

**Western House School, Brook Path, Cippenham,
Slough, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for George Wimpey West London Ltd**

by James Lewis
Thames Valley Archaeological Services
Ltd

Site Code WCS07/46

November 2009

Summary

Site name: Western House School, Brook Path, Cippenham, Slough, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 9475 8060

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 20-23rd October 2009

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: James Lewis

Site code: WCS 07/46

Area of site: 1.5ha

Summary of results: No deposits or features pre-dating the 19th century were discovered. Nine struck flints of broadly prehistoric (Neolithic/Bronze Age) date were recovered from the spoilheaps. Elements of a former farmhouse known from 19th century cartographic sources were revealed but did not appear to have earlier origins. The site is thought to have low 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 ✓ 02.11.09

Western House School, Brook Path, Cippenham, Slough, Berkshire. An Archaeological Evaluation

by James Lewis

Report 07/46

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Western House School, Brook Path, Cippenham, Slough, Berkshire (SU9475 8060) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr William Luck of George Wimpey West London Ltd, Stratfield House, Station Road, Hook, Hampshire, RG27 9PQ.

Planning consent has been gained on appeal (app no App/J0350/A/09/2102041) from Slough Borough Council to construct new housing on the site of the former Western House School. The archaeological potential of the site was highlighted in a desk-based assessment (Ford 2007) which concluded that the site was in a locally rich archaeological area. The planning consent was therefore subject to an archaeological condition which required an archaeological evaluation as part of a phased programme of archaeological work.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and Slough 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 Council on archaeological matters. The fieldwork was undertaken by James Lewis, Andrew Weale, Claire Bland, Daniel Bray and Paulina Pankiewicz between 20-23rd October 2009 and the site code is WCS 07/46. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Reading Museum in due course.

Location

The site is located on the west side of the modern town of Slough in the suburb of Cippenham, a residential area. The area is occupied by a former school with old buildings surrounded by playing field and areas of hard standing (Fig. 2). The site is bounded on the east and south sides by the rear gardens of houses and by Mallard Drive to the north. To the west stands the British Legion club house. The development area lies on level ground at height of *c.*25m above Ordnance Datum and is located according to the British Geological Survey (BGS 1981) on floodplain gravel. However, brickearth was encountered in the trenches.

Archaeological background

The site lies within an area of eastern Berkshire until recently not previously noted for its wealth or density of archaeological deposits (Ford 1987). Despite the extensive ground disturbance which took place during the construction of modern Slough and the trading estate, this did not lead to the discovery of many archaeological sites or finds. Whilst the site lies within the archaeologically rich Thames Valley as evidenced from aerial photography (Gates 1975), the soils relatively close to the site are not conducive to the formation of cropmarks. Recent excavations on the south-west margins of Slough (to the south and east of the site) have revealed a wealth of prehistoric, Roman and medieval deposits (Ford *et al.* 2003; Howell and Durden 2003) while work on the Maidenhead, Windsor and Eton flood relief channel and the Eton College rowing lake has added substantially to the number of sites known (Foreman *et al.* 2002). Excavations to the south and south-east have confirmed this potential for the Cippenham area (Ford *et al.* 2003; Taylor 2007; Taylor 2009) with the site lying close to what is considered to be the historic core of medieval Cippenham.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological or palaeo-environmental deposits within the area of development. Specific research aims for the project were:

- to determine if archaeological relevant levels have survived;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;
- to determine if archaeological deposits relating to the medieval hamlet of Cippenham are present;
- and
- to determine if a now demolished 19th-century farm complex on the site has medieval or early post-medieval origins (Fig. 6).

It was proposed to dig 20 trenches, 20m in length and 1.6m wide using a machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under the supervision of an experienced archaeologist. The trenches were located primarily to examine the footprints of the proposed new structures and avoid the footprints of the school buildings. All spoil heaps were monitored.

All archaeological features were hand cleaned and sufficient features and deposits were investigated to satisfy the aims of the project.

Results

In the event 21 trenches were dug: 19 measured *c.*20m in length and were 1.6m wide and between 0.4m to 1.13m deep (Fig. 3). Trench 17 was re-located to investigate more of the area around the car park where the remains of the 19th-century farmhouse was thought to be. In the event, due to the location of services, two shorter trenches (17 and 21) were dug here. The relocation of Trench 17 took place after consultation with the Berkshire Archaeological Officer, Ms Mary O'Donoghue. The alignments of trenches 11, 13 and 16 were altered to avoid damaging trees.

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

Trench 1

Trench 1 was aligned N-S and measured 20.2m in length and 0.46m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.2m of topsoil above 0.16m of subsoil above the natural geology of brickearth. Three metres from the northern end of the trench a linear feature was identified (1). The feature was initially thought to be a ditch. However, it appeared to extend only 50mm below the base of the trench. A sondage was dug to the depth of 0.48m but this did not reveal the continuation of a ditch. The feature contained a single piece of 19th-century pottery.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was aligned N-S measured 20.35m in length and was 0.47m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m of topsoil above 0.17m of subsoil above the natural geology. No features were identified in this trench.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was aligned N-S and measured 20.2m in length and was 0.48m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.22m of topsoil above 0.24m of subsoil above the natural geology. No features were identified in this trench.

Trench 4

Trench 4 was aligned NE-SW and measured 20.2m in length and was 0.58m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.32m of topsoil above 0.21m of subsoil above the natural geology. In the northern half of the trench one feature (6) was identified. Feature 6 was possibly the side of a small ditch which was aligned N-S and the available measurements were at least 0.8m wide and 0.3m deep (Fig. 5). The eastern side extended beyond the north east side of the trench. The feature contained tile, a large horse shoe, animal bone and 19th-century pottery.

Trench 5

Trench 5 was aligned NE-SW and measured *c.*19m in length and 0.51m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.29m of topsoil above 0.22m of subsoil above the natural geology. The trench was staggered due to the presence of services. No features were identified in the trench.

Trench 6

Trench 6 was aligned N-S and measured 19.3m in length and was 0.53m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.3m of topsoil above 0.18m of subsoil above the natural geology. No features were identified in the trench.

Trench 7

Trench 7 was aligned NE-SW and measured 19m in length and was 0.68m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.48m of topsoil above 0.10m of subsoil above the natural geology. No features were identified in this trench.

Trench 8 (Plate 3)

Trench 8 was aligned E-W and measured 20m in length and was 0.64m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.24m of topsoil above 0.23m of subsoil above the natural geology. Five features (2–5 and 9) were identified in the trench and these will be described from west to east.

Approximately 1m from the western end of the trench was a shallow pit (5), 2.2m wide and 0.17m deep (Fig. 5). The pit contained roof tile and 19th-century pottery. Two metres from the pit was a NE-SW aligned wall (3) which was constructed with machine made red bricks and bonded with non-hydraulic mortar. The bricks measured 230mm in length, 100mm wide and 70mm thick. The wall's width varied between 0.35m at the NE end to 0.80m at the SW end and survived to a height of 0.23m. The wall was constructed in a foundation trench (2) which was located in the NW side of the wall which measured 0.5m in length. Situated 3.5m east of the wall was another NE-SW aligned wall (4) which was similarly constructed with machine made red bricks (of the same dimensions as wall (3) and bonded with non-hydraulic mortar. The was 0.35m wide and survived to a height of 0.23m. No foundation cut could be identified in the base of the trench. One metre to the north of this wall (4) on the north side of the trench another wall was observed (9), of identical construction to the other two.

Trench 9

Trench 9 was aligned E-W and measured 20m in length and was 0.71m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.31m of topsoil above 0.29m of subsoil above the natural geology. No features were identified in this trench.

Trench 10

Trench 10 was aligned N-S and measured 20.5m in length and was 0.64m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.34m of made ground above the natural geology. No features were identified in the trench.

Trench 11

Trench 11 was aligned E-W and measured 22.2m in length and was 0.49m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.28m of topsoil above 0.14m of subsoil above the natural geology. No features were found within the trench.

Trench 12

Trench 12 was aligned E-W and measured 20.6m in length and was 0.68m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m of topsoil above 0.27m of subsoil above the natural geology. Two features (7 and 10) were identified in the trench; at the west end of the trench a post-medieval drain (7) was noted, constructed of red bricks which measured 230mm in length, 100mm wide and 70mm thick. Approximately 10m east from the drain was the remains of a modern animal burial probably a cat (10).

Trench 13

Trench 13 was aligned NW-SE and measured 20m in length and was 0.42m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.22m of topsoil above 0.16m of subsoil above the natural geology. No features were identified in this trench.

Trench 14 (Plates 1 and 2)

Trench 14 was aligned NW-SE and measured 19m in length and was 0.75m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.07m of Tarmac above 0.37m of made ground above the natural geology. One feature (8) was identified in the trench. Feature 8 was a E-W aligned ditch which measured 0.5m wide and was 0.43m deep, it contained no finds. It was truncated by made ground (54 and 55) and so it was impossible to establish if it cut through or was sealed below subsoil and as a result it was not possible to state with certainty if it was a feature of archaeological interest..

Trench 15

Trench 15 was aligned E-W and measured 21.4m in length and 0.4m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.07m of Tarmac above 0.08m of made ground above the natural geology. No features were identified in this trench. Three prehistoric struck flints were recovered from the spoilheap.

Trench 16 (Plate 4)

Trench 16 was aligned NE-SW and measured 18m in length and was 0.68m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.32m of topsoil above 0.21m of subsoil above the natural geology. No features were identified in this trench.

Trench 17

Trench 17 was aligned N-S and measured 10.4m in length and was 0.81m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of topsoil above 0.43m of subsoil above the natural geology. No features were identified in the trench.

Trench 18

Trench 18 was aligned W-E and measured 20m in length and was 1.16m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.29m of topsoil above 0.31m of subsoil above 0.2m of buried topsoil (57) above 0.3m of buried subsoil (58) above the natural geology. The presence of the buried soils in the trench was due to the landscaping of the play area during the construction of the school. The soils therefore are the result of modern activity.

Trench 19

Trench 19 was aligned NW-SE and measured 20.1m in length and was 0.6m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.31m of topsoil above 0.20m of subsoil above the natural geology. No features were identified in the trench. Five prehistoric struck flints were recovered from the spoilheap.

Trench 20

Trench 20 was aligned E-W and measured 20m in length and was 0.56m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.2m of topsoil above 0.30m of subsoil above the natural geology. No features were identified in the trench.

Trench 21

Trench 21 was aligned N-S and measured 10.5m in length and was 0.5m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.2m of topsoil above 0.30m of subsoil above the natural geology. No features were identified in this trench. One prehistoric struck flint was recovered from the spoilheap.

Finds

Pottery by James Lewis

Five pieces of pottery were recovered during the excavation, three pieces came from a ditch (6) and the other two pieces to feature 1 and the pit (5) respectively. The three sherds of pot from cut 6 are salt glazed earthenware and appear to belong to the same vessel probably a jar. The single piece from cut 1 is part of a stone ware cup with a white glaze. The piece from cut 5 is white glazed stone ware displaying a blue transfer pattern.

All these pieces of pottery represent examples of domestic wares from the 19th and 20th centuries.

Metalwork by Henrietta Longden

A substantial iron horseshoe was recovered from ditch 6. The horseshoe is a very large example weighing 892g and measuring 173mm across. It is likely this shoe was fitted to a draught horse. This is post-medieval in date, the ubiquitous nature of horseshoes and the corrosion of this example makes narrowing this date bracket impossible.

Ceramic building materials by Danielle Milbank

Brick and tile fragments were recorded in two contexts. Pit 5 (52) contained two examples of machine-made brick fragments (2265g), of likely late 19th century date, which were of a dark red, coarse sandy fabric and were 60mm thick. This context also contained 6 tile fragments (1670g), one of which has a peg hole. Tiles of this type were produced in large numbers from the 13th century onwards, however these examples are of a hard, consistent dark red sandy fabric, with sharp edges, and are broadly post-medieval.

Context 6 (53) contained a total of 9 tile fragments (558g), including three pieces of handmade tile with a small lip along one side. These examples were not closely dateable, but are again likely to be post-medieval. Deposit 53 also contained four pieces of ceramic drain pipe (332g) which are post-medieval, probably dating to the Victorian period.

Overall, the brick and tile recovered reflects the post-medieval contexts in which they were encountered.

Glass by Danielle Milbank

A total of six glass fragments weighing 70g were recovered from context 6 (53). These comprised two flat, clear fragments of window glass, a fragment of thick, colourless bottle glass of broadly post-medieval date, and three fragments of pale green bottle glass with a rim suggesting a date of mid-19th century or later.

Struck Flint by Steve Ford

A small collection comprising just 9 struck flints was recovered during the course of the evaluation. All were spoilheap finds. These comprise flakes, one of which was a narrow flake. The latter is possibly of Mesolithic

/early Neolithic date but one of the other items are closely datable in themselves and could be of Neolithic or Bronze Age date.

Trench 15	2 Intact flakes; Narrow flake
Trench 19	2 Intact flakes; 3 Broken flakes
Trench 21	Broken flake

Conclusion

The archaeological evaluation at Western House School has revealed no evidence for the presence of medieval or earlier deposits on the site. The three walls located in trench 8 are the remains of the 19th-century farm which was identified on 19th century maps (Fig. 6: Ford 2009). There is no evidence to indicate that this farm originated any earlier than the mid-nineteenth century. Nine struck flints of prehistoric (Neolithic/Bronze Age) date recovered from unstratified contexts point to some prehistoric activity in the area.

Despite the site's location within an area of high archaeological potential the evaluation indicates that the site has no archaeological potential.

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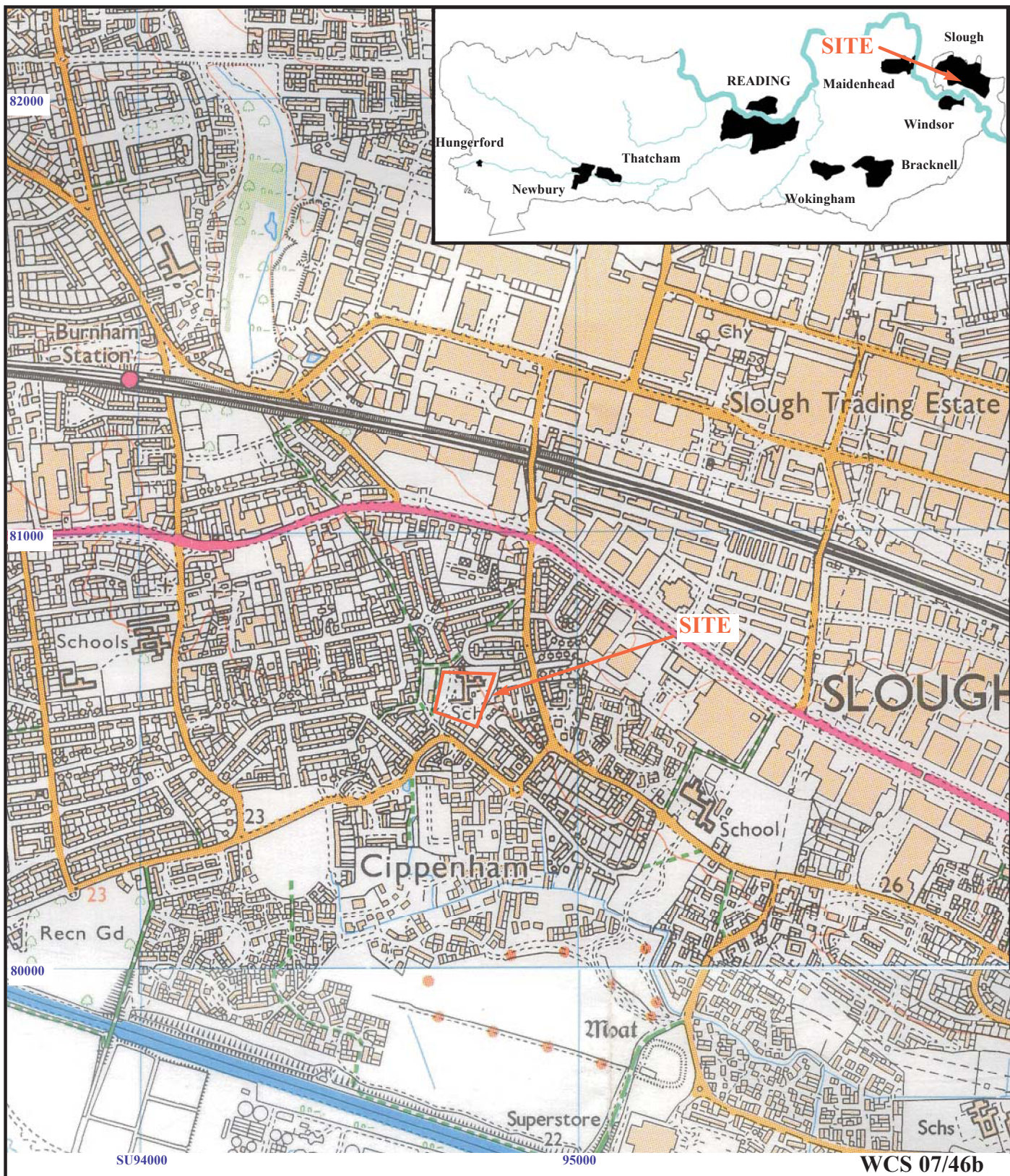
APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at S or West end

Trench	Length (m)	Breadth (m)	Depth (m)	Comment
1	20	1.6	0.46	0-0.2m topsoil; 0.2-0.36m subsoil; 0.36m+ natural geology (brickearth). Feature 1.
2	20	1.6	0.47	0-0.25m topsoil; 0.25-0.42m subsoil; 0.46m+ natural geology (brickearth).
3	20	1.6	0.48	0-0.22m topsoil; 0.22-0.46m subsoil; 0.46m+ natural geology (brickearth).
4	20	1.6	0.58	0-0.32m topsoil; 0.32-0.53m subsoil; 0.53m+ natural geology (brickearth). Feature 6.
5	19	1.6	0.51	0-0.29m topsoil; 0.29-0.51m subsoil; 0.51m+ natural geology (brickearth).
6	20	1.6	0.53	0-0.3m topsoil; 0.3-0.48m subsoil; 0.48m+ natural geology (brickearth).
7	19	1.6	0.68	0-0.48m made ground; 0.48-0.58m subsoil; 0.58m+ natural geology (brickearth). Features 2, 3, 4, 5 and 9.
8	17.2	1.6	0.64	0-0.24m made ground; 0.24-0.47m subsoil; 0.47m+ natural geology (brickearth). Features 2, 3, 4, 5 and 9. [Plate 3]
9	20	1.6	0.71	0-0.31m topsoil; 0.31-0.6m subsoil; 0.6m+ natural geology (brickearth).
10	20.5	1.6	0.64	0-0.34m made ground; 0.34m+ natural geology (brickearth).
11	22	1.6	0.49	0-0.28m topsoil; 0.28-0.42m subsoil; 0.42m+ natural geology (brickearth).
12	20.6	1.6	0.68	0-0.25m topsoil; 0.25-0.52m subsoil; 0.52m+ natural geology (brickearth). Features 7 and 10.
13	20	1.6	0.42	0-0.22m topsoil; 0.22-0.38m subsoil; 0.38m+ natural geology (brickearth).
14	19	1.6	0.75	0-0.07 Tarmac; 0.07-0.44m made ground; 0.44m+ natural geology (brickearth). Feature 8. [Plates 1 and 2]
15	21.4	1.6	0.4	0-0.07m Tarmac; 0.07-0.16m made ground; 0.16m+ natural geology (brickearth).
16	18	1.6	0.68	0-0.32m topsoil; 0.32-0.53m subsoil; 0.53m+ natural geology (brickearth). [Plate 4]
17	10.4	1.6	0.81	0-0.15m topsoil; 0.15-0.58m subsoil; 0.58m+ natural geology (brickearth).
18	20	1.6	1.16	0-0.29m topsoil; 0.29-0.6m subsoil; 0.6-0.8m buried topsoil (57); 0.6-0.9m buried subsoil (58); 0.9m+ natural geology (brickearth).
19	20	1.6	0.56	0-0.31m topsoil; 0.31-0.51m subsoil; 0.51m+ natural geology (brickearth).
20	20	1.6	0.5	0-0.2m topsoil; 0.2-0.5m subsoil; 0.5m+ natural geology (brickearth).
21	10.5	1.6	0.5	0-0.2m topsoil; 0.2-0.5m subsoil; 0.5m+ natural geology (brickearth).

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	50	Ditch	19th century	Pottery
8	2	51	Wall foundation	19th century	Stratigraphic
8	3	-		19th century	Wall construction
8	4	-			Wall construction
8	5	52	Pit	19th century	Tile and Pottery
4	6	53	Ditch	19th century	Pottery and tile
12	7		Drain	19th century	Construction
14	8	56	Ditch	Unknown	None
8	9	-		19th century	Wall construction
12	10	59	Animal burial	Undated	None



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Figure 1. Location of site within Slough
and Berkshire.

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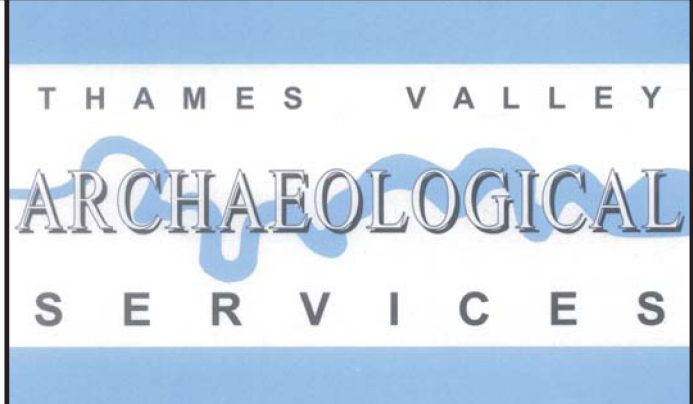


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Figure 2. Location of site off Lower Cippenham Lane.

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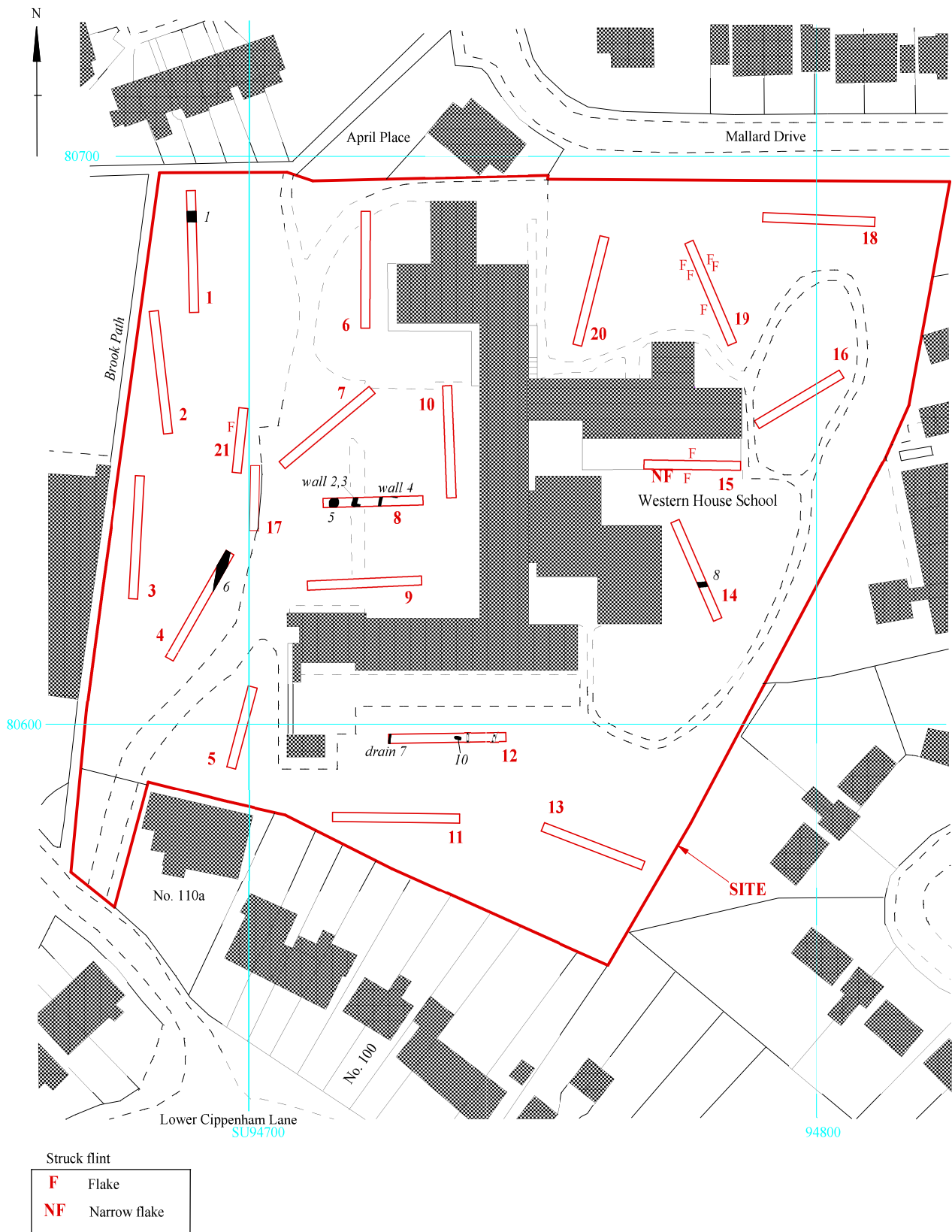


Figure 3. Location of trenches and struck flint distribution.

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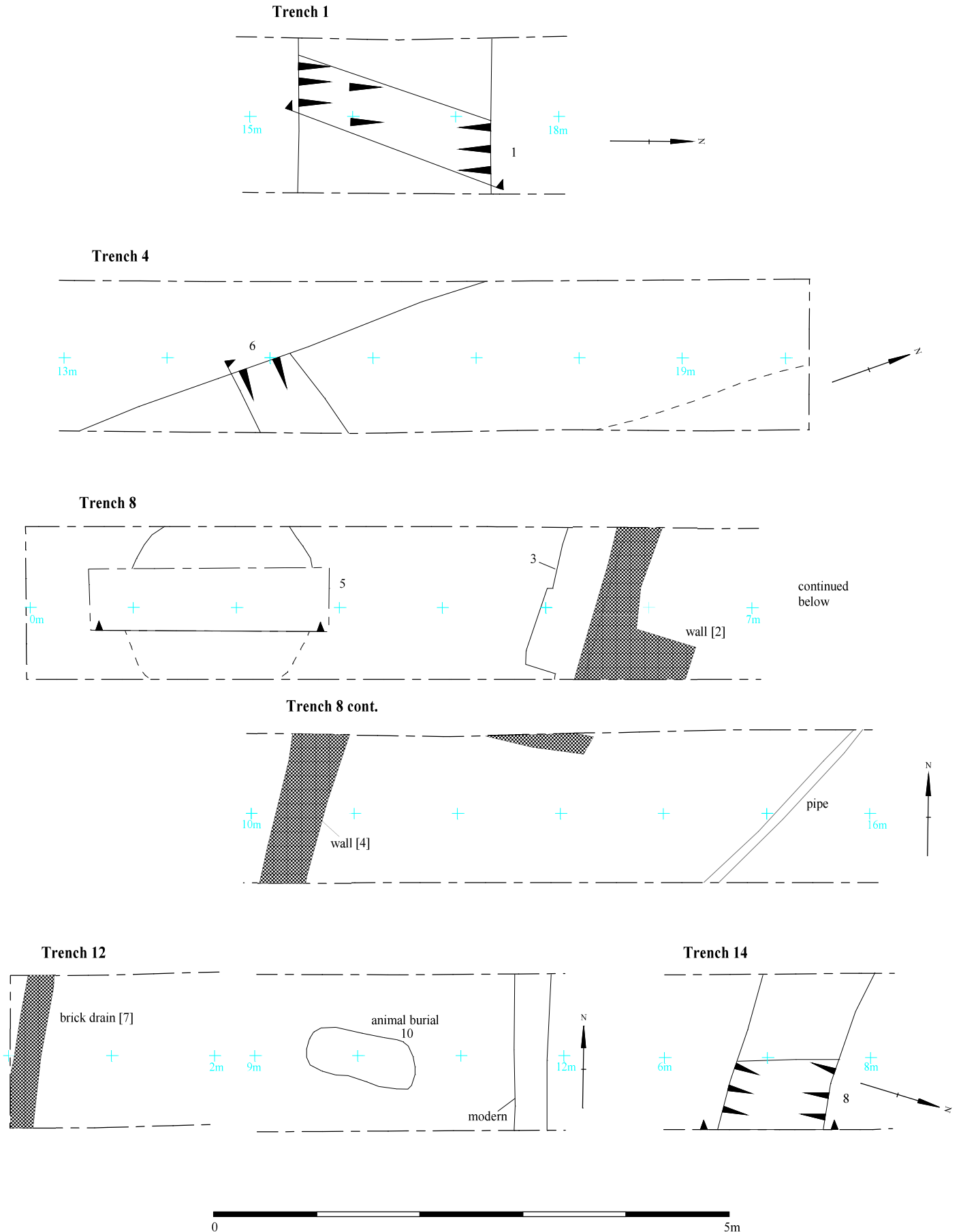


Figure 4. Detail of trenches.

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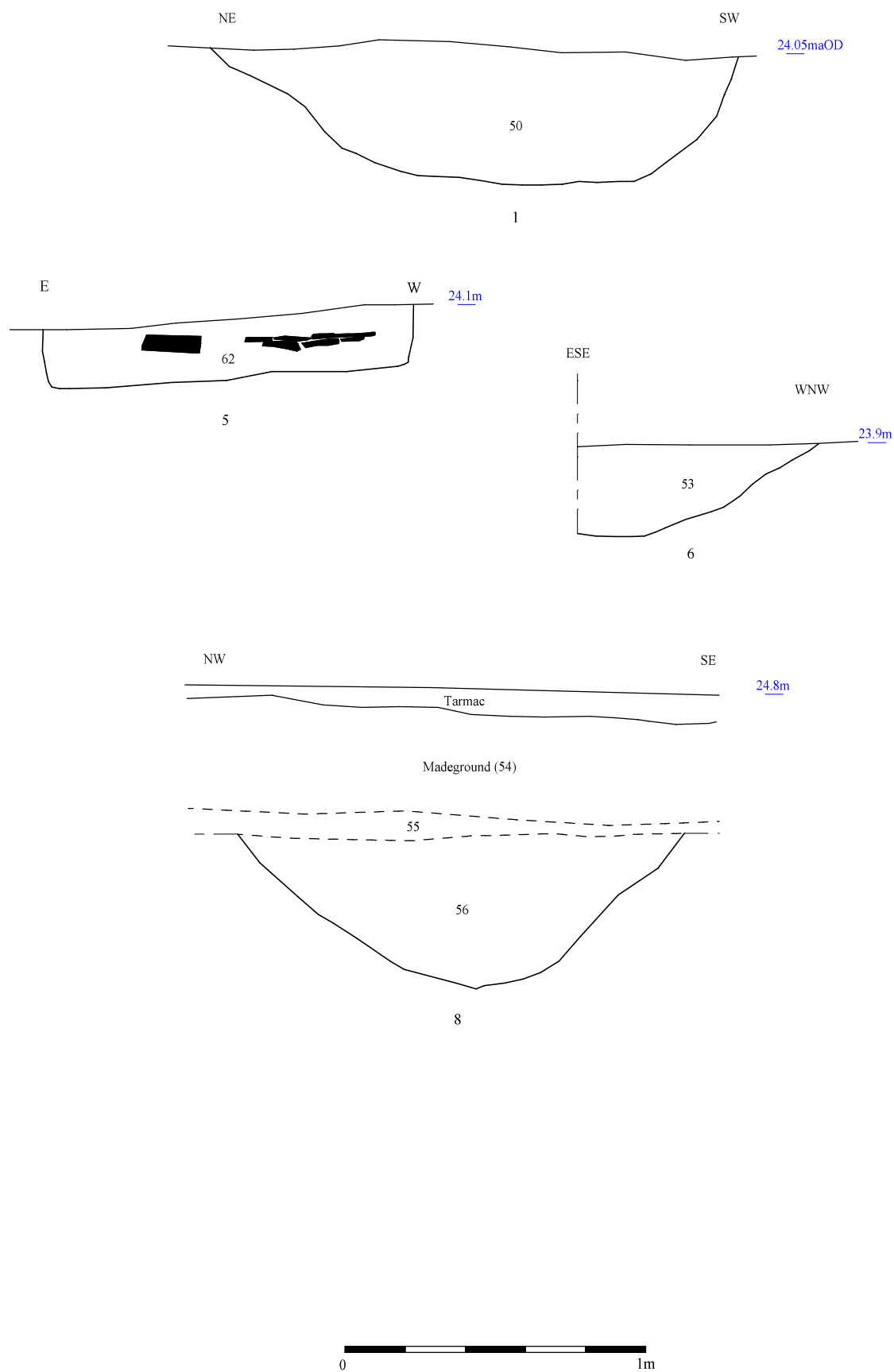
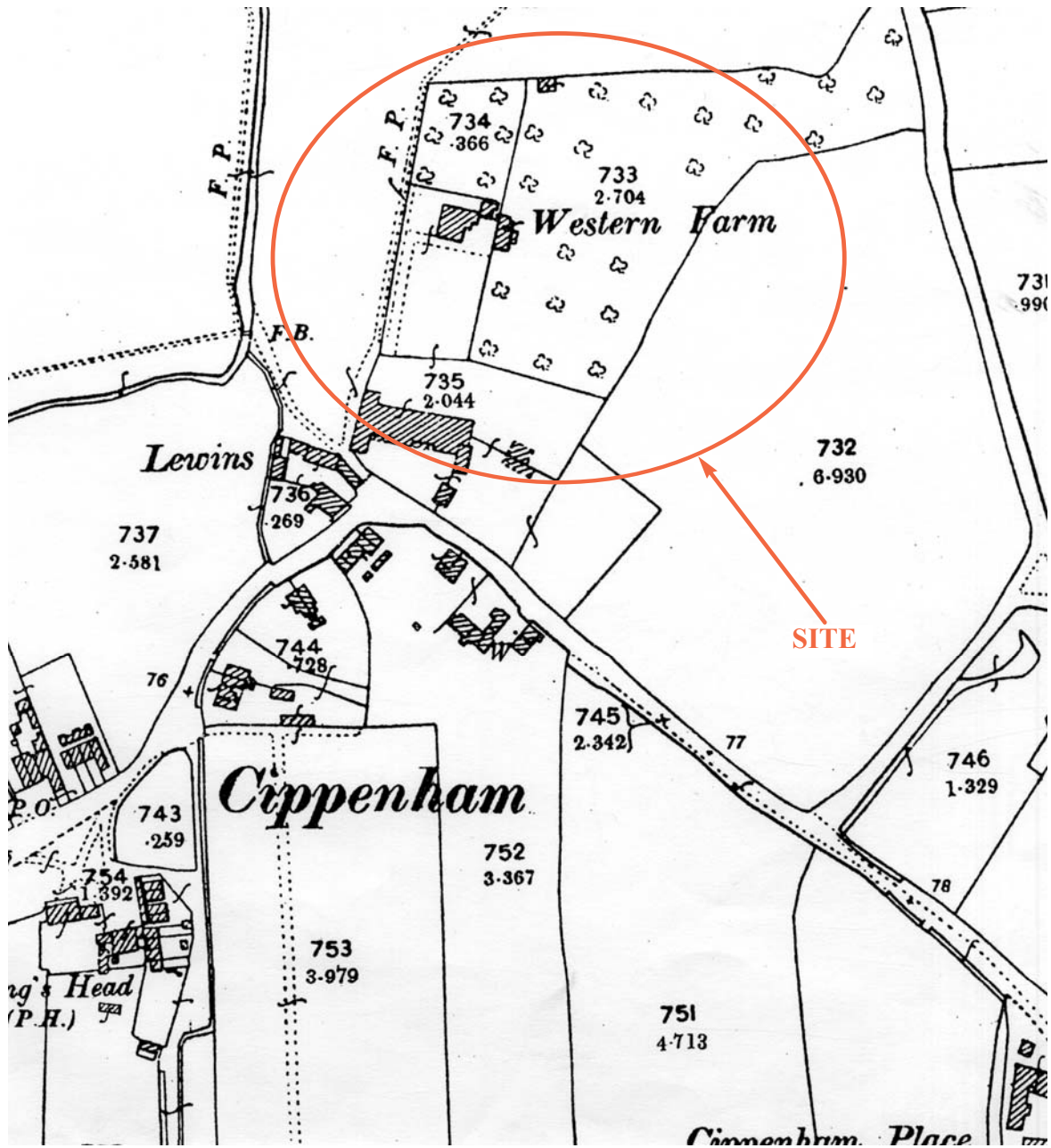


Figure 5. Sections of excavated features.



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Figure 6. Ordnance Survey Second Edition 1899

T H A M E S V A L L E Y
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Plate 1. Trench 14, looking north, Scales: 2m and 0.5m.



Plate 2. Trench 14, ditch 8, looking east, horizontal scale 1m, vertical 0.5m



Plate 3. Trench 8, looking east, Scales: 2m and 1m



Plate 4. Trench 16, looking north east, Scales: 2m and 0.5m.