

BEDFORD SOUTHERN BYPASS

Interim Results
January 1995

Preface

The Bedford Southern Bypass project is one of the largest and most costly archaeological investigations ever funded by the Department of Transport, and certainly one of the most prestigious and complex undertaken by the Archaeological Service here in Bedford. Nine months of fieldwork between October 1993 and June 1994 have produced an extraordinary range and variety of material spanning the Neolithic to Modern periods, including evidence for ritual, settlement, land division, agriculture, craft, and industry

With the provisional phasing now almost complete the significance of the project is becoming increasingly apparent, not just in terms of the individual sites but also in terms of their group value for landscape studies. Together the Bypass sites offer the opportunity for us to construct meaningful models for human exploitation of, and impact on, the environment of the Ouse valley over the last five thousand years.

The crucial assessment stage is about to begin and to aid the process this document seeks to provide a useful background to the project and a summary of the results. Detailed provisional phasing reports will exist for each site and guidance is also given as to how these have been put together and how they might best be used during assessment to provide the framework for that work. Assessment itself, its scope and format, is the subject of heated debate, and so as an aid to those contributing we also provide an indication of the proposed Bypass format.

1. INTRODUCTION

The route of the Bypass skirts the southern and eastern sides of Bedford, some 5km from the medieval centre, running from near Kempston in the west to the St Neots Road in the east, a distance of approximately 8.5km. A greenfield development, the route is wholly within the Ouse valley, largely lying on the nascent first gravel terrace, but to the east crossing the floodplain and the river itself. Its location within the Ouse valley is important, firstly because of the high density of archaeological sites one might expect but also because this provides a common environment within which all those sites can be assessed.

Archaeological background

The area of the Ouse valley affected by the route is rich in archaeological remains. An examination of plotted crop marks shows the valley floor and sides to be covered with sites of all dates. Perhaps most significant and obvious is the concentration of sites dating to the Neolithic and Bronze Age. Dominated by the Cardington causewayed enclosure the majority of monuments relate to ritual, ceremonial and burial activities as at Octagon Farm, and form part of recurring pattern throughout the Ouse and adjacent Nene and Welland valleys. The bulk of the remaining crop-marks define settlements and enclosures of Iron Age and Romano-British date such as the excavated sites at Peartree Farm and Eastcotts, the major part of the landscape having been cleared and turned over to agriculture. Surviving fragments of the medieval Landscape, other than those fossilised in the modern pattern, are relatively rare, earthwork sites having seldom survived the plough.

The first phases of archaeological investigation of the route began prior to the public enquiry in 1990, specifically designed to inform that process. Once the route had been agreed evaluation continued through 1991/92 with fieldwalking, geophysical survey and trial trenching across all those areas where access could be negotiated. The results of this work led to the submission of project designs for full scale excavation on seven sites and for a watching brief during construction.

2. SUMMARY OF RESULTS

General Introduction

All the Bypass sites have been integrated into a single phasing sequence, this identifies the following major periods;

- Period 1 Natural glacial and alluvial deposits
- Period 2 Early Prehistoric
- Period 3 Neolithic
- Period 4 Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age
- Period 5 Bronze Age
- Period 6 Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age
- Period 7 Iron Age
- Period 8 Late Iron Age/Early Romano-British *circa 1st century BC/AD*
- Period 9 Romano-British *circa late 1st to 4th century*
- Period 10 Late Romano-British/Early Saxon *circa 5th century*
- Period 11 Saxon *circa 5th to 10th century*
- Period 12 Saxo-Norman *circa 10th to 11th century*
- Period 13 Medieval *circa 12th to 15th century*
- Period 14 Post Medieval to Modern *circa 16th century to present*

None of the sites has evidence for all the above periods, most however display evidence for more than one, with gaps between periods identifying actual discontinuity, or low intensity land-use difficult to identify archaeologically. Where possible, separate phases of activity have been identified within a major period, e.g. during the Romano-British period at Peartree Farm and Eastcotts and the Medieval period at Harrowden.

2.1 Peartree Farm (fig. 2)

Introduction

Located at the western end of the bypass Peartree Farm was recognised from aerial photographs and evaluation as being a single Romano-British farmstead, the farm compound sited to one side of a driveway and surrounded by infield and outfield enclosures. A total of 2.75ha was stripped and excavated.

Data Summary

Contexts	Pot (boxes)	Recorded finds	Bone (boxes)	Samples
2036	28	182	20 + 1 burial	64

Phasing Summary

PERIOD	LANDSCAPE GROUPS	DESCRIPTION
Period 1 Natural glacial and alluvial deposits	1	
Period 3 Neolithic	2, 16	Tree clearance
Period 7 Iron Age	3	Landscape boundaries
Period 9 Romano-British	4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12,	Settlement
Period 10 Late Romano-British/Early Saxon	11, 13, 14, 15	Settlement
Period 13 Medieval	18, 19	Cultivation
Period 14 Post Medieval to Modern		Cultivation

Period 3 Neolithic

The earliest evidence for activity comprised tree-throws, randomly spread across the site. The majority were undated and so a number of phases of clearance may be represented, at least one however contained Neolithic ceramics and may indicate the primary clearance period. This is supported by other Bypass and Ouse valley sites and by inference from sites within the Nene and Welland valleys.

Period 7 Iron Age

A series of rectilinear field or other enclosure boundaries were established, indicating a by now cleared landscape. Three four-post structures suggest nearby settlement, a contemporary settlement site has been excavated 500m to the NE.

Period 9 Romano British

This was the main period of activity on the site and can be divided into two phases.

Phase 1 Early Roman 1st/2nd century

Although a small number of features may pre-date it, the establishment of the driveway, the main field and enclosure boundaries, and the settlement focus appear to have been conceived and executed as part of a single system. The overall plan is clear but detailed definition is poor, especially within the settlement focus in terms of buildings and other structures. Good assemblages of animal bone and plant macros suggest that a convincing profile for the agricultural base of the settlement can be assembled, the consistent spread of samples across the site is also encouraging for an analysis of intra site patterning in the disposal of this material. The relationship of environmental material to the ceramic assemblage may also yield interesting results.

Phase 2, 2nd/3rd century

Although the framework established in the earlier phase remained intact a number of modification can be identified involving the re-alignment of some of the boundaries and the sub-division of enclosures.

Period 10 Late Romano British/Early Saxon

Again two phases can be identified, both involving the progressive abandonment of the major boundary elements of the Period 9 system.

Phase 1

Concentrated within the area of the Period 9 settlement focus a number of discontinuous ditches may mark the establishment of small enclosures, although they are clearly late in the sequence and appear to make redundant elements of the Period 9 system, the major parts of that system may still intact, including the driveway and the outfields.

Phase 2

Cutting across both the outfield boundaries of the Period 9 system and the smaller ditches described above a network of narrow ditches mark the position of rather incomplete, possibly poorly preserved, enclosures. Dating these is difficult. Although the driveway may still be in use and certain element of the Period 9 system have been shadowed in the orientation of these enclosures, it is clearly a radical reorganisation of the site. Large quarry pits dug through the silted up remains of the major Period 9 ditches contain small amounts of Saxon material in their upper fills and this may suggest the date of this latest period of occupation.

Period 13 Medieval

The marks of ridge and furrow cultivation were clear across the entire site with a relict headland still visible within the modern ploughed fields to the north. The site of Peartree farm would have stood within the common fields of Elstow and it is assumed that any contemporary settlement is situated towards the surviving village centre.

2.2 VILLAGE FARM (fig. 3)

Introduction

Located to the east of Peartree Farm and just to the south of Elstow Village, the site was notable for the location of two ring-ditches and a later field system, both visible on aerial photographs. Full excavation confirmed the location of the ring-ditches and additionally identified evidence for Iron Age, Early Saxon and Saxo-Norman through to Medieval occupation. A total of 1.6ha was excavated.

Data Summary

Contexts	Pot (boxes)	Recorded finds	Bone (boxes)	Samples
2075	11	80	10	86

Phasing Summary

PERIOD	LANDSCAPE GROUPS	DESCRIPTION
Period 1 Natural glacial and alluvial deposits	14, 20, 27	

Period 4 Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age	1	Barrows
Period 7 Iron Age	2, 3, 16, 18, 24, 26	Settlement
Period 11 Saxon	13, 25	Settlement
Period 12 Saxo-Norman	6, 7, 11, 23	Settlement
Period 13 Medieval	4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 12, 15, 21	Settlement
Period 14 Post Medieval to Modern	17,	Cultivation
Unphased features	22	

Period 4 Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age

The sites of both ring ditches were confirmed with extensive sampling of the ditch fills. These indicated a primary phase of mineralised fills, probably associated with the early use of the barrows, separated by a stabilisation horizon from a second phase of more humic fills. The first phase was characterised by few finds other than flint flakes, the second by domestic refuse of iron Age date. No barrow material was recognised, either *in situ* or in section, nor where any primary or satellite burials identified. It is likely that the barrows had been reduced by ploughing from the Roman period onwards.

Period 7 Iron Age

The barrows appear to have been upstanding into the Iron Age, the ditches certainly being open to collect ceramics and bone at this time. The material appears to have originated from settlement immediately to the north. This comprised pits, some conforming to types interpreted as performing a storage function, two and four-post structures and short lengths of gully. Strangely a single post-built rectangular building may date to this period, no circular buildings were identified although these may well lie beyond the limits of the excavation. Perhaps the most interesting feature recorded was an alignment of thirty pits, some storage pits, some perhaps large post-holes. These are common on Iron Age period sites where extensive alignments are often interpreted as boundaries, this may be more extensive to the south but may represent, or respect, some internal settlement boundary. Its relationship to the larger ring-ditch recalls similar observations on sites such as Pennylands in Milton Keynes and may suggest that ring is in fact of Iron Age date. The settlement focus clearly lies off-site and so it is not possible to closely define its form and extent. Although the possible storage pits and four-post structures strongly suggest settlement it is possible that the features in fact represent activities associated with a continued ritual function for the barrows.

Period 11 Saxon

No evidence survives for Roman period use of the site and this may indicate a genuine hiatus of settlement, although cultivation or grazing cannot be ruled out. The next identifiable period of activity dates to the Early Saxon, a single Sunken Featured Building, containing decorated pottery and loom weights, having been excavated. A number of pits and post holes were also identified, largely concentrated close to the SFB (this just to the east of the main concentration of Iron Age features) but with a spread of larger quarry type pits across the site suggesting settlement may have been more extensive.

Period 12 Saxo Norman

The lack of Middle Saxon material may again mark a hiatus in the occupation of the site, or at least a change in the intensity of land-use. Re-occupation takes place in the Saxo-Norman period, a cluster of settlement features being identified towards the centre of the site. These comprise pits and scattered post-holes but also up to four, and possibly more, rectangular post-built structures. The settlement may have been enclosed by a sub-circular ditched boundary.

Period 13 Medieval

Settlement shifts again during this period with two foci identified, one to the NW of the site, one to the SE. Both possibly single farms, the NW site was accompanied by a possible bread oven, the SE site by three hearths and evidence for iron working (samples for archaeomagnetic dating were taken from both sets of features). No buildings were identified but this may reflect the development from earth fast posts to sill beam construction. This dispersed pattern of settlement was set within a framework of enclosures that, in outline at least, appear to survive into the eighteenth century.

2.3 BUNYAN'S FARM (fig.4)

Introduction

A large rectangular enclosure and two round barrows were visible just to the north of the road corridor, crop marks suggested that some elements of this may continue to the south and be affected by construction. This section of the bypass is carried on an embankment and so the only proposed ground disturbance was along the line of the roadside drainage ditches, our investigations concentrating there. Nothing more than glorified trial trenches the limitations on first the identification of activity, and then its meaningful interpretation should be born in mind, and this caveat should be applied to the other three trenched sites in equal measure (see Manor Farm, Harrowden and Octagon Farm). However, having said that the results can be useful when considered in overall landscape terms and have certainly thrown up surprises when one considers the range of periods of settlement represented.

Data Summary

Contexts	Pot (boxes)	Recorded finds	Bone (boxes)	Samples
299				21

Phasing Summary

PERIOD	LANDSCAPE GROUPS	DESCRIPTION
Period 1 Natural glacial and alluvial deposits	6, 9, 10,	
Period 6 Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age	1, 3	Landscape boundaries and scattered settlement

Period 14 Post Medieval to Modern	11	Cultivation
Unphased features	4, 5, 7, 8	

Period 6 Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age

The major crop marks were not conclusively investigated but the evidence suggests that they may date to this period, outlying ditches, probably part of the system, having been sectioned. Scattered, isolated pits and post holes seem to testify to settlement, although the focus of this may be to north or south of the road corridor

2.4 MANOR FARM (fig.4)

Introduction

A trenched site immediately adjacent to and similar to Bunyans' Farm. Crop marks suggested a network of simple field type enclosures, slightly more complex to the north where a settlement enclosure may exist.

Data Summary

Contexts	Pot (boxes)	Recorded finds	Bone (boxes)	Samples
253				7

Phasing Summary

PERIOD	LANDSCAPE GROUPS	DESCRIPTION
Period 1 Natural glacial and alluvial deposits	7, 8, 17	
Period 7 Iron Age	1, 2	Boundaries, settlement?
Period 9 Romano-British	4	?Cultivation
Period 11 Saxon	5	Settlement
Period 14 Post Medieval to Modern	9	Cultivation
Unphased features	6	

Period 7 Iron Age

The ditched boundaries of the main field system were investigated and found to contain pottery spanning the early to late Iron Age. Scattered and isolated features suggest settlement, if not within the road corridor then close by.

Period 9 Romano-British

A single feature of this date was recorded from which little can be deduced. Perhaps more significant was the overall absence of evidence for activity of this date, from both Manor and Bunyans'.

Period 11 Saxon

Three probable quarry pits were dated by ceramics to the Middle Saxon. Spatial association suggests that number of undated features may also belong to this period. Given the limitations of trench excavation a settlement site is a strong possibility.

2.5 BUMPY LANE (fig.5)

Introduction

Located at a point between the sites of, Manor Farm, Harrowden and Eastcotts, Bumpy Lane shares characteristics of all three. Restricted access and lack of survey data had lead the area to be designated a 'Blank Area' prior to the commencement of the main fieldwork stage of the Bypass project. Subsequent evaluation revealed a surprising range of material within two main areas of interest totalling 1.1ha.

Data Summary

Contexts	Pot (boxes)	Recorded finds	Bone (boxes)	Samples
476				

Phasing Summary

PERIOD	LANDSCAPE GROUPS	DESCRIPTION
Period 1 Natural glacial and alluvial deposits		
Period 3 Neolithic	7	Settlement?
Period 4 Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age	10	Settlement?
Period 7 Iron Age	1, 2, 4, 5, 8	Enclosures and settlement
Period 9 Romano-British	6	Enclosures
Period 13 Medieval	9	Cultivation
Period 14 Post Medieval to Modern		Cultivation
Unphased features	11, 12	

Period 3 Neolithic

Two pits were dated by ceramics and lithics to this period and while not a substantial body of evidence they do appear to indicate settlement activity rather than the more common ritual monuments.

Period 4 Late Bronze Age Early Iron Age

A single feature was dated to this period and may indicate activity just beyond the limits of Area 1.

Period 7 Iron Age

A scatter of pits and post holes and hearths indicate settlement and possibly structures although the limits of excavation mitigated against overview. A sequence of enclosures was also noted. To the west within Area 1 this took the form of a primary sub-circular enclosure, possibly originating in the Bronze Age, succeeded by first a rectilinear field system and then a post/pit alignment. To the east a further set of rectilinear boundaries marked the site of a separate system.

Period 9 Romano British

Evidence for activity in this period was limited to the eastern part of Area 2 where the Iron Age field ditches appear to have been re-cut and re-defined.

Period 13 Medieval

A system of ridge and furrow was recorded across Area 2 and this interestingly aligned exactly to the earlier Iron Age and Roman field system, one of the furrows running directly down the line of one of the ditches.

2.6 HARROWDEN (fig.6)

Introduction

Located to the south of both Bumpy Lane and Eastcotts, Harrowden had been targeted primarily because of the well preserved earthworks of the shrunken medieval settlement. Although the main Bypass passes to the north of the site, remodelling of the A600 has resulted in the relocation of an embankment and the investigation of roadside drainage ditches as at Bunyans' and Manor. In all seven trenches were investigated on both sides of the existing A600, the majority of data coming from trenches 1 and 4 to the west and 6 to the east.

Data Summary

Contexts	Pot (boxes)	Recorded finds	Bone (boxes)	Samples
430	7	50	4	6

Phasing Summary

PERIOD	LANDSCAPE GROUPS	DESCRIPTION
Period 1 Natural glacial and alluvial deposits		
Period 7 Iron Age	4	Boundary
Period 9 Romano-British	3, 6, 7, 10, 11	Settlement
Period 13 Medieval	2, 9, 12, 15	Settlement
Period 14 Post Medieval to Modern	8	Cultivation
Unphased features	5, 13, 14	

Period 7 Iron Age

A single ditch was identified, the line of which appears to have been maintained into the Roman period.

Period 9 Romano-British

Surprisingly this constituted a large proportion of the total data recovered. Within trench 1 a sequence of ditched boundaries and an interesting layout of linear quarries was recorded, these were close to the Romano-British evidence from Bumpy Lane and probably form part of the same system. On the other side of the road within trench 6 a network of small square or rectangular enclosures, associated with pits and post holes was very reminiscent of the layout at Eastcotts. A separate occupation site may be indicated but it is possible that the spread of settlement is more or less continuous between here and the Eastcotts site.

Period 13 Medieval

Although the earthwork banks of the medieval enclosures still survived in the grassed field surprisingly few features of this date were excavated. On the eastern side of the A600 within trench 6 the main settlement boundary between the ridge and furrow fields to the north and occupation features to the south was identified. Occupation features were in fact limited and this suggests that not all the closes surviving as earthworks were used as such. Most striking was the coincidence in the alignment of the earthen banks and the earlier Roman period features, indeed they were so similar that it was initially assumed that the latter were of medieval date. A more secure medieval sequence was recovered to the west within trench 4 where 12th/13th century features, pits and ditches were sealed by a 15th century agricultural soil, itself sealed by a cobbled trackway.

2.7 EASTCOTTS (fig.7)

Introduction

Eastcotts was the largest site excavated in terms of area (2.8ha.) and also in terms of the quantity of data recovered. To the north of the road corridor crop marks comprised ring-ditches, circular and rectilinear enclosures and a prominent triple ditched boundary. This latter had been interpreted as possibly marking the boundary to the Neolithic/Bronze Age ritual landscape centred on Octagon Farm, a theory that gained credence as a result of trial excavation which uncovered an inhumation and other features of prehistoric date. In the event Eastcotts turned out to be significant largely for the Romano British period.

Data Summary

Contexts	Pot (boxes)	Recorded finds	Bone (boxes)	Samples
3300	78	339	31 +5 burials	132

Phasing Summary

PERIOD	LANDSCAPE GROUPS	DESCRIPTION
Period 1 Natural glacial and alluvial deposits	40, 41	
Period 4 Late Neolithic/Bronze Age	18, 19	Settlement? Burial
Period 7 Iron Age	4, 20	Landscape boundaries, scattered settlement
Period 9 Romano-British	1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 38	Settlement
Period 13 Medieval	5, 42	Cultivation
Period 14 Post Medieval to Modern	43, 44	Cultivation
Unphased features	16, 21, 39	

Period 2 Early Prehistoric

Although no structural data was recorded a significant lithic assemblage of late Mesolithic/Early Neolithic date was recovered. Analysis remains to be done on the spatial distribution of this material.

Period 4 Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age

In addition to the material recovered from the trial trenches (including a crouched inhumation) ditches and pits were excavated during the main phase of excavation. Dated largely by lithics, the features also exhibited the characteristic leached appearance. The boundaries may mark the site of fields, the pits suggesting settlement.

Period 7 Iron Age

The boundary marked by the triple ditch probably dates to this period, although it appears also to have continued in use through the Roman period acting as a western boundary to settlement. Three concentrations of Iron-Age material suggest possible settlement, the first to the west of the triple ditch, the second some 75m to the west and including a feature possibly the remnant of a circular hut drainage gully, and the third at the far eastern end of the site.

Period 9 Romano -British

As at Peartree Farm a number of phases of development within the Roman Period can be identified.

Phase 1 1st/2nd century

This involved the establishment of a rectilinear field/enclosure system across the eastern 2/3rds of the excavated area. Bounded to the west and east by major north-south ditches, the northern limits can be identified from crop marks just beyond the excavated area, to the south alluvium masks and inhibits attempts to gauge the extent

of the settlement. Possibly two major blocks of enclosures can be identified and within these concentrations of pits and post holes, although unfortunately no definite structures, probably mark occupation. Included within one of these concentrations was a pottery kiln and to the west of this a large pit, containing waterlogged deposits including a preserved wattle panel and leather objects.

Phase 2 2nd/3rd century

Little change can be detected in the Phase 1 system but this appears to have been extended to the west towards the Iron Age triple ditch boundary. Two cremations were identified within this area and a T-shaped possible corn-drier. Beyond the extended enclosures, within the area of the phase 1 development, a collection of pits yielded a large amount of iron working slag.

Phase 3 3rd/4th century

The shift in the focus of activity towards the western end of the site, begun in phase 2, continues into phase 3. There is little or no evidence for later Roman use of the enclosures at the eastern end of the site. This strongly suggests that occupation has shifted, although less intensive land-use, agricultural or horticultural, could still be continuing while leaving little trace in the archaeological record. To the west the picture is radically different with re-cutting and simplification of the original phase 1 rectilinear system and further extension to the west, this time characterised by a network of curvilinear ditches and enclosures. Within one of these enclosure, and subsequently demolished on redesign of the enclosure, sat the only certain example of a building. Rectangular and measuring approximately 6.5m. by 8m., all that remained were the fragments of cobble alignments, presumably either the lower part of the walls or footings for timber base-plates.

Phase 4 Late 4th century

The system evolved by the end of phase 3 receives little amendment. Continued occupation, still concentrated to the western end of the site is attested by the digging of pits through already existing enclosure ditches.

Period 13 Medieval

A small amount of ridge and furrow cultivation was identified at the eastern end of the site.

2.8 OCTAGON FARM (fig.8)

Introduction

Octagon farm comprises the ploughed out remains of 34 ritual monuments dating from the Middle Neolithic into the Early Bronze Age. That part of the complex affected by the road was scheduled and the engineering design altered to protect the site. Although largely a mitigation exercise to ensure that damage would not occur during construction, fifteen of the monuments were investigated by trenching.

Data Summary

Contexts	Pot (boxes)	Recorded finds	Bone (boxes)	Samples
1157				

Phasing Summary

PERIOD	LANDSCAPE GROUPS	DESCRIPTION
Period 1 Natural glacial and alluvial deposits		
Period 3 Neolithic		Ritual monuments
Period 4 Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age		Barrow cemetery
Period 6 Late Bronze Age /Early Iron Age		Field system, settlement?
Period 7-9 Iron-Age to Roman		Settlement
Period 13 Medieval		Cultivation
Period 14 Post Medieval to Modern		Cultivation

Period 3 Neolithic

Five rectangular or butt-ended monuments were investigated, variously describes as small cursuses or mortuary enclosures. All that survived were plough truncated ditches, little of the interiors were examined but internal structures were suggested and the occurrence of tree throws may also be significant. A general spread of tree throws beyond and between the monuments attests the once wooded nature of the landscape here. No direct dating evidence was recovered to tie down primary clearance but by inference this must at least have been underway by this period. The general landscape surrounding the monuments still appears to have been governed by its proximity to the Ouse, a network of palaeochannels is visible from aerial photographs and the monuments themselves are largely sited between these on what would have been dry gravel islands.

Period 4 Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age

Eight ring ditches, presumably once surrounding barrows, were investigated. By and large no greater than 30m. in diameter and of single ring construction these are typical of the type found throughout the Ouse valley. What is significant is the continued relevance of the area in terms of ritual and ceremony.

Period 6 Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age

Also visible as a crop mark was a system of rectilinear ditches marking at least five enclosures, although certainly later than the Period 3 monuments, through one of which the ditches cut, it appears to respect the sites of the barrows. Pits and post holes close by may indicate contemporary settlement.

Period 7 to 9 Iron Age to Roman

Enclosures along the northern edge of the site, on a slight rise overlooking the floodplain, although little investigated, appear to be of Iron Age to Roman date and certainly indicate settlement. Nothing of this date was located directly over the site of the ritual monuments.

Period 13 Medieval

An extensive network of ridge and furrow was recorded across the whole area.

Overall Phasing Summary

PERIOD	PTF	VF	BF	MF	BL	H	E	OF
Period 1 Natural glacial and alluvial deposits								
Period 2 Early Prehistoric								
Period 3 Neolithic								
Period 4 Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age								
Period 5 Bronze Age								
Period 6 Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age								
Period 7 Iron Age								
Period 8 Late Iron Age/Early Romano-British								
Period 9 Romano-British								
Period 10 Late Romano-British/Early Saxon								
Period 11 Saxon								
Period 12 Saxo-Norman								
Period 13 Medieval								
Period 14 Post Medieval to Modern								

3. PROVISIONAL PHASING

The results so far presented have emerged during the provisional phasing stage of the project. Clearly a chronological and spatial structure for each site is necessary before any assessment can be made of the various types and classes of evidence, be they artefacts, ecofacts or indeed the structural data itself. Provisional phasing has been geared towards providing just enough of a structure and no more, its provisional nature should be emphasised.

Methodology

The main thrust of provisional phasing has been towards the production of a phased database whereby each context is organised into a basic hierarchy of phasing groups. This has been achieved as far as possible using stratigraphic evidence only, however the nature of the sites demand that spatial patterning and pottery spot-dates also form an important part of the mix. The nature of this mix has varied depending on the site and so no hard and fast guidelines can be given as to how exactly each phase has been assembled on each site although an explanation of some the broad methodological approaches and terms might be useful for anyone using the databases.

BCCAS currently uses a relational database, DBASE IV, to enter basic context and finds data. The major structural and phasing units are then added (when available) to enable interrogation of the database, both spatially and chronologically. Once plan information has been digitised using AUTOCAD the whole, text records and drawn record, should be brought together by GEOSYS to provide an integrated analytical tool.

DBASE IV: The structural/finds database

All structural records and finds records for a site are entered onto a single database. Our concerns in this section are with the entering of structural data (for finds data see p.00). Guidelines for the creation and maintenance of the database are only given in so far as they require explanation in purely archaeological terms, as in for instance the question of how to assign processual interpretations and the codes to use. The nuts and bolts of using DbaseIV, how to create, add to, and interrogate a database, are explained in the appropriate manuals accompanying the software.

The design of the database is broadly based on post-excavation indexing techniques developed by the Museum of London (DUA). Various adaptations have been necessary to reflect the normal types of sites excavated in Bedfordshire which are often quite extensive rural sites with little vertical stratigraphy. The system was first used to contribute towards the MAP2 assessment of Stratton in 1993 and has been further developed for the Bedford Southern Bypass project Further analytical work will probably require the database to be expanded or amended.

The database should contain the following fields, which (where appropriate), are described in more detail:

1. **CONTEXT:** context number up to five integers in length.

2. **F-TYPE:** (feature type) basic interpretative description of a context. A one letter code is used for cut features and their fills; a two letter code is used for layers.
3. **F-NUMBER:** (feature number) serves to cross-reference fills to cuts.
4. **PROCESSL:** (processual group) gives an indication of the processes that lead to the formation of an individual context.
5. **ASSOCITNL:** (associational group) places contexts into associated groups.
6. **LANDSCAPE:** (landscape group) places contexts into broad landscape units
7. **PHASE:** places contexts into broad chronological phases.

The database is designed so that moving across the screen from left to right gives a greater degree of interpretation of the context in each field. Fields 1 to 4 should be relatively easy to assign the relative information, from the context sheets alone and these are always the first fields to be completed after checking of the archive. Where doubt exists regarding the 'Processl', or any other field, the relevant sections and plans must be consulted.

Once provisional phasing has been completed the hierarchy of structural groupings can be added. Associational, landscape and phase groups were considered adequate for Stratton post-excavation and should serve for most assessments. Should further analysis take place a more flexible approach may be needed in defining the nature of these groups and in possibly adding to them dependant upon the demands of the site.

F-TYPE

This field contains the basic interpretative description of a context. A single letter is used for cut features (and for fills of cut features; two letters are used for layers. Where possible the initial letter of the types of features/layers have been used.

As with all codes referring to glossary terms, be they feature types or groups, these can be added to as the site demands. The current list was considered adequate for the types of features encountered at Stratton, other site will almost certainly involve the definition of new feature types.

Cut feature codes

- | | |
|----------|--|
| A | cremation |
| B | robber-cut (refers to robber-trenches or robbing-holes of posts) |
| C | cartwheel rut |
| D | ditch/gully (linear features) |
| F | furrow |
| G | grave |
| H | hearth/oven/kiln/pyrotechnic installation of any sort |
| M | masonry (refers to stone structures rather than stone post pads) |
| N | natural interface (tree-hole/animal burrow/scoop recorded as natural but interpreted as natural) |
| O | pond |
| P | pit (unspecified type) |
| Q | pit (quarry) |

R pit (rubbish)
 S structural cut (posthole/beamslot etc.)
 T pit (storage)
 V river channel
 W well or sump

Layer codes

EC external cultivation i.e. ploughsoil
 ED external dump
 ES external surface
 IS internal surface
 NG natural gravel
 NS natural stratum other than gravel
 OC occupation debris

F-NO (feature number)

The principle function of this field is to cross-reference fills to cut features. For contexts representing fills this field should contain the number of the cut in which the fill was recorded. For contexts representing layers or cut features this field will be the same as field 1 (i.e. context number).

It follows from the above that where fields 1 and 3 differ, the former represents a fill and the latter a cut feature. Where the two fields are the same the context represents either a cut feature or a layer.

This field is the basic unit that will render the database compatible with the CAD feature files and thus enable the two to 'run' together.

PROCESSL (processual group)

The purpose of field 4 is to describe the processes that lead to the formation of the context. The three basic terms are:

C construction (including the digging of cut features, post-packing, well lining, wall footings and coursing)
 U use (primary fills, burnt deposits of hearths relating to use or last firing, post-pipe fill with evidence of in-situ decay)
 D disuse (fills no relevant to features original function, for example upper fill, fills of robbing, or post-holes with no evidence of post)

In certain instances it may be necessary to use more than one of these terms. For example, if it is uncertain whether the pit fill represents the use or disuse of the feature in which it was deposited.

CD construction/disuse (post-packing present but not recorded separately).
 UD use/disuse (contexts which are the sole fill or where the "Processl" interpretation is in doubt).
 CUD constructio/use/disuse (where no differentiation can be made)

The "Processl" field is of importance because it will enable the relative value of any finds from contexts to be assessed with regard to their relevance to the feature in which it was found. For example, finds from disuse contexts are likely only to give an approximate date for the use of the feature, use/disuse contexts by their very name indicates a degree of uncertainty. It is to finds from use or construction contexts that most value (in dating terms but also in terms of reconstructing contemporary activities) can be attached. That is why the identification of these contexts, on site, is of paramount importance.

This field is perhaps the most difficult to use as there are often examples that may cause confusion. It must be remembered that this field is largely dependant on the features type. For example, the fills of a well are likely to be disuse, even if they are deliberately dumped in, for they represent the disuse of the feature. Only a fill which accumulated during the use of the well can be regarded as use. The clay-lining of a hearth represents the construction of the feature, however, burnt deposits may not represent the use of the feature if they contain unburnt material, but merely the dumping of mixed material into the feature once it has gone out of use

ASSOCITNL (associational group)

The following terms will be used to group associated structures:

- B** Building; (confident that the elements, for example wall line, floor remnants etc. suggest the presence of a building).
- S** Structure; where there is doubt over a possible building being represented by the evidence available, for example, if only one wall survives, post-hole lines that due to their short length are unlikely to be a fence line, hearths or wells.
- T** Track/roadway; (includes make-up, deposits but care should be taken with re-surfacing for if substantial enough it could be treated as a separate trackway).
- C** Cemetery; (groupings of graves of similar date).
- D** Boundary; (ditch/fence etc. usually of sufficient length that they would have acted as a property or other divide).
- P** Pit group; (any clustering of pits that may be of similar date or function).
- I** Isolated feature (no obvious associations with any other features).

LANDSCAPE (landscape group)

This will record the broadest landscape associations

- E** Enclosure
- O** Open Area
- T** Trackway

PHASE

This field will assign each context to its broad historical/chronological phase. A numerical sequence will provide the database with the flexibility it needs to perform a variety of sorts

Provisional phasing reports

For each of the bypass sites a report on the provisional phasing will be produced. This will contain the phased database described above. In addition a more detailed background to the site will be provided, including a reprise of the original research objectives and a summary of the results phase by phase. Phase plans showing the major groups will be included along with matrices where appropriate. The database can be supplied in either hard copy or on disc, as a matter of course the report will normally include at least a listing by context order and phase order.

4. ASSESSMENT

Aims and objectives

Although accepted as a key stage within all projects the detail of assessment, its scope and format are still disputed. The nature of assessment will to a large extent be determined by the funding circumstances of the project, private developer or English Heritage, the Bypass began as one and finished as another and so has a slightly complex background. Although the bypass assessment will follow the format currently encouraged by EH and outlined in MAP2, copies of the report will be submitted to EH but only as a reporting exercise, detailed comments are not expected. Monitoring of the project has been provided by the Department of Transport's own consultant, RPS Clouston, and it is they who will provide the detailed comments and recommend acceptance of the final draft.

Rather than produce individual assessment reports for each site a single volume is envisaged, housing separate sections for the sites but emphasising an integrated approach to all the various data sets. The following contents list gives a fair idea of how the report will be structured.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preface

1.2 Summary of overall project objectives

1.3 Organisation of the report

1.4 Site location and land use

2 DATA COLLECTION AND METHOD STATEMENT

2.1 Fieldwork

2.1.1 Structural

2.1.2 Non ceramic artefacts

2.1.3 Ceramic artefacts

2.1.4 Human bone

2.1.5 Animal bone

2.1.6 Macro/microscopic plant remains and invertebrate remains

2.2 Assessment

2.2.1 Structural

2.2.2 Non ceramic artefacts

2.2.3 Ceramics

2.2.4 Human bone

2.2.5 Animal bone

2.2.6 Macro/microscopic plant remains and invertebrate remains

3. DESCRIPTION OF FIELDWORK: THE SITES

3.1 Peartree Farm

3.1.1 Introduction

3.1.2 Structural evidence

3.1.2.1 Factual data

Quantification of material

Evidence by phase

3.1.2.2 Statement of potential

Original research aims

New research aims

3.1.3 Non ceramic and bulk finds

3.1.3.1 Factual data

Quantification of material

Provenance

Range and variety

3.1.3.2 Statement of potential

Original research aims

New research aims

3.1.3.3 Storage and curation

3.1.4 Ceramics

3.1.4.1 Factual data

Quantification of material

Provenance

Range and variety

3.1.4.2 Statement of potential

Original research aims

New research aims

3.1.4.3 Storage and curation

3.1.5 Human bone

3.1.6 Animal bone

3.1.7 Macroscopic plant remains and invertebrate remains

3.1.8 Summary statement of potential

3.2 Village farm

3.3 Bunyans and Manor Farms

3.4 Bumpy Lane

3.5 Harrowden

3.6 Eastcotts

3.7 Octagon Farm

4. SUMMARY OF THE EVIDENCE

5. SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL

5.1 Original research objectives

5.2 New research objectives

5.3 Summary of potential for analysis

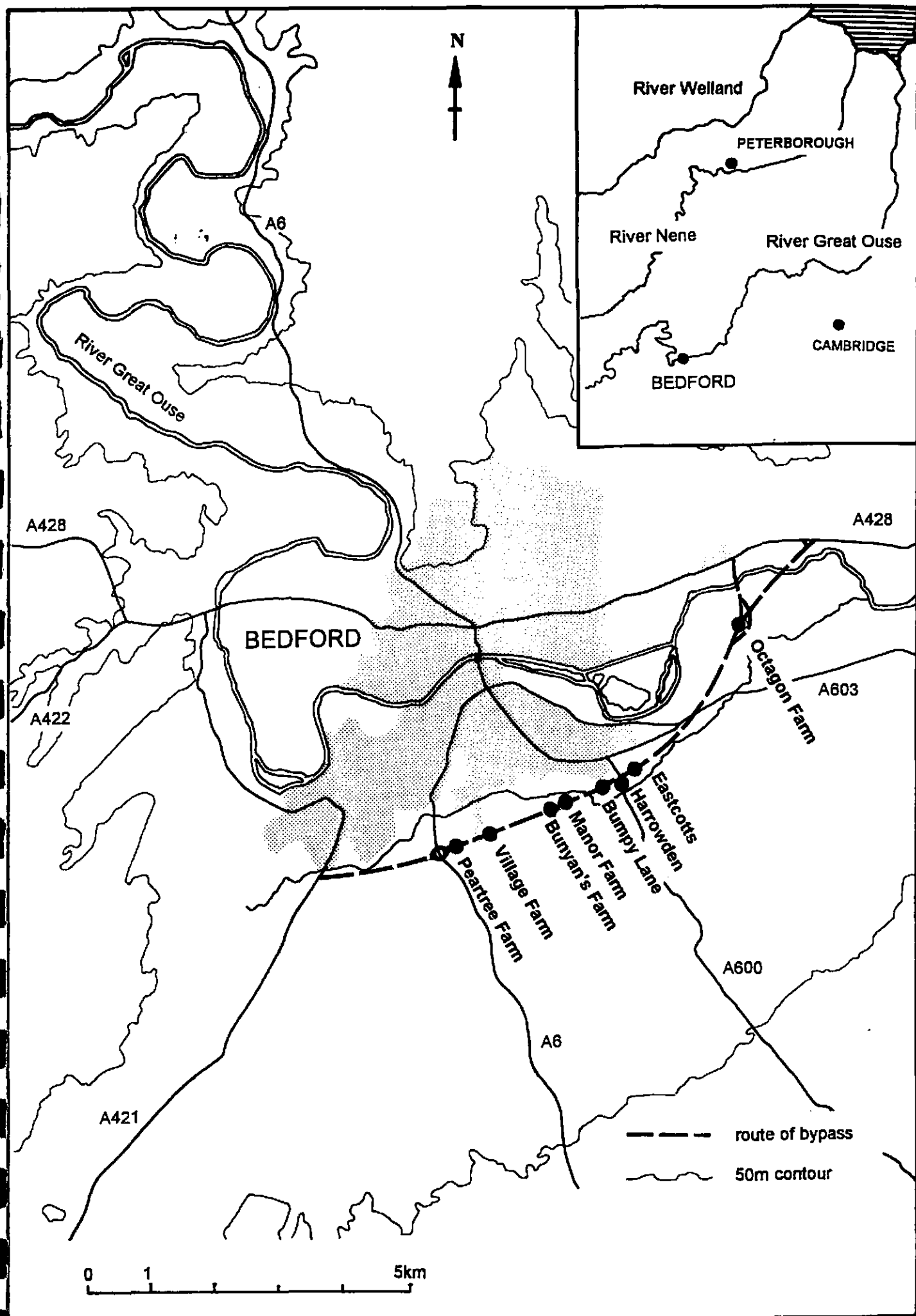
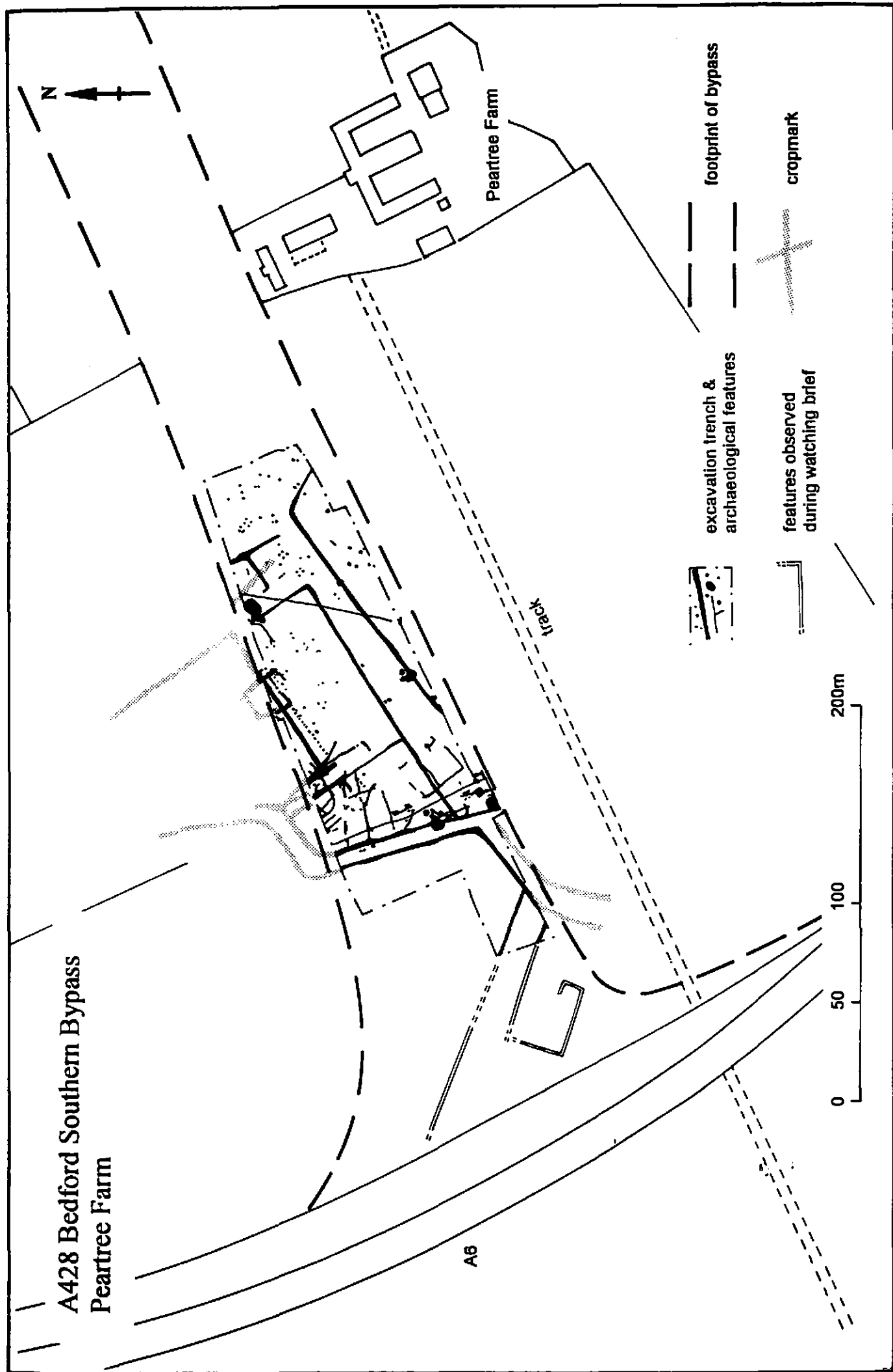
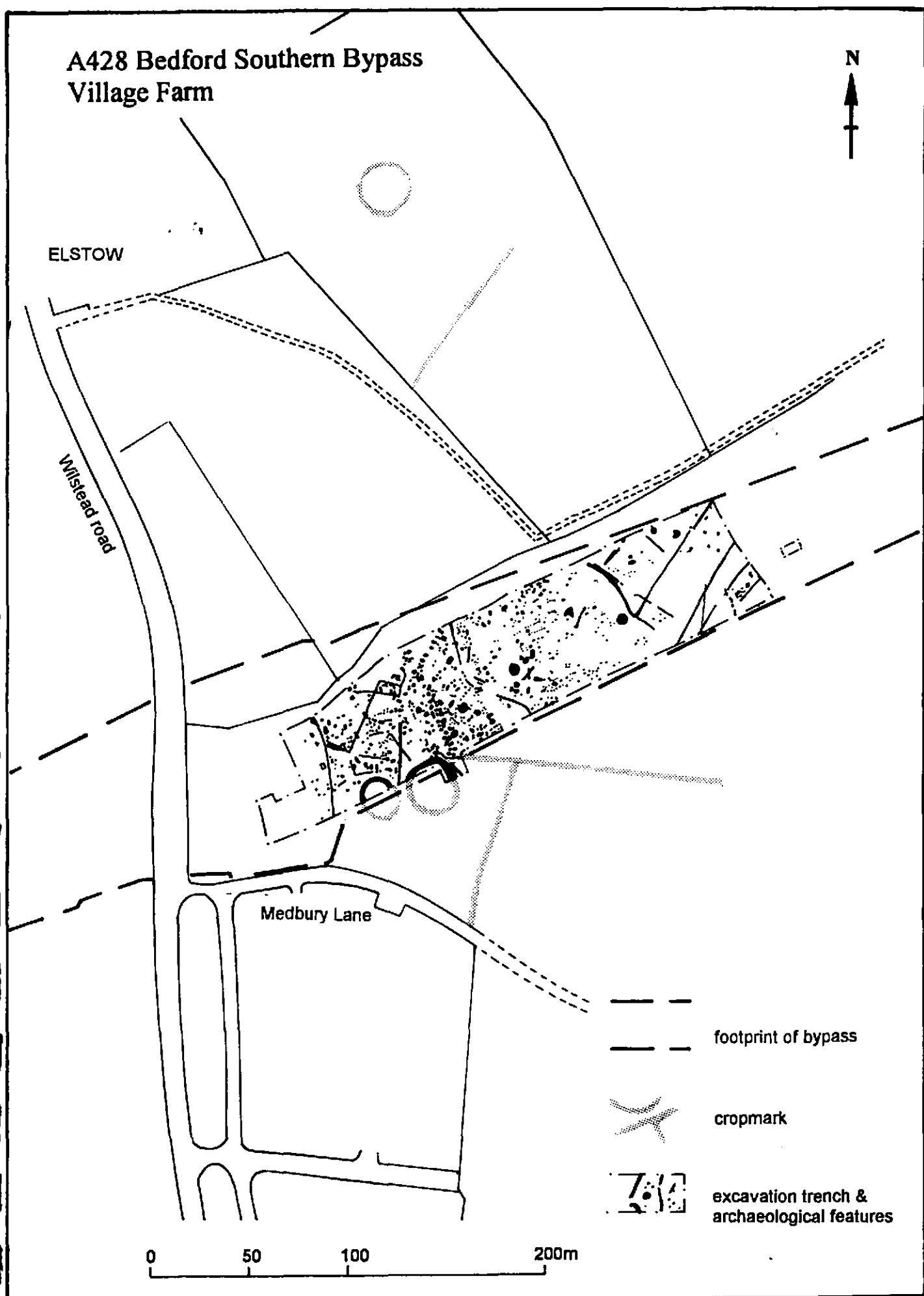


Figure 1



1625

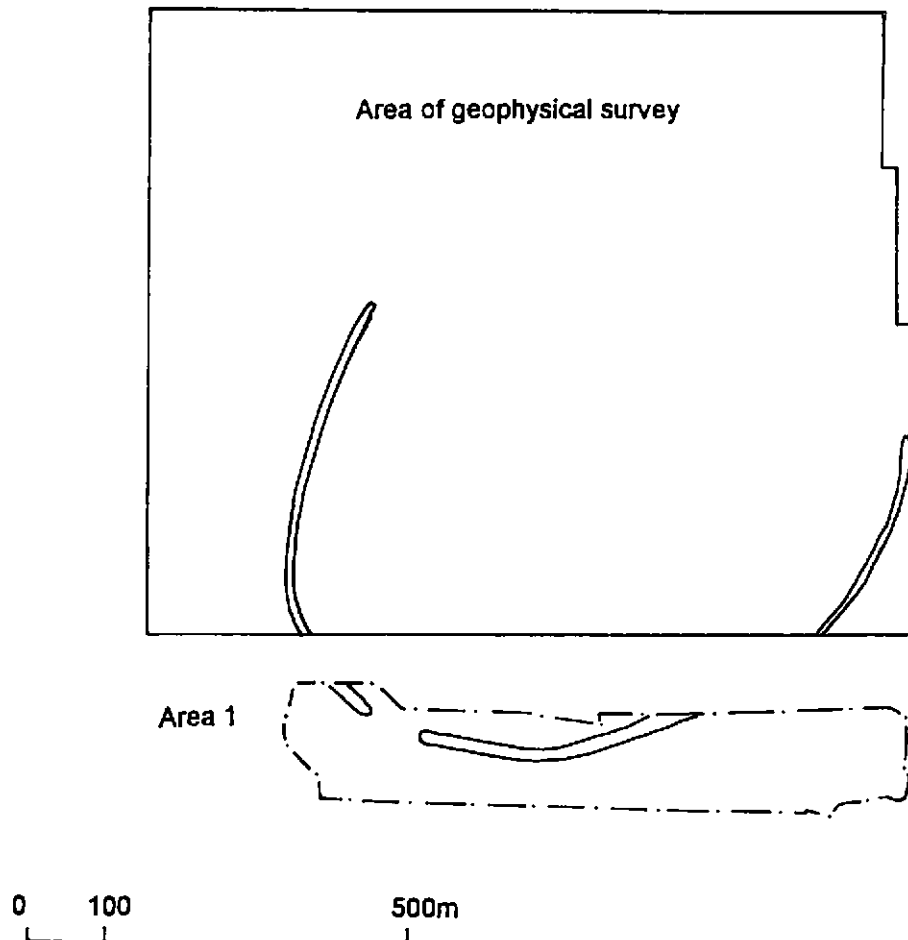
Figure 2



242

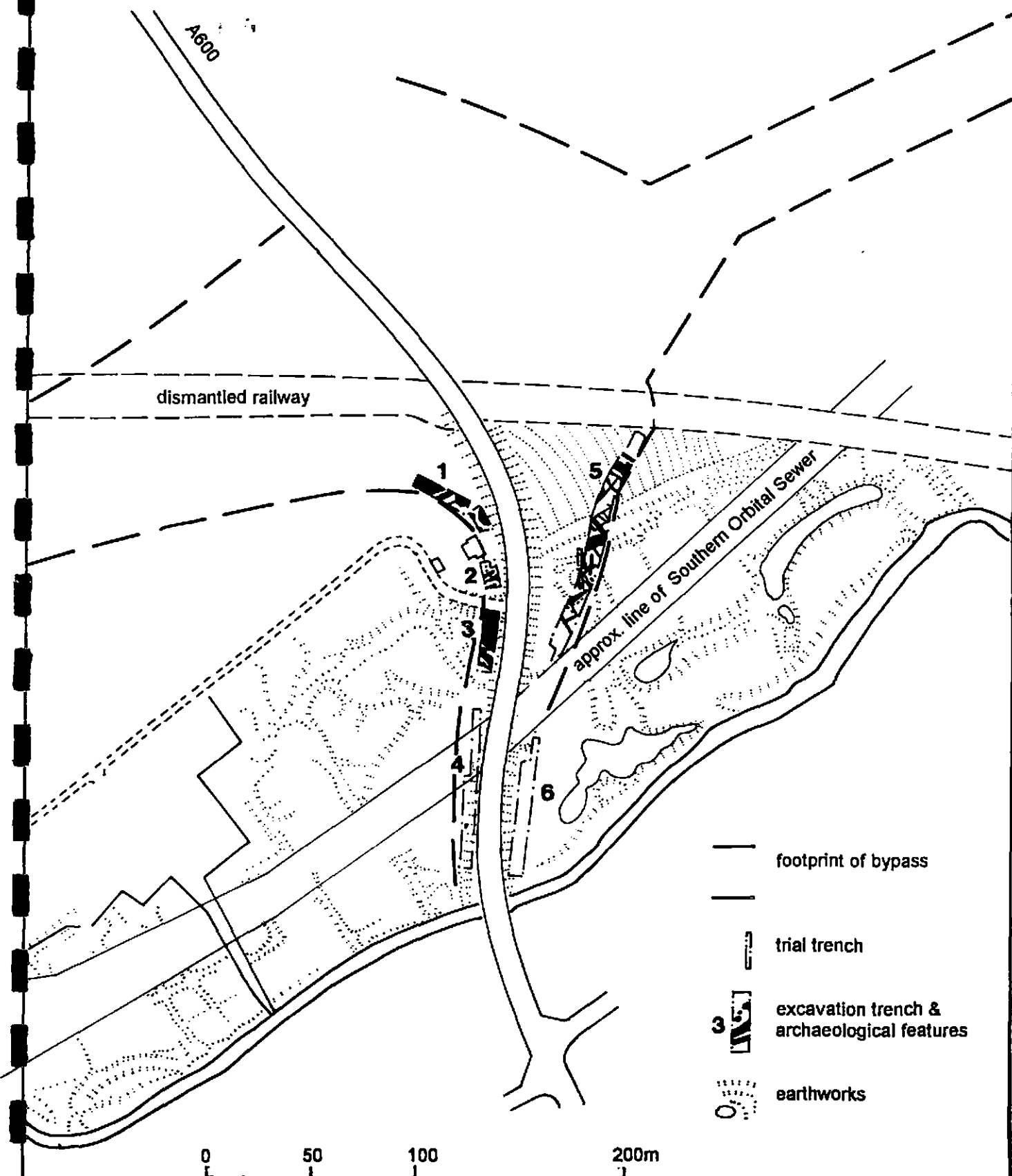
Figure 3

A428 Bedford Southern Bypass
Bumpy Lane



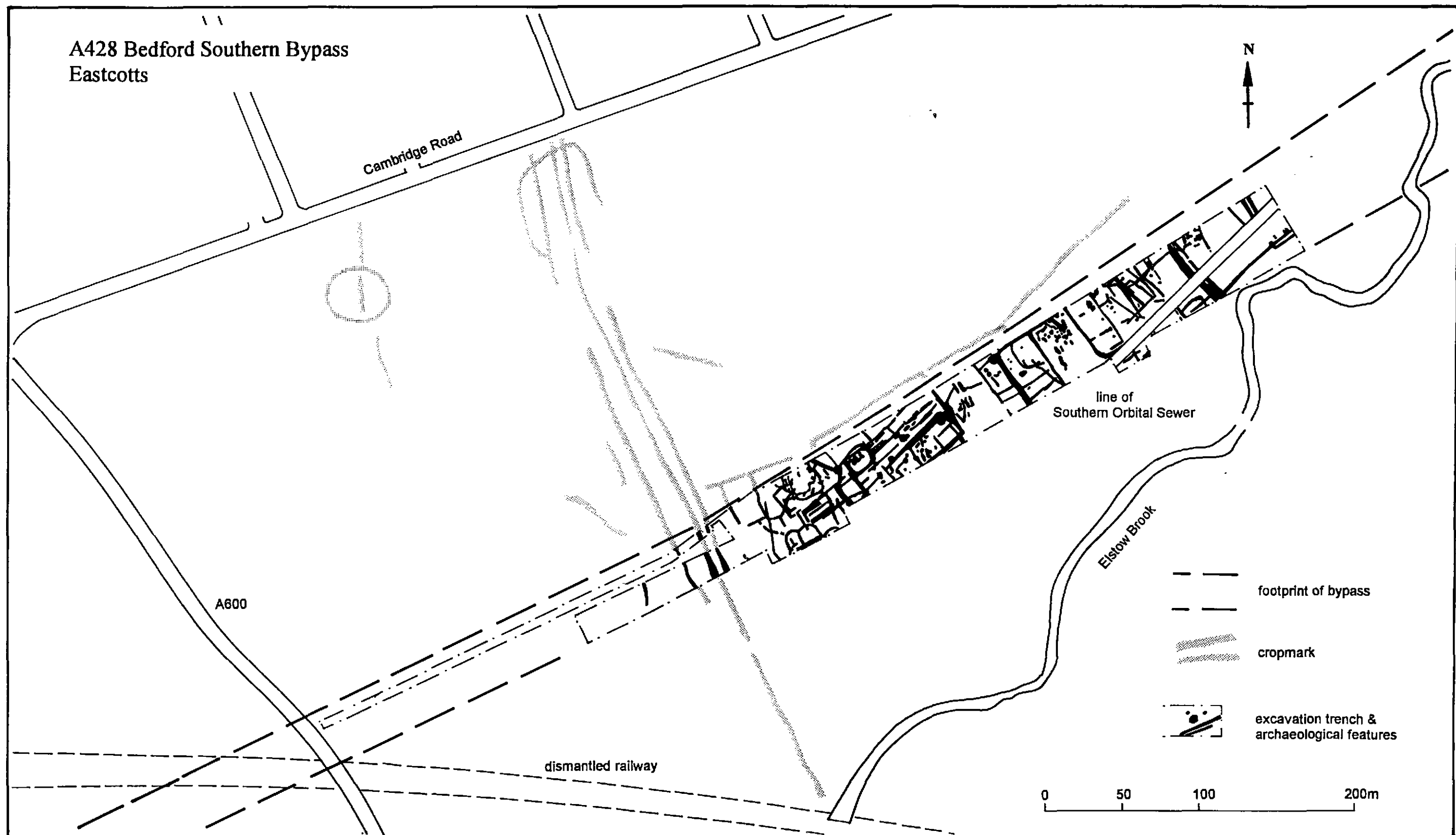
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A428 Bedford Southern Bypass Harrowden



3920

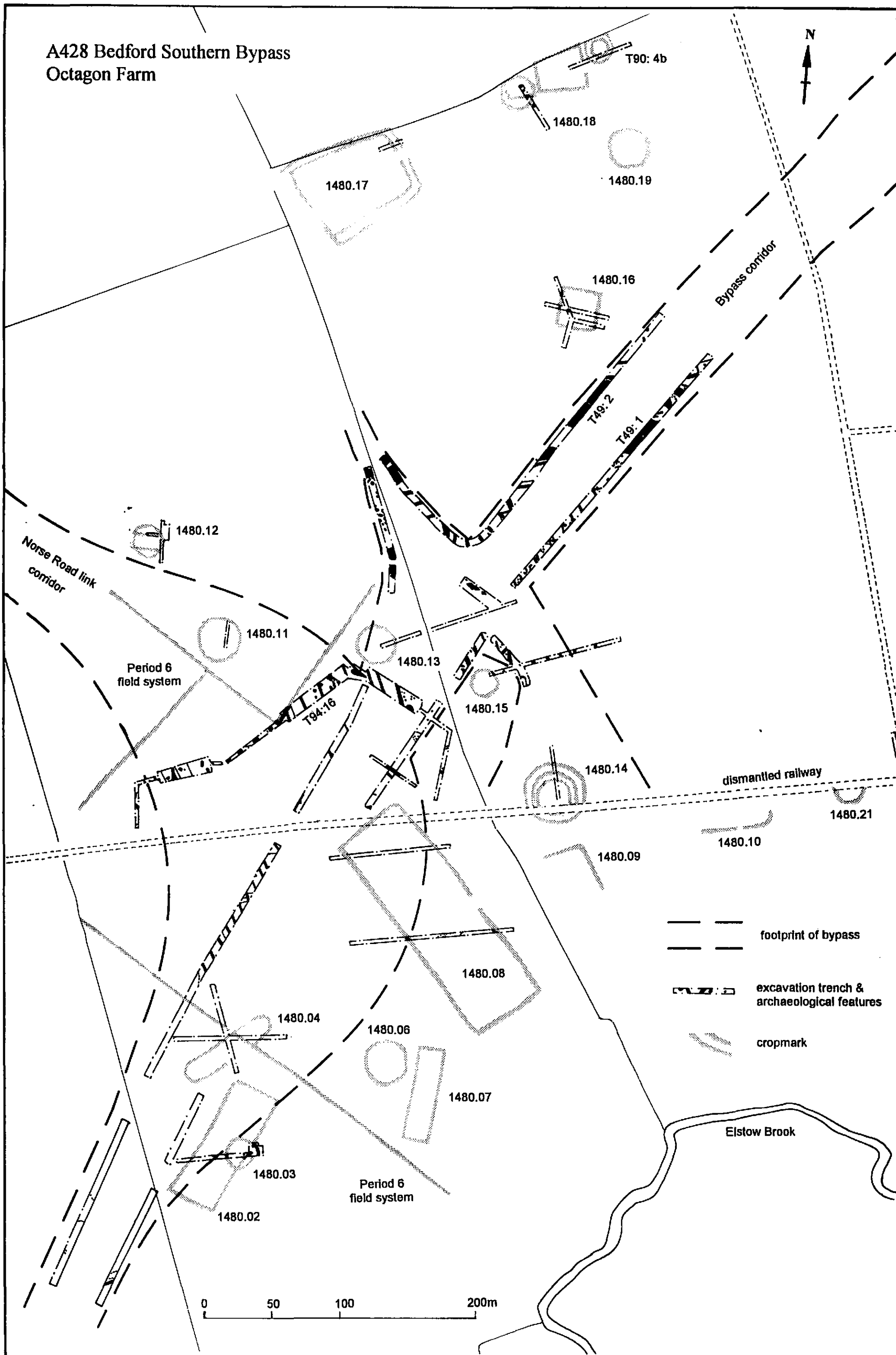
Figure 7



1623

Figure 8

A428 Bedford Southern Bypass
Octagon Farm



1480

Figure 9

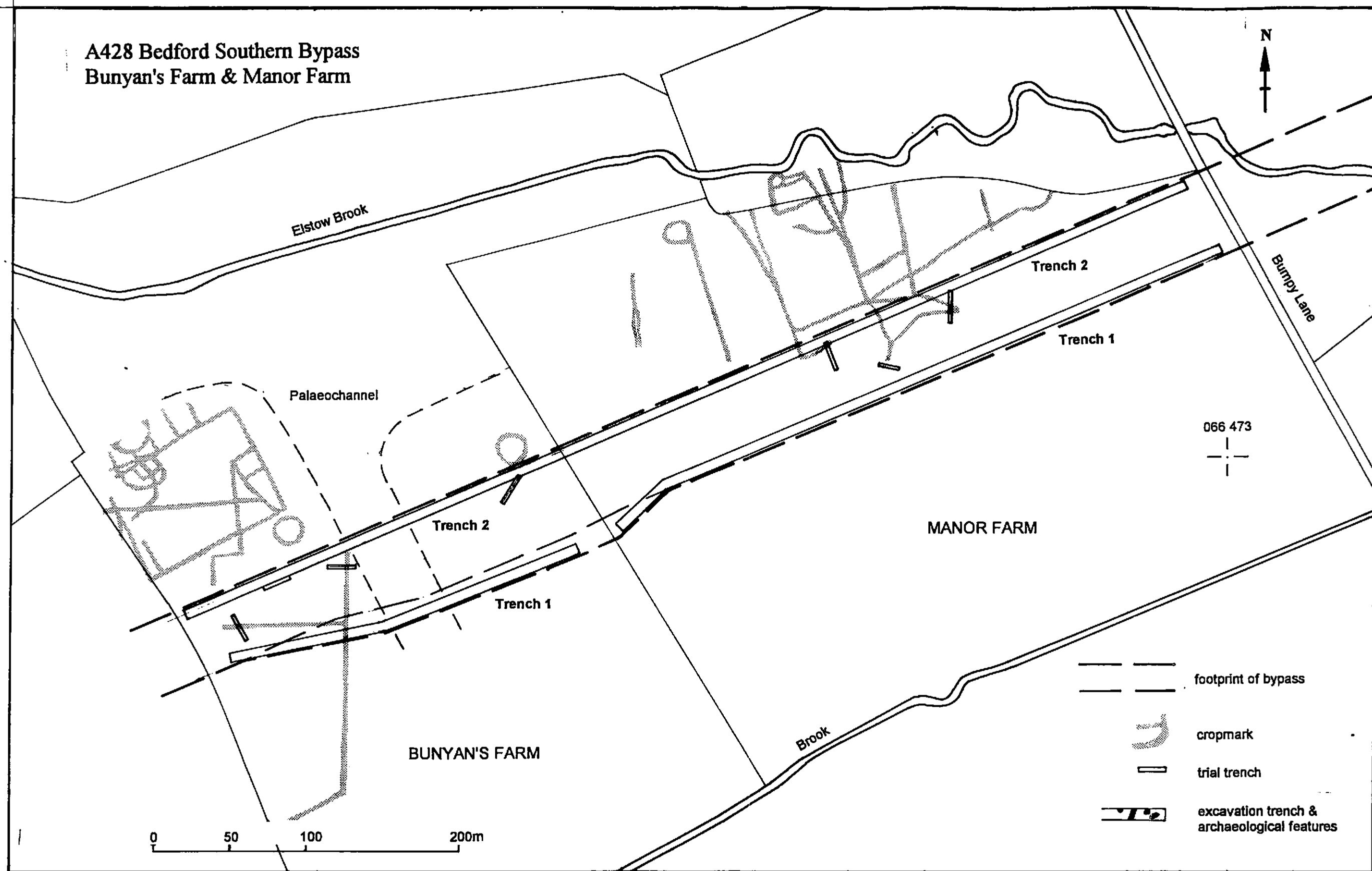
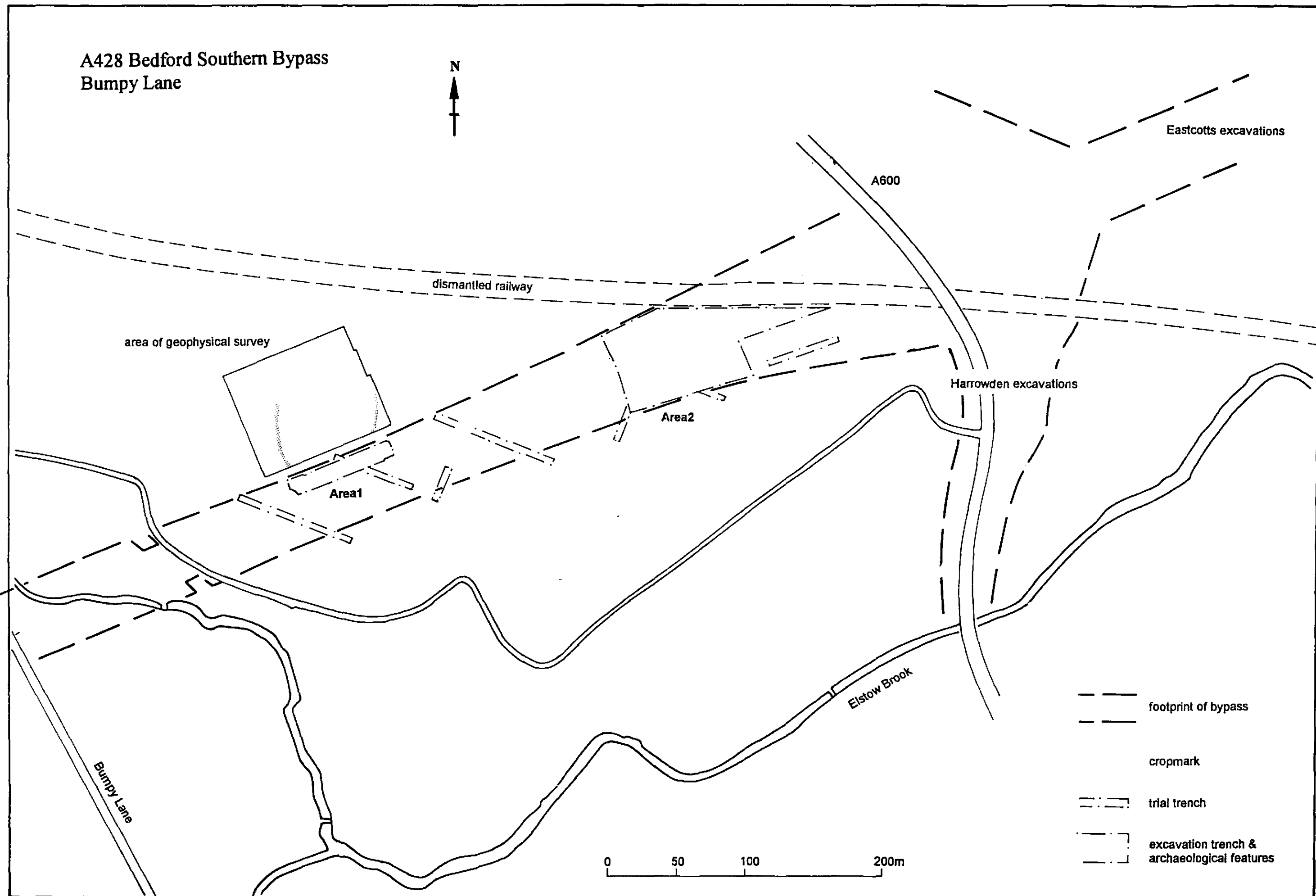


Figure 4



See EPL 260

HER/5852

extend mapping to the wide
boundary geophysical

Figure 5