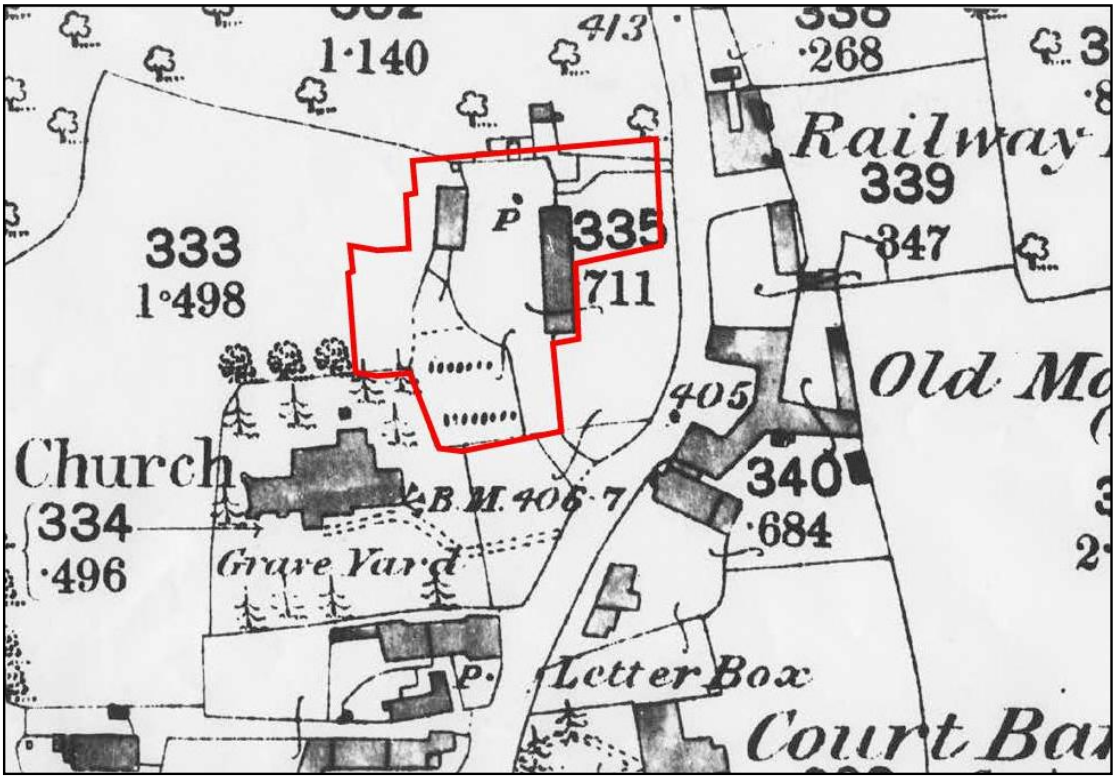
OAKFORD ARCHAEOLOGY

Archaeological Evaluation on land at Lower Town Place, Lapford, Devon



on behalf of
Mr Derek Manning

Report No. 14-09

Project No. 1155

March 2014

OAKFORD ARCHAEOLOGY

Archaeological Groundworks and Historic Buildings

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Summary

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by Oakford Archaeology on land at Lower Town Place, Lapford, Devon (SS 7319 0831), during February 2014. The work comprised the excavation of 5 trenches totalling 50m in length, with each trench 1.8m wide.

No archaeological features were found in the immediate area. Excavation revealed the remains of a single tree-throw, while a series of modern made ground deposits were also recorded across the western part of the site.

Evidence for earlier activity was confined to the northeast corner of the site where 9 sherds of medieval and post-medieval pottery were recovered from the subsoil.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared for Fuse Architecture and sets out the results of an archaeological trench evaluation undertaken by Oakford Archaeology (OA) in February 2014 on land at Lower Town Place, Lapford, Devon (SS 7319 0831). The work was commissioned on the advice of the Devon County Historic Environment Service (DCHES), to provide information in support of a forthcoming planning application for housing development.

1.1 **The site**

The site (Fig. 1) lies immediately to the north of the parish church of St Thomas a Beckets and covers an area of approximately 0.225ha. It consists of a large irregular plot with a number of former farm buildings. The site lies between c. 124m and 126m AOD and the underlying geology is on the border between Westphalian shale and sandstones of the Carboniferous Period. The sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 354 to 290 million years ago, and gives rise to mixed deposits of clay and shillet (BGS 1995).

1.2 **Archaeological and historical background**

The site has been the subject of an archaeological desk-based assessment, undertaken by Dr John Salvatore (Salvatore 2014).

The site lies within the historic core of the town of Lapford, immediately to the north of the parish church of St Thomas A Becket. Few early archaeological remains have been recorded in the vicinity. Some possible prehistoric activity, a crop-mark of an irregular enclosure west of Parsonage Farm (MDV40990), has been identified approximately 600m to the north, while a Roman fort, occupied during the Claudio-Neronian period (41–68 AD), is located at Bury Barton (NHL 1002669) some 1.1km to the south.

Lapford (*Eslapaforda*) is of Saxon origin, and following the Conquest the village and its land were held by King William in the Domesday survey of 1086 (Thorn and Thorn 1985, 1.66). The town developed in the medieval period and its main era of prosperity came between 1600 and 1800.

The land at Lower Town Place stands to the north of the parish church. From here the land drops away to the south. The proposal area has probably been part of a farmstead since medieval times. The 1840 Tithe Map shows two buildings at right angles, as well as a garden and orchard. By 1889 the buildings have been altered, with at least one large building having been erected on the boundary between the courtyard and the garden of the house shown on

the earlier tithe map, while the earlier buildings shown on the 1840 Tithe map have also been reduced in size. By 1905 little had changed. A small building shown at the northern end of the site in 1889 is gone, while the orchard is still present 65 years later.

2. AIMS

The principal aim of the evaluation was to establish the presence or absence, character, extent, depth and date of archaeological features and deposits within the footprints of the proposed development. The results of the evaluation (this document), in conjunction with the desk-based assessment, will inform the planning process and may be used to formulate a programme of further archaeological work either prior to and/or during groundworks.

3. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a project design prepared by Oakford Archaeology (2014), submitted to and approved by DCHES prior to commencement on site. This document is included as Appendix 1.

The work comprised the excavation of 5 trenches totalling 50m in length, with each trench 1.8m wide. Trench positions were agreed with DCHES prior to commencement on site. Localised site constraints (eg. Trees, buildings) subsequently required moving trench 1 and 3. The positions of trenches as excavated are shown on Fig.2.

Machine excavation was undertaken under archaeological control using a 360^{o} mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.8m wide toothless grading bucket. Topsoil and underlying deposits were removed to the level of either natural subsoil, or the top of archaeological deposits (whichever was higher). Areas of archaeological survival were then cleaned by hand, investigated and recorded.

The standard OA recording system was employed. Stratigraphic information was recorded on *pro-forma* context record sheets and individual trench recording forms, plans and sections for each trench were drawn at a scale of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50 as appropriate and a detailed digital photographic record was made. Registers were maintained for photographs, drawings and context sheets on *pro forma* sheets.

4. RESULTS

Relevant detailed plans and sections are included as Figs 2-4 and context descriptions for the trenches are set out in Appendix 2.

4.1 **The trenches**

Trench 1 (Detailed section Fig. 3. Plates 1-2)
This trench measured 10m x 1.8m, was orientated approximately N-S and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.5m. No archaeological features or finds were present. The recorded layer sequence is set out in Table 1, Appendix 2.

Trench 2 (Detailed section Fig. 3. Plates 3-4)
This trench measured 25m x 1.6m, was orientated approximately NE-SW and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.5m. No archaeological features or finds were present. The recorded layer sequence is set out in Table 2, Appendix 2.

Trench 3 (Detailed section Fig. 3. Plates 5-6)
This trench measured 25m x 1.6m, was orientated approximately NE-SW and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.5m. No archaeological features or finds were present. The recorded layer sequence is set out in Table 3, Appendix 2.

Trench 4 (Detailed section Fig. 3. Plates 7-8)
This trench measured 25m x 1.6m, was orientated approximately NW-SE and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.5m. Although no archaeological features were present 9 sherds of late 13th-17th century pottery were recovered from the subsoil (402). The recorded layer sequence is set out in Table 4, Appendix 2.

Trench 5 (Detailed section Fig. 4. Plates 9-11)
This trench measured 25m x 1.6m, was orientated approximately NW-SE and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.5m. The only archaeological feature present was a tree throw (503) located at the centre of the trench. This cut through natural subsoil at a depth of 0.25m (124.73mAOD). The recorded layer sequence is set out in Table 5, Appendix 2.

Feature 503 was a possible tree throw, with gradually to sharply breaking sides and an irregular base. It was approximately 1m wide and 0.35m deep. No finds were recovered from its single fill (504). This consisted of a light grey silty clay deposit.

5. FINDS
by John Allan

5.1 **Introduction**
This is a small assemblage composed of medieval and post-medieval finds from Trench 4 dominated by finds from North Devon. The sherds are largely in a good condition, although some of the material is abraded. The finds are briefly described below.

5.2 **Medieval pottery**
In total there are 5 sherds weighing 19g that are medieval in character. All of these were recovered from the colluvial subsoil (402). They consist of four sherds of North Devon coarseware, with a date range of late 13th-early 14th century, and a single sherd of 14th-15th century barrel costrel.

5.3 **Post-medieval pottery**
The post-medieval pottery, consisting of 4 sherds (total weight 12g) and recovered from the colluvial subsoil (402), consists of a single sherd of 17th century North Devon sgraffito ware, and a single sherd of 17th century North Devon gravel free ware. Two sherds of North Devon gravel tempered ware (16th-17th centuries) were also present.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The trench evaluation constitutes a thorough examination of the site, with trenches positioned to provide a comprehensive sample of all available areas. A subsoil deposit (up to 0.3m deep) and containing sherds of medieval and post-medieval pottery has been confirmed, primarily

to the north of the village hall, but the total removal of this material within trenches 1, 3 and 4 has failed to reveal any evidence for buried archaeological features or deposits.

Elsewhere, the results have been very consistent, with only a single tree throw identified. In addition the pottery assemblage recovered from the site is minimal, despite examination of spoil heaps. This further indicates that the site is, with the potential exception of the eastern area, archaeologically sterile.

7. PROJECT ARCHIVE

A project archive will not be produced (as agreed with Stephen Reed, Archaeologist, DCHET, 24th March 2014). A summary of the archaeological investigations has been submitted to the on-line archaeological database OASIS (oakforda1-175614).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This evaluation was commissioned by Mr Derek Manning and administered on behalf of the client by Edward Holden (Architectural Services). The project was managed for Oakford Archaeology by Marc Steinmetzer. The fieldwork was carried out by Marc Steinmetzer; the illustrations for the report were prepared by Marc Steinmetzer.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Unpublished sources

Salvatore, J. 2014 *Archaeological Assessment of land at Lower Town Place, Lapford, Devon*.

Steinmetzer, MFR 2014. *Archaeological evaluation at Lower Town Place, Lapford, Devon*. Written Scheme of Investigation.

Appendix 1:

Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological works

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document has been prepared by Oakford Archaeology (OA) for Mr Ed Holden to describe the methodology to be used during an archaeological evaluation at Lower Town Place, Lapford, Devon (SS 7318 0831). This document represents the 'Written Scheme of Investigation' for archaeological work required by Mid Devon District Council (MDDC), as advised by the Devon County Historic Environment Team (DCHET).

1.2 The proposed development lies in an area of high archaeological potential in the historic core of the village, close to the medieval parish church. The southern boundary of the site lies less than 20m to the north of the parish church of St Thomas A Beckett of Canterbury, a grade I listed building (1250085) dating in part to the 15th century, while historic maps show that the site was occupied by agricultural buildings, the dates of which are unknown, in the mid-19th century.

It is likely that any early settlement was focussed on the parish church, and archaeological deposits and artefacts associated with the medieval settlement here may be present within the area affected by the proposed development.

2. AIMS

2.1 The principal aims of the project are to establish the presence or absence, character, depth, extent and date of archaeological deposits within the site and to excavate and record them as necessary prior to and during the development; and to report the results of the project as appropriate.

3. METHOD

Liaison will be established with the client and their contractor prior to the works commencing, in order to obtain details of the works programme and to advise on OA requirements. If a good working relationship is established at the outset, any delays resulting from archaeological recording can be kept to a minimum. However, localised delays to site operations may be caused and time should be allowed within the main contractor's programme for the adequate investigation and recording of archaeological deposits.

3.1 5 trenches, measuring 50m long and 1.6m wide will be excavated across the site (Fig. 1). The trenches may be adjusted in the light of the results of the desk-based assessment.

This will inform the level of mitigation required before proceeding with the development:

Option 1 – no mitigation required.

Option 2 - monitoring and recording/limited excavation during construction groundworks, if necessary. Sufficient time will need to be allowed for the completion of any archaeological recording and limited excavation necessary

within the construction groundworks. At times this may require a pause in the construction works, but the requirement for this will be kept to a minimum where possible. Where more substantial delays are envisaged, then a site meeting will be convened as necessary with the DCHET and the Client to agree the way forward.

Option 3 - full archaeological excavation of certain areas prior to construction starting, if necessary.

The need for, and extent of options 2 and 3 will be reviewed and agreed at a site meeting with the DCHET, once the trial trenches have been excavated and the results are evident. If required, option 3 will then be carried out and completed before the commencement of construction works, and option 2 will be undertaken during the latter. Should significant archaeological deposits or remains be present in the phase 1 trial trenches, then these will be left in situ and excavated as part of a larger area excavation under option 3.

In addition, there will be a further phase of off-site analysis and reporting work.

The method outlined below applies primarily to the phase 1 trenching work. Should options 2 or 3 be required, then the generic methods and provisions set out in sections 3.4 - 3.7, 3.9-10, and 4 - 6 below will apply, and a plan showing proposed areas of excavation and/or monitoring will be submitted to the DCHET for approval prior to such works commencing.

3.2 Trenches will be opened using a tracked or wheeled machine fitted with a toothless grading bucket. Excavation will continue until either the top of significant archaeological levels or natural subsoil is reached (whichever is higher), at which point machining will cease and investigation will continue by hand. Where archaeological deposits are present the trench will be cleaned and deposits investigated, excavated and recorded.

3.3 The DCHET has provided guidance on the scope of the archaeological excavation requirements to apply both to the trial trenches where no remains of archaeological significance are exposed, and to option 3. All archaeological deposits will be stratigraphically excavated by hand down to natural subsoil in the following manner, unless agreed otherwise with the DCHET:

- all significant deposits will be excavated and recorded by hand;
- some less significant and more bulky deposits may be carefully removed by machine with a toothless grading bucket, under direct archaeological supervision and with prior agreement of the DCHET;
- substantial structural remains (e.g. of the footings of the present buildings) will be left in situ, except where they may obscure other significant deposits or remains;
- fills of cut features will be excavated by hand as follows:-pits (50%), postholes (50 and then 100%), stakeholes (100%), wells (to be determined on site depending on depth and site conditions), linears (20%, targeted on interrelationships, terminals, etc). Variations to these may be required, for

example to fully recover important finds and material, or to obtain secure dating evidence, and these will be agreed with the DCHET and then carried out.

3.4 Health and Safety requirements will be observed at all times by archaeological staff working on site, particularly when machinery is operating nearby. Personal protective equipment (safety boots, helmets and high visibility vests) will be worn by staff when plant is operating on site. A risk assessment will be prepared prior to excavation.

3.5 As appropriate, the environmental deposits will be assessed on site by a suitably qualified archaeologist, with advice as necessary from Allen Environmental Archaeology and/or the English Heritage Regional Science Advisor, to determine the possible yield (if any) of environmental or microfaunal evidence, and its potential for radiocarbon dating. If deposits potential survive, these will be processed by AC Archaeology using the EH Guidelines for Environmental Archaeology (EH CfA Guidelines 2002/1), and outside specialists (AEA) organised to undertake further assessment and analysis as appropriate.

3.6 Initial cleaning, conservation, packaging and any stabilisation or longer term conservation measures will be undertaken in accordance with relevant professional guidance (including *Conservation guidelines No 1 (*UKIC, 2001); *First Aid for Finds (*UKIC & RESCUE, 1997) and on advice provided by Alison Hopper-Bishop, Specialist Services Officer, RAM Museum, Exeter.

3.7 On completion of investigations, trenches will be backfilled with the excavated material and made safe. Sections of trench containing remains will be left open pending extension as part of option 3, if there is little or no time delay before starting the latter.

3.8 Should any human remains be exposed, these will initially be left *in situ.* If removal at either this or a later stage in the archaeological works is deemed necessary, these will then be fully excavated and removed from the site in accordance with Ministry of Justice guidelines. If required, the necessary license will be obtained by OA on behalf of the client. Any remains will be excavated in accordance with Institute of Field Archaeologist Technical Paper No. 13 (McKinley and Roberts 1993). Where appropriate bulk samples will be collected.

3.9 Should items be exposed that fall within the scope of the Treasure Act 1996, then these will be removed to a safe place and reported to the local coroner. Where removal cannot be effected on the same working day as the discovery, suitable security measures will be taken to protect the finds from theft.

3.10 The DCHET will be informed of the start of the project, and will monitor progress throughout on behalf of the planning authority and will wish to inspect the works in progress. Any amendments to the trenching plan or to any subsequent excavation plan will be agreed with them prior to implementation and completion. A date of completion of all archaeological site work will be

confirmed with the DCHET and the timescale of the completion of items under section 5 will run from that date.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING

4.1 The standard OA recording system will be employed, consisting of:

(i) standardised single context record sheets; survey drawings, plans and sections at scales 1:10,1:20, 1:50 as appropriate;

(ii) colour digital photography;

(iii) survey and location of finds, deposits or archaeological features, using EDM surveying equipment and software where appropriate;

(iv) labelling and bagging of finds on site from all excavated levels, post-1800 unstratified pottery may be discarded on site with a small sample retained for dating evidence as required.

5. REPORTING AND ARCHIVING

5.1 The reporting requirements will be confirmed with DCHET on completion of the site work. If little or no significant archaeology is exposed then reporting will consist of a completed DCHET HER entry, including a plan showing location of groundworks and of any significant features found. The text entry and plan will be produced in an appropriate electronic format suitable for easy incorporation into the HER, and sent to DCHET within 3 months of completion of all archaeological fieldwork.

5.2 Should significant deposits be exposed the results of all phases of archaeological work will be presented within one summary report within four months of the date of completion of all archaeological fieldwork. Any summary report will contain the following elements as appropriate:

- location plan and overall site plans showing the positions of the trenches and the distribution of archaeological features within them;
- a written description of the exposed features and deposits and a discussion and interpretation of their character and significance in the context of the known history of the site;
- plans and sections at appropriate scales showing the exact location and character of significant archaeological deposits and features;
- a selection of photographs illustrating the principal features and deposits found;
- specialist assessments and reports as appropriate.

5.3 One bound and illustrated hard colour copy and a .pdf version of the report will be produced and distributed to the Client and DCHET on completion of sitework. A copy of the report and .pdf version will also be deposited with the site archive.

5.4 An ordered and integrated site archive will be prepared with reference to *The Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage, 1991 2nd edition) upon completion of the project.

The archive will consist of two elements, the artefactual and digital - the latter comprising all born-digital (data images, survey data, digital correspondence, site data collected digitally etc.) and digital copies of the primary site records and images.

The digital archive will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) within 6 months of the completion of site work, while the artefactual element will be deposited with the Royal Albert Memorial Museum (deposition currently suspended - *ref. pending*). The hardcopy of the archive will be offered to the RAMM and if not required will be disposed of by OA

OA will notify DCHET upon the deposition of the digital archive with the ADS, and the deposition of the material (finds) archive with the RAMM.

5.5 A .pdf copy of the updated summary report will be submitted, together with the site details, to the national OASIS (Online AccesS to the Index of Archaeological investigationS) database within three months of the completion of site work.

5.6 A short report summarising the results of the project will be prepared for inclusion within the "round up" section of an appropriate national journal, if merited, within 12 months of the completion of site work.

5.7 Should particularly significant remains, finds and/or deposits be encountered, then these, owing to their importance, are likely to merit wider publication in line with government planning guidance. If such remains are encountered, the publication requirements – including any further analysis that may be necessary – will be confirmed with DCHET, in consultation with the Client. OA, on behalf of the Client, will then implement publication in accordance with a timescale agreed with the Client, and the DCHET. This will be within 12 months of the completion of all phases of archaeological site work unless otherwise agreed in writing.

6. CONFLICT WITH OTHER CONDITIONS AND STATUTORILY PROTECTED SPECIES

6.1 If topsoil stripping or groundworks are being undertaken under the direct control and supervision of the archaeological contractor then it is the archaeological contractor's responsibility - in consultation with the applicant or agent - to ensure that the required archaeological works do not conflict with any other conditions that have been imposed upon the consent granted and should also consider any biodiversity issues as covered by the NERC Act 2006. In particular, such conflicts may arise where archaeological investigations/excavations have the potential to have an impact upon protected species and/or natural habitats e.g. SSSIs, National Nature Reserves, Special

Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, Ramsar sites, County Wildlife Sites etc.

7. COPYRIGHT

7.1 OA shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports, tender documents or other project documents, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved, excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the client for the use of such documents by the client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in this document.

8. PROJECT ORGANISATION

8.1 The project will be undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced archaeologists, in accordance with the Code of Conduct and relevant standards and guidance of the Institute for Archaeologists (*Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation,* 1994, revised 2008, and *Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief,* 1994, revised 2008), plus *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation* 1994, revised 2008). The project will be managed by Marc Steinmetzer. Oakford Archaeology is managed by a Member of the Institute for Archaeologists.

Health & Safety

8.2 All monitoring works within this scheme will be carried out in accordance with current *Safe Working Practices (The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974*).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Specialists contributors and advisors
The expertise of the following specialists can be called upon if required:

Bone artefact analysis: Ian Riddler;
Dating techniques: University of Waikato Radiocarbon Laboratory, NZ;
Building specialist: Richard Parker;
Illustrator: Sarnia Blackmore;
Charcoal identification: Dana Challinor;
Diatom analysis: Nigel Cameron (UCL);
Environmental data: Vanessa Straker (English Heritage);
Faunal remains: Lorraine Higbee (Wessex);
Finds conservation: Alison Hopper-Bishop (Exeter Museums);
Human remains: Louise Loe (Oxford Archaeology), Charlotte Coles;
Lithic analysis: Dr. Linda Hurcombe (Exeter University);
Medieval and post-medieval finds: John Allan;
Metallurgy: Gill Juleff (Exeter University);
Numismatics: Norman Shiel (Exeter);
Petrology/geology: Roger Taylor (RAM Museum), Imogen Morris;
Plant remains: Julie Jones (Bristol);
Prehistoric pottery: Henrietta Quinnell (Exeter);
Roman finds: Paul Bidwell & associates (Arbeia Roman Fort, South Shields);

Others: Wessex Archaeology Specialist Services Team

MFR Steinmetzer
18 December 2013
WSI/OA1155/01

Appendix 2:

Context description by Trench

Table 1: Trench 1

Context No.	Depth (b.g.s.)	Description	Interpretation
100	0-0.1m	dark brown silty loam	Modern topsoil
101	0.2-1m	Mid grey hardcore	Modern made ground
102	0.5m+	Light yellow clay and mudstone	Natural subsoil

Table 2: Trench 2

Context No.	Depth (b.g.s.)	Description	Interpretation
200	0-0.25m	dark brown silty loam	Modern topsoil
201	0.25-0.5m	Mid reddish brown silty clay	Buried topsoil
202	0.5-0.9m	Light greyish brown silty clay	Subsoil
203	0.9m+	Light yellow clay and mudstone	Natural subsoil

Table 3: Trench 3

Context No.	Depth (b.g.s.)	Description	Interpretation
300	0-0.1m	dark brown silty loam	Modern topsoil
301	0.1-0.4m	Mid orange brown silty clay	Modern made ground
302	0.4-0.8m	Mid reddish brown silty clay	Buried topsoil
303	0.8-1m	Mid to dark grey silty clay	Colluvial subsoil
304	1m+	Light yellow clay and mudstone	Natural subsoil

Table 4: Trench 4

Context No.	Depth (b.g.s.)	Description	Interpretation
400	0-0.2m	dark brown silty loam	Modern topsoil
401	0.2-0.5m	Mid reddish brown silty clay	Buried topsoil
402	0.5-0.8m	Light yellowish grey silty clay	Subsoil
403	0.8m+	Light yellow clay and mudstone	Natural subsoil

Table 5: Trench 5

Context No.	Depth (b.g.s.)	Description	Interpretation
500	0-0.2m	dark brown silty loam	Modern topsoil
501	0.2-0.5m	Mid reddish brown silty clay	Buried topsoil
502	0.5m+	Light yellow clay and mudstone	Natural subsoil
503	0.5-0.75m	Irregular feature	Tree throw
504	0.5-0.75m	Light grey silty clay	Fill of tree throw [503]

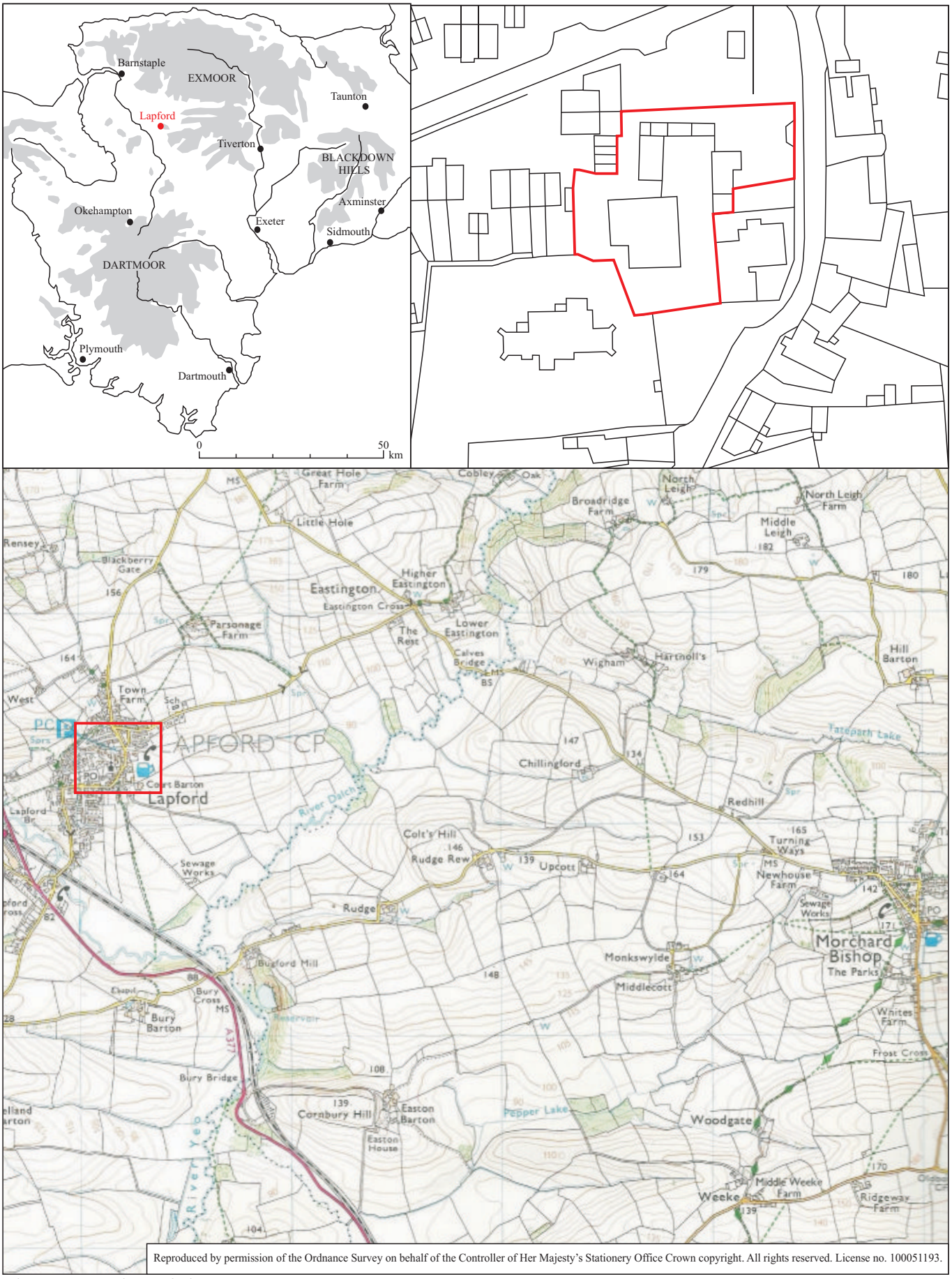

Fig. 1 Location of site.

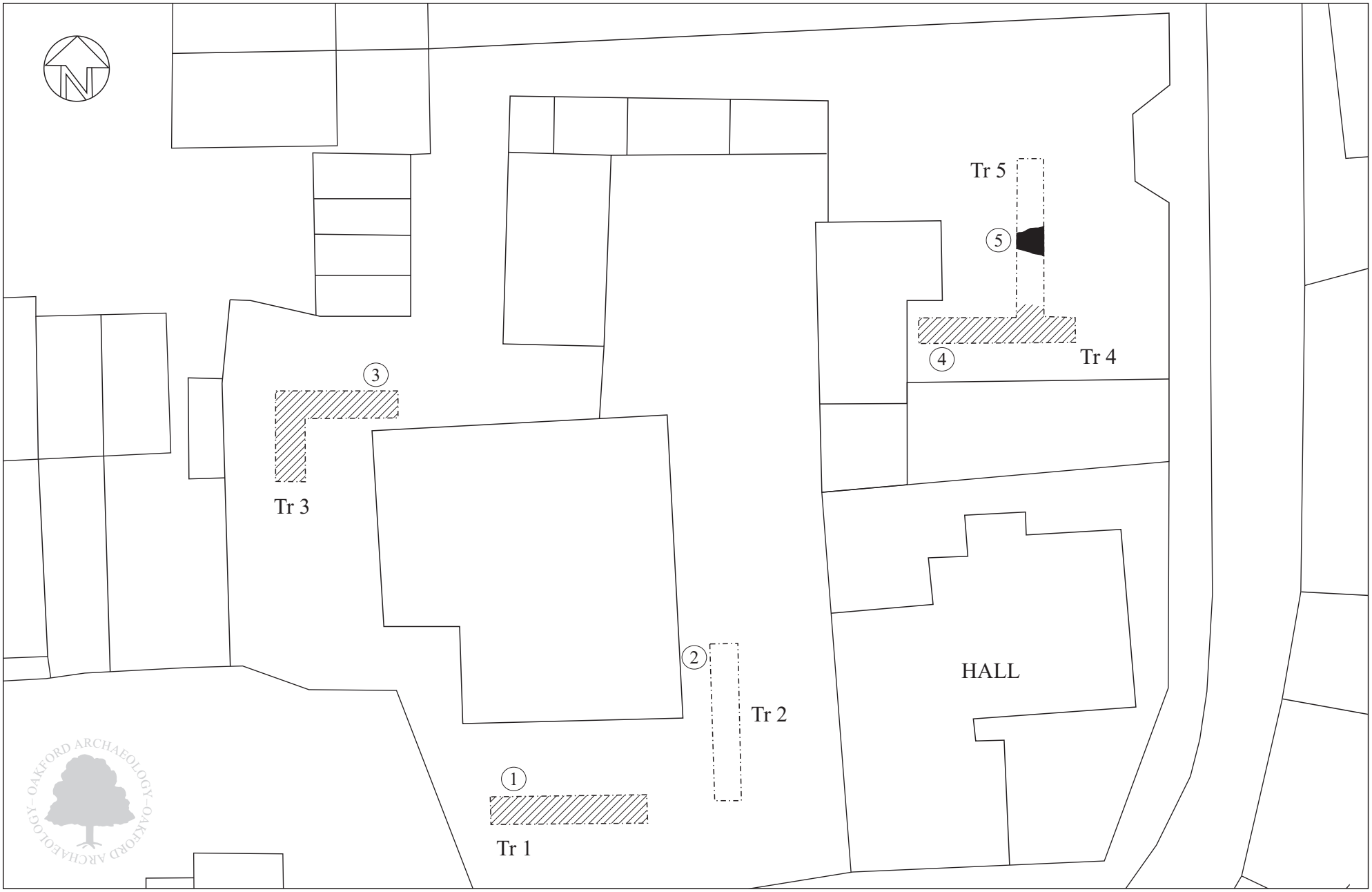

Fig. 2 Plan showing location of observations with principal feature identified (black) and presence of subsoil (hatching).

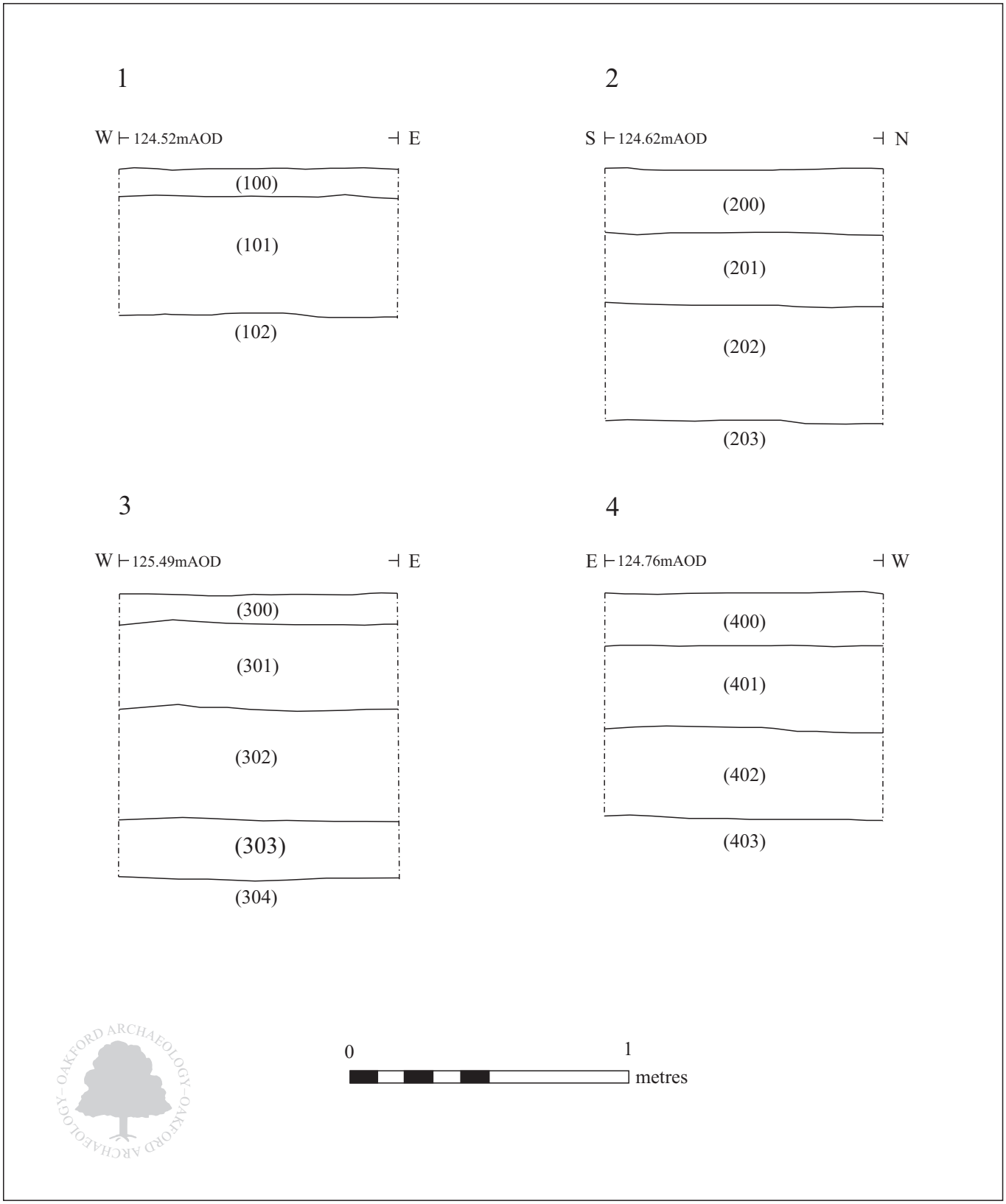

Fig. 3 Sections.

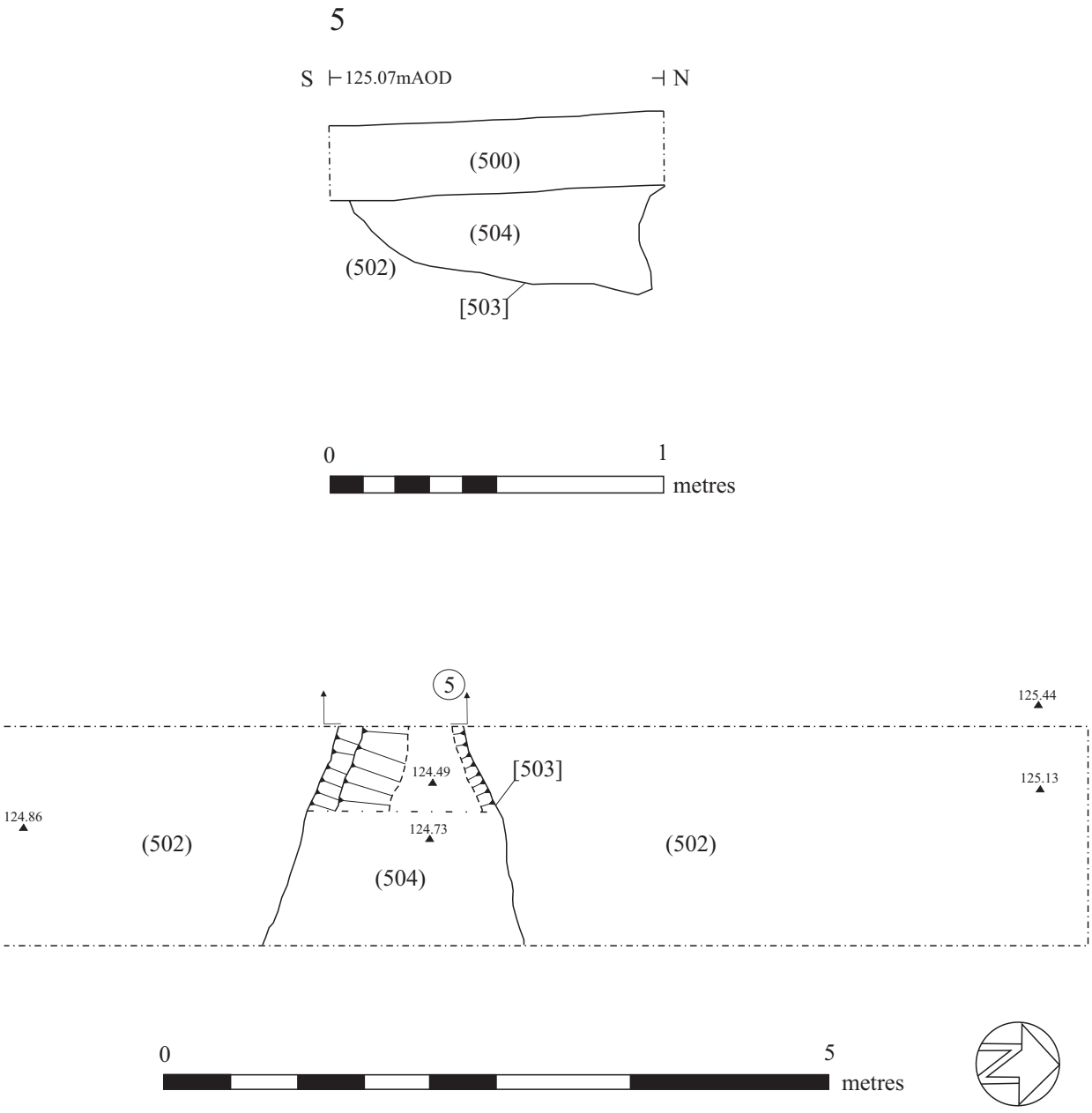

Fig. 4 Plan and section of tree throw [503].

Plate 1 General view of Trench 1 showing modern truncation (right). 2m scale. Looking north.

Plate 2 Close-up view of Trench 1 sample section (north end) showing depth of topsoil (100) and modern made ground (101). 1m scale. Looking west.

Plate 3 General view of Trench 2. 2m scale. Looking west.

Plate 4 Close-up view of Trench 2 sample section (west end) showing depth of deposit sequence. 1m scale. Looking west.

Plate 5 General view of Trench 3 showing tree root disturbance. 2m scale. Looking north.

Plate 6 Close-up view of Trench 3 sample section (east end) showing depth of modern made ground (301) and underlying deposit sequence. 1m scale. Looking west.

Plate 7 General view of Trench 4. 2m scale. Looking west.

Plate 8 Close-up view of Trench 4 sample section (west end) showing depth of deposit sequence. 1m scale. Looking west.

Plate 9 General view of Trench 5 showing tree throw [503]. 2m scale. Looking south.

Plate 10 Close-up view of Trench 5 sample section (north end) showing depth of deposit sequence. 1m scale. Looking west.

Plate 11 Close-up view of Trench 5 section through tree throw [503]. 1m scale. Looking west.