

**Riding Court Farm,
Datchet, Royal Borough
of Windsor and
Maidenhead, Berkshire:
An Archaeological
Evaluation**

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
Project No. 745
September 2000

**Riding Court Farm, Datchet,
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Berkshire:
An Archaeological Evaluation.**

by
H. M. Roberts
With a contribution by A. Hancocks

For further information please contact:
Simon Buteux or Iain Ferris (Directors)
Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
The University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 2TT
Tel: 0121 414 5513
Fax: 0121 414 5516
E-Mail: BUFAU@bham.ac.uk
Web Address: <http://www.bufau.bham.ac.uk>

**Riding Court Farm, Datchet,
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Berkshire:
An Archaeological Evaluation.**

CONTENTS

	Page	
1.0	Summary	1
2.0	Introduction	1
3.0	Archaeological Background	1
4.0	Aims and Objectives	2
5.0	Methodology	2
6.0	Results	3
6.01	Trial Trench 1	3
6.02	Trial Trench 2	3
6.03	Trial Trench 3	4
6.04	Trial Trench 4	4
6.05	Trial Trench 5	4
6.06	Trial Trench 6	5
6.07	Trial Trench 7	5
6.08	Trial Trench 8	5
6.09	Trial Trench 9	5
6.10	Trial Trench 10	6
6.11	Trial Trench 11	6
6.12	Trial Trench 12	7
6.13	Trial Trench 13	7
6.14	Trial Trench 14	7
6.15	Trial Trench 15	8
6.16	Trial Trench 16	8
6.17	Trial Trench 17	8
6.18	Trial Trench 18	9
6.19/20	Trial Trench 19/20	9
6.21	Trial Trench 21	10
6.22	Trial Trench 22	10
6.23	Trial Trench 23	10
6.24	Trial Trench 24	11
6.25	Trial Trench 25	11
6.26	Trial Trench 26	11
6.27	Trial Trench 27	13
6.28	Trial Trench 28	14

6.29	Trial Trench 29	15
6.30	Trial Trench 30	15
6.31	Trial Trench 31	16
6.32	Trial Trench 32	16
6.33	Trial Trench 33	17
6.34	Trial Trench 34	17
6.35	Trial Trench 35	18

7.0	The Finds: <i>by A. Hancocks</i>	19
7.1	Factual Data	19
7.2	Statement of Potential	19
7.3	Storage and Curation	19

8.0	Discussion	21
------------	-------------------	----

9.0	Acknowledgements	22
------------	-------------------------	----

10.0	References	22
-------------	-------------------	----

Figures

Fig.1	Site Location
Fig.2	Trial Trench Locations
Fig.3	Areas of Archaeological Survival
Fig.4	Plan and Section of Trench 26
Fig.5	Sections of Trench 26
Fig.6	Plans and Sections of Trenches 11 and 30
Fig.7	Plans and Sections of Trenches 29 and 34

Riding Court Farm, Datchet, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Berkshire: An Archaeological Evaluation.

1.0 Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit at Riding Court Farm (NGR TQ 990778) near to Datchet, Berkshire in September 2000 for Phoenix Consulting on behalf of RMC Aggregates (Greater London) Ltd. The proposed development will involve the extraction of gravel and subsequent filling with non-inert waste. The area affected by the proposal covers circa 41 hectares, within a landscape of known archaeological sensitivity.

The evaluation involved the excavation of 35 trial trenches, following the results of a desk based study prepared by Phoenix Consulting, (Howlett 1999a), an aerial photography assessment carried out by Air Photo Services (Cox 2000) and geophysical investigations undertaken by Bartlett-Clarke Consultancy (Bartlett 2000). Of these trial trenches, 16 revealed possible archaeological features and 9 trial trenches produced artefacts dating to the Iron Age, Roman and Post-medieval periods. These archaeological remains were seen to survive best in the immediate environs of Riding Court Farm

2.0 Introduction (Fig.1)

The following report describes the results of a programme of archaeological trial trenching prior to the proposed development of land at Riding Court Farm, Datchet, Berkshire (centred on NGR TQ 990778). The trial trenching was carried out between September 4th-15th 2000, in accordance with a Specification for Archaeological Field Evaluation prepared by Phoenix Consulting (Howlett 1999b). The work was commissioned by Phoenix Consulting on behalf of RMC Aggregates (Greater London) Ltd.

The proposed development will involve the extraction of gravel and subsequent filling with non-inert waste. The area affected by the proposal (the 'site') covers circa 41 hectares. The site is located on the Thames 1st terrace river gravels, and is currently given over largely to arable cultivation .

3.0 Archaeological Background

A detailed discussion of the archaeological background is provided in the Desk Based Study and Specification (Howlett 1999a&b). No previously known archaeological sites or features were identified within the site. However, the site lies within a landscape of considerable archaeological potential, particularly for the prehistoric and medieval periods. Cropmark evidence located to the east and west of the site is thought to represent prehistoric activity. Documentary sources indicate extensive settlement in the

medieval period, focussed at Riding Court Farm, Datchet village (to the south), Ditton Park (to the east) and Upton Court (to the northwest).

4.0 Aims and Objectives

The general aim of the evaluation was to attempt to identify and determine the extent, character, period, function and quality of any archaeological remains surviving within the site.

The key objectives were to determine whether any evidence of prehistoric activity survives within the site, and whether medieval settlement at Riding Court Farm or Ditton Park extended into the site.

5.0 Methodology (Figs. 1 and 2)

Detailed non-intrusive evaluation comprising Desk Based Study, aerial photographic assessment, magnetic susceptibility and detailed magnetometer survey identified only a few particular locations for evaluation by trial trenching. The larger part of the trial trenching programme was located to afford the widest possible spatial distribution and most complete coverage of the site. Where possible, the 35 trial trenches were aligned north-south or east-west on the national grid. Topographical features such as drainage ditches determined the orientation of other trial trenches. The total area opened by trial trenching comprised circa 1 % of the site.

Each trial trench was accurately surveyed using a total station theodolite, and its location plotted at an appropriate scale.

Each trial trench measured 50 x 2m and all trial trenches were machine excavated down to the upper most archaeological horizon or to undisturbed natural deposits. The trial trenches were excavated using a large tracked excavator using a 2m toothless bucket under continuous archaeological supervision. Where encountered, archaeologically sterile alluvial deposits were removed to reveal the surface of the underlying gravel.

The stratigraphy of all trial trenches was recorded even where no archaeological features or deposits were recorded. All trial trenches were photographed. Those sections of each trial trench where archaeological features were identified were hand cleaned. All possible archaeological features or deposits were located (at a scale of 1:100) within individual trial trenches. A sample of all possible archaeological features was excavated and all recovered artefacts were retained for specialist analysis. All excavated archaeological features and deposits were recorded using a continuous numbered context system and BUFAU pro-forma record cards. All features were photographed and a drawn record at an appropriate scale was maintained.

6.0 Results (Figs. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7)

6.01 Trial Trench 1

Aligned east-west - maximum depth 0.57m

Context	Description	Dimensions
F100	NE-SW linear feature	0.40m W x 0.30m D
F101	NE-SW linear feature	0.45m W x 0.15m D
F102	NE-SW linear feature	0.40m W x 0.50m D
1000	Fill of F100	As F100
1001	Fill of F101	As F101
1002	Fill of F102	As F102
1003	Topsoil	0.37m-0.42m Th
1004	Upper Alluvium	0.15m-0.21m Th
1005	Lower Alluvium	N/A

Trial Trench 1 was located at the northern limit of the site, and its position was marginally adjusted to avoid a modern drainage channel. The lowest deposit encountered in the trench was a pale brownish yellow clay silt (1005) believed to be alluvial in origin. Context 1005 was cut by three linear features (F100, F101, F102) all aligned broadly northeast-southwest. F100 was a regular, U-shaped gully located towards the centre of the trench, and was filled by a grey green clay silt (1000) exhibiting ferric mottling. F101 truncated the northwestern edge of F100, but was highly irregular and terminated 1.40m from the northern limit of the trench. F101 was filled by a dark brown sandy clay silt (1001). F102 was a regular, V-shaped gully located 5.5m to the east of F100, filled by a grey green clay silt (1002). Linear features F100, F101 and F102 were all sealed by a layer of disturbed brownish yellow clay silt (1004) believed to represent an alluvial deposit disturbed by later agricultural activity. Layer 1004 was sealed by the modern topsoil (1003).

No artefacts were recovered from any of the features or deposits in Trial Trench 1.

6.02 Trial Trench 2

Aligned northwest-southeast - maximum depth 0.57m.

Context	Description	Dimensions
F200	Tree bole	1.2m diam x 0.17m D
F201	Tree bole	1.0m diam x 0.12m D
2001	Topsoil	0.30m Th
2002	Alluvium	0.27m+ Th

Trial Trench 2 was located towards the northern limit of the site. Its position was adjusted to avoid both a modern drainage channel and an area of recent tree planting. A number of possible archaeological features were identified after machining. Two of these were sampled (F200 and F201) and proved to be shallow, highly irregular, features exhibiting considerable root action.

No artefacts or features of archaeological interest were identified in Trial Trench 2.

6.03 Trial Trench 3

Aligned east-west - maximum depth 0.68m.

Context	Description	Dimensions
3000	Topsoil	0.36m Th
3001	Alluvium	0.32m+ Th

Trial Trench 3 was located towards the northern limit of the site. Its position was adjusted to avoid both a modern drainage channel and an area of recent tree planting. Areas of tree root disturbance were noted throughout the trench, along with modern truncation and dumping at its eastern limit.

No artefacts or features of archaeological interest were identified in Trial Trench 3.

6.04 Trial Trench 4

Aligned north-south - maximum depth 0.65m.

Context	Description	Dimensions
F400	E-W linear feature	1.52m W x 0.21m D
F401	NE-SW large linear feature	2.20m+ W x 0.70m D
4000	Topsoil	0.42m Th
4001	Alluvium	0.23m+ Th
4002	Fill of F400	As F400
4003	Lower fill of F401	0.24m max D
4004	Upper fill of F401	0.49m max D

Trial Trench 4 was located towards the northern limit of the site, to the south of Trial Trench 1. The lowest deposit encountered was a yellow brown clay silt (4001) of alluvial origin. Context 4001 was cut by two linear features, F400 and F401. F400 was located towards the centre of the trench and aligned east-west. F400 had a shallow and irregular concave profile, and was filled by mid yellow brown clay silt (4002) including occasional fragments of natural flint. F401 was located at the southern limit of the trench and was aligned north-east south-west. F401 was filled by a pale brown silty sand (4003) overlain by a mid grey-brown sandy clay silt (4004) including occasional charcoal and root disturbance. Features F400 and F 401 were both sealed by topsoil (4000).

Context 4004 produced several fragments of post-medieval tile. Context 4003 produced three flint fragments, including one flint flake.

6.05 Trial Trench 5

Aligned east-west - maximum depth 0.49m.

Context	Description	Dimensions
5000	Topsoil	0.35m Th
5001	Natural gravels	N/A

Trial Trench 5 was located to the southwest of Trial Trench 4. Removal of the topsoil (5000) revealed only reddish brown natural flint gravels in a matrix of silty sand (5001).

No artefacts or features of archaeological interest were identified in Trial Trench 5.

6.06 Trial Trench 6

Aligned north-south - maximum depth 0.53m.

Context	Description	Dimensions
6000	Topsoil	0.32m Th
6001	Alluvium	0.15m Th
6002	Natural gravels	N/A

Trial Trench 6 was located south of Trial Trench 4. Removal of the topsoil (6000) revealed a thin layer of pale yellow brown sandy silt (6001) overlying reddish brown flint gravels (6002).

No artefacts or features of archaeological interest were identified in Trial Trench 6.

6.07 Trial Trench 7

Aligned east-west - maximum depth 1.06m.

Context	Description	Dimensions
7000	Topsoil	0.40m Th
7001	Alluvium	0.10m Th
7002	Alluvial clay	0.10m Th
7003	Alluvial clay	0.56m Th
7004	Natural gravels	N/A

Trial Trench 7 was located to the south of Trial Trenches 2 and 3. Excavation revealed only topsoil (7000) sealing a series of alluvial deposits (7001, 7002, 7003), overlying orange brown flint gravels (7004).

No artefacts or features of archaeological interest were identified in Trial Trench 7.

6.08 Trial Trench 8

Aligned east-west - maximum depth 0.51m.

Context	Description	Dimensions
8000	Topsoil	0.36m Th
8001	Natural gravels	0.15m+ Th

Trial Trench 8 was located to the south of Trial Trench 5, towards the centre west of the site. Removal of the topsoil (8000) revealed only a pale reddish brown deposit of flint gravel (8001) with occasional sandy silt patches.

No artefacts or features of archaeological interest were identified in Trial Trench 8.

6.09 Trial Trench 9

Aligned north-south - maximum depth 0.65m.

Context	Description	Dimensions
F900	Small pit	0.90m diam x 0.30m D
9000	Topsoil	0.45m Th
9001	Alluvium	0.20m Th
9002	Alluvial clay silt	N/A
9003	Fill of F900	As F900
9004	Natural gravel and clay silts	N/A

Trial Trench 9 was located at the centre west of the site. The lowest deposit encountered was a natural orange brown flint gravel (9004) with intermittent patches of orange brown clay silt. Context 9004 was bisected by an irregular band of yellowish brown clay silt (9002) located approximately 10m south of the northern limit of the trench. Context 9002 was cut by a small irregular sub-circular pit (F900), with steep sides and a flattish base. F900 was filled by mid brown sandy silt (9003) with occasional flecks of charcoal. Both F400 and deposit 9002 were sealed by a layer of orange brown alluvial silt (9001), in turn overlain by topsoil (9000).

Context 9002 produced one flint flake, and context 9003 produced one fragment of burnt clay/daub.

6.10 - Trial Trench 10

Aligned east-west - maximum depth 0.60m.

Context	Description	Dimensions
10000	Topsoil	0.40m Th
10001	Subsoil	0.20m+ Th

Trial Trench 10 was located at the centre north of the site. Removal of the topsoil (10000) revealed only a modern plastic pipe trench and a modern L-shaped feature also containing plastic. Both of these modern features truncated a plough disturbed dark orange brown clay silt (10001).

No artefacts or features of archaeological interest were identified in Trial Trench 10.

6.11 Trial Trench 11 (Fig. 6)

Aligned north-south - maximum depth 0.74m.

Context	Description	Dimensions
F1100	Pit	0.80-1.05m diam x 0.64m D
F1101	SW-NE linear	0.90m W x 0.24m D
F1102	Pit	2.00m W x 0.45m D
11000	Topsoil	0.35m Th
11001	Upper fill of F1100	0.28m D
11002	Alluvium	0.30m Th
11003	Lower fill of F1100	0.36m D
11004	Natural gravels	N/A
11005	Fill of F1101	As F1101
11006	Fill of F1102	As F1102

Trial Trench 11 was located at the centre of the site, to the west of Riding Court Farm. The lowest layer encountered was a deposit of reddish brown gravels in a matrix of silty sand (11004). Context 11004 was overlain by up to 0.30m of orange brown alluvial clay silt (11002). Context 11002 was cut by two pits (F1100 and F1102) and by one linear feature (F1101). Pit F1100 was located 17m north of the southern limit of the trench, and was irregular in shape with a U-shaped profile; it was filled with a firm mid brown sandy clay silt (11003), including charcoal flecks and angular flint fragments, overlain by a softer clay silt (11001) with fewer inclusions. Pit F1102 was located immediately south of F1100 and was identified in section. Only the western most edge of the concave base of this feature could be identified within the trench. F1102 was filled with a mid brown

clay silt (11006) exhibiting substantial plough disturbance towards its upper horizon. Linear ditch F1101 was located at the northern limit of the trench and was aligned southwest-northeast, with steep sides and a slightly concave base. It was filled with a pale yellow brown clay silt with very few inclusions (11005). All features were sealed by topsoil (11000).

Contexts 11001 produced two pieces of tile and 11003 produced significant amounts of pottery of Roman date as well as tile, an iron nail and one flint flake. Context 11002 also produced tile fragments and context 11006 contained Roman pottery and fired clay/daub.

6.12 Trial Trench 12

Aligned north-south - maximum depth 0.69m.

Context	Description	Dimensions
12000	Topsoil	0.30m Th
12001	Alluvium	0.39m Th
12002	Natural gravels	N/A

Trial Trench 12 was located at the centre north of the site. Excavation revealed only orange brown flint gravel (12002), overlain by pale orange brown sandy silt (12001) and topsoil (12000). Trial Trench 12 was extended by 5m to the south, as a 5m section at the centre could not be fully excavated due the presence of a modern pipe at a higher level than the desired horizon.

No artefacts or features of archaeological interest were identified in Trial Trench 12.

6.13 Trial Trench 13

Aligned east-west - maximum depth 0.46m.

Context	Description	Dimensions
13000	Topsoil	0.28m Th
13001	Alluvium	0.18m Th
13002	Natural gravels	N/A

Trial Trench 13 was located at the centre northeast of the site. Excavation revealed only orange brown flint gravel (13002), overlain by pale orange brown silty sand (13001) and topsoil (13000).

No artefacts or features of archaeological interest were identified in Trial Trench 13.

6.14 Trial Trench 14

Aligned north-south - maximum depth 0.75m.

Context	Description	Dimensions
14000	Topsoil	0.28m Th
14001	Alluvium	0.31m Th
14002	Natural gravels	N/A

Trial Trench 14 was located at the central eastern edge of the site. Excavation revealed only orange brown flint gravel (14002), overlain by pale yellow brown silty sand (14001) and topsoil (14000).

No artefacts or features of archaeological interest were identified in Trial Trench 14.

6.15 Trial Trench 15

Aligned east-west - maximum depth 1.15m.

Context	Description	Dimensions
F1500	Sub-circular feature	0.90m diam x 0.30m D
15000	Topsoil	0.29m Th
15001	Alluvium	0.30-0.40m Th
15002	Mixed chalky silt	0.14-0.35 m Th
15003	Natural sand	N/A
15004	Fill of F1500	As F1500

Trial Trench 15 was located at the centre east of the site. The lowest deposit encountered was a fine pale yellow sand (15003). Context 15003 was cut by an irregular sub-circular feature (F1500) filled with a sterile pale brown silt (15004) with ferric mottling. Feature F1500 was located at the centre of the trench and is believed to be geological in origin. The latter contexts were sealed by an irregular band of very pale grey - very pale orange brown silt (15002), apparently derived from chalk. Context 15002 was sealed by pale orange brown silt (15001), overlain by topsoil (15000)

No artefacts or features of archaeological interest were identified in Trial Trench 15.

6.16 Trial Trench 16

Aligned north-south - maximum depth 1.29m

Context	Description	Dimensions
16000	Topsoil	0.40m Th
16001	Alluvium	0.90m max Th
16002	Natural gravel and sand	N/A

Trial Trench 16 was located east of Riding Court Farm, to the southwest of Trial Trench 15. Excavation revealed orange brown flint gravel and sand (16002), overlain by orange brown silty sand (16001) and topsoil (16000). A modern truncation was investigated at the southern limit of the trench, and a darker band of gravel was tested towards the northern limit.

No artefacts or features of archaeological interest were identified in Trial Trench 16.

6.17 Trial Trench 17

Aligned east-west - maximum depth 0.87m.

Context	Description	Dimensions
17000	Topsoil	0.30m Th
17001	Alluvium	0.35m Th
17002	Natural sand and gravel	N/A

Trial Trench 17 was located southeast of Riding Court Farm, to the south of Trial Trench 16. Excavation revealed orange brown sand and gravels (17002), overlain by orange brown clay silt (17001) and topsoil (17000).

No artefacts or features of archaeological interest were identified in Trial Trench 17.

6.18 Trial Trench 18

Aligned north-south - maximum depth 0.76m.

Context	Description	Dimensions
F1800	E-W linear feature	1.52m W x 0.76m D
18000	Topsoil	0.30m Th
18001	Alluvium	0.42m Th
18002	Mixed natural sands and gravel	N/A
18003	Fill of F1800	As F1800

Trial Trench 18 was located southeast of Riding Court Farm. The lowest horizon was formed by a mixed sequence of pale orange brown to mid red brown fine sands, including frequent gravel and gravel lenses (18002). Context 18002 was cut by a linear ditch (F1800) located 6.5m from the northern limit of the trench. Ditch F1800 was aligned east-west and had a steep, stepped irregular profile. Filling F1800 was a pale grey brown to orange brown sandy silt (18003) including small sub-angular stones. The latter contexts were sealed by a pale orange brown sandy silt (18001) overlain by topsoil (18000).

Context 18003 produced one sherd of prehistoric pottery.

6.19/20 Trial Trenches 19 and 20

Forming a cross - maximum depth 1.48m

Context	Description	Dimensions
19000	Topsoil	0.30-0.35m Th
19001	Alluvium	0.70-0.90m Th
19002	Natural gravels	N/A
19003	Disturbed subsoil inc. brick	37.5m diam x 0.30-0.50m Th
19004	Brick rubble	18.5m L x 15m x up to 0.42m D
19005	Sandy silt	Up to 0.30m Th
19006		Equals 19005
19007		Equals 19001
19008		Equals 19002
20000		Equals 19000
20001		Equals 19005
20002		Equals 19001
20003		Equals 19002
20004		Equals 19003
20005		Equals 19004
20006		Equals 19003

Trial Trenches 19 and 20 were positioned to test a significant geophysical anomaly located at the centre of the southeastern portion of the site, and intersected each other to form a north-south / east-west cross. The lowest deposits encountered in these trenches were pale grey brown sandy gravels (19002, 19008 and 20003). The latter contexts were sealed by deposits of pale yellow brown sandy silt (19001, 19007 and 20002). These were in turn overlain by disturbed mid brown silty sands (19003, 20004 and 20006) including occasional small fragments of brick rubble. At the centre of the trenches these latter deposits were overlain by a thick irregular layer of brick rubble (Contexts 19004 and 20005). This brick rubble horizon was examined in several places to test the possibility that it might fill or mask structural features such as foundation trenches. No

such features were identified. At the extremities of the trenches the alluvial horizon (19001, 19007 and 20002) was also overlain by deposits of friable mid brown sandy silt (19005, 19006 and 20001). These were in turn sealed by topsoil (19000 and 20000).

Fragments of brick from the rubble horizon 19004/20005 were examined, and found to be quite soft, pale-mid red orange in colour, and small in size with irregular handmade surfaces. They are early post-medieval in date.

6.21 Trial Trench 21

Aligned east-west - maximum depth 0.97m.

Context	Description	Dimensions
21000	Topsoil	0.30m Th
21001	Alluvium	0.25-0.30m Th
21002	Sub-soil	0.20m Th
21003	Natural gravels	N/A

Trial Trench 21 was located at the eastern edge of the site. Pale yellow brown gravels (21003) were sealed by a layer of yellow brown sandy silt (21002). This silt was in turn overlain by a mid orange brown sandy silt (21001) and topsoil (21000).

No artefacts or features of archaeological interest were identified in Trial Trench 21.

6.22 Trial Trench 22

Aligned east-west - maximum depth 0.49m.

Context	Description	Dimensions
22000	Topsoil	0.35m Th
22001	Alluvium	0.15m Th
22002	Natural gravels	N/A

Trial Trench 22 was located at the southeastern edge of the site. Orange brown gravels (22002) were sealed by a layer of pale yellow brown sandy silt (22001). The silt was in turn overlain by topsoil (22000).

No artefacts or features of archaeological interest were identified in Trial Trench 22.

6.23 Trial Trench 23

Aligned north-south - maximum depth 1.33m.

Context	Description	Dimensions
23000	Topsoil	0.30m Th
23001	Alluvium	0.25m Th
23002	Alluvium	0.25m Th
23003	Alluvium	0.25m Th
23004	Gravel	0.05m Th
23005	Silty sand	0.15m Th
23006	Silty sand and gravel	N/A

Trial Trench 23 was located at the eastern limit of the site. Pale brown sand and gravel (23006) was overlain by a layer of yellow brown silty sand (23005). Context 23005 was

in turn overlain by a thin layer of gravel (23004). The latter context was sealed by three bands of alluvial clay silt of varying colour (23001, 23002 and 23003). These were in turn sealed by topsoil (23000).

No artefacts or features of archaeological interest were identified in Trial Trench 23.

6.24 Trial Trench 24

Aligned north-south - maximum depth 1.80m.

Context	Description	Dimensions
24000	Topsoil	0.30m Th
24001	Alluvium	0.50m Th
24002	Alluvium	0.80m Th
24003	Natural gravels	N/A

Trial Trench 24 was located at the southeastern edge of the site. The lowest deposit examined was a pale brown gravel (24003) exhibiting patches of orange and black mineralisation. Context 24003 was sealed by two thick bands of alluvium (Contexts 24001 and 24002). Context 24002 was a pale yellow brown clay silt overlain by a mid orange brown clay silt (24001). Context 24001 was sealed by topsoil (24000).

An area of darker, greyer clay silt was identified at the southern limit of the trench, at the surface of the upper alluvial horizon. This proved to be natural in origin.

No artefacts or features of archaeological interest were identified in Trial Trench 24.

6.25 Trial Trench 25

Aligned east-west - maximum depth 1.70m.

Context	Description	Dimensions
25000	Topsoil	0.30m Th
25001	Mixed sub-soil	0.50m Th
25002	Alluvium	0.90m Th
25003	Natural gravels	N/A

Trial Trench 25 was located at the southeastern corner of the site. Brownish yellow gravels (25003) were overlain by a thick layer of pale yellow brown silty sand (25002). Context 25002 was in turn overlain by a mid orange brown sandy silt (25001). Context 25001 was of variable colour, being darker towards a plough disturbed upper horizon with the topsoil (25000).

No artefacts or features of archaeological interest were identified in Trial Trench 25.

6.26 Trial Trench 26 (Figs. 3, 4 and 5)

Aligned northeast-southwest - maximum depth 1.06m.

Context	Description	Dimensions
F2600	Pit	1.25m diam x 0.5m D
F2601	Linear feature, equals F2605	3.0m W x 0.4m D
F2602	Linear feature, equals F2604	2.4m W x 0.3m D
F2603	Linear feature	0.8-2.0m W x 0.38m D
F2604	Linear feature, equals F2602	2.6m W x 0.4m D
F2605	Linear feature, equals F2601	2.4m W x 0.3m D
F2606	UNUSED	

F2607	Possible negative feature	1.6m W x 0.3m D
F2608	Pit	0.70-1.0m diam x 0.35m D
F2609	Curvilinear feature	0.40m W x 0.30m D
F2610	Possible pit	1.3m W x 0.4m D
F2611	Possible linear feature	0.9m W x 0.4m D
F2612	Equals F2611?	1.1m W x 0.4m D
26000	Topsoil	0.21-0.40m D
26001	Natural gravel	N/A
26002	Upper fill of F2600	0.22m max D
26003	Middle fill of F2600	0.20m max D
26004	Lower fill of F2600	0.32m max D
26005	Lower fill of F2603	0.23m max D
26006	Upper fill of F2603	0.38m max D
26007	Fill of F2605	As F2605
26008	Fill of F2603, equals 26006	0.28m max D
26009	Fill of F2602	As F2602
26010	Fill of F2601	As F2601
26011	Layer	Up to 10m L x 0.45m D
26012	Alluvium	0.45m Th
26013	Fill of F2604	As F2604
26014	Fill of F2607	0.17m max D
26015	Fill of F2607	0.24m max D
26016	Fill of F2608	As F2608
26017	Fill of F2609	As F2609
26018	Fill of F2610	As F2610
26019	UNUSED	
26020	Fill of F2612	As F2612
26021	Fill of F2611	As F2611
26022	Equals 26011	As 26011

Trial Trench 26 was located at the central southern limit of the site and was positioned to intersect an area of possible activity identified by geophysical survey.

Twelve features or possible features were identified in the trench, along with significant quantities of prehistoric pottery. Of these, only four features were securely identifiable in plan (F2600, F2603, F2608 and F2609), the remainder being identified in section.

The lowest deposit encountered was a yellow brown sandy gravel (26001). This natural horizon was overlain by a deposit of alluvial yellow clay silt (26012). Context 26012 was cut by all the above mentioned features.

F2600 was a sub-circular pit located 17m from the southeastern limit of the trench and continuing into the northeastern trench section. It had an irregular shallow concave profile, becoming much steeper towards its centre at its northwestern edge. F2600 was filled by an orange brown clay silt (26004) overlain by a dark grey compact clay silt (26003) containing flecks of charcoal and burnt clay. The northern portion of context 26003 was in turn overlain by a mid brown sandy clay silt (26002) including occasional charcoal flecks.

The southern edge of context 26004/F2600 was truncated by a curvilinear feature (F2609). F2609 was aligned broadly southwest-northeast and curved to suggest a

continuation to the southeast. It was shallow and concave in profile, and filled by a mid brown chalky clay silt (26017). The latter feature was also truncated to the southeast by a possible pit (F2610). F2610 had a moderately steep concave profile and was filled by a dark grey clay silt (26018) with charcoal and burnt clay inclusions. Context 26018/F2610 was once more truncated at its southeast by a further possible linear feature (F2611 NE section / F2612 SW section). The latter feature was aligned southwest-northeast with a regular concave U-shaped profile, and was filled by a clean compact brown grey sandy clay silt (26020 SW section / 26021 NE section).

Context 26012 was cut by a sub-circular pit (F2608) continuing into the northeastern trench section, 21m from the southeastern end of the trench. The pit had near vertical sides and a slightly concave base, and was filled by a compact mid brown clay silt (26016) with frequent flecks of burnt clay. Immediately northwest of F2608 context 26012 was further cut by a linear feature, F2603. The latter feature itself truncated a further possible pit (F2607) to the northwest. F2607 was filled by a clean mid brown clay silt (26014) beneath a compact orange brown silty clay (26015), and had a very shallow concave profile. F2603 was visible in both sections and aligned northeast-southwest with moderately steep concave sides and a slightly concave base. F2603 was filled by a mid brown clay silt (26005) with moderate charcoal flecks beneath a similar deposit (26006 NE section / 26008 SW section) also found to include burnt clay flecks, small sub-angular stones and lenses of pale chalky silt.

Two further linear features were identified in both trench sections, located 22m from the northwestern limit of the trench. F2602/F2604 was aligned north-south with moderately steep concave sides and a flattish base. It was filled by a clean, compact mid brown clay silt (26009/26013). The feature was truncated by an east-west aligned linear feature (F2601/F2605) with shallow concave sides and a concave base. F2601/F2605 was also filled by a clean mid brown clay silt (26007/26010).

Additionally, an extensive layer of orange brown clay silt (26011/26022) was identified overlying the alluvium (26012) towards the northwestern limit of the trench. The upper horizon of layer 26011/26022 exhibited considerable plough disturbance. All features and deposits were sealed by topsoil (26000).

Contexts 26002, 26003, 26004, 26006, 26008, 26009, 26010, 26011, 26017, 26020, and 26021 all produced sherds of Iron Age pottery. Contexts 26005, 26006 and 26007 produced pieces of burnt clay/daub. Context 26002 also produced three flint fragments.

6.27 Trial Trench 27

Aligned east-west - maximum depth 0.95m.

Context	Description	Dimensions
F2700	Possible pit	1.28m diam x 0.26m D
F2701	Possible pit	1.21m diam x 0.24m D
F2702	Possible oval pit	1.62m L x 1.03m W x 0.36m D
F2703	Possible sub-oval feature	up to 0.60m diam x 0.08m D
27000	Topsoil	0.40m Th
27001	Alluvium	0.30m Th
27002	Alluvium	0.25-0.30m Th

27003	Natural sands and gravels	N/A
27004	Fill of F2700	As F2700
27005	Fill of F2701	As F2701
27006	Fill of F2702	As F2702
27007	Fill of F2703	As F2703

Trial Trench 27 was located north of Trial Trench 26 and to the southwest of Riding Court Farm. The lowest deposit encountered was a mixed horizon of orange brown sand and flint gravel (27003). This was cut by four possible features. Possible pit F2700 was located at the eastern limit of the trench, and was seen to extend beyond the southern edge of the trench. It was semi-circular in visible extent, with a moderately steep regular concave profile. F2700 was filled by dark green grey silty clay (27004) with ferric mottling. Possible pit F2701 was located 5.5m from the eastern limit of the trench. F2701 extended beyond the southern edge of the trench, and was irregular in both extent and profile. It was filled by a dark green grey silty clay (27005) with ferric mottling.

Possible pit F2702 was located 10m from the eastern limit of the trench, was oval in plan and had steep sides and a concave base. It was filled by dark grey green silty clay (27006), showing evidence of root action and ferric mottling. Possible feature F2703 was located 12.5m from the eastern limit of the trench, was sub-oval in plan with very shallow irregular sides. It was filled by dark grey green clay silt (27007). All features were sealed by a layer of orange brown clay silt (27002) overlain by pale yellowish brown clay silt (27001) and topsoil (27000).

No artefacts of archaeological interest were recovered from Trial Trench 27.

6.28 Trial Trench 28

Aligned east-west - maximum depth 0.95m.

Context	Description	Dimensions
F2800	Possible linear feature	0.65m W x 0.20m D
F2801	Possible linear feature	0.85m W x 0.25m D
F2802	Possible pit / tree bole	1.20m diam x 0.20m D
F2803	Possible irregular feature	0.64m diam x 0.15m D
F2804	Possible irregular linear feature	2.65m W x 0.50m D
F2805	Possible irregular feature	0.8m W x 0.18m D
28000	Topsoil	Up to 0.65m
28001	Alluvium	Up to 0.45m
28002	Natural gravels	N/A
28003	Fill of F2800	As F2800
28004	Upper fill of F2801	0.15m max D
28005	Lower fill of F2801	0.12m max D
28006	Upper fill of F2802	0.11m max D
28007	Lower fill of F2802	0.09m max D
28008	Fill of F2803	As F2803
28009	Upper fill of F2804	0.23m max D
28010	Lower fill of F2804	0.28m max D
28011	Fill of F2805	As F2805

Trial Trench 28 was located to the north of Trial Trench 27, to the west of Riding Court Farm. Examination of a variable horizon of natural flint gravels (28002) identified six possible features. Of these, only F2800 and F2801 appear to be anthropogenic in origin.

Possible linear feature F2800 was located at the western limit of Trial Trench 28 and aligned west northwest-east southeast, with a shallow concave profile. It was filled by a clean mid orange brown clay silt (28003). A second possible linear feature (F2801) was located 9.2m from the western limit of the trench and was aligned northwest-southeast. It was irregular and concave in profile, and filled by a clean orange brown sandy silt (28005) with occasional small sub-angular stones, and a orange brown clay silt (28004).

Features F2802, F2803, F2804 and F2805 were all highly irregular in form and are thought to represent either variations in the underlying deposit or tree root action. All features and possible features were sealed by a pale orange brown clay silt (28001) overlain by topsoil (28000).

No artefacts of archaeological interest were recovered from Trial Trench 28.

6.29 Trial Trench 29 (Fig. 7)

Aligned north-south - maximum depth 0.80m.

Context	Description	Dimensions
F2900	Linear feature	1.80m W x 0.90m D
29000	Topsoil	0.40m Th
29001	Alluvium	0.20m Th
29002	Alluvium	0.20m Th
29003	Natural gravels	N/A
29004	Upper fill of F2900	0.32m max D
29005	Lower fill of F2900	0.64m max D

Trial Trench 29 was located to the west of Riding Court Farm. Natural flint gravels in a matrix of orange sand (29003) were overlain by orange brown clay silt (29002). At the northern limit of the trench context 29002 was cut by a substantial southwest-northeast aligned linear feature (F2900). F2900 was moderately steep sided with a U-shaped profile, and filled by a dark greenish brown clay silt (29005) overlain by a pale orange brown sandy silt (29004). It was sealed by layer of pale greyish brown clay silt (29001) and topsoil (29000).

Context 29004 produced one piece of prehistoric pottery.

6.30 Trial Trench 30 (Fig. 6)

Aligned east-west - maximum depth 1.05m.

Context	Description	Dimensions
F3001	Linear feature	1.30m W x 0.60m D
F3002	Linear feature	0.60m W x 0.20m D
F3003	Tree bole	0.80m diam x 0.25m D
F3004	Natural scoop	1.35m diam x 0.35m D
30001	Topsoil	0.40m Th
30002	Alluvium	0.50m Th
30003	Fill of F3001	As F3001
30004	Fill of F3002	As F3002
30005	Fill of F3003	As F3003
30006	Fill of F3004	As F3004
30007	Natural gravels	N/A

Trial Trench 30 was located to the northwest of Trial Trench 29. Two well-defined linear features (F3001 and F3002) were identified towards the western limit of the trench. Both were aligned southwest-northeast and were seen to cut the underlying deposit of variably coloured gravels (30007). F3001 was a steep sided ditch with a narrow concave base and was filled by a mid grey clay silt (30003). Nine metres to the west of F3001 was a narrow steep sided gully (F3002), filled by grey clay silt (30004). Features F3003 and F3004 were located towards the eastern end of the trench and are believed to be natural in origin.

Contexts 30003 and 30004 both produced small quantities of prehistoric pottery.

6.31 Trial Trench 31

Aligned north-south - maximum depth 0.80m.

Context	Description	Dimensions
F3100	Linear feature	2.05m W x 0.50m D
F3101	Post hole	0.32m diam x 0.20m D
31000	Topsoil	0.30m Th
31001	Natural sandy gravels	N/A
31002	Alluvium	up to 0.50m Th
31003	Natural silty sand	N/A
31004	Natural silty sand	N/A
31005	Natural silty sand	N/A
31006	Natural silty sand	N/A
31007	Natural silty sand	N/A
31008	Fill of F3100	As F3100
31009	Fill of F3101	As F3101

Trial Trench 31 was located to the west of Trial Trench 30. The lowest deposits encountered were pale brown sandy gravel (31001) and five bands of pale grey sandy silt (contexts 31003-31007 inclusive). Two of the latter bands were tested in order to demonstrate their natural origin. These deposits were overlain by a layer of pale yellow clay silt (31002). This silt was cut by an east southeast-west northwest linear feature (F3100) at the centre of the trench. Feature F3100 was U-shaped in profile with a flattish base and was filled by mid grey brown clay silt (31008). Located 8m from the northern limit of the trench was a small posthole (F3101) filled by mid brown clay silt (31009) with a charcoal lens at its upper horizon.

No artefacts of archaeological interest were recovered from Trial Trench 31.

6.32 Trial Trench 32

Aligned north-south - maximum depth 0.80m.

Context	Description	Dimensions
F3200	Linear feature	1.25m W x 0.45m D
F3201	Linear feature	0.90m W x 0.25m D
32000	Topsoil	0.25m Th
32001	Alluvium	0.16-0.20m Th
32002	Natural gravels	N/A
32003	Fill of F3200	As F3200
32004	Fill of F3201	As F3201

Trial Trench 32 was located towards the northwestern limit of the site. Natural orange brown gravels (32002) were cut by two linear features (F3200 and F3201). F3200 was located 14m from the northern limit of the trench and was aligned east-west. It had an irregular U-shaped profile and was filled by a mid brown clay silt (32003). F3201 was located 9.5m from the northern trench limit and was also aligned east-west. It had an irregular flattened U-shaped profile and was filled by orange brown silty clay (32004). These features were sealed by a layer of pale orange brown clay silt (32001) overlain by topsoil (32000).

No artefacts of archaeological interest were recovered from Trial Trench 32.

6.33 Trial Trench 33

Aligned east-west - maximum depth 1.10m.

Context	Description	Dimensions
F3300	Linear feature	3.0m W x 0.70m D
F3301	Possible Pit	0.90m diam x 0.14m D
F3302	Small linear feature	0.52m W x 0.10m D
F3303	Linear feature	1.08m W x 0.4m D
33000	Topsoil	0.40m Th
33001	Natural sand and gravel	N/A
33002	Lower alluvium	0.30m Th
33003	Fill of F3300	As F3300
33004	Fill of F3301	As F3301
33005	Fill of F3302	As F3302
33006	Fill of F3303	As F3303
33007	Upper alluvium	0.40m Th

Trial Trench 33 was located towards the northwestern limit of the site. The lowest deposit encountered was a pale brown sand and flint gravel (33001). Context 33001 was overlain by a layer of pale orange silt (33002). Layer 33002 was cut by three linear features (F3300, F3302 and F3303) and one possible pit (F3301). Linear feature F3300 was located 5m from the eastern end of the trench and aligned north northwest-south southwest. It had a shallow concave profile and was filled by dark grey silty clay (33003). F3301 was a shallow concave scoop located 8m from the eastern end of the trench and filled by a grey silty clay (33004). Linear feature F3302 was located 11m from the eastern end of the trench and aligned northeast-southwest with a very shallow concave profile. It was filled by a grey sandy silt (33005). The third linear feature F3303 was located 17m from the eastern end of the trench and aligned northeast-southwest. It was filled by a dark grey clay silt (33006). All features were sealed by a layer of mid orange brown clay silt (33007) overlain by topsoil (33000).

No artefacts of archaeological interest were recovered from Trial Trench 33.

6.34 Trial Trench 34 (Fig. 7)

Aligned east-west - maximum depth 0.55m.

Context	Description	Dimensions
F3401	Linear feature	0.77m W x 0.49m D
F3402	Linear feature	1.18m W x 0.33m D
34001	Topsoil	0.30m Th
34002	Middle fill of F3401	0.19m max D

34003	Lower fill of F3401	0.16m max D
34004	Fill of F3402	As F3402
34005	Alluvium	N/A
34006	Upper fill of F3401	0.14m max D

Trial Trench 34 was located at the northwestern limit of the site. At the eastern limit of the trench the underlying pale yellow alluvial silt (34005) was cut by two southwest-northeast linear features (F3401 and F3402). F3401 was narrow and steep sided with a flattish base. It was filled by three deposits of silty sand (34006, 34002 and 34003), varying in colour from pale orange brown at the surface (34006) becoming progressively darker and more mottled towards the base (34003). F3402 had a slightly irregular U-shaped profile and was filled by a mid grey brown sandy silt (34004). Both these features were sealed by topsoil (34001).

Contexts 34002 and 34004 produced sherds of prehistoric pottery and flint fragments. Contexts 34003 and 34004 also produced very small quantities of animal bone.

6.35 Trial Trench 35

Aligned north-south - maximum depth 0.55m.

Context	Description	Dimensions
F3500	Linear feature	1.02m W x 0.60m D
F3501	Linear feature	1.92m W x 0.50m D
35000	Topsoil	0.35m Th
35001	Alluvium	N/A
35002	Fill of F3500	As F3500
35003	Fill of F3501	As F3501

Trial Trench 35 was located at the northwestern limit of the site. The underlying pale yellow brown alluvial silt (35001) was truncated by two southwest-northeast aligned linear features (F3500 and F3501). F3500 was located 5.5m from the southern limit of the trench and had steep sides and a flattish base. It was filled by a soft grey silty sand (35002). F3501 was located 10m from the northern limit of the trench. It had a shallow concave profile and was filled by mid grey brown sandy silt (35003). Both features were sealed by topsoil (35000).

Context 35002 produced a single flint fragment and 35003 produced an iron nail and fragments of modern tile.

7.0 The Finds: by Annette Hancocks

7.1 Factual data

A small assemblage of finds was recovered from the evaluation. Only nine of the 35 trenches produced finds. The material was quantified by count, rapidly scanned and spot dated. A terminus post quem was assigned where possible. Table 1 details the composition of the assemblage.

The pottery from the site provided the only diagnostic dating evidence. Some 32 contexts produced datable finds of Iron Age, Roman or later date. A single residual Iron Age sherd was recovered from Trial Trench 11, F1100, (Context 11003). A total of 142 sherds of pottery were recovered. The range and variety of this material is important. Some 109 sherds of probable late Iron Age pottery were recovered (Table 2), with a further 29 sherds of Roman pottery of later 2nd century AD date. Four post-medieval sherds were recovered from the topsoil. All of the material could be securely provenanced. None of the pottery displayed decorative motifs. Within the assemblage as a whole, only two everted jar rim forms of Roman date were recognised. Small quantities of unworked flint, flint flakes and fired clay/daub were recognised. These could not be dated, although in most cases were associated with Iron Age pottery.

7.2 Statement of potential

The evaluation of the pottery has identified several discrete groups of Roman and in particular, Iron Age material culture. Within the immediate environs of the evaluation, little Iron Age or Roman settlement has previously been observed. The concentration of Iron Age pottery within Trial Trenches 26, 29, 30 and 34 is important. A further discrete concentration of Roman pottery was recovered from Trial Trench 11. The ceramics recovered add significantly to the existing body of data, at both a local and a regional level. The pottery has helped to determine the presence, extent, and character, period of occupation, function and quality of preservation of the archaeological remains (Howlett 1999b, 2.1.1).

Several of the objectives (Howlett 1999b, 2.2.1-2.2.2) have been achieved. There is no artefactual evidence to suggest that medieval activity extended into the evaluation area, but a significant quantity of Iron Age and Roman pottery has survived within the area of the evaluation.

7.3 Storage and Curation

The immediate and long-term conservation and storage of the finds archive provides no problems. All finds have been retained and will be deposited with the designated archaeological store for the borough of Windsor and Maidenhead subject to approval by the landowner.

Pottery and Other Finds From Riding Court Farm

Context	Description	Date/Date range	Prehistoric	Roman	Other
			(Number of Sherds)		
U/S	Topsoil	Post-medieval (18 th /19 th century)			4xPM sherds, 1x vessel glass (modern)
4003	Tr.4 F401				3x flint
4004	Tr.4 F401	Modern			5x tile
9002	Tr.9				1x flint
9003	Tr.9 F900				2x fired clay
U/S	Tr.11	Roman		3	1x iron nail, 2x tile, , 1 x fired clay and 1x flint
11001	Tr.11 F1100				2x box flue tile
11002	Tr.11 Layer	Roman			2x tile
11003	Tr.11 F1100	2 nd century AD with one residual IA sherd	1	20	1x iron nail, 1x flint, 4x tile
11006	Tr.11 F1102	Roman		6	1x charcoal, 2x fired clay/daub
18003	Tr.18 F1800	Iron Age	1		
26002	Tr.26 F2600	Iron Age	26		3x flint
26003	Tr.26 F2600	Iron Age	4		
26004	Tr.26 F2600	Iron Age	2		
26005	Tr.26 F2603				1x fired clay/daub
26006	Tr.26 F2603	Iron Age	10		2 x fired clay/daub
26007	Tr.26 F2605				2x fired clay/daub
26008	Tr.26 F2603	Iron Age	8		
26009	Tr.26 F2602	Iron Age	8		
26010	Tr.26 F2601	Iron Age	9		
26011	Tr.26 Layer	Iron Age	7		
26017	Tr.26 F2609	Iron Age	6		
26020	Tr.26 F2612	Iron Age	1		
26021	Tr.26 F2611	Iron Age	3		
29004	Tr.29 F2900	Iron Age	1		
30003	Tr.30 F3001	Iron Age	7		
30004	Tr.30 F3002	Iron Age	1		
34002	Tr.34 F3401	Iron Age	10		1x flint
34003	Tr.34 F3401				Bone 52g
34004	Tr.34 F3402	Iron Age	4		1x flint, Bone 85g
35002	Tr.35 F3500				1x flint
35003	Tr.35 F3501				1x nail, 2x modern tile

KEY: IA (Iron Age) PM (Post-Medieval)

Summary of Finds

Find type	Quantity
<i>Pottery</i>	
Prehistoric	109
Roman	29
Post-medieval	4
Total	142
<i>Other finds</i>	
Iron Nails	3
Modern vessel glass	1
Charcoal	1
Tile (Roman)	6
Tile (Modern)	6
Fired clay/daub	11
Flint	13
Animal bone	137g

8.0 Discussion (See Fig. 3)

The programme of archaeological trial trenching at Riding Court Farm achieved its key objectives. Evidence of prehistoric activity, dated to the Iron Age, was shown to survive towards the western edge of the site. In addition, an unexpected but significant discovery of Roman artefacts was made within a single trench (Trial Trench 11) immediately to the northwest of Riding Court Farm. No evidence of medieval activity was identified. To the southeast of Riding Court Farm, a geophysical anomaly was shown to be formed from an horizon of post-medieval brick rubble within Trial Trench 19/20.

Features or possible features were identified in Trial Trenches 1, 4, 9, 11, 18, 19/20, and 26 to 35 inclusive. Artefacts dating to the Iron Age were recovered from Trial Trenches 18, 26, 29, 30 and 34. Roman artefacts were recovered from Trial Trench 11, and both flint fragments and modern artefacts were recovered from Trial Trenches 4 and 35.

Natural deposits of gravel and alluvium varied considerably across the site, both in colour, content and stratigraphic complexity. Archaeological features were seen to be both cutting and sealed by alluvial deposition. It is thought that the site has seen many localised depositional events, and no single horizon can be shown to be of higher or lower archaeological potential.

Although numerous prehistoric linear features were identified within the western portion of the site no clear association between these features emerges from a study of their proportions, shape or alignment. Additionally, most of these features produced only very few or no datable artefacts. Trial Trench 26 produced the greater majority of Iron Age material, and had a much higher density of demonstrably archaeological features than other trenches from which Iron Age material was recovered. In light of this it is suggested that the focus of Iron Age activity at Riding Court Farm is likely to be located to the southwest of the modern farm buildings. Other Iron Age activity in Trial Trenches 18, 29, 30 and 34 may represent drains, field boundaries or similar outlying landscape features. Therefore it is suggested that prehistoric activity at Riding Court Farm can be divided into three areas. A single area of intensive activity is identified in and around Trial Trench 26, and two outlying areas of dispersed activity are identified, firstly to the north west of Riding Court Farm encompassing Trial Trenches 29, 30 and 34, and secondly to the southeast of Riding Court Farm, centred on Trial Trench 18.

Roman activity at Riding Court Farm was only identified in and around two small pits (F1100 and F1102) in Trial Trench 11. These features produced a small assemblage of Roman material, including fragments of building materials. Although these finds are of significance, their isolation allows little to be said about the nature and extent of Roman activity at Riding Court Farm.

Trial Trench 19/20 revealed a deposit of post-medieval brick rubble (19004/20005). This extensive deposit is interpreted as a dump of demolition material, later disturbed by ploughing and is thought to represent the destruction of an outbuilding either at this location or from the area of the modern farm.

For all periods, the foci of highest activity are seen to cluster around the site of the modern farm. This continuity of settlement may be indicative of preferential environmental factors at this location. The marginally higher elevation of the area of the farm may offer some protection from inundation.

9.0 Acknowledgements

The evaluation was supervised by the author, assisted by M. Duncan, D. Moscrop, A. Newton, C. Neilson, H. Martin and A. Rudge. The illustrations were prepared by N. Dodds, and the report was edited by S. Buteux. The project was managed by C. Mould for Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit and monitored by Kevin Beechers on behalf of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. Many thanks to Chris Howlett of Phoenix Consulting Limited.

10.0 References

Bartlett, A. D. H., 2000

Riding Court Farm, Datchet. Report of Archaeo-Geophysical Survey.
Bartlett-Clarke Consultancy, September 2000.

Cox, C., 2000

Riding Court Farm, Datchet. Aerial Photography Appraisal: Archaeology.
Air Photo Services of Cambridge and Swindon, March 2000.

Howlett, C. E., 1999a

Archaeological Desk-based report: Riding Court Farm, Datchet, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Berkshire.
Phoenix Consulting - Doc no. P/132/A.

Howlett, C. E., 1999b

Specification for Archaeological Field Evaluation: Riding Court Farm, Datchet, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Berkshire.
Phoenix Consulting - Doc no. P/132/B.

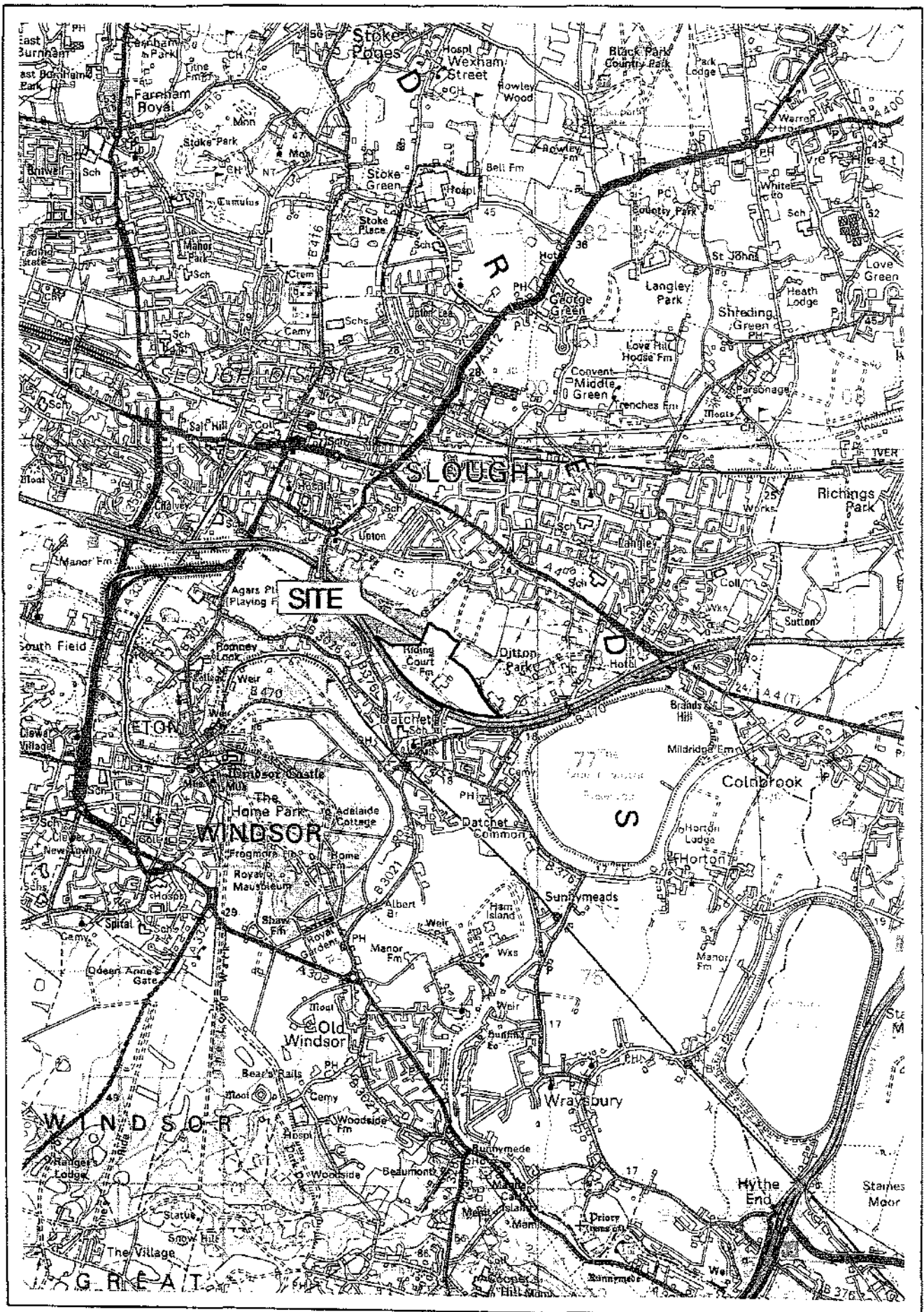


Fig.1 Location of Site

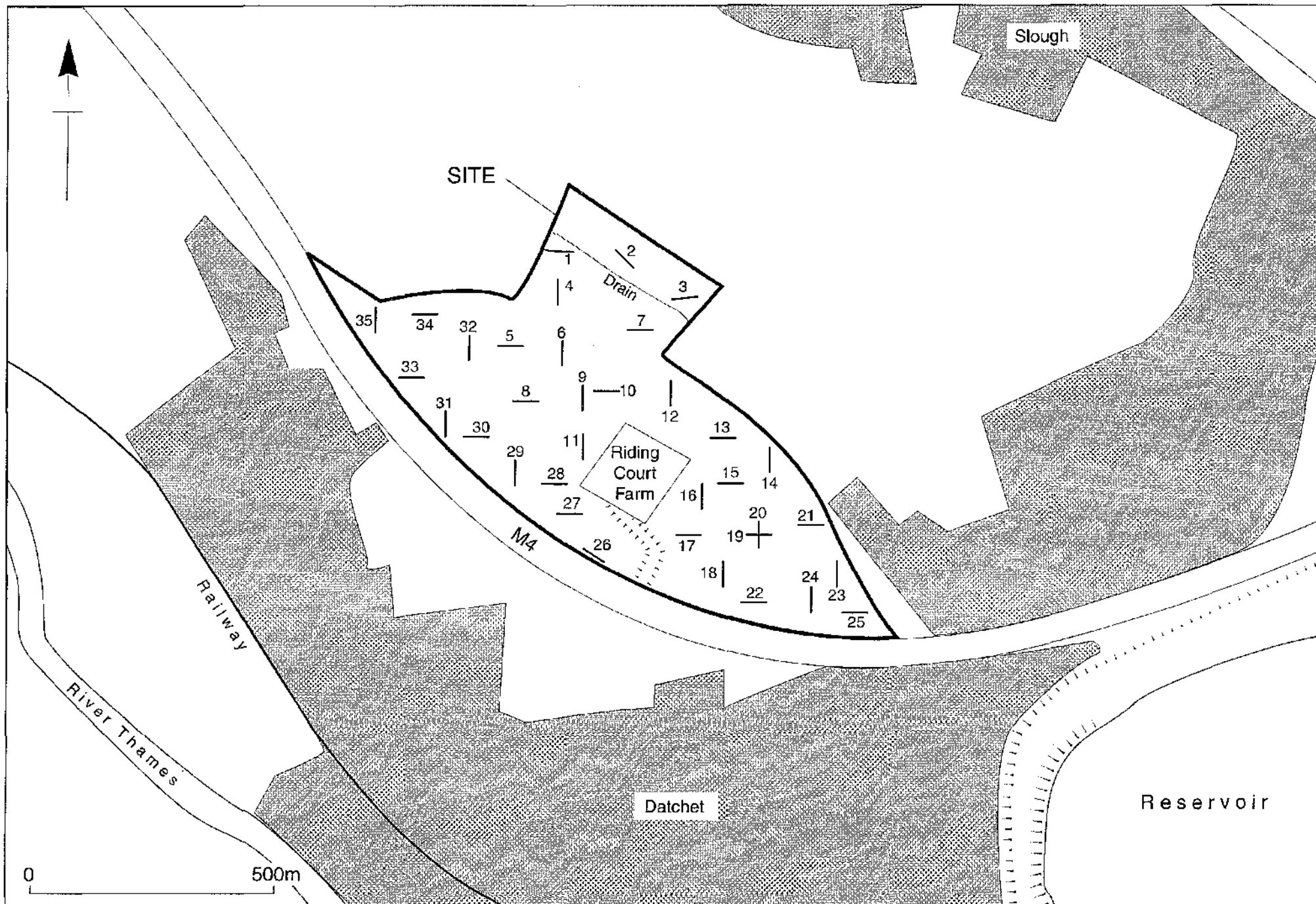


Fig.2 Trial Trench Locations

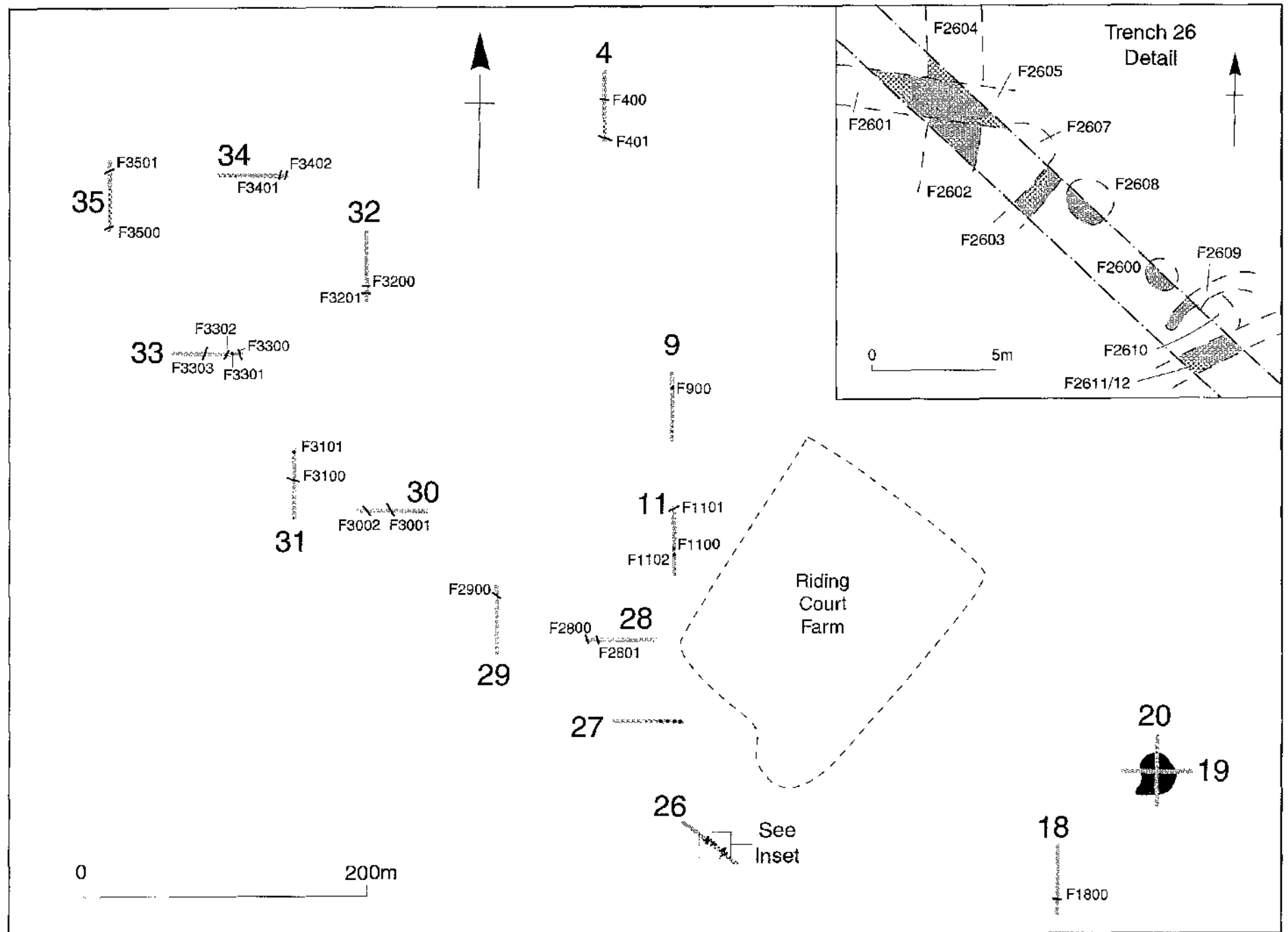
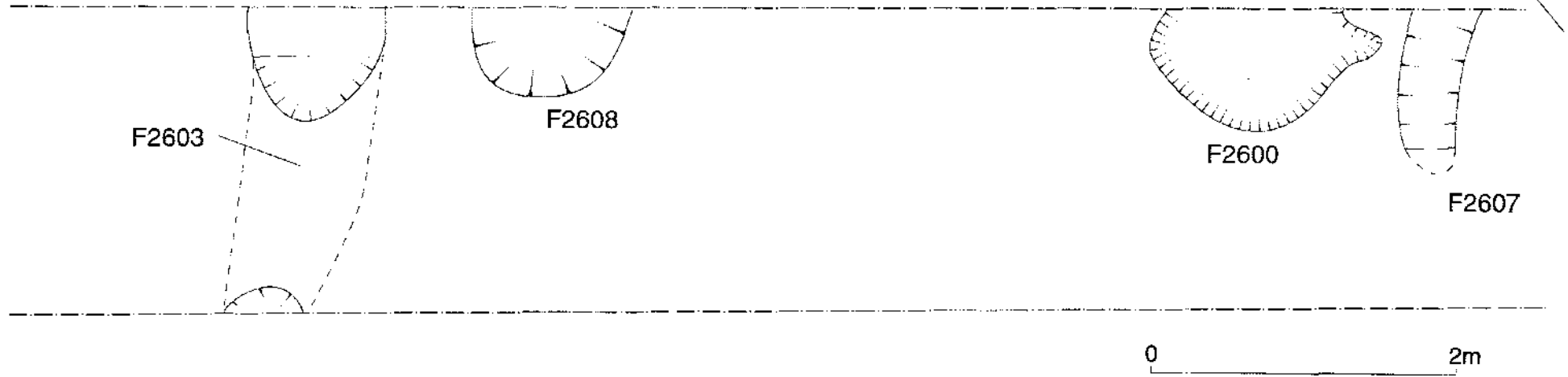


Fig.3 Areas of Archaeological Survival

TRENCH 26 - Plan of F2600 , F2603 , F2607 and F2608



NE Facing Section (Part A) - Feature F2611 and Layer 26022

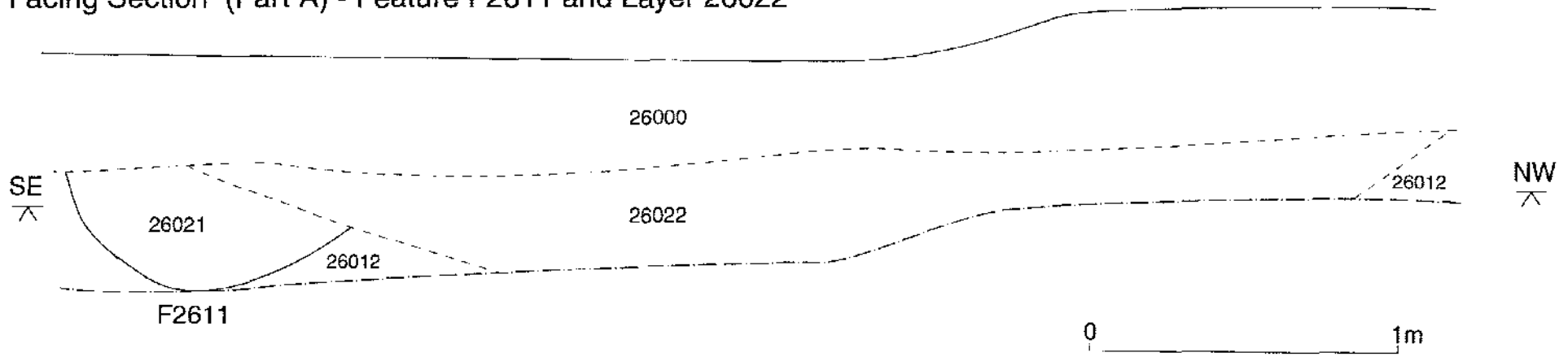
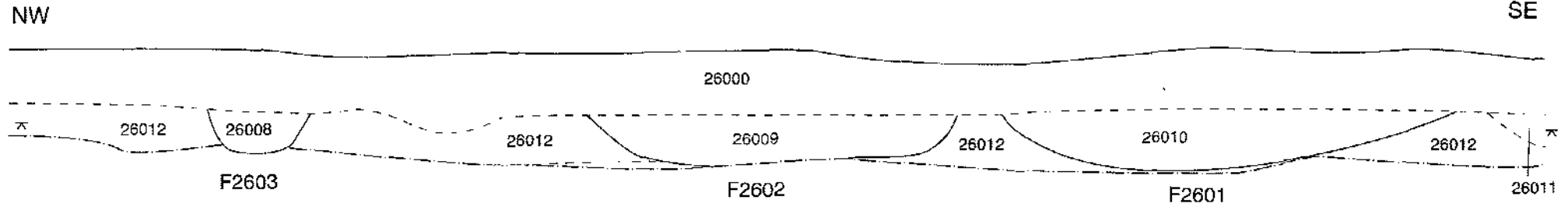
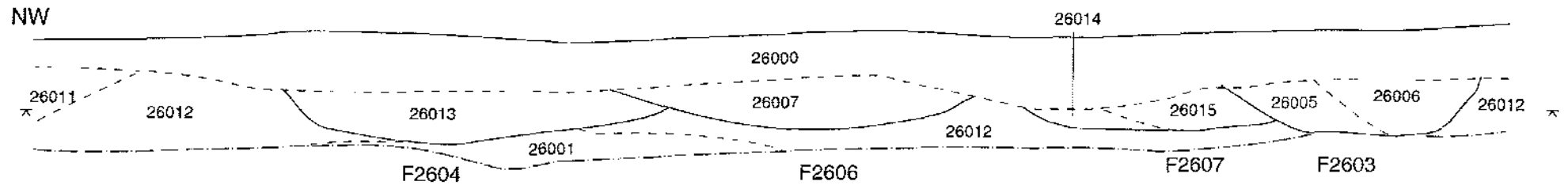


Fig.4 Plan and Section of Trench 26

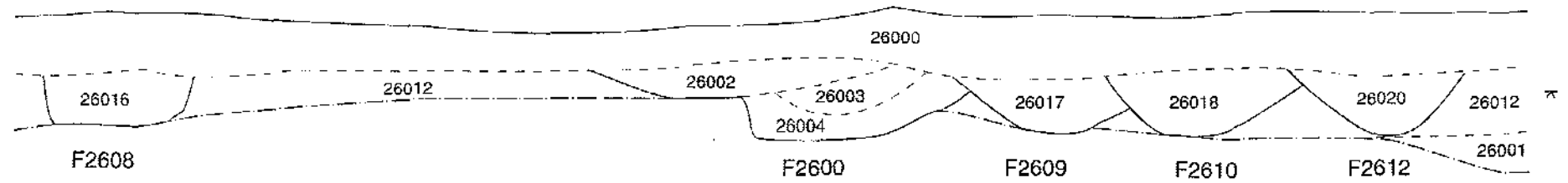
TRENCH 26 NE Facing Section (Part B) ; Features F2601 , F2602 and F2603



TRENCH 26 SW Facing Section ; Features F2600 , F2603 , F2604 , F2607 , F2608 , F2609 , F2610 and F2612



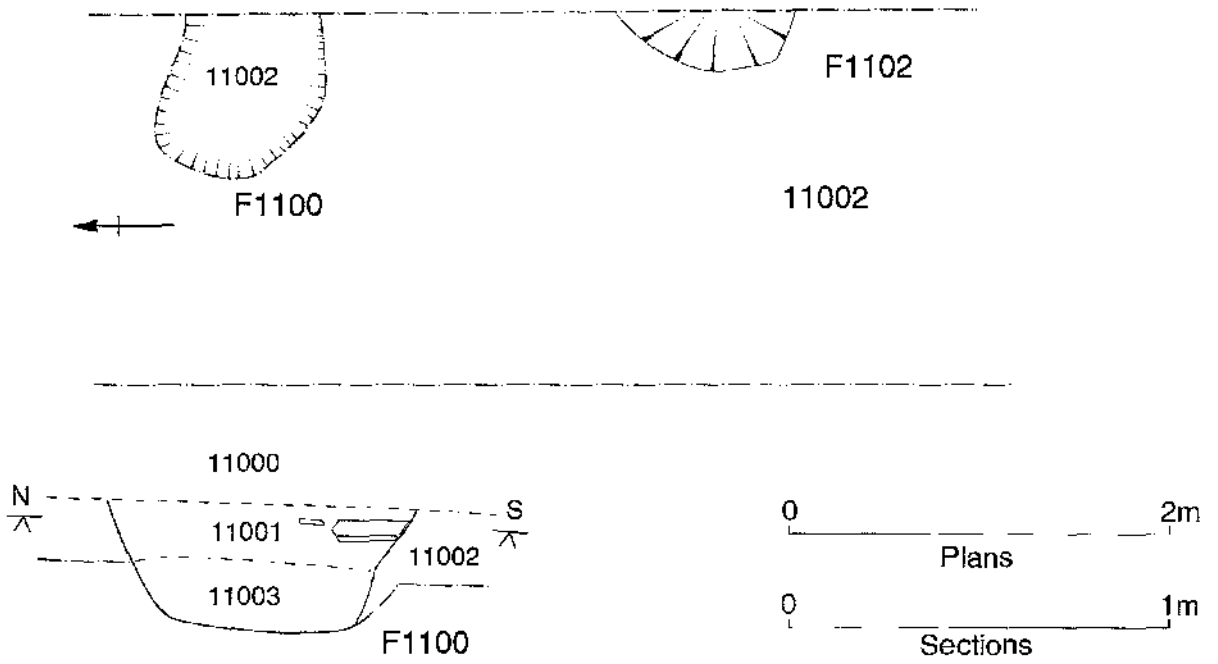
TRENCH 26 (continued)



0 _____ 2m

Fig.5 Sections of Trench 26

TRENCH 11 Plan of F1100 and F1102



TRENCH 30 Plan of F3001

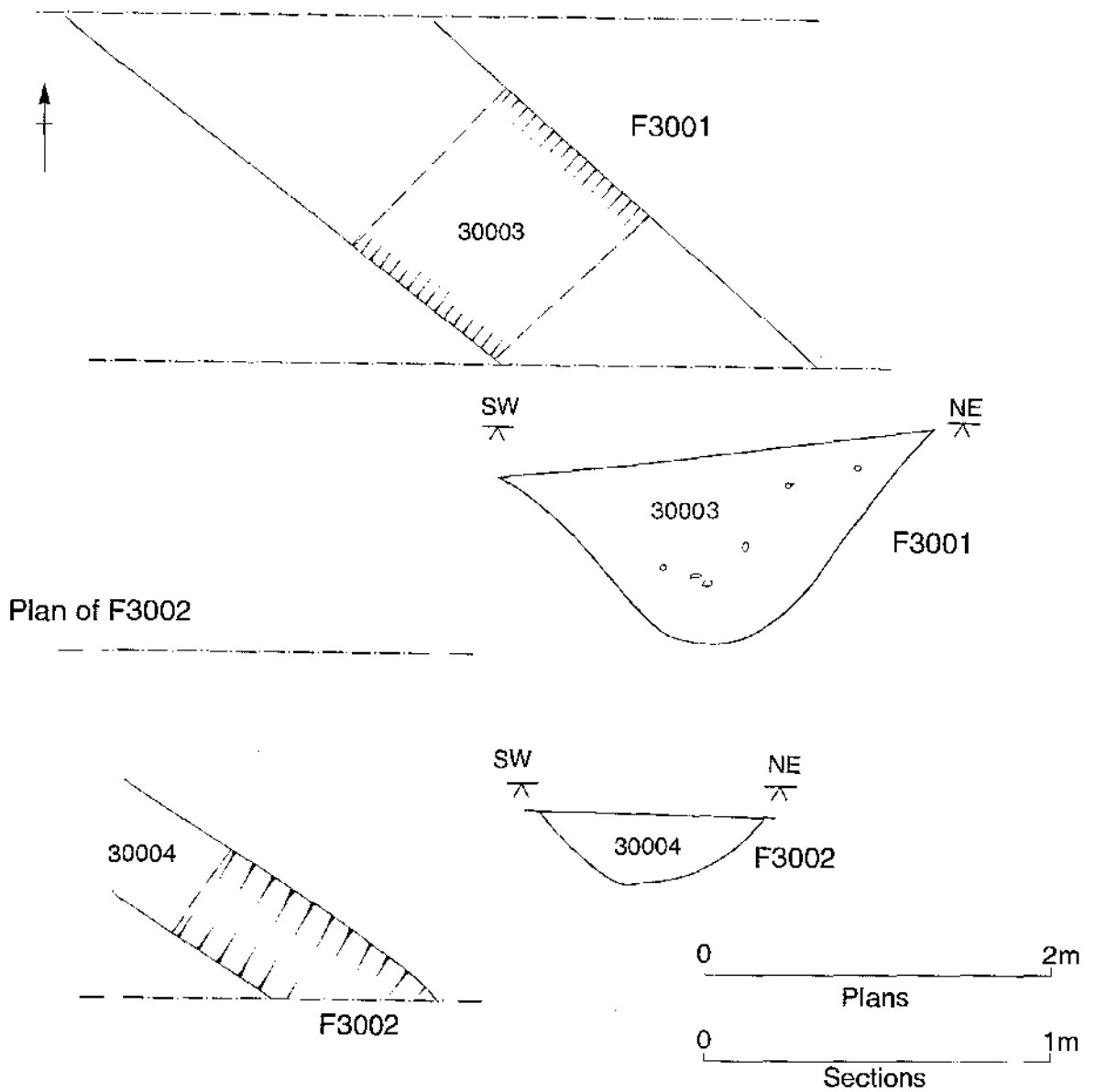


Fig.6 Plans and Sections of Trenches 11 and 30

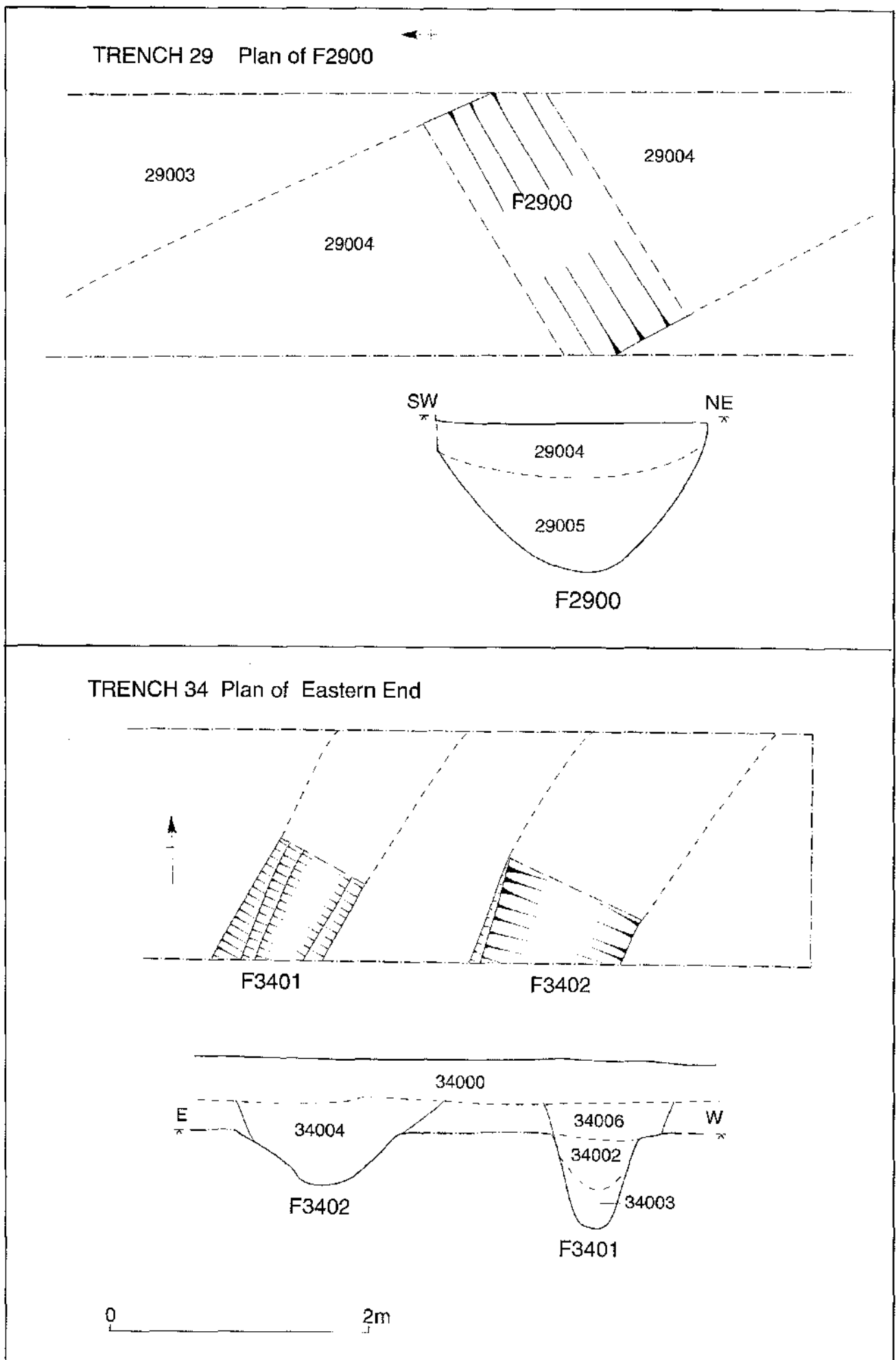


Fig.7 Plans and Sections of Trenches 29 and 34