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COXFORD ABBEY QUARRY, EAST RUDHAM, NORFOLK

`STRIP, MAP & SAMPLE' ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION (PHASES 5A, 5B, 5C, 6A & 6B)

Authors: Walter McCall PhD MIFA (Fieldwork & Report) Matthew Adams BA (Fieldwork & Report) Christopher Leonard MA (Fieldwork & Report) Rosanna Price BSc (Graphics)	
NGR: TF 83172 30249	Report No. 3900
Parish: East Rudham	Site Code:51025
Approved: Claire Halpin MIFA	Project No. 2445
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD
98-100 Fore Street, Hertford, SG14 1AB
Unit 6, Brunel Business Court, Eastern Way, Bury St Edmunds IP32 7AJ
Tel: 01992 558170
Fax: 01992 553359
E-mail: info@ascontracts.co.uk
Web: www.archaeologicalsolutions.co.uk

Registered Number: 4702122

Project details			
Project name	*Coxford Abbey Quarry, East Rudham, Norfolk.*		
Project *description (250 words)* *In October and November 2009, May and June 2010, October 2010 and August 2011 Archaeological Solutions Ltd conducted a strip, map and sample excavation on the area of Phases 5A-C and 6A-B at Coxford Abbey Quarry, East Rudham, Norfolk (NGR: TF 83172 30249).* *Numerous phases of archaeological investigations (field walking and `strip, map & sample' excavations) have been undertaken, and dispersed discrete features, mostly late Neolithic/early Bronze Age pits, have been excavated.* *Phase 6B revealed 49 gault holes, of which five were excavated. No finds were present.*			
Project dates (fieldwork)	*26/10/09 – 06/11/09; 05/10 & 06/10; 18 – 20/10/2010; 01-02/08/2011*		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	*Y*		
P. number	*P2445*	Site Code	*51025*
Type of project	*'Strip map and sample' archaeological excavation*		
Site status	*Former agricultural land*		
Current land use	*Quarry site*		
Planned development	*Proposed mineral extraction*		
Main features (+dates)	*Pits*		
Significant finds (+dates)	*Early Bronze Age Beaker pottery*		
Project location			
County/ District/ Parish	*Norfolk*		*East Rudham*
HER/ SMR for area	*Norfolk HER*		
Post code (if known)			
Area of site	*c.1.5 ha*		
NGR	*TF 83172 30249*		
Height AOD (max/ min)	*c.70m AOD*		
Project creators			
Brief issued by	*Norfolk Landscape Archaeology*		
Project supervisor/s (PO)	*Walter McCall, Matthew Adams, Christopher Leonard*		
Funded by	*Longwater (Gravel) Co.*		
Full title	*Coxford Abbey Quarry, East Rudham, Norfolk.` Strip, Map and Sample' Archaeological Excavation. Phases 5A, 5B, 5C, 6A & 6B.*		
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Report no.	*3900*		
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION (PHASES 5A, 5B, 5C, 6A & 6B)

SUMMARY

In October and November 2009, May and June 2010 and October 2010 Archaeological Solutions Ltd conducted a `strip, map and sample' excavation on the remaining area of Phases 5A-C and 6A-B at Coxford Abbey Quarry, East Rudham, Norfolk (NGR: TF 83172 30249).

Field walking and subsequent excavation of Phase 1A revealed over 30 discrete pits clustered in eight distinct groups, dating to the Early to Middle Neolithic period, approximately 3500BC. 687 sherds of Neolithic pottery (7549g), and also 855 pieces (6676g) of worked flint were recovered (Doyle et al 2005). The Phase 1B excavation revealed 'clusters' of Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age features comprising pits, postholes, an occupation layer and a ditch (Cameron et al 2005). The features are thought to represent a temporary encampment.

The Phase 2 excavation revealed Late Neolithic/Bronze Age features comprising pits and postholes. Two natural "gault" holes were excavated and produced large flint and pottery assemblages suggesting the natural hollows were utilised as shelter or for waste disposal. The two parallel ditches of a possible droveway were also identified (Weston 2006).

The Phase 3 field walking produced a considerable collection of burnt flint (441g, 146g and 73g), possibly indicative of prehistoric domestic settlement. Some animal bone (3g and 1g) was found (Brook et al 2007). The Phase 3 excavation revealed numerous `features' but the majority were natural (22) and a large number were undated (9). Some of the latter contained struck flint. Two late Neolithic/early Bronze Age features were recorded (F1104 & F1127), and two early Roman features (F1135 & F1137) were excavated.

A strip, map and sample archaeological excavation of the remaining areas of Phase 3 revealed six pits. Pit F4010 contained early Bronze Age pottery, and Pits F4006 and F4008 contained Iron Age pottery. Several of the features contained very small quantities of struck flint (F4002, F4004, F4006 and F4008) (Brook et al 2009).

Quarry Phase 5A while producing a considerably higher number of `features', yielded fewer finds. The only datable archaeological material was derived from a cluster of four pits in the north-western corner of the site. The pits contained early Bronze Age Beaker pottery. The cluster was similar to those discovered in Excavation Phases 1A, 1B and 2. No finds were recovered from the excavated gault holes.

Fifty circular features were revealed in Quarry Phase 5B. None of the features generated diagnostic cultural material. The majority were tree hollows, large gault holes or smaller naturally- occurring depressions. One of the gault holes, F5089, yielded a single piece of struck flint debitage in a lower fill allowing for the possibility of prehistoric activity.

Over 60 circular features were recorded in Quarry Phase 5C, broadly distributed. No surface finds were present, and of the features investigated none contained finds. The features were tree hollows, large gault holes or smaller naturally-occurring depressions, directly comparable to the `features' recorded in Phase 5A and 5B.

Forty features were identified in Quarry Phase 6A and were broadly comparable to Quarry Phase 5. No surface finds were present and no finds were recovered from the excavated features. A potential ditch terminus (F6007) was recorded. The remaining features appeared to be tree hollows, large gault holes or smaller naturally-occurring depressions, directly comparable to the `features' recorded in Phase 5.

Phase 6B revealed 49 gault holes, of which five were excavated. No finds were present.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 During October and November 2009, May and June 2010, October 2010 and August 2011, Archaeological Solutions (AS) carried out a `strip map and sample' archaeological excavation on the area of Phases 5A, 5B, 5C, 6A and 6B at Coxford Abbey Quarry, East Rudham, Norfolk (NGR: TF 83172 30249; Figs. 1 - 2). The excavation was commissioned by Longwater (Gravel) Co. Ltd in advance of proposed mineral extraction. It was undertaken in compliance with a planning condition required by the local planning authority (based on advice from Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (NLA)).

1.2 The excavation was conducted in accordance with a brief issued by NLA (dated 28/01/2005), and a specification prepared by AS (dated 12/10/2007). NLA confirmed that the brief was still valid for the current investigation. The project complied with the document *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003), and the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavations* (revised 2001).

1.3 This report presents the results of the archaeological `strip, map and sample' archaeological excavation of the area of Phases 5A, 5B, 5C, 6A & 6B. By agreement with NLA, the requirement in the original project brief for subsequent trial trenching has been varied to proceed directly to a programme of archaeological 'strip, map & sample' excavation, as set out in a model brief for this phase of works issued by NLA.

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

2.1 Coxford Abbey Quarry is situated *c*. 1.2km to the west of the village of Tattersett, *c.*2.5km to the north of East Rudham and *c.* 2.5km to the south of Syderstone. The larger settlement of Fakenham lies *c.* 8 km to the east. The River Tat is located *c.* 800m to the east and Coxford Heath is *c.* 500m to the north of the site. Phase 5 is an area of c.1.5 ha on the north-western side of the proposed extraction area (Figs.1 - 2).

2.2 The site lies at an approximate height of *c.*70m AOD at the north-western corner, falling to *c.*63m AOD to the south and east. The drift geology of the area is sands and gravels. Prior to the archaeological works, the land was in agricultural use, mainly used for pig-rearing.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Prehistoric evidence close to East Rudham and Tattersett is attested by the discovery of Neolithic flint axes throughout the area, including one *c.* 1.1 km to the south east (HER 14677). Several Bronze Age barrows are located in the vicinity of the site. A well preserved saucer barrow is located *c.* 375m to the north east of the site (HER 11280), and a bowl barrow lies *c.* 875m to the north east (HER 1987). Several cropmarks probably representing ploughed out monuments have been identified *c.* 500m to the south (HER 13841) and *c.* 1.6 km to the south east (HER 35941). A further round barrow is marked on the 1st edition OS Map *c.* 750m to the south west of the site, however no trace of it could be recognised by 1955 (HER 1985). The remains of a burnt mound have been identified *c.* 750m to the north east (HER 35082). Barrows are often identified in river valley areas and in East Anglia they are frequently located on lighter or chalk soils, rather then heavier clay (Taylor 2001).

3.2 The area surrounding Coxford Abbey Quarry has been the subject of systematic metal detector surveying. These surveys have assisted in the recovery of 14 Late Bronze Age socketed axes *c.* 1.5 km to the south (HER 35907), along with two Iron Age coins and an Iron Age ornament, found *c.*1 km to the east (HER 31589). An unidentified object, also thought to be dated to the Iron Age was found *c.* 1.5km to the south east (HER 31569).

3.3 Metal detecting has recovered a large quantity of material dating to the Roman period, including 31 coins, a brooch and associated pottery sherds *c.* 1.1km to the south east (HER 40988), a strap fitting *c.* 800m to the east (HER 32606) and coins *c.* 700m to the north-east (HER 31716) and *c.* 1.1 km to the south (HER 40792). A large quantity of Roman finds were identified in Tattersett *c.* 1.2km to the south-east of the site and material recovered included over 148 coins, jewellery, brooches and a steelyard weight (HER 31569) and similar material was recorded *c.* 1.1km to the east (HER 31589). Roman finds have also been recorded at East Rudham (e.g HER 40986 and 40568) and a cropmark of a possible trackway and field system associated with Romano-British pottery has been noted to the north of Syderstone Common, 1.6 km from the site (HER 33770). A Roman coin hoard is reputed to have been discovered at the site of Coxford Priory, *c.* 1.8 km to the south-east of the site in 1719 (HER 3632).

3.4 The surveys have also yielded evidence dating to the Saxon period, including a hanging bowl (HER 32606), brooches, a girdle hanger, pins, a sword (HER 31589), beads, a strap fitting and a buckle (HER 31569). There are references to Rudham, Tattersett and Syderstone in the Domesday Survey, indicating the presence of settlements on these sites by the later Saxon period. Evidence of settlement in the earlier medieval period is further attested with the establishment of an Augustinian priory in Rudham in 1140, which was moved to Coxford in 1216. The priory survives as a series of earthworks, *c.* 1.8 km to the south east of the fieldwalking site (HER 3632).

3.5 A large quantity of medieval finds have been recovered throughout the area through metal detecting, including coins, buckles, strap fittings, (HER 31089, 31569, 31589, 31716, 32606, 34359 and 40792). The high quantity of material suggests the

area was substantially occupied during the medieval period. However, the presence of deserted medieval villages at Wicken *c.* 1.3km to the north north east and at Broomsthorpe, *c.* 2.9km to the south-east, indicate a significant change in settlement pattern after the 16th century. The contraction of settlement can be further seen in the village of Tattersett, which decreased dramatically in size during the 16th century.

3.6 Finds dating to the post-medieval finds are also represented in the material collected by metal detectors, including coins, buckles, a dagger, a purse and strap fittings (HER 31089, 31569, 31589, 34359 and 40988). The Coxford Heath and Syderstone Common area, immediately to the north of the site, was used a bombing decoy during World War II for Sculthorpe Airport, and mock aeroplanes and buildings were erected. The area was later used as a bombing range (HER 15020).

4 SUMMARY OF THE PREVIOUS WORKS FOR PHASES 1A, 1B, 2 and 3

4.1 Fieldwalking and Metal Detector Survey Phase 1A

4.1.1 The field walking and metal detector survey of Phase 1A (Weston 2005) produced sparse finds, principally consisting of three struck flints. The flints were dispersed and so cannot be considered to be a scatter. A small quantity of CBM was also recovered as well as modern metal finds, predominantly consisting of plastic coated wire.

4.2 Strip, Map and Sample Excavation Phase 1A

4.2.1 Stripping of the topsoil, Phase 1A, of Coxford Quarry revealed over 30 discrete pits clustered in eight distinct groups. Excavation of these features indicated that the pits dated to the Early to Middle Neolithic period, approximately 3500BC. 687 sherds of Neolithic pottery (7.549g), including decorated Mildenhall ware was recovered, and also 855 pieces (6676g) of worked flint including two flint axes and a broken flint sickle, were recovered (Doyle *et al* 2005).

4.3 Fieldwalking and Metal Detector Survey Phase 1B

4.3.1 As with Phase 1A, fieldwalking and metal detector survey of Phase 1B produced only sparse finds. Five struck flint flakes were recovered from dispersed locations across the site, forming no discernible concentration. One flake showed evidence of irregular retouching along one edge and may have been utilised as a scraper. Iron items, predominantly nails, wire and plough parts, were observed within the ploughsoil. Three brass .22 calibre cartridge shells were also recovered during the metal detector survey. A single piece of slag (137g) was also recovered. (Grassam *et al* 2005).

4.4 Strip, Map and Sample Excavation Phase 1B

4.4.1 The `strip, map and sample' excavation of Phase 1B revealed 'clusters' of Late Neolithic/Bronze Age features comprising pits, post holes, an occupation layer and a ditch. The features are interpreted as the remains of a temporary or periodically re-used encampment. They yielded struck flint and pottery. The latter largely consisting

of poorly-fired coarse wares, but also including two decorated sherds reminiscent of Beaker types (Cameron *et al* 2005).

4.5 Fieldwalking and Metal Detector Survey Phase 2

4.5.1 The fieldwalking of Phase 2 recovered 13 pieces of struck flint and two pieces of CBM during the Phase 2 field survey. The assemblage consisted of ten flakes, one blade, one broken blade and a scraper. Modern metal objects were also identified during the metal detector survey (Grassam *et al* 2006).

4.6 Strip, Map and Sample Excavation Phase 2

4.6.1 The `strip, map and sample' excavation of Phase 2 revealed clusters of Late Neolithic/Bronze Age features comprising pits and postholes. Two natural "gault" holes were excavated and they produced large flint and pottery assemblages suggesting the natural hollows were utilised as shelter or for waste disposal. Two parallel ditches of a possible droveway were also identified. The features yielded finds of struck flint, daub and pottery. The latter largely consisting of poorly-fired coarse wares, but also included a smaller assemblage of decorated sherds reminiscent of Beaker types (Weston 2006).

4.7 Fieldwalking and Metal Detector Survey Phase 3

4.7.1 The fieldwalking and metal detector survey of Phase 3 produced a considerable collection of burnt flint (441g, 146g and 73g) suggestive of prehistoric settlement although it was not all concentrated in one area. Some animal bone (3g and 1g) was also found, and also several gun clips (175g and 254g) and shotgun cartridges (Brook *et al* 2007).

4.8 Strip, Map and Sample Excavation Phase 3

4.8.1 Phase 3 revealed numerous `features' but the majority were natural (22) and a large number were undated (9). Some of the latter contained struck flint. Two late Neolithic/early Bronze Age features were recorded (F1104 & F1127), and two early Roman features (F1135 & F1137) were excavated.

4.9 Strip, Map and Sample Excavation Extension to Phase 3

4.9.1 In August 2009, a strip, map and sample archaeological excavation of the remaining areas of Phase 3 revealed six pits. Pit F4010 contained early Bronze Age pottery, and Pits F4006 and F4008 contained Iron Age pottery. Several of the features contained very small quantities of struck flint (F4002, F4004, F4006 and F4008). The evidence was comparable to that previously recorded (Brook *et al* 2009)

5 METHOD OF WORK

Phase 5A

5.1 Quarry Phase 5A comprised a large rectangular area (8637.28m2), immediately west of Quarry Phase 3 (Fig. 2). The topsoil was stripped from the area using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under the close supervision of an Archaeological Project Officer. Exposed features were cleaned and planned electronically using a Leica TPS Total Station. A total of 108 features were planned, comprising pits, postholes and natural features (Figs. 2 - 3).

5.2 An excavation strategy was agreed with Dr Ken Hamilton of Norfolk Landscape Archaeology. A minimum of 20 features were to be half-sectioned targeting those with visible surface finds. Features yielding diagnostic archaeological material were excavated in full and sampled.

5.3 All further investigations were undertaken by hand. Exposed surfaces were cleaned as appropriate and examined for archaeological features and finds. Deposits were recorded using *pro forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale, and photographed when appropriate.

Phase 5B

5.4 Quarry Phase 5B was a continuation of the Phase 5A investigation. The excavation area comprised a large rectangle, 4777.5m^2, adjacent to the Phase 5A (Fig. 2; DP 1). The topsoil was stripped from the site using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under the close supervision of an Archaeological Project Officer. Exposed features were cleaned and planned electronically using a Leica TPS Total Station. A total of 50 features were planned, all of which resembled pits of various sizes (Figs. 2 - 3).

5.5 An excavation and sampling strategy was achieved following the advice of Dr Ken Hamilton, Head of Archaeological Planning, Norfolk Landscape Archaeology. A minimum of 20% of the features were to be half-sectioned targeting those with dark fills and visible surface finds. Others were selected to achieve a representative sample of the different sizes of features present and their spatial distribution. Priority was given to the features in the north-eastern corner of the excavation area because of their proximity to the prehistoric postholes discovered during Phase 5A.

5.6 All further investigations were undertaken by hand. Exposed surfaces were cleaned as appropriate and examined for archaeological features and finds. Deposits were recorded using *pro forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale, and photographed when appropriate.

Phase 6A

5.7 Quarry Phase 6A was located immediately to the west of Phase 5B and was adjacent to the trackway. The excavation area comprised a roughly rectangular

parcel of land 5200m^2 (Fig. 2). As with Phase 5, the topsoil was stripped from the site using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under the close supervision of an Archaeological Project Officer. Exposed features were cleaned and planned electronically using a Leica TPS Total Station. A total of 40 features were planned, all of which resembled pits of various sizes (Figs. 2 – 3).

5.8 An excavation strategy was agreed following the advice of Dr Ken Hamilton, Head of Archaeological Planning, Norfolk Landscape Archaeology. A minimum of 10% of the features were to be half-sectioned targeting those with the highest archaeological potential.

5.9 All further investigations were undertaken by hand. Exposed surfaces were cleaned as appropriate and examined for archaeological features and finds. Deposits were recorded using *pro forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale, and photographed when appropriate.

Phase 6B

5.10 Quarry Phase 6B was located immediately to the south of, and contiguous with, Phase 6A. The area excavated was approximately 6300 m^2 (Fig. 2). The topsoil was stripped from the site using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under the close supervision of an Archaeological Project Officer. Exposed features were planned electronically using a Leica TPS Total Station. A total of 49 features were planned, all of which were approximately circular in plan (Figs. 2-3).

5.11 An excavation strategy was agreed following the advice of Dr Ken Hamilton, Head of Archaeological Planning, Norfolk Landscape Archaeology. A minimum of ten per cent of the features were to be half-sectioned targeting those with the highest archaeological potential.

5.12 All further investigations were undertaken by hand. Exposed surfaces were cleaned and examined for archaeological features and finds. Deposits were recorded using *pro forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale, and were photographed.

6 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

6.1 Summary of results Phase 5A Figs. 2 - 4

6.1.1 Sixteen pits and postholes, and 8 natural features were excavated (Fig.3). The majority were selected based on the darkness of their fills and the presence of surface finds. Others were selected to achieve a representative sample of the different sizes of features present and to achieve a broad coverage of the site. Four small pits in the north-western corner of Phase 5 contained early Bronze Age Beaker pottery. Two small postholes in the immediate vicinity are assigned to this phase based on their proximity. They contained no finds.

6.1.2 The excavated features and deposits have been phased on the basis of combined finds and stratigraphic evidence, as detailed in the table below.

Phase	Date	Characteristics
1	Early Bronze Age (Beaker)	4 pits and two postholes

Phasing

6.1.3 The remaining 10 features were undated. A pit along the southern boundary of the quarry area, F5032, was re-cut twice and contained very dark fills (DP 2). The presence of a thin layer of chalk at the base of the most recent re-cut, F5043, suggests that the feature was a cess pit. Five pits (F5028, F5036, F5038, F5040 and F5053) were deep and contained very dark fills; they were likely postholes or small pits. Undated pits F5007 and F5009 inter-cut. The remaining eight features were of natural origin (mostly gault holes).

6.2 Summary of results Phase 5B Figs. 2 – 3 & 5

6.2.1 Fifty circular features were revealed. Most were discreet and evenly distributed throughout the excavation area, although few larger pits were visible in the north-west corner. A total of 13 were excavated. Three revealed earlier pits beneath bringing the total of recorded features to 16. All were sealed by a thin topsoil and may have been truncated slightly by agricultural activities, although no plough scars were observed.

6.2.2 None of the features generated diagnostic cultural material. The majority were tree hollows, large gault holes or smaller naturally- occurring depressions. One of the gault holes, F5089, yielded a single piece of struck flint debitage in a lower fill allowing for the possibility of prehistoric activity.

6.3 Summary of results Phase 5C Fig. 2

6.3.1 Over sixty circular features were recorded in Quarry Phase 5C, broadly distributed. No surface finds were present, and of the features investigated none contained finds. The features were tree hollows, large gault holes or smaller naturally- occurring depressions, directly comparable to those recorded in Phases 5A and 5B.

6.4 Summary of Results Phase 6A Fig. 2 & 6

6.4.1 Forty features were recorded in Quarry Phase 6A with 39 circular and one possible linear ditch terminus. No surface finds were present and of the features investigated, none contained finds. As with previous phases, the majority of features were tree hollows, large gault holes or smaller naturally occurring depressions.

6.5 Summary of Results Phase 6B Fig. 2 & 7

6.5.1 Forty-nine features were recorded in Quarry Phase 6B, all of which were of a roughly circular in plan, consistent with the tree hollows and gault holes recorded in

previous phases. No surface finds were present. Five of the features were investigated, yielding no cultural material.

7 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS PHASE 5A

7.1 Phase 1: Early Bronze Age (Beaker) Figs. 3 - 4

Six small pits and postholes in the north-western corner of the site were assigned to this phase. Four pits (F5015, F5017, F5019 and F5021) contained early Bronze Age Beaker pottery. Two postholes to the immediate north (F5011 and F5013) were assigned to this phase based on their proximity to the group.

Dated pits

Pit F5015 was circular in plan (0.70 x 0.60 x 0.18). It had moderately sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill, L5016, was a loose, dark grey black sandy silt with occasional charcoal. It contained early Bronze Age Beaker pottery (160g).

Pit F5017 was circular in plan (0.76 x 0.66 x 0.22m). It had moderately sloping sides and a flattish base. Its fill, L5018, was a loose, dark grey black sandy silt with moderate charcoal and small stones. It contained early Bronze Age Beaker pottery (48g).

Pit F5019 was circular in plan (1.03 x 0.82 x 0.23m). It had moderately sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill, L5020, was a loose, dark grey black sandy silt with occasional charcoal and small stones. It contained early Bronze Age Beaker pottery (38g).

Pit F5021 was circular in plan (0.63 x 0.60 x 0.24m). It had steep sides and a flattish base. Its fill, L5022, was a loose, dark grey black sandy silt with occasional charcoal. It contained early Bronze Age Beaker pottery (35g).

Adjacent postholes

Posthole F5011 was oval in plan (0.36 x 0.40 x 0.11m). It had moderately sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill, L5012, was a loose, medium grey black sandy silt. No finds were present.

Posthole F5013 was oval in plan (0.46 x 0.21 x 0.14m). It had moderately sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill, L5014, was a loose, medium grey black sandy silt. No finds were present.

7.2 Undated (Figs. 3-4)

Ten undated pits and postholes were excavated. Five (F5028, F5036, F5038, F5040 and F5053) were large, deep postholes or small pits. F5032 was re-cut twice and may have been a cess pit. F5007 cut F5009 suggesting that F5007, at least, was not

of natural origin. The remaining eight undated features were either gault holes or tree/root hollows.

Postholes

Posthole F5028 was oval in plan (0.47 x 0.34 x 0.17m). It had relatively steep sides and a concave base. Its fill, L5029, was a loose, dark grey black sandy silt with moderate small angular flint gravel. No finds were present.

Posthole F5036 was oval in plan (0.82 x 0.46 x 0.70m). It had vertical sides undercutting near the base, and a flat base. Its fill, L5037, was a friable, dark grey brown silty sand with moderate angular flint. No finds were present.

Posthole F5038 was circular in plan (1.06 x 1.06 x 0.44m). It had vertical sides and a concave base. Its fill, L5039, was a friable, medium orange grey silty sand with occasional angular flint. No finds were present.

Posthole F5040 was oval in plan (0.82 x 0.46 x 0.87m). It had vertical sides and a narrow concave base. It contained two fills. The primary fill, L5050, was a friable, medium orange brown silty sand with occasional angular flint. The upper fill, L5041, was a friable, dark brown grey silty sand with occasional angular flint. No finds were present in either fill.

Posthole F5053 was circular in plan (1.10 x 1.10 x 1.00m+). It had vertical sides undercutting near the base. The latter was not reached. Its fill, L5054, was a firm, dark grey brown organic silty sand with moderate small angular flint and large flint nodules. Lenses of re-deposited natural were present from a depth of 0.80m. No finds were present.

Pits

Pit F5007 was circular in plan (1.04 x 1.01 x 0.51m). It had steep sides and a flattish base. Its fill, L5008, was a loose, dark grey brown sandy silt with frequent small pebbles, angular gravel and medium flint nodules. No finds were present. F5007 cut Pit F5009.

Pit F5009 was oval in plan (0.94 x 0.36 x 0.79m). It had steep, almost vertical sides and a flattish base. Its fill, L5010, was a loose medium grey brown silty sand with red mottling and occasional small pebbles and medium flint nodules. No finds were present. F5009 was cut by Pit F5007

Pit F5032 was oval in plan (0.73+ x 0.68+ x 0.21m+). It had irregular sides and narrow base. Its fill, L5033, was a dark grey black silty sand with moderate small angular flint and occasional charcoal. No finds were present. Pit F5032 was re-cut twice (F5035 and F5043).

Pit F5035 (2.08 x 2.04 x 1.37m+) was the first re-cut of Pit F5032. It was circular in plan with vertical sides and a flattish base. Two fills were present. The primary fill, L5034, was a thin layer (0.23m) of re-deposited natural sand. It comprised a semi-

compact dark brown yellow silty sand with moderate angular flint gravel and flint nodules. The upper fill, L5042, was a thick layer (0.84m) of loose, medium grey black silty sand with occasional small angular flint. No finds were present in either fill.

Pit F5043 (2.08 x 2.04 x 0.65m) was a re-cut of Pit F5035. It was circular in plan with vertical sides and a concave base. It was lined by L5044, a thin layer (0.04m) of soft, medium grey white chalk. The upper fill, L5045, was a loose, medium brown grey silty sand with moderate angular flint and occasional charcoal. No finds were present in either fill. The presence of a chalk lining suggests that the feature may have been a cess pit.

The natural features

Gault Hole F5002 was circular in plan (2.05 x 1.84 x 0.50m). It had steep irregular sides and an irregular base. It contained two fills. The primary fill, L5004, was a loose, dark red brown sandy silt with occasional small stones. The upper fill, L5003, was a loose, dark grey brown sandy silt with moderate small pebbles and angular gravel. No finds were present in either fill.

F5005 was circular in plan (0.60 x 0.58 x 0.12m). It had shallow sides and a concave base. Its fill, L5006, was a loose, dark grey brown sandy silt with frequent pebbles and angular gravel. No finds were present. This feature was likely a small natural depression or root hollow.

Gault Hole F5023 was oval in plan (3.05 x 2.70+ x 0.92m). It had steep sides and a concave base. Two fills were present. The primary and principal fill, L5024, was a loose, dark grey brown silty sand with moderate small angular flint. The upper fill, L5025, was a loose, medium brown black silty sand with moderate angular flint gravel and flint nodules. No finds were present in either fill.

Gault Hole F5026 was circular in plan (1.08 x 1.00 x 0.42m). It had steep sides and a concave base. Its fill, L5027, was a loose, dark grey brown sandy silt with moderate small angular flint. No finds were present. F5026 was cut by Posthole F5028.

Gault Hole F5030 was circular in plan (2.26 x 2.21 x 0.48m). It had irregular moderately sloping sides and a flattish base. Its fill, L5031, was a loose, medium grey brown sandy silt with orange mottling and moderate small angular flint and medium flint nodules. No finds were present.

Gault Hole F5046 was oval in plan (3.20 x 2.10 x 1.47m+). It had irregular steep, nearly vertical sides. The base was not reached. It contained three fills. The primary and principal fill, L5049, was a friable, medium red brown sandy silt with frequent angular flint gravel and large flint nodules. No finds were present. The middle fill, L5048, was a thick layer (0.44m) of loose, dark grey black sandy silt with frequent charcoal and occasional small pebbles. No finds were present. The uppermost fill, L5047, was a shallow deposit (0.23m) of loose, medium grey brown sandy silt with moderate small angular flint. No finds were present.

Gault Hole F5051 was circular (3.5 x 3.1 x 0.45m). It had moderately sloping sides and a flattish base. Its fill, L5052, was a loose, dark brown grey silty sand with moderate small and medium angular flint and flint nodules. No finds were present.

Gault Hole F5055 was circular in plan (6.16 x 5.65 x 0.66m). It had shallow moderately sloping sides and an irregular base. Two fills were present. The primary fill, L5057, was a loose, light orange brown silty sand with frequent medium to large flint nodules. The upper fill, was a friable, dark grey brown sandy silt and gravel. No finds were present.

8 DESCRIPTION OF RESUILTS PHASE 5B

Prehistoric (Figs. 3 & 5; DP 6)

A single flake of struck flint debitage was recovered from the lower fill of a large gault hole, F5089. This evidence maintains the working hypothesis that the large naturally occurring depressions were used for shelter or waste disposal during the prehistoric period.

Pit F5089 (2.40 x 2.00 x 1.45m) was oval in plan. It had vertical sides, flaring at the top, and a flattish base. Four fills were present tabulated below from the primary fill upwards.

Fill	Thickness	Description	Finds/Date
L5090	0.81m	Loose, mid orange brown silty sand with frequent flint.	none.
L5091	0.21m	Moderately loose, dark blackish grey silty sand with frequent charcoal.	Struck flint (secondary flake).
L5092	0.58m	Moderately loose, light grey silty sand with occasional small flint.	none.
L5093	0.35m	Moderately loose, dark grey brown silty sand with frequent gravel and angular flint.	none.

Undated (Figs. 3 & 5; DP 2 - 5)

The remaining 15 excavated features were undated and likely natural in origin. They comprised 12 depressions/gault holes and 3 tree hollows.

Depressions/gault holes

Most of the excavated depressions/gault holes were circular or slightly ovoid in plan and medium to large in size. Only F5066 and F5072 were less than a metre long. The majority, however, were less than 0.43 metres deep. F5064 was the largest and the deepest of the group. None of those excavated were intercutting, although F5072, F5078 and F5084 were completely truncated by F5070, F5078 and F5086

respectively. F5086 was the only undated feature to contain multiple fills, although dark charcoal rich lenses were observed in F5058. Gault Hole F5064 yielded small, scattered post-depositional animal bone. It was the only feature other than F5089 to contain finds.

Context	Shape and Profile	Fill	Description	Finds
F5058	Circular plan, irregular sides, flattish base (2.50 x 2.42 x 0.73m)	L5059	Moderately loose, medium brown silty sand and dark grey charcoal rich lenses with frequent angular flint.	None
F5062	Oval plan, shallow sides, concave base (0.94 x 0.80 x 0.17m)	L5063	Compact, dark grey brown silty sand with frequent angular flint.	None.
F5064	Circular plan, steep sides, flattish base (2.89 x 2.80 x 1.23m)	L5065	Loose, medium orange brown silty sand with frequent angular flint.	Animal bone
L5066	Oval plan, shallow sides, concave base (0.52 x 0.44 x 0.06m)	L5067	Compact, dark grey brown silty sand with frequent small angular flint.	None.
F5068	Oval plan, moderately sloping sides, concave base (1.29 x 1.20 x 0.28m)	L5069	Friable, dark grey brown sandy silt with frequent angular flint.	None.
F5070	Oval plan, shallow sides, concave base (0.96 x 0.65 x 0.14m)	L5071	Compact, medium grey silty sand with occasional angular flint and frequent charcoal.	None.
F5072	Circular plan, steep sides, shallow concave base (0.32 x 0.24+ x 0.14m)	L5073	Compact, medium grey and orange brown silty sand with occasional charcoal.	Cut by F5070.
F5078	Irregular plan, steep sides, flattish base (1.00 x 0.60+ x 0.38m)	L5079	Friable, dark grey brown sandy silt with moderate angular flint gravel.	Cut by F5080.
F5080	Oval plan, shallow sides, flattish base (1.72 x 1.30 x 0.25m)	L5081	Friable, medium brown grey sandy silt with frequent gravel and angular flint.	None.
F5082	Oval plan, shallow sides flaring at the top, concave base (1.48 x 1.39 x 0.35m)	L5083	Friable, medium brown grey sandy silt with frequent angular flint.	None.
F5084	Oval plan, steep sides, flattish base (0.90+ x 1.05 x 0.43m)	L5085	Loose, dark brown grey sandy silt with frequent angular and rounded flint.	Cut by F5086.
F5086	Circular plan, steep sides, flattish base (2.44 x 2.29 x 0.67)	L5087	Loose, medium orange brown sandy silt with frequent rounded flint.	No finds. Natural silting in base.
		L5088	Friable, medium grey brown silty sand with frequent rounded and angular flint.	None.

Tree Hollows

Tree Hollow F5060 (2.20 x 2.10 x 0.38m) was irregular in plan and profile. Its fill, L5061, was a friable mix of dark grey, black and medium orange brown sandy silt with frequent small gravel and angular flint. No finds were present.

Tree Hollow F5074 (2.80 x 2.08 x 0.25m) was oval in plan. It had shallow sides and an irregular base. Its fill, L5075, was a moderately loose, medium grey brown silty sand with occasional angular flint. No finds were present.

Root Hollow F5076 (0.60 x 0.38 x 0.12m) was oval in plan with gradually sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill, L5075, was a moderately loose, medium grey brown silty sand with occasional angular flint. No finds were present. It was likely an extension of Tree Hollow F5074.

9 DESCRIPTION OF RESUILTS PHASE 5C

9.1 Over sixty circular features were recorded in Quarry Phase 5C, broadly distributed. No surface finds were present, and of the features investigated none contained finds. The features were tree hollows, large gault holes or smaller naturally- occurring depressions, directly comparable to those recorded in Phases 5A and 5B.

10 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS PHASE 6A

10.1 UNDATED (Fig. 2 – 3 & 6)

Forty circular features were recorded in Quarry Phase 6A and were evenly distributed across the site. They directly related to features found in the Phase 5 excavations. Four undated features were excavated and are described below.

Pit/Natural Feature F6003 was circular in plan (1.64 x 1.63 x 1.24m). It had steep, vertical, undercutting sides and a concave base. Its fill, L6004, was a mid grey brown, loose silty sandy gravel with moderate rounded flint gravel. No finds were present.

Pit/Natural Feature F6005 was sub-circular in plan (1.52 x 1.28 x 1.04m). It had steep, slightly irregular sides and an irregular tapered base. Its fill, L6006, was a mid grey brown, loose sandy silt with frequent rounded to angular flint stones. No finds were present.

Ditch Terminus F6007 was linear in plan (2.40 x 1.79 x 0.92m) aligned NNE/SSW. It had steep sides and a concave base. Its fill, L6008, was a mid red brown, friable silty sand with occasional flint gravel. No finds were present.

Pit F6009 was circular in plan (1.62 x 1.51 x 1.49m). It had steep vertical sides and a concave base. Its fill, L6010, was a mid grey brown, loose silty sand. No finds were present.

11 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS PHASE 6B

11.1 UNDATED (Fig. 2 - 3 & 7)

Forty-nine features were revealed in Quarry Phase 6B. The features were evenly distributed across the area. Although the features had a variety of different sizes, all were roughly circular in plan and correlate well with the natural features encountered in other areas of the site, particularly in Phases 5C and 6A. Five of the features were selected for investigation, equating to a 10% sample, and are described below.

Natural feature F8003 was circular in plan (2.30 x 2.33 x 0.52m). It had very steep, almost vertical sides and a sharp break of slope to a flat base. Its fill, L8004, was a friable mid brownish grey sandy silt with frequent flint gravel and occasional large flint nodules. No finds were present.

Natural feature F8005 was circular in plan (2.66 x 3.30 x 0.38m). It had very steep, almost vertical sides and a sharp break of slope to a flattish base. Its fill, L8006, was a friable mid brownish grey sandy silt with frequent flint gravel and occasional large flint nodules. No finds were present.

Natural feature F8007 was ovoid in plan (2.74 x 3.64 x 0.54m). It had moderately steep sides, becoming vertical near the base. The sides had a sharp break of slope to a flattish base. Its fill, L8008, was a friable mid brownish grey sandy silt with occasional large flint nodules. No finds were present.

Natural feature F8009 was circular in plan (1.70 x 1.54 x 0.47m). It had vertical sides and a sharp break of slope to a flattish base. Its fill, L8010, was a friable mid brownish grey sandy silt with frequent flint gravel inclusions and occasional large flint nodules. No finds were present.

Natural feature F8011 was circular in plan (2.05 x 2.90 x 1.18m). It had vertical sides and a sharp break of slope to a flattish base. Its fill, L8012, was a friable mid brownish grey sandy silt with frequent flint gravel inclusions and occasional large flint nodules. No finds were present.

12 CONFIDENCE RATING

12.1 It is not felt that any factors inhibited the recognition of archaeological features or finds.

13 DEPOSIT MODEL

13.1 Topsoil L5000 (=L6000 and L8000) (0.29 – 0.54m), directly overlay the natural geological deposits (L6002 and L8002) in Phase 5 and the majority of Phase 6A. In phase 6A, the Topsoil partially overlay a thin layer of surviving Subsoil (L6001) in the western sector of the site. In phase 6B the thin subsoil layer covered the major part of the excavated area. L5000 (=L6000 and L8000) was a friable, dark grey brown sandy silt with occasional angular flint gravel and rounded pebbles. The Subsoil, L6001

(=8001), was mid red/grey brown, friable sandy silt with occasional flint gravel (0.15 – 0.20m). The natural deposit, L6002 (=L8002), was a friable, light yellow brown silty sand with angular flint gravel throughout.

14 DISCUSSION

14.1 Summary of the archaeology

Phase 5A

14.1.1 A total of 108 features were present within Quarry Phase 5A, comprising pits, postholes and natural features. They were scattered evenly across the excavation area and varied in size from less that half a metre to almost eight metres in diameter (Fig.2). A representative sample of 24 features was excavated.

14.1.2 The only features to yield diagnostic archaeological material were clustered in the north-western corner of Phase 5. Here, four small pits, F5015, F5017, F5019, and F5021, were contained early Bronze Age Beaker pottery. Two small postholes, F5011 and F5013, to the north were also attributed to this phase based on their close proximity to the dated pits.

14.1.3 Among the undated features, five postholes (F5028, F5036, F5038, F5040 and F5053) and a large pit, F5032, were distinguished as being archaeological as opposed to natural. Pit F5032 was re-cut twice. Pit F2009 may have been archaeological as it cut F2007.

14.1.4 The remaining features were natural, principally gault holes. They were all circular or slightly ovoid and ranged in diameter from 1.00 – 6.16m. Unlike the gault holes excavated in earlier quarry phases, the large gault holes from the current phase contained no artefacts.

Phase 5B

14.1.5 Fifty features were recorded within Phase 5B, scattered evenly across the excavation area. They were all circular or slightly ovoid in plan and varied in size from less that half a metre to just over five metres in diameter. A representative sample of 16 features was recorded covering the various size groups represented at the site. Most were less than half a metre deep, although F5064, the largest of the group reached a depth of 1.28 metres. Fills were commonly grey brown or orange brown with frequent rounded angular flint. Gault Hole F5086 was the only remaining feature to contain multiple fills.

14.1.6 Only two features yielded finds and none diagnostic archaeological material. Gault Hole F5064 contained small, scattered animal bones from a burrowing animal. Gault Hole F5089 (DP 6) yielded a single flake of struck flint debitage in a lower fill.

14.1.7 Pits F5062 and F5066 (DP 3) were very shallow and may represent truncated features rather than natural depressions. Pit F5072 (DP 4) was also smaller than the other features on site and may have been archaeological in origin before being

truncated by F5070. Tree Bole F5074, meanwhile, featured a burnt, charcoal rich fill and may represent a prehistoric fire site.

14.1.8 The remaining features excavated on the site were natural in origin, taking the form of gault holes or small depressions filled with topsoil.

Phase 5C

14.1.9 Over sixty circular features were revealed in Quarry Phase 5C, broadly distributed. No surface finds were present, and of the features investigated none contained finds. The features were tree hollows, large gault holes or smaller naturally- occurring depressions, directly comparable to those recorded in Phases 5A and 5B.

Phase 6A

14.1.10Thirty nine circular features and one linear feature were revealed in Quarry Phase 6A, and evenly distributed across the site. No surface finds were present, and of the features investigated none contained finds. The features were generally tree hollows, large gault holes or smaller naturally- occurring depressions, directly comparable to those recorded in Phases 5.

14.1.11The Ditch Terminus, F6007, and Pit, F6009 were potentially archaeological features, however no dating evidence was recovered from either fill. The remaining pits were likely natural features.

Phase 6B

14.1.12 Forty-nine roughly circular features were revealed in Quarry Phase 6B. Five of the features were excavated, however none of these contained any finds. All of the features recorded were directly comparable to the previously recorded natural features, such as gault holes and large tree hollows.

14.2 Interpretation of the site

14.2.1 The desk based assessment records that the site is located in an area of recognised prehistoric and Romano-British activity. In particular, the NHER records Bronze Age burial mounds (13840-1, 1985 and 11280) in the immediate vicinity. One of these, located to the north of the site, is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Evidence for Romano-British settlement is less extensive, consisting of coins, pottery sherds and metal artefacts (NHER 40792 & 40988).

14.2.2 Excavation Phase 1A yielded eight early Neolithic pit clusters containing abundant finds, including large pottery and struck flint assemblages, three axes and a broken sickle (Doyle *et al* 2005). A ditch in Excavation Phase 1B to the south contained amongst other pottery, two decorated sherds resembling Beaker types (Cameron *et al* 2005). Excavation Phase 2 produced fewer finds, although clusters of late Neolithic pits and postholes and a possible droveway were present. Once again, a small assemblage of decorated Beaker style sherds was recovered. Two large gault holes yielded pottery and struck flint finds suggesting that they were

utilised for shelter or waste disposal (Weston 2006). Similar results were achieved in the Excavation Phase 3 area, immediately adjacent to the site, with large natural depressions yielding prehistoric remains.

14.2.3 Quarry Phase 5A while producing a considerably higher number of `features', yielded fewer finds. The only datable archaeological material was derived from a cluster of four pits in the north-western corner of the site. The pits contained early Bronze Age Beaker pottery. The cluster was similar to those discovered in Excavation Phases 1A, 1B and 2. No finds were recovered from the excavated gault holes.

14.2.4 Fifty circular features were revealed in Quarry Phase 5B. None of the features generated diagnostic cultural material. The majority were tree hollows, large gault holes or smaller naturally- occurring depressions. One of the gault holes, F5089, yielded a single piece of struck flint debitage in a lower fill allowing for the possibility of prehistoric activity.

14.2.5 Over sixty circular features were recorded in Quarry Phase 5C, broadly distributed. No surface finds were present, and of the features investigated none contained finds. The features were tree hollows, large gault holes or smaller naturally- occurring depressions, directly comparable to those recorded in Phases 5A and 5B.

14.2.6 Forty features were recorded in Quarry Phase 6A and followed the general pattern established in the Quarry Phase 5 excavations, with most features being tree hollows, large gault holes or smaller naturally occurring depressions. The Ditch Terminus L6007 may suggest the presence of more activity to the south of Phase 6A.

14.2.7 Forty-nine features were recorded in Quarry Phase B. All were natural features, either gault holes or tree hollows, and none yielded any cultural material.

ARCHIVE DEPOSITION

Archive records, with an inventory, will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency. The archive will be deposited with Norwich Castle Museum.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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APPENDIX 1 CONCORDANCE OF FINDS

51025: Coxford Abbey Quarry, Norfolk
PHASE 5A Concordance of finds by feature

Feature	Context	Description	Spot Date	Pottery
5015	5016	Pit Fill	Early Bronze Age	(19) 160g
5017	5018	Pit Fill	Early Bronze Age	(9) 48g
5019	5020	Pit Fill	Early Bronze Age	(8) 38g
5021	5022	Pit Fill	Early Bronze Age	(7) 35g

51025: Coxford Abbey Quarry, Norfolk
PHASE 5B
Concordance of finds by feature

Feature	Context	Description	A.Bone (g)	Other
5089	5091	Pit Fill		S.Flint (1) 32g

APPENDIX 2

Pottery Report

Excavations recovered a total of 43 sherds (281g) of early Bronze Age Beaker pottery sparsely distributed in the fills of four pits. The entire assemblage is fragmentary and moderately to highly abraded.

Methodology

The pottery was examined at x20 magnification to define fabric categories and quantified by sherd count, weight (g) and R.EVE with all diagnostic features and observations also recorded in accordance with the guidelines of the Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group (PCRG 1995). All data will be entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet that forms part of the archive.

Commentary

The early Bronze Age pottery occurs in a single homogenous fabric with slightly powdery, oxidised orange-brown surfaces that fade to a dark grey-brown core. Inclusions comprise sparse to common, ill-sorted quartz (0.2-1mm), sparse grog (0.2-0.5mm), with a combination of sparse to occasional quartzite, calcined flint or organics (0.5-1.5mm). The appearance and inclusions of this fabric are closely comparable to the Beaker fabrics recorded at Hockwold-cum-Wilton (Bamford 1982, 23) and Witton, North Walsham (Lawson 1983, 16).

The sherds in all four Pits: F5015, F5017, F5019 and F1521 all display decorative characteristics that are indicative of early Bronze Age Beaker pottery, and although the sherds are too limited in size for accurate form comparisons they are clearly comparable in style to other Beaker pottery from the region, notably at Spong Hill (Healy 1988) and Hockwold-cum-Wilton (Bamford 1982; Healy 1996), as well as from previous phases of excavation at Coxford Abbey Quarry.

The only rim sherd in the assemblage was contained in Pit F5019 (L5020) and comprised a slightly everted rim with a series of grooves on the exterior. L5020 also contained body sherds decorated with ‘crows-foot’ fingernail rustication and inscribed, lattice-filled lozenges; however the rim and decorated sherds are all from separate vessels. Body sherds decorated with ‘crows-foot’ fingernail rustication were also contained in Pits F5015 (L5016) and F5017 (L5018), while Pit F5015 (L5016) also contained body sherds decorated with comb-stabbed and comb-impressed chevrons, and Pit F5021 (L5022) contained body sherds decorated with lozenges filled with comb-stabbing.

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The Charred Remains

The environmental samples from Pits F5015, F5017, F5019, and F5021 were negative

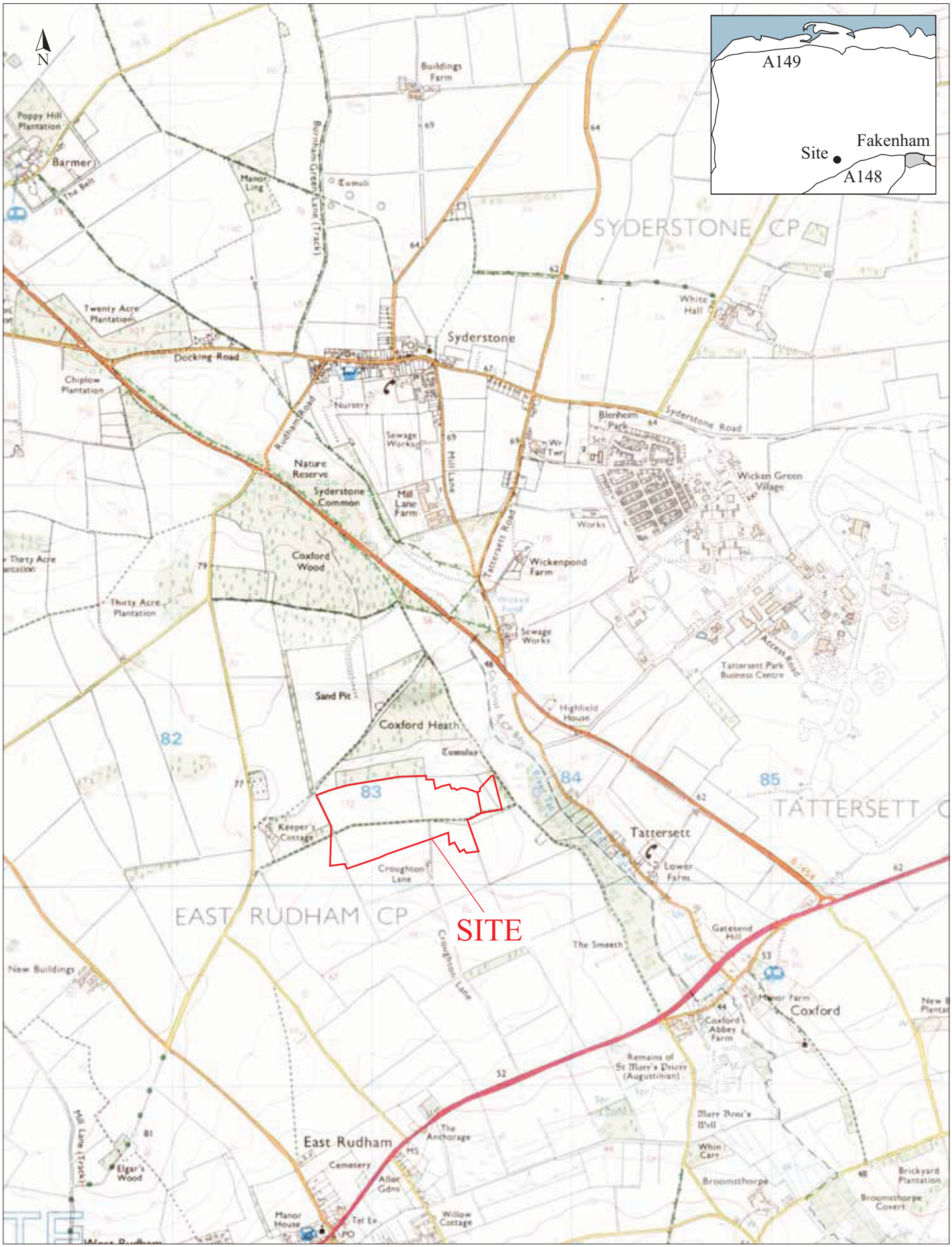

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Fig. 1 Site location plan

Scale 1:25,000 at A4

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Fig. 2 Trench location plan

Scale 1:2000 at A3

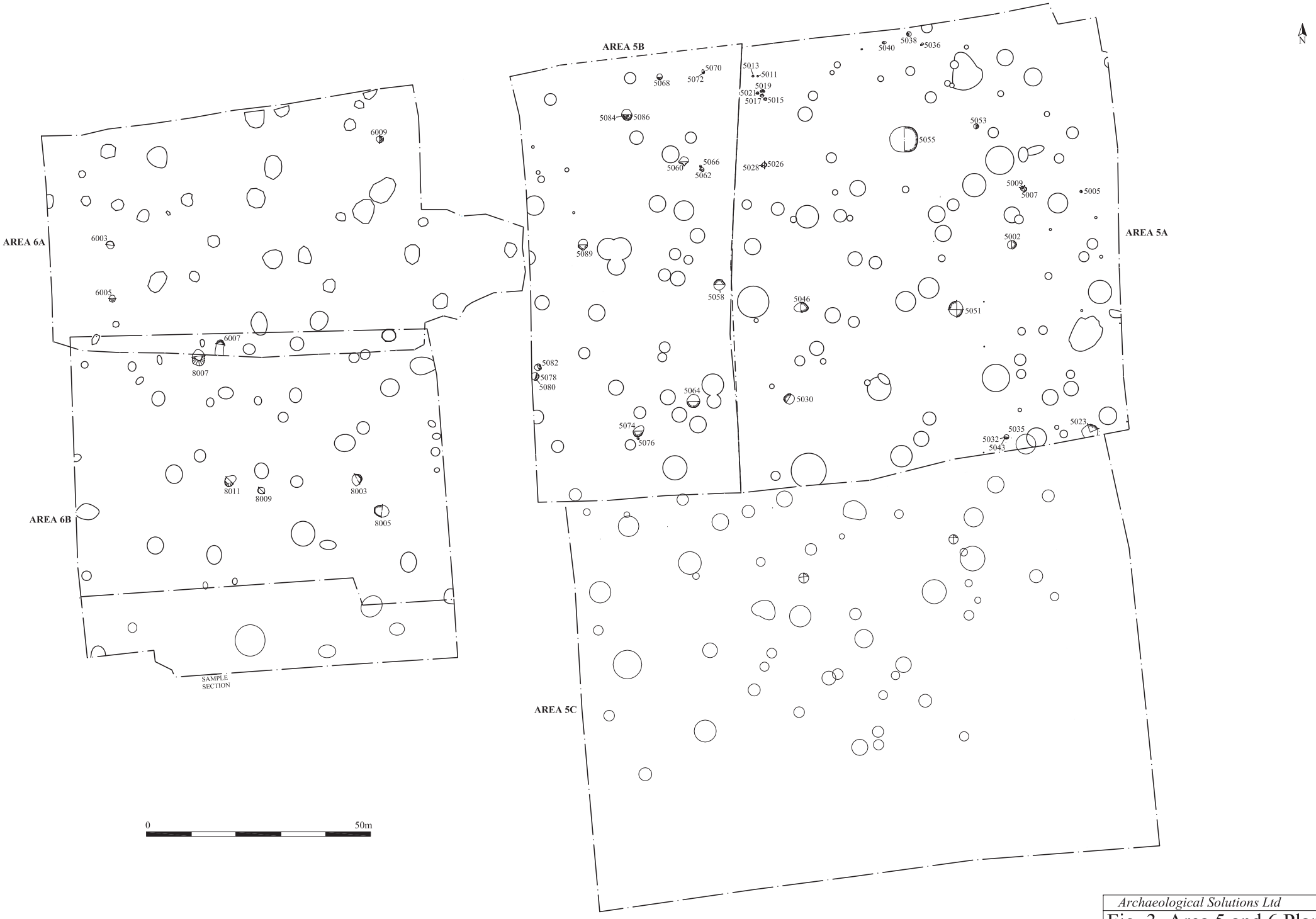

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Fig. 3 Area 5 and 6 Plan

Scale 1:750 at A3

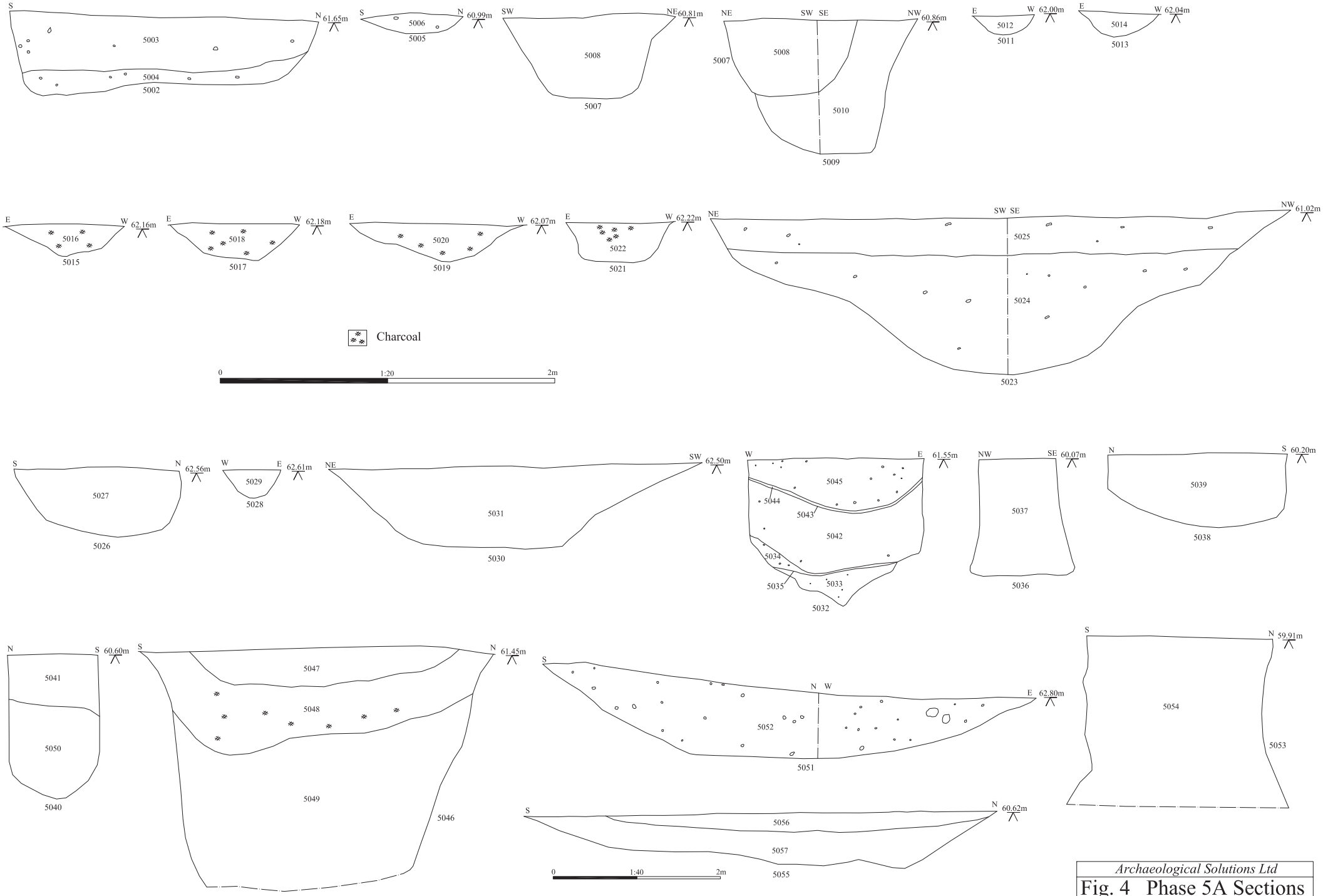

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Fig. 4 Phase 5A Sections

Scale 1:20 except F5055 at 1:40 at A3

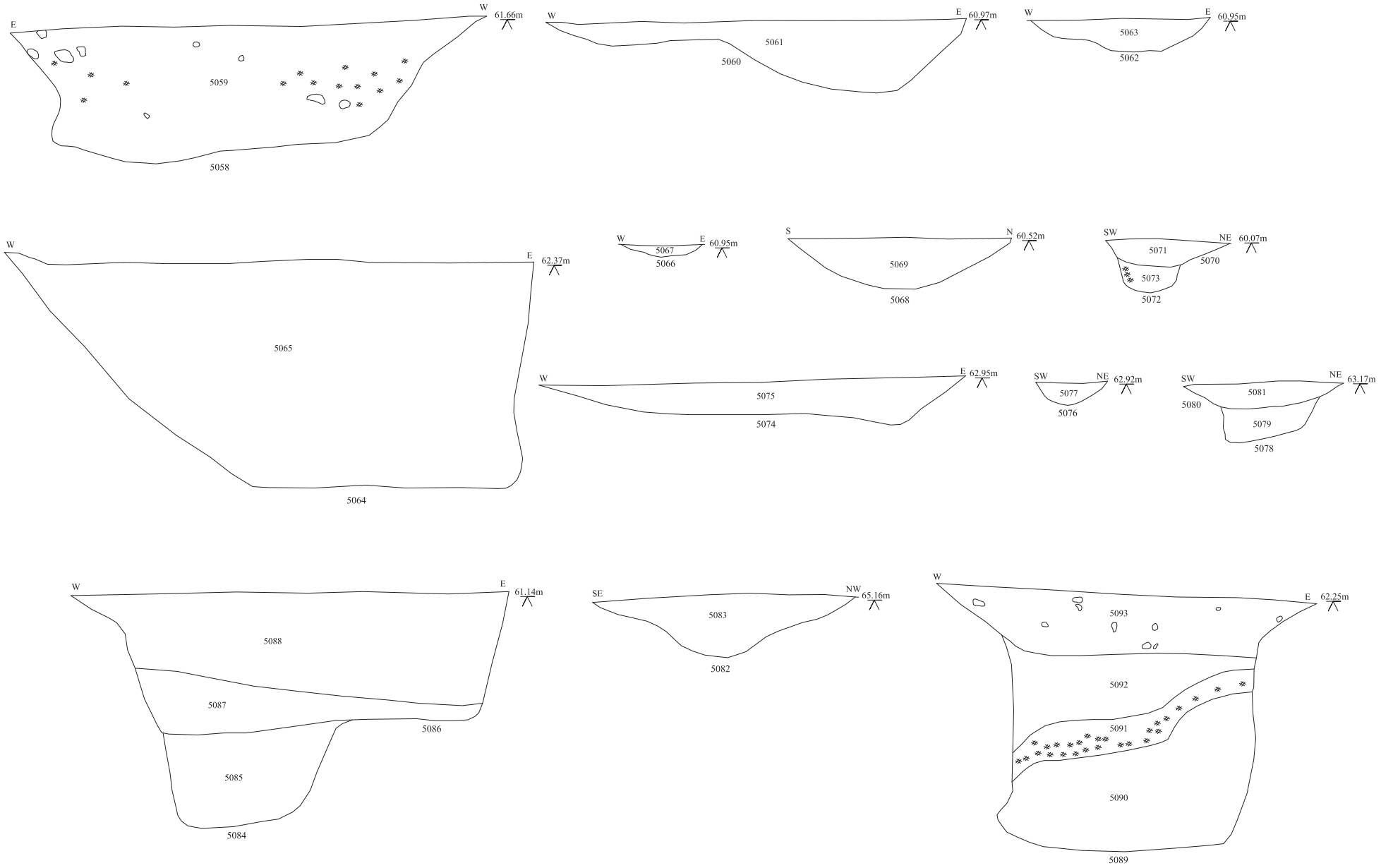

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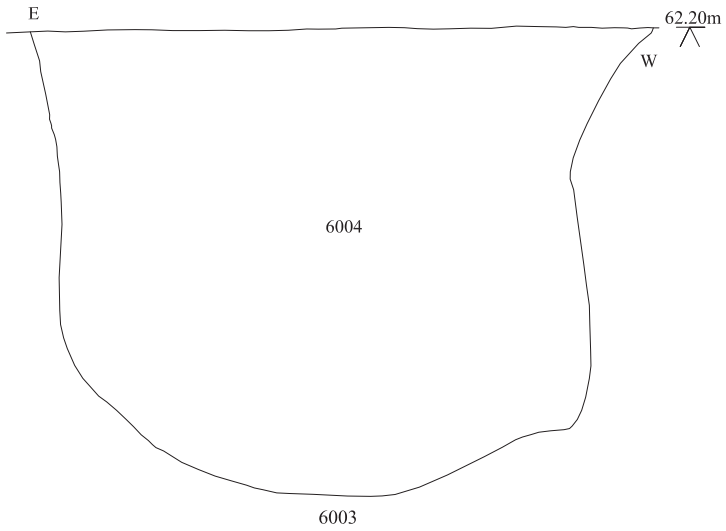
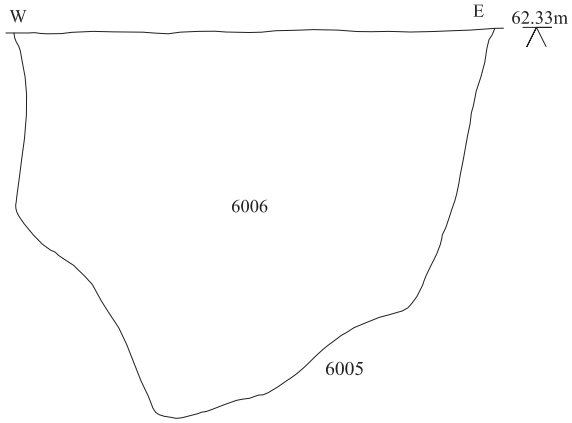
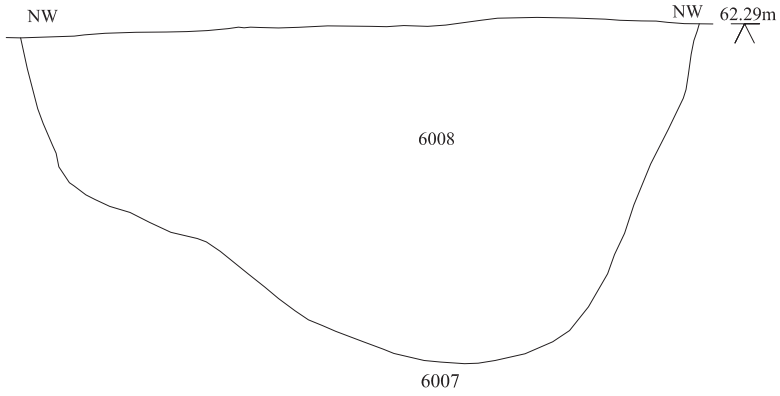
Fig. 5 Area 5B Sections
Scale 1:20 at A3







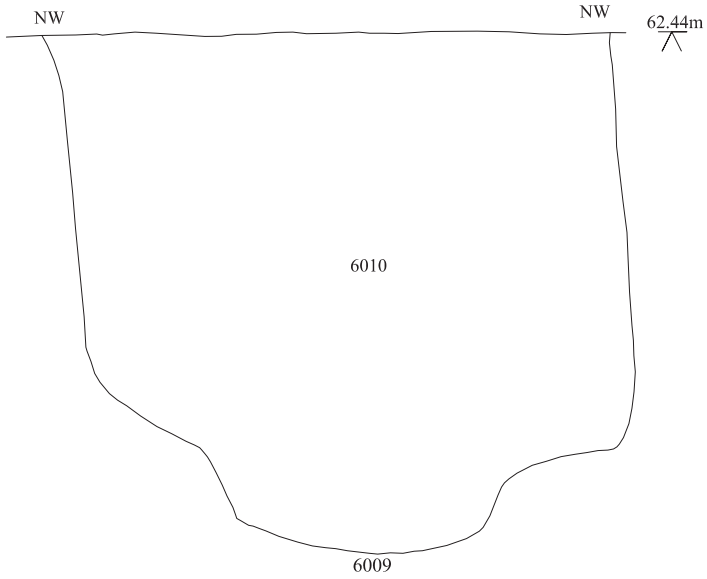


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Fig. 6 Phase 6A Sections

Scale 1:20 at A4

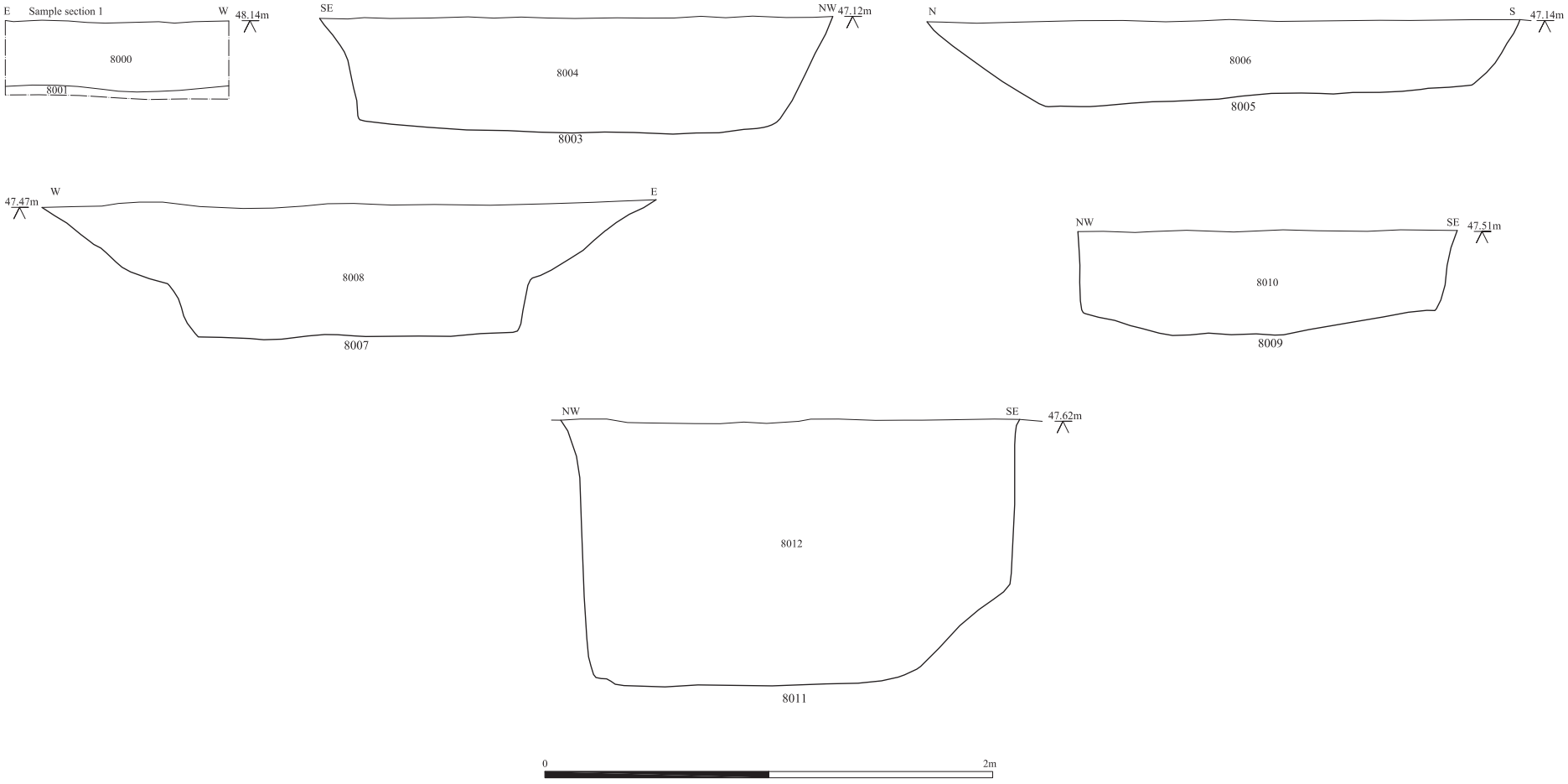

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Fig. 7 Phase 6B Sections
Scale 1:20 at A3