An Archaeological Evaluation On Land At Hallaton Hall, Hallaton, Leicestershire (NGR SP 790 966)

Jennifer Browning

For Hallam Contracts

Planning Application Number: 04/00991/FUL

Checked by Project Manager

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ULAS Report No: 2005-024

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Summary

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by ULAS on land at Hallaton Hall, Hallaton, Leicestershire (SP790 966) in February 2005. The work was commissioned by Hallam Contracts. Six trial trenches were excavated in order to assess the potential for the survival of archaeological remains. The site is located in the medieval village core of Hallaton, within the grounds of an 18th century hall. There was a considerable amount of modern ground disturbance. However, fragments of walling uncovered may represent 18th century ancillary structures related to the hall. Earlier activity in the form of a pit and probable boundary ditch, yielded late Saxon and medieval pottery. Leicestershire County Council Museums will hold the archive under the Accession Number X .A25 2005.

1. Introduction

This report presents the results of archaeological trial trenching on land in the grounds of Hallaton Hall, Hallaton Leicestershire (NGR SP 790 966) (figure 1). The work took place from the 15th to the 21st February 2005, after the demolition of the previous buildings and prior to the proposed construction of several residential dwellings with associated landscaping and car parking (Planning Application No: 04/00991/FUL). An archaeological desk based assessment of the proposed development area commissioned by Hazel Homes and Anthony Rickett Architects (George 2004 ULAS Report 2004-068) concluded that the site had potential to contain buried archaeological deposits, as it was located in the medieval village core of Hallaton. A *Brief for Archaeological Evaluation At Hallaton Hall, North End, Hallaton* was subsequently prepared by the Senior Planning Archaeologist of the Historic and Natural Environment Team of Leicestershire County Council detailing further archaeological works that would be required as a condition of planning permission.

A strategy for the evaluation was set out in the *Design Specification for Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trench.* (ULAS 2004 (hereinafter DS). This followed Trial trenching totalling 5% of the area of impact was undertaken amounting to 56 linear metres of 1.5m wide trench

Figure 1: Location map. 1:50000 © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Licence Number: AL100021186

2. Location and Geology

The proposed development site is located in the grounds of Hallaton Hall (formerly Torch House) North End, Hallaton. It consists of an area of *c.*0.2078 hectares in which several structures have been demolished and it is proposed to construct a number of new dwellings with associated drives, car parking and landscaping (figures 2, 3 and 4).

The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain, Sheet 156, indicates that the underlying geology is likely to consist of sands and gravels. The site lies at a height of *c.*114m O.D.

3. Archaeological and Historical Background

The following information is mostly taken from the *Desk-based Assessment* (George 2004).

Northwest of the site there are the earthwork remains of a possible windmill (LE1650). A low flat-topped mound that can be seen from the air (LE1651) may

represent another possible mill mound. In addition, prehistoric and Roman remains are also known from the area around Hallaton. A footpath running northeast to southwest through the village may be the course of a Roman road joining Gartree Road, southwest of Slawston (LE6033). This possible road passes within 140m to the west of the development.

The development is situated in the heart of Hallaton's medieval village core. A number of known medieval and post-medieval remains have been found in the vicinity and are listed in the Sites and Monuments Record. References to medieval capital messuages at Hallaton in 1362 and 1363 suggest that there were two concurrent manors (LE1644). The manor had passed to the Crown and in 1171 was divided by Henry II. Part of manor was granted to Thomas Bardolf, while the other part came to the family of Greinvill and later to the Engaine family. The manors continued separately until they were reunited in 1613, as the property of William Street (Lee 1964).

Hallaton Hall occupies a triangle of land at the northeast end of the village, surrounded by a high wall. The site is believed to be originally that of either Bardolf or Engaine's manor house (Lee 1964). The present building was built for Reverend Benjamin Bewicke in 1713, after he bought Berkeley Street's estate (Matthews 1972). The Hall was home to the Bewicke family until the mid 19th century, after which it had various tenants. In 1958 it was occupied by nuns of the order of Our Lady of Good Counsel and used as a training school for novices. Map evidence indicates that parts of the land had been built on in the 19th and 20th centuries but lack of previous disturbance in other areas mean that there is potential for the survival of archaeological remains (George 2004).

Four geotechnical test pits were excavated by Nicholls Colton Geotechnical in November 2004. Two of these (TP3 and TP4 figure 3), located towards the southeast of the area, apparently contained up to 2.8m of made ground, below which was undisturbed Upper Lias clay.

4. Aims

The main aims of the evaluation, as set out in the DS, were:-

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To provide information on the character, extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and relative quality of any archaeological deposits present.
- To assess the potential impact of the proposed development on any archaeological remains
- To help suggest mitigation strategies to preserve/avoid archaeology or indicate whether further stages of archaeological work are necessary
- To produce an archive and report of any results

5. Methodology

The trenches were excavated using a mechanical digger with a 1.5m wide, toothless, ditching bucket. The topsoil and subsoil were removed in spits under constant archaeological supervision until either archaeological features were revealed, the undisturbed natural substrata was reached or to a maximum depth of 1.20m.

Limited excavation of any archaeological features was carried out to determine the character and date of any remains. Archaeological features were recorded with reference to the ULAS recording manual. All work followed the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* and the *Guidelines and Procedures for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland* (Leicestershire Museums, Arts and Records Service).

6. Results

Six trenches of varying length were excavated in the development area. These were positioned so as to avoid known services and other obstacles and their location can be seen on figure 3. They are described below. The development area had previously contained buildings and the demolition of these had left a good deal of modern rubble and disturbance in, what remained, of the topsoil.

During the excavation, suspected archaeological deposits were assigned unique context numbers in order to identify them. These will be shown in round brackets in the following text (*x*).

6.1: Trench 1

Length	15m
Width	1.50m
Orientation	NW-SE
Min Depth	0.60m
Max Depth	0.80m
Context nos	(1)-(9), (11)-16)

Trench 1 was excavated towards the north of the development area, parallel with the boundary wall. The property 'Bethany' had previously stood in this location. There was no topsoil and the trench was excavated through a depth of up to 0.50m of modern disturbance, consisting of loose orange brown sandy loam with frequent brick, tile, charcoal fragments and stones. Below this was a silty sandy clay deposit up to 0.30m thick. Natural subsoil was encountered at depths of between 0.45m and 0.74m below ground level. A number of modern intrusions and vegetative features, of no archaeological value, were observed in the top half metre below ground level.

In the north-eastern section, a wall was observed, barely below the ground surface. This was of brick construction with ironstone foundations (1), (2) and is illustrated in figure 5. Brick dimensions of 230 x 111 x 65mm were recorded. The wall was bonded with pale orange/grey mortar, with chalky inclusions. Towards the centre of the trench

a rectangular shaped pit (8) (9) was uncovered. This was not fully exposed, being partially obscured by the baulk. It contained mid brown sandy silty clay with common rounded and sub-rounded stones (8) and had a minimum depth of 0.70m deep. Both pottery sherds and glass were recovered during test excavation. The pottery comprised sherds of Stamford ware (1050-1200 AD +), Bourne ware (1250 +) and Stanion Lyveden type ware (*c*.1225AD).

A patchy layer of cobbles (14) at the south end of the trench appeared to represent the remains of a yard surface. These were photographed prior to being removed and also recorded in section.

6.2: Trench 2

Length	7m
Width	1.50m
Orientation	E-W
Min Depth	0.50m
Max Depth	1.60m
Context nos	(20)-(26)

Trench 2 projected at right angles from the centre of trench 1. The trench was excavated though modern layers of pebbles, charcoal, ash and grey clay, between 0.40 and 0.50m deep. These all appeared to be make-up layers and the ground was particularly disturbed at the western end of the trench. Below the modern layers was subsoil consisting of compacted clays and gravels. Test excavation through the western end of the trench indicated that this was a natural deposit.

A linear band of dark soil, 1.0m wide, was present about halfway down the trench, orientated north-south. This could be seen cutting through the modern layers in the side of the trench, which suggested that it was a modern intrusion, and likely to represent a service trench.

At the eastern end of the trench (where it joined trench 1), the remains of a wall foundation were revealed (22), with a construction cut noted on the western side (23) (figure 6). The wall was constructed of irregular, unworked ironstone blocks, up to 5 courses deep and bonded with a mid orange brown sandy mortar. A larger stone appeared to form the end of the wall, beyond which a number of bricks were laid flat side by side. The bricks measured 230 x 111 x 60mm. There was a modern drain along the western side of the structure (25).

6.3: Trench 3

Length	10m
Width	1.5m
Orientation	E-W
Min Depth	0.25m
Max Depth	0.90m
Context nos	(10), (17), (30)

Trench 3 was excavated south and slightly east of trench 1. At the eastern end of the trench, grey brown clay overburden contained numerous fragments of modern brick, tile, ceramic pipe and ironstone fragments. A substantial stone wall (context number (10), construction cut (30)), was revealed directly beneath the surface at the eastern end. This was orientated NNW-SSE and constructed from a mixture of sub-rectangular ironstone and limestone fragments bonded by a light yellow sandy mortar. Only two foundation courses were still in place. However, where visible in the side of the trench, it appeared that a third course had also been constructed in ironstone. A ceramic pipe crossed the trench immediately to the west of this feature on a slightly different alignment. West of the pipe, on the southern side of the trench, were the fragmentary remains of a structure, probably another wall (17). This consisted of a number of loosely piled irregular ironstone fragments, possibly representing a wall of drystone construction. On the northern side of the trench the stones had been completely displaced by the pipe.

The western end was excavated to a greater depth (*c.* 0.8m) and was considerably disturbed by the roots of a recently felled tree, formerly located immediately to the southwest of the trench. Topsoil was only encountered at the western end and consisting of heavy dark brown sandy clay loam, close to the tree it was almost 0.60m thick. Light yellow brown clay with frequent stones was encountered below the topsoil. This appeared to be a natural deposit and overlay the natural sandy clay observed at the base of the trench. Two 'features' thought to represent vegetative activity were observed in the centre of the trench. One of these was a shallow circular patch of grey silty clay only 0.05m in thickness, with thin roots protruding. The second was a large (*c*1.50m) sub-rectangular feature, extremely rooty and filled with dark brown soil. Neither was considered to be archaeological.

6.4: Trench 4

Length	15m
Width	1.50m
Orientation	NW-SE
Min Depth	1.06m
Max Depth	1.30m
Context nos	(18)-(21), (27-29)

Trench 4 was located south of trench 3, parallel with the eastern boundary wall. The excavation initially encountered a pipe or cable, surrounded by clean brown sand, at a depth of 1.0m. The trench was consequently re-aligned (figure 4).

At its southern end, disturbed backfilled soil was encountered to a depth of 1.90m (comprising layers of re-deposited natural, charcoal and ash and backfilled topsoil), below which was a natural deposit (yellow brown silty clay with occasional chalky stones). This depth was ascertained by machining a section, which was immediately backfilled to a safe depth. Four metres from the southern end of the trench the disturbance ceased and the strata changed. Topsoil consisted of very dark brown friable sandy silt ranging from 0.50m at the north to 0.90m at the south. Below this was a thick subsoil of orange brown clay extending to a depth of 1.0m below current ground level. A natural substratum of yellow brown clay was present at the base of

the trench. At this level, three archaeological features were observed; a gully (20) (21) a ditch (27) (28) orientated north-south and a possible post hole (18) (19). The features were sample-excavated. The full width of the ditch (28) was not exposed during the trenching and part of it lay beneath the eastern baulk, although this was an observation only made during excavation when the natural clay on the eastern side was found to be redeposited (31), with the main fill running beneath it. The ditch was filled with grey/brown, slightly silty clay soil, from which a number of pottery sherds were recovered. Sherds of Stamford ware (900-1050 AD +), Bourne ware (1250 +) and Stanion Lyveden type ware (*c*.1225AD) were retrieved. The ditch was test excavated to a depth of almost half a metre, before the combined trench/feature depth, narrow space and poor weather prevented further investigation. The angle of the cut (figure 8) suggests that the ditch could be up to a metre deep and possibly 2m wide.

A shallow gully was identified (20) (21) running almost parallel with the ditch. This feature was easier to see on the surface than the ditch but, by contrast, proved to be quite ephemeral once excavated. It contained mid-orange brown clay with occasional charcoal flecks. It was 0.60m wide and up to 0.20m deep. The gully appeared to cut a shallow sub-circular feature (context numbers (18) (29) and (19) consisting of a scoop of grey/brown clay with charcoal-rich patches. This feature was 0.15m deep. No finds were recovered from either feature.

6.5: Trench 5

Length	11m
Width	1.50m
Orientation	E-W
Min Depth	0.50m
Max Depth	1.50m

Trench 5 was positioned at right angles to the southern end of trench 4. A depth of overburden containing redeposited natural subsoil, layers of charcoal and modern rubble was removed. At the west end this was present to a depth of 1.20m, below which was the natural subsoil. In the centre of the trench, a linear feature, containing frequent ash, coal and modern brick, was thought likely to be a modern service.

East of this feature the modern overburden was only 0.5m deep. A significant amount of brick rubble was seen in the south facing trench section, probably the result of the demolition of one of the former buildings. Below this was light yellow orange clay subsoil, probably undisturbed, which overlay yellow brown clay subsoil. No archaeological features were observed in the trench. The narrow cable or pipe observed in trench 4, changed direction to cross the east end of the trench on a northwest-southeast alignment.

6.6: Trench 6

Length	7m
Width	1.50m
Orientation	E-W
Min Depth	1.40m
Max Depth	1.50m

Trench 6 was located at the southern end of the development area. It was excavated though made ground, consisting of a mixture of re-deposited natural subsoil, black ash and charcoal deposits, with modern brick fragments. Blue and white pottery of probable twentieth century date was observed at the base of the trench. A service trench 0.55m wide, containing a brown ceramic pipe, was noted on a northeast-southwest alignment at the base. No archaeological deposits or natural subsoil were observed and for health and safety reasons the trench was recorded and backfilled straight away, due to its depth.

7. Discussion

7.1: Archaeological features were observed in trenches 1, 2, 3 and 4. Trench 6 was located in an area of deep disturbance, confirming the observations made during the excavation of the geotechnical test pits (Nicholls Colton Geotechnical). Trench 5 was disturbed to a depth of 1.20m towards the west and, likewise, Trench 4 contained modern backfill at its southern end. These findings suggest that any archaeological deposits, which may once have existed at the southern end of the site, are likely to have been impacted upon or destroyed by modern activity. However, there may be small pockets of undisturbed ground, for example, the eastern end of trench 5.

7.2: The walls

Remains of walling were located in trenches 1-3. These were all on an approximate north-south alignment, parallel with the extant boundary wall. The wall in trench 1 (context numbers (1) and (2)) was constructed of brick above a stone foundation. It was observed that the existing brick boundary wall also had a stone foundation. Further fragments of walling were located in trenches 2 and 3 (context numbers 22 and 10). In trench 2, the bottom foundation course was constructed of a double row of large ironstone fragments (figure 6). A large single stone laid at right angles to this row appeared to demarcate a gap or the end of the wall. Beyond this stone a number of bricks were laid flat, creating perhaps a threshold. A ceramic pipe was laid on the south-western side of the wall and, although not disrupting it may have obstructed an opening, which might suggest that the doorway fell out of use. A surviving area of large cobbles observed during the machining appeared to be the remains of floor surface inside the building. Therefore this is likely to have been an ancillary structure, perhaps a stable or other outbuilding, rather than a dwelling.

A substantial wall section also survived in trench 3. This was up to four courses high and constructed from ironstone and limestone fragments, bonded with a hard sandy mortar (figure 7). No bricks had been used in the construction. A ceramic pipe,

(possibly the same as observed in trench 2) ran west of the wall. It is perfectly possible that the pipe and this wall existed contemporaneously. However the more fragmentary ironstone wall to the west (17) is almost certainly part of an earlier structure, as the pipe evidently cut it. The stones were un-mortared. Drystone walls are notoriously difficult to date, because in stone-producing areas they have been constructed in a similar way for hundreds of years.

The earliest available map, the 1885 OS, shows a long thin building along the boundary in approximately the same position as the walls identified during the trial trenching (George 2004). However, a 2-storey brick building in this location (now demolished) which was observed during the site visit for the desk-based assessment appeared ostensibly to be a post-war construction, although its shallow pitched hipped roof looks more typically nineteenth century (Neil Finn *pers. comm.*). On balance the evidence suggests that an eighteenth century building stood in this location and that its foundations were re-used for subsequent structures.

7.3: Cut features

A gully (21) and possible post hole (19) located in trench 4 were shallow features with poorly defined edges. No finds were recovered and it is difficult to interpret them. By contrast, the ditch (28) is substantial and well-defined. Unfortunately it was not possible to expose its full width, as its eastern edge was located beneath the baulk. Sample excavation demonstrated that it was steep sided and also hinted at a width in excess of 2m. The pottery recovered suggested a 13th century date for the backfilling of the feature (Appendix 2). The probable size and location, parallel to the boundary wall, suggest that it represents a boundary ditch, which plausibly relates to early manorial activity.

A pit located in trench 1, contexts (8) (9), yielded finds of modern glass and medieval pottery. The fragment of modern glass is problematic; it was found near the surface of the feature and there is a distinct likelihood that it is intrusive, however, the possibility that the pottery is residual cannot conclusively be ruled out. At the very least, however, the presence of the pottery is indicative of late Saxon and medieval activity in the vicinity and it is undoubtedly significant that the pottery assemblages recovered from both the pit and boundary ditch had similar dates and fabrics.

8. Conclusion

Evaluation of the proposed development area has revealed evidence for archaeological activity, especially located towards the north of the site. A pit and part of a probable boundary ditch close to the eastern site boundary, yielded late Saxon and medieval pottery. Fragments of stone walling almost certainly represent an early ancillary structure to the hall. The trial trenching has also suggested areas towards the south of the site where ground disturbance is likely to have damaged or destroyed the archaeological resource.

9. Archive

The archive consists of 6 trench sheets, 5 permatrace plan/section sheets, digital photographs, 2 bags of finds and will be held by Leicestershire County Council Museums under the Accession number X.A25 2005.

10. Acknowledgements

ULAS would like to thank Tom Hazelton, Andy from Newline and the contractors on site for their help and co-operation during this work. This report was compiled from information collected on site by Matthew Hurford and Jennifer Browning and Deborah Sawday examined the pottery and Neil Finn commented on the building remains. The project was managed by James Meek.

Jennifer Browning
ULAS Report No: 2005-024

11. References

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Appendix 1: Summary of Contexts.

Context	*Cut*	*Below*	*Trench No*	*Brief Description*
1			1	Brick wall above stone foundations
2		1	1	Ironstone foundations
3			1	Natural sands and gravels
4			1	Layer
5		4	1	Black ash layer
6			1	layer
7			1	Natural subsoil
8	9		1	Pit fill
9		8	1	Pit cut
10			3	Bonded stone wall
11			1	Natural subsoil
12			1	Modern layer
13			1	Layer
14			1	Cobbles/pebbles
15			1	Mortar spread
16			1	Layer/subsoil
17			3	Wall (ironstone fragments)
18	19		4	?post hole fill
19		29	4	?post hole cut
20			4	Gully fill
21			4	Gully cut
22	23		2	Wall foundations (ironstone)
23		22	2	Wall construction cut
24	25		2	Modern drain fill
25		24	2	Modern drain cut
26			2	Modern demolition debris
27	28		4	Ditch fill
28		27	4	Ditch cut
29	19	18	4	Lower fill of (19)
30		10	3	Wall construction cut

Appendix 2: The Pottery From An Evaluation At Hallaton Hall, Leicestershire. By D. Sawday

The pottery recovered from the evaluation, ten sherds, weighing seventy two grams, was examined under a binocular microscope and catalogued with reference to the ULAS fabric series (Davies and Sawday 1999). The backfill of both the features examined, the boundary ditch (27), and the pit [9], contained late Saxon pottery dating from the tenth or mid eleventh centuries to the eleventh or twelfth centuries, together with medieval pottery with a probable terminal date in the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries.

The pottery is, typically, all local in origin. Stamford is a major pottery production centre from *circa* 900 to 1250 AD, whilst the Stanion Lyveden kilns in the Rockingham Forest in north Northamptonshire, and the Bourne kilns in Lincolnshire are important suppliers of pottery to the region throughout the medieval period.

This is the first time that the author has identified late Saxon Stamford wares from Hallaton, and their presence here is of note. The range of medieval pottery fabrics, however, ties in well with the finds previously recorded during archaeological work in the parish. Although this pottery assemblage is very small, the presence of the glazed Stanion Lyveden type ware, fabric LY1, again echoes previous findings, particularly from field walking by ULAS in 2001 and 2002, where this particular fabric was the most common of all the Stanion Lyveden type wares present.

Conclusions

The castle, which is thought to be immediately post Conquest in date, (Creighton 1997), lies over six hundred metres to the south west of the core of the village. The earliest parts of the church are late Norman, *circa* 1150-1160, (Pevsner 1984, 172). Hence the potential significance of the, albeit very small assemblage, of late Saxon pottery and medieval pottery from two features within the grounds of the Hallaton Hall towards the north east of the present village.

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Catalogue

Site/Parish: Hallaton Hall, Hallaton, Leics. Accession No/ Doc Ref: XA25 2005/hallaton6.doc) Material: pottery & misc. finds Site Type: Hall	Submitter: J. Browning Identifier: D. Sawday Date of Id: 4.03.05 Method of Recovery: evaluation.

Context	Fabric/ware	Sherd nos.	Weight grams	Comments
POTTERY				
(8) [9] pit	ST2 – Fine Stamford ware	2	11	One sherd glazed, *c.*1050-*c.*1200+
(8) [9]	BO2 – Bourne A/B ware	1	4	*c.*1250+
(8) [9]	LY1 – Stanion Lyveden type ware 1	1	30	Thickened jar rim with thumbed and combed decoration on exterior rim, and combed wavy line decoration on exterior wall, *c.*1225+
T4 (27) boundary ditch	ST3 – Coarse Stamford ware	1	1	*c.* 900-c.1050+
T4 (27)	BO2 – Bourne A/B ware	4	10	Join, *c.*1250+
T4 (27)	LY1 – Stanion Lyveden type ware 1	1	16	Glazed, *c.*1225+
Misc.				
(8) [9]	Glass	1		Modern - intrusive
T4 (27)	Bone	2		undentified shaft fragment Period unknown!
T4 (27)	Fossil	1		

Figure 2: Site plan. Development area outlined
(Anthony Rickett Architects Ltd).

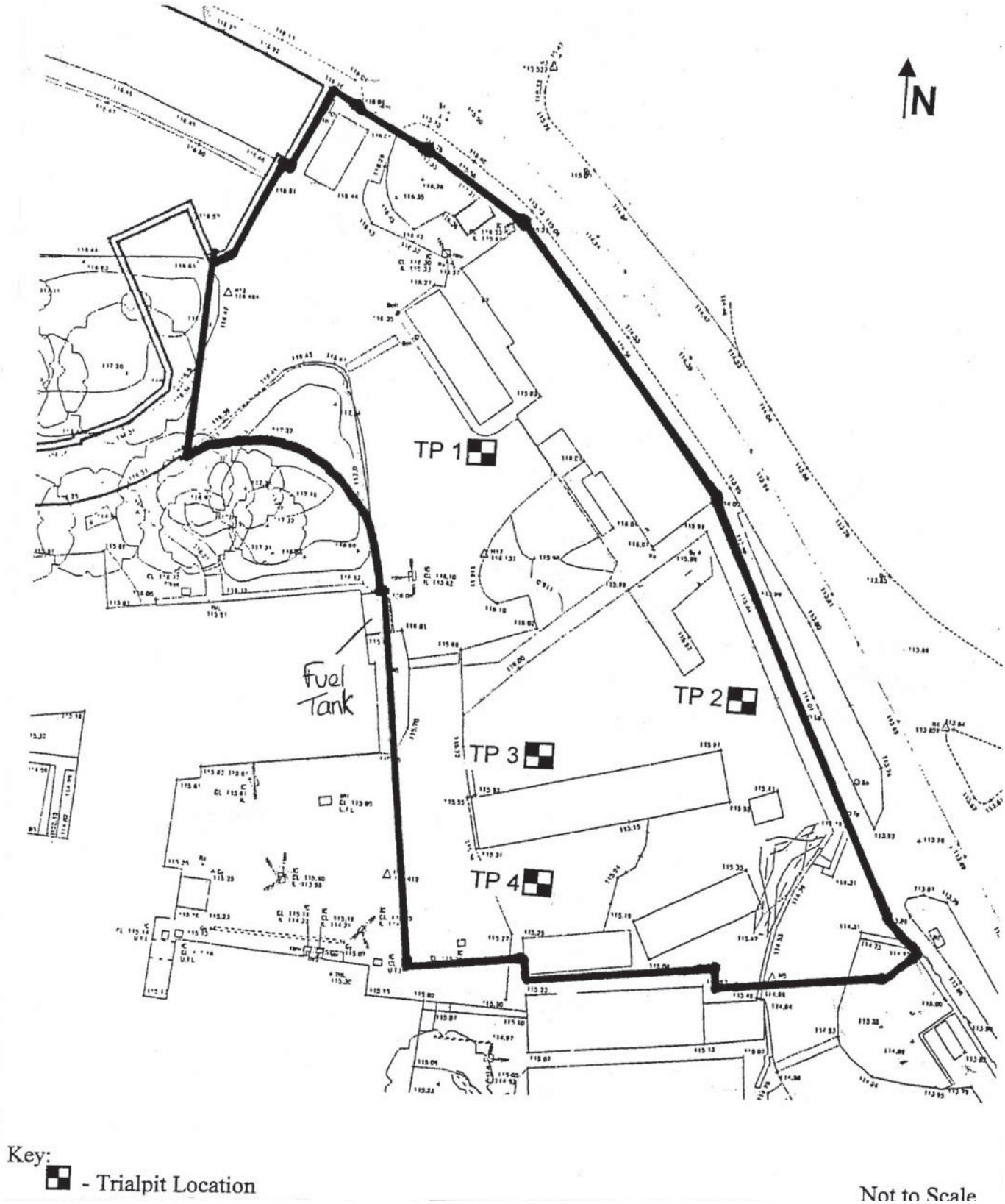


Figure 3: Location of Geotechnical trial pits. (Nicholls Colton Geotechnical)

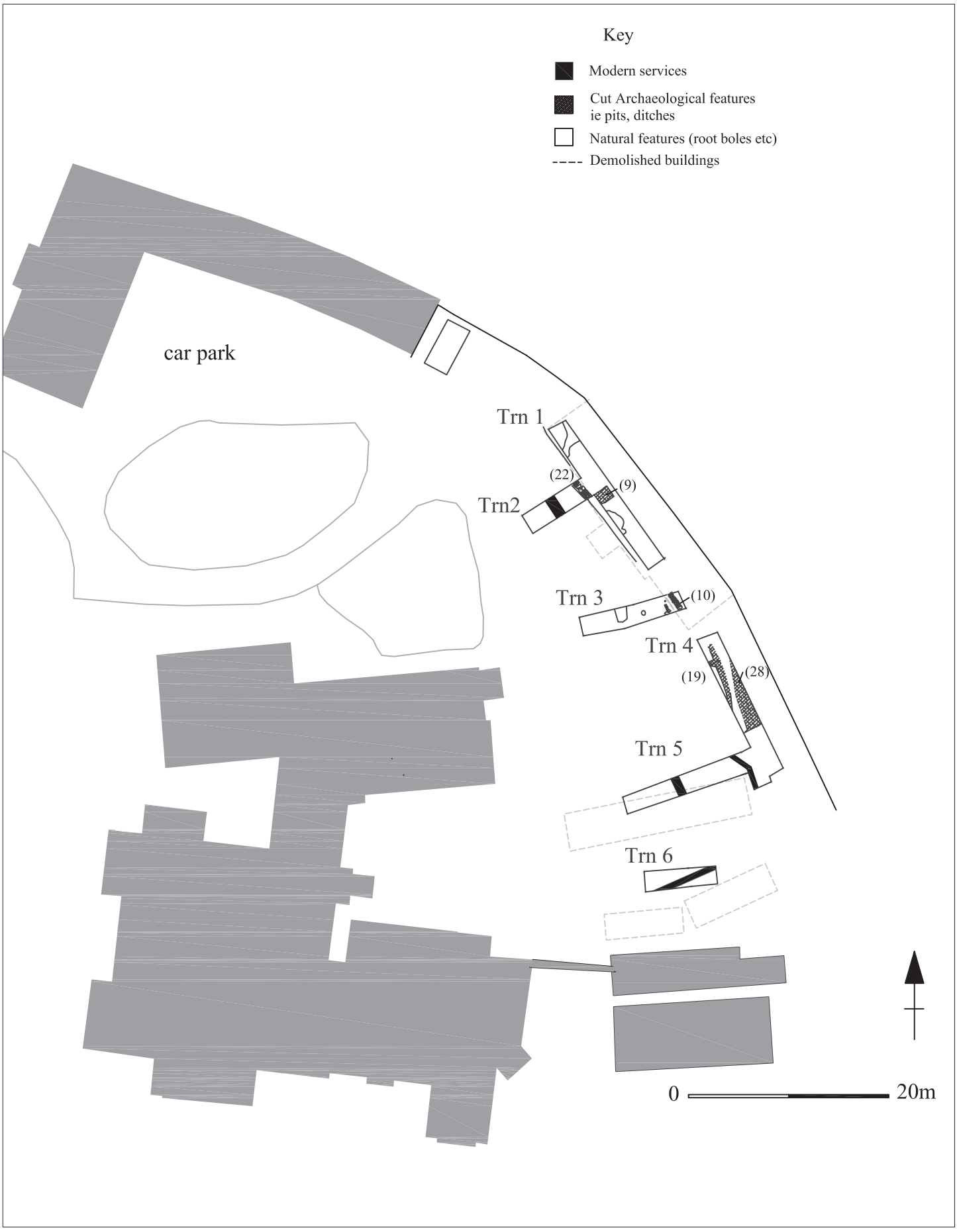


Figure 4: Trench location plan.

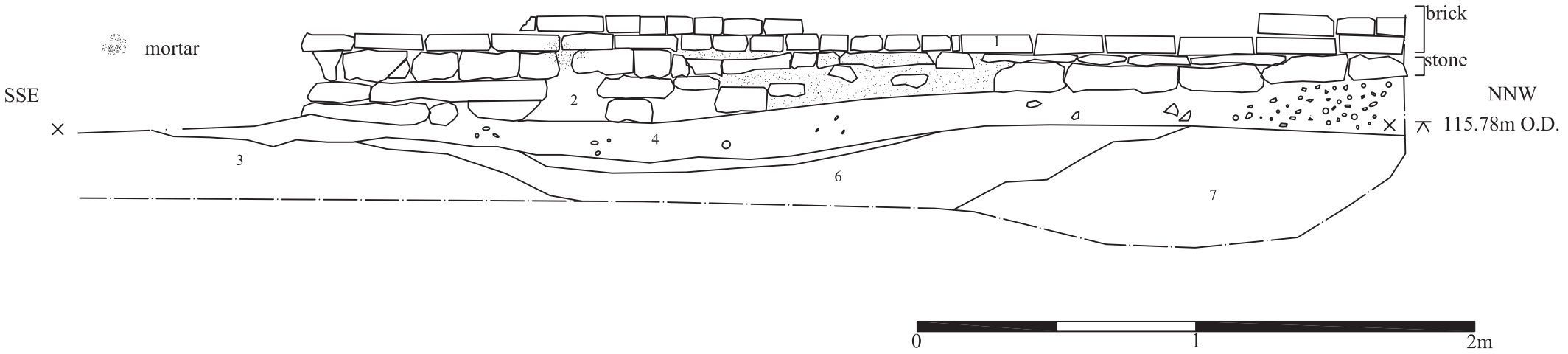
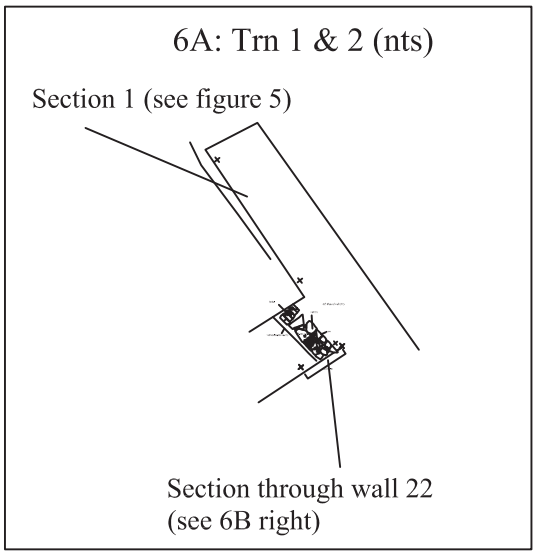
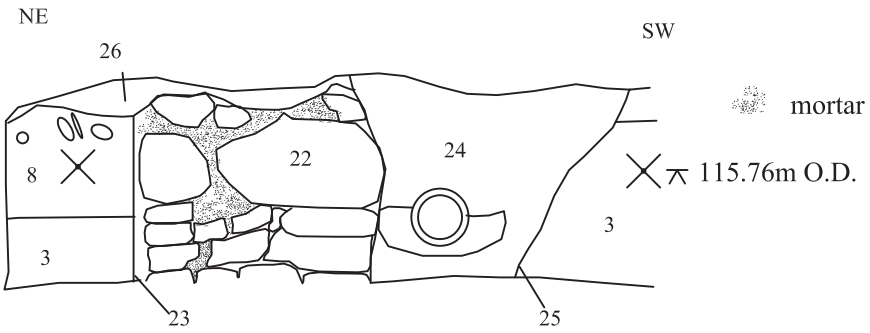


Figure 5: Section showing brick wall with stone foundations, Trench 1. Context descriptions in Appendix.





6B: Section through wall 22 (see plan for location).

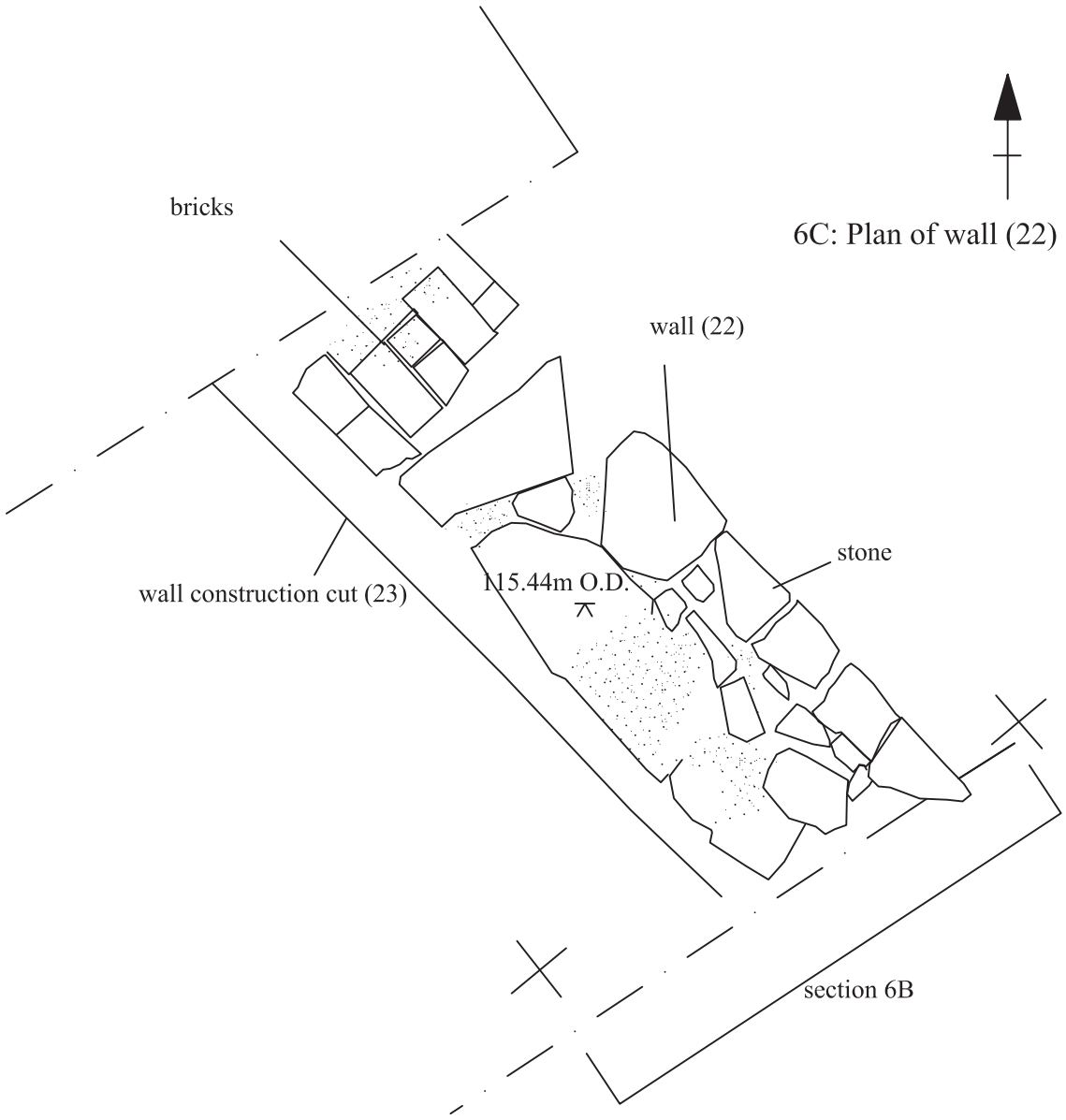


Figure 6: Plan and section of wall 22 in Trench 2.

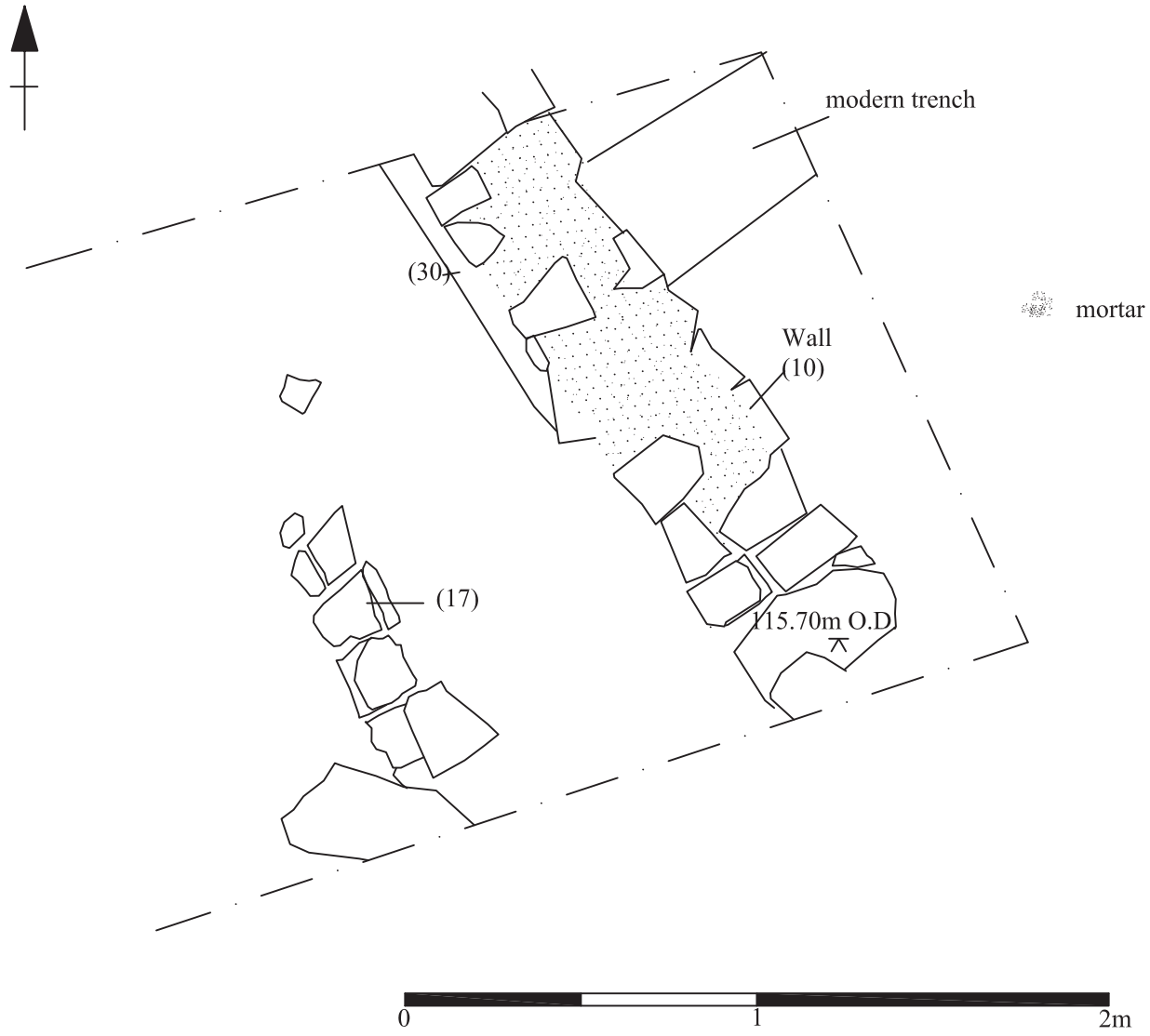


Figure 7: Plan of features in trench 3. Scale 1:20

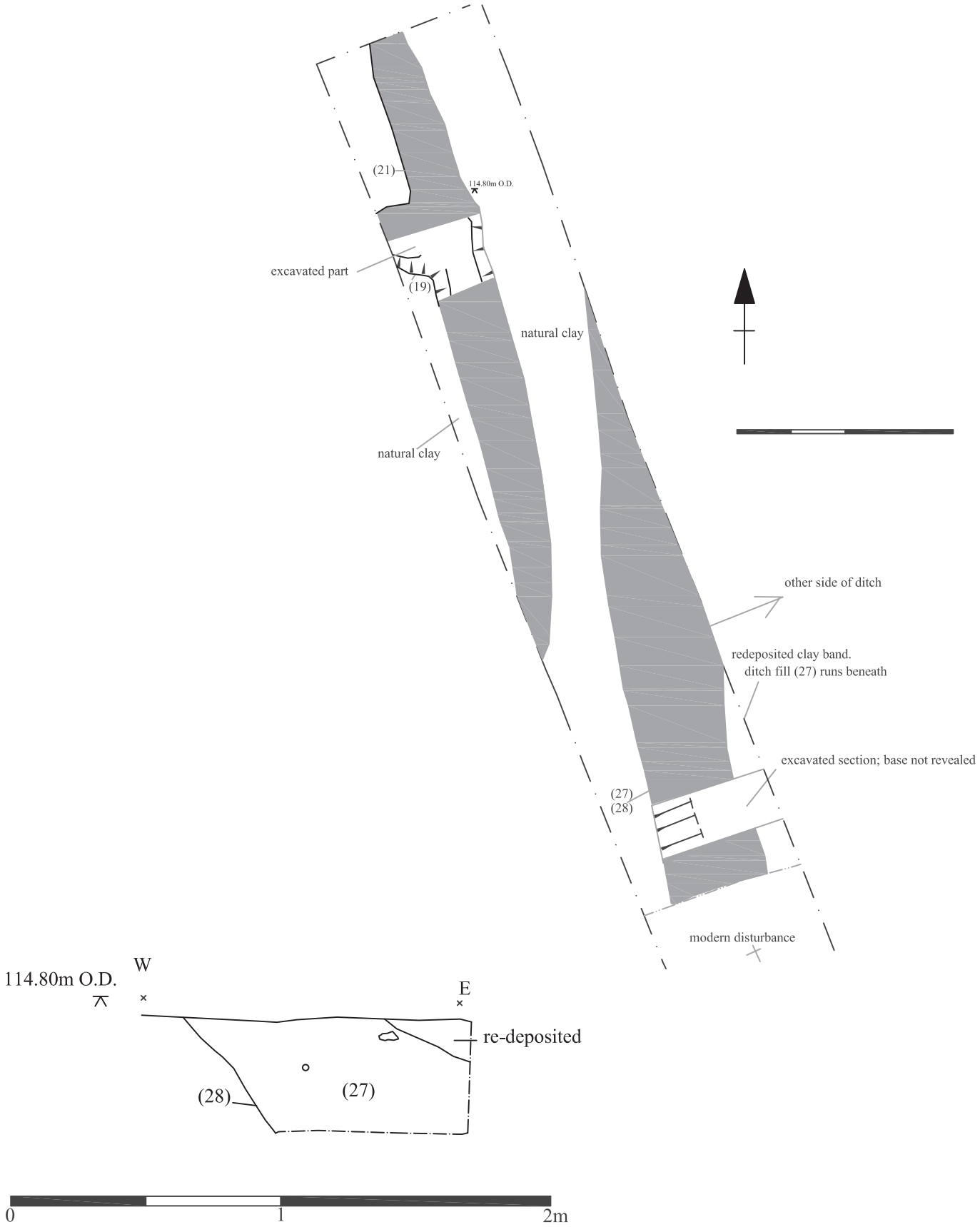


Figure 8: Plan of north end of trench 4 and section through ditch (28)..