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**UPDATED REPORT ON AN  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT  
LAND TO THE REAR OF 26 MARKET PLACE,  
BEDALE, NORTH YORKSHIRE**

**PRE-CONSTRUCT  
ARCHAEOLOGY LTD.**

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**Updated Report on an Archaeological Evaluation at land to the rear of  
26 Market Place, Bedale, North Yorkshire**

**Central National Grid Reference SE 265 881  
Site Code BED 02**

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May 2002 (updated May 2003)**

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## 1. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

- 1 1 An archaeological field evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited between 4<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> April 2002 at land to the rear of 26 Market Place, Bedale, North Yorkshire. The site's central National Grid Reference is SE 265 881. The commissioning Client was CgMs Consulting on behalf of McCarthy and Stone (Developments) Limited.
- 1 2 Five trenches were investigated and these revealed evidence relating to medieval, post-medieval and modern occupation of the site. In addition, an accumulation of peat material was encountered across the central portion of the site, suggesting the presence of a localised area of ancient wetland. Stratigraphic evidence broadly suggested that the origin of this material was pre-medieval. Subsequent assessment of pollen from the peat has indicated an early Holocene, broadly Mesolithic, origin for the material. Radiocarbon dating of the peat has confirmed this prehistoric date.
- 1 3 Natural boulder clay was exposed in Trench 1 and this was overlain by an organic deposit associated with the northern edge of the prehistoric wetland area. This trench also contained important remains of medieval date, including the remains of what appeared to be a wall construction trench and associated deposits. A sandstone wall dating from the post-medieval period was also recorded, along with modern overburden.
- 1 4 A deep sequence of alluvial silts, overlain by a peat formation, was recorded in Trench 2. These deposits were associated with the prehistoric wetland area. Assessment of pollen from the peat suggests that the depositional site was grass-sedge fen surrounded by willow, with birch woodland being the dominant terrestrial vegetation at the time. This trench also contained a possible yard surface of medieval date, a post-medieval drain and modern surfacing.
- 1 5 Alluvial silts were recorded in the base of Trench 3, overlain by an extensive peat formation, up to 1.30m thick, suggesting that the deepest material associated with the prehistoric wetland area lay in the vicinity of the south-western end of this trench. Radiocarbon dating of the peat indicates that it accumulated during the Mesolithic period. A post-medieval drain was also recorded in this trench, along with evidence of modern ground consolidation and surfacing.
- 1 6 Trench 4 also revealed extensive deposits of alluvial silts overlain by a peat formation along the length of the trench. The maximum recorded thickness of the peat in this trench was 1.05m and again this material was associated with the prehistoric wetland area. Modern drains were recorded beneath deposits associated with recent ground consolidation and surfacing.
- 1 7 Natural boulder clay was exposed along the length of Trench 5. A post-medieval gully or boundary feature was recorded underneath modern strata.
- 1 8 This is an update of a report prepared in May 2002 to take into account the results of palaeoenvironmental assessments and radiocarbon dating of material collected during the evaluation. This work had been put on hold until the planning application for the site was re-activated in early 2003.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 An archaeological field evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited (hereinafter PCA) between 4<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> April 2002 on land to the rear of 26 Market Place, Bedale, North Yorkshire. The site's central National Grid Reference is SE 265 881 (Figures 1 and 2). The field evaluation was carried out in advance of a proposed residential redevelopment.
- 2.2 The site lies in the centre of Bedale, behind buildings that front Market Place to the north-east. The site is roughly rectangular in shape and is orientated NE-SW. It is bounded by gardens and backyards to the north-east and by back lanes on all other sides. The area of the proposed development is presently occupied by derelict standing buildings and open areas of yard, enclosing an area of c. 0.5 hectares.
- 2.3 The evaluation was commissioned by CgMs Consulting, on behalf of McCarthy and Stone (Developments) Limited. The proposed redevelopment comprises the construction of a series of two- and three-storey residential buildings. PCA was contracted to evaluate the archaeological potential of the proposed redevelopment site by archaeological trial trenching. This would allow the impact of the development proposals upon the archaeological resource to be assessed in order to inform the planning decision.
- 2.4 A specification for the undertaking of the archaeological field evaluation was compiled by CgMs Consulting.<sup>1</sup> In addition, a map regression exercise was undertaken by CgMs Consulting prior to the fieldwork.
- 2.5 The completed archive, comprising written, drawn, and photographic records and artefacts will be deposited with the Yorkshire Museum, York, under the site code BED 02.
- 2.6 An initial report on the evaluation was prepared in May 2002. This represents an update of the report on the work to take into account the results of palaeoenvironmental assessments and radiocarbon dating of material collected during the evaluation. This work had been put on hold until re-activation of the planning application for the site in early 2003.

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<sup>1</sup> Bourn, 2002



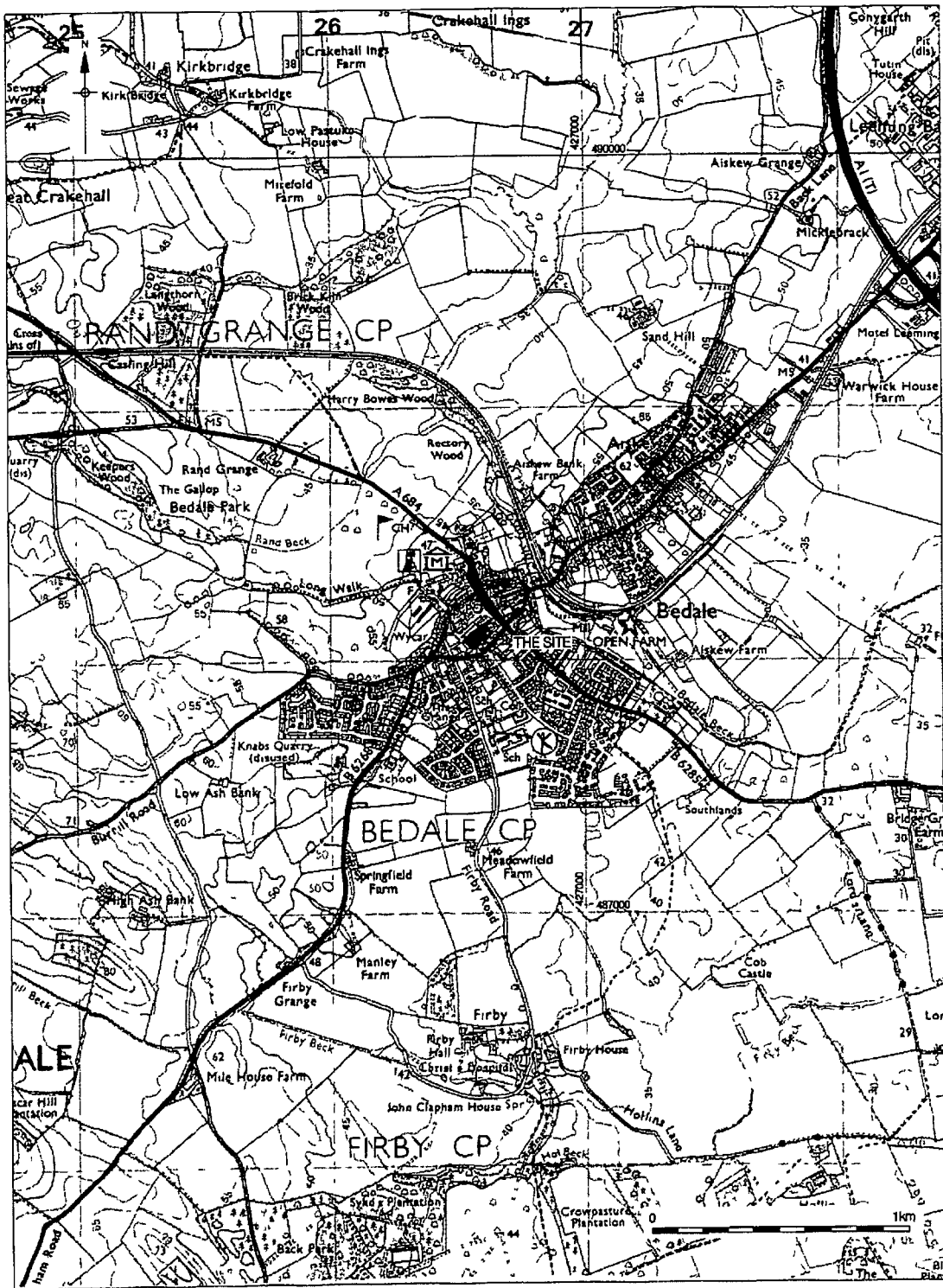


Figure 1 Site Location

### **3. PLANNING BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

#### **3 1 Planning Background**

3 1 1 The archaeological field evaluation described within this report was undertaken as a planning requirement associated with a proposed residential development of land to the rear of 26 Market Place, Bedale, North Yorkshire. The site lies within the historic core of Bedale, within an area displaying a property plan of recognisably medieval character, and, therefore, has good potential for the survival of archaeological remains of the medieval period.

3 1 2 The need for early consultation in the planning process in order to determine the impact of development schemes upon the archaeological resource is identified in the document 'Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 Archaeology and Planning (PPG 16)'<sup>2</sup>. The Heritage Unit of North Yorkshire County Council has responsibility for archaeological development control in North Yorkshire. The Heritage Unit identifies planning proposals that will be subject to archaeological conditions and is responsible for the implementation of archaeological mitigation schemes.

3 1 3 Planning permission is being sought for the construction of a part two-storey and part three-storey residential development. The Heritage Unit advised Hambleton District Council, as the Local Planning Authority, that it required further information regarding the archaeological potential of the site prior to determining the planning application. It was on the recommendation of the Heritage Unit that an archaeological field evaluation should be undertaken at the site to further inform the planning decision.

3 1 4 Prior to the evaluation described in this report, a specification for the undertaking of the archaeological field evaluation was compiled by CgMs Consulting.

3 1 5 This is an update of a report prepared in May 2002 to take into account the results of palaeoenvironmental assessments and radiocarbon dating of material collected during the evaluation. This work was put on hold until February 2002 when the planning application for the site was re-activated.

#### **3 2 Research Objectives**

3 2 1 The broad aim of the of the evaluation was to advise Hambleton District Council, as the Local Planning Authority, on the weight which ought to be attached to the preservation of any archaeological deposits in situ or any mitigation measures which may be required to record important deposits prior to destruction.

3 2 2 The site specific research objectives of the archaeological field evaluation can be summarised thus:

- to determine or confirm the general nature of any remains present,
- to determine or confirm approximate date or date range of any remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence,
- to determine or confirm the approximate extent of any remain,
- to determine the condition and state of preservation of any remains,



- to determine or confirm the likely range, quantity and quality of any artefactual evidence present,
- to determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present,
- to determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence and the forms in which such evidence may be present

3 2 3 Additional objectives of the project were

- to set out the background of the site, drawing together the results of previous archaeological, historical, and environmental work in the area,
- to compile a site archive consisting of all site and project documentary and photographic records, as well as artefactual and palaeoenvironmental material recovered,
- to compile a report that contains an assessment of the nature and significance of the stratigraphic, artefactual, archaeological, and environmental data

#### 4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 4 1 A brief summary of the historical and archaeological background of the site is included below. The information is partially taken from the aforementioned specification, and the author gratefully acknowledges the research and reporting of the individual(s) responsible. In addition, the more significant findings of a map regression exercise undertaken by CgMs Consulting are appended to this report (see Appendix F)
- 4 2 The origins of Bedale date to before the Norman Conquest. The church is mentioned in the Domesday Book survey, earned out in the area in 1085. A large church existing at this date implies that the town was well established by this period, and indeed, stonework dating to the late 9<sup>th</sup> and early 10<sup>th</sup> centuries is preserved in the church. The valuation of the parish is exceptionally low in the Domesday Book, far lower than one would expect for such a focal market town, but is still a higher value than before the Norman Conquest, indicating the importance of the market, even surrounded by wastelands. Unusually, the town was not destroyed during the 'Devastation of the North', a campaign undertaken by the Conqueror to suppress the north of the country in the years 1069-1071.
- 4 3 Bedale became a prosperous settlement during the medieval period, mainly as a result of the wool trade, and the town was granted a market charter by Henry III in 1251. The town takes the form of a 'corridor village', a common style of medieval settlement, mainly seen in the land between the Tyne and the Tees, but which extends across the north of England. This type of town plan involves two facades of buildings, constructed to face one another, and often with an area of 'green' between them. The rows of buildings are then divided into long, thin tenements which occupy narrow street frontages, but which extend back from the street in areas of outbuildings, yards, and backlots. The corridor plan is often associated with market towns. Some early antiquaries suggest that a castle once stood at the northern end of Market Place in Bedale, presumably of earth and timber construction, although no remains of such a structure can be traced on the ground.
- 4 4 For much of its later history, Bedale was a minor estate of the Earls of Arundel, whose manor stood at Bedale Hall. No trace of this manor remains, and a Georgian building now occupies that site. The market cross appears to date from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, but the fabric of Bedale is primarily of Georgian or more modern construction. The town appears to have been fairly prosperous during the post-medieval period, supporting small industries of weaving, dyeing and tanning. However, as these industries declined, the town came to rely on the market for prosperity.
- 4 5 Map regression reveals little in the way of detailed information about the site, principally due to the scale of the plotting. Some of the standing buildings are probably of mid 19<sup>th</sup> century origin, the row of two-storey stone cottages down the site's spine is not depicted shown on the 1838 Tithe map. This row of buildings, along with a two-storey stone cottage lying between evaluation Trenches 1 and 2, are the most noteworthy from the point of view of vernacular architecture.

## 5. GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

### 5.1 Geology

5.1.1 The underlying 'solid' geology of the area is of Cadeby Formation (formerly Lower Magnesian Limestone). The 'drift' geology comprises laminated silt and boulder clay, interleaved in places with fluvio-glacial sand and gravel.<sup>3</sup>

### 5.2 Topography

5.2.1 Ground level is slightly lower at the site's south-western end compared to its north-eastern end. Ground level in the vicinity of Trench 1, to the north-east, lies at c. 41.80m AOD, while to the south-west, in the vicinity of Trench 5, it lies at c. 41.30m AOD. However, there is a discernible dip in the ground level in the central southern portion of the site. This area lies at c. 40m AOD. This 'feature' may be a vestige of the localised prehistoric wetland area, which the evaluation exposed.

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<sup>3</sup> Powell et al., 1992

## 6. ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

### 6.1 Fieldwork

- 6.1.1 The archaeological fieldwork was undertaken in accordance with the relevant standard and guidance documents of the Institute of Field Archaeologists<sup>4</sup>
- 6.1.2 The specification for the evaluation described the investigation of six trenches, two trenches measuring 20m x 1.8m, and four measuring 10m x 1.8m. However, various factors, including service runs and access arrangements, required the number, location and size of the trenches to be altered. The modified scheme, which comprised five trenches, was agreed on site in consultation with the Heritage Unit. All trenches were positioned where possible to investigate the potential of the medieval backlot areas, and to define the extent of any deposits encountered (Figure 2)
- 6.1.3 Trench 1 was located towards the north-eastern end of the site. This was an L-shaped trench with a longer portion measuring 15.5m x 1.9m aligned SE-NW and a shorter portion measuring 2.6m x 1.8m aligned SW-NE. This single trench replaced the original Trenches 1 and 2, as described in the specification, in an attempt to avoid a live sewer, to avoid cutting off access to the rear of Market Street properties and to test the possible remains of a medieval burgage plot boundary. A baulk, c. 1.3m wide, was left upstanding roughly in the centre of Trench 1 in order to protect a possible live drain that crossed the trench.
- 6.1.4 Trench 2 was roughly square in plan with a short extension projecting from its south-eastern corner. The main body of the trench measured 4.15m N-S x 4.0m E-W and the extension measured 1.80m square. Due to the depth of stratigraphy encountered in this trench, its sides were stepped twice in order to provide a safe working environment. It had been intended to locate this trench further to the north-west but this was not possible as access to the rear of Market Street properties had to be maintained.
- 6.1.5 Trench 3, measuring 13.25m x 1.80m, was aligned NE-SW, roughly parallel with the row of stone cottages occupying the site's central spine. The intended length of this trench was shortened due to the presence of two possible live drains. This trench was positioned to investigate the central portion of the medieval backlots. A peat formation exposed along the base of the trench was excavated by machine in a series of sondages in order to ascertain its thickness while, at the same time, maintaining a safe working environment.
- 6.1.6 Trench 4 measured 17.10m x 1.90m and was orientated NE-SW on the same line as Trench 3 and to the south-west. Again, this trench had to be shortened due to a modern drain encountered at its western end. Although this feature was retained in situ undamaged, its exposure established that it was leaking and in fact it caused the southern end of the trench to quickly become flooded. A thick concrete slab exposed towards the centre of the trench was not removed in order to prevent the entire trench becoming flooded. This trench was positioned to investigate the central/rear of the backlot area. A peat formation exposed along the base of the trench was excavated by machine in a series of sondages in order to ascertain its thickness while, at the same time, maintaining a safe working environment.

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<sup>4</sup> Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1999

- 6 1 7 Trench 5 was located at the rear of the site, adjacent to the back lane which bounds it. This trench measured 8.25m x 1.90m, and was orientated SW-NE. It was shortened from its intended length in order to ensure safe machine operation. This trench was intended to examine the rearmost portion of the backlot area.
- 6 1 8 Ground reduction was undertaken using a JOB back-acting mechanical excavator. A 1.8m wide, non-toothed bucket was utilised and the work took place under the direct guidance of the supervising archaeologist. All undifferentiated modern overburden was stripped down, in strips of approximately 100mm thickness, to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon.
- 6 1 9 All excavation and recording was undertaken in accordance with recognised archaeological practice and following methodology set out in PCA's field recording manual<sup>5</sup>. Following machine excavation, the sections and the base of each trench were carefully cleaned using the appropriate hand tools. Relevant sections in each trench were drawn at a scale of 1:10. The base of each trench was planned at a scale of 1:20, relative to a baseline established across the trench. The position of each trench baseline was precisely located using a Nikon Total Station EDM.
- 6 1 10 Archaeological deposits were recorded using a 'single context planning' system. Features, deposits and structures were recorded on pro forma context record sheets.
- 6 1 11 Within appropriate archaeological horizons, partial excavation, the recovery of dating evidence, or cleaning and recording of deposits was preferred to full excavation, and was practised wherever possible. Intrusive modern features, for example silted-up modern drainage features, which were visible after machining, were removed completely by hand, using mattocks and shovels. This was undertaken prior to the investigation of earlier strata, in order to remove the risk of contaminating archaeological deposits.
- 6 1 12 Photographic recording employed both colour transparency and black and white print formats. All photographs included a metric graduated scale.
- 6 1 13 Two Temporary Bench Marks (TBMs) were established on the site, using an Ordnance Survey Bench Mark (41.19m AOD) located on the north-eastern side of Market Place, near to the Market Cross. These TBMs had values of 41.33m AOD and 41.15m AOD.

## 6 2 Post-Excavation

- 6 2 1 The site's stratigraphic data is represented by the written, drawn and photographic records. A total of 63 archaeological contexts was defined in the five evaluation trenches (see Appendix A). Post-excavation work involved checking and collating site records, grouping contexts, enhancing matrices, consulting with a specialist and provisionally phasing the stratigraphic data (see Appendix B). A written summary of the archaeological sequence was then compiled, as described below in Section 7.

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<sup>5</sup> PCA, 1999

- 6 2 2 All artefactual material was washed, dried, marked and packaged, as appropriate, according to relevant guidelines in order to guarantee a stable storage environment <sup>6</sup> The artefactual material from the site principally comprised an assemblage of ceramic material, mostly pottery and building material with one piece of clay tobacco pipe. Specialist assessment of the pottery was undertaken (see Appendix C). In addition, one metallic object was recovered and specialist conservation assessment, including x-radiography, was undertaken (see Appendix D). No other categories of inorganic artefactual material were represented.
- 6 2 3 The organic archaeological material from the site comprised a very small assemblage of faunal remains. This material was not processed or subject to specialist assessment because of the extremely small quantity recovered and any data would, therefore, be essentially meaningless. No other categories of organic archaeological material were represented.
- 6 2 3 The alluvial silts and overlying peat formation encountered in Trenches 2, 3 and 4 were subject to extensive sampling at the time of the fieldwork, on the recommendation of the English Heritage Regional Advisor on Archaeological Science. A series of bulk samples for plant macrofossils and invertebrate remains were collected from the peat and underlying silts, along with column samples of peat for pollen analysis and bulk samples of peat for radiocarbon dating. In February 2003, four bulk samples of peat or alluvial material from Trenches 2 and 3 were submitted for assessment of their plant macrofossil remains, one sample from the peat formation in Trench 2 was submitted for assessment of its pollen content and two samples from the upper and lower parts of the peat formation in Trench 3 were submitted for radiocarbon dating (see Appendix E). This report represents an update of an original report on the evaluation to take into account the results of these environmental assessments and the radiocarbon dating.
- 6 2 4 A single bulk sample was collected from an archaeological deposit in Trench 1. This sample was submitted for specialist processing and assessment for the presence of plant macrofossils and archaeological materials, along with the samples described above, in February 2003.
- 6 2 5 Survival of all materials from archaeological fieldwork depends upon suitable storage. The complete project archive, comprising written, drawn, and photographic records (including all material generated electronically during post-excavation) and all 'finds' will be packaged for long term curation according to relevant guidelines <sup>7</sup>. The depositional requirements of the receiving body, in this case the Yorkshire Museum, will be met in full.

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<sup>6</sup> Watkinson and Neal, 1998, UKIC, 1983

<sup>7</sup> UKIC, 1990

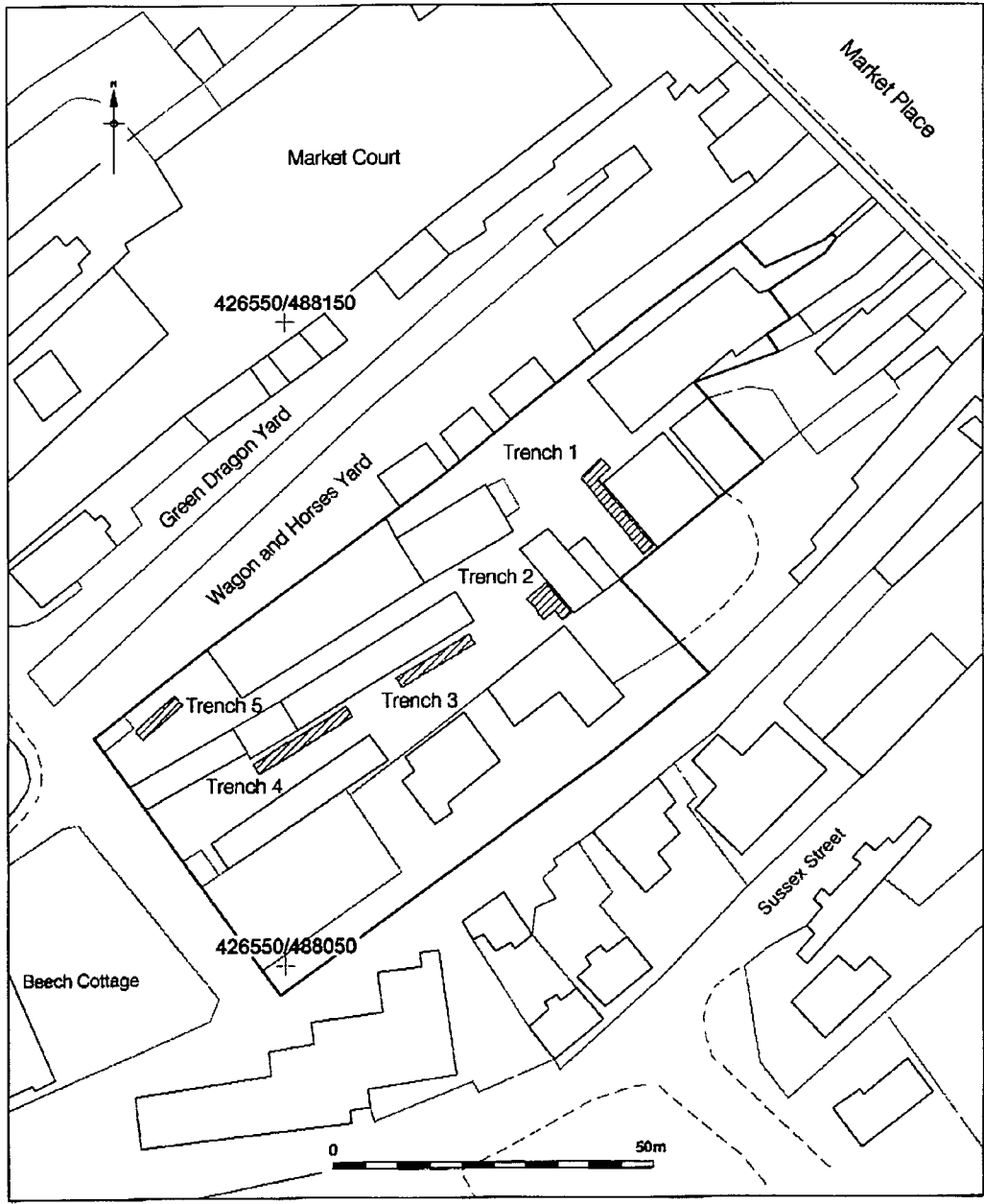


Figure 2 Trench Location



## 7. THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

*Note Discrete stratigraphic entities (e.g., a cut, a fill, a deposit) were assigned unique and individual 'context' numbers, and these are indicated in the following text as [\*]. The archaeological sequence has been described by broad stratigraphic phases. These are indicated by Roman numerals (e.g., II)*

### 7.1 Phase I: Natural Sub-stratum

- 7.1.1 The natural sub-stratum was encountered in Trenches 1 and 5. The earliest natural deposit to be recorded at the site comprised a layer, [13], of soft, yellowish grey, fine sand with occasional small flecks of decayed sandstone. A patch of this material, interpreted as a glacial deposit, was exposed and recorded in the northern half of Trench 1, but was not excavated further (Figure 3).
- 7.1.2 Sand deposit [13] was overlain by natural boulder clay, [12], comprising stiff, dark yellowish grey, sandy clay, with moderate gravel throughout. The upper interface of this deposit fell away sharply from a height of 41.12m AOD in the shorter portion of Trench 1 to a height of 40.30m AOD only a few metres away in the northern end of the longer portion (Figure 4). This 'edge' is interpreted as being part of a substantial feature of probable pre-medieval date, the fills of which were exposed in Trenches 2, 3 and 4, as described below.
- 7.1.3 Natural boulder clay, [4], was exposed along the length of Trench 5. This upper interface of this deposit was fairly level throughout the trench and the highest level at which it occurred was 41.64m AOD.

### 7.2 Phase II: Prehistoric Alluvium

- 7.2.1 Alluvial strata, interpreted as deriving from a localised area of ancient wetland that once occupied the central portion of the site, were recorded in Trenches 2, 3 and 4. A deep sequence of alluvial deposits was recorded in Trench 2 (Figure 7). The earliest of these, recorded at the base of the sondage in the centre of the trench, was a layer, [31], of soft, silty clay with moderate plant remains throughout. This deposit was encountered at a maximum height of 38.20m AOD. It was overlain by a layer, [30], up to 0.15m thick, of soft, clayey silt with decayed organic material throughout. This was overlain by another alluvial layer, [29], of clayey silt, up to 0.13m thick, which in turn was overlain by a substantial layer, [28], up to 0.65m thick, of soft, silty clay with decayed organic material throughout. This lay beneath an alluvial deposit, [27], of soft, fine silt, notable for the very frequent small mollusc shells throughout, as well as moderate organic material and very occasional insect remains. The maximum thickness of this deposit was 0.12m thick. The latest alluvial deposit recorded in Trench 2 comprised a 0.25m thick layer, [26], of soft, fine silt with very frequent small mollusc shells and moderate organic remains throughout. The combined thickness of the alluvial strata exposed in Trench 2 was 1.20m, although the full depth of the alluvial sequence could not be ascertained while maintaining a safe working environment. The highest level at which the alluvial sequence was encountered in Trench 2 was 39.35m AOD.

7 2 2 The earliest excavated deposit in Trench 3 was an alluvial layer, [37], comprising soft, fine silt with very frequent small mollusc shells throughout (Figure 9) It was exposed at the north-eastern end of the trench and within two machine excavated sondages in the base of the trench The maximum recorded thickness of the deposit was 0 70m but it was not possible to determine its full extent while maintaining a safe working environment The top of alluvial layer [37] sloped down from a height of 38 98m AOD at the north-eastern end of Trench 3 to 38 25m AOD at its south-western end A sample of this material yielded a number of birch seeds, suggesting birch woodland either at the site or in the general area at the time this alluvium accumulated A significant number of molluscs were preserved in the sample

7 2 3 The basal deposit exposed at the north-eastern end of Trench 4 was a layer, [52], of alluvial origin, comprising soft fine silt with very frequent small mollusc shells throughout (Figure 11) This deposit had a maximum excavated thickness of 0 5m, but it was not possible to determine the full depth of the deposit while maintaining a safe working environment The highest level at which the alluvium occurred was 38 81m AOD

### 7 3 Phase III Prehistoric Peat Formation

7 3 1 A peat formation was encountered in Trenches 1, 2, 3 and 4 It had evidently developed in a localised wetland area, characterised as grass-sedge fen, in the central portion of the site The edge of the peat was observed in Trench 1 to the north-east, it attained its maximum thickness in Trench 3 in the central part of the site and was not present in Trench 5 to the south-west

7 3 2 The eastern edge of the peat formation was exposed in the northern part of Trench 1 overlying natural boulder clay at a height of 40 14m AOD (Figure 3) Here the peat, layer [10], comprised soft, dark brown and purplish black, silty peat with lenses of felted vegetable matter The deposit continued to the west and south where it was overlain by later, unexcavated, deposits A small area of the peat deposit was also exposed at the south-eastern end of the trench in the base of a hand-excavated sondage through medieval remains

7 3 3 A peat formation, [25], was encountered across the extent of Trench 2, overlying the alluvial material, as described above (Figure 7) This layer comprised soft, dark brown to black peat with very frequent inclusions of preserved wood and felted vegetable matter It was encountered at a maximum height of 39 70m AOD and was up to 0 40m thick A sample of deposit [25] produced coarse organic material and waterlogged plant fragments, although waterlogged seeds were low in number and not from the species usually associated with waterlogged, peaty environments Assessment of pollen from deposit [25] indicates that the material accumulated in an anaerobic, peat-forming environment The species represented indicates that this area was grass-sedge fen, with willow probably growing on its periphery (see Appendix E)

7 3 4 In Trench 3, the peat formation, [36], was also recorded across the extent of the trench overlying the alluvium, as described above (Figure 9) This peat, very similar in composition to that recorded in Trench 2, increased considerably in thickness from 0 70m at the north-eastern end of the trench to 1 30m at the south-western end The top of the peat occurred at a maximum height of 39 60m AOD Bulk samples of deposit [36] produced similar material to that from deposit [25] from Trench 2 (see Appendix E)

- 7 3 5 In addition, material from the upper and lower parts of deposit [36] was submitted for radiocarbon dating (see Appendix E) Each sample provided sufficient carbon for accurate measurements and produced radiocarbon ages of  $5830 \pm 50$  BP (upper part of layer) and  $8120 \pm 60$  BP (lower part of layer) The material, therefore, appears conclusively to be prehistoric in origin, and can be considered to be broadly of Mesolithic date
- 7 3 6 At the north-eastern end of Trench 4, the peat formation, [51], was fully exposed for a distance of 4.50m and in this area it was 0.80m thick overlying the alluvium, as described above (Figure 11) To the south-west it was not possible to expose the base of the peat deposit, due to flooding, but at this point its maximum recorded thickness was 1.05m The top of the peat formation in this trench was encountered at heights between 39.92m AOD and 38.60m AOD
- 7 4 Phases II and III: Discussion
- 7 4 1 Alluvial material of the type encountered in Trenches 2, 3 and 4 is typically deposited by a slow-moving, low energy body of water This implies, when the horizontal extent of the strata is also considered, that a relatively large body of water, probably a small lake, once existed at the site The upper interface of the alluvium was recorded at its lowest height at the south-western end of Trench 3, suggesting that the deepest part of the feature was located within the central portion of the site The variety of alluvial material recorded in Trench 2, ranging from fine silts to laminated organic silt and sterile clay, is of note The implication is that the edge of the feature lies immediately to the east of Trench 2, which is essentially confirmed by the findings of Trench 1 Typically, it would be towards the edge of an extensive water-filled feature that such varied depositional episodes would be represented in the sedimentary sequence It appears that the full width of the feature is contained within the site, since no alluvial material was encountered in Trench 5 to the west Its width can be estimated as c. 70m and it probably lies on a NNW-SSE orientation Environmental evidence indicates that birch woodland lay at the site or in the area around the site when the alluvial material accumulated
- 7 4 2 The overlying peat material developed in an anaerobic peat-forming wetland environment Pollen evidence from the peat formation in Trench 2 indicates that this was a grass-sedge fen, probably with willow growing on the periphery of the wetland Birch woodland, however, along with some pine and hazel woodland, was evidently dominant on the drier surrounding areas A probable early Holocene date is suggested by the pollen evidence and radiometric analysis has broadly confirmed a Mesolithic period of origin for the wetland material
- 7 5 Phase IV: Medieval
- 7 5 1 Evidence for occupation of the site during the medieval period was recorded in Trenches 1 and 2 In Trench 1, the peat formation was overlain by a layer, [11], of sandy silt, with occasional charcoal flecks throughout This was recorded in plan in the central portion of the trench but was not excavated (Figure 3) This deposit probably represents the remains of a developed soil Pottery of 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century date was recovered from the deposit as it was exposed The highest level at which layer [11] was recorded was 40.26m AOD

- 7 5 2 A silty clay deposit, [57], was revealed within a hand excavated sondage towards the southern end of Trench 1 (Figure 6) This deposit contained occasional charcoal flecks and small lenses of peat A bulk sample for palaeoenvironmental remains and archaeological material was collected from this deposit (see Appendix E) Small quantities of fuel waste present in the sample were probably residual, from waste material nearby Very low numbers of plant macrofossils were recovered from the sample, implying that domestic waste material had not accumulated in the deposit Nevertheless, this deposit is interpreted as a probable occupation deposit, representing material which accumulated upon an existing ground surface The material may have accumulated in an open backyard area or could feasibly represent a floor surface within a backlot structure
- 7 5 3 A linear feature, [33], truncated deposit [11] to the west and deposit [57] to the east Orientated N-S it was traced in plan for a distance of c 5 50m whereupon it turned at right angles in the south to run W-E for a distance of c 1m, at which point it had been truncated by a modern service trench, [15] (Figure 3) Its maximum width was 1 40m and it was 0 52m deep A 1 5m wide portion of the feature was excavated and this revealed a profile with sides sloping at 45° and a concave, uneven base The highest level at which the feature occurred was 40 18m AOD
- 7 5 4 The primary fill, [32], of feature [33] comprised a sandy silt deposit from which pottery dating from the 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century was recovered An iron object, provisionally identified as an axe head, was recovered from this deposit, close to the base of the feature A conservation assessment of this object was undertaken (see Appendix D), x-radiography established that it was not an axe head A sandy silt upper fill, [8], was notable for the very frequent presence of medium and large sub-rounded and rounded cobbles Medieval pottery was also recovered from this deposit
- 7 5 5 Feature [33] is provisionally interpreted as the construction trench for a building The primary fill may have been a consolidation deposit, laid to receive a foundation, represented by fill [8] It is likely that this represents the footing of a cobble or masonry dwarf wall, possibly to support a timber baseplate beam for the upper portion of the wall On the basis of the excavated evidence, a more precise interpretation of the form of the structure that these remains represent is unwise Pottery recovered from the primary fill of the construction trench indicates that the structure dates from the 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century
- 7 5 6 A sandy silt deposit, [48], was recorded to the east and north of construction trench [33], i e internal to the putative structure, at a maximum height of 40 11m AOD (Figure 3) It lay stratigraphically above the putative wall foundation and is suggestive of an occupation layer Rim sherds from the same medieval cooking pot were recovered from the primary fill, [32], of the construction trench and layer [48], suggesting contemporaneous deposition
- 7 5 7 A developed soil, [7], was recorded along the length of Trench 1 (Figure 4) Up to 0 50m thick, this layer was a fairly homogeneous deposit comprising mid brownish grey sandy silt with few inclusions It was recorded at a maximum height of 41 10m AOD at the north-western end of the trench but fell away gradually to the east where it attained a maximum height of 40 50m AOD at the south-eastern end of the trench Pottery dating from the 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century was recovered from the deposit Accumulation of this layer appears to represent the end of medieval activity, with all earlier medieval stratigraphy sealed by it It may be that the backlot area was turned over to agricultural or market gardening activity in the late medieval period resulting in the development of such a horizon

7 5 8 In Trench 2, a layer, [24], of mid brownish grey silty sand was recorded across the extent of the trench (Figure 7) It was notable for the presence of very frequent, thin irregular lenses of gritty yellowish orange sand and frequent sub-angular to sub-rounded cobbles Its maximum thickness was 0 15m thick and the highest level at which it occurred was 39 71m AOD Pottery dating from the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century was recovered from this deposit This deposit is interpreted as an occupation layer, laid down upon the underlying peat deposit to consolidate this area Rather than simply representing an attempt to consolidate the ground surface, it is possible that this layer was actually a yard surface within the backlot area

## 7 6 Phase V Post-medieval

7 6 1 Post-medieval deposits were exposed in all five trenches In Trench 1, a developed soil, [6], up to 0 50m in thickness, was recorded along the length of the trench It was a firm, dark brown to black deposit composed of slightly sandy silt with few inclusions This layer was exposed at a maximum height of 41 28m AOD, at the north-western end of the trench

7 6 2 Towards the north-western end of Trench 1, soil horizon [6] was truncated by a NE-SW aligned linear feature, [63] This had near vertical sides, a flat base and was 0 65m wide x 0 45m deep It is interpreted as a construction trench for a wall footing The foundation itself, [62], was constructed with sandstone blocks and sub-rounded cobbles The top of the structure had been bonded with a light greyish white chalky mortar, which had evidently had poured in on top of the main structural elements It is likely that this wall represents a property boundary of post-medieval date, its position probably reflecting an earlier burgage plot boundary

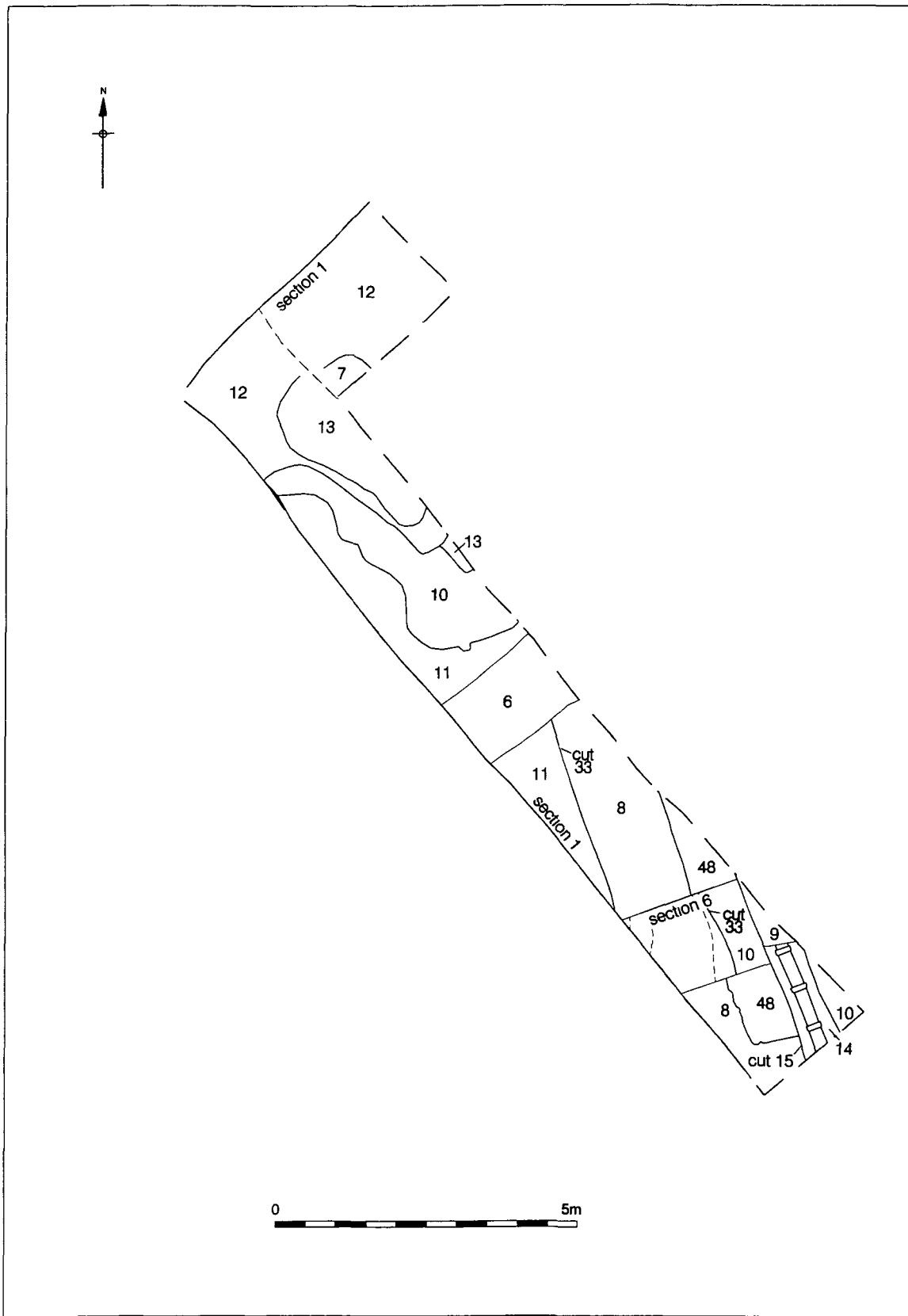
7 6 3 Similar horizons were observed in Trenches 2, 3, and 4, all overlying the uppermost peat formation These deposits, layer [23] in Trench 2, layer [35] in Trench 3, and layer [50] in Trench 4, consisted of fairly homogeneous materials, typically described as fine, mid greyish brown, silty clay There were only occasional inclusions, most notably small fragments of coal and small angular fragments of brick or tile These deposits, which can be reasonably equated, were up to 0 35m thick and were encountered at a maximum height of 40 08m AOD to the north-east, sloping down to a level of 39 77m AOD to the south-west It is likely that these layers represent a ground raising and consolidation episode, with material laid down over the uppermost peat deposits in the central portion of the site in an attempt to establish a viable ground surface It is assumed that this event immediately pre-dated construction of the post-medieval buildings which still stand in this part of the site

7 6 4 Layer [23] in Trench 2 was truncated by the construction trench, [22], for a stone and brick drain This structure was orientated NE-SW and extended across the trench, terminating approximately at the centre of the trench The drain was 1m wide x 0 48m deep A stone base slab, [21], had been set into the base of the construction trench and parallel walls of brick, [20], had been erected directly upon this A silting-up fill, [19], was recorded inside the drain, which presumably accumulated after the structure went out of use

- 7 6 5 Layer [35] in Trench 3 was truncated by the construction trench, [45], for another stone and brick drain, [43] This consisted of a series of base slabs with three courses of brick and stone walls set upon them This drain was 0 95m wide x 0 50m deep The construction trench contained a backfill deposit, [42], and the drain contained a silty infill, [44] Neither of the drains described above had capping stones While these may have been removed in antiquity, it is possible that the features were simply open drains, given the low-status of the dwellings that they were serving
- 7 6 6 The natural boulder clay in Trench 5 was truncated by a linear feature, [3], aligned roughly NE-SW and running along the length of the trench It was 0 35-0 45m in width x 0 20m deep It sandy fill, [2], was notable for the very frequent inclusion of gravel, sub-rounded cobbles and, particularly, abraded fragments of brick and tile It is possible that this feature represents a post-medieval property boundary However, given the nature of the fill, it is likely that this was a drainage gully, designed to carry away rain water Ceramic material dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> century was recovered from the fill

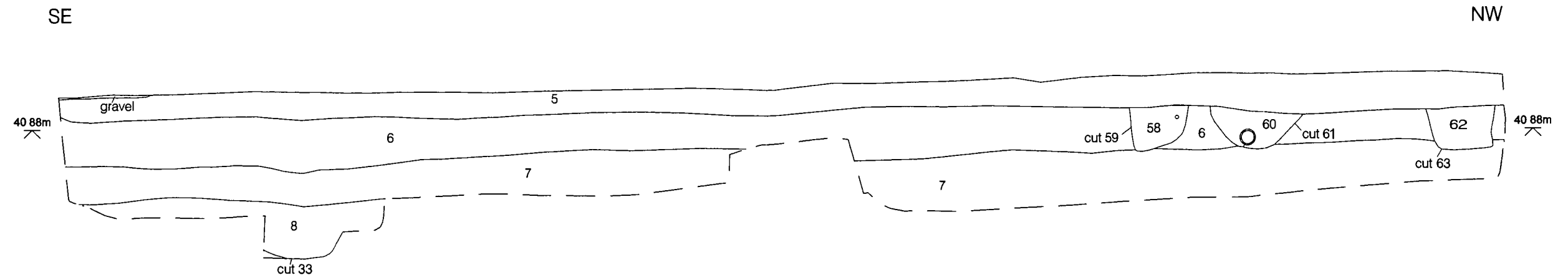
## 7 7 Phase VI Modern

- 7 7 1 Modern drains and services were exposed in all trenches, except Trench 5, during the evaluation The drains consisted of ceramic salt-glazed pipes At the south-eastern end of Trench 1 was a deep linear trench, [15], containing a live sewer pipe, [14], aligned roughly north-south A water pipe trench and a drain trench, [59] and [61] respectively, were also encountered in this trench, these being of much shallower depth A layer, [5], of rubble hardcore, up to c 0 40m thick, was located along the length of the trench, sealing all activity A thin band of gravel towards the south-eastern end of the trench represented the remains of the existing yard surface Ground level lay at c 41 60m AOD at the northern end of Trench 1, falling away to c 41 20m AOD to the south-east
- 7 7 2 A shallow trench, [18], containing an iron water pipe was located against the north-western limit of excavation in Trench 2, and this was overlain by layer, [16], of rubble hardcore, which extended across the trench A modern gravel surface formed the uppermost deposit in Trench 2, with ground level standing at maximum height of c 40 40m AOD
- 7 7 3 A shallow drain trench, [47], was partially exposed at the south-western end of Trench 3 and a similar feature, [39], was recorded towards its north-eastern end A layer, [34], of rubble hardcore underlay the existing gravel yard surface, which stood at a height of c 39 95m AOD along the length of the trench
- 7 7 4 Two shallow drain trenches, [53] and [55], were recorded towards the north-eastern end of Trench 4, and these were overlain by a layer, [49], of rubble hardcore This attained a maximum thickness of 0 70m at the south-western end of the trench, where it directly overlies the uppermost peat formation The existing gravel yard surface lay at c 40 40m AOD in this part of the trench, falling away to c 40 0m AOD to the north-east
- 7 7 5 In Trench 5, natural boulder clay was overlain by a 0 50m thick layer, [1], of rubble hardcore, this being make-up for the overlying concrete slab No horizontal stratigraphy of post-medieval or earlier date survived in this trench and it is assumed that such material was truncated in recent times The level of the top of the slab was c 41 30m AOD

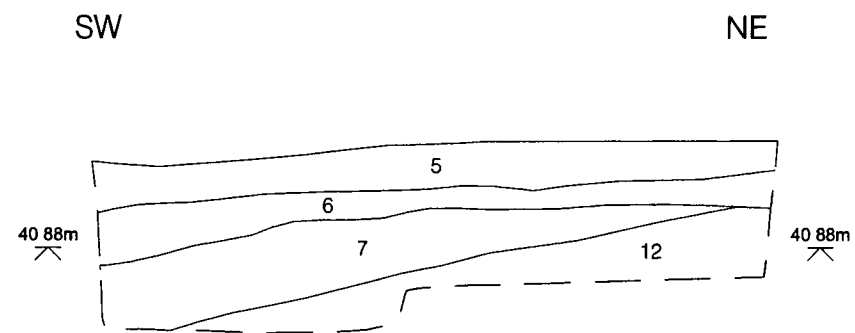




Section 1, North-east facing, Trench 1



Section 1, South-east facing, Trench 1



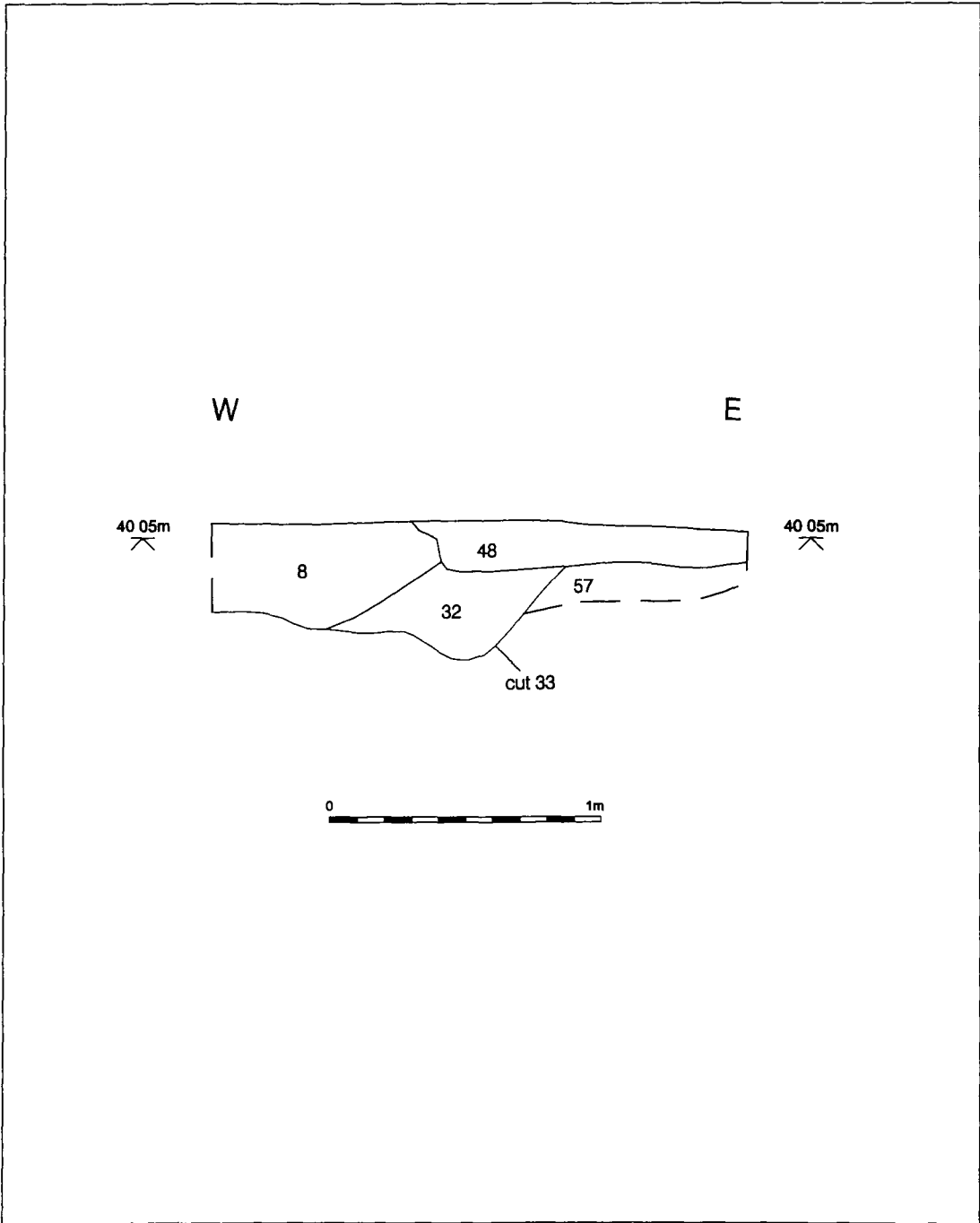
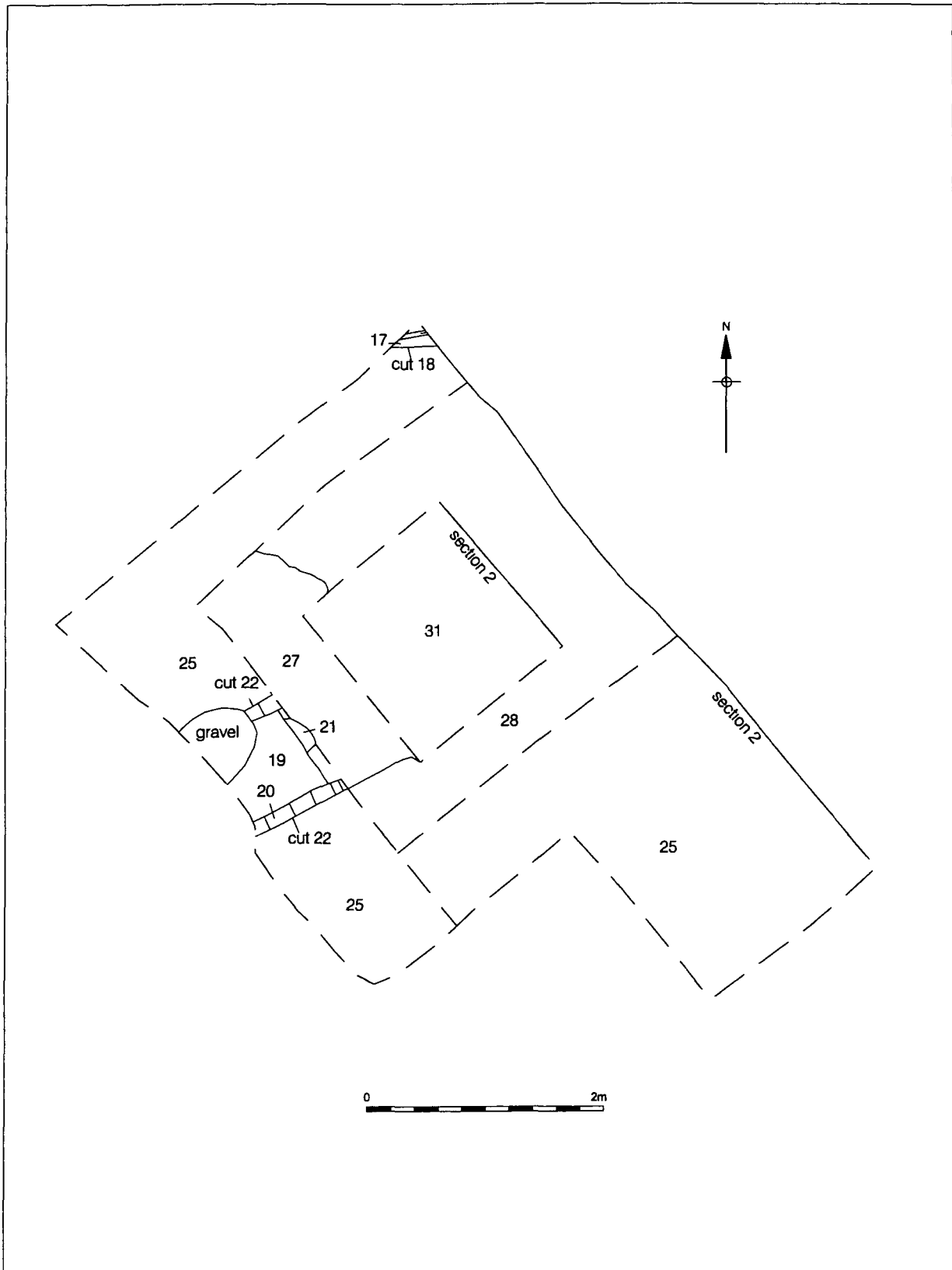
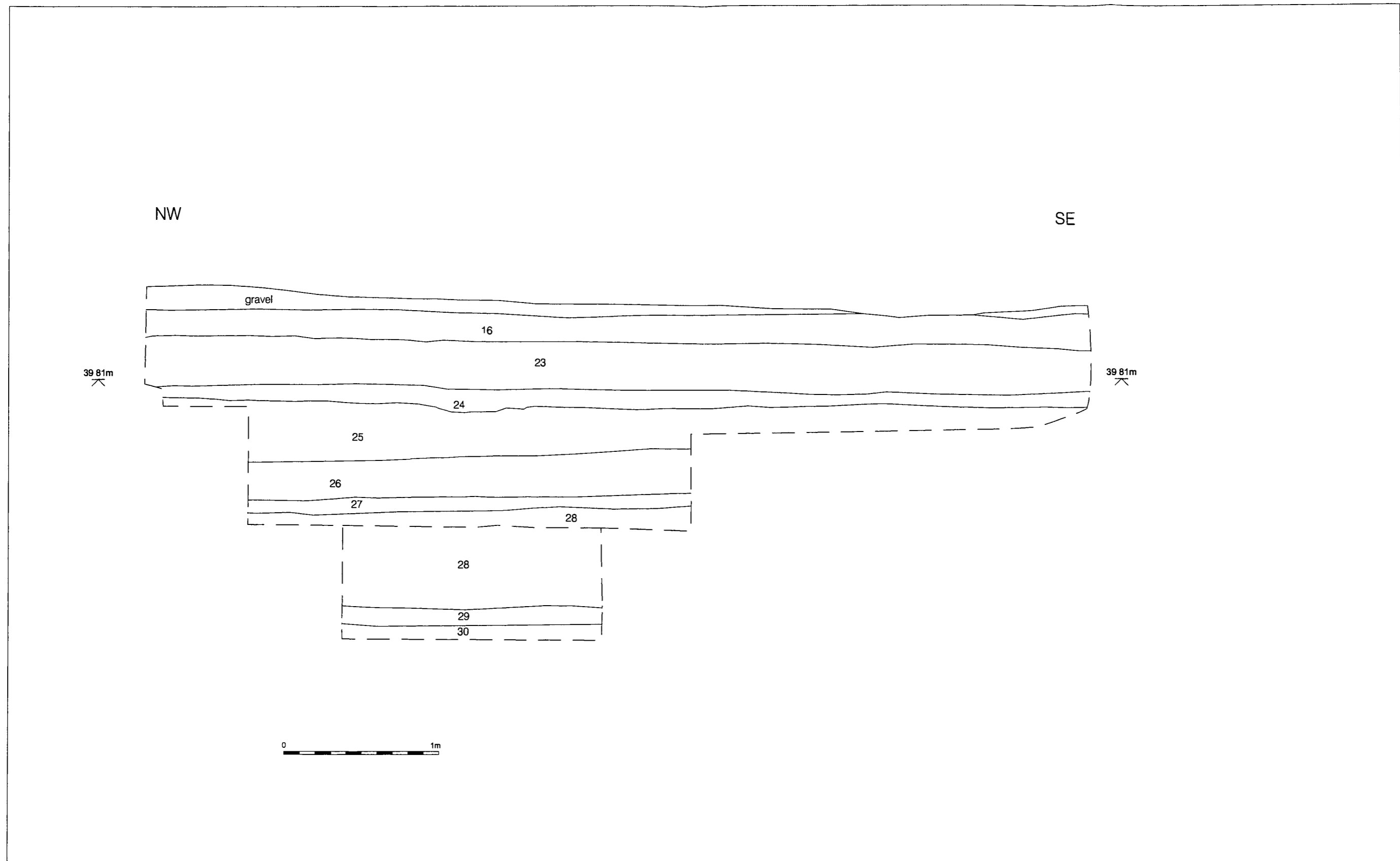


Figure 5  
Section 6, South facing, Trench 1  
1 25





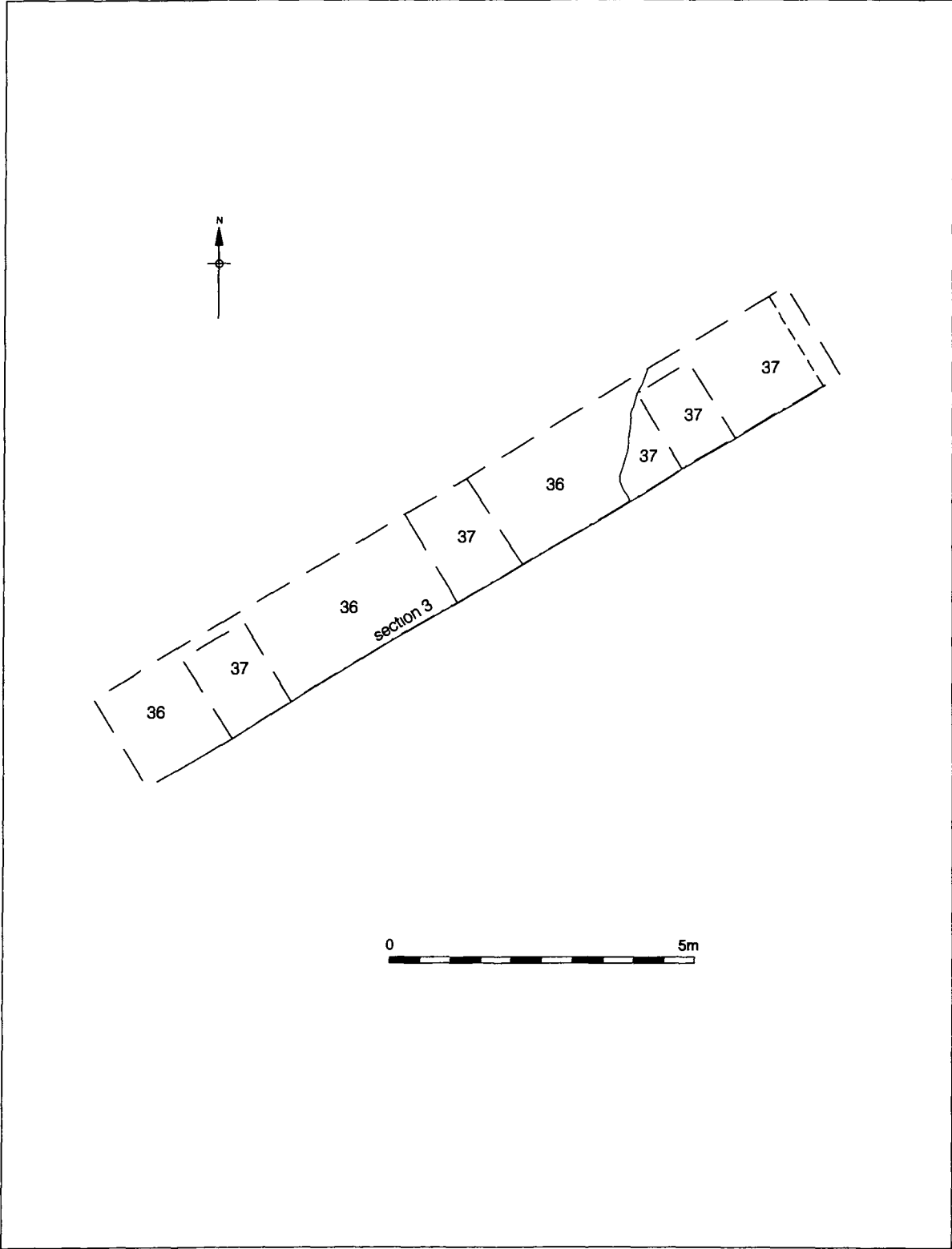


Figure 8  
Plan of Trench 3  
1 100

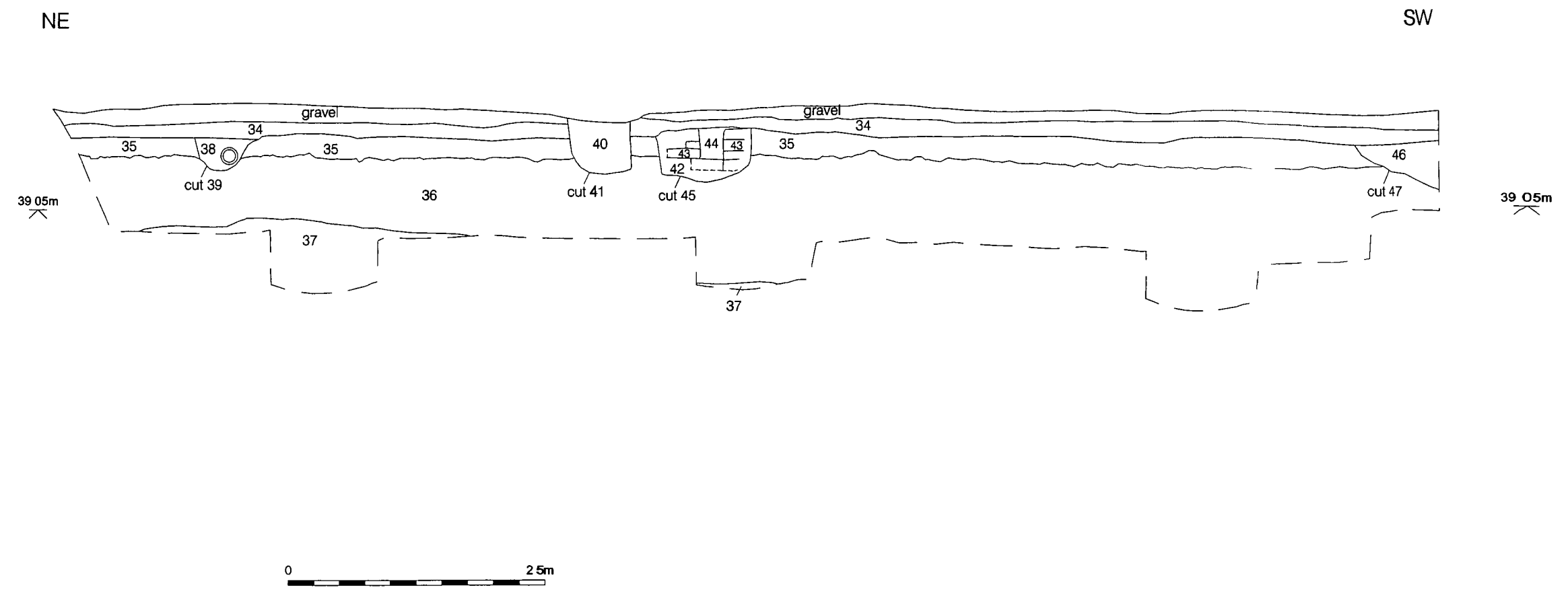
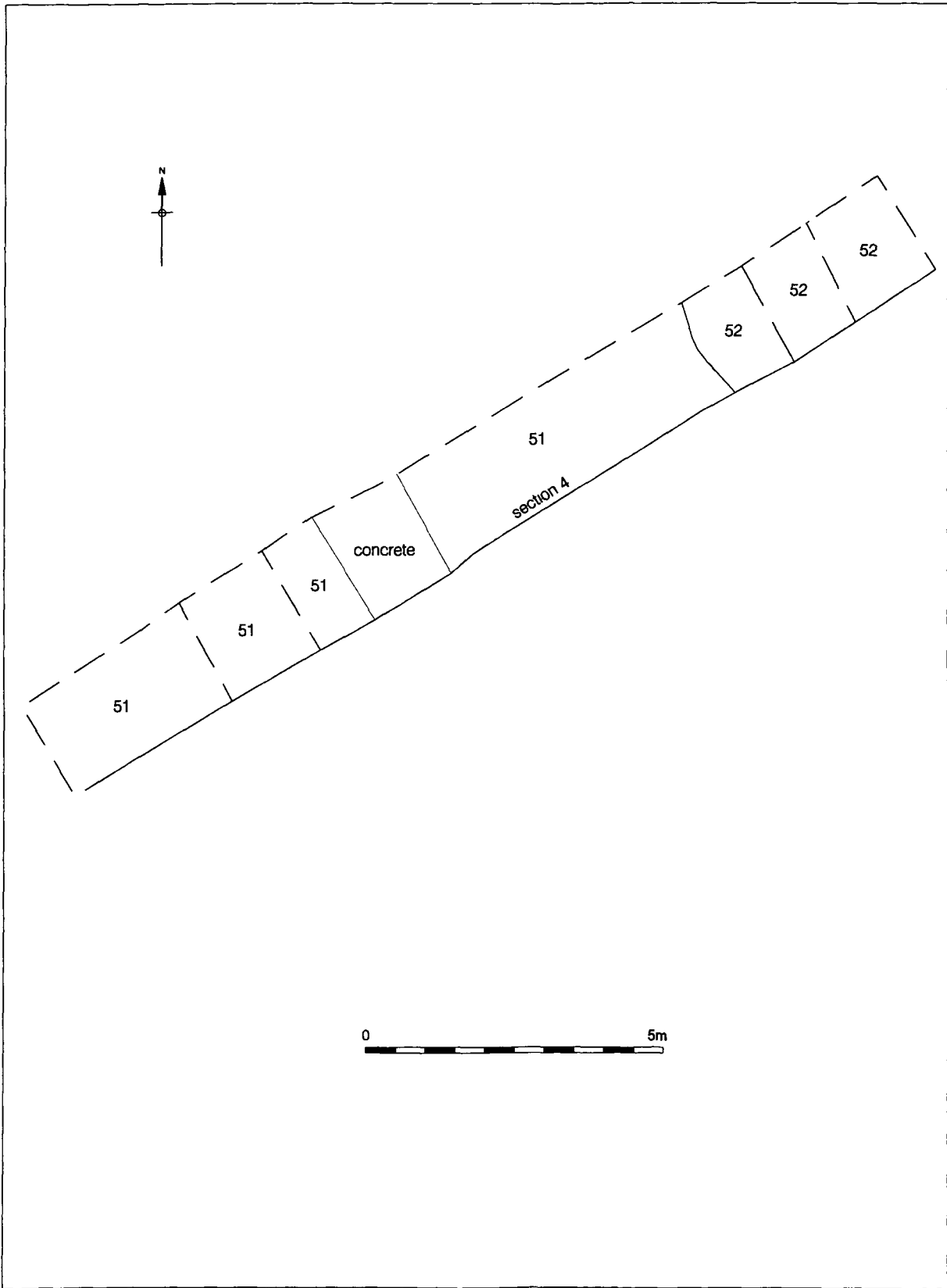


Figure 9  
 Section 3, North-west facing, Trench 3  
 1 50





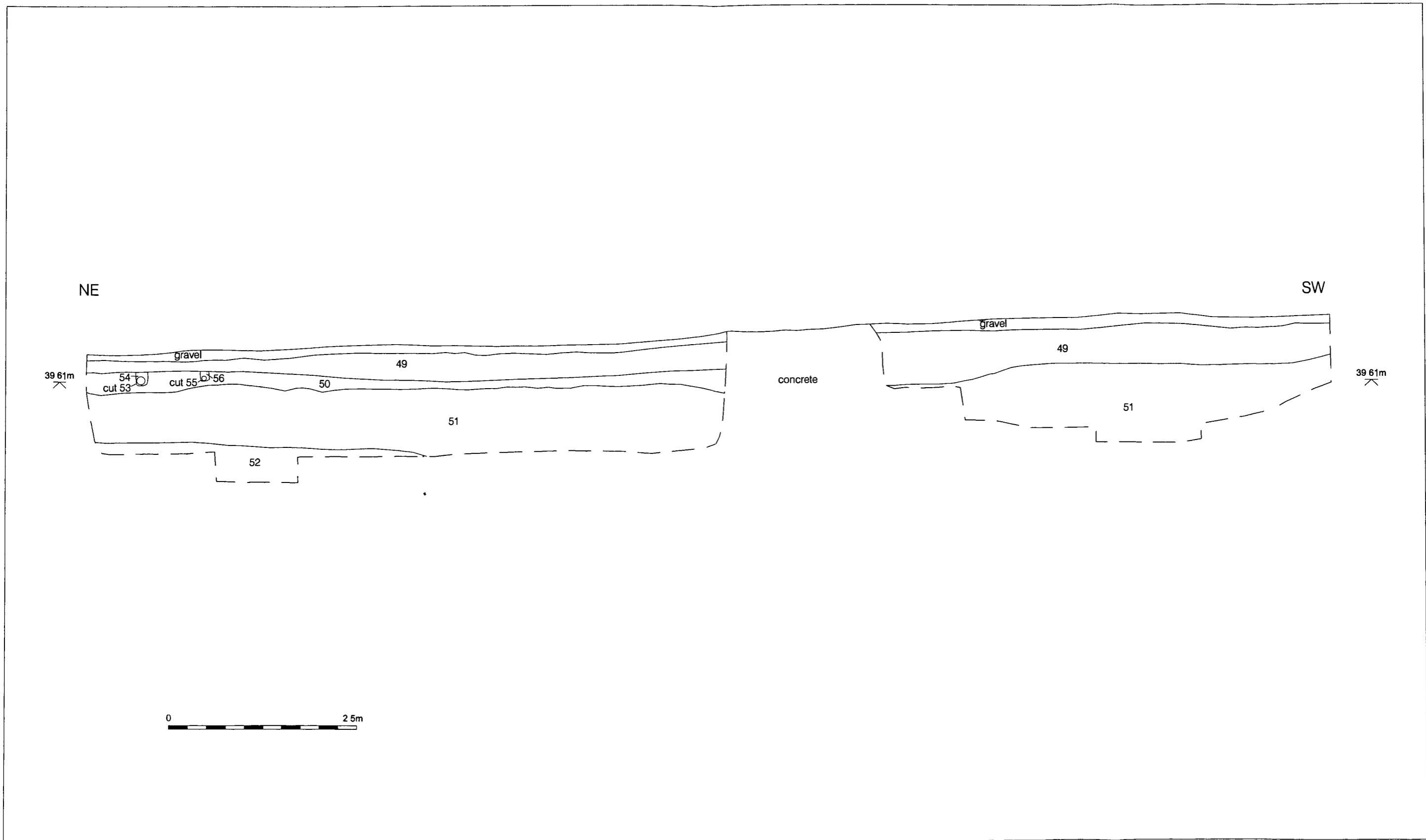


Figure 11  
 Section 4, North-west facing, Trench 4  
 1 50

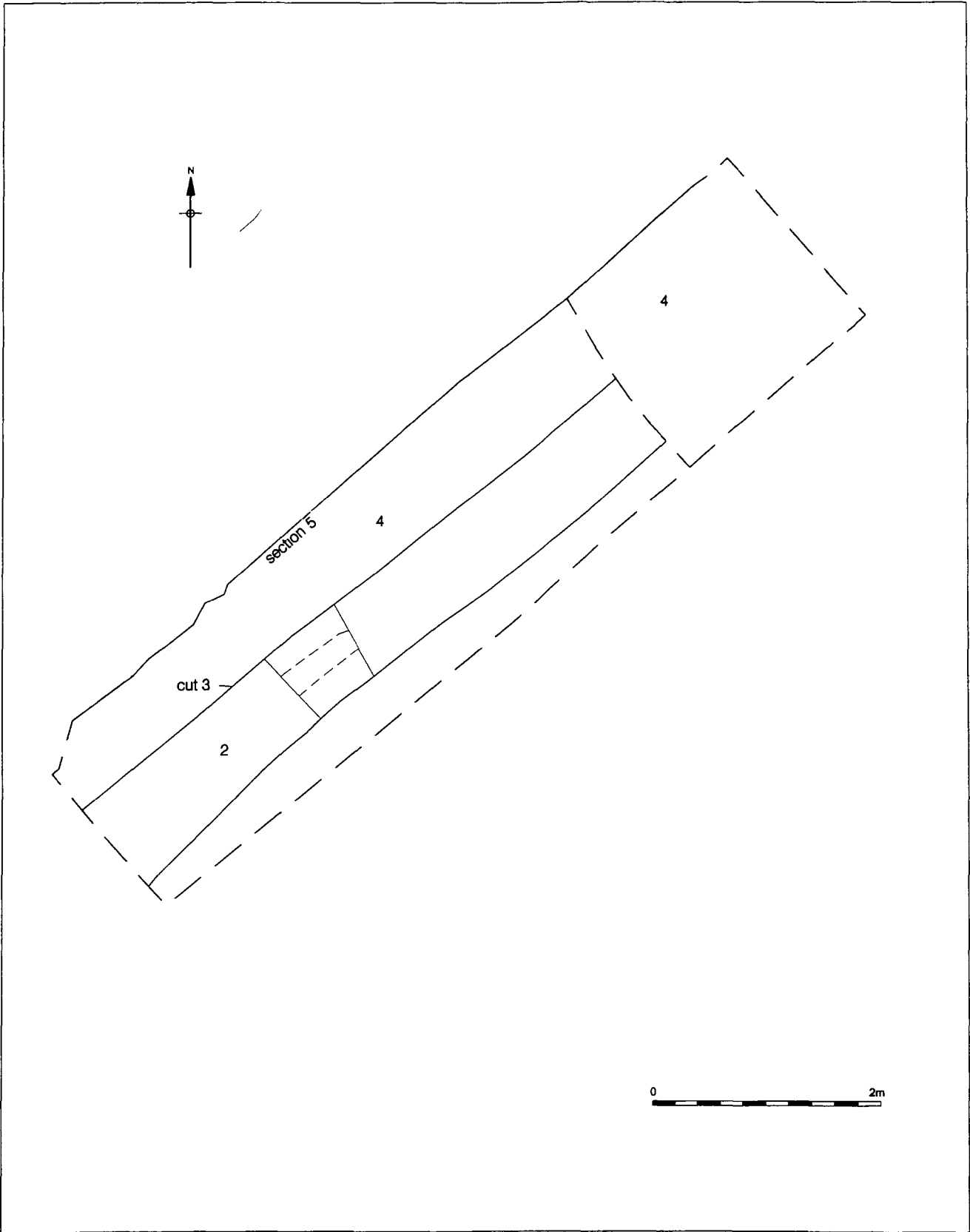


Figure 12  
Plan of Trench 5  
1 50

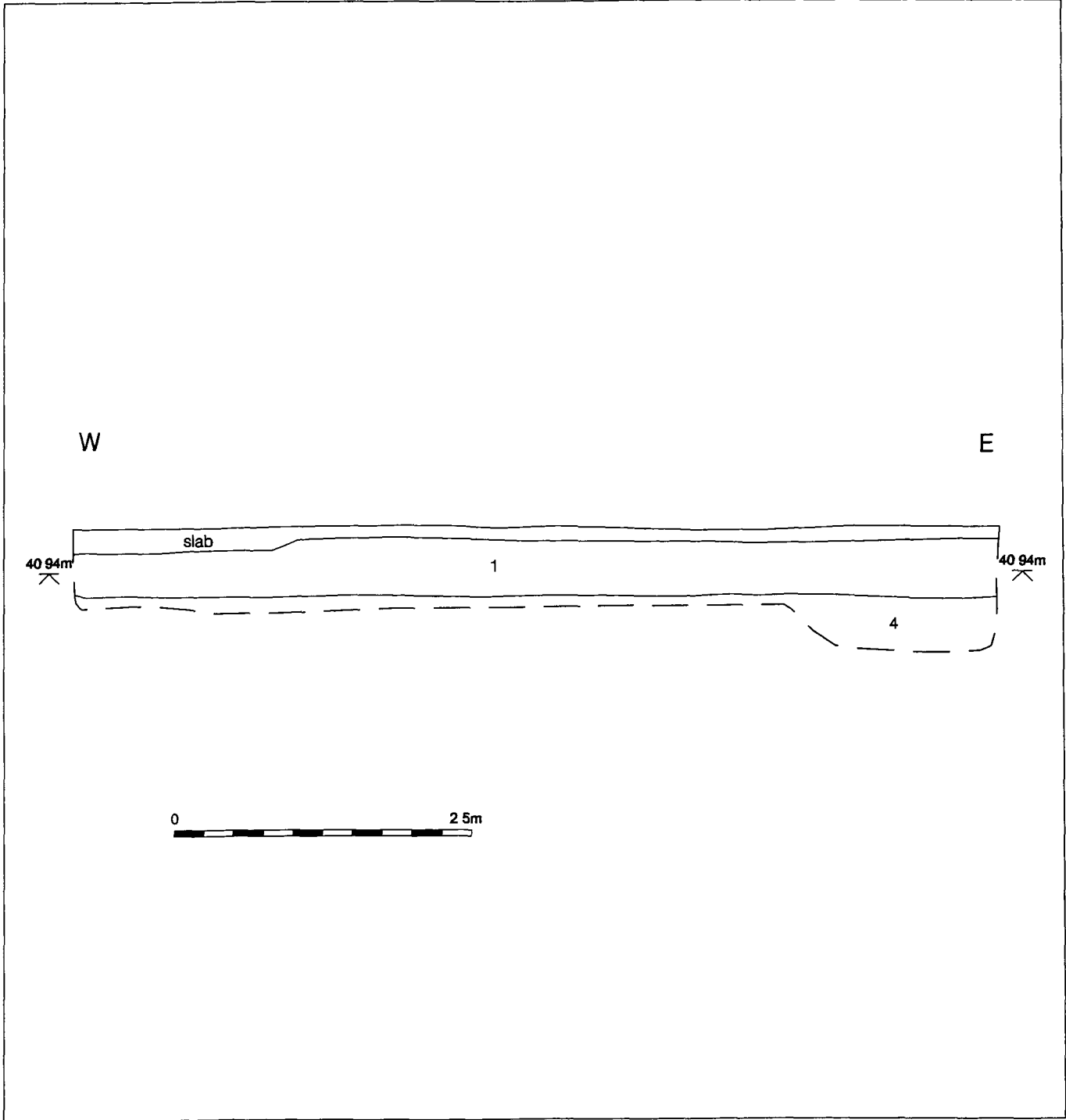


Figure 13  
Section 5, South facing, Trench 5  
1 50

## 8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 8.1 Conclusions

- 8.1.1 The archaeological evaluation of land to the rear of 26 Market Place, Bedale, demonstrated that significant archaeological remains of medieval date exist immediately to the rear of the back yards of the Market Place properties. In addition, the evaluation identified the remains of an evidently relatively localised area of ancient wetland, occupying the central portion of the site.
- 8.1.2 The earliest strata recorded in Trenches 2, 3, and 4 were alluvial in nature, probably deposited by slow-moving or standing water, and represent gradual silting-up of what may have been a small lake. A grass-sedge fen then developed, leading to extensive peat formation in the central part of the site. Part of the eastern edge of the wetland area was exposed in Trench 1, towards the north-eastern side of the site, and the maximum recorded extent of peat formation was 70m NE-SW, indicating the minimum extent of the ancient marshy area. It was not possible to fully excavate the alluvial material in Trenches 2, 3 and 4 while maintaining a safe working environment, but it seems probable that the greatest depth of the peat and underlying alluvium lies towards the western end of Trench 3.
- 8.1.3 The alluvial material in Trench 3 contained a significant number of molluscs, with the potential to provide further evidence of former environmental conditions. In addition, birch seeds identified in samples of the alluvium suggest birch woodland either at the site or in the immediate vicinity. The lower part of the overlying peat formation produced a calibrated age range through radiometric analysis of 7300 BC to 7040 BC, while the upper part of the same formation produced a calibrated age range through radiometric analysis of 4790 BC to 4550 BC. Thus the material can be broadly considered to have developed during the Mesolithic period.
- 8.1.4 The peat formation in Trench 2 contained abundant well preserved pollen and spores confirming that birch woodland was the dominant terrestrial vegetation, and it is possible that birch acted as a pioneer coloniser after the last (Devensian) glacial period. The pollen spectrum has established that the depositional site itself was a grass sedge-fen, with willow trees on its periphery. The pollen data is also suggestive of an early Holocene, probably Mesolithic, date for the peat formation.
- 8.1.5 Archaeological remains dating from the medieval era were recorded in Trenches 1 and 2 within the north-eastern portion of the site. These remains are interpreted as being associated with backlot activity on land to the rear of the Market Place street frontage. The remains in Trenches 1 and 2 are of moderate to high archaeological value. A phase of construction in the backlot area is represented, with probable associated yard and occupation deposits being exposed. A probable wall foundation lies c. 1.10m below the existing ground surface at the south-eastern end of Trench 1, but because of the site's natural topography medieval stratigraphy lies at c. 0.40m below the existing ground surface at the north-western end of the Trench 1. A possible medieval yard surface in Trench 2 lies c. 0.60m beneath the existing ground surface.
- 8.1.6 The potential of the medieval deposits in the area of Trench 1 to produce environmental or economic data of value should probably be considered to be low. However, the possibility should be acknowledged that different feature types could produce significant quantities of material deriving from human activities during the medieval period.

8 1 7 No remains of medieval date were exposed in Trenches 3, 4, and 5, although a possible boundary or drainage feature of post-medieval date ran along the length of Trench 5

## 8 2 Recommendations

8 2 1 The results of the fieldwork indicate that archaeological remains of moderate to high value exist within the area of the proposed redevelopment. The medieval remains exposed at the south-eastern end of Trench 1 have the greatest archaeological value. These, however, are relatively well protected beneath c. 1m of later medieval, post-medieval and modern stratigraphy. To the north-west - immediately to the rear of the derelict properties - medieval remains of similar value would, because of the site's natural topography, lie at depths of only c. 0.40m below the existing ground surface, if they were present. Medieval remains in Trench 2 lie at a depth of c. 0.60m.

8 2 2 In summary, therefore, the extent to which medieval remains in the areas of Trenches 1 and 2 would be affected by the redevelopment proposals depends largely upon the layout and foundation design of the new structures, as well as the overall extent and depth of associated groundworks, particularly the establishment of an overall project formation level and the excavation of deep service runs. Technical data, therefore, should be made available in order that the impact of the development proposals upon the archaeological resource can be fully assessed. In instances where archaeological remains of value are threatened with destruction, further archaeological investigation, excavation and recording is recommended in the north-easternmost third of the site prior to the proposed redevelopment in order to mitigate its impact.

8 2 3 The archaeological and palaeoenvironmental potential of the ancient wetland area occupying the central portion of the site can now be assessed to a far greater extent as a result of the environmental work and radiocarbon dating earned out since the first evaluation report was produced. An early Holocene, broadly Mesolithic, date has been established for the peat formation indirectly through an assessment of the pollen spectrum and directly through radiometric analysis. The pollen profile associated with the peat deposits at the site has the potential for further analysis to provide more detailed palaeoenvironmental information. Molluscs within the earlier alluvial material have the potential, through assessment of species composition, to provide further evidence of palaeoenvironmental conditions at the site. It may be the case, that the site's palaeoenvironmental potential can be fully addressed through further work on the existing material collected through sampling at the time of the evaluation fieldwork.

8 2 4 There is a possibility that evidence of anthropogenic prehistoric activity could survive at the site, particularly on the margins of the ancient wetland area. Where the development will impact upon such locations, there may be a requirement for further archaeological excavation and recording, in an attempt to identify and characterise any such evidence of activity.

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*Fieldwork* Mark Randerson (Site Supervisor), Robin Taylor-Wilson, Alan Telford, Catrin Jenkins

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### **Other Credits**

*Pottery Assessment* Chns Cumberpatch

*Conservation Assessment* Jennifer Jones (ASUD)

*Environmental Assessments* ASUD (co-ordinated by Duncan Hale)

*Radiocarbon Dating* Beta Analytic (co-ordinated by ASUD)