

LAND SOUTH OF 'THE MEADOWS', WARTH LANE, SKEGNESS

TOPOGRAPHIC (EARTHWORKS) SURVEY REPORT

NGR: TF 550 638 (centre)
ELDC Planning Ref.: S/153/02558/14
PCAS job no. 1491
Site code: TMST 15
Archive acc. code: 2015.157

Prepared for
Chestnut Homes
by
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December 2015



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Contents

| | | |
|-------------|--|---|
| | Summary | 1 |
| 1.0 | Introduction | 2 |
| 2.0 | Location and Description | 2 |
| 3.0 | Topography and Geology | 2 |
| 4.0 | Planning Background | 2 |
| 5.0 | Archaeological and Historical Background | 4 |
| 6.0 | Methodology | 5 |
| 7.0 | Results | 5 |
| 8.0 | Discussion and Conclusions | 6 |
| 9.0 | Effectiveness of Methodology | 6 |
| 10.0 | Project Archive | 6 |
| 11.0 | Acknowledgements | 6 |
| 12.0 | References | 6 |

Appendices

Appendix 1: Colour Plates

Appendix 2: OASIS Summary

Illustrations

Fig. 1: Location map at scale 1:25,000

Fig. 2: Plan of the site at scale 1:2500, showing the positions and directions of the photographs in Appendix 1, with sketch plan of the earthworks seen on the site visit.

Fig. 3: Plan of the results of the survey at scale 1:1250, showing the earthwork features and the positions of the five transects (figs 4 -8).

Fig. 4 WNW-ESE Transect (1) across the earthworks in the east field. Horizontal Scale 1:100, Vertical Scale 1:20.

Fig. 5: WNW-ESE Transect (2) across the earthworks in the east field. Horizontal Scale 1:100, Vertical Scale 1:20.

Fig. 6: WNW-ESE Transect (3) across the earthworks in the east field. Horizontal Scale 1:100, Vertical Scale 1:20.

Fig. 7: S-N Transect (4) across the ridge and furrow in the central field. Horizontal Scale 1:100, Vertical Scale 1:20.

Fig. 8: W-E Transect (5) across the ridge and furrow in the west field. Horizontal Scale 1:100, Vertical Scale 1:20.

Colour Plates

Plate 1: General shot of the site looking east from the southwest corner of the western field.

Plate 2: General shot of the site looking north across the east field from the Mar Dyke.

Plate 3: General shot, looking southwest across the southern part of the east field, showing the upcast material (A) of the Mar Dyke.

Plate 4: General shot, looking south-southwest down the length of probable boundary ditch (D); less defined ridge and furrow area (C) flanks this feature.

Plate 5: The boundary ditch and headland (E) at the east side of E-W ridge and furrow area (F), looking south.

Plate 6: General view southwest across well defined E-W ridge and furrow area (F).

Plate 7: View southwest from Area (F) across headland (G) and into the area of N-S ridge and furrow (H).

Plate 8: View north across the best-defined part of north-south ridge and furrow (H).

Summary

- Full planning permission has been granted for the construction of 169 dwellings, to include a public open space and a community facility on Land South of 'The Meadows', Warth Lane, Skegness. The site is centred on NGR TF 550 638.
- Conditions for a scheme of archaeological investigation in the form of a topographic survey of areas of ridge and furrow earthworks surviving within the area to be carried out to preserve these remains by record prior to development, have been attached to the Planning Permission (S/153/02558/14).
- The survey recorded two distinct areas of medieval ridge and furrow earthworks and a further area of indistinct ridge and furrow, separated by boundary ditches and headlands. The ridge and furrow displayed the typical reverse 'S' curve in plan and had ridges spaced approximately 8m apart.
- The survey has demonstrated that the application area was formerly three distinct fields within a wider medieval agrarian landscape; it did not identify any evidence for domestic occupation such as closes or building platforms.

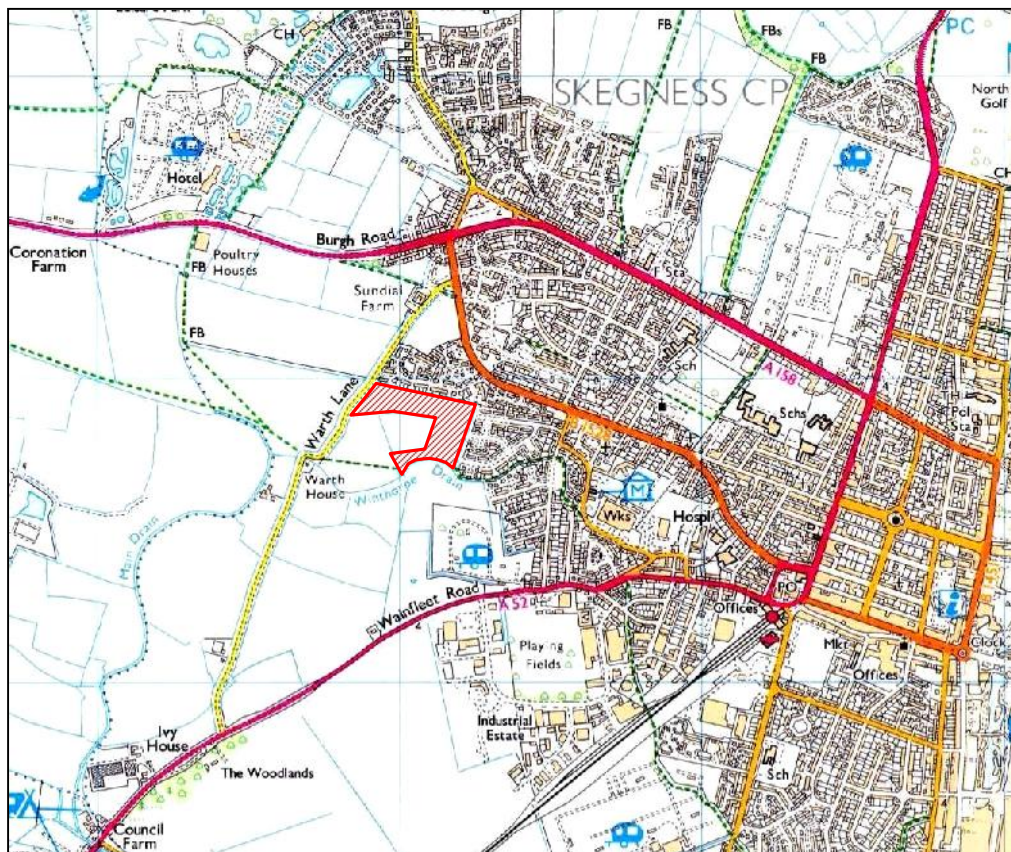


Fig. 1: Location plan of the site (marked in red) at scale 1:25,000. Based on the 2008 Ordnance Survey Explorer Sheet 274. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. PCAS licence no. 100049278.

1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd. (PCAS) was commissioned by Chestnut Homes to undertake a topographic survey of an area of land to the east of Warth Lane and to the south of The Meadows housing estate, on the west side of the town of Skegness in the East Lindsey district of Lincolnshire.

The topographic survey will fulfil planning conditions on an approved Planning Permission for a residential development of 169 dwellings and a community facility.

2.0 Location and Description (figs. 1 and 2)

The coastal resort town of Skegness is situated in the district of East Lindsey, approximately 22km to the north-east of Boston. The Lincolnshire Historic Character Assessment describes the landscape character area in which it lies, 'The Skegness Holiday Coast', as *'dominated by large modern fields largely formed by consolidation of older field patterns'*. The assessment further notes that *'The medieval landscape can be seen in the survival of well preserved irregular enclosures and, close to settlements, well preserved ridge and furrow earthworks. Modern fields in the zone often retain significant boundaries, which are indicative of the former field types that have been consolidated'* (Lord and MacIntosh, 2011).

The proposed development site is located on the west side of the town, in an area of modern development expanding outwards from the historic centre, approximately 1km to the east. The site is irregular in shape, forming a roughly reversed-C-shaped field, which was completely under long, rough grass at the time of a site visit in 2014; it is bordered by Warth Lane to the east, with arable fields beyond on the opposite side of the road, and by modern housing developments to the west and north. The north-western extent of the site is bordered to the south by two pasture fields, which occupy the 'centre' of the C-shape; the southern extent is bordered by the Winthorpe Drain, with arable fields beyond (Savage, 2014).

Central National Grid Reference: TF 550 638.

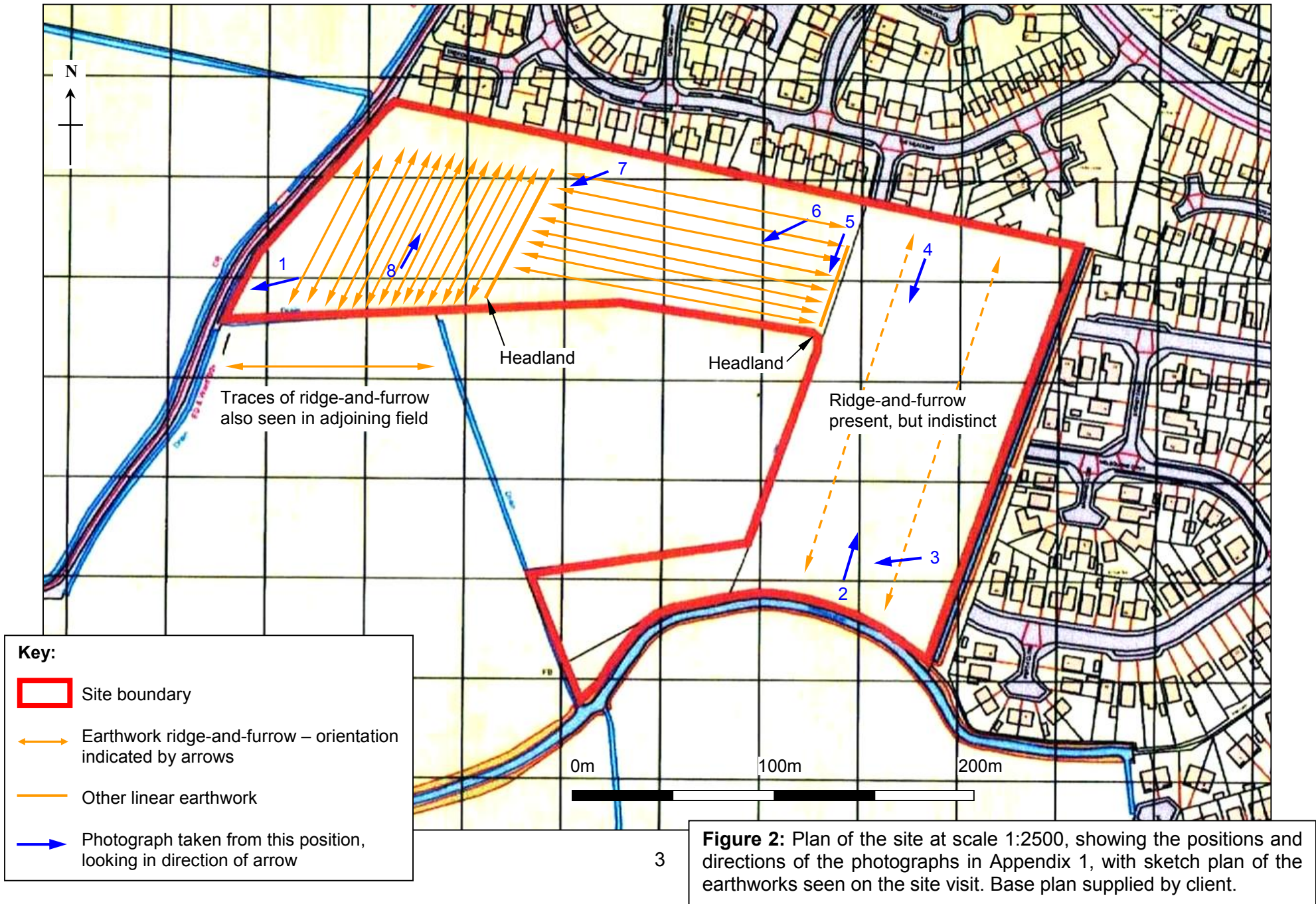
3.0 Topography and Geology

The site lies on flat, artificially drained land, below the 5m Ordnance Datum contour line. The majority of field boundaries in the area also function as drains, emptying either into the Main Drain, which here forms the Skegness parish boundary and runs approximately 300m to the west of the site, or into the Winthorpe Drain, which runs along the site's southern boundary.

The drift geology of the area is composed of the Terrington Beds younger salt marsh and tidal creek deposits, mainly silts and clays; these deposits overlie the solid Cretaceous Ferriby Chalk with Red Chalk (BGS, 1996).

4.0 Planning Background

A planning application for the construction of 169 dwellings, to include a public open space and a community facility, was approved on 28th October 2015 (application ref. S/153/02558/14) with conditions (19-21) for a scheme of archaeological investigation at the site, in the form of a topographical survey of the earthworks present within the development area and noted in a Historic Impact Assessment prepared by this company in support of the application in October 2014 (Savage, R. D., 2014).



5.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

A detailed archaeological and historical background for this site and a surrounding study area appears in a Heritage Impact Assessment previously prepared by PCAS (Savage, 2014) and is briefly summarised here.

There was very little evidence within the study area for activity pre-dating the Iron Age, and none for the Roman period. Salt manufacture is known to have taken place on a large scale along the Skegness coastline throughout the Iron Age and into the Roman administration; the proposed development site lies on or close to the salt manufacturing tidal zone, but no saltern sites have been recorded closer than the northern perimeter of the 1km radius study area taken for the HIA.

Domesday Book has no listing for a settlement named 'Skegness', but a district or settlement in Candleshoe wapentake referred to as '*Tric*' is believed to have been sited in this area. C. W. Foster's survey of lost Lincolnshire villages lists *Tric* as '*an extinct village, the name of which is not found after 1086. It seems to be represented by Skegness in subsequent records*' (Foster and Longley, 1924). Norman *Tric* was not a manor as such, but a group of outlying holdings, or sokeland, of three other manors: by the standards of Domesday Book estates, these have unusually small areas of ploughland, with very low populations (Williams and Martin, 1992). The three landholdings had some 120 acres of meadow land between them, suggesting that they were chiefly pastoral settlements, where animals could be grazed in the salt marshes, but relatively little land was suitable for arable cultivation (Lane, 2013).

Areas of ridge-and-furrow, created by the strip cultivation of medieval open fields, and associated earthworks have been recorded in many fields to the north and west of Skegness town centre, including the proposed development site and other fields to its north, south and east. It is uncertain whether these areas were ever parts of one united open-field system: the status of early medieval *Tric* as a disparate group of outlying holdings may have continued throughout the Middle Ages (Savage, 2005). Earthwork ridge and furrow, consisting of three furlongs at right angles to one another, was recorded across most of the proposed development site by the National Mapping Programme aerial photographic survey carried out by the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments and held by the Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record. The HER further records that these earthworks were visible on Google Maps aerial photograph layer in 2007, apart from the those in the southernmost field of the group (HER ref. 46929); it was observed to be extant during the site visit.

Skegness began to be developed as a seaside resort in 1875 by the 9th Earl of Scarborough, the main landowner at the time, who had the town planned and laid out with pleasure gardens, a pier, a cricket ground and a sea-front. The transformation of a small and unprofitable coastal village into a popular resort was facilitated by the opening of a railway link to Skegness in 1873. In 1861, the population of Skegness was still only 322: by 1911, it had increased more than ten times over, to 3775. Continued expansion to the south is slowly obliterating the earthwork remains of the medieval village (Savage, 2005).

A site visit made in October 2014, as part of research for a Heritage Impact Assessment carried out for this project, observed three blocks of earthwork ridge-and-furrow (furlongs), perpendicular to one another and divided by headlands (the earth bank thrown up by strip ploughing along the line where two groups of furlongs lying at right angles to each other meet), within the proposed development area. A shallow, dry ditch was also observed, but it was uncertain whether this was an original feature or a more recent one (fig. 2). The earthworks were noted to be particularly distinct in the furlong closest to Warth Road, but ceased to be visible at the northern edge of the site, possibly due to the recent use of this side of the site for vehicle access. The site was under long grass at the time of the visit, and ground visibility was not ideal (Savage, 2014).

The Historic Environment Officer for the Historic Environment Team at Lincolnshire County Council, who acts as advisor to ELDC, has commented that: *Areas of ridge and furrow earthworks survive within this proposal area. Earthworks are by nature very friable and easily destroyed, and heritage assets are a non-renewable resource with earthworks in particular becoming rarer. Indeed earthworks are constantly under threat, not just from development but from land erosion due to normal land management practices such as grass cutting.*

6.0 Methodology

The survey was carried out on 16th and 17th November 2015. This work was undertaken using a Leica GNSS full RTK GPS. After a rapid walkover survey, the areas of ridge and furrow were surveyed (fig. 3). Six transects were also surveyed in order to produce typical profiles across the areas of surviving ridge and furrow, and to establish the extent of survival of the ridge and furrow in the eastern field (figs. 4-8). Weather conditions were generally overcast on 16th November, becoming clearer at the end of the day while they began bright and clear on 17th November but deteriorated rapidly with heavy rain and high winds in the afternoon. Ground conditions were clear with formerly overgrown grass having been recently flailed to a length of c.10cm.

Colour photographs complement the survey (Appendix 1).

7.0 Results (Figs. 3-5)

The field contained two distinct areas of medieval ridge and furrow earthworks and a further area of indistinct ridge and furrow, separated by boundary ditches and headlands; the surveyed features are distinguished by letters A-H on the plot (fig.3).

In the eastern field the ridge and furrow was indistinct and only survived in two areas (B and C), oriented NNE-SSW. The best preserved earthwork was a probable ditch (D) on the same alignment, wider and with a flatter base than any furrows observed here. At the south side all of the earthworks were obscured by mounded material (A) deposited from the cutting or cleaning of the Winthorpe Drain here. Three transects were recorded across this area in the hope that post-survey processing of the data would allow for better definition of the ridge and furrow here, however this has proved unsuccessful.

The central part of the site contained well-defined east-west ridge and furrow (F) separated from the features in the eastern field by a headland and boundary ditch (E) which continued on the line of the western boundary of the east field. Here, eight ridges and associated furrows were recorded, displaying a typical slight reverse 'S' curve in plan and with ridges spaced approximately 8m apart.

The western part of the site also contained well preserved ridge and furrow (H); here on a N-S alignment, becoming NE-SW to accommodate the western boundary with Warth Lane. This was separated from the N-S ridge and furrow to the east by a headland (G). Here, sixteen ridges and associated furrows were recorded, displaying a strong reverse 'S' curve in plan and with ridges spaced approximately 7.5m apart.

A ridge of material present close to the western boundary of the area, too narrow to conform to a ridge of medieval agricultural use, is most likely explained as upcast material from the drain at the east of Warth Lane.

8.0 Discussion and Conclusions

The survey has demonstrated that the application area was formerly three distinct fields within a wider medieval agrarian landscape. These fields are characterised by ridge and furrow of slightly differing intervals, separated by headlands and boundary ditches, which now appear as deeper furrows.

The survey did not identify any evidence for domestic occupation such as closes or building platforms.

The earthwork survey has mitigated the loss of landscape features that will result from the proposed development.

9.0 Effectiveness of Methodology

The methodology employed has allowed the rapid and accurate preservation by record of the earthworks present in the development area.

10.0 Project Archive

The project archive, consisting of the raw GPS data and digital photographs, will be deposited with printed copies of this report at The Collection, Lincoln, in or before December 2015; following deposition, it will be available for public consultation under the LCNCC archive accession number 2015.157. A copy of the full report will also be uploaded to the Archaeology Data Service OASIS (Online Access to the Index of archaeological investigationS) database, where it will be publicly accessible online.

11.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services would like to thank Chestnut Homes for this commission.

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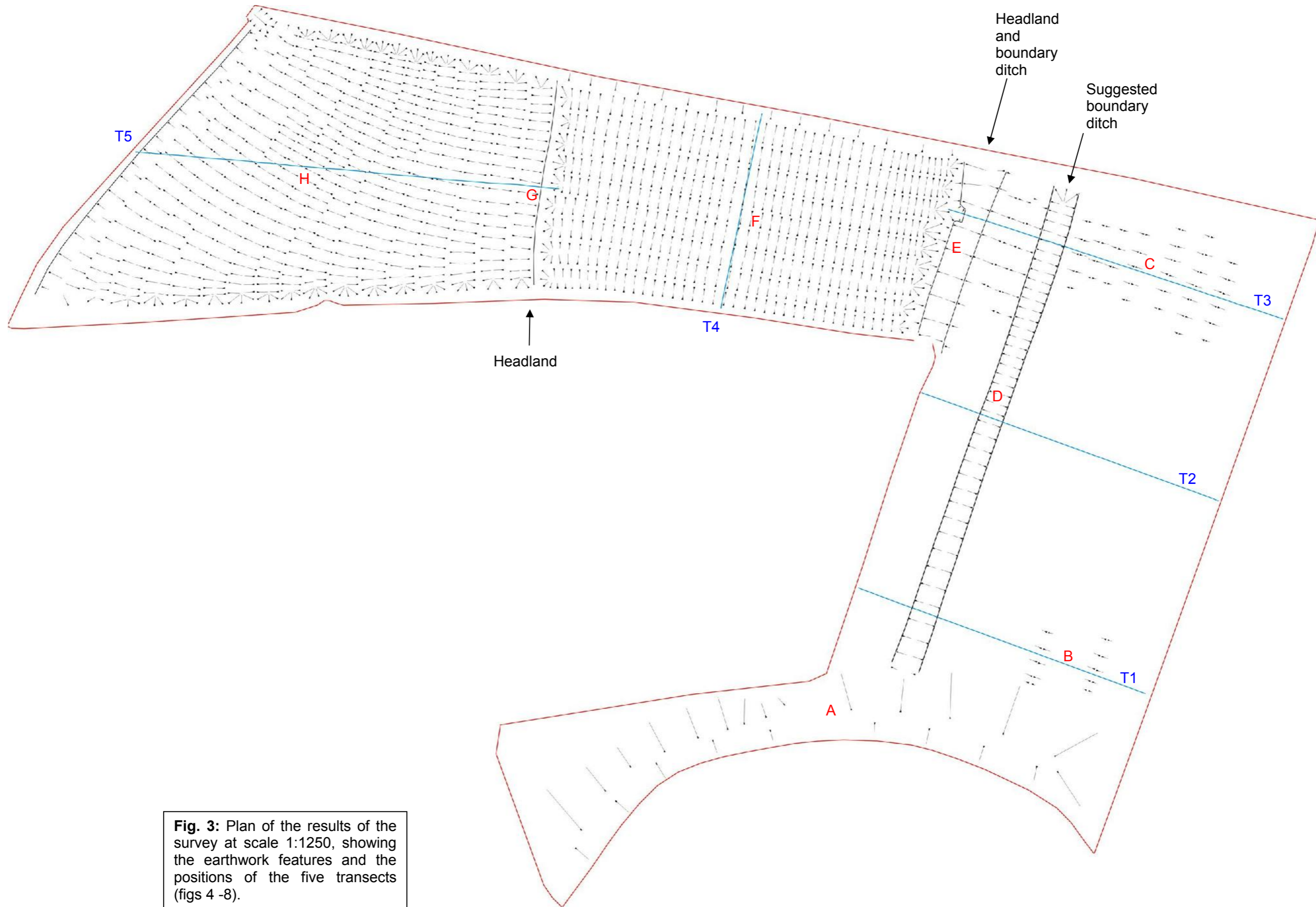


Fig. 3: Plan of the results of the survey at scale 1:1250, showing the earthwork features and the positions of the five transects (figs 4 -8).

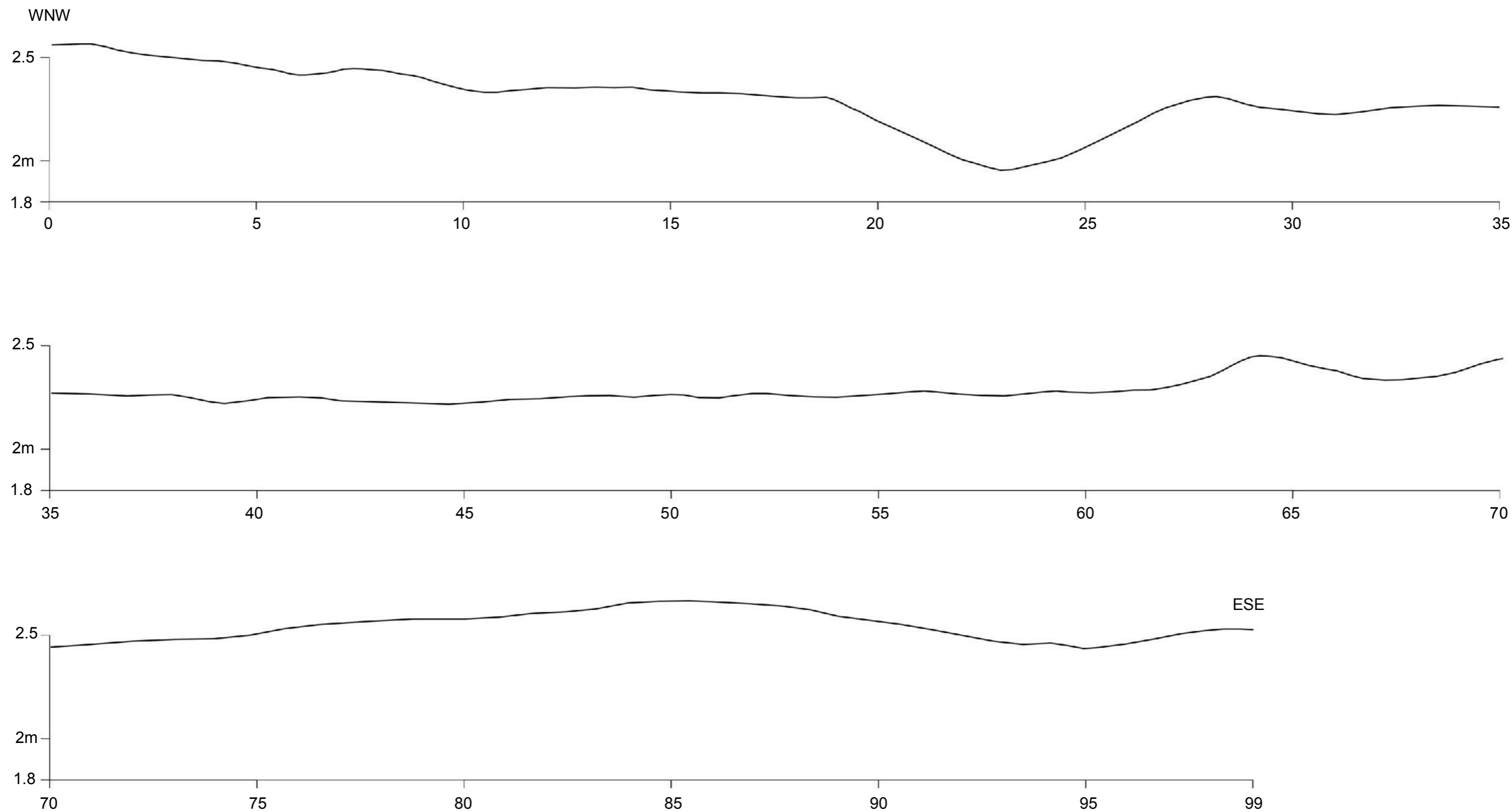


Fig. 4 WNW-ESE Transect (1) across the earthworks in the east field. Horizontal Scale 1:100, Vertical Scale 1:20.

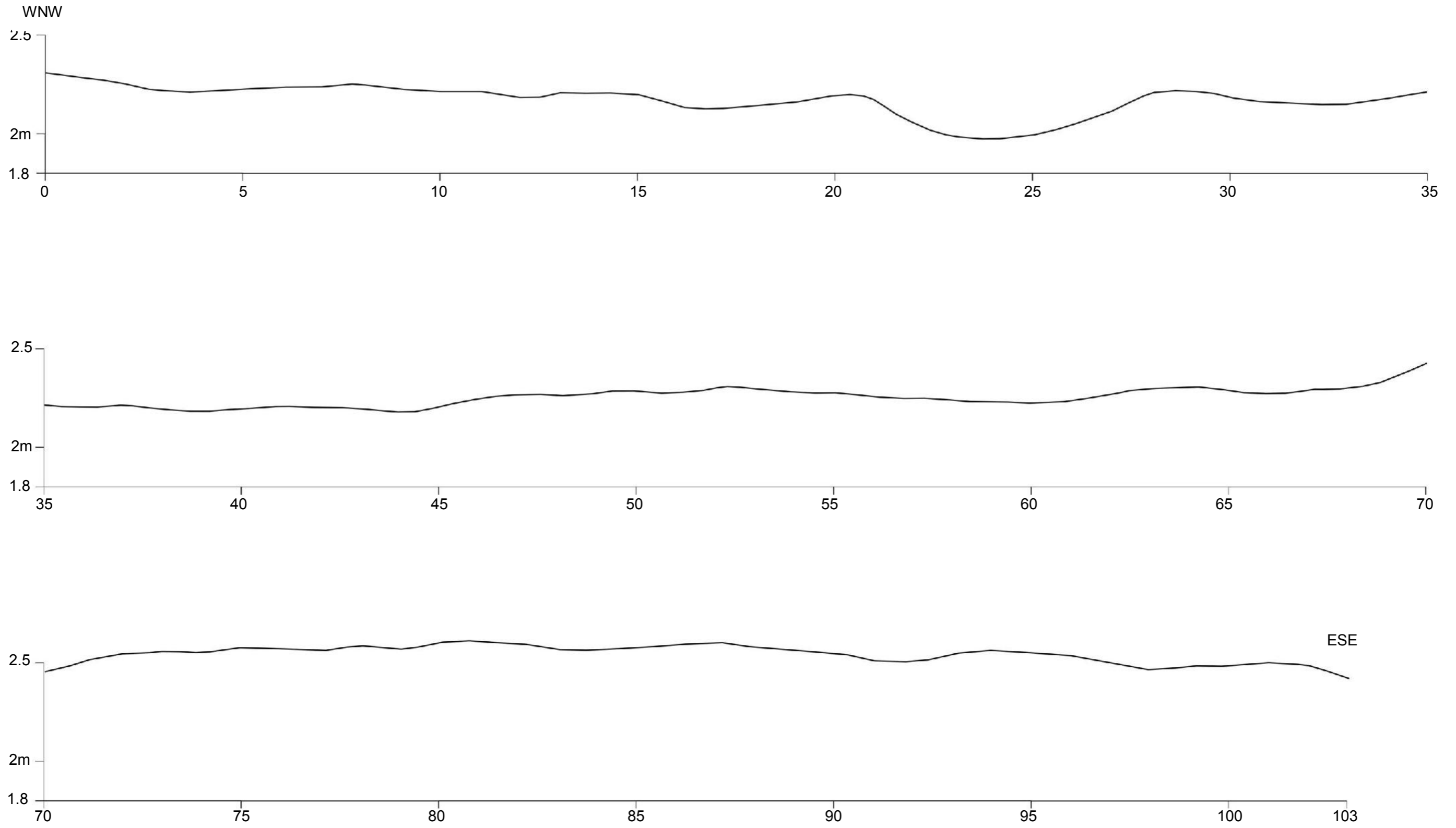


Fig. 5: WNW-ESE Transect (2) across the earthworks in the east field. Horizontal Scale 1:100, Vertical Scale 1:20.

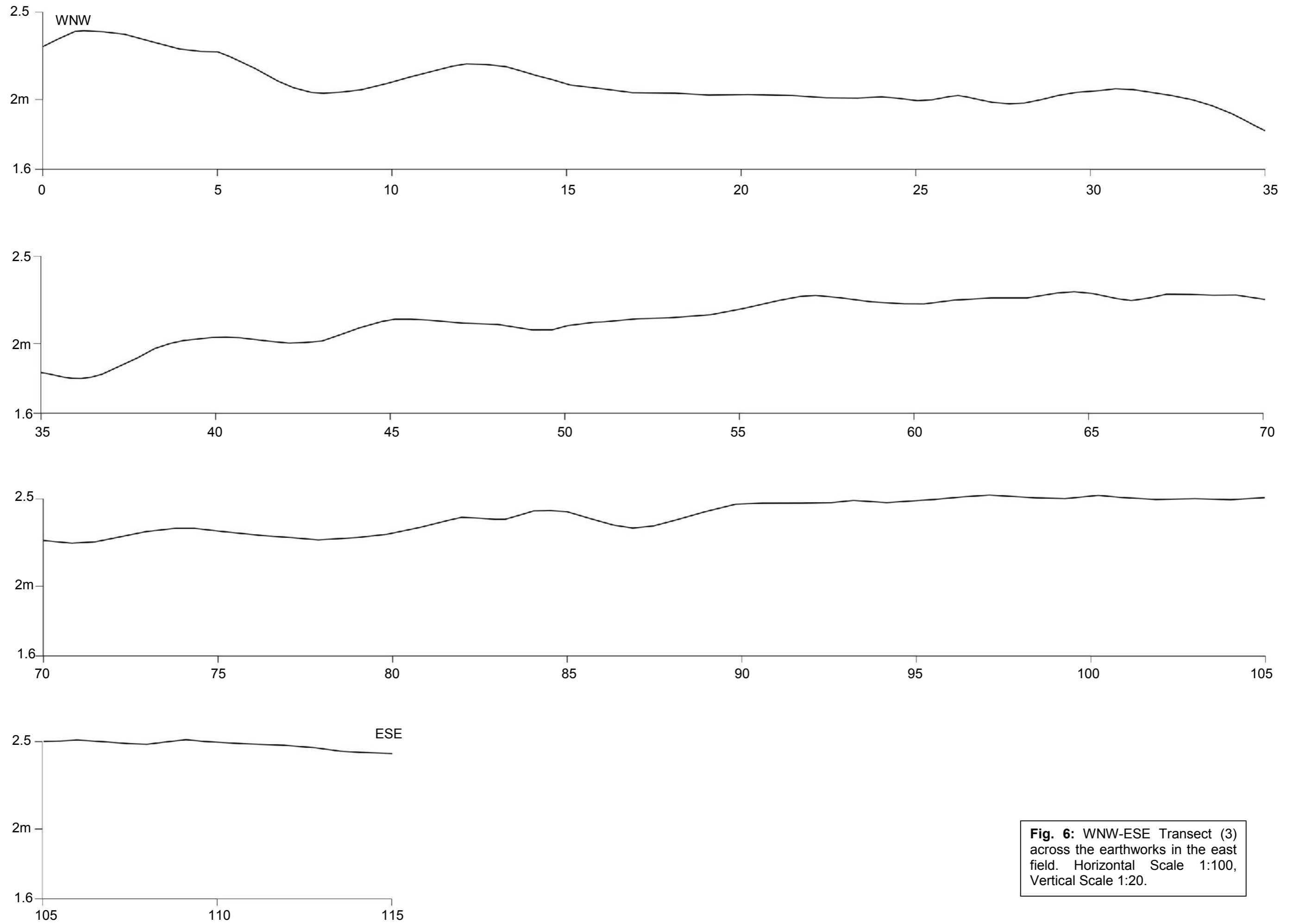


Fig. 6: WNW-ESE Transect (3) across the earthworks in the east field. Horizontal Scale 1:100, Vertical Scale 1:20.

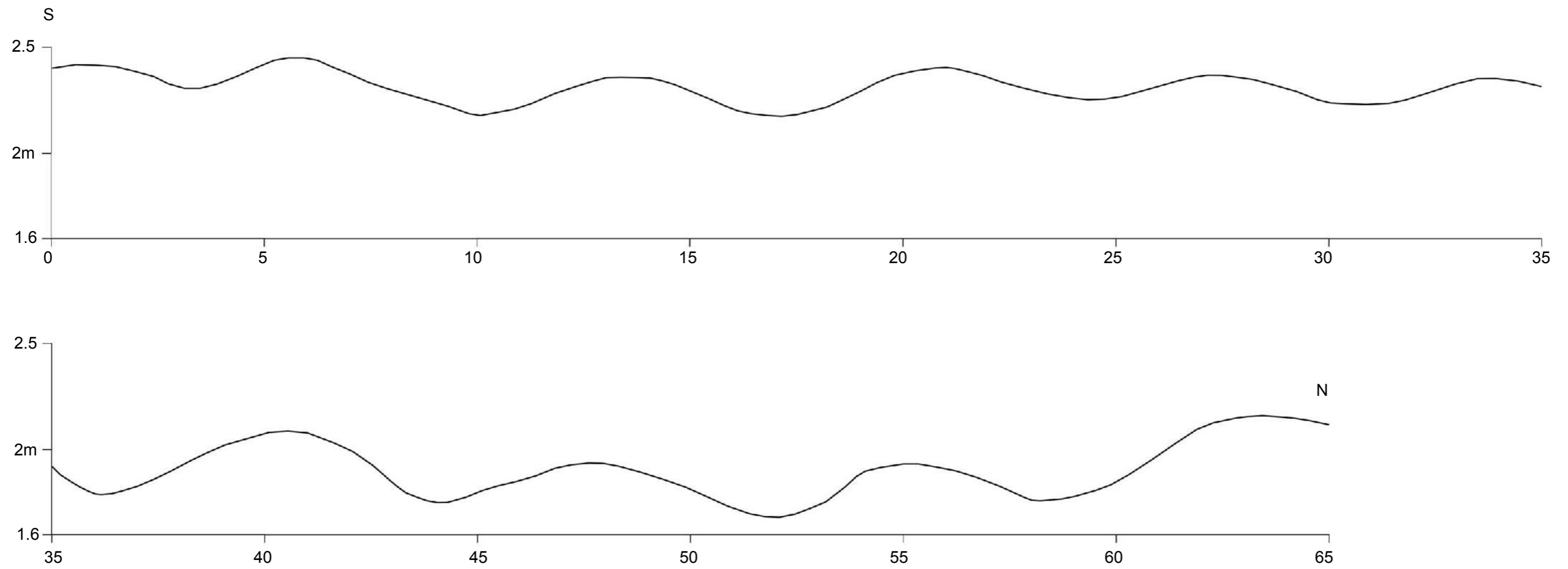


Fig. 7: S-N Transect (4) across the ridge and furrow in the central field. Horizontal Scale 1:100, Vertical Scale 1:20.

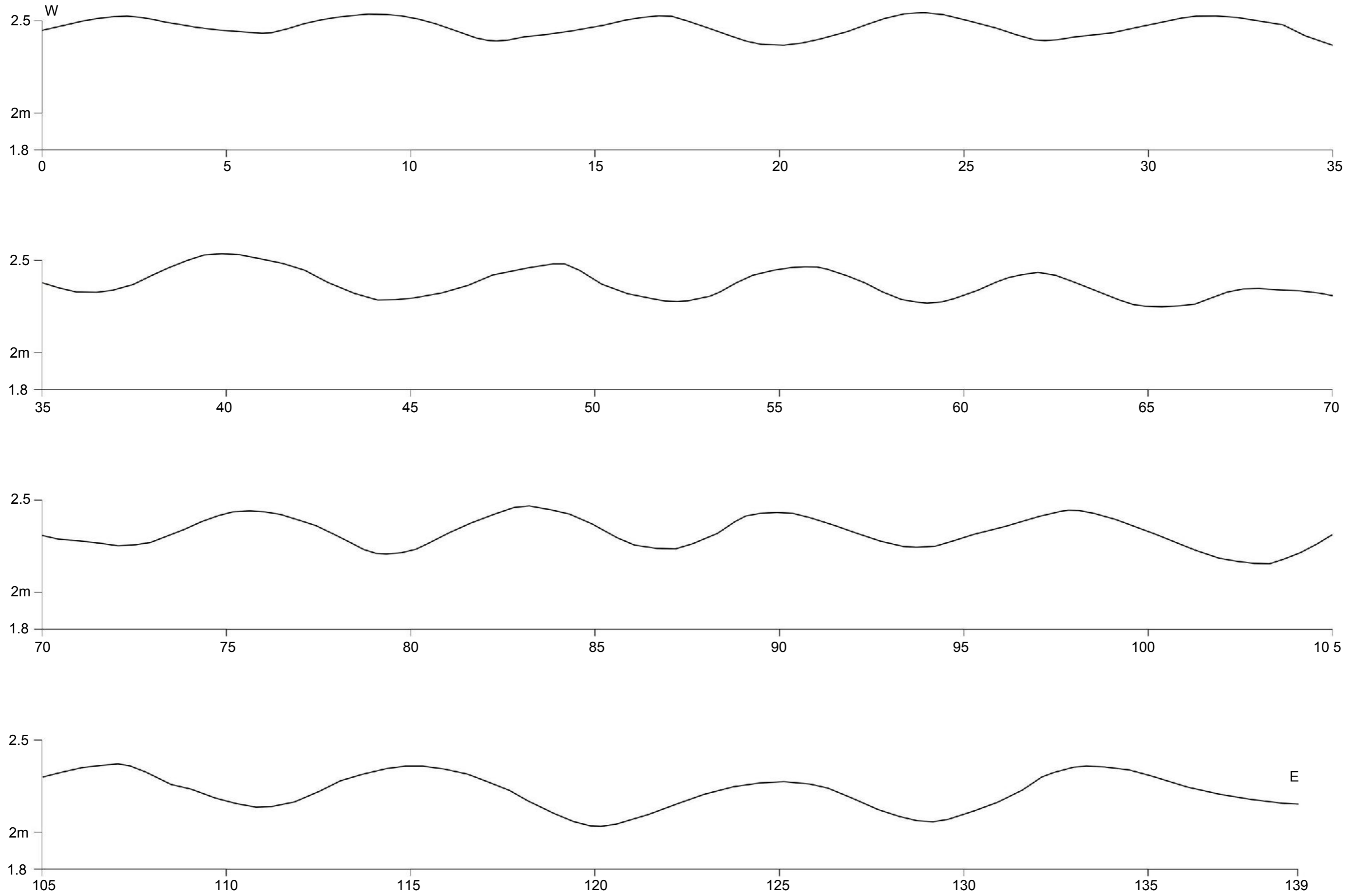


Fig. 8: W-E Transect (5) across the ridge and furrow in the west field. Horizontal Scale 1:100, Vertical Scale 1:20.

Appendix 1: Colour Plates



Plate 1: General shot of the site looking east from the southwest corner of the western field.



Plate 2: General shot of the site looking north across the east field from the Winthorpe Drain.



Plate 3: General shot, looking southwest across the southern part of the east field, showing the upcast material (A) of the Winthorpe Drain.



Plate 4: General shot, looking south-southwest down the length of probable boundary ditch (D); less defined ridge and furrow area (C) flanks this feature.

Plate 5: The boundary ditch and headland (E) at the east side of E-W ridge and furrow area (F), looking south.



Plate 6: General view southwest across well defined E-W ridge and furrow area (F).

Plate 7: View southwest from Area (F) across headland (G) and into the area of N-S ridge and furrow (H).



Plate 8: View north across the best-defined part of north-south ridge and furrow (H).

Appendix 2: OASIS Summary

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