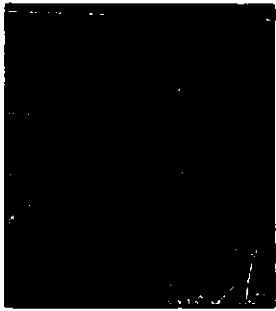


Wessex
Archaeology



1996-046

EVENT 711

**SPTA Track 54D, Chapperton Down, Tilshead
Archaeological Evaluation**

Report No: 42467a

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October 1996

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SPTA Track 54D, Chapperton Down, Tilshead

Archaeological Evaluation

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SPTA Track 54D, Chapperton Down, Tilshead

Archaeological Evaluation

SUMMARY

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Gifford and Partners to undertake an archaeological evaluation in connection with the proposed construction of a hard surface vehicle track (Track 54D). The proposed track, hereafter referred to as the Site, is situated to the west of Tilshead, Wiltshire, and north of the Romano-British settlement on Chapperton Down, and follows the line of an existing, west to east aligned, unsurfaced route. Overall, the Site covers a distance of c. 600 m, from OS national grid co-ordinates ST 9965 4817 to SU 0021 4821.

The majority of Track 54D falls within a Scheduled Monument (WI 10105) containing a well preserved prehistoric and Romano-British landscape. At least one long barrow, two round barrows, a prehistoric linear earthwork, a Romano-British settlement and an ancient field system lie within the Scheduled area. The proposed track crosses the area of the ancient field system and the west end of the track lies close to a probable round barrow.

The fieldwork comprised the machine excavation of a 2 m wide trench along the approximate centre line of the proposed track route. Eight features were recorded of which three are probably of natural origin. The remaining features comprised two lynchets, a gully and a post hole, possibly elements of a structure of Romano-British date, and a scoop containing Roman material. A deposit of colluvium was recorded in the floor of a dry valley. A small quantity of worked flint and pottery of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age (1,000 - 500 BC) and Roman date was also recovered.

The two lynchets are elements of the known ancient field system, part of a Scheduled Monument (WI 10105), crossed by the evaluation trench. Otherwise the absence of well-dated features of Bronze Age or Roman date is notable in view of the proximity of the Romano-British settlement on Chapperton Down to the south and Bronze Age features to the east recorded during the evaluation of other sections of Track 54D in 1995 (Wessex Archaeology 1995).

SPTA Track 54D, Chapperton Down, Tilshead

Archaeological Evaluation

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This evaluation was commissioned by Gifford and Partners. Wessex Archaeology acknowledges the assistance shown by Anne Thompson, Gifford and Partners, Jane Hallett, Bob McAlister and Ian Barnes, Defence Estates Organisation, and in particular, the comments and observations made by Ian Barnes. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank the SPTA Land Wardens for their interest and assistance.

The collaborative role of the Archaeology Service, Wiltshire County Council, is acknowledged during the course of the project. In particular, thanks are due to Roy Canham, County Archaeologist, and Helena Cave-Penney, Assistant Archaeologist, for their interest in the project, and monitoring, advice and encouragement in the field.

The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Roland Smith, with the fieldwork undertaken by Vaughan Birbeck and Kevin Ritchie. This report was compiled by Vaughan Birbeck, with finds analysis provided by Lorraine Mephram, and the illustrations produced by Linda Coleman.

SPTA Track 54D, West Lavington Down, Tilshead

Archaeological Evaluation

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Gifford and Partners to undertake an archaeological evaluation in connection with the planned construction of a hard surface vehicle track (Track 54D).
- 1.1.2 The Site is situated within the Salisbury Plain Training Area (SPTA), to the west of Tilshead (**Fig. 1**). It follows the line of an existing, west to east aligned, unsurfaced route from OS national grid co-ordinates ST 9965 4817 to SU 0021 4821, a distance of c. 600 m (**Fig. 2**).
- 1.1.3 The archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a specification prepared by Wessex Archaeology (Wessex Archaeology 1996), based on a Brief supplied by the Archaeological Service, Wiltshire County Council (ref: DC/PAI/95DC010.br).
- 1.1.4 The evaluation was undertaken to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed development area, in accordance with guidelines set out in the Department of the Environment's *Planning Policy Guidance 16* (PPG16 - Archaeology and Planning, November 1990). The results of the evaluation will support an Environmental Statement on the proposed development for submission to the Local Planning Authority.
- 1.1.5 The archaeological fieldwork was carried out from September 9th - 13th, 1996.

1.2 Geology, topography and land use

- 1.2.1 The underlying solid geology for the immediate area comprises Cretaceous Upper Chalk (Ordnance Survey 1959) with occasional patches of clay with flints.
- 1.2.2 The route of the proposed track runs from close to a ridge top at the west end and descends an east facing slope into a broad dry valley before climbing a west facing slope after crossing the valley floor. The route falls from around 150 m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) at the west end to 139 m aOD on the valley floor before ascending to 144 m aOD at the east end.
- 1.2.3 The Site is situated on grassland, on the line of an existing unsurfaced route. As a result of this the topsoil has been badly rutted by both tracked and wheeled vehicle movements.

1.3 Archaeological background

1.3.1 The archaeological potential of the Site is set out in the brief which states:

'The proposed track route runs through a Scheduled Ancient Monument (WI 10105). This SAM contains a well preserved prehistoric and Romano-British landscape which includes a long barrow, at least two round barrows, a linear earthwork of probable prehistoric origin, an extensive Romano-British settlement and a field system of Celtic type.

The route of the proposed track runs through the area of Celtic field system and at its western end runs close to a probable round barrow (as shown on O.S. maps).

A length of approximately 800 metres through the SAM has previously been evaluated by Wessex Archaeology which revealed a number of archaeological features'.

1.3.2 The evaluation undertaken by Wessex Archaeology on track 54D to the east of the present site revealed a wide range of archaeological features including post holes, pits, gullies, a major ditch and bank and a possible cremation related feature, all of prehistoric, probably Bronze Age, date (Wessex Archaeology 1995).

2 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The principal aim of the project was to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving remains liable to be under threat from the proposed development.

2.2 Methods

2.2.1 The aims were to be achieved by the machine excavation of a single 2 m wide trench along the approximate centre line of the proposed track, from OS NGR co-ordinates ST 9965 4817 to SU 0021 4821, a distance of c. 600 m (Fig. 2).

2.2.2 All machine excavation was carried out by a tracked hydraulic excavator using a toothless bucket under constant archaeological supervision, to either the surface of *in situ* geology (chalk or clay with flints) or the level at which potential archaeological features could be identified, whichever was encountered first. Any artefacts observed within the machine-excavated material, with the exception of obviously modern material, were recorded and retained.

- 2.2.3 All archaeological and potentially archaeological features were investigated through hand-excavation, with all recording carried out using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* recording system. All archaeological features were drawn in plan at 1:20 and in section at 1:10. In addition, a full photographic record of the evaluation was carried out.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Stratigraphy

- 3.1.1 The overburden comprised heavily compacted and deeply rutted calcareous clay topsoil which varied from 0.02 - 0.30 m in depth. The majority of finds recovered from this were from the west end of the trench, on the periphery of the Romano-British settlement. In the floor of the dry valley topsoil overlay a colluvial deposit up to 0.8 m thick, which was removed by machine in c. 0.1 m spits.
- 3.1.2 The upper surface of the natural substrata was predominantly weathered unstructured flinty chalk with occasional patches of clay with flints with discrete areas of structured chalk recorded predominantly towards the higher ground to the west.

3.2 Archaeological features (Fig. 2)

- 3.2.1 Eight features were excavated and recorded (see **Appendix 1**). The features comprised two gullies (104 and 110), one broad linear feature (105), two lynchets (118 and 131), one post hole (108) and a small scoop or heavily truncated pit (111). A deposit of colluvium (132) was recorded in the base of the dry valley and a shallow linear feature of probable natural origin (115) were also excavated and recorded. In addition several modern features (service trenches, wheel/track ruts) and natural features were also excavated. The form and location of these modern features and tree holes were noted but not recorded in detail.
- 3.2.2 The features will be briefly described below, in OS grid co-ordinate order (from west to east). Full details are to be found in the site archive.

Feature 111

- 3.2.3 Feature 111, which was located c. 10 m from the west end of the track, comprised an irregular scoop 1.40 m long, 1.24 m wide and 0.12 m deep with shallow irregular sides and a concave base. Four pieces of heavily corroded ironwork and a single sherd of Romano-British pottery were recovered from the secondary fill. Worked flint and burnt flint were recovered from the primary fill.
- 3.2.4 The nature of this feature is unclear, however, it may represent the base of a heavily truncated pit.

ST94NE668
302

Gully 104

- 3.2.5 Approximately 70 m from the west end of the trench a small gully, up to 0.6 m wide, but narrowing to 0.3 m at the north end, and 0.15 m deep, was recorded (Fig. 3). As only a 2 m length of this feature was exposed it is uncertain whether this represented a deliberately curving gully or if it was simply a rather irregular linear feature.

- 3.2.6 No datable material was recovered from the primary silting of this feature, which comprised re-deposited chalk within a silty clay matrix. However, four sherds of Romano-British coarseware pottery were recovered from the secondary fill.

8T94NE 304

- 3.2.7 This feature may be associated with the undated post hole (108) which was located c. 1 m to the east (Fig. 3).

Post Hole 108

- 3.2.7 Approximately 1 m to the east of gully 104 was post hole 108, this was a large oval feature, 0.76 m long, 0.31 m wide and 0.12 m deep with sloping sides and a concave base (Fig. 3). No datable material was recovered from the single loamy fill (107).

8T94NE
669

- 3.2.8 The close proximity of gully 104 and post hole 108 may indicate that the two features are associated and could represent elements of a structure, however, the lack of dating evidence from the post hole and the small area exposed make this uncertain.

143
153
1650

Linear Feature 105

- 3.2.9 Feature 105, a 7.4 m wide, 0.18 m deep, possibly linear feature, was located approximately 85 m from the west end of the trench. The irregular, ill-defined edges and undulating base of this feature suggest a natural origin and this is supported by the very abraded state of the worked flint and Romano-British pottery which was recovered from the single silty clay fill (106).

8T94NE
305

- 3.2.10 On its extreme east edge, this feature appeared to be cut by a small irregular gully (110), however, due to the similarity of the fills, this relationship is uncertain.

+

Gully 110

- 3.2.11 This short, irregular, length of gully appeared to cut the extreme east edge of feature 105, however, this relationship could not be clearly defined. The Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age pottery recovered from its single silty clay fill would suggest that it pre-dates feature 105. The very irregular form of this feature, which was cut into very soft, degraded, chalk is suggestive of an animal burrow or tree root disturbance.

150
670

Feature 115

- 3.2.12 Between approximately 150 and 200 m from the west end of the trench a number of linear features, all on an identical alignment were noted. These

were thought to be of natural origin, however, one of the larger examples feature **115** was excavated in order to check this hypothesis.

- 3.2.13 Feature **115** was 0.06 m deep with poorly defined, irregular edges and an undulating base. No finds were recovered from its single calcareous clay fill.

Lynchet 118

ST96NE635

- 3.2.14 Approximately 200 m from the west end of the trench, on the fairly steep east facing slope of the dry valley, a linear earthwork on a roughly north to south alignment was noted. Excavation proved this to be a small lynchet some 6.3 m wide and standing approximately 0.8 m high (Fig. 4). The only material recovered from this was burnt flint and worked flint. No precise date can, therefore, assigned to this feature, although it may be associated with the field systems which surround the nearby Romano-British settlement on Chapperton Down.

Lynchet 131

ST96NE635

- 3.2.15 A further 70 m downslope from lynchet **118**, on a similar alignment, a second linear earthwork was noted. This also proved to be a lynchet, approximately 5.6 m wide and 0.5 m high. Once again no datable material was recovered, however, it is assumed that this represents a further element of the probable Romano-British field system.

The Colluvium

- 3.2.16 Further evidence of ancient ploughing, in the form of a thick colluvial deposit was encountered in the base of the dry valley. This extended over an approximately 60 m length of trench and was up to 0.8 m thick. No datable material was recovered from this deposit.

4 THE FINDS

- 4.1 A small quantity of artefacts was recovered from eight contexts. These finds have been cleaned and quantified by material type within each context (see Table 1), and the finds are briefly discussed by material type below.

4.2 Worked and Burnt Flint

- 4.2.1 Worked flint was recovered from five contexts, all in heavily patinated chalk flint, and with most pieces exhibiting edge damage. One rather crude scraper was noted from linear feature **105**, but otherwise there are no tools or retouched pieces, and the undiagnostic nature of the cores and waste flakes means that it is only possible to assign these pieces to a broad date range of Neolithic to Bronze Age. The burnt, unworked flint recovered from three of these contexts is of uncertain, although presumed prehistoric date.

4.3 Pottery

- 4.3.1 Pottery was recovered from five contexts. The earliest material appears to be the single flint-tempered sherd from the topsoil, and four sherds from gully **110**, three in a sparsely flint-tempered fabric with some organic inclusions, including one rim sherd; and one in a coarse shelly fabric. Fabric types and the rim form would suggest a date range in the Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age (early 1st millennium BC).
- 4.3.2 Sherds from the topsoil, gully **104**, linear **105** and scoop **111** are all coarsewares of Romano-British date, although closer dating within this period is not possible.

4.4 Iron

- 4.4.1 None of the five pieces of iron found, all from scoop **111**, may be identified, and all are of uncertain date.

Table 1: Finds totals by context

| Feature | Context | Burnt Flint | Worked Flint | Prehist. pottery | R-B pottery | Iron |
|-------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------------|----------------|-------------|
| Topsoil | 101 | - | 6/535 | 1/2 | 8/30 | - |
| Gully 104 | 102 | - | - | - | 4/15 | - |
| Linear 105 | 106 | 14/108 | 12/131 | - | 8/28 | - |
| Gully 110 | 109 | - | - | 4/8 | - | - |
| Scoop 111 | 112 | - | - | - | 1/1 | 4/31 |
| " | 113 | 1/2 | 2/8 | - | - | 1/24 |
| Lynchet 118 | 116 | 1/26 | 4/47 | - | - | - |
| Lynchet 131 | 130 | - | 4/70 | - | - | - |
| | TOTAL | 16/136 | 28/791 | 5/10 | 21/74 | 5/55 |

5 DISCUSSION

- 5.1 Features **105**, **110** and **115** all appear to be of natural origin, the heavily abraded condition of the datable material recovered from **105** and **110** would tend to indicate that it had been in the topsoil for some time before being deposited within these features and can only be considered as indicative of Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age and Romano-British activity in the general vicinity.
- 5.2 Gully **104** and post hole **108** could be elements of a structure of Romano-British date which would have been on the periphery of the known settlement of this date on Chapperton Down to the south. However, due to the limited size of the area exposed this is uncertain. Feature **111** also appears to be of Romano-British date, however, its function is uncertain.

- 5.3 The two lynchets which run along the east facing slope of the dry valley, and the colluvium on its floor are assumed to be the product of the agricultural exploitation of the area during the Romano-British period, and to be associated with the nearby settlement. The lynchets lie within, and are part of, an ancient field system that is a Scheduled Monument, along with the Romano-British settlement and other monuments on Chapperton Down (WI 10105) (Fig. 1).
- 5.4 The absence of well-dated features of Bronze Age or Roman date is slightly disappointing in view of the proximity of the Romano-British settlement to the south and Bronze Age features to the east recorded during the evaluation of other sections of Track 54D in 1995 (Wessex Archaeology 1995).

6 PROJECT ARCHIVE

6.1 The project archive is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Salisbury under site code reference W2467. It will be deposited in due course with the appropriate body.

6.2 The archive currently comprises the following components:

| File/ Roll no. | NAR Cat. | Details | No. of Sheets | Format |
|----------------|----------|----------------------------------|---------------|--------|
| 1 | Index | Index to archive | 1 | A4 |
| 1 | | Evaluation Report | 40 | A4 |
| 1 | | Project Specification | 30 | A4 |
| 1 | B | Context Index | 2 | A4 |
| 1 | B | Context Records | 32 | A4 |
| 1 | B | Levels Book (Photocopy) | 14 | A4 |
| 1 | B | Day Book (Photocopy) | 11 | A4 |
| 1 | B | Graphics Register | 2 | A4 |
| 1 | B | A4 graphics | 10 | A4 |
| 1 | C | Context Finds Record/Spot Dating | 18 | A4 |
| 1 | D | Photographic Record Sheets | 4 | A4 |
| | D | B+W 36 exp. Contact Print Sheets | 2 | 35mm |
| | D | B+W 36 exp. Negatives | 2 | 35mm |
| | D | Colour Slides in plastic hangers | | 35mm |
| 2 | B | A3 & A1 graphics | 11 | |

7 REFERENCES

Ordnance Survey, 1959, *British Geological Survey 1" Series - Sheet 282; Devizes*

Wessex Archaeology, 1995, *SPTA Tracks 28, 43A and 54D: Archaeological Evaluation*, unpublished client report no. 39404

Wessex Archaeology 1996, *SPTA Track 54D: Archaeological Evaluation. Project Design Specification* unpublished document reference no. T3276.

Appendix 1: Context Summaries

Features/ deposits are described in stratigraphic order where applicable, or according to OS co-ordinates otherwise (W to E)

m aOD = metres above Ordnance Datum (denotes upper surface height for feature, not modern ground surface)

n/e = not excavated

n/a = not applicable

| Context | Feature | Description | Thickness | OS co-ordinates | m aOD |
|---------|-----------------|--|---------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| 101 | Topsoil | A brown (10YR4/3) calcareous clay loam with frequent small subangular flint pebbles and chalk fragments. | 0.02 - 0.30 m | ST 99650 48170 to SU 00260 48210 | c. 150 m to c. 139 m |
| 112 | Secondary fill | Yellowish brown (10YR 5/4) silty clay loam with sparse chalk inclusions. One sherd of Romano-British pottery and five unidentified iron objects recovered. | 0.10m | ST 99660 48170 | 149.79m |
| 113 | Primary fill | Brown (10YR 5/3) silty clay with abundant flint and chalk inclusions. | 0.02m | | |
| 111 | Scoop | Shallow irregular scoop 1.40m x 1.24m, function unclear. | 0.12m | | |
| 102 | Secondary fill | Brown (10YR 4/3) clay loam with abundant chalk inclusions. Romano-British pottery recovered. | 0.08m | ST 99720 48172 | 148.77m |
| 103 | Primary fill | Very pale brown (10YR 7/4) re-deposited chalk silting. | 0.10m | | |
| 104 | Gully | Shallow slightly curvilinear gully 2.00m+ long and 0.62m wide with steep sides and flat base. | 0.15m | | |
| 107 | Fill | Brown (10YR 5/3) silty clay loam with abundant flint inclusions | 0.12m | ST 99721 48172 | 148.74m |
| 108 | Post hole | Oval post hole, 0.76m x 0.31m, with vertical sides and a concave base. | 0.12m | | |
| 106 | Fill | Brown (10YR 5/3) calcareous silty clay with abundant flint and chalk inclusions. | 0.18m | ST 99730 48172 | 148.59m |
| 105 | Linear? feature | Very broad (7.4m wide), shallow, probably linear feature on north-south alignment. Function unclear. | 0.18m | | |
| 109 | Fill | Yellowish brown (10YR 5/4) silty clay loam with abundant flint and chalk inclusions. | 0.26m | ST 9973748172 | 148.24m |
| 110 | Gully? | Irregular gully, 1.30m+ long and 0.25-0.30m wide with steep sides and irregular base. | 0.26m | | |
| 114 | Fill | Brown (10YR 5/3) calcareous clay with abundant flint and chalk inclusions. | 0.06m | ST 99810 48178 | 145.55m |
| 115 | Natural feature | Irregular linear depression, probably periglacial in origin. | 0.06m | | |
| 116 | Fill | Brown (10YR 4/3) silty clay loam with abundant chalk and flint inclusions. | 0.18m | ST 99845 48180 | 144.52m |
| 117 | Fill | Yellowish brown (10YR 5/6) calcareous clay loam with abundant flint and chalk inclusions. | 0.18m | | |
| 118 | Lynchet | Lynchet visible as earthwork to north and south of trench, 6.30m wide. | 0.36m | | |
| 130 | Fill | Yellowish brown (10YR 5/4) silty clay loam with moderate - frequent flint and chalk inclusions. | 0.25m | ST 99920 48184 | 140.09m |
| 131 | Lynchet | Lynchet visible as earthwork to north and south of trench, 5.60m wide. | 0.25m | | |
| 132 | Colluvium | Dark yellowish brown (10YR 4/6) silty clay loam with abundant flint inclusions. Confined to base of dry valley. | 0.80m (max) | ST 99938 48184 to SU 00010 48194 | 138.42m |

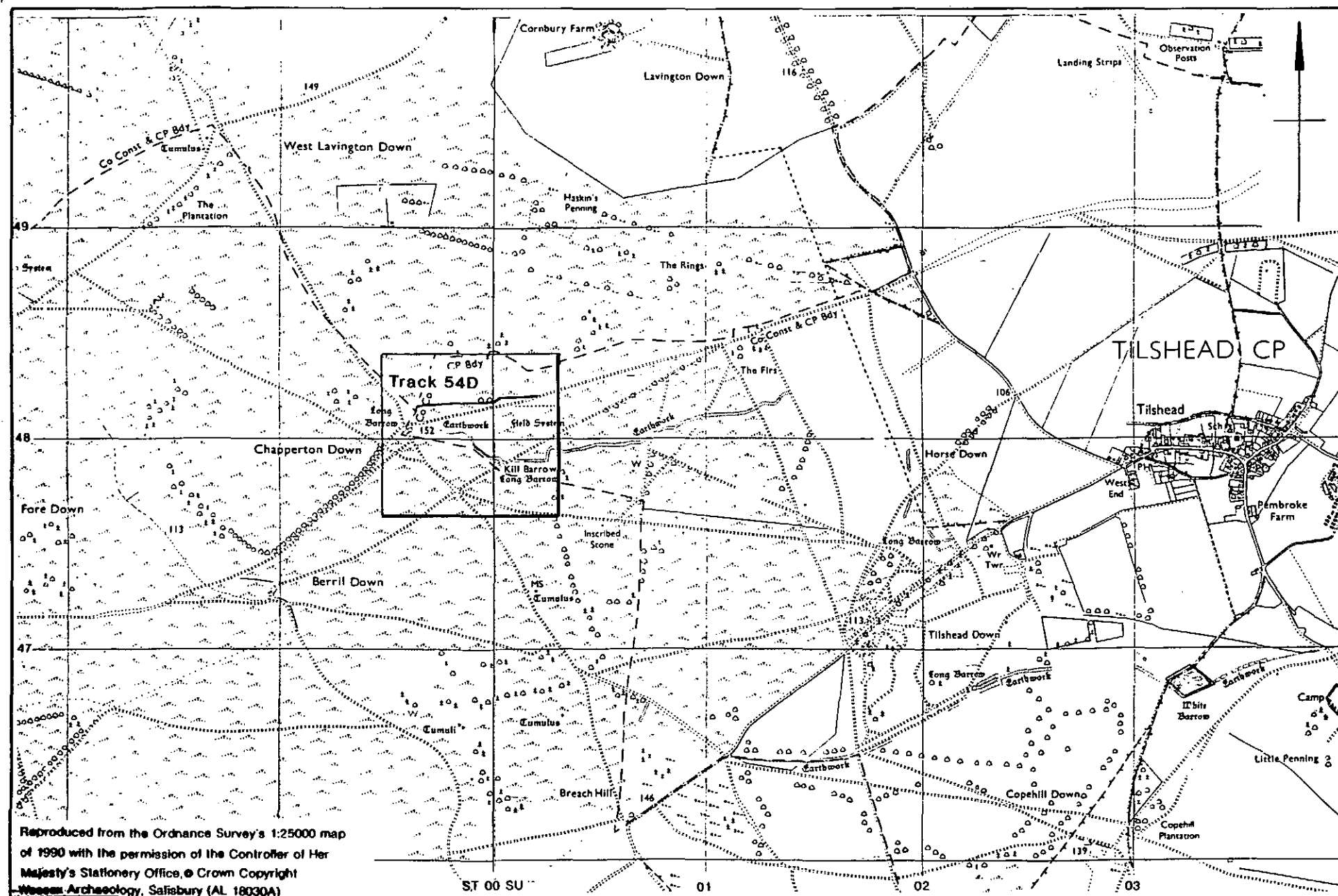


Figure 1

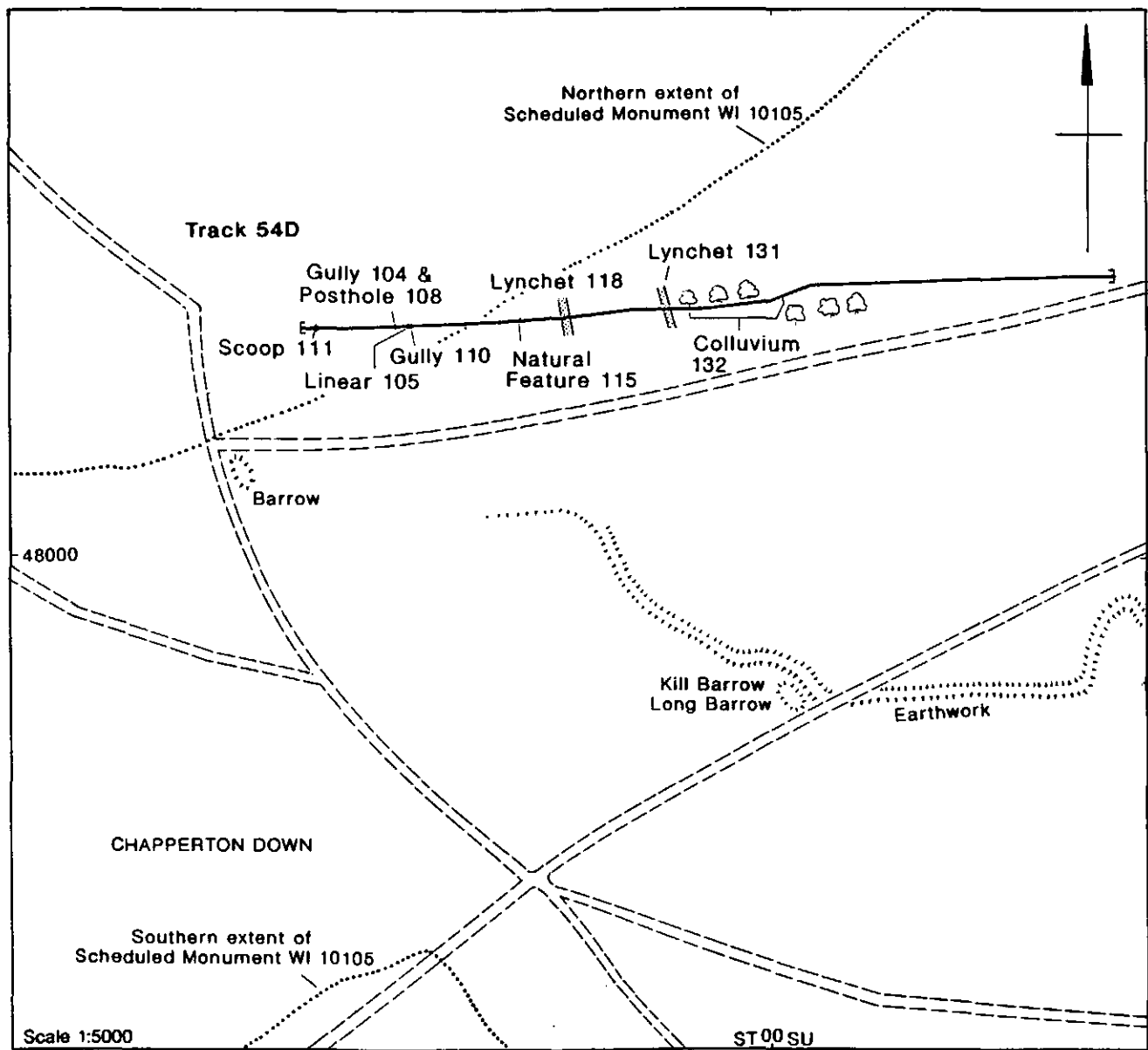


Figure 2

Gully 104 & Posthole 108

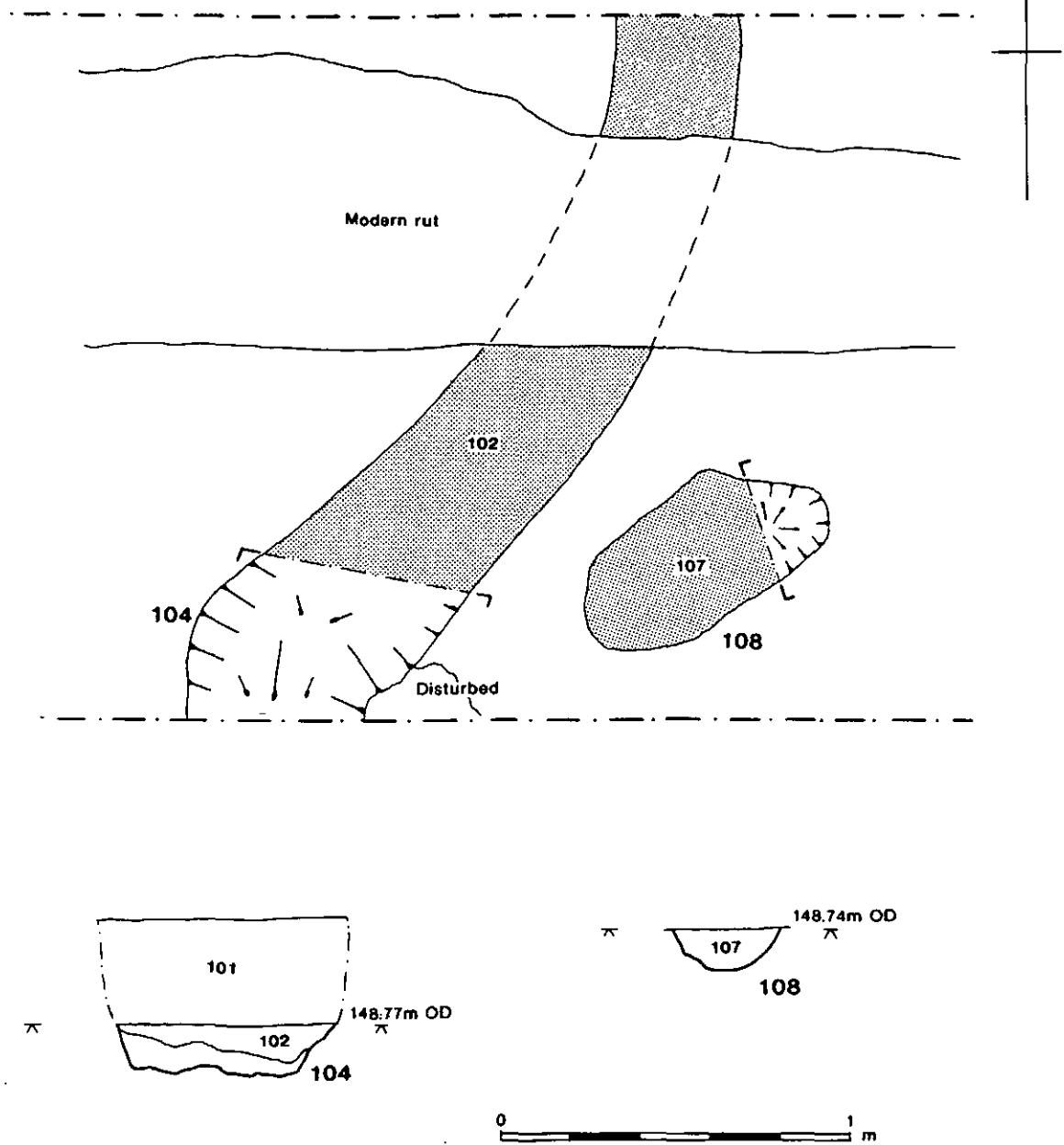


Figure 3

Lynchet 118

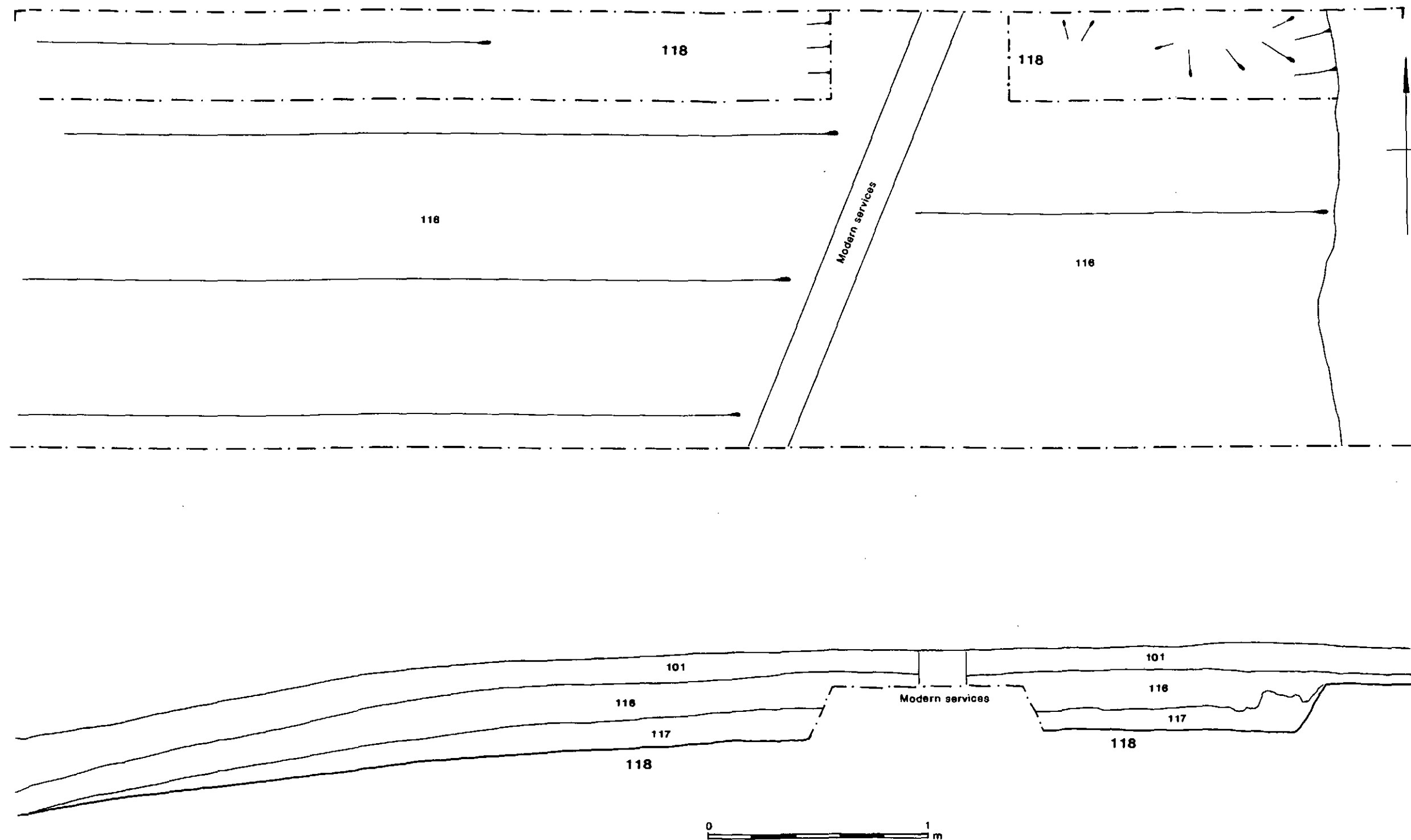


Figure 4

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