

*BIRMINGHAM UNIVERSITY
FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT*

**Grange Park,
Courteenhall,
Northamptonshire:
Surface Collection**

Revised November 1997

B.U.F.A.U.



Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
Project No. 496
November 1997

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by
Annette Hancocks

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Grange Park, Courteenhall, Northamptonshire : Surface Collection Revised Report

Annette Hancocks

Introduction

The following report details the results of archaeological fieldwork at Grange Park, Courteenhall, Northamptonshire (Fig. 1 : centred on SP 760 550). The fieldwork was undertaken by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit during September and October 1997. The fieldwork was commissioned by John Samuels Archaeological Consultants. This second version of the report includes contextual information not available to B.U.F.A.U. at the time of its survey and the compilation of a survey report.

The site is located approximately 4 km south of Northampton (Fig. 1). A desktop assessment of the site was prepared by John Samuels Archaeological Consultants (Rosenberg 1997). The underlying geology comprises drift over Jurassic and Cretaceous clay shale and river alluvium in the northern part of the site, and chalky till in the south. Within and surrounding the proposed development area much of the landscape appears to be of medieval or post-medieval origin (Fig. 3). Identified sites include the former Courteenhall Grange landscaped park (SMR No. 1657), the possible site of a post-medieval moated site (SMR No. 4629), a cropmark of two parallel ditches (SMR No. 1481), the site of a former post-medieval windmill mound (SMR No. 1482), an undated cropmark feature (SMR No. 1486), thought to be Iron Age/Romano-British in date and a possible medieval settlement site (SMR No. 4710). Perhaps the potential for the presence of earlier activity in the area is greatest on the eastern side of the proposed development where several cropmark features have been identified outside of the proposed development (SMR No. 5455, 5456 and 4630, Rosenberg 1997, Fig.3).

Of the proposed 193ha development of land at Grange Park, Courteenhall, some 148ha were available for fieldwalking. When the surface collection was carried out, the fields were in varying stages of cultivation. Fields 9-14 were harrowed and seeded, although the remnants of last year's crop were still visible, whilst Fields 1 and 2 were ploughed, Field 16 under pasture and Fields 3-8, 15 and 17-18 were ploughed and harrowed. This information is detailed in a landuse map (Fig. 2). Throughout the fieldwork the weather was dry, with a few overcast days. Generally the conditions were ideal for surface collection, although the planted rape seed crop in Fields 9-14 may have affected the visibility of surface material. However, noticeable quantities of flint, Roman, medieval and post-medieval pottery were recovered from these areas.

Objective

The objective of the surface collection was to provide information to determine the nature, extent, character and date of any potential archaeological sites by the surface collection of artefacts within the proposed development area.

Methodology

The survey area was fieldwalked in accordance with guidelines established by Northamptonshire Heritage, Northamptonshire County Council (1995, 11). The general requirements for evaluations, as set out in the brief, were followed at all times.

100m² grids were laid out using a total station and tied into the national grid. Reconnaissance survey was undertaken over all the areas available for fieldwalking. This was carried out along 50m transects and 20m stints. Rapid field assessment of the results was undertaken and specific 100m² grids were targeted for more detailed survey, where significant artefact concentrations were identified. This was carried out along transects at 20m intervals and 20m stints. Part of the study area was identified for this more detailed survey by the Development Control Officer of Northamptonshire Heritage, before the commencement of the fieldwork. The areas selected for intensive survey are indicated on Fig. 3.

Field boundaries were digitised using Auto-CAD and finds data queried using Access for Windows database. Plans were produced displaying quantities of finds for both levels of survey (reconnaissance and detailed). These quantifications are depicted as symbols, varying in size, according to the quantity of finds recovered (Figs. 4-23).

The finds were quantified by occurrence only and sorted into the following groups: flint, Romano-British pottery, medieval pottery and post-medieval pottery, brick and tile fragments, clay pipe, iron objects, glass, metalworking slag, copper alloy objects and animal bone. Only finds that were of archaeological interest were processed and in the case of the flint and medieval and post-medieval ceramics further detailed assessment was undertaken by specialists in these fields.

Descriptions

The detailed distribution plots of each of the finds categories are presented in Appendix 1. The following provides a brief summary of the results. For ease of description the fields have been numbered (see Fig. 2).

The flint - A total of 181 items of humanly-struck flint was recovered, including 23 retouched implements, such as an arrowhead preform and four scrapers, 33 cores and core fragments, one core/hammerstone and 119 flakes (Figs. 6-13).

A general scatter of flint was recovered from all areas of the site during the reconnaissance survey (Fig. 6). However, there are indications of slightly greater concentrations in the central areas (Fields 12, 13 and 14 and the northern parts of Fields 4, 10 and 11). The concentration in Field 12 corresponds with the presence of a cropmarked feature (SMR No. 1486), interpreted as an Iron Age/Romano-British enclosure (Rosenberg 1997, 10). This also represents the higher lying part of the study area. Detailed survey was subsequently undertaken where there were high concentrations in Fields 4, 11, 12 and 14 (Fig. 7). It is difficult to identify specific concentrations in this data, although one possible focus may be the western side of Field 14.

Identifiable tools included a possible arrowhead preform and a scraper. However, the assemblage was dominated by waste flakes and cores suggesting on-site manufacture of tools. It is noticeable that the majority of the flint cores are from the south western part of the study area (Fig. 8). The flint assemblage in general does suggest extensive Neolithic and Bronze Age activity in the area of the proposed development. A more detailed assessment of the flint assemblage is provided in Appendix 2.

Iron Age pottery - No Iron Age pottery was recovered during the surface collection, despite the known presence of a cropmark feature in Field 12 (SMR No. 1486). However, an unknown quantity of Iron Age material was recovered from Field 14 during a surface collection carried out in the early 1980's by David Hall (Fig. 3). This information was not made available to B.U.F.A.U. at the time of the surface collection survey. Given the general paucity of pottery of this period, in Northamptonshire, it is perhaps not surprising that none was recovered during the recent fieldwork. Factors contributing to its absence could include: the friable nature of pottery of this period; the poor visibility caused by the seeded rape crop; a low level of material culture commonly associated with this period and unquantifiable recovery biases reflecting the adopted sampling methodologies. Iron Age pottery has been subsequently recorded from Field 14 (S. Kidd pers. comm).

The Roman pottery - Only a very small number of Romano-British pottery fragments was recovered (22 in total). The numbers are too small to suggest any significant focus for Roman activity within the study area (Figs. 14 and 15), although there does appear to be a discrete concentration in Field 14.

The fragments comprised mainly local reduced greywares and a couple of small sherds of Belgic grog-tempered ware. The overall quantities proved to be rather disappointing, given the proximity of known pre-Flavian and Flavian kiln sites at both Hardingstone to the north east and Quinton to the south west.

Saxon pottery - No pottery of Saxon date was recovered during the surface collection. However, an unknown quantity of Saxon pottery was recovered as a result of surface collection in 1983 by David Hall. The material was recovered from Fields 4, 5/7 and 11 (Fig. 3). Unfortunately, the existence of this material was not made known to B.U.F.A.U. until after the current surface collection was completed and the first draft report submitted. The failure to identify further Saxon material may be partly explained by the poor visibility encountered in Field 11 by the seeded rape crop. In retrospect a more detailed sampling strategy in this area might have been appropriate.

The medieval pottery - Very few sherds of medieval pottery were recovered (11 sherds). The few sherds that were collected appear to be Potterspury in type. The typical medieval shell tempered wares of the period were notable for their absence. There is a small cluster in the southern part of the study area (Figs. 16 and 17). A number of sherds were collected from Field 5 and the southern part of Field 4 during the detailed survey. The name of this field 'Cotton Closes' (SMR No. 4710) implies the presence of a possible medieval settlement, but given the small, abraded nature of the sherds it seems unlikely that any settlement existed here.

The post-medieval pottery - 114 sherds of post-medieval pottery were recovered (Figs. 18 and 19). Interestingly there was no discernible pattern between the presence of post-medieval ceramics in areas which were intensively and extensively fieldwalked. No areas of particular concentrations were observed and the wide distribution of post-medieval pottery across the site could well be a result of the common practice of manuring within this period, dating to the 18th and 19th centuries.

The post-medieval finds - The combined plot of all the post-medieval finds recovered during the reconnaissance survey (Fig. 20) suggests a greater level of activity in the south western part of the study area. This corresponds with the area containing the former landscaped park (SMR No. 1657). The combined plot of all the post-medieval finds from the intensive survey (Fig. 21) suggests a second possible focus of activity in Field 12.

The brick and tile - All the brick and tile recovered was of post-medieval date (373 fragments). Like the pottery its distribution can be commonly associated with the practice of manuring in this period (Figs. 22 and 23). However, small, but significant, quantities of material were found in Field 18 (SMR No. 4629), the possible location of a post-medieval moated site and in Field 1, the area of the former landscaped park (SMR No. 1657).

Miscellaneous finds - All the other finds recovered were of post-medieval date and include very small quantities of slag (11 fragments), bottle glass (75), roofing slate (34), clay pipe (5), of which one was inscribed E. Roberts Northampton, iron nails (5), other iron objects including horseshoes and stirrups (18), animal bone (6) and charcoal (16). Within Field 4, a single bronze half penny of George II, dated 1744, was collected. A further unidentifiable coin was found some 500m to the west.

Conclusions

Several possible areas of archaeological interest have been identified as a result of the surface collection. The most notable of these was a distinct flint scatter across the eastern side of the proposed development (Fields 12, 13 and 14, centred on SP 476360 255160 and SP 476800 255240).

In addition, within the same area a small discrete scatter of Roman pottery was identified, centred on SP 476400 255240. This coincides with the additional data concerning the Iron Age pottery scatter in Field 14 and the Saxon pottery scatter at the northern end of Field 4.

The few medieval finds recovered appear to cluster in the southern area of the proposed development, possibly associated with the suggested medieval settlement (SMR 4710).

Post-medieval finds appear to be concentrated in the south western areas, possibly associated with the former landscaped park (SMR No. 1657).

Methodological review

In retrospect, the failure to recover artefacts from known archaeological sites during the course of the surface collection needs to be addressed. Where known cropmark sites or previous find spots were present in the study area, a third level of surface collection survey could have been employed, at a more intensive level than 20m transects and 20m stints. This could have involved a more intensive grid being employed, with transects and stints walked at perhaps 5m intervals to maximise the recovery of finds. The detailed surface collection policy employed at Grange Park did retrieve finds spanning most archaeological periods, but perhaps was not suited to pinpointing areas of anthropogenic activity represented by a low-level material culture scatter.

In addition, it is now felt that future surface collection projects should somehow attempt to quantify the extent to which elements such as the weather and ground conditions can affect sampling bias in the recovery rates of artefacts.

Ideally, associated fieldwork such as resistivity or magnetometer survey could have been carried out before any surface collection was undertaken, so that the results were available to use in conjunction with a desk-based assessment. This would have perhaps allowed a more effective sampling policy to be implemented in certain areas and to maximise the potential to recover as much data as possible by a more flexible response.

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was carried out by a team consisting of E. Macey, A. Hanna, S. Barfield, K. Nichol, J. Sterenberg, G. Coates, J. La Niece, S. Linnane, D. Leach and R. Kracowicz under the supervision of A. Hancocks. The report was compiled by A. Hancocks and edited by G. Hughes. The figures were prepared by N. Dodds and the data processing was undertaken by L. Dingwall. The provisional identifications of the finds were made by A. Hancocks, with specialist contributions from S. Ratkai and L. Bevan.

The project was monitored by John Samuels on behalf of John Samuels Archaeological Consultants and Sandy Kidd on behalf of Northamptonshire Heritage. Many thanks to the farm manager, Mr David Townsend, for his co-operation and assistance.

This is a revised text which has incorporated information, previously not available, regarding the recovery of Iron Age and Saxon pottery and comments by Northamptonshire Heritage and Nansi Rosenberg for John Samuels Archaeological Consultants. The revised text was edited by Iain Ferris and Gwilym Hughes.

References

Bevan, L 1995 A Later Bronze Age Flint Assemblage From The Riverside Zone, Runnymede Bridge, Egham, Surrey. Unpublished manuscript for the British Museum.

Edmonds, M. 1995 Stone Tools and Society. B.T. Batsford Ltd, London.

Northamptonshire County Council, Northamptonshire Heritage 1995 *Policy and Guidance Notes for Archaeological Fieldwork Projects in Northamptonshire*.

Northamptonshire County Council, Northamptonshire Heritage 1996 *Policy Report on Saxon and Medieval Ceramics in Northamptonshire*.

Rosenberg, N 1997 *An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment of Land Known as Grange Park, Northampton*, unpublished report, John Samuels Archaeological Consultants.

Appendix 1

Fieldwalking : finds distribution plots

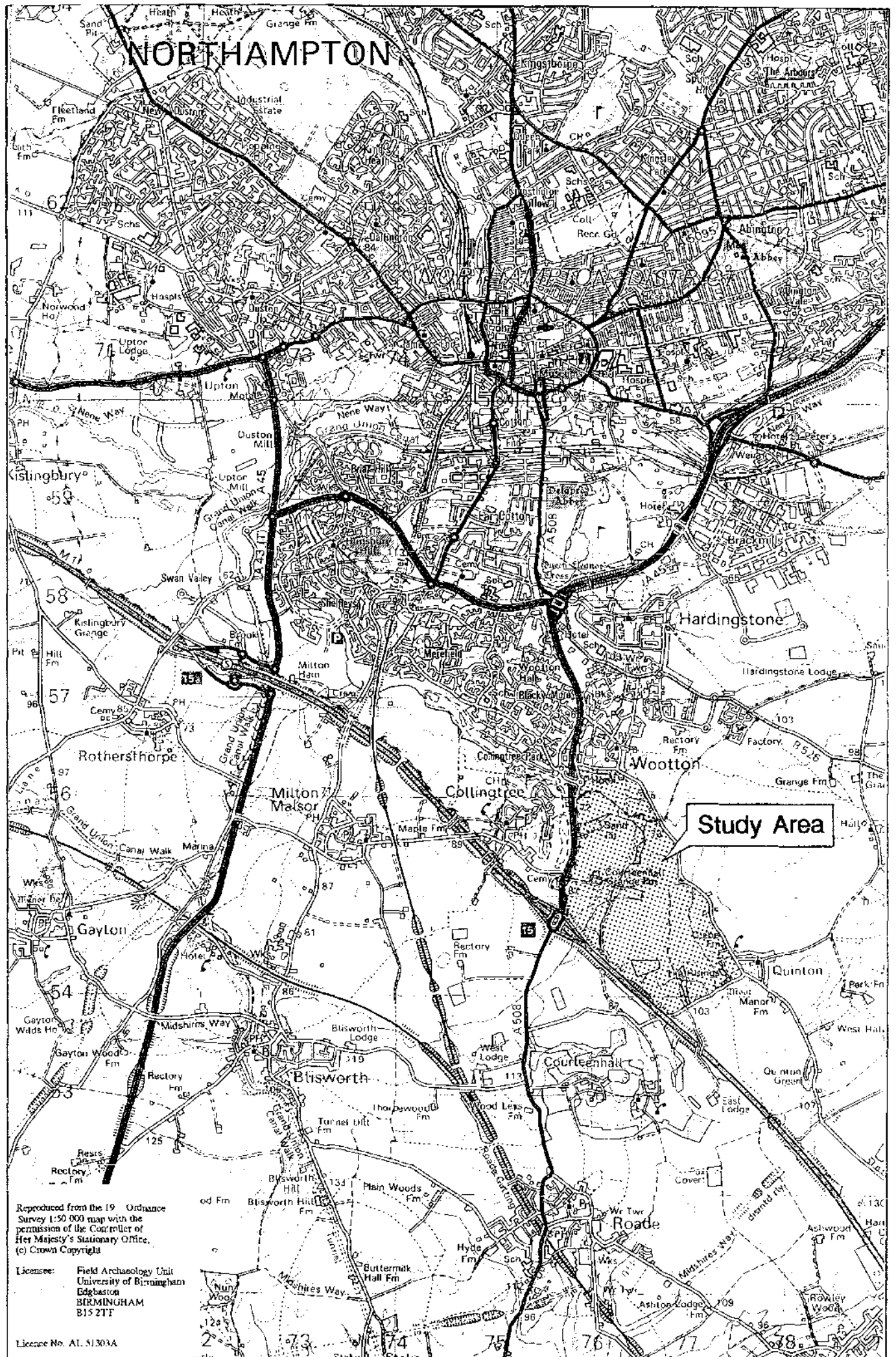
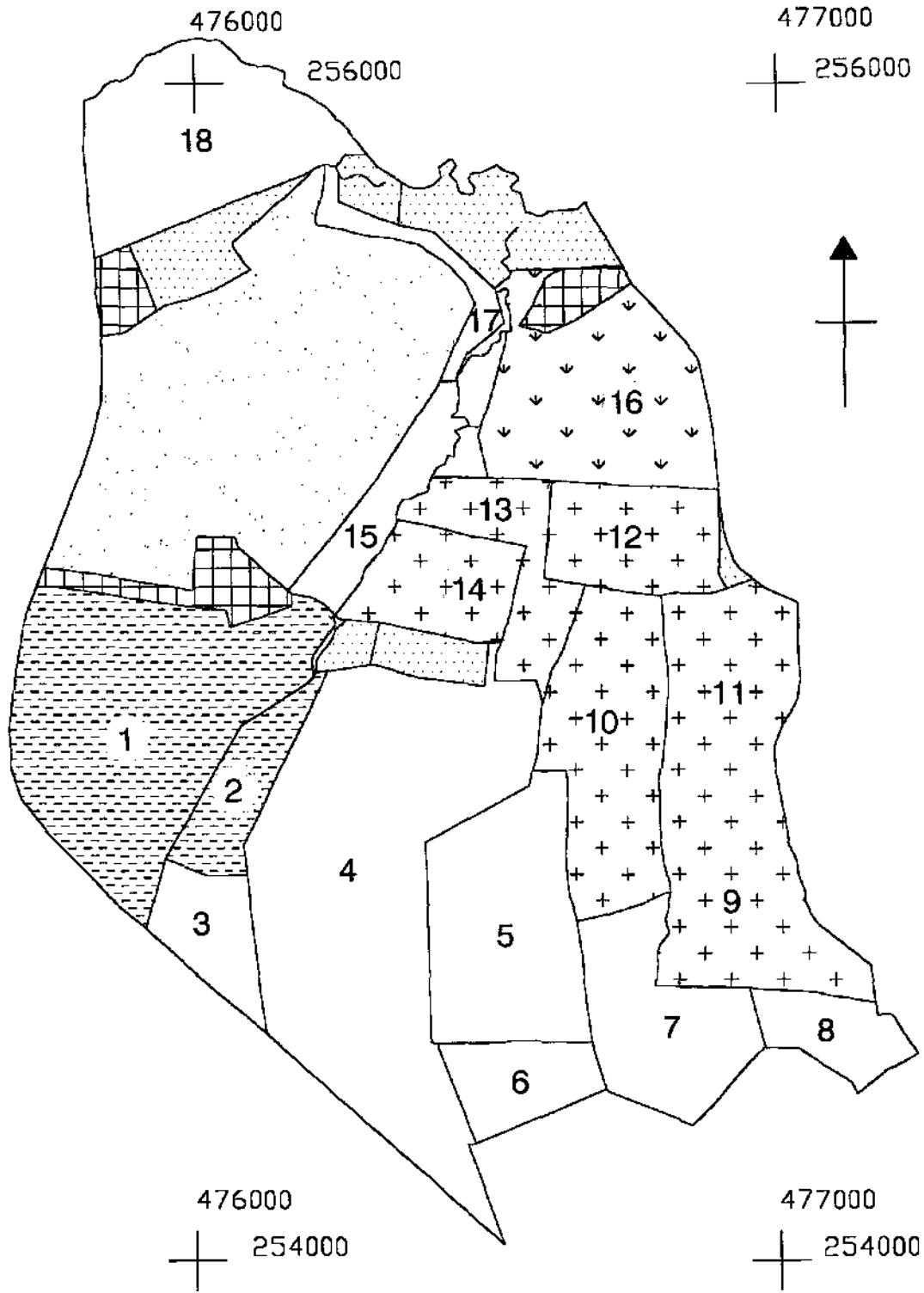


Fig.1

Grange Park, Courteenhall 1997: Fieldwalking



Areas not Fieldwalked



Residences



Woodland



Mineral Extraction



Pasture

Areas Fieldwalked



Harrowed & Seeded Only



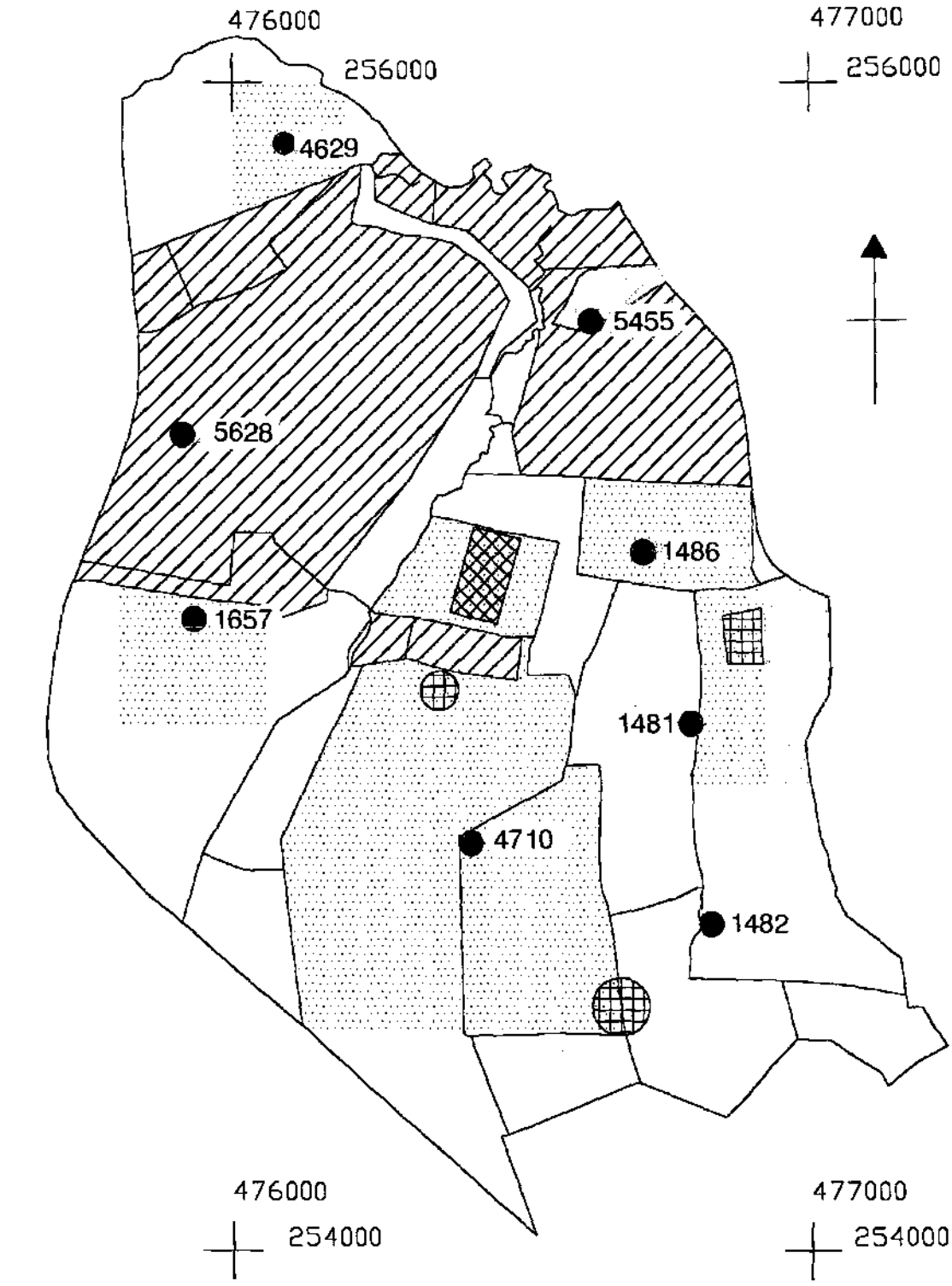
Ploughed Only



Ploughed & Harrowed Only

Fig.2

Grange Park, Courteenhall 1997: Fieldwalking








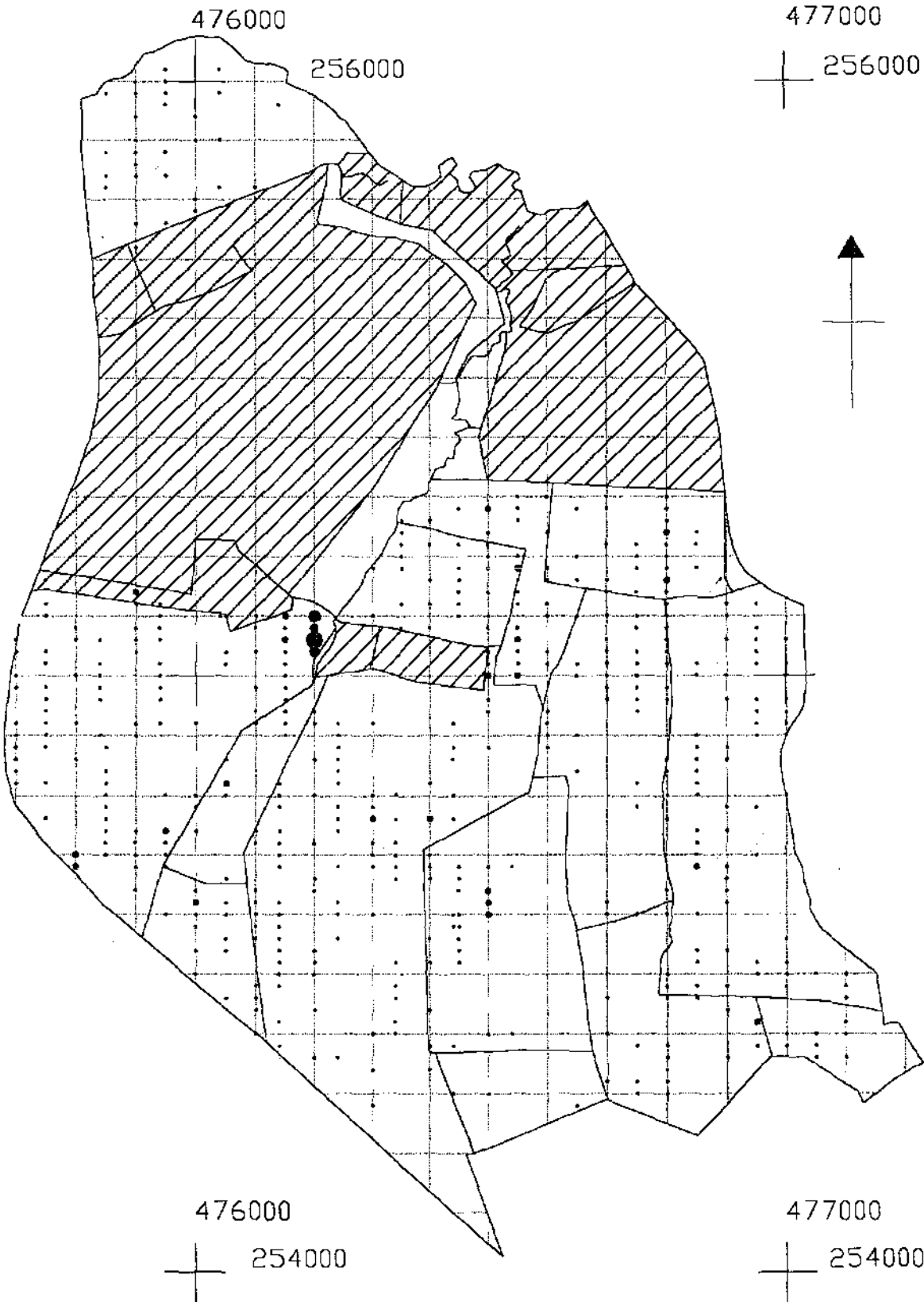
-  Intensively Walked
  Extensively Walked
-  Areas Outside of Fieldwalking Parameters
-  Iron Age Pottery - Surface Collected 1983
-  Saxon Pottery - Surface Collected 1983

Fig.3

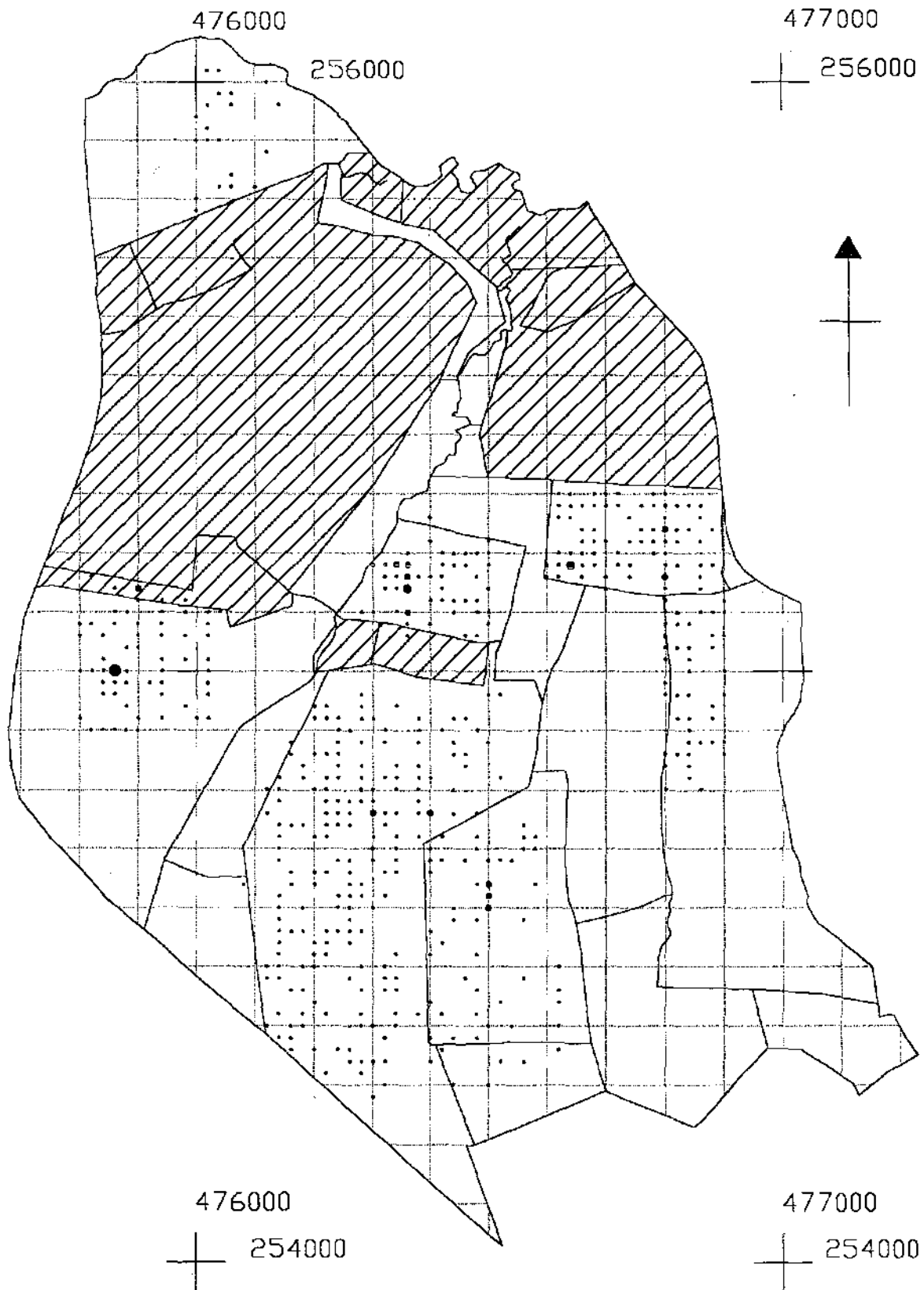
Grange Park, Courteenhall 1997: Fieldwalking



- | | | |
|---------|---------|-----------|
| • 1-4 | • 20-24 | All Finds |
| • 5-9 | • 25-29 | Extensive |
| • 10-14 | • 30-34 | |
| • 15-19 | | |

Fig.4

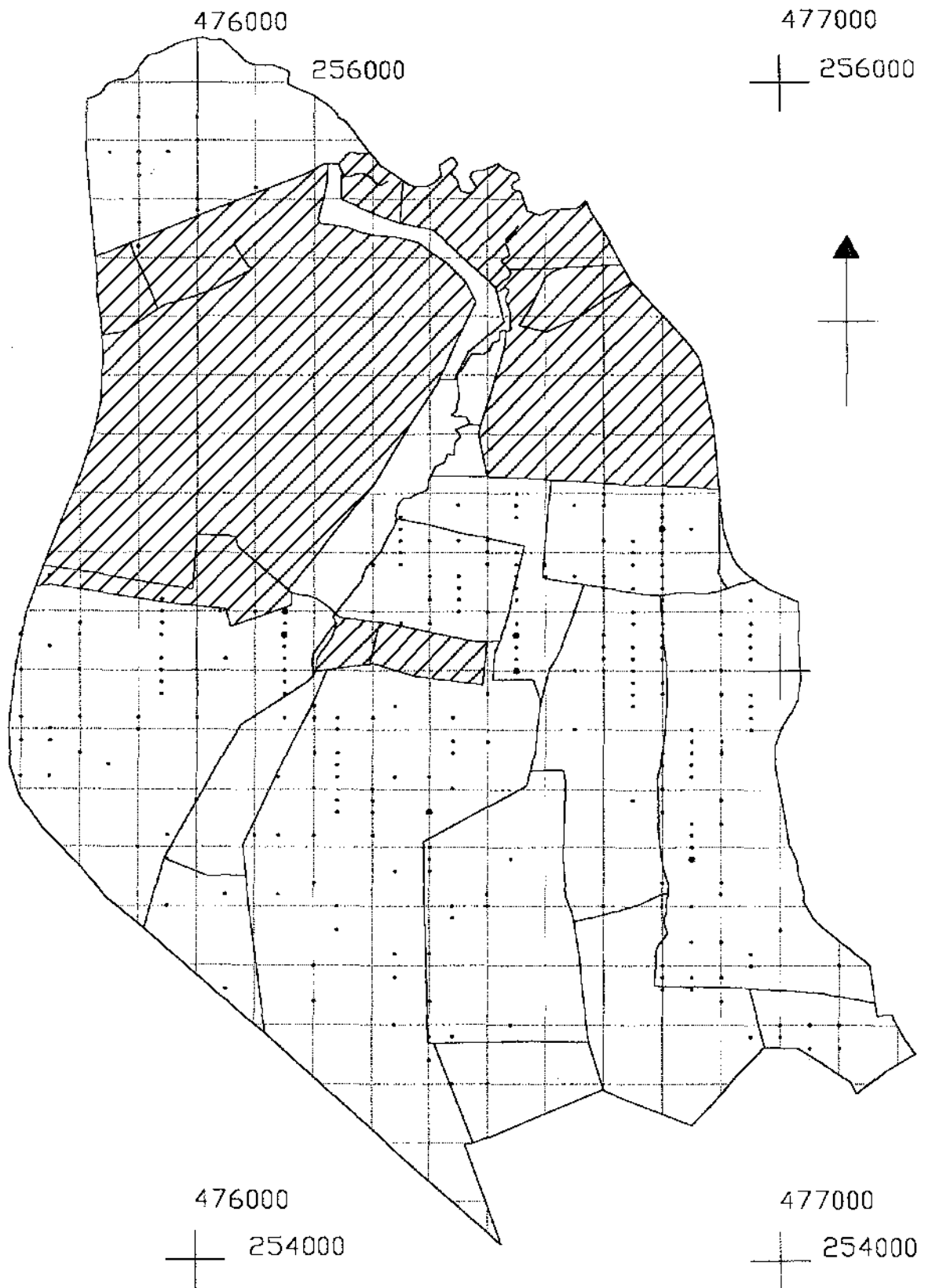
Grange Park, Courteenhall 1997: Fieldwalking



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|---------|---------|-----------|
| • 1-4 | ● 20-24 | All Finds |
| • 5-9 | ● 25-29 | Intensive |
| • 10-14 | ● 30-34 | |
| • 15-19 | | |

Fig.5

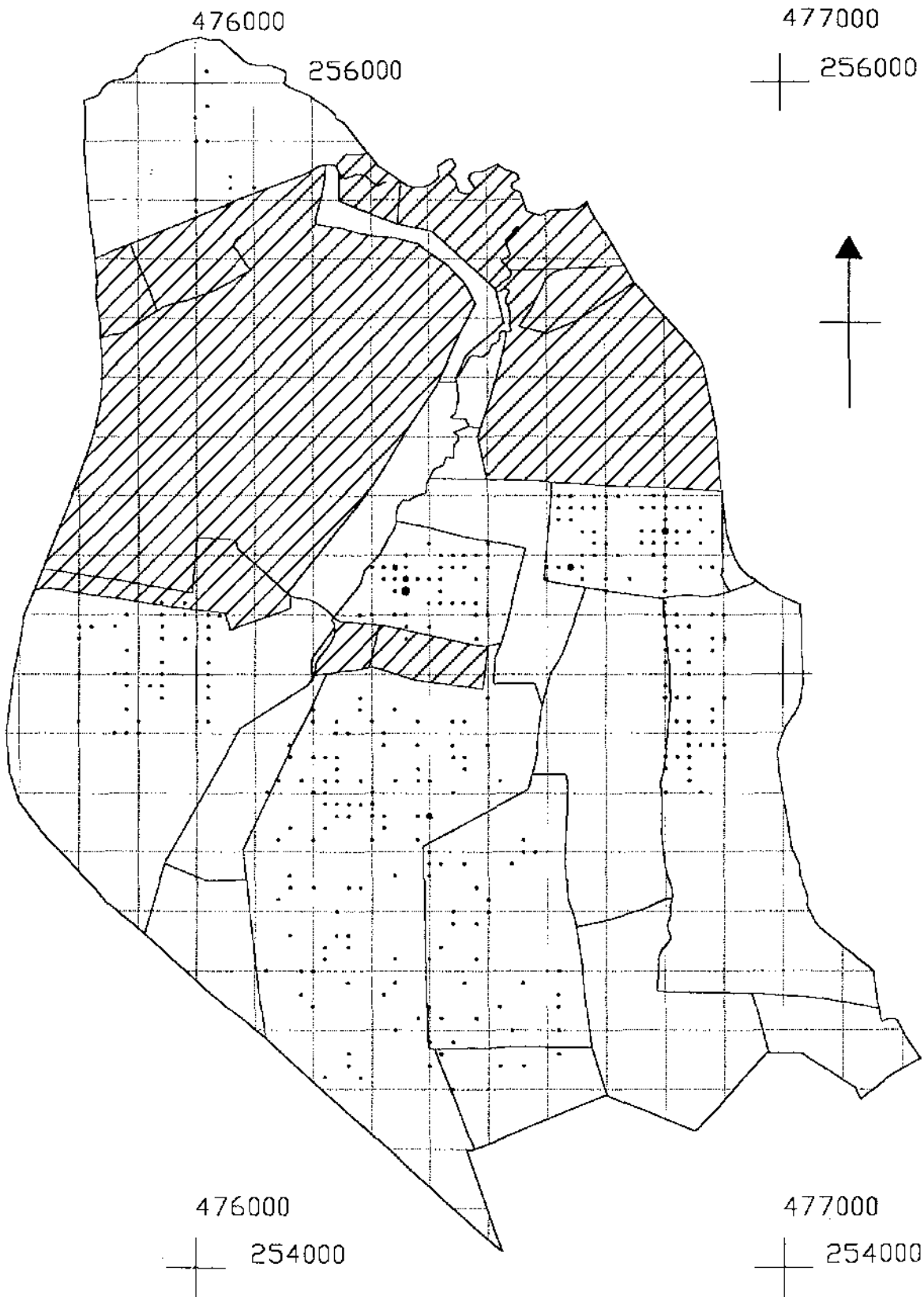
Grange Park, Courteenhall 1997: Fieldwalking



- | | | |
|---------|---------|------------------------------|
| • 1-4 | • 20-24 | All Flint Finds
Extensive |
| • 5-9 | • 25-29 | |
| • 10-14 | • 30-34 | |
| • 15-19 | | |
| | | |

Fig.6

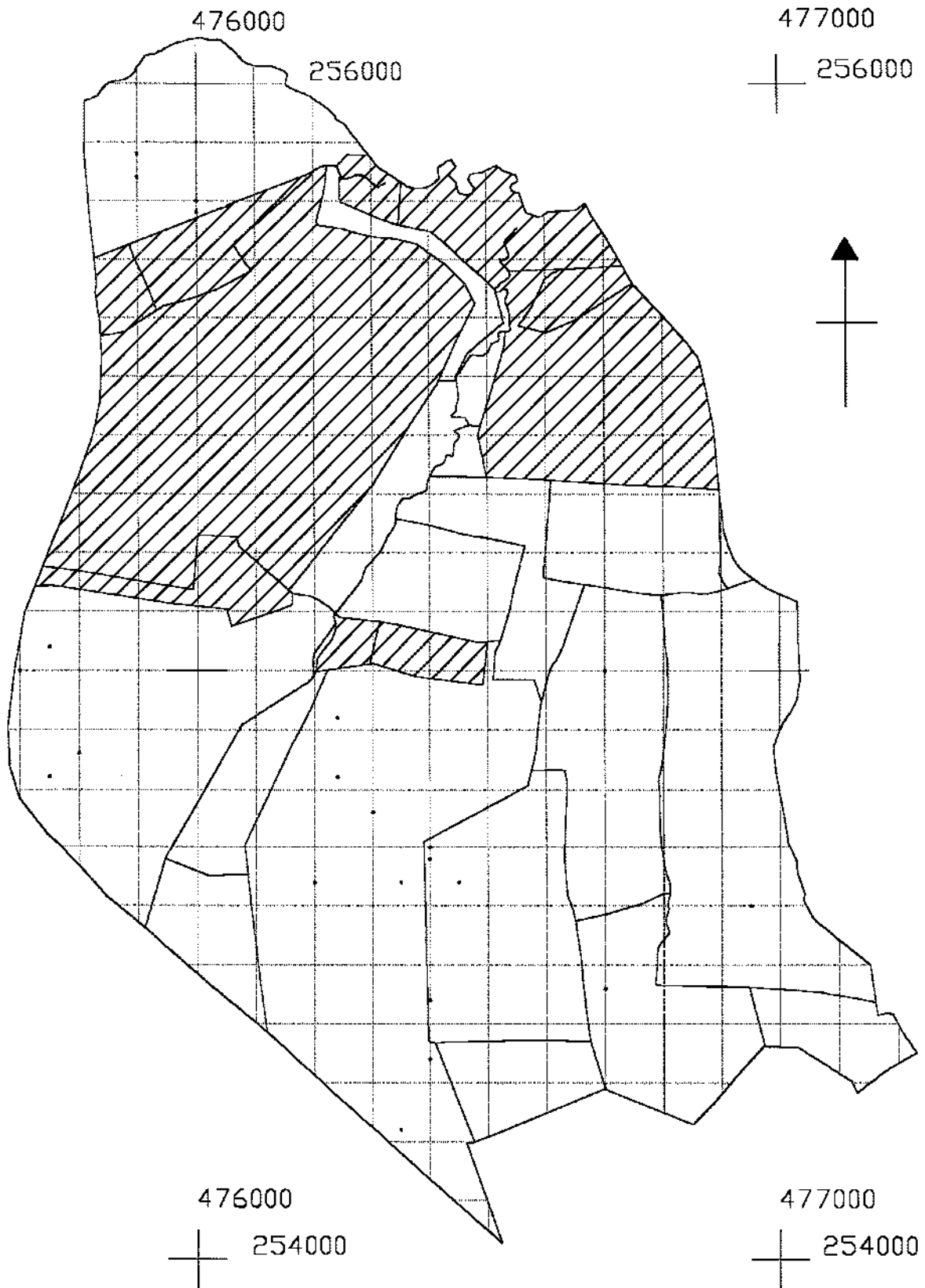
Grange Park, Courteenhall 1997: Fieldwalking



- | | | |
|---------|---------|------------------------------|
| • 1-4 | ● 20-24 | All Flint Finds
Intensive |
| • 5-9 | ● 25-29 | |
| • 10-14 | ● 30-34 | |
| • 15-19 | | |

Fig.7

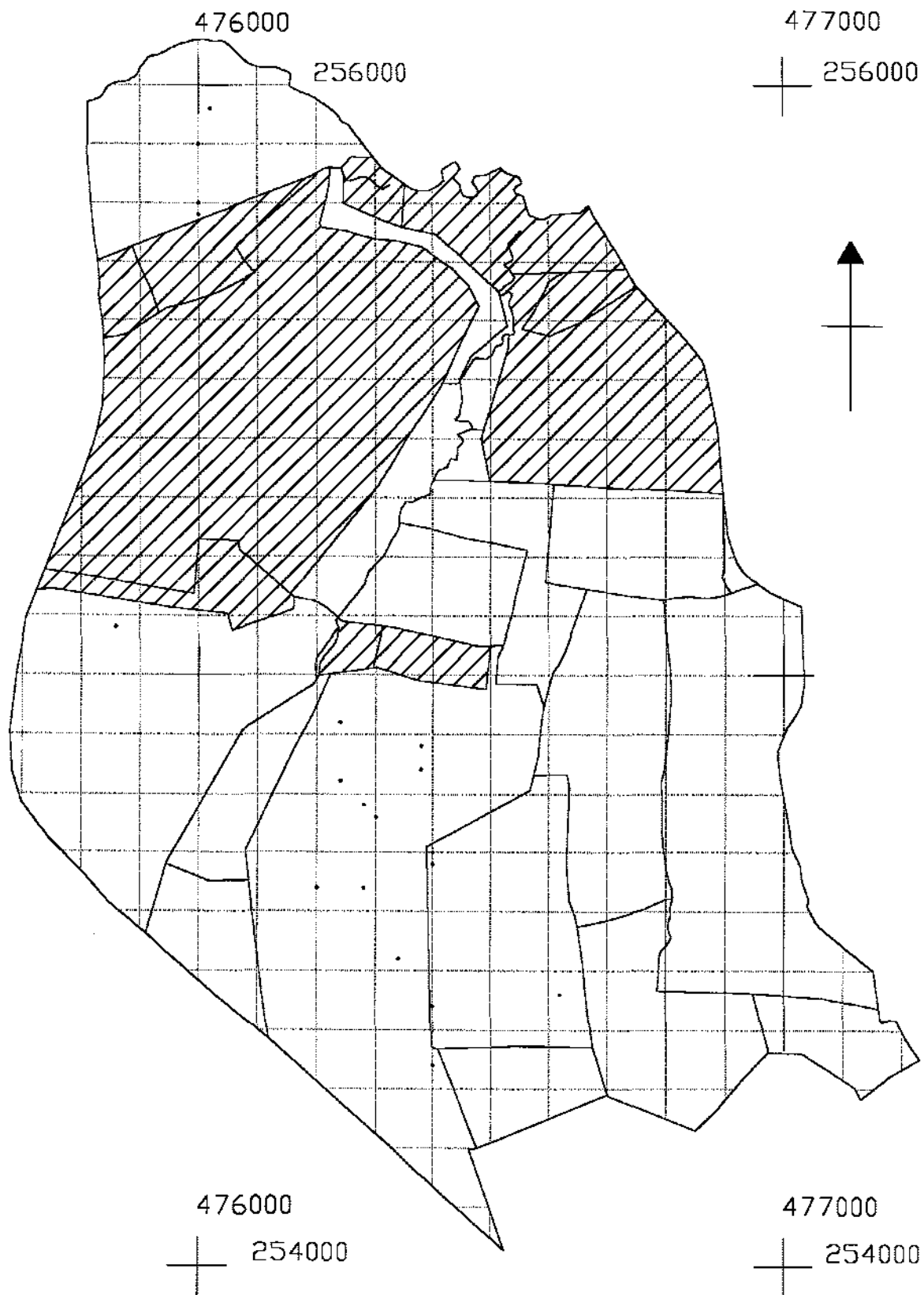
Grange Park, Courteenhall 1997: Fieldwalking



- | | | |
|---------|---------|-------------|
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| • 5-9 | • 25-29 | Extensive |
| • 10-14 | • 30-34 | |
| • 15-19 | | |

Fig.8

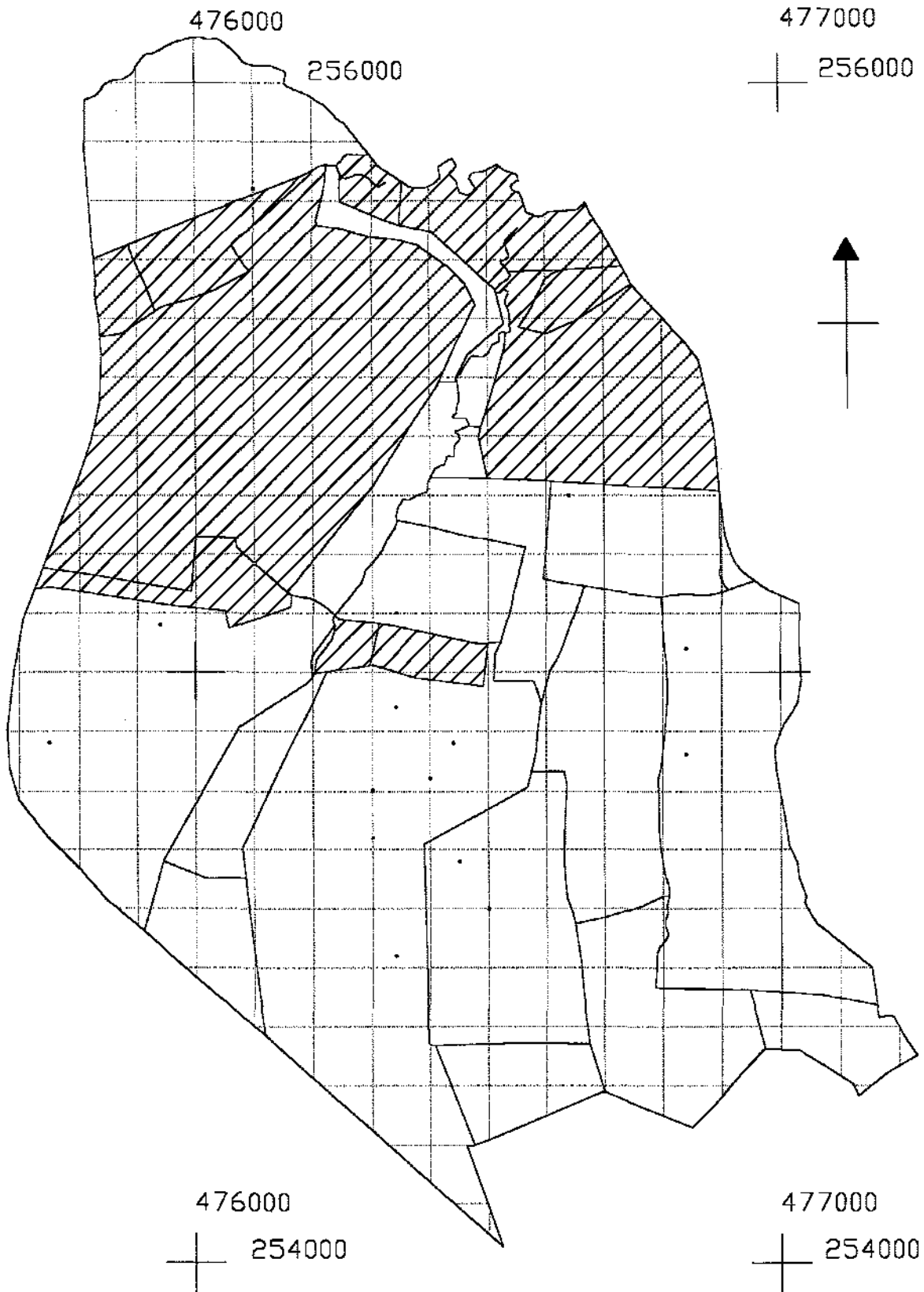
Grange Park, Courteenhall 1997: Fieldwalking



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|---------|---------|-------------|
| • 1-4 | • 20-24 | Flint Cores |
| • 5-9 | • 25-29 | Intensive |
| • 10-14 | • 30-34 | |
| • 15-19 | | |

Fig.9

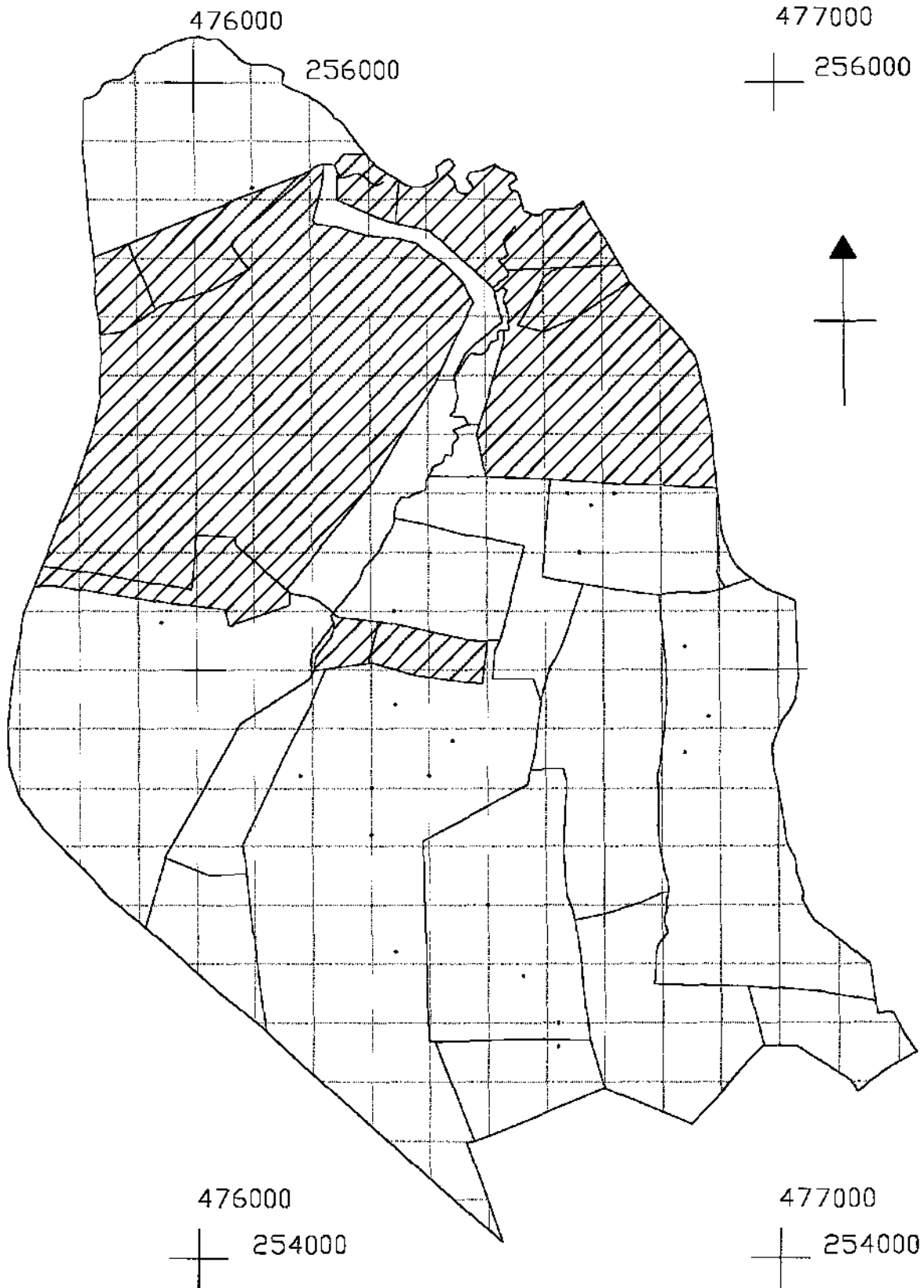
Grange Park, Courteenhall 1997: Fieldwalking



- | | | |
|---------|---------|-------------|
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| • 5-9 | • 25-29 | Extensive |
| • 10-14 | • 30-34 | |
| • 15-19 | | |

Fig.10

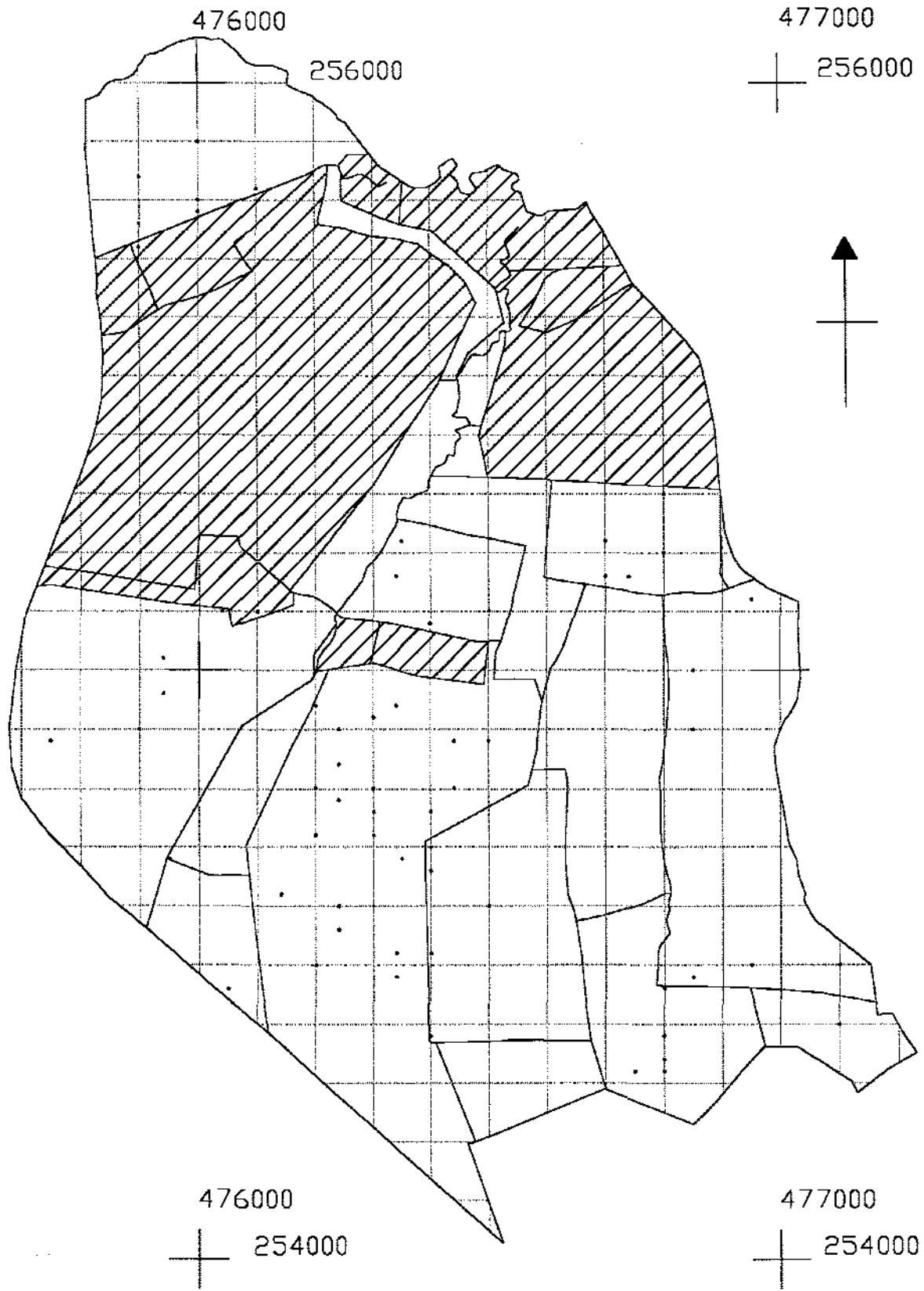
Grange Park, Courteenhall 1997: Fieldwalking



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|---------|---------|-------------|
| • 1-4 | • 20-24 | Flint Tools |
| • 5-9 | • 25-29 | Intensive |
| • 10-14 | • 30-34 | |
| • 15-19 | | |

Fig.11

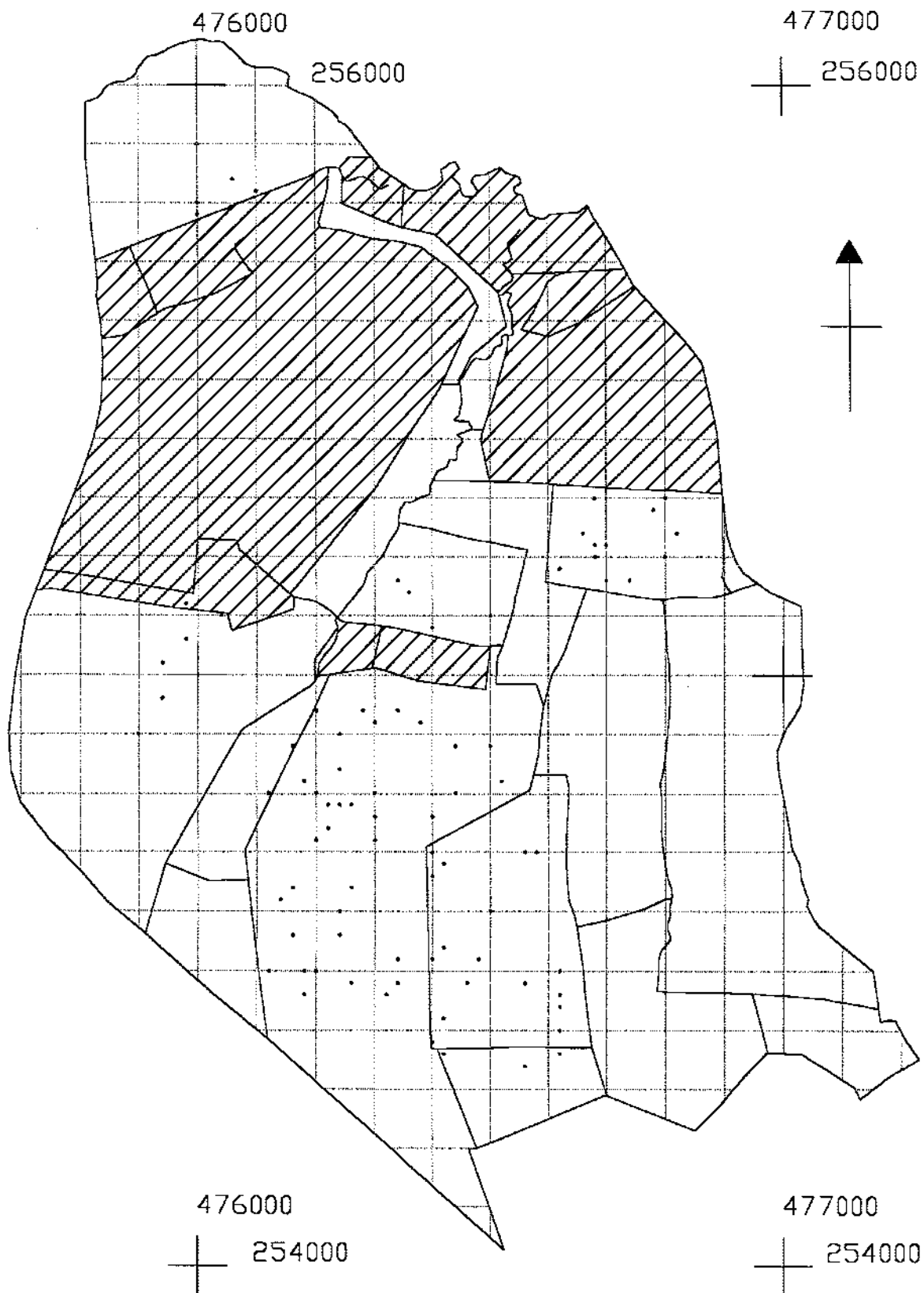
Grange Park, Courteenhall 1997: Fieldwalking



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|---------|---------|---------------------------|
| • 1-4 | • 20-24 | Flint Flakes
Extensive |
| • 5-9 | • 25-29 | |
| • 10-14 | • 30-34 | |
| • 15-19 | | |

Fig.12

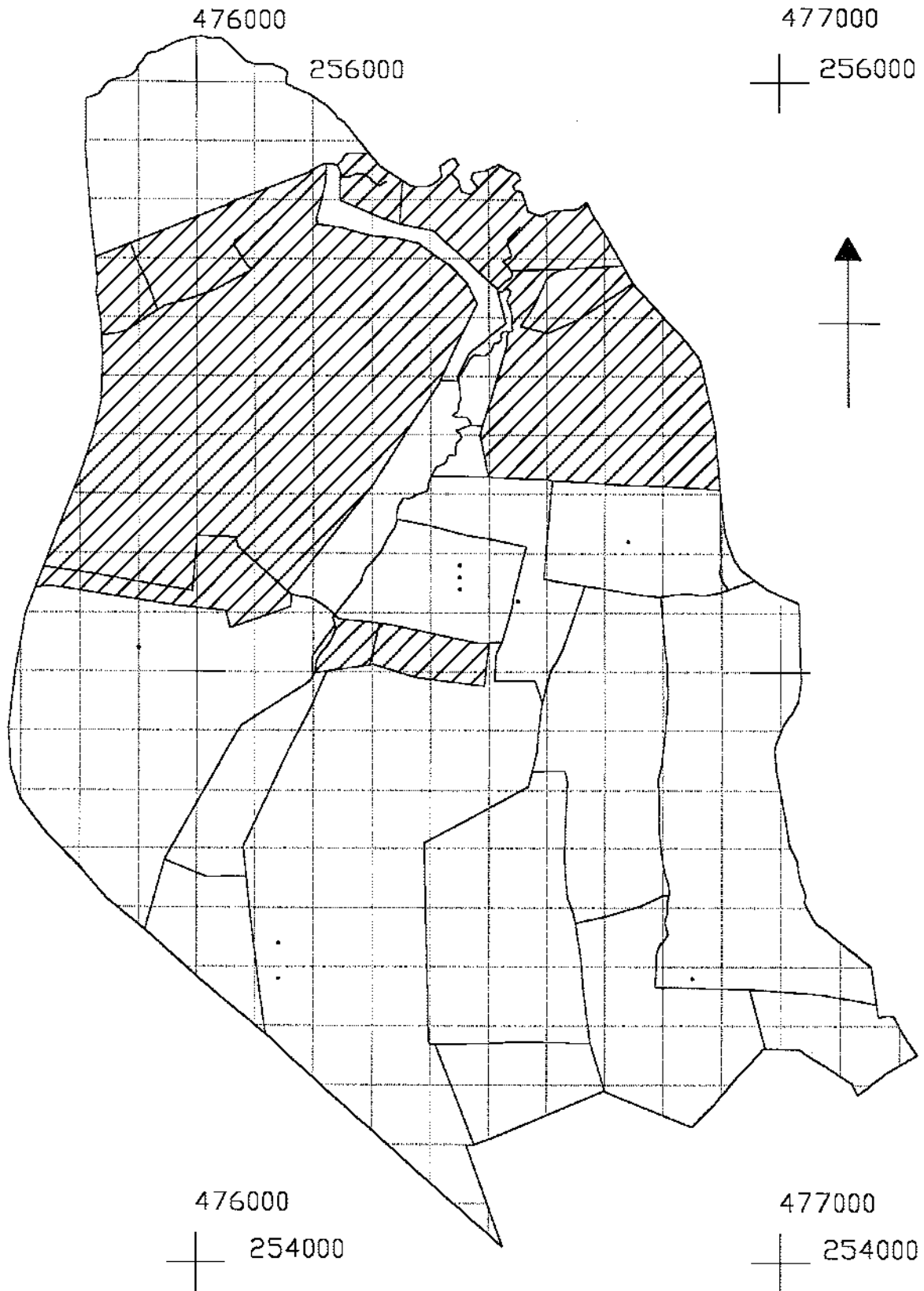
Grange Park, Courteenhall 1997: Fieldwalking



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|---------|---------|--------------|
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| • 5-9 | • 25-29 | Intensive |
| • 10-14 | • 30-34 | |
| • 15-19 | | |

Fig.13

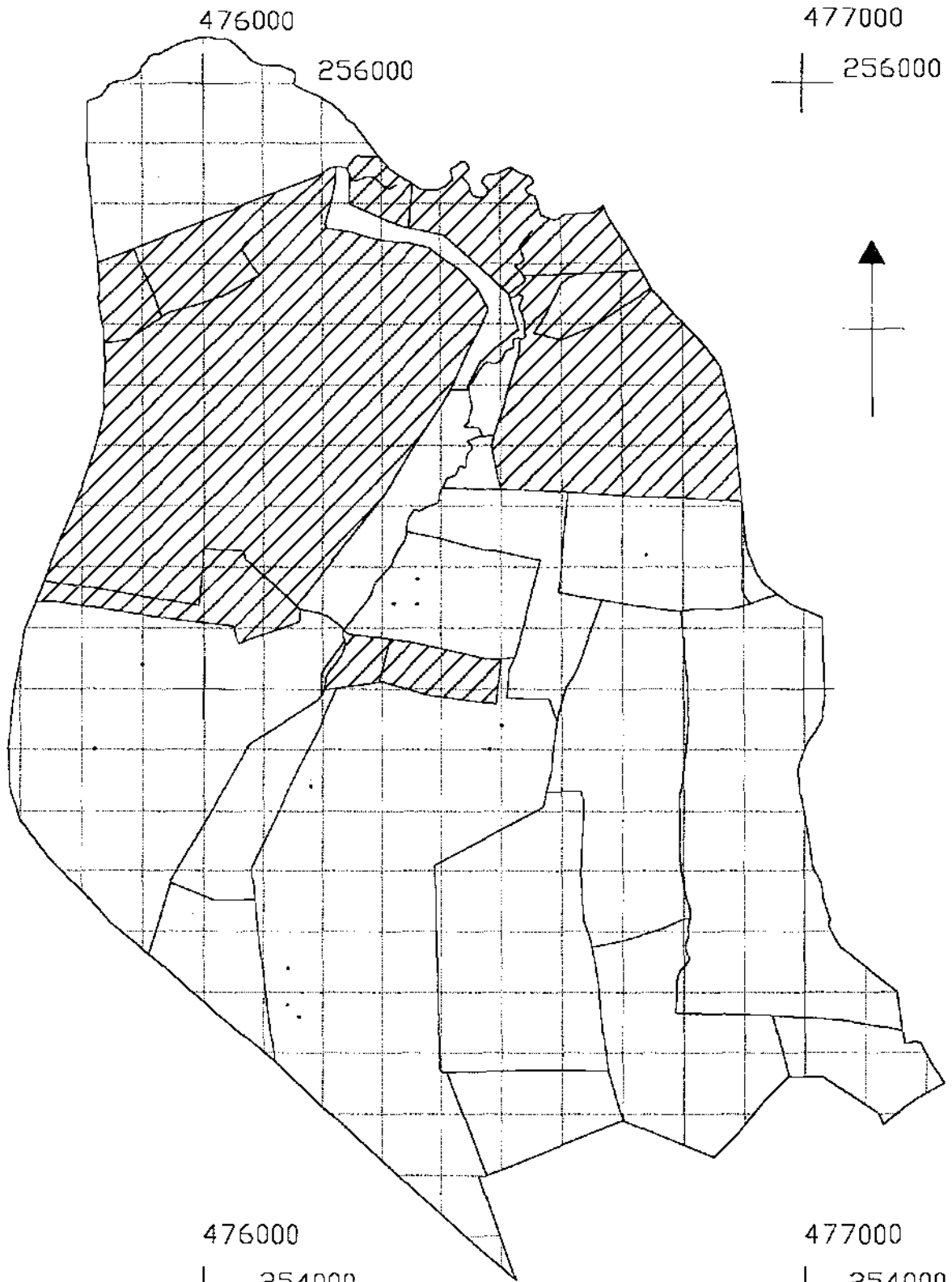
Grange Park, Courteenhall 1997: Fieldwalking



- | | | |
|---------|---------|---------------|
| • 1-4 | • 20-24 | Roman Pottery |
| • 5-9 | • 25-29 | Extensive |
| • 10-14 | • 30-34 | |
| • 15-19 | | |

Fig.14

Grange Park, Courteenhall 1997: Fieldwalking



476000
+ 254000

477000
+ 254000

• 1-4

• 5-9

• 10-14

• 15-19

• 20-24

• 25-29

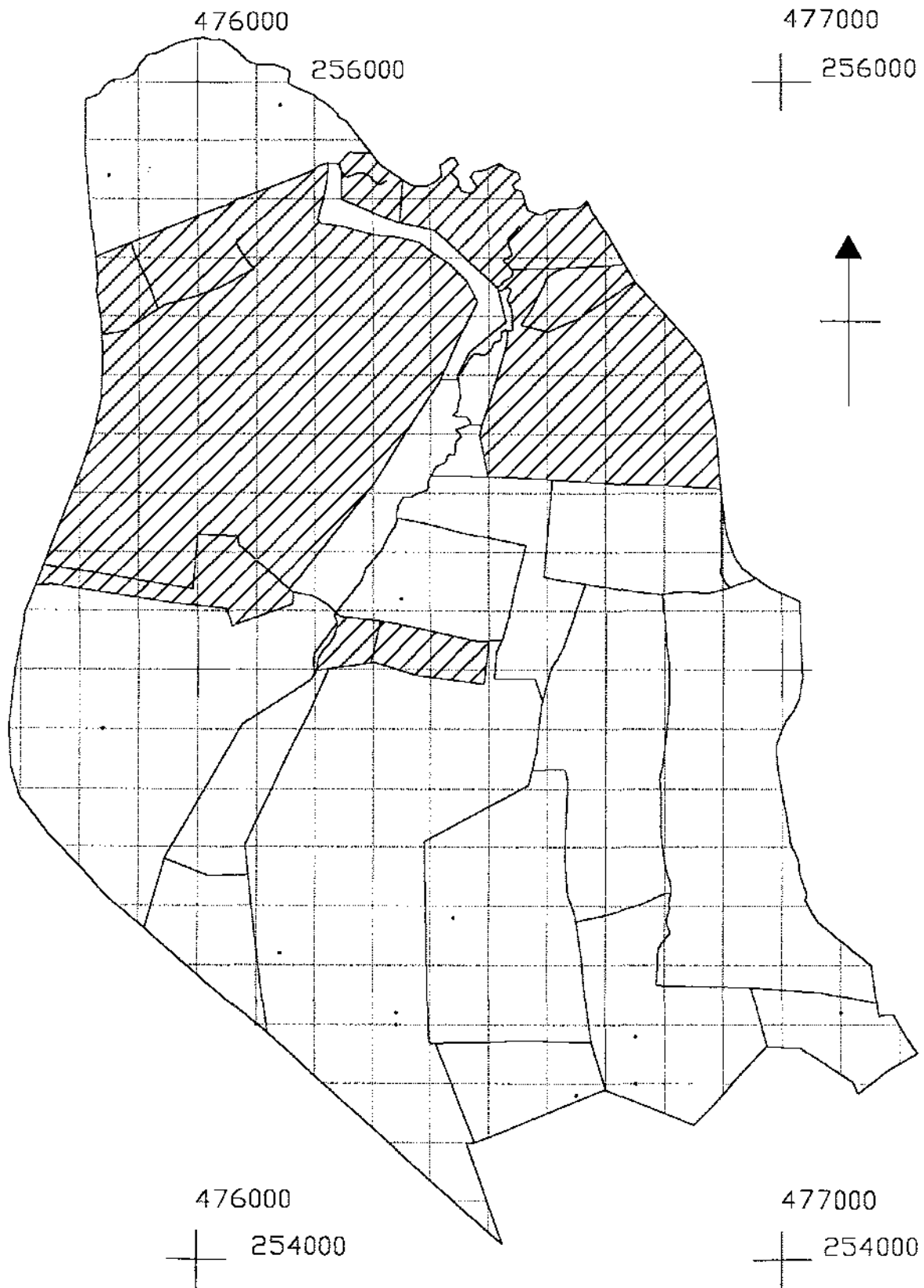
• 30-34

Roman Pottery

Intensive

Fig.15

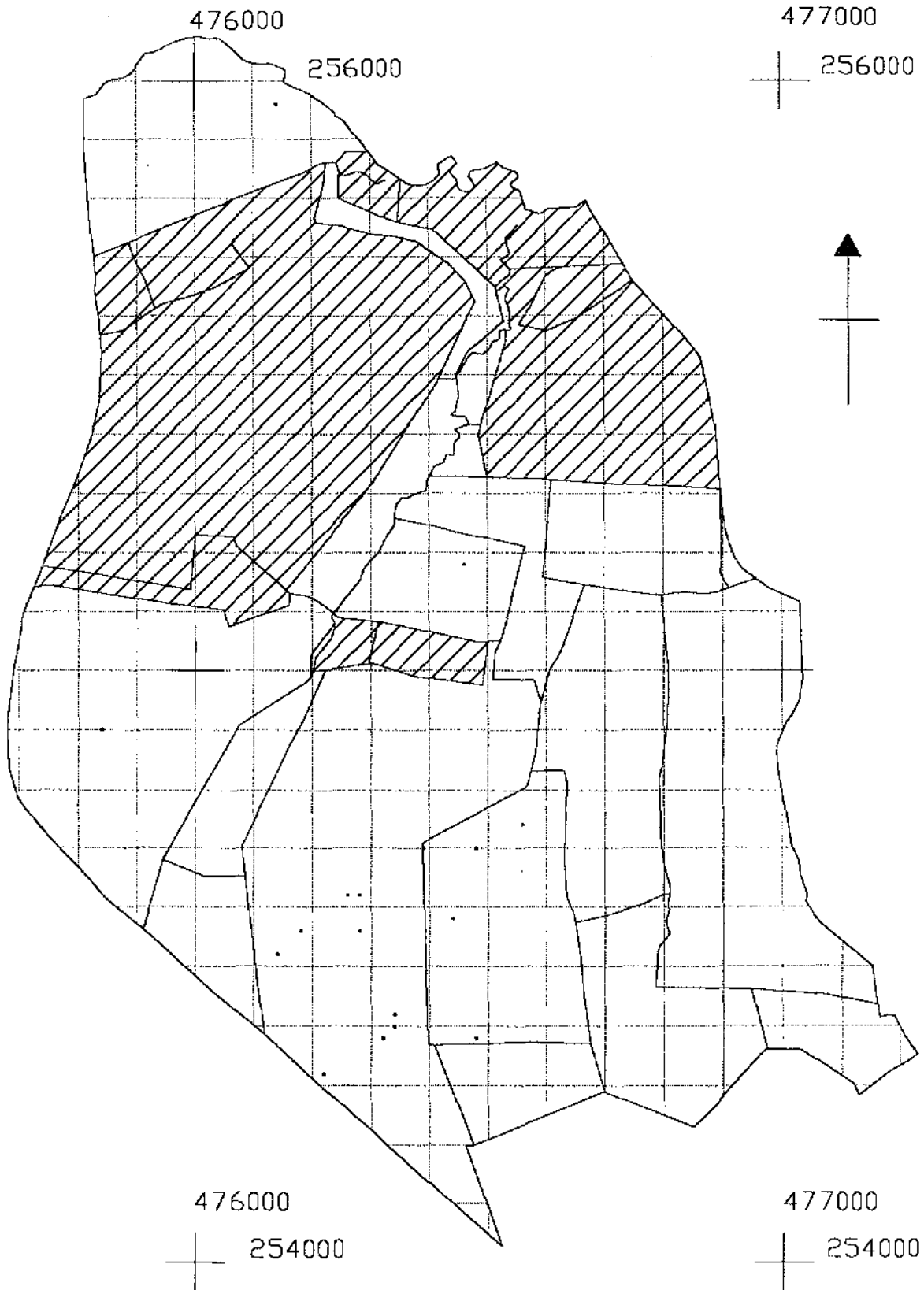
Grange Park, Courteenhall 1997: Fieldwalking



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|---------|---------|------------------|
| • 1-4 | • 20-24 | Medieval Pottery |
| • 5-9 | • 25-29 | Extensive |
| • 10-14 | • 30-34 | |
| • 15-19 | | |

Fig.16

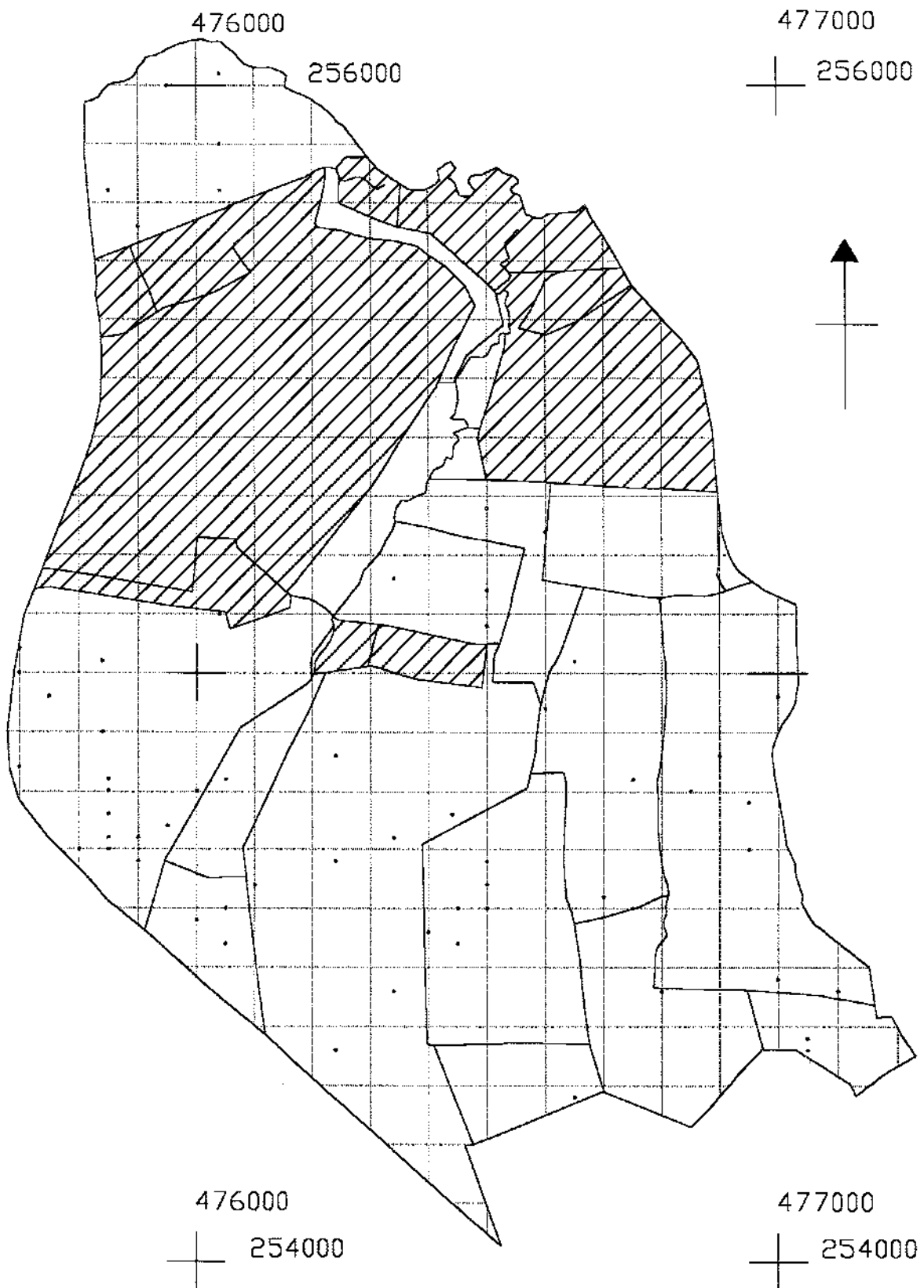
Grange Park, Courteenhall 1997: Fieldwalking



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|---------|---------|------------------|
| • 1-4 | • 20-24 | Medieval Pottery |
| • 5-9 | • 25-29 | Intensive |
| • 10-14 | • 30-34 | |
| • 15-19 | | |

Fig.17

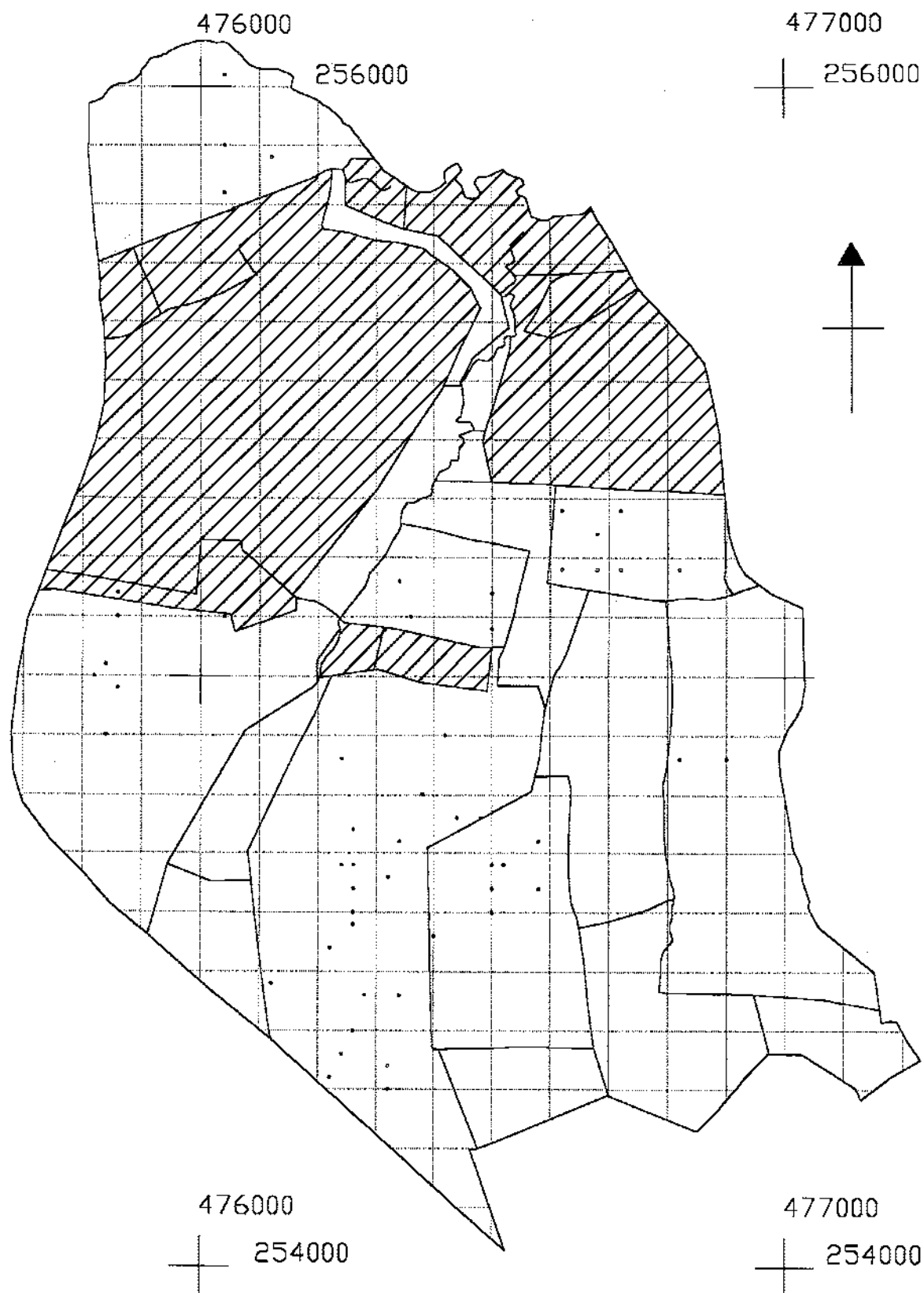
Grange Park, Courteenhall 1997: Fieldwalking



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|---------|---------|--------------------------------|
| • 1-4 | ● 20-24 | Post-Med Ceramics
Extensive |
| • 5-9 | ● 25-29 | |
| • 10-14 | ● 30-34 | |
| • 15-19 | | |

Fig.18

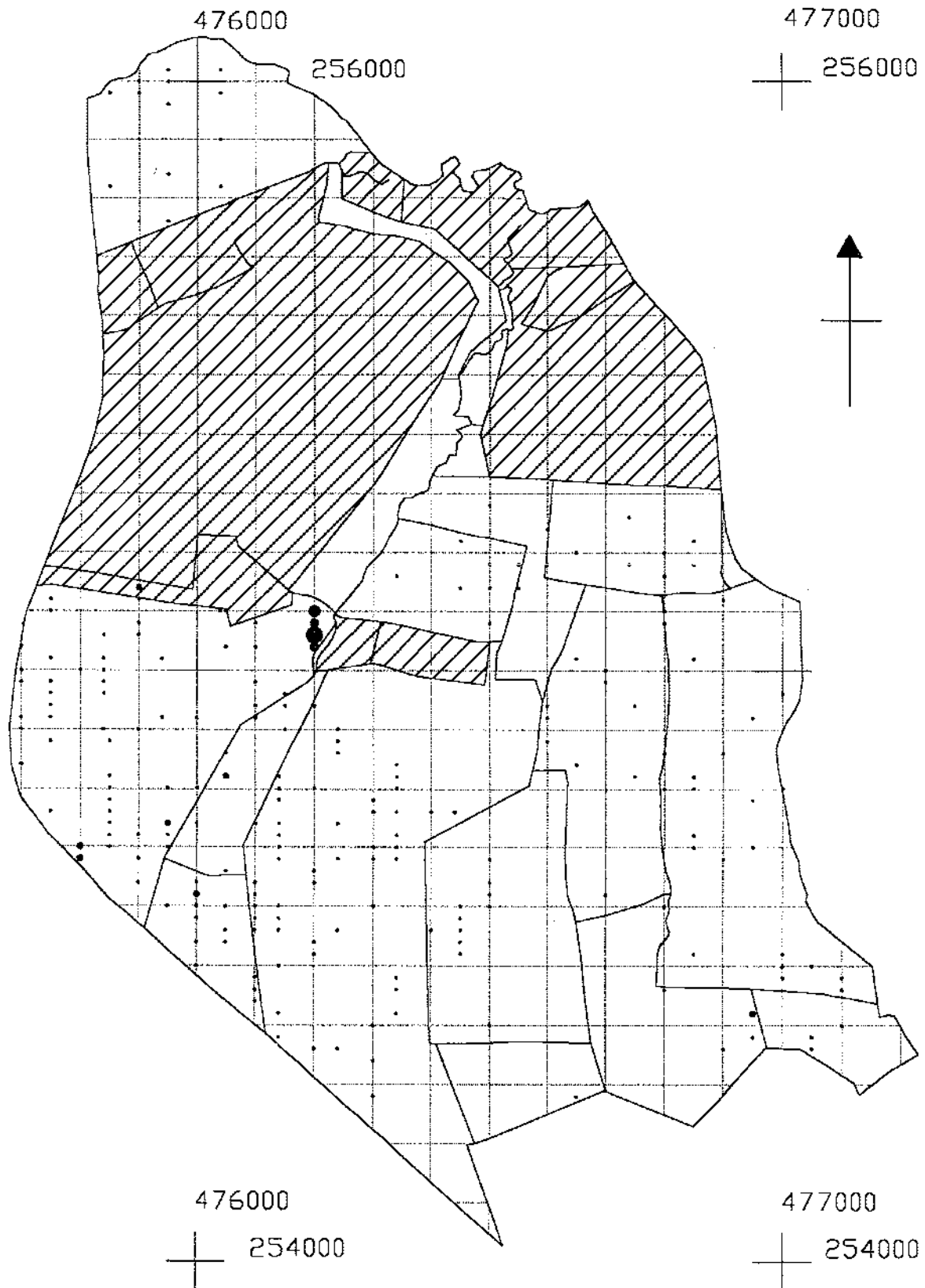
Grange Park, Courteenhall 1997: Fieldwalking



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|---------|---------|--------------------------------|
| • 1-4 | • 20-24 | Post-Med Ceramics
Intensive |
| • 5-9 | • 25-29 | |
| • 10-14 | • 30-34 | |
| • 15-19 | | |

Fig.19

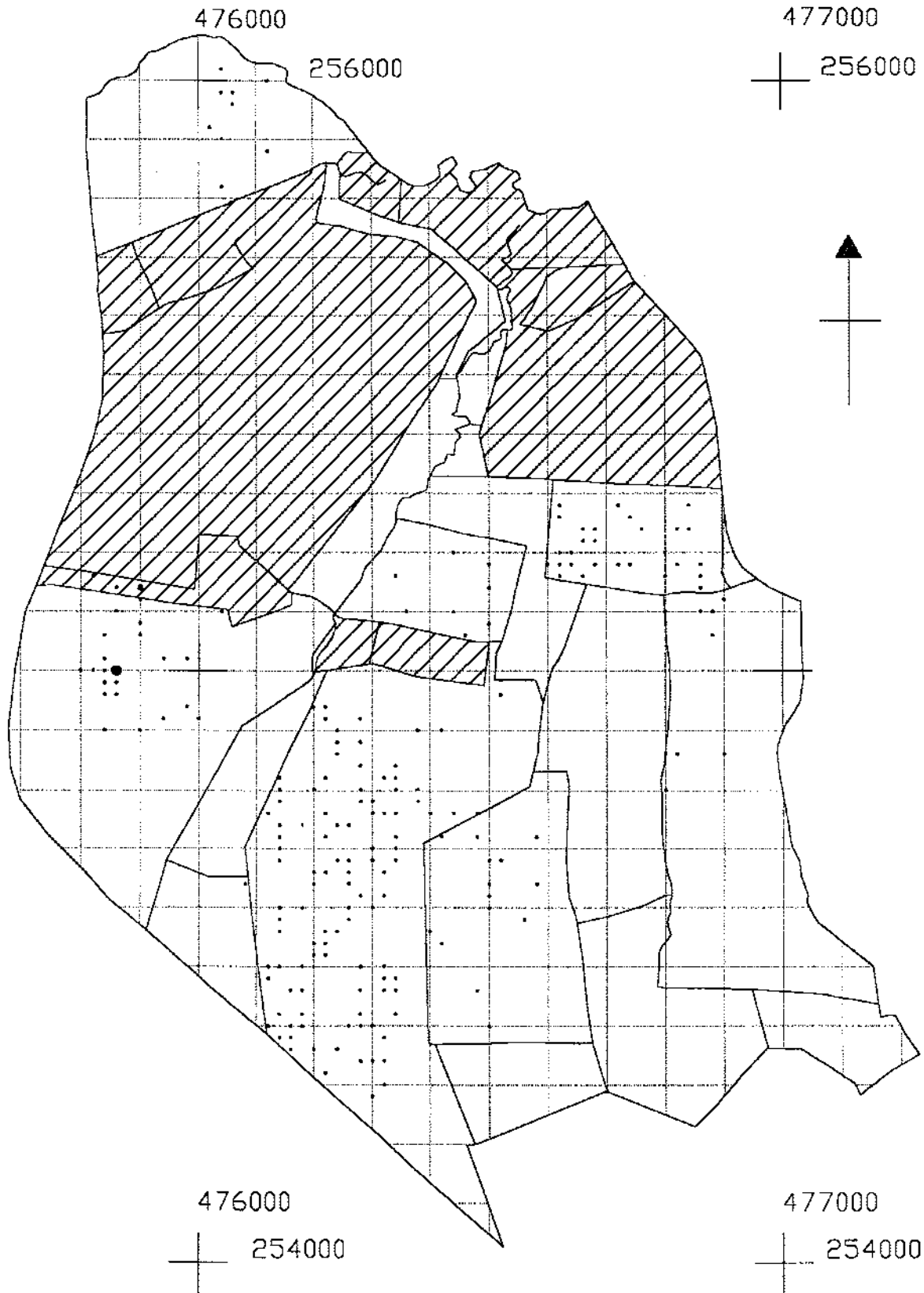
Grange Park, Courteenhall 1997: Fieldwalking



- | | | |
|---------|---------|---------------------------------|
| • 1-4 | • 20-24 | All Post-Med Finds
Extensive |
| • 5-9 | • 25-29 | |
| • 10-14 | • 30-34 | |
| • 15-19 | | |

Fig.20

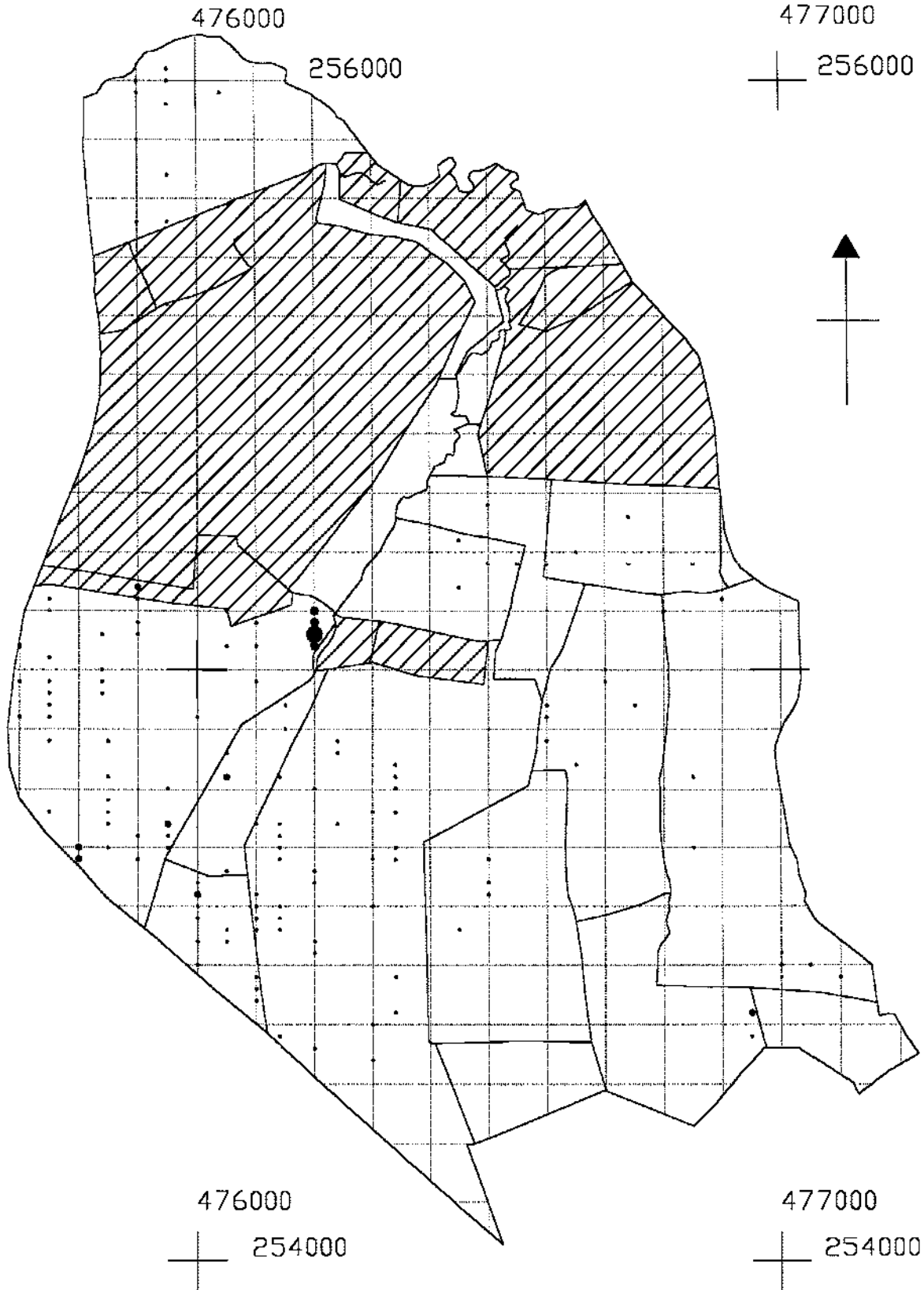
Grange Park, Courteenhall 1997: Fieldwalking



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|---------|---------|---------------------------------|
| • 1-4 | • 20-24 | All Post-Med Finds
Intensive |
| • 5-9 | • 25-29 | |
| • 10-14 | • 30-34 | |
| • 15-19 | | |
| | | |

Fig21

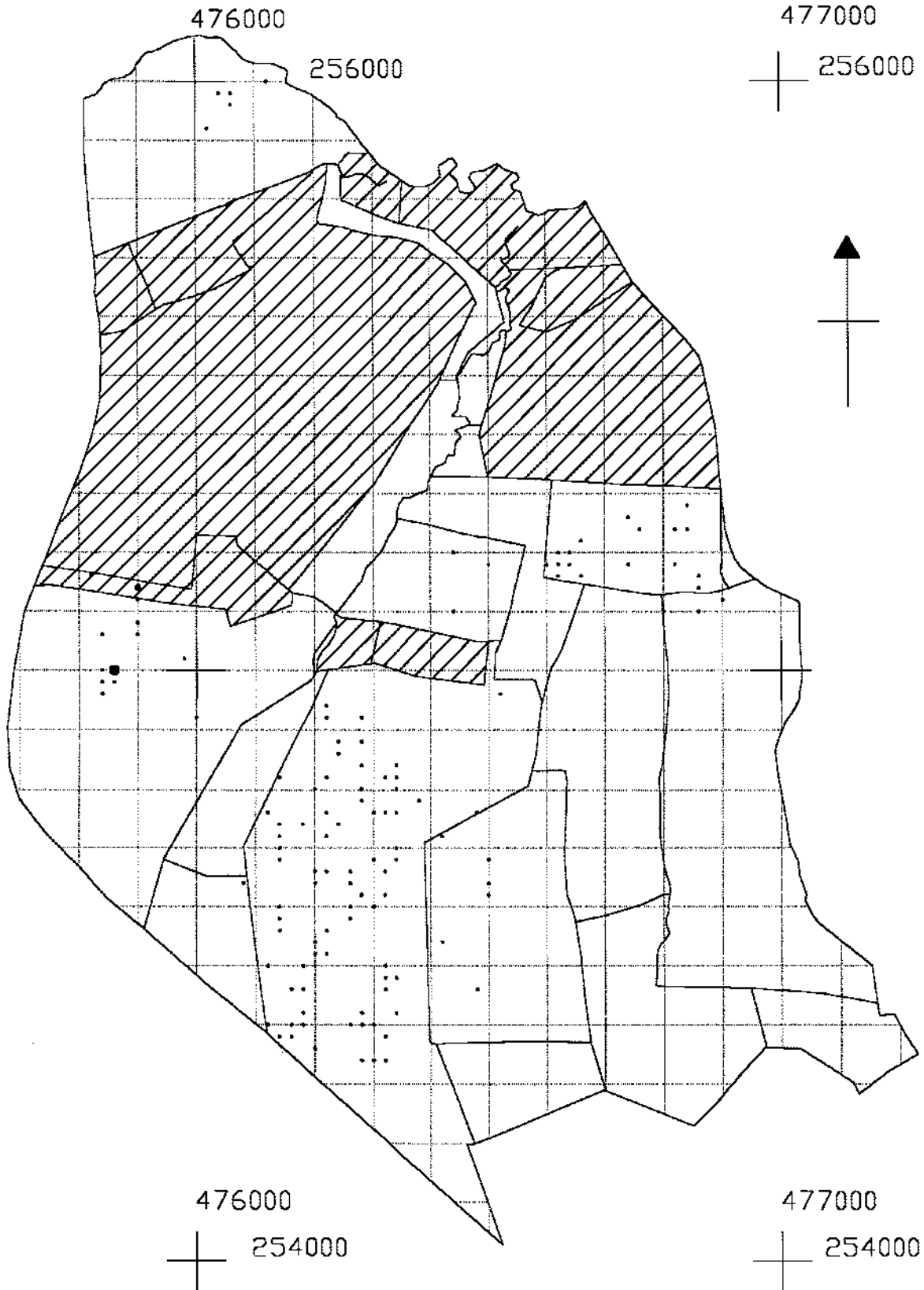
Grange Park, Courteenhall 1997: Fieldwalking



- | | | |
|---------|---------|-----------------------------|
| • 1-4 | ● 20-24 | Brick and Tile
Extensive |
| • 5-9 | ● 25-29 | |
| • 10-14 | ● 30-34 | |
| • 15-19 | | |
| | | |

Fig22

Grange Park, Courteenhall 1997: Fieldwalking



- | | | |
|---------|---------|-----------------------------|
| • 1-4 | ● 20-24 | Brick and Tile
Intensive |
| • 5-9 | ● 25-29 | |
| • 10-14 | ● 30-34 | |
| • 15-19 | | |

Fig.23

Appendix 2

Grange Park Flint by Lynne Bevan

Grange Park Flint by Lynne Bevan

A total of 181 items of humanly-struck flint was recovered, including 23 retouched implements, such as an arrowhead preform and four scrapers, 33 cores and core fragments, one core/hammerstone, and 119 flakes.

The flint used is generally translucent, light brown to mid-grey in colour, with the thin, compacted cortex characteristic of pebble flint from secondary deposits, possibly local river gravels, although natural flint pebbles are also present in the soil. As a raw material, the flint is of an unpredictable quality, since several cores and struck pieces had been abandoned as a result of cortical and crystalline inclusions. Among the struck pieces were four large nodules which had been 'tested' by the removal of a few flakes and then discarded. That several successful cores had been reduced beyond the point of apparent usefulness suggests that good quality flint was at a premium. Tool re-use, evident in two cores with retouched edges (see below) and a large core which had been re-used as a hammerstone, was another feature of the collection which also suggests a lack of good quality raw material.

Despite the inherent difficulties involved in differentiating between worked flint and the large quantities of natural flint present in the ploughsoil, which might have resulted in an over-representation of cores as opposed to smaller, less obvious items, the high incidence of cores remains significant, attesting to intensive flintworking being practised in the survey area, particularly within the central area, in accordance with the distribution of flakes. Core preparation was minimal and cores tended to be rough and multi-platformed, presumably for the production of broad flakes, suggesting a Bronze Age date for the majority of the collection.

This general date is supported by the high incidence of miscellaneous retouched pieces made from barely modified flakes and chunks, and, in two instances, re-used cores, all of which had single retouched edges and often exhibited traces of utilisation. In comparison, only five formal tools, an arrowhead preform and four scrapers, were present in the collection, at least two of which were diagnostically later tool types. The first, an arrowhead preform of translucent yellowish flint, worked to a point and broken across its shaft, was probably intended as a barbed and tanged form, and is thus broadly contemporary with the second chronologically-diagnostic artefact in the collection, a discoidal 'thumbnail' scraper. Both tool types have been found in Beaker and early Bronze Age contexts (e.g. Edmonds 1995, 140-141).

In conclusion, the collection suggests an intensive, if episodic, usage of the landscape with an emphasis upon tool manufacture. While separate chronological phases of tool manufacture and use cannot be identified in fieldwalking collections, the evidence (unskilled knapping resulting in multi-platformed flake cores and large struck chunks, a lack of blades and formal tool types, and a high incidence of miscellaneous retouched pieces), suggests a generally later prehistoric date for the collection. Closer chronological definition beyond the Beaker period/early-to-late Bronze Age is not possible, although the high incidence of struck chunks in the central/north-eastern areas and lack of identifiable cores might indicate a focus of later Bronze Age activity when flint pebbles were often smashed into a series of chunks without leaving a

central 'core', as observed in the later Bronze Age assemblage from the riverside zone at Runnymede Bridge, Surrey (Bevan 1995).