the east end of the trench a complex of small features cut directly into the natural subsoil was uncovered. They comprised: a pit/posthole (38), 0.45m wide and 0.3m deep; four postholes (32, 34, 36, 44) 0.15 - 0.25m in diameter and up to 0.15m in depth and two shallow stakeholes (40, 42), 0.05m deep. In conjunction with the postholes at the eastern end of Trench B they may indicate a structure of some form in this area. No dating evidence was recovered from the fill of any of these features.

The infilled features were overlaid by layer 30 which was up to 0.25m thick. It was evidently the equivalent of layer 25 in Trench B. No dating evidence was recovered from it.

Phase 2 (fig 6) At the west end of the trench an area of pits cut through layer 30 was uncovered. The latest features were three shallow pits (5, 7, 10), 0.45 - 0.55m deep, all filled with layers of dark grey - black loam. These pits overlay a layer of yellowish brown loam (11) which itself sealed two possible postholes (13, 15),  $\underline{c}$  0.3m in diameter and  $\underline{c}$  0.05m deep. They were cut into a layer of brownish yellow sandy loam which overlay layers of yellowish brown sandy loam (17), brown loam (18) and a layer of burnt material and stone (19). Layer 19 was only partially removed. It overlay further layers of fill but these were not investigated for safety reasons. Medieval pottery was recovered from the lower layers (18, 19), while late Medieval pottery was recovered from two of the upper pits (5, 10). Two sherds of 1st - 2nd century Romano-British pottery, one sherd of Early/Middle Saxon pottery and two sherds of middle Saxon Ipswich ware present as a residual element in the assemblage from this area.

To the east of the pitted area a number of postholes, also cut through layer 30, were recovered. Only one was possibly of an early date; a sub-circular post-hole (27), infilled with a layer of yellowish brown loam (26) from which a single pottery sherd of late Saxon date was recovered.

The other post-holes (21, 23, 25, 29) were infilled with black or very dark grey loam and were similar to the recent postholes uncovered in Trench B.

Trench D (fig 8) was located by the western site boundary at right angles to the present line of St Peter's Road. At its eastern end the trench was cut through a pathway while at the eastern end it cut through a playground area which was cut down c 0.5m below the surrounding area. The natural subsoil was revealed immediately below the modern tarmac, hardcore and other debris. At the west end of the trench it was located at c 118.5m above OD but in the playground its top had been removed and it was revealed at c 118m above OD. A number of features, cut into the natural subsoil, were located. Part of a pit (5), at least 1.2m across and 0.4m deep, was discovered at the north-west end of the trench. A single sherd of Romano-British pottery of 1st - 2nd century AD date, was recovered from its fill (4) of dark yellowish brown loam with abundant ironstone fragments.

A ditch (8), 0.9m wide and 0.25m deep, was located running on a north-east - south-west alignment across the trench. It was infilled with a layer of yellowish brown silty loam (7). No dating evidence was recovered from it. Possibly this feature represents a boundary ditch.

The east end of the trench was heavily pitted. Part of one of the pits (11) was excavated to a depth of 0.7m but not bottomed. Layers of dark greyish brown sandy loam (10) and silty loam (9) were removed. Potsherds of Medieval date were recovered from these fills.

Trench E (fig 9) was situated on the lawn to the south of Egerton House on the line of the proposed driveway. Initially an east - west trench c 6m in length was excavated. This was subsequently extended 3m to the north to form a T-shaped trench. Layers of garden soil and topsoil were removed by machine to a depth of up to 0.75m. The natural subsoil was revealed at a depth of c 117.35m above OD. A substantial pit (7), 4m wide and over 5.5m long, was cut down into the natural subsoil to a depth of c 0.95m. It was filled with layers of yellowish brown sandy loam (5) and dark greyish brown sandy clay loam (6)

from which two sherds of Medieval pottery were recovered. At the west end of the trench pit 7 was cut by another large pit (9). No dating evidence was recovered from the fill of pit 9 - a brownish yellow clay loam (8). Both pits were overlaid by a layer of dark brown sandy clay loam (4), up to 0.65m thick, from which sherds of post-Medieval pottery were recovered.

Trench F (fig 10) lay to the west of Trench E. It too was sited on the lawn to the south of Egerton House on the line of the proposed driveway. Topsoil and garden soil build-up were machined off to a depth of c 0.65m. A large area of loam fill was revealed. Towards the centre of the trench a section of this material was removed and a number of intercutting features were located. The natural subsoil was located at a depth of c 116.95m above OD. The earliest feature was a large pit? (11), 0.9m deep. It was backfilled with a layer of olive brown sandy clay loam (10) from which pottery of Medieval date was recovered. Pit 11 was cut by a small pit (9), 0.9m in diameter and 0.46m in depth. No dating evidence was recovered from its fill of dark greyish brown silty clay loam (8). Above these features were layers of very dark greyish brown clay loam (7), dark greyish brown clay loam (6), brown sandy loam (5) and yellowish brown sandy clay loam with limestone rubble, mortar and wall-plaster (4). Potsherds of post-Medieval date was recovered from layer 6 while post-Medieval pottery, clay-pipes, tile and glass, were recovered from amongst the rubble in layer 4. The material in layer 4 appears to derive from the demolition of a building.

Trench G (fig 11) was situated as close as possible to the west boundary wall at right angles to St Peters Road, on the proposed site of the respite accommodation block. Initially the topsoil, c 0.3m deep, was removed. The area could be seen to be heavily pitted. At the west end of the trench the pits were removed, chiefly by machine, in order to ascertain their depth and date. Elsewhere the pits were revealed and planned but not excavated. The pits were cut into a layer of brown sandy clay loam (2), 0.2m thick. Layer 2 overlay the natural subsoil which was located at a depth of 118.4m above OD.

The earliest of the excavated pits (16) was at least 1.8m in diameter and 0.6m deep with almost vertical sides. The primary fill (7) of dark greyish brown silty loam was no more than 0.05m deep. It was overlaid by a layer of dark greyish brown sandy clay loam (5) c 0.2m deep. Pottery sherds of Medieval date were recovered from these layers along with one residual early/middle Saxon sherd. An homogeneous deposit of brown, sandy loam (10), from which no finds were recovered, completed the infilling of this pit.

The eastern edge of pit 16 was cut by a substantial pit or ditch (15) c 2.5m in diameter and 0.5m deep with uneven sloping sides. The primary infills of greyish brown silty clay loam (4) and yellowish brown sandy loam (6) contained Medieval pottery sherds and a residual Iron Age/ Romano-British potsherd. A layer of brownish yellow silty clay (12) infilled the east edge of this feature. It was cut by a further pit/ditch (14) at least 1.25m wide and 0.4m deep, infilled with a layer of sandy clay loam (9) from which no finds were recovered.

A substantial pit (13), at least 2.5m across and 0.4m deep was cut down into the backfill of features 14 and 15. It was infilled with a layer of dark yellowish brown loam (8), from which no finds were recovered.

A thick deposit of dark brown loam (3) overlay features 13 - 16. The pottery assemblage from this layer included post-Medieval material. Possibly it was a levelling deposit deliberately laid over the area where the fill of these pits had subsided.

In the remaining area of the trench at least four further areas of dark greyish brown sandy loam (18, 20, 22, 24) could be recognised cutting into layer 2. They are presumably further pits. They were planned but not sampled.



## SUMMARY

### PHASES OF ACTIVITY

#### Late Iron Age - Romano-British (1st - 2nd centuries AD)

Evidence for activity at this phase is provided by a shallow ditch A46 and probably by a larger ditch B33. In addition a number of shallow pits, postholes and stakeholes in Trenches A - D are likely to be of this phase. Those in Trenches B and C may form a structure of some form immediately to the south of ditch B33. The evidence does not, however, suggest intensive activity; it may be that the area lies at the periphery of a settlement whose centre lies to the south of St Peter's Church. There is no evidence of Romano-British activity later than the 2nd century AD.

These features are overlaid in Trenches A - C by layers which may be the remnants of former agricultural soil (A41; B25; C30). Layer G2 may have been formed by the same process. The date of this activity is uncertain - the small amount of material from these layers is late Iron Age - early Romano-British in date but is likely to be residual; it must, however, pre-date the Medieval period.

#### Saxon (AD 410 - 1100)

There is no evidence of early or middle Saxon occupation on the site. The presence of three Early/Middle Saxon and two Middle Saxon Ipswich ware potsherds as a residual element in the pottery assemblage (Table 1) would perhaps suggest activity of this period in the area. The Ipswich-type wares are of interest in that they are possibly the most westerly find of this pottery type.

There is little evidence of late Saxon activity - only eight late Saxon sherds were recovered from the site (Table 1). Shallow pit B9 and posthole C27 each contained a single sherd of late Saxon pottery and hence may belong to this

phase; the remaining sherds were residual.

#### Medieval (AD 1100 - 1500)

There is more ample evidence of activity at this period. Ditch B14 would appear to mark a long-lived boundary, possibly of a property fronting on to Old Town road to the north, whose line is preserved in the post-Medieval period by linear stone feature B10. Stone walls A31, A48 and A40 may mark a structure of late Medieval or early post-Medieval date with associated stone surfaces. The majority of the evidence for this phase is for rubbish disposal. Pits of Medieval date were discovered in all trenches apart from Trench A.

#### Post-Medieval (AD 1500 onwards)

This phase was not examined in detail. The discovery of deposits of stone rubble, mortar and wall plaster in Trench F is, however, worthy of note as they may represent clearance from a precursor of the 19th century Vicarage.

#### CONDITION

The archaeological deposits in Trenches B - D, and at the western end of Trench A are buried at a shallow depth, below c 0.3m of recent material. In the remainder of Trench A the archaeological deposits are sealed by the embankment material. At the east end of Trench D the construction of the playground has removed all archaeological deposits overlying the subsoil and the top c 0.5m of the subsoil. In Trenches E - G the Medieval pits were located at a depth of 0.9m - 1.4m below the present ground surface. They are overlaid by topsoil and layers of post-Medieval material. The large number of Medieval pits on the south side of Egerton House are likely to have removed a large part of any evidence for earlier occupation which may have existed there.

TABLE 1: Pottery by Period within Trench

PERIOD	TRENCH							TOTAL
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	
Late Iron Age	40	1	-	-	-	-	2	43
Romano-British	3	1	2	1	1	-	2	10
Early/Middle Saxon	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	3
Ipswich Ware (Middle Saxon)	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2
Late Saxon	2	1	1	1	1	-	2	8
Medieval	48	13	26	20	13	14	30	164
Post-Medieval	2	5	-	-	2	5	-	14
TOTAL	96	21	32	22	17	19	37	244

## SCHEDULE OF ILLUSTRATIONS

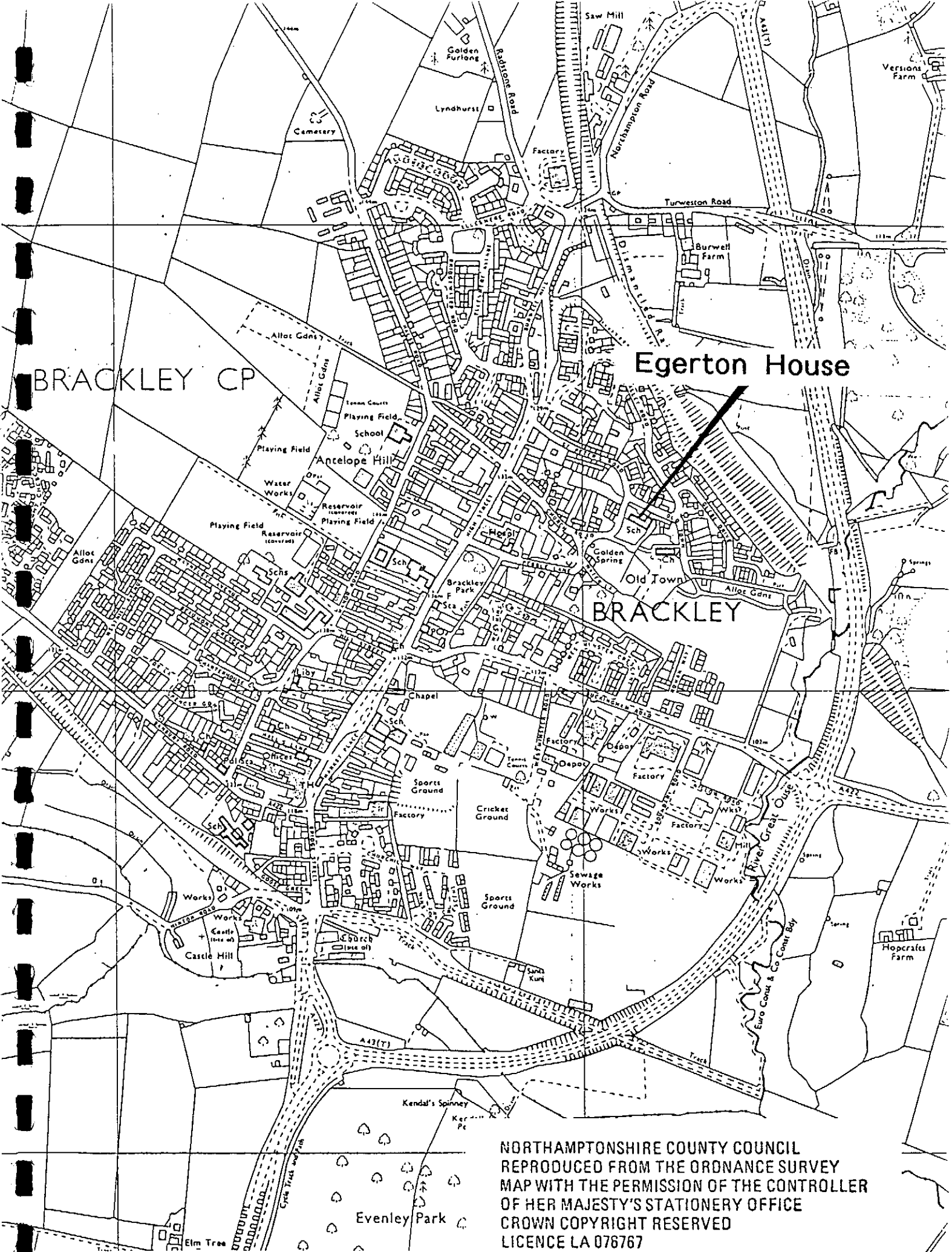
- Fig 1: Egerton House, Brackley. Location.
- Fig 2: Egerton House, Brackley. Location of trenches.
- Fig 3: Egerton House, Brackley. Trench A: Plan.
- Fig 4: Egerton House, Brackley. Trench A: Section.
- Fig 5: Egerton House, Brackley. Trenches B and C: Plan - Phase 1.
- Fig 6: Egerton House, Brackley. Trenches B and C: Plan - Phase 2.
- Fig 7: Egerton House, Brackley. Trench B: Section.
- Fig 8: Egerton House, Brackley. Trench D: Plan.
- Fig 9: Egerton House, Brackley. Trench E: Plan.
- Fig 10: Egerton House, Brackley. Trench F: Plan.
- Fig 11: Egerton House, Brackley. Trench G: Plan.

Michael Shaw and Sean Steadman

Contracts Section, Northamptonshire Archaeology Unit

13.9.91

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Fig 1: Egerton House, Brackley. Location.

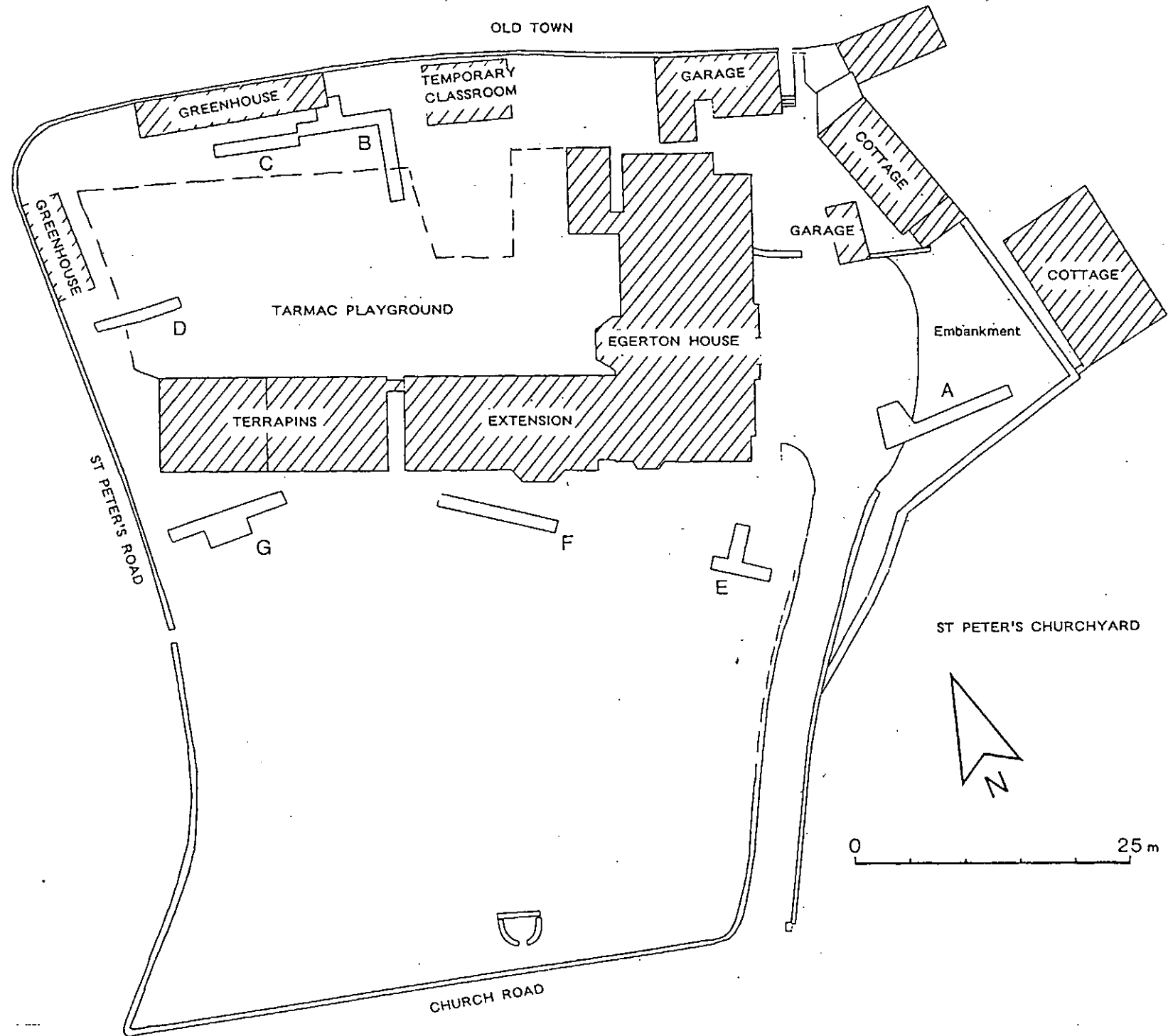


Fig 2: Egerton House, Brackley. Location of trenches.

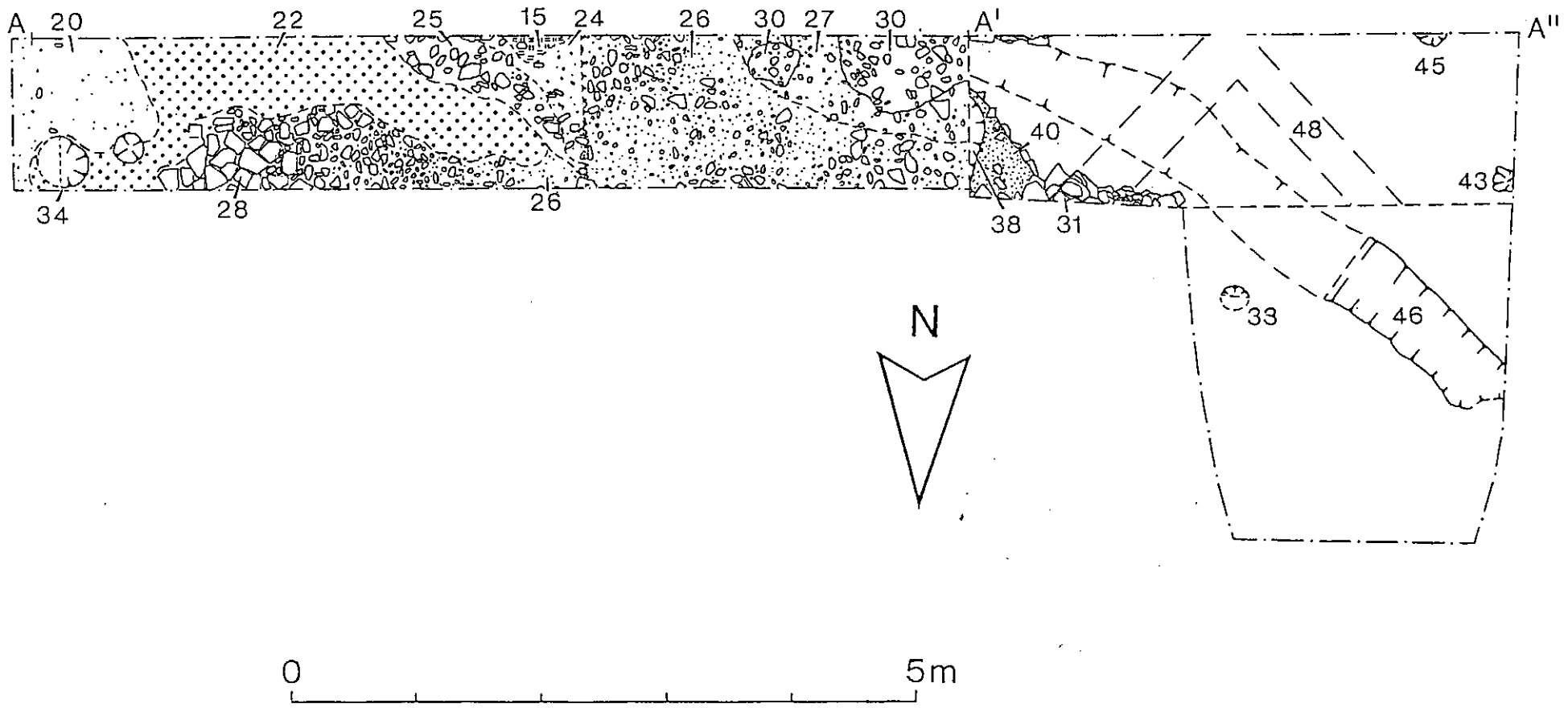


Fig 3: Egerton House, Brackley. Trench A: Plan.

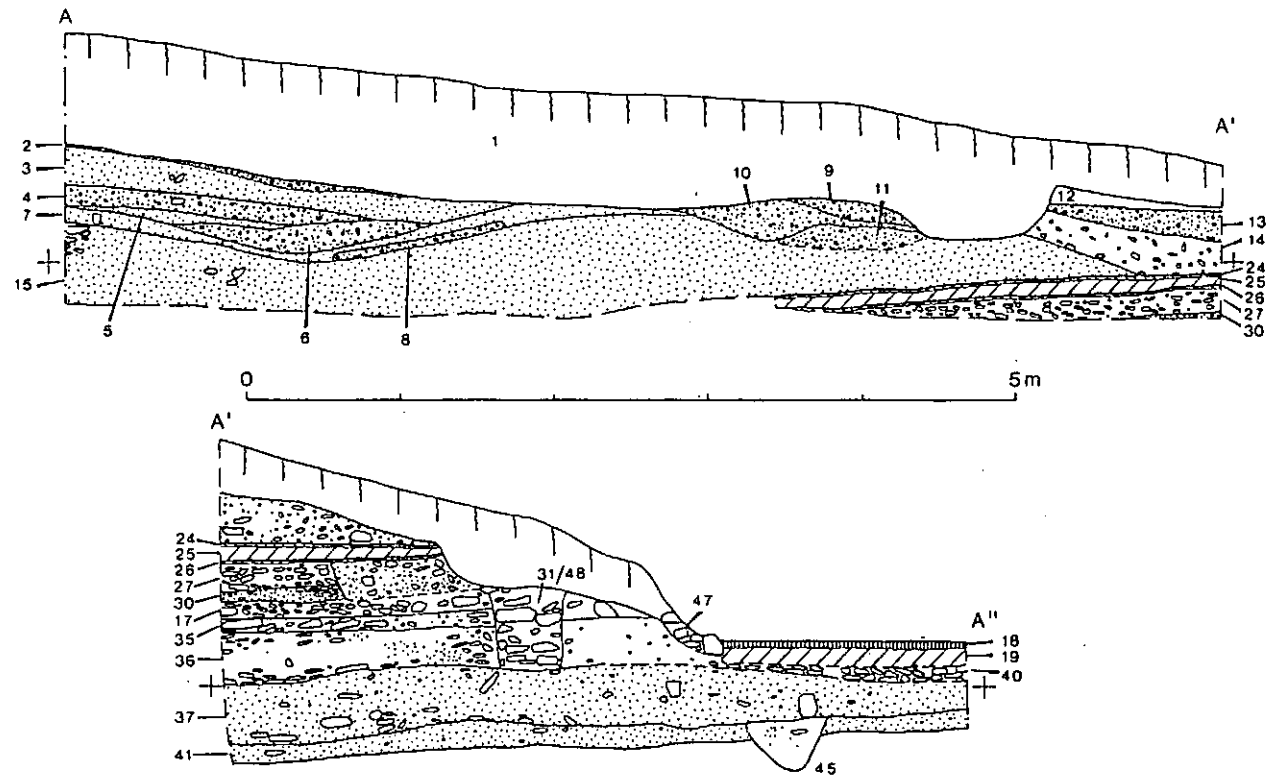


Fig 4: Egerton House, Brackley. Trench A: Section.



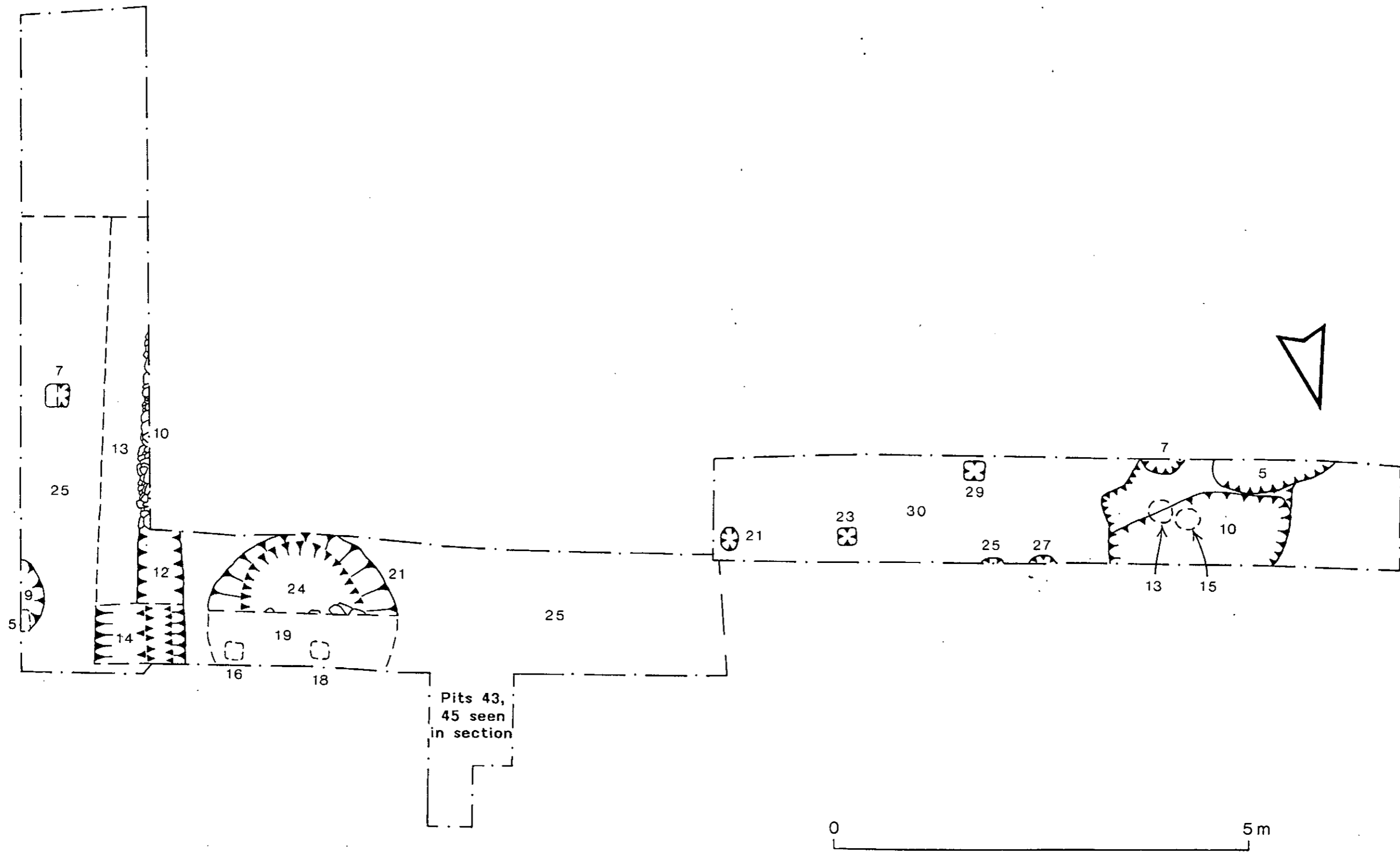


Fig 5: Egerton House, Brackley. Trenches B and C: Phase 1.

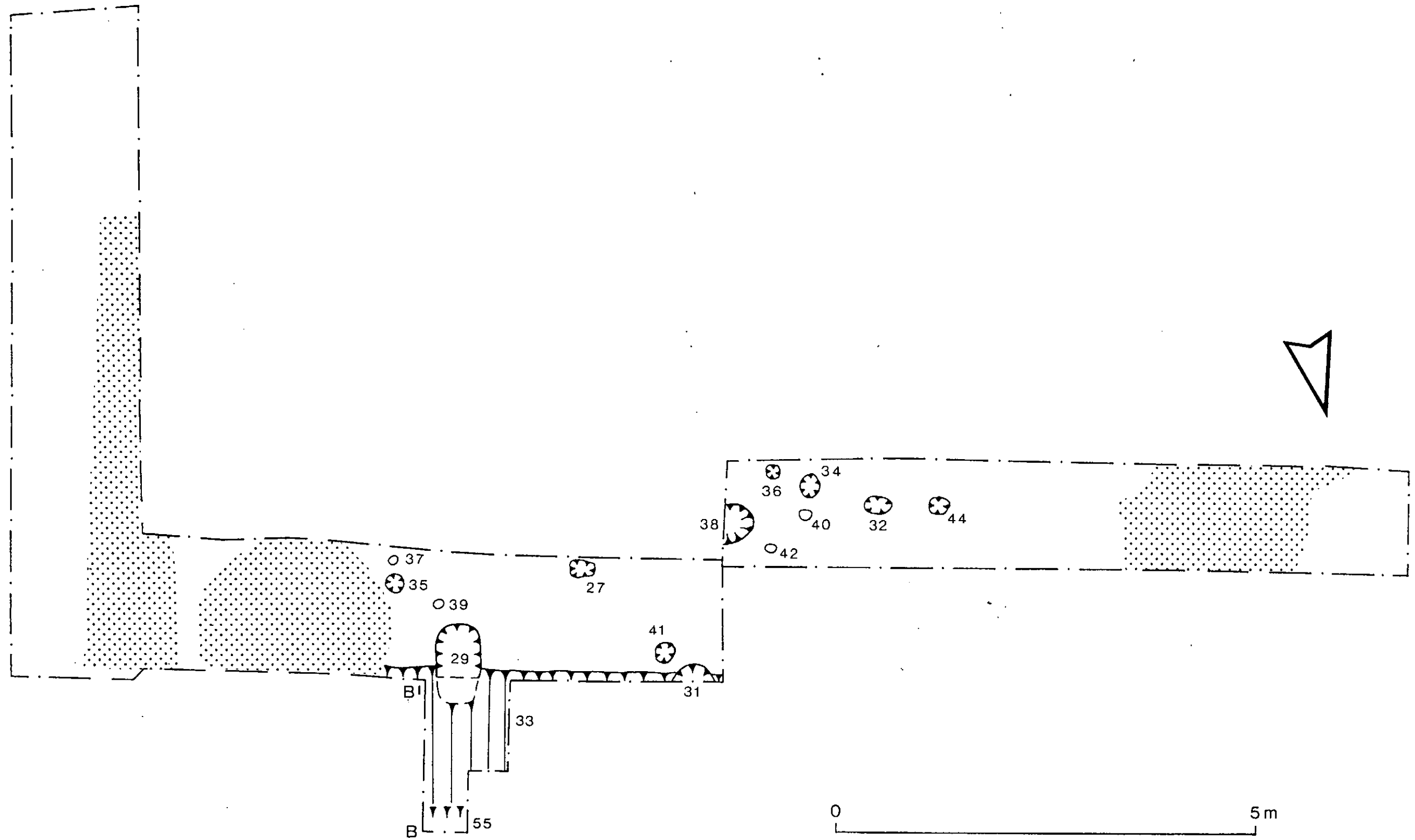


Fig 6: Egerton House, Brackley. Trenches B and C: Phase 2.

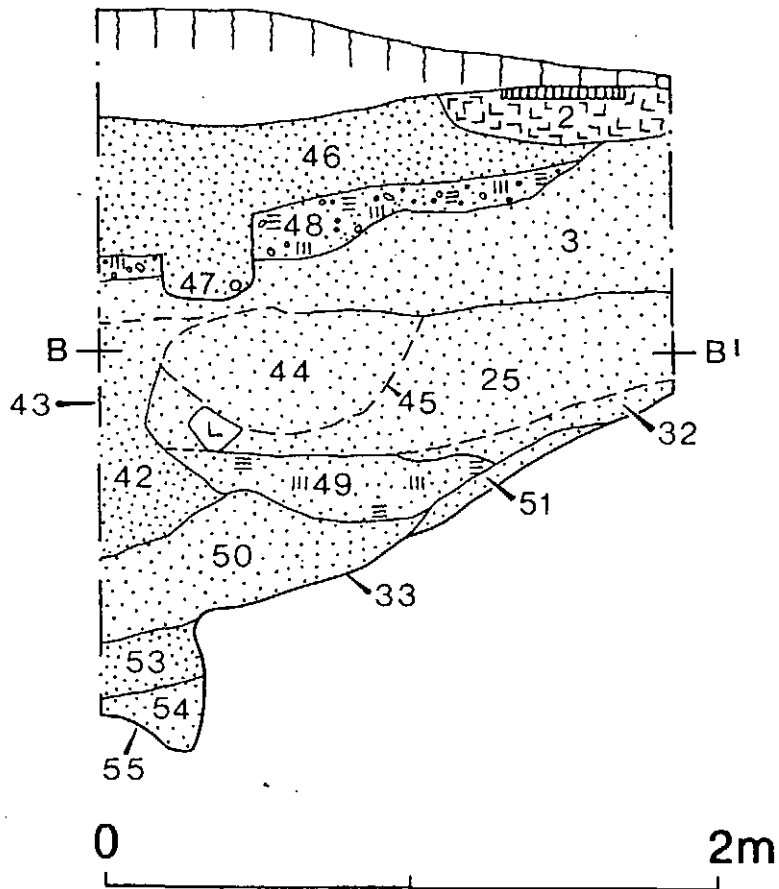


Fig 7: Egerton House, Brackley. Trench B: Section.

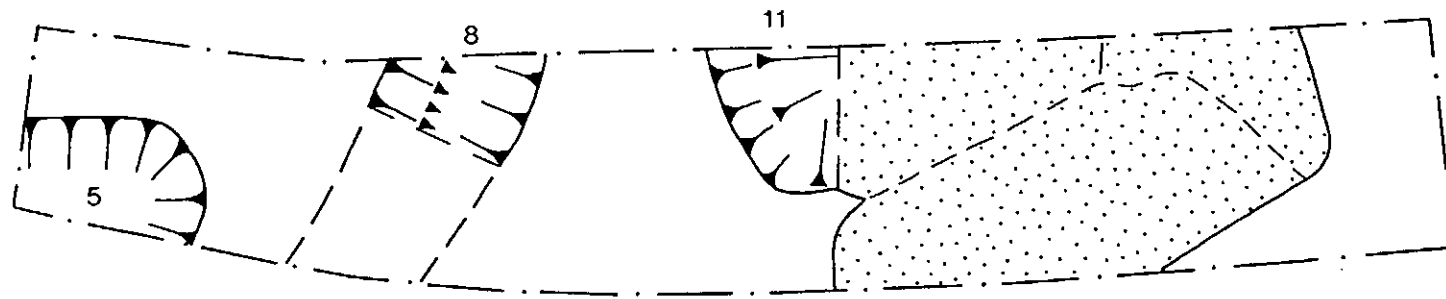
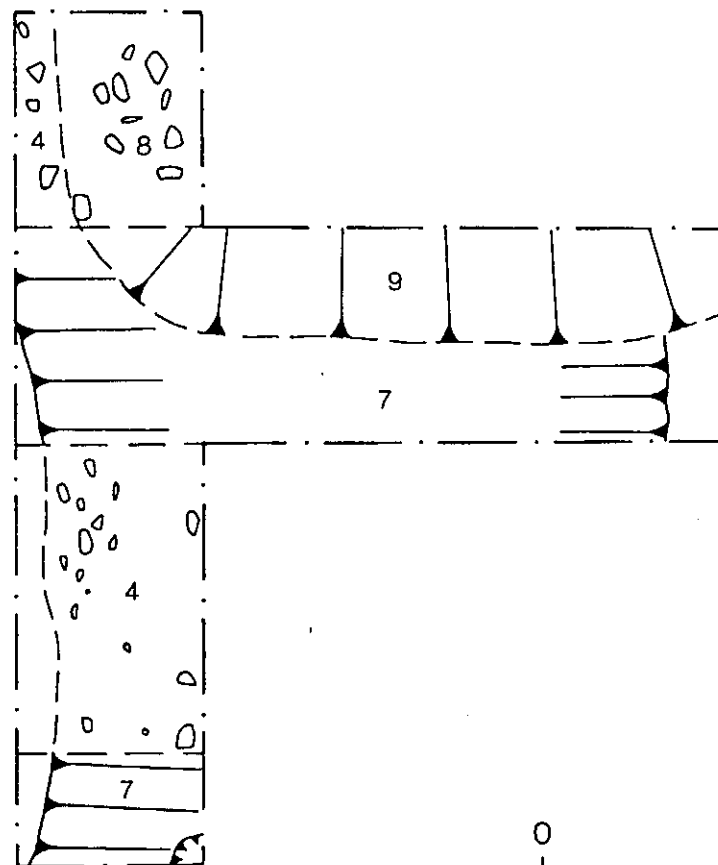


Fig 8: Egerton House, Brackley. Trench D: Plan.



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Fig 9: Egerton House, Brackley. Trench E: Plan.

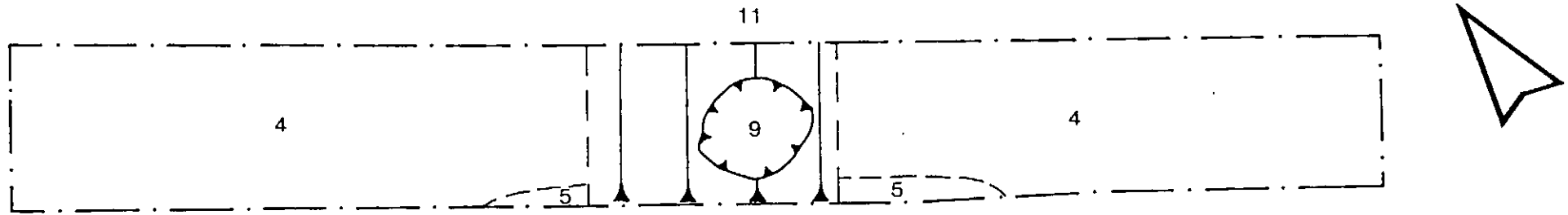


Fig 10: Egerton House, Brackley. Trench F: Plan.

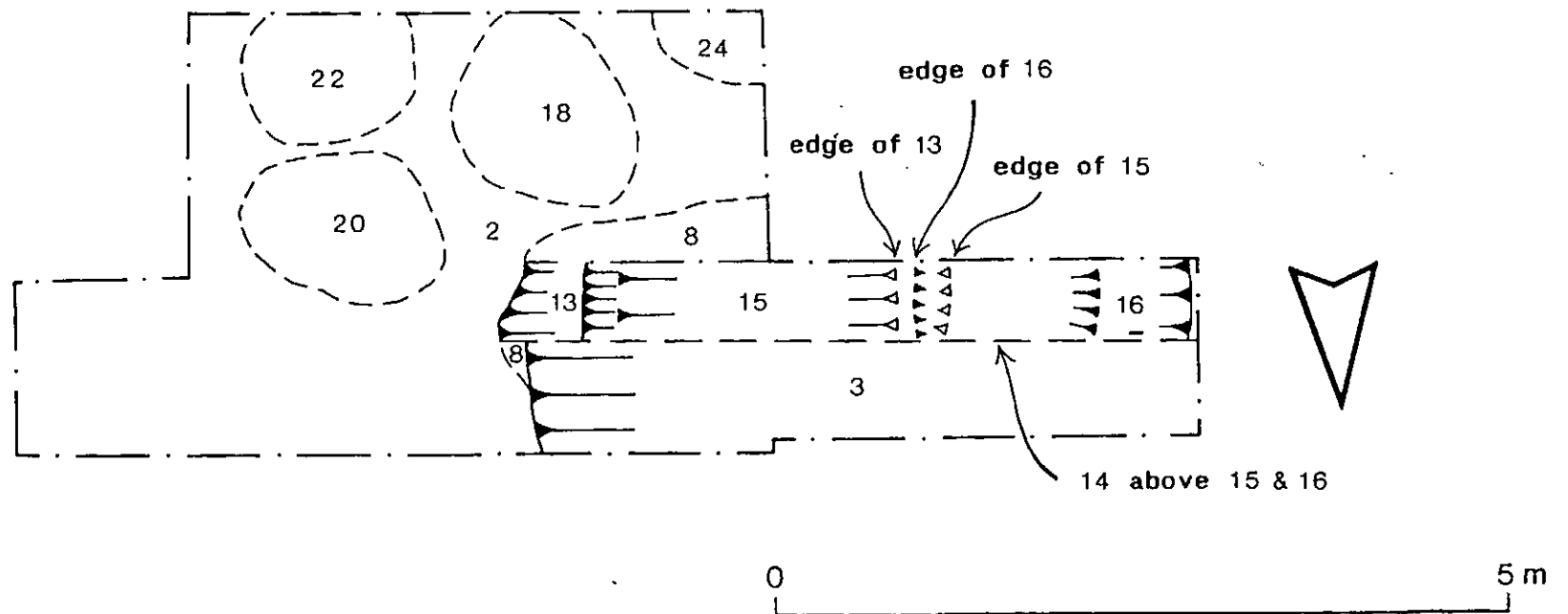
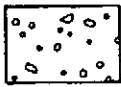


Fig 11: Egerton House, Brackley. Trench G: Plan.

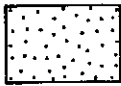
# Key to Plans and Sections



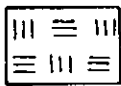
topsoil



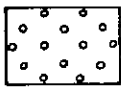
gravel



loam



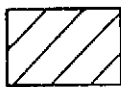
clay



compact limestone rubble



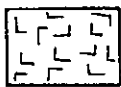
mortar



compact sand mortar gravel



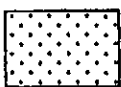
compact small gravel



hardcore



tarmac/concrete



disturbed areas

Author

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