

**1 Rose Court, Rose Street,  
Wokingham, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**For Mr Bob Atkinson**

by James McNicoll-Norbury

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code RCW 09/35

**April 2009**

## Summary

**Site name:** 1 Rose Court, Rose Street, Wokingham, Berkshire

**Grid reference:** SU 8132 6875

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 6th – 7th April 2009

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** James McNicoll-Norbury

**Site code:** RCW 09/35

**Area of site:** 45 sq m

**Summary of results:** Two late post-medieval pits were recorded

**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 ✓ 23.04.09 Steve Preston ✓ 23.04.09
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# **1 Rose Court, Rose Street, Wokingham, Berkshire An Archaeological Watching Brief**

by James McNicoll-Norbury

**Report 09/35**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 1 Rose Court, Rose Street, Wokingham, Berkshire (SU8132 6875) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Bob Atkinson, 19 Bayliss Road, Wargrave, Berkshire, RG10 8DR. Planning permission (app no F2008/2131) was gained from Wokingham Council to construct a new house behind the property of 1 Rose Court. The consent was subject to a condition relating to archaeology which required that a watching brief be carried out during groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Mary O'Donoghue, Archaeological Officer for Berkshire Archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by James McNicoll-Norbury between 6th and 7th April 2009 and the site code is RCW 09/35.

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

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site is located behind 1 Rose Court, off Rose Street in central Wokingham. The site was previously occupied by a workshop attached to the rear of 1 Rose Court. Just to the east is a set of garages and private gardens and other residential and commercial buildings make up the surrounding area (Fig. 2). The underlying geology is described as Plateau Gravel (BGS 1946) which was observed in the base of the foundation trenches as a dark orange sand. The site lies at 69m above Ordnance Datum.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within the historic core of the town. The place name of 'Wokingham' is of Saxon origin but no finds or deposits of Saxon date have yet been found for the town. Wokingham is not mentioned in Domesday Book but this is probably a quirk of the administrative set up with its entry subsumed within that for Sonning and as a detached portion of Wiltshire (Astill 1978). In medieval

times the settlement appears to have been chosen by the Bishop of Salisbury as the site of a planned town. Rose Street is thought to be one of the two main streets of the planned town. Fieldwork to the south-east on the east side of Rose Street adjacent to Cross Street revealed the presence of a succession of late medieval and post-medieval buildings (Morris and Jones 1990). However, by way of contrast, a watching brief on Rose Street Methodist chapel to the south-west did not reveal any deposits of archaeological interest (Oram 2006). On the Rose Street frontage just to the east and south-east of the site are three late medieval and an early post-medieval buildings and other similar listed properties are to be found elsewhere on Rose Street. The proposal site is likely to lie in the rear yards of burgage plots of these post-medieval or earlier medieval plots.

### **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. This was to include the monitoring of foundation and service trench digging and ground reduction as necessary. Archaeological deposits threatened by the groundworks were to be excavated and recorded.

### **Results**

The groundworks of archaeological relevance comprised only the digging of foundation trenches for the new structure. The foundation trenches were dug according to plan using a mini-digger with a toothless bucket. The trenches were between 0.8m and 1.0m wide and were dug to a depth of 1.20m. The stratigraphy revealed comprised 0.65m made ground (dark grey silty clay and brick rubble), over 0.32m creamy brown sand subsoil above dark orange sand natural geology. The made ground contained sherds of post-medieval pottery and fragments of bone.

Two pits were recorded within the exposed groundworks. Both pits lay beneath the modern made ground and were cut through the creamy brown subsoil and extended into the orange sand below.

Pit 1 was 1.50m across and at least 0.84m deep with a steep-sided section. The fill consisted of dark grey silty clay and contained twelve sherds of late post-medieval pottery (brown glazed post-medieval redware and mass produced plain white glazed earthenware), two fragments of bone, seven tile fragments and one brick fragment. The pit was not bottomed as the base lay below the formation level of the foundation trench.



Pit 2 was 0.87m across and 0.48m deep with a bowl-shaped section. The fill consisted of dark grey silty clay and contained one sherd of late post-medieval mass produced plain white glazed earthenware a fragment of tile and five small fragments of bone.

## **Finds**

### *Pottery*

The fieldwork produced a small collection of pottery. Ten sherds (1kg) of post-medieval redware pottery from Pit 1 were all large with a internal brown glaze and yellow wavy line decoration. They all appear to come from a single vessel, such as platter. A further two sherds (50g) of mass produced plain white glazed earthenware were recovered from Pit 1.

Pit 2 contained a single sherd (25g) of mass produced plain white glazed earthenware

A further nine sherds (278g) of various 19th- and 20th-century mass produced glazed earthenwares, and one stoneware jar, were recovered from the layer of made ground above the subsoil in which the pits were found. These included plain and decorated sherds from plates and bowls, along with the lid of a preserve pot decorated in the form of a leaf.

All of the pottery is of 19th- or 20th-century date.

### *Animal Bone by Ceri Falys*

A very small amount of animal bone was recovered from two separate contexts. A total of seven fragments were present for analysis, weighing 271g. The overall preservation of the remains was good, although much fragmentation was noted, hindering much of the identification. The five fragments recovered from pit 2 (53) were identifiable. However, the two fragments from 1 (52) were a horse-sized leg and foot bone, although again too fragmented to allow for a more specific identification. A single transverse cut was observed on the fragment of leg bone, severing it from the original whole element.

### *Brick and Tile*

Seven fragments of tile (750g) were recovered from pit 1. Two were peg tiles one of which had had its holes filled with mortar. A broken but still large machine-made un-frogged brick (1777g) was also found in Pit 1. It was 0.10m wide and 0.06m deep. It is of late post-medieval date.

## Conclusion

Despite the location of the site within the historic core of the town and its proximity to three late medieval buildings no finds nor deposits earlier than the 19th century were identified. Two cut features (pits) were revealed but were of 19th or 20th century date.

## References

- Astill, G G, 1978, *Historic towns in Berkshire; an archaeological appraisal*, Berkshire Archaeol Comm Publ **2**, Reading
- BGS, 1946, *British Geological Survey*, 1:63360, Sheet 268, Drift Edition, Keyworth
- PPG 16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO
- Morris, E and Jones, N, 1990, 'Excavations at Cross St., Wokingham, 1974–75', *Berkshire Archaeol J*, **73** (for 1986–90), 105–15
- Oram, R 2006, 'Methodist Church, Rose Street, Wokingham, An Archaeological Watching Brief', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 02/98b, Reading

## APPENDIX 1: Catalogue of all excavated features

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Phase</i>	<i>Dating Evidence</i>
1	52	Pit	Post-medieval 19th/20th century	Pottery
2	53	Pit	Post-medieval 19th/20th century	Pottery

## APPENDIX 2: Pottery by Context

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>Date</i>
	50	9	278	Modern
1	52	12	1050	Post-medieval
	Total	21	1328	

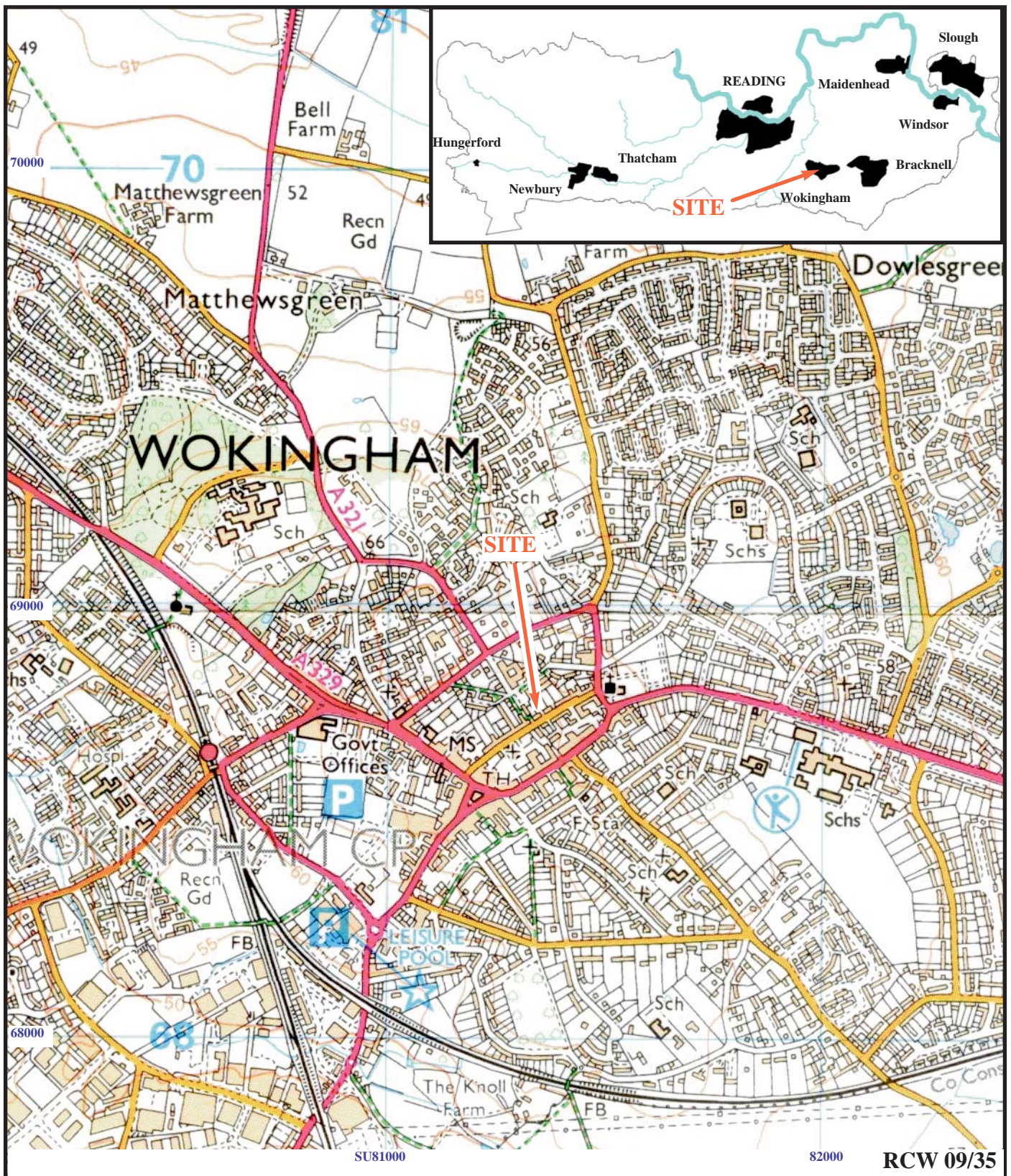
### APPENDIX 3: Animal Bone by Context

Cut	Deposit	Number of Fragments	Weight (g)
1	52	2	238
2	53	5	33
	Total	7	

#### APPENDIX 4: Brick and Tile by Context

Cut	Deposit	Number of Fragments	Weight (g)
1	52	8	2527
	Total	8	





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Figure 1. Location of site within Wokingham and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Location of site off Rose Street.

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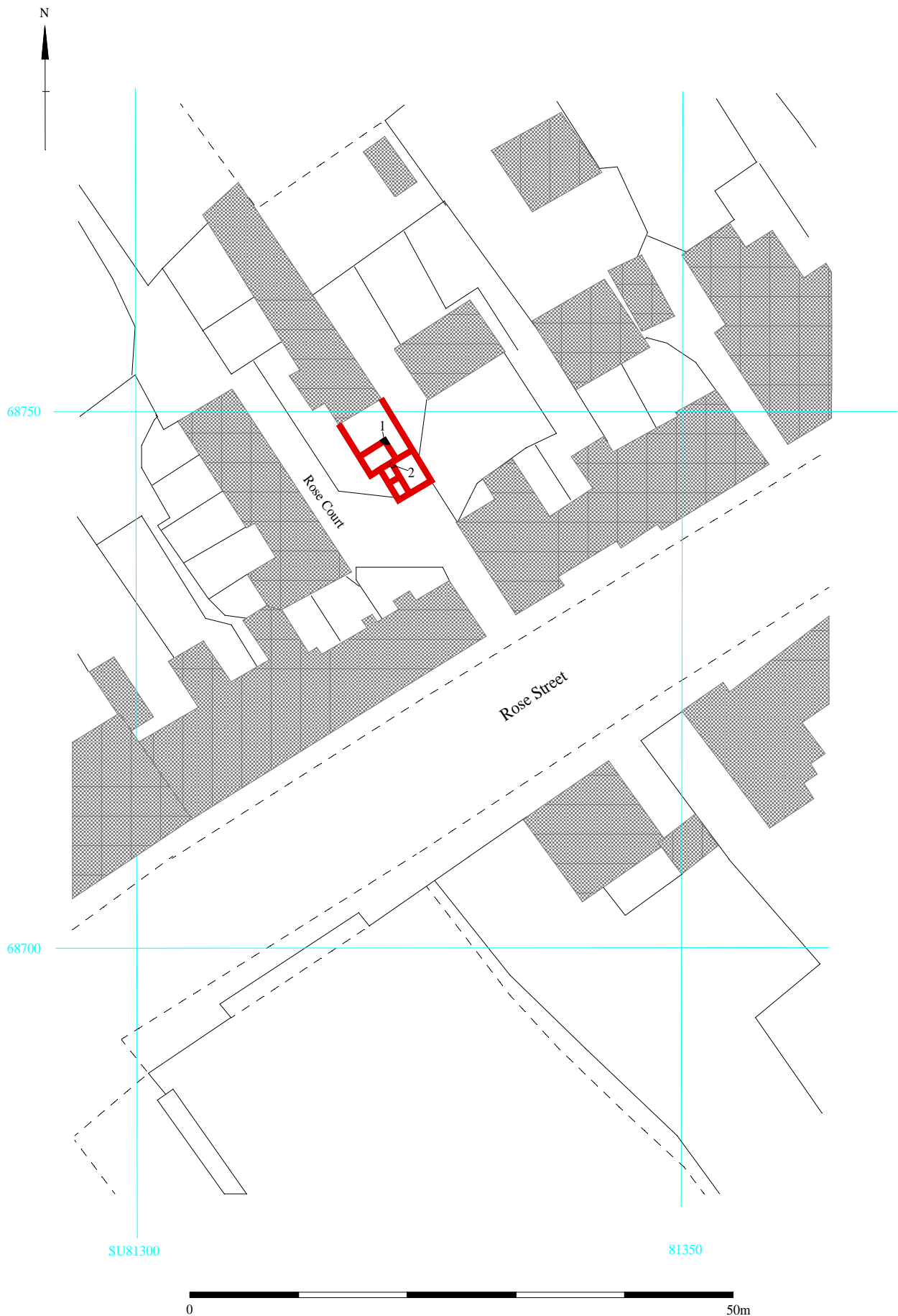


Figure 3. Location of watching brief and deposits recorded.

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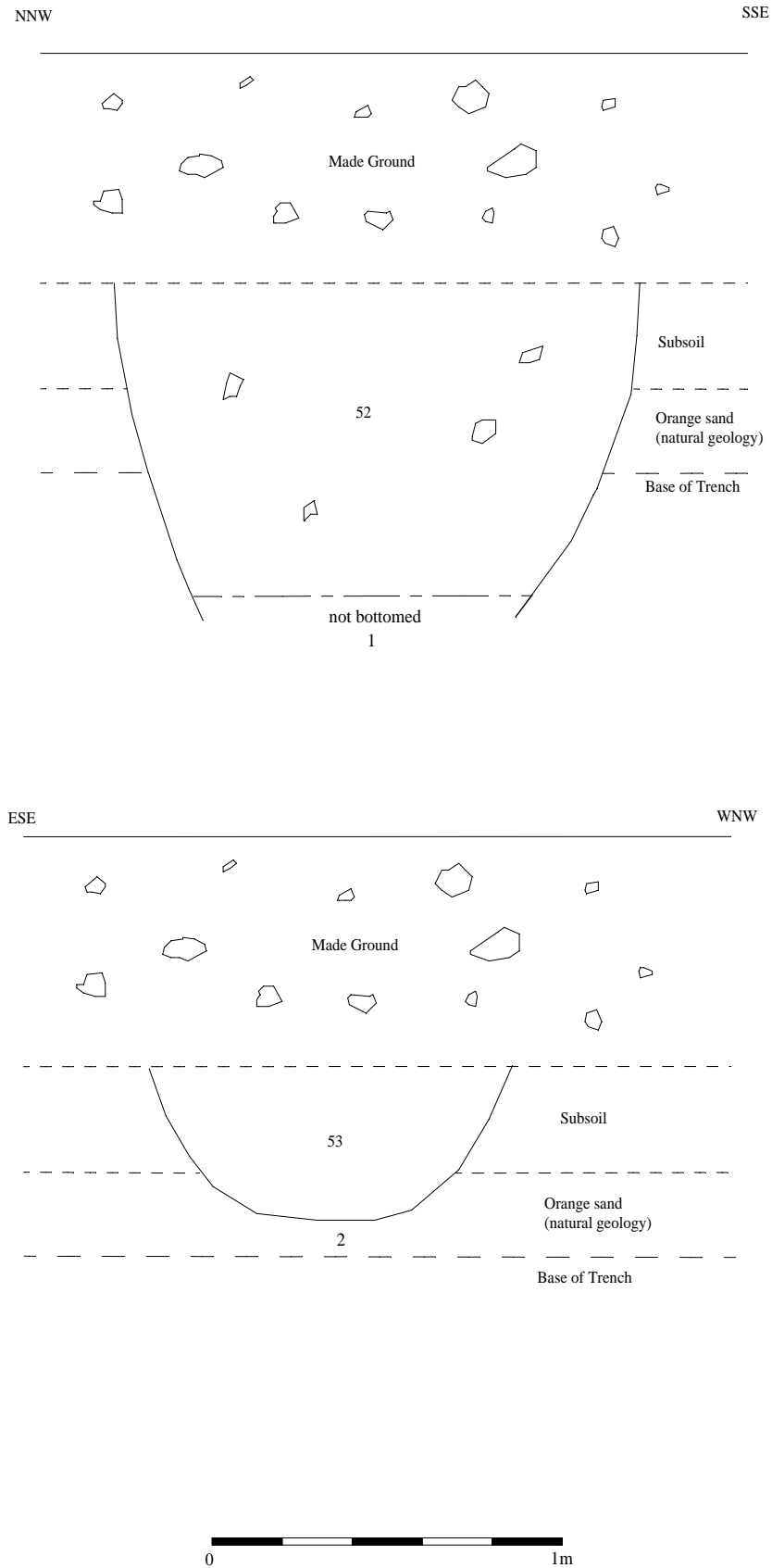


Figure 4. Representative Sections