

**COURT FARM, EDINGTON, WILTSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

Author: I Williamson

**September 2000**

Report No. 131

*This report has been compiled with all reasonable skill care and attention to detail within the terms of the project as specified by the client and within the general terms and conditions of Archaeological Management Services Ltd trading as Foundations Archaeology. This report is confidential to the client. AMS Ltd accepts no responsibility whatsoever to third parties to whom this report or any part thereof is made known. Any such party relies on this report at their own risk.*

## **CONTENTS**

Summary

- 1 INTRODUCTION**
- 2 PROJECT BACKGROUND**
- 3 AIMS**
- 4 METHODOLOGY**
- 5 DISCUSSION**
- 6 CONCLUSION**
- 7 BIBLIOGRAPHY**
- 8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

### **List of Figures**

Figure 1: Site Location

Figure 2: Trench Location

Figure 3: Trench 1, plan & section.

Figure 4: Trenches 2 & 3, sections

Figure 5: Trench 4, plan & section

Figure 6: Trench 5, plan & section.

## **SUMMARY**

On the 14<sup>th</sup> September 2000 Foundations Archaeology undertook an Archaeological Evaluation on land at Court Farm, Edington, Westbury, Wiltshire (NGR ST 934536) on behalf of York King Ltd.

The proposed development will comprise the construction of nine new houses with access, on land currently occupied by agricultural buildings. The development is located within an area identified by Wiltshire County Archaeological Services as being of archaeological importance. A priory was established in Edington between 1351 and 1539. A number of field systems to the north and south of Court Farm have been identified on Aerial Photographs. Metal artefacts from both the Roman and medieval periods have also been discovered in the vicinity.

Five evaluation trenches, one 10m x 1.6m, two 2m x 2m and two 5m x 1.6m, were excavated and recorded. These revealed two post-medieval linear features and a probable palaeochannel. No other deposits of archaeological significance were identified and the site yielded a general paucity of artefactual evidence.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 On the 14<sup>th</sup> September 2000 Foundations Archaeology undertook an Archaeological Evaluation on behalf of York King Ltd, on land at Court Farm, Edington, Wiltshire, NGR ST 934536 (Figure One).
- 1.2 The proposed development site for nine new houses with associated access is located on an area currently occupied by agricultural buildings. The land surrounding the study area was under pasture. The archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations* issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994), the *Standards for Archaeological Assessment and Field Evaluation in Wiltshire* (County Archaeological Service 1995) and the Project Design prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2000).
- 1.3 This document presents the findings of the archaeological evaluation and conforms to the specification set out in Appendices 4 and 5 of The Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage 1991).

## **2 PROJECT BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The development area was situated in an area occupied by agricultural buildings surrounded by pasture, with an underlying geology of Head, close to the boundary with Upper Greensand.
- 2.2 Edington is recorded in the Domesday survey of 1086 as 'Edendone'.
- 2.3 An important priory was established in Edington between 1351 and 1539.
- 2.4 Former field systems in the modern fields surrounding the village, and particularly to the north and south of Court Farm have been identified on aerial photographs.
- 2.5 A number of metal finds from the Roman and medieval periods have also been recovered in these areas.
- 2.6 The study area therefore had the potential for the preservation of archaeological features and deposits, in particular those associated with medieval settlement. The evaluation remit covered the possible discovery of finds and features of all periods.

### **3 AIMS**

- 3.1 The aims of the archaeological evaluation were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits in order to provide sufficient information to establish the nature, extent, preservation and potential of any surviving archaeological remains. It aimed to make recommendations for the management of the resource, including further archaeological works if necessary. This will allow reasonable planning decisions to be taken regarding the archaeological provision for the area affected by the proposed development.
- 3.2 These aims were to be achieved by the pursuit of the following specific objectives as stated in the Project Design (Foundations Archaeology 2000).
- i) to define, identify and record any archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible.
  - ii) to attempt to characterise the nature of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning of features present on the site.
  - iii) where possible to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence and recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples.

### **4 METHODOLOGY**

- 4.1 The evaluation comprised excavation and recording of one 10m x 1.6m, two 2m x 2m and two 5m x 1.6m evaluation trenches within the development area (Figure Two).
- 4.2 All non-significant overburden was removed by a mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.6m toothless grading bucket, to the top of the archaeological deposits or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first.
- 4.3 All archaeological deposits were excavated by hand, and recorded to an appropriate level of investigation in order to fulfil the aims of the evaluation as set out in the Project Design.
- 4.4 Any archaeological deposits encountered were to be excavated and fully recorded to the standards set out in the Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual.

## 5 DISCUSSION

- 5.1 Archaeological deposits were identified in Trenches 4 and 5. These comprised post-medieval linear features. Trench 1 contained a large linear feature, which may be a palaeochannel. Trenches 2 and 3 were excavated in a yard area and revealed several successive yard surfaces, but no further deposits of archaeological significance.
- 5.2 Trench One, was located 3m from the southern frontage of the proposed development area. This was an east- west aligned, 10m x 1.6m trench and was excavated to the underlying natural Upper Greensand at a depth of c. 0.60m- 1.20m ( c. 82.45m- 81.96m AOD). A layer of thick, mid blue-grey, silty clay (103) sealed the natural. This layer extended the entire length of the trench with a depth of 0.40m- 0.60m and followed the natural substrate to form a shallow channel like profile, which may represent a silted up watercourse or palaeochannel. This layer had been disturbed by several modern pipe cuts, and yielded no artefactual evidence. The channel was not investigated to its full depth, due to Health and Safety considerations. Excavation stopped at 1.2m from the modern ground surface. The thick mid blue-grey silty clay (103) was overlain by a layer of mixed hardcore (102), which was in turn sealed by a layer of tarmac (101). The trench identified no other deposits of archaeological significance.
- 5.3 Trench Two (2m x 2m) was located on the eastern side of a yard area surrounded by barns and cattle sheds. The underlying natural substrate was encountered at a depth of 1.0m (81.15m AOD) and was overlain by a dark grey-black clay (204) with a depth of 0.30m- 0.40m and occasional charcoal inclusions. Several fragments of post-medieval brick were recovered from this layer. The dark clay layer (204) underlay a mid grey silty clay (203) which contained a high brick and rubble content. The layer (203) was sealed by mixed concrete and rubble (202) which formed a yard surface which was sealed beneath the modern concrete (201) of the present yard. No archaeologically significant deposits were identified in this trench which was heavily disturbed by post-medieval agricultural construction.
- 5.4 The second 2m x 2m trench (Trench Three) was located 4m from the frontage of an existing barn in the western entrance to the study area (Figure Two). Upper Greensand was encountered at a depth of c. 0.70m (81.92m AOD) and was sealed by a grey clay with a high rubble content (303). This layer was 0.30m in depth and was overlain by a yard surface (302) comprising concrete and packed rubble with a depth of 0.20m. The yard surface (302) was sealed by modern concrete (301). The stratigraphy of this trench exhibited a similar level of disturbance as that of Trench Two and revealed no archaeological deposits.
- 5.5 Trench 4 was aligned east-west, and excavated in the pasture approximately 5m to the north of the agricultural buildings. This 5m x 1.6m trench was excavated to the Health and Safety limit of 1.2m (78.87m AOD) but the

underlying natural was not encountered. The deepest stratigraphic layer (407) comprised dark blue-grey clay with black organic mottling and evidence of root disturbance. A north-south aligned, 0.98m wide rubble filled linear feature [405] (Figures Three and Four) was cut into this layer a depth of 0.52m. The linear feature contained a mid grey fill of mixed silty clay and rubble comprising gravel and limestone fragments (406). This feature yielded several small sherds of glazed post-medieval pottery and probably represents a soakaway or some form of drainage ditch. Both (407) and linear [405] were sealed by a dark 'chocolate brown' silty clay layer (403) with a high organic content and infrequent limestone inclusions. This layer was overlain by a layer of mixed gravel hardcore (402) over which a thin (0.04m- 0.06, poor layer of topsoil and slurry (401) had formed. The linear feature [405] was the only archaeological feature observed in this trench.

- 5.6 Trench 5 was aligned east-west and located directly to the west of Trench 4. This trench was excavated to the Health and Safety limit of 1.2m without encountering the natural substrate. The deepest stratigraphic deposit (Figure Four) was a mixed green and brown silty clay (504) at a depth of 0.80m- 1.20m (78.97m AOD), following a gentle dipping gradient to the east. This layer appeared to be contaminated, probably with slurry and to possibly form part of a buried slurry pit. Cut into the top of layer (504) was a north-west-south-east aligned gully (Figure Three), with a shallow 'u' shaped profile. The gully contained a mid grey-brown silty clay fill (506) and was dated by several small sherds of green and brown glazed post-medieval ceramic sealed within its make-up. This linear gully is of unknown purpose but could have been used for drainage. Overlying both layer (504) and the linear feature [505] was a mid brown, silty clay with infrequent limestone inclusions and contained several unidentified animal bone fragments and fragments of post-medieval ceramics. This layer was sealed by a mixed chalky hardcore (502) over which a thin layer of topsoil and slurry (501) had built up. The shallow linear gully [505] was the only archaeological deposit observed in this trench.

## **6 CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 The evaluation identified no deposits of archaeological significance. The only features identified were two post-medieval linear features, the probable drainage ditch [405] and the gully [505] of unknown function.
- 6.2 Both of these features were located in the pasture to the north of the existing agricultural buildings in Trenches 4 and 5 respectively and dated by glazed ceramics sealed within the make-up of their fills.
- 6.3 Neither Trench 4 or 5 were excavated to the natural substrate. This could be due to the natural Greensand dropping away to the north. It is also possible that disturbed nature of the stratigraphy in each trench denotes agricultural activity such as slurry pitting. Although the results of the investigation within these trenches were unclear, no direct evidence of medieval or earlier field

systems were observed and it seems unlikely that such features would survive at any greater depth.

- 6.4 Trench 1 revealed no deposits of archaeological significance. The entire trench appeared to be located within the limits of the mid grey clay fill (103), which extended the full length of the trench. The 'clean' nature of this fill, with no obvious cut or tip lines and the lack of any artefactual evidence from within its make-up suggest an alluvial origin for this feature. It is probably a paleochannel.
- 6.5 The success of the evaluation and the objectives set out in Section 3 were limited by modern agricultural disturbances to the area. However the presence of field systems and ridge and furrow in the fields to the north and south of the development area justified the implementation of an archaeological evaluation.

## **7 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Foundations Archaeology 2000 *Court Farm, Edington: Project Design*.

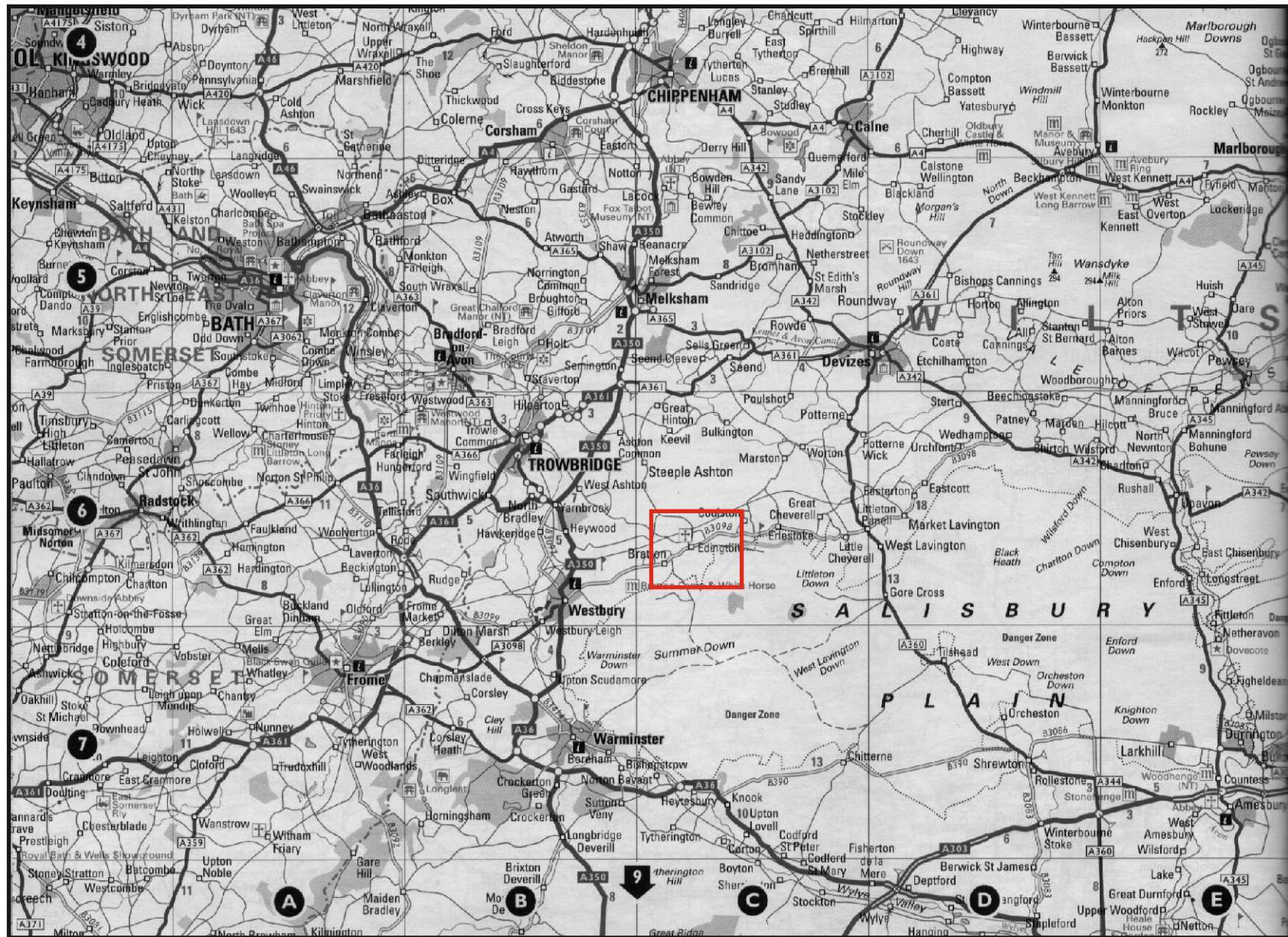
IFA 1994 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavations*. Institute of Field Archaeologists

## **8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Foundations Archaeology would like to thank Duncan Coe and Stephanie Chettle of Wiltshire County Council Archaeological Service, Mr Michael King and A+D plant hire.



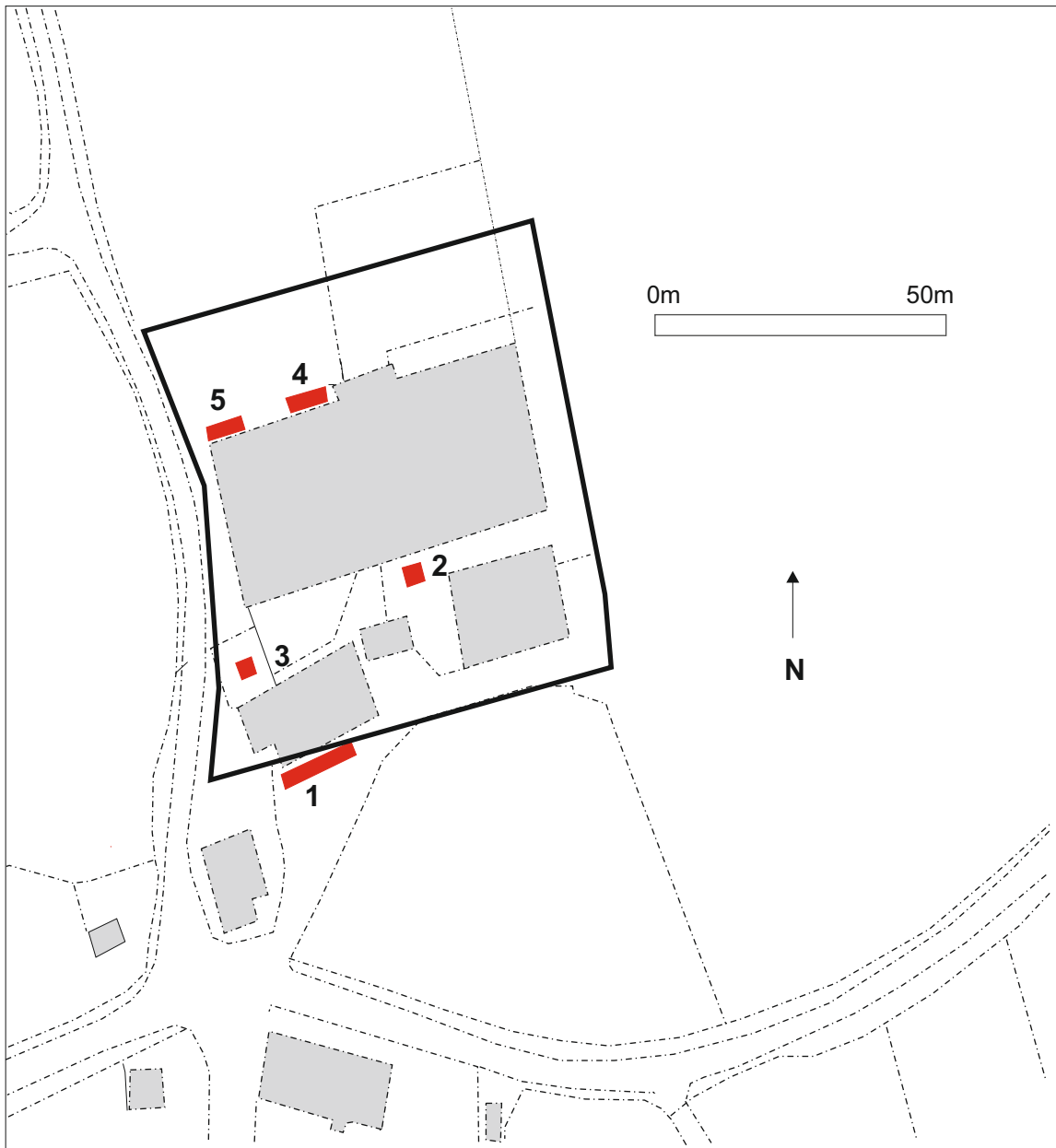
FIGURE 1: Court Farm, Edington. Site location.



 Site location

0km  10km

FIGURE 2: Court Farm, Edington. Location of trenches 1-5.



Copyright ©Foundations Archaeology 2000




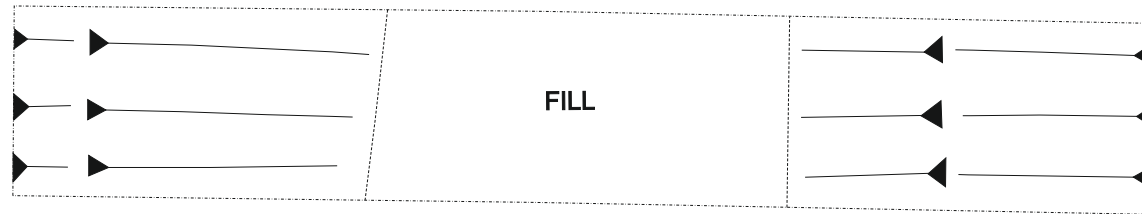
-  Trench
-  Study area
-  Modern buildings and landscape

FIGURE 3: Court Farm, Edington. Trench 1, plan and section.

PLAN: TRENCH 1 1:50



SOUTH FACING SECTION TRENCH 1 1:50

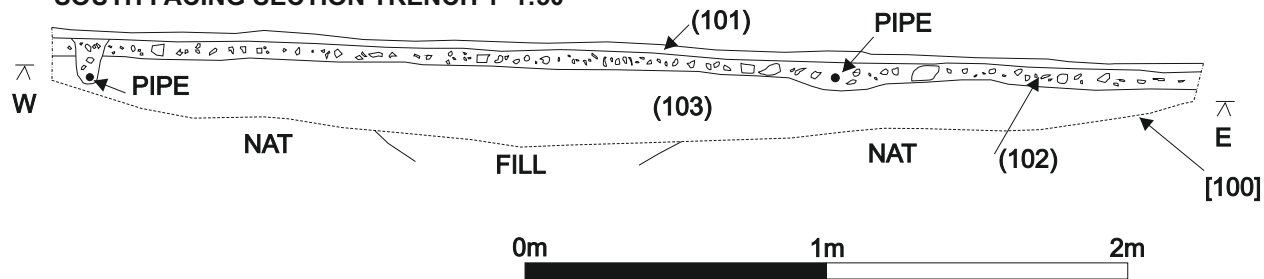
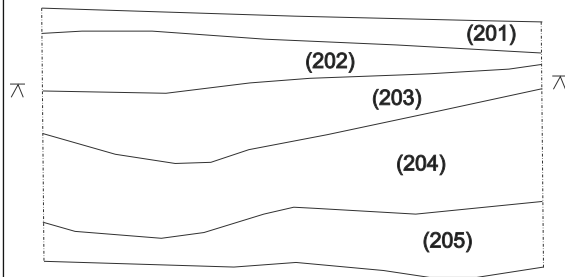


FIGURE 4: Court Farm, Edington. Trenches 2 & 3, sections.

TRENCH 2 EAST FACING SECTION



TRENCH 3 NORTH WEST FACING SECTION

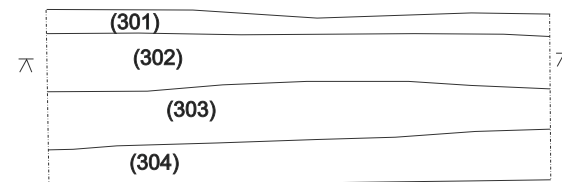


FIGURE 5: Court Farm Edington. Trench 4, plan and section.

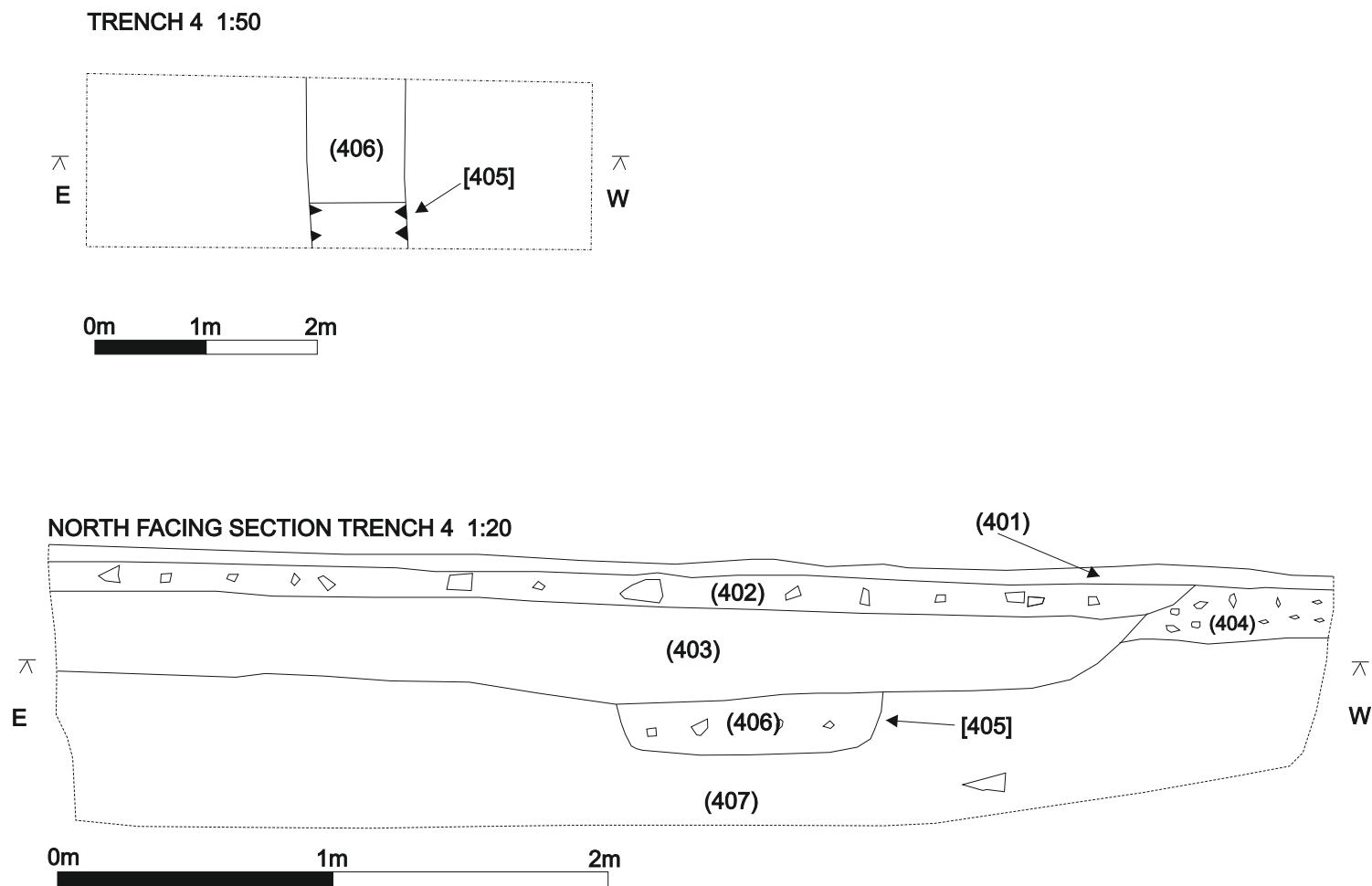
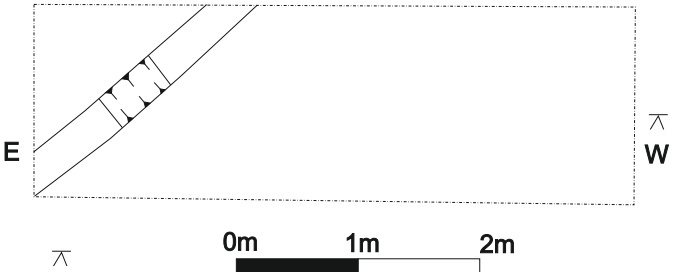


FIGURE 6: Court Farm, Edington. Trench 5, plan & section.

**TRENCH 5 1:50**



**TRENCH 5 SOUTH FACING SECTION**

