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BIRMINGHAM UNIVERSITY
FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT

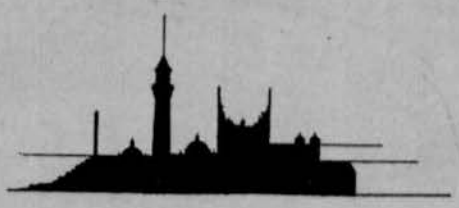
Madley, Hereford and Worcester

An archaeological evaluation

1989

By Alex Jones

B.U.F.A.U.



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M A D L E Y, H E R E F O R D A N D W O R C E S T E R

A n A r c h a e o l o g i c a l E v a l u a t i o n 1 9 8 9:

including further proposals and recommendations

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M A D L E Y, H E R E F O R D A N D W O R C E S T E R

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1.0: INTRODUCTION.

An archaeological assessment in advance of proposed development was undertaken in January 1989 by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit of land off Rosemary Lane, Madley, Hereford and Worcester (Figure 1A), centered on NGR. SO 416388. The work was commissioned by Campbell Allan Ltd of Bristol, architects for a residential development comprising 9 units and a new access road. The purpose of the evaluation was to provide information on the nature, depth and extent of archaeological deposits, and to provide a framework for detailed consideration of the reserved matters in the planning approval. The following presents an interim assessment of the archaeological results and the implications of the impending development for the survival of the known deposits, together with proposals to minimise the impact of the development upon the proven archaeology.

The site contains a moated earthwork not hitherto examined by survey or controlled archaeological excavation. Areas not affected by the proposals were excluded from the scope of the evaluation. Nine trenches were opened to enable an extensive examination of those areas most affected by the development proposals (Figure 1C). Trenches I to VI facilitated a profile of the deposits across the platform and moat. Level profiles (Figure 1C: Figure 2B) were undertaken to supplement the evidence from excavation. Trenches I, VIII and IX investigated the bank at the south and west of the site, and Trenches VI and VII the north of the site. A mechanical excavator was employed to remove up to 0.4m of topsoil from each trench prior to the definition and recording of archaeological deposits. In each trench the priority was the definition of deposits at their upper levels, coupled with the selective excavation of sondages within the trenches to define the depth of deposits. The information recovered through this approach is regarded as being adequate for a basic understanding of the nature and depth of the archaeological deposits.

2.0: THE SITE AND ITS SETTING.

The site comprises an area of 0.35 ha. formerly used for pasture, on the southern outskirts of Madley (Figure 1B). The local solid geology is Old Red Sandstone, overlain by Keuper Marl (Midland Mudstone). The site is dominated by an irregularly shaped mound, interpreted as a ?platform enclosed by a moat, intended to be filled with water but now dry. A shallow bank runs parallel to the south and western plot boundaries, interrupted in front of the modern field entrance (Figure 1C).

The topography of the site suggests the dumping of upcast from the excavation of the moat to form a raised platform and counteract the natural slope from north to south. The moat may have been fed with water from a

leat in the area marked by the former position of a pond (Figure 1B).

The platform of a moated site may contain evidence for a sequence of buildings in stone or timber, or, in some cases only for a temporary presence with little occupation debris and no structures (Le Patourel, 1978). The range of structures represented on moated sites can include not only a dwelling but also service buildings for the house, and farm buildings. Sites seemingly devoid of buildings may have been enclosures for animals, or orchards, (Taylor, 1978). The development of moated sites may be fitted into a well established chronological framework, and began in the later Medieval period. The earliest moated sites were constructed in the second half of the 12th century, and a period of expansion in numbers followed up to the beginning of the 14th century. After this time fewer sites were constructed, and from the 16th century the sites were often extensively remodelled (Le Patourel, 1978).

3.0: THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS.

3.1: The platform. Trenches III, IV, V.

The earliest level investigated in these trenches comprised the upper horizon of a mottled red-brown clay silt, possibly the upcast from the digging of the moat, sealed in each case by occupation deposits.

In Trench III (Figure 1C) this deposit was contacted ca. 0.35m below the modern surface at 80.35m AOD. Above was the south-east corner of an irregular ?yard surface, comprising a regular arrangement of rounded pebbles. Sealing this cobbling was a spread of demolition rubble, containing 12th-14th-century pottery. To the west of the rubble was cut a drain, 0.4m wide, formed of two parallel lines of roughly hewn sandstone blocks aligned approximately north east- south west and mostly pitched into the drain cut. The drain was sealed by dark brown silt soil containing 15th-century pottery.

Trench IV was excavated to sample any occupation deposits and structures in the northern platform area. Here the ground surface is raised above the level of the remainder of the platform, suggesting a possible build-up of such deposits. Above the ?moat excavation upcast (contacted at ca. 80.3m AOD) was the south-east corner of another rectangular yard surface comprising worn irregular sandstone blocks and rounded pebbles, associated with pottery of 12th- 13th century date (Figure 1C). To the east the lower horizon of mottled red-brown clay-silt was overlain by occupation deposits of charcoal-rich soil containing fragments of burnt wood, bone and sherds of thin-walled ?cooking vessels of 14th-century date.

In Trench V a homogenous deposit of brown silt soil overlay the mottled clay silt contacted at 80.15m AOD, at the northern limit of the platform.

3.2: The Moat. Trenches II, V.

Trenches II and V were dug to provide a profile through the moat deposits and to locate the north and south limits of the platform area (Figure 1C: Figure 2A). In Trench II the bottom of the moat was located ca. 2m below the modern ground surface (at 78.40m AOD), but the water-table

was not contacted. The earliest fill was a dump of demolition rubble, comprising shattered angular sandstone blocks. Above the rubble was a deposit of up to 1m thick, of dark grey banded silts flecked with charcoal, it's the upper horizon comprising a charcoal rich- silt (Figure 2A). The upper moat fill consisted of up to 1m of brown-orange clay accumulated along the line of the moat, and beneath the modern topsoil.

In Trench V (Figure 1C) the edge of the northern arm of the moat was defined by a dump of massive rough- hewn sandstone blocks, the remains of a revetment, collapsed into the lip of the moat above the latest silt infill. The alignment and location of these stones corresponds with a sharply defined break of slope, sligtly inturned to the east, delimiting the northern edge of the platform for a length of ca. 15m. To the north of Trench V, the moat had been disturbed in the ?17th or 18th centuries.

3.3: Outside the moat. Trenches I, VI, VII, VI, IX.

Trenches I and IX were dug to investigate the composition of a narrow bank of irregular profile (Figure 1C) parallel to the south and west plot boundaries.

In Trench I the principal features encountered comprised two yard surfaces (Figure 1C). The lowest, ca. 0.3m below the modern ground surface, was a rough surface of hard-packed gravel and small, worn, rounded stones, and was cut by two sub-circular post holes ca. 0.10m in diameter, both containing a red-brown silt fill. Immediately above was a second heavily worn yard surface comprising small angular sandstone blocks in a buff-brown clay. No datable artifacts were recovered from any of these features or deposits.

In Trench IX (Figure 1C) excavation of a homogenous orange-brown clay to a depth of 1m below the modern surface produced no datable artifacts.

In Trench VIII (Figure 1C), to the west of the plot, the earliest excavated feature was a sandstone ?wall aligned east-west. Sealing this wall was a layer of orange clay containing 15th-century pottery. The clay was cut by a hearth formed from vertically-placed sandstone blocks enclosing an area of burnt wood and charcoal-rich soil ca. 0.15m in diameter.

Two small trenches (Trenches VI and VII) (Figure 1C) were dug to the north of the plot. In Area VI a horizon of charcoal flecks within orange clay was contacted ca. 1m below the modern ground surface. Above this contaminated horizon, a ditch of very weathered U- profile was cut on a west-east alignment, but no datable artifacts were recorded. In Area VII a clean orange clay silt was contacted ca. 0.7m below the surface, sealed by silts containing 18th century pottery.

4.0: DISCUSSION.

The archaeological return from this evaluation has been high relative to the statistically small area of the site investigated, and the limits set on the excavation of those deposits encountered. The pottery collected, ranging from the 12th-15th centuries, confirms the attribution of the site

on morphological grounds to the Medieval period, which conforms with the chronology of most moated sites.

Evidence from the platform indicates occupation in the 12th-15th centuries. The failure to contact any coherent structure was a disappointment. However, in such limited areas for investigation, the evidence for timber structures such as postholes or beam-slots will often be elusive. The identification of two distinct yard surfaces and a stone-lined drain, together with a quantity of occupation debris does suggest settled occupation on the site. Excavation of a wider area (eg, of the hardstanding) may permit the recovery of a sequence of buildings, and may also allow the investigation of any occupation levels sealed by the deposition of the moat upcast.

The lowest level of the moat contains stone rubble, probably deriving from the demolition of buildings on the platform. The silts above the rubble will have accumulated mainly after the abandonment of the site. Evidence from Trench II suggests that no waterlogged deposits survive in the south sector of the moat, but other sectors may be cut to beneath the water table, particularly those towards the the pond to the north east of the platform.

The evidence from outside the moat is the most difficult to interpret. No dating evidence was recovered from Trench I, but the yard surfaces may well post-date the platform activity. Pottery from Area VIII may be dated to the 14th- 15th centuries. The chronological relationship between occupation on the platform and from Trenches I, VI and VIII may only be established by further excavation over a more extensive area.

5.0: IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

The archaeological evaluation at Madley has demonstrated the survival of a medieval site of some chronological and structural complexity. Given the shallow depth of occurrence of certain archaeological deposits, and the extensive nature of the modern development as presently envisaged, what further archaeological response may be appropriate?

5.1: Development Implications.

Given the expectation that development will proceed, and that a policy of total archaeological preservation is thus not viable a strategy for an appropriate archaeological response is urgently needed. The principal threat to the proven deposits will arise from the construction of the access road, and in the area of the hardstanding which will occupy the greater part of the platform area. This must pose a considerable threat to archaeological deposits that have the greatest potential to reveal the historical sequence of occupation. The excavation of foundation and service trenches will for the most part be outside the platform area, in areas of secondary archaeological importance.

5.2: Archaeological Response.

To provide an adequate response to the anticipated threats two main options suggest themselves: (A) minimise the damage (B) adequately record what is

destroyed, though these options are not necessarily exclusive.

(A): Minimising the damage caused by construction might be achieved by importing up to 2m of compacted overburden, to artificially raise the level of the site, in combination with the use of rafted foundations. However the latter might still cause disturbance in a wider area than conventional foundations, albeit to a shallower depth.

(B): Adequate archaeological recording of the area of the road, hardstanding and foundations, so far as they will be destroyed by the development proposals. Ideally, this could be achieved by machine excavation of the topsoil in the affected areas followed by hand excavation.

5.3: Recommendations.

5.3.1: Whateaver development proposals are finally adopted, the existing topography of the site will be radically altered to accomodate these works, and thus a detailed mapped survey of the entire site should be effected before commencement of any construction works.

5.3.2: After the supervised machining of overburden from the designated hardstanding area, this should be excavated archaeologically by hand, and a continuous 1m wide transect dug from the hardstanding area to the south of the plot, to the depth that development will penetrate the known deposits.

5.3.3: The impact of foundation and service trenches in the areas outside the platform may be minimised by a combination of the use of landfill, rafted foundations, or amendment of overall building layout. In either case an archaeological watching brief in liaison with the developer is required to the monitor contractor's excavation works.

6.0: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

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7.0: REFERENCES.

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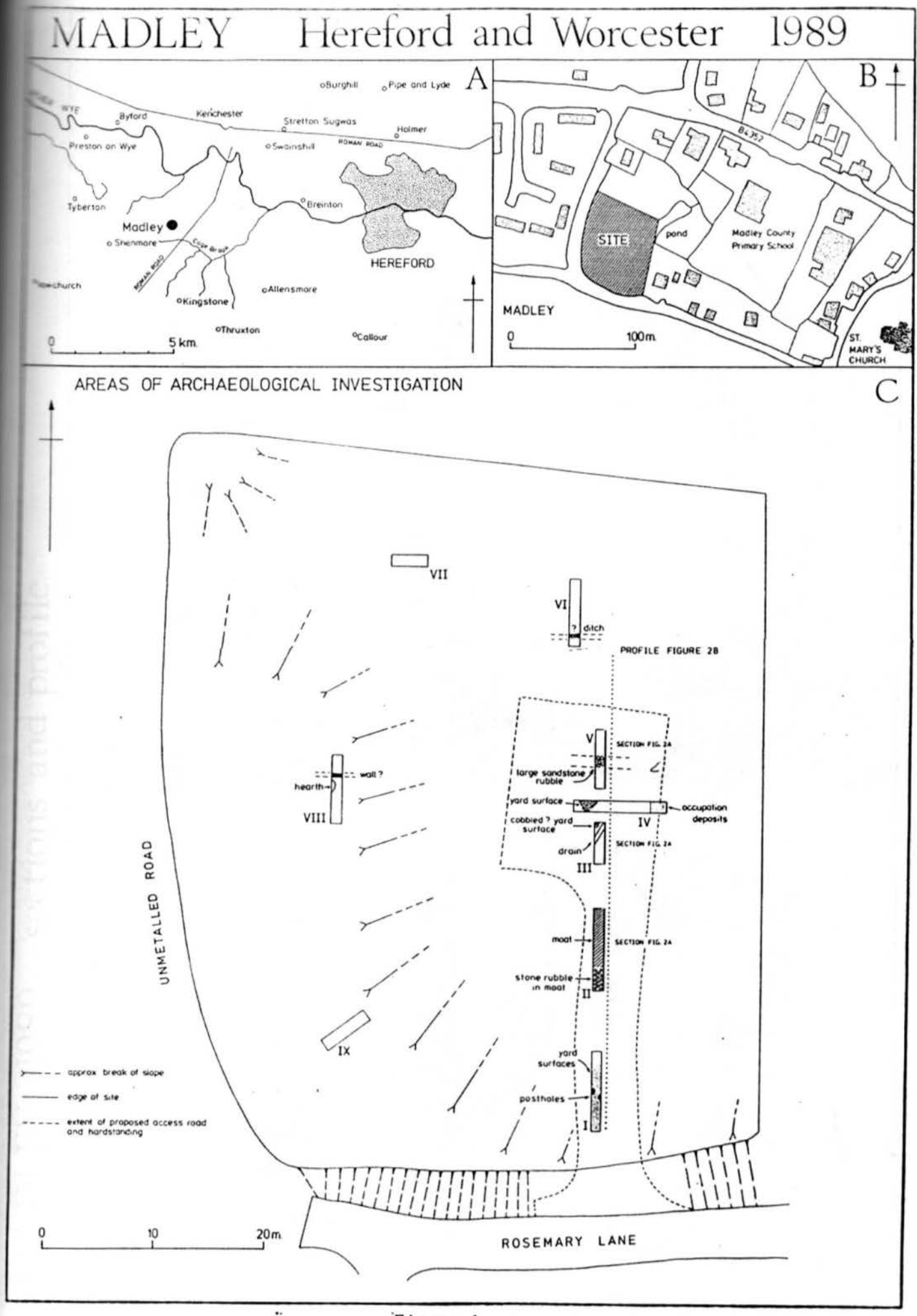
MADLEY Hereford and Worcester 1989
A
Burghill
Pipe and Lyde
WYE
Byford
Kenchester
Stretton Sugwas
Holmer
Preston on Wye
Swainshill
ROMAN ROAD
Tyberton
Breinton
Madley
Shenmore
Cage Brook
HEREFORD
ROMAN ROAD
Kingstone
Allensmore
Thruxton
Callour
0
5 km
B
B4352
SITE
pond
Madley County Primary School
MADLEY
0
100m
ST. MARY'S CHURCH
AREAS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION
C
VII
VI
? ditch
PROFILE FIGURE 2B
V
SECTION FIG. 2A
large sandstone rubble
yard surface
occupation deposits
cobbled ? yard surface
IV
drain
SECTION FIG. 2A
III
wall ?
hearth
VIII
moat
SECTION FIG. 2A
stone rubble in moat
II
IX
yard surfaces
postholes
I
UNMETALLED ROAD
approx break of slope
edge of site
extent of proposed access road and hardstanding
0
10
20m
ROSEMARY LANE

Figure 1

MADLEY 1989 sections and profile

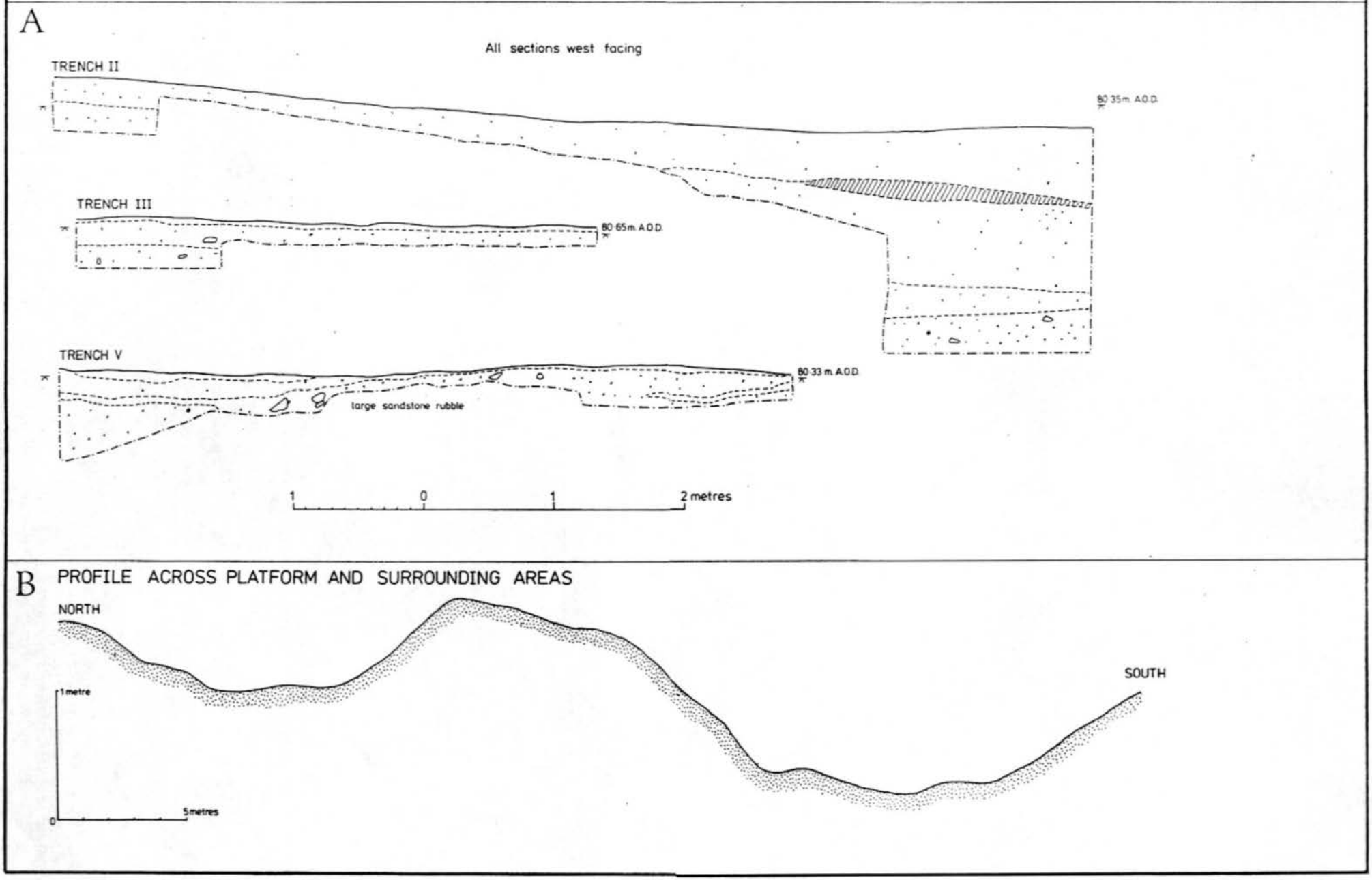

Figure 2