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An Archaeological Investigation at

**Graylingwell,
Chichester, West Sussex**

(inc. Hurrenville House)

P-98-044

— prehistoric negative ✓

An Archaeological Investigation at Graylingwell, Chichester, West Sussex.

Summary

The Chichester Priority Care Services NHS Trust have submitted a planning application to erect two new medical facilities at Graylingwell, one south of Barnfield Villas (Site 1, ref. CC/96/01826/OUT) and the other on the site of Havenstoke House (Site 2, ref. CC/97/02124/FUL). The applicants were required by Chichester District Council, the local planning authority, to submit the results of an archaeological evaluation, in order that the impact of the scheme could be assessed before planning permission was considered. The applicants commissioned Southern Archaeology (Chichester) to carry out the work as detailed in a specification provided by CDC (ref. Magilton, 1997).

Introduction

In total 490 metres of archaeological evaluation trench were excavated in the footprints of the proposed new buildings: 425 metres (nine trenches) at Site 1 (centred NGR SU866059), with an additional 35 metres of trenching (Trench H), in accordance with the contingency arrangements in the archaeological specification, and 65 metres (two trenches) at Site 2 (centred NGR SU862061). The fieldwork component took place between July 13th and 17th.

Geology and Topography

The site lies approximately one kilometre north of Chichester. The topographic regime is dominated by a gently rising south-facing slope, from c. 27 to 22m AOD. Within Site 1 is a slight but noticeable slope to the east, west and south. The underlying geology is of a flinty silty head of the Strettington Series under both sites, and the Binsted Series to the south of Site 1 (Soil Survey of England and Wales, SU 70 and SU 80, Hodgson, 1967). Site 1, lying on the southward slope, has been utilised as arable farmland in the recent past (cereal stubble was evident in the field, though presently the area is set aside, being dominated by ragwort). Site 2 lies on the brow of the hill and as such is fairly flat; it has been under development for some time, having been occupied by a lodge and adjacent garden until recently.

Archaeologically, the reader is referred to Kenny (1997, ref. P-97-047) for a full synopsis of the area. However, it is worth noting that Site 2 lies between two north-south sections of the Chichester Entrenchments (Bradley, 1971, N-S 1 and 2), a system of linear banks and ditches which are thought to date from the period immediately prior to the Roman invasion and to have delimited either the pre-Roman tribal centre or a royal estate. In either case it is apparent that many of the Entrenchments were of importance as land boundaries in the Medieval period: the boundary of the Medieval Liberty of Chichester utilises part of the line of entrenchment N-S 2 before turning east to bisect Site 1, and then south again on the line of another (not numbered) section of entrenchment east of St Richard's Hospital.

Methodology

The trial trenches at both sites were machine-excavated using a toothless ditching bucket to expose an undisturbed gravely substrate; the resulting trenches were 1.6 metres wide. The depth of the topsoil varied from 0.15 - 0.45 metres. The substrate was subsequently manually cleaned to expose and/or confirm any archaeology. This substrate and the archaeological features within exhibited evidence of bioturbation (from both root and worm action) and at breaks of slope (notably in trenches F and G) plough marks were visible. Changeable weather experienced during the evaluation aided, rather than hindered, the identification of features.

In order to comply with the archaeological specification (Magilton, 1997) only 10% of the archaeology identified was to be excavated, but all features were to be recorded. All were recorded using the single context system, planned at 1:20 and given a detailed soil description; all excavated features had sections drawn at 1:10. Due to the ephemeral nature of many of the contexts only those that were excavated and the readily apparent unexcavated features were photographed (using both colour slide and black and white print films). Artefactual remains were hand collected, and the area was metal detected (no archaeological metal objects were found).

Results:

The dominant feature is a large ditch orientated east-west, six metres wide and over two metres deep. Attendant to this feature is a low bank of gravel which may be a remnant of the earthwork. The bank overlies another deposit, whose blocky structure suggests that it may be a palaeosol.

Additional features also identified were linear gullies, large and small circular pits, a ring of postholes, circular gullies/ditches and a probable hearth. Since very few of the features (only five) yielded artefactual evidence the dating of the majority is at this stage impossible; further excavation may produce more dating evidence.

No matrix is supplied with this report as most of the features lie stratigraphically below the topsoil and above the natural. The only stratigraphic relationships found between archaeological contexts was in Trench C where posthole 39, overlay the gravel bank (11), which in turn sealed the palaeosol (12).

No environmental samples were taken during the evaluation as it was felt that the deposits were of limited potential, particularly since no faunal remains were recovered. It should be borne in mind that within features microenvironments may exist, reflecting particular depositional episodes within the features which would merit sampling.

Discussion

Prehistoric

Feature 7 (the Entrenchment ditch) contained 5 sherds of Iron Age pottery; the same feature also produced Roman tile, but it is conceivable that the Iron Age pottery may be from a lower fill (three fills were identified in section). The scale of this ditch suggests that it probably represents a hitherto unidentified section of the Chichester Entrenchments, and the section exposed during the evaluation has parallels, both in shape and size, with the section described by Bradley (1971, 34-35) excavated at Goodwood Park. Dateable pottery from the Chichester earthworks is relatively scarce, therefore the potential for more dating evidence here is extremely significant.

Feature 4 also produced some very degraded pottery which has been provisionally dated to the Iron Age although it may possibly be dated to the Early Bronze Age.

Roman

As already stated Roman brick and tile were recovered from the entrenchment ditch (Feature 7). This material perhaps came from a late silting of the ditch

Feature 19 also produced Roman material including a large number of sherds from the same pottery vessel, a flagon provisionally dated to the second half of the first century. Since no other vessels were represented the flagon is unlikely to have been residual. Roman activity is further endorsed by the presence of a *Tegula*-based hearth (Feature 21), which is provisionally dated to the second century; (this date may be refined with the implementation of archaeomagnetic dating).

The significant new conclusions to be drawn from the presence of these Roman features are that some degree of early Roman settlement activity occurs locally; the hearth is unlikely to occur in isolation and that the presence of flue tile within Feature 7 implies that a masonry building with heated floors is somewhere in the immediate vicinity. Since Roman remains of any date were previously unknown in the vicinity of Graylingwell, the importance these new discoveries cannot be overstated.

Post-Medieval

Feature 47, apparently a linear feature with an ashy fill, may represent a burnt out hedgeline. The preservation of sub-carbonised wood in this feature suggests that it may be of post-medieval date (no artefactual remains were recovered); presumably it relates to the removal of the prehistoric and Medieval boundary features at a relatively recent date.

Comment

Two problems arise due to the nature of the excavation, whereby the features are seen in narrow trenches (though open excavation would resolve these problems). Firstly the features appear isolated, whereas in an open excavation a relative stratigraphic framework could be constructed, and thus in part remove the difficulty in dating the features. This would probably be very successful on this site as there are a number of linear features running in a variety of directions. Secondly, there is an intrinsic problem with the interpretation of the archaeology. In part this is due to the non-excavation of features, and this is further compounded if the feature is not fully exposed. This is probably best borne out by Feature 21: prior to excavation this appeared as a large circular pit, but excavation revealed this feature not to be a pit but a hearth. This example is particularly pertinent when one considers that several large circular features were identified during the evaluation, Feature 21 being the only one excavated. Other examples are also apparent such as Feature 43, which may represent either a ring gully or a sub-circular circle of double postholes, and the postholes in Trench D which might also form a circle if a larger area were to be exposed.

Furthermore, due to the limited excavation that occurs at evaluation level it should be considered that as Feature 12 was sealed by the gravel bank (Feature 11), it was not possible to pursue the possibility of archaeology being buried below this palaeosol. It should also be considered that due to the nature of an active soil horizon archaeology is not visible within these deposits, but only below them, and that palaeosols have great potential both archaeologically and environmentally if sampled correctly.

It is felt that due to the scale of the area being developed the methodology implemented was the most pragmatic. Due to the wetting and drying of the features the visibility of the archaeology was heightened, and that the results obtained are a fair representation of the archaeology in the area.

Other

The artefacts from the excavation will be deposited at Chichester District Museum (Accession No. 7327).

Figure 1: Site location plan, showing the position of the trenches within (Scale 1:2000).

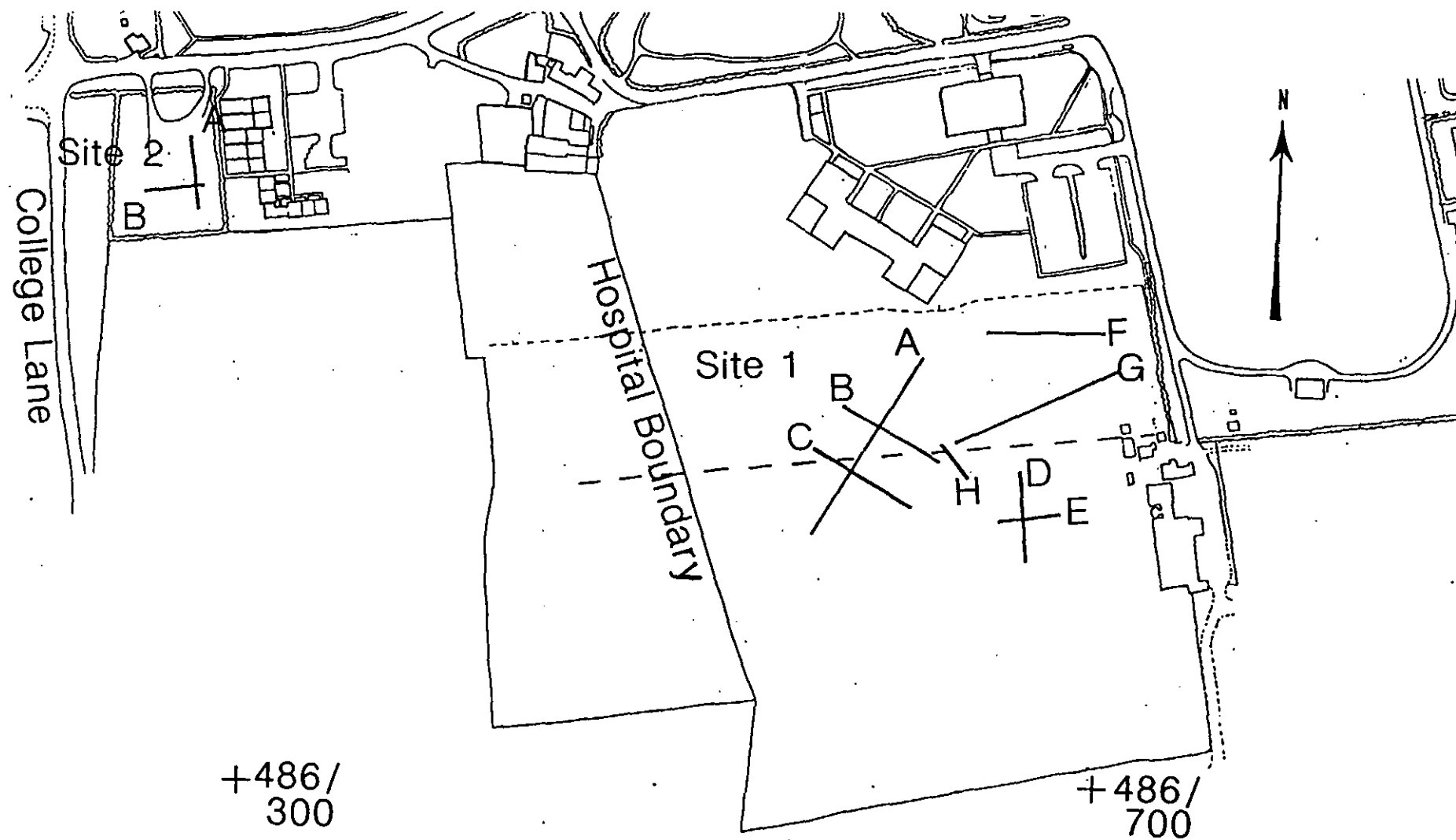


Figure 2: Archaeological features recorded in Trench A and Trench B, Site 1 (Scale 1:100).

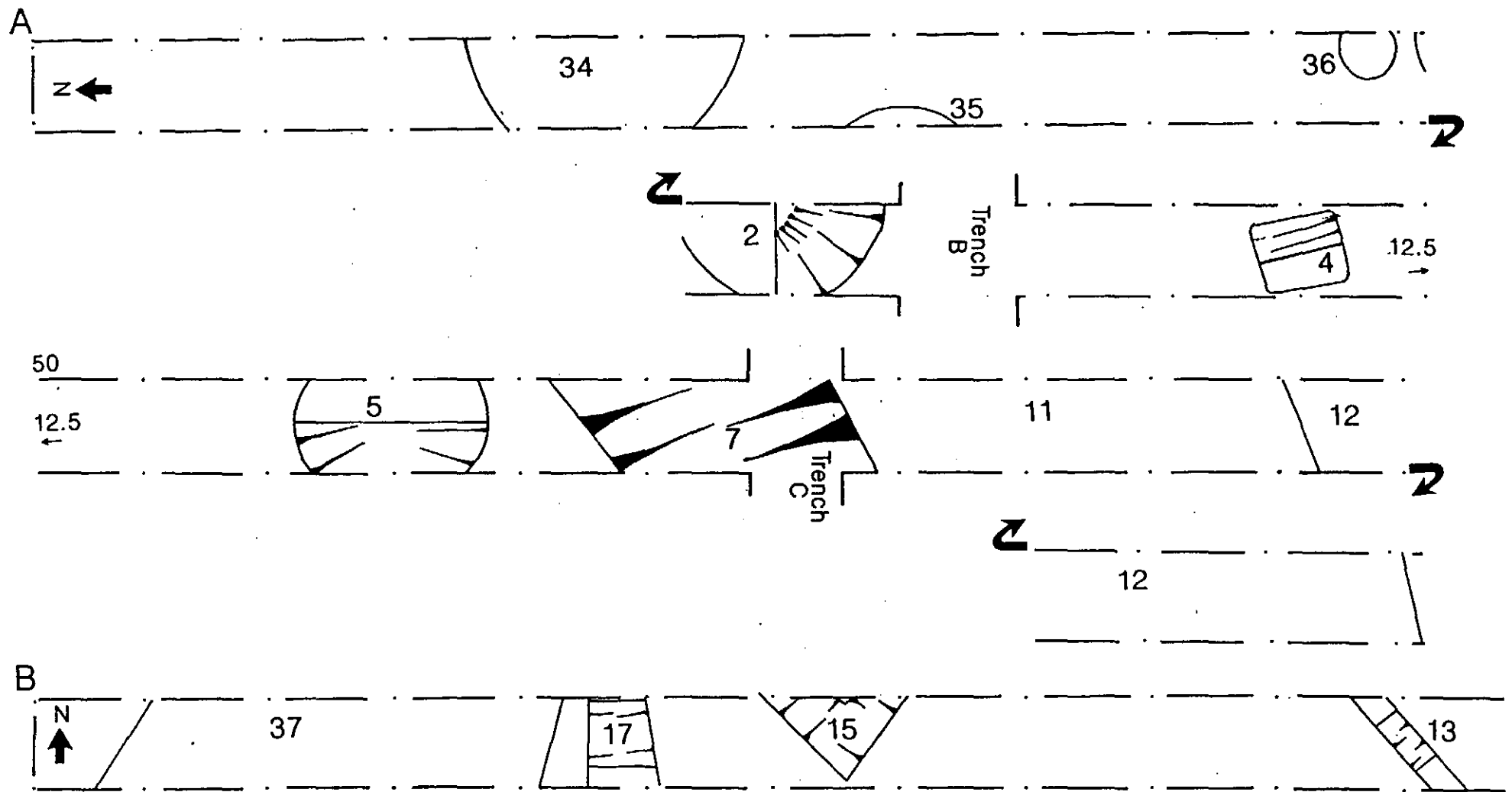


Figure 3: Archaeological features recorded in Trenches C, D and E, Site 1 (Scale 1:100).

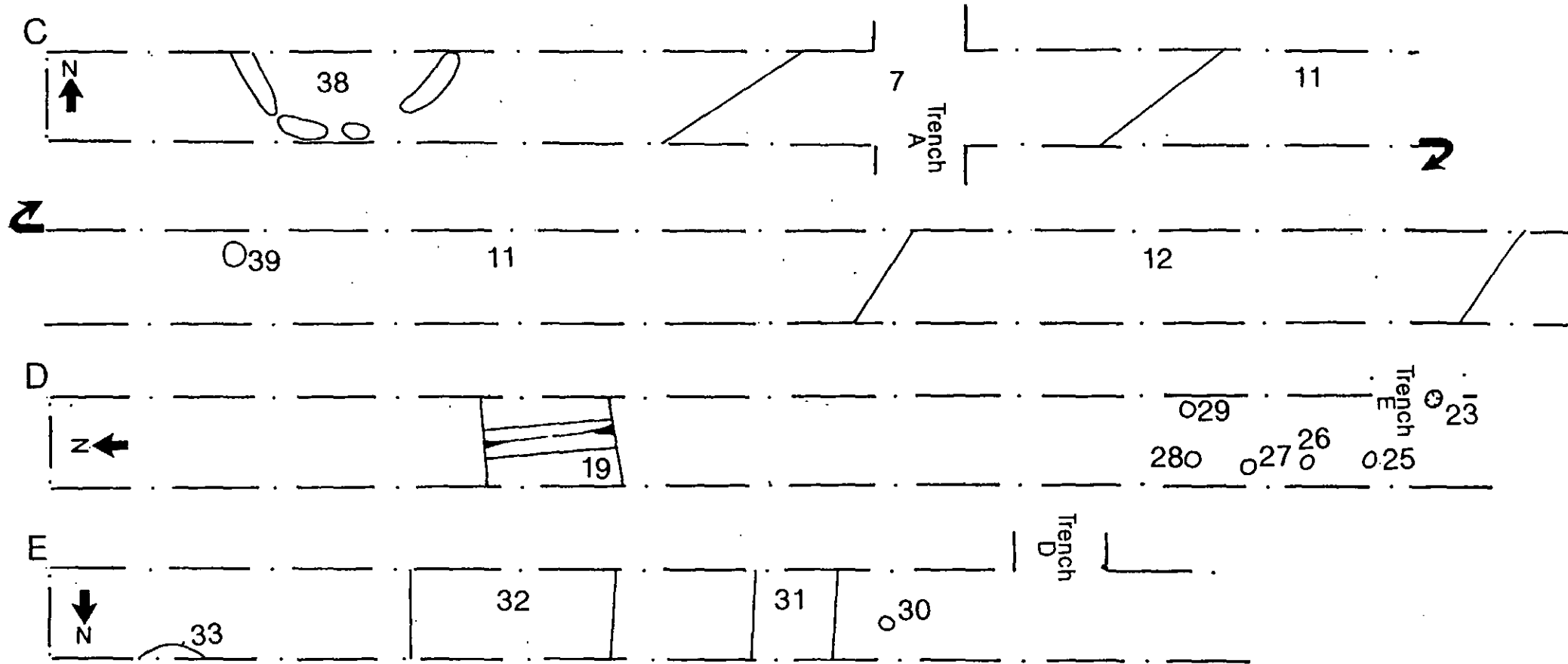


Figure 4: Archaeological features recorded in Trench G and Trench H, Site 1 (Scale 1:100).

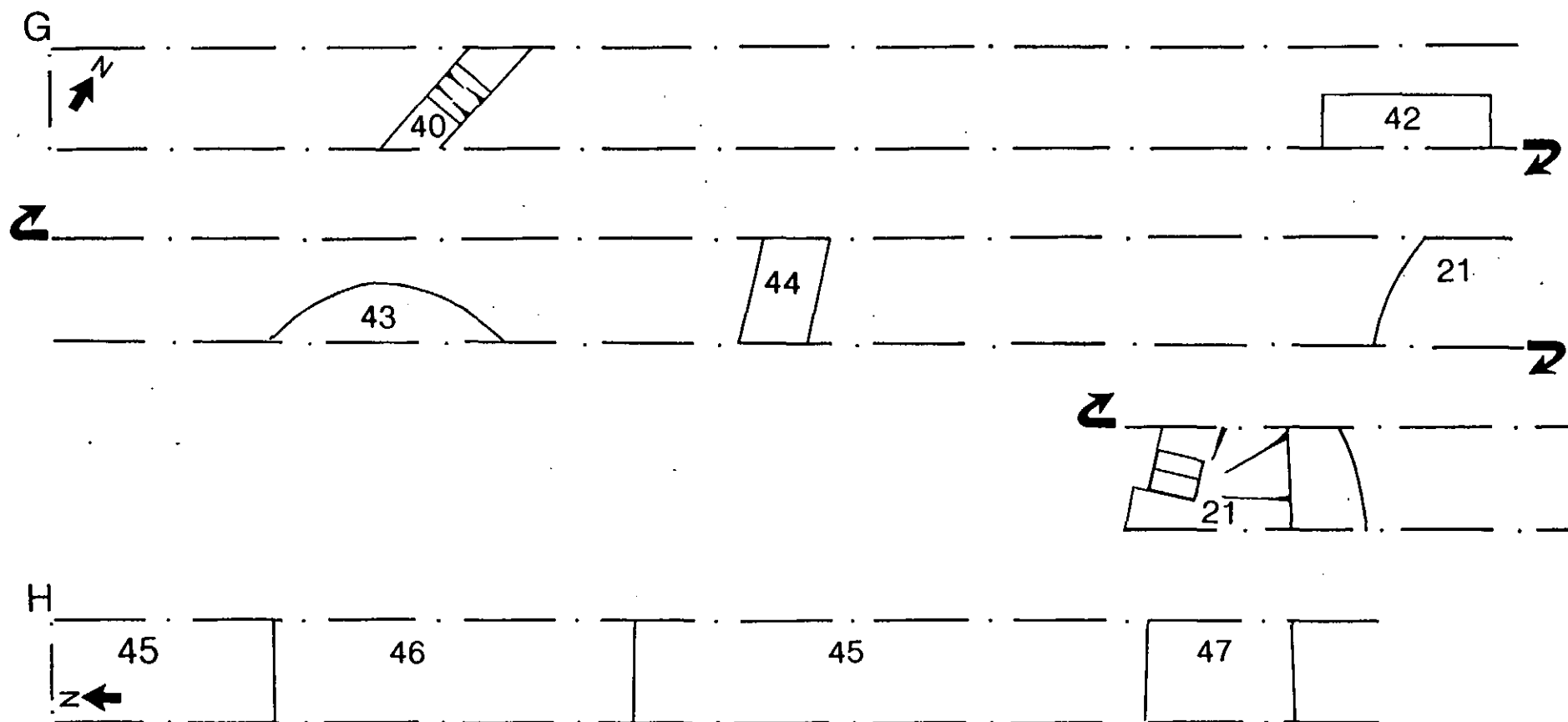
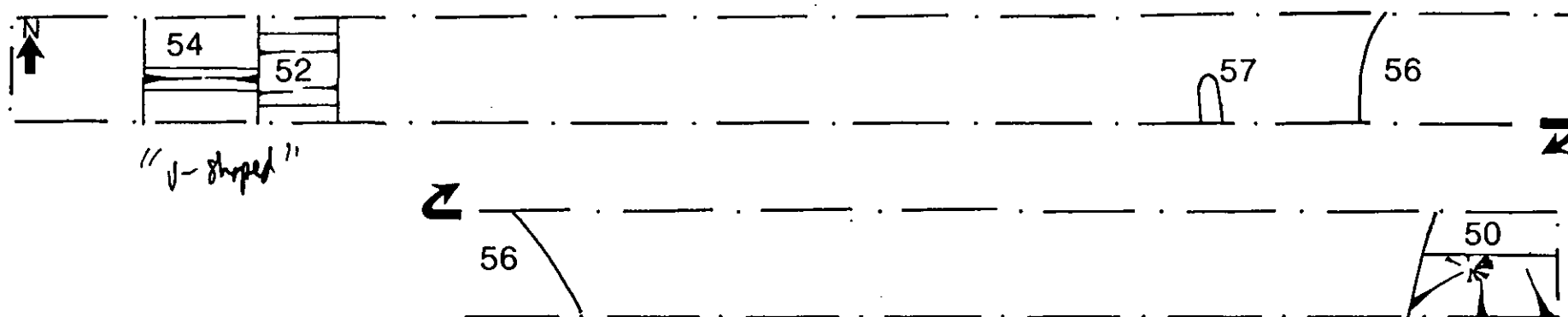


Figure 5: Archaeological features recorded in Trench B, Site 2 (Scale 1:100).



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Appendix 1: Context list

Site 1

Context	Fill	Description	Trench	Spot Date
1		Topsoil	Site 1	
2	3	Ring Ditch	1(A)	
3		Fill of Ring Ditch 2	1(A)	Roman
4		Layer/ Fill	1(A)	Iron Age
5	6	Sub-circular Pit	1(A)	
6		Fill of Pit 5	1(A)	
7	8, 9 + 10	V-Shaped Ditch	1(A) + (C)	
8		Upper Fill of 7	1(A) + (C)	Roman
10		Primary Fill of 7	1(A) + (C)	
11		Layer, Possible Bank	1(A) + (C)	
12		Layer, Possible Palaeosol	1(A) + (C)	
13	14	Gully	1(B)	
14		Fill of Gully 13	1(B)	
15	16	Gully	1(B)	
16		Fill of Gully 15	1(B)	
17	18	Gully	1(B)	
18		Fill of Gully 17	1(B)	
19	20	V-Shaped Ditch	1(D)	
20		Fill of Ditch 19	1(D)	50-100 AD
21	22	Hearth	1(G)	
22		Fill of Hearth 21	1(G)	C. 2 nd AD
23	24	Circular Posthole	1(D)	
24		Fill of Posthole 23	1(D)	
25		Circular Posthole	1(D)	
26		Circular Posthole	1(D)	
27		Circular Posthole	1(D)	
28		Circular Posthole	1(D)	
29		Circular Posthole	1(D)	
30		Circular Posthole	1(E)	
31		Ditch	1(E)	
32		Ditch	1(E)	
33		Pit (?)	1(E)	
34		Large Pit	1(A)	
35		Pit (?)	1(A)	
36		Pit (?)	1(A)	
37		Ditch (same as 7)	1(B)	
38		Ring Gully (?)	1(C)	
39		Posthole	1(C)	
40	41	Ditch	1(G)	

Context	Fill	Description	Trench	Spot Date
41		Fill of Ditch 40	1(G)	
42		Rectilinear Feature	1(G)	
43		Large Pit	1(G)	
44		Ditch	1(G)	
45		Possible Bank (same as 11)	1(H)	
46		Ditch (same as 7)	1(H)	
47		Linear Ashy Feature	1(H)	
Site 2				
50	51	Circular Pit	2(B)	
51		Fill of Pit 50	2(B)	
52	53	Gully	2(B)	
53		Fill of Gully 52	2(B)	
54	55	V-Shaped Ditch	2(B)	
55		Fill of Ditch 54	2(B)	
56		Large Circular Pit	2(B)	
57		Terminus of Gully(?)	2(B)	

Appendix 2: The find-types context (by weight, in grammes, and quantity).

Context	CBM	Tegula	Imbrex	Flue Tile	Iron Age Pot	Prehist. Pot	Roman Fine Wares	Roman Coarse Wares	Burnt Green Sand	Burnt Daub
3	195 (1)									
4					10 (1)	35 (1)				
8	1995 (9)	600 (3)		215 (3)	65 (5)				65 (1)	
20							385 (5)			
22	260 (2)	5020 (47)	145 (2)				205 (1)	905 (30)	120 (2)	540 (62)