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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
EVALUATION REPORT**

**LAND TO THE REAR OF 56-  
70 GREET ROAD,  
WINCHCOMBE,  
CHELTENHAM,  
GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

**MARCH 2007**



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70 GREET ROAD,  
WINCHCOMBE,  
CHELTENHAM,  
GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

**LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:  
TEWKESBURY BOROUGH  
COUNCIL**

**SITE CENTRED AT: SP 024 292**

**MARCH 2007**

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**Archaeological evaluation**  
**at**  
**56-70, Greet Road, Winchcombe, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire**

SP 02470 29200

**SUMMARY**

During February 2007 an archaeological evaluation consisting of seven trenches totalling approximately 160 linear metres was carried out by 110 Archaeology on land to the rear of nos. 56-70 Greet Road, Winchcombe, Cheltenham in respect of a planning application for residential development of the site. The natural substrate, consisting of a brown Lias clay was exposed in all of the trenches; the height of this clay indicating a general slope on the site from west to east. Two of the trenches (1 and 6) revealed archaeological activity. In Trench 1 a large partially exposed pit yielded Roman pottery and building material, animal bone, and fragments of burnt stone and iron slag. Near the pit was a flat based ditch aligned east to west producing animal bone and a flint waste fragment. In Trench 6, a shallow flat base gully yielding a single sherd of medieval pottery may represent a foundation for an earlier structure. In some trenches the surface of the clay was also shown to have been cut by plough furrows associated with a thick overlying layer of soil deposited during what appears to have been an extensive period of cultivation running from the the medieval to post medieval periods. During the 18/19<sup>th</sup> century the area appears to have been used as pasture or orchard as evidenced by a thick layer of topsoil.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF STUDY**

### **1.1 Location and scope of work (Figs.1&2)**

1.1.1 This document details the results of an archaeological evaluation on land to the rear of nos. 56-70 Greet Road, Winchcombe, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, carried out by 110 Archaeology in February 2007 on behalf of CgMs and their client. An application has been made for development of the site (Centred at NGR 402470 229200) for the erection of housing and is conditional on a programme of archaeological work being carried out in accordance with a brief issued by Gloucestershire County Council Environment Service. The evaluation comprised seven trial trenches totalling approx. 160 linear metres (approx. 3 % of the site). The location and length of these trenches was primarily determined by the current land use of the site consisting of eight back gardens of privately owned residences incorporating glass houses, sheds, summer houses and planted areas including trees. Each of these residences is divided by fencing aligned east-west, which dictates the orientation of each trench. Trench 1 was positioned to determine if any further remains of the Roman settlement (mentioned below in paragraph 3) exist in the north western portion of the site..

### **1.2 Geology and topography**

1.2.1 The site lies on the northern edge of Winchcombe. It fronts onto Greet Road to the east. Residential properties form the southern and western boundaries of the site whilst agricultural land forms the northern boundary. The site has houses on it's eastern edge, with the western portion of the site being formed by the back gardens of these properties. The site lies at about 94m above Ordnance Datum and covers an area of approx. 0.75ha. The solid geology around the site consists of the Charmouth Mudstone Formation (British Geological Survey, 2000). Excavation revealed that the underlying geology of the site was a light brown Lias clay.

### **1.3 Archaeological and historical background**

1.3.1 The site lies within an area of known Roman activity. A number of Roman remains, consisting of tile, pot, tesserae and coins have been found in the garden of 32 Godwin Road and adjacent properties, which lie to the west of the Site (SMR 2181 and 7527). Excavation has revealed stone foundations extending into the adjacent field (SMR 7527). Although the entry SMR does not specifically attribute a dating evidence to

these foundations, they have been interpreted as being evidence for a Roman site (ibid, letter from Charles Parry 13.12.2005). The evidence has been interpreted as suggesting the former presence of a well-appointed Roman building with tessellated or mosaic flooring, possibly a villa, remains of which may extend into the site. Such villa sites may be extensive and usually contain associated ranges of outbuildings. They are often associated with a cemetery (letter from Charles Parry 13.12.2005).

## **2.0 EVALUATION AIMS**

### **2.1 The objectives of the evaluation are to:**

- i) clarify the presence/absence, location and extent of archaeological deposits on the site;
- ii) identify, within the constraints of the evaluation, the date, character, condition, depth, significance and quality of any surviving remains within the site.
- iii) assess the degree of existing impacts to sub-surface horizons and to document the extent of archaeological survival of buried deposits.

### **3.0 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Sample size and scope of fieldwork (Fig.2)**

3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of seven machine excavated trenches using a toothless bucket amounting to an approximate 3 % sample of the application area. The location of the trenches was aimed at covering the application area with a grid array. Trench 1 (30 m) was located on the north edge of the site in the rear garden of 70, Greet Road and Trenches 2 (10 m) and 7 (20 m) were placed in the rear of number 66. Trench 3 (40 m) was located in the rear of 62; Trench 4 (10 m) in the rear of 60; Trenches 5 and 6 (23 m) to the rear of number 58 and 56, respectively.

#### **3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording**

3.2.1 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologist's (IFA) Guidance and Standards relating to archaeological evaluations. All deposits were excavated removing the overburden under close archaeological supervision. The trenches were subsequently cleaned by hand and investigated for archaeological features. Sample hand excavation was undertaken of some of the features and finds were collected and bagged. Plans of the trenches and representative sections were made during the recording process



## **4.0 RESULTS:GENERAL**

### **4.1 Soil and ground conditions**

4.1.1 Conditions were wet during fieldwork as a result of continued rainfall. Although the majority of the trenches remained free of water, Trench 1 became increasingly waterlogged as a result of rainfall running into the trench from the higher ground to the north and west of the site. This meant that hand excavation carried out to characterise some of the more important features was difficult and a pump was employed during the recording process.

### **4.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits**

4.2.1 The evaluation exercise displayed a short stratigraphic sequence of deposits consisting on the whole of the natural substrate, a light yellowish brown Lias clay overlain by a thick layer of medieval/post-medieval plough soil in turn sealed by the modern top soil. Only in Trench 6 was there an absence of an earlier cultivation layer, with the natural clay immediately overlain by the modern top soil. Archaeological deposits were recorded in Trench 1 and consisted of a large Roman pit like feature (107) and a shallow undated, but probable contemporary Roman ditch (105). In addition, Trench 6, revealed a flat based gully like feature, possibly representing the remains of a former wooden foundation. This was also recorded with the natural clay, but immediately below the top soil and yielded a single sherd of medieval pottery. Later features consisted of medieval/post-medieval plough furrows recorded in Trenches 1, 3 and 7.

### **4.3 Presentation of results**

4.3.1 The results of the evaluation are described from the earliest to the latest deposits. The descriptions of the deposits refer to the individual trenches.

## **5.0 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS**

### **5.1 Description of deposits (Figs. 4 5 & 6)**

#### **5.1.1 Trench 1 (30 m x 1.5 m)**

Trench 1 was positioned in the rear garden of no.70 Greet Road and was aligned north west to south east. The surface of the natural Lias clay was exposed through out the trench; recorded at about 94.7 m OD at the north west end sloping to a height of about 93.40 m OD at the south east end; a number of truncated features were recorded within this layer.

##### *Pit 107*

This feature was recorded slightly north of the centre of the trench and sample excavation revealed a pit like feature measuring about 0.70 m deep and 4.20 m wide on a north south axis with the east and west sides of this feature continuing beyond the edge of the trench. The pit was filled by a single deposit of dark greyish brown silty-clay yielding a few sherds of Roman pottery and fragments of Roman brick and tile. There were also some pieces of animal bone, a few iron nails, and frequent fragments of burnt stone and iron slag. The upper part of this pit has been truncated by later ploughing associated with the overlying layer 109; the north edge of the pit being cut away by an adjacent plough furrow (103).

##### *Ditch 105 (filled by 106)*

Ditch 105 was located to the south of Pit 107 and was aligned east to west across the trench. The ditch measured 1.60 m wide and about 0.50 m deep. A single fill (106), consisting of a light greyish brown silty clay was excavated from this ditch and although undated yielded two fragments of animal bone and a piece of worked flint waste and a fragment of burnt stone. This feature also appears to have been truncated by later ploughing associated with the overlying layer 109.

##### *Furrows 101, 103 and 110*

Three plough furrows were also recorded within the trench all aligned east to west. Two of these features (101 & 103) were excavated, but were undated revealing furrows between 0.70 and 1 m wide with a depth of between 0.2 and 0.4 m. One of these furrows (103) truncated the north side of Pit 107.

##### *Layer 109*

Overlying the clay and sealing the pit, ditch and the three recorded furrows was the layer 109, a dark yellowish brown silty-clay up to 0.50 m thick. A single sherd of pottery from this layer and from the equivalent layer in Trench 5 suggests that the deposit was worked during the post-medieval period.

#### **5.1.2 Trench 2 (10 m x 1.5 m)**

Trench 2 was positioned at the rear on number 66 and was orientated north east to south west. The surface of the natural clay (200) was recorded at 96.80 m OD at the west end of the trench and 96.2 m OD at east end. No archaeological deposits were observed within the surface of this layer. Overlying the clay was a layer of plough-soil (201) consisting of a stiff yellowish/greyish brown silty-clay about 0.25 m thick and containing frequent small fragments of limestone. This layer is overlain by the modern top soil (202) at 0.30 m thick.

#### **5.1.3 Trench 3 (40 m x 1.5 m)**

Trench 3 was located in the rear garden of number 62 and was orientated north east to south west. The surface of the natural clay (300) was exposed through out the trench at a height of about 96.2 m at west end of the trench sloping to 95 m at east end. No archaeological deposits were observed within the surface of this clay, although the base of a single plough furrow was recorded orientated east to west in the west end of the trench. Post medieval finds were observed within the fill of this furrow. Overlying the clay was 301, a layer of plough soil about 0.30 m thick through out the trench. This was in turn sealed by a layer of modern top soil (302) at 0.30 m thick.

#### **5.1.4 Trench 4 (10 m x 1.5 m)**

Trench 4 was excavated in the rear garden of number 60 and was orientated north east to south west. The natural Lias clay (400) was exposed through out the trench lying at a level height of about 95.50 m OD. No archaeological deposits were observed within the surface of this layer. Overlying the clay was a former plough soil layer 401 at 0.14 m thick. This was in turn overlain by the modern top soil (402) at 0.25 m thick.

#### **5.1.5 Trench 5 (23 m x 1.5 m)**

Trench 5 was excavated in the rear garden of number 58 and was also orientated north east to south west. The natural clay (500) was again exposed through out the trench

recorded at a height of 94.80 m OD in the west end sloping to 94.15 m OD at the east end. No archaeological deposits were recorded in the surface of this clay which was in turn overlain by the layer of post-medieval plough soil (501) at approx. 0.30 m thick. This was then sealed by the modern topsoil (502) at 0.25 m thick.

#### **5.1.6 Trench 6 (23 m x 1.5 m)**

Trench 3 was excavated on the southern edge of the site in the rear garden of number 56, Greet Road. The natural clay (600) recorded at a level height of about 94.7 m OD at the west end sloping to about 94 m at the east end. Cut in to the surface of the natural clay was a linear gully like feature (601). The feature was almost 0.60 m wide and 0.16 m deep with a wide flat base indicating that it may have been constructed as a beam slot ( a horizontal wooden beam laid to support an upright vertical post). A single deposit (602) filled the gully and this yielded a fragment of modern tile and a rim sherd of medieval pottery. The Trench was devoid of subsoil suggesting that the earlier cultivation seen in the other trenches was absent in this area of the site. Immediately overlying the clay and sealing the fill of the gully was the modern top soil (603) at 0.24 m thick.

#### **5.1.7 Trench 7 (10 m x 1.5 m)**

Trench 7 was positioned near Trench 2 in the rear garden of number 66 and was orientated north west to south east. The natural Lias clay, observed through out the trench, was recorded at a level height of about 96.50 m OD. No archaeological deposits were observed within the surface of this layer although the base of a former plough furrow was recorded in the north end of the trench. The clay was overlain by a former plough soil (701) at about 0.20 m thick and equivalent to 201 and 401 in the adjacent trenches. This layer was in turn overlain by the modern topsoil at about 0.25 m thick.

### **5.2 Finds**

#### **5.2.1 Pottery and ceramic building material**

Pottery and ceramic building material was retrieved from the following contexts:

Context 108 (fill of pit 107)

Context 109 medieval/post-medieval cultivation layer (Trench 1)

Context 501 medieval/post-medieval cultivation layer (Trench 5)

A detailed report on these assemblages is outlined in Appendix 1.

#### **5.2.2 Animal bone**

A small assemblage of animal bone was retrieved from the following contexts:

Context 106 three fragments of bone

Context 108 five fragments of bone

#### **5.2.2 Slag**

Numerous fragments of iron slag were recovered from context 108 (fill of Pit 107)

#### **5.2.3 Metalwork**

Three iron (Fe) nails were recovered from context 108 (fill of Pit 107). All of the nails were badly corroded.

#### **5.2.5 Flint**

A single flint waste fragment was retrieved from context 106, the fill of ditch 105.

### **5.3 Environmental data**

5.3.1 Deposits of potential archaeological significance were assessed for their suitability for palaeo-environmental sampling. The fill of gully 601 was sealed by the modern topsoil and the potential for modern contamination of this deposit was high. Context 106, the single fill of ditch 105 showed very little organic content whilst context 108, the fill of pit 107 also did not show a high organic content. Since the pit itself was only partially exposed during the evaluation, fill 108 could not be reliably interpreted as a primary context.

## **6.0 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION**

### **6.1 Reliability of field investigation**

- 6.1.1 There was no major disturbance to underlying archaeological deposits resulting from later development. The only noticeable truncation resulted from 19<sup>th</sup> century land drains and the effect of this was limited.

### **6.2 Overall interpretation**

- 6.2.1 The Roman pit like feature (107) in Trench 1 and the probable contemporary ditch (105) were located in the area of the site where Roman deposits could be anticipated given the earlier findings to the west along Godwin Road where the evidence suggests that a well appointed Roman building, possibly a villa, existed in the area. The pit like feature (107) and the undated, but probable ditch (105) in Trench 1 appear to confirm the presence of Roman activity within the north west part of the site. The pottery, ceramic building material and evidence of metalworking as suggested by waste iron slag from the fill of pit points to Roman occupation including the presence of structural remains within the vicinity of the site.
- 6.2.2 The gully feature (601) in Trench 6 in the south end of the site is perhaps the only other evidence of early occupation and its shape may represent the foundation for an early wooden structure. The feature was only tentatively dated by a single sherd of medieval pottery and also produced a fragment of modern roof tile. The fill also lay directly below the modern garden soil and these finds may have been intrusively deposited within the gully fill as a result of perhaps gardening activities associated with the modern top soil. This gully was aligned north to south, but did not extend into the adjacent garden as shown by the excavation of Trench 5.
- 6.2.3 The site appears to have been subjected to a significant period of cultivation as evidenced by the truncated features (pit 107 and ditch 105) in Trench 1 and the presence of plough furrows within the surface of the natural recorded in Trenches 1, 3 and 7. The presence of intrusive medieval pottery within the fill (108) of pit 107 as a result of disturbance from a later plough furrow 103, suggests that this cultivation, associated with the overlying and equivalent layers 109, 201, 301, 401, 501 and 701, began during the medieval period and continued into the post-medieval period resulting in a thick build up of soil evidenced by the layer 109.. The absence of this cultivation layer within Trench 6 would suggest that the layer had either been graded away or

more likely that cultivation did not extend much further south than the position of Trench 5.

### **6.3 Summary of results**

6.3.1 The evaluation established a relatively short sequence of stratified deposits on the site consisting of a natural Lias clay overlain by a thick post Roman cultivation layer in turn sealed by a thick layer of modern top soil. In Trench 1, on the north side of the site exposed within the surface of the Lias clay was a large probable Roman pit like feature. Apart from a few sherds of Roman pottery and building material (including an abraded fragment of tegula roof tile) there was also some animal bone, iron nails and frequent fragments of burnt stone and iron slag indicating metalworking activity.

6.3.2 The Lias clay and associated archaeological deposits were sealed by a thick layer of medieval and post-medieval cultivation soil indicating that the area had been ploughed and manured for a considerable period of time during the post Roman period. An overlying layer of modern topsoil indicated a more recent period when the area was likely to have been utilised for pasture and/or as an orchard.

### **6.4 Significance**

6.4.1 The results of the trial trenching suggest that that Roman deposits are present in the north side of the application area (Trench 1) and that these deposits are likely to be related to a probable Roman settlement located in the area of 32, Godwin Road as suggested by the discovery of a number of Roman finds in 1976. There is a possibility that medieval remains as suggested by the presence of gully 601 in Trench 6 may point to later occupation on the south edge of the site.

### **6.5 Impact of development**

6.5.1 The results of the trial trenching suggests that the proposed development is likely to affect Roman deposits on the north side of the site. The evidence from Trench 6 suggests that there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may exist on the southern edge of the site. The area of the site between Trench 1 and Trench 6 is devoid of archaeological deposits suggesting that there was no occupation in the central portion of the application area. The only evidence of activity in this part of the site is post-medieval period pottery from the later plough soil indicating a period of cultivation.

## **6.6 Archive Location**

6.6.1 The archive resulting from the work will be deposited with the Cheltenham Museum and Art Gallery.



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## APPENDIX 1

### *Pottery and Ceramic Building Material* by Jane Timby

#### 1 Introduction

1.1 The archaeological work resulted in the recovery of 11 sherds of pottery and 9 fragments of ceramic building material (CBM).

1.2 Pottery was recovered from just four contexts and includes sherds of Roman, medieval and post-medieval date.

1.3 The sherds were moderately well preserved, the CBM less so.

1.4 For the purposes of the assessment the assemblage was scanned to assess its likely chronology and quantified by fragment count and weight. The resulting data is summarised in Table 1.

#### 2 Roman

2.1 Three sherds from a handmade Malvernian rock-tempered jar with a burnished finish along with a wheelmade necked jar in grey ware were recovered from pit 107 (108). The former is a late Iron Age form which continued to be made well into the Roman period; the latter probably dates to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Accompanying this material were nine fragments of very degraded ceramic building material. This all appears to be Roman and includes at least one fragment from a tegula (roofing tile). The same feature produced four sherds of medieval ware from the Herefordshire Border industries possibly intrusive.

2.2 Small quantities of Roman pottery have been documented from North Street, Winchcombe from previous work (Saville 1985) attesting a Roman presence somewhere in the general area.

#### 3 Medieval

3.1 In addition to the four sherds of medieval ware from pit 107 (Gloucester City type fabric 52), context 602 produced a rimsherd from a simple everted rim jar. The pale orange-brown fabric contained frequent oolitic limestone with sparse iron, quartz sand and

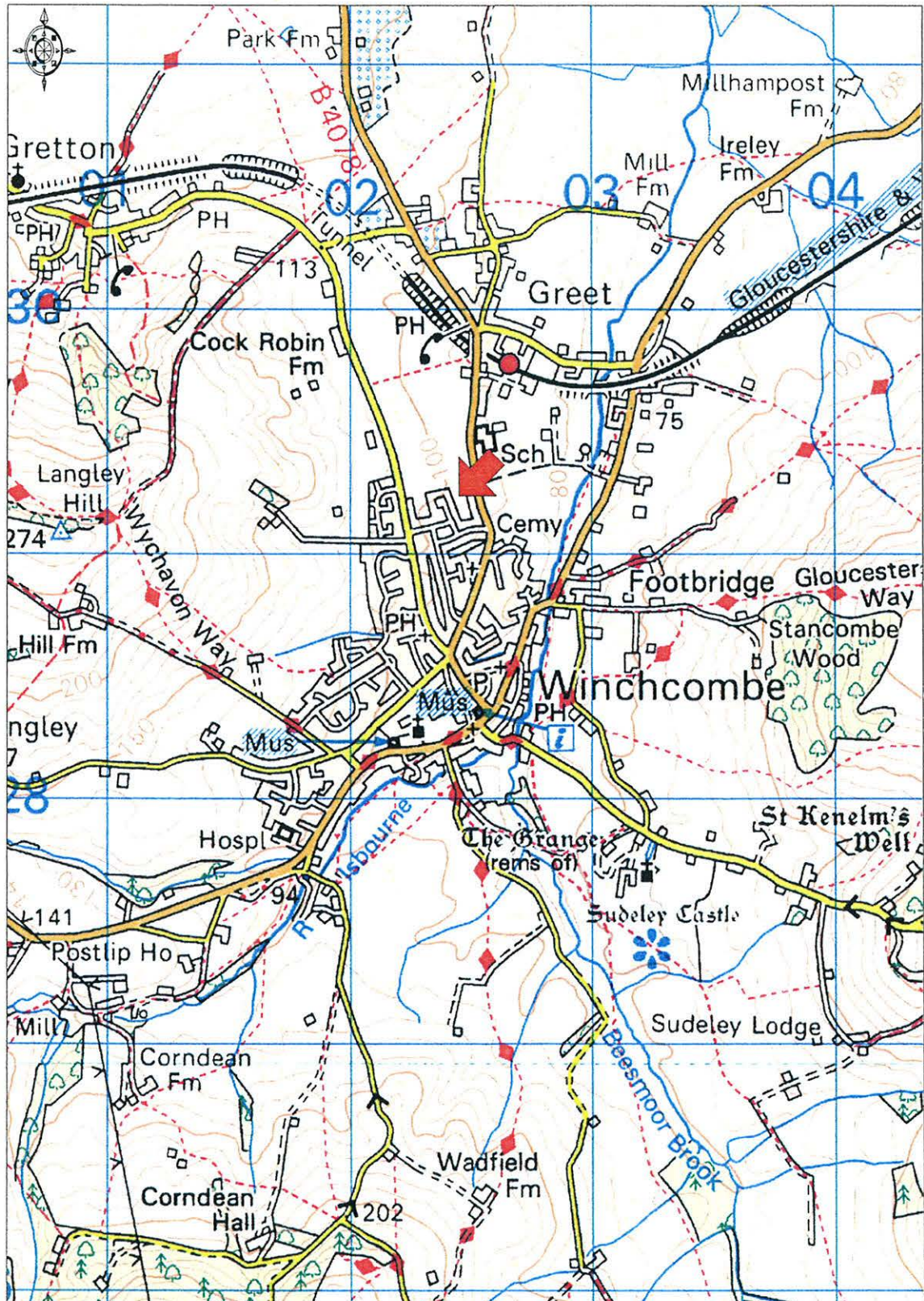
mica. This probably falls within the range of material known as Winchcombe ware which is considered to date from the 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries (Vince 1984, 263).

#### 4 Post-medieval

4.1 Two sherds of post-medieval date were recovered from contexts 109 and 501, both interpreted as post-medieval ploughsoil although the sherds were moderately well preserved suggesting they had not been in a ploughsoil environment for a prolonged period of time.

#### 5 Potential and further work

5.1 This is a very small assemblage of pottery which broadly accords with material previously recorded from Winchcombe. No further work is recommended at this stage.



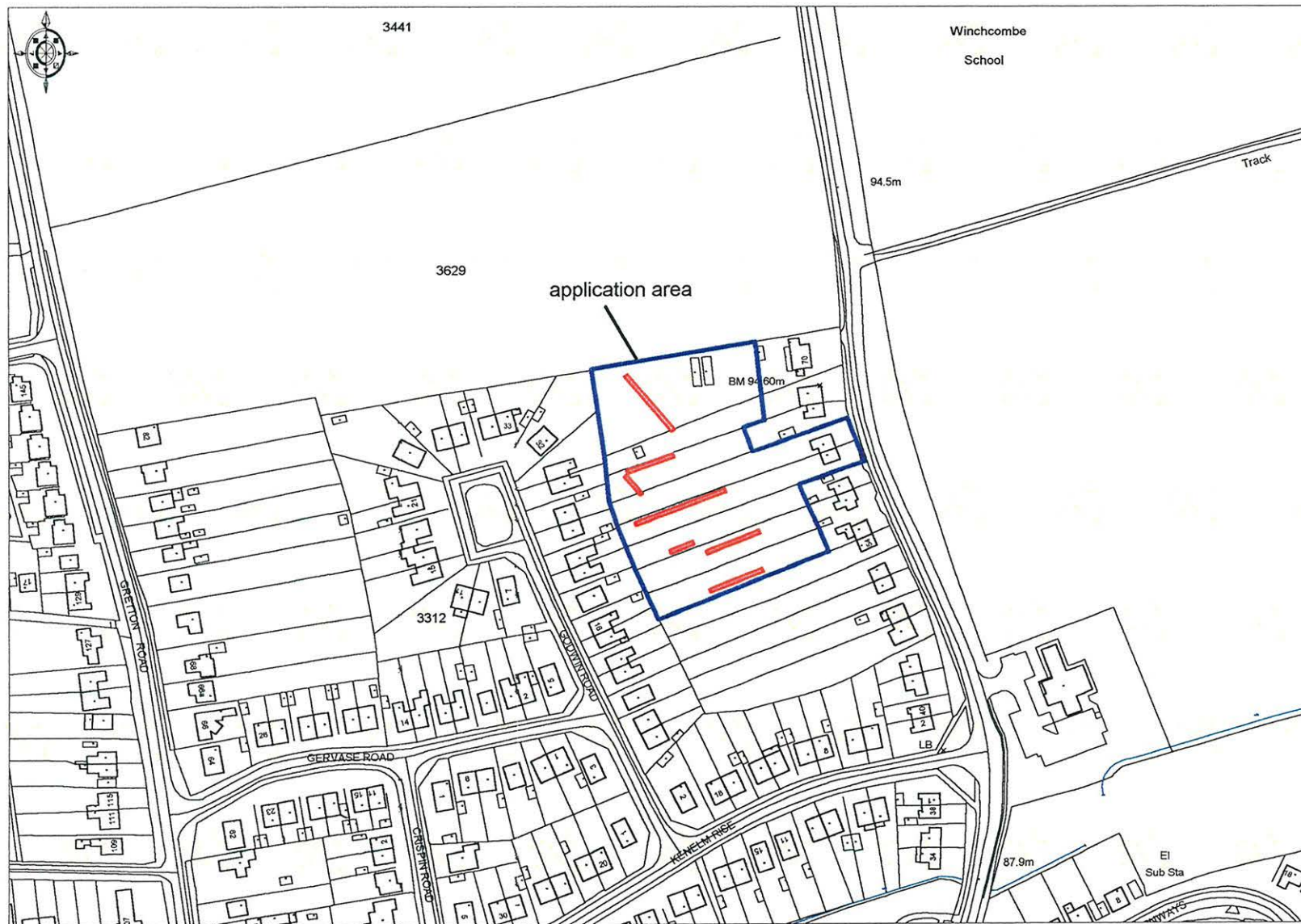
Ordnance Survey

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Figure 1: site location plan



Archaeological evaluation at 56-70, Greet Road, Winchcombe, Cheltenham

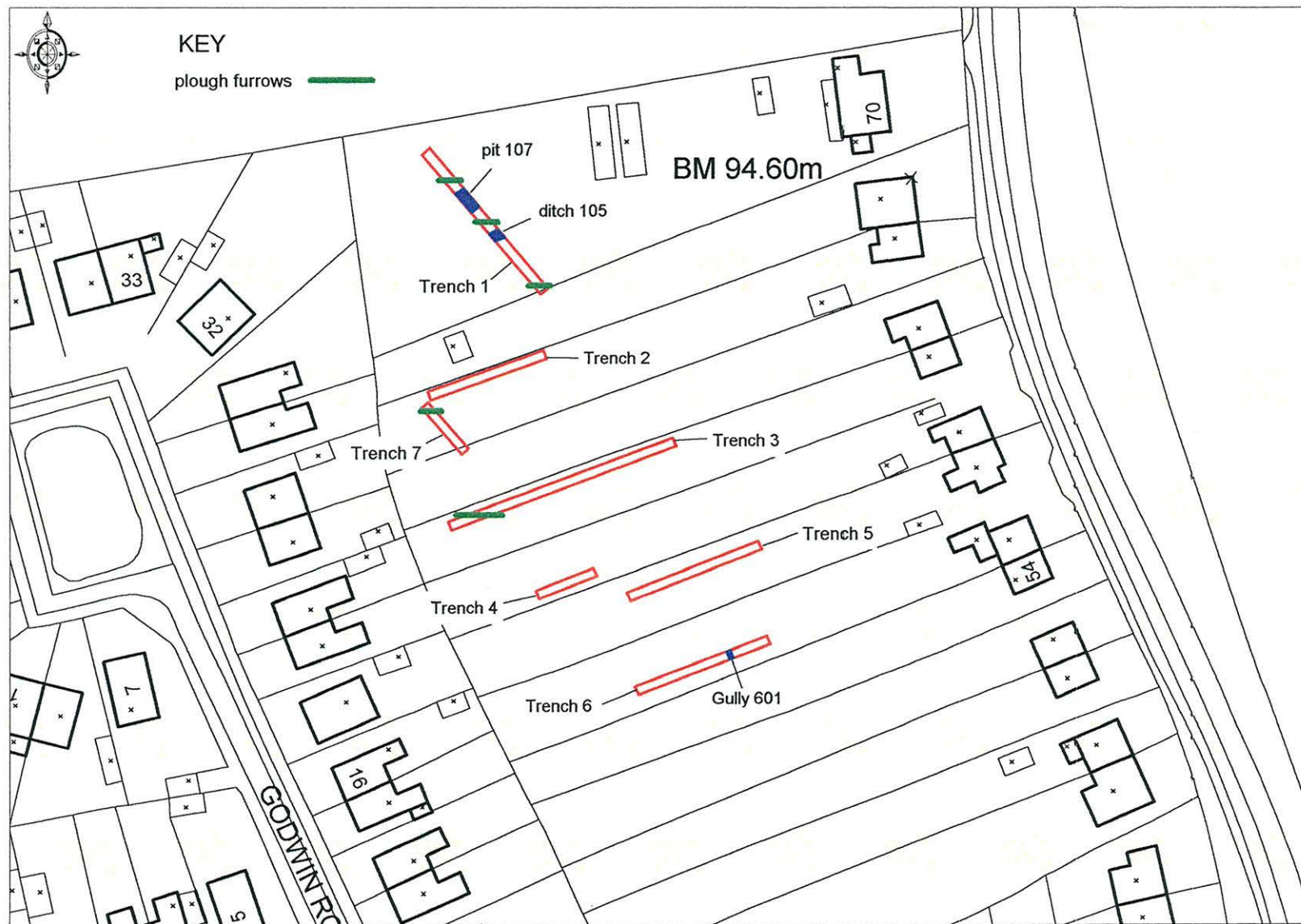


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Survey

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Figure 2: Plan of application area and trench locations

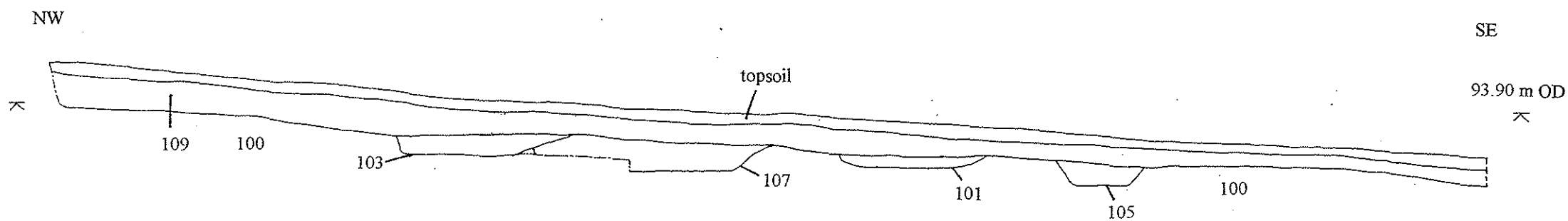
Archaeological evaluation at land to the rear of 56-70 Greet Road, Winchcombe, Cheltenham.



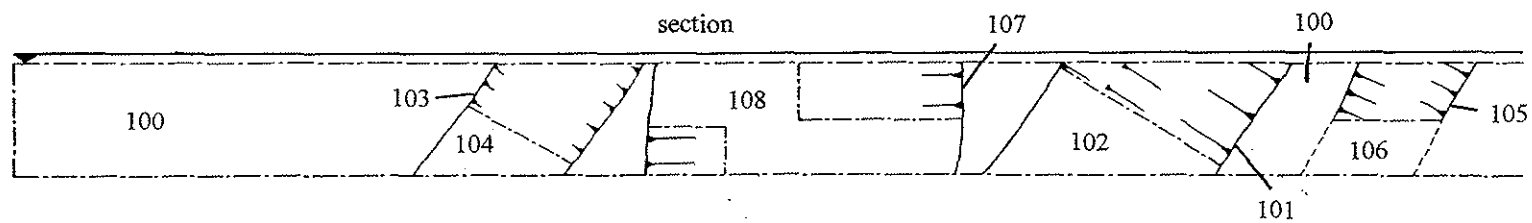
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Figure 3: Trench Location plan and main archaeological features



Trench 1: section



Trench 1: plan

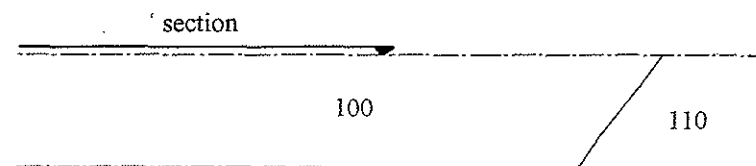
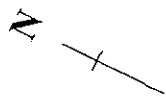
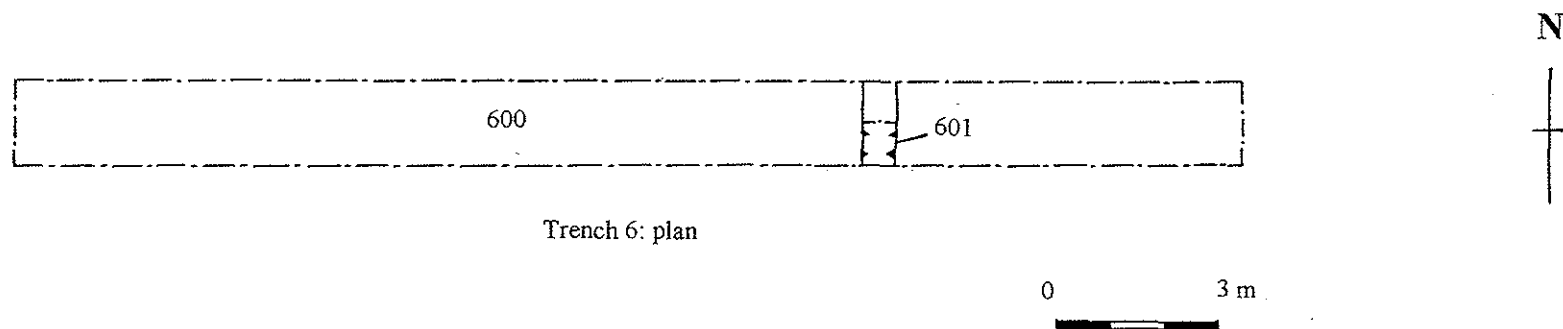
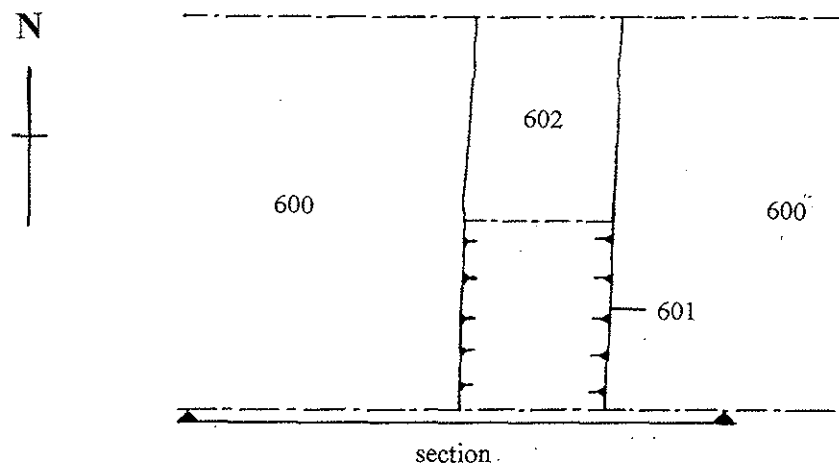


Figure 4: Plan and section of Trench 1

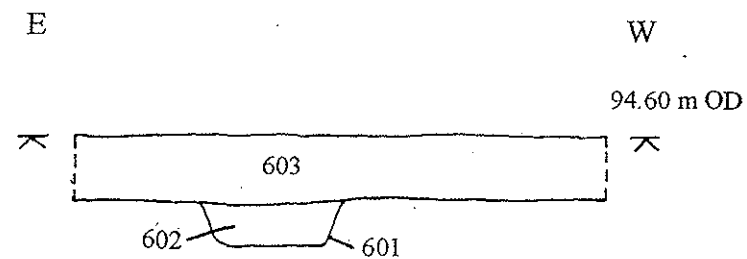


Trench 6: plan



section

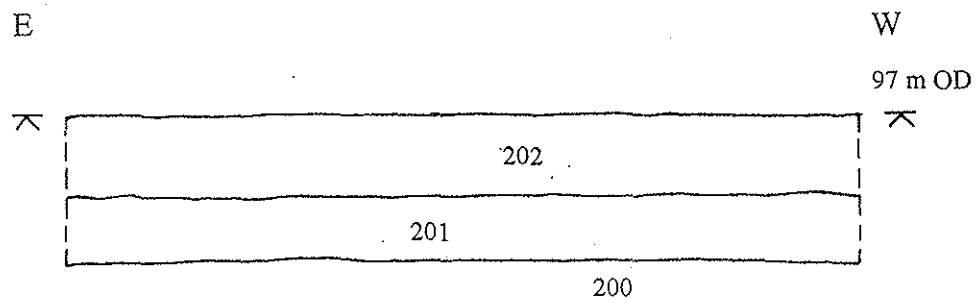
Plan of gully 601



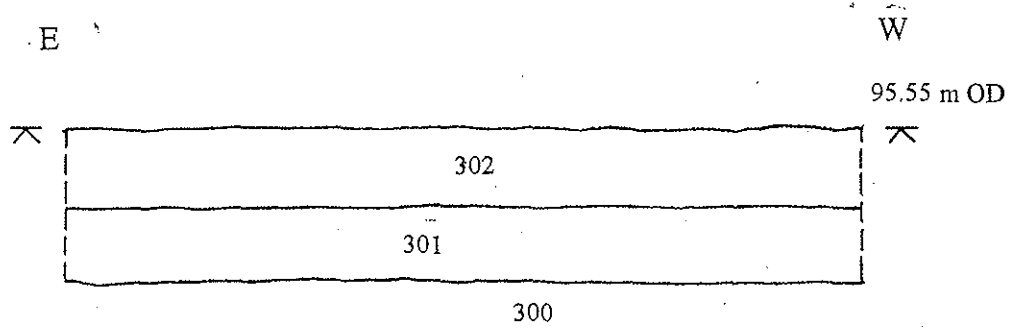
Trench 6: section

Figure 5: Plans and section of Trench 6

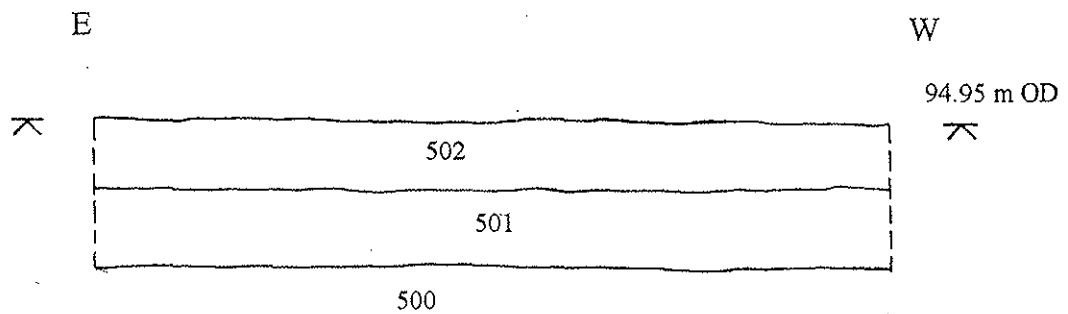




Trench 2: section



Trench 3: section



Trench 5: section



Figure 6: Sample sections; Trenches 2, 3 and 5

## PLATES



PLATE 1: Trench 1, view north east showing the ditch 105 within the natural clay (100)



PLATE 2: Trench 1, view east showing the dark fill of pit 107 at the base of the trench with the lighter Lias clay either side.





PLATE 3: Trench 1, view east showing the plough furrow 101 within the surface of the Lias clay.

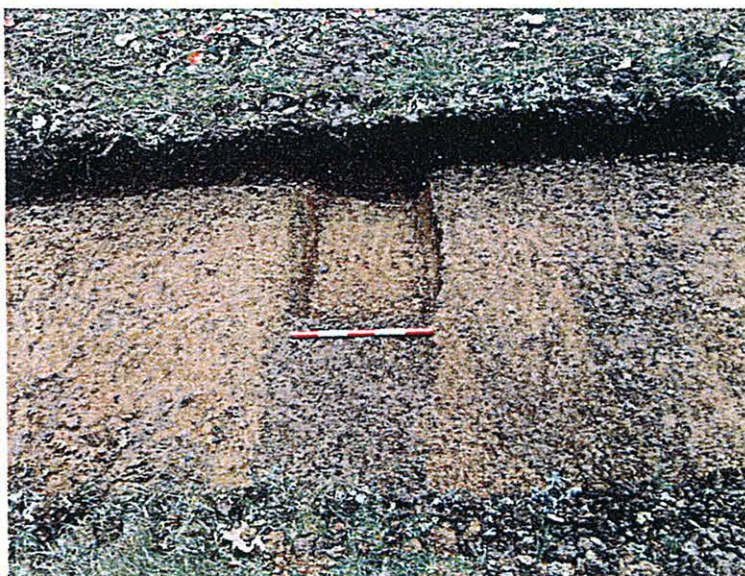


PLATE 4: Trench 6, view south showing the gully 601 within the surface of the Lias clay and immediately below the modern top soil.