

NORFOLK ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Report No. 814

**A Report on an Archaeological Evaluation at
103 St Peter's Road, West Lynn, Norfolk**

37643 KLY

Gary L Trimble
April 2003

© Norfolk Archaeological Unit 2003

Contents

Summary

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Geology and Topography
- 3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background
- 4.0 Methodology
- 5.0 Results
- 6.0 The Finds
- 7.0 Conclusions

Acknowledgements

Bibliography

Appendix 1: Context Summary

Appendix 2: Finds by Context

Appendix 3: The Pottery

Figures

- Fig. 1 Site Location
- Fig. 2 Trench Location
- Fig. 3 Trench 1, east-facing section
- Fig. 4 Trench 2, north-facing section
- Fig. 5 Trench 3, plan of oven [01] and gully [23]
- Fig. 6 Trench 3, east-facing section
- Fig. 7 Trench 3, south-facing section
- Fig. 8 Trench 4, west-facing section
- Fig. 9 Trench 5, west-facing section

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 (19/04/2003). **Reference copy: no further copies to be made.**

Location: 103 St Peter's Road, West Lynn, Norfolk
Grid Ref: TF 6119 1982
HER No: 37643KLY
Date of Fieldwork: 14th to 17th January 2003

Summary

Five evaluation trenches were excavated at 103 St Peter's Road, West Lynn, Norfolk in advance of a housing development. Three of these trenches were devoid of any archaeological features or deposits. Archaeological features which probably date to the medieval period were identified in Trench 3. These comprised a partially preserved oven and a gully. It is possible that these features were associated with salt-making. A trench located close to the street frontage contained floor surfaces associated with post-medieval cottages.

1.0 Introduction

The site was in an area of proposed development at 103 St Peter's Road, West Lynn, Norfolk covering an area of 37.12 ha (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned and funded by Jon Holden Homes Ltd.

This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (NLA Ref: AH/03/01/02) and a Method Statement prepared by the Norfolk Archaeological Unit (NAU Ref: MS/Eval/AS/1386).

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

The site is bounded to the north by housing, to the east by St Peter's Road and to the south by the West Lynn drain. To the west lie open fields occupied until recently by apple orchards. At present the site is occupied by disused farm buildings and sheds to the west whilst to the east is the house and garden of 'The Firs'. The area occupied by the farm buildings is partly laid to grass which surrounds a concrete apron. A tarmac driveway bisects the site. The whole site lies above silt alluvial deposits which are sealed by a dark grey silt topsoil.

3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

Unlike other Marshland settlements, the origins of West Lynn are probably industrial rather than agricultural with extensive salt making taking place throughout the medieval period. Salt making was a widespread industry in the fenland with some sites dating back to the Late Bronze Age. They are characterised by spreads of the distinctive ceramics used in the boiling of brine,

called briquetage, and fuel ash which can form prominent mounds. There is archaeological as well as possible documentary evidence for salt making in and around West Lynn. The Domesday Book records several salterns attached to a number of holdings in Lynn at the time of the Conquest. West Lynn may have been with the Lynn holding of Ralph Banyard's manor of Terrington which included two and a half salterns (Owen 1984 cited in Silvester 1988). Saltern mounds have been recorded to the north and west of the village (Silvester 1988). The majority have been levelled by the plough although one large group with mounds surviving to up to 2m height lie within the former orchard to the west of the evaluation site. These mounds are probably remnants of a much larger group which have been levelled as West Lynn expanded. Saltern mounds located to the north of the village were levelled in recent years and pottery recovered from them indicates that salt making took place here between the 11th and 13th centuries.

4.0 Methodology

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

The Brief required that for each dwelling footprint an area of 4m by 4m should be examined, providing a total evaluated area of 80m² or 2.4% of the development total (Fig. 2).

Machine excavation was carried out with a wheeled JCB-type excavator using a 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 the Norfolk Archaeological Unit's *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.

5.0 Results

Trench 1

Fig. 3

Trench 1 was located within the footprint of the westernmost proposed building plot. It measured 4m x 4m. The trench was machine excavated to a total depth of 2.65m. No archaeological features or deposits were recorded.

Virtually the whole profile comprised a light brown, silt alluvial deposit ([25]), the full depth of which was not recorded.

Sealing [25] was a dark grey silt topsoil ([26]) which measured 0.30m in depth.

Above the topsoil ([26]) was an orange sand ([27]) which measured 0.10m in thickness and served as a levelling or bedding deposit for the concrete apron ([28]) which sealed it.

Trench 2

Fig. 4

Trench 2 was positioned to the east of Trench 1 and was located within the footprint of proposed building plot No 4. It measured 4m x 4m in area and was machine excavated to a total depth of 2.71m. No archaeological features or deposits were recorded.

A light brown silt alluvial deposit ([29]) measuring 2.18m in depth was recorded. Its full depth was not established.

Alluvium deposit [29] was sealed by a dark grey silt topsoil ([30]) measuring 0.48m in depth.

The topsoil lay beneath a thin tarmac layer ([31]) which measured 0.08m in depth.

Trench 3

Figs 5, 6 & 7

Trench 3 was located with the footprint of the centrally located building plot. It measured 4m x 4m and was excavated to a depth of 1.00m.

Two archaeological features, an oven ([01]) and a gully ([23]) were recorded. Both appeared to be cut from a similar level which lay approximately 0.75m below the top of the evaluation trench. The features were both cut into and sealed by an alluvium deposit ([03]).

Oven ([01]) was located to the north-west of the trench. Only the northern side of the oven had survived. It was orientated south-west to north-east. The oven measured 2.40m in length although its full dimensions were not established as the feature continued beyond the limits of the evaluation trench in both directions. Its full width remains unknown owing to the loss of the southern side. A total depth of 0.45m was recorded. In parts, a hard, baked clay lining ([32]) was present to the upper level of the cut. In profile the oven displayed a concave base and was mostly filled by a deposit of scorched, orange coloured silt ([02]) which contained occasional charcoal flecks and fragments. Small patches of ash and charcoal were present to the sides of the cut. A single sherd of pottery dating to between the 11th and 13th centuries was recovered from the fill.

Gully [23] was positioned to the south-east of the evaluation trench and orientated south-east to north-west. The gully terminated in the evaluation trench. It measured 1.60m in length, 0.40m in width and had a depth of 0.15m. In profile the gully had steep sides and a flat base and was filled by a single deposit of bluish grey clay ([24]). No artefacts were recovered from the feature.

Sealing the archaeological features was a 0.20m depth of light brown silt alluvium [03] from which pottery weighing 0.186kg was recovered. The pottery had a date range of between the 12th and 13th centuries.

The alluvium was sealed by a mid brownish grey topsoil ([33]) which measured 0.45m in depth. Above the topsoil was a clinker levelling or bedding layer ([34]) on top of which lay a thin layer of tarmac ([35]).

Trench 4

Fig. 8

Trench 4 was located to the east of the site. It was not possible to excavate the proposed full trench area of 4m x 4m due to the presence of services and a septic tank which was damaged during the initial stages of excavation. This resulted in sewage contamination of the trench and led to its subsequent abandonment. However, a smaller trench measuring 1.80m in width and 2.00m in length was excavated in close proximity away from the contaminated area.

No archaeological features or deposits were recorded in the evaluation trench. It was machine excavated to a depth of 1.30m. Light brown silt alluvium ([18]) was encountered at 0.60m below the top of the trench. Its full depth was not established as it continued below the base of the trench. The alluvium was sealed by a mid to dark grey topsoil ([17]) which measured 0.60m in thickness.

Trench 5

Fig. 9

Trench 5 was positioned to the east of the site on the road frontage. It measured 4m x 4m in area and was machine excavated to a total depth of 2.65m. Mortar and clay floor surfaces associated with the cottages which stood on the road frontage were encountered and probably date to the 18th or 19th centuries. The floors covered almost the entire area of the trench except to the extreme west. A brick floor was restricted to the south-east corner.

Light brown alluvial deposits ([16]) were encountered at the base of the trench.

Immediately above the alluvium was a reddish brown silt layer ([15]) from which no finds were retrieved. The deposit measured 0.13m in depth and is likely to have formed the original topsoil formed above the alluvium ([16]).

Above [15] was a dumped mid to dark brownish grey soil make-up deposit ([05]) which measured 0.85m in depth. Pottery sherds recovered from the deposit indicate a late 18th- or 19th-century date for this dumping episode.

Sealing deposit [05] was a dark grey ash and soil deposit ([13]) which measured an average depth of 0.10m. This was sealed by a dark grey soil deposit ([12]) measuring 0.05m in depth. Deposits [13] and [12] represented levelling material for a buff light brown clay floor ([11]) which measured 0.04m in depth.

Above clay floor [11] was a levelling material ([10]) which was comprised of a dark grey silt. A cream-coloured mortar floor [09] sealed levelling material [10]. Floor [09] had been resurfaced or repaired with a white mortar floor [14].

Sealing floor [14] was a brick floor ([07]) and its associated levelling, or bedding, layer ([08]). The levelling layer comprised a dark grey sandy silt which measured 0.04m in thickness. The brick floor was arranged in a haphazard manner and was located to the south-east of the evaluation trench. An area measuring 1.5m x 1.5m was recorded although it continued beyond the limits of excavation to the south and east.

The brick floor was sealed by a 0.20m thick deposit of clayey silt ([04]) which incorporated frequent fragments of mortar and brick. It probably represents a demolition layer. Several pottery sherds with a date range of between the 18th and 19th centuries were recovered from the deposit.

Deposit [04] was sealed by a 0.60m thick topsoil of mid brown silt ([06]).

6.0 The Finds (Appendix 2)

6.1 The Post-Roman Pottery (Appendix 3)

Introduction

Twenty-six fragments of pottery of post-Roman date were recovered during the evaluation. These weighed 0.426kg. The ceramics were medieval and post-medieval in date and were present in four deposits.

Methodology

The ceramics were quantified by the number of sherds present in each context, the estimated number of vessels represented and the weight of each fabric. Other characteristics such as condition and decoration were noted, and an overall date range for the pottery in each context was established. The pottery was recorded on *pro forma* sheets by context using letter codes based on fabric and form. The codes used are based mainly on those identified in *Eighteen centuries of pottery from Norwich* (Jennings 1981), and supplemented by additional ones from the Suffolk Archaeological Unit (S Anderson unpublished). The information was recorded on a spreadsheet which is contained within the archive.

Discussion

Thirteen fragments of medieval pottery were present in two of the contexts ([02] and [03]). These comprised a sherd of a cooking vessel made in a sandy medium coarse grey ware known as Local medieval unglazed ware (LMU) from [02] and several sherds of another medieval cooking coarseware which was present in [03]. The LMU cooking vessel has a simple everted rim which has slight thumbing marks on the inside, a form which dates from between the 11th and 13th centuries, possibly even between the 11th and 12th centuries. The second cooking vessel was made in a sandy patchily oxidised fabric, and consisted of a hand-made body to which a wheel-thrown rim had been joined. The junction of the join was clearly marked by knife-trimming and crude wiping by hand, making it visually very similar to products recovered from the likely kiln-site of Blackborough End, Middleton, to the south-east of West Lynn. Here deposits of ceramic wasters and kiln debris were identified, dating to the medieval period (Rogerson and Ashley 1985, 181-189). The dating of this pottery is problematic and is based mainly on comparative material from other excavations, but is likely to span the period of the 12th and 13th centuries (*ibid.*, 186-188). The vessel recovered from West Lynn has a fully medieval rim, which is closest in form to Blackborough End jar Type 4 (*ibid.*, fig 3, no 4). This vessel is believed to perhaps date to around the end of the 13th century (*ibid.*, 188).

Thirteen sherds of post-medieval date were recovered from two contexts in the evaluation, weighing a total of 0.22kg. Both contexts were of an approximately similar date range. The pottery from [04] included fragments of glazed redware

which are likely to be residual, along with a fragment of a white ware dish with 'hammerhead' type rim and abraded yellow slip. The vessel which is imported, may be a product of the Wese slipware industry in Germany dating to between the late 16th to early 17th centuries (Hurst *et al* 1986, 251). A small body sherd made from a mixed brown and red fabric was also present, covered with a marbled slip. The fragment is from a cup or bowl of a Staffordshire-type Agate ware, of late 17th- to 18th-century date (Jennings 1981, 104). A single vessel of 18th-century date was also present in [04]. This consisted of a small footring of a Staffordshire white salt-glazed vessel, most probably a bowl or a dish. Two fragments of creamware dishes were also recovered from this context, and one sherd of blue and white transfer-printed ware dating to the late 18th to 19th centuries. A single fragment of late Glazed red earthenware was also of 18th- to 19th-century date.

A further four sherds of post-medieval pottery were found in [05]. They included three fragments of Glazed red earthenware including the foot of a large pipkin. In addition the rim of a polygonal buff ?press-moulded vessel, either a coffee-pot or a vase, was also present in [05]. The vessel is decorated with a horizontal row of rosettes on the outside of the rim, which is further delineated with a small brown slipped band. This is also painted along either side of the strap handle. The fragment is made in a drab buff unglazed stoneware, which is as yet unidentified, but may be a Castleford ware product dating from the late 18th to 19th centuries (Field 1988, 50).

Conclusions

The small quantity of pottery recovered from the evaluation provided useful dating evidence for the recorded features. The presence of part of a cooking vessel which is similar to those recovered at Blackborough End together with the other medieval pottery indicates a 12th- to 13th-century date for two of the contexts ([02] and [03]).

6.2 Fired Clay

The site produced five pieces of fired clay, which are possibly briquetage, weighing 0.213kg from deposit [03].

7.0 Conclusions

Archaeological features were recorded in Trenches 3 and 5. The oven and gully recorded in Trench 3 almost certainly date to the medieval period and lie above and below the alluvial deposits recorded in all evaluation trenches. This would suggest that the site was subject to marine inundation, possibly well into the post-medieval period, which undoubtedly made occupation of the site untenable before this time. However, the oven and gully indicate industrial and/or agricultural activity on the site during the earlier part of the medieval period. The precise nature of this activity is uncertain though salt-making is a possibility. Five pieces of possible briquetage were recovered from the alluvium overlying the oven. The oven itself may have served in the salt-making process, either being used for the boiling of brine or for salt drying. The gully may have been used to channel sea water as part of the salt-making process.

Trench 5 occupied an area of 18th- or 19th-century ground make-up on top of which were floor surfaces of a similar date. It would appear that soil was imported

on to the site in order to raise the ground level above the level of potential flooding and thus making it suitable for occupation.

Recommendations for future work based upon this report will be made by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology.

Acknowledgements

This work was funded by Jon Holden Homes Ltd. The fieldwork was carried out by Gary Trimble and John Ames. The report was written by Gary Trimble with illustrations by Gary Trimble and Maggie Foottit. The pottery report was by Richenda Goffin. The finds were processed by Lucy Talbot. The report was formatted and produced by Maggie Foottit and edited by Andy Shelley.

Bibliography

- | | | |
|--|------|--|
| Field, R. | 1988 | <i>A collector's guide to buying antique pottery and porcelain</i> |
| Hurst, J., Neal, D., & van Beuningen, H. | 1986 | <i>Pottery produced and traded in north-west Europe 1350-1650</i> , Rotterdam Papers VI |
| Jennings, S. | 1981 | <i>Eighteen centuries of pottery from Norwich</i> , East Anglian Archaeology 13 |
| Rogerson, A. and Ashley, S. | 1985 | 'A medieval pottery production site at Blackborough End, Middleton in <i>Norfolk Archaeology</i> Vol XXIX, Part II |
| Silvester, R.J. | 1988 | <i>The Fenland Project Number 3: Marshland and the Nar Valley, Norfolk</i> , East Anglian Archaeology 45 |

Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context	Trench	Category	Description	Period
01	3	Cut	Oven	Medieval
02	3	Deposit	Fill of oven [01]	Medieval
03	3	Deposit	Alluvium	
04	5	Deposit	Probable demolition layer	Post-medieval
05	5	Deposit	Make-up layer	Post-medieval
06	5	Deposit	Topsoil	Post-medieval
07	5	Masonry	Brick floor	Post-medieval
08	5	Deposit	Levelling material	Post-medieval
09	5	Deposit	Mortar floor	Post-medieval
10	5	Deposit	Levelling material	Post-medieval
11	5	Deposit	Clay floor	Post-medieval
12	5	Deposit	Levelling material	Post-medieval
13	5	Deposit	Levelling material	Post-medieval
14	5	Deposit	Floor repair	Post-medieval
15	5	Deposit	Topsoil above alluvium [16]	Post-medieval
16	5	Deposit	Alluvium	
17	4	Deposit	Topsoil	Post-medieval
18	4	Deposit	Alluvium	
19	3	Deposit	Fill of oven [01]	Medieval
20	3	Deposit	Alluvium	
21	3	Deposit	Topsoil	Post-medieval
23	3	Cut	Gully	Probably medieval
24	3	Deposit	Fill of gully [23]	Probably medieval
25	1	Deposit	Alluvium	
26	1	Deposit	Topsoil	Post-medieval
27	1	Deposit	Levelling layer	Modern
28	1	Deposit	Concrete	Modern
29	2	Deposit	Alluvium	
30	2	Deposit	Topsoil	Post-medieval
31	2	Deposit	Tarmac	Modern
32	3	Deposit	Clay Lining of oven [01]	Medieval
33	3	Deposit	Topsoil	Post-medieval
34	3	Deposit	Clinker bedding layer	Modern
35	3	Deposit	Tarmac	Modern

Appendix 2: Finds by Context

Context	Material	Quantity	Weight (kg)
02	Medieval pottery	1	0.020
03	Medieval pottery	12	0.186
03	Briquetage	5	0.213
04	Post-medieval pottery	9	0.085
05	Post-medieval pottery	4	140

Appendix 3: The Pottery

Context	Ceramic Period	Fabric	Form	Quantity	Weight (kg)	Overall Date Range
2	Medieval	Local medieval unglazed ware	Jar	1	0.020	11th- to 14th-, probably 12th- to 13th-, century
3	Medieval	Medieval coarseware	Jar	12	0.186	12th- to 13th-century?
4	Post-medieval	Glazed red earthen ware	Body	2	0.026	
4	Post-medieval	Staffordshire white salt-glazed stoneware	Bowl?	1	0.009	
4	Post-medieval	Transfer Printed ware	Saucer	1	0.003	
4	Post-medieval	?Weser ware	Dish	1	0.019	
4	Post-medieval	Creamware	Dish	2	0.011	
4	Post-medieval	Late Glazed red earthenware	Body	1	0.009	
4	Post-medieval	Staffordshire agate ware	Body	1	0.004	1770 to 1900
5	Post-medieval	Glazed red earthenware	Pipkin	2	0.070	
5	Post-medieval	Glazed red earthenware	Body	1	0.020	
5	Post-medieval	English stone ware	Coffee pot?	1	0.049	Late 18th- to 19th-century

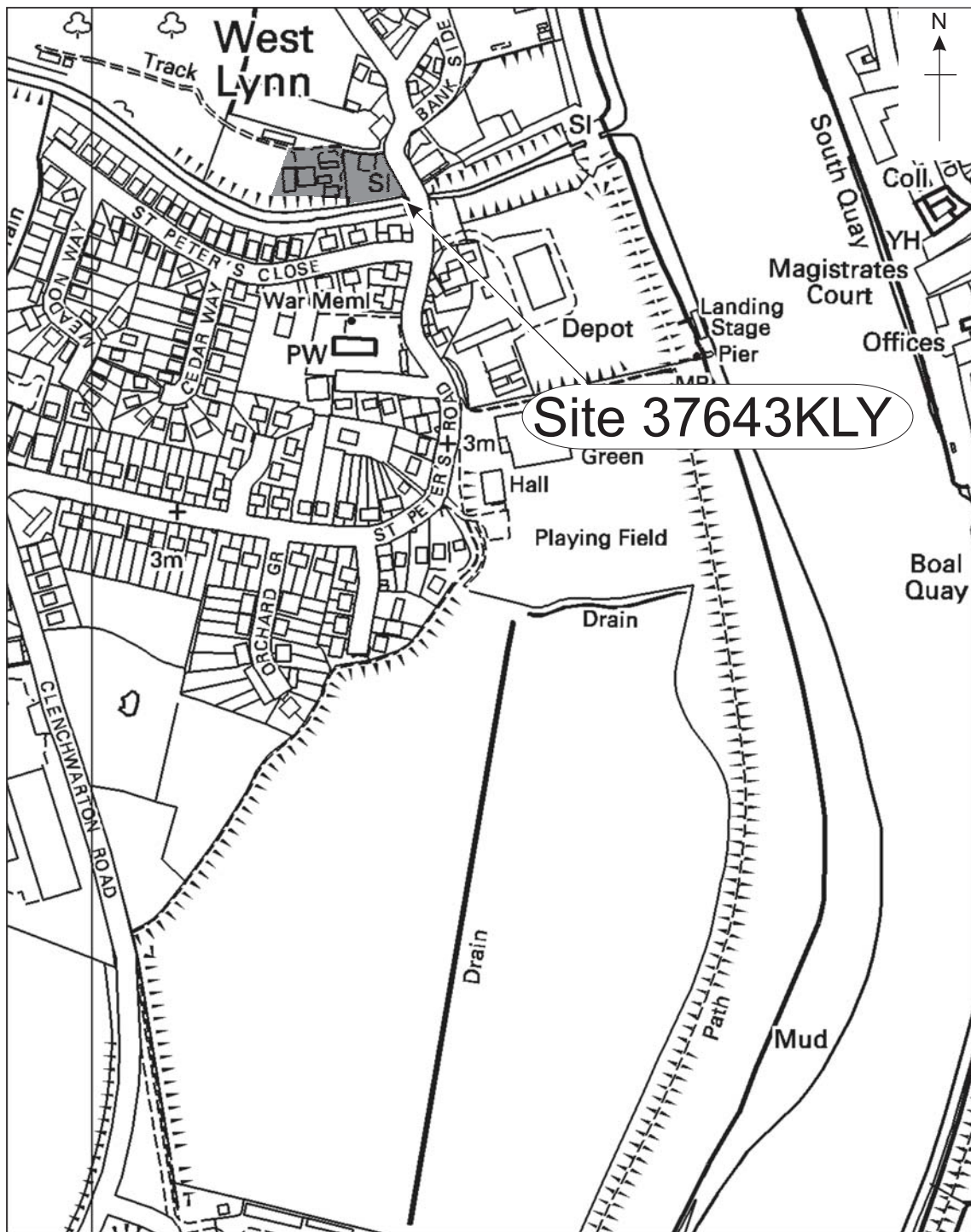


Figure 1. Site Location. Scale 1:5000



Figure 2. Trench Locations. Scale 1:50

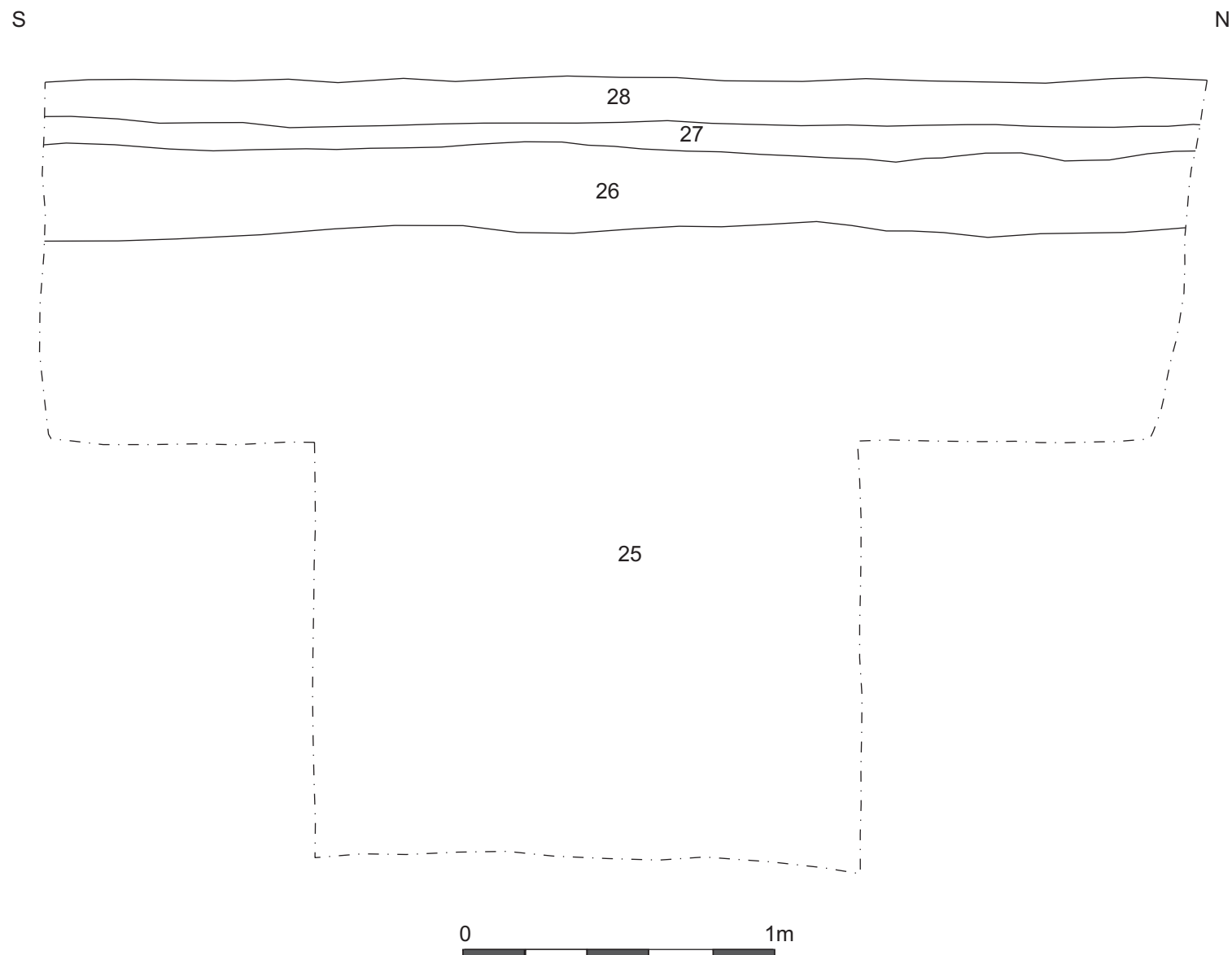


Figure 3. Trench 1, east-facing section. Scale 1:20

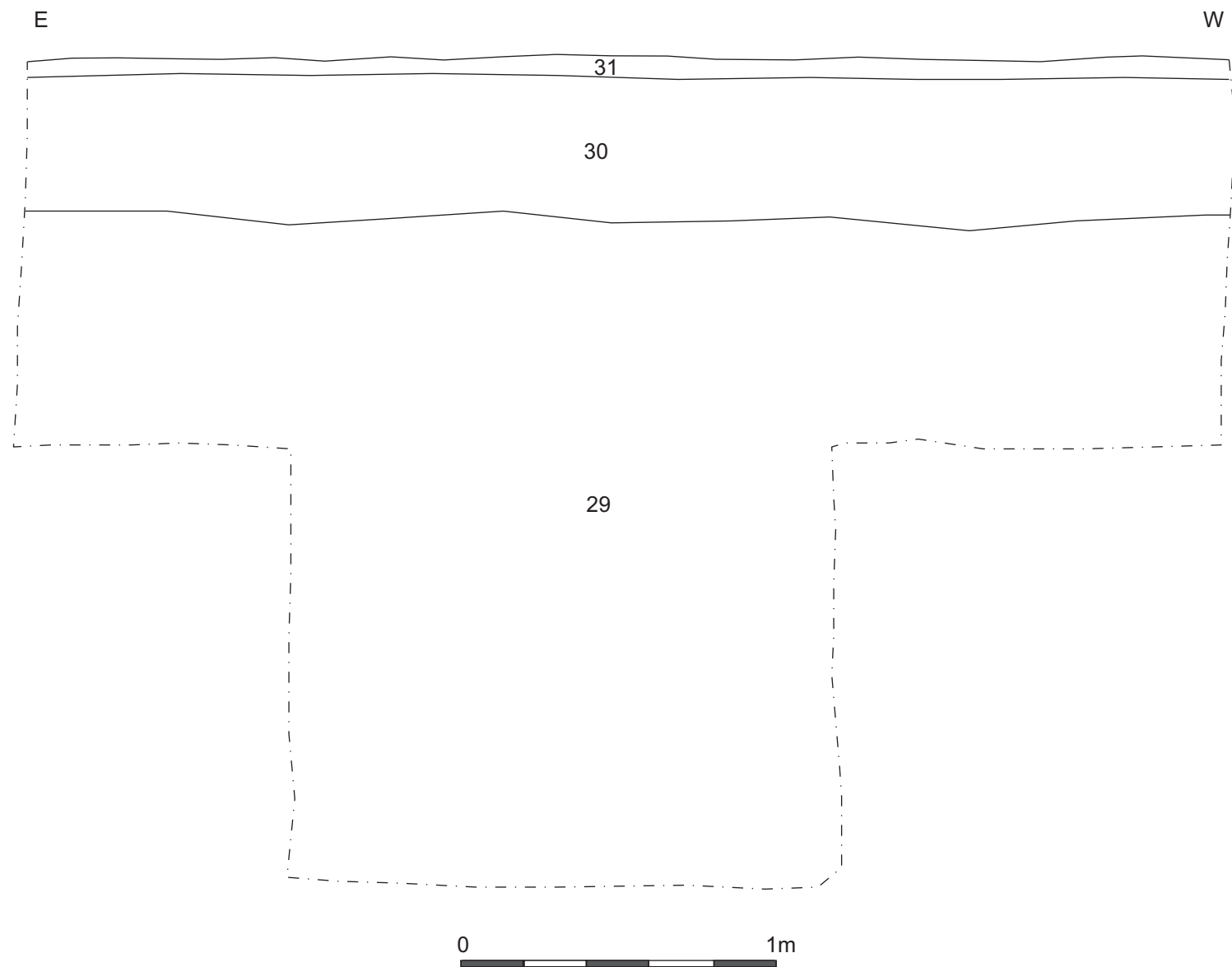
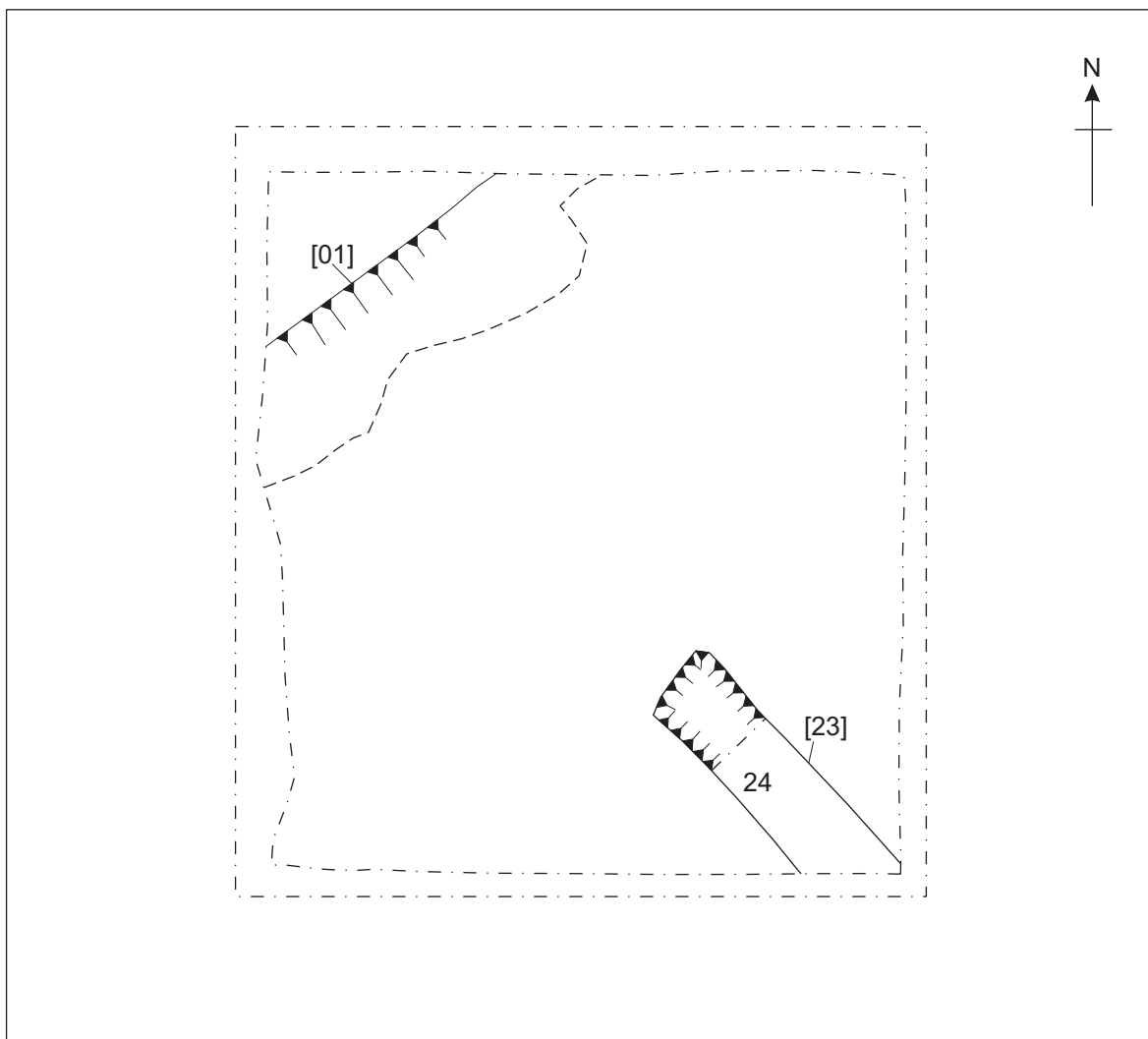


Figure 4. Trench 2, north facing section. Scale 1:20



0 2m

Figure 5. Trench 3, plan of oven [01] and gully [23]. Scale 1:40

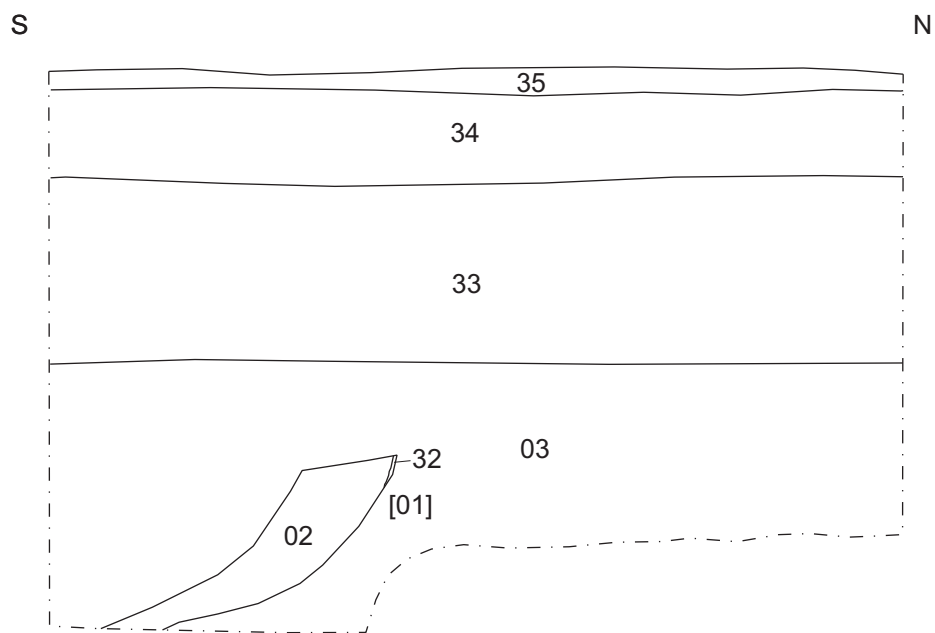


Figure 6. Trench 3, east-facing section. Scale 1:20

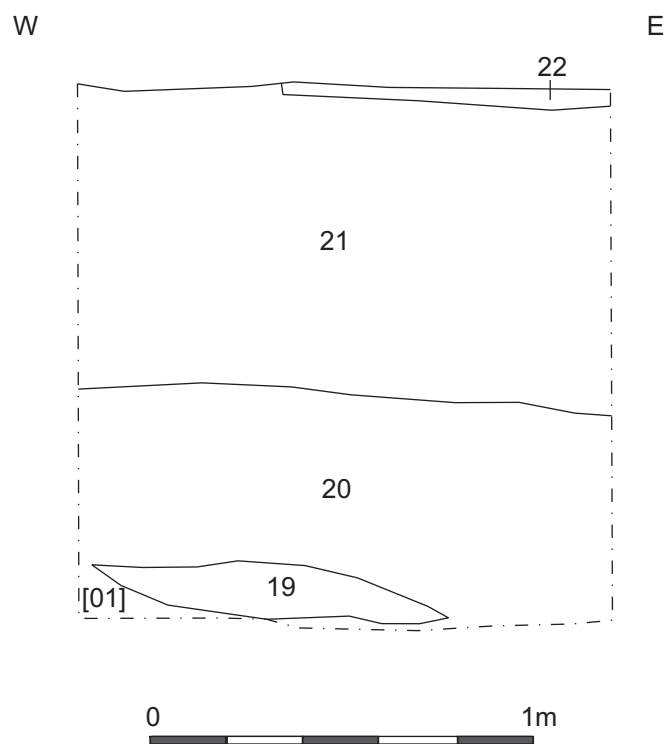


Figure 7. Trench 3, south-facing section. Scale 1:20

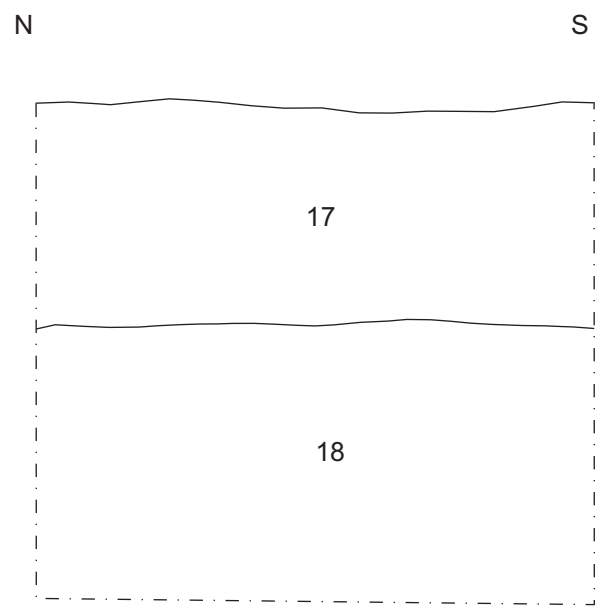


Figure 8. Trench 4, west-facing section. Scale 1:20

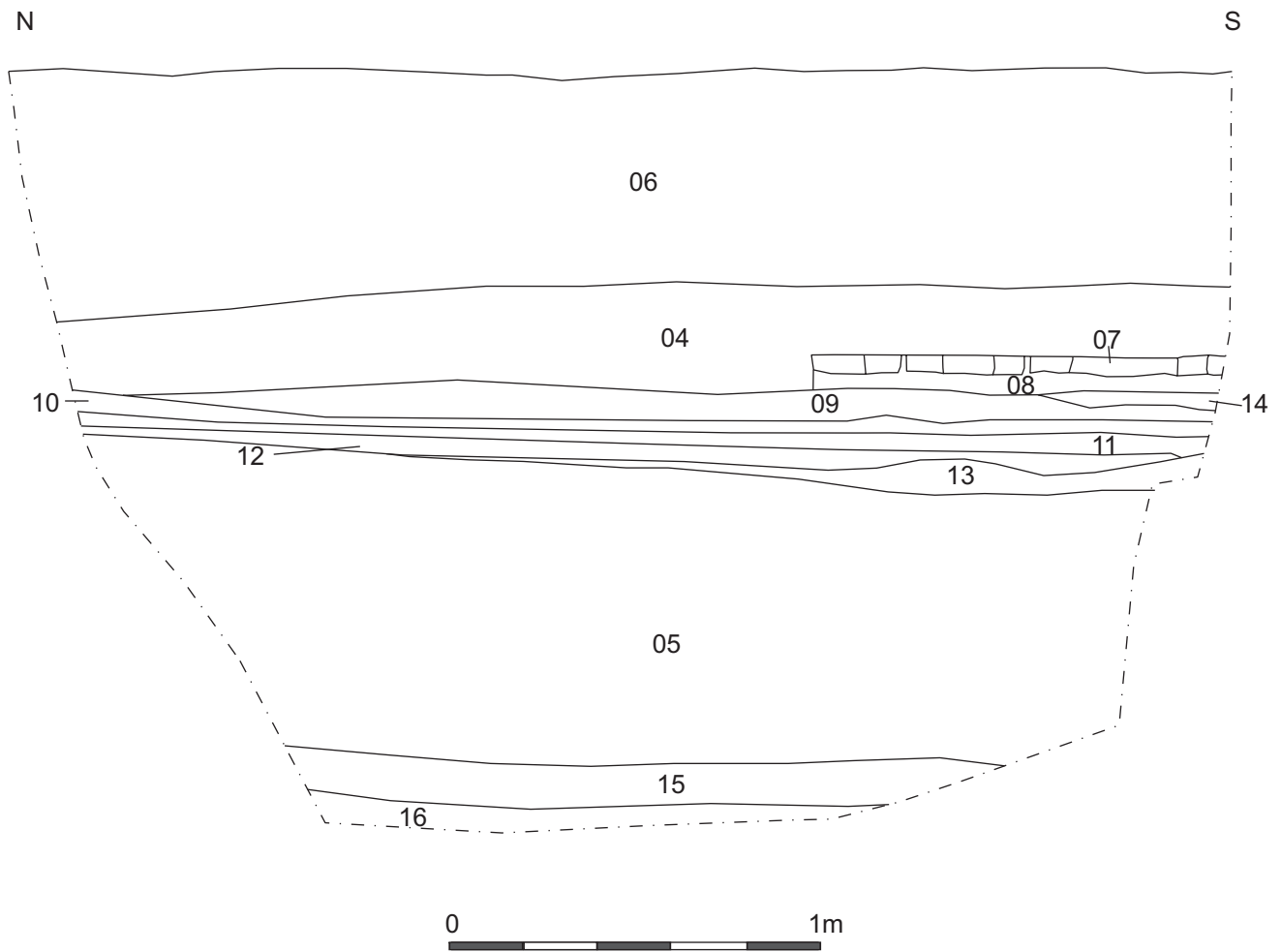


Figure 9. Trench 5, west-facing section. Scale 1:20

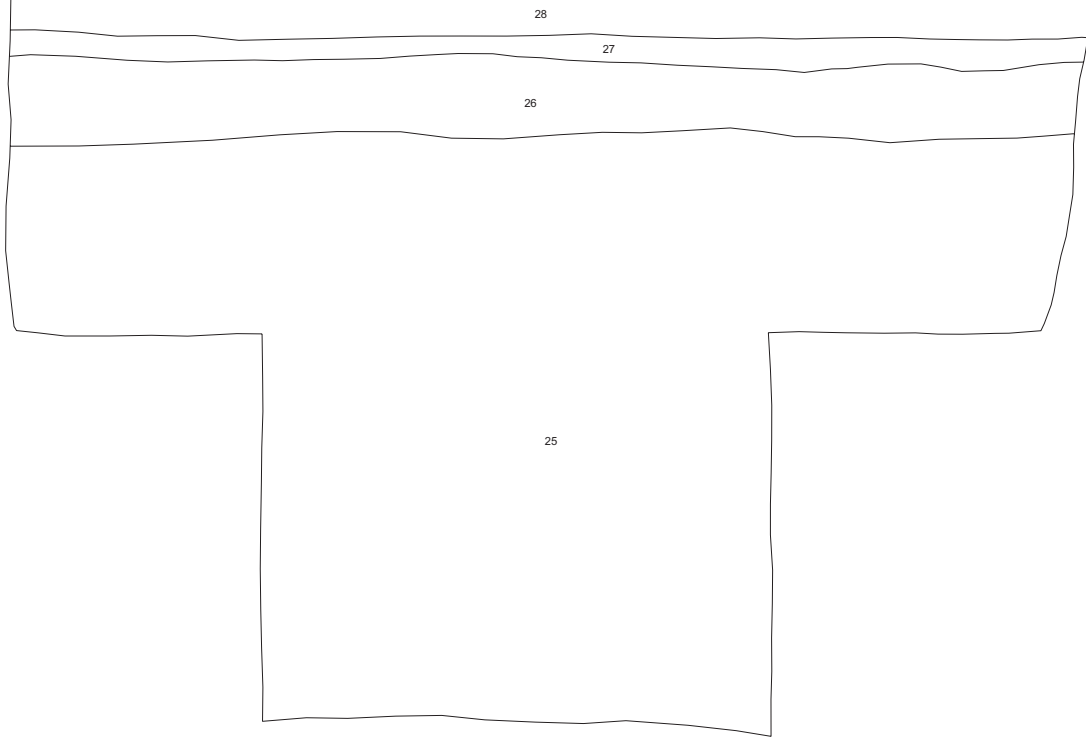


Fig. 3. Trench 1. East facing section

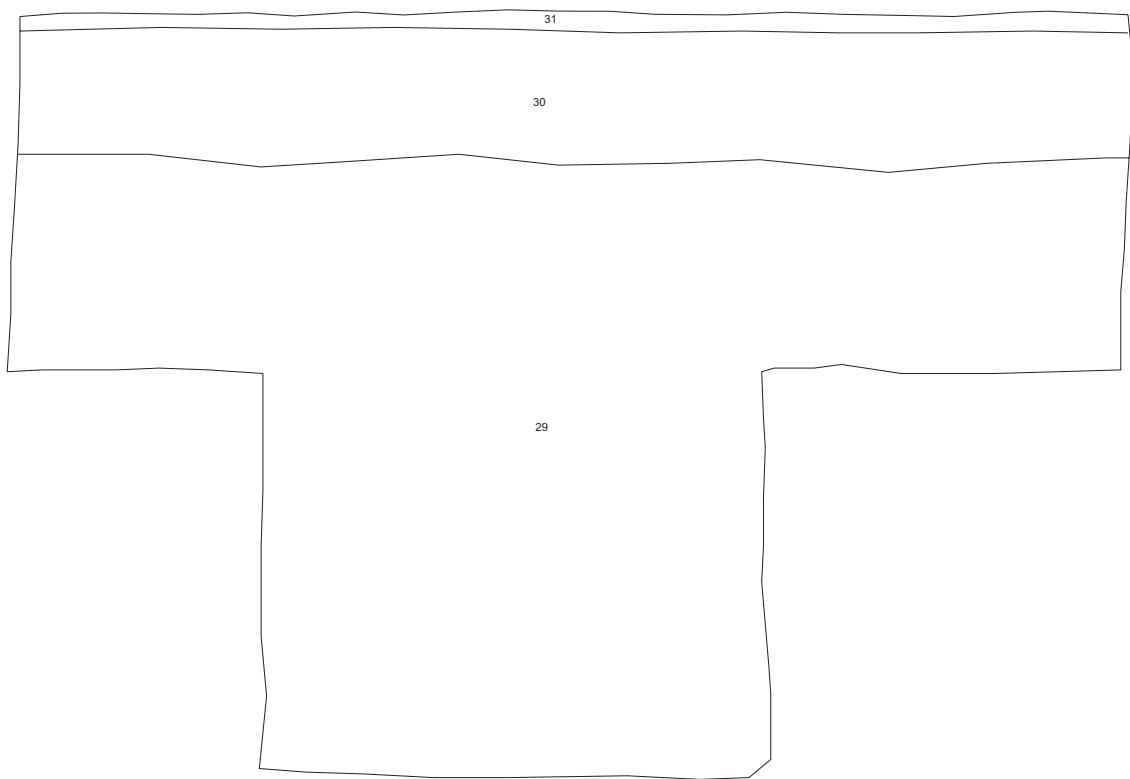


Fig. 4. Trench 2. North facing section

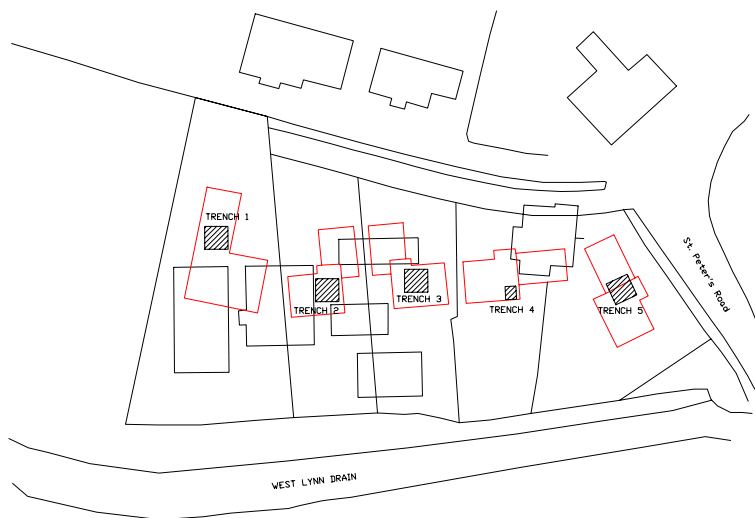


Fig. 2: Trench Locations

