

birmingham archaeology

Tame Schemes, Kings Heath,
Birmingham:

an archaeological watching brief
2006

Project No. 1522

By

John Halsted

For

Severn Trent Ltd.

For further information please contact:

Alex Jones (Director)

Birmingham Archaeology

The University of Birmingham

Edgbaston

Birmingham B15 2TT

Tel: 0121 414 5513

Fax: 0121 414 5516

E-Mail: bham-arch@bham.ac.uk

Web Address: <http://www.barch.bham.ac.uk/bufau>

**TAME SCHEMES, KINGS HEATH, BIRMINGHAM
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF 2006**

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	LOCATION AND GEOLOGY	1
3	AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	1
4	METHODOLOGY	1
5	ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT	1
6	RESULTS	2
6.1	BAYSTON ROAD	2
6.2	GLASTONBURY ROAD	2
6.3	COCKS MOORS WOODS WEST	2
7	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	3
8	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
9	REFERENCES	3

Figures

Fig.1 General location plan

Fig. 2 Location of sites in relation to the Chinn Brook

Fig. 3 Location of test pits and significant sites and monuments at Bayston Road

Fig. 4 Location of test pits and significant sites and monuments at Glastonbury Road

Fig. 5 Location of test pits and significant Sites and Monuments at Cocks Moors Woods West

Fig. 6 Test pit stratigraphy at Bayston Road

Fig. 7 Test pit stratigraphy at Glastonbury Road and Cocks Moors Woods West

Plates

Plate 1, Glastonbury Road, Test Pit 1, looking east

Plate 2 Bayston Road, Test Pit 2, looking east

Plate 3, Cocks Moors Woods West, Test Pit 5, looking east

Appendices

Written Scheme of Investigation for an archaeological watching brief

SUMMARY

In November 2006 Birmingham Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief at three sites (Bayston Road, Glastonbury Road and Cocks Moors Woods West) in Kings Heath, south Birmingham (centred on NGR 407687, 279903) for Severn Trent Water Ltd. The watching Brief monitored the excavation of 12 geotechnical test pits in the vicinity of the Chinn Brook. The test pits revealed sequences of natural geology and alluviation, together with some waterlogged organic deposits at the site of Cocks Moors Woods West.

TAME SCHEMES, KINGS HEATH, BIRMINGHAM AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF, 2006

1 INTRODUCTION

In November 2006 Birmingham Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief at three sites in Kings Heath, south Birmingham (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Severn Trent Water Ltd. as part of geotechnical investigations in advance of a proposed pipeline scheme. This report outlines the results of the watching brief, which was prepared in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief (IFA 2001).

The watching brief conformed to a Written Scheme of Investigation (Appendix 1) which was approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to implementation, in accordance with guidelines laid down in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (DoE 1990) and Policy 8.36 of the Birmingham Unitary Development Plan.

2 LOCATION AND GEOLOGY

The scheme involved three sites situated in Kings Heath (Fig. 2), at Glastonbury Road (NGR 409071/280011), Bayston Road (NGR 407377/279299) and at Cocks Moors West (NGR 407620/279725). The three sites were all located in relative proximity to the Chinn Brook which runs in a broadly southwest to northeast direction through the area, feeding the River Cole to the east. The underlying geology of the area is of Keuper Marl, overlain by deposits of alluvium in association with the Chinn Brook (BGS map sheet 168).

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The principle aim of the project was to assess the survival and potential significance of any archaeology within the study area.

More specific aims were to:

- Record the stratigraphy within excavated test pits
- Establish the presence or absence of archaeological deposits at the three sites

4 METHODOLOGY

The excavation of all test pits was continuously monitored, and the stratigraphy recorded, even where no archaeological deposits were encountered. Deposits were recorded on pro forma written records, supplemented by colour print and monochrome photography. Further details can be found in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Appendix 1). Test pits were recorded as according to a numerical sequence at each site, equating with that set out by Severn Trent Water Ltd.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

A number of burnt mound sites have been recorded in the vicinity of the Chinn Brook. Two have been recorded to the south of Bayston Road (MBM 532 and MBM 2431; Fig.3) and two to the north of Glastonbury Road (MBM771; Fig. 4 and MBM 2407; not illustrated). These sites are characterised by heat-shattered stones forming mounds with charcoal, often found in association with stream channels and bogs and are usually considered to represent cooking

sites or sweat lodges (Barfield and Hodder 1987). They are considered to date to the Early and Middle Bronze Age (c. 1700-1000BC; Hodder 2004, 33) in Birmingham, and many examples have been recorded, including a dated example at Moseley Bog, c.3km to the northeast (Barfield and Hodder 1989).

A number of water mills have also been recorded in association with the Chinn Brook in the vicinity of the three sites under discussion here. To the south of Cocks Moors West, a mill has been identified adjacent to Mill Pool Hill (MBM1668; Fig. 5) and another, Trittiford Mill has been identified in the vicinity of Glastonbury Road (MBM 916; Fig. 4). The earliest reference for the latter site was in 1778, when it was in use as a corn mill, which was later converted into a rolling mill, in existence until 1914. An early post-medieval tile kiln (MBM 1849) has also been identified through documentary sources in the vicinity of Trittiford Mill, to the east of Glastonbury Road. Lime kilns have been recorded, associated with the Stratford Canal, to the south of Cocks Moors West, dating to the late 19th century (MBM 2336, not illustrated).

6 RESULTS

A schematic illustration of each test pit is shown in Figures 6 and 7, where the depths of deposits are indicated to scale.

6.1 Bayston Road

Six test pits were excavated at Bayston Road, to the northwest of the Chinn Brook (Fig. 3). The test pits were excavated between 2.9m and 3.9m in depth and the detailed stratigraphy of each pit is represented in Fig. 6. Comparable deposits were recorded in all test pits. The deepest test pit (TP2 excavated to 3.9m from the surface; Plate 1) recorded red-brown sandy clay with gravel, overlain by red clay with blue-grey mottling, followed by a light brown sandy clay with sub-rounded stones sealed by a mid –brown clay and topsoil. This sequence was replicated in all other test pits at Bayston Road, although the basal deposit of sandy clay with gravel was recorded in test pits 2, 4 and 5 only.

6.2 Glastonbury Road

Two test pits were excavated at Glastonbury Road (Fig. 4), to the south of the Chinn Brook, excavated to a depth of 3.9m and 3.7m respectively. The detailed stratigraphy recorded within these pits is shown in Fig. 7. Test pit 1 (Plate 2) revealed red clay-sand and gravel, overlain by red clay with blue-grey mottling, sealed by light brown clay with frequent stones and also with blue grey mottling. This was sealed by a layer of light grey-brown sandy clay, a thin band of dark humic silt and a thin band of reddish-brown silty clay, sealed by topsoil.

Test pit 2 revealed a comparable sequence of deposits. Red-brown clayey sand and gravel was again overlain by a red clay with blue-grey mottling, sealed by a light brown clay, with further blue grey mottling, a dark grey-brown humic silt sealed by a thin layer of silty clay and topsoil.

6.3 Cocks Moors Woods West

Five test pits were excavated at this site between 1.8m and 2.7m in depth, located to the northwest of the Chinn Brook (Fig. 5). Detailed stratigraphic profiles of each test pit are reproduced in Fig. 7.

Test pit 1 revealed stiff red clay with blue-grey mottling, overlain by light grey brown sandy clay, sealed by topsoil. Test pit 2 revealed stiff red clay at the base, overlain by a deposit of sand and gravel, sealed by light grey-brown sandy clay with frequent stones, sealed by topsoil.

Test pit 3 again revealed red clay, with occasional waterlogged twigs overlain by a thin band of sands and gravels, light blue-grey clay, a thin band of waterlogged twigs, sealed by light grey brown sandy clay with blue-grey mottling and topsoil.

Further waterlogged deposits were also recorded closer to the Chinn Brook within test pits 4 and 5. In test pit 4, a red-brown clay, again with gleyed blue-grey mottling was recorded at the base of the pit, overlain by light brown clay, with further blue-grey mottling, a thin band of sand and gravel, overlain by dark brown sandy silt with waterlogged twigs and wood fragments, c. 0.15m thick. This was overlain by further light brown clay with blue-grey mottling and iron mottling, suggesting gleying. This was sealed by reddish brown sandy clay and topsoil.

Test pit 5 (Plate 3) revealed red-brown sandy clay with occasional waterlogged twigs and branches, overlain by light grey-brown sand and gravel, and a layer of blue-grey clay with waterlogged twigs and branches, sealed by topsoil.

The test pits appear to have revealed natural red clays which have been subject to some waterlogging, as suggested by blue-grey gleying, sealed by alluvial deposits of sands and gravels and sandy clays with frequent stones. Test pits 3, 4 and 5 have also produced well-preserved organic components within clays and as thin bands of waterlogged twigs.

7 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The test pits at all three sites recorded natural clays, overlain by sequences of alluvial deposits relating to the Chinn Brook. Blue grey clay deposits suggest that the subsoils here are gleyed, indicating waterlogging. It is notable that organic preservation in the form of twigs found within both clays and distinct thin layers were recorded to the northwest of the Chinn Brook at the Cocks Moors West site. These organic layers may have been the product of alluvial sedimentation and waterlogging in this area. These deposits may represent areas with high potential for preserved palaeo-environmental deposits. No artefactual dating evidence was, however, recovered during the watching brief.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project was commissioned by Severn Trent Water Ltd. Thanks are due to Andy Foster for his co-operation and assistance throughout the project. Thanks are also due to Steve Wright for his cooperation on site. Thanks also go to Mike Hodder who monitored the project on behalf of Birmingham City Council Development Directorate. The watching Brief was undertaken by Andy Gittins. The written report was produced by John Halsted, who also monitored the project for Birmingham Archaeology.

9 REFERENCES

Barfield, L. and Hodder, M. 1987. 'Burnt mounds as saunas, and the prehistory of bathing' *Antiquity* 61, 370-79.

Barfield, L. and Hodder, M. 1989. 'Burnt mounds in the West Midlands: surveys and excavations', in A. Gibson (ed.) *Midlands Prehistory, some recent and current researches into the prehistory of central England*, B.A.R. British Series 204, 5-13.

Department of the Environment (DoE) 1990 *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning*

Hodder, M. *Birmingham the hidden history*, Stroud: tempus.

Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) 1999 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment*, rev. edn.

9.1 Cartographic Sources

British Geological Survey map sheet 168: Birmingham Solid and Drift.

Appendix 1

WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF TAME SCHEMES, SEVERN TRENT WATER

1.0: PLANNING BACKGROUND

Severn Trent are currently undertaking geotechnical investigations in advance of proposed new pipeline schemes. These investigations involve boreholes and the excavation of test-pits.

2.0: LOCATION

Geotechnical work is proposed in relation to three sites:
400059, Bayston Road, centred on NGR 407377/279299
400068 Cocks Moor West, centred on NGR 407620/279725
400080 Glastonbury Road, centred on NGR 409071/280011

3.0: ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

No archaeological information is presently available.

4.0: SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

An archaeologist will attend site to monitor the machine-excavated test-pits, and will record any features of archaeological, or possible archaeological interest. All excavation will be by machine. Hand-excavation will be confined to the hand-cleaning of deposits in section or profile, for their better definition.

5.0: STAFFING

The project manager will be John Halsted and the watching brief will be maintained by an experienced archaeologist.

GENERAL

A: AIMS

The general aims of an archaeological watching brief is to identify and record archaeological features and deposits uncovered during hand-cleaning of excavations in advance of construction or infrastructure projects, and to prepare a brief report summarising the findings.

B: METHODOLOGY

An experienced archaeologist will attend site to monitor the excavation of geotechnical test-pits.

Groundworks to be observed will include the stripping of topsoil, B-horizon subsoils, and trenches cut into the natural subsoil.

Following the stripping of topsoil the machined surface will be inspected, and sufficient hand-cleaning will be undertaken to facilitate the definition of archaeological, or possible archaeological features and deposits.

Where it is safe to do so, the archaeologist will enter construction trenches for the purpose of undertaking hand-cleaning of the trench sides and base for the better definition of any archaeological features or deposits present. No excavation of archaeological features, other than hand-cleaning, would be undertaken. Where it is unsafe to enter deep trenches archaeological recording will be confined to photography and the completion of pre-printed pro-formas.

Should significant, or potentially significant groups of archaeological features be uncovered the Planning Archaeologist will be consulted immediately so that an alternative strategy for more detailed investigation can be devised, in consultation with the developer.

Human remains

No excavation of human remains would be undertaken until a Department of Constitutional Affairs Licence was obtained, and the Planning Archaeologist, the local Coroner, the Police, the Archaeological Consultant (if any) consulted.

Recording

Recording would be by means of pre-printed pro-formas for contexts and features, supplemented by plans (1:20 and 1:50 as appropriate) and sections (1:10 and 1:20 as appropriate), and 35mm monochrome print and colour slide photography.

Finds

Finds would be recovered by context would be washed, marked and bagged. Appropriate conservation work would be undertaken. A metal detector would be used as an aid to finds recovery.

Environmental sampling

All datable features would be sampled objectively for the recovery of charred or waterlogged plant remains, pollen and insect remains.

C: REPORT FORMAT

The archaeological watching brief report will comprise:

Description of the development and archaeological background

Details of the archaeological results, set within their context.

Spot-dating of datable finds, and brief finds and environmental reports

A discussion of the watching brief results.

Plans showing the locations and extent of the development site subjected to the watching brief, supported by historic map extracts to place the watching brief results in the wider context.

Simplified feature plans and sections, where applicable.

A selection of colour photographs, where applicable.

D: PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Birmingham Archaeology is a Registered Archaeological Organisation (RAO) with the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA)

All Birmingham Archaeology staff will follow the Code of Conduct of the IFA at all times.

The watching brief will be undertaken in accordance with the standards laid down in the 'Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs' (1999)

The archaeological watching brief will follow the specific guidelines and requirements laid down in the Design Brief prepared by the relevant Planning Archaeologist, and the particular requirements set down in this document, which will be followed by all project staff. All variations will be agreed in advance with the relevant Planning Archaeologist and Archaeological Consultant (as appropriate).

E: HEALTH AND SAFETY

A Risk Assessment will be undertaken before commencement of the archaeological watching brief.

Birmingham Archaeology staff will follow the Health and safety guidelines contained in the Birmingham Archaeology Health and Safety Manual. This follows the requirements of the SCAUM Health and Safety Manual, and is approved by the Health and Safety Unit of the University of Birmingham.

F: PROGRAMME

The watching brief programme will follow that of the general contractor undertaking geotechnical groundworks, with regular liaison between Birmingham Archaeology and the general contractor to ensure that regular archaeological attendance is maintained during the groundworks sufficient to ensure that the requirements of the Design Brief are fulfilled.

A suitable time allowance for hand-cleaning and recording of archaeological features and deposits should be made by the developer and their construction groundworkers. The archaeologist undertaking the watching brief will maintain regular liaison with the site manager/foreman to keep disruption of the construction programme to a minimum.



Fig.1

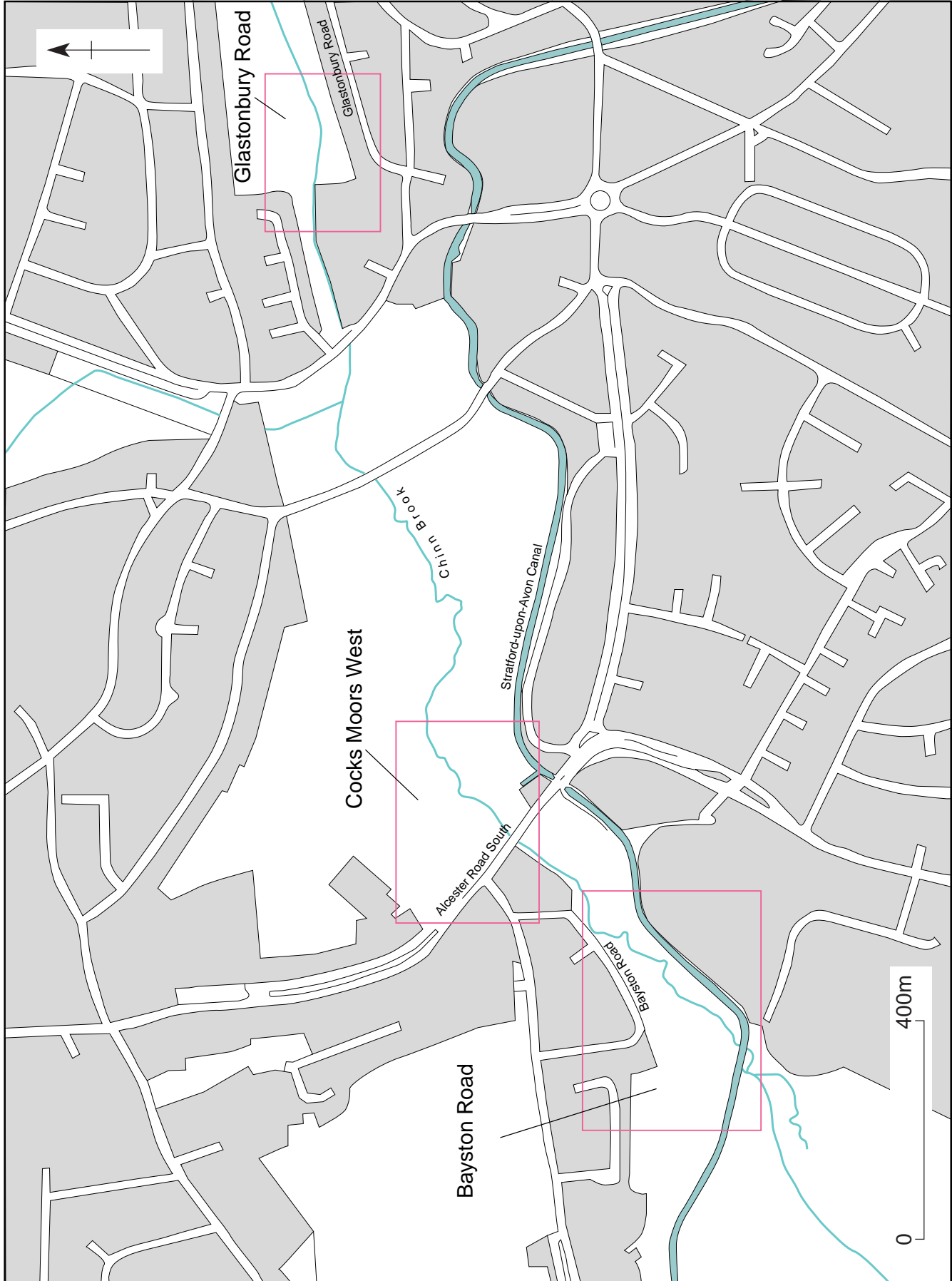


Fig.2

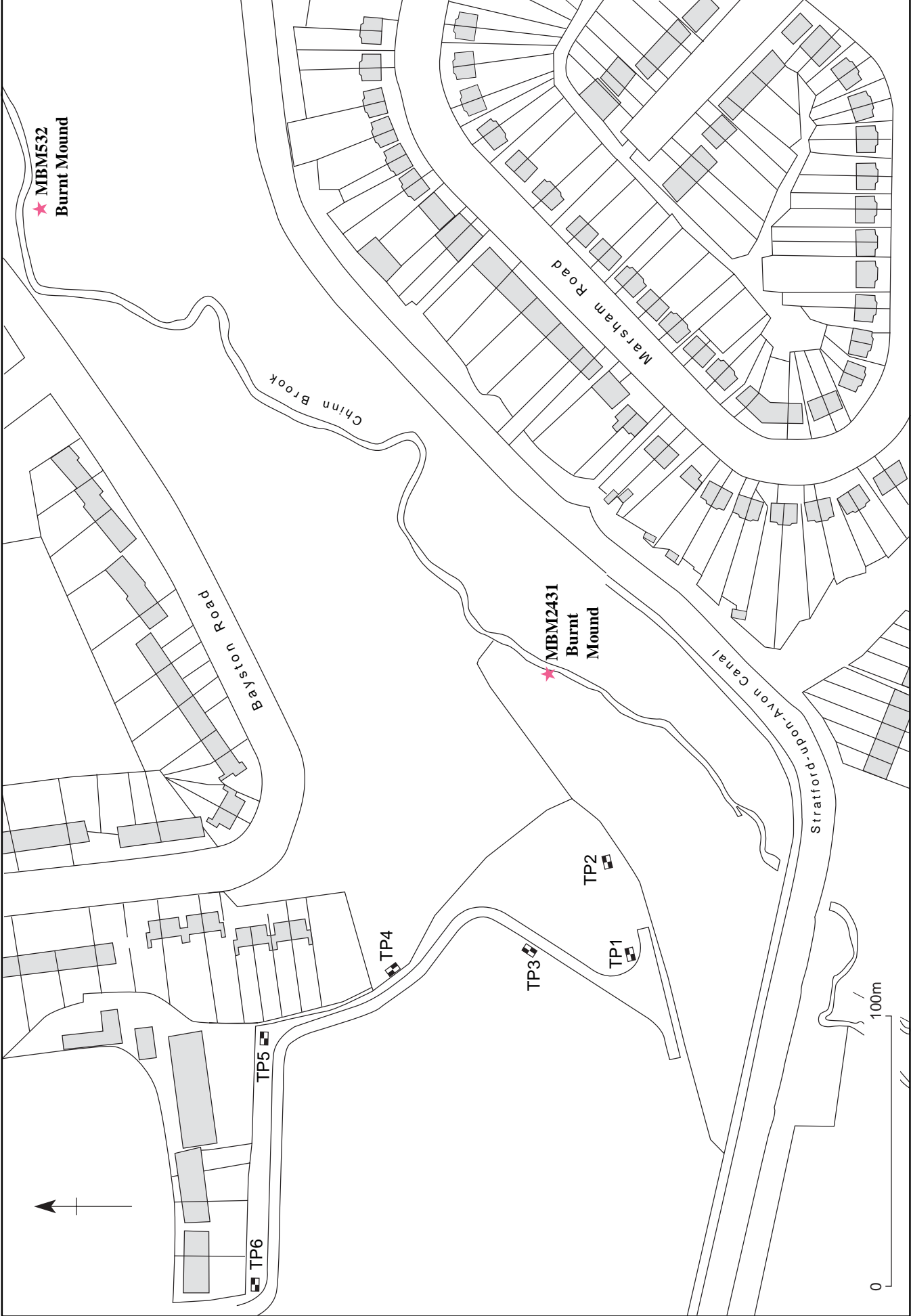


Fig.3

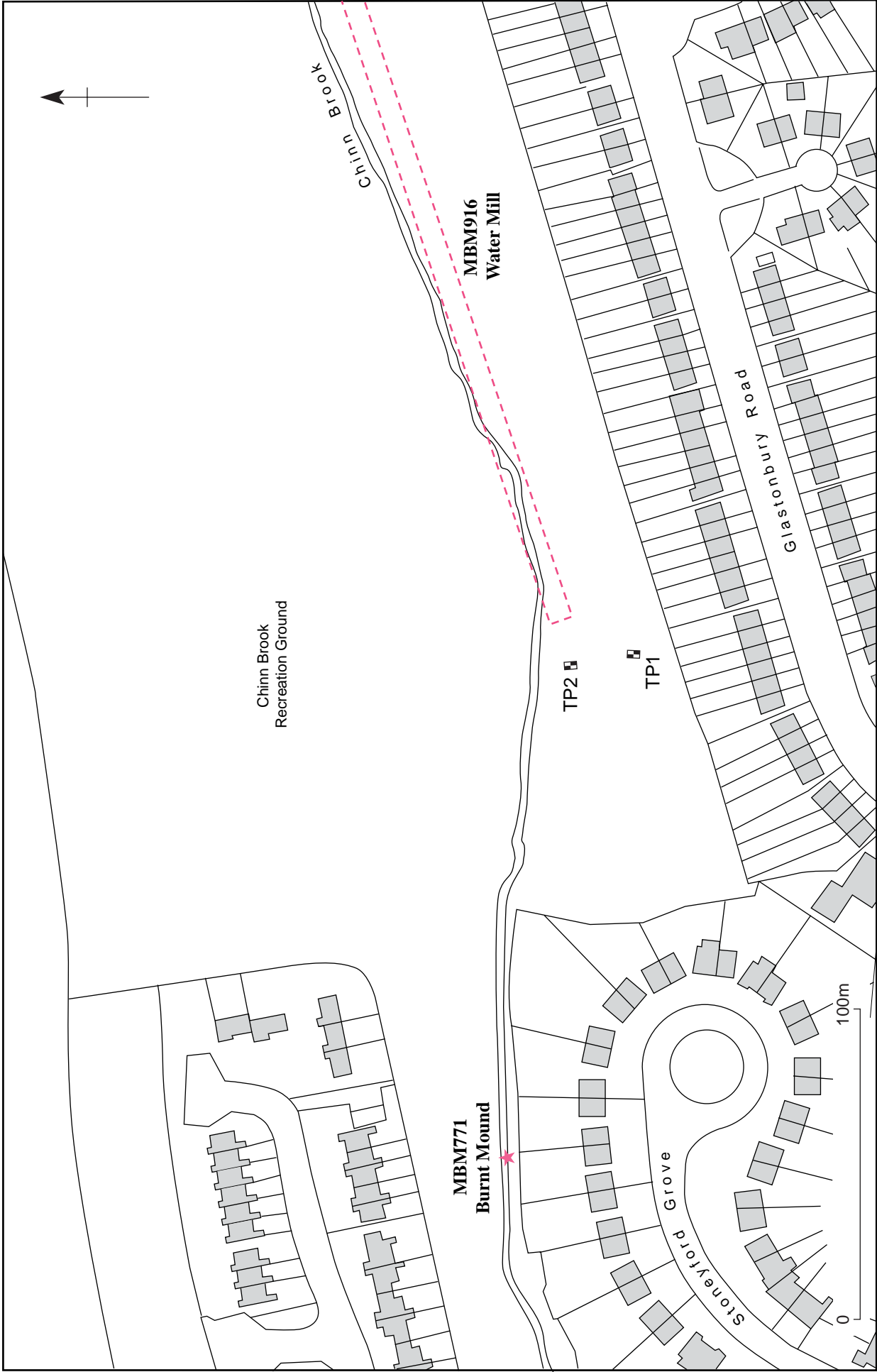


Fig.4

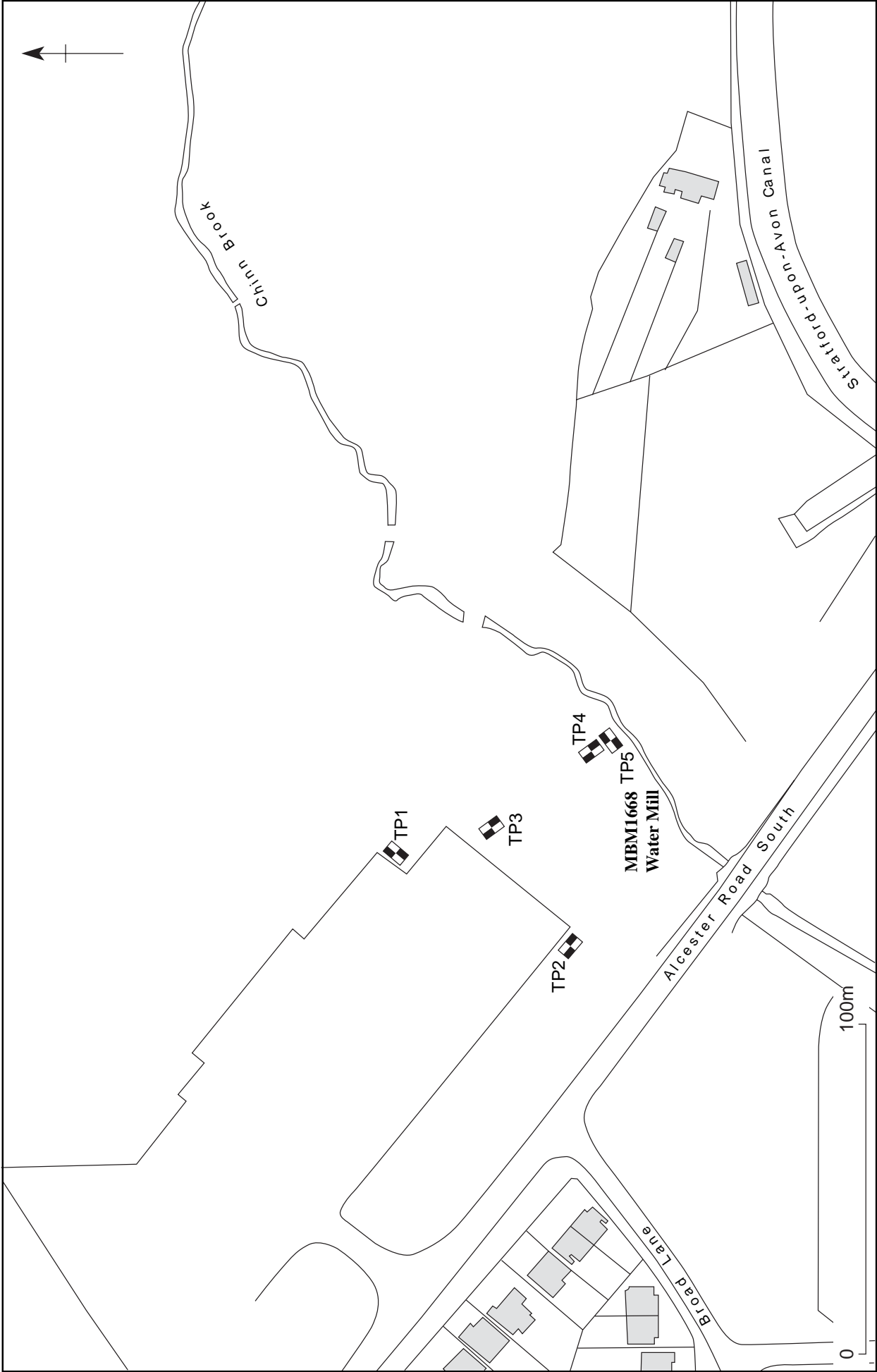


Fig.5

Bayston Road

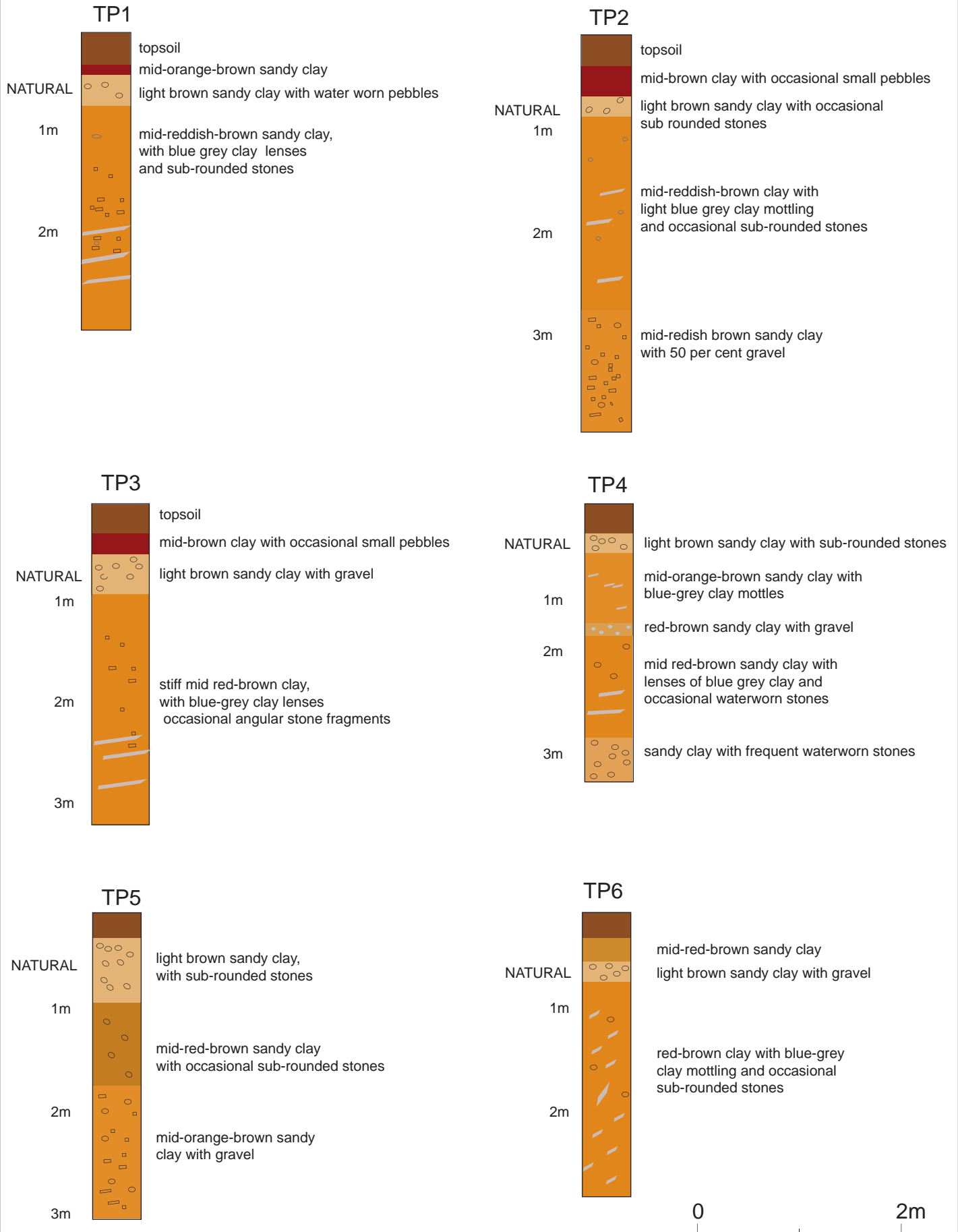
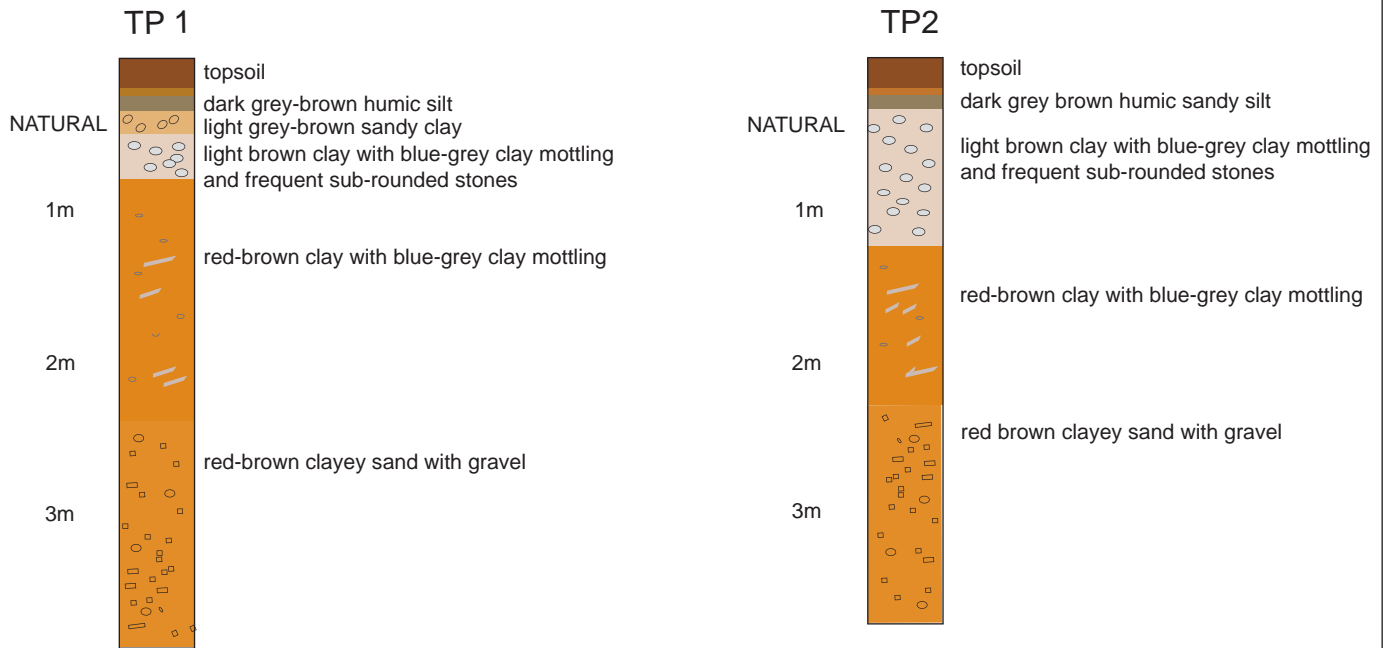


Fig.6

Glastonbury Road



Cocks Moors Woods West

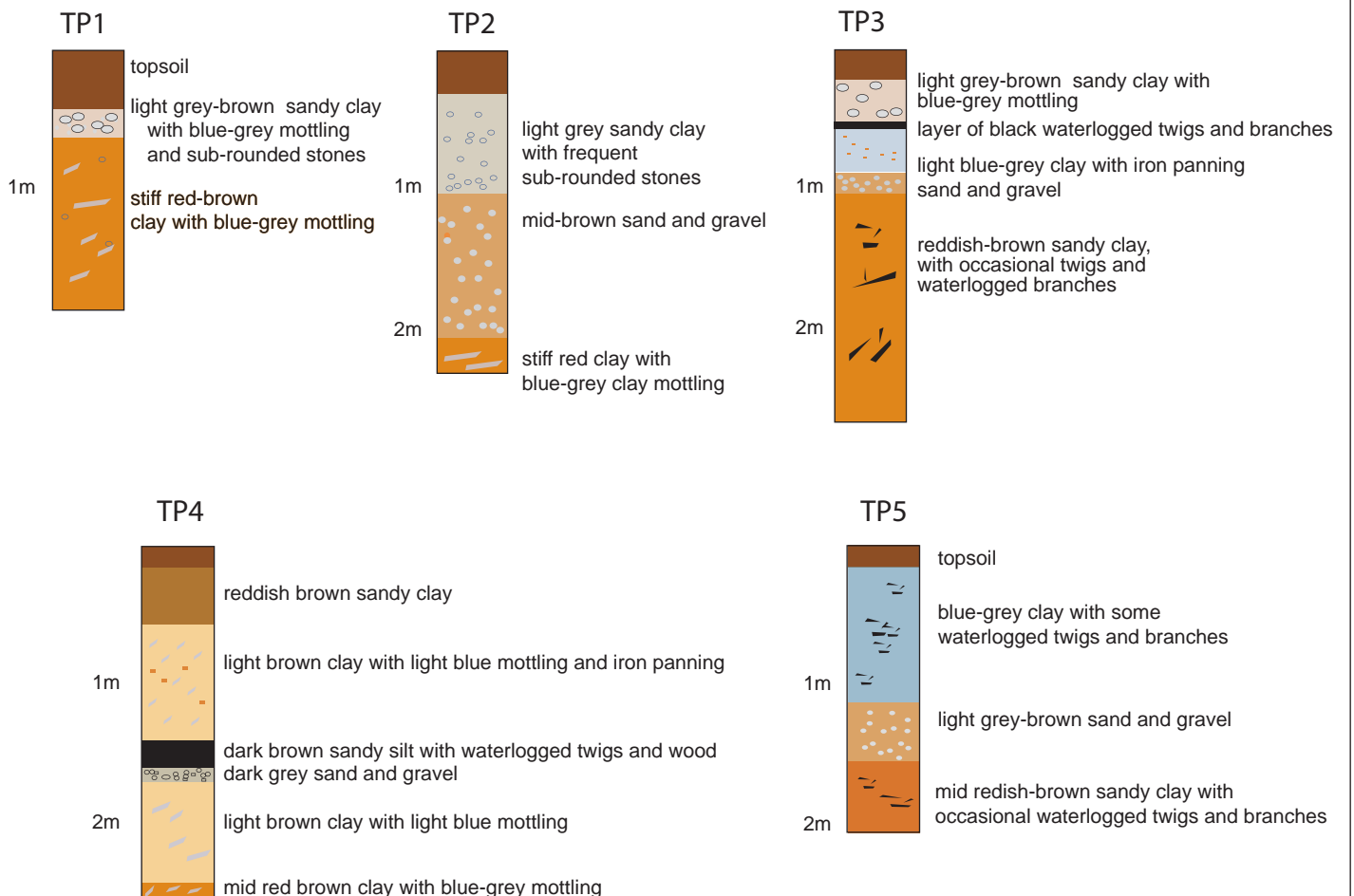


Fig.7



Plate 1



Plate 2



Plate 3