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WOODLANDS FARM, SHEPTON MALLET
An Archaeological Evaluation
1991

by

Peter Leach, Alex Jones and Audrey Henry

For further information please contact:
Simon Buteux (Manager), Peter Leach or Iain Ferris (Assistant Directors)
Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
The University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 2TT
Tel: 021 414 5513

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Silver coin of Elizabeth I

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1.0: INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of an archaeological evaluation of land at Woodlands Farm, on the northeastern fringe of Shepton Mallet and to the north of Charlton (centred on NGR. ST 632435: Figure 1), and their archaeological implications. In October 1991 Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit was commissioned by Hiram Walker Ltd. to undertake the evaluation, in advance of the formulation of proposals for a residential development.

This evaluation follows an extensive geophysical survey carried out by Geophysical Surveys of Bradford (Report 91/07), and a preliminary assessment of the archaeological potential of the site, largely based on the survey results (Leach 1991), which contained the recommendations for the programme of trial-trenching reported on here.

The aims of the evaluation were to assess the nature, extent and survival of any archaeological remains within the proposed Charlton Vale development site. In particular it was intended to verify the identity, character and date of the anomalies revealed by the geophysical survey.

2.0: THE SITE AND ITS SETTING

The site (Figure 1) is located on the northern fringe of the core an extensive Romano-British roadside settlement defined recently by a major programme of surveys, evaluations and excavations (Buteux 1990, Leach 1991a). Fieldwork has identified the survival of both medieval and Roman remains extending northwards from Fosse Lane, up to the River Sheppey at Charlton (Ellis 1987), just beyond the southwestern boundary of the Woodlands Farm site.

The results of the geophysical survey suggested that any surviving archaeological remains would be both sparsely and unevenly distributed within the site. There was no indication here of a density or coherence of geophysical anomalies similar to that recorded in previous surveys closer to the core of the Romano-British settlement. This in itself indicated that the area as a whole lay beyond the northern bounds of that settlement, although the Fosse Way here may have provided a focus for further contemporary settlement sites, land division or other activities.

Evidence for pre-Roman exploitation of the area, dating from the Neolithic and the Iron Age, has been recovered from both within and beyond the bounds of the Roman town in the course of other recent site evaluations. Although the precise foci and character of this earlier activity has yet to be established, the presence of free-draining, limestone-based soils and a good water supply in the area would have been attractive for early settlers, criteria which apply equally to the Woodlands Farm site itself.

The area is today bisected by a modern lane, respecting the former north-south alignment of the Roman Fosse Way, and leading northwards towards Beacon Hill, Camerton and Bath (Figure 1). This routeway survives in the form of an embanked holloway, created by the passage of pedestrian and wheeled traffic over almost 2,000 years, wearing through the original metalled surfaces.

The proposed Charlton Vale development site is separated from the site of the Fosse Lane Roman roadside settlement to the south by the steep-sided valley of the River Sheppey, aligned

here approximately north–south. The site occupies an area of 22 ha, located on a mainly southwest facing slope, between the 145m and 157m contours. To the west of the Fosse Way the ground slopes gently to the west, and slight traces of cultivation lynchets, aligned parallel with the Fosse Way, are visible in the surface of the pasture. The land on the east side of the road is marked initially by a steep west–facing scarp, defined to the east by a sharp break of slope. A slight natural terrace is apparent in the north of the site, east of, and adjoining, the road, where the gradient is less steep; and a shallow dry valley develops towards the northeast. Elsewhere, the eastern area of the site, above the scarp, is defined as a slightly undulating plateau, bounded to the south by the deeper valley of the River Sheppey, which preserves traces of relict field boundaries as parch marks and slight lynchets. Another shallow dry valley, aligned approximately northeast–southwest, was identified as a slight linear depression, just inside the southeastern site boundary. The majority of the site was under permanent pasture at the time of the evaluation, although the large field crossed by the track linking Boddan Lane with the Fosse Way is periodically ploughed.

3.0: EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1: Areas of evaluation (Figure 2)

In the first phase of evaluation, twelve areas were selected for geophysical survey, totalling 4.7 ha (approximately 21% of the Woodlands Farm property), to provide a wide-ranging examination of the proposed Charlton Vale development area. This approach was adopted to obtain a widespread and extensive coverage in an initial attempt to determine the area's archaeological potential in the context of non-specific development proposals. The geophysical survey suggested the presence of anomalies of possible archaeological significance located in Areas A,B,C,F,L and K (Geophysical Surveys Report 91/07, and Leach 1991, Figure 2).

A second-phase programme of machine-excavated trial trenching was devised to intercept some of the major archaeological anomalies encountered (Leach 1991). In the event a greater proportion of the site (1750 sq. m. or approximately 0.8%) was trenched. Two trenches

were excavated to the west of the Fosse Way to examine linear and small, roughly circular, geophysical anomalies of possible archaeological significance (Trench I, Area L and Trench IV, adjacent to Area K). In addition, two further trenches (II and III), located between Trenches I and IV, were excavated perpendicular to the Fosse Way to further test the archaeological potential of the western road frontage. Two trenches (V and VI) were excavated on the eastern margin of the Roman road, to test the archaeological potential of a group of roughly circular anomalies in Area F (Trench V), and similar anomalies and ferrous disturbance in Area B (Trench VI). Trenches I–VI were excavated as close as possible to the modern hedged boundary on either side of the modern Fosse Way, to examine the zone immediately adjacent to the Roman Fosse Way. Two trenches (IX–X, Area A) were excavated towards the eastern margin of the site to examine a group of roughly circular anomalies. In the south of the site transect trenching (Trenches XI–XIII) was primarily aimed to intercept a group of linear anomalies defined in Area C. On the eastern edge of Area B, two further trenches (VII and VIII) were excavated to investigate a slight mound visible as a surface feature on the crest of the slope.

3.2: Methodology

In each trench the overburden, comprising turf, topsoil and some hillwash, was removed by machine along 2m wide transect-trenches, under archaeological control. This exposed the upper horizon of weathered limestone bedrock in some places, and elsewhere a buff-brown clay mantling the bedrock or infilling naturally-formed hollows within it. Manual cleaning of the various subsoil horizons exposed by machining was achieved over the greater part of the trenches, and was targeted to define any structural archaeological features and deposits, and the character and location of the major geophysical anomalies. The information recovered through this approach is considered adequate for a basic understanding of the nature and survival of archaeological deposits and artifacts in the localities examined. Recording was by means of pro-forma recording sheets, supplemented by plans, sections and photographs which are held in the archive. Subject to the owner's approval, it is proposed to deposit

the paper archive in the Somerset County Record Office and the finds in the Somerset County Museum.

4.0: THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

4.1: The Western frontage of the Fosse Way (Trenches I–IV) (Figure 2)

Trench I comprised three linked cuttings, measuring a total of 130m in length, and was located close to the southern boundary of the site to sample the geophysical survey Area L. The southern and northern arms were cut perpendicular to the Fosse Way, and were separated by the central cutting, which was dug parallel to the road. Machine excavation exposed the upper horizon of shattered angular limestone bedrock (1002), in the south of the central cutting, and in the eastern part of the southern cutting, at a depth of 0.3m below the modern surface, but no manmade features could be defined here despite careful manual cleaning. Towards the Fosse Way in the northern cutting the bedrock was capped by light brown silt-clay subsoil (1003). This subsoil and the bedrock were overlain by hillwash (1001), increasing in depth from 0.3m in the east of the cuttings to 0.9m downslope to the west. Within this hillwash deposit were scatters of well-weathered limestone blocks, Iron Age, Roman and medieval pottery, flint, animal bone, and some heavily corroded iron objects. The topsoil (1000) averaged 0.2m in depth throughout these trenches.

Trench II, located to the north of Trench I, measured 50m in length, and was positioned perpendicular to the Fosse Way and partly within survey Area I. The natural light-grey-brown silt-clay subsoil (1102) was exposed in the base of the trench, at an average depth of 0.45m below the modern surface. The subsoil was sealed by hillwash (1101) which was removed by machine, although it was difficult to establish a clear horizon between these levels. The only archaeological features here were two gulleys (F110 and F111), which were half excavated as two roughly parallel cuts from the base of the hillwash, aligned approximately north-south. These features were approximately 0.4m wide, 0.2m deep, and had well-defined, flat U-shaped bases. Both features were infilled with light buff-red clay silt (1103 in F110; 1104 in F111);

neither contained any artifacts. There was no evidence of the Roman Fosse Way or of horizons contemporary with it in this trench, and no other archaeological remains were recorded here.

Trench III was located 80m north of Trench II, measuring 30m in length and once again cut perpendicular to the Fosse Way. Machine excavation exposed the upper surface of fractured angular limestone bedrock (1203), at a depth of 0.4m below the modern turf and topsoil and a thin stony brown clay-silt subsoil. The western edge of a track or hardstanding (1202), formed of heavily worn limestone fragments and pebbles set in buff-brown clay silt, was laid over bedrock. This was exposed for a width of 2m at the east end of the trench. It appeared to be aligned north-south, and continued to the east beyond the trench. This feature, and the bedrock to the west, was sealed by a 0.2m depth of hillwash (1201) below the modern topsoil (1200).

Trench IV, 30m long, was aligned west-east, and lay 68m north of Trench III. It was cut at a right-angle to the modern Fosse Way, to the east of survey Area K. Machine excavation exposed the underlying limestone bedrock beneath a light buff-brown silt-clay subsoil (1302), within which no archaeological features were apparent. To the east in this trench the bedrock was sealed more deeply by hillwash (1301). There was no trace of the Roman Fosse Way or of other contemporary archaeological features or horizons.

4.2: The Eastern Frontage of the Fosse Way (Trenches V–VI) (Figure 2)

Trench V (Figure 3), 38m long, was located in the centre of a naturally-formed plateau, within a shallow valley, to sample survey Area F. The trench was cut almost opposite Trench III, at a right angle to the modern road. Machine excavation exposed the upper surface of fractured limestone bedrock (1402), at 0.3m below the modern surface, which was sealed more deeply by a deposit of hillwash in the east of the trench. Careful hand cleaning of the bedrock exposed the eastern margin of a crude yard surface or trackway (F141) at the west end of the trench, aligned approximately north-south, and apparently continuing beyond it to the west. This irregularly laid surface was formed of heavily-worn limestone fragments set in buff-

brown clay silt (1410), and may be equivalent to a similar surface located in Trench III (1202). A number of small features, representing post-holes or small pits cut into bedrock, were defined in the centre of the trench (1404–1409). One pit (F140) was half-excavated to reveal a flat-based U-shape profile. It was filled with red-brown silt clay (1404) and contained sherds of medieval pottery. Patches of disturbed, and pitched limestone were also recorded within the natural bedrock. The hillwash, archaeological features and bedrock were sealed by topsoil, which averaged 0.2m in depth.

Trench VI (Figure 3) measured 18m in length, was cut at approximately 90 degrees to the west side of the Fosse Way, within survey Area B, and was located almost opposite Trench II. The earliest deposit encountered was a mid-brown clay silt (1512), located (but not excavated), at a depth of 0.75m below the modern surface. In the west of the trench this deposit was overlain by a layer of crushed limestone (1511), edged to the east by a band of angular limestone blocks forming a kerb, aligned approximately north–south. This road foundation was sealed by a layer of smooth rounded pebbles (1508), forming the earliest, cambered, road surface. Above this was the remains of a badly disturbed, irregular upper road surface (1509), formed of heavily worn, flat, angular limestone blocks. The eastern road margin was further defined by a narrow, vertical-sided, and flat-based trench (F150), dug on a north–south alignment and cutting 1508 and 1509. A sondage 0.3m deep was dug immediately to the east of F150 in an attempt to locate an earlier roadside ditch, but there was no evidence for such a cut.

A buff-brown, gritty silt clay (1506) was exposed by excavation in the centre of the trench, overlain by a tumble of weathered limestone blocks (1505). This may represent the butt-end of a collapsed wall (F154), possibly continuing to the south beyond the trench. This stone spread and the upper surface of the road were sealed by a layer of hillwash composed of red-brown silt clay (1504), which increased in depth to the east and was mottled with iron-pan throughout. The latter effect may account for the extensive area of ferrous disturbance recorded in geophysical survey Area B.

The hillwash was overlain further east by a band, 1m wide, of heavily worn limestone blocks (1502) exposed at a depth of 0.2m below the modern surface, possibly forming the base of another collapsed wall on a north–south alignment. A further drystone wall (F152), aligned north–south, set within 1504, was exposed in the west of the trench. Above F152 and wall 1502 was a further layer of buff-brown silt hillwash (1501), immediately beneath the modern topsoil (1500). No datable artifacts were associated with the sequence of archaeological features and deposits recorded in this trench.

4.3: The Eastern Plateau (Trenches VII–XIII) (Figure 2)

Trench VII, 20m long, and aligned approximately east–west, was cut to examine the pronounced break of slope towards the eastern edge of survey Area B. Shattered limestone bedrock set in a buff-brown clay silt (1602) was exposed to the west down the slope and was sealed by hillwash (1601). Some tumbled limestone down this slope may mark the remains of a former north–south field boundary here. Further east, the only feature was a modern stone-lined field drain cut into the clay subsoil.

Trench VIII comprised two arms cut at right-angles to form an L-shape, in the southeast corner of survey Area B. One was aligned west–east, continuing the alignment of Trench VI to the west and measured 40m in length; the other was cut north–south, measuring 20m in length. These were positioned to examine the marked break of slope and a low spread mound visible in the surface of the field at this point. Machine excavation exposed bedrock and the possible remains of a tumbled drystone wall field-boundary aligned north–south in the west of the trench down the slope; in the remainder a homogenous light grey-brown clay (1701) with patches of iron pan was seen. A number of narrow, linear stone-filled features, aligned approximately west–east were exposed in the machined surface further east, where limited excavation identified them as recent field drains.

No other archaeological features or finds were recorded from Trenches VII or VIII. The low spread mound examined by Trench VIII was apparently composed almost entirely of

accumulated hillwash (1701), probably the effect of ploughing and embanking of material against a former field boundary, now marked only by a mature ash tree on the crest of the slope.

Trenches IX and X were excavated towards the eastern boundary of the site with Bodden Lane, in the approximate position of geophysical survey Area A. Trench IX comprised two arms arranged in an L-shape; one aligned north-south (30m long), the second west-east (20m long). Shattered angular limestone bedrock was exposed in the north end of the north-south arm of the trench, which also intersected a former modern field boundary here. The remainder of the trench was machined to expose a light brown, clay-silt hillwash (1801), at a depth of 0.2m beneath the topsoil. This hillwash contained slight traces of iron-pan but was not excavated to its full depth above weathered limestone bedrock. There were no archaeological features or finds recorded in this trench.

Trench X, aligned approximately north-south, measured 35m in length, and was located 10m southeast of Trench IX. Machining here exposed a buff-brown clay silt (1902) below the natural hillwash at a depth of 0.4m below the modern surface. No features or finds of archaeological significance were recorded in this trench.

Trenches XI and XII were cut on a similar alignment, at approximately right angles to the Fosse Way, to sample survey Area C. Trench XI measured 35m in length, and was aligned west-east; it terminated 8m to the west of the Fosse Way. The shattered angular limestone bedrock exposed by machine excavation was not subjected to manual cleaning, since it was clear that no archaeological features were present in this trench. There was a gap of 20m between Trench XI and Trench XII which continued the alignment of the former eastwards for another 40m. This trench (along with Trench XIII to the south), was laid out to clarify the existence and character of geophysical anomalies plotted in survey Area C. Manual cleaning here was concentrated in the eastern sector of the trench in an attempt to locate two major linear geophysical anomalies. These were both positively identified after manual cleaning. One was a possible limestone wall (2102) formed of weathered, angular limestone

blocks found in the east end of the trench, aligned approximately northeast-southwest, and possibly associated with a patch of disturbed shattered bedrock to the west. The second anomaly was identified as a well-defined, flat-based linear ditch (F210), aligned southwest-northeast and following a natural fracture line in the bedrock. This feature was filled with a buff-brown silt clay (2103) containing small shattered fragments of angular limestone. Several sherds of Roman pottery and an iron finger-ring were recovered from the fill.

Trench XIII, aligned approximately west-east, measured 105m long and was dug to the south of Trenches XI and XII, 30m inside the southern boundary of the site. The eastern section of Trench XIII was selectively excavated by hand in an attempt to intercept the geophysical anomalies found in survey Area C (revealed in Trench XII). However, no clear evidence of these was found. A scatter of slag, medieval pottery and ferrous objects was found towards the east of the trench. A sondage here exposed the limestone bedrock (2201) masked by deposits of buff-brown clay-soil hillwash. These appeared to deepen eastwards towards a shallow dry valley still visible as a surface feature in the field.

Towards the western end of Trench XIII was exposed a band of disturbed, shattered limestone bedrock, aligned west-east. This appears to be the disturbed remains of a vertical setting of stone foundations set in dark brown clay (2202), measuring 4.0m by 1.0m. To the south of this feature was an area of buff-brown clay silt (2204) exposed just inside the southern baulk of the trench. This material represents the fills within one or more pits cut into bedrock, which were not excavated or distinguished further. A fourth issue silver sixpence of Elizabeth I was recovered from the top of these fills.

5.0: DISCUSSION

The excavation and recording of thirteen transects, sampling within and beyond the bounds of areas previously assessed by geophysical survey, has considerably enhanced the value of the latter and provided a much firmer basis for an evaluation of the archaeological potential at Woodlands Farm.

5.1: Geology and Prehistory

Information relating to the underlying structure of the area and the processes which have created or modified past and present landscapes have a considerable bearing upon archaeological interpretation here. An almost horizontally-bedded, well jointed lias limestone bedrock underlies the site, a formation deposited upon the lower southern slopes of the Mendip Hills and their earlier Carboniferous rock formations. In places the lias limestone was present very close to the surface, its weathered surface appearing in several trenches 0.30m or so beneath the modern turf. Elsewhere it was masked by a considerable overburden of light buff-brown clay silt, variable in depth and evidently mostly of relatively recent origin. This deposit was not subjected to any detailed interpretative geotechnical study but is probably best understood as hillwash, although its lower horizons probably derive from *in-situ* weathering of the bedrock.

Several deeper sondages were cut by machine into this deposit wherever it was extensively exposed within the evaluation trenches. In places these demonstrated the weathered bedrock buried 1m or more beneath the clay silt, although its full depth was not always established. The best clues to its origins and rate of deposition were obtained where sequences of archaeological structures or artifacts were recorded within it. Most graphic was that recorded within Trench VI, where the western margin of the Roman Fosse Way, itself set into a natural deposit of clay-silt hillwash, was itself overwhelmed by later hillwash. Within these later deposits were remains of a later stone structure probably of medieval date, associated with some animal bone. A further horizon of hillwash sealed those remains within which were set the remains of a drystone wall, itself overlain by a thinner hillwash deposit just beneath the modern turf-line.

This notable sequence suggests a relatively modern date for much of the hillwash on the Woodlands Farm site as a whole, although in this particular instance local circumstances – a steep slope to the east and a long established boundary against the Fosse Way lane to the west – were especially favourable to both the movement and accumulation of these deposits.

The origin and history of the hillwash deposits at Woodlands Farm is undoubtedly complex. Much of this material probably originates in late-glacial and early post-glacial times when severe frost and thaw effects eroded and loosened the exposed geological formations of the Mendip Hills, breaking them down into finer sediments and redepositing them within the hollows and undulations of a weathered and vegetation-free post-glacial landscape. Human clearance and cultivation of the landscape probably began 6,000 years ago or more in this area during the Neolithic period. A sparse scatter of flint flakes and tools at Woodlands Farm testify to this, early activity, but no other contemporary archaeological remains were encountered and this period is much better represented on sites excavated or assessed elsewhere around Shepton Mallet, notably beside Fosse Lane to the south.

It was probably not until the Iron Age, within the last millenium before the Roman Conquest, that human exploitation of the landscape intensified to the extent that its effects became lasting and widespread. At Woodlands Farm clearance and cultivation of the landscape was almost certainly responsible for a re-distribution of hillwash deposits in certain areas, particularly where ploughing and erosion affected the slopes. Archaeological evidence of this period is once again very sparse on this site. A few sherds of Iron Age pottery may represent no more than rubbish disposal or manuring of fields, although some occupation should not be ruled out. There is stronger evidence for Iron Age settlement to the south, preceding the Romano-British settlement along Fosse Lane, while local hillforts such as Maesbury are further indication of the scale and complexity of settlements and society by this time.

5.2: Roman Archaeology

The Fosse Way, its line marked today by a deeply worn lane, traverses the property on a north-south axis. The best evidence of its former state was recorded in Trench VI, where successive metallings along its eastern margin survived outside the line of the modern lane. This was the clearest demonstration of the post-Roman erosion effect upon the Fosse Way, which has now created a holloway with a surface one metre or

more below the original road. Traces of what may be later (?medieval) road surfaces were also recorded in Trenches IV and V, and it appears that a narrow zone may survive in places along each side of the present lane, which preserves some remains of the original Roman Fosse Way and its successors.

There are hints that further remains contemporary with the Roman road may also survive within this zone, particularly to the east where the hillwash accumulations against the more recent lane boundary will have protected features and deposits from subsequent erosion and disturbance. Any such remains are unlikely to represent Romano-British settlement as such along the road frontage, but could relate to contemporary agriculture and land use.

The absence of any Romano-British material from virtually all the evaluation trenches was indeed remarkable, given the proximity of the intensively occupied urban roadside settlement existing just to the south across the valley of the River Sheppey (Leach 1991a). One notable exception was the ditch (F210) in Trench XII, and possibly other contemporary features. Finds here were sparse and the remains may represent no more than enclosure boundaries, although some focus of modest settlement could be present in the vicinity.

5.3: Medieval and Post-Medieval Archaeology

As in the Roman period, in the middle ages Woodlands Farm lay on the periphery of a settlement just to the south. The Domesday hamlet of Charlton, a mile or so to the east of Shepton Mallet, evidently developed around the junction of the Fosse Way with a road from Wells and Shepton Mallet to Doultling and Frome to the east (subsequently the A361). Most of this settlement probably concentrated within the shelter of the small river valley, along Brewery Lane, The Maltings and up Frog Lane. Medieval material has been recovered beside the latter and a contemporary earthwork was investigated in 1987 beside Brewery Lane prior to a housing development (Ellis 1987).

Medieval pottery was recovered from several trenches close to the Fosse Way, notably I, V,

XII, and XIII. Much of this was displaced and had been incorporated into the more recent hillwash deposits, being frequently well abraded. Such material may have been introduced as a result of rubbish disposal and manuring on fields close to the medieval settlement of Charlton. Two areas suggested the potential for more substantial remains, however.

The pits, post-holes and cobbled areas in Trench V suggest the possibility of a modest settlement, perhaps an outlying farm alongside the medieval Fosse Way, whose continued use at this time may be signified by the metalling at the west end of the trench. Further exploration here would be required to clarify and interpret these remains with more precision.

In Trenches XII and XIII medieval pottery was again associated with potential structural features, some of which may be no more than enclosure boundaries. The possibility of rubbish pits here, one containing a sixpence of Elizabeth I, and other foundations, post-holes and ditches, may all point to occupation until the 16th century at least on this plateau overlooking the main settlement of Charlton. The remains of this period, coupled with the evidence of Romano-British activity in this part of the site, may suggest an outlying focus of intermittent settlement at different periods here. Its proximity to the Fosse Way and the known Roman and medieval settlement foci just to the south, along with a well-drained and relatively level site, suggest that some further exploration for surviving archaeological remains here would be worthwhile.

Excepting the evidence for 16th-century occupation mentioned previously, there was no evidence of post-medieval settlement or structures elsewhere in the area. Post-medieval pottery and other debris was recovered in the upper topsoil and hillwash deposits as a background scatter, principally in those trenches on either side of the Fosse Way which are closest to Charlton. Further from the road several trenches encountered the remains of field drains and former drystone field boundaries, some of which are still visible on earlier editions of Ordnance Survey maps.

6.0: IMPLICATIONS AND PROPOSALS

6.1: Implications

As the second stage of a phased approach to the evaluation of Woodlands Farm, it is apparent that the results achieved and their implications are broadly in conformity with those suggested at stage one. The stage two objectives, employing trial trenching to sample and verify some of the geophysical survey anomalies, to examine in more detail the immediate proximity of the Fosse Way, and to expand somewhat the extent of investigation represented by the original geophysical survey, have all been achieved.

Although the sample investigated by trial trenching amounts to less than 1% of the Woodlands Farm property as a whole, the results, combined with the much more extensive coverage obtained through geophysical survey, can be considered to have provided an adequate assessment of archaeological resources and potential within the locality. Throughout so extensive an area the possibility of other unlocated and localised foci of archaeological remains cannot be ruled out, but the overall picture seems relatively clear. In terms of human settlement history this was a peripheral area, utilised and exploited for centuries, as it is today, within successive agricultural regimes, but never apparently a focus for settlement or more intensive land use. The Fosse Way is perhaps the most notable exception to this generality, and it is this routeway, along with certain other localities with some additional archaeological potential, which are at the core of the following recommendations.

6.2: Proposals

At present, proposals for the Charlton Vale development are insufficiently advanced for the formulation of more detailed or specific archaeological recommendations. General zones of interest and appropriate responses, in order of priority, can however be outlined at this stage.

1. **The Fosse Way.** This feature has already been identified as a prime historic and landscape feature within the site, whose course and existing character should be preserved as a high priority. The survival of the original Roman road margin appears to have been demonstrated in at least one

locality (Trench VI), along with other possible roadside features. In affording maximum protection to the existing Fosse Way case should be taken to preserve a zone flanking the present lane of at least 10m width on either side. Should any extensive disturbances be envisaged within this whole corridor, these should be preceded by archaeological excavation and recording.

2. **Within Survey Area F,** sampled by Trench V, a potential for the survival of further remains, suggested as belonging to a small medieval roadside settlement or farm, may require further investigation. Should development be envisaged within this area a more extensive evaluation will be required as a preliminary to the possibility of more extensive excavations to recover and record such remains as are threatened by the development.
3. **Survey Area C and an area between it and the Fosse Way,** sampled by Trenches XI–XIII, contain scattered remains of several periods. In the event of specific development proposals for this area a further programme of archaeological excavation would be required to sample more extensively and to excavate and record all such features and deposits to be affected by development.
4. **Beyond the specific zones and areas identified in 1–3 above,** some provision should be made for archaeological monitoring during development, within other areas of the site. A watching brief at this stage should include all the remaining parts of the site, whether or not they have been assessed in this initial phase of evaluation, as such areas may still have some potential for the survival of archaeological remains.

Finally, and as a separate point, it should be recognised that a developer of this site will almost certainly be expected to bear not only the costs of any further archaeological works as recommended above (1–4) or in addition by the Planning Authority, but also the costs of archiving and preparing the information and discoveries obtained for proper publication.

7.0: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Audrey Henry (Post-Graduate Diploma Student). The project was managed by Peter Leach and Simon Buteux read and commented upon an earlier version of this report. The illustrations were prepared by Nigel Dodds, the photograph by Graham Norrie, and the report was compiled at BUFAU by Liz Hooper and Ann Humphries.

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SHEPTON MALLET

Archaeological Investigations 1990-1

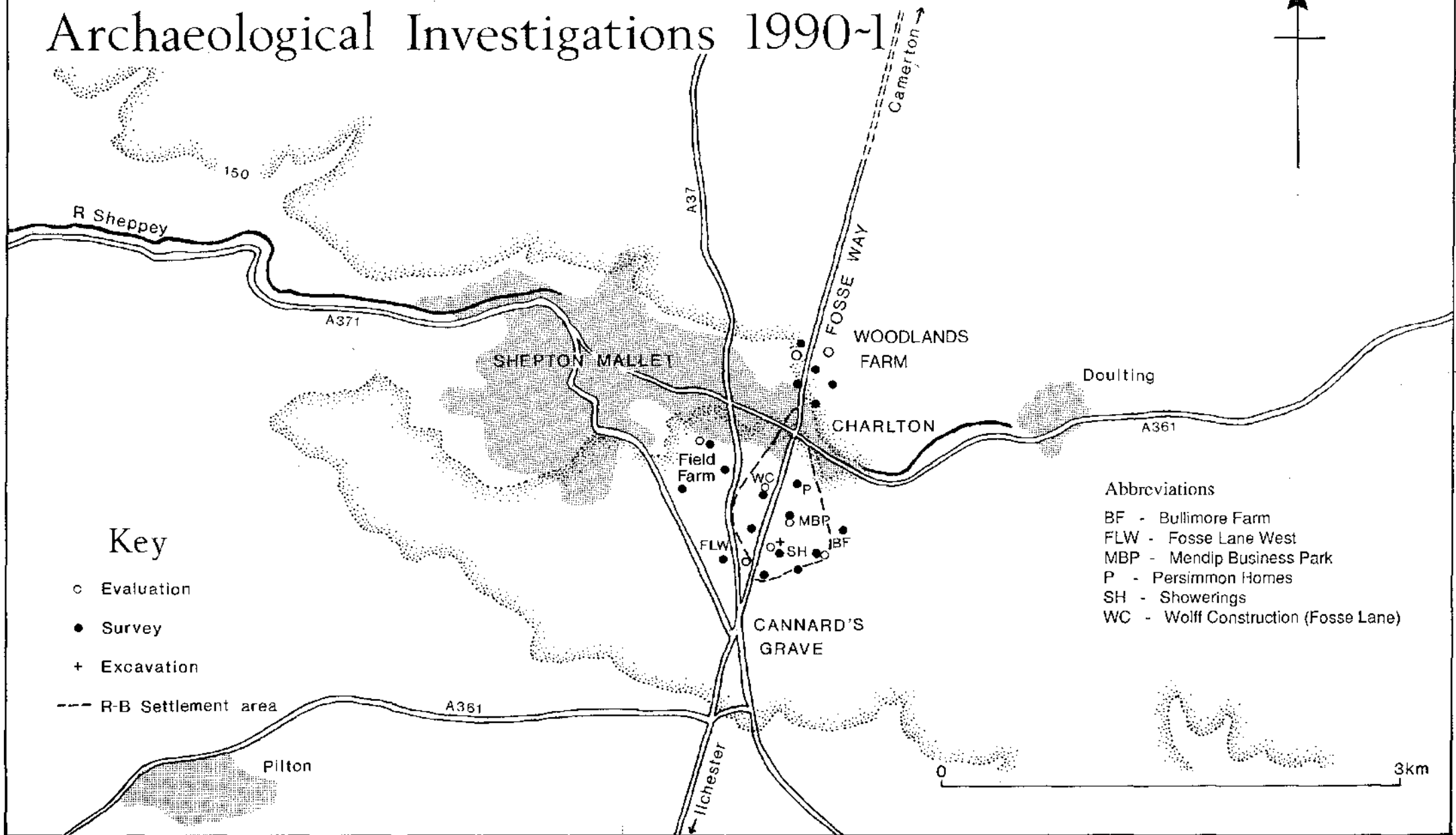


Figure 1

SHEPTON MALLET Woodlands Farm Evaluations 1991

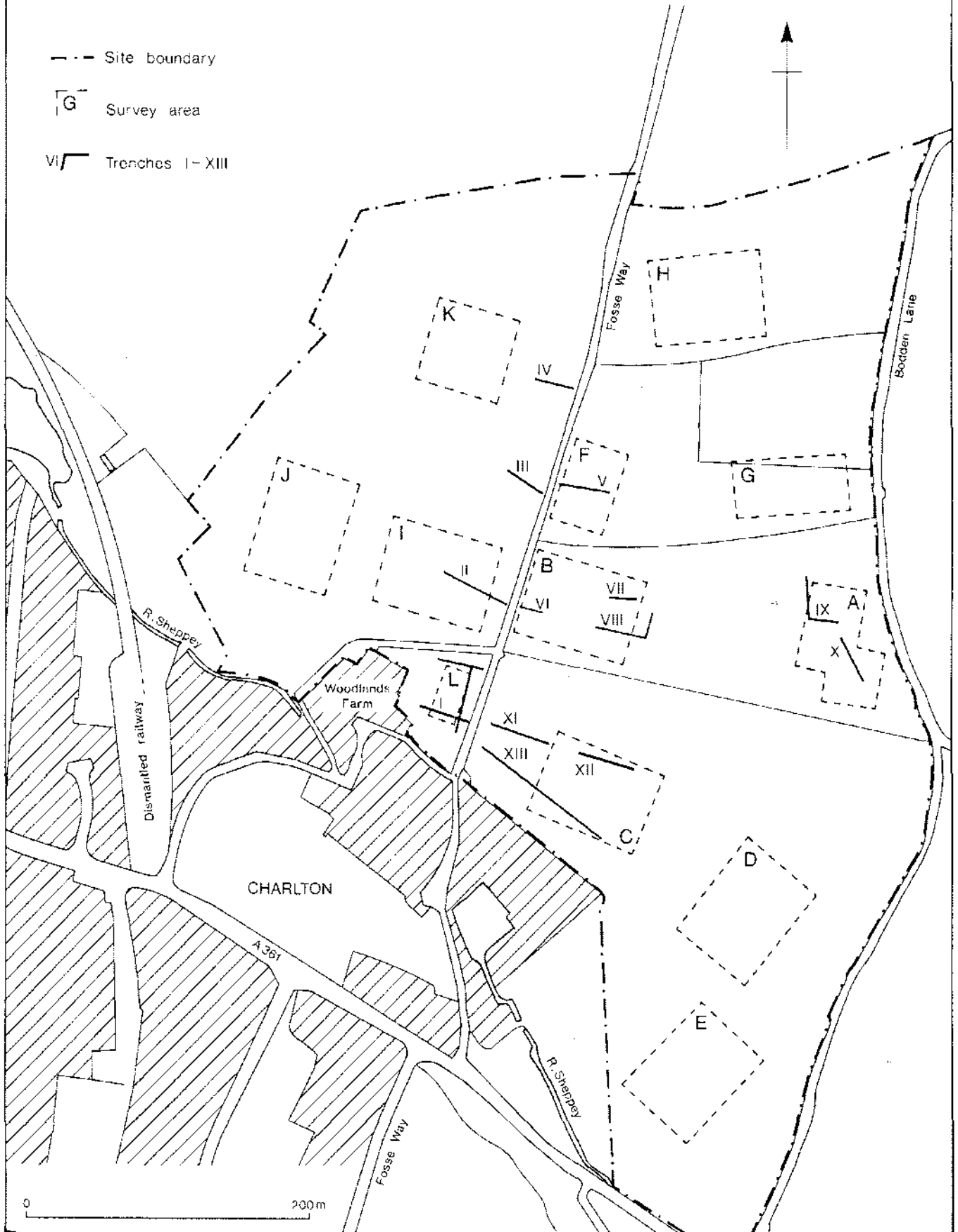


Figure 2

SHEPTON MALLET 1991 Woodlands Farm Plans

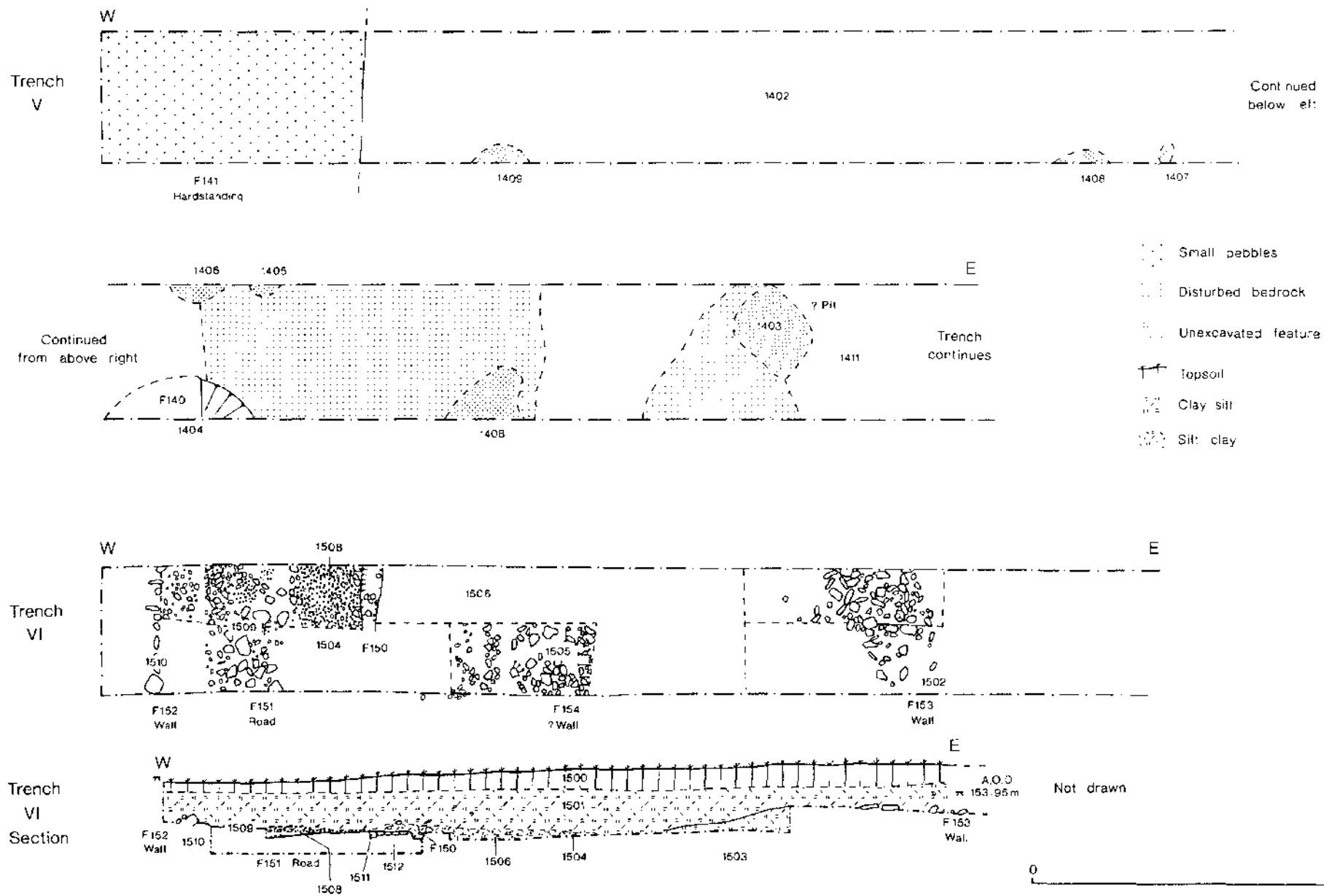


Figure 3