



Planning, Transport
and Environment

*An Archaeological Evaluation of a Proposed
Development Site at*
ASHCHURCH RAILWAY BRIDGE, ASHCHURCH
GLOUCESTERSHIRE

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
RPS PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

Kim Watkins
ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICE
Environment Department



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Site Details

Site address	Land adjacent to Ashchurch Railway Bridge, Ashchurch
OS NGR	SO 927 332
Site Type	Archaeological Evaluation
Client	RPS Planning, Transport and Environment (on behalf of Parkman Ltd)
Date of Fieldwork	10 th to 14 th March 2003
Date of Report	27 March 2003
Author	Kim Watkins

Contents

Summary

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Site location
- 3 Background
- 4 Methodology
- 5 Results of the evaluation
- 6 Discussion
- 7 Conclusions and mitigation recommendations
- 8 References

Appendix A Tables Showing The Depth of Overburden Deposits
in Trenches 3, 4 and 5

Appendix B Pottery Report by Jane Timby

Appendix C Written Scheme of Investigation

Figures

- Fig 1 Site location plan
- Fig 2 Trench location plan
- Fig 3 Trench 1 and Trench 2
- Fig 4 Trench 3
- Fig 5 Trench 4
- Fig 6 Trench 5
- Fig. 7 Scheme Layout showing trench locations
- Fig 8 Area of disturbance to archaeology (proposed archaeological excavation area)

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service in association with RPS during March 2003 at Ashchurch, Gloucestershire, prior to the construction of a new railway bridge and adjoining road. The archaeological evaluation covered an area of fields on the eastern side of the railway line where the new road will be located. Early deposits and features of archaeological interest were recorded in all five evaluation trenches, extending across the whole development area.

There was some limited settlement activity within the central part of the evaluation area from the 1st century AD, or possibly earlier. The most widespread phase of activity on the site was during the middle of the Romano-British period, when the whole of the evaluation area appears to have been within the environs of a settlement. Evidence of domestic activity was concentrated in the northern and eastern parts of the evaluation area, with features of a more agricultural nature elsewhere. Other areas of disturbance dating to the Romano-British period, might also indicate that sand was being quarried on this site during that time.

There were a number of undated features on the western side of the site, some cutting the 2nd to 3rd century Romano-British deposits. A sherd of pottery of possible Saxon date was retrieved from a post hole in the south western corner of the evaluation area, and might indicate some post Roman activity.

During the medieval period there appears to have been domestic activity in the south eastern corner of the evaluation area, and a reasonable assemblage of 13th to 14th century pottery was recorded from one feature here. Across much of the site there is ridge and furrow ploughing visible, which would suggest that it was a largely agricultural area during part of the medieval period. Although this has caused a slight fluctuation of subsoil depths across the site, the truncation of many features is moderate rather than heavy.

Post medieval activity in the south eastern corner of the site is evidenced by large quantities of 15th to 17th century pottery from at least one feature. The presence of iron slag associated with this suggests that some industrial activity was taking place at that time.

1 Introduction

1.1 An archaeological evaluation was carried out during March 2003 on land in the village of Ashchurch, Gloucestershire, by the Gloucestershire County Council Archaeological Service in association with RPS. This work was requested prior to the construction of a replacement railway bridge, and a new section of road, adjacent to the existing railway crossing on the A46. The evaluation was commissioned by Rob Masefield of RPS Planning, Transport and Environment on behalf of Parkman Ltd and the Highways Agency.

1.2 The evaluation was carried out in line with the standard brief issued by Gloucestershire County Council, and in accordance with a project specification prepared by Kim Watkins of Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service, and approved by Rob Masefield of RPS, who also performed a managerial role during the project. The work was also in accordance with *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation produced by the Institute of Field Archaeologists* (IFA 2001).

1.3 The Archaeological evaluation was requested by Parkman Ltd in order to reduce potential delays during the construction works, which might be caused by archaeological discoveries during monitoring of the project.

2 Site Location (Fig 1)

2.1 Ashchurch is located 3km east of Tewkesbury, at junction 19 of the M5 motorway. The evaluation area is an area of open fields to the south of St Nicholas's church in the village, located adjacent to the northern side of the main A46 road. Geologically the area is located on gravels of the River Avon Second Terrace Upper Part, and Lower Lias clay (OS 1988). The site is centred on OS NGR SO 927 332.

2.2 The site at present consists of an area of open fields, split into two areas by a track leading to Church Farm, and St Nicholas's church.

3 Background

Published and unpublished reports, the Gloucestershire Sites and Monuments Record (GSMR) and Ordnance Survey maps curated by the County Records Office have been consulted in the preparation of this information.

3.1 Prehistoric

There are no previously recorded sites of this date within the immediate vicinity of the evaluation area.

3.2 Roman

Although there are no known Romano-British sites within the vicinity of the proposed development area, a number of sherds of pottery from this period have been recorded during previous

archaeological investigations in the area (see below). During an archaeological evaluation in the churchyard in 1998 by Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service (GSMR 5478), three trenches were excavated and Romano-British pottery was recorded.

3.3 Medieval

The parish of Ashchurch lies immediately to the east of Tewkesbury parish, from which it established independence shortly after the Dissolution. St Nicholas's church, to the north of the proposed development area, is thought to have been built by 1145 as a chapel of ease to Tewkesbury Abbey. The earliest parts of the existing building date to the late 12th century (Elrington 1968 186). Settlement was thinly scattered throughout the area of Ashchurch parish in the medieval period, with a number of small hamlets including Newton, the closest to the development area. The area was largely agricultural and much of it lay in open fields until Inclosure took place from the 16th century onwards (Elrington 1968 172). Traces of medieval ridge and furrow are still visible in areas close to or within the proposed development area (see below). In March 2001, Cotswold Archaeological Trust carried out an archaeological evaluation (GSMR 21005) on land at Church Farm, Ashchurch, 80m north of the proposed development area. Three trenches were excavated, revealing a number of medieval features, which may represent a medieval field system contemporaneous with the construction of the adjacent St. Nicholas's Church, and the formalisation of the village layout in the 12th century.

3.4 Post-medieval

The present route of the A46 road was turnpiked during the 18th century and became a major thoroughfare from that time. By 1828 a number of houses had been built along the road at Newtown although most of these had been demolished by the mid 20th century (Elrington 1968 173). The main Bristol to Birmingham railway line was built in 1840, with a station located near the church to the north west of the proposed development area. The railway bridge on the west side of the evaluation area, which is to be demolished during the proposed works was also built at this time (Elrington 1968 173). It was the location of this railway bridge, and the station to the north, which encouraged a settlement focus to first develop along the main road in this area during the 19th century.

3.5 Cartographic background

3.5.1 Inclosure map of 1816

This map shows the layout of the landscape in the area prior to the construction of the railway (Gwatkin 1995). The area around the church, including the proposed development area to the south, was open fields at this time and the settlement along the main road is all on the southern side. The proposed evaluation area is shown as a field called Sheep Close.

3.5.2 Tithe map of 1842

This map shows the location of the newly constructed railway line, and the proposed development area is an open field known at this time as Middle Close (Gwatkin 1995).

3.5.3 First Edition Ordnance Survey map c.1880

This map shows very little change in the landscape around the proposed development area since the

Tithe map of 1842. The evaluation area is occupied by an open field although a small area in the south western corner has been enclosed separately.

4 Methodology (Fig 2)

4.1 The evaluation involved the excavation of five trenches 1.7m wide and of varying length, across the whole of the proposed development area. Trenches were located along the line of the new road alignments, and their position is shown on plans Fig 2, 7 and 8.

4.2 All non-significant topsoil and overburden was removed by machine down to the first archaeological horizon or undisturbed natural deposits, whichever was encountered first. Any archaeological deposits were then hand excavated and fully recorded.

5 Results of the evaluation

Depths of overburden in Trenches 3, 4 and 5 are given in Appendix A.

A full report on the pottery from this archaeological evaluation, by Jane Timby, is given in Appendix B.

5.1 Trench 1 (Fig 3)

This trench was 22.4m in length and orientated north by south. It was machined to a depth of between 0.46 and 1.03m, the level at which natural orange clayey sand was encountered, at an average of 20.35m AOD. The overburden became gradually deeper towards the northern end of the trench.

There were a number of features recorded in this trench cutting the natural. A circular post hole [104], was recorded at the southern end, 0.25m deep with a diameter of 0.31m. This was filled with (105), a mid greyish brown silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks, Ceramic Building Material (CBM), animal bone and one sherd of pottery of Iron Age or Saxon date.

There were two small shallow rounded cuts [106] and [108] further northwards, with fills (107) and (108) respectively, both similar to context (105). Cut [106] was 0.05m deep, and 0.3m in diameter, with gently sloping concave sides. Cut [108] was 0.12m deep and 0.75m in diameter, with moderately sloping sides and a flat base.

Further northwards there were several small irregular features. Cut [110] was a narrow linear feature terminating within the trench, 0.11m deep by 0.15m wide, with a shallow V-shaped profile, and filled with (111), a mid greyish brown silty clay. Cut [118] to the north, was a very shallow irregular feature, possibly the terminus of a linear, 0.3m wide and 0.025m deep. This was filled with a mid greyish brown silty clay (119), and cut by [116], a possible truncated post hole. The fill of [116] was a mid greyish brown silty clay (117), with occasional charcoal flecks and pieces of burnt limestone. Another feature [120], similar to [118] in plan, was not excavated. A shallow rounded cut feature [112], possibly a linear terminus, was recorded cutting [114], a narrow east by west orientated linear. Cut [112] had moderately sloping straight sides and a flat base, and was filled with (113) a greyish brown sandy clay with frequent burnt limestone pieces, and flecks of CBM and charcoal. A sherd of Romano-British pottery of probable 2nd century date and a piece of fired clay were also recorded from this context. Linear [114] was 0.13m deep and 0.25m wide with a flat base and gradually sloping south side. The fill (115) was a light greyish brown sandy clay with occasional flint nodules.

At the northern end of the trench there were two further linear features. Cut [122] was a very shallow east by west orientated cut, 0.07m in depth and an average of 0.62m wide. The fill (123), was mid greyish brown silty clay, containing a pottery sherd of Romano-British date, and flecks of CBM and

charcoal. A straight edged ditch [124], 1.95m wide, was recorded at the northern end of the trench. This feature was excavated to a depth of 0.34m before filling with water. The sides were moderately sloping and straight, and the fill (125) was a greyish brown sandy clay with Romano-British pottery of probable 2nd or 3rd century date, and charcoal inclusions.

All of these features were overlain by a mid greyish brown sandy clay subsoil, (102), which varied in depth between 0.2m at the southern end, and over 0.7m deep at the northern end of the trench. Several sherds of Romano-British pottery, 2nd or 3rd century in date, were recovered from this context, and it was overlain by a dark brown silty clay topsoil (101), which was an average of 0.3m in depth.

5.2 Trench 2 (Fig 3)

This trench was 19.3m in length and orientated north east by south west. The trench was machined to an average depth of 0.77m, the level at which natural orange clayey sand with grey mottling was recorded at 20.45m AOD.

The natural sand was cut by a number of features. A ditch [203] with slightly curved edges was recorded on a north by south alignment. This feature was 1.5m wide with steeply sloping sides, and was excavated to a depth of 0.62m before filling with water. The fill (204) was a greyish brown silty clay, containing Romano-British pottery of probable 2nd or 3rd century date, bone and CBM. The southern end of this ditch had been cut by [205], a large feature over 4.8m long, which had very indistinct edges. This appeared to be a wide irregular cut, possibly a large pit, and a machine excavated sondage showed it to be over 0.3m in depth. The fill (206), was a mottled greyish brown silty clay, with common inclusions of a light silvery grey slag and pieces of bone.

Further southwards there was another ditch [207], on an east by west alignment. This cut was 1.54m wide with moderately sloping sides, and was excavated to a depth of 0.33m before filling with water. The fill (208) was a greyish brown silty clay with occasional flecks of charcoal and CBM, and a sherd of Romano-British pottery, 2nd or 3rd century in date.

In the north eastern corner of the trench a steep sided cut [209] was recorded, with a straight north by south aligned western edge. This feature was 0.42m deep and contained a dark grey sandy clay (210), with a sherd of Romano-British pottery of probable 2nd century date, and bone.

5.3 Trench 3 (Fig 4)

This trench was 38m in length and orientated east by west. It was machined to a depth of between 0.95m at the west end and 0.6m at the east end. Natural mottled clayey sand / sandy clay was recorded at 20.27m AOD at the east end.

A table of the height above Ordnance Datum and depth of overburden deposits is shown in Table 1, Appendix A.

There were a number of features, some quite indistinct and amorphous, cutting the natural within this trench. At the western end there was a large feature [323], between 3m and 7m long, which had a very indistinct eastern edge. This feature was machine excavated to a depth of 0.3m in a sondage at the end of the trench, and the fill (324), was a greyish brown sandy clay with inclusions of gravel, from which pieces of bone and two sherds of Romano-British pottery of 2nd to 4th century date were retrieved. The spread of this deposit was difficult to evaluate, although disturbance to the natural was visible up to 8m from the western end of the trench.

The cut of a possible large linear feature [325], 10m from the western end of the trench was obscured by the presence of a live pipe. This appeared to be a linear cut, 4.5m wide on a north by south alignment, and the fill (326) was a dark greyish brown sandy clay.

Further eastwards there was a ditch [303], on a north north west by south south east alignment. Cut [303] was 0.9m wide with straight sides and a V-shaped profile at the top, excavated to a depth of 0.5m before it filled with water. The fill (304) was a dark greyish brown silty clay containing pieces of bone, and sherds of Romano-British pottery of 2nd to 3rd century date. This feature was cut by [305], a less distinct feature over 0.36m deep and 2m long, the eastern edge of which was not well defined. It

was filled with a mid greyish brown sandy clay (306), containing inclusions of Romano-British pottery of probable 2nd or 3rd century date, and charcoal.

Further eastwards there were several intercutting features interpreted as a linear cut aligned north west by south east, [311], and two round pits [307] and [309]. Cut [311] was over 0.9m wide, with a straight north eastern edge visible. The eastern side was steeply sloping, with a shallow step at the top. The top of the western side of the feature was not visible but the lower part was sloping steeply, and the base was not found due to the feature filling with water at a depth of 0.44m. The fill (312) was a dark grey sandy clay with several sherds of pottery, dated to the 1st century, early Romano-British period or possibly earlier. This linear was cut by [309], a round pit 0.57m in diameter and 0.16m deep, with moderately sloping concave sides and a flat base. The fill of this cut (310), was a grey friable clay with occasional inclusions of limestone, and one large unabraded rimsherd of 2nd to 3rd century Romano-British date. Pit [309] was cut by another round pit [307], which was 0.4m in diameter and 0.15m deep with a concave profile. The fill (310) was a dark greyish brown silty clay, with inclusions of 10% semi-articulated animal bone, and a sherd of Romano-British pottery of 2nd or 3rd century date.

Further eastwards the western side of another feature [314] was excavated, and was steeply sloping at the top, becoming less steep towards the base, which was not excavated due to water at a depth of 0.45m. It was not clear if this cut was part of a wide ditch, or the edge of a number of separate features. The fill (313), was a greyish brown sandy clay, with occasional charcoal flecks and a sherd of pottery, 1st century AD or earlier in date. This was overlain by a shallow irregular cut [316], containing a yellowish brown firm clay (315), with several pottery sherds of 1st century AD or earlier date. This feature was interpreted as a surface, with a reddish burnt area indicating a possible hearth.

At the eastern end of the trench a feature [317], was running on an east by west alignment for 10m along the northern side of the trench. The southern edge was straight, and the feature was over 0.35m wide and excavated to a depth of 0.47m before becoming water filled. The fill was a brown sandy clay, (318). Several other features had been cut by [317], including a north by south orientated linear [321]. This was a straight edged feature 0.8m wide with almost vertical sides, over 0.32m deep. The fill (322), was a mottled orangey grey silty clay with occasional gravel. Further eastwards another north by south orientated linear [319], 0.8m wide, was also cut by [317], and was over 0.35m deep with a moderately sloping straight western side. The fill (320) was a brown sandy clay, from which one sherd of pottery of 1st century AD or earlier date was retrieved. Another feature [326] was also observed at the eastern end of the trench but not excavated.

5.4 Trench 4 (Fig 5)

This trench was 49m in length and orientated east by west. It was machined to a depth of between 0.35m and 0.57m in depth, the level at which the very mottled natural grey clay was encountered at 20.2m AOD at the western end, dipping to 19m AOD at the eastern end.

A table of the height above Ordnance Datum and depth of overburden deposits is shown in Table 2, Appendix A.

In this trench there were a number of features cutting the natural, however these were generally large and amorphous and difficult to define. Several of these areas were however sample excavated, to ascertain depth of deposits and dating information.

At the western end of the trench an irregular shaped feature [403], was excavated and had a gently sloping northern side. The cut was 0.16m deep and over 1m wide, with a greyish brown sandy clay fill (404), with charcoal flecks, containing 2nd to 3rd century Romano-British pottery. The eastern extent of this feature was not clear.

A slot through another irregular feature [405], was excavated to the full depth of 0.22m. This feature had gently sloping sides, and an uneven base. The fill (406), was a greyish brown silty clay with frequent medieval pottery sherds of 13th or 14th century date, and residual Romano-British sherds. Further eastwards the western edge of another cut [407], possibly a wide linear orientated north by south, was excavated. The western edge of the feature was straight, but the eastern edge was less well defined. The western side was a moderate slope with a step half way down, and the base was not excavated, although the cut was over 0.43m deep. The fill (408) was a dark brown silty clay with occasional pieces of limestone, frequent late medieval or post medieval pottery 15th to 17th century in

date, and large pieces of iron slag. A further sample slot excavated to the east [409], indicated that the deposits were over 0.35m in depth in this area. Although there were indications of a side gradually sloping westwards, no edges were defined to the cut. It is however possible that this forms part of the same wide linear feature as [407]. The nature of this feature may suggest that it represents a holloway, possibly as a former route to the church.

The other areas of disturbance in this trench were very patchy and amorphous with irregular edges, they have not therefore been allotted separate context numbers, but are shown on the plan in Fig 5. The features were all overlain by a layer of greyish brown silty clay subsoil (401), which varied in depth between 0.1m and 0.3m. This was overlain by a dark brown silty clay topsoil (400), which also varied slightly in depth.

5.5 Trench 5 (Fig 6)

This trench was 18m in length and orientated north west by south east. It was machined to a depth of between 0.46m and 0.66m, where natural orange sand was encountered at 20.21m AOD at the northern end. The trench was positioned to evaluate the route of a new farm access track. It was located in the heras fencing that delineated the proposed new track and accurately located against the existing farm track. There appears to be a slight discrepancy between the location of the trench and the proposed new track as located on the development plans.

A table of the height above Ordnance Datum and depth of overburden deposits is shown in Table 3, Appendix A.

A number of intercutting features were visible cutting the natural sand in this trench, with sherds of relatively unabraded pottery in the top of the fills. The presence of areas of stone associated with these features was suggestive of structures, and a settlement focus in this area. In order to provide some dating evidence for these features the deposits were given context numbers and pottery was collected from them, these are shown on the plan in Fig 6. All of the pottery collected from features in this trench is Romano-British, and generally dates to the 2nd or 3rd century. A fragment of roof tile of Romano-British date was also recovered from context (507).

One discrete feature was excavated at the northern end of the trench, a linear cut [508], orientated east by west. This was 1.3m wide and over 0.36m deep with straight edges, and moderately sloping sides. The fill (509), was a greyish brown sandy clay with charcoal and Romano-British pottery of probable 2nd century date.

These features were overlain by a greyish brown silty clay subsoil (511), between 0.35m and 0.1m in depth. This was overlain by dark brown silty clay topsoil (510), of 0.25m average depth.

6 Discussion

6.1 The earliest dating evidence recovered from features on this site consisted of Malvernian wares, a pottery type, which spanned the Iron Age and early Roman period. It is therefore not possible to precisely date the earliest phase of activity on the site, other than to the 1st century AD or earlier. The focus of this early activity appears to be within the central area of Trench 3, where there are several linear features and a possible floor surface of 1st century AD or earlier date.

6.2 A later phase of Romano-British activity, during the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD appears to have extended across the whole evaluation area, with a settlement focus somewhere in the area of Trench 5, and a lesser scatter in Trench 3. This is evidenced by the high occurrence of unabraded Romano-British pottery and building debris in deposits in Trench 5, and pits containing domestic refuse in Trench 3. Spreading out from this area of possible settlement focus, there are a number of Romano-British ditches extending to the western edge of the evaluation area, which might be associated with agricultural activities, possibly for drainage purposes. There are also a number of less distinct features with irregular edges, of similar date, which covered large areas of Trenches 3 and 4. These were interpreted as possible areas of sand quarrying, but might also be natural channels, which have become silted up. There is limited evidence for activity during the later Romano-British period, with no pottery later than 3rd century in date.

6.3 A large undated feature, possibly a pit, was cutting a Romano-British ditch in Trench 2, and contained a large number of pieces of grey slag.

6.4 One sherd of pottery from a post hole in the south western corner of the site, is of a possible Saxon date, and there are several other undated features including pits and post holes in this area.

6.5 In the south eastern corner of the site there were a number of indistinct or intercutting features. From one of these areas in Trench 5, a large number of sherds of unabraded Medieval pottery were recorded, of 13th to 14th century date. These included a number of pieces of cooking pot, and are indicative of domestic activity in this area during the medieval period. There are also traces of Medieval ridge and furrow ploughing across much of the evaluation area, causing a fluctuation in the depth of the subsoil across the site.

6.6 In the south eastern corner of the evaluation area a large post medieval feature, possibly a pit, was recorded, dated to between the 15th and 17th century. This feature contained large pieces of iron slag, indicating some form of industrial activity in the area at that time.

7 Conclusions and Mitigation Recommendations

7.1 The evaluation results have clearly demonstrated the existence of a previously unknown Romano-British settlement, possibly a farmstead. The site may have origins in the pre-Roman Iron Age and spans the 1st to 3rd century AD. The focus of the Roman occupation appears to be the central area of the site (trenches 3 and 5). Medieval and post-medieval features in the eastern area of the evaluation are suggestive of lower levels of adjacent settlement for these periods. Evidence for occupation for these periods at this location was also previously unknown, although is not altogether unexpected given the proximity of the church.

7.2 A site meeting was held on 13th March 2003 in order to discuss the high levels of archaeology identified and the implications of the findings for road construction and bridge-works. Those present included Mark Bradshaw of Parkman (Design Team for the Highways Agency), Jonathon Holt of Amy Mouchel (Project Principal Contractor under CDM Regulations), Rob Masefield of RPS (Archaeological Consultant for Parkman), Charles Parry (Gloucestershire County Council County Archaeologist) and Toby Catchpole (Gloucestershire County Council County Archaeological Service).

7.3 The potential for preservation in situ of archaeological remains was discussed. Essentially the route corridor can be divided into two areas of impact, west and east. For the western area from the bridge works to the present farm access from the A46, the new road alignment is to be constructed upon a raised embankment. The embankment will provide a gentle slope down from the new bridge to approximate existing ground level to the east. The proposed construction methodology here was to strip the topsoil ahead of bunding. This technique would clearly impact upon the buried archaeology. Parkman and Amy Mouchel have suggested that geo-textile fabric matting could be used on top of the existing grassed ground level for the bunded section, to avoid exposure of the archaeology. The geo-textile will spread the embankment and road weight sufficiently to ensure that there is no compaction of either the topsoil (following initial rolling) or the underlying archaeological deposits.

7.4 However it is not possible to achieve preservation in situ of the archaeology in the eastern area of the route, including the new farm access track, as this segment will be within cutting. The County Archaeologist has confirmed that this area of impact (shown on Figure 8) should be subject to full archaeological investigation (excavation) ahead of the construction phase.

8 References

- | | | |
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APPENDIX A

Tables Showing The Depth of Overburden Deposits
in Trenches 3, 4 and 5

Table 1

Depth of Overlying Deposits in Trench 3																				
(all measurements in m)																				
on plan	0m	2m	4m	6m	8m	10m	12m	14m	16m	18m	20m	22m	24m	26m	28m	30m	32m	34m	36m	38m
ground height AOD	21.26	21.27	21.26	21.27	21.27	21.23	21.20	21.15	21.07	21.08	21.01	20.99	20.98	20.91	20.86	20.84	20.81	20.81	20.80	20.77
topsoil	0.40	0.35	0.40	0.30	0.35	0.40	0.35	0.38	0.43	0.40	0.33	0.20	0.27	0.30	0.33	0.30	0.32	0.25	0.20	0.20
subsoil	0.40	0.40	0.23	0.32		>0.2	0.30	0.26	0.34	0.47	0.20	0.18	0.20	0.23	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.30

Table 2

Depth of Overlying Deposits in Trench 4																				
(all measurements in m)																				
on plan	0m	2m	4m	6m	8m	10m	12m	14m	16m	18m	20m	22m	24m	26m	28m	30m	32m	34m	36m	38m
ground height AOD	20.64	20.63	20.62	20.60	20.61	20.59	20.64	20.73	20.63	20.57	20.47	20.39	20.31	20.20	20.04	19.88	19.76	19.69	19.64	19.61
topsoil	0.20	0.20	0.23	0.26	0.33	0.30	0.30	0.32	0.30	0.22	0.28	0.27	0.26	0.24	0.19	0.20	0.22	0.23	0.20	0.20
subsoil	0.24	0.30	0.30	0.26	0.25	0.18	0.25	0.18	0.16	0.28	0.18	0.22	0.20	0.22	0.20	>0.1	0.15	0.10	0.10	0.10

on plan	40m	42m	44m	46m	48m
ground height AOD	19.55	19.50	19.47	19.40	19.35
topsoil	0.20	0.20	0.19	0.17	0.18
subsoil	0.11	0.12	0.19	0.13	0.10

Table 3

Depth of Overlying Deposits in Trench 5										
(all measurements in m)										
on plan	0m	2m	4m	6m	8m	10m	12m	14m	16m	18m
ground height AOD	21.26	21.27	21.26	21.27	21.27	21.23	21.20	21.15	21.07	21.08
topsoil	0.40	0.35	0.40	0.30	0.35	0.40	0.35	0.38	0.43	0.40
subsoil	0.40	0.40	0.23	0.32		>0.2	0.30	0.26	0.34	0.47

APPENDIX B

Pottery Report by Jane Timby

For: Gloucester County Council Archaeological Services

Site: Ashchurch, Glos.

Site Code: GSMR 22031

Status: assessment

THE POTTERY

1 Introduction

1.1 The archaeological work resulted in the recovery of 147 sherds of pottery weighing 3217 g largely dating to the Roman, Medieval and early post-medieval periods. In addition a single fragment of tile and five small fragments of fired clay were recovered.

1.2 The material was generally well preserved with an average sherd weight of 22 g. The individual groups were quite small being derived from some 29 individual contexts across the five evaluation trenches. This combined with the relatively restricted range of wares and the dominance of sherds from particularly long-lived industries operating in the area has hampered close dating.

1.3 For the purposes of this assessment the assemblage was scanned to assess its likely chronology and quantified by sherd count and weight for each recorded context. The resulting data is summarised in Table 1.

2 Iron Age or Saxon

2.1 A single small handmade rimsherd with a limestone and organic temper was recovered from (105). Provisionally such material would be likely to date to the Saxon period (6-9th centuries) but an Iron Age cannot be precluded. No other obviously later prehistoric or Saxon material was present in the assemblage.

3 Roman

3.1 Roman wares made up the bulk of the assemblage, some 109 sherds. These could largely be divided into two fabrics; Severn Valley wares and Malvernian wares. Amongst the small number of other wares are two sherds of Central Gaulish samian, two sherds of Dorset black burnished ware and one shelly ware.

3.2 The Malvernian wares were almost all black or grey handmade wares. This is an industry dating back into the Iron Age and there is little change in technology until well into the Roman period. It is thus difficult to date single unfeatured sherds. The fact that most of the pieces occurred with wheel made oxidised Severn Valley ware suggests that most of the examples here should be seen as Roman and dating to well within the 2nd century and beyond. The possible exceptions are some sherds from Trench 3, which are not associated with Roman material, and these could potentially be earlier.

3.4 Of particular note amongst the Malvernian wares is a decorated jar from (210). Later products of the industry are indicated by a straight-sided dish from (503) and a Malvernian roof tile fragment from (507).

3.5 Further hints of 1st-century activity in the locality are suggested by six sherds of Malvernian limestone-tempered ware from (312, 313, 320) and (500), another ware spanning the Iron Age and early Roman periods. This would again point to an earlier focus of activity around Trench 3.

3.6 Severn Valley wares represent another long-lived industry with a fairly conservative repertoire of forms spanning the 1st to 4th centuries. Amongst the forms present here are tankards, triangular-rimmed bowls and jars. Sherds of this ware were recovered from all the trenches and are provisionally dated to the 2nd and/or 3rd centuries on the basis that there are no obviously earlier or later wares either within or associated with the groups. External dating is provided by the samian and BB1.

3.7 The greatest concentration of Roman material came from Trench 5 and this includes the most diverse range of wares. Of particular note is a Dorset black burnished straight-sided dish from (500), a sherd of brown colour-coated beaker from (505) and a fragment of a ?tazza decorated with a notched cordon and burnished wavy lines from Tr. 5 u/s.

4 Medieval

4.1 One context, (406), produced a concentration of Medieval sherds including 15 sherds from Malvernian club-rimmed unglazed cooking pots, one sherd of glazed jug or pitcher in a sand and limestone-tempered fabric and four sherds of sandy ware cooking pot, probably from the Herefordshire region. The sherds were in moderately fresh condition showing little evidence of disturbance.

5 Medieval / post-medieval

5.1 One context, (408), produced a group of 17 glazed and unglazed wares all in local Malvern Chase ware which was made throughout the 15-16th centuries into the early 17th century. No other post-medieval material was recovered from the site.

J R Timby

March 2003

APPENDIX C

Written Scheme of Investigation

GSMR 22031
NGR: SO 927 332

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT LAND ADJACENT
TO ASHCHURCH RAILWAY BRIDGE ON THE
A46 TRUNK ROAD, GLOUCESTERSHIRE
PROJECT DESIGN**

**GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICE
PREPARED FOR ROB MASEFIELD, RPS PLANNING, TRANSPORT
AND ENVIRONMENT.**

Kim Watkins
Archaeology Service
Environment Department,
Shire Hall,
Gloucester GL1 2TH

Tel. 01452 425688
Fax. 01452 425356

January 2003

Summary

This document forms a written scheme of investigation for an archaeological evaluation at Ashchurch railway bridge on the A46 Trunk road, Ashchurch, Gloucestershire. It has been prepared as required in a standard brief for archaeological evaluation produced by the Senior Archaeological Officer of Gloucestershire County Council (GCC). It includes details of historical research into the site that has been used to determine the nature of the field investigation. The aims and methodology of the fieldwork and report production are explained. Further details regarding staffing, health and safety and a suggested timetable are included. It has been produced by the Archaeology Service of Gloucestershire County Council at the request of Mr R Masefield. It will be submitted for approval to the Senior Archaeological Officer of Gloucestershire County Council.

1 Introduction

1.1 The following comprises a project design for an archaeological evaluation on the site of a proposed road-realignment and bridge replacement on the A46 at Ashchurch, Gloucestershire. The evaluation has been requested by RPS Planning, Transport and Environment in order to reduce the potential for delays during the prospective works, as monitoring is required in this archaeologically sensitive area. This has been endorsed by the County Archaeologist, and Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service have been commissioned by RPS to carry out the evaluation.

1.2 This evaluation will examine a 2% sample of the proposed development area by trial trenching. It is therefore proposed that five trenches in total, 168m long by 1.52m wide, will be excavated. The evaluation will be carried out in accordance with the 'Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations' produced by the Institute of Field Archaeology (IFA 1996). The location of these trenches is shown on the accompanying site plan.

1.3 The site is located on land on the northern side of the A46 at Ashchurch, Gloucestershire, adjacent to the railway bridge. The proposed development area is centred on NGR SO 927 332 and is geologically located on River Avon Second Terrace Upper Part and Lower Lias Clay (OS 1988)

2 Archaeological, historical and cartographic background

The information in this section has been provided by the staff of Gloucestershire County Council Sites and Monuments Record, historical maps and the reports of previous archaeological work in the area. Background information has also been taken from the Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by RPS (RPS 2002).

2.1 Prehistoric

There is no evidence for prehistoric activity within the vicinity of the proposed development area.

2.2 Romano-British

Although there are no known Romano British sites within the vicinity of the proposed development area, a number of sherds of pottery from this period have been recorded during previous archaeological investigations in the area (see below).

2.3 Medieval

The parish of Ashchurch lies immediately to the east of Tewkesbury parish, from which it established independence shortly after the Dissolution. St Nicholas's church to the north of the proposed

development area, is thought to have been built by 1145 as a chapel of ease to Tewkesbury Abbey. The earliest parts of the existing building date to the late 12th century (VCH 1968 186). Settlement was thinly scattered throughout the area of Ashchurch parish in the medieval period, with a number of small hamlets including Newton, the closest to the development area. The area was largely agricultural and much of it lay in open fields until Inclosure took place from the 16th century onwards (VCH 1968 172). Traces of medieval ridge and furrow are still visible in areas close to or within the proposed development area (see below).

2.4 Post medieval

The present route of the A46 road was turnpiked during the 18th century and became a major thoroughfare from that time. By 1828 a number of houses had been built along the road at Newtown although most of these had been demolished by the mid 20th century (VCH 1968 173). The main Bristol to Birmingham railway line was built in 1840, with a station located near the church to the north west of the proposed development area. The railway bridge on the west side of the evaluation area, which is to be demolished during the proposed works was also built at this time (VCH 1968 173). It was the location of this railway bridge, and the station to the north, which encouraged a settlement focus to first develop along the main road in this area during the 19th century.

2.5 Previous archaeological work in the area

2.5.1 An archaeological watching brief (GSMR 19887) was undertaken by Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service in 1998 on the proposed development area, during geotechnical test pitting. A single pot sherd provisionally identified as of late medieval date, a fragment of coke and several animal bones were recovered from a sandy-clay layer, beneath the topsoil. A sherd of Roman pottery was also recorded from a the ploughsoil (Goult 1998).

2.5.2 In March 2001, Cotswold Archaeological Trust carried out an archaeological evaluation (GSMR 21005) on land at Church Farm, Ashchurch, 80m north of the proposed development area. Three trenches were excavated, revealing a number of medieval features, which may represent a medieval field system contemporaneous with the construction of the adjacent St. Nicholas's Church, and the formalisation of the village layout in the 12th century.

2.5.3 An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service in 1998 in connection with the construction of a septic tank and associated drainage within the churchyard (GSMR 5478). Three trenches were excavated. Trench one contained two grave cuts at 20.86m AOD orientated north-south, and trench two contained three grave cuts at 20.76m AOD. The orientation of these graves was uncertain due to the small size of the trench. Trench three contained one grave cut at 20.82m AOD and was orientated east-west. Romano-British, medieval and post medieval pottery was also retrieved from the trenches

2.5.4 An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Gloucestershire County Council Archaeology Service in 1999, in connection with groundworks for the construction of a septic tank and associated drainage. The watching brief established the presence of human bone from previously disturbed burials and residual pottery finds which indicate activity in the vicinity during the medieval period (GSMR 5478).

2.6 Cartographic background

2.6.1 Inclosure map of 1816

This map shows the layout of the landscape in the area prior to the construction of the railway (Gwatkin 1993). The area around the church, including the proposed development area to the south, was open fields at this time and the settlement along the main road is all on the southern side. The proposed evaluation area is shown as a field called Sheep Close.

2.6.2 Tithe map of 1842

This map shows the location of the newly constructed railway line, and the proposed development area is an open field known at this time as Middle Close (Gwatkin 1993).

2.6.3 First Edition Ordnance Survey map c.1880

This map shows very little change in the landscape around the proposed development area since the Tithe map of 1842. The evaluation area is occupied by an open field although a small area in the south western corner has been enclosed separately.

3 Purpose of the evaluation

3.1 The purpose of the evaluation will be "to gain information about the archaeological resource ... including its presence or absence, character and extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and relative quality, in order to make an assessment of its worth in the appropriate context, leading to: the formulation of a strategy for the preservation or management of those remains; and/or the formulation of an appropriate response or mitigation strategy to planning applications or other proposals which may affect adversely such archaeological remains, or enhance them; and/or the formulation of a proposal for further archaeological investigation within a programme of research." (IFA 1999).

4 Methodology

4.1 Summary and trench location

Five trenches in total will be excavated all 1.52m wide and varying in length. The trench lengths will be, one trench of 50m long, two trenches 40m long, and two trenches 20m long. The final trench location may be altered on site to account for the presence of live services or other obstacles. The location of these trenches is shown on the accompanying trench plan.

4.2 Excavation procedures

4.2.1 All undifferentiated topsoil or overburden of recent origin will be removed by machine down to the first significant archaeological horizon. Successive spits will be removed until the first significant horizon is reached.

4.2.2 All faces of the trench that require examination or recording will be cleaned using appropriate hand tools. All investigation of archaeological levels will be by hand, with cleaning, examination and recording both in plan and section. In archaeological evaluations the objective is to define rather than totally remove deposits. Full excavation will therefore be confined to the least significant remains,

which may allow underlying stratigraphy and features to be exposed and recorded. Within significant levels partial excavation, half-sectioning, the recovery of dating evidence, sampling and the cleaning and recording of structures will be preferred to full excavation.

4.2.3 Whilst investigation will not be at the expense of any structures, features or finds which might reasonably be considered to merit preservation *in situ* (or be in any way prejudicial to the protection of such remains), a sufficient sample of the deposits will be studied to allow the resolution of the principal questions outlined in the evaluation brief and research design.

4.2.4 Any finds of human remains will also be left *in situ*, covered and protected. If removal is essential it can only take place under appropriate environmental health regulations, and, if appropriate, in compliance with the Burial Act 1857 and the Disused Burial Grounds (Amendment) Act 1981. Notice will also be given to the local planning authority.

4.2.5 All finds of gold and silver will be removed to a safe place and reported to the local Coroner according to the provisions of the Treasure Act 1996. Where removal cannot be effected on the same working day as the discovery suitable security measures will be taken to protect finds from theft.

4.3 Recording

4.3.1 A unique site code, Glos 22031, has been agreed with the County SMR Officer.

4.3.2 A site location plan based on the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map will be prepared.

4.3.3 All archaeological deposits will be recorded on pro-forma context sheets. A record of the full extent in plan of all archaeological deposits encountered will be made on plastic drawing film, at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20. Single context and multi-context plans will be produced as appropriate. Multi-context plans will only be considered where the interpretation of stratigraphy is not compromised by this method of recording. The OD height of all archaeological strata and features will be calculated and indicated on the appropriate plans and sections. Upon completion of each evaluation trench, one long section, and further sections, including half-sections of individual layers or features, will be drawn as appropriate.

4.3.4 If the site complexity is such as to justify its use the Harris matrix stratification diagram will be employed to record stratigraphic relationships. This record will be compiled and fully checked during the course of the evaluation.

4.3.5 A photographic record of the investigations will be prepared. It will include black and white prints and colour transparencies (on 35mm film), illustrating in both detail and general context the principal features and finds discovered. The photographic record will also include working shots to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological operation. The transparencies will be mounted in suitable frames.

4.4 Treatment of finds and samples

4.4.1 Different sampling strategies may be employed according to the perceived importance of the

strata under investigation. Close attention will be given to sampling for date, structure and environment. Sample size will take into account the frequency with which material is likely to occur.

4.4.2 A high priority will be given to the sampling of deposits where organic materials may be preserved. Organic samples will be subject to the appropriate specialist analysis.

4.4.3 Finds retrieval policy will be in line with that required in the brief. The owners of any finds will be recommended to donate them to the appropriate recipient museum.

4.5 Report production and archive

4.5.1 The written, drawn and photographic record will be ordered and catalogued. Finds will be washed marked and quantified. Specialist advice and reports will be obtained on the collected finds and environmental material where appropriate.

4.5.2 A report of the results of the evaluation will be drawn up for submission to the local planning authority. The report will contain a summary of the archaeological sequence in each trench, conclusions on the significance of the archaeology of the site and recommendations in line with the aims of the evaluation as outlined at 4 above.

4.5.3 A summary of the results of the work, even if negative, will be submitted to the County SMR and for publication in the appropriate academic journals.

4.5.4 The archive will conform to standards defined in the Management of Archaeological Projects 2 5.4 and Appendix 3 (English Heritage 1991). It will be quantified, ordered, indexed and internally consistent.

5 Staffing

5.1 The project will be managed by Jo Vallender, Senior Project Officer, and the site work and report will be carried out by an Assistant Project Officer of the Archaeology Service, Gloucestershire County Council, aided by one field assistant. The fieldwork stage has been programmed to commence in the week commencing 24th February 2003 and will run for four days.

5.2 External specialists used in the past and likely to be consulted as necessary:

Animal bone	Ian Baxter
Coins	Richard Reece
Conservation	Vanessa Fell
Ecofactual data	Julie Jones
Human skeletal remains	Dr. Charlotte Roberts
Pottery (post-RB)	Dr. Alan Vince
Pottery (Roman)	Dr. Jane Timby
Pottery (prehistoric)	Dr. Elaine L. Morris MIFA
Slag	Justine Bailey, English Heritage London
Small find ID	Hilary Cool

6 Other details

6.1 Access

Reasonable access to the site will be given to representatives of the local planning authority who may wish to be satisfied through site inspections that the archaeological works are being conducted to appropriate professional standards and in accordance with the agreements made.

6.2 Insurance

The Archaeology Service is covered by Gloucestershire County Council professional indemnity insurance to £1,000,000 and public liability insurance to £25,000,000.

7 Health and Safety

7.1 General provisions

All relevant health and safety legislation and regulations will be followed. General safe practice provisions outlined in *Gloucestershire County Council, Archaeological Sites, Safety Rules and safe working practices* will be adhered to. No personnel are to work in deep unsupported excavations. Trenches deeper than 1.21m will be stepped, battered back or shored. All archaeological trenches will be backfilled upon completion (for safety and to protect archaeological deposits), unless the developer has given specific instructions to the contrary. Spoil will be stored at a safe distance from trench edges.

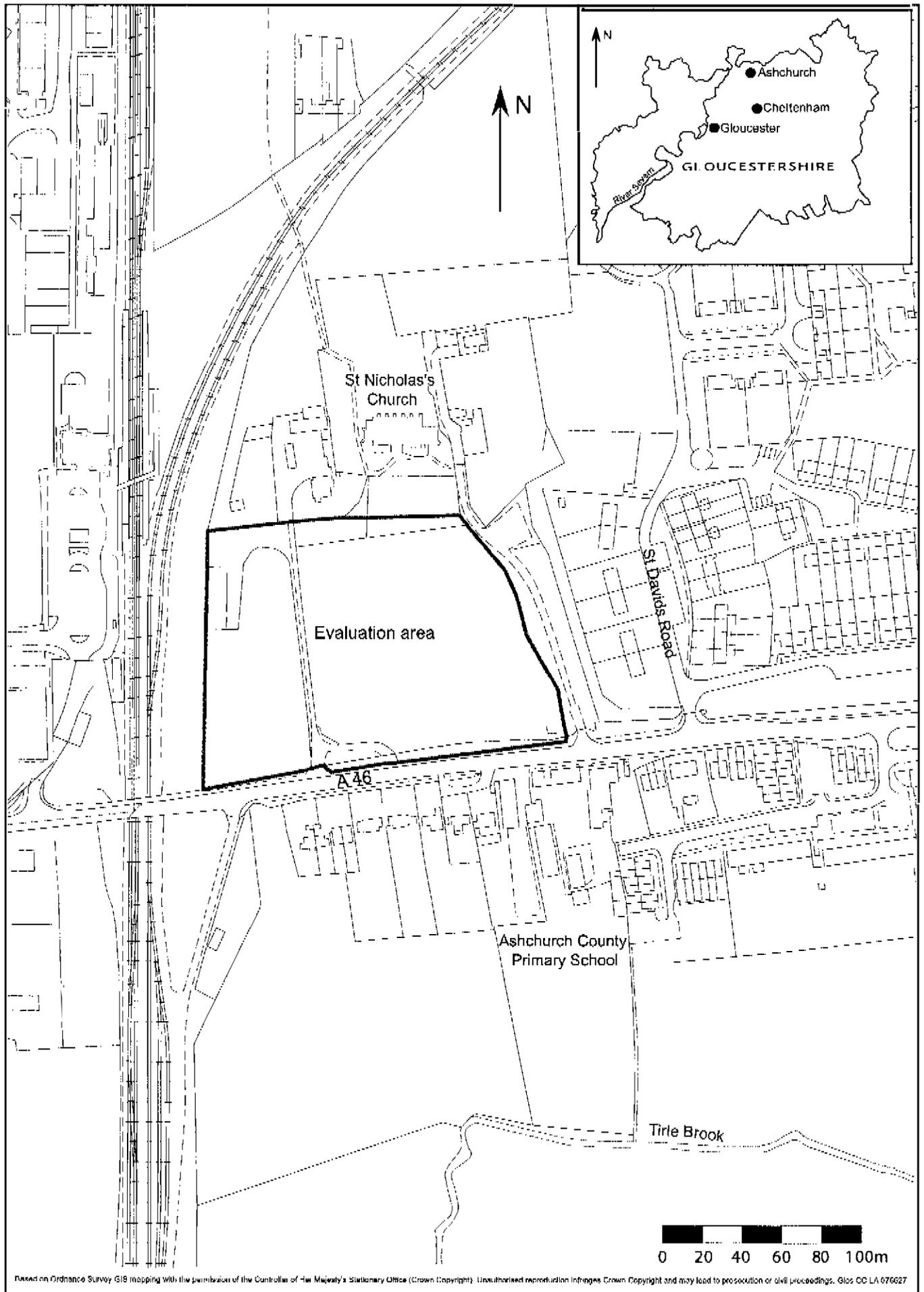
7.2 Site specific provisions

7.2.1 Information regarding live services and drains will be obtained from the relevant utility companies. No trenches will be excavated where services or drains are known to be present. A CAT scanner will be used over the areas to be excavated to detect live private cables.

7.2.2 All staff will wear hard hats and high visibility jackets whilst machinery is excavating or moving on site.

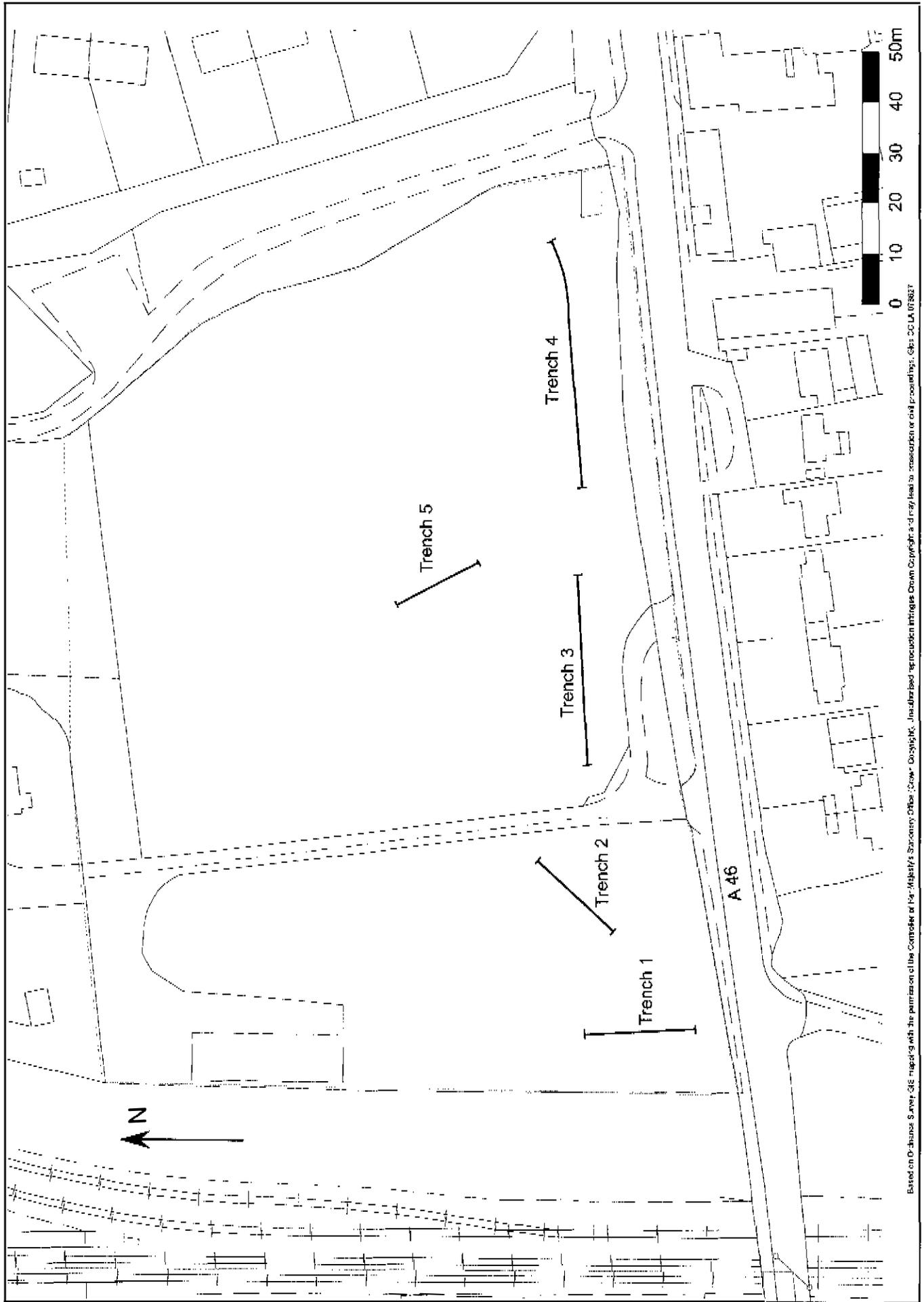
8 References

- Elrington, C. R 1968 *Victoria County History of Gloucestershire, Vol. VIII*
- Goult, D 1998 Site of Replacement Railway Bridge (A46 , Ashchurch, Gloucestershire) An Archaeological Watching Brief
- Gwatkin, G 1995 Copy of the 1816 Inclosure Map Of Northway, Newton, Natton and Fiddington
- Gwatkin, G 1995 Copy of the 1842 Tithe Map for Ashchurch
- I FA 1999 *Standard and guidance for archaeological evaluations*
- OS c.1880 Ordnance Survey County Series Plans, 1st edition, scale 1:2500. OS digital data
- OS c.1900 Ordnance Survey County Series Plans, 2nd edition, scale 1:2500. OS digital data
- OS c.1925 Ordnance Survey County Series Plans, 3rd edition, scale 1:2500. OS digital data
- OS 1988 *British Geological Survey (England and Wales), Tewkesbury, Sheet 216*
- OS 1996 Ordnance Survey Digital data held on Gloucestershire County Council GIS (Licence LA076627)
- RPS 2002 Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Trial Trenching and Building Survey.



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Fig 1: Site location plan (Scale 1:2500)



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Fig 2: Trench location plan (Scale 1:1000)

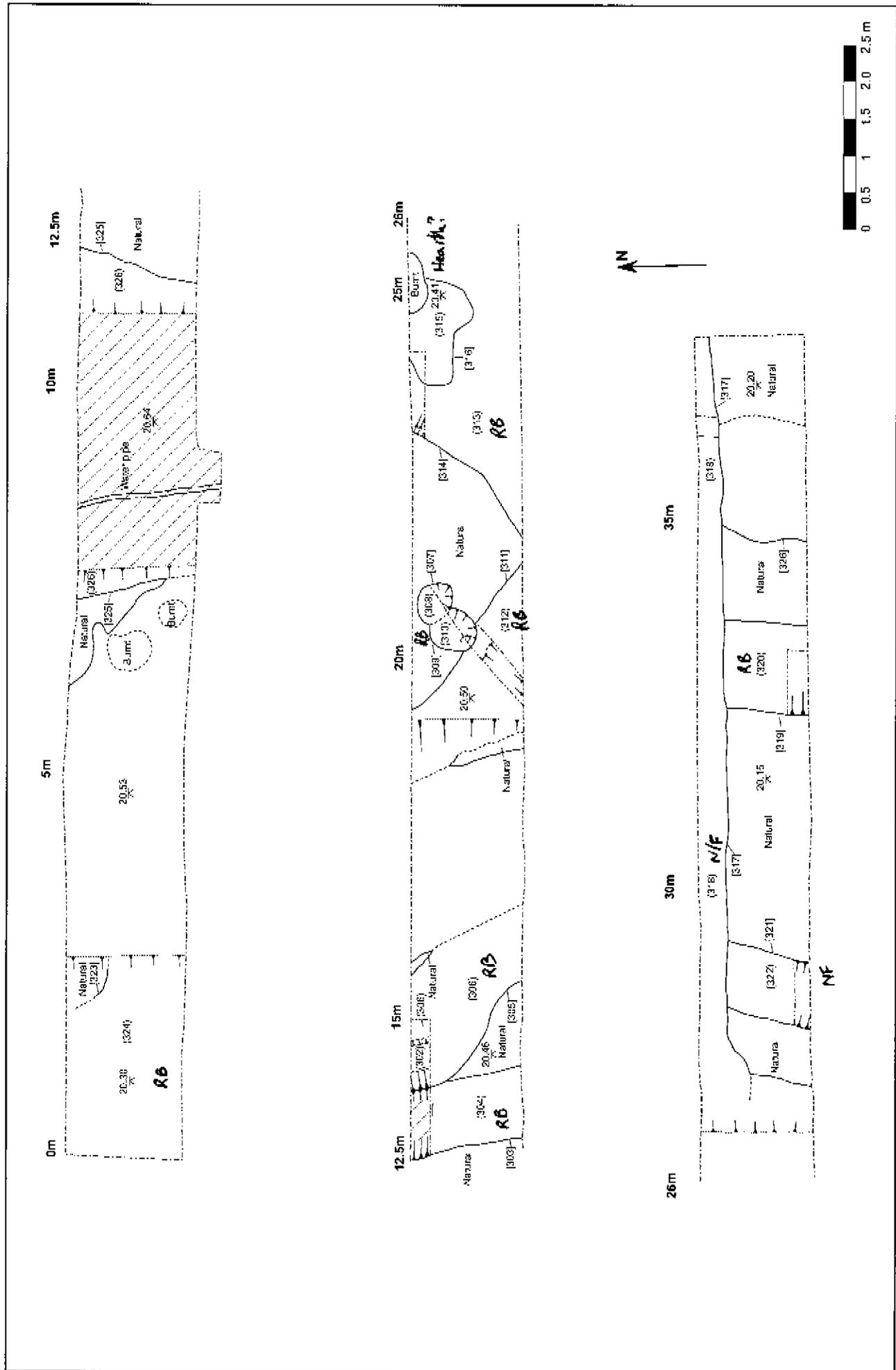


Fig 4 : Trench 3 (Scale 1:50)

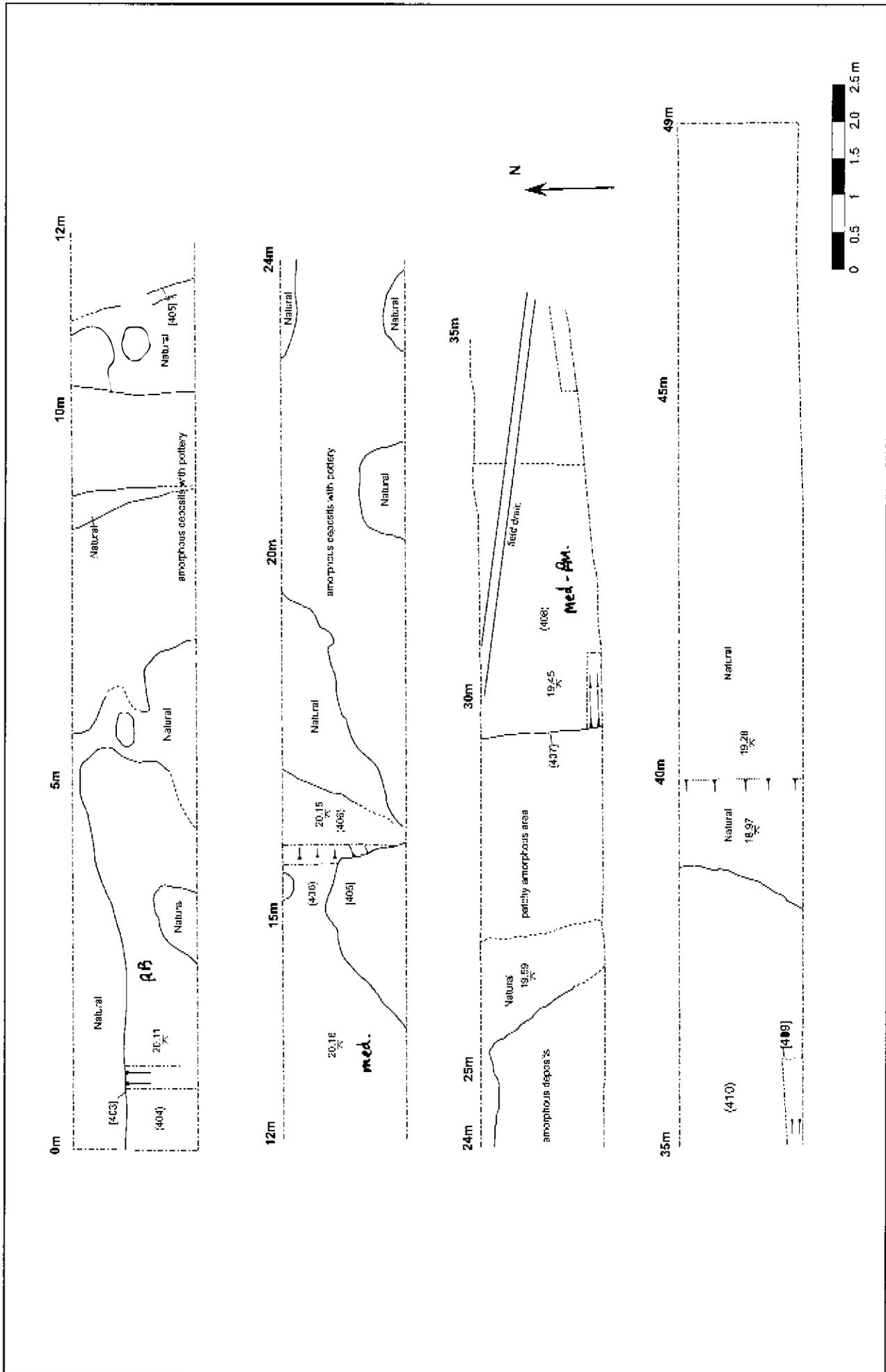


Fig 5 : Trench 4 (Scale 1:50)

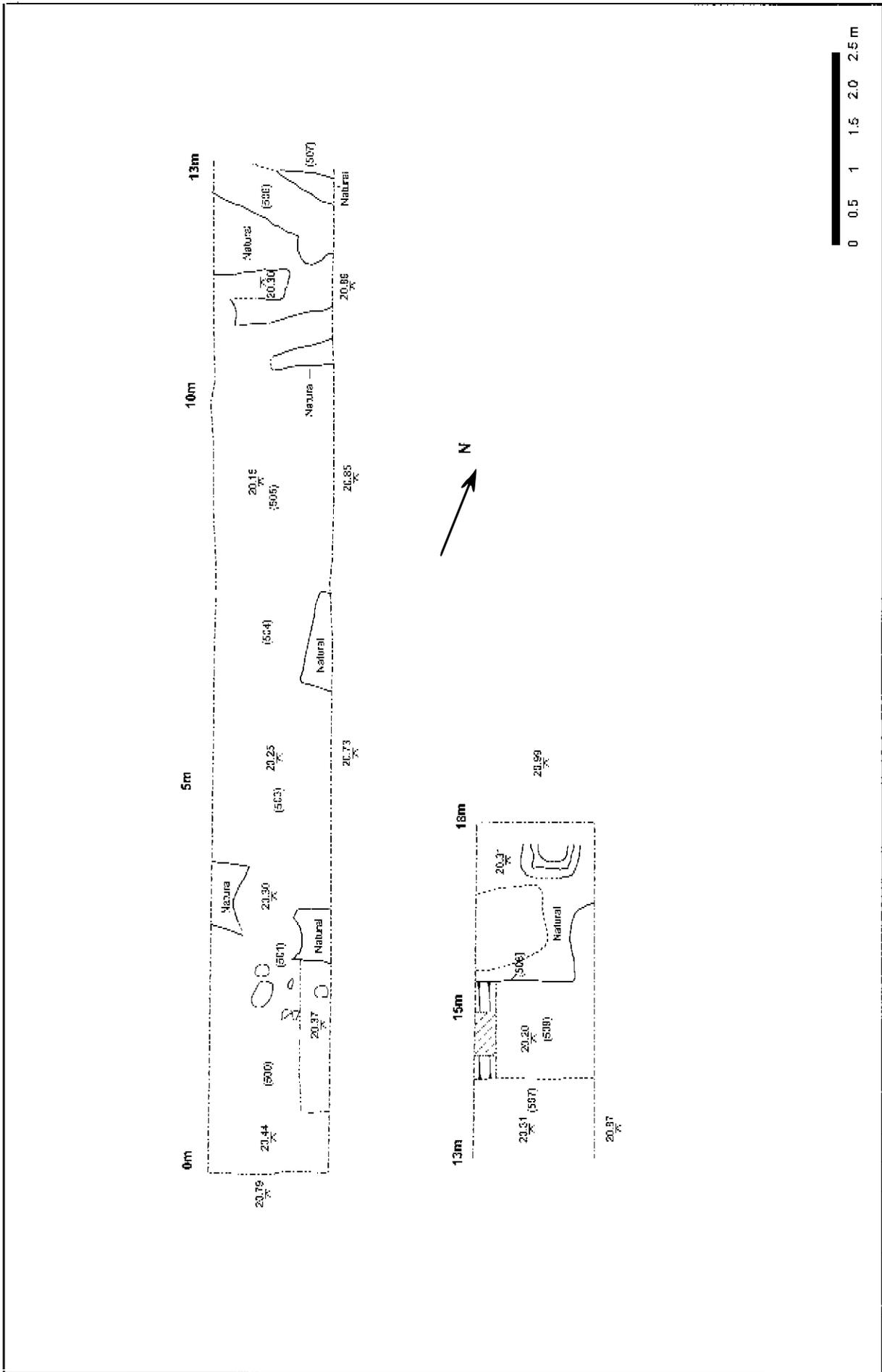


Fig 6 : Trench 5 (Scale 1:50)

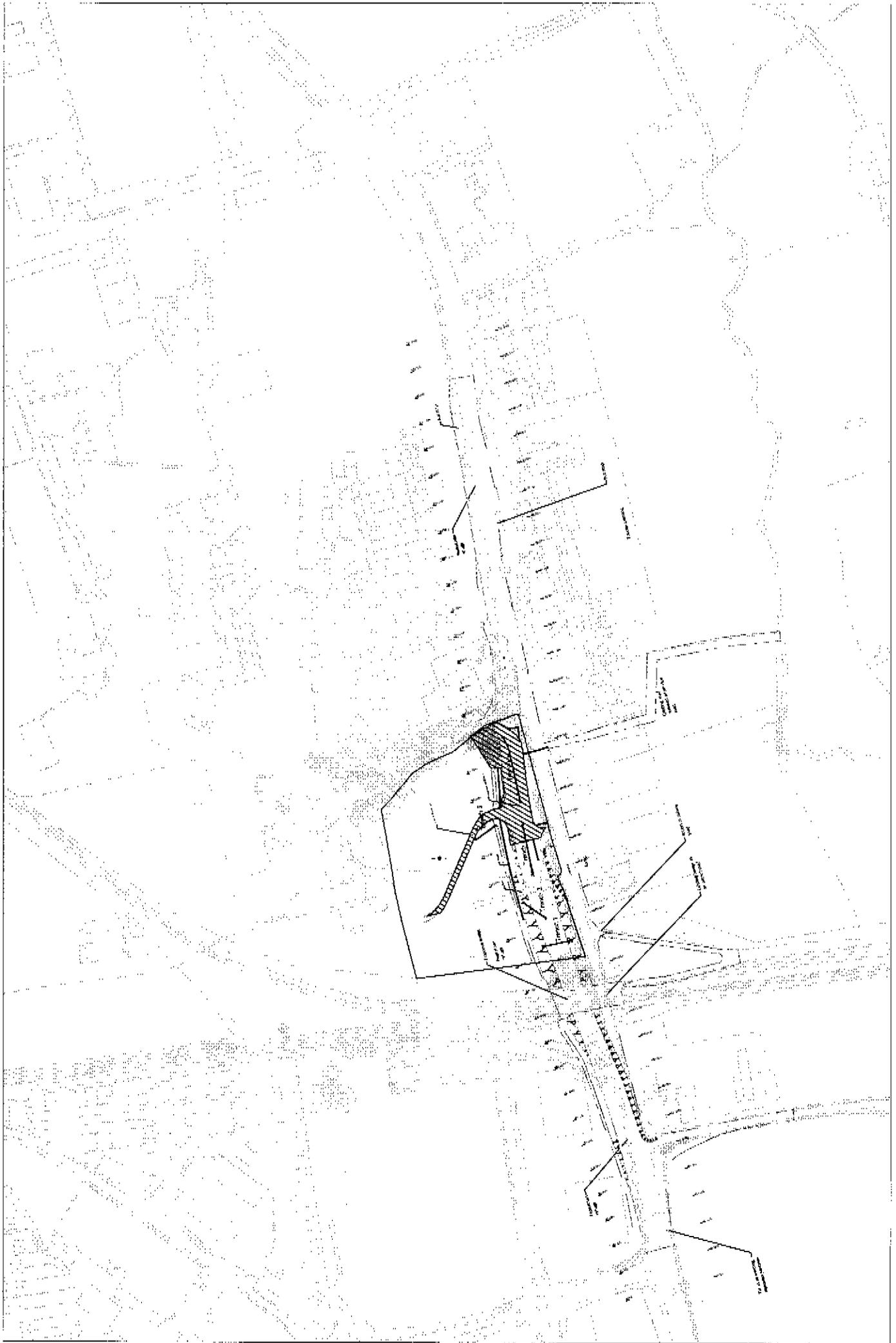


Fig 7 : Scheme Layout Showing Trench Locations (Scale 1:2,500)

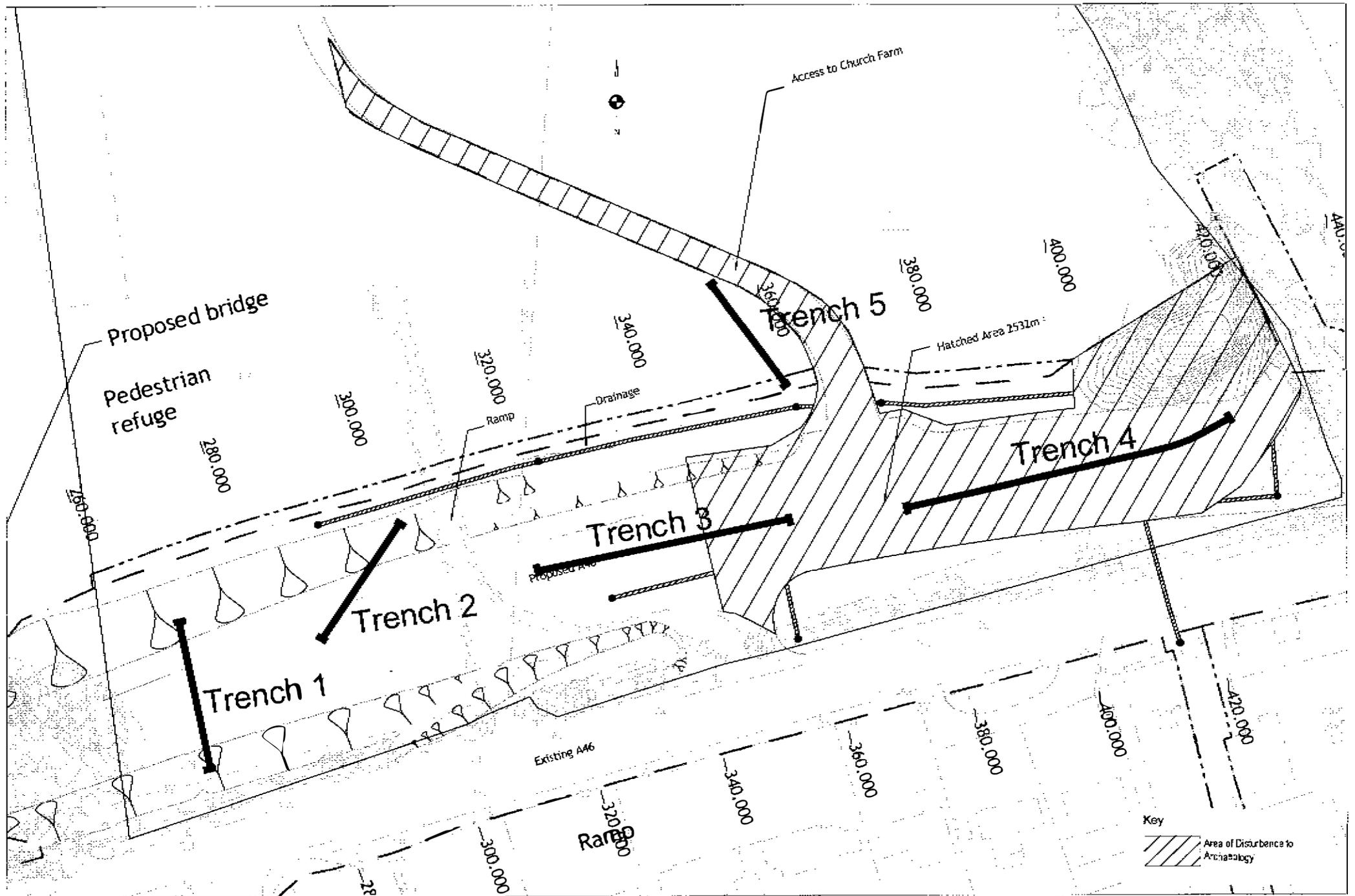


Fig 8 : Area of Disturbance to Archaeology (Proposed Archaeological Excavation Area) (Scale 1:500)