

An Archaeological Evaluation at  
5-7 Station Street,  
Whetstone, Leicestershire,  
(SK 556 976).

**Matthew Hurford**

<p><b>Checked by Project Manager</b></p> <p><b>Signed .....</b><b>Date.....</b></p> <p><b>Name.....</b></p>
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**For: David Haynes, Architect.**

**University of Leicester Archaeological Services**  
**Report 2006/033**

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**1. Summary**

*An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at 5-7 Station Street, Whetstone, Leicestershire (SK 556 976) by ULAS in February 2006. The work was commissioned by David Haynes, Architect. Three trial trenches were excavated in order to assess the potential for the survival of archaeological remains. The evaluation revealed probable property boundary ditches aligned east to west in the north and south of the area. A post medieval or modern date is likely for both. Two postholes of unknown date were also located during trenching. The site archive will be held by the Historic and Natural Environment Team, Leicestershire County Council, under the Accession Number XA16 2006.*

**2. Introduction**

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 5-7 Station Street, Whetstone, Leicestershire (SK 556 976).

The evaluation forms part of an Archaeological Impact Assessment following the recommendations from Leicestershire County Council, Historic and Natural Environment Team in their capacity as archaeological advisors to the planning authority. Together with a desk-based assessment the trial trench evaluation addressed the requirements detailed in their brief for *Archaeological evaluation of land to the rear of 5-7 Station Road, Whetstone* (4.1.200) and follows the approved Design specification for archaeological evaluation by trial trenching (ULAS Report No. 06/566 Appendix 1)

The proposed development site is located at 5-7 Station Street, Whetstone, Leicestershire (SK 556 976). It consists of an area c.0.02ha that is currently an orchard. The proposals involve the demolition of a brick built house and factory unit of late nineteenth or early twentieth century date and the construction of five dwellings and an access road.

**3. Geology and Topography**

The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain Sheet 156 indicates that the underlying geology is likely to consist of sand and gravel. The site lies at a height of c. 70m OD.

#### **4. Archaeological and Historical Background**

No archaeological deposits have been located within the development area though there are three prehistoric or Anglo-Saxon archaeological sites within the vicinity of Whetstone. A double ditched enclosure forms a river loop enclosure 0.5km to the south west of the development site (**MLE367**) within which are four rectangular enclosures and another possible ring ditch (**MLE368**). Pottery recovered from this area suggests an Anglo-Saxon date for the features. The third cropmark is a multiple ditch system, which is undated but may relate to the previously mentioned cropmarks (**MLE367** and **MLE368**). The ditch system forms a double ditched boundary that cuts off the angle between the River Soar and the Whetstone Brook (**MLE366**). In 1998 the Parish Archaeological Warden and Peter Liddle of LCCHNET undertook a programme of fieldwalking over this area. Artefacts recovered consist of a variety of flint material dating from the Mesolithic to the Bronze Age, and pottery dating from the Iron Age to the post-medieval period (Pollard 1999:116)

Lutterworth Road (**MLE9906**) is thought to represent the Roman road that connected Leicester and Manduessedum, and its projected line passes around 1km to the east of the proposed development site.

The SMR indicates that the proposed development area is within the historic core of the medieval village of Whetstone (**MLE15731**). The site lies to the southeast of the medieval church of St. Peter's (**MLE11895**) and a probable medieval windmill (**MLE369**) that was found during excavations. To the south of the development area is a medieval watermill (**MLE372**) and to the north Enderby Old Bridge that is also medieval in date (**MLE85**).

A number of post-medieval sites are located within the vicinity of the development area including buildings (**MLE11897** **MLE11898** and **MLE12263**), an earthwork of a windmill (**MLE370**) and a millstone (**MLE7339**).

#### *Historical Background*

Whetstone is referred to in the Domesday Book as being held by Ralph, one of the Count of Meulan's men. The village has variously been called *Weston*, *Whestone* and *Hevetsan* (White 1877:631). The name Whetstone probably refers to a place where good stone for the making of whetstones could be found (Mills 1998). According to the Domesday Book, Ralph held '1/2 hide and 1 carucate of land. There were 6 ploughs. Now in lordship 2 ploughs; 2 slaves. 24 Freemen and 11 villagers with 5 smallholders have 5 ploughs. 1 man-at arms. 1 mill at 2s; meadow, 16 acre' (Morgan 1979).

A map search of the proposed development area and surrounding land was undertaken at the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Records Office (LLRRO). No enclosure or tithe maps were available of the area. Additionally, no first edition OS Map of the proposed development area was obtainable at the current time. The second edition OS Map of 1914 shows the area as properties fronting onto Station Street with presumably gardens to the rear. This map does indicate that the adjacent plot of land behind number 3 Station Street and also behind the Bulls Head Public House was an

orchard of some description, which is the present use of the land behind numbers 5 and 7 Station Street. The OS Map of 1930 shows no change from the 1914 edition with the exception of a small structure to the very rear of the properties. The 1991 edition of the OS Map shows this structure to have disappeared.

## **5. Objectives**

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.

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.

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

## **6. Methodology**

Trial trenching totalled c. 87.50 sq metres that provided a c. 5 % sample of the c. 1750 sq. metres of the development area. This comprised one 30m x 1.3m, and two 17m x 1.3m trenches.

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.

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

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).

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.

## 7. Results

### Trench 1

Interval from S end	0m	3m	6m	9m	12m	15	17.30
Ground (OD)	69.30 OD	69.27 OD	69.30 OD	69.24 OD	69.21 OD	69:13 OD	69.09 OD
Topsoil Depth	0.20m	0.25m	0.24m	0.22m	0.18m	0.19m	0.18m
Subsoil Depth	0.67m	0.70m	0.69m	0.76m	0.77m	0.75m	0.77m
Top of Natural	0.67m	0.70	0.6936m	0.76m	0.77m	0.75m	0.77m
Base of Trench	0.67m	0.70m	0.69m	0.76m	0.77m	0.75m	0.77m

Trench 1 was located in the north western corner of the development area. It measured 17.30m long and 1.30m wide and was on a north to south alignment. Approximately 0.20m of dark greyish brown loose sandy silt topsoil (001) was removed revealing a subsoil (002) layer of mid yellowish brown friable clayey silt that was approximately 0.50m thick. Beneath it, at a depth of c. 0.70m below ground level, was natural substratum (003) consisting of yellow brown and greyish brown silty clay. Cutting the substratum in the northern half of the trench was a linear feature [004] on an east to west alignment. It was up to 1.00m wide and up to 0.35m deep and was filled with soft mid brown silty clay (005) that was almost totally devoid of finds indicating that it was some distance from settlement suggesting that it could have been a field boundary. Residents of the area thought that it could have been a property boundary that was filled in following a dispute over ownership in the 1940's.

### Trench 2

Interval from S end	0m	3m	6m	9m	12m	15	17.00
Ground (OD)	69.33 OD	69.28 OD	69.27 OD	69.25 OD	69.25 OD	69.19 OD	69.20 OD
Topsoil Depth	0.35m	0.32m	0.28m	0.30m	0.32m	0.28m	0.29m
Subsoil Depth	0.74m	0.67m	0.65m	0.55m	0.76m	0.68m	0.65m
Top of Natural	0.74m	0.67m	0.65m	0.55m	0.76m	0.68m	0.65m
Base of Trench	0.82m	0.76m	0.77m	0.68m	0.90m	0.80m	0.75m

Trench 2 was located in the north eastern half of the development area. It measured 17.00m long and 1.30m wide and was on a north to south alignment. Approximately 0.30m of topsoil (001) was removed revealing the subsoil (002) that was up to 0.39m

thick, beneath which was the subsoil (003). No archaeological features were revealed during trenching that was surprising as [004] was expected to appear in the northern half.

### Trench 3

Interval from S end	0m	5m	10m	15m	20m	25m	29m
Ground OD	69.74	69.60	69.60	69.44	69.20	69.13	68.98
Topsoil Depth	0.30m	0.26m	0.40m	0.30m	0.20m	0.25m	0.35m
Subsoil Depth	0.80m	0.72m	0.77m	0.61m	0.45m	0.38m	0.48m
Top of Natural	0.80m	0.72m	0.77m	0.61m	0.45m	0.38m	0.48m
Base of Trench	0.80m	0.72m	0.77m	0.61m	0.45m	0.48m	0.48m

Trench 03 was located in the centre of the development area. It measured 29.70m long and 1.30m wide and was on a north to south alignment. Approximately 0.30m of topsoil (001) was removed revealing the subsoil (002) that was approximately 0.30m thick. Beneath it, at a depth of between 0.80m and 0.45m below ground level, was natural substratum (003). Cutting the substratum in the northern half of the trench were two postholes [006] and [008]. They were probably associated as they were of very similar in size, shape and depth and had identical fills (007) and (009) of light grey friable sandy silt. There were no finds to assist with dating. A linear feature [010] located 15 metres to the south of the postholes was also revealed during trenching. It was on an east to west alignment and was 1.10m wide and up to 0.14m deep and was filled with mid greyish brown sandy silt (011). No finds were recovered to assist with dating though it is likely to be a property boundary of post medieval or modern date as it is on exactly the same alignment as the path in the garden to the west and the property boundary formed by the outhouse buildings to the east.

### 8. Conclusion

The evaluation at 5-7 Station Street established that a few archaeological remains survive within the proposed development area. In the northern part of the site an east to west aligned property boundary ditch is present that is of probable modern date. A similar ditch that is likely to be of the same date and function was found in the southern half of the site. Two postholes were also revealed but their date and function could not be ascertained.



## **9. References**

Parker, M., 2005 An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment for a Proposed Residential Development at Land on 5 and 7 Station Street, Whetstone, Leicestershire (SP 556 977) ULAS Report Number 2005-162

Pollard, R., 1999 Whetstone (SP 5597) Archaeology in Leicestershire and Rutland 1998 *The Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society Transactions*. Volume 73. Published by the Society

## **10. Acknowledgements**

Fieldwork was undertaken by the author with the assistance of Giles McFarland. Dr. Patrick Clay managed the project.

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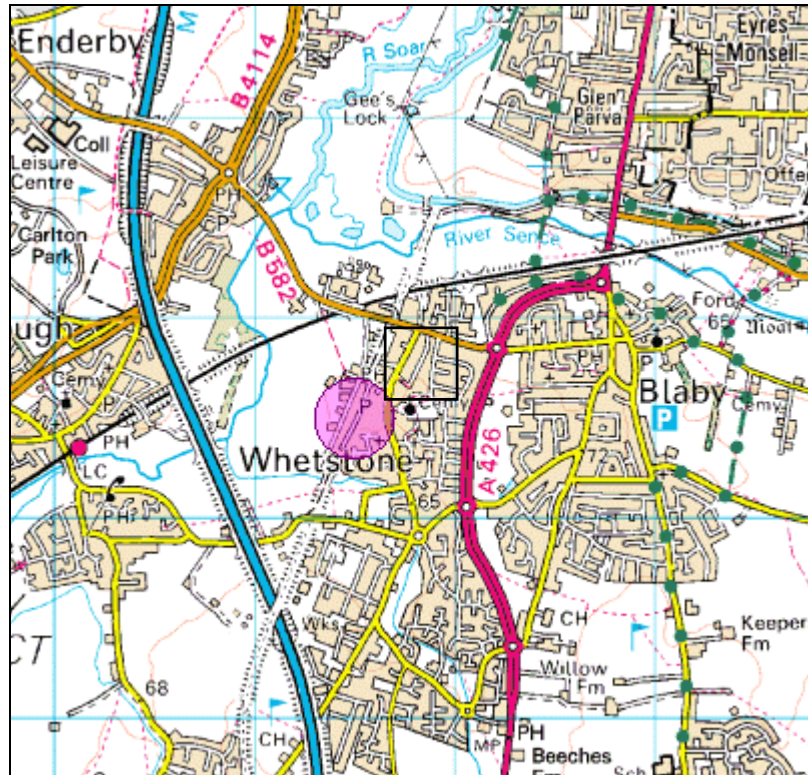


Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:50000.

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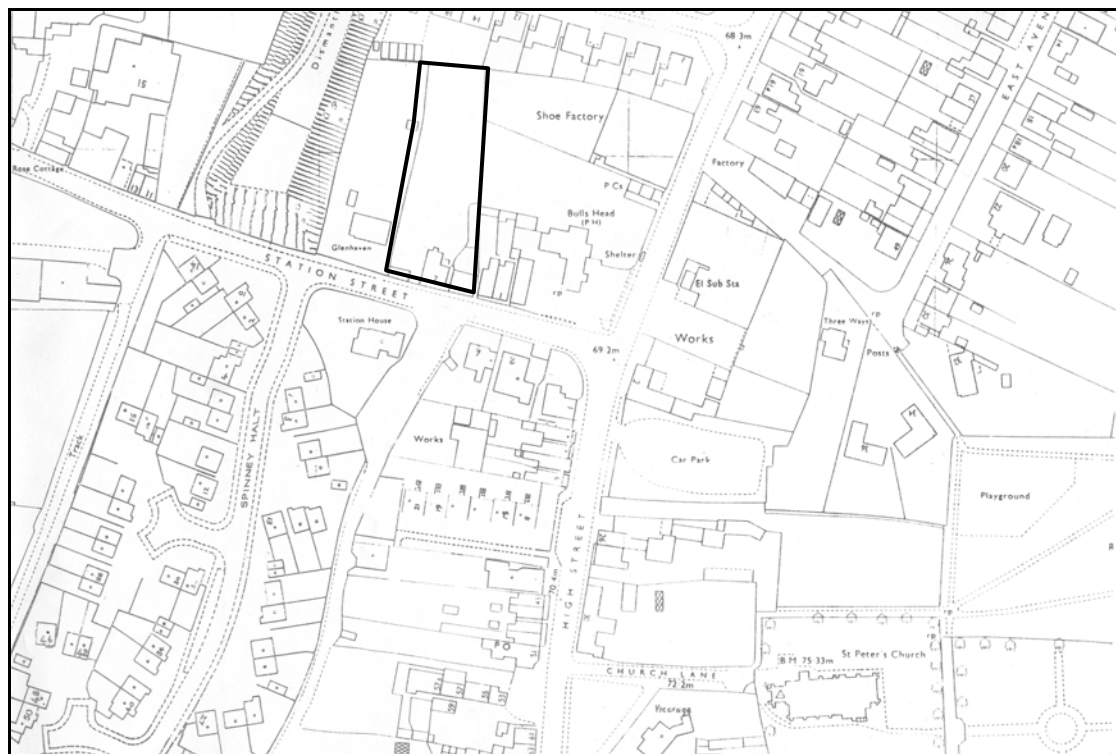


Figure 2. Location of proposed development taken from 1992 OS map SP5597 NE (derived from scale 1:1250).

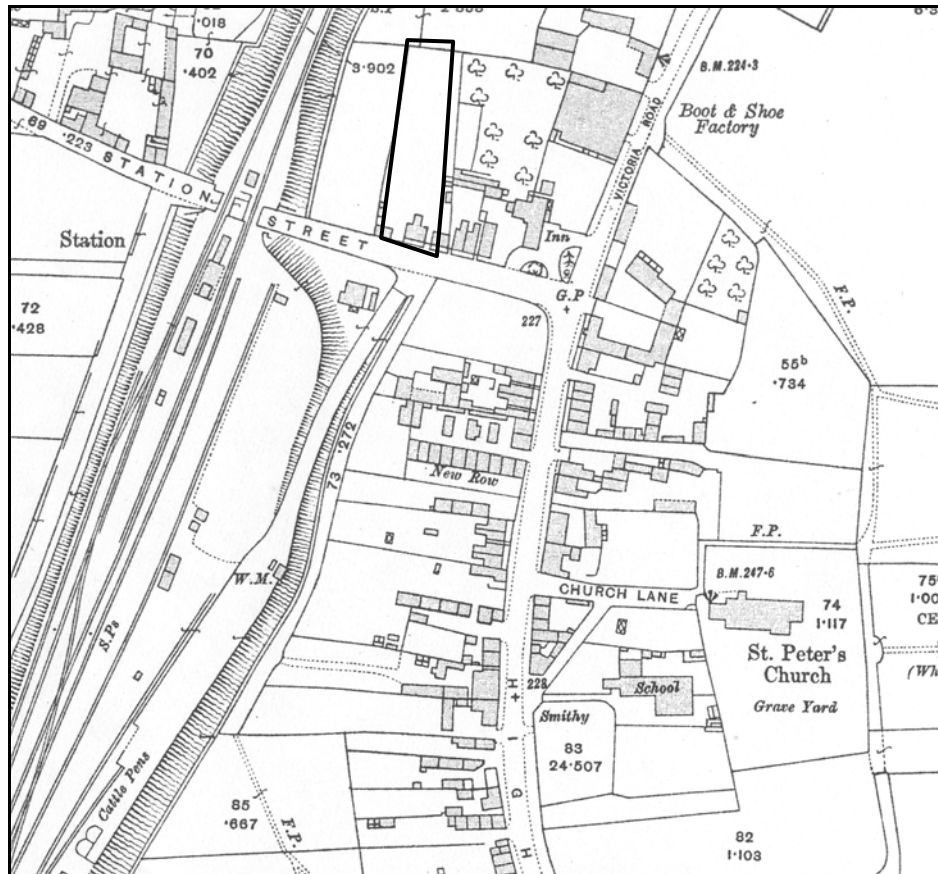


Figure 3. 1914 OS map Leicestershire XXXVII.13 with development area outlined (derived from scale 1:2500).

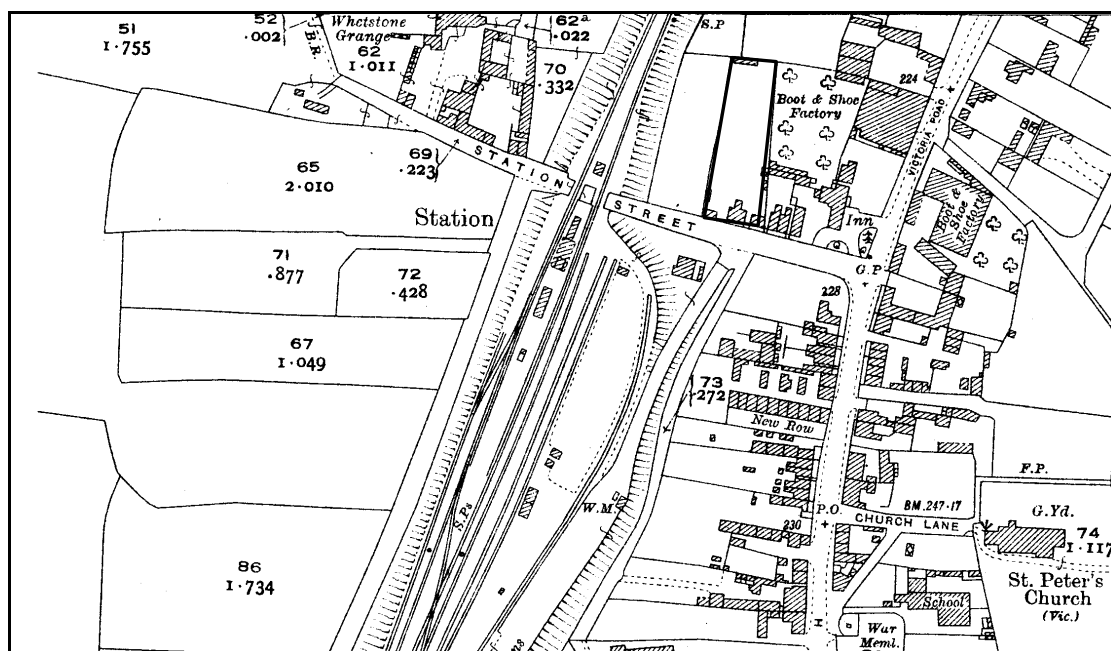


Figure 4. 1930 OS map of Leicestershire XXXVII.13 with development area outlined (derived from scale 1:2500).

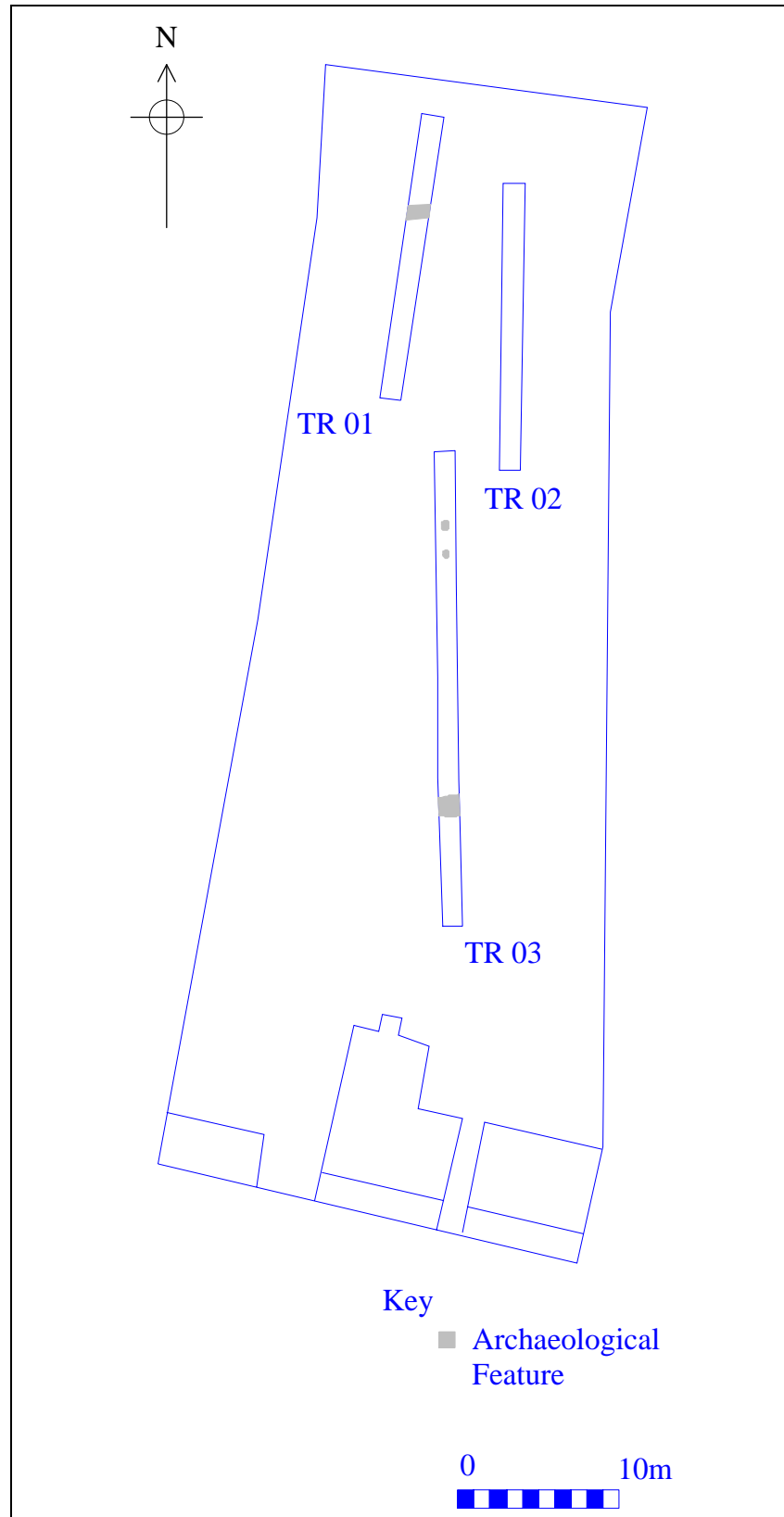


Figure 5. Trench location plan.

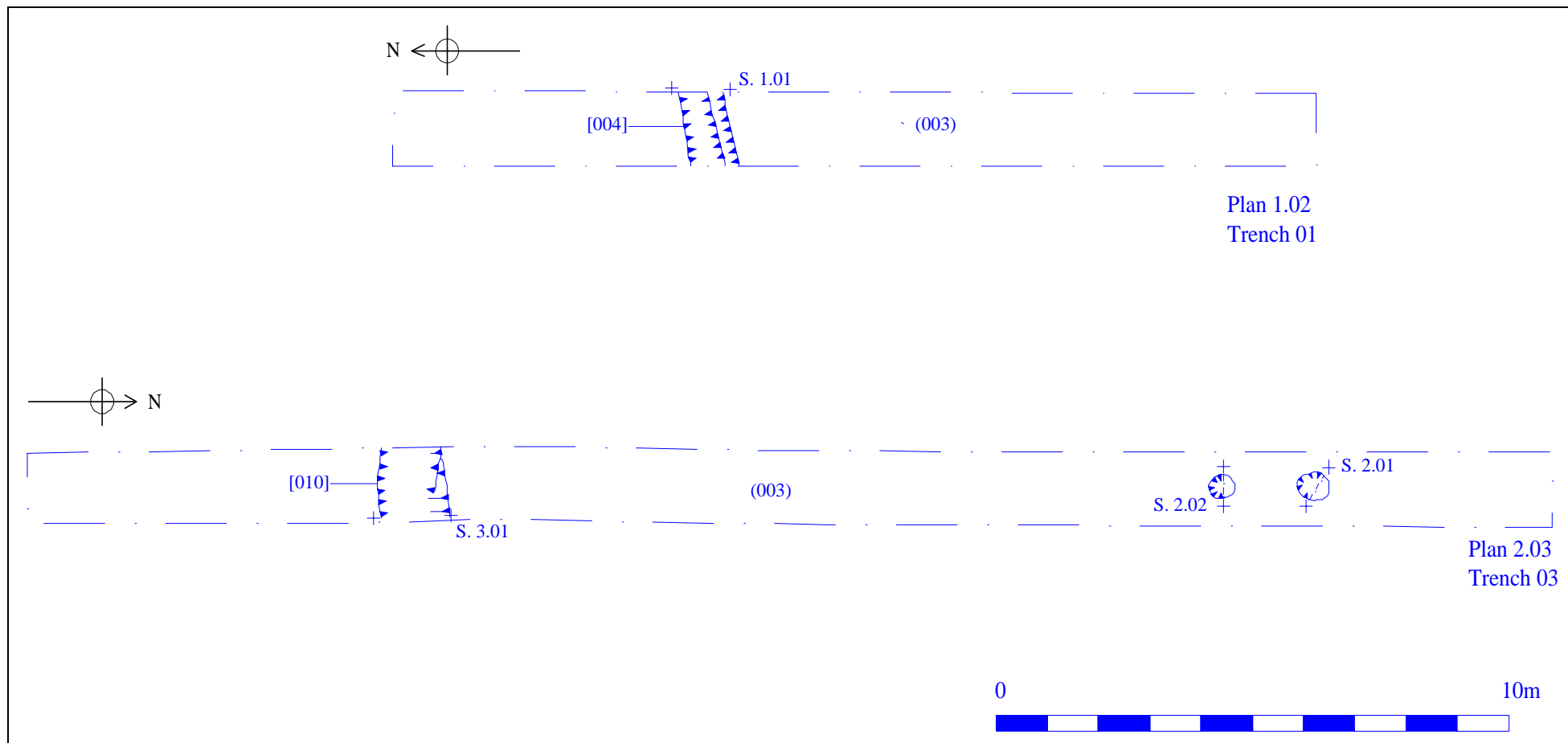


Figure 6. Plan of features in Trench 01 and 02.

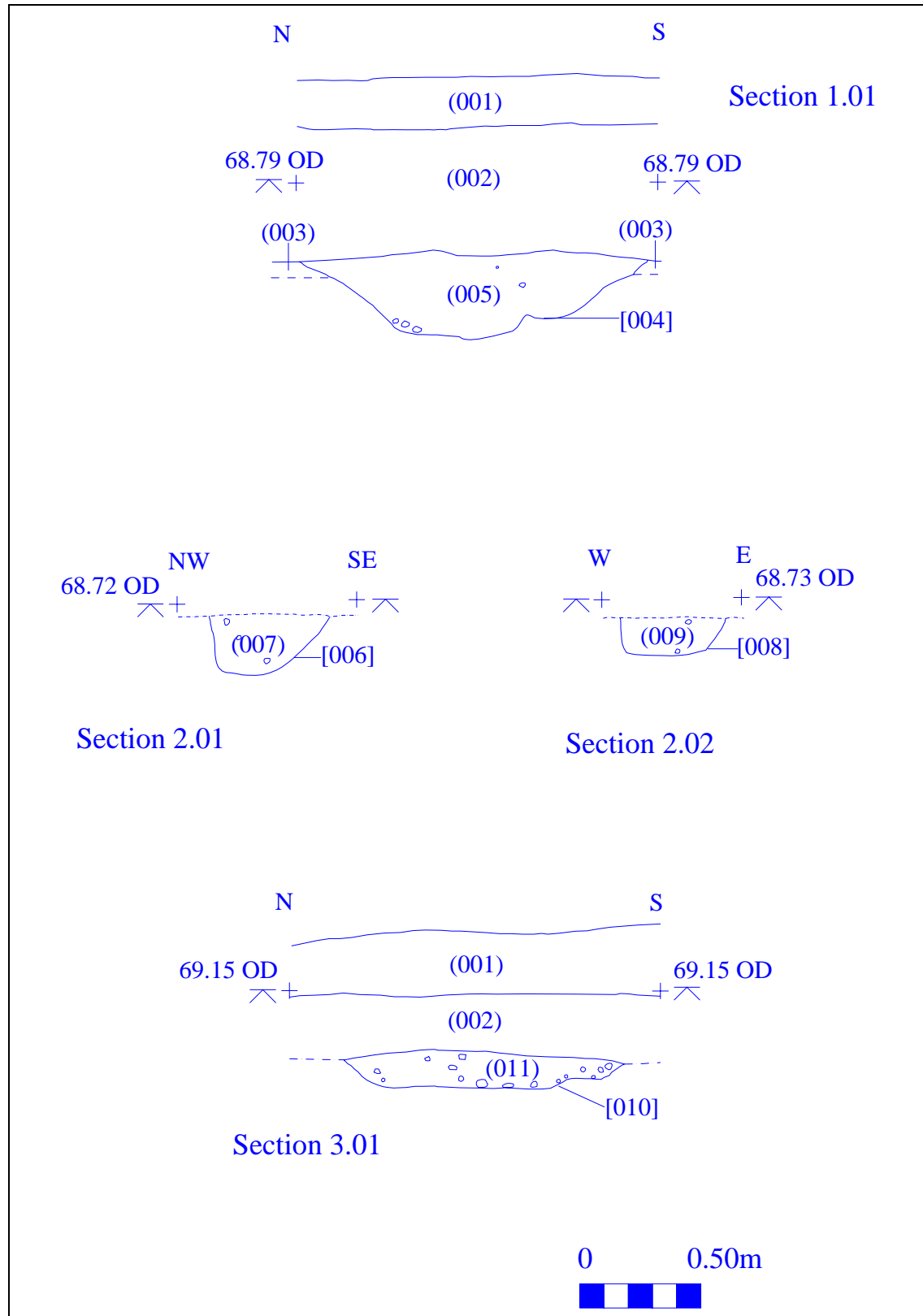


Figure 7. Sections from Trench 01 and Trench 02.





Plate 1. Feature [010] looking east.



Plate 2. Feature [004] looking east.





Plate 3. Feature [006] looking northeast.



Plate 4. Feature [008] looking north.