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**Ponderosa Caravan Park, Boroughbridge,  
North Yorkshire**

An Archaeological Evaluation

*April 1997*

CLIENT

Mike Griffiths and Associates

**Ponderosa Caravan Park, Boroughbridge, North Yorkshire**

*An Archaeological Evaluation*

*By*

*Alan Hunter Blair*

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## 1. Summary

### *Client*

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### *Project Supervision*

Project Manager: Colm Moloney BA MIFA FSA(Scot)  
Excavation Supervisor: Alan Hunter Blair

### *Objectives*

The objective of the evaluation was to establish the extent, character, condition and date of any archaeological remains on the site prior to development.

### *Results*

A total of five trenches were excavated during the evaluation. Four of these were found to contain a diversity of archaeological features, and a limited assemblage of varying finds, indicating that the site could have been in use from prehistoric times, through to the post-medieval period. The most significant feature consisted of a roughly cobbled road/trackway which ran from north-east to south-west across the entire site.

## 2. Introduction (Fig. 1)

The site covered an area of 2.55ha of pasture located to the south of Boroughbridge and occupies land previously used as a caravan site by the Ponderosa Caravan Park. It is enclosed to the east by the A6055 and to the west by the A1. Mature hedgerow forms its northern and southern boundaries. The site is presently being developed as housing.

## 3. Method

Initially a watching brief was commissioned between the 26th and the 28th of November 1996. This consisted of the monitoring of ground disturbance of a house plot which was being excavated at the south-west corner of the site. Various anomalies were excavated but were found to be of geological origin. During January and February 1997 a further stage of work was commissioned involving trial trenching. Initially two trial trenches were positioned in areas of the site undergoing development. Trench 1 on house plot 44, Trench B along the course of informal accessway 3. After an on-site meeting, with the consultant archaeologist Mike Griffiths on the 10th of February, it was decided to increase the number of trenches to five in order to establish the extent of a particular linear archaeological feature discovered in Trench B. The resulting evaluation took place between 29/1/97 and 14/2/97 with up to four archaeologists present on site.

The five trenches were machine excavated by a JCB3CX using a wide toothless ditching bucket under archaeological supervision (Fig. 1). Within the trenches potential archaeological features were recorded photographically (black and white print and colour slide film) and were drawn in plan and section at scales of 1:10, 1:20, or 1:50, as appropriate. In this report the context number for the cut of a feature has been indicated by the letter F, preceding the number in the text, and a box around the number on the drawings. The location and extent of the trenches were recorded by instrument survey using a Geodimeter 600 Series Total Station Theodolite.

## 4. Results

### *Trench 1*

Trench 1, which was orientated east to west, measured 10m x 7m and revealed two probably natural features. The first, F001, comprised an irregular linear feature 3.4m long by 0.75m wide and 0.19m deep, aligned on a north-east to south-west axis. A segment was excavated through this feature at its north-east end. The fill, 002, a firm sandy silty clay, contained no obvious inclusions and no datable material was recovered during excavation. The second feature, F003, was linear in plan and measured 4m in length from where it butt-ended in the south-west corner of the trench to where it left the trench under the northern baulk. It measured 1.25m wide and 0.32m at its deepest point. Two segments were excavated through this feature and two very degraded pottery sherds were recovered from within its fill, 004, a firm sandy silt. These consisted of a Roman greyware chip and a possible sherd of Rheinzabern samian (Evans 1997). Given the small overall area of the trench and the rather vestigial condition of these two features it was unclear whether they were of anthropogenic or natural origin. The most likely interpretation is that they are the result of animal activity.

### *Trench A (Fig.3)*

Trench A measured 11m x 2m and was orientated north-south. It contained two archaeological features which were initially interpreted as geological anomalies but identified in section as archaeologically significant. The first, 110, was situated at the northern end of the trench, and comprised of a spread of gravel and small cobbles <150mm in diameter, bound by a firm grey sandy clay. This deposit traversed the width of the trench on an east to west alignment and continued beneath the baulks to the north, east and west and was found to have been laid on top of a sandy-clay natural. It measured 5.6m wide and had a maximum depth of 0.20m. A linear feature, ditch 104, which measured 0.9m wide and 0.38m deep, was recorded 3m south of the cobble deposit to which it was parallel. These may prove to be contemporary although no datable material was recovered from either of these features during excavation and their relationship therefore remains inconclusive at this point.

### *Trench B (Fig.2)*

Trench B measured 50m x 5m and was orientated north to south. Within this trench a number of archaeological features were recorded. The most significant was the continuation of the linear cobble/gravel spread 110 already observed in Trench A, although in Trench B it was possible to establish the full extent and character of this feature (204). Here it measured 8.4m wide, traversed the width of the trench on roughly an east to west alignment, and continued under the baulks. A hand-dug section was excavated through this feature against the western baulk which determined the depth as a maximum of 0.26m. The cobbles were bonded by and laid on top of a very firm grey silty clay. A very gentle camber was seen in the profile of this deposit, probably caused by a number of larger cobbles < 300mm in diameter, concentrated towards the centre. Towards the northern edge of this deposit, graded gravel/pebbles and pea gravel overlay smaller cobbles and formed a metallated surface. Finds consisted of two metal (probably bronze) objects, and a quantity of undiagnostic tile/brick fragments.

Two ditches were recorded running parallel either side of the cobbled surface. The first ditch (F206) ran parallel at a distance of 1.5m to the north of the cobbles and measured 1m wide and 0.55m deep. It contained a single fill of brown/grey sandy clay with occasional flecks of charcoal and infrequent flecks of very degraded pot/tile. The second ditch (F200) lay at a distance of 1.5m to the south of the cobbles and measured 0.6m wide and 0.18m deep. This contained a single fill of a brown sandy clay with similar inclusions to that of the fill of ditch F260.

A further two ditches were recorded in Trench B. The first, ditch F219, diagonally traversed the length of the trench, commencing approximately 8m south of the cobbled surface, and leaving the trench through its south-east corner. Three box-sections were excavated through this feature which measured 32m in length by 1.1m wide and 0.5m deep. No datable material was recovered from the fill which consisted of a firm pale yellow clay with patchy blue/grey mottling throughout. Ditch F219 appeared to have been re-cut by a shallower narrower ditch (F202), which contained a single fill of grey silty clay. It measured 36m in length by 0.7m wide and 0.35m deep but gradually reduced in size to 0.25m wide and 0.1m deep at its northern end. Here it intersected with ditch F200 close to the west baulk. A segment was excavated at this intersection which suggested that ditch F200 cut, and is therefore more recent than, ditch F202.

The last feature of possible archaeological significance comprised of a small post-hole (F224) which measured 0.2m in diameter and was 0.1m deep. This was filled by a loose, coarse sandy clay with no conspicuous inclusions. Given that this post-hole was an isolated feature within a sizable area of excavation it is possible that it may have been of a more transient nature than

the other features, possibly associated with more recent use of the site as a caravan park. Six fragments of unstratified pottery were recovered from Trench B. These comprised four undiagnostic medieval sherds and two Roman sandy greyware bodysherds (Evans 1997).

#### *Trench C*

Trench C was aligned north to south and measured 23m x 2m. Five features were recorded within this trench. The most substantial related to the cobbled surface unearthed in Trench A (110) and Trench B (204) and is probably a continuation of this feature extending to the west. In this trench it was represented by two cobble/gravel surfaces. The first, 302, originated at the mid-point of the length of the trench and continued under the baulks to the east and west. It measured 4.5m wide. The second, 306, was situated 5m to the north of 302, and measured 2.2m wide. Again this continued under the baulks to the east and west. These two surfaces survived well in parts, with areas of metalling still visible on both. Two parallel linear depressions (307/308), with irregular U-shaped profiles, set apart by a distance of 1.4m, were observed traversing cobble surface 306 from east to west. They measured approximately 0.15m-0.2m wide and were 0.1m deep. A single depression of similar dimensions was recorded traversing the cobbles to the south (311). A ditch (F309) situated 0.8m north of, and running parallel to, the northern edge of cobble surface 302 was excavated to a depth of 0.4m. This measured 1m wide and contained a single fill of brown loamy sand devoid of inclusions. A second linear feature (301) was recorded running parallel to, and 3m south of, cobble surface 302. This was clearly visible in plan and had a box-section excavated across it. It was impossible to discern any visible sign of a cut for this feature, initially perceived as a ditch, in the section. The final feature, possibly of archaeological origin, was located in the south-east corner of the trench and was found to be in a rather vestigial condition. A shallow, loose sandy loam fill with infrequent flecks of tile and charcoal lay in a north-south cut (F312) which was 0.5m wide and less than 0.1m deep. This was recorded over a distance of 2.5m.

#### *Trench D*

Trench D was aligned north to south and measured 37m x 2m. It contained two archaeological features and a further two features of rather dubious origin. The first archaeological feature was located at the north end of the trench and comprised of a shallow ditch (F406). This measured 1m wide and 0.4m deep and contained two fills. The primary fill (410) was 0.03-0.05m deep and consisted of a firm grey/brown silty clay with no inclusions. The secondary fill (407) consisted of a grey clay with iron staining throughout. Two diagnostic sherds of pottery were recovered from this fill and these have been identified as having derived from a Nene Valley colour-coated ware bowl with a triangular sectioned rim. This dates to the later 3rd to early 4th century and is an unusually early example of this bowl type in the north (Evans 1997). The second feature was found 1.3m south of ditch F406. A sub-rectangular cut (F408), aligned north to south, measured 2.7m long and 0.4m wide and was excavated to a depth of 0.32m. It contained a single fill of grey/brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of very small degraded orange pot/tile fragments, and occasional flecks of charcoal. A worked flint flake of possible Bronze Age date was recovered from this fill near the base of the feature. A small isolated post-hole (F404) was recorded towards the southern end of the trench and measured *circa* 0.3m in diameter. It was excavated to a depth of 0.1m. The two remaining features were located towards the southern end of the trench and consisted of two irregular gravelly deposits (400 and 402) contained within a brown sandy loam which traversed the trench and continued under the east and west baulks. Deposit 400 measured 5.4m wide and 0.7m deep. Deposit 402 measured 3.8m wide and 0.6m deep. Neither

produced any finds.

## 5. Conclusions

A variety of features were recorded in all five evaluation trenches. Interpretations can be given to some of these with a degree of confidence. However, many of the features recorded failed to yield sufficient evidence to enable assignation of function or period.

The slot-trench (406) in Trench D may be a vestigial remnant of a late prehistoric building, although the evidence here is slight and this is a necessarily tentative interpretation. The ditch located immediately to its north (408) may prove to be contemporary, and relate to prehistoric activity on the site. A more wide scale investigation would be required to fully understand the nature of these features.

The cobbled surface, remnants of a possible road or trackway, with possible associated linear cut features evident in three of the evaluation trenches, may originally date to the Roman period. In form and size it would not be dissimilar to some of the lesser Roman roads although in construction quality it certainly would not compete with the major Roman roads. It does appear to head towards the Roman town of Aldborough although this is not evidence of contemporaneity. The structure would appear to be long lived with substantial repair evident in Trench B. Unfortunately no dateable finds were retrieved from stratified deposits and both medieval and Roman pottery was recovered from the overlying topsoil deposits. It is possible however that the road/trackway was in use through both periods. If the trackway was in existence in the medieval period a map regression study may elucidate the matter further and allow the feature to be tracked over the wider landscape context.

The features for which neither function nor period were established include the linear cut features in Trench 1, the north-south linear cut features in Trenches B and C, the two gravel deposits in Trench D and the isolated post-holes in Trenches B and D.

In general the excavated features recorded across the site suggest various periods of activity or settlement dating from the prehistoric period through to possibly the post-medieval period. Further excavation may permit phasing and clearer interpretation of these features.

## Appendix

### Contents of Primary Archive

#### 1 Lever arch file containing:

- 5 Context register sheets
- 56 Context cards
- 3 Drawing register sheets
- 1 Small find register sheet
- 1 Environmental register sheet

#### 1 Green file containing:

- 14 Drawings

#### 6 Large drawings on permatrace

#### 4 Colour slide films (WYAS ref 4200,4202,4203,4199)

#### 4 Monochrome print films

#### Finds:

<i>Provenance</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Quantity</i>
204 Trench B	Brick/Tile sherds	11
211 Trench B	Brick/Tile sherds	2
205 Trench B	Brick/Tile sherds	3
U/S Trench B	Pot sherds (diagnostic)	4
U/S Trench B	Roofing tile	1
U/S Trench B	Tooth fragments	1
U/S Trench B	Tooth fragments	1
U/S Trench B	Worked flint flake	1
U/S Trench B	FE. Slag	1
U/S Trench B	Brick/Tile sherds	11
407 Trench D	Worked stone	1
407 Trench D	Tile fragment	1
407 Trench D	Pot sherds (diagnostic)	3
U/S Trench D	FE. Button	1
U/S Trench D	Flint flake	1

## Acknowledgements

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Field work: Alan Hunter Blair  
Mark Brennand BA  
Julian Sleaf  
William Fletcher BA  
Chris Hurn  
Pete Karras BA  
Vicky Bolderson BA  
Jaki Hawker BA MSoc MSCI

Illustrations: Andy Swan MAAIS

## Bibliography

Evans J 1997 The pottery from the Ponderosa Caravan Park, Boroughbridge, North Yorkshire

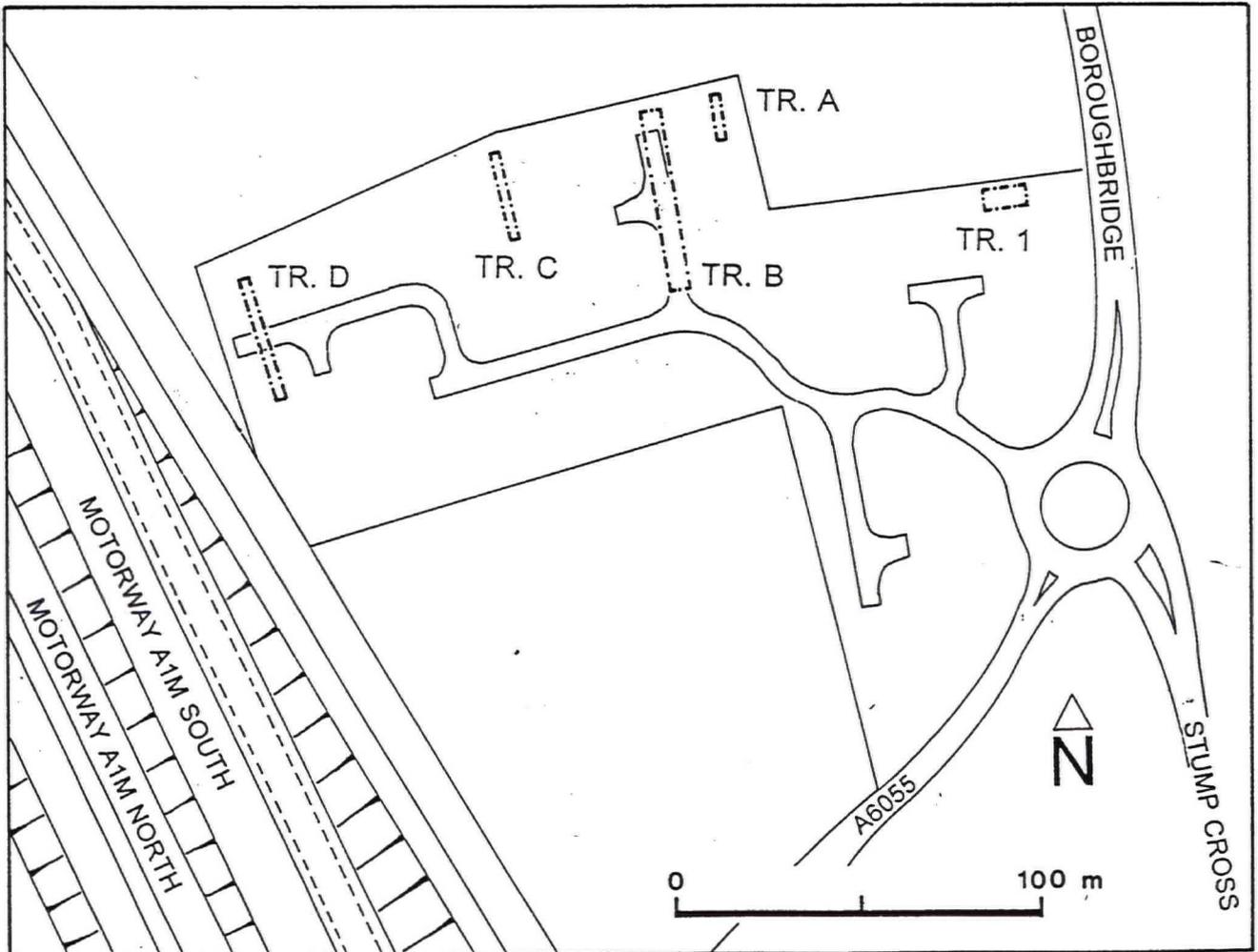
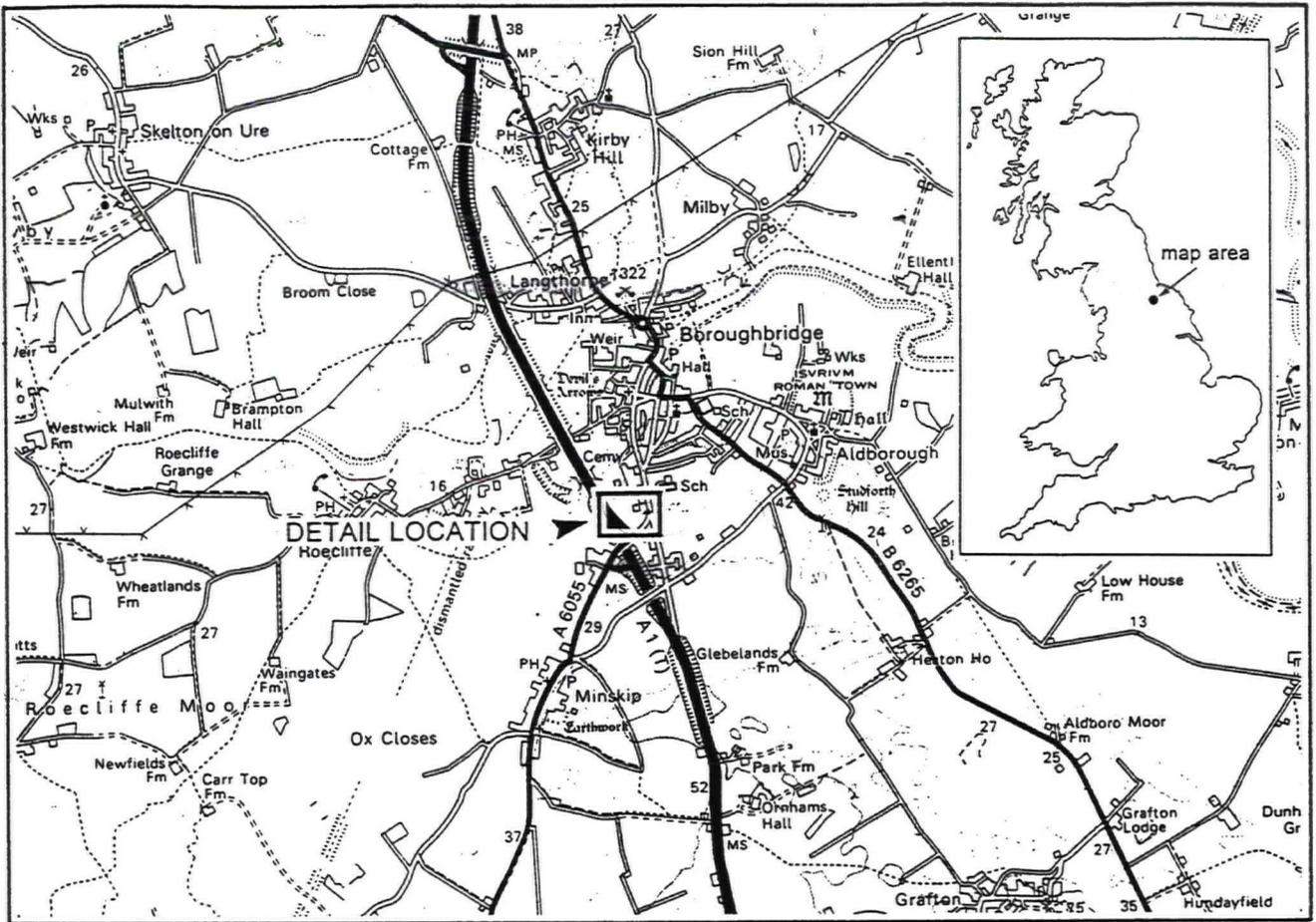
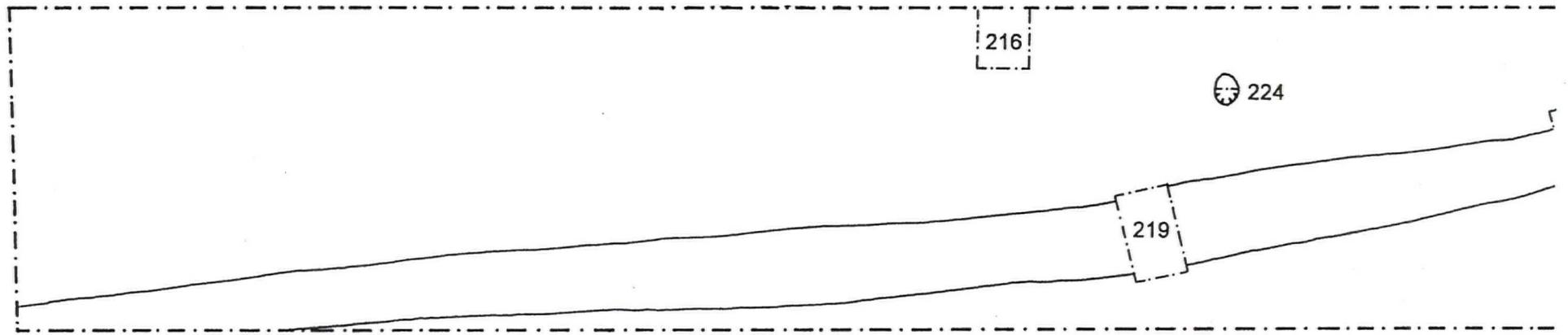


Figure 1

Plan Trench B



Section, see Fig. 3

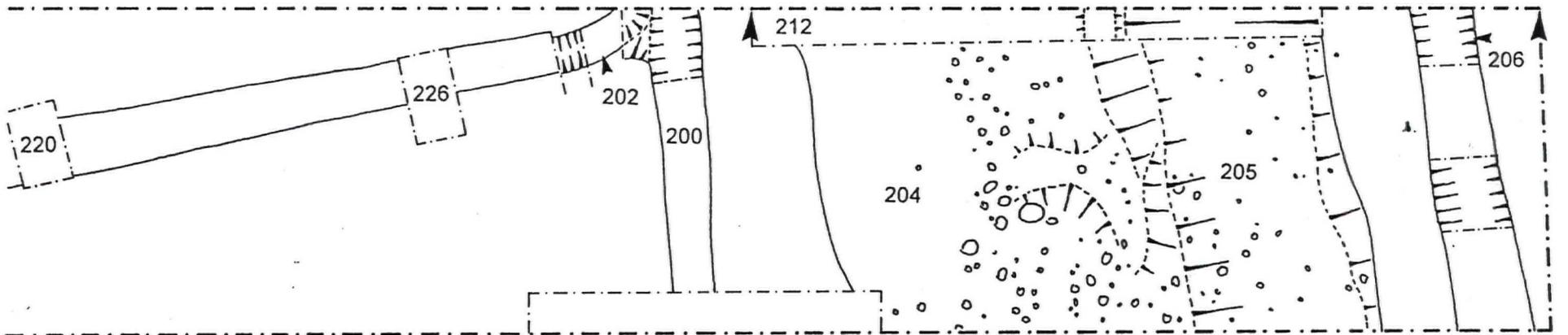
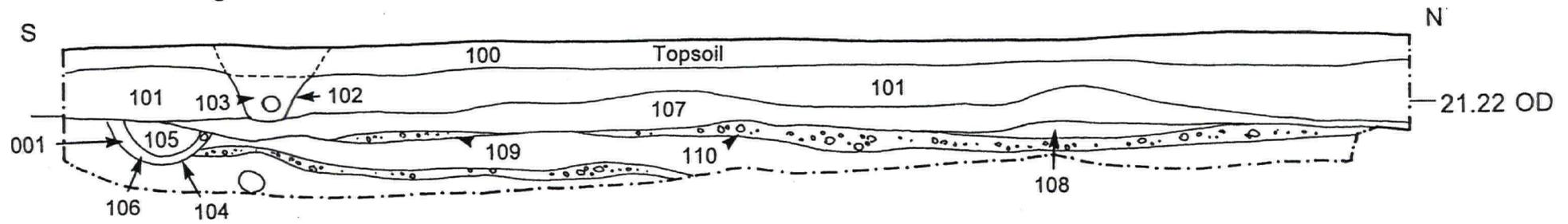


Figure 2

### East Facing Section Trench A



### East Facing Section Trench B

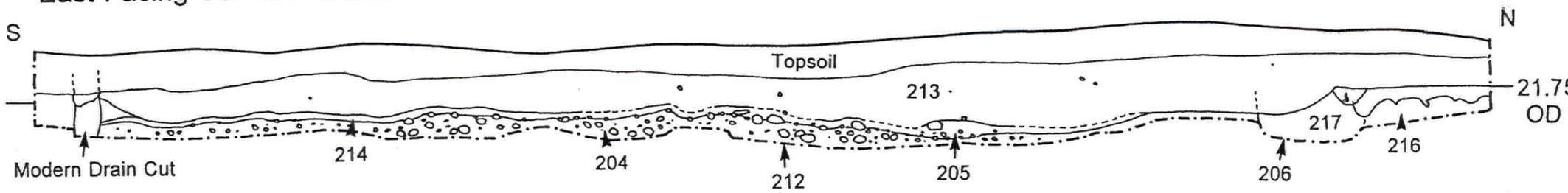
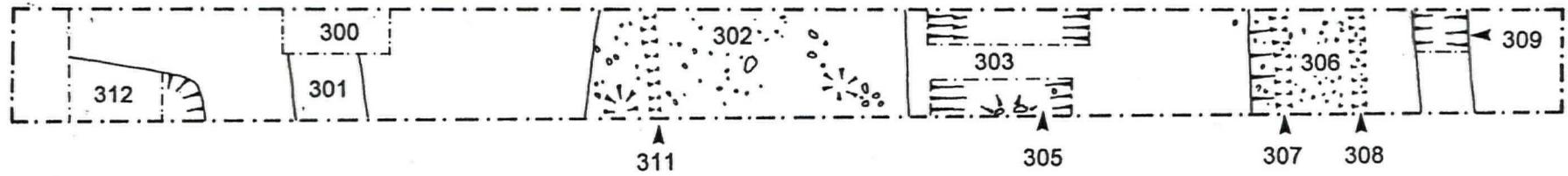


Figure 3

Plan Trench C



Plan Trench D

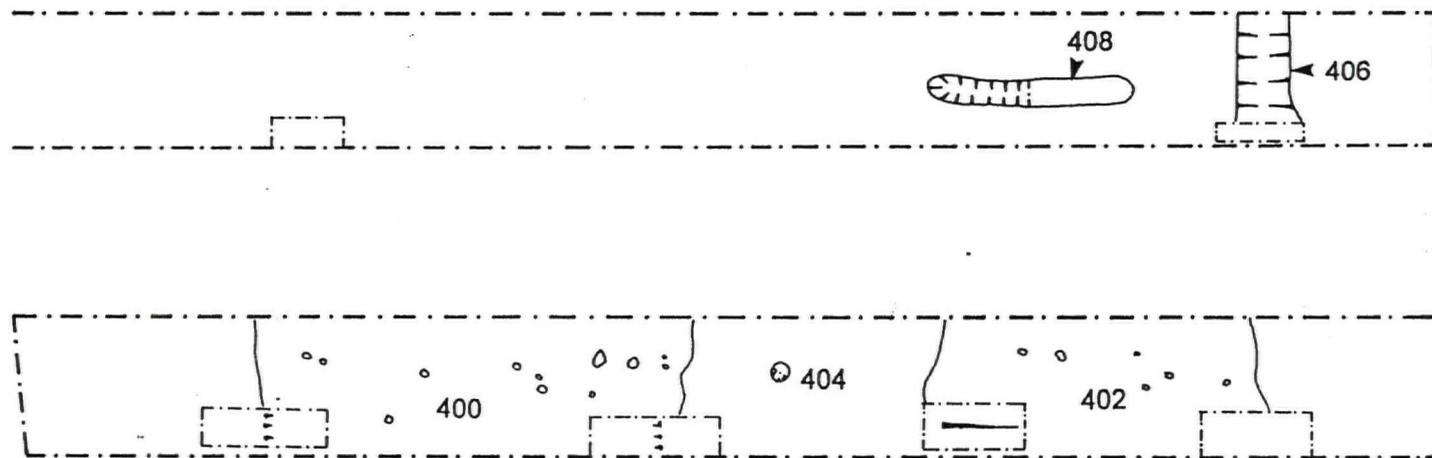


Figure 4

# East Facing Section Trench C

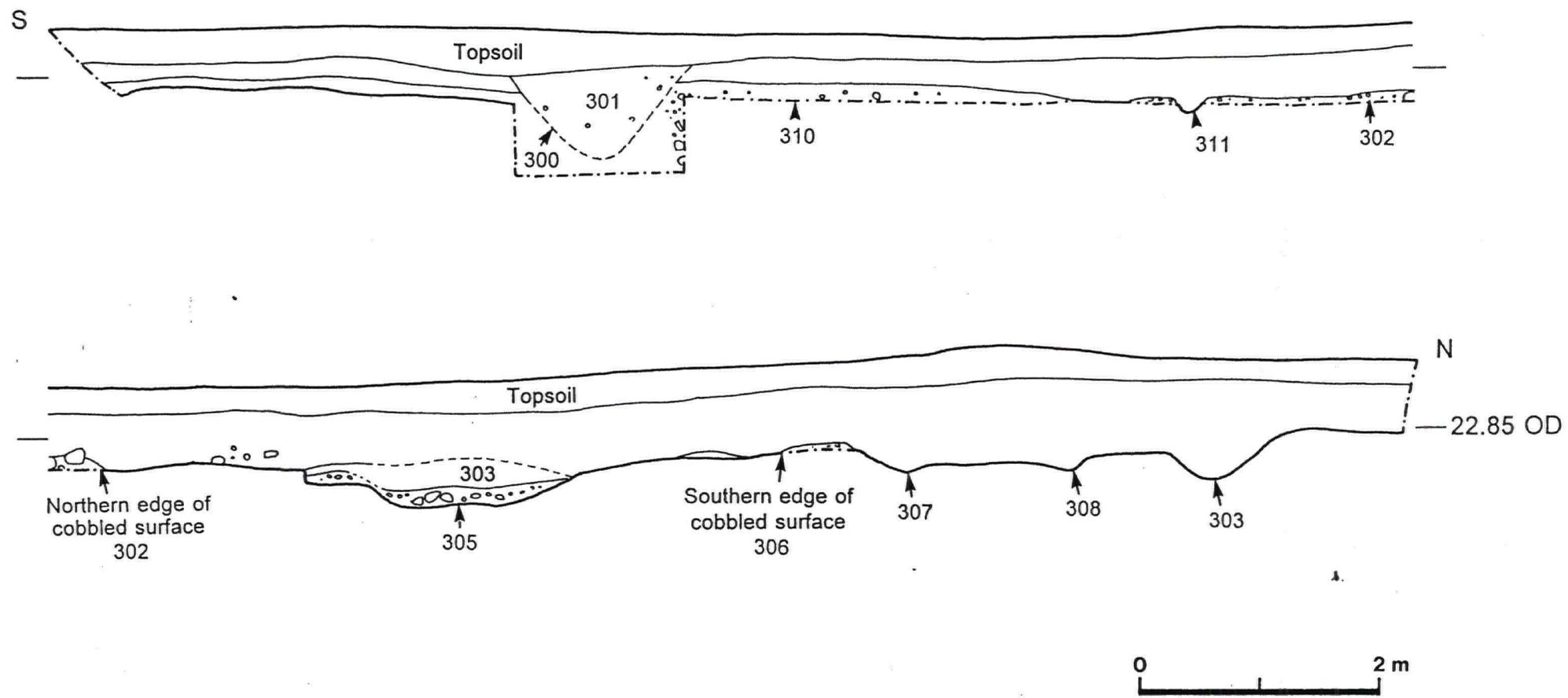


Figure 5