

Marches Archaeology

Barn at Hill Farm Wychnor Staffordshire

Report on an archaeological evaluation

March 2004

Marches Archaeology Series 324

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**Barn at Hill Farm
Wychnor
Staffordshire**

A report on an evaluation

NGR: SK 1762 1630 (site centre)

**Report by
Jane Kenney**

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**Barn at Hill Farm
Wychnor
Staffordshire**

A report on an evaluation

Summary

Three evaluation trenches were dug to assess the archaeology within the development site located in the middle of the earthworks of a deserted medieval village. Trench 1 confirmed that an earthwork represented the edge of a late medieval field, but also revealed a medieval pit or gully below the ploughsoil. Trench 2 exposed no significant archaeology. Trench 3 was on a small, man-made platform and revealed postholes and cobbled surfaces related its use, probably dating to the late medieval period.

1 Introduction

Scheduled Monument Consent was granted for works to convert a barn at Hill Farm, Wychnor to residential use on the condition that appropriate archaeological works were carried out (ref. HSD 9/2/5094). The site is centred on NGR: SK 1762 1630 (Figs 1 and 2).

The site lies within the extensive earthworks of a deserted medieval village scheduled as SAM number 22436. The Scheduled Monument Consent required that before any groundworks were undertaken a programme of archaeological work had to be carried out. A Written Scheme of Investigation (Meeson 2004) for this programme was produced by Bob Meeson, archaeological consultant to Mercer Farming Ltd (the client), and approved by the Secretary of State advised by English Heritage. Geophysical and contour surveys have been carried out as the first stage of the three stage archaeological programme (Sabin 2003). The present work forms the second stage, which comprises an archaeological evaluation. Bob Meeson, on behalf of the client, commissioned Marches Archaeology to provide the archaeological services detailed in the Written Scheme of Investigation.

The work was carried out between 16th and 18th February 2004 inclusive and the final report was issued on 3rd March 2004.

2 Aims and objectives

The aim of this evaluation was to provide sufficient information to inform decisions to minimise the impact of the development works. The Written Scheme of Investigation stated that the archaeological project would consist of:

- Evaluative excavation of 10% of the development site
- Reporting
- Archive deposition

An archaeological evaluation aims to “gain information about the archaeological resource within a given area or site (including presence or absence, character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and quality) in order to make an assessment of its merit in the appropriate context, leading to one or more of the following: the formulation of a strategy to ensure the recording, preservation or management of the resource; the formulation of a strategy to mitigate a threat to the archaeological resource; the formulation of a proposal for further archaeological investigation within a programme of research” (Institute of Field Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations).

3 Methodology

Fieldwork

The Written Scheme of Investigation stated that four trenches were to be excavated as shown on a plan provided with the Scheme. However, conditions on the site prevented the works being carried out exactly as specified. The curtilage fence on the south side of the site followed quite a different line to that shown on the plan. Trench D as originally specified was largely outside the curtilage as defined in the ground (Fig. 3). It was therefore decided between Marches Archaeology and Bob Meeson to move the location of this trench. The area close to the southern boundary in the south-eastern corner of the site has been disturbed by a drain, so it was decided to place the trench where undisturbed archaeological evidence was most likely to be found. In this south-eastern corner of the site was a low, square platform. This is rather poorly defined on the contour survey, although quite clear on the geophysical plot as a dark anomaly and well defined on the ground. The evaluation trench was placed on top of this platform, the size of the trench reduced to 3m by 3m to fit on the platform.

An additional problem was that the site was extensively waterlogged when the evaluation was due to be carried out. Any trenches dug in low lying areas would immediately fill with water and recording of the archaeology would be impossible. The wet conditions meant that the ground could easily be churned up by machines, and any machine access had to be restricted to the drier periphery of the site. To avoid these problems it was decided not to excavate trenches within low-lying areas of the site. The replacement for trench D therefore did not extend beyond the platform, and trench C was abandoned altogether. Three trenches were excavated and these are referred to by numbers rather than letters to fit with Marches Archaeology’s recording system. Trenches 1 and 2 (A and B) were positioned approximately as indicated in the Written Scheme, trench C was abandoned and trench 3, the replacement for trench D, was situated as described above (Fig. 3).

While the evaluation was being undertaken three test pits were dug on behalf of the client to investigate the foundations of the barn. These were located along the southern side of the barn and were dug by hand. These test pits were inspected and recorded by Marches Archaeology and are included in this report as trenches 4 to 6 (Fig. 3).

In the three evaluation trenches the upper deposits were removed by a 2CX JCB, a mini excavator being unavailable, to a depth where significant structures or deposits were visible or the natural subsoil was exposed. These features were then cleaned and investigated by hand. All artefactual material recovered from hand excavation was retained.

The recording system included written, drawn and photographic data. Context numbers were allocated and context record sheets completed. The photographic record was made using

black and white negative and colour transparency film. Plans at a scale of 1:20 and sections at 1:10 were made of all the trenches, with further plans and sections of features as appropriate. The trenches were located in relation to the site boundaries and the barn using a total station theodolite. An interpretive earthwork survey was also carried out with the total station within the area of the development site as the existing topographical survey did not sufficiently define the archaeological features as seen on the ground (see Fig. 3).

Office work

On completion of fieldwork a site archive was prepared. The written, drawn and photographic data was catalogued and cross-referenced and a summary produced (see appendix I for a summary of contexts). The artefactual data was processed, catalogued and cross-referenced and summaries produced. The pottery was sent to Stephanie Rátkai for specialist analysis (see appendix II for a summary of finds, appendix III for the pottery report).

4 Site description and the proposed development

The site is an area of pasture field surrounding a brick barn, located at an altitude of between 61.5m and 63.0m OD. It is now enclosed by a curtilage fence and covers 0.13 hectares. It is situated on the western side of the lane leading down to St Leonard's Church. The village of Wychnor is now little more than a hamlet of scattered houses to the south of the road leading from the A38 to Wychnor Park. It is situated on a gentle south facing slope on the northern edge of the flood plain of the River Trent (Figs 1 and 2). The underlying geology is Triassic mudstone overlaid by Quaternary river terrace deposits (Sabin 2003, 2).

It is proposed to convert the brick barn to residential use. This will involve creating a driveway from the existing gate at the north-eastern corner of the site and creating an area of hard standing to the north and east of the barn (Fig. 3). Service trenches will be dug and a soak-away will be necessary. It is intended to plant a hedge down the eastern boundary of the site and some of the area may be made into flower beds.

5 Archaeological and historical background

The Written Scheme of Investigation (Meeson 2004) describes the archaeological context and history of the area and only a brief summary will be given here. Wychnor is an Old English name and the village is Saxon in origin. The manor of Wychnor was mentioned in the Domesday Book, and there is Norman masonry in the church of St Leonard, although it too may have Saxon origins. There were two substantial medieval houses, one a moated site on the flood plain to the south (now cut by the canal), the other visible as a sub-rectangular earthwork enclosure west of the church. A lane ran north from the eastern side of the enclosure, joining the east-west aligned main village street at the location of the present development site. A survey of the village earthworks carried out by the Department of Adult and Continuing Education at Keele University (Fig. 4) clearly shows these roads and some of the house platforms adjacent to them. A map of 1724 (Meeson 2004, plate 1) shows that the village street was still in use and many buildings were still standing in the early 18th century. The village declined in the late 17th and 18th centuries, but was still of considerable size in the early 19th century, with Enclosure probably causing its final abandonment.

Within the development site archaeological earthworks are visible (Fig. 3) and these can be understood in context of the broader plan of the deserted village (Fig. 4). The steep scarp (Fig. 3 (a)), up to 0.75m high, across the north-west corner of the site is the southern edge of an area of crofts. There are crofts and a probable toft (house platform) (Fig. 4 (a)) to the south of the site, just beyond the curtilage fence. A small square platform (up to 0.45m high) in the south-eastern corner of the site (Fig. 3 (b)) was identified for investigation by evaluation trench 3. All these raised areas are shown as high resistance in the geophysical survey (Sabin 2003).

The barn itself is situated in a linear hollow forming part of the main village street, at the point where the north-south lane joined it. South of the barn is a low, but steep scarp (up to 0.2m high), reinforced with stones (Fig. 3 (c)), possibly originally a revetment, defining the northern side of a large rectangular hollow. This contains the remains, including concrete stanchions around its edge, of a recent steel-framed structure, probably a stock shelter.

The southern edge of a pond in the field to the north of the site extends within the site boundaries (Fig. 3 (d)). A low, broad scarp (up to 0.25m high) along the northern side of the site (Fig. 3 (e)) was initially interpreted as defining the northern edge of the holloway, but reconsideration of these slighter earthworks in the light of the evaluation results suggests that later erosion may have caused some confusion (see section 7 for discussion).

Three manholes giving access to drains were visible on the ground. Comparison of the location of these to the linear low resistance features shown on the summary of the geophysical plot (Sabin 2003, fig 10) demonstrates that these anomalies were caused by the drain trenches. A linear high resistance anomaly just north of one of these drains is probably related to the drain as its alignment is similar and there was no earthwork visible on the ground to account for it. Other areas of high resistance correspond to visible earthworks.

6 The evaluation

Trench 1 (Figs 5 to 7)

Trench 1 measured 6m by 2m and was located to investigate the raised area on the northern side of the site.

The topsoil [101] over trench 1 was a dark grey-brown sandy loam with few stones, and was up to 0.25m deep. This overlay 0.36m of mid brown sandy loam [102] with *c.* 30% pebbles. This was an old ploughsoil demonstrating that this area was the edge of an arable field. Within the ploughsoil were 26 pot sherds dating from the mid 17th and early 18th century with residual sherds from the 13th to 15th centuries, representing ploughing and manuring over an extended period.

Layer [102] directly overlay the natural gravels [105], the top of the natural being up to 0.62m below the present ground surface at between 62.38 and 62.53m OD. Over much of the trench the natural consisted of orange and brown gravel concreted with iron panning, but at the southern end of trench the iron panning was less intense and the gravel was loose and not concreted.

Cut into the gravels [105] and sealed by the ploughsoil [102] was a feature [104] only part of which extended into the trench. This cut was *c.* 0.2m deep and had gradually sloping sides except the north side, which was near vertical. The base was flat and the fill [103] was a grey

loam with some pebbles, which produced 5 sherds of medieval pottery dating to the mid 13th to 14th centuries. This feature appeared to be part of a sub-circular pit, but it could also have been the end of a gully.

Trench 2 (Figs 8 and 9)

Trench 2 measured 5m by 2m and was located to test the area within the entrance to the site.

Here the topsoil [201] was up to 0.25m deep, with an additional stonier interface zone [202] up to 0.1m deep between the topsoil and the natural subsoil. The topsoil became shallower towards the northern end of the trench.

The northern half of the trench was covered by a layer [203] of large and small pebbles and occasional brick and tile fragments dumped over the natural subsoil to stabilise the area within the gateway. This deposit was removed by hand in a sondage along the eastern side of the trench. This revealed a steep sided linear cut [205] with a flat base. It was 0.4m deep and filled by grey and red-brown silty sand [204] with lumps of more clayey sand and occasional pebbles. This feature strongly resembled a pipe trench, but no pipe was seen despite being excavated to the base. Fragments of brick from the fill suggest that the feature is quite recent.

To the south of this was another feature [208] with steep but irregular sides. This feature was not bottomed, but was filled by friable grey sand [207] then yellow-brown sandy clay [206] containing 20% stones with brick and tile fragments. The finds also suggest that it is quite recent and this feature may be a deep rut or other erosion feature filled with clay [206] to level it.

The natural in this trench [209] was seen at 0.22 to 0.30m below the present ground surface (61.82 to 61.63m OD). Over most of the trench, where it was exposed, the natural was a red-brown clayey sand with *c.* 20% small stones and gravel. A band of dark grey-brown sand [210] mottled with brown iron oxide crossed the southern end of the trench, but this merged into [209] and was clearly part of the natural river terrace deposits.

Trench 3 (Figs 10 to 13)

Trench 3 measured 3m by 3m and was situated on top of a low, square platform. The topsoil [301] over top of the platform was only 0.1m deep with a gravel deposit [315] immediately below this over much of the trench, at an altitude of between 61.56 and 61.64m OD.

The gravel [315] was compact with *c.* 30% sand and silt. The surface was mixed by root action making it greyer and sandier, but the deposit became pale yellow and more gravelly with depth. This compact, leached gravel appeared to be natural but will be further discussed below.

In the north-east corner of the trench was an irregular shaped, near vertical edge [314] through the gravel [315]. The base of the feature was flat and followed a layer of red sand that continued under gravel [315]. This was filled by grey and orange sand with *c.* 50% gravel [313] then a fairly stone free, mottled grey-brown and red-brown sand [312]. Both these fills had no organic content except for what was introduced by root disturbance, and they also appeared to be natural deposits.

Several features on the platform indicated that it had been used for a structure, although no convincing ground plan was recognised. Part of the trench was covered by patches of stones ([302] and [303]) composed of densely packed pebbles up to 120mm in length. The

concentration of larger pebbles did not occur in any of the other trenches and suggests that these have been deliberately selected and deposited to form a surface. Other features seemed to have been cut through this surface. Most clearly structural were two postholes. One [308] had a circular cut with steep sides tapering to narrow rounded base and was filled by grey sand [307]. The other [311] had a sub-circular cut with steep sides curving into rounded base. Stones were packed around three sides of the cut. These were mainly rounded river pebbles but they also included two flat siltstone slabs set on edge. The fill within the packing stones was a dark grey sandy silt [304]. The packing stones projected above the level of the cobbled surface [302] and were no more than *c.* 50mm below the ground surface.

Running under the northern baulk of the trench was a linear cut [306] with a steep western side, more gradual eastern side, and a rounded, gently sloping southern terminus. It was filled by dark grey-brown silty sand, similar to the topsoil but slightly less organic. This could be a gully related to the postholes, but it is possible that it is just an old vehicle rut.

Two other even more uncertain features were investigated. In the south-east corner of the trench was a shallow curving linear cut [310] with steep east side and shallow north and west sides, filled by dark grey, pebbly silty sand [309]. This could have been caused by root activity but it appeared too well defined, and might be a slot relating to a structure. Just to the west was a more poorly defined linear cut [319] with a similar fill [318]. Again this may be due to root disturbance, but a flimsy hut or shed might leave only very slight traces in the ground.

Apart from brick and tile fragments from the topsoil and 2 small pieces from the fill of posthole [311] the only find from this trench was a small sherd of 17th to 18th century pottery from a patch of pale yellow-grey clayey sand with occasional stones [316]. This could be the result of mending the cobbled surface [302], but not enough of it was exposed in the trench to understand this deposit.

Trench 4

Trench 4, measuring 0.7m by 0.65m and up to 0.8m deep, was one of the test pits dug along the south side of the barn. In it was seen a brick surface [401] composed of 19th century machine-made red bricks, now overgrown with turf. This overlay a layer of dark grey loam [402] containing small fragments of coal and cinders and representing the topsoil on which the surface was constructed. At 0.22m below the present ground surface (61.93m OD) the natural subsoil was encountered. This was a red-brown clayey sand [403] with 40% gravel and small pebbles.

Trench 5

Trench 5 was a test pit measuring 0.6m by 0.6m and dug to a depth of 0.53m. A brick surface [501] was seen, obviously a continuation of that in trench 4. This also overlay an old topsoil deposit [502]. The natural [503] was the same as in trench 4 and was encountered 0.23m below the present ground surface (61.81m OD).

Trench 6

Trench 6 measured 0.66m by 0.62m and was dug to a maximum depth of 0.68m. The topsoil [601] contained some large river pebbles originating from a disturbed cobble surface. The natural subsoil was 0.3m below the ground surface (61.62m OD) and it was a red-brown clayey sand with *c.*20% gravel and small pebbles, with more clay and fewer stones than in trenches 4 and 5.

All three test pits revealed the footings of the barn, which were dug up to 0.2m into the natural, the topsoil deposit presumably having built up against the barn foundations after their construction. The foundations themselves stepped out slightly towards the base.

The finds

Finds were generally sparse in the evaluation trenches. Recent brick and tile fragments were recovered from trenches 2 and 3, but only trench 1 produced pottery useful for dating. That from the old ploughsoil [102] was probably introduced over a considerable period in manure spread over the field. Feature [104], however, was sealed under [102] and the sherds from its fill [103] must have been introduced when the feature was open. The date of mid 13th to 14th century for the sherds from the feature and those from the ploughsoil dating from the 13th century onwards suggests that the field was ploughed in the late medieval period.

7 Discussion

Trench 1 confirmed that the earthwork in the north-western corner of the site is the edge of an arable field, ploughed from the 13th or 14th century until the early 18th century. The existence of a feature below the ploughsoil is suggestive that the area had other uses perhaps as a house platform or just an open area in which rubbish pits and other features could be dug. The ploughing was then extended over this area. It is presumed that the ploughing has heavily truncated feature [104] so it may originally have been much deeper and larger. The nature of the pre-ploughing activity in this area was not established, but the pottery dates suggest that the field was converted from arable to pasture in the mid 18th century.

Trench 2 revealed little of interest. All the features in this trench contained brick and tile fragments and appeared quite recent, the result of the present use of the field for pasture.

The test pits revealed that there had been a brick surface *c.* 1m wide along the western part of the southern side of the barn. Along the eastern part of this side the surface was of cobbles, but three large sandstone slabs were also seen on the ground, which seem to have been incorporate into this surface.

Trench 3 is of more interest. The two postholes demonstrated the presence of activity on the small square platform. The spread of larger pebbles did seem to form a surface, but posthole [311] must post-date this as the packing stones protruded well above the level of the surface, showing that the posthole had been cut from a higher level. Feature [306] also cut the cobbles, and it is likely that posthole [308] also did, although the cobbles did not survive sufficiently well here to prove this. The evidence indicates the possibility of at least two phases of use of this small platform. Whether the other features investigated were also part of this activity is unclear, as they formed no coherent plan.

The platform itself is something of a puzzle. As the earthwork survey on Fig. 3 shows it is a regular square shape in plan and has a flat top, making it appear to have been deliberately constructed by either depositing gravel to build up the platform or digging away an area round it. The former seems more likely as it would raise the feature above the level of the damp holloway. However, the evidence from the evaluation trench contradicts this hypothesis. The gravel forming the platform [315] was quite different from the iron panned gravel in trench 1 and the clayey sand in trench 2 and in the test pits. In particular the distinctive leaching was not seen in the other trenches, but there was no clear indication that it was redeposited. The steep sides and clean fill of feature [314] made it appear to be a

natural feature created by variations in deposition of the river terrace deposits. The layer of sand extending under [315] seen in the base of [314] tends to confirm this interpretation. The surface of [315] is also at about the same level as the surface of the natural in the closest test pit, trench 6.

The conclusion reached in the field from close inspection of the deposits was that [315] was *in situ* natural river terrace gravel. In this case the platform must have been formed by the removal of deposits around it, most probably by erosion rather than deliberate digging. This suggests that the platform investigated by trench 3 was not deliberately created but formed by erosion around a square structure or small enclosure in the same way that a holloway is formed. What function this structure or enclosure had is still not established. The excavated features did not appear to be part of the coherent plan of a built structure, so this may have been an enclosure defined by flimsy stake fencing or some other boundary not readily visible in the archaeology. Posts were used in this enclosure but they may have stood individually, supporting haystacks or other similar functions and may not have been part of a building.

The date of this feature is also uncertain. The presence of brick fragments in the fill of posthole [311] is consistent with this being a post-medieval feature, but the fragments were found in the top of the fill and may be intrusive. It was initially thought that the platform must be contemporary with the barn as it appears to stand within the holloway and would have been an obstacle in the village street. However, the earthworks in this area have been considerably disturbed by both the present upstanding barn and the now demolished steel-framed structure to its south. By comparing the 1724 map with the recorded earthworks a tentative reconstruction of the undisturbed earthworks is presented in Fig. 14. This suggests that the shallow scarp marked as (e) on Fig. 3 does not define the edge of the holloway, but is the result of erosion caused by access of vehicles and livestock to the barn. The inset on Fig. 14 shows a detail from the 1884 first edition OS map. This demonstrates that scarp (e) is the remains of a trackway leading from Hill Farm to the lane via the barn. There is also a short drain shown which may explain the southward curving eastern end of scarp (e).

The reconstruction of the original earthworks (Fig. 14) suggests that the southern edge of the holloway probably ran under the barn and to the north of the square platform. The latter, therefore, did not block the village street, but seems to fit well with the other earthworks relating to the medieval village. The 1724 map shows this area as the corner of a field, with no detail as suggested by the earthworks on the ground. Therefore, the earthworks in this area, including the square platform, probably predate the early 18th century and, based on their relationship with other earthworks, are likely to relate to the deserted medieval village.

8 Conclusions and recommendations

The evaluation has demonstrated that there is buried archaeology surviving on the site. In the case of trench 3 this is only a few centimetres below the present ground surface, and therefore very vulnerable. The archaeology in this area was not well dated, but probably dates to the late medieval or early post medieval period. Trench 1 revealed a demonstrably medieval feature, but in this case the significant archaeology was 0.6m below the present ground surface and damaged by the development should be easily avoided. Due to the waterlogged condition of the site when the evaluation was undertaken the nature of deposits within the holloway could not be investigated. However, the holloway would have been formed by erosion during its use as a street, so medieval deposits would be unlikely to have built up here. The later location of the barn in this area and the trackway to it have caused

considerable disturbance in the area around it, resulting in part of the original holloway being further eroded.

The vulnerability of the site was demonstrated by the deep ruts, presumably caused recently by a tractor, which were visible across much of the eastern end of the site when the evaluation team arrived (plate 1). Such disturbance has probably occurred many times in this area. The area north of the barn was also very wet and had been churned up by cattle. Livestock disturbance over the years since the barn was built will have ensured that relatively little archaeology *in situ* survives immediately to the north of the barn.

Two earthworks appear to be of significance: the field edge scarp (Fig. 3 (a)) and the square platform (Fig. 3 (b)). The latter is located in a central position within the village at a junction of three routeways. This position may indicate a greater importance for this feature than the slight archaeological remains alone might suggest. The other earthworks within the development site do not appear to be very significant, produced by erosion around the barn. The proposed route of the driveway avoids these important areas and will probably not disturb any *in situ* archaeological deposits. Service trenches should be restricted to the area of the holloway, and particularly the soak-away should be sited where considerable disturbance has already taken place, such as just north of the barn or preferably in the area levelled for the demolished barn to the south. The plan of the proposed development (Fig. 3) indicates a soak-away close to trench 1. This should be moved to the south off the high ground. Gardening will do little harm in the area of trench 1, as long as no trees and deep-rooted plants are planted, but should be avoided entirely over the square platform (Fig. 3 (b)), where the topsoil is very shallow.

The evaluation has established the depth of overburden and the survival of archaeology in particularly significant areas of the site, but unexpected archaeological deposits and features may be hidden in parts of the site not investigated. It may be worthwhile testing the survival of deposits within the holloway during drier conditions. It is also recommended that a watching brief be undertaken during all groundworks. This would involve an archaeologist being present when groundworks are being dug to recognise and record any archaeology revealed.

9 References

Ordnance Survey County Series 6" map, Staffordshire sheet 47 SW, first edition 1884

Meeson, B, 2004, Barn at Hill Farm, Wychnor, Staffordshire: written scheme of investigation and invitation to tender for archaeological site evaluation

Sabin, DJ, 2003, A report for Roger Mercer (Mercer Farming) on a geophysical survey carried out at Wychnor, Staffordshire. Stratascan, job reference number 1796

10 Archive

The site code is HFWS04A. The archive consists of:

- 30 context sheets
- 6 trench sheets
- 1 drawing index sheet
- 11 field drawings on 3 sheets
- 1 levels sheet
- 1 sheet survey notes
- 1 sheet of site notes
- 6 finds record sheets
- 4 photo record sheets
- 2 film of black and white photographic negatives
- 2 film of colour photographic transparencies
- 1 box of finds (see appendix II).

The archive is currently held by Marches Archaeology awaiting transfer to the Potteries Museum, Hanley under accession number 2004.LH.21.

Appendix I

List of contexts

Context	Trench	Description	Interpretation
101	T1	Dark grey-brown sandy loam with few stones	Topsoil
102	T1	Mid brown sandy loam with 30% pebbles.	Old ploughsoil
103	T1	Grey loam with some pebbles.	Fill of 104
104	T1	Cut with near vertical north side and gradual sides round the rest of the feature. Flat base. Only part of feature visible in trench.	Sub-circular pit or end of gully.
105	T1	Patchy orange and brown gravel concreted with iron panning. At southern end of trench less iron panning and gravels are not concreted.	Natural gravel
201	T2	Dark grey-brown sandy loam with few stones.	Topsoil
202	T2	Dark grey-brown sandy loam with occasional small pebbles.	Interface between topsoil and natural
203	T2	Large and small pebbles dumped over the natural subsoil to stabilise the area within the gateway.	Consolidation deposit
204	T2	Grey and red-brown silty sand with lumps of more clayey sand and occasional pebbles.	Fill of 205
205	T2	Steep sided cut with flat base, presumably linear.	Looks like pipe trench but no pipe found.
206	T2	Yellow-brown sandy clay with 20% stones and brick and tile fragments.	Upper fill of 208
207	T2	Friable grey sand, few stones.	Lower fill of 208
208	T2	Steep but irregular sided cut. Not bottomed.	Possible deep rut or other erosion feature
209	T2	Red-brown clayey sand with c.20% small stones and gravel.	Natural
210	T2	Dark grey-brown sand mottled with brown iron oxide. Merges into 209 with paler clayey sand marbling at the interface.	Natural sand deposit
301	T3	Dark grey-brown sandy loam with few stones.	Topsoil
302	T3	Patch of stones along west side of trench. Composed of river pebbles up to 120mm in length, quite densely packed to form fairly even level.	Appears to be deliberately created surface as larger pebbles have been selected in a way unlikely to happen naturally
303	T3	Patch of round pebbles up to 100mm long. Presumably part of 302.	Possible surface
304	T3	Dark grey sandy silt with some small pebbles forming central fill. Around edge of cut on 3 sides are stones up to 200mm in length. Some are rounded river pebbles but also includes 2 flat siltstone slabs set on edge.	Fill and packing stones of posthole 311
305	T3	Dark grey-brown silty sand. Similar to topsoil but slightly less organic. Contains very few stones.	Fill of 306
306	T3	Linear cut with steep western side and more gradual eastern side. Rounded gently sloping southern terminus.	Gully, may be related to the postholes
307	T3	Friable, grey sand with occasional small pebbles. Similar to 305, but less organic and silty.	Fill of 308
308	T3	Circular cut with steep sides tapering to narrow rounded base.	Posthole
309	T3	Dark grey silty sand with c.40% small pebbles and gravel.	Fill of 310
310	T3	Shallow curving linear cut with steep east side and shallow north and west side.	Could be caused by root activity or could be slot related to structure.
311	T3	Sub-circular cut with steep sides curving into rounded base.	Posthole

Context	Trench	Description	Interpretation
312	T3	Mottled grey-brown and red-brown sand with mottles of paler yellow sand. Fairly stone free.	Upper fill of 314
313	T3	Grey and orange sand with c.50% gravel and a band of grey sand against the southern side of the feature.	Lower fill of 314
314	T3	Irregular shaped cut with near vertical sides. The base is flat and follows a layer of red sand that continues under the gravel 314 is cut into.	Natural fluvio-glacial feature?
315	T3	Compact gravel with c.30% sand becoming pale yellow with depth. The surface is mixed by root action making it greyer and sandier.	Compact leached gravel, possibly redeposited.
316	T3	Patch of pale yellow-grey clayey sand with occasional stones.	Possible patch filling hollow in surface 302
317	T3	Thin layer of gravel and small stones over 312	Gravel eroded from 315
318	T3	Dark grey sand with small pebbles and gravel. Much root disturbance	Fill of 319
319	T3	Shallow linear cut with fairly steep north-east side and very gradual south-west side. Shallow rounded ends.	May just be from root disturbance. Seems too slight to be real cut.
401	T4	Machine made red bricks (230mm x 110mm x 80mm) laid to form surface.	Brick surface
402	T4	Dark grey loam containing small fragments of coal and cinders.	Old topsoil
403	T4	Red-brown clayey sand with 40% gravel and small pebbles.	Natural
501	T5	Machine made red bricks (230mm x 110mm x 80mm) laid to form surface.	Brick surface
502	T5	Dark grey loam containing small fragments of coal and cinders.	Old topsoil
503	T5	Red-brown clayey sand with 40% gravel and small pebbles.	Natural
601	T6	Dark grey loam containing small fragments of coal and cinders. Also contains large river pebbles mixed into the soil. Elsewhere next to the barn wall these survive as the remains of a cobbled surface.	Topsoil and disturbed cobbled surface.
602	T6	Red-brown clayey sand with c.20% gravel and small pebbles. More clay and fewer stones than in trenches 4 and 5. Pale grey marbling throughout. Deposit becomes more yellow at surface.	Natural

Appendix II

List of finds

Context 102	26 pot sherds	various
Context 103	5 pot sherds	medieval
Context 204	1 brick fragment	post-medieval
Context 301	10 brick/tile fragments	post-medieval
Context 304	2 brick/tile fragments	post-medieval
Context 316	1 pot sherd	post-medieval

Appendix III

Spot dating and catalogue of pottery

By Stephanie Rátkai

102 Mid 17th-early 18th c (residual 13th-15th c pottery)

1 x post-medieval coarseware bowl rim

1 x light-on-dark slip trailed bowl base

3 x whiteware cooking pots body sherds

1 x whiteware jug sherd, brownish glaze

1 x whiteware body sherd, yellowish-buff fabric

1 x iron-poor, everted rim jar sherd. Coarse fabric with large quartz grits

2 x iron-poor, olive glazed, body sherds, same fabric as above.

3 x salmon pink, glazed body sherds, coarse grits and streaky fabric

1 x salmon pink, bowl sherd with internal glaze, same fabric as above

1 x salmon pink body sherd, same fabric as above.

5 x iron-rich, cooking pot body sherds, brown surfaces, grey core.

2 x iron-rich, olive glazed body sherds, fine powdery orange fabric, grey core.

1 x iron-rich, jug rim sherd, similar form to Ford (1995, Fig 12: 56), mainly reduced but with orange surfaces, same fabric as above.

103 mid 13th-14th c

3 x whiteware sherds, comprising two rim sherds, paralleled by Ford (1995 fig 14: 78) and one body sherd from cooking pots.

1 x iron-rich, body sherd, reduced, orange surfaces

1 x iron-rich, body sherd, oxidised orange throughout.

316 17th - ?mid 18th c

1 x blackware sherd

Comment

The pottery is typical of this area of Staffordshire with a mix of iron-poor wares and iron rich wares. The pottery was mainly abraded. Pit (103) below the ploughsoil contained pottery of mid 13th-14th century date, suggesting that the ploughsoil was formed in the later medieval period.

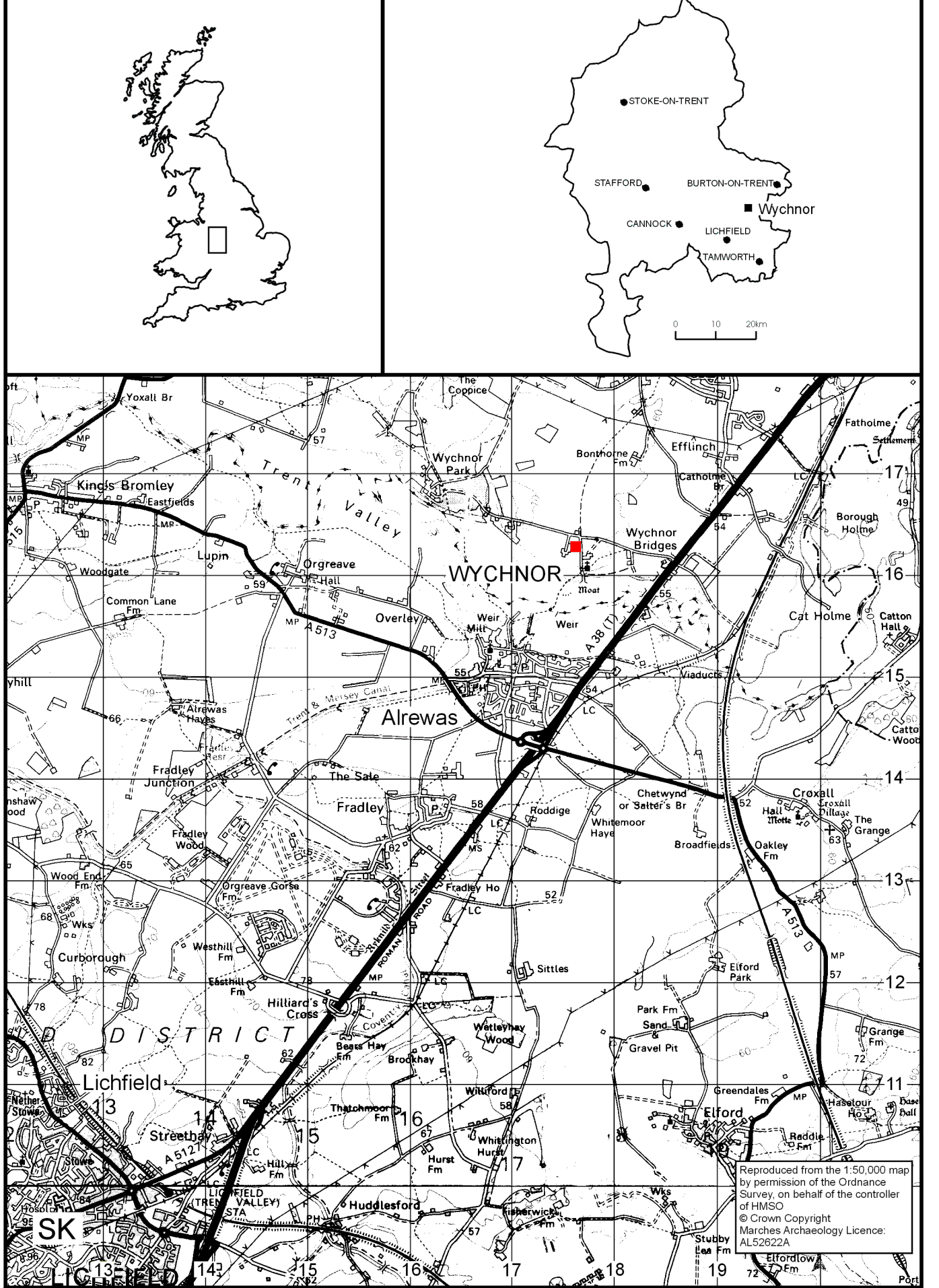
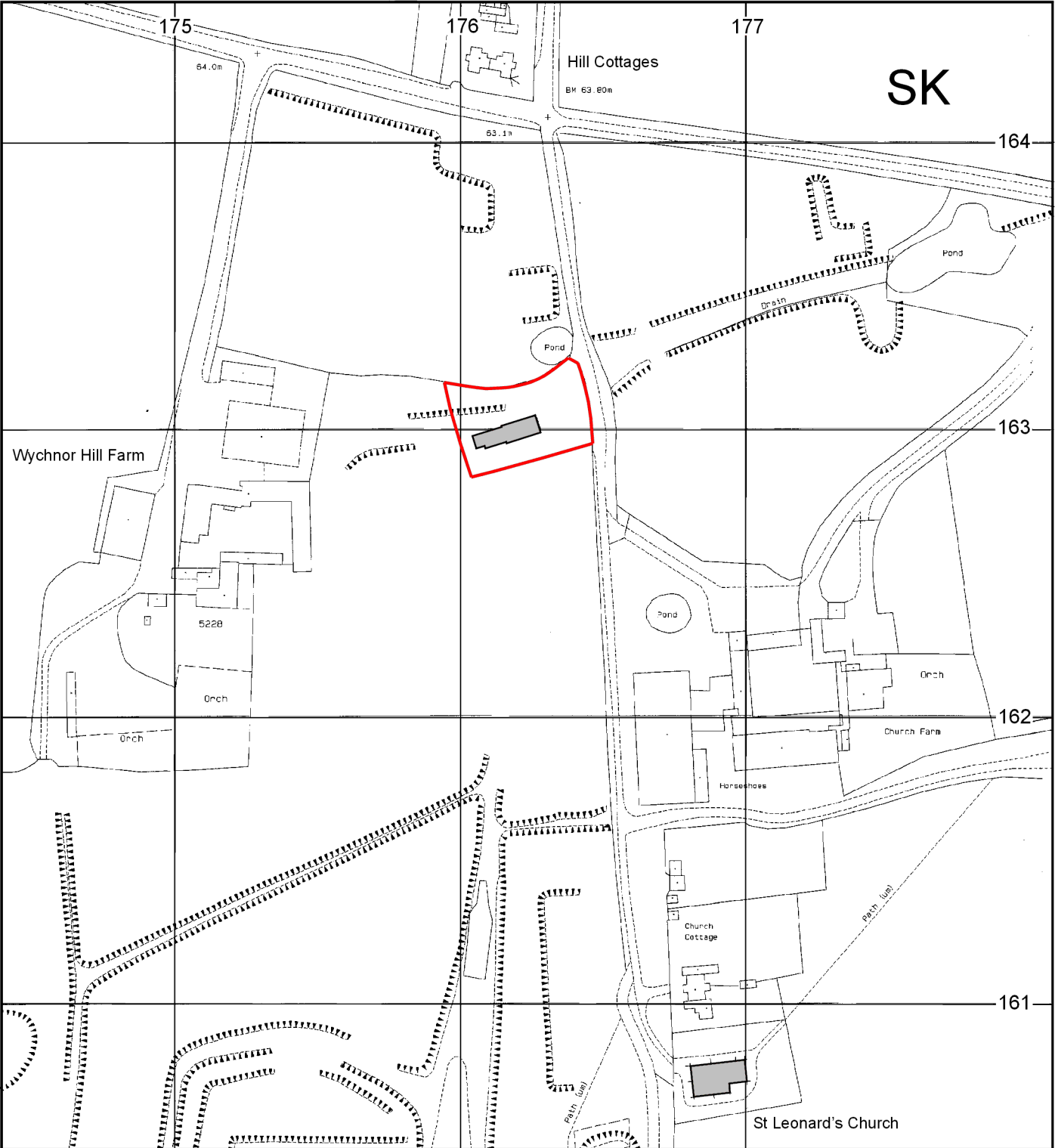


Fig. 1: Location of Wychnor
(red square indicates site)



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Fig. 2: Site location within Wychnor
 (site boundary in red)

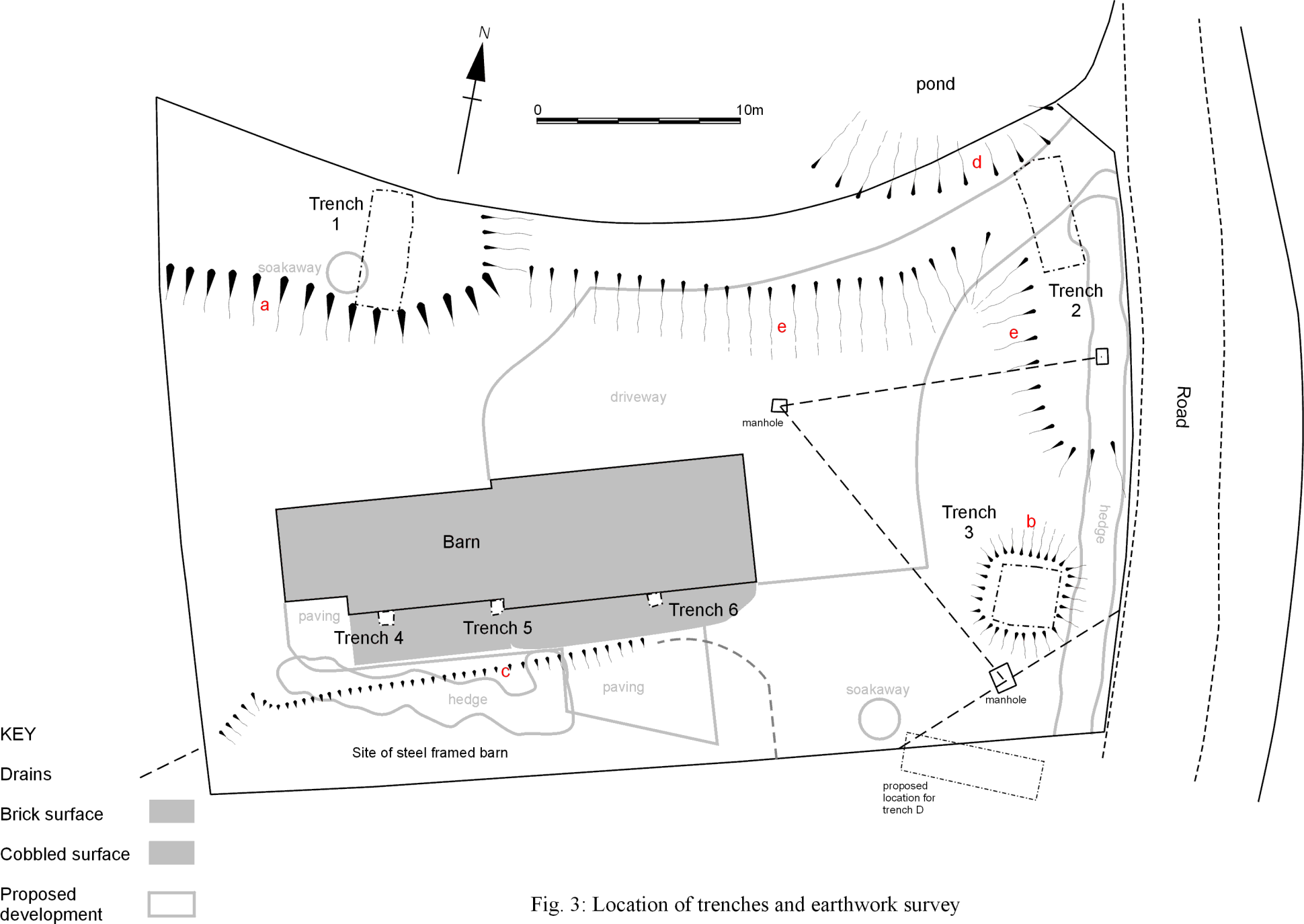


Fig. 3: Location of trenches and earthwork survey

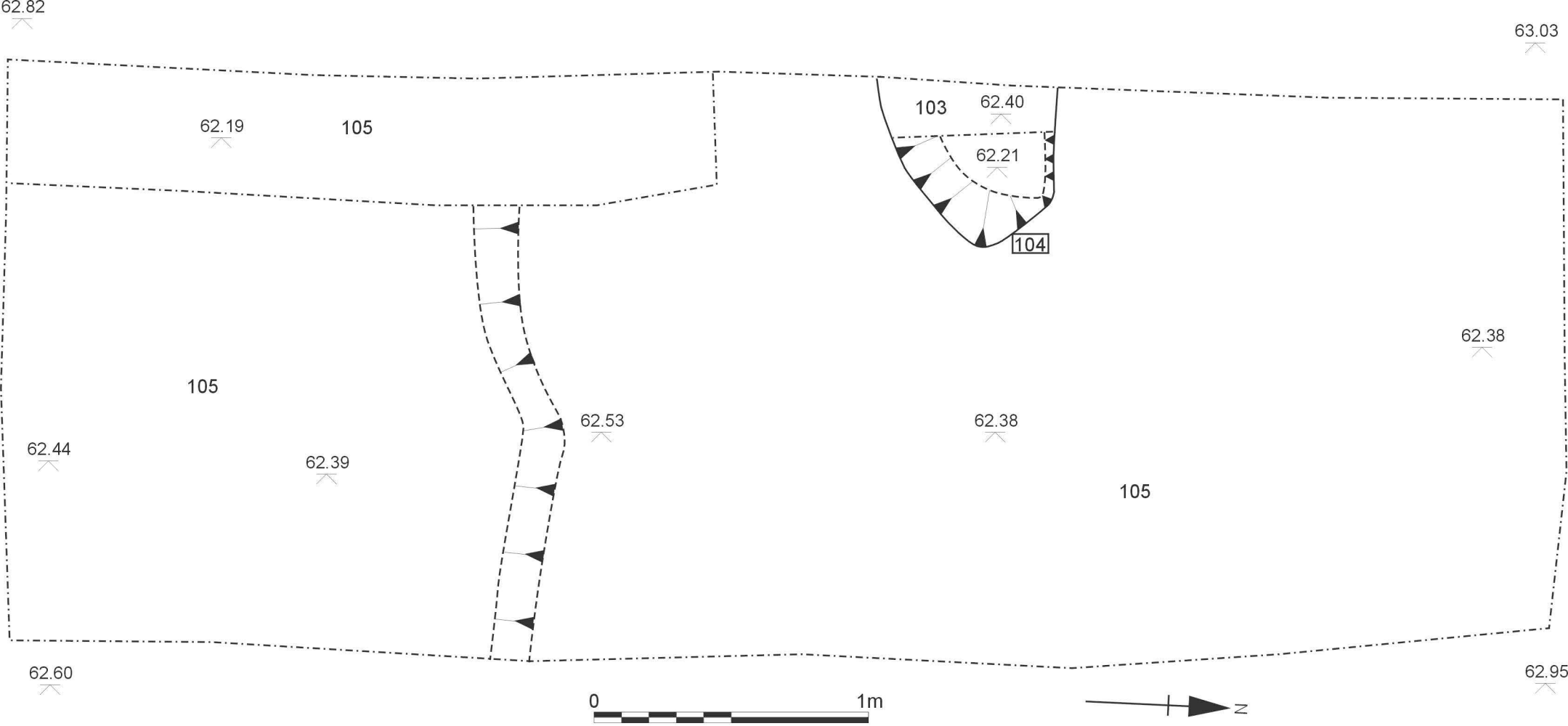


Fig. 5: Plan of trench 1

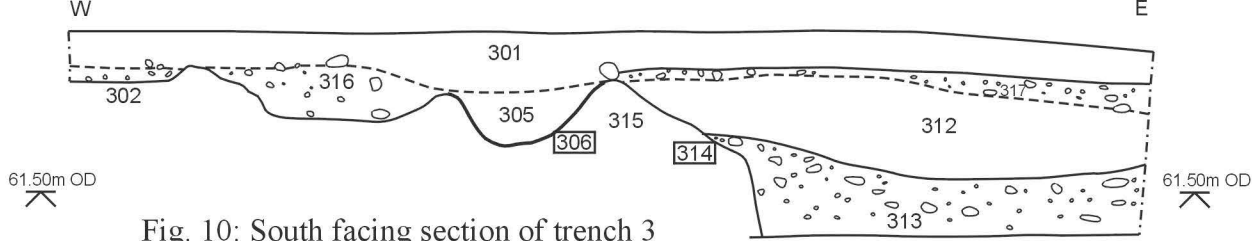


Fig. 10: South facing section of trench 3

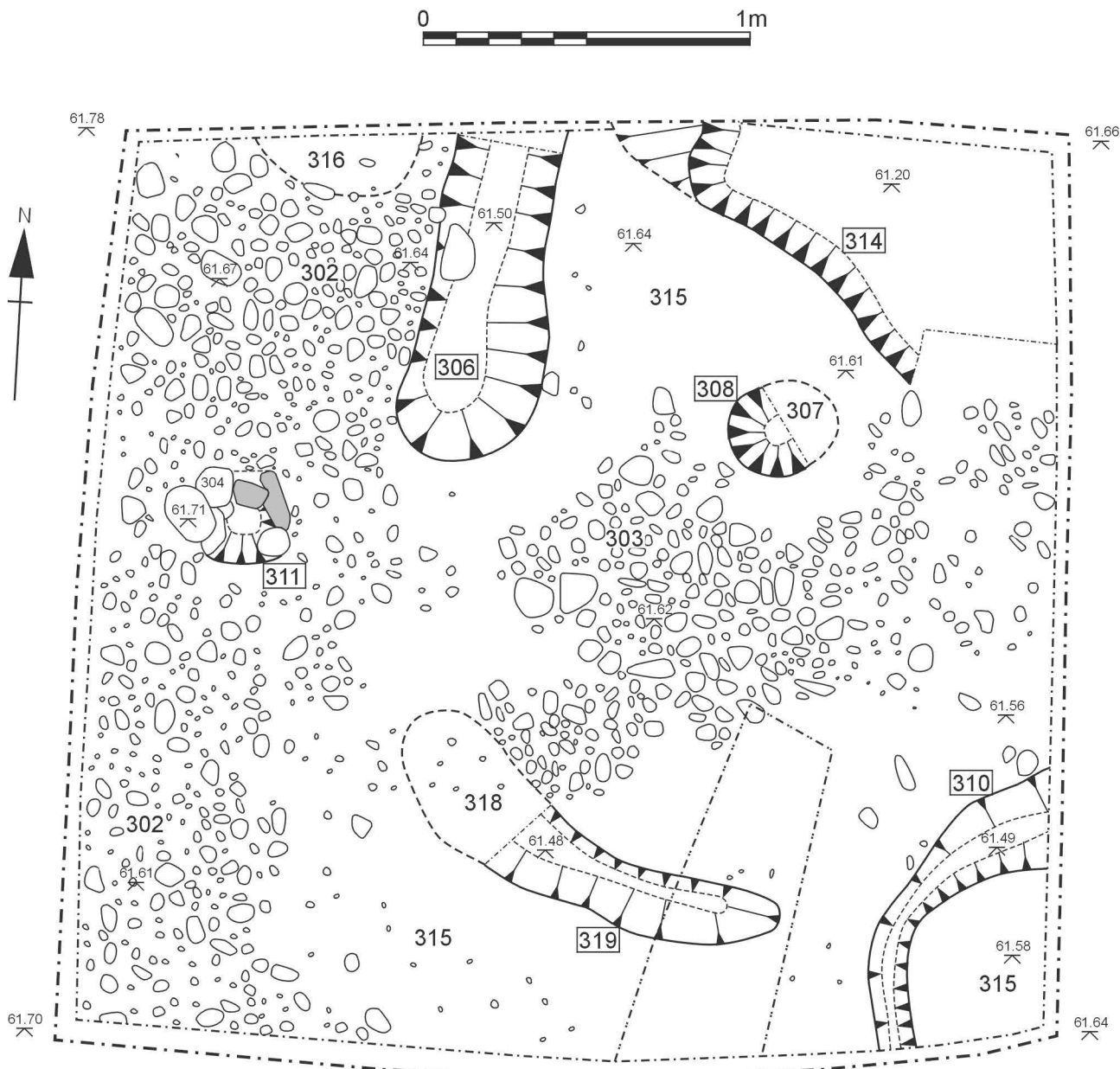


Fig. 11: Plan of trench 3

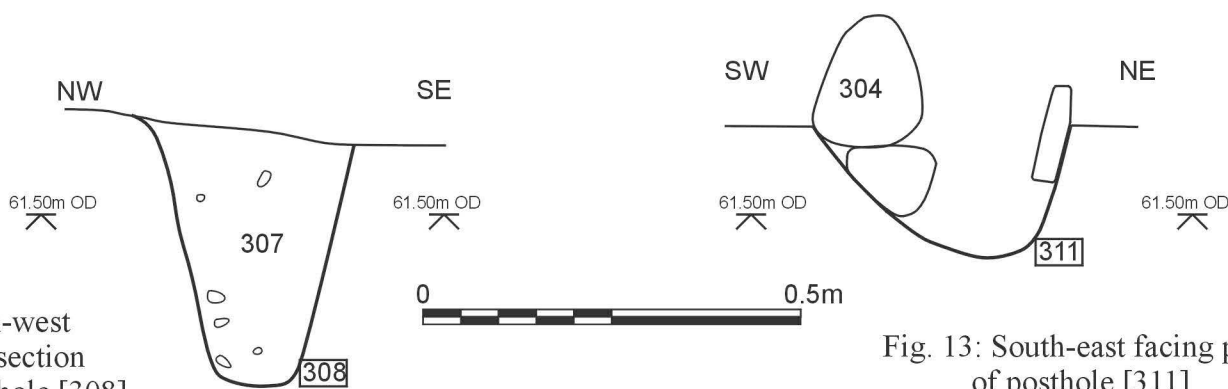


Fig. 12: South-west facing section of posthole [308]

Fig. 13: South-east facing profile of posthole [311]

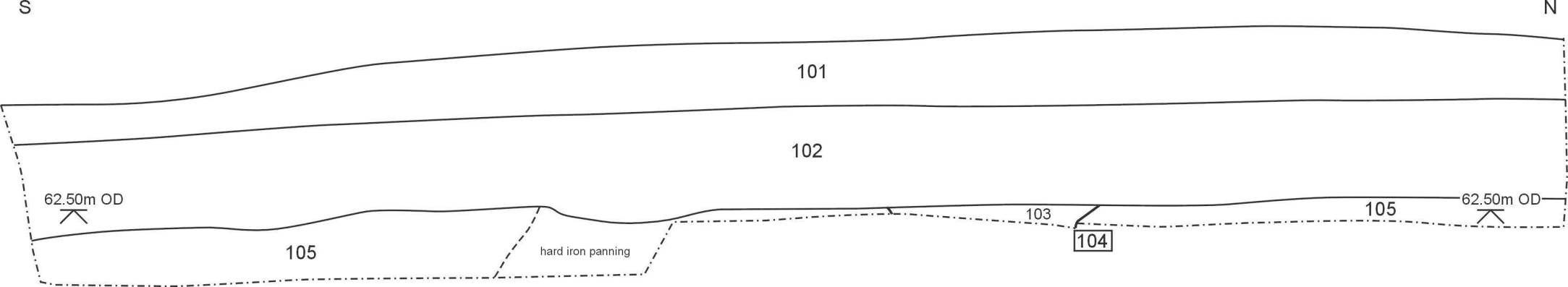


Fig. 6: East facing section of trench 1

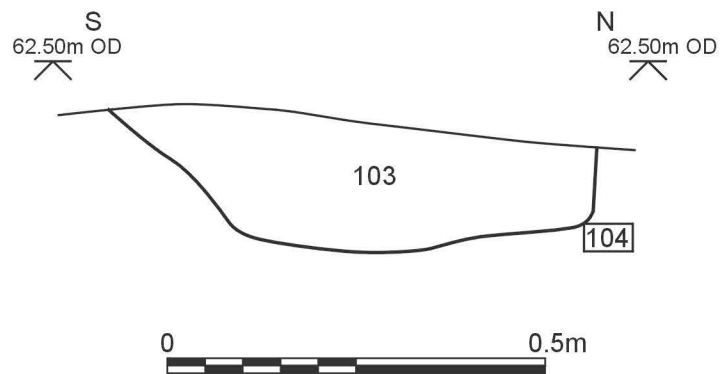
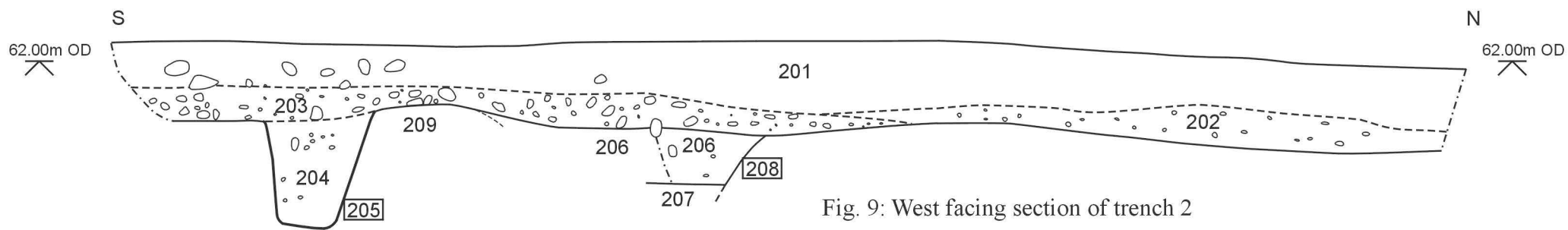
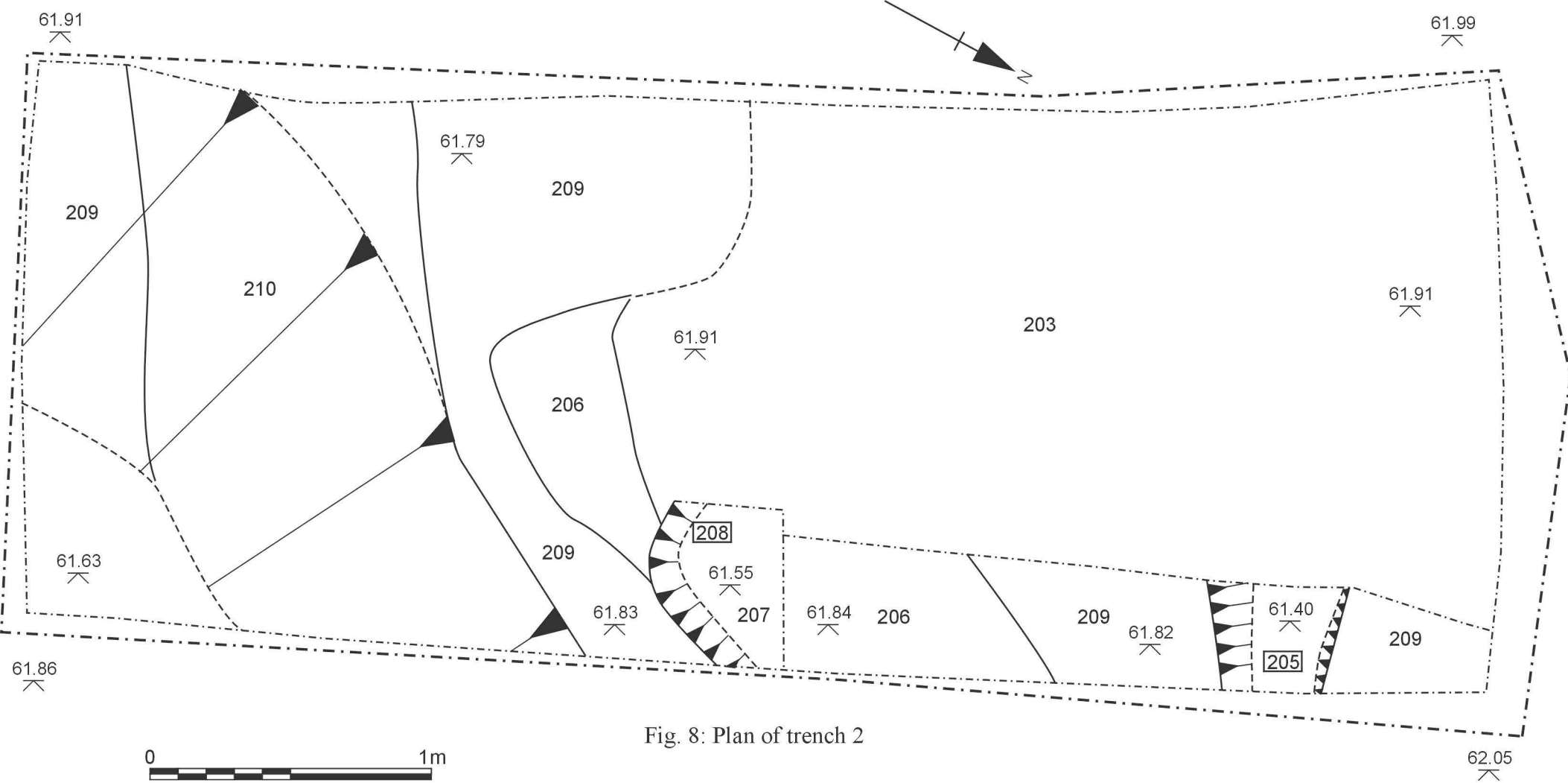


Fig. 7: East facing section of feature [104]



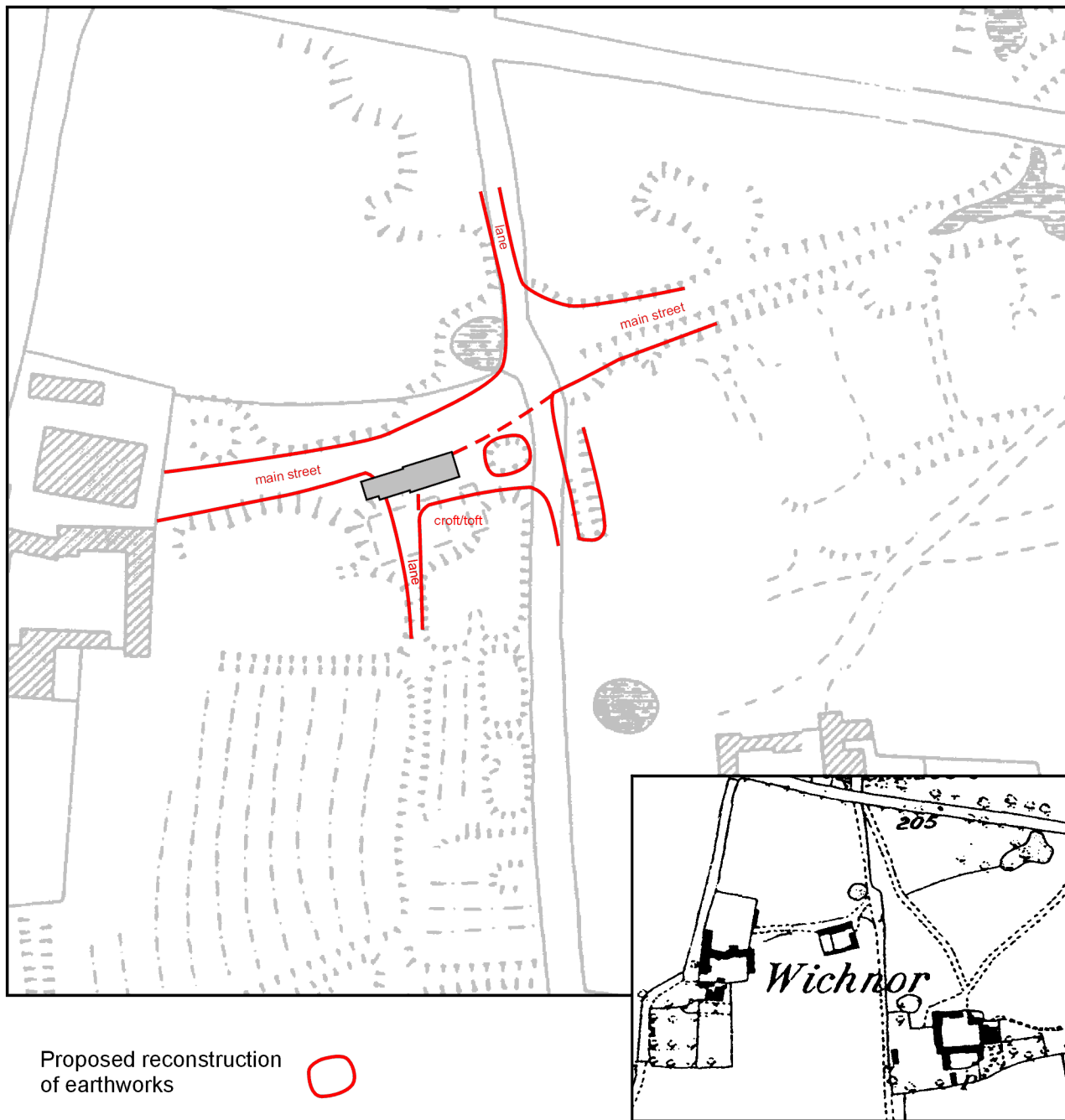


Fig. 14: Proposed reconstruction of earthworks in the area of the site with inset showing 1884 first edition OS map



Plate 1: View of site looking south-west showing disturbance by vehicle tracks