

NORFOLK ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Report No. 891

**An Archaeological Evaluation at
Boyland Hall, Hempnall Road
Morningthorpe**

39694 MRN

John Ames
December 2003

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Local Authority No.076759

Fig.1 is based upon the Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 map with the permission of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office © Crown Copyright 'Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings' Norfolk County Council, County Hall, Norwich (02/12/2003). **Reference copy: no further copies to be made.**

Location: Boyland Hall, Morningthorpe
Grid Ref: TM 2220 9434
HER No.: 39694 MRN
Date of fieldwork: 6th to 10th October 2003

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by trial trenching inside the footprint of a proposed development at Boyland Hall, Morningthorpe, Norfolk. Three trenches were placed in accessible areas between the remains of the demolished hall and its garden boundary wall.

Examination of the trenches revealed that a substantial amount of truncation had taken place during the levelling of the hall in c.1947 and the majority of surviving evidence was in the form of post-medieval walls and foundations. However there was limited evidence of an earlier construction, possibly of Elizabethan date.

1.0 Introduction

(Fig. 1)

The site is situated approximately 1.9km west of Hempnall along the B1135 and comprises an area of 4.45ha of land. Residential development, consisting of a single house and associated roads and services, is proposed for the site.

The archaeological evaluation was commissioned by Mr A E Bromley-Martin of Strutt & Parker on behalf of their client, and undertaken in accordance with a Project Design prepared by the Norfolk Archaeological Unit (NAU) and a Brief issued by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (NLA Ref: 2/10/02/ARJH). 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 is currently held by the Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service, following the relevant policy on archiving standards.

2.0 Geology and Topography

(Fig. 1)

The site lies partly on the north-to-south Boulder clay plateau and Glacial sands and gravels overlying Upper Chalk and London Clay.

The site is situated at c.30m OD and lies in a shallow valley. The topography rises to 40m OD south-east and 36m OD to the west. A tributary of the river Tas flows east-to-west, from Hempnall to Tasburgh and forms the northern parish boundary.

3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

Boyland is mentioned in Domesday, a record which suggests that the site of the hall could contain the remains of the Late Saxon and early medieval manor. The hall itself sat within the remains of a moated enclosure. Additional information about the surrounding archaeology is recorded on Norfolk Historic and Environmental Record (HER), a summary of which is listed below.

- To the north-west a cropmark of a ring ditch (HER 10179) possible dating to the Bronze Age is recorded on an aerial photograph.
- A rectangular enclosure (HER 10176) lies to the west of the site and is probably Romano-British in date.
- A large amount of archaeological evidence dating to the Romano-British period (HER 10178) including a settlement, field systems, rectilinear enclosures, building materials and numerous metal finds.
- West of Boyland Hall, an archaeological excavation in *c.1974* revealed an Early Saxon cemetery (HER 1120), inhumations, cremations and an enclosure.
- A post-medieval brick kiln (HER 15555) lies south-west of Boyland Hall as indicated on Faden's Topographical Map of Norfolk *c.1797*.
- An ice-house (HER 23168) is marked on the *c.1926 25"* OS map (not named) in Stable Plantation. A large egg-shaped chamber made of red brick with short tunnel entrance made of gault brick. The ice-house is probably mid 19th-century and served Boyland Hall.

4.0 Methodology

(Figs 2 & 3)

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 stated that three evaluation trenches, each measuring 28m by 6.6m, should be excavated within the footprint (2,950m²) of the proposed development to allow a 5% area sample (151m² at trench base). The trenches were required to be excavated to the optimum depth by employing a series of steps, at 1.2m intervals, until a basal width of 1.8m was achieved.

During the machining of Trench 1, upstanding obstructions made it impossible for the objectives as set out in the Brief to be achieved. Walls were encountered and excavated to a depth of *c.1.70m*, at which depth the water table was reached and machining became problematic. In addition Trench 1 lay approximately 2.5m east of a north-to-south aligned underground water culvert.

Because, of difficulties experienced in Trench 1, a revision of the trench locations for Trenches 2 and 3 was agreed with Norfolk Landscape Archaeology.

The trenches were relocated to more accessible areas, still within the footprint of the development, but where there was less likely to be significant obstructions.

Machine excavation was carried out with a hydraulic 360° excavator using a 1.60m toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision.

Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds, other than those which were obviously modern, were retained for inspection.

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.

Site conditions were excellent with clear access around the site. The weather conditions were also very good during the duration of the project.

5.0 Results (Appendix 1)

(Figs 3, 4, 5 & 6)

Trench 1

Trench 1 was excavated in two parts, both located in the western part of the site and aligned north-to-south.

The northern part of the trench measured c.2.20m in length by c.2m in width and was machined to a depth of c.1.50m.

The southern part of the trench measured c.4.0m in length by c.3.5m in width and was stepped-in at c.1.20m intervals to a depth of c.2.30m.

Excavation of Trench 1 revealed the post-medieval structural remains and related make-up deposits related to the demolished remnants of Boyland Hall (Fig. 4). These include the partial remains of a wall ([2]). The wall and an associated mid greyish brown clay make-up deposit ([6]) had been disturbed by the up-rooting of a tree ([01]). At a similar level but with no stratigraphic relationship to these remains, another construction cut ([13]) was identified. This contained a deposit ([14]) which consisted of a mid brown clay with frequent rounded, sub-rounded, angular and sub-angular flint nodules and moderate sized chalk lumps. On top of which sat a mortar bedding ([12]) for an east-to-west aligned wall ([11]). Wall [11] has been constructed with Norfolk red brick suggesting an early 19th-century date or later.

Below these the remains of another brick built structure ([07]) survived. This was interpreted as a possible wall, clearly constructed on banded foundation deposits ([8] and [9]), representing an earlier phase of construction. A representative sample of bricks were removed for identification and have been dated between the later medieval to early post-medieval period.

At the base of Trench 1, in both parts, was a thick layer of peat ([10] and [20]).

Trench 2

(Figs 3, 4 & 6)

Trench 2 was relocated to the northern part of the site, aligned east-to-west.

The trench measured c.17.5m in length, c.1.60m in width and was machined to a depth of c.0.80m.

The deposits recorded in Trench 2 all proved to be make-up deposits (Fig.6). Context [21] was a mixed deposit of mid brown silty sand and gravel which continued throughout the trench. Deposit [22] consisted of mid brown silty sand with frequent small-to-medium sized rounded, sub-rounded, angular and sub-angular flints; Layer [23] was a mid brown clayey sand with frequent small-to-medium sized rounded, sub-rounded, angular and sub-angular flints. All of these deposits were cut by a modern drainage pipe ([24]).

Trench 3

(Fig. 3, 4 & 6)

Trench 3 was relocated to the south-east of the site, aligned north-to-south.

The trench measured c.22m in length, c.1.6m in width and was machined to a depth of c.1.1m.

Trench 3 contained make-up deposits that included a gravel deposit ([27]) similar to that found in Trench 2 (i.e. [21]). Below this was a gravel deposit ([28]), another make-up layer which consisted of a mid brown silty sand with frequent chalk lumps and rounded and sub-rounded flint. At the base of the section lay a peat deposit ([27]) very similar to those recorded in Trench 1 (i.e. [10] and [20]).

The Sondages

It was decided to excavate two additional sondages to compensate for the reduction of observable areas due to the necessary relocation of the trenches. These were positioned beside two of the post-medieval walls to attempt to understand the construction techniques adopted for the building of the hall. The sondages revealed that very large construction cuts of considerable depth were used for the foundations of the post-medieval hall

Sondage 1

(Figs 4 & 5)

Sondage 1 was located on the eastern side of a north-to-south wall ([15]) belonging to the demolished hall. The sondage measured c.2.20m in length by c.1.80m in width and was 1.85m in depth.

Wall [15] was constructed using the brick-laying technique of English Bond. The wall was supported by a mortar bed ([16]) which consisted of a mixed deposit of light-to-mid lime mortar with moderate small-to-medium sized sub-rounded, angular and sub-angular flint. The underlying deposit ([17]) was very similar in appearance except there were less flint inclusions. The main bulk of the foundation was formed by deposit [18] which consisted of mixed light-to-mid brown silty sand with very large flint nodules and moderate medium-to-large sized red-bricks. Layer [10], a deposit of peat lay at the base of the sondage.

Sondage 2

(Figs 4 & 5)

Sondage 2 was located on the southern side of east-to-west wall [19]. The sondage measured c.2.50m in length by c.1.80m in width and was 1.6m deep.

The section appeared very similar to that recorded in Sondage 1, except that there was no mortar bed lying beneath the wall. Wall [19] was placed directly above a mixed light-to-mid brown silty sand ([20]) with very large flint nodules and moderate medium-to-large sized red-bricks. No construction cut was seen in section.

6.0 The Finds

The only finds recovered during this project was the sample of ceramic building material taken to hopefully provide a date for linear structure [07] in Trench 1. This consisted of three bricks dated between the late medieval and early post-medieval period.

7.0 Conclusions

Trench 1 provided the only evidence for a structure ([07]) that may have predated the demolished Boyland Hall. This is not surprising, however, considering the amount of truncation which would have taken place during the build of Boyland Hall, as demonstrated by the massive construction cuts recorded in Sondages 1 and 2.

The ground surrounding Boyland Hall has been deliberately landscaped and this is certainly evident by the amount of made ground revealed by the trial trenching. The made ground has changed the surrounding topography giving the impression that Boyland Hall sat on a higher plateau overlooking the Tas Valley. This favourable position overlooking the valley may not have been solely chosen for the pleasing views. Equally, important was the requirement to take precautions from the possibility of flooding by the river Tas.

This archaeological evaluation has demonstrated that it is unlikely that any remains earlier than the late medieval periods survive above the peat deposits in the immediate vicinity of the relatively recently demolished Boyland Hall.

Although, no significant archaeological finds were made within the vicinity of the present location of Boyland Hall during this evaluation, the possibility that earlier remains survive under the landscaped deposits within the grounds cannot be discounted.

Acknowledgements

This site was excavated by the author and surveyed by Sandrine Whitmore and Cath Chisman. The digitisation of plans and sections were by the author. The report was illustrated and produced by Maggie Foottit and edited by Alice Lyons. Thanks are due to by Mr A E Bromley-Martin of Strutt & Parker who commissioned this project. The author would also like to thank Mr Abbott and David Abbott for their help with the machining of the trenches and their co-operation throughout the period on site. The author would also like to recognise Andy Hutcheson, Senior Archaeologist (Planning) for his help and consideration throughout the project and Jan Allen (both of NLA) for supplying the HER data.

Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context	Trench	Category	Description	Period
01	1	Cut	Tree-bowl	Modern
02	1	Masonry	Wall	Post-medieval
03	1	Deposit	Make-up	Post-medieval
04	1	Deposit	Make-up	Post-medieval
05	1	Deposit	Make-up	Post-medieval
06	1	Deposit	Make-up	Post-medieval
07	1	Masonry	Wall	Late medieval to early post-medieval
08	1	Deposit	Banded foundation	Late medieval to early post-medieval
09	1	Deposit	Banded foundation	Late medieval to early post-medieval
10	1	Deposit	Natural peat	
11	1	Masonry	Wall	Post-medieval
12	1	Deposit	Mortar	Post-medieval
13	1	Cut	Construction cut	Post-medieval
14	1	Deposit	Fill of construction cut [13]	Post-medieval
15	Sondage 1	Masonry	Wall	Post-medieval
16	Sondage 1	Deposit	Mortar	Post-medieval
17	Sondage 1	Deposit	Make-up	Post-medieval
18	Sondage 1	Deposit	Foundation deposit	Post-medieval
19	Sondage 2	Masonry	Wall	Post-medieval
20	Sondage 2	Deposit	Foundation deposit	Post-medieval
21	2	Deposit	Make-up	Post-medieval
22	2	Deposit	Make-up	Post-medieval
23	2	Deposit	Make-up	Post-medieval
24	2	Cut	Drainage pipe	Modern
25	2	Deposit	Fill of drainage pipe	Modern
26	3	Deposit	Topsoil/brick debris	Modern
27	3	Deposit	Gravel make-up	Modern
28	3	Deposit	Make-up	Post-medieval
29	3	Deposit	Make-up	Post-medieval

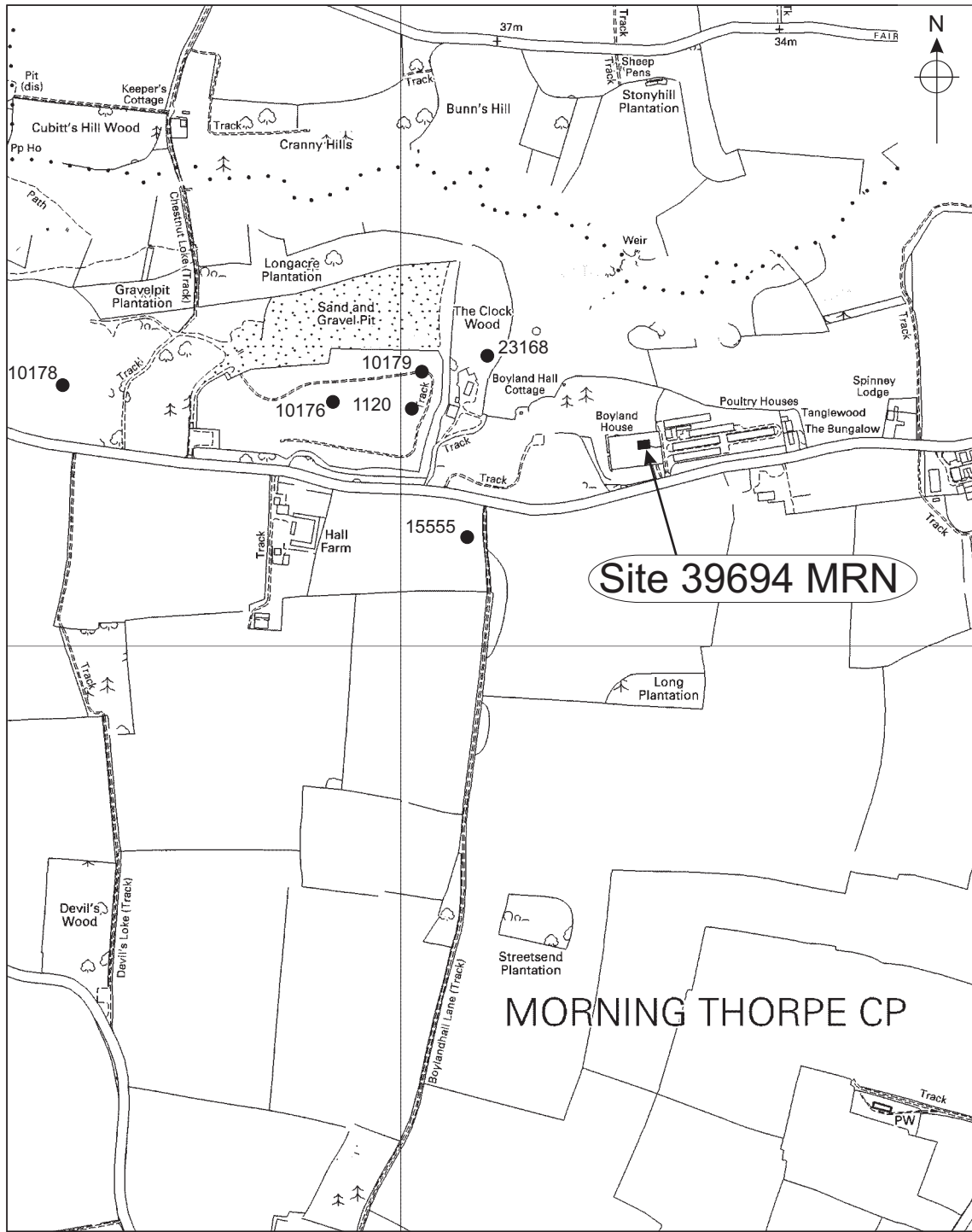


Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:10,000

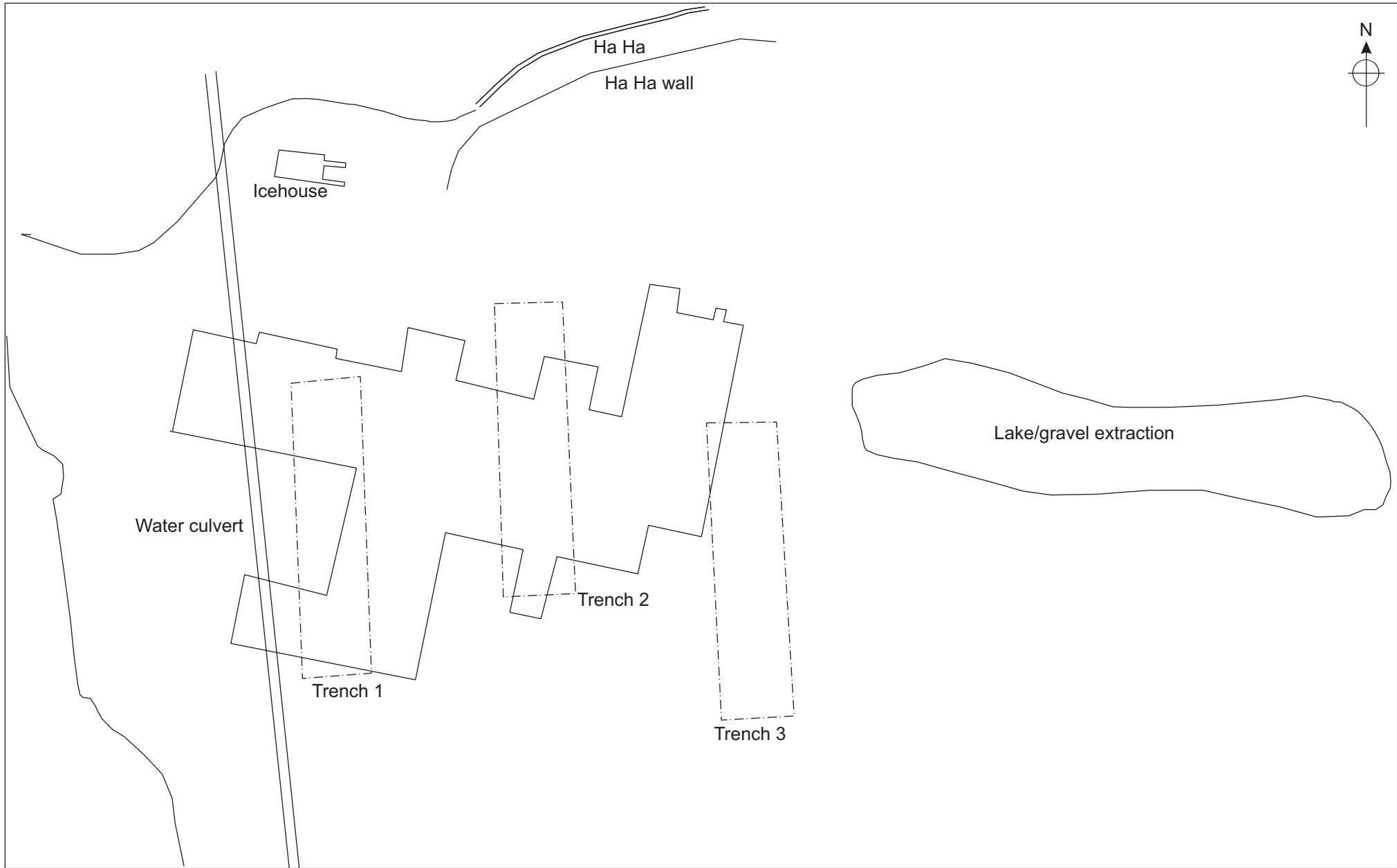


Figure 2. Proposed trench location. Scale 1:500

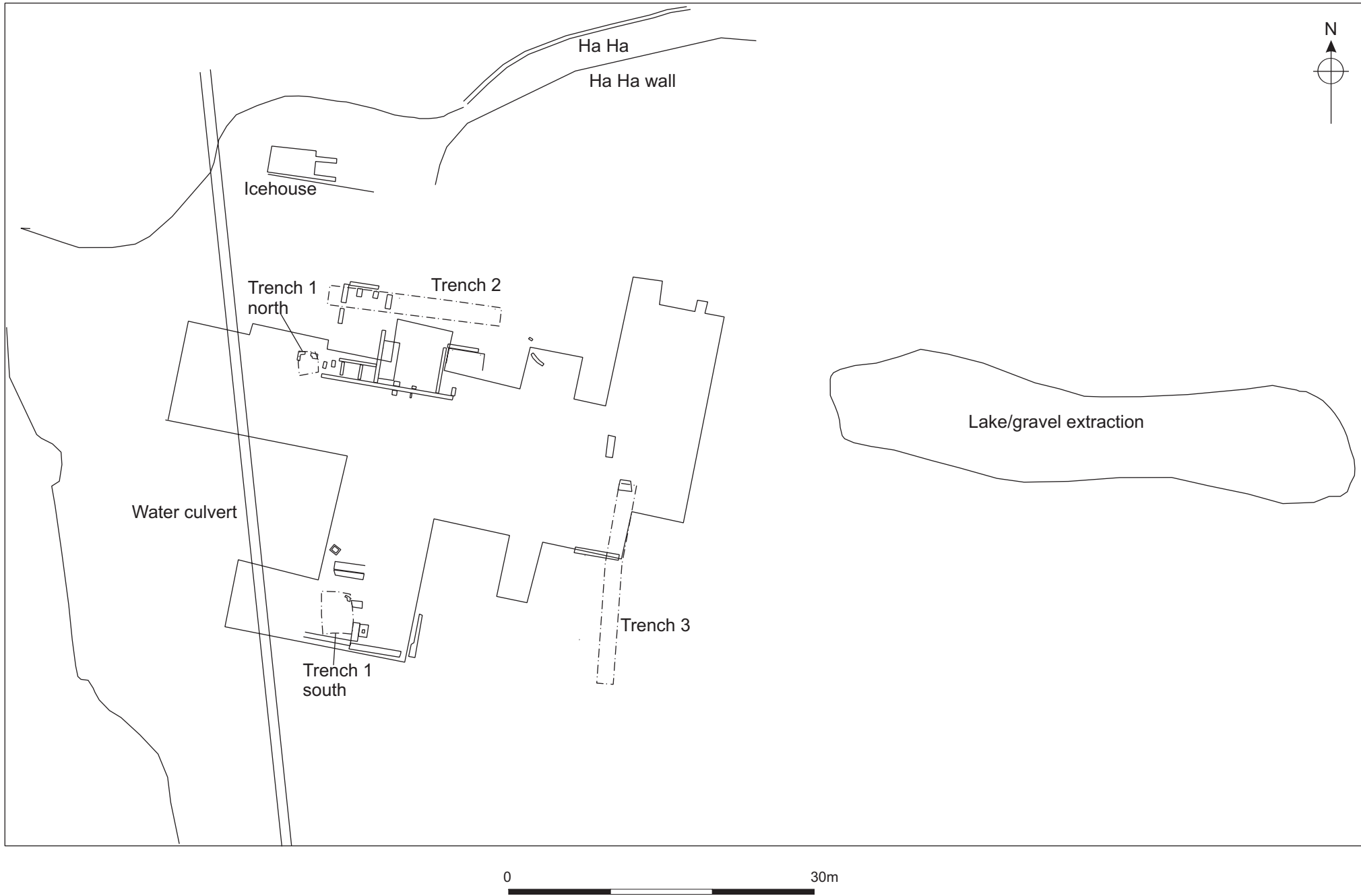
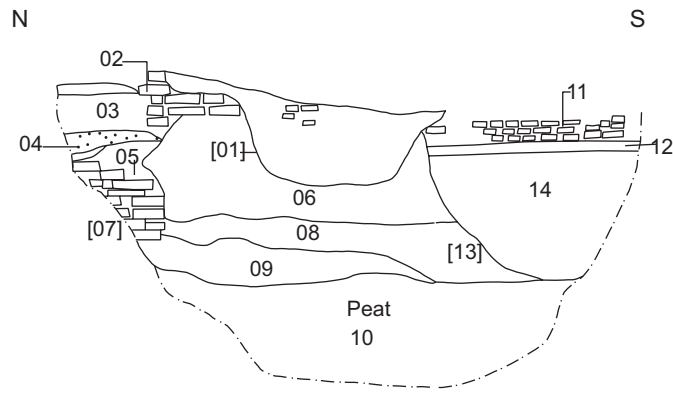


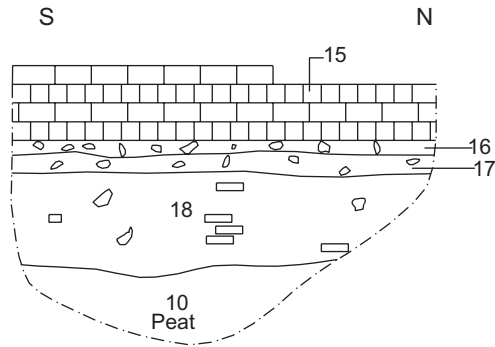
Figure 3. Actual trench location. Scale 1:500



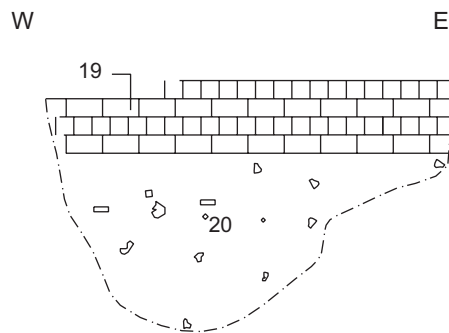
Figure 4. Section and sondage location. Scale 1:250



Trench 1 south, west facing section 1



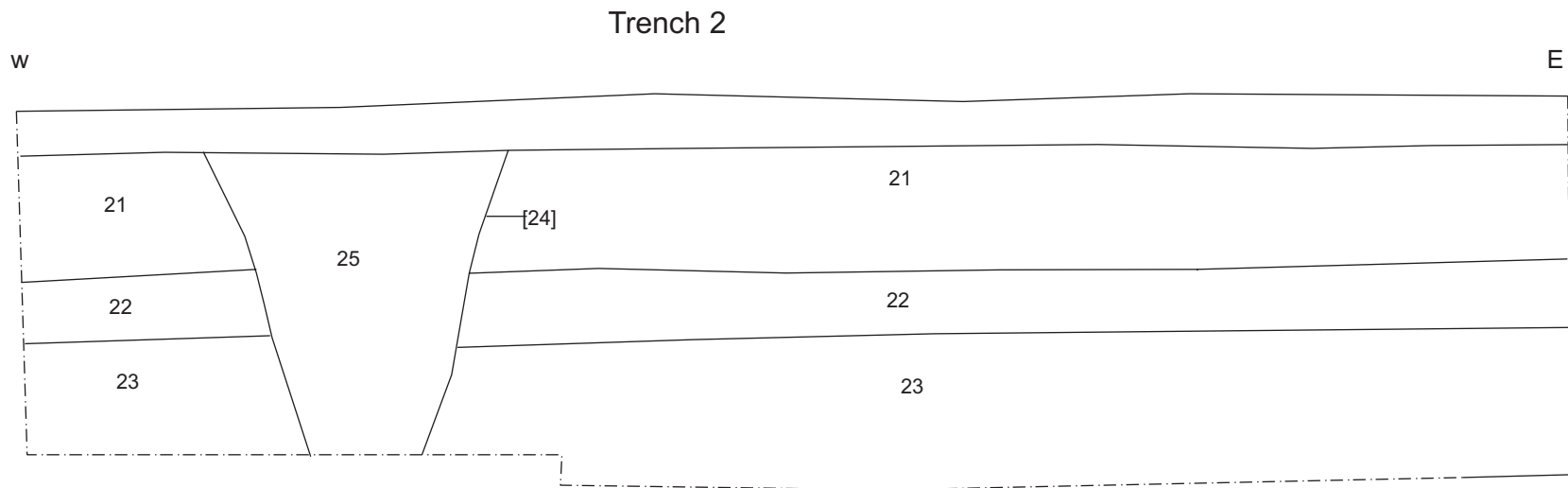
Sondage 1 east facing section 2



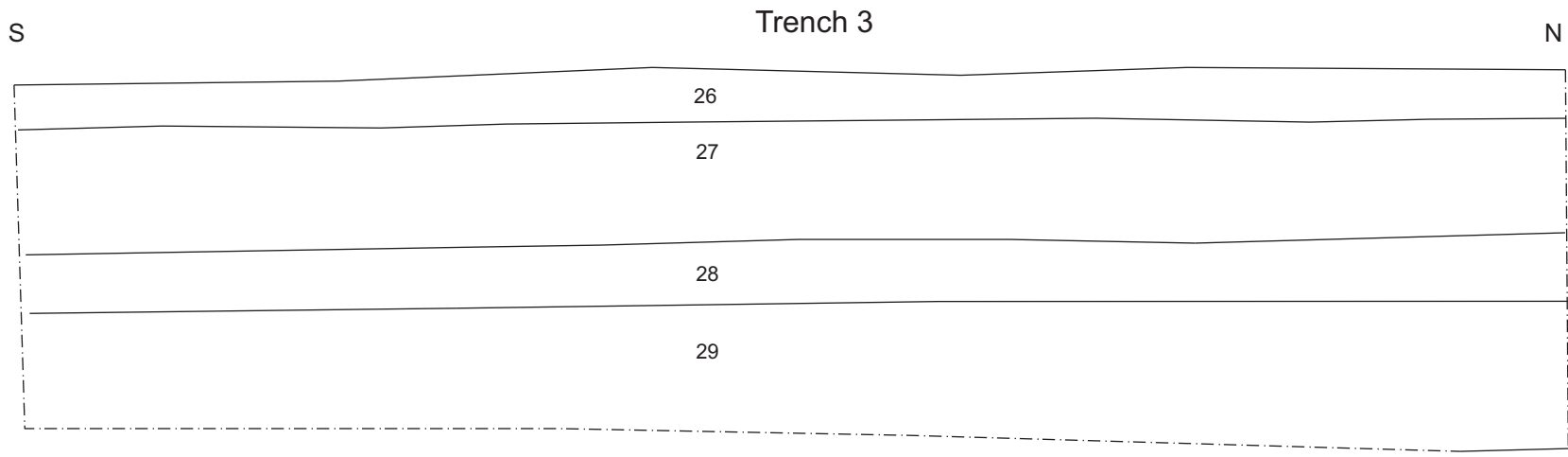
Sondage 2 south facing section 3



Figure 5. Trench 1 and sondages, sections 1 to 3. Scale 1:50



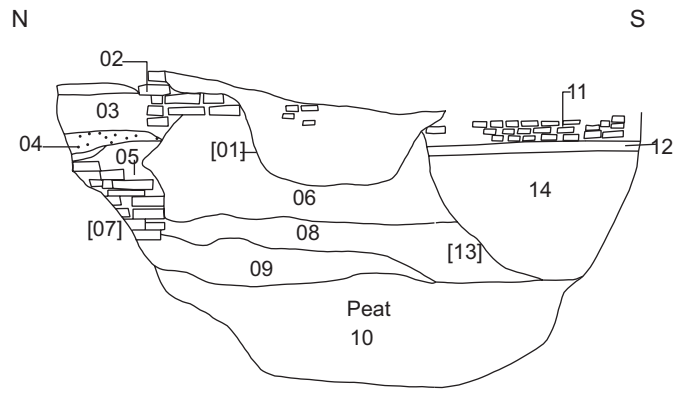
South facing section 4



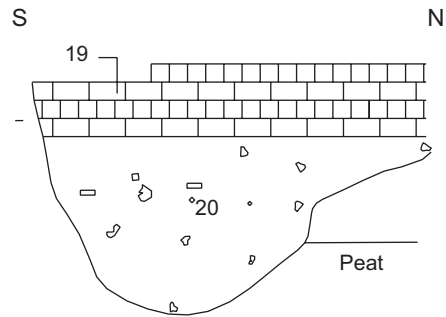
East facing section 5



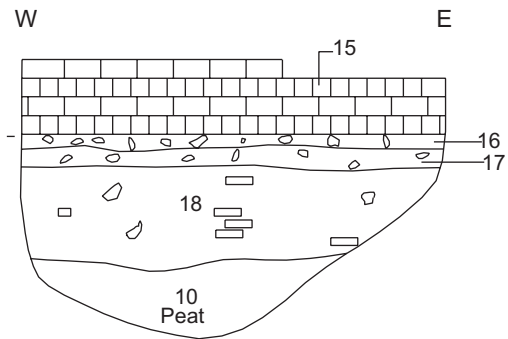
Figure 6. Trenches 2, section 4 and Trench 3, section 5. Scale 1:20



West facing section 1



East facing section 2



South facing section 3

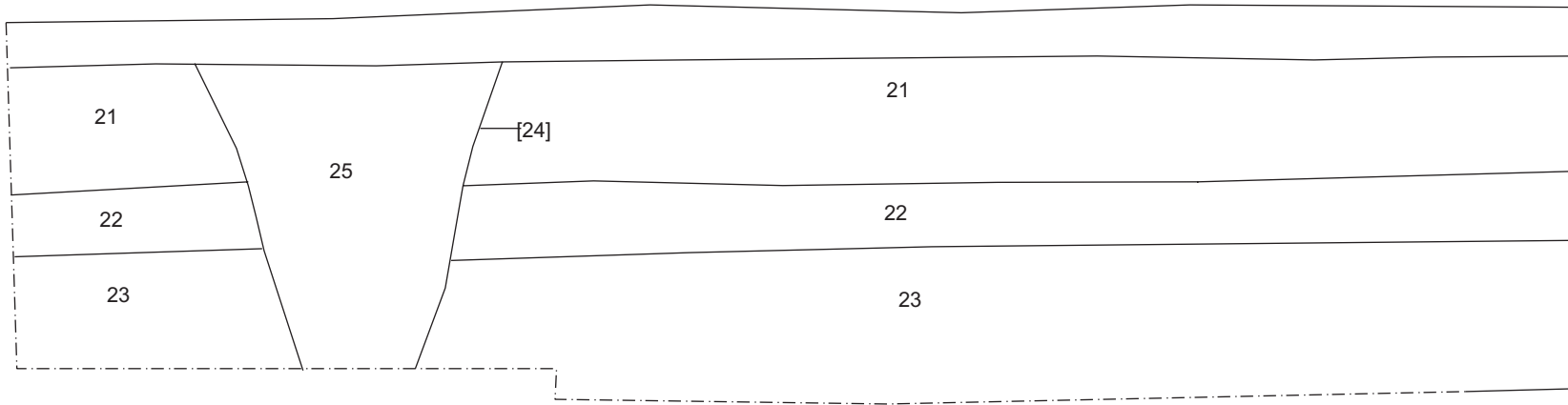


Figure 5. Trench 1, sections 1 to 3. Scale 1:50

W

Trench 2

E

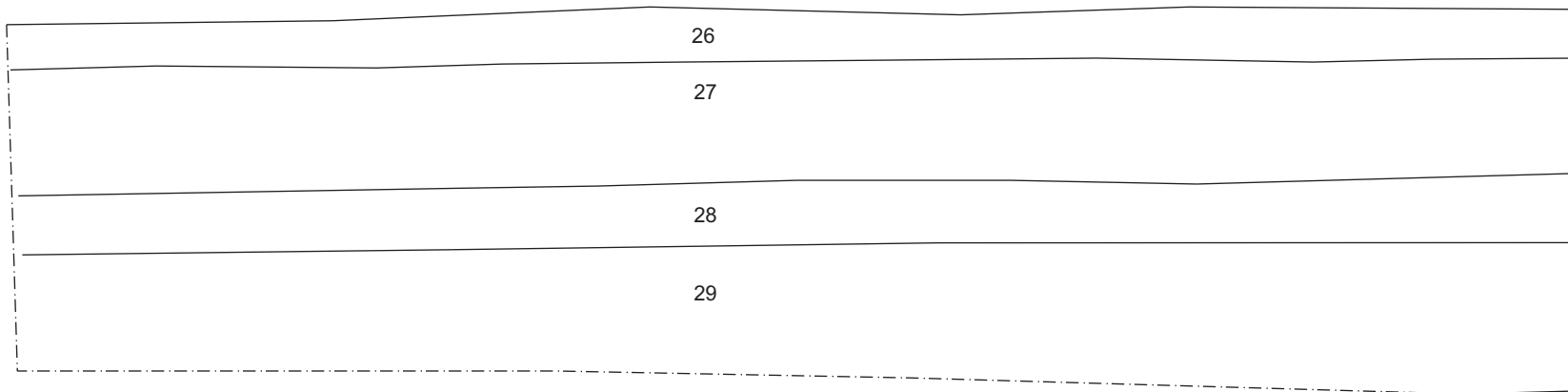


South facing section 4

S

Trench 3

N



East facing section 5