

NAU Archaeology

Report No. 1219

**An Archaeological Evaluation at 61 Pinbush Road,
Lowestoft, Suffolk**

GSE 065

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BAU 1404

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Location: 61 Pinbush Road, Gisleham
District: Lowestoft, Waveney District Council
Grid Ref: TM 5256 8946
HER No.: GSE 065
Date of fieldwork: 11th and 12th October 2006

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at 61 Pinbush Road, South Lowestoft Industrial Estate, in advance of the creation of a new storage facility. A pit and post-hole of probable Neolithic date were found to be sealed by a layer of subsoil containing Neolithic and Bronze Age pottery sherds. The features add to the overall picture of prehistoric land use in the area, supplementing the results of the larger investigations on the industrial estate in the past few years.

1.0 Introduction

The site (Fig. 1) was in an area of proposed development at 61 Pinbush Road, Gisleham, Lowestoft. The footprint of the proposed storage building, measuring 15m by 20m, was evaluated with a trench aligned east-to-west down the centre of the plot. This trench was 20m in length by 1.80m in width.

Chris Arlow of DK Transport commissioned the report and the fieldwork.

This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NAU Archaeology (ref: 1404/KJP) and a Brief issued by Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Conservation Team (Jess Tipper 22 September 2006).

The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, following the guidelines set out in *Planning and Policy Guidance 16 – Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990). The results will enable decisions to be made by the Local Planning Authority with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.

The site archive will be deposited with the Suffolk County SMR, following the relevant policy on archiving standards.

2.0 Geology and Topography

The site lies upon an area of Corton formation, mainly sands and gravels, and just to the west of an area of Lowestoft Till consisting of mainly chalky, pebbly, sandy clay till) (British Geological Survey 1996). The area is known as the ‘Sandlings’ due to the sandy nature of the soil. The site is positioned on land that gently slopes from east to west, dipping away from the higher Lowestoft Till down towards the Waveney valley several miles to the west. At the base of the evaluation trench this natural sand was encountered at a level of 11.63m OD. The natural geology allowed for good drainage on the site.

3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

Approximately 100m directly to the east of this site is the location of the excavations at Carlton Colville, undertaken in 2006, which revealed a multi-period occupation site. A range of features were found, including a Neolithic pit, Bronze Age pits (one of which produced a lozenge-shaped jet plaque and a flint knife), undated large possible clay quarrying pits, and a probable Iron Age ditched enclosure with associated roundhouse. Further work based on trial trenching across Hadenham Road, to the north of this excavation, has results outstanding. HER information in both cases is currently being prepared (<http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/ONESUFFOLK>).

An SMR search was undertaken and the following results produced.

Around 500m to the west of the present evaluation, the site known as 'East of Bloodmoor Hill' (SMR CAC 013) produced evidence of multi-phase activity, with features of Late Iron Age, Early Roman, Late Roman and Early Saxon date. The features included ditches, post-holes and pits. Many of these features were overlain by hill-wash deposits. The site also produced some earlier prehistoric and medieval finds, though the Late Roman/Early Saxon period predominated.

Three hundred metres to the north-north-east a polished flint axe head of Early Neolithic to Early Bronze Age date was found (SMR GSE 006).

Also 300m to the north-east, was the findspot of a Bronze Age triple ribbed socketed axe, found whilst digging with a machine excavator in 1972 (SMR GSE 017). A Neolithic worked flint object was found at approximately the same location at a later date. Almost immediately next to GSE 017 was a well defined circular earthwork (GSE 042) located to the east of London Road, which may represent brick kilns. It is possible that these were still in use in 1904, but the date of their origin is unknown.

Metal detecting in 1998 found metal items of Roman, medieval and post-medieval date (SMR GSE 060) 500m to the north of the site.

A length of World War Two tank trap is known to have existed next to London Road (SMR GSE 045), 500m to the south-east of the present evaluation; and, 1000m to the south-east of the present site, a line of World War Two anti-tank cubes was seen on aerial photographs from June 1941 (SMR GSE 046).

4.0 Methodology

The objective of this evaluation was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence or absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.

The Brief required that a trench 20m long by 1.80m wide (Fig. 2 and Plate 1) be excavated through the centre of the proposed building footprint in an east-to-west direction.

Machine excavation was carried out with a small 3-tonne hydraulic 360° excavator using a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Just over 10% of the area to be developed was evaluated.

Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. No metal-detected finds were retained because they were obviously modern. Three sherds of ceramic and two flints were recovered from the subsoil [3].

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using NAU *pro forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

A level was transferred from a known height of 16.04m on the road at the junction between Cook Road and Tower Road, c. 500m north-west of the site. A temporary benchmark of 11.52m OD was created adjacent to the site on the kerb at the side of Pinbush Road.

Due to the lack of suitable deposits, no environmental samples were taken.

Whilst recording was being carried out on the second day of the evaluation, the author machined a further evaluation trench for a different client at 5 Hadenham Rd (SMR GSE Misc) (around 50m to the north). The results of that work were negative, though the same deposits were present.

The weather was dry for the duration of the evaluation and site access was good. Mr Arlow helpfully assisted towards the successful completion of the project.

5.0 Results (Fig. 3)

The latest deposit ([1]) in the sequence was 0.30m thick and consisted of a series of dumped deposits laid down in the recent past to form a yard surface. These in part consisted of builders' sand and loose disrupted tarmac.

Below this lay a compact mid-greyish-brown silty sand ([2]) containing occasional small angular flints, occasional charcoal flecks and occasional chalk flecks. This probably represented the old plough soil, compressed by the yard surface and recent heavy use of the business plot. It was also around 0.30m thick and was seen across the entire area of the trench. A fragment of 19th-century clay pipe stem was found at the base of this layer, probably indicating disruption by ploughing in the recent past.

The earliest layer found on the site was a mid-brown loose silty sand ([3]) containing occasional small rounded stones and small flints of an average size of 10–20mm. This layer produced two sherds of Neolithic/Bronze Age period ceramic, and one further abraded sherd which was probably also of a similar period. The layer was very homogenous and had built up through natural processes. As the layer was removed by machine it could be seen to mask an earlier pit ([5]) and post-hole ([7]) (Fig. 3 and Plate 2).

The largest of these features was pit ([5]), which was situated in the north-east corner of the trench, and which measured at least 1.65m east-to-west and at least 0.80m north-to-south. It had a depth of 0.26m. The break of slope at the top and bottom was gradual and it had a roughly flat base. It had reasonably well-defined though slightly irregular edges (being slightly convex in places). It was filled with a mid-brown silty sand ([4]) including sub-angular, sub-rounded, and round moderate flints 10–30mm in size. The deposit was also very homogenous and was just a shade darker than the subsoil ([3]) located above it. This fill had probably built up largely by natural processes, though it contained worked flints.

The second feature was a small post-hole ([7]), situated 0.20m to the west of pit [5]. It was 0.30m across with slightly convex sides that tapered to a rounded point. It had a reasonably sharp break of slope at the top. The shape is probably derived from a large sharpened post being driven into the ground. The post-hole, like pit [5], was 0.26m in depth.

The fill ([6]) was, similarly, a mid-brown silty sand which contained moderate small sub-rounded flints 10–20mm in size and occasional small fragments of charcoal 1–10mm in size. The fill also contained worked flint debitage, but probably accumulated via naturally occurring processes.

6.0 The Finds

Introduction

The finds from the site are presented in tabular form with basic quantitative information in Appendix 2a: Finds by Context.

In addition to this summary, more detailed information on specific finds is included in separate reports below. Supporting tables for these contributions are included in the Appendices.

6.1 Pottery

By Sarah Percival (NAU Archaeology)

Three sherds weighing 0.020kg were recovered from subsoil [3]. The largest of the sherds is tempered with small angular pieces of calcined flint and weighs 0.013kg. The sherd is undecorated and is probably of earlier Neolithic date. A second sherd (0.006kg) in oxidised, flint-tempered fabric may be of later Neolithic earlier Bronze Age date. A small sherd (0.001kg) of quartz-sand-tempered fabric is highly abraded and cannot be closely dated.

6.2 Flint

By Sarah Bates (NAU Archaeology)

A total of twenty-two struck flints were recovered from the site. The assemblage is summarised in Table 1:

Type	Number
core trimming flake	1
flake	11
blade-like flake	3
blade	1
spall	5
retouched blade	1
total	22

Table 1: Summary of flint

No cores are present but several pieces attest to the careful use and preparation of cores.

There is a thick flake from the side of a core [4]. It has formerly had a few flakes struck quite neatly from its proximal end. It has a battered beach-pebble type cortex.

Eleven flakes are present. These include several neat pieces with parallel blade-like scars on their dorsal surfaces. Two or three of these have almost certainly been struck from blade-type cores. There are also some more squat jagged hard hammer-struck pieces and a couple of flakes have small areas of patinated cortex. Two or three other flakes have pebble-type cortices, also showing that weathered flint was already used as a raw material.

One very neat blade is present [4]. It is small and thin with an abraded platform, showing that it came from a carefully prepared core.

Only one retouched piece is present. This is a neat soft hammer-struck flake [3]. It has a very 'smooth', slightly curving appearance, neat retouch of its distal end and both its edges show signs of utilisation.

The assemblage is small but includes both hard and soft hammer-struck flakes. The evidence for core preparation and the presence of the neat flakes and the blade all suggest that an earlier Neolithic date is quite likely for some of activity represented by the flint.

7.0 Conclusions

This work has provided additional information supplementing existing knowledge that the area was settled in the Neolithic period. The evaluation fills in a geographical gap between the large sites of Bloodmoor Hill to the west (Mortimer 2000) and Carlton Colville to the east (2006). The absence of Romano-British and Saxon settlement, in particular, suggests that the relatively concentrated settlements seen at Bloodmoor Hill and Carlton Colville do not extend into this area. The small size of the trench here, however, means that this conclusion must be treated with some caution.

A barrow has been previously noted on Bloodmoor Hill (Mortimer 2000), which is more likely to be Bronze Age than Saxon, and this, with the continued finding of earlier prehistoric finds and settlement features, indicates that this area was probably extensively utilised in the Neolithic/Bronze Age period.

Little can be concluded about the nature of the settlement from a single pit and post-hole, though the work confirms the general idea that Neolithic communities seem to prefer the light soils and well-drained river tracts rather than the heavily wooded central clay-lands. 'In Suffolk, the distribution of Neolithic pottery strongly suggests that settlements were mainly on light soils – in the Breckland, Sandlings and river valleys – and within a mile of a watercourse' (Martin 1999, 36). This work indicates that, if the industrial estate continues to expand in the years to come, further Neolithic and Bronze Age settlement features may be found.

Recommendations for future work based upon this report will be made by Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Conservation Team.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the following: Kirsty Bone, who undertook the fieldwork with the author; Sarah Bates and Sarah Percival, who examined the flints and prehistoric pottery respectively; David Dobson, who prepared the illustrations and formatted the report, which was edited by Jayne Bown and Sarah Harrison; and Ken Penn, who prepared the extra logistical research. Thanks also to the client, Chris Arlow, for his interest in the project and help towards its successful completion.

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Appendix 1a: Context Summary

Context	Category	Description	Period
1	deposit	modern surface	modern
2	deposit	old ploughsoil?	—
3	deposit	subsoil	—
4	fill	fill of [5]	Neolithic/Bronze Age
5	cut	Pit	Neolithic/Bronze Age
6	fill	fill of [7]	Neolithic/Bronze Age
7	cut	post-hole	Neolithic/Bronze Age
8	deposit	natural sand	—

Appendix 1b: OASIS feature summary table

Period	Feature type	Quantity
Neolithic to Bronze Age(4000 to 701BC)	pit	1
	post-hole	1

Appendix 2a: Finds by Context

Context	Material	Quantity	Weight (kg)	Period
2	clay pipe	1	0.001	post-medieval
3	ceramic	2 sherds	0.019	Neolithic/Bronze Age
3	ceramic	1 sherd	0.001	undated
3	flint	2 flakes	—	Neolithic
4	flint	17 flakes	—	Neolithic
6	flint	3 flakes	—	Neolithic

Appendix 2b: NHER finds summary table

Period	Material	Quantity
Unknown	pot sherd	1
Neolithic (4000 to 2201BC)	worked flints	22
	pot sherd	1
Neolithic – Bronze Age (4000 to 701BC)	pot sherd	1
post-medieval (1540 to 1900AD)	clay pipe stem	1

Appendix 3: Pottery

Context	Total context sherd count	sherd weight (kg)	Fabric	Form	Ceramic date
3	1	0.013	flint-tempered	undecorated	Neolithic
3	1	0.006	flint-tempered	undecorated	Neolithic/Bronze Age
3	1	0.001	quartz-sand-tempered	very abraded	undated

Appendix 4: Flint

Context	Type	Quantity
3	flake	1
3	retouched blade	1
4	blade	1
4	blade-like flake	3
4	core trimming flake	1
4	flake	7
4	spall	5
6	flake	3

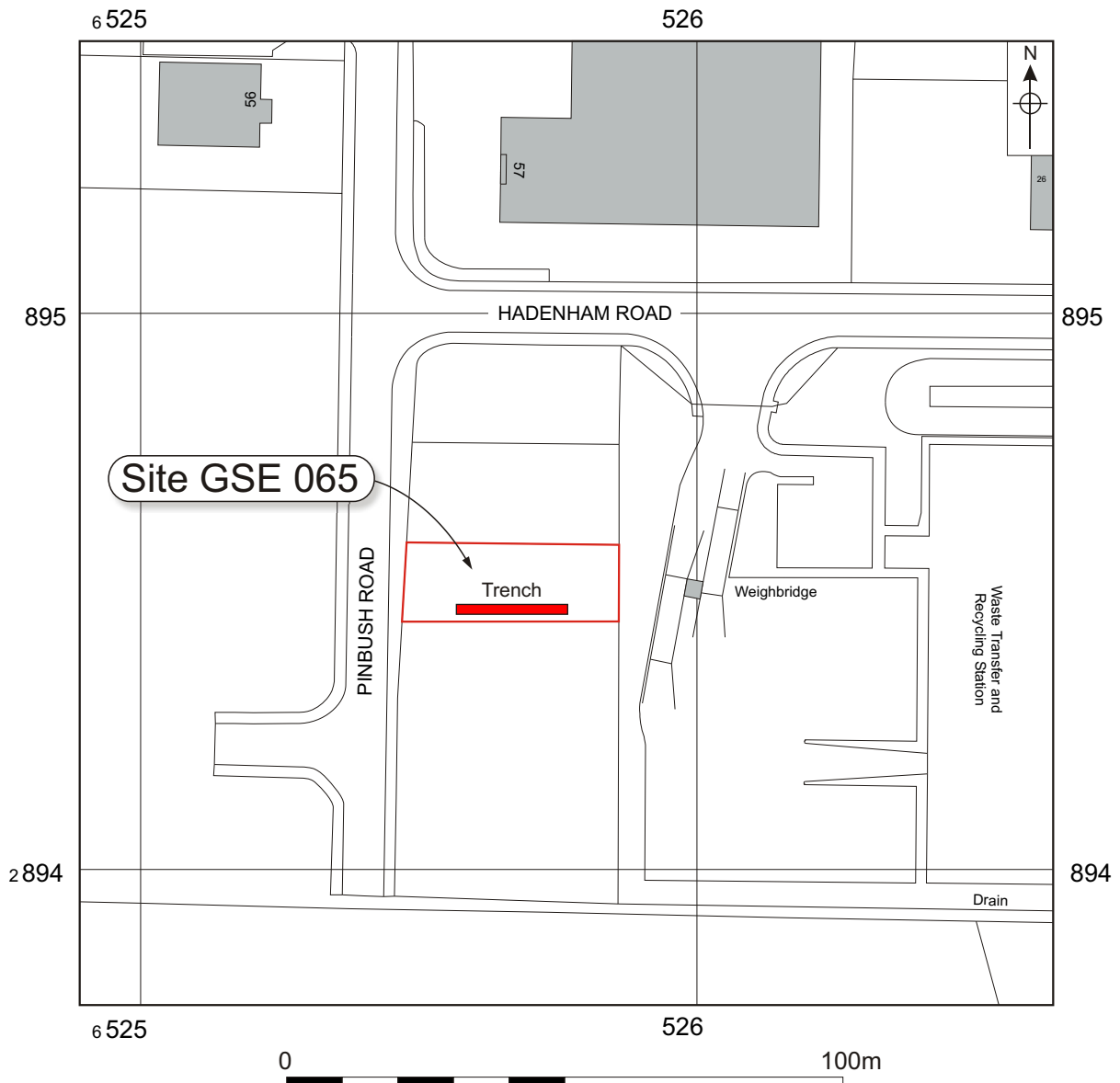


Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:1250

Local Authority No.100019340

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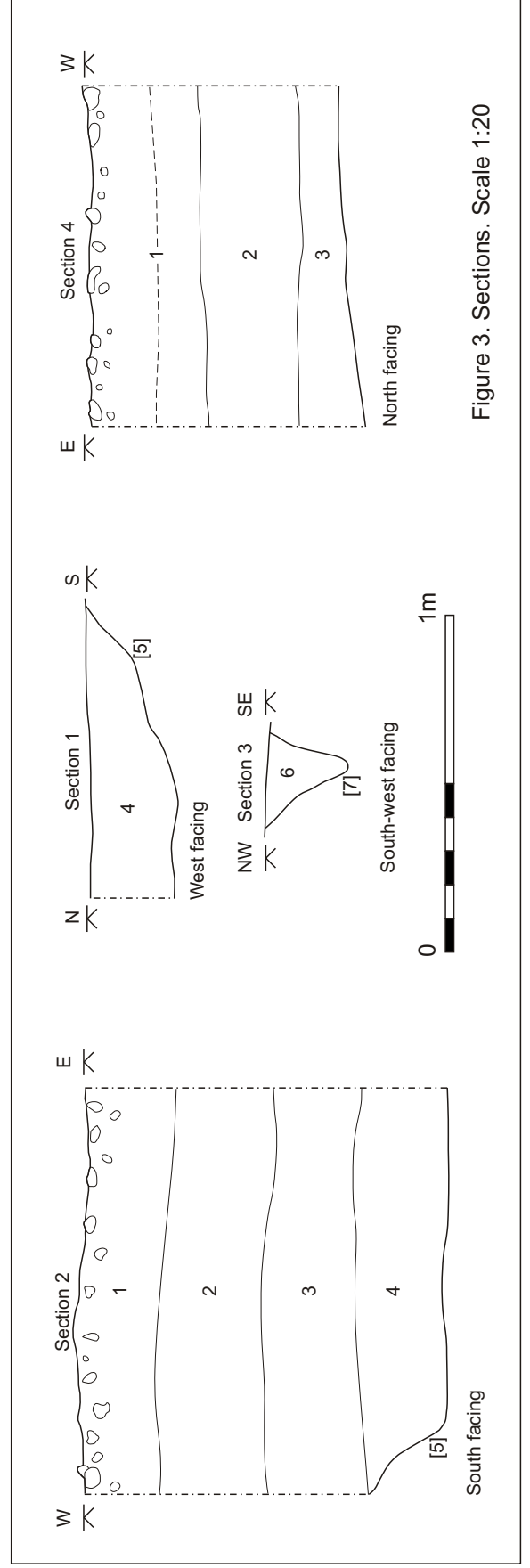
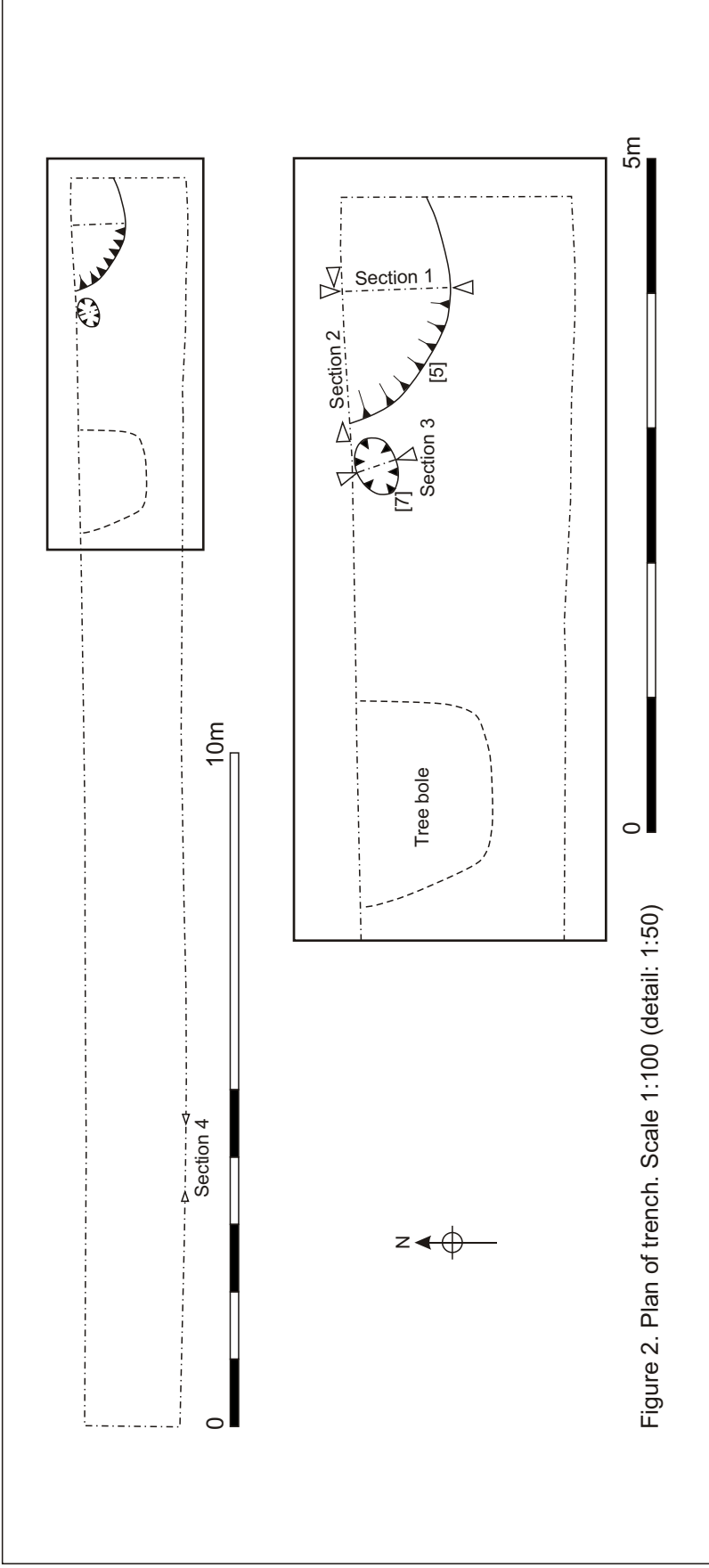




Plate 1. Whole trench



Plate 2. Pit [5] and post-hole [7]