

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
ON LAND AT ILTON FARM,
MALBOROUGH, DEVON**

by

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief on land at Ilton Farm, Malborough (NGR SX 7215 4011) was undertaken by Exeter Archaeology (EA) during April and May 2007 in advance of the construction of an agricultural building.

The site was close to known earthwork remains of a deserted settlement (almost certainly those of Eddetone from which Ilton derives its present name) a Scheduled Ancient Monument of national archaeological importance.

Discovered as part of the watching brief, and subsequently recorded, was an enclosure, possibly for livestock, of probable late medieval date.

1 INTRODUCTION

The following report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Ilton Farm, Malborough, Devon (SX 7215 4011) (Fig. 1) between April and May 2007. Mr. J. Rogers, the owner and developer of the site, commissioned the work to fulfil Condition 9 of the full planning permission (33/1199/F) issued by South Hams District Council.

The site has been allocated an OASIS reference number of 60184

The project involved the demolition of two existing agricultural buildings, followed by the construction of a new single structure in their place. No condition was imposed for archaeological monitoring of the demolition of existing buildings but the stripping of topsoil across the footprint of the new structure was observed.

1.1 The site (Fig. 2)

The development footprint is situated on a gentle south-facing slope, within a field located immediately to the south of Ilton Farm bounded on the north and south sides by hedgebanks, and to the west by the existing farm buildings.

1.2 Geology and land use

Geologically, the site comprises lower Devonian slates overlain by typical brown earths of the (541a) Milford association (Soil Survey 1983). Prior to groundworks commencing the site was used for pasture.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Ilton Farm is located to the south and west of the remains of a deserted medieval settlement, probably associated with the settlement of *Eddetone*, mentioned in Domesday. The remains are protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SM 33788; Old DV 1005), and comprise a complex of relict earthworks of the deserted medieval settlement, a quadrangular medieval castle, a surrounding garden of post-medieval date, two fish-ponds and other associated archaeological features situated between Ilton Farm and Ilton Castle Farm to the northeast. The new agricultural building is positioned about 25m outside of the Scheduled area.

The earliest available map which depicts Ilton Farm is a 1780 estate map (Devon Record Office ref. 1508M collection), which shows the field containing the new agricultural building as an orchard. The orchard is also shown on the parish tithe map of 1841 and the Ordnance Survey First Edition 25-inch map of 1891.

3 METHOD

Archaeological monitoring was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation produced by EA (Valentin 2007), and approved by Devon County Council Historic Environment Service (DCHES).

All archaeological features and deposits were cleaned and investigated by hand. Stratigraphic information was recorded in accordance with standard EA procedures. A written record was produced on EA single context and watching brief record sheets. Sections and plans were drawn at scales of 1:10 and 1:20, as appropriate, and a photographic record compiled in digital and black-and-white print media.

4 RESULTS

The site was stripped of between 0.3 and 0.5m of friable mid-brown silt clay topsoil to expose firm yellow brown clay natural subsoil. The depth of topsoil was greater towards the bottom of the south-facing slope.

Stripping of topsoil revealed a ditched enclosure cut into the natural subsoil (Figs. 2 and 3). Ditch [501] formed a sub-rectangular enclosure that, at most, measured 14.5m east/west by 16.0m north/south. The eastern side of the enclosure ran parallel with and adjacent to the field's eastern hedgebank boundary. The ditch had a maximum width of 1.0m and was between 0.10m and 0.68m in depth. The profile of ditch [501] varied from V-shaped with a concave base to straight-sided with a flat base. The depth of the feature was less along the eastern edge and is possibly a result of later truncation. The ditch contained a single homogenous fill consisting of friable dark brown silt clay with occasional flecks and fragments of charcoal. The fill yielded six fragments of faunal bone, a single sherd of white unglazed pottery and eighteen unabraded sherds of South-Western micaceous pottery (mostly jugs), all of 14th to 15th century date.

In the north-west corner of the enclosure was a 1.0m-wide break in ditch [501], with rounded terminals; this was interpreted as an entrance. In the south-east corner of the enclosure a second ditch [502] branched from ditch [501]. Ditch [502] was followed for about 1.0m to a modern disturbance. It was oriented south west-north east and measured 0.48m in width and 0.26m in depth. It contained the same fill (500) as ditch [501], suggesting that both ditches were contemporary and that [502] perhaps formed a small subdivision in the south-east corner of the enclosure. No other features were identified within, or outside of, the enclosure.

A deposit of dark grey-brown silt clay overlay ditch [501] on the eastern side of the enclosure and is attributed to an accumulation of colluvium on the up-slope side on the adjacent hedgebank.

Nine sherds of post-medieval pottery, one of post-medieval tile, two fragments of post-medieval clay smoking-pipe and a struck flint of Neolithic to early Bronze Age date were recovered from the topsoil.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The site is situated adjacent to Ilton Farm, and within close proximity of the known deserted medieval settlement which is a component part of the protected Scheduled Ancient Monument SM 33788. The sub-rectangular ditched enclosure, of probable late-medieval date found during the watching brief, may represent a small compound for corralling livestock within the field in which it sits. It was an isolated construction with one recorded entrance and no internal features other than a possible corner sub-division; there is no evidence to suggest that it was connected to a more extensive system. It is possible that the ditch originally had a counterscarp bank, which was levelled when the enclosure went out of use. There is the potential that further medieval remains are located beyond the investigated area of groundworks.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project was administered on behalf of Exeter Archaeology by J. Valentin. The fieldwork was undertaken by J. Bell and P. Swindin. Thanks to Graham Tait of the Devon County Council Historic Environment Record.

SOURCES CONSULTED

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Records for sites in the vicinity of the proposed works.

Soil Survey of England and Wales. 1983. *Soils of England and Wales: Sheet 5 South West England*. Ordnance Survey, Southampton.

Valentin, J. 2007: Project Design for an Archaeological Watching Brief on Land at Ilton Farm, Malborough, Devon. Exeter Archaeology unpublished document.

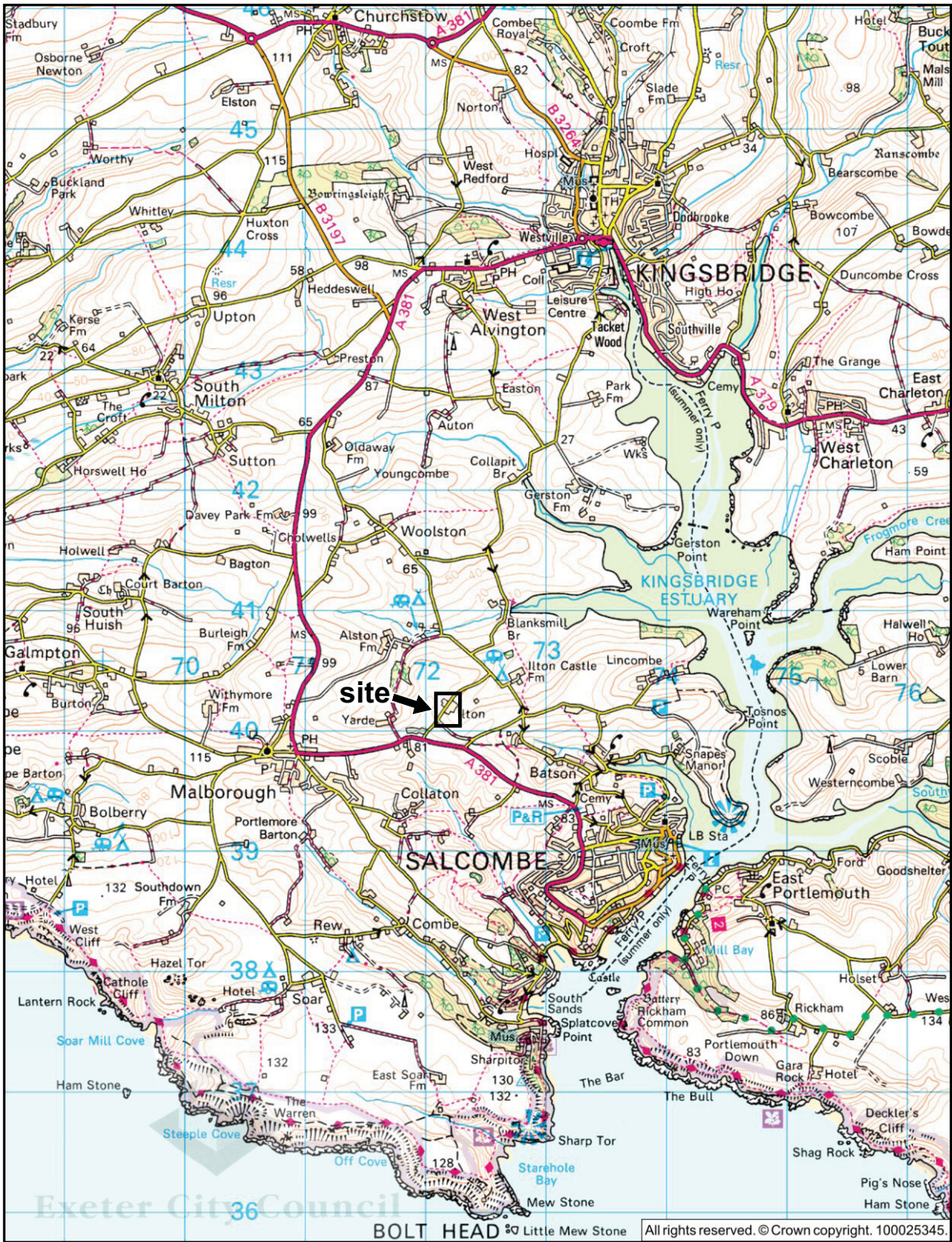


Fig. 1 Location of site.

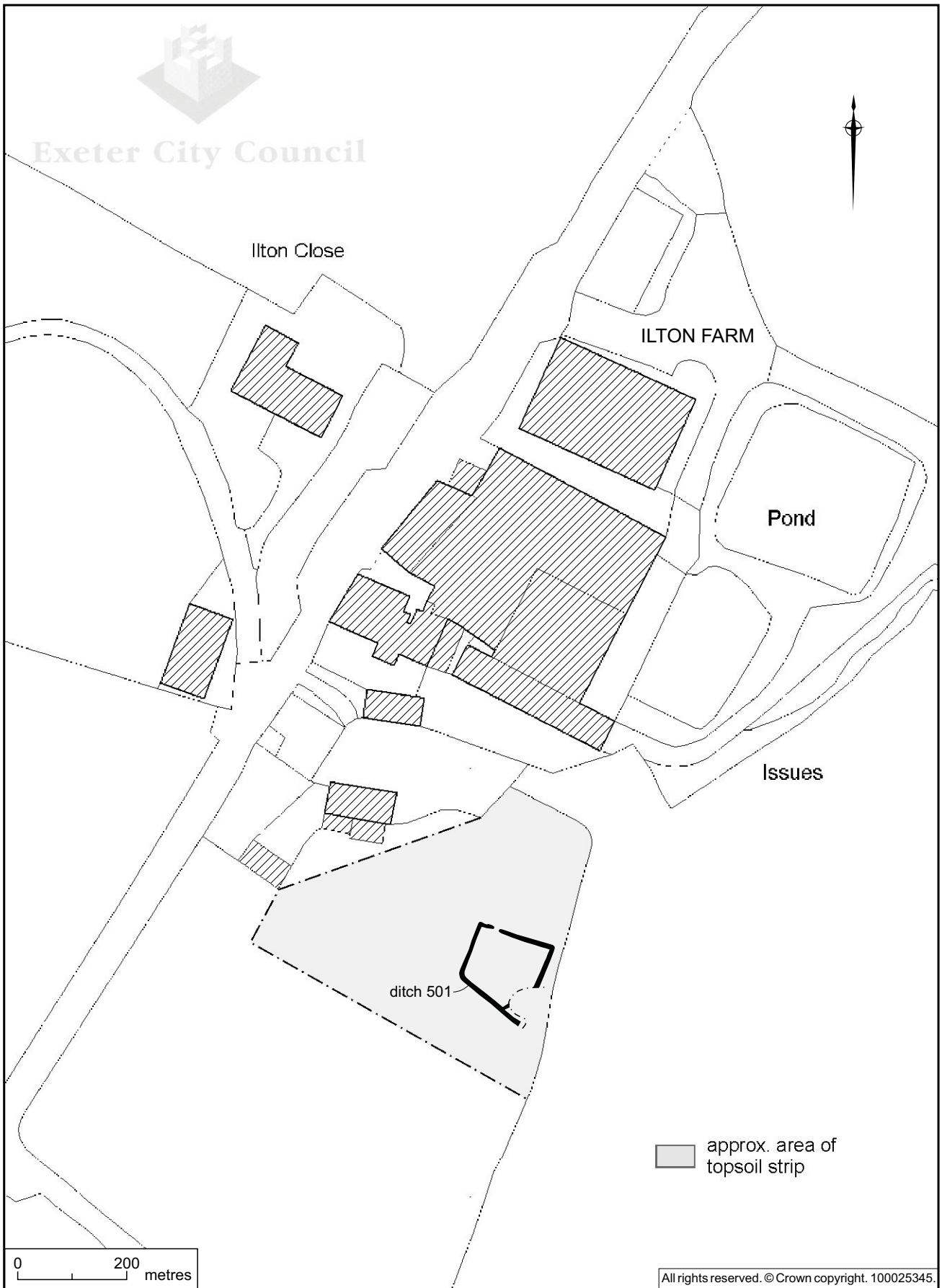
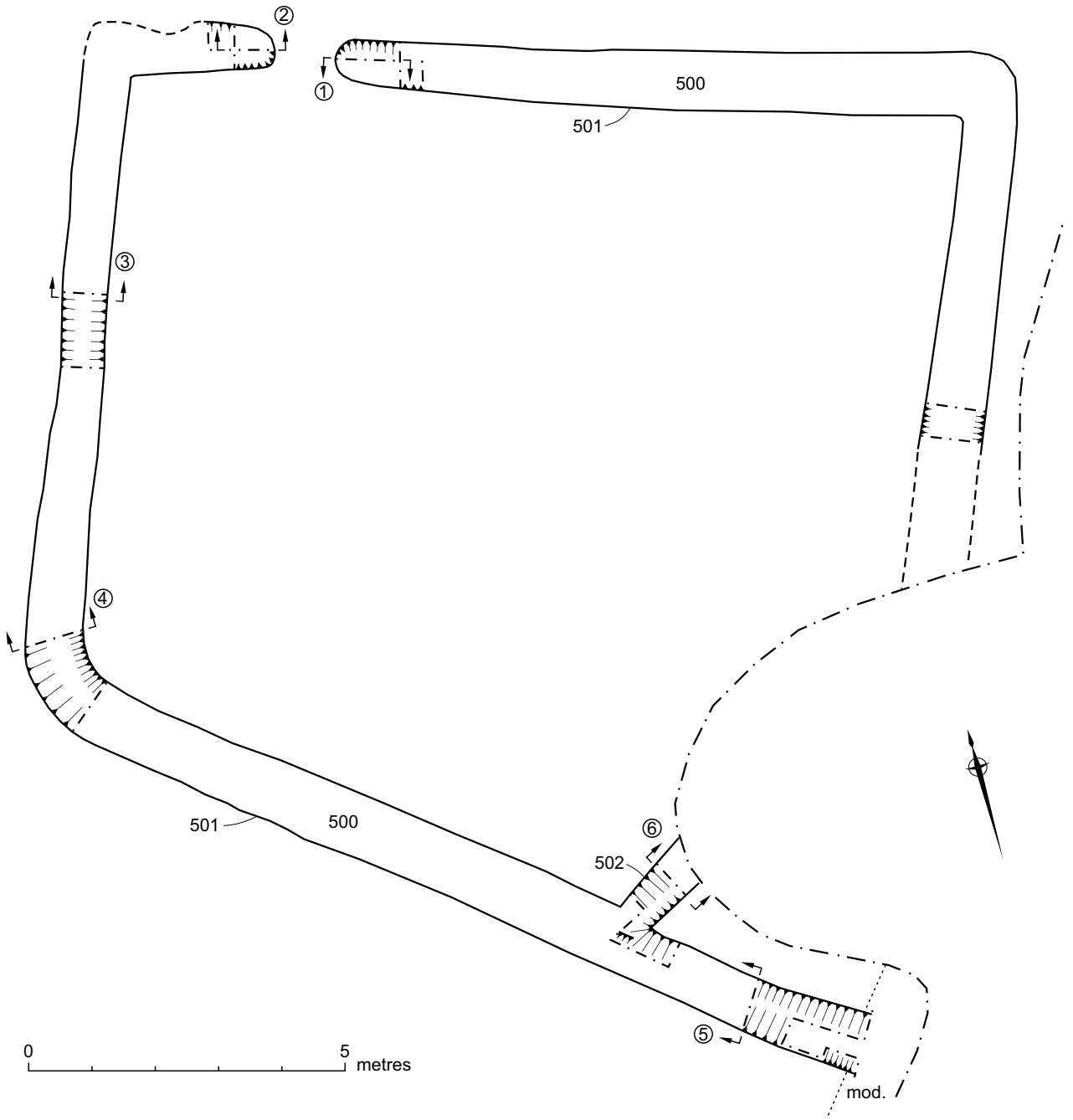


Fig. 2 Location of enclosure ditch 501. Scale 1:1000.

Plan



Sections

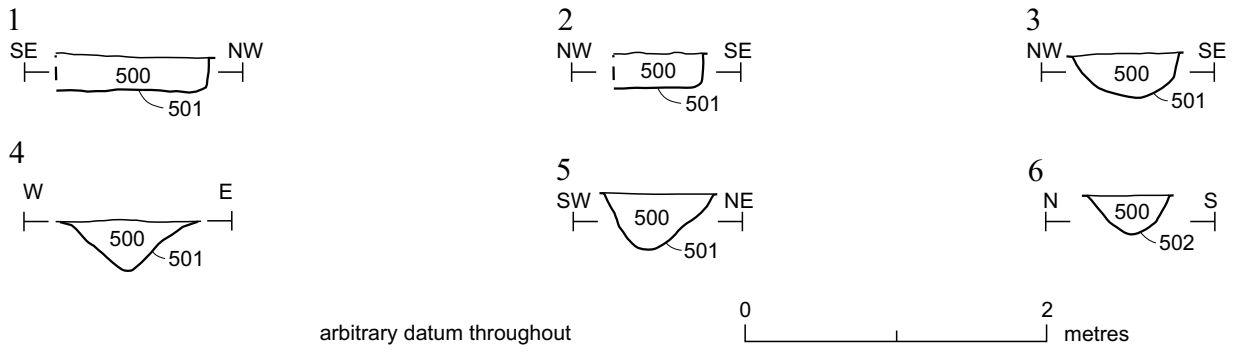


Fig. 3 Plan and sections of enclosure ditch 501.