

# **NORFOLK ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT**

**Report No. 754**

Report on an Archaeological Watching Brief at  
69 Northgate Way, Terrington St Clement, Norfolk

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Location: 69 Northgate Way, Terrington St Clement, Norfolk  
Grid Ref: TF 5583 2112  
SMR No.: 37393  
Date of work: 1st October 2002

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## **Summary**

*A watching brief was maintained during the excavation of foundation trenches for a proposed new house. Deposits of laminated silts of natural origin were seen in the lower sides of the trenches, particularly towards the north end of the site. They were overlaid by other deposits of silt and fine sand and by the topsoil. A slightly darker coloured mixed deposit of silt-sand and some clay was seen in two of the recorded sections and it was thought possible that this may represent the lower part of the medieval sea bank which is known to have crossed the site. No other archaeological deposits were observed.*

## **1.0 Introduction**

The area covered by the archaeological watching brief was located on the north-eastern edge of Terrington St Clement, on the eastern side of a track which leads from Northgate Way to Hart's Marsh (Fig. 1). The work was undertaken to specifications set out in Norfolk Archaeological Unit's Project Design for watching briefs and in accordance with a Brief issued by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (NLA Ref. 30/08/02/EJR). Martin Burrell, the landowner, commissioned the watching brief.

At the time of the work the site was under rough grass; trees and shrubs had been cleared from around the site and concrete and rubble had been removed from the area of a former house. A new house is proposed and it was the digging of foundation trenches for the proposed building which required the watching brief.

The site archive is currently held by the Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service, following the relevant policy on archiving standards.

## **2.0 Archaeological and Historical Background**

Terrington St Clement is the regional centre of Marshland, the area of (mainly) silt fens immediately to the south of The Wash. A marine incursion led to the deposition of the silts termed the Terrington Beds and radiocarbon dating of material from beneath suggests that they were deposited during the 2nd or 1st century BC (Silvester 1988, 7). Later, more silts were deposited in the area and these cover sites of Roman date. Today the area is low-lying (below 0m OD).

The low-lying nature of the area means that drainage and flood prevention have always been important factors and the line of the former medieval sea bank runs directly across the present site (Silvester 1988, fig. 24). The area to the north formerly consisted of salt marsh and mudflats. Also prevalent in the vicinity are former saltern mounds with a few lying just beyond the former sea bank in the area to the north-east of Terrington and a more significant group lying to the west, north of South Green.

### 3.0 Methodology

The objective of this watching brief was to record any archaeological evidence revealed during groundworks for the building of the new house. The Brief required constant attendance during the digging of the foundation trenches (Fig. 2). The trenches were dug by machine and were 0.7m wide and 0.8m in depth.

Spoil was scanned with a metal detector and visually checked for the retrieval of artefacts. All finds were retained for inspection, other than those which were obviously modern.

An area of laminated silts was noticed in the north end of one trench. In the absence of any other distinctive deposits, three west-facing sections along the long axis of the proposed house (and across the putative line of the former sea-bank) were hand-cleaned and recorded.

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using the Norfolk Archaeological Unit's *pro-forma* sheets. Trench locations and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and photographs were taken of all relevant deposits.

Due to the lack of suitable deposits, no environmental samples were taken. Site conditions were good; weather was fine and the trenches were cleanly excavated and accessible.

### 4.0 Results

The lowest deposit revealed in the foundation trenches was a layer of pale cream-yellow and orange-yellow laminated fine sand and silt ((5); Fig. 3). Located towards the north end of the site, this was interpreted as a deposit of marine silts of natural origin. Above it was a deposit of mixed mid grey-brown and pale cream-yellow mottled silt and fine sand with some small patches of clay ((4)). The deposit appeared about two metres from the northern end of the trench and became thicker (to a maximum thickness of about 0.3m) to the south. Further to the south a very similar deposit ((6)), which was 0.5m thick, sloped down to the south for 3m. As these deposits were more mixed in nature with patches or 'lumps' of different material, they were interpreted as of possible deliberate deposition. The excavator thought that they might represent the truncated lower part of the former sea bank.

Overlaying the northern edge of deposit (4) were more laminated silt and sand deposits ((3)). These were probably undisturbed deposits of natural origin, perhaps an accumulation of silts 'outside' the sea bank.

Stratigraphically above deposit (3) and spread over the top of deposit (4) was another mixed layer of mottled cream-yellow and grey-brown silt ((2)). This had some slightly loamy patches, was root disturbed and was a mix of disturbed silt from lower down the section and topsoil. To the south, deposit (6) was overlaid by a homogenous layer of light orangey-yellow-brown fine sandy-silt ((7)). This deposit appeared in most of the trench sections in the southern part of the site. The silt loam topsoil ((1)) overlay deposits (2) and (7).

Although the other trench sections were not hand-cleaned, the laminated silt-sands were visible in the lower parts of the exposed sections in northern part of the site. They were interpreted as representing deposits of marine silts to the north of the former sea bank.

A modern well or cess pit lay in the path of the foundation trench in the north-western part of the site.

## **4.0 The Finds**

### ***Ceramic Building Material***

Four small pieces of brick of medieval and post-medieval date were found in the topsoil ((1)).

### ***Metal Artefacts***

A single iron artefact was recovered from the topsoil ((1)). It is unidentified but is probably of late post-medieval date.

## **5.0 Conclusions**

Possible evidence for the former sea bank was seen in the excavated foundation trenches. This took the form of mixed deposits of fine sandy-silt with some clay patches. These deposits varied in colour and composition from the layers of laminated silt-sands which were seen underneath and overlaying them in the north part of the site and from a thicker layer of homogenous silt in the south part of the site.

Nothing else of archaeological interest was revealed in the excavated foundation trenches.

## ***Acknowledgements***

The watching brief was funded by the landowner, Martin Burrell. Sarah Bates carried out the archaeological work. The finds were processed and reported on by Lucy Talbot. This report has been illustrated and formatted by Maggie Footit and edited by David Robertson.

## ***Bibliography***

- Silvester, R.J., 1988 *The Fenland Project Number 3: Marshland and the Nar Valley, Norfolk*, East Anglian Archaeology. 45

### ***Appendix 1: Context Summary***

Context No.	Category	Description
1	Deposit	Topsoil
2	Deposit	Mixed/disturbed layer
3	Deposit	Laminated silt sands
4	Deposit	Mixed deposit
5	Deposit	Laminated silt sands
6	Deposit	Mixed deposit
7	Deposit	Layer of silt

### ***Appendix 2: Finds***

Context No.	Material	Quantity	Weight (kg)
1	Medieval ceramic building material	2	0.035
1	Post-medieval ceramic building material	2	0.005
1	Iron	1	-



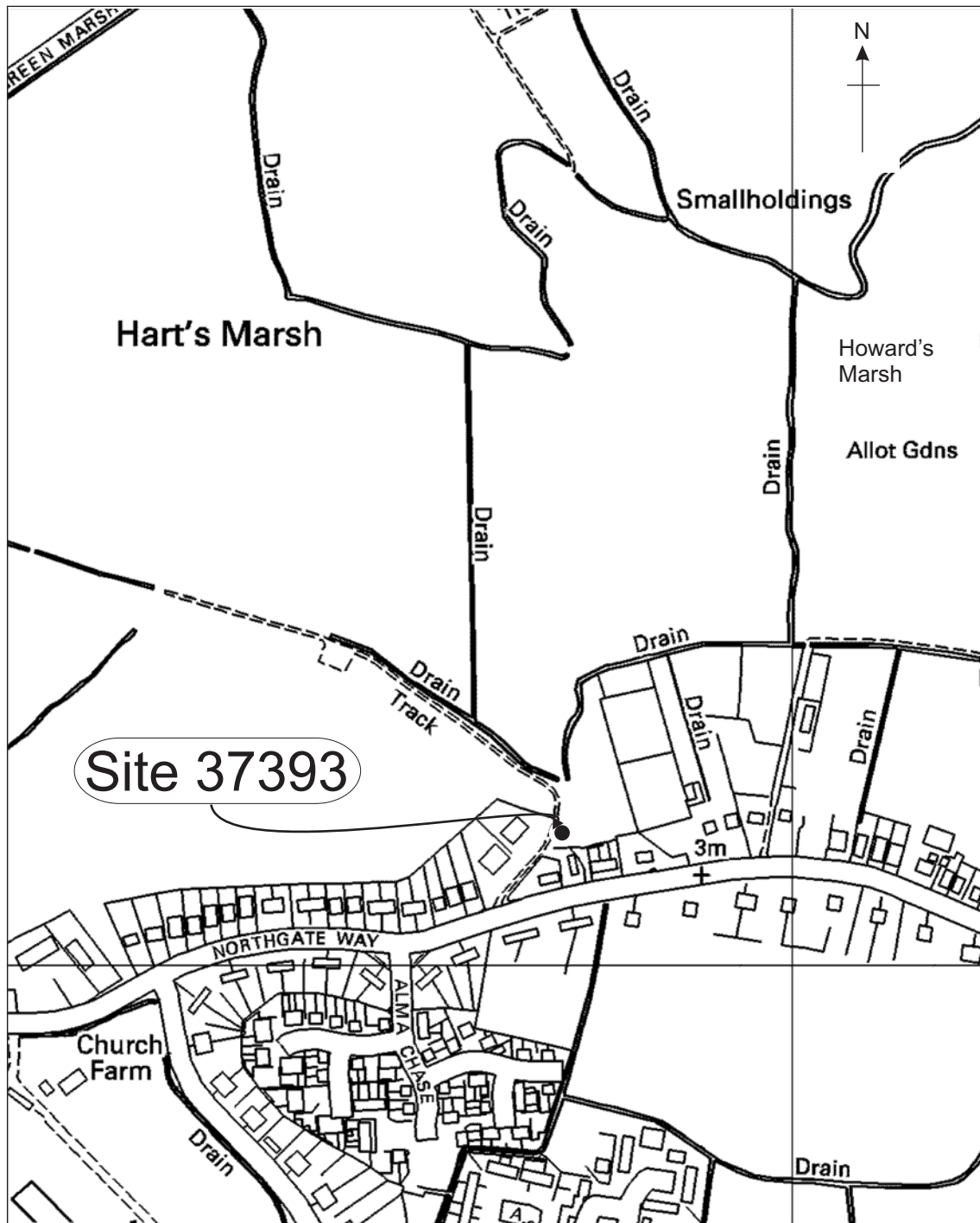


Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:5.000

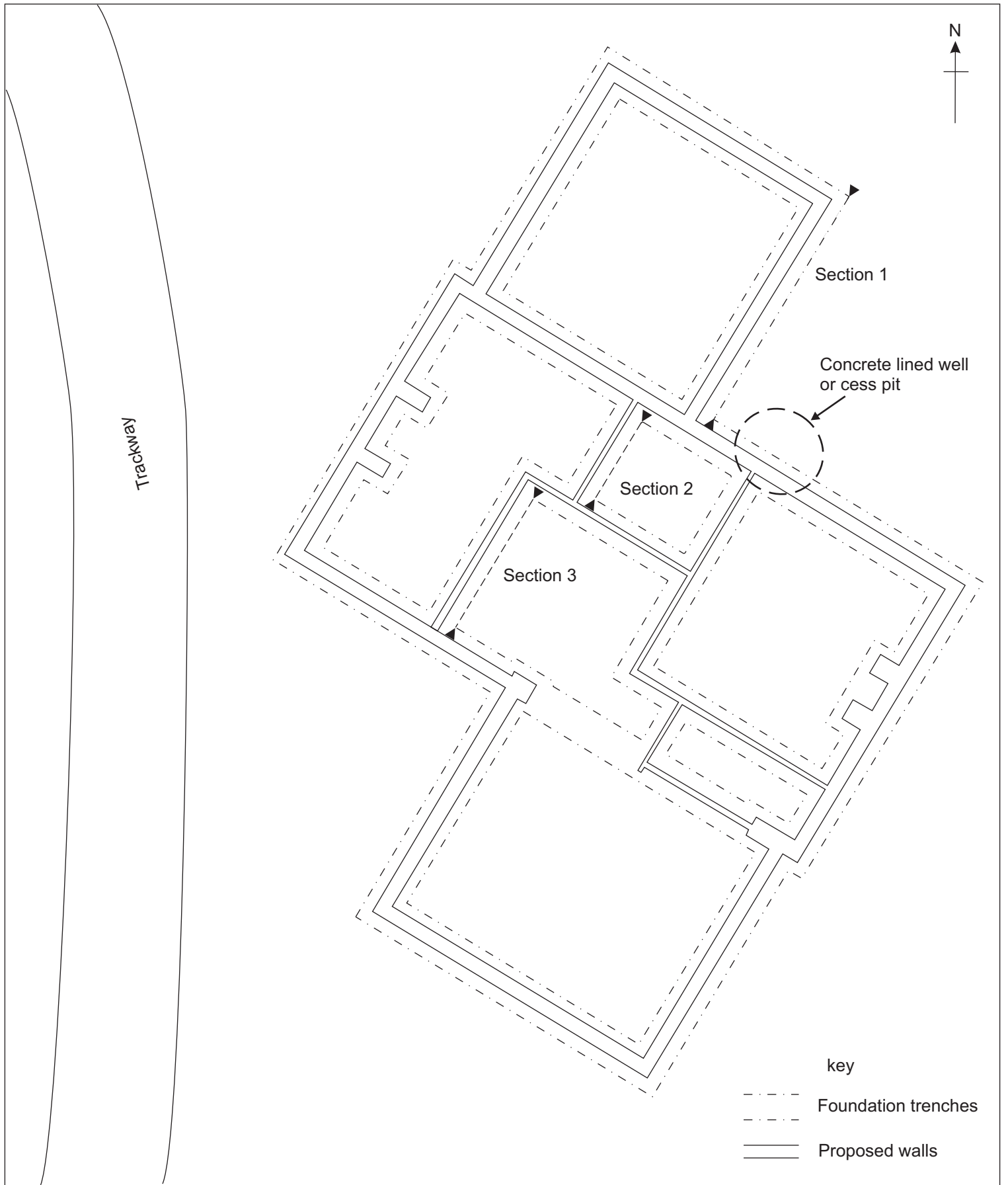


Figure 2. Plan of foundation trenches. Scale 1:100

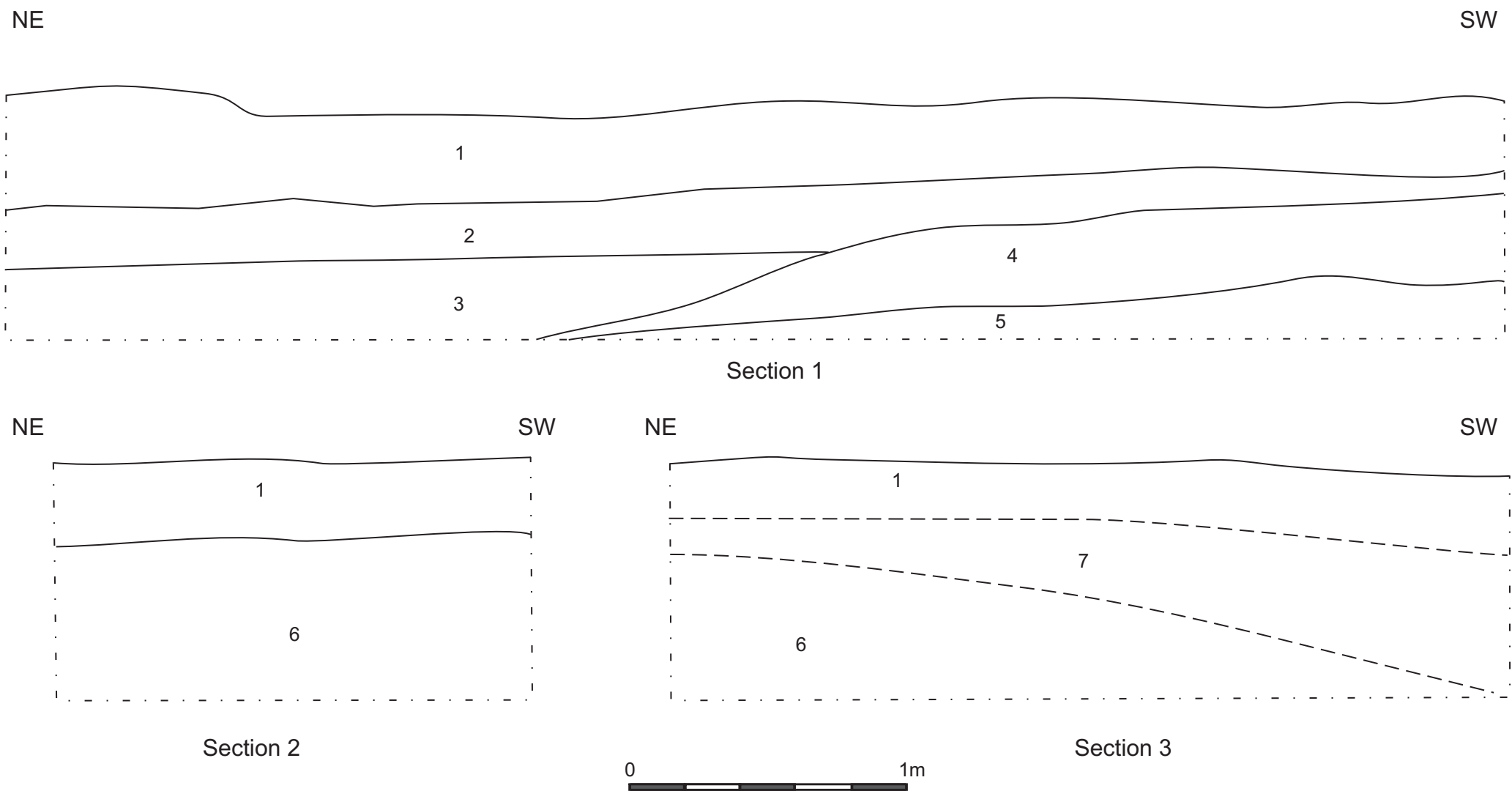


Figure 3. Sections 1,2 and 3. Scale 1:20