

NEW HALL SCHOOL

BOREHAM

ESSEX

ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCHING



Essex County Council

FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT

June 2011

**NEW HALL SCHOOL
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**NEW HALL SCHOOL
BOREHAM
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCHING

Client: New Hall School
FAU Project No: 2424
NGR: TL 7318 1045
Planning Application No.: 11/00199/FUL
Site Code: BONH11
Dates of Fieldwork: 17-18 May 2011
OASIS Ref: 103318

SUMMARY

Archaeological trial trenching was carried out before the construction of a new car park in a sports field on the north-west side of New Hall School, Boreham, Essex. Two 30m-long and two 15m-long trenches were excavated to evaluate a 4% sample of the car park area.

The site lies 300m to the north-west of the main school buildings, which were built on the site of a medieval manor house, a 16th-century palace built by Henry VIII, and later houses. A Middle/Late Iron Age and Roman farmstead and a small medieval settlement site 300-400m to the west have been identified by trial trenching around the perimeter of New Hall.

The trial trenching did not identify any archaeological remains that might relate to the earlier phases of New Hall, or to the known Iron Age/Roman and medieval sites to the west. The only features recorded were modern root-holes or disturbances, with small amounts of residual medieval and post-medieval finds.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of archaeological trial trenching at New Hall School, Boreham before groundworks for the construction of a new car park in a sports field to the north-west of the main school buildings (Fig. 1). The site is located within an area of archaeological potential due to the historic importance of New Hall, which dates from the 16th century and was built on the site of an earlier medieval manor, and the presence of known prehistoric, Roman and medieval remains in the area. The trial trenching was carried out by Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) on behalf of New Hall School as part of a planning condition (11/00199/FUL) placed upon the development by Chelmsford Borough Council, following advice given by the Essex County Council Historic Environment Management team (ECC HEM) in line with Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment. The trial trenching was carried out in accordance with a brief issued by ECC HEM (2011) and a written scheme of investigation (WSI) prepared by ECC FAU (2011), and was monitored by ECC HEM on behalf of the local planning authority.

Bound and digital copies of this report will be supplied to New Hall School (including a copy for the Local Planning Authority), ECC HEM and the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER). A digital copy of the report will be uploaded on the online access to the index of archaeological investigations (www.oasis.ac.uk). The site archive and copies of the report will be deposited with Chelmsford Museum.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location, Geology and Topography (Fig. 1)

New Hall School lies on the north-eastern outskirts of Chelmsford, 1km north-west of the A12 Boreham Interchange (NGR TL 7318 1045) (Fig. 1), on a plateau at the top of the north-western slope of the Chelmer Valley. The local drift geology comprises mixed silty clay of the Springfield Till, laid down during the Anglian glacial period.

The development consists of the construction of a car park, covering an area of 120 x 35m, in a sports field to the north-west of the school buildings, immediately to the east of an existing athletics track. An area of gravelled hard-standing for an existing temporary car park, measuring 40 x 15m, is located in the south-west of the site, but the remainder is

grassed. Drainage runs and a petrol interceptor tank are planned to the south of the new car park area, in a fenced-off area adjacent to a school building in current use.

2.2 Archaeology and History

The following information is based on the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) and reports on previous archaeological investigations in the immediate site area.

The main school buildings are Grade 1 listed (EHER 30269), and although they have been extensively rebuilt, originated in the early 16th century as a palace built by Henry VIII on the site of an earlier medieval manor house (EHER 6040-1). The earliest documentary record for New Hall is a land grant of 1062 by Earl Howard to the Dean and Secular Canons of the college he founded at Waltham. After 1350 New Hall was held by series of wealthy secular landowners. Henry VIII acquired New Hall in 1516 from the father of Anne Boleyn and after extensive rebuilding renamed it Beaulieu. Most of the palace was demolished in 1737 and it was rebuilt as a more modest house. The house became a nunnery in 1798 and has been used as a Roman Catholic school since 1799. There have been numerous 19th-century and modern extensions and developments of the site.

Three trenches have recently been excavated within the area of Henry VIII's palace as part of a Time Team Channel 4 television programme. These located the gatehouse, western range and chapel of the palace immediately to the south of the present school buildings, as well as a stone wall of the earlier medieval manor house (Gruszczynski and Ford 2010). Other trenches to the east of the school buildings have confirmed that this area was a 16th-century and later walled garden (Ennis 2008).

The school is surrounded by a registered park and garden, and the site lies within the area of one of four 17th-century parks covering a much wider area around New Hall, covering an area of around 1500 acres. In the medieval period the land around New Hall was an extensive deer park.

Prehistoric and medieval remains have been recorded over a wide area to the south and west of the present site, between New Hall and White Hart Lane (EHER 5811-14, 17438-9), although these remains were not densely concentrated. Recent investigations around the western limits of New Hall (Pocock 2009) have located a Middle/Late Iron Age and Roman remains 300m to the south-west of the site (Fig. 1, SPGB Site 8), and medieval and early

post-medieval remains 400m to its west (Fig. 1, SPGB Site 10). Site 8 is potentially important, probably representing a small Middle/Late Iron Age and Roman farmstead.

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Aims

The general aim of the archaeological investigation was to record the location, extent, date and character of any surviving archaeological remains within the proposed development site through trial-trenching.

3.2 Objectives

The research objectives for the project were in line with those laid out in *Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties, 2. research agenda and strategy* (Brown and Glazebrook 2000).

The specific objectives of the evaluation were to investigate:

- Any evidence related to the 16th-century New Hall and later phases of rebuilding;
- Any evidence of the medieval manorial site predating New Hall;
- Any evidence of prehistoric and Roman activity, especially in relation to SPGB Site 8 to the west (Fig. 1).

4.0 METHOD

The ECC FAU is a Registered Archaeological Organisation (RAO) with the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) and adheres to its code of conduct (IfA 2010). The IfA's *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Evaluation* (IfA 2008) and ALGAO's *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003) were followed throughout the project.

The archaeological work comprised trial-trenching of a 4% sample of the car park area, with provision for a 1% contingency for additional trenching if necessary for evaluating the site (Fig. 1). Four trenches were excavated, two measuring 30 x 1.8m and two 15 x 1.8m, in an irregular zig-zag arrangement up the long axis of the site (Fig. 2). The irregular trenching pattern was necessary to avoid various obstacles, but represents a fairly even coverage of the site area. Topsoil was removed down to the top of the natural subsoil using an 8 ton

tracked 360° excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The exposed archaeological features were cleaned, recorded, and excavated by hand using the Essex CC FAU's recording system. A sample of all features was excavated and all finds were recovered for study.

5.0 FIELDWORK RESULTS

Topsoil was relatively thin, varying between 0.16 and 0.25m in depth across the evaluation trenches. The archaeological features were cut into a natural subsoil of brown-orange silt-clay with gravel lenses (the Springfield Till). Archaeological features were recorded only in Trenches 1 and 2 in the north of the site area, and Trenches 3 and 4 in the south were completely empty (Fig. 1; Plates 1-5). All features were filled with grey-brown silt-clay with very few inclusions, similar to the topsoil. Full details of the archaeological deposits recorded can be found in Appendix 1.

5.1 Trench 1 (Fig. 2; Plate 1)

A single oval pit (1), 0.3m deep, was recorded towards the eastern end of the trench. It contained a small post-medieval/modern brick fragment.

5.2 Trench 2 (Fig. 2; Plate 2)

A shallow shrub-hole (3) was recorded at the north-eastern end of the trench. It contained no dating material, but was clearly modern as its loose fill was very similar to the overlying topsoil. The presence of root fibres confirms the interpretation of a hole created by uprooting a shrub. An oval pit (5) towards the south-western end of the trench was also very shallow. It contained a few sherds of medieval pottery and post-medieval tile, but the presence of chips of modern porcelain suggest these earlier finds are residual. The finds were all highly fragmented, consistent with redeposition. Pit 5 could also have been a root-hole.

6.0 FINDS by Alan J. Jacobs

6.1 Introduction

A total of nine fragments of brick, tile, burnt flint and pottery weighing a total of 32g were recovered from a single stratified context 6, fill of pit 5. All of the material has been sorted into type and recorded by count and weight. The finds are described in Appendix 2.

6.2 Medieval and later pottery by Helen Walker

Two sherds weighing 5g were excavated from fill 6 of pit 5. One is an abraded sherd of medieval coarse ware, spanning the late 12th to 14th centuries and the second appears to be an example of unglazed Mill Green-type ware, which is most likely to be late medieval in date, spanning the 14th to 16th century, although a later date cannot be precluded. Small chips of modern material in context 6 suggest the pottery is residual in a modern context.

6.3 Finds

The collection consists primarily of post medieval and modern material in the form of porcelain chips from either tiles or toilet/bath type fittings, small fragments of brick/and tile that can not be closely dated. Again this is of little use in indicating more than agricultural manuring or rubbish disposal. The single burnt flint fragment is undateable.

6.4 Conclusion

The feature produced a very limited finds assemblage, and one that does little beyond indicating a broad modern date range, with residual medieval and post-medieval material. No further work is required on any of the finds, all materials should be discarded.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS AND ASSESSMENT

The evaluation trenches did not identify any significant archaeological features. Trenches 1 and 2 in the north of the site area recorded two modern pits and the root-hole of a shrub, while Trenches 3 and 4 in the south recorded no features at all. Highly fragmented sherds of medieval pottery and post-medieval tile in pit 5 in Trench 2 are residual. The shallow nature of the features and the paucity of finds in them suggest that they could all represent modern root-holes or disturbances. The north-centre of the site was until quite recently occupied by an area of shrubbery, which has been grubbed out, and the features recorded may be related to this. The relatively thin topsoil cover is also consistent with previous ground disturbance.

No evidence was found of the medieval manor house, or of Henry VIII's palace or later phases of New Hall, which is perhaps not surprising as the site is 300m north-west of the main building complex. Neither was any evidence found of earlier phases of activity related

to the known Middle/Late Iron Age/Roman and medieval sites recorded 300m to the south-west and 400m to the west of the site area respectively (Fig. 1, SGBP08 Sites 8 and 10).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The ECC FAU would like to thank New Hall School for commissioning and funding the archaeological investigation, and particularly Mr Nigel Floyd, the estate manager, for his assistance. The archaeological fieldwork was undertaken by Mark Germany with assistance from Natalia Hunt. The finds were processed, analysed and reported upon by Alan J. Jacobs and Helen Walker. The figures were drawn by Andrew Lewsey. The project was managed by Patrick Allen of the ECC FAU and was monitored by Teresa O'Connor and Richard Havis of the ECC HEM on behalf of the local planning authority.

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- | | | |
|-------------------------------|------|--|
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APPENDIX 1: FIELDWORK DATA

Cont.	Feat.	Trench	Type	Description	Date
1	1	1	Pit	Oval, irregular rounded profile, 1.3m+ long axis, 0.3m deep	Post-med or Modern
2	2	1	Fill of pit 2	Dark brown-grey silt-clay, soft. Frag. post-med/modern brick (discarded)	Post-med or Modern
3	3	2	Shrub hole	Sub-rectangular, shallow rounded profile, 1.0+ x 0.9+ m, 0.07m deep	Modern
4	3	2	Fill of cut 3	Brown-grey silt-clay. Similar to topsoil	Modern
5	5	2	Pit	Oval, shallow rounded profile, 0.95m long axis, 0.13m deep	Modern
6	5	2	Fill of pit 5	Brown-grey silt-clay. Medieval, post-med & modern finds	Modern

APPENDIX 2: FINDS DATA

Context	Feature	Count	Wt (g)	Description	Date
6	5	2	1	Porcelain chips, from a tile or bathroom fitting, too small for clearer definition.	19th to 20th century
		3	12	Brick or tile fragments, small and much abraded, orange fabric.	13th to 20th century
		1	12	Fragment of roof tile highly fired orange fabric smoothed surfaces, 13mm thick.	15th to 20th century
		1	2	Burnt flint, fragment.	
		1	4	Medieval coarse ware, abraded body sherd, oxidised fabric	Late 12th to 14th century
		1	1	Mill Green-type ware, unglazed body sherd	14th to 16th century or later
Total		9	32		

APPENDIX 3: ARCHIVE INDEX

NEW HALL SCHOOL, BOREHAM, ESSEX. ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCHING

SITE CODE: BONH11

Index to the Archive

File containing:

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Brief for evaluation
- 1.2 WSI for evaluation

2. Research Archive

- 2.1 Evaluation report
- 2.2 Finds report
- 2.3 CD Rom containing pdf version of report and digital images

3. Site Archive

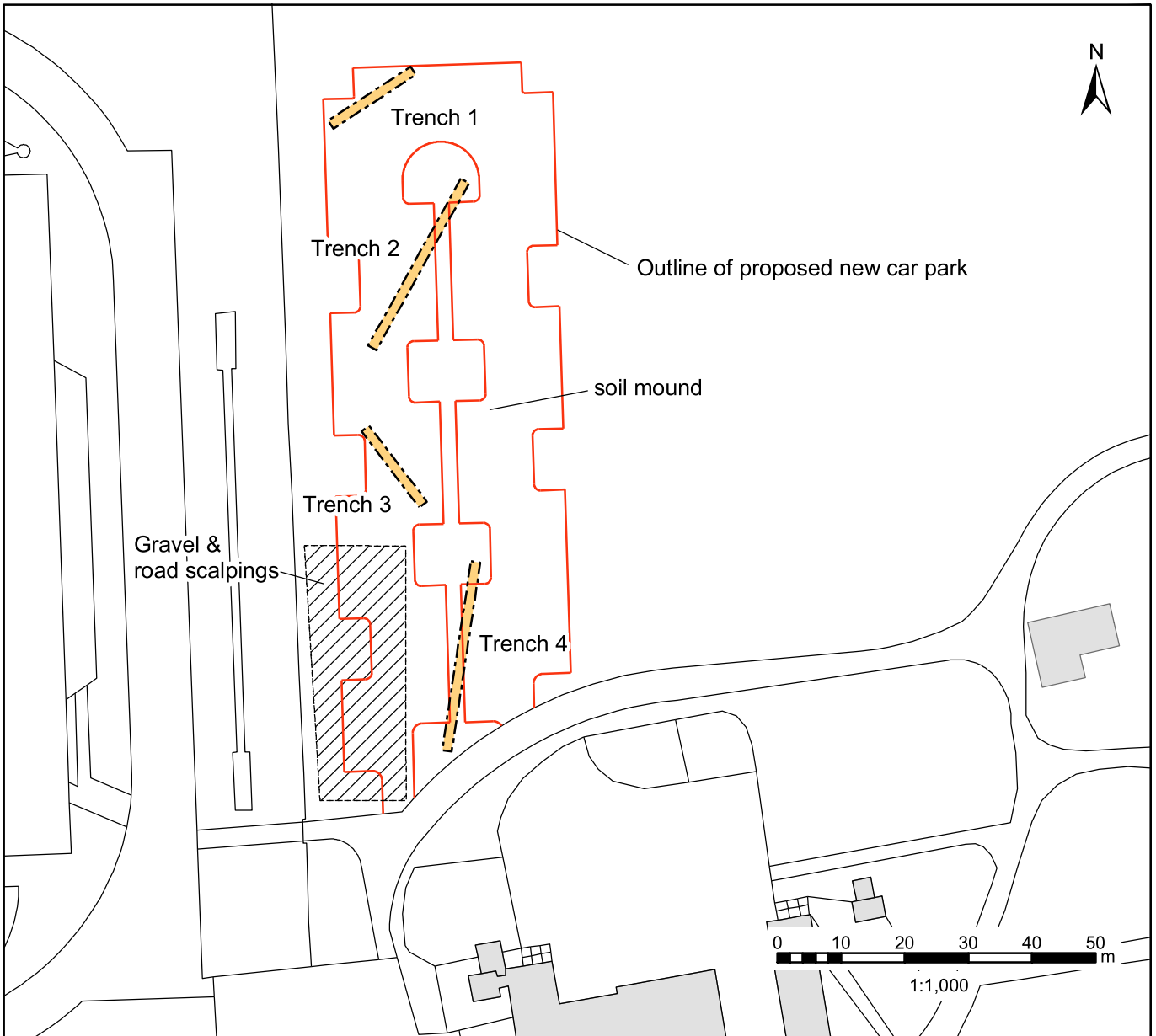
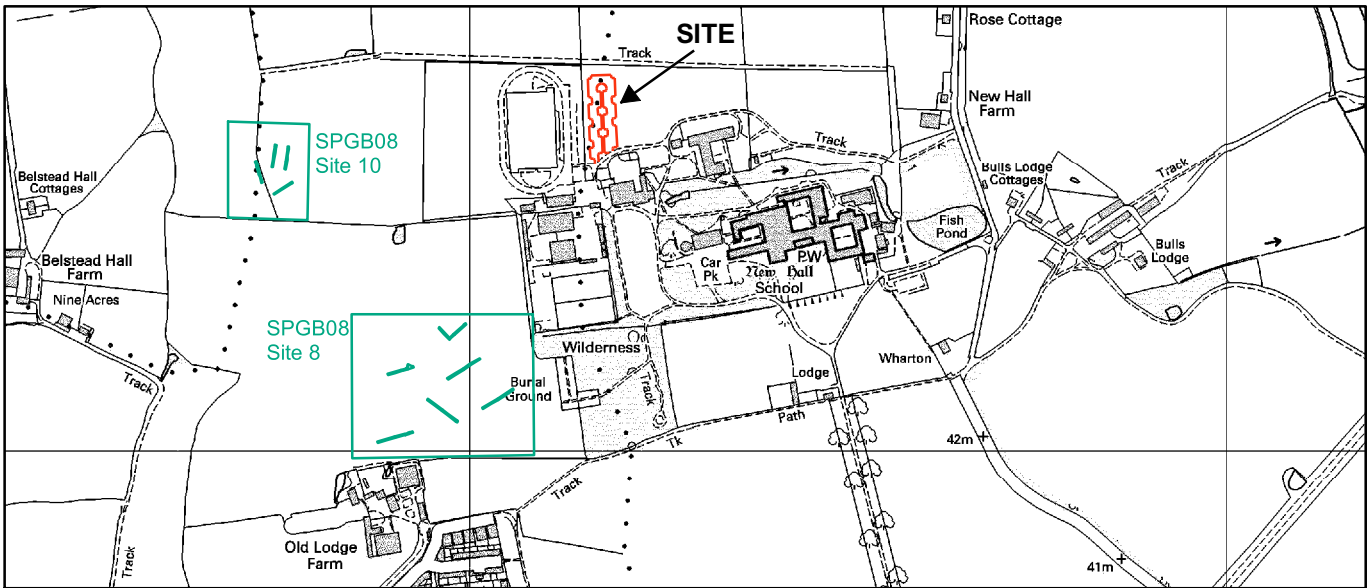
- 3.1 Trench recording sheets 1-4
- 3.2 Context record register
- 3.3 Context recording sheets 1-6
- 3.4 Plan and section register
- 3.5 Drawings 1-2
- 3.6 Survey plot
- 3.7 Miscellaneous maps and plans
- 3.8 Photographic register
- 3.9 Digital photograph prints

Not in File:

Finds discarded.

APPENDIX 4: ESSEX HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY

Site Name/Address: New Hall School, Boreham, Essex	
Parish: Boreham	District: Chelmsford
NGR: TL 7318 1045	Site Code: BONH11
Type of Work: Archaeological Evaluation	Site Director/Team: Mark Germany, ECC FAU
Dates of Work: 17-18 May 2011	Size of Area Investigated: 4025 sq m
Curating Museum: Chelmsford Museum	Funding Source: New Hall School
Further Work Anticipated? No	Related HER Nos. 6040-1, 30269
Final Report: Summary in EAH	OASIS Ref: essexcou1-103318
Periods Represented: Medieval, post-medieval, modern	
<p>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</p> <p><i>Archaeological trial trenching was carried out before the construction of a new car park in a sports field on the north-west side of New Hall School, Boreham, Essex. Two 30m-long and two 15m-long trenches were excavated to evaluate a 4% sample of the car park area.</i></p> <p><i>The site lies 300m to the north-west of the main school buildings, which were built on the site of a medieval manor house, a 16th-century palace built by Henry VIII, and later houses. A Late Iron Age/Roman farmstead and a small medieval settlement site 300-400m to the west have been identified by trial trenching around the perimeter of New Hall.</i></p> <p><i>The trial trenching did not identify any archaeological remains that might relate to the earlier phases of New Hall or to the known Iron Age/Roman and medieval sites to the west. The only features recorded were modern root-holes or disturbances, with small amounts of residual medieval and post-medieval finds.</i></p>	
<p>Previous Summaries/Reports:</p> <p>Pocock 2009: <i>Greater Beaulieu Park, Chelmsford. Archaeological Evaluation.</i> ECC FAU Report 1905, in EHER</p> <p>Gruszczynski, J. and Ford, B. 2010: <i>New Hall School, Essex (Time Team Palaces Special).</i> <i>Archaeological Evaluation Report.</i> Oxford Archaeology South, OA 4341</p>	
Author of Summary: P. Allen	Date of Summary: June 2011



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Fig.1. Location of archaeological evaluation trenches

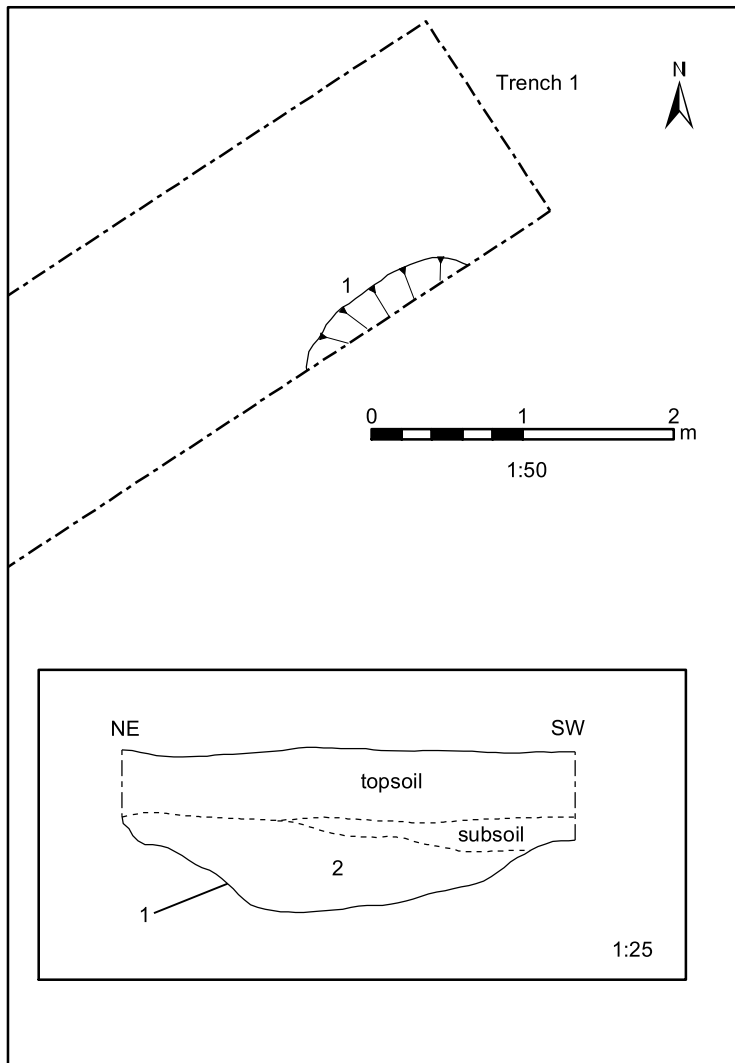


Fig.2. Plan and section of Trench 1

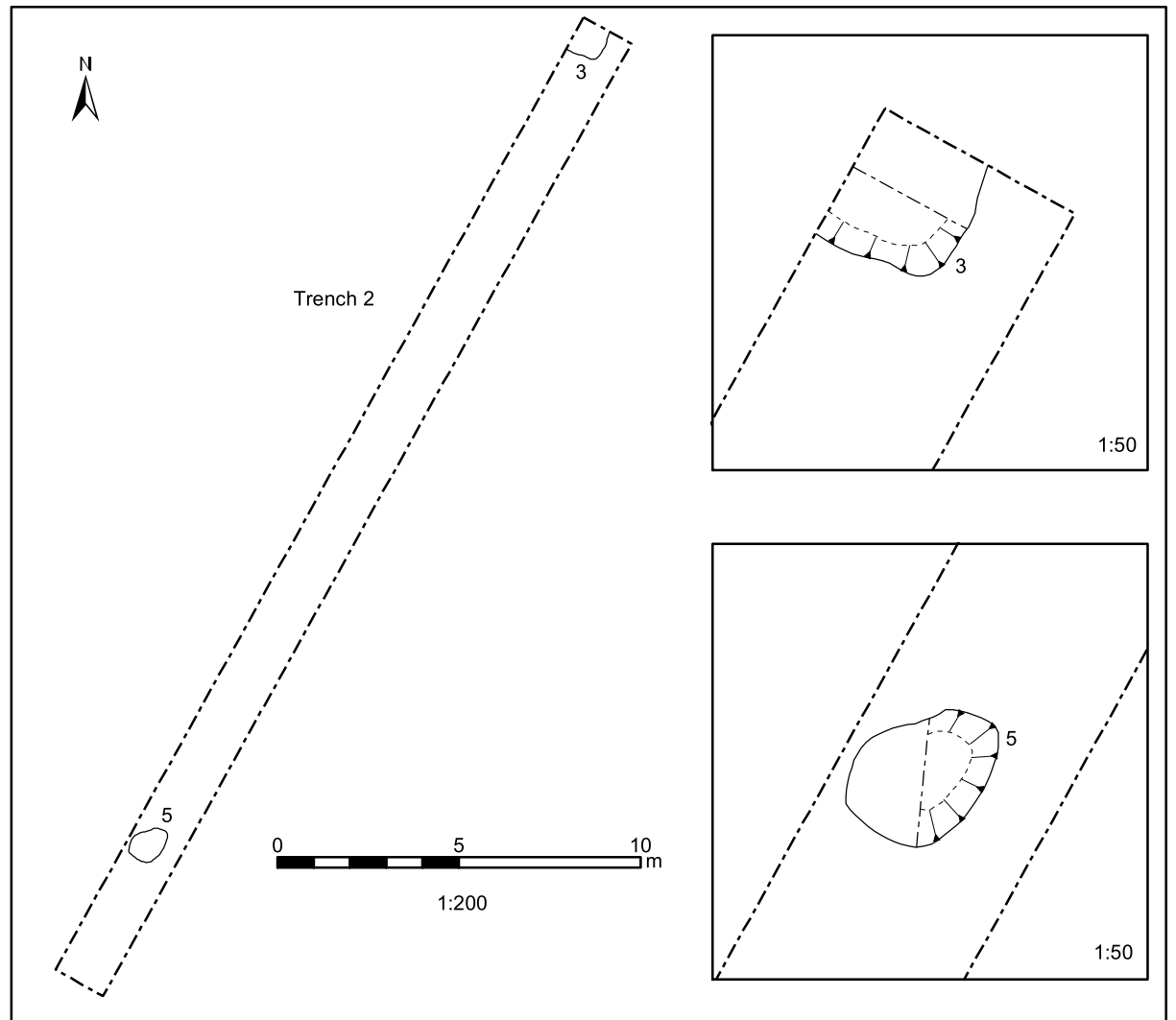


Fig.3. Plan and details of Trench 2



Plate 1. Trench 1, looking south-west



Plate 2. Trench 2, looking south-west



Plate 3. Trench 3, looking north-west



Trench 4, looking north-east



Plate 5. Pit 5, looking south-west