

**Roakes Avenue, Chertsey,
Surrey**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Crest Nicholson (Southern)**

by Steve Ford

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code RAC07/03

July 2007

Summary

Site name: Roakes Avenue, Chertsey, Surrey

Grid reference: TQ 0460 6580

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 30th May–5th June 2007

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Stephen Hammond

Site code: RAC07/03

Area of site: c. 1.6ha

Summary of results:

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

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Report 07/03b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at a former housing estate at Roakes Avenue Chertsey, Surrey (TQ 0460 6580) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Bob Saund of Crest Nicholson (South) Limited, Crest House, Pycroft Road, Chertsey, Surrey, KT16 9GN.

Planning permission (App no RU.03/0441) was granted by Runnymede Borough Council for the redevelopment of this site for housing. This consent was subject to a condition relating to archaeology requiring a programme of archaeological works, beginning with the field evaluation detailed here but possibly requiring further stages of work, dependent on the results of the evaluation.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the Borough's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Tony Howe of Surrey County Council, archaeological adviser to the Borough. The fieldwork was undertaken by Stephen Hammond and James Haygreen between 30th May and 6th June 2007 and the site code is RAC07/03. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Chertsey Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site comprises an irregular parcel of land containing derelict residential accommodation, garages and parking. It is bounded to the south by a railway line and on other sides by further residential accommodation. (Fig. 2). The site lies on virtually level ground at a height of approximately 12m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology is shown as gravel on the British Geological Survey map (BGS 1981) however an orange silty clay (brickearth) overlay the gravel on site.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a desk-based assessment (Preston 2007). In summary, the site lies within a general topographic zone considered to be of high archaeological potential. Few finds are recorded for the environs except that a Bronze Age site has been recorded almost adjacent to the north-

western part of the proposal area (Howe *et al.* 2005, 281). Further prehistoric finds and sites are recorded within the wider area (Cotton *et al.* 2004). The site lies well beyond the limits of the historic (Saxon and medieval) centre of Chertsey.

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. The specific aims of the project were to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on the site, given that parts of it have been previously developed, and to determine if archaeologically relevant levels of any period are present.

Thirteen trenches were to be excavated, each measuring 20m in length and 1.6m in width using a machine fitted with a ditching bucket and under constant archaeological supervision. Spoilheaps were to be searched for finds. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Results

Thirteen trenches were excavated, using a JCB-type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under continuous archaeological supervision. The trenches ranged in length from 19.2m to 23.9m (Fig. 3) and were all 1.6m wide.

Trench 1 (Plate 1)

This trench was 20.5m long, and 0.78m deep and orientated east - west. The stratigraphy encountered consisted of 0.16m turf/topsoil above three layers of made ground containing brick, concrete, etc., to a total depth of 0.7m. Below this was the silty clay natural geology (brickearth). A small pit (6) was revealed cutting the natural geology and itself partly cut by a service trench. The pit was 0.39m across and 0.34m deep and contained a charcoal-rich fill with what appeared to be fragments of burnt bone (Figs 3 and 4, Plate 1). This deposit was fully excavated in spits but no artefacts were recovered. The whole fill was sieved using a 2mm mesh but the quantity of burnt bone recovered was slight (<2g in total) as many of the small 'white' pieces were found in fact to be small fragments of burnt flint.

Trench 2

This trench was 21.4m long, and 0.72m deep aligned NW-SE. The stratigraphy encountered consisted of 0.12m of turf/topsoil overlying three layers of made ground containing brick, etc., to a depth of 0.64m. Below this was the silty clay natural geology (brickearth). Many service trenches were revealed in this trench. No archaeological finds nor deposits were revealed.

Trench 3

This trench was 21.1m long and 0.7m deep orientated north-south. The stratigraphy encountered consisted of 0.20m turf/topsoil above two layers of made ground to a depth of 0.63m. Below this was the silty clay natural geology (brickearth). No archaeological finds nor deposits were revealed.

Trench 4

This trench was 19.2m long, and 0.59m deep orientated NW-SE. The stratigraphy encountered consisted of 0.32m of turf/topsoil and made ground above 0.2m of grey silty sand subsoil above orange silty clay (brickearth) natural geology. No archaeological finds nor deposits were revealed.

Trench 5

This trench was 23.1m long, and 0.76m deep orientated north-south. The stratigraphy encountered consisted of 0.48m of turf/topsoil and made ground above 0.28m of grey silty sand subsoil above orange silty clay (brickearth) natural geology. A gully (5) aligned north-south was revealed and which was 0.38m wide and 0.14m deep which cut the natural geology (Figs 4 and 5). It was partly truncated by a modern service. No dating evidence was recovered.

Trench 6

This trench was 20.6m long, and 0.79m deep orientated NW-SE. The stratigraphy encountered consisted of 0.52m of turf/topsoil and made ground above 0.26m of grey/brown silty sand (subsoil) above orange silty clay (brickearth) natural geology.

Trench 7

This trench was 19.8m long, and between 0.76m and 1.12m deep orientated NW-SE. The stratigraphy encountered consisted of 0.18m of concrete above 0.62m of made ground above 0.27m of grey silty sand subsoil above orange silty clay (brickearth) natural geology.

Trench 8 (Plates 2 and 3)

This trench was 19.6m long and 0.63m deep orientated NW-SE. The stratigraphy encountered consisted of 0.14m of turf/topsoil above 0.23m of made ground above 0.14m of grey/brown silty sand (subsoil) above mottled orange silty clay (brickearth) natural geology. A gully (2) aligned east-west, was 0.35m across and 0.14m deep, cutting the natural geology (Figs 4 and 5; Pl. 3). It contained brick/tile fragments, clay tobacco pipe stem and late post-medieval pottery and is clearly of late post-medieval date. Similarly ditch 4 aligned north-south was 0.84m wide and 0.25m deep cutting the natural geology. It contained brick/tile fragments, glass and late post-medieval pottery and is likewise clearly of late post-medieval date.

Trench 9

This trench was 19.1m long and 0.68m deep orientated east-west. The stratigraphy encountered consisted of 0.13m of turf/topsoil above 0.26m of made ground above 0.22m of grey/brown silty sand (subsoil) above mottled orange silty clay (brickearth) natural geology. Several service trenches and areas of disturbed natural geology were observed. No archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 10

This trench was subdivided to maintain an in-use access. The total length was 21.6m, and was 0.61m deep orientated east-west. The stratigraphy encountered for the western portion (10A) consisted of 0.08m of Tarmac above 0.19m of made ground above 0.14m of buried old topsoil above 0.21m of grey/brown silty sand (subsoil) above mottled orange silty clay (brickearth) natural geology. A ditch (1) was revealed aligned north-south which was 1m wide and 0.6m deep cutting the natural geology. It contained brick/tile, clay tobacco pipe and brown-glazed earthenware pottery.

For the eastern portion (10B) the stratigraphy comprised 0.13m of turf/topsoil above 0.15m of made ground above 0.25m of grey/brown silty sand (subsoil) above mottled orange silty clay (brickearth) natural geology. Several service trenches were present at the western end and a test pit was dug adjacent to these to a depth of 0.98m. No archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 11

This trench was 20.9m long, and 0.5m deep orientated SE-NW. The stratigraphy encountered consisted of 0.13m of turf/topsoil above 0.26m of made ground above 0.22m of grey/brown silty sand (subsoil) above mottled orange silty clay (brickearth) natural geology. A test pit was dug at the east end to a depth of 0.80m. No archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 12 (Plate 4)

This trench was 23.9m long, and 0.46m deep orientated north- south. The stratigraphy encountered consisted of 0.32m of turf/topsoil above 0.09m of grey/brown silty sand (subsoil) above orange silty clay (brickearth) natural geology. A ditch (3) aligned east- west was revealed and which was 1.3m across and 0.75m deep cutting the natural geology (Figs 4 and 5, Pl. 4). It contained brick/tile fragments and is probably of late post-medieval date.

Trench 13

This trench was 21.3m long, and 0.57m deep orientated east-west. The stratigraphy encountered consisted of 0.10m of turf/topsoil above 0.29m of made ground above 0.11m of grey/brown silty sand (subsoil) above orange silty clay (brickearth) natural geology. A test pit was dug at the east end to a depth of 1.05m. No archaeological deposits were encountered.

Finds

The only artefacts recovered not of unambiguously modern date were a few fragments (15g) of burnt flint from charcoal patch 6 in Trench 1. These were not retained. The burnt bone fragments from the same deposit were too small to identify even to the level of human/animal. The sieved residues of charcoal and fragments of burnt bone from feature 1 are retained with the archive.

Conclusion

The evaluation has revealed a number of features cutting the natural geology on the site, most of which are linear features (ditches and gullies). However, the majority of these features were unambiguously of late post-medieval date (one gully was undated) and are probably field boundaries or associated with the previous use of the site as allotments. The exception was a small pit which was fully excavated and found to contain charcoal and a few minuscule fragments of burnt bone, but no artefactual dating evidence. It is possible that this feature is related to cremation burial but with the fill being no more than disposal of pyre debris rather than a cremation burial proper (Brickley and McKinley 2004). The fragments of burnt bone are so few that inclusion in the fill of the feature by accident cannot be discounted. Although this feature is undated, its nature and the maturity of the fill suggests that it is not the product of a relatively recent event and that it is of pre-medieval date. It is, however, the only feature of its kind from the site, with no other deposits or artefacts of pre-modern date recorded for any of the evaluation trenches. On balance the site as a whole is therefore considered to have very low archaeological potential.

References

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- Brickley, M and McKinley, J (eds), 2004, *Guidelines to the Standards for Recording Human Remains*, IFA Pap 7, Reading
- Cotton, J, Crocker, G and Graham A 2004, *Aspects of archaeology and history in Surrey; towards a research framework for the county*, Surrey Archaeol Soc, Guildford
- Howe, T, Jackson, J and Maloney, C, 2005, 'Archaeology in Surrey, 2004', *Surrey Archaeol Collect*, **92**, 275–95
- Preston, S, 2007, Roakes Avenue, Chertsey, Surrey, an archaeological desk-based assessment, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 07/03, Reading
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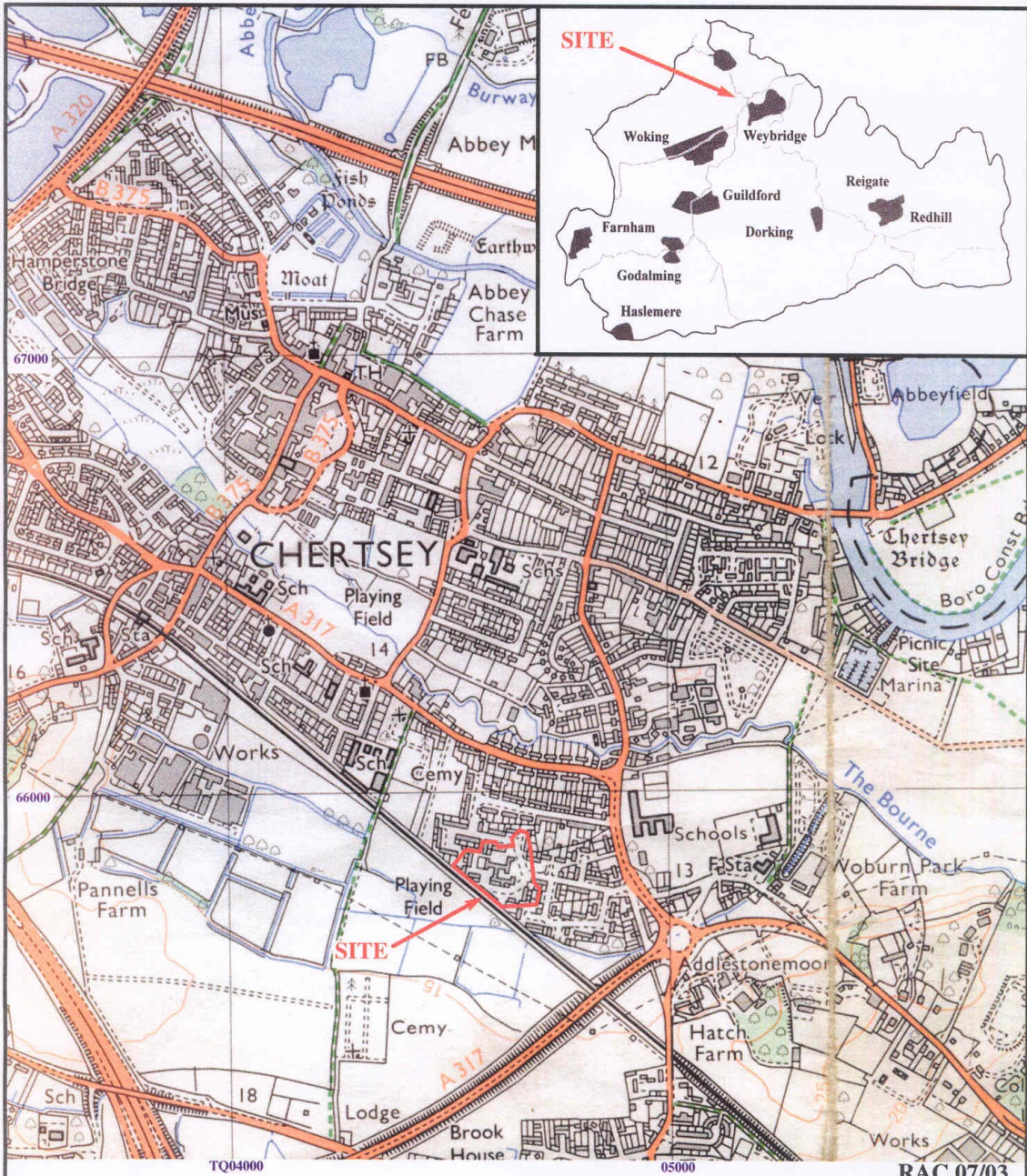
APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at south or west end

Trench	Length (m)	Breadth (m)	Depth (m)	Comment
1	20.5	1.6	0.78	0-0.16m Turf/topsoil; 0.16-0.26m orange/brown silty sand with brick (made ground); 0.26-0.52m Brown silty sand with brick/concrete (made ground); 0.52-0.70m orange silty clay with some brick; 0.70m+ orange silty clay (natural geology). Pit 6. [Plate 1]
2	21.4	1.6	0.72	0-0.12m Turf/topsoil; 0.12-0.24m brown silty sand with brick (made ground); 0.24-0.46m Grey/brown silty sand with brick/concrete (made ground); 0.46-0.60m orange silty clay with some brick; 0.6-0.64m brown/orange silty clay with some brick; 0.64m+ orange silty clay (natural geology). Many services present
3	21.0	1.6	0.70	0-0.20m Turf/topsoil; 0.2-0.48m brown silty sand with gravel and brick (made ground); 0.48-0.63m orange/brown silty clay with some brick; 0.63m+ orange silty clay with some sand (natural geology).
4	19.2	1.6	0.59	0.32m Turf/topsoil and made ground; 0.32-0.52m grey/brown silty sand (subsoil); 0.52m+ orange silty clay (natural geology). Test pit at NW end
5	23.1	1.6	0.76	0-0.48m Turf/topsoil and made ground; 0.48-0.76m grey/brown silty sand (subsoil); 0.76m+ orange silty clay (natural geology). Gully 5
6	20.6	1.6	0.79	0-0.52m Turf/topsoil and made ground; 0.52-0.68m grey/brown silty sand (subsoil); 0.68m+ orange brown silty clay (natural geology).
7	19.8	1.6	0.76NW 1.12SE	0-0.18m concrete; 0.18-0.80m rubble made ground; 0.80-1.07m+ grey/brown silty clay (subsoil) 1.07m+ orange brown silty clay natural geology.
8	19.6	1.6	0.63	0-0.37m Turf/topsoil and made ground; 0.37-0.51m grey/brown silty sand (subsoil); 0.51m+ orange brown silty clay (natural geology). Gully 2, ditch 4. [Plates 2 and 3]
9	19.1	1.6	0.68	0-0.39m Turf/topsoil and made ground; 0.39-0.61 grey/brown silty sand (subsoil); 0.61m+ orange brown silty clay (natural geology).
10	21.6	1.6	0.65 0.8m Test pit	Subdivided into A(west) and B. Trench 10A: 0-0.08m Tarmac; 0.08-0.27m made ground; 0.27-0.41m buried old topsoil; 0.41-0.62m grey/brown silty sand (subsoil); 0.62m+ orange brown silty clay (natural geology). Trench 10B: 0-0.13m Topsoil; 0.13-0.28m made ground; 0.28-0.53m grey/brown silty sand (subsoil); 0.62m+ orange brown silty clay (natural geology). Test pit at west end. Services at west end Ditch 1
11	20.9	1.6	0.50 0.8 Test pit	0-0.15m concrete; 0.15-0.38m rubble/gravel made ground; 0.38-0.45m+ grey/brown silty clay (subsoil) 0.45m+ orange brown silty clay natural geology. Test pit at SE end
12	23.9	1.6	0.46	0-0.32m Turf/topsoil; 0.32-0.41 grey/brown silty sand (subsoil); 0.41m+ orange brown silty clay (natural geology). Ditch 3. [Plate 4]
13	21.3	1.6	0.57 1.05 Test pit	0-0.39m Turf/topsoil and made ground; 0.39-0.50 grey/brown silty sand (subsoil); 0.50m+ orange brown silty clay (natural geology). Test pit at east end
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APPENDIX 2: Feature details

Trench	Cut	Fill (s)	Type	Date	Dating evidence
10A	1	51	Ditch	Late post-medieval	Clay pipe, pot
8	2	52	Gully	Late post-medieval	Clay pipe, pot
12	3	53	Ditch	Late post-medieval	Brick/tile
8	4	54	Ditch	Late post-medieval	Clay pipe, pot
5	5	55	Gully	Undated	
1	6	56	Pit	Undated Pre-medieval?	



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Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 1. Location of site within Chertsey and Surrey.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Roakes Avenue.

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Figure 3. Location of trenches.

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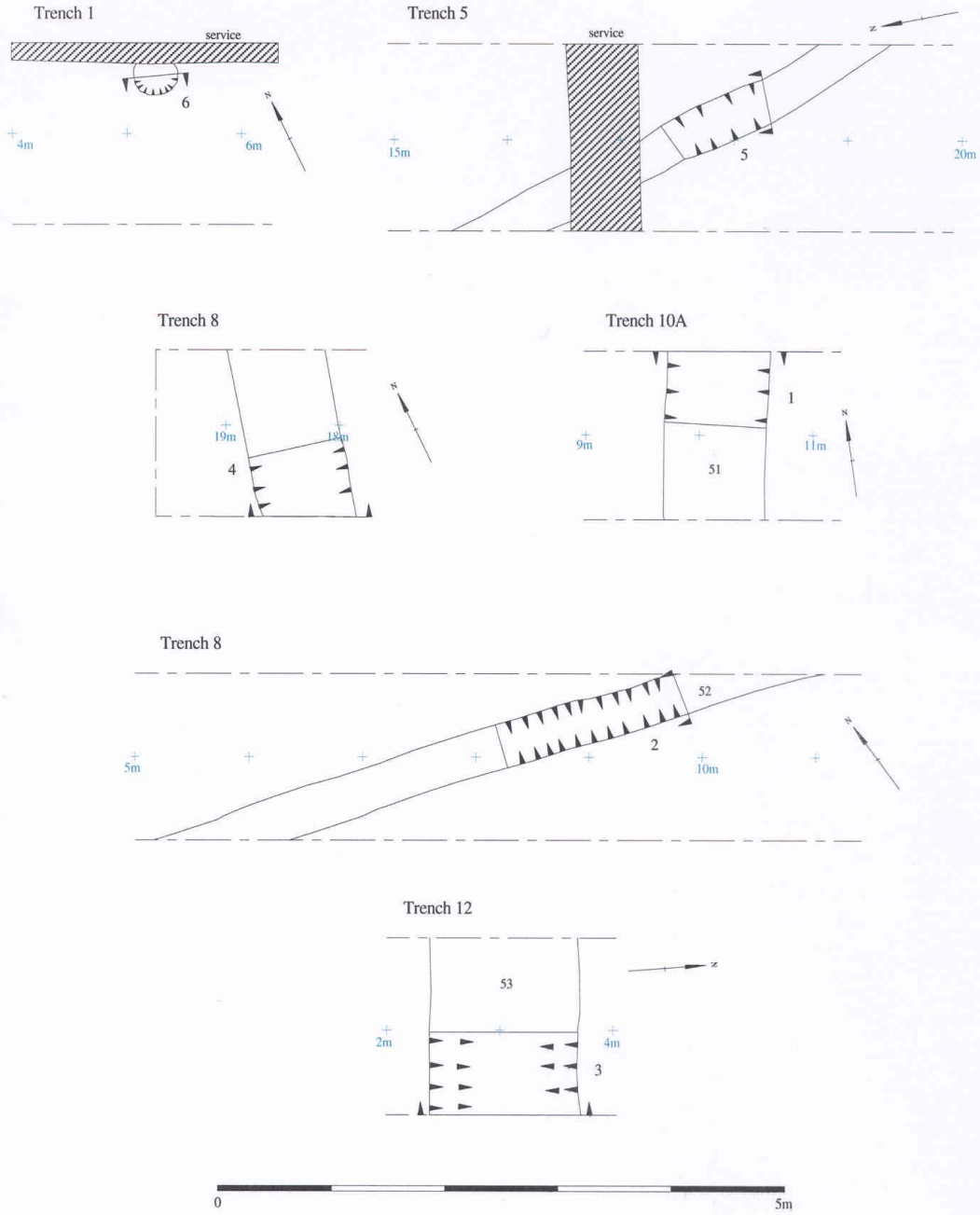


Figure 4. Detail of features.

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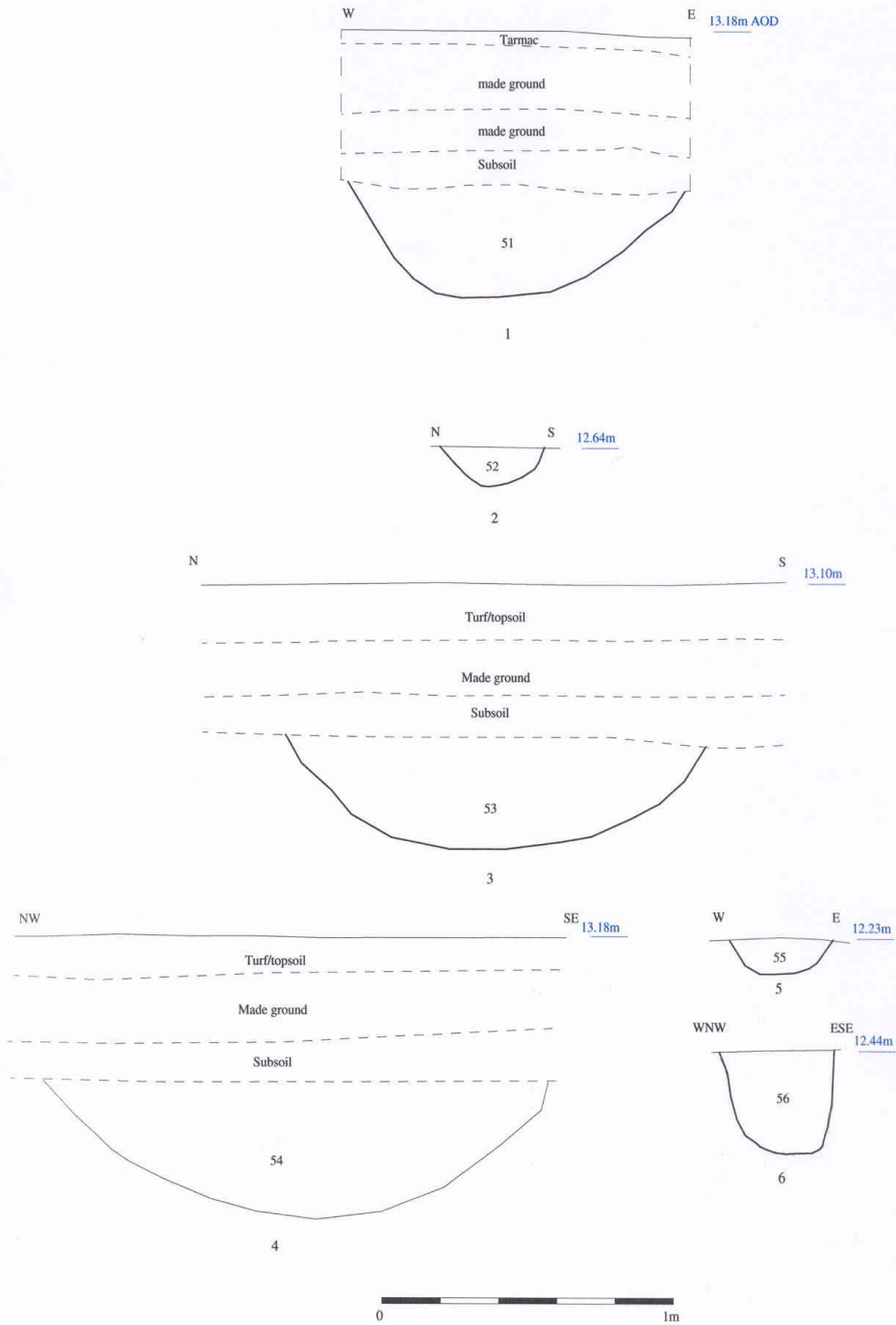


Figure 5. Sections.

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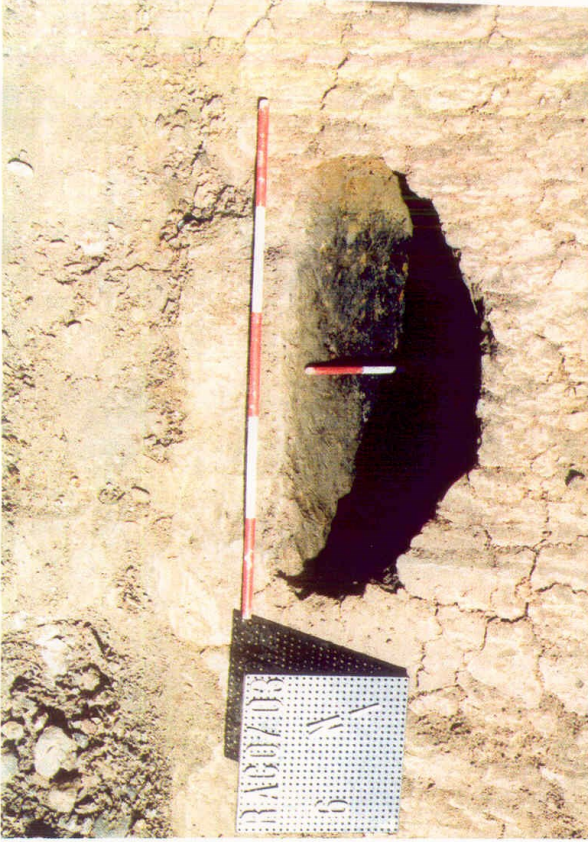


Plate 1. Trench 1 pit 6 looking north west, Scales: 0.3m and 0.5m.



Plate 2. Trench 8 looking north west. Scales: 1m and 2m.

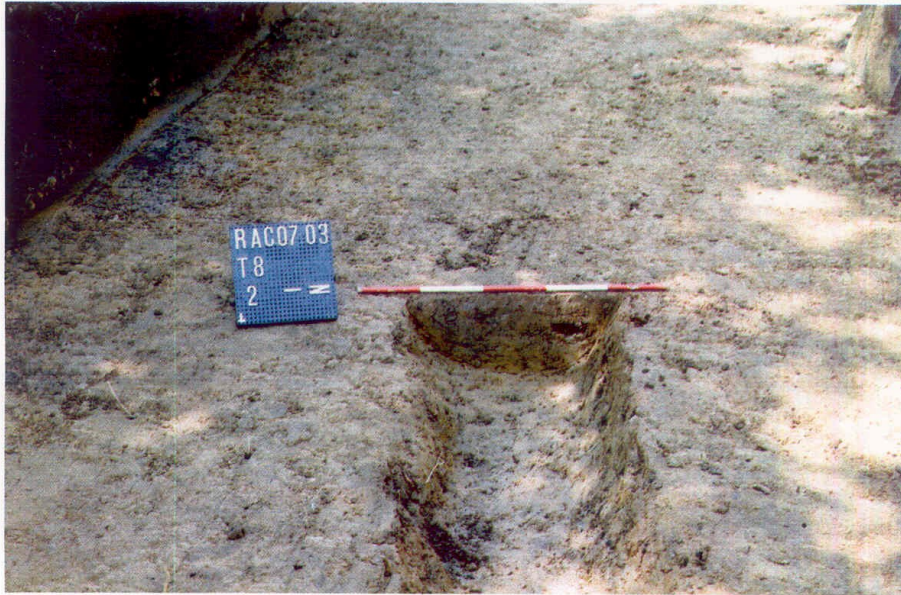


Plate 3. Trench 8 looking west, gully 2. Scale: 0.5m.

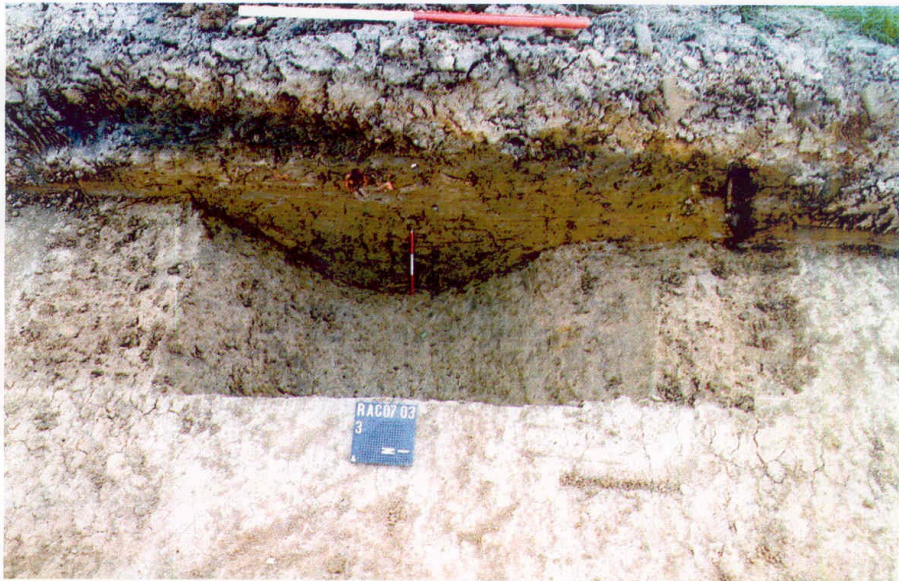


Plate 4. Trench 12 looking east, Ditch 3, Scales 1m and 0.3m.