

Wing Care Home, Church Street, Wing, Buckinghamshire

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for CastleOak Care Partnerships Ltd**

by Andy Taylor and Steve Ford
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code WCW 07/10

February 2007

Summary

Site name: Wing Care Home, Church Street, Wing, Buckinghamshire

Grid reference: SP 8808 2240

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 15th-27th February 2007

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Steve Ford and Andy Taylor

Site code: WCW 07/10

Area of site: c. 0.7 ha

Summary of results: Four ditches and a posthole were found. Two of the ditches were dated to the medieval period. A few sherds of Roman pottery and few struck flints indicate activity nearby in these periods also.

Monuments identified: Four ditches and a posthole.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held by Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd, 47–49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading, RG1 5NR, and will be deposited with Buckinghamshire Museum Service in due course.

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Wing Care Home, Church Street, Wing, Buckinghamshire An Archaeological Evaluation

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Report 07/10

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Wing Care Home, Church Street, Wing, Buckinghamshire (SP 8808 2240) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Jonathan Hughes of Carless and Adams Partnership, 6 Progress Building Surveyors, Whittle Parkway, Bath Road, Slough, Berkshire, SL1 6DQ on behalf of Castleoak Care Partnerships Limited.

Planning permission (06/11912/INF) is being sought from Aylesbury Vale District Council to demolish the existing care home and replace it with a new home. In order to advise the planning process, information has been requested as to the archaeological potential of the site. This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the District's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr David Radford, Archaeological Officer with Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service, advisers to the district on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Steve Ford, James Haygreen, Andrew Lawler and Andy Taylor between the 15th and 27th February 2007 and the site code is WCW 07/10. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Buckinghamshire County Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on a roughly triangular parcel of land on Church Street, Wing, Buckinghamshire (Fig. 2). Overstone Combined School is to the west of the site and the parish church stands to the north. It is currently occupied by the Wing Care Home and its associated gardens. The underlying geology comprises Glacial Sand and Gravel (BGS 1992), which was observed in all trenches. The site lies on a plateau at a height of approximately 124m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site was highlighted in a brief prepared by Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (Radford 2006). In summary the site lies within an area of archaeological potential, on

the projected course of an uncertain Roman road. This suggested road as depicted on the SMR map is aligned SE–NW until the environs of the site when it makes a sharp turn to a more nearly west-east line. More significant is the certain presence of a late Saxon/medieval inhumation cemetery, whose recorded centre lies just 50m to the north of the site boundary (NA 1999). The cemetery could, of course, be much larger than the portion already excavated. Further to the north-west the SMR records the site of Wing Priory and it is possible that medieval deposits will be present on the site which relate to the priory. Wing was a sizeable manor at the time of Domesday Book (AD1086) and contains a middle Saxon stone church, to the north of the site. A structure is shown on the site on a map of 1798, which is likely to be the now demolished Wing Lodge.

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.

Specific aims of the project were:

To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site;

To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;

To establish whether there is evidence for Roman activity in this area (bearing in mind the projected route of the doubtful Roman road);

To establish whether there is evidence for Saxon activity in this area;

To establish whether there is evidence for medieval or post medieval occupation, property boundaries, domestic, commercial or industrial activities associated with the medieval post medieval settlement and Wing Priory.

It was proposed to dig 85m of trenching, 1.4m wide, with a contingency for further trenching if required to clarify the initial findings. In the event, a 1.5m wide bucket was used, and a total of 11 trenches, measuring between 2.20m and 9.60m in length, were excavated as close as possible to their intended locations, although the presence of live services did result in some slight repositioning, in consultation with the monitor. The trenches were dug with a small 360° type machine fitted with a toothless grading bucket and under constant archaeological supervision. All spoilheaps were monitored for finds.

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. A complete list of features are detailed in Appendix 2.

Results

Trench 1

This trench measured 4.30m in length and 1.09m deep. It consisted of turf/topsoil overlying made ground overlying a buried soil. This was overlying subsoil overlying gravel natural. A modern soakaway and drain trench occupied parts of this trench. No finds nor deposits of archaeological interest were observed.

Trench 2 (Figs 4 and 5; Pl. 1)

This trench measured 9.60m in length and 0.85m deep. It consisted of turf/topsoil overlying subsoil overlying clayey gravel natural. Two ditches and a posthole were observed in this trench. The posthole was located at 1.70m. This was fully dug (3) and measured 0.41m in diameter and 0.10m deep. It did not contain any dating evidence despite wet sieving of a sample of its fill. Ditch 2 was located between 1.70m and 4.20m. A slot was dug showing it was 1.60m wide and 0.26m deep. A single sherd of medieval pottery was retrieved from its fill (52). Another ditch was located between 4.20m and 9.20m. A slot (1) was dug across it measuring 1.00m in length, 0.87m wide and 0.21m deep. Its dark brown sandy clay fill (51) contained two sherds of Roman pottery, 13 pieces of bone, five pieces of fired clay and two struck flints. It was unclear if ditches 1 and 2 were the same feature as the intersection point lay beyond the trench margins.

Trench 3

This trench measured 7.50m in length and 0.70m deep. It consisted of topsoil and made ground overlying a buried soil overlying subsoil overlying gravel natural. Two sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from the spoilheap. Faint soil marks which were found to only slightly penetrate the natural geology coincide with a boundary feature which was extant on the site prior to construction of the present Care Home. No deposits of archaeological interest were observed.

Trench 4

This trench measured 4.50m in length, 0.70m deep. It comprised topsoil overlying made ground overlying subsoil overlying natural gravel. The southern end of the trench had been disturbed by modern intrusions. Seven sherds of medieval pottery and two post-medieval sherds were recovered from the spoilheap. No deposits of archaeological interest were observed.

Trench 5 (Figs 4 and 5; Pl. 2)

This trench measured 5.20m in length and 0.90m deep. It consisted of turf/topsoil overlying made ground overlying gravel natural. A ditch was located at the south end of the trench. A slot (4) was excavated across it and revealed it to be 1.40m wide and 0.14m deep. No finds were recovered from its mid brown sandy clay fill (54). Three sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from the spoilheap of this trench.

Trench 6

This trench measured 6.10m in length and 0.55m deep. It comprised turf/topsoil overlying subsoil overlying gravel natural. No finds nor deposits of archaeological interest were observed.

Trench 7

This trench measured 2.20m and 0.75m deep. It consisted of topsoil overlying subsoil overlying gravel natural. No finds nor deposits of archaeological interest were observed.

Trench 8

This trench measured 7.10m in length and 0.55m deep. It consisted of turf/topsoil overlying subsoil overlying gravel natural. No finds nor deposits of archaeological interest were observed.

Trench 9

This trench measured 5.20m in length and 0.58m deep. It consisted of topsoil overlying subsoil overlying gravel natural. No finds nor deposits of archaeological interest were observed.

Trench 10

This trench measured 6.90m in length and 0.80m deep. It consisted of turf/topsoil overlying subsoil overlying modern made ground overlying a buried soil overlying gravel natural. No finds nor deposits of archaeological interest were observed.

Trench 11 (Fig 4 and 5)

This trench measured 6.00m in length and 0.76m deep. It comprised turf/topsoil overlying made ground overlying gravel natural. A ditch was located between 2.60m and 3.80m. A slot (5) was excavated across it

measuring 0.80m in length, 0.90m wide and 0.11m deep. It contained nine pieces of medieval pottery, two pieces of animal bone and 13 pieces of brick and tile, some of which appears to be intrusive modern material (not retained). This most likely has come from the above made ground layer.

Finds

Pottery by Jane Timby

The archaeological work resulted in the recovery of a small assemblage of 27 sherds of pottery, weighing 197g, from six trenches. The assemblage includes material of Roman, medieval and post-medieval dates. The pottery was fairly well fragmented with an overall average sherd weight of 7g. Only three rims are present and one basesherd. For the purposes of the assessment the assemblage was scanned to determine the form and fabrics and the likely date of the pieces. These were quantified by sherd count and weight for each context. The resulting data is summarized in Appendix 3.

Roman

Two sherds of Roman date were recovered from Ditch 1. Both are small unfeatured bodysherds, one a shelly ware; the other a pink grog-tempered ware. The fabrics are typical of material dating the 1st or 2nd centuries AD.

Medieval and post-medieval

Most of the sherds, 23 in total, appear to be local micaceous sandy wares dating to the medieval period (?12th-14th century). Three sherds, one a basesherd from Trench 11 are externally sooted. One sherd from Trench 5 has glaze splatters, otherwise the sherds are unglazed and appear to be from cooking pots and dishes. Two glazed red earthenware sherds from the same vessel feature amongst the medieval sherds recovered from Trench 4. One piece, also in this group, is either pottery or a fragment of ceramic building material.

Animal Bone by Andy Taylor

A total of fifteen pieces of animal bone were recovered from features one and five weighing a total of 86g. These comprised a cow tooth, a cow sized rib fragment and piece of calcaneum. A further 12 bone fragments were unidentifiable. None of these showed any evidence of butchery.

Struck Flint by Steve Ford

Two struck flints were recovered from ditch 1 (51) during the course of the evaluation. One was a core and the other a flake. The pieces are broad flake tradition and are not closely datable in themselves but are likely to be later of Neolithic or Bronze Age date.

Fired Clay by Andy Taylor

A total of five small unfeatured pieces of fired clay were recovered from ditch 1 weighing 2g.

Environmental Samples by Andy Taylor

Three samples of 10L of soil were taken for environmental analysis and finds retrieval from ditches 1 and 2 and posthole 3. These were wet sieved and examined using a hand lens. Only a few small pieces of wood charcoal were observed measuring no more than 5mm across.

Conclusion

A moderate number of archaeological deposits were uncovered during the evaluation. These comprised four ditches and a posthole and appeared to be concentrated towards the northern and eastern ends of the site. Ditch 1 was tentatively dated to the Early Roman period, although only two sherds of pottery were recovered, and it may be the same feature as ditch 2. Ditches 2 and 5 were dated to the medieval period (12th-14th centuries). Ditch 4 and posthole 3 did not contain any dating evidence. Further work would be required to determine the nature of these deposits such as if they are boundary features, possibly related to the dubious Roman road that is projected to pass through the development site, or if they reflect nearby medieval occupation. However the density of these archaeological deposits would suggest that further features would probably be present within the area to be developed. The archaeologically relevant levels survived across the entire site, modern development having raised the ground level rather than truncating it, but no finds or deposits came from the eastern half of the area.

References

- BGS, 1992, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 220, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
PPG16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO
NA, 1999, 'Excavation of a late Saxon/Medieval cemetery at the site of the former Victorian School, Church Street, Wing' Northamptonshire Archaeology
Radford, D, 2006, 'Wing, Freemantle Trust, Home for Older People, Church Street, Brief for Archaeological Field Evaluation (Trial Trenching)', Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service, Aylesbury

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

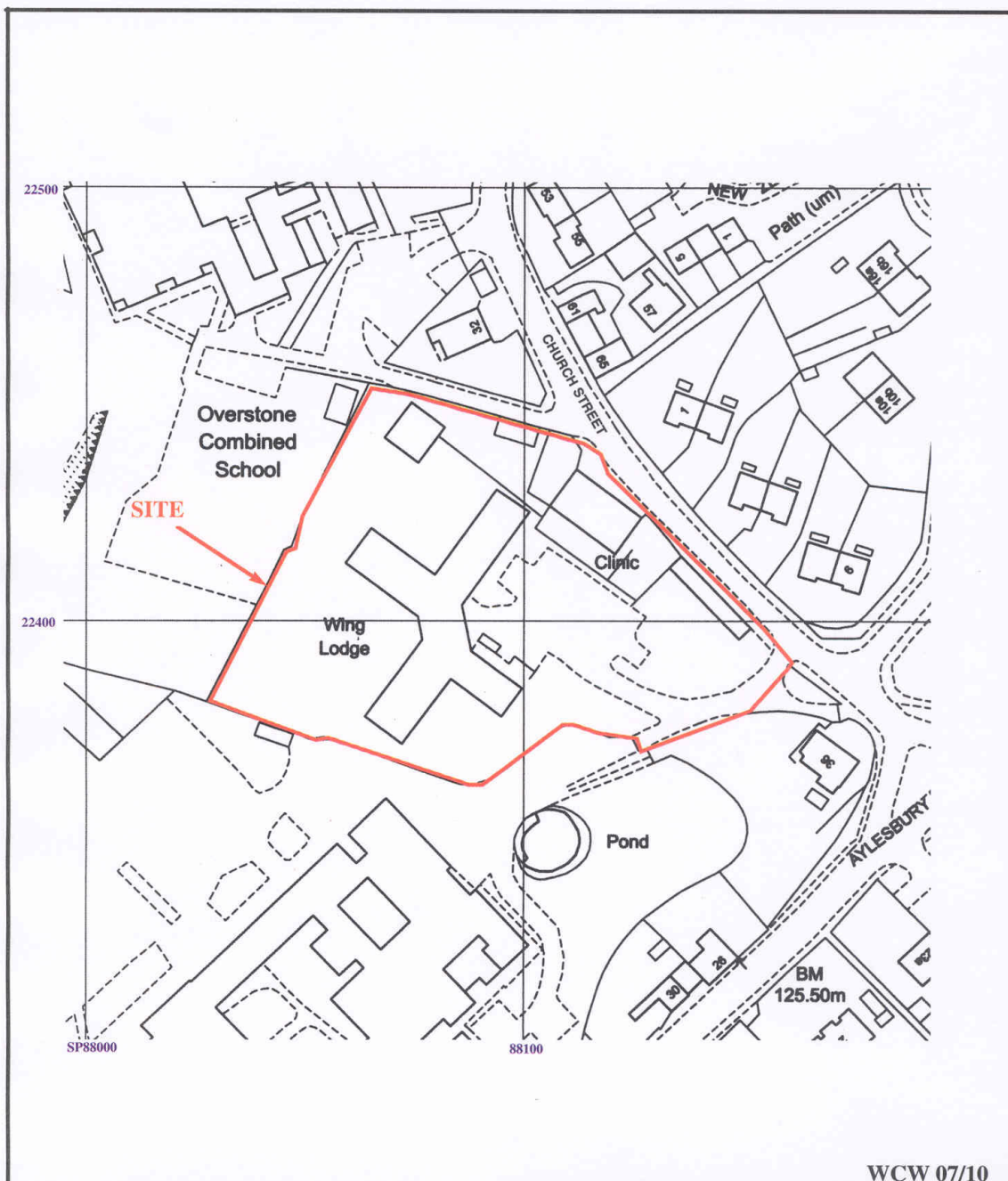
<i>Trench No.</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	4.30	1.50	1.09	0.00m-0.15m turf/topsoil; 0.15m-0.40m made ground; 0.40m-0.60m buried soil; 0.60m-1.05m subsoil; 1.05m-1.09m+ gravel natural.
2	9.60	1.50	0.85	0.00m-0.15m turf/topsoil; 0.15m-0.80m subsoil; 0.80m-0.85m+ gravel natural. Ditch 1 and 2; Posthole 3. [Plate 1]
3	7.50	1.50	0.70	0.00m-0.15m topsoil/made ground; 0.15m-0.50m buried soil; 0.50m-0.70m subsoil; 0.70m+ gravel natural.
4	4.50	1.50	0.70	0.00m-0.20m turf/topsoil; 0.20m-0.40m made ground; 0.40m-0.60m subsoil; 0.60m-0.70m+ gravel natural.
5	5.20	1.50	0.90	0.00m-0.20m turf/topsoil; 0.20m-0.90m made ground; 0.90m+ gravel natural. Ditch 4. [Plate 2]
6	6.10	1.50	0.55	0.00m-0.20m topsoil; 0.20m-0.53m subsoil; 0.53m-0.55m+ gravel natural.
7	2.20	1.00	0.75	0.00m-0.20m topsoil; 0.20m-0.72m subsoil; 0.72m-0.75m+ gravel natural.
8	7.10	1.50	0.55	0.00m-0.20m topsoil; 0.20m-0.52m subsoil; 0.52m-0.55m+ gravel natural.
9	5.20	1.50	0.58	0.00m-0.22m topsoil; 0.22m-0.55m subsoil; 0.55m-0.58m+ gravel natural.
10	6.90	1.50	0.80	0.00m-0.21m topsoil; 0.21m-0.47m subsoil; 0.47m-0.70m made ground; 0.70m-0.76m buried soil; 0.76m-0.80m+ gravel natural.
11	6.00	1.50	0.76	0.00m-0.46m topsoil; 0.46m-0.73m made ground; 0.73m-0.73m+ gravel natural. Ditch 5

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
2	1	51	Ditch	Roman?	Pottery
2	2	52	Ditch	Medieval	Pottery
2	3	53	Posthole	Unknown	None
5	4	54	Ditch	Unknown	None
11	5	55	Ditch	Medieval	Pottery

APPENDIX 3: Pottery Catalogue

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Roman</i>	<i>Medieval</i>	<i>Post- medieval</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>Date</i>
2	1	51	2			2	13	Roman
2		u/s		1		1	10	Medieval
2	2	52		1		1	6	Medieval
3		spoil		2		2	15	Medieval
4		spoil		7	2	9	67	Postmedieval
5		spoil		3		3	39	Medieval
11	35	55		9		9	47	Medieval
TOTAL			2	23	2	27	197	



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Figure 2. Detailed location of site on Church Street.

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Scale 1:1250

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Wing Care Home, Church Street, Wing, Buckinghamshire, 2007



Figure 3. Plan of trenches relative to existing and proposed development.

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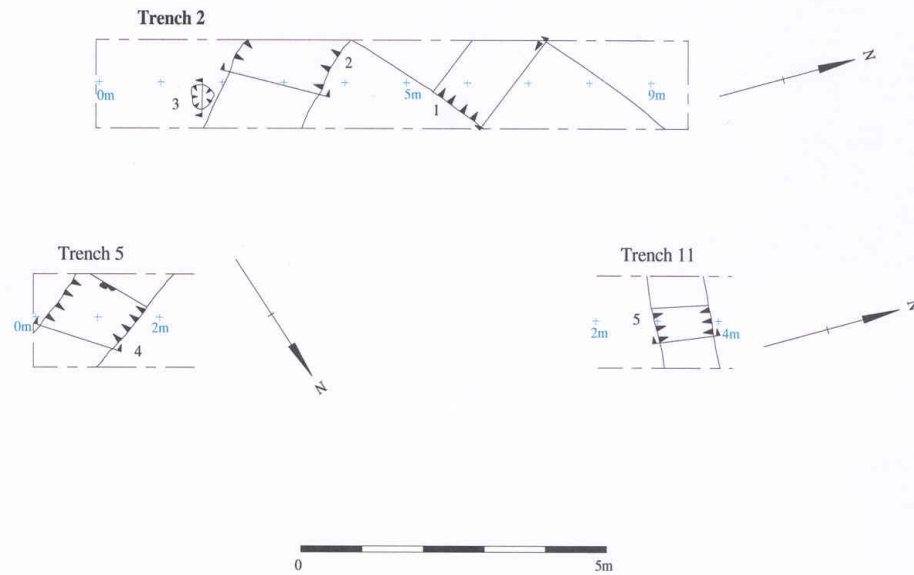


Figure 4. Plan of trenches.

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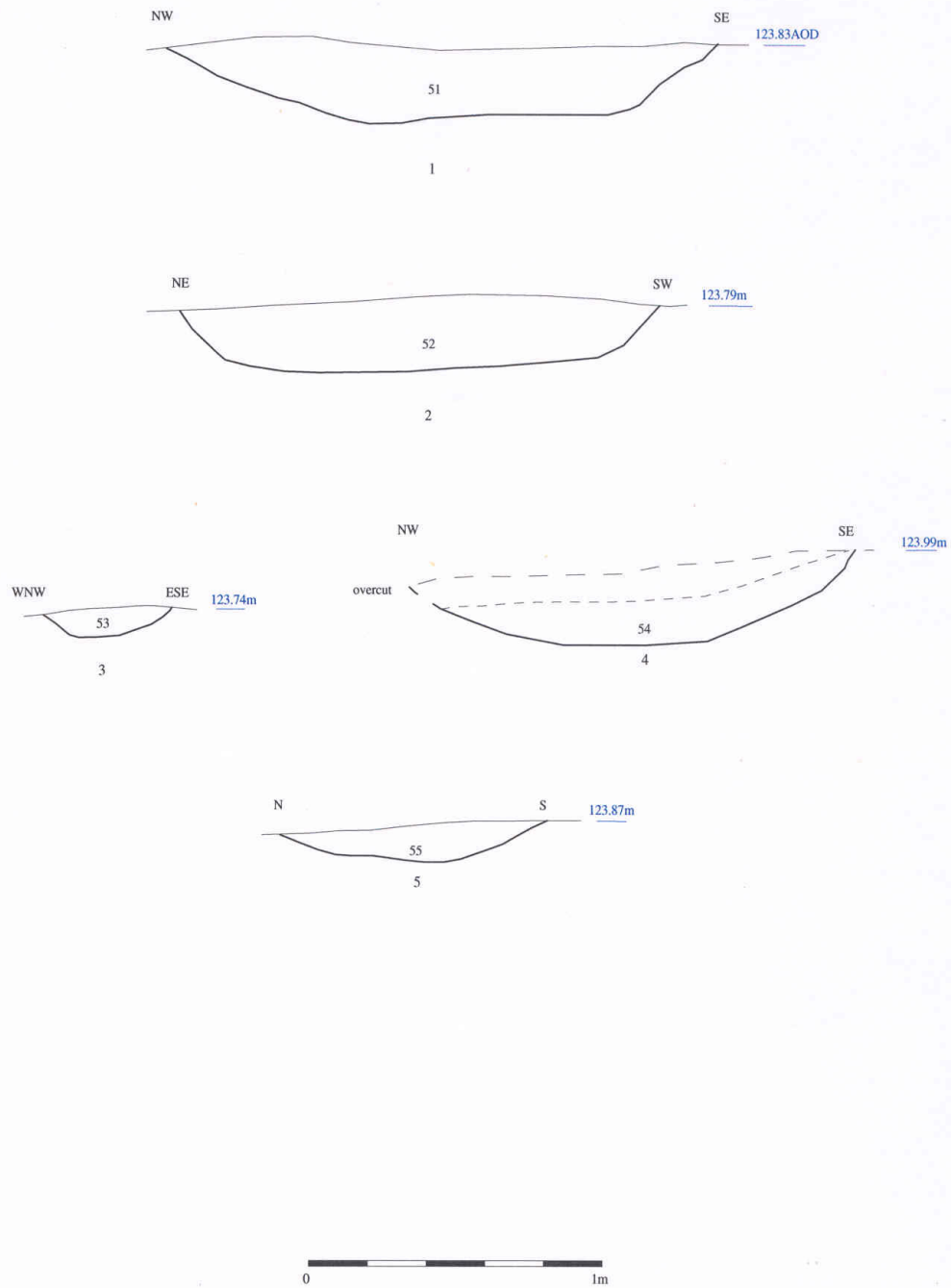


Figure 5. Sections.

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Plate 1. Trench 2 looking east, Features 1-3, horizontal scale 1m.



Plate 2. Trench 5 looking south-east, ditch 4, vertical scale 1m.