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LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

**North Street, Caistor, Lincolnshire  
Archaeological Evaluation**

**LCNCC Accn No.: 2001.123  
Site Code: CANS 03  
NGR: TA 11840152  
Planning Application MOO/P/0798**

heritage



**Report  
for**

**Sturton Securities Ltd**

**by**

**Richard Pullen MA PIFA**

**LAS Report No. 668**

**July 2003**

Conservation  
Services  
  
22 JUL 2003  
  
Highways & Planning  
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**Summary**

*An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on a parcel of land off North Street, Caistor, Lincs. The evaluation consisted of the machine excavation of four trenches, 10.00m in length by 2.00m wide. The stratigraphic make-up of the site consisted of topsoil overlying two layers of very similar subsoil that sealed archaeological features cut directly into the natural chalk geology. The two subtly different subsoil layers identified over the entire site probably indicate a raising of the ground level at some point. Several features were noted although five were of modern origin. The remaining three features consisted of a single east-west aligned ditch in Trench 2 and a pair of similar shallow ditches in Trench 3. No dating evidence was recovered from any of these three features. A single fragment of redeposited Saxon pottery was recovered from the topsoil in Trench 4.*

*No foundation plan is currently available for the site and although there has been little obvious past occupation on the site, any intrusive ground works or site stripping below the subsoil layers will have a detrimental affect on any archaeological remains still surviving on the site.*

**Introduction**

In April 2003 Lindsey Archaeological Services was commissioned by Sturton Securities Ltd to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land off North Street, Caistor, Lincolnshire. The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with the general requirements set out in the *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook* published by the Archaeology Section, Lincolnshire County Council (1998).

**Site Location and Description**

Caistor is a small market town situated in the Lincolnshire Wolds c.13km to the north of Market Rasen. The site lies on a west sloping hill directly adjacent to North Street and measures approximately 37.00m x 43.00m. The proposed development site is currently under well-kept short grass. There is a concrete floor slab in the north-west of the site that represents the remains of a small telephone exchange building. At its highest point the ground surface of the site is over 1.00m higher than that of the plots adjoining it to the west. Several mature trees border the site including silver birch, horse chestnut, leylandii and cherry (Pl. 1).

**Planning Background**

A planning application (MOO/P/0798) for the construction of six bungalows has been lodged with West Lindsey District Council. Due to the potential for the survival of archaeological remains in the area an archaeological evaluation has been requested prior to determination of the application.

### **Archaeological Background**

Caistor was an important Roman town with a late 3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> century walled enclosure being built on top of the hill. There was also an extensive Roman settlement to the west of the walled area. Caistor appears to have retained its importance into the Anglo-Saxon period and is thought to have been the capital of the North Riding of Lindsey with an early minster church located inside the Roman walls. It was a royal manor both before and after the Norman Conquest. The medieval period saw a steady decline in Caistor's importance as its merchants and businessmen began to move away and settle in larger, more established towns such as Boston and Lincoln.

Although the proposed development site is outside the core of known archaeological activity in Caistor this is likely to be due to a lack of research in the area as opposed to absence of surviving archaeological material. A number of undated human burials have been located south of the car park of the Town Hall approximately 100m to the south-east of the proposed development area on North Street.

### **Aims and Objectives**

The aims of the evaluation were to;

- establish the presence or absence, quality and extent of archaeological remains and their location within the proposed development area
- gather sufficient information to enable an assessment of the potential and significance of any archaeological remains to be made and the impact which any development will have upon them. Determine the extent and quality of such remains
- enable an informed decision to be made regarding the future treatment of any archaeological remains and consider any appropriate mitigatory measures either in advance of and/or during development.

### **Method**

Four 10.00m x 2.00m trenches were positioned in accordance with a brief set out by the Assistant Building and Environment Officer for Lincolnshire County Council on behalf of West Lindsey District Council. Work started in the week beginning 12<sup>th</sup> May 2003. The trenches were machine excavated, using a JCB type machine equipped with a flat bladed ditching bucket. Excavation stopped at the first archaeological horizon or at the natural geology, as was appropriate. Subsequent feature excavation was undertaken by hand and all features were recorded by single context, scale drawing and photographic record. A temporary bench mark of 91.85m was established on site, taken from an Ordnance Survey bench mark of 92.40m located on the south wall of Caistor Town Hall.

## Results

### Trench 1 (Fig. 4)

Trench 1 was sited parallel to the northern perimeter of the site (Fig. 3). The topsoil **100** and subsoil had a combined maximum depth of 1.50m. The subsoil was separated into two different contexts, **105** and **112**. Although the two contexts are of extremely similar material a disproportionate amount of chalk flecks was noted in the upper layer (Fig. 4, Pl. 2). A ditch **103** was noted running north-south across the trench cutting into subsoil layers **105/112** and sealed by the topsoil **100**. The ditch was 1.10m wide by 0.70m deep and contained a single fill of mid red/grey brown silty sand **104**. A fragmented early 19<sup>th</sup> century brown saltglaze drug jar was recovered from fill **104**. Subsoil layer **112** directly overlay the natural geology **107**, which was a mix of chalk till, soft orange brown sand and degraded chalk. Several possible features were observed cutting into the natural **107**, but after hand cleaning these were all discounted as being of natural or animal origin (Fig. 4).

A modern feature **101** had been cut into the southern baulk of the trench. **101** had straight 90° sides and contained four fills, **102**, **109**, **110** and **111**, mainly consisting of redeposited natural and topsoil. This modern feature was cut directly from the surface to below the final depth of the trench. Due to its considerable depth and termination within the base of Trench 1 it is likely to be a modern bore-hole or soil test pit. With the exception of **101** no further features were observed in Trench 1.

### Trench 2 (Fig. 5)

Trench 2 was aligned at 45° to North Street (Fig. 3). The topsoil **200** and subsoil layers **201** and **202** had a combined maximum depth of 1.20m and were removed by machine excavation. A single fragment of mid 19<sup>th</sup> century blue and white transfer printed bowl was recovered from **200**. The subsoil was given two separate contexts, **201** and **202**, as the upper layer, **201**, had a far greater occurrence of chalk flecks. Beneath **202** the natural geology **203** was encountered. The natural was consistent throughout the site being a mix of chalk till, soft orange brown sand and degraded chalk (Fig. 5, Pl. 3). A single east-west aligned ditch **205** was noted cut into the natural **203**. The ditch was 0.60m wide by 0.30m deep with c.45° sides and an open concave profile. Ditch **205** contained a single fill, **204**, of mid brown/orange silt (Pl. 4). Three fragments of animal bone were recovered from fill **204**. Several possible features were observed cut into the natural **203**. However, these were all later discounted as being of natural origin. No further finds or features were noted within Trench 2.

### Trench 3 (Fig. 6)

Trench 3 was aligned north south at 90° to North Street and parallel to the western boundary of the site (Fig. 3). The topsoil **300** had a depth of 0.30m. As in Trenches 1 and 2 the subsoil, **311**, was sealed by a very similar layer **310** that contained a high occurrence of chalk flecks. Layers **300**, **310** and **311** had a combined depth of 1.20m from the present ground surface. Two pits were noted cutting through the subsoil layers **311** and **310**. Both pits had similar fills, **305** and **306**, of mid brown/grey sandy silt. No finds were recovered from either of the two pits. Beneath **311** the natural mixed chalk geology, **314**, was encountered (Fig. 6, Pl. 5). A pair of parallel ditches, **304** and **316**, were found

running east west across the base of the trench. The first of the two ditches, **304**, was 2.00m wide by 0.50m deep and contained two fills, **308** and **309** (Pl. 7). Fill **309** was the primary fill and was a light yellow/brown silty sand. The second fill **308** was a mid orange/brown sandy silt. No finds were recovered from either fill of ditch **304**. The second feature **316** contained a single fill, **315**, consisting of light orange/brown silty sand. No finds were recovered from this fill. The original dimensions of ditch **316** are unclear as it had been recut. The recut, **303** (Pl. 6) was 0.70m wide by 0.50m deep and contained a single fill **307** that consisted of a mid brown/orange sandy silt (Fig. 6). Two fragments of animal bone were recovered from **307**. Several natural features were observed in the base of Trench 3. No further archaeological finds or features were encountered.

#### **Trench 4 (Fig. 7)**

Trench 4 was aligned east-west directly parallel to North Street (Fig. 3) in the hope of locating the remains of any roadside structures that may once have occupied this area of the site. The topsoil **400** and subsoil **401/402** had a combined maximum depth of 1.00m. A single redeposited fragment of Saxon pottery was recovered from the topsoil layer **400**. The subsoil was again separated into two different contexts, **401** and **402**, due to the notable amount of chalk flecks in the upper layer. The subsoil directly overlay the natural geology **407**, which was, as on the rest of the site, a mix of chalk brash, soft orange brown sand and degraded chalk (Fig. 7, Pl. 8). A single modern feature **404** was observed running south east by north west along the trench. Feature **404** had vertical sides and contained a single fill **405** consisting mainly of mixed redeposited natural and topsoil. Fill **405** contained several fragments of pottery with a range of dates from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the late 19<sup>th</sup> centuries demonstrating the disturbed nature of the fills of feature **404**. Feature **404** and its fill **405** were very similar in character to the modern test pit **101** found in Trench 1 and could represent a further phase of the same recent works. A relatively modern metal cased gas pipeline **406** was observed running north south across the trench. The current status of this service is unknown. Several possible features were observed cut into the natural **407**, but after cleaning these were all discounted as being of natural origin. No further finds or features of an archaeological nature were observed in Trench 4.

#### **Discussion**

All four of the evaluation trenches excavated off North Street, Caistor were of a similar stratigraphic character, being topsoil overlying a deep undisturbed silt subsoil which in turn sealed a chalk till natural. The two clearly different subsoil layers identified over the entire site probably indicate a raising of the ground level at some point. The upper layer contains a high occurrence of chalk natural that would have been scaped off and imported from somewhere nearby, probably from the plots immediately to the east and west that were lowered and developed in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The natural depressions noted in the base of all four of the evaluation trenches were not unexpected as this type of deposition is quite normal when dealing with uneven brash naturals such as chalk or limestone. Six archaeological features were identified on site, three of which were demonstrably modern. The other three ditches remain undated, but due to their considerable depth below the undisturbed subsoil layer it is likely that they are of some considerable age. The single fragment of

redeposited Saxon pottery recovered from the topsoil of Trench 4 was in particularly good condition with edges that had not been degraded by constant movement over the years. Although this is just a single fragment of pottery it has only recently been disturbed and could perhaps indicate Saxon activity somewhere on or very near to the proposed development site.

The recent evaluation has succeeded in locating and recording the archaeology of the proposed development area and that there has been little obvious past occupation on the site. However, the depth of the subsoil build-up differs greatly from the north to the south end of the site with the depth in the north being 1.50m whereas the subsoil depth at the southern end is a mere 0.40m below the present ground surface.

### **Conclusion**

No foundation design is currently available for the site, but the archaeological potential appears to be low and the potential impact of development is therefore considered to be negligible.

Richard Pullen MA PIFA  
Lindsey Archaeological Services  
15<sup>th</sup> July 2003



**APPENDIX 1**

# Pottery Archive CANS 03

Jane Young and Dave Marshall

context	cname	full name	form type	sherds	weight (g)	part	description	date
104	DERBS	brown saltglaze	jar	9	582	profile	drug jar	1830-40
104	DERBS	brown saltglaze	lid	2	179	profile	drug jar lid	1830-40
200	TPW		bowl/plate	1	14	rim	blue and white transfer	mid-late 19th
310	WHITE		light pull	1	310	base	base of light pull with hole through centre	late 19th
400	ESGS			1	64	body	internal carbonised deposit, part sooty exterior. Large fresh fragment	
400	WHITE STAFFS		cup	1	8	rim	green vine transfer decoration	late 19th
405	WHITE		bowl	1	14	body	lime green glazed	mid-late
405	PMF		bottle/jug	1	5	shoulder	light grey body int. and ext. green glaze	16-18th
405	ENGS LONDON	saltglaze	ink pot	1	39	body/rim	small pork pie ink pot	mid-late
405	ENGS NOTTS/ DERBS	brown saltglaze	dish	1	192	complete	Nottingham type	mid-late 19th
405	ENGS NOTTS/ DERBS	brown saltglaze	dish	1	133	complete	Nottingham type	mid-late 19th
500	GRE		bowl	1	5	body	dark brown shiny glaze	M16-18th
500	STMO STAFFS		mug	1	18	handle	mottled glaze	L17-E18th
500	WHITE STAFFS		bowl	1	40	body	large bowl, grey transfer print	mid 19th

# Tile Archive CANS 03

*Jane Young and Dave Marshall*

context	cname	full name	frags	weight (g)	description	date
104	BRK	brick	1	119	heavily sooted	post-med
104	BRK	brick	1	40	heavily sooted on surface and edge	post-med
104	PNR	tile	1	59	flat roof tile	med/post-med
500	PNR	tile	1	20	flat roof tile	med/post-med

**APPENDIX 2**

## North Road, Caistor, Lincs (CANS 03)

## Appendix 2

## Context Summary

Context	Type	Description
<b>Trench 1</b>		
100	Layer	Dark brown silt topsoil
101	Cut	Modern feature/test pit
102	Fill	Orange/brown sandy silt upper fill of 101
103	Cut	Post medieval ditch
104	Fill	Orange/brown sandy silt sole fill of 103
105	Layer	Mid orange/brown silt/chalk mix subsoil
106	Layer	Subsoil infilling natural hollows in 107/108
107	Layer	Natural chalk brash
108	Layer	Degraded natural chalk brash
109	Fill	Mid brown sandy silt fill of 101
110	Fill	Yellow brown/clay natural chalk mix fill of 101
111	Fill	Mid brown silty sand fill of 101
112	Layer	Mid orange/brown silt subsoil ,
<b>Trench 2</b>		
200	Layer	Dark brown silt topsoil
201	Layer	Mid orange/brown silt/chalk mix subsoil
202	Layer	Mid orange/brown silt subsoil
203	Layer	Natural chalk brash
204	Fill	Mid brown/orange fill of 205
205	Cut	Cut of ditch
206	Fill	Subsoil infilling natural hollows in 203
<b>Trench 3</b>		
300	Layer	Dark brown silt topsoil
301	Cut	Cut of ditch
302	Cut	Cut of ditch
303	Re-cut	Re-cut of ditch
304	Cut	Cut of ditch
305	Fill	Mid brown/grey sandy silt fill of 301
306	Fill	Mid brown/grey sandy silt fill of 302
307	Fill	Mid orange/brown sandy silt fill of 303
308	Fill	Mid orange/brown sandy silt upper fill of 304
309	Fill	Mid yellow/brown sandy silt lower fill of 304
310	Layer	Light orange/brown sandy/silt /chalk subsoil
311	Layer	Light orange/brown sandy silt subsoil

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312	Layer	Mid reddish/brown sand silt
313	Layer	Yellowish/white degraded natural chalk brash
314	Layer	Reddish/white degraded natural chalk brash
315	Fill	Light orange/brown silty sand fill of 316
316	Cut	Cut of ditch
<b>Trench 4</b>		
400	Layer	Dark brown silt topsoil
401	Layer	Light orange/brown sandy/silt /chalk subsoil
402	Layer	Light orange/brown sandy silt subsoil
403	Layer	Natural chalk brash
404	Cut	Cut of modern linear
405	Fill	Mixed fill of topsoil, natural and subsoil
406	Cut	Modern gas pipeline
407	Deposit	Natural depressions in base of trench

**THE FIGURES**

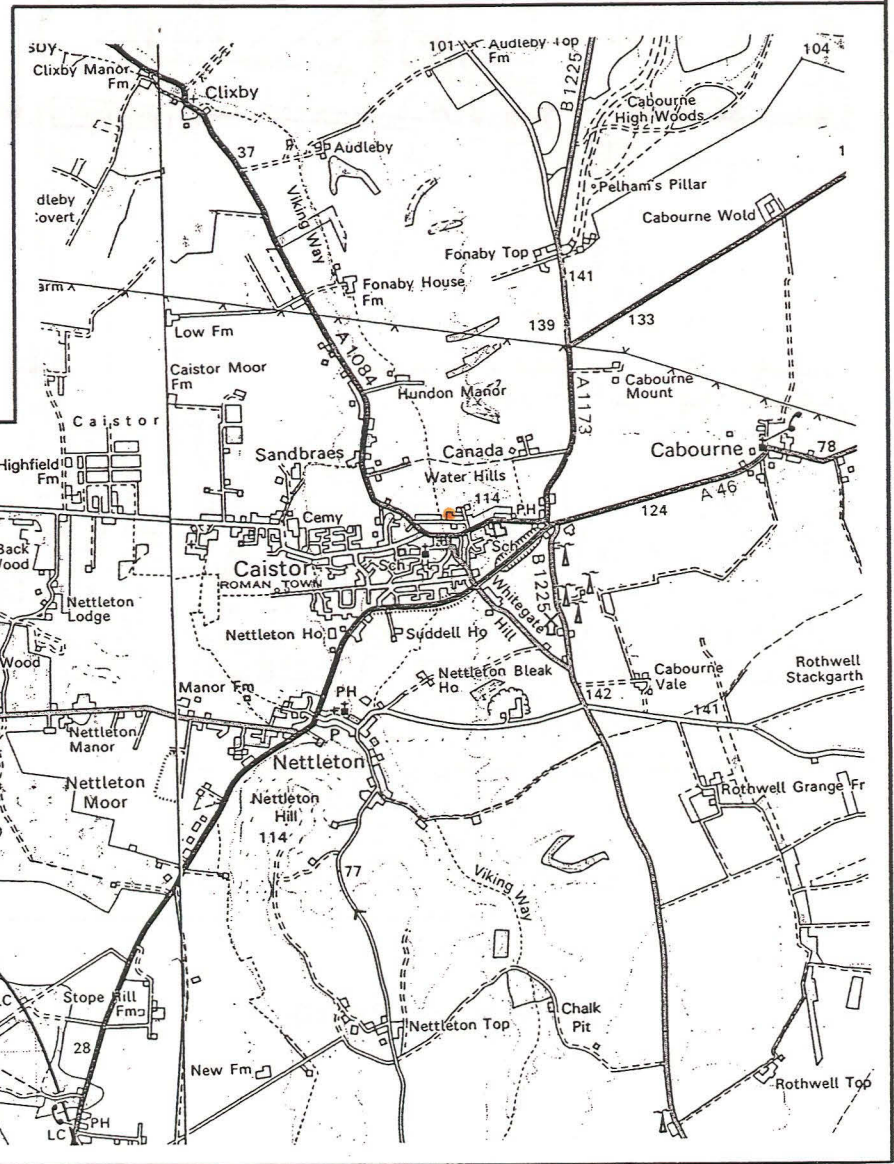
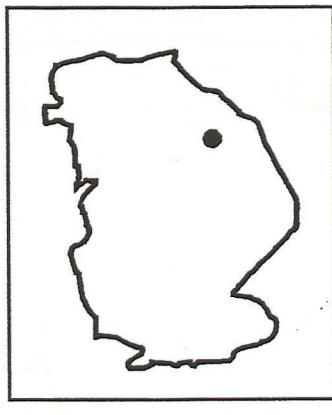
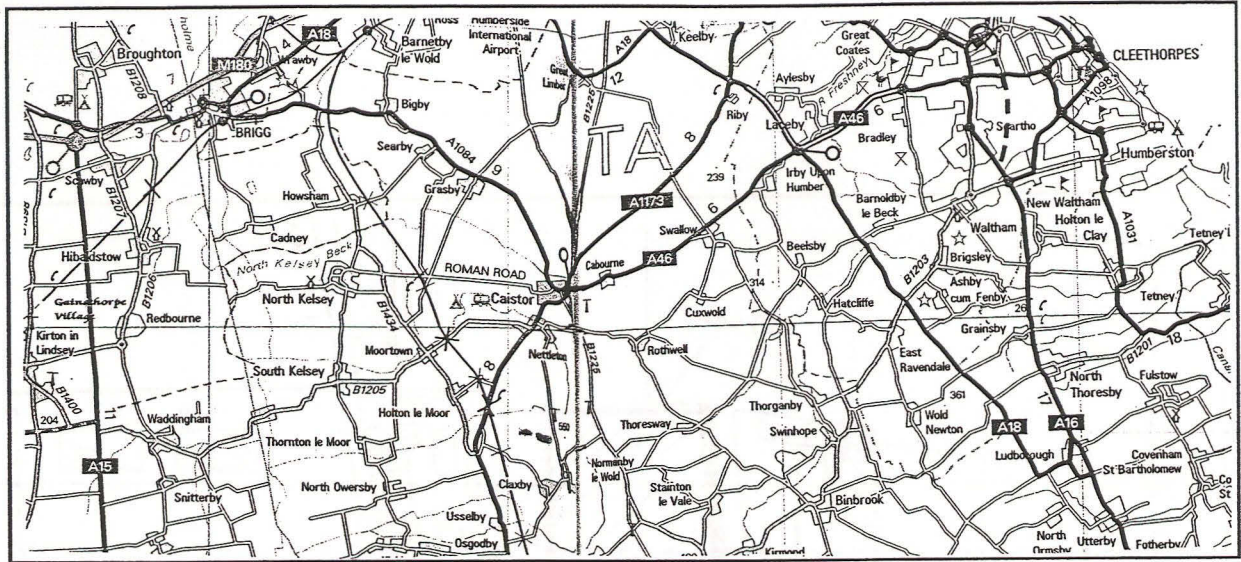


Fig. 1 Caistor, location plan. Reproduced from the 1992 O.S. 1:50,000 map (Landranger series No. 113) with permission of the Controller of HMSO, ©Crown copyright. LAS Licence No. AL 10002165



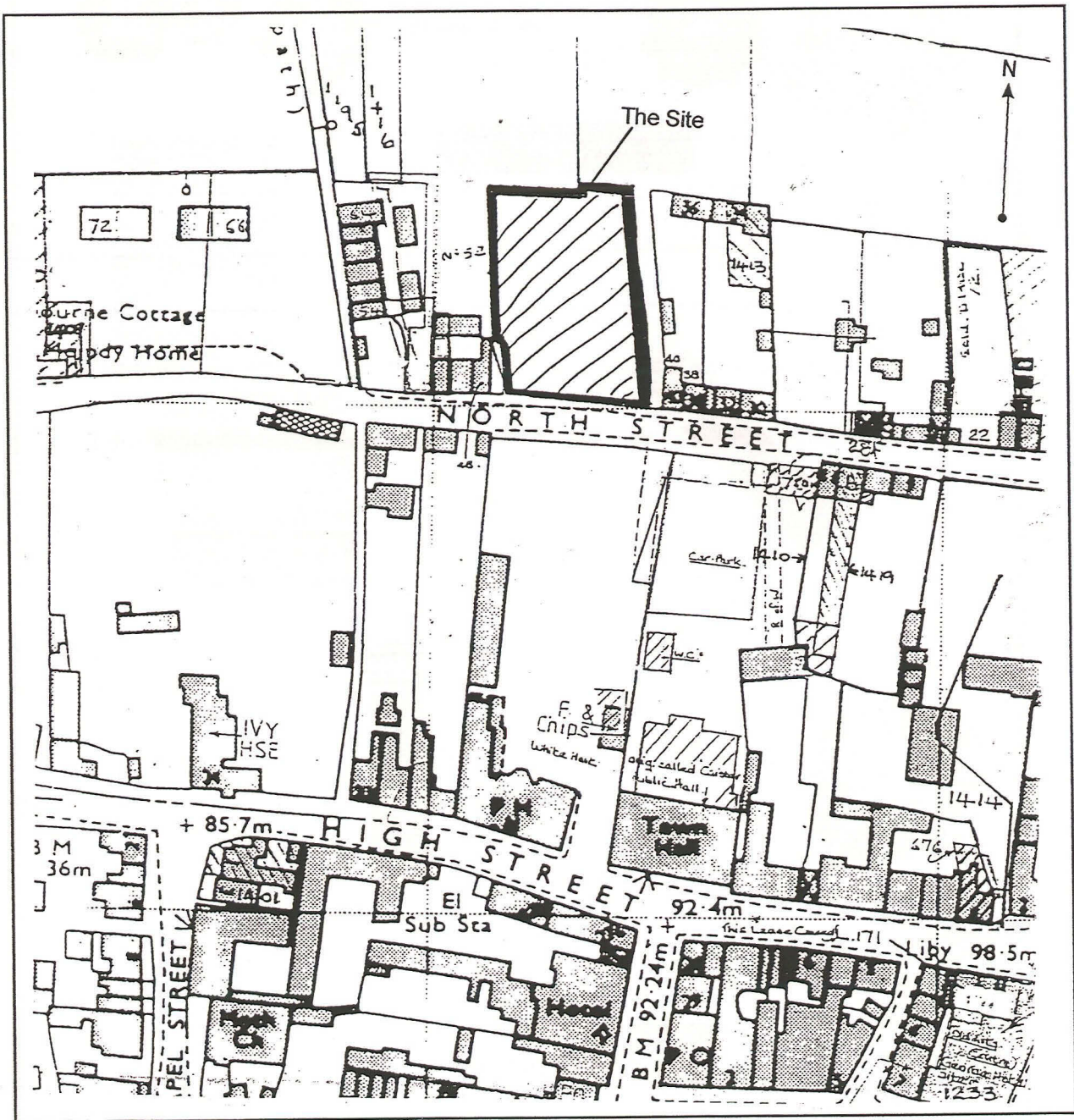


Fig. 2 Site location plan Scale 1:1250 (LAS Licence No. AL100002165)

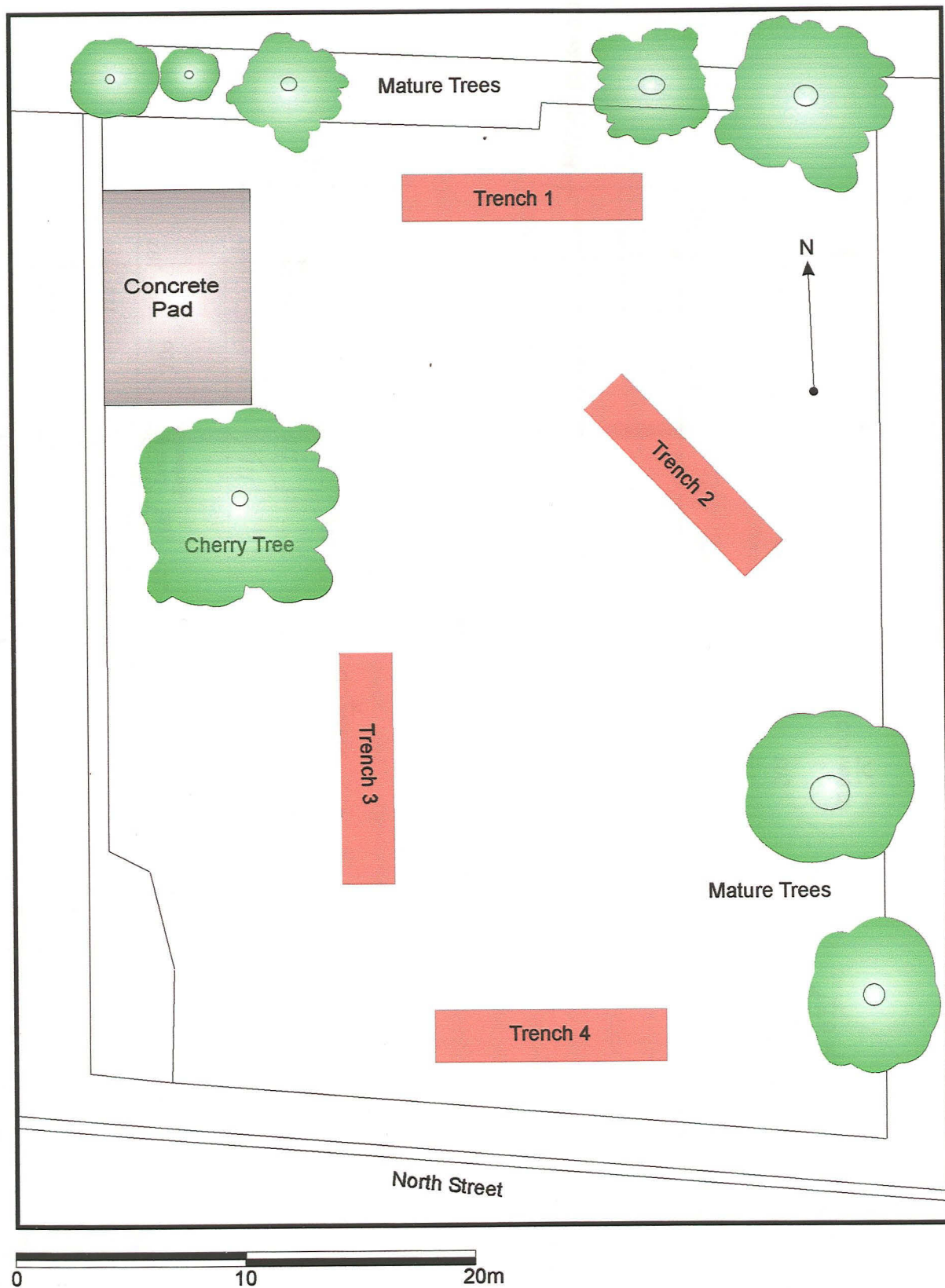


Fig. 3 Trench location plan

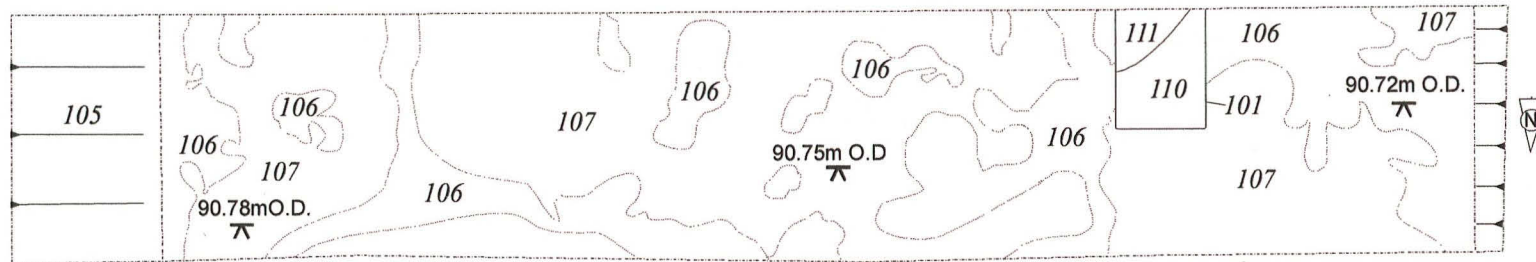
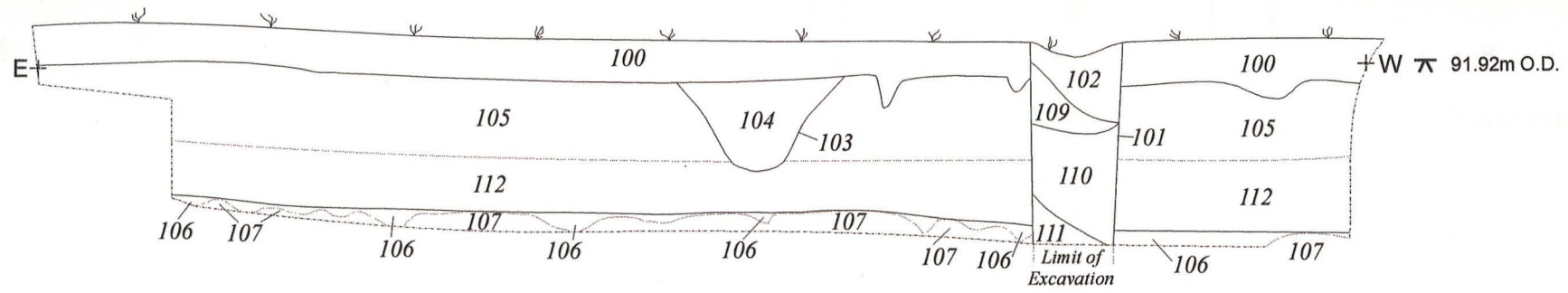


Fig. 4 Trench 1 plan and section

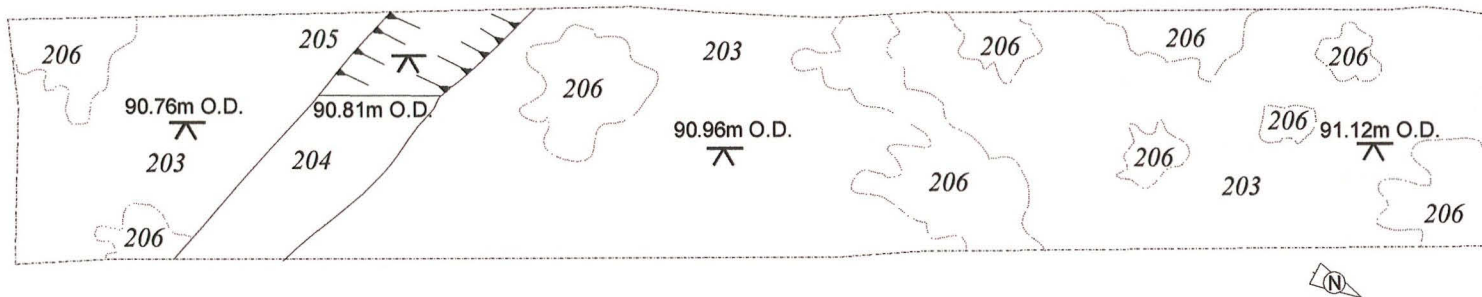
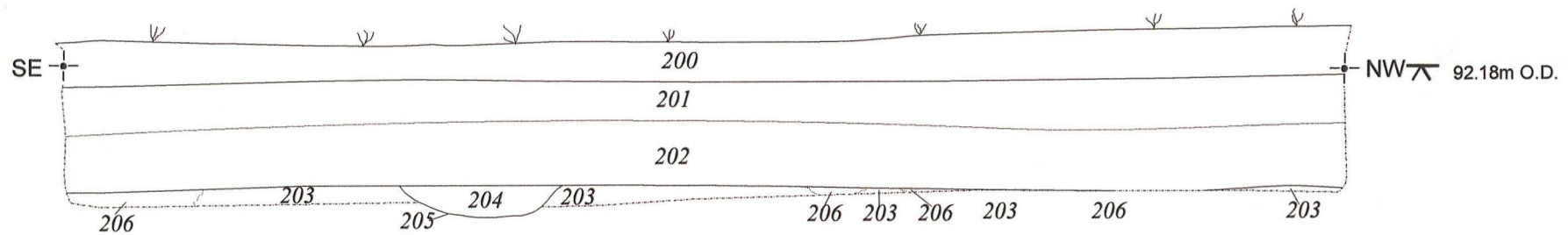


Fig. 5 Trench 2 plan and section



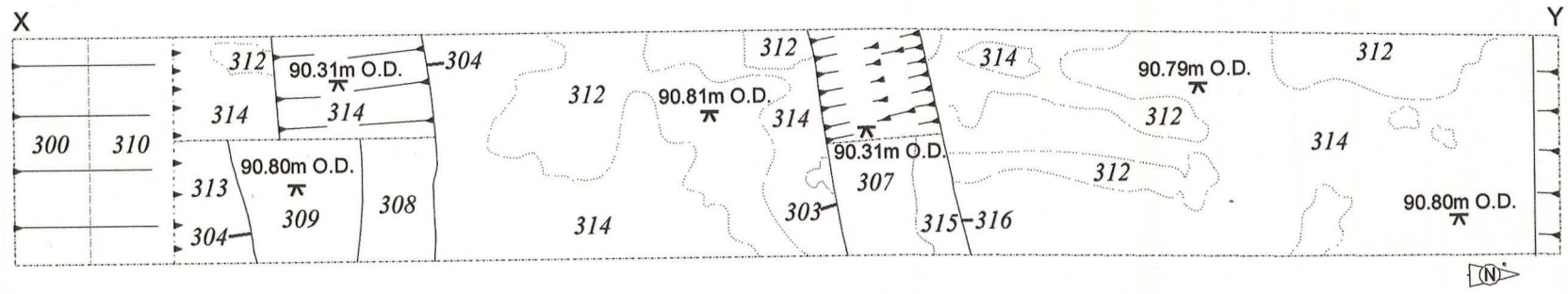
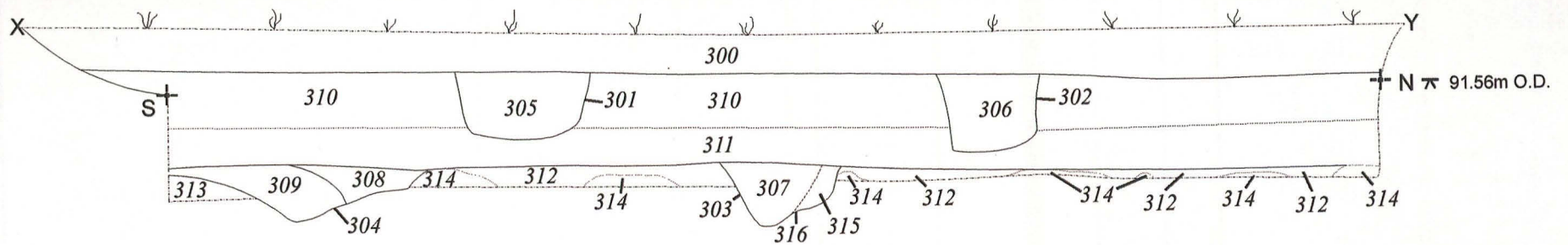


Fig. 6 Trench 3 plan and section

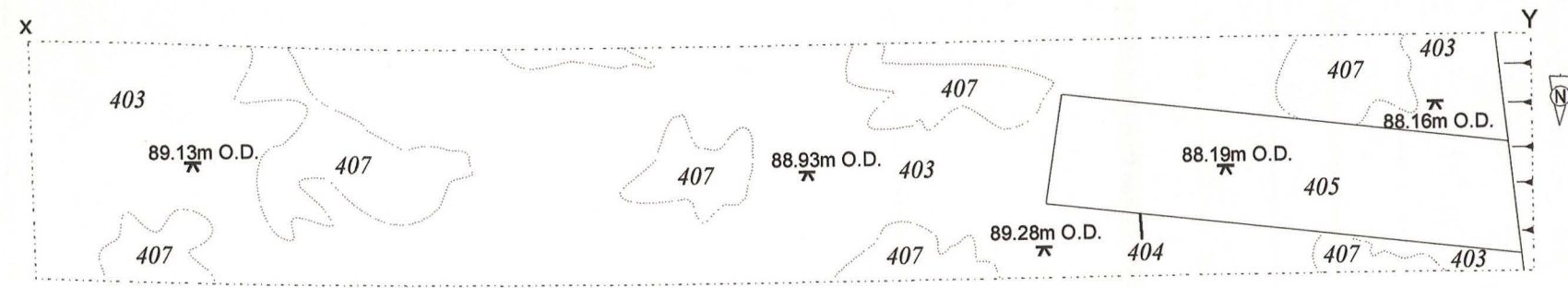
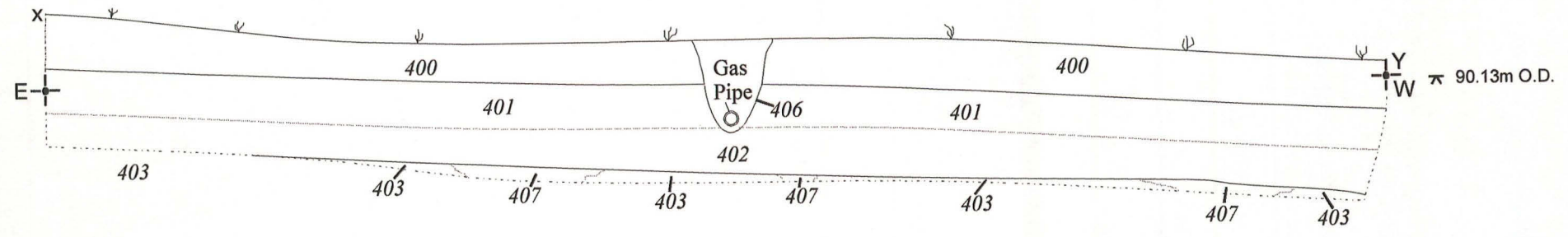


Fig. 7 Trench 4 plan and section



**THE PLATES**



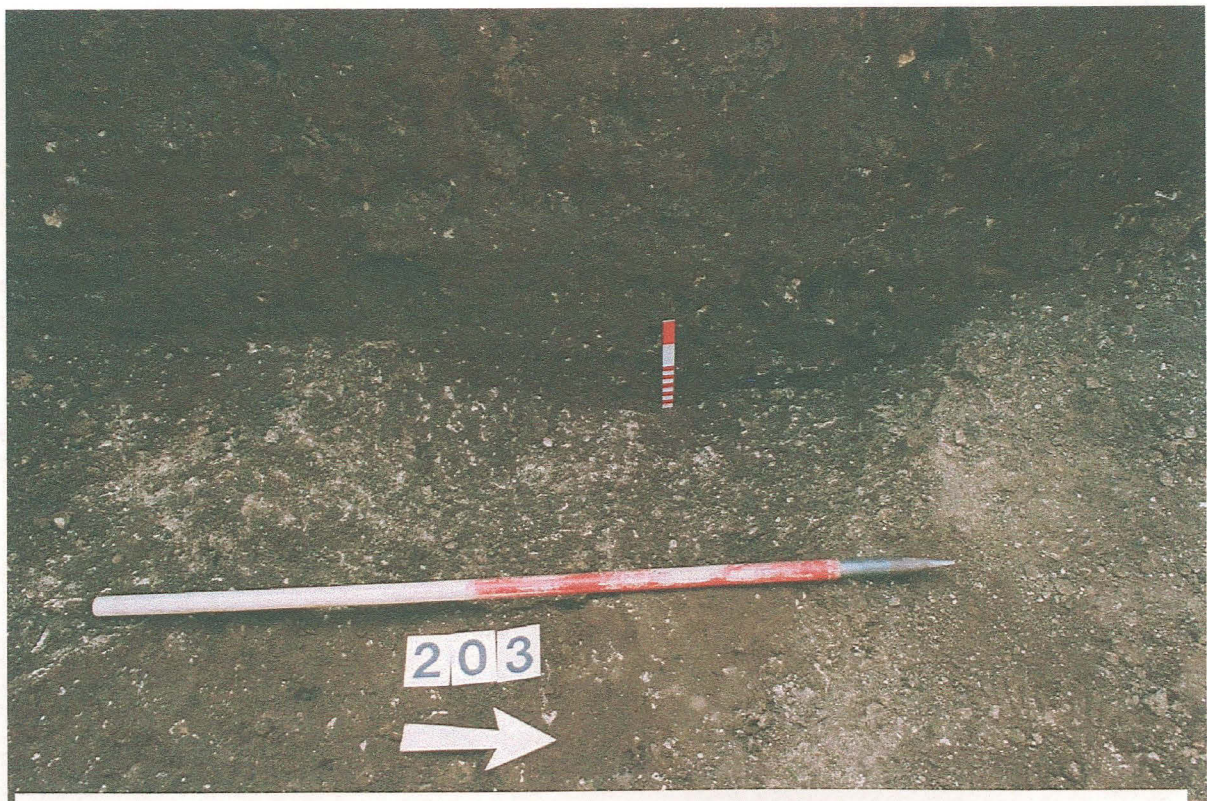
Pl. 1 General view of the site prior to excavation



Pl. 2 Trench 1 looking west



Pl. 3 Trench 2 looking south-east



Pl. 4 Feature 203



PL. 5 Post excavation view of Trench 3 looking north



Pl. 6 Feature 303





Pl. 7 Feature 304



Pl. 8 Trench 4 looking west