

**An Archaeological
Evaluation at Bradbury
Lines, Hereford:
Phase Two**

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Phase Two**

by
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An Archaeological Evaluation at Bradbury Lines, Bullingham, Hereford: Phase Two

Summary

George Wimpey UK Ltd have applied for planning permission to redevelop the existing MOD site known as Bradbury Lines, Hereford. The site is c 20.5 hectares in size and is the former 22nd Special Air Service and 264 (SAS) Signal Squadron barracks. The redevelopment is to be carried out in two phases. An archaeological desk-based assessment of the site was carried out by John Samuels Archaeological Consultants in March 2002 but this did not establish whether any archaeological deposits were contained within the site. Following on from this assessment a programme of archaeological evaluation was deemed necessary prior to the granting of planning permission by the County Council. Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) were commissioned to carry out the evaluation by John Samuels Archaeological Consultants acting on behalf of the developer George Wimpey UK Ltd. The evaluation, which was carried out on two separate areas for development called Phase One and Phase Two, consisted of 420m of linear trenches totalling an area of 840m². The positioning of the trenches was limited by the presence of standing buildings across large parts of the site; the trenches were, therefore, excavated in the existing open areas of the site. Two of the three trenches, Trenches 3 and 4, excavated in the Phase Two part of the site did not uncover any archaeological deposits. The trenches showed that these parts of the site had been subject to several episodes of landscaping. Trench 1a contained one archaeological feature, a large but shallow pit, of probable later prehistoric date. This feature contained flint, slag and later prehistoric pottery. The feature also contained charred plant remains of both cultivated crops and weeds. The feature seems to have been a hearth used in iron smithing.

1.0 Introduction

This report outlines the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out at the former 22nd Special Air Services and 264 (SAS) Signal Squadron barracks at Bradbury Lines, Hereford in advance of proposed redevelopment. John Samuels Archaeological Consultants, acting on behalf of George Wimpey UK Ltd, commissioned Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) to carry out this fieldwork in June 2002.

The site lies within an area of known prehistoric and medieval activity. No archaeological information exists for the site, as it has been a restricted place under the terms of the Official Secrets Act since its inception as a military facility in the 1930s. A programme of archaeological assessment was therefore deemed necessary by the County Council's archaeological advisor prior to the approval of planning permission for the redevelopment. This evaluation forms the second stage of the programme of archaeological assessment and follows a desk-based assessment of the site by John Samuels Archaeological Consultants (2002a). The redevelopment is envisaged as comprising two separate stages of development. The Phase One redevelopment will

affect the northwestern part of the former base; Phase Two will affect the southeastern portion of the base. This report outlines the results of the evaluation trenches excavated in the area affected by the Phase Two redevelopment only.

The evaluation method was agreed with Julian Cotton of Herefordshire County Council on site and the fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the specification prepared by John Samuels Archaeological Consultants for this project (2002b) and with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994).

2.0 Site Location

The site lies c 1.4 miles to the south of Hereford town centre at the southern edge of the city's associated suburbs (Figure 1). The site lies about half a mile to the southwest of the River Wye. The site is bounded to the north and northwest by the rear of the housing plots along Web Tree Avenue, Garrick Avenue and Ross Road. To the east the site is bounded by Hoarwithy Road. The western side of the site is bounded by Bullingham Lane. The south boundary of the site is formed by the Crewe – Cardiff railway.

3.0 Topography and Geology

The topography of the site is generally flat. Slight changes in level, between 59 – 61 m AOD, exist between areas of different usage, indicating that levelling activity has probably occurred in parts of the site. The first and second gravel terraces of the River Wye form the underlying drift geology of the site. These are overlain by red and orange clays in places.

4.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

The fact that access to this site has been restricted due to its status as a military facility means that many of the traditional sources of archaeological information, for example aerial photographs, are not available for the site itself. No archaeological work is known to have been carried out on the site prior to the current programme of archaeological assessment.

The desk-based assessment of the site failed to find any records on the Hereford SMR which lay within the site itself (JSAC 2002a, 8). An assessment of SMR records for the vicinity of the site showed that evidence of prehistoric (Neolithic) and medieval activity exists around the site (JSAC 2002a, 8). The site itself lies around a mile and a half northwest of the hillfort at Dinedor Camp (Figure 1).

The area around the site was probably settled in the Anglo-Saxon period. The nearest Anglo-Saxon settlement to the site was probably Bullingham, now Bullinghope, which lies just over a mile to the south of the site. The placename Bullingham may derive from

the Old English 'bula ingham' settlement/valley of Bula's people (JSAC 2002a, 7). Settlement at Bullingham is attested from the 11th century onwards.

The site itself does not seem to have been settled in the post-medieval period and seems to have lain in the agricultural hinterland of the surrounding villages (JSAC 2002a, 7). The site seems to have remained undeveloped until the construction of the first army camp there in 1938. This camp comprised several complexes of wooden huts and was subject to various military uses until the site was occupied by the 22nd Special Air Service and 264 (SAS) Signal Squadron in 1960. The form of the base seems to have been relatively unchanged until the 1970s when a major reconstruction of the base was undertaken. The site was cleared of the original structures and the barrack blocks and attendant buildings were constructed. The base retains the structures and organisational layout established by this reconstruction to the present day.

5.0 Aims

The aims of this evaluation were to gather sufficient information to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the site, to establish the character, significance, quality and date of any archaeological deposits encountered and to identify the scope of any further archaeological work required prior to development.

6.0 Method

A length of 420 metres of linear trenches, two metres wide, was excavated across both phases of the site, representing a total coverage of 840m². The positioning of the trenches was limited to the existing open areas on the site as the military buildings have not yet been demolished. Three trenches, totalling 218 metres, were excavated in the Phase Two part of the site.

The trenches were excavated using a tracked 360 excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under direct archaeological supervision. The trenches were excavated down to the natural subsoil or the upper surface of any significant archaeological horizon. All significant archaeological deposits encountered were excavated by hand and recorded on *pro-forma* record cards supplemented by scale plans, section drawings and photographs, where appropriate. Where no archaeological deposits were identified, the stratigraphy was recorded and photographed. Finds were retained by context and suitably qualified staff were available to carry out final analysis and any conservation required.

The paper records, photographs and finds comprise the site archive. The archive has been prepared according to the guidelines outlined in Appendix 3 of the *Management of Archaeology Projects* (English Heritage 1991), the *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage* (UKIC 1990), and *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections* (Museum and Art Galleries Commission 1992). The archive will be deposited with the relevant repository with the prior notification and

agreement of the museum, within a reasonable time after the completion of the evaluation, subject to approval by the landowner.

7.0 Results

The trial trenches, Trenches 1a, 3 and 4, in the Phase Two part of the site were located in one of the base's former playing fields and in the former aerial field.

7.0 Trench 1a (Figures 2 and 3, Plates 1-3)

Trench 1a was located in one of the base's playing fields. The trench was 80m long and aligned approximately northwest-southeast. Trench 1a was frequently disturbed by services and drainage trenches. The alignment of Trench 1a was changed after the machining of the trench was begun, causing a kink in the trench near the southeastern end. A drain was located within the first metre of the trench which would have run straight through the middle of the length of the trench if the intended alignment was maintained. Trench 1a was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.70m below the modern ground surface (56.72m AOD) at the southeastern end of the trench where the underlying natural geology (1001) was detected. The natural was an orange-brown gravel. The depth of the natural gravel rose along the course of the southeastern half of the trench and was a uniform depth of 0.30m from the modern ground surface along the northwestern half of the trench. The natural gravel was disturbed by recent drainage trenches in places (Plate 1).

Along the southeastern half of the trench the natural gravel was overlain by a layer of mid-yellow-brown clayey silt (1005). This layer was heavily flecked with charcoal and disturbed by service and drainage trenches. This layer was 0.30m deep and petered-out as the level of the natural gravel rose towards the middle of the trench. This layer appears to be the remains of a subsoil and may be a buried soil horizon. After this point, over the northwestern half of the trench, the natural gravel was overlain directly by the topsoil (1000). The topsoil (1000) was a dark brown slightly stony silt and also directly overlay the clayey silt layer (1005).

One archaeological feature (F100) was detected within this trench. The feature lay 16m from the southeastern end of Trench 1a. Only about half of the feature was visible in plan after the initial machining of the trench so a small extension to the side of the trench was excavated in order to clarify the nature and extent of the feature (Figure 3). Feature F100 was oval in plan, measuring 2.08m by 1.60m, its long axis oriented northeast-southwest (Figure 3, Plate 2). It had a flattened U-shaped profile and was 0.24m deep. It was cut through on its western side by a gravel filled drainage trench (Figure 3, Plate 3). The feature contained three fills (Figure 5, Plate 2). The basal fill of the feature was a layer of dark grey, slightly sandy silt, with large quantities of gravel (1004), and varied in thickness from 0.02m to 0.08m. This layer was partially overlain by a layer of burnt clay (1003) which was red in colour (Plate 2). This burnt clay layer did not extend across the whole of the feature but was concentrated in the centre of the feature, being

approximately circular in plan and measuring 1m in width (Plate 3). The uppermost fill of the feature was a dark grey sandy silt which contained a large amount of charcoal and frequent stones (1002). This layer was 0.10m thick and overlay the burnt clay layer (1003) and the basal fill of the pit (1004) where it was not covered by the burnt clay (Figure 3).

The uppermost fill of F100 (1002) was the only layer which contained any finds. Two small sherds of prehistoric pottery, one flint flake, ten fragments of animal bone and twenty-eight pieces of a slag-like material were recovered.

7.2 Trench 3 (Figure 2, Plate 4)

Trench 3 was excavated in the base's former aerial field. The trench was 67m long and aligned approximately north-south. Trench 3 was very heavily disturbed by numerous services, including two gas mains and several electric cables, and concrete capped drains. The presence of these services meant that it was not possible to excavate this trench down to the level of the natural over a total of ten metres of the trench's length. Trench 3 was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.20m below the modern ground surface (56.51m AOD) at the northern end of the trench where the underlying natural geology (3003) was detected. The natural was a mixture of bands of compact red clay and red-brown gravel. The depth of the natural rose slightly toward the southern end of the trench to c 1m deep. The natural was only disturbed by two service trenches.

The natural gravel was overlain by a 0.45m thick deposit of dark red-brown clayey silt (3002). This layer was heavily flecked with charcoal and occurred at 0.70m below the modern ground surface. This layer was interpreted as a deep subsoil layer. No archaeological features were visible cut through this layer or sealed by it. Layer 3002 was disturbed by all the service trenches located.

The subsoil was overlain by a 0.36m thick layer of rubble (3001) which occurred at 0.34m below the modern ground surface. The layer had a fairly level surface and was mainly composed of small-large stones and bricks and building rubble. The nature of this layer was extremely mixed, which suggests that the layer had accumulated by the levelling of dumps of rubble and other materials in order to create a level surface.

This rubble layer was overlain by the 0.34m thick topsoil (3000), a mid-brown slightly sandy silt containing frequent stones.

No archaeological features or deposits were detected in this trench, though one artefact was recovered from this trench, a flint blade of probable Neolithic date. This was found unstratified near one of the electrical service trenches in the centre of the trench (L. Hevan *pers. comm.*). The centre of Trench 3 was the most disturbed portion of the trench, so it is impossible, on present evidence, to say whether this blade came from an archaeological deposit in this vicinity or whether it was imported in the levelling material described above.

7.3 Trench 4 (Figure 2, Plate 5)

The trench was 70m long and aligned approximately east-west. Trench 4 was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.00m below the modern ground surface (58.33m AOD) at the western end of the trench. The underlying natural geology (4003) was detected at 0.70m below the modern ground surface. The natural was an orange-yellow sandy gravel which had occasional bands of red-brown gravel toward the western end of the trench.

The natural gravel was overlain by a deposit of light orange-brown sandy silt with some clay (4002). This layer was heavily flecked with charcoal and possessed frequent stones. This layer occurred at 0.40m below the modern ground surface, and was a maximum of 0.30m thick. This layer was interpreted as a deep subsoil layer, which may represent a buried soil horizon. No archaeological features were visible cut through this layer or sealed by it. This layer was sampled in places to see if any dateable artefacts were contained within it but none was recovered.

The subsoil was overlain by a 0.30m thick layer of clayey gravel with rubble (4001) which occurred at 0.10m below the modern ground surface. The layer had a fairly level surface and contained large amounts of modern debris including plastic. This layer seems to be indicative of recent levelling activity and was overlain by the topsoil (4000), a mid-brown, slightly sandy, silt containing frequent stones and approximately 0.10m thick.

No archaeological features or deposits were detected in this trench.

8.0 The Finds

Table 1: Quantification of Finds by Context and Material

CONTEXT	ANIMAL BONE	SLAG	FLINT	POTTERY
1002	1g	121g	1	2

The only finds from the site came from context 1002, the upper fill of F100, in Trench 1a. The pottery was of probable later Iron Age date and was thin-walled (A. Woodward *pers. comm.*). Slight differences in the fabric and treatment of each sherd are present. One sherd was of a fabric which contained sparse inclusions of medium and large fragments of rock (A. Woodward *pers. comm.*). The other sherd was vesicular and tempered with lime, the pot having been burnished on its exterior surface (A. Woodward *pers. comm.*). The flint flake was undateable but had been burnt (L. Bevan *pers. comm.*). The animal bone fragments all seem to be fragments of the enamel of a cow tooth. A total of 121 grammes of smithing slag was also found in 1002 (A. Hancocks *pers. comm.*). This included one fragment of hearth bottom with a convex base, tap slag was also recognised, some fragments of which had baked fired clay adhering to it (A. Hancocks *pers. comm.*).

An assessment of the plant remains from the evaluation excavation at Bradbury Lines (SAS02), Herefordshire

Marina Ciaraldi

27/06/2002

An archaeological evaluation at Bradbury Lines has uncovered a single prehistoric feature. A soil sample of 20 litres was taken from feature F100, trench 1 and the plant remains recovered are here discussed. The sediment consisted of an ashy, loose silt and contained some slags (**I haven't seen them but Maurice mentioned them in the processing sheet**).

The sample was processed with a York flotation machine. The light fraction (flot) was recovered on a 0.5 sieve and the residue (heavy fraction) on a 1mm mesh. The residue was sorted by eye, whereas the flots was sorted under a low power stereomicroscope.

Results and recommendation

The flot contained very fragmented pieces of charcoal, some chaff, a few cereal and weed seeds. The chaff included glume bases (13) and a single forklet of spelt (*Triticum spelta* L.). The cereal grains were poorly preserved and identifiable only as wheat (*Triticum* sp.). Some seeds of *Rumex* sp.(3), *Bromus* sp. (1) and *Polygonum lapathifolium* (1) were also observed.

The recovery of charred plant remains from the sample examined suggests there is the potential of finding them on site. The presence of chaff and weeds amongst the plant remains identified implies either that agricultural activities were undertaken on site or that crop waste was used as fuel or tinder.

On the basis of the results discussed above, it is recommended that sampling is undertaken in any further excavation of the site, particularly if the prehistoric date of the site is confirmed.

9.0 Environmental Assessment by Dr. Marina Ciaraldi

One environmental sample, totalling 20 litres, was taken from context 1002. The plant remains recovered from the sample are here discussed. The sediment consisted of an ashy, loose silt and contained some slags. The sample was processed with a York flotation machine. The light fraction (flot) was recovered on a 0.5mm sieve and the residue (heavy fraction) on a 1mm mesh. The residue was sorted by eye, whereas the flots were sorted under a low-power stereomicroscope.

9.1 Results

The flot contained very fragmented pieces of charcoal, some chaff, and a few cereal and weed seeds. The chaff included glume bases (13) and a single forklet of spelt (*Triticum spelta* L.). The cereal grains were poorly preserved and identifiable only as wheat (*Triticum* sp.). Some seeds of *Rumex* sp.(3), *Bromus* sp. (1) and *Polygonum lapathifolium* (1) were also observed. The presence of chaff and weeds amongst the plant remains identified implies either that agricultural activities were undertaken on site or that crop waste was used as fuel or tinder.

10.0 Discussion

This phase of the evaluation located one feature of prehistoric date and a possible buried soil in the form of the deep subsoils observed across parts of the site. The feature located seems to be a hearth used for iron smithing which, on the basis of the artefacts recovered from the feature, seems to date to the Iron Age. While this feature may have existed in isolation, further archaeological features may exist in the immediate vicinity. This evaluation suggests that large areas of the base have otherwise been extensively landscaped. The areas around Trenches 3 and 4 seem to have been raised by this levelling. Much of the area around Trench 1a has been terraced and levelled, removing subsoil deposits. The areas where deep subsoils are present, around Trench 4 and the southeastern half of Trench 1a, probably represent the areas in which any further archaeological remains which may be present will be best preserved. The area around Trench 3 is probably too disturbed by the many services detected during the excavation of this trench to contain intelligible archaeological deposits, if they had ever existed in this area.

11.0 Acknowledgements

This report was written by Melissa Conway and edited by Iain Ferris, who also managed the project. The illustrations were prepared by John Halsted. The fieldwork was carried out by Maurice Hopper, Kate Bain and Andy Rudge supervised by Melissa Conway. The environmental samples were processed by Maurice Hopper and examined by Dr. Marina Ciaraldi, who also prepared the report on the environmental samples. The pottery was examined by Dr. Ann Woodward, the flint by Lynne Bevan and the slags by Annette Hancocks. Many thanks are due to Forbes Marsden of John Samuels Archaeological Consultants and George Wimpey UK Ltd. for commissioning this project. Many thanks are due to Karl and Paul of Hydrex Ltd. for their expert machine driving.

12.0 References

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- JSAC 2002a *An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment of Bradbury Lines, Bullingham Lane, Hereford* John Samuels Archaeological Consultants Report
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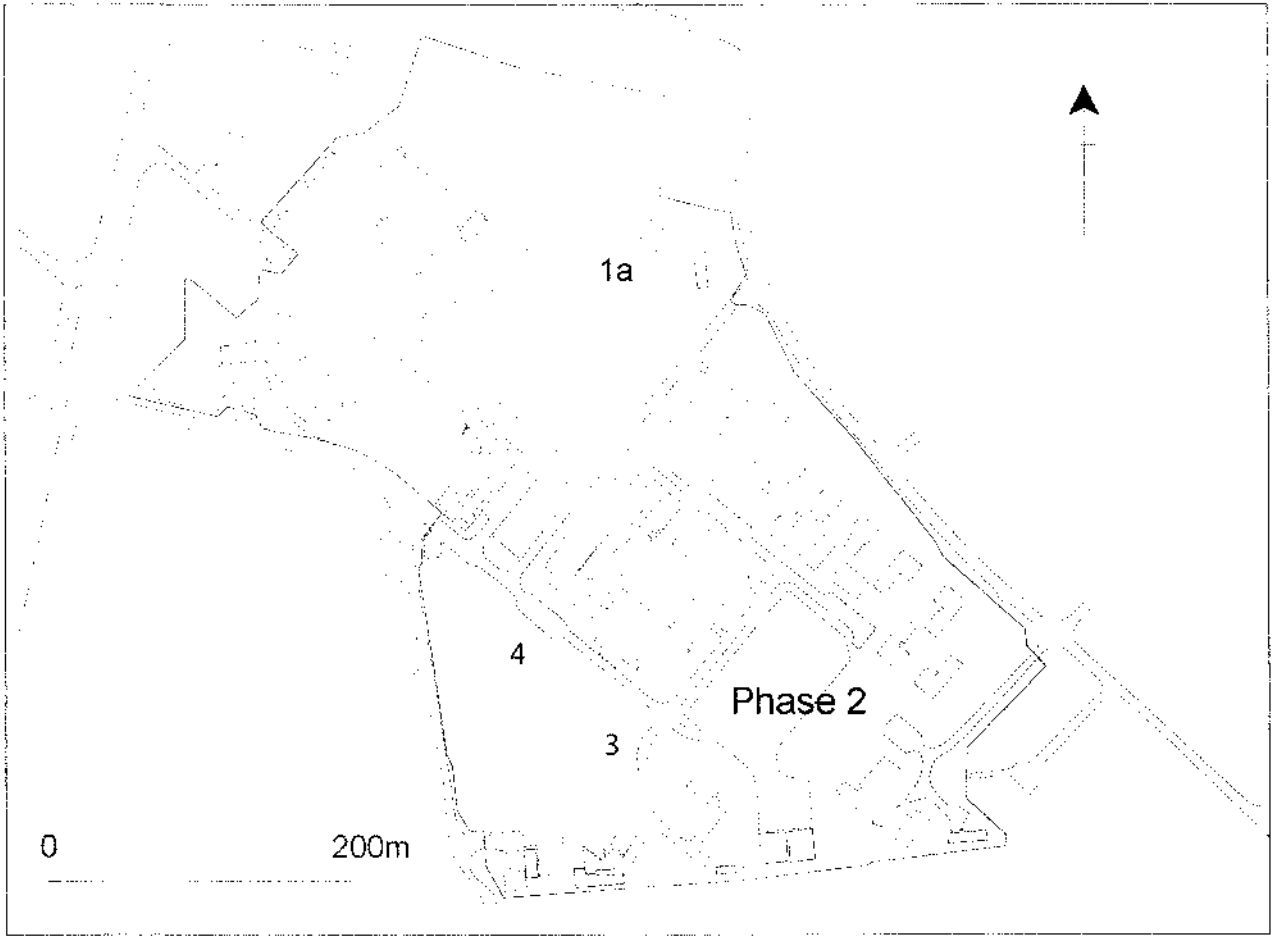


Figure 2

Trench 1a

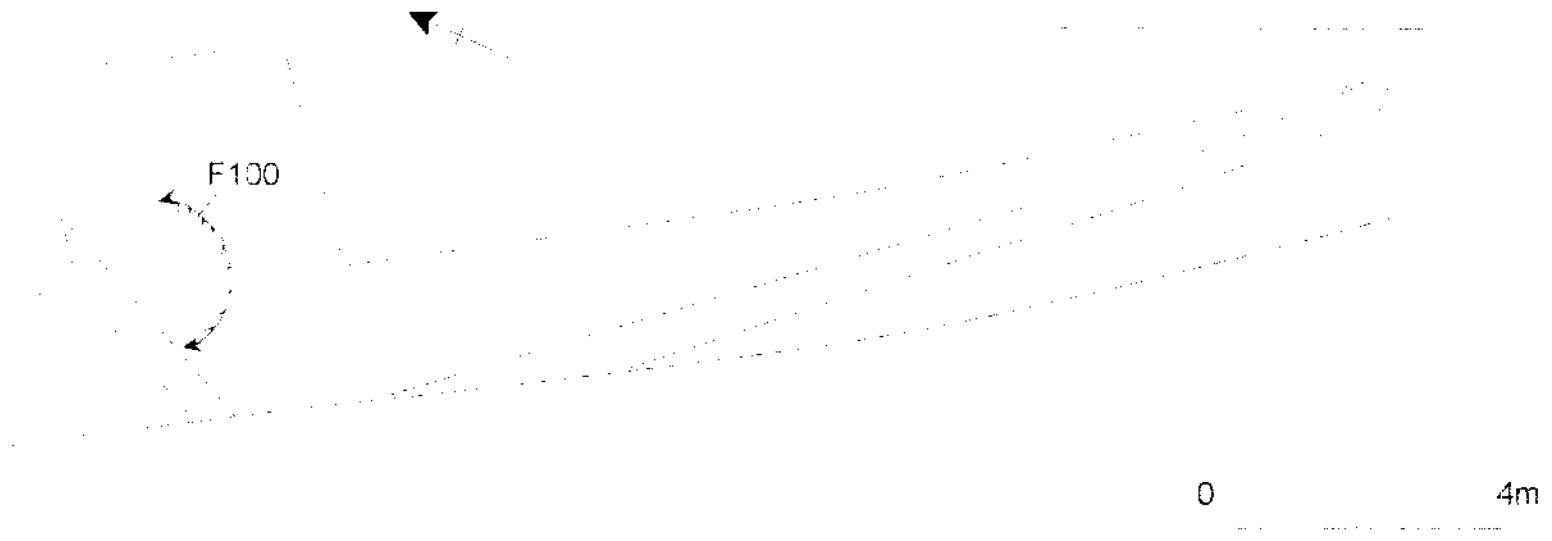
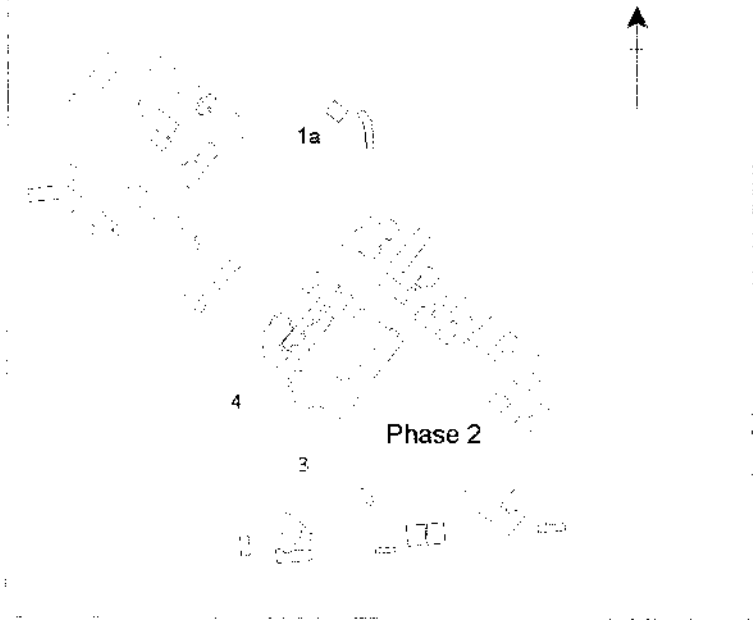
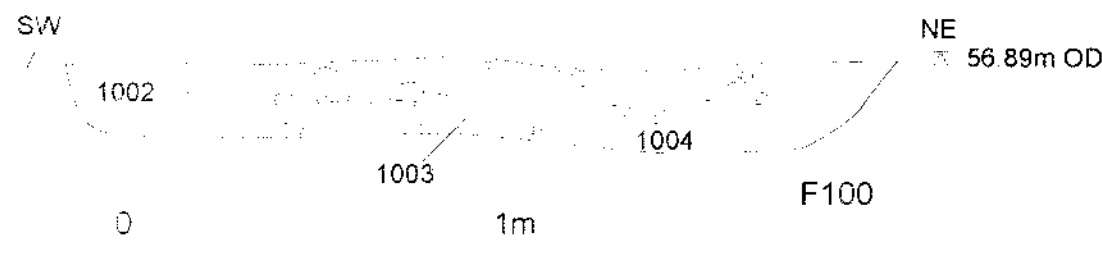


Figure 3



Plate 1

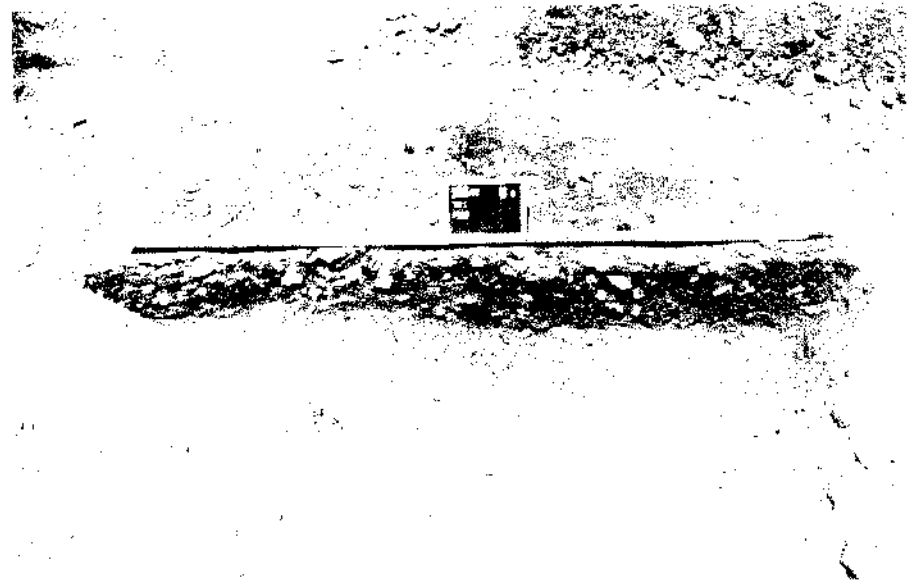


Plate 2

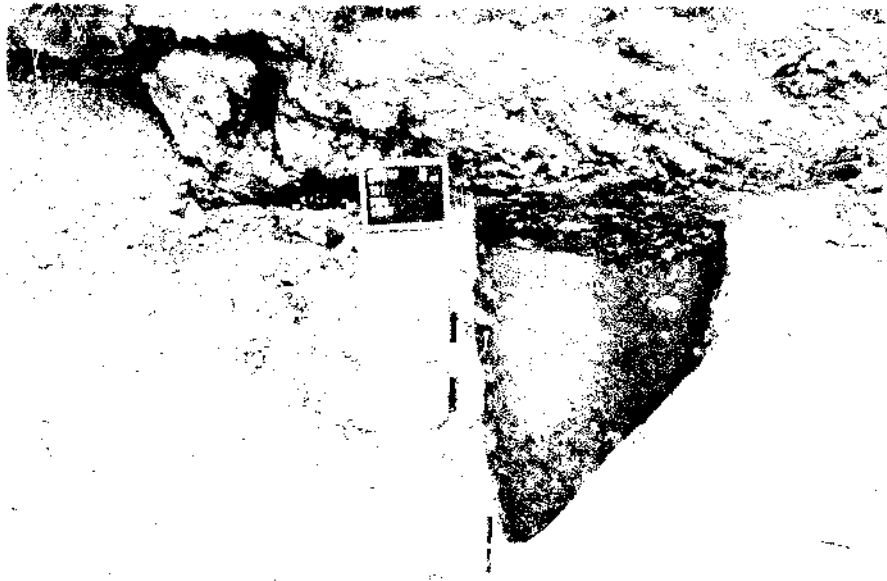


Plate 3



Plate 4



Plate 5