

THE
HERITAGE NETWORK

LTD



PAPWORTH BUSINESS PARK
Papworth Everard, Cambs.

(HN245)

Observation and Recording Report



THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

PAPWORTH BUSINESS PARK

Papworth Everard, Cambs.

HN245

Observation and Recording Report

Prepared on behalf of The Varrier Jones Foundation

by

Nigel Wilson

Report No. 89

December 1999

© The Heritage Network Ltd

12 ROYSTON ROAD, BALDOCK, HERTS. SG7 6NT

TEL: (01462) 893288 FAX: (01462) 893562

Contents

Section 1	Introduction	Page 1
Section 2	Background	Page 1
Section 3	Fieldwork	Page 2
Section 4	Discussion	Page 4
Section 5	Illustrations	<i>following</i> Page 5
Appendix 1	Context Descriptions	Page 6

The cover illustration is looking southwest across Unit 4 and shows the crop mark which has been interpreted as a possible headland.

Summary

Site Name:	Papworth Business Park	NGR:	TL 2910 6215
Address:	Ermine St S, Papworth Everard	Site Code:	P134
Client:	The Varrier Jones Foundation	HN Reference:	HN 245
Project Type:	Observation & Recording	Period Range:	Medieval
Fieldwork Dates:	14 June - 15 July 1999	Report Date:	December 1999
Director:	Chris Howlett, Phoenix Cnsltng	Supervisor:	Nigel Wilson
LPA:	South Cambs District Council	Archive held at:	Cambridge CAO

In response to a planning condition placed on the construction of a new business park on the southern edge of Papworth Everard, Cambs, by the local planning authority, South Cambridgeshire District Council, and following a desk-based assessment and field evaluation undertaken by the Cambridge Archaeological Unit, Phoenix Consulting was commissioned to undertake the archaeological observation and recording of the groundworks. Fieldwork and reporting of the results was undertaken under contract by the Heritage Network.

The excavations revealed evidence for medieval ploughing, a number of undated possible boundary features, and a number of irregular pits which have been interpreted as tree throws. One of these contained a single abraded sherd of Romano-British pottery. Fragments of burnt flint, which were noted across the site, are believed to result from modern stubble burning.

Acknowledgements

Fieldwork for this project was carried out by Nigel Wilson.

The Heritage Network and Phoenix Consulting would like to express their thanks to the staff of the County Archaeology Office, Cambridgeshire County Council; and to Messrs. Bidwells as agents for the clients, for their cooperation and assistance in the execution of this project.

Bibliography

Alexander M., 1998, An Archaeological Evaluation at Papworth Everard, South-East Quadrant, Cambridgeshire. Cambridge Archaeological Unit report No. 279

Dickens A., 1998, The Archaeology of Papworth Everard Southeast Quadrant: A Desktop Assessment. Cambridge Archaeological Unit report No. 249

Thomas A., 1999, Brief for Basic Archaeological Investigation. Cambridgeshire County Council.

Richmond A., 1999, Specification for Basic Archaeological Investigation. Phoenix Consulting.

Archive

The archive, which is to be deposited with Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Section, consists of:

- Field records
- Field drawings and sketches
- Colour Slides
- Black and White photographs
- Site diary / notebook
- Project documentation
- This report

1 Introduction

1.1 The following report has been prepared at the request of Phoenix Consulting, for Bidwells Property Consultants, acting on behalf of their clients the Varrier-Jones Foundation. It forms part of a programme of archaeological observation and recording of preliminary groundworks for the construction of four industrial units on land to the east of Ermine Street South (A1198), Papworth Everard, Cambs (see Figure 1).

1.2 Following an archaeological desktop assessment (Dickens 1998), and an archaeological evaluation of the site (Alexander 1998) by the University of Cambridge Archaeological Unit in 1998, an archaeological planning condition was placed on the development by the South Cambridgeshire District Council (planning reference S/1900/98). The present programme of work followed the requirements of a *Brief for Basic Archaeological Investigation* prepared by the County Archaeological Office of Cambridgeshire County Council (Thomas 1999), acting as archaeological advisors to the SCDC, and the archaeological specification prepared by Phoenix Consulting (Richmond 1999).

1.3 The fieldwork and report preparation was undertaken by The Heritage Network Ltd, as contractors under the direction of, and under a timetable dictated by, Phoenix Consulting.

2 Background

Topography and Geography

2.1 The site lies directly to the south east of the modern village of Papworth Everard and straddles the A1198 road (NGR TL 2910 6215). The land to the north east of the A1198 is almost flat and forms part of a large arable field, whilst the land to the south west dips gently down in a southerly direction to a small stream. The underlying geology is Oxford Clay, with drift deposits of mixed boulder clay above.

Archaeological and Historical Background

2.2 Previous work on the site provided indications of possible prehistoric activity, including the presence of burnt flint in several features, and the presence of late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age pottery in residual contexts. Medieval activity has also been demonstrated by the presence of ridge and furrow, which became apparent after the removal of the topsoil. The evaluation of the site suggested that survival of pre-medieval archaeological features could be relatively good, particularly where the lower soils have not been subjected to modern ploughing.

2.3 A detailed appraisal of the recorded history of land use on the site and in its immediate vicinity can be found in Dickens 1998. The results of the field evaluation are summarised in Alexander 1998.

3 Fieldwork

3.1 The present development involves the construction of four industrial units, designated Units 1-4. Within the study area the four units are located as follows: Unit 1 in the north-west sector, Unit 2 in the north-east sector, Unit 3 in the south-west sector and Unit 4 in the south-east sector (see Figure 1).

3.2 The current project was intended to observe and record any archaeological features or deposits exposed during ground reduction for Units 1 and 4, although a significant proportion of unit 3 was also stripped, and the watching brief was extended to include the soil stripping for a stormwater attenuation pond to be constructed to the west of Ermine Street South. Ground reduction was carried out in two stages, the first removing the topsoil, the second removing sufficient of the sub-soil deposits to enable a constant level to be maintained across the site.

3.3 Prior to the start of the development, the site to the east of Ermine Street South formed a single field, in which a crop of wheat was growing. The crop and plough soil were stripped using a 360° tracked excavator fitted with a toothless bucket, to the interface with the subsoil. This operation was carried out under close archaeological supervision and intrusive features identified, sampled and recorded using standard pro-formae. A base plan was drawn at a scale of 1:500, with individual features drawn at 1:20, and sections of excavated features drawn at 1:10. The south-eastern sector of the site was used to stockpile topsoil.

3.4 Over the entire site the exposed natural subsoil was formed by yellow, orange and blue-grey clays. In the area of Unit 1, the remnants of ridge and furrow, aligned north-west to south-east, were well defined, the truncated ridges being lighter than the mineral rich soil which survived in the furrows, which had cut into the *natural*. The full extent of the ridge and furrow was not recorded during the present exercise, as previous plans already exist (Alexander 1998). Further ridge and furrow orientated north-east to south-west was observed in the area of Unit 4. A 8m wide strip of darker and slightly shorter wheat was observed between the two areas of ridge and furrow which may signify a medieval headland, but it was not possible to confirm this once the plough soil had been removed (see Figure 2).

3.5 Three narrow linear features ([009], [007]/[011], [015]) were also recorded cutting into the subsoil (see Figures 2, 3, 4). These features were orientated north-east to south-west. Two ([009], [007]/[011]) have been interpreted as ditches, having very steep sides to flattish bases and measuring approximately 0.7m wide at their bases. The depth of the excavated ditch segments varied between 0.3 and 0.4m. The fills of each segment were very similar, and consisted of very dark yellowish brown silty clays, with occasional small stones and chalk flecks from the surrounding natural clays. These ditches may represent former field boundaries or may provide drainage. The third linear [015] appears to represent the base of a medieval plough furrow, having a much shallower profile which had been disturbed by animal activity. Several other shallow linear disturbances were also noted which may represent the remains of grubbed out hedges.

3.6 The most recent activity on the site seems to be associated with the creation of a single large field, with a system of ceramic land drain pipes. This field has been deep-ploughed on at least one occasion. The furrows from the deep-ploughing were orientated north-east to south-west, and cut through the subsoil into the top of the natural.

3.7 An area of light burning in a shallow hollow [013] measuring 1.2 x 0.8 x 0.1m deep, may represent the site of a hearth, but as the burning is not severe, long term use would seem unlikely (see Figures 2, 3, 4).

3.8 Several irregular shaped hollows up to approximately 1.5m across were also observed ([001], [003], [019]). Their irregular nature, especially in their bases, suggests that they represent tree throws rather than deliberately cut pits. No definitive date can be attributed to these features, but feature [019] had been cut by ditch [007]/[011]. From the fill in the base of feature [001] a single sherd of abraded pottery was recovered which may be Romano-British in date. Within the fills of these features charcoal flecks were relatively common, and areas of the fill were fire reddened, which may be consistent with the burning of felled trees.

3.9 No further archaeological features were encountered in the course of the second phase of ground reduction which was undertaken within the footprint of Units 1 and 4, and along the access road.

3.10 The initial soil stripping which was undertaken in connection with the creation of the storm water attenuation pond to the west of Ermine Street South produced a remarkably featureless surface with no evidence of prehistoric or later activity (see Figure 5).

Finds

Context	Pottery		Tile		Daub		Burnt flint	
	No	Wt(g)	No	Wt(g)	No	Wt(g)	No	Wt(g)
u/s	5	65	2	30				
002	1	10			1	10		
014							9	45
Totals	6	75	2	30	1	10	9	45

Table 1: Concordance of finds

3.11 The pottery from this site is all in the form of small abraded sherds, suggesting that it was not found in situ. The unstratified pottery ranges in date from the early medieval period (2 sherds) to the post-medieval period (3 sherds including one slipware base fragment). One shell-tempered body sherd was recovered from context 002. This could be either Romano-British or early medieval in date, although it appears more reminiscent of RB shell-tempered ware, possibly from the kiln site at Harrold in Bedfordshire.

3.12 Two fragments of possible Romano-British tile were collected from the site. Unfortunately, both of these were unstratified.

4Discussion

4.1 The archaeological observation of the present phase of development suggests that the flat land to the east of the main road has been in agricultural use for many centuries, possibly since medieval times. The sloping land to the west of the road was certainly under arable in the late 18th century, according to the Victoria County History, and may well have formed part of the medieval open field system even though no evidence for ridge and furrow was observed.

4.2 The evidence gained during the present exercise suggests that the land to the east of the main road has undergone a typical pattern of arable land development since the medieval period: medieval open fields, with their distinctive pattern of ridge and furrow, giving way to smaller enclosed fields, possibly with a few isolated trees growing in them. As modern intensive commercial farming techniques have been developed, these small fields have had their boundary hedges grubbed up and drainage ditches filled to form the larger more economically viable fields which we see today.

4.3 A single sherd of possibly Romano-British pottery from the base of a probable tree throw pit, and two fragments of possible Romano-British tile suggest the presence of activity from this period in the general vicinity. This is unsurprising given the location of the site adjacent to Ermine Street. The presence of burnt flint, which has been used as an indication of prehistoric activity on other sites in the area, seems unlikely to be significant in this case, as small fragments of unworked burnt flint occur across the whole site at the interface of the plough soil and subsoil. This suggests that the burning may be due to natural or agriculturally related causes rather than domestic or industrial causes.

Confidence Rating

4.4 Despite the small number of archaeological features identified during the present exercise, it seems unlikely any significant features were missed. A continuous archaeological presence was kept on site during the earth moving operation, and plant was kept clear of the stripped area so that it could be inspected after the soil had been allowed to weather out for several days. It should be noted that immediately after stripping, features, including the 1998 evaluation trenches were poorly defined but after they had been allowed to weather for a day or so they became much clearer, as is often the case on clay.

4.5 It should be recognised that the potential survival of any smaller and shallower pre-medieval features would have been affected by later ploughing and by the modern deep-ploughing in particular. The lack of any unstratified or redeposited artefactual material, however, suggests that little significant information has been lost in this way.

5 Illustrations

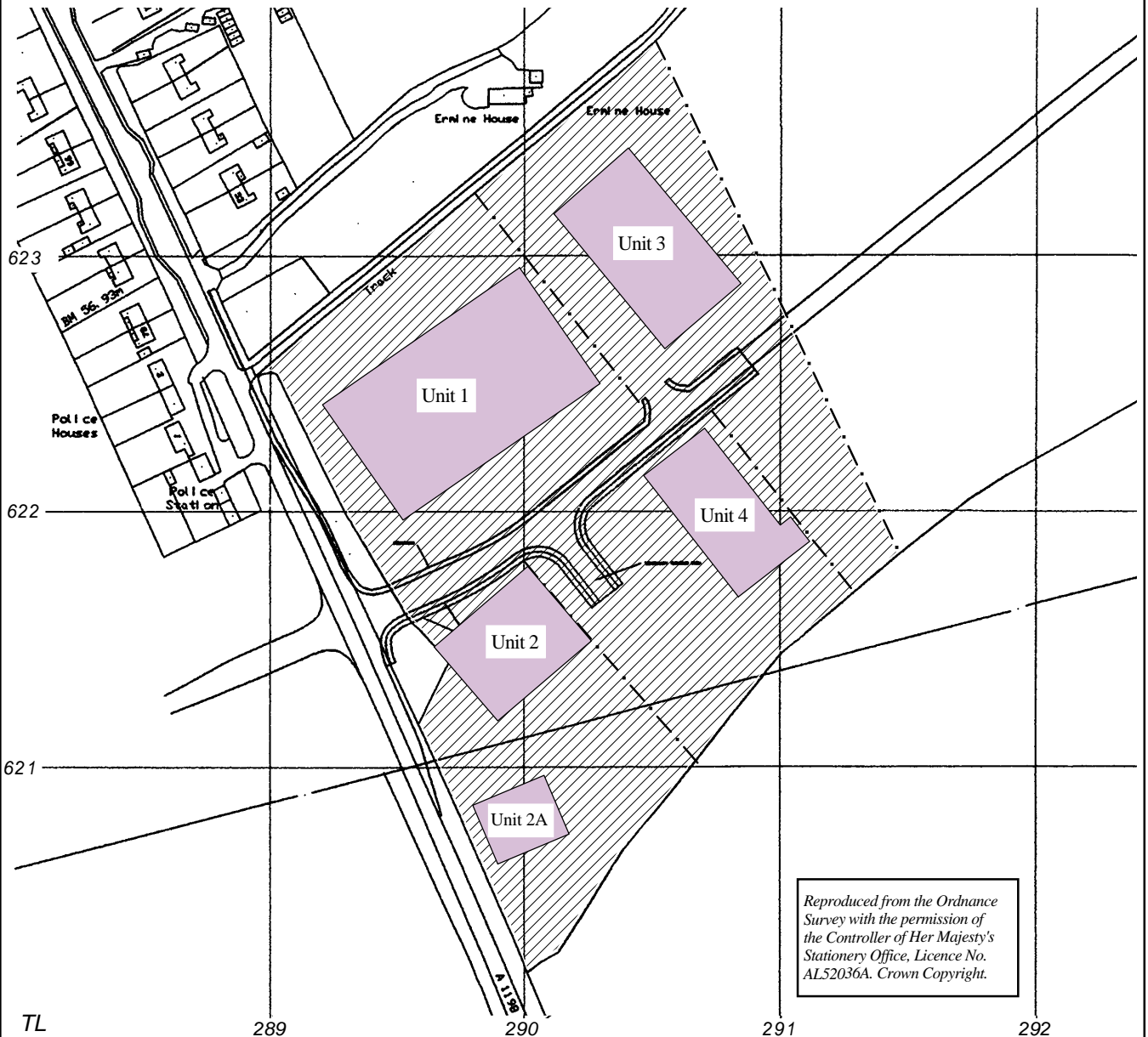
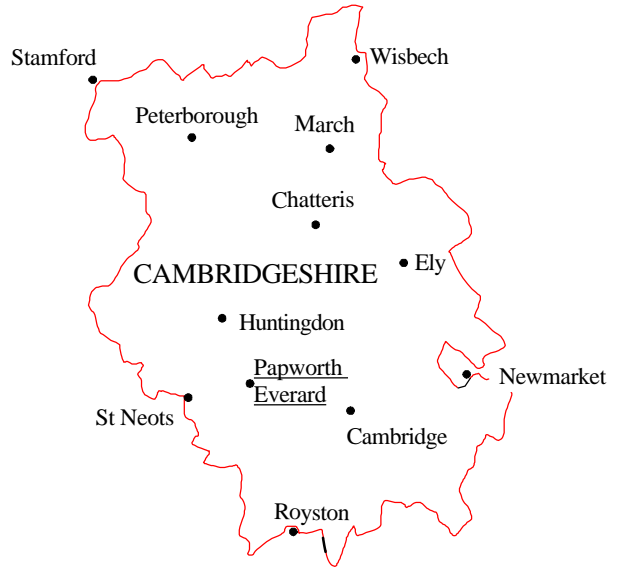
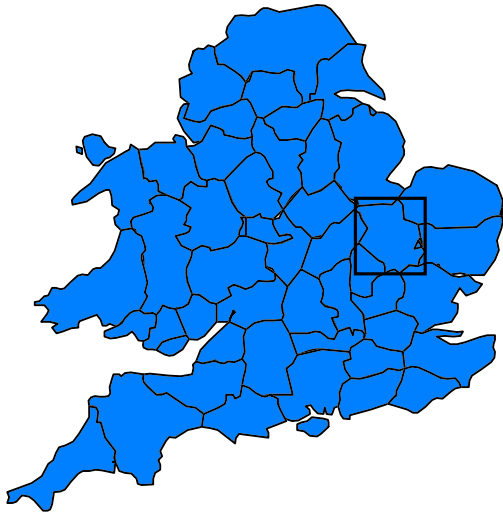
Figure 1 Site location plan
Figure 2 Location of identified features
Figure 3 Feature plans
Figure 4 Feature sections
Figure 5 Location of storm water attenuation pond

Appendix 1

Context Descriptions

Context	Type	Fill of	Contains	Description
001	Cut		002	Irregular sub-oval cut: W1.5m, L2.5m, D0.65m (Tree throw)
002	Fill	001		Pale yellowish to pale greyish brown firm clay with occ. small sub-rounded stones and occ. chalk flecks.
003	Cut		004	Irregular sub-circular cut: Dia.0.80m (Tree throw)
004	Fill	003		Pale yellowish to pale greyish brown firm clay with occ. small sub-rounded stones and occ. chalk flecks.
005	Cut		006	Sub-circular cut: W0.45m, L0.5m, D0.15m (Post-hole)
006	Fill	005		V.dark yellowish brown firm silty clay with rare small sub-rounded stones.
007	Cut		008	Flat-bottomed linear cut: W0.55m, D0.35m (Ditch) (<i>see 011, 017</i>)
008	Fill	007		V.dark yellowish brown firm silty clay with occ. small sub-rounded stones.
009	Cut		010	U-shaped linear cut: W0.60m, D0.40m (Ditch)
010	Fill	009		V.dark yellowish brown firm silty clay with occ. med and small sub-rounded and angular stones.
011	Cut		012	Flat-bottomed linear cut: W0.60m, D0.35m (Ditch) (<i>see 007, 017</i>)
012	Fill	011		V.dark yellowish brown firm silty clay with occ. small to med sub-rounded stones.
013	Cut		014	Shallow sub-circular depression: Dia.0.7m, D0.07m (?Hearth)
014	Fill	013		Dark yellowish brown firm clay including heat reddened patches, charcoal and burnt flint.
015	Cut		016	Flat bottomed linear cut: W0.90m, D 0.20m (?plough furrow)
016	Fill	045		Dark yellowish brown firm clay with occ. small stones
017	Cut		018	Flat-bottomed linear cut: W0.55m, D0.25m (Ditch) (<i>see 007, 011</i>)
018	Fill	017		Yellowish brown firm silty clay with occ. small sub-rounded stones and occ. small chalk flecks.
019	Cut		020	Sub-square cut with irregular base: W1.5m, L 1.6m, D0.4m (Tree throw or pit)

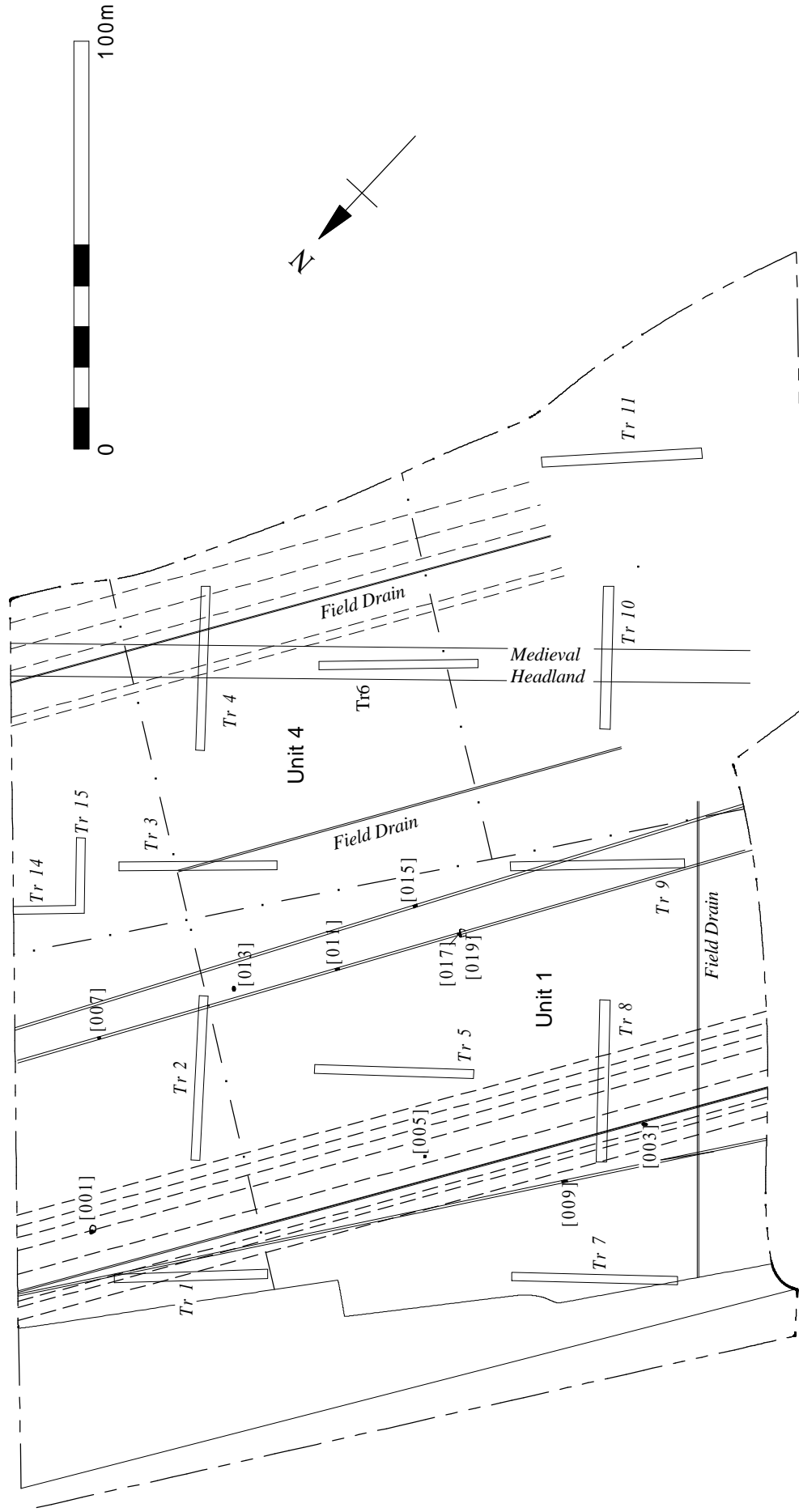
020	Fill	019		Yellowish brown firm silty clay with occ. small rounded stones and rare large sub-angular stones.
-----	------	-----	--	---



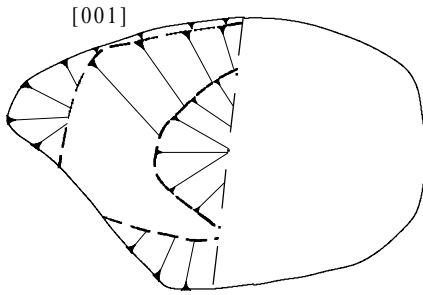
Site Location Plan

Scale 1:2500

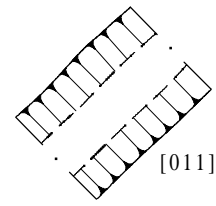
Figure 1



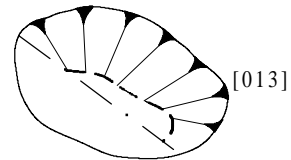
Plan showing location of identified features and evaluation trenches



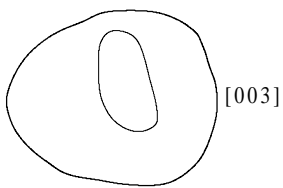
Plan 2



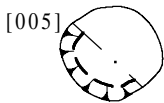
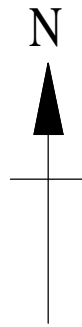
Plan 7



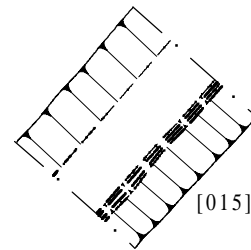
Plan 8



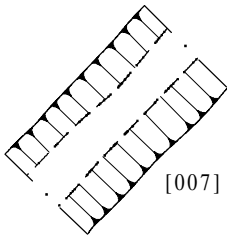
Plan 3
(Unexcavated)



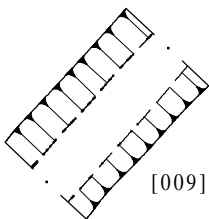
Plan 4



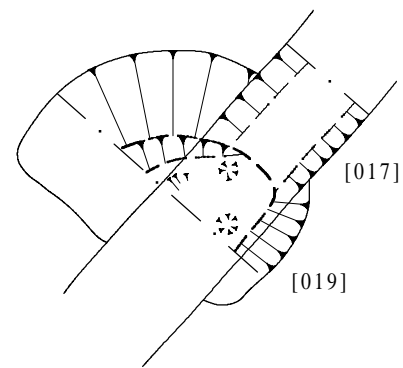
Plan 9



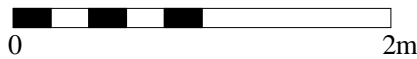
Plan 5

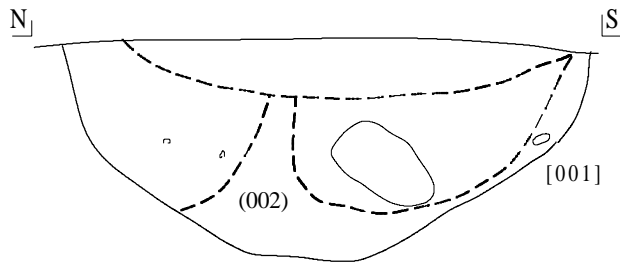


Plan 6

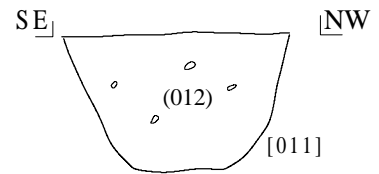


Plan 10

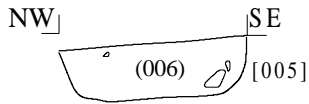




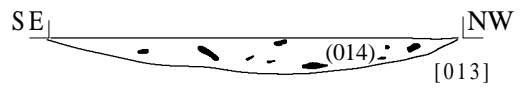
Section 1



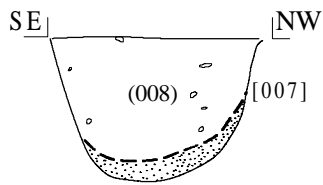
Section 5



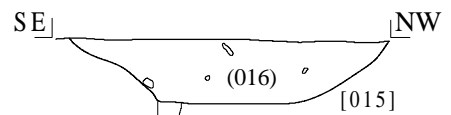
Section 2



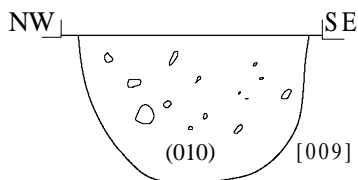
Section 6



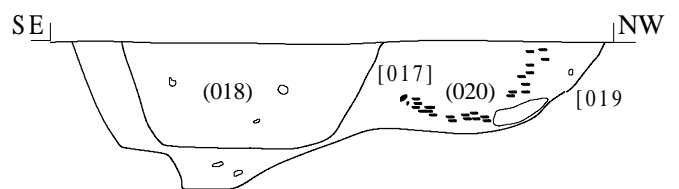
Section 3



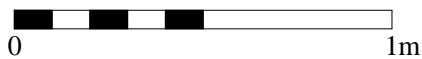
Section 7

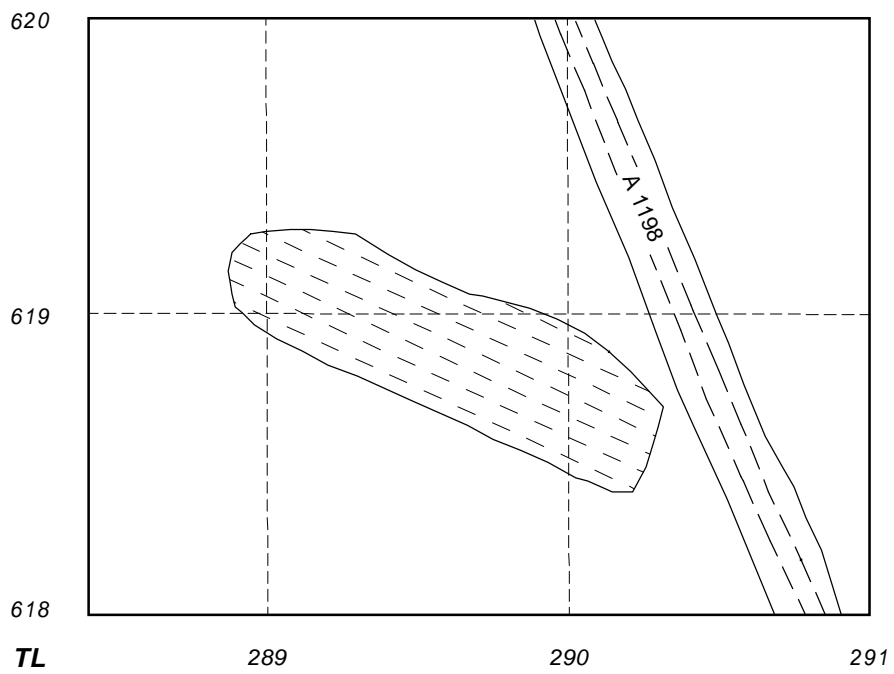


Section 4



Section 8





Location of storm water attenuation pond

Scale 1:2500

Figure 5