

PONDS FARM 2

SANDY LANE

AVELEY

ESSEX

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION

BY TRIAL TRENCHING



Essex County Council

FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT

April 2010

PONDS FARM 2
SANDY LANE, AVELEY
ESSEX

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION BY TRIAL TRENCHING

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As part of our desire to provide a quality service, we would welcome any comments you may have on the content or the presentation of this report.

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PONDS FARM 2, SANDY LANE, AVELEY, ESSEX

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION BY TRIAL TRENCHING

Client: Scott Wilson Ltd

Grid reference: TQ 55172 80514

Date of fieldwork: 8/2/10 to 1/3/10

Site code: THPF 10

ECC FAU project number: 2185

Oasis reference: essexcou1-74697

SUMMARY

A programme of archaeological evaluation, consisting of trial trenching, geoarchaeological test pitting and boreholing was undertaken prior to the submission of an outline planning application for commercial development on land near Ponds Farm, Aveley. The investigation was commissioned by Scott Wilson Ltd on behalf of Urban Initiatives and was carried out by the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit. The work was monitored by Scott Wilson Ltd, and the Essex County Council Historic Environment Management team on behalf of the local planning authority. The results of the geoarchaeological work form a separate report and are not included in this document.

The trial trenching revealed a number of modern rabbit holes, a post-medieval field ditch and a large modern pit. It also produced several pieces of worked flint, a small sherd of Roman pottery, and a small quantity of 19th and 20th-century coins and buttons. The amount of archaeological remains found by the trenching is very low and suggests that the site has not been previously intensively occupied.

Accordingly, development work is unlikely to have an adverse impact upon the archaeological record and it is not anticipated that any further archaeological work will be required in connection with the areas that have been investigated.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

A planning application for commercial development on green field land between Ponds Farm and Sandy Lane Farm, Aveley was preceded by archaeological trial trenching and geoarchaeological trial pitting and boreholing. The archaeological work was requested by Scott Wilson Ltd on behalf of Urban Initiatives and was undertaken by the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU). The work was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation produced by Scott Wilson Ltd in consultation with the Essex County Council Historic Environment Management team (ECC HEM) (Scott Wilson 2010).

The results of the geoarchaeological work undertaken by Quaternary Scientific (QUEST) form a separate report and are not included in the following text.

Copies of this report will be supplied to Scott Wilson Ltd, the Essex County Council Historic Environment Management team and the Essex County Council Historic Environment Record. The site archive will be stored at Thurrock Museum. A pdf version of this report will be uploaded to the Oasis Access to Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) at www.oasis.ac.uk/.

2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The following information is derived from the Written Scheme of Investigation (Scott Wilson 2010).

2.1 Location

The area of investigation consists of 7.6ha of grazing land to the west of Aveley (Fig. 1). The site is crossed by overhead power cables and is bounded by Sandy Lane to the north, Sandy Lane Farm to the east, the A13 to the south and reclaimed arable land (a former quarry) to the west. Ponds Farm is located on Purfleet Road at the southern end of the site.

2.2 Geology

The geology of the area is London Clay beneath head deposits (orange brown sandy clay) and Taplow gravels (medium grained sand with fine to medium gravel and pebbles). The overlying topsoil (c. 0.4m thick) is light, well-drained and easy to plough.

2.3 Archaeological

Known archaeological discoveries from within the footprint of the proposed development site comprise Mesolithic worked flint and a small amount of Saxon ironwork, possibly representing a Saxon grave or cemetery. The precise location of where the ironwork was found is not known. Trial trenching of the nearby Ponds Farm 1 site in 2007 found a pit and a small spread of pottery, possibly indicating the site of a medieval settlement (ASE 2007). Some of the features contained residual pieces of Mesolithic worked flint.

Archaeological sites from the area surrounding the proposed development site include a Neolithic peat deposit containing thousands of flint artefacts at Tank Hill Road, a Bronze Age hoard found near Sandy Lane, and Iron Age remains at Halls Gravel Pit, to the north-east. Evidence for Roman activity within the area is sparse and largely comprises a small number of complete and fragmentary pottery vessels found at nearby Halls Gravel Pit.

3.0 GENERAL AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

3.1 General objectives

The general objectives of the archaeological work were:

- to identify the presence/absence, likely extent and state of preservation of any archaeological remains
- to identify the presence/absence and likely extent of any modern ground disturbance
- to inform any future mitigation strategy including the provision of preservation in situ and preservation by record

3.2 Specific

The specific objectives of the archaeological work were:

- to determine the location, nature, extent, depth, date, condition, preservation, significance and stratigraphic complexity of any surviving archaeological deposits and the distribution of the archaeological remains for each archaeological period
- to determine the likely range, quality and quantity of artefactual and environmental evidence present
- to provide sufficient evidence to support an outline planning application for the proposed development
- to determine the level of risk that the archaeological resource would present to the construction programme and to inform an appropriate mitigation strategy

4.0 METHOD

The archaeological field evaluation was carried out in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation and the Association of Local Government Officers' Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (IFA 2008; Gurney 2003). The ECC FAU is a registered archaeological organisation with the Institute for Field Archaeologists. The ECC FAU uses its own recording system to record all archaeological deposits and features (ECC FAU 2006). Further details of the recording strategy and method can be found in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Scott Wilson 2010).

The trial trenching consisted of twenty-four trenches, representing a 2.8% sample of the available area (Fig. 2: Trenches 1 to 12, 15 to 16 and 23 to 32). It was not possible to open a further twenty-three trenches within the eastern and southern parts of the site because of access constraints.

The trial-trenches were 1.85m wide and between 25m and 50m long. No excavation work was carried out within 10m of the overhead power cables, in order to provide a minimum safe-working distance for the mechanical excavator, resulting in some areas of the site being left un-investigated.

The trenches were located by using a directional GPS with on-board map-based software. The error margin of the GPS varies, but is always less than 0.2m.

Each trench was stripped of topsoil using a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket. The surface of the underlying orange brown sandy clay was then visually inspected for archaeological remains. A metal detector was used to detect all of the spoil heaps and trial trenches for non-ferrous finds.

Due to the risk of unexploded ordnance being present on the site all machine excavation, including the test pitting and boreholes, was monitored by an explosive ordnance disposal engineer.

5.0 FIELDWORK RESULTS

The archaeological trial trenching revealed a ditch (1) in trench 23, a large pit (14) in trench 24 (Fig. 4), and rabbit holes (3, 5, 7, 9 and 15 to 18) in trenches 2 and 4 (Fig. 3). All of the

features cut natural orange brown sandy clay and lay directly below topsoil. There were no standing remains or buried layers.

The ditch ran north-south and contained several pieces of post-medieval brick and a small sherd of Roman pottery (Plates 1 and 2). The pit in trench 24 was not excavated because it contained modern artefacts, including pieces of plastic. The majority of the rabbit holes formed a small cluster in trench 4. Sampling of some of the holes (3, 5, 7 and 9) revealed modern artefacts.

Metal detecting of the trenches, trial pits and spoil heaps found mostly post-medieval / modern coins and buttons, several pieces of lead shot, and a small amount of exploded World War II ordnance. Further finds from the spoil heaps comprised two small pieces of prehistoric worked flint.

6.0 FINDS

Finds, almost all of which are of recent date, were recovered from seven contexts. These have been recorded by count and weight, in grams, by context. Full details can be found in appendix 3. The finds are described briefly by category, as follows:

6.1 Pottery

Three contexts produced pottery, amounting to five sherds, weighing 10g. All of the pottery comprises small body sherds, and all are relatively modern except for a single Roman sherd (2g) recovered from the fill of ditch 1. This is identified as Colchester colour-coated ware of mid 2nd-century date, although presumably residual in the feature.

6.2 Brick and tile

Three contexts also contained brick and tile fragments, amounting to six pieces, weighing 398g; all are of recent date.

6.3 Metalwork

Most of the metalwork represents metal-detected material from spoil heaps, although an iron nail came from the fill of rabbit hole 5 and a piece of iron wire from the fill of rabbit hole 9. The bulk of the metal-detected material comprises modern items of copper alloy and lead/white metal. These are listed in full in the table in appendix 3. The earliest datable find is a farthing of Victoria (1861). There is a variety of buttons, including military-style

examples, and several pieces of shrapnel and other ordnance. The lead items include several sizes of shot.

6.4 Flints

The flints comprise two unstratified flakes and two pieces of burnt flint. The flakes have been examined by Hazel Martingell, as follows;

One of the flakes is a retouched axe-thinning flake. Both flints are probably derived from the knapping of flints in the vicinity and are likely to be Neolithic in date.

6.5 Other finds

A tiny piece of oyster shell came from the fill of rabbit hole 5 and a fragment of slate was found in the fill of rabbit hole 9. Unstratified finds include coal, a chip of dark green modern glass and a clay tobacco pipe stem.

6.6 Comments on the assemblage

Almost all of the assemblage is datable to the Victorian period or later. The exceptions are the Roman pot sherd and the flints. No further work is required on any of the material. Due to the recent nature of the finds, nothing has been retained except for the Roman pottery, the clay pipe stem and the flint flakes.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

The results of the archaeological trial-trenching suggest that the evaluated area has not been intensively occupied during the past. The majority of the trenches contain no archaeological remains and all of the features found are of post-medieval and modern date.

Human activity in general within the wider area during the prehistoric and Roman periods is indicated by the two unstratified pieces of probable Neolithic worked flint from the spoil heaps and the residual sherd of Roman pottery from post-medieval ditch 1. The flint flakes complement pieces of Mesolithic worked flint found previously and point to activity continuing in the area into the Neolithic period.

The archaeological work has found no further evidence to indicate that the site contains an Early Saxon cemetery, as suggested by the earlier discovery of Saxon ironwork. If a cemetery is present then it is probably small in extent and located in one of the areas between the trenches. However, this seems unlikely.

Post-medieval ditch 1 is not recorded on the first four editions of the Ordnance Survey (1872 to 1953) and is therefore probably more than 140 years old. The single fill of the ditch suggests that it was deliberately backfilled to create larger fields.

Most of the coins and the buttons found by the metal detecting are probably casual losses by farmhands working in the fields during the 19th and 20th centuries. The pieces of exploded ordnance found by metal detecting relate to bombing raids and the defence of London during the Second World War. Several of the buttons carry military insignia and are further indications of war-time activity.

8.0 ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS

Evaluation of the available areas indicates that no significant remains are present, with only a small number of features of low and local significance having been uncovered.

Accordingly, development work is unlikely to have an adverse impact upon the archaeological record and it is not anticipated that any further archaeological work will be required in connection with the areas that have been investigated.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The archaeological work was commissioned by Scott Wilson Ltd and was carried out by the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit. The ECC FAU thanks Iain Williamson of Scott Wilson Ltd for his assistance.

The archaeological trial trenching was carried out by Mark Germany, John Hewitt, Laura Sapsford and Phillippa Sparrow. The surveying and the drawing of figures 1, 2 and 3 was undertaken by Andrew Lewsey. The finds were analysed by Joyce Compton, Hazel Martingell and Helen Walker. The project was managed by Adrian Scruby, and was monitored by Iain Williamson of Scott Wilson Ltd and by Richard Havis of ECC HEM.

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| ECC FAU | 2006 | <i>Site Recording Manual (Version 2)</i> |
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| IFA | 2008 | <i>Standard and guidance for archaeological evaluation.</i> Institute of Field Archaeologists |
| Scott Wilson | 2010 | <i>Ponds Farm 2, Sandy Lane, Aveley, Essex. Specification for Archaeological Field Evaluation.</i> Unpublished report |

APPENDIX 1: TRENCH DATA

All of the co-ordinates are preceded by TQ. The co-ordinates and levels are for the two ends of each central axis.
NA = not available

Trench	End	Co-ordinates	Surface level	Base level
1	NW SE	X = 555057 Y = 180595 X = 555069 Y = 180571	NA NA	NA NA
2	S N	X = 555111.53 Y = 180648.24 X = 555111.53 Y = 180598.24	12.05 12.90	11.73 12.49
3	W E	X = 555131.87 Y = 180622.20 X = 555181.87 Y = 180622.20	12.88 14.33	12.56 13.88
4	S N	X = 555212.43 Y = 180638.77 X = 555212.43 Y = 180588.77	14.88 15.02	11.54 14.67
5	W E	X = 555229.76 Y = 180622.10 X = 555279.76 Y = 180622.10	15.45 16.40	15.09 16.04
6	N S	X = 555161.02 Y = 180601.69 X = 555161.02 Y = 180551.69	13.42 12.96	13.08 12.51
7	W E	X = 555204.19 Y = 180574.91 X = 555254.19 Y = 180574.91	14.58 16.00	14.21 15.65
8	N S	X = 555255.19 Y = 180600.25 X = 555255.19 Y = 180550.25	16.18 15.76	15.91 15.46
9	NW SE	X = 555158.07 Y = 180535.25 X = 555192.06 Y = 180498.57	12.60 13.03	12.20 12.65
10	N S	X = 555229.85 Y = 180551.03 X = 555229.85 Y = 180501.03	15.04 14.31	14.65 13.88
11	W E	X = 555205.51 Y = 180500.03 X = 555255.51 Y = 180500.03	13.67 15.22	13.28 14.73
12	W E	X = 555231.51 Y = 180456.79 X = 555281.51 Y = 180456.79	13.31 15.00	13.03 14.67
15	SE NW	X = 555249.81 Y = 180444.89 X = 555283.04 Y = 180407.53	14.27 13.82	13.93 13.48
16	S N	X = 555296.78 Y = 180411.96 X = 555302.41 Y = 180362.27	14.57 14.76	14.12 14.47
23	N S	X = 555112.31 Y = 180536.67 X = 555117.70 Y = 180486.96	11.37 11.19	11.02 10.86
24	W E	X = 555112.54 Y = 180480.04 X = 555162.54 Y = 180480.04	10.97 12.04	10.66 11.52
25	N S	X = 555138.33 Y = 180459.08 X = 555138.33 Y = 180409.08	11.08 10.54	10.75 10.28
26	W E	X = 555150.96 Y = 180432.23 X = 555200.96 Y = 180432.23	11.39 12.26	10.80 11.97
27	W E	X = 555120.38 Y = 180387.72 X = 555170.38 Y = 180387.72	10.10 11.22	9.69 10.81
28	N S	X = 555190.59 Y = 180412.35 X = 555190.59 Y = 180362.35	11.78 11.54	11.47 11.27

29	N S	X = 555143.39 X = 555143.39	Y = 180379.33 Y = 180329.33	10.54 9.99	10.15 9.67
30	W E	X = 555168.33 X = 555218.33	Y = 180345.67 Y = 180345.67	10.76 12.07	10.44 11.76
31	N S	X = 555242.20 X = 555242.20	Y = 180370.15 Y = 180320.15	13.05 12.44	12.74 12.11
32	N S	X = 555206.32 X = 555206.32	Y = 180335.41 Y = 180310.41	11.58 11.16	11.14 11.06

APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT DATA

No.	Trench	Category	Description	Date
1	23	Ditch	Linear. Irregular-sloping sides. Uneven base. 1m+ long, 1.6m wide, 0.43m deep. Filled by 2	Post-medieval
2	23	Fill	Orange brown loose sandy clay with infrequent small stones. Single fill of 1	Post-medieval
3	2	Rabbit hole	Oval. Gradually sloping sides. Concave base. 0.52m+ long, 0.42m wide, 0.07m deep. Filled by 4	Modern
4	2	Fill	Dark greyish brown loose sandy silt. Single fill of 3	Modern
5	4	Rabbit hole	Oval. Gradually sloping sides. Concave base. 0.66m long, 0.25m wide. 0.04m deep. Filled by 6	?Modern
6	4	Fill	Dark greyish brown loose sandy silt. Single fill of 5	?Modern
7	4	Rabbit hole	Oval. Gradually sloping sides. Concave base. 0.68m long, 0.22m wide, 0.09m deep. Filled by 8	?Modern
8	4	Fill	Dark brownish grey loose sandy silt. Single fill of 7	?Modern
9	4	Rabbit hole	Oval. Steeply sloping sides. Uneven base. 1.74m long, 0.5m wide, 0.28m deep. Filled by 10	Modern
10	4	Fill	Dark greyish brown loose sandy silt. Single fill of 9	Modern
11	1 to 11 & 23 to 24	Artefacts	Unstratified finds	-
12	23	Artefacts	Unstratified finds	-
13	12, 14 to 16 & 25 to 32	Artefacts	Unstratified finds	-
14	24	Pit	Not excavated. 1.85m+ long, 2.75m wide	Modern
15	4	Rabbit hole	Not excavated. 0.86m long, 0.32m wide	?Modern
16	4	Rabbit hole	Not excavated. 0.8m long, 0.23m wide	?Modern
17	4	Rabbit hole	Not excavated. 0.82m long, 0.3m wide	?Modern
18	4	Rabbit hole	Not excavated. 0.8m+ long, 0.5m wide	?Modern

APPENDIX 3: FINDS DATA

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
2	1	1	22	Burnt flint (Discarded)	-
		1	226	Brick fragment, poorly mixed clay (Discarded)	Post med.
		1	158	Roof tile fragment (Discarded)	Post med.
		1	2	Pottery; body sherd, Colchester colour-coated ware	Roman
4	3	3	6	Pottery; body sherds, white earthenware and local red earthenware (Discarded)	Post med/ modern
6	5	1	1	Iron nail (Discarded)	-
		1	1	Shell; oyster fragment (Discarded)	-
10	9	1	18	Iron wire fragment (Discarded)	-
		1	1	Slate fragment (Discarded)	-
		1	2	Roof tile fragment (Discarded)	Post med.
		1	2	Pottery; body sherd, white earthenware (Discarded)	Modern
11	u/s	25	214	Copper alloy objects (metal-detected); shrapnel and bullet case; eleven buttons, inc one military and one with incised decoration and remains of gilding; five coins, inc 1861 farthing and 1879 halfpenny; spoon handle; button from a button-loop fastener; toothed wheel with remains of iron spindle (All discarded)	Post med/ modern
		5	64	White metal/lead objects (metal-detected); half a dome-shaped weight (¾oz); 18mm-diameter shot; off-cuts/sprues (All discarded)	Post med/ modern
12	u/s	1	4	Coal fragment (Discarded)	-
		1	-	Glass chip, dark green (Discarded)	Post med.
		3	12	Brick fragments (Discarded)	Post med.
		1	6	Clay pipe stem	Post med.
13	u/s	2	8	Flint flakes; Flake, secondary	?Neo
		1	20	Retouched ?axe-thinning flake	-
		10	86	Burnt flint (Discarded) Copper alloy objects (metal-detected); shrapnel and bullet, which has been fired; two buttons; coin, 1971 new penny; 17mm-diameter ring (All discarded)	Modern
		1	10	Lead; 12mm-diameter shot (Discarded)	Modern

APPENDIX 4: CONTENTS OF SITE ARCHIVE

Contained in one lever arch file:

1. Client report
1. Written Scheme of Investigation
1. Finds report
1. Short note on the worked flint
1. Context register sheet
14. Context sheets
3. Photographic register sheets
1. Section drawing register sheet
1. Plan register sheet
7. Level register sheets
23. Trench recording sheets
1. Small bag containing two worked flints, a clay pipe stem and a Roman pottery sherd
1. Computer disk containing seventy-four digital photographs, and digital copies of all the reports listed above

Held separately:

1. Large sheet of site plans
1. Large sheet of section drawings

APPENDIX 5: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY

Site name/Address: Ponds Farm, Sandy Lane, Aveley	
Parish: South Ockendon	District: Thurrock
NGR: TQ 55172 80514	Site Code: THPF 10
Type of Work: Archaeological trial trenching	Site Director/Group: Mark Germany, Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit
Date of Work: 8/2/10 to 1/3/10	Size of Area Investigated: Twenty-four trenches, totalling 2133m ²
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Thurrock Museum	Client: Scott Wilson Ltd on behalf of Urban Initiatives
Further Seasons Anticipated?:	Related HER Nos.: 5089
Final Report: Essex Archaeology and History (summary)	
Periods represented: Prehistoric Roman Post-medieval Modern	
SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:	
<p>Archaeological evaluation by trial trenching was undertaken prior to the submission of an outline planning application for commercial development on land near Ponds Farm, Aveley. The investigation was commissioned by Scott Wilson Ltd on behalf of Urban Initiatives and was carried out by the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit. The work was monitored by Scott Wilson Ltd, and the Essex County Council Historic Environment Management team on behalf of the local planning authority.</p> <p>Previous discoveries made within the footprint of the proposed development site comprise pieces of Mesolithic worked flint (EHER 5089) and a small amount of Saxon ironwork. The precise location of where the Saxon ironwork was found is not known.</p> <p>The trenching revealed modern rabbit holes, a post-medieval field ditch and a large modern pit. It also revealed several pieces of probable Neolithic worked flint, a small sherd of Roman pottery, and a small quantity of 19th and 20th-century coins and buttons. The amount of archaeological remains found by the trenching is very low and suggests that the site has not been previously intensively occupied.</p>	
Previous Summaries/Reports:-	
Author of Summary: Mark Germany	Date of Summary: March 2010

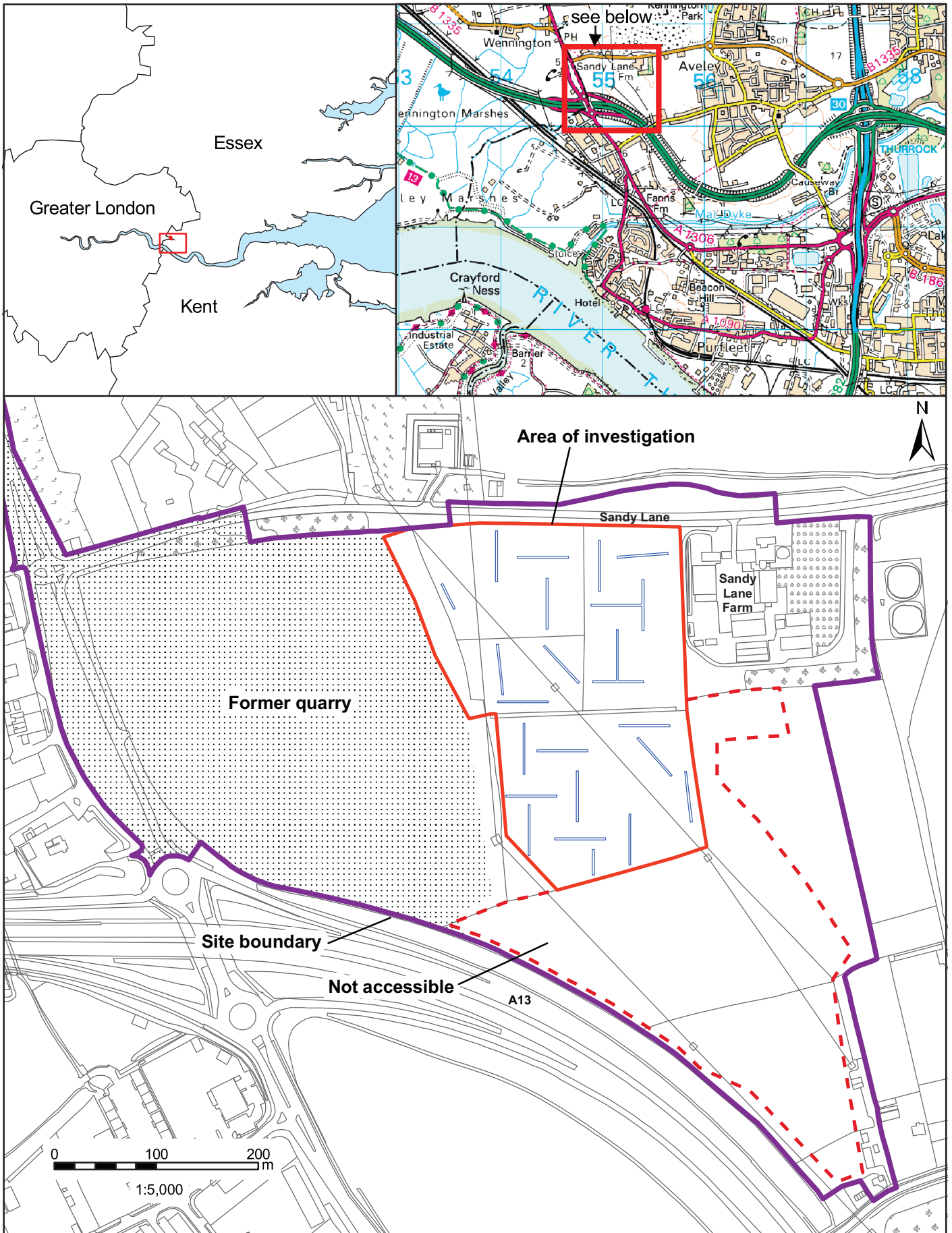
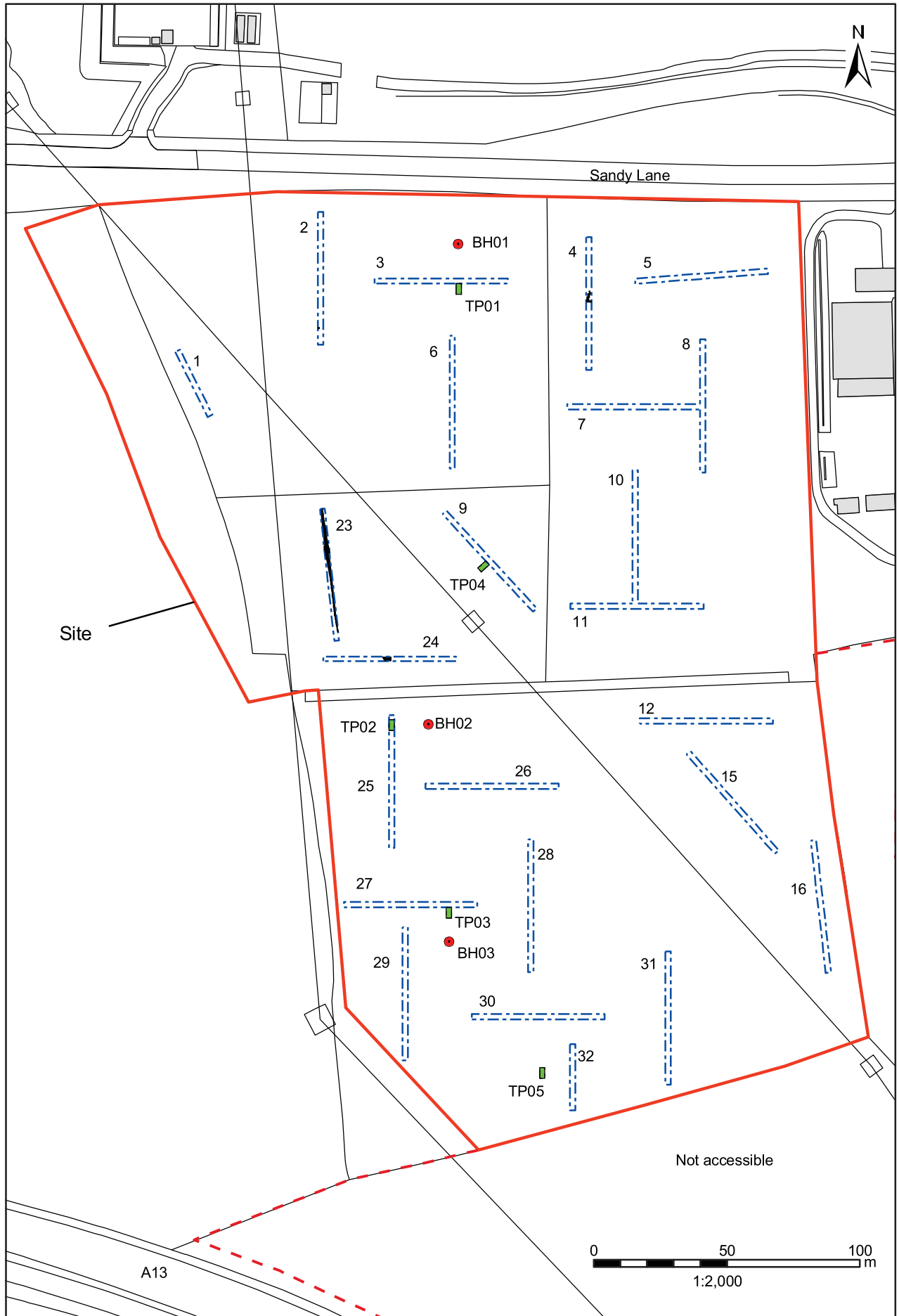


Fig.1. Site location

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Fig.2. Area of investigation

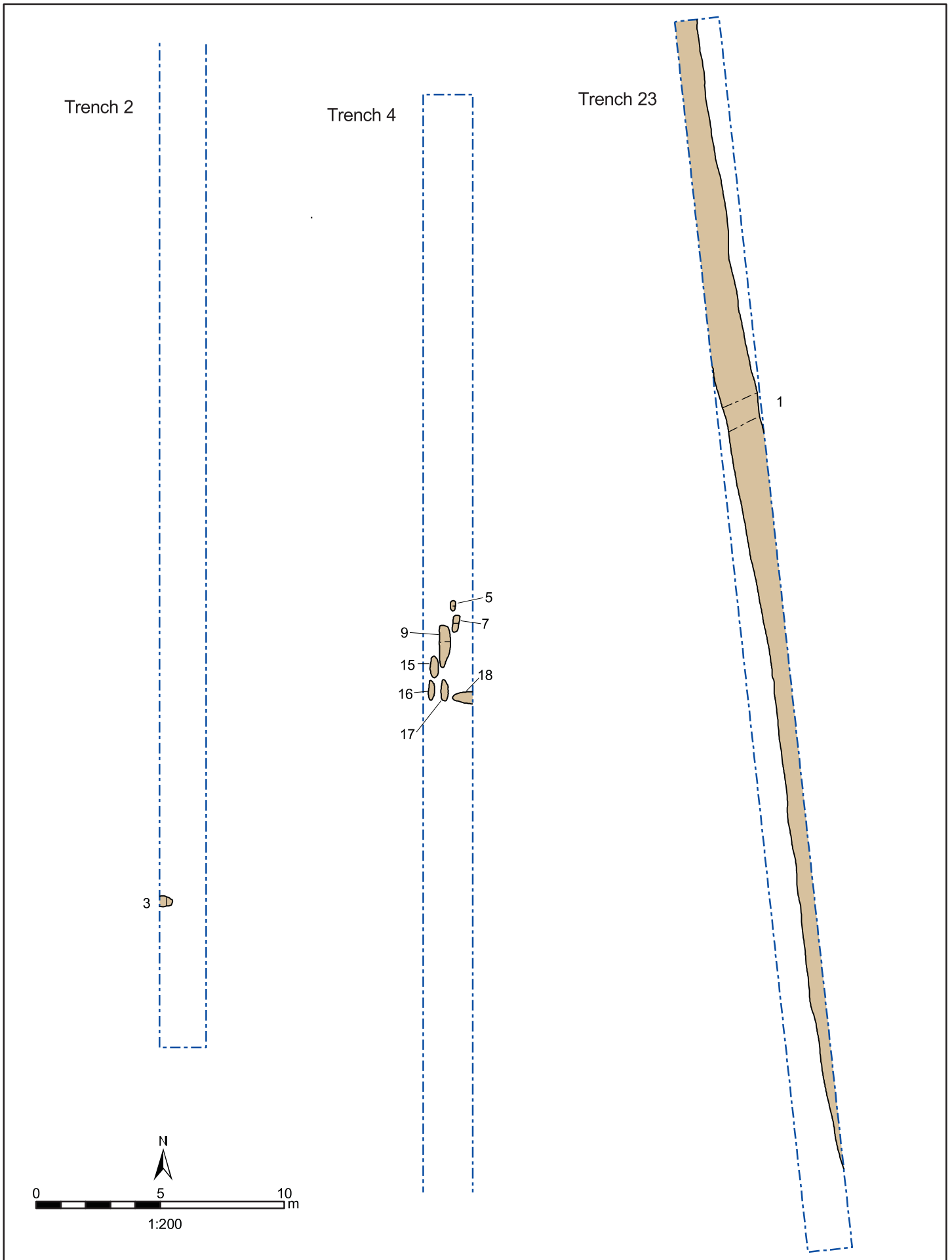


Fig.3. Trenches 2, 4 and 23

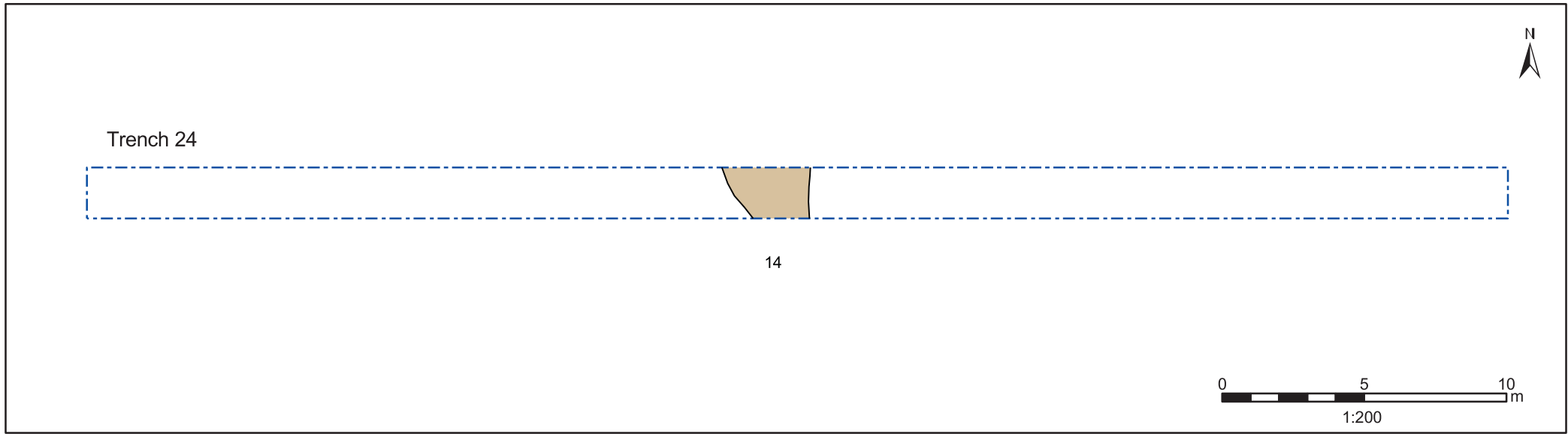


Fig.4. Trench 24



Plate 1. Ditch 1, Trench 23



Plate 2. Ditch 1, Trench 23. looking north



Plate 3. Trench 12, looking west



Plate 4. Metal detecting, Trench 15