

**Archaeological Evaluation at the former  
Trent Vale Primary School  
Newcastle Road  
Stoke-on-Trent  
Staffordshire  
NGR SJ 86415 43370**

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**Non-technical summary.**

*Prior to the re-development of the former site of Trent Vale Primary School on Newcastle Road, Stoke-on-Trent (NGR SJ 86415 43370), an archaeological evaluation was carried out by Stoke-on Trent Archaeology. Part of the site had been occupied by a National School from 1845 until the 1970s when it was replaced by a more modern school, which was itself demolished in 2009. The rest of the site had been given over to allotment gardens in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The development area however also lies approximately 300m north west of a known Roman pottery kiln and a fort dating to the AD 1<sup>st</sup> century.*

*The evaluation was carried out between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> June 2010. It involved the excavation of six trenches, one of which was targeted to investigate the remains of the 19<sup>th</sup> century school buildings and another to find domestic privies at the back of late Victorian houses fronting Newcastle Road. The remainder of the trenches were sited speculatively to assess for any evidence of Roman activity on the site.*

*No evidence for Roman activity was encountered during the course of the evaluation and very little structural and artefactual evidence pertaining to the early school was found, although part of a suspected toilet block that stood in the playground until c.1924 was investigated and a building that may have been for domestic privies was also recorded. No material dating to before the early to mid 19<sup>th</sup> century was encountered in any of the trenches.*

### 1.0 Introduction

**1.1** The development area (DA) is on the site of the former Trent Vale Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School on Newcastle Road in Trent Vale, which is a residential suburb of Stoke-upon-Trent, one of the six towns that comprise the modern city of Stoke-on-Trent (Fig. 1). The DA is close to the sites of a Roman kiln and fort dating to the AD 1<sup>st</sup> century and as the full extent of Roman activity in the area remains unknown, it was thought possible that there might be evidence of their presence within the DA.

### 2.0 The development area

#### 2.1 *Planning background*

**2.1.1** An application for planning permission by Balfour Beatty Construction Northern Ltd. to redevelop the DA with a purpose-built Special School was registered with the Local Planning Authority (LPA), Stoke-on-Trent City Council, on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2009 (ref. SOT/50068) and consent was granted on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2009.

**2.1.2** Due to its proximity to areas of archaeological sensitivity, an attached condition from the LPA's Planning Archaeologist (Boothroyd 2010) recommended an archaeological evaluation of the site in advance of groundworks. This proposal complied with the LPA's statutory planning and development process as defined by *Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan* policy NC14 (*Sites of Archaeological Importance*) and national government guidelines established in *Planning Policy Statement 5 (Planning for the Historic Environment, 2010)*.

**2.1.3** An archaeological evaluation, as defined by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), aims to establish the extent, preservation and character of any archaeological features or deposits on the site. Stoke-on-Trent Archaeology (SOTARCH) was commissioned by Balfour Beatty to undertake the project.

#### 2.2 *Site location*

**2.2.1** The site is centred on Ordnance Survey (OS) National Grid Reference (NGR) SJ 86415 43370, on land located approximately 2.70 km south west of the centre of Stoke-upon-Trent, and about 100m north of the Black Lion public house at the junction of Newcastle Road (A34) and London Road (B5041) (Fig. 1).

### ***2.3 Site character and topography***

**2.3.1** The DA is broadly rectangular in shape, aligned NE-SW, and extends to a gross area of approximately 12,030m<sup>2</sup>. The site is generally flat with levels increasing between the rear of the former school site and the north-east boundary. The entire rear half of the site comprises unmanaged grass turf, while tarmac surfacing and concrete paved flags represent the locations of late 20<sup>th</sup>-century hard-standing and play areas around the former school buildings.

**2.3.2** The site is bound by residential properties to the north along Flash Lane and to the south east on London Road. To the west is School Street, a one-way street accessed off Newcastle Road. The south-western perimeter along School Street and Newcastle Road is marked by security fencing, while the remaining boundaries mostly comprise garden fencing and hedges to the rear of the housing on London Road and Flash Lane.

### ***2.4 Geology and ground conditions***

**2.4.1** The site's surface conditions comprise superficial drifts of boulder clays and glacial sands and gravel deposited in the Devensian ice age (c.70,000-11,000 years BP). The underlying solid geology (bedrock) is mudstone of the Etruria Formation, with a band of sandstone outcropping through the eastern half of the site (Ground Investigation Report 2006, 5).

## **3.0 Archaeological and historical background**

### ***3.1 The school***

**3.1.1** Trent Vale developed as a residential suburb along the Newcastle Road turnpike between Hanford and Newcastle-under-Lyme in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and the district became a parish in 1844 (Cockin 2006, 530). Trent Vale National School (PRN 30414), the district's first educational establishment, was founded by the 'National Society for Promoting Religion' in 1845 to provide an elementary education to working class children in accordance with the teachings of the Church of England.

**3.1.2** The school operated as a mixed and infants establishment until 1932 (Young 1963, 321), with the main building being enlarged in 1894 to accommodate 270 pupils (Kelly 1921, 388). By 1912 (Kelly, 393) there were 277 mixed and 96 infants attending. Following the reorganisation of local schools in 1932, junior school children were also

taken in at Trent Vale. It became a voluntary aided school in 1953 (Young 1963, 328), governed and appointed by the local Anglican diocese, but responsible to the local authority for admissions.

**3.1.3** The late 19<sup>th</sup>-century school was demolished in the 1970s and replaced with a new structure, positioned to the east of the earlier buildings. In 2003 there were 101 pupils aged 3-11 on roll (Platt 2004, 3). The school closed in July 2005 when it merged with Springfield Primary and the buildings were demolished in 2009.

### **3.2 *The Roman kiln and fort***

**3.2.1** The remains of a loaded Roman pottery kiln and workshop (PRN 00068) were excavated between 1929-34 and 1955-58 on a site located at NGR SJ 8676 4309, some 300m south east of the DA on land belonging to the Trent Vale Brick and Tile Works. The kiln is thought to have operated in the second half of the AD 1<sup>st</sup> century (Mountford *et al* 1968).

**3.2.2** A pair of ditches, each about 1.0m deep, with a typical Roman military 'V'-profile, were discovered in 1970 during levelling operations at the factory (NGR SJ 8680 4330). They probably represent the south-eastern defences of a fort (PRN 30728) built on high ground above the River Trent to guard the crossing at Hanford; material from the site suggests that it is broadly contemporary with the kiln (White 2010). It has been advocated that the fort was abandoned during the Boudiccan revolt of AD 61 (Cockin 2006, 530).

## **4.0 Site development**

**4.1** Yates' map of 1775 identifies the Trent Vale area as *High Trent Bank*, but no properties are indicated in the vicinity of the DA. Hargreaves' 1832 map does show the Black Lion Inn at the junction of Newcastle and London Roads, but the triangular plot that these thoroughfares form with Flash Lane to the north is devoid of development.

**4.2** The 1878 OS map (Fig. 3) shows a cruciform school for boys and girls located at the junction of Newcastle Road and School Street, set within a defined enclosure covering approximately 1,040m<sup>2</sup>, but sub-divided into three separate zones. To the east of the school is a rectangular building measuring 6.50m E-W x 4.50m N-S that appears to



allow access between the three zones. Fronting Newcastle Road south of the school are nine dwellings, all of which feature back yards containing privies. Terraced housing and the Black Lion Inn are present on London Road and Flash Lane.

**4.3** The 1900 OS edition shows few major changes compared to 1878, apart from a few more terraced dwellings along London Road and a Sunday School on School Street. The 1924 OS map (Fig. 4) reveals the east end and south side of the school have been enlarged. Allotment gardens are indicated to the east of the school site. The dwellings along London Road have been extended along the south east boundary.

**4.4** By 1937 (Fig. 5) the small structure in the playground has gone, as have the boundaries delineating the three separate zones while the play area has been extended to the east. The school's curtilage has been extended south behind the houses on Newcastle Road. The 1950 OS map (Fig. 6) shows three rectangular outbuildings within the grounds to the rear of the school. The allotment gardens, which now extend north up to Flash Lane, contain a scattering of isolated structures (mostly greenhouses). The allotments are also bisected by an east – west path crossing the site from School Street.

**4.5** In 1970 the school is identified as *Trent Vale C.E. Junior and Infants School* but there appear to be no major changes to the buildings. To the north a row of semi-detached dwellings has been built over the allotments along Flash Lane. By 1994 the original school had been replaced by a new building located approximately 20m to the east, in the middle of the site, set back from the frontage and the side boundaries. The terraced houses fronting Newcastle Road disappear between 1970 and 1994.

## **5.0 Methodology**

### **5.1 Aims and objectives**

**5.1.1** The primary aim of the evaluation was to determine the state of preservation of the original school complex and privies relating to housing on Newcastle Road, and to assess the potential for Roman remains within the DA. The over-arching objectives of the project are described in full in the Planning Archaeologist's project brief (Boothroyd 2010) but are broadly summarised below:

- Confirm the presence or absence of buried remains of archaeological interest.

- Determine the date, nature, phasing and the state of preservation and relationships of any archaeological deposits and features.
- Preserve by record the archaeological evidence found.
- Attempt to provide information on the character of the site within a local, regional and national context.

**5.1.2** The project brief required the opening of six 2.0m x 10.0m evaluation trenches, in accordance with the IfA *Standard and Guidance for field evaluation* (revised October 2008). The locations for two trenches (numbers 1 and 2) were determined by historical map evidence, the remainder being positioned speculatively, but with consideration to the footprint of the modern school (Fig. 2). The trenches would give a total excavation area of 120.0m<sup>2</sup>, representing a 0.99% sample of the entire development site.

**5.1.3** Fieldwork was undertaken between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> June 2010 and was conducted in compliance with the Planning Archaeologist's project brief (Boothroyd 2010) and a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by SOTARCH (Goodwin 2010). The project was conducted in accordance with current best archaeological practice and conformed with relevant national codes of conduct, standards and guidance as advocated in the *By-laws of the Institute for Archaeologists* (revised October 2008).

**5.1.4** The evaluation involved the archaeological supervision of a 180° backhoe excavator equipped with a 1.70m-wide toothless ditching bucket to remove overburden down to the first discernible archaeological horizon. If no archaeological features or deposits were identified, excavation was continued either to a point where undisturbed natural subsoil could be confirmed or to a safe and practical working depth.

**5.1.5** All archaeological horizons were cleaned by hand and the trench documented by means of a written record (site notes and individual *pro-forma* context sheets) and measured drawings (1:20 for sections and plans). A high-resolution digital colour and 35mm monochrome print photographic record was maintained, showing specific stages of the fieldwork and the layout and relationship of any archaeological features. Finds were sampled where appropriate. A temporary benchmark (TBM) with a value of 100.0m was established on a wall at the north-west corner of the site (Fig. 2). All site levels were related to this TBM. Representative stratigraphic sequences were recorded

in each trench and all the trenches were backfilled after recording with the permission of the Planning Archaeologist.

**5.1.6** The site archive is stored at The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Bethesda Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire (site code **TVS10**, Museum Accession Number **2010.LH.5**).

## **6.0 Results of evaluation**

**6.1 Trench 1** (10.20m NW-SE x 2.18m (max.) NE-SW) (Figs. 7a, b & c; Plate 1)

**6.1.1** Trench 1 was located on the west side of the DA and was targeted to investigate the 19<sup>th</sup>-century school buildings. The presence of active utilities necessitated the re-location of the trench *c.* 1.0m to the east. This still ensured that the trench came down on the rectangular building depicted in the playground between 1880 and 1924 (Figs. 3 & 4).

**6.1.2** Removal of a 0.09m thick overburden of tarmac hard-standing (100) revealed an underlying base course of gravel and red ash (101), 0.09m thick, which in turn overlay a levelling layer of dark brown gritty sand and pebbles (102), also 0.09m thick. Along the majority of the trench this stratum overlay a 0.31m-thick band of yellow-orange sandy clay and pebbles (103), interpreted as disturbed natural subsoil.

**6.1.3** At the north end of the trench (103) was cut by an east – west aligned linear feature [104] *c.* 1.90m in length and containing a redundant ceramic drain pipe (105) within a loose backfill of dark brown sandy clay containing mixed rubble and pebbles (106). A rectangular patch of dark brown silt (110) was contained within (103) at the trench bottom. Another cut [107] within (103), was aligned NW – SE across the trench and contained a 0.20m diameter ceramic drain (108) under a backfill of light brown sand, pebbles and rubble (109). This cut was visible at the limit of excavation, but was not obvious in the east-facing trench section. A longitudinal branch of this pipe extended south beneath an east – west aligned double-skin brick wall, laid to stretcher bond (111).

**6.1.4** Wall (111) formed the north side of a brick structure located at the south end of the trench directly beneath layer (102). Bonded to the southern side of (111) was a

north– south aligned, double-skin wall of blue and red brick (112). A pair of double-skin walls (113) and (119), both laid to stretcher bond, were bonded to (112) and extended west. Positioned across the two compartments formed by (119), (113) and (111) were single-skin, north-south aligned walls (120) and (121). Both (120) and (121) appeared to butt against the walls at their northern and southern ends.

**6.1.5** The west face of wall (112) was exposed to its base and recorded to a height of 0.73m. Within it were two square-headed arches: A measured c.0.30m high and 0.25m wide and arch B was 0.40m in height by 0.40m wide (Fig. 7c; Plate 2). These opened into two separate rectangular chambers measuring about 0.90m N-S x 0.40m E-W which were located between (112) and (120)/(121) and had been in-filled with a mix of brown silt and rubble (115). There was no intervening gap within wall (113) so both chambers were apparently self-contained, although pipe (108) entered the northern chamber under wall (111), where it stopped. The material at the base of the chambers consisted of loose light brown clay containing brick rubble, late 19<sup>th</sup>-century pottery and other finds (117), which appeared to overlie a layer of mortar (118).

**6.2 Trench 2** (11.32m NW-SE x 2.94m (max.) NE-SW) (Fig. 8a; Plate 3)

**6.2.1** This trench was positioned in the south-west corner of the DA and was targeted on the domestic privies and outbuildings from the 19<sup>th</sup>-century terraced housing fronting Newcastle Road (numbers 30-24) (Figs. 3-6). The presence of a line of tree stumps and standing conifers necessitated re-location of this trench 1.0m to the west.

**6.2.2** The overburden in trench 2 consisted almost entirely of turf and humic topsoil (200), up to 0.40m in depth. The array of wall lines at the south end of the trench included a north-west – south-east aligned, double skin red brick wall (201), laid to stretcher bond and surviving to a maximum height of 0.50m, interpreted as the rear wall of a building. A north-east – south-west orientated double-skin wall (204), laid to English bond, appears to represent the south end of the structure; a return wall (213) seems to be within a defined feature c.1.80m E-W and 0.45m N-S [214], perhaps a foundation cut, backfilled with a brown sandy silt containing brick and tile (215).

**6.2.3** Approximately 1.10m to the west of, and running parallel to wall (201) was a possible front wall of the building, comprising greyish-red brick laid to English bond

(202) and surviving to a maximum height of 0.16m. The interior of the building was sub-divided into small bays (A-D) represented by three lateral walls, consisting of (203) and (206), both double skinned and with the latter revealing a stepped lower course and (205), comprising a single row of bricks.

**6.2.4** In plan, the building appeared to have squarish compartments at each end (A and D), measuring approximately 0.78m NW-SE x 0.90m NE-SW, defined by the double-skin walling, and two smaller rectangular spaces (B and C), each about 1.0m NE-SW x 0.48m NW-SE, separated by a thin partition (205). Underlying a 0.08m thick layer of dark brown silty sand (207), the base layer within compartment A at the south end of the building comprised a firm yellow clay (210), possibly the natural sub-soil, within which was an unidentifiable circular cut [211], c.0.38m in diameter and 0.08m deep, with gently sloping sides and a flat bottom. The feature contained a fill of loose, dark brown silty sand (212), containing a single late 19<sup>th</sup>-century potsherd.

**6.2.5** Again underlying silty sand layer (207) the base of compartment B comprised a surface of degraded red brick covered by a rough mortar (209), within which was set a congealed rusty mass that could not be identified. The base of compartment C also underlay (207) and consisted of a brick floor covered with mortar (208). The overburden covering the base of compartment D was left *in situ*. On the north side of wall (213) was a 2.0m-wide deposit of yellow clay (225) underlying (200).

**6.2.6** Underlying overburden (200) at the north end of trench 2 was another configuration of bonded walls (Plate 4), consisting of (217), a stub of north – south aligned, double skin wall, presumably a back wall comparable with (201). Again a double-skin wall (220) ran parallel to (217) approximately 0.90m to the west, which appeared to accommodate a 0.15m-diameter ceramic drain (222). Extending between walls (217) and (220) was a double-skin lateral wall (219). A tiny stub of another lateral wall (218) on wall (217) suggested a corresponding wall, implying a compartment measuring about 1.10m N-S x 0.90m E-W. At the south end of wall (217) was a surface of bricks laid flat (221).

**6.3 Trench 3** (10.35 NW-SE x 2.04m NE-SW) (Figs. 8b & c; Plate 5)

**6.3.1** Trench 3 was opened on the west side of the site in an area previously utilised by former schools as a playground space. It was speculatively located to assess any possible Roman activity, but only encountered 19<sup>th</sup>-century boundary walls.

**6.3.2** Removal of tarmac hard-standing overburden (300), 0.14m thick, revealed an underlying stratum of black gritty ash (301), c.0.06m thick. This was interpreted as a base course for the tarmac and overlay a red aggregate (302) up to 0.10m thick, which formed a sub-base. Beneath (302) was a compacted brown silty sand (303), up to 0.10m deep, which formed the base of the trench. Confined to the north end of the trench was a patch of loose, brown-black silty sand (306), containing moderate inclusions of charcoal.

**6.3.3** Layers (303) and (306) abutted the west face of (304), a north-west – south-east aligned, double-skin red brick wall which extended the full length of the section. A sondage at the north end of the trench revealed the wall survived to a height of 0.70m. The bottom two courses were stepped and rested on a natural foundation of yellow-grey clay (307), interpreted as undisturbed natural subsoil (Plate 6). Wall (304) was bonded to north-east – south-west aligned double-skin return wall (305), which crossed the north end of the trench, also possessing stepped footings resting on (307).

**6.4 Trench 4** (9.90m NW-SE x 2.40m NE-SW) (Figs. 9a & b; Plate 7)

**6.4.1** Trench 4 was on the west side of the site and was speculatively located to assess potential Roman activity. The north end of the trench was defined by a north-east – south-west aligned brick and concrete wall (401). A representative five out of seven negative features encountered within this trench were sectioned and sampled, but overall the trench produced no pre-modern archaeological material.

**6.4.2** The trench area had been utilised by the modern school as a garden pond and was overlain by a flexible PVC pond liner, beneath which was a layer of pink-grey angular stones (400). This overlay a band of mixed rubble (403), possibly related to the demolition of the original school in the 1970s, beneath which was a brown-yellow sandy clay (407) up to 0.25m thick, interpreted as natural subsoil. Within this was a



roughly concave cut [410], possibly a rubbish pit, 2.40m wide and 0.45m deep, containing a fill of brown-black silty clay (406) with inclusions of brick and ash.

**6.4.3** Also cut into (407) was a linear feature [408] which extended east – west across the trench, with a 2.90m long ‘tail’ [414], running south east. The vertical sides of [408] were visible in section underlying (403). A sondage at the junction of these two features revealed a dark brown sandy fill containing brick fragments (409) 0.04m deep within [408]. The fill (413) of [414] comprised a lens of dark brown compact sandy clay about 0.01m deep and feature [418] also proved to be a lens of dark brown sand (417) about 0.02m thick.

**6.4.4** To the north of [408] was a 0.40m wide sub-circular pit [412], again cut into (407), which had been truncated by a later feature [420]. This was another sub-circular cut, 0.74m NE-SW x 0.40m NW-SE x 0.13m deep that contained a compact fill of dark brown sandy clay (419) with inclusions of tile, pottery and clay pipe. It also contained the articulated skeleton of a small dog (421) (Plate 8), laid on its right side, with the head orientated to the east and the legs folded beneath the body. The material inclusions within fill (419) suggest this burial does not pre-date the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (see **7.5**). Towards the southern end of the trench, another small pit [424], measuring 0.42m NE-SW x 0.36m NW-SE x 0.10m deep and containing a silty brown fill (423), featured an articulated dog or cat skeleton, laid on its right side, with the head orientated to the west and the back legs partially extended (Plate 9). The cut and the skeleton extended into the north-west-facing trench section and neither was fully revealed. No diagnostic artefacts were recovered from (423).

## **6.5 Trench 5** (10.0m E-W x 2.0m N-S) (Fig. 10a; Plate 10)

**6.5.1** This trench was located in the north-east corner of the DA in an area utilised by the modern school as playing fields and previously occupied by the garden allotments. It was speculatively located to assess any possible Roman activity. The trench exposed no pre-modern archaeological material; two negative features were uncovered, one of which was sectioned.

**6.5.2** The overburden of turf and sandy clay top soil (500) was 0.30m deep and contained significant amounts of pottery and brick. Within (500) at the west end of the

trench was a single course of red bricks laid flat (508). Underlying (500) at the west end was a 0.19m-thick stratum of broken white tile wasters (501), most of which were biscuit fired; the mix also included several pyrometric rings.

**6.5.3** Beneath (501) was a compact layer of brown sandy clay containing brick rubble, glass and metal (502), which in turn overlay strata of brown sandy clay (503) and (504), interpreted as layers of disturbed natural subsoil with inclusions of pottery and clay pipe stems. At the east end of (504) was a vertical cut [512] visible in section only and containing a dark brown clay backfill (513). Underlying (504) was a layer of brown-red clay (505), interpreted as natural which had been cut by [507], which showed up in section as a vertical feature about 0.45m deep, splaying out at the top. In the base of the trench it was visible as a circular cut approximately 0.35m in diameter. This was sectioned to a depth of 0.18m and was found to have a slightly concave base. The loose, light brown sandy clay fill (506) however was sterile.

## **6.6 Trench 6** (9.0m E-W x 2.0m N-S) (Fig. 10b; Plate 11)

**6.6.1** This trench was located in the north-east corner of the DA in an area utilised by the modern school as playing fields and previously occupied by the allotments. It was speculatively located to assess the possibility of Roman activity. No pre-modern archaeological finds or features were encountered in this trench. Extending diagonally across the south end of the trench was an outcropping of laminated sandstone.

**6.6.2** A 0.10m-thick topsoil (600) overlay a dark brown sandy clay (601) about 0.40m thick, with inclusions of small angular stones and pottery, and a yellow brown sandy clay and pebbles (602) up to 0.50m thick. Both of these layers were cut by a concave feature [606] about 3.70m wide and 0.59m deep, the sandy clay fill of which (607) contained blocks of aggregate concrete. This feature had also cut (603), which underlay (602), and was similar in composition to (601). Underlying (603) was a firm light brown clay containing pebbles (604) up to 0.27m thick, interpreted as natural subsoil. At the east end of the trench, beneath (601), was a 0.30m-thick band of pinkish brown clay (605), similar in composition to (604) except for the colour.



## **7.0 The finds**

**7.1** Ceramic, glass, metal and bone artefacts were recovered from (117), (207), (212) and (419), and are discussed by context below.

### **7.2 Context 117**

**7.2.1** The context includes a collection of 40 earthenware sherds, representing a minimum of six vessels. Most of the sherds (37) have under-glaze transfer-printed designs in either blue or black, two of which are Aesthetic in style (one marked as 'Hampden') with one example of 'Willow' pattern. The forms amongst the printed wares are three plates and a possible dish. One of the plates has illegible printed and impressed marks on the base. In addition to the printed wares, the group includes one sherd of an earthenware hollow ware with yellow glaze painted with enamels and two sherds of an undecorated earthenware bowl.

**7.2.2** The group also features a clay pipe bowl with moulded claw, part of a bone knife handle and four fragments of writing slate, with incised horizontal lines on one face.

**7.2.3** The material from this group appears to date from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### **7.3 Context 207**

**7.3.1** This is by far the largest single group of artefacts recovered during the evaluation. Ceramic finds constitute the largest component of the material and represent a mix of items discarded from a domestic context and industrial pottery waste. A collection of 121 sherds were found, at least 33 of which (27.2% of the total) are clearly industrial waste, being either biscuit fired (23 sherds) or representing placing material used in firing (ten sherds). The remaining ceramics are largely a mix of decorated and undecorated earthenwares and bone china, with a handful of ironstones and stonewares.

**7.3.2** Most (29 sherds) of the decorated earthenwares have under-glaze transfer-printed designs in blue, black, green or pink; some embellished with under- and over-glaze painted details and gilding. Examples of 'Willow' pattern, 'Asiatic Pheasants' and a floral pattern, 'Colonna' are present, alongside anonymous Oriental scenes, Aesthetic prints and floral designs. One mug has a print commemorating the coronation of Edward VII and Queen Alexandra, and features the date June 26<sup>th</sup> 1902. This was the

intended date of the ceremony, but was pushed back to August 1902 due to Edward's ill health. The mug was produced by George Jones & Sons Ltd. of the Crescent Works, Stoke and was to be presented to the Borough of Stoke-upon-Trent, its mayor, T. R. Yoxall and the Town Clerk, J. B. Ashwell. Presumably, vessels marked with the original coronation date were released by the factory as seconds for general retail. The remains of sixteen vessels feature amongst the transfer-printed wares, comprising five plates, five cups, three saucers, a mug, one jug(?) and a tureen cover. None of the printed wares form matching sets.

**7.3.3** Under-glaze painted designs, in the form of polychrome floral motifs or simple horizontal bands appear on three sherds – two cups and one saucer. The latter vessel is extremely discoloured, which may be the result of a firing fault, or could have occurred during use. Eight sherds represent a majolica vessel, moulded into the shape of a purse with red glaze inside and out. Two red-bodied earthenware sherds stem from a teapot with gold lustre and applied relief decoration. A total of fourteen white-bodied earthenware sherds are glazed and undecorated, representing at least four cups, a teapot or jug, a chamber pot, an ointment pot, a cover (teapot?) and a candlestick(?). Three buff-bodied earthenware teapot(?) sherds have a streaky brown 'Rockingham' glaze. Only one coarse earthenware sherd features – a red-bodied jar with dark glaze on interior and exterior.

**7.3.4** Twenty bone china sherds are present, most of which are undecorated. The decorated examples comprise a cup sherd with an under-glaze printed 'Broseley' pattern and a cup with under-glaze painted band around the rim and over-glaze gilding. The undecorated vessels include a saucer with moulded spiral flutes, a plain saucer, a bowl, and two cups, one of which has moulded vertical flutes on the body.

**7.3.5** Only one ironstone-type ware is present – an undecorated plate with a printed mark of J. & G. Meakin, Hanley (Godden 1991, 427). Stonewares comprise one sherd of a moulded smear-glazed white stoneware jug, four sherds of at least two bottles and two preserve jars.

**7.3.6** Other finds include four undecorated clay pipe stem fragments. The glass assemblage comprises six fragments of a blue vase with moulded spiral flutes, a blue

glass bottle of octagonal form, two sherds of two clear bottles, two green beer/wine bottle fragments, a marble and six pieces of window glass. Two unmarked copper alloy teaspoons were found within one of the stoneware preserve jars. Fourteen pieces of at least three leather shoes are also present. Five fragments of animal bone, at least one of which shows signs of butchery, complete the group.

**7.3.7** The ceramic material offers the best dating evidence for the group and appears in the main to belong to the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Only two manufacturers' marks are present – one of J. G. Meakin which was in use from 1890 onwards (Godden 1991, 427) and the other of George Jones from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Stylistically some of the wares may be closer to the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century in date, perhaps suggesting an accumulation of material over time, but equally, given the domestic context, these may simply represent curated pieces.

**7.3.8** Production waste is a common element of domestic groups recovered from Stoke-on-Trent (Goodwin 2008, 19) and despite its inclusion within (207) the context group is still likely to have derived from one or more of the households that once fronted onto Newcastle Road. Unfortunately, the assemblage is too small to offer any real insight into the lives of the individuals that occupied these properties. General statements can be made: the ceramics are standard wares that could be found in most households of the period and were obtained, at least in part, from local sources, although some of the stonewares were manufactured outside of Stoke-on-Trent (probably Derbyshire or Nottinghamshire). The ceramics are mass-produced items and nothing within assemblage would have constituted an expensive purchase: although the bone china vessels would have been more costly than the earthenwares, they would still have been in reach of all but those with the most limited finances.

## **7.4 Context 212**

**7.4.1** One sherd of late 19<sup>th</sup>-century earthenware cup with under-glaze horizontal banding under rim on exterior and interior.

## **7.5 Context 419**

**7.5.1** A small collection of finds comprising one early-mid 19<sup>th</sup>-century slip-decorated earthenware hollow ware; one white earthenware hollow ware base or mid 19<sup>th</sup>-century

date; one 19<sup>th</sup>-century clay pipe stem; three 19<sup>th</sup>-century roof tile fragments; one 19<sup>th</sup>-century brick fragment; and a corroded iron nail.

## **8.0 Conclusions**

**8.1** The gross area excavated amounted to 138.49m<sup>2</sup>, representing 1.15% sample of the DA. No Roman material was recovered in the course of the evaluation. Very little structural or artefactual evidence was found in trenches 5 and 6, and what was encountered can probably be associated with the 20<sup>th</sup>-century garden allotments.

**8.2** Trench 3 exposed only wall lines, with (304) probably representing the boundary wall depicted on the historical OS maps between 1878 and 1924 (Figs. 3 & 4), before being relocated to the east by 1937. Wall (305) most likely connected to the east side of the school toilet block revealed by trench 1 and helped segregate the north and south-east zones of the playground which had separate areas for boys and girls, usually divided by a wall. Girls and infants shared space, with the boys retaining the largest area (Baker 1984, 31).

**8.3** Although a number of discrete features in trench 4 were sampled, the artefactual evidence suggests that none of the material recovered from the features dated to earlier than the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and may be secondary depositions. The pits containing the animal bones could have been dug, on what until c.1970 was waste ground, by householders on Newcastle Road. Wall (401) is probably part of the playground boundary erected between 1924 and 1937 (Figs. 4 & 5).

**8.4** Only trenches 1 and 2 furnished evidence of the 19<sup>th</sup>- to 20<sup>th</sup>-century school and nearby domestic housing. The rectangular structure partially revealed in trench 1 was almost certainly a free-standing toilet block, although only a fraction of its overall structure was exposed. It is therefore not apparent quite how the facility worked. The arches in wall (112) presumably funnelled waste into the narrow chambers, which may have originally been emptied by hand before the imposition of a pipe to remove the sewage. Nonetheless it is still unclear how this system worked in practice as there is no obvious connection between the chambers. An assemblage from (117) included the only potential evidence of schooling from the site in the form of fragments of possible writing slates, although the material is probably a secondary deposition resulting from

backfilling the chambers, probably when the block was demolished between 1924 and 1937.

**8.5** The possible residential privy block in trench 2 appears to have been a single building that contained what were presumably basic dry privies (no evidence of drainage was encountered) at each end (compartments A & D), with the two small areas (B & C) perhaps storing coal or ash, divided by a thin party wall (205). Ash was used as a deodorant and was invariably stored next to the privy. The privies probably served numbers 28 and 26, Newcastle Road. It is unclear as to the function of the second structure, but it is probably a small, square building shown on the historical maps belonging to number 28.

**8.6** The layer of brown silty sand (207) overlying the floors of the individual bays contained an extensive domestic pottery assemblage dating to the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is unclear whether the assemblage is an accumulation of refuse in the privy or the result of a single episode, such as a house clearance. There was, however, little rubble in the matrix, so they probably do not relate to the demolition of the properties. The value of 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century household artefact assemblages to furthering and understanding of domestic life in the past has been demonstrated through previous excavations within Stoke-on-Trent (Cramp 2008, 42-3). To date, however, relatively few assemblages of this type have been recovered and any future opportunity to excavate from the site more complete domestic artefact assemblages than that represented by (207), should be pursued.

## **9.0 Acknowledgements**

**9.1** Fieldwork was undertaken by Heather Anne Cope, Richard Cramp (supervisor), Peter Stuart and Zoë Sutherland of SOTARCH. This report was written by Richard Cramp AIfA, with illustrations by Heather Anne Cope. Finds were identified by Jonathan Goodwin of SOTARCH. Thanks are due to Noel Boothroyd, Stoke-on-Trent City Council Planning Archaeologist; Peter Huttley of Balfour Beatty Construction Northern Ltd and T.G. Barnett Plant Hire for their assistance and co-operation during the scheme.

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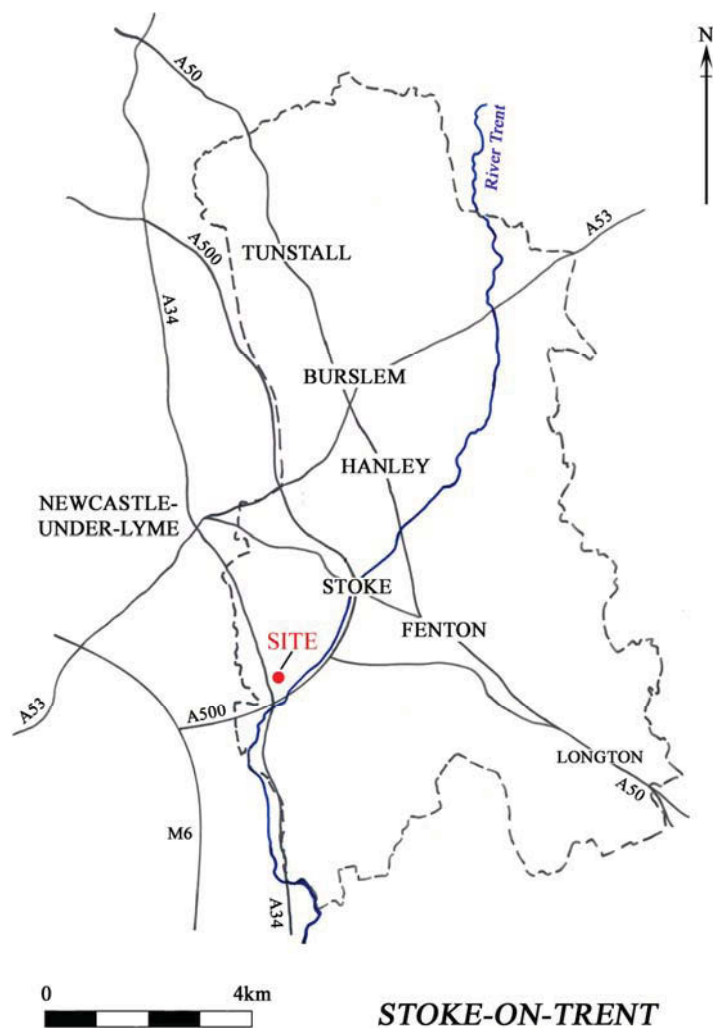
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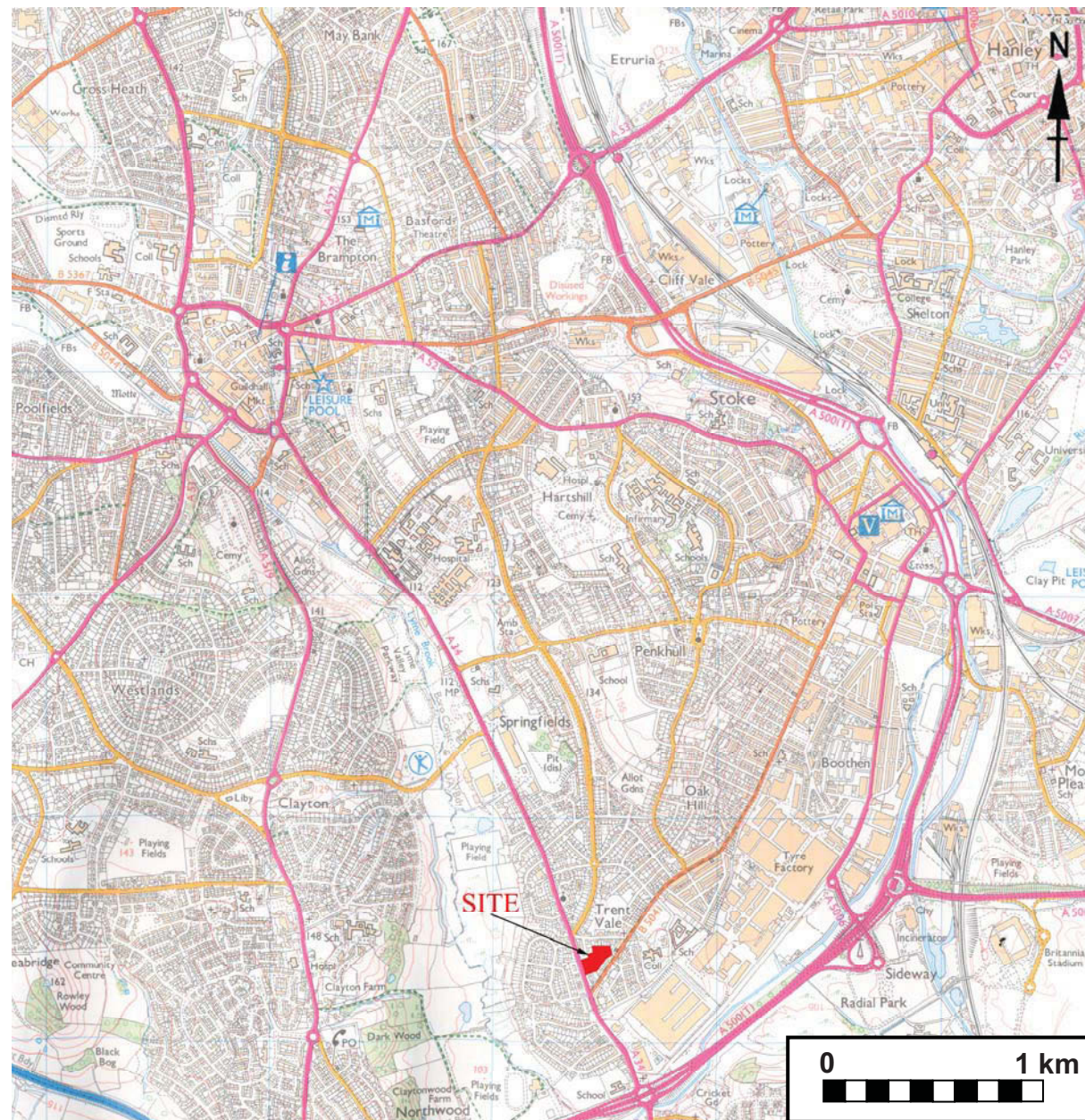




STOKE-ON-TRENT

FIG. 1

Site location.







**FIG. 2**

Trench location plan.

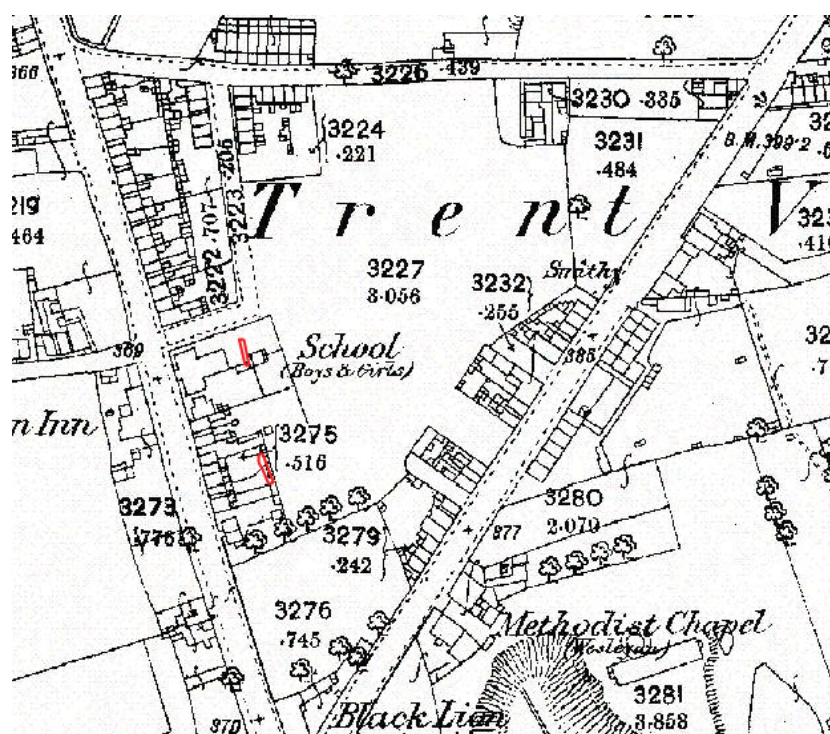


FIG. 3

Extract from 1878 OS map showing the school and housing on Newcastle Road (the positions of trenches 1 and 2 are indicated in red).

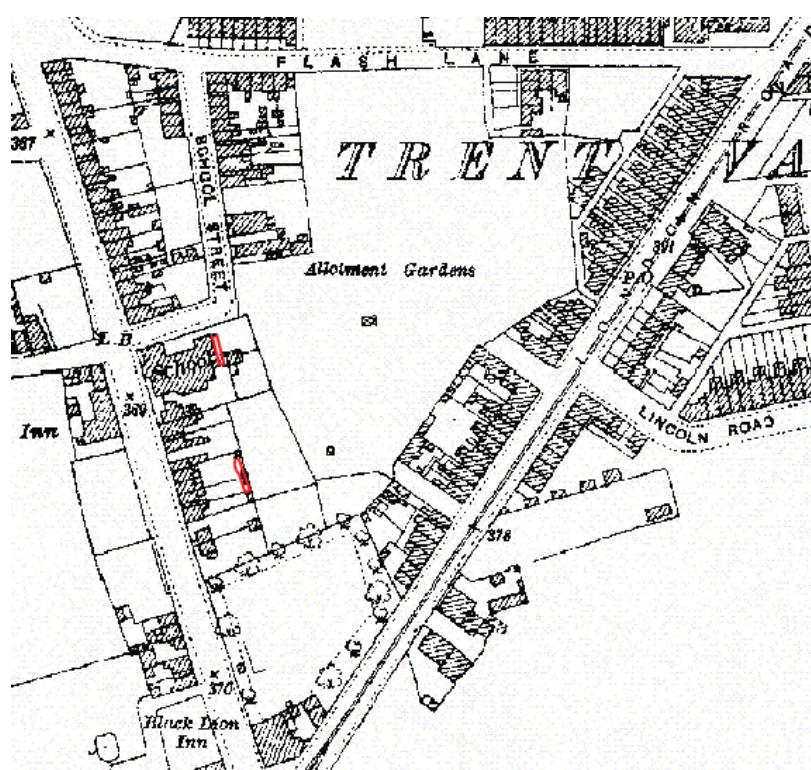


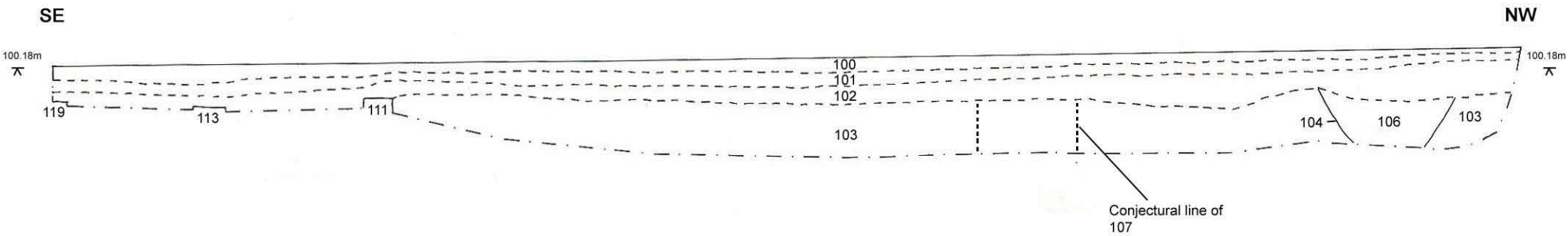
FIG. 4

Extract from 1924 OS map showing the reconfigured school and housing on Newcastle Road (the positions of trenches 1 and 2 are indicated in red).

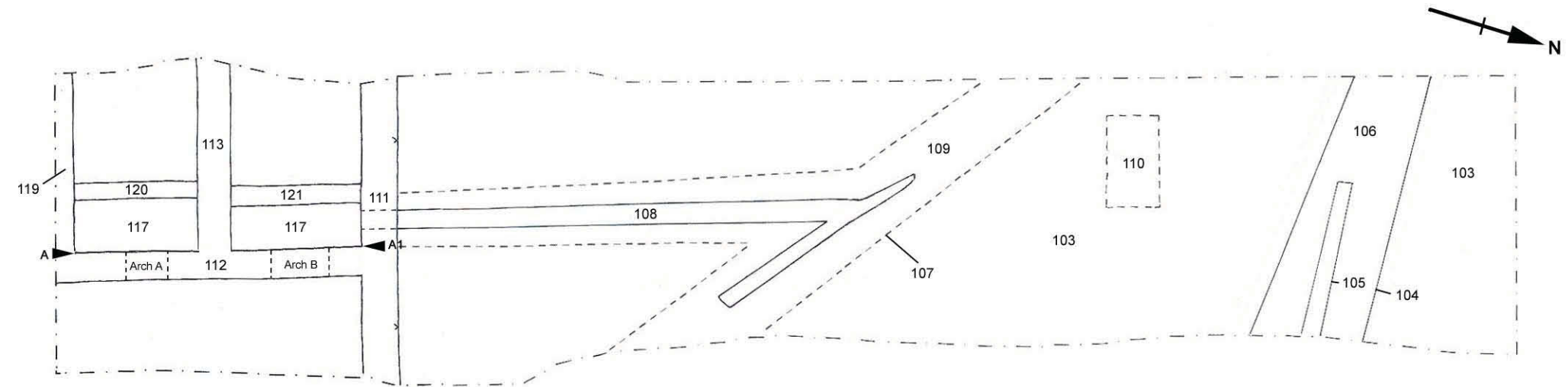




a)



b)



c)

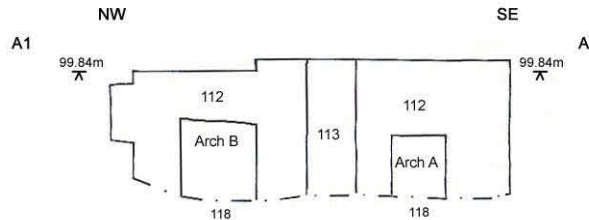


FIG. 7

- a) North-east facing section of trench 1
- b) Post-excavation plan of trench 1
- c) South-west facing elevation of (112)

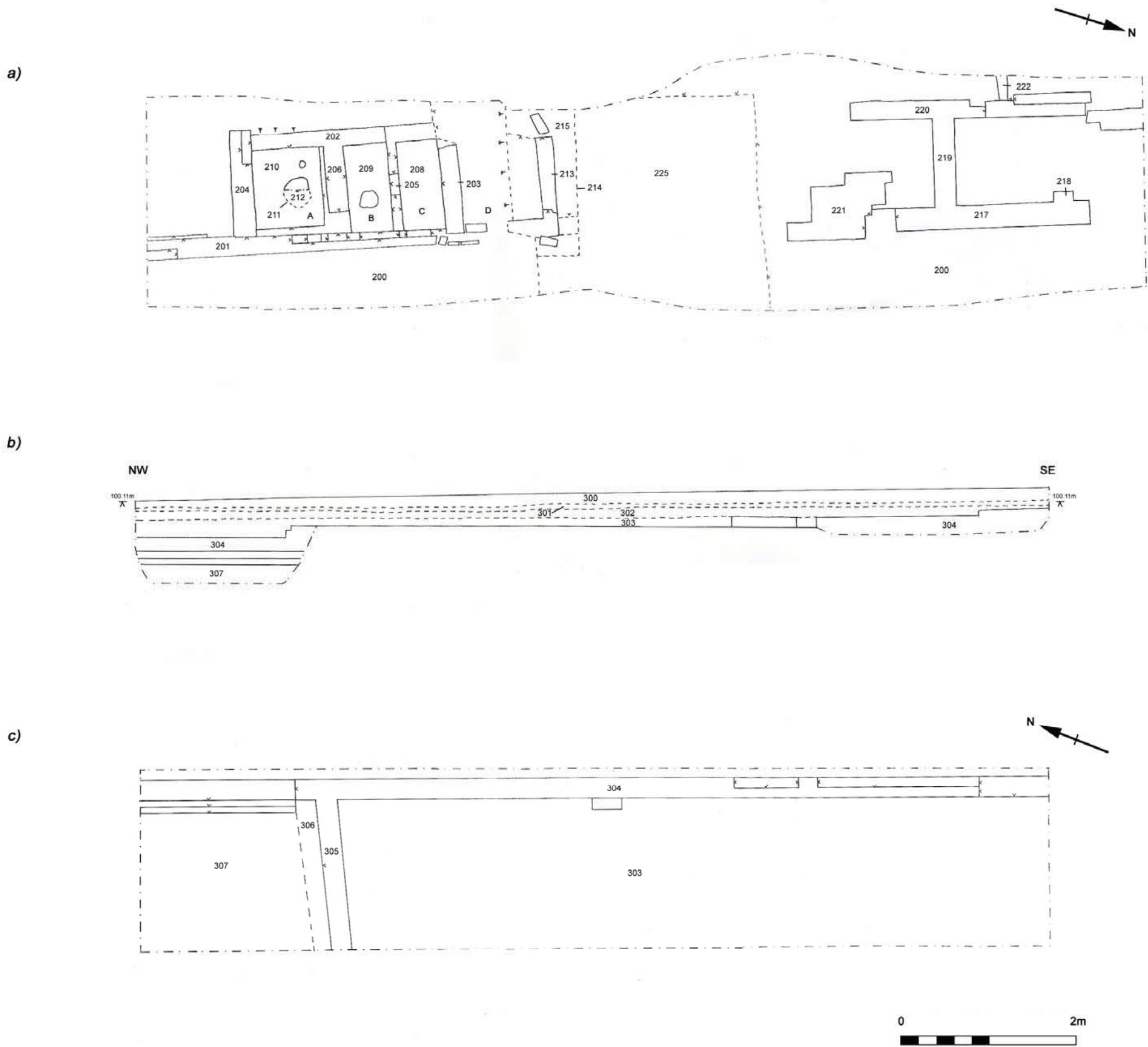


FIG. 8

- a) Post-excavation plan of trench 2
- b) South-west-facing section of trench 3
- c) Post-excavation plan of trench 3

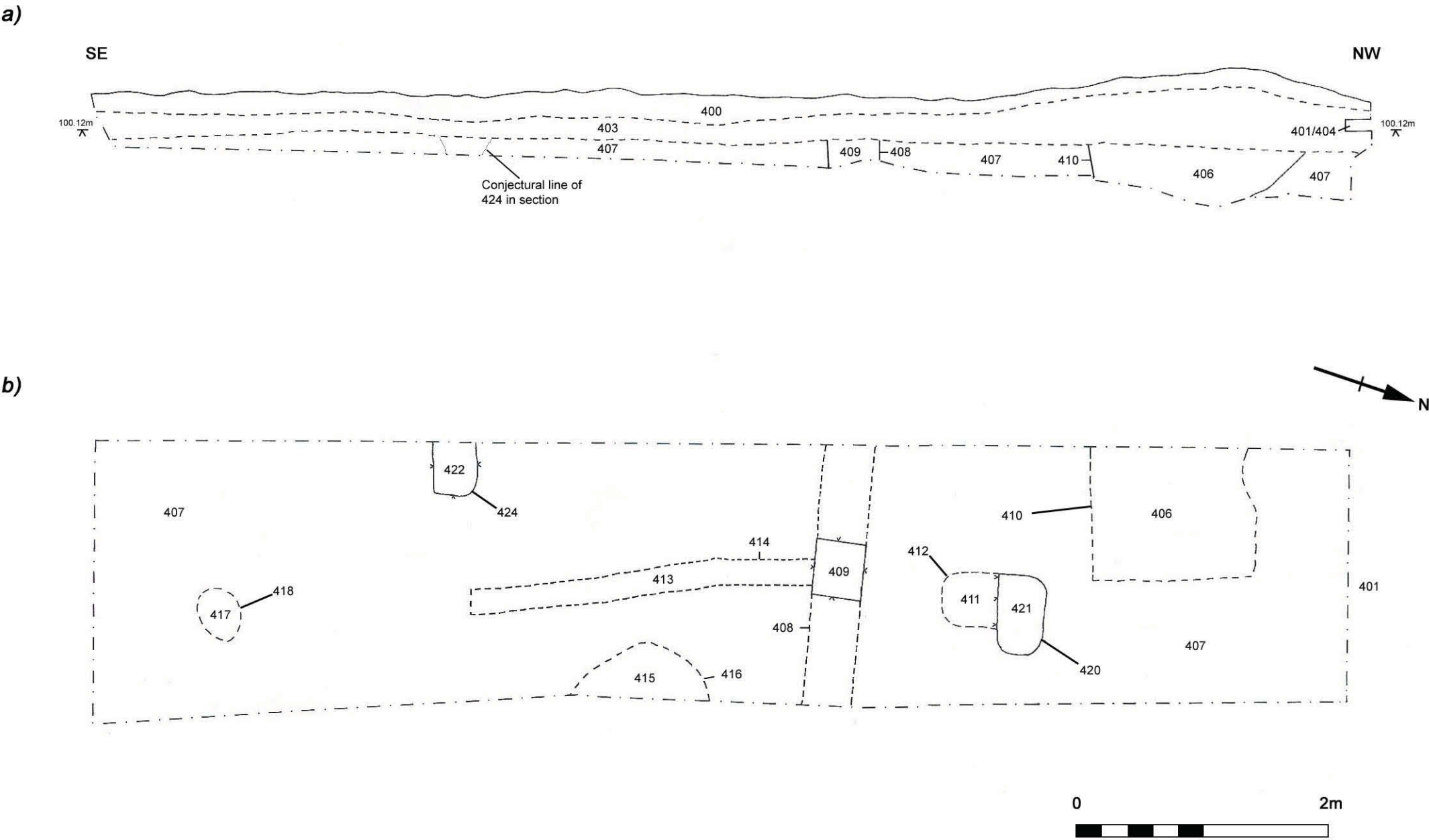


FIG. 9

- a) North-east-facing section of trench 4
- b) Post-excavation plan of trench 4



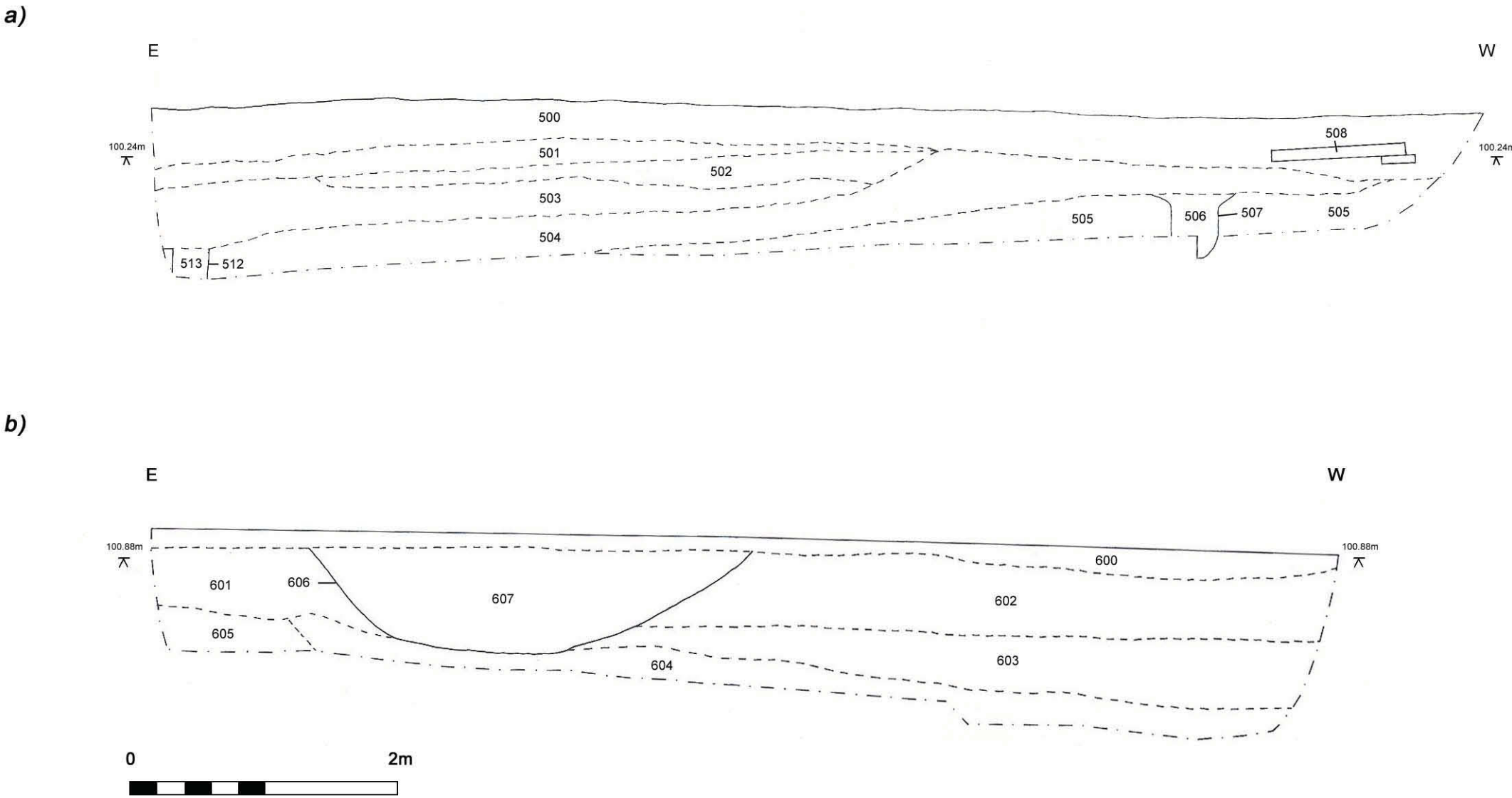


FIG. 10

- a) North-facing section of trench 5
- b) North-facing section of trench 6



**PLATE 1**

General view of trench 1 looking north west, with wall (112) on the right (scales: 1.0m & 2.0m).



**PLATE 2**

Post-excavation detail of arch B in wall (112) looking east, with transverse wall (113) on the right and wall (121) just visible in the foreground (scale: 0.50m).





**PLATE 3**

General view of trench 3 looking north west, with the suspected privies in the foreground. Wall (201) is on the right (scales: 1.0m & 2.0m).



**PLATE 4**

General view of trench 2 looking south east, showing the configuration of walls at the north end of the trench (scales: 1.0m & 2.0m).



**PLATE 5**

General view of trench 3 looking north west (scales: 1.0m & 2.0m).



**PLATE 6**

Post-excavation detail of wall (304) at the north end of the trench, looking north east with wall (305) on the right (scales: 1.0m & 2.0m).





**PLATE 7**

General view of trench 4 looking north west, demonstrating some of the negative features visible in (407) (scales: 1.0m & 2.0m).



**PLATE 8**

Dog skeleton (421), looking south east (scale: 0.50m).





**PLATE 9**

Animal skeleton (422), looking south east. The spine is at the bottom of the picture, disappearing into the trench section at right (scale: 0.50m).



**PLATE 10**

General view of trench 5, looking west (scales: 1.0m & 2.0m).



**PLATE 11**

General view of trench 6, looking east (scales: 1.0m & 2.0m).



**PLATE 12**

Possible writing slate recovered from (117).





**PLATE 13**

Edward VII Coronation mug from (207).