

**QUEEN'S SCONCE AND DEVON PARK,  
NEWARK, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SCHEME OF MONITORING WORKS**

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by

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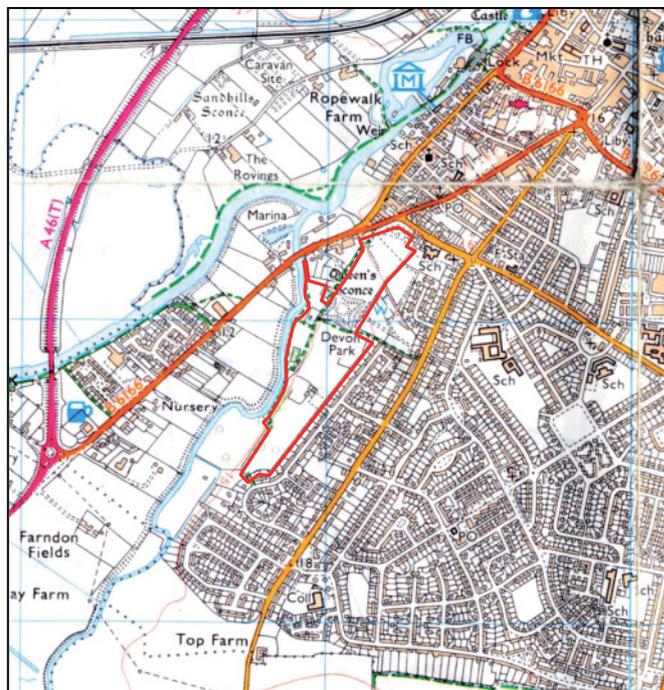
## Summary

Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out during an extensive programme of improvement works to Sconce and Devon Park in Newark on Trent, Nottinghamshire. The park comprises four character areas: the Sconce Hills; the Queen's Sconce (a Scheduled Ancient Monument); Devon Pastures Nature Reserve, and Devon Park.

The Queen's Sconce was constructed during the Civil War as part of a chain of earthwork fortifications outside the town walls, which are some of the most impressive and best preserved field fortifications in Britain. Other areas of the park had previous uses as a linen manufacturing site and the route of an industrial tramway.

The excavation of two trenches to carry the foundations of a bridge access to the Queen's Sconce revealed several phases of deposits and possible linear features: the earliest deposit exposed probably dates to the original construction of the Sconce earthwork.

Other features encountered include a concrete structure identified as a World War II Home Guard hut, and a number of brick structures probably dating from earlier phases of landscaping in the park, which has been open to the public since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.



**Figure 1:** Location plan of Devon Park and the Queen's Sconce (marked in red) at scale 1:25,000.

## **1.0 Introduction**

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd (PCAS) carried out a programme of archaeological observation and recording on a series of groundworks associated with improvements to the Queen's Sconce and Devon Park in Newark, Nottinghamshire. The works included repair and restoration of the Queen's Sconce earthwork, with access improvements including the construction of a bridge; the laying of new paths in four areas of the park; improvements to the Farndon Road entrance and the road to St. Catherine's Cottage; a car park extension; improvements to the park management building and play area at the north end of the park, and the installation of a CCTV system.

## **2.0 Site location and description (figs. 1 & 2)**

Sconce and Devon Park is located on the south-western edge of the town of Newark-on-Trent, within the administrative district of Newark and Sherwood.

Sconce and Devon Park is the largest area of public green space in Newark, covering an area of approximately 15 hectares. It is an urban park, open to the public since the late 19th century. There are four broad character areas: the Sconce Hills; the Queen's Sconce, a Civil War earthwork fortification created by the royalist defenders in 1643 and now a Scheduled Ancient Monument (plate 1); Devon Pastures Nature Reserve, and Devon Park, which contains formal sports provision (Hall Aitken, 2009).

## **3.0 Geology and topography**

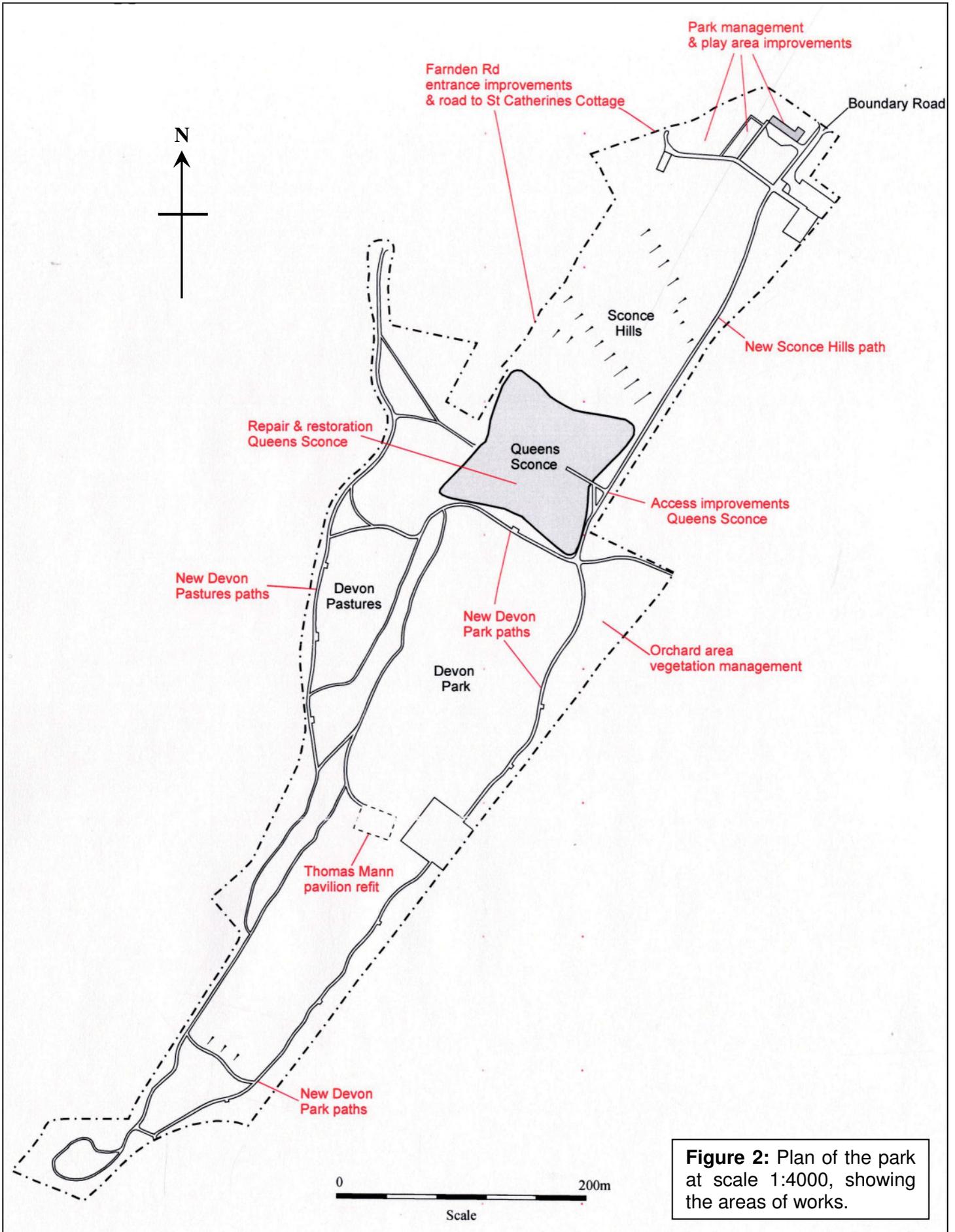
The drift geology over most of the site consists of Balderton Sand and Gravel, with a narrow band of alluvium, laid down by the River Devon, on its north-western edge. The Balderton Sand and Gravel, part of the terraces laid down by the River Trent, forms an island on which most of the town of Newark stands: the deposit does not extend to the eastern side of the Trent, and it is probably for this reason that the core of the town is entirely on the western side. The underlying solid geology is Middle to Upper Triassic Edwalton Formation Mudstone (BGS, 1996).

The park is situated on level, low-lying ground within the Trent valley, to the south-east of the confluence of the River Trent with its tributary, the River Devon. The River Devon forms much of the park's western border.

## **4.0 Planning background**

Planning permission was granted for the construction of a new park management and visitors' centre with associated planting and car parking, the erection of play equipment and the demolition of a small existing building; the development of a footpath network over the whole site; various areas of planting, and the construction of a new access bridge leading onto the top of the Queen's Sconce Scheduled Ancient Monument.

The various stages of development involved a range of groundworks, and as a condition of the planning consent, these were monitored by a scheme of archaeological works.



## 5.0 Archaeological and historical background

Newark's origins appear to lie in the Roman period, as a small town lying on the Fosse Way, the Roman road, originally of military construction, that connected Lincoln with Exeter and passes directly to the north-west of Devon Park.

The place-name 'Newark' is of Anglo-Saxon derivation: the first written reference to '*Newarcha*' occurs shortly before the Norman Conquest. The literal meaning is 'new work', referring to a recently constructed fortification. Newark's defences were probably 'new' in comparison with the 'old work' of the Roman fortification of Margidunum, 11 miles to the south-west along the Fosse Way (Gover *et al.*, 1979, p. 199). Newark became a *burh* – a fortified settlement – in the early or mid 9<sup>th</sup> century, in response to the Scandinavian raids and the setting up of the Danelaw to the north, and at least part of the 'work' may date from this period: excavation within the town exposed a length of 10<sup>th</sup> century rampart (Gardner *et al.*, 2006).

The Domesday Book listings for the town of Newark are conflated with the two outlying estates of Balderton and Farndon, attached to the manor. However, the survey lists '56 *burgesses*', and since a *burgess* was a dweller in a *burh*, this must refer to the number of households within the walls of Newark town alone, while the other 53 taxable inhabitants and their households lived elsewhere on the manor (Williams and Martin, 1992, p. 762).

There was no castle in Newark at the time of the Domesday Survey, and no standing masonry remains from the first castle built there. The earliest work in the present castle, the North Gateway, dates from AD 1170-75; there is other 12<sup>th</sup> century masonry, and work from the late 13<sup>th</sup> and late 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. The castle was described as derelict in 1581, but repaired later in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, only to be taken and destroyed by the Parliamentarians in the Civil War; it remains as a ruin (Pevsner, 1951; SMR ref. 3040).

Newark was a Royalist stronghold during much of the Civil War, and was intermittently besieged by the Parliamentary forces over a period of some four years, eventually falling to General Poyntz in May 1646. The town was defended by a range of earthwork fortifications outside the town walls, which remain some of the most impressive and best preserved field fortifications in Britain. They included a pair of earthwork forts, the King's and Queen's Sconces (a word derived from the Dutch *schans*, 'fort', and used in English to mean a small protective fortification or earthwork). These were earthworks constructed outside the town, serving as a platform for ordnance that could provide covering fire in all directions over the flat meadows. The location of the Queen's Sconce on a prominent knoll, with commanding views of the crossing point over the River Devon at Markhall Bridge and of the Fosse Way, suggests that it was primarily designed to cover the southern approach to the town whilst denying control of a tactically important piece of high ground to the attackers.

The Queen's Sconce fortification is nearly 300 feet across. It is square with arrowhead bastions at each corner, surrounded by a wide, deep ditch. The sconce is constructed of local gravel, but the steep angle of repose suggests that it was reinforced in some way. The mass of the sconce was designed to absorb the impact of cannon fire and its shape to deflect cannon balls. It is likely to have had an earthen parapet to protect troops and gun emplacements, and timber storm poles projecting horizontally from the bastions to deter access by foot soldiers. Cannon would have been located in the bastions to provide flanking lines of fire. A timber drawbridge was the most likely means of access for troops, stores and ammunition. The Sconce was

manned in rotation by sections of troops stationed outside the garrison (FSDP, n.d.). It is now a Scheduled Ancient Monument (no. 30213).

To the west of the knoll occupied by the Queen's Sconce was a triangular meadow, sloping gently down to the River Devon and extending to Devon Bridge and the stretch of the Fosse Way known as Farndon Road. As development began to spread from the town centre in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, George Scales established a linen factory at the north end of the meadow. Its water supply came from the spring, known as St Catherine's Well, immediately west of the south-west bastion of the Queen's Sconce. The water's purity and mineral content was believed not only to have healing properties, but to aid the washing and bleaching of the linen. The meadow area, known as the Croft, was used as a bleaching ground, where the cloth was exposed to the sun for three weeks to a month. The company closed in 1889, and the only standing remnant of the linen factory complex is the house now known as Orchard House on Farndon Road (*ibid.*).

Throughout the period of the Scales Linen Factory's operation, the field containing the Queen's Sconce appears to have remained unaltered, but by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the town was beginning to expand, with plots north and east of the sconce being laid out as allotments. Between 1897 and 1901, a tramway was laid to the north of the Queen's Sconce, dividing the plot on which the earthwork lay. It was built to serve the Cafferata and Co. gypsum works at Hawton south of Newark, bringing the gypsum to a quay on the Trent north of the Scales Linen Factory site (*ibid.*).

Gypsum has been quarried and processed into plaster at Newark since the Roman period; both construction-grade plaster and plaster of Paris for medical use were being produced in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (*ibid.*). William Cafferata founded his business in 1858, and in 1862, purchased a quarry and works at Beacon Hill, along with a brickworks. The brickworks had a high production rate, but the bricks themselves were of poor quality and tended not to be weatherproof. Brick manufacture was discontinued, but the brickworks were reopened for a period between the First and Second World Wars, producing some 100,000 bricks per week (Cafferata, 2011). These bricks, stamped 'Cafferata & Co.', are frequently to be found in the area.

Three archaeological watching briefs were carried out by the John Samuels Archaeological Consultancy between 2002 and 2005 in the Devon Park sports ground area, but none encountered any features that could be dated to the Civil War. However, a large number of individual finds from this period have been retrieved from the area by metal-detecting (JSAC, 2005).

## 6.0 Methodology

Construction work began in February 2009, with borehole and other geotechnical investigations; the first borehole was excavated under archaeological supervision.

The monitoring programme continued in August 2009, with the extension of an existing car park area, to the west of the school boundary hedge, into the park. The groundworks for the construction of the new park management building were also monitored: these consisted of reduction of the site and the excavation of 12 pits for 2m x 2m pads and 1m wide connecting strip foundations, with two linear trenches for a new underground heating system, a large pit for a rainwater harvesting tank and two soakaway pits.

A network of paths was created around the park during the remainder of 2009: the impact of this work proved to be minimal and intermittent monitoring was arranged.

The works for the new bridge providing access into the interior of the Queen's Sconce earthwork took place in May 2010. Plastic membrane was laid over the grass around the intended pile positions on the east side of the Sconce. The membrane was then covered with hardcore to raise the level before the piling rig was erected. The piles on the western side of the bridge position were driven directly into the existing ground surface. Spoil displaced by the piles was metal-detected, screened and used for erosion scar repairs across the monument. As part of these works, a single pile-cap pit was excavated on either side of the bridge position, partly by hand but with some machine assistance. Topsoil stripping for the construction of a flight of steps, an access ramp and a viewing area was also monitored. Minor groundworks included the hand excavation of a circular footing for the construction of an orientation plate, the excavation of some 210 additional post holes to improve and repair the kerb rail around the Sconce ditch, and the excavation of a number of pits for tree planting.

A final phase of works took place in August 2010, when the groundworks for the installation of a CCTV system were monitored.

All machine excavation was carried out using flat-bladed ditching buckets. Spoil heaps were checked with a metal-detector for small metal items such as musket balls. Where the presence of archaeological features was suspected, exposed surfaces were cleaned by hand and a sample section excavated where required. All features and deposits seen were recorded on standard PCAS context recording sheets, and drawn in plan and section at an appropriate scale; a photographic record was maintained in colour slide, monochrome and digital formats (appendix 1). The fieldwork was completed on August 19<sup>th</sup> 2010, and was undertaken by Phil Chavasse, Laura Keal, Mike Rowe and Ian Rowlandson.

## **7.0 Results**

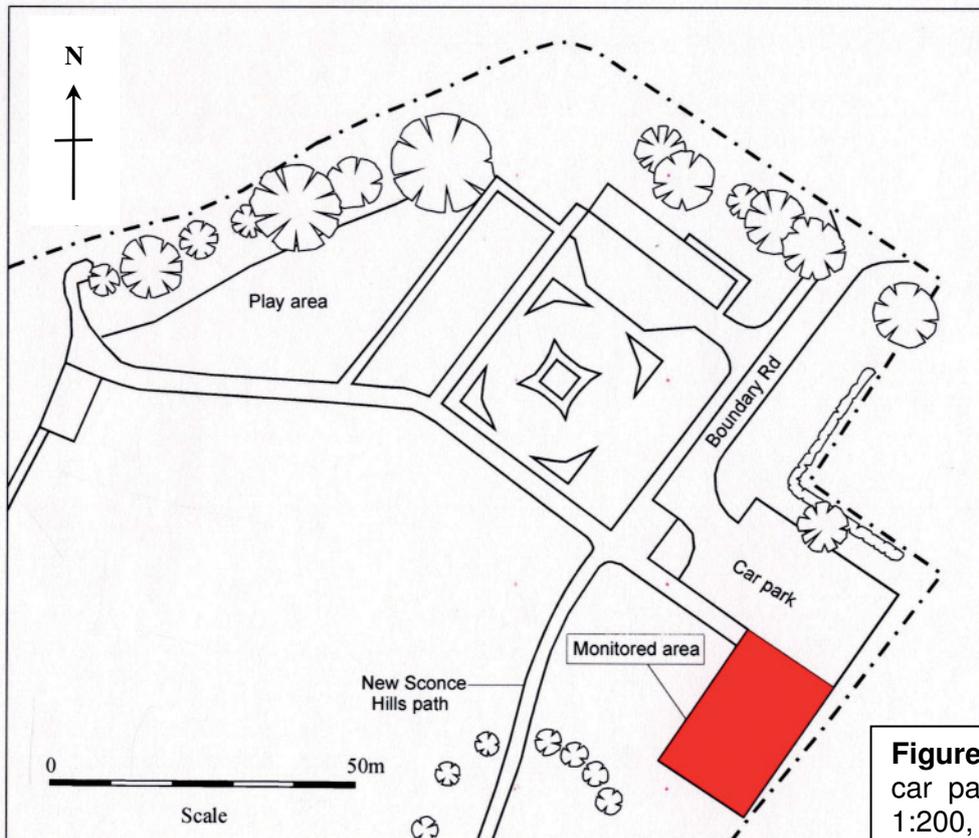
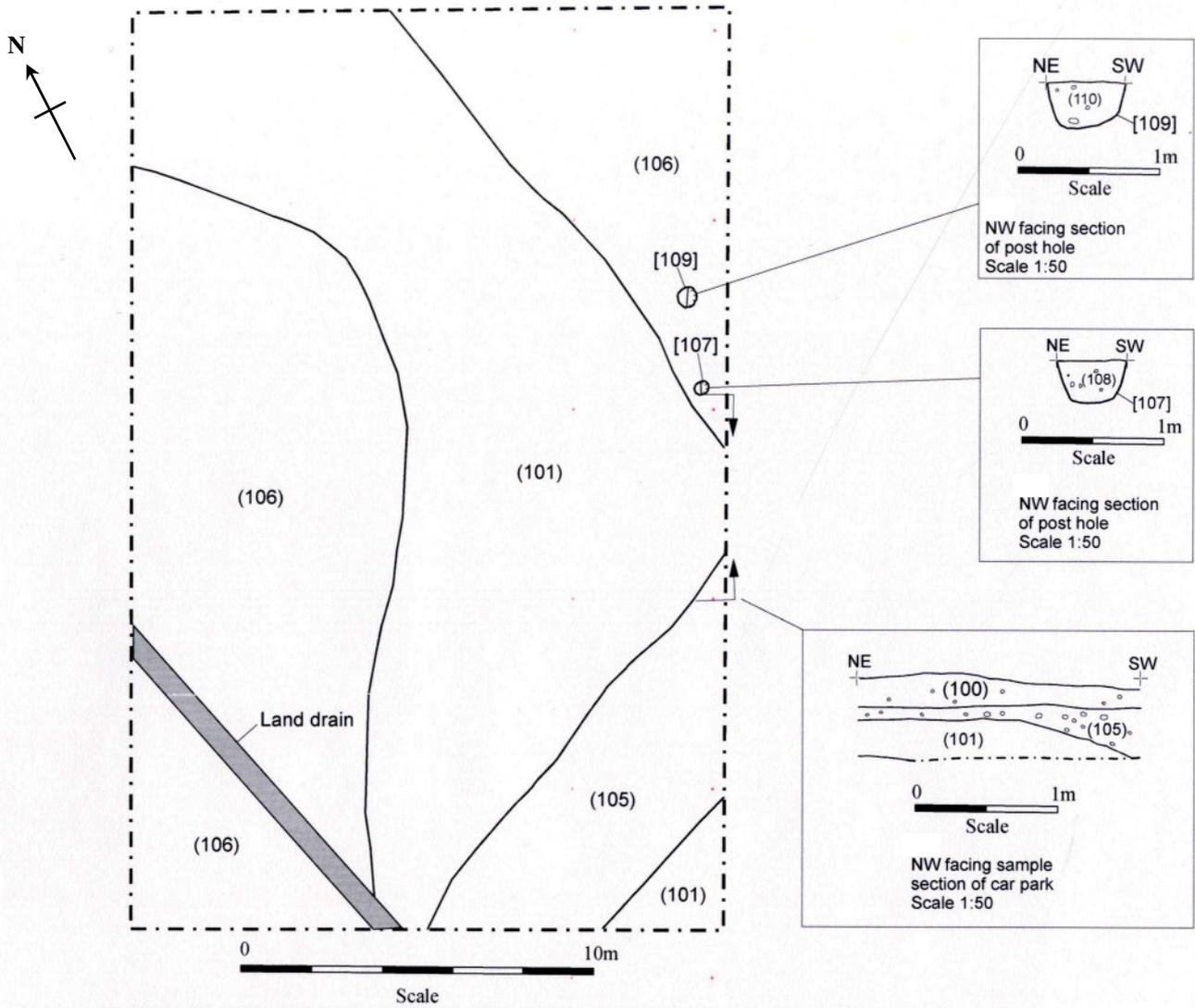
### **7.1 Borehole 1**

Borehole 1 was approximately 3m deep and 0.15m in diameter. Four deposits were noticed within the extracted core: the modern topsoil, 001, a possible subsoil layer, 002, and a deposit of sand and gravel, 003, overlying a further natural deposit of sand 004. No finds were retrieved, and no further boreholes were monitored.

### **7.2 Car park extension (fig. 3)**

The modern turf and topsoil layer 156 was 0.15m deep; it was the same as the topsoil numbered 100 in other areas of the park, but a separate context number was assigned for finds location purposes. The soil had been spread over a layer of redeposited sand and gravel, 105, which had been used to level a linear depression running across the area on a north-east/south-west alignment. A vague linear feature in this position can be made out on GoogleEarth air photography from 1999, and probably represents subsidence above a large buried service, such as a sewer. The redeposited material 105, which was over 0.4m thick, incorporated concrete rubble and 19th century bricks stamped 'Cafferata' (see historical background, section 5).

The gravel levelling material overlay a buried topsoil, 152, equating to layer 101 in other areas of the park, and also numbered separately for finds location purposes. This layer was deeper across the middle of the car-park extension, and may have been levelling a curvilinear depression. Below 101 was a mixed layer of soil and



**Figure 3:** Plan of monitored car park extension at scale 1:200, with section drawings at scale 1:50.

gravel, 106, which may have been a subsoil, but which was not sufficiently exposed to ascertain its nature with any confidence. Natural deposits were not exposed in this area.

Two post-holes were identified cutting through layer 106. Post-holes 107 and 109 were 2m apart and on a north-east to south-west alignment 3m from the hedge boundary. Both were 0.50m in diameter; 107 was 0.30m deep and 109 was 0.34m deep. They had fills resembling the overlying buried topsoil 152, and were interpreted as part of a relatively modern fence line.

### **7.3 Park Management Building (fig. 4)**

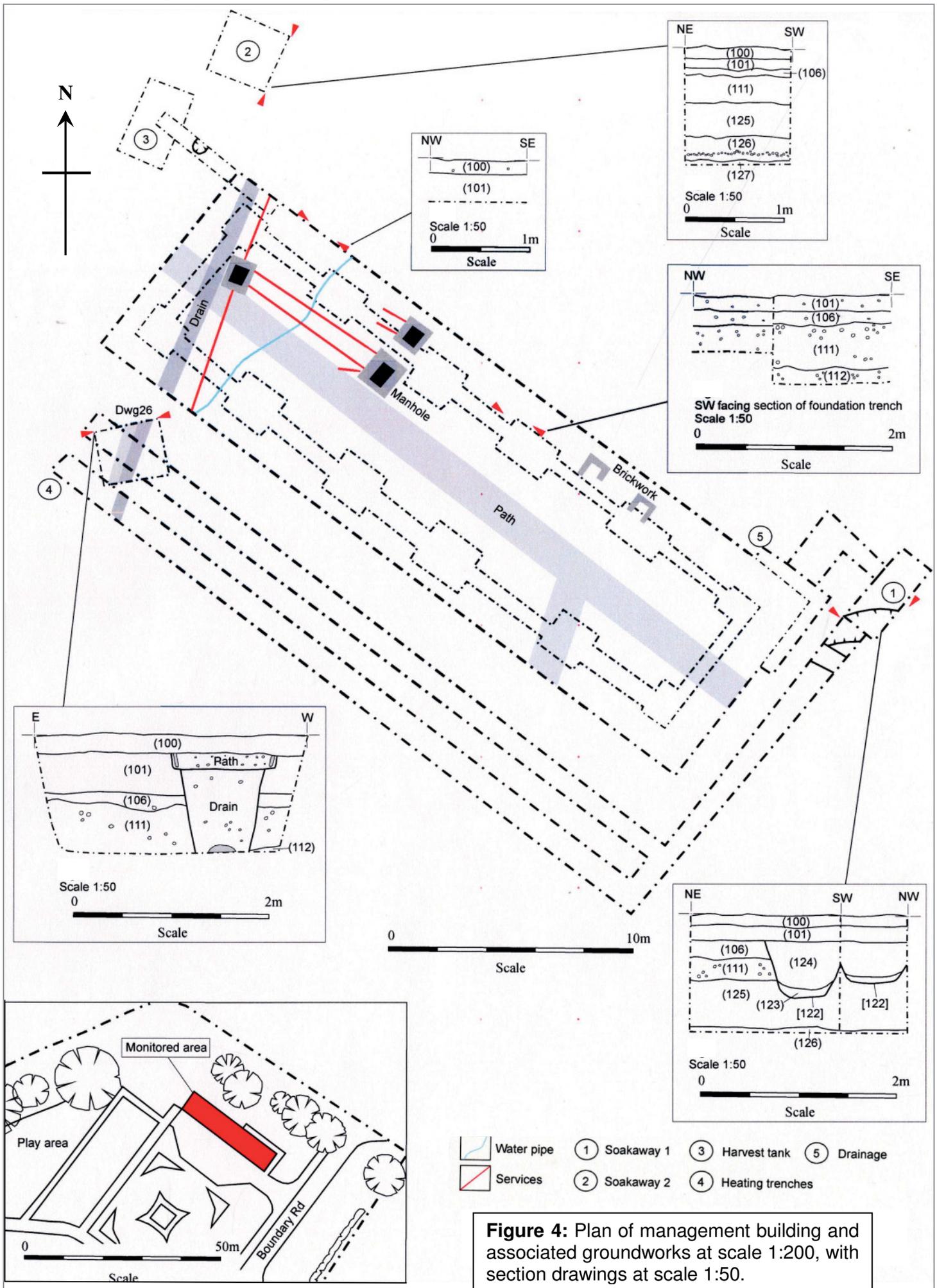
Groundworks for the construction of the new Park Management Building to the west of the Boundary Road entrance were monitored in August 2009 (plate 3). The groundworks comprised reduction of the building footprint, a narrow rectangle aligned north-west to south-east and measuring roughly 30m x 10m (plate 4), and the excavation of 12 pits for 2m x 2m pads and 1m wide connecting strip foundations. Pits were also excavated for a rainwater harvesting tank and two soakaways (see sections 7.4 to 7.6).

The modern topsoil with turf layer, recorded as context 100 in this area, overlay part of an earlier network of paths. The main path in this area, occupying the 1.2m wide north-west to south-east aligned cut 104, lay within the centre of the footprint of the new building, parallel to the Boundary Road hedge boundary, 13m to the north-east. The cut was filled with yellow limestone rubble bedding 103, overlain by a surface of reddish-brown sand and gravel between concrete edging slabs, 102. Two side paths, 160 and 161, branched off the southern side of the path at 14m and 34m from the access road respectively. All the paths were cut into a buried topsoil layer, very dark greyish-brown sandy silt 101. These paths, and consequently the topsoil sealing them, were very recent: GoogleEarth imagery of the park shows paths in these positions until 1999, which were no longer visible by 2004.

The remains of two rectangular brick structures were found below topsoil 100, 2m to the north-east of the path. Structure 1, to the south-east, consisted of a single course of ten red Cafferata bricks, context no. 158, laid unbonded around three sides of a 0.5m wide space (plate 5). Structure 2, 1.4m closer to the park entrance, consisted of twenty-three yellow Cafferata bricks (context no. 159) and defined three sides of a larger space, probably deliberately aligned with Structure 1 and the adjacent path. Both structures post-dated buried topsoil 101, and may have represented the bases of flower beds or path-side benches.

Two adjacent redundant mortared brick man-holes, MH1 and MH2 (context nos. 162 and 163), were encountered 25m from the park access road, with another, 164, close to the north-western end of the stripped area. These had also been built with Cafferata bricks. A water pipe crossed between the manholes. A modern drain, 165, passed to the west of 164 on a north-west to south-east alignment. This drain was found to continue beyond the area of two linear trenches for a new underground heating system excavated to the south-west of the Park Management Building footprint.

Within the building footprint, fragments of clay tobacco pipe stem were recovered from the 0.4m thick buried topsoil layer 101 below modern topsoil 100. Below the buried topsoil was a 0.25m depth of subsoil, 106, overlying two layers of natural deposits: sand and gravel 111 above orange sand 112. No archaeological features were encountered.



#### **7.4 Soakaway Pit 1 (fig. 4)**

A 4m x 1.6m trench was excavated at the south-east corner of the new Park Management Building, 6m from the park entrance (numbered 1 on fig. 4). Below the topsoil 100 and buried topsoil 101, subsoil layer 106 had been cut by a 2m wide west-to-east aligned ditch, 122 (plate 6). The ditch had steeply sloping sides and a rounded base, and contained two fills. The southern side of the ditch was encountered in the adjacent end of a series of trenches for an underground heating system (numbered 4 on fig. 4). The ditch had been cut through natural sandy gravel 111 into natural sand 125, which in turn overlay natural sand 126.

The line of this ditch is approximately parallel with Victoria Street – and so could represent part of a field system extant in the mid-19th century. However, it is not an alignment obviously shared with nearby features and property boundaries, with the possible exception of the enigmatic linear depression backfilled with levelling material 105, seen in the car park groundworks 70m to the south.

#### **7.5 Soakaway Pit 2 (fig. 4)**

A second pit, 2.5m x 2.5m, was excavated to the north-west of the Park Management Building (numbered 2 on fig. 4). This 1.2m deep trench encountered the same sequence of topsoil, subsoil and natural deposits seen in Soakaway Pit 1, 32m to the south-east, with a further natural sand layer, 127, seen below natural sand 126. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered.

#### **7.6 Rainwater Harvesting Tank (fig. 4)**

A 3m x 2m trench for a rainwater harvesting tank was excavated 2.5m beyond the north-western end of the Park Management Building footprint (numbered 3 on fig. 4), exposing the same sequence of topsoil, subsoil and natural deposits seen in the soakaway pits. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered.

#### **7.7 New Paths (fig. 5)**

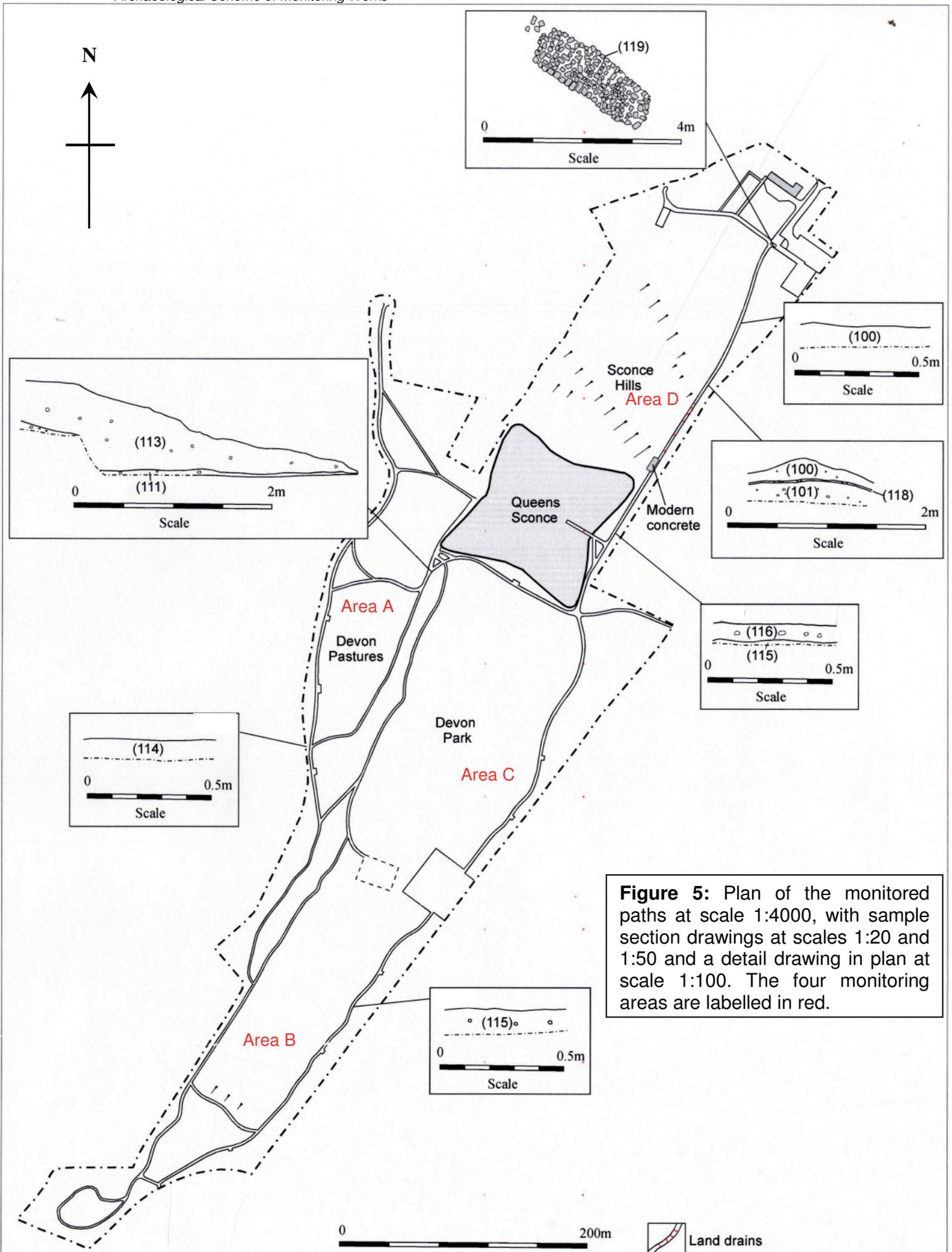
A network of paths were created around the park, mostly 2.2m wide and 0.15m deep. In places these coincided with earlier concrete-edged paths, similar to buried path 104 and others revealed in the Park Management Building footprint. As the groundworks associated with this part of the project proved unlikely to have a significant impact on any underlying archaeological remains, monitoring was carried out intermittently.

##### **7.7.1 Area A**

The first path monitored was to the east of the River Devon watercourse, south of the Farndon Road bridge (plate 7). The groundworks encountered only topsoil 113 and the existing edged path and its hardcore foundation, recorded collectively as 114, and occasionally exposed natural sandy gravel 111. The topsoil contained factory-made brick fragments and recent metal objects, which were not retrieved.

##### **7.7.2 Area B**

This area formed the south-western part of the park (plate 8). The paths in Area B were cut through topsoil 115: a light yellowish-brown silty sand with gravel, also present in Area C and the southern part of Area D alongside the Queen's Sconce earthwork. The groundworks did not penetrate the topsoil layer in this area.



**Figure 5:** Plan of the monitored paths at scale 1:4000, with sample section drawings at scales 1:20 and 1:50 and a detail drawing in plan at scale 1:100. The four monitoring areas are labelled in red.

### 7.7.3 Area C

Area C was sited to the south of the Queen's Sconce, east of Area A and north-east of Area B. The area included a pavilion building close to its south-east corner.

The groundworks in this area did not penetrate to the full depth of topsoil 115. It was, however, noted that the density of topsoil ceramic finds increased to the north of the pavilion, although the topsoil appeared similar to that in Area B to the south.

At the northern end of Area C much of the new path to the south of the hedge boundary alongside the Queens' Sconce was stripped without archaeological monitoring.

### 7.7.4 Area D

This area contained a single path, which passed very close to the east of the Queen's Sconce, giving access to the new footbridge, and ran north-north-eastwards up to the extended car park in the north-east corner of the site.

The topsoil in Area D was the same light yellowish-brown silty sand 115 as that recorded in Areas B and C. To the east of the earthwork, where the path passed through the restricted area surrounding the Scheduled Ancient Monument, topsoil 115 was overlain by 116, a mixed layer of topsoil and debris, some 20 to 30m wide, containing asbestos and metal fragments.

15m to the north-east of the north-eastern point of the Queen's Sconce, the concrete slab base of a structure was revealed in the western side of the path strip. Structure 116 comprised four rectangular slabs placed at 90° to the nearby hedge line, with a combined width of 11.3m (plate 9). Below topsoil 115 in the vicinity of this structure was a layer of redeposited sand and modern refuse, 117; this deposit may have been associated with the construction of structure 116. Only the eastern ends of the floor slabs protruded into the line of the new path, and initially they were to be retained and the ground raised beside them. A reappraisal of the safety hazards presented by vegetation growing through the structure led to a subsequent decision by Newark and Sherwood Council that the slabs should be removed. The structure was found to measure 11.3m x 3.6m, with the concrete slabs, 0.07m deep, laid across 0.5m high concrete beams; the space below the floor was filled with loose 19th century brick rubble. No dating evidence was seen, but as the rubble was occupied by snakes, only a cursory investigation was made. The monitoring archaeologist was informed by a member of the Friends of Sconce and Devon Park that the structure had been a World War II Home Guard hut, used for storage and shelter. To the north of this structure, a deposit of clinker overlay topsoil 115. Clinker deposit 118 also contained coal, iron waste and fragments of 19<sup>th</sup> century brick, and was probably associated with the tramway that was laid to the north of the Queen's Sconce at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

An area of brick paving was exposed at a four-way junction near the north end of the park. Feature 119 consisted of a single layer of bricks and brick fragments, with no visible bonding material: although the bricks were laid unbonded, their layout, with bricks laid more closely along the long edges of the structure, suggested that it might have been part of an earlier path (plate 10).

## 7.8 New Bridge

The works for the new bridge providing access into the interior of the Queen's Sconce earthwork took place in May 2010 (plate 11). Plastic membrane was laid over the grass around the intended pile positions on the east side of the Sconce. The

membrane was then covered with hardcore to raise the level before the piling rig was erected on the east side of the Sconce. Spoil displaced by the piles was metal detected, screened and used for erosion scar repairs across the monument.

Piles P1, P2, P3, P4 and P9 were augered on the east side of the Sconce. The topsoil, 501, was 0.25m thick, over natural sandy gravel 500. There was no visible evidence of any upcast material from the Sconce ditch. It was noted that larger pebbles were more frequent at a depth of approximately 4m below ground level, apparently at a natural horizon.

The augered pile holes P1 and P2 collapsed below 4m depth and the piles were driven the remaining distance. The casing of P1 was driven to a depth of 9m, where it settled. P2 was augered to 4m, with the casing driven to 3.5m where it settled and could not be moved. As this was considered unsatisfactory for engineering purposes, an additional pile P9 was augered to a depth of 7m immediately to the side of P2 and the casing was set at 12m depth. Piles P3 and P4 were augered to 7m, and their casing set at 10m and 8.2m respectively.

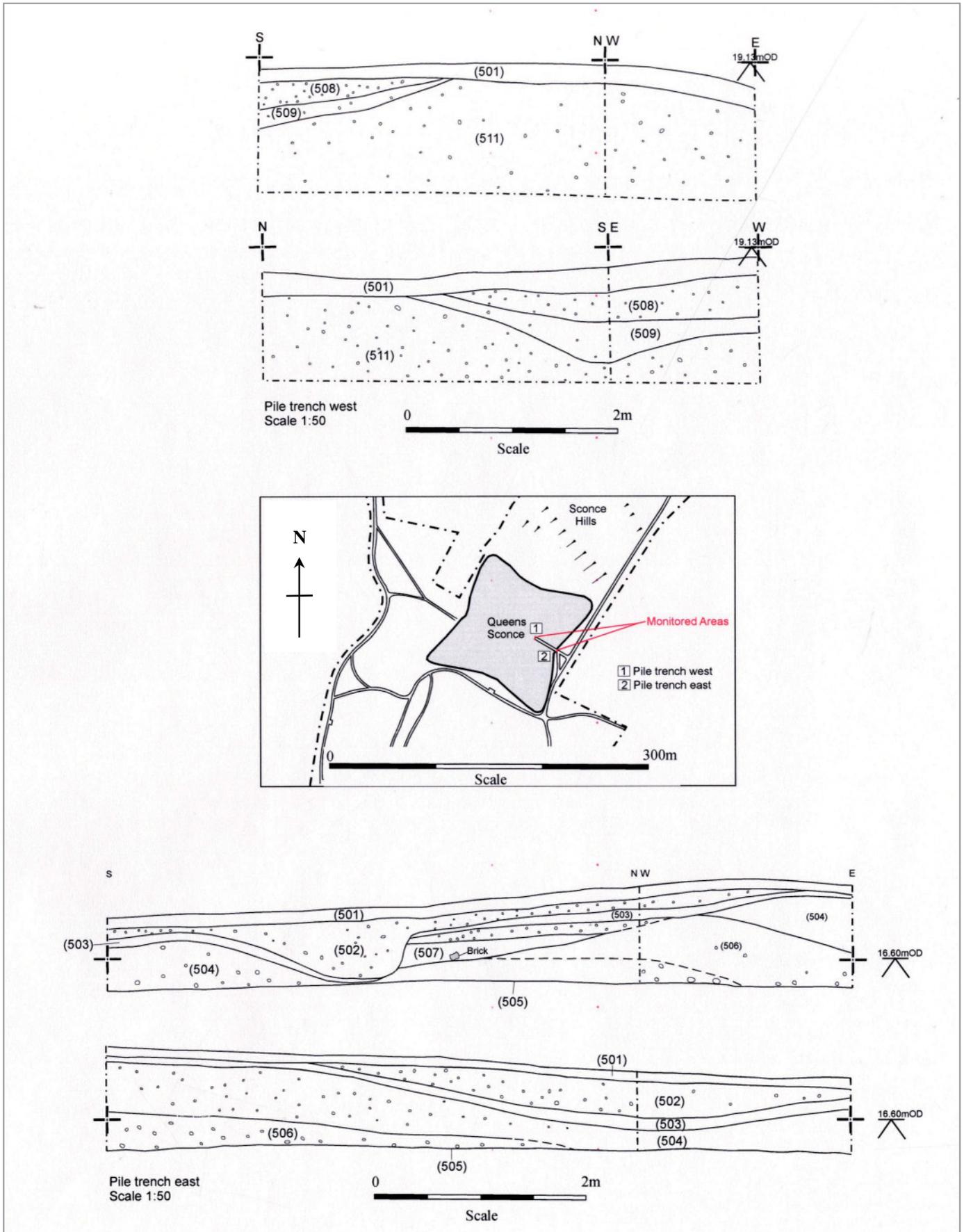
The piling rig was lifted 25m across the Sconce ditch by crane to auger piles on the western side. Piles P5 and P6 were augered to 7m depth and the casings were driven and set at 7.5m. Pile P7 was augered to 6.8m, P8 to 6.7m, with casings driven and set at 7m. The piles appeared to pass through the topsoil and a deposit of clean gravel, interpreted as upcast material from the Sconce ditch excavation, into a dirtier gravel at 4.5m depth, which may have been the original ground surface; no context numbers were assigned to these deposits, as they could not be confidently distinguished. Upcast material was scanned with a metal detector and stored for reuse; no finds were seen.

### **7.9 Eastern Pile Cap Trench (fig. 6)**

A 5m x 2m north-to-south aligned pile-cap pit was excavated to a depth of 0.8m below ground level on the eastern side of the Sconce ditch, partly by hand but with some machine assistance. At this location, the existing topography was a slight slope to the south, from 17.3m to 17.0m OD across the length of the trench (plate 12).

The modern turf and topsoil layer 501 was a uniform thickness of 0.15m. It covered a brownish-grey coarse sand and gravel levelling layer 502, which varied in thickness from 0.06m to 0.34m, thickest in the south-east corner of the trench. The deposit had backfilled feature 514. This feature was 1.80m wide and 0.44m deep, with a gently sloping southern face and an almost vertical cut to the north (plate 13): its profile suggested a ditch, or possibly an erosion scar, but it was visible only in the east-facing section of the pit, and did not extend towards the edge of the monument as far as the west-facing section.

Beneath levelling layer 502 lay deposit 503, a 0.1m thick layer of dark brownish-grey sandy silt which stopped at the northern edge of feature 514, but overlay the whole of its shallow southern side. This was interpreted as a former turf line, developing while feature 514 was open. In the east-facing pit section, layer 503 sealed what appeared to be a shallow feature, truncated by the north side of 514: no number was assigned to this feature on site. It appeared to contain a single fill, sandy silt with gravel 507, but the distribution of gravel within the fill was so uneven as to give the impression that two fills were present; a brick was recorded at the base of this fill, but was not retrieved.



**Figure 6:** Sections of the east and west pile trenches at scale 1:50, with a location plan at scale 1:500.

In the other three pit sections, layer 503 overlay 504, a deposit of greyish-brown sandy silt with frequent small gravel, varying in depth from 0.20 to at least 0.50m; at the southern end of the trench, the base of this deposit was not reached. Deposit 504 overlay 506, an orange-brown sand and gravel, apparently redeposited natural; this deposit was not reached at the southern side of the trench, but where it was exposed, it mirrored the north-to-south slope of 504. Below 506 was a deposit of greyish-brown sandy silt, 505, possibly a buried soil, which was exposed only in the north-western corner of the trench and whose full depth was not reached: this deposit has been dated to the late medieval or early post-medieval period by a single sherd of Cistercian ware and two fragments of tile (appendix 3). This layer may represent the original surface of the Queen's Sconce earthwork, with layers 506 and 504 possibly representing upcast from later work deepening and recutting its ditch. The shallow depression with 507 as its primary fill cut across the inclination of layers 504 and 506, indicating that this was a deliberately constructed feature, rather than a natural one caused by erosion, with feature 514 as a recut, but the sampled area was too small to draw any certain conclusions about the purpose or nature of these features.

### **7.10 Western Pile Cap Trench (fig. 6).**

The trench around the western piles, further within the Queen's Sconce monument, measured 3.65m x 1.4m and a maximum of 1.25m deep, with its base at 17.83m OD (plate 14).

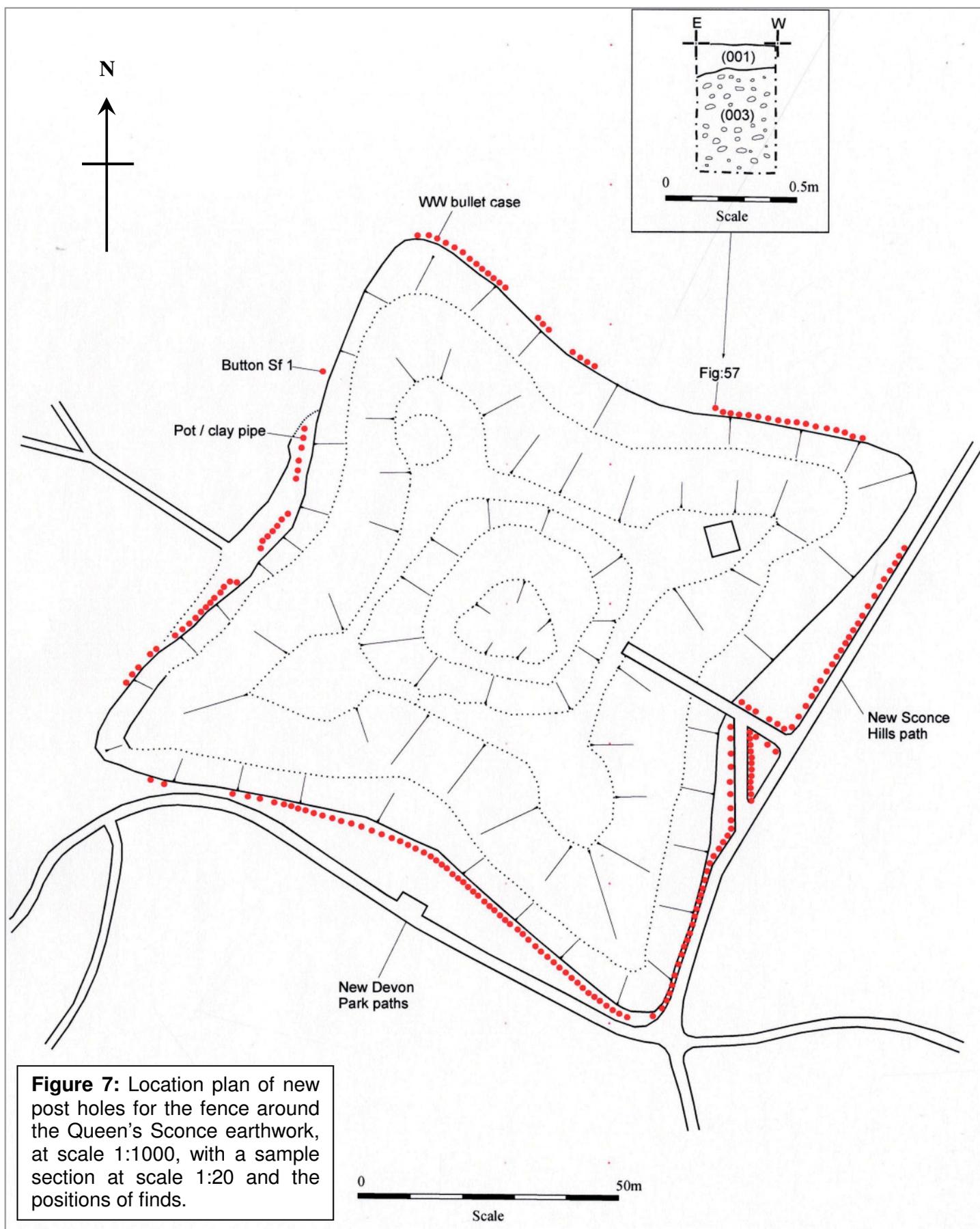
The modern turf and topsoil layer 501 was up to 0.22m thick, thickest to the south-east. At the south-western corner of the trench it sealed a shallow cut or depression, 515, which was aligned east-to-west across the rampart and was at least 2m wide and 0.6m deep. Feature 515 contained two fills: 508, a greyish-brown deposit of sandy silt and gravel up to 0.40m deep, contained a fragment of clay tobacco pipe stem and overlay 509, a sandier deposit at the base of the feature, which may have represented a fragment of an earlier soil horizon. This feature may have been a former erosion scar, backfilled and levelled during a past episode of conserving the monument.

Feature 515 was cut into layer 511, a thick deposit of orange-brown sand and gravel which represented the original mound construction material. The base of this deposit was not reached, and no artefacts were found.

After a concrete base for the new bridge had been constructed above the piles, the remaining edge of the rampart beside the pile cap trench was removed. This 1.1m x 3.5m area included an unrepaired erosion scar (plate 15). Plastic mesh was laid around the end of the bridge before returfing, to absorb the wear generated by the concentration of foot traffic.

### **7.11 Eastern Bridge Approach**

The eastern abutment of the bridge was placed above ground level, supported on the piles. Steps were constructed directly to the east of the abutment, linking the bridge platform with the path around the park perimeter. In the footprint of the steps, topsoil 512 was stripped by machine from an area 4m x 3m, to a depth of 0.15m (plate 16). A sandy gravel was exposed over the eastern side of the stripped area, but a much siltier material was across the western side. The siltier material probably represents the remnants of a thicker turf close to the edge of the Sconce ditch. Groundworks to the south for an access ramp and an adjacent viewing area removed the 0.25m thick layer of turf and topsoil 513, but exposed no earlier horizons.



### 7.12 Orientation Plate Plinth Trench

A circular trench 1.60m in diameter and 0.25m deep was excavated by hand near the northern edge of the Queen's Sconce for the concrete plinth of a circular display feature. After removal of 0.10m depth of topsoil 501, a light brownish-grey sandy layer, 510, was exposed. The layer continued below the base of the trench. A brick containing gypsum or lime was found in this layer, which had been heavily disturbed by root action and probably also animal burrowing.

### 7.13 Improvements to Kerb Rail around the Queen's Sconce (fig. 7)

An existing low-level wooden post and rail fence around the exterior of the Sconce ditch was in need of repair. The fence is designed to discourage bicycle and other activities across the outer ditch of the monument. The original intention to replace it was altered to replacement of the rail and rotten or damaged posts, retaining the existing posts where possible, in order to minimise groundworks encroaching on the management area of the scheduled monument. This part of the project was monitored intermittently while other groundworks were in progress, as the small size of the holes was clearly going to limit any potential information that might be gained.

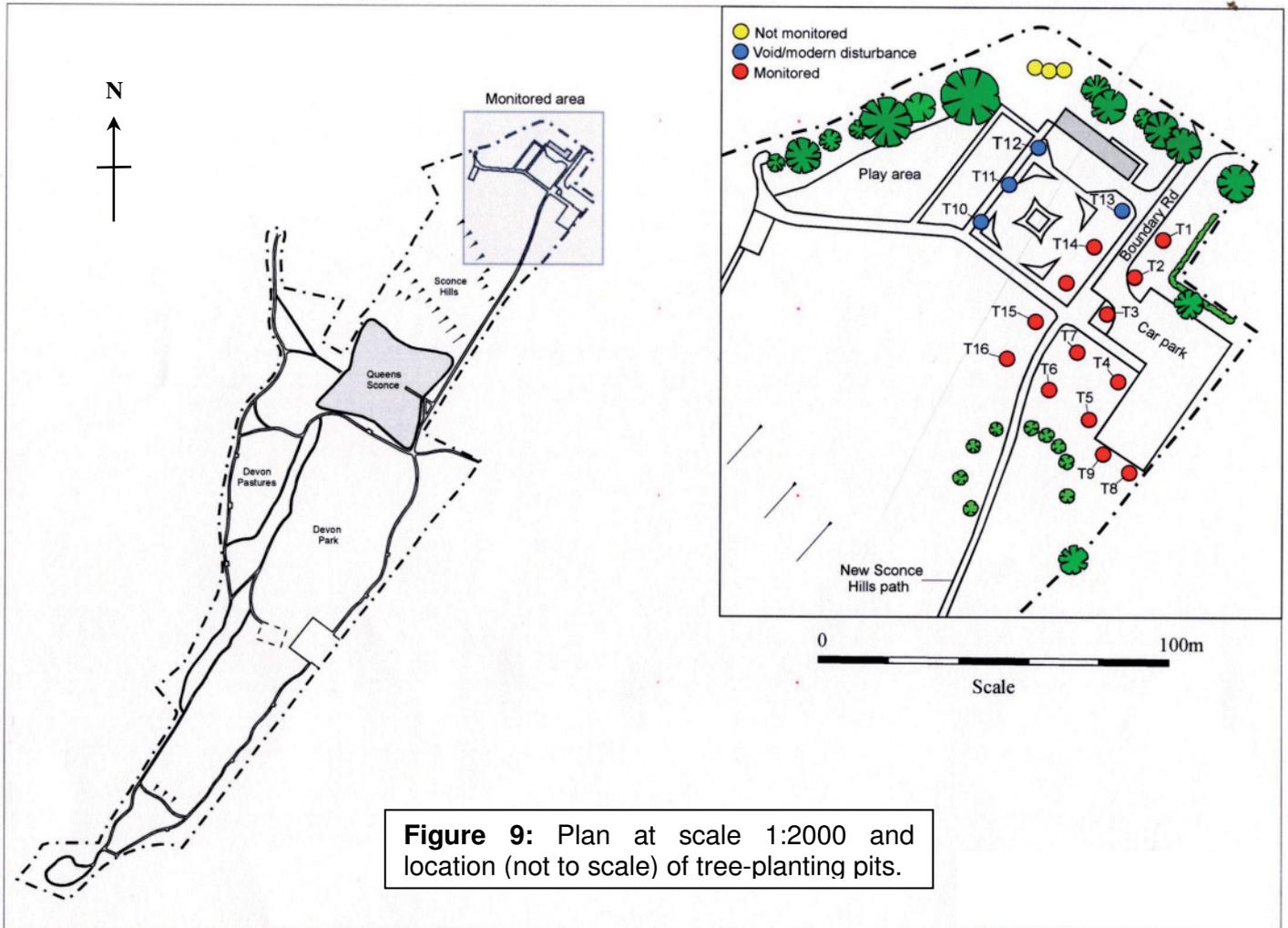
The old posts were set in concrete-filled holes roughly 0.50m square and 0.60m deep. Approximately 210 additional posts were erected to connect with the existing lengths of kerb rail, each placed at 1.5m intervals within a 0.3m x 0.3m hole excavated to a depth of 0.5m-0.70m; some of these post-holes were excavated by hand, others with an auger. No archaeological deposits or features were observed either during the removal of old posts or the excavation of holes for new posts: only topsoil 001 overlying natural sand and gravel 003 was seen, and a single representative sample section is reproduced as part of figure 7. Finds were retrieved from the topsoil of three of the post-holes, and are located on figure 7: these comprised a Second World War bullet casing, a metal button, a sherd of post-medieval pottery and a fragment of clay tobacco pipe.



**Figure 8:** Contour plan of the Queen's Sconce earthwork (not to scale), showing the erosion scars to be repaired.

### 7.14 Scar Repairs (fig. 8; plates 18-20)

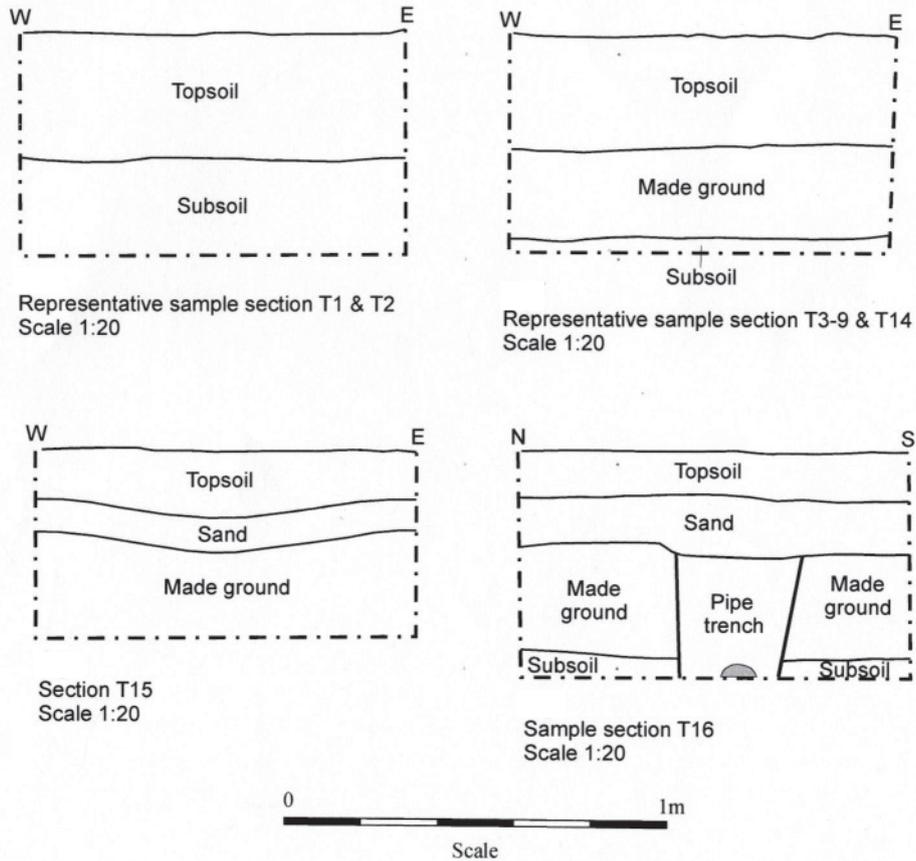
Timber revetments were constructed across the erosion scars that were to be infilled. Material excavated from the pile trenches was used: topsoil and lower deposits were screened and kept separate. The material was lifted to the north-east corner of the earthwork by crane, and then transported by wheelbarrow and filled in to the erosion scars by hand. Where the erosion was particularly deep, the scar was packed with sandbags filled with screened topsoil, overlying a compacted layer of base fill material. Polypropylene netting was then laid and pegged down, to keep the repair in position until the turf was re-established; finally, the fill was covered over with topsoil, which was seeded with a grass and wildflower mix.



### 7.15 Tree Planting Holes (figs. 9 and 10)

A total of sixteen pits for tree planting were excavated in the north-eastern corner of the park, around the car parking area and play area and along the beginning of the footpath running south to the Queen's Scence; a group of three further pits filling a gap in the tree planting around the north-western corner of the park were not monitored. The pits were approximately 1m square and 0.9m deep, and were dug using a 180° excavator with a toothless bucket.

In the majority of the pits, the topsoil overlay made ground, which in turn overlay subsoil (no context numbers were assigned). In pits 1 and 2, on the east side of Boundary Road, no made ground was present and the topsoil directly overlay the subsoil, while in pits 15 and 16, on the west side of the footpath, the topsoil overlay a layer of sand above the made ground. Pits 10-13, on the west and north sides of the play area, were excavated through material so heavily disturbed that discrete deposits could not be distinguished, and were not recorded. Natural deposits were not reached in any of the pits.

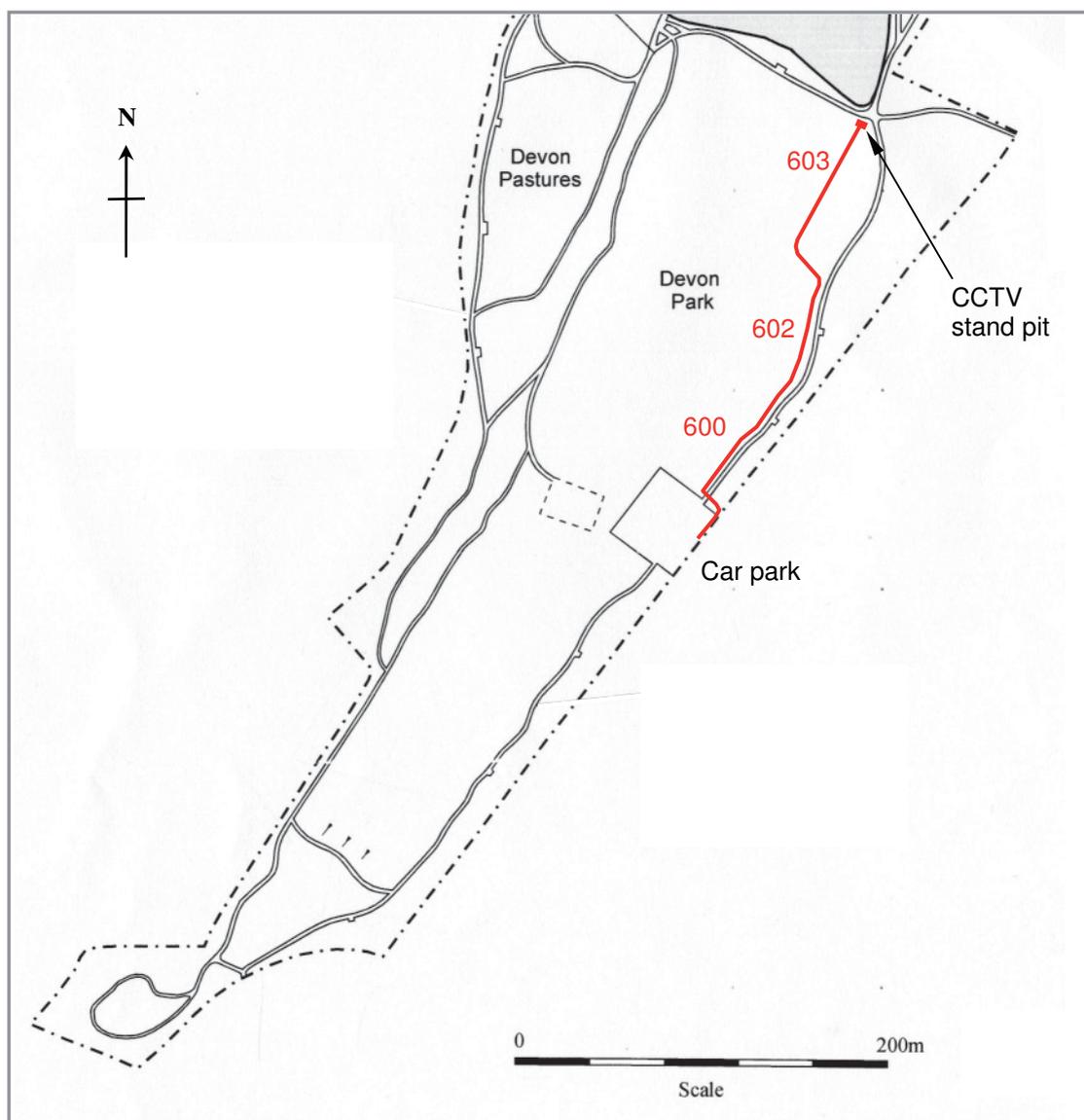


**Figure 10:** Sample sections from the tree-planting pits.

Six further pits were excavated along the bank on the south side of the pathway approaching the Queen's Sconce from the south-west (not on plan). The pits were 1.0m square, 0.90m deep and roughly 3m apart. The deposits exposed in all six pits were heavily disturbed, and were interpreted as redeposited natural and made ground associated with earlier landscaping works. Undisturbed natural was exposed in four of the pits at depths ranging from 0.70m to 0.90m. No archaeological features or deposits were seen during this part of the project.

### 7.16 CCTV works (fig. 11)

An additional phase of works was undertaken the following year, to monitor the installation of a closed-circuit television system. A pit was excavated for the mounting of a CCTV camera on the south-west angle of the crossing paths directly adjacent to the south-east corner of the Sconce earthwork, and a cable trench was excavated over a total distance of approximately 250m to connect this camera to an existing CCTV stand on the eastern side of the car park to the south. This phase of works had the site code QSDN 10 and was issued a separate job number, 689.



**Figure 11:** Sketch plan of the CCTV cable route, shown in red, at scale 1:4000, with the context numbers assigned to the various sections of the route also in red.

Turf could not be removed by hand as the ground was extremely hard and dry; the cable route was deturfed using the mini-digger that subsequently dug the trench. The trench was approximately 0.18m wide and 0.40m deep (plate 21). All spoil was checked with a metal-detector. The work was carried out between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of August 2010, and was monitored by Mike Rowe.

Topsoil across the cable route was a desiccated, powdery layer, up to 0.28m deep. Separate context numbers were assigned to aid finds location: in the southern section of the cable route, the topsoil was numbered 600, in the central section, 602, in the northern section, 603, and 604 in the camera stand pit. The topsoil overlay a sand and gravel subsoil, 601, which measured up to 0.36m deep in the stand pit, and whose base was not reached elsewhere; natural in the stand pit was recorded as sand and gravel 605.

No archaeological features were encountered during this part of the watching brief. A number of finds were retrieved from the topsoil, chiefly fragments of pottery and ceramic building material (CBM), clay pipe stems and severely corroded iron objects.

The pottery was a very mixed assemblage in terms of date and condition and represents disturbed material, as would be expected with topsoil finds: the earliest material was Roman, with early medieval, medieval, post-medieval and modern sherds also present. The range of wares is typical for Newark. Two fragments of roof tile, one medieval and one modern, were also retrieved. The most significant find was a lead musket ball, found by metal-detecting in topsoil 602 in the central section of the cable route; the other metal items included a post-medieval button, a post-medieval buckle, the bowl of a spoon, several nails and a French franc dated 1961.

## 8.0 Conclusion

Not all of the monitored groundworks proved to be deep enough to expose archaeological deposits. Where datable deposits and features were encountered, the majority were relatively recent, originating from earlier phases of landscaping in the park, such as the brick structures encountered in the Park Management Building area; from the Second World War, such as the concrete structure encountered in Area D of the path works; or from construction projects of the industrial period, such as clinker deposit 118.

Deposits and features of potential significance were recorded only in the two pile cap trenches, on the Queen's Sconce monument itself. The oldest securely dated deposit, possible buried soil 505, was encountered in the eastern trench, and may have represented the original surface of the Queen's Sconce earthwork, with two overlying layers possibly representing upcast from later work deepening and recutting its ditch. The surface layers were then cut by what appeared to be a sequence of two linear features, one so shallow that it was uncertain that it was in fact anthropogenic rather than natural, while the other, feature 514, was clearly marked and had stood open long enough for a turf line to form. No dating evidence was retrieved from these features that might have assigned them to the active life of the fort. A single linear feature was recorded in the western trench, but this produced no dating evidence apart from a fragment of clay pipe stem.

The only other evidence for the military history of the site was provided by an isolated find of a musket ball in topsoil during the excavation of the CCTV cable. Systematic metal-detecting is known to have taken place on the site already, with up to 250 finds, many from the Civil War period, having been retrieved (JSAC, 2005), and this may account for the paucity of datable metal finds of archaeological interest encountered during the project.

## 9.0 Effectiveness of methodology

The methodology employed during the archaeological monitoring scheme was entirely adequate to the task of recording archaeological deposits, features and artefacts encountered during the groundworks.

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## 11.0 Acknowledgements

PCAS Ltd would like to thank MHI for this commission and Paul White (site foreman) for his co-operation during the monitoring scheme.

## 12.0 Site Archive

The site archive is currently held at the offices of PCAS Ltd, Saxilby, Lincolnshire, and will be deposited at the Newark Resource Centre within six months of the completion of the report. It may be consulted there by quoting the archive accession number, NEKMS:2009.