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**Hopper Hill Road
Crossgates, Seamer,
North Yorkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

**August 2000
MAP 04-08-99**

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Crossgates, Seamer,
North Yorkshire**

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Archaeological Evaluation

1. Introduction

1.1 This report sets out the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd on land lying south of Hopper Hill Road, Crossgates, Seamer parish, North Yorkshire (TA 0330 8300 Fig 1), in August 2000

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1.2 The evaluation was carried out on behalf of, Iain Simpson and Company to satisfy an archaeological condition attached to the Outline Planning Permission for the development of the site for light industrial purposes

1.3 Two areas, totalling 100 square metres were examined to investigate anomalies shown by a Geophysical Survey (GSB 2000)

1.4 The on site work and report has been funded by Caddick Developments Ltd

1.5 All maps within this report have been produced from the Ordnance Survey with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Crown Copyright Licence No AL 50453A.

2. Site Description

2.1 The site lies immediately south of modern industrial units situated along Hopper Hill Road, and west of the access road to the Seamer Carr landfill site. The former Burton Riggs gravel quarry, now a wetland area of Special Scientific Interest, lies immediately to the west

2.2 The site situated at c 31m AOD, comprises of an area of c 5 hectares, given over to arable farming, and bounded by hedges and fencing. The topography consists of a number of small undulating hillocks, the general elevation of the land dropping to the north.

3. Geology

3.1 The geology at the site consists of glaciofluvial deposits, mainly of sands and gravels, underlying coarse loamy, non-calcareous soils of the Wick 1 Association (Mackney *et al* 1983)

4. Archaeological and Historical Background

- 4.1 The area lies within a rich landscape of multi-period archaeological remains, the Vale of Pickering having formed a focus for human occupation since earliest times
- 4.2 The Vale of Pickering Research Trust has conducted extensive research into the late glacial and early post-glacial periods at the eastern end of the Vale of Pickering. To the south of the site, beyond the railway line, a number of nationally important early mesolithic sites have been excavated, along with sites ranging from the Upper Palaeolithic to the Bronze Age (Schadla-Hall 1988). The mesolithic sites are concentrated around the 25m contour at the margins of low gravel hills - such as Hopper Hill, No Name Hill and Rabbit Hill - which rise out of areas of peat
- 4.3 The later prehistoric sites identified by the Vale of Pickering Research Trust occurred at a higher level around the 27m contour. Neolithic occupation was identified on the western edge of Manham Hill. A horse-shoe shaped gully, further gullies and postholes excavated on Hopper Hill were dated by flint artefacts and pottery to the late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age
- 4.4 There is considerable cropmark evidence for later prehistoric sites on the southern side of the Vale of Pickering situated around the 30m contour. On the northern side of the Vale, excavations in advance of housing development on land both east and west of Crab Lane (600-900m north-west of the site) identified field boundaries, enclosures and structures dating from the Early Iron Age to the Roman periods. Iron Age occupation within a large square enclosure directly underlying Crab Lane was superseded by a Roman stone building dating to the First and Second centuries A.D. (MAP 1999)
- 4.5 During 1947-81 gravel extraction from the Burton Riggs quarry immediately west of the site revealed a wealth of occupation sites - pits, gullies, postholes and structures - ranging in date from the late Iron Age to Anglian periods (Pye 1976 and 1983, Rutter and Duke 1958). Particularly significant was a large square or rectangular enclosure, situated c. 200m north of the site, originally interpreted as a 'Roman Fortlet', this was the subject of additional excavation by the Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) in advance of industrial development in 1989 (Leach 1989)
- 4.6 Rutter and Duke undertook work on the proposed development site which they referred to as 'Field F', but it was "searched for surface finds without result" (Rutter and Duke 1959, 6)
- 4.7 The 1989 BUFAU excavation in advance of industrial development was accompanied by Geophysical Survey of those areas not previously excavated, including the present site. A sample area of the site was subjected to Resistivity Survey, several anomalies were identified (Jones and Pearson 1989)

4 8 As mentioned above, a Geophysical Survey, this time Gradiometry, was carried out as part the present proposed development of the site (GSB 2000) The entire site was scanned, followed by the detailed survey of 20% of the area. A number of linear anomalies were seen as havmg archaeological potential; others were interpreted as bemg of natural origin or the result of modem ploughing trends This survey provided the targets for the evaluation excavations

5. Aims and Objectives

5 1 The aims and objectives were to detemine the origin of selected geophysical anomalies by trial trenching, thus establishing the presence or absence of additional features associated with the linear anomalies In addition to detemne the nature, depth, extent and state of preservation of any archaeological deposits present.

5.2 The Trial Trenching was successful in achieving the objectives

6. Methodology

6 1 *Evaluation*

6 1 1 Two areas were evaluated, each 10m x 5m in size to give a total of 100 square metres.

6 1 2 The evaluation areas were stripped of topsoil by a rear-acting excavator using a toothless blade, under close archaeological supervision. Machining ceased at the top of natural deposits, into which the features were directly cut.

6 1 3 Ditches, gullies and slots sections were placed to provide representative profiles.

6 1 4 Postholes and pits these were half-sectioned to detemne function and record their form

6 1 5 All work was carried out in line with the Institute of Field Archaeologists Code of Conduct (IFA 1998)

6 1 6 All artefacts were retained for specialist analysis

6 2 *On-site Recording*

6 2 1 All archaeological deposits were recorded according to correct principles of stratigraphic excavation on MAP's *pro forma* context sheets (Appendix 1)

6 3 *Plans and Sections*

6 3.1 The full extent of archaeological deposits were recorded in plan at a scale of 1:20 on drawing film Sections of features and individual layers were drawn at 1:10, also on drawing film, and included an OD height (Appendix 3)

6 3 2 A Total Station was used to accurately locate the position of the planned features to adjacent permanent structures, roads and boundaries

6 4 *Photographic Record*

6 4 1 The photographic record comprised monochrome and colour prints, and colour transparencies, to record all archaeological features encountered (Appendix 4)

6 5 *Finds*

6 5 1 The finds were processed in accordance with English Heritage Guidelines (EH 1995) All finds were cleaned, identified, assessed, dated (where possible), marked (where appropriate), and properly packed and stored according to national guidelines.

7. Results

7 1 *Trench 1*

7 1 1 Trench 1 was aligned north-south and was designed to intercept a curving north-west to south-east aligned anomaly in the west/central part of the site Two linear anomalies were identified, along with two postholes, a pit and an indeterminate feature (Figs 1 and 2) These features had no inter-relationships and were cut into natural deposits which varied from yellowish brown clay in the south-eastern corner of the trench to brownish yellow gravelly sand in the remainder.

7 1 2 *Cut 1007* was a linear cut that ran for a distance of c 6.5m across the north-eastern corner of the trench on a north-west to south-east alignment (Figs. 2 and 4 c-d). With a broad U-shaped profile, this feature was 1.2m in width and 0.30m deep. There were two fills, the lowest of which (context 1006) was a yellowish brown clay silt with moderate gravel inclusions; it contained three abraded pottery sherds. The upper fill (context 1005) was a brown sandy silt which yielded four sherds of pottery, three flint waste-flakes and an edge-retouched flake (SF 2 . Appendix 2)

7 1 3 *Cut 1004* was a shallow gully running on an approximately parallel alignment to the west of Ditch 1007, butting out at its north end after a distance of c 3m (Figs 2 and 4). The profile was U-shaped, 0.05m deep and 0.20m wide (Fig 4 -b) The brown clay silt fill (context 1003) contained no finds.

7 1 4 *Cut 1009* an oval pit was situated approximately 1m west of Ditch 1007, and was 1.2m long, 0.75m wide and 0.18m deep (Figs. 2 and 4 e-f) The yellowish brown sandy silt fill (context 1008) contained patches of ashy material, and yielded two flint waste flakes.

7 1 5 *Cut 1014* was an oval posthole situated around 1.5m north of Pit 1009 (Figs 2 and 4 i-j), measuring 0.62m by 0.42m and 0.2m deep Clear traces of post-packing existed in the form of a number of flat pieces of sandstone (context 1013) set vertically along the east and west edges of the cut Neither

the packing nor the homogenous brown silty sand (context 1012) filling the remainder of the cut contained any finds

- 7.1.6 *Cut 1011*, a small sub-circular feature around 0.4m in diameter and 0.11m deep, lay in the centre of the trench and represented a truncated posthole (Figs 2 and 4 g-h). The brown sandy silt fill (context 1010) contained no finds.
- 7.1.7 A sub-rectangular pit-like feature, *Cut 1016*, partly obscured by the western bank of the trench, measured 0.85m long and 0.18m deep (Figs 2 and 4 k-l). The loose dark reddish brown fill (context 1015) contained no finds. It is likely that this feature was an animal burrow, judging by the nature of the fill and the sloping profile.
- 7.1.8 A thin deposit of hillwash (context 1002) was present over the northern and western parts of the trench (Fig. 4); this brown clay silt contained a flint scraper (SF 1). A 0.30m deep layer of modern ploughsoil (context 1001) completed the sequence.

7.2 *Trench 2*

- 7.2.1 Trench 2 was situated close to the central part of the southern boundary of the site (Figs 1 and 3), and was intended to examine a north-west to south-east aligned linear anomaly. A single linear feature (cut 2004) was identified, cutting into the yellowish brown clay natural.
- 7.2.2 *Cut 2004* ran for a distance of around 6.5m across the north-western area of the trench (Figs 3 and 4). This feature became wider towards the southern end of its course, where the excavated segment had a width of 1.9m (Fig. 4 m-n). The trough-shaped profile was irregular with a depth of 0.30m. There were two yellowish brown silty sand fills (contexts 2002 and 2003), neither contained any finds.
- 7.2.3 A 0.30m deep layer of modern ploughsoil (context 2001) directly overlies the natural.

8. Discussion

- 8.1 The evaluation was successful in identifying two of the linear anomalies known from the Geophysical Survey, and in establishing the presence of additional features in Trench 2. The only evidence was recovered from features to date the activity was recovered from Trench 1.
- 8.2 It is uncertain whether the linear feature in Trench 2 was the continuation of the ditch in Trench 1 as there were a number of similarly-aligned geophysical anomalies in this area. The two excavated linears had similar broad, relatively shallow profiles. However, there were differences in the fills, though these may be explained by the different natural deposits in the two areas: clay in Trench 2 and (mostly) gravelly sand in Trench 1. The finds from the Ditch 1007 in Trench 1 probably relate to the adjacent pits and postholes, activity which was not present in Trench 2.

- 8 3 The pit and postholes identified in Trench 1 clearly represent 'occupation' activity. The presence of a structure is suggested by the two postholes, and the grouping of both these and Pit 1009 in the northern part of the trench may be significant in terms of giving a finite zone of activity.
- 8 4 The dating of the features in Trench 1 is provided by the flint and the ceramics of Neolithic date.
- 8 5 Although flint artefacts were recovered from the Burton Riggs excavations, and from the surface of areas in advance of quarrying, no associated features were recognised. The general picture at the Hopper Hill Road site therefore would seem to have more in common with the excavations at Hanham Hill and Hopper Hill, where Neolithic occupation occupied low gravel hills, which superficially at least resemble the rising land on which Trench 1 lay.
- 8 7 The Hopper Hill Road site therefore would appear to fit into the pattern of Neolithic activity associated with the gravel hills on the low-lying margins of the eastern part of the Vale of Pickering.

9. Archaeological Implications of the Development

- 9 1 To judge by the evidence from the evaluation trenches the most significant area of the site lies in the vicinity of the northern end of Trench 1, where clear traces of Neolithic occupation were identified. The features associated with this activity are relatively insubstantial and in addition are situated within 0.40m of the present land surface. The archaeological remains are therefore vulnerable to all but the shallowest processes. Preservation under the proposed development would not therefore appear to be a viable option.
- 9 2 These deposits apparently extend beyond the northern limits of the trench, for an unknown distance, but their clustering towards the northern end of the trench suggests that their southern limit may have been defined by the evaluation.
- 9 3 It is recommended that a larger area extending north from Trench 1 be examined to investigate the likely continuation of Neolithic activity, and to establish the limits of this activity. The precise timing and nature of this work is dependant on the scheduling of the development for this area. It may be satisfactory to conduct a controlled *Recording Brief* if topsoil stripping is to take place in this area during the installation of roads. Otherwise, if this area is to be occupied by buildings it will be necessary to examine and excavate the deposits in advance of development works. This last option is preferable from an archaeological point of view, and avoid delays and unforeseen expense at the development stage. The follow-on excavation and recording should lead to a full report, including specialist work, publication of the results if appropriate, and preparation of the site archive for museum deposition.

10. Bibliography

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APPENDIX 1

Context Listing

Context No. Description

Trench 1

1001 Deposit, 10 YR 3/4, clay loam, modern ploughsoil
1002 Deposit, 10 YR 3/4, clay silt, hillwash
1003 Fill, 10 YR 4/4, clay silt, fill of linear feature 1004
1004 Cut, linear feature
1005 Fill, 10 YR 5/4, sandy silt, upper fill of ditch 1007
1006 Fill, 10 YR 6/4, clay silt; lower fill of ditch 1007
1007 Cut; ditch
1008 Fill, 10 YR 5/4, sandy silt, fill of pit 1009
1009 Cut, pit
1010 Fill, 10 YR 4/3, silty sand, fill of posthole 1011
1011 Cut, posthole
1012 Fill, 10 YR 4/4, silty sand, postpipe of posthole 1014
1013 Fill, 10 YR 4/4, silty sand with sandstones, packing in posthole 1014
1014 Cut, posthole
1015 Fill, 7.5 YR 4/4, silty sand, fill of feature 1016
1016 Cut, ?animal burrow

Trench 2

2001 Deposit, 10 YR 3/2, clay loam, modern ploughsoil
2002 Fill, 10 YR 4/4, silty sand, upper fill of linear feature 2004
2003 Fill, 10 YR 6/4, silty sand, lower fill of linear feature 2004
2004 Cut, ditch

APPENDIX 2

Finds Catalogue

Context No.	Category	Description
1002	Flint	1 side / end scraper (SF 1)
1005	Pottery	4 sherds
	Flint	1 edge-retouched flake (SF 2) 3 waste flakes
1006	Pottery	3 sherds
1008	Flint	2 waste flakes

The Flint

The flint assemblage falls within the Neolithic period. The side/end scraper (SF 1) from context 1002 is of the Early Neolithic period, the remainder of the assemblage is of types used in the Middle/Late Neolithic (P Makey)

The Pottery

The pottery assemblage is of at least two different fabrics: the first vesicular, hand-made, thick-walled and laminated, the other hand-made, with fine, variable quartz sand inclusions. Although clearly Prehistoric, the sherds are not consistent with the calcite-gritted Late Iron Age/Early Roman material from Crab Lane, Crossgates and would appear to be earlier, most probably of Neolithic date.

APPENDIX 3

Archive Listing

Plan No.	Scale	Description
1	1 10	Feature 1004 South-east facing section
2	1 10	Feature 1007 South-east facing section
3	1 10	Feature 1009 South-west facing section
4	1 10	Feature 1011 West facing section
5	1 10	Feature 1014 North facing section
6	1 10	Feature 1016 East facing section
7	1 20	Trench 1 Plan
8	1 10	Feature 2004 North-west facing section
9	1 20	Trench 2 Plan

APPENDIX 4

Photographic Listing

(The following shots have been taken in black & white & colour print & colour slide)

- 1 Trench 1 General shot after cleaning Facing north
- 2 Trench 1 General shot after cleaning Facing south
- 3 Trench 1 Feature 1004 Facing north-west
- 4 Trench 1 Feature 1004 Facing north-west
- 5 Trench 1 Feature 1007 Facing north-west
- 6 Trench 1 Feature 1007 Facing north-west
- 7 Trench 1 Feature 1009 Facing north-east
- 8 Trench 1 Feature 1009 Facing north-east
- 9 Trench 1 Feature 1011 Facing east
- 10 Trench 1 Feature 1011 Facing east
- 11 Trench 1 Feature 1014 Facing south
- 12 Trench 1 Feature 1014 Facing south
- 13 Trench 1 Feature 1016 Facing west
- 14 Trench 1 Feature 1016 Facing west
- 15 Trench 2 General shot after cleaning Facing north
- 16 Trench 2 General shot after cleaning Facing north
- 17 Trench 2 Feature 2004 Facing south-east
- 18 Trench 2 Feature 2004 Facing south-east

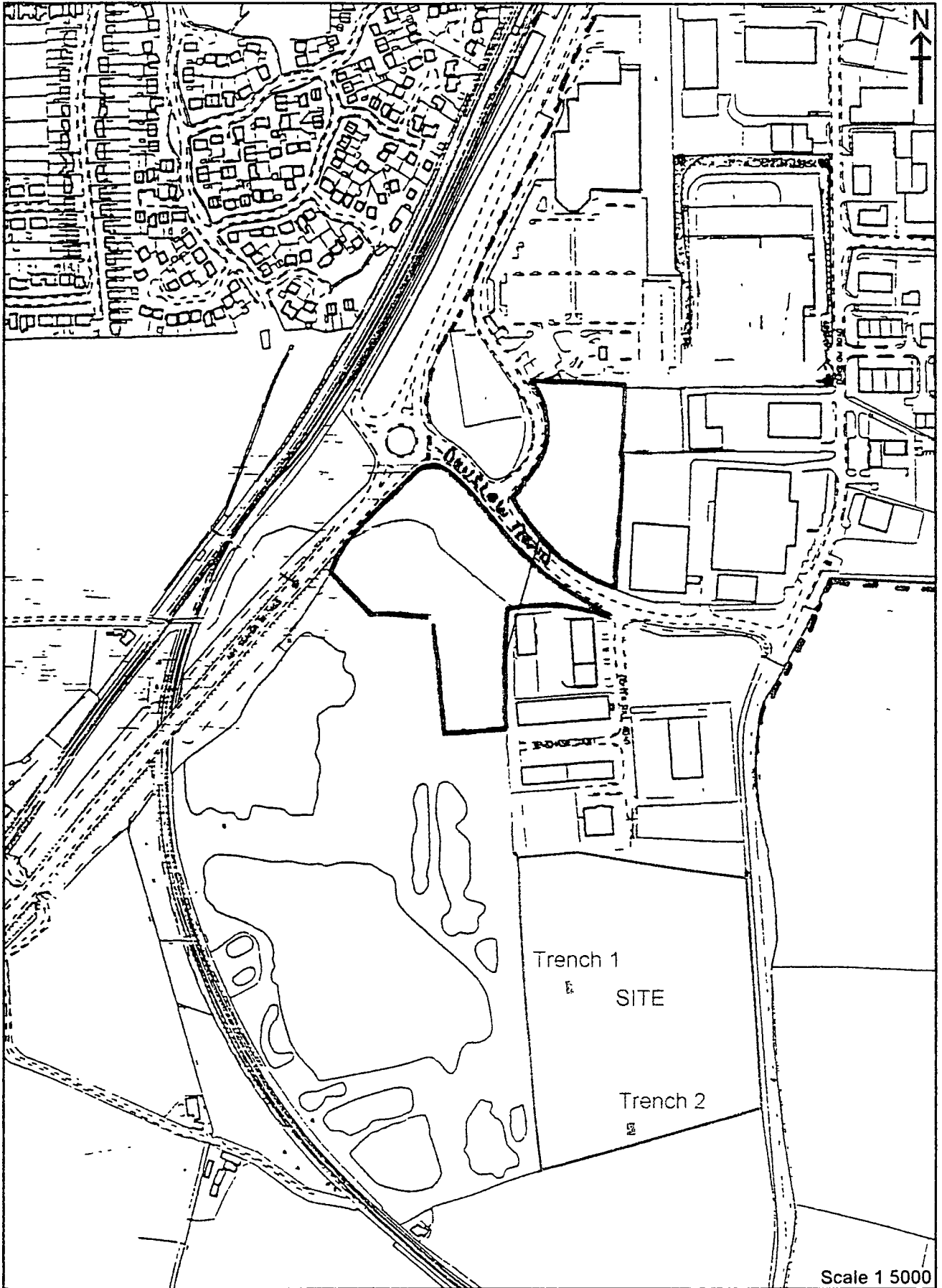


Figure 1 Site and Trench Location

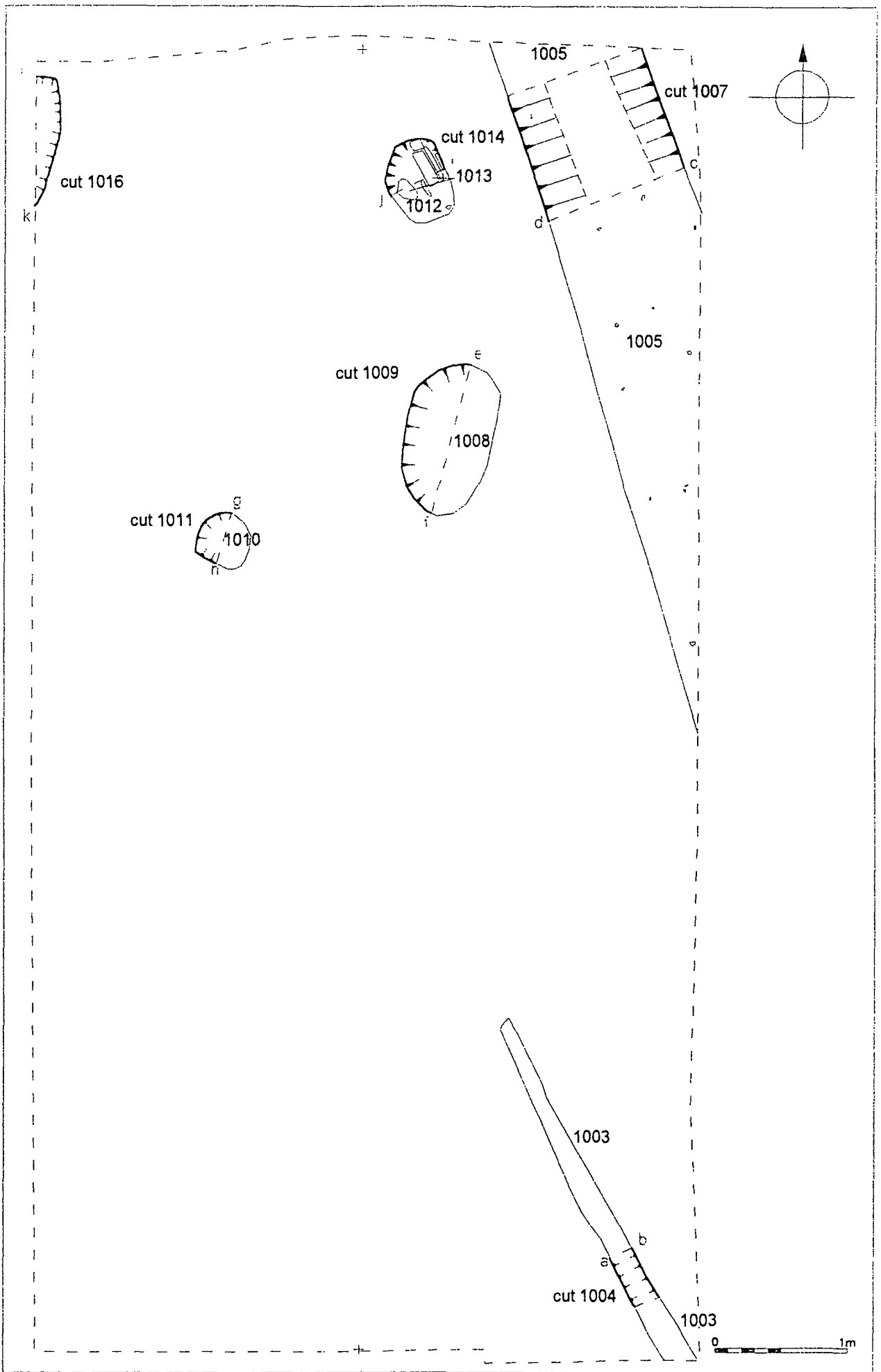


Figure 2 Trench 1 Plan

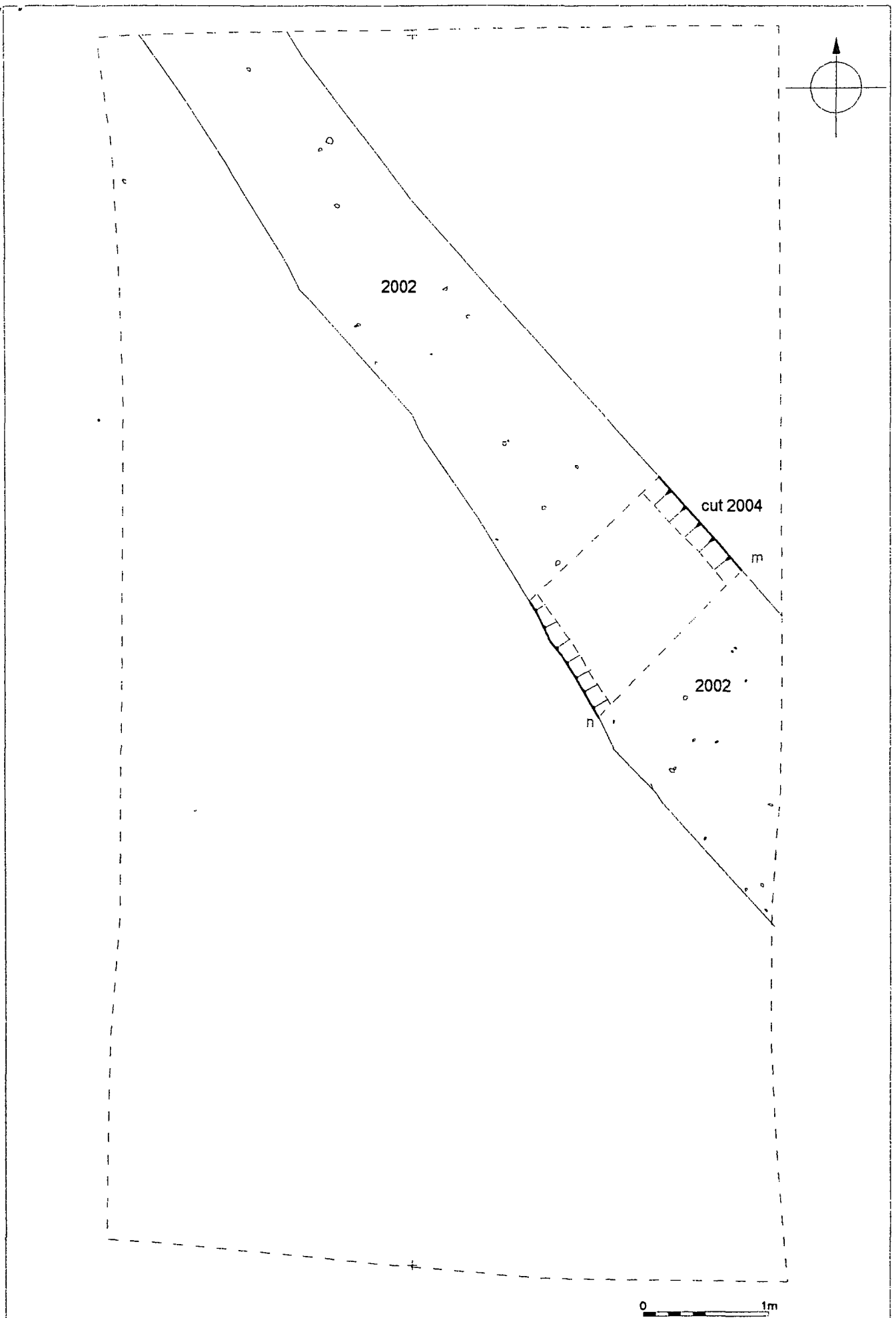


Figure 3 Trench 2 Plan

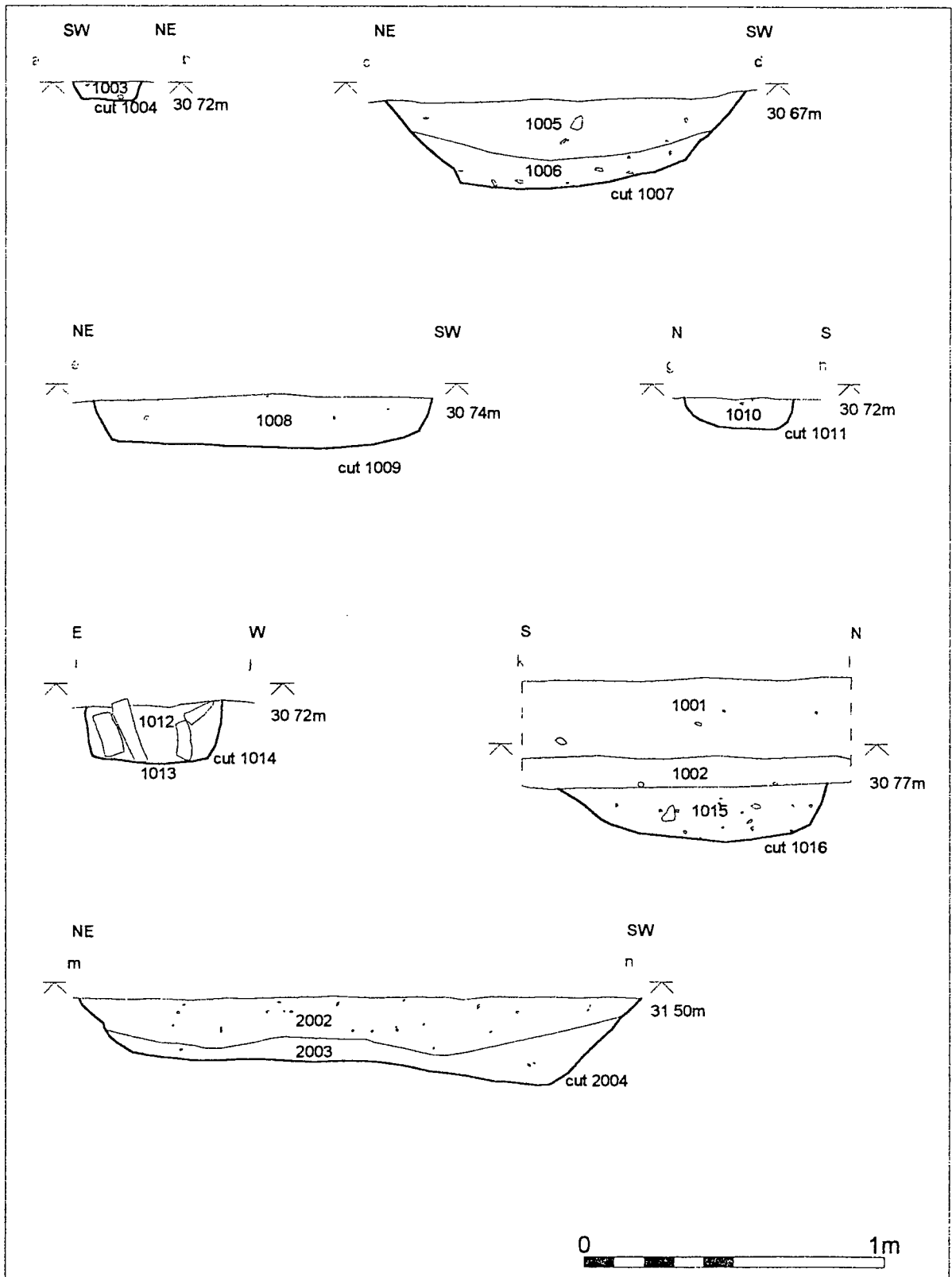


Figure 4 Trenches 1 and 2 Sections