

**Hillside, Glenhills and Popple Trees,
Crowthorne Road, Bracknell, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Kingsdown Construction Limited**

by Andrew Weale
Thames Valley Archaeological Services
Ltd

Site Code HCB 09/27

July 2009

Summary

Site name: Hillside, Glenhills and Popple Trees, Crowthorne Road, Bracknell

Grid reference: SU 8658 6846

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 2nd April – 5th July 2009

Project manager: Sean Wallis

Site supervisor: Andrew Weale

Site code: HCB 09/27

Area of site: c. 0.32 ha

Summary of results: No deposits of archaeological interest were observed, nor artefacts recovered. The site is considered to have no archaeological potential

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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	Steve Preston ✓ 08.07.09

Hillside, Glenhills and Popple Trees, Crowthorne Road, Bracknell, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

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Report 09/27

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at properties known as Hillside, Glenhills and Popple Trees, Crowthorne Road, Bracknell, Berkshire (SU 8658 6846) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Brian Collins of Kingsdown Construction Limited, 15a Colleton Drive, Twyford, Reading, Berkshire RG10 0AU.

Planning permission has been granted by Bracknell Forest Borough Council (application number 08/00260/FUL) for the erection of 8 houses and 17 flats with associated parking and access from Crowthorne Road following the demolition of existing dwellings. The planning permission was subject to a condition (17) that states: ‘No development shall take place until the applicant has secured and implemented a phased programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (method statement), which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Planning Authority. All intrusive groundworks shall be monitored by a qualified archaeologist. This is to be undertaken as the provisional stage of a phased programme of works should initial investigation warrant further mitigation.’

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 by Ms Mary O’Donoghue, Archaeology Officer for Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Borough. The fieldwork was undertaken in two phases by Andrew Weale, Tim Dawson, James McNichol-Norbury and Susan Colley between 2nd April and 6th July 2009 and the site code is HCB09/27. 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 in the suburbs of mainly modern houses around Bracknell (Fig. 1) and is bounded on the south by Crowthorne Road and the north, east and west by residential dwellings with gardens (Fig. 2). The site lies on a north-west facing slope of a hill overlooking Wildridings at around 82m above Ordnance Datum. The site lies close to the boundary between the London Clay and the Bagshot Beds (BGS 1981); the sands of the Bagshot

beds were observed in all trenches. The site is currently occupied by three houses with associated parking, gardens and outbuildings.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential for the site lies in its location in an area containing earlier prehistoric remains (Ford 1987). In particular to the south-east of the site near the summit of Bill Hill is an upstanding round barrow (a presumed Bronze Age burial mound) which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. In the areas surrounding the monument, there is an expectation for contemporary occupation deposits to be present. However an evaluation directly to the south of the site at Glendower on Crowthorne Road did not reveal any deposits of archaeological interest (Wallis 2006). At more distance, extensive excavations to the north east at the former RAF Staff College revealed Middle Bronze Age and Iron Age occupation along with a post-medieval lime kiln (Lowe 2008).

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 research aims of the project were;

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

To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.

To determine if any deposits representing prehistoric occupation are present, especially those possibly contemporary with the nearby Bronze Age burial mound.

Six trenches, all 20m long and 1.6m wide were intended to be excavated. The trenches were to be located to examine the footprint of the new structures and where disturbance from previous buildings was considered to have been minimal. The topsoil and subsoil within the trenches were removed by a back hoe machine (JCB-type) fitted with a toothless ditching/rehandling bucket under continuous archaeological supervision.

Where archaeological features were thought to exist the stripped areas were to be hand cleaned and sufficient of the features were excavated by hand to satisfy the aims of the project. All the spoil heaps were to be monitored for artefacts.

Results

The evaluation fieldwork was commenced in April but was curtailed at that time due to access problems. Trench 2 and half of Trench 1 had been opened but not fully recorded and these were backfilled at that time. They were re-dug in slightly different positions when the evaluation was restarted in July. All six trenches were dug between 15.5 and 20m long and 1.6m wide (Fig. 3). Trenches 1, 2 and 5 were dug as intended, but Trench 3 was shortened as the property in which it was located was still occupied and the patio area still in use. Trenches 4 and 6 were shortened due to presence on site of upstanding trees and of live services. The trenches ranged between 0.51m to 1.01m deep. The changes to the trenching positions and lengths were made in consultation with Ms O'Donoghue of Berkshire Archaeology.

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

Trench 1 (Plates 1 and 2)

Trench 1 was 20.20m long, aligned NNW–SSE, and a maximum of 0.51m deep. The stratigraphy within the trench was 0.22m of topsoil (50) a firm grey humic sand (Fig. 4). Beneath the topsoil was a gully (1) which was 0.62m deep and filled with a deposit of mixed white/yellow sand with patches of grey sand (topsoil) with occasional rounded flint gravel (52). Gully 1 was straight-sided and flat bottomed, 0.58m wide, aligned SW–NE and cut the subsoil (51), a mixed yellow/white/red sand with occasional rounded flint gravel, 0.28m thick. Beneath the subsoil (51) was hard pale yellow sand forming the natural geology. No artefacts were recovered from any deposits within Trench 1. Gully 1 is considered to be a modern feature.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was 20m long, aligned WSW–ENE, and a maximum of 0.65m deep. The stratigraphy within the trench was 0.30m of topsoil (50) over subsoil (51) (as in Trench 1) over hard pale yellow to red/brown natural sand. No archaeological features or artefacts were present within this trench.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was 15.80m long, aligned NNW–SSE and a maximum of 0.55m deep. Topsoil (50) overlay subsoil (51) over hard red/brown natural sand. No archaeological features or artefacts were present within this trench.

Trench 4

Trench 4 was 16.70m long, aligned SW–NE, and a maximum of 0.55m deep. Topsoil (50) overlay subsoil (51) over the natural geology which was hard red/brown clayey natural sand. No archaeological features or artefacts were present within this trench.

Trench 5

Trench 5 was 15.80m long, aligned NNW–SSE, and a maximum of 0.55m deep. Topsoil (50) overlay subsoil (51) over the natural geology which was hard pale grey to white natural sand. No archaeological features or artefacts were present within this trench.

Trench 6

Trench 6 was 15.50m long, aligned NNW–SSE, and a maximum of 1.01m deep. Topsoil (50) overlay subsoil (51) which here was patchy and loose and may have been redeposited. Beneath subsoil (51) was hard pale yellow to grey natural sand. No archaeological features or artefacts were present within this trench.

Conclusion

No features or artefacts of archaeological interest were present in the evaluation trenches. The gully in Trench 1 was cut from above the level of the subsoil, and contained a high proportion of unleached topsoil with its fill: it is certainly of no great age, and in any case contained no finds. No other features or artefacts were encountered within the remaining five trenches. No pre-modern artefacts were recovered from any of the spoil heaps of topsoil or subsoil. This is very similar to the results from Glendower, Crowthorne Road immediately to the south of the site. On the basis of these results, the site is considered to have no archaeological potential.

References

- BGS, 1981, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 269, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Ford, S, 1987, *East Berkshire Archaeological Survey*, Berkshire County Council Dept Highways and Planning Occas Pap 1, Reading
- Lowe, J, 2008, Middle Bronze Age and middle Iron Age occupation and post-medieval limekilns at RAF Staff College, Broad Lane, Bracknell, Berkshire Draft publication report Thames Valley Archaeological Services rep 06/67, Reading
- PPG16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO
- Wallis, S, 2006, 'Glendower, Crowthorne Road, Bracknell, Berkshire, an archaeological evaluation', Thames Valley Archaeological Services rep 06/53, Reading

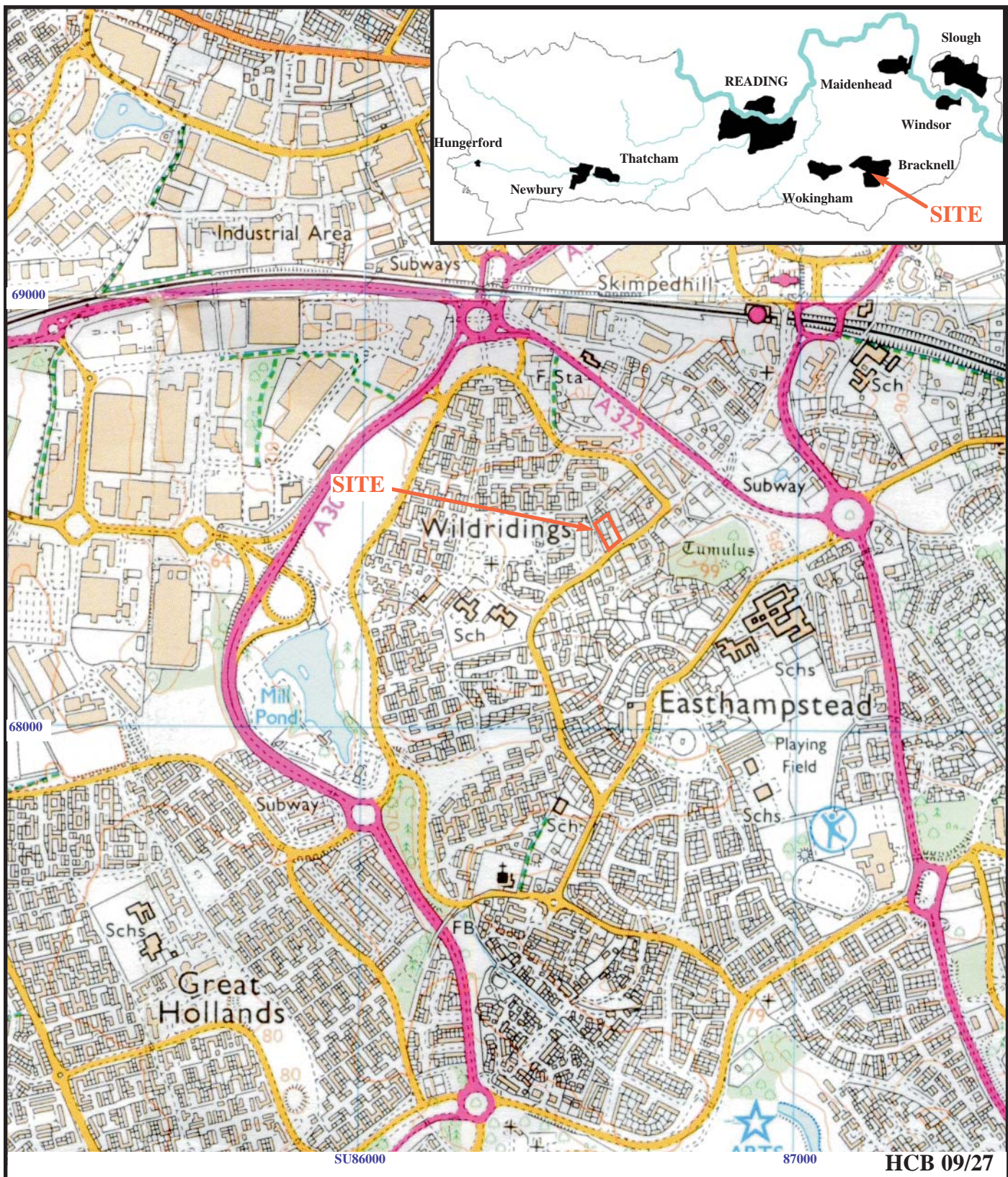
APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at south or west end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	20.20	1.6	0.51	0–0.22m Topsoil; 0.22–0.51m subsoil. Gully 1. Bagshot Bed sands (natural geology) [Pls 1 and 2]
2	20.0	1.6	0.65	0–0.30m Topsoil; 0.30–0.65m subsoil. Bagshot Bed sands
3	15.80	1.6	0.54	0–.025m Topsoil; 0.25–0.54m subsoil. Bagshot Bed sands
4	16.70	1.6	0.55	0–0.19m Topsoil; 0.19–0.55m subsoil. Bagshot Bed sands
5	20.1	1.6	0.66	0–0.34m Topsoil; 0.34–0.66m subsoil. Bagshot Bed sands
6	15.50	1.6	1.01	0–0.22m Topsoil; 0.22–1.01m subsoil. Bagshot Bed sands

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
1	1	52	gully	modern	Modern topsoil in fill



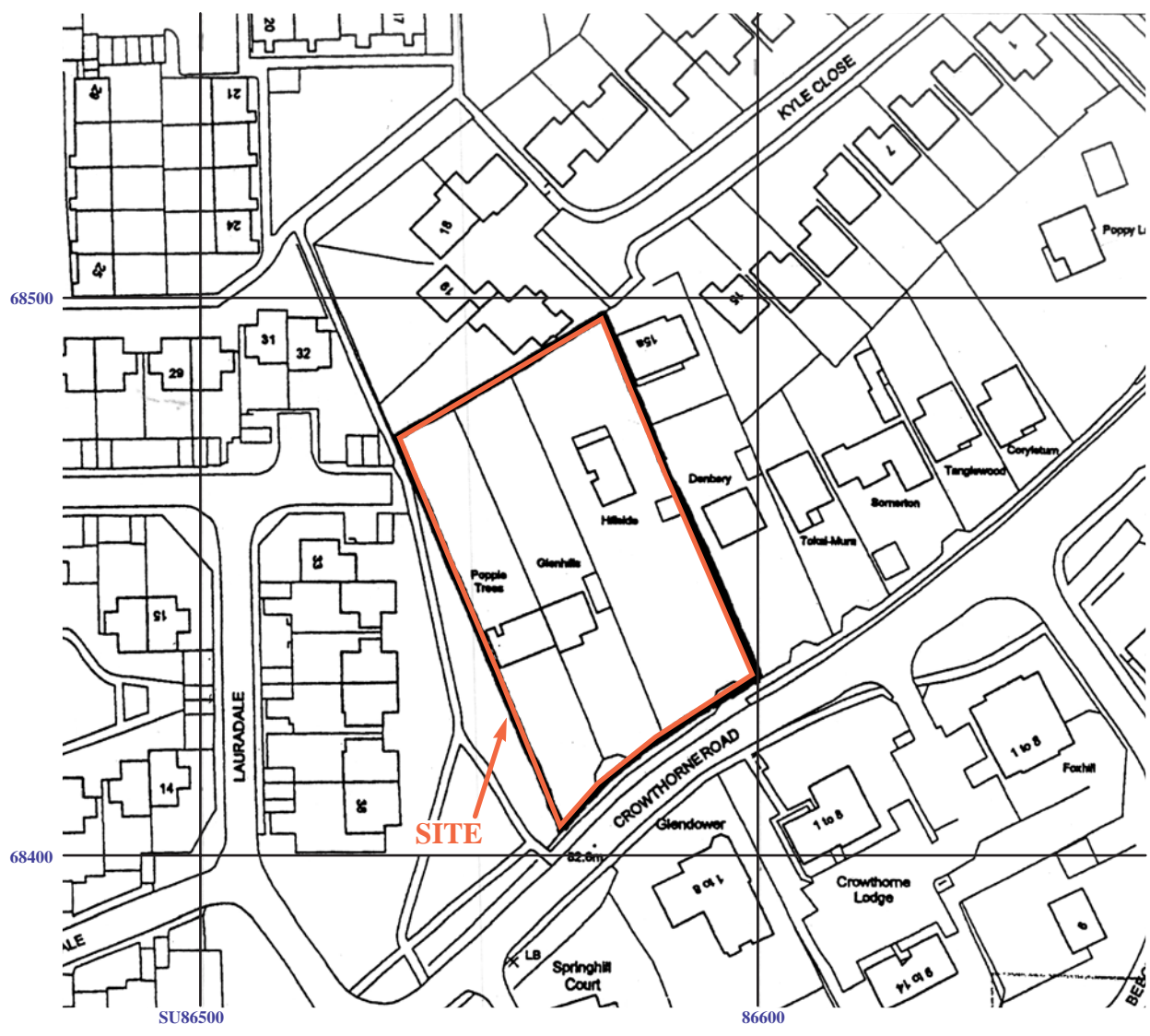
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Figure 1. Location of site within Bracknell and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Crowthorne Road.

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Figure 3. Location of trenches

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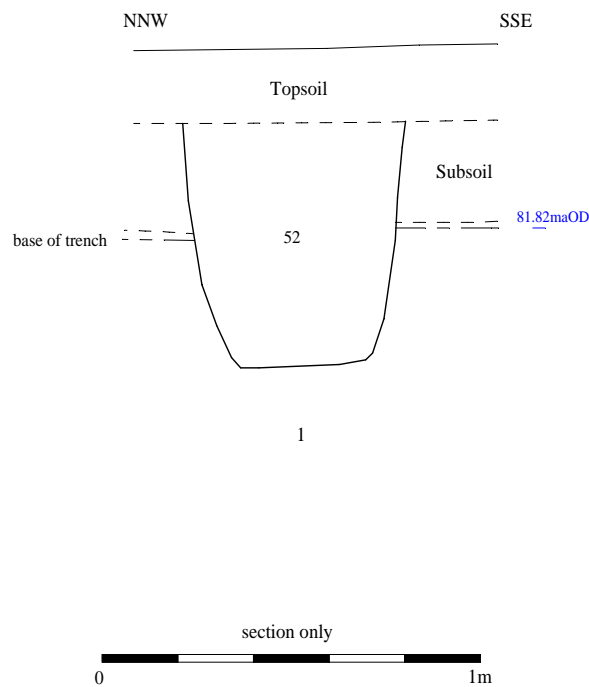
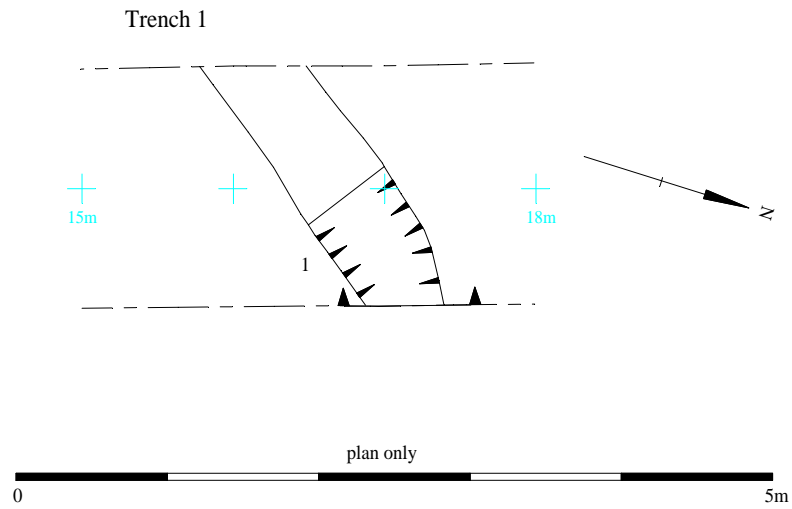


Figure 4. Detail of Trench 1 and section of modern gully 1.