


Lockington Quarry Extension Phase 10 (Field 1)
Interim Report on Archaeological Evaluations
SK4728

Alastair MacIntosh

For: Lafarge Aggregates Ltd.

Checked by

Signed: Date: ..15-04-2008...
Name:Vicki Score.....
Approved by
Signed: Date:
Name:

University of Leicester
Archaeological Services
University Rd., Leicester, LE1 7RH
Tel: (0116) 2522848 Fax: (0116) 2522614
www.le.ac.uk/ulas

ULAS Report Number 2008-058
©2008
XA64.2008

CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Previous Work	1
Methodology	1
Results.....	2
Archaeological Deposits	2
Conclusions.....	3

FIGURES

Figure 1 – Location of Field 1

Figure 2 – Location of Trenches in Field 1

Figure 3 - Archaeological Features in Relation to Geophysical Anomalies

Figure 4 - Archaeological Features in Relation to Cropmarks

Figure 5 - Archaeological Features in Relation to Palaeochannels

Lockington Quarry Phase 10 (Field 1)

Interim Report

For Lafarge Aggregates Ltd.

Introduction

During March-April 2008, an evaluation was carried out on land around Warren Lane, Lockington, Leicestershire. The work was undertaken in advance of a planning application for aggregates extraction by Lafarge Aggregates Ltd. A total of 38 trenches were excavated and recorded during this period. This interim report is concerned with trenches **6-16** in the northernmost field of the application area (Fig. 1), hereafter known as field 1.

The application area is situated just outside an area of intense archaeological activity, including a scheduled Roman Villa site immediately to the north, Lockington Barrow cemetery to the south-east, and an Iron Age and Romano-British settlement site, currently under excavation, to the north-west.

Previous Work

The field under consideration lies immediately to the south of the scheduled Roman villa site (LE140, LE126). Cropmark evidence appears to suggest that related features, specifically a possible roadway and a pit alignment, extend southwards into this field. In order to assess this possibility, the field has been subjected to a fieldwalking survey (Priest 2000) and a programme of Magnetic Susceptibility and detailed Magnetometry (Butler and Coward 2000, Bartlett 2007).

Methodology

A total of eleven trenches were excavated in field 1 (Fig. 2). Two trenches, 6 and 11, were moved, 15m north and south respectively, in order to avoid an overhead power line. The trenches were placed in order to target geophysical anomalies (**6, 8, 10-14**) Lidar features (**15**) and cropmarks interpreted from aerial photography (**9, 16**). Where neither was in evidence, trenches were placed to assess the archaeological potential of 'blank' areas (**7**).

Trenches were excavated using a Komatsu PC240 tracked excavator with a 2.2m toothless bucket. After topsoil removal, any subsoils were excavated in 6-10 inch spits down to archaeological deposits or undisturbed natural sands and gravels. Each trench was 50m long by 2.2m wide. Trenches were oriented either north-south or east-west according to the features targeted. After excavation, all archaeological features were hand cleaned, excavated to the appropriate extent and recorded. All spoil was scanned using a metal detector, and a final inspection was carried out visually to ensure maximum recovery of artefacts.

Results

The stratigraphy in most of the trenches comprised topsoil overlying the gravels with an interface between the two, mixed by ploughing. Thin layers of alluvium were noted in trench **16**, above the palaeochannel deposits and along the eastern side of the field where deep soils were suggested by the aerial photographs. Trenches **7**, **10** and **14** were devoid of archaeological features.

Archaeological Deposits (Figs 3, 4 & 5)

Trench **6** contained two shallow east-west aligned ditches and a single small pit. The pit may correspond to the geophysical anomaly. The ditches may be the remains of truncated ridge and furrow. No dating evidence was recovered from this trench

Trench **8** was located to assess several geophysical anomalies. Three ditches were present, two running northwest-southeast and one running southwest-northeast. There was also a single pit. One of the ditches seems to correspond with a linear anomaly, while the pit appears to confirm the presence of a discrete anomaly on the geophysical interpretation. No dating evidence was recovered from this trench.

Trench **9** was positioned to verify features indicated by cropmarks, in particular a linear feature connected with the scheduled villa site in the adjacent field to the north. Three north-south aligned ditches were present, as well as a feature which may be either a pit or the terminus of a ditch. The easternmost ditch produced two sherds of pot. The sherds are abraded and difficult to identify. They both share similarities with earlier prehistoric pottery found in the region and may indicate that this feature is considerably earlier than the cropmarks.

Allowing for possible error in aerial photograph rectification, one of the ditches may correspond to a linear cropmark, while the pit may be part of the north-south pit alignment indicated by the aerial photographic survey (Fig. 4). These features were also indicated by linear trends in the geophysical survey (Fig. 3).

Trench **11** contained a single southwest-northeast aligned shallow ditch, which may be the remnant of a furrow. No dating evidence was recovered from this trench.

Trench **12** revealed two ditches on a roughly north-south alignment. The larger of the two contained several large fragments of modern field drain, which may have been ploughed into the feature over time. The smaller feature may be the remnants of a tree throw. No dating evidence was recovered from either feature.

Trench **13** contained two north-south aligned ditches and a single post-hole. Both ditches were somewhat deeper than their width initially indicated, and it is possible that they are the remnants of a hedgerow. These features were indicated by linear trends in the geophysical survey (Fig. 3). The post-hole appeared somewhat truncated. No dating evidence was recovered from any of these features.

Trench **15** was targeted on an area of deep soil, thought to be a palaeochannel. Excavation showed no trace of palaeochannel material in this trench, but did reveal several archaeological features. Towards the eastern end of the trench there was a single 10m wide feature, which was further excavated by machine to reveal a series of intercutting ditches, and a well preserved bank. The machine box proved too unstable for full cleaning and recording, although a photographic record was made before the section collapsed. Immediately to the west of this was a double ditch, which was hand excavated. At the western end of the trench was a single southeast-northwest aligned ditch with a red clay fill. No dating evidence was recovered.

Trench **16** contained no archaeological features, but cut into a deep palaeochannel deposit (Fig. 5). A machine section was cut through this deposit to the natural gravels, but, at approximately 2.5m deep, it was considered unsafe for work in the trench. A photograph was taken, but both sections collapsed before any further record could be made. The palaeochannel material comprised a homogenous blue-grey silty deposit to a depth of 1.5m, with a 0.5m deposit of yellow silt beneath it. At the base of the channel there were organic deposits approximately 150mm deep. This deposit was immediately above the natural gravel. The local water table appeared stable at a depth of 1.5m.

Conclusions

Although a number of archaeological features were identified across the entire field, little dating evidence was recovered. The main areas of activity appear to be in the vicinity of trenches **8**, **9** and **15**. There is no material evidence to suggest a continuation of the Roman villa site to the north into this field beyond the ditch and pit alignment indicated by the cropmarks and seen in trench **9**. Most of the archaeological features identified are narrow linear features or small irregular pits and it seems likely that these features, if of a similar date to the scheduled monument, are likely to be part of a peripheral field system. In comparison to the features identified on the settlement site to the west, these features are often shallow with sandy, silty fills mixed with gravel suggesting there has been significant truncation by agricultural activity.

Likewise, there is little indication of earlier activity which would relate to the barrow cemetery to the south. However pottery and flint from some of the features (and from previous fieldwalking) might suggest some earlier prehistoric activity within the site.

Bibliography

Butler A., and Coward J. 2000. *A Geophysical Survey at the Proposed Fulcrum Site, Kegworth, Leicestershire*
ULAS report 2000/57

Priest V. 2000. *A Fieldwalking Survey at the Fulcrum Site, Kegworth, Leicestershire.*
ULAS report 2000/56

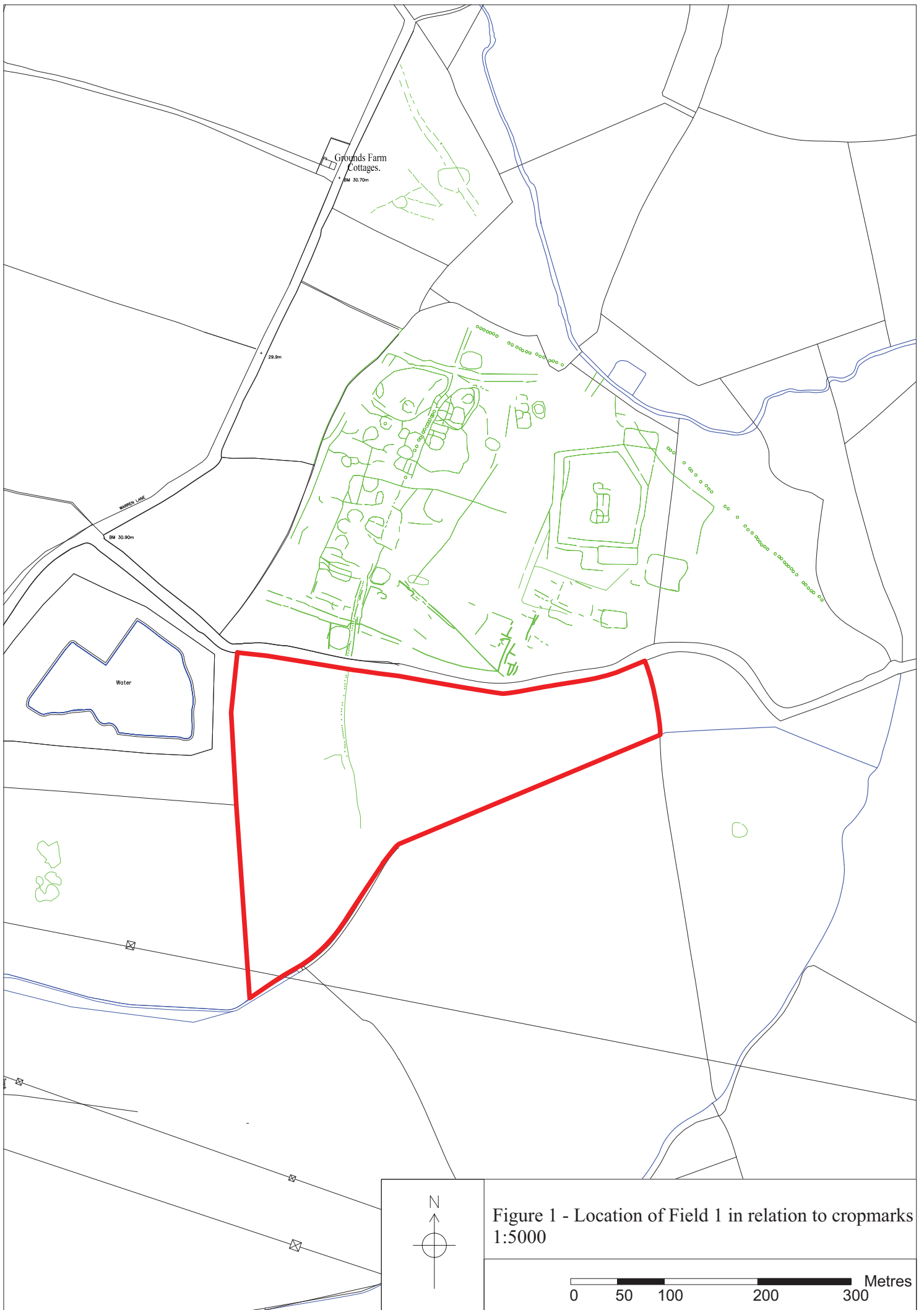


Figure 1 - Location of Field 1 in relation to cropmarks
1:5000

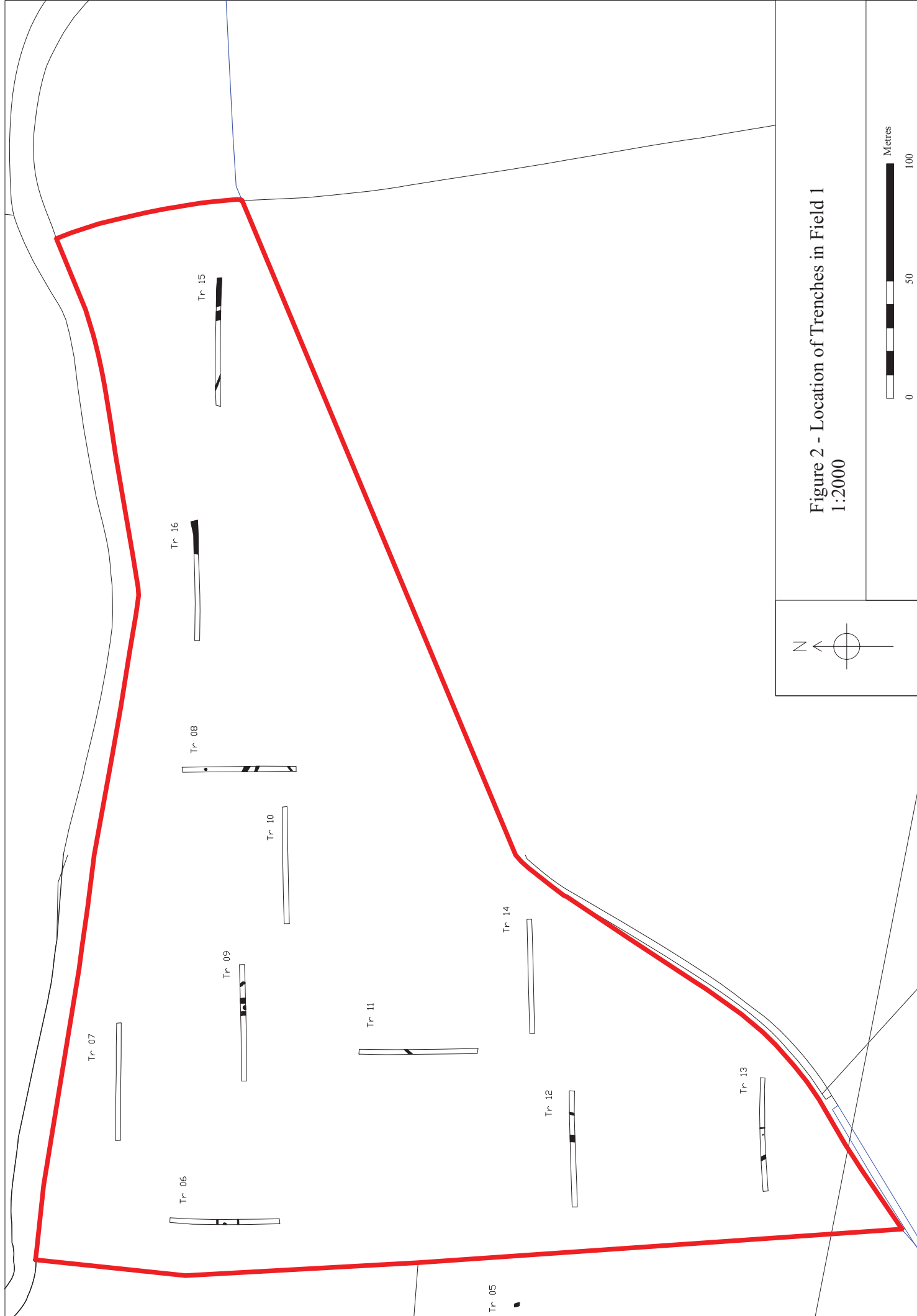
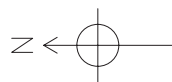


Figure 2 - Location of Trenches in Field 1
1:2000



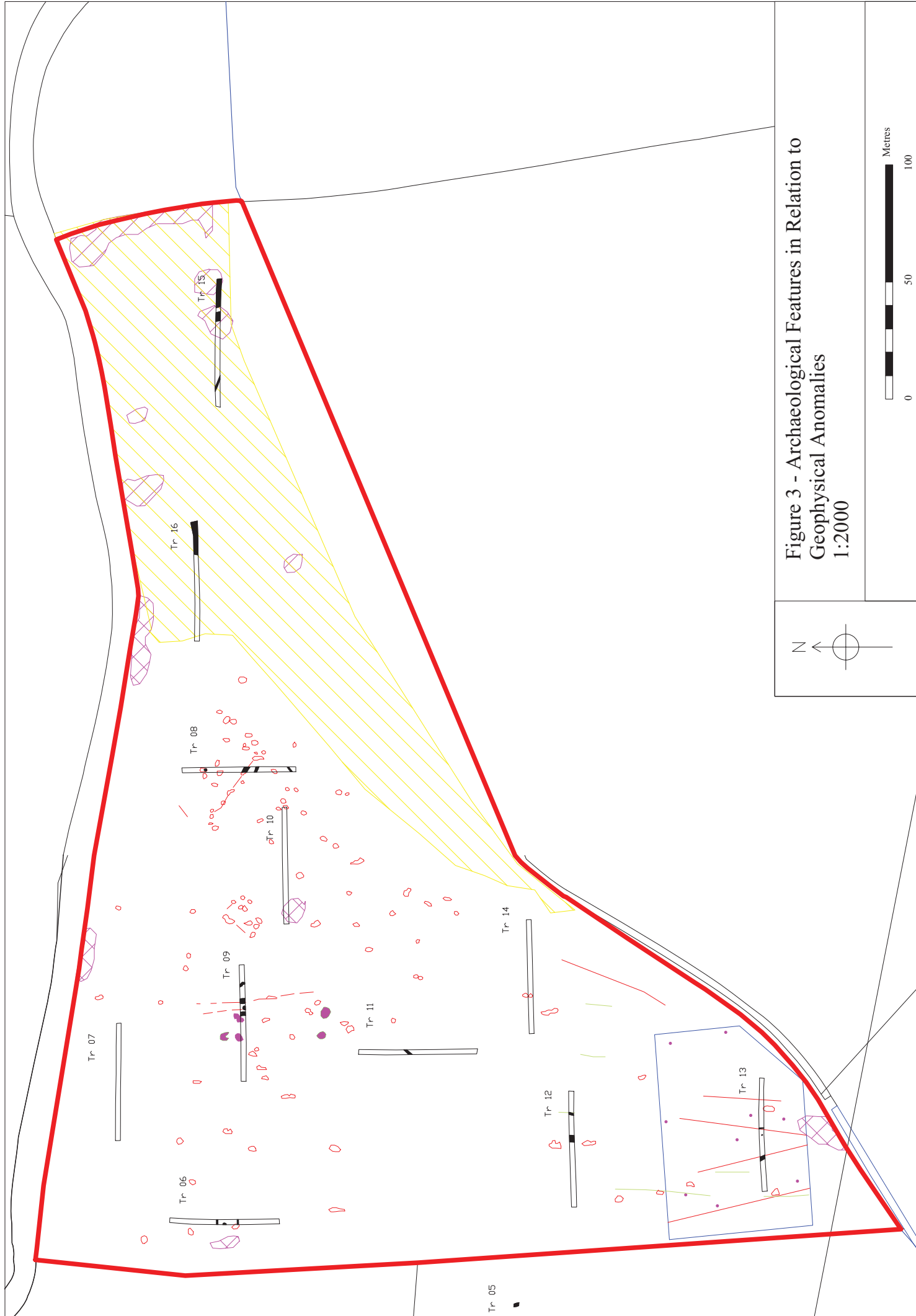
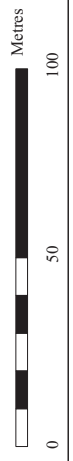
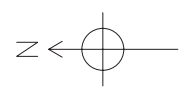


Figure 3 - Archaeological Features in Relation to Geophysical Anomalies
1:2000



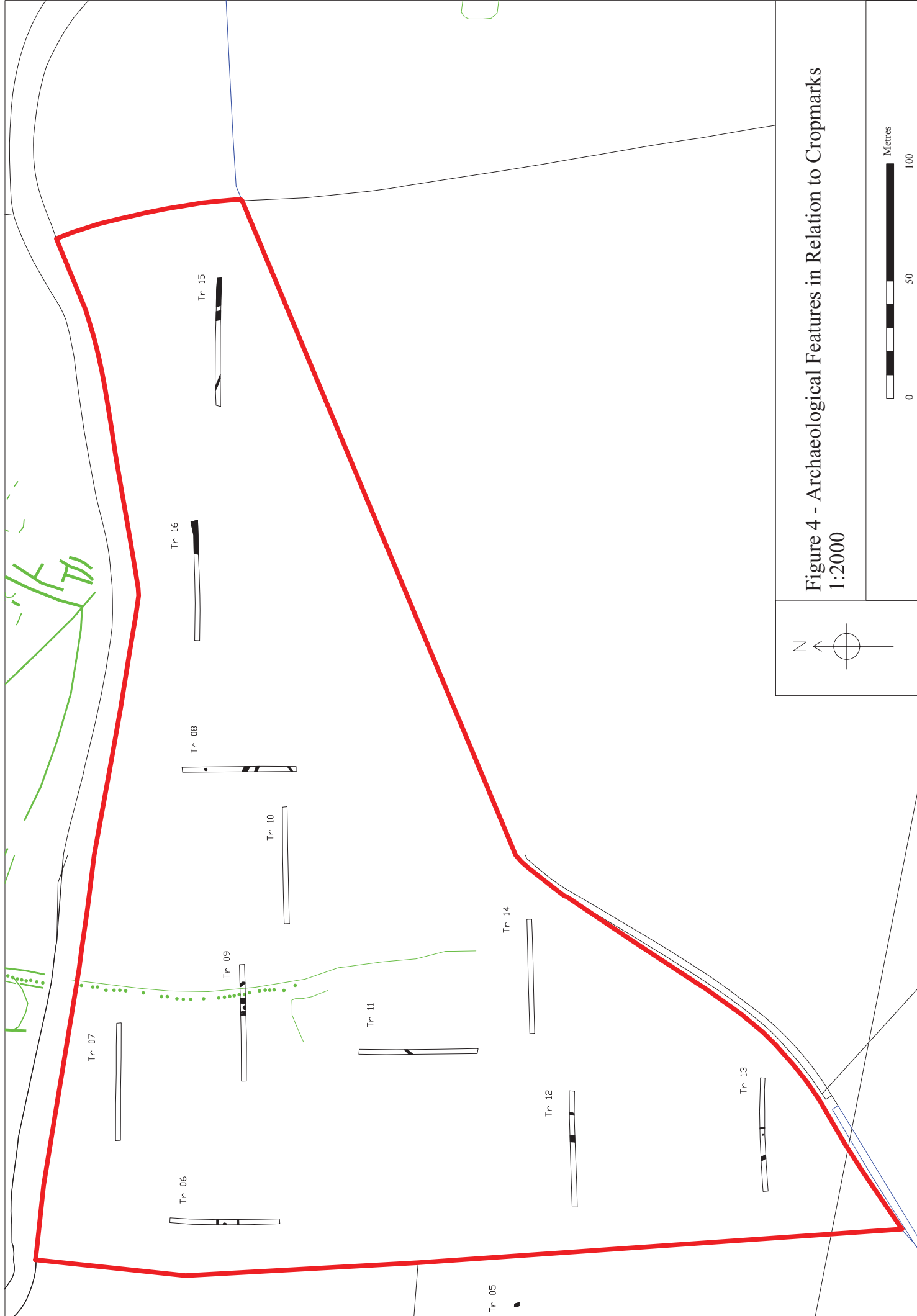


Figure 4 - Archaeological Features in Relation to Cropmarks
1:2000

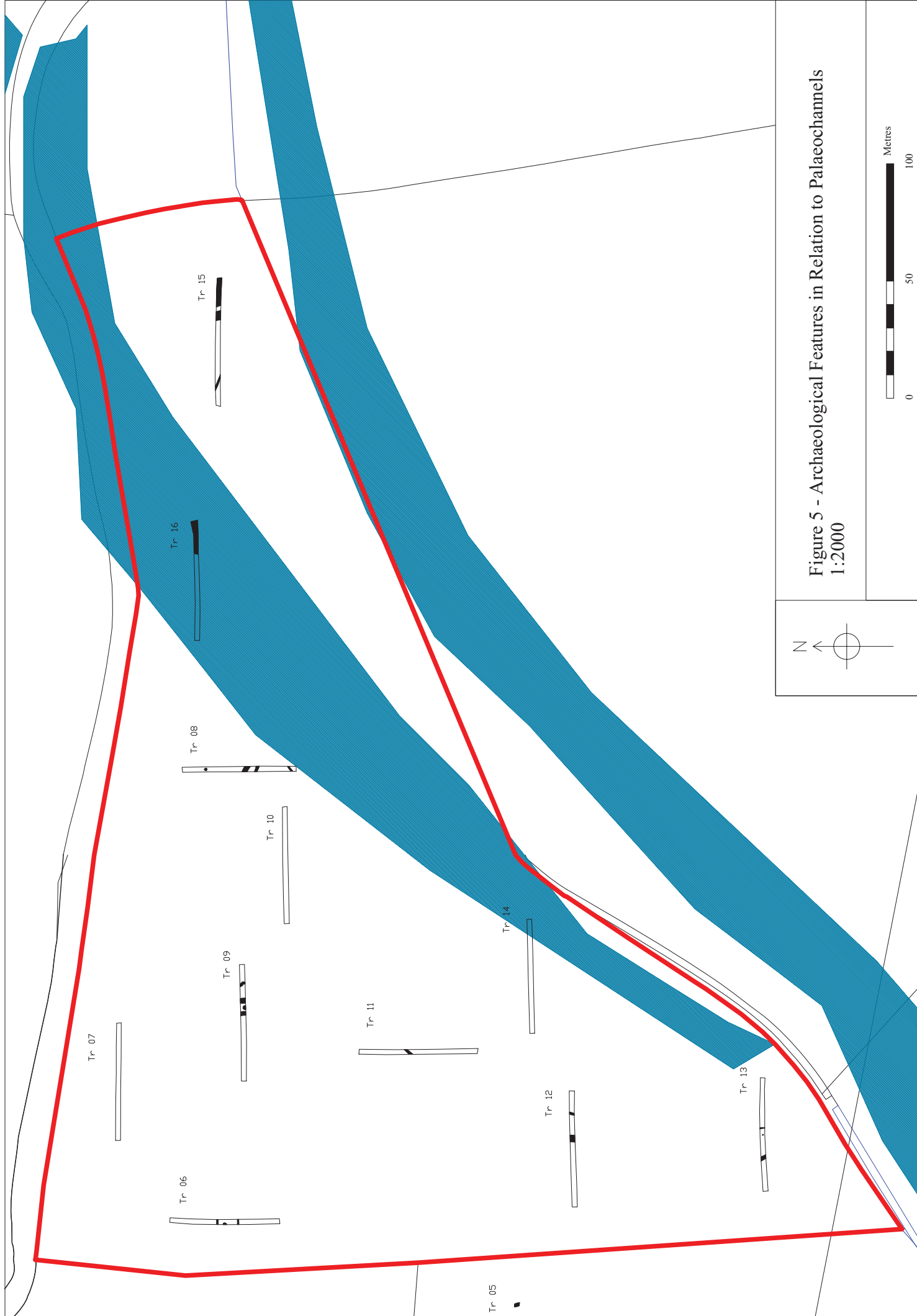


Figure 5 - Archaeological Features in Relation to Palaeochannels
1:2000