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HEADLAND

ARCHAEOLOGY Ltd

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**Wooperton gravel quarry
Phase 1
Assessment report**

Client: Northern Aggregates Ltd

Magnar Dalland

May 1997

Headland Archaeology Ltd

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Wooperton gravel quarry

Phase 1

Assessment report

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Summary

Northern Aggregates Ltd have begun developing a new quarry to the east of Wooperton, Northumberland. The site has been identified as of potential archaeological interest by Northumberland County Council and all ground disturbance required archaeological monitoring. During the topsoil strip for Phase 1 of the quarry development, archaeological features were identified; a line of 25 pits and two ditches near the middle of the stripped area and further two ditches and two pits some 100 m to the northeast. All features were excavated. Some of the pits in the pit alignment contained Roman and Iron Age pottery. Environmental samples were taken from selected contexts.

1. Introduction

1.1 Site location and topography

The site is located 350 m to the east of the village of Wooperton at NGR NU 049 204. The development comprises two fields which cover 26.5 ha and are bounded to the southwest by A697 and to the southeast by B6346 and a minor road. There is considerable topographical relief within the site. A comparatively flat and broad ridge runs down the centre of each field aligned northwest to southeast. The ground slopes steeply down towards the A697 to the southwest, dropping 14 m over a distance of 100 m. Phase 1 is located at the east edge of the site and was up to recently under pasture. The geology of the area comprises a deep sequence of glaciofluvial sediments of gravels and sand down to fine sand and silt.

1.2 Area investigated (Fig. 1)

Phase 1 of the extraction programme involved the construction of a haul road, 15 by 250 m to the southwest leading up to the extracting area which is 30 m wide and some 310 m long. In total the area stripped for topsoil is 560 m long and 15 to 35 m wide covering some 1.4 ha.

1.3 Previous archaeological work

The supposed line of a Roman Road, the *Devil's Causeway* runs across the middle of the extracting area. The line is well established to the north and the south of Wooperton but it has never been recorded close to the quarry site.

A series of cropmarks has been seen in the southwest parts of the area of the development, some of which were believed to be caused by human activity in the past. In particular a possible ring ditch in the southern corner of the area was believed to be of considerable interest.

On the basis of these cropmarks the site was the subject of evaluations by Oxford Archaeological Associates (1994) and West Yorkshire Archaeological Services WYAS (1996). The OAA evaluation consisted of geophysical survey and test pitting while the WYAS investigation consisted of trial trenching designed to investigate features identified in the southeast corner by OAA. With the exception of a ditch identified in both evaluations and a hearth identified in the 1994 investigation no archaeological

features were identified in the trenching and most of the cropmarks seen previously were therefore attributed to geological processes, mainly ice wedges.

The cropmark photographs and the previous geophysical survey of the site did not indicate that there would be any archaeological features in the area affected by Phase 1 of the development. However, during the watching brief carried out by Headland Archaeology as the topsoil was stripped, a number of linear features and a line of pits were identified. These features were subsequently excavated by Headland Archaeology.

2. Method

The work was carried out according to the specifications set out in the project design of 15/04/97 approved by Northumberland County Council Archaeology Section.

The topsoil was removed by a 360° tracked excavator with a six-foot toothless bucket. The topsoil stripping was overseen by archaeologists from Headland Archaeology Ltd. During this watching brief several archaeological features were noted. At the start of the excavation, the areas where features had been noted were cleaned by hand and all features were planned at 1:50. All pits were then half sectioned and the sections drawn at 1:10 and described. Colour transparencies and black and white negative photographs were taken of all sections. The pits were all fully excavated while 10% of all linear features were excavated. Samples for ecofactual/environmental remains were taken from contexts which were likely to contain such remains.

3. Excavated features

The features were concentrated in two areas:

- A) The south area which contained two ditches and a pit alignment and
- B) The north area which contained two parallel ditches and two pits

3.1 The south area (Fig. 2)

The south area covered some 890 m² which was cleaned by hand. The main feature was a pit alignment of 25 pits fairly evenly spaced out on an east-west alignment over a distance of some 50 m. The pit alignment spanned the entire area stripped of topsoil and is likely to continue in under the unexcavated area to the east and west. A further three pits lay within 1 m of the alignment (F24, F56 and F80) and may be regarded as part of the same structure. The pits were generally oval in shape orientated along the axis of the alignment and on average measured 1.3 by 0.9 m and 0.3 m deep. The pits at either end had gravelly fills with hardly any inclusions, while some of the pits in the middle contained some charcoal and occasional potsherds. (42)? which pits?

At right angles, and to the south of the pit alignment, was a ditch F20. It had a V-shaped cross section and was up to 1.6 m wide, 0.5 m deep and 19.5 m long. The ditch terminated to the north at the south side of pit F18 of the pit alignment, and to the

south at a second ditch F88 aligned east to west at right angles to F20 and parallel with the pit alignment.

The ditch F88 was exposed within the stripped area over a distance of 14 m. It peters out at the west end and continues in under the edge of the stripped area to the east. The ditch has a V-shaped section, is up to 1.4 m wide and 0.4 m deep.

In addition to the ditches and the pit alignment a further six pits were recorded in the area. These pits varied in size from 1.1 to 0.4 m in diameter and 0.6 to 0.08 m in depth. Two of the pits, F82 and F86, may be interpreted as post-holes being narrow and deep. All six pits had gravelly fills with few inclusions, except for the smallest pit F58 which contained several sherds of a decorated pottery vessel.

3.2 Stratigraphy

Although there was a slight overlap between the ditch F20 and pit F18 of the pit alignment, the fills of the two features were so similar that it was not possible to determine the stratigraphical relationship between the features, although it seemed more likely that the ditch cut into the pit. The stratigraphic relation between F20 and the pit F56 was very clear, as the pit, with its darker fill F55, was discovered at the base of ditch F20 after the removal of the ditch fill F19. Pit F56 clearly predates the ditch. The fill F55 contained sherds of thick walled potsherds similar to a sherd found in pit F18 which supports the assumption that the ditch F20 postdates the pit-alignment.

Ditch F20 did not cut fully into ditch F88 as there was a low threshold between the two ditches. Although there was an overlap between ditches F20 and F88, the fills were very similar, and it was not possible to see any stratigraphical relationship between the two.

Although there is some evidence that suggests that the pit alignment predates the ditch F20, the configuration of the two ditches and the pit alignment strongly suggests that they are contemporary and part of the same structure.

← No decision.

hardly

3.3 The north area (Fig. 3)

The main features in the north area were two parallel ditches aligned towards north-north-west, lying 20 m apart. The ditch to the west F48 had a V-shaped section and was generally 0.7 m wide and up to 0.5 m deep. Over a distance of 5 m the ditch widened out to a width of 1.1 m which appeared to be a larger pit cut by the ditch. However, having cut sections to investigate this there was no indication of a separate feature, and the wider part appears just to be a variation in the cut of the ditch. The ditch continues into the unexcavated area to the north. To the south end the ditch ran down the slope into a hollow with deep topsoil sediments. It was therefore not possible to trace the line of the ditch as it did not show up except against the subsoil, and it was not possible to trace the ditch up to the southeast edge of the stripped area.

The ditch to the east, F45, spanned the entire width of the stripped area. It had a V-shaped profile and was from 0.5 to 0.75 m wide and up to 0.5 m deep. The nature of

F47?

this ditch was different from ditch F47. It was narrower overall and not as straight as its counterpart to the west.

The other two features in this area were a large pit F49, 3.2 by 2.7 m and 0.8 m deep, possibly a small quarry pit, and a small pit F54, 0.8 m in diameter and 0.2 m deep packed with fire cracked stones. *post hole?*

The two ditches lie on the same alignment as and only 15 and 35 m to the east of the projected line of the *Devil's Causeway* (Fig. 1). It seems therefore reasonable to assume that the ditches mark the position of the road. However, the ditches are 20 m apart which is twice the width of the paved causeway seen further south, at the excavations ~~to the south~~ of the only known fort on the road at Learchild.

3.4 Results

With regard to the project design of 15/04/97, the following results were achieved:

The relationship between ditch F20 and pit F18 of the pit alignment was established, although it seems highly probable that the two ditches F20 and F88 are contemporary with the pit alignment. The two ditches produced no dating material, but based on the pottery found in several pits of the pit alignment, it was possible to date that structure. Two sherds that fit together from the same vessel were found, one in pit F14 and the other in pit F18, demonstrating that these pit fills were contemporary. *Only 16 + 18 shs!*

*was it? No.
see 3.2*
*Was there
not
enough
charcoal
to date?*

It is most likely that the two ditches in the north area mark the position of the *Devil's Causeway*, it is less clear if the two ditches are part of the original Roman construction of the road. Unfortunately the excavated parts of the two ditches did not produce any dating material. The large pit F49 to the west of ditch F48 might be a quarry pit used for the construction of the road.

47?

The relation between the features seen in the two areas investigated is difficult to assess without any dating evidence from the ditches to the north. However, it is worth noting that the distance between the two parallel ditches F45 and F48 is 20 m which is the same as the distance between the pit alignment and its parallel ditch F88, and that the orientation of the pit alignment is close to right angles to the two parallel ditches 100 m to the northeast which may indicate that these features are parts of the same major boundary system.

47?

4. Artefact record

During the excavation 60 potsherds were recovered from nine different contexts all fills of pits on the south area. Seven sherds were found while cleaning the surface and could not be attributed to any feature. In addition to these, two lumps of flint, one lump of mortar and an iron nail were recovered from the fills of pits in the pit alignment. The potsherds were submitted to a specialist for preliminary examination. Two periods are represented, the early Bronze Age and Roman. There is a single early Bronze Age feature, Pit F58, containing a Beaker base (SFs 25 and 27), the remaining

potsherds, with a 1st to 3rd century date range, were retrieved from seven pits in the pit alignment next to the north terminal of Ditch F20.

The collection of Roman pottery from this site is unusual. Some has military associations and some seems related to the indigenous tradition. There seems little doubt that the collection has a ritual significance given the morphology of the site, its Roman date and its very curious assemblage. The composition of this group is not what one might expect to find on a 'normal' rural site.

5. Environmental record

Bulk samples were collected from thirteen deposits considered to have a high potential for the preservation of carbonised plant remains. These samples were floated and washed and assessed by Dr. T G Holden (see Appendix 3).

Floation of the soil samples produced low concentration of carbonised seeds and cereal grains. Of the thirteen sampled deposits, twelve contained sufficient charcoal for a radiocarbon date.

So there is enough? This would be more secure dating?

6. Storage and Curation

The written, drawn and photographic records are currently held by Headland Archaeology, as are the finds and environmental material. Where appropriate these materials are stored in controlled environments. It is anticipated that the site archive including finds will be deposited at Museum of Antiquities, University (and Society of Antiquaries) of Newcastle upon Tyne following the completion of post-excavation analysis.

7. Statement of Potential

7.1 The excavated features

The major features investigated, a pit alignment of Roman date possibly connected to a Roman road, is of high significance and worthy of publication in an appropriate regional or specialist journal.

There has been no comparison with other pit alignments - there are many in the Borders, see MacInnes.

7.2 Potential for Artefactual Analysis

The collection is clearly of national significance and should be published in full. The site is rare if not unique in producing what appears to be a ritual focus in an apparently Roman period pit alignment.

See above.

7.3 Potential for Environmental Analysis

Floation of the soil samples produced low concentration of carbonised seeds and cereal grains. These would not provide a basis for meaningful analysis of the assemblage. No further action is therefore recommended.

7.4 Dating

Dating material was obtained from 12 different contexts. However, eight of these are from pits in the pit alignment, which is likely to be dated more precisely by the roman pot sherds found in the pit fills. The other dateable features are three isolated pits, F54, F58, F84, and the ditch F20 which, based on its layout, is likely to be roughly contemporary with the pit alignment. It is therefore not likely that radiocarbon dates of any of these contexts will provide a significant contribution to the understanding and interpretation of the site. No further action is recommended.

Bibliography

Wright, R P 1938 'The South-western section of the Devil's Causeway', *Archaeologia Aeliana 4th Series*, 15, 351-361

Wright, R P 1940 'The Devils's Causeway from Rimside Moor (Longframlington) to Bridge of Aln', *Archaeologia Aeliana 4th Series*, 17, 65-74

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Illustrations

Figure 1 Location plan

Figure 2 Plan of excavated features. South Area

Figure 3 Plan of excavated features. North Area

Appendix I

Archive listings

Description	No
Drawing record	1 sheet
Drawings	10 sheets
Post-excavation plans	2 large sheets
Location map	1 sheet
South area plan	1 sheet
North area plan	1 sheet
Context sheets	88 sheets
Photographic record	2 sheets
Mono print films	3 films
Colour slides	74 slides

Appendix II

Context Summary

Context	Type	Colour	Texture	Inclusions	Comments
F1	Deposit	Orange brown	Sandy loam and gravel	Occasional charcoal flecks	Upper fill of pit F2
F2	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Pit F2; 1 m diameter, 0.9 m deep
F3	Deposit	Orange brown	Sandy loam and gravel	None	Fill of pit F4
F4	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Pit F4; 1.1 by 0.9 m, 0.35 m deep
F5	Deposit	Orange brown	Sandy loam and gravel	None	Fill of pit F6
F6	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Pit F6; 1.3 by 0.75 m, 0.2 m deep
F7	Deposit	Orange brown	Sandy loam	Some medium to large stones	Fill of pit F8
F8	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Pit F8; 2.1 by 1 m, 0.3 m deep
F9	Deposit	Orange brown	Sandy loam and gravel	Occasional charcoal flecks	Fill of pit F10
F10	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Pit F10; 1.3 by 1 m, 0.4 m deep
F11	Deposit	Orange brown	Sandy loam and gravel	Pot sherds, charcoal flecks	Fill of pit F12
F12	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Pit F12; 1.3 by 1 m, 0.5 m deep
F13	Deposit	Orange brown	Sandy loam and gravel	Pot sherds, charcoal, iron nail	Fill of pit F14
F14	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Pit F14; 2.2 by 1.1 m, 0.4 m deep
F15	Deposit	Dark brown	Sandy loam	Pot sherds, charcoal, flint	Upper fill of pit F16
F16	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Pit F16; 1.7 by 1 m, 0.2 m deep
F17	Deposit	Dark brown	Sandy loam and gravel	Pot sherds, flint fragment	Fill of pit F18
F18	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Pit F18; 1.7 by 0.9 m, 0.35 m deep
F19	Deposit	Dark brown	Sandy loam	Occasional charcoal flecks	Fill of ditch F20
F20	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Ditch F20, V-shaped, up 1.6 m wide, 0.5 m deep
F21	Deposit	Orange brown	Sandy loam and gravel	None	Fill of pit F22
F22	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Pit F22; 1.25 by 0.7 m, 0.25 m deep
F23	Deposit	Orange brown	Sandy loam and gravel	Pot sherd, lump of ?mortar	Fill of pit F24
F24	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Pit F24; 1.5 by 1 m, 0.4 m deep
F25	Deposit	Orange brown	Sandy loam	Pot sherds, charcoal flecks	Upper fill of pit F27
F26	Deposit	Dark brown	Sandy loam	Pot sherds, charcoal, burnt bone	Lower fill of pit F27

Context	Type	Colour	Texture	Inclusions	Comments
F27	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Pit F27; 1.6 m in diameter, 0.45 m deep
F28	Deposit	Orange brown	Sandy loam and gravel	None	Fill of pit F29
F29	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Pit F29; 0.9 by 0.7 m, 0.25 m deep
F30	Deposit	Orange brown	Sandy loam and gravel	None	Fill of pit F31
F32	Deposit	Grey brown	Sandy loam	Charcoal flecks	Fill of pit F32
F33	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Pit F33; 0.9 m in diameter, 0.25 m deep
F34	Deposit	Yellow brown	Gravel	Charcoal flecks	Fill of pit F35
F35	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Pit F35; 1.1 m in diameter, 0.6 m deep
F36	Deposit	Yellow brown	Sandy loam	Occasional charcoal flecks	Lower fill of pit F16
F37	Deposit	Dark grey	Sand	Charcoal	Fill in pit F2
F38	Deposit	Light grey	Coarse sand	None	Fill in pit F2
F39	Deposit	Orange	Coarse sand and gravel	None	Basal fill in pit F2
F40	Deposit	Orange brown	Coarse sand and gravel	None	Basal fill in pit F2
F41	Deposit	Mid brown	Sandy loam and gravel	Charcoal	Fill of pit F42
F42	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Pit F42; 1.4 by 0.85 m, 0.55 m deep
F43	Deposit	Mid brown	Sandy loam and gravel	None	Fill of pit F44
F44	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Pit F44; 1.3 by 0.8 m, 0.3 m deep
F45	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Ditch F45, V-shaped, 0.5 to 0.75 m wide, 0.4 m deep
F46	Deposit	Brown	Sandy loam	None	Fill of ditch F45
F47	Deposit	Brown	Sandy loam	None	Fill of ditch F48
F48	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Ditch F48, V-shaped, 0.7 to 1.1 m wide, 0.5 m deep
F49	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Pit F49; 3.2 by 2.7 m, 0.8 m deep
F50	Deposit	Brown	Sandy loam	None	Upper fill of pit F49
F51	Deposit	Brown	Sandy loam and gravel	None	Lower fill of pit F49
F52	-----	-----	-----	-----	Not used
F53	Deposit	Black	Sandy loam	Charcoal and fire cracked stones	Fill of pit F54
F54	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Pit F54; 0.8 m in diameter, 0.2 m deep
F55	Deposit	Dark grey	Sandy loam	Pot sherds, charcoal flecks	Fill of pit F56
F56	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Pit F56; 1 by 0.8 m, 0.25 m deep
F57	Deposit	Mid brown	Sandy loam and gravel	Pot sherds, charcoal flecks	Fill of pit F58
F58	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Pit F58; 0.4 m in diameter, 0.08 m deep
F59	Deposit	Mid brown	Sandy loam and gravel	None	Fill of pit F60
F60	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Pit F60; 1.6 by 1.1 m, 0.4 m deep

Context	Type	Colour	Texture	Inclusions	Comments
F61	Deposit	Mid brown	Sandy loam and gravel	None	Fill of pit F62
F62	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Pit F62; 1 by 0.6 m, 0.15 m deep
F63	Deposit	Mid brown	Sandy loam and gravel	None	Fill of pit F64
F64	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Pit F64; 1.6 by 0.8 m, 0.25 m deep
F65	Deposit	Mid brown	Sandy loam and gravel	None	Fill of pit F66
F66	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Pit F66; 1.3 by 1 m, 0.25 m deep
F67	Deposit	Mid brown	Sandy loam and gravel	None	Fill of pit F68
F68	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Pit F68; 1.5 by 1 m, 0.35 m deep
F69	Deposit	Mid brown	Sandy loam and gravel	None	Fill of pit F70
F70	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Pit F70; 1.2 by 0.85 m, 0.3 m deep
F71	Deposit	Mid brown	Sandy loam and gravel	None	Fill of pit F72
F72	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Pit F72; 1.1 by 0.85 m, 0.27 m deep
F73	Deposit	Mid brown	Sandy loam and gravel	None	Fill of pit F74
F74	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Pit F74; 1.2 by 0.8 m, 0.3 m deep
F75	Deposit	Mid brown	Sandy loam and gravel		Fill of pit F75, not excavated
F76	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Pit F76. Partly exposed at SE edge. Not excavated
F77	Deposit	Yellow brown	Sandy loam and gravel	None	Fill of pit F78
F78	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Pit F78; 1.1 m in diameter, 0.3 m deep
F79	Deposit	Mid brown	Sandy loam and gravel	Lumps of charcoal	Fill of pit F80
F80	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Pit F80; 0.7 by 0.5 m, 0.4 m deep
F81	Deposit	Dark brown	Sandy loam	None	Fill of pit F82
F82	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Pit F82; 0.6 m in diameter, 0.5 m deep
F83	Deposit	Mid brown	Sandy loam	None	Fill of pit F84
F84	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Pit F84; 1.1 by 0.8 m, 0.4 m deep
F85	Deposit	Dark brown	Sandy loam	None	Fill of pit F86
F86	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Pit F86; 0.65 by 0.55 m, 0.5 m deep
F87	Deposit	Dark brown	Sandy loam	Occasional charcoal flecks	Fill of ditch F88
F88	Cut	-----	-----	-----	Ditch F88, V-shaped, up 1.4 m wide and 0.4 m deep

Appendix III

Finds list

Find no	Context	Material	Qty	Comments
1	25	Pot	1	Abraded grey base sherd
2	55	Pot	1	Thin-walled grey body sherd
3	25	Pot	2	Small pot fragments (surface of pit)
4	13	Iron	3	Iron nail broken in three pieces
5	15	Pot	1	Small pot fragment
6	17	Pot	3	Thin walled red body sherds with handle
7	17	Pot	1	Thin walled red rim sherd
8	17	Pot	1	Thin walled red sherd (fits with find no.20)
9	23	Pot	1	Thick walled light grey body sherd
10	15	Flint	1	Small flint fragment
11	25	Pot	2	Thin walled red body sherd
12	17	Pot	1	Large body sherd with handle
13	17	Flint	1	Small flint fragment
14	13	Pot	1	Thin walled red body sherd
15	13	Pot	1	Thin walled red rim sherd
16	13	Pot	1	Coarse body sherd (fits with find no 17)
17	13	Pot	1	Coarse body sherd (fits with find no. 16)
18	13	Pot	1	Thick-walled body(?) sherd (same vessel as find no. 19?)
19	13	Pot	1	Thick-walled body sherd (same vessel as find no. 18?)
20	13	Pot	1	Thin walled red sherd (fits with find no.8)
21	11	Pot	2	Thin walled red rim sherds (fit together)
22	11	Pot	2	Thin walled red base sherds (fit together)
23	11	Pot	1	Red pot fragment
24	11	Pot	1	Red base fragment
25	57	Pot	5	Decorated coarse pot fragments (all from same vessel)
26	79	Wood	2	Carbonised wood fragments
27	57	Pot	1	Decorated coarse pot fragment (same vessel as find no. 25)
28	15	Pot	6	Thick-walled light grey pot fragments (same vessel?)
29	55	Pot	3	Thick-walled body sherds (fit together)
30	26	Pot	1	Grey pot sherd?
31	26	Pot	10	Grey pot sherds all from same vessel
32	US	Pot	7	Thin-walled red perforated pot sherds
33	23	Mortar?	1	Lump of mortar?

Appendix IV

ASSESSMENT OF SAMPLES FROM WOOPERTON

Dr. T.G. Holden

May 1997

METHOD

The sample was subjected to a system of flotation in a Siraf style flotation tank. The floating debris (the flot) was collected in a 500 μ m sieve and, once dry, scanned by the author using a binocular microscope. Any material that did not float (the retent) was dried and scanned by eye and items of potential archaeological value recorded.

RESULTS

Charcoal was recovered from most samples. Those identified by an asterisk in Table 1 probably contain sufficient material for an AMS. Those that also have a value of '+++' or '++++' in the charcoal column would, however, offer best chances of obtaining a reasonably large charcoal sample for dating purposes. Identification of the species of wood represented would need to be undertaken prior to dating.

Cereal grain was recorded from five of the flot samples. This was identified as hulled barley from Context F67 but wheat, either emmer or spelt, was recovered from Context 26. In most other cases the condition was too poor for identification to the level of species. A small number of seeds were identified from Context 23 but the low number of these does not allow for any discussion of these.

The only additional material from the retents was a small quantity of slag recovered from Context F 19. This could be of some industrial significance but is present in such small quantities as to be of little value.

No further work on any of the categories of material recovered is recommended.

Table 1 - Flots

Context	Date	Vol (litres)	Cereal grain	Seed	Charcoal		Comments
					Amount	AMS	
F11	03/04/97	30			++	*	
F15	03/04/97	20	+		++++	*	1 x barley grain
F17	03/04/97	20		+	+++	*	
F19	03/04/97	20			+++	*	
F23	03/04/97	20	+		+++	*	cereal indet, Silene, gramineae
F26	03/04/97	20	++		++++	*	emmer/spelt, barley
F37	03/04/97	5			++++	*	
F53	04/04/97	50			++++	*	
F57	10/04/97	5			+	*	
F67	10/04/97	20	+		+	*	3 x barley grain
F79	10/04/97	20	+		+++	*	2 x barley grain
F83	10/04/97	20			++	*	
F87	10/04/97	20			+		

Key: + = rare, ++ = occasional, +++ = common, ++++ = abundant
 * = sufficient for an AMS date

Table 2 - Retents

Context	Category	Abundance	Diversity
F11	Charcoal	+++	
F15	Charcoal	+++	
F17	Pottery	+	+
	Worn stone	+	
	Mortar	+	
	Slag	+	
F19	Sterile		
F23	Charcoal	+++	
	Pottery	+	+
	Cereal (grain)	+	+
F26	Charcoal	++++	
	Cereal (charred)	+	+
	Pottery	+	+
F37	Charcoal	++++	
F53	Charcoal	+++	
	Charred nut shell	+	
F57	Charcoal	+++	
F67	Charcoal	+	
	Cereal (charred)	+	+
F79	Charcoal	+++	
	Cereal (charred)	+	+
F83	Sterile		
F87	Sterile		

Key + = rare, ++ = occasional, +++ = common, ++++ = abundant

Appendix V

ASSESSMENT OF POTTERY FROM WOOPERTON

Jeremy Evans

May 1997

There are around 60 sherds of pottery from the Wooperton site. Two periods are represented, the early Bronze Age and Roman. There is a single early Bronze Age feature, pit F58, containing a Beaker base (SFS 25 and 27). Surprisingly all the other features would appear to be of Roman date. SFs 2 and 29 come from pit F56 cut by ditch F20, these are respectively a greyware bodysherd and three sherds of a Dressel 20 amphora with a 1st to 3rd century date range. Pits F12, F14, F16, F18, F24 and F27 all also contain Roman pottery, and the oxidised dish with cross-joins between pit F14 and F18 may suggest that these were filled broadly contemporaneously.

Turning to the Roman pottery it is an unusual assemblage. Dressel 20 amphorae are rarely found on Romano-British rural sites and if they are then it is normally at levels of well below 1% of the assemblage. Similarly U/S fragments of what may have been an oxidised strainer seem an odd find for a rural site. The oxidised ware with the 'honeypot' like jar seem to have military associations, as do the quantities of Dressel 20. However, the rest of the assemblage includes two sherds of Iron Age tradition handmade pottery from pit F14 and a complete profile representing about half a vessel, in handmade grog? tempered fabric, sooted from use with an everted rim and carinated shoulder from pit F27. This vessel seems to be of 'Romanising' form but its manufacture is hardly that, although neither does grog tempering seem to be part of the local Iron Age tradition. The complete profile and surviving quantity of this vessel smacks of deliberate deposition rather than normal 'rubbish'.

The collection of Roman pottery from this site is very good, some has military associations and some seems related to the indigenous tradition. There seems little doubt that the collection has a ritual significance given the morphology of the site, its Roman date and its very curious assemblage. The composition of this group is not what one might expect to find on a 'normal' rural site.

The collection is clearly of ^{regional} national significance and should be published in full. The site is rare if not unique in producing what appears to be a ritual focus in an apparently Roman period pit alignment.

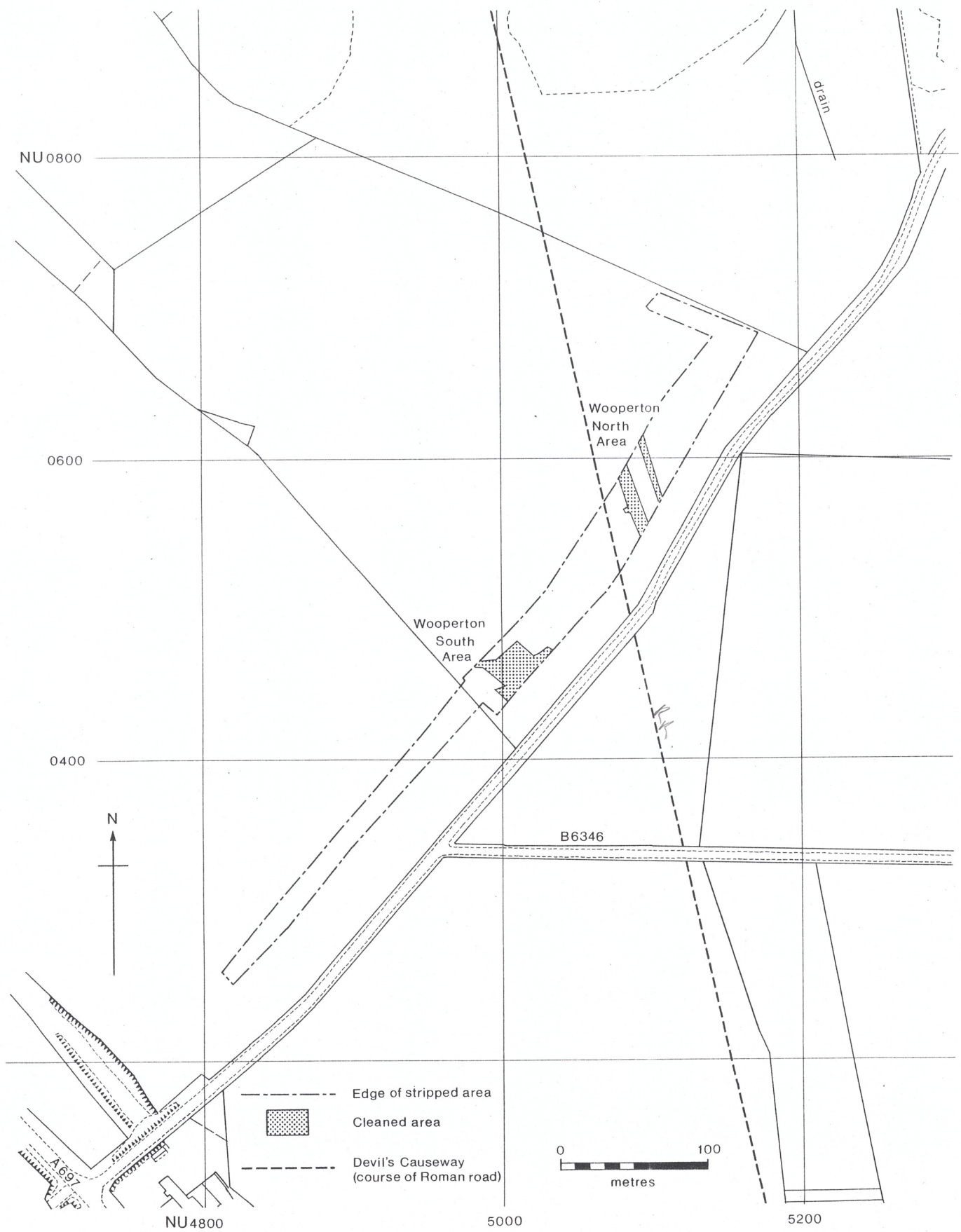


Figure 1 Location plan

Wooperton, Plan of Excavated Features.
South Area

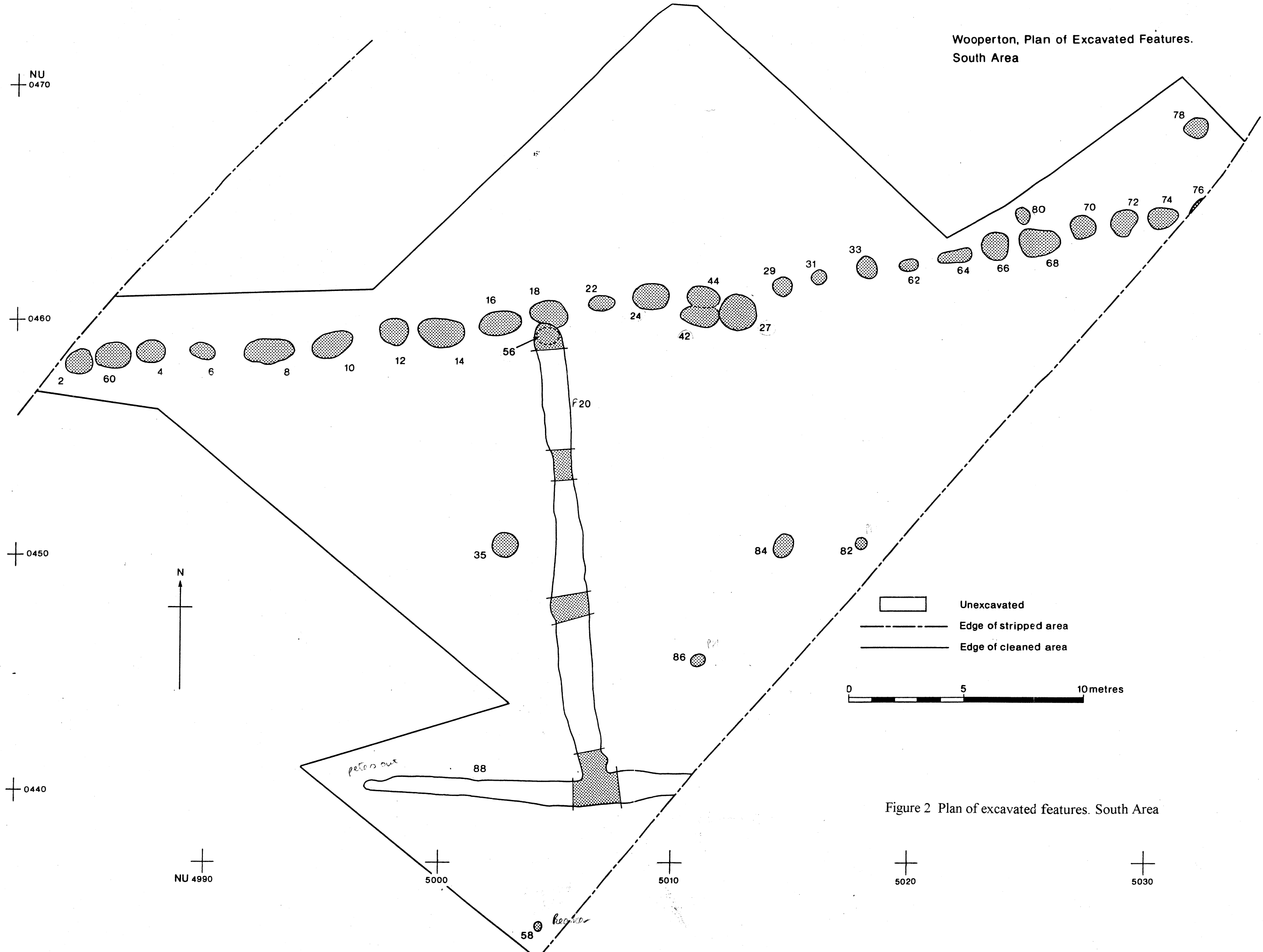


Figure 2 Plan of excavated features. South Area

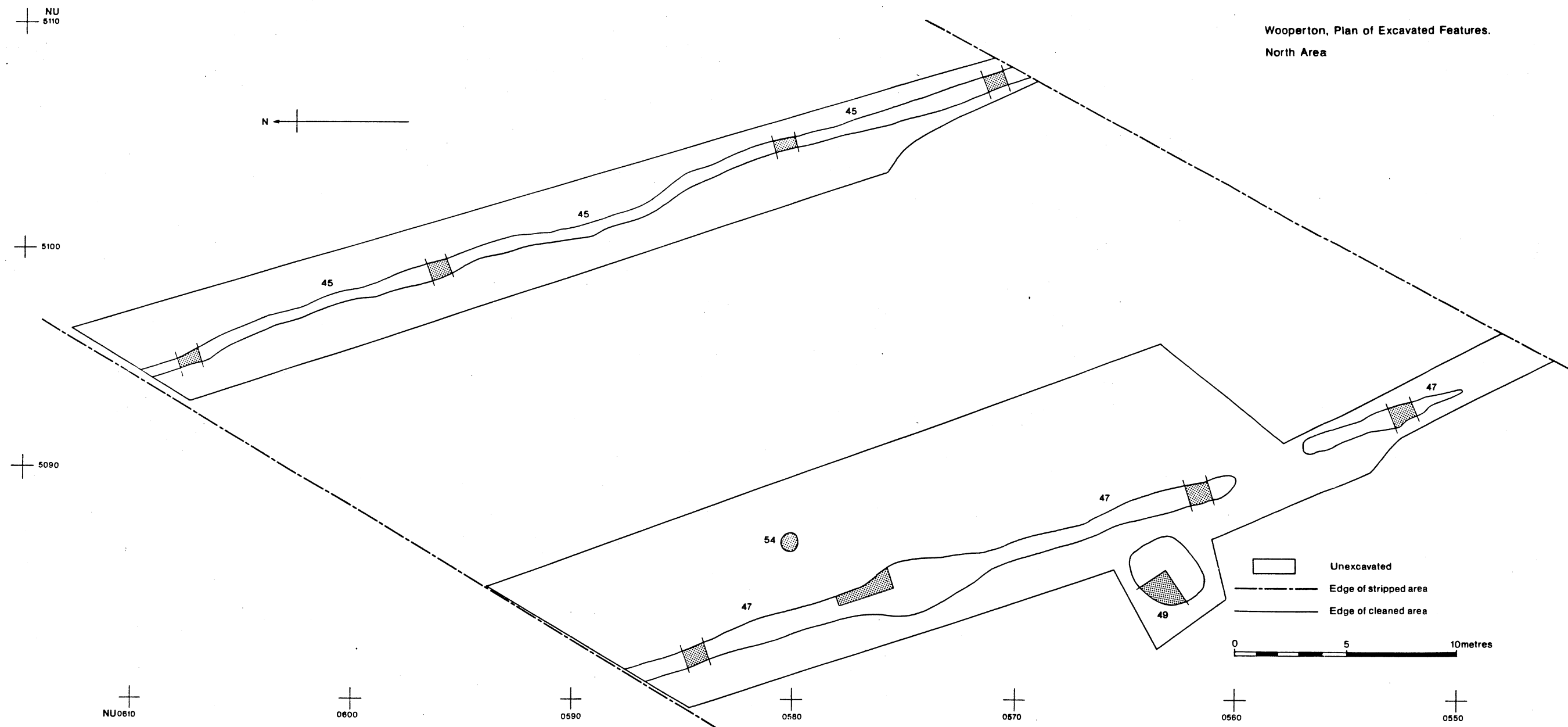


Figure 3 Plan of excavated features. North Area