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Archaeological Evaluation
of land adjacent to
BRADLEY STOKE WAY,
BRADLEY STOKE, SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE.
for
South Gloucestershire Council

Report No. 779/2001

Bristol and Region Archaeological Services

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Archaeological Evaluation

of land adjacent to

BRADLEY STOKE WAY,

BRADLEY STOKE, SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

Centred on
N.G.R. ST 625 817

Client: South Gloucestershire Council

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CONTENTS

Abbreviations Used in the text

BRSMG	Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery
c.	circa
m	metre
NGR	National Grid Reference
OD	Ordnance Datum
OS	Ordnance Survey
<	less than
>	greater than

January, 2001.

SUMMARY

In November 2000, Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (BaRAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to Bradley Stoke Way, Bradley Stoke, South Gloucestershire. The site is intended for proposed development as a school and residential area. The evaluation was required in order to assess the survival, extent, character and date of any archaeological features, deposits or structures which may still be preserved *in-situ* within the application site. As such, the work was undertaken as part of the planning process.

The site of proposed development is located adjacent to known areas of Bronze Age and Romano-British activity, and the main objective of the fieldwork was to see if settlement dating to those periods extended into the evaluation area. The archaeology was sampled by means of trial excavation trenches (57 in all) opened at regular intervals across the site.

The evaluation identified three main areas of Bronze Age and Romano-British activity characterised by post-holes, pits and linear features containing pottery, bone, fragmented Pennant sandstone (a common inclusion in prehistoric features recorded in this area), worked limestone and metal working waste. The bulk of the remains appeared to be located at the southern end of the field flanking Bradley Stoke Way and the central area of the land parcel located adjacent to it.

Given the disturbed nature of the ground and its erosion over the years, much of the physical archaeological evidence is truncated and of poor quality. It does not, therefore warrant preservation *in situ,* but is of sufficient importance at a regional level to require further, more detailed investigation should it be disturbed by the proposed development. This should ideally take the form of topsoil stripping (under controlled archaeological conditions) in those areas of the site containing the densest concentration of features and finds. In this way, the archaeological resource can be preserved by record prior to the commencement of any groundworking activity.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figures

Plates

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In November 2000, Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (BaRAS) carried out an archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to Bradley Stoke Way, Bradley Stoke, South Gloucestershire. There is a proposal to develop the site as a school and residential area (South Gloucestershire planning application no. PT00/2225/R3). The work was commissioned and funded by South Gloucestershire District Council.

1.2 The evaluation was carried out prior to the determination of the planning application in accordance with the guidelines laid down in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (DoE 1990) and Avon County Structure Plan (Third Alteration) Policy BE4A (Appendix 1). Its aim was to provide information that will enable an informed and reasonable planning decision to be taken regarding the archaeological provision for those areas of the site affected by the proposed development.

1.3 The particular objectives of the evaluation were to locate any archaeological features, deposits and structures likely to be affected by the proposed development, to assess their state of preservation, quality and condition and to identify and recommend options concerning their future treatment, archaeological or otherwise.

1.4 The evaluation was implemented in accordance with a project design prepared by BaRAS and agreed with the Archaeological Officer for South Gloucestershire, David Haigh.

1.5 Previous archaeological investigations carried out within adjacent development sites have revealed extensive prehistoric remains, in the form of ditches, pits and post-holes, dating mainly to the Bronze Age. The probability of similar features surviving within the current application site was therefore quite high.

1.6 The evaluation comprised two elements: documentary research and trial trenching. The fieldwork, which lasted four weeks, was carried out between the 6th and 30th November 2000. This report, summarising the findings of the evaluation, was compiled by the project supervisor, Adrian Parry.

1.7 Thanks are due to Brigid Gallagher, Rachel Heaton, Heather Hirons, Chris Reese, Dave Stevens, Peter Thompson and in a voluntary capacity, Duncan Wright, for working on site in often trying conditions. The writer would also like to acknowledge Nick Thompson and Ken Morris of South Gloucestershire Council for assisting with the arrangement of the fieldwork and providing access to the site. Farmtrac of Yate supplied the mechanical excavator. The Project was managed by Bruce Williams MIFA.

2. THE SITE

2.1 The proposed application site, centred upon NGR ST625817, occupies two land parcels located immediately east of Bradley Stoke Way, Bradley Stoke, South Gloucestershire (Figs 1 & 2). To the northwest lies the Bradley Stoke Leisure Centre, to the South Webbs Wood and to the east, beyond the site boundary the M4 motorway.

2.2 The area to be evaluated covered an area of c. 88,200 square metres (8.82 hectares).

2.3 The northern, eastern and southern periphery of the application site has been subject to tipping associated with previous development in the area. These areas of the site, where the archaeological resource is unlikely to be impinged upon by the proposed development, were excluded from the evaluation.

2.4 The northern and eastern areas of the proposed development footprint were relatively flat (57m-58m above OD) The terrain of the remaining area of the site fell away sharply to the south and west (dropping in height from 56m to 50m). In the southwestern corner, the ground surface rose again towards Bradley Stoke Way.

2.5 Much of the site was covered in grass and scrubland. Areas of more dense vegetation (mainly saplings) were located along the hedge boundaries. Several ponds and an area of herb-rich grassland were not evaluated for ecological reasons. The fields have also been furrowed and banked around the edges to protect the site from traveller incursions.

2.6 The natural solid geology of the site consists primarily of White and Blue Lias limestone with interbedded clays and sands. This strata was laid down at the end of the Triassic period.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 No archaeological investigation of the application site had been undertaken prior to the evaluation, but a considerable amount of archaeological fieldwork has been undertaken in its immediate vicinity in advance of other development. (**Fig.2**). A trawl of the South Gloucestershire Sites and Monuments Record (SGSMR) identified a number of Bronze Age and Roman-British sites, which are listed below.

To the north of the application site:

SGSMR 7424 (NGR ST62018211) - A full scale excavation on the site of the Tesco supermarket in 1991 revealed the post settings for a Bronze Age roundhouse as well as other postholes and ditches. A significant quantity of pottery, worked flint and bone from that period was also recovered.

SGSMR 7442 (NGR ST62078195), SGMSR 7453 (NGR ST62038187) & SGMSR 10568 (NGR ST62068200) represented trial trenching exercises carried out in close proximity to the above site. All uncovered further evidence of Bronze Age settlement.

SGSMR 10574 (NGR ST 62188208) - topsoil stripping on the site of the Bradley Stoke District centre exposed two small pits containing black soil, charcoal, and densely packed pennant sandstone fragments. Worked flints, including a tanged arrowhead, were recovered from the fills of the pits and the adjacent area. A sherd of coarse local Romano-British pottery was also recorded.

To the west of the application site:

SGSMR 7432 (NGSMR 62408150) - a trial excavation carried out in 1991 recovered an assemblage of medieval pottery

3.2 A survey of documentary and aerial photographic evidence pertinent to the site did not record any information of historical or archaeological significance.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 For the purposes of the evaluation, 57 trial excavation trenches of varying length were excavated at regular intervals across the application site (**Fig.1**). This represented an approximate 5% sample of the proposed development footprint. The location of the trenches was agreed with the County Archaeological Officer prior to the commencement of the evaluation.

4.2 The trenches were opened by a 180-degree mechanical excavator equipped with a 1.6m wide toothless grading bucket. Topsoil and any other recent overburden was removed to expose the top of the archaeological resource or the surface of the undisturbed natural substrate.

4.3 The trenches were cleaned and further excavated by hand where necessary in order to characterise, date and properly stratify any archaeological features or deposits preserved *in-situ*.

4.4 Excavated archaeological remains, or unexcavated features of potential archaeological significance were recorded using BaRAS single context record sheets (see 4.5 below), plan and section drawings scaled at 1:50, 1:20 and 1:10, and scaled photographs (in both black and white print and colour transparency format).

4.5 Each archaeological cut, fill, layer or structure was allocated its own (context) number. Each trench, in turn, was assigned a unique set of sequential context numbers prefixed by the number of trench (e.g. Trench 1 contained contexts 100, 101, 102 etc, Trench 10 contexts 1000, 1001,1002 etc.)

4.6 Archaeological artefacts recovered during the evaluation were labelled on site and retained for cleaning and specialist analysis. They were then related to the contexts from which they were derived. All typologically distinct and closely datable finds were recorded three-dimensionally.

4.7 The trenches were surveyed three dimensionally using an Electronic distance measurer (EDM) and related to a ground survey plan provided by South Gloucestershire Council. All features of archaeological significance were levelled to Ordnance Datum.

4.8 Upon completion of the archaeological fieldwork, the trenches were mechanically backfilled and the site left as tidy as possible.

4.9 The site archive (written records, drawings, photographs and finds) will, ultimately be transferred to Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery under accession number BRSMG 2000/40.

5. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS

5.1 Given the time of year, the clayey natures of the soils within the application site, and higher than average rainfall, many of the trenches became waterlogged during the course of the evaluation. The fact that the ground was saturated with water precluded the use of a pump. It was possible to bale out some trenches to enable them to be at least partially recorded, but several, with the sanction of the County Archaeological officer, were left uninvestigated.

5.1.1 The majority of the trenches registered a simple stratigraphic sequence, comprising a thin layer of topsoil and a patchy, sometimes non-existent, subsoil horizon. The surface of the natural geology, which was recorded at a relatively shallow depth (<0.40m below present ground level)) consisted of Lias limestone, fine stiff clays and coarser, archaeologically sterile silty clays. The uneven bedding of these deposits created surface depressions filled with pockets of soil. It was clear that the ground surface had become heavily eroded over time, presumably through agricultural cultivation and more recent disturbances such as tipping and the cutting of traveller defences. Root disturbance and soil mixing was also evident across the site, particularly within areas of dense vegetation. Any variations from the soil profile referred to above will be described in the relevant trench description.

5.1.2 In most cases, the archaeological resource consisted of rock- or clay-cut features sealed by either topsoil or subsoil.

5.1.3 For ease of reference, the field adjacent to Bradley Stoke Way is referred to as land parcel A, and the field to the east of it as land parcel B (see **Fig. 3**)

Trenches 1-3 were opened to the north of land parcels A & B. Trench 1 was located close to the Savages Wood roundabout. The other two trenches were excavated through an embankment running approximately east-west across the top of the site.

Trench 1
19.8m x 1.6m x 0.64m
Fig.1

The stratigraphic sequence recorded in this trench comprised a 0.4 - 0.5m thick topsoil horizon and an underlying mixed deposit of blueish-yellow clay, brick, stone and slag. This re-deposited material was shown by deeper excavation at the southwestern end of the trench to be at least 1m thick.

Trench 2
24.65m x 1.6m x 0.6m
Fig.1

The removal of a 0.1m thick layer of topsoil from this trench exposed a 0.3m thick deposit of red scalpings. This, in turn sealed the same deep deposit of blueish-yellow clay recorded in Trench 1 above. The presence of plastic, corrugated iron, polythene, electrical wiring flex and timber within this material, in addition to the brick, stone and slag already seen in the other trench, confirmed that it had a modern provenance.

Trench 3
30m x 1.6m x 0.85m
Figs. 1 & 3

The northern end of this trench contained the same simple stratigraphy recorded over the majority of the site (i.e. topsoil and, occasionally, subsoil overlying naturally occurring Lias limestone and clay). The rest of the trench, however, was filled by a series of tip deposits (alternating layers of reburied natural clay and topsoil) which bore the hallmark of dumping activity (possibly related to the construction of the road). Unstratified archaeological finds recovered from this trench comprised a sherd of undated post-Romano-British pottery and a piece of ironstone or metalworking waste.

Trench 4
30m x 1.6m x 0.64m
Fig.1

A broad, straight linear feature, 0.9m in width, traversed the base of this trench on an east west orientation. This feature, which was filled with re-deposited clay, was interpreted as a land drain. Three curvilinear soil features were also recorded, but these were devoid of any archaeological finds or inclusions. The only find recovered from the trench was an unstratified sherd of Romano-British Black Burnished ware pottery.

Trench 5
29m x1.6m x 0.27m
Figs 1 & 3; Plate 1

The northern half of this trench contained several small sub-circular, or curvilinear features (501,503-504 & 506), interpreted as post-holes or small pits. These shallow features, with the exception of 503, were filled with, and sealed by, grey clay containing very sparse quantities of charcoal and heat affected Lias (500). The extensive nature of this deposit suggested that it might have represented the truncated remains of a buried occupation horizon. The recovery of early to middle Bronze Age pottery sherds and fragmented Pennant sandstone from layer 500 and feature 503 (a more mottled version of 500) indicated a prehistoric date. Several unstratified pottery sherds of Bronze Age and Roman-British date were also retrieved from this trench during its initial cleaning. The top of the archaeological resource in this trench was recorded at a height of c.55m above OD.

Trench 6

30m x 1.6m x 0.35m

Figs 1 & 2; Plate 2

The northern half of this trench, like Trench 5 above, contained a dense cluster of archaeologically significant features. The largest of these features (612), interpreted as the remains of a possible stone-lined pit, had well-defined sides (quite steep on its northern side) rounding gently to form a flat base. The 0.35m thick fill of this feature was a moderately compacted mottled brown silty clay (611) containing sparse quantities of heat affected clay, fragmented Lias (one of which may have been part of a tile or slab) and a sherd of early to middle Bronze Age pottery. Three smaller features (607, 610 & 619), interpreted as pits or large post-holes, contained similar fills to 611, but no finds. A 1.6m wide linear feature (or possibly a double feature) located to the south of pit 612 was not fully excavated due to time constraints, but a brief investigation of one of its fills (615) resulted in the recovery of Romano-British pottery sherds (Severn Valley ware and third century AD native ware fabric types) and a fragment of Pennant sandstone. This feature (616/621),

which was orientated approximately east-west, may have represented a (double) ditch or gully. The top of the archaeology in this trench was recorded between 54.652m and 55.192m above OD.

Trench 7
31m x 1.6m x 0.33m
Fig.1

This trench was filled with a 0.3m thick deposit of building stone or quarry aggregate sealed by topsoil. Flooding of the trench prevented closer inspection of this re-deposited material but it lay directly above the remains of a buried soil horizon interpreted as the ground surface prior to recent tipping activity.

Trench 8
26m x 1.6m x 0.28m
Fig.1

Three deposits of mixed greyish-brown/dark yellowish brown clay were recorded in the base of this trench. Two of these deposits filled curving linear features, 0.6m wide, cut into the top of the yellow clay substrate. Partial excavation of one of these features (805) showed that it was 0.2m deep with steep sides and a flat base. The remaining deposit appeared to fill a larger bowl -shaped feature which, like the two other features, extended beyond the trench. None of the features contained any archaeological inclusions or finds.

Trench 9
26m x 1.6m x 0.27m
Fig.1

The only soil feature recorded in this trench was shown by excavation to be non-archaeological in origin.

Trench 10
24.5m x 1.6m x 0.23m
Fig.1

Several small circular or sub-circular soil features were recorded in the base of this trench. Hand excavation showed, however, that these features were fairly ephemeral in nature and unlikely to be archaeological in origin. A slightly larger patch of mixed greyish-brown/yellowish-brown clay flecked with red clay and charcoal was located at the northwestern end of the trench. This deposit appeared to fill a natural depression in the surface of the natural substrate, rather than an archaeological feature, but it did, significantly, contain a flint flake.

Trench 11
18.6m x 1.6m x 0.25m
Fig.1

Evidence of potential archaeological activity in this trench was confined to a single curvilinear soil feature, which was distinguished from the surrounding natural substrate by its mixed yellowish-brown/grey colour and red clay inclusions. This feature (exposed width 2.4m) extended beyond the trench to the east.

Trench 12
0.24m x 1.6m x 0.24m
Fig.1

This trench was waterlogged for the duration of the evaluation, which prevented detailed examination for archaeological purposes.

Trench 13
19m x 1.6m x 0.32m
Fig.1

See Description for Trench 12

Trench 14
21.5m x 1.6m x 0.23m
Fig.1; Plate 14

A cluster of curvilinear soil features was recorded at the northern end of this trench. One of these (1401), upon excavation, was found to contain an almost rectilinear "wall like" arrangement (3m x 0.3m) of coursed Lias slabs flanked on both sides by angled, broken limestone. It was unclear whether this feature (1402) was structural in character or a geological anomaly, as there were no associated archaeological deposits or finds (apart from a fragment of Pennant sandstone). A smaller sub-circular soil feature (1404), also containing vertically pitched limestone within its fill, was located nearby. A single sherd of unstratified Romano-British pottery (possibly of 2nd century date), a fragment of Pennant sandstone and 2 pieces of worked? limestone were recovered during the cleaning of this trench. The top of the potential archaeology was recorded at a height of 55.32m above OD.

Trench 15
15.3m x 1.6m x 0.33m
Fig.1

A shallow dump of rubble and other modern debris filled the southern end of this trench. An extensive spread of very dark brown clayey silt loam was recorded along the rest of its length. No archaeological features or finds were noted during investigation of either feature. Ground disturbance in this corner of the site appeared to have been caused by a combination of recent tipping activity and traveller occupation.

Trench 16
22.5m x 1.6m x 0.26m
Fig.1

No archaeological features or finds were recorded in this trench, merely remnants of topsoil caught in shallow depressions within the surface of the yellow clay substrate.

Trench 17
26.5m x 1.6m x 0.17m
Fig.1

Various deposits of mixed greyish-brown and yellowish-brown clay were recorded in the surface of the naturally occurring clay recorded in the base of this trench. These were archaeologically sterile in character. The only feature of possible archaeological significance was a shallow linear cut (1.2m wide; 0.16m deep) orientated east west across the southeastern end of the trench. The fill of this feature consisted of a very fine dark grey clay containing fragments of Lias. No finds

were recovered during its partial excavation. The only dating evidence for this trench came in the form of several sherds of post-medieval whiteware recorded on the surface of the natural substrate.

Trench 18
16m x 1.6m x 0.16m
Fig.1

This trench was flooded throughout the evaluation and could not be investigated archaeologically.

Trench 19
22m x 1.6m x 0.5m
Fig.1

The thin layer of topsoil removed from this trench sealed a mixed horizon of naturally occurring brown and yellow clays. The only points of interest were a clay-filled land drain, and the truncated remains of a 0.3m wide linear soil feature with a rounded terminal. This feature was insufficiently exposed and too poorly preserved *in-situ* for its character and origin to be determined.

Trench 20
26m x 1.6m x 0.2m
Fig.1

The stripping of topsoil from this trench exposed naturally occurring yellow clay at a very shallow depth and spreads of what initially appeared to be archaeologically sterile grey clay (2001). Closer investigation of the latter at regular intervals along the trench demonstrated that it filled geological or vegetation features, rather than those of archaeological origin. One possible exception to this was a linear cut (2004) which crossed the width of the trench at its northern end. This feature (c.1m in width; 0.40m deep) had a well-defined U-shaped profile in section but was devoid of archaeological finds. Examination of layer 2001 at the opposite end of the trench revealed that it contained sparse flecks of charcoal, fragmented Pennant sandstone and two sherds of later? Bronze Age pottery.

Trench 21
0.22m x 1.6m x 0.17m
Fig.1

The removal of a very thin covering of topsoil from this trench exposed naturally occurring pale brown clay pitted with sparse, sub-circular deposits of mid-grey clay. These appeared to be archaeologically sterile in character

Trench 22
25m x 1.6m x 0.62m
Figs 1 & 3; Plate 4

The top of this trench was filled with a layer of recently tipped rubble, which petered out towards the southwestern end. This material sealed what, initially, appeared to be a broad (3.5 m wide) linear feature (2205) orientated northwest-southeast across the width of the trench. The upper fill of this feature (2202) consisted of soft greyish-brown clay. The primary fill (2204) was a 0.3m thick deposit of stiff blueish-grey clay. A lens of limestone rubble located between the two fills was given context number 2203. The profile of the feature in section was broadly U-shaped with a flat base and gently sloping sides. Upon excavation, the two fills produced significant quantities of prehistoric and Roman-British pottery, calcined bone, a ceramic spindle weight, a worked limestone tile or slab and cubes of white Lias, which may have been tesserae. Unstratified animal bone was also recovered from this trench during cleaning.

The extension of Trench 22 to the west and east demonstrated that feature 2205 had very irregular edges in plan and more than the two fills originally suspected. This was interpreted as evidence of re-cutting or archaeological use of a previously existing feature, but further excavation to test this theory was prevented by repeated waterlogging of the trench. The archaeology recorded in Trench 22 was preserved at a height of 54.65m above OD.

Trench 23
27.5m x 1.6m x 0.05m
Fig.1

Evidence of possible archaeological activity in this trench was confined to a small, shallow soil feature partially exposed *in-situ* at the northern end of the trench. The fill of this feature, a deposit of mid brown/grey clay, did not contain any archaeological inclusions or finds.

Trench 24
15.40m 1.6m x 0.46m
Figs 1 & 4

The northern half of this trench contained an east-west aligned, linear-cut feature of variable width (2403) and a 0.8m wide soil feature on the same orientation. The fills of both features contained sparse quantities of fragmented Pennant sandstone, but no finds. Feature 2403 appeared to cut an earlier sub-circular feature, possibly a posthole.

Trench 25
28m x 1.6m x 0.17m
Fig. 1

The removal of topsoil from this L-shaped trench exposed naturally occurring yellow clay and extensive spreads of clean brown silty clay. Investigation of one of these soil spreads demonstrated that it was 0.8m deep but devoid of any archaeological inclusions or finds.

Trench 26
20m x 1.6mx 0.31m
Figs 1 & 4

The only feature of potential archaeological significance recorded in this trench was a small, very shallow cut (2603) with a poorly-defined profile in section and a coarse-textured, dark grey humic fill. This feature, which extended beyond the confines of the trench, appeared to be linear in form with a rounded terminal at its eastern end. Coal or lignite, possibly worked, was recovered from this feature during its excavation.

Trench 27
21.5m x 1.6m x 0.23m
Figs 1 & 5; Plate 5

One feature of possible archaeological significance was recorded in this trench: a sub-rectangular cut (2702), 1.2m wide, with rounded corners, which extended beyond the trench to the north. The fill (2701) of this feature comprised a deposit of clean brown clay (max. thickness 0.2m) which did not contain any inclusions or finds. A single fragment of Pennant sandstone was, however, recovered during cleaning of the trench.

Trench 28
25.10m x 1.65m x 0.28m
Figs 1 & 4

Two features of potential archaeological significance were recorded in the base of this trench (c.53.30m above OD): a narrow (0.2m wide) linear feature aligned northwest-southeast (2803), and a broader, deeper cut (2802) which traversed the trench on an east-west orientation. The former was filled with dark greyish-brown silty clay containing sparse quantities of charcoal and red clay nodules. The fill of the latter comprised a 0.23m thick deposit of grey clay, which was devoid of inclusions but produced a piece of iron-working waste during excavation.

Trench 29
24.5m x 1.6m x 0.19m
Figs 1 & 4

A shallow linear feature (2901), orientated north-south, was recorded at the western end of this trench at a height of 56.828m above OD. Initially, due to the patchy nature of its two fills (which did not appear to be that distinguishable from the surrounding natural clay) and its rather shallow, poorly-defined cut, feature 2904 (1.2m x 0.2m) was not considered to be archaeological in origin. This opinion was revised, however, upon the recovery of a fragment of tap slag from one of the fills. No other archaeological features or finds were recorded.

Trench 30
19.5m x 1.6m x 0.26m
Fig. 1

A number of soil features, distinguished by their dark greyish-brown or dark grey silty clay fills, were noted in the base of this trench. One of these, a patchy, truncated linear, orientated northeast-southwest, was not considered archaeological in character on the basis of its irregular appearance in plan, lack of definition in profile and shallow depth. Three small, unexcavated, deposits may conceivably have represented the fills of stake-holes although, on the surface they did not appear to contain any obvious archaeological inclusions. No finds were recovered from this trench.

Trench 31
28m x 1.6m x 0.27m
Fig.1

This trench was waterlogged and therefore not available for detailed archaeological examination.

Trench 32
21m x 1.6m x 0.23m
Fig.1

This trench was waterlogged and not available for detailed archaeological investigation.

Trench 33
15m.20 x 1.6m x 0.33m
Fig. 1

This trench was waterlogged and not available for detailed archaeological examination.

Trench 34
13.5m x 1.6m x 0.3m
Fig.1

A straight, narrow linear soil feature, similar in character and dimensions to those seen in the northern half of land parcel A and Trench 28, was recorded on an approximate northwest-southeast orientation at the southern end of this trench. This was truncated by a broader linear feature aligned east-west. Neither feature contained any archaeological inclusions or finds.

Trench 35
21m x 1.6m x 0.32m
Fig. 1

This trench remained waterlogged for the duration of the evaluation and was therefore not available for archaeological investigation.

Trench 36
13m x 1.6m x 0.28m
Fig.1

The topsoil was separated from the naturally occurring clay in this trench by a 0.1m thick layer of fragmented Lias rubble contained within a loose, loamy soil matrix. This was interpreted as up-cast material from a pond located nearby. No archaeological features or finds were recorded.

Trench 37
39m x 1.6m x 0.29m
Fig.1

This T- shaped trench was excavated to the top of the natural substrate - no archaeological features or finds were recorded.

Trench 38
15m x 1.6m x 0.24m
Fig.1
The removal of topsoil from this trench exposed the surface of the yellow clay substrate - no archaeological features or finds were recorded.

Trench 39
14m x 1.6m x 0.24m
Fig.1.

See description for Trench 38 above

Trench 40
10.5m x 1.6m x 0.28m
Fig.1

No archaeological features or finds were recorded in this trench, which contained clean, naturally occurring yellow clay.

Trench 41
24m x 1.6m x 0.56m
Fig.1

The middle segment of this trench was traversed by a straight, narrow linear feature orientated southwest-northeast, and a clay filled land drain which cut through it at right angles. The fill of the earlier feature consisted of dark greyish-brown silty clay with red clay inclusions.

Trench 42
27m x 1.6m x 0.29m
Fig.1

The only feature of interest observed in this trench was a continuation of the post-medieval land drain recorded in Trench 41. A piece of ironstone was recovered from this trench during its cleaning by hand.

Trench 43
23.5m x 1.6m x 0.22m
Fig.1

The only feature recorded in this trench was a post-medieval land drain orientated southwest-northeast.

Trench 44
22m x 1.6m x 0.29m
Fig.1

This trench remained waterlogged throughout the duration of the evaluation and was not archaeologically investigated.

Trench 45
23.2m x 1.6m x 0.32
Fig.1

Two features of potential archaeological significance were recorded in the middle segment of this trench: a narrow cut orientated northwest-southeast (c.f. Trenches 29 & 41), and a possible posthole with stone packing. The truncated remnants of a buried soil layer flecked with sparse quantities of charcoal and red clay were noted at the western end of the trench. No finds were recovered during excavation of these features or the cleaning of the trench.

Trench 46
29.5m x 1.6m x 0.25m
Figs 1 & 5

Two narrow linear soil features (4607 & 4615), 8m apart on a northwest-southeast alignment, were recorded in the base of this trench. Both were filled with dark greyish-brown aceramic silty clay (4606 & 4615) flecked with red clay nodules. The southernmost cut had a sharper profile in section, and was slightly wider than its counterpart. The only other feature of potential archaeological significance was 4610, a small, shallow charcoal-flecked deposit of very dark grey silty clay sealed by a layer of clean orange-brown subsoil. It was insufficiently exposed within the trench to be characterised properly. Neither did it produce any archaeological finds.

Trench 47
26.2m x 1.6m x 0.26m
Figs 1 & 6; Plate 6

A suspected continuation of linear feature 4615 was recorded and excavated at the southwestern end of this trench (4703). A second linear feature (4704), orientated southwest-northeast was also recorded. This was filled with mixed, re-deposited natural clay, limestone fragments, charcoal and red clay (4702 & 4704). It was interpreted as a land drain.

Trench 48
14.5m x 1.6m x 0.2m
Fig.1

No features, deposits or finds of archaeological significance were recorded in this trench.

Trench 49
23m x 1.6m x 0.36m
Fig.1

A narrow, straight linear feature, comparable in character to those seen in Trenches 41 and 45-47, crossed the north-eastern end of this trench (in fact, its location suggested that it might have been a continuation of the feature recorded in Trenches 46 and 47). A similar feature also ran along the southeastern side of the trench. Two small, very shallow sub-circular features, filled with fine grey clay were also recorded, but, in the absence of finds or archaeological inclusions, it was unclear whether they were man-made or natural in origin.

Trench 50
23m x 1.6m x 0.34m
Fig.1

Several soil features were noted in the base of this trench. Given the lack of archaeological inclusions and finds, however, and the disturbed nature of the ground in this part of the site, only one of these features, a truncated narrow linear comparable to those seen elsewhere in this field, was considered to be of potential archaeological significance.

Trench 51
28m x 1.6m x 0.33m
Fig.1

A narrow linear soil feature similar to those seen elsewhere in this part of the site was recorded in this trench. It was 0.25m -0.35 wide, 0.12m deep and filled with dark greyish brown silty clay containing red clay inclusions. No archaeological finds were recovered from its fill during excavation. Other soil spreads containing similar material were also observed in the base of the trench but these did not appear to fill archaeological features. A sherd of unstratified late post-medieval redware pottery and a flint fragment were retrieved from this trench during its excavation.

Trench 52
19.5m x 1.6m x 0.28m
Fig.1; Plate 7

The only feature of interest recorded in this trench was a straight, narrow linear feature (5203), interpreted as an east-west orientated land drain. Investigative excavation demonstrated that it was 0.45m wide, 0.5m deep, steep sided, and filled with a mixture of re-deposited natural clay at the

top (5202) and dark brown, red clay flecked silt (5204) at the base. No finds were recovered from either of the two fills.

Trench 53
26.5m x 1.6m x 0.3m
Fig.6; Plate 8

This trench contained two features of potential archaeological significance. The first to be excavated was a narrow linear cut (5304) filled with dark greyish-brown silty clay flecked with red clay and charcoal inclusions. This feature, which traversed the trench on an east-west orientation was comparable in character to those recorded in Trenches 41, 45-7, 49 and 51. The second feature (5303) located at the northwestern end of the trench was defined by a shallow, sub-rectangular cut (0.95m wide; 0.10m deep) into clay and limestone. The upper fill of this feature (recorded at a height of 56.886m above OD) consisted of a mixture of grey and re-deposited yellow clay flecked with charcoal (5301). The lower fill (5302), which was sampled for possible future analysis, was even more mixed, containing fragments of pennant sandstone, heat affected red clay and organic material.. The function and date of this feature were not determined, but it may possibly have represented the remains of a hearth. Neither feature produced any finds during excavation

Trench 54
27.5m x 1.6m x 0.24m
Figs 1 & 6; Plate 9

This trench was located just below the level of the embankment carrying Bradley Stoke Way. The removal of the topsoil layer exposed a horizon of clean, archaeologically sterile orange-brown and yellow clay. Two features of potential archaeological significance were located at this level (51.252m - 51.352m above OD): an irregular rubble spread contained within an aceramic dark brown silty soil matrix (5401), and a possible post-hole (5403). The latter, a small, shallow sub-circular feature 0.38m wide and 0.2m deep was characterised by a well-defined cut containing two fills: a deposit of dark brown silty clay (5402) overlying re-deposited natural material (5404). There was evidence for possible post packing in the form of vertically pitched slabs lining the edge of the cut. Three sherds of pottery dated this feature (5403) to the early to middle Bronze Age.

Trench 55
14.5m x 1.6m x 0.33m
Fig.1

No archaeological features, deposits or finds were recorded in this trench. Removal of the topsoil exposed naturally occurring yellow clay and pockets of topsoil filling surface depressions in the natural substrate.

Trench 56
17m x 1.6m x 0.21m
Fig.1

A line of four small, sub-circular soil features, possibly representing the fills of a row of truncated post-holes, was recorded along the length of this trench. No archaeological finds were recovered from these very shallow deposits during excavation.

Trench 57
20m x 1.6m x 0.33m
Fig.1

A single feature, similar in character to those recorded in Trench 56, was recorded in this trench. It did not contain any archaeological finds.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The evaluation demonstrated that archaeological remains of prehistoric and Roman-British date are still preserved *in-situ*, albeit in a truncated form, within the proposed development area. The character of the archaeology and the presence of early to middle Bronze Age pottery and fragmented Pennant sandstone in some of the features was consistent with the settlement activity recorded on the site of the nearby Tesco superstore and District Centre. The Roman-British material dated mainly from the third century AD

6.2 Surprisingly, perhaps, the archaeological activity recorded to the north of the Savages Wood roundabout did not extend into the northern part of the proposed development area. Three foci of archaeological activity were, however, identified within the application site. (**Fig1**). A dense concentration of small pits, post-holes and linear features was recorded in Trenches 5 & 6 (towards the southern end of land parcel A). These produced a small, but significant quantity of prehistoric and Romano-British pottery. A substantial feature, possibly a rubbish pit, which was filled with large quantities of pre-medieval pottery was partially excavated in Trench 22 (at the southern end of land parcel B). Several features, which produced waste material derived from Iron Age or later metalworking activity, were located in Trenches 26, 28 & 29 (at the northern end of land parcel B). A Bronze Age posthole was also recorded in Trench 54, close to Bradley Stoke Way.

6.3 A rectilinear pattern of narrow, soil-filled linear features, orientated northwest-southeast, was recorded at the northern end of land parcels A & B. These features did not produce any dating evidence but this does not preclude the possibility that they were the remains of a field, or drainage system contemporaneous with the archaeology recorded elsewhere on the site.

6.4 A number of clay-filled post-medieval land drains were also recorded during the evaluation.

6.5 Other negative features were recorded across the site, but given their truncated character and the absence of any inclusions and finds, it was difficult to determine whether these were archaeological in character or caused by other factors (vegetation disturbance, geological anomalies, traveller occupation or other recent ground disturbance).

7. CONTRACTOR'S ADVICE

7.1 The evaluation carried out adjacent to Bradley Stoke Way recorded evidence of Bronze Age and Romano-British activity at a relatively shallow depth (c. 0.15m - 0.4m below present ground level). The archaeological remains preserved *in-situ* within the proposed development area were comparable in character and date to those excavated on adjacent sites.

7.2 Given the disturbed nature of the ground across much of the site and the fact that it has clearly been heavily eroded over time, the archaeological evidence is not of sufficient quality or national importance to justify physical preservation *in-situ*. However, the remains are of regional importance, both because of the rarity of such later prehistoric occupation in South Gloucestershire and because of the quality of the evidence recorded on the adjacent Tesco superstore site.

7.3 Accordingly, if the programme of proposed development proceeds and is likely to disturb the archaeological remains recorded on the site, then the Archaeological Officer for South Gloucestershire is likely to recommend a further programme of work in order to ensure their preservation by record. This is most likely to take the form of topsoil stripping and archaeological recording under controlled conditions in the those parts of the site referred to in paragraph 6.2 (i.e., in those areas sampled by Trenches 5, 6, 22, 26, 28, 29 and 54). This should be carried out in advance of any groundworking activity related to the development, so that the extent, layout and character of archaeologically significant remains can be recorded without hindrance.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Parry AHH 1995 — *Avon SMR 10548: Archaeological Evaluation off Savages Wood Road, Bradley Stoke, Avon*
Avon Archaeological Unit 1995

APPENDIX 1: Policy Statement

This report is the result of work carried out in the light of national and local authority policies.

NATIONAL POLICIES

Statutory protection for archaeology is enshrined in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979), amended by the National Heritage Act, 1983. Nationally important sites are listed in the Schedule of Ancient Monuments (SAM). Scheduled Monument consent is required for any work which would affect a SAM.

DOE PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE

The Planning Policy Guidance of Archaeology and Planning (PPG 16) consolidates advice to planning authorities. The Guidance stresses the non-renewable nature of the archaeological resource, details the role of the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), encourages early consultation with county and district archaeological officers and sets out the requirement for developers to provide sufficient information on the archaeological impact of development to enable a reasonable planning decision to be made.

PPG 16 also indicates the circumstances where further work would be necessary and outlines the use of agreements and conditions to protect the archaeological resource.

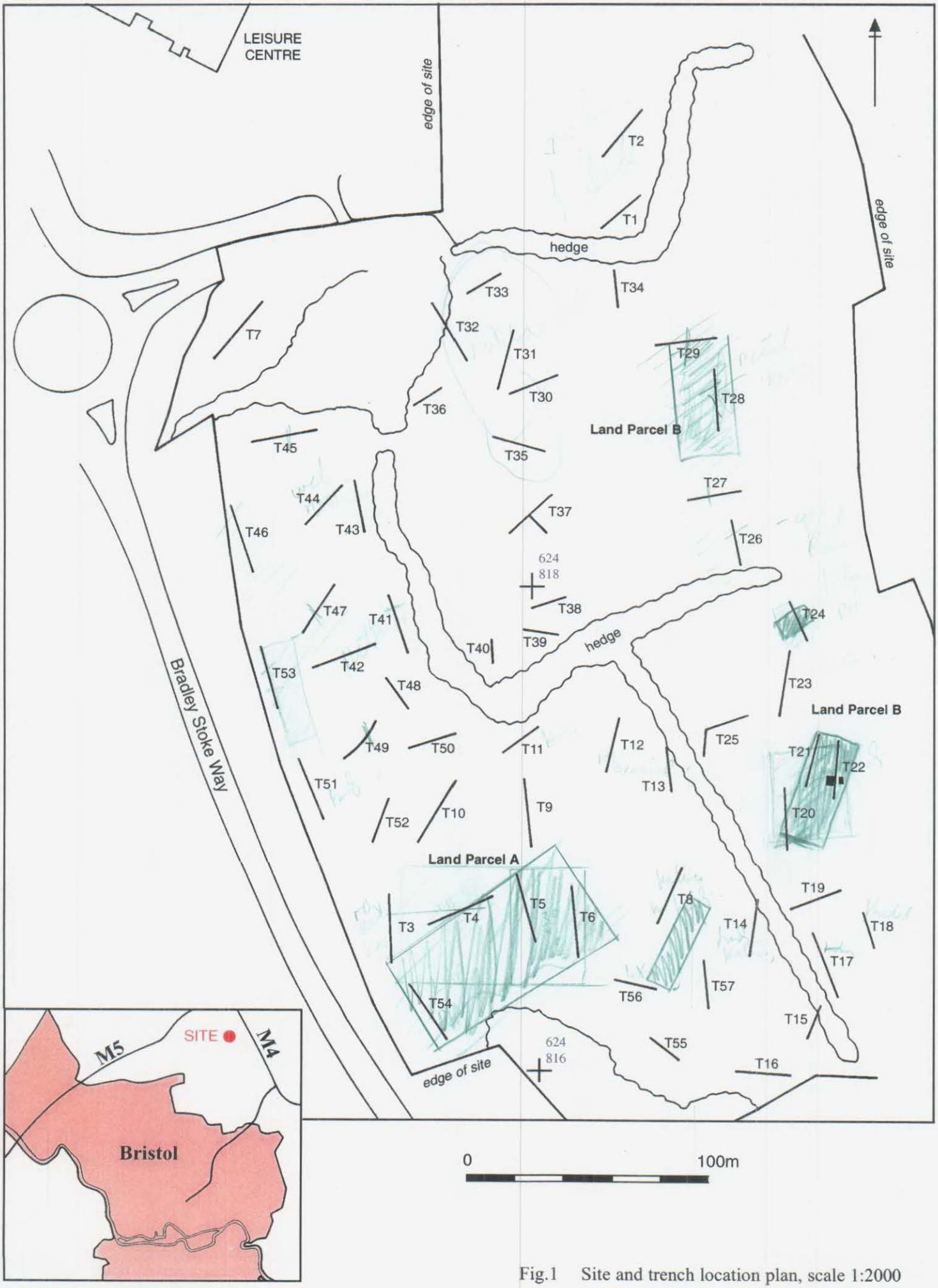


Fig.1 Site and trench location plan, scale 1:2000

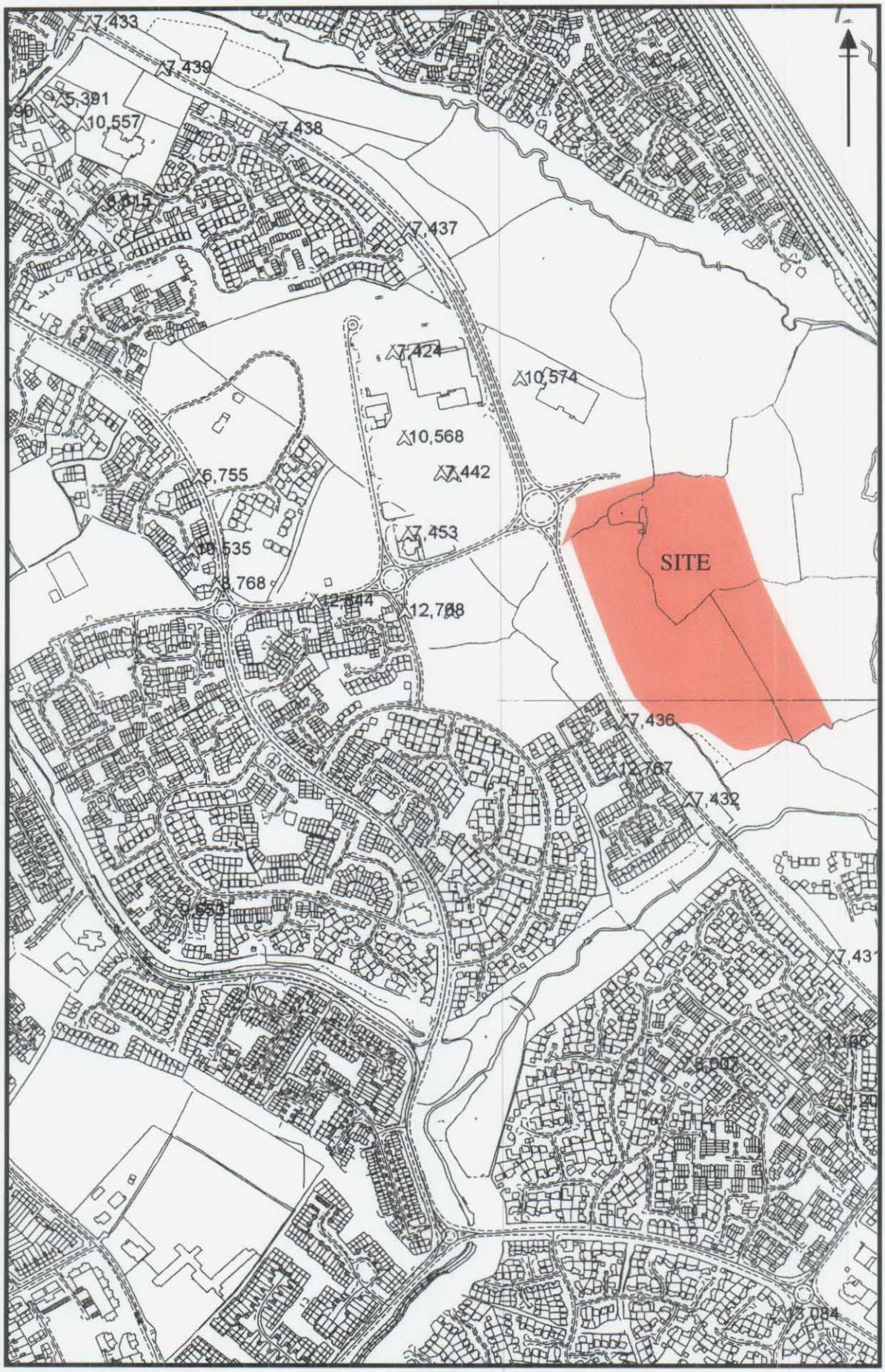
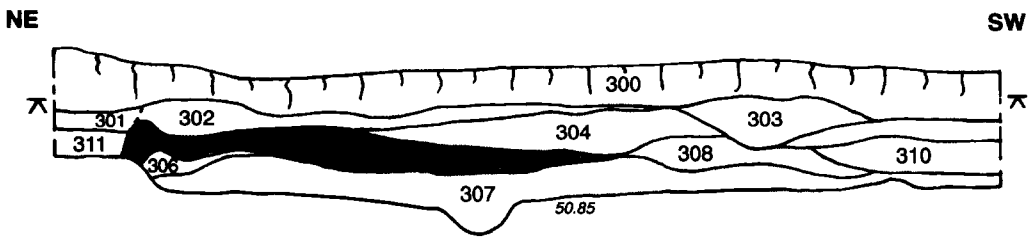


Fig.2 Plan showing SMR sites adjacent to the evaluation site

Section detail



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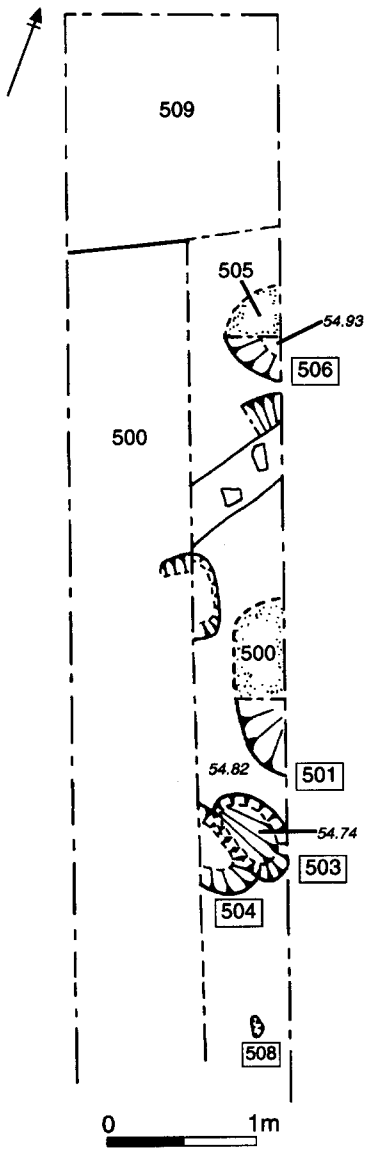

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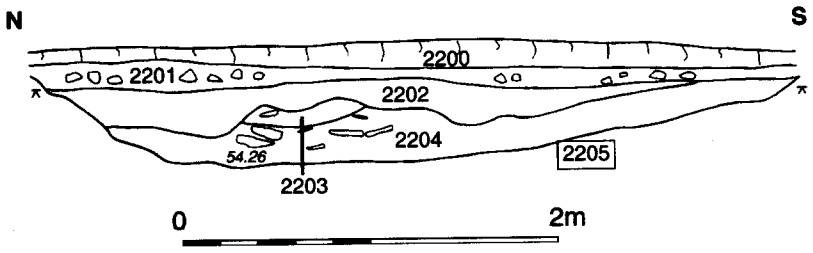

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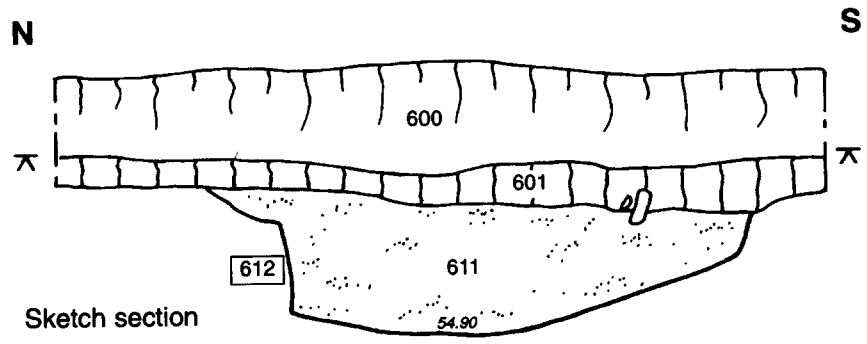

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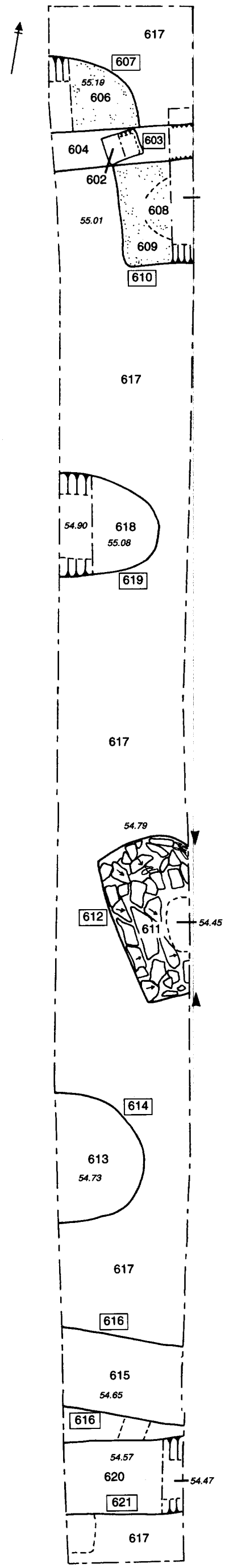
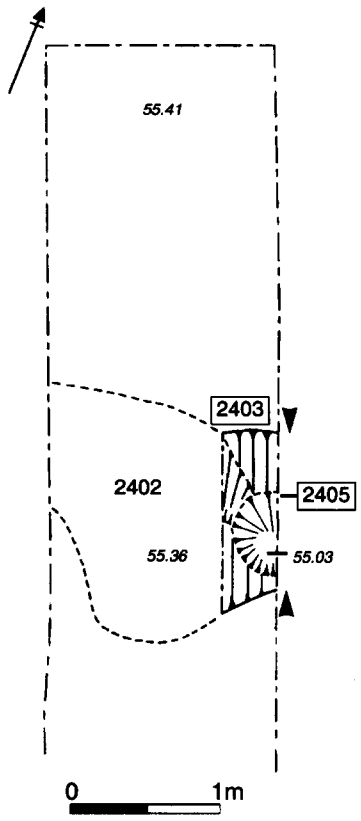
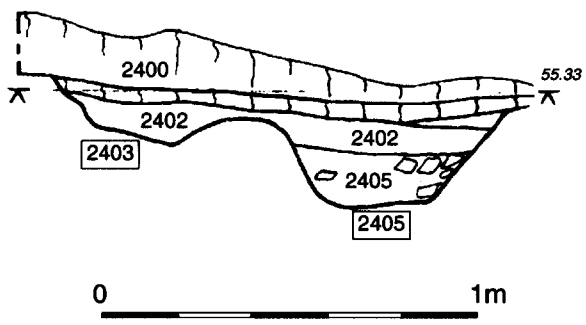


TRENCH 6

Fig.3 Trenches 3, 5, 6, 22





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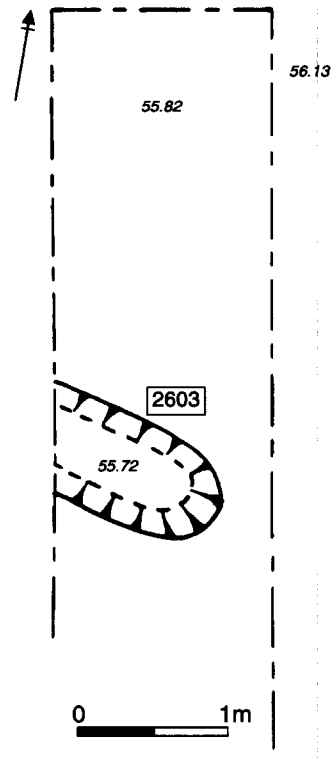

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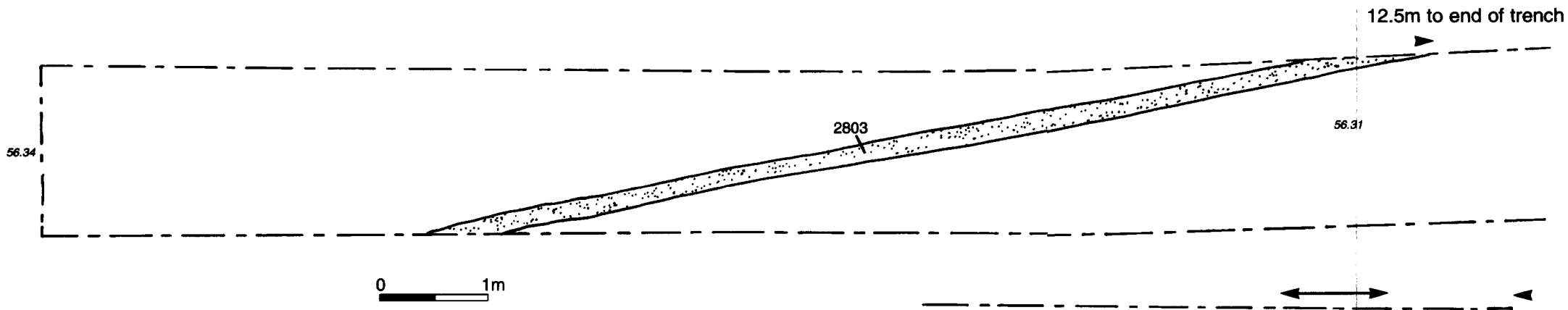

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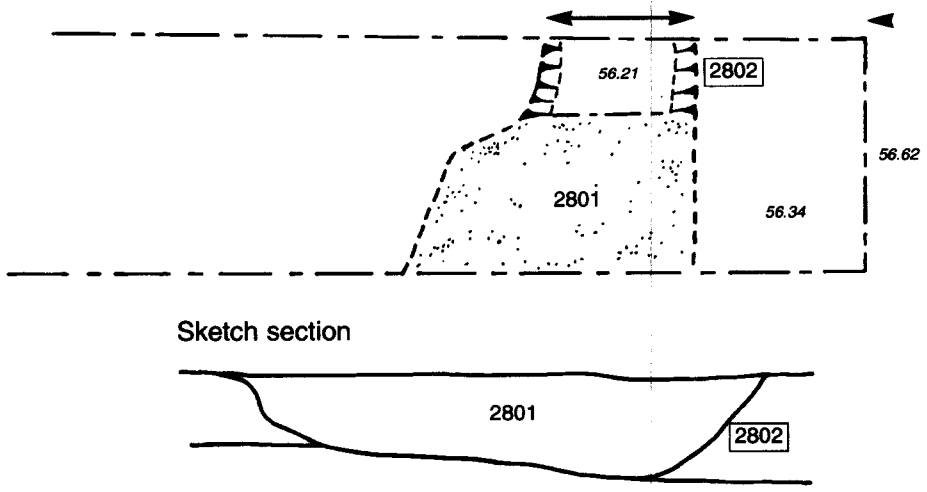

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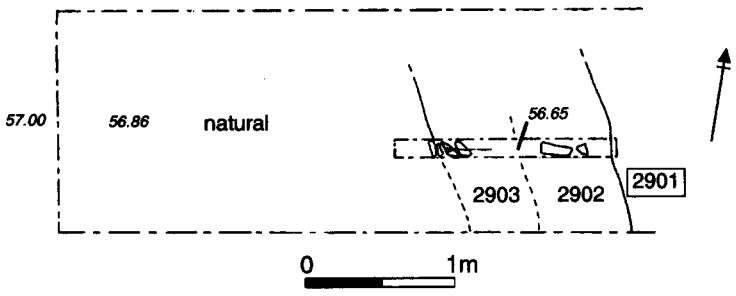
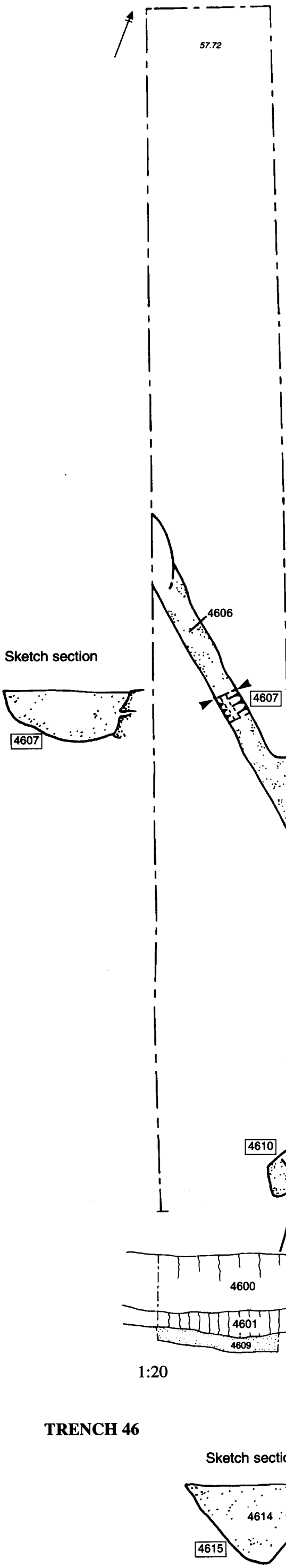


TRENCH 29

Fig.4 Trenches 24, 26, 28, 29



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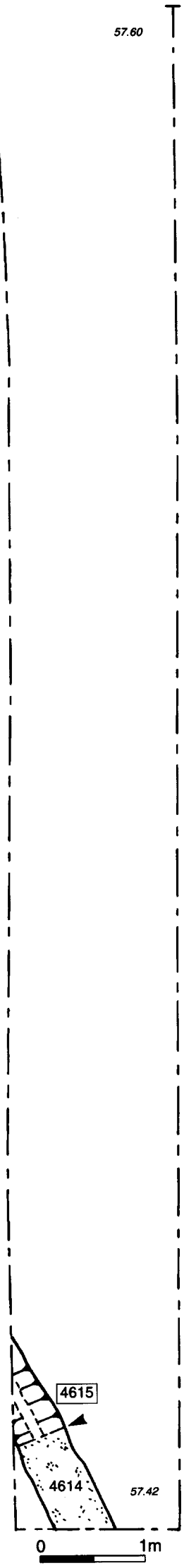

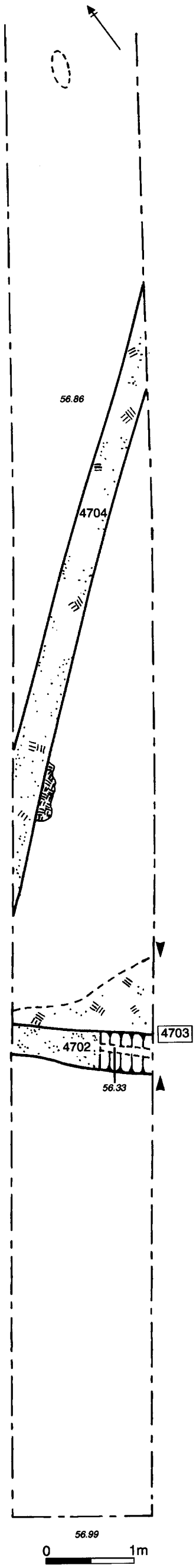

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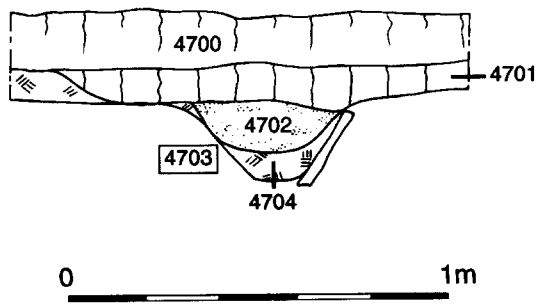
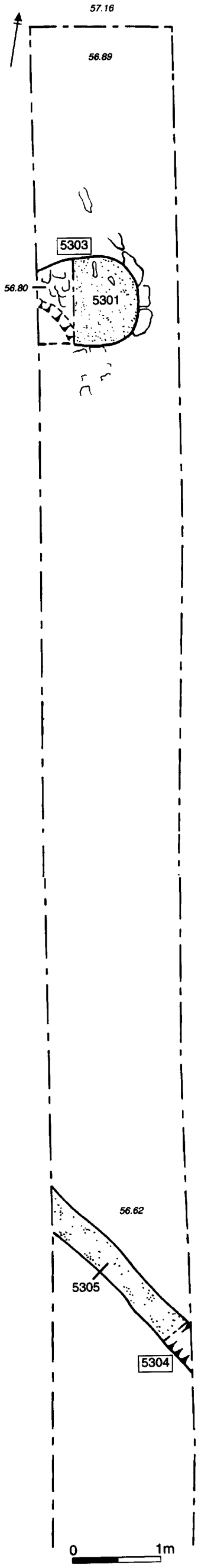


Fig.5 Trenches 46, 47



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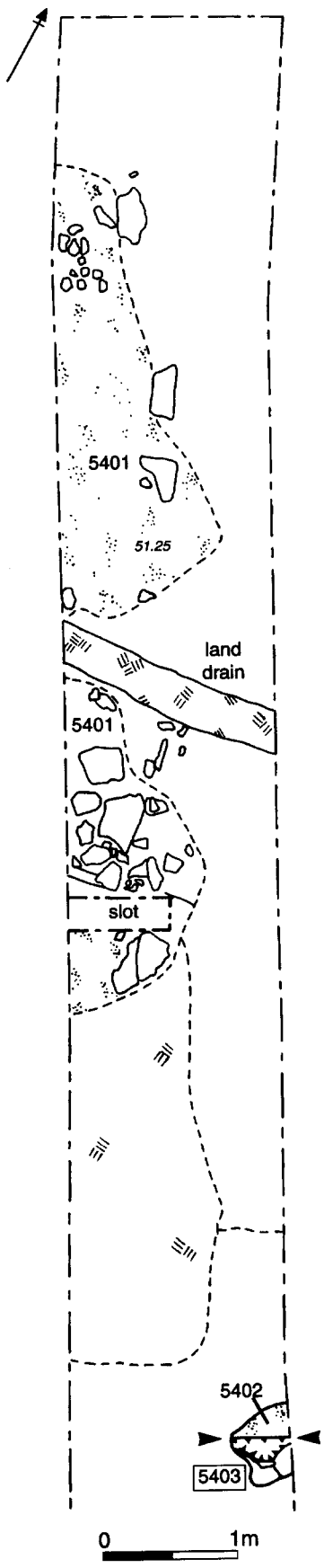

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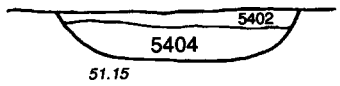

TRENCH 54

Fig.6 Trenches 53, 54

Plate 1 Trench 5 - features 503 & 504, looking north

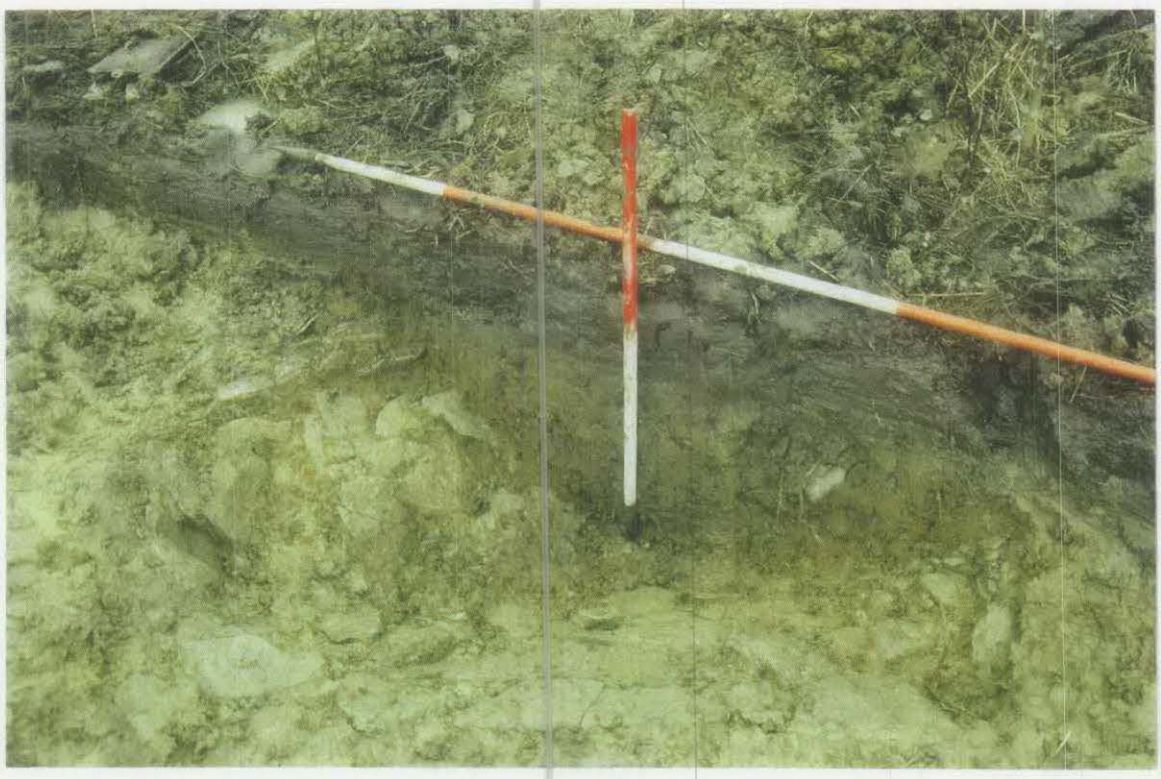

Plate 2 Trench 6 - feature 612, looking east

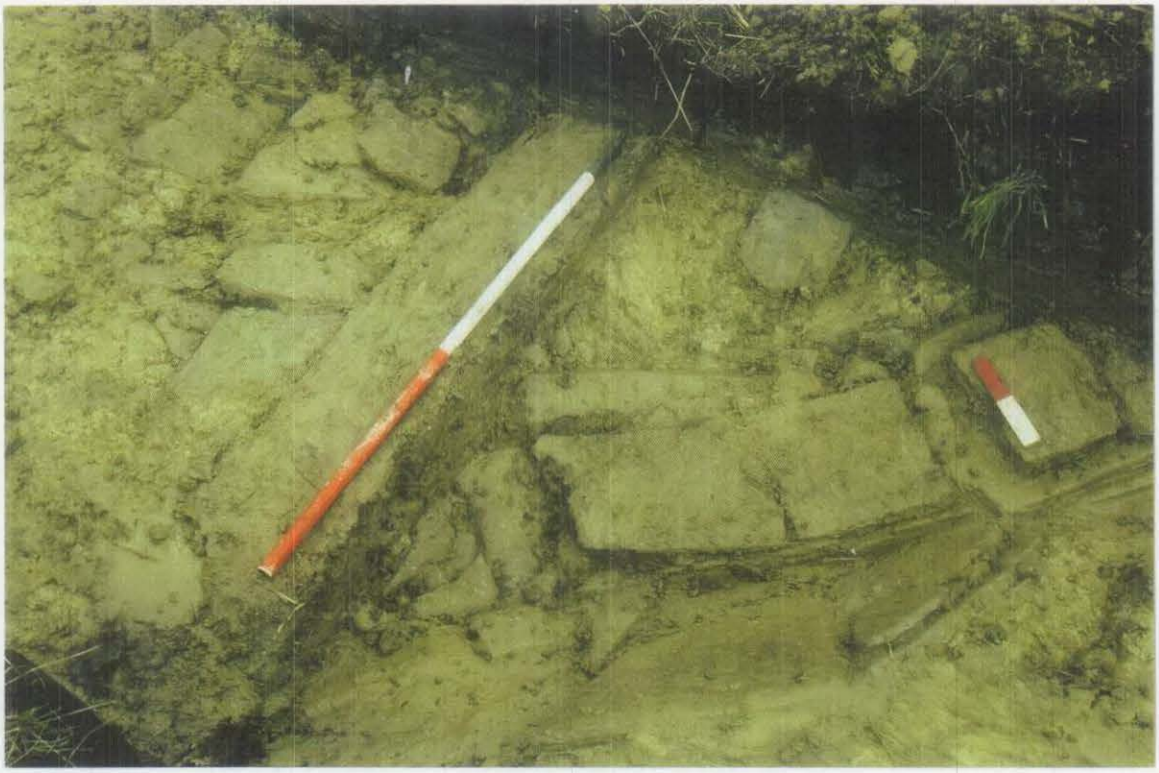

Plate 3 Trench 14- feature 1402, looking south-east

Plate 4 Trench 22 - feature 2205, looking south-west

Plate 5 Trench 27- feature 2702, looking north-west

Plate 6 Trench 47 - feature 4703, looking north-west

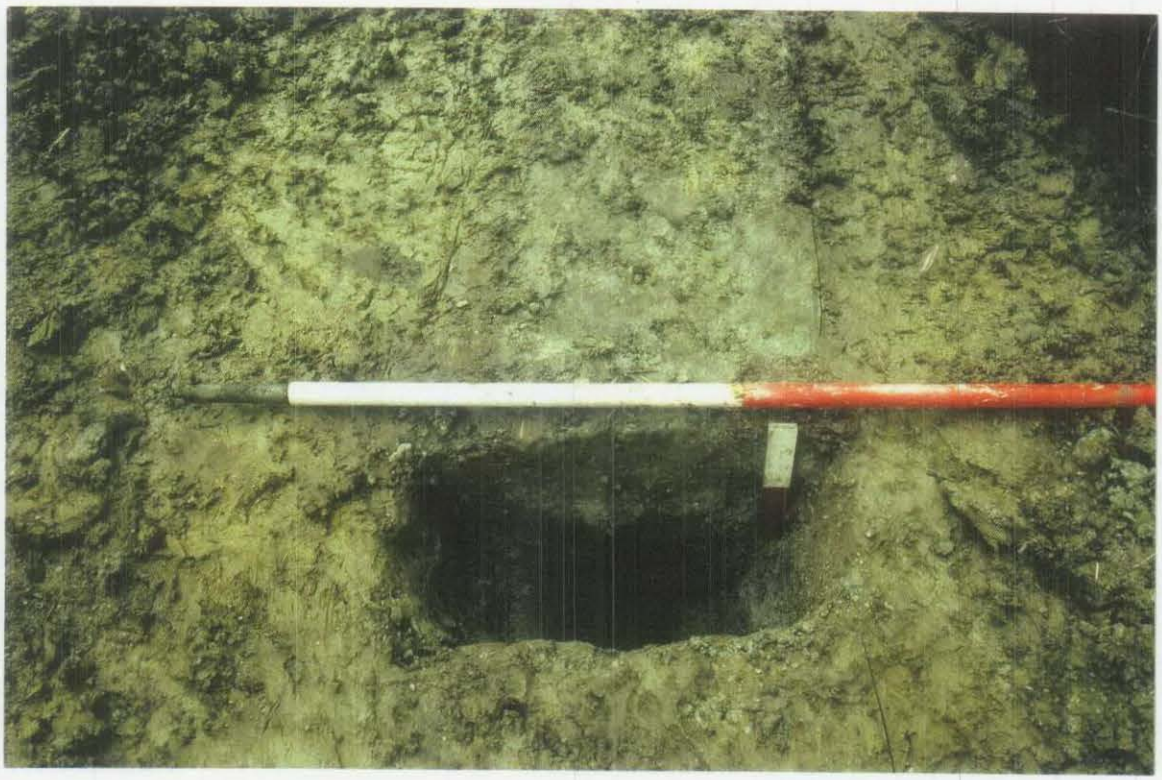

Plate 7 Trench 52 - land drain

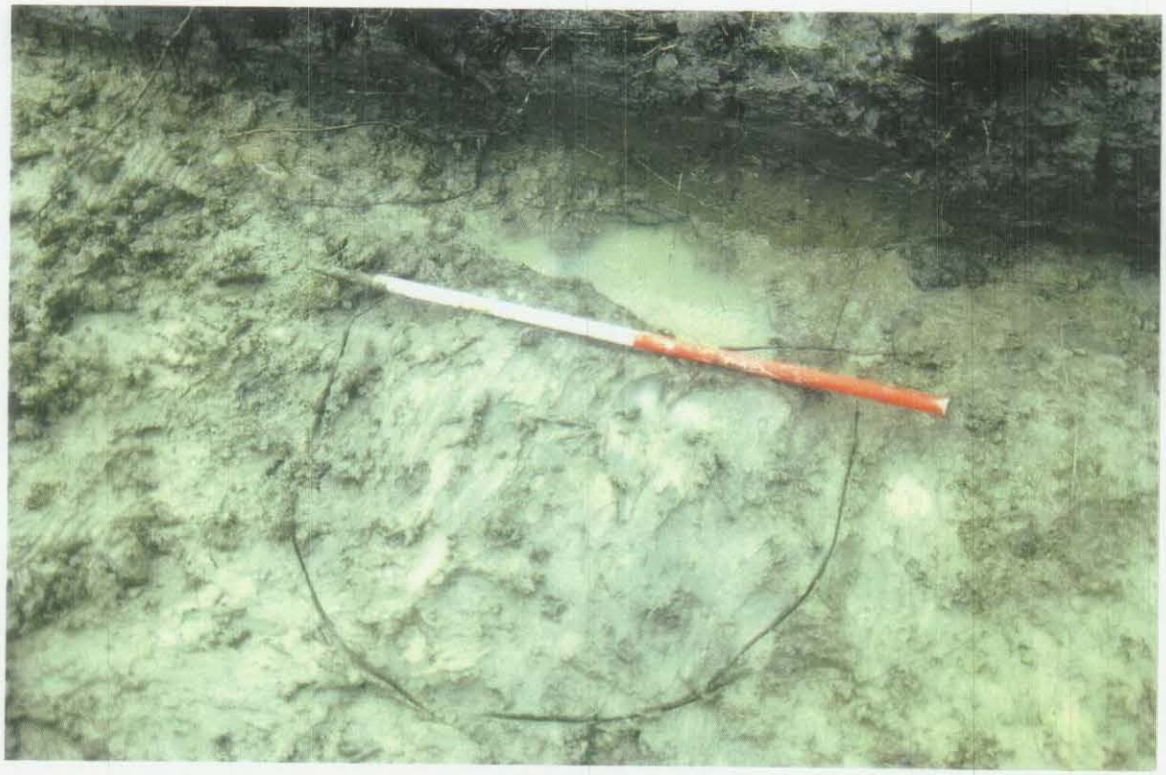

Plate 8 Trench 53 - feature 5304, looking west

Plate 9 Trench 54 - feature 5403, looking north-west