

**Archaeological evaluation  
at land behind Penn Cottage,  
Shindle Park Chillington  
Devon**

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# Archaeological evaluation at land behind Penn Cottage, Shindle Park Chillington Devon

## Introduction

An archaeological evaluation, carried out at the rear of Penn Cottage, Shindle Park, Chillington, Devon (SX 7892 4274; Fig 1), was undertaken at the request of Mark Donald of Allcroft Ltd according to a brief provided by Devon County Council Historic Environment Service. This was undertaken in order to provide information regarding the nature, extent and date of any surviving archaeological deposits on the site. The aim of this was to inform the planning process regarding any mitigation to be required as a result of the proposed development (planning ref 53/1191/07/O).

This was to be accomplished by documentary research, the excavation of trial trenches totalling 160 square metres (being 5% of the development area of *c* 3150 square metres), or approximately 80 linear metres of trenches *c* 2m wide. The location of these trenches (Fig 4.1), which were positioned with respect to the results of a geophysical survey (Fig 5), was agreed with Devon County Council Historic Environment Service.

## Documentary background

### Historic mapping

The historic maps available at the Devon County Record Office were the Stokenham tithe map of 1841 and the Ordnance Survey maps of 1884 and 1907 (Fig 2).

The Stokenham tithe map shows the site as Parcel 374, called Lower Port Lane Field, at this time used as pasture. The size and shape of the field is consistent with the modern boundaries. The Ordnance Survey maps of 1884 and 1907 show no significant variations to this. A non-conformist chapel, shown on the 1884 map, was built adjacent to the site's north-east corner in 1850 (information from a date stone on the chapel).

### Geological mapping

The Soil Survey of England and Wales (1983) indicates that the drift deposits to be expected on the site are typical brown earths of the Milford association.

### Other documentary evidence

#### *The evidence of trade directories*

A small selection of trade directories were consulted to obtain a general picture of Chillington over the previous 150 years or so. Chillington does not have an entry of its own. Instead, it is described under Stokenham parish and village as a hamlet. Notwithstanding this, it is clear that from 1850 at least, it provided important local services to its inhabitants.

In the commercial section of White's directory (1850) Chillington was host to a tea dealer, a tailor, a painter and glazier, a schoolmaster and a parish clerk. There was an inn (the New Inn), a baker, a builder, three farmers, two masons, four shoemakers and two blacksmiths. This last occupation (and a similar entry in Kelly's directory of 1902 below) may have implications for the interpretation of certain deposits located during the laying of a water main on the site (see **Previous archaeological work** and **Discussion** below).

In Kelly's directory of 1902 there was a carpenter, a butcher, a grocer, five farmers, two shopkeepers, police constable, fish hawker, tailor, baker, shoe maker and parish clerk, two gardeners, a draper and grocer, three builders, a stone mason, an earthenware dealer, the New Inn, and one blacksmith.

Shortly before the outbreak of World War II, Kelly's directory of 1935 listed a carpenter, seven farmers (none of whom farmed over 150 acres), two shopkeepers and a post office, two builders, a grocer, a butcher, the New Inn, a boot repairer, a carrier, a nurseryman, a newsagent, a tailor and registrar of births and deaths.

*The Devon Historic Environment Record (see Fig 3)*

The village or hamlet of Chillington (DHER 15792) was first mentioned in Domesday Book where it occurs as the Royal manor of Cedelintone. When ecclesiastical parishes were formed, perhaps in the 12th century, Chillington was included within the parish of Stokenham. A market was granted in 1217-18 and there are references to Burgesses and a borough court from the next century. The hundred court was originally held at Chillington before moving to Colridge (Reichel 1911). However, Chillington was to remain as a small wayside settlement. Even the completion of the Turnpike road linking Torcross to Dartmouth c 1850 did little to promote its growth. Only from the 1960s did development require the construction of new residential roads (Exeter Archaeology 2004).

Maps hint at the presence of medieval burgage plots, particularly north of the road (DHER 15792). The tithe apportionment refers to a field south of the main road as Lower Port Lane Field (Fig 2). The 'port' element may refer to the presence of a market in the medieval period (Exeter Archaeology 1996). This may be true but it could also refer to a market or fair at a later period of history. A description of such an event is given by Thomas Hardy in *The mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), who set his novel in the years following the Napoleonic Wars:

*The trusser and his family proceeded on their way, and soon entered the Fair-field, which showed standing-places and pens where many hundreds of horses and sheep had been exhibited and sold in the forenoon, but were now in great part taken away. At present, as their informant had observed, but little real business remained on hand, the chief being the sale by auction of a few inferior animals, that could not otherwise be disposed of, and had been absolutely refused by the better class of traders, who came and went early.*

*The crowd was denser now than during the morning hours, the frivolous contingent of visitors, including journeymen out for a holiday, a stray soldier or two come on furlough, village shopkeepers, and the like, having latterly flocked in; persons whose activities found a congenial field among the peep-shows, toy-stands, waxworks, inspired monsters, disinterested medical men who travelled for the public good, thimble-riggers, nick-nack vendors, and readers of Fate.*

This event took place in a field adjacent to the fictional village of Weydon Priors, probably to be identified with Weyhill near Andover.

In the vicinity of the evaluation site are a range of monuments of varying ages. These include the village of Chillington itself (DHER 15792), a possible bowl barrow 400m south of Home Farm, forming an outlying part of a round barrow cemetery (DHER 63166; Bayer 2000). Closer to the site itself is Chillington school and cemetery, dating to 1850, which lies to the immediate north-east of the site (DHER 7283). It is shown as 'Ebenezer Chapel' on the 1886 1st edition Ordnance Survey map (Fig 2) and is associated with a small burial ground. Features reminiscent of medieval burgage plots lie to the south (DHER 61266) while the area to the north of the village resembles an area of enclosed open fields.

*West Country Studies Library*

The West Country Studies Library was visited in anticipation of consulting synthetic works. Unfortunately, the relevant parts of the work of Pole (1791) and Lysons (1822) comprise solely a descent of the manor of Stokenham. It is also unfortunate that the relevant Victoria County History (Page 1906) has never been published beyond the first volume.

## **Previous archaeological work**

Previous archaeological activity on the site comprises two pieces of work. Observations made during the laying of a water main along the site's eastern side (DHER 63913) identified two pits containing iron working debris to the south of Penn Cottage (Exeter Archaeology 2004). These were described as being 'two pits and a scoop containing slag and charcoal some 5m off the south-east corner of Penn Cottage garden'. The slag was dense and vesicular, containing stone fragments and impressions and fragments of charcoal. The blackened fills contained a high proportion of magnetic

hammerscale, which is indicative of smithing activity and the presence of charcoal suggested that the slag derived from a furnace. The charcoal in the slag was probably fuel residue and the use of charcoal rather than coal may point to an earlier rather than a later date. It was noted that neither the mid 19th century tithe map, nor later maps (Fig 2), gave any indication of a smithy at this location. However, the trade directories of 1850 and 1902 record the presence of blacksmiths in Chillington (see above). It was also thought that there may have been some plough damage to upper archaeological levels (see **Discussion** below). A soil sample taken to the south of stream (DHER 63915) identified clay overlying 0.15m of organic peat.

A geophysical survey was undertaken by Exeter Archaeology (Exeter Archaeology 2004) as a preliminary stage in the process of the archaeological evaluation of this site. The plan of the features identified is reproduced as Figure 5 which also shows the positions of the trenches. This survey showed a number of linear features crossing the site from north to south or from east to west and two sides of a possible rectangular enclosure.

### **Description of the fieldwork**

The trenches were located in positions to test the results of the geophysical survey (Exeter Archaeology 2004; Figs 4.1 and 5). The trenches were made sufficiently long to place any features found in context and were so positioned so as to test the areas in between the features anticipated from the geophysical survey. The positions of the trenches and the features forming the site boundaries were surveyed with a plane table from a single station, optical alidade and 50m tape (Fig 4.1).

#### **The site boundaries**

To the north the site boundary was formed by the modern fence of the properties fronting the main road. To the east and west the boundaries were formed by substantial banks being *c* 2m wide at the base and *c* 1.8m high. To the south the boundary was taken to be a slight break in slope, presumed to be a lynchet, which aligned approximately with the returns of the banks already described (Fig 4.1).

#### **The trenches**

Sections of one long side of each trench were drawn at 1:50. All the features found were located against one or the other long section (in the case of linear features, both). Sections of features were drawn at 1:20. The side of the trench to be drawn was selected such that sections of all the discrete features appeared on the long section. The position and direction of view of each long section may be found on Figure 4.1 as well as on the individual trench plans (Figs 6.1, 7, 8, 9 and 10.1). The long sections of the trenches turned out to be simple and rather repetitive and only two (trench 1 because it is typical and trench 5 because it is anomalous) have been reproduced in this report. The others are available in the archive (Plymouth Museum AR. 2008.19). The sections of all the features (at 1:20) have been reproduced.

Plans of each feature were drawn at 1:20. There were substantial areas of each trench in which no features appeared and these blank areas were not drawn. The location of each 1:20 plan may be found on the appropriate, schematic trench plan on Figs 6.1 to 10.1.

#### *All trenches*

Topsoil (context 009) and subsoil (context 010) were identified and recorded in all trenches.

#### *Trench 1 and trench 1 extension (Figs 4.2, 6.1, 6.2 and 13)*

A narrow, shallow, east-west cut (context 004) filled with a reddish to mid-brown friable sandy clay (context 003) was recorded at the northern end of trench 1. This cut the fill (context 005; also a reddish to mid-brown friable sandy clay) of a shallow cut (context 006) running north-south. This cut and its fill was recorded again a few metres to the south as contexts 011 and 012. Here this feature was cut by a sub-circular steep-sided cut (context 008) filled with a reddish to mid-brown friable sandy clay (context 007).

Near the southern end of trench 1 a deep, steep-sided, flat-bottomed cut was excavated (context 017). This had been filled asymmetrically with a dark reddish-brown, tenacious, sandy clay (context 016), a reddish-brown, friable, sandy clay (context 015), a dark, reddy-brown, sandy clay with abundant small, angular schist/slate fragments (context 014) and a reddish-brown, friable, sandy clay (context 013).

#### *Trench 2 (Figs 4.2, 7 and 12)*

A narrow, north-south cut (context 002) filled with a reddish to mid-brown friable sandy clay (context 001) was recorded at the western end of trench 2. This feature was also recorded in trenches 3 and 4 below.

#### *Trench 3 (Figs 4.2 and 8)*

The narrow, north-south cut identified in trench 2 was also recorded in trench 3 (context 019). It was filled with the same material as before, a reddish to mid-brown friable sandy clay (context 018). In trench 3 it cut the fill (a reddish to mid-brown friable sandy clay; context 020) of a shallow scoop (context 021).

Also in trench 3 was a narrow, shallow, cut running north-south (context 026). This was filled with a mid-reddish-brown, friable sandy clay (context 025).

#### *Trench 4 (Figs 4.2 and 9)*

The narrow, north-south cut identified in trenches 2 and 3 was also recorded in trench 4 (context 028). It was filled with the same material as before, a reddish to mid-brown friable sandy clay (context 027).

#### *Trench 5 (Figs 4.2, 10.1 and 10.2)*

A narrow, shallow, east-west cut (context 023) filled with a reddish to mid-brown friable sandy clay (context 022) was recorded at the northern end of trench 5. In the mid part of trench 5 a vertically-sided cut (context 033) was filled with a loamy sandy clay (context 031) and a tenacious sandy clay (context 032).

At the southern end of trench 5, a light to mid-grey green friable sandy clay layer (context 034) overlay a dark reddish brown friable sandy clay (context 029) being the fill of a broad, but shallow east-west ditch (context 030).

### **The finds**

These were very limited both in number and in their presence in stratified deposits. Only one sherd of pottery came from a stratified deposit (context 003) and this was from the very top of the fill. This was a coarse fabric rim sherd of a cooking pot, certainly of the 14th-15th century and possibly of the 13th-14th century. The only other sherd was from an unstratified deposit in trench 2. This was a much finer ware with a green glaze on the inside and is probably a jar of the 17th to 18th century. A slate roof tile came from context 001 and in an unstratified context in trench 4 came a flint flake. Three pieces of slag were recovered: one from context 007 and the other two from unstratified contexts in trenches 2 and 4. The paucity of finds of all periods suggests that this was not an occupation site or even immediately adjacent to one.

## **Discussion**

### **The site boundaries**

Banks such as those forming the east and west boundaries of the evaluation site are common features in this part of the country. It is not possible to be certain but they were probably present when the tithe map was surveyed in 1841. They are not considered further as their study was not required by the brief. During the surveying of the trench location, section and site boundary plan (Fig 4.1) it was noted that the southern site boundary was formed by a slight break in the slope of the ground. It is thought that this is a small lynchet. It is probably of no great antiquity. Indeed, it is likely that it was formed by ploughing during World War II when every available area, including bowling greens and cricket pitches, were turned over to the production of food. However, during the

course of the evaluation, it became apparent that this earthwork was merely a faint echo of a much more significant feature (see below).

#### **Features identified by or associated with the geophysical survey**

The features identified by the geophysical survey (Exeter Archaeology 2004; Fig 5) turned out to be ditches running either north to south or east to west. These varied considerably in their characteristics. The ditch identified as dividing the evaluation site in two, east to west (Exeter Archaeology 2004; contexts 002, 019 and 028), was sampled in three places. Although it varied somewhat, it was generally narrow with a flat bottom. In trench 2, a slate roofing tile was found in the fill (context 001). In trench 3 it cut another feature (context 021), apparently a shallow scoop, although it could be an earlier cut of the same ditch.

The feature identified as an enclosure (Exeter Archaeology 2004; context 004), was sampled in one place. This was a narrow, shallow ditch and it also cut another feature, a narrow slot running north to south, sampled in three places (contexts 006, 012 and 030). This slot may be the remains of a fence line.

By way of contrast was another east-west feature (context 017). This was a deep, steep-sided ditch which had clearly silted (or had been backfilled) asymmetrically. The implication is that this ditch had an associated bank. The function of this feature is unknown (but see below).

In the northern end of trench 5 was a further, narrow, shallow ditch (context 023) running east to west. To the south of this the geophysical plot became less clear. This was presumably due to the nature of the two features still to be described. A vertically sided cut, which was not bottomed, was the trench for a nine inch combined foul and surface water sewer (shown on a service plan). The fills of this feature (contexts 031 and 032) were quite distinctive and clearly modern. Its alignment on the service plan suggests that it pre-dates the 1960s development of Shindle Park.

At the southern end of Trench 5 the depth of archaeological deposit increased considerably. An additional layer (context 034) was identified below the subsoil (context 010). This appears to be a substantial lynchet which presumably built up against a boundary ditch (context 030) before finally overwhelming it. In an analysis of the formation of lynchet terraces as a product of open field agriculture it was noted by Orwin (1954) that ploughing along the contours of a hillside, without intervening baulks between the lands, could be commonly seen (at least up to the mid-20th century). The effect of this movement of the soil and the action of rain and frost was to cause a gentle slipping of the surface. In time a bank (positive lynchet) was accumulated at the bottom of the field and a negative lynchet was cut out at the top. The contour of the field remained unchanged and there was no terracing. This seems to be the situation at Penn Cottage. Any trace of a negative lynchet at the top of the field would have been destroyed when Penn Cottage was built.

The ditches identified during the course of this project are probably boundaries. The north to south ditch that divides the site into two (contexts 002, 019 and 028) is probably contemporary with the adjacent, north to south hedge banks which form two of the boundaries to the site and those parallel, north to south boundaries up and down the A379 through Chillington village. It is possible that the deep, steep-sided, east to west ditch (context 017) that was believed to have an associated bank is also contemporary. This would divide the site into two from north to south. There is some evidence from the tithe map (Fig 2) that some plots were approximately 50% of the length of the current site. This would mean that the bank associated with context 017 was a redundant hedge bank.

Without further evidence the other ditches and slot are more difficult to interpret. Although ditches such as contexts 008, 023 and 026 may not reasonably be described as slight, they are significantly smaller than 017. Contexts 004, 006/012 and 021 are very shallow. This may be due to truncation of the deposits.

#### **Other features**

In their discussion of two pits and a scoop containing slag and smithing hammerscale adjacent to Penn Cottage garden, Exeter Archaeology (2004) noted that neither the mid 19th century tithe map, nor later maps (Fig 2), gave any indication of a smithy at this location. While this is undoubtedly

true it is probably of limited significance. The trade directories of 1850 and 1902 note the presence of a blacksmith or blacksmiths in Chillington. In addition, trades in the mid to late 19th century might require little by way of premises. The reconstruction of a forge at the Black Country Museum (Fig 14) shows this activity occupying scarcely more than a simple shelter. This simplicity may be even more marked for earlier periods. The most substantial piece of equipment: the forge itself, was essentially portable (albeit in a wagon). It is easy to imagine that, if the site was ploughed, little trace of such a structure would remain to be recognised archaeologically.

At this connection, it was noted above (**Previous archaeological work**; DHER 63913) that there may have been some evidence for plough damage to upper archaeological levels. Ploughing might also account for the occasional pieces of slag encountered in various trenches during the course of the evaluation.

It was also noted that the charcoal in the slag was probably fuel residue and that ‘the use of charcoal rather than coal may point to an earlier rather than a later date’. Again, this is true but it does not have to be very much earlier. Wood, or more specifically charcoal, was in use as a fuel for these activities in the Midlands right up to the early 19th century (Court 1953) and only declined when serious shortages arose (Yarranton 1677-81).

## Significance

The features recorded by the evaluation were almost exclusively ditches, originally identified by the geophysical survey by Exeter Archaeology (2004). These ditches ran either north to south or east to west. A single sherd of pottery in the top of the fill tentatively dates one of these ditches to the medieval period. At the southern extremity of the site another ditch, running east to west, was a boundary against which a lynchet built-up and was subsequently overwhelmed. The quantity of recovered finds of any sort, stratified or unstratified, was tiny, notwithstanding the fairly large sample size of 5%. The presence of the lynchets, both recent and in the more distant past and, to a lesser extent, the slight nature of some of the features, clearly indicate that the site has been, to some extent, damaged by ploughing.

This is where the quandary of this site lies. If the presence of dating evidence could be reasonably anticipated, there are research questions that could be addressed by further work. However, it is clear that satisfactory dating evidence on this site can be obtained only by good fortune or very extensive excavation. With regard to the ditches, presumably land or property boundaries, it is thought, on the basis of the above, that further work cannot be justified. Unfortunately, the same arguments apply also to the lynchet which otherwise might have provided significant environmental information.

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### **Brief summary of the archive**

The archive consists of:

- 9 Site drawings - plans and sections
- 34 Context sheets
- 1 Black and white photographic film - prints and negatives
- 1 Small box of finds
- 1 Finds report
- 1 CD-Rom
- 1 Hard copy of this report

It has been deposited at Plymouth Museum ref AR.2008.19.

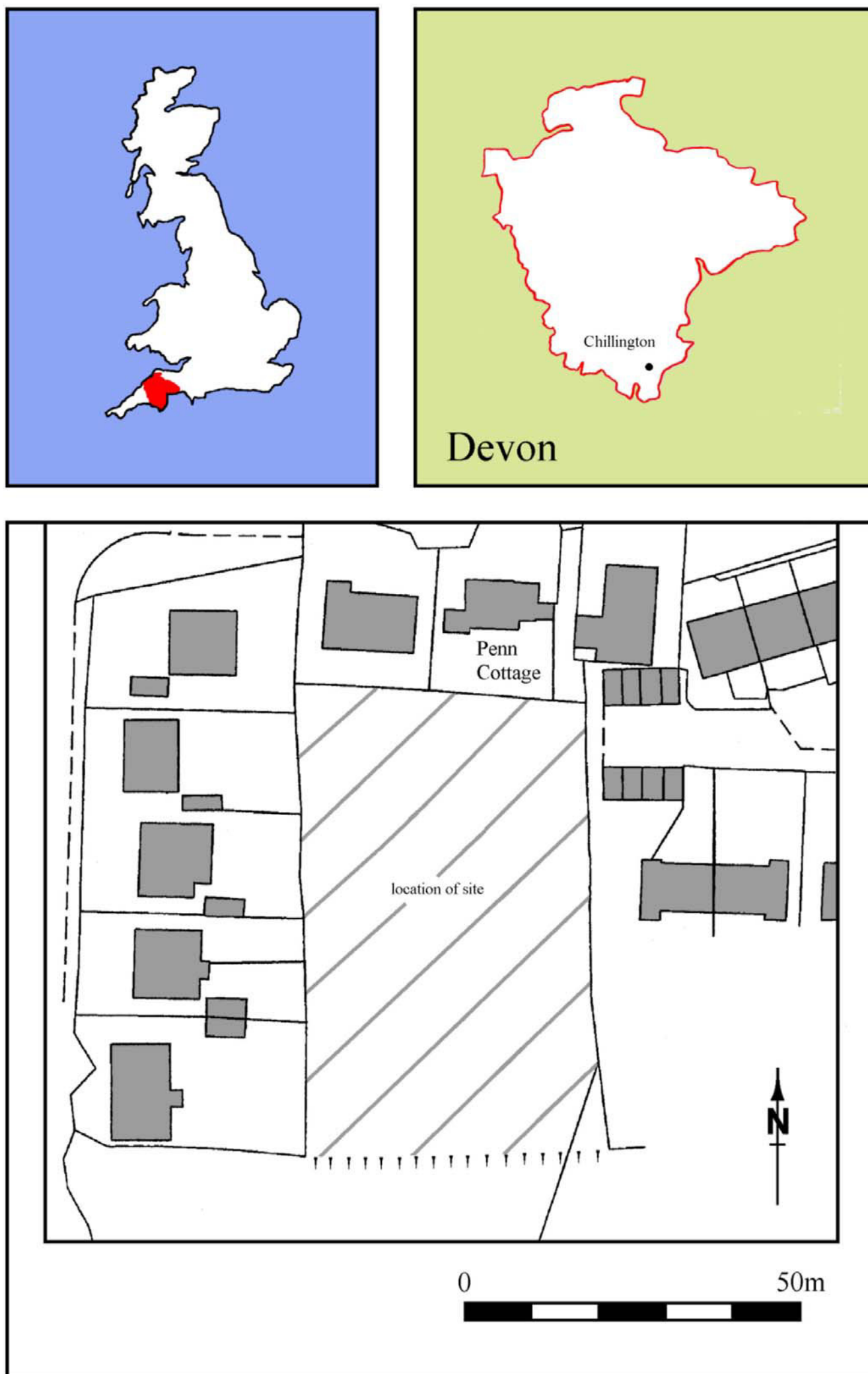
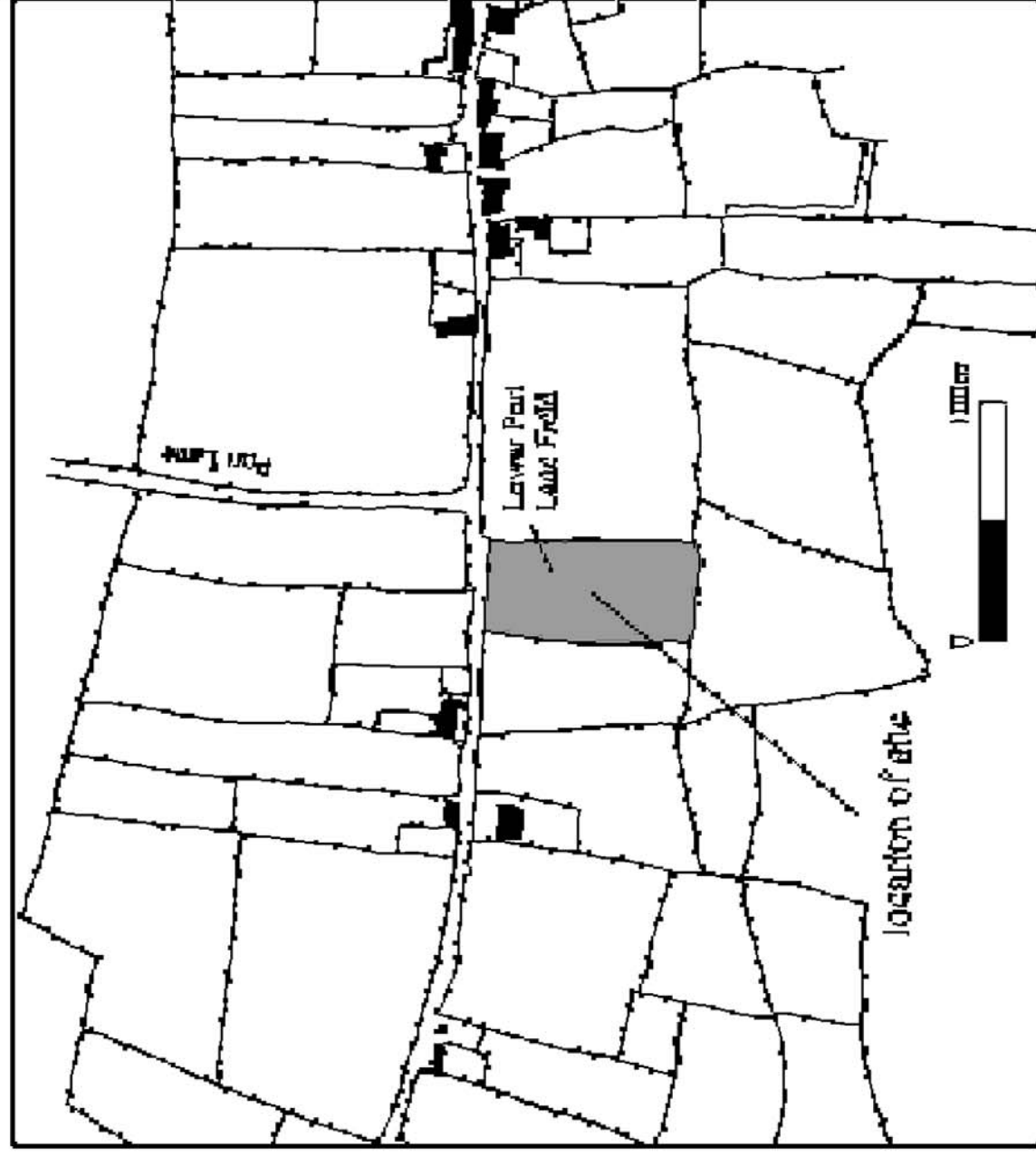


Fig 1: Location of site

Tulle map 1841



Ordinance Survey map 1884



Ordinance Survey map 1907



0 500m

Fig 2: Historic mapping



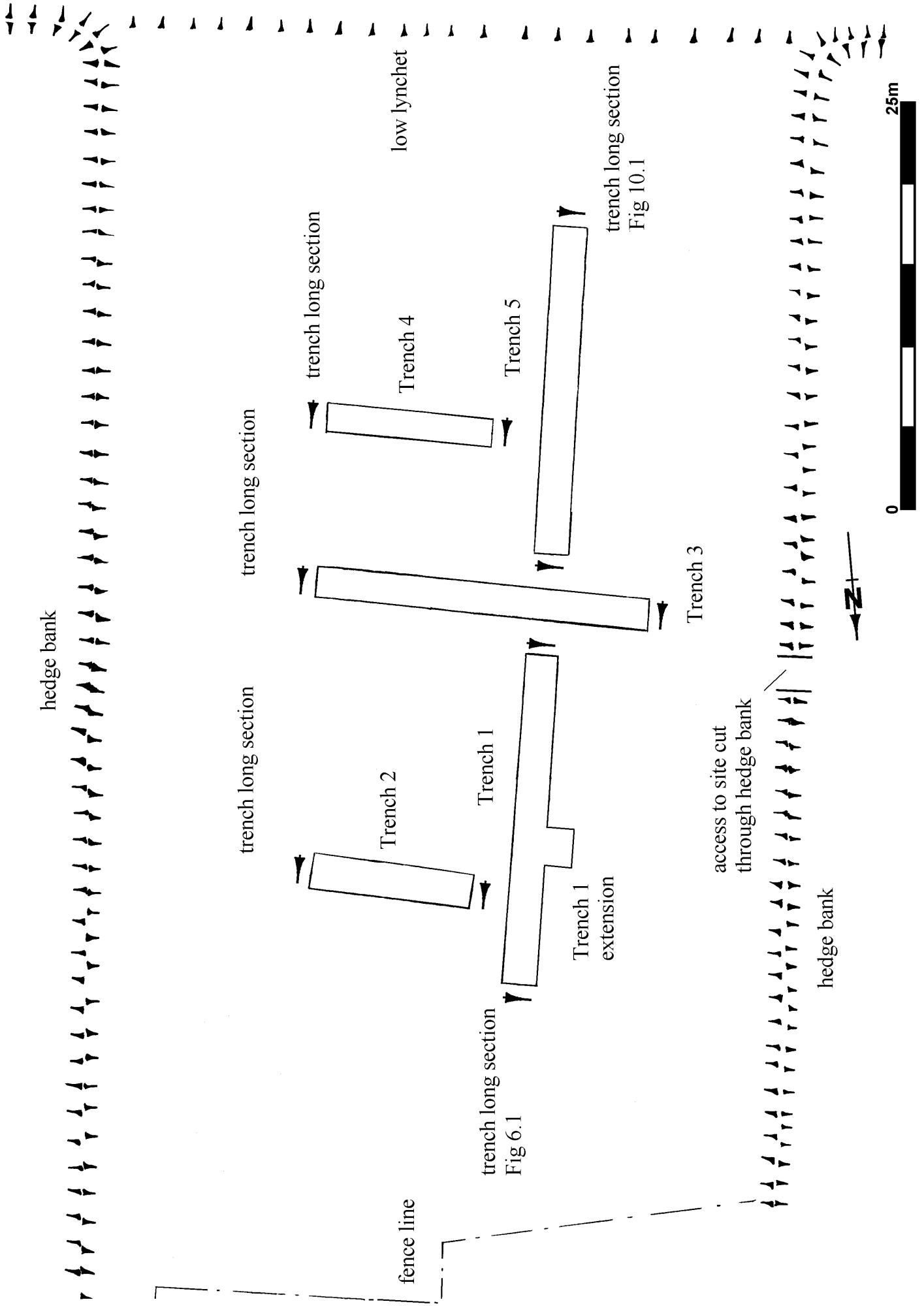


Fig 4.1: Trench and section location and site boundaries

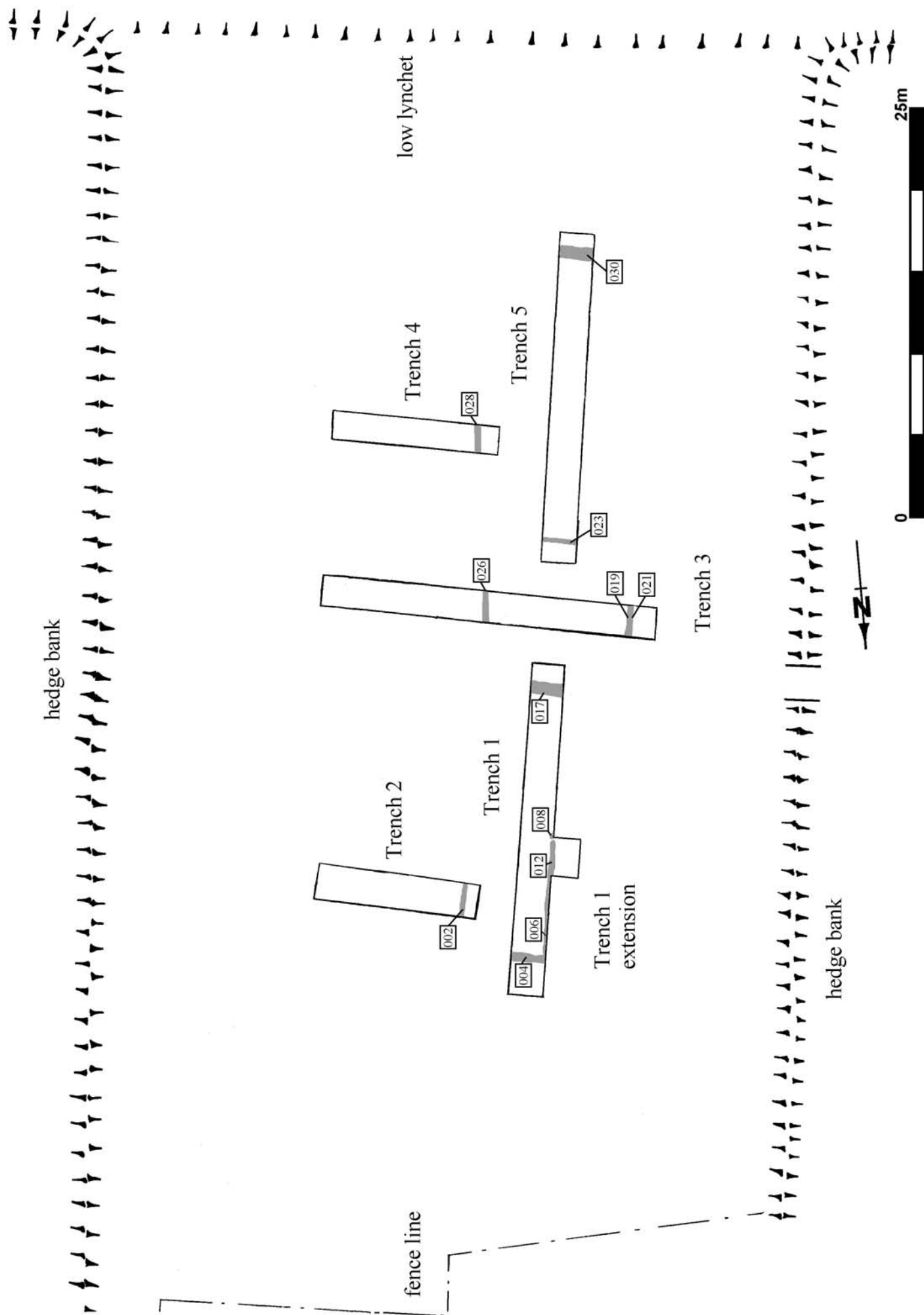
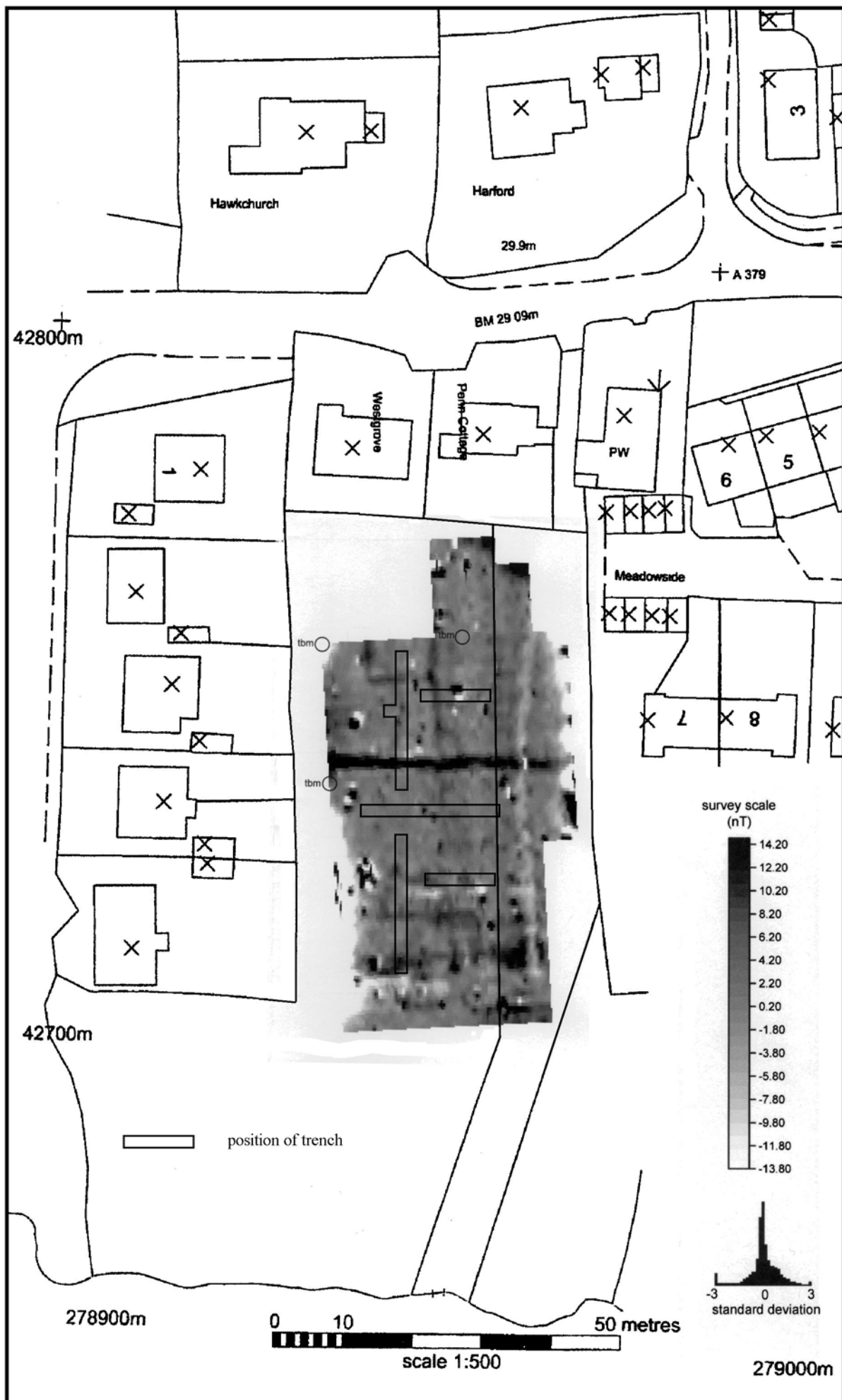


Fig 4.2: Principal features of the site



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Fig 5: Geophysical survey; reproduced from report by Exeter Archaeology 2004  
with positions of trenches superimposed

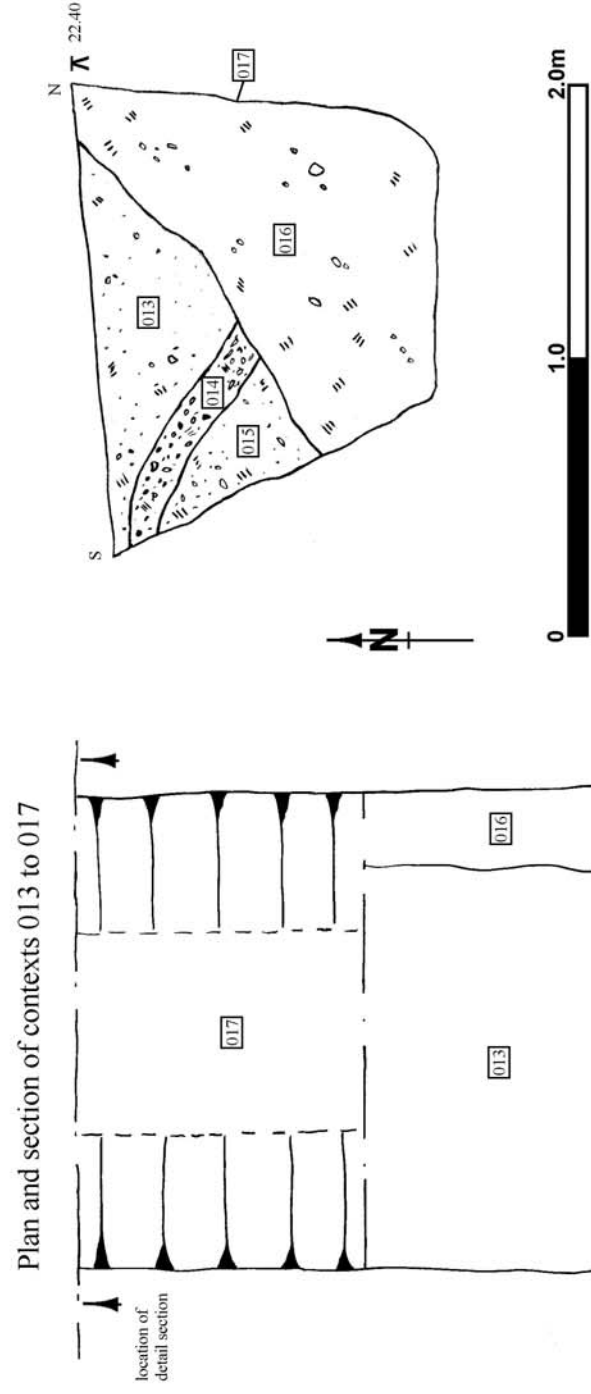
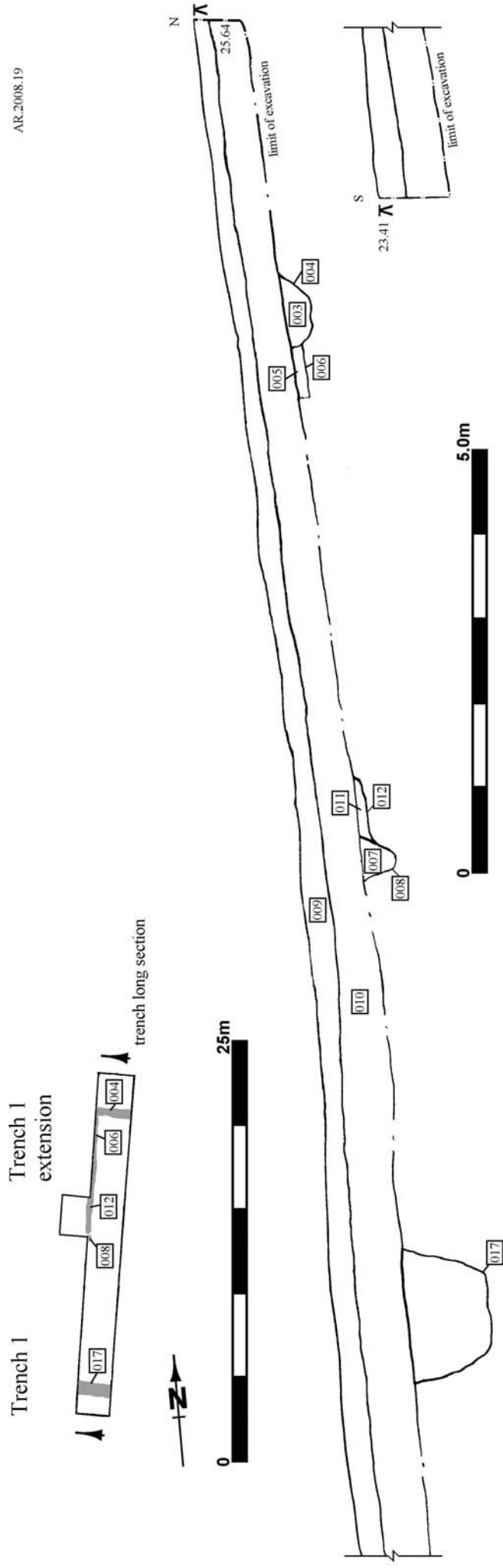
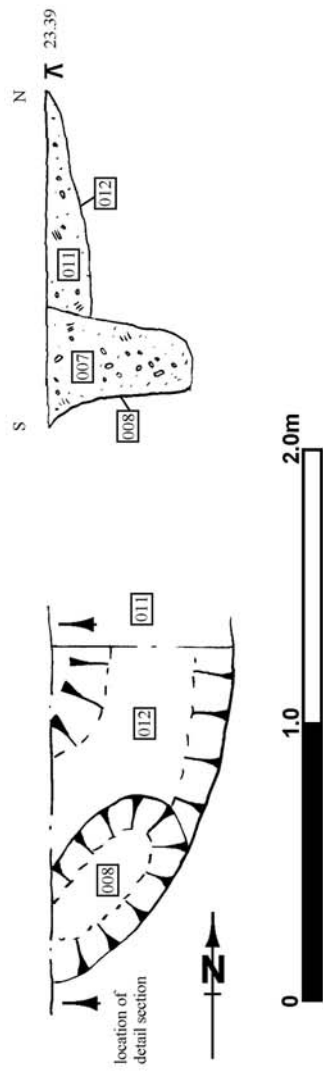


Fig 6.1: Trench 1; sections and plans

Plan and section of contexts 007, 008, 011 and 012



Plan and section of contexts 003, 004, 005 and 006

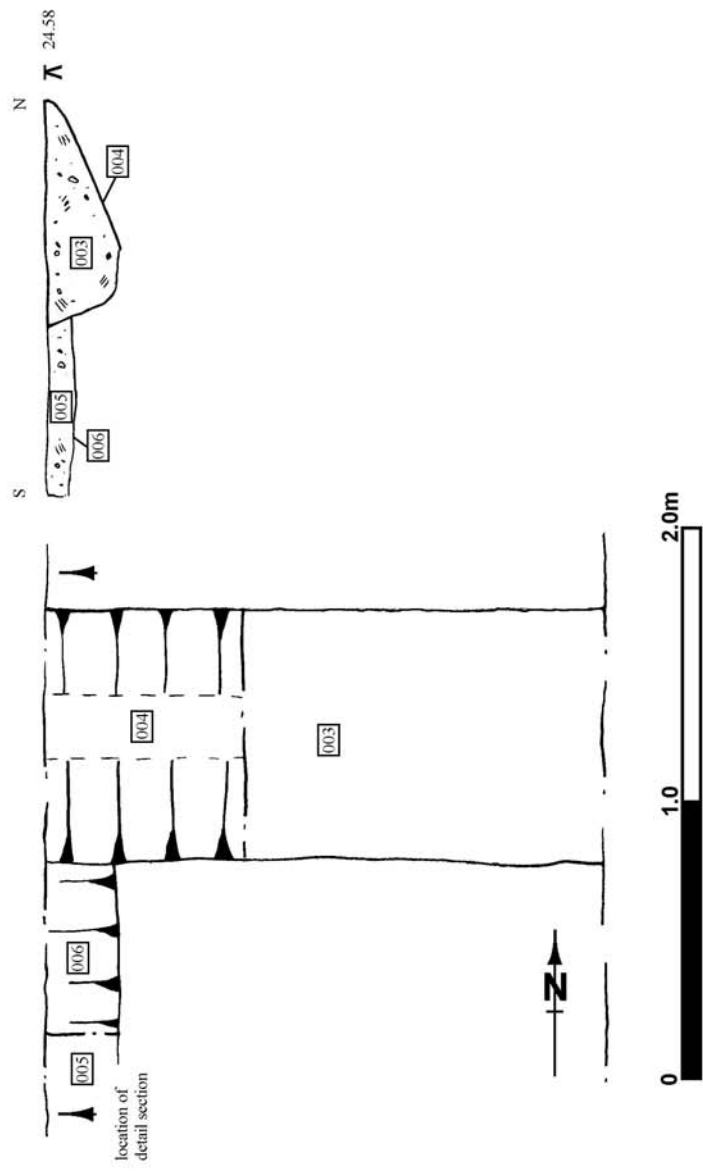
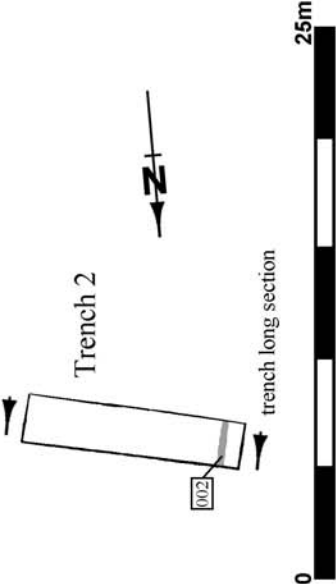


Fig 6.2: Trench 1; plans and sections trenches 1 to 5



Plan and section of contexts 001 and 002

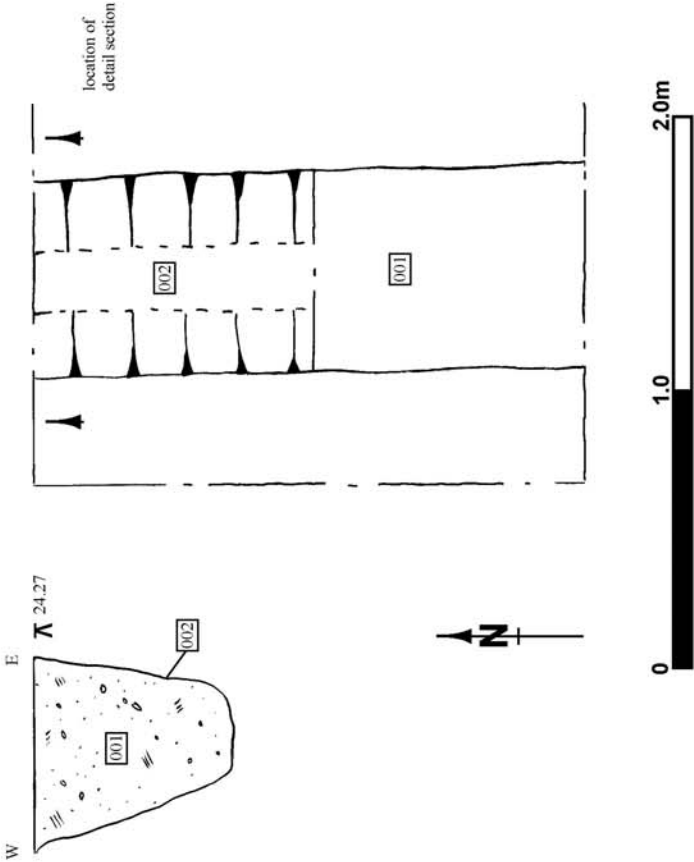
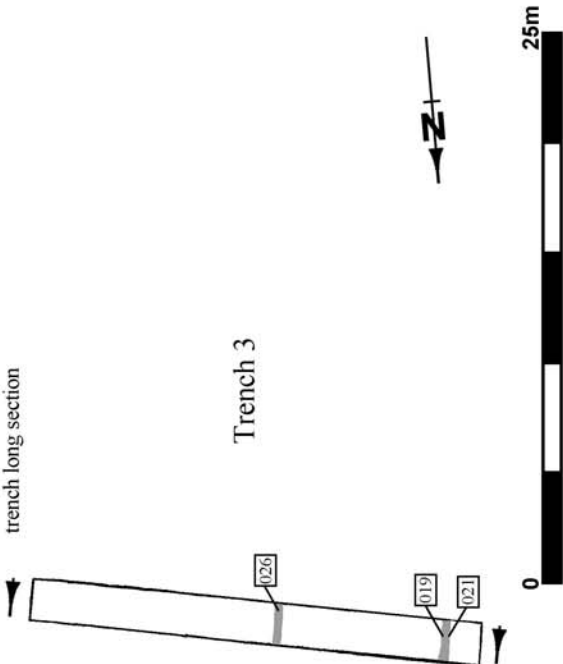
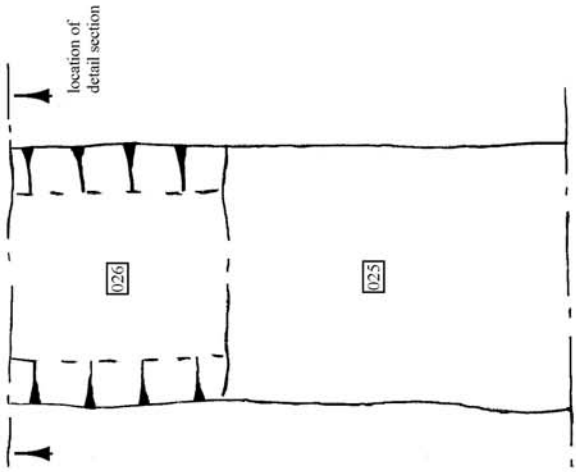
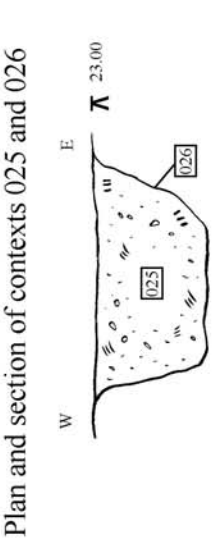


Fig 7: Trench 2; section and plan



Plan and section of contexts 018, 019, 020 and 021

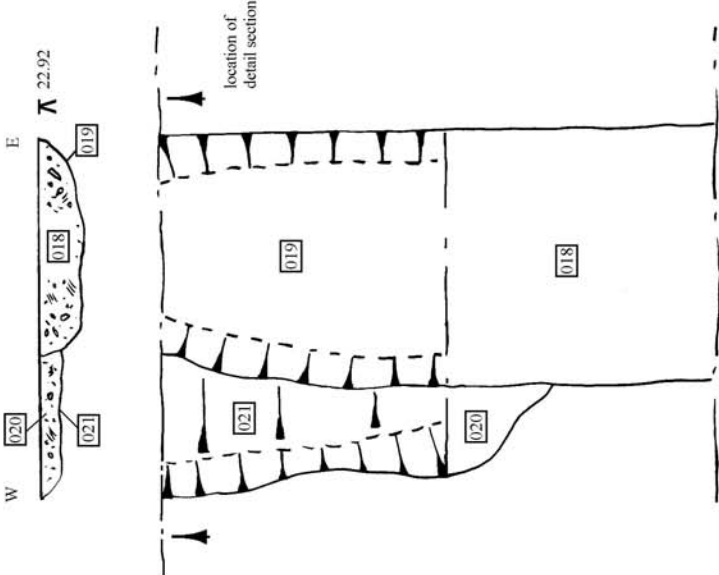
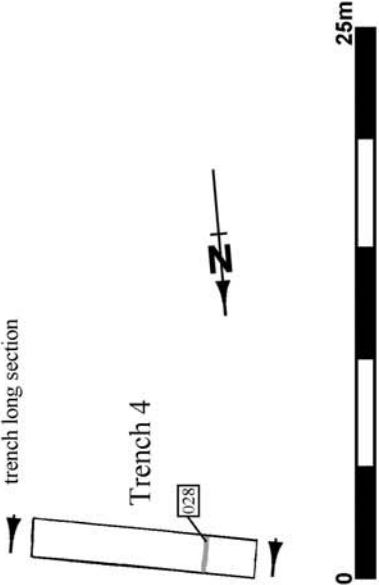


Fig 8. Trench 3; sections and plans



Plan and section of contexts 027 and 028

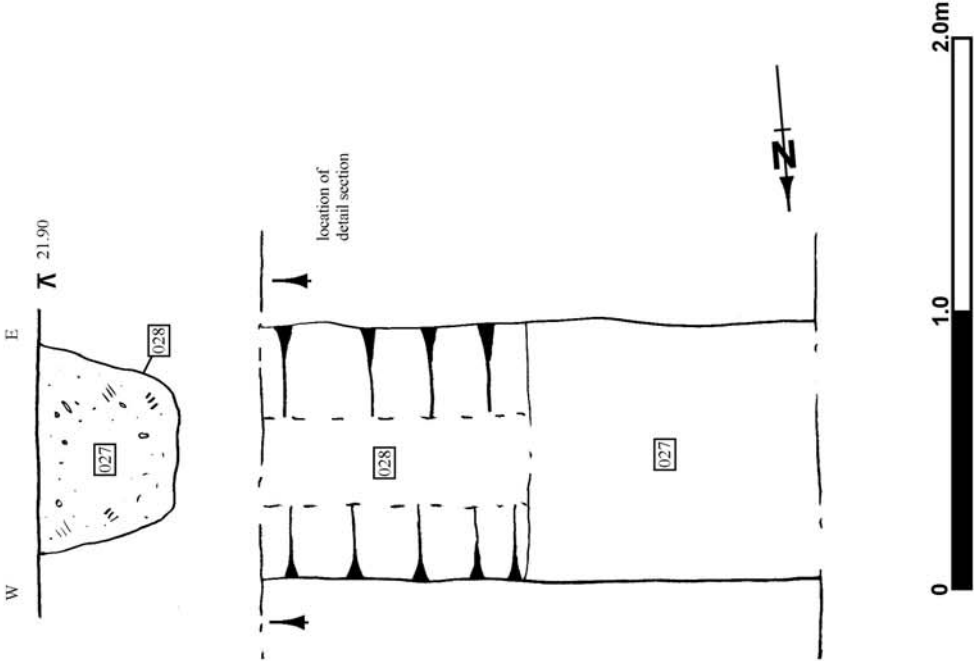


Fig 9: Trench 4, sections and plans

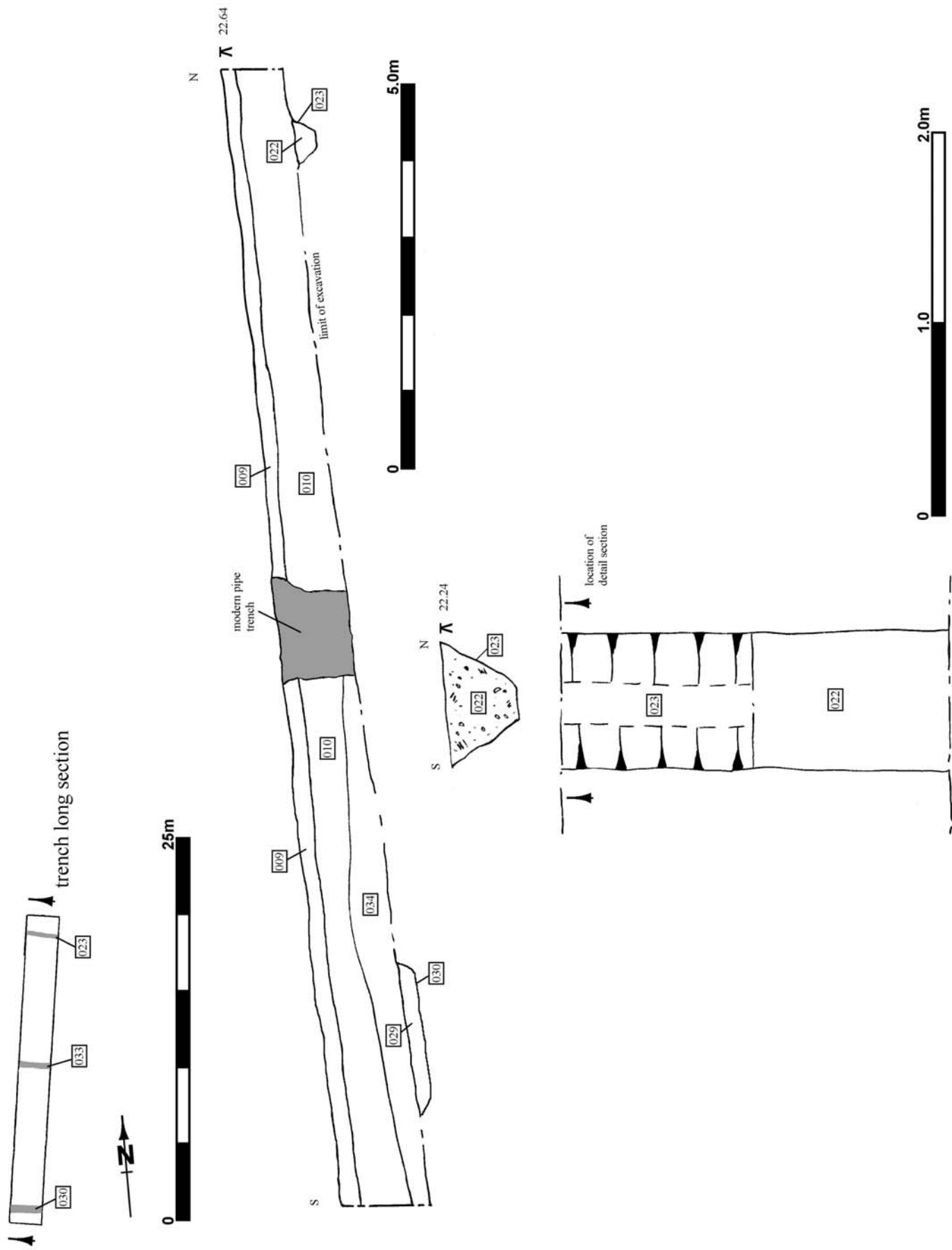


Fig 10.1: Trench 5; sections and plans

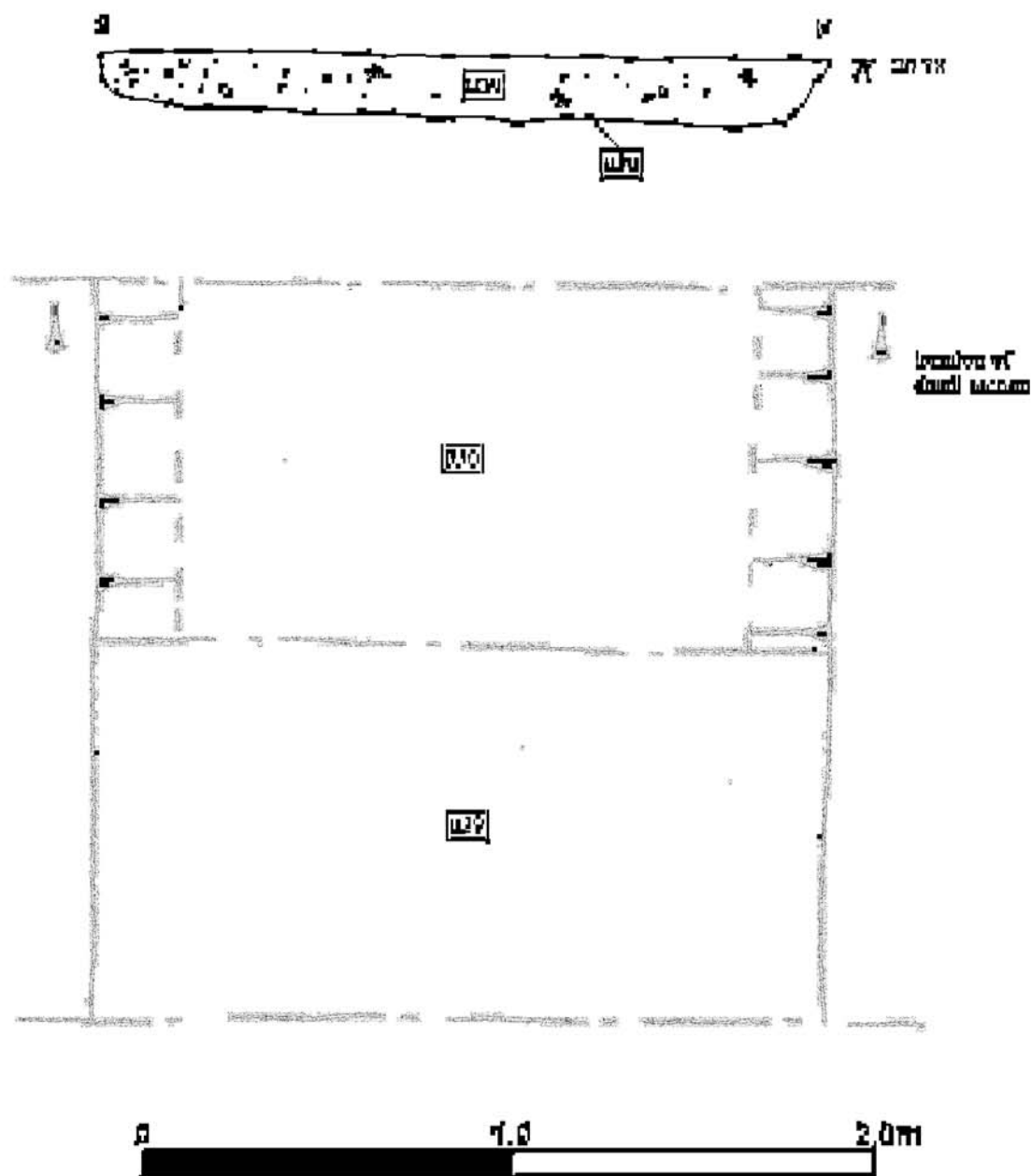


Fig. 10.3. Structure 5; plan and section

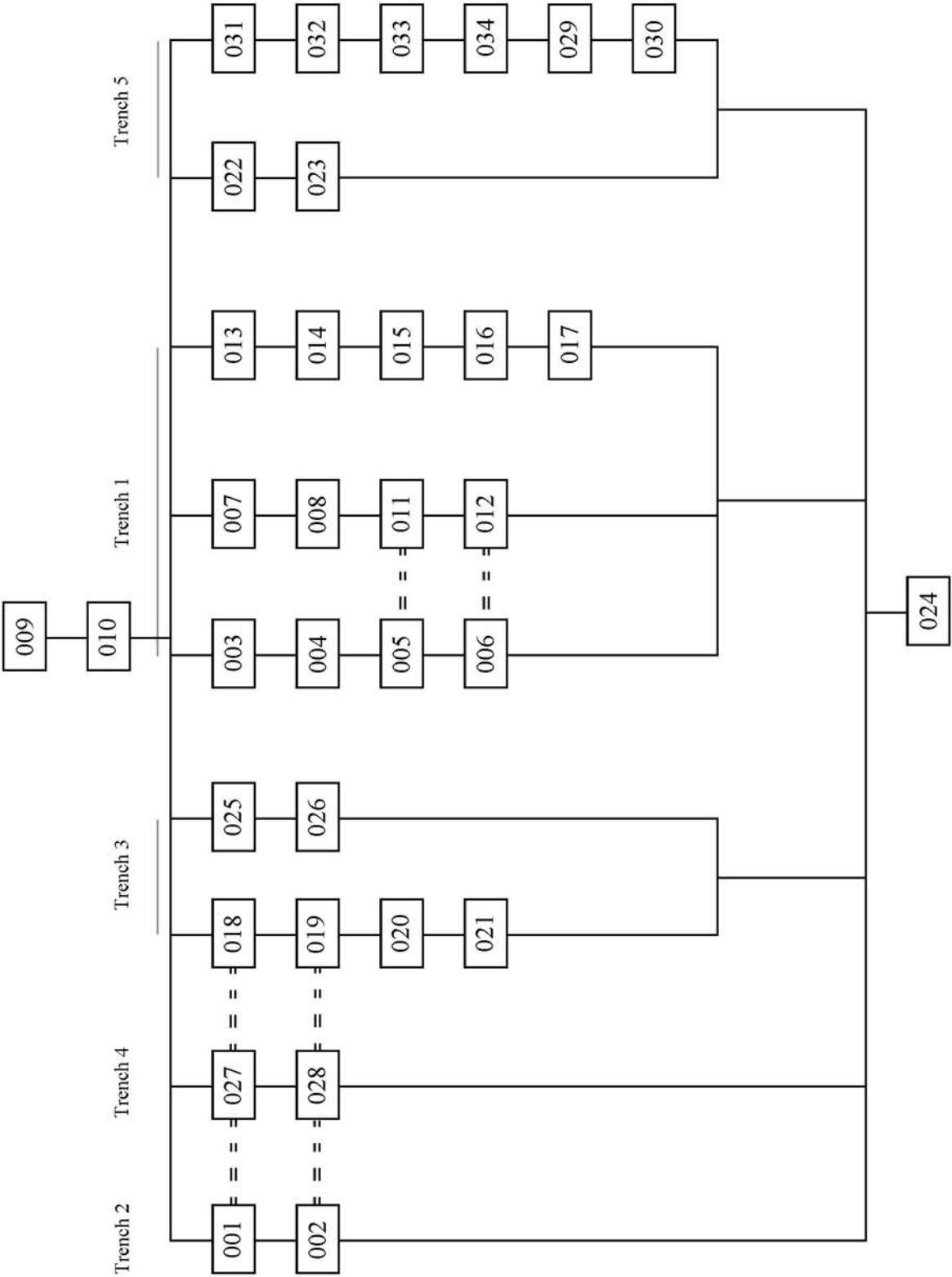


Fig 11: Harris matrix for trenches 1 to 5

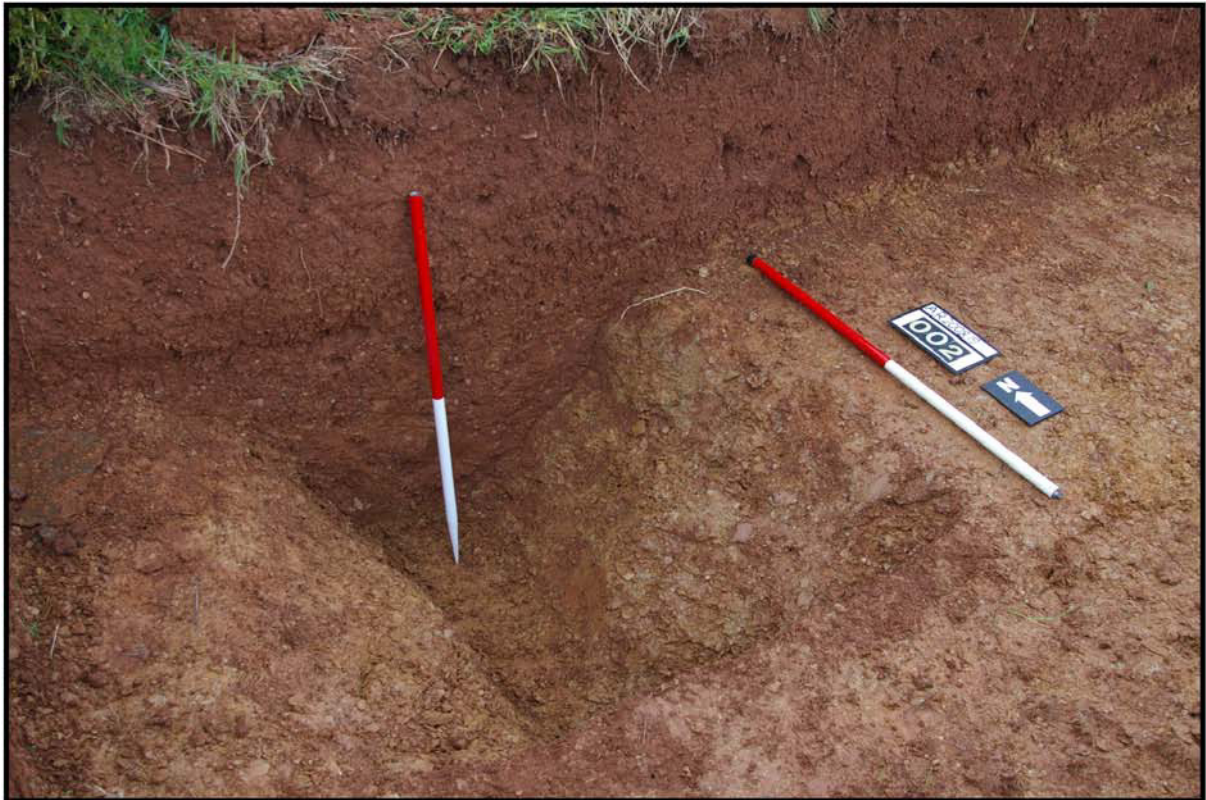


Fig 12: Trench 2; contexts 001 and 002



Fig 13: Trench 1; contexts 013 to 017



Fig 14: Blacksmith's forge at the Black Country Museum

## **Appendix 1: The finds report**

## **The finds by L C Griffin**

### **Artefactual analysis**

#### ***Aims***

The brief required an assessment of the quantity, range and potential of artefacts from the excavation.

The aims of the finds assessment were:

- a) to identify, sort, spot date, and quantify all artefacts
- b) to describe the range of artefacts present
- c) to preliminarily assess the significance of the artefacts

This report covers artefacts of prehistoric, medieval and late post-medieval date.

### **Method of analysis**

All hand-retrieved artefacts were examined and identified, quantified and dated to period. All information was recorded on a Microsoft Access 2000 database.

### **Results of analysis**

The assemblage retrieved from the site consisted of two sherds of pottery, three lumps of slag, a worked flint and a slate roof tile from three stratified contexts (001, 003 and 007; see Table 1). The sherds were of local fabric types and came from two separate vessels, which were datable by fabric and form to the 12<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### **Discussion**

The discussion below is a summary of the artefacts and associated context by period. Where possible, dates have been allocated and the importance of individual finds commented upon as necessary.

#### ***Prehistoric***

A single worked flint was the only material of prehistoric date from the site (unstratified). This was identified as a retouched blade.

#### ***Medieval***

Material of medieval date consisted of a highly abraded rim sherd from an unglazed sandy micaceous ware jar of 12<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> century date from context 003 (McCarthy and Brooks 1988, 349 no. 1446). This had carbonised deposits on the exterior surface indicating use as a cooking pot .

#### ***Late post-medieval***

The lower half of a probable jar form was identified as being of 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century in date (unstratified). It was of a fine oxidised fabric with a green internal glaze.

#### ***Other***

Other material consisted of three lumps of undiagnostic iron-working slag (context 007 and unstratified) and one broken roofing slate with a peg hole of unknown date (context 001).

### **Bibliography**

McCarthy, M R, and Brookes, C M, 1988 *Medieval Pottery in Britain AD 900-1600*, Leicester University Press

**Appendix 1: Table**

<b>Material</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Weight (g)</b>
<b>Medieval pottery</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Post medieval pottery</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>Slate</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1346</b>
<b>Flint</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Slag</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>560</b>

*Table 1 : Quantification of the assemblage*