

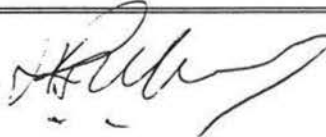
DTZ Debenham Thorpe

Cade's Farm, Taunton Road, Wellington, Somerset

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

[NGR ST 1440 2120]

[Planning ref 43/96/115]

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[March/ 1997]

**CADE'S FARM, TAUNTON ROAD,
WELLINGTON, SOMERSET**

NGR ST 1440 2120

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**OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT
MARCH 1997**

1. SUMMARY

The Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out an archaeological field evaluation consisting of the excavation of four trenches just west of Cade's Farm, Taunton Road Wellington, Somerset. A pit and ditch, in Trench 1 near to the Taunton Road produced a large quantity of Romano-British pottery. The limited fabrics and condition of the pottery suggest it is waste from a nearby production site. Further evidence for Roman or possibly late Iron Age occupation on the site was revealed in Trench 3 immediately west of the farm buildings at Cade's Farm. This included two ditches and a possible occupation layer. Only one of the ditches in Trench 3 contained pottery which has been dated to the late Iron Age. It is not possible to reach any firm conclusions about the likely layout of the site but the information from the four trenches may indicate a focus of activity in the north and east of the site although Roman pottery was present in all the trenches. Trench 4, in the south-eastern part of the site had no Roman features. The southern end of the trench had been disturbed in the post-medieval period, probably as a result of activity related to Cade's Farm. There was no evidence for medieval features associated with Cade's Farm, although a little medieval pottery was recovered.

2. INTRODUCTION

An archaeological field evaluation was undertaken by the Oxford Archaeological Unit at Cade's farm Wellington between the 3rd and 5th of March 1997. A planning application has been submitted to Taunton Deane Borough Council for the development of a retail food store (3384 sq. m.), car parking and petrol filling station (Planning Application reference 43/96/115). The archaeological recommendation for a field evaluation follows the policy outlined in *Planning Policy Guidance on Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16).

3. LOCATION (Fig. 1 & 2)

The site is situated on the north eastern fringes of the town of Wellington to the south of the B3187 Taunton Road and immediately west of Cade's Farm (NGR ST1440 2120). The area is approximately 2.6 hectares in extent and the land use is currently mostly pasture. The site rises up towards the Taunton Road at 68m above Ordnance Datum (OD) and the lowest point is to the south-east of Cade's Farm at 59m OD.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

There is little archaeological information concerning the immediate vicinity of the site. Bronze Age axes have been recovered, one within Wellington and one from the area of Olands meadow just west of Wellington. Roman coins were found near to the nearby church (Bob Croft pers comm).

The town of Wellington itself is a planned medieval town which grew with the woollen industry.

The farm buildings at Cade's Farm date to the 17th century and include some buildings of cob construction. The farm may have had a medieval precursor.

5. STRATEGY (Fig. 2)

The work was carried out according to a specification set by the County Archaeologist for Somerset. The specifications are set out in *General Specification for Archaeological Work in Somerset* (March 1995). The general dimensions of the trenches were:

Trench 1	31m x 2m
Trench 2	30m x 2m
Trench 3	30m x 1m
Trench 4	30m x 1m

Trenches 1 and 2 were situated near to the Taunton Road, in an area which is proposed to be reduced in level by almost three metres. The area of the food store (Trench 4) will be raised in level. Trench 3 was situated adjacent to Cade's Farm to sample an area of earthworks and identify any earlier farm buildings. The position of Trench 4 was moved from its original location in order to avoid services and a public footpath. The trenches were excavated using a JCB excavator with a toothless ditching bucket and each trench was hand cleaned to identify archaeological features.

The objectives of the evaluation were to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains on the site. To date any remains or deposits and establish the quality of their preservation and the potential of environmental remains.

6. RESULTS

6.1 Trenches 1 and 2 (Fig. 3)

Trenches 1 and 2 formed a T-shape in the area of the proposed petrol filling station. At the north-east end of Trench 1 a number of archaeological features were located. The earliest features were two pits 108 and 113 and both were cut by a later linear ditch, 107. A large quantity of Romano-British pottery sherds, as well as carbonised material (see environmental evaluation) was recovered from Pit 108 and Ditch 107. In contrast pit 113 contained no pottery and little if any carbonised material. Pit 108 was mostly cut away by Ditch 107 and the full size of the pit was not seen within the trench.

Ditch 107 was orientated approximately east-west and measured 1.50m wide at the top and was 0.94m in depth. The upper profile of the ditch had sloping sides, but the base of the ditch consisted of a vertical sided 'slot'. Fill 112 was deepest on the south side of the ditch and may indicate filling from this side.

All the archaeological features were sealed by a ploughsoil 102 (=202) which in turn was overlain by the modern topsoil. The archaeological features in Trench 1 were located 0.46m below the present ground surface. In addition a modern trench for a foul water pipe ran north-west / south-east across Trench 1 and 2.

6.2 Trench 3 (Fig. 4)

Trench 3 contained two ditches, 305 and 311 as well as a shallow deposit preserved within a hollow, 304. Both ditches were orientated north-east south-west, and were filled with a reddish brown sandy silt with occasional charcoal flecks. The larger of the two ditches, 305 had a U-shaped profile and measured 1.56m wide and 0.74m in depth; the latest fill (306) produced a sherd of late-Iron Age pottery. A smaller V-shaped ditch 311 measured 1.10m wide and 0.35m in depth and contained no finds.

In the south-east end of Trench 3 a shallow depression, filled by deposit 304, produced mostly Romano-British pottery, although Iron Age sherds and one medieval sherd were also present. The depression was 7m wide and up to 0.12m in depth. There was an indistinct and disturbed boundary between 304 and the natural subsoil. It was noticeable that some of the pottery was laying flat within the deposit and so the depression was probably formed during a period of occupation rather than caused by later ploughing.

The two ditches, 305 and 311, were sealed by a ploughsoil, 302, which was overlain by the present topsoil 301. The archaeological features were located at 0.56m below the present ground surface. In the south-eastern half of the trench an additional ploughsoil 303 occurred, overlying 304. In addition two ceramic land drains were uncovered.

6.3 Trench 4 (Fig. 5)

The earliest ploughsoil in Trench 4 was 403, which was in turn overlain by another ploughsoil 402 which was overlain by the present topsoil 401. At the south-east end a wide (4.30m+) feature, 405 (=408) appeared to cut ploughsoil 402 and although it produced Romano-British pottery it also contained a clay tobacco pipe and a sherd of medieval pottery. The proximity of a water pipe and the flow of groundwater prevented a detailed examination of this feature and it was not clear if it represented a wide ditch or an attempt to landscape or level the bottom of the field.

The depth from the present ground surface to the top of the natural subsoil was between 0.50m and 0.60m.

7. POTTERY: Paul Booth

Some 545 sherds of pottery were recovered in the evaluation. The majority of the material was of Roman date, though Iron Age, medieval and post-medieval sherds were also present, and most appeared to derive from activity related to pottery production, the principal focus of which was in Trench 1. The pottery was in variable condition, a result in part of soil conditions and of variations in the firing of some of the material.

The pottery was scanned quite rapidly in order to provide dating evidence and an assessment of the character of the site. Detailed recording was not considered appropriate at this stage, particularly with regard to the characterisation of fabrics. Some aspects of fabric and form (where identifiable) were recorded systematically however, with quantification of all the material by sherd count and weight. The pottery is discussed by period and the quantities of pottery (by period) in each context group are given in Appendix 2.

7.1 Iron Age

Eight sherds (156 g) were assigned to the Iron Age on criteria of fabric and form. All the sherds occurred in Trench 3, seven in layer 304 and one in fill 306. Two fabrics were identified, one with irregular voids, probably representing leached shell inclusions (3 sherds), the other with angular ?quartz inclusions (5 sherds). Three rims were present. One in the leached fabric, in fill 306, was from a simple barrel-shaped jar with incurving rim, defined by a tooled line just below the rim. A further barrel-shaped vessel occurred in the ?quartz fabric, together with a bead-rimmed jar. All of these vessels seem likely to have been relatively late in the Iron Age period.

7.2 Roman

Over 96% of all the sherds from the site were of Roman date, and 511 sherds (93.8% of all sherds) were assigned to three fabric groups thought to be associated with pottery production on the site. The remaining non-local sherds were a single abraded fragment of a fine reduced ware (from 304), a sherd of a coarser, sandy reduced ware from 202, and sherds of black-burnished ware. No attempt was made at this stage to distinguish between south-east Dorset (Poole Harbour) BB1 and the so-called South-Western BB1. The only confidently identifiable rim form was of a grooved flat-rimmed bowl or dish, probably datable from late 2nd-mid 3rd century (Holbrook and Bidwell 1991, 98). This vessel occurred in layer 304, accompanied by a tiny fragment perhaps from a conical flanged bowl of later 3rd century or later date.

7.2.1 Production waste

A very substantial concentration of pottery (482 sherds, 88.4% of the site total, 92.3% of the total pottery by weight) was recovered from the north-eastern end of Trench 1. This material came from a limited number of contexts and was notable for the homogeneity of the fabrics present (though these exhibited a wide range of variation in firing) and for the very limited range of forms, including an unusual emphasis on sherds of large storage jars. These characteristics leave no doubt that the material was production debris, derived from a workshop area closely adjacent to where it was found.

7.2.2 Fabrics

Superficial examination suggests that three main fabrics were present, although as so often with this type of material, definition of a clearcut dividing line between the two most common fabrics was not easy and some sherds fell into a 'grey area' between the two (generally speaking, where there was uncertainty sherds tended to be assigned to fabric 2). The fabrics were as follows:

Fabric 1. Common quartz sand with sparse to moderate prominent mica inclusions and sparse ferrous inclusions. This fabric appears in both oxidised and reduced versions.

Fabric 2. As fabric 1, though usually less sandy, and with the addition of occasional organic voids and sparse to moderate (occasionally abundant) soft platy inclusions. These are characteristically light grey but can appear reddish brown in oxidised versions of the fabric. This fabric varies quite markedly in coarseness and more detailed analysis may indicate subdivisions of it.

Fabric 3. Similar to fabric 2, but with moderately common small organic voids. All recorded examples of this relatively scarce fabric were reduced, usually with black surfaces.

The approximate quantities of these fabrics were as follows:

Fabric 1, 70 sherds (20 oxidised, 50 reduced)
Fabric 2, 426 sherds (273 oxidised, 153 reduced)
Fabric 3, 14 sherds (all reduced)

As already noted a wide range of firing was apparent. As a general rule the reduced sherds were harder fired than oxidised ones and at least some of the oxidised sherds were clearly underfired and may have been rejected for that reason. It is not clear if a particular finish was intended, ie that all the vessels were meant to be reduced and that oxidised sherds were by definition mostly if not entirely failures, but this is possible. Some of the reduced sherds, however, are also likely to have been rejects. Overfired sherds were present and while no certain wasters were recovered, a number of sherds were sufficiently distorted to indicate that they were at least seconds. If larger portions of some vessels had been present it is likely that definite wasters would have been identified. A number of sherds were unevenly fired - part oxidised and part reduced - which is also characteristic of production site waste. Subjectively it appeared that the thicker-walled storage jar sherds were more prone to irregularities of firing. This may have been, if not intentional, at least acceptable since some other storage jar fabrics known from the region exhibit a wide range of surface colour.

There was surprisingly little evidence for surface treatment of the sherds. Even allowing for the erosion of the surfaces of poorly fired pieces, there was almost no indication of the use of burnishing as a finishing or decorative technique on the well-fired pieces. Decoration appears to have been confined to the sporadic use of horizontal grooves or incised lines, and the impression of irregular indentations on the upper surface of the rim of some storage jars.

7.2.3 Forms

Twenty-eight vessels were represented by rim sherds in these fabrics. They included a jug with a three ribbed handle and two small fragments from unidentifiable forms. Otherwise all the rims were from jars or probable jars (vessels in which insufficient of the profile was present for the form to be certain), of which six were large storage jars. The jars appeared to be of simple forms, usually with slightly thickened, outcurving rims. A small but significant number of these rims, both on storage jars and other jar forms, had squared or double-lipped ends.

7.2.4 Dating and discussion

There was almost no independent dating material from the site to indicate the likely chronological range of the pottery production. The only such evidence consisted of small quantities of black-burnished ware, associated with production site material only in layer 304, in which Iron Age material and a medieval sherd were also present. This deposit is therefore mixed and while it might suggest that kiln production material occurred in deposits contemporary with black-burnished ware broadly of 3rd century date, there is no proof that this was the case and the two classes of Roman pottery might have originated from separate and differently dated deposits.

On present evidence the pottery production was of a narrow range of essentially utilitarian forms, with minimal use even of basic surface finishing techniques on these vessels. The extent to which the excavated sample is representative of the production as a whole is unknown, however. The ceramic background to the

region has been reviewed most extensively by Holbrook and Bidwell (1991) in their discussion of Exeter. Evidence for production sites in the region up to the early 1980s is assembled by Swan (1984). The only nearby production site recorded by Swan is at Norton Fitzwarren, some 7 km distant to the north-east. The site is poorly known but production is likely to have fallen in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD (Holbrook and Bidwell 1991, 175). Holbrook and Bidwell considered both this ware and their 'Exeter Gritty Grey ware' to be "part of a series of interrelated grey ware industries which produced pottery for local markets in Somerset and East Devon in the second and third centuries" (ibid). This succinct summary establishes the context in which the present site may be seen. The place of the Wellington assemblage within this regional tradition is demonstrated by both the fabrics and forms present. In terms of the fabrics, there are at least superficial similarities between the more heavily tempered examples of fabric 2 and the description of Norton Fitzwarren ware, particularly in the use at Norton Fitzwarren of 'pale grey soft flaky grits' (ibid). The wide variation in inclusion frequency observed here in fabric 2 in particular is also seen in Exeter Gritty Grey ware (ibid, 171) and the related South-Western Grey Ware storage jars (ibid, 175), probably from a variety of sources including Woodbury, south-east of Exeter. The storage jars in the present assemblage share a number of specific characteristics with vessels assigned to the South-Western Grey Ware storage jar group, including details of rim shape (cf eg Holbrook and Bidwell 1991, 176 No 3.2) and the occurrence in some cases of irregular impressions on the top of the rim (cf idem No 3.1), a feature also seen much further east at Ilchester (eg Leach 1982, 158 No 281). These similarities emphasise unity of tradition if not of source. Holbrook and Bidwell (1991, 175) indicate that as a general rule storage jars were rare in the region before the 3rd century. If this holds good slightly further east it may support a 3rd century (if not later) date for at least some of the Wellington production. This would at least be consistent with the very limited dating evidence available for the site, though the tenuous nature of this must be borne in mind.

In summary, the present assemblage, perhaps broadly of 3rd century date, can be placed within a recognisable if in detail little-known regional tradition. It offers the potential to add considerably to the understanding of this tradition.

7.3 Medieval and post-medieval

Eight medieval and three post-medieval sherds were recovered - the latter consisted of 19th-20th century material and is not further commented upon. The medieval material included a cooking pot rim in a fairly fine, sandy oxidised fabric (from layer 303) and further small rim fragments in a similar fabric from layers 404 and 202. The remaining material was in a much coarser sand-tempered fabric. A single sherd in this fabric in layer 304 was from the base angle of a probable cooking pot. None of the sherds was glazed. Layers 303, 304 and 404 could have been of medieval date on the basis of their pottery content.

7.4 References

Holbrook, N, and Bidwell, P T, 1991, *Roman finds from Exeter*, Exeter Archaeol Rep 4, Exeter

Leach, P, 1982, *Ilchester Volume 1, Excavations 1974-1975*, Western Archaeol Trust Mono 3, Bristol

Swan, V G, 1984, *The pottery kilns of Roman Britain*, Royal Commission on Historical Monuments Supplementary Series 5, London

8. ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

In order to assess the preservation of environmental material, three deposits were sampled: fill 104 of Pit 108, and two fills from Ditch 107: its base fill 105 and its final in-filling 103. The samples were processed by mechanical flotation, with the flot collected on 0.25 mm mesh; in all cases the mechanical flotation had to be supplemented by bucket-flotation to ensure adequate recovery of remains. The volume processed ranged from 12-20 litres.

The flots were assessed by Ruth Pelling of the English Heritage Environmental Archaeology Unit at the University Museum, Oxford. All three samples produced small flots, which contained small quantities of wood charcoal. The charcoal was too small to be identified in ditch fill 103, but in the other two samples was almost entirely of hazel/alder (*Corylus/Alnus*). Some charcoal of oak (*Quercus*) was found in pit fill 104.

All three samples contained charred grass tubers and rhizomes, and other charred roots. It is possible that these were formed by the burning of turf, either by lighting of fires directly on the ground or by the use of turf as fuel.

Cereal remains, chaff and weed seeds were sparse. One unidentifiable grain and two weed seeds were found in the upper ditch fill 103, and six grains of barley (*Hordeum*) and about a dozen weed seeds in the base fill, 105, of the same ditch. Pit fill 104 contained hulled barley and wheat (*Triticum* sp.) in low concentrations.

The wheat is of short fat form, but it is not certain that they are spelt wheat or bread/club type. The limited chaff (dominated by glume bases) did include material clearly from spelt wheat (*T. Spelta*), the species characteristic of the Roman period. Although this deposit produced the largest range of plant remains and included seeds of dock (*Rumex*), plantain (*Plantago*) and bindweed (*Polygonum/Convolvulus*), the flot was too small to produce any firm conclusions.

No bone was recovered from any of the trenches or from the soil samples. Snails were also absent.

9. CONCLUSIONS

The limited scope of this evaluation makes detailed interpretation of the recorded archaeology difficult. However, the quality and characteristics of the Roman pottery recovered from relatively few features strongly suggests the presence of a pottery production site close by. It is not possible to closely date the production debris at present, although the association of this material with sherds of late 2nd to late 3rd century pottery in Trench 3 and similarities with material from Norton Fitzwarren and elsewhere indicate a 3rd century date (see Pottery Discussion).

Romano-British pottery was recovered from all the four trenches although the Roman pottery from Trench 4 was redeposited in later deposits. The bulk of the Romano-British pottery was recovered from Pit 108 and Ditch 107 in Trench 1. Since the ditch cuts the pit the pottery in the ditch could be redeposited. There was no sign of a bank for Ditch 107 although one fill sloping in from the south side may indicate the remains of a slighted bank which ran along the south side

There were relatively few finds from Trenches 3 and 4, this indicates a particular focus adjacent to Trench 1. The ditches in Trench 3 could be some way from the main focus of activity which would account for the limited finds. It is also possible they relate to a slightly earlier phase of occupation indicated by the presence of late Iron Age pottery sherds. The depression in Trench 3 may be contemporary with the period of Romano-British activity, although the presence of a medieval sherd of pottery (which is possibly intrusive) could indicate that the Roman material is redeposited. However the exact nature of this deposit is unclear.

The trenches did not identify earlier more extensive phases of Cade's Farm. The trenching revealed a fairly deep sequence of earlier soils and the depth from the present ground surface to the archaeological levels varied from 0.46m in Trench 1 to 0.60m in Trench 4. This is partly accounted for by the friable nature of the soil and also the movement of soil down slope. Consequently this could indicate the potential existence of areas of well preserved archaeological features on the lower slopes.

The site has been disturbed by a number of modern features most notably a high pressure foul-water pipe which runs through Trenches 1 and 2. A number of agricultural field drains were also recorded.

SUMMARY OF CONTEXTS. APPENDIX 1

CADE'S FARM WELLINGTON (TTNCM 28 / 1997)					
Context	Type	Depth	Width	Length	Comments
TRENCH 1					
101	Layer	0.28			Topsoil
102	Layer	0.22			Earlier ploughsoil
103	Fill	0.42			Fill of 107
104	Fill	0.30			Fill of 108
105	105	0.10			Fill of 107
106	106	0.40			Fill of 107
107	Ditch	0.94	1.5		NW/SE Ditch
108	Pit	0.32	?2.40		
109	Fill				Fill of 110
110	Cut				Modern Foul Water Pipe Trench
111	Layer				Natural subsoil
112	Fill	0.30			Fill of 107
113	Pit	0.50	0.90		
114	Fill	0.50			Fill of 113
115	Finds				Finds from spoil probably from 103
TRENCH 2					
201	Layer	0.24			Topsoil
202	Layer	0.18			Earlier ploughsoil
203	Cut				Modern pipe trench, same as 110
204	Fill				Fill of modern pipe trench 203
205	Layer				Natural subsoil
TRENCH 3					
301	Layer	0.20			Topsoil
302	Layer	0.24			Earlier ploughsoil
303	Layer	0.16			Earlier ploughsoil
304	Layer	0.12			? Occupation layer
305	Ditch	0.74	1.56		
306	Fill	0.46			Fill of 305
307	Fill	0.27			Fill of 305
308	Layer				Natural subsoil
309	Layer				Natural subsoil
310	Fill	0.40			Fill of 311
311	Ditch	0.35	1.10		
TRENCH 4					
401	Layer	0.34			Topsoil
402	Layer	0.20			Earlier Ploughsoil
403	Layer	0.20			Earlier Ploughsoil

CADE'S FARM WELLINGTON (TTNCM 28 / 1997)					
Context	Type	Depth	Width	Length	Comments
404	Fill	0.28			Fill of 405
405	Cut	0.28	1.20		Post-medieval feature
406	Layer				Natural subsoil
407	Fill	0.32+			Fill of 408 (clay pipe)
408	Cut		4.30+		Post-medieval feature
409	Layer	0.15			Recent deposit
410	Layer	0.13			Recent deposit
411	Fill	0.29			Fill of 405 and 408

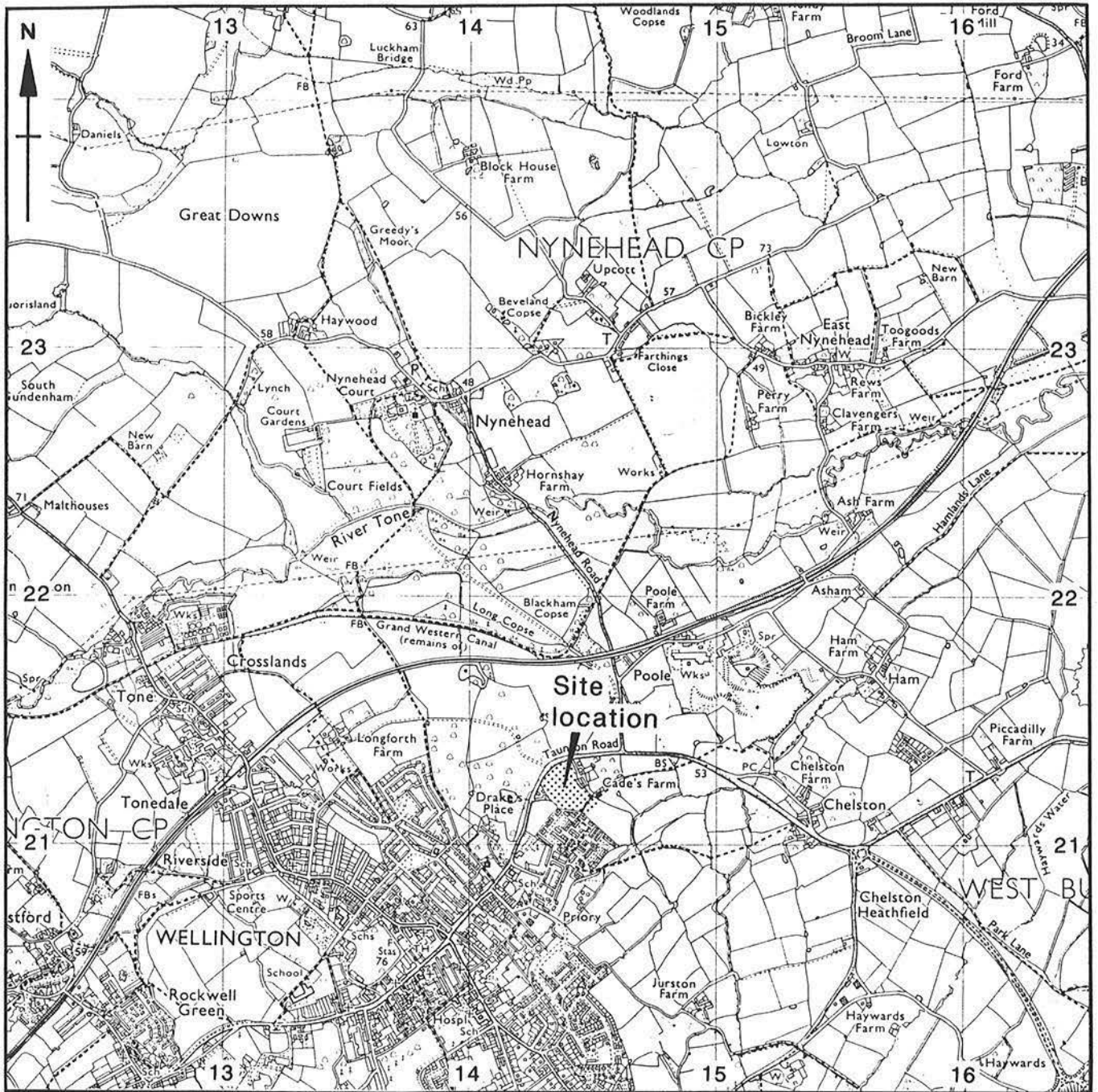
APPENDIX. 2

CADE'S FARM WELLINGTON. POTTERY (TTNCM 28/ 1997)

Context	IA	RB/Kiln	RB/ Other	Med	P.Med
101					2 (5g)
103		185 (5237g)			
104		164 (2632g)			
105		104 (3971g)			
106		6 (254g)			
115		23 (546g)			
202			2 (30g)	5 (22g)	1 (13g)
302		1 (25g)			
303		1 (58g)		1 (32g)	
304	7 (148g)	21 (355g)	13 (66g)	1 (30g)	
306	1 (8g)				
403		3 (72g)			
404		3 (188g)		1 (4g)	
Total	8 (156g)	511 (13329g)	15 (96g)	8(88g)	3 (18g)

Number of Pottery sherds are followed by weight in grams.

IA = Iron Age. RB=Romano -British. Med=Medieval. P.Med=Post-medieval.



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scale 1:25,000

Figure 1

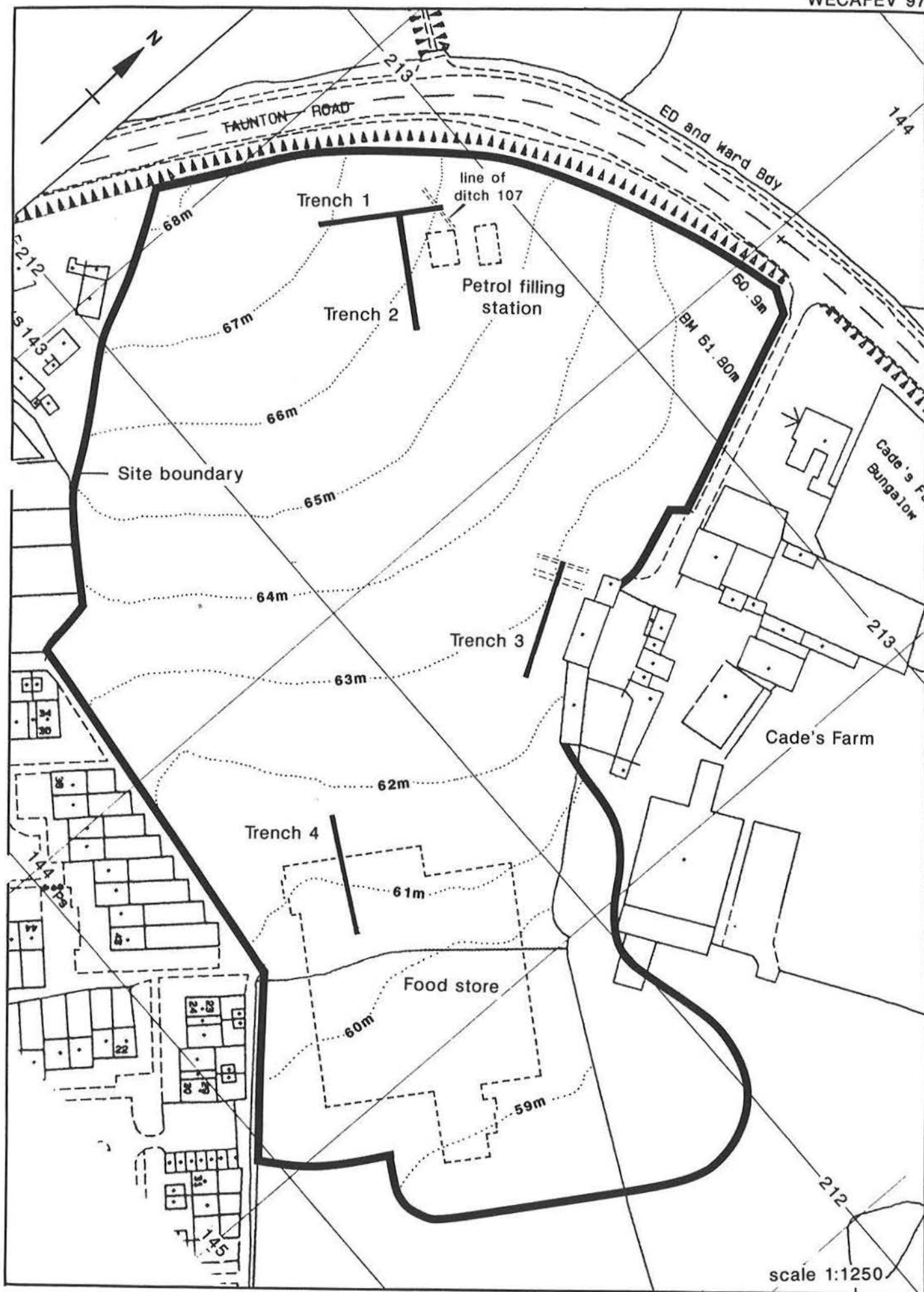


Figure 2

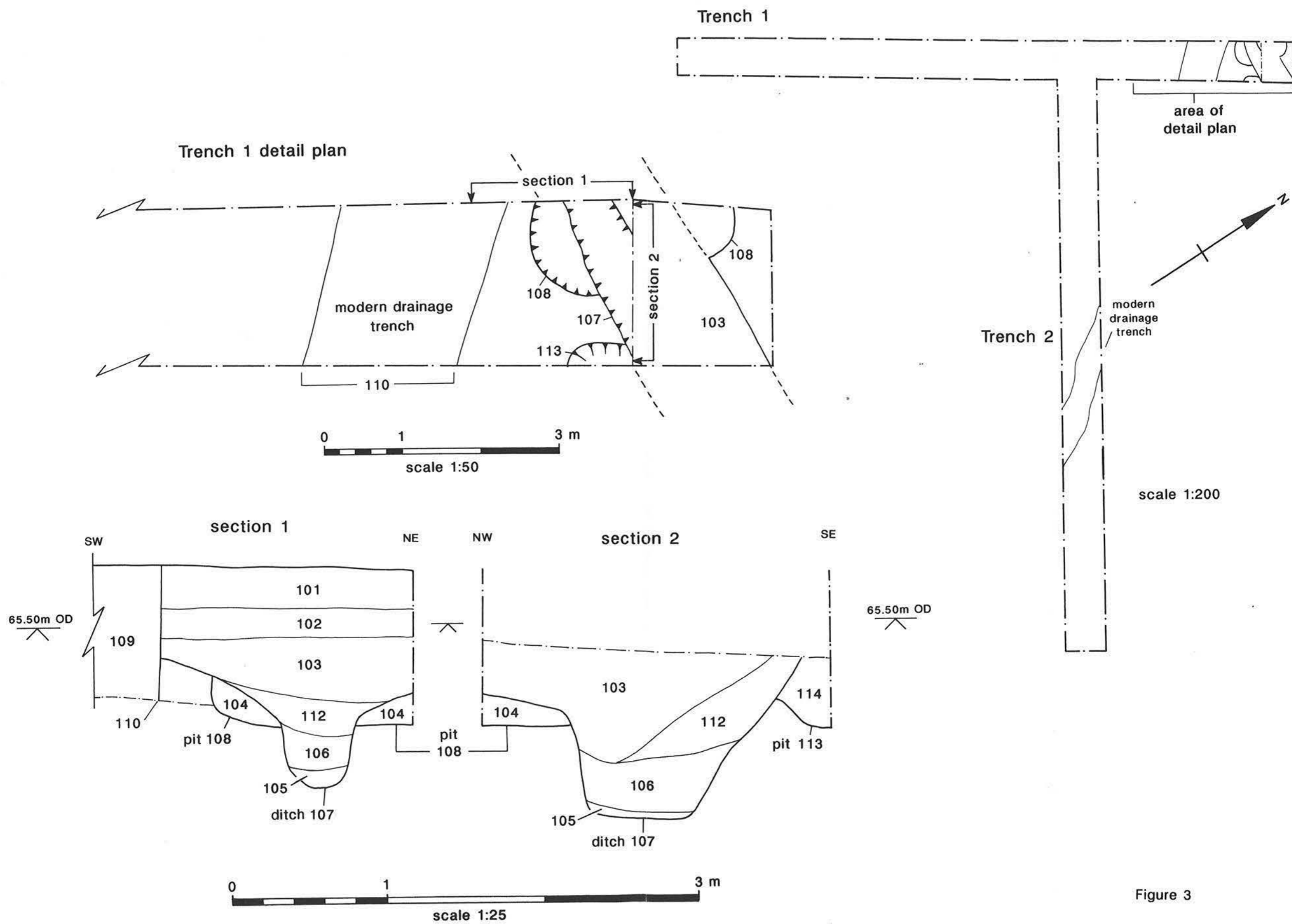


Figure 3

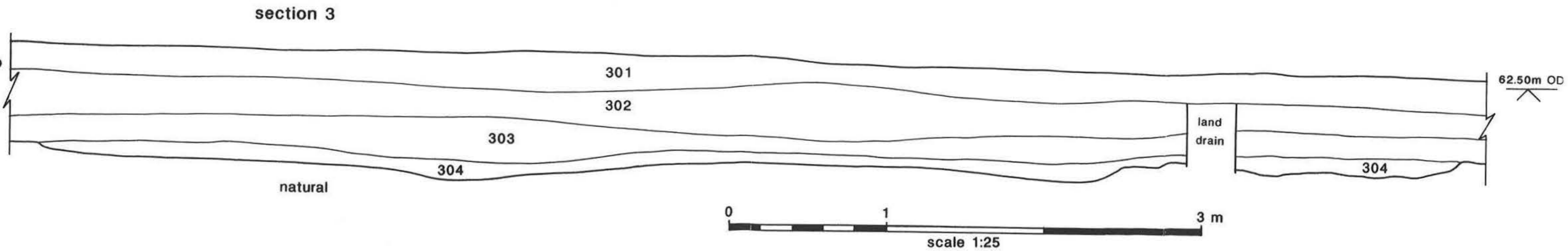
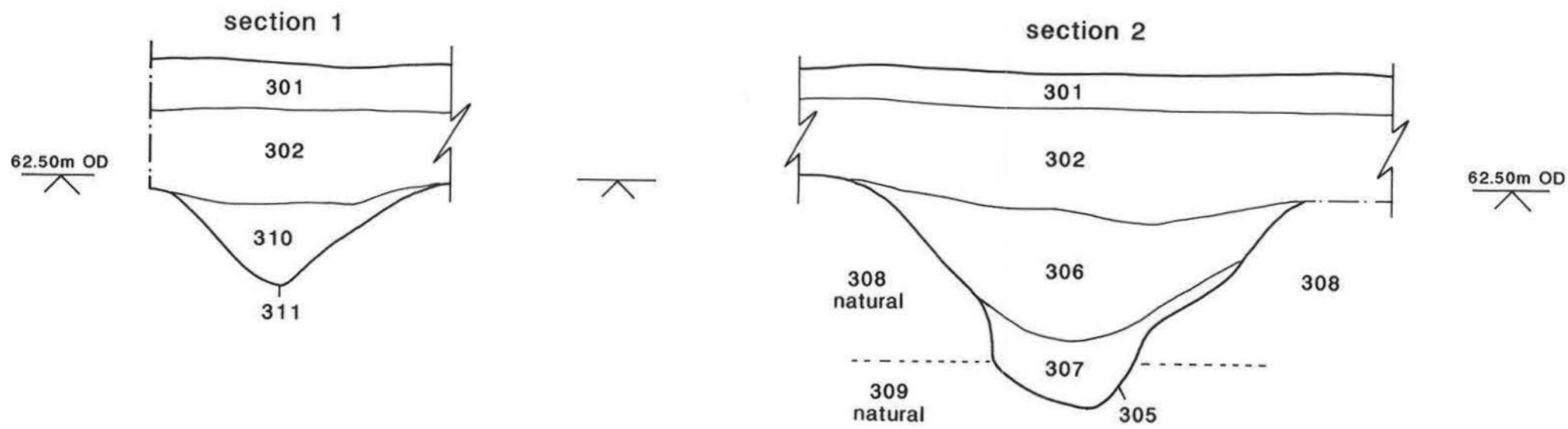
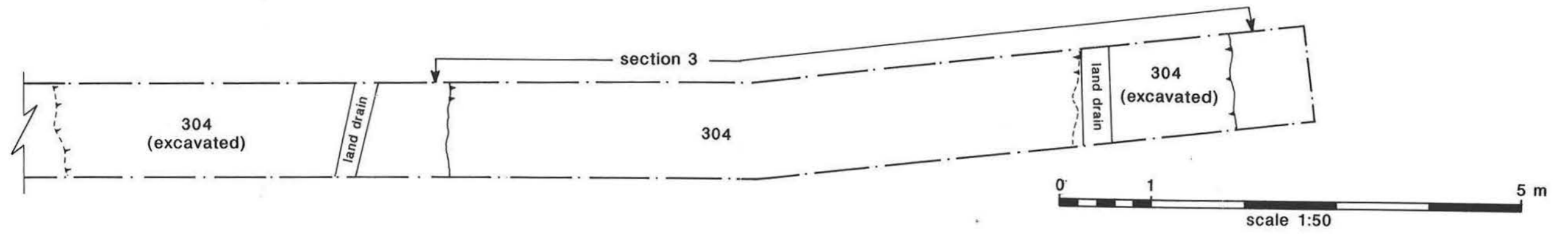
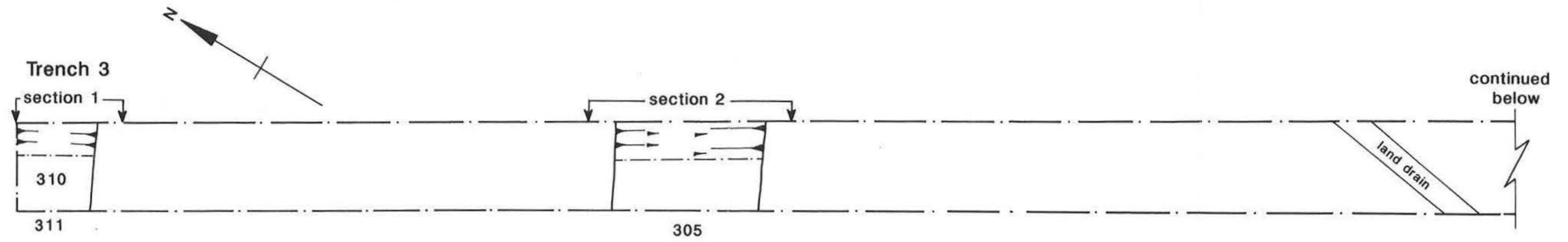


Figure 4

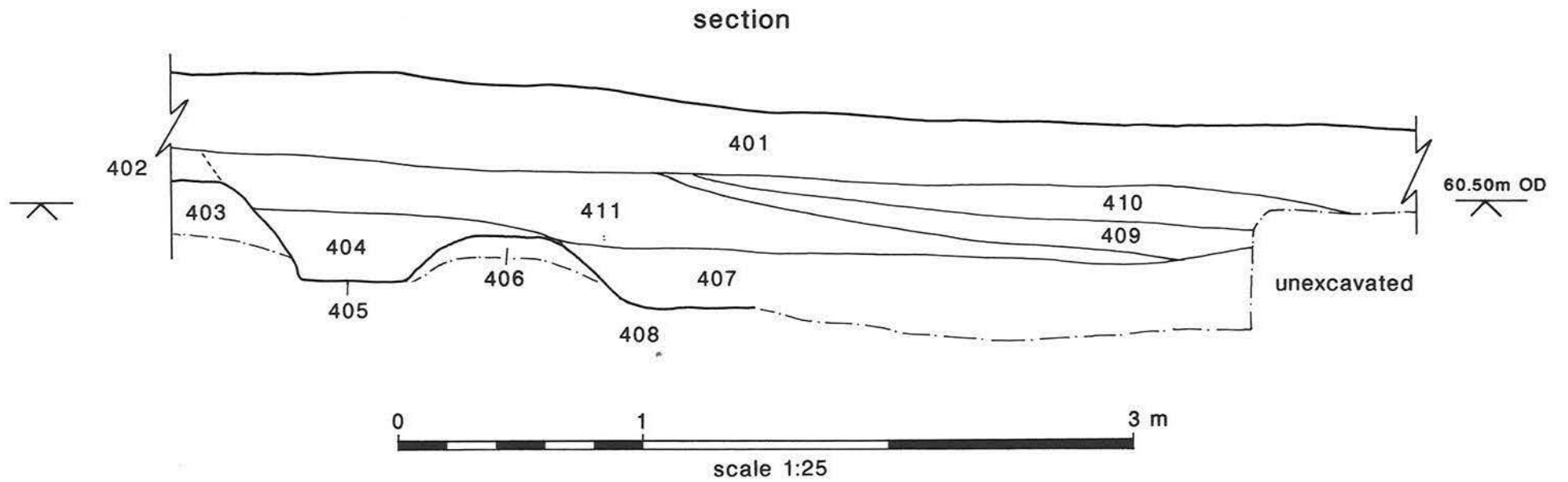
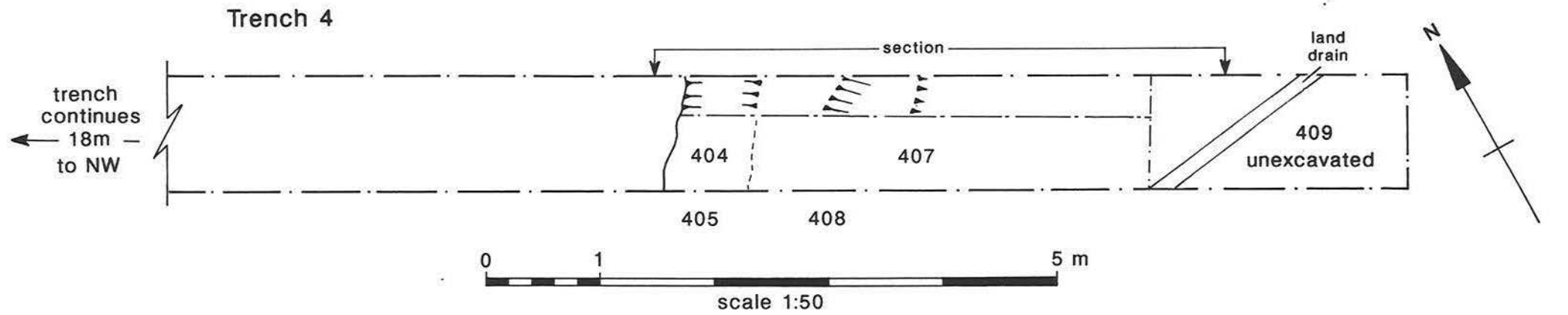


Figure 5