

**NORFOLK ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT**

Report No. 989

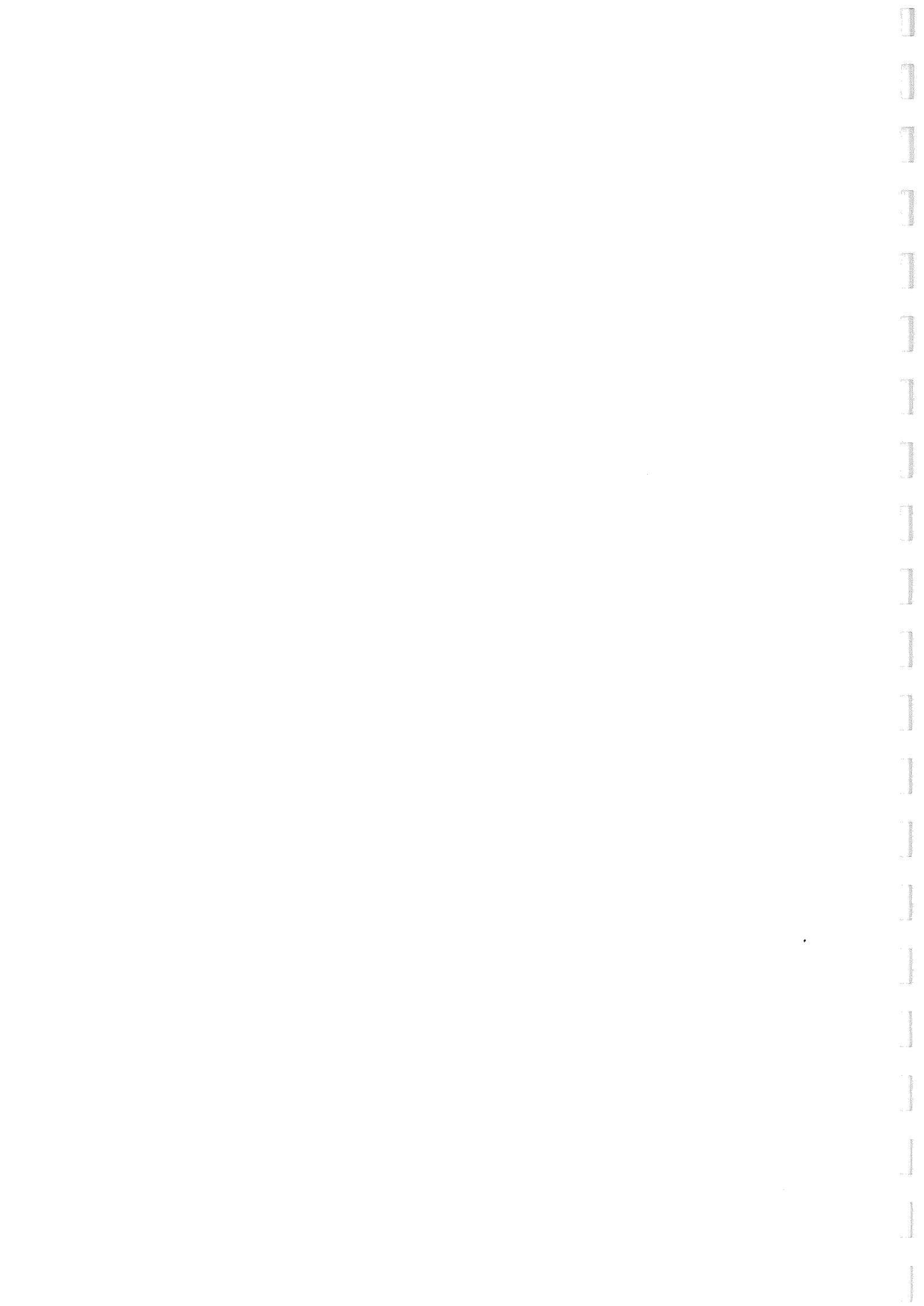
**An Archaeological Evaluation at Bellamy's Lane,  
Burnham Norton, Norfolk**

40704 BVN

Mavis Whitmore

October 2004

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Local Authority No. 100019340

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Location: Bellamy's Lane, Burnham Norton  
District: West Norfolk  
Grid Ref: TF836 425  
HER No.: 40704 BVM  
Date of fieldwork: 9th to 11th August 2004

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## **Summary**

*An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Bellamy's Lane in the parish of Burnham Norton on the northern edge of the village of Burnham Market, Norfolk, in advance of a proposed housing development.*

*Five trenches were excavated. A single prehistoric feature was recorded in Trench 1, while no archaeological features were observed in Trenches 2 and 3. Although in Trench 3 a layer of subsoil (containing pottery of prehistoric, Late Saxon and medieval date) interpreted as hillwash colluvium was recorded.*

*Trench 4 contained two ditches forming the boundaries of an undated north-west to south-east aligned trackway. This trackway was cut by a shallow east-to-west oriented gully that contained pottery of medieval date and by a substantial east-to-west aligned ditch containing fragments of post-medieval brick and tile. A positive correlation could not be made between any of these features and the curvilinear enclosure seen on aerial photographs.*

*An undated north-to-south aligned ditch was noted in Trench 5.*

## **1.0 Introduction**

(Fig. 1)

An evaluation excavation was carried out by Norfolk Archaeological Unit (NAU) in the south-western corner of a field on the northern edge of the village of Burnham Market, although falling within the boundary of the parish of Burnham Norton. This work was necessary due to the proposed construction of housing, the development area measured 4230m<sup>2</sup>.

This work was commissioned by James Oxbury, of Oxbury and Co., on behalf of their clients Halcyon Homes, who funded this evaluation.

This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Method Statement prepared by the Norfolk Archaeological Unit (NAU Ref: 1813) and a Brief issued by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (NLA Ref: ARJH 10/06/04).

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 field was covered by a dark greyish brown topsoil that ranged from 0.30-0.40m thick. This topsoil overlay natural except at the southern end of the field where it overlay a possible hillwash colluvium layer up to 0.40m thick (Trench 3). The underlying natural was composed of orange or yellow gravel and sand with pockets of orange clay and occasional patches of chalk. Solid chalk bedrock was noted to lie 0.30m-0.50m below the sand and gravels.

The development site was located on the south-facing slope of a field that dropped from 19m OD at the north-western corner of the field down to approximately 10m OD at the south-western corner of the development area. The field also sloped away eastwards where it fell to 9m OD.

## 3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

(Figs 1 and 2)

Burnham Market, Burnham Norton and Burnham Overy are all parishes of considerable archaeological significance. The place name 'Burnham' applied to a number of contiguous parishes close to the north Norfolk coast. It is believed that these originally belonged to a single estate that was later divided, in the Saxon period, into a number of separate landholdings, each with its own manor and church. Thus the discrete parishes of Burnham Deepdale, Norton, Overy, Sutton, Ulph and Westgate developed. Burnham Market itself originated as a market place (market status was granted in 1270) that developed alongside the street and green between the parish churches of Burnham Ulph and Burnham Westgate. Eventually the market place became the focus of settlement and ultimately subsumed the other parishes (Bates 2001). The site itself, although on the edge of Burnham Market, actually lies just within the parish of Burnham Norton.

Aerial photographs show a circular cropmark (HER 27002) present in the southern half of the field. The western side of this cropmark falls within the development area. Currently this cropmark is undated but thought to represent later prehistoric settlement activity. Metal detecting and fieldwalking have recovered a variety of artefacts from the field (HER 25918), including prehistoric worked flint and pottery of Iron Age, Romano-British, Saxon and medieval date. The metal finds date from the Romano-British period through to the post-medieval period and include coins, brooches, buckles, book fittings and most notably an Early Saxon girdlehanger.

A few sherds of Iron Age and medieval pottery, along with a small number of Romano-British, Late Saxon and medieval metal artefacts have been recovered from the field to the west of the development area (HER 29624). A human skeleton found in the far south-western corner of this field was thought to be of Romano-British date (HER 28915).

Cropmark evidence from the field to the east of the present site suggests the presence of substantial ditches, pits and a possible rectilinear enclosure (HER 27010). A Romano-British date is suggested for these features. Field walking in this field has recovered Romano-British, Saxon and medieval pottery (HER 1756).

To the north-east are the remains of the Carmelite Friary of St. Mary (HER 1738) whilst to the north, field walking and metal detecting have produced prehistoric, Romano-British, Saxon and medieval artefacts (HER 29185). These finds include a

square headed brooch that may indicate the presence of an Early Saxon cemetery (HER 1736) in this field.

Numerous archaeological watching briefs have been undertaken by NAU in the vicinity, one adjacent to this site (HER 15151) at 10 Bellamy's Lane (Bates 2000) found compacted chalk dumps (to raise the level of the ground) which were cut by an undated linear feature; sealed by post-medieval flint and ceramic building material.

To the south of the site, at Creake Road (HER 32791), a large excavation (8.4ha) was undertaken by NAU in 1998. This site revealed a limited prehistoric presence followed by Romano-British, Middle and Later Saxon and medieval evidence of an agricultural character, including large structures associated with grain drying dating to both the Romano-British and later Saxon periods (Percival forthcoming).

## 4.0 Methodology

(Fig. 2)

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 5% sample of the development area (4230m<sup>2</sup>) be evaluated by trial trenching. This entailed the excavation of five 1.60m wide and 26m long trenches. One of the trenches was positioned to intersect with the circular cropmark (HER 27002) observed from aerial photographs. Where archaeological features were encountered, the trenches were to be widened to 4m.

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 that 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.

A level was transferred from an Ordnance Survey benchmark of 9.11m OD, located on the corner of a wall forming the western boundary to Bellamy's Lane, opposite Mill Green, to a temporary benchmark positioned at the north-western corner of Trench 4. A value of 14.36m OD was calculated for this temporary benchmark.

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

The site was accessed from Bellamy's Lane *via* an opening in the north-western corner of the field. The evaluation was undertaken in intermittent moderate to heavy rain.

## 5.0 Results

A summary of the contexts excavated can be found in Appendix 1, located towards the back of this report.

## **Trench 1**

(Figs 2 and 3)

Trench 1 was aligned east-to-west, perpendicular to Bellamy's Lane. A small irregularly shaped pit [106] was located 2.50m from the eastern end of the trench. This pit measured 0.17m deep and 0.75m in length. It was filled with a mid brown slightly silty clay sand ([107]). A worked flint and a fragment of possible Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age pottery were recovered from this feature.

## **Trench 2**

(Fig. 2)

Trench 2 was located 18.5m to the south of Trench 1 and was also oriented east-to-west. No archaeological features were observed in this trench.

## **Trench 3**

(Figs 2 and 4)

Trench 3 was aligned east-to-west and situated a further 18.5m south of Trench 2, close to the south-western corner of the field. No archaeological cut features were noted. The width of the trench was expanded to 4m on its southern side to allow the excavation of a dark reddish brown silty clay sand deposit ([105]) observed along part of the southern edge. This deposit sloped away towards the south-west corner of the field. Hand and machine excavated sondages through this layer revealed that at its lowest excavated point it measured 0.40m in depth.

Seven sherds of pottery along with two struck flints and a small fragment of animal bone were recovered from this layer. The pottery comprised a solitary sherd of Iron Age date, along with Late Saxon Thetford-type wares and Local medieval unglazed wares. The position and appearance of this layer suggest that it is hillwash colluvium that has accumulated at the lowest point of the field.

## **Trench 4**

(Figs 2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13)

Trench 4 was aligned north-to-south and positioned to intersect with a known circular cropmark (HER 27002). Two parallel ditches 6m apart, interpreted as a pair, crossed the trench on a north-west-to-south-easterly alignment. The northernmost ditch (Fig. 11; [116]/[130]) measured 0.18m deep and 1.10m wide, it was infilled with a mid orange brown silty clay sand ([117]/[131]). The second ditch ([102]/[118]) measured 1.05m wide and 0.20m deep, it had also been filled with a mid orange brown silty clay sand ([103]/[119]). These ditches are likely to represent the boundary to a trackway.

Cut through ditch [102]/[118] was a shallow east-to-west oriented gully ([100]). The gully (Fig. 7) measured 0.45m wide and 0.14m deep and had been filled with a mid brown silty clay sand ([101]). A solitary sherd of Local medieval unglazed ware pottery and an oyster shell fragment were recovered from this feature. A shallow, undated, pit-like feature ([120]) filled with a dark brown silty clay sand ([121]) was also observed cutting the northern edge of the ditch (Fig. 12).



The northerly trackway boundary ditch had been cut by a second north-to-south aligned ditch [127]. This ditch measured 1.70m wide and 0.58m deep and contained two distinct fills (Fig. 13). The upper fill ([129]) was a dark brown silty clay sand deposit 0.28m thick, very similar in appearance to the overlying topsoil. Below this the ditch appeared to have been deliberately backfilled with a light brown heavily compacted chalk lump rich silty sandy clay ([128]). Post-medieval brick and tile fragments from the upper fill of the ditch suggest a 17th- to 19th-century date for this feature. Five sherds of medieval pottery also recovered are likely to be residual. The alignment and position of this ditch appears to correspond with end of a hedgeline forming the eastern boundary separating the field from Bellamy's Lane.

Three post-holes were also noted running in an east-to-west line, 2.30m to the south of ditch [127]. All three post-holes were filled with a mid orange brown silty clay sand. Two of these post-holes (Fig. 8; [110] and Fig. 10; [112]) were quite small and shallow and contained no dating evidence. The third post-hole (Fig. 9; [114]) was larger, 0.56m wide and 0.20m deep, and contained two worked flints ([115]).

### **Trench 5**

(Figs 2, 6 and 14)

Trench 5 was oriented east-to-west and positioned to examine the internal area enclosed by the circular cropmark (HER 27002). The only archaeological feature within this trench was a shallow north-to-south ditch (Fig. 14; [108]), 0.22m deep by 0.80m wide, filled with a mid reddish brown silty clay sand ([109]). No artefactual material was recovered from this ditch.

## **6.0 The Finds**

### **Introduction**

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

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

### **6.1 Pottery**

(Appendix 3)

#### **6.1.1 Prehistoric**

Very little prehistoric pottery was found during the excavation. In all two sherds weighing 0.008kg were recovered from two contexts. One sherd containing occasional small pieces of angular burnt flint and abundant quartz sand was recovered from colluvium [105]. The sherd is not closely datable, but the fabric suggests that it is probably Iron Age and therefore residual within the colluvium context.

The second sherd contains occasional sub-rounded voids indicative of grog and abundant quartz sand was found in the fill of pit [107]. A Later Neolithic to Early Bronze Age date is proposed for this sherd.

### **6.1.2 Post-Roman**

A total of twelve fragments of post-Roman pottery were recovered from the evaluation, weighing 0.091kg. Nearly all the ceramics are medieval in date, although a small quantity of Late Saxon sherds were also identified.

A single sherd of 11th to 14th century Local medieval unglazed ware was present in the fill ([101]) of gully [100]. Further fragments of Local medieval unglazed ware were identified in colluvium deposit [105], with two fragments of Thetford-type ware of Late Saxon date, and a discoloured sherd of a wheelthrown greyware which may also be Thetford-type ware.

Fragments of medieval pottery were also recovered from the lower fill ([128]) of ditch [127]. In addition to Local medieval unglazed ware, an abraded fragment of Grimston-type ware was present which dates between the late 12th to 14th century. Further sherds of Local medieval unglazed ware were present in the upper fill ([129]) of this ditch.

### **6.2 Ceramic Building Material**

(Appendix 4)

Four fragments of ceramic building material (weighing 1.179kg) were recovered from the upper fill ([129]) of ditch [127]. The assemblage consists of a fragment of medieval plain roof tile that dates between the 13th to 15th century, a single piece of post-medieval pantile and two fragments of post-medieval brick of probable 16th- to 19th-century date.

### **6.3 Worked Flint**

(Appendix 5)

A total of five struck flints were recovered during the evaluation. All of these worked flints were waste flakes made from surface collected material and none were closely datable.

### **6.4 Animal Bone**

(Appendix 2)

Animal bone, weighing 0.349kg, was recovered during the evaluation. A small fragment, 0.006kg, of animal bone was found in colluvium layer [105] whilst the remainder was recovered from the fills [128/129] from a probable post-medieval ditch ([127]).

### **6.5 Small Finds**

(Appendix 6)

Three small find numbers were allocated to metal detected finds recovered from topsoil on the site. The material includes a Roman copper alloy coin (SF1), a post medieval copper alloy coin (SF3) and a lead musket ball (SF2).

Other metal finds were recovered (Appendix 7) but not Small Found as they have no archaeological significance.

## 7.0 Conclusions

Only a few archaeological features were revealed during the evaluation, predominantly clustered in Trench 4. The parallel ditches are likely to represent trackway boundaries but remain undated. A shallow gully cutting the trackway contained pottery of medieval date. A substantial ditch at the northern end of the trench was of post-medieval date. None of these features can be positively identified as the cropmark (HER 27002) seen on aerial photographs.

The relatively shallow depth of topsoil and the depth of most of the surviving archaeological features suggest that modern agricultural practices may have removed other archaeological evidence. This view is reinforced by the presence of numerous sherds of pottery that were noted lying on the surface of the field whilst walking between the evaluation trenches. It is possible that this field has always been open land, although the proximity and density of settlement in the adjoining fields might suggest otherwise.

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

### **Acknowledgements**

Thanks to both James Oxbury, of Oxbury and Co., who commissioned this work and their client Halcyon Homes who funded this evaluation.

The excavation team of Juha-Matti Vuorinen, Anna-Maria Silva and Katie Gardiner must be thanked for their hard work in unpleasant weather conditions. Fran Green and Helen Stocks undertook the site surveying. The metal detecting was undertaken by Dave Fox and John Bocking.

The finds were reported on by Julie Curl (animal bone), Richenda Goffin (post-Roman pottery), Sarah Percival (prehistoric pottery), Sarah Bates (flint), and Lucy Talbot (ceramic building material and metal artefacts). The digitising was by Katie Gardiner and Sandrine Whitmore. The report was produced by David Dobson and edited by Alice Lyons.

### **Bibliography**

- |               |             |   |
|---------------|-------------|---|
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| Bates, S.,    | 2001        | <i>Report on an Archaeological Evaluation at the New Village Hall, Burnham Market</i> , NAU Report 565 (unpublished)  |
| Percival, S., | Forthcoming | <i>An Archaeological Excavation at Creake Road, Burnham Market, 1998</i> , East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper  |

## Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context	Trench	Category	Description	Period
100	4	Cut	Gully	Medieval
101	4	Deposit	Fill of [100]	Medieval
102	4	Cut	Ditch	Medieval or earlier
103	4	Deposit	Fill of [102]	Medieval or earlier
104	3	Cut	Subsoil Interface	Medieval
105	3	Deposit	Subsoil	Medieval
106	1	Cut	Pit	?Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age
107	1	Deposit	Fill of [106]	?Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age
108	5	Cut	Ditch	Undated
109	5	Deposit	Fill of [108]	Undated
110	4	Cut	Post-hole	Undated
111	4	Deposit	Fill of [110]	Undated
112	4	Cut	Post-hole	Undated
113	4	Deposit	Fill of [112]	Undated
114	4	Cut	Post-hole	?Prehistoric
115	4	Deposit	Fill of [114]	?Prehistoric
116	4	Cut	Ditch	Medieval or earlier
117	4	Deposit	Fill of [116]	Medieval or earlier
118	4	Cut	Ditch	Medieval or earlier
119	4	Deposit	Fill of [118]	Medieval or earlier
120	4	Cut	Pit	Undated
121	4	Deposit	Fill of [120]	Undated
122	4	Deposit	Fill of [118]	Medieval or earlier
123	4	Deposit	Fill of [120]	Undated
124	4	Deposit	Topsoil	Post-medieval
125	4	Cut	Shallow linear feature	Undated
126	4	Deposit	Fill of [125]	Undated
127	4	Cut	Ditch	Post-medieval
128	4	Deposit	Fill of [127]	Post-medieval
129	4	Deposit	Fill of [127]	Post-medieval
130	4	Cut	Ditch	Medieval or earlier
131	4	Deposit	Fill of [130]	Medieval or earlier
132	1	Deposit	Topsoil	Post-medieval
133	2	Deposit	Topsoil	Post-medieval
134	3	Deposit	Topsoil	Post-medieval
135	5	Deposit	Topsoil	Post-medieval

## Appendix 2: Finds by Context

Context	Material	Quantity	Weight (kg)	Period
101	Pottery	1	0.006	Medieval
101	Shell		0.066	-
105	Pottery	7	0.055	Prehistoric and medieval
105	Flint	1	-	Prehistoric
105	Animal Bone		0.006	-
107	Pottery	1	0.006	Prehistoric
107	Flint	1	-	Prehistoric
115	Flint	2	-	Prehistoric
117	Flint	1	-	Prehistoric
124	Copper Alloy	1		Post-medieval
128	Pottery	2	0.014	Medieval
128	Animal Bone		0.011	-
129	Pottery	3	0.019	Medieval
129	Ceramic building material	4	1.179	Medieval and post-medieval
129	Animal Bone		0.332	-
132	Copper Alloy	4	-	Roman and post-medieval
132	Lead	2	-	Post-medieval
134	Copper Alloy	1	-	Post-medieval
135	Lead	1	-	Undated

## Appendix 3: Pottery

Context	Fabric	Form	Quantity	Weight (kg)	Date
101	Local medieval unglazed ware	Body	1	0.005	11th to 14th century
105	Prehistoric	Body	1	0.002	Iron Age
105	Thetford-type ware	Body	2	0.010	10th to 11th century
105	Miscellaneous medieval ware	Body	1	0.012	Medieval
105	Local medieval unglazed ware	Body	3	0.031	11th to 14th century
107	Prehistoric	Body	1	0.006	Late Neolithic to Early Bronze Age
128	Local medieval unglazed ware	Body	1	0.004	11th to 14th century
128	Grimston-type ware	Body	1	0.009	Late 12th-14th
129	Local medieval unglazed ware	Body	3	0.018	11th to 14th century

#### ***Appendix 4: Ceramic Building Material***

<b>Context</b>	<b>Form</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Weight (kg)</b>	<b>Period</b>
129	Brick	1	1.179	Medieval
129	Pan Tile	1		Post-medieval
129	Brick	2		Post-medieval

#### ***Appendix 5: Flint***

<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Quantity</b>
105	Flake	1
107	Flake	1
115	Flake	2
117	Flake	1

#### ***Appendix 6: Small Finds***

<b>Small Find</b>	<b>Context</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Object Name</b>	<b>Period/date</b>
1	132	1	Copper Alloy	Coin	Roman
2	132	1	Lead	Musket ball	Post-medieval
3	134	1	Copper Alloy	Coin	Post-medieval

#### ***Appendix 7: Catalogue of Other Metal Objects (not small found, as they have no archaeological significance)***

<b>Context</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Object Name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Period/date</b>
124	1	Copper Alloy	Lock	Part	Post-medieval
132	1	Copper Alloy	Furniture	Knob	Post-medieval
132	1	Copper Alloy	Button		Post-medieval
132	1	Copper Alloy	Waste		-
132	1	Lead	Waste		-
135	1	Lead	Waste		-

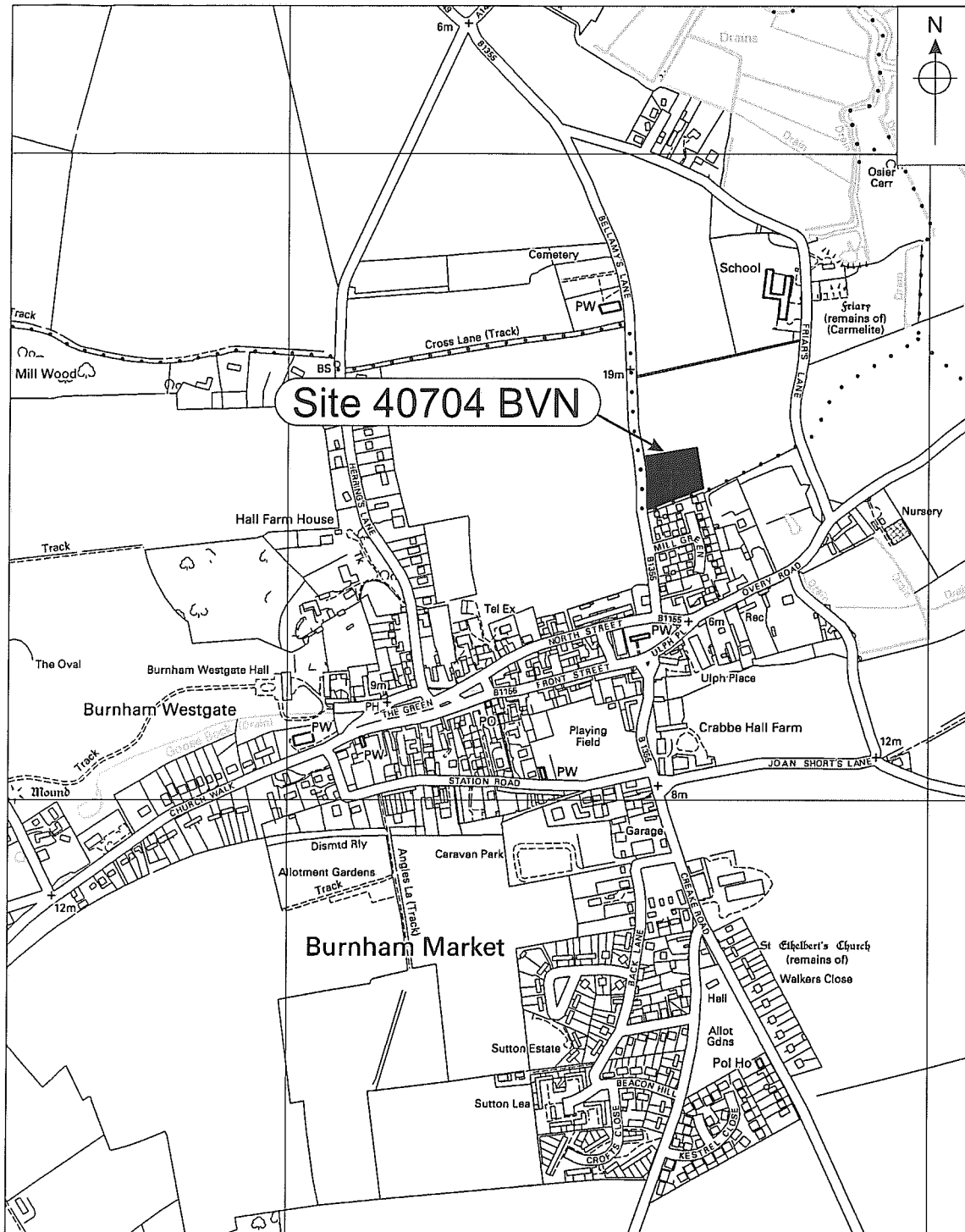


Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:10,000

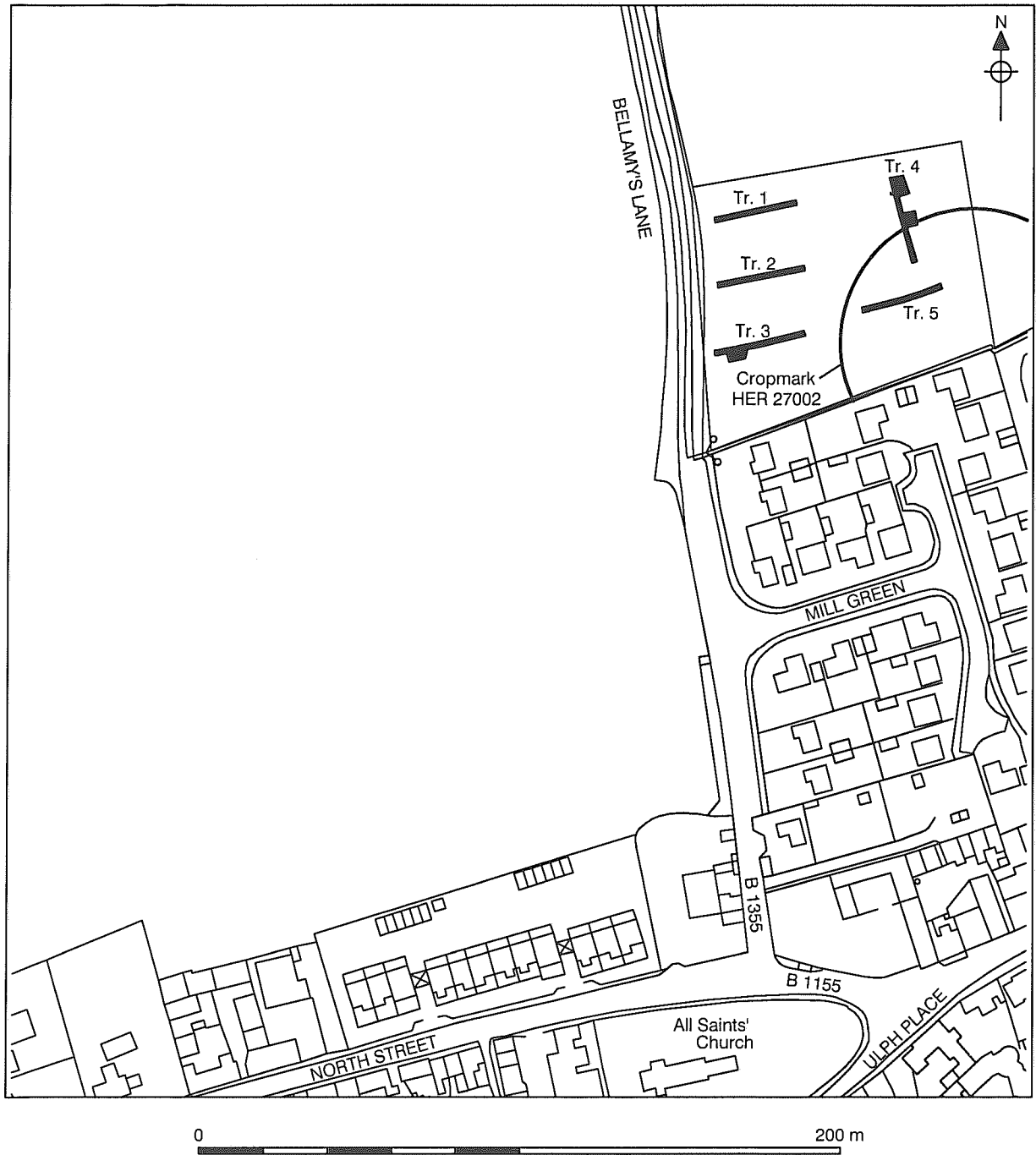


Figure 2. Trench location, also showing cropmarks. Scale 1:2000



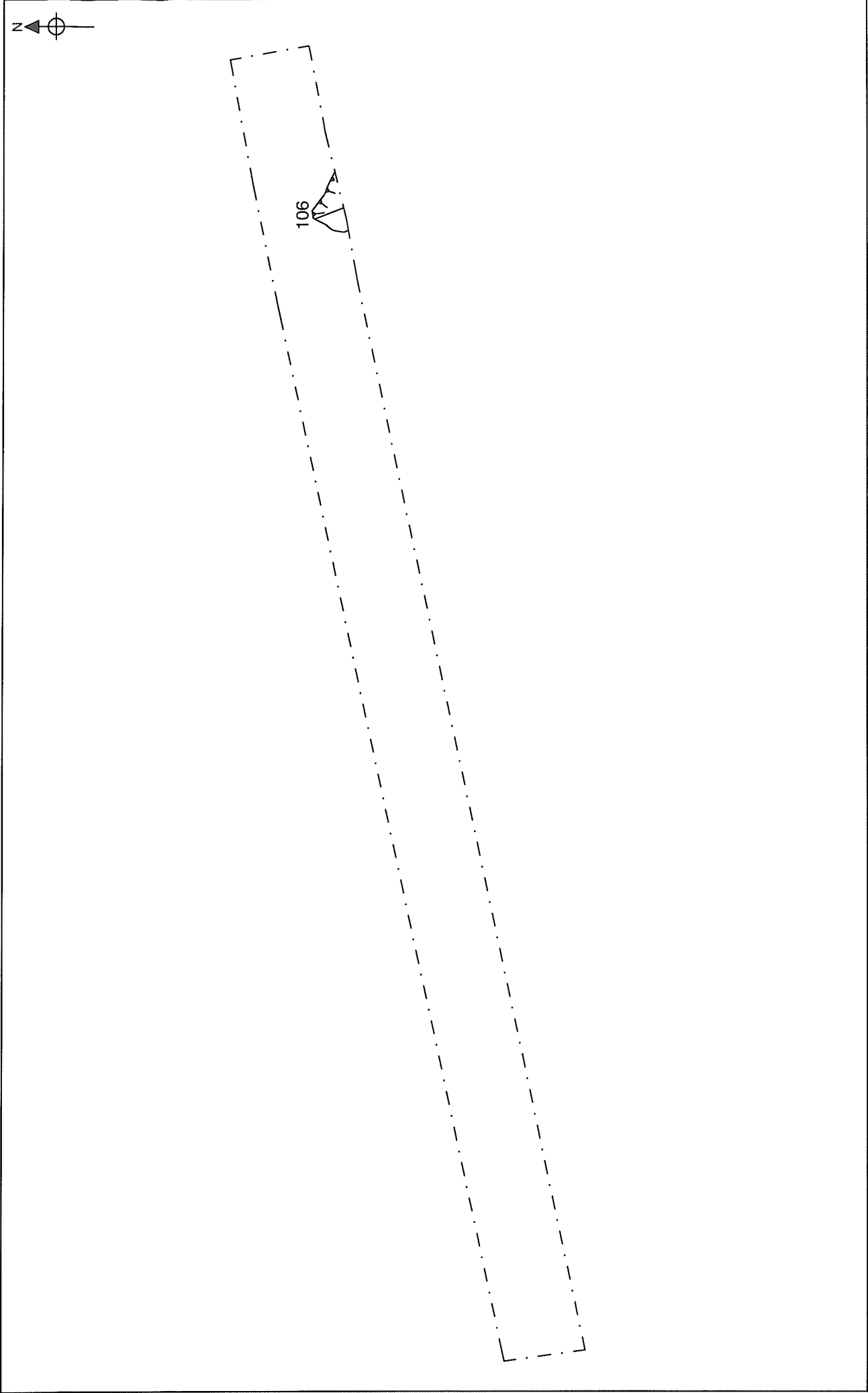


Figure 3. Plan of Trench 1. Scale 1:100

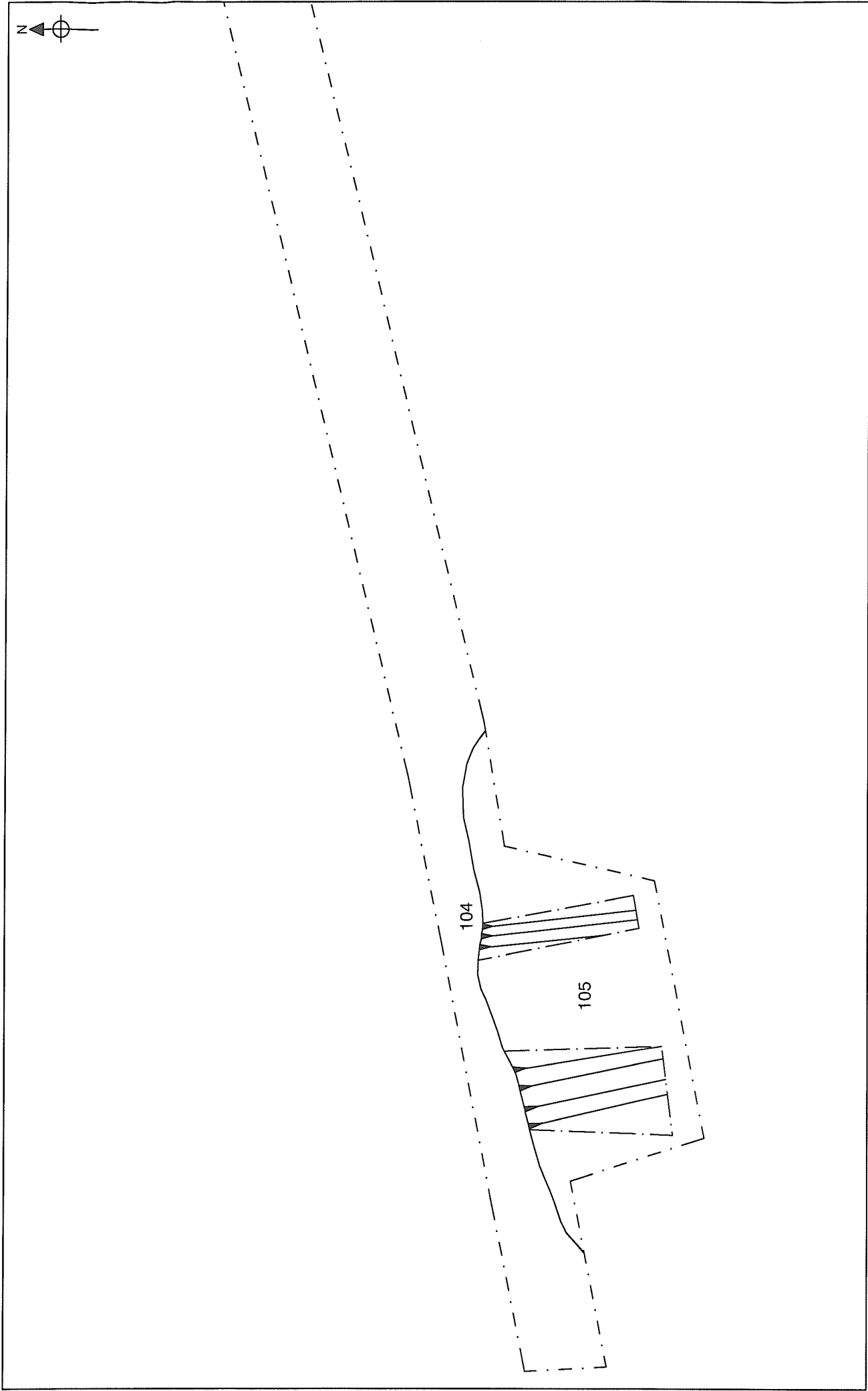


Figure 4. Plan of Trench 3. Scale 1:100

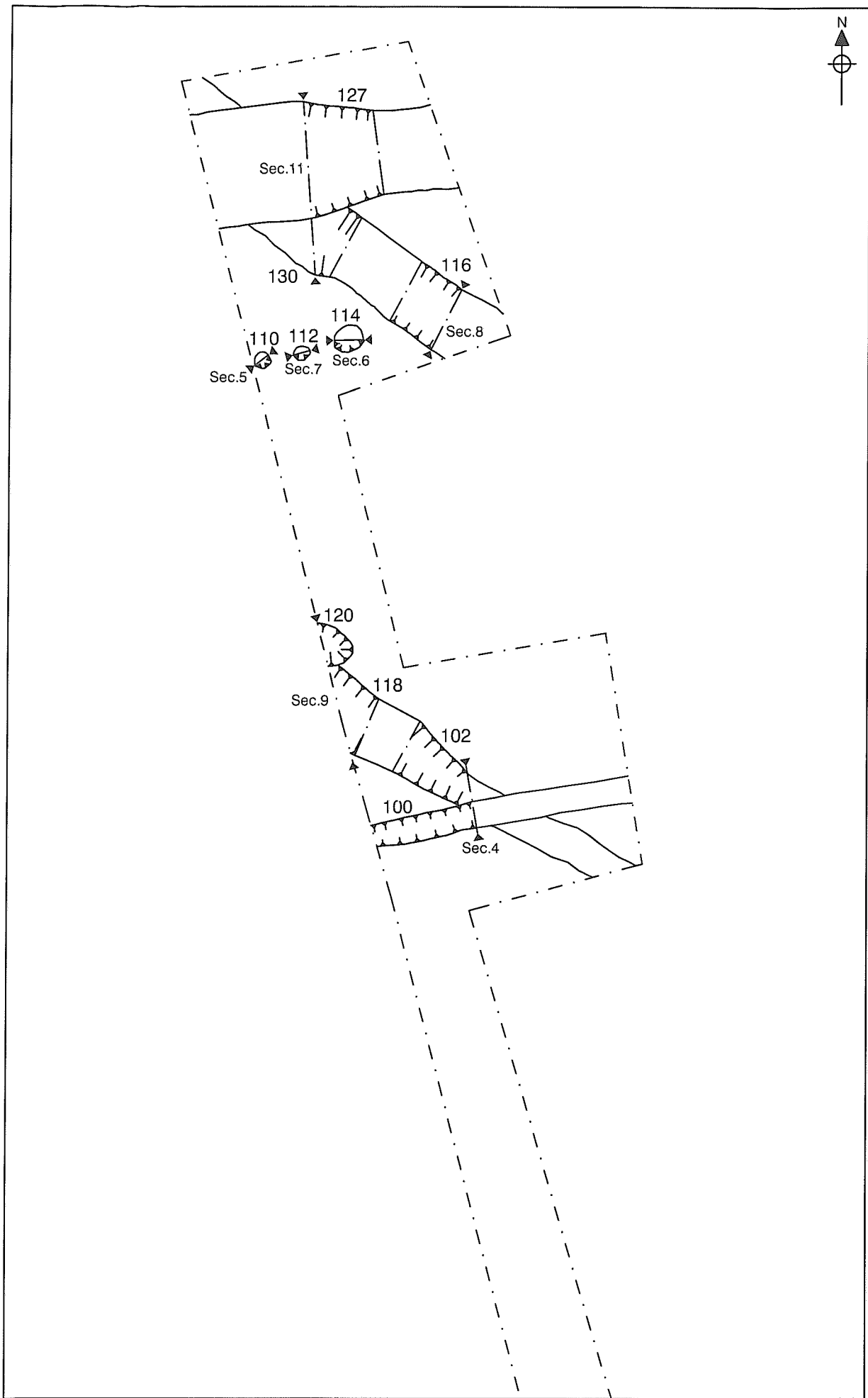


Figure 5. Plan of Trench 4. Scale 1:100

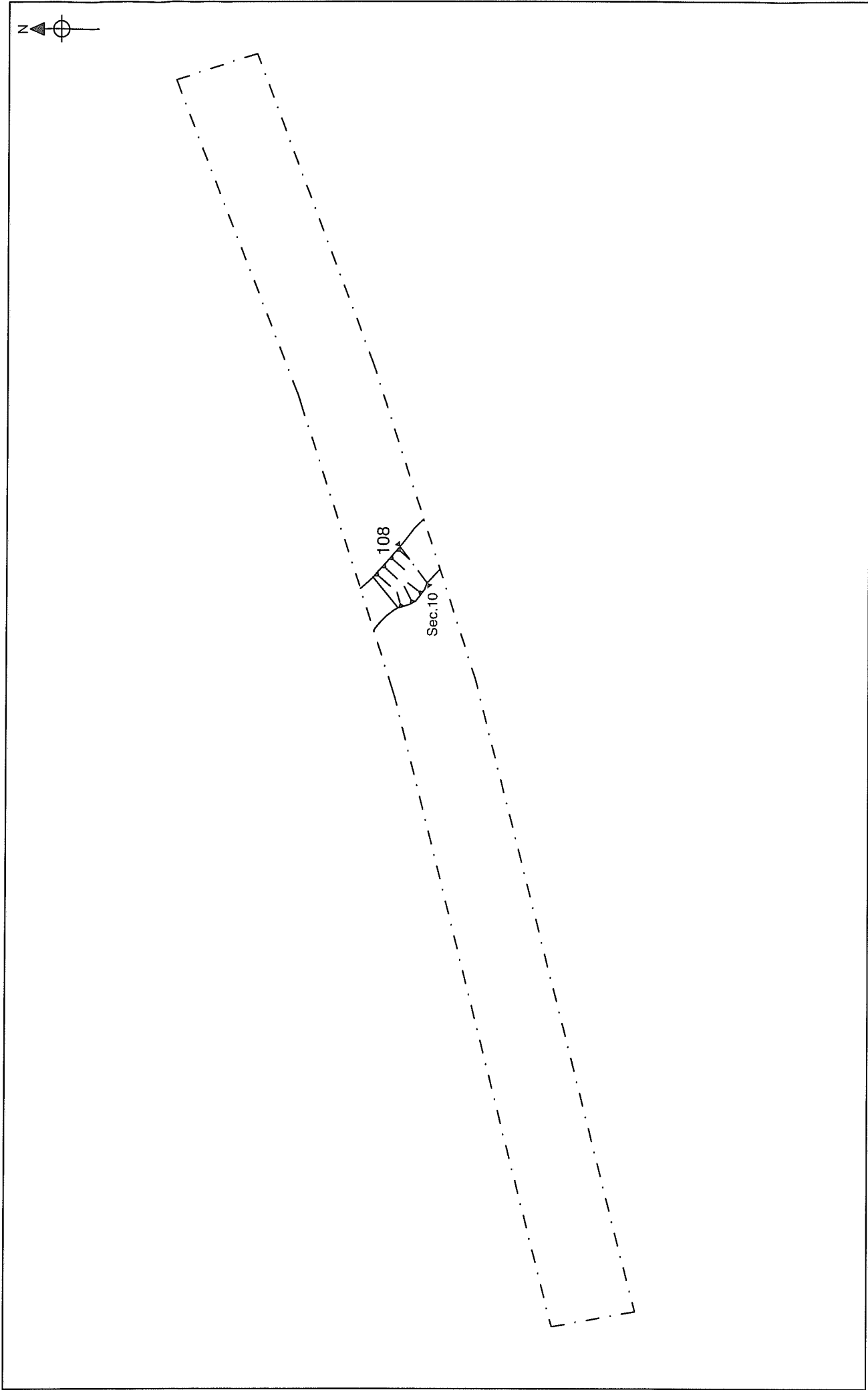


Figure 6. Plan of Trench 5. Scale 1:100

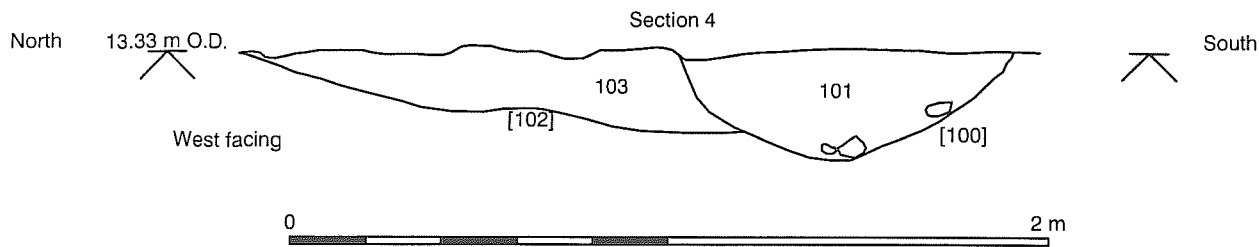


Figure 7. Trench 4, section through ditches [100] and [102]. Scale 1:20

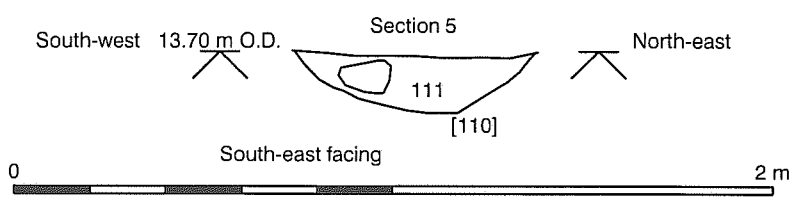


Figure 8. Trench 4, section through posthole [110]. Scale 1:20

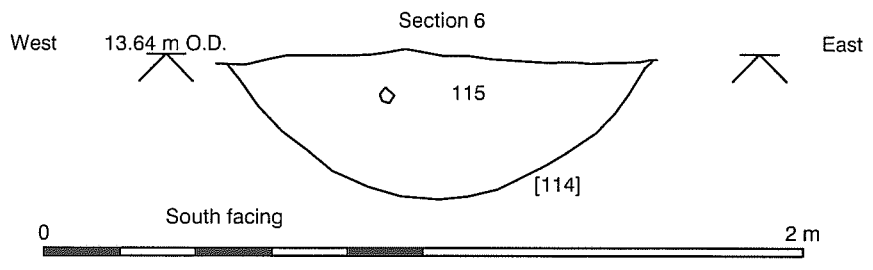


Figure 9. Trench 4, section through posthole [114]. Scale 1:20

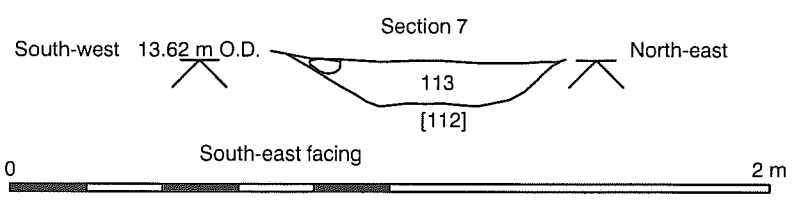


Figure 10. Trench 4, section through posthole [112]. Scale 1:20

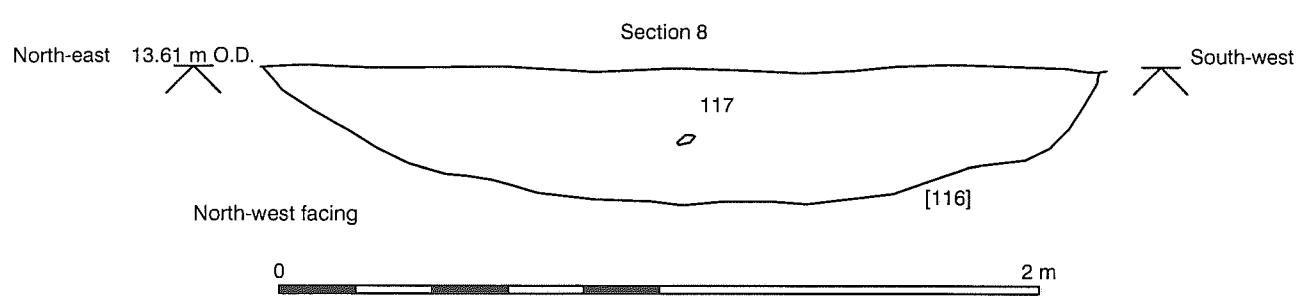


Figure 11. Trench 4, section through ditch [116]. Scale 1:20

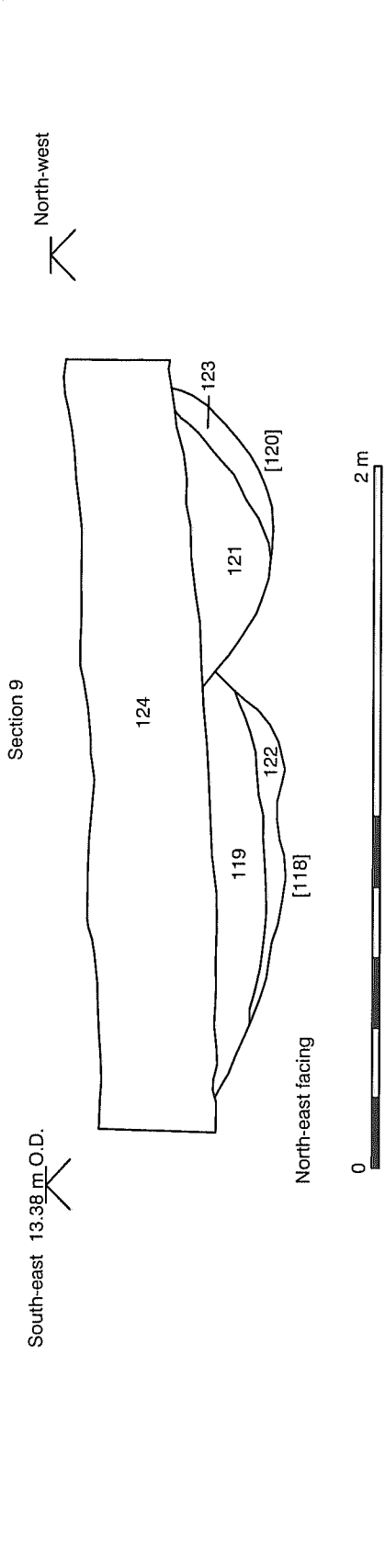


Figure 12. Trench 4, section through ditch [118] and pit [120]. Scale 1:20

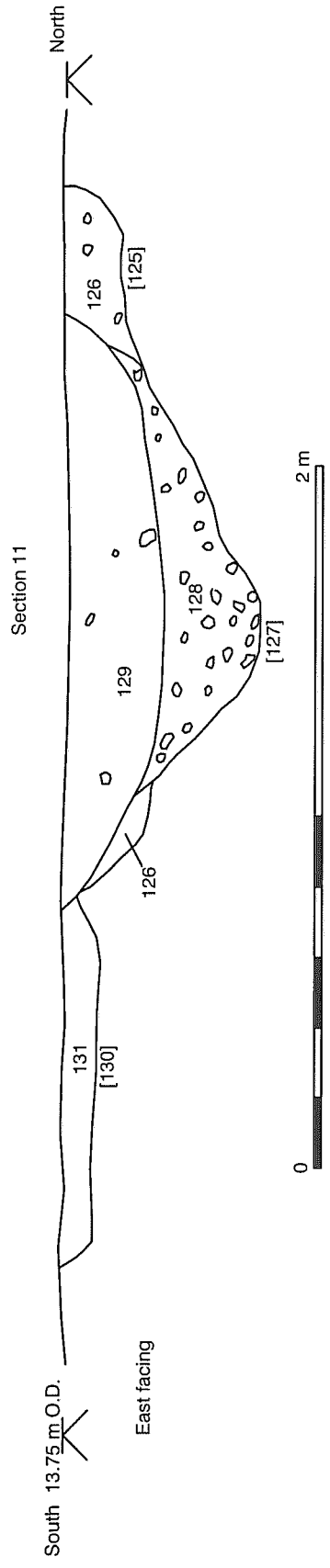


Figure 13. Trench 4, section through ditches [127] and [130]. Scale 1:20

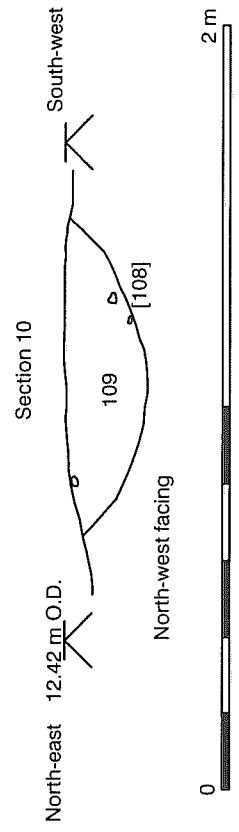


Figure 14. Trench 5, section through ditch [108]. Scale 1:20