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Excavations at Springfield Garth,

Norton, North Yorkshire.

January, 1991.

M.R. Stephens  
M.A.P.Ltd  
Malton, 12.3.91

PARISH  
3096.

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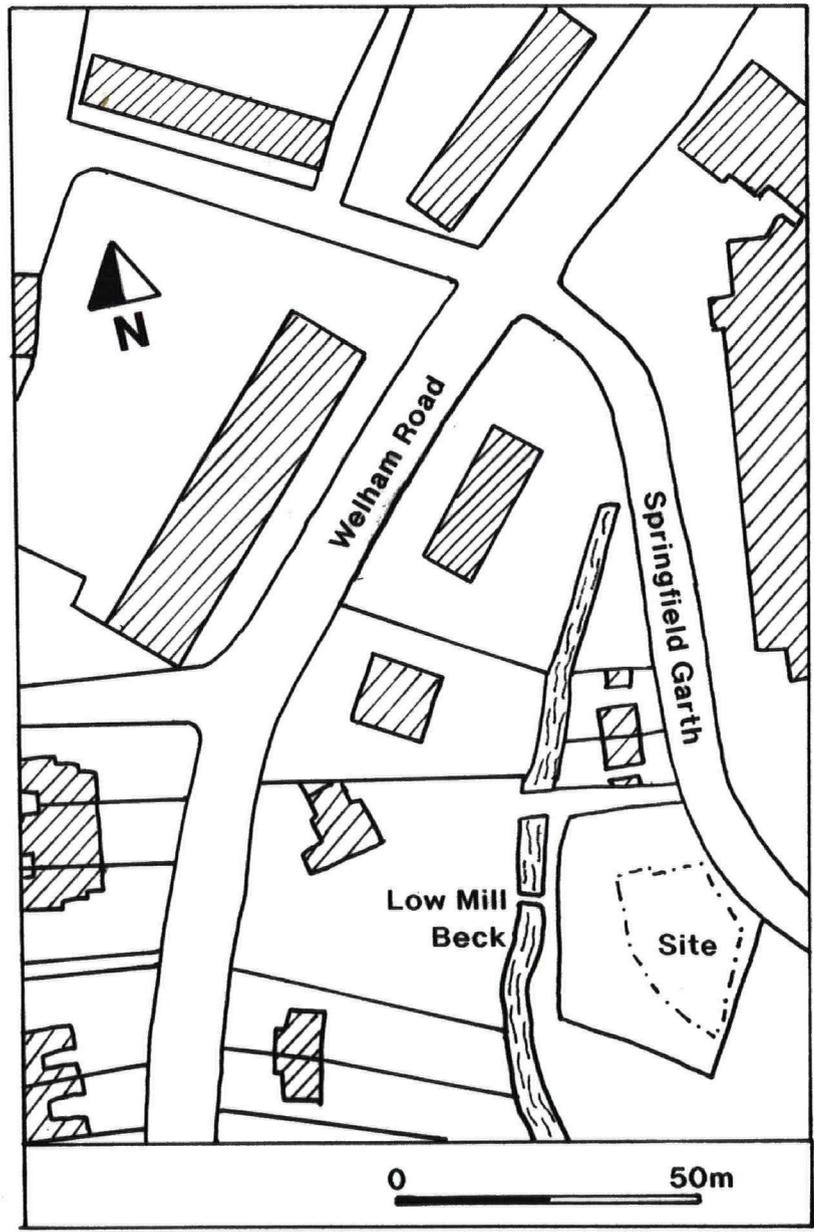


Fig. 1 Location Plan

Excavations at Springfield Garth, Norton; January 1991.

**Introduction**

An excavation and Watching Brief was carried out by M.A.P. at Springfield Garth, on an area of land to the east of Low Mill Beck, Norton, North Yorkshire, SE: 7908 7125 (Fig.1). The site had formerly been occupied by a paddock and out-buildings, and was threatened by the proposal erection of houses by S.Harrison (Builders) Ltd.

An archaeological constraint was laid on the area by NYCC, due to the potential sensitivity of the site in relation to previously discovered Romano-British remains in the vicinity.

The excavation and Watching Brief took place over two weeks in January, 1991, with the full co-operation of the developer. All work was funded by S.Harrison (Builders) Ltd.

CONDITION APPENDED

## **Excavation Methods**

The modern topsoil, together with a layer of ploughsoil or windblown material (0002) was removed by a machine with a ditching bucket under close archaeological supervision. The surface of the natural sandy gravel was shovel-scraped to fully reveal the features present. Segments of the features were excavated to provide full details of the development and dating of archaeological activity on the site.

Plans and sections were drawn, and a photographic record was taken in monochrome and colour transparency. Recording was by the continuous context system. At present the archive is housed at the M.A.P. premises at Malton.

No LOCATIONAL INFO / NO SITE GRID

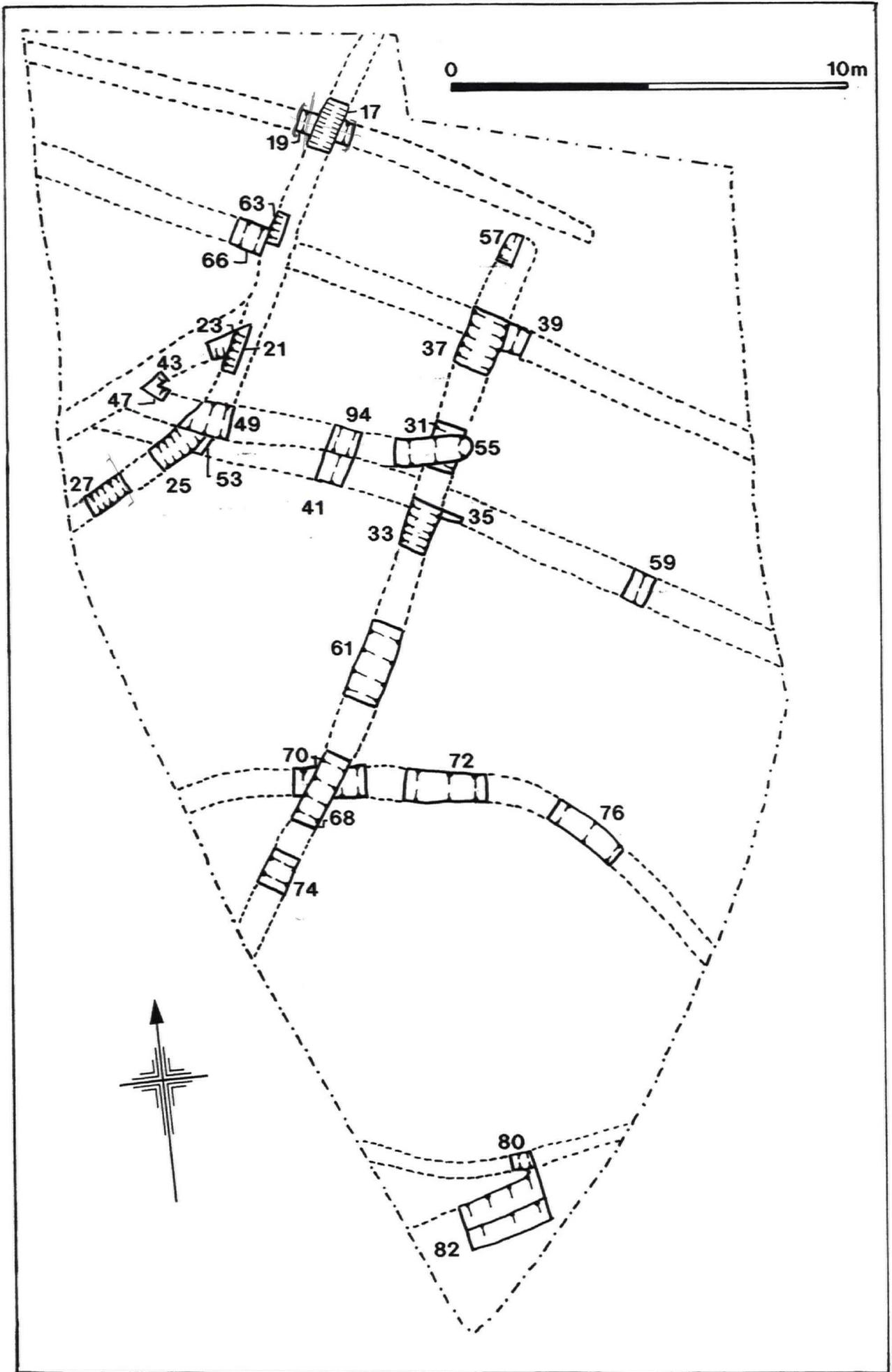


Fig. 2 Site Plan

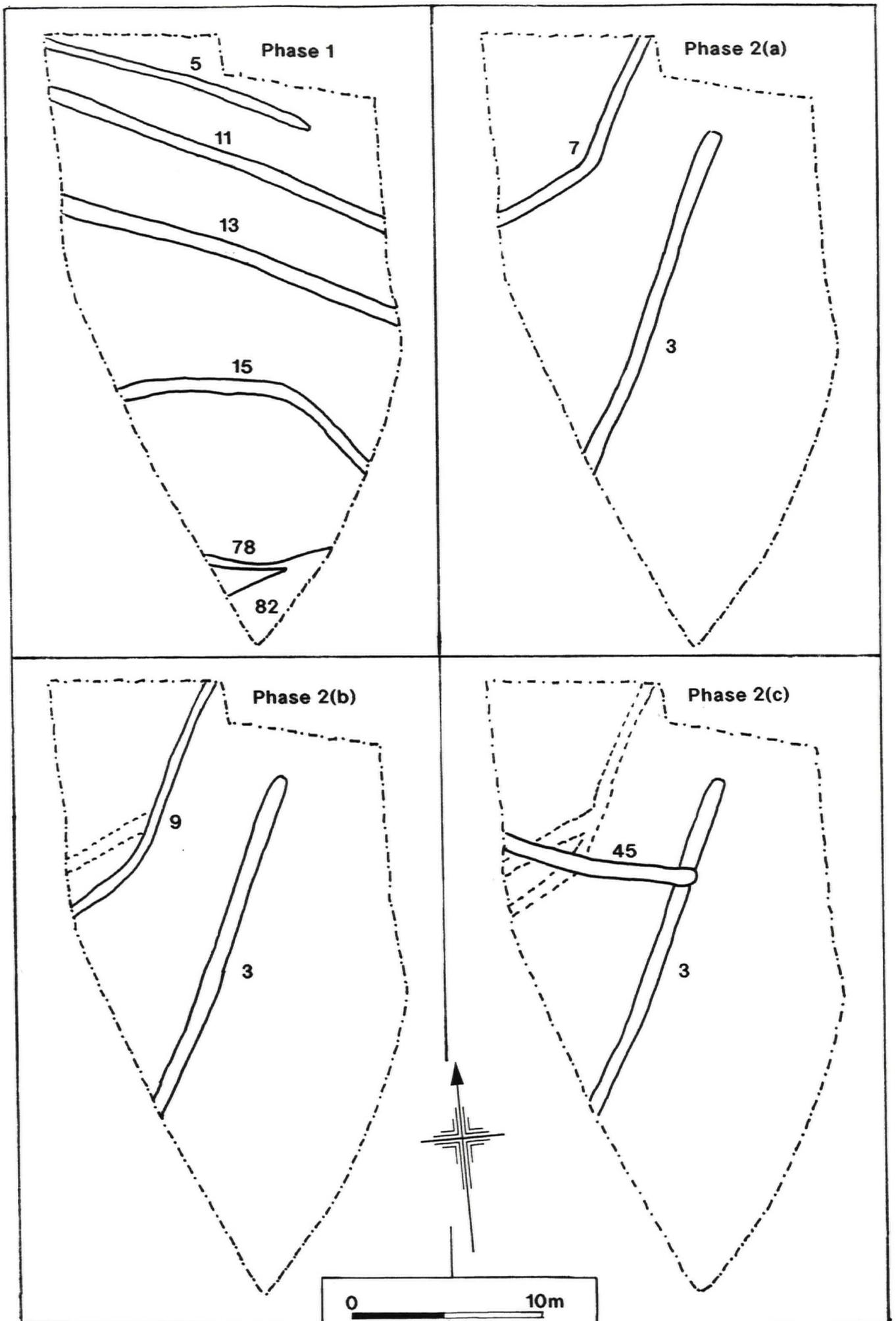


Fig. 3 Phase Plan

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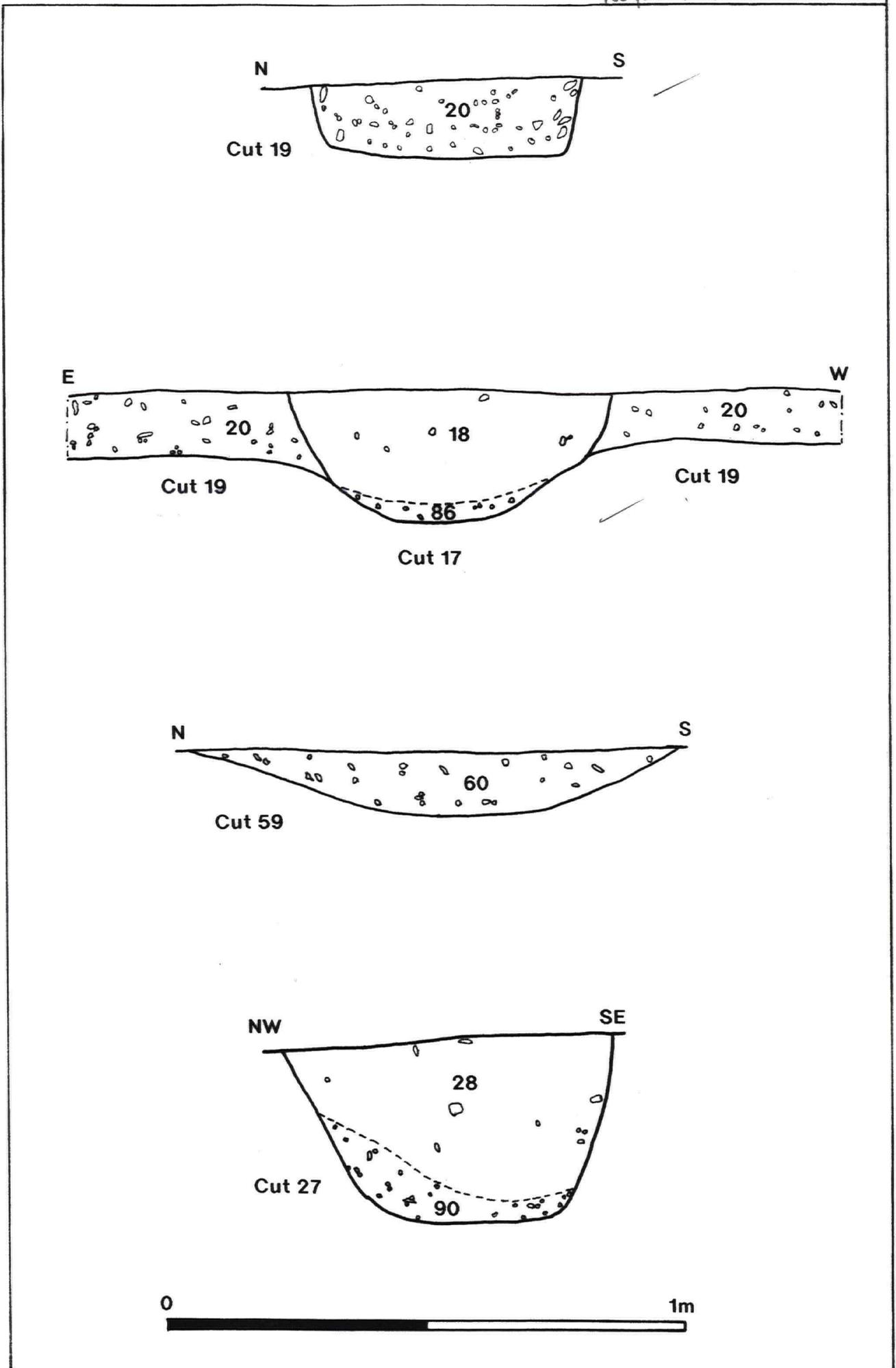


Fig. 4 Sections

## Excavation Results

The natural subsoil consisted of sandy, well-sorted, small gravels. During the cutting of the foundation trenches, the sandy gravel was shown to mantle bands of silty sands and clays. All of these deposits were apparently laid down by the forerunner of Low Mill Beck in post-glacial times.

The layer of accumulated ploughsoil/windblown material (0002) completely covered the features, and was overlain in turn by a layer of extremely silty modern topsoil (0001). *Nothing on sections to show depth of overburden*

The northern part of the site had been disturbed by the erection of modern outbuildings and service trenches. All traces of archaeological activity had been removed in this area. *This shd be shown on plan*

The archaeological features could be divided into two main phases, Phases 1 and 2, the latter being further subdivided into three periods: 2(a), (b) and (c) (Figs. 2 and 3).

### Phase 1

Phase 1 was represented by three ENE-WNW gullies, Master Cuts 5, 11 and 13 (Figs. 2 and 3). These gullies ran across the central part of the site on parallel alignments, and were situated c.4m apart. Gullies 5, 11 and 13 were demonstrated to be earlier than the NNE-SSW gullies, Master Cuts 3 and 7 that cut across them. *Section drawings*

Phase 1 also probably contained the curvilinear gullies 15 and 78, plus cut 82, that were situated at the south of the site (see discussion).

**Gully Cut Master 5** was excavated in a single segment, **Seg. Cut 19**, (Figs 2 and 4).

The segment had a width of 0.52m and a depth of 0.16m. The fill (20) consisted of a yellowish-grey silty, sandy loam, with inclusions of small gravel which constituted 25% of the total. 20 was cut by later Gully Cut Seg. 17, which was a subdivision of NNE-SSW Master Cut 7. There were no finds.

The excavated segments of **Gully Cut Master 11** consisted of Segment Cuts 66 and 39.

**Segment Cut 66** (Figs. 2 and 5) had a width of 0.65m and a depth of 0.07m. The fill was a yellowish-grey loamy, sandy gravel (0067). There were no finds. 67 was cut by later Gully Segment 63, which was a subdivision of NNE-SSW Gully Master Cut 7.

**Segment Cut 39** (Fig. 2) was 0.65m wide and had a depth of 0.04m. The profile was dished. The fill, 40, consisted of a yellowish-grey loamy gravel, which yielded no finds. 40 was cut by later Gully Segment 33.

**Gully Cut Master 13** was excavated in three segments, Segment Cuts 41, 53 and 59.

**Segment Cut 41** (Fig. 2) had a depth of 0.03m and a width of 0.82m. The profile was dished. The fill, 42, consisted of a yellowish-grey loamy gravel, from which no finds came. 42 was cut by 94, a segment of NNE-SSW Gully Cut Master 45. *No section*

**Segment Cut 53** (Fig. 2) had a width of 0.90m and a depth of 0.09m, giving a dished profile. The fill, 54, comprised a yellowish-grey, gravelly, sandy loam, which yielded no finds. 54 was cut by 25, a subdivision of SW-NE Gully Cut Master 9.

**Segment Cut 59** (Figs. 2 and 4) had a broad-U profile, a depth of 0.12m and a width of 0.96m. The yellowish-grey, sandy, loamy gravel that comprised the fill (60) contained no finds.

**Gully Master Cut 15** was of curvilinear plan and was excavated in three segments, Gully Segment Cuts 70, 72 and 76.

**Segment Cut 70** (Figs. 2 and 6) had a width of 0.70m and a depth of 0.22m. The profile was U-shaped. A dark yellowish-grey, sandy, silty loam (71) represented the fill. Finds consisted of two long-bone fragments and two small body sherds, one of Romano-British grey-ware and the other Medieval Gritty Ware (Appendix 1). Segment Fill 71 was cut by later Gully Segment Cut 68, a subdivision of SSW-NNE Gully Master Cut 3.

**Segment Cut 72** (Figs. 2 and 8) was 0.70m wide, 0.23m deep and had a U-shaped profile. The upper fill of the segment, 73, existed as a dark yellowish-grey, sandy, silty loam, which contained five Medieval Gritty Ware body sherds (Appendix 1). The basal fill, 103, consisted of yellowish-grey loamy gravel, 0.03m deep.

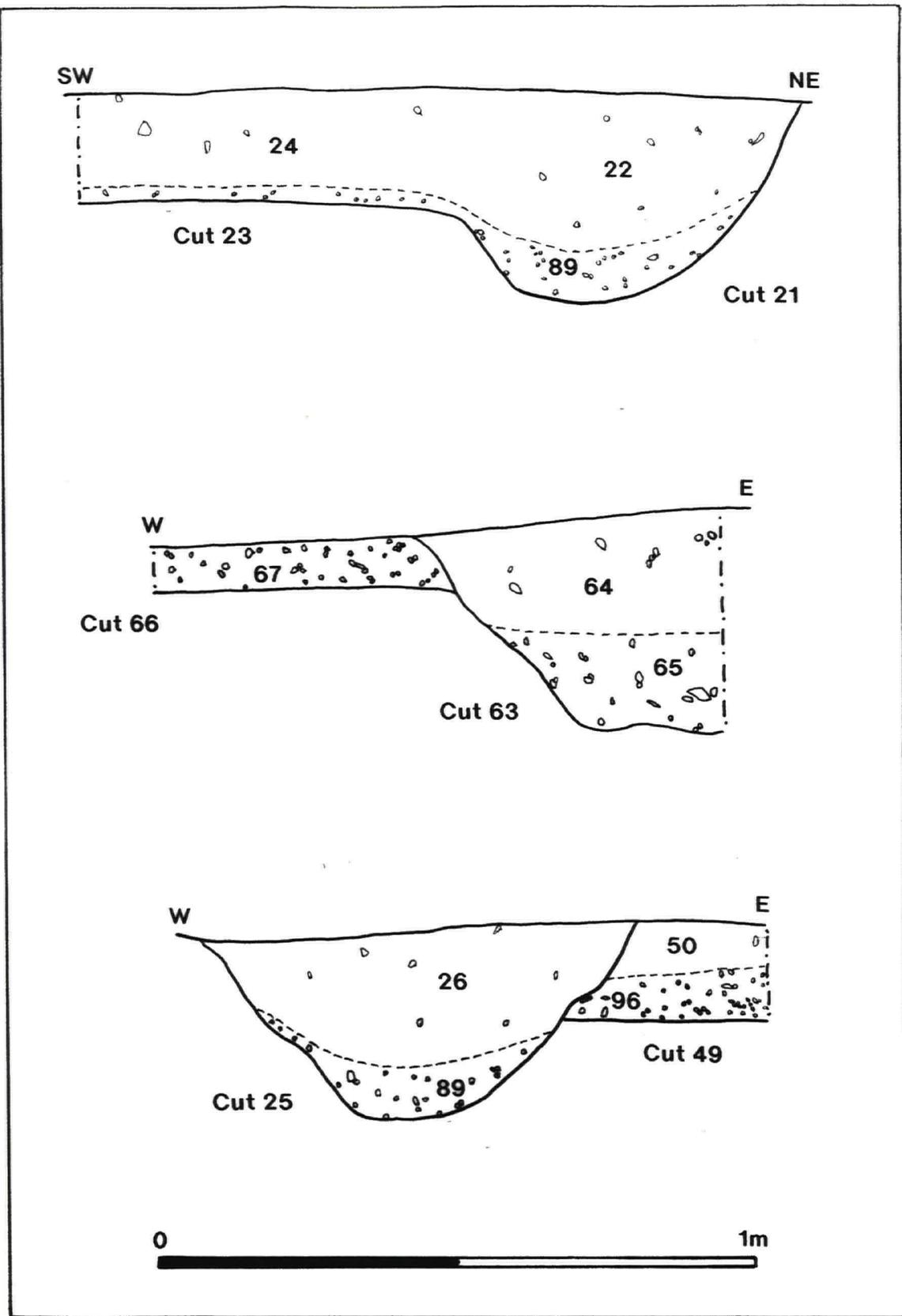


Fig. 5 Sections

**Segment Cut 76** (Figs. 2 and 8) had a broad-U profile, a width of 0.58m and a depth of 0.17m. 77, the fill, was a dark yellowish-grey silty loam. There were no finds.

**Gully Cut Master 78** was dug in a single segment, 80.

**Gully Segment 80** (Figs. 2 and 9) had a rounded-V profile, was 0.45m wide and 0.16m deep. The upper fill, 81, comprised a dark yellowish-grey clay loam. The lower fill, 100, was a yellowish-grey, gravelly, silty clay. The segment cut the fill of Feature Cut 82 along the southern edge.

**Feature Cut 82** (Figs. 2 and 9) was situated at the extreme southern edge of the excavation: only a small area was visible. A broad cut of dished profile, the feature had a depth of 0.25m. The feature was filled by 83, a dark yellowish-brown, loamy clay, which contained animal bone fragments.

#### **Phase 2(a)**

Phase 2(a) (Fig. 3) involved the digging of two gullies, Master Gully Cuts 3 and 7, on SSE-NNW alignments.

**Gully Cut Master 3** was excavated in six segments, Segment Cuts 33, 37, 57, 61, 68 and 74.

**Segment Cut 33** (Figs. 2 and 6) was of broad-U profile. The depth was 0.13m and the width 0.75m. The segment cut through the fill of earlier gully segment 35. 33 was filled by a dark-yellowish-grey, sandy, silty loam (34), which contained eroded Romano-British and Medieval sherds (Appendix 1).

**Segment Cut 37** (Figs. 2 and 7) was excavated at the junction with earlier gully segment 39. The profile was U-shaped. The width was 0.95m and the depth 0.19m. The upper fill consisted of a dark yellowish-grey, sandy, silty loam, 38, which contained animal bone fragments (Appendix 1). The basal fill was represented by a gravelly, dark yellowish-grey, silty, sandy loam, context 91.

**Segment Cut 57** (Figs. 2 and 7) was dug at the northern butt-end of Master Cut 3. The depth of the segment was 0.15m, the width 0.80m and the profile a broad-U. The fill existed as a dark yellowish-grey, silty, sandy loam, 58, which contained no finds.

**Segment Cut 61** (Figs. 2 and 6) was of broad-U profile and had a depth of 0.19m. The width was 0.90m. There were two fills. The upper fill, 62, consisted of a dark yellowish-grey, silty loam and contained Romano-British and Medieval sherds, along with animal bone fragments (Appendix 1). The lower fill consisted of a yellowish-grey silty clay loam, 97, which contained no finds.

**Segment Cut 68** (Figs. 2 and 6) was dug at the intersection with earlier gully segment cut 70. The width was 0.75m, and the profile was U-shaped with a depth of 0.20m. The fill comprised context 69, a dark yellowish-grey, sandy, silty loam. Finds consisted of a single small Medieval sherd (Appendix 1).

**Segment Cut 74** (Figs. 2 and 7) was the most southerly subdivision of 3. The profile was that of a rounded-V. The width was 0.75m and the depth 0.23m. The upper fill consisted of 75, a dark yellowish-grey, silty loam, which yielded a Medieval sherd and animal bone fragments (Appendix 1). 75 overlay 99, which was similar in texture, with the addition of peagrit and small gravel.

**Gully Master Cut 7** was excavated in four segments, 17, 23, 43 and 63.

**Segment Cut 17** (Figs. 2 and 4) was the most northerly, and cut the fill of earlier gully segment 19. 17 had a broad-U profile, with a width of 0.75m and a depth of 0.26m. The upper fill consisted of a dark yellowish-grey, sandy, silty loam, 18, which contained both Romano-British and Medieval sherds, along with animal bone fragments (Appendix 1). The base of the feature was filled by context 86, which consisted of a yellowish grey silty clay.

**Segment Cut 23** (Figs. 2 and 5) was of rounded-V profile, and had a depth of 0.20m. The width was 0.90m. Context 24, a dark yellowish-grey, silty, sandy loam, comprised the upper fill. 24 was cut by later gully segment 21. The base of the segment 23 was occupied by context 89, a yellowish-grey, gravelly, sandy loam.

**Segment Cut 43** (Fig. 2) was dug at the intersection with gully segment 47, which was later in date. The profile of 43 was dished and the depth was 0.15m. The width was 0.60m. The fill was represented by 44, a dark yellowish-brown, sandy, silty loam. There were no finds.

**Segment Cut 63** (Figs. 2 and 5) was of flat-based-V profile and had a depth of 0.40m. The width was 0.70m. The segment cut through the fill of earlier ENE-WSW gully segment 66. The upper

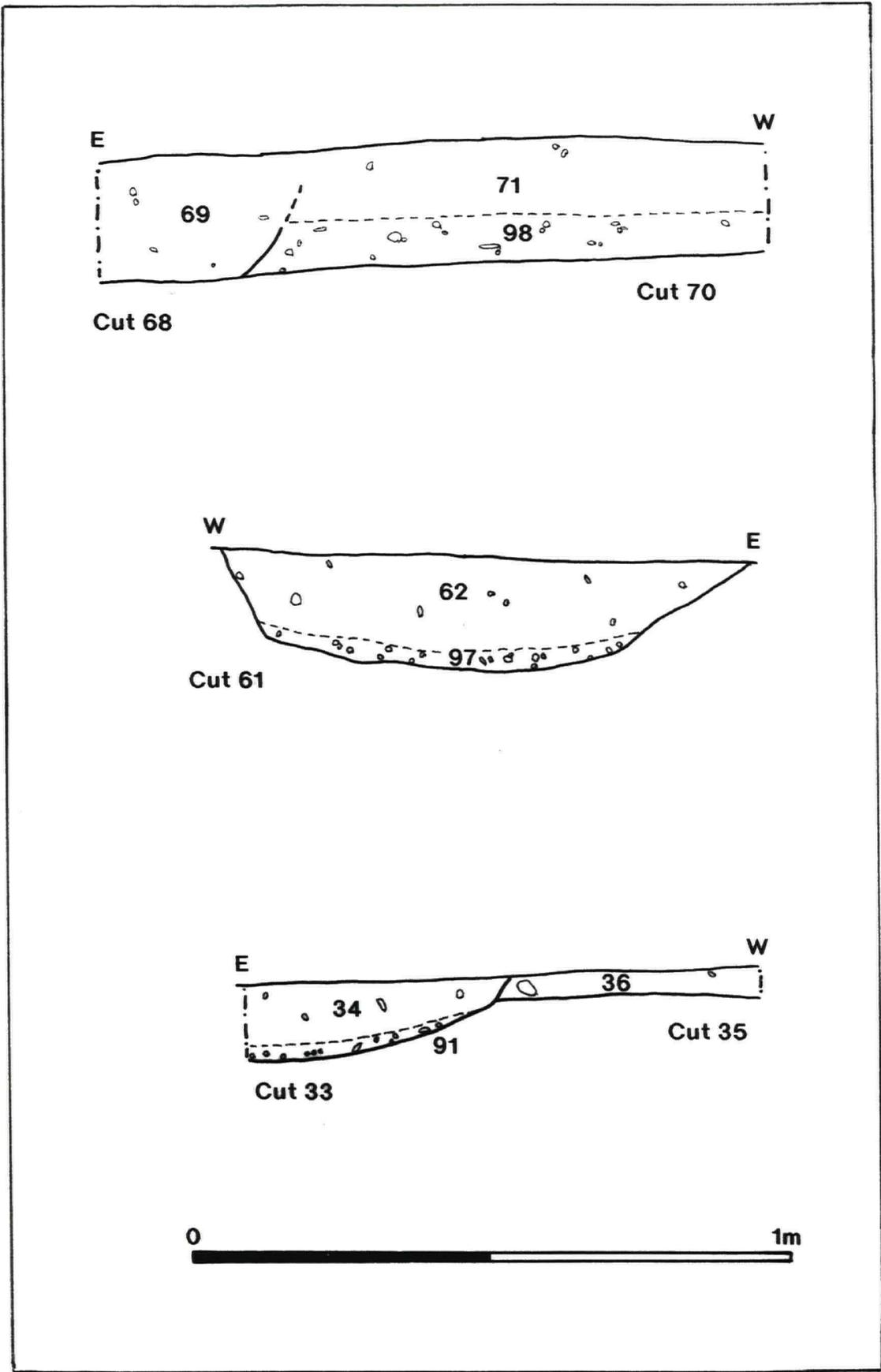


Fig. 6 Sections

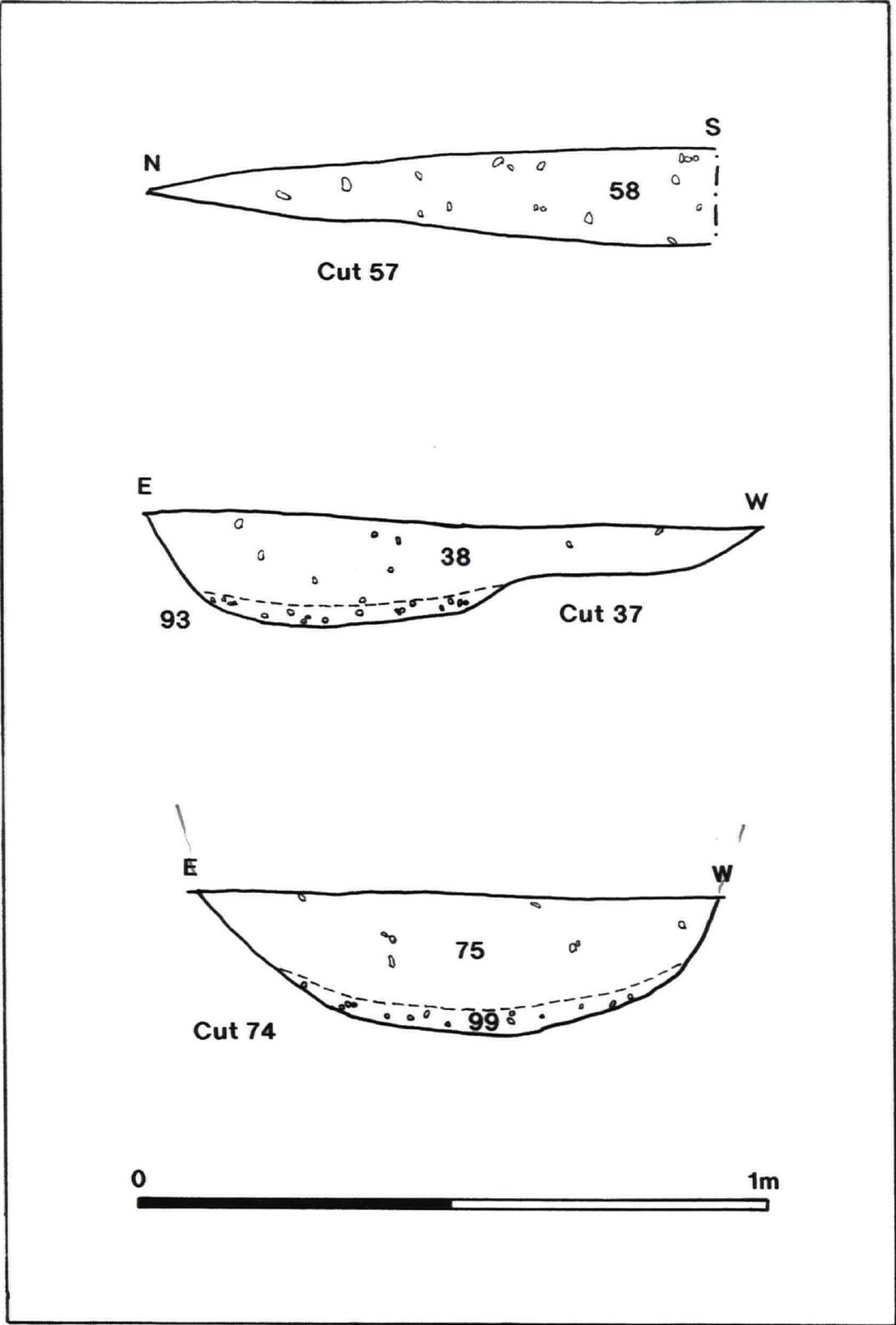


Fig. 7 Sections

part of 63 was filled by 64, a dark yellowish-brown, gravelly, silty loam. A Romano-British sherd was found in 64 (Appendix 1). Below 64 occurred 65, a dark yellowish-brown, silty, gravelly loam, which also contained a Romano-British sherd (Appendix 1).

#### Phase 2(b)

This phase (Fig. 3) involved the cutting of **Gully Master Cut 9**, slightly to the south-east of, and apparently replacing, the south-western 6m of earlier Gully Master 7. Three segments were dug, Gully Segment Cuts 21, 25 and 27.

**Segment Cut 21** (Figs. 2 and 5) was dug at the intersection with earlier gully segment 23. The profile was a rounded-V shape, and the depth 0.33m. The segment was 0.65m wide. Context 21 represented the upper fill, existing as a dark yellowish-brown, silty, sandy loam. Finds from 21 consisted of single sherds of both Romano-British and Medieval pottery, plus animal bone fragments (Appendix 1). Underlying 21, occurred 88, a yellowish-brown, sandy, silty loam with small gravel and pea-grit inclusions.

**Segment Cut 25** (Figs. 2 and 5) was excavated at the junction with earlier gully segment 49 and later gully segment 53. 25 had a width of 0.75m, a depth of 0.35m and a rounded-V profile. The upper fill consisted of 26, a dark yellowish-brown, sandy, silty loam, containing five small Romano-British sherds, plus one Medieval sherd and animal bone fragments (Appendix 1). 89, a 0.10m deep context, underlay 26 and existed as a yellowish-brown sandy loam which filled the base of the segment

**Gully Segment Cut 27** had a U-shaped profile, with a depth of 0.34m. The width was 0.65m. There were two fills. The upper fill, 28, existed as a dark yellowish-brown, sandy, silty loam and contained animal bone fragments, plus a fourth century bronze coin (Appendix 1). The basal fill, 90, was a yellowish-brown, sandy, silty loam with small gravel and pea-grit inclusions.

#### Phase 2(c)

This phase (Fig. 3) represented a further modification to the system of gullies 3, 7 and 9. **Gully Master Cut 45** was dug on a W-E alignment, apparently linking 7 with 3. Four segments were excavated, 47, 49, 55 and 94.

**Gully Segment Cut 47** (Fig. 2) was later in date to segment 43. The profile was a broad-U, the depth 0.20m and the width 0.75m. A dark yellowish-brown, sandy, silty loam (48) comprised the fill and contained animal bone fragments (Appendix 1).

**Gully Segment Cut 49** (Figs. 2 and 5) cut through the fill of earlier segment 25. The depth of 45 was 0.17m, and the width 0.72m, with a broad-U profile. Context 50, the fill, was a yellowish-grey, sandy, silty loam, which contained a single Medieval sherd and animal bone fragments (Appendix 1).

**Gully Segment Cut 94** (Figs. 2 and 8) was dug to show the relationship with gully segment 41, which proved to be earlier. 94 was of U-shaped profile and had a depth of 0.19m. The width was 0.70m. The fill, 95, was a dark yellowish-grey, sandy, silty loam, and contained no finds.

Gully Master Cut 45 butted out c.0.10m east of the eastern edge of earlier gully segment 31. The butt-end was excavated as **Gully Segment Cut 55** (Figs. 2 and 8). This segment had a dish profile, with a depth of 0.09m; the width was 0.75m. Context 56 comprised the fill and existed as a dark yellowish-grey, sandy, silty loam. There were no finds.

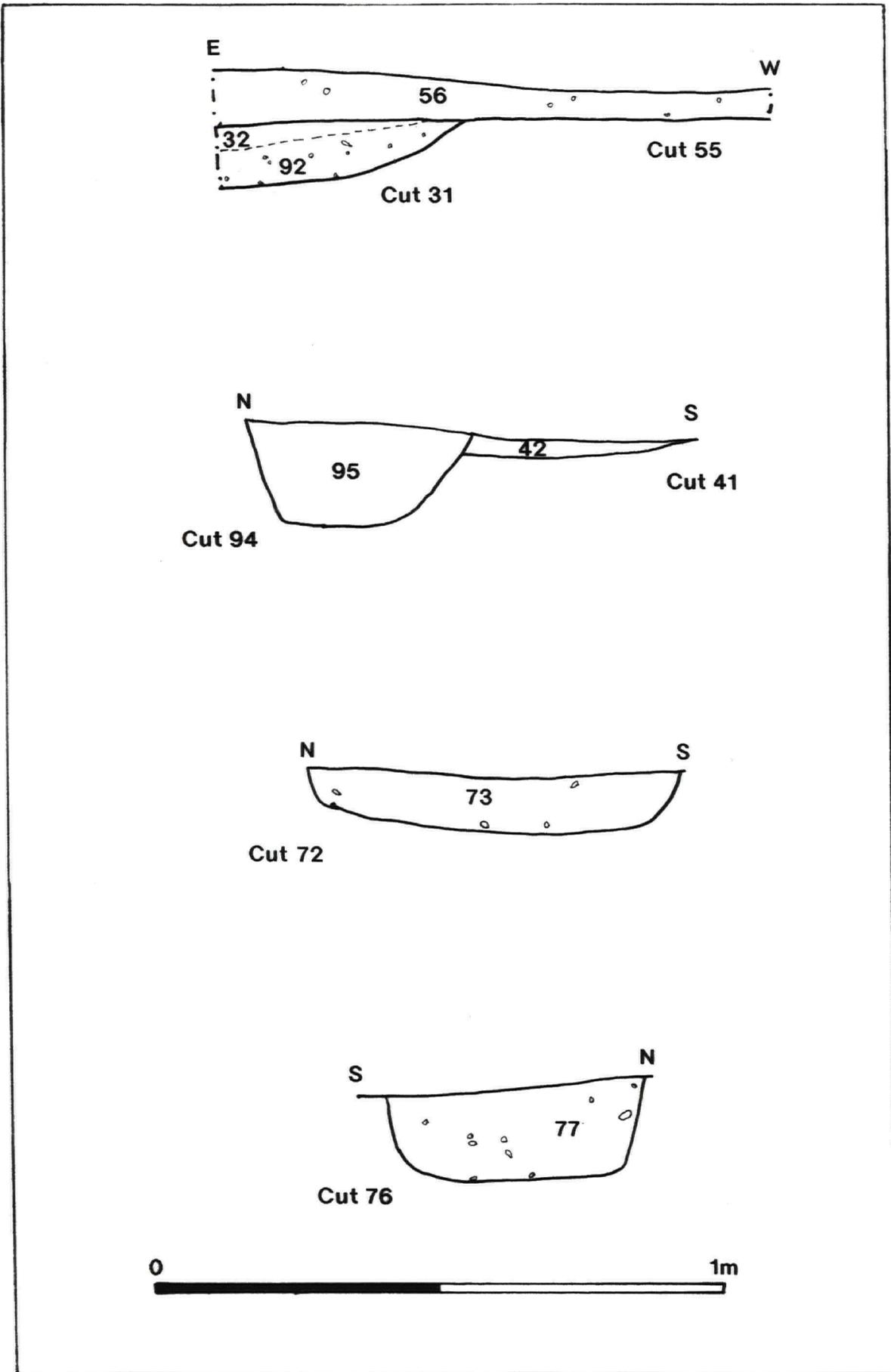


Fig. 8 Sections

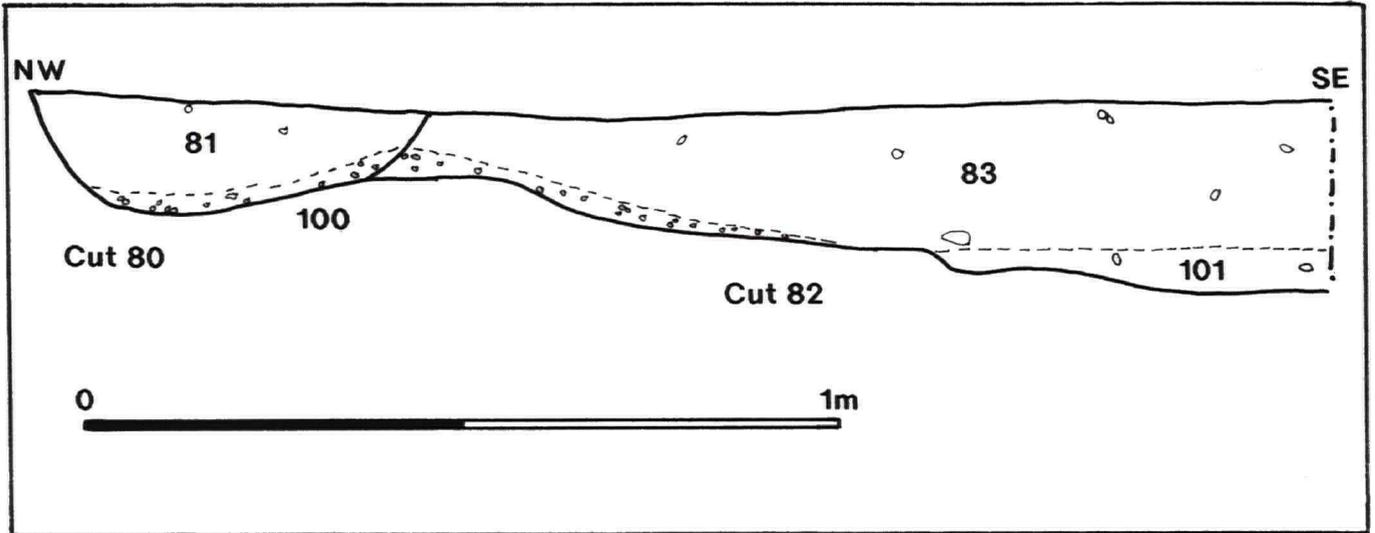


Fig. 9 Section

## Discussion

The parallel course of the three gullies, 5, 11 and 13, which crossed the northern part of the site during Phase 1, suggests that they relate to a planned, or at least organised arrangement. It is likely that they relate to a Medieval Rig and Furrow field system, the shallow gullies representing the bases of the furrows. No finds were made in the excavated segments, but the later gullies cutting through them are dateable by the pottery to the 12th or early 13th century. Clearly, if Rig and Furrow is represented, then the field system must relate to the early Medieval period.

At the south of the site, the curvilinear gullies, master cuts 15 and 78, along with the large feature 82, appear to relate to Phase 1. The fill of 15 was cut by 3, as were the fills of 11 and 13. Furthermore, the spatial distribution of the two curvilinear gullies, with no overlap with the three parallel examples, would place them in the same broad phase.

The dark yellowish-grey silty fills of 15 and 78 contrasted to the more gravelly and sandy fills of 5, 11 and 13. This suggests a difference in function, with the former possibly existing as open drains. In addition, 15 may have demarcated the large feature 82. The function and origin of 82 remain obscure, not least because only a small part of the feature was visible. The texture of the fill, 83, a yellowish-grey clay suggests a natural origin, though the presence of animal bone within it shows that it silted up adjacent to human activity. A number of springs are marked on early O.S. maps in this area, and feature 82 could represent one of them.

Phase 2(a) involved a complete change in activity over the site. The NNE-SSW gullies discussed above were replaced by SSW-NNE gullies 3 and 7. Subsequently, in Phase 2(b) the partial silting-up of 7 necessitated the cutting of 9, which replaced the south-western line of 7. At a later stage, Phase 2(c), a west-east gully, Segment Cut 45, linked 7 and 9 with 3, and this might imply that the former had become disused.

The silty fills of these Phase 2 gullies strongly suggests that their function was to act as drainage ditches and carry surface run-off. As the site is bounded by Low Mill Beck to the west, the necessity for adequate drainage is clear.

One possible interpretation for the events of Phase 2 is that a rise in the water table, perhaps coupled with a change (man-made or otherwise) in the course of Low Mill Beck, necessitated a switch in land use from arable to rough grazing on the increasingly boggy ground.

Romano-British material was found within the Phase 2 gullies, but the latest finds, Medieval Gritty Ware sherds, suggest a 12th or early 13th century date.

## Conclusions

A probable Rig and Furrow field system of early Medieval date, existed adjacent to a spring, the area of the latter being apparently cordoned off by a curvilinear gully (Phase 1 – arable). At a later stage the earlier system was replaced by two gullies on a radically changed alignment (Phase 2(a) – ?pastoral). The western of these gullies was subject to a series of modifications (Phases 2(b) and (c)).

Romano-British activity in the general area was attested by the presence of sherds of that date; however no features could be ascribed to the Romano-British period. The Medieval Gritty Ware sherds from the Phase 2 ditches, the latest finds from the excavation, suggest that activity ceased on the site during the early 13th century.

The area remained open ground until recent times when out-buildings were erected on the northern part of the site, followed by the present development.

## Appendix 1 – Finds Catalogue

### Context 2 (Overall Layer)

1 rim sherd from a Gritty Ware bowl or ?Lid. Fumed exterior.

### Context 8 (Gully Fill Master)

1 body sherd of ? Crambeck grey ware. Wheel-thrown, hard, metallic fabric.

### Context 16 (Gully Fill Master)

1 body sherd of Gritty Ware; orange fabric.

### Context 18 (Gully Fill Seg.)

1 body sherd of Crambeck type; hard, gritty fabric, grey exterior, oxidized orange core.

1 body sherd, decorated Samian, fragment of ovolo remaining.

1 body sherd R-B grey ware.

1 rim sherd Gritty Ware, light reddish-yellow fabric, squared rim.

1 rim and shoulder sherd Gritty Ware; flared rim, orange to buff surfaces, grey core.

1 body sherd Gritty Ware, buff surfaces, grey core.

1 frag. of brick/tile, sandy, orange fabric.

1 fragmentary sheep mandible, 2 teeth.

3 other animal bone frags.

### Context 22 (Gully Fill Seg.)

1 body sherd, hard R-B sandy ware, grey fabric.

1 clubbed-rim sherd from a Gritty Ware cooking pot or jar; dk. grey fabric.

1 frag. of brick/tile, hard, sandy fabric.

1 long bone frag.

1 frag. of sheep pelvis.

1 cow tooth.

2 other animal bone frags.

### Context 24 (Gully Fill Seg.)

1 tile frag. in a hard, sandy, orange fabric with grey core.

### Context 26 (Gully Fill Seg.)

1 small body sherd R-B colour-coated ware.

1 plain rim sherd, R-B calcite-gritted ware, ?Knapton.

1 fine rim sherd, small jar in R-B grey ware.

1 body sherd R-B grey ware.

1 small body sherd, R-B black-burnished type fabric.

1 body sherd Gritty Ware, orange/buff fabric.

7 animal bone frags.

### Context 28 (Gully Fill Seg.)

1 Ae coin; R-B 4th century, largely illegible.

1 hard brick/tile frag.

1 sheep sacrum.

4 other animal bone frags.

**Context 30 (Modern Pit Fill)**

2 animal skull frags.

1 horn-core frag.

1 animal long-bone frag.

**Context 32 (Gully Fill Seg.)**

1 sherd hard, sandy R-B black-burnished type.

1 sheep horn-core frag.

**Context 34 (Gully Fill Seg.)**

1 very eroded body sherd, R-B grey ware.

1 small body sherd Gritty Ware, orange surface, grey core.

3 animal long-bone frags.

**Context 38 (Gully Fill Seg.)**

1 complete adult sheep tibia.

1 scapula frag.

**Context 48 (Gully Fill Seg.)**

5 animal bone frags.

**Context 50 (Gully Fill Seg.)**

1 sherd Gritty Ware; orange fabric, very eroded.

2 horn-core frags.

1 animal long-bone frag.

**Context 62 (Gully Fill Seg.)**

1 rim sherd of a R-B jar in a hard, sandy fabric; buff surfaces, grey core.

1 small body sherd from a R-B colour-coat beaker or jar.

2 sherds of Gritty Ware, orange fabric, 1 with grey core.

1 small frag. of brick or tile.

8 animal bone frags.

1 sheep tooth

1 almost complete adult horse scapula.

**Context 64 (Gully Fill Seg.)**

1 body sherd of R-B Knapton ware.

**Context 65 (Gully Fill Seg.)**

1 rim sherd from a R-B jar in a hard sandy fabric.

**Context 69 (Gully Fill Seg.)**

1 small body sherd of Gritty Ware, orange fabric.

**Context 71 (Gully Fill Seg.)**

1 body sherd of R-B grey ware.

1 small Gritty Ware body sherd.

2 animal long bone frags.

**Context 73 (Gully Fill Seg.)**

5 Gritty Ware sherds; 2 orange, 3 reduced and grey.

**Context 75 (Gully Fill Seg.)**

1 Gritty Ware body sherd.

1 cow rib frag.

1 lamb rib frag.

3 other animal bone frags.

**Context 83 (Feature Fill)**

1 adult sheep tibia frag.

1 sheep vertebra.

1 frag. cow humerus.

1 frag. cow tibia.

1 cow tooth.

4 other bone frags.