

An Archaeological Evaluation at
Aston Hall Hospital, Aston-on-Trent,
South Derbyshire,
(SK 4124 2872).

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For: REDLINE: Town Planning and Development Consultants

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Neolithic and other Prehistoric Pottery from Aston-on-Trent 2006 by Nicholas J. Cooper

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Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Aston Hall Hospital, Aston-on-Trent, South Derbyshire, (NGR 4124 2872) by ULAS in April 2006. The work was commissioned by Redline.

Sixteen trial trenches were excavated in order to assess the potential for the survival of archaeological remains. In essence the evaluation has confirmed that archaeological features exist within the evaluation area, concentrated on the western side. The evaluation would suggest that archaeological features are also likely to be present within the area of the existing hospital buildings to the north.

The archaeological features comprised of a number of ditches, gullies, post holes and pits, a number of which were prehistoric and could potentially be associated with the nationally important Neolithic activity to the east of the site, and to later ritual and settlement activity running just below the 40m contour within 2km of the site.

The site archive will be held by the Derby Museums and Art Gallery under the Accession Number DBYMU:2006-2.

1. Introduction

1.1 In accordance with Planning Policy Guidelines 16 (PPG 16, Archaeology and Planning, para 30), this document presents the results of an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching at Aston Hall Hospital, Aston-on-Trent, South Derbyshire, (SK 4124 2872).

1.2 Due to the proposed development area being located in an area within an archaeologically sensitive landscape the Development Control Archaeologist for Derbyshire County Council, in his capacity as archaeological advisor to the planning authority, requested an evaluation by trial trenching prior to any decision being made on outline planning permission (Planning Application Number 9/2005/1408/M) for the construction of an assisted living development on the site of the former hospital.

1.3 The proposed development site is located at Aston Hall Hospital, Aston-on-Trent, South Derbyshire, (SK 4124 2872). It consists of an area approximately 1.8ha that is currently laid to grass, having formerly been playing fields. The area lies on a plateau with a slope down to the River Trent lying outside of the southern boundary of the site.

2. Archaeological and Historical Background

2.1 The site area has not been subject to an archaeological desk-based assessment but lies in a wider landscape that has been subject to a number of previous archaeological excavations. A Brief for Archaeological Field Evaluation (sections 3.1 –3.5) has been prepared by the Development Control Archaeologist of Derbyshire County Council that details the known archaeology surrounding the development area (fig. 3).

“3.1 The application site sits astride the 40m contour on the northern side of the Trent Valley, and is located within an archaeologically sensitive landscape. 170m to the east is the large scheduled monument (DR185) “Cursus and other air photographic cropmarks east of Aston-on-Trent” (SMR 27710). This monument includes evidence for extensive Neolithic and later ritual and settlement activity running just below the 40m contour. Excavations of a cropmark complex in advance of the construction of the A50 exposed Iron Age enclosure, settlement and a possible ring ditch.

“3.2 Immediately south of the application site is a field which, once again, sits astride the 40m contour and contains a cropmark complex (SMR 27706). Plots of these cropmark features suggests they may extent northwards into the playing field at the southern end of the application site. The cropmarks are partially overlain and obscured by evidence of later agriculture in the area in the form of ridge and furrow (SMR 27224).

“3.3 Prior to the construction of the hall the application site probably formed part of the agricultural field systems of the medieval and early post-medieval villages of Aston and Weston. From the late eighteenth century the land became incorporated into the estate and grounds of Aston Hall. The northern end of Middle Wood, which falls within the application site, contains an ice house (SMR 166604) that was probably constructed to serve Aston Hall in the nineteenth century.

“3.4 The Ordnance Survey mapping confirms that at no time prior to the construction of the existing hospital was the land built upon. I have no evidence to hand regarding the extent of ground disturbance that was involve during the construction of the hospital buildings. Some of the buildings may have been constructed with cellars or required deep excavations. However, it is clear that much of the site, especially in the southern half, has never been developed for buildings.

“3.5 The southern part of the PDA retains a distinct potential for buried prehistoric features similar to those recognised in the surrounding cropmark complexes to survive within the application site.”

3. Objectives

3.1 The main objectives of the evaluation were:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.

- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works.
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

3.2 Within the stated project objectives, the principal aim of the evaluation was to establish the nature, extent, date, depth, significance and state of preservation of archaeological deposits on the site in order to determine the potential impact upon them from the proposed development.

3.3 All work follows the *Institute of Field Archaeologist's Code of Conduct* and adheres to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological evaluations*.

4. Methodology

4.1 Trial trenching totalled c. 512 sq metres that provided a c. 5 % sample of the c. 1.8ha. development area. This comprised sixteen 30m x 2m trenches. A denser concentration of trenches was located in the southern part of the area, in order to ascertain whether cropmarks noted in the field to the south extended into the proposed development area (fig.4).

4.2 The topsoil and subsoil was removed in spits by machine with a toothless ditching bucket under full supervision, until archaeological deposits or undisturbed substrata was encountered.

4.3 The location of the trenches was surveyed using a Total Station Electronic Distance Measurer (EDM) linked to a hand held computer.

4.4 Each trench was hand cleaned. Samples of the archaeological deposits located were hand excavated and planned addressing the aims and objectives of the evaluation. Measured drawings of all archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:20 and tied into an overall site plan of 1:100. All plans were tied into the National Grid using an Electronic Distance Measurer (EDM).

4.5 All excavated sections were recorded and drawn at a scale of 1:10 and were levelled and tied into the Ordnance Survey datum. Spot heights were taken as appropriate.

5. Results

5.1 Trench 01 (see figs. 4 and 5)

Interval from S end	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25	30.20m
Topsoil Depth	0.30m	0.30m	0.31m	0.30m	0.32m	0.30m	0.30m
Subsoil Depth	0.40m	0.42m	0.41m	0.40m	0.44m	0.43m	0.40m
Top of Natural	0.40m	0.42m	0.41m	0.40m	0.44m	0.43m	0.40m
Base of Trench	0.60m	0.60m	0.56m	0.52m	0.58m	0.55m	0.50m

5.1.1 Trench 01 measured 30.20m long and 2.00m wide and was on a north to south alignment. Approximately 0.30m of dark brown weak clay silt sand topsoil (001) was removed revealing a subsoil (002) layer of mid orange brown weak to loose sandy clay silt layer. Beneath it, at a depth of *c.* 0.40m below ground level, was natural substratum consisting of orange loose sand and gravels. The base of the trench lies at a height of *c.* 41.49 OD.

5.1.2 Located in the southern half of the trench were two linear ditches [003] and [004]. Both were aligned west to east and contained mid-light orangish brown friable clayey sand. A sherd of Neolithic pottery was recovered from the fill of [004] (Appendix 1). A southwest to northeast aligned feature [003] was discovered in the south corner of the trench. Excavation revealed that it was probably an ice wedge rather than an archaeological feature.

5.2 Trench 02 (see figs 4, 5 and 9)

Interval from W end	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25	28.50m
Topsoil Depth	0.30m	0.30m	0.31m	0.32m	0.34m	0.35m	0.34m
Subsoil Depth	0.50m	0.50m	0.40m	0.44m	0.48m	0.46m	0.50m
Top of Natural	0.50m	0.50m	0.40m	0.44m	0.48m	0.46m	0.50m
Base of Trench	0.60m	0.60m	0.55m	0.58m	0.58m	0.60m	0.60m

5.2.1 Trench 02 measured 28.50m long and 2.00m wide and was on an east to west alignment. Approximately 0.30m of topsoil (001) was removed revealing subsoil (002) beneath which, at a depth of *c.* 0.45m below ground level, was natural substratum. The base of the trench lies at a height of *c.* 41.44 OD.

5.2.2 Feature [009] was exposed in the western half of the trench. It was aligned southwest to northeast before turning at a right angle to the southeast. It contained orangish/yellow brown loose silty sand fill (010) that contained sherds of Bronze Age or later pottery within it (Appendix 1). It could be a continuation of [003], though the pottery suggests that it may be archaeological and related to the cropmarks to the south of the development area. To the east of [009] was a northeast to southwest aligned linear gully [011] that contained mid orange brown weak clay silt (012) with evidence of potential prehistoric activity in the form of numerous heat affected stones.

5.3 Trench 3 (figs. 4 and 5)

Interval from S end	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25	29.60m
Topsoil Depth	0.30m	0.40m	0.38m	0.30m	0.40m	0.36m	0.34m
Subsoil Depth	0.50m	0.60m	0.50m	0.48m	0.52m	0.55m	0.55m
Top of Natural	0.50m	0.60m	0.50m	0.48m	0.52m	0.55m	0.40m
Base of Trench	0.65m	0.65m	0.60m	0.60m	0.65m	0.68m	0.50m

5.3.1 Trench 03 measured 29.60m long and 2.00m wide and was on a north to south alignment. Approximately 0.35m of topsoil (001) was removed revealing subsoil (002) beneath which, at a depth of *c.* 0.55m below ground level, was natural substratum. The base of the trench lies at a height of *c.* 41.31 OD.

5.3.2 The only archaeological feature in this trench was a shallow pit [013]. It was circular and up to 0.10m in depth. The fill was mid orange weak sandy clay silt. No finds were recovered to assist with dating.

5.4 Trench 4 (figs. 4 and 6)

Interval from W end	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25	29.60m
Topsoil Depth	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.35m	0.35m	0.35m	0.30m
Subsoil Depth	0.60m	0.56m	0.50m	0.52m	0.55m	0.50m	0.52m
Top of Natural	0.60m	0.56m	0.50m	0.52m	0.55m	0.50m	0.52m
Base of Trench	0.70m	0.65m	0.60m	0.60m	0.64m	0.68m	0.65m

5.4.1 Trench 04 measured 29.60m long and 2.00m wide and was on an east to west alignment. Approximately 0.35m of topsoil (001) was removed revealing subsoil (002) beneath which, at a depth of *c.* 0.55m below ground level, was natural substratum. The base of the trench lies at a height of *c.* 41.31 OD.

5.4.2 Located in the northeast corner of the trench a linear gully [017] was exposed. It was aligned northeast to southwest and was 0.80m in width and up to 0.25m in depth. The fill was mid orange brown weak sandy clay silt. No finds were recovered to assist with dating.

5.5 Trench 05 (figs. 4 and 6)

Interval from S end	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25	29m
Topsoil Depth	0.40m	0.35m	0.40m	0.40m	0.30m	0.40m	0.30m
Subsoil Depth	0.60m	0.55m	0.62m	0.60m	0.50m	0.52m	0.52m
Top of Natural	0.60m	0.55m	0.62m	0.60m	0.50m	0.52m	0.52m
Base of Trench	0.80m	0.70m	0.80m	0.75m	0.65m	0.65m	0.65m

5.5.1 Trench 05 measured 29m long and 2.00m wide and was on a north to south alignment. Approximately 0.35m of topsoil (001) was removed revealing subsoil (002) beneath which, at a depth of *c.* 0.55m below ground level, was natural substratum. The base of the trench lies at a height of *c.* 41.25 OD.

5.5.2 A southeast to northwest aligned linear gully [015] was exposed in the northern end of the trench. It was 0.70m in width up to 0.10m in depth. The fill was mid orange brown weak to friable silty clay sand. No finds were recovered to assist with dating.

5.6 Trench 06 (fig. 4)

Interval from W end	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25	28.70m
Topsoil Depth	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m
Subsoil Depth	0.45m	0.50m	0.52m	0.40m	0.40m	0.45m	0.46m
Top of Natural	0.45m	0.50m	0.52m	0.40m	0.40m	0.45m	0.46m
Base of Trench	0.60m	0.60m	0.61m	0.55m	0.50m	0.60m	0.58m

5.6.1 Trench 06 measured 28.70m long and 2.00m wide and was on an east to west alignment. Approximately 0.30m of topsoil (001) was removed revealing subsoil (002) beneath which, at a depth of *c.* 0.50m below ground level, was natural substratum. The base of the trench lies at a height of *c.* 41.58 OD.

5.6.2 No archaeological deposits were encountered.

5.7 Trench 07 (fig. 4)

Interval from S end	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25	28.60m
Topsoil Depth	0.30m	0.30m	0.32m	0.30m	0.28m	0.30m	0.30m
Subsoil Depth	0.50m	0.45m	0.48m	0.45m	0.40m	0.38m	0.40m
Top of Natural	0.50m	0.45m	0.48m	0.45m	0.40m	0.38m	0.40m
Base of Trench	0.70m	0.60m	0.60m	0.55m	0.45m	0.48m	0.50m

5.7.1 Trench 07 measured 28.60m long and 2.00m wide and was on a north to south alignment. Approximately 0.30m of topsoil (001) was removed revealing subsoil (002) beneath which, at a depth of *c.* 0.45m below ground level, was natural substratum. The base of the trench lies at a height of *c.* 40.86 OD.

5.7.2 No archaeological deposits were encountered.

5.8 Trench 08 (figs. 4 and 6)

Interval from S end	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25	28.60m
Topsoil Depth	0.30m	0.30m	0.31m	0.34m	0.33m	0.30m	0.36m
Subsoil Depth	0.50m	0.50m	0.48m	0.48m	0.52m	0.50m	0.51m
Top of Natural	0.50m	0.50m	0.48m	0.48m	0.52m	0.50m	0.51m
Base of Trench	0.64m	0.60m	0.56m	0.62m	0.64m	0.65m	0.70m

5.8.1 Trench 08 measured 28.60m long and 2.00m wide and was on a northwest to southeast alignment. Approximately 0.35m of topsoil (001) was removed revealing subsoil (002) beneath which, at a depth of *c.* 0.50m below ground level, was natural substratum. The base of the trench lies at a height of *c.* 41.58OD.

5.8.2 Two parallel north to south aligned linear gullies were encountered in the centre of the trench. Gully [026] contained mid brown sandy silt (027) and gully [033] mid orange brown friable sandy clay silt (033). No finds were recovered to assist with dating. Between the gullies was a sub circular posthole [024] that contained modern pottery.

5.9 Trench 09 (fig. 4)

Interval from S end	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25	28m
Topsoil Depth	0.35m	0.30m	0.34m	0.35m	0.32m	0.30m	0.31m
Subsoil Depth	0.50m	0.45m	0.49m	0.46m	0.48m	0.50m	0.45m
Top of Natural	0.50m	0.45m	0.49m	0.46m	0.48m	0.50m	0.45m
Base of Trench	0.65m	0.55m	0.65m	0.66m	0.60m	0.60m	0.55m

5.9.1 Trench 09 measured 28m long and 2.00m wide and was on a northeast to southwest alignment. Approximately 0.32m of topsoil (001) was removed revealing subsoil (002) beneath which, at a depth of *c.* 0.50m below ground level, was natural substratum. The base of the trench lies at a height of *c.* 41.36 OD.

5.9.2 No archaeological deposits were encountered.

5.10 Trench 10 (figs. 4, 7 and 9)

Interval from E end	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25	29.40m
Topsoil Depth	0.35m	0.33m	0.30m	0.32m	0.30m	0.32m	0.30m
Subsoil Depth	0.50m	0.48m	0.45m	0.50m	0.50m	0.48m	0.45m
Top of Natural	0.50m	0.48m	0.45m	0.50m	0.50m	0.48m	0.45m
Base of Trench	0.70m	0.65m	0.65m	0.65m	0.65m	0.60m	0.50m

5.10.1 Trench 10 measured 29.40m long and 2.00m wide and was on an east to west alignment. Approximately 0.32m of topsoil (001) was removed revealing subsoil (002) beneath which, at a depth of *c.* 0.50m below ground level, was natural substratum. The base of the trench lies at a height of *c.* 41.31 OD.

5.10.2 Located in the western end of the trench the eastern and northern sides of a ring gully were revealed [028]. It varied in width from 0.13m to 0.21m and was up to 0.25m in depth. The fill was mid to dark orangish brown friable sand silt clay (029). At the southern end was a possible posthole that appeared to have been excavated or driven in from the east. Within the dark orange brown friable silt sand clay fill (031) was prehistoric pottery (Appendix 1). Further excavation would be required to establish the function of the gully though it could potentially be either a ring ditch for a barrow or the drip gully of a roundhouse. To the east were two circular pits, [032] and [034], that both contained identical mid orange brown weak sandy silt clay. Prehistoric pottery was recovered from [032] (Appendix 1). West of

[034] was a posthole [036]. It was sub-circular and up to 0.56m in depth. No finds were recovered from its mid orangish brown weak sand silt clay fill (037).

5.11 Trench 11 (fig. 4 and 8)

Interval from S end	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25	28.70m
Topsoil Depth	0.30m	0.31m	0.32m	0.30m	0.33m	0.32m	0.33m
Subsoil Depth	0.40m	0.42m	0.45m	0.48m	0.45m	0.42m	0.45m
Top of Natural	0.40m	0.42m	0.45m	0.48m	0.45m	0.42m	0.45m
Base of Trench	0.55m	0.52m	0.65m	0.60m	0.60m	0.50m	0.55m

5.11.1 Trench 11 measured 28.70m long and 2.00m wide and was on a northwest to southeast alignment. Approximately 0.32m of topsoil (001) was removed revealing subsoil (002) beneath which, at a depth of *c.* 0.45m below ground level, was natural substratum. The base of the trench lies at a height of *c.* 41.07 OD.

5.11.2 A northeast to southwest aligned ditch [038] was exposed in the northern half of the trench. The fill was light orangish brown loose silty sand that contained pottery of possible Neolithic or Anglo-Saxon date (Appendix 1). To the south were features [040] and [042] that both had similar dimensions and contained mid orangish friable to plastic brown clayey sand fill. It is likely that they are either gully terminals or postholes.

5.12 Trench 12 (figs. 4 and 8)

Interval from SW end	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25	29.50m
Topsoil Depth	0.30m	0.30m	0.30m	0.32m	0.30m	0.30m	0.32m
Subsoil Depth	0.46m	0.50m	0.42m	0.40m	0.45m	0.40m	0.40m
Top of Natural	0.46m	0.50m	0.42m	0.40m	0.45m	0.40m	0.40m
Base of Trench	0.60m	0.65m	0.60m	0.50m	0.60m	0.60m	0.60m

5.12.1 Trench 12 measured 29.50m long and 2.00m wide and was on a northwest to south alignment. Approximately 0.30m of topsoil (001) was removed revealing subsoil (002) beneath which, at a depth of *c.* 0.45m below ground level, was natural substratum. The base of the trench lies at a height of *c.* 41.50 OD.

5.12.2 Located in the western end of the trench was a linear gully [046]. It was aligned southeast to northwest and contained mid orange brown weak sandy clay silt (047). No finds were recovered to assist with dating.

5.13 Trench 13 (figs. 4, 8 and 9)

Interval from W end	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25	29.50m
Topsoil Depth	0.33m	0.35m	0.34m	0.30m	0.30m	0.31m	0.30m
Subsoil Depth	0.50m	0.58m	0.55m	0.52m	0.50m	0.45m	0.51m
Top of Natural	0.50m	0.58m	0.55m	0.52m	0.50m	0.45m	0.51m
Base of Trench	0.60m	0.65m	0.60m	0.60m	0.65m	0.55m	0.62m

5.13.1. Trench 13 measured 29.50m long and 2.00m wide and was on an east to west alignment. Approximately 0.30m of topsoil (001) was removed revealing subsoil (002) beneath which, at a depth of *c.* 0.50m below ground level, was natural substratum. The base of the trench lies at a height of *c.* 41.60 OD.

5.13.2 A single circular shallow pit [044], up to 0.08m in depth and 0.80m wide was exposed in the eastern end of the trench. The fill was mid to dark orange brown loose clay sand silt (045) that contained decorated Neolithic pottery (Appendix 1).

5.14 Trench 14 (fig. 4)

Interval from S end	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25	29.50m
Topsoil Depth	0.31m	0.30m	0.31m	0.30m	0.30m	0.33m	0.32m
Subsoil Depth	0.52m	0.47m	0.45m	0.48m	0.52m	0.47m	0.50m
Top of Natural	0.52m	0.47m	0.45m	0.48m	0.52m	0.47m	0.50m
Base of Trench	0.70m	0.56m	0.55m	0.60m	0.70m	0.60m	0.60m

5.14.1 Trench 14 measured 29.50m long and 2.00m wide and was on a north to south alignment. Approximately 0.30m of topsoil (001) was removed revealing subsoil (002) beneath which, at a depth of *c.* 0.50m below ground level, was natural substratum. The base of the trench lies at a height of *c.* 41.37OD.

5.14.2 No archaeological deposits were encountered.

5.15 Trench 15 (fig. 4)

Interval from NW end	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25	29.50m
Topsoil Depth	0.32m	0.30m	0.30m	0.32m	0.30m	0.31m	0.30m
Subsoil Depth	0.45m	0.45m	0.40m	0.50m	0.40m	0.40m	0.38m
Top of Natural	0.45m	0.45m	0.40m	0.50m	0.40m	0.40m	0.38m
Base of Trench	0.60m	0.60m	0.52m	0.65m	0.60m	0.55m	0.50m

5.15.1 Trench 15 measured 29.50m long and 2.00m wide and was on a northwest to southeast alignment. Approximately 0.30m of topsoil (001) was removed revealing subsoil (002) beneath which, at a depth of *c.* 0.40m below ground level, was natural substratum. The base of the trench lies at a height of *c.* 41.35 OD.

5.15.2 No archaeological deposits were encountered.

5.16 Trench 16 (fig. 4)

Interval from SW end	0m	5m	10m	15.60m	20m	25	29.50m
Topsoil Depth	0.30m	0.32m	0.30m	0.35m	0.35m	0.30m	0.36m
Subsoil Depth	0.45m	0.44m	0.42m	Disturbed	0.45m	Disturbed	0.55m
Top of Natural	0.45m	0.44m	0.42m	Disturbed	0.45m	Disturbed	0.55m
Base of Trench	0.60m	0.66m	0.60m	0.95m	0.70m	0.76m	0.82m

5.16.1 Trench 16 measured 29.50m long and 2.00m wide and was on a northeast to southwest alignment. Approximately 0.30m of topsoil (001) was removed revealing subsoil (002) beneath which, at a depth of *c.* 0.45m below ground level, was natural substratum. The base of the trench lies at a height of *c.* 41.58 OD.

5.16.2 No archaeological deposits were encountered. The southern half of the trench had been truncated by modern foundations and demolition.

6. Discussion

6.1 The evaluation has established the presence of archaeological remains within the proposed development area. They lie beneath *c.* 0.5m of topsoil and subsoil and are quite shallow, probably due to medieval and later ploughing.

6.2 The pottery assemblage suggests that a number of the features could potentially be associated with the nationally important Neolithic activity to the east of the site, and to later ritual and settlement activity running just below the 40m contour within 2km of the site.

6.3 The undated features could also be prehistoric in date or could be part of the agricultural field systems of the medieval and early post-medieval villages of Aston and Weston.

6.4 In essence the evaluation has confirmed that archaeological features exist within the evaluation area, concentrated on the western side. The evaluation would suggest that archaeological features are also likely to be present within the area of the existing hospital buildings to the north.

7. Conclusion

7.1 The trial trench evaluation has demonstrated the presence of archaeological remains within the proposed development area.

7.2 The results of the evaluation demonstrated that any construction works associated with the proposed development would have a severe impact upon the buried archaeological remains if the groundworks exceeded 0.5m beneath the present surface.

7.3 As many of the features have been badly truncated, even minimal levelling or clearance, could potentially have a serious impact on the surviving archaeological deposits.

7.4 Development proposals within the former hospital site to the north are also likely to affect buried archaeological deposits in the areas between the footprints of the extant buildings, where archaeological remains are also likely to survive.

8. Acknowledgements

8.1 Fieldwork was undertaken by the author with the assistance of Vicki Priest, Jamie Patrick and Greg Jones. James Meek managed the project.

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Appendix 1

Neolithic and other Prehistoric Pottery from Aston-on-Trent 2006

Nicholas J. Cooper

An assemblage of 15 sherds of Prehistoric handmade pottery weighing 88g was retrieved from six contexts within the evaluation trenches. The assemblage has been classified by fabric using the Leicestershire County Prehistoric Fabric Collection and quantified by sherd count and weight (summarised in Table 1 below and then discussed in more detail).

Aston-on-Trent 2006 Neolithic and other prehistoric pottery									
Trench	Context	Cut	Fabric	Form	Dec	Sherds	Weight	Comment	
	7	4	Q2 (quartz)	misc		1	7		
2	9	10	Q1	misc		1	6	Fine sandy micaceous fabric	
	31	28	G (mudstne)	misc		1	7	fine body, handmade ncd	
10	33	32	Q1	upright rim		1	5	handmade but ncd	
11	39	38	R1 (granite)	misc		2	9	granodiorite, joining.	
13	45	44	Q2 (quartz)	bowl	impressed	1	34	incised diagonal slashes/impressed motif	
13	45	44	Q2 (quartz)	bowl	impressed	7	11	rim frag with 'maggot' impression	
13	45	44	S/G (shell)	bowl	impressed	1	9	shoulder with diagonal 'cord' impressions	
Total						15	88		

Of the fifteen sherds, nine are diagnostically Neolithic in date and belong to at least two or, more likely, three separate vessels found in context (45). All three appear to be bowls and are impressed decorated over their entire surface, which would be consistent with classification as impressed wares within the broad Peterborough ware tradition of the south of Britain. It has been recognised through calibrating the impressed ware typologies against radiocarbon dates that the tradition was fully established by c. 3000BC with associated dates spanning the period c.3600 BC to 2500 BC (Gibson 2002, 80 and fig. 38).

The first vessel is represented by a sherd belonging to the shoulder and lower body of the bowl with the start of the neck extending above. The external surface below the shoulder has been initially incised with diagonal forward slashes at regular but uneven spacing and overlain with three finger tip and nail impressions arranged horizontally mid way down the body. The surviving portion of the neck is decorated with back slash incision to create a herringbone effect. The vessel occurs in the distinctive fabric (Q2) comprises a fine clay body tempered with large (up to 7mm) angular fragments of pebble quartz, white or off white and occasionally red (haematite?) which has been also identified in Neolithic impressed wares from Rothley (Cooper unpublished archive on site XA240.2004) and nearby Willington, Derbyshire (E. Johnson unpublished archive thin section report).

The second vessel comprises seven small sherds belonging to the rim of a bowl. Much of the external surface has been lost but where it remains there are two 'maggot' impressions arranged as forward slashes immediately below the top of the rim. It is

possible that these sherds do belong to Vessel 1 as they share the same fabric but the overall appearance suggests not.

The third vessel is again from the shoulder of a bowl. The decoration below the shoulder comprises linear cord impressions arranged as closely spaced back slashes. The fabric is (S/G) is a mixture of shell fragments and 'grog' or possibly argillaceous or mudstone pellets. Whilst this fabric was recognised from Rothley it was confined to the Early Bronze Age material rather than the Neolithic impressed wares.

One other sherd in fabric Q2 (but with a micaceous clay matrix) came from (7) and though undecorated could also be broadly contemporary with that from (45). Two other joining sherds from (39) in a granitic (granodiorite) fabric (R1) *could* also be of Neolithic date in line with similar, but impressed, sherds from Rothley. Whilst the fabric is similar in appearance to Q2 it is distinguished by the occurrence of large plates of biotite mica and the less angular nature of the quartz/feldspar fragments and is believed to derive from the weathered outcrops in the Mountsorrel area (Knight, Marsden and Carney 2003). However, since similar fabrics are used throughout the remainder of Prehistory and again in the Anglo-Saxon period caution is required.

Of the three remaining sherds, two from (9) and (33) are in a fine sand tempered fabric (Q1), one of which (33) is from a vessel with a flat upright rim which could be Bronze Age or later prehistoric in date. The last sherd, in a grog or mudstone tempered fabric from (31) is not closely dated.

Other finds

A struck flint flake was found associated with the sherd from (9) above. Naturally struck flint flakes came from (12) and (23).

Context (25) appears to be of modern date, containing a sherd of bone china and an iron nail.

Bibliography

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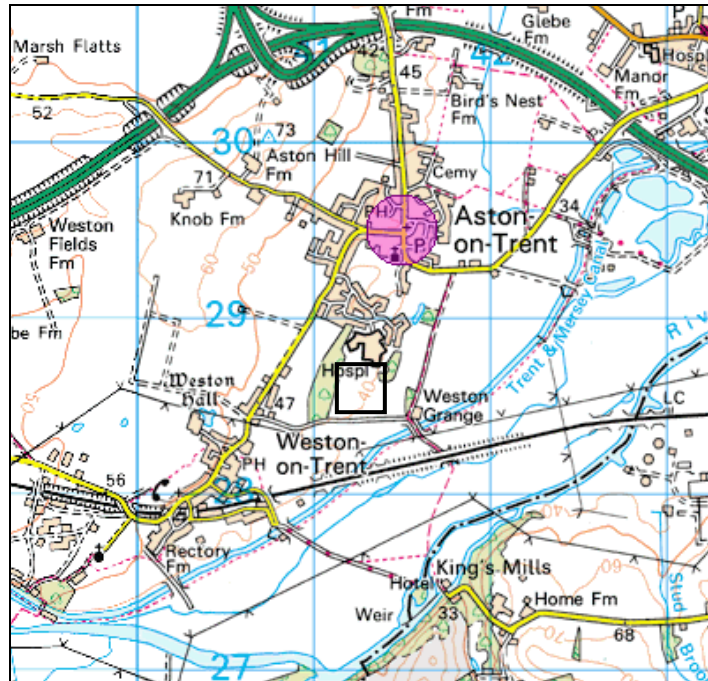


Figure 1. Location plan with the application area outlined.

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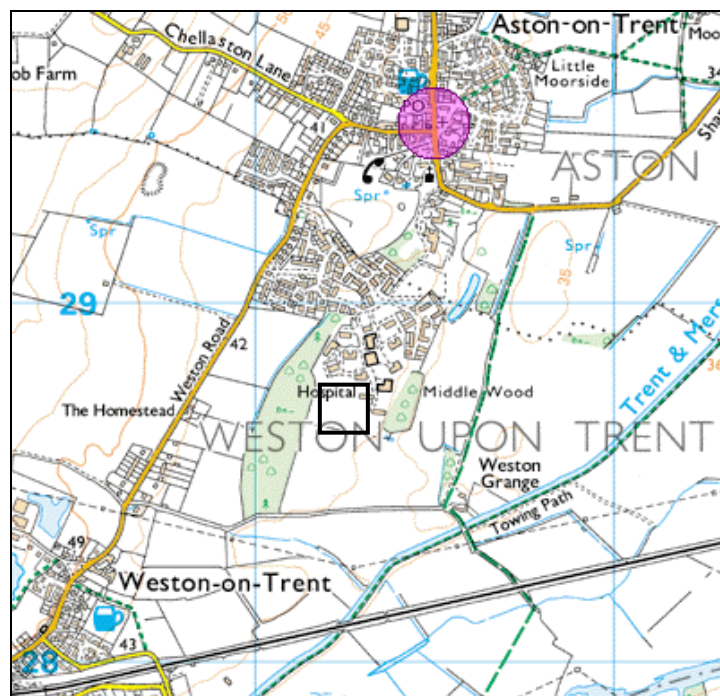


Figure 2. Location plan with the application area outlined.

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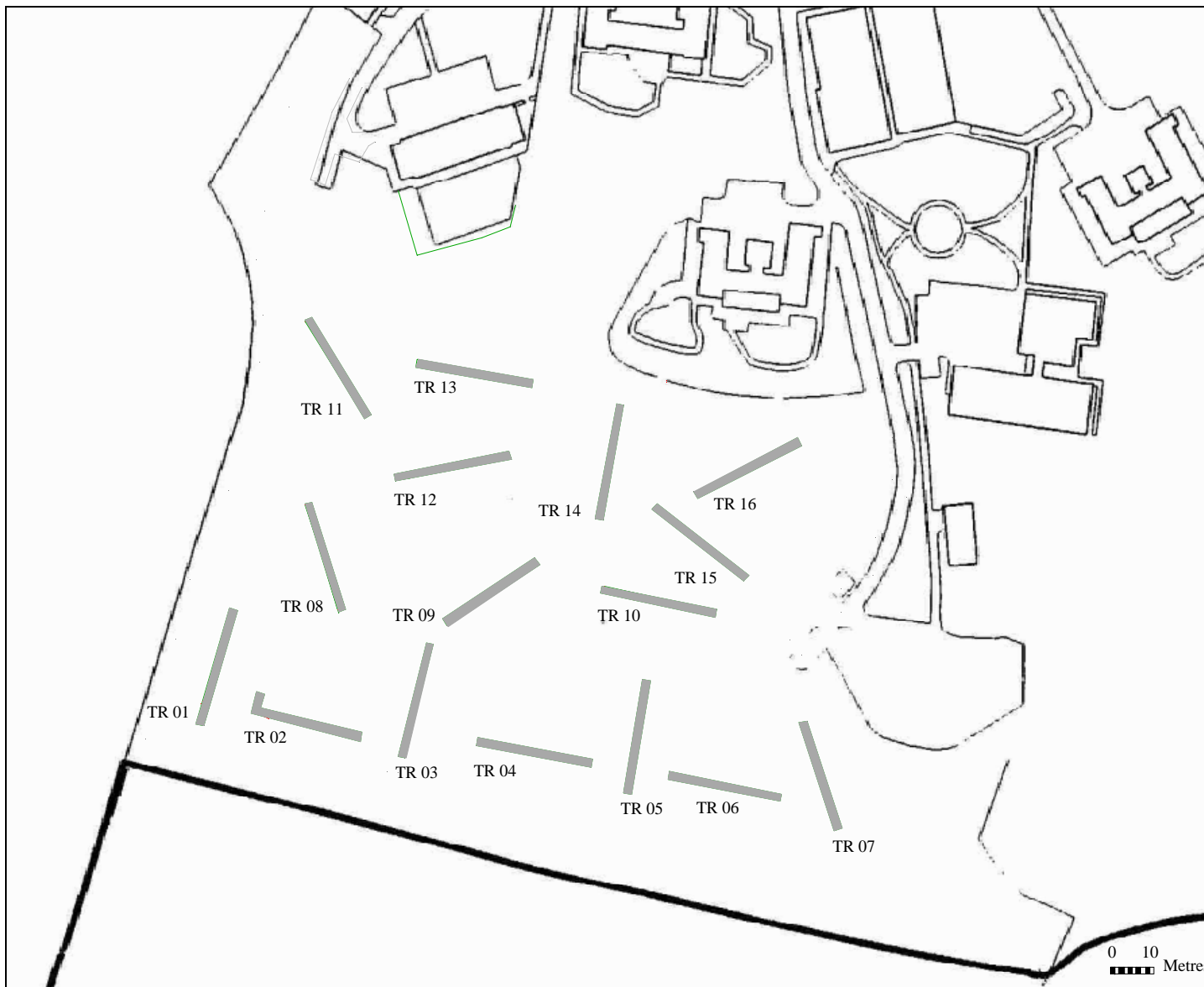


Figure 4. Trench location plan

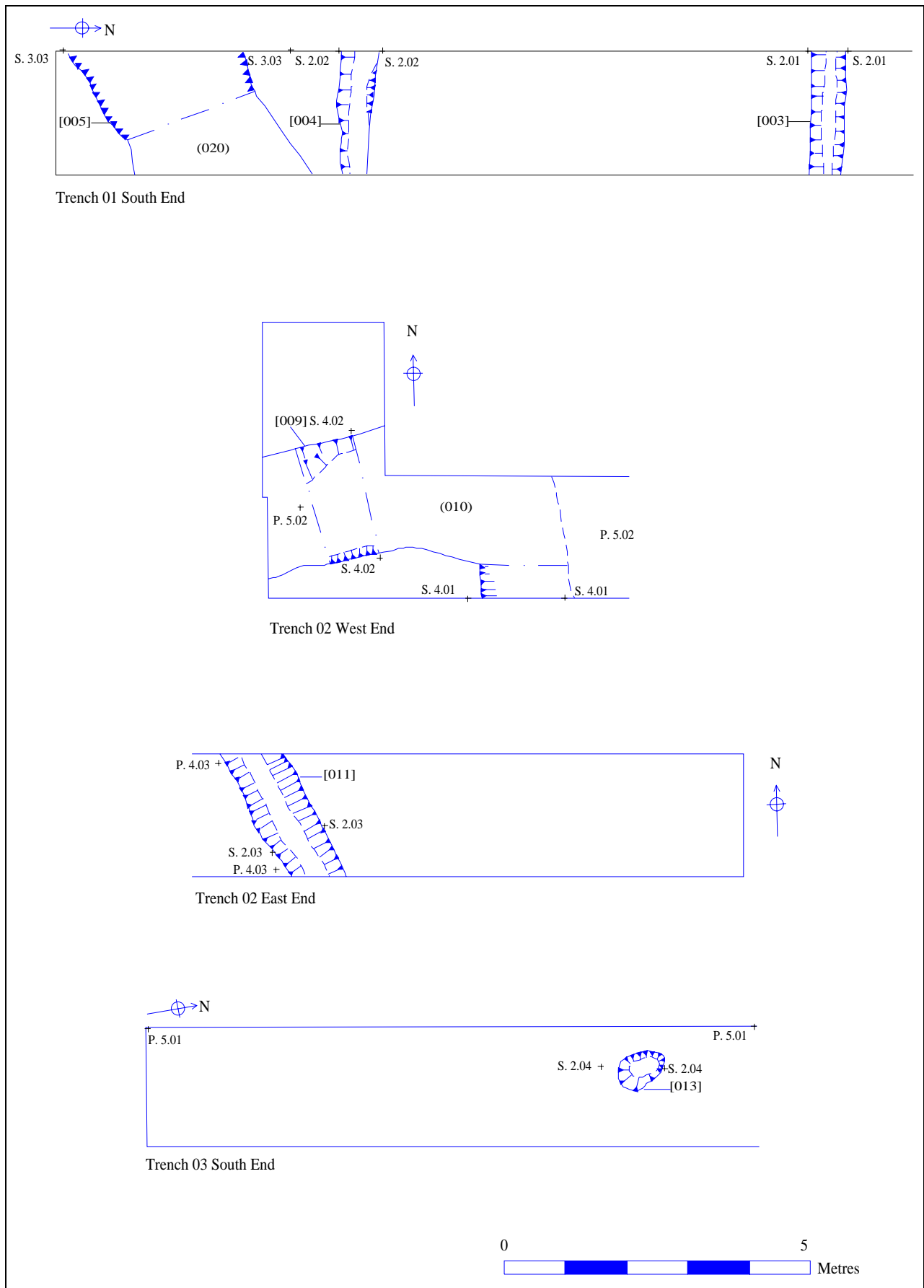


Figure 5. Plans of Trenches 01, 02 and 03.

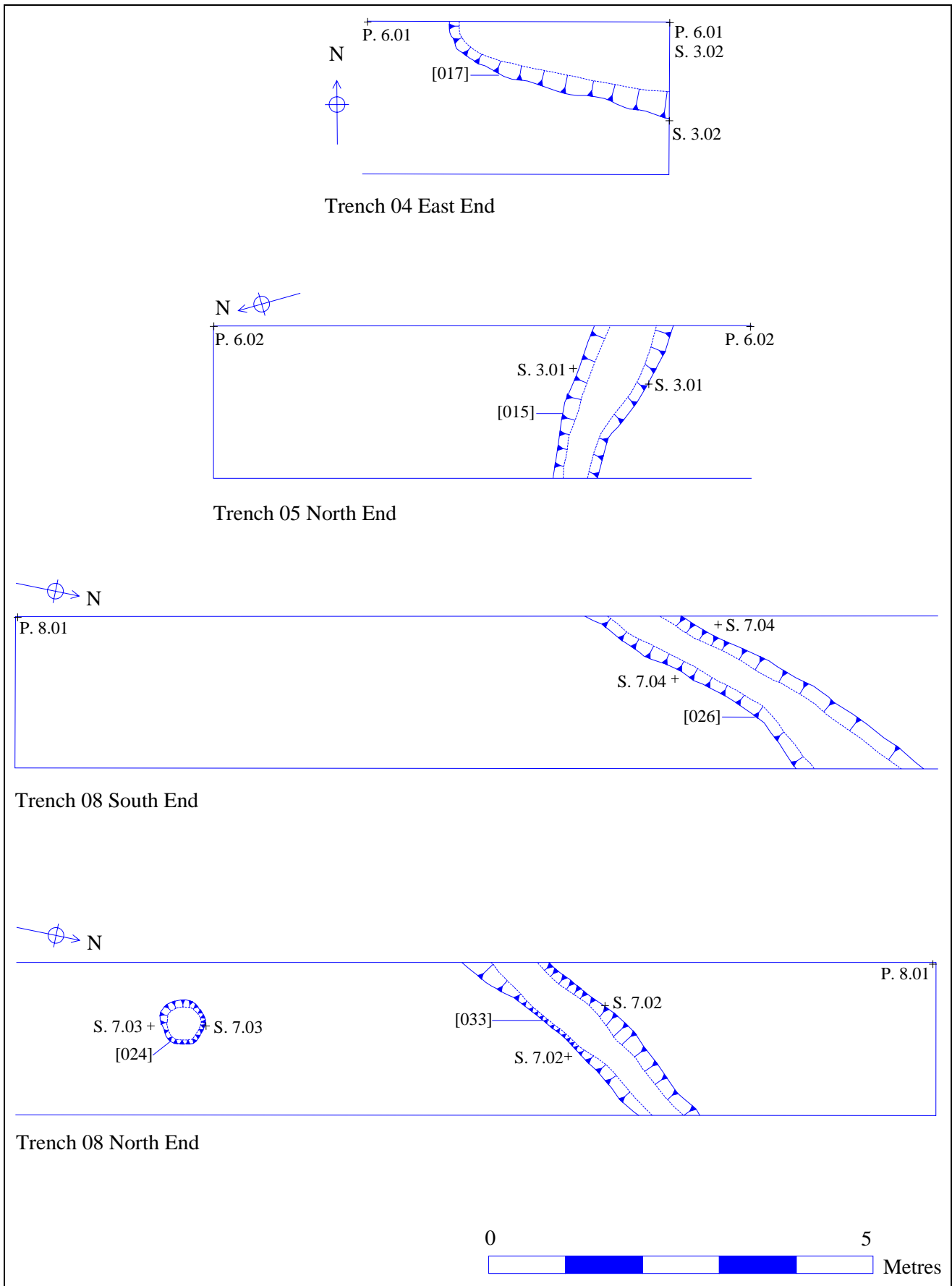


Figure 6. Plans of Trenches 04, 05 and 08.

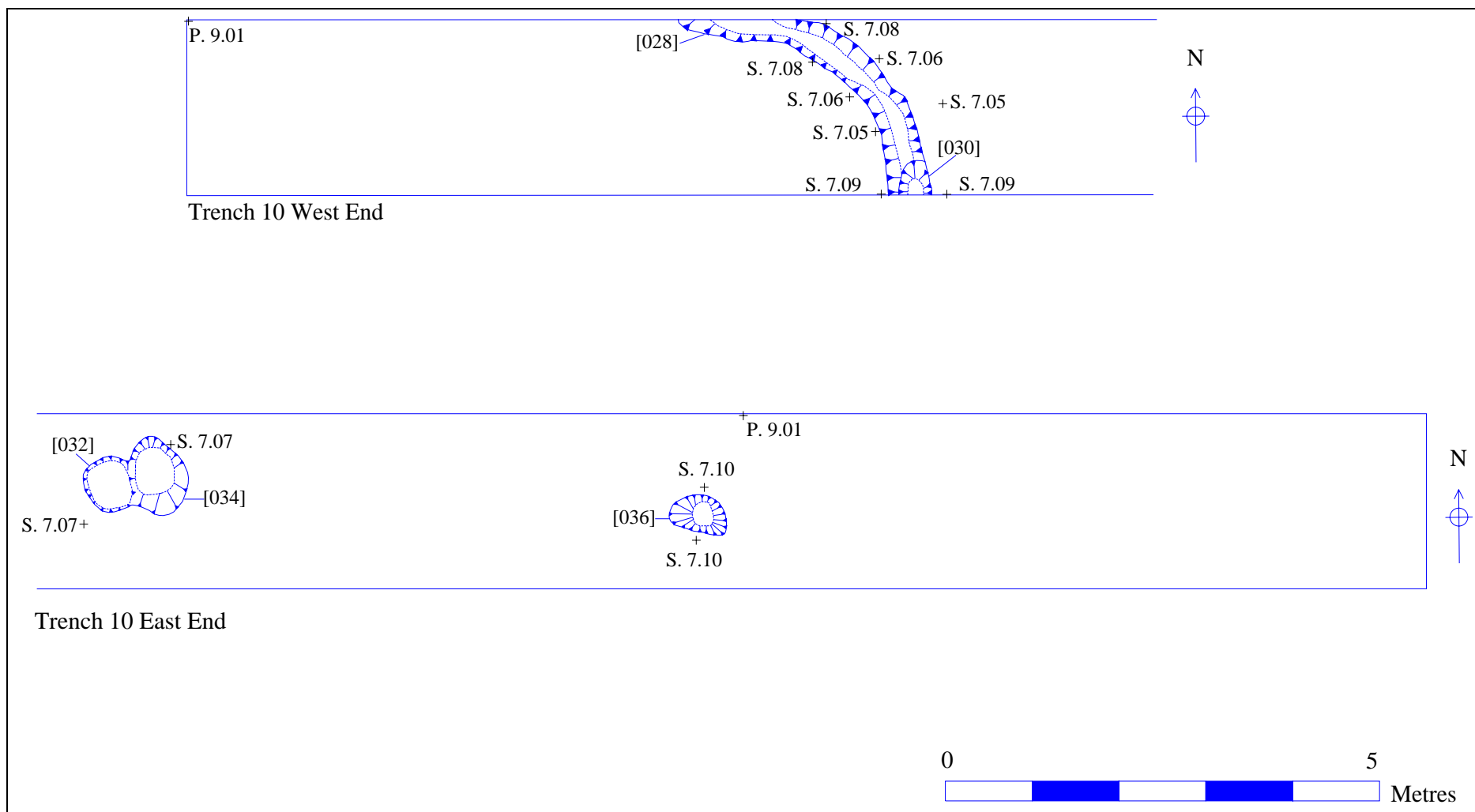


Figure 7. Plan of Trench 10.

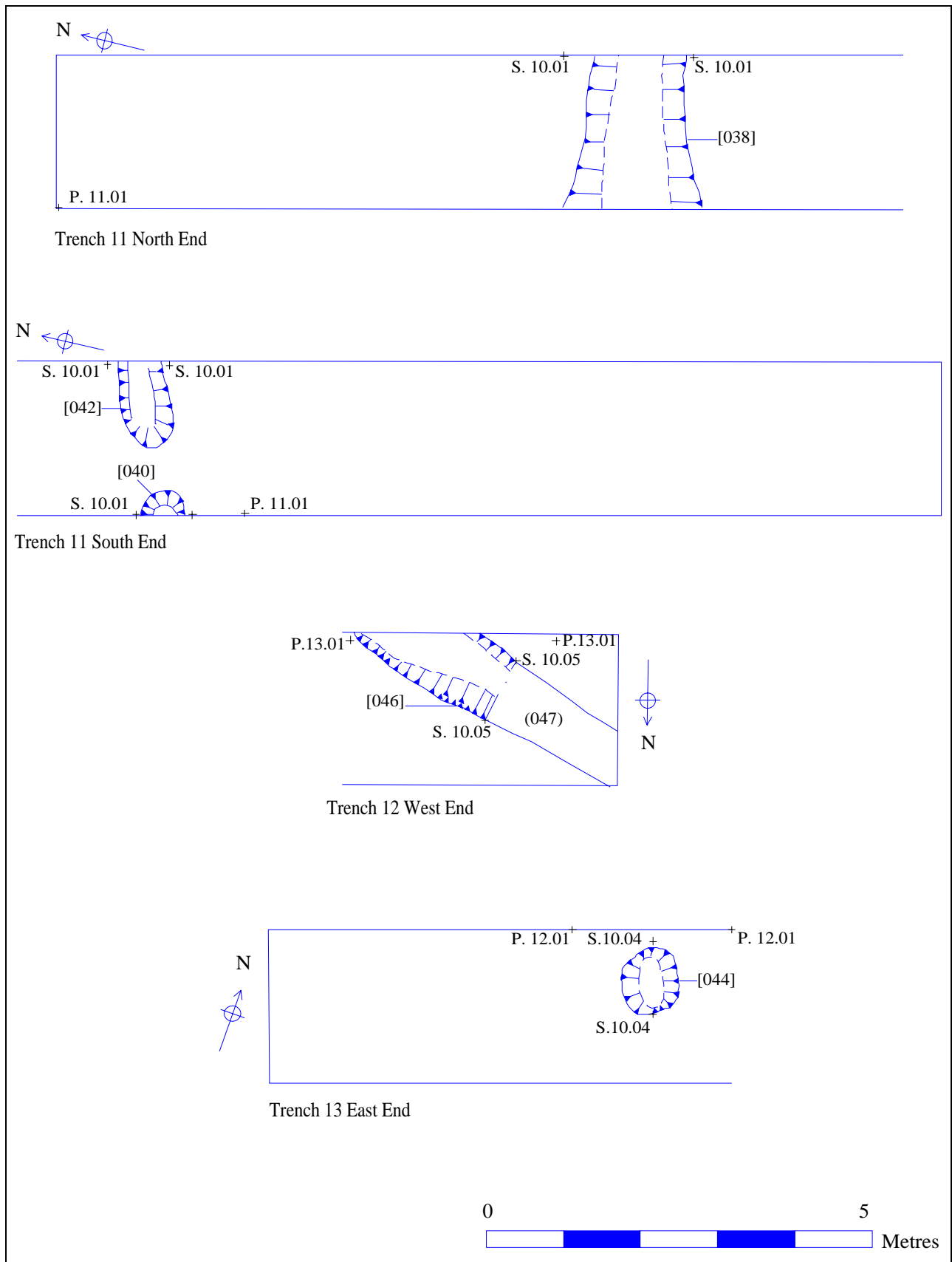


Figure 8. Plans of Trenches 11, 12 and 13.

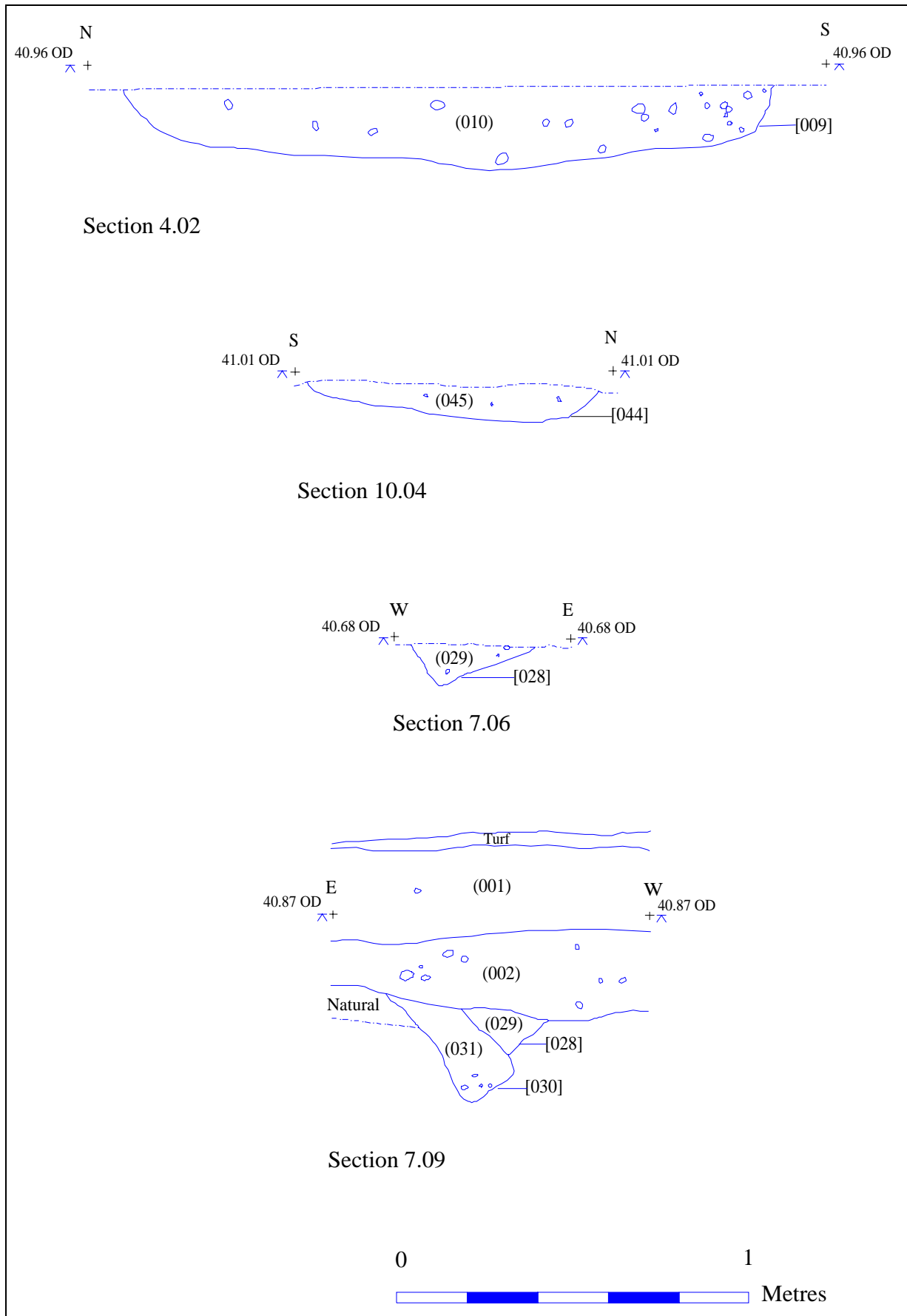


Figure 9. Sections 4.02, 10.04, 7.06 and 7.09.



Plate 1. Ring ditch [028] and post hole [030] looking northwest.



Plate 2. Post hole [030] looking south.



Plate 3. Pits [032] and [034] looking southwest.



Plate 4. Pit [044] looking west.



Plate 5. Gully [004] looking west.