

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF A PROPOSED
HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AT THE FORMER HARDYE'S
SCHOOL, BARNES WAY, DORCHESTER, CENTRED ON
NGR SY698898

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1. SUMMARY

The archaeological field evaluation of former playing fields and land adjacent to Hardy's School, Dorchester, comprised the machine excavation of fourteen trenches totalling an approximate 2.7% sample of the 7.8 hectares of proposed development. The northern part of the site occupies the Alington Ridge, which was an important focus within the early prehistoric ceremonial and ritual landscape around Dorchester, as well as containing a number of Bronze Age barrows. Two of these, 'The Two Barrows', lie on the northern fringe of the site and have been largely levelled by earlier ploughing and development. A large number of archaeological features were identified in the evaluation; these were mostly field ditches and gullies associated with Romano-British to Post-Medieval field systems and possible intermittent flanking ditches for Medieval field trackways. Two significant areas were identified, however. The first was a large curving ditch, identified in two trenches. This is possibly an outer ditch for the westernmost of the 'Two Barrows', which would make it comparable in size and complexity to its eastern neighbour, where excavation revealed four phases of construction. The second area was a small Romano-British rectangular enclosure which was fully revealed in plan and a number of sections were excavated through the profile. The feature may have been used as an animal enclosure or pen. Very few artefacts were recovered from the evaluation and there was much truncation of features, largely as a result of Medieval and Post-Medieval ploughing. Large parts of the site appear to have low potential for providing additional information, although further significant archaeological information may be obtained during redevelopment in the area adjacent to the western barrow.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 The following report presents the results of an archaeological field evaluation of the former Hardy's School site, Barnes Way, Dorchester. The work was carried out by AC archaeology during September and October 1996.

2.2 The investigation was commissioned by the present owners of the site, Betterment Properties (Weymouth) Ltd, who propose to develop the site for residential housing. A planning condition for the development requires archaeological observation and recording during all periods of demolition and/or development. The purpose of this present evaluation was, first, to identify areas on the site which can be considered to be of negative archaeological interest, and hence do not need further archaeological monitoring; and secondly, to define areas where deposits of archaeological interest can be confirmed to exist and which will require further archaeological recording, or could be avoided by small redesign of the housing layout.

2.3 The work was carried out in accordance with a specification (AC archaeology Document no. 6496/1/0), which was approved in advance by the County

Archaeological Officer, Dorset County Council. A representative of the County Archaeological Officer visited the site during fieldwork to monitor progress. The specification is included with this report as Appendix 1.

2.4 The site covers an area of around 7.8 hectares, much of which consists of open playing fields. Former school buildings and tarmac surfaces occupy an area of approximately 1.4 hectares, being located on the northern and western fringes of the development. The site lies between 70m and 60m OD on a chalk ridge and gradual south-facing slope into a coombe, which is overlooked on the south side by the parallel Conygar Hill 1km away. To the north is the valley of the river Frome.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 The ridge occupied by the site was an important focus within the early prehistoric ceremonial and ritual landscape around Dorchester and contains a number of important prehistoric monuments, including the neolithic henge monuments at Mount Pleasant and Maumbury Rings, the long barrow at Alington Avenue and the causewayed enclosure at 'Flagstones'. The ridge was also later used as a focus for Bronze Age funerary activity; eight barrows lie on the ridge above the 60m contour. At Alington Avenue, less than 300m along the ridge to the east of the site, extensive prehistoric and Roman deposits were also discovered during excavations in advance of development (Davies *et al* 1985).

3.2 Two round barrows lie on the northern fringe of the site, both having largely been levelled by ploughing and development, but the western barrow is still visible as a slight earthwork (Fig. 1). A narrow section through this barrow was recorded during roadworks in 1978, revealing at least two phases of mound, each enclosed by a ditch (Sparey-Green 1994). This site lies partly within the present development area and can be seen as a slight mound under trees which line the northern site perimeter. Part of the mound has previously been built over by small classroom buildings. These are now demolished.

The eastern barrow, the 'Fordington Farm barrow' was partially excavated in 1988 (Bellamy 1991), revealing four successive phases of construction, with the mound area and ditch diameter becoming progressively larger through its history of use. Inhumations and cremations were also excavated within the area of the mound. Only the southern portion of the barrow lies within the present development area, but in a zone to be retained as a playing field.

The 'Two Barrows' are thought to mirror, in terms of burial tradition and location, the two important Bronze Age 'Wessex' barrows on Conygar Hill to the south (Woodward 1991).

3.3 The more recent, c. 18th-century land-use history of the site is described fully in a recent article published in the *Dorset Proceedings* (Morris and Draper 1995), where the evaluation area is shown to be in East Field, part of the Manor of Fordington Open fields.

4. FIELD METHODOLOGY

4.1 The evaluation comprised the machine excavation of fourteen trenches (TR1 - TR14), as per the specification, in the positions shown on Fig. 1. Several trenches (TR2, 4, and 6) were subsequently extended, at the request of the County Archaeologist, where it was considered that significant concentrations or types of features were present that could be clarified with limited additional exposure. At the northern end of Trench 10, a rectangular enclosure was identified. After consultation with the County Archaeological Officer's representative, an area adjacent to the trench was stripped of topsoil and the feature recorded fully in plan (see Section 5.3 below). Trench 12 was an additional trench excavated to define the circuit of features recorded in Trench 2.

4.2 Topsoil and overburden were removed by mechanical excavator under constant archaeological supervision, until bedrock or archaeological features could be identified with some certainty. Clarity of features was generally good, with only localised hand-cleaning necessary. The majority of subsoil features was then sampled by hand excavation. Where linear features crossed through more than one trench, only a single section generally was excavated, with the other segments recorded in plan.

4.3 There was a large number of tree bowls present within the trenches, with fills similar in nature to archaeological features. The majority of these were hand-excavated but are not described as part of this report, although representative sections are included on Fig. 5 (a, i).

4.4 Column soil samples for molluscan analysis have been collected where it was considered appropriate.

4.5 All recording was carried out using the AC *archaeology* pro forma recording system, comprising written, graphic and photographic records. The archive has been prepared using the site code AC 356.

5. RESULTS

Detailed trench and context records are held in the site archive. The following description and discussion of results are summarised by period headings to aid clarity. Relevant detailed plans and section of features and deposits are included here as Figs. 2 - 5.

In summary the results comprise evidence for probable prehistoric funerary deposits, a possible Romano-British enclosure, and field ditches and gullies spanning the Romano-British to Post-Medieval periods. The occurrence of fragments of Medieval and Post-Medieval pottery within the upper deposits of many features suggests that later ploughing has caused much disturbance and truncation on the site.

5.1 Negative Areas

There were two trenches in the north-west corner of the site (Trenches 13 and 14) which contained no evidence for archaeological deposits. Trench 13 was located in a former car park currently covered with a tarmac surface. The trench showed evidence for much modern truncation and therefore the likelihood of survival of archaeological deposits is poor. Trench 14 was located immediately west of the

main school building in an area formerly used as playgrounds and was tarmac surfaced. Although no archaeological deposits were present in this trench, it appears, that, with the exception of many service trenches, no major landscaping has occurred in this area. It is therefore likely that if archaeological activity is present within this area there is the probability of good survival.

5.2 Prehistoric

Prehistoric activity on the site appears to be confined to the ridge at the northern end of the field, close to the area of the known location of the western barrow where a large, seemingly curving ditch (F217) was identified, as well as a smaller ditch immediately to the north, both possibly associated with the barrow. Three trenches were located in this area (Trenches 2, 3 and 12); detailed plans and sections from Trenches 2 and 12 are included as Figs. 2 and 3.

5.2.1 Ditch F217 and associated/adjacent features

The large ditch was initially revealed at the northern end of Trench 2, immediately below an extensive layer (211) seemingly infilling a hollow in the natural chalk, with the chalk present at a higher level at the northern end of the trench. The layer was composed of a light yellowish-brown clay silt containing frequent chalk fragments and occasional flint fragments, being at its greatest depth where it had spread across the softer infilling of the ditch, then becoming shallower and fading out to the south (Fig. 3). Pottery dateable to the Iron Age and Romano-British periods was found within this layer, as well as a small residual fragment of Medieval pottery.

Ditch F217 had a width of 2.90m and surviving depth of 600mm. The profile showed as almost vertically sloping sides, with a sharp break at the bottom onto a flat base. The lower parts of the ditch appear to have filled up with layers of chalk fragments and rubble within a yellowish-brown clayey silt soil symmetrical on the north and south edges (fills 216 and 214), which suggests that the ditch has been allowed to infill fairly quickly with weathered material derived from the ditch sides. The upper fills (contexts 212 and 224) were composed of yellowish-brown clayey silts containing a prominent band of flint fragments and nodules towards the base of the fill. The phase 4 ditch of the nearby eastern barrow (Bellamy 1991) contained an almost identical upper fill, where it was suggested that it was formed as a result of arable agricultural activity in the immediate area (Bellamy *ibid.*). A small pottery fragment of probable Iron Age date was recovered from the basal chalk rubble fill, although possibly intrusive.

A continuation of this ditch was located in Trench 12 immediately to the north-east, which shows the ditch seemingly curving round to the north, although somewhat wider at around 5.50m on the exposed surface. In this trench the feature was only exposed in plan, and this width is likely to be as a result of a continuation of layer 211 into this trench which extends across Trench 2 for a similar distance.

Immediately to the north of the main ditch was F219, a smaller ditch on a similar alignment to F217 which also continues into Trench 12 and shows as possibly curving round to the north. The ditch is fairly shallow, with its surviving depth of around 100mm almost certainly reduced as a result of later ploughing. The surviving width was 800mm, with the profile showing as gradually sloping onto a slightly rounded base. Its fill (context 218) was composed of a yellowish-brown, slightly clayey silt, containing occasional chalk flecks and fragments. No artefacts were recovered from this ditch.

Other linear features were identified within the three trenches in this area, but the lack of artefacts makes their dating uncertain. These include two parallel east to west aligned 'grooves' (F220 and F221) immediately to the south of ditch F217, and are possibly associated features.

5.3 Romano-British

5.3.1 Rectangular Enclosure [1003]

This small ditch enclosure was located towards the northern end of Trench 10 (Fig. 4). The western edge and north-west and south-west corners were initially identified within the trench, which was subsequently extended to the east and west to confirm the presence of an enclosure. There were no associated archaeological features identified within or around the enclosure during this initial assessment. At the suggestion of Dorset County Council Archaeology Section, the enclosure was fully revealed in plan, cleaned and a number of sections excavated through the ditch. A possible pit (F1023), cutting the ditch on its south side, was the only additional feature identified within the area of the enclosure.

The enclosure was rectangular in plan (Fig. 4) with dimensions of 8.5 x 7.5 metres, the corners showing as slightly rounded. The width of the enclosure ditch was variable on all sides, being 800mm on the east side and only 400mm on the west side. The profile was also inconsistent, but generally moderate to steep sloping sides onto a flattish base, with the section on the west side (1010) showing a slightly rounded base. Detailed sections for each excavated segment are shown on Fig. 4.

The enclosure ditch had a fairly consistent fill, generally composed of a light yellowish-brown clay silt containing occasional chalk fragments and flecks and occasional flint fragments and flecks. There was a lower fill also present within segment 1010 on the east side, which did not show variations in texture or colour, but was noticeably very compacted. There were very few artefacts recovered from the enclosure, these include Romano-British pottery and roof tile from the lower levels, with small quantities of medieval pottery recovered from the upper deposits, considered to be intrusive as a consequence of ploughing.

The possible pit (F1023), which cuts the enclosure ditch on its south side, showed as roughly oval in plan with a length of 1.75m, width of 1.25m and depth of 200mm. The profile showed as generally steep sloping, although there was a gradually sloping edge on its southern side. It contained two fills, with the upper fill (context 1021) composed of a light yellowish-brown chalky silt, and the primary fill (context 1022), similar in texture, but also containing larger quantities of chalk fragments. Artefacts recovered from this probable shallow pit were a large worked limestone slab and worked flint fragments.

Immediately external to the north-west and south-west corners of the enclosure, two possible stake-hole groups were identified (Groups 1016 and 1017), with their positions shown on Fig. 4. It is, however, not clear as to whether these ephemeral features may have been formed as a result of tree root disturbance. Depth, diameter and profile was generally variable and there was no regular pattern identified.

The general absence of associated archaeological features of a possible structural or settlement nature, within the area of the enclosure, the profile of the ditch and the small number of artefacts recovered, suggests that the enclosure may represent the remains of a small ditched animal enclosure or pen, rather than a slot trench for a structure.

5.3.2 Field Ditches (Fig. 5, g & d)

The terminal of east to west aligned ditch F503 was present within Trench 5, and is likely to be the same feature as context 612 in Trench 6, but did not extend as far as Trench 7 (Fig. 1). A section was excavated at the terminal, revealing a width of 2.85m and depth of 400mm, with the profile showing as moderately sloping onto a flattish base, although the presence of animal burrows made the edge slightly irregular. The terminal contained two fills, with the upper fill (context 502) composed of a very dark greyish-brown silty clay occasional chalk fragments and rare flint fragments, with the lower primary fill, a slightly lighter silty clay containing frequent chalk and flint fragments. Artefacts were recovered from the upper fill only, which include fragments of Romano-British and Medieval pottery and a very worn copper alloy coin of probable Romano-British date.

A second feature of similar form was present in Trench 4, which was an approximately north-east to south-west aligned ditch (F402). Its continuation was revealed in the east to west extension of the trench (Fig. 1). A hand-dug section was excavated across it, revealing a width of 1.60m and maximum depth of 250mm. The ditch had a rounded profile, with the infill seemingly spread on the south-east side. There were two fills present, with the upper fill (context 403) composed of a dark greyish-brown silty clay containing occasional chalk and flint fragments, with the lower fill (context 404), a mid to dark brown silty clay containing frequent chalk fragments and flecks and occasional flint fragments. Artefacts recovered include a small fragment of probable Romano-British pottery from the lower fill, although two fragments of Medieval pottery was recovered from the upper fill. The feature may be a drainage ditch.

5.4 Medieval or Uncertain

A large number of shallow, ill-defined ditches and gullies was present in most trenches, with the majority located in the southern, lower-lying area of the field. Very few artefacts were recovered from these features, generally consisting of very small, abraded sherds of Medieval or Post-Medieval pottery from some features. It is uncertain as to whether these artefacts provide a confident date for these features or were deposited by later agricultural disturbance. Amongst this group of features was a sequence of parallel, approximately east to west aligned gullies, generally sealed by a prominent build up of Post-Medieval ploughsoil or colluvium immediately below the topsoil.

5.4.1 Parallel gullies (Fig. 5 e & f)

The position and presence of these gullies in relation to particular trenches is shown on Fig. 1, with selected sections included on Fig. 5. It is clear that some of these parallel gullies are present in more than one trench, continuing east to west in the southern half of the field, although some are only present in one trench. Where it was evident that gullies were present in two or more trenches, one pair was excavated, with the continuations into other trenches recorded in plan only. All gullies showed similar dimensions and profiles, generally with a width of around 500mm and depth of less than 200mm with rounded profiles. All contained uniform mid to dark brown silty clay fills with inclusions consisting of occasional natural flint and chalk fragments. It is unclear as to the function of these parallel gullies, although they may represent the remains of flanking ditches along trackways associated with Medieval or Post-Medieval cultivation.

5.4.2 Unassociated linear features

Most trenches contained shallow linear features at intermittent intervals throughout the evaluation area, most of which were approximately east to west aligned. Details of these are in the project archive, but general observations are included here. Examples of this feature type are shown on Fig. 5 (b,c,h,k,l,m). All appeared as fairly shallow, with an average depth of between 150 and 200mm. The profiles tended to be slightly rounded or irregular, with the fills generally consisting of dark or reddish-brown silty clays containing occasional flint and chalk fragments. Very few dateable artefacts were recovered from the fills, although small fragments of Medieval and Post-Medieval pottery have been identified from some features. It is likely that the majority of these features represent drainage or boundary ditches and gullies associated with Medieval or Post-Medieval strip cultivation.

5.4.3 Isolated Features (Fig. 5 n & o)

There were two pit-like features present in the north-east corner of the evaluation area, which tended to have a greater depth and more regular profile than those identified as treebowls. F910 (Fig. 5, n) was located towards the northern end of Trench 9, with a plan diameter of around 1.50m and depth of around 300mm, with the sides showing as moderately sloping onto a slightly rounded, irregular base. Its fill (context 911) was composed of a mid to dark brown silty clay. Artefacts recovered comprised two small fragments of Medieval pottery.

F1006 (Fig. 5, o) was located towards the northern end of Trench 10 with diameter of around 1.50m and depth of 300mm. The profile showed as fairly steep sloping with a rounded, narrow base. Its fill (context 1007) was again composed of a mid to dark brown silty clay containing no artefacts.

Other possible pits were identified, but have been interpreted as treebowls, these are not described but examples of sections are included on Fig. 5 (a, i & j).

5.4.4 Chalk Bank

A pronounced, very compact chalk bank and associated soil layers was identified towards the southern end of Trenches 9 and 10 (contexts 920 and 1014). Its surface width was c. 3.00m, with a height of 160mm. The feature did not appear as an earthwork at ground surface level. It is probable that this chalk and soil represents infill for a sewer trench which is known to run across this area.

6. THE FINDS

6.1 A summary of all finds recovered is included in Table 1 below. Notes on the principal finds groups only are included below.

6.2 The pottery

The pottery recovered from the site constitutes a small assemblage with little early diagnostic material. The earliest group comes from layer 211 which includes material of possible middle Iron Age date, but the sherds are very fragmentary (average sherd weight 2.86g) and do not show any diagnostic decoration or form. The later Iron Age and Romano-British pottery is equally sparse and fragmentary, but does contain distinctive fragments of samian, colour-coat, amphora and mortarium, as well as local black-burnished ware. The total late Iron Age / Romano-British assemblage constitutes only 18 sherds (146g), almost 50% of which, by weight, is one mortarium sherd.

A total of 72 Medieval pottery sherds weighing 355g (average sherd weight 4.9g) was recovered. Several have traces of glaze, but have not been further analysed for diagnostic attributes.

6.3 The worked flint

The material comprises largely cortical flake material, only three pieces of which show retouch. No tools were present. Unless otherwise shown on Table 1 all fragments are flakes. The nature of the assemblage, lacking any evidence for earlier blade material, is suggestive of a Bronze Age technology.

6.4 The ceramic tile

Little of the material is diagnostic, but several fragments can be identified as being Romano-British *tegula*. These are noted on Table 1.

| TR NO. | CONTEXT NO. | FEATURE NO./ TYPE | POTTERY | | | | | WORKED FLINT | BURNT FLINT | CERAMIC TILE | ANIMAL BONE | CU ALLOY | IRON | NOTES |
|--------|-------------|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|------------|-------|----------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|----------|-------|--|
| | | | Early/Middle Iron Age | Late Iron Age/Romano-British | Ro-British | Med | Post-Med | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 116 | F117 | - | - | - | - | - | 1/4g | - | - | - | - | - | flint flake |
| | 118 | F119 | - | - | - | - | - | 1/2g | - | - | 4/80g | - | - | flint chip |
| | 122 | F123 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3/34g | - | - | - | |
| | 124 | F125 | - | - | - | - | 1/2g | 2/2g | - | 2/2g | - | - | - | flint = 1 chip, 1 flake |
| | 130 | F131 | - | - | - | - | 1/4g | - | - | 1/2g | 1/4g | - | - | |
| | 132 | Spoilheap | - | - | - | 3/8g | 4/32g | 9/190 | 2/88g | - | - | - | 1/23g | cortical flakes, 1 with retouch. Fe object = modern |
| | + | Spoilheap | - | - | - | - | - | 1/466g | - | - | - | - | - | hammerstone |
| 2 | 201 | Buried Ploughsoil | - | - | 2/8g | 8/40g | 2/16g | - | - | 2/36g | 4/26g | 1/<5g | - | RB pot includes 1 samian frag; cu alloy RB coin illegible |
| | 202 | F203 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3/322g | 1/6g | - | - | |
| | 204 | F205 | - | - | 1/1g | ?1/2g | - | - | - | - | 3/4g | - | - | RB pottery = samian |
| | 206 | F207 | - | - | - | 2/2g | - | 2/24g | 1/38g | 3/14g | 1/42g | - | - | |
| | 208 | F210 | - | - | 3/34g | - | - | 1/2g | - | 1/8g | 1/2g | - | - | RB pot includes amphora fragment |
| | 211 | Layer | 7/20g | 2/12g | - | 1/8g | - | 30/1014g | 1/18g | 9/466g | 3/30g | - | - | Flint = 29 flakes, 1 core, all very fresh; tile includes one fragment of RB tegula |
| | 212 | F217 | - | - | - | - | - | 27/280g | - | - | - | - | - | white patinated flakes very fresh |
| | 214 | F217 | - | 1/4g | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| | 225 | Spoilheap | - | - | - | 1/2g | 2/20g | 2/24g | - | - | - | - | - | |
| 3 | 302 | F303 | - | - | - | 2/4g | - | - | 1/28g | - | - | - | - | |
| | 306 | Spoilheap | - | - | - | 1/8g | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| 4 | 403 | F402 | - | - | - | 2/10g | - | 1/16g | 2/70g | - | - | - | - | |
| | 404 | F402 | - | - | - | 1/2g? | - | - | - | - | 1/10g | - | - | |
| | 415 | Spoilheap | - | - | - | 4/28g | 4/34g | 3/42g | - | 1/24g | - | - | - | |
| 5 | 502 | F503 | - | 1/4g | 1/2g | 4/16g | - | 1/4g | - | - | - | 1/<5g | - | RB pot = rim of mortarium; cu alloy = RB coin illegible |
| | 510 | Spoilheap | - | - | - | 1/2g | 6/92g | 1/2g | - | - | - | - | - | |
| 6 | 602 | Treebowl | - | - | - | 2/4g | - | - | - | - | 1/16g | - | - | |
| | 603 | F604 | - | - | - | 2/2g | 1/2g | - | 2/20g | 1/1g | 1/2g | - | - | |

| TR NO. | CONTEXT NO. | FEATURE NO./TYPE | POTTERY | | | | | WORKED FLINT | BURNT FLINT | CERAMIC TILE | ANIMAL BONE | CU ALLOY | IRON | NOTES |
|--------|-------------|------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|------------|-------|----------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|----------|-------|---|
| | | | Early/Middle Iron Age | Late Iron Age / Romano-British | Ro-British | Med | Post-Med | | | | | | | |
| | 614 | Spoilheap | - | - | - | 9/48g | 9/74 | 3/54g | 1/10g | 2/22g | - | - | - | |
| | 619 | Treebowl | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 frag of slate (<2g) |
| 7 | 708 | Treebowl | - | - | - | - | 1/2g | - | - | 2/26g | - | - | - | |
| | 709 | Treebowl | - | - | - | 1/4g | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| | 710 | Treebowl | - | - | - | 1/7g | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| | 712 | Spoilheap | - | - | - | 8/38g | 9/68g | 3/24g | - | 1/24g | - | - | - | Flint includes 1 retouched; floor tile frag glazed |
| 8 | 803 | F804 | - | - | 1/2g | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | Very weathered colour coat/samian fragment |
| | 808 | Treebowl | - | - | - | 1/2g | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| | 809 | F810 | - | - | - | - | - | 1/2g | - | - | - | - | - | |
| | 813 | Spoilheap | - | - | - | - | 8/78g | 6/82g | 2/8g | 2/12g | - | 1/2g | - | Flint = 5 flakes, 1 worked lump; cu alloy = modern button |
| 9 | 908 | F909 | - | - | - | - | - | 1/6g | - | - | - | - | - | |
| | 911 | F910 | - | - | - | 2/12g | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| | 912 | Treebowl | - | - | - | 1/<2g | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| | 919 | Bank | - | - | - | - | 1/2g | 1/2g | - | 1/11g | - | - | - | |
| | 920 | Bank | - | - | - | - | - | 3/20g | - | - | - | - | - | also glass fragment <2g |
| | 925 | Spoilheap | - | - | - | 3/20g | 13/106g | 3/62g | 2/60g | 1/28g | - | - | - | Flint includes 1 retouched flake; Tile prob. Roman |
| 10 | 1002 | Clearance | - | - | - | 3/10g | 2/8g | - | - | 2/4g | - | - | - | 1 clay pipe stem |
| | 1005 | F1003 | - | - | - | 2/3g | ?2/36g | 1/2g | - | 2/76g | - | - | - | |
| | 1008 | F1003 | - | - | - | 1/4g | 2/22g | 1/4g | 6/20g | - | 2/176g | 1/1g | - | 1 large frag of roman tile (tegula) 174g |
| | 1009 | F1003 | - | - | - | - | - | 2/28g | - | - | - | - | 1/10g | Fe nail with sq. head, also 1 frag slate (1g) |
| | 1011 | Spoilheap | - | - | - | 1/2g | 4/16g | 19/190g | 5/98g | 1/34g | 2/68g | - | 1/6g | Glazed ridge tile and floor tile frags; cu alloy coin prob post med/modern. |
| | 1017 | Treebowl | - | - | - | 1/2g | - | - | 3/150g | - | 3/16g | - | - | also worked s tone frag (? quern) 108g |
| | 1021 | F1023 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | Limestone slab 2,098g ? worked |
| | 1022 | F1023 | - | - | - | - | - | 4/30g | - | 1/50g | - | - | - | Tile prob Roman |
| | 1025 | F1003 | - | - | - | 1/68g | - | - | 1/4g | - | - | - | - | Mortarium rim |
| 13 | 1302 | Layer | - | - | - | - | 1/4g | - | - | - | - | - | - | |

Table 1 : Summary of Finds by No. / Weight in Grams

7. COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

7.1 It is clear that Medieval and later ploughing has caused disturbance or partial truncation to the majority of features identified during the evaluation, and possibly the complete removal of any shallower, more ephemeral deposits that may have been present. Many of the linear features recorded in the southern half of the site have been particularly affected by truncation, a factor which has affected the understanding of their date and function.

7.2 The evaluation has identified potential evidence for Prehistoric funerary activity, seemingly limited to the northern fringes of the site. A large ditch and other linear features, possibly associated with the most western of the 'Two Barrows', has been identified in Trench 2 and Trench 12. The curve of the ditch, following the same arc as the previously recorded ditch of the western barrow (Spary-Green 1994) is significant. It seems likely that the western barrow, rather than being smaller and less complex than the eastern structure, as suggested by Spary-Green based on limited investigation, is more likely to follow the same pattern of successive modifications and enlargement, culminating in a monument similar in size and nature to the eastern of the 'Two Barrows', considered to be one of the largest bell barrows in Dorset (Bellamy 1991). Column samples for molluscan analysis have been collected from the full sequence of deposits of the large ditch. Future analysis of these samples may help to confirm a more reliable date and environmental context for the ditch.

7.3 The rectangular enclosure F1003 present in the north-east corner of the site, did not contain large quantities of artefacts or large numbers of associated features. However, the limited artefactual evidence indicates the enclosure is of probable Romano-British date, with the small quantity of Medieval pottery recovered likely to be intrusive as a result of later ploughing. It is unclear as to the function of this feature; the lack of associated material and profile of the enclosure ditch does not suggest a domestic, agricultural or mortuary slot or post-built structure. Its use may potentially have been a small animal enclosure or pen.

7.4 The larger field ditches present in Trenches 4, 5 and 6 are likely to represent drainage or boundary ditches, of probable Romano-British date, although both ditches contained intrusive Medieval pottery in the upper part of fills. These ditches were not continuous across the site, seemingly terminating between, or as is the case with F503, within evaluation trenches.

7.5 The shallow gullies and other narrow linear features, either in pairs or occurring singularly, were the main feature type identified on the site. These linear features are likely to span the Medieval and Post-Medieval periods, although in most cases, very few artefacts were recovered to enable positive dating. The purpose of all these features is unclear. However, it is possible that the parallel linear gullies represent the remains of flanking ditches relating to trackways associated with Medieval open fields. The other single ditches are more likely to represent drainage features or serve some other agricultural function.

8. CONCLUSIONS

8.1 The evaluation has identified two areas considered to be of archaeological significance; the first is the potential outer ditch associated with the western of the 'Two Barrows', and secondly, the area of the probable Romano-British rectangular

enclosure, located in the north-east corner of the site. Much has been written on the importance of the 'Two Barrows' (Woodward 1991, Bellamy 1991, Sparey-Green 1994) and their setting within an important prehistoric landscape. If the large ditch identified during this evaluation is part of the western barrow monument, then it is likely to be as large and complex as its immediate neighbour, which excavation has shown to have four phases of construction, with the earliest possibly during the later Neolithic / early Bronze Age. Sparey-Green has hinted at the partial excavation and removal of objects from the western barrow by nineteenth century antiquarians, and much of the barrow is now levelled. Nevertheless, there is still much information that can be gained on the construction and development through time of the surviving material. Current housing plans for this area show that groundworks are likely to disturb at least part of this monument, with therefore the possibility of obtaining significant archaeological information prior to or during redevelopment.

8.2 The rectangular enclosure appears to be an isolated feature of probable Romano-British date showing no internal and little external activity. The feature was fully recorded in plan, and a number of sections excavated through it (Fig. 4). It cannot be shown that further information will be revealed by additional advance archaeological investigations in this area.

8.3 The numerous linear features identified on the site are all likely to be part of field systems and trackways; the larger ditches probably Romano-British in date, the smaller gullies and other linear features more likely to span the Medieval and Post-Medieval periods. Limited artefactual material was recovered from these features, with the trenches revealing no evidence for associated settlement activity. It is therefore considered that minimal archaeological information could be gained from any further work on these deposits.

8.4 Evaluation Trench 13 was located within the triangular area in the north-west corner of the site. It revealed evidence for truncation to an extent where any archaeological deposits present in the immediate area of the trench are likely to have been completely removed. However, it is clear that the projected arc of the western barrow would continue into the south-east corner of the area (Fig. 1), which was not evaluated, so it is not clear as to whether potential archaeological features are likely to survive in this zone. Trench 14 also contained no archaeological features, although it is unlikely that major truncation has occurred in this area, thus there is potential for survival of archaeological deposits here.

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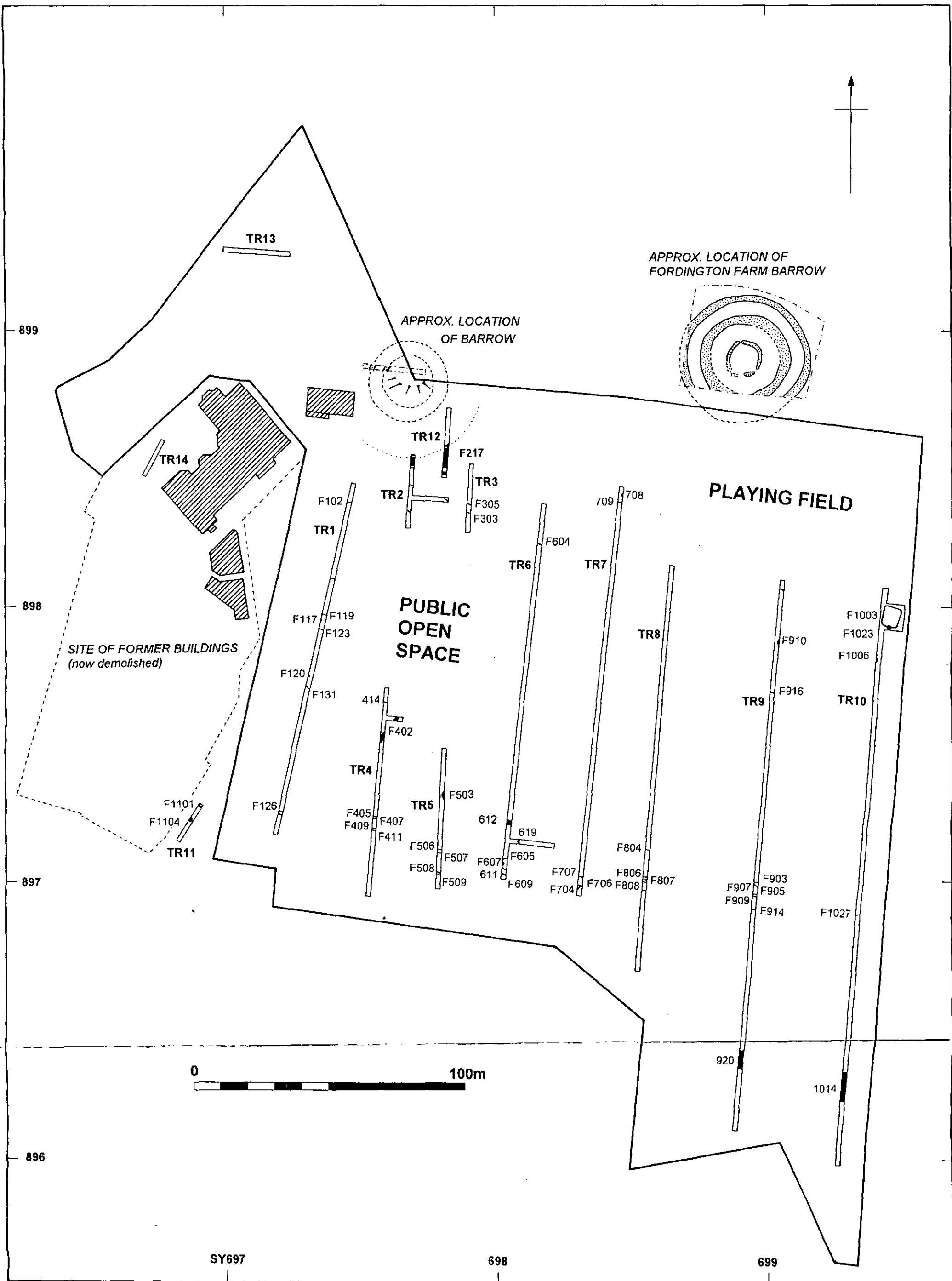


FIG. 1: TRENCH LOCATION AND SUMMARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES RECORDED

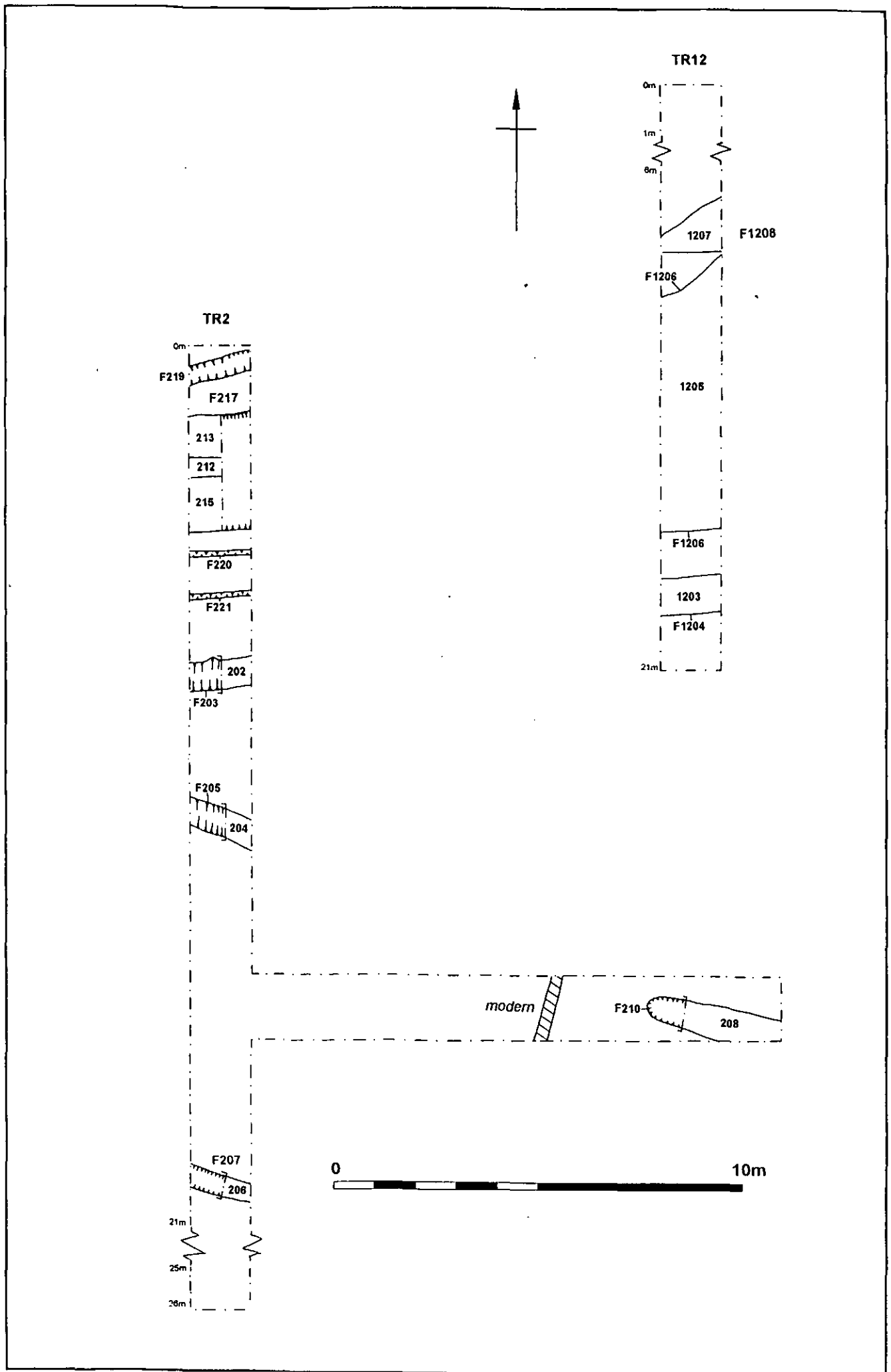


FIG. 2: PLAN OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES IN TRENCHES 2 & 12

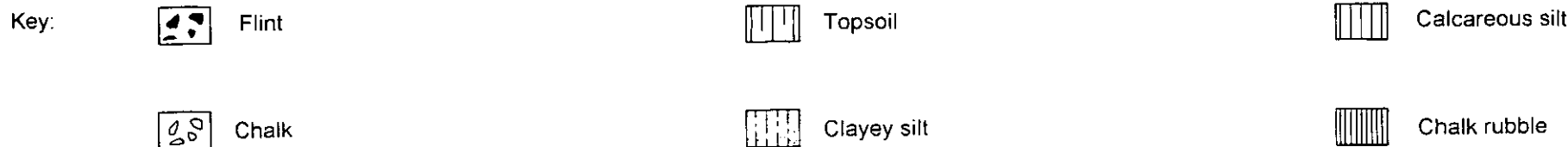
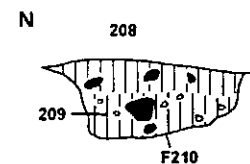
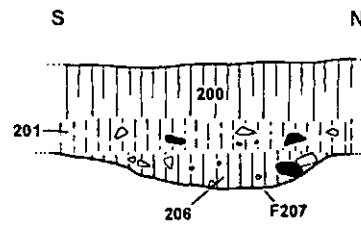
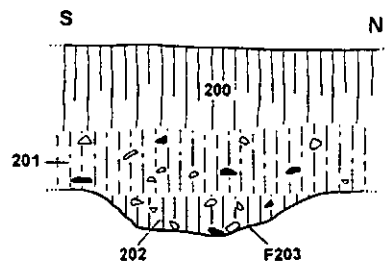
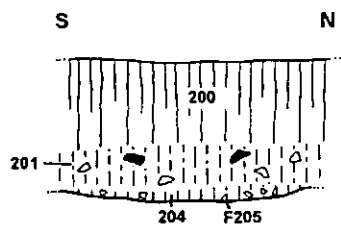
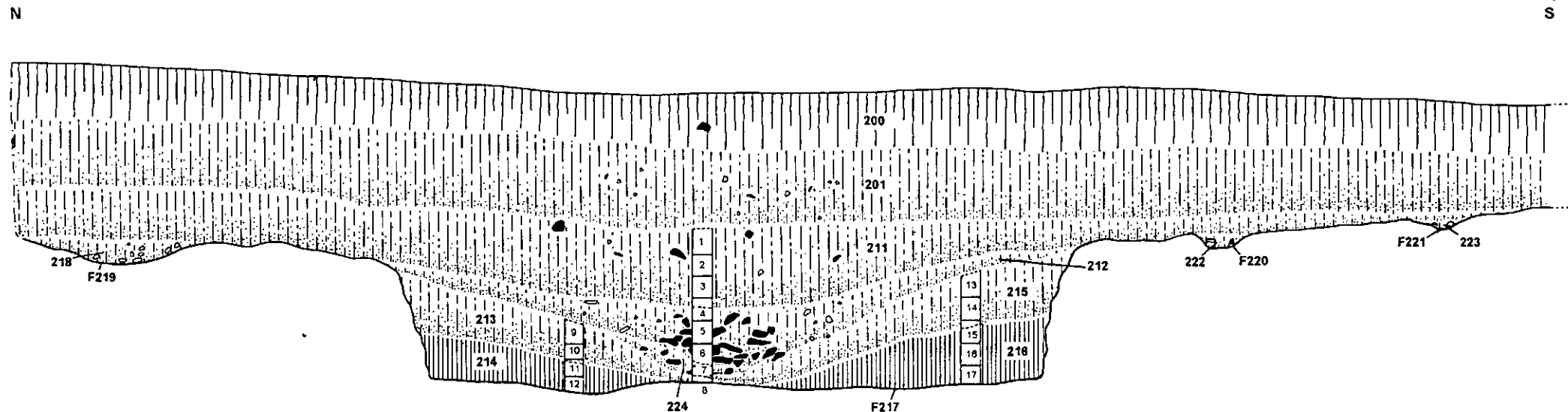


FIG. 3: SECTIONS THROUGH ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES IN TRENCH 2 & KEY TO ALL SECTION DRAWINGS

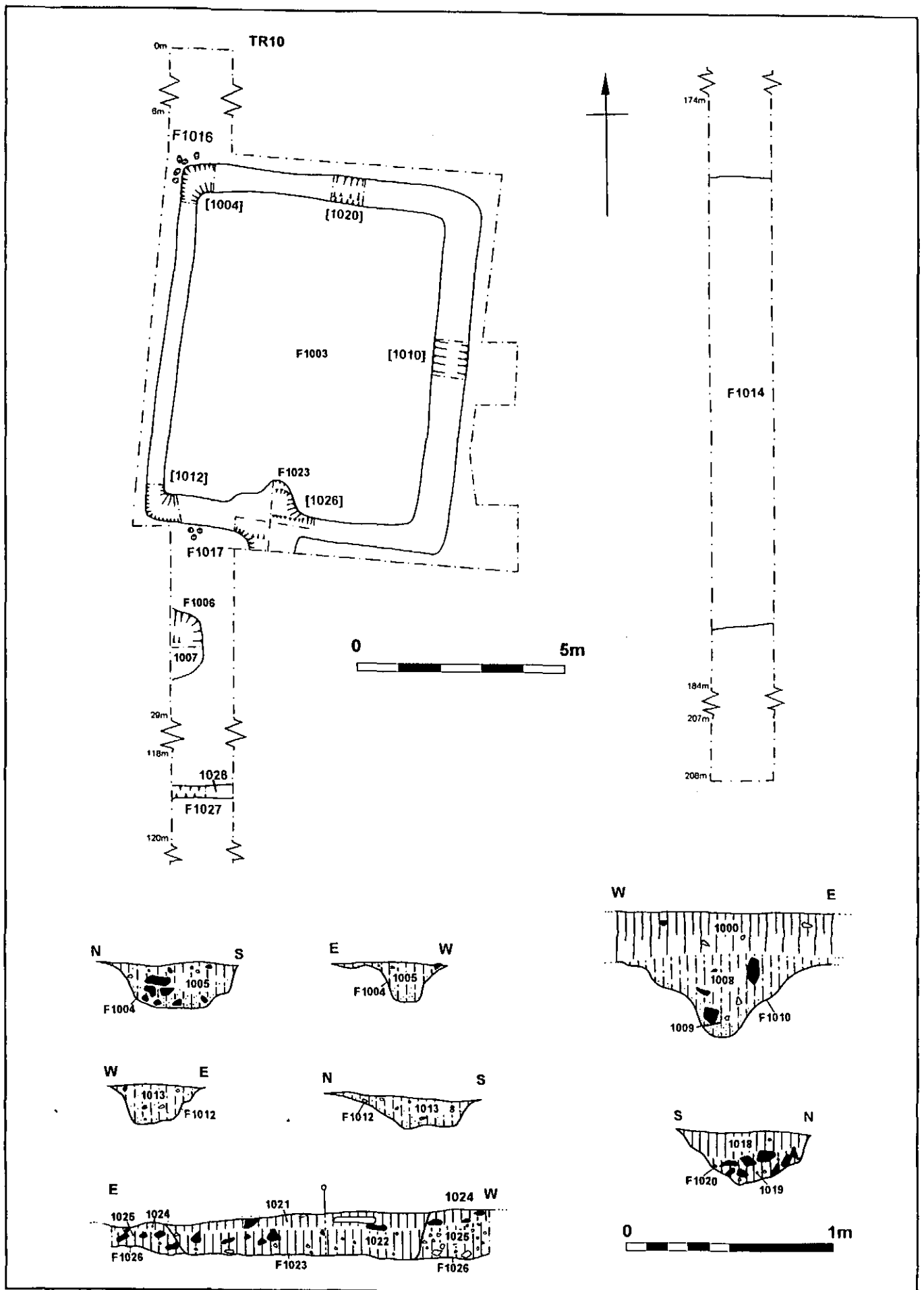


FIG. 4: PLAN OF ENCLOSURE / STRUCTURE 1003 AND SECTIONS OF FEATURES IN TRENCH 10

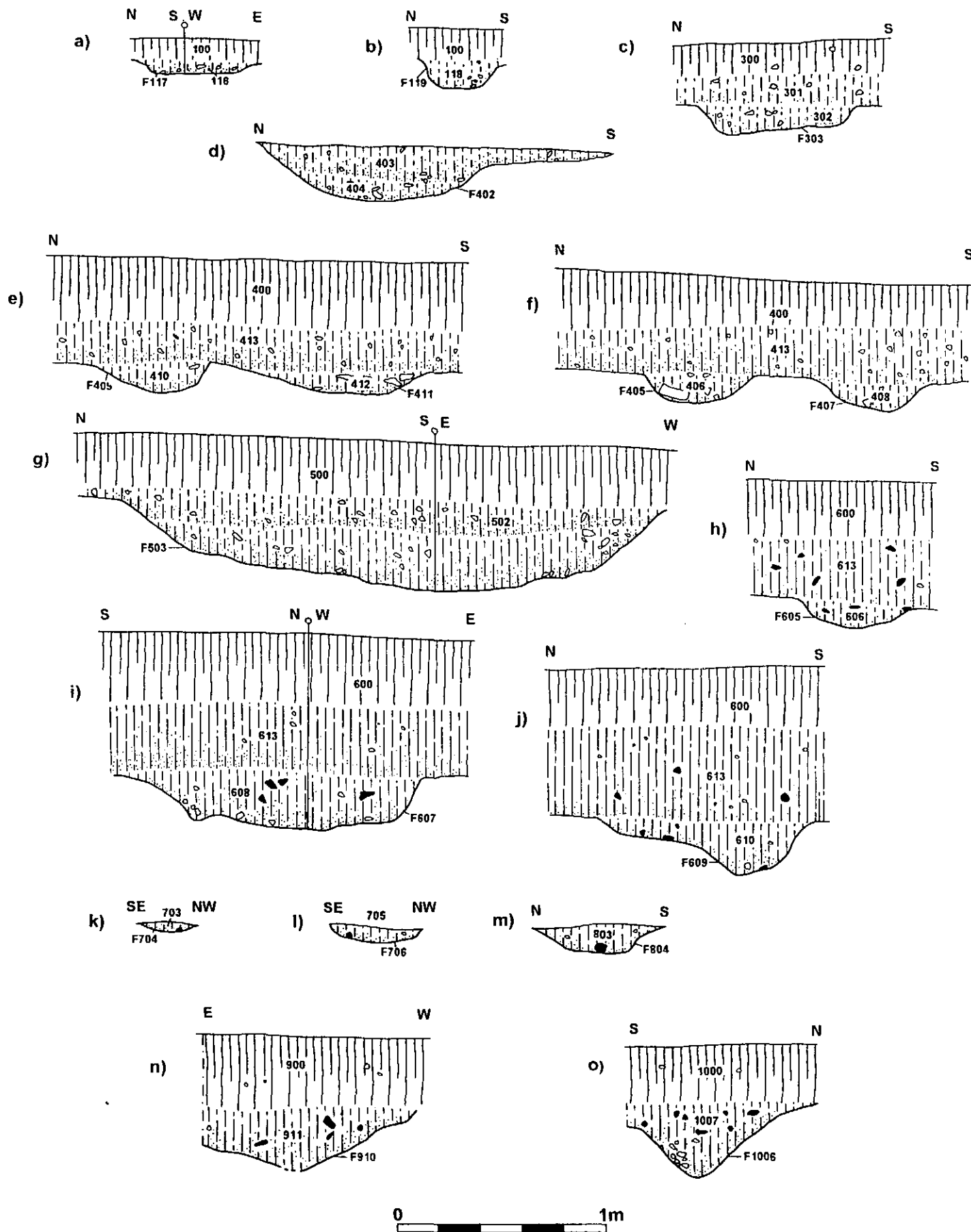


FIG. 5: SECTIONS THROUGH ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES IN TRENCHES 1, 3 - 10

APPENDIX 1

SPECIFICATION FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION OF THE PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE FORMER HARDYE'S SCHOOL SITE, BARNES WAY, DORCHESTER, DORSET

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This specification sets out proposals for an archaeological field evaluation of the former site of Hardy's School, Dorchester, Dorset.

1.2 The total site area comprises 7.76 hectares, for which outline planning permission has been granted, subject to a number of conditions, by West Dorset District Council (Application no. 1/E/95/0132P). Condition 15 of the planning permission relates to archaeology and states that:

The landowner/developer shall make arrangements for archaeological observation and recording to take place during any period of demolition and/or development. Details of those arrangements shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, at least one month before any work commences on site.

1.3 Prior to the grant of planning permission no formal archaeological investigation was carried out on the site. A sample geophysical survey, by magnetometer, was undertaken, but no conclusive results were obtained.

1.4 The development of the site is proposed to commence during the winter of 1996/7 and proceed in phases over a period of approximately six years.

2. PURPOSE OF WORK

2.1 In order to discharge the planning condition in the most cost efficient manner, the present owners of the site, Betterment Properties (Weymouth) Ltd have requested an approach whereby advance archaeological evaluation is carried out over the site. The aims of this investigation are 1) to identify areas which can be considered to be of negative archaeological interest, and hence do not need further archaeological monitoring, or 2) define areas where deposits of archaeological interest can be confirmed to exist and which will require further archaeological recording, or could be avoided by small redesign of the site housing layout.

2.2 The evaluation will seek to identify the physical archaeological potential of the application area by the least destructive means and will therefore only involve the disturbance of sufficient buried deposits or finds as is considered

appropriate to determine the nature, date and degree of survival of any deposits present on the site.

3. THE DEVELOPMENT AREA

3.1 The total area of the site comprises 7.76 hectares including an area of c. 1.4 hectares of former school buildings. The majority of the site consists of open playing fields with mature trees on boundaries. The area around the school buildings has tarmac surfaces and a triangular plot of land to the north of the former school comprises a turning area with hard surface and a small grassed area with trees. The northernmost zone of the site is generally level at around 70m OD, but the land slopes down southwards from this ridge towards its lowest point at around 55m OD.

3.2 While the majority of the development area will be occupied by new house construction three areas will not be built over; these are shown on the accompanying plan. The first is the central block of old school buildings which will be converted into dwellings; the second is an area which has been set aside for a new football pitch; and the third is an area of public open space within the core of the new development.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 There are no known archaeological sites or finds recorded from within the former school site. The site of a round barrow is recorded on the northern fringe of the site in what is now the grounds of St Mary's Primary School.

4.2 The area lies close to areas where extensive prehistoric and Roman remains have been located, principally on the Dorchester Bypass and in advance of development at Alington Avenue (Davies et al 1986)

5. TRENCH EXCAVATION

5.1 It is proposed that the evaluation will comprise a 2% sample of the entire site by the excavation of trenches in the positions shown on the accompanying plan. No trenches will be excavated in areas where existing school buildings remain, although limited trenching will be undertaken in accessible areas around them.

5.2 The total area to be covered by the evaluation trenches will be 1,552m². Each trench will be mechanically excavated using a toothless digging bucket to a nominal width of 1.5m (1,034 linear metres of trench in total).

5.3 Topsoil, modern overburden and deposits which can be shown to be of post-Medieval date only will be removed by mechanical excavator under constant archaeological supervision. All other deposits will be hand-excavated to an appropriate sample level; normally 50% of selected discrete features and 10% of linear features. Features to be investigated will be selected on the basis of type and form and may be agreed in consultation with the County Archaeological Officer. All trenches will be excavated to a maximum depth of 1.2m, or to the top of the natural subsoil, whichever is less. All spoil heaps will be scanned for the recovery of displaced archaeological artefacts.

5.4 On completion of the work all trenches will be backfilled with the excavated material, compacted by digger bucket, where possible, and left level with the surrounding ground surface.

5.5 Any structural remains encountered in the trenches will be cleaned and planned at an appropriate scale but not further excavated.

5.6 All archaeological deposits will be assessed for palaeo-environmental potential and suitable samples taken for analysis from selected contexts

6. **ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING**

6.1 All artefacts or deposits revealed will be recorded using the standard **AC archaeology** pro-forma recording system, with appropriate scale plans and section drawings, photographs and finds records.

6.2 Any human remains encountered during the work will be recorded in situ, but not removed at this stage.

7. **REPORT**

7.1 Four copies of the evaluation report, summarising the results of the work, will be submitted to the Employer within three weeks of completion of the fieldwork. The report will be accompanied by plans with OS levels and section drawings as appropriate.

8. **FINDS AND ARCHIVE**

8.1 All finds will be catalogued and suitably packaged in accordance with currently approved methods and as required by any recipient museum. Subject to the approval of the landowner, and the laws of treasure trove, it is proposed that all finds should be deposited in the Dorset County Museum, Dorchester, along with the archive of site records.

9. PERSONNEL

9.1 The work will be directly supervised by a Member or Associate of the Institute of Field Archaeologists with suitable experience in this type of investigation.

10. ACCESS AND HEALTH AND SAFETY

10.1 Access to the site will be by arrangement with the Betterment Properties (Weymouth) Ltd. During the course of the work the County Archaeological Officer will be invited to inspect the work on at least two occasions. The contractor will ensure that arrangements for site safety are carried out during the course of the work. Any deep excavations will be surrounded with a barrier of high visibility fencing.

11. INSURANCE

11.1 **AC archaeology** carries Employers and Public Liability Insurance cover to £2,000,000 and Professional Indemnity cover to £250,000.

12. COPYRIGHT

12.1 On written request **AC archaeology** will assign to the employer the copyright of all documents and other records created during the course of the work.

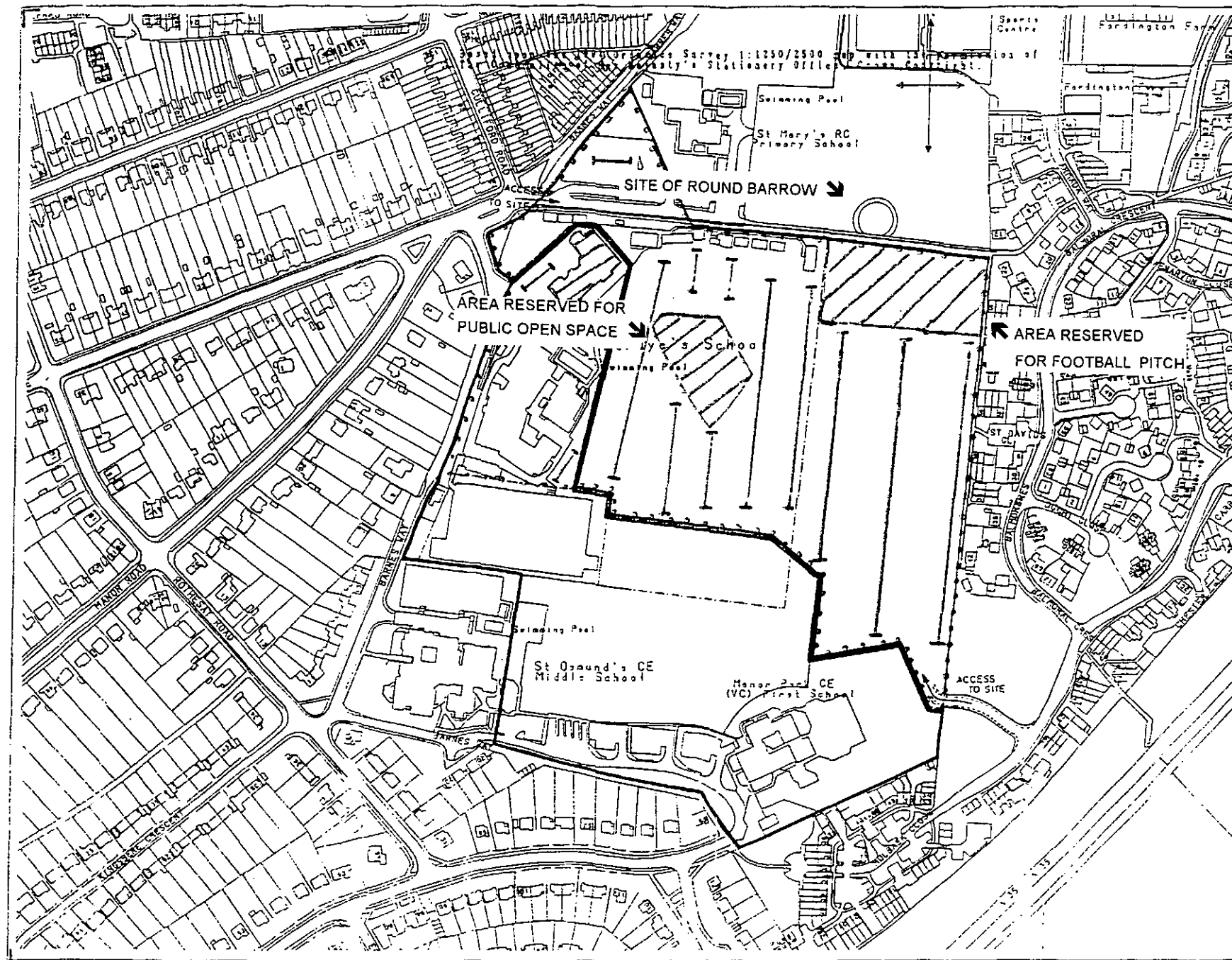
13. PROGRAMME

13.1 It is proposed that the archaeological evaluation will start during week commencing 16 September 1996. The site works will take approximately three weeks to complete.


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Davies , Susan M., Stacey Linda C., & Woodward Peter J., 1986 'Excavations at Alington Avenue, Fordington, Dorchester 1984/5: Interim Report.' *Proc. Dorset Natur. Hist. & Archaeol. Soc.* Vol 107 (for 1985) 101 - 110

Peter W. Cox
AC archaeology



Notes

 Evaluation trench

 Site boundary

Drawing Title

**HARDYE'S SCHOOL
BARNES WAY
DORCHESTER :-
Site for planning
application**



J.F.Tweed, F.R.I.C.S.
County Valuer &
Estates Officer

Based on the 1994
Ordnance Survey 1:1250/
2500 map with the
permission of The
Controller of Her Majesty's
Stationary Office, Crown
Copyright.

Scale **N.T.S.**

Date

Drawn

OS Sheet No.
SY 6989

Drawing Number
V/485A

PROPOSED LAYOUT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION TRENCHES