



HERITAGE NETWORK



**SANDY HEATH QUARRY,
Sandy, Beds.**

(EN901)

Archaeological Monitoring Report



THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

SANDY HEATH QUARRY **Sandy, Beds**

HN401

Archaeological Monitoring Report

Prepared on behalf of Lafarge Aggregates Ltd.

by

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&
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Report No.190

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Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by Chris Turner, Geoff Saunders, Mark Winter and Karin Semmelmann, under the supervision of Chris Turner. Illustrations were prepared by Chris Turner and Karin Semmelmann, and the report was edited by David Hillelson.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to Dr Andy Richmond, Phoenix Consulting; Lafarge Aggregates Ltd; and Martin Oake, Bedfordshire County Council, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

Summary

Site name and address:	Sandy Heath Quarry, Sandy.		
County:	Bedfordshire	District:	Mid Beds
Village/town:	Sandy	Parish:	Sandy
Planning reference:	n/a	NGR:	TL 200 495
Client name and address:	Lafarge Aggregates Ltd, Melton Mowbray, LE14 3PD.		
Nature of work:	Quarrying	Present land use:	Heath land
Size of affected area:	c. 7.7 ha	Size of area investigated:	c. 7.7 ha
Site Code:	HN401	Other reference:	n/a
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Type of work:	Monitoring & recording	Curating museum:	Bedford Museum
Start of work	13 January 2003	Finish of work	25 February 2003
Related SMR Nos.:	n/a	Periods represented:	Unknown/ Post medieval?
Previous summaries/reports:			

Synopsis: In response to a condition on the minerals extraction permit for an extension to Sandy Heath Quarry, Sandy, Beds, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the owners to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording on the topsoil stripping of the site.

A number of known cropmarks have been recorded crossing the site. In the course of the present works, five linear features were observed, although none of these provided any dateable evidence.

Three ditches appear to represent a trackway running NW-SE across the study area. A further ditch on a parallel alignment to the trackway and 95m to the southeast, may represent a contemporary field boundary. The fifth linear is probably modern.

There was no evidence of any settlement inside the limits of the present site.

1 Introduction

- 1.1** This report was prepared at the request of Phoenix Consulting Ltd, acting on behalf of Lafarge Aggregates Ltd, as part of a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording at Sandy Heath Quarry, Sandy, Bedfordshire.
- 1.2** The scope of the works has been defined in a written scheme of investigation prepared by Phoenix Consultancy Ltd. (Ref. PC 175B) and approved by the Bedfordshire County Archaeology Officer on behalf of the minerals planning authority.
- 1.3** The site covers approximately 7.7 ha and is located to the east of the River Ivel on the summit of a sand plateau, centred on OS grid reference TL 200 495. To the south runs the valley of a tributary of the Ivel, which is itself a tributary of the Great Ouse. The site lies on open heath land, which has been used for arable farming, and some parts have been used for conifer plantation and tree nurseries. The study area lies between the 55 and 65mAOD. An escarpment around the edge of the sand plateau lies approximately 1 km to the north.
- 1.4** The proposed works consist of an extension of an existing sand quarry located immediately to the north. No known archaeological sites lie within the limits of the study area. However, a series of cropmarks, coupled with the results of fieldwalking and trial trenching suggest that there may be limited potential for Prehistoric, Iron Age or Romano-British archaeological finds.

2 Site Background

GEO-TECHNICAL

- 2.1 The geology of the area consists of Lower Greensand (British Geological Survey, 1:50,000 series: sheet 204). Boreholes drilled for a geotechnical survey of the site recorded topsoil overlying sand (degraded ironstone) above Oxford Clay.
- 2.2 The outcrop of greensand coincides with a change in altitude and topography. The river Ivel valley to the west contains gravels, which, in areas adjacent to the river, are covered by alluvium. Elsewhere, away from the watercourses, the greensand is surrounded by clay: Oxford clay to the west and boulder clay to the east.
- 2.3 The soils within the site are classified as part of the Frilford Series. These are generally described as sandy, brown soils, well drained, but likely to be affected by summer droughts and suffer erosion where set on sloping ground.

PREVIOUS WORK

- 2.4 Aerial photography revealed a series of cropmarks across the present site extending into adjacent areas (Palmer, 1996). These features appear to indicate rectangular enclosures and trackways on the heath. Although some of these may be the result of 20th century military activities, others suggest Romano-British farmsteads. Some of these anomalies may have geological origins.
- 2.5 The results of geophysical survey were inconclusive; magnetometry and resistivity surveys did not detect any clear archaeological anomalies.
- 2.6 Fieldwalking survey produced worked flint dating from the Mesolithic to the early Bronze Age. However, the amount of this material collected was relatively small, and concentrated outside the present site limits. The fieldwalking also demonstrated that the area had been subjected to manuring with Medieval and Post Medieval material during the 19th century. No finds relating to the Iron Age, Romano-British or Saxon periods were recovered from the site.
- 2.7 In total, a programme of 26 trial trenches were excavated over the heath. Only 7 of these were inside the limits of the present site. No significant archaeological features were encountered in these trenches, although a linear feature was observed in trench 20. No conclusive dating evidence was recovered, however, which suggests that it related to the use of the site as a training ground during World War II.

3 Fieldwork

METHODOLOGY

- 3.1** All work was carried out in accordance with the approved written scheme of investigation, and in consultation with Phoenix Consulting, Lafarge Aggregates Ltd and the Bedfordshire County Archaeological Officer.
- 3.2** An intermittent watching brief was carried out, with the frequency of visits being dictated by the pace of the topsoil stripping.
- 3.3** Topsoil was removed using either box scrapers or a tracked 360° machine fitted with a toothless bucket. In order to maximise the visibility of potential archaeological features, vehicles were restricted from running across areas until they had been inspected, and areas were allowed to weather for a couple of days before being released.
- 3.4** In addition, areas that did not provide a reasonable level of visibility, due to factors such as weather, were re-cleaned before they were released.
- 3.5** All potential archaeological features encountered were hand excavated and recorded according to current professional standards, by written, drawn and photographic methods.

RESULTS

- 3.6** Over the course of the watching brief 30 contexts were recorded, representing 5 archaeological features. Group numbers were issued to features that had multiple sections excavated through them.

Stratigraphy

- 3.7** The stratigraphy was similar across the whole site. The topsoil was a clayey sandy silt, measuring 0.30m in depth. Beneath the overburden was a coarse yellow brown sand natural, with irregular seams and pockets of decayed natural sandstone.

Recorded Contexts

No.	Type	Dimensions	Description	Interpretation	Date
1	Cut	29.4m long; 2.0m wide; 0.09-0.2m deep	Linear, orientated NW-SE, with irregular uneven sides and base.	Possible hedge row	Undated
2	Fill	29.4m long; 2.0m wide; 0.09-0.2m deep	Dark greyish brown, clayey sand. Frequent irregular sandstone fragments. Fill of cut [1]	Fill of ditch	Undated
3	Cut	25m long; 0.85m wide; 0.2m deep	Linear, orientated NE-SW, with steep sides and flat base.	Part of ditch group [10]	Undated

No.	Type	Dimensions	Description	Interpretation	Date
4	Fill	25m long; 0.85m wide; 0.2m deep	Very dark greyish brown (10YR 3/2), clayey sand. Freq irregular sandstone fragments. Fill of cut [3]	Fill of ditch	Undated
5	Cut	25m long; 0.7m wide; 0.22m deep	Linear, orientated NE-SW, with steep sides and flat base.	Part of ditch group [10]	Undated
6	Fill	25m long; 0.7m wide; 0.22m deep	Very dark greyish brown (10YR 3/2), clayey sand. Frequent irregular sandstone fragments. Fill of cut [5]	Fill of ditch	Undated
7	Cut	25m long; 0.87m wide; 0.38m deep	Linear, orientated NE-SW, with steep sides and flat base.	Part of ditch group [10]	Undated
8	Fill	25m long; 0.87m wide; 0.38m deep	Very dark greyish brown (10YR 3/2), clayey sand. Frequent irregular sandstone fragments. Fill of cut [7]	Fill of ditch	Undated
9	Cut	90m+ long; 2.74m wide; 0.25m deep	Linear, orientated NW-SE, slightly irregular sides and flat base	Part of ditch group [17]	Undated
10	Group	25m long; 0.8m wide; 0.38m deep	Short ditch group, orientated NE-SW containing, [3], (4); [5], (6); [7], (8)	Possible modern trench.	Undated
11	Fill	90m+ long; 2.74m wide; 0.25m deep	Dark yellowish brown (10YR 3 / 4), clayey sand. Frequent irregular sandstone fragments. Fill of cut [9]	Fill of ditch	Undated
12	Cut	90m+ long; 3.5m wide; 0.28m deep	Linear, orientated NW-SE, steep sides and flat base	Part of ditch group [17]	Undated
13	Fill	90m+ long; 3.5m wide; 0.28m deep	Dark yellowish brown (10YR 3 / 4), clayey sand. Frequent irregular sandstone fragments. Fill of cut [12]	Fill of ditch	Undated
14	Cut	90m+ long; 2.4m wide; 0.36m deep	Linear, orientated NW-SE, slightly irregular sides and flat base	Part of ditch group [17]	Undated
15	Fill	90m+ long; 1.7m wide; 0.2m deep	Dark greyish brown (2.5Y 2.5 / 1), clayey sand. Frequent irregular sandstone fragments. Secondary fill of cut [14]	Secondary ditch fill	Undated
16	Fill	90m+ long; 2.4m wide; 0.16m deep	Dark greyish brown (10YR 3 / 4), clayey sand. Frequent irregular sandstone fragments. Primary fill of cut [14]	Primary ditch fill	Undated
17	Group	90m+ long; 3.5m wide; 0.36m deep	Ditch group, orientated NW-SE containing, [9], (11); [12], (13); [14], (15), (16)	Northern ditch of possible trackway	Undated
18	Cut	47.1m long; 1.3m wide; 0.1m deep	Linear, orientated NW-SE, steep sides and flat base	Part of ditch group [30]	Undated
19	Fill	47.1m long; 1.3m wide; 0.1m deep	Dark greyish brown (10YR 3 / 3), clayey sand. Frequent	Fill of ditch	Undated

No.	Type	Dimensions	Description	Interpretation	Date
			irregular sandstone fragments. Fill of cut [18]		
20	Cut	72.6m long; 1.5m wide; 0.2m deep	Linear, orientated NW-SE, steep sides and flat base	Part of ditch group [30]	Undated
21	Fill	72.6m long; 1.5m wide; 0.2m deep	Very dark brown (10YR 2/2), clayey sand. Frequent irregular sandstone fragments. Fill of cut [20]	Fill of ditch	Undated
22	Cut	72.6m long; 1.24m wide; 0.17m deep	Linear, orientated NW-SE, steep sides and rounded base	Part of ditch group [30]	Undated
23	Fill	72.6m long; 1.24m wide; 0.17m deep	Very dark brown (10YR 2/2), clayey sand. Frequent irregular sandstone fragments. Fill of cut [22]	Fill of ditch	Undated
24	Cut	47.1m long; 1.26m wide; 0.27m deep	Linear, orientated NW-SE, slightly irregular sides and flat base	Part of ditch group [30]	Undated
25	Fill	47.1m long; 1.26m wide; 0.27m deep	Dark greyish brown (10YR 3 / 3), clayey sand. Frequent irregular sandstone fragments. Fill of cut [24]	Fill of ditch	Undated
26	Cut	72.6m long; 1m wide; 0.1m deep	Linear, orientated NW-SE, shallow sides and slightly rounded base	Part of ditch group [30]	Undated
27	Fill	72.6m long; 1m wide; 0.1m deep	Very dark brown (10YR 2/2), clayey sand. Frequent irregular sandstone fragments. Fill of cut [26]	Fill of ditch	Undated
28	Cut	47.1m long; 1.1m wide; 0.15m deep	Linear, orientated NW-SE, slightly irregular sides and flat base	Part of ditch group [30]	Undated
29	Fill	47.1m long; 1.1m wide; 0.15m deep	Dark greyish brown (10YR 3 / 3), clayey sand. Frequent irregular sandstone fragments. Fill of cut [28]	Fill of ditch	Undated
30	Group	72.6m long; 4m wide; 0.27m deep	Double ditch group, orientated NW-SE containing, [18], (19); [20], (21); [22], (23); [24], (25); [26], (27); [28], (29)	Southern ditch of possible trackway	Undated

FINDS CONCORDANCE

3.8 No archaeological material was recovered from any of these features. During the monitoring of the whole area, only late 19th century ceramic building material (CBM) and pottery fragments were observed. These were not recovered as it had been demonstrated that the area had been manured with this material during this period. In addition, modern brick dumps were also observed within the scrubbed out tree line that runs along the eastern margin of the existing quarry. These were also ignored, as they were clearly intrusive in nature.

4 Discussions and Conclusions

- 4.1** Despite the location of the site on heath land where settlement sites are common, and the potential indicated by cropmarks within and adjacent to the site, the results of the fieldwork have shown no evidence for a settlement on the site. The presence of a trackway, which had been indicated by cropmarks, suggests that further cropmarks on land adjacent to the current site may also represent genuine features.
- 4.2** The trackway consisted of two ditch groups running parallel to each other, c.15m apart, on a northwest to southeast alignment. Ditch group [17] formed the northern edge of the trackway and was over 90m long by 3.5m wide by 0.36m deep. Ditch group [30] was made up of a double ditch that formed the southern edge of the trackway and measured 72.6m long by 4m wide by 0.27m deep. The ditch cuts were irregular in nature showing signs of feathering possibly indicating heavy root disturbance. Neither of the two ditch groups produced any archaeological material, to clarify their date.
- 4.3** Ditch [01] measured 29.4m in length by 2.0m in width and varied in depth between 0.09 and 0.2m. It ran on a northwest to southeast alignment parallel to the trackway at approximately 95m to the southeast. The sides of the cut were irregular and showed signs of feathering which may indicate this feature as the remains of a hedgerow. Due to the similarity of the alignments it is possible that the ditch represents a field boundary contemporary with the trackway
- 4.4** Ditch group [10] measured 25m long by 0.8m wide by 0.38m deep and was orientated on a northeast to southwest alignment. Due to the nature of the steep sides and flat base of this feature it has been interpreted as a modern trench possibly associated with the sites use as a military training ground during World War II.
- 4.5** A flint scraper, recovered unstratified c.50m to the north of the trackway, and to the east of the modern footpath, measured 0.42m long by 0.34m wide by 0.05m deep and showed signs of retouch. The apparent lack of further chance finds suggests that there was no intensive settlement on the site.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT

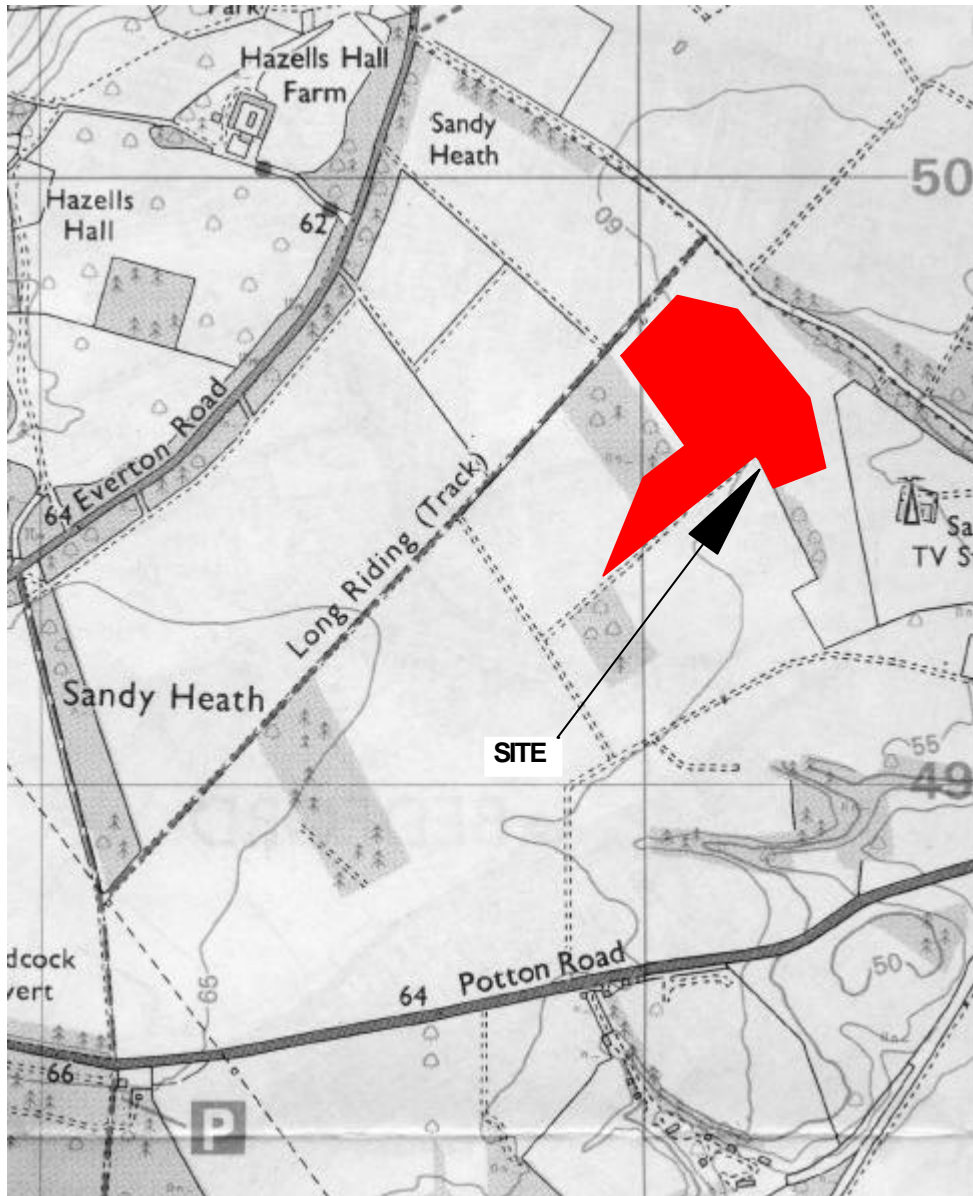
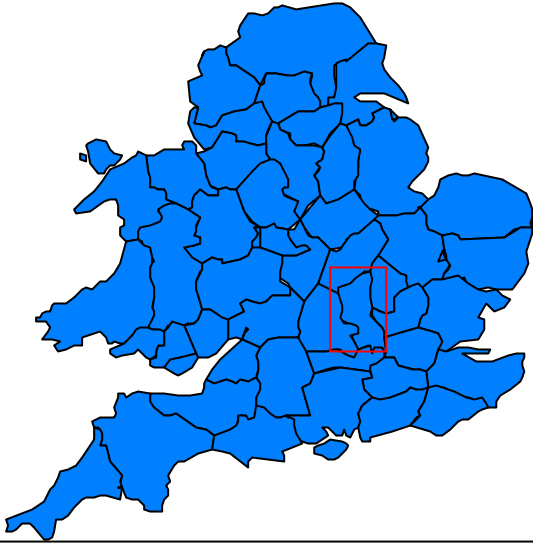
- 4.6** Due to the nature of the sand extraction, all stratigraphic layers that may contain potential archaeological features will be removed during the quarrying process.

CONFIDENCE RATING

- 4.7** Despite periods of bad weather, the conditions affecting the visibility of the archaeology were generally fair to good. There were no circumstances that would lead to a confidence rating for the work that was less than high.

5 Illustrations

Figure 1	Site location plan
Figure 2	Cropmarks, evaluation trenches and investigated area
Figure 3	Site plan
Figure 4	Plan of ditch groups [17] and [30]
Figure 5 (a)	Plan and section of [18]
(b)	Plan and section of [20]
Figure 6 (a)	Plan and section of [12]
(b)	Plan and section of [14]
Figure 7	Plan and section of [9]
Figure 8 (a)	Plan of feature [10]
(b)	Sections of [03], [05] and [07]
Figure 9	Sections of [22], [24], [26], and [28]

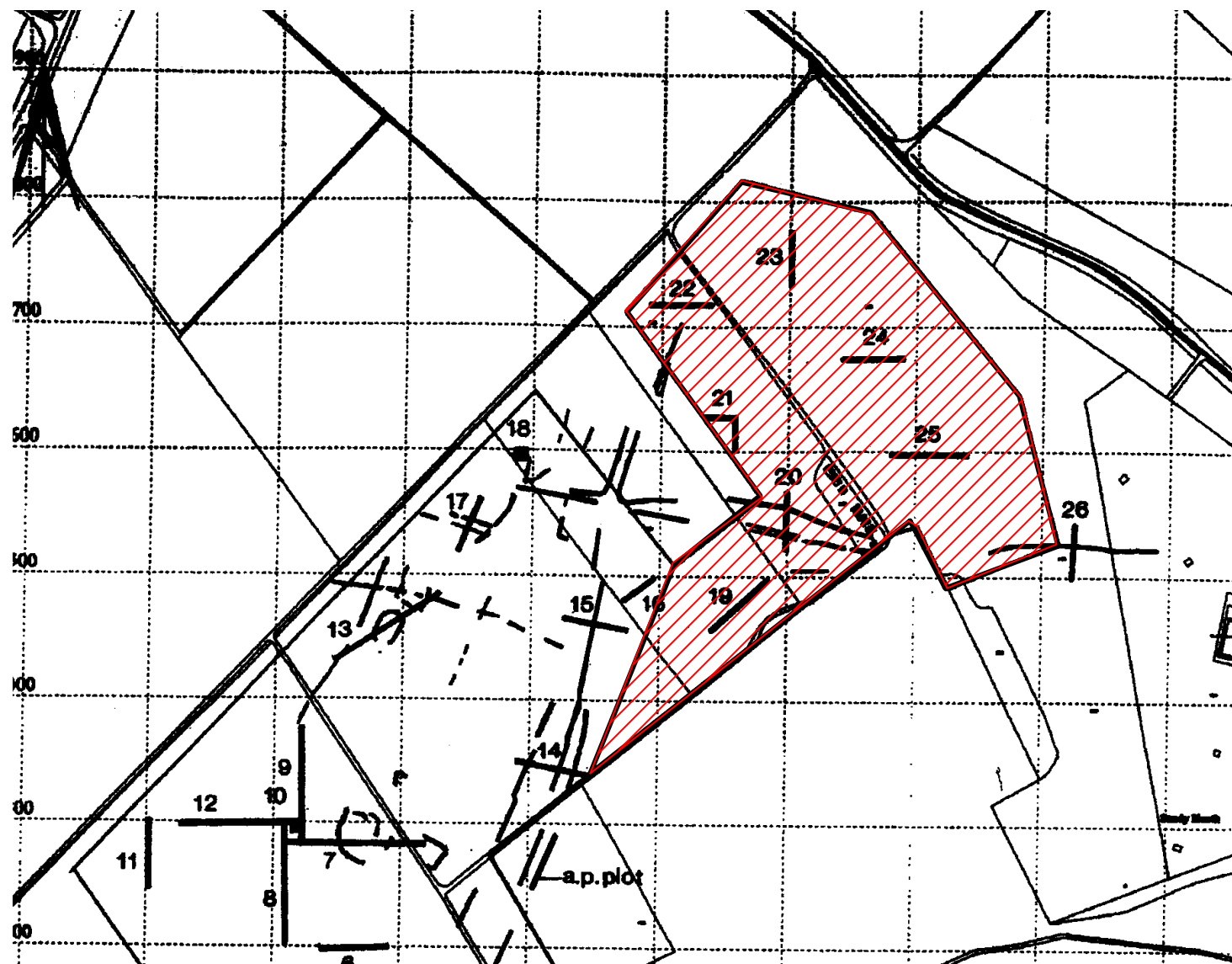


TL 19

TL 20

Site Location

Scale 1:1250

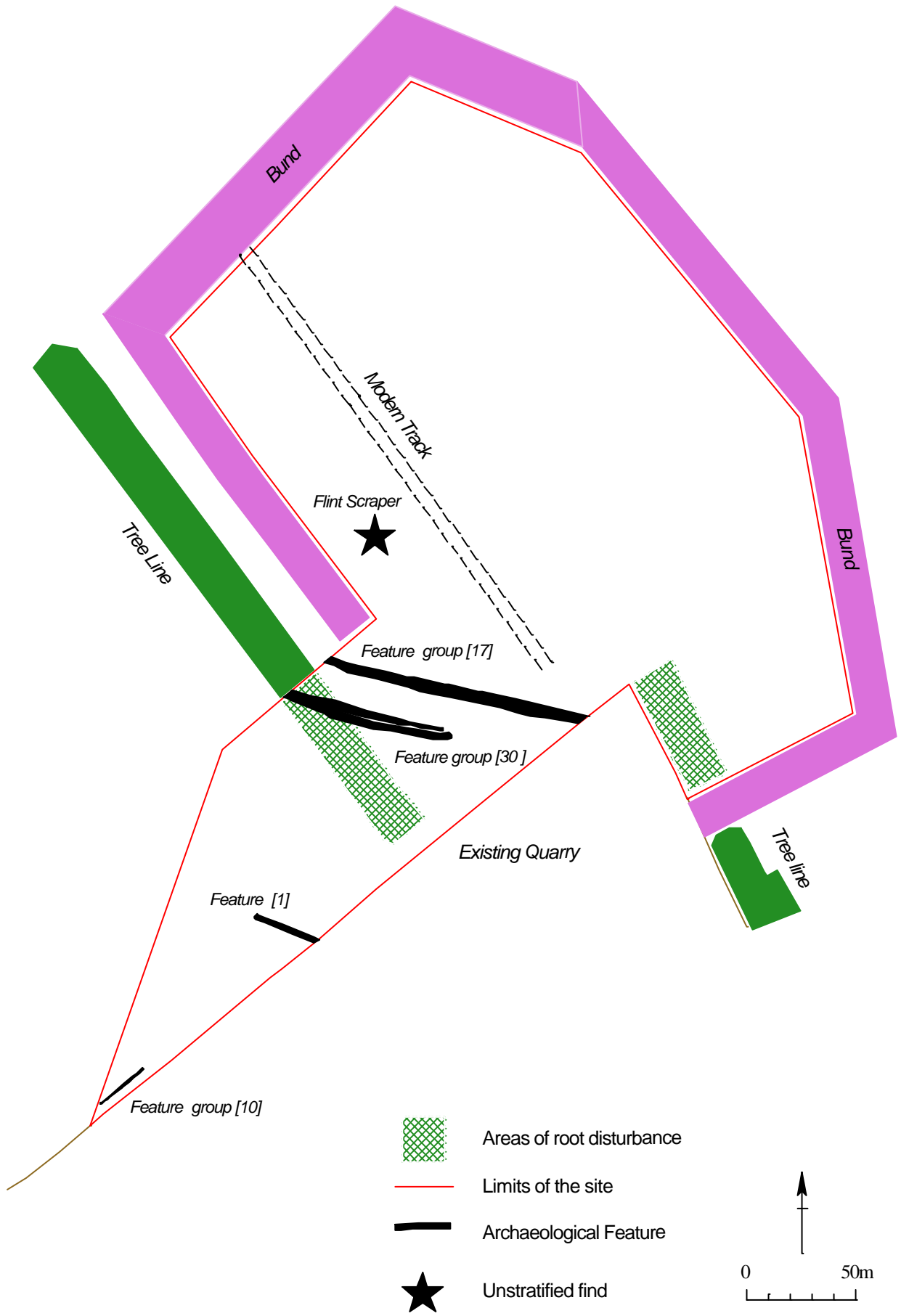


Cropmarks, evaluation trenches & area of investigation

(Courtesy of BCAS 1996)

Scale 1:5000

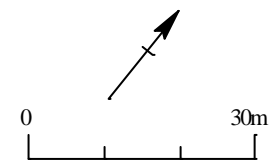
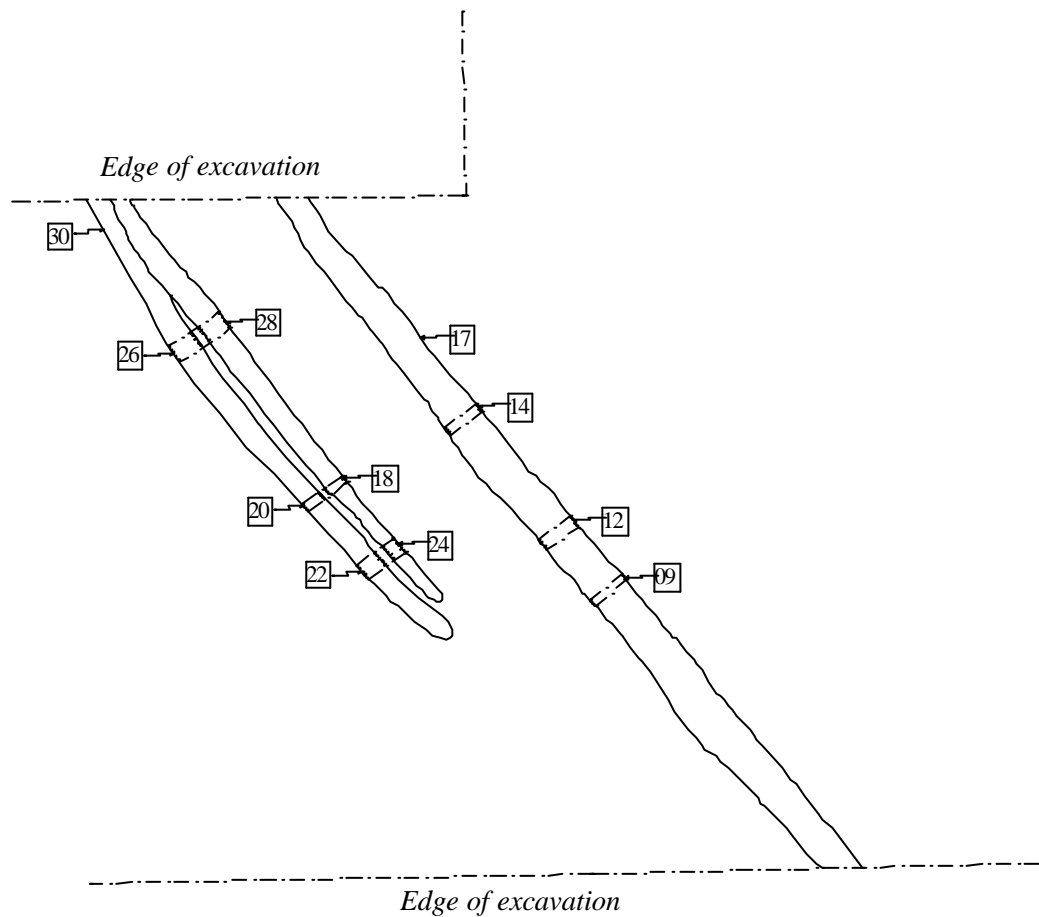
Figure 2



Site plan

Scale 1:2500

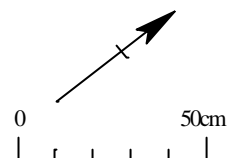
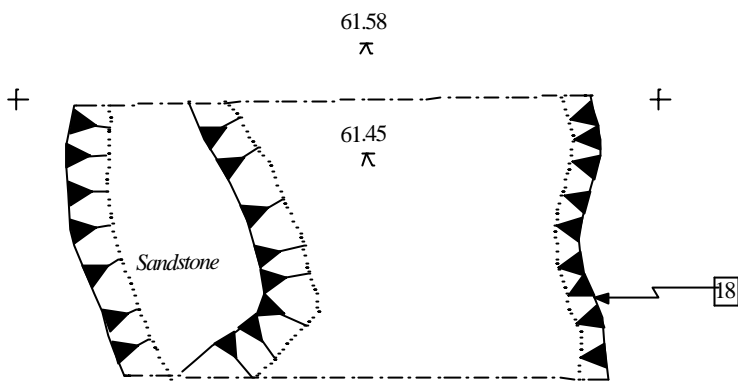
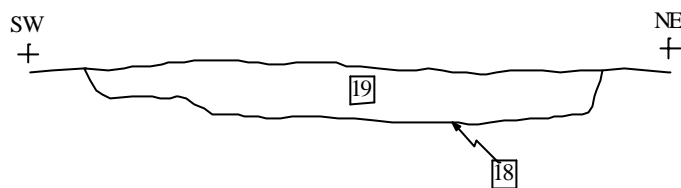
Figure 3



Plan of ditch groups [17] & [30]

Scale 1:1000

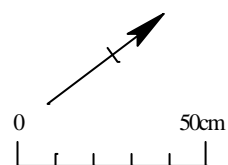
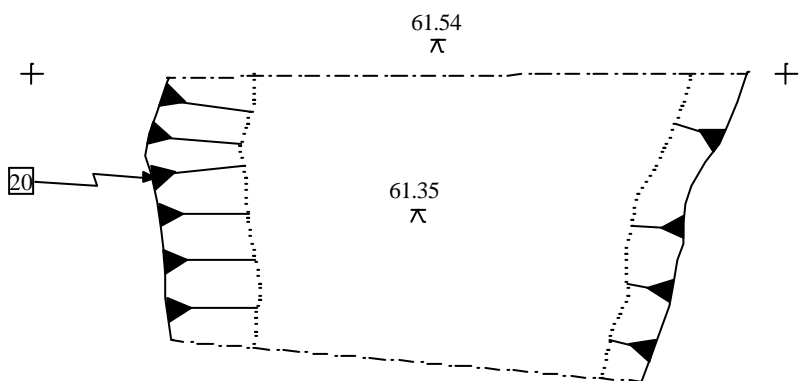
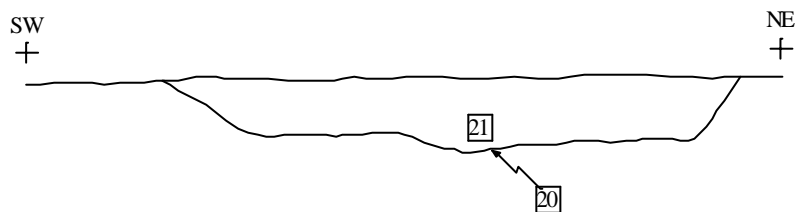
Figure 4



Plan & section of feature [18]

Scale 1:20

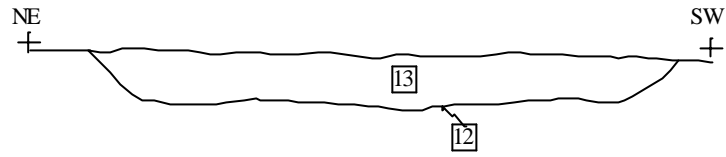
Figure 5a



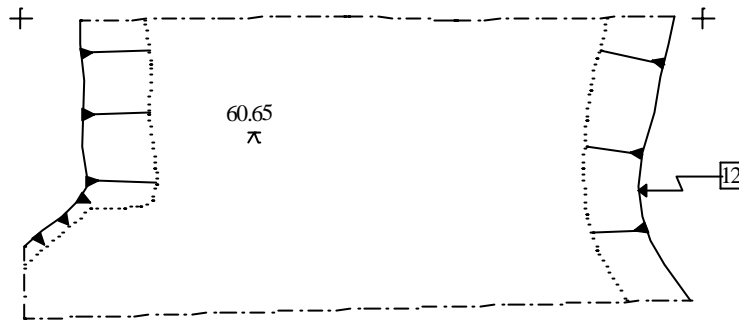
Plan & section of feature [20]

Scale 1:20

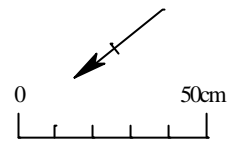
Figure 5b



60.90
π



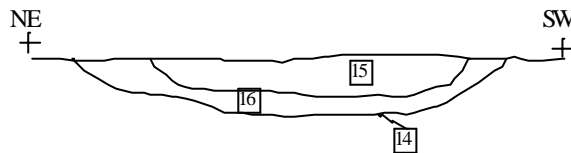
60.65
π



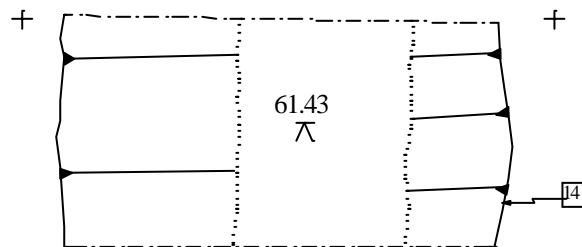
Plan & section of feature [12]

Scale 1:40

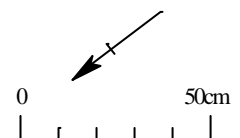
Figure 6a



61.43
π



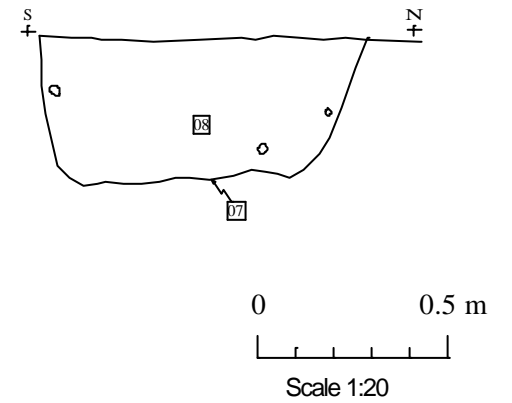
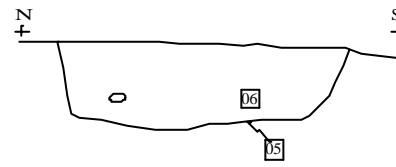
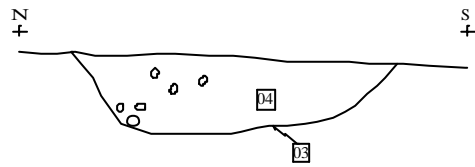
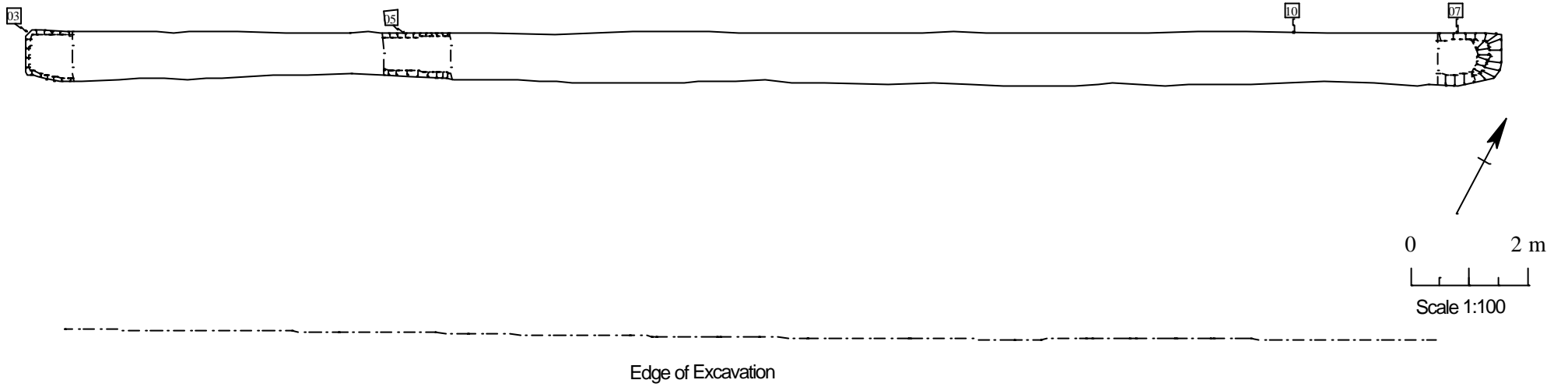
61.15
π



Plan & section of feature [14]

Scale 1:40

Figure 6b



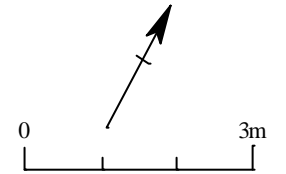
Plan and sections of feature [10]

Scale : see scales above

Figure 7



Limit of Site

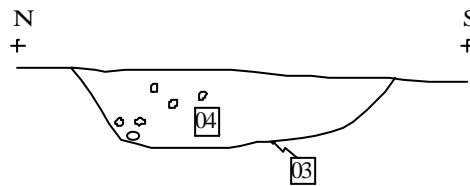


Plan of feature [10]

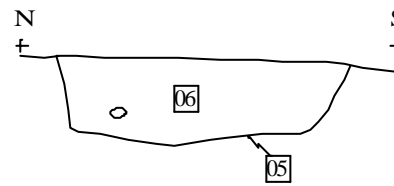
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Figure 8a

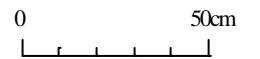
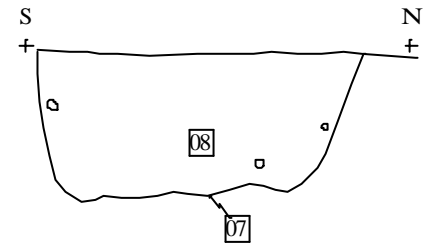
West facing section of [03]



West facing section of [05]



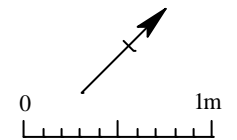
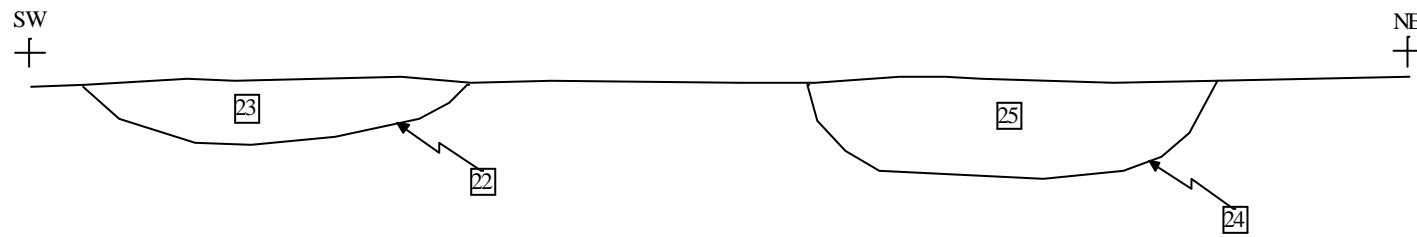
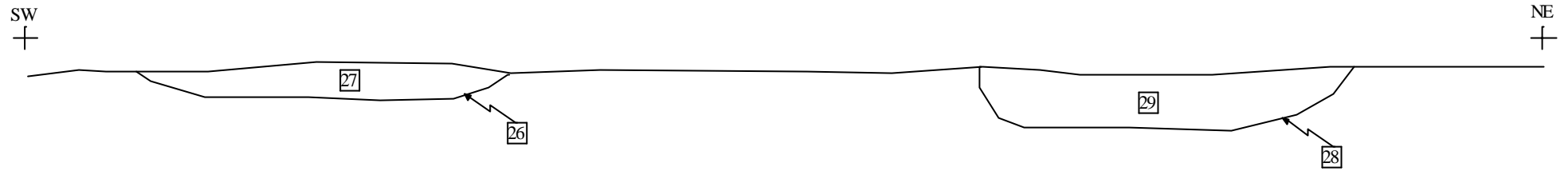
East facing section of [07]



Sections of [03], [05], and [07]

Scale 1:20

Figure 8b



Sections of [22], [24], [26] & [28]

Scale 1:40

Figure 9