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LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Horncastle, Banovallum Gardens:

Residential Development: Plots 54 and 55
Archaeological Watching Brief

2662 6925

NGR: ~~TF-2670-6919~~

Site Code **HBG 98**

LCNCC Museum Accn. No. **198.98**

ELDC Planning Application No. **S/086/0647/93**

Report prepared for Stamford Homes Ltd

LAS Report No. 316

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Horncastle, Banovallum Gardens
Residential Development: Plot 54 + Plot 55
Archaeological Watching Brief

NGR: TF 2670 6919

Site Code: HBG 98

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Introduction

Stamford Homes Ltd commissioned Lindsey Archaeological Services (LAS) to monitor the mechanical excavation of house footings at Plot 54, Banovallum Gardens, Horncastle in compliance with an archaeological condition on the planning consent (Figs. 1 and 2). This watching brief formed the final phase of archaeological monitoring of this development by LAS, which has previously located possible prehistoric and Romano-British features (Field 1994; Field 1994b; Tann 1993, 1995, 1996 and 1997). The archaeological background has been described in previous reports.

Foundations for house plot 54 were monitored on 2nd September 1998. The house plot was located on the north side of an estate road and lay within a zone marked for further archaeological investigation after the 1993 evaluation. Evaluation Trench 17 in 1993 had encountered a ditch aligned west-east beside a field hedge (since removed) and a redeposited prehistoric worked flint in a subsoil sealing the ditch fill. Trench 17 had been sited across Plot 54 and it was hoped that additional information could be recorded during excavation of the house footings (Tann 1993).

The Watching Brief

The foundation trenches were excavated by a machine fitted with a 0.6m wide toothed bucket; the base and sides of the house foundation trenches were inspected during excavation. The natural deposits on this site are very mixed, incorporating pockets of clay, sand, peat and loam, reflecting glacial material from the Wolds reworked by shallow natural watercourses (now represented by Thunker Drain at the northern edge of the development).

Plot 54 (Pl. 1)

There was no trace of the undated Ditch 33 identified during the 1993 evaluation, although a backfill deposit of recent date was revealed along part of the rear trench of the foundations, probably representing the southern edge of the earlier evaluation trench. Ditch 33 lay closer to the former field hedge and may have been encountered during excavation of the garage for Plot 53 (not monitored) although those foundations had been expected to be shallow.

From the monitoring, a large SE-NW aligned ditch 6 was found to cross the eastern side of this plot (Pl. 2). From the sequence of fill deposits it appears that the ditch was dug to about 32.85m OD. and an original width of about 1.8m; although the edge of the feature is visible to 0.4m higher up, modern

Figures

Fig. 1 Location of Banovallum Gardens, Horncastle (based on the Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 map Sheets TF26NW and 27SW; © Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 50424A.

Fig. 2 Location of the Banovallum Gardens development (based on the OS 1:2,500 map; © Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 50424A.

Fig. 3 Position of Plots 54 and 5⁵ marked onto a plan of the development, showing the position of Ditch 33 seen in the 1993 Evaluation Trench 17, and Ditch 6 (McDaid, after D.B. Lawrence and Associates).

Fig. 4 Plan of the foundation trenches for Plot 54, showing archaeological features; A: Section across Ditch 6; B: Section across Pits 4 and 8 (McDaid and Tann after Stamford Homes).

Fig. 5 Plan of the foundation trenches for Plot 5⁵, showing features (McDaid and Tann after Stamford Homes).

Plates

Pl. 1 Position of Plot 54, Banovallum Gardens (looking east).

Pl. 2 NE corner of Plot 54, looking north along the line of Ditch 6 (marked by the red/white scales) to the far hedge beside Thunker Drain.

Pl. 3 Light-coloured fills of Ditch 6, below dark brown soil of recently disturbed ground. Looking NE, scales 1m.

Pl. 4 Composite view of pits 4 and 8. Looking SE, scales 1m.

Pl. 5 Foundation trenches for Plot 5⁵ (foreground) and Plot 54 (by machine). Looking south.

Pl. 6 Mixed yellow clay fill of 15 visible in trench sides (right foreground), cutting the chalk bedrock. Looking north.

Pl. 7 Very mixed fill of possible stream channel 17, seen in corner of foundation trenches (left). Looking north.

Pl. 8 Pit 19 seen in west edge of foundation trenches for Plot 5⁵, cut into chalk bedrock. Looking north.

Horncastle, Banovallum Gardens
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Introduction

Stamford Homes Ltd commissioned Lindsey Archaeological Services (LAS) to monitor the mechanical excavation of house footings at Plot 54, Banovallum Gardens, Horncastle in compliance with an archaeological condition on the planning consent (Figs. 1 and 2). This watching brief formed the final phase of archaeological monitoring of this development by LAS, which has previously located possible prehistoric and Romano-British features (Field 1994; Field 1994b; Tann 1993, 1995, 1996 and 1997). The archaeological background has been described in previous reports.

Foundations for house plot 54 were monitored on 2nd September 1998. The house plot was located on the north side of an estate road and lay within a zone marked for further archaeological investigation after the 1993 evaluation. Evaluation Trench 17 in 1993 had encountered a ditch aligned west-east beside a field hedge (since removed) and a redeposited prehistoric worked flint in a subsoil sealing the ditch fill. Trench 17 had been sited across Plot 54 and it was hoped that additional information could be recorded during excavation of the house footings (Tann 1993).

The Watching Brief

The foundation trenches were excavated by a machine fitted with a 0.6m wide toothed bucket; the base and sides of the house foundation trenches were inspected during excavation. The natural deposits on this site are very mixed, incorporating pockets of clay, sand, peat and loam, reflecting glacial material from the Wolds reworked by shallow natural watercourses (now represented by Thunker Drain at the northern edge of the development).

Plot 54 (Pl. 1)

There was no trace of the undated Ditch 33 identified during the 1993 evaluation, although a backfill deposit of recent date was revealed along part of the rear trench of the foundations, probably representing the southern edge of the earlier evaluation trench. Ditch 33 lay closer to the former field hedge and may have been encountered during excavation of the garage for Plot 53 (not monitored) although those foundations had been expected to be shallow.

From the monitoring, a large SE-NW aligned ditch 6 was found to cross the eastern side of this plot (Pl. 2). From the sequence of fill deposits it appears that the ditch was dug to about 32.85m OD. and an original width of about 1.8m; although the edge of the feature is visible to 0.4m higher up, modern

disturbances have truncated it and the ground surface from which it was dug is not known. A light brown subsoil layer **2** sealed the ditch; Ditch **33** was also sealed by that layer. No evidence of re-cutting of this ditch was found, despite the broad width and flat base. Most of the surviving east side was filled with a chalky silt **11** which spread across half of the ditch base, and this appeared to be a natural slump of upcast material (the bank) on the eastern edge. On the western side, early silting by **12** had been succeeded by lenses of silt **7** which had entered from the west (Pl. 3). The grey coloration of most of these deposits was probably indicative of waterlogging while organic matter such as vegetation decomposed.

This ditch had not been recognised during the 1993 evaluatory work although reassessment of photographs from that phase suggest that a broad feature with a similar alignment was encountered but interpreted then as a very mixed natural deposit to the west of Ditch **33**. Examination of the photographic record shows the evaluation trench base to have been a dark brown sandy loam with a distinct gravel content, in retrospect probably a subsoil or fill rather than a natural, water-lain deposit. 8m to the west of Ditch **33** gravel was recorded beneath the light brown subsoil, and this can now be equated with the gravelly deposits seen in Plot **56** and probably representing a minor watercourse channel. The recently discovered ditch **6** may best be interpreted as a boundary alongside the watercourse, although a drainage function could have been primary. Unfortunately, in the absence of dating evidence, ditch **6** can only be described as not respecting the alignment of the medieval or post-medieval field system, and so probably pre-medieval. Although it seems at an irregular angle to Ditch **33** (and not necessarily contemporary), the two could form the corner of a field or enclosure. Had this been an Iron Age or Romano-British habitation enclosure, pottery and other domestic refuse could have been expected.

In addition to Ditch **6**, two other features were identified in the foundation trenches for Plot **54** (Pl. 4). Both of these pits were cut into the chalk bedrock, although chalk extraction seems an unlikely function. Pit **4** was the deeper, cut from above 33m OD and at least 0.3m deep. Its width was over 2m, sloping downwards to a narrow point. Pit **8** was positioned immediately to the south with its base at 32.9m OD and its highest surviving fill at 33.2m OD. The base was rounded, sloping more gently towards the south. The single fills, **5** and **9** respectively, were both grey sands.

Any relationship between pits **4** and **8** has been lost, probably during a cultivation phase responsible for producing soil layer **3** (which may equate with layer **2**). A single fragment of brick retrieved from **3** has been dated as post-medieval, probably eighteenth century.

Plot 56 (Pl. 5)

A curving channel or ditch **15** crossed the NE corner of the foundations for this house plot. The base of this 1.25m wide feature, cut into chalk bedrock, was 1.5m below existing ground level. The fill was a very mixed chalk and clay and appeared to have been naturally deposited (Pl. 6). It was overlain by

the subsoil deposit **2**. The feature was tentatively identified as a natural watercourse.

Slightly to the west of **15** was a much wider feature, apparently aligned NE-SW. Its maximum width was about 3.75m and its depth 1.35m. The upper material had been disturbed and it was difficult to determine whether this was a natural or archaeological feature (Pl. 7). The mix of chalk rubble, clay and peat suggested a natural feature such as a stream channel subsequently deliberately filled, but the straight alignment may indicate a deep boundary feature. Instability of the trench sides and the loose feature fills prevented close investigation of these features.

The only probable archaeological feature within these foundation trenches was **19**, seen in the western trench (Pl. 8). The base of this 1.5m wide pit was over 1.5m below the modern ground surface, and its light brown sandy loam fill was sealed by **2**. No finds were seen.

Conclusion

No archaeological artefacts were found on this occasion and it is not possible to assign a firm date to any of the features. The formation of the subsoil **2** is probably the result of medieval or later cultivation, and this would indicate all the features in Plot 54 to be medieval or earlier.

All the Romano-British features on the Banovallum Gardens development have been difficult to interpret and were probably peripheral features of an occupation site centred beyond this development.

Acknowledgements

Mr. Derek Hinchliffe (Site Agent) has provided every co-operation during the numerous monitoring visits for this project and LAS would like to thank him for his interest. On this occasion, groundworks were undertaken by RJK Construction and their help was appreciated.

Illustrations were prepared by Mick McDaid; the report was produced and collated by Jane Frost.

Geoff Tann
Lindsey Archaeological Services
30th September 1998

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- Tann, G. 1993 *An Archaeological Evaluation of Land at Banovallum Gardens, Horncastle*. Unpublished report by LAS for Stamford Homes.

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Tann, G. 1996 *Horncastle, Banovallum Gardens: Archaeological Watching Brief during groundworks for a New Estate Access Road*. Unpublished report by LAS for Stamford Homes, March 1996.

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Archive Summary

Context sheets

Field sketch plans (annotated) A4

Field sections (to scale)

Annotated copies of Developer's plans

Inked plans and section drawings

Developer's plans

Photographs: LAS Film No. 98/116/11-21

Correspondence

Fig. 1 Location of Banovallum Gardens, Horncastle (based on the Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 map Sheets TF25NW and 27SW; © Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 50424A.

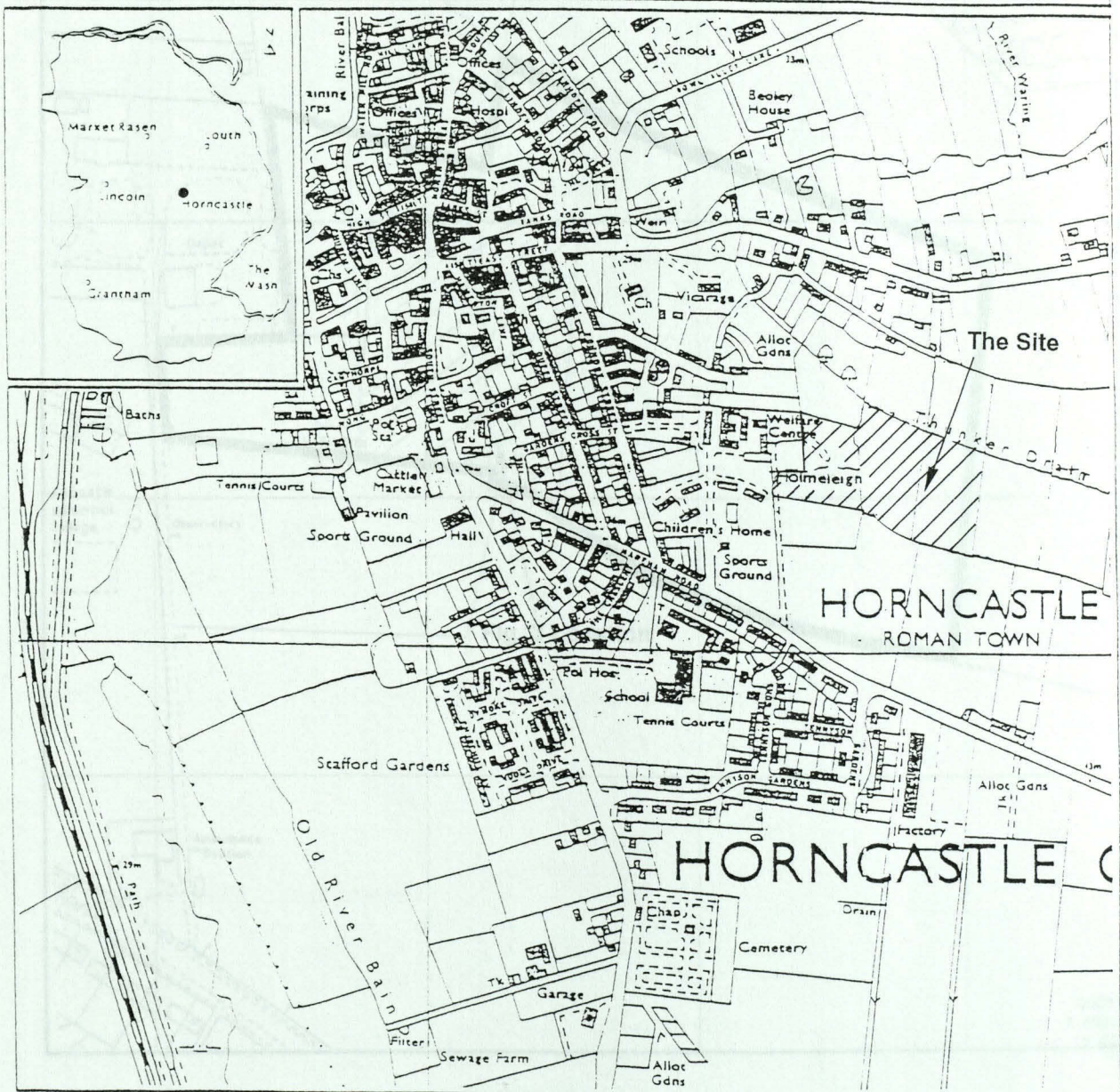
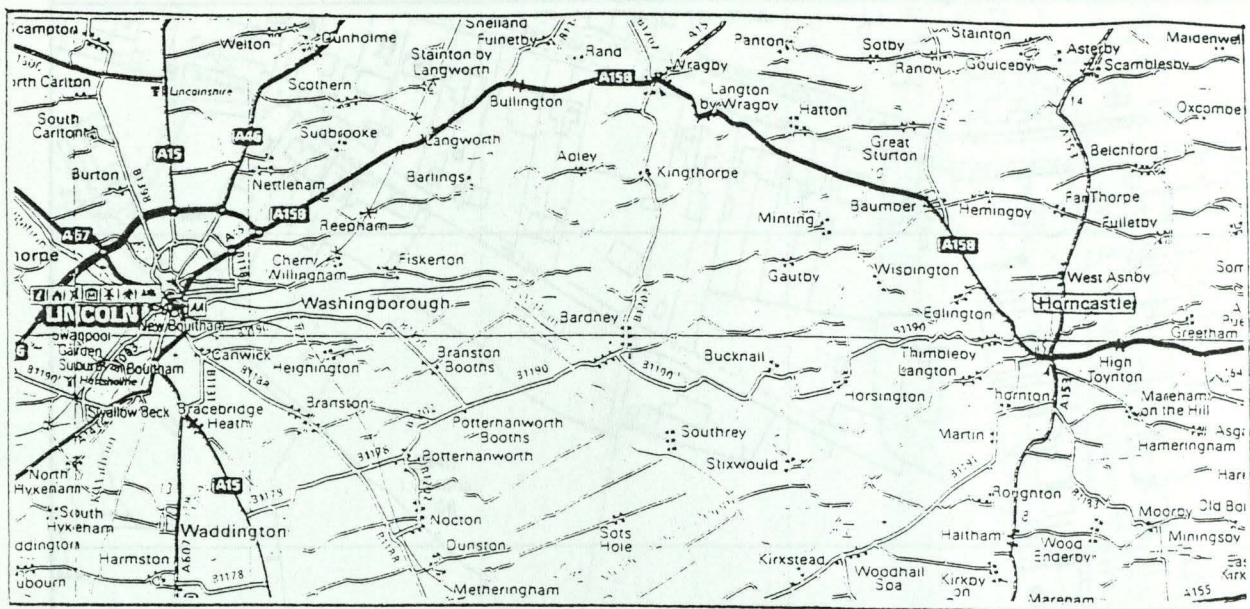
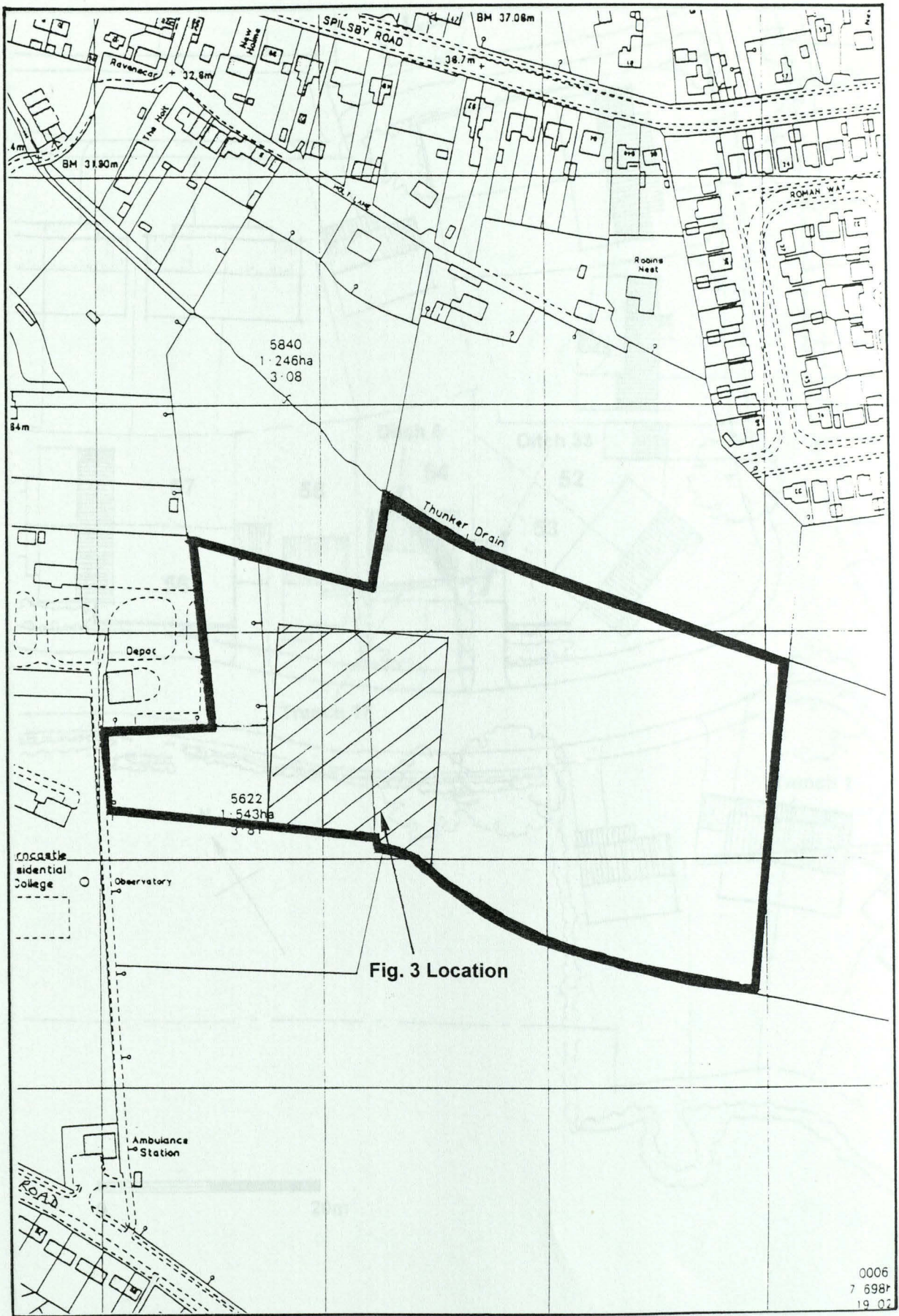


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Fig. 2 Location of the Banovallum Gardens development (based on the Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 map; © Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 50424A.

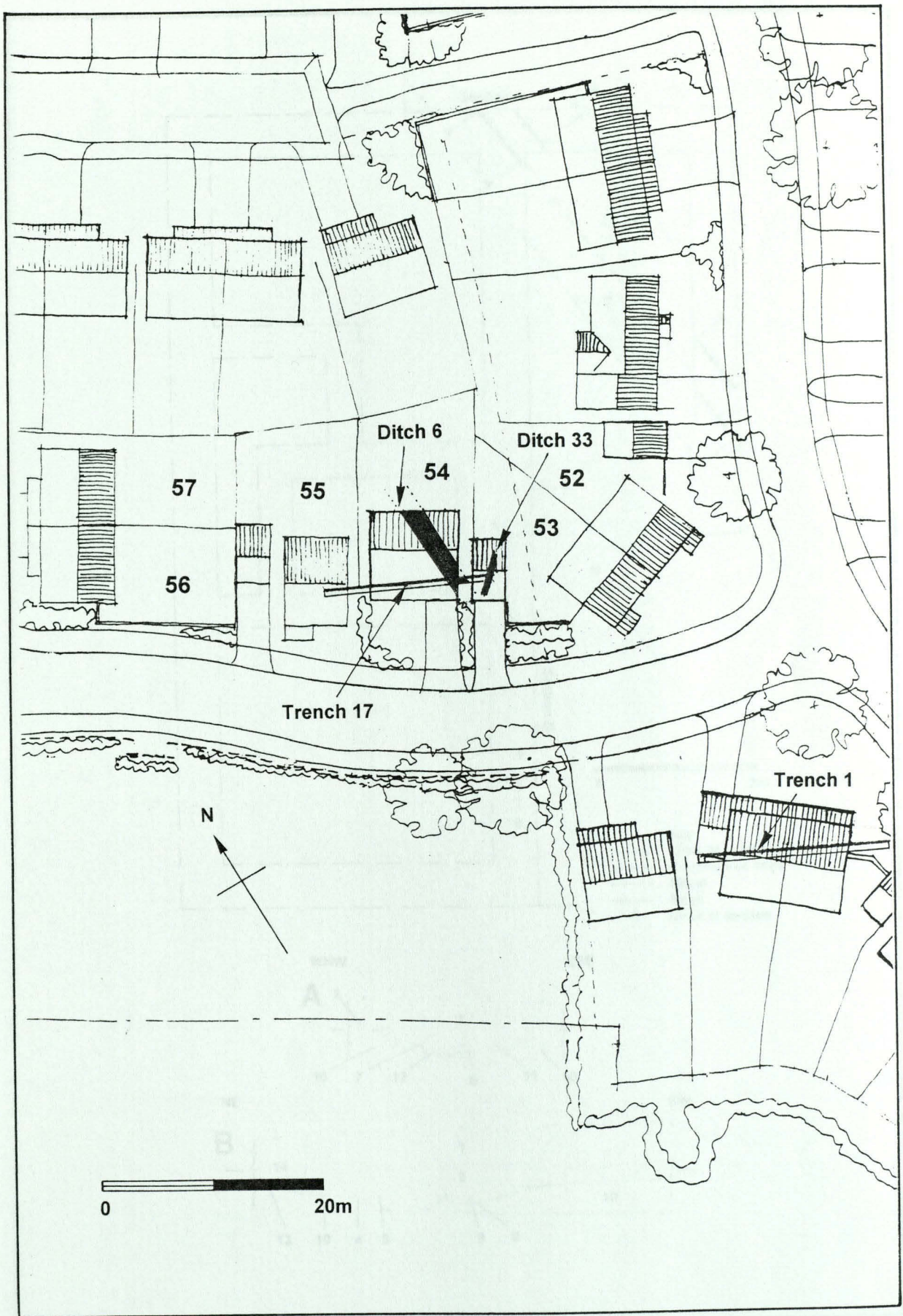


Fig. 3 Position of Plots 54 and 56, showing the position of Ditch 33 seen in the 1993 Evaluation Trench 17, and Ditch 6 (McDaid, after D.B. Lawrence and Associates).

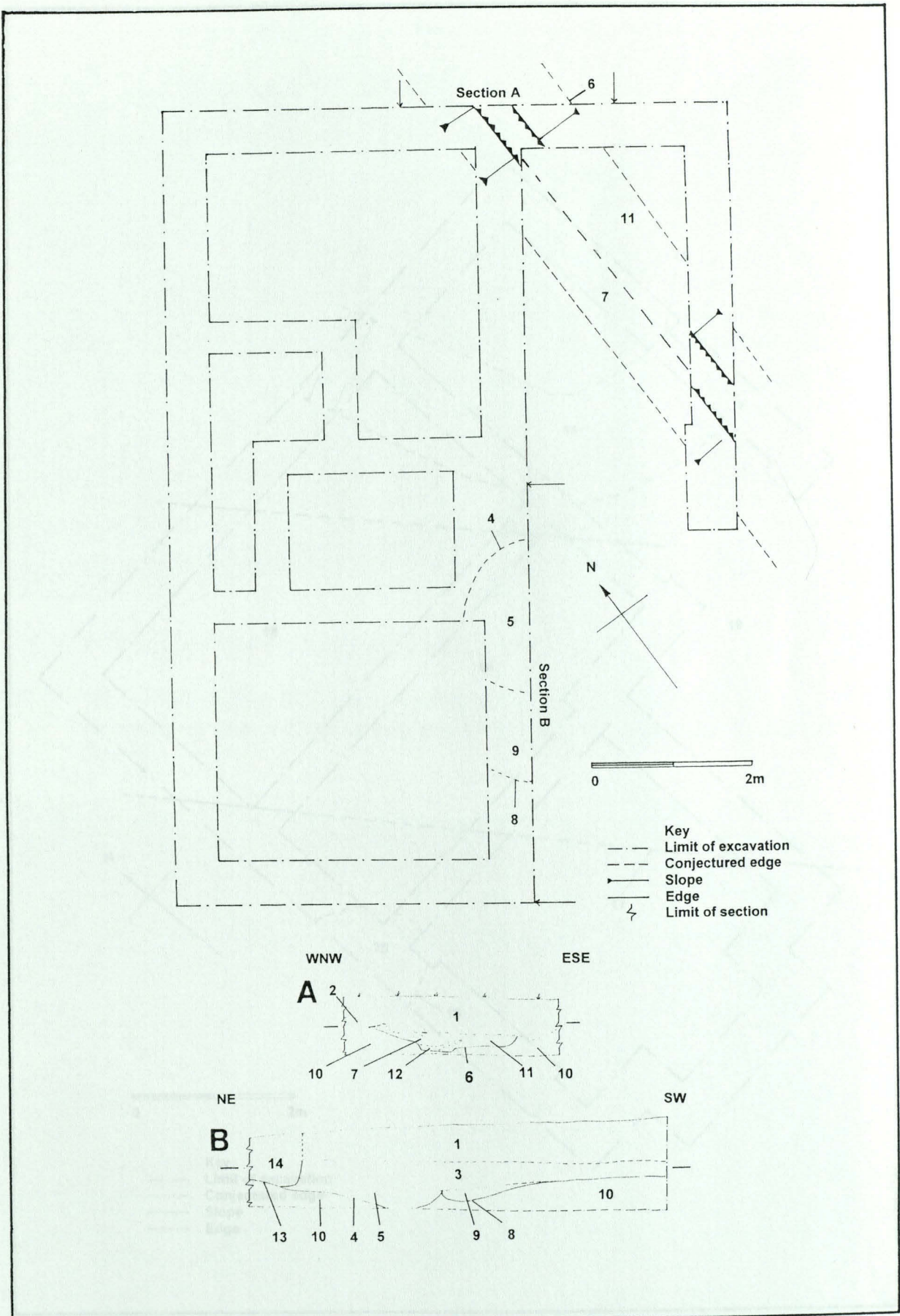


Fig. 4 Plan of the trenches for Plot 54, showing archaeological features; A: Section across Ditch 6; B: Section across Pits 4 and 8 (McDaid and Tann after Stamford Homes).

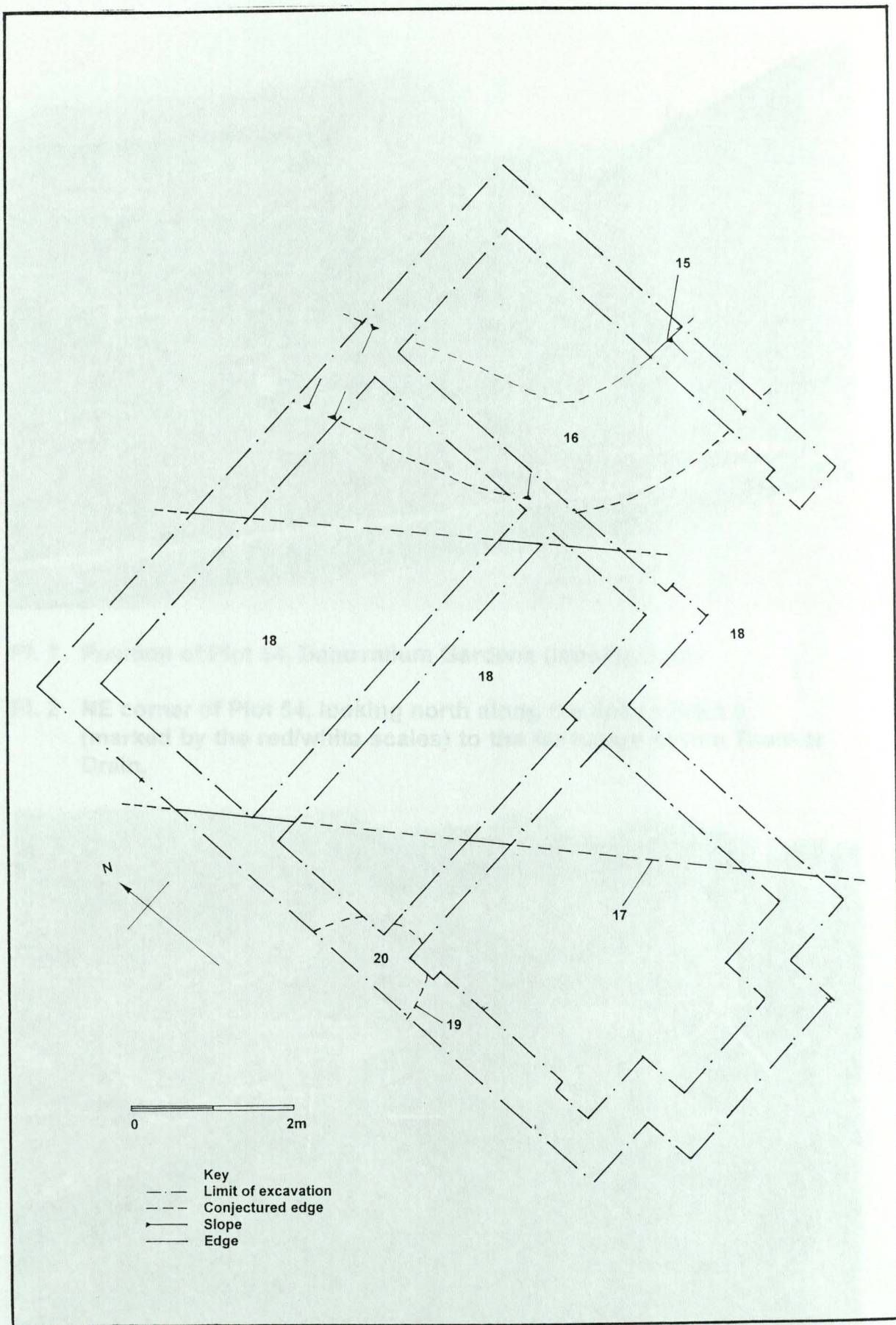


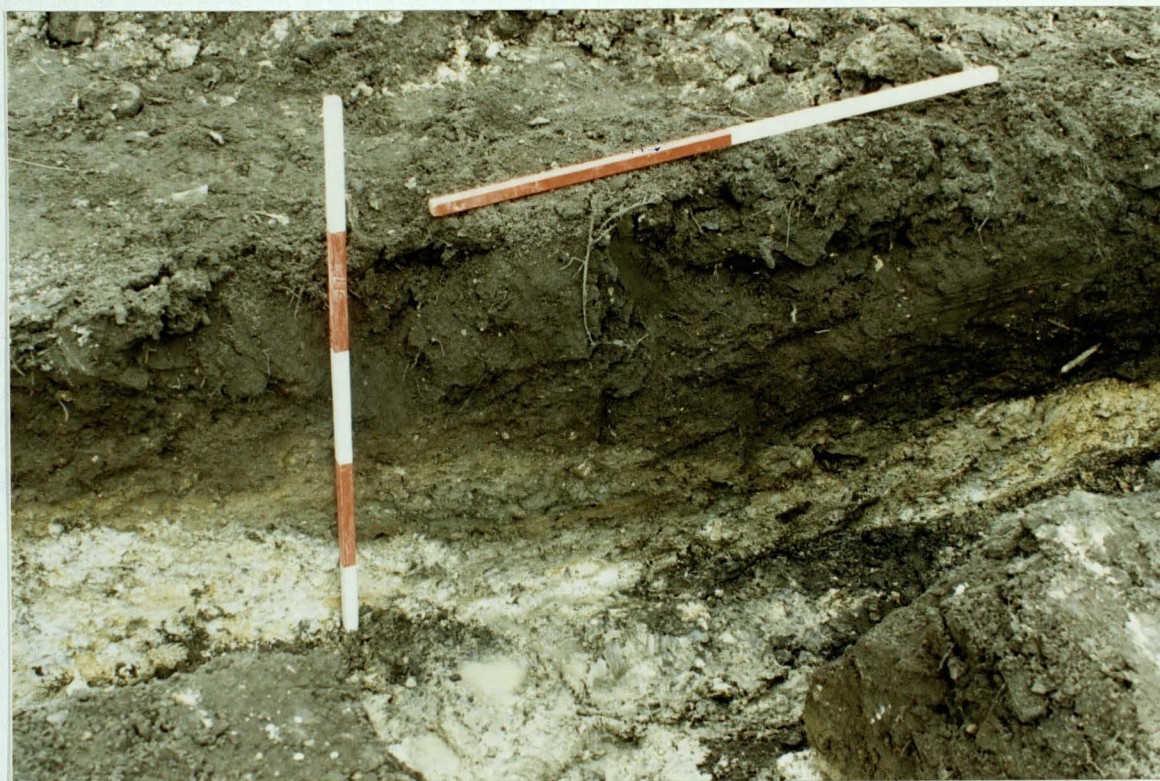
Fig. 5 Plan of the foundation trenches for Plot 50, showing features (McDaid and Tann after Stamford Homes).



PI. 1 Position of Plot 54, Banovallum Gardens (looking east).

PI. 2 NE corner of Plot 54, looking north along the line of Ditch 6 (marked by the red/white scales) to the far hedge beside Thunker Drain.





Pl. 3 Light-coloured fills of Ditch 6, below dark brown soil of recently disturbed ground. Looking NE, scales 1m.



PI. 4 Composite view of pits 4 and 8. Looking SE, scales 1m.



PI. 5 Foundation trenches for Plot 5^S (foreground) and Plot 54 (by machine). Looking south.

PI. 6 Mixed yellow clay fill of 15 visible in trench sides (right foreground), cutting the chalk bedrock. Looking north.





PI. 7 Very mixed fill of possible stream channel 17, seen in corner of foundation trenches (left). Looking north.

PI. 8 Pit 19 seen in west edge of foundation trenches for Plot 5^S, cut into chalk bedrock. Looking north.

