

**Land Adjoining the Former Post  
House Hotel, Littleover, Derby**

**An Archaeological Evaluation 2003**

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# **Land adjoining the former Post House Hotel, Littleover, Derby. An Archaeological Evaluation 2003**

## **1.0 Summary**

*An archaeological evaluation of land adjacent to the site of the former Post House Hotel, Littleover, Derby (centred on NGR. SK 32503420) was undertaken by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit in May 2003. The evaluation was sponsored by Michael Goodall Quality Homes Limited, ahead of the proposed development of the site. Previous archaeological work comprised desk-based assessment, and geophysical survey. Trial trenches were located to test features, or possible features of archaeological interest, and also areas for which no archaeological information was available. A total of 13 trenches was excavated. Lengths of a metalled road of probable Roman date were identified in Trenches 2, 3, 5 and 13. A north-south alignment comprising six pits of Late Iron Age date was recorded in Trenches 12 and 5. One human juvenile cremation, contained within an urn of Bronze Age date was excavated in Trench 5. Two unexcavated cremations and a further five possible cremations were recorded in Trench 5, and a sixth in Trench 3. An undated earth bank which survived as an above-ground feature was also tested by the trenching. Plough-furrows, post-medieval field boundaries and modern intrusions were present in trenches within the southwestern part of the site.*

## **2.0 Introduction**

This report describes the results of an archaeological evaluation, by means of trial-trenching, carried out by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU), of land adjacent to the site of the former Post House Hotel, Littleover, Derby (NGR SK 32503420, Fig. 1, hereafter the site). The site included two lengths of Ryknild Street, a Roman road, both Scheduled Ancient Monuments (DR 236 a and b). This archaeological evaluation was required in advance of the consideration of development proposals, in accordance with government advice in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 *Archaeology and Planning*. Scheduled Monument Consent for the trenching was granted on 12 May 2003, and revised by letter of 2 June 2003, to take account of agreed changes to trench locations to avoid live services. A Home Office Licence was granted to enable the lifting of cremated human remains. The work conforms to a Design Brief prepared by Derbyshire County Council (Derbyshire CC 2003), and a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by BUFAU (BUFAU 2002) and follows the standards and guidance for archaeological field evaluations published by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA 2001). Previous work comprised a geophysical survey (Stratascan 2003) and desk based assessment (Hancox 2003).

## **3.0 Site location and description (Figs. 1 and 2)**

The site is located to the southwest of Derby City Centre. It is bounded by Pastures Hill to the southeast, Chain Lane to the northeast, by Greenway Drive to the northeast, and by a new housing estate to its remaining sides. The site comprises the partly demolished Crest Hotel and grounds. Most of the land comprises open areas of grass and tarmac. Details of the archaeological background may be found in the archaeological assessment (Hancox 2003) and will not be repeated here.

The archive will be deposited with Derby City Museum within a reasonable time following completion of the project, subject to the agreement of the landowner.

#### **4.0 Aims**

The broad aims of the evaluation were test the archaeological potential of the site, and to assess the likely impact of the proposed development upon that resource.

The detailed objectives of this archaeological evaluation related to:

- Defining the extent of the Roman roads that are Scheduled Ancient Monuments.
- Evaluating the unscheduled portions of the Roman road.
- Testing the potential for roadside activity.

In particular, it was intended to test the two roughly southwest-northeast aligned above-ground earthwork banks, provisionally interpreted as forming the agger of a Roman road either side of a slight change of alignment. It was also intended to determine the presence of any roadside features. Further aims related to the testing of geophysical anomalies (Stratascan 2003), provisionally interpreted as representing the Roman road, or more recent field boundaries. By locating the alignment and location of the Roman road, the trenching aimed to pinpoint precisely the location and extent of the Scheduled Areas which were imprecisely mapped before the evaluation. These aims were achieved through archaeological trial trenching.

#### **5.0 Methodology**

Overburden was removed by a JCB excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. This was monitored by a qualified archaeologist at all times. Care was taken not to damage the above-ground earthwork banks during machine movement across the site. Where appropriate, surfaces and sections were hand cleaned to aid interpretation and recording. In trenches intercepting the Roman road, hand-excavation defined the uppermost level of the latest surface. The trenches in the area of the southwest-northeast-aligned above-ground earthwork in the northeast of the site were re-located to avoid live services. No trenches were cut in the area of the former hotel car park because the below-ground deposits here were assumed to have been truncated or scoured-out. A selection of the features, and feature types was hand-excavated. A detailed context record on individual pro-forma record cards was maintained and all deposits were photographed using both colour and monochrome film. Sections and plans were drawn at a scale of 1:50 or 1:20 as appropriate. Where no archaeological deposits were identified, a record of the stratigraphy was nevertheless made.

#### **6.0 Results (Figs. 2-7)**

##### **6.1 Trench 1** (Fig. 1, Plate 1)

*Dimensions:* 38m long by 2m wide (north-south)

*Level (at ground surface):* 104.65m to 104.28m AOD

Trench 1 was located to intercept the Roman road surface, evidence of roadside settlement, and to test an area of magnetic disturbance revealed by the geophysical survey, and the southwest-northeast-aligned above-ground earthwork bank.

The natural subsoil (1005) was encountered at a depth of 0.5m below the present ground surface. This was overlain by a layer of dark brown sandy loam mixed with red sand, gravel and clay with frequent flint nodules (1003), 0.25m deep. Overlying layer 1003, was a topsoil deposit (1000) comprising dark brown sandy loam. Layers 1000 and 1003 were truncated by a straight-sided linear cut (F100, Plate 1) filled by a deposit of dark brown sandy loam, coke and ash (1002), and a redeposited layer of topsoil (1001).

#### *Trench 1 details*

Nos.	Description	Depth of deposit	Context type
1001	Dark brown sandy loam	0.25m	Fill of F100
1002	Dark brown sandy loam, coke and ash	0.25m	Fill of F100
F100	Modern cut	0.5m	Cut
1000	Dark brown sandy loam	0.25m	Topsoil
1003	Dark brown sandy loam mixed with red sand, gravel and clay with frequent flint nodules	0.25m	? Bank
1005	Red sand, gravel and clay with frequent flint nodules	104.65m to 104.28m AOD	Natural subsoil

#### *Interpretation*

The uniform angular nature of feature F100 would suggest that it had been excavated by machine and is therefore likely to be a modern field drain. It contained numerous modern inclusions and can be securely dated to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This feature corresponded with the geophysical anomaly. Layer 1003 may represent the truncated base of the earthwork bank. No other features of archaeological interest were encountered in this trench and no archaeological artifacts of interest were recovered. No trace of the Roman road surface could be identified in this trench.

### 6.2 Trench 2 (Fig. 4, Plate 2)

*Dimensions:* 31m long by 2m wide (east-west)

*Level (at ground surface):* 104.93m to 105.20m AOD

Trench 2 was located to intercept the Roman road surface, any Roman roadside features and the northeast-southwest-aligned above-ground earthwork bank.

The natural subsoil (2002) was encountered at a depth of 0.85m below the present ground surface. The road surface (F205, Plate 2) was approximately 5.0m wide and 0.1m in depth. The road metal (2008) comprised small and medium sized round pebbles compacted into a matrix of brown sandy clay and measured 0.1m in depth. This directly overlay the natural subsoil (2002). Several larger stones were recorded on the eastern and

western edges of the road. Three north-south aligned narrow features (F200, F204 and F206) and one circular feature (F201) cut the natural subsoil. Two of these features (F204 and F206) were excavated, due to their close proximity to the linear road surface (F205). On the southwestern side of the road, feature F204 was approximately 0.65m wide and 0.4m in depth and was filled with a light brown sandy silt deposit with frequent stone and flint (2007). Immediately southwest of feature F204 was evidence of plough scarring cutting the natural ground surface. On the northeastern side of the road, feature F206 was approximately 0.5m wide and 0.3m in depth and was filled by a deposit of mid grey/brown silty sand with frequent stone and flint (2009). No artifacts were recovered from features F204 or F206. A layer of red/brown sandy clay silt with gravel and flint nodules (2001) measuring 0.2m to 0.85m in depth overlay these features. Immediately above was a layer of dark brown sandy loam (2000) 0.1m to 0.45m in depth. No other features of archaeological interest were recorded.

*Trench 2 details*

Nos.	Description	Depth of deposit	Context type
2000	Dark brown sandy loam	0.1m to 0.45m	Topsoil
2001	Red/brown sandy clay silt with gravel and flint nodules	0.2m to 0.85m	Layer
2003	Mid/light brown silt with occasional stones and charcoal flecks	N/A	Fill of F200
F200	Gully	N/A	Unexcavated gully
2004	Mid/light brown silt with occasional stones and frequent charcoal flecks	N/A	Fill of F201
F201	Circular cut	N/A	Unexcavated circular cut
2005	Mid brown silt with occasional stones and charcoal flecks	N/A	Fill of F202
F202	Gully	N/A	Unexcavated linear cut
2007	Light brown sandy silt with frequent stones	0.4m	Fill of F204
F204	Gully	0.4m	Possible roadside drainage gully
2008	Compacted rounded stones	0.1m	Road metal
F205	Road surface	0.1m	Road surface
2009	Mid grey/brown silty sand with frequent stone and flint	0.3m	Fill of F206
F206	Gully	0.3m	Possible road drainage gully?
2002	Red sand, gravel and clay with frequent flint nodules	104.93m to 105.20m AOD	Natural subsoil

## *Interpretation*

Flanked by gullies F204 and F206, the road surface (F205) is almost certainly the remains of the Roman road identified in the desk-based assessment, although no dating evidence was recovered. The larger stones recorded to the east and west of the road surface may be the remains of kerbs to retain the road metal. The two unexcavated ditches (F200 and F202) may relate to post-medieval field boundaries. Although the unexcavated circular cut (F201) respected the line of cremations in Trenches 3 and 5 and the pit alignment in Trenches 12 and 5, although this observation is not conclusive evidence for the interpretation of feature F201.

### 6.3 Trench 3 (Fig. 5, Plates 3-4)

*Dimensions:* 40.5m long by 2m wide (northwest-southeast)

*Level (at ground surface):* 105.22m to 105.61m AOD

Trench 3 was located to intercept the Roman road, any roadside features, and the southwest-northeast-aligned earthwork bank.

The natural subsoil (3007) was encountered at a depth of 0.3m to 0.6m below the present ground surface. Four features (F303, F304, F305 and F306) cut the natural subsoil. Feature F303 comprised a rectangular area of charcoal-rich soil, 0.35m across, but was not excavated. Feature F304 was an irregular shallow scoop, measuring between 0.4m and 0.8m in width and 0.05m to 0.2m in depth, filled with a mid-brown sandy silt deposit with occasional pebbles (3004) which contained two sherds of Late Iron Age pottery. A ditch (F306), 0.5m in width, and 0.26m in depth was recorded at the northeastern end of the trench. A single sherd of Roman pottery was recovered from the feature fill (3006). Feature F306 was cut by a very shallow linear feature (F305) measuring 0.36m in width and 0.09m in depth. Two features (F301 and F302) overlay the natural subsoil (3007). The southwest-northeast-aligned above-ground earthwork (F301, Plate 3) visible as an above-ground feature was 9.75m in width and 0.25m in maximum depth. The earthwork comprised a deposit of dark brown silty clay (3002) with pebbles. One sherd of pottery was recovered from the surface of feature F301. To the east of, and running approximately parallel with, earthwork F301 was a road surface (F302, Plate 4) 4.75m in width and 0.1m in depth. The western half of the road had been truncated by plough scars. The road metal (3003) comprised rounded stones compacted into a silty brown clay matrix. No evidence of roadside ditches was encountered. With the exception of feature F301, a layer of b-horizon subsoil (3008) 0.05m to 0.2m in depth sealed these features. Immediately above this was a layer of dark brown sandy loam (3001) 0.3m in depth.

### *Trench 3 details*

Nos.	Description	Depth of deposit	Context type
3001	Dark brown sandy loam	Up to 0.3m	Topsoil layer
3008	Silty red sand, gravel and clay with frequent flint nodules	Up to 0.3m	B-horizon subsoil
3002	Dark brown silty clay with pebbles	Up to 0.3m	Earthwork
F301	Southwest-northeast-aligned earthwork	Up to 0.25m in height	Positive feature
3006	Mid/dark brown clayey loam	0.26m	Fill of F306
F306	Ditch	0.26m	Cut
3005	Mid/dark brown clayey loam	0.09m	Fill of F305
F305	Root disturbance	0.09m	Cut
3004	Mid-brown sandy silt with occasional pebbles	0.05m to 0.26m	Fill of F304
F304	Shallow scoop	0.05m to 0.26m	Cut
F303	Possible cremation (unexcavated)	N/A	Human burial
3003	Compacted rounded stones	0.1m	Road metal
F302	Road surface (equivalent to F205)	0.1m	Road surface
3007	Red sand, gravel and clay with frequent flint nodules	105.22m to 105.61m AOD	Natural subsoil

### *Interpretation*

This trench tested the best-preserved above-ground portion of the earthwork. The morphology of the earthwork suggests it may be an anthropogenic boundary feature. The road surface (F302) already noted in Trench 2 was again apparent. Although unexcavated, the morphology, location and fill of feature F303 suggested that it was a cremation, possibly originally associated with others found in Trench 5. Feature F305 was almost certainly the result of root disturbance. The shallow scoop (F304) is probably the remains of an Iron Age pit truncated by Roman road construction.

### 6.4 Trench 4 (Fig. 6)

*Dimensions:* 28m long by 2m wide (northeast-southwest)

*Level (at ground surface):* 105.34m to 105.58m AOD

Trench 4 was located to intercept the Roman road, and any roadside features.

The natural subsoil (4002) was encountered at a depth of 0.5m below the present ground surface. Northwest-southeast aligned ditch F400 cut the natural subsoil, and was 0.3m in width and 0.25m in depth. It was filled by a mid/light brown sandy silt with pebbles (4003). No artefacts were recovered from this feature. A b-horizon subsoil layer (4001) up to 0.15m in depth overlay the natural subsoil. Immediately above this was a topsoil layer, 0.2m to 0.3m in depth.



#### *Trench 4 details*

Nos.	Context Description	Depth of deposit	Context type
4000	Dark brown sandy loam (topsoil)	0.2 to 0.3m	Layer
4001	Red/brown sandy clay silt with gravel and flint nodules	Up to 0.15m	Layer
4003	Mid/light brown sandy silt with pebbles	0.25m	Fill of F400
F400	NW-SE ditch	0.25m	Ditch
4002	Red sand, gravel and clay with frequent flint nodules	105.34m to 105.58m AOD	Natural ground surface

#### *Interpretation*

Feature F400 was an undiagnostic shallow ditch on an northwest-southeast alignment and may be the remains of a post-medieval field boundary.

#### 6.5 Trench 5 (Fig. 7, Plates 5-8)

*Dimensions:* 28m long by 2m wide (northwest-southeast)

*Level (at ground surface):* 105.39m to 106.17m AOD

Trench 5 was located to intercept the Roman road surface, and any roadside features.

The natural subsoil (5007) was encountered at a depth of 0.3 to 0.6m below the present ground surface, overlain by a b-horizon subsoil, comprising layer of red/brown sandy clay silt (5001) with gravel and flint nodules. Eight features (F504, F505, F506, F507, F508, F509, F511 and F512) cut this layer. Two (F505 and F509) comprised pits measuring approximately 1.75m x 1.0m filled with deposits of silty natural material, but neither was excavated. Four features (F504, F506, F507 and F508) were the possible remains of human cremations. These were characterised by circular areas of charcoal-rich soil 0.4m to 0.5m in diameter, but were not excavated. Excavated feature F511 contained the remains of a cremated human juvenile (HB01) within a funerary urn of Bronze Age date (Plate 5). This cremation had been compromised by both plough-damage and was lifted because it could not be retained *in situ*. The funerary urn was approximately 0.2m in diameter and was set within a deposit of dark sandy loam and charcoal (5004). The urn had been placed in a shallow cut (F511, Plate 6) 0.5m in diameter and 0.22m in depth. The cut had been backfilled with a deposit of silty red sand and gravel with frequent rounded stones (5003), some of which appeared to have been deliberately arranged surrounding the urn. An area 0.6m in diameter immediately north of the cremation had been disturbed by ploughing and also contained fragments of the cremation and funerary urn. The funerary urn and its contents were removed from site intact (Plate 7) and was excavated under controlled conditions at BUFAU. Feature F512 (Plate 8) comprised an northwest-southeast-aligned ditch with a rounded V-shaped profile, 0.8m in width and 0.4m in depth, filled by a deposit of mid/light brown sandy silt with occasional stone and flint (5005). Two further possible human cremations (F502 and F503) were recorded adjoining the northwest-facing section of the trench, and a third (F510) was recorded at the northern end of the trench, but none of this feature group was excavated. At the

southwestern edge of the trench was recorded a continuation of the road surface (F501) also noted in Trench 3 (F302), overlying the natural ground surface (5007). Above layer 5001 was the dark brown sandy loam topsoil (5000).

#### *Trench 5 details*

Nos.	Description	Depth of deposit	Context type
5000	Dark brown sandy loam	Up to 0.3m	Topsoil layer
5001	Red/brown sandy clay silt with gravel and flint nodules	Up to 0.3m	B-horizon subsoil
5006	Compacted rounded stones	0.1m	Road metal
F501	Road surface (equivalent to F205 and F302)	0.1m	Road surface
F502	Possible cremation (unexcavated)	0.12m	Cut
F503	Possible cremation (unexcavated)	0.1m	Cut
F504	Possible cremation (unexcavated)	N/A	Cut
F505	Pit (unexcavated)	N/A	Cut
F506	Possible cremation (unexcavated)	N/A	Cut
F507	Possible cremation (unexcavated)	N/A	Cut
F508	Possible cremation (unexcavated)	N/A	Cut
F509	Pit (unexcavated)	N/A	Cut
F510	Possible cremation (unexcavated)	N/A	Cut
5003	Silty red sand and gravel with frequent rounded stones	0.22m	Fill of F511
5004	Human remains (HB01), charcoal and dark brown sandy loam	0.22m	Human burial
F511	Cremation	0.22m	Cut
5005	Mid/light brown sandy silt with occasional stone and flint	0.4m	Fill of F512
F512	Ditch	0.4m	Cut
5007	Red sand, gravel and clay with frequent flint nodules	105.39m to 106.17m AOD	Natural subsoil

#### *Interpretation*

Although unexcavated, the two shaped pits (F505 and F509) were almost certainly a continuation of the partially-excavated pit alignment in Trench 12 (see below). One of the pits (F1200) excavated in Trench 12 produced four sherds of Late Iron Age pottery from its primary fill (12004). Four unexcavated features (F504, F506, F507 and F508) are likely to be the remains of human cremations. This argument is based on the characteristic circular areas of charcoal-rich soil bearing a close morphological and metrical resemblance to suggested cremations F502, F503 and F510. It is possible that all these cremations were contemporary with excavated cremation F511, in which case they would be Bronze Age in date. The road surface (F501) was again apparent continuing from Trench 3 on a northeast-southwest alignment.

#### 6.6 Trench 6 (Plate 9)

*Dimensions:* 20m long by 2m wide (northeast-southwest)

*Level (at ground surface): 107.80m to 107.84m AOD*

Trench 6 was located to intercept the Roman road, any roadside features, and the above-ground earthwork in the northeast of the site. This trench was one of several re-located to the east of its original position to avoid live services.

The natural subsoil (6003) was encountered at a depth of 0.5m below the present ground surface. The only feature recorded in this trench (F600, Plate 9) was the above-ground earthwork, overlying layer 6003, and here measuring 9.0m in width and was equivalent to feature F301 in Trench 3. A b-horizon subsoil layer (6001) up to 0.2m in depth overlay the natural ground surface and feature F600. Immediately above this was a topsoil layer (6000) up to 0.3m in depth. No other features of archaeological interest were recorded and no artifacts were recovered.

*Trench 6 details*

Nos.	Description	Depth of deposit	Context type
6000	Dark brown sandy loam	0.25m to 0.3m	Topsoil layer
6001	Red/brown sandy clay silt with gravel and flint nodules	0.1m to 0.2m	B-horizon subsoil
6002	Dark brown silty clay with pebbles (unexcavated)	N/A	Earthwork
F600	Linear earthwork (equivalent to F301), unexcavated	N/A	Positive feature
6003	Red sand, gravel and clay with frequent flint nodules	107.80m to 107.84m AOD	Natural subsoil

*Interpretation*

The unexcavated earthwork bank (F600) visible above-ground was a continuation of feature F301 noted in Trench 3.

6.7 Trench 7

*Dimensions: 29m long by 2m wide (northwest-southeast)*

*Level (at ground surface): 107.37m to 107.73m A.O.D.*

Trench 7 was located to intercept the Roman road and any roadside features.

The natural subsoil (7002) was encountered at a depth of 0.6m below the present ground surface. One feature (F700) overlay the natural subsoil. It comprised a section of the above-ground earthwork measuring 1.5m in width, equivalent to features F301 and F600. A b-horizon subsoil layer (7001) up to 0.25m in depth overlay the feature and the natural subsoil. Immediately above this was a topsoil layer (7000) up to 0.35m in depth. No other features of archaeological interest were recorded and no artifacts were found.

#### *Trench 7*

Nos.	Context Description	Depth of deposit	Context type
7000	Dark brown sandy loam	0.25m to 0.35m	Topsoil layer
7001	Red/brown sandy clay silt with gravel and flint nodules	0.15 to 0.25m	B-horizon subsoil
7003	Dark brown silty clay with pebbles (unexcavated)	N/A	Earthwork
F700	Linear earthwork (equivalent to F301 and F600), unexcavated	N/A	Positive feature
7002	Red sand, gravel and clay with frequent flint nodules	107.37m to 107.73m AOD	Natural ground surface

#### *Interpretation*

The unexcavated linear earthwork bank (F700) was a continuation of the above-ground earthwork also recorded in Trenches 3 (F301) and 6 (F600).

#### 6.8 Trench 8

*Dimensions:* 16m long by 2m wide (northeast-southwest)

*Level (at ground surface):* 107.01m to 107.04m A.O.D.

Trench 8 was located to intercept any Roman roadside activity.

The natural subsoil (8002) was encountered at a depth of 0.5m below the present ground surface. A b-horizon subsoil layer (8001) up to 0.15m in depth overlay the natural subsoil. Immediately above this was a topsoil layer (8000) up to 0.35m in depth. No features of archaeological interest were recorded and no artifacts were recovered.

#### *Trench 8 details*

Nos.	Description	Depth of deposit	Context type
8000	Dark brown sandy loam	0.25m to 0.35m	Topsoil layer
8001	Red/brown sandy clay silt with gravel and flint nodules	0.1m to 0.15m	B-horizon subsoil
8002	Red sand, gravel and clay with frequent flint nodules	107.01m to 107.04m AOD	Natural subsoil

#### *Interpretation*

No features of archaeological interest were recorded and no artifacts were recovered.

## 6.9 Trench 9

*Dimensions:* 33m long by 2m wide (northwest-southeast)

*Level (at ground surface):* 106.74m to 107.39m A.O.D.

Trench 9 was located to intercept any Roman roadside activity.

The natural subsoil (9002) was encountered at a depth of 0.6m below the present ground surface. A b-horizon subsoil layer (9001) up to 0.25m in depth overlay the natural subsoil. Immediately above this was a topsoil layer (9000) up to 0.35m in depth. No features of archaeological interest were recorded and no artifacts were recovered.

### *Trench 9 details*

Nos.	Description	Depth deposit	of	Context type
9000	Dark brown sandy loam	0.25m 0.35m	to	Topsoil layer
9001	Red/brown sandy clay silt with gravel and flint nodules	0.15m 0.25m	to	Subsoil layer
9002	Red sand, gravel and clay with frequent flint nodules	106.74m 107.39m AOD	to	Natural subsoil

### *Interpretation*

No features of archaeological interest were recorded and no artifacts were recovered.

## 6.10 Trench 10

*Dimensions:* 15m long by 2m wide (northeast-southwest)

*Level (at ground surface):* 106.97m to 107.12m AOD

Trench 10 was located to test for evidence of Roman roadside activity.

The natural subsoil (10002) was encountered at a depth of 0.5m below the present ground surface. A b-horizon subsoil layer (9001) up to 0.2m in depth overlay the natural subsoil. Immediately above this was a topsoil layer (9000) up to 0.3m in depth. No features of archaeological interest were recorded and no artifacts were recovered.

### *Trench 10 details*

Nos	Context Description	Depth deposit	of	Context type
10000	Dark brown sandy loam	0.2m to 0.3m		Topsoil layer
10001	Red/brown sandy clay silt with gravel and flint nodules	0.15m to 0.2m		B-horizon subsoil
10002	Red sand, gravel and clay with frequent flint nodules	106.97m 107.12m AOD	to	Natural subsoil

### *Interpretation*

No features of archaeological interest were recorded and no artifacts were recovered.

#### 6.11 Trench 11

*Dimensions:* 34m long by 2m wide (east-west)

*Level (at ground surface):* 102.79m to 105.55m AOD

Trench 11 was located to establish the nature, extent and preservation of any archaeological deposits to the northwest of the putative roadline.

The natural subsoil (11004 and 11005) was encountered at a depth of up to 0.7m below the present ground surface, and was further tested by a machine-cut test pit at the northwestern end of the trench. A b-horizon subsoil layer (11002) up to 0.3m in depth overlay the natural subsoil. Immediately above this were mixed deposits of demolition debris (11000), buried topsoil (11001), and topsoil (11003) up to 0.4m in depth. No features of archaeological interest were recorded and no artifacts were recovered.

#### *Trench 11 details*

Nos.	Description	Depth of deposit	Context type
11000	Dark brown sandy loam with demolition debris	0.4m	Demolition debris
11001	Dark brown sandy loam	0.3m	Buried topsoil layer
11002	Red/brown sandy clay silt with gravel and flint nodules	0.3m	B-horizon subsoil
11003	Dark brown sandy loam	0.3m to 0.4m	Topsoil layer
11004	Red sand, gravel and clay with frequent flint nodules		Natural subsoil
11005	Brown clay	102.79m to 105.55m A.O.D.	Natural subsoil

### *Interpretation*

The trench had been located very close to the former hotel and had been subjected to much modern disturbance. No features of archaeological interest were recorded and no artifacts were recovered.

## 6.12 Trench 12 (Fig. 3, Plate 10)

*Dimensions:* 27m long by 3m wide (mainly east-west)

*Level (at ground surface):* 106.32m to 106.52m AOD

Trench 12 was originally intended to test for evidence of Roman roadside activity. It was subsequently extended to the southwest to locate further evidence of a suggested pit alignment. This trench was also re-located to avoid live services.

The natural subsoil (12002) was encountered at a depth of 0.6m below the present ground surface. Five pits (F1200, F1201, F1202, F1203 and F1204) together forming a roughly north-south alignment were recorded cutting the natural subsoil. Two of these pits were excavated. Feature F1200 (Plate 10) was a round-based pit only partly recorded within the trench. It measured approximately 1.5m in diameter and 0.5m in depth. Two deposits (12004 and 12003) filled the pit. The primary fill (12004) contained one sherd of Late Iron Age pottery and several pieces of worked flint, including a blade fragment. The secondary fill (12003) comprised re-deposited subsoil mixed with silt and charcoal. Feature F1201 was a round-based pit measuring 1.1m in diameter and 0.32m in depth. A single deposit of re-deposited subsoil mixed with silt and charcoal (12005) filled the pit, but no artifacts were collected. The remaining pits forming the alignment (F1202 and F1203) were unexcavated, but appeared to be similar in plan to the excavated examples. A b-horizon subsoil layer (12001) up to 0.2m in depth overlay the natural subsoil and the pits. Immediately above this was a topsoil layer (12000) up to 0.4m in depth. The other features identified comprised modern services, not described in detail, or numbered on the plan.

### *Trench 12 details*

Nos.	Context Description	Depth of deposit	Context type
12000	Dark brown sandy loam	0.15m to 0.4m	Topsoil layer
12001	Reddish mid-brown sandy silt with some small stones	0.2m	B-horizon subsoil
12003	Red sand, gravel and clay with frequent flint nodules and charcoal flecks	0.3m	Upper fill of F1200
12004	Silty red sand, gravel and clay with frequent flint nodules and charcoal flecks	0.2m	Lower fill of F1200
F1200	Pit	0.5m	Cut
12005	Silty red sand, gravel and clay with frequent flint nodules and charcoal flecks	0.32m	Fill of F1201
F1201	Pit	0.32m	Cut
F1202	Pit (unexcavated)	N/A	Cut
F1203	Pit (unexcavated)	N/A	Cut
F1204	Pit (unexcavated)	N/A	Cut
12002	Red sand, gravel and clay with frequent flint nodules	106.32m to 106.52m AOD	Natural subsoil

## *Interpretation*

The five pits (F1200, F1201, F1202, F1203 and F1204) were part of a pit alignment following a northeast-southwest course. Features F505 and F509 in Trench 5 appeared to respect this alignment. Feature F1200 produced four sherds of Late Iron Age pottery from the primary fill (12004) and can therefore be securely dated to this period, the earlier prehistoric finds being residual.

### 6.13 Trench 13 (Plate 11)

*Dimensions:* 10m long by 2m wide (northwest-southeast)

*Level (at ground surface):* 105.07m A.O.D.

Trench 13 was an additional trench located to intercept the Roman road alignment, and any associated roadside features.

The natural subsoil (13002) was encountered at a depth of 0.3m to 0.6m below the present ground surface. The Roman road surface (F1300, Plate 11) was approximately 5.0m wide and 0.1m in depth. The road metal (13003) comprised small and medium sized round pebbles compacted into a matrix of brown sandy clay and measured 0.1m in depth. This directly overlay the natural subsoil (13002). A b-horizon subsoil layer (13001) up to 0.3m in depth overlay the natural subsoil. Immediately above this was a layer of topsoil (13000) up to 0.3m in depth. No other features of archaeological interest were recorded and no artifacts were recovered.

#### *Trench 13 details*

Nos.	Description	Depth of deposit	Context type
13000	Dark brown sandy loam	N/A	Topsoil layer
13001	Silty red sand, gravel and clay with frequent flint nodules	N/A	Subsoil layer
13003	Compacted rounded stones	0.1m	Road metal
F1300	Road surface (equivalent to F205, F302 and F501)	0.1m	Road surface
13002	Red sand, gravel and clay with frequent flint nodules	105.07m AOD	Natural subsoil

## **7.0 Specialists reports**

### **7.1 Summary of the Bronze Age pottery by Annette Hancocks**

The pottery was collected by hand excavation, rapidly scanned and a provisional spot-date was provided. A near complete cremation urn was recovered from Trench 5. The urn and associated fill (5003) were recovered from F511. The urn had collapsed *in situ*, but appears to have originally been in an upright position, but the rim has not survived ploughing. Initial quantification by count and weight (g) identified ten flat, basal fragments (355g), 54 plain wall sherds (897g) and six decorated wall sherds (239g.). The



decorated wall sherds include three deeply incised and two pinched sherds. All the pottery recognised from this deposit was grog tempered.

## 7.2 Other finds by Annette Hancocks

Details of the remainder of the finds assemblage are summarised below:

Trench	Feature	Context	Description	Date
1	F100	1001	2 x brick (57g)	Modern 20 <sup>th</sup> century AD
1	F100	1002	Slag (25g)	
1	F100	1004	1 x brick (18g)	Modern 20 <sup>th</sup> century AD
2		Cleaning layer	2 x flint (39g); 2x Roman pottery (32g)	2 <sup>nd</sup> – 4 <sup>th</sup> century AD
3	F304	3004	2 x Late Iron Age body sherds (32g)	Late Iron Age
3	F306	3006	1 x Roman body sherd (3g)	Roman
5	F511	5003	70 x Bronze Age sherds (1491g) Cremated human bone (780g) charcoal (9g)	Bronze Age
12	F1200	12004	6x flints (25g); 4x Late Iron Age pottery (48g), including internal bevelled rim from barrel shaped jar	Late Iron Age

The most significant find was the Bronze Age cremation urn recovered from F511 (5003.) This was an unexpected find and will be a welcome addition to the corpus of Bronze Age material for Derbyshire, both at a local and regional level. The latter will provide, upon detailed analysis, an excellent chronological framework for phasing and interpretation of the site.

## 7.3: Charred plant remains by Marina Ciaraldi

During the evaluation ten-litre soil samples were collected from pits F1200 (12004) and F1201 (12005). The samples were processed by manual flotation. The flots were recovered on 0.5 mesh. The residue was recovered on a 1mm mesh and sorted by eye.

The two samples did not contain biological remains of any type and were therefore discarded.

## 8.0 Discussion

Trial-trenching has identified the line of the Roman road in the southwest of the site. Over the remainder of the site the projected continuation of the road on the same alignment may have been removed by groundworks for the former hotel car park. The earthwork banks visible as above-ground features were identified as field boundaries, although no clear dating evidence was obtained. A surprise was the identification of prehistoric activity in the centre and southwest of the site. Of particular importance was the evidence for possible Bronze Age-Roman continuity in the road alignment.

Prior to the May 2003 evaluation the only evidence of prehistoric activity in the area was an early Bronze-Age polished flint axe hammer found in Scarsdale Avenue approximately 100m from the proposed development area (Derby SMR 18933). This was held to be representative of transitory activity across the landscape (Hancox 2003). The suggestion that the high ground including the vicinity of the study area could have been settled during prehistory is now borne-out by the discovery of the Bronze Age cremation. The identification of further cremations deposited during, and possibly after the Bronze Age, points to the presence of a long-lived 'ritual' landscape. The pit alignment may have formed a late prehistoric land division. One pit (F1200) contained four sherds of Late Iron Age pottery in the primary feature fill, and can, therefore, be securely dated to this period, although earlier, residual material was also recovered. If the identified cremations were contemporary, these features could have been laid out along the line of a Bronze Age trackway, the line of which continued in use into, or was returned to use, in the early Roman period.

Roman activity is represented by the road surface (F205, F302, F501 and F1300) recorded in the southeast of the site. The course of the excavated road is similar to the plotted alignment of Ryknild Street (Hancox 2003). Perhaps more significantly, the line of the Roman road appeared to respect the alignment of the identified cremations, one of which at least may be securely dated to the Bronze Age. The most convincing evidence for roadside ditches was recorded in Trench 2 (F204 and F206), although no dating evidence was recovered. Roadside ditches, however, may not have been necessary here due to the surrounding raised area. Roman pottery from a secure context was recovered from ditch F306 in Trench 3. Feature F306 was approximately 15m from the edge of the road surface (F302). Margary (1967, 21-22) notes that often other, smaller ditches were constructed along the edge of the road further out than the drainage ditches. These were only about 0.6-1m wide and fairly shallow, and presumably marked the course of the road. Evidence for Roman roadside activity was not present, indeed the activity present on the eastern side of the road considerably pre-dated the Roman period. Trenches in the northeast of the site (Trenches 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11) did not reveal any cut features of an archaeological nature. This may have been due to the shallow depth of the natural ground surface and plough intrusion. This negative evidence for the Roman road may suggest that it continued the alignment identified in the trenches within the southwest of the site, as is also suggested by the putative identification of a Roman road surface by a householder to the north of Chain Lane, on the same alignment (Andrew Myers, pers. comm.). It would probably not be feasible to further test this alignment in the northeast of the site, since the Roman road would probably cross areas probably scoured-out for car parking around the former hotel.

In the post-Roman period the site was in arable cultivation, as indicated by the plough scars cutting the Roman road surface, and possibly even by the above-ground earthwork which could have formed a substantial plough headland.

## **9.0 Acknowledgements**

The fieldwork was sponsored by Michael Goodall Quality Homes Limited. Richard Cherrington wrote this report and supervised the evaluation fieldwork, which was carried out with the assistance of Josh Williams, Bob Bracken, Emma Hancox, Paul Harris, Erica Macey, and David Mullen. Annette Hancock reported on the finds and Nigel Dodds

prepared the illustrations. Alex Jones managed the project and also edited this report. The project was monitored by Dr. Andrew Myers, Development Control Archaeologist, Derbyshire County Council. We are grateful to Mike Goodall and Andrew Kay for their co-operation and assistance during the evaluation fieldwork. The careful machine excavating of Danny is also gratefully acknowledged.

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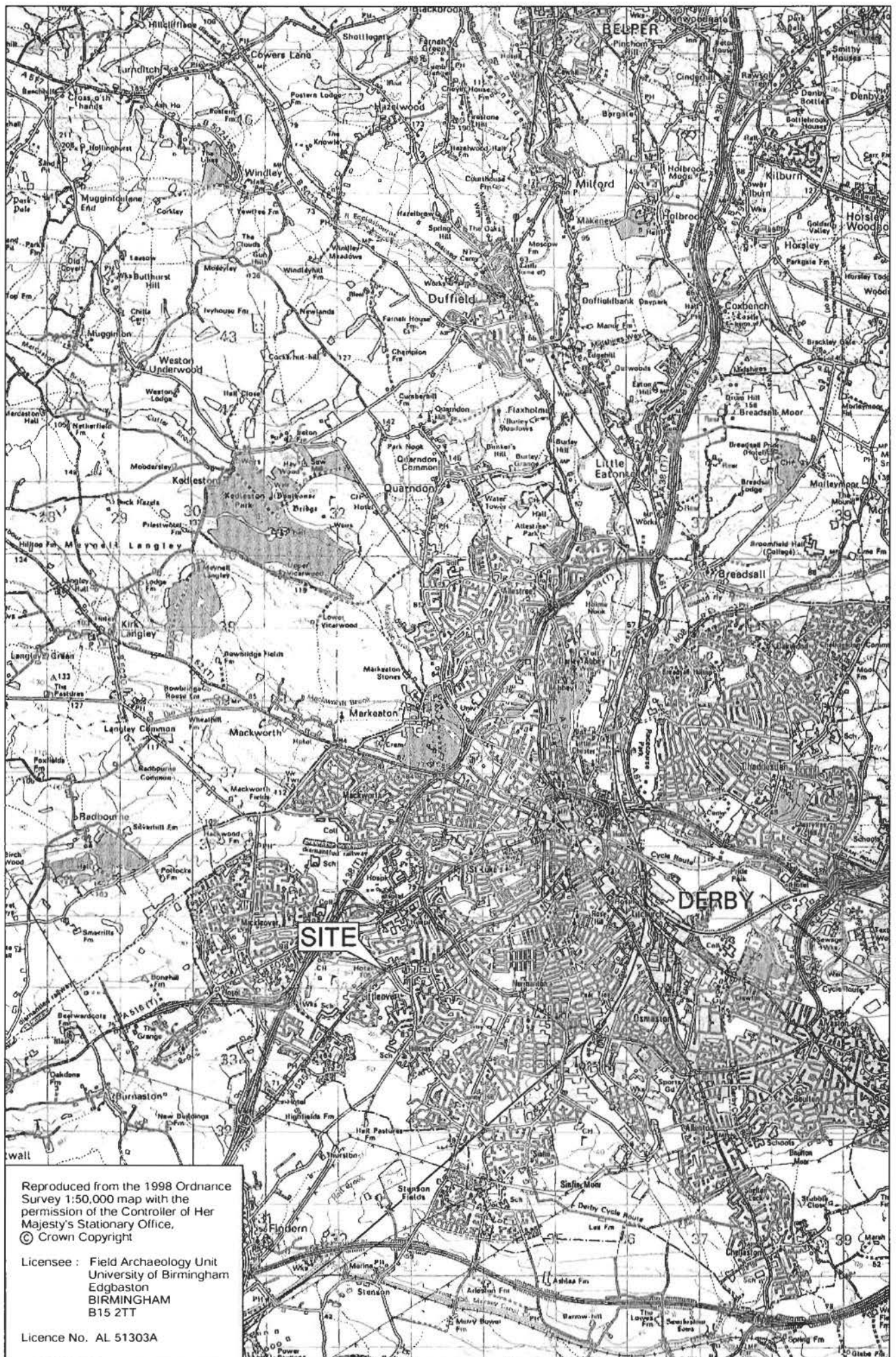


Fig.1



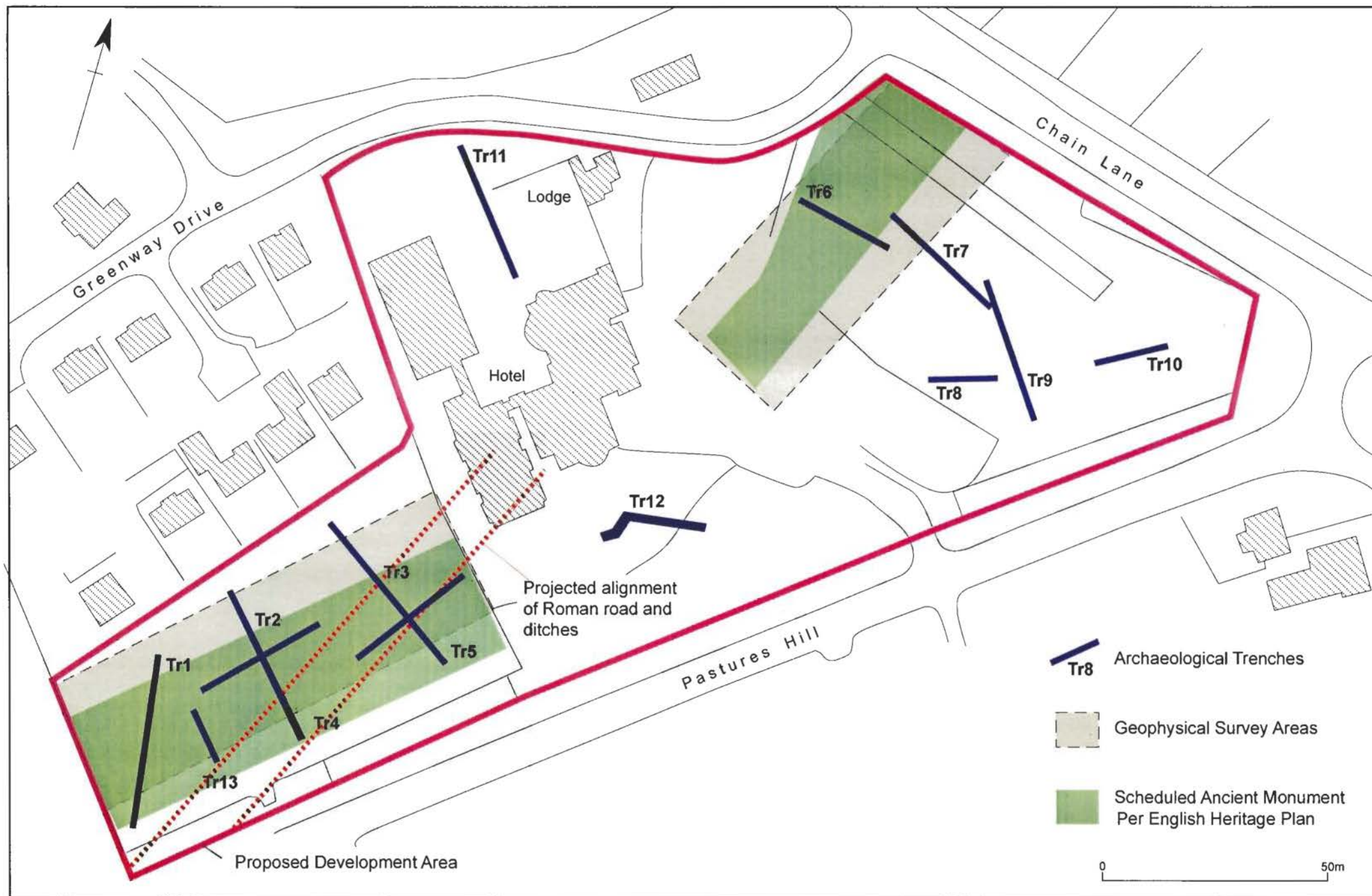
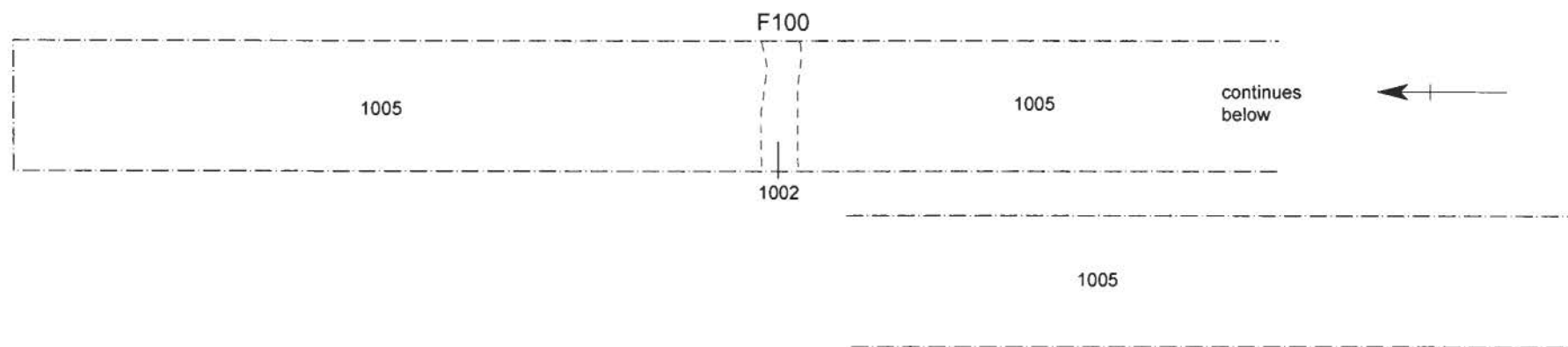


Fig.2

Trench 1



Trench 12

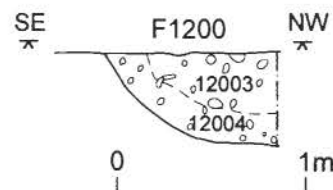
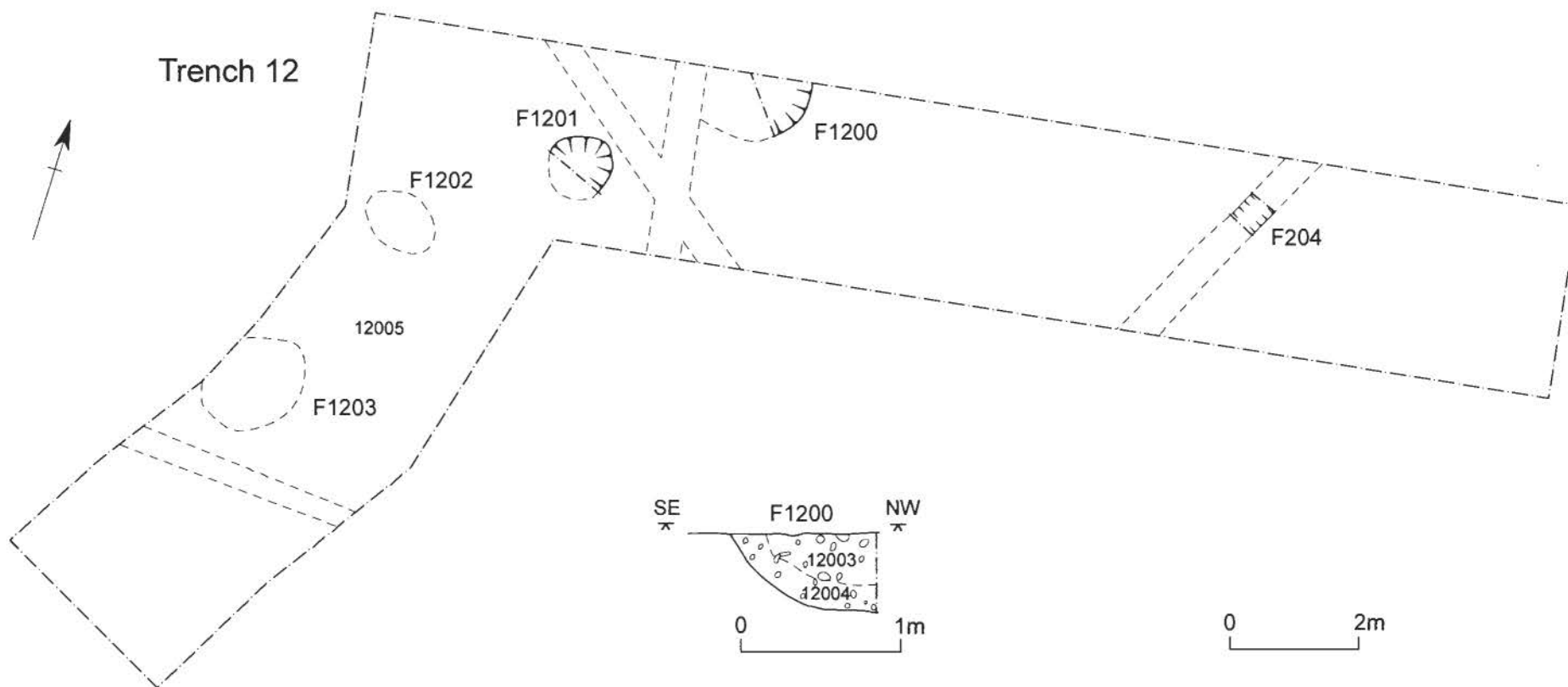


Fig.3

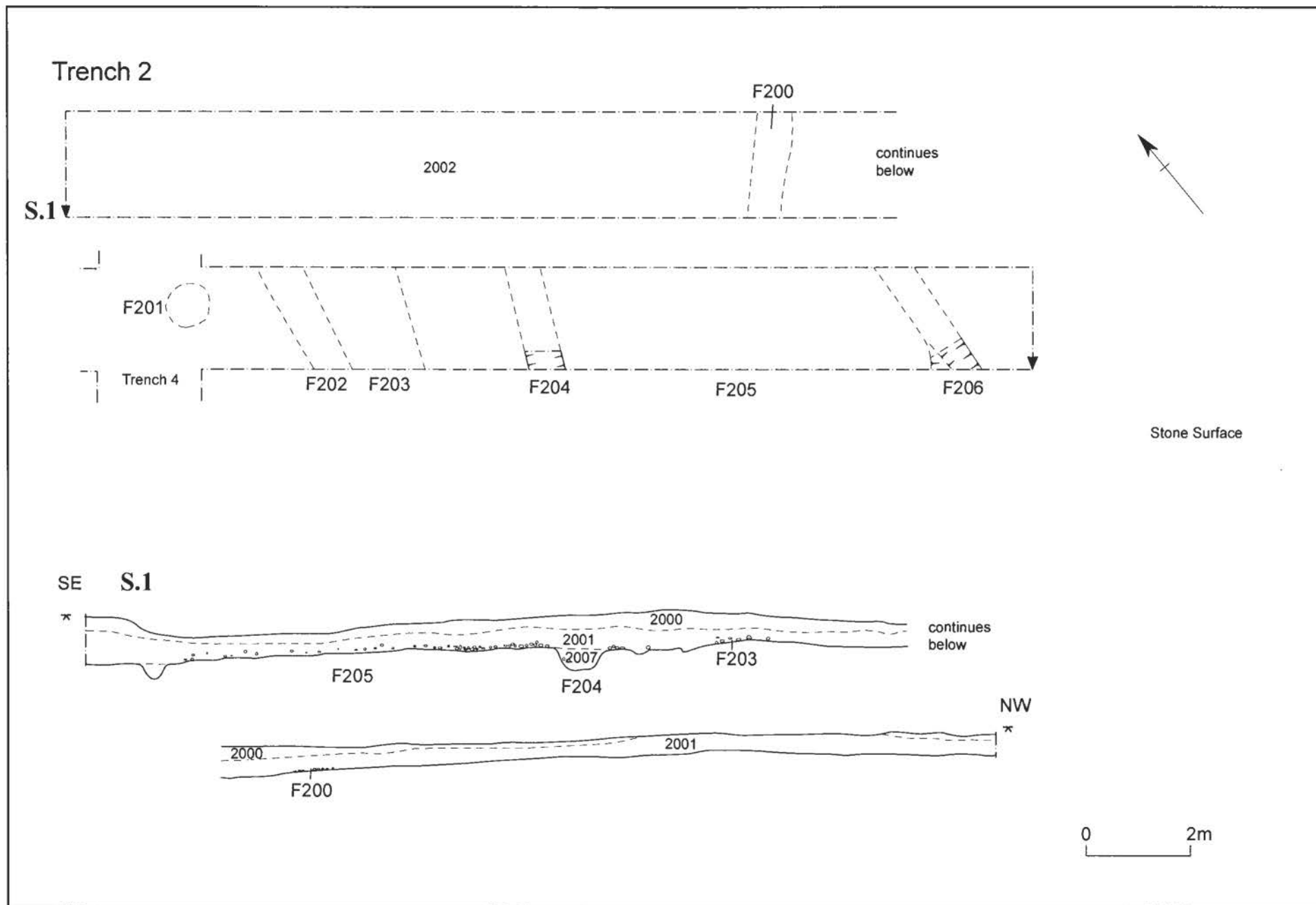


Fig.4

# Trench 3

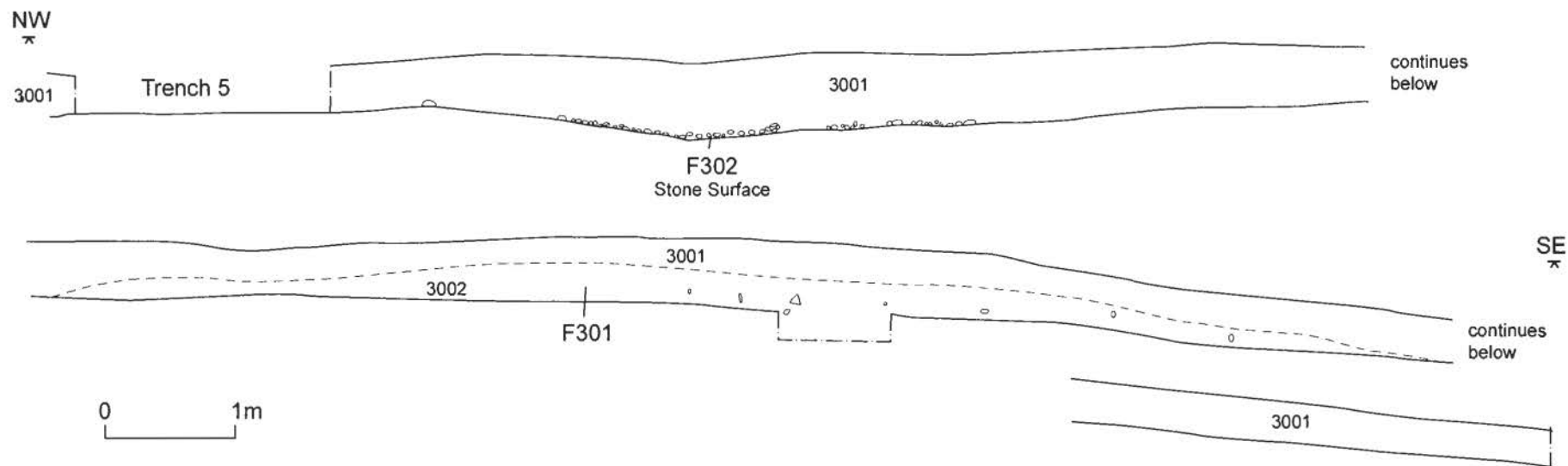
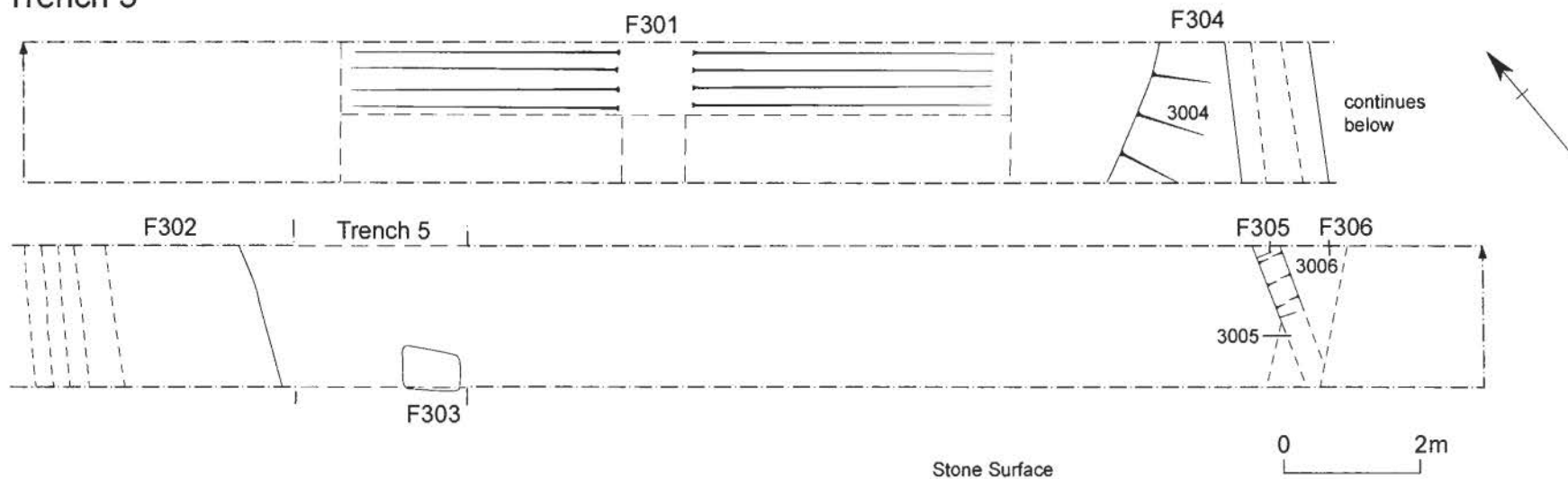
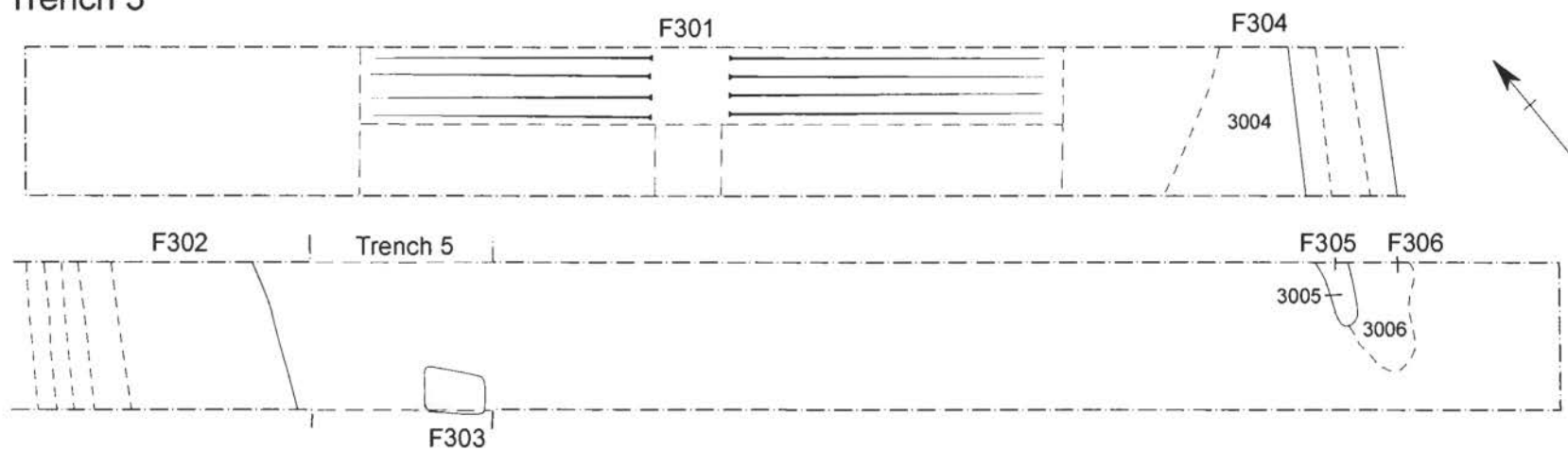


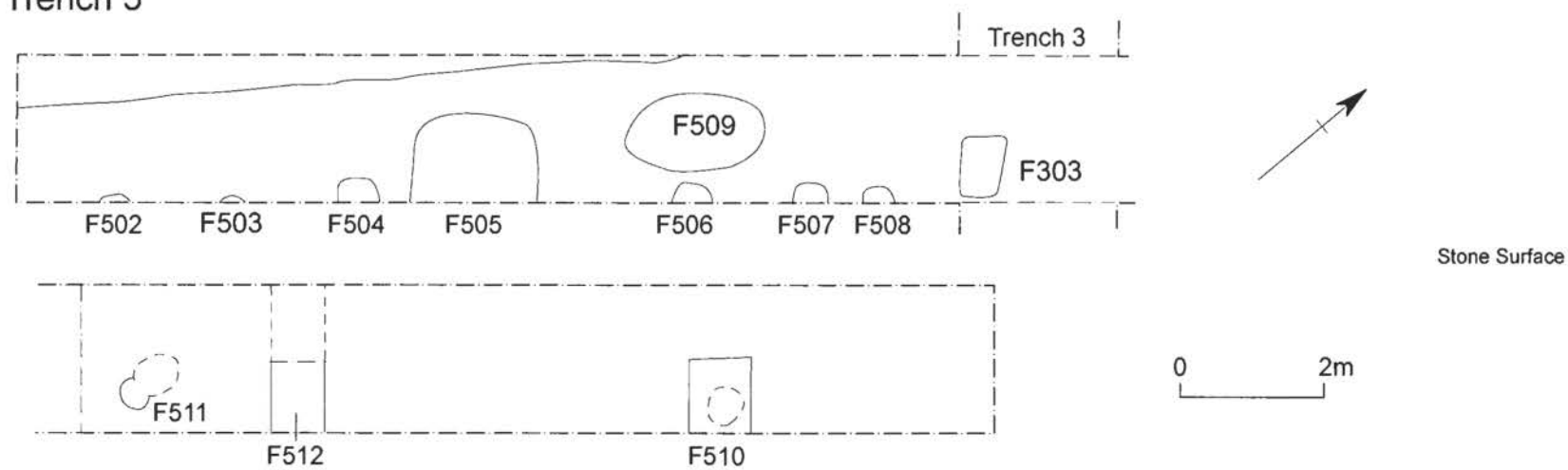
Fig.5



### Trench 3



### Trench 5



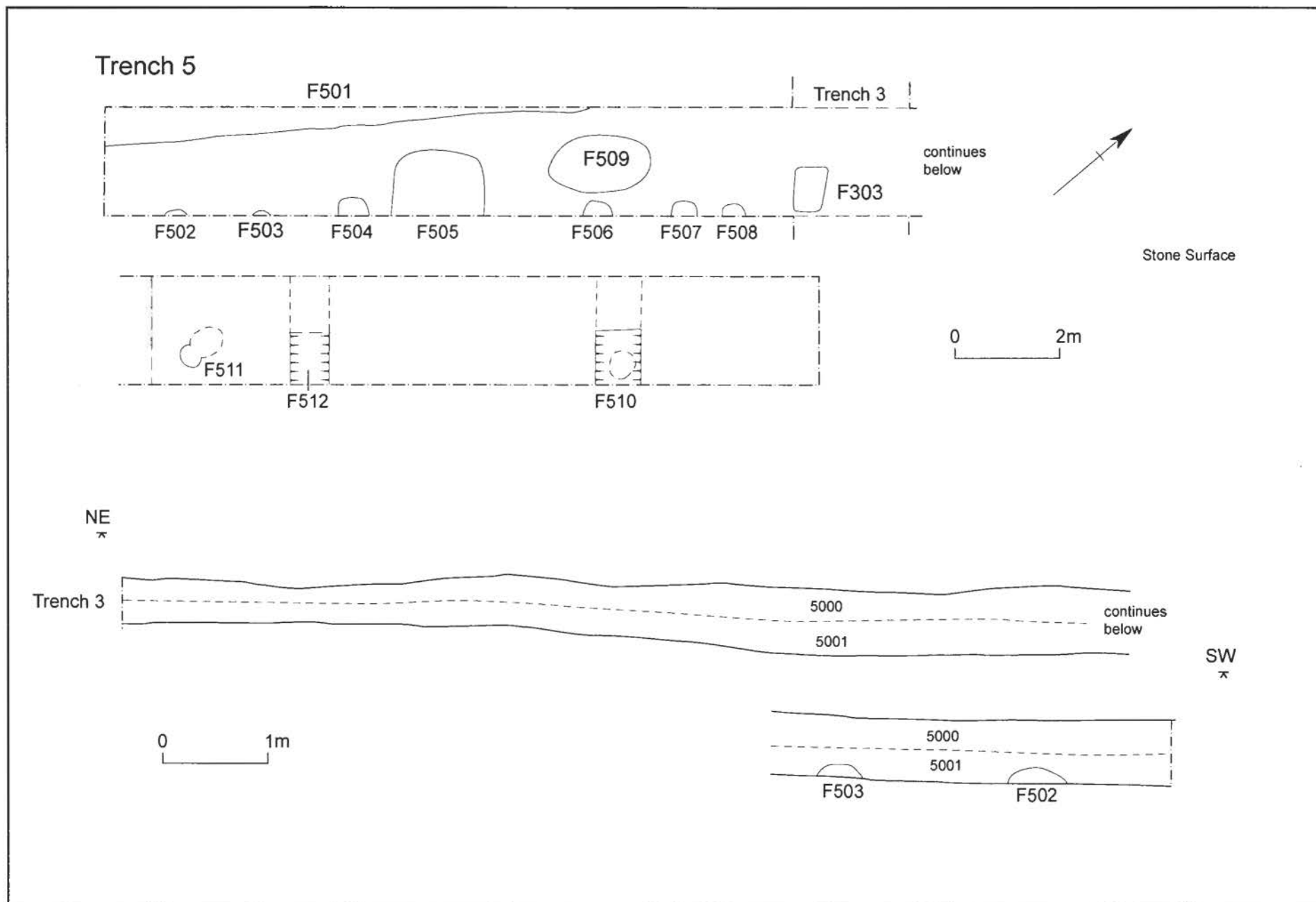


Fig.7



Plate 1



Plate 2





Plate 3



Plate 4





Plate 5



Plate 6





Plate 7



Plate 8





Plate 9



Plate 10