ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT PARBROOK, BILLINGSHURST, WEST SUSSEX.

POST-EXCAVATION ASSESSMENT AND DESIGN

Project No. 1858

by Simon Stevens BA MIFA

with a contribution by

Luke Barber

July 2004

Archaeology South-East
1 West Street
Ditchling
East Sussex
BN6 8TS

Tel : 01273 845497
Fax : 01273 844187
email : fau@ucl.ac.uk
website : www.archaeologyse.co.uk

Archaeology South-East

Archaeology South-East is a division of University College London Field Archaeology Unit. The Institute of Archaeology at UCL is one of the largest groupings of academic archaeologists in the country. Consequently, Archaeology South-East has access to the conservation, computing and environmental backup of the college, as well as a range of other archaeological services.

UCL Field Archaeology Unit and South Eastern Archaeological Services (which became Archaeology South-East in 1996) were established in 1974 and 1991 respectively. Although field projects have been conducted world-wide, Archaeology South East retains a special interest in south-east England with the majority of our contract and consultancy work concentrated in Hampshire, Surrey, Sussex, Kent, Greater London and Essex.

Drawing on experience of the countryside and towns of the south east of England, Archaeology South East can give advice and carry out surveys at an early stage in the planning process. By working closely with developers and planning authorities it is possible to incorporate archaeological work into developments with little inconvenience.

Archaeology South-East, as part of UCL Field Archaeology Unit, is a registered organisation with the Institute of Field Archaeologists and, as such, is required to meet IFA standards.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Introduction*

1.1.1 Given the extremely limited range of features and artefacts encountered at the site it was not considered appropriate to produce a full Post-Excavation Assessment document, based on the guidelines laid out in English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects* (2nd edition).

1.1.2 However, the ultimate aim of this limited document is to provide a suitable framework for carrying that report through to possible publication, including the cost of full post-excavation analysis, publication and archiving.

1.2 *Background*

1.2.1 The site lies to the south of the centre of Billingshurst, and to the east of the current alignment of Stane Street, the modern A29 trunk road (NGR TQ 0826 2504) (Fig. 1). According to the British Geological Survey 1:50,000 scale map (Sheet 301, *Haslemere*) the underlying geology is Wealden Clay with a narrow strip of Alluvium close to the former course of the Par Brook.

1.2.2 Planning permission was granted by Horsham District Council for a residential development at the site (Planning ref. BL/12/03). Following consultations between Horsham District Council and West Sussex County Council (Horsham District Council's advisers on archaeological issues), a condition was attached to the permission requiring a programme of archaeological work at the site prior to the commencement of development. The initial phase of the work (Stage 1) consisted of a field evaluation that aimed to assess the archaeological potential of the site (Fig. 2).

1.2.3 Archaeology South-East (a division of University College London Field Archaeology Unit) was commissioned by Taylor Woodrow Developments to undertake the Stage 1 archaeological evaluation of the site in March 2004. The evaluation was carried out according to *Recommended Standard Conditions for Archaeological Fieldwork* for West Sussex and a site-specific Specification prepared by John Mills Archaeological Officer, Environment and Development Department, West Sussex County Council. A Method Statement was prepared by Neville Hall of Archaeology South-East outlining the scope of the initial phase of work at the site, which was approved by John Mills prior to this work commencing. Significant archaeological remains were encountered during the evaluation of the site.[1]

[1] J. Stevenson *An Archaeological Evaluation of Land at Parbrook Bungalow, Stane Street, Billingshurst, West Sussex*. Unpub. Archaeology South-East Report No. 1836 (April 2004)

1.2.4 Subsequently Archaeology South-East was commissioned by Taylor Woodrow Developments to undertake the Stage 2 archaeological excavation. Following discussions between Neville Hall of Archaeology South-East and John Mills of West Sussex County Council, it was agreed that one area (Area A) would be mechanically stripped, excavated and recorded. The second element of the Stage 2 work was the mechanical excavation of further trial trenches in Area B (Fig. 2). A Method Statement for both elements of the work was produced by Neville Hall in response to a second Brief prepared by John Mills. This second Method Statement was similarly approved before the Stage 2 works began.

2.0 THE SITE

2.1 *The Evaluation (Stage 1)* (Fig 2)

2.1.1 The pattern of trenches at the site was aimed at recovering evidence of the possible alignment of the Roman Stane Street and any associated roadside remains. Of the 23 planned Stage 1 evaluation trenches at the site, 15 were archaeologically sterile (Trenches **T5-T11**, **T13-T15**, **T17-T18, T20-T21** and **T23**), and Trench **T3** could not be excavated owing to space limitations.

2.1.2 Trench **T1** contained a number of broadly horizontally laid layers of manganese- and iron-rich material, encountered below the topsoil (Context **100**) and subsoil (Context **101**). A single struck flint was recovered from the surface of one of the deposits, Context **138**. Two features were encountered running broadly north to south, a 'v' shaped ditch (Contexts **119/120**) and a shallow gully (Contexts **134/135**). No datable evidence was recovered from either of these features.

2.1.3 Trench **T2** contained another group of horizontally laid manganese and iron--rich deposits and a single ditch (Cut **102**) running from broadly north to south. No datable evidence was recovered from the fills, Contexts **103, 104** and **105**. A sample for analysis of environmental potential was taken from Context **103**. A further possible ditch, Cut **146** on a similar alignment at the eastern end of the trench could not be investigated owing to lack of space.

2.1.4 Trench **T4** produced limited evidence of the manganese- and iron-rich deposits, and a ditch (Cut **143**), which ran broadly north to south. No dating evidence was recovered from the two fills, Contexts **143** and **144**. This appeared to be the ditch previously encountered in Trench **T1** (Contexts **119/120**) Further to the south, Trench **T12** contained a shallow gully (Cut **120**). A piece of fire-cracked flint was recovered from the fill, Context **121**.

2.1.5 Trenches **T16, T19** and **T22** contained evidence of a pair of shallow, parallel gullies running across the site broadly from north to south, Medieval pottery was recovered from the gullies (Contexts **124/125** in Trench **T16** and

126/127 in Trench **T19**). Samples for analysis of environmental potential were taken from **126/127** and from the parallel ditch **128/129** (Trench **T19**).

2.1.6 The various deposits and features were interpreted as the *possible* alignment of the Roman Road and evidence of later medieval trackways/field systems. The discovery of struck and fire-cracked flint also hints at prehistoric activity.

2.1.7 Four geoarchaeological test-pits were mechanically excavated under the supervision of Chris Pine. Evidence of a localised, intermittently flooded palaeoenvironment with potential for preservation of organic artefacts was evidenced.[2]

2.2 *The Excavation (Stage 2)*

2.2.1 **Area A** (Figs. 2, 3, 4 and 5)

2.2.1.1 An area was mechanically stripped to the immediate south and west of the Stage 1 evaluation Trench **T1** to clarify the nature of the manganese- and iron-rich deposits and to further investigate the ditch (Contexts **119/120**) and the gully (Contexts **134/135**). After the removal of the topsoil and subsoil overburden (Contexts **300** and **301**) the excavation area was manually cleaned, planned and a number of test-pits (labelled **A-E**) were hand excavated through the previously identified deposits.

2.2.1.2 The excavation and recording of these deposits proved that they were natural in origin and not part of a Roman road surface. The deposits included pockets of naturally occurring laminar 'iron pan' intermixed with silt and clay deposits typical of the Wealden Clay:

> *'Wealden Clay is considered to have been laid down under lacustrine/deltaic conditions that result in laterally discontinuous laminated beds. Silts and clays contain complex arrangements of mudstones, siltstones, limestone and ferrous clays. Weathered exposures result in modification of a generally mid-dark grey colouration to yellow brown with blocking and fracturing along sediment laminations in a shale like appearance'*[3]

2.2.1.3 This geological formation was clearly visible in a number of the drawn sections (an example is reproduced below: Fig. 4, Section 1).

[2] Appendix 1, Geoarchaeological Evaluation and Test Pit Record in Stephenson, *op. cit.*
[3] *Ibid.*

2.2.1.4 The ditch found at the eastern end of Trench **T1** (Contexts **119/120**) and also in Trench **T4** (Contexts **143, 144** and **145**) extended across the excavation area and was contexted as **314/315**. Two sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from the fill, and a sample was taken for analysis of environmental potential from Context **315**.

2.2.1.5 The gully found in Trench **T1** (Contexts **134/135**) also continued across the excavation area and was contexted as **307/308**. No finds were recovered from it, but a sample was taken for analysis of environmental potential. A further gully (Contexts **220/221**) was also identified but its exact extent could not be ascertained. No dating evidence was recovered from the fill.

2.2.2 **Area B** (Figs. 2 and 5)

2.2.2.1 Two further trenches were planned for the north-eastern part of the site to further investigate the parallel medieval ditches encountered in the Stage 1 evaluation Trenches **T16, T19** and **T22**. Only one of the trenches could be excavated owing to the presence of trees with Preservation Orders in the vicinity.

2.2.2.2 Both anticipated features were observed and recorded. The westernmost was gully **203/202** which turned and terminated in the trench. Medieval pottery was recovered from the fill. The other feature, ditch **205/204** contained a larger assemblage of medieval pottery.

3.0 THE FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES by Luke Barber

3.1 *Introduction*

3.1.1 The evaluation and subsequent excavation(s) produced small finds assemblages. These are quantified in Tables 1

Context	Pottery	Other	Comments
Evaluation			
121	-	FCF 1/110g	-
125	1/15g	-	C13th-C14th
127	3/20g	-	C13th-C14th
138	-	Worked Flint 1/20g	-
Excavation : Area A			
Topsoil	-	Clay pipe 1/8g	C18th
202 slot 1	2/4g	-	C13th
202 slot 2	3/56g	-	C13th
204	27/164g	-	Mid/Later C14th (residual

			C13th material)
Excavation : Area B			
215	2/8g	Burnt clay 3/4g	C13th

Table 1: Finds quantification (No./weight in grams)

3.1.2 The pottery from the site consists of small, generally abraded, sherds. Most pieces exhibit signs of attack from acidic burial conditions, particularly the lower fired C13th- century wares. Sand tempered fabrics dominate though some higher fired finer sand tempered wares are also present (Context **204**). Only two small rim sherds are present. The pottery is not considered to hold any potential for further detailed study. A short note will be produced for the final report outlining the date range of the pottery and the nature of the assemblage.

3.1.3 The remaining categories of find consist of a single struck flint, a piece of fire-cracked flint and a clay pipe fragment and a little burnt clay. No further work on these categories is considered necessary.

3.1.4 Three 28-litre samples were taken during the evaluation phase, from Contexts **103, 127** and **128.** A sub-sample of each was processed using bucket flotation using 250 micron (flot) and 1mm (residue) meshes. The flots from the sub-samples contained only small quantities of charcoal and no seeds and no archaeological significant artefacts/ecofacts were recovered from the residues.

3.1.5 Two 28 litre environmental samples were taken during the excavation phase, from Contexts **308** and **315** (both in Area A). A sub-sample of each was processed using bucket flotation using 250 micron (flot) and 1mm (residue) meshes. The flots from the sub-samples proved totally devoid of any carbonised material and no archaeological significant artefacts/ecofacts were recovered from the residues.

3.1.6 As such the samples from both phases of work at the site are not considered to hold any potential for further analysis.

4.0 ARTEFACTS AND ARCHIVE DEPOSITION

4.1 Following completion of the post-excavation work, the artefacts recovered during the evaluation and excavation phases and the site archive will be placed in a suitable local museum, to be agreed with the landowner and the County Archaeologist for West Sussex. It is initially proposed to deposit the archive and retained finds in Horsham Museum.

5.0 REPORT AND PUBLICATION

5.1 The site and finds have the potential to add extremely limited new information to the ever-growing body of data on medieval settlement in the Weald. The absence of the expected Roman Road in the area is also be worthy of comment. It is envisaged that no more than a short note should be submitted to the county journal (*Sussex Archaeological Collections*). This will outline the geological, historical and planning background to the site. A site and trench location plan, together with selected sections may be produced. The proposed short note will be no more than 1000 words in length.

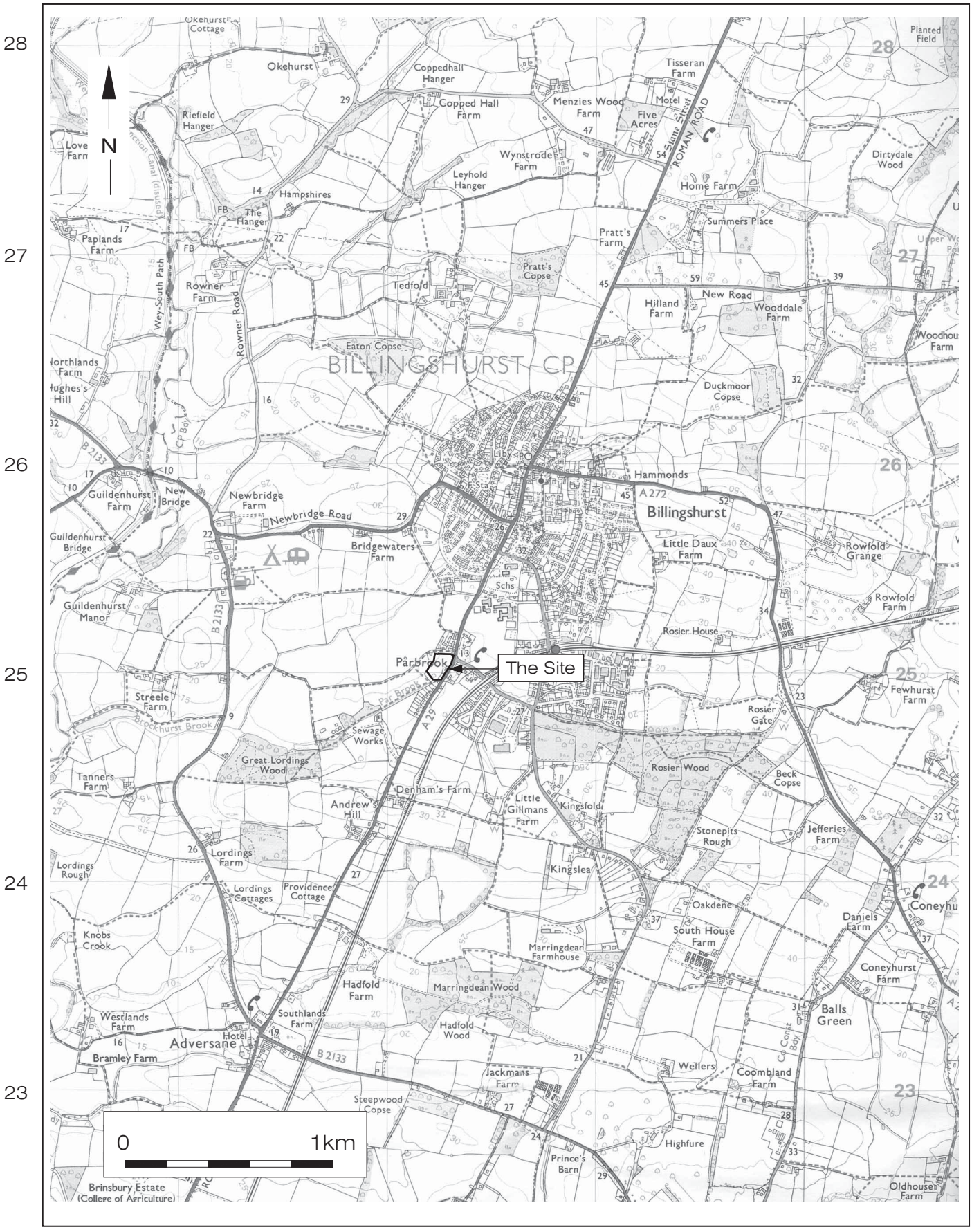
The proposed resource allocation to achieve this is tabulated below.

NB. Figures in italics indicate completed tasks

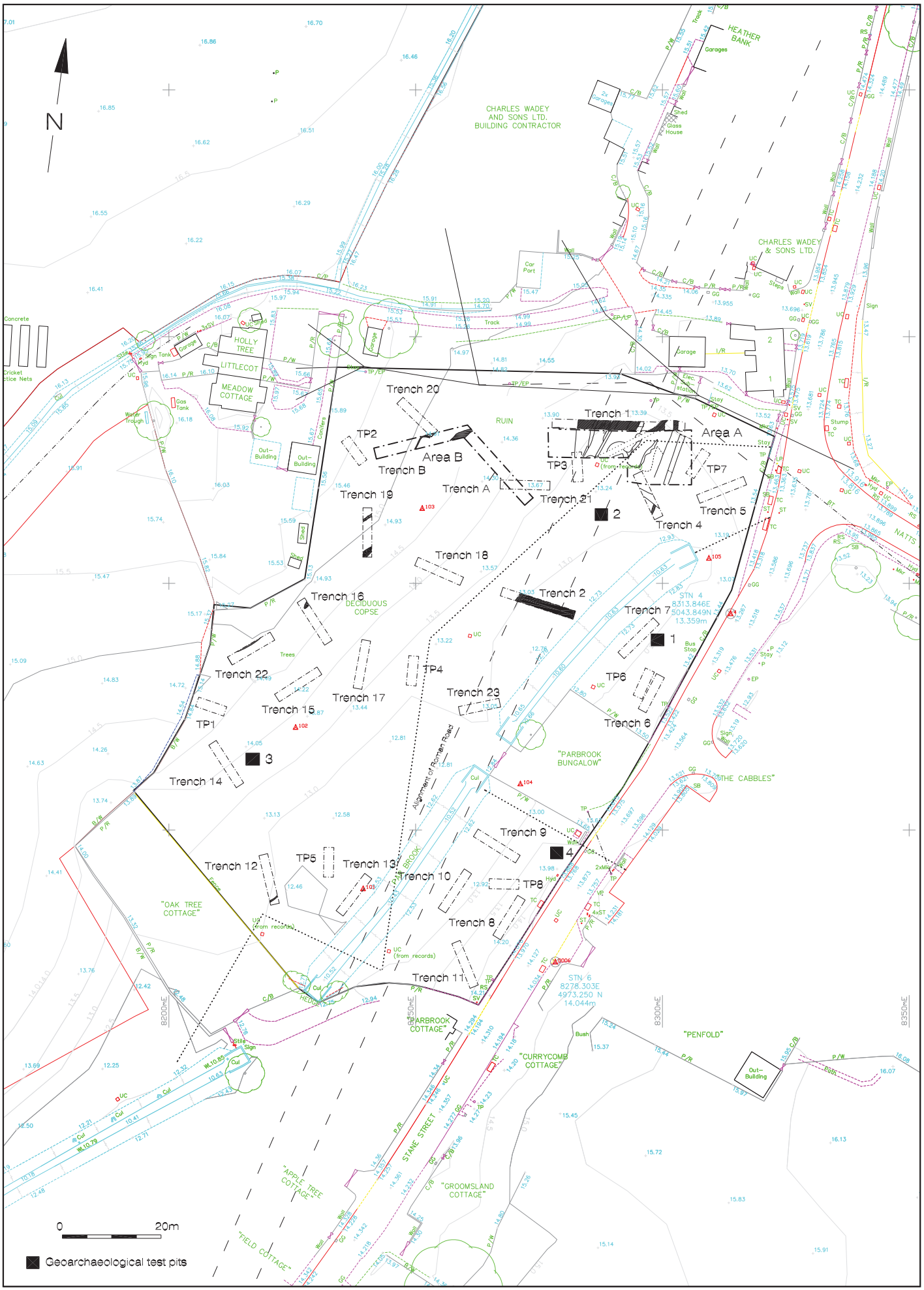
Task	Staff	No. Days	Cost
Finds Processing/assessing	*various*	*complete*	£200
Processing environmental samples	*various*	*complete*	£325
Rapid P/X Assessment	*various*	*complete*	£437
Pottery report	L. Barber	0.25	£50
Report writing	S. Stevens	5	£750
Background Research	S. Stevens	2	£300
Illustrations	J. Russell/F. Griffin	3	£360
Project Management	L. Barber	2	£400
Editing for publication	L. Barber/ S. Stevens	2	£350
Publication grant	-	-	£300
Archive	S. Crawt	0.25	£30
Travel/Expenses	Various	-	£50
Total (exc. VAT)		-	**£3,552**

Table 2: Proposed Resource Allocation

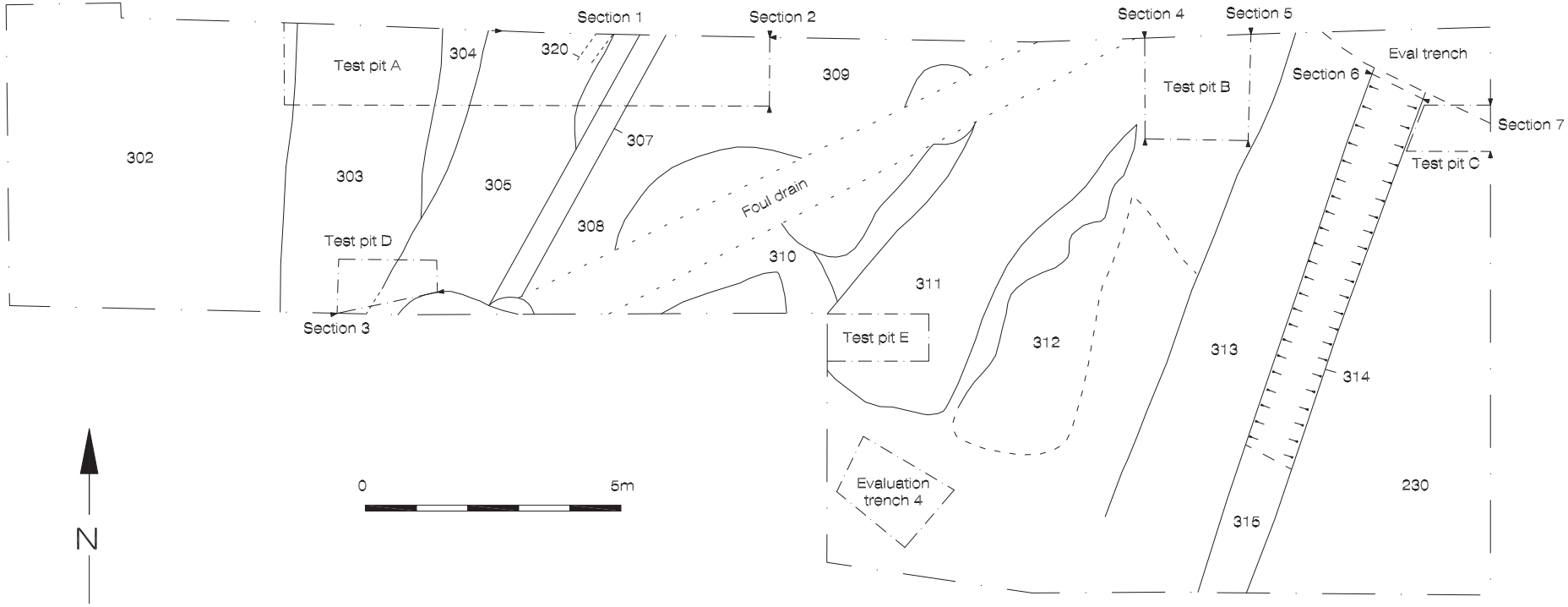
NB. Prices valid for 3 month period from 13/06/05. If a works order has not been received within this period costs may need to be revised.



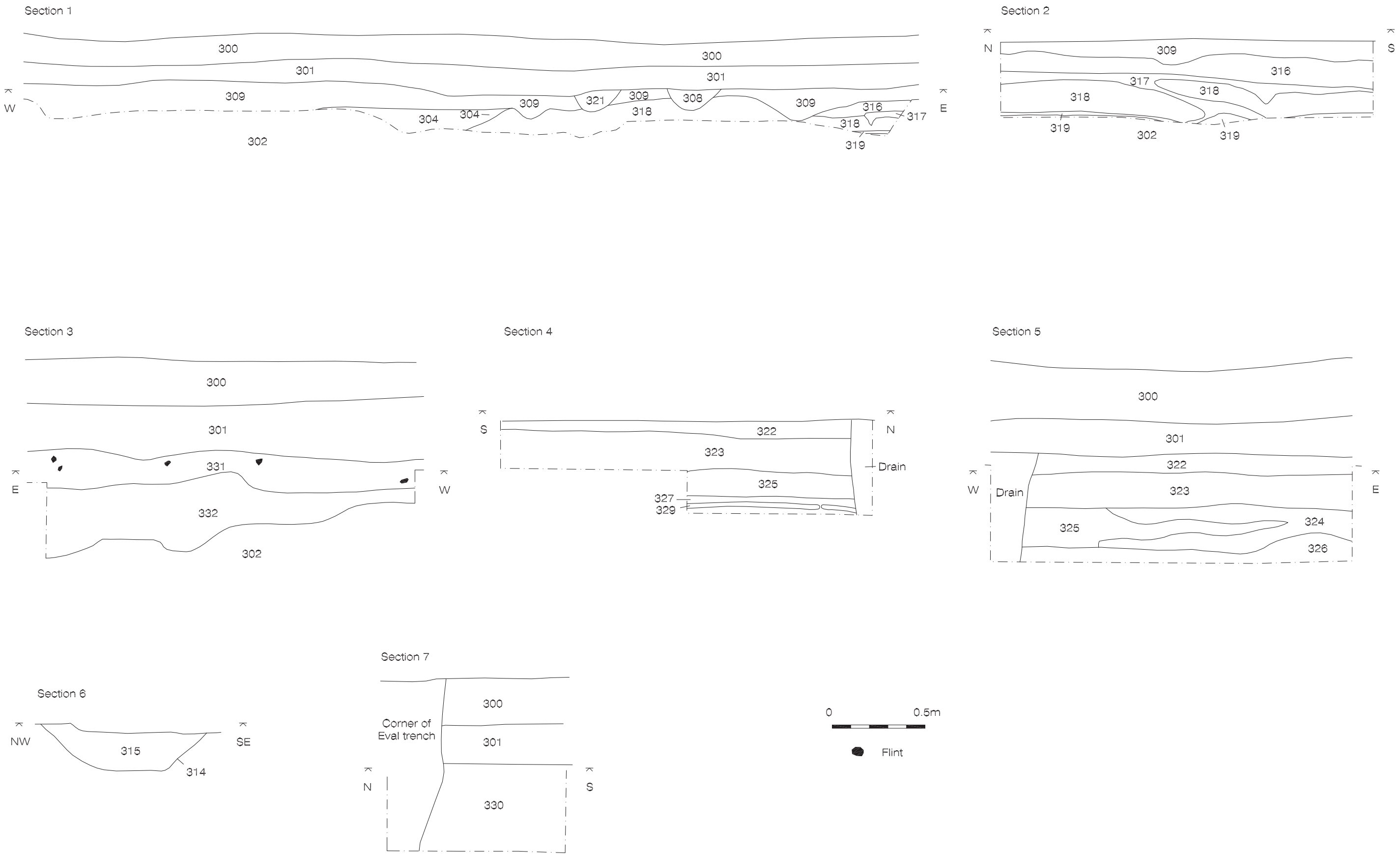
© ARCHAEOLOGY SOUTH EAST		Parbrook Bungalow II	Fig. 1
Ref: 1858	July 2004	Site Location Plan	



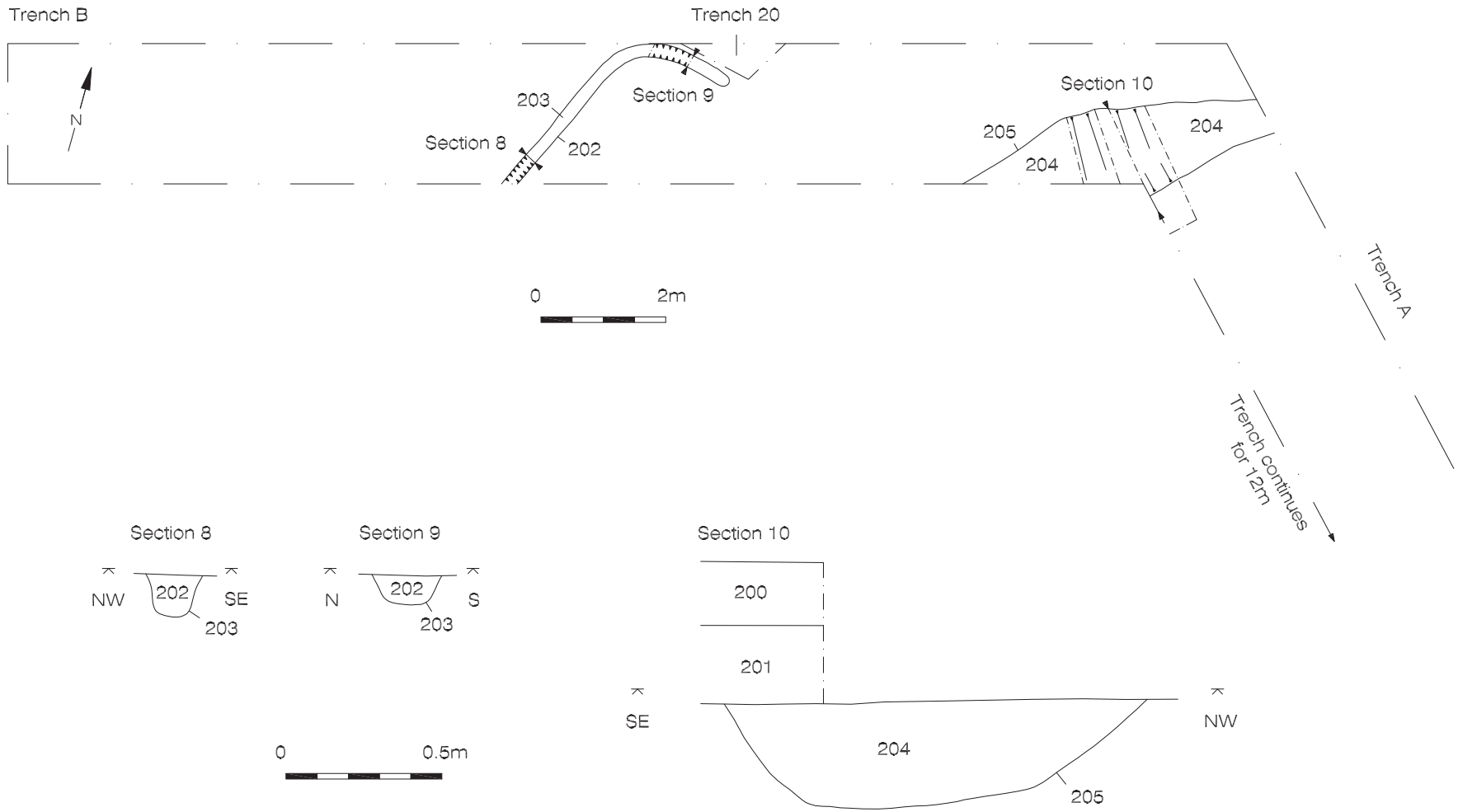
© ARCHAEOLOGY SOUTH EAST		Parbrook Bungalow II	Fig. 2
Ref: 1858	JuLY 2004	Plan showing Stage II Evaluation Trenches and Stage II Excavation Areas	



© ARCHAEOLOGY SOUTH EAST		Parbrook Bungalow II	Fig. 3
Ref: 1858	July 2004	Area A: Plan	



© ARCHAEOLOGY SOUTH EAST		Parbrook Bungalow II	Fig. 4
Ref: 1858	June 2004	Area A: Sections	



© ARCHAEOLOGY SOUTH EAST		Parbrook Bungalow II	Fig. 5
Ref: 1858	June 2004	Area B: Plan and Sections	