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LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

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LAND FRONTING MAREHAM ROAD, HORNCastle
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION (PHASE 2)

Report for
LAND AND BUILDINGS CONSULTANCY

July 1994

LAND FRONTING MAREHAM ROAD HORNCastle

Archaeological Evaluation (Phase 2)

INTRODUCTION

Lindsey Archaeological Services was commissioned by the Land and Buildings Consultancy of Lincolnshire County Council to undertake further archaeological evaluation of land in the grounds of Horncastle Residential College (Fig.1). Results of the geophysical survey carried out by the Landscape Research Centre Ltd in March 1994 identified a total of seven magnetic anomalies (Field 1994). Two linear features were thought to be archaeological in origin. A small evaluation trench was requested by the Archaeology Section of the Lincolnshire County Council to test the possible presence of archaeological remains. Excavations at the north end of the site were carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Archaeology Section set out in a letter dated May 6th 1994 ref. IKG/DEL/ELS086.

METHOD

The geophysical anomalies were located in relation to modern field boundaries and an area 6m x 2m was set out across the presumed junction of Anomalies 6 and 7 (Fig. 2). A second trench 10m x 1m was excavated east of Trench 1 to further investigate Anomaly 7. The areas were stripped of turf by hand prior to excavation of the topsoil using a Bobcat mini-excavator with a 1m wide bucket (Pls. 1 and 2).

Archaeological deposits were assigned numbers for the purposes of recording purposes, which are referred to in the text and on the illustrations. Context numbers 1-25 were assigned in Trench 1 and numbers 50-64 in Trench 2.

RESULTS

Trench 1 (Fig. 3)

Beneath the turf a sequence of three layers covered the entire trench area comprising a dark brown topsoil **1** 0.30m deep, overlying a slightly paler sandy silt subsoil **2** 0.40m deep. This in turn overlay a brown-grey sandy silt deposit, 0.20m deep, **23** which sealed archaeological features beneath (Pl. 3). A modern field drain, containing a segmented ceramic pipe, diagonally crossed the trench. This was not recorded and the excavation ensured that the drain was left undisturbed. An area NE of the field drain was excavated to the base of the archaeological deposits (Pl. 4). Groundwater was encountered at the bottom of the trench c.1m. below the turf and the deepest features were difficult to record.

Beneath layer **23** was a small pit **5**. Its full dimensions were not recorded as it ran beyond the limits of the trench (Pl. 5). A thin layer of charcoal was found at the base of this feature (Pl. 6).

A V-shaped gully **11** running diagonally across the trench was also sealed by the layer **23**. This feature ran roughly parallel to, and west of, the modern field drain (Pl. 7).

The gully **11** and pit **5** had been dug into the fill of a second gully **24** which extended across the whole of the excavated area, aligned approximately N-S. It was only recognised in the trench section (Fig. 3) because its fill **6** was virtually identical in colour to the layer **23** above it.

Gully **24** had been dug into the natural yellow sandy clay but sealed four very shallow features, also dug into the natural. There was a possible post-hole **18**, just east of the much later pit **5**, 0.22m in diameter and surviving to a depth of only 0.10m. South of **18** were two amorphous soil discolourations **12** and **13** which may originally have joined to form a curving linear gully 0.20m wide. North of **18** was another soil discolouration **19** which was the remains of a linear gully. A shallow pit or posthole, **16**, was recorded on the edge of trench, cut through by the much later feature **5**. These features had all been severely truncated by the gully **24** and their true extent and character was lost. There were no finds in any of these features.

At the north-east end of Trench 1 was a layer of redeposited natural yellow sandy clay (Pls. 8 and 9). This had been truncated by the digging of gully **24** revealing a darker grey deposit of sandy silt beneath **21**. Removal of **7** revealed a flat-bottomed gully **9** crossing the end of the trench (Pls. 9 and 10). Its fill **21** contained several pieces of Roman pottery and residual pieces of worked flint, including a possible core and flakes. There was also a hammerstone, fashioned from a large glacial pebble. The full profile of this feature was not recorded because its eastern edge lay beyond the limits of the excavation.

Trench 2 (Fig. 4).

Trench 2 was dug 20m north of the fire station boundary fence. A much simpler and shallower sequence of deposits was encountered. The topsoil and subsoil were the same as recorded in Trench 1 (Pl. 11). Sealed beneath the topsoil and dug through the subsoil was a modern field drain, **55**, 0.20m wide and 0.43m deep, packed with stones which crossed the full width of the trench (Pl. 12).

Sealed beneath the subsoil and dug into the natural yellow sandy clay were several features. At the north end of the trench was a shallow gully **53**, running N-S parallel to the trench, terminating just north of the field drain **55** (Pl. 13). It survived to a depth of only 0.08m and contained a single fragment of Roman roof tile (tegula).

South of the field drain was a shallow gully **61** aligned E-W (Pls. 16 and 17). Its excavated fill contained a single scrap of Roman pottery of indeterminate date. Its true profile could not be determined because it had been cleaned out and replaced by a U-shaped gully **59** 0.60m wide and 0.34m deep (Pl.

15). Two joining rim sherds from a large narrow-necked jar were found in the fill of **59** dating to the late 3rd/4th century AD. Gully **59** was replaced by a similar gully, **57**, on its south side (Pl. 14). This was 0.86m wide and 0.14m deep. Four sherds of Roman grey ware, representing three different vessels, and a scrap of a Nene Valley Colour Coated vessel were found in its fill. Sealed beneath the gullies on the east side of the trench was a posthole **64** which contained no finds (Pl. 16).

DISCUSSION

Roman gullies and other less well-defined features were present in both trenches. It was very difficult to relate any of the recorded features directly to the results of the geophysical survey, although it is possible that gully 9 in Trench 1 and gully 61 in Trench 2 represent anomaly 7 on the geophysical survey. The evaluation did not establish whether this was a single curving gully or two separate features, although the pottery from each trench was of the same date. Worked flint, probably of late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age date in Trench 1 was not unexpected as flint of similar date was found in the adjacent field to the east during archaeological evaluation in 1993. However, the material is of limited significance because it was found in contexts which also contained Roman pottery and must therefore be residual.

The evaluation trenches confirmed the presence of late Roman activity on the site. It should be noted that the features recorded in Trench 1 lie just beyond the limit of the proposed development. All the features encountered had been severely truncated in the past, possibly by medieval or later ploughing activity.

Reference

Field, N., 1994 *Land Fronting Mareham Rd, Horncastle: Archaeological Evaluation (Phase 1)*.

Acknowledgements

LAS would like to thank The Principal and the staff of the Residential College for their hospitality and the provision of storage for equipment. Thanks go to Maggi Darling (CLAU) who identified Romano-British pottery and Daryl Garton (Trent and Peak Archaeological Trust) the flints at very short notice.

Naomi Field
July 26th 1994

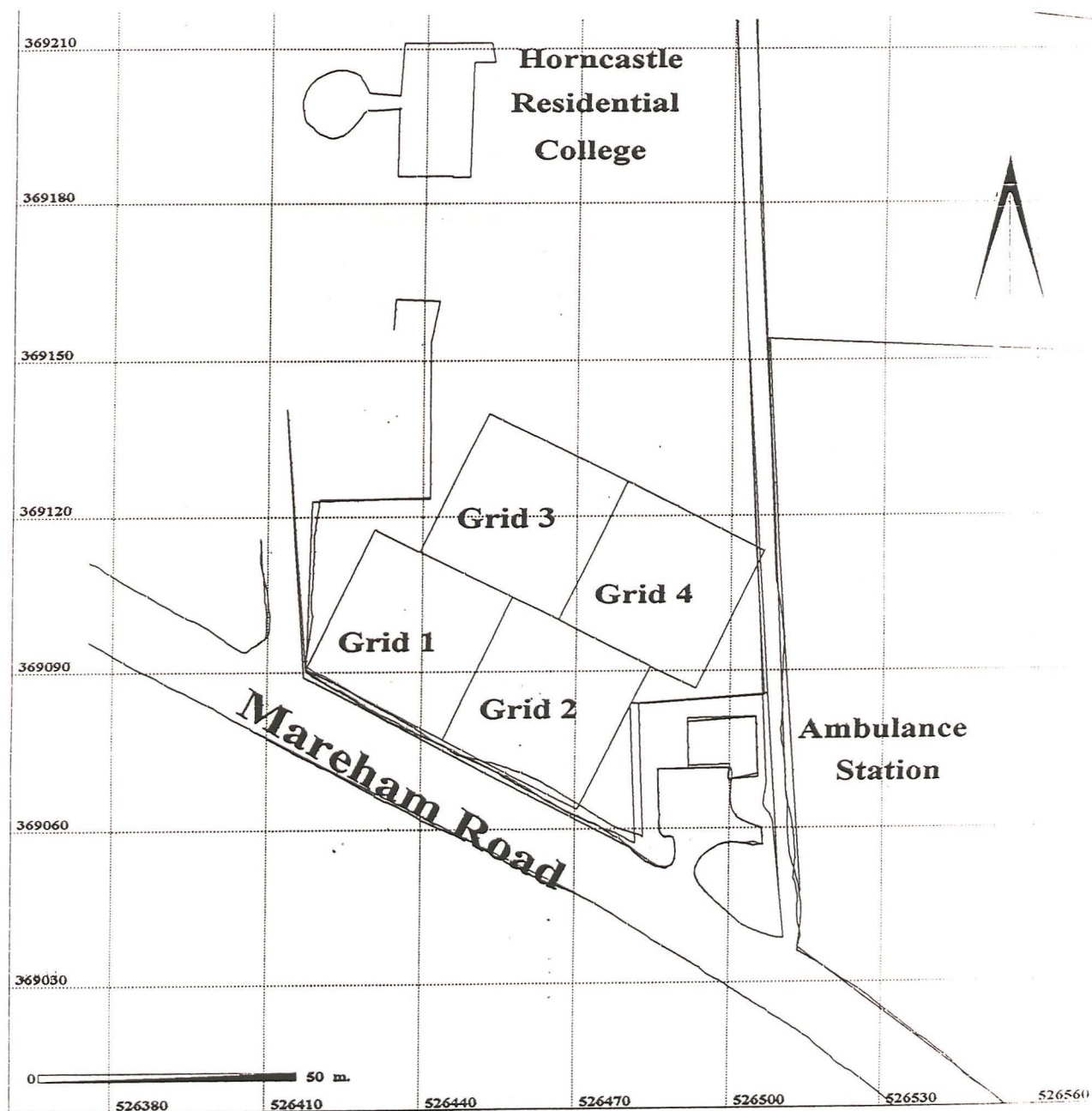


Fig. 1 Horncastle Residential College, Mareham Road. Site location showing position of geophysical survey grids

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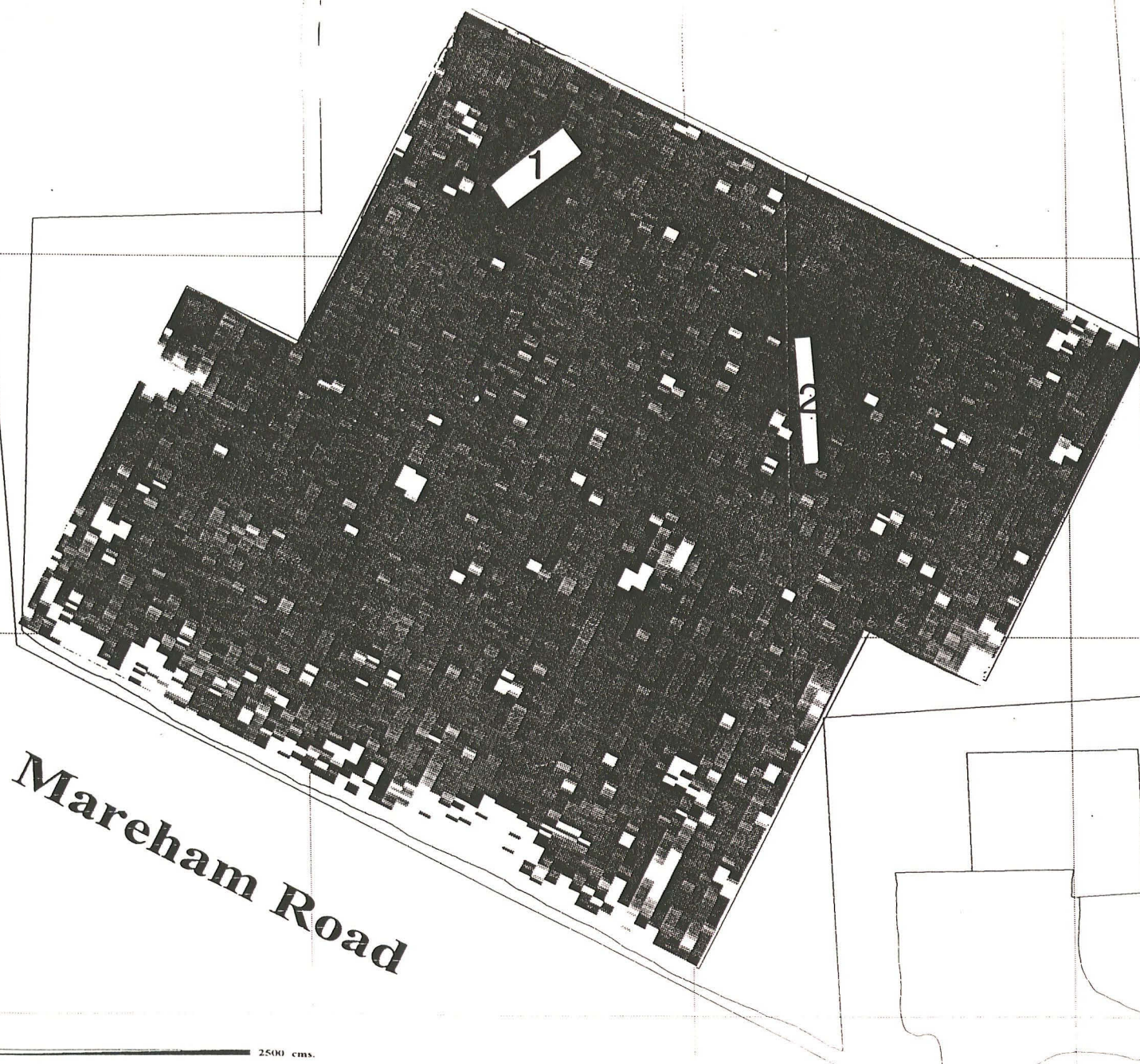
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Mareham Road

Ambulance
Station

Fig. 2 Horncastle Residential College, Mareham Road. Location of trenches, overlaid on geophysical survey results.

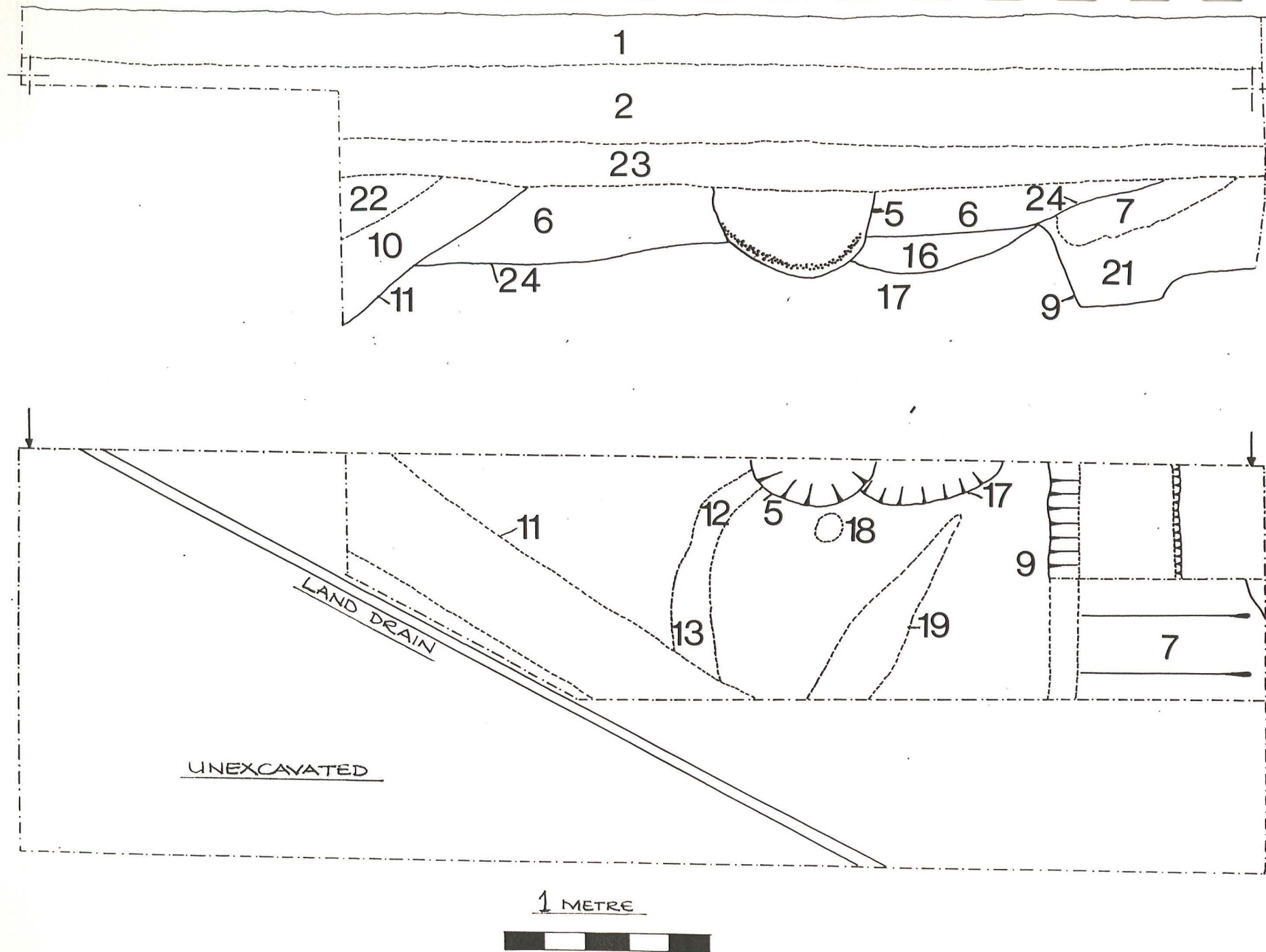


Fig. 3 Trench 1 Plan and section of excavated features

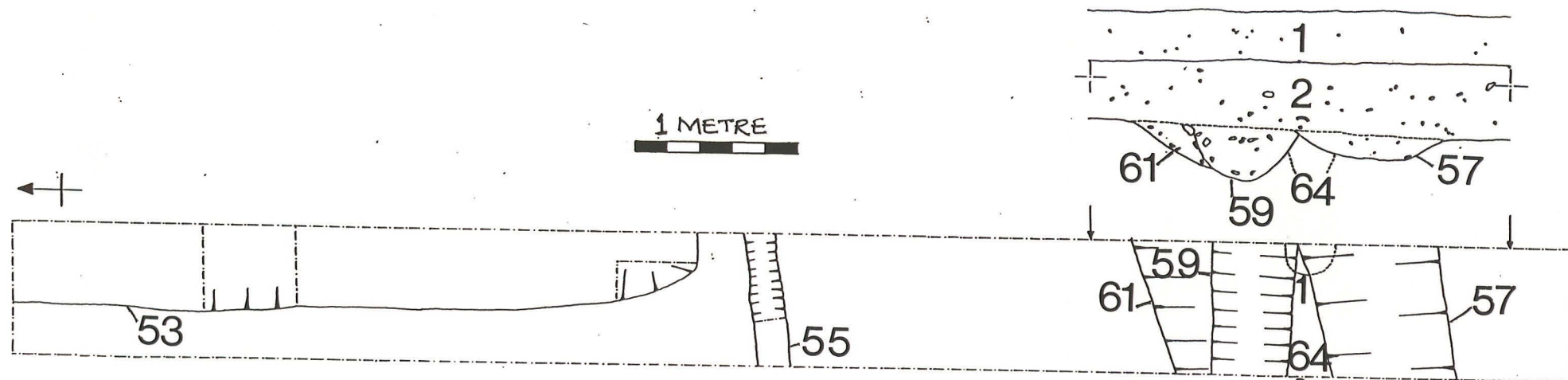


Fig. 4 Trench 2 Plan and section of excavated features



Pl. 1. Excavation of Trench 1 using mini-excavator.

Pl. 2. General view of Trenches 1 and 2 (foreground) looking north towards College buildings.

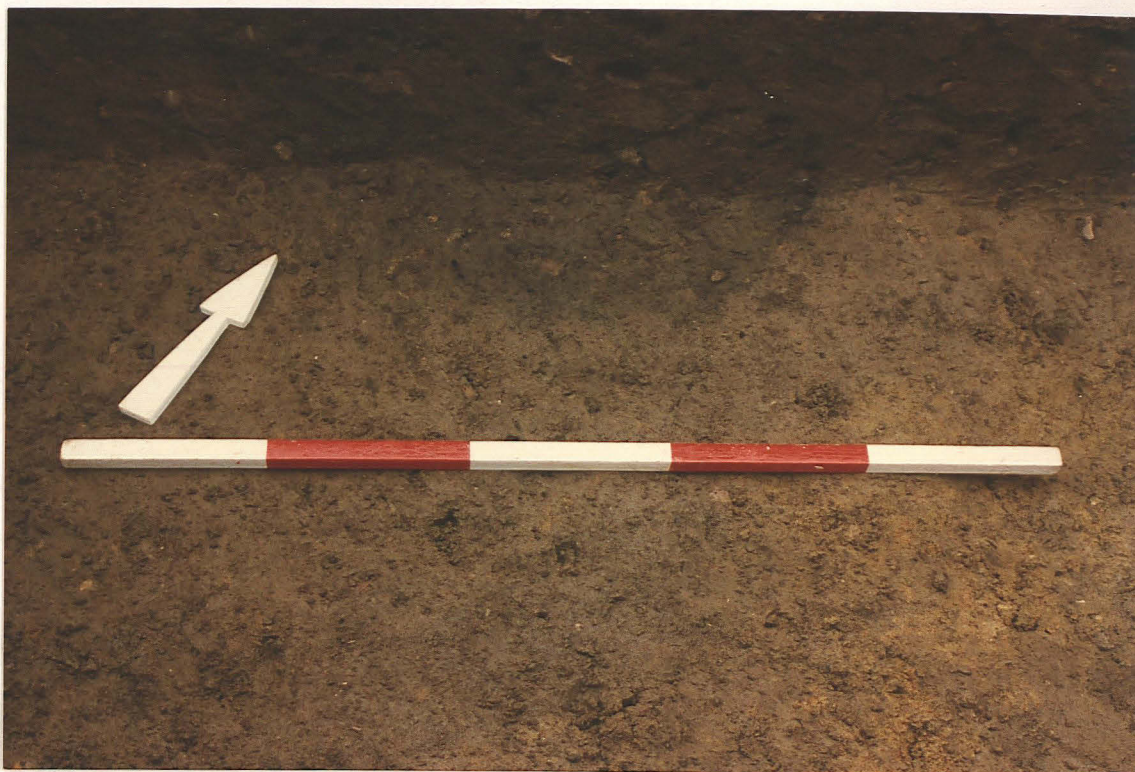




Pl. 3. Trench 1. Fully excavated section showing sequence of deposits.

Pl. 4. Trench 1, view south. Note modern field drain and groundwater in base of deepest feature.

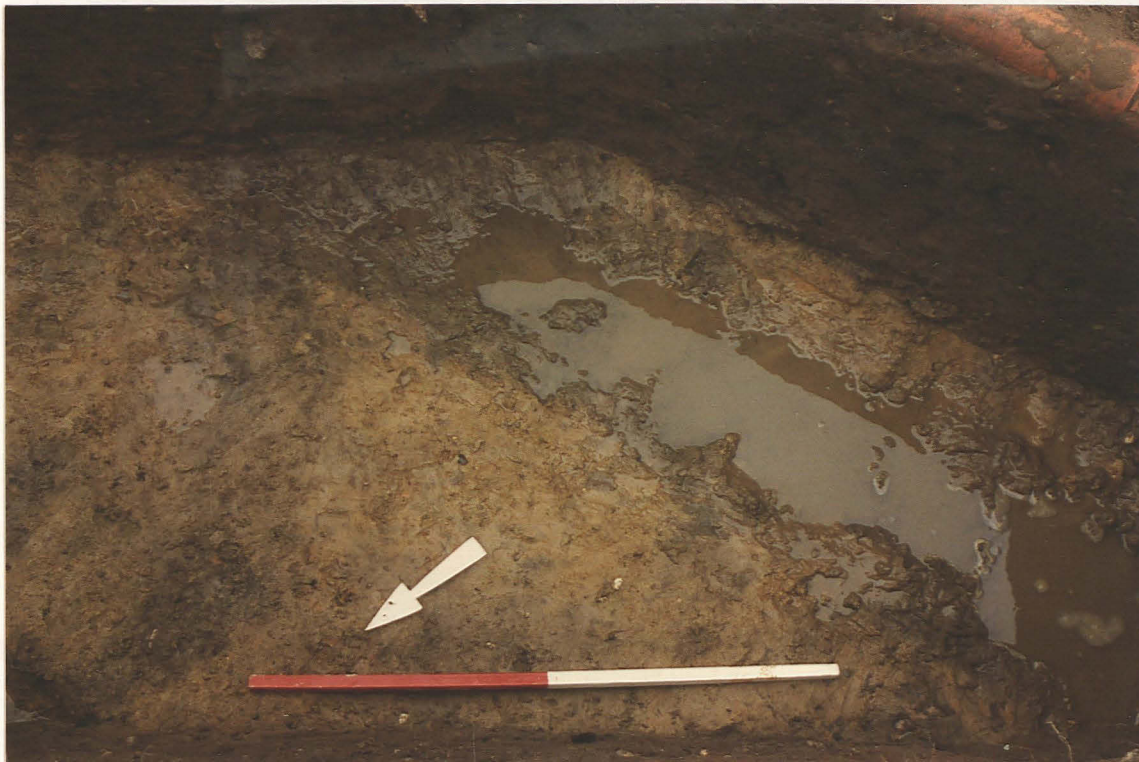




Pl. 5. Trench 1. Pit (5).

Pl. 6. Trench 1. Pit (5) after excavation showing charcoal layer near base.





Pl. 7. Trench 1. Base of gully (11).

Pl. 8. Trench 1. Remains of features in bottom of trench. Scale (1m) crosses shallow gully (19). Also visible below number board are stains (12), (13) and (11) in foreground, and (7) in background.





Pl. 9. Trench 1. Partially excavated ditch (9), left, showing remains of backfilled natural (7).

Pl. 10. Ditch (9) showing possible palisade trench.





Pl. 11. Trench 2. General view after cleaning. Unexcavated features show as darkened patches.

Pl. 12. Trench 2. Field drain (55).





Pl. 13. Trench 2. Gully (53).

Pl. 14. Trench 2. Gully (57).





Pl. 15. Trench 2. Gully (59).

Pl. 16. Trench 2. Gully (61) and posthole (64), gully (57) to right of (64) unlabelled.





Pl. 17. Trench 2 after excavation of archaeological features.