

Church Street, Ampthill, Bedfordshire; An Archaeological Evaluation Report

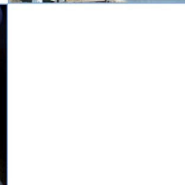
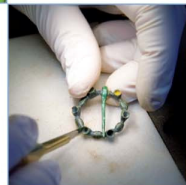
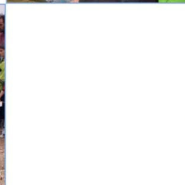
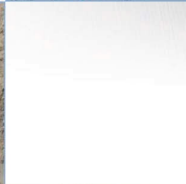
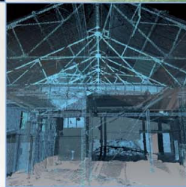
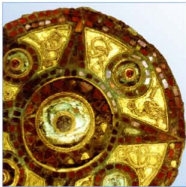
Planning Application Number: MB/08/01890/FULL

National Grid Reference Number: TL 0388 3828

Site Code: BEDFM2010.28

AOC Project No: 30708

Date: July 2010



ARCHAEOLOGY

HERITAGE

CONSERVATION

Church Street, Ampthill, Bedfordshire: An Archaeological Evaluation Report

On Behalf of: **Dandara Limited**
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National Grid Reference (NGR): TL 0388 3828

AOC Project No: 30708

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Contents

	Page
List of Illustrations	ii
Non-Technical Summary	iii
1. Introduction	1
2. Planning Background	1
3. Geology and Topography	2
4. Archaeological & Historical Background	2
Prehistoric	2
Romano-British.....	2
Early Medieval	2
Medieval	3
Post-Medieval.....	3
5. Aims of the Investigation	4
6. Methodology	4
7. Results	5
8. Finds	12
9. Conclusions and Recommendations	12
10. Bibliography	14
Appendix A – Context Register	29
Appendix B – Specialist Finds Assessment	32
Appendix C - OASIS Form	34

List of Illustrations

Figure 1	Site Location
Figure 2	Detailed Site Location
Figure 3	Trench Location
Figure 4	Trench 1: Plan (1:100) and Sections (1:20)
Figure 5	Trench 2: Plan (1:100) and Section (1:20)
Figure 6	Trench 3: Plan (1:100) and Sections (1:20)
Figure 7	Trench 4: Plan (1:100) and Sections (1:20)
Figure 8	Trench 5: Plan (1:100) and Section (1:20)
Figure 9	Trench 6: Plan (1:125) and Section (1:20)
Figure 10	Trench 7: Plan (1:100) and Sections (1:20)
Figure 11	Trench 8: Plan (1:100)
Figure 12	Trench 10: Plan (1:100) and Sections (1:20)
Figure 13	Trenches 9 and 11: Sample Sections (1:20)

Non-Technical Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by AOC Archaeology Group on behalf of Dandara Ltd at Church Street, Ampthill, Bedfordshire (NGR TL 0388 3828) between 31st May and 7th June 2010.

The evaluation comprised the machine excavation of eleven trenches located across the site. The trenches varied in size from 16.00m to 30.00m in length by 2.00m wide. The vast majority of archaeological features were recorded on the higher ground in the north and west of the site, within only drainage channels being found in the waterlogged trenches to the southeast.

The archaeological remains consisted mainly of agricultural features including cultivation strips and tree bowls, post-medieval/modern pottery was retrieved from most of these features with only residual finds from earlier periods.

Due to the lack of significant archaeological remains and the known truncation of deposits within the northern limits it is recommended that no further work is undertaken on the site. The final decision rests with the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeology Team.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document details the findings of an archaeological evaluation undertaken at the proposed development at Church Street, Ampthill, Bedfordshire (Figure 1). The evaluation was undertaken between the 31st May and 7th June 2010 and comprised of the excavation of eleven trenches. All works were undertaken by a team of professional archaeologists.
- 1.2 The site was located on the northern outskirts of the town of Ampthill, approximately 1km northeast of the town centre. It was centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) TL 0388 3828. The site was bounded by Church Street to the south, Gas House Lane to the east, residential properties and St. Andrew's Church Cemetery to the west, and St. Andrew's Church Burial Ground and the former Old Town Gas Works to the north. The site was irregular in shape and covered an area of approximately 1.2ha (Figure 2).
- 1.3 The proposed development is for the provision of a new public car park and residential housing. The site consisted of vegetation covered open ground and water meadow at the time of fieldwork.

2. Planning Background

- 2.1 The proposed scheme comprises the provision of a new long-stay town centre car park comprising 100 spaces and 38 new residential units.
- 2.2 The local planning authority is Central Bedfordshire. The site does not lie within a Conservation Area, nor does it contain any known Scheduled Monuments or Listed Buildings. Archaeological advice to the council is provided by the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeology Team.
- 2.3 Planning permission to undertake the development has been granted under the Town & Country Planning Act (1990) (Ref No.:MB/08/01890/FULL), subject to conditions. Condition 10 states that:
"Details of a scheme of archaeological investigation of the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the development hereby approved is commenced. The said development shall only be implemented in accordance with the scheme thereby approved."

Reason: To safeguard any material of archaeological interest which exists on the site.

- 2.4 This condition has been required in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS 5) issued by the Department of the Environment in 1990 (DoE, 2010), and was recommended by the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeology Team.
- 2.5 A Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared as a detailed project design for the archaeological evaluation trenching following consultation with the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeology Team as to the scope of works required.
- 2.5 This report details the results of the archaeological evaluation.

3. Geology and Topography

- 3.1 According to the British Geological Survey the area the site was located close to the solid geology boundary between the Lower Greensand Group and West Walton Formation.
- 3.2 The site was located in an area of ground sloping from northwest to southeast, in an area of lower ground surrounded on the south, eastern and northern sides by a 3-4m high bank. The site lies at an approximate height of 90m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD).
- 3.3 A geotechnical site investigation identified a thickness of between 0.80m to 1.20m of topsoil and made ground overlying either Woburn Sand Formation or Head Deposits across the area of the site.

4. Archaeological & Historical Background

- 4.1 The following information is drawn from the Extensive Urban Survey for Bedfordshire: Ampthill Archaeological Assessment (Albion Archaeology 2005). Where stated, additional information from the Bedfordshire Historic Environment Record (BHER) has been incorporated into the background material based on a 1km radius search around the site.

Prehistoric

- 4.2 The earliest evidence for activity in the proximity of the town is a range of prehistoric flint artefacts have been found in Ampthill Park which is located approximately 1km to the northwest of the site.
- 4.3 During the construction of Ampthill bypass, c 1.5km to the south of the site, kilns dating to the Late Iron Age and Early Romano-British period were excavated. Pottery evidence indicated the kilns may have continued to be used through into the early Romano-British period.
- 4.4 The most substantial evidence for prehistoric activity is represented by the extensive Late Iron Age and Romano-British settlement at Ruxox Farm, approximately 2.5km south of the proposed development site. Excavation undertaken between the 1950s and 1970s indicate the presence of a villa or possible shrine.

Romano-British

- 4.5 Evidence for Romano-British activity in the area is limited. The most significant evidence for this period is the transitional activity identified during the Ampthill bypass construction and Ruxox Farm excavations (see above).
- 4.6 A possible Roman road is conjectured to run through, or close to the town, but no evidence has yet been found to substantiate this suggestion.
- 4.7 The only other evidence for activity during this period relates to a Romano-British ditch excavated during the construction of the by-pass. In addition to the recovery of small scatters of Romano-British pottery during fieldwalking undertaken to the east of the town.

Early Medieval

- 4.8 There are no known Saxon sites within the town of Ampthill. It is thought likely that the earliest settlement is concentrated around the Parish Church of St. Andrew which is located on the eastern edge of the town, approximately 100m to the west of the proposed development site.
- 4.9 The name Ampthill or *Aemethyll* is thought to be Anglo-Saxon in origin, meaning ant-heap or ant infested hill.

Medieval

- 4.10 By 1086 the Domesday survey listed the settlement of Ampthill as containing six villeins, two bordars and one serf.
- 4.11 The remains of a possible motte and bailey castle are thought to be located approximately 1km to the northwest of the site.
- 4.12 In c 1140 the parish church of St Andrew at Ampthill was given as a gift to Alban's Abbey. The Norman Church was rebuilt in about 1330 although only the pillars of the nave are still visible from this period. Despite refurbishments in the 15th and 16th century the main body of the church and the Chancel were reported to be 'ruinous' in 1518 and 'almost down to the ground' by 1556.
- 4.13 In 1219 Henry III granted the settlement of Ampthill a market charter.
- 4.14 The medieval development of the town indicates that Church Street is likely to be the earliest focus for activity with the market place at its west end. Buildings abutting Church Street to the south-east of the Church are also recorded in an account of Lord Grey's lands dated 1485. Further documentary evidence indicates that, by the 15th century, Bedford Street and Dunstable Street had developed significantly. Deeds of 1434 refer to cottages and a dwelling house, in "Dunstaplestret" demonstrating that the street and the current name were well established by that time.
- 4.15 Possible rubbish pits found during a watching brief on a site located on the east side of Dunstable Street, c 500m southwest of the site, dated to the 12th-14th century, indicating that settled activity had been established on the line of the street by this date.

Post-Medieval

- 4.16 Outwardly, the town of Ampthill is likely to have developed little up to the 17th century, during the 18th century the town acquired much of its present character. Ampthill continued to grow in the early 19th century, although its population increased by only 36% between 1801 and 1836 compared to an average increase for towns in the county of 50%.
- 4.17 The BHER lists numerous surviving buildings of 16th to 19th century date, primarily concentrated on the main thoroughfares of Church Street, Dunstable Street, Woburn Street. The site is thought to lie immediately to the east of the historic core of the town. This interpretation is supported by the presence of two buildings dated to the 16th or 17th century located approximately 75m to the west of the site (BHER- 2825 & 12677). Evidence for expansion of the town to the east during the 18th and 19th century is present in the form of structures of this date immediately adjacent to the west and southern boundaries of the site (BHER- 6211, 6212, 15635 & 16118).
- 4.18 Through into the 19th century the Ampthill's prosperity continued to rise, partly due to its function as a key coaching town. Its growing wealth is demonstrated by the expanding range of trades recorded in the Parish Register. One of these trades is known to relate to brick and tile manufacture, as evidence for late post-medieval brick and tile kilns lies to the north of the town, c 300m to the northwest of the site (BHER- 7368 & 13992).

- 4.19 By the 19th century St. Andrew's had received several phases of restoration. As part of the church's development at this time it's burial ground was extended to the north, taking in a large area of ground which borders the development site to the northwest (BHER- 856 & 8848).
- 4.20 The Ampthill Gas Company was established immediately to the northeast site in 1849, and was closed down in 1934.
- 4.21 The pace development in the town was increased with the arrival of the railway in 1867, in the form of the Midland Railway Line between London and Bedford.

5. Aims of the Investigation

- 5.1 The aims of the evaluation were defined as being:
- To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the site.
 - To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.
 - To record and sample excavate any archaeological remains encountered.
 - To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of any archaeological features and deposits.
 - To determine the extent of previous truncations of the archaeological deposits.
 - To enable the Local Planning Authority Archaeological Officer to make an informed decision as to the requirement for any further archaeological work.
- 5.2 The specific aims of the evaluation were to:
- Identify any possible remains that may be associated with the suspected Anglo-Saxon settlement core located in proximity to St. Andrew's Church.
 - Determine the presence of any evidence related to the medieval and post-medieval development of the town.
- 5.3 The final aim was to make public the results of the investigation, subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

6. Methodology

- 6.1 The field evaluation comprised the machine excavation of 11 trenches with selected hand excavation of archaeological features where present. The trenches were originally planned to measure 30m x 2m trenches but due to environmental constraints a number of the trenches had to be moved and altered in size (Figure 3).
- 6.2 All machining during the evaluation was carried out using a 360° excavator with a smooth bladed ditching bucket, under the constant supervision of the archaeological Project Officer.
- 6.4 The accession code BEDFM 2010.28 was obtained from Bedford Museum for the project, and used for all fieldwork.

- 6.5 All evaluation trenches were accurately located to the National Grid and their levels calculated using a temporary benchmark established on site by the fieldwork team having moved the level from a BM on St Andrew's Church. The value of the BM was 100.40mOD whilst the TBM on site was valued at 92.89mOD.
- 6.6 All recording was in accordance with the standards and requirements of the Museum of London's *Archaeological Field Manual* (MoL 3rd edition 1994).
- 6.7 All of the work was carried out in line with:
- *Archaeological Guidance Paper (AGP): 3, Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork* (English Heritage 1998).
 - *Standards for the Field Archaeology in the East of England* East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14 (Gurney 2003)
 - *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (IFA 2008).
- 6.8 A continuous unique numbering system was employed. For each trench, a block of numbers in a continuous sequence was allocated.
- 6.9 Written descriptions, comprising both factual data and interpretative elements, were recorded on standardised sheets.
- 6.10 For each trench, a block of numbers in a continuous sequence was allocated. In this report the archaeological fills and layers are represented in () whilst the cut numbers are represented in [].

7. Results

Trench 1 (Figure 4)

Context No	Depth	Height of Deposit (mOD)	Description/Interpretation
100	0.20m	94.04 – 92.14	Loose, dark greyish brown silt. Topsoil.
101	0.38m	93.84 – 91.94	Loose, mid brown sandy silt. Subsoil.
102	0.35m	93.60 – 91.30	Reddish orange sand. Natural.
107	0.25m	91.70	Made ground.

- 7.1 Trench 1 measured 30.00m x 2.00m and was aligned east-west.
- 7.2 The natural deposit of orange red sand (102) was observed at between 93.60mOD and 91.30mOD.
- 7.3 The natural was cut by two cultivation strips [104] and [106] which ran east-west. Cultivation strip [104] measured 5.50m x 0.70m x 0.20m, it was linear with moderately sloping sides and a flat base which showed signs of rooting, it was filled by dark brown silty sand (103), the fill contained two fragments of horse/cow bone, a horse tooth, a green glass bottle base, ceramic building material (CBM) and two sherds of 19th – 20th century pottery. The CBM consisted of five fragments of brick and peg tile though to be late medieval to early post-medieval in date. Immediately to the south of

[104] was a second parallel cultivation strip of the same length [106], it was 0.50m wide and 0.07m deep with gently sloping sides and a flat base. Cut [106] was filled by (105) which was very similar to (103). One piece of peg tile was recovered from (105) which is thought to be of late medieval date.

- 7.4 The cultivation strips were overlain by a 0.38m thick mid brown sandy silt subsoil (101). Two-shell tempered sherds typical of Harrold shelly wares were recovered from the subsoil (101). These were produced around 20-30km north of Ampthill from the 1st century but became very widely-distributed in the late Roman period. One of these is a partial rim sherd with a characteristic hooked rim, suggesting a later Roman date. These sherds were associated with an undiagnostic sandy grey ware. Given the stratigraphic relationship of the subsoil, this pottery is likely to be residual.
- 7.5 The subsoil was overlain at the eastern end of the trench by a 0.25m thick deposit of dark brown sandy silt interpreted as imported subsoil or made ground (107). This was sealed by 0.20m of dark greyish brown silty topsoil.

Trench 2 (Figure 5)

Context No	Depth	Height of Deposit (mOD)	Description/Interpretation
200	0.20m	92.32 - 90.87	Grey brown sandy silt. Topsoil.
201	0.40m	92.12 – 90.66	Loose, mid brown sandy silt. Subsoil.
202	0.10m	90.98 - 90.32	Reddish orange sand. Natural.
203	1.12m	90.22 – 90.04	Dark greyish brown sandy clay.
204	0.15m	90.02	Mid orangey brown sand.

- 7.6 Trench 2 was located in the west of the site and was aligned north-south; it measured 30.00m x 2.00m.
- 7.7 Natural reddish orange sand (202) was observed in the northern half of the trench between 90.98mOD and 90.32mOD, it was overlain by a small band (0.15m thick) of brownish orange natural sand (204), this discolouration probably occurred because of the alluvial clay overlying it (203). The alluvial layer consisted of mid brownish grey sandy clay which sloped from north to south; it was 1.12m thick although not fully excavated at the southern end of the trench. This deposit represents the northern limit of the marshy area still present in the south and east of the site.
- 7.6 The alluvium was sealed by a 0.40m thick deposit of mid brown sandy silt imported subsoil or made ground. This deposit was overlain by a 0.20m thick mid greyish brown sandy silt topsoil. No archaeological features were observed in this trench.

Trench 3 (Figure 6)

Context No	Depth	Height of Deposit (mOD)	Description/Interpretation
301	0.55m	91.15 - 89.44	Mid greyish brown sandy silt. Topsoil.

302	0.40m	90.58 - 89.00	Pale greyish brown silty sand. Subsoil.
308	0.10m	90.10 - 88.60	Pale Orangey yellow sand. Natural.

- 7.7 Trench 3 was located in the west of site, running north-south; its location had to be altered from the original trench position due to the proximity of nesting birds. The trench measured 26.50m x 2.00m.
- 7.8 Pale orangey yellow sand (308) was located between 91.15mOD and 89.44mOD. This natural deposit was cut by a possible cultivation strip [307] and a possible post hole [304]. The cultivation strip [307] was roughly linear with steep but uneven sides and an irregular base; it ran east-west and measured 2.00m x 1.20m x 0.45m. The lower fill (306) consisted of 0.15m of mid brown silt with occasional charcoal flecks, it was overlain by another fill consisting of 0.30m of dark grey brown sandy silt (305). One sherd of 19th/20th century pottery and a fragment of late medieval peg tile were retrieved from this context.
- 7.9 Cut [304] measured 0.50m x 0.42m x 0.18m, it was subcircular, steep sided with a concave base. It has tentatively been interpreted as a post hole. Within the feature was fill (303), a dark grey brown silt. No finds were retrieved from this context. The features were overlain by 0.40m of pale greyish brown imported subsoil (302); this was sealed by a 0.55m thick mid greyish brown topsoil (301).

Trench 4 (Figure 7)

Context No	Depth	Height of Deposit (mOD)	Description/Interpretation
400	0.20m	91.16 - 89.40	Mid greyish brown sandy silt. Topsoil
401	0.30m	90.97 - 89.24	Mid brown silty sand. Subsoil
402	0.10m	90.49	Mid orange yellow sand. Natural
413	0.10m	89.02	Mid yellow silty clay. Natural.

- 7.10 Trench 4 was located near the northern perimeter of the site, it ran east-west and measured 20.00m x 2.00m; the trench had to be shortened due to the presence of animal burrows.
- 7.11 Natural yellow silty clays (413) were observed at the eastern end of the trench at a height of 89.02mOD. Natural orange yellow sands (402) were observed across the rest of the trench at a height of 90.49mOD. The natural deposits were cut by a series of cultivation strips and tree boles.
- 7.12 Cultivation strip [412] ran east-west and measured 7.80m x 1.15m x 0.50m, it had vertical sides and an uneven base which showed signs of rooting. The fill of this feature (411) consisted of 0.50m of mid reddish brown silty sand. Pottery, an oyster shell, a butchered long bone shaft of a horse/cow and CBM were recovered from the fill. The CBM consisted of seven fragments of peg tile and brick thought to be late medieval to early post-medieval in date. Two tiny reduced sandy sherds were recovered from fill (411). These seem most likely to be of Roman date, although it can be difficult to distinguish Roman and medieval fabrics in the case of such small body sherds and late medieval/early post-medieval finds were also recovered from this feature.

- 7.13 A second cultivation strip [410] started at the western extent of [412] and slightly to the north of it. Feature [410] was on the same east-west alignment as the previous cultivation strip and measured 3.00m x 0.80m, it was at least 0.70m deep although it was not fully excavated. The feature was linear with vertical sides and was filled with dark brownish grey silty sand (409). The fill contained nine sherds of 19th/20th century pottery.
- 7.14 Two possible tree boles were also recorded; [404] and [408]. Feature [404] was linear with gently sloping sides and an undulating base, it ran north-south and measured 2.00m x 1.40m x 0.25m, it was filled by mid grey brown silty sand (403). A second feature aligned north-south [408] was recorded to east of [404]. It measured 2.00m x 1.75m x 0.25m with gently sloping sides and a flat base, this feature has been interpreted as a natural hollow. It was filled with mid yellowish orange sand (407).
- 7.15 In the west of the trench was a small subcircular possible posthole [406], it measured 0.62m x 0.54m x 0.15m and had steep sides and a flat base. The fill (405) consisted of mid brownish grey silty sand. It is possible that this feature also originated from root activity.
- 7.16 The features were sealed by a 0.30m thick deposit of mid brown silty sand made ground or imported subsoil (401); this was sealed by 0.20m of mid greyish brown silt topsoil (400).

Trench 5 (Figure 8)

Context No	Depth	Height of Deposit (mOD)	Description/Interpretation
500	0.60m	88.77 – 87.82	Dark greyish brown sandy clay. Topsoil
501	0.45m	88.17 - 87.45m	Dark grey sandy clay. Subsoil.
502	0.05m	87.63	Firm mid orangey grey sandy clay. Natural.
505	0.50m	87.26	Dark Blackish grey sandy clay. Alluvial deposit.

- 7.17 Trench 5 was situated in the south of the site; it measured 20.00m x 2.00m and was aligned southeast-northwest.
- 7.18 Natural yellow clay (502) was observed at a height of 87.63mOD, it was cut by a pit [504] at the northwestern end of the trench. The pit was subcircular with vertical sides and measured 1.80m x 0.90m x 0.30m, it was not fully excavated due to the wet conditions. The pit fill (503) consisted of dark grey sandy silt with occasional charcoal flecks, no finds were retrieved from this context.
- 7.19 A channel was cut into the natural deposits, 7.00m from the northwestern end of the trench. This channel [506] appeared to be linear with gently sloping sides, the base was not observed, it measured 2.00m x 13.00m x 0.50m. The channel was filled with an alluvial deposit (505) of dark blackish grey sandy clay. The channel was probably excavated to drain the groundwater in this low lying part of the site.

- 7.20 The trench was sealed by deposits of subsoil (501) and topsoil (500). The subsoil (501) consisted of dark grey sandy clay, 0.45m thick, which was overlain by a 0.60m thick deposit of dark brownish grey sandy clay topsoil.

Trench 6 (Figure 9)

Context No	Depth	Height of Deposit (mOD)	Description/Interpretation
601	0.80m	87.80 – 86.97	Dark greyish brown sandy clay. Topsoil.
602	0.60m	87.02	Dark grey sandy clay. Subsoil.
603	1.20m	87.00 – 86.16	Mid bluish grey sandy clay. Alluvial deposit.
604	0.50m	85.80 – 84.99	Dark Blackish grey sandy clay. Alluvial deposit.
606	0.10m	86.20 – 84.90	Firm mid orangey grey sandy clay. Natural.

- 7.21 Trench 6 was located in the southeast of the site; it measured 30.00m x 2.00m and was aligned north-south.
- 7.22 Natural orangey grey sandy clay was observed at either end of the trench between 86.20mOD and 84.90mOD. The central 20.00m of the trench was occupied by a large channel [605] which ran northeast-southwest. It was 1.70m deep, linear, with gentle sloping sides, the base was not observed. The channel was filled by alluvial deposit (604); this consisted of 0.50m of grey brown sandy clay. It was presumably cut to drain the surrounding area.
- 7.23 The channel was overlain by alluvial deposit (603) which slumped into the channel). This alluvial deposit consisted of mid blue grey sandy clay 1.20m thick.
- 7.24 The alluvial deposits were partially overlain by a subsoil deposit (602) which was only present at the ends of the trench. It consisted of 0.60m of dark grey sandy clay. The trench was sealed by a 0.80m thick deposit of dark brownish grey sandy clay topsoil.

Trench 7 (Figure 10)

Context No	Depth	Height of Deposit (mOD)	Description/Interpretation
701	0.33m	88.95 – 87.63	Mid greyish brown sandy silt. Topsoil.
702	0.42m	88.61 – 87.32	Mid brown silty sand. Subsoil.
725	0.10m	87.98 – 86.96	Mid yellow silty clay. Natural.

- 7.25 Trench 7 was located in the northeast of the site; the trench was relocated and shortened due to the presence of nesting birds nearby. The trench was aligned northwest-southeast.

- 7.26 Natural yellow clay deposits (725) were observed between 88.95m and 87.63mOD.
- 7.27 The natural deposit was cut by ten linear features interpreted as cultivation strips [704], [706], [708], [710], [712], [714], [716], [718], [720] and [724]. These features all ran on a north-south alignment and were between 0.40 and 0.20m apart from each other. Due to the homogenous nature of these features only three of them were excavated [712], [716] and [722]. All of these features were steep sided with concave bases; they were between 0.70m and 0.50m in width and between 0.18m and 0.10m in depth. They contained fills of mid orangey brown clay, (711), (715) and (721) respectively. No finds were present within the fills.
- 7.28 At the northwestern end of the trench the natural deposit was cut by a small pit [724]. The pit was circular with steep sides and a concave base; it measured 0.75m x 0.65m x 0.23m. It was filled by mid orangey brown clayey sand (723). No finds were recovered from the fill.
- 7.29 The features were sealed by 0.42m of imported subsoil (702), a mid brown silty sand deposit. The subsoil was overlain by (701) a 0.33m thick deposit of mid greyish brown sandy silt topsoil.

Trench 8 (Figure 8)

Context No	Depth	Height of Deposit (mOD)	Description/Interpretation
800	0.20m	87.42 – 87.22	Mid greyish brown sandy silt. Topsoil.
801	1.40m	87.22 – 86.92	Orangey grey sandy clay. Alluvium.
803	0.10m	86.92 – 86.72	Pale orangey yellow sandy clay. Natural.

- 7.30 Trench 8 was located in the east of site, it was aligned north-south. It had to be shortened due to the proximity of nesting birds; it measured 19.00m x 2.00m.
- 7.31 The orangey yellow sandy clay natural deposit (803) was observed at either end of the trench between 87.42mOD and 87.22mOD.
- 7.32 The natural deposit was cut by a large channel [802] similar to those seen in Trenches 5 and 6. It was aligned east-west and was 12.00m wide and 1.40m deep although not fully excavated. The channel was overlain by a deposit of alluvium (801) which extended throughout the trench; it consisted of dark orangey grey sandy clay. This deposit was overlain by 0.20m of mid greyish brown sandy clay topsoil (800).

Trench 9 (Figure 13)

Context No	Depth	Height of Deposit (mOD)	Description/Interpretation
901	0.60m	91.14 – 90.50	Mid greyish brown sandy silt. Topsoil.
902	0.35m	90.55 – 89.90	Grey brown silty sand. Subsoil.
903	0.05m	90.22 – 89.53	Pale orangey yellow sand. Natural.

- 7.33 Trench 9 was located in the west of site, it has to be moved and shortened due to the presence of nesting birds. It measured 18.00 x 2.00m and was aligned east-west.
- 7.34 The natural deposit of orangey yellow sand (903) was observed between 91.14mOD and 90.50mOD. It was overlain by 0.35m thick grey brown silty sand imported subsoil (902). The imported subsoil was sealed by 0.60m of greyish brown sandy silt topsoil (901). No archaeological features were observed in this trench.

Trench 10 (Figure 12)

Context No	Depth	Height of Deposit (mOD)	Description/Interpretation
1000	0.25m	90.07 – 89.27	Mid greyish brown sandy silt. Topsoil.
1001	0.35m	89.83 – 89.02	Orangey grey sand. Subsoil.
1002	0.05m	89.49 – 88.44	Pale orangey yellow sand. Natural.

- 7.35 Trench 10 was located in the centre of site, it has to be relocated and shortened due to nesting birds. The trench was aligned north-south and measured 16.50m x 2.00m.
- 7.36 Natural orangey yellow sand (1002) was observed throughout the trench between 90.07mOD and 89.27mOD. It was cut by three tree boles [1004], [1006] and [1008] and the terminus of a cultivation strip [1010].
- 7.37 The tree boles were in a row aligned north-south, suggesting organised planting. They were all of a similar shape, being subcircular with gently sloping sides and uneven bases. Tree bole [1008] measured 1.50m x 1.50m x 0.14m, it contained fill (1007) which consisted of dark yellowish brown sand. Tree bole [1006] was similar to [1008] and measured 1.20m x 1.10m x 0.26m, the fill (1005) was very similar to (1007). Tree bole [1004] was unexcavated but measured 1.60m x 0.70m in plan; its fill (1003) was similar to (1007).
- 7.38 The cultivation strip terminus [1010] was on the same alignment as the tree boles. It was linear with gently sloping sides and a concave base, it measured 1.25m x 0.85m x 0.20m. It was filled by mid brown sand (1009).
- 7.39 The features were sealed by deposits of orangey grey sand imported subsoil (1001), 0.35m thick, and 0.25m of mid greyish brown sandy silt (1000).

Trench 11 (Figure 13)

Context No	Depth	Height of Deposit (mOD)	Description/Interpretation
1101	0.50m	91.82 – 91.43	Mid greyish brown sandy silt. Topsoil.
1102	0.40m	91.20 – 91.03	Loose dark grey sandy clay. Made ground.
1103	1.30m	89.90-90.83	Orangey grey sandy clay. Alluvium.
1104	0.05m	90.02	Pale orangey yellow sandy clay. Natural.

7.40 Trench 11 was located in the southwest of the site; it was aligned north-south but was shortened due to nesting birds. It measured 16.50m x 2.00m.

7.41 The natural yellow sandy clays (1104) were only observed at the northern end of the trench at a height of 90.02mOD. The natural deposit was overlain by an alluvial deposit (1103), 1.30m thick consisting of mid bluish grey sandy clay which sloped from north to south. The alluvium was overlain by 0.40m of modern made ground (1102) consisting of loose dark grey sandy clay with frequent brick inclusions. The trench was sealed by mid greyish brown sandy silt topsoil (1101) 0.50m thick.

7.42 No archaeological features were observed in the trench.

8 Finds

8.1 Finds were retrieved from five contexts; (101), (103), (305), (409) and (411) (Appendix B). The finds assemblage consisted of animal bone, medieval and late medieval/early post-medieval CBM, Roman pottery, 19th/20th century pottery, a 19th/20th glass bottle base and an oyster shell.

8.2 Subsoil (101) contained two sherds of probable Roman pottery. Context (103) contained two sherds of post-medieval pottery, as well as five fragments of CBM, a pony hoof and a piece of post-medieval bottle glass. Peg tile and animal bone were retrieved from context (105). Fragments of peg tile and one sherd of 18th/19th century pottery were retrieved from tree bole (305). Context (409) contained nine sherds of 18th/19th century pottery. A single sherd of possible Roman pottery, as well as seven fragments of CBM, an oyster shell and two fragments of cattle bone were recovered from context (409).

8.3 The finds underwent specialist assessment (Appendix B). No further work is recommended on the finds. All finds have been retained and will be archived at Bedford Museum.

9 Conclusions and Recommendations

9.1 The archaeological evaluation met its primary aim; to determine the presence or absence of archaeological remains. Archaeological remains were recorded across the higher ground in the north and west of the site, the only features seen in the low lying southeastern area consisted of water channels presumably to try and drain the area.

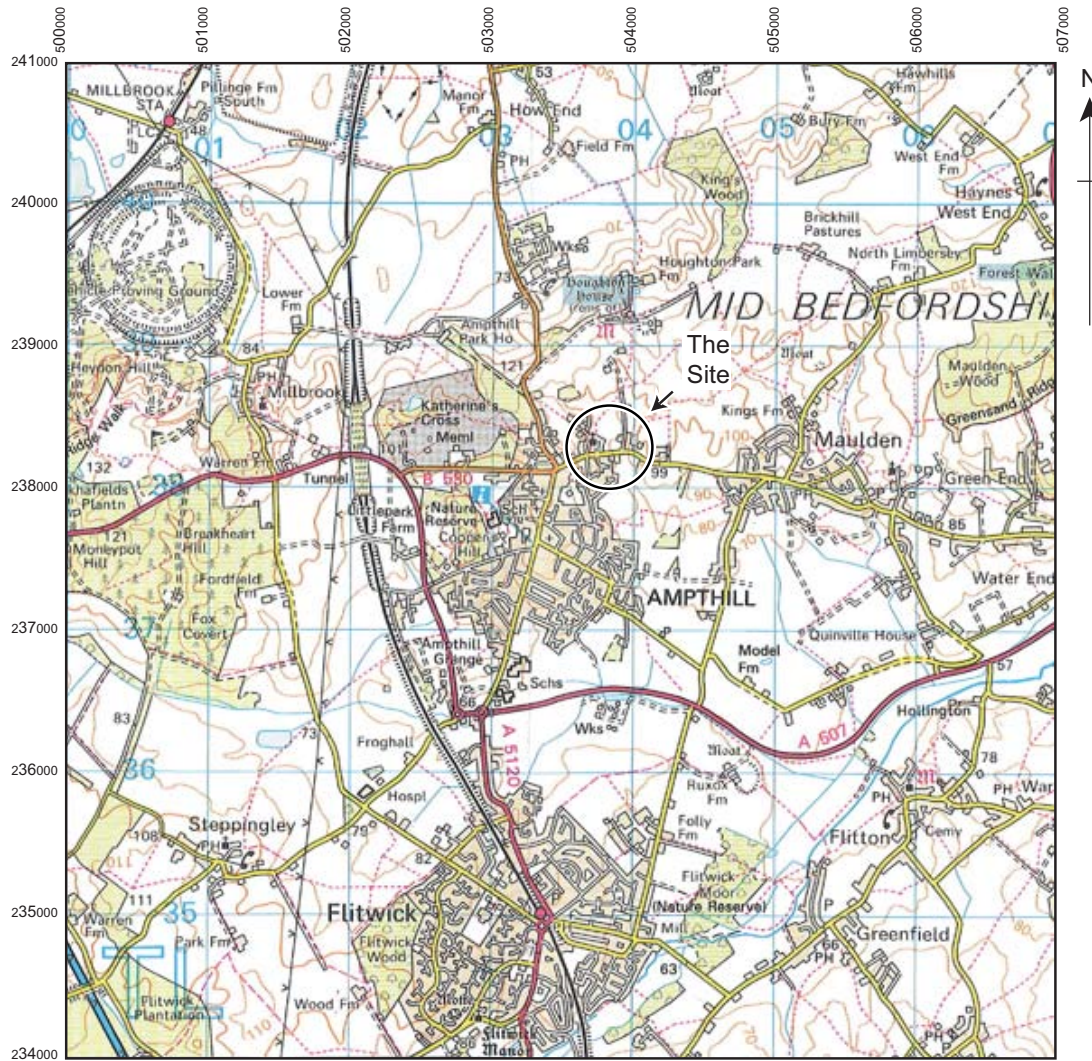
9.2 The features in the north and west of the site were almost exclusively agricultural in nature, with many cultivation strips and a number of tree boles, these features were all of post-medieval date.

The evidence seems to suggest that all available land was being utilised at this time with agriculture spreading right up to the marshy land to the southeast, where some attempts were made to reclaim the land.

- 9.3 The features were mostly overlain by a thick subsoil deposit which contained occasional sherds of residual medieval pottery; this material seems likely to have been imported into the area as it overlies relatively late features and is very thick for a conventional subsoil.
- 9.4 No Saxon or medieval features were identified at the site. No evidence relating to the development of the town was encountered.
- 9.5 Publication will be limited to a short summary submitted to the local journal and via the OASIS project (Appendix C). The archive will be deposited with Bedford Museum within one year.

10. Bibliography

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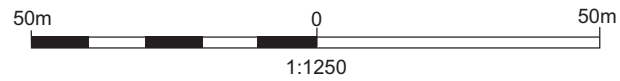
Figure 1: Site Location





Based on the Ordnance Survey's 1:50 000 Landranger map of 1995
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Figure 2: Detailed Site Location



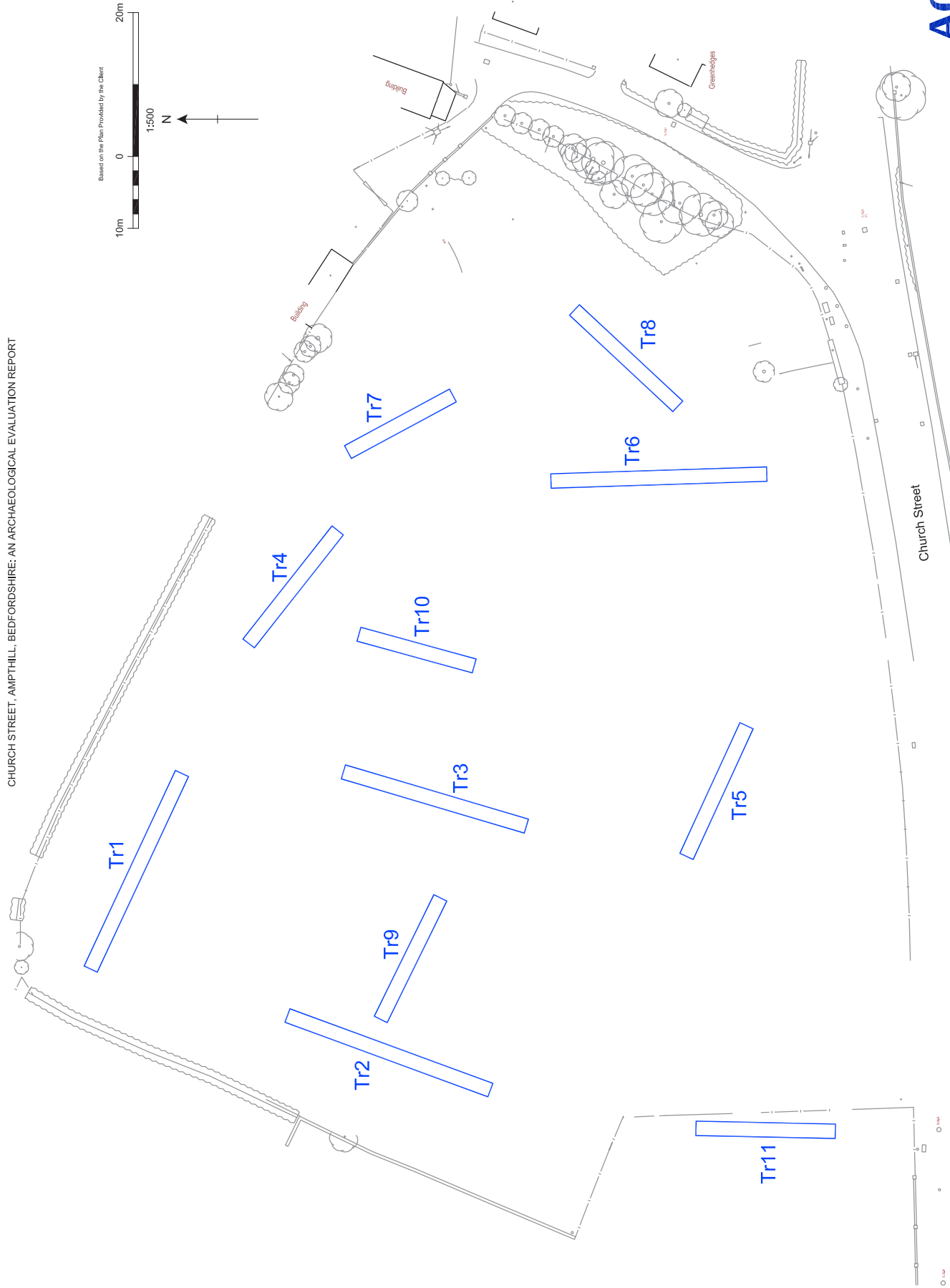


Figure 3: Trench Location Plan

CHURCH STREET, AMPTHILL, BEDFORDSHIRE: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

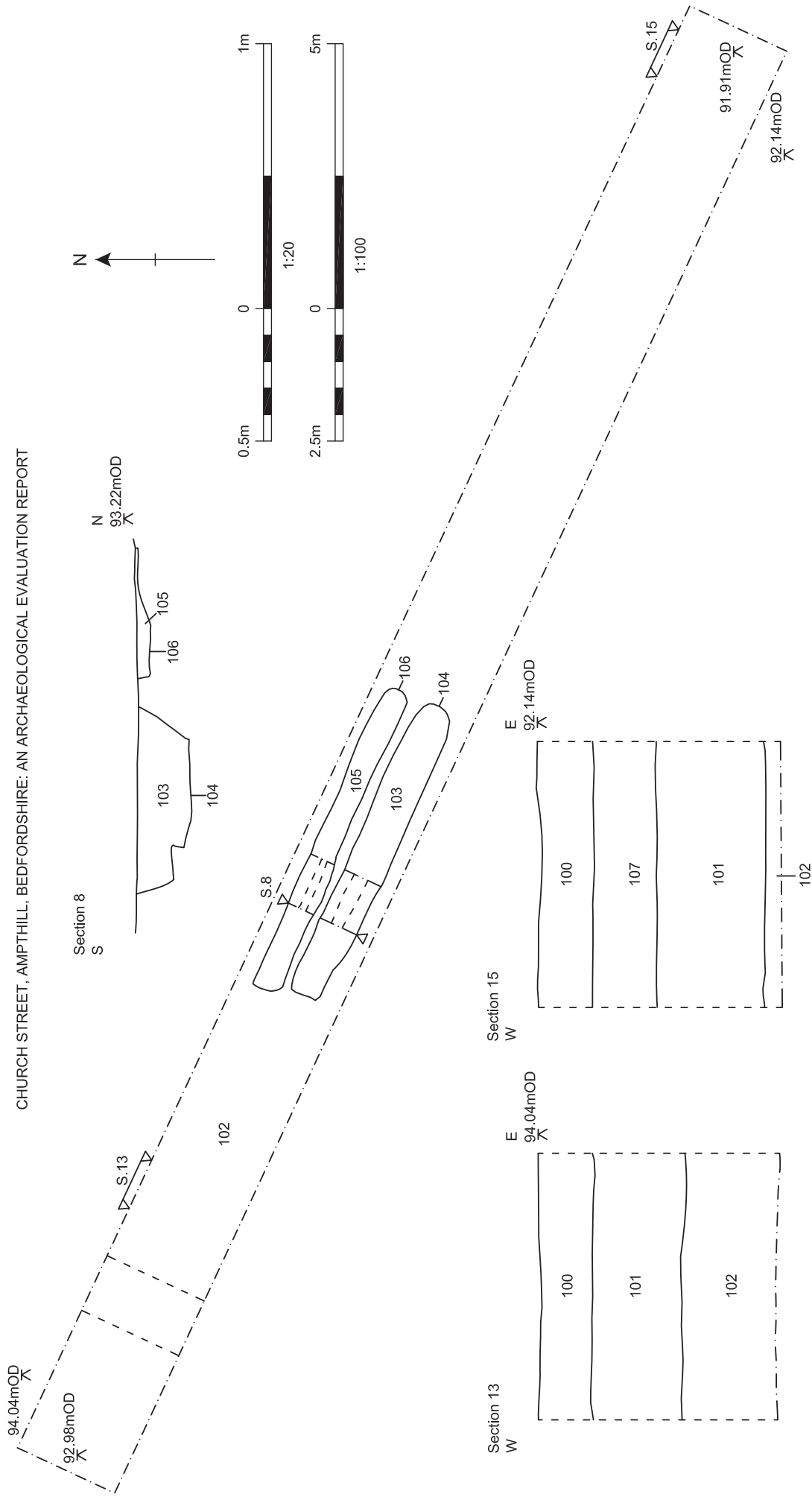


Figure 4: Trench 1: Plan (1:100) & Sections (1:20)

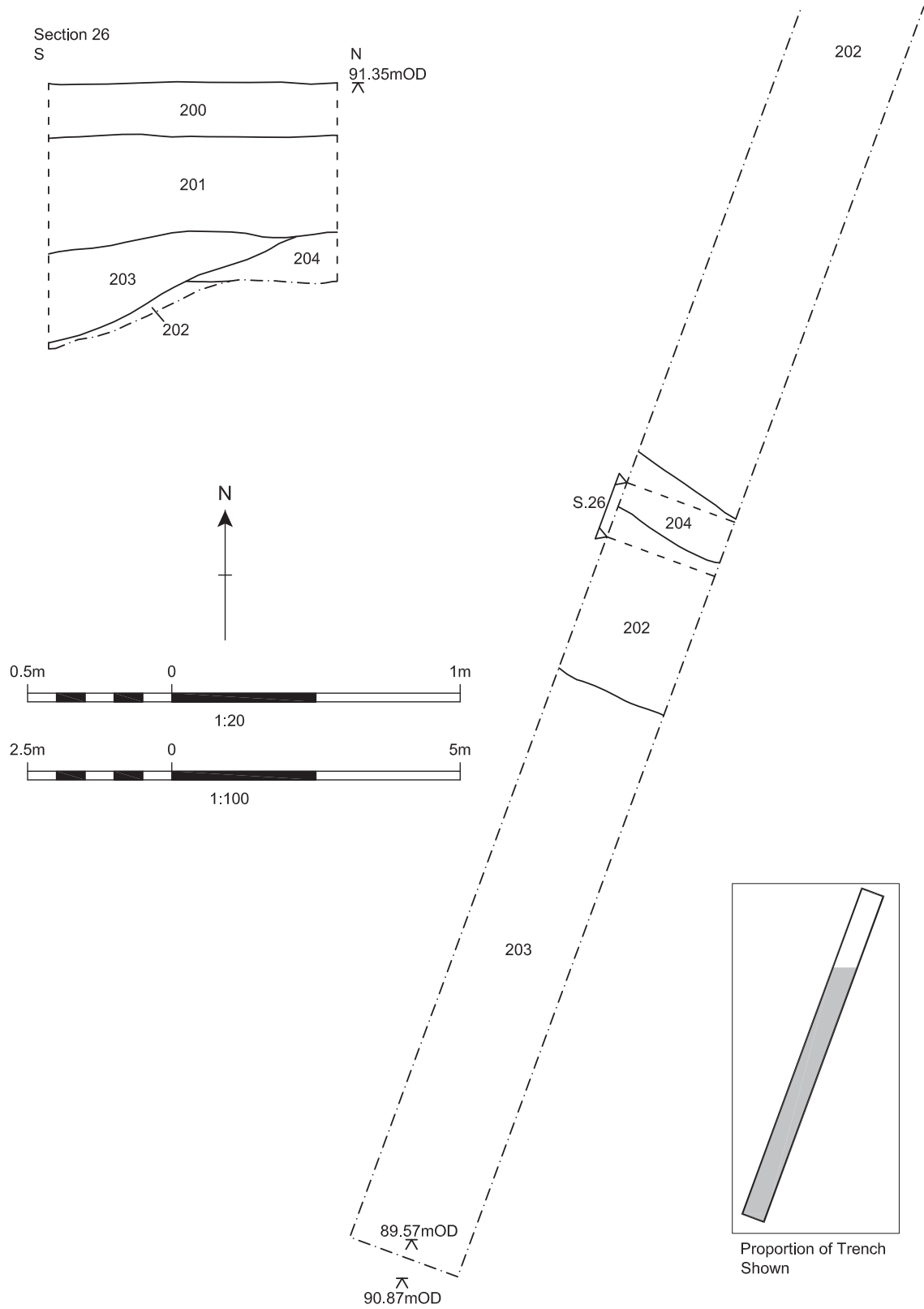


Figure 5: Trench 2: Plan (1:100) & Section (1:20)

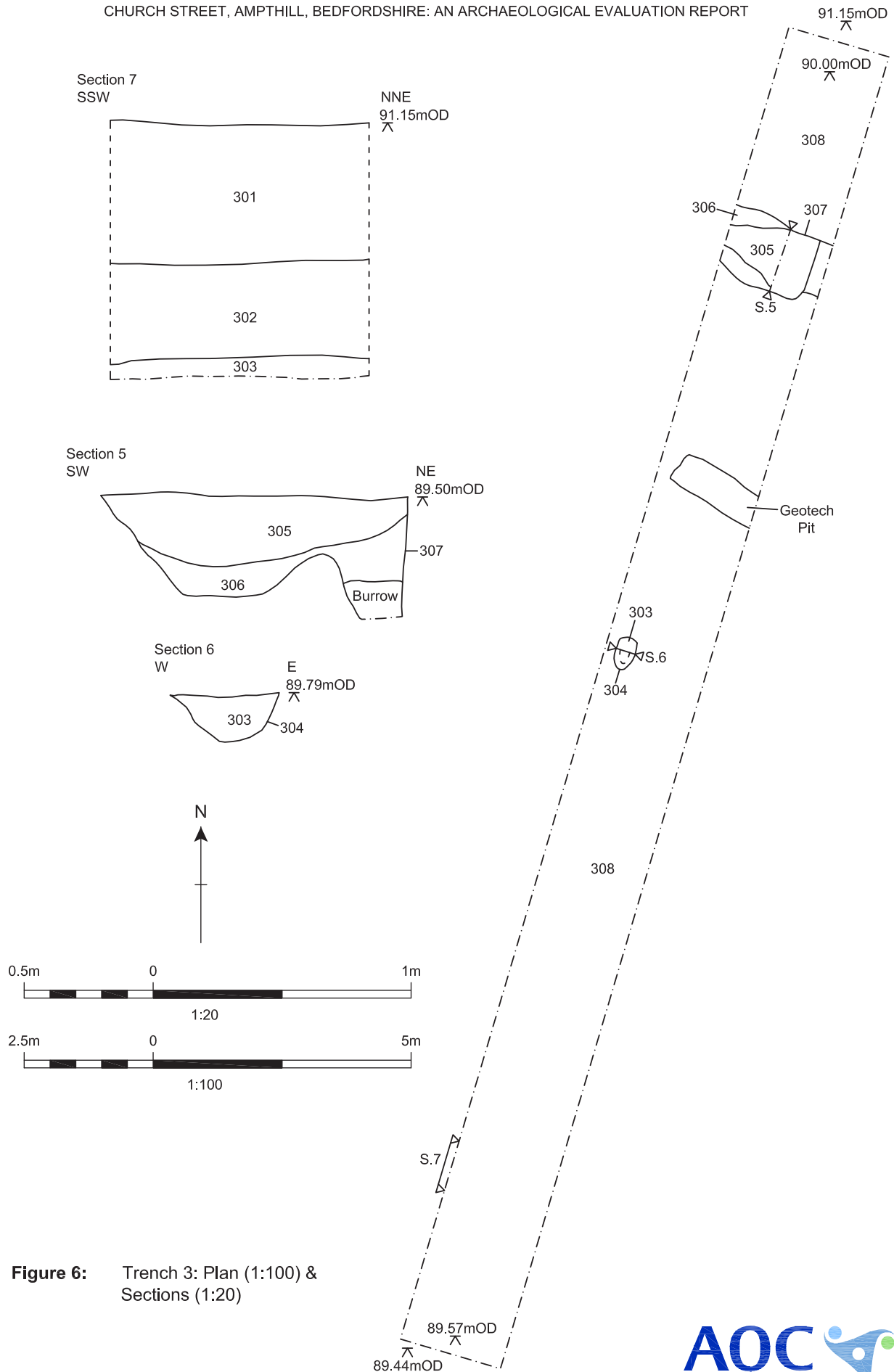


Figure 6: Trench 3: Plan (1:100) & Sections (1:20)

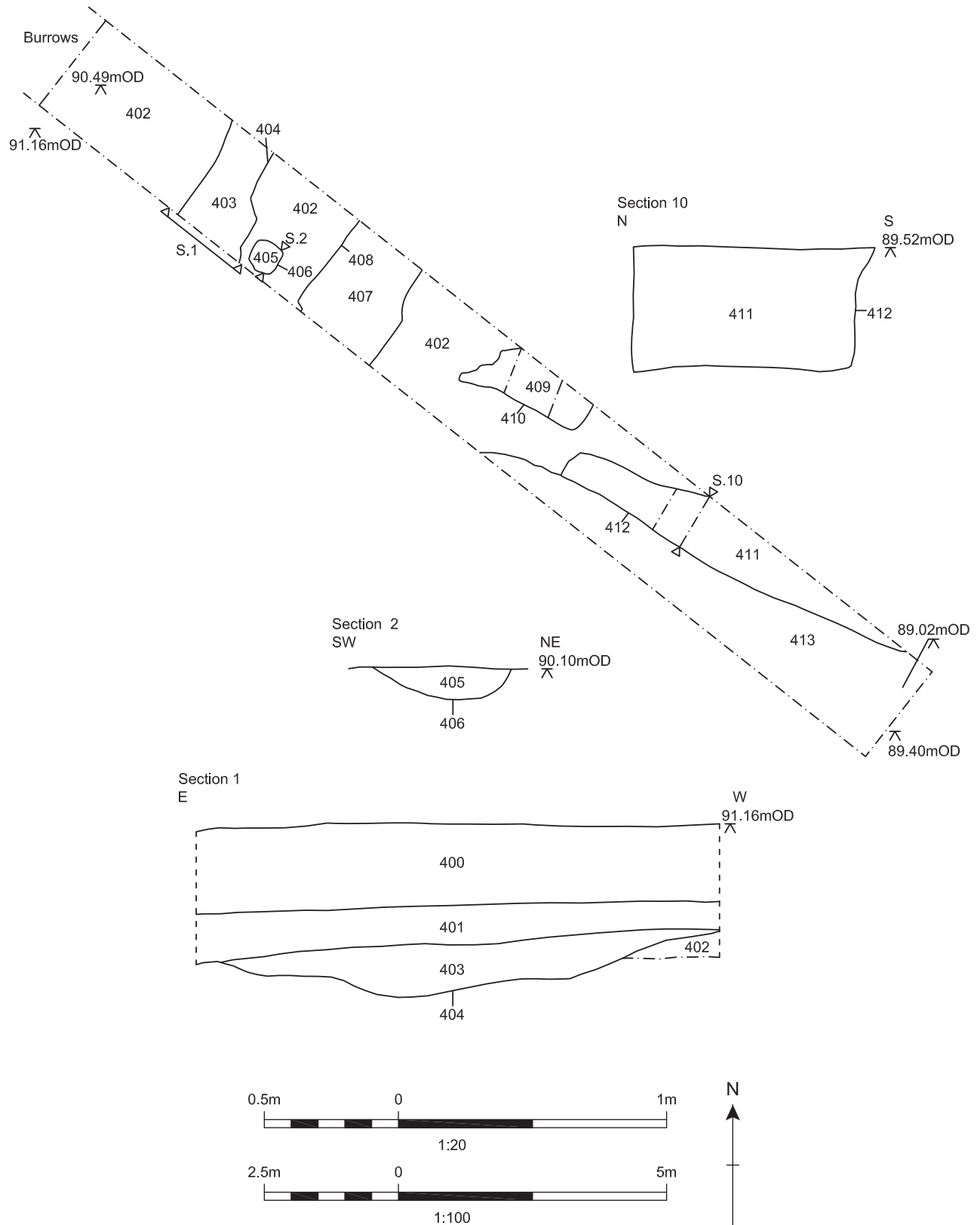


Figure 7: Trench 4: Plan (1:100) & Sections (1:20)

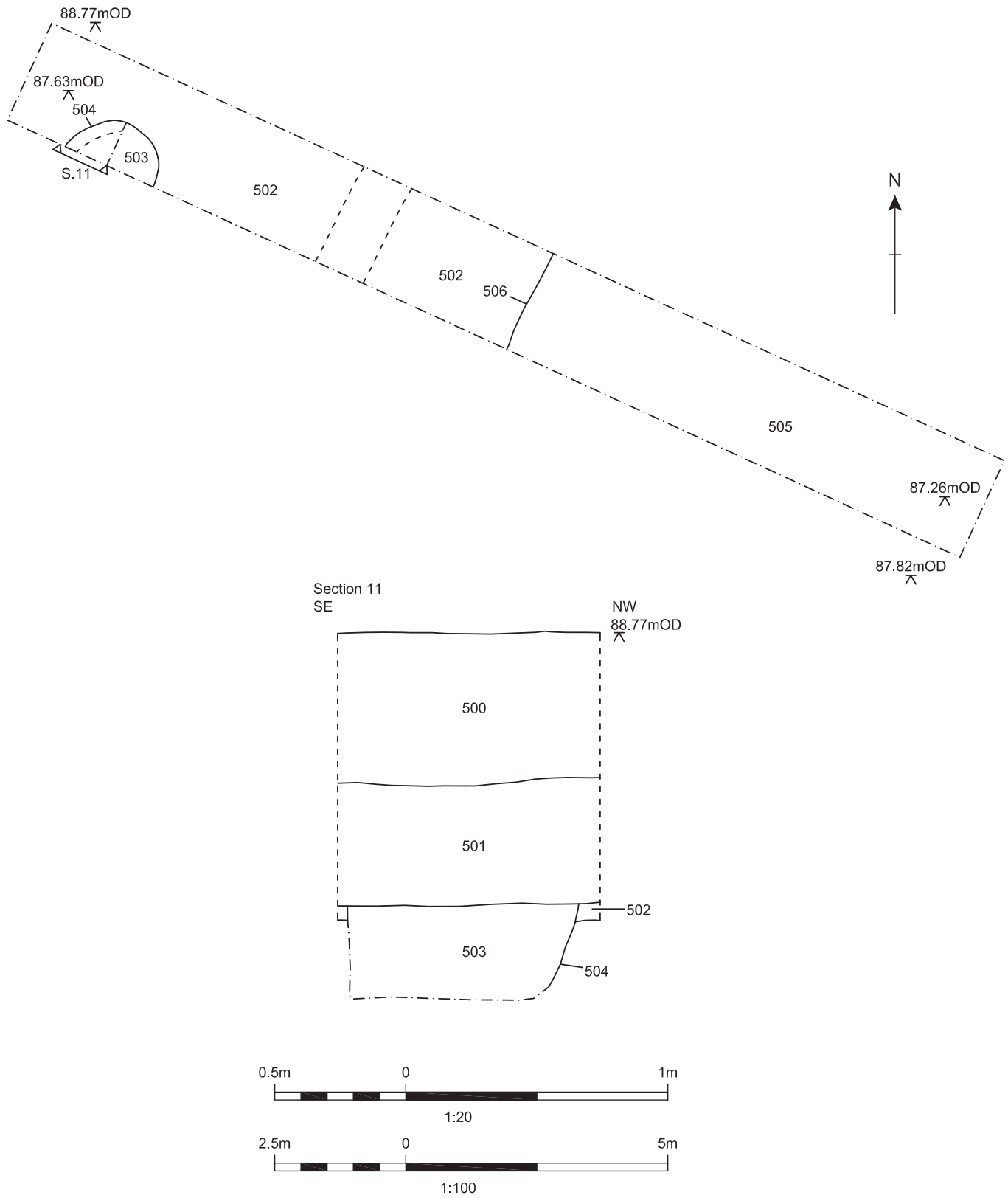


Figure 8: Trench 5: Plan (1:100) & Section (1:20)

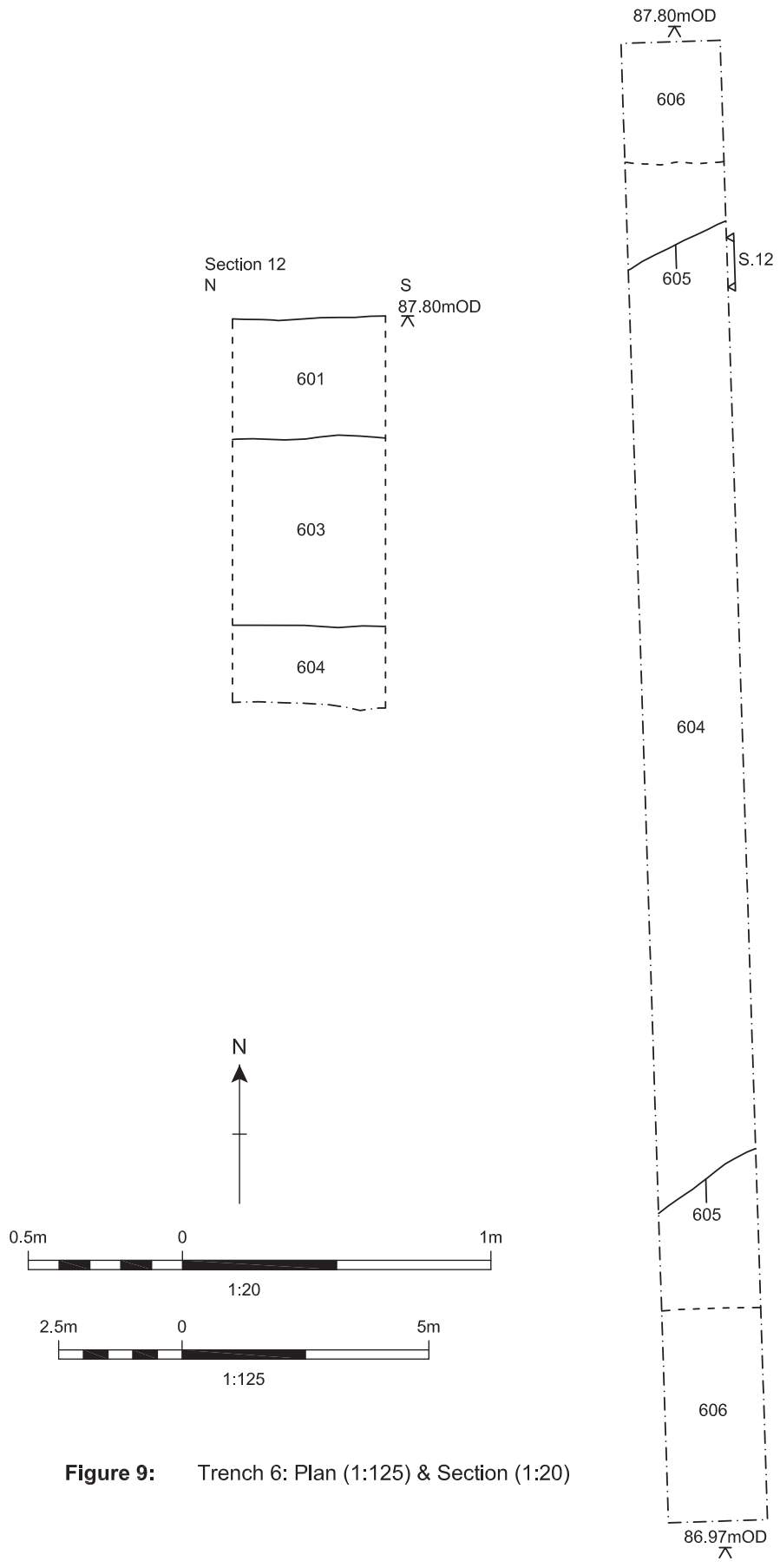


Figure 9: Trench 6: Plan (1:125) & Section (1:20)

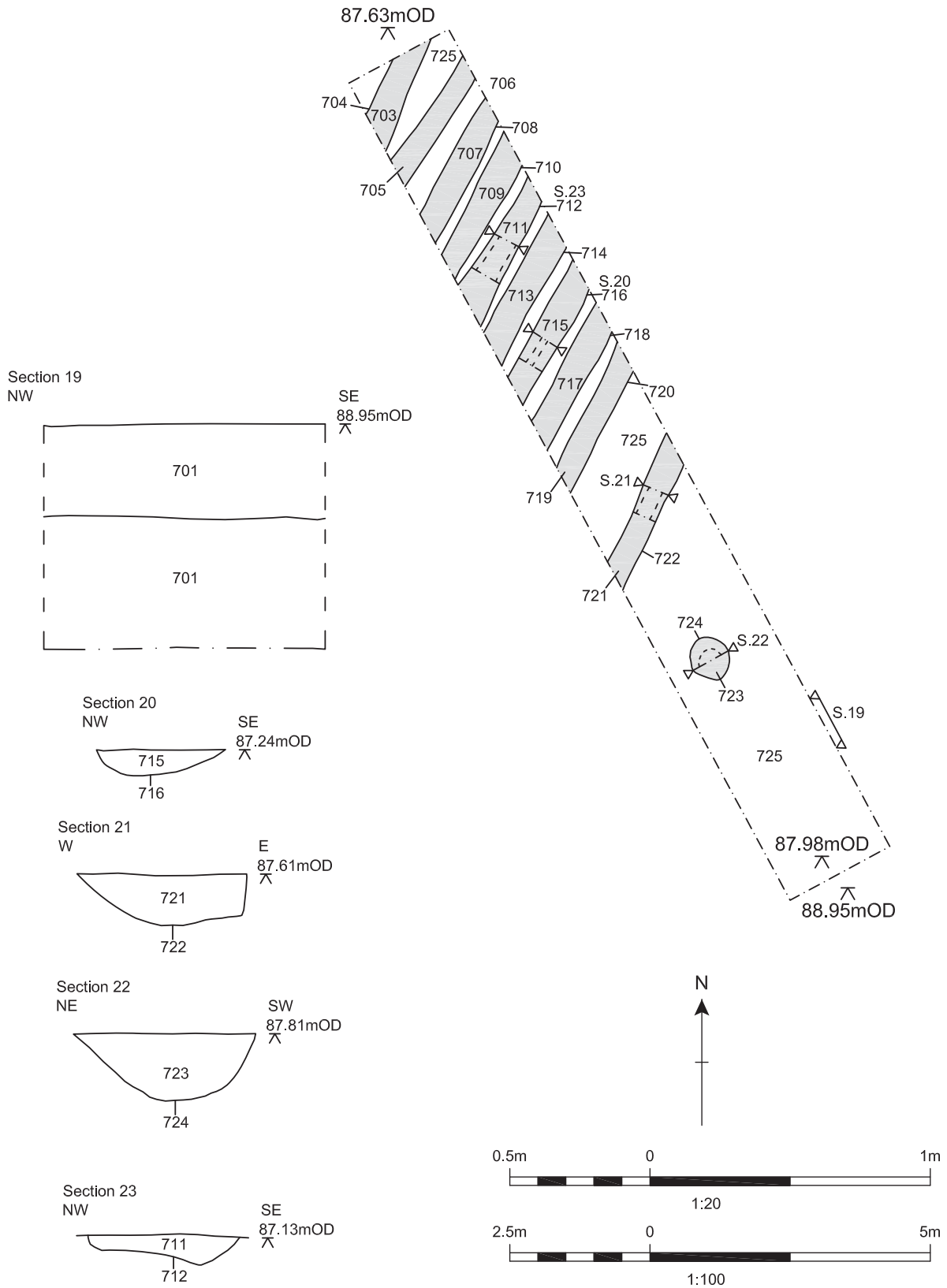


Figure 10: Trench 7: Plan (1:100) & Sections (1:20)

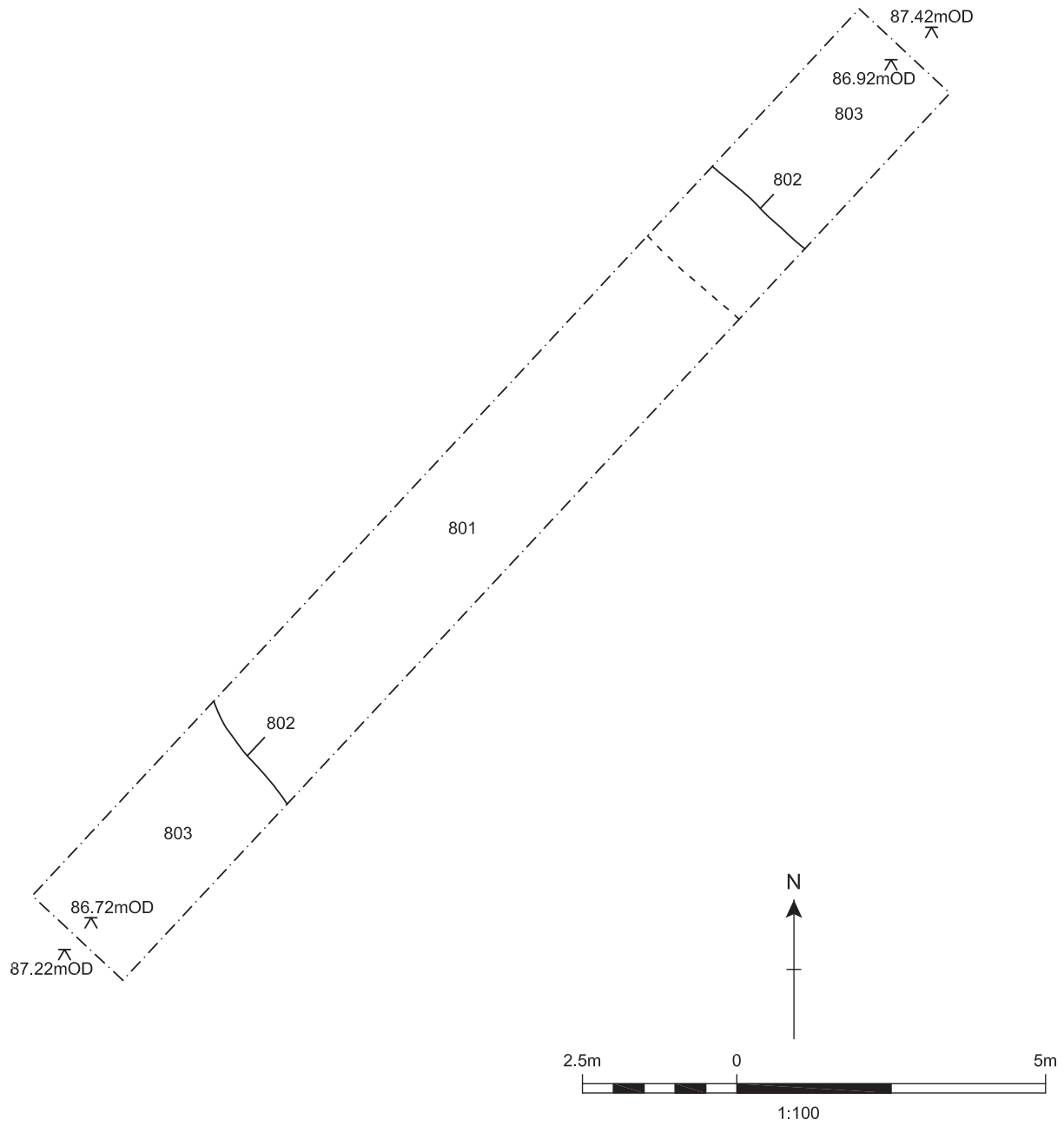


Figure 11: Trench 8: Plan (1:100)

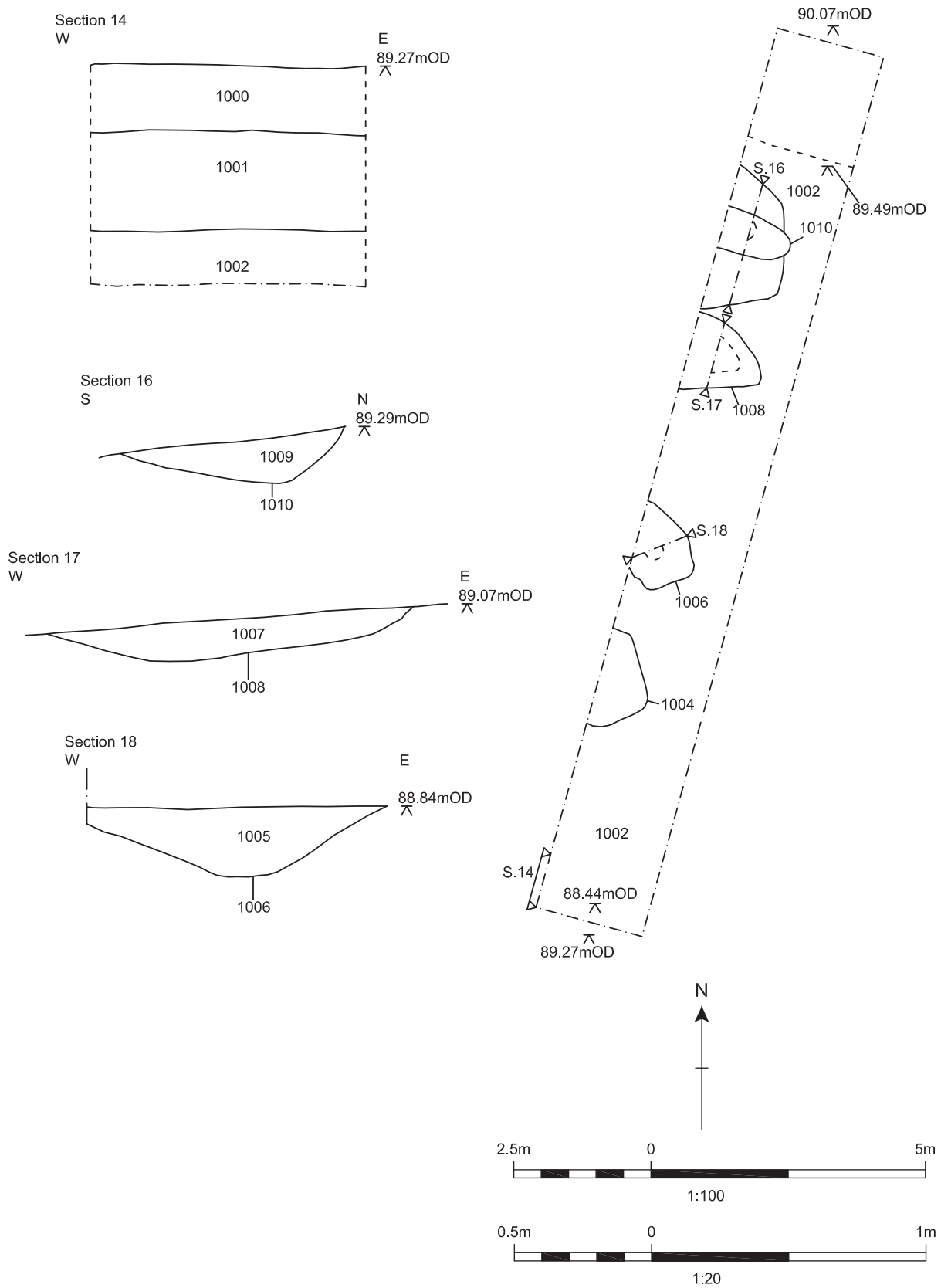


Figure 12: Trench 10: Plan (1:100) & Sections (1:20)

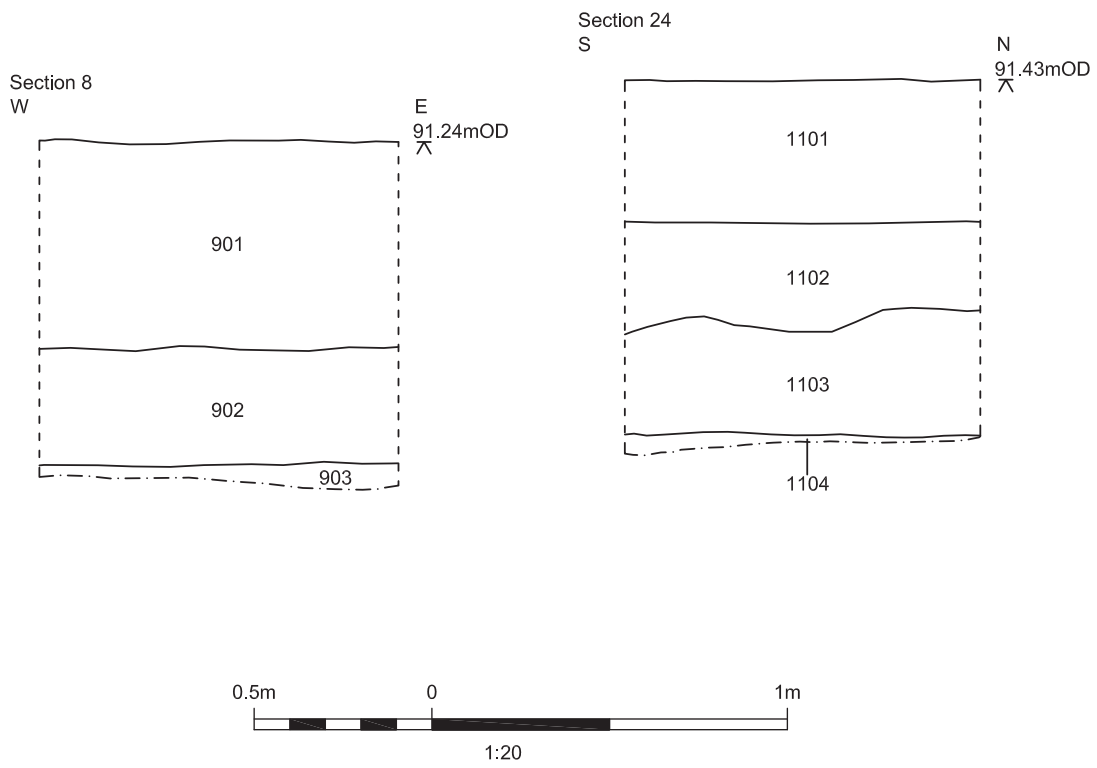


Figure 13: Trenches 9 & 11: Sample Sections

Appendices



Appendix A – Context Register

Context No.	Context Description/Index code	Length	Width	Depth	Plan No.	Section No.
100	Loose, dark greyish brown silt. Topsoil	30.00m	2.00m	0.20m	1	13
101	Loose, mid brown sandy silt. Subsoil	30.00m	2.00m	0.38m	1	13
102	Reddish orange sand. Natural.	30.00m	2.00m	0.35m	1	13
103	Cultivation strip fill	5.50m	0.70m	0.20m	1	9
104	Cultivation strip	5.50m	0.70m	0.20m	1	9
105	Cultivation strip fill	5.50m	0.50m	0.07m	1	9
106	Cultivation strip	5.50m	0.50m	0.07m	1	9
107	Made ground	10.00m	2.00m	0.25m	1	15
200	Grey brown sandy silt. Topsoil.	30.00m	2.00m	0.20m	2	26
201	Loose, mid brown sandy silt. Subsoil	30.00m	2.00m	0.40m	2	26
202	Reddish orange sand. Natural.	12.00m	2.00m	0.10m	2	26
203	Dark greyish brown sandy clay	17.50m	2.00m	1.12m	2	26
204	Mid orangey brown sand	1.00m	2.00m	0.15m	2	26
301	Mid greyish brown sandy silt. Topsoil	26.50m	2.00m	0.55m	3	7
302	Pale greyish brown silty sand. Subsoil	26.50m	2.00m	0.40m	3	7
303	Post hole fill	0.50m	0.42m	0.18m	3	6
304	Post hole	0.50m	0.42m	0.18m	3	6
305	Cultivation strip fill	2.00m	1.20m	0.30m	3	5
306	Cultivation strip fill	2.00m	1.20m	0.15m	3	5
307	Cultivation strip	2.00m	1.20m	0.45m	3	5
308	Pale Orangey yellow sand. Natural	26.50m	2.00m	0.10m	3	7
400	Mid greyish brown sandy silt. Topsoil	20.00m	2.00m	0.20m	4	1
401	Mid brown silty sand. Subsoil	20.00m	2.00m	0.30m	4	1
402	Mid orange yellow sand. Natural	20.00m	2.00m	0.10m	4	1
403	Possible tree bole fill	2.00m	1.40m	0.25m	4	1
404	Possible tree bole	2.00m	1.40m	0.25m	4	1
405	Tree bole fill	0.62m	0.54m	0.15m	4	2
406	Tree bole fill	0.62m	0.54m	0.15m	4	2
407	Possible tree bole fill	2.00m	1.75m	0.25m	4	
408	Possible tree bole	2.00m	1.75m	0.25m	4	
409	Cultivation strip fill	3.00m	0.80m	0.70m	4	3
410	Cultivation strip	3.00m	0.80m	0.70m	4	3
411	Cultivation strip fill	7.80m	1.15m	0.50m	4	10
412	Cultivation strip	7.80m	1.15m	0.50m	4	10
413	Mid yellow silty clay. Natural.	20.00m	2.00m	0.10m	4	

500	Dark greyish brown sandy clay. Topsoil	20.00m	2.00m	0.60m	5	11
501	Dark grey sandy clay. Subsoil	10.00m	2.00m	0.45m	5	11
502	Firm mid orangey grey sandy clay. Natural	10.00m	2.00m	0.05m	5	11
503	Pit fill	1.80m	0.90m	0.30m	5	11
504	Pit cut	1.80m	0.90m	0.30m	5	11
505	Dark Blackish grey sandy clay. Alluvial deposit	10.00m	2.00m	0.50m	5	
506	Channel	10.00m	2.00m	0.50m	5	
601	Dark greyish brown sandy clay. Topsoil	30.00m	2.00m	0.80m	6	12
602	Dark grey sandy clay. Subsoil	12.00m	2.00m	0.60m	6	
603	Mid bluish grey sandy clay. Alluvial deposit	18.00m	2.00m	1.20m	6	12
604	Dark Blackish grey sandy clay. Alluvial deposit	17.00m	2.00m	0.50m	6	12
605	Channel	18.00m	2.00m		6	
606	Firm mid orangey grey sandy clay. Natural	14.00m	2.00m	0.10m	6	
701	Mid greyish brown sandy silt. Topsoil	16.50m	2.00m	0.33m	7	19
702	Mid brown silty sand. Subsoil	16.50m	2.00m		7	19
703	Cultivation strip fill	2.00m	0.70m		7	
704	Cultivation strip	2.00m	0.70m		7	
705	Cultivation strip fill	2.00m	0.50m		7	
706	Cultivation strip	2.00m	0.50m		7	
707	Cultivation strip fill	2.00m	0.60m		7	
708	Cultivation strip	2.00m	0.60m		7	
709	Cultivation strip fill	2.00m	0.70m		7	
710	Cultivation strip	2.00m	0.70m		7	
711	Cultivation strip fill	2.00m	0.55m	0.10m	7	23
712	Cultivation strip	2.00m	0.55m	0.10m	7	23
713	Cultivation strip fill	2.00m	0.70m		7	
714	Cultivation strip	2.00m	0.70m		7	
715	Cultivation strip fill	2.00m	0.45m	0.10m	7	20
716	Cultivation strip	2.00m	0.45m	0.10m	7	20
717	Cultivation strip fill	2.00m	0.55m		7	
718	Cultivation strip	2.00m	0.55m		7	
719	Cultivation strip fill	2.00m	0.50m		7	
720	Cultivation strip	2.00m	0.50m		7	
721	Cultivation strip fill	2.00m	0.60m	0.20m	7	21
722	Cultivation strip	2.00m	0.60m	0.20m	7	21
723	Pit fill	0.80m	0.65m	0.20m	7	22
724	Pit cut	0.80m	0.65m	0.20m	7	22
725	Mid yellow silty clay. Natural.	16.50m	2.00m	0.10m	7	
800	Mid greyish brown sandy silt. Topsoil	19.60m	2.00m	0.20m	8	

801	Orangey grey sandy clay. Alluvium	11.60m	2.00m	1.40m	8	
802	Channel	2.00m	11.60m	1.40m	8	
803	Pale orangey yellow sandy clay. Natural	19.60m	2.00m	0.10m	8	
901	Mid greyish brown sandy silt. Topsoil	18.00m	2.00m	0.60m	9	8
902	Grey brown silty sand. Subsoil	18.00m	2.00m	0.35m	9	8
903	Pale orangey yellow sand. Natural	18.00m	2.00m	0.05m	9	8
1000	Mid greyish brown sandy silt. Topsoil	16.50m	2.00m	0.25m	10	14
1001	Orangey grey sand. Subsoil	16.50m	2.00m	0.35m	10	14
1002	Pale orangey yellow sand. Natural	16.50m	2.00m	0.05m	10	14
1003	Tree bole fill	1.60m	0.70m		10	
1004	Tree bole	1.60m	0.70m		10	
1005	Tree bole fill	1.20m	1.10m	0.26m	10	18
1006	Tree bole	1.20m	1.10m	0.26m	10	18
1007	Tree bole fill	1.50m	1.50m	0.26m	10	17
1008	Tree bole	1.50m	1.50m	0.26m	10	17
1009	Cultivation strip fill	1.25m	0.85m	0.20m	10	16
1010	Cultivation strip	1.25m	0.85m	0.20m	10	16
1101	Mid greyish brown sandy silt. Topsoil	16.50m	2.00m	0.50m	11	24
1102	Loose dark grey sandy clay. Made ground	16.50m	2.00m	0.40m	11	24
1103	Orangey grey sandy clay. Alluvium	16.50m	2.00m	1.30m	11	24
1104	Pale orangey yellow sandy clay. Natural	16.50m	2.00m	0.05m	11	24

Appendix B – Specialist Finds Assessments

Roman Pottery by Anna Doherty

Just five sherds, weighing 20g of probable/possible Roman date were found in two contexts, and all of this material is either unstratified or residual. Two shell-tempered sherds typical of Harrold shelly wares were recovered from the subsoil [101]. These were produced around 20-30km north of Ampthill from the 1st century but became very widely-distributed in the late Roman period. One of these is a partial rim sherd with a characteristic hooked rim, suggesting a later Roman date. These sherds were associated with an undiagnostic sandy grey ware. Two other tiny reduced sandy sherds were recovered from context [411]. These seem most likely to be of Roman date, although it can be difficult to distinguish Roman and medieval fabrics in the case of such small bodysherds and post-medieval finds were also recovered from this feature.

The Ceramic Building Material by Sarah Porteus

A total of 14 fragments of ceramic building material (CBM) with a combined weight of 612g were recovered from four contexts. The material is abraded and is of later medieval or early post-medieval date (table 1). A provisional fabric type series was drawn up.

Peg tile in three fabrics were identified. Fabric T1 is an orange calcareous fabric with abundant fine calcareous speckling and abundant burnt organics with sparse coarse quartz with reduced core. Peg tile in fabric T1 was identified in context [411] and is of later medieval date. Fabric T2 is an orange silty fabric with moderate coarse quartz and coarse angular orange silt inclusions. Peg tile in fabric T2 was recovered from context [103] and [411] and is of probable later medieval date. The third peg tile fabric, T3, is an occasionally reduced orange fabric with abundant medium to coarse quartz and occasional to moderate elongated voids. Peg tile in fabric T3 occurred in contexts [103], [105], [305] and [411] and is also of probable later medieval date.

Fragments of red brick in a sandy fabric (B1) with sparse very coarse quartz inclusions were recovered from contexts [103] and [411]. A single complete thickness of 58mm was recorded. The brick was under-fired with rounded arises and is of most likely later medieval or early post-medieval date.

Context	Fabrics	Forms	Count	Weight	Date
103	T3, T2, B1	Peg tile, brick	5	282	Late med- early post-med
105	T3	Peg tile	1	18	Med
305	T3	Peg tile	1	50	Med
411	T1, T2, T3, B1	Peg tile, Brick	7	262	Late med- early post med

Table 1: Summary of CBM by fabric, form and context.

No further work is required.

The Post-Medieval Pottery, Glass and Animal Bone by Paul Fitz

Linear fill (103) yielded a small sherd of pearl ware (1770-1850) and a small sherd of plain white glazed earthenware (1800-1900+). Tree bole (305) has a single plain white glazed sherd (1800-1900+). Planting

bed fill (409) had one sherd of post medieval redware (1580-1900) and eight small sherds of white glazed earthenware-‘china’ (1800-1900+).

Two pieces of hoof from a pony or small horse were retrieved from linear fill (103) as well as a single small piece of sheep maxilla from linear fill (105) and two pieces of small cattle bone from plant bed fill (411), one of which has been butchered at both ends.

A single piece of dark green wine bottle base was recovered from context (103).

The finds assemblage is small in size and has little significance on a local or national level. The pot sherds are all quite small in size. It is uncertain if some were the result of manuring as their relatively late date shows little sign of abrasion. It is recommended that the finds are packed and submitted with the archive to the Bedford Museum’s guidelines for deposition.

Appendix C - OASIS Form

OASIS ID: aocarcha1-76567

Project details

Project name CHURCH STREET, AMPHILL, BEDFORDSHIRE

Short description of the project The evaluation comprised the machine excavation of eleven trenches located across the site. The trenches varied in size from 16.00m to 30.00m in length by 2.00m wide. The vast majority of archaeological features were recorded on the higher ground in the north and west of the site, within only drainage channels being found in the waterlogged trenches to the southeast. The archaeological remains consisted mainly of agricultural features including cultivation strips and tree bowls, post medieval pottery was retrieved from most of these features with only residual finds from earlier periods.

Project dates Start: 31-05-2010 End: 07-06-2010

Previous/future work No / Not known

Any associated project reference codes 30708 - Contracting Unit No.

Any associated project reference codes BEDFM:2010.28 - Museum accession ID

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Current Land use Vacant Land 2 - Vacant land not previously developed

Monument type CULTIVATION STRIPS Post Medieval

Monument type TREE BOLES Post Medieval

Monument type PITS Post Medieval

Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Roman
Significant Finds	CBM Post Medieval
Significant Finds	ANIMAL BONE Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	'Sample Trenches'
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	BEDFORDSHIRE MID BEDFORDSHIRE AMPHILL CHURCH STREET, AMPHILL, BEDFORDSHIRE:
Postcode	MK45 2PZ
Study area	1.20 Hectares
Site coordinates	TL 0388 3828 52.0327578174 -0.485534914727 52 01 57 N 000 29 07 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 84.90m Max: 93.60m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	AOC Archaeology
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design	AOC Archaeology

originator

Project director/manager Melissa Melikian

Project supervisor Ian Hogg

Type of sponsor/funding body Developer

Name of sponsor/funding body Dandara Ltd

Project archives
Physical Archive recipient Bedford Museum

Physical Contents 'Animal Bones','Ceramics'

Digital Archive recipient Bedford Museum

Digital Contents 'Stratigraphic'

Digital Media available 'Text','Images raster / digital photography'

Paper Archive recipient Bedford Museum

Paper Contents 'Stratigraphic'

Paper Media available 'Context sheet','Photograph','Plan','Report','Section'

Project bibliography
1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

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WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION FOR AN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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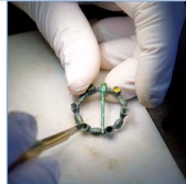
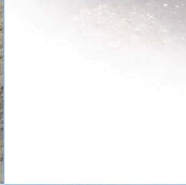
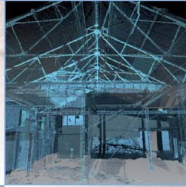
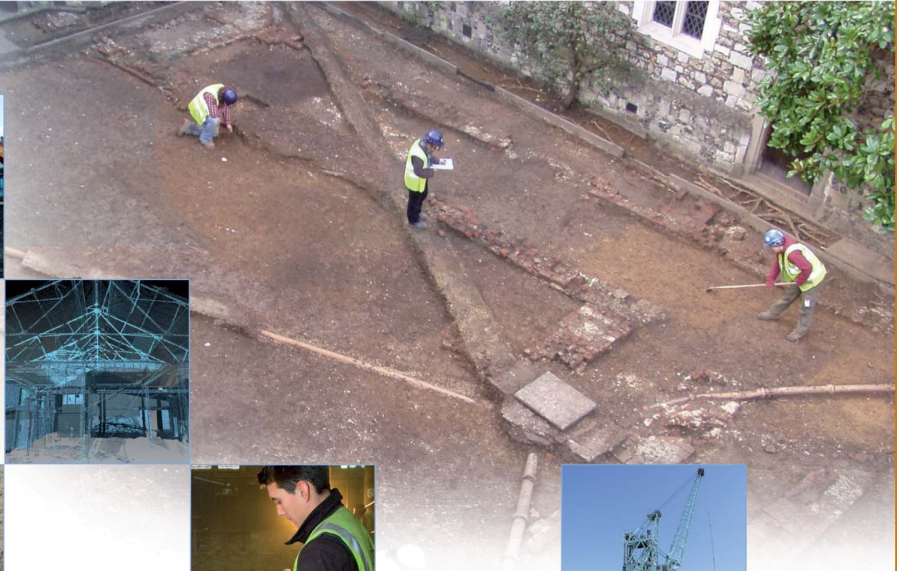
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