

# **birmingham archaeology**



**THE UNIVERSITY  
OF BIRMINGHAM**

**Land at Milton Road, Bloxham,  
Oxfordshire: An Archaeological  
Evaluation 2005**



**LAND AT MILTON ROAD, BLOXHAM, OXFORDSHIRE  
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION 2005**

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**An Archaeological Evaluation 2005**

**1.0: SUMMARY**

This report describes the results of an archaeological evaluation of land to the southeast of Bloxham, Oxfordshire (centred on NGR SP 4312 3545). The evaluation was undertaken by Birmingham Archaeology Unit on behalf of Taylor Woodrow Developments, with advice from CPM Environmental Planning and Design. Nineteen trial-trenches were excavated. The aims of the evaluation were to assess the nature and significance of any potential archaeological features or deposits.

A single, undated linear feature was investigated and identified as a probable remnant of medieval agriculture. A further undated pit was also excavated. Two concrete floor bases were also identified.

**2.0: INTRODUCTION (Figs. 1-2)**

This report describes the results of archaeological trial-trenching of land to the southeast of Bloxham, Oxfordshire (centred on NGR SP 4312 3545, Fig 1). Birmingham Archaeology was commissioned to undertake the evaluation by Taylor Woodrow Developments Ltd, with advice from CPM Environmental Planning and Design, ahead of a proposal for residential development of the site.

The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with the guidelines contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 Archaeology and Planning (Department of the Environment, November 1990). The methodology of the evaluation conforms to a Design Brief (Oxfordshire County Council 2005), and a Written Scheme of Investigation (Birmingham Archaeology 2005) approved by Oxfordshire County Council.

The proposed development site lies to the southeast of the village of Bloxham and consists of approximately 2.5ha of agricultural land used as pasture, bounded by Milton Road to the south, and fenced boundaries on all other sides (Fig. 2).

The general archaeological background is described in a desk-based assessment (CPM 2001) which identified a number of aspects of possible archaeological potential within the general area, as follows:

- 1: Evidence of prehistoric activity associated with prehistoric cropmark sites.
- 2: Evidence of Roman activity associated with the remains of a significant settlement to the northwest of the site.
- 3: Evidence of inhumation burials from the Roman period associated with the discovery of inhumation cemeteries to the north and southwest of the site.
- 4: Evidence for medieval settlement or agricultural practices possibly associated

- with St. Amands Manor (c 1285) or the later Beauchamp Manor, both of which held lands covering a significant area.
- 5: Evidence of post-medieval settlement, industry, or other activity.

### **3.0: AIMS AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1: Aims**

The purpose of the archaeological evaluation was to determine the presence or absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of archaeological features within the proposed development site.

#### **3.2: Methodology**

A total of nineteen trenches (Fig. 3) were excavated by machine under archaeological supervision to the top of the natural subsoil. The trenches were located in a random pattern to locate any features or deposits present within the site. Trench 5 was reduced in length to 20m in order to allow the machine sufficient room to work. Trench 20 was abandoned due to inadequate access to the enclosure in which it was proposed and the proximity of trees covered by protection orders.

The stratigraphy was recorded by means of pre-printed pro-formas for contexts and features, drawings and photography, even when no archaeological, or possible archaeological, deposits were encountered.

### **4.0: SUMMARY OF RESULTS**

Full details of all features and deposits recorded during the trial-trenching are provided in the appendix.

The natural subsoil was located in all of the trenches (for details see the appendix). The natural subsoil in the southern and central area of the site was made up of plastic yellow, blue and orange clays, whereas in the northern areas of the site the subsoil was a limestone bedrock. The topsoil was a consistent dark silty clay.

The excavation of the trial-trenches revealed few features or deposits of archaeological interest. A single plough furrow (9005, Trench 9; 1006, Trench 10; 11004, Trench 11; 12004, Trench 12) was identified. Further linear features investigated were revealed to be parts of post-medieval land drainage systems.

At the southern end of Trench 5, a shallow, roughly ovoid scoop or pit (5004) was excavated. This was seen to have gently sloping sides and a concave base. It was filled with a dark orange-brown silty clay with occasional stones (5003). This was sealed by a deep deposit of silty clay subsoil (5001) which became deeper to the north and which lay below the topsoil (5000).



In the central-northern area of the site it was clear that an episode of levelling had taken place. A deep layer of redeposited clay was identified overlying the natural slope of the field. This layer was observed in trial trenches 7-9, 14-16 and 19. This layer appears to be associated with an episode of levelling, either as a result of backfilling after limestone quarrying, or associated with the construction of the railway to the north.

Trenches 1 (1003) and 4 (4005) both contained the remains of large concrete floor bases. In each case the concrete slabs were located immediately above the natural clay ground surface and were sealed by a dark layer of silt containing modern debris. In both cases a layer of subsoil, sealed by topsoil overlaid this modern deposit. Each of the concrete slabs measured 0.1m in thickness and approximately 4m in width. Both were identified as the remains of Nissan huts.

No finds were recovered from the trial-trenching.

No datable evidence of medieval, or pre-medieval activity was recorded in any of the excavated trenches. The undated features identified comprised a single, undated pit (5004) and plough furrows (9005, 1006, 11004, 12004). Also found were the remains of concrete founded Nissan huts (1003 and 4005).

## **5.0: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Thanks are due to Ben Stephenson of CPM Environmental Planning and Design, and Hannah Fluck, Oxfordshire County Council Archaeological Officer, for their assistance. The evaluation was supervised by Kate Bain assisted by Kristina Krawiec, Sally Radford and Alexa Stevenson. The report was written by Kate Bain. Alex Jones edited the report and managed the project. The figures were prepared by Nigel Dodds.

## **6.0: REFERENCES**

Birmingham Archaeology 2005 *Milton Road, Bloxham, Oxfordshire. Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation.*

CPM Environmental Planning and Design 2001 *Church Street, Bloxham, Oxfordshire Archaeological Assessment.*

Oxfordshire County Council 2005 *Milton Road, Bloxham. Design Brief for Archaeological Field Evaluation*

## Appendix: detailed results of trial-trenching

Trench/ Context number	Context/ feature type	Description	Width (m)	Depth (m)
<b>Trench 1</b>				
1000	Topsoil	Turf over dark brown silty clay		0.45
1001	Subsoil	Orange- brown silty clay with small stones		0.2
1002	Layer	Dark brown friable silt-clay with modern debris		0.15
1003	Floor	Concrete slab		0.10
1004	Natural	Yellow-brown plastic clay with manganese flecks		
<b>Trench 2</b>				
2000	Topsoil	Turf over dark brown silty clay		0.5
2001	Subsoil	Orange- brown silty clay with small stones		0.2
2002	Natural	Yellow-brown plastic clay with manganese flecks		
<b>Trench 3</b>				
3000	Topsoil	Turf over dark brown silty clay		0.3
3001	Subsoil	Orange- brown silty clay with small stones		0.4
3002	Natural	Yellow-brown plastic clay with manganese flecks		
<b>Trench 4</b>				
4000	Topsoil	Turf over dark brown silty clay		0.1
4001	Layer	Dark brown silt with demolition rubble		0.15
4002	Layer	Dark brown friable silt-clay with modern debris		0.2
4003	Subsoil	Orange- brown silty clay with small stones		0.05
4004	Natural	Yellow-brown plastic clay with manganese flecks		
4005	Floor	Concrete slab		0.10
<b>Trench 5</b>				
5000	Topsoil	Turf over dark brown silty clay		0.10
5001	Subsoil	Orange- brown silty clay with small stones		0.7
5002	Natural	Yellow-brown plastic clay with manganese flecks		
5003	Fill	Orange-brown silt clay with some small stones	3.2	0.3
5004	Pit	Shallow oval feature with sloping sides and concave base.	3.2	0.3
<b>Trench 6</b>				
6000	Topsoil	Turf over dark brown silty clay		0.2
6001	Subsoil	Orange-brown silty clay with small stones		0.3
6002	Natural	Limestone bedrock		
<b>Trench 7</b>				
7000	Topsoil	Turf over dark brown silty clay		0.1
7001	Layer	Mixed orange-brown plastic silt clay	11	0.8
7002	Layer	Orange-brown friable silt clay		0.13
7003	Subsoil	Orange- brown silty clay with small stones		0.25
7004	Natural	Limestone bedrock		
<b>Trench 8</b>				
8000	Topsoil	Turf over dark brown silty clay		0.1
8001	Layer	Mixed orange-brown plastic silt clay		1.10
8002	Layer	Orange-brown friable silt clay		0.25
8003	Subsoil	Orange- brown silty clay with small stones		0.25
8004	Natural	Limestone bedrock		
<b>Trench 9</b>				
9000	Topsoil	Turf over dark brown silty clay		0.06

9001	Layer	Modern rubble and silt		0.08
9002	Subsoil	Orange-brown silty clay with small stones		0.35
9003	Natural	Yellow-brown and blue plastic clay with manganese flecks and bedrock outcrops		
9004	Fill	Orange-brown, compact, stony silt-clay	1.3	0.3
9005	Furrow	Shallow linear feature with sloping sides and concave base	1.3	0.3
<u>Trench 10</u>				
10000	Topsoil	Turf over dark brown silty clay		
10001	Subsoil	Orange-brown silty clay with small stones		
10002	Natural	Yellow-brown and blue plastic clay with manganese flecks and bedrock outcrops		
10003	Fill	Mid-brown silty clay with numerous stone fragments	0.32	0.36
10004	Linear	Steep sided linear feature with flattened base	0.32	0.36
10005	Fill	Orange-grey silty clay with manganese flecks	0.6	0.07
10006	Furrow	Broad, shallow linear with sloping sides and concave base	0.6	0.07
<u>Trench 11</u>				
11000	Topsoil	Turf over dark brown silty clay		0.2
11001	Subsoil	Mid-dark orange-brown silty clay with small stones		0.4
11002	Natural	Yellow-brown and blue plastic clay with some gravel		
11003	Fill	Orange-brown silt clay with small stones and charcoal flecks	0.9	0.1
11004	Furrow	Wide, shallow linear with bowl shaped profile	0.9	0.1
<u>Trench 12</u>				
12000	Topsoil	Turf over dark brown silty clay		0.2
12001	Subsoil	Mid-dark orange-brown silty clay with small stones		0.4
12002	Natural	Yellow-brown and blue plastic clay with some gravel		
12003	Fill	Yellow brown silt-clay with some gravel inclusions	1.2	0.24
12004	Furrow	Wide, shallow linear with bowl shaped profile	1.2	0.24
<u>Trench 13</u>				
13000	Topsoil	Turf over dark brown silty clay		0.15
13001	Subsoil	Mid-dark orange-brown silty clay with some charcoal		0.45
13002	Natural	Yellow-brown and blue plastic clay with some bedrock		
<u>Trench 14</u>				
14000	Topsoil	Turf over dark brown silty clay		0.02
14001	Subsoil	Mid-dark orange-brown silty clay with some charcoal		0.04
14002	Layer	Mixed orange-brown plastic silt clay		0.45
14003	Natural	Orange-grey plastic clay with manganese flecks		
<u>Trench 15</u>				
15000	Topsoil	Turf over dark brown silty clay		0.2
15001	Subsoil	Mid-dark orange-brown silty clay with some charcoal		0.3
15002	Layer	Mixed orange-brown plastic silt clay		0.3
15003	Natural	Orange-grey plastic clay with manganese flecks		
<u>Trench 16</u>				
16000	Topsoil	Turf over dark brown silty clay		0.15
16001	Subsoil	Mid-dark orange-brown silty clay with some charcoal		0.3
16002	Layer	Mixed orange-brown plastic silt clay		0.3
16004	Natural	Orange-grey plastic clay with manganese flecks and limestone bedrock		

<u>Trench 17</u>				
17000	Topsoil	Turf over dark brown silty clay		0.2
17001	Subsoil	Mid-dark orange-brown silty clay with some charcoal		0.3
17002	Natural	Orange-grey plastic clay with manganese flecks		
<u>Trench 18</u>				
18000	Topsoil	Turf over dark brown silty clay		0.1
18001	Subsoil	Mid-dark orange-brown silty clay with some charcoal		0.4
18002	Natural	Orange-grey plastic clay with manganese flecks		
<u>Trench 19</u>				
19000	Topsoil	Turf over dark brown silty clay		0.1
19001	Subsoil	Mid-dark orange-brown silty clay with some charcoal		0.2
19002	Layer	Mixed orange-brown plastic silt clay		0.25
19003	Natural	Orange-grey plastic clay with manganese flecks		

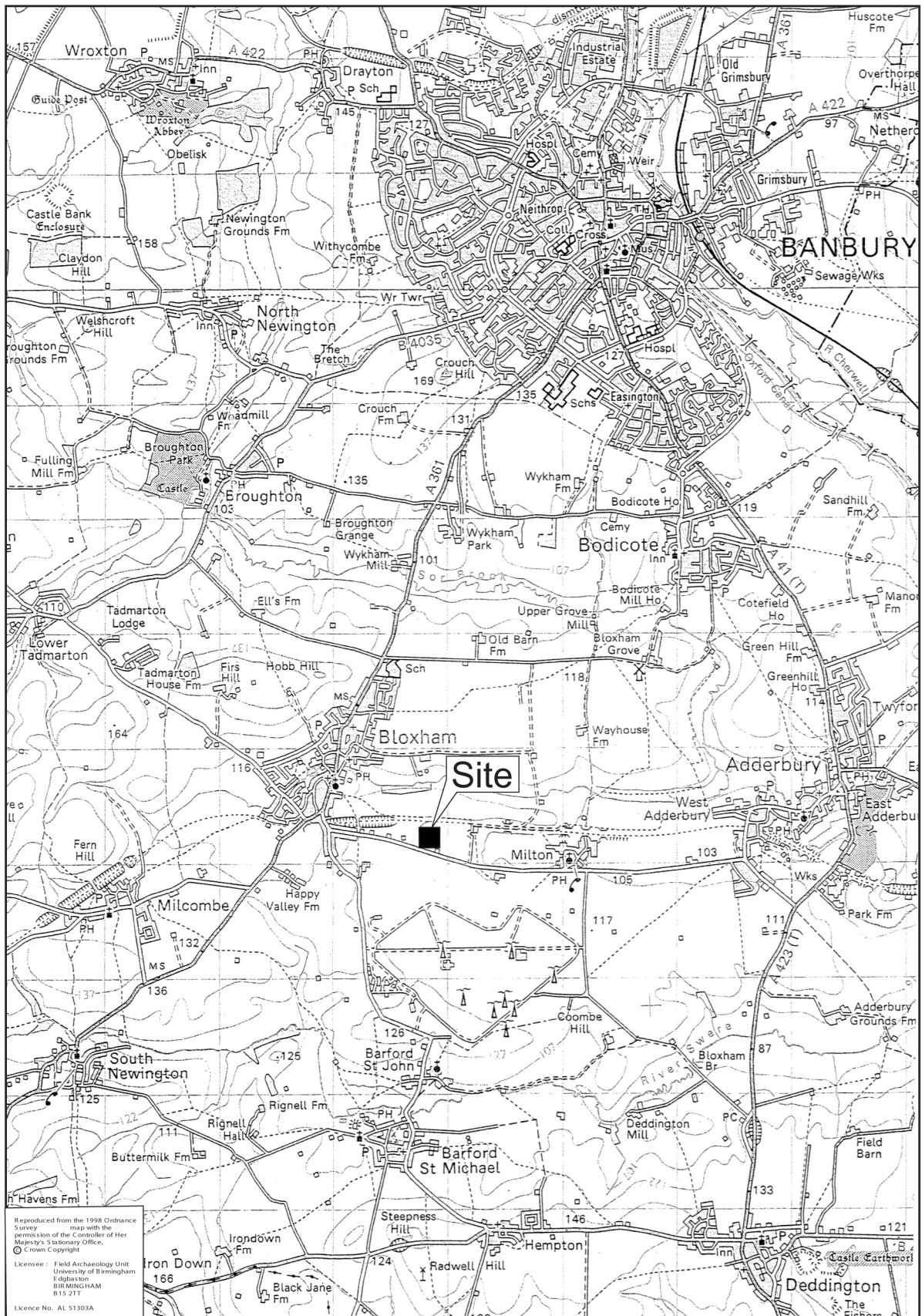
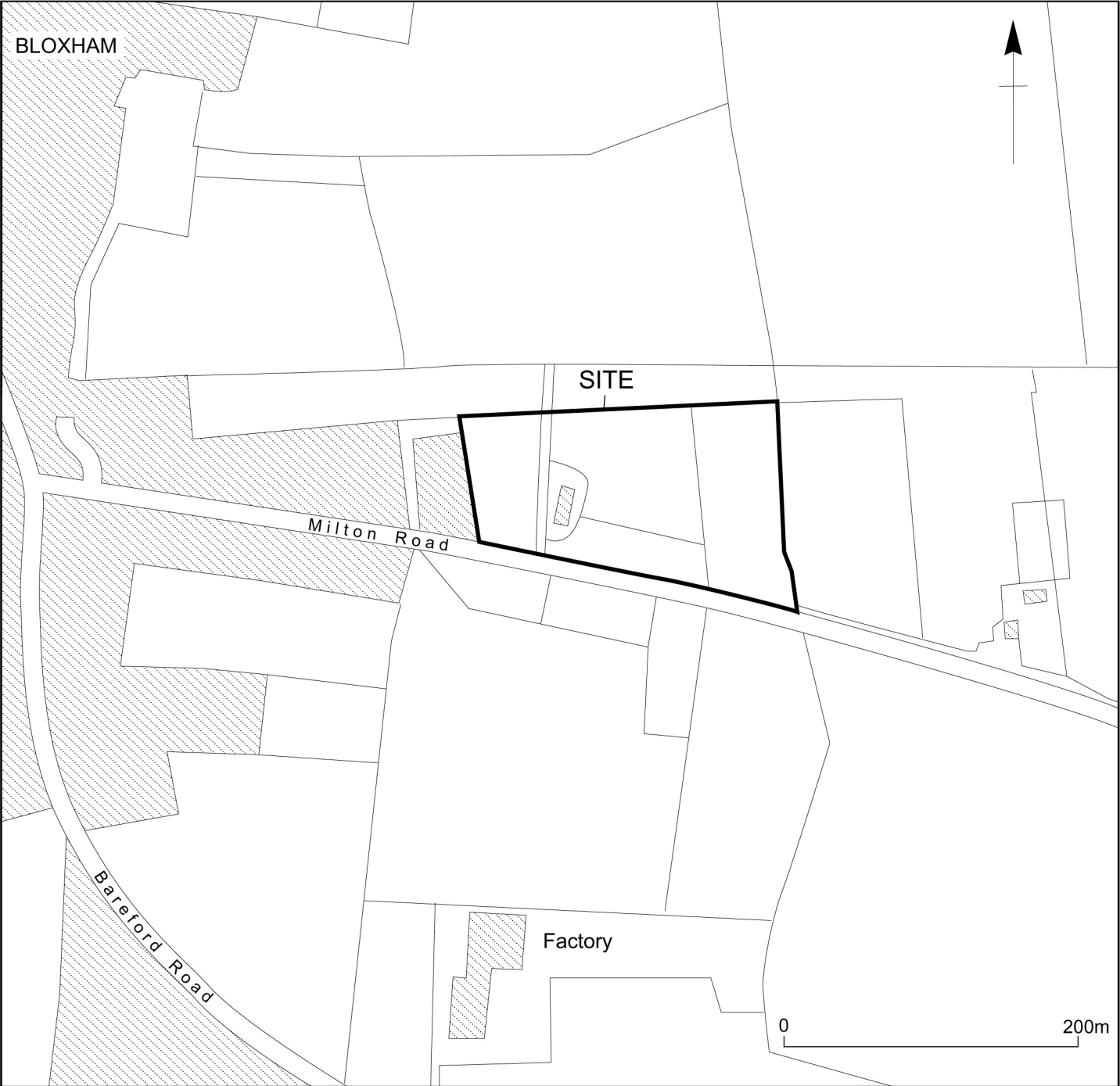


Fig.1



BLOXHAM

SITE

Milton Road

Bareford Road

Factory

0

200m

Fig.2

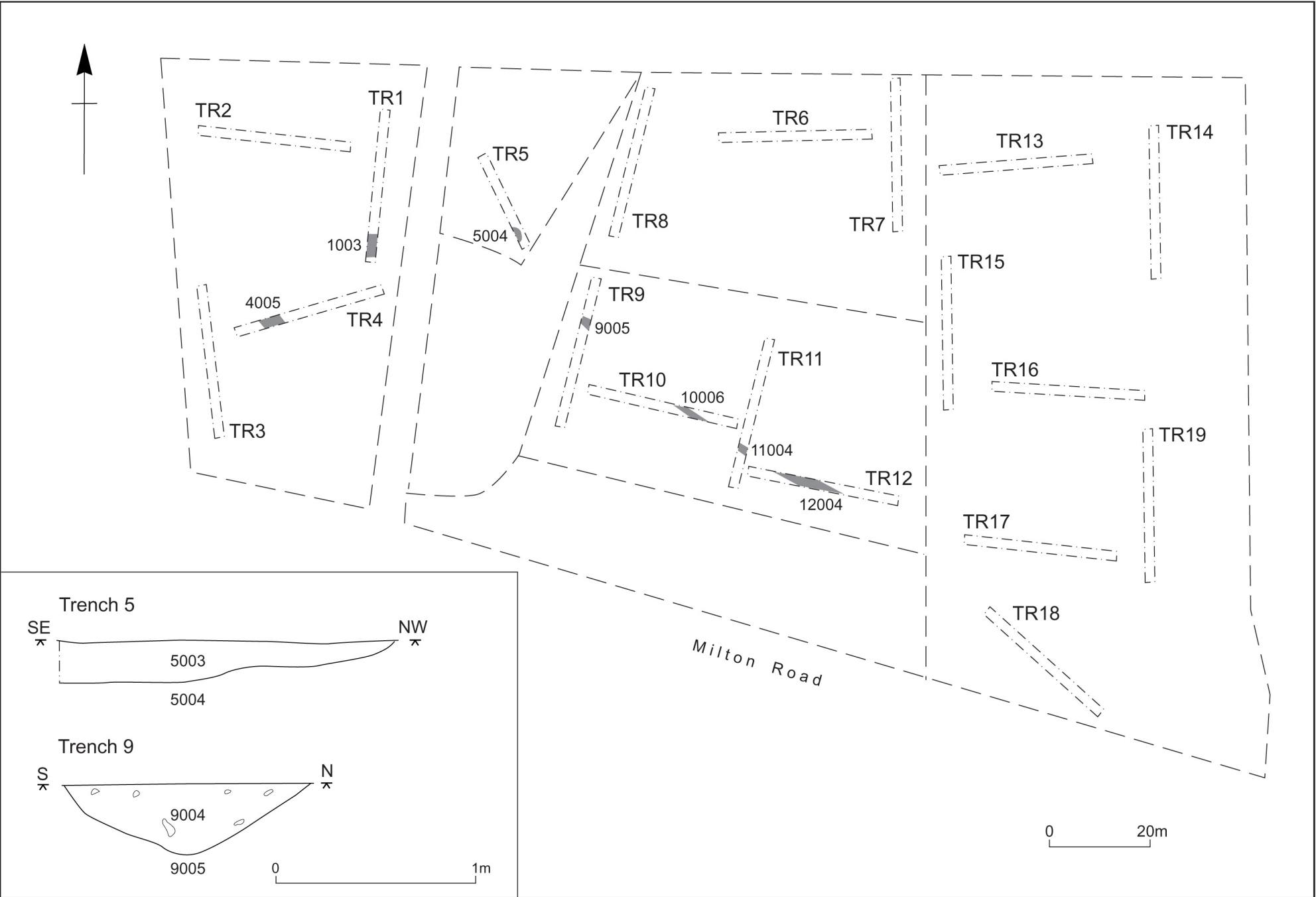


Fig.3