

**WEST TREES,
MILDENHALL,
MARLBOROUGH,
WILTSHIRE**

NGR: SU 20875 69642

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Roy King BA MIFA

March 2005
Report No. 404



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SUMMARY

In March 2005 Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological evaluation on land at the rear of West Trees, Mildenhall, Marlborough, Wiltshire (NGR: SU 20875 69642). The project was commissioned by the landowner, Mr David Fishlock.

The evaluation comprised the excavation and recording of two trenches each measuring 20m by 1.6m, across the proposed development area (Figure 2)

A single certain archaeological feature, in the form of a possible medieval ditch, was present within the evaluated area, along with a number of negative features which appeared to be of natural origin.

GLOSSARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Archaeology

For the purpose of this project, archaeology is taken to mean the study of past human societies through their material remains from prehistoric times to the modern era. No rigid upper date limit has been set, but AD 1900 is used as a general cut-off point.

CBM

Ceramic Building Material.

Medieval

The period between the Norman Conquest (AD 1066) and *circa* AD 1500.

Natural

In archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site, in this case chalk and clay with flints.

NGR

National Grid Reference from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

OD

Ordnance datum; used to express a given height above sea-level. (AOD Above Ordnance Datum)

OS

Ordnance Survey

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by Foundations Archaeology in March 2005 on land at the rear of West Trees, Mildenhall, Marlborough, Wiltshire (NGR: SU 20875 69642). The project was commissioned by the landowner, Mr David Fishlock and jointly funded by Wiltshire County Council.
- 1.2 There has been a proposal to undertake a new residential development on the land at the rear of West Trees. A programme of archaeological works was required prior to the determination of planning permission, in accordance with the principals of Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG 16): Archaeology and Planning (DoE 1990) and the archaeological policies of Wiltshire County Council.
- 1.3 This report constitutes the results of the archaeological works. The project was undertaken in accordance with the Project Design prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2005), based upon the Brief provided by Wiltshire County Council Archaeological Service (2005). The fieldwork was undertaken in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Standards and Guidance on Archaeological Evaluation* (1994, revised 2001) and *Standards for Archaeological Assessment and Field Evaluation in Wiltshire* (CAS 1995).

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site lies within an area of archaeological potential.
- 2.2 A Neolithic flint core (SU26NW102) and Romano-British pottery sherds (SU26NW306) were discovered in a pit in a construction trench immediately west of the site in 1973. In addition the Roman town of Cunetio is located to the east of the village (SU26NW300). The site was excavated between 1956-64 and around 20 buildings and numerous coins were unearthed.
- 2.3 The village itself is first recorded as Mildanhald in AD803-5 (SU26NW405) and a square earthwork of possible medieval date has been recorded north east of the church (SU26NW606).
- 2.4 The site therefore contains the potential for archaeological deposits of prehistoric, Roman and medieval date. This did not prejudice the evaluation against the recovery of finds or features dating to other 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; as well as to make recommendations

for management of the resource, including further archaeological works if necessary. In turn this would allow reasonable planning decisions to be taken regarding the archaeological provision for the areas affected by the proposed development.

3.2 These aims were achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:

i) To define and identify the nature of 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) To recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence and recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 The project required the excavation of two evaluation trenches each measuring 20m by 1.6m. Due to on-site constraints it was only possible to excavate Trench 2 in two parts. The trench locations are shown on Figure 2.

4.2 Topsoil and non-significant overburden were removed to the top of the archaeological deposits or natural, whichever was encountered first. This was achieved with the use of a mechanical excavator with a toothless grading bucket. Thereafter the trenches were cleaned and all additional excavation was conducted by hand.

4.3 All excavation and recording work was undertaken in accordance with the Foundations Archaeology Project Design (2005) and the Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Land use at the time of the archaeological investigation consisted of residential garden. The modern ground surface sloped downwards from east to west.

5.2 **Trench 1** (20m long) was aligned approximately northeast-southwest and was excavated onto natural clay with flints at an average depth of 0.51m (130.64m OD) from the modern ground surface. The natural substrates were sealed beneath subsoil layer (102), up to 0.22m thick, which consisted of a mid brown clay silt with frequent flint inclusions. This was overlaid by (101), up to 0.36m thick, which comprised a dark brown clay silt humus. A single possible feature was present within this trench. This consisted of a cut with an irregular

plan and uneven sides. It contained a silt clay fill with quantities of charcoal and appeared to represent a burnt out root channel.

- 5.3 **Trench 2** (22.9m long) was excavated in two sections measuring 13.8m and 9.1m long respectively. In the longer northern section the trench was excavated onto natural clay with flints at an average depth of 0.39m (130.80m OD) and in the shorter southern section at 0.27m (130.38m OD). The natural substrates were sealed beneath subsoil layer (202), up to 0.20m thick, which consisted of a mid brown clay silt with frequent flint inclusions. This was overlaid by topsoil (101), up to 0.30m thick in the northern section and up to 0.16m thick in the southern section, which comprised a dark brown clay silt humus.
- 5.4 A total of seven irregular features were present within the northern section. Each of these features was irregular in form with uneven edges and bases and appeared to represent root/tree holes. All of the features contained a dark brown clay silt, often with surviving organic root material. Two small sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from these features, but this material is almost certainly residual in context.
- 5.5 A total of four features were present within the southern section. Three of these consisted of similar root/tree holes to those encountered in the northern section. A single archaeological feature was present within this section of trench. Ditch [207] was aligned north east-south west and measured 0.72m wide by 0.27m deep with steep sides and a narrow flat base. It contained a dark grey brown silty clay (208) with frequent flint inclusions from which a single sherd of medieval pottery was recovered. The feature was cut through the subsoil.

6 DISCUSSION

- 6.1 A single certain archaeological feature was present within the two trenches, along with a number of root/tree holes. These latter features were concentrated in Trench 2 close to the property boundary, which is likely to have previously contained trees or shrubs. In historical times the area of Trench 2 is believed to have been used as a brickyard, although no archaeological trace of this activity was identified.
- 6.2 Ditch [207] may be of medieval date. The feature was cut through subsoil (202) but this layer, containing a very high proportion of flint pebbles, may have been deposited in geological, rather than archaeological, timescales. The feature is likely to represent either a drainage ditch, or possibly a grubbed out hedgerow.
- 6.3 The medieval pottery comprised three undiagnostic bodysherds of local wares from the Newbury B industry (12th-14th century). This material represents an entirely standard background scatter of material for a site on the edge of a historic village.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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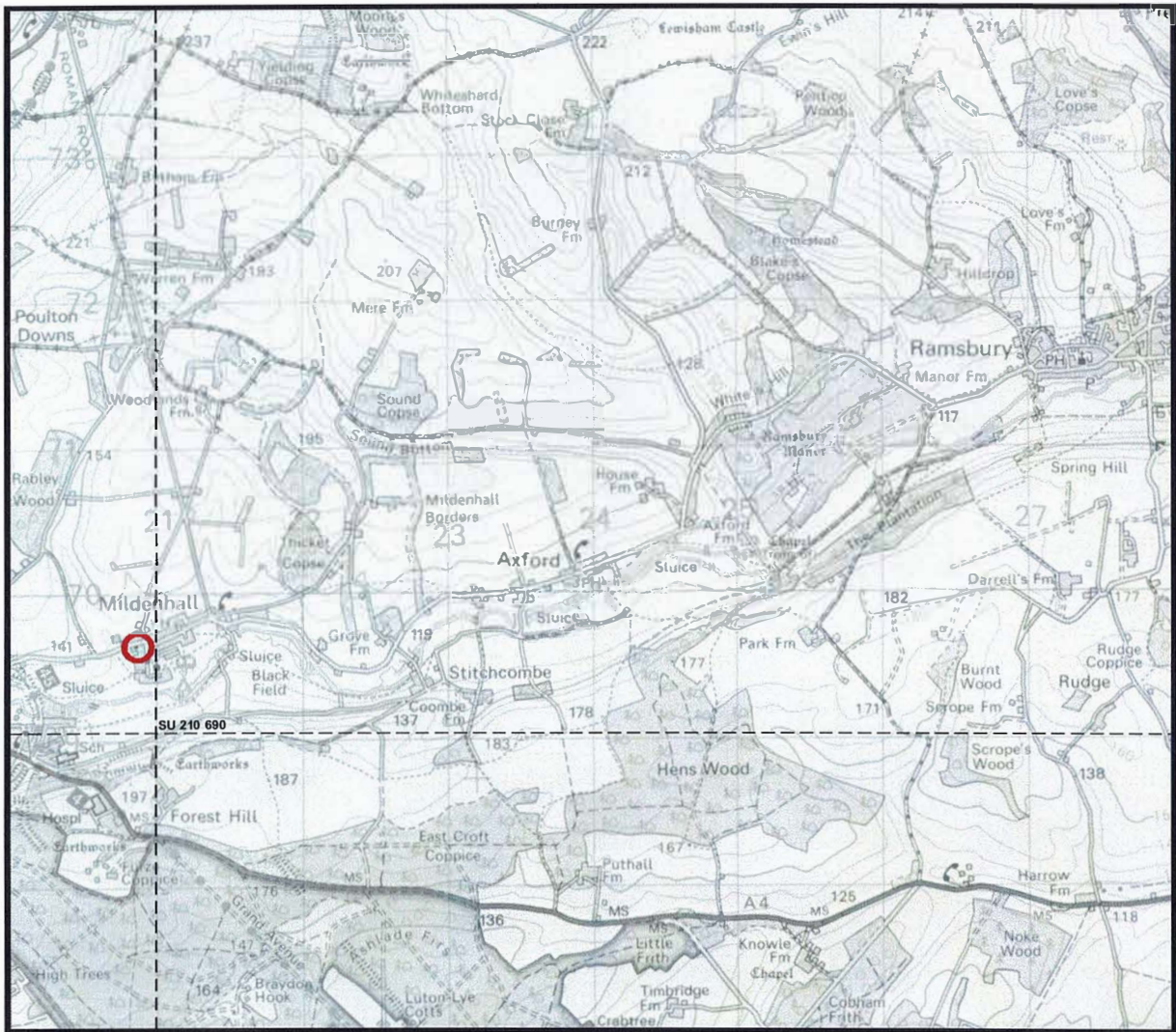
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8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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FIGURE 1: Site Location

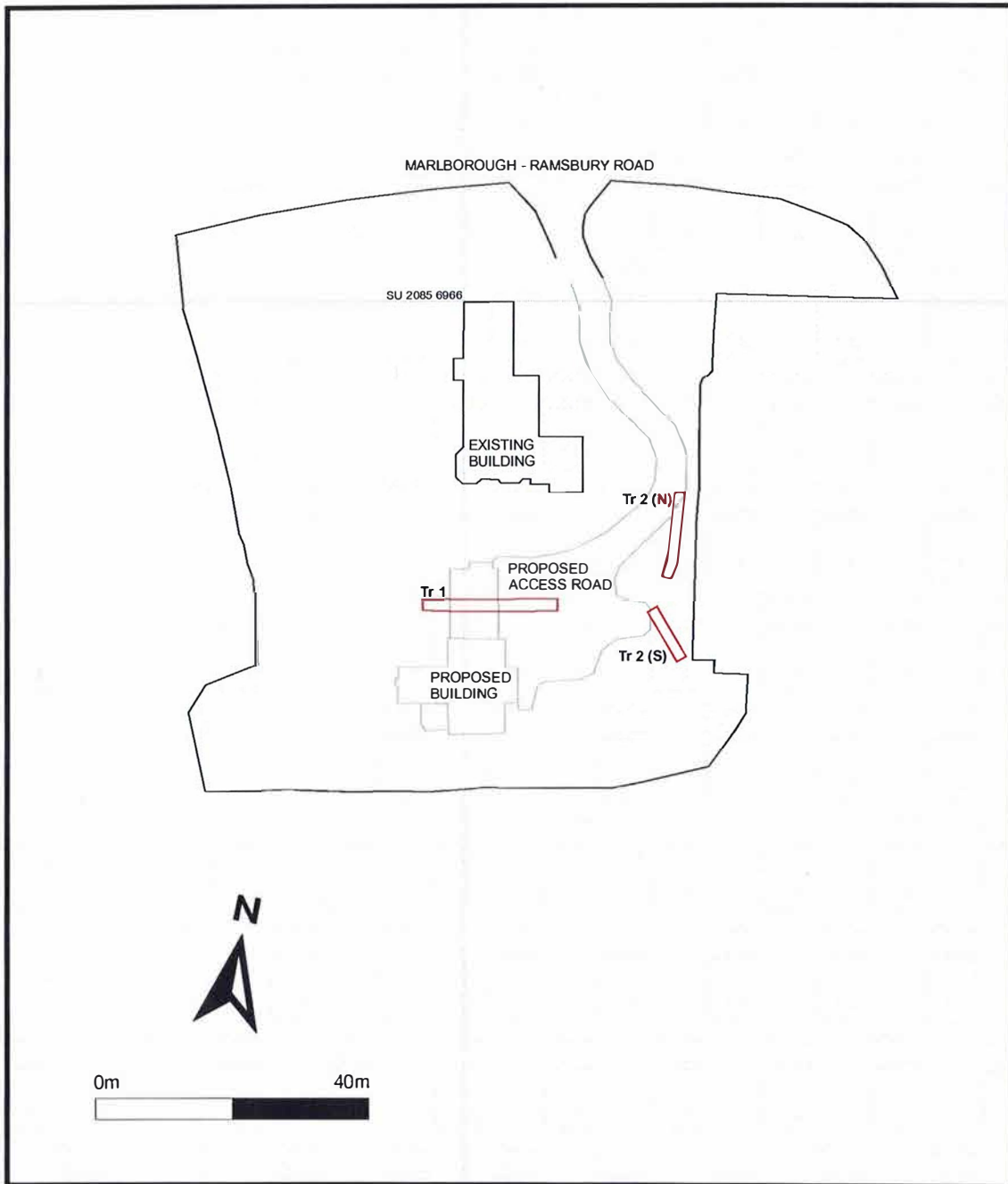


FIGURE 2: Site Plan

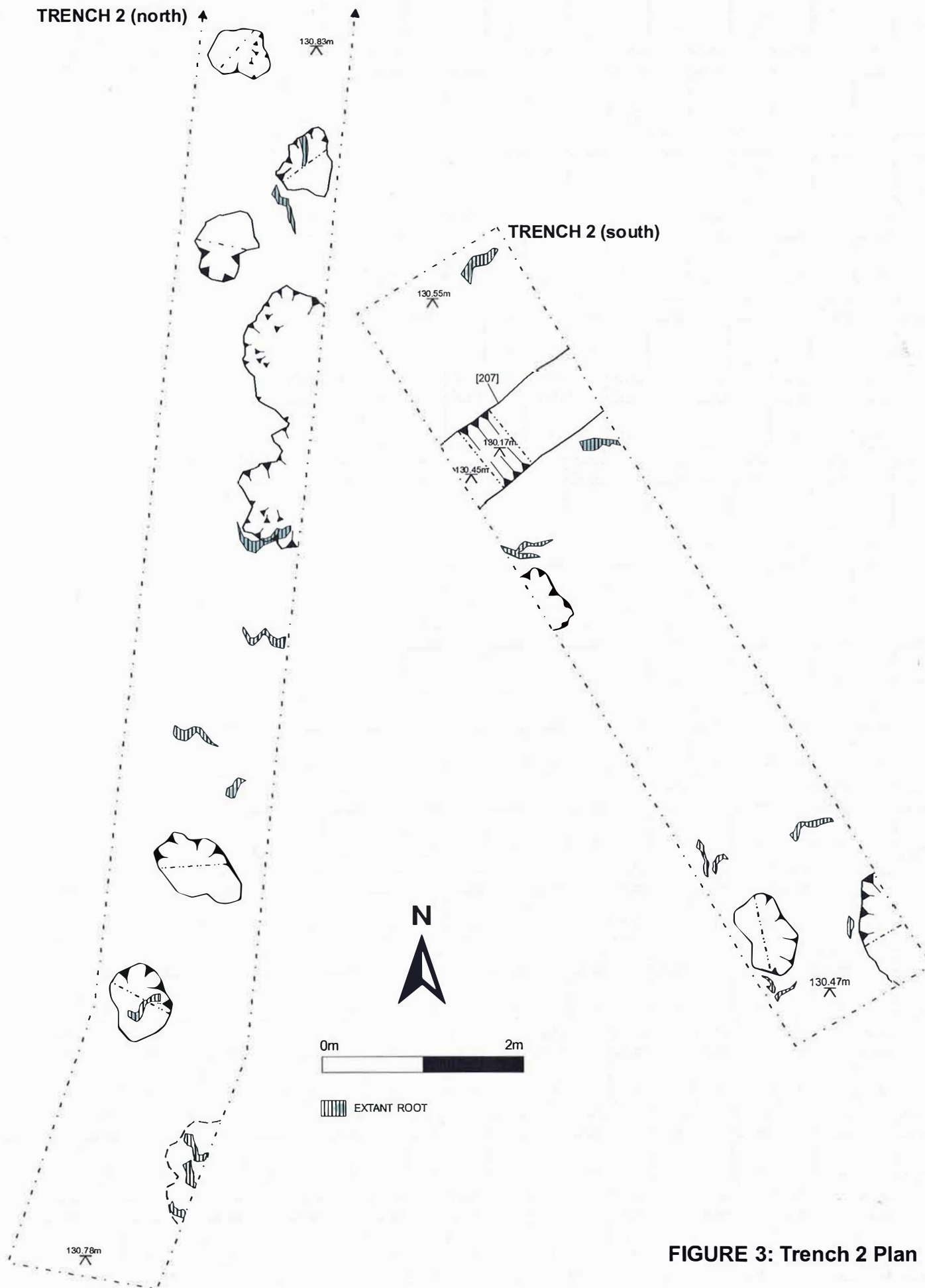


FIGURE 3: Trench 2 Plan

NORTH EAST FACING SECTION [207]

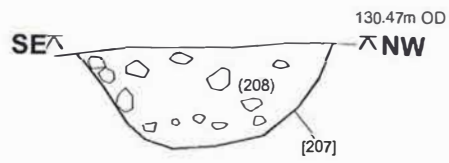


FIGURE 4: Section