The Old Maltings and Former St Mark's Church, Green Street, Northampton

An Archaeological Evaluation Report
for Linfield Ltd

by Jo Pine

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code MGN 05/112

December 2005

Summary

Site name: The Old Maltings and Former St Mark's Church, Green Street, Northampton

Grid reference: SP 7486 6032

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 24th -29th November 2005

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Jo Pine

Site code: MGN05/112

Area of site: 0.29ha

Summary of results: Archaeological deposits were present deeply buried by modern made ground and possible 19th century or earlier buried soils. An undated pit, a posthole of possible early/mid Saxon date and two postholes of late Saxon date together with two postholes which are probably contemporary were recorded.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Northampton Museum in due course.

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 15.12.05 Steve Preston✓ 15.12.05

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The Old Maltings and Former St Mark's Church, Green Street, Northampton
An Archaeological Evaluation

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Report 05/112b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on a plot of land located on Green Street, Northampton (SP 7486 6032) (Fig. 1). The project was commissioned by Mr Henry Venners of The John Phillips Planning Consultancy, Bagley Court, Hinksey Hill, Oxford, OX1 5BS on behalf of Linfield Ltd.

Planning permission is to be sought from Northampton Borough Council to redevelop the site for residential purposes. Details of the development proposal have not been finalized at the time of writing. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site which may be damaged or destroyed by development, a field evaluation has been requested in accordance with principles detailed in the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16, 1990), and the Borough Council's policies on archaeology, to inform the planning process.

The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Myk Flitcroft, team leader of Northamptonshire County Council Historic Environment Team. The fieldwork was undertaken by Jo Pine and Jennifer Lowe between the 24th and the 29th November 2005 and the site code is MGN05/112. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Northampton Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the south-western edge of Northampton town centre and comprises two disused buildings, the former St Mark's Church and the Old Maltings, with associated carparking facilities, as well as a bay of parking spaces for the former church directly opposite, on the other side of Green Street (Fig 2). The site is roughly 0.29 ha in extent. Green Street forms a virtual crescent around the site to the west, and St Peter's Way is the eastern boundary. According to the British Geological Survey, the site is located on alluvium, overlying head deposits (BGS 1980). During previous work on Green Street an orange brown sandy clay was encountered, as well as clean orange gravel and sand hardened by iron panning (Chapman 2000). A sandy/silty clay was encountered during this phase of fieldwork. The site lies at a height of between 63m and 61m above Ordnance

Datum. The carparking area of the Old Malting slopes down from 63.50m in the north to 61m to the south. The area of carparking opposite the church is at *c*. 62m.

Archaeological background

The archaeological background for the site had been highlighted in a desk-based assessment prepared for the site (Lowe 2005) which shows the high archaeological potential of the site. In summary, Northampton developed from a middle Saxon palace complex, which lies just to the east of the site near St Peters Church and which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Williams *et al*. 1985). The town subsequently developed in late Saxon times into a defended urban settlement (*burh*) and continued to prosper into medieval times. The town declined in later medieval times but was refortified in the Civil War. Trial trenching immediately to the west and south of the site in 1995 appears to have located the late Saxon and medieval town defences together with evidence of late medieval and post-medieval tanning. Trial trenches were excavated on the proposal site itself in 1987 and it was believed these revealed the town defences. However, in the light of the results of a later (1995) evaluation it is now thought these represent quarrying, industrial activity and rubbish dumping (Chapman 2000),

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development. This work was to be carried out in a manner that would not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which might warrant preservation *in situ*, or might better be excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on the site.

To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.

To determine if deposits of Saxon, medieval or early post-medieval date are present on the site.

To determine the depth at which the archaeologically significant horizon is located.

To determine the extent of disturbance to archaeological levels, if present, caused by previous development on the site.

The specification called for the excavation of the equivalent of seven trenches between 5m and 12m in length and 1.60m in width. The exact configuration of trenches would be determined following the results of the desk-based assessment and knowledge of access constraints. A contingency for an additional 5m of trench was included within the proposal, should this be required to clarify the nature of the initial findings.

In the event six trenches were excavated with their positions and lengths dictated by the presence of live services, standing buildings and access requirements (Fig. 2). They varied in length between 1.40m and 7.10m and were 1.60m wide, although due to the great depth of the deposits, two of the trenches (2 and 3) were stepped/widened at the top to facilitate safe entry. Three of the trenches (1, 4 and 6) were excavated to clarify the depth of the deposits but these trenches were not entered once excavated beyond a safe access depth. This strategy was agreed after consultation with Mr Myk Flitcroft and was in the main due to limited space for stepping of the trenches.

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Results (Figs 3, 4, 5 and 6)

Trench 1

The trench was aligned NE–SW positioned in the northern part of the Old Maltings car park. Tarmac 0.10m deep overlay scalpins 0.40m deep, which sealed a terram matting. This overlay a black made ground layer (51) which was 0.14m deep which in turn overlay a brown made ground layer (52) which was 0.14m deep and contained glass and a rubber shoe sole indicating that this deposit was modern in date. This deposit sealed a cobbled surface (62), at the northern end of the trench, and a red brick surface at the southern end (76) (Fig. 3). Parts of the cobbled surface and brick surface were removed to reveal a ceramic service pipe continuing beneath the cobbled surface. It was probable this service was 'live' thus the northern end of the trench could not be excavated.

However, the southern end of the trench was excavated to the natural geology. Beneath the cobbles and brickwork at this end of the trench was a modern cut (6) which was 3m by 0.50m and 0.90m deep and which truncated another layer of made ground (61) 0.40m deep. This deposit overlay a grey brown sandy silt layer (50) which was 1.30m deep and contained a sherd of Brill-Boarstall ware together with 19th-century pottery and two clay pipe stems. This deposit is interpreted as a buried soil and given its depth, had probably accumulated over a considerable time. It overlay an orange silty clay, which was the natural geology. This deposit had been truncated by cut 6 and also observed was a circular feature (5), also truncated by 6. Due to the great depth of the trench, 2.30m at this point, and the fact that this trench could stepped or battered or shored safely it was decided after consultation with Mr Flitcroft that this trench would be recorded but not further investigated.

Trench 2

This trench was aligned SE–NW. The upper levels were stepped to allow safe access to the base of the trench at 2.2m where the natural geology was exposed The stratigraphy comprised Tarmac 0.08m deep, which overlay scalpins 0.90m deep that, in turn, overlay terram matting. This sealed made ground layer (70), which was 0.12m deep, which overlay a brown-black deposit (55) which was 0.18m deep and contained 19th-century porcelain. Beneath this was a grey brown sandy silt layer (54), probably the same deposit as context 50 in Trench 1. This material contained three sherds of 16th-century pottery and a clay pipe stem. Beneath this buried soil, which was *c*. 0.90m deep, were four postholes (1, 2, 3 and 4) which truncated an orange silty clay deposit with ironstone, (the natural geology). At this depth also the water table was reached.

Posthole 1 was 0.30m in diameter and 0.24m deep. Its fill (56) contained a sherd of 10th-century St Neots ware and animal bone fragments. Posthole 2 was 0.48m in diameter and 0.10m deep and contained bone fragments of cow sized and sheep/goat species. Posthole 3 was 0.50m in diameter and 0.25m deep and contained fragments of animal bone. Posthole 4 had a projected diameter of 0.60m and although not bottomed, was at least 0.25m deep. Its fill (59) contained one sherd of St Neots ware and cow bone fragments.

Trench 3

This trench was aligned on a SE–NW alignment and again was stepped to allow safe access. The stratigraphy of the trench comprised Tarmac 0.10m deep, which overlay scalpins 0.60m deep that in turn overlay made ground, 0.10m deep, over another band of scalpins 0.20m which sealed terram matting. Beneath this material was a made ground layer (67) which was 0.20m deep and sealed a brown black sandy silt deposit (66) which was c. 0.20m deep and contained 19th century porcelain and is probably a continuation of layer 55 in Trench 2. This deposit sealed a grey brown sandy silt layer (64), which contained a clay pipe bowl date to between AD1700–40 and was a continuation of the buried soil deposit (50 and 54). This deposit was *c*. 0.75m deep and sealed an orange silty clay deposit with iron stone. A possible posthole (7) was partially exposed in the trench and was 0.19m deep and contained a single sherd of early/middle Saxon pottery.

Trench 4

This was excavated within a paved area in the north of the site. Tarmac 0.10m deep overlay a scalpin deposit 0.50m deep, which overlay a dump of red bricks, which was 0.40m deep and prone to collapse (73). This sealed a layer of made ground (75), which contained slate and clear glass in a black sandy silt matrix which was 0.20m

deep. This was removed onto a grey brown sandy silt deposit (74) which was possibly the buried soil deposit, of which 0.10m was removed until the trench became unstable and was abandoned at 1.30m below the present ground surface.

Trench 5

This was excavated in the south of the Old Maltings carpark but for a very limited length due to the known presence of a foul water sewer and water pipe. The stratigraphy comprised Tarmac 0.12m thick onto scalpins 0.15m deep onto terram. Beneath this surface were observed two service trenches truncating a dark brown sandy silt deposit (68) which contained 6 sherds of 19th-century pottery, bottle glass and a clay pipe bowl dated to between 1700–40 and was again probably a continuation of deposits 55 and 66 seen in Trenches 2 and 3. Due to the presence of these probable 'live' services the trench could not be further excavated by machine, therefore a hand-dug sondage was excavated to clarify the depth of the deposits. This illustrated that below deposit 69 was a grey brown sandy silt deposit (69) which was possibly the buried soil. This contained four sherds of medieval pottery together with 3 clay pipe stems and one bowl and this deposit was hand excavated for 0.40m. Augering illustrated that a brown sandy silt continued for a further 0.80m and below this the deposit changed to a grey brown sandy silt.

Trench 6

This was excavated in the carparking bay to the north of the site. The stratigraphy of the trench was a laid brick surface and bedding sand 0.15m deep onto scalpins 0.35m deep. This overlay stone rubble 0.70m deep, which was placed in a wire cage. Beneath this was excavated a made ground layer which was 0.60m deep and contained red brick fragments. The trench was abandoned at 1.83m for safety considerations.

Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 30 sherds with a total weight of 274g (Appendix 3). It comprised early/middle Saxon, late Saxon and medieval and later wares.

Fabric

The late Saxon and medieval pottery was quantified using the chronology and coding system of the Northamptonshire County Ceramic Type-Series (CTS), as follows:

F100: St Neots ware, AD850–1100

F330: Shelly Coarseware, AD1100–1400

F324: Brill/Boarstall Ware, AD1200–1600

F329: Potterspury ware, AD1250–1600

F404: Cistercian ware, AD1470–1550

F1000: Miscellaneous 19th/20th century wares

In addition, the following, not covered by the CTS, was noted:

Early/Middle Saxon: Hand-built, sparse to moderate sub-angular quartz up to 0.5mm, sparse to moderate sub-rounded black ironstone up to2mm, sparse organic voids up to 5mm.

Discussion

The presence of the early/middle Saxon sherd is worthy of comment. Previous excavations at Green Street produced a large assemblage of middle Saxon Maxey ware pottery (Blinkhorn 2000) but no early/middle Saxon handmade pottery. That site also produced a small assemblage of late Saxon St. Neots, Northampton and Stamford wares. The early/middle Saxon hand-built sherd from this site could be contemporary with the Maxey ware from Chapman's excavations, or could be earlier. A large group of pottery was recovered from excavations of the early and middle Saxon settlement at Chalk Lane in Northampton less than 200m to the north-east of this site (Gryspeerdt 1981). This site may therefore represent an outlier of that site, or possibly evidence of agriculture associated with it. The sherd is in good condition, however, and does not appear to have spent any significant time in a ploughsoil or similar, where it would have experienced considerable attrition.

The small assemblage of small sherds of late Saxon pottery is in keeping with the nature of the contemporary material from the previous excavations at Green Street. The lack of Northampton and Stamford wares from this site may be chronologically significant, but it is difficult to be certain due to the small size of the assemblage. Further excavations could help to clarify the matter.

Animal Bone by Ceri Falys

A total of 53 pieces of animal bone (1140g) were recovered from 10 contexts (Appendix 4). Overall, the remains were well preserved, although fragmented to varying sizes, and demonstrated no evidence of cortical exfoliation, root action, rodent gnawing, nor butchery. Identified skeletal elements indicated the remains were primarily from cattle and sheep/goats, however a single fragment of a pig mandible was present. At least two cows are represented in this collection, as both fused and unfused appendicular elements were present. Based on the fact that the greater trochanter and distal epiphyses of the right femur excavated from 4 (59) were unfused, one of the

cows present was younger than 3.5 years of age. This is also supported by the unfused radius-ulna also found in the same context.

Flint by Steve Ford

A broken flake was recovered from posthole 3 (58) but it is not closely dateable and can only be given a broad prehistoric date.

Clay Pipe by Richard Oram

Fifteen fragments of clay pipe were recovered, consisting mainly of stems but there were two bowl fragments and one complete bowl. The complete bowl, from deposit 68, is similar to an Oswald type 10b *c*. 1700–40, (Oswald 1975, 37). This has an upright, fairly narrow, bowl and a small tight foot. One bowl fragment, from deposit 64, consists of the lower part of the bowl and the foot only. It has thick walls and stem and is close to an Oswald type 9a, also *c*. 1700-40. The other bowl fragment is a small side piece that is fairly undiagnostic. None of the stems have any distinguishing marks and the sample size is too small for any statistical dating methods.

Glass

Seven fragments of glass were recovered during the fieldwork, the majority being clear window glass from modern contexts. A piece of patinated brown bottle glass was recovered from buried soil deposit 54 and a bottle base from 19th-century deposit 68.

Brick and Tile

Five pieces of tile were retained during the evaluation. One is from a 20th-century context, whilst the remainder came from the buried soil deposit in Trenches 1, 2 and 3

Shell

A fragment of oyster shell was recovered from deposit 54 in Trench 2

Metal

An iron nail, not badly corroded was recovered from deposit 51, Trench 1.

Stone

Fifteen pieces of stone were recovered the majority being ironstone, some of which came from the buried soil deposit and also from the late Saxon postholes 1, 4 and 3.

Conclusion

This evaluation has established that archaeological deposits dating from probably as early as the mid Saxon period and certainly the 10th century are present on the site. Together with the results of the previous 1985 evaluation, this fieldwork has illustrated the high archaeological potential of the proposal area, within a part of Northampton which is already realized as archaeologically significant.

The features recorded during this fieldwork, postholes, are well defined and preservation of artefacts/ecofacts is good. The deposits are sealed and thus protected by a substantial deposit of buried soil, which is shown to be present within the eastern area of the site and which may have been accumulating over much of the post-medieval period.

The results from Trench 6, in contrast, suggest deep truncation in this area of the proposal site.

References

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APPENDIX 1: Trench details
0m at S or W end

Trench No.	*Length (m)*	*Breadth (m)*	*Depth (m)*	*Comment*
1	7.10	1.60	2.30	0-0.1m Tarmac; 0.1-0.5m scalpins on terram matting.; 0.5-0.64m black made ground (51); 0.64-0.80m brown made ground (52); 0.80-1.00m cobbled surface (62) (northern end of trench) and a red brick surface (southern end); 1.00m-1.40 made ground (61) truncated by modern cut (6); 1.40-2.30m grey brown sandy silt layer (50); 2.30m+ orange silty clay (natural geology). Pit 5.
2	2.6	1.60 where natural exposed	2.20	0-0.8m Tarmac; 0.8-.98m scalpins on terram matting; 0.98-1.12m. made ground layer (70); 1.12-1.30m brown black deposit (55); 1.30-2.20m grey brown sandy silt layer (54); 2.20m+ orange silty clay (natural geology). Postholes 1, 2, 3 and 4 **[Plates 1 and 2]**
3	1.40	1.60 where natural exposed	2.40	0-0.1m Tarmac; 0.1-0.7m scalpins; 0.7-0.8m made ground; 0.8-1.00m scalpins on terram matting; 1.00-1.20m made ground (67); 1.20-1.4m brown black sandy silt (66); 1.4-2.15m grey brown sandy silt (64) (buried soil); 2.15m+ orange silty clay (natural geology). Posthole 7
4	2.00	1.00	1.30	0-0.1m Tarmac; 0.1-0.6m scalpins; 0.6-1.00m red brick dump; 1.00--1.2m made ground (73), which contained slate and clear glass; 1.2m+-grey brown sandy silt (74) (buried soil?). Trench abandoned.
5	1.80	1.60	1.20-1.95	0-0.12m Tarmac; 0.12-0.27m scalpins on terram; 0.27-0.79-dark brown sandy silt deposit (68) and live services. Hand dug sondage to 1.17m illustrated that below 68 was a grey brown sandy silt deposit (69) and was shown by augering to be present to 1.95m+
6	1.95	1.60	1.83	0-0.15m Brick surface and bedding sand; 0.15-0..50m scalpins; 0.50-1.20m stone rubble in a wire cage; 1.20m+ made ground. Trench abandoned

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

Trench	*Cut*	*Deposit*	*Type*	*Date (century AD)*	*Evidence*
1		50	Buried soil	19th and ?earlier	Pottery and stratigraphy
1		51	Layer	20th	Finds and Stratigraphy
1		52	Layer	20th	Finds and Stratigraphy
1		53	Layer/bedding sand	20th	Finds and Stratigraphy
2		54	Buried soil	19th and ?earlier	Pottery and stratigraphy
2		55	Buried soil	19th and ?earlier	Pottery and stratigraphy
2	1	56	Posthole	10th?	Pottery
2	2	57	Posthole	10th?	Association
2	3	58	Posthole	10th?	Association
2	4	59	Posthole	19th and ?earlier	Pottery and stratigraphy
1	5	60	Possible feature	?	?
1		61	Made ground		
1		62	Cobbles	20th	Stratigraphy
1	6	63	Modern feature	20th	Stratigraphy
3		64	Buried soil	19th and ?earlier	Pottery and stratigraphy
3	7	65	Posthole	Early/middle Saxon	Pottery
3		66	Buried soil		
3		67	Made ground		
5		68	Made ground	19th	Pottery and stratigraphy
5		69	Buried soil	19th and ?earlier	Pottery and stratigraphy
2		70	Made ground	20th	Stratigraphy
6		71	Made ground	20th	Finds
6		72	Made ground	20th	Finds
4		73	Made ground	20th	Stratigraphy
4		74	Buried soil	20th	Stratigraphy
4		75	Made ground	20th or earlier	Stratigraphy

APPENDIX 3: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

			E/MS		F100		F330		F324		F329		F404		F1000	
Tr	Cut	Context	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
2	1	56			1	56										
2	4	59			1	1										
1		50							1	26					5	19
2											1	25				
2		70													4	15
2		54					1	11			1	6	1	2		
2		55													1	2
3	7	65	1	45												
3		66													2	4
5		68													6	33
5		69					4	29								
		Total	1	45	2	57	5	40	1	26	2	31	1	2	18	73

APPENDIX 4: Animal bone

Trench	*Cut*	*Fill*	*Cow*	*Cow-SZ*	*Sheep/Goat*	*Sheep/Goat SZ*	*Other*	*Unident*	*Total*
	1	56						8	8
	Tr2 - 1.8m	54			1 talus (left)			3	5
					1 distal tibia (left)				
	Tr2 - 2.2m	54				1 tooth		2	3
	2	54			1 prox metacarpal (right)				1
	2	57		1 femur epiphysis (greater tro) (right)				5	6
	3	58						4	4
	4	59	1 femoral shaft (unfused) (right)	3 rib shaft			1 mandible (pig)	7	16
			1 distal femoral epiphysis (right)	1 unfused proximal radius-ulna					
			1 fused proximal radius-ulna (right)	1 radius-ulna fragment					
	1.9m below surface	64	1 unfused intermediate phalanx	1 rib shaft				2	4
	Tr3	64				1 ilium neck			1
	7	65	1 proximal phalanx (right)					4	5
	Total		5	7	3	2	1	33	53

APPENDIX 5: Clay Pipe

Trench	Feature	Context	Type	Date	Description
1		50			2 stems
2		54			1 stem
3		64	9a	1700-40	5 stems, 1 bowl
5		68	10b	1700-40	1 bowl
5		69			3 stems, 1 bowl

APPENDIX 6: Glass

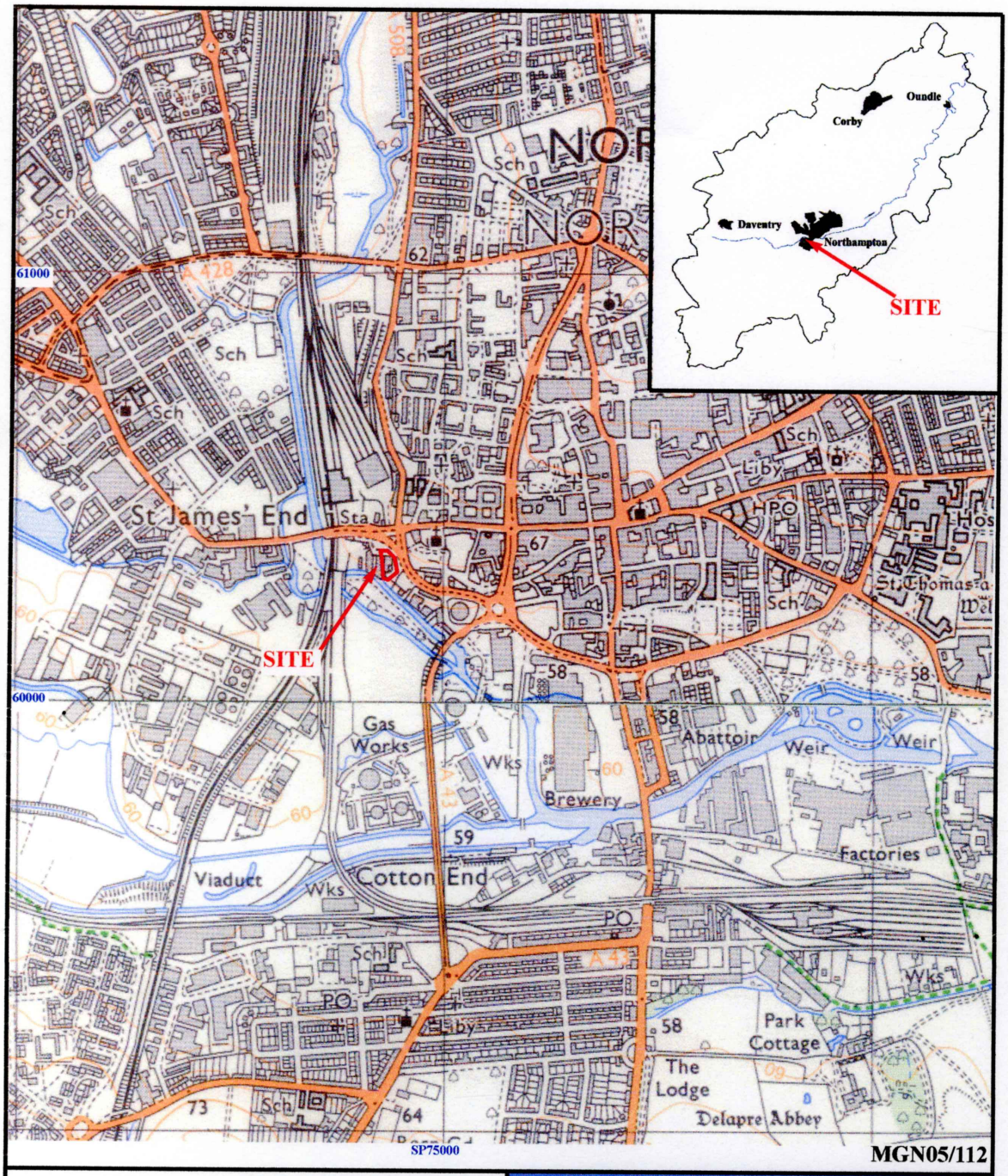
Trench	*Cut*	*Deposit*	*Type*	*No*	*Wt (g)*	*Comment*
1		51	Layer	1	2	clear window
1		52	Layer	1	2	clear window
2		54	Buried soil	1	1	Patinated brown
5		68	Made ground/buried soil	1	20	base with kick green glass
		70	Made ground	3	26	clear window glass

APPENDIX 7: Brick and tile

Trench	*Cut*	*Deposit*	*Type*	*Type*	*No*	*Wt (g)*
1		50	Buried soil	tile	2	44
1		53	Layer/bedding sand	tile	1	56
2		55	Buried soil	tile	1	36
3		64	Buried soil	tile	1	12

APPENDIX 8: Stone

Trench	*Cut*	*Deposit*	*Type*	*No*	*Wt(g)*	*Comment*
1		52	Layer	1	2	Slate
2		54	Buried soil	1	30	Iron Stone
2		54	Buried soil	4	48	Iron Stone
2	1	56	Posthole	1	6	sedimentary?
2	1	56	Posthole	3	22	Iron Stone
2	3	58	Posthole	1	6	soft sedimentary?
2	3	58	Posthole	6	46	Iron Stone
2	4	59	Posthole	4	34	Iron Stone
3		65	Posthole	1	84	hard igneous



The Old Maltings and former St Mark's Church, Green Street, Northampton, 2005
An Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 1. Location of site within Northampton and Northamptonshire.

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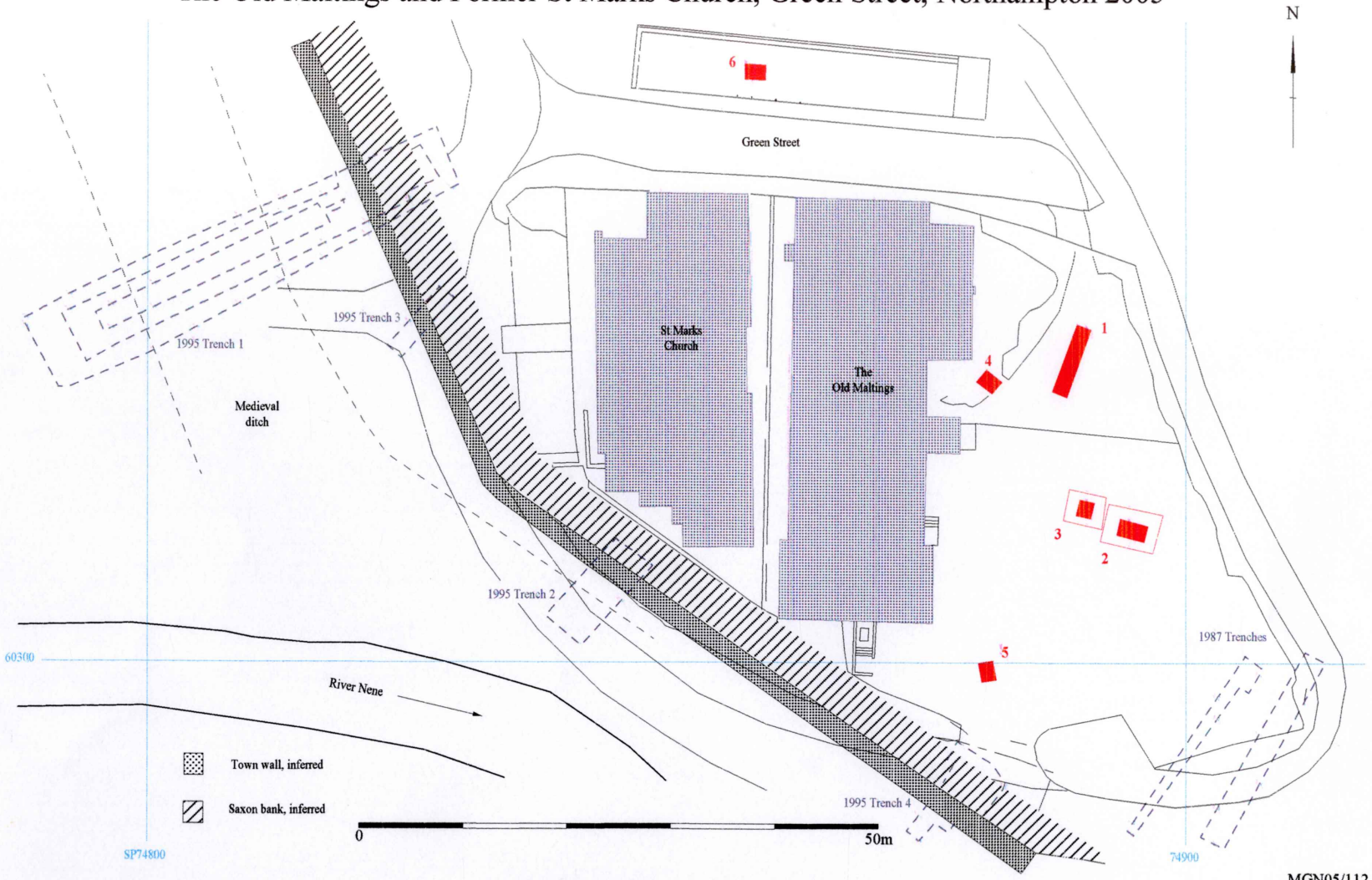

Figure 2. Location of trenches and previous archaeological work

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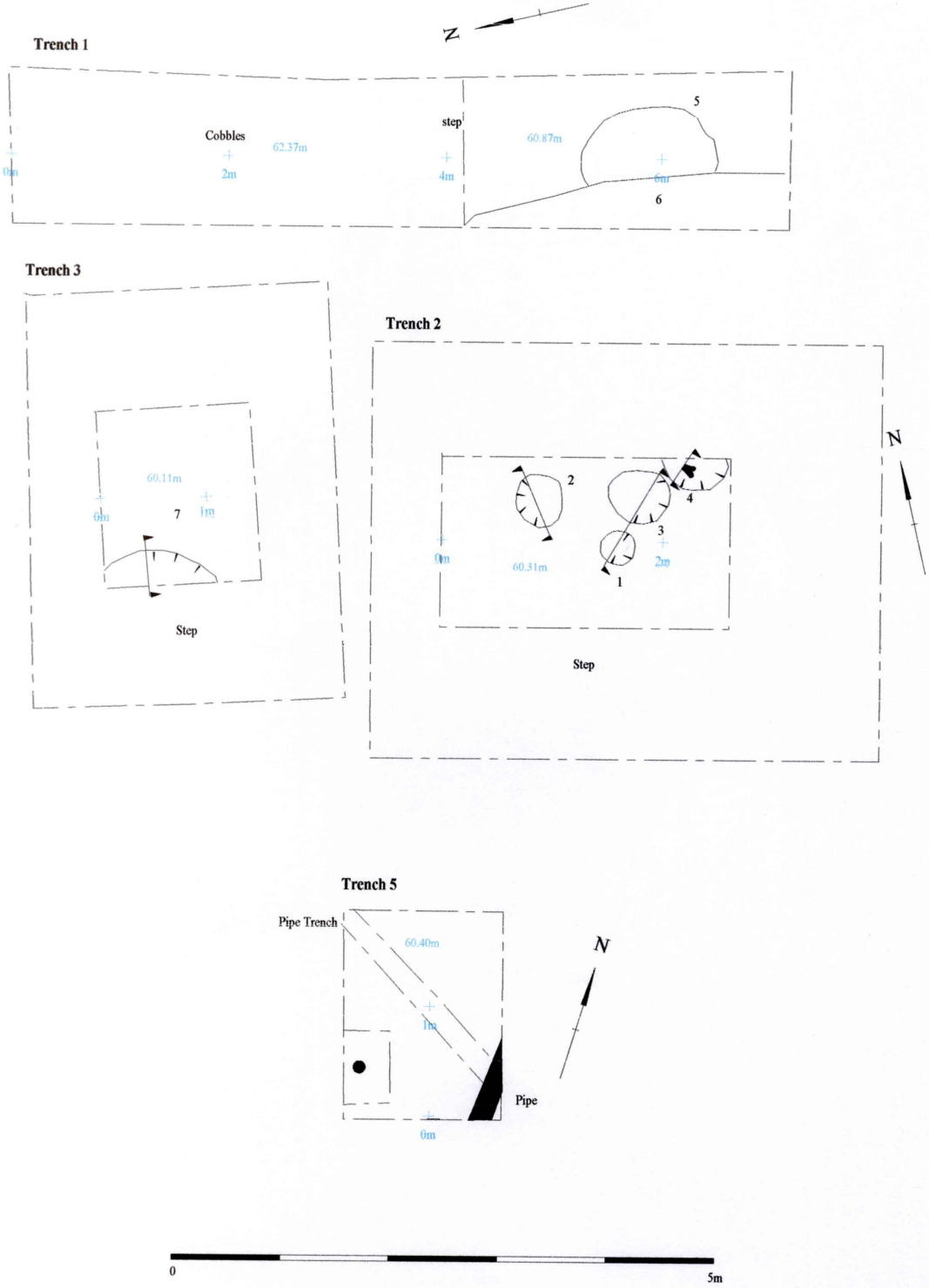

Figure 3. Plan of Trenches

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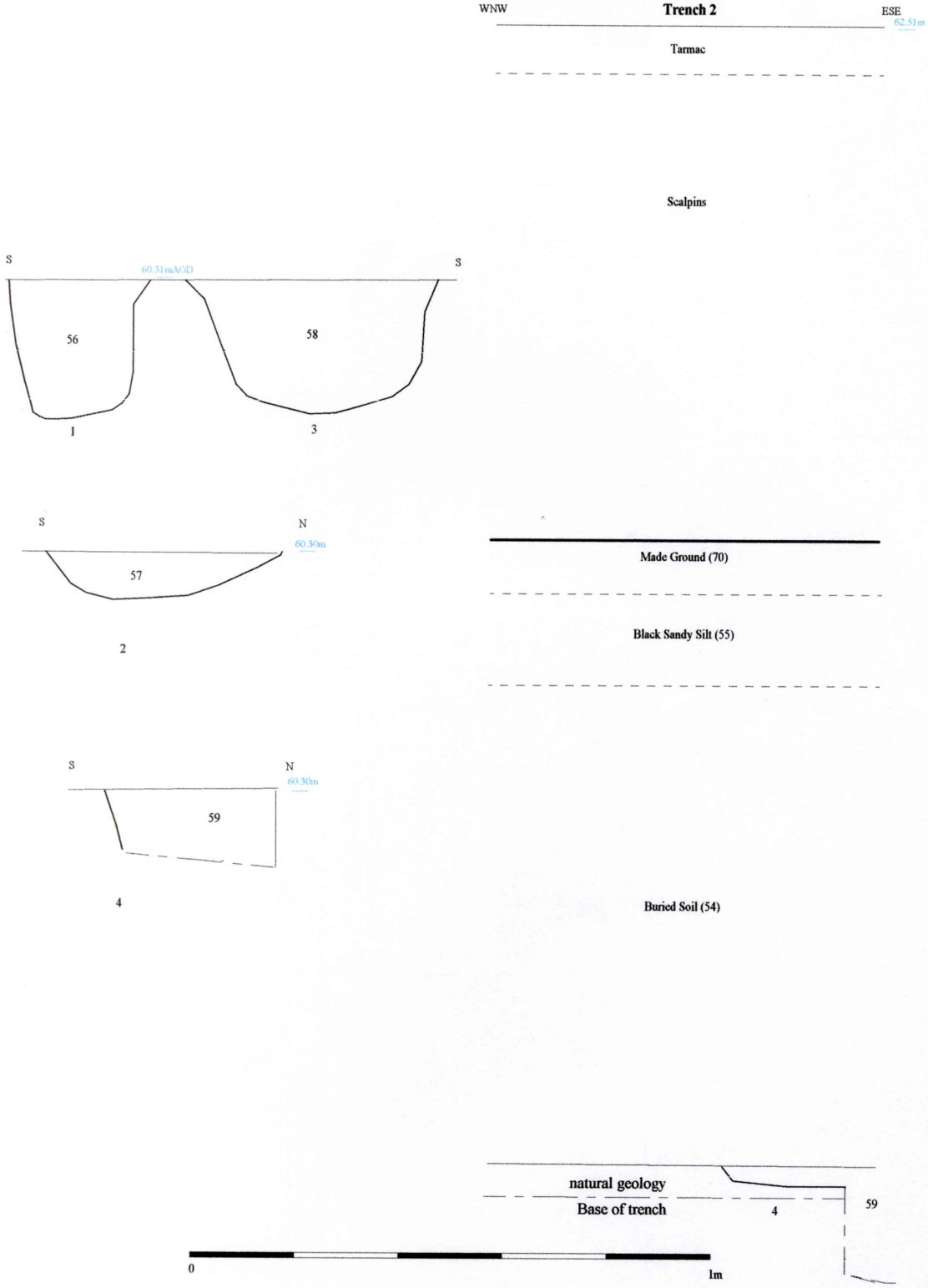

Figure 4. Sections

MGN05/112

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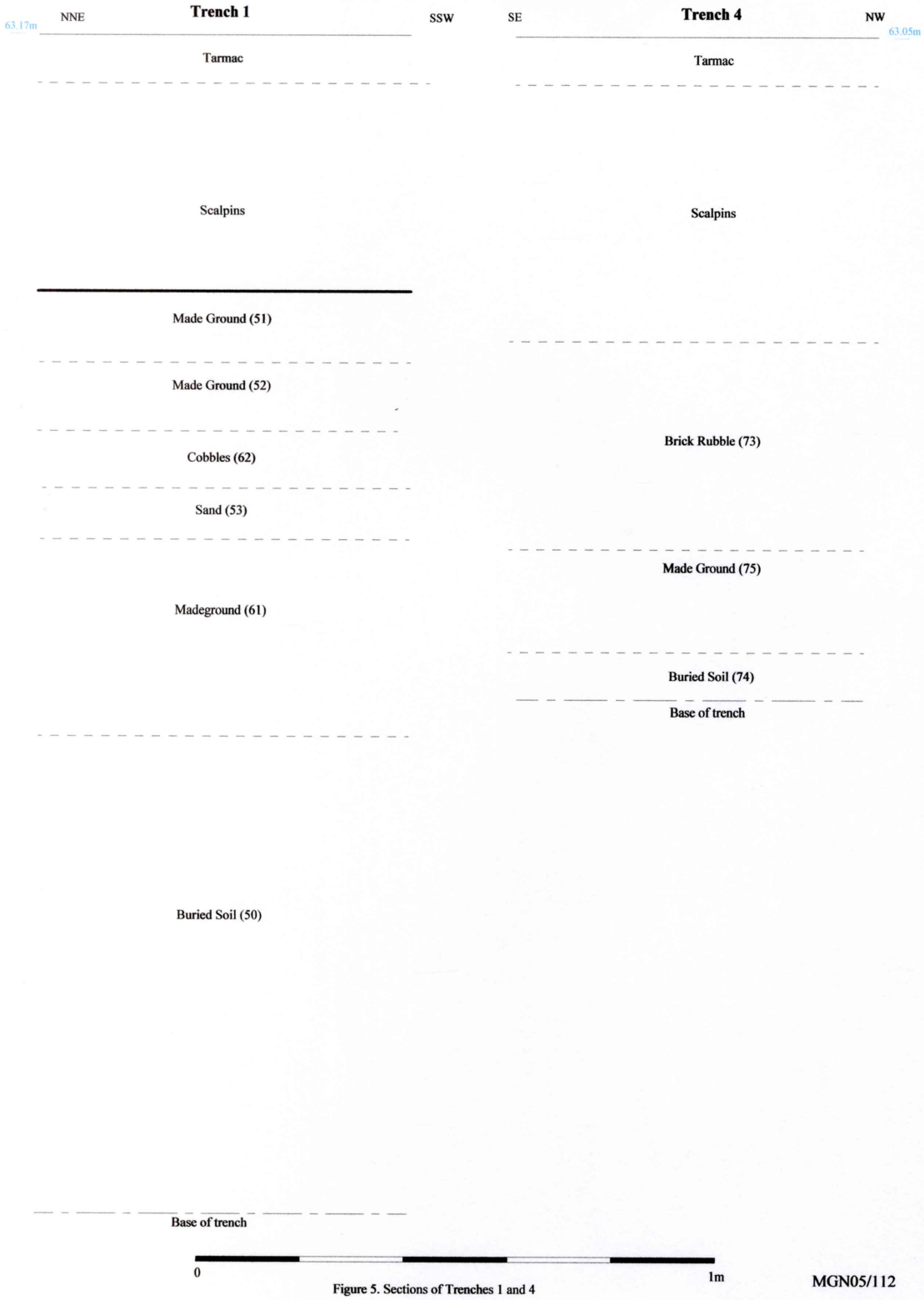

Figure 5. Sections of Trenches 1 and 4

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Figure 6. Sections of Trenches 5 and 6

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Plate 1. Trench 2, Postholes 1, 3 and 4, horizontal scale 0.5m, vertical scale 0.1m.

Plate 2. Trench 2 Posthole 2, horizontal scale 0.5m, vertical scale 0.1m.