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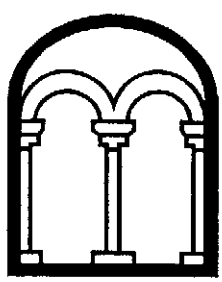

ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICE

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Brocket Hall, Welwyn-Hatfield District
Hertfordshire

Results of Archaeological Field Evaluation and Watching Brief

Document 1998/57
Project 516

30th October 1998

Produced for:
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Preface

Every effort has been made in the preparation of this document to provide as complete an assessment as possible, within the terms of the specification. All statements and opinions in this document are offered in good faith. Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service (BCAS) cannot accept responsibility for errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by a third party, or for any loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in this document.

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Non-Technical Summary

During the week 13th to 17th July 1998 a programme of pre-construction field evaluation was carried out over the site of the proposed new Palmerston Course at Brocket Hall. Nineteen trial trenches of between 25m and 50m in length, and 1.6 to 1.8m wide, were excavated. This was followed by a watching brief during the early stages of construction across the western parts of the course.

Evidence was recovered to indicate human exploitation of the landscape from the Neolithic (c. 4500BC) to the present day. Two sites of particular interest were highlighted. Both contained archaeological remains of significant regional interest and both are likely to represent the site of small farming settlements of Iron Age and Roman date respectively.

Site 1 lay in the central northern part of the development, close to the main north gate of the golf course. Trenches excavated in this area contained pits, post-holes and ditches indicating a settlement. Pottery and other finds were also recovered and together these suggest a date range for occupation spanning the early to late Iron Age (c. 800BC to AD43). The settlement was located on a broad south-facing plateau commanding excellent viewes across the valley of the River Lea, with land dropping steeply to the east, west and south.

Site 2 lay some 500m to the south on a similar but lower plateau. Excavated trenches contained a similar range of archaeological features, again indicating settlement. The pottery recovered, however, suggests a Roman date of between the 1st and 3rd centuries AD.

Both sites were previously unknown and their location makes a significant contribution to regional settlement studies. The identification of preferred topographic locations will be useful in locating other sites locally.

The identification of the sites during field evaluation enabled some details of the course design to be amended to protect the archaeological remains. This was monitored during the watching brief. No further archaeological remains were identified during this stage of work.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location

The Study Area comprises 99.6ha and lies within the grounds of Brocket Hall, split between the parishes of Ayot of St. Peter and Hatfield in Welwyn-Hatfield District of Hertfordshire (figs.1 and 2). An approximate centre to the site lies at NGR TL 2150 1350.

1.2 Planning Background

1.2.1 The Brocket Hall Golf Club intends to create a new course 'The Palmerston Course' to the SW, W and N of the current course. A condition attached to the Planning Permission, granted by Welwyn Hatfield District Council, required the implementation of an agreed scheme of archaeological works prior to construction. Consequently a *Proposal for an Archaeological Evaluation* was prepared by Duncan Hawkins of CgMs (July 1998), the clients consultant, and agreed by Tony Hurley, the Archaeological Conservation Officer (ACO) for Hertfordshire County Council.

1.2.2 Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service (BCAS) were commissioned to carry out these works comprising:

- A topographic survey
- A field evaluation consisting of the excavation of 19 trial trenches
- A watching brief during the construction of the course

1.2.3 The topographic survey has been reported elsewhere in BCAS 98/30. Results were largely negative beyong identifying an area of possible medieval or post-medieval gardens immediately to the NW of Brocket Hall. However, areas of modern disturbance were mapped, (including recent conifer plantation) and the results were used to target areas of archaeological potential on the basis of posotive topographic indicators (shallow slopes, plateaux, etc.) and lack of modern disturbance. These results were used to inform the placement of trial trenches during the evaluation stage.

1.3 Structure of the Report

1.3.1 This report details the results of the archaeological investigations undertaken by BCAS during the field evaluation and watching brief. All work was carried out in accordance with the *Proposal* issued by CgMs. Details in that document are not reproduced here except in reference.

1.3.2 Section 2 of this document presents the results of the field evaluation and Section 3 the results of the watching brief. Section 4 presents an overall synthesis of the results.

1.3.3 Only those trenches and areas which produced surviving archaeological deposits of medieval date or earlier are described in detail within the main body of the report.

1.3.4 Appendix 1 provides a more detailed, tabulated breakdown of recorded observation across all trenches of the field evaluation.

1.3.5 Figures are bound together at the end of the document.

2. THE FIELD EVALUATION

2.1 Methodology

2.1.1 Twenty two trenches were specified within the *Proposal* (but see 2.1.3 below) and these were located on the ground by tachometric survey (Fig.3). The lack of reference points across the study area contributed to an error in location of +/- 3m.

2.1.2 Trenches were located to investigate areas of disturbance indicated on design plans (Donald Steel Ltd. April 1998 BH:5:SDP:Rev1). These included greens, tees, bunkers and borrow pits. Trenches were not located in areas where high levels of disturbance had already taken place as indicated by the topographic survey (BCAS 1998/30), e.g. existing borrow pits and areas of dense conifer plantation.

2.1.3 Trenches 3, 4, and 13 were subsequently removed from the evaluation on the agreement of the ACO. Trench 5 was slightly relocated to coincide with the position of a proposed pond and trench 17 was rotated through 40° to take advantage of a break in the trees.

2.1.4 Trenches were excavated by a tracked 360° machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket.

2.1.5 All trenches measured between 1.6m to 1.8m wide and 25m long, except trench 14 which was 50m long, and trench 17 which was extended from 25m to 50m. Trench 11, originally a single 25m N-S trench, had added to it a second 25m arm running E-W. These changes were made to ensure a more even coverage of the site.

2.1.6 Where archaeological deposits were identified they were excavated and recorded as specified within the *Proposal.*

2.1.7 In selected trenches that did not contain any archaeological features test-pits were machine excavated to investigate natural deposits.

2.1.8 All spoil heaps were investigated for finds. Bucket samples were taken for on-site dry-sieving.

2.1.9 All features and deposits were assigned context numbers. They were recorded in a numbered sequence for each trench and described on pro-formae sheets. The numbers in brackets within the text refer to the original context numbers issued on site. A summary of the contexts encountered in each trench is presented in tabular form within appendix 1. Significant archaeological features are described in detail in Section 2.2. Plans and section drawings are bound together at end of this report.

2.2 Results

Five trenches contained buried archaeological features, with a further 6 containing finds of worked flint or pottery within the topsoil. The following table provides a summary of the results. Finds are summarised in table 2.

Table 1: Summary of archaeological evidence from the trial trenches

TRENCH NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
1	No archaeological observations
2	No archaeological observations
3	Not excavated
4	Not excavated
5	No archaeological observations
6	**Curving ditch cut by large pit**
7	**Two post-holes and a pit**
8	**Four post-holes and a pit**
9	No archaeological observations
10	No archaeological observations
11	Flint from topsoil
12	Flint from topsoil
13	Flint from topsoil
14	No archaeological observations
15	No archaeological observations
16	No archaeological observations
17	Late Iron Age pottery from the topsoil
18	Roman tile from topsoil
19	Roman pot from topsoil
20	**Three pits**
21	**Seven pits/post-holes and two ditches**
22	No archaeological observations

Archaeological remains are clearly concentrated into two areas. An early to late Iron Age concentration to the N central part of the development comprises **Site 1** (fig.3), trenches 17, 20 and 21, with a first to third century Roman concentration in the central part of the site comprising **Site 2** (fig.6), trenches 6, 7 and 8.

2.2.1 Site 1

Trench 17 (fig.3)

This was located on the edge of woodland across the site of proposed borrow area 9. The trench was oriented W-E running from the edge of a level grassed area downslope through trees. Topsoil and the upper part of subsoil were removed to a depth of around 300mm, with 600mm removed at the SW end as a control. No archaeological features were observed, although, four sherds from a single Belgic Iron Age pot (50BC to AD100) were recovered from within the topsoil. The trench was subsequently lengthened to the E to extend it up over the crest of the slope onto the grassed level area, again with no archaeological features observed.

Trench 20 (Fig.4)
This was excavated on the site of the proposed green for the 2nd hole, 75m to the E of trench 17. It was located on a level area of mown grass. Oriented approximately N-S, topsoil and subsoil was removed to a depth of around 300mm until archaeological features were observed. These comprised three pits; [202] (cutting) [204], and [206]. All three contained pottery of Iron Age date (see table 2). A fourth feature [208] is interpreted as of natural origin.

Trench 21 (Fig.5)
Located 100m to the N of trench 17, on the boundary of the grassed area with a recent woodland plantation to the W. It was excavated across the site of the 11th hole green. Topsoil and a shallow scrape of subsoil were removed to a depth of 200mm where archaeological features were observed. These comprised seven small pits or post-holes [212], [214], [216], [250], [256],[259] and [261]and two ditches [252] and [254]. The features contained a mix of early and late Iron Age pottery with [216] producing 20 sherds and [256] a small amount of metalworking slag. A fragment of Roman tile was found in the ditch [254] which may suggest some continued activity in this area.

2.2.2 Area 2

Trench 6 (Fig.7)
This was located in open mown grass to investigate Borrow Area 3. Topsoil and subsoil were removed to a depth of 350mm. Two archaeological features were recorded; a curving ditch [62], which was cut by a large pit-like feature [65]. The pit was only partly revealed within the trench, at a minimum of 1.6m across and only partly excavated to a depth of 800mm. Both features contained early Roman pot together with tile and animal bone.

Trench 7 (Fig.8)
This was located in open mown grass across the proposed Borrow Area 3. Topsoil and subsoil were removed to a depth of 300mm. Three archaeological features a were recorded; two post holes [72] and [78] and a pit [76] containing a large fragment of puddingstone quern (RA1) together with early Iron Age pot. The post holes were undated and only 180mm and 100mm deep, probably indicating an amount of truncation. An irregular linear scoop [74] contained modern material.

Trench 8 (Fig.9)
This was located across the area of the 18th green. 350mm of topsoil and subsoil was removed. Five post-holes [84], [86], [88] and [270] were excavated along with a large shallow feature, 2.5m across, [82]. The features had been truncated and only survived to between 50mm and 300mm deep. All five of the features were dated to the late Iron Age and Early Roman period by pottery. Animal bone and tile were also recovered.

2.3 Blank Areas

2.3.1 Over the majority of the site trenches did not produce any archaeological finds or observations.

2.3.2 Where trenches were arranged in a close network, providing good coverage we can be fairly certain that significant archaeological remains will not have been missed (e.g. to the W of Area 2; trenches 9-12, and in the area of the reservoir; trenches 15, 16, 18 and 19).

2.3.3 Elsewhere, however, where trench coverage was less dense, (e.g. to the S of the river) or where trenches were wholly absent, archaeological remains may survive close by. These areas are not threatened by any planned development.

2.4 Finds Assemblage

2.4.1 Introduction

Evaluation produced a small artefactual assemblage (Table 2) comprising mainly pottery and ceramic building material. The material has been scanned to ascertain the nature, condition and, where possible, date range of the artefact types present.

Table 2: Artefact assemblage by trench and feature

KEY: PBIA = Pre-'Belgic' Iron Age BIA = 'Belgic' Iron Age ER = Early Roman

Trench*	Feature	Date	Pottery	Ceramic Building Material		Other finds
			Vess:Sherd: Wt (g)	Frag no: Wt (g)	Type	
6	62		1:1:6			animal bone 4g
	65	ER	8:10:151	9:1264	brick, *teg, imbrex*	
7	72					animal bone 41g
	74			2:9	unid	modern vessel glass 12g
	76	PBIA	1:2:23			RA 1 quern fragments 1.3kg
8	82	BIA, ER	19:22:144			animal bone 11g
	84	BIA, ER	2:2:10			
	86	Roman		1:88	*tegulae*	
	88	ER	1:1:7			
	270	ER	1:1:9			
11	110					flint flake & core rejuvenation flake 52g
12	126					flint flake 7g
14	140					flint flake 9g
17	170	BIA	1:4:10			
18	180	Roman		4:235	*tegula*, brick	
19	190	ER	1:1:20			
20	202	PBIA	9:10:70			
	204	PBIA	7:11:76			
	206	BIA	1:2:15			flint flake 7g
21	210	PBIA	1:1:5			flint flake 6g
	212	BIA	5:8:33			
	214	PBIA	1:2:16			
	216	PBIA	20:36:334			
	254	BIA, ER	4:4:18	1:268	*tegula*	RA 2 quern fragment 4 kg, flint core fragment 33g
	256					ferrous slag 15g, fe ?nail shank 3g
Totals			**83:118:947**	**17:1864**		

* No artefacts were recovered from trenches 1-5, 9, 10, 13, 15, 16, or 22.

2.4.2 Worked Flint

Seven fragments of flint debitage weighing 81g were recovered. The assemblage comprises both patinated and unpatinated pieces, in poor quality flint possibly dating to the late Neolithic/early Bronze Age. The material

derives either from ploughsoil, or is clearly residual within features of later date.

2.4.3 Pottery

A total of 83 vessels represented by 118 sherds, weighing 947g was recovered. The pottery was examined by context and 15 fabric types identified, using common names and type codes in accordance with the Bedfordshire Ceramic Type Series, held by BCAS. Fabrics are listed below in approximate chronological order: bracketed figures represent vessel number. Quantification was carried out using minimum vessel and sherd count, and weight.

Table 3: The Pottery Type Series from Brocket Hall

	Common Name	Date Range
Pre-'Belgic' Iron Age (40) 49% total assemblage		
Type F01A	coarse flint tempered	*c.* 800-50BC
Type F01B	fine flint tempered	*c.* 800-50BC
Type F35	micaceous	*c.* 800-50BC
'Belgic' Iron Age (12) 15% total assemblage		
Type F06B	medium grog tempered	*c.* 50BC-100AD
Type F06C	coarse grog tempered	*c.* 50BC-100AD
Type F09	grog/sand tempered	*c.* 50BC-100AD
Early Roman (31) 36% total assemblage		
Type R01	samian ware	C2
Type R03A	Verulamium whiteware	C2
Type R07B	sandy blackware	C2-3
Type R07C	gritty blackware	C2-3
Type R18A	gritty pinkware	C2-3
Type R05A	orange sand tempered	C2+
Type R06B	coarse greyware	C2+
Type R06C	fine greyware	C2+
Type R22A	Hadham oxidised	C2+

Pottery was retrieved from 8 trenches (36%), with the largest concentrations deriving from features within trenches 6 and 8 (30 vessels) located in the centre of the study area, and trenches 20 and 21 (48 vessels) to the NE. The assemblage ranges in date from the early Iron Age to early Roman periods.

The material survives in poor condition, being highly abraded and fragmentary. Few diagnostic forms are present.

Pre-'Belgic' Iron Age
The incidence of hand-made pre-'Belgic' Iron Age material is largely restricted to features within trenches 20 (pits [203] and [204]) and 21 (pits [214] and [216]). The majority of vessels are sand tempered and highly micaceous (type F35), while the remainder contain either coarse or fine flint particles (types F01A and F01B respectively). No diagnostic forms are present and none of the sherds bear decoration.

'Belgic' Iron Age and Early Roman
Vessels of 'Belgic' type are poorly represented (12 examples), and are associated with both pre-'Belgic' and Romano-British material. The assemblage comprises locally produced vessels in predominantly grog and/or sand tempered fabrics. Recognisable forms are restricted to a cordoned jar. Vessels of Roman date are concentrated within trenches 6 (ditch [62], pit [65]) and 8 (pit [82], postholes [84] and [88]), and date predominantly from the second century onwards. Coarsewares are represented by a standard range of local greywares (R06), oxidised sandy wares (R05A, R22A), blackwares (R07), Verulamium whitewares (R03) and pinkwares (R18). Continental imports are represented by a single sherd of samian (R01). Diagnostic forms include a flanged bowl, triangular rim bowl, everted rim jar and a lid.

2.4.4 Ceramic Building Material

Seventeen fragments of ceramic building material (1.9kg), comprising *tegulae*, brick and a single fragment of *imbrex* were recovered, the greatest quantity (363g) deriving from the disuse fills of pit [65], trench 6. All are sand tempered and uniformly oxidised. Although small and entirely redeposited, the assemblage suggests the presence of tiled buildings in the vicinity.

2.4.5 Registered Artefacts

Two fragments of Hertfordshire puddingstone quern (**RA 1** and **RA 2**) were recovered from pit [76], trench 7 and ditch [254], trench 21 respectively. The former is highly fragmentary and has been burnt, while the latter retains part of a grinding surface, and is of beehive type, broadly datable to the Iron Age and early Roman periods.

2.4.6 Faunal Remains

Sixteen fragments of animal bone, weighing 56g were recovered from early Roman contexts. Recognisable species are horse and cow. As with the ceramic material, the fragments are highly abraded and shattered.

2.4.7 Summary

The artefactual assemblage attests human activity from the Neolithic to the early Roman period, with the bulk of the material dating to the 'Belgic' Iron Age and early Roman period.

The lithic material, although largely unstratified or residual, is suggestive of activity within the earlier prehistoric period.

The concentration of predominantly pre-'Belgic' pottery and a small quantity of 'Belgic' material in trenches 20 and 21 (Site 1) may suggest an extended period of Iron Age occupation and attests the coincidence of differing ceramic traditions.

Roman material is focused largely in the central part of the site (Site 2: trenches 6 and 8). The utilitarian nature of the pottery, comprising few regional or continental imported wares, indicates a fairly standard domestic assemblage. The small quantity of ceramic roof tile and brick suggests the presence of reasonably substantial structures in the vicinity. Isolated finds of Roman origin recovered from trenches 18 and 19 to the N of Site 2 may be the result of 'background activity' during this period.

3. RESULTS OF THE WATCHING BRIEF

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 All references are to a plan produced by Donald Steel Ltd.(April 1998 BH:5:SDP:Rev1) marked up by Duncan Hawkins of CgMs.

3.1.2 Observations were made on Monday 27th and Wednesday 29th July and Monday 10th August 1998. The areas to be observed were indicated by CgMs. Additional areas were observed in the course traversing the development area.

3.1.3 All works were concentrated to the W of the N access road into the estate. Works on the E side of the road will not begin before Spring 1999 and will be the subject of a separate phase of watching brief.

3.1.4 Tree removal as part of the construction of the hole 11 green was observed. This was particularly sensitive in view of the proximity of the Iron Age settlement remains identified in trench 21 of the field evaluation. A tracked bulldozer fitted with a hydraulic fork was used. The fork slipped beneath the shallow roots of the young trees and removed them with minimal disturbance to the subsoil. In our judgement this process posed minimal threat to the archaeological deposits.

3.1.5 Discussions were held with John Wells (Grounds Manager) concerning the methods of green construction to be employed within the areas of high archaeological importance (marked yellow on the plan). It was initially agreed with the ACO that cultivation to 4" depth could take place but that no topsoil should be removed. JW subsequently requested that removal of the cultivated topsoil should be allowed to save costs on brought in material. This was agreed by the ACO.

3.1.6 The above methodology was applied to the construction of greens on holes 2 and 11. Topsoil was first cultivated across green 2. BCAS inspected the surface for artefacts and none were found. Green 11 was then cultivated and topsoil was removed across both greens using a tracked bulldozer. This involved pushing topsoil to the limit of the greens and tracking over exposed subsoil. This process was not observed and took place between BCAS visits. The surfaces, subsequent to topsoil removal, were walked over. Although archaeological features were excavated in these areas during the trench evaluation none were now visible beyond ill-defined areas of darker soil. No artefacts were seen. It was clear that in places the full depth of topsoil had been removed down to the level where archaeological features would have survived. Tracking across the exposed surface had obscure the location of these features and had probably disturbed them at their upper limit. No more cutting was planned for these areas. Brought-in material was dumped across the green sites to build up their level. Further machine movement across these areas was restricted to an absolute minimum.

3.17 Topsoil was removed from over the area of green 18 with a 360° machine fitted with a toothless bucket. This was observed by an archaeologist. The surface was not clean enough to allow archaeological features to be defined although fragments of Roman pottery were recovered.

3.18 The difficulty in locating known archaeological features after removal of topsoil by bulldozer has implications for other areas of the development. Where this methodology has been used or is planned to be used it is unlikely that archaeological features, if they are present, will be seen.

3.2 Results

3.2.1 No significant archaeological deposits were located as part of the watching brief.

Table 4: Summary of observations during the watching brief

Area of Observation	Comments	Observations
As directed by CgMs		
Holes		
Hole 1 green	Topsoil removed. Green cut into subsoil	Very uneven removal of topsoil. No features visible in 300-400mm cut into subsoil.
Hole 2 green	Area cultivated to 4". Topsoil stripped.	No material visible on surface after cultivation. Subsequently topsoil removed across whole area of green. Bulldozer used, tracking over exposed areas. Disturbance has masked archaeological features. Darker areas may indicate position of archaeological remains but these are ill-defined.
Hole 2 tee/bunkers	Topsoil stripped	No archaeological features
Hole 4 green	No work yet	
Hole 9 green	Topsoil stripped	Very uneven strip, some topsoil remains. Possible features to N but these associated with recent 'flower pot' sherds
Hole 10 bunkers	Topsoil stripped	Much recent dumping (tile/brick/willow pattern pot). Much root

		disturbance from recent clearance
Hole 11 bunkers	Trees removed. No excavation yet.	
Hole 11 green	Focus for Iron Age Site 1. Trees removed, topsoil stripped.	Tree removal caused minimal subsoil disturbance. Tracked bulldozer fitted with hydraulic fork. Young trees with shallow roots. Subsequently topsoil removed across whole area of green. Bulldozer used, tracking over exposed areas. Disturbance has masked archaeological features. Darker areas may indicate position of archaeological remains but these are ill-defined.
Hole 18 green	Focus for Romano-British Site 2	Topsoil removed under archaeological supervision by tracked excavator using toothless bucket. Not enough material removed to clearly show underlying features. Stray sherds of Roman pottery recovered.
Hole 18 fairway	No work yet. Focus for possible garden earthworks noted in topographuic survey	
Borrow Areas		
BA3	Out of design	
BA4	Probably out of design	
BA5	Out of design	
BA6 (reservoir)	Topsoil stripped	Topsoil removed by bulldozer leaving fairly disturbed surface. Observations difficult. Darker areas associated with roots (probably tree bowls).
BA7	Enlargement of already existing quarry. Work to be done at later date t.b.a.	
BA9	Enlargement of already existing quarry. Topsoil	No archaeological features.

	removed and excavations underway.	
BA13	Enlargement of already existing quarry. Work to be done at later date t.b.a.	
BA11	Enlargement of already existing quarry. Work to be done at later date t.b.a.	
Additional Areas		
Site of compound	Topsoil stripped. Hardcore brought in.	Did not observe stripping or exposed surface.
Warm-up area green	Topsoil stripped	No archaeological features
Hole 1 tee	Topsoil stripped	No archaeological features
Hole 7 green and bunkers	Topsoil removed	No archaeological features
Hole 8 tee, bunkers and green	Topsoil removed	No archaeological features
Hole 10 green	Topsoil removed	No archaeological features
Hole 18 tee	Topsoil stripped	No archaeological features

4. SYNTHESIS

Trial-trenching uncovered evidence of human activity on the site dating from the later prehistoric period to the post-medieval period. The finds assemblage indicates that the bulk of the evidence dates from the Iron Age (c 800BC) to the mid-Roman period (c AD300).

4.1 Early Prehistoric

No features or deposits of early prehistoric date were recovered. Only a small number of poorly conditioned worked flints of uncertain date, (possibly late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age), were recorded. These clustered in two groups; trenches 11, 12 and 14, and Trenches 20 and 21 (fig.3).

4.2 Site 1: Early to Late Iron Age Settlement (c. 800BC to ?AD100) SMR 5852

4.2.1 Site1 lay within the N central part of development and is represented by eleven features within trenches 20 and 21.

4.2.2 The features comprise a mix of pits, post holes and ditches indicative of settlement-type activity. The post-holes in particular probably represent timber structures, possibly domestic buildings. The concentration of features within trench 21 suggests that this may represent the focus for occupation. The settlement clearly extends between trenches 20 and 21, across an area of 115m, although it may not be continuous.

4.2.3 The recovery of pottery spanning the early to late Iron Age suggests the site, while being long-lived may have been occupied episodically or may have shifted across the area over time. The truncation of pit [204] by pit [202] in trench 20 confirms at least some development.

4.2.4 The total extent of the settlement site is unknown and the lack of features within trenches 17 and 22 should not be taken to delimit activity. Open areas within the settlement area would be expected and linear trenches might easily miss features, even in areas of concentrated activity.

4.2.5 The best indicator of the extent of the site is probably the topography. Both trenches 20 and 21 are located on a level plateau, with land dropping away sharply to the W, S and E. The Ordnance Survey 1:25000 map makes clear the topography on this part of the site and shows a wide level promentory, 300m by 250m oriented approximately SW to NE between the woodland of Crackendell Wood and Cats Gallows (figs.3 &10). The promentory is bounded by the 120m and 125m contours and runs S from the medieval settlement of Ayot Green which occupies the only other level and prominent position in the immediate area. While no features were found within trench 17 on the edge of

the promentory the sherds of Iron Age pottery from within the topsoil were probably washed downslope from the settlement site.

4.2.6 The impression on the ground is very strongly of a level plateau with good visibility over the river valley to the S. If defence were an important issue in the location and layout of the site then this would be an obvious location. Given the steep topography elsewhere on the site however, it might also appear the only location. Trench 17 was originally excavated from the edge of the promentory downslope but was subsequently extended N across the edge of the slope to search for any possible boundary or defensive works to the settlement. None were found.

4.3 Site 2: Roman Settlement (c. ?50BC to AD300)

SMR 9859

4.3.1 Site 2, to the S of Site 1, occupies a similar, if less elevated, position. Three trenches 6, 7, and 8 cluster at the SE end of a broad plateau running NW-SE and defined by the 95m and 100m contours (figs.6&10).

4.3.2 A total of 11 features, again comprising post-holes, pits and a single ditch were excavated. As with Area 1 these are likely to represent a settlement site.

4.3.3 Again, the location and boundaries of the site are probably determined by the topography with moderate to steep slopes to the S and E. There is no clear break of slope to the W and so here the lack of features within trenches 9, 10, 11, and 12 probably indicates a real boundary to activity. The maximum likely extent of the settlement is marked on fig. **.

4.3.4 The small amounts of Roman building material recovered from trenches 18 and 21 are enigmatic. They may indicate a building of some substance in the vicinity. However, there were no indications of any such structures within the study area. The occurrence of tile in particular on low status sites is well attested and it may be that it could travel some distance from source in secondary deposits such as hardcore dumps, etc.

4.4 Discussion

4.4.1 The trench evaluation has been successful in locating the position of two previously unknown settlement sites. The range and type of features and finds suggests relatively low status farmsteads. Both sites appear to have been truncated by ploughing at some time in the past and only features cut into the natural deposits survive beneath modern topsoil.

4.4.2 The extent of both sites remains uncertain, although the natural topography may impose sensible limits in some directions. It is possible that neither site lay at the heart of an extensive system of field enclosures as none were located in trenches in the immediate environs of either site. The detailed layout of the settlements and the way in which they developed over time is also obscure. No

clear boundaries were discovered to suggest formal enclosure, although ditches were present on both sites suggesting at least some sub-division of space within the settlements. No clear domestic or structural focus could be identified either although pits and post-holes were excavated suggesting that buildings were present and domestic activities were undertaken.

4.4.3 The exact relationship between the sites cannot be understood from the limited evaluation results. The pottery dates clearly indicate that in general terms the sites were not contemporary, although there may have been a slight overlap in the late Iron Age Belgic period (50BC to AD100). More probably the occurrence of Belgic type pottery on both sites indicates the date at which settlement shifted form Area 1 to Area 2 and the sites may be directly successive. For whatever reason a decision may have been taken to move the settlement downslope in the late Iron Age/early Roman period.

4.4.4 Both sites appear to represent similar low status agricultural settlements. They represent a type common in the region but still little studied in comparison with villa and urban settlement types (Hingley 1989, 1991). The close association of the sites, their possibly successive relationship and similar topographic location make them a particularly useful resource for study should the opportunity ever arise. In particular, sites of this type have recently been highlighted as of regional importance by Bryant and Going in *Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties* (Glazebrook 1997).

4.4.5 The sites describes within this report now lie beneath the new golf course. The trench evaluation took place immediately prior to the start of construction, on the understanding that should significant archaeological remains be located the design of the course would be changed to ensure their preservation. Agreement was reached regarding archaeological remains in Sites 1 and 2 and the watching brief was carried out during construction to ensure preservation.

4.4.6 The site archive will be deposited with Hertford Museum and a short note summarising results will be published in the County Journal *Hertfordshire Archaeology.*

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5. APPENDIX 1: TRENCH TABLES

Trench 1							
Max Dimensions		**Length**	25m	**Width**	1.6m	**Depth**	250mm
Reason For Trench		**Investigate Borrow Area 1**					
Context	**Type**	**Description**				**Max Depth**	**Depth (BGL)**
10	Layer	Topsoil				200mm	
11	Layer	Subsoil/Natural				n/a	

Trench 2							
Max Dimensions		**Length**	25m	**Width**	1.6m	**Depth**	250mm
Reason For Trench		**Investigate Borrow Area 1**					
Context	**Type**	**Description**				**Max Depth**	**Depth (BGL)**
20	Layer	Topsoil				200mm	
21	Layer	Subsoil/Natural				n/a	

Trench 5							
Max Dimensions		**Length**	25m	**Width**	1.8m	**Depth**	1m
Reason For Trench		**Investigate site of pond**					
Context	**Type**	**Description**				**Max Depth**	**Depth (BGL)**
50	Layer	Topsoil and recent alluvial dumps, mixed dark brown silty loam				750mm	
51	Layer	Natural alluvium, mid yellow brown silty clay				150mm	900mm
52	Layer	Natural mixed red-brown silty clays and gravels				n/a	

Trench 6							
Max Dimensions		**Length**	25m	**Width**	1.6m	**Depth**	350mm
Reason For Trench		**Investigate Borrow Area 3**					
Context	**Type**	**Description**				**Max Depth**	**Depth (BGL)**
60	Layer	Topsoil					
61	Layer	Subsoil/Natural				n/a	
62	**Cut**	Ditch				450mm	
63	Fill	Upper fill of 62					
64	Fill	Lower fill of 62					
65	**Cut**	Pit/Quarry/Well, 1.6m across, >450mm deep. Nit fully excavated					
66	Fill	Upper fill of 65					
67	Fill	Middle fill of 65					
68	Fill	Lower fill of 65					

Trench 7							
Max Dimensions		**Length**	25m	**Width**	1.6m	**Depth**	300mm
Reason For Trench		**Investigate Borrow Area 3**					
Context	**Type**	**Description**				**Max Depth**	**Depth (BGL)**
70	Layer	Topsoil				250mm	
71	Layer	Subsoil/Natural				n/a	
72	Cut	Post-hole, 500mm across, possible double post-setting				180mm	
73	Fill	Fill of 72, with possible post-packing				180mm	
74	Cut	Irregular 'scoop'					
75	Fill	Fill of 74					
76	Cut	Pit, circular					
77	Fill	Fill of 76, including frequent burnt stones and puddinstone frag.					
78	Cut	Post-hole, 500mm wide				100mm	
79	Fill	Fill of 78, including burnt stones and charcoal				100mm	

Trench 8							
Max Dimensions		**Length**	25m	**Width**	1.6m	**Depth**	350mm
Reason For Trench		**Investigate 18th hole green**					
Context	**Type**	**Description**				**Max Depth**	**Depth (BGL)**
80	Layer	Topsoil				250mm	
81	Layer	Subsoil/Natural				n/a	
82	Cut	Pit, 2.5m x 700mm wide				110mm	
83	Fill	Fill of 82				110mm	
84	Cut	Post-hole, 300mm across				200mm	
85	Fill	Fill of 84				200mm	
86	Cut	Post-hole, 500 x 240mmm across				70mm	
87	Fill	Fill of 86				70mm	
88	Cut	Post-hole, 370 x 300mm across				80mm	
89	Fill	Fill of 88				80mm	
270	Cut	Post-hole, 400 x 200mm across				50mm	
271	Fill	Fill of 270				50mm	

Trench 9							
Max Dimensions		**Length**	25m	**Width**	1.6m	**Depth**	250mm
Reason For Trench		**Investigate edge of Borrow Area 10**					
Context	**Type**	**Description**				**Max Depth**	**Depth (BGL)**
90	Layer	Topsoil				200mm	
91	Layer	Subsoil/Natural				n/a	

Trench 10							
Max Dimensions		**Length**	25m	**Width**	1.6m	**Depth**	310mm
Reason For Trench		**Investigate10th hole, green**					
Context	**Type**	**Description**				**Max Depth**	**Depth (BGL)**
100	Layer	Topsoil				250mm	
101	Layer	Subsoil/Natural				n/a	

Trench 11							
Max Dimensions		**Length**	25m	**Width**	1.6m	**Depth**	300mm
Reason For Trench		**Investigate Borrow Area 4**					
Context	**Type**	**Description**				**Max Depth**	**Depth (BGL)**
110	Layer	Topsoil				240mm	
111	Layer	Subsoil/Natural				n/a	

Trench 12							
Max Dimensions		**Length**	25m	**Width**	1.6m	**Depth**	300mm
Reason For Trench		**Investigate Borrow Area 1**					
Context	**Type**	**Description**				**Max Depth**	**Depth (BGL)**
120	Layer	Topsoil				250mm	
121	Layer	Subsoil/Natural				n/a	

Trench 14							
Max Dimensions		**Length**	50m	**Width**	1.6m	**Depth**	250mm
Reason For Trench		**Investigate Borrow Area 1**					
Context	**Type**	**Description**				**Max Depth**	**Depth (BGL)**
140	Layer	Topsoil				240mm	
141	Layer	Subsoil/Natural (excavated to 860mm at S end)				n/a	

Trench 15							
Max Dimensions		**Length**	25m	**Width**	1.6m	**Depth**	320mm
Reason For Trench		**Investigate Irrigation Reservoir, Borrow Area 6**					
Context	**Type**	**Description**				**Max Depth**	**Depth (BGL)**
150	Layer	Topsoil				260mm	
151	Layer	Subsoil/Natural (excavated to 750mm at SE end)				n/a	

Trench 16							
Max Dimensions		**Length**	25m	**Width**	1.6m	**Depth**	410mm
Reason For Trench		**Investigate Irrigation Reservoir, Borrow Area 6**					
Context	**Type**	**Description**				**Max Depth**	**Depth (BGL)**
160	Layer	Topsoil				300mm	
161	Layer	Subsoil/Natural (excavated to 700mm at S end)				n/a	

Trench 17							
Max Dimensions		**Length**	54m	**Width**	1.6m	**Depth**	300mm
Reason For Trench		**Borrow Area 8**					
Context	**Type**	**Description**				**Max Depth**	**Depth (BGL)**
160	Layer	Topsoil				300mm	
161	Layer	Subsoil/Natural (excavated to 600mm at S end)				n/a	

Trench 18							
Max Dimensions		**Length**	25m	**Width**	1.6m	**Depth**	410mm
Reason For Trench		**Investigate Irrigation Reservoir, Borrow Area 6**					
Context	**Type**	**Description**				**Max Depth**	**Depth (BGL)**
180	Layer	Topsoil				150mm	
181	Layer	Subsoil/Natural (excavated to 830mm at N end)				n/a	

Trench 19							
Max Dimensions		**Length**	25m	**Width**	1.6m	**Depth**	250mm
Reason For Trench		**Investigate Irrigation Reservoir, Borrow Area 6**					
Context	**Type**	**Description**				**Max Depth**	**Depth (BGL)**
190	Layer	Topsoil				180mm	
191	Layer	Subsoil/Natural (excavated to 580mm at S end)				n/a	

Trench 20							
Max Dimensions		**Length**	25m	**Width**	1.7m	**Depth**	300mm
Reason For Trench		**Investigate 2nd hole, green**					
Context	**Type**	**Description**				**Max Depth**	**Depth (BGL)**
200	Layer	Topsoil				300mm	
201	Layer	Subsoil/Natural (excavated to 700mm at S end)				n/a	
202	Cut	Pit, 1.3m x 820mm across, circular, flat base, truncates 204				250	
203	Fill	Fill of 202				250	
204	Cut	Pit, 560 x 520mm across, circular flat base, truncated by 202				300	
205	Fill	Fill of 204				300	
206	Cut	Pit, 1.6m x 700mm across, sub-rectangular				160	
207	Fill	Fill of 206				160	
208	Cut	Natural feature				n/a	
209	Fill	Fill of 208				n/a	

Trench 21							
Max Dimensions		**Length**	25m	**Width**	1.7m	**Depth**	400mm
Reason For Trench		**Investigate 11th hole, green**					
Context	**Type**	**Description**				**Max Depth**	**Depth (BGL)**
210	Layer	Topsoil				200mm	
211	Layer	Subsoil/Natural (excavated to 700mm at S end)				n/a	
212	Cut	Pit, 500 x 400mm across, circular, rounded base				290mm	
213	Fill	Fill of 212, mid grey brown silty clay, occ. charcoal					
214	Cut	Pit,					
215	Fill	Fill of 214, mid grey brown silty clay					
216	Cut	Pit,					
217	Fill	Main fill of 216					
218	Fill	Clay-lining of 216					
219	Fill	Local dump fill within 216					
250	Cut	Post hole					
251	Fill	Fill of 250					
252	Cut	Ditch					
253	Fill	Fill of 252, mid red brown sandy silt					
254	Cut	Ditch					
255	Fill	Fill of 254, mid red grown sandy silt					
256	Cut	Post-hole					
257	Fill	Fill of 256, mixed dumped backfill					
258	Fill	Fill of 256, mixed dumped backfill					
259	Cut	?Pit					
260	Fill	Fill of 259, dark grey brown sandy loam					
261	Cut	?Pit					
262	Fill	Fill of 261, dark grey brown sandy loam					

Trench 22							
Max Dimensions		**Length**	**25m**	**Width**	**1.6m**	**Depth**	**300mm**
Reason For Trench		**Investigate area of compound**					
Context	**Type**	**Description**				**Max Depth**	**Depth (BGL)**
220	Layer	Topsoil				150mm	
221	Layer	Subsoil/Natural (excavated to 600mm at S end)				n/a	
-	Layer	Unnumbered spread of recent dumps at N end				?	

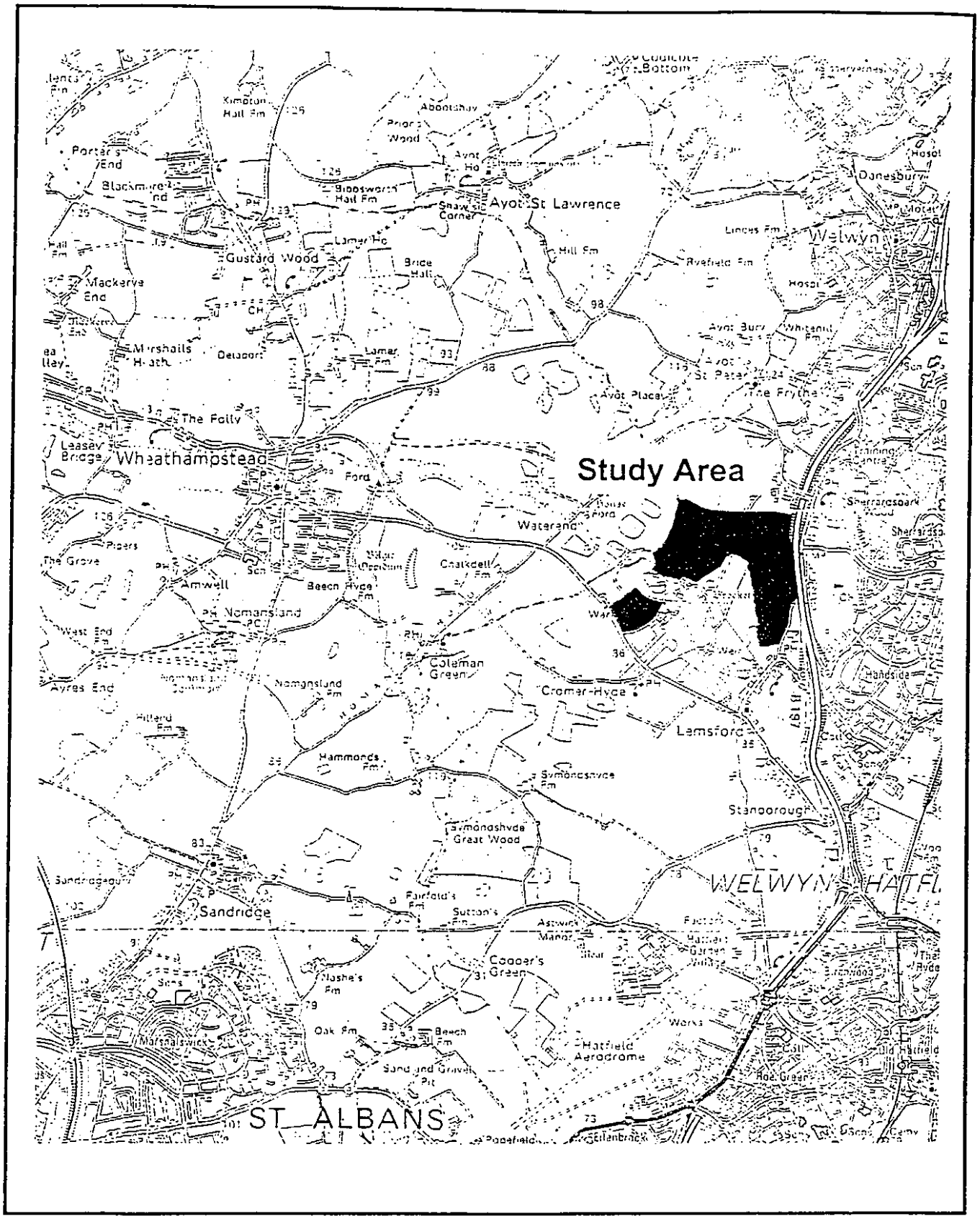

Fig.1 General location of the Study Area

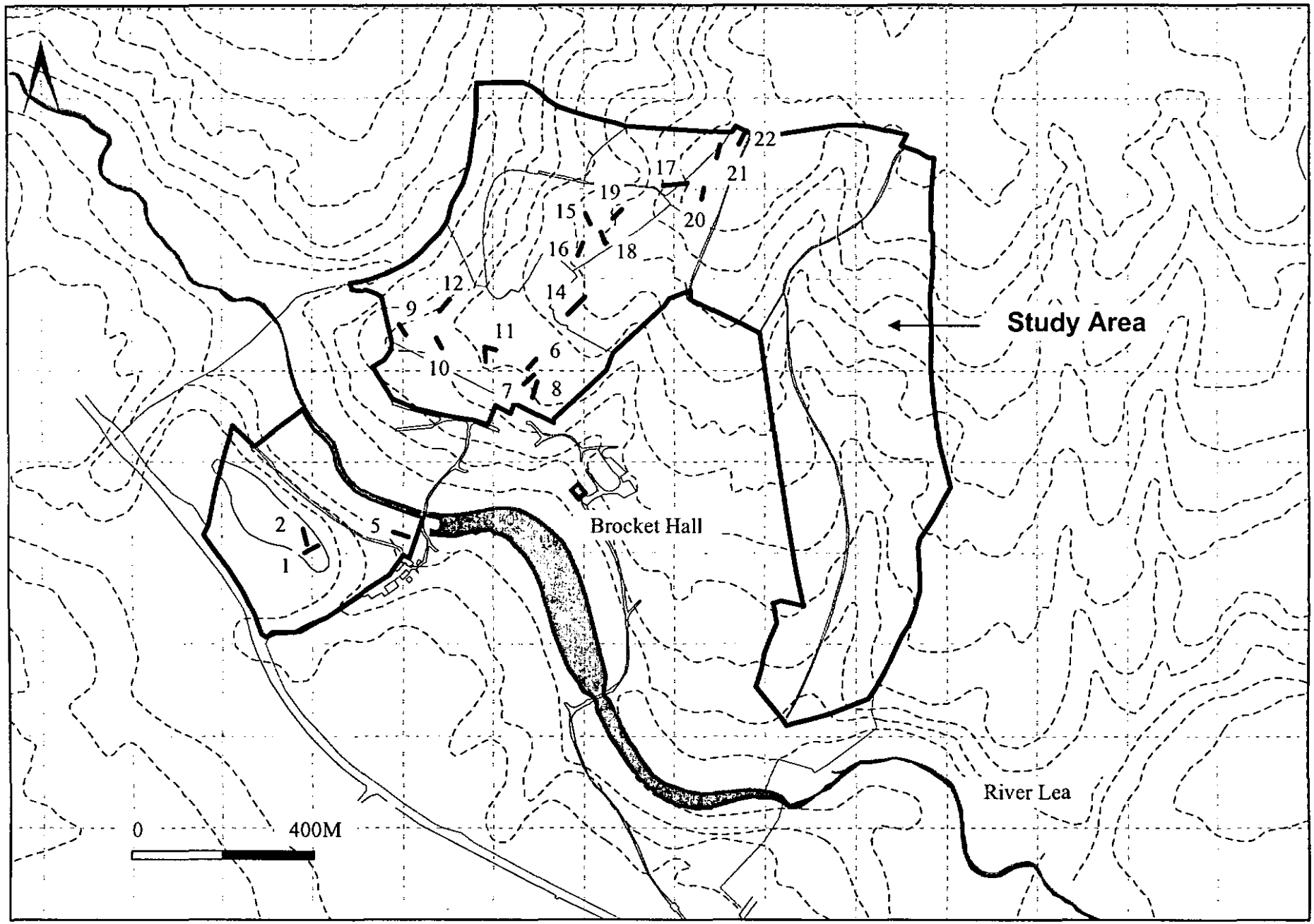

Fig.2 Location of trial trenches

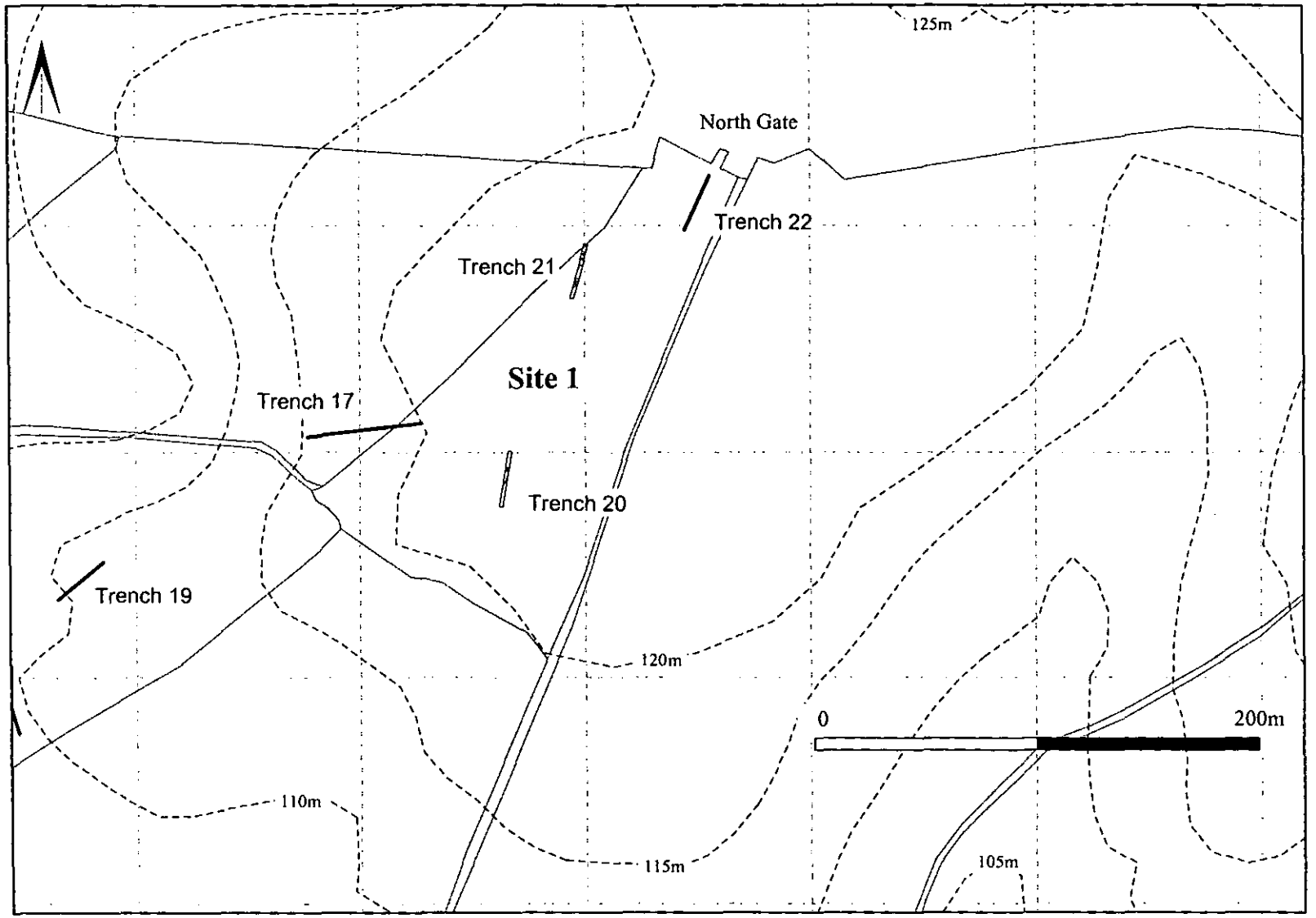

Fig. 3 Detailed location of trenches in area of Site 1

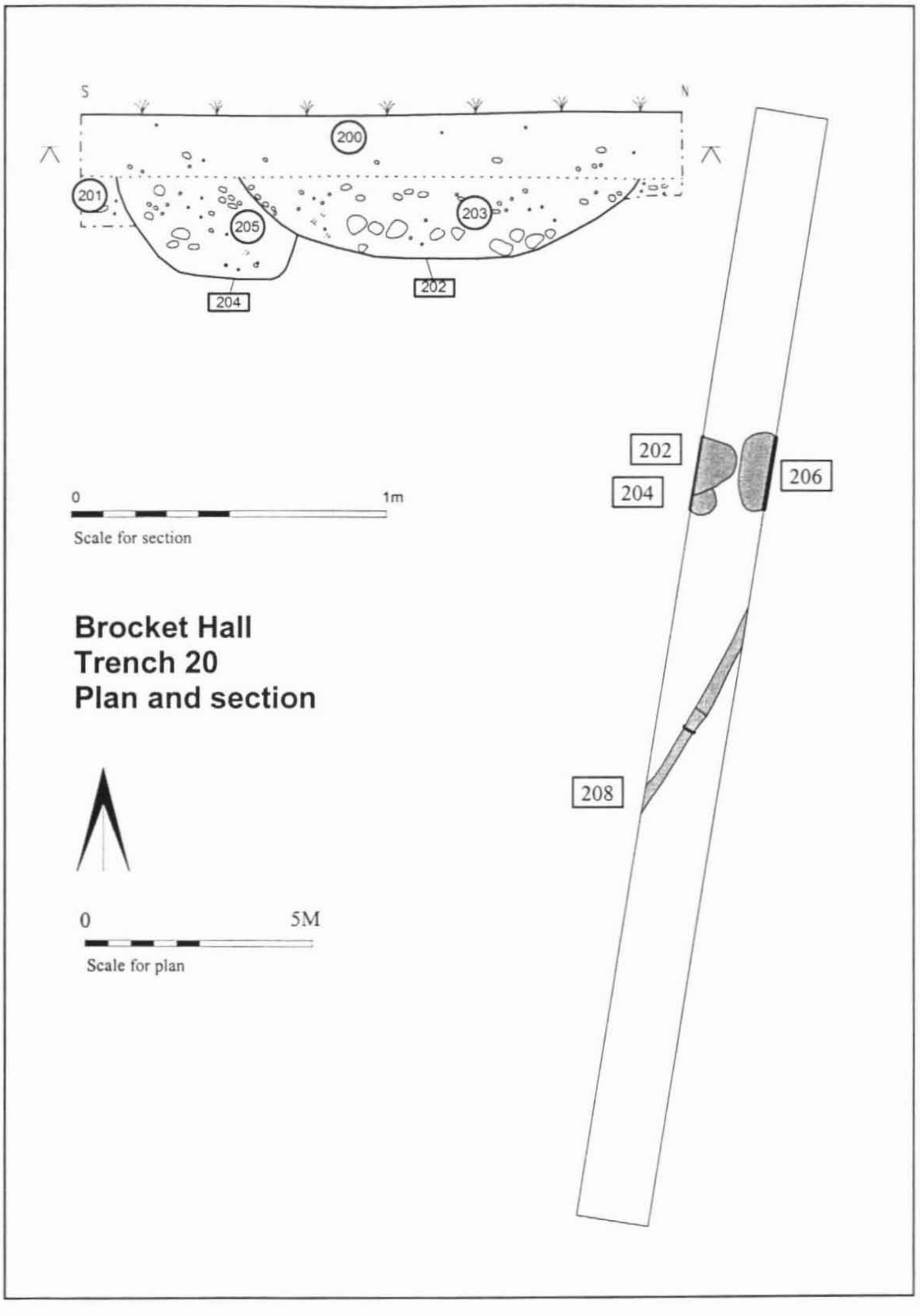

Fig.4 Trench 20: Plan and section

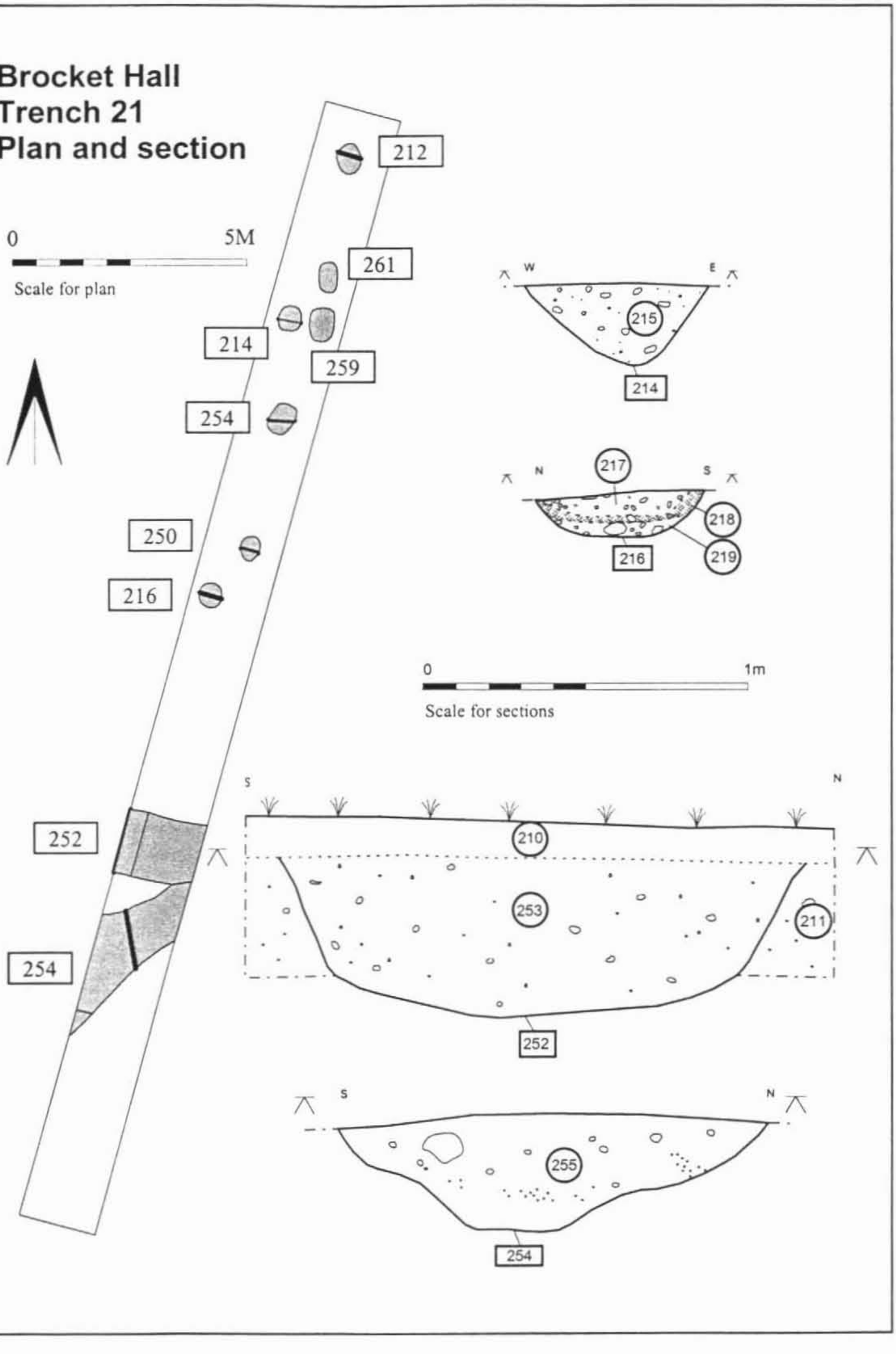

Fig.5 Trench 21: Plan and sections

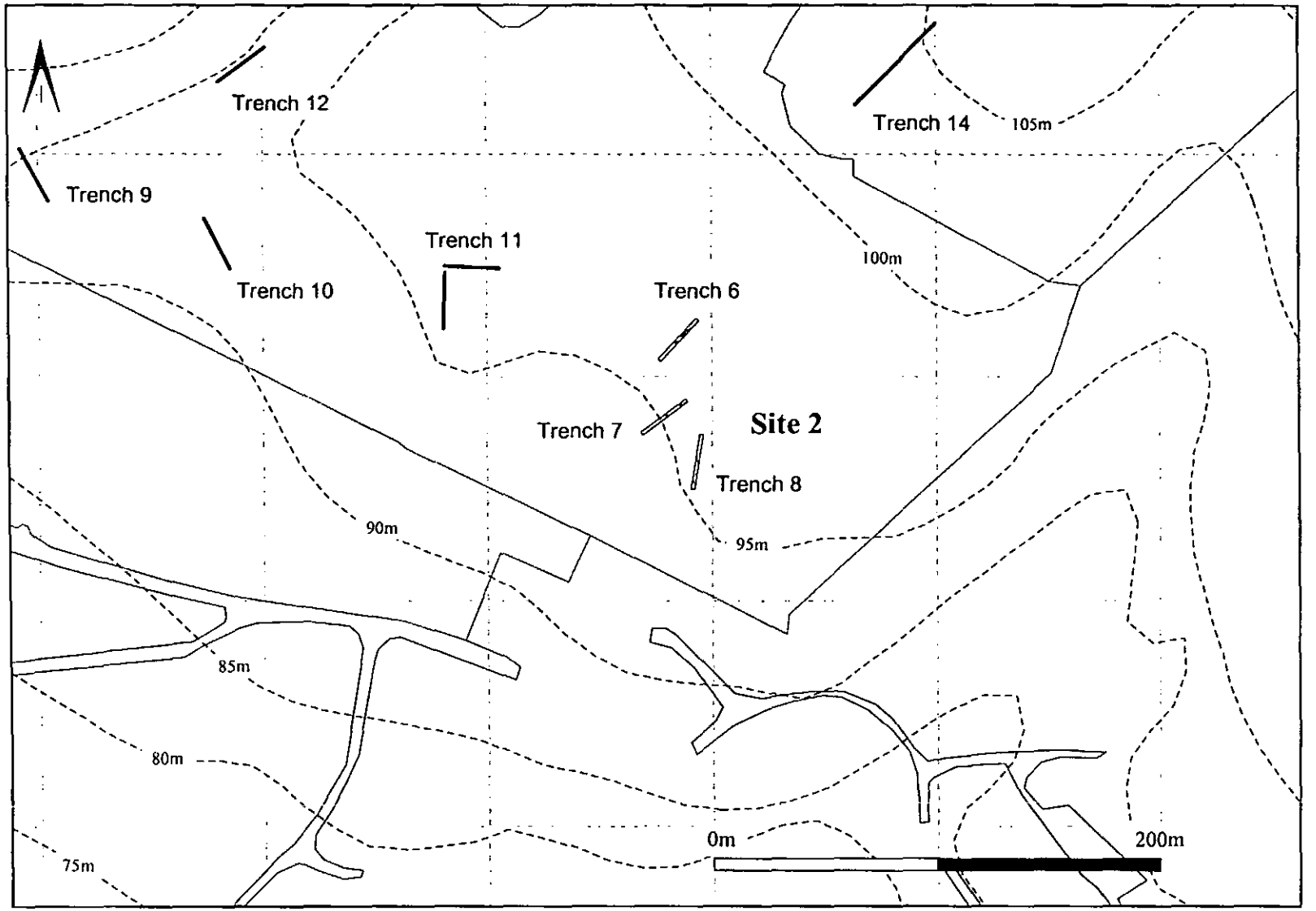

Fig.6 Detailed location of trenches in Area of Site 2

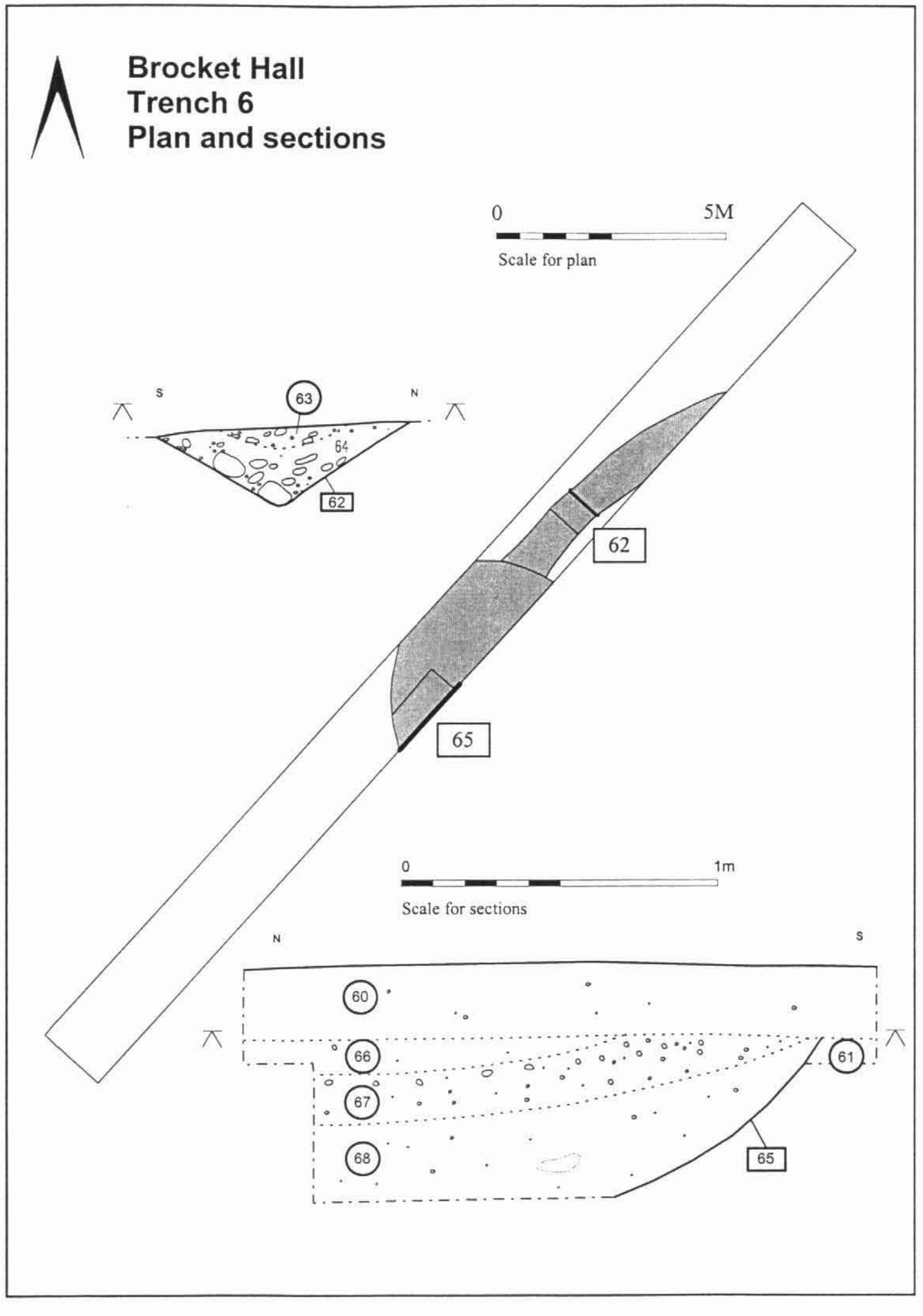

Fig.7 Trench 6: Plan and sections

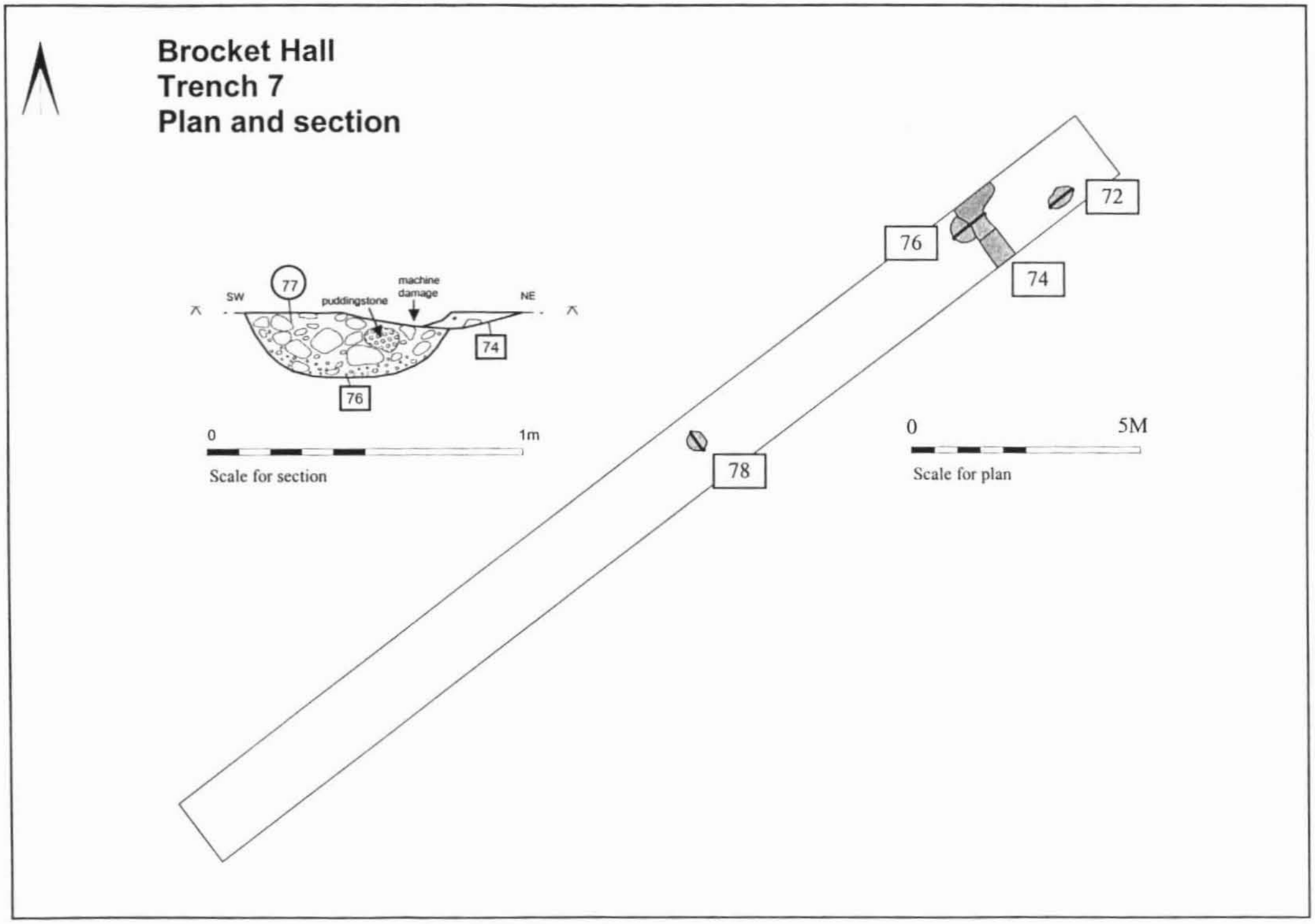

Fig.8 Trench 7: Plan and section

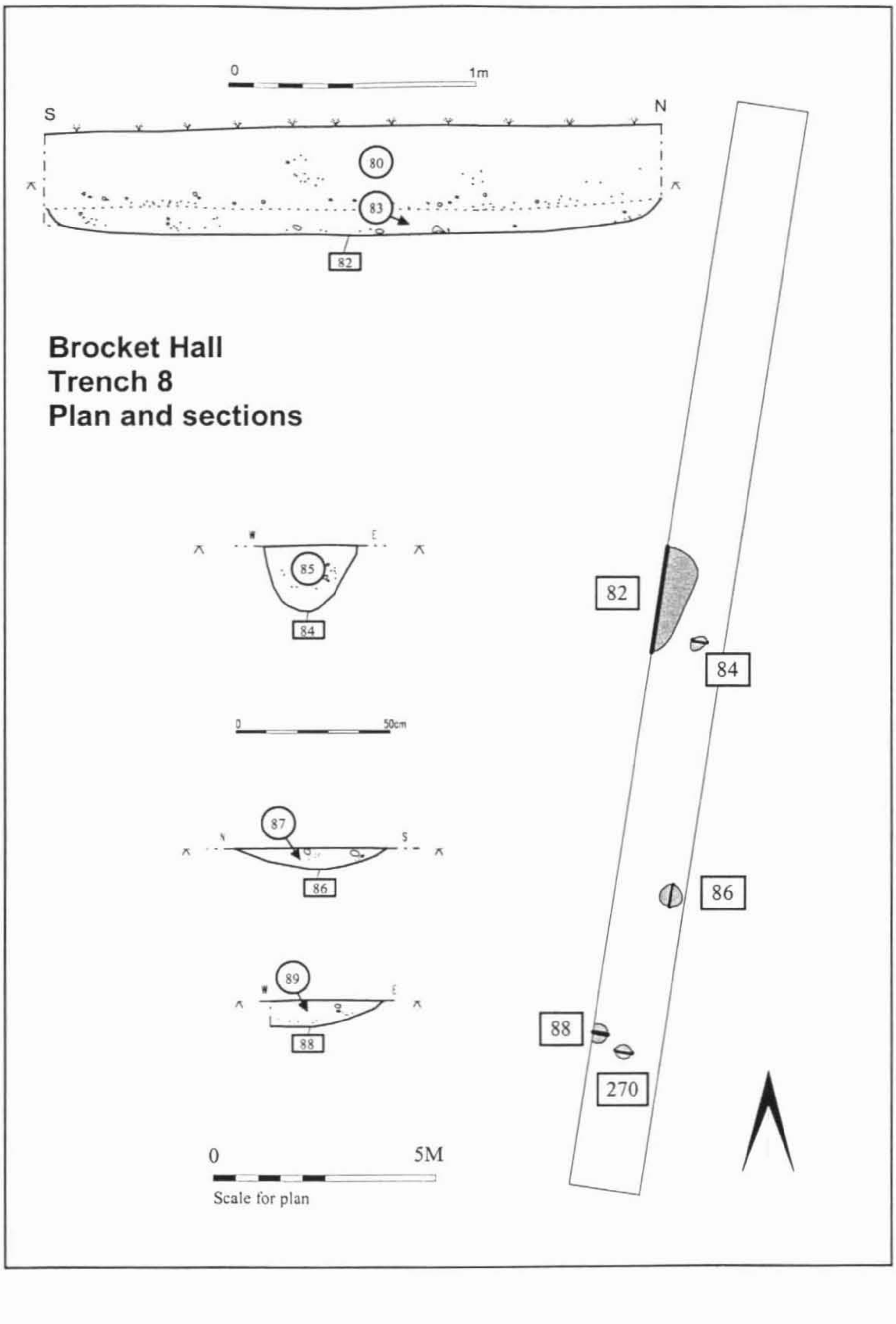

Fig.9 Trench 8: Plan and sections

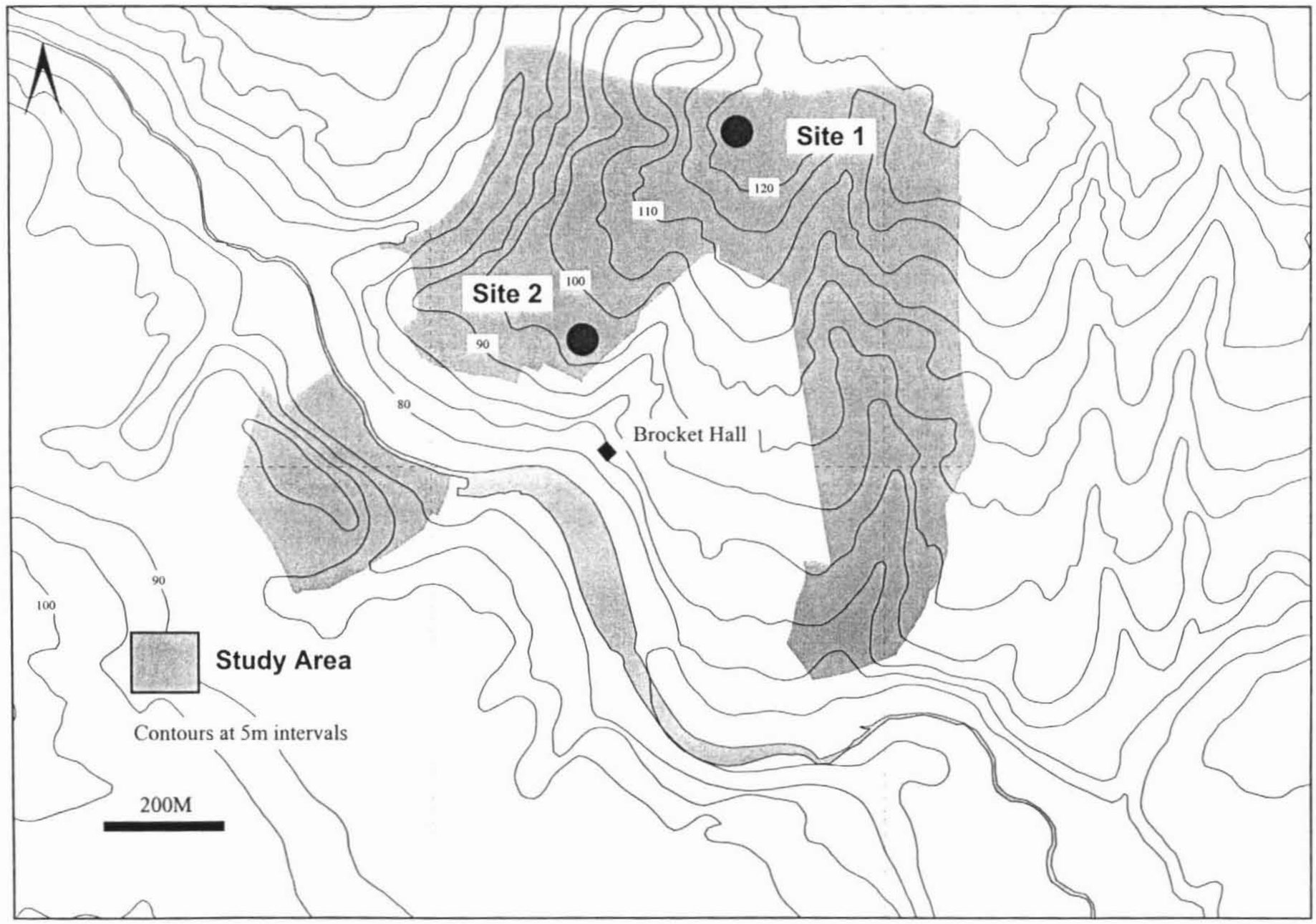

Fig.10 Sites 1 and 2 shown against relief and drainage.

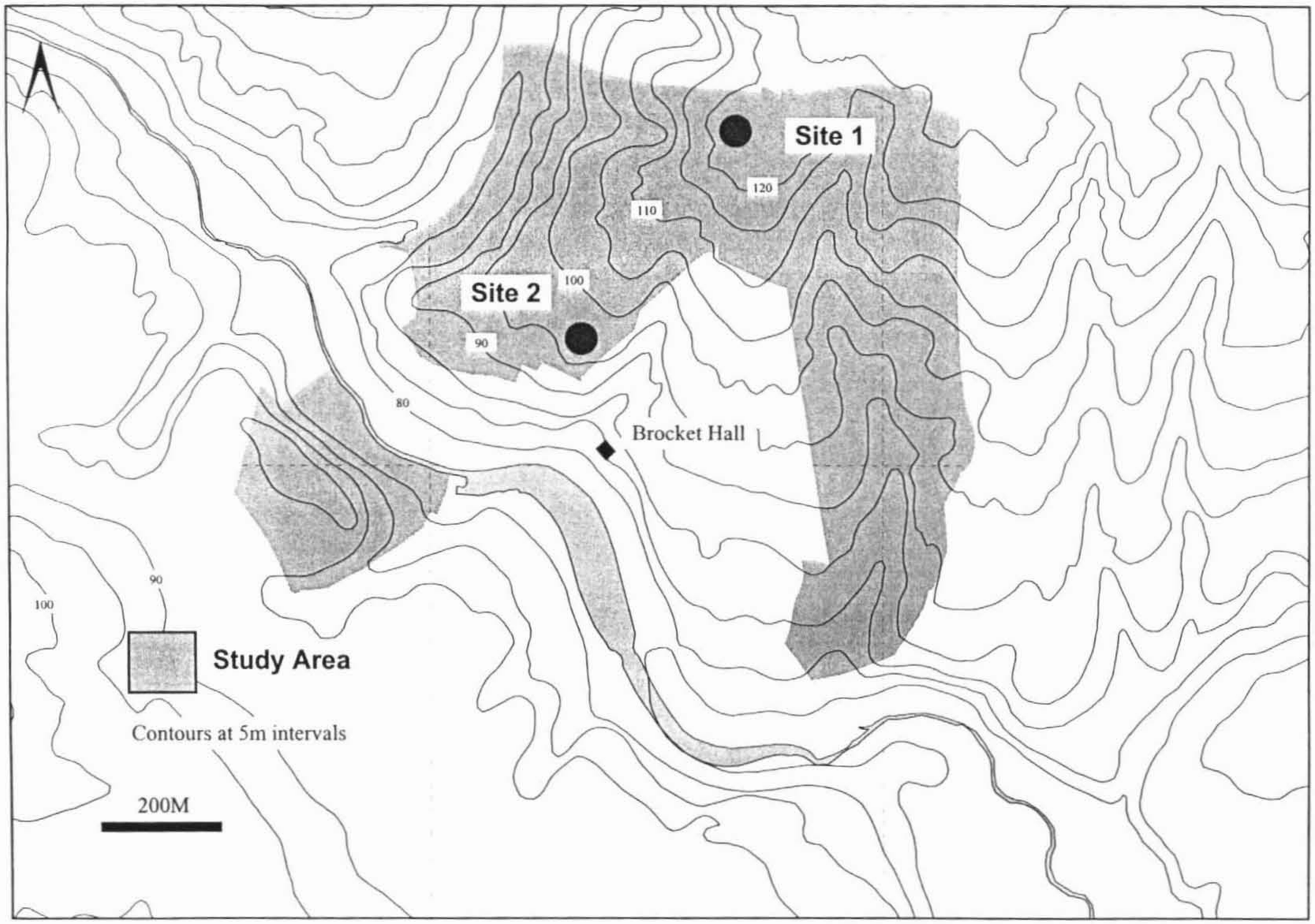

Fig.10 Sites 1 and 2 shown against relief and drainage.