Marches Archaeology

Land between Upper Weston and Little Weston
Weston-under-Penyard
Herefordshire

Report on a
programme of archaeological works

October 2003

Marches Archaeology Series 307

Archaeological Consultants and Contractors

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Land between Upper Weston and Little Weston
Weston-under-Penyard
Herefordshire

A report on a programme of archaeological works

NGR: centered on SO 633 234

SMR number: 35368

Report by
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Summary

The results of an evaluation in 1999 including geophysical survey, and of archaeological works in 2003 produced evidence of features that are all probably related to agricultural practices. The excavated features are all cut features for stock enclosures and boundary ditches apart from an ovoid feature the function of which remains unclear. The excavated features date from the late Iron Age, Roman and medieval periods.

The geophysical survey showed anomalies which were interpreted as round houses but the excavations did not validate these interpretations and the paucity of features and finds on the site suggests that the area has only ever been utilized for agricultural purposes. It appears to have been on the peripheries of a settlement from the late Iron Age onwards In the Iron Age and Romano-British periods the focus of settlement was about 1 kilometre to the north-east. By the medieval period the focus had shifted closer to the site but to the south.

1 Introduction

A planning application has been approved by the local planning authority for permission to erect dwellings on land at Weston-under-Penyard (ref. SE1999/1539/o) (Fig. 1). A standard archaeological 'site investigation' condition has been attached to the planning permission.

Prior to the application being determined Marches Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation 1999 and a report on the findings was produced (Appleton-Fox, 1999). The Herefordshire Sites and Monuments number (SMR) for the 1999 archaeological intervention is 30224

Subsequently, the Local Planning Authority's Archaeological Advisor produced a "Brief for a programme of archaeological work relating to the condition" Evans Jones Housing, on behalf of Craig Thorpe Limited (the client), commissioned Marches Archaeology to provide the archaeological services detailed in the Brief.

This programme of archaeological works has been allocated the SMR number 35368.

2 Location of the site and geological background

The site is centered on NGR: SO 633 234 and is situated in the village of Weston-under-Penyard (Fig. 1). The site originally consisted of two grass fields but these have since been amalgamated. The area is bounded in the south by the Ross-on-Wye to Gloucester road, the A40. The other boundaries are fenced and along parts of the west and east boundaries houses back onto the site. The northern boundary follows the now dismantled Hereford, Ross and Gloucester railway line.

The development area slopes gently down from the north to the south. The area of the main excavation is approximately 77.50 m O.D. The underlying solid geology is of Breconian and Old Red Sandstone and the soils are typical of the Eardiston Series. It has been noted that these soils are subject to erosion and gullies have been observed in the base geology.

3 Archaeological and historical background

The site of Ariconium and its environs

The site lies about one kilometre south-west from the Roman settlement of *Ariconium* (Fig. 1). A draft report on extensive archaeological investigations at Ariconium by Worcestershire Archaeological Service provides a detailed background to the archaeology and history of the area (Jackson, forthcoming). Unless otherwise stated the following summary is based on Jackson's publication.

The first occupation of the area appears to have been in the late Iron Age with activity occurring in the area of the later Roman settlement and alongside two of the roads. The Roman roads are believed to be based on Iron Age routes. The archaeological evidence points to a settlement with at least three focal points and it was an important iron production site exploiting the naturally occurring ore of the Forest of Dean. It has been suggested that the Iron Age settlement was a centre of some considerable status and economic importance. Perhaps as an elite centre of the Dobunnic tribe in the territory west of the Severn.

The archaeological picture suggests that during the early Roman period (c.AD 50 to 100) occupation was continuing in the areas occupied during the late Iron Age. The character and nature of the settlement seems to have been of a similar ilk.

The earliest reference to a Roman settlement on the site is found in the Antonine Itinerary and the first antiquarian source dates from 1586.

In the early 2nd century a domestic core emerged and the settlement was seen to expand in the later 2nd century and early 3rd century. To the north of this core an extensive ironworking area developed. Ironworking formed the basis of the economy of the settlement and *Ariconium* was probably the most important of the many iron producing centres around the edges of the Forest of Dean. Although an important industrial site the development of the settlement was more akin to the roadside sites of Roman 'small towns' in southern England.

After the mid 3rd century a new ironworking centre in the south-west replaced the one to the north which was abandoned. However, during this period the settlement itself appears to have been in decline and by the later 4th century the archaeological evidence indicates that the

occupation of *Ariconium* was much reduced. In the 5th and 6th centuries there is no excavated evidence for occupation on the site but it has been suggested that some sort of settlement continued close to the site at Eccleswall Court.

Presumably by the time of the Conquest the focus of settlement had shifted south-west. The name *'Westune'* means "west settlement" and is first recorded in Domesday (Thorn and Thorn, 1983).

Domesday records the settlement thus:

> *Durand* (of Gloucester) *holds Westune, and Bernard from him. The said Gunnar held it. 2 hides that pay tax.*
> *2 smallholders have 1 plough; a further 3 ploughs possible.*
> *The value is and was 4s.*

A late Norman north arcade survives in the Church of St Lawrence and the north doorway is probably of similar date (Pevsner, 1963). The Bret family held the manor of Weston in the early 12th century and in 1243 it is recorded as *Weston Bret*. By 1376 Weston had gained the suffix Penyard, being recorded as *'Weston subtus Penyord'* in a document of that year (Copplestone-Crow, 1989).

Thin scatters of medieval pottery within Weston and the Early English chancel of the church attest occupation of the settlement during the 13th century and further alterations were made during the 14th or 15th centuries. Little other evidence for medieval occupation survives in the records, whilst one building, Penyard Castle, in the area shows elements from the 14th century, the majority of the buildings of any antiquity date from the late 17th century or later. In the late 17th and into the 18th century iron 'cinders' from *Ariconium* were probably extracted for re-smelting at ironworks nearby.

The development area

The site has been in agricultural use at least since the time of the 1838 Tithe Map (Fig. 2). The two fields 196 and 197 were respectively listed as an orchard and the 'Lower Twelve Acre'. The Hereford, Ross and Gloucester railway line is shown on the 1881 Ordnance Survey 6 Inch Plan (Fig. 3). In the 20th century the fields have been used initially for arable and latterly pastoral farming.

An archaeological assessment of the site was carried out by Marches Archaeology in 1999. This consisted of a geophysical survey and an archaeological evaluation (Fig. 4). The initial results from the geophysical survey were promising, indicating the possible presence of two sub rectangular enclosures, one containing anomalies that looked like a round house. Thirteen trenches were opened to investigate the anomalies. On excavation the ditches for the enclosures were found but no internal features were discernible. Throughout the evaluation finds were very rare, though pottery from the late Iron Age and the Roman period were found. The 2003 excavation was situated over part of evaluation Trench 7. This trench contained two features cut into the underlying natural. Both of these were probably caused by animal action. Above the natural was the ploughsoil and topsoil.

A field to the north of the development area (number 209 on the Tithe Map) was fieldwalked for finds (SMR: 21335, Fig.1) by the Dean Archaeological Group. However, nothing of any

antiquity was recovered. A watching brief carried out to the north-east on the excavation of a swimming pool also produced no archaeological significant features or finds (SMR: 21096, Fig.1). Two more watching briefs, one almost adjacent to the site (SMR:21366, Fig.1) and one about half a kilometre in the south-east (SMR:15984, Fig.1), also revealed no significant finds or features. However, a watching brief with salvage recording (SMR: 15983, Fig.1) to the east uncovered Roman remains of a possible domestic enclosure. One hundred metres to the south possible medieval settlement remains have been uncovered next to the school (SMR: 26886, Fig.1).

4 Scope and aims of the project

The Brief states that the archaeological project would consist of:

1. Archaeological observation of the construction of a wall/garage forming part of the southern boundary of the development site
2. Archaeological excavation of an area identified on a plan accompanying the Brief.
3. Reporting the results, including collation of other archaeologically relevant data and deposition of the archive
4. If necessary, more detailed publication in a recognised Journal

The Institute of Field Archaeology defines an Excavation as "a programme of controlled, intrusive fieldwork with defined research objectives which examines and records archaeological deposits, features and structures and, as appropriate, retrieves artefacts, ecofacts and other remains within a specified area or site. The records made and objects gathered during fieldwork are studied and the results of that study published in detail appropriate to the Project Design and in the light of the findings".

The objectives of this excavation, based on the above stated aim, were

to record, prior to and during development all archaeological materials present on the site

5 Methodology

Archaeological observation of the construction of the wall/garage forming part of the southern boundary of the excavation area

The groundworks associated with the construction of the wall/garage were monitored by an archaeologist on 18th August 2003 (Fig. 5). The footings were excavated to a maximum depth of c 1.10 metres with a toothed bucket 600mm wide. The recording system and retrieval policies were as described below.

Excavation of the main excavation

One trench was excavated near the eastern boundary of the field as shown on the plan accompanying the Brief (Fig. 5). The precise location and dimensions of the trench were determined by the client with reference to this plan by scaling from Evans Jones drawing 10092/02b (Feb 2003).

The topsoil and the underlying cultivation soil was excavated by a JCB with a toothless bucket to a level determined to comprise deposits, features or horizons of archaeological significance. Further excavation was by hand. 10-20% of linear features were excavated and 50% of discrete features. One archaeologist was on site for four days during the site strip and four archaeologists were on site for a further eight days to complete the hand excavation of the site. On completion of the fieldwork the area of the excavation was left open and returned to the main groundworks contractor

The recording system included written, drawn and photographic data. Context numbers were allocated and context record sheets completed. Site notebooks were also used. A running matrix was maintained. Plans and sections of significant data were made. Deposits and features were related to Ordnance Datum. The photographic record was made using black and white negative and colour transparency film. All artefactual and ecofactual material recovered from hand excavation was retained. Samples were taken of deposits considered to have environmental, technological or scientific dating potential.

Reporting the results, including collation of other archaeologically relevant data

On completion of fieldwork a site archive was completed. The written, drawn and photographic data was catalogued and cross-referenced and a summary produced. The artefactual and ecofactual data was processed, catalogued and cross-referenced and summaries produced.

It was considered that a post-excavation assessment report on the findings was not required as the archive was not considerable. The Local Planning Authority's Archaeology Advisor was consulted and it was agreed to proceed directly to a final report.

Post-excavation assessment was based on the site archive. The pottery, metal objects, environmental samples and metalworking debris were submitted for specialist assessment.

Sufficient documentary research was undertaken to supplement that done for the evaluation in 1999. This included consulting the County Sites and Monuments Record to check for more recent work.

It is envisaged that a summary of the findings of this report will be submitted for publication in *The Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists Field Club* in the near future.

6 Results of the programme of archaeological works

Archaeological observation of the construction of the wall/garage forming part of the southern boundary of the excavation area (Fig. 5)

No significant archaeological features or deposits were excavated. The natural marls and sandstone [3] were encountered about 300-500mm below the ground surface. Above this was a cultivation soil [2] which was a mid reddish brown sandy silt with some clay present. This layer varied in thickness throughout the footing trench but was about 300mm thick in general. Above [2] was the topsoil and turf [1] which was a mid reddish brown humic sandy clay. The thickness of [1] was about 200mm. Approximately 2 metres from the eastern fence line a

modern water pipe was encountered. This was at a depth of about 700mm below ground surface.

The main excavation (Fig. 5)

The natural marls and sandstone [3] were seen about 350-600mm below the present day ground surface. Any features that had survived on the site were negative features cutting the natural [3] and underlying the ploughsoils [2] and [4]. Layer [4] was only seen in the north eastern corner of the site and was a dark reddish brown clay loam about 120mm thick. Two ditches were immediately visible after the site stripping had taken place. One contained pottery from the Roman period [6] and the other, pottery from the late medieval period [10].

The earlier ditch [6], in the south of the site, was very straight and was aligned east to west. The cut had concave sides, a sharp break of slope base and a flat base (Fig. 6). In the west of the area it was about 150mm deep whilst in the east it was deeper at about 300mm deep. The ditch had a single fill [5] which was a firm reddish brown sandy silt with occasional clay fragments and sub-rounded pebbles.

At the eastern *terminus* of ditch [10] and cut by this ditch was an ovoid cut with a flat bottom and vertical sides [26]. In the base of this what was initially thought to be a post hole was excavated [37] and [38]. However, this is more than likely a natural hollow. The ovoid feature [26] was 390mm deep, 700mm wide and 1.5 m in length (Fig. 7). It was orientated north-east to south-west. Cut [26] contained two fills. The lower fill was of a light to mid reddish brown sandy silt with occasional charcoal and decayed sandstone flecks and sub-rounded pebbles [34]. Two sandstone blocks were within this fill. The larger of the two blocks was roughly hewn whilst the other was more squared. This fill was about 200mm thick and contained one sherd of abraded pottery of a probable Roman date. The upper fill was a firm mid brown sandy silt with frequent flecks of charcoal and was also about 200mm thick [25]. A substantial fragment of probable Roman building material was recovered from this fill.

About 4 metres to the west of feature [26] was a shallow scoop [36] which was irregular in plan (Fig. 8). This was filled with brown sandy clay [35]. It is likely that [36] is a natural feature.

Three features excavated in the central part of the site, close to ditch [10], are probably natural depressions. Cut [24] had an irregular shape and was filled with red brown clayey sand [23]. Cut [20] was a shallow depression filled with red brown clayey sand [19] and cut [22] was irregular in plan and filled with [21] a brown clayey sand. Close to these features was layer [29] which was also probably the fill of a natural depression. Cut [31], in the south-west of the site is also thought to be a natural depression. The fill was a red brown clayey sand [30].

Also cut by ditch [10] at the west of the site was a possible sub-square base of a pit [18] (Fig 9). This was only 200mm deep and the southern edge of ditch [10] was aligned along the southern edge of feature [18]. The fill of [18] was a firm mid reddish brown sandy silt with fragments of pink clay and charcoal. It is possible that cut [18] is a natural hollow within the sandstone [3].

A shallow sub-circular scoop [12] excavated east of feature [18] could be a pit base or a natural depression (Fig. 10). The fill was a mid reddish brown sandy silt [11] and contained an abraded sherd of probably a Roman date. Two post holes [14 and 16] situated close to this feature are probably of a post-medieval date. The fills [13 and 15] were similar in nature being humic dark brown sandy silts.

Ditch [10] was on a similar alignment to ditch [6] but it was less regular in plan. The sides of the cut were concave and the base varied between being flat, rounded and occasionally almost V shaped (Fig. 11). The depth varied between about 100mm to 250mm. The *terminus* at the east end was rounded and dish shaped. The ditch was filled with a reddish brown sandy silt [9] with occasional sub rounded pebbles and clay fragments.

Directly to the east and on the same alignment as ditch [10] was another ditch [28]. The size and position of the two ditches strongly suggests they are contemporary though no finds were recovered from the fill of [28] Cut [28] had a dish shaped base with concave sides and was about 150mm deep. The *terminus* was rounded and dish shaped. It is possible that this ditch had been recut but this was impossible to ascertain as only one fill was excavated (Fig. 12). The fill was a reddish brown sandy silt with clay fragments [27].

Masking the eastern *terminus* of ditch [10] were two layers [7 and 8]. These were similar in nature to the cultivation soil [2] which overlay these layers. It is very probable that these layers represent the lowest portion of the cultivation soil. The pottery recovered from [7 and 8] dates from the 13th to 16th century but a small button recovered from [8] probably dates from the 19th century.

7 The finds

The pottery *by Stephanie Rátkai*

The Roman and putative Roman sherds are so small and abraded that they are likely to have been part of a general surface or manuring scatter and their incorporation into features only gives a *terminus post quem.* It is probable that there was no significant Roman activity in the area of the site. Feature [26] could be possibly early post-Roman.

Context 1 post-medieval

coarseware x 2. Tiny speck of black glaze on one sherd. The sherds are very abraded but may be part of the strainer from [2].
coarseware x 1. Small body sherd, abraded, possibly flowerpot.

Context 2 19th c

blue transfer printed ware x 1
white stoneware x 1
coarseware strainer x 3 (sherds join)
coarseware x 1
coarseware x 1
Malvernian ware (Hereford fabric B4) x 1
4 x very abraded sherds, may be pottery or building materials. The fabric is very similar to Severn Valley ware, so possibly Roman.

Context 5 Roman

grogged ware (?Belgic type) 1st c AD (The sherd is tiny-weighs only 2g-and abraded)

Severn Valley ware x 2
coarse orange-brown ware, probably Roman Malvernian ware (sherds join)
highly abraded, ?burnt, ?black burnished ware.
Another small 2g sherd with absolutely no diagnostic features. Fabric is not likely to be post-Roman.

Context 7 late 15th-16th c

cup base, cistercian ware x 1

Context 8 13th-14th c

moderately sandy glazed sherd with grey core, white external surface and margin and buff internal surface and margin. ?Not local.

Context 9 15th-16th c

base sherd from Malvernian (Hereford fabric B4) bowl x 1
Malvernian ware (Hereford fabric B4) x 6
Hereford fabric A7b x 1

Context 11 ?Roman

?Severn Valley ware x 1 - another 2g abraded sherd

Context 25 ?Roman

building material, probably Roman

Context 34 ?Roman

?Severn Valley ware x 1 -1g, abraded sherd.

The metalwork *by Quita Mould*

Small find 1 unstratified

Copper alloy finger ring
Plain cast hoop of plano-convex section. External diameter 19mm, internal diameter 16mm, hoop width 3.5mm.

This finger ring has no diagnostic features and can not be independently dated on stylistic grounds. Plain cast hoops of this type have been found in Roman (for example Crummy 1983, 45 no 1742, 1744, 1749, 1755), later medieval (Egan and Pritchard 1991, 332 no 1625-1629) and post-medieval contexts. Two comparable rings of brass have been found in burials attributed to the 18th- earlier 19th century in the graveyard of St. Peter's Church, Barton upon Humber (Mould, work in progress), worn as wedding rings or love tokens. The ring from Weston under Penyard is likely to be of the same date.

Small find 2 context 8

Copper alloy button.
Flat disc with three sewing holes. Diameter 7mm

This extremely small sew-through button may be the back of a linen-covered button for an undergarment or ladies glove. It is unlikely to date prior to the mid 19th century.

The metalworking debris *by Nick Tavener*

A total of 4.7kg of metalworking debris was recovered from 10 contexts. The contexts range from the Romano-British to post-medieval periods. The assemblage was examined visually and categorised largely according to Jackson, 2000 but categories for blooms and billets, although rarely found (English Heritage, 2001), have been added if only to clarify the absence of such: No chemical or petrographic analyses have been undertaken. The results of the examination are given in Appendix 1: Table 1.

The material has little to add to the interpretation of the site. Four contexts, including the fairly recent topsoil layers [1], [7] and [4] and also the fill [35] of a possibly natural feature, produced only very small quantities of material amounting to less than 3% of the assemblage. These pieces were almost certainly relict material. The apparently larger quantities in soil [8] and the fill [9] of the medieval ditch [10] can be explained by the presence of a single very large piece in each of those contexts as indeed can the weights from contexts [11] and [25]. The material recovered from the possible contexts of Romano- British date was in modest quantity and could also easily be relict material from a background scatter.

The material is of interest, however, when viewed as an assemblage. An interesting aspect of the assemblage was the small proportion of undiagnostic material.. Small broken fragments of clearly diagnostic tap slag were identified within the material recovered from nine of the ten contexts. Large and very heavy pieces of very dense primary working slag recovered from four contexts accounted for 65% of the total weight of the entire assemblage. A small proportion of the assemblage comprises very light aerated vesicular pieces which seem to have been cinders or have solidified from a very light froth. If these were not a form of tap slag then they remain undiagnostic. The material appears to be largely, if not wholly, associated with primary iron working, i.e. smelting. There are no clearly identifiable pieces associated with secondary working although there may be hammer-scale amongst the bulk soil samples. This remains unknown.

The material almost certainly indicates production of iron at no great distance from the site although the addition of (chemically) basic ‘slags’ can have a beneficial effect in agriculture. The discovery of Roman pottery in association with some of the material probably indicates that the material originated as part of the well known local Roman iron industry. The source for the ore was probably the same as the other Roman metal working debris found during previous archaeological excavations in the vicinity, i.e. the eastern part of the Forest of Dean (Jackson, 2000).

The environmental remains *by Eizabeth Pearson*

Fieldwork and sampling policy

One sample was taken by the excavator from a deposit considered to be of high potential for the recovery of environmental remains. A total of 20 litres of fill was sampled from context 34.

Processing and analysis

The sample was processed by flotation followed by wet sieving using a Siraf tank. The flot was collected on a 300μm sieve and the residue retained on a 1mm mesh. This allows for the recover of items such as small animal bones, molluscs and seeds.

The residue was fully sorted by eye and the abundance of each category of environmental remains estimated. The flot was fully sorted using a low power EMT stereo light microscope and plant remains identified using modern reference collections maintained by the Service, and seed identification manual (Beijerinck 1947). Nomenclature for the plant remains follows the Flora of the British Isles, 3rd edition (Clapham, Tutin and Moore 1989).

Results

Only small fragments of charcoal and a fragment of a charred barley grain (*Hordeum vulgare*) were recovered from this sample. This assemblage is likely to derive from waste from a hearth. Although the feature was interpreted as a burial, no environmental remains such as human bone have been recovered which confirm this.

8 Discussion

The results from the 1999 geophysical survey were promising but the evaluation only identified three features that were on the geophysical plot (Fig. 4). All were ditches. Two corresponded with two sub-rectangular enclosures dating from the late Iron Age or Roman period. The third feature corresponded with a linear anomaly and given the context number [32]. No finds were recovered from the fill of [32]. Ditch [32] was picked up in the excavation and given the context number [6] (Fig. 5). Medieval pottery was recovered from the fill of [6]. The only other feature identified during the 2003 works which corresponds to a geophysical survey anomaly was the cast iron water pipe.

The paucity of securely dated features excavated in 1999 and 2003 suggests that the area of the site has only been utilized for agricultural purposes and it is probable that most of the tops of the features excavated have been ploughed out. It is impossible to assign any of the features to a definite period in history as the finds from the features could be residual. However, it is possible to suggest that certain features are more than likely to ascribe from the following periods.

Romano-British

The fills of the ovoid feature [26] contained a sherd of pottery and a fragment of building material of a probable Romano-British date. The function of feature [26] remains unclear. In plan the feature was the shape and size of a grave cut for a crouched inhumation. However, on excavation no skeletal remains were uncovered. It is possible that the acidity of the soil could have dissolved any skeletal remains if they had existed. The two large sandstone blocks uncovered within the lower fill of this feature could be interpreted as markers for a grave which have sunk in. The excavation area was devoid of large fragments of stone which suggests that

the stones were carried in from somewhere else. It is possible that feature [26] was a robbed out grave but this is not a very convincing argument. Alternatively cut [26] could be a pit whose function cannot be ascertained. Environmental remains recovered from the lower fill are possibly waste from a hearth but the fills of this feature do not support it being a hearth so the environmental remains are presumably brought in from elsewhere.

It is probable that ditch [6] was either a boundary or enclosure ditch sited within a wider agricultural landscape in the Romano-British period. However it is possible that the pottery recovered from this ditch was residual and it is from a later date, perhaps the medieval period. The only other feature to contain pottery of a Romano-British date was feature [12]. However, it is difficult to ascertain whether this is a natural depression filled with cultivation soil or perhaps the base of a pit.

Medieval

Ditch [10] is probably a boundary ditch situated on the edge of the settlement of Weston-under-Penyard. Ditch [28], situated to the east of [10] is interpreted as a continuation of this boundary. The gap between ditch [10] and ditch [28] is about the right size for a field gateway. There is evidence of a possible recut of [28] but it is difficult to be certain.

The location of the *terminus* of ditch [10] directly over cut [26] is interesting. Although the siting of the ditch over [26] could be a coincidence it is possible that it was deliberately sited. If this is the case then feature [26] must have been visible when the ditch was excavated in the medieval period. If [26] was a grave dating from the Romano-British period then it is possible that a low mound of soils or stones was placed over it. However, if this is the case then why was the *terminus* of the ditch situated over the grave? Alternatively the finds within the fills of [26] could be residual and the feature could date from the medieval period or even later.

Layers [7] and [8] are the remnants of the cultivation soil and although they produced pottery from the Romano-British period these soils would have been worked from the Romano-British period to the post-medieval period.

Cut [18] is possibly a pit that could date from the medieval period or earlier. Other features excavated are more than likely to be natural depressions or burrows within the natural clays and bedrock. It has been noted elsewhere that the natural soils are subject to erosion and gullies have been observed in the base geology (Jackson, fothcoming).

9 Conclusions

The results of the 1999 evaluation, geophysical survey and the 2003 excavations produced evidence of features that are all probably related to agricultural practices. The excavated features are mainly cut features of stock enclosures and boundary ditches dating from the late Iron Age, Roman and medieval periods. The geophysical survey showed anomalies which were interpreted as round houses but the excavations did not validate these interpretations and the paucity of features and finds on the site suggests that the area has only ever been utilized for agricultural purposes. It appears to have been on the peripheries of a settlement from the late Iron Age onwards. In the Iron Age and Romano-British periods the focus of settlement was about 1 kilometre to the north-east. By the medieval period the focus had shifted closer to the site but to the south.

Two ditches were excavated. One probably dates from the Romano-British period and the other from the medieval period. Both were probably boundary ditches set within a wider agricultural landscape.

Feature [26] remains an enigma. It probably dates from the Romano-British period or just later. However, the function of this feature is unclear. It is possible that it is a pit with some sort of agricultural purpose, perhaps excavated to bury a diseased sheep. Alternatively it could be a grave and the skeletal remains have been dissolved by the acidity of the soil. If this is the case why was it sited in an isolated and predominantly agricultural area?

The siting of the *terminus* of the medieval ditch over feature [26] suggests that it was a visible landmark in the medieval period when the ditch was excavated. Indeed it is likely that the ditch was deliberately sited over this feature. However, the reason for this remains unclear. It is possible that this landmark had ritual connotations but this must remain speculative.

10 Sources

Plans

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1838 Tithe Plan

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Pevsner, N. *The Buildings of England, Herefordshire*, 1963

Thorn, C. and Thorn, F. *Domesday Book: Herefordshire*, 1983

11 The archive

The archive is currently held in the offices of Marches Archaeology awaiting transfer to Herefordshire Heritage Services.

The archive consists of:

1 set of site notes
1 context index
38 context sheets
11 finds recording sheets
1 box of finds
1 small find index
2 small find recording sheets
1 sample index
2 sample recording sheets
1 photographic index
2 sheets of black and white negatives
2 sets of black and white prints
4 sheets of colour transparencies
5 sheets of levels
1 drawing index
10 sheets of field drawings

The site code is WUP203A

Appendix 2: Copy of the Brief

Appendix 3: Copy of the project proposal

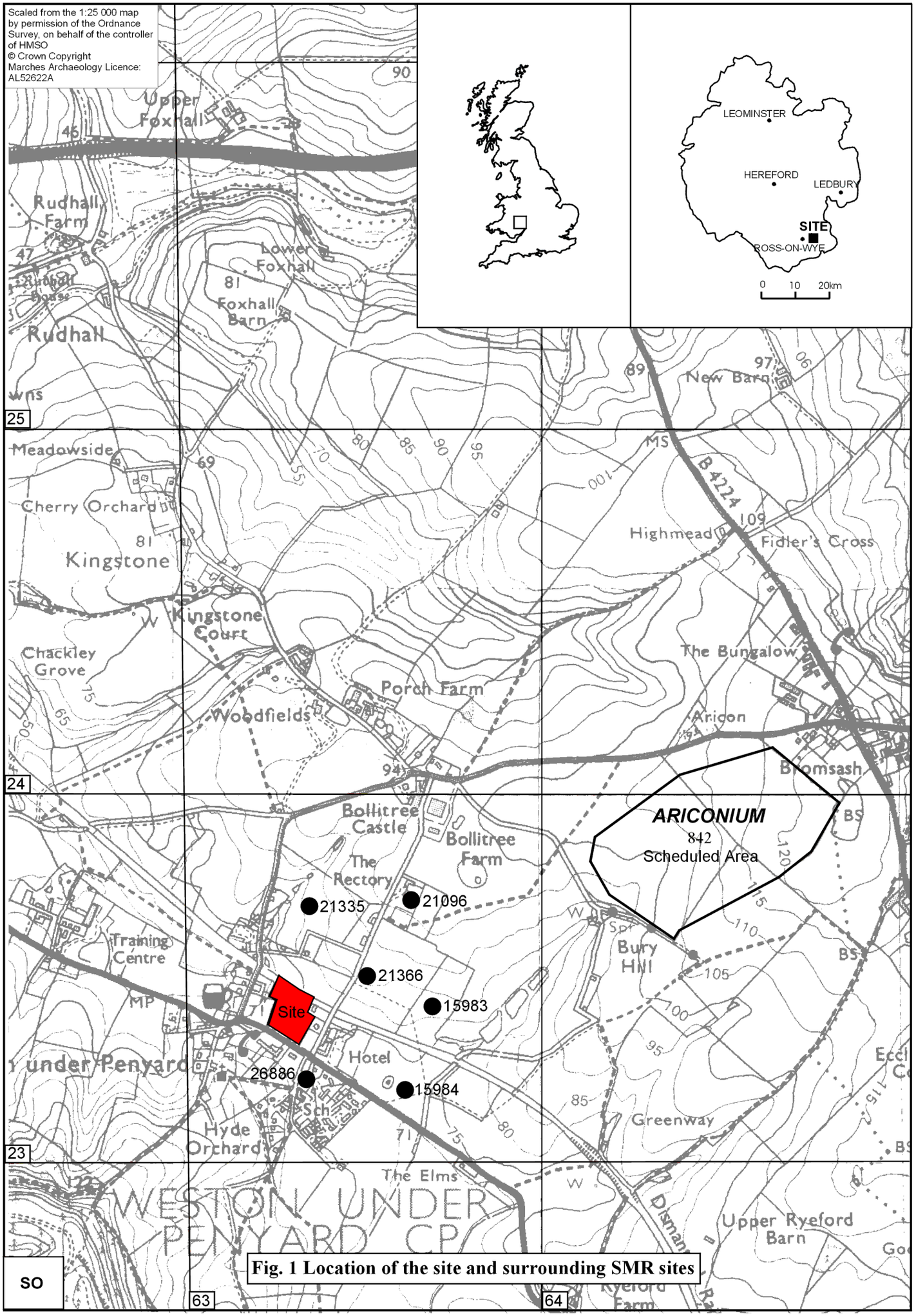


Fig. 1 Location of the site and surrounding SMR sites

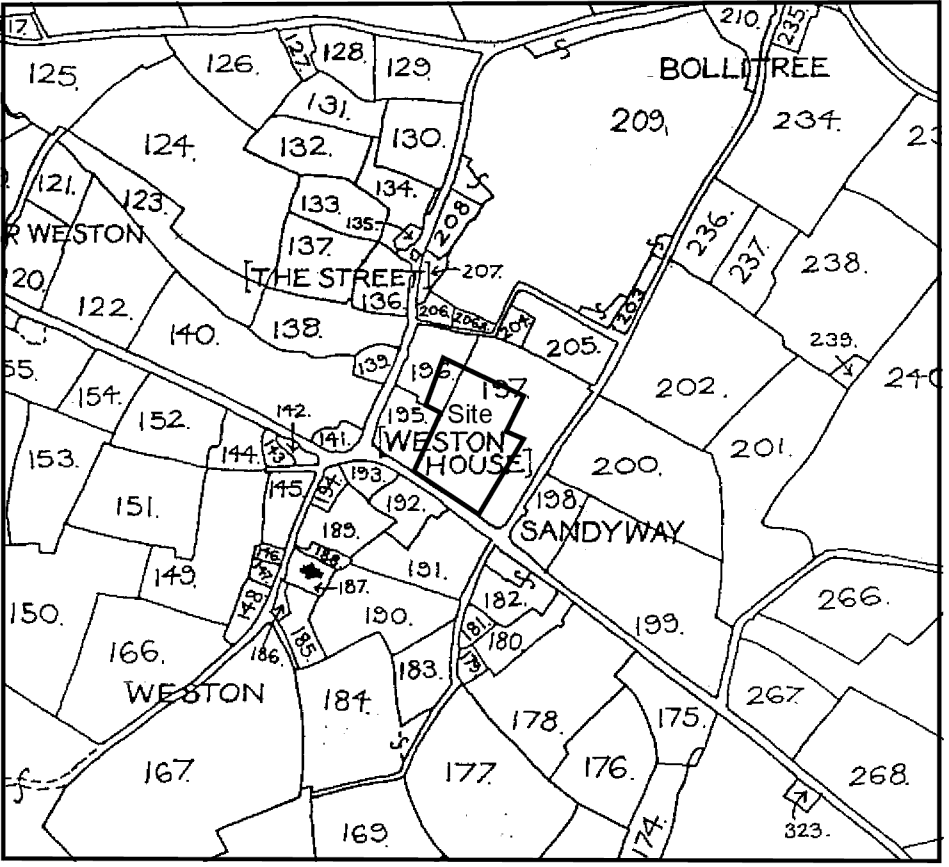


Fig. 2 The 1838 Tithe Plan

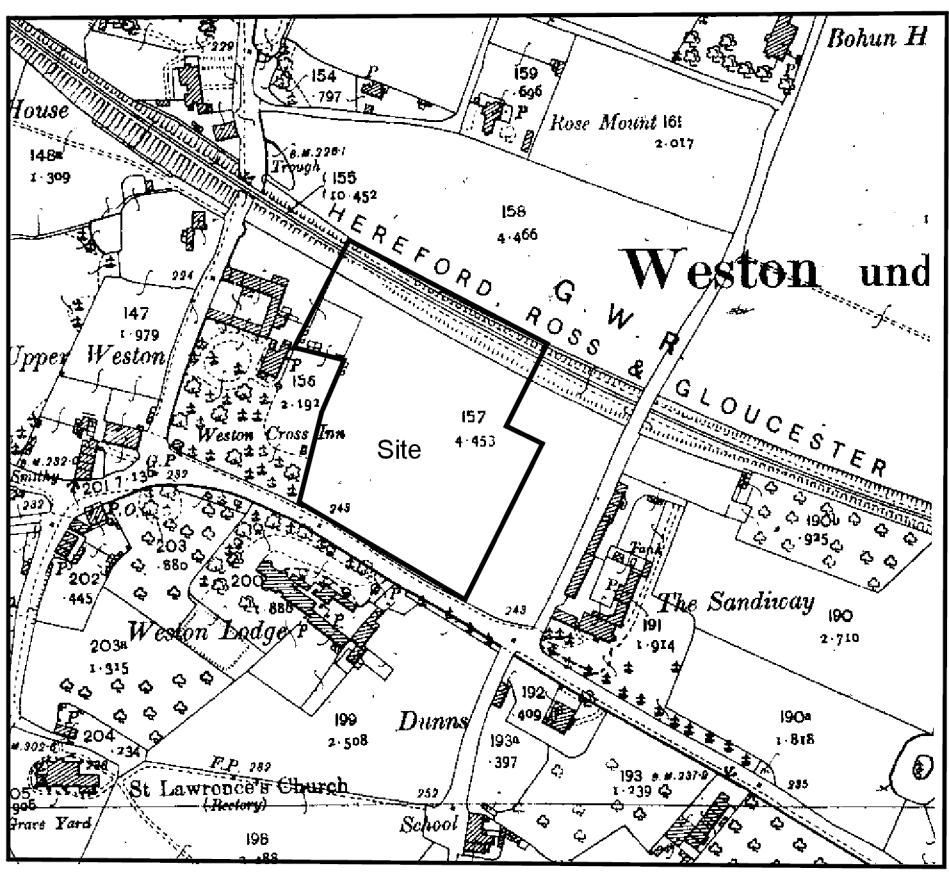


Fig. 3 1881 First Edition Ordnance Survey 6 Inch Plan

Fig. 4 Location of the 1999 evaluation trenches, results of the geophysical survey and location of the 2003 excavation

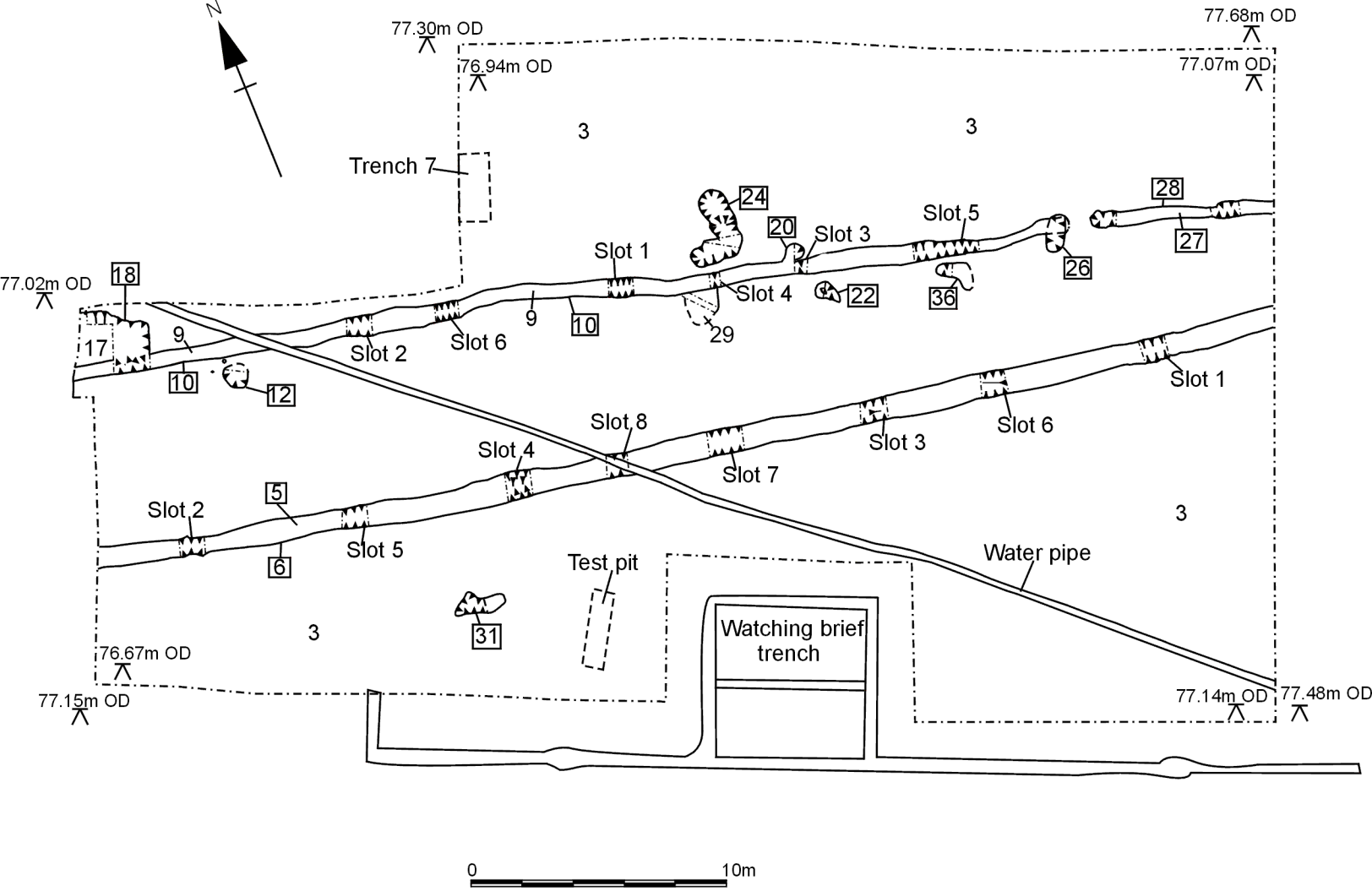


Fig. 5 The area of the excavation and watching brief showing archaeological features

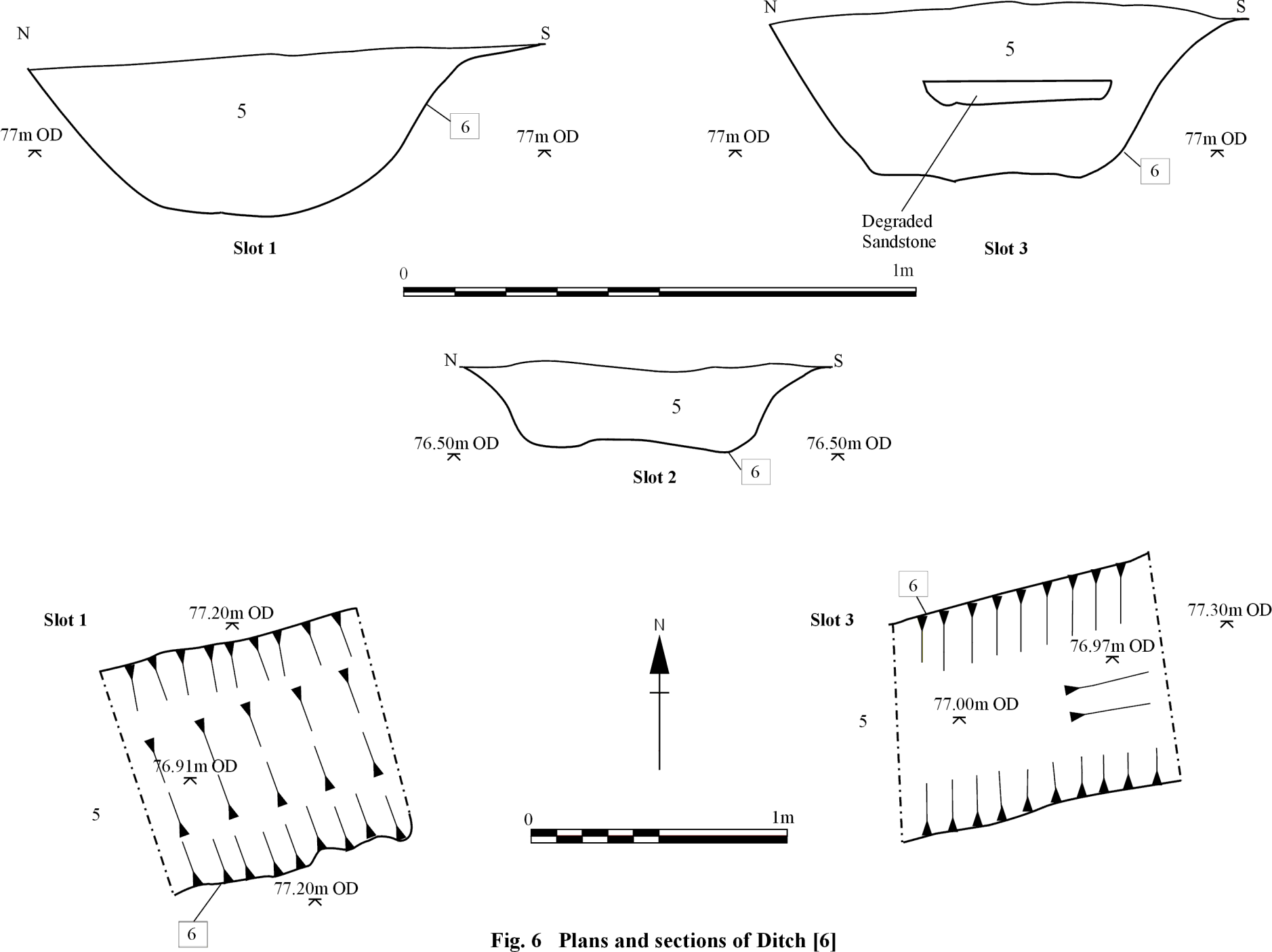


Fig. 6 Plans and sections of Ditch [6]

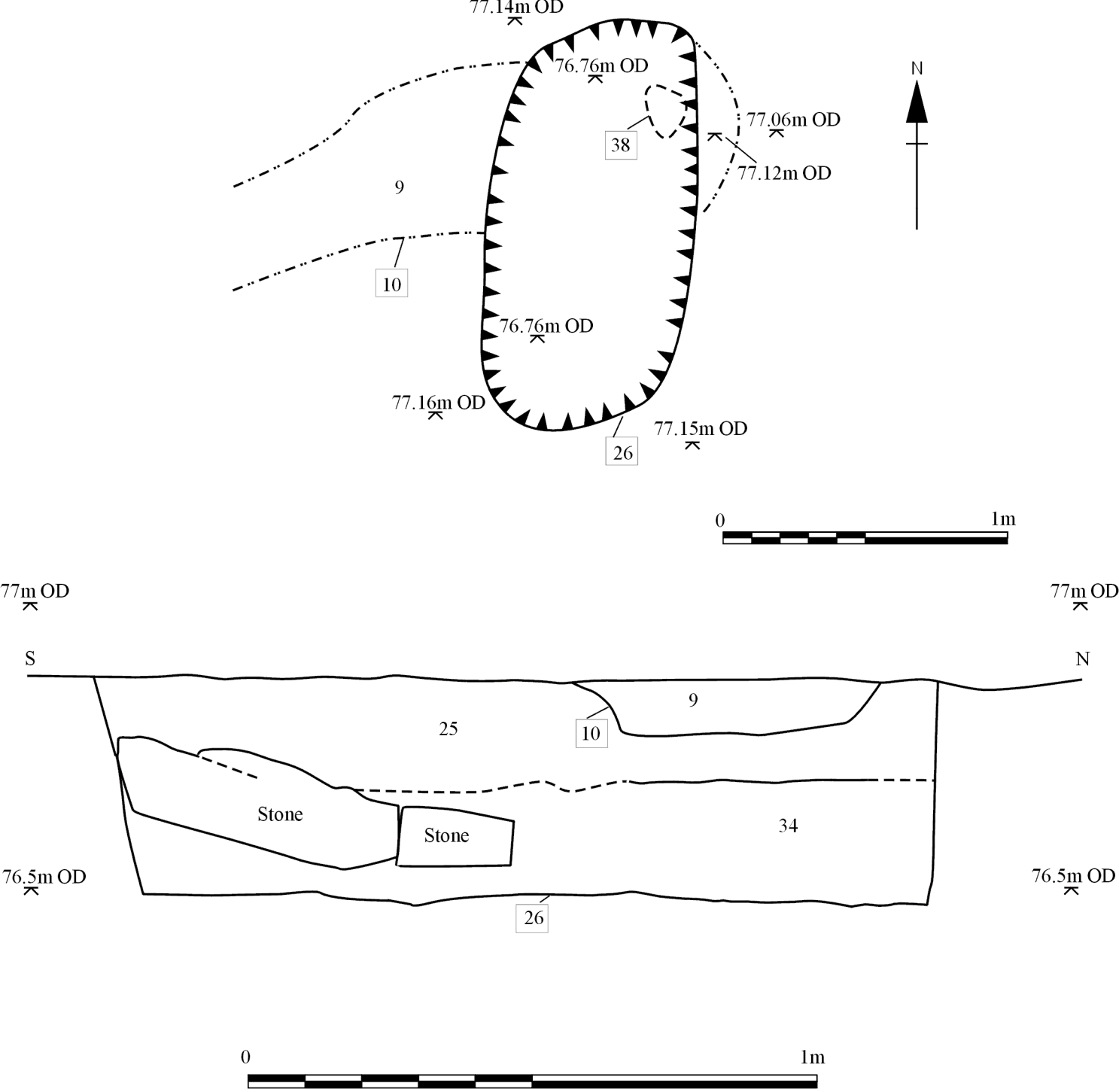


Fig. 7 Plan and section of feature [26]

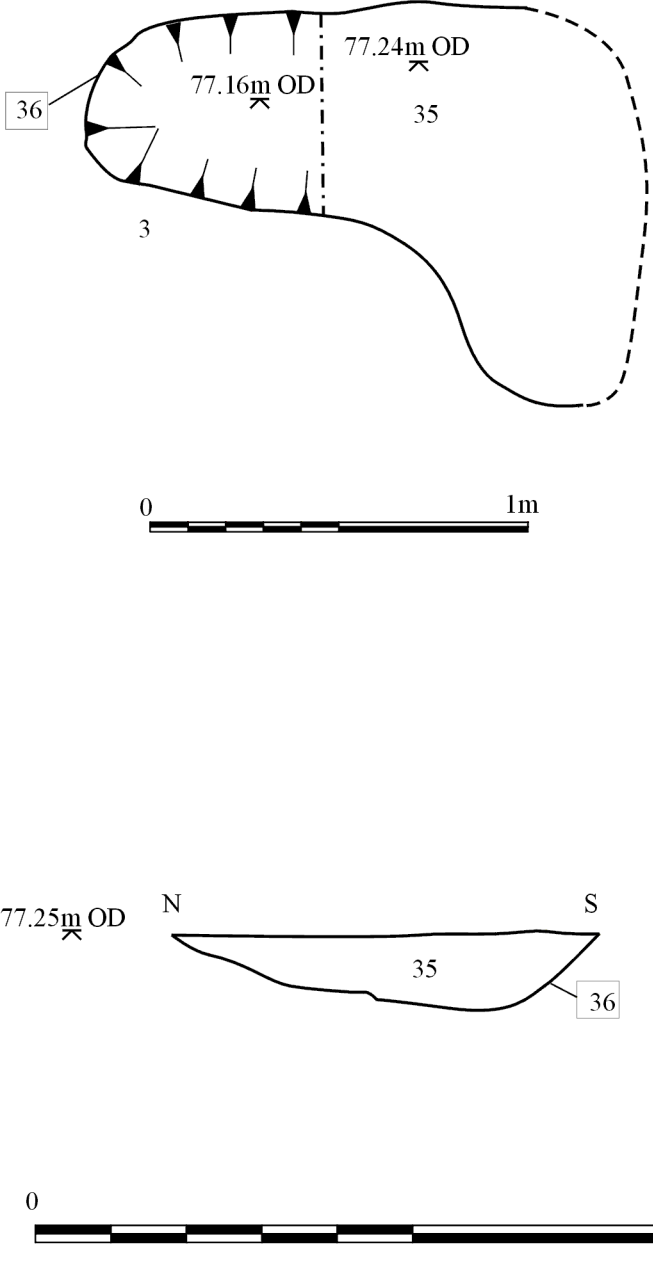


Fig. 8 Plan and section of feature [36]

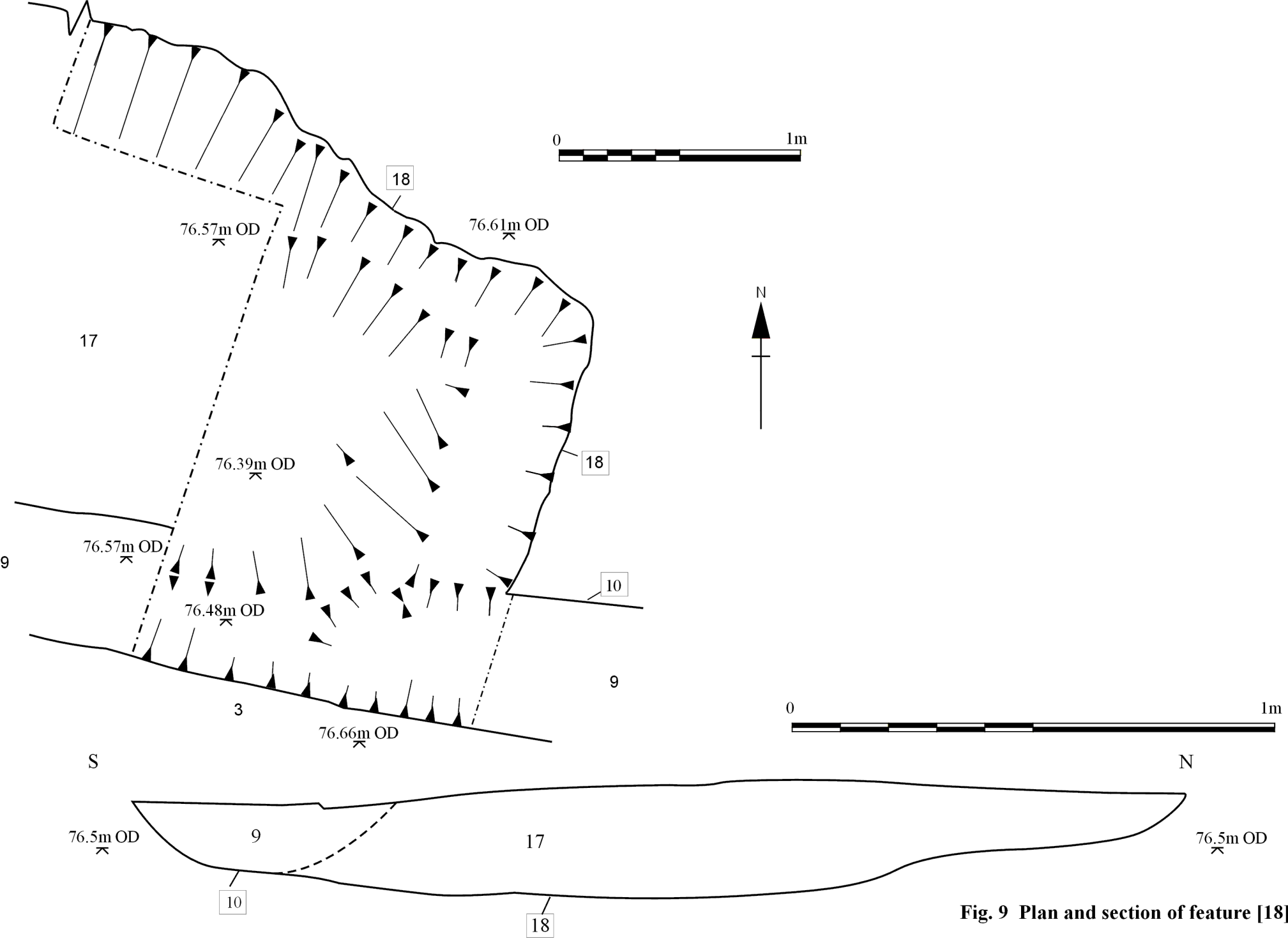


Fig. 9 Plan and section of feature [18]

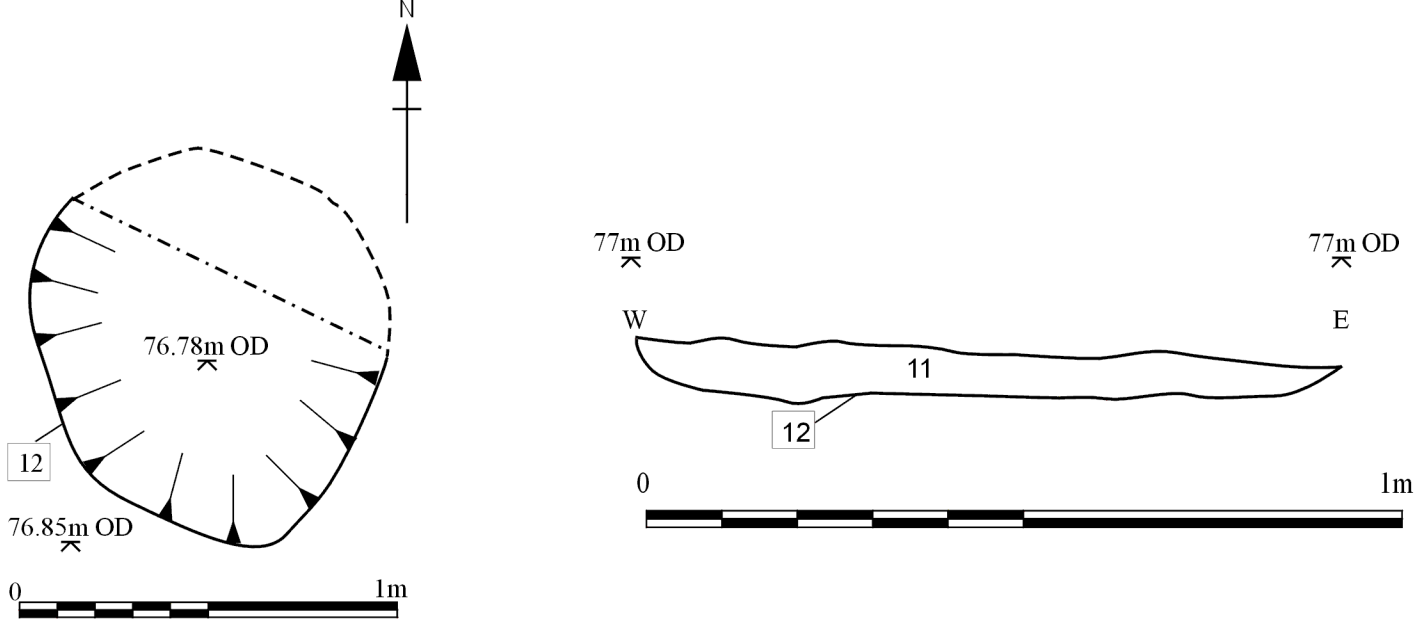


Fig. 10 Plan and section of ditch [12]

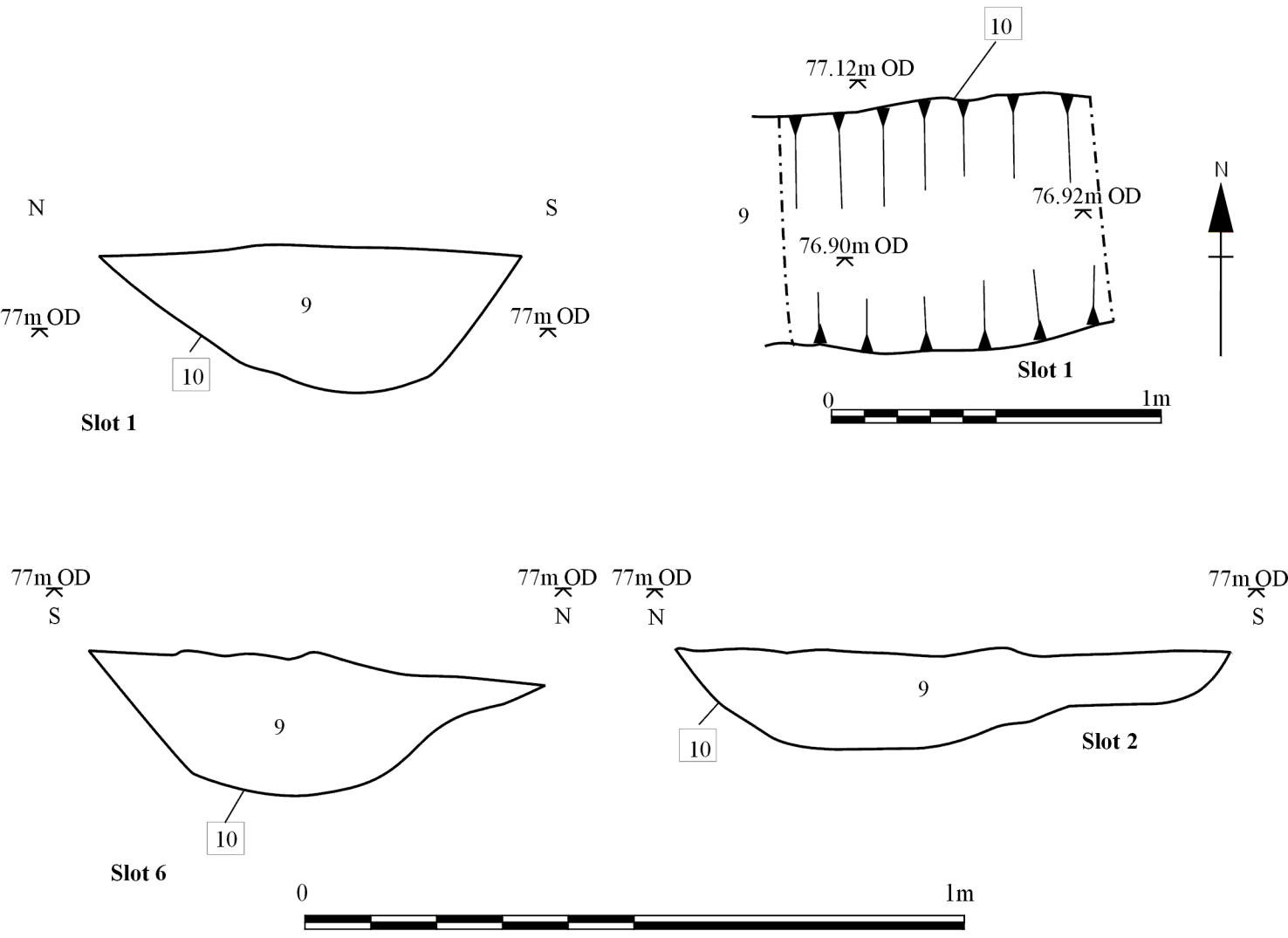
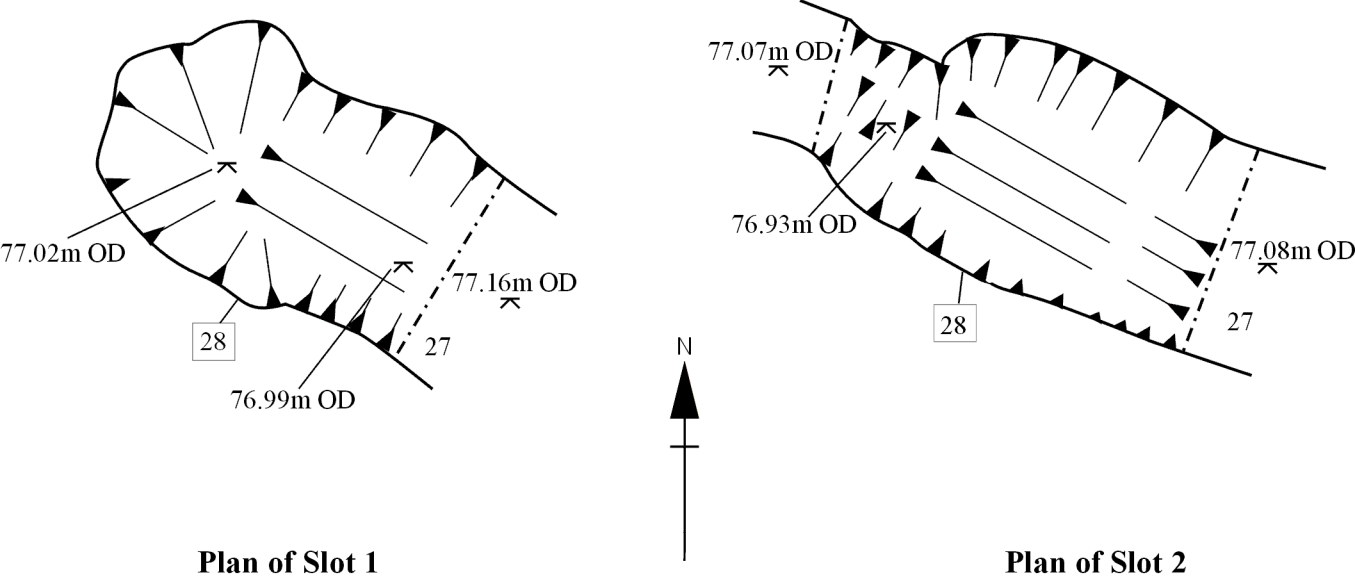
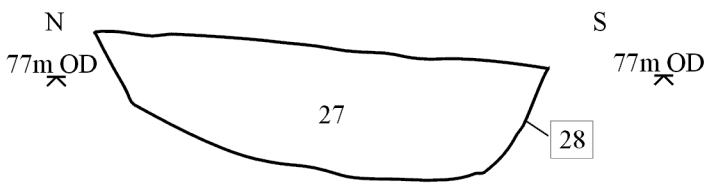


Fig. 11 Plan and sections of ditch [10]



Plan of Slot 1

Plan of Slot 2



Slot 2

Fig. 12 Plans and section of Ditch [28]

Appendix 1: Table 1 - Assessment of the metal working debris

Context	5	11	25	35	9	4	7	8	2	1
context type	fill of [6]	fill of [12]	fill of[26]	fill of [36]	fill of [10]	ploughsoil	soil	soil	ploughsoil	ploughsoil
period	?Roman	?Roman	?Roman	?natural	?medieval	?medieval	= ?[2]	= ?[7]	post -med	recent
Primary working										
tap slag	100g / 3	4g / 1	20g / 1	6g / 1	68 / 5	24g / 1	20g / 2		146g / 5	54 g / 3
dense ironworking slag		492g / 1	380g / 1		1000g / 1			1190g / 1		
vitrified furnace										
possible roasted ores										
glassy / blast furnace slag										
bloom										
cinder/froth (?undiag)	202g / 6				108 / 6			298g / 13		
Secondary working										
smithing hearth bottom(s)										
hammerscale										
billet										
vitrified hearth										
iron-rich cinder										
Undiagnostic										
undiagnostic iron working						6g / 1			238g / 6	
ferruginous concretion										
fired clay										
iron objects									198g / 1	
Total (weight (g) / No. of pieces)	302g / 9	496g / 2	400g / 2	6g / 1	1176g / 12	30g / 2	20g / 2	1488g / 14	588g / 12	54g / 3

Marches Archaeology

Land between Upper Weston and Little Weston
Weston-under-Penyard
Herefordshire

Project Proposal for an Archaeological Excavation

Introduction

A planning application has been approved by the local planning authority for permission to erect dwellings on land at Weston-under-Penyard (ref. SE1999/1539/o). The site is situated at NGR: SO 633 234.

A standard archaeological 'site investigation' condition has been attached to the planning permission.

The Local Planning Authority's Archaeology Advisor has produced a "Brief for a programme of archaeological work" Evans Jones Housing, on behalf of Craig Thorpe Limited (the client), has requested Marches Archaeology to quote for providing the archaeological services detailed in the Brief.

This project proposal is based on the Brief and will follow its stipulations, unless specified below. This proposal forms a written scheme of investigation for the archaeological works and should be read in conjunction with the Brief and its attached plan(s). Any subsequent alterations to the brief will be agreed in writing between Marches Archaeology and the Local Planning Authority's Archaeology Advisor.

Archaeological and Historical Background

The site lies close to the Roman settlement of *Ariconium*. An archaeological assessment of the site was carried out by Marches Archaeology in 1999. This indicated that there are sporadic remains throughout the site, with a concentration of activity in the south-eastern corner. This activity was dated to the late Iron Age and Roman periods. Map evidence shows that the site has been in agricultural use since the mid-nineteenth century at least and this has probably been the case for much longer.

Scope and aims of the project

The Brief states that the archaeological project will consist of:

1. Archaeological observation of the construction of a wall/garage forming part of the southern boundary of the development site
2. Archaeological excavation of an area identified on a plan accompanying the Brief.
3. Reporting the results, including collation of other archaeologically relevant data and deposition of the archive

4 If necessary, more detailed publication in a recognised Journal

The Institute of Field Archaeology defines an Excavation as "a programme of controlled, intrusive fieldwork with defined research objectives which examines and records archaeological deposits, features and structures and, as appropriate, retrieves artefacts, ecofacts and other remains within a specified area or site. The records made and objects gathered during fieldwork are studied and the results of that study published in detail appropriate to the Project Design and in the light of the findings".

The objective of this excavation, based on the above stated aim, are

to record, prior to and during development all archaeological materials present on the site

Site Arrangements

It is understood that the archaeological site works will take place during the main development works. Accordingly, Marches Archaeology will conform to the Health and Safety policy of the main groundworks contractor. The Safety Policy and General Risk Assessment operated by Marches Archaeology will be implemented. Copies of these documents are available on request. A risk assessment specific to this project will be carried out before commencement of fieldwork to identify any risks not noted in the General Risk Assessment. If costs accrue due to Health and Safety issues not made apparent to Marches Archaeology by the time of submission of this Project Proposal these costs will be additional to any costs identified in the estimate. The requirements of Health and Safety legislation are deemed to take precedence over archaeological requirements.

Welfare facilities, office space and tool store will be provided by the main groundworks contractor. It is also assumed that 110V power supply and running cold water will be available. If these are not available Marches Archaeology may provide these at the client's cost.

It is assumed that Marches Archaeology will have full, sole and uninterrupted access to the area of excavation throughout the period of excavation and that a sufficient area surrounding the site will be provided for the temporary storage of spoil, which will be periodically carted away by the main groundworks contractor for the development.

The area of the excavation and spoil heap will be fenced by Marches Archaeology with Netlon type fencing to delimit the area under the control of Marches Archaeology. On completion of the fieldwork the trench will be left open.

The excavation area will be stripped under archaeological supervision by the main groundworks contractor using a machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, using a dumper or similar to remove spoil from the vicinity of the excavation.

On completion of the fieldwork the area of the excavation will be returned to the main groundworks contractor.

Methodology

Before the project commences two full sets of any existing relevant drawings (plans, elevations, sections etc.) including the development site and any building(s) as existing and as proposed will be provided to Marches Archaeology by the client. Two copies of any amendments or revisions to such drawings and of any additional drawings will be provided as the project continues. Copies will also be provided to Marches Archaeology of any additional relevant historical, archaeological, structural or other information is held by the client.

Archaeological observation of the construction of a wall/garage forming part of the southern boundary of the development site

The groundworks associated with the construction of the wall/garage will be monitored by an archaeologist. The archaeologist(s) shall have the power to suspend work on the excavation of material for short periods of time for the purpose of investigating areas of potential archaeological interest. If an area is deemed to require more detailed recording the archaeologist(s) shall have the power to suspend work in that area for the purpose of small scale excavation and recording of archaeological data in order to fulfil the requirements of the Brief. The recording system and retrieval policies will be as described below.

Archaeological excavation of an area identified on a plan accompanying the Brief. Fieldwork

One trench will be excavated near the southern boundary of the field as shown on the plan accompanying the brief. The precise location and dimensions of the trench will be determined with reference to this plan by scaling from Evans Jones drawing 10092/02b (Feb 2003).

It is assumed that there are no service trenches, hedges or other impediments either above or below ground in the area of the proposed archaeological ground works. It is the responsibility of the client to inform Marches Archaeology if there are any such impediments. It is specifically assumed that the iron water identified by the geophysical survey, which traverses the site, will not be live and can be removed. Any costs to the project, whether archaeological or other, incurred by the presence of such impediments will not be borne by Marches Archaeology.

Top soil and the underlying cultivation soil will be excavated by mechanical excavator to a level determined to comprise deposits, features or horizons of archaeological significance. Further excavation will be by hand. Undifferentiated soil layers may be further excavated by machine after testing by hand excavation. Where non-significant features penetrate the natural deposits and do not impact on other archaeological deposits or features the non-significant features will be left *in situ*. Archaeological features likely to be impacted on by the development are to be excavated by hand. 10-20% of linear features will be excavated, 50% of discrete features and all of any structures.

The recording system will include written, drawn and photographic data. Context numbers will be allocated and context record sheets completed. Site notebooks may also be used. A running matrix will be maintained. Plans (normally 1:20), sections (normally 1:10) and other appropriate drawings of significant data will be made. Plans will normally be multi-context, but certain features may require single context planning. Deposits and features will be related to Ordnance Datum. The photographic record will be made using

black and white negative and colour transparency film. All artefactual and ecofactual material recovered from hand excavation will initially be retained. Allowance is made for specialists to visit the site. If immediate conservation of fragile or otherwise vulnerable objects is needed the agreement of the client will be sought to carry this out. Samples will be taken of deposits considered to have environmental, technological or scientific dating potential. Environmental sampling and finds strategies are given as Appendix 1 and 2.

All artefactual and ecofactual material recovered from hand excavation will initially be retained. Samples will be taken of deposits considered to have environmental, technological or scientific dating potential, with particular regard to the potential for dendrochronology and radiocarbon dating.

The recording system will include written, drawn and photographic data. Context numbers will be allocated and context record sheets completed. Site notebooks may also be used. A running matrix will be maintained if appropriate. Plans (normally 1:20), sections (normally 1:10) and other appropriate drawings of significant data will be made. Plans will normally be multi-context, but certain features may require single context planning. The photographic record will be made using black and white negative and colour transparency film.

This project proposal does not cover the eventuality that there are human remains within the area to be investigated as additional legal requirements then come into force.

Reporting the results, including collation of other archaeologically relevant data and deposition of the archive

On completion of fieldwork a site archive will be completed. The written, drawn and photographic data will be catalogued and cross-referenced and a summary produced. The artefactual and ecofactual data will be processed, catalogued and cross-referenced and summaries produced. After an initial assessment any unstratified non-diagnostic artefacts and ecofacts and non-diagnostic samples will be discarded. Further dispersal of artefacts and ecofacts will be in line with the collection policy of the recipient repository and will be documented in the archive. The checked site matrix will be produced if appropriate.

The freeholder(s) of the land to which this document relates has title to all objects (unless within the jurisdiction of the Treasure Act 1996) recovered from the land. The client shall secure the agreement of the freeholder(s) to donate the archive, together with any artefacts and ecofacts recovered during the fieldwork, to an appropriate repository. Marches Archaeology will arrange for such deposition.

Post-excavation assessment will be based on the site archive. Any artefacts and ecofacts which require specialist assessment will be submitted for such work. Depending on the nature of artefacts and deposits discovered in the excavation the following specialist analysis may be required:

> palaeoenvironmental study, soil micromorphology, bone analysis, radiocarbon dates, pottery analysis and consolidation.

As the extent of specialist work required cannot be estimated at this stage, the cost of this work has been included in the present project proposal as a contingency which will be considered after the fieldwork is complete.

Sufficient documentary research will be undertaken to supplement that done for the evaluation in 1999. This will include consulting the County Sites and Monuments Record to check for any more recent work.

An illustrated report will be produced which will detail the aims, methods, and results of the project A non-technical summary and details of the location and size of the archive will be included. Copyright of any reports is vested in Marches Archaeology.

The client will be provided with two copies of the report. Further copies will be deposited with the local Sites and Monuments Record (two copies), the Local Authority's archaeological service and the National Archaeological Record (one copy each).

If necessary, more detailed publication in a recognised Journal

If the project reveals that the quality and potential of the information resulting from the fieldwork is such that further analysis and formal publication is required the level of such work will be determined in discussions between the client, Marches Archaeology and the Local Planning Authority's Archaeological Advisor. Such works would be subject to a further Project Proposal which would be separately costed.

Management of the Project

Marches Archaeology recognises the Code of Conduct, Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology, By-laws, Standards and other documents produced by the Institute of Field Archaeologists. The project will be managed by a Member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

Appropriate insurance cover will be held throughout the project.

The Local Planning Authority's Archaeology Advisor shall at any reasonable time be granted access to the site, with prior notice, for the purpose of monitoring the fieldwork.

Timetable

The timetable has not yet been finalised. This Proposal will be submitted for approval by the Local Planning Authority's Archaeology Advisor, who will be given at least one week's notice (or such shorter period as agreed between Marches Archaeology and the Local Planning Authority's Archaeology Advisor) of the commencement of the fieldwork. The report will be presented to the client within one month of completion of the fieldwork, unless otherwise agreed. The results will be reported to the Local Planning Authority's Archaeology Advisor and the local Sites and Monuments Record within one month of presentation, unless otherwise agreed. A summary report will be submitted for publication in an appropriate medium within one year of completion of all fieldwork.

Resources

The project will be managed by either Richard Stone or Nic Appleton-Fox, both of whom are Members of the Institute of Field Archaeologists with a registered Area of Competence in Archaeological Field Practice. Other field and post-excavation staff will be appropriately

experienced. Where trainees are used they will be closely supervised by senior members of the project team.

The Project Director will supervise or carry out any documentary study, the majority of which will normally be completed before commencement of fieldwork.

Specialist sub-contractors will be used as appropriate. Specialists will normally be people approved by English Heritage Ancient Monuments Laboratory. Those who might be expected to be called upon (dependent upon availability) include:

Jeremy Evans (Rátkai and Evans PX Partners)	Roman ceramics
Stephanie Rátkai (Rátkai and Evans PX Partners)	medieval ceramics
David Barker (Stoke on Trent Museum)	post-medieval ceramics
Liz Pearson (Worcestershire Archaeological Service)	environmental remains
Ian Baxter (freelance)	animal bone
Megan Brickley (Birmingham Univ. Field Archaeology Unit)	human bone

31st July 2003

Appendix 1

Sampling strategy for environmental and technological evidence

Specialist advice is provided by the specialists named in the Project Proposal and by the Ancient Monuments Laboratory of English Heritage and by their university post holders at the University of Birmingham.

The sampling strategy described below will be supplemented by telephone contact with the appropriate specialists to inform them of the progress of the project. Further advice will be sought if any deposits are encountered which the excavators consider may require alternative treatment. Specialist advice on site may be required in some circumstances. The level of such involvement will be determined by the nature of the archaeological resource.

Environmental remains

Four principal sizes of sample may be taken by site staff:

a total samples
b bulk samples of 20 or 40 litres
c sub-samples of 0.25 litres
d bone and artefact recovery samples of 100 litres

Additionally, samples may be required for micromorphology or pollen analysis. These would normally be taken by specialists.

Non-waterlogged negative features

Bulk samples may be taken from each significant context. Where the sample size is less than 40 litres a total sample may be used. 10 litres may be wet sieved using meshes of 1mm for residue and 500 microns for flotation. Specialist advice may be sought for the need to sieve more of the sample.

Sub-samples will be taken for pollen analysis only where there is reason to suspect pollen deposition and preservation (e.g. in a buried soil surface).

If the context is larger than 40 litres a bone and artefact recovery sample may be taken. This would be for wet sieving using a 6mm mesh.

Waterlogged negative contexts

Bulk samples of 10-20 litres may be taken for general biological analysis (GBA) - seeds, beetles, pollen etc. - from each context where the preservation of organic material seems likely. If the context size is less than 20 litres a total sample may be taken. Specialist advice may be sought and specialists invited to visit the site to comment on the sampling strategy as work progresses.

Any GBA samples may be processed in an environmental laboratory under specialist supervision

Burnt deposits

Total samples may be taken from each context. 10 litres may be wet sieved using meshes of 1mm for residue and 500 microns for flotation. Specialist advice may be sought for the need to sieve more of the sample

Bone retrieval and quality control samples

In addition to hand collection, 100 litre samples for wet coarse sieving with a 6mm mesh may be taken - these will be 'whole earth', without artefacts or bones having first been collected by hand. Such samples may be taken from substantial features, general layers which extend over substantial areas of the site and those which represent a substantive activity, not only from features rich in artefacts or bones. This will allow an assessment of the rate of loss of smaller artefacts and bones from the hand collected assemblage.

Pollen samples

In addition to the routine pollen samples, specialist advice may be sought for the need for pollen samples from cesspits, buried soils, silting up of ditches etc. and peats.

Micromorphology

If buried soils survive Matthew Canti of the Ancient Monuments Laboratory may be contacted to determine the appropriate level and methodology for sampling the deposits.

Timber

If waterlogged worked timber survives specialist advice may be sought from the Ancient Monuments Laboratory.

Dendrochronology

If sufficient timber (>50 rings of growth) to have potential for dendrochronological analysis survives in a permanently waterlogged context specialist advice may be taken.

Technological evidence

Two principal sizes of sample may be taken by site staff:

a total samples
b 1 litre samples

Smithing

Routine testing for the presence of hammerscale will be made by the use of a magnet in areas where it is thought there may be evidence for ironworking.

Where hammerscale is present the area may be divided into 0.5m squares and 250g samples taken from each square to identify distribution patterns.

Slag and other metalworking debris

If found in small quantities (<1kg) in contexts without specific association with metalworking, slags will be treated as bulk finds rather than as samples.

If substantial quantities of slag or other metalworking debris are found, or if they are found in association with other evidence of metalworking a total sample may be taken.

If very large amounts (>40kg) are found from one activity advice may be sought on the appropriate level of sampling.

If slag is present over a large area the area may be divided into 0.5m squares and total samples taken from each square to identify distribution patterns.

Radiocarbon

The need for radiocarbon dating is likely to be slight as the ceramic record is likely to be sufficient to date the stratigraphic sequence adequately. If, however, earlier phases are encountered radiocarbon dating may be of benefit. 1 litre samples (or total samples if less than this amount) of any charcoal, wood and bone may be taken from significant deposits.

Archaeomagnetism

The advice of staff of the Ancient Monuments Laboratory may be sought if deposits which may be susceptible to archaeomagnetic analysis are found.

Appendix 2
Finds collection, processing and conservation

Finds collection

It is intended that all stratified material will be retained. The only exclusion to this is building material which has no identifiable features (e.g. mouldings, more than one dressed visible face. Many categories of material will be treated as 'bulk' finds. These include ceramic material, clay pipe, post-medieval glass, bone, shell, amorphous small pieces of ironwork (less than 20mm) and iron nails.

Bulk finds will not be allocated unique numbers, the number of the context from which they were derived will be used as the identifier. If, during after excavation, further specific information is required bulk finds can be allocated a unique number as a small find.

Certain categories of artefacts will automatically be allocated small find numbers. These include all non-ferrous metals, non-amorphous ironwork (excluding nails), medieval and earlier glass, worked stone, worked wood and leather.

The conservation and processing of finds is discussed below.

Finds processing and conservation

Specialist advice is provided by the specialists named in the Project Proposal and by the Ancient Monuments Laboratory of English Heritage and by their regional science advisor.

Fragile objects

Whatever the material, fragile objects (i.e. those which may reasonably be expected to decay significantly if left untreated) will be treated as follows:
Small objects will be lifted in a block of soil and bagged with the soil. These will then be put in polythene boxes padded with bubble wrap and sent for stabilisation.
Large objects (>0.2m in at least one dimension) and very fragile smaller objects will be left *in situ* and the conservator contacted to determine the appropriate treatment (e.g. expanding polyurethane foam or Plaster of Paris).

Objects of composite manufacture.

Objects which are made of more than one material will be treated as fragile objects and the advice of the conservator sought.

Bone

Bone will be washed and allowed to dry gradually. After marking (2 large pieces per bag will be marked) it will be bagged in polythene bags and boxed in acid free boxes.

Ceramics

Ceramics will be washed and allowed to dry gradually. After marking it will be bagged in polythene bags and boxed in acid free boxes.

Glass

Glass will be kept damp in a polythene bag. This will then be put in a polythene box padded with bubble wrap and kept dark.

Leather

Leather will be kept at the same level of humidity as when excavated by double bagging in polythene bags. These will then be put in a polythene box padded with bubble wrap and kept dark.

Metalwork

Metalwork will be allowed to dry gradually and will be bagged in polythene bags with small holes and boxed in polythene with silica gel.

Mortar and plaster

Mortar and plaster will be allowed to dry gradually and will be bagged in polythene bags with small holes and boxed in polythene. If painted it will be treated as a fragile object.

Shell

Shell will be washed and allowed to dry gradually and will be bagged in polythene bags with small holes and boxed in polythene with silica gel.

Stone

Stone will be allowed to dry gradually and will be bagged in polythene bags and boxed in acid free boxes. Large pieces of stone will be stored on pallets. If painted it will be treated as a fragile object.

Wood

Wood will be kept at the same level of humidity as when excavated by double bagging in polythene bags. These will then be put in a polythene box padded with bubble wrap and kept dark.