

# **Land Adjacent to Baylis Court School, Granville Avenue, Slough, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
for Catalyst Housing Group Ltd**

by James McNicoll-Norbury  
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code GAS 08/113

**April 2009**

## Summary

**Site name:** Land adjacent to Baylis Court School, Granville Avenue, Slough, Berkshire

**Grid reference:** SU 9660 8170

**Site activity:** Archaeological Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 14th April 2009

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** James McNicoll-Norbury

**Site code:** GAS 08/113

**Area of site:** 0.3ha

**Summary of results:** Two undated gullies were identified.

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 16.04.09 Steve Preston ✓ xx.xx.06
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# Land adjacent to Baylis Court School. Granville Avenue, Slough, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by James McNicoll-Norbury

Report 08/113b

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land adjacent to Baylis Court School, Granville Avenue, Slough, Berkshire (SU 9660 8170) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr John Stevens of Thomas Vale Construction, Foundation House, Paddock Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5BY on behalf of Catalyst Housing Group Ltd.

Planning consent has been gained (app nos P/14395/000; P/14395/001) from Slough Borough Council to construct twelve terrace houses on the site, along with associated car parking areas and access road. The consent is subject to a condition (13) relating to archaeology, requiring a phased programme of archaeological work. This was to take the form, initially, of field evaluation, based on the results of which an appropriate mitigation strategy could be devised if necessary.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the Borough Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved Ms Mary O'Donoghue, Archaeology Officer for Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Borough on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by James McNicoll-Norbury and Kyle Beaverstock on 14th April 2009 and the site code is GAS08/113. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited Reading Museum in due course.

## Location, topography and geology

The site comprised a roughly rectangular parcel of land of c. 0.3ha to the rear of 1–18 Granville Avenue, Slough with Baylis Court School directly to the south (Fig. 2). The underlying geology is described as Langley Silt, a mixture of sandy clay and silt (brickearth') (BGS 2004). However, what was observed in the five trenches was a medium to dark brown sandy clayey gravel. The site lies at a height of c. 30m above Ordnance Datum.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site has been considered in a desk-based assessment (Hopkins 2008). In summary, the site lies on a brickearth-capped terrace of the Thames Valley which is usually regarded as archaeologically rich with a wide range of sites and finds of many periods recorded from field survey, aerial photography and, increasingly, trial trenching (Ford 1987; Gates 1975; Foreman *et al.* 2002). The deeply buried underlying gravel deposits are also noteworthy in the vicinity for the presence of Palaeolithic finds. However, for later, post-glacial periods, relatively few finds or sites are recorded in the vicinity with a Roman coin and Bronze Age round barrow recorded to the north. Recent fieldwork on the north-eastern margins of Slough (Wexham) and over the administrative boundary in South Buckinghamshire, has revealed further prehistoric, Roman and Saxon activity (Ford 2008a and b).

## **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 had survived on site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period were present; and
- to assess the significance of any such deposits according to local, regional and national research priorities.

Five trenches were proposed to be dug, 1.6m wide and 15m long in positions related to the positions of the proposed houses. The trenches were to be dug using a 360° machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant supervision by an archaeologist. The spoil heaps were monitored for finds and all archaeological deposits were hand-cleaned and excavated.

## **Results**

The five trenches were dug as intended although Trenches 3, 4 and 5 had to be moved slightly due to the presence of large mounds of crushed concrete and the associated crusher. The trenches ranged from 14.2m to 16.5m in length, all were 1.8m wide and were between 0.32m to 0.49m in depth. An additional 5m of trench was dug to the side of trench 5 in order to expose more of a linear feature identified there (Fig. 3). A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1 and a list of features is given in Appendix 2.

Trench 3 and 5 were found to contain archaeological deposits which were excavated initially in 1.5m slots and later extended for finds retrieval. No finds were recovered from the trench spoilheaps nor the archaeological deposits despite sieving of bulk samples taken from the latter.

#### Trench 1

Trench 1 was 14.1m long, 0.38m deep and aligned south-north. The stratigraphy comprised 0.18m of made ground, consisting of loose gravel and crushed concrete overlying 0.18m of light brown silty clay subsoil, which in turn overlay the natural geology consisting of medium brown silty gravel. No archaeological features were identified.

#### Trench 2

Trench 2 was 16.5m long, 0.47m deep and aligned west-east. The stratigraphy comprised 0.16m of made ground (as in Trench 1) overlying 0.25m of light brown silty clay subsoil which in turn overlay the natural silty gravel. No archaeological features were identified.

#### Trench 3 (Plates 1 and 2)

Trench 3 was 16.0m long, 0.49m deep and aligned west-east. The stratigraphy comprised 0.18m of made ground overlying 0.29m of light brown silty clay subsoil which in turn overlay the natural silty gravel. A gully (1) was excavated which revealed a shallow cut, 0.78m wide and 0.30m deep filled with a brown silty clay fill but no finds were recovered (Figs 4 and 5). The initial 1.5m long slot was extended by another 1.0m to try and recover dating evidence but unfortunately none were recovered. A bulk sample (15L) from the gully was floated for charred plant remains and sieved for artefacts but no material in either category was recovered.

#### Trench 4

Trench 4 was 17.0m long, 0.32m deep and aligned SW–NE. The stratigraphy comprised 0.11m of made ground overlying 0.19m of light brown silty clay subsoil which in turn overlay the natural silty gravel geology. No archaeological features were identified.

#### Trench 5 (Plates 3 and 4)

Trench 5 was 13.5m long, 0.38m deep and aligned SE–NW. The stratigraphy comprised 0.12m of made ground consisting of loose gravel and crushed concrete overlying 0.22m of light brown silty clay subsoil which in turn overlay the natural geology consisting of silty gravel. A 1.8m long slot was excavated across gully (2) which revealed a shallow cut 0.98m wide and 0.25m deep filled with a brown silty clay fill (Figs 4 and 5). No finds were recovered. The trench was extended to further expose gully 2. The original slot was later extended by another 2m into the trench extension but still no finds were recovered. Again a bulk sample (15L) from the gully was floated for charred plant remains and sieved for artefacts but no material in either category was recovered.

## **Finds**

No finds were recovered from the archaeological deposits nor trench spoilheaps .

## **Conclusion**

The evaluation has revealed that deposits of probable archaeological interest are present on the site. The deposits revealed comprise two linear features. Excavation of these features did not produce any dating evidence, but their stratigraphic position beneath subsoil suggests that they do not reflect modern activity. On the limited evidence available at present, the linear features are likely to be landscape features (eg field boundaries) but it is not known if these lay close to contemporary occupation sites or were at more distance.

## **References**

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## APPENDIX 1: Trench details

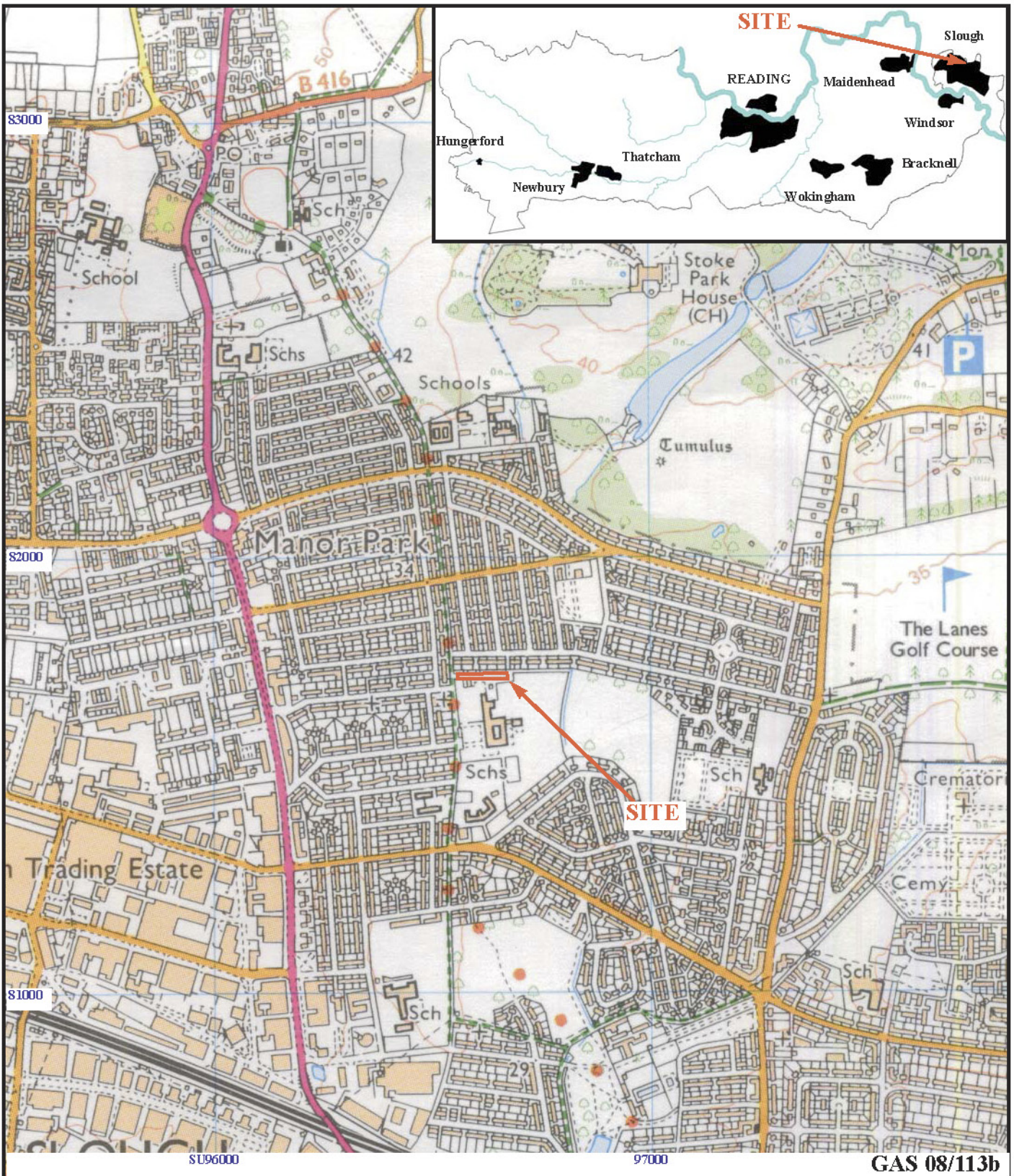
0m at S or W end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	14.1	1.8	0.38	0–0.18m Dark brown made ground (Loose gravel and crushed concrete); 0.18–0.36m brown silty clay subsoil; 0.36m+ brown gravel (natural geology).
2	16.5	1.8	0.47	0–0.16m Dark brown made ground; 0.16–0.41m brown silty clay subsoil; 0.41m+ gravel natural geology.
3	16.0	1.8	0.49	0–0.18m Dark brown black made ground; 0.18–0.47m brown silty clay subsoil; 0.47m+ gravel natural geology. <b>Gully 1. [Plates 1 and 2]</b>
4	17.0	1.8	0.32	0–0.11m Dark brown made ground; 0.11–0.30m brown silty clay subsoil; 0.30m+ gravel natural geology. No archaeology.
5	13.5	1.8	0.38	0–0.12m Dark brown made ground; 0.12–0.34m brown silty clay subsoil; 0.34m+ gravel natural geology. <b>Gully 2. [Plates 3 and 4]</b>

**APPENDIX 2: Feature details**

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
3	1	52	Gully	Undated	None
5	2	53	Gully	Undated	None



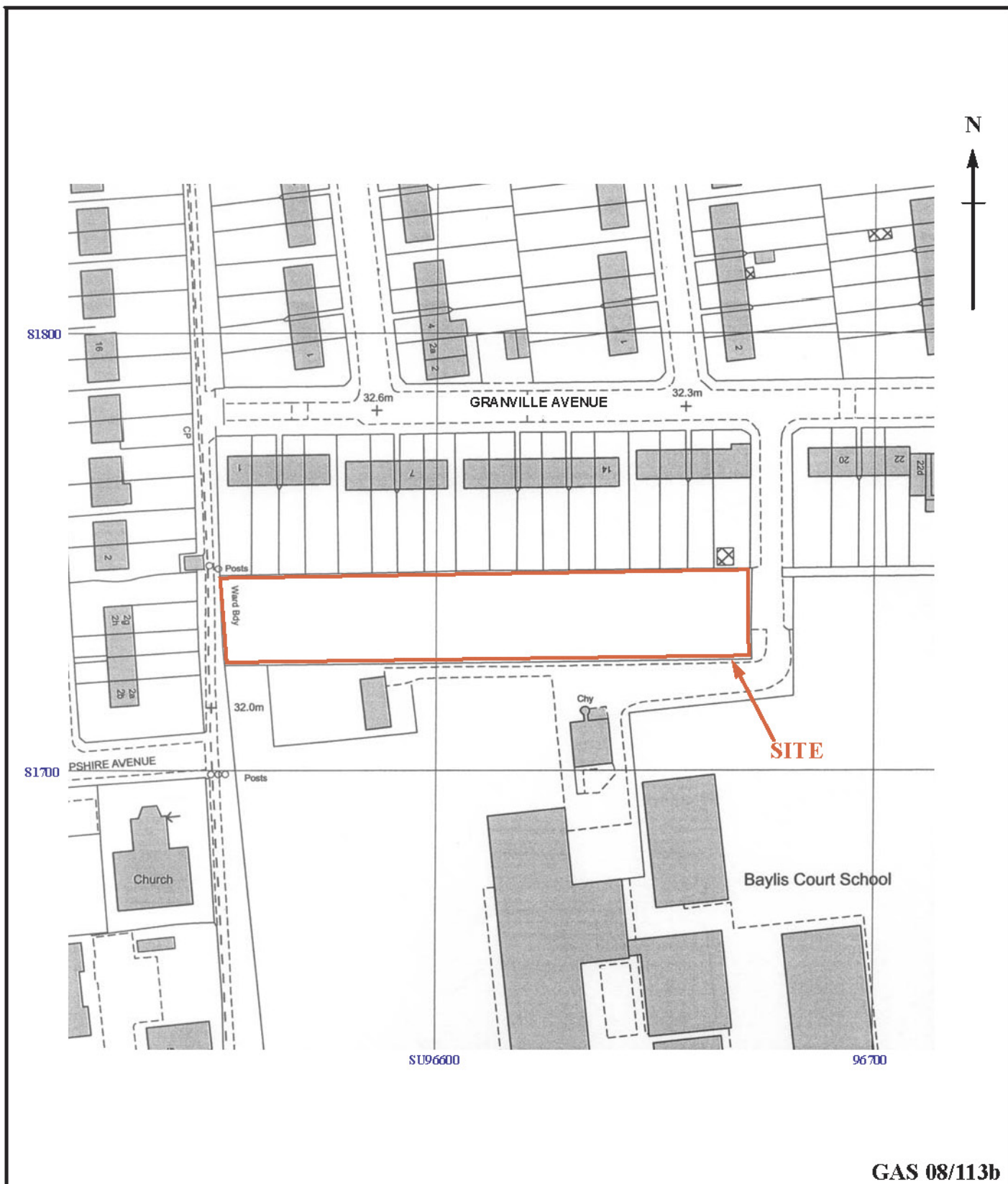


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Figure 1. Location of site within Slough  
and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Location of site off Granville Avenue.

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Figure 3. Location of trenches.

# Land adjacent to Baylis Court School, Granville Avenue, Slough, Berkshire, 2009

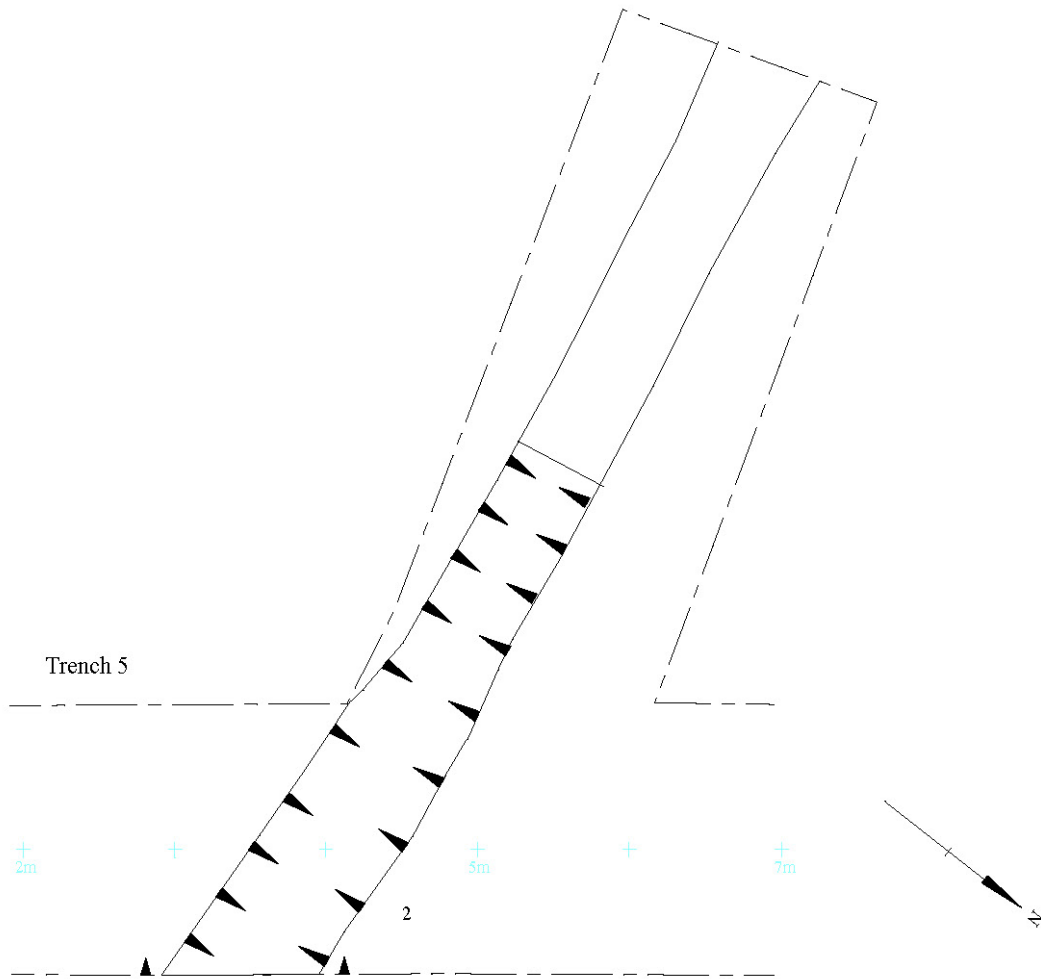
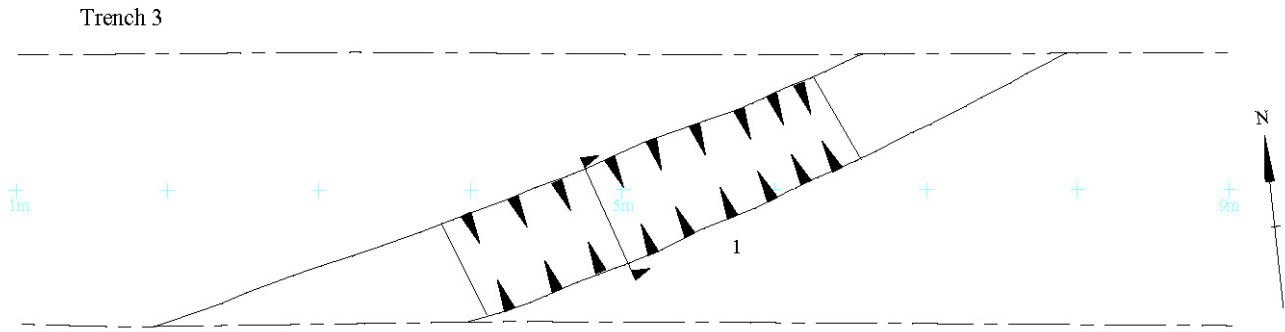


Figure 4. Detail of trenches.

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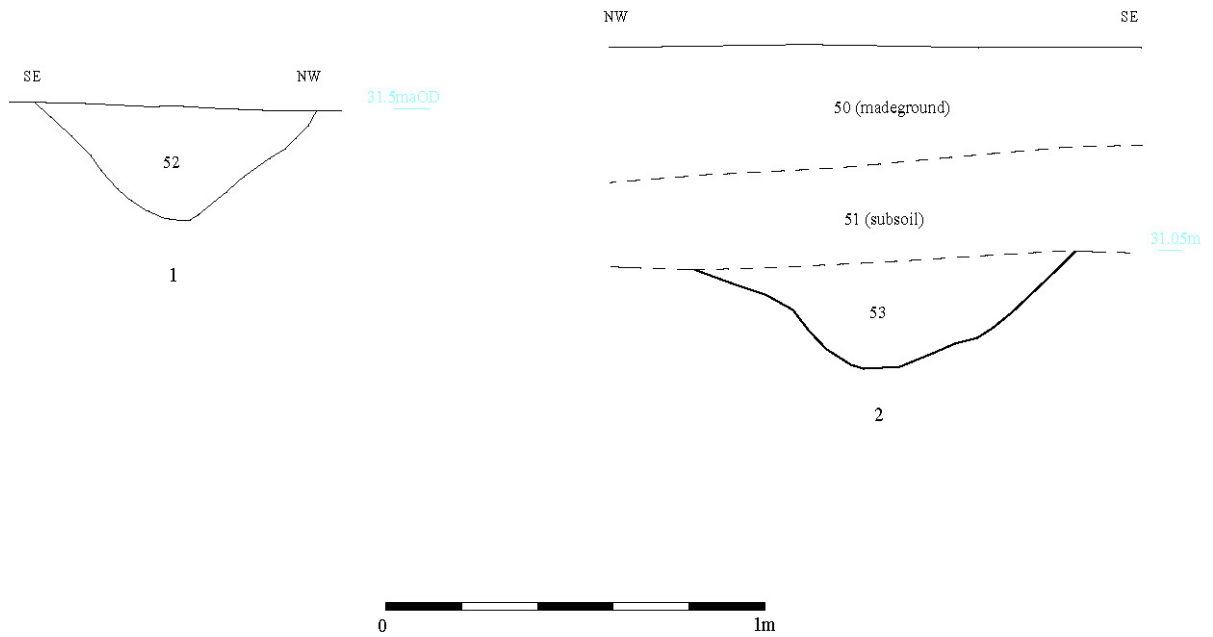


Figure 5. Sections.

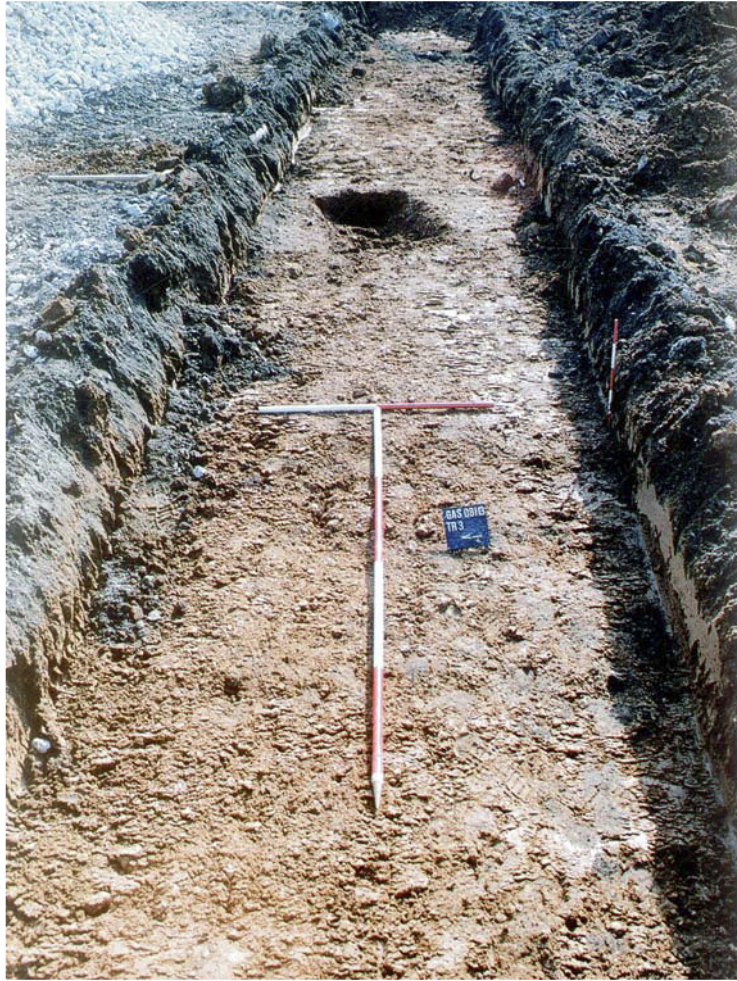


Plate 1. Trench 3, looking east, scales; horizontal, 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m



Plate 2. Trench 3, gully 1, looking south-west, scales 0.5m and 0.1m



Plate 3. Trench 5, gully 2, looking east, scales; horizontal, 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m



Plate 4. Trench 5, gully 2, looking east, scales; 1m and 0.5m





