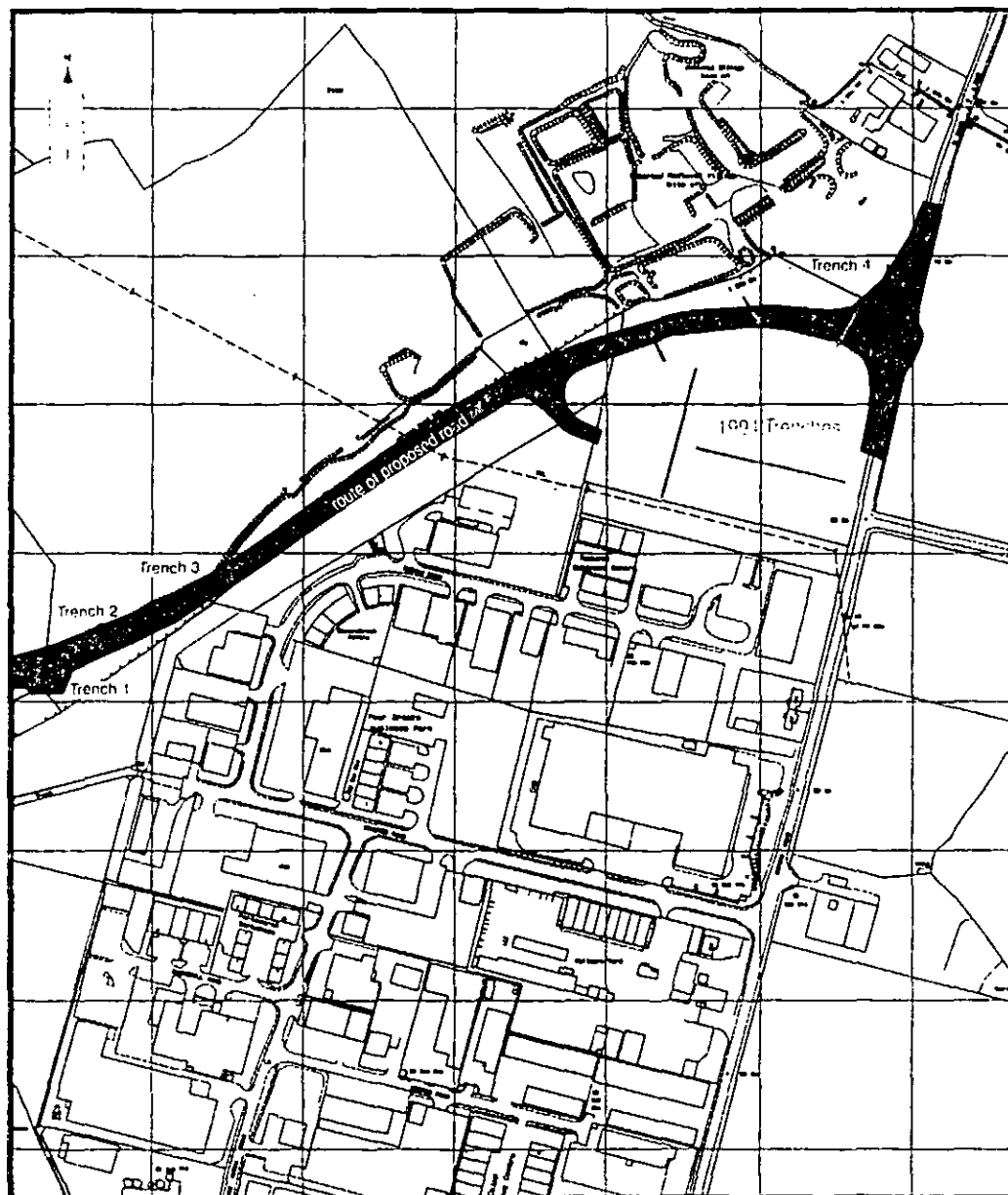


# North Calne Distributor Road, Calne, Wiltshire

## *ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT*

NGR SU 0015 7265



OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

March 1999

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Surveying and Management Consultancy

North Calne Distributor Road, Calne, Wiltshire

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NGR SU 0015 7265

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

March 1999

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*ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT*

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OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

March 1999

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## **SUMMARY**

*The Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out a field evaluation of the proposed route of the North Calne Distributor Road, Calne, Wiltshire, (NGR SU 0015 7265) on behalf of Surveying and Management Consultancy in February 1999. The evaluation investigated a linear earthwork which formed part of the Beversbrook deserted medieval village, Scheduled Ancient Monument 906. The earthwork was interpreted as a hollow way.*

*Romano-British pottery was recovered from the lower fill of the hollow way and the upper fills produced pottery of the same date in association with medieval sherds. The amount of Romano-British material found during the evaluation confirms the findings of an earlier evaluation of the proposed road corridor, by the Oxford Archaeological Unit in July 1994, which identified a Romano-British ditch. The hollow way is likely to be medieval in date, although it is possible that it is Romano-British in origin. The amount of Romano-British pottery recovered suggests that there is a Romano-British settlement in the vicinity, possibly within the area of the medieval village.*

*From the evidence of both evaluations there is a strong possibility that further Romano-British and medieval features and possibly a Romano-British settlement will be impacted upon by the construction of the proposed distributor road. The discovery of Romano-British features in the vicinity of the medieval village is significant and suggests continuity of use of the site.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Location and scope of work**

Between 21 February and 23 February 1999, the Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out a field evaluation of the proposed route of the North Calne Distributor Road, Calne, Wiltshire (NGR SU 0015 7265) (Fig. 1). The work was conducted on behalf of Surveying and Management Consultancy to a brief set by Wiltshire County Archaeological Services.

The evaluation comprised four trial trenches covering an area of approximately 240 m<sup>2</sup>. The trenches were located in two separate fields, both of which are currently used as pasture (Fig. 2). The northernmost field was located immediately to the west of the A3102 and the southernmost field was adjacent to the Beversbrook Centre. Trench 2 was located across the line of a linear negative earthwork thought to be a possible hollow-way.

### **1.2 Geology and topography**

The site is located approximately 2 miles north of Calne. The underlying geology is Kimmeridge clay and the area of the proposed road corridor falls from 80 m OD at the northern end to 78.5 m OD at the southern extent.

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

The medieval village of Beversbrook (SMR 450) lies adjacent to the site. This is a well preserved Scheduled Ancient Monument (Wilts 906), represented by substantial and extensive earthworks, surviving in permanent pasture. The village is first mentioned in Domesday Book as Bevresbroc, which literally means 'Bevers brook'. The reasons for, and the date of the decline of Beversbrook are uncertain, although documentary evidence shows that dwellings still existed on the site until at least the 1380's.

The Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out an evaluation of the parcel of land that lies between the two areas investigated in July 1994, on behalf of Dalton Warner Davis (OAU 1994). The latter evaluation revealed two shallow ditches, one of which produced Roman tile and pottery. The remains of medieval ridge and furrow ploughing were also observed.

## **2 EVALUATION AIMS**

The aims of the evaluation were to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the proposal area and to determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality, date and depth of any archaeological remains present. Additionally, the evaluation aimed to establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features and to make available the results of the investigation.

### **3 METHOD**

#### **3.1 Sample size and scope of fieldwork**

Four trenches were opened using a JCB excavator under close archaeological supervision. Trench 1 measured 30 m by 1.6 m, Trench 2 measured 20 m by 1.6 m, Trench 3 measured 60 m by 1.6 m and Trench 4 measured 40 m by 1.6 m (see Figure 2 for trench locations).

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

The trenches were machined to the top of the underlying natural geology, Kimmeridge clay, under close archaeological supervision. Archaeological features were cleaned by hand, excavated, planned and photographed. Sections were drawn of all excavated features. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson 1992) and in line with requirements of the Wiltshire County Council Archaeological Brief.

### **4 RESULTS: GENERAL**

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

Kimmeridge clay was located at a depth of between 0.24 m and 0.37 m below the ground surface in the four trenches. A buried ploughsoil overlay the natural in Trenches 1 and 2 and was in turn overlain by modern silty clay topsoil.

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

No significant archaeological remains were located in Trenches 3 and 4. Trenches 1 and 2 contained a medieval hollow way. A shallow gully was also excavated in Trench 2.

#### **4.3 Presentation of results**

In the following sections the deposits are described trench by trench. There is additional comment on the finds and the reliability of the results. A quantification and description of the pottery and animal bone is given in Section 5. A context inventory, including a summary of finds present is provided in Appendix 1.

### **5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS**

#### **5.1 Trench descriptions**

##### **5.1.1 Trench 1 (Fig. 3), Sections 1 and 2)**

Trench 1 was located on the south-western extent of the site and it was aligned north to south. Kimmeridge clay (102) was encountered at depth of c. 0.36 m. A linear feature, interpreted as a possible hollow way, 105 cut the natural at the northern end of the trench.

The profile of the hollow-way was not fully revealed in this trench, nor was it visible as a surface earthwork. Approximately 0.50 m of the shallow northern edge were revealed before the feature extended beyond the northern extent of the trench. A five metre section was excavated in spits through two fills of the feature, 103 and 104; excavation was halted at c. 0.65 m because the water table was encountered.

The lowest excavated fill, 104 of the possible hollow way was a slightly bluish grey layer, 0.32 m thick, which contained frequent charcoal flecks. The fill produced 43 sherds (401 g) of Romano-British pottery. The upper fill, (103) a greenish grey silty clay overlay 104. Thirty-four sherds (297 g) of Romano-British pottery were recovered from the fill together with four medieval/post-medieval sherds giving the context a *terminus post quem* of the 17th century. Bone, fired clay and slag were also found within the fill. Fill 103 was overlain by topsoil, Layer 100.

An earlier ploughsoil, 101 was observed at the southern extent of the trench. There was no relationship observed between the fills of the hollow way and the layer of ploughsoil.

#### 5.1.2 Trench 2 (Fig. 3), Sections 3-5)

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Trench 2 was positioned at right angles across a visible linear earthwork. Kimmeridge clay was encountered at depth of c. 0.37 m. The linear feature, interpreted as a possible hollow way, 209 together with a gully, 214 cut the natural.

The full profile of hollow way 209 was not revealed; it extended beyond the northern extent of the trench. It was in excess of 4.8 m wide and up to 0.90 m deep. The earliest fill of the hollow way (207) was a mottled bluish grey clay layer which may have accumulated naturally as slump from the eastern edge. The lowest Fill 208 was the same as Fill 104 in Trench 1. It was overlain by a dump of sandstone blocks, 210. This dump appeared to have been deliberately placed over the deepest part of the hollow way. This in turn was sealed by 206 and 211 which were very similar and comprised greenish grey silty clay; Fill 211 was distinguished by frequent charcoal flecks. Fill 206 contained 2 sherds, (6 g) of Romano-British pottery and 2 sherds of medieval pottery, together with bone and fired clay and Fill 211 produced two sherds of later medieval pottery and fired clay and was cut by a probable wheel rut, 213. Layer 212, a mid grey brown silty clay extended beyond the limits of the rut and appeared to have been forced into it. It was very similar to the ploughsoil.

Fill 204 sealed 206 and comprised a mid slightly bluish grey silty clay. It was truncated by Cut 202 which was associated with the construction of a modern cambered chipped stone surface, 201 above the hollow way.

Gully 214 was 0.30 m wide, 0.18 m deep and 2.7 m of its length was visible within the trench (Fig. 3, Section 4). It was orientated north-east – south-west and it extended beneath the eastern and southern edges of the trench. The gully was filled with light bluish grey silty clay, 215 which produced no finds.

A layer of ploughsoil, 203 extended from 2 m north of the southern extent of the trench until it was cut by Cut 202 (Fig. 3, Section 3). The ploughsoil sealed Gully 214, but no



relationship was established between the ploughsoil and the hollow way. Topsoil overlay both the ploughsoil and the chipped stone surface.

#### 5.1.3 *Trench 3 (not illustrated)*

Trench 3 was aligned north-east to south-west. Kimmeridge clay was encountered at a depth of approximately 0.24 m. The natural was overlain by modern hardcore, 302, which was the same as Layer 201 observed in Trench 2. The hardcore surface was directly overlain by modern topsoil.

#### 5.1.4 *Trench 4 (not illustrated)*

Trench 4 was aligned approximately north-south, parallel to the A3102. Kimmeridge clay was encountered at a depth of c. 0.25 m. The natural was overlain by topsoil. No significant archaeological features were encountered.

## 6 **FINDS**

### 6.1 *Animal bone by B M Charles*

Only a few fragments of bone were retrieved from the evaluation. Four fragments were recovered from the medieval upper fill (103) of the hollow way in Trench 1. Only one could be positively identified as a small section from a sheep/goat rib. One of the unidentified fragments had gnawing marks on it. One distal half of a single right tibia belonging to a sheep/goat was found in context 206, which was the same deposit as Fill 103 in Trench 1. There were again clear signs of gnawing damage, probably by a dog. The condition of all the bone was good, with little attritional damage.

### 6.2 *Roman pottery by Paul Booth*

#### 6.2.1 *Introduction*

Some 75 sherds (687 g) of Roman pottery, mainly of 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century date, were recovered in the evaluation. The material was scanned briefly and recorded by context using fabric and type codes employed in the OAU Roman pottery recording system. Quantification was by sherd count, weight and rim count. The pottery was in moderate condition at best. Sherd size was variable but the average sherd weight was only 9 g, and preservation of surfaces was variable, with slips substantially if not entirely eroded away.

#### 6.2.2 *Fabrics*

The following fabric groupings were present:

F51. Oxford colour-coated ware. 1 sherd, 3 g.

F53. New Forest colour-coated ware (fabric 1a). 1 sherd, 9 g.

OF. Possible Oxford colour-coated ware (surfaces do not survive). 1 sherd, 5 g.

M41. Oxford colour-coated ware mortarium fabric. 1 sherd, 7 g.

W15. ?New Forest fine white ware (fabric 2b). 1 sherd, 7 g.

- O10. Fine oxidised ware(s). 4 sherds, 24 g.
- O30. Moderately fine sandy oxidised ware(s), North Wiltshire tradition. 12 sherds, 77 g.
- R10. Fine reduced ware. 3 sherds, 8 g.
- R20. Coarse sandy reduced ware(s). 15 sherds, 110 g.
- R30. Moderately sandy reduced ware(s). 26 sherds, 322 g.
- B10. Black-burnished ware (BB1). 1 sherd, 15 g.
- B11. Black-burnished ware (Dorset BB1). 9 sherds, 96 g.

The 'fine and specialist' wares are all from sources which are predictable for the region. With the exception of the black-burnished ware, however, none of the coarse wares can be confidently attributed to specific sources, though most if not all are likely to have been of fairly local origin. The O30 and R30 ware groups have characteristics reminiscent of the North Wiltshire sandy wares of the 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> centuries and presumably derived from this general region. Some three or four R30 sherds appeared to be misfired or overfired (though they could not be described as wasters) and might hint at a very local source for some of this material. Sherds in the R20 fabric group were heavily tempered with sand which included some distinctive large rounded glassy grains. A variant of this group consisted of sherds additionally tempered with rounded clay pellets.

### 6.2.3 *Vessel Forms*

Fourteen vessels were represented by rim sherds, comprising a jug, 6 jars (or uncertain jar/bowl forms), 6 bowls/dishes and one unknown (fragmentary) form. Few of these were sufficiently large (or otherwise diagnostic) to be closely datable or assignable to specific types. Chronologically distinctive pieces included a drop-flanged bowl in black-burnished ware and a possible bowl (Young 1977 type C51) in Oxford colour-coated ware, though the date range of the latter vessel, and of a curving sided bowl or dish in fabric W15 (New Forest white ware) are effectively those of the period of production of the respective fabrics.

### 6.2.4 *Chronology*

The assemblage as a whole is dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries, with the likelihood that most of it can be assigned to the period c AD 250-350. Distinctive 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century fabrics and forms are entirely absent, and while the chronological range of the coarse ware fabrics is uncertain their character suggests that they belong to the period after the main production of the North Wiltshire fine sandy wares, of 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century date. The limited evidence of the vessel typology is consistent with this, and the occurrence of jars and bowls/dishes in more or less equal proportions is also characteristic of later Roman assemblages. Roman pottery was only recovered from four contexts, of which only two produced more than two sherds. These assemblages both contained material such as Oxford or New Forest products which must be dated after the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. The relative scarcity of Oxford material might suggest that the groups did not extend much into the 4<sup>th</sup> century, by which time the proportion of Oxford wares might have been higher. Argument from negative evidence in such a small group must be treated with caution, however.

### 6.2.5 Conclusion

The assemblage, in moderate condition, is of later Roman date. It is likely to have derived from an almost immediately adjacent settlement site, though by what process is unclear. The group is too small to permit conclusions about the function and status of the site where it originated.

## 6.3 The post-Roman pottery by P Blinkhorn

### 6.3.1 Introduction

The pottery assemblage comprised 8 sherds with a total weight of 115 g. The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1.

### 6.3.2 Fabrics

East Wiltshire Ware. Oxfordshire fabric OXAQ (Mellor 1994, 100-6). Flint and limestone gritted ware, coil built, wheel-finished. Early 12<sup>th</sup> – early 15<sup>th</sup> century. 1 sherd, 20 g.

Scratched ware. Medieval unglazed ware. Pottery with this distinctive surface finish is known from several sites in the region, including both production and consumption sites. It has been noted at the kiln site at Laverstock, Wilts (Musty *et al.* 1969), and during excavations at Old Sarum, Salisbury and Gomeldon in Wiltshire (McCarthy and Brooks 1988, 340). The so-called 'M40 ware' is also often found with a scratched finish (Hinton 1974). The sherd from this site has moderate to dense sub-angular quartz up to 1 mm, and is probably a Laverstock type (eg. Musty *et al.* 1969, figs 9 and 10). 1 sherd, 8 g.

Laverstock ware. Medieval production centre (Musty *et al.* 1969). Single bodysherd with a dirty green glaze. Buff fabric with subrounded quartz up to 2 mm, most less than 1 mm. 1 sherd, 7 g.

Nash Hill ware. Medieval sandy ware, products of the eponymous kiln site at Lacock, Wiltshire. Late 13<sup>th</sup> – early 14<sup>th</sup> century. Assemblage comprises a bodysherd from an unglazed jar and two sherds from glazed jugs. One of the jug sherds has the remains of a vertical stripe of white slip dotted with pellets of a red-firing clay. 3 sherds, 77 g.

Late Medieval Oxidized ware. Moderate sub-rounded red and grey quartz up to 1 mm. 15<sup>th</sup> century. Similar wares are found throughout the South Midlands. 1 sherd, 1 g.

Tin-Glazed Earthenwares. c. AD1550-1700. Fine white earthenware, occasionally pinkish or yellowish core. Thick white tin glaze, with painted cobalt blue decoration, occasionally manganese purple and ochre. Rare inscriptions. Glaze tends to flake away from surface of body clay. Vessels usually ointment pots, albarellos and plates. 1 sherd, 2 g.

### 6.3.3 Discussion

The small size of this assemblage somewhat limits any discussion of its significance. All the sherds were in reasonably good condition, however, with the exception of the slipped and glazed sherd from context 103, which was rather abraded, with most of the glaze and slip missing. It would seem from the ceramic that the medieval activity at this site was contemporary with the nearby deserted medieval village.

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

	RB		OXAQ		Scratched		Laverstock		Nash Hill		Oxidized		TGE		
Context	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	Date
101	1	20													RB
103	34	283	1	20	1	8			2	28			1	2	17thC?
104	38	374													RB
206	2	6					1	7	1	49					13thC
211											1	1			15thC?
	75	683	1	20	1	8	1	7	3	77	1	1	1	2	

### 6.4 Environmental

No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were located. The deposits within the hollow-way were not suitable for sampling given their likely mode of deposition.

## 7 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

### 7.1 Reliability of field investigation.

Although some disturbance of archaeological deposits was recorded such as the truncation by the construction of the modern hardcore surface and several land drains, most deposits appeared to be sealed. However, at the time of evaluation the site was extremely waterlogged and such marshy ground conditions allow for considerable mixing of deposits. The high water table limited the excavation of the hollow way in Trench 1.

### 7.2 Overall interpretation

#### 7.2.1 Summary of Results

A north-east to south-west orientated linear feature recorded on the Ordnance Survey map of the site was investigated in Trenches 1 and 2 and was interpreted as a hollow way, of probable medieval date. A shallow, undated, north-west to south-east orientated Gully was also excavated in Trench 2.

The bulk of the pottery recovered was of Romano-British date, 75 sherds (683 g). The remainder of the pottery assemblage, 8 sherds (115 g) dated to between the 12 th century

and the 17<sup>th</sup> century. All of the pottery was recovered from three fills of the hollow way. Other finds from the possible hollow way included bone, fired clay and slag.

A modern chipped stone cambered surface was recorded in Trenches 2 and 3 that was thought to connect two gates on the western and southern perimeter of the field to the west of the Beversbrook centre.

#### 7.2.2 *Significance*

The areas investigated lie adjacent to Scheduled Ancient Monument (SMR 450), the deserted medieval village of Beversbrook. Trench 2 was positioned to examine a north-east to south-west orientated linear earthwork that extends across the length of the scheduled area. The discovery of 75 sherds (681 g) of Romano-British pottery from the fills of the earthwork, which was interpreted as a possible hollow way is therefore significant. It is also significant that the earthwork was seen to extend into Trench 1, 15 m further west than recorded on the 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map.

It is possible that all of the Romano-British pottery from the earliest fill of the possible hollow way in Trench 1 was redeposited in a medieval or later dump to level the area above the feature. The fact that the pottery was recovered predominantly from Trench 1 suggests that it may have been within a localised dump. The similarity of the Roman pottery between the upper and lower fills of the hollow way in Trench 1 may suggest that they were deposited contemporaneously, and represent the subsequent redeposition of a Roman midden type deposit.

The rubble dump encountered in Trench 2 appeared to be a deliberate attempt to level the area above the hollow way and the pottery retrieved from the fills above it was a mixture of Roman and medieval material.

The undated Gully 214 was sealed by the buried ploughsoil and may therefore have been medieval or earlier in date.

It is not clear when the hollow way was filled. The proximity of the site to the deserted medieval village and the fact that the earthwork appears consistent with other earthworks associated with the village suggest that the feature is likely to be medieval in date. It is also unusual to find such relatively large pottery assemblages from road ways, which may indicate that the fills were dumped as the feature fell out of use. On balance it is more likely that the fills of the hollow way were deposited in the medieval period and that the hollow-way was in use in that period, although it is possible that the hollow-way originated as a Romano-British boundary/earthwork.

The amount of Romano-British material found in this and the previous 1994 evaluation of the proposed road corridor suggests that there may be Roman settlement in the vicinity. There is a significant possibility of further Romano-British and medieval features and possibly a Romano-British settlement being impacted upon by the construction of the proposed road. The discovery of Romano-British activity in the vicinity of the medieval village may suggest continuity of use of the site and is thus highly significant.

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OAU, 1994 Land adjacent to Oxford Road, Calne, Wiltshire (Unpublished Client Report, July 1994)

Wilkinson, D (ed) 1992 *Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual*, (First edition, August 1992)

## Appendix 1 Context Inventory.

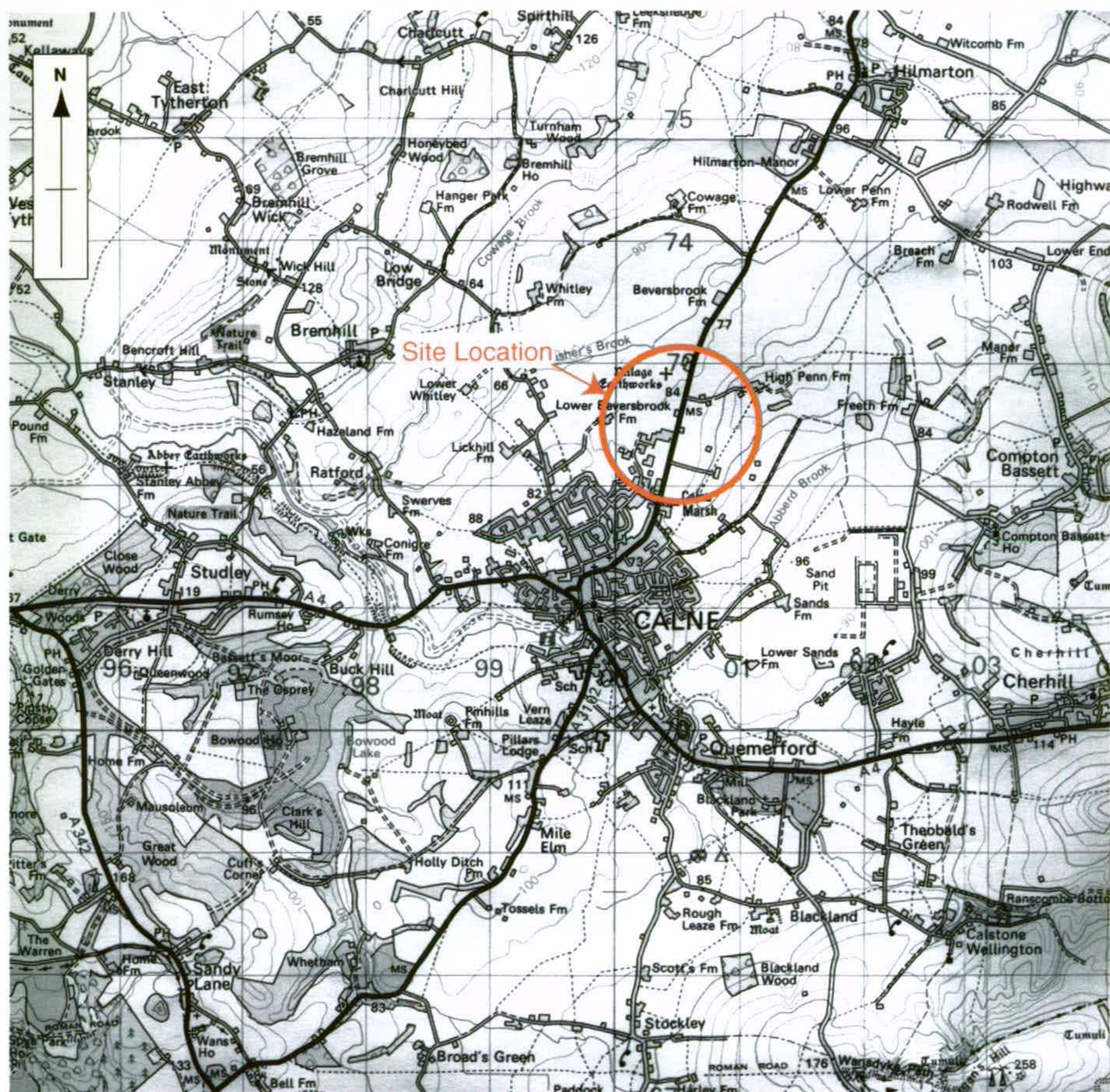
CADR99: NORTH CALNE DISTRIBUTOR ROAD, WILTSHIRE							
TRENCH 1							
CXT. No	TYPE	DESCRIPTION / COMMENTS	DEPTH (M)	WIDTH (M)	LENGTH (M)	FINDS	DATE
100	LAYER	TOPSOIL	0.22				
101	LAYER	PLOUGHSOIL	0.14			Pottery	Medieval?
102	LAYER	KIMMERIDGE CLAY					
103	FILL	FILL OF HOLLOW WAY	0.30			Pottery Bone Fired clay Slag	Medieval?
104	LAYER	FILL OF HOLLOW WAY	0.10			Pottery	Medieval?
105	LAYER	HOLLOW WAY	>0.40				

TRENCH 2							
CXT. No	TYPE	DESCRIPTION / COMMENTS	DEPTH (M)	WIDTH (M)	LENGTH (M)	FINDS	DATE
200	LAYER	TOPSOIL	0.22				
201	LAYER	CHIPPED STONE DEPOSIT	0.41	5.3			
202	CUT	CUT FOR CHIPPED STONE	0.41	5.3			
203	LAYER	PLOUGHSOIL	0.15				
204	FILL	FILL OF HOLLOW WAY	0.17				
205	LAYER	KIMMERIDGE CLAY					
206	FILL	FILL OF HOLLOW WAY	0.40			Pottery Bone Fired clay	Medieval?
207	FILL	FILL OF HOLLOW WAY	0.30				
208	FILL	FILL OF HOLLOW WAY	0.32				
209	CUT	HOLLOW WAY	0.88	5.3			
210	FILL	FILL OF HOLLOW WAY	0.40				
211	FILL	FILL OF HOLLOW WAY	0.22			Pottery Fired clay	Medieval
212	FILL	FILL OF RUT	0.30	0.70			
213	CUT	WHEEL RUT	0.24	0.70			
214	CUT	GULLY	0.18	0.30			
215	FILL	FILL OF GULLY	0.18	0.30			

TRENCH 3							
CXT. No	TYPE	DESCRIPTION / COMMENTS	DEPTH (M)	WIDTH (M)	LENGTH (M)	FINDS	DATE
300	LAYER	TOPSOIL	0.24				
301	LAYER	KIMMERIDGE CLAY					
302	LAYER	CHIPPED STONE SURFACE	0.30				

TRENCH 4							
CXT. No	TYPE	DESCRIPTION / COMMENTS	DEPTH (M)	WIDTH (M)	LENGTH (M)	FINDS	DATE
400	LAYER	TOPSOIL	0.25				
401	LAYER	KIMMERIDGE CLAY					





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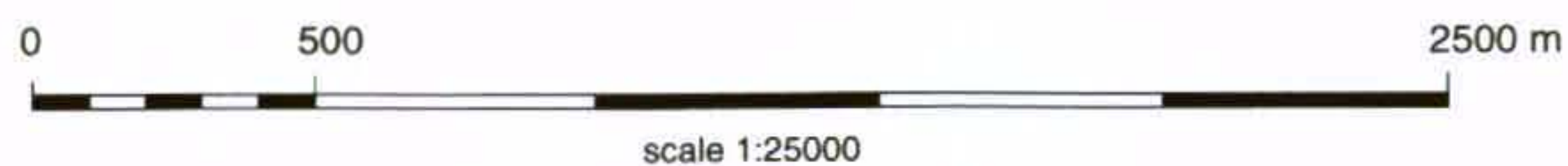


Figure 1 : Location of site





Figure 2 : Trench locations



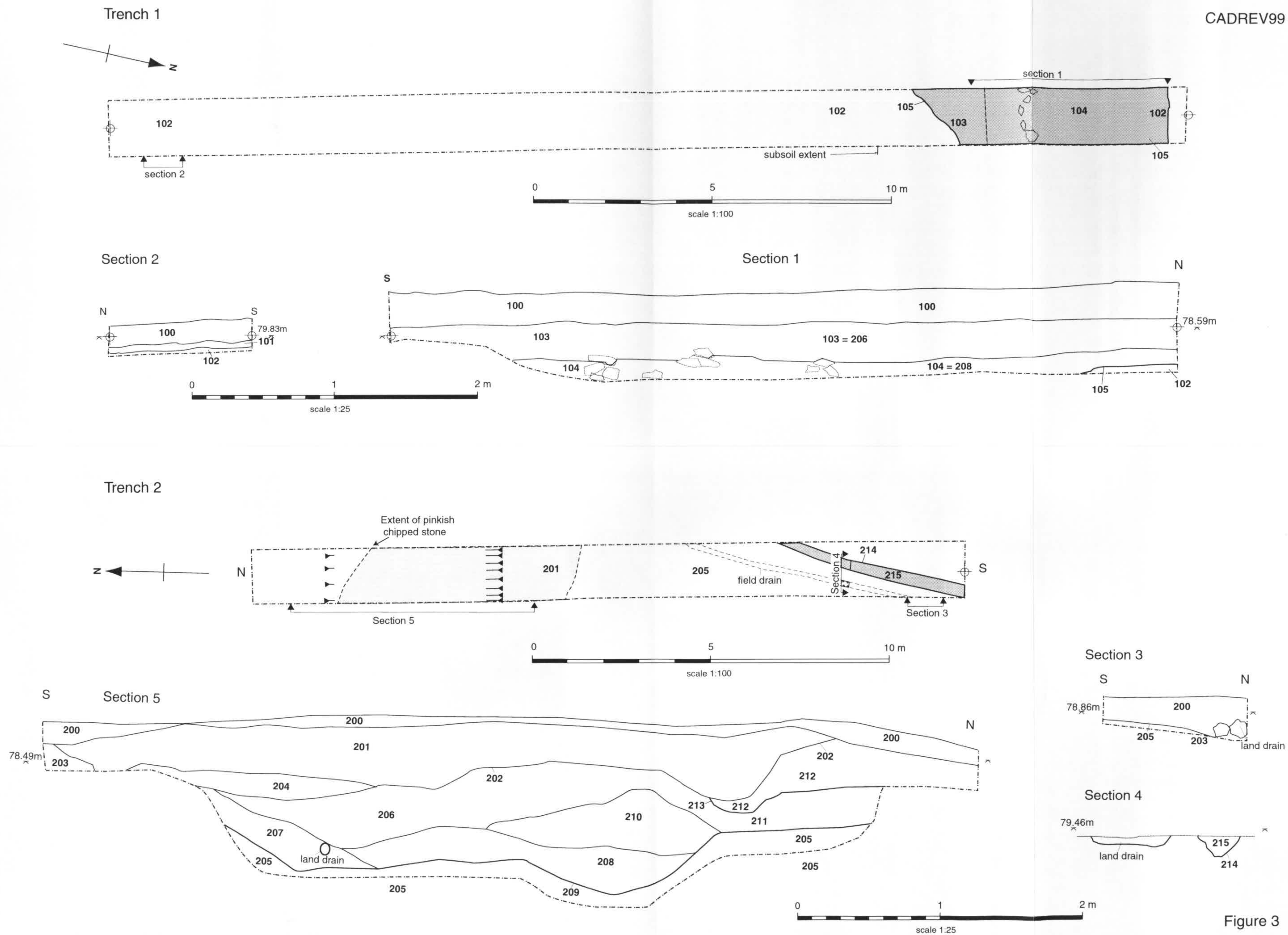


Figure 3



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