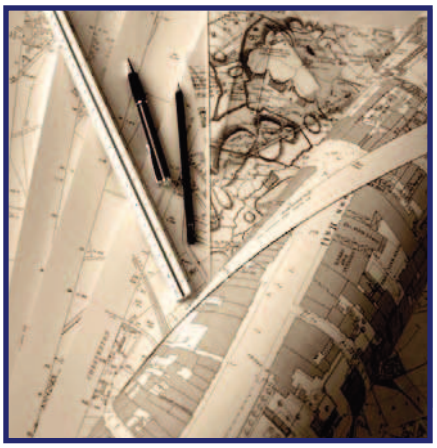
# Trial Trenching at Starveall Farm Claydon Gloucestershire



## Archaeological Evaluation Report

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July 2012

**Client: Bruton Knowles**

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OA Job No: 5391
NGR: SO 940 317

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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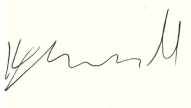
| 1 | Stephen Leech<br>Project Officer | Tim Allen<br>Senior Project Manager | Klara Spandl<br>Head of Historic Management Services |  |

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# Trial Trenching at Starveall Farm, Claydon, Gloucestershire

*Archaeological Evaluation Report*

*Written by Stephen Leech and Tim Allen*

*and illustrated by Leo Heatley*

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## *Summary*

*Between 12th and 18th July 2012 Oxford Archaeology carried out an evaluation by trenching of the site of a proposed chicken farm at Starveall Farm, Claydon, Gloucestershire (NGR SO 940 317). The site is an open field currently under cultivation, with surviving ridge-and-furrow running east-west across it. Six trenches each 36m long and 1.6m wide were excavated to natural, a 2% sample of the development area. The trenches were laid out to provide overall coverage of the area of the proposed development, and also to take account of a magnetometer survey carried out by Stratascan. This had not found any anomalies definitely of archaeological origin, but had indicated a number of tentative faint anomalies, which were crossed by the line of the trenches..*

*Excavation of the trenches revealed a topsoil underlain by a subsoil, probably another ploughsoil, overlying the natural. The only archaeological features were the furrows of ridge-and-furrow cultivation. No finds earlier than the 19th century were seen.*

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 The site lies at SO 940 317 at c 28m above OD, on land that slopes gently down to the north-west and up to the south-east. The local topography is dominated by Oxenton Hill which peaks some 3km to the east. The site lies midway between Dean Brook 3km to the south and Carran Brook to the north, both running west to meet the Severn about 5km to the west. There is another smaller stream running parallel to Dean Brook around 1.2km north of it, and two small streams rise at the 30m contour either side of the site and only about 0.5km distant, running NW to the Curran Brook.

## 1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The area of proposed development currently consists of open farmland, and lies just south of a small triangle of woodland (Figs 1 and 2).

1.2.2 The geology of the area is weathered clay derived from the Charmouth Mudstone Formation (BGS Sheet 216).

## 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background to the site is described in detail in the Desk-based Assessment, and will not be reproduced in detail here.

1.3.2 To summarise, there is no record of previous archaeological discoveries on or adjacent to the site.

1.3.3 The site was clearly arable farmland in the medieval period, as the remains of ridge-and-furrow cultivation are still evident running east-west across the site.

1.3.4 A geophysical magnetometer survey was carried out covering the proposed development area, and was supplemented by an earth resistance survey covering part of the same area to check the results. These surveys have not revealed evidence of any definite archaeological features other than the furrrows, although faint traces of a few possible features were noted (see Figures 3 and 4).

1.3.5 On current evidence the potential for archaeological remains of later prehistoric, Roman or Saxon date is low. The possible linear and curvilinear features tentatively identified by the geophysical survey may however belong to boundaries of one of these periods.

1.3.6 Earlier prehistoric activity (Mesolithic, Neolithic and Early Bronze Age) is often sparsely scattered, consisting of small numbers of pits and treethrow-holes, and sometimes consists entirely of lithic material deposited on the ancient ground surface. There remains therefore a possibility that remains of any of these periods may be encountered.

## 1.4 Acknowledgements

1.4.1 The evaluation was undertaken by Stephen Leech, Hannah Kennedy and Matthew Morgan of Oxford Archaeology on behalf of Bruton Knowles, acting for F C Jones and Son. We would like to thank Kinsey Hern and Richard Brogden and Alister King-Smith of Bruton Knowles for their assistance. We are also grateful to Jan Wills and Charles Parry of Gloucestershire County Council for enabling the archaeological work.

# 2 Evaluation Aims and Methodology

## 2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The specific aims and objectives of the evaluation were:

(i) To determine whether the faint linear and other anomalies identified by the geophysical survey are of archaeological origin

(ii) To determine whether the ridge-and-furrow is masking evidence of earlier archaeological activity on the site

(iii) To look for artefactual evidence of surface activity in the past, such as spreads of struck flint, burnt flint etc.

(iv) As far as is practicable within the constraints of the trenches, to obtain dating evidence for the ridge-and-furrow cultivation

## 2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 A summary of OA's general approach to excavation and recording can be found in Appendix A of the WSI. Standard methodologies for Geomatics and Survey, Environmental evidence, Artefactual evidence and Burials can also be found in the WSI (Appendices B, C, D and E respectively).

2.2.2 Site specific methodologies were as follows:

(i) The trenches were positioned to provide overall coverage of the area of proposed development, and to test potential geophysical anomalies tentatively identified by the geophysical survey (see Fig. 4)

(ii) All trenches were excavated to the surface of the natural, or to the surface of the first archaeological horizon (excluding medieval ridges). Removal of the medieval ridges was carried out under close archaeological supervision in case ancient soils were preserved beneath them. In the event, no surviving soils were found under the medieval ridges crossing the trenches.

(iii) Had significant numbers of archaeological features been evident within the trenches, medieval furrows were to have been left in *situ*, unless their removal was needed to clarify relationships between features either side.

(iv) No archaeological features were observed, and some of the medieval furrows were removed by machine to check for earlier archaeological features.

(v) Should any potentially well-preserved or *in situ* archaeological deposits have been found below the medieval ridges, these were to be characterised and dated by limited hand-excavation to comprehend their state of preservation and archaeological potential, prior to review by the client, the County Archaeologist and Oxford Archaeology.

(vi) Should human remains have been encountered, excavation was to cease as soon as their identification was secure pending a site meeting with the client and archaeological curator.

# 3 RESULTS

## 3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

3.1.1 The following section summarises the results of the evaluation. The location of the trenches is shown on Figure 4, and the details of each trench on Figures 5-10. Detailed archaeological descriptions are presented in the context inventory (Appendix A), and within the descriptive text where they are integral to the interpretation of the context in question.

## 3.2 General soils and ground conditions

3.2.1 All the trenches (1 to 6) had a ploughsoil that also incorporated the ridge and furrow that extended across the field. It consisted of a grey / brown silty clay, ranging in thickness from 0.3m to 0.5m.

3.2.2 Underlying the plough-soil was an orange / brown silty clay 0.2m thick, probably representing an earlier ploughsoil.

3.2.3 The natural consisted of an orange / grey clay.

3.2.4 The trenches were opened up in dry conditions, allowing clear observation of any potential archaeological features. Following heavy rain trenches 1 to 3, which were slightly down-slope in the field, were partly or completely flooded.

## 3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits

3.3.1 There were no archaeological deposits other than furrows present in any of the trenches.

## 3.4 Trench 1 (Fig. 5)

3.4.1 Trench 1 was orientated North-East – South-West, it was 1.6m wide and 36m in length. It cut through the ridge and furrow, which was present within the ploughsoil. The ploughsoil (0.3m thick) and the subsoil (0.2m thick) overlay the natural clay. There was no archaeology present in the trench.

## 3.5 Trench 2 (Fig. 6)

3.5.1 Trench 2 was orientated North – South, it was 1.6m wide and 36m in length. It cut through the ridge and furrow, which was present within the ploughsoil. The ploughsoil (0.3m thick) and the subsoil (0.2m thick) overlay the natural clay. There was no archaeology present in the trench.

## 3.6 Trench 3 (Fig. 7)

3.6.1 Trench 3 was orientated East - West, it was 1.6m wide and 36m in length. It cut through the ridge and furrow, which was present within the ploughsoil. The ploughsoil (0.3m thick) and the subsoil (0.2m thick) overlay the natural clay. There was no archaeology present in the trench.

## 3.7 Trench 4 (Fig. 8)

3.7.1 Trench 4 was orientated North-East - South-West, it was 1.6m wide and 36m in length. It cut through the ridge and furrow, which was present within the ploughsoil. The ploughsoil (0.5m thick) and the subsoil (0.2m thick) overlay the natural clay. There was

no archaeology present in the trench. An irregular shaped feature was investigated at the Northern end of the trench, this was a pocket of the natural grey clay that underlies the natural orange clay.

## 3.8 Trench 5 (Fig. 9)

3.8.1 Trench 5 was orientated North-East - South-West, it was 1.6m wide and 36m in length. It cut through the ridge and furrow, which was present within the ploughsoil. The ploughsoil (0.3m thick) and the subsoil (0.2m thick) overlay the natural clay. There was no archaeology present in the trench.

## 3.9 Trench 6 (Fig. 10)

3.9.1 Trench 6 was orientated North-East - South-West, it was 1.6m wide and 36m in length. It cut through the ridge and furrow, which was present within the ploughsoil. The ploughsoil (0.4m thick) and the subsoil (0.2m thick) overlay the natural clay. There was no archaeology present in the trench.

## 3.10 Finds summary

3.10.1 A very few small fragments of post-medieval pottery of 19$^{th}$ century date were noted in the furrows and land-drains. No other finds were recovered from any of the trenches.

# 4 DISCUSSION

## 4.1 Reliability of field investigation

4.1.1 The initial machining and recording of the trenches was carried out in dry conditions. Despite the subsequent flooding of trenches 1-3, which hindered the taking of further photographs, there was nothing that might have biased or prejudiced the conclusions of the evaluation.

## 4.2 Evaluation objectives and results

4.2.1 The trenches were located to test whether the faint geophysical anomalies were of archaeological origin. The evaluation demonstrated that this was not the case.

4.2.2 The evaluation was undertaken to assess whether the medieval ridge-and-furrow cultivation was masking earlier archaeological features or deposits. In the areas evaluated, no evidence of earlier archaeological activity was found

4.2.3 Trenching was undertaken to examine whether evidence of past surface activity such as flint scatters or spreads of burnt flint were present. No such evidence was found.

4.2.4 It was hoped that dating evidence for the ridge-and-furrow cultivation might be obtained within the evaluation trenches. Although a few fragments of recent pottery and tile were seen, these were related to land-drains or to the modern ploughsoil. No earlier artefactual evidence was found, and the date of the ridge-and-furrow cultivation was therefore not established.

## 4.3 Interpretation

4.3.1 Apart from the furrows of the ridge and furrow earthworks, there was no archaeology identified within any of the trenches.

## 4.4 Significance

4.4.1 The evaluation trenches did not recover any indication of archaeological features , and no finds preceding the 19$^{th}$ century were recovered in the ploughsoils. The faint geophysical anomalies tentatively indicated on the interpretation were not confirmed as archaeological. Some variation in the natural was observed within the trenches, and this may explain the very limited responses in the geophysical survey. On current evidence, there is nothing of archaeological significance within the development area.

# Appendix A. Trench Descriptions and Context Inventory

| Trench 1 | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **General description** | | | | | **Orientation** | NE-SW |
| Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural clay. | | | | | **Avg. depth (m)** | 0.55 |
| | | | | | **Width (m)** | 1.6 |
| | | | | | **Length (m)** | 36 |
| **Contexts** | | | | | | |
| **context no** | **type** | **Width (m)** | **Depth (m)** | **comment** | **finds** | **date** |
| 100 | Layer | - | - | Natural | - | - |
| 101 | Layer | - | 0.2 | Subsoil | - | - |
| 102 | Layer | - | 0.3 | Topsoil | - | - |

| Trench 2 | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **General description** | | | | | **Orientation** | N-S |
| Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural clay. | | | | | **Avg. depth (m)** | 0.45 |
| | | | | | **Width (m)** | 1.6 |
| | | | | | **Length (m)** | 36 |
| **Contexts** | | | | | | |
| **context no** | **type** | **Width (m)** | **Depth (m)** | **comment** | **finds** | **date** |
| 200 | Layer | - | - | Natural | - | - |
| 201 | Layer | - | 0.2 | Subsoil | - | - |
| 202 | Layer | - | 0.3 | Topsoil | - | - |

| Trench 3 | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **General description** | | | | | **Orientation** | E-W |
| Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural clay. | | | | | **Avg. depth (m)** | 0.5 |
| | | | | | **Width (m)** | 1.6 |
| | | | | | **Length (m)** | 36 |
| **Contexts** | | | | | | |
| **context no** | **type** | **Width (m)** | **Depth (m)** | **comment** | **finds** | **date** |
| 300 | Layer | - | - | Natural | - | - |
| 301 | Layer | - | 0.2 | Subsoil | - | - |
| 302 | Layer | - | 0.3 | Topsoil | - | - |

| Trench 4 | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **General description** | | | | | **Orientation** | NE-SW |
| Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural clay. | | | | | **Avg. depth (m)** | 0.7 |
| | | | | | **Width (m)** | 1.6 |
| | | | | | **Length (m)** | 36 |
| **Contexts** | | | | | | |
| **context no** | **type** | **Width (m)** | **Depth (m)** | **comment** | **finds** | **date** |
| 400 | Layer | - | - | Natural | - | - |
| 401 | Layer | - | 0.2 | Subsoil | - | - |
| 402 | Layer | - | -0.5 | Topsoil | - | - |

| Trench 5 | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **General description** | | | | | **Orientation** | NE-SW |
| Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying a natural clay. | | | | | **Avg. depth (m)** | 0.5 |
| | | | | | **Width (m)** | 1.6 |
| | | | | | **Length (m)** | 36 |
| **Contexts** | | | | | | |
| **context no** | **type** | **Width (m)** | **Depth (m)** | **comment** | **finds** | **date** |
| 500 | Layer | - | - | Natural | - | - |
| 501 | Layer | - | 0.2 | Subsoil | - | - |
| 502 | Layer | - | 0.3 | Topsoil | - | |

# Appendix B. Bibliography and References

English Heritage, 1991, Management of Archaeological Projects.

Hey, G. and Lacey, M. 2001, Evaluation of Archaeological Decision-making Processes and Sampling Strategies.

Oxford Archaeology, 1992, Fieldwork Manual, (Ed. D Wilkinson, first edition, August 1992)

## Appendix C. Summary of Site Details

**Site name:** Starveall Farm, Claydon, Gloucestershire

**Site code:** CLSTRL 12

**Grid reference:** SO 940/317

**Type:** Evaluation

**Date and duration:** One week, from 12-18th July 2012

**Area of site:** 1.67 ha

**Summary of results:** No archaeological features were found

**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with the .Gloucestershire County Museum in due course, under the following accession number: .....

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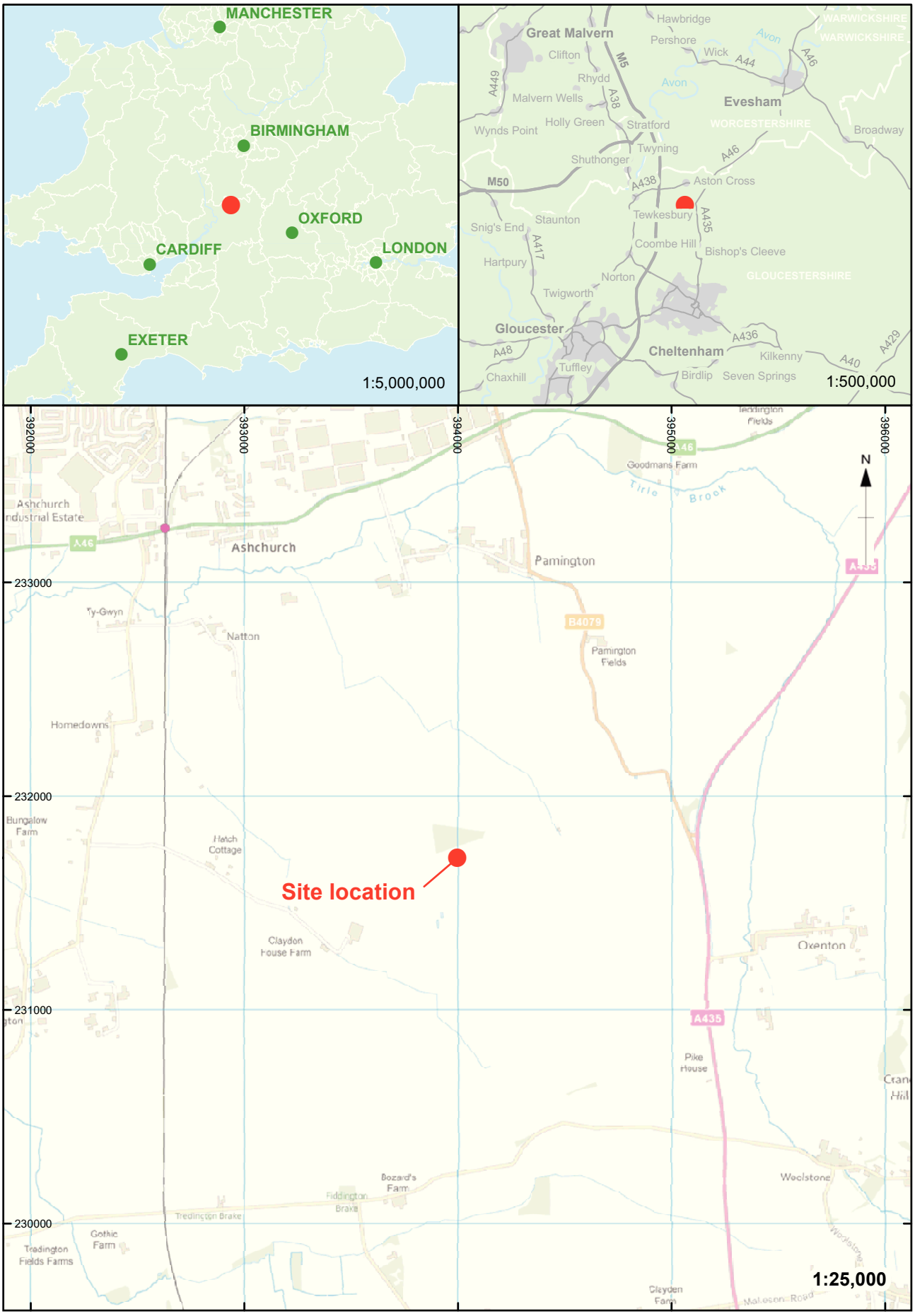


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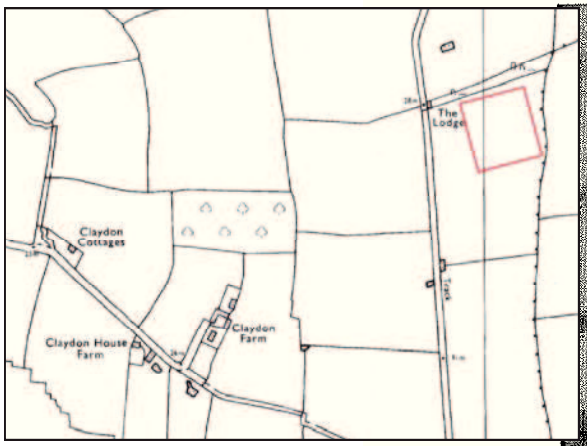
Figure 1: Site location






Proposed area of development

Access along white arrow

Main Access into site will be 6m wide with crushed stone, but likely to be upgraded

Poultry Site Boundary (Red)

6 Feed Bins

Rough Scale
7cm = 157metres
1cm = 22.43m

Concrete turning area (Assume 20m out from shed frontage)

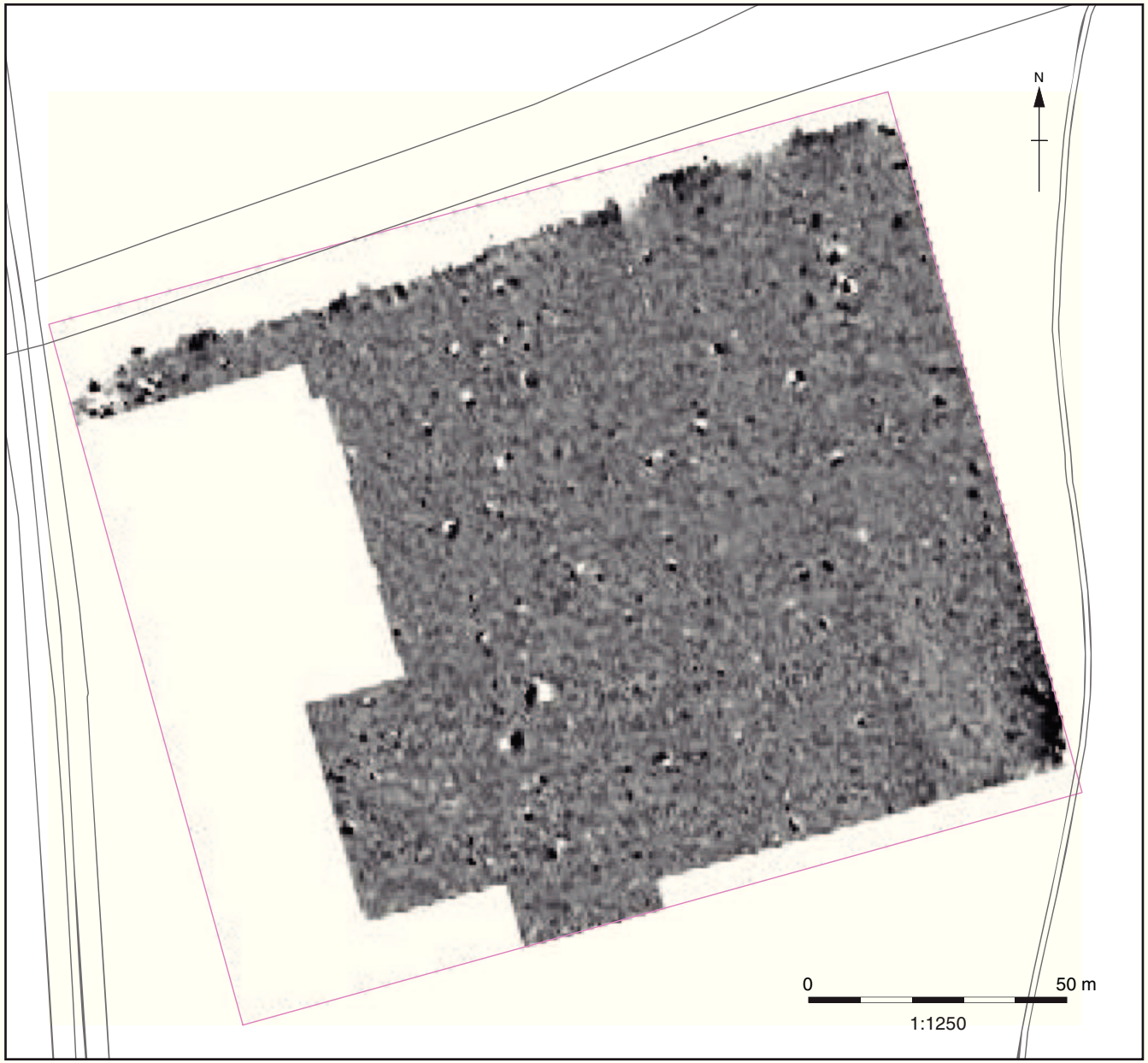
Ownership Boundary (yellow)

4 Sheds lying east west in one block.
All sheds are internal 27.5 x 91.5m, with roof ventilation fans and side inlets. They will be clad dark green box profile. (Lime Green)

200 ft
50 m

©2011 G

Figure 2: Detailed location plan



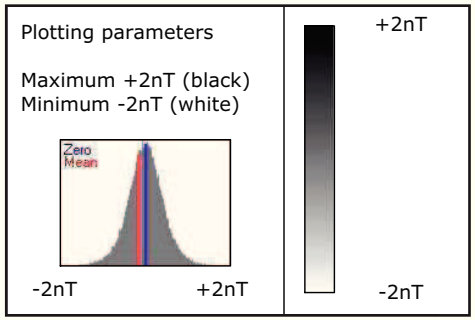
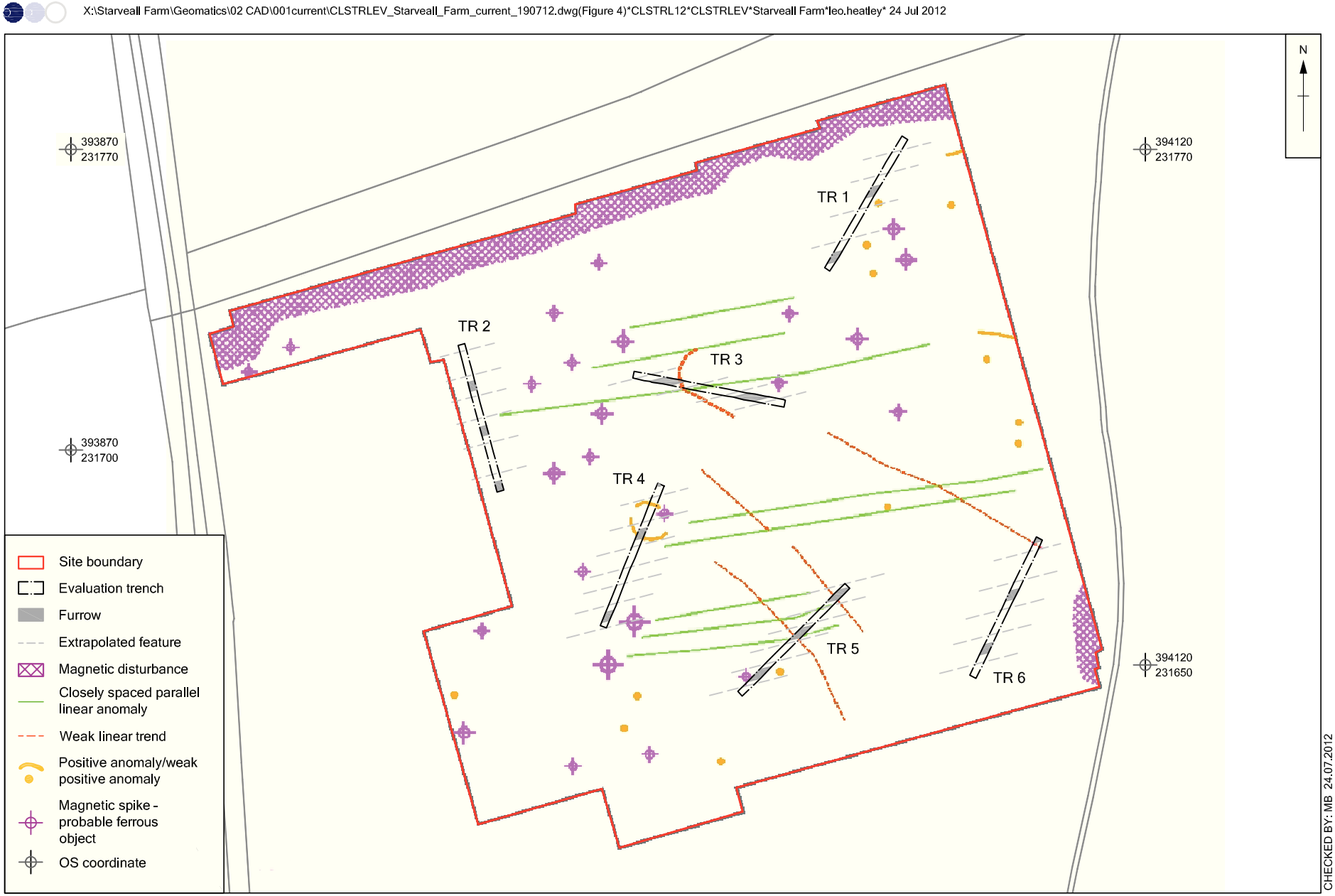




Figure 3: Geophysical survey plan (courtesy of Stratascan)



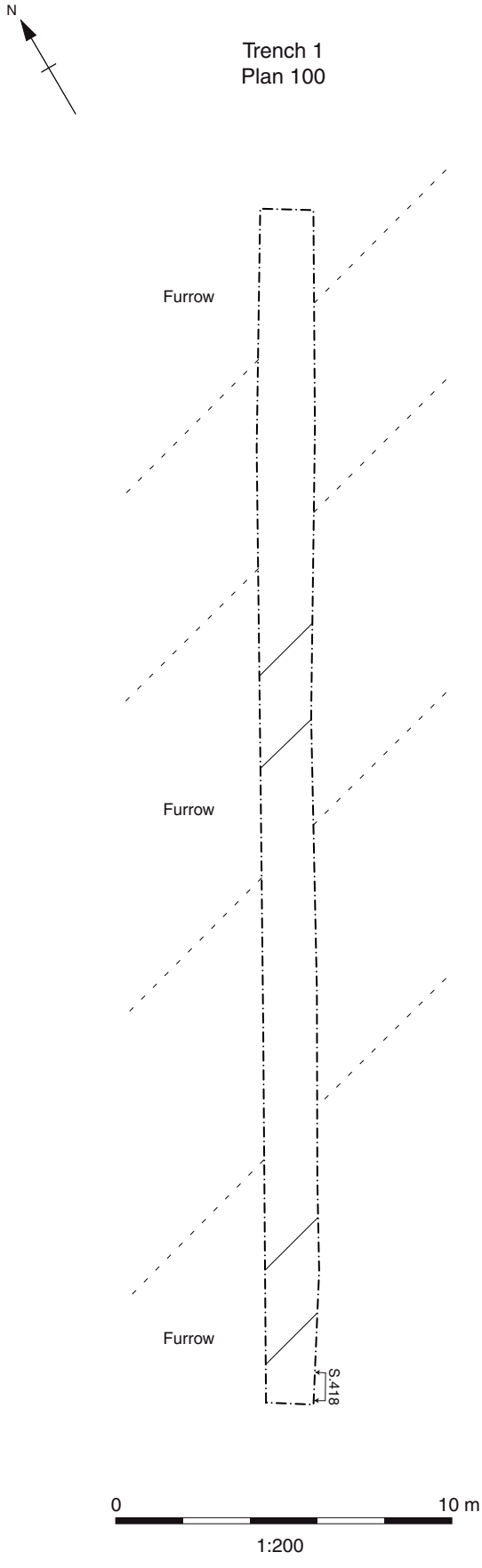


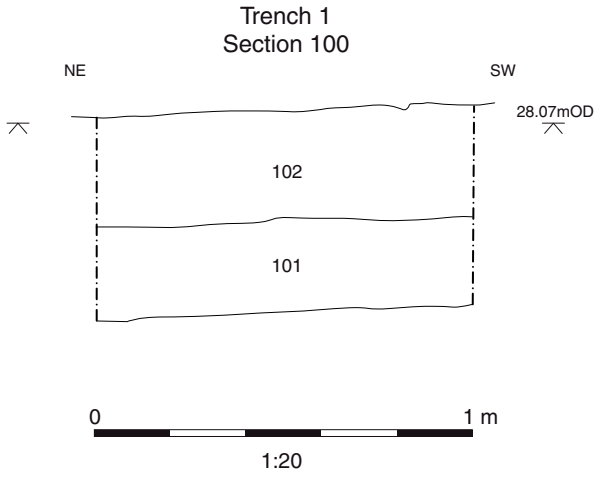

Geophysical Survey Data supplied by : Stratascan

0 50 m

Scale at A4 1:1250

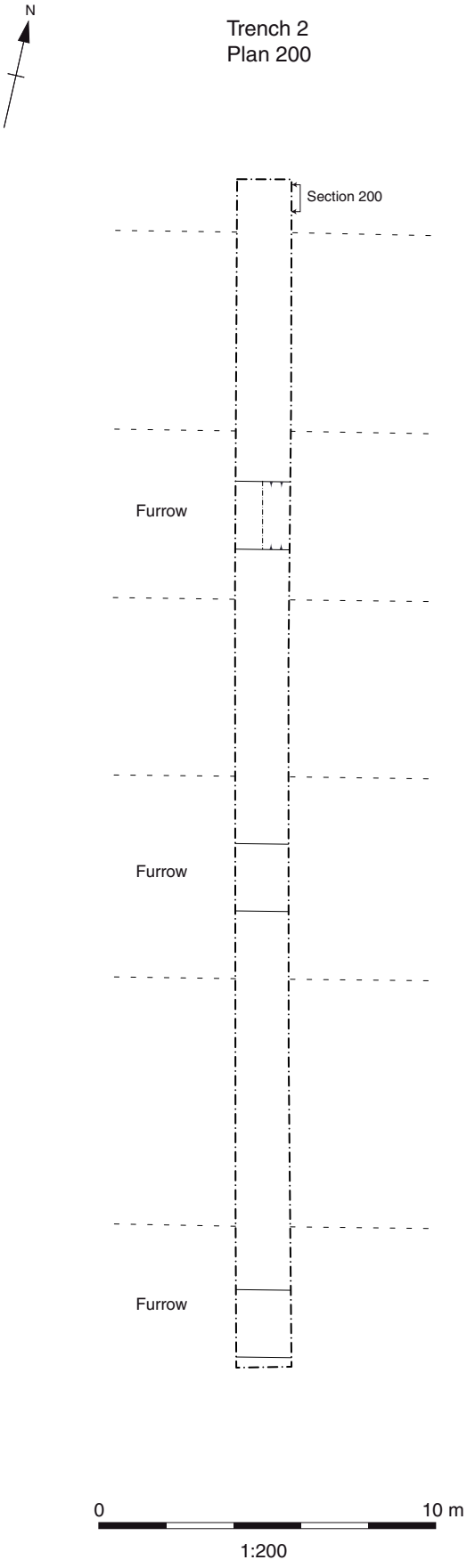
Figure 4: Interpretation of geophysical survey and location of trial trenches

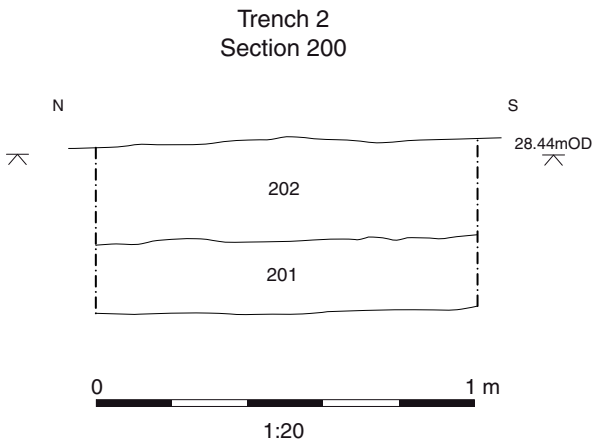


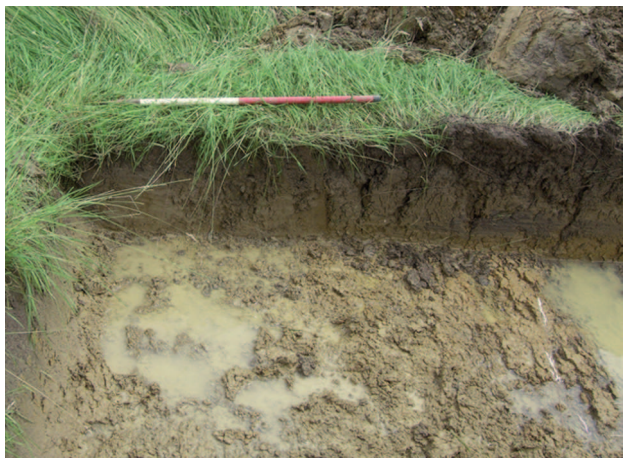




East-facing photograph of Section 100.

Figure 5: Plan, section and photograph of Trench 1

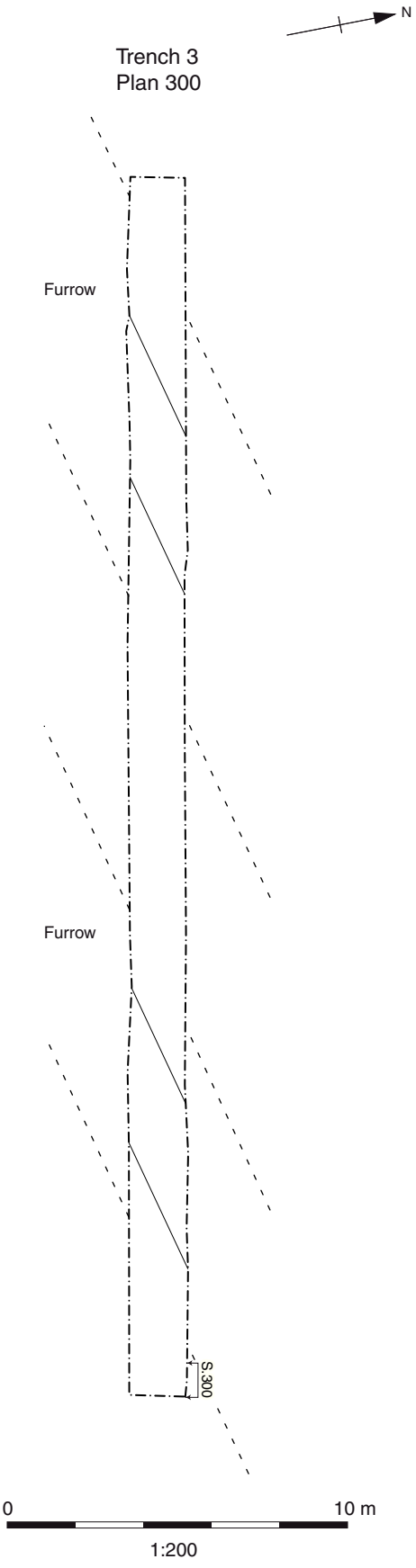


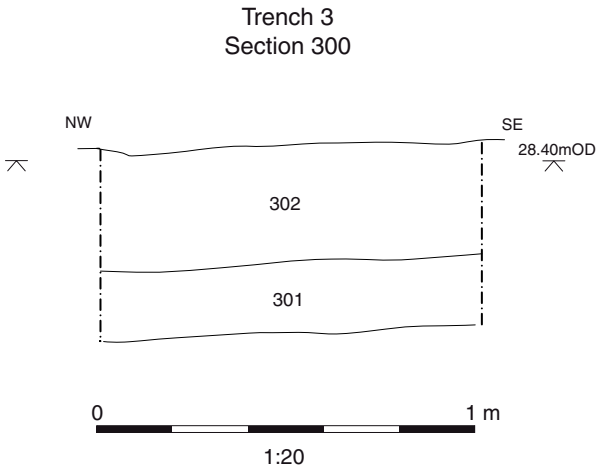



South-East facing photograph of Section 200

Figure 6: Plan, section and photograph of Trench 2

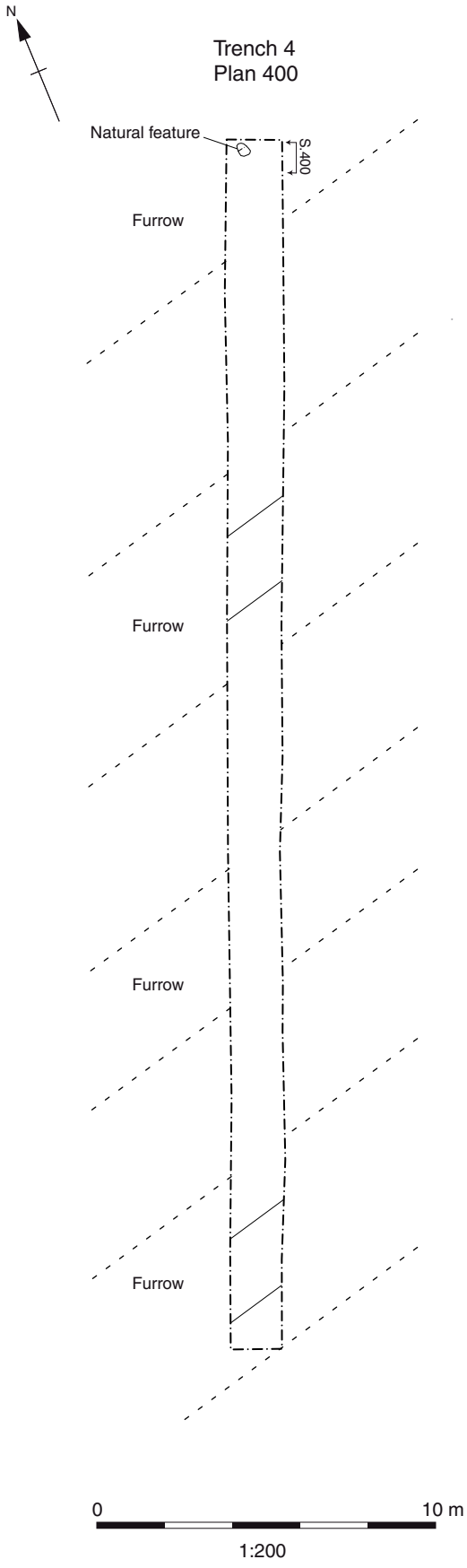


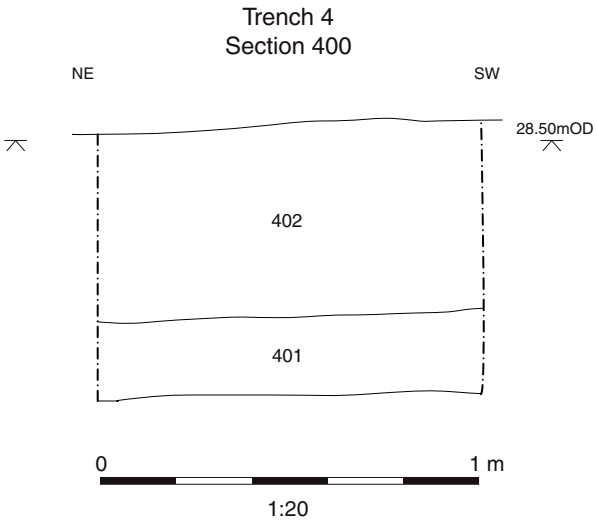





North-facing photograph of Section 300

Figure 7: Plan, section and photograph of Trench 3

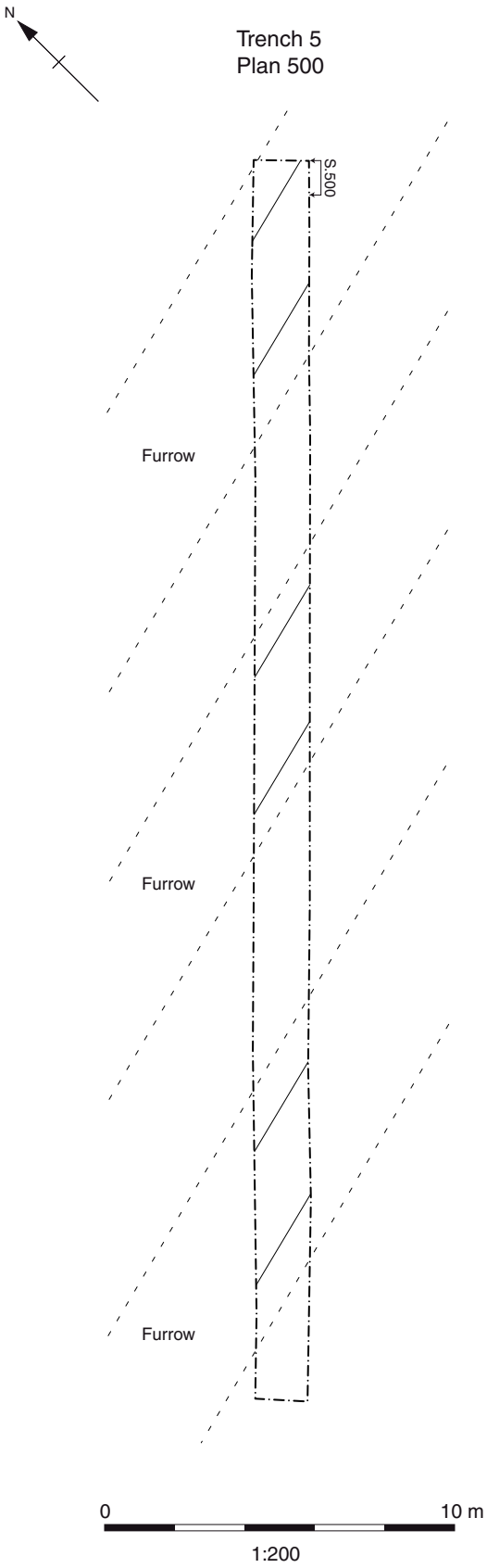


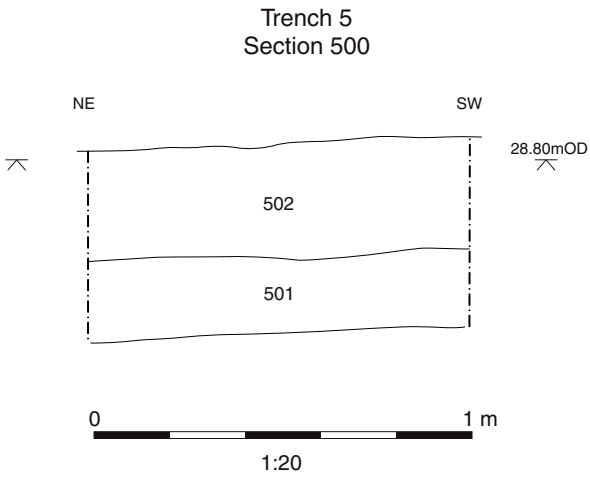




South-East facing photograph of Section 400

South-West facing photograph of Trench 4

Figure 8: Plan, section and photographs of Trench 4

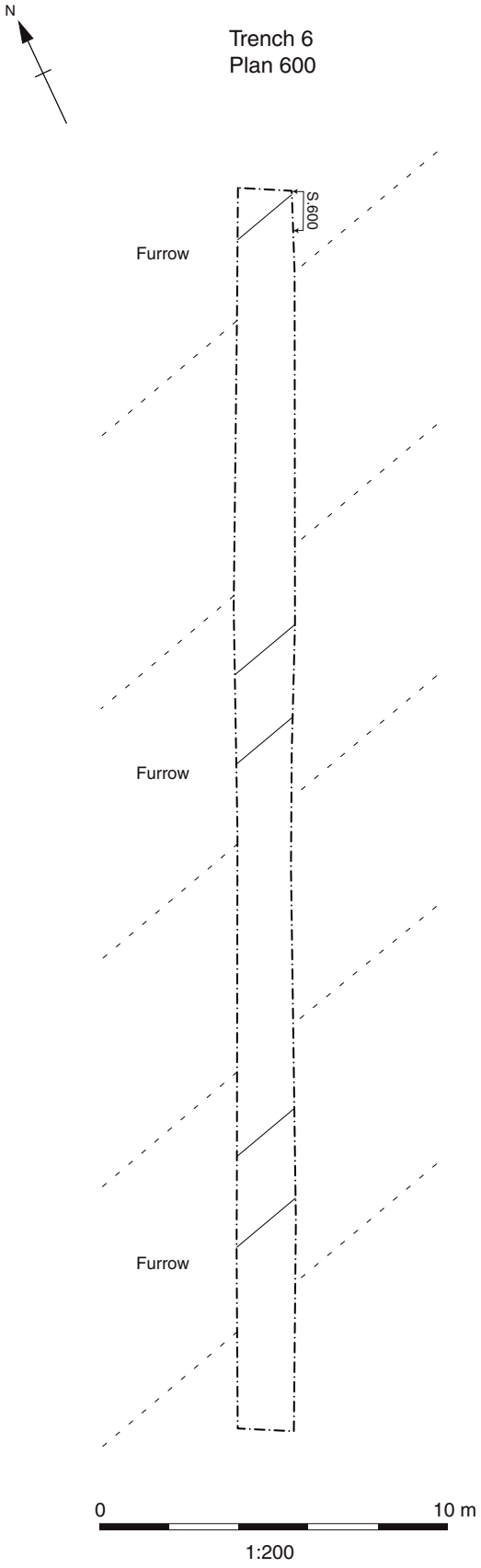


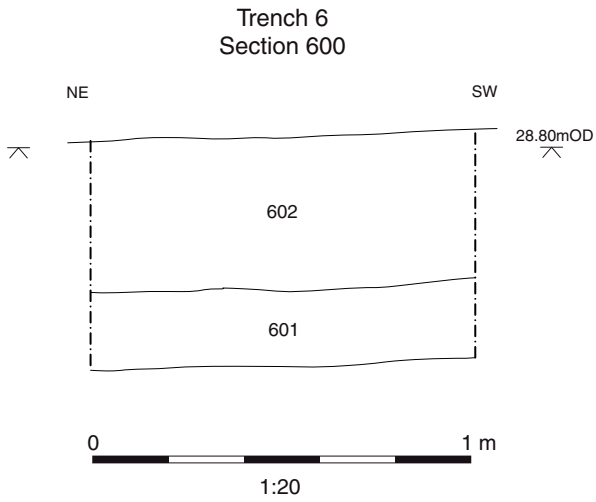




View to South-East of Section 500

View to South-West of Trench 5

Figure 9: Plan, section and photographs of Trench 5




South-East facing photograph of Section 600

South-West facing photograph of Trench 6

Figure 10: Plan, section and photographs of Trench 6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