

# Archaeological Topographical Survey:

The Boot Field, Soulbury  
Buckinghamshire, LU7 0WA  
(NGR SP 8828 2675)

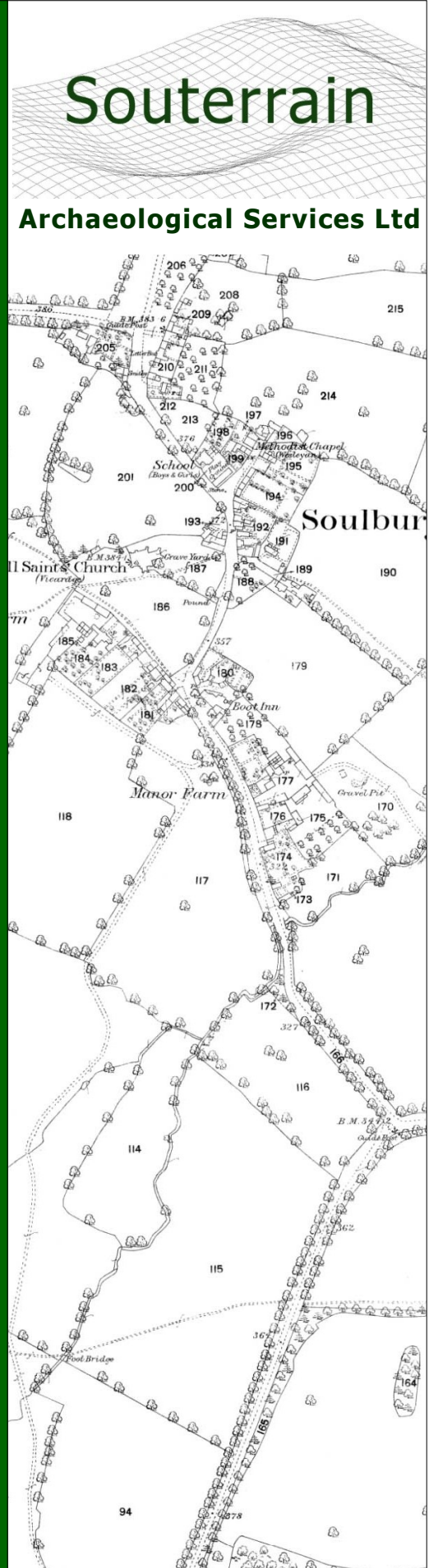


February 2019

Souterrain Archaeological Services Ltd

for

Albion Archaeology



## **Archaeological Topographical Survey:**

### **The Boot Field, Soulbury Buckinghamshire, LU7 0WA**

NGR SP 8828 2675 (centre)

Aylesbury Vale District Council Planning Refs. 16/04602/AOP  
& APP/J0405/W/18/3203262

Souterrain Project No. SOU19-631

### **Souterrain Archaeological Services Ltd**

February 2019

*for*

### **Albion Archaeology**

(cover map: reproduced from the 1881 Ordnance Survey 25" map of Buckinghamshire  
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e-mail: [gps@souterrain.biz](mailto:gps@souterrain.biz) [www.souterrain.biz](http://www.souterrain.biz)

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**Preface**

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**Field survey:**

*Martin Wilson BA Hons, MAAIS, MCIfA, MEnvSc, FSA Scot  
Mercedes Planas BA, MA, MSc (Eng), MCIfA*

**Report:** *Martin Wilson & Mercedes Planas*

## **Summary**

*In February 2019 an Archaeological Topographical Survey was undertaken of a part of an enclosed field off High Road, Soulbury, Buckinghamshire.*

*The purpose of the survey was to obtain an accurate measured archaeological record of historic earthworks relating to the medieval / post-medieval agrarian landscape, prior to their loss or damage in the course of development.*

*The earthworks comprise: lynchets and boundary ditches in a reasonably good state of preservation; a series of rectilinear enclosures in extremely low relief; and three possible building platforms. The lynchets are likely to have been formed during the period of medieval open field cultivation, while the rectilinear enclosures and platforms represent later encroachment and (pre-Parliamentary) enclosure.*

*The earthworks were surveyed to Ordnance Survey National Grid co-ordinates and orthometric heights using RTK Differential GPS.*

*The report provides an illustrative and descriptive account of the earthworks, using a combination of computer-generated graphics and conventional survey drawings (hachure plan), supported by digital photography.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 On the 5<sup>th</sup> February 2019 Souterrain conducted an Archaeological Topographical Survey over part of a pasture field known as The Boot Field, at High Road, Soulbury, Buckinghamshire LU7 0WA (Fig. 1). The survey was undertaken in advance of archaeological trial trenching and subsequent development of a permitted development area (PDA) within The Boot Field. This document is an illustrated report of the results of the survey.
- 1.2 The PDA is identified in Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC) planning permission 16/04602/AOP (granted on appeal APP/J0405/W/18/3203262) for the development of up to 10 dwellings, with associated access, parking, landscaping, drainage and associated engineering works.
- 1.3 The reason for the Archaeological Topographical Survey was to gain a better understanding of earthworks pertaining to the medieval to post-medieval agrarian landscape. The survey was carried out for Albion Archaeology and represents the first stage of a programme of archaeological mitigation work at the site (Albion Archaeology 2019), in accordance with a condition (No. 5) attached to the planning permission. Subsequent invasive mitigation work at the Application Site is to be undertaken by Albion Archaeology.
- 1.4 The creation of the survey record is consistent with paragraph 141 of National Planning Policy (DCLG, 2012) which requires the developer to record, and to advance understanding of the significance of heritage assets that may be lost (wholly or in part) due to development.
- 1.5 The survey was undertaken in accordance with current best practice and guidance for archaeological landscape surveys of this type (RCHME, 1999; English Heritage 2007, rev. Historic England 2017).

## **2. LOCATION & ASPECT OF THE STUDY AREA**

- 2.1 The village of Soulbury is located in the District of Aylesbury Vale, c. 4.5 km to the northwest of Leighton Buzzard and c. 14.5 km northeast of Aylesbury. The PDA is located at the southern end of the village on the west side of High Road, centred at NGR SP 8828 2675. It consists of an arbitrary and irregular portion of land of about 0.9 hectares, situated within an enclosed field of sheep pasture, of about 2.5 hectares, known as The Boot Field.

### **Topography**

- 2.2 The terrain of the PDA slopes down to the south-east from c. 104.5 m to c. 96 m over a distance of c. 160 m. At the foot of the slope is a stream, alongside which stands a water pumping station housed within a brick building. Clockwise from south to northwest, the PDA is bounded by agricultural land, predominantly grazing land. The north end of the PDA is bordered by a residential properties and gardens.

### **Designations**

- 2.3 The Boot Field lies outside of the Soulbury Conservation Area and there are no designated heritage sites within the PDA.

### **Geology**

- 2.4 A sequence of superficial geological deposits is understood to underlie the PDA (BGS, 2019). The uppermost deposit, which outcrops as a central band across the PDA, is a diamicton of

Oadby Member of the Wolston Formation, characterised by rock fragments subordinate lenses of sand and gravel, clay and silt clays. This is underlain by Mid Pleistocene Glaciofluvial Deposits which occur throughout the northern part of the PDA. The lowermost deposit is Head, comprised of poorly sorted gravel, sand and clay, frequently the result of hillwash and soil creep. This occurs across the lower southern part of the PDA.

### 3. HISTORIC BACKGROUND & SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EARTHWORKS

- 3.1 The village of as *Soleberie* has its roots in at least the late Saxon period. The earliest mention is in the Domesday survey of 1086. The name is understood to refer to a 'stronghold in a gully'. There were six estates within the parish of Soulbury, including the hamlet of Hollingdon, c. 1.4 km to the northwest of Soulbury village<sup>1</sup>. Thirty-four households were recorded in 1086 (20 villagers, 8 smallholders and 6 slaves), representing a fairly large population of perhaps 170. The cultivable land within the parish was assessed at 22.5 ploughlands, in addition to which there were three meadows and two mills.
- 3.2 The majority of the medieval population resided in the two larger estates - Liscombe (*Lychescumbe*) Manor where there were 22 households, and Chelmscott (*Chaumindescote*) Manor with 9 households. The spatial extent of either manor is unknown. Lipscombe Park, c. 400 m to the southeast of the PDA, is known to be the site of a deserted medieval settlement<sup>2</sup>. Although the origin of the settlement at Soulbury is uncertain, though we might assume that the initial village was formally laid out in the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century, as is understood to have been the case throughout the central Midlands (e.g. Lewis 2006, 191; Edgeworth 2007, 93). During a period of widespread reorganization, dispersed settlements were brought together to be centralized around a church and manor house surrounded by a planned open field system. The purpose of such large scale re-planning is open to speculation, but was probably to improve social cohesion and increase productivity (Lewis 2006 *op.cit.*). The village focus at Soulbury would have been on the higher ground in the vicinity of the church. Thereafter, the settlement evolved along High Road, the main route which runs roughly north-south.
- 3.3 Traces of the medieval settlement have been identified by aerial survey recording at least seven locations around the village, where ridge and furrow attests to either part of the open fields system and/or demesne farm land<sup>3</sup>. In 1772 the main landowners of the parish were granted an Act of Parliament '*for dividing and enclosing the Open and Common Fields, Common Meadows, Common Pastures, and other Commonable Lands and Grounds, within the Manor and liberties of Soulbury, with the Hamlet of Hollingdon*'<sup>4</sup>.
- 3.4 The PDA is located within an Archaeological Notification Area<sup>5</sup> designated by Aylesbury Vale District Council. It contains earthworks which are considered largely to pertain to the medieval and post-medieval settlement of Soulbury. The earthworks, which are

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<sup>1</sup> see Open Domesday <https://opendomesday.org/place/SP8827/soulbury/> [26 Feb 2019]; *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/bucks/vol3/pp414-420>, 'Parishes: Soulbury', in *A History of the County of Buckingham: Volume 3*, ed. William Page (London, 1925), 414-420. [accessed 27 Feb 2019].

<sup>2</sup> BCC record ID: 0107600000 Medieval village earthworks south of church indicating village shrinkage, NGR SP 8823 2672

3. c.f Clarke, C. 2016. Archaeological Desk Based Assessment: The Boot Field, Soulbury, Buckinghamshire, CgMs CC/22546, Fig. 2

<sup>4</sup> *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/lords-jrnl/vol33/pp292-310>, 'House of Lords Journal Volume 33: March 1772, 11-20', in *Journal of the House of Lords Volume 33, 1770-1773* (London, 1767-1830), 292-310. [accessed 27 Feb 2019].

<sup>5</sup> BCC record ID: 0108500000

predominantly in low-relief, are non-designated heritage assets. At least two low mounds within the field are considered to be building platforms. A manorial estate map of 1767<sup>6</sup> depicts four dwellings on the east side of The Boot Field, the field which at that time contained six 'pre-Parliamentary' enclosures.

- 3.5 Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Records MBC3272/ MBC3273 relate to earthwork features associated with the shrunken medieval village within the land parcel containing the PDA, which have been identified from aerial photographs<sup>7</sup>. Record MBC3274 relates to the trackway along the northern limit of the PDA. At some juncture in the 1970s a trench dug for a water pipe bisected one of the postulated building platforms exposing several slabs of limestone, but no features or artefacts.

#### **Desk-based Assessment**

- 3.6 An archaeological desk-based Assessment has been undertaken by CgMs Consulting (Clarke C 2016) in support of the planning application, the results of which should be read in conjunction with the present document. The study concluded that *'the site is considered likely to have a high potential for archaeological remains associated with the Medieval and Post-Medieval periods, and a theoretical low to moderate potential for the Anglo-Saxon period'*. The remains are deemed to be of local to regional significance.

#### **Geophysical Prospection**

- 3.7 Geophysical surveys in the form of fluxgate gradiometry and earth resistance have also been conducted across the PDA in support of the planning application (Davies & Udyrysz, 2016). The surveys concluded that: *'No features of probable archaeology have been identified, though a number of possible archaeological features have been detected. An extant earthwork bank is visible in the results of all three survey techniques. Further linear features have been detected and are likely to be related to former cut features, such as ditches. Areas of enhanced magnetic response may be the result of settlement activity, while a high resistance area anomaly is possibly related to a former building platform. The remaining features are modern and include an area of made ground, an underground service, disturbance from nearby ferrous objects and magnetic spikes which are likely to be modern rubbish'*.
- 3.8 The field name, The Boot Field is believed to be a fairly recent appellation, derived from a glacial erratic roughly in the shape of boot which is located on High Road, c. 40 m northeast of the PDA.

## **4. PURPOSE OF THE SURVEY**

- 4.1 The purpose of the Archaeological Topographical Survey is to provide a comprehensive record of the earthworks prior to their change or loss in the course of the proposed development. To this end, a detailed and metrically accurate topographical survey has been undertaken, enabling the production of a series of illustrations that best represent the form of any earthworks. These are accompanied by a photographic, descriptive and interpretative record.

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<sup>6</sup> 1769 Soulbury Manorial Plan, Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies, See Clarke, C. 2016, Fig. 3

<sup>7</sup> BCC record ID: 0108500000

## 5. SURVEY METHOD

- 5.1 The survey was undertaken in accordance with current best practice and guidance for archaeological landscape surveys of this type (RCHME, 1999; English Heritage 2007, rev. Historic England 2017).
- 5.2 The earthworks were surveyed to Ordnance Survey National Grid co-ordinates and orthometric heights. Data was recorded using RTK Differential GPS with plan precision generally from 5 mm to 26mm, and height precision between 8 mm to 28 mm. Profile data was recorded at general intervals of c. 0.8 m and at closer intervals where greater detail was necessary. Consistent precision was maintained throughout the survey.
- 5.3 Where deemed necessary, the survey encompassed a wider zone than the PDA (i.e. on the western side) in order to better contextualize specific earthworks.

## 6. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

- 6.1 The results of the field survey are depicted in a series of scaled plans which are considered to best portray the archaeological topography and aid comprehension. Figure 2 shows earthwork features using hachured conventions. The hachured base plan is used in Figure 3 to show the direction of photographs (at Section 11) and in Figure 4 to show the location of five ground profiles (Figures 7 & 8). Figure 5 presents two perspective views of the computer-generated 3D Terrain Model (DTM), one from the south, the other from the north. Figure 6 is an orthographic view of the DTM,
- 6.2 The profiles (Figs. 7 & 8) represent salient vertical and horizontal differences in the ground surface across main earthwork features. Due to the constraints of producing the profiles in report format, profiles are also shown with an exaggerated vertical scale.

## 7. OBSERVATIONS

(Figure 2)

*Note: the bold numbers in square brackets [ ] refer to photographs at Section 11.*

### Lynchets

- 7.1 The most conspicuous element of the earthworks within The Boot Field is a sequence of four lynchets on a northeast/southwest alignment (**L1** to **L4**). These are, in effect, wide terraces which formed as a result of prolonged ploughing (i.e. in antiquity) in the direction of the natural contour, whereby the continual downward movement of soil has resulted in terrace of accumulated earth and a scarp; known as a positive lynchet. (Where ground has been reduced on the adjacent, lower, terrace it is referred to as a negative lynchet). Terraced medieval landscape features of this type are frequently referred to as strip-lynchets. Those within The Boot Field are most likely residual elements of Soulbury's medieval open field system.
- 7.2 The most prominent lynchet scarp (**L2**) extends for a distance of c. 108 m [5-8, 13, 15]. Its slope has a maximum height of around 0.8 m towards its north-eastern extent [15]. This gradually decreases to around 0.4 - 0.36 m in the central area [6], and finally (just beyond the PDA), to a little over 0.12 m at its south-western extent [3]. The other lynchet scarps are less extensive and, where they most pronounced, are generally between 0.25 - 0.35 m in height [e.g. 1, 2 and 9]. The uppermost terrace (between **L1** and **L2**) is approximately 32 m

wide, while the lowermost terrace (**L3** to **L4**) is irregular and narrow, perhaps denoting more than one phase. Within the central terrace a very faint linear depression is vaguely discernible parallel to the lynchet scarp which may be the remains of a cultivation furrow.

#### **Boundary Ditch**

- 7.3 The terraces terminate to the southwest at a straight shallow ditch aligned northwest/southeast, which flanked on its southwest side by a bank in very low relief [1-4]. Approximately 20 m of the ditch and bank lies within the PDA [3]. The ditch is c. 3 – 3.5 m wide and is c. 0.15 – 0.25 m deep. The bank is c. 3 m wide and c.0.12 m high.

#### **Rectilinear Enclosures**

- 7.4 At some juncture, the uppermost terrace was apportioned into at least five rectilinear enclosures, of varying dimensions, which are separated by banks in extremely low relief [9, 11, 16, 20] The internal divisions probably belong to a later encroachment of the village fringe open fields to create homesteads and closes. By 1767 there were six closes and four dwellings in the area now straddled by the PDA.

#### **Mounds**

- 7.5 In the eastern corner of the upper terrace is an amorphous mound (**M1**), which measures approximately 17.1 m (N-S) by 16.45 m (E-W) [18, 19, 21, 22]. As it is situated directly above the north-eastern extent of lynchet scarp **L2**, the slope of its southern and eastern sides is accentuated to a height of up to c. 0.7 m. In contrast, the northern and western slope attains a height of around 0.1 – 0.15 m. In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century the mound was bisected by a services trench (**S**), c. 1 m- 1.5 m in width, aligned northwest/southeast [19].
- 7.6 The central terrace (between **L2** and **L3**) is c. 40.4 m wide. Its north-eastern extent appears to have been much disturbed by modern service trench activity (**D**) [23]. Two amorphous mounds are discernible within the terrace. The larger of these (**M2**) is located in the east corner of the terrace [23-24] and is bisected by a continuation of the aforementioned modern service trench (**S**). It measures approximately 21 m (E-W) by 24.5 m (N-S). Sited on the natural slope of ground its south-eastern scarp has a height of up to c.0.9 m, while its south-western scarp has a maximum height around 0.32 m. The other mound (**M3**) is located in the zone of the negative lynchet, approximately mid way along the course of lynchet scarp **L2** [8, 10, 12-14]. Broadly oval in plan it is c. 14.2 m long by c. 9.2 m wide and stands to a height of c. 0.26 m.
- 7.7 The mounds (**M1**, **M2** and **M3**) are of uncertain origin. It is noted that the spatial arrangement of the mounds appear to share an imprecise proximity with three structures depicted on the manorial estate map of 1769, although it would be imprudent to speculate further without ground truth.

## **8. ARCHIVE & REPORT**

- 8.1 The archive is intended as a public-accessible record, to be housed in the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Record. Copyright is retained by Souterrain Archaeological Services Ltd from whom permission may be sought for reproduction.
- 8.2 The archive comprises a CD containing survey data imagery, illustrations, digital photographs with index and a copy of the report.

8.3 The archive is to be integrated with the wider project archive (i.e. from the invasive investigation) generated by Albion Archaeology.

8.4 The OASIS (Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations: [www.oasis.ac.uk](http://www.oasis.ac.uk)) identification number for this project is souterra1-344081.

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9.3 A licence is to be granted to the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Record for the use of all reports arising from projects for planning purposes. *Bona fide* research requests will be granted a licence upon written request to Souterrain.

## 10. REFERENCES

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**Historic maps:**

1769 Soulbury Manorial Plan, Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies

## **11. PHOTOGRAPHS**





1. Southernmost part of the PDA. Facing west. Ranging poles traverse lynchets L4 (foreground) and lynchets L3. South-western boundary ditch beyond



2. Southernmost part of the PDA. View to the north across south-western boundary ditch. Ranging poles traverse lower lynchets (L4 & L3)



3. Southernmost part of the PDA. View to the northwest along south-western boundary ditch. The ranging poles traverse the portion of the ditch within the PDA. Beyond is the south-western extent of lynchets L2



4. Southernmost part of the PDA. View to the northeast across south-western boundary ditch. Ranging poles traverse lower lynchets (L4 & L3)





5. Western side of the PDA. Ranging poles traverse lynchets scarp L2. Facing N



6. Western side of the PDA. Lynchets scarp L2. Facing N



7. Western side of the PDA. Lynchets scarp L2 and mound M3. Facing NNE



8. Western side of the PDA. Lynchets scarp L2 and mound M3. Facing NNE





9. North-western side of the PDA. Facing N. Ranging poles traverse rectilinear enclosures within the uppermost terrace



11. North-western side of the PDA. Facing NE. Ranging poles traverse rectilinear enclosures within the uppermost terrace



10. Central area of the PDA. Facing ESE. Ranging poles traverse Lynchet scarp L2 and mound M3



12. Central area of the PDA. Facing SSE. Ranging poles traverse Lynchet scarp L2 and mound M3





13. North-eastern side of the PDA. Facing WNW. Ranging poles traverse mound M3 (foreground) and Lynchet scarp L2



14. Central area of the PDA. Facing SW. Amorphous mound M3



15. Eastern area of the PDA. Facing W. Lynchet scarp L2 (upper and middle cultivation terraces)



16. Northern part of the PDA. Facing SE. Ranging poles traverse low banks of rectilinear enclosures within the uppermost terrace





17. Overview of north-eastern part of the PDA. Facing SE



18. Overview of north-eastern part of the PDA. Facing SE towards low amorphous mound M1



19. Overview of eastern side of the PDA. Facing SSE. Mound M1 in foreground, with C 20 service trench cut to right



20. Northern part of the PDA. Facing NW. Ranging poles traverse low banks of rectilinear enclosures within the uppermost terrace





21. Overview of eastern side of the PDA. Facing N. Mound M1 in foreground



22. Eastern side of the PDA. Facing NE. Ranging poles traverse Mound M1 (to left)



23. Eastern side of the PDA. Facing N. Ranging poles traverse hollow possibly caused by modern disturbance. Amorphous mound M2 in foreground



24. South-eastern side of the PDA. Facing NE. Ranging poles traverse amorphous mound M2

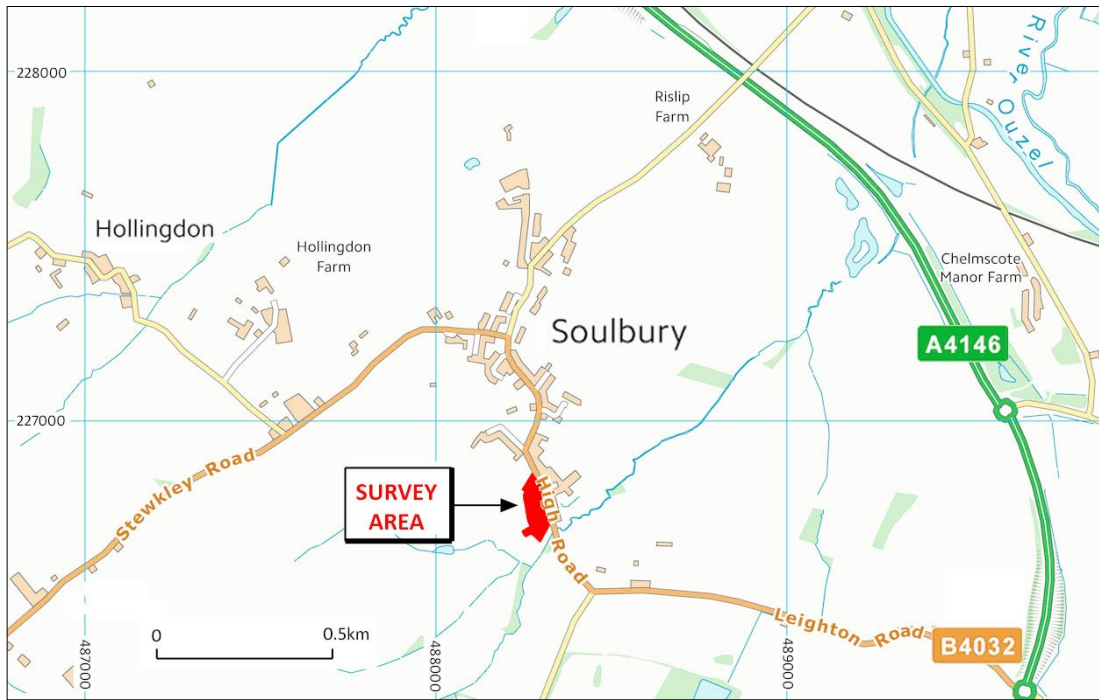


**Photographic Index**

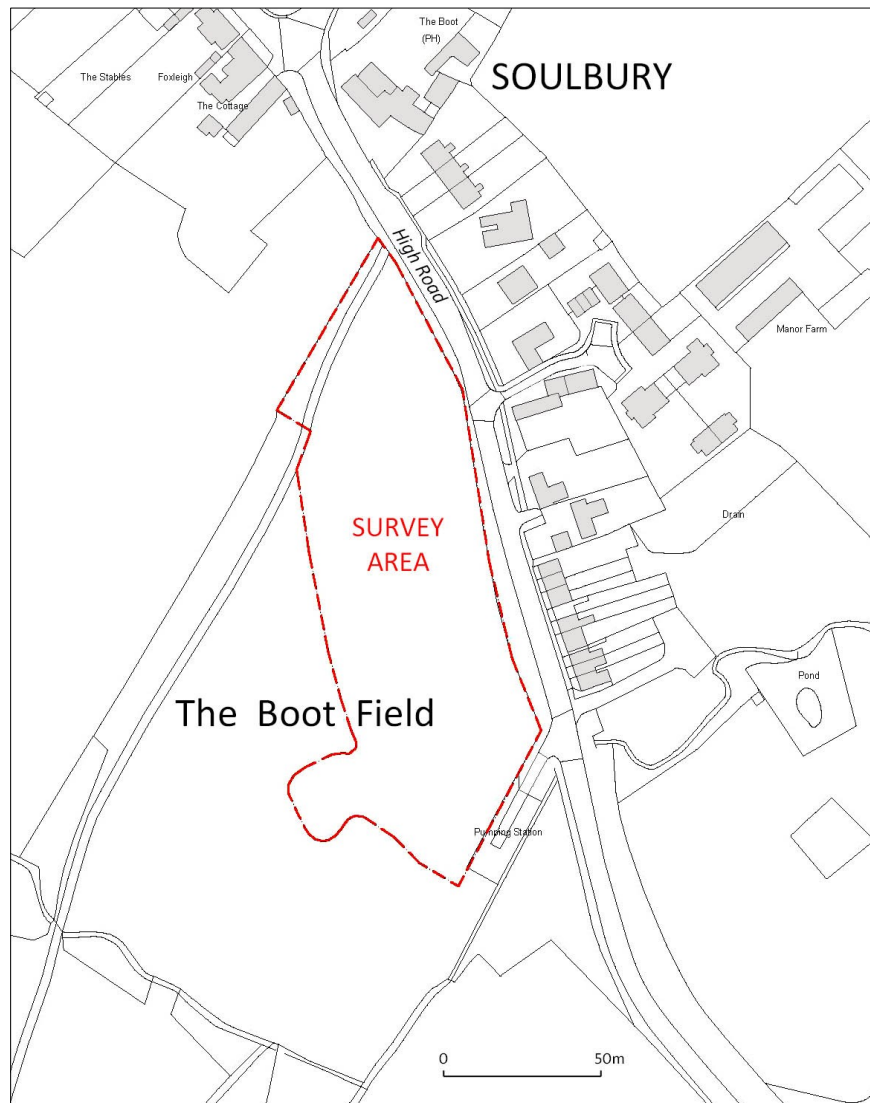
(REPORT &amp; ARCHIVE: CD)

<b>DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX</b>		
<b>PROJECT: Archaeological Topographical Survey: The Boot Field, Soulbury, Buckinghamshire, LU7 0WA (NGR SP 8828 2675)</b>		<b>Date:</b> 05.02. 2019
<b>No. in report</b>	<b>Image No.</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	1-P1150814	Southernmost part of the PDA. Facing west. Ranging poles traverse lynchet scarp L4 (foreground) and lynchet scarp L3. South-western boundary ditch beyond
2	2-P1150817	Southernmost part of the PDA. View to the north across south-western boundary ditch. Ranging poles traverse lower Lynchets (L4 & L3)
3	3-P1150825	Southernmost part of the PDA. View to the northwest along south-western boundary ditch. The ranging poles traverse the portion of the ditch within the PDA. Beyond is the south-western extent of lynchet scarp L2
4	4-P1150822	Southernmost part of the PDA. View to the northeast across south-western boundary ditch. Ranging poles traverse lower Lynchets (L4 & L3)
5	5-P1150832	Western side of the PDA. Ranging poles traverse lynchet scarp L2. Facing N
6	6-P1150840	Western side of the PDA. Lynchet scarp L2. Facing N
7	7-P1150760	Western side of the PDA. Lynchet scarp L2 and mound M3. Facing NNE
8	8-P1150763	Western side of the PDA. Lynchet scarp L2 and mound M3. Facing NNE
9	9-P1150775	North-western side of the PDA. Facing N. Ranging poles traverse rectilinear enclosures within the uppermost terrace
10	10-P1150767	Central area of the PDA. Facing ESE. Ranging poles traverse Lynchet scarp L2 and mound M3
11	11-P1150778	North-western side of the PDA. Facing NE. Ranging poles traverse rectilinear enclosures within the uppermost terrace
12	12-P1150766	Central area of the PDA. Facing SSE. Ranging poles traverse Lynchet scarp L2 and mound M3
13	13-P1150748	North-eastern side of the PDA. Facing WNW. Ranging poles traverse mound M3 (foreground) and Lynchet scarp L2
14	14-P1150754	Central area of the PDA. Facing SW. Amorphous mound M3
15	15-P1150757	Eastern area of the PDA. Facing W. Lynchet scarp L2 (upper and middle cultivation terraces)
16	16-P1150782	Northern part of the PDA. Facing SE. Ranging poles traverse low banks of rectilinear enclosures within the uppermost terrace
17	17-P1150784	Overview of north-eastern part of the PDA. Facing SE
18	18-P1150786	Overview of north-eastern part of the PDA. Facing SE towards low amorphous mound M1
19	19-P1150794	Overview of eastern side of the PDA. Facing SSE. Mound M1 in foreground, with C 20 service trench cut to right
20	20-P1150792	Northern part of the PDA. Facing NW. Ranging poles traverse low banks of rectilinear enclosures within the uppermost terrace
21	21-P1150787	Overview of eastern side of the PDA. Facing N. Mound M1 in foreground
22	22-P1150800	Eastern side of the PDA. Facing NE. Ranging poles traverse Mound M1 (to left)
23	23-P1150803	Eastern side of the PDA. Facing N. Ranging poles traverse hollow possibly caused by modern disturbance. Amorphous mound M2 in foreground
24	24-P1150812	South-eastern side of the PDA. Facing NE. Ranging poles traverse amorphous mound M2

## **12. FIGURES**



**Figure 1.**  
**Location of**  
**Survey Area**



(based on Ordnance  
Survey mapping &  
Ordnance Survey  
Open Data mapping,  
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AL 100015565)

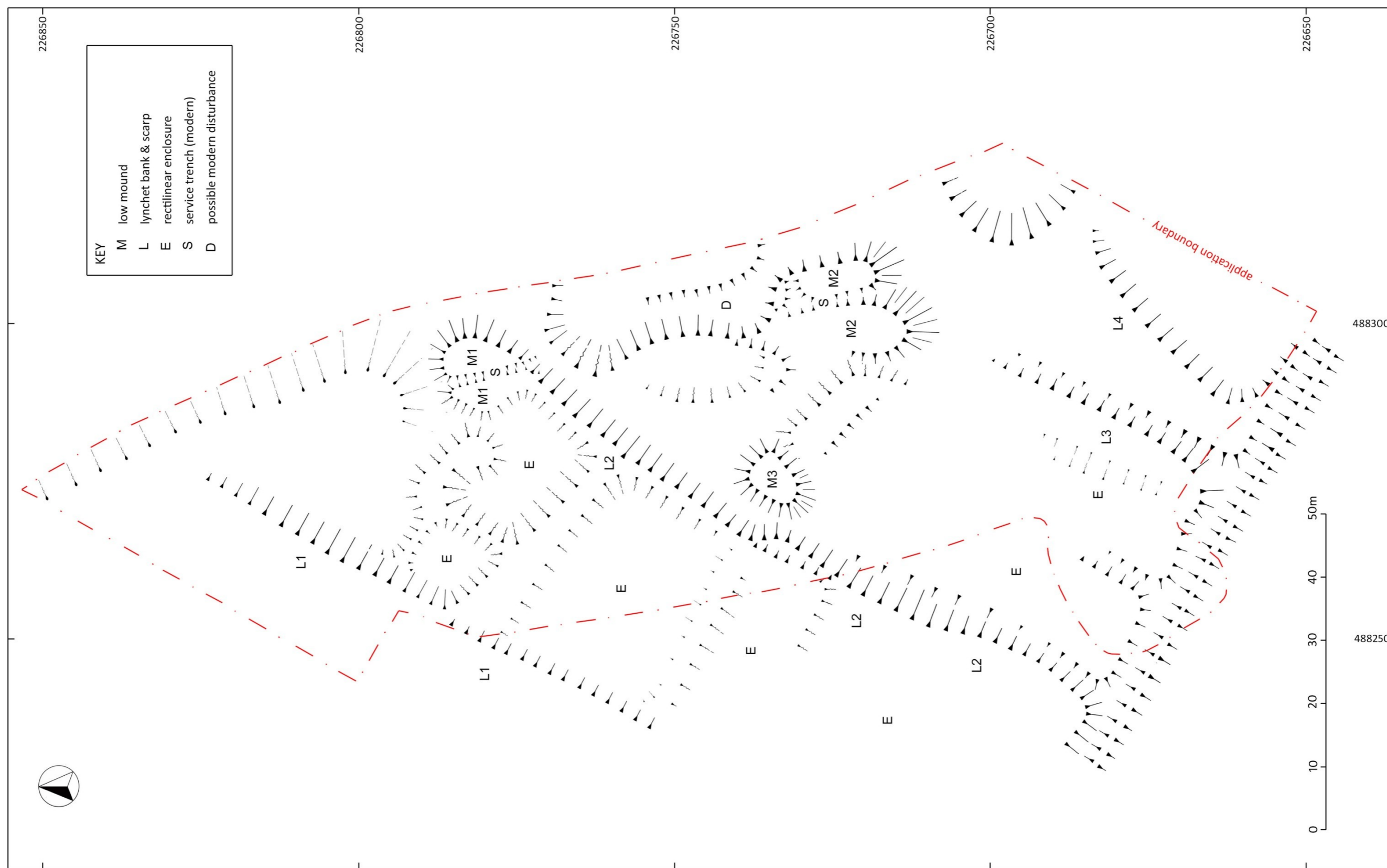


Figure 2. Hachure plan

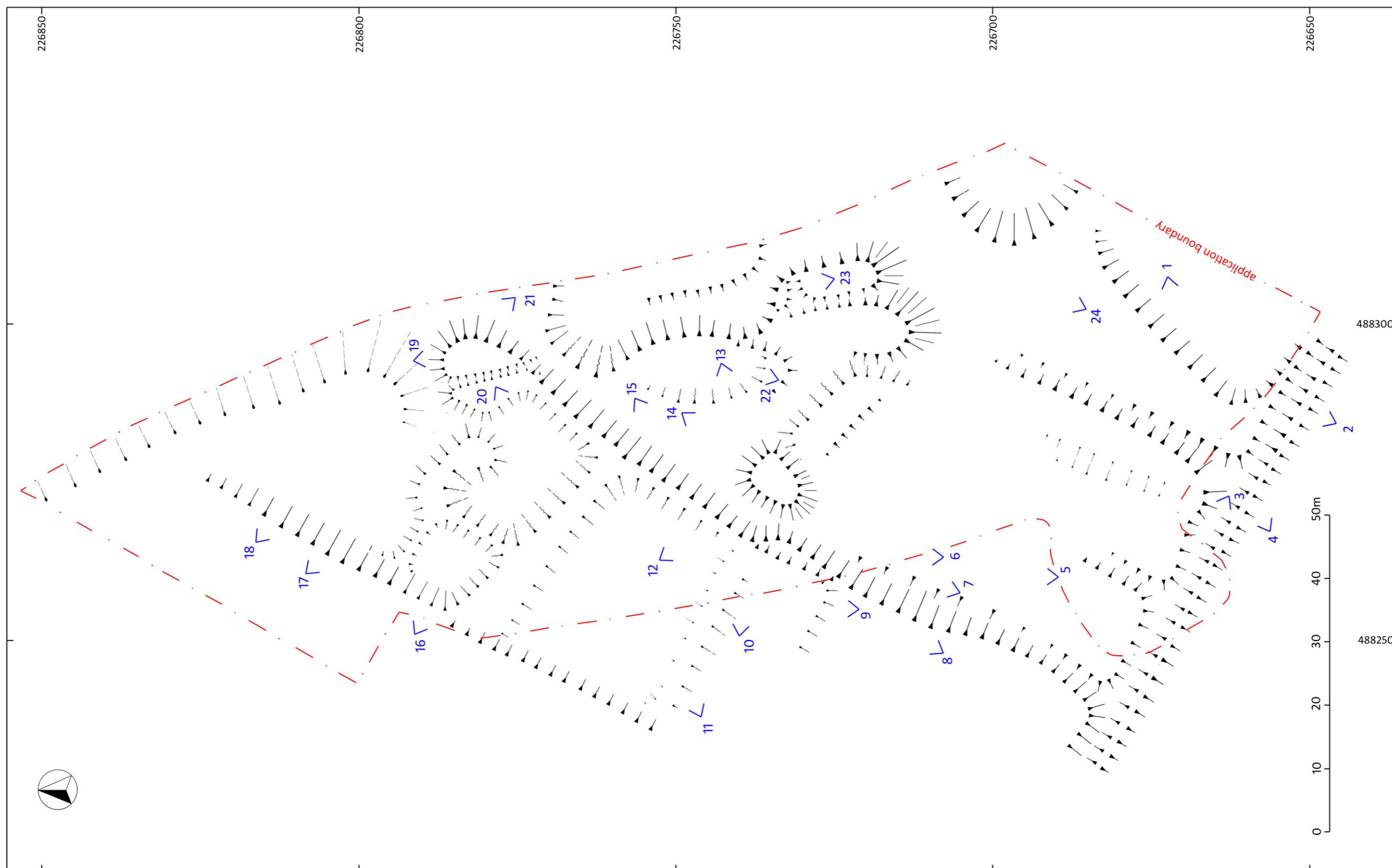


Figure 3. Direction of photographs

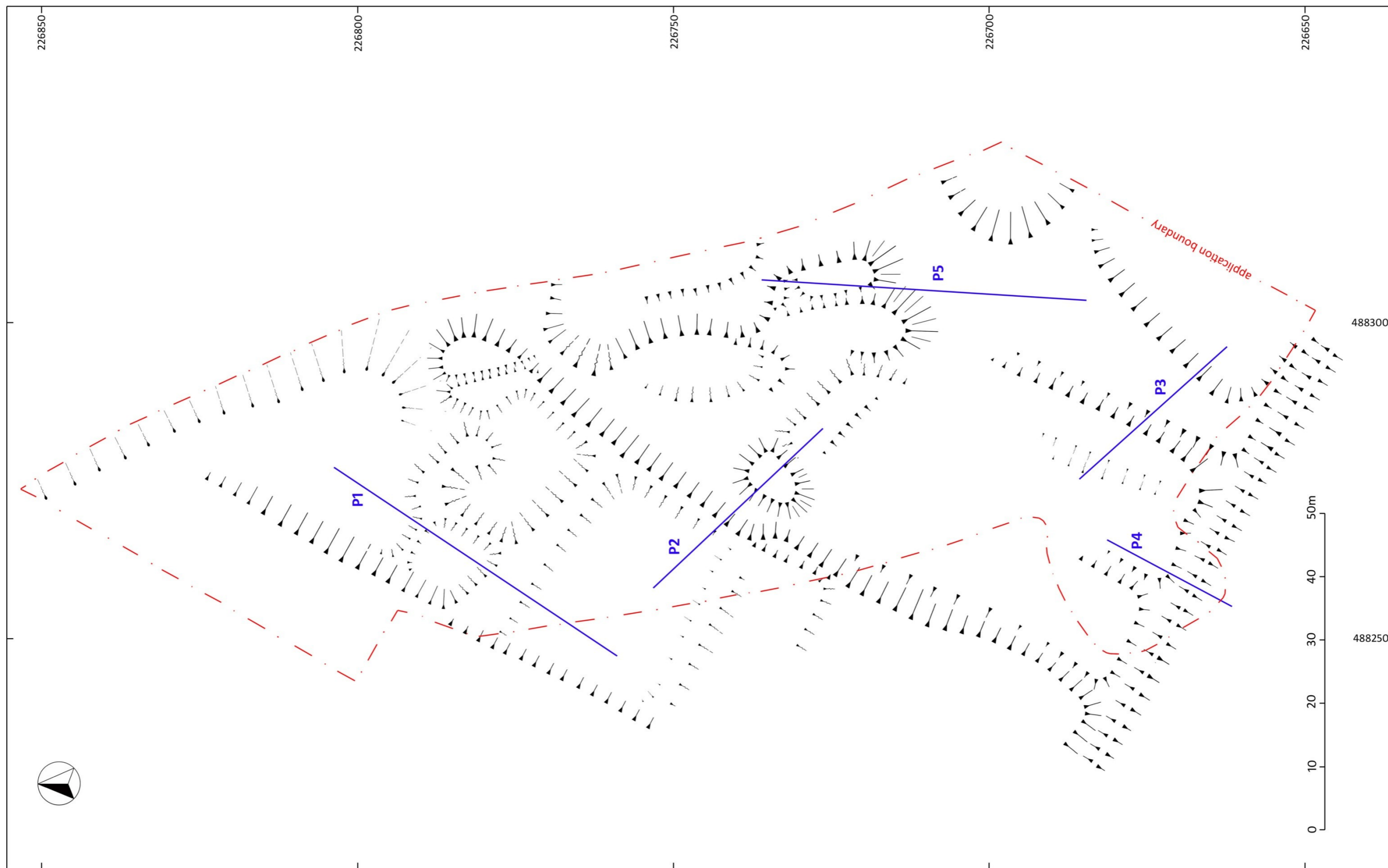


Figure 4. Location of profiles



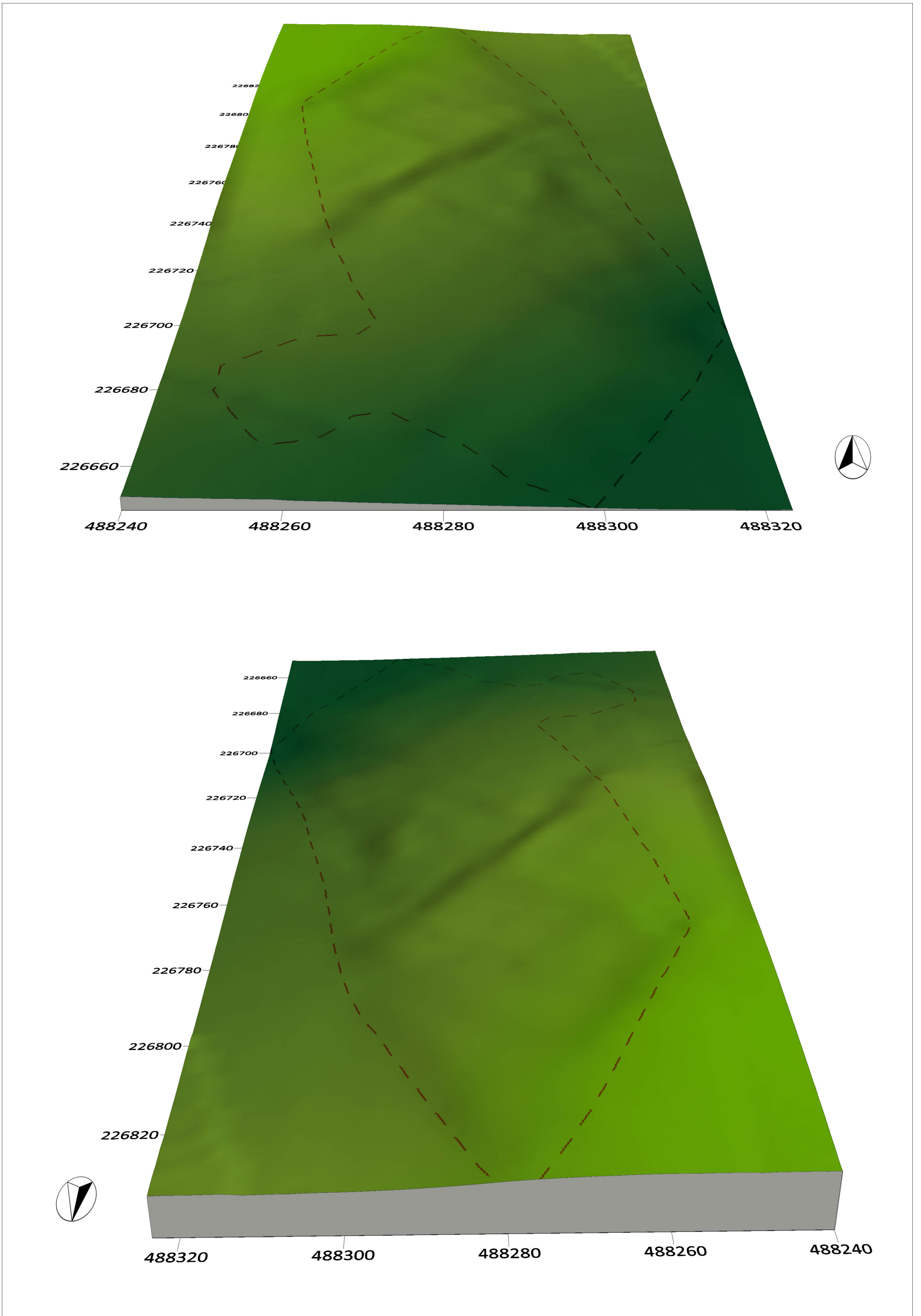


Figure 5: Digital Terrain Model of the Survey Area. Perspective views

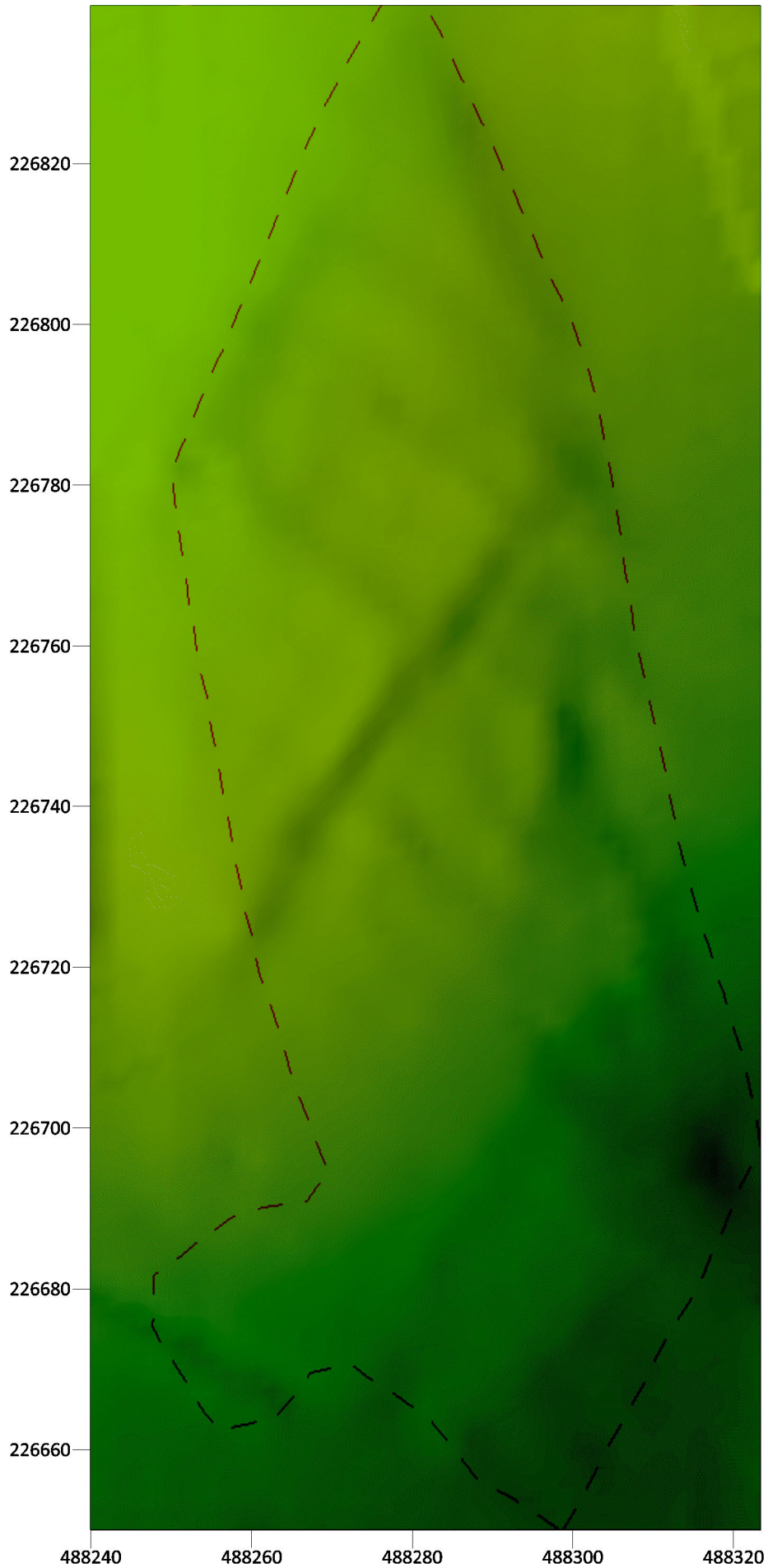


Figure 6: Digital Terrain Model of the Survey Area. Orthographic view



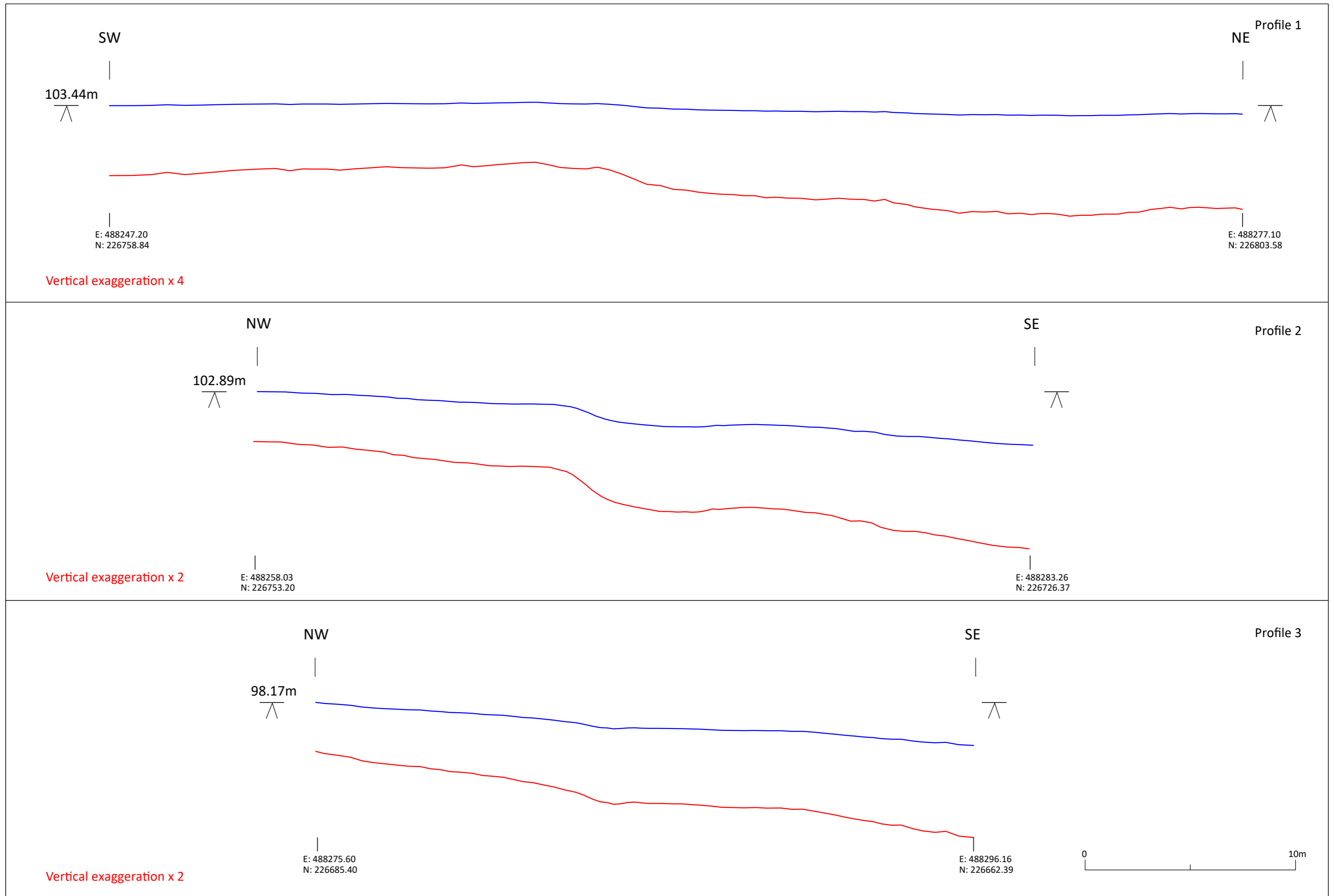


Figure 7: Profiles 1,2, &3

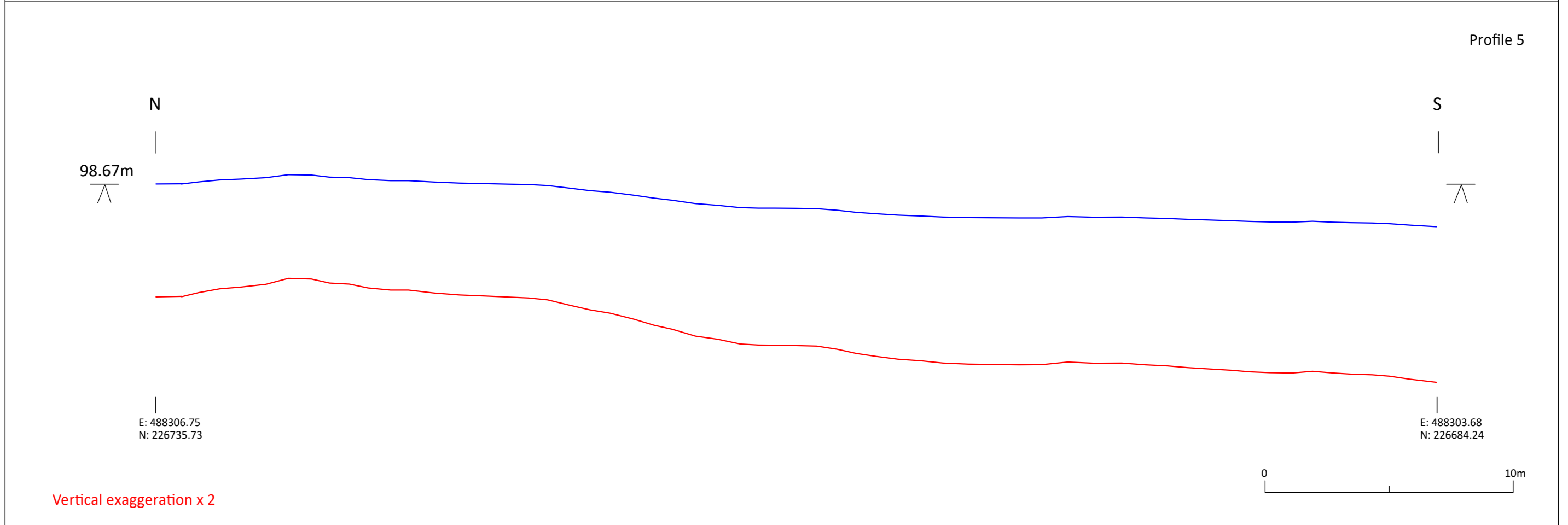
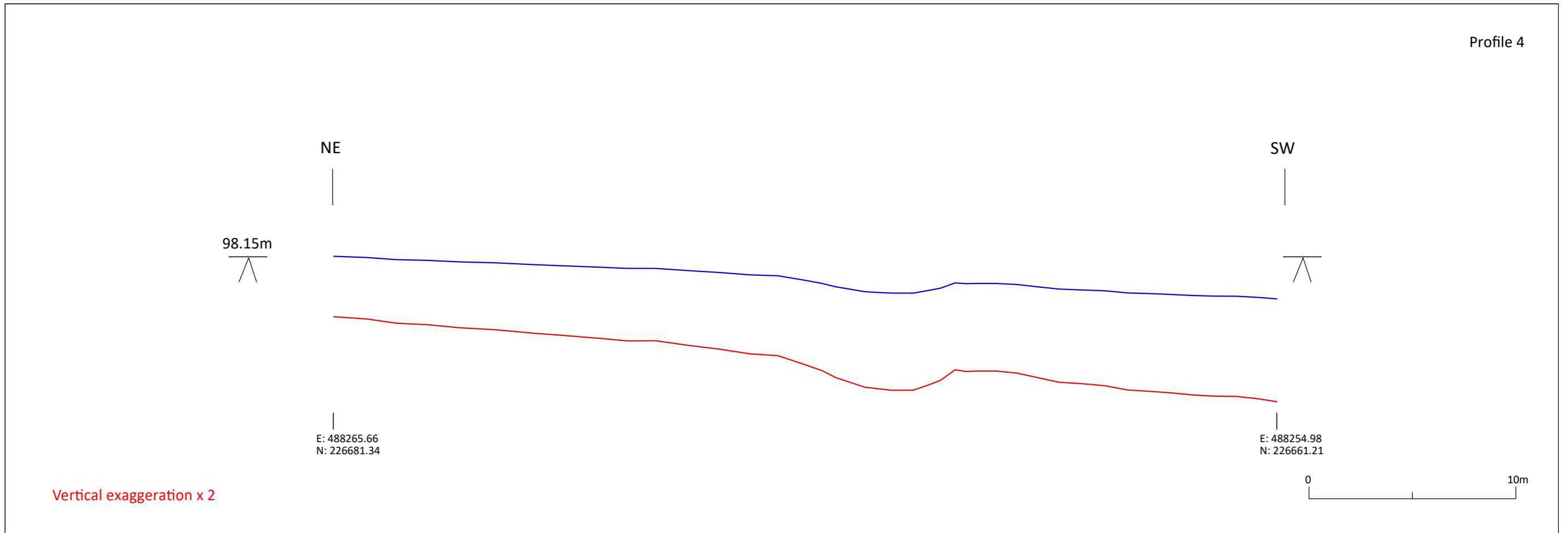


Figure 8: Profiles 4 & 5