Nick Tavener is a full Member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists and abides by its code of practice and other regulations.

Services include the standard range of archaeological excavations, evaluations, watching briefs and desk-based assessments as well as building survey, analysis & photographic recording and also planning advice and landscape survey. Specialist consultants are available to provide environmental, geophysical and finds advice and analysis.

Nick Tavener *BA MIFA*

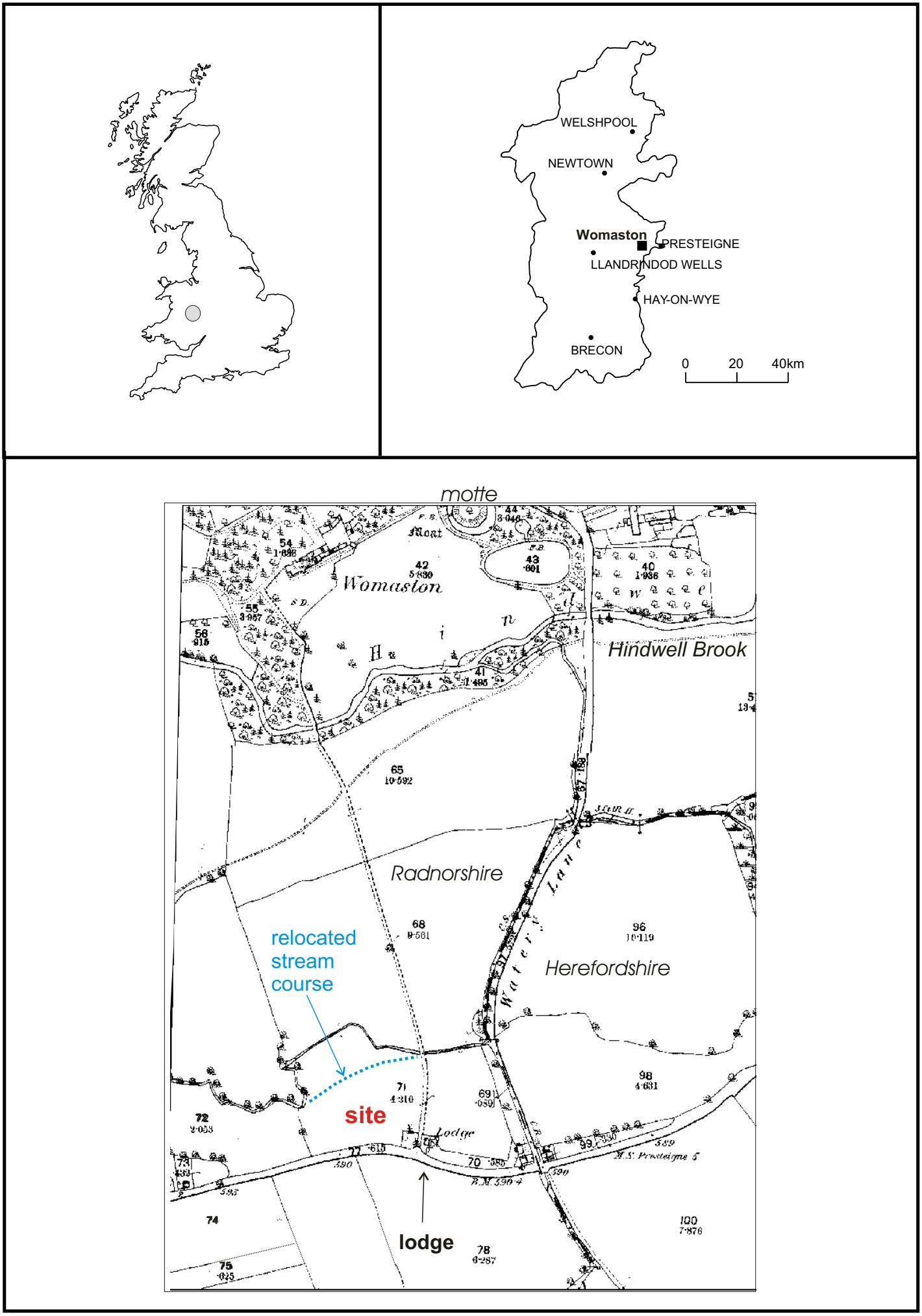

Fig. 1: Location of the proposed development area (detail map is 1889 Ordnance Survey 1:2500)

Summary

Four evaluation trenches were dug within a few metres of the Walton Green cursus monument near its eastern end. No evidence was found for any Neolithic activity, but three shallow ditches were found (all roughly parallel), along with three scattered post-holes. These features had been partially truncated by a ridge and furrow cultivation system shown by pottery to have been in use until c. 1800.

Of the three ditches, two contained Roman pottery and had nearly V-shaped profiles. Too small to have been military, they were probably part of a field system for the nearby military camps. Of the three post-holes, two were definitely Roman, one being cut by the westernmost ditch. These, along with the fairly common pottery and burnt manuport stones within the ditch fills, probably indicate Roman or Romano-British settlement nearby but probably not actually within the proposed development area.

1.1 A development proposal has been submitted on behalf of Mr C.J. Williams of Upper Womaston Farm, Walton Green (Fig. 1). The proposals involve the replacement of the existing access road to Womaston School and Upper Womaston Farm with a new access. The latter will require works to improve visibility along the main road by re-aligning the existing hedgerows along the road corridor. The scheme also involves three new dwellings with associated access, landscaping and parking areas (Powys County Council Planning Application P2008/0864).

1.2 The location lies within a few metres of a site of archaeological interest registered on the Regional Historic Environment Record (PRN 5134). The Local Planning Authority's Archaeology Advisor (CPAT Curatorial Section - henceforward 'the Curator') was first consulted on 24/6/2008. Their reply (also dated 24/6/2008) advised that a pre-determination archaeological evaluation would be necessary in order to ascertain the potential for preserved archaeological features within the application area. The Curatorial Section subsequently produced a Design Brief for the Archaeological Evaluation (CPAT EVB 720).

1.3 Mr. Martin Edmunds of Cross Gates, Llandrindod Wells, acting as agent for the owners, commissioned Nick Tavener Archaeological Services to provide the archaeological services detailed in the Brief.

2.1 The Brief stated that the primary objectives would be to locate and describe, by means of detailed desktop analysis and strategic trial trenching, all archaeological features that might be present within the development area.

2.2 The Brief states that the archaeological project would consist of: -

- ✓ The excavation of four trenches. All trenches measured 20x2 metres and were excavated at (or close to) the locations shown on the plan that accompanied the Brief (see Fig. 2). Essentially, the chosen locations targeted the three house plots plus the entry point of the proposed new access road. The locations were double-checked to ensure that one trench examined one of the two possible ditches previously identified on aerial photographs (para. 4.6 below – see Fig. 7).

- ✓ Adequate sample excavation and recording of any archaeological deposits or features identified in order to gather sufficient information to allow an informed decision to be made over the future treatment of the archaeological resource.

- ✓ Preparation of a report on the results of the evaluation and appropriate dissemination of those results (i.e., this report).

- ✓ Preparation of a site archive

- ✓ Assessment of the potential of the site for any further post-excavation analyses.

2.3 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 initiate 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).

3.2 Documentary research

3.2.1 A full map regression was undertaken.

3.2.2 The following primary and secondary sources were sought and consulted (as appropriate) in order to inform the fieldwork phase:-.

> Ordnance Survey maps; Tithe maps; Estate maps and other historical maps; Previous published and unpublished archaeological reports and archive work; Written non-archaeological sources; Air photographs; Geological maps; borehole and other engineering data.

3.2.3 To achieve this, the following organizations were visited:-

- ✓ County Sites and Monuments Record (Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust)
- ✓ Powys County Archives, Shire Hall, Llandrindod Wells.
- ✓ National Library of Wales (for records not available at Powys CC Archives).
- ✓ Royal Commission on Ancient & Historical Monuments in Wales, Crown Buildings, Plas Crug, Aberystwyth.

3.2.2 Aerial photographs that revealed archaeological information are included in this report (Figs 3 to 7).

3.2.5 All sources consulted are listed at the rear of this report.

3.3 Fieldwork

3.3.1 The evaluation comprised 4 trenches, each measuring 20m by 2m, at locations shown on the plan accompanying the Brief.

3.3.2 The overburden was removed by 8 tonne JCB under constant archaeological supervision down to a level determined to comprise deposits, features or horizons of archaeological significance.

3.3.3 The machine used a '5 foot' toothless bucket and stopped at the top of subsoil or the first significant archaeological horizon. All further excavation was by hand.

3.3.4 All trench sides and bases were cleaned manually by hoeing and trowelling to reveal contexts in plan and profile. This was completed even where trench apparently revealed only natural deposits. The trenches were then mapped.

3.3.5 The evaluation was intended to be essentially a non-destructive process (designed to promote the appropriate management of the archaeological resource – see Brief para. 6.1). It did, however, need to recover enough information to enable

the planning authority and the curator to correctly assess the implications of the development. It was also necessary that it provide an assessment of the site's overall archaeological worth.

3.3.6 Thus, appropriate further excavation was undertaken to elucidate the function and date of exposed remains (Brief para 6.7). Features or deposits deemed to be of value to the understanding and interpretation of the site were selectively excavated, either in part or in full. All artefactual and ecofactual material recovered from hand excavation was retained.

3.3.7 The recording system included written, drawn and photographic data. Context numbers were allocated and trench/context record sheets completed.

3.3.8 Plans and other appropriate drawings were made of significant data. All plans were multi-context. The photographic record was made using digital cameras (6 megapixel) and 35mm colour print film.

3.3.9 No deposits considered to have environmental, technological or scientific dating potential were encountered. No samples were taken.

3.4 Office work

3.4.1 A site archive has been prepared. The written, drawn and photographic data has been catalogued and cross-referenced. The artefacts have been processed, catalogued and cross-referenced. Artefacts requiring specialist assessment have been submitted for such work.

3.4.2 This illustrated client report details the aims, methods, and results of the project. It also includes a non-technical summary and details of the composition of the site archive. Copyright of this report is vested in Nick Tavener Archaeological Services.

3.4.3 The client has been given two copies of this report and the freeholder one copy. Further copies will be deposited with the Regional Historic Environment Record and National Archaeological Record (digital files in .pdf format).

4.1 The proposed development site is situated 1km east of Walton village. The southern boundary is the B4362 (running from Walton to Presteigne). The northern boundary of the field is a small spring-fed stream known as Riddings Brook. The site is currently a pasture on farmland with gated access.

4.2 The Regional Historic Environment Record holds information that the proposed development lays less than 20 metres to the north of the Walton Green Cursus (PRN 5134). This is a Neolithic (prehistoric) site of national importance. It originally comprised a ditch encompassing a long, narrow rectangular enclosure and was flanked by an earthen bank made from spoil from the quarrying of the ditch.

Cursus monuments are believed to have acted as a ceremonial corridor on an alignment whose significance has been lost over time.

4.3 Just outside the western extremity of the cursus monument there is a burial mound known as Walton Green Barrow (PRN 369). Overlying the cursus are three later rectangular enclosures and a further example at the western extent (south of the barrow). Such enclosures are also likely to be prehistoric in date.

4.4 Some of these monuments have been partly investigated during a major programme of field study in the area (see Gibson, 1999 – section 8 below).

4.5 All the later prehistoric periods are represented by other monuments in the near vicinity. There are also several nearby Roman monuments including a fortlet and several marching camp(s) (Gibson, 1999 : comprehensively reviewed in Davies and Jones, 2006).

4.6 Two linear ditches have been identified on aerial photographs within the development area (see Fig. 7). They are oriented north/south, but are of unknown function or date; they could be, for example, drainage ditches of relatively recent date (see para 4.10 below).

4.7 The review of the published historic maps and local histories showed that there was no reason to believe that the site was anything other than agricultural farmland in the post-medieval period (see detail map on Fig 1). There was, however, every realistic expectation of encountering significant archaeological remains, especially of Neolithic, Iron Age or Roman date (see Davies and Jones, 2006).

4.8 Thus, all relevant aerial photographs held at RCAHMW (Aberystwyth) were studied looking for cropmarks that might illuminate the results of the evaluation. Cropmarks show on aerial photographs during very dry summers when grass or cereal crops become stressed by lack of water. This typically occurs from late May to mid-July. Most of the available vertical aerial photographs were taken at the wrong time of year (see sortie dates in section 8 below). The only exception was Fig 5 (photographed in July 1972). Not every summer is suitable. The 1972 photograph shows none of the cursus or indeed anything of any major archaeological significance.

4.9 The earliest aerial phoptograph (Fig 3) shows Riddings Brook in its original course. This was irregular and meandering and some distance to the north of its present course (compare it with Fig 1). This course had not changed by 1962 (Fig 4) or 1972 (Fig 5). Interestingly, the driveway from the lodge to the building that is now Womaston School cannot be seen on the 1946 photograph.

4.10 The two north-south linear cropmarks noted on the County Sites and Monuments Record were clearly visible in 1996 (Fig 7). A slightly earlier photograph (1989) shows the study area has been used for arable in the fairly recent past. The 1946 and (especially) 1962 photographs (Figs 3 and 4) show that the easternmost of these cropmarks was an open field boundary ditch until some time just before 1972 (Fig. 5). Riddings Brook was moved some time between 1972 and 1989 (Fig 6). The westernmost of the linear cropmarks visible on Fig 7 is probably ditch [106] or something close by (section 5 below).

The trench was machined down to the top of true glacial subsoil, a platy gravel (100) with barely any matrix (<10% orange sandy silt). This was overlain fairly abruptly by mid brown gritty floury silt loam (101) which merged upwards into a darker, more organic loam (102) of nearly identical texture.

The southern end of the trench just clipped a linear feature [104] filled with mid reddish brown gritty, floury silt loam (103). There was not enough of the feature within the trench to allow any meaningful excavation, but three sherds of Roman pottery, probably all part of the same Roman Redware vessel, were recovered from the upper edge fill of this feature during cleaning of the trench (Plate 16).

The most prominent feature in this trench was a large, parallel-sided, linear ditch [106] (Plate 1). A slot 1.2m wide was excavated across the ditch (Fig. 8 and Plate 4). The upper fill, a mid reddish brown silty loam (105), contained numerous sherds of pottery (Plate 3 & 16) along with occasional clusters of burnt and fragmented stone. The lower fill (109) was much stonier (Plate 6). The fully excavated feature had a very nearly V-shaped profile (Plates 4, 5 & 6) that is often a characteristic of Roman ditches.

At its south end, ditch [106] cut a post-hole [110]. It was only cut 0.08m into the subsoil and may have been a post-pad setting, for it featured a large flat platy stone (Fig 8 - also top right on plates 3 & 4). The soil fill (111) was identical to (105) in nature. It yielded three fragments of a Black-Burnished vessel including a very distinctive base sherd (Plate 16). Although the edges of the sherds were not abraded, the Black Burnish finish was. This was a well worn 'antique' when it was disposed of.

Near the north end of the trench, a perfect example of a post-hole post-hole [108] contained no finds. It was filled with silty loam (107) identical in nature to fill (105) in ditch [106] (Plate 2).

The trench was machined down to the top of true glacial subsoil, a platy gravel (200). This was overlain fairly abruptly by mid brown gritty floury silty and very stony loam (201) that merged upwards into a darker, more organic loam (202) of nearly identical texture.

The trench was intersected virtually at a right angle by three broad, shallow linear 'gullies', [204], [206] and [210]. These were parallel, c 2.5m wide and cut no more than 0.1m into the subsoil. The fills were essentially the same as the lowest soil horizon (201) and these features were almost certainly the bases of furrows for a ridge and furrow cultivation system filled simply with the lower part of the cultivation soil.

An almost perfect example of a post-hole [208] was found towards the eastern end of the trench (Fig 8 –Plate 7). It was 0.4m in diameter, cut 0.25m into the subsoil and featured a ring of 6 evenly spaced packing stones (209) (Plate 8). The soil fill was the same mid brown silt loam (207) as seen in all other Roman features. An abraded sherd and a tiny scrap of Roman Redware were recovered from the post-pipe (Plate 16).

The trench was machined down to the top of glacial platy gravel (300). This was overlain fairly abruptly by mid brown gritty floury silty loam (301) that merged upwards into a darker, more organic loam (302) of nearly identical texture. A considerable quantity of early 19th century pottery was recovered from the base of soil (301) nearly 0.6m below existing ground level. There was no indication that this pottery was in any form of intrusive cut, i.e., it seems to have been securely stratified at the base of cultivation.

The east side of cultivation furrow [204] ran along most of the western edge of this trench (Fig 8). The only other possible feature within the trench was an irregular 'linear' patch [304] filled with strongly red loamy silt (303). This was the same type of feature as several investigated in trench 4 (context (409)), i.e., natural.

The trench was machined down to the top of true glacial subsoil, a platy gravel (400). This was overlain fairly abruptly by mid brown gritty floury silty loam (401) that merged upwards into a slightly darker, more organic loam (402) of nearly identical texture that in turn merged upwards into darker loam (403).

A narrow linear ditch [404] emerged from the extreme southeast corner of the trench heading obliquely northwestwards. A 1.2m wide slot excavated through the fill (405) found it to be identical in nature to fill (105) in ditch [106]. A single large sherd of Roman Greyware was recovered (Plate 16). The feature was only cut 0.08m into the subsoil, but the edges could be identified slightly higher up in the section at the southeastern corner of the trench (to a maximum of 0.2m deep). The visible profile showed it to be very similar in profile to ditch [106], i.e., near V-shaped.

To the north, another broader linear feature [406] was only cut c. 0.06m into the subsoil (after truncation by cultivation). It was filled with the same type of silt loam (407) as the other ditches but produced no finds.

To the immediate south, a linear feature [408] with a strongly red fill had irregular edges. Many of the stones in the natural alongside the northern edge of the feature were set on edge (Plate 15). This is often indicative of a peri-glacial 'frost' or cryoturbation feature.

Several other patches of silt (409) with strong red hue occupied hollows in the subsoil in the northern part of the trench (Fig. 8). Most were partially investigated but had no real edges. They were almost certainly natural peri-glacial features.

6.0.1 The Roman features were all very obvious immediately following exposure by machine. The brashy subsoil dries very quickly, so differential drying begins very quickly (compare Plates 7 and 9 [wet] with Plate 11 [dry]). No new features were thrown up by this process (the field work took place over a three week period).

6.1.1 Feature [104] apparently ran parallel to the existing field boundary. It is, however, highly unlikely that it was a post-medieval field boundary or roadside ditch as it was not found again at the south end of trench 3 (some 25m eastwards).

6.1.2 The heat affected stones found in the top of ditch [106] were typical of those usually indicative of debris or rubbish from nearby domestic occupation. Such stones may have been used as parts of hearths or as 'pot boilers'. These stones were of lithologies not present in the local subsoil (which is virtually 100% platy grey-brown mudstone pieces) so were thus manuports ('carried by hand'). Mainly volcanic, they could well have been brought from the area of the present-day quarries at Walton.

6.2.1 The most notable features were the three parallel furrows forming part of a (presumably) contemporaneous ridge and furrow system. This is interesting. The valley floor land around Upper Womaston is some of the best arable land in the whole of Radnorshire. Groundwater levels are held reasonably stable at a good level by two spring-fed (and fairly reliable) streams, namely the Riddings and Hindwell Brooks. Areas further west in the Walton Basin can suffer dryness problems (Mr. Williams, *pers comm*). The presence of a lone post-hole (feature [208]) is odd, but not unique.

6.3.1 The pottery found near the base of soil (301) in trench 3 indicates that the ridge and furrow system was in use or extant until c. 1800. Its creation has undoubtedly served to truncate features (indeed more recent ploughing has failed to penetrate deeper). Whilst post-hole [208] was not within the footprint of a furrow, it would have survived (just) if it had been. The survival of such a small shallow feature indicates that truncation by the ridge and furrow system has not been too severe.

6.3.2 Ditch [406] was a much broader, shallower feature than the obviously Roman ditches V-profile ditches [106] and [404], but is on the same alignment so could well be broadly contemporary. This trench contained many more natural features than the other trenches.

7.1 No evidence was found for any Neolithic activity, but three shallow ditches (all roughly parallel) were found, along with three scattered post-holes. Two of the three ditches found had V-shaped profiles; these contained Roman pottery and no later finds. Too small to have been of military function, they were presumably part of a field system for the nearby military camps. The third ditch [406] was on a similar alignment and probably broadly contemporary.

7.2 Of the three post-holes, two were definitely Roman, one being cut by the westernmost ditch [106]. The post-holes, along with the fairly common presence of Roman pottery and burnt stones (all manuports) within the ditch fills, would seem to indicate Roman or Romano-British settlement nearby but probably not actually within the proposed development area. Had there been buildings in the vicinity of posts [108] or [208], then there would almost certainly have been other indications nearby.

7.3 The Roman features have been truncated to a certain extent by a ridge and furrow cultivation system shown by pottery to have been in use until c. 1800. The truncation cannot have been too severe or the two post-holes [108] / [208] would have been totally destroyed. There was not a scrap of medieval pottery anywhere on site.

Davies, JL & Jones, RH, 2006, *Roman Camps in Wales and the Marches*. University of Wales Press

Gibson, Alex 1999, *The Walton Basin Project: Excavation and Survey in a Prehistoric Landscape 1993-7*. Council for British Archaeology Research Report 118

(in date order, earliest first)

a) Air Ministry vertical photographs

128 - 106G/UK/836/3230&3231 & 4230&4231 - date 25/09/1945 – not found in box
128 - CPE/UK/1873/1313 date 04/12/1946 - reproduced herein as Fig 3

128 - 543/1913/150 date 17/10/1962 - part reproduced herein (enlarged) as Fig. 4

b) Ordnance Survey mapping photographs (true-scale verticals)

72-252-345 - date 17th July 1972 - part reproduced herein as Fig. 5
72-251-231 - date July 1972 - centred c. 1km to east of site

75-072/191 & 192 not seen

99-967/055 not seen
99-968/170 not seen

c) RCAHMW obliques

89-CS/679
895040/13 & 14 (date 1989 - see herein Fig 6)
96-CS/1279
96/5102/70 (date 1996 - see herein Fig 7)

Trench / context record sheets for trenches 1 – 4 (the plan for each trench is on the back of each sheet)

Survey tie-in data with AutoCAD plot of same

Detailed AutoCAD plot of trench edge profiles (one for each trench)

2 x 35mm colour print films (negatives, contact sheet and CD for each)

The relatively small assemblage of pottery from 5 contexts (section 9.2 below)

1CD containing:- a) digital pictures (from digital camera)
b) digital copy of this report

3 medium sized sherds- one from Roman Redware rim

1 x large Rimsherd – banded linear decoration – Roman Redware
3 x medium body sherds and one fragment – Roman Redware - probably from same vessel as large rimsherd
7 x medium sherds - Black Burnished [copy] - being 7 fragments of the same rimsherd (Plate 3)
1 x struck flint flake

3 x pieces of Black Burnished Roman Greyware including one base sherd. The burnished finish is heavily worn and abraded.

1 x very abraded sherd of Redware probably part of a base
1 x tiny scrap of Redware

1 x sherd Roman Greyware or badly fired / reduced Redware

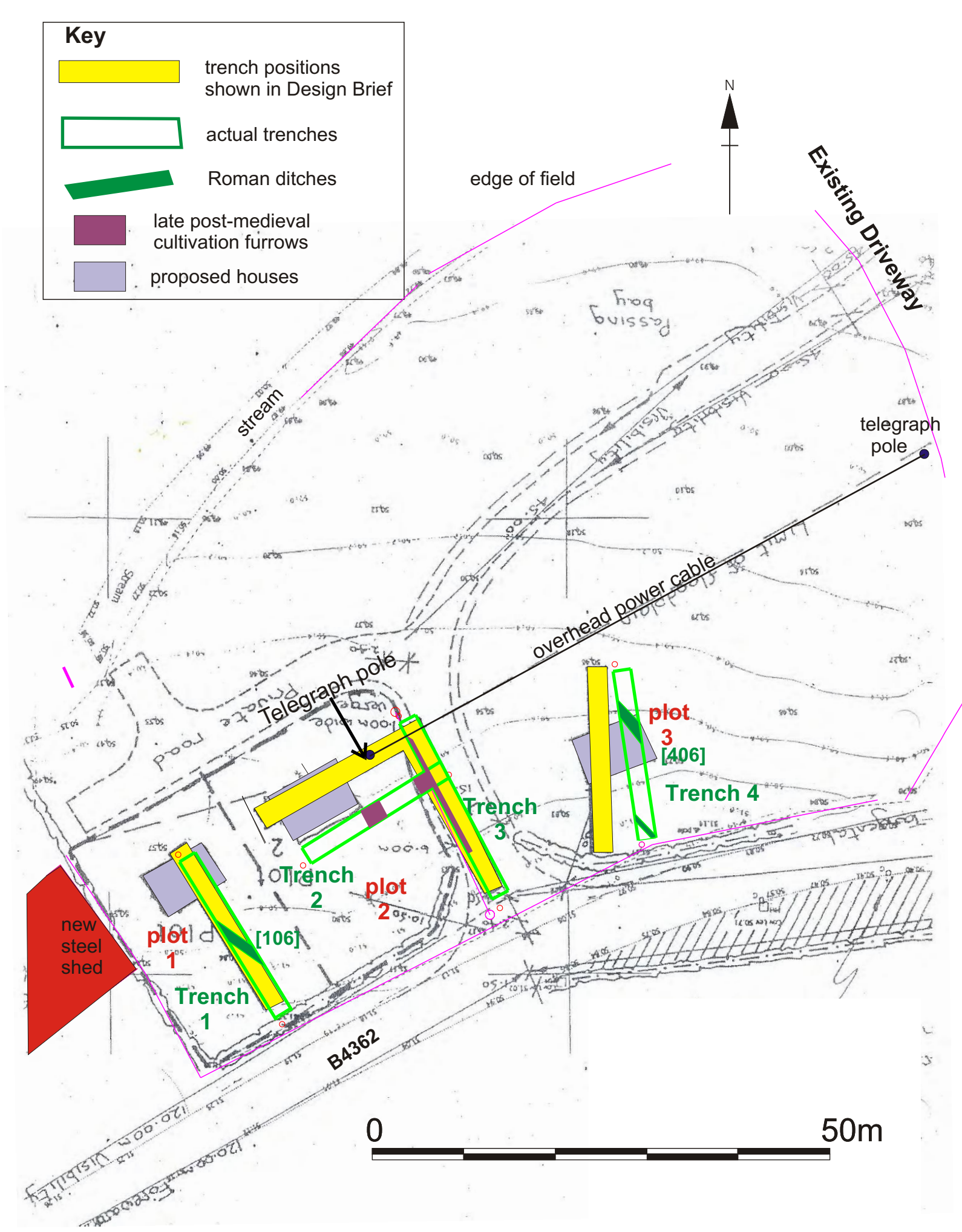

Fig 2 Detailed Trench location based on Architects Plan (scale 1:500)

Fig. 3 The site in December 1946 (RAF vertical REF:- 128/CPE?UK/1873/frame 1313)

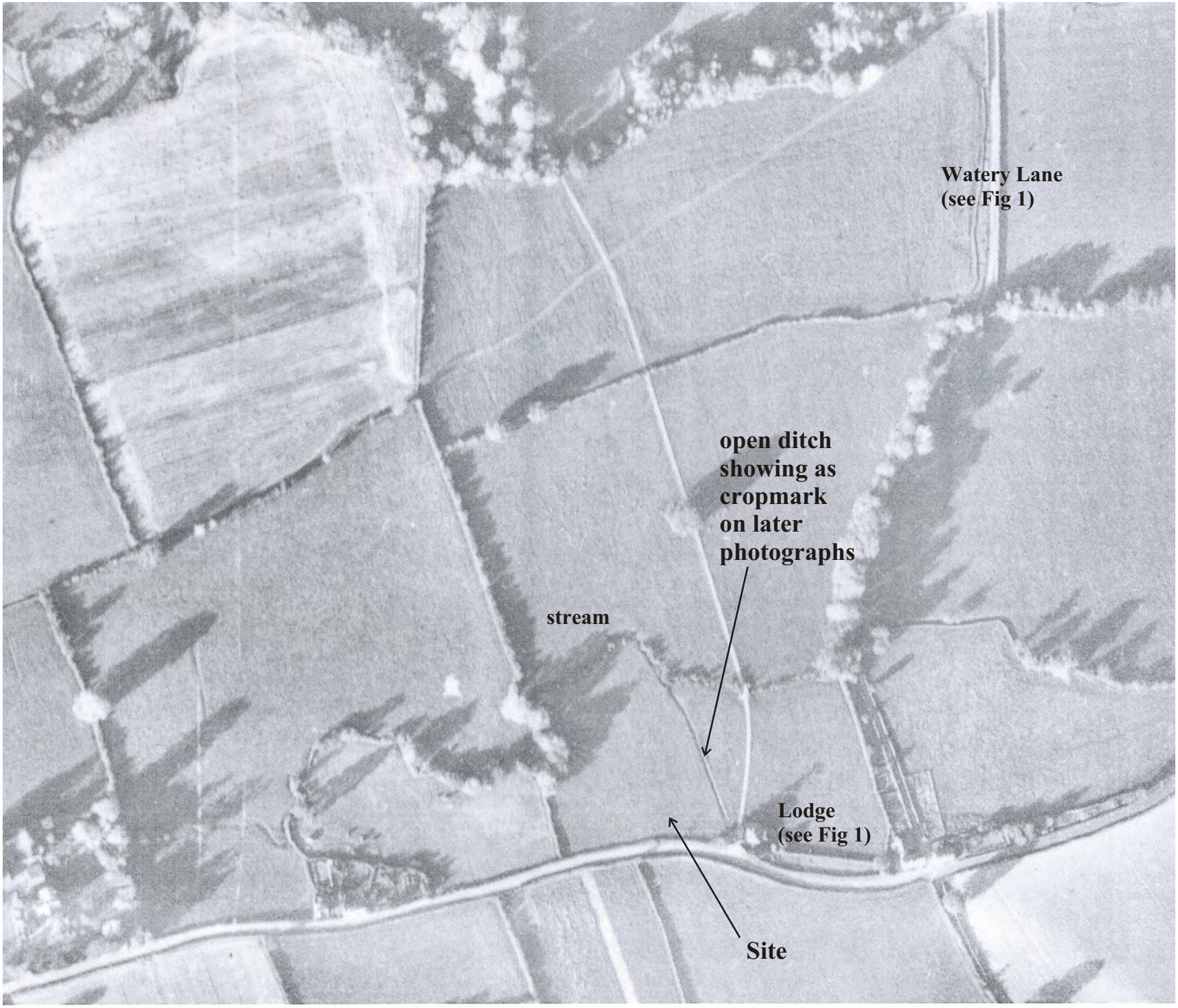

Fig. 4 The site in October 1962 - note stream still in 1889 position (part of MOD vertical aerial photograph 128/543/1313/frame 150)

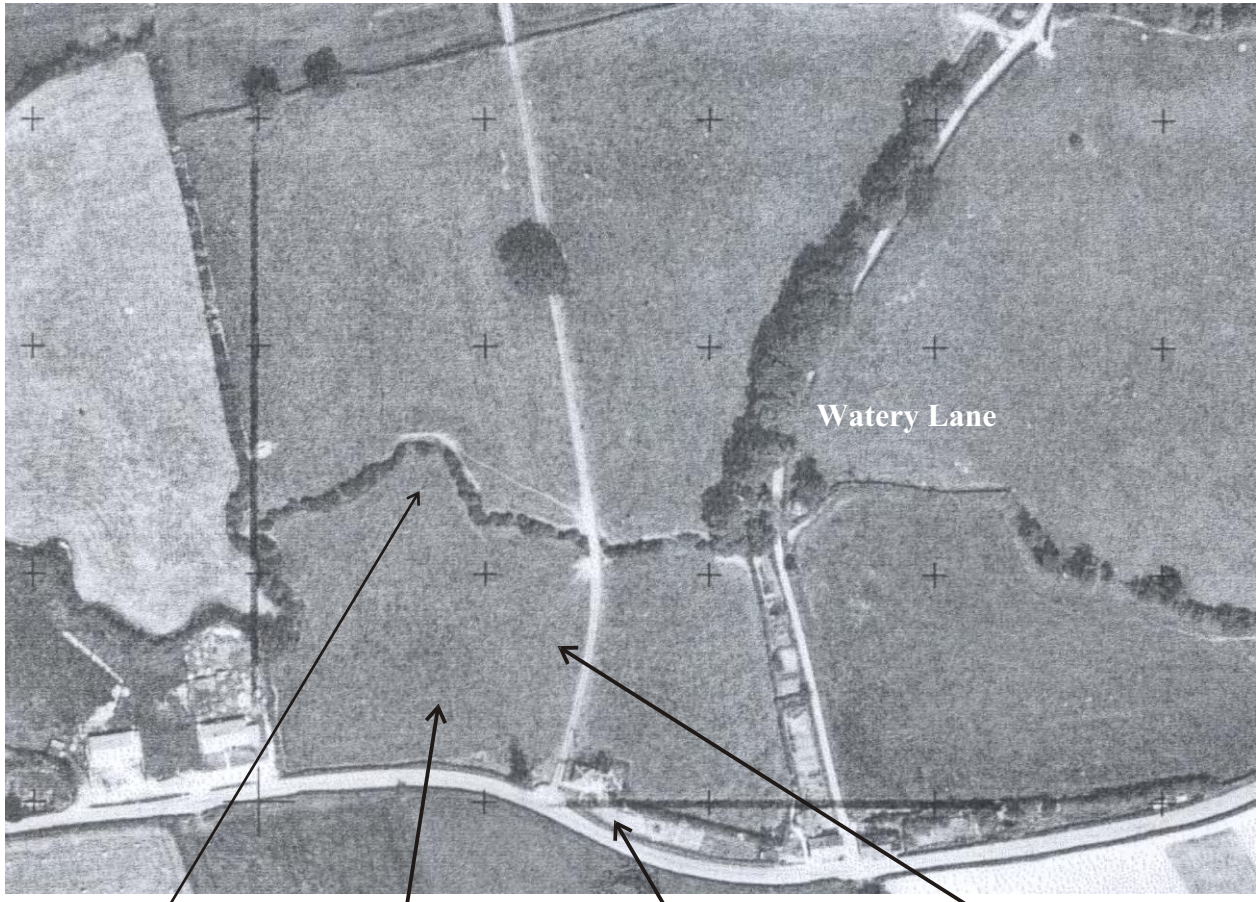

Fig. 5 The site in 1972 (part of Ordnance Survey vertical mapping aerial photograph Ref:- 72-252/frame 377)

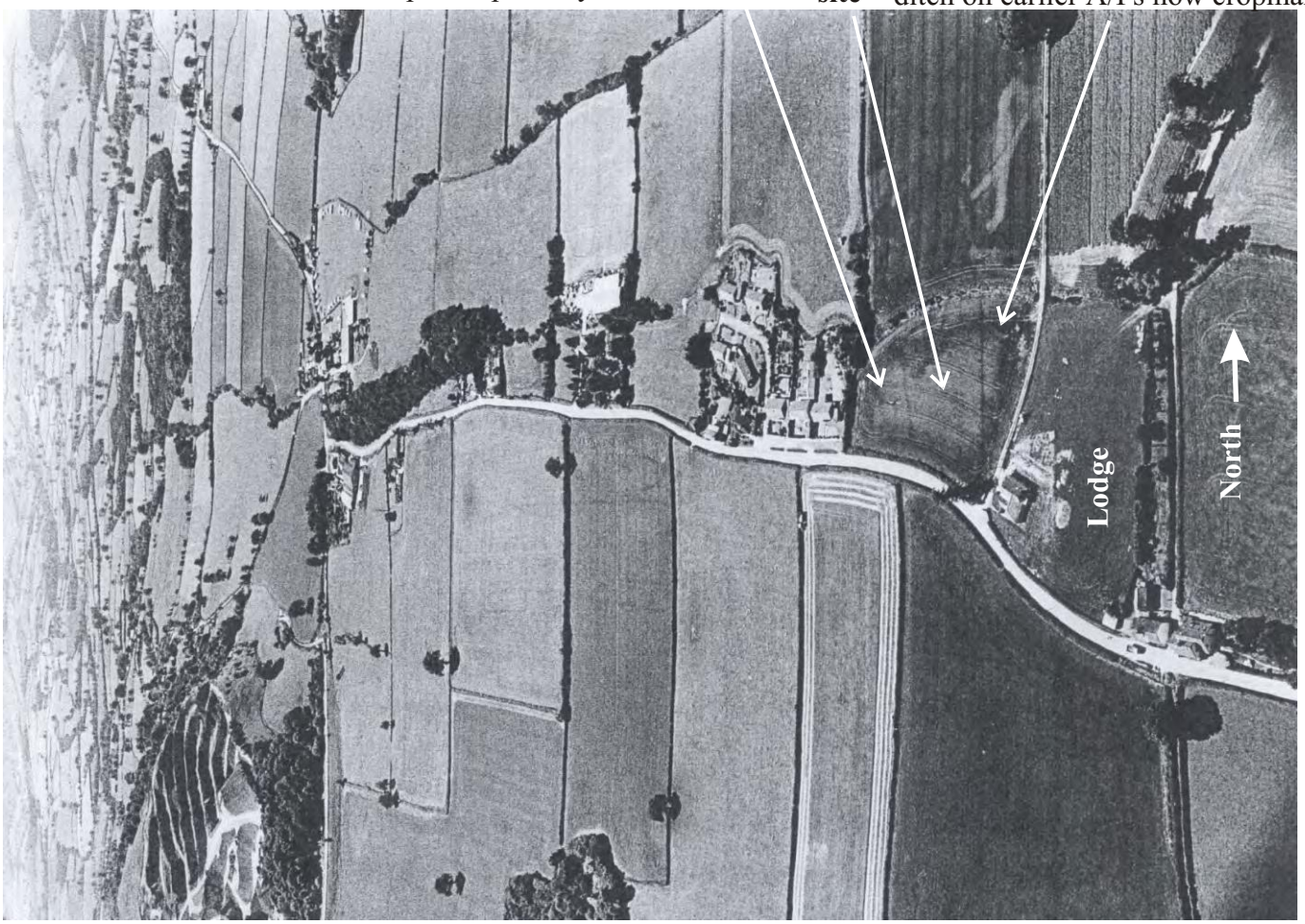

Fig. 6 The site in 1989 (part of Aerial photograph RCAHMW 89/5040-14

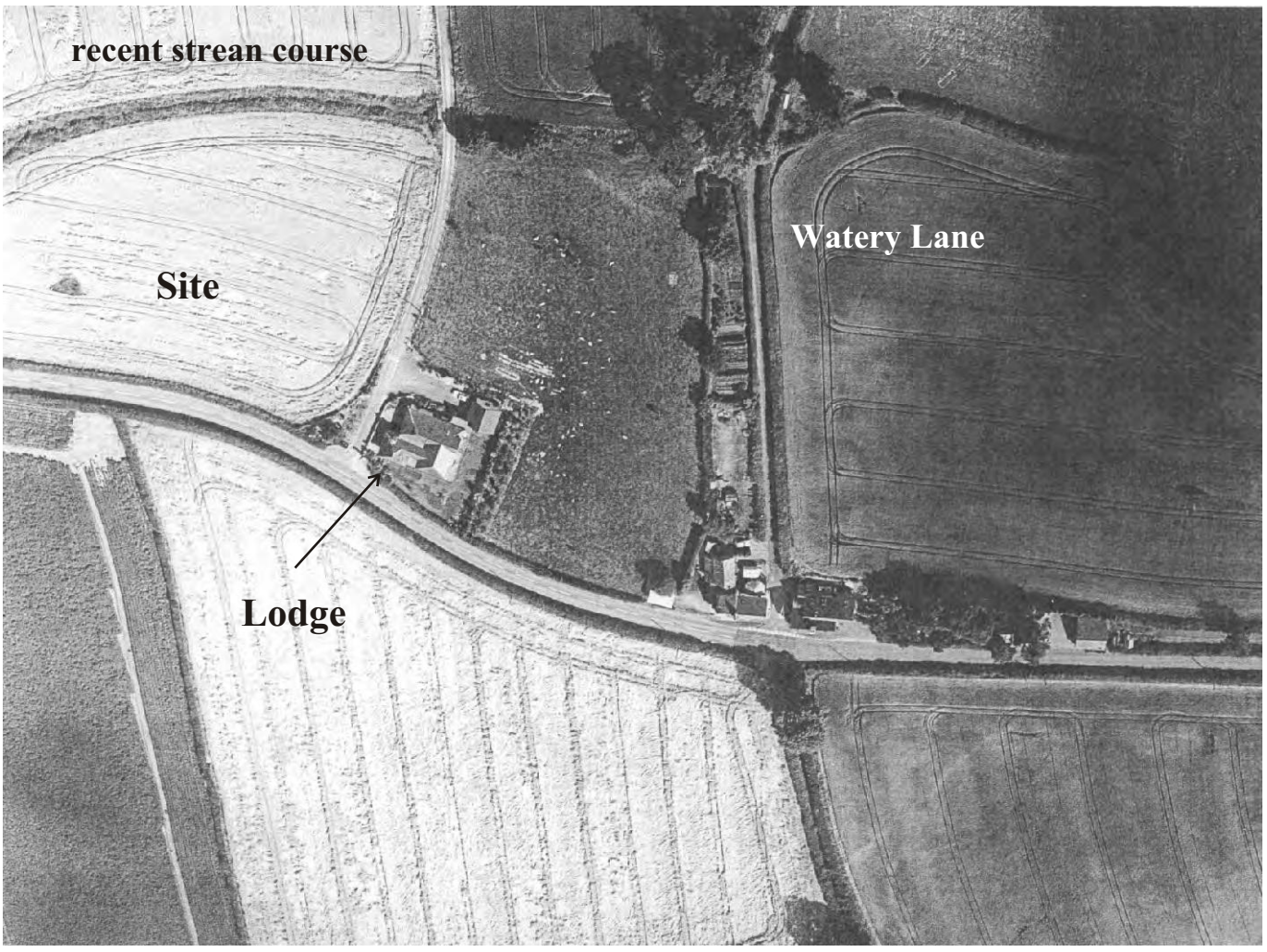

Fig 7 The site in 1996 (part of aerial photograph RCAHMW 96/5102-70)

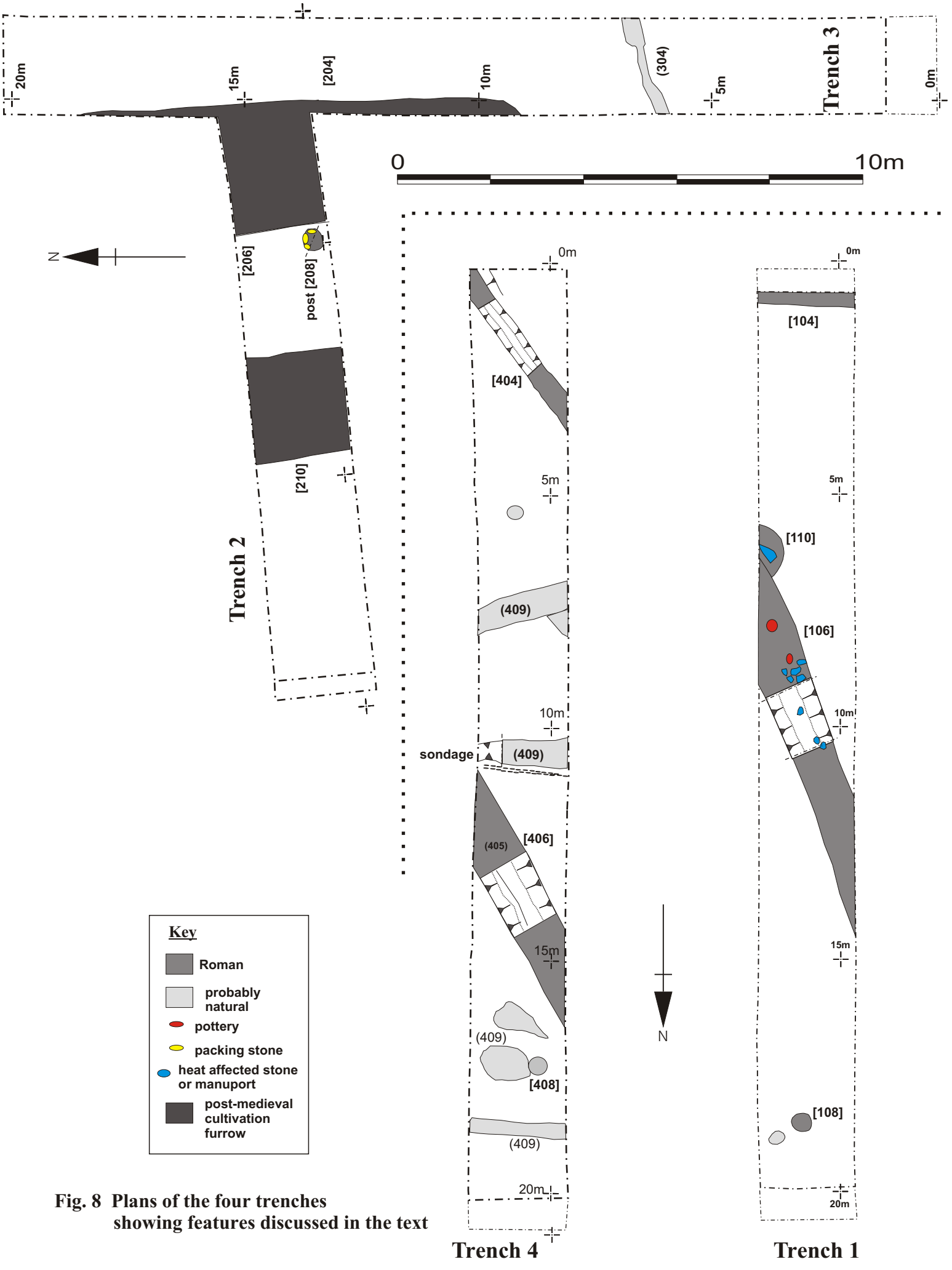

Fig. 8 Plans of the four trenches showing features discussed in the text

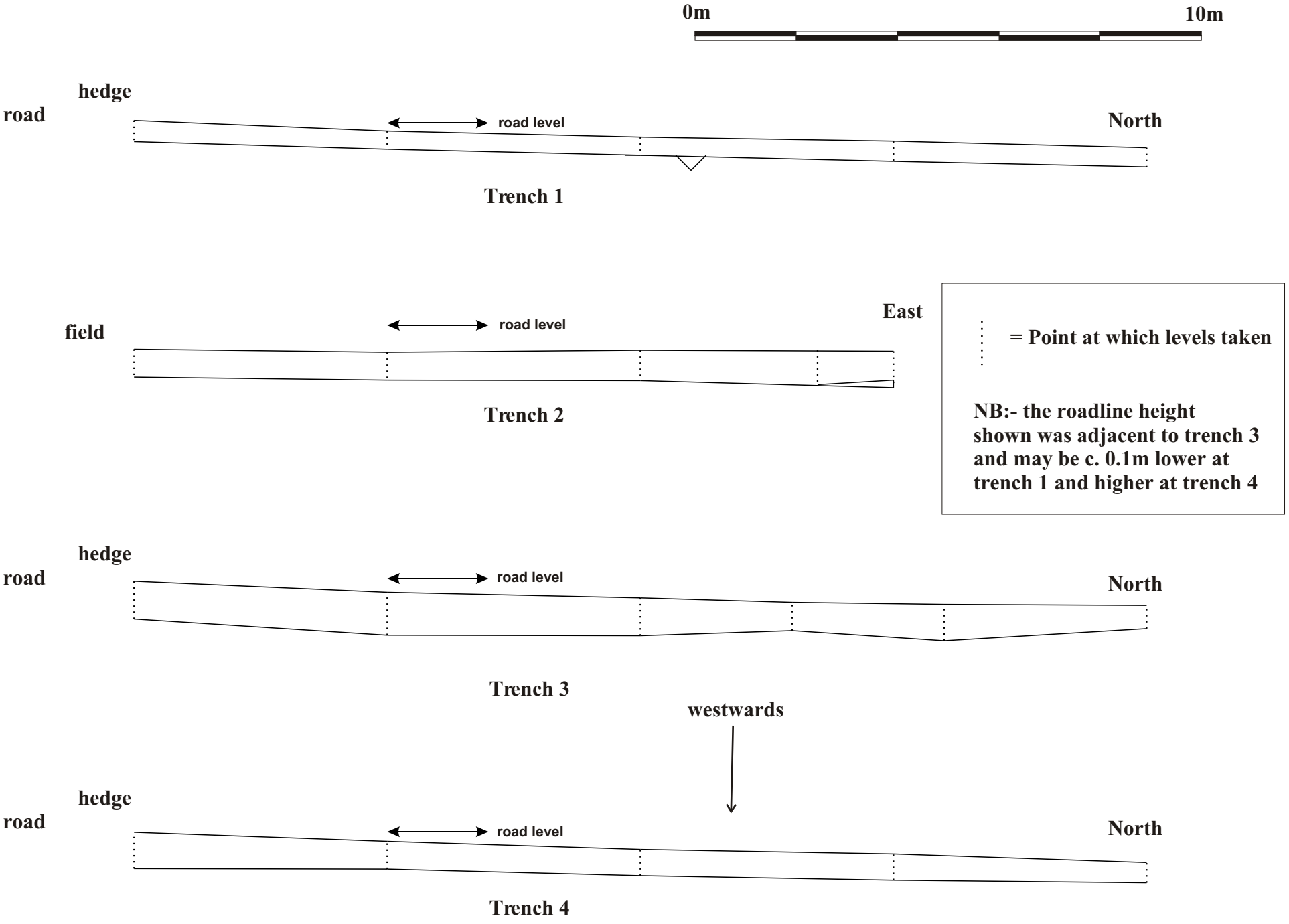

Fig. 9 Simplified trench profiles at scale 1:100 showing heights in relation to the level of the adjacent road

Plate 1 - Trench 1 - general view northwards along cleaned trench
(ditch [106] beyond nearest scale)

Plate 2 - Trench 1 - general view southwards along cleaned trench
(post-hole [108] in foreground)

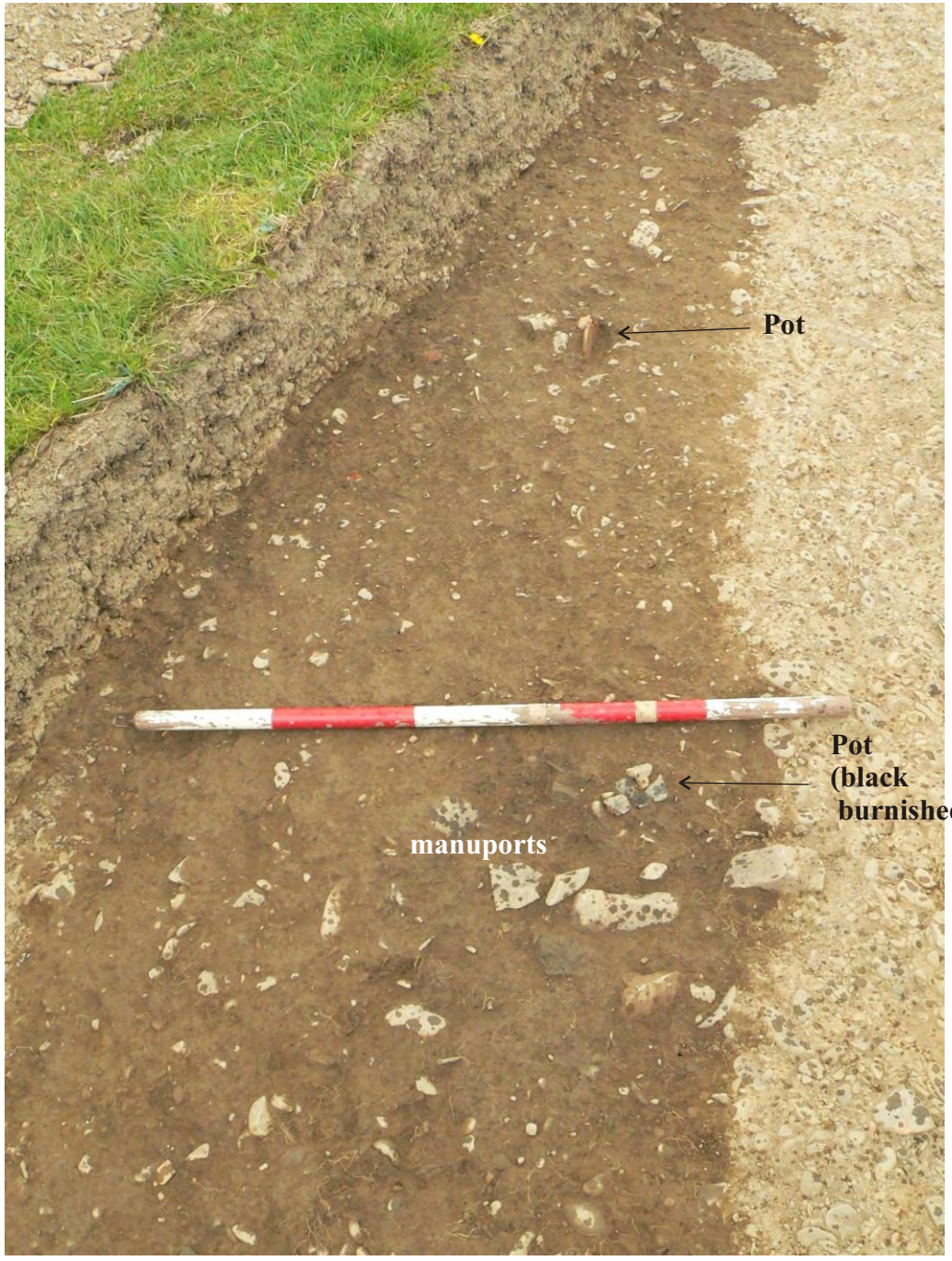

Plate 3 - Trench 1 - ditch [106] - view southeastwards along ditch showing pottery locations and burnt manuport stones

Plate 4 - Trench 1 - ditch [106] - same location partly excavated
(looking southeastwards)

Plate 5 - Trench 1 - ditch [106] - detail of the excavated slot showing V profile
(looking southeastwards)

Plate 6 - Trench 1 - ditch [106] - detail of the ditch profile
(looking southeastwards)

Plate 7 - Trench 2 - general view westwards along cleaned trench
(note furrow [204] in foreground and post [208] by furthest photo scales)

Plate 8 - Trench 2 - post-hole [208] half-sectioned (looking south-westwards)

Plate 9 - Trench 3 - view southwards along cleaned trench

Plate 10 - Trench 2/ 3 junction - view of slot through furrow [204] looking south

Plate 11 - Trench 4 - view along cleaned trench, looking north
(ditch [404] under nearest scale)

Plate 12 - Trench 4 - view along cleaned trench, looking south
(natural features [408] and (409) in foreground)

Plate 13 - Trench 4 - slot through ditch [404], looking south-east

Plate 13 - Trench 4 - slot through ditch [406], looking south-east

Plate 15 - Trench 4 - detail of natural feature (408)
(note iron-rich red colour of fill and linear arrangement of upright stones running parallel to right)

Plate 16 - all trenches / all contexts - The Roman pottery assemblage