

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRENCH  
EVALUATION ON LAND AT OLDWAY,  
CHUDLEIGH, DEVON**

**prepared for David Wilson Homes**

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**Exeter Archaeology**

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## Contents

1. Introduction	1
1.1 The site	1
2. Project specification	1
3. Aims	1
4. Results of desk based assessment	1
5. Method	2
6. Results	3
6.1 Trench 1	3
6.2 Trench 2	3
6.3 Trench 3	3
6.4 Trench 4	3
6.5 Trench 5	3
6.6 Trench 6	4
7. The Finds	4
8. Discussion	4
9. Project archive and ‘OASIS’ report	5

Acknowledgments

Bibliography

## List of Illustrations

Fig. 1 Site location map

Fig. 2 Trench location of plan

Fig. 3 Trenches 3, 5 and 6: plans

Fig. 4 Trenches 5 and 6: sections

Fig. 5 Extract from the 1840 Chudleigh Tithe Map

Fig. 6 Extract from the OS Map 1890

Plate 1 View of site looking south-west

Plate 2 Trench 5: ditches {502} and {504}, looking north. 1m scale.

## *Summary*

*An archaeological trench evaluation of land with archaeological potential at Oldway, Chudleigh was undertaken by Exeter Archaeology during June 2010.*

*The evaluation comprised the machine-excavation of six trenches totalling 375m in length, with each trench 1.6m wide. In two trenches evidence for a former hedgebank shown on 19<sup>th</sup> century mapping was uncovered whilst a third trench produced evidence of post-medieval field drains. The remaining three trenches were devoid of archaeological features.*

*Finds pre-dating the post-medieval period were limited to two struck flakes of the prehistoric period from topsoil deposits only.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared for David Wilson Homes at the behest of Prospect Archaeology Ltd., the archaeological consultant of David Wilson Homes, and presents the results of an archaeological trench evaluation undertaken by Exeter Archaeology (EA) in June 2010, on land at Oldway on the southwest side of the village of Chudleigh, Teignbridge, Devon. It represents archaeological evaluation work required by Teignbridge District Council as advised by Devon County Council's Historic Environment Service (DCCHEs) in accordance with a condition of outline planning permission for the development of the site as residential accommodation (Planning Ref. No 08/03004/MAJ).

### 1.1 **The site** (SX 8615 7908 Fig. 1)

The evaluation site comprises a near rectangular field bounded to the north by the road of Oldway and the existing houses of Twindle Beer and Beechwood Road, plus a smaller oval area in the neighbouring field to the south. Both fields were under pasture at the time of the evaluation. The underlying geology of the site consists of the grey shales and sandstones of the Crackington formation within the Upper Carboniferous geological period (GSGB, Sheet 339).

## 2. PROJECT SPECIFICATION

Specifications for archaeological evaluation were set out in a brief provided by DCCHEs (ref. Arch/dc/te/13012). The principal requirements were:

- production of a rapid desk-based assessment to place the development site in its historical and archaeological context;
- evaluative trenching to investigate a representative sample, by area, of the proposed development site;
- the production of a report and archiving as appropriate.

A written scheme of investigation (WSI) was subsequently produced by EA for Prospect Archaeology Ltd acting on behalf of David Wilson Homes, which described the precise methodology to be employed for the archaeological trench evaluation (see 5 below)

## 3. AIMS

The principal aim of the project was to establish the presence or absence, character extent, depth and date of archaeological deposits within the site. The results of the evaluation will inform the planning process and may form the basis of a subsequent programme of archaeological investigation within the site either prior to, and/or during construction, should the planning process proceed.

## 4. RESULTS OF DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

### *Historical*

The site lies about 600m southwest of the historic core of Chudleigh which, in the 11<sup>th</sup>-century was part of the Episcopal manor of Bishop's Teignton (from which the parish name of Bishopsteington on the north side of the Teign estuary derives). The

bishops of Exeter had a medieval palace at Chudleigh of which traces survive (Scheduled Ancient Monument 24838) about 485m southeast of the site on the other side of the B3344. The earliest large scale map of the area is the Chudleigh Tithe Map (1840) which shows the site area divided into several fields. A building, probably of agricultural use, is shown in one of the adjacent fields. Two of the fields in the south-eastern corner of the site (plots 1382 & 1385) are recorded as orchards whilst the remaining fields were under pasture, even though three of them had 'wood' names. The two fields occupying the bulk of the area of interest for assessment purposes here were fields 1383 and 1384 and these are shown divided by a field boundary which at this time and location is most likely to have been represented by a hedge.

By 1890 (OS 1:10560 map) some field boundaries had been removed although the boundary between 1383 and 1384 is still depicted. The building shown on the Tithe map is no longer shown although the lane immediately to the north of the site (now Oldway) was then known as Pottery Lane suggesting the possibility of a kiln in the area. A field (plot 1358) was called 'Pottery Meadow' on the Tithe map; this now lies beneath modern housing to the northeast of the assessment area.

### *Archaeological*

Topographically the site lies on a gently sloping spur projecting westward into the Teign valley and as such may represent a potential prehistoric settlement site. However, no known sites of archaeological interest lie within the immediate proposed development area although prehistoric activity in the hinterland around the Chudleigh area is demonstrated by the presence 2km to the south-east of an Iron Age hillfort, Castle Dyke, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (DV 170). Other prehistoric finds spots include that of a flint axe at Chudleigh cricket ground and a bronze axe from the bed of Kate Brook - both to the north-east of the town whilst a Bronze Age axe has also been recovered some 500m to the south-east.

Palaeolithic material has been recovered from a cluster of caves about 1km south-east of the application area. Cow Hole (SAM 10720), Pixies Hole (SAM 10719) and Tramp's Shelter (SAM 10721) have all been dated to the Upper Palaeolithic period (35,000 - 10,000BC); all three are Scheduled Ancient Monuments..

## 5. METHOD

The agreed WSI for the evaluation stipulated six trenches totalling 375m in length to be excavated using a tracked machine fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless grading bucket. Trenches were positioned to achieve a representative spatial sample of the site with five trenches located in the main field to be evaluated and one within the smaller adjacent area to the south. The six trenches, one at 100m in length, one at 75m in length and four at 50m in length, together accomplished the required total of 375m of trenching.

Machining continued until either natural subsoil or archaeological deposits were reached. Where archaeological deposits were exposed, trenches were cleaned back by hand, and the deposits investigated and recorded.

Standard EA recording procedures were employed. Stratigraphic information was recorded on pro-forma single context record sheets; a drawn record was compiled in plan and section at scales of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50 as appropriate and a photographic record was prepared in black and white film and digital (colour) format.

## 6. RESULTS (Figs. 2-4)

The location of the evaluation trenches is found on Fig. 2. Note: trench 5 was swung 10m in a clockwise direction away from its original intended alignment at its southeastern end in order to be clear of the existing tree canopy and for the avoidance of tree roots.

### 6.1 Trench 1

This trench measured 50m in length and was orientated NW-SE. A mid-yellowish/brown topsoil (100) with an average depth of 340mm overlay a natural subsoil of light yellow-orange clay (101). No archaeological deposits or features were observed.

### 6.2 Trench 2

This trench measured 75m in length and was orientated NE-SW. A mid-yellowish/brown topsoil (200) with an average depth of 340mm overlay a natural subsoil of light yellow-orange clay (201). No archaeological deposits or features were observed.

### 6.3 Trench 3 (Figs. 2-4)

This trench measured 100m in length and was orientated approximately E-W (Fig.3). A dark-brown topsoil (300) with an average depth of 360mm overlay a natural subsoil of yellow clay with sandstone bands (301). Two features were recorded within the evaluation trench (302 and 304). The features are interpreted as contemporary post-medieval ditches flanking a removed hedgebank.

Feature 302 was a ditch 1.15m wide with a NE-SW alignment. Below topsoil the ditch was filled with a dark-brown sandy clay (303). Unexcavated – see Trench 5 feature 502.

Feature 304 was a ditch 1.45m wide with a NE-SW alignment. It was parallel to 302 and about 1.8m to its east. Below topsoil the ditch was filled with a dark-grey/brown sandy clay (305). Unexcavated – see Trench 5 feature 504

### 6.4 Trench 4

This trench measured 50m in length and was orientated NW-SE. A mid-yellowish/brown topsoil (400) with an average depth of 340mm overlay a natural subsoil of light yellow clay (401). No archaeological deposits or features were observed.

### 6.5 Trench 5 (Figs. 2-4)

This trench measured 50m in length and was orientated NW-SE (Fig.3). A dark-brown topsoil (500) with an average depth of 280mm overlay a natural subsoil of light yellow clay (501). Two features were recorded within the evaluation trench (502 and 504). Both are thought to represent a continuation of the ditches recorded in trench 3 (302 and 304 respectively) and both are considered therefore to be post-medieval ditches flanking a removed hedgebank.

Feature 502 was a linear feature (ditch) 1.7m wide with a NE-SW alignment. It was 500mm deep with an asymmetrical profile, gentler on the northwestern side. Where fully excavated the ditch had three fills the uppermost of which was a mid-brown sandy clay (503) with a depth of around 140mm. This overlay a layer (506) of mottled gray and yellowish-brown clay with a depth of 320mm; the lowest fill

(507) was a lens of mid-brown sandy clay material with a maximum depth of 0.80m on the NW side of the ditch only. The full profile of 502 was recorded in section (Fig. 4).

Feature 504 was a linear feature (ditch) 1.2m wide with a NE-SW alignment. It was parallel to 502 and about 1.7m to its east. Where fully excavated the ditch had three fills the uppermost of which was a mid-brown sandy clay (505) with a maximum depth of 220mm. This overlay a layer (508) of mid grey clay with a depth of 140mm; the lowest fill (509) a mid-brown sandy clay was also 140mm deep. The full profile of 504 was recorded in section (Fig. 4). It was 450mm deep with a U-shaped profile.

### 6.6 Trench 6 (Figs. 2-4)

This trench measured 50m in length and was orientated E-W (Fig.3). A dark-brown topsoil (600) with an average depth of 260mm overlay a natural subsoil of light yellow clay (601). Three features were recorded within the evaluation trench (602, 604 and 607) see Fig.3. All three were aligned N-S and all were interpreted as post-medieval ditches possibly for drainage.

Feature 602 was a linear feature 1m wide and 240mm deep on a N-S alignment; it had a gentle bowl-shaped profile (Fig. 4). The feature had a fill of dark-brown sandy clay (603) with inclusions of mortar, coal, slate fragments and small sandstone fragments. The fill produced a sherd of post-medieval pottery of the 16<sup>th</sup>-early17<sup>th</sup> century.

Feature 604 was a linear feature 1.05m wide and 400mm deep on a N-S alignment; it had a bowl-shaped profile with a flat base (Fig. 4). Two fills were recorded; the upper fill was a light-brown silty clay (605) with inclusions of small sandstone fragments. The lower and primary fill (606) was a mid-brown silty clay with inclusions of small sandstone fragments. Finds from the primary fill included post-medieval pottery and clay pipe of the 18<sup>th</sup> -century.

Feature 607 was a linear feature 500mm wide and 0.80m deep on a N-S alignment with a very shallow U-shaped profile (Fig. 4). The feature had a fill of dark-brown sandy clay (608) with inclusions of brick, slate fragments and small sandstone fragments.

## 7. THE FINDS

The evaluation produced little in the way of finds. All pottery which was recovered was from Trench 6 and proved to be of post-medieval date. This included a sherd of Surrey/Hampshire Border ware of 16<sup>th</sup> to early 17<sup>th</sup> century date from 603, and a fragment of a coarseware vessel of 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century date from 606. Context 606 also produced a sherd of industrial redware dated 1780-1820 and two tobacco clay-pipe bowls of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

### *Lithics*

Two worked lithics were recovered from the topsoil; these were a struck flint flake cortical of Neolithic date (from layer 300) and a struck flint flake with retouch of Neolithic or Early Bronze Age date (from layer 500).

## 8. DISCUSSION

No significant archaeological deposits or features were recorded within the evaluation trenches and no concentrations of worked flint were observed the worked flint finds being limited to two struck flakes from topsoil deposits only.

In three of the trenches (Nos 1, 2 and 4) a depth of topsoil up to 340mm thick was observed lying above the natural subsoil. The topsoil is likely to be the result of agricultural activity, possibly ploughsoil, and it was present in all of the evaluation trenches. Trenches 3 and 5 provided evidence of parallel ditches approximately 1.7m

apart which, from their location and alignment, almost certainly represent the flanking ditches which stood either side of a hedgebank which is depicted on the Tithe Map of 1840 and on the OS plan of 1891 (Figs. 5 and 6) but which has disappeared certainly by the time of publication of the OS plan of 1970.

Trench 6 provided evidence of three parallel ditches all of which produced finds of the post-medieval period in their fill and all of which were interpreted as field drains (possibly for the draining of the field during its employment as an orchard at least from the mid -18<sup>th</sup> century where this use is recorded on the Tithe Map).

## 9. PROJECT ARCHIVE AND 'OASIS' REPORT

A fully integrated project archive has been compiled and will be deposited at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, under museum accession number 126/2010.

A report of the evaluation (including a pdf version of this document) will be submitted to the on-line database OASIS (On-line Access to the Index of archaeological investigationS), under OASIS ID: exeterar1-78546.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The work was commissioned by Prospect Archaeology and funded by David Wilson Homes. The project was managed by Nansi Rosenberg (Prospect Archaeology Ltd.) and Peter Stead (EA). Site work was supervised by Alex Farnell with assistance from Sarnia Blackmore. The report was written by John Pamment Salvatore with assistance from Alex Farnell, Pru Manning and Sarnia Blackmore. The illustrations were prepared by Sarnia Blackmore. The finds were identified by John Allan and catalogued by Charlotte Coles.

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1:10560 map Sheet 101SE, 1890  
1: 2500 map Sheet SX 8679

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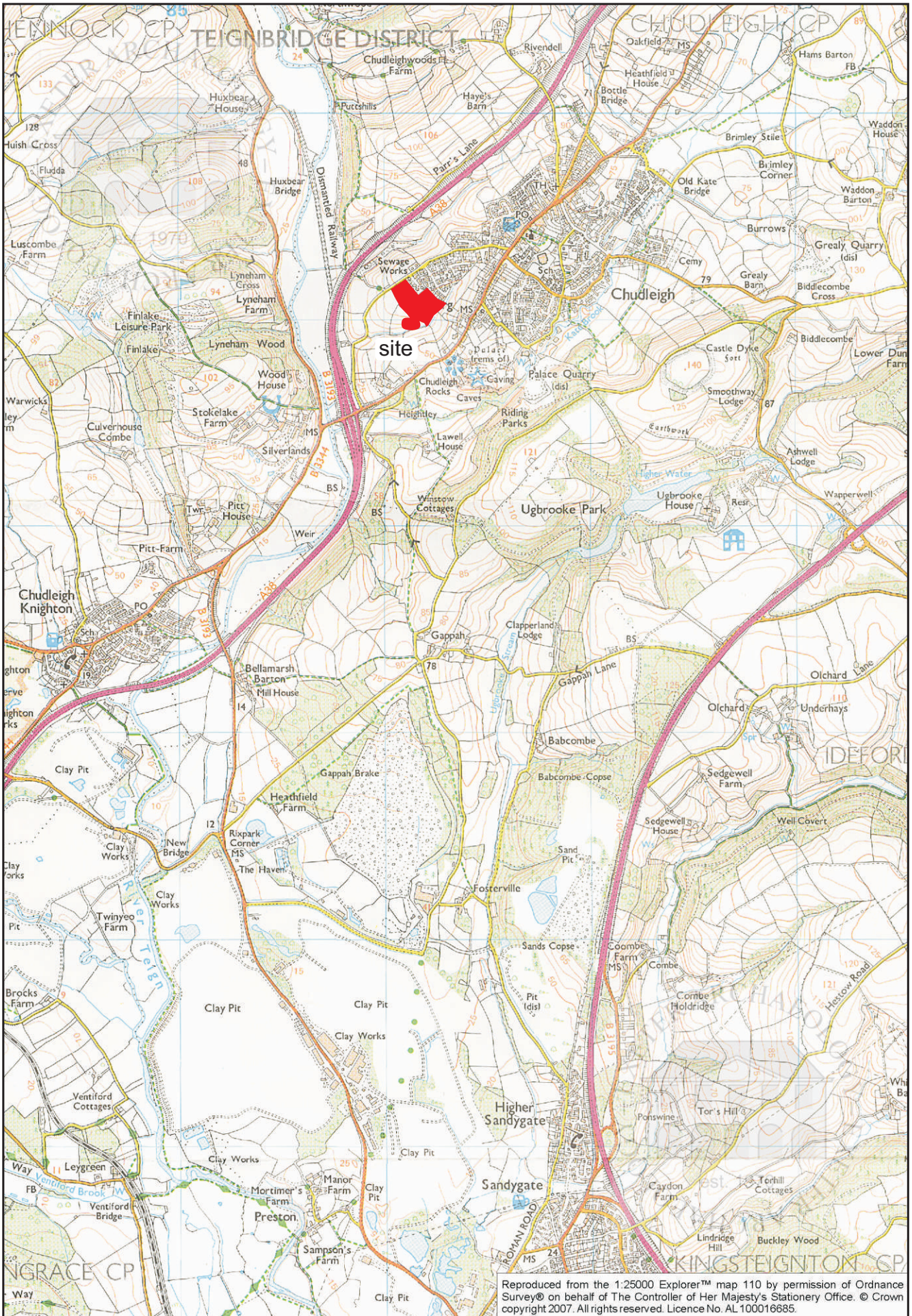


Fig. 1 Location map.

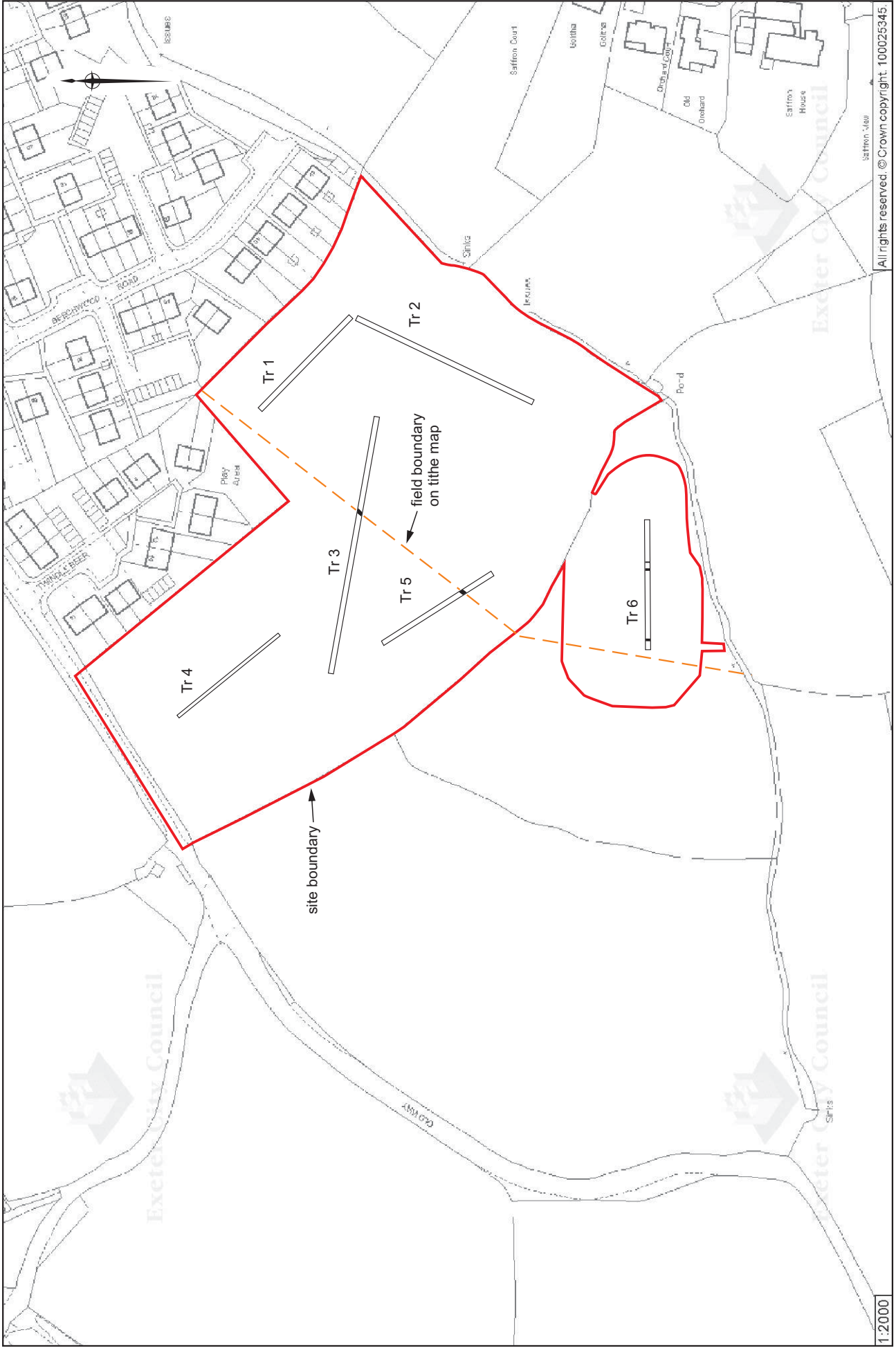


Fig. 2 Trench location plan.

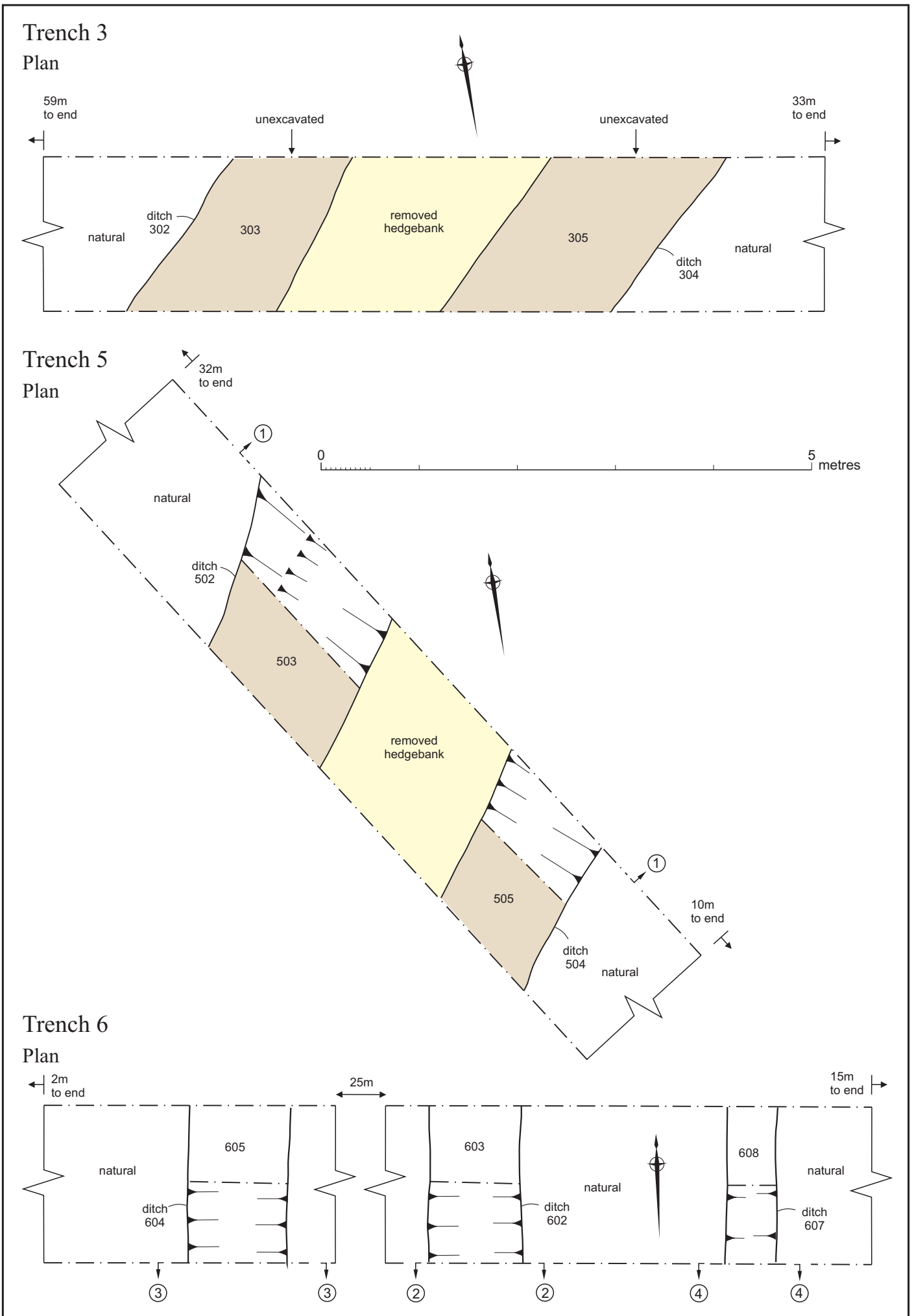


Fig. 3 Trenches 3, 5 and 6: plans.

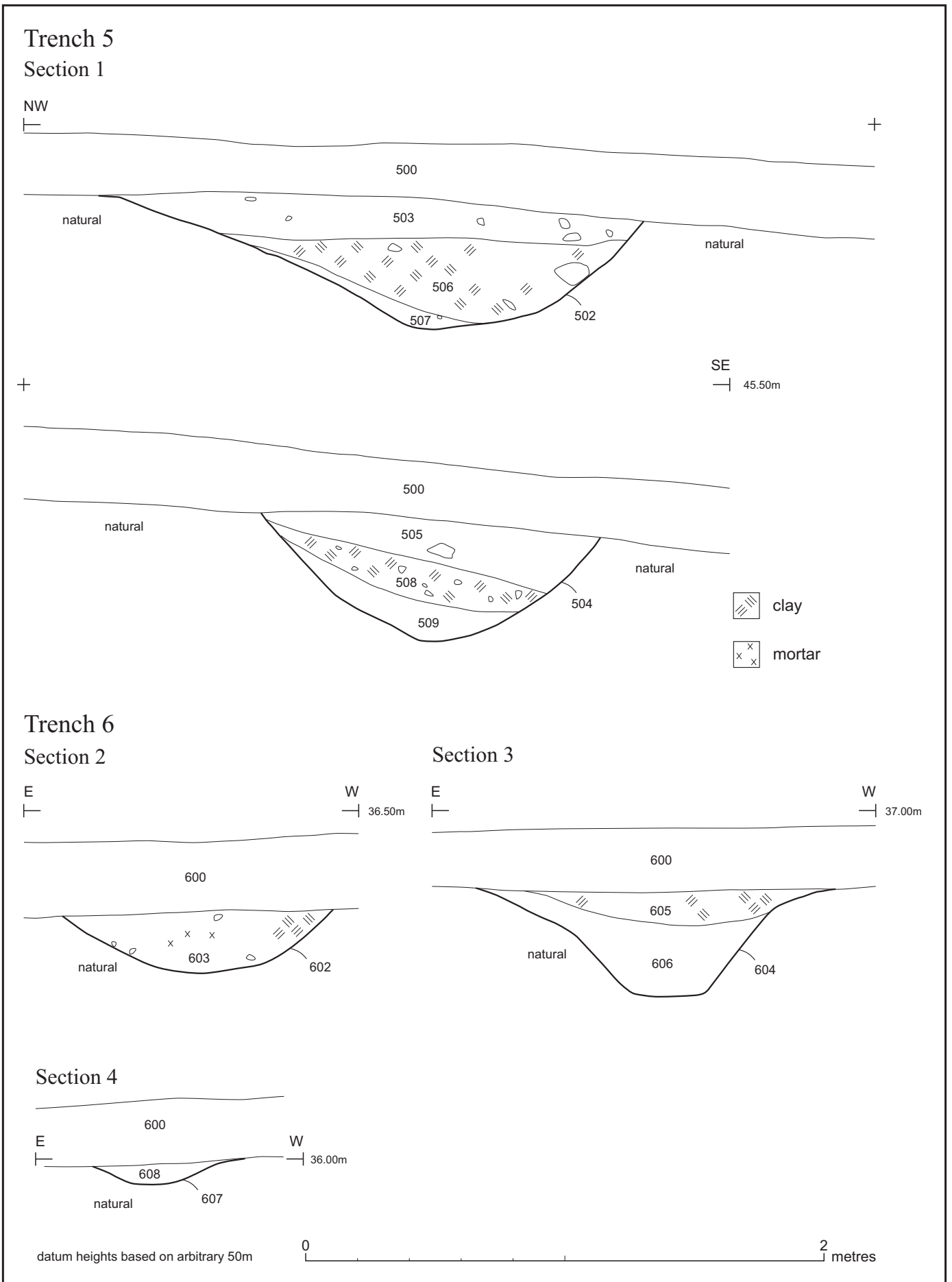


Fig. 4 Trenches 5 and 6: sections.

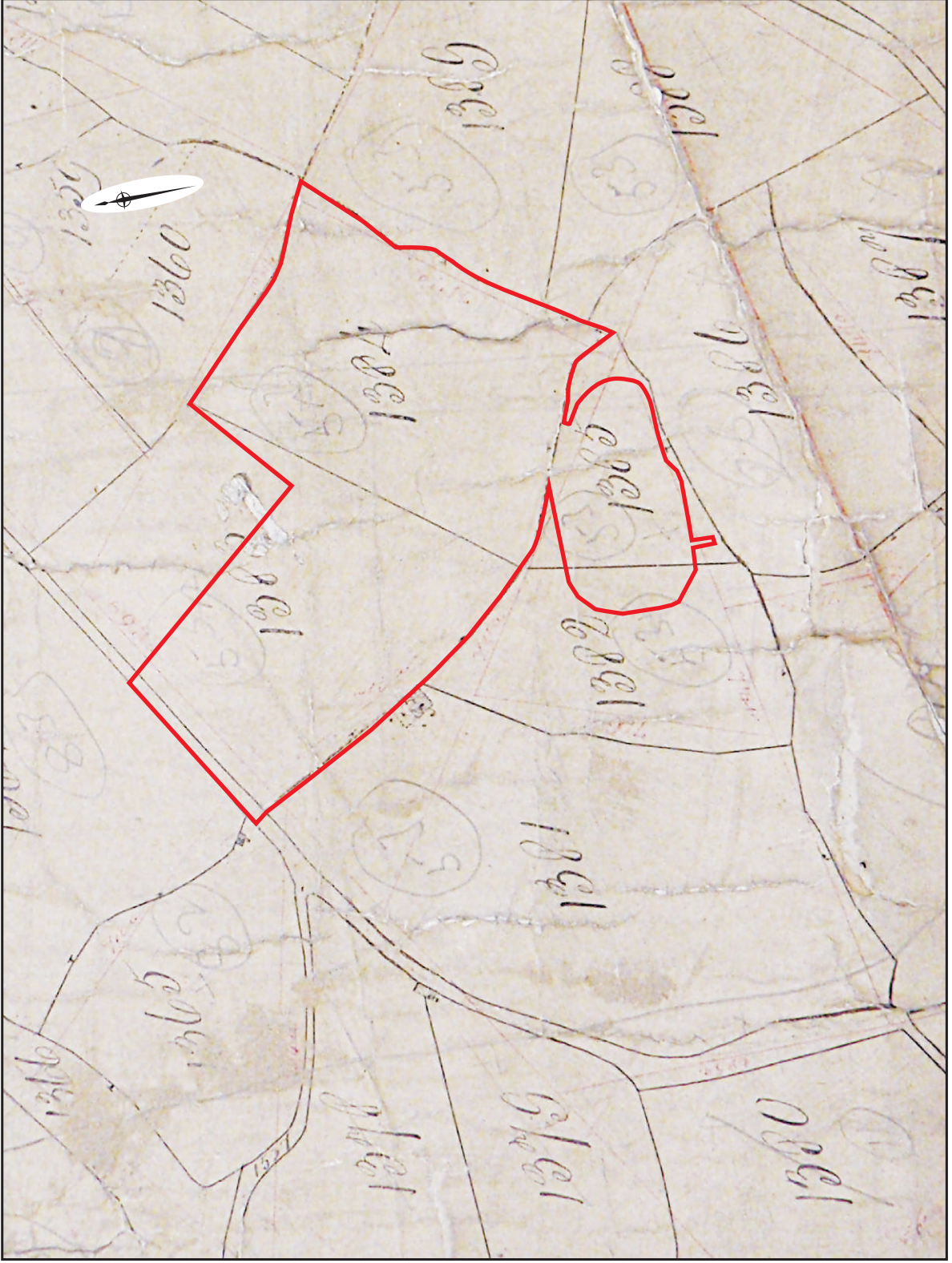


Fig. 5 Extract from the 1840 Chudleigh Tithe map (scale approximately 1:2500) site area outlined in red.

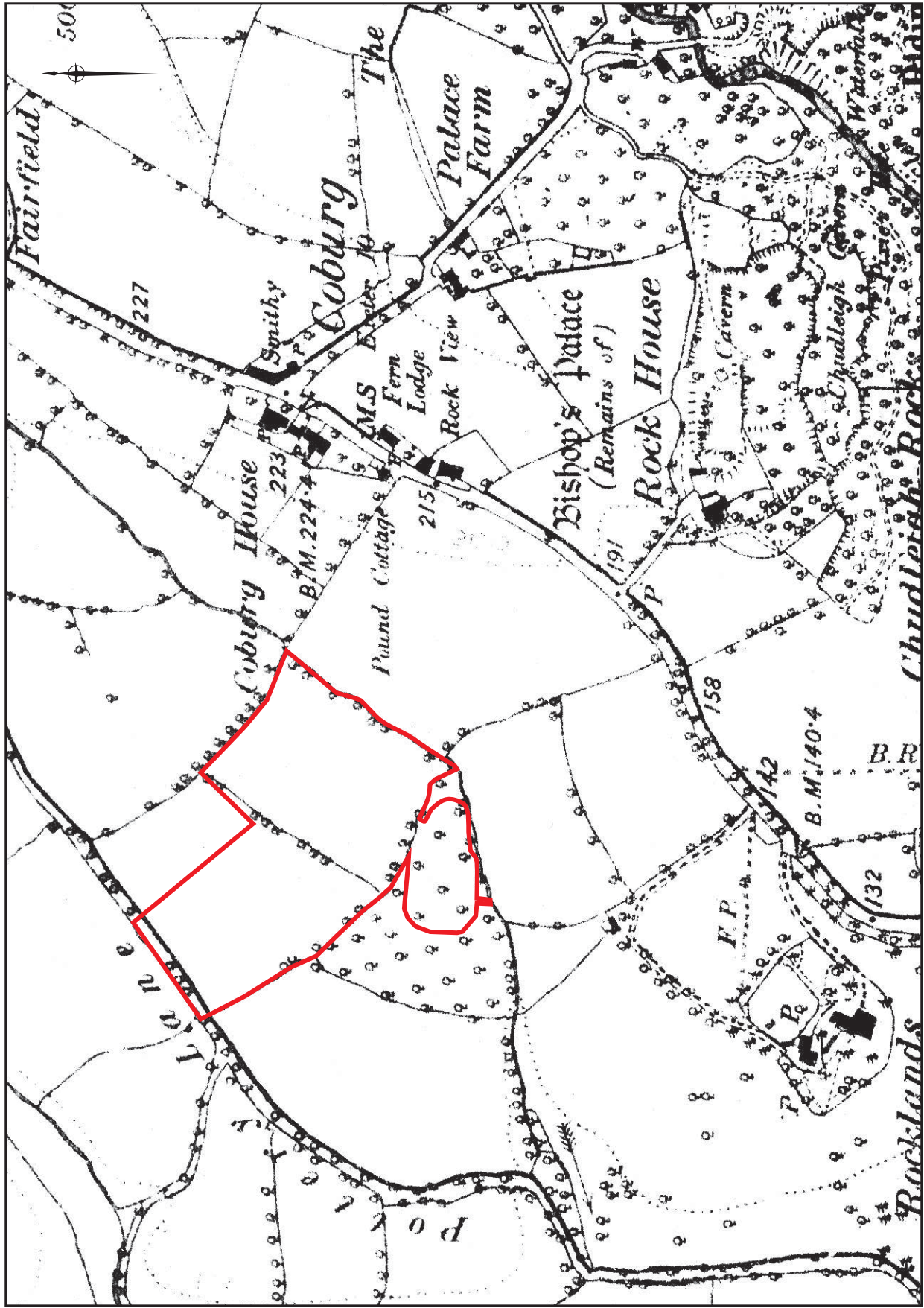


Fig. 6 Extract from the OS 1:10560 map Sheet 101 SE, published in 1890 (scale approximately 1:4000) site area outlined in red.



Plate 1 View of site looking south-west.



Plate 2 Trench 5: ditches [502] and [504], looking north. 1m scale.