The Grange, Petersfield, Hampshire

An Archaeological Evaluation

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by
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The Grange, Petersfield, Hampshire: an archaeological evaluation

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at The Grange, Petersfield, Hampshire (NGR MR 747 230) in January 2000. This followed a desk-based assessment (Ellis 1999) which had suggested that the site may have been associated with a number of historical features and structures including a possible medieval monastic grange, a possible mill and early post-medieval tanning activity. The evaluation was also designed to test for the survival of landscape features associated with Petersfield House, a mansion dating to the 18th century.

A series of eight trial trenches were excavated. Evidence was obtained for one of the ornamental ponds associated with the landscape gardens of Petersfield House. The remaining trenches revealed no significant archaeology, due largely to modern disturbance. The only finds recovered were fragments of post-medieval brick, tile and pottery and two very abraded sherds of possible medieval pottery.

Introduction

This report details the results of an archaeological evaluation, undertaken prior to the construction of a supermarket, at The Grange, Petersfield (centred on NGR MR747230, Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Healey and Baker on behalf of Tesco Stores Limited and was undertaken by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit in January 2000. The trial trenching followed a desk-based assessment (Ellis 1999) and an archaeological specification (Mather 2000).

The site lies to the south of the centre of Petersfield. The study area (Fig. 1) is to the west of the junction between Hyton Road and The Causeway. The land is currently occupied by a Grade II listed building known as The Grange and a disused abattoir. The desk–based study (Ellis 1999) assessed the extent of the known archaeology within and around the proposed development area. It included a comprehensive documentary and cartographic survey and a review of previous archaeological work in the area.

Archaeological background

Petersfield is thought to have been a 12th-century creation with burgage plots deliberately laid out to the north and south of High Street terminating in an open market space, the Square, with, on its south side, the town's church. Later 12th-century documentary evidence referring to grants of a merchant guild to the burgesses of Petersfield suggest a planned new town (Beresford 1967). There are, however, indications that the origins of the town may have been more complex (Edwards 1999). The church itself is 1120 in date. There is, however, no suggestion that the town's origins lay very much earlier. Its absence from the Domesday record would seem to indicate a date of origin in the 12th century, and no pottery earlier than that date has been found in the, admittedly small-scale, excavations undertaken to date.

The later medieval prosperity of the town was based on wool, cloth, and leather manufactories (VCH 1908; Yates 1979, 12; Edwards 1999). These continued into the post-medieval period

with the addition of income from hostelries and inns servicing the road between London and Portsmouth (Fox and Hughes 1993). Petersfield House, built in the 18th century, was set within landscape features that required the demolition of town houses and the resiting of streets.

Excavations and watching briefs in the town have recorded medieval ditches, a timber structure, pits, hearths and wells, and post-medieval foundations, kilns, and a brickworks. The nearest archaeological work to the study area was the finding of limestone foundations, thought to represent those of Petersfield House at NGR MR 7470 2310 (SMR: SU 72, no 61). Of the town's industries, leather making and fulling required a water supply. The town's tanneries were near the Forebridge in the 16th century (Yates 1979, 16), and river pollution by tanners is attested in this period (*ibid.* ; VCH 1908). There would have been limepits in which skins were steeped (Yates 1979, 16).

The study area lies to the south of the historic town core and lay within the grounds of Petersfield House between 1730 and 1790 when ornamental ponds and two grandiose stable blocks were constructed as landscape features. The building currently referred to as The Grange is the easternmost of the two stable blocks. The western block was demolished and now lies below the site of the modern abattoir. The assessment suggests that there may have been an earlier medieval monastic grange on the site and that this may have formed part of an estate noted in the 17th century. Map evidence also suggested the former presence of a mill within or near to the study area. According to documents dating to the 16th century, the stream running across the site was used by tanners. Consequently, activities associated with the early post-medieval leather industry are also possible within the study area.

Aims

The objectives of the archaeological evaluation was to contribute to an understanding of the nature, extent and significance of archaeological remains within the area proposed for development and to permit the formulation of a mitigation strategy, if appropriate.

Specific objectives were to test for any surviving archaeological evidence for:

1 – structures associated with the possible medieval monastic grange and in particular a barn-like building depicted on a map dating to 1676.

2 – structures or water features associated with the site of the possible mill.

3 – features associated with the early post-medieval tanning industry.

4 – landscape features associated with the former grounds of Petersfield House.

5 – structures associated with The Grange such as farm buildings.

Method

A total of eight trenches (Fig. 2) were excavated of varying dimensions (see appendix). These provided a total sample of approximately 1% of the proposed development area. The rationale

for each of the trench locations was principally based on the results of the desk-top assessment. All the trenches are located to the south of the east-west stream that runs across the study area. Due to problems of access it was not possible to evaluate the area to the north of the stream.

Each of the trenches was located using a Total Station Theodolite. The topsoil and other modern overburden was excavated using a mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.6m toothless ditching bucket under archaeological supervision. Where appropriate, the subsoil surface was hand cleaned. A representative sample of the features identified were hand excavated to provide information concerning the survival and complexity of feature fills, and to recover artefactual evidence. A detailed context record on individual pro-forma record cards was maintained and all features and trenches were photographed using both colour and black and white film. Trench plans were drawn at a scale of 1:50. 20 litre soil samples were collected when considered appropriate for assessment of the potential for the recovery of charred plant remains.

Summary results of trial trenching

Detailed results of the trial trenching, including the objectives of each trench location and descriptions of features and stratigraphy, are provided in the appendix. The following is a brief summary describing the principal features recorded.

The topsoil and overburden over most of the site varied between 0.3m and 0.5m deep. The natural subsoil varied considerably and comprised yellowish brown sands, whitish gravel and blueish clay. The natural subsoil was not encountered within Trench 2 which was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.2m.

Few features of archaeological interest were identified in the study area. There were no features in Trenches 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8. However, several tip lines were visible in the southern end of Trench 2, which may correspond with one of the ornamental ponds located within the grounds of Petersfield House. The only other feature of possible interest was an undated pit (F500) in Trench 5 to the south of The Grange.

Finds

	T2/2001	T2/2003	T2/2010	T5/5003	T5/5004	T5/5005	T6/6000
Tile	1	3	1			1	3
Brick	1	1					
Pottery (Post Med)				1			1
Pottery (?Med)							2
Animal bone					4	1	

Numerous fragments of post-medieval brick and tile and two sherds of post-medieval pottery were recovered from various deposits. These probably relate either to the period when the study area lay within the grounds of Peterfield House or later. The only fragments of possible earlier pottery were two very abraded body sherds of possible medieval pottery from the topsoil in Trench 6.

Discussion

It is clear that the study area has been subjected to considerable modern disturbance and very little of the potential archaeological evidence suggested by the desk-based assessment appears to have survived.

The only features of potential archaeological interest were the pit in Trench 5 to the south of The Grange and the tip lines in Trench 2. These appear to confirm the location of one of the ornamental ponds known to have existed in the grounds of Petersfield House. These tip lines correspond with a noticeable depression in the footpath north of The Grange (Ellis 1999, 7). The other trenches revealed nothing of archaeological significance and modern leveling appears to account for the destruction of the features suggested by the cartographic evidence (Ellis 1999).

Acknowledgements

Lesley-Ann Mather supervised the fieldwork with the assistance of Mary Duncan Chris Hewitson and Ellie Ramsey. The illustrations are the work of Nigel Dodds.

The project was managed by Gwilym Hughes and monitored by Iain Wykes, the Development Control Archaeologist for Hampshire County Council. Thanks are also due to Bruce Raven (Healey and Baker) for his assistance with the archaeological investigation.

Appendix

Detailed results of Trial Trenching

Trench 1

Aim: to locate the feature marked as a 'canal' in a map of 1773, which may have been a mill leat.

Method: machine excavated trench 1.6m wide and 30m long orientated N-S.

Stratigraphy: the natural subsoil was encountered at a depth of between 0.25-0.50m. It comprised a brown sand mottled on the surface, gradually becoming clean and more yellow with increased depth (1001). The subsoil was sealed by an irregular layer of pink hardcore and rubble (1000).

Features: no features identified.

Interpretation: no significant archaeology encountered.

Trench 2 (Fig 3)

Aim: to investigate the location of the ornamental ponds laid out as part of the landscaping of Petersfield House

Method: machine excavated trench 1.6m wide and 13.60m long orientated NE-SW. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.2m.

Stratigraphy: the natural subsoil was not encountered. The earliest context recorded was a medium yellow brown clay (2001 and 2011). This was overlain by redeposited clays (2007, 2008 and 2009). In the southern area of the trench these clay deposits appeared to have been cut by a possible feature filled with mixed deposits of chalk (2006), chalk and brown clay (2005), a charcoal rich deposit (2004) and further deposits of clay (2003). A further deposit of blue/black clay containing brick fragments (2010) may be the fill of a second feature cutting the earlier clays in the northern area of the trench.

All these contexts are sealed by a mixture of silty clay, broken bricks and modern debris (2002) and degraded tarmac, gravel and grass (2000).

Interpretation: although the area has been leveled and resurfaced, it is possible that the tip lines of the contexts) filling the possible cut (2006, 2005, 2004 at the southern end of the trench represent the filled in remains of the southern ornamental pond.

Trench 3

Aim: to test for structures and features associated with the suggested medieval grange, as well as pits and other features associated with the post-medieval tanning industry.

Method: machine excavated trench 1.6m wide and 19m long orientated NW-SE.

Stratigraphy: the natural subsoil was encountered at a depth of 0.90m. It comprised a blue/grey clay, disturbed in places by root activity (3001). Above this was a layer of rubble and brick (3003), sealed by a blackcoke/coal leveling deposit (3002) and pink hardcore (3000).

Interpretation: no significant archaeology encountered.

Trench 4

Aim: to test for structures associated with The Grange.

Method: machine excavated trench 1.6m wide and 5m long orientated NW-SE

Stratigraphy: the natural subsoil was encountered at a depth of 0.70m. It comprised of a light brown sandy clay (4001) sealed by a layer of mid-brown sandy gravel with rubble (4002). The topsoil (4000) was a dark brown sandy silt with occasional stones.

Interpretation: no significant archaeology encountered.

Trench 5 (Fig. 3)

Aim: to test for structures associated with The Grange.

Method: machine excavated trench 1.6m wide and 11m long orientated NE-SW

Stratigraphy: the natural subsoil was encountered at a depth of 0.7m. It comprised of a mixture of yellow sandy silt changing to a brown sandy clay (5001). It was cut by a pit (F500), filled by a mixture of brown sandy clay, containing fragments of tile and bone (5005). This was sealed by a layer of rubble (5004) in the northern end and garden soil (5003) with fragments of brick, charcoal and post-medieval pottery in the southern end. These deposits were overlain by brown sandy silt (5002) with fragments of oyster shells and brick and dark brown garden topsoil (5000). A modern test pit was reorded in the southern end of the trench (5006).

Interpretation: no evidence of structures associated with The Grange.

Trench 6 (Fig. 3)

Aim: to locate the barn shown on the map of 1676.

Method: machine excavated trench 1.6m wide and 22m long orientated NE-SW.

Stratigraphy: the natural sub soil was encountered at a depth of 0.50m. It was a mixed deposit, comprising yellow sand, brown sandy clay, whitish-grey sand with gravel and natural flint (6001). This was sealed by brown silt/sand mixed with gravel (6002). The upper deposits comprised brown silt/sand topsoil (6000), which in turn was cut by a modern test pit (6003). Two sherds of very abraded pottery were recovered from the topsoil which might be medieval in date.

Interpretation: no significant archaeology encountered.

Trench 7 (Fig. 3)

Aim: to locate the barn shown on the map of 1676.

Method: machine excavated trench 1.6m wide and 16m long orientated NW-SE.

Stratigraphy: the natural sub soil was encountered at a depth of 0.50m. It comprised of a mixture of yellow sand, brown sandy clay and whitish grey sand with gravel and natural flint (7001). This was sealed by brown sandy silt (7002). The topsoil was a brown silt with fragments of modern brick, charcoal and gravel (7000) and was cut by a modern test pit (7003).

Interpretation: no significant archaeology encountered

Trench 8

Aim: to test for structures associated with The Grange.

Method: machine excavated trench 1.6m wide and 3.0m long orientated NW-SE.

Stratigraphy: the natural subsoil was not encountered. The subsoil consisted of mid brown sand, silt and rubble (8001) and was sealed by dark brown organic sandy silt (8000).

Interpretation: no archaeology encountered.

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List of figures

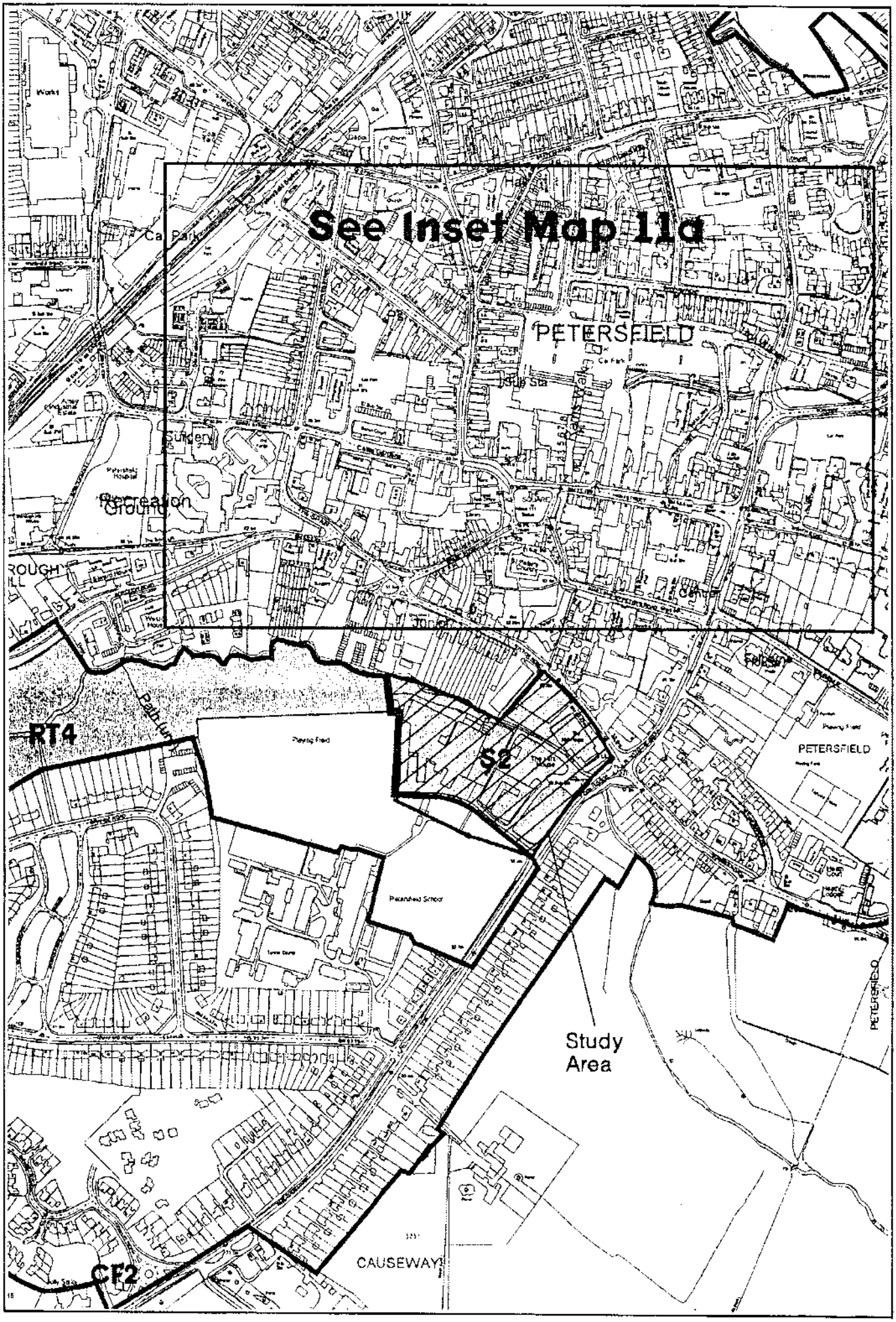
See Inset Map 11a
PETERSFIELD
Recreation Ground
RT4
S2
Study Area
CAUSEWAY
CF2

Fig. 1

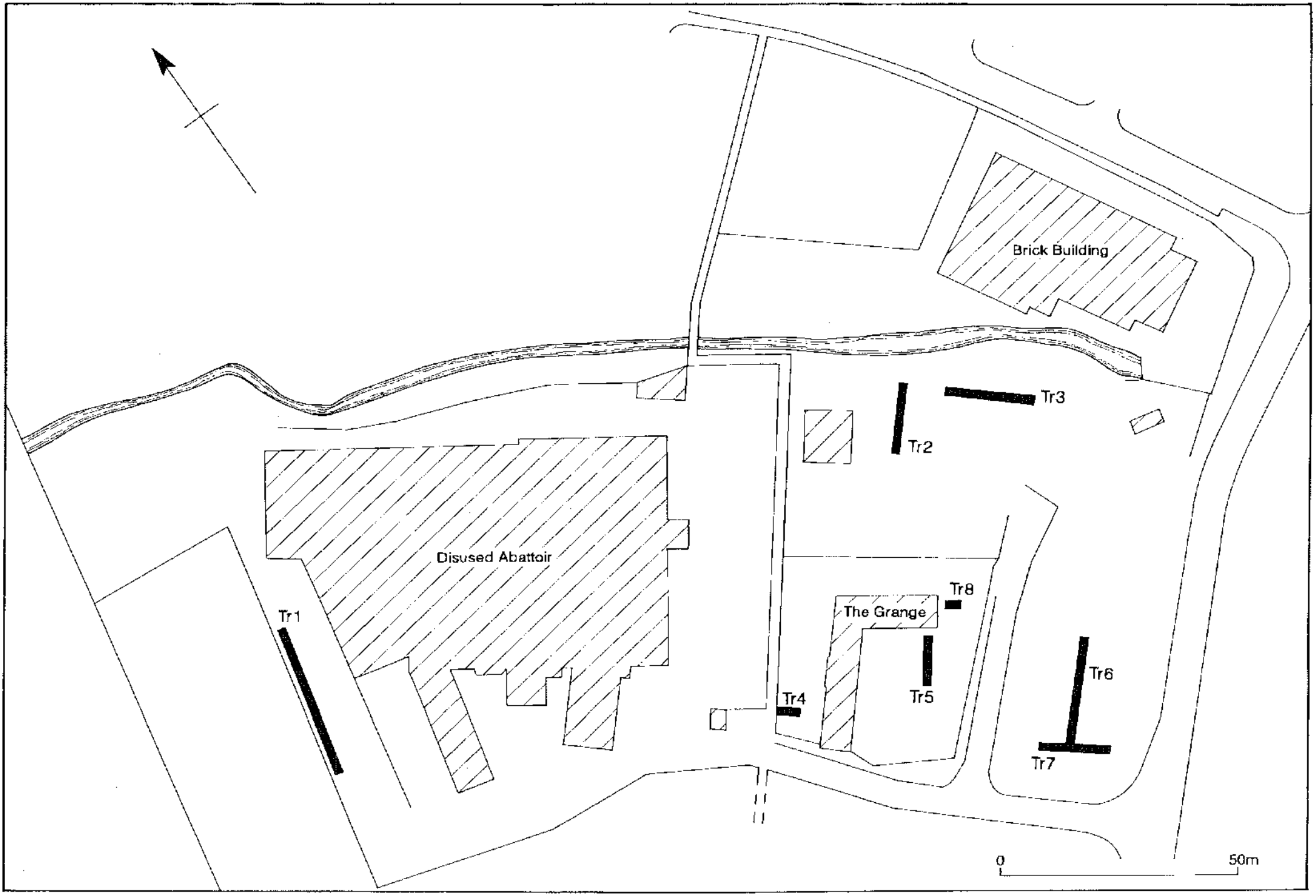
Brick Building
Tr3
Tr2
Disused Abattoir
Tr1
Tr8
The Grange
Tr5
Tr4
Tr6
Tr7
0
50m

Fig.2

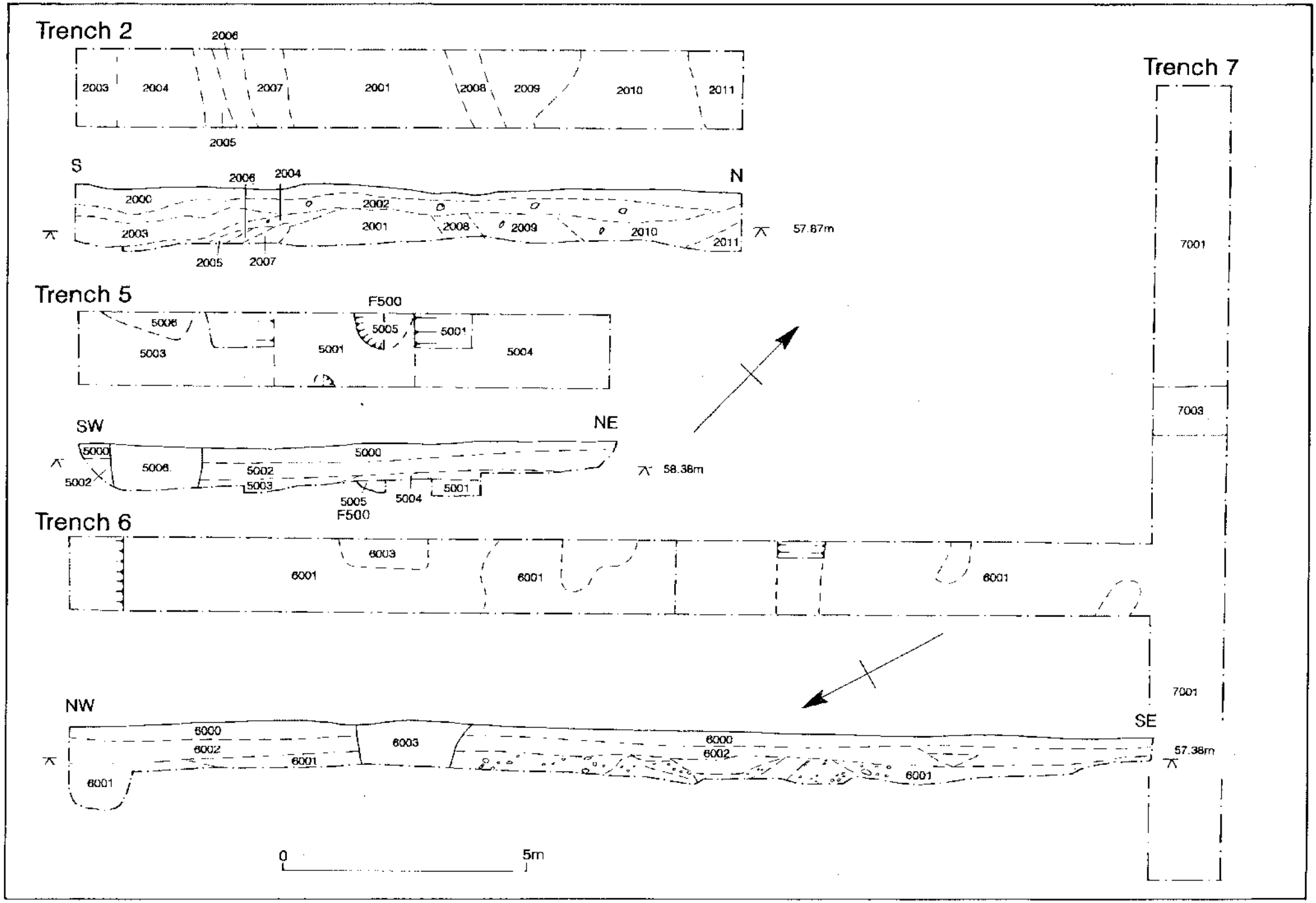
Trench 2
2006
2003
2004
2007
2001
2008
2009
2010
2011
2005
S
N
2006
2004
2000
2002
2003
2001
2008
2009
2010
2011
57.87m
2005
2007
Trench 5
F500
5006
5005
5001
5003
5001
5004
SW
NE
5000
5000
5006
5002
5002
5003
5005
5004
5001
F500
58.36m
Trench 6
6003
6001
6001
6001
NW
SE
6000
6002
6003
6001
6000
6002
6001
6001
57.38m
Trench 7
7001
7003
7001
0
5m

Fig.3

Table 6: Occurrence of charred plant macrofossils

Period	1	1	1	1	2	2	3	3	3	4	
Feature	1078	1078	1078	1078	1045	1045	1009	1036	1036	1056	
Layer	1084	1084	1087	1087	1044	1044	1007	1035	1035	1056	
Layer type	D	D	D	D	D	D	K	D	D	Pit	
GRAINS											
Triticum sp.	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	3	-	1	Wheat
Hordeum vulgare L. hulled	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	1	Barley
Hordeum vulgare L.	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	-	-	-	Barley
Cereal indet.	-	2	1	1	3	-	4	1	-	1	Cereal
Cereal/Poaceae	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	Cereal/Grass
CHAFF											
Triticum dicoccum/spelta glume base	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	Emmer/Spelt
T. dicoccum/spelta spikelet fork	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Emmer/Spelt
WILD PLANTS											
Ranunculus sp.	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	Buttercup
Corylus avellana L.	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Hazel nut shell
Chenopodium sp.	-	-	1	-	-	-	7	-	-	-	Goosefoot
Polygonum sp.	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	Knotweed
Rumex sp.	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	Dock
Raphanus raphanistrum L. pod frag.	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-		-	Wild radish
Vicia/Lathyrus	-	1	-	-	3	1	6	-	-	1	Vetch/Vetchling
Medicago/Melilotus/Trifolium	-	-	1	-	1	-	12	-	-	1	Clover type
Galium aparine L.	-	-	-	-	4	-	4	-	1	2	Cleavers
Eleocharis sp.	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	Spike-rush
Carex sp	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	Sedge
Arrhenatherum elatius (L) tuber	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Onion couch
Bromus hordeaceus/secalinus	-	1	1	-	-	-	9	-	-	-	Brome grass
Danthonia decumbens (L.) DC	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	Heath grass
Poaceae large	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	1	Grasses
Poaceae small	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	Grasses
Indetermined seeds	-	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	Seeds
OTHER											
Root fragments	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	Stem fragments
Tuber fragments	-	-	-	-	2	1	4	-	-	1	Tuber fragments
Culm fragments, small	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	Grass stem
Charred fragments indet.	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	Charred frags
TOTAL	3	8	7	1	27	6	57	5	3	12	(items)
Vol flot	105	40	15	10	95	7	30	7	10	15	(mls)

Key. D = ditch, K = kiln. All samples 20 litres in size. Flots 100% sorted.
Remains are seeds in the broad sense unless described otherwise.