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Gazeley Properties Ltd.

Colthrop Mill, Thatcham, Berkshire  
*ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT*

NGR SU 534 666

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April 2001

# Colthrop Mill, Thatcham, Berkshire

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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## SUMMARY

*In April 2001 the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) carried out a field evaluation at Colthrop Mill, Thatcham on behalf of Gazeley Properties Ltd. The evaluation revealed a section of Roman road, a number of shallow undated ditches within the north-western area of the site and a system of undated drainage ditches within the eastern end of the site.*

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In April 2001 OAU carried out a field evaluation at Colthrop Mill, Thatcham on behalf of Gazeley Properties Ltd. in respect of a planning application for redevelopment of the site. The work was carried out in accordance with a *Scheme of Archaeological Investigation* prepared by CPM Environmental Planning and Design and approved by West Berkshire Council. The proposed area for development is the site of the former Colthrop card mill, which is situated on the eastern side of Thatcham and north of the Kennet and Avon canal (Fig. 1).

#### 1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site consists of a flat area of ground to the north of the Kennet and Avon Canal and the main Newbury to London Rail line. The site was formerly occupied by Colthrop card mill, and the evaluation took place during the demolition of the mill building and associated structures.
- 1.2.2 The site is on the first gravel terrace of the River Kennet and rises slightly from a height of 64.90 m OD at the south-east, to 67.80 m OD at the north-west.

#### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the evaluation has been the subject of a study by CPM, the results of which are summarized (from the *Scheme of Archaeological Investigation*) below:-
- 1.3.2 The site overlays terrace gravels of the River Kennet, which suggests potential for prehistoric activity.
- 1.3.3 A Bronze Age spearhead was found to the west of Colthrop Mill, but its location was poorly recorded.
- 1.3.4 The supposed route of Ermine Street, the Roman road between Silchester and Cirencester, crosses the site on a north-west to south-east alignment. Other evaluation and fieldwork has confirmed the route of the road to the north west, in Thatcham, and to the south east at Kennetholme Farm (SMR nos 2083 and 2086).

- 1.3.5 It is thought that a Roman linear settlement lies under Thatcham, to the north west of the site. SMR no. 10019 records the discovery during the 1920s of a Roman skeleton associated with a horse skeleton and wheel.
- 1.3.6 The site itself has produced a single Anglo-Saxon or Viking spearhead that was discovered during the construction of the mill in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (SMR no. 2084).

## 2 EVALUATION AIMS

- 2.1.1 To establish the presence/ absence of archaeological remains within the proposal area.
- 2.1.2 To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present.
- 2.1.3 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features.
- 2.1.4 To make available the results of the investigation.

## 3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Scope of fieldwork

- 3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of eleven 50 m trenches and a single 100 m trench (Fig. 2). All but two of the trenches were machined to a width of 1.8 m. Trenches 7 and 8, to the east of the site, were deepened and stepped for safety reasons. These trenches were machined to widths of 5 m and 3.5 m respectively.
- 3.1.2 The overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision by a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket.

### 3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

- 3.2.1 The trenches were hand cleaned as appropriate and revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, to retrieve finds and environmental samples. All archaeological features were planned and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20. All features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

### 3.3 Finds

- 3.3.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and generally bagged by context. Spoil heaps were also monitored for finds.

### 3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence

- 3.4.1 A general lack of dating evidence and the presence of much modern disturbance meant that the site was generally unsuitable for environmental sampling.

### 3.5 Presentation of results

- 3.5.1 The general conditions and distribution of the archaeological deposits are briefly described, and a description of deposits within individual trenches is given. This is followed by a description of the finds and a discussion of the results.

## 4 RESULTS: GENERAL

### 4.1 Soils and ground conditions

- 4.1.1 The site overlays river terrace gravels of the River Kennet. Soils overlying the gravel consisted of clays and silty clays. Substantial deposits of modern made ground were also encountered. The water table was generally only encountered beneath the level of the natural gravel horizon. Some localised flooding occurred as water which had accumulated within made ground deposits drained into opened trenches.

### 4.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits

- 4.2.1 A number of shallow undated linear features were located within Trenches 1, 3 and 5, to the north-west of the site (Fig. 2). There had been extensive modern dumping in this area.
- 4.2.2 Trench 8, within the south-eastern area of the site, contained several ditches which were aligned roughly ESE to WNW. Trench 7 contained a single shallow ditch which was aligned north-south. Both trenches also revealed substantial modern dumping.
- 4.2.3 A Roman track or roadway was located within Trench 12, north of the centre of the site. This is very likely to be part of Roman Ermine Street. Approximately 8 m to the east of the road a single ditch lay on a parallel ESE to WNW alignment.

## 5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS OF DEPOSITS

### 5.1 Trench 1 (Fig. 3)

- 5.1.1 Trench 1 was aligned NNE to SSW and measured 50 m long by 1.8 m wide.
- 5.1.2 Excavation revealed a orange-grey sandy gravel (103) which was overlain by orange and light grey-brown alluvial sandy clay (102) at a depth of 0.78 m (67.06 m OD) beneath the present ground level. Both are interpreted as natural deposits.
- 5.1.3 Two east-west aligned linear features (104 and 106) were seen in the middle of the trench, cutting the clay (102).

- 5.1.4 The larger of these cuts, 106, measured 0.6m wide and 0.30 m deep. Its sides were asymmetric, with a straight sloping north-eastern side, a flat base and a nearly vertical south-western side. The primary fill of this feature, a yellow brown sandy clay (109), seems to have been deposited almost vertically against the side of the cut. This suggests that it was deposited quickly, possibly by some form of machine activity rather than a gradually infilling. Two later fills, an orange-grey sandy clay (107) and a grey sandy clay (108), appear to have been deposited more gradually. None of these fills produced finds.
- 5.1.5 Ditch 104 lay 2 m to the north of ditch 106. It measured 0.6 m wide by 0.3 m deep and its sides sloped at 45° to a flat base. The ditch was filled by a clean grey brown silty clay (105), which contained no finds.
- 5.1.6 Another linear feature was noted 3 m to the south of and parallel to cut 106, but this was not excavated as it contained a large modern brick fragment and was therefore thought to be modern.
- 5.1.7 The presence of this modern feature, in close proximity to ditches 106 and 104, suggests that they may also be modern.

## 5.2 Trench 2

- 5.2.1 Trench 2 was aligned east-west and measured 50 m long by 1.8 m wide.
- 5.2.2 The trench contained extensive modern disturbance but no archaeological features.
- 5.2.3 The sequence of deposits within this trench was typical of the general sequence across the site and consisted of an underlying gravel (203) that was overlain by orange and grey brown slightly silty clay (202), 0.4 m thick. This clay is probably alluvial in nature, and was in turn overlain by an orange brown clay loam subsoil (201) which was 0.25 m thick, and a dark grey brown clay loam topsoil (200) 0.2 m thick.
- 5.2.4 A large concrete ground slab was located within the middle of the trench forming an access road (204). The eastern end of the trench was truncated and back-filled with broken concrete and disturbed mixed soil.

## 5.3 Trench 3 (Figs 3 and 5)

- 5.3.1 Trench 3 was aligned NNE to SSW and measured 50 m long by 1.8 m wide.
- 5.3.2 Within the northern end of the trench a curving ditch (311) cut the underlying natural clay (302). This feature was revealed for a length of approximately 10 m within the trench and measured up to 1.1 m wide by 0.3 m deep. It had gently sloping sides and a flat base. It was filled by a primary slippage of grey-brown sandy clay (312), a secondary dark grey-brown clay (313) and an orange-brown sandy clay with lenses of sand (314). It was noted that the main fill of the ditch (313), contained small twig fragments.



- 5.3.3 Three separate ceramic land-drains protruded from the trench sections above fill 313. A large modern north-west to south-east aligned ditch was also seen to cut from beneath the level of the former topsoil just to the north-east of ditch 311 and it is thought that both ditches and the land-drains form part of a modern drainage system.
- 5.3.4 Three east-west aligned linear features were revealed within the southern end of the trench. The shallowest of these features (303) cut the underlying clay (302) beneath the level of the subsoil (301). This feature was 0.6 m wide but only 0.08 m deep. It was filled by a dark grey-brown sandy clay (304). Just to the north and south of cut 303, two parallel linears, (305 and 315), were clearly seen to cut from beneath the level of the topsoil (300). One of these features, 315, was only partially seen in section at the southern end of the trench and was not excavated. The other, cut 305, measured 1.6 m wide by 0.65 m deep and contained a single grey-brown silty clay fill (306). None of these features produced any dating evidence.

#### 5.4 Trench 4

- 5.4.1 Trench 4 measured 48 m long by 1.8 m wide and was aligned east-west. It was located on the line of a former road, which had been previously been removed down to the level of the underlying subsoil.
- 5.4.2 The trench was relatively shallow and revealed the underlying gravel (401) at 66.96 m OD. It was cut by a single shallow feature (404). This feature measured 0.75 m wide by 0.20 m deep. It had 45° sides and a flat base and contained two fills; a primary grey-brown sandy clay (403), and a secondary greenish-brown sandy clay, (402).
- 5.4.3 Two concrete foundations or possible drain caps were also seen aligned north-south at intervals across the trench at a similar level to cut 404. These features were overlain by up to 0.25 m of orange brown subsoil (400), which also overlay the fills of 404.
- 5.4.4 It seems likely that cut 404 may have been the result of the removal of a similar foundations or drain.

#### 5.5 Trench 5 (Figs 3 and 5)

- 5.5.1 Trench 5 was aligned NNE to SSW and measured 48 m long by 1.8 m wide.
- 5.5.2 Natural gravel was seen at a depth of 0.42 m beneath current ground level (at 67.00 m OD).
- 5.5.3 Three parallel east-west aligned ditches (504, 507, and 510) were seen at the northern end of the trench cutting the natural gravel (502). The largest of these ditches, 507, measured 1.7 m wide by 0.4 m deep. It had gently sloping sides and a flat base and contained a single fill, a dark grey-brown sandy clay (508), which was cut by a later ditch (510). This ditch measured 0.9 m wide by 0.4 m deep and had the same profile as ditch 507. It was filled by a blue-green clayey sand (509).

5.5.4 Ditch 504 also had gently sloping sides and a flat base, and measured 1 m wide by 0.2 m deep. It contained two fills, a primary slippage of gravelly sandy clay (505) and a orange-brown sandy clay fill (506).

5.5.5 None of these ditch fills produced finds.

5.5.6 These features were overlain by up to 0.35 m of orange-brown sandy clay subsoil (501), a thin layer of former topsoil (500) and up to 0.4 m of modern made-ground deposits (503), forming an access road.

## 5.6 Trench 6

5.6.1 Trench 6 was aligned north-south and measured 50 m long by 1.8 m wide. It contained no archaeological features.

5.6.2 Natural gravel was revealed at a depth of 1.5 m beneath current ground level, at 64.04 m OD, and was overlain by 0.24 m of pinkish grey clay (604), and 0.6 m of grey brown clay (603).

5.6.3 From this level the area seems to have been made-up with a thick deposit (602) of coal dust and coke waste together with other industrial rubbish (e.g. electrical wiring and metalwork). This deposit was overlain by up to 0.35 m orange brown clay loam (601) and a thin spread of topsoil (600).

## 5.7 Trench 7

5.7.1 Trench 7 was aligned east-west and measured 50 m long. Due to the presence of substantial made-ground deposits this trench was deepened and stepped out to an overall width of 5 m.

5.7.2 The natural gravel (705) was found at a depth of 2.4 m (63.72 m OD) beneath the current ground level, and was overlain by up to 0.35 m of clean natural yellow-brown and grey-brown alluvial clays (704 and 709). These clays were in turn overlain by a 0.4 m thick grey-brown silty clay layer (703). This deposit was deepest towards the eastern end of the trench but became shallower and then absent to the west.

5.7.3 The only feature found was a single shallow ditch (706) which cut layer 703.

5.7.4 Ditch 706 was aligned north-south across the trench and measured 2.4 m wide by 0.26 m deep. It was filled by a brown silty loam (708) containing roots, and a blackish-brown peaty loam (707). Neither fill produced finds.

5.7.5 Above the level of ditch 706, the trench contained substantial made ground deposits. The make-up for a modern trackway, 701, was aligned north-east to south-west within this trench and consisted of dumped modern bricks and re-deposited gravel. The road make-up was overlain by up to 1.2 m of broken coal, coal dust and coke (700), presumably designed to raise the ground level.

## 5.8 Trench 8 (Figs 4 and 5)

- 5.8.1 Trench 8 was aligned ESE to WNW within the south-eastern corner of the site.
- 5.8.2 The trench was deepened and stepped down through substantial depths of made-ground, and measured 48 m long by up to 3.8 m wide.
- 5.8.3 Grey and orange-grey natural gravels (811) were revealed at a depth of 1.46 m beneath the present ground level (at 63.55 m OD) and were overlain by brown-grey silty clays (802 and 816).
- 5.8.4 Three ditches (800, 803, and 806) cut the gravel (811) or the overlying clays (802, 816). All three ditches were aligned approximately ENE to WSW across the trench.
- 5.8.5 Ditch 806 was the southern-most of the three ditches and cut the gravel. It measured 1.20 m wide by 0.3 m deep and had a concave base and sides. It was filled with a grey silty clay (807), which was very similar to a clay layer which overlay it (817).
- 5.8.6 Ditch 800 lay approximately 9 m to the north-west of ditch 806 and cut the silty clay 802. The ditch was 1.4 m wide by 0.34 m deep and had a concave base and sides. Its fill, a brown-grey silty clay (801) contained no finds.
- 5.8.7 The largest of the three ditches, 803, lay approximately a further 0.9 m to the north of ditch 800, within the north-eastern end of the trench. The southern side of this ditch cut clay 802, but its northern extent was very poorly defined against surrounding mixed gravels and clays.
- 5.8.8 Ditch 803 measured at least 0.9 m wide by 0.6 m deep, with stepped sides and a rounded base. However the overall width may have been as much as 3 m (see Fig. 4). A pale grey-brown fill (804) against the southern side of the cut contained a single piece of animal bone. Fill 804 appeared to be cut by a later smaller ditch, 808, on the same alignment as ditch 803.
- 5.8.9 Ditch 808 had rounded sides and an asymmetrical base and measured 1 m wide by 0.6 m deep. Its single fill, a dark grey brown silty clay, 809, contained medieval or post-medieval tile fragments (see below); the top of this fill appeared to have been stained by thick overlying deposits of coal dust and coke (814).
- 5.8.10 The fills of ditches 800 and 806 were overlain by a layer of grey brown silty clay, 817. This layer was absent at the north-western end of the trench but thickened to a maximum depth of 0.4 m to the south-east.
- 5.8.11 Layer 817 was overlain by a brick rubble and gravel make-up of a modern road (818 and 821) and was truncated by a large modern cut (820) at the south eastern end of the trench.

- 5.8.12 The road make-up consisted of modern brick rubble and re-deposited gravel and was aligned north-east to south-west across the trench. It continues within Trench 7 as context 701.
- 5.8.13 A large modern cut (820) appeared to run parallel to road make-up 818 and 821, and its fill of banded clayey gravels partially overlay the road make-up on its south-eastern side. At a lower level this cut truncated the clays 817. The lower fill of this cut contained several waterlogged branches or tree roots at the level of the underlying water-table.
- 5.8.14 A thick deposit of coal dust and coke (814) abutted the modern road make-up and overlay the underlying clays and fills of ditches 803 and 808. This layer occurred throughout the trench and was up to 1.5 m thick. It contained pockets of obviously dumped modern material. Layer 814 was overlain by a thin skim of topsoil (815) that was typically less than 0.1 m thick.

## 5.9 Trench 9

- 5.9.1 Trench 9 was aligned north-south and measured 50 m long by 1.8 m wide. The trench was machined in two parts, to avoid the projected path of a known culverted drain, running approximately east-west across the centre of the trench.
- 5.9.2 The trench was machined to a maximum depth of 1.4 m. No archaeological features were evident.
- 5.9.3 Natural gravel was encountered at a depth of 1.28 m below current ground level (64.55 m OD) and was overlain by grey-brown and orange-brown clays (903, 904, 907 and 908). These clays were up to 0.4 m thick and thought to be natural alluvial deposits. They were overlain by up to 1.4 m of coal dust and coke (902) and other modern dumped debris, including cement and re-deposited gravel (901).
- 5.9.4 These deposits were overlain by less than 0.1 m of topsoil (900).

## 5.10 Trench 10

- 5.10.1 Trench 10 was aligned east-west, parallel and to the south of an open culverted drain. The trench measured 50 m long by 1.8 m wide.
- 5.10.2 Natural sandy gravel (1003) was revealed at a depth of 0.65 m (65.86 m OD) and was overlain by up to 0.11 m of grey-brown silty clay loam, 1002, which was probably a natural subsoil.
- 5.10.3 Layer 1002 was in turn overlain by up to 0.35 m of re-deposited orange gravel (1001) and up to 0.2 m of mixed dark grey gravel (1000) which contained modern debris.
- 5.10.4 The trench contained no archaeological features or deposits.

## 5.11 Trench 11

- 5.11.1 Trench 11 was aligned north south, to the west of the former mill buildings.
- 5.11.2 The trench measured 54 m long by 1.8 m wide.
- 5.11.3 The natural gravel (1102) was revealed at a depth of 0.4m beneath the present ground level (66.13 m OD). It was overlain by a 0.1 m thick layer of gravel in a grey-brown sandy loam (1101), and up to 0.4 m of re-deposited orange gravel (1100).
- 5.11.4 No archaeological features were present.

## 5.12 Trench 12 (Figs 4 and 5)

- 5.12.1 Trench 12 consisted of a single 100 m long trench located to the north of the former mill buildings at the centre of the site. The trench was aligned approximately east-west and was 1.8 m wide.
- 5.12.2 The geology within the trench changed from east to west. At the western end, clean banded gravel (1203) was seen at a depth of 0.6 m (66.57 m OD) beneath the current ground level; this depth increased to 1.2 m at the east. To the east the gravel was overlain by sandy and silty clays (1206 and 1207) to a depth of 0.5 m (66.48 m OD).
- 5.12.3 The upper-most of these clays, 1206, seems to correspond to a brown-grey silty clay, (1211), which overlays the clean gravels to the centre and western end of the trench.
- 5.12.4 A broad WNW to ESE aligned pebble and gravel trackway or road, 1210, overlay silty clay 1211, within the middle of the trench. A parallel ditch, 1208, cut clay 1206 from a similar level at the eastern end of the trench.
- 5.12.5 Trackway 1210 was found at only 0.24 m beneath the current ground level. It consisted of a single compacted layer of mixed small pebbles, flints nodules and gravel within a matrix of dark brown sandy clay, and was up to 0.16 m thick. The overall width of this metalling was approximately 8 m. The upper surface of the trackway was generally flat but contained a small number of irregularities due to missing stones. No apparent wear patterns or rut marks were evident. Roadside ditches, banks or kerbs were also absent, although a single large parallel ditch (1208) lay approximately 8.5 m to the east.
- 5.12.6 A section excavated across the width of the trackway produced several fragments of Romano-British tile (see below).
- 5.12.7 The orientation and location of this track, together with the presence of the tile fragments within its make-up indicates that this is almost certainly Ermine Street . The absence of obvious rutting or wear marks suggested that this may be the foundation or make-up of the road, and that the original trackway surface had been truncated.
- 5.12.8 Ditch 1208 lay parallel to the trackway and was cut from a similar level. The ditch lay 8.5 m to the east of the trackway, within the excavated trench, or approximately 6.4 m to the north-east on its projected parallel course.

5.12.9 Ditch 1208 measured 2 m wide by 0.42 m deep. Its sides were asymmetrical, with a stepped north-eastern side, a rounded base and a straight sloping south-western side. The ditch contained a single fill (1209) of dark grey-brown silty clay, with frequent red-brown flecking and a single small piece of burnt flint.

5.12.10 Both the trackway and ditch were overlain by a layer of orange brown clay (1205) and a brown silty clay topsoil (1204), which contained medieval or post-medieval tile.

### 5.13 Finds

#### *Ceramic building material, by Leigh Allen*

5.13.1 A total of 876g of ceramic building material was recovered from 3 contexts during the evaluation. The small assemblage contains material of Roman and medieval /post medieval date.

5.13.2 The material has been identified and then recorded in the table below. Tile types, where they are identifiable, have been recorded, as have the dimensions of the tiles or tile fragments where they are complete. No attempt has been made at this stage to identify the various fabric types present in the assemblage.

<i>Ctx</i>	<i>Ctx type</i>	<i>tile type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>thickness</i>	<i>weight</i>	<i>date</i>
809	ditch fill	flat tile	Thin plain tile, probably a peg tile	1	15mm	200g	medieval/ post medieval
809	ditch fill	misc		1		30g	medieval/ post medieval
1204	disturbed topsoil	misc		1		10g	medieval/ post medieval
1210	road metalling	misc		4		149g	Romano-British
1210	road metalling	flat tile		2	16-17mm	147g	Romano-British
1210	road metalling	flat tile	Hard fired	3	35-37mm	340g	Romano-British

#### *Roman tile*

5.13.3 There were 9 fragments (636g) of Roman tile in the assemblage. There are 5 fragments from flat tiles: 2 of these fragments are of an orange, soft, soapy fabric with a thickness of between 16-17mm; the other 3 fragments are of a dark, hard-fired material with a thickness of 35-37mm. Two of the hard fired fragments join and have a misshapen protrusion on the upper surface. This does not look like it has been deliberately applied (such as a flange or a mammata) but appears to be a fragment from another tile that may have lain across it in the kiln. The remaining Roman

fragments are miscellaneous pieces that do not have a measurable thickness and are devoid of any distinguishing marks.

*Medieval/post medieval tile.*

- 5.13.4 There are 3 fragments (240g) of medieval/post medieval tile in the assemblage. Two fragments are miscellaneous pieces with no measurable thickness or distinguishing marks. The remaining fragment is a thin piece from a rectangular tile, probably a peg tile.

## 6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

### 6.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 6.1.1 Extensive modern disturbance and levelling up together with a general lack of finds makes the definition and interpretation of many of the features difficult. Some features were also poorly defined, particularly against underlying alluvial clays. There was limited localised flooding within the opened trenches, but this was generally not problematic and few of the excavated features were affected.
- 6.1.2 The layout of the trenches was largely conditioned by site conditions and the presence of partially demolished buildings. It is assumed that the area not covered by the trench layout, i.e. the central area of the site, will have been subject to considerable disturbance during construction and demolition, thereby reducing the archaeological potential significantly.

### 6.2 Overall interpretation

- 6.2.1 The trackway, 1210, found within Trench 12 is almost certainly Ermine Street, as it's alignment and location correspond closely to the predicted route. Roman tile recovered from the make-up of the trackway reinforces this interpretation. The upper surface of the uncovered trackway was a little uneven and showed no obvious signs of wear. This suggests that the metalling found is the foundation or make-up of the road, and the original surface is either absent or heavily degraded.
- 6.2.2 The function of a parallel ditch, 1208, within Trench 12, is unknown and the single piece of burnt flint recovered from its fill does not help to date it. However, this ditch is cut from a similar level to trackway 1210, and its parallel alignment suggest that the two may be associated.
- 6.2.3 A number of linear features found within trenches to the west of the site are undated. Some of these features may have been drainage ditches or part of field systems. However, the presence of other modern ditches, seen cutting from beneath the topsoil, and drainage features( i.e. land-drains and a probable modern drainage ditch) within the same area, suggests that these undated features may be modern.
- 6.2.4 A shallow north-south aligned ditch, 706, in Trench 7, cut the underlying alluvial clay and contained peaty, organic fills which were directly overlain by modern made-

ground deposits. This feature may be a shallow or truncated drainage ditch which possibly relates to one of the ditches found to the south-west, in Trench 8.

- 6.2.5 There was extensive modern disturbance and levelling up in the eastern end of the site. A number of ditches found in Trench 8 seem to respect the alignment of a modern road that curves ESE to WNW across Trench 8 and Trench 7. Most of these ditches are undated and are either sealed by alluvial clay or overlain by made-ground deposits. One of these ditches, 803, produced medieval or post-medieval tile. As ditches 800 and 803 are sealed by an alluvial clay it seems likely that these are drainage ditches for low lying land. Ditch 808 may represent a later re-cut of one of these ditches, and also appears to be associated with the construction of a modern hard-core road.
- 6.2.6 Trench 9 was specifically targeted on the projected line of Ermine Street. Although this trench was machined to an maximum depth of 1.4 m, the road was found to be entirely absent. Therefore, it was presumed either to have been truncated by modern activity, or to run on a different line, as suggested by the results of Trench 12.

#### *Summary of results*

- 6.2.7 The evaluation located a section of the Roman road and a probable roadside ditch. A separate group of linear features located in the north-western area of the site are thought to be either drainage ditches or field boundaries and may well be modern. The eastern end of the site has been extensively made-up up by substantial dumps of coal dust and coke. Several ditches found beneath these deposits are either undated or relate to a modern road. These ditches were probably part of a drainage system in this formerly low lying area.

#### *Significance*

- 6.2.8 The Roman trackway found within Trench 12 is almost certainly a continuation of Ermine Street. The alignment and location of the trackway indicates that the true course of the road is slightly to the south of the previously projected route, possibly to avoid a formerly low lying area of land within the south east of the site (Fig.2) .



## APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Finds	Date
100	Layer	Topsoil	0.4			
101	Layer	Subsoil	0.4			
102	Layer	Natural	0.05			
103	Layer	Natural				
104	Cut	Ditch	0.15	0.6		
105	Fill	Fill of 104	0.15			
106	Cut	Ditch	0.3	0.6		
107	Fill	Fill of 106	0.3			
108	Fill	Fill of 106	0.2			
109	Fill	Fill of 106	0.3			
Trench 2						
200	Layer	Topsoil	0.2			
201	Layer	Subsoil	0.25			
202	Layer	Subsoil	0.4			
203	Layer	Natural				
204	Structure	Modern road	0.4			Modern
205	Layer	Natural				
Trench 3						
300	Layer	Topsoil	0.1			
301	Layer	Subsoil	0.5			
302	Layer	Natural				
303	Cut	Ditch	0.08	0.6		
304	Fill	Fill of 305	0.08			
305	Cut	Ditch	0.65	1.6		
306	Fill	Fill of 305	0.2			
307	Fill	Fill of 305	0.45			
308	Layer	Natural				
309	Cut	Tree disturbance?	0.1	1.35		
310	Fill	Fill of 309	0.1	1.35		
311	Cut	Ditch	0.3	1		
312	Fill	Fill of 311	0.1			
313	Fill	Fill of 311	0.2			
314	Fill	Fill of 311	0.1			
315	Cut	Modern cut	0.3	Unknown		Modern
Trench 4						
400	Layer	Subsoil	0.25			
401	Layer	Natural				
402	Fill	Fill of 404	0.1			
403	Fill	Fill of 404	0.15			
404	Cut	Ditch	0.2	0.75		
Trench 5						
500	Layer	Topsoil				Modern
501	Layer	Subsoil				
502	Layer	Natural				
503	Structure	Tarmac road	0.4			Modern
504	Cut	Ditch	0.2	1		
505	Fill	Fill of 504	0.15			
506	Fill	Fill of 504	0.15			

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Finds	Date
<b>Trench 5</b>						
507	Cut	Ditch	0.4	1.7		
508	Fill	Fill of 507	0.4			
509	Fill	Fill of 510	0.35			
510	Cut	Recut ditch	0.4	0.9		
<b>Trench 6</b>						
600	Layer	Topsoil	0.1			Modern
601	Layer	Made ground	0.38			Modern
602	Layer	Made ground	0.4			Modern
603	Layer	Subsoil	0.6			
604	Layer	Natural	0.24			
605	Layer	Natural				
<b>Trench 7</b>						
700	Layer	Coal dust	1.2			Modern
701	Layer	Modern make-up	1.2+			Modern
702	Layer	Modern make-up	1.2+			Modern
703	Layer	Subsoil	0.4			
704	Layer	Grey clay	0.23			
705	Layer	Natural				
706	Cut	Shallow ditch	0.26	2.4		
707	Fill	Fill of 706	0.12			
708	Fill	Fill of 706	0.11			
709	Layer	Yellow brown clay	0.35			
710	Fill	Fill of 706	0.08			
<b>Trench 8</b>						
800	Cut	Ditch	0.34	1.4		
801	Fill	Fill of 800	0.34	1.4		
802	Layer	Grey brown silty clay	0.2			
803	Cut	Modern disturbance	0.6	3.00+		
804	Fill	Fill of 803	0.6		Animal bone	
805		Context not used				
806	Cut	Recut ditch	0.6	1.2		
807	Fill	Fill of 806	0.6			
808	Cut	Recut ditch	0.6	1		
809	Fill	Fill of 808	0.6		CBM	Medieval/post-medieval
810	Fill	Fill of 803	0.4+			
811	Layer	Natural				
812	Layer	Made ground	Unknown			
813	Layer	Subsoil	0.4			
814	Layer	Coal dust and coke	1.5			
815	Layer	Topsoil	0.1			
816	Layer	Grey clay	Unknown			
817	Layer	Grey brown silty clay	0.4			
818	Structure	Modern road				
819	Fill	Fill of 820	1.30+			
820	Cut	Modern disturbance	0.5			
821	Layer	Made ground	0.4			

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Finds	Date
<b>Trench 9</b>						
900	Layer	Topsoil	0.1			
901	Layer	Made ground	0.45			
902	Layer	Coal dust and coke	0.4			
903	Layer	Grey brown clay	0.34			
904	Layer	Grey brown clay	0.3			
905	Layer	Gravel				
906	Layer	Course gravels				
907	Layer	Grey brown clay				
908	Layer	Yellow brown clay				
<b>Trench 10</b>						
1000	Layer	Made ground	0.2			
1001	Layer	Made ground	0.35			
1002	Layer	Grey brown silty clay	0.11			
1003	Layer	Natural	0.25+			
<b>Trench 11</b>						
1100	Layer	Made ground	0.4			
1101	Layer	Grey brown gravels	0.1			
1102	Layer	Natural gravels				
<b>Trench 12</b>						
1200	Layer	Made ground	0.6			
1201	Layer	Made ground	0.28			
1202	Layer	Light brown gravel	0.29			
1203	Layer	Grey brown gravels	0.27+			
1204	Layer	Topsoil	0.25		CBM	Romano-British
1205	Layer	Subsoil	0.26			
1206	Layer	orange clay	0.3			
1207	Layer	Gravel and orange clay	0.40+			
1208	Cut	Ditch	0.42	2		
1209	Fill	Fill of 1208	0.42		Burnt flint	
1210	Structure	Road/trackway	0.16	7	CBM, struck flint	Romano-British
1211	Layer	Brown grey clay	0.4			
1212	Layer	Brown grey clay	0.6			

**APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES**

CPM 2001 Colthrop Mill, Thatcham, Berkshire; Specification for an Archaeological Field Evaluation

Wilkinson, D (ed) 1992 *Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual*, (First edition, August 1992)

**APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS**

**Site name:** Thatcham, Colthrop Mill

**Site code:** THCOLM '01

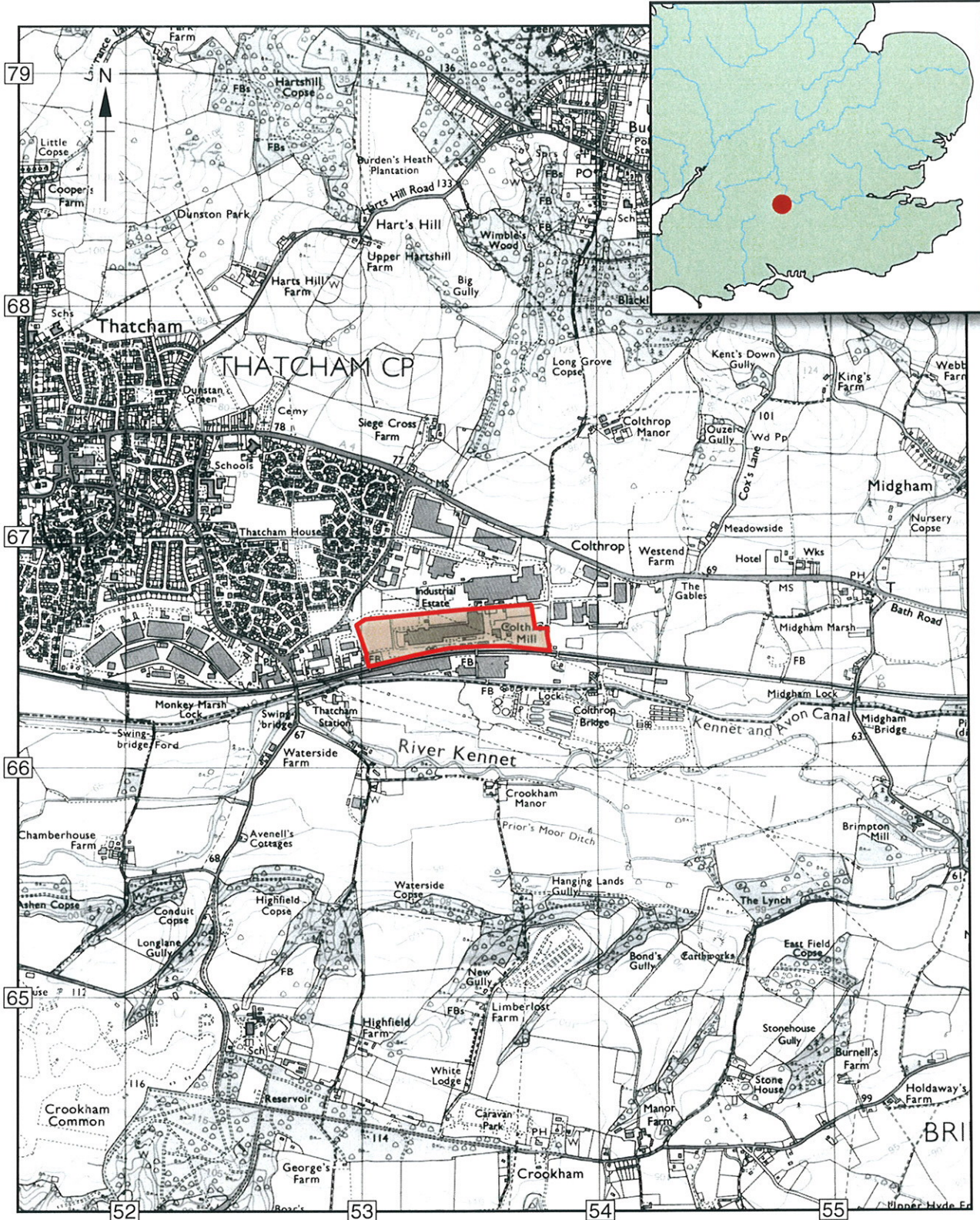
**Grid reference:** SU 534 666

**Type of evaluation:** Eleven 50 m trenches and a single 100 m trench.

**Date and duration of project:** 9/4/01-25/4/01

**Summary of results:** Route of Roman trackway confirmed. Also a number of undated or modern ditches investigated.

**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OAU, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES.



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Figure 1: Site location

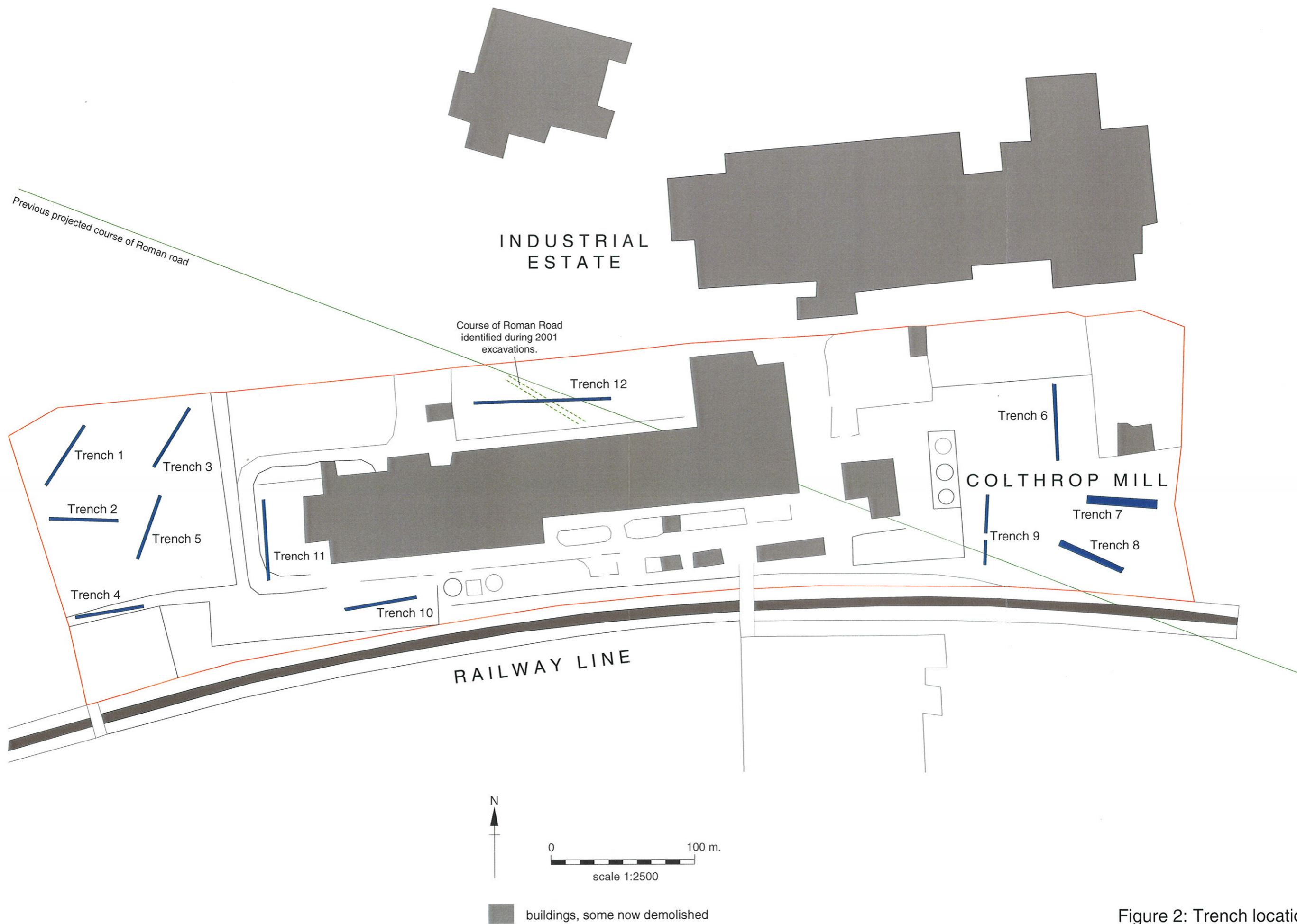
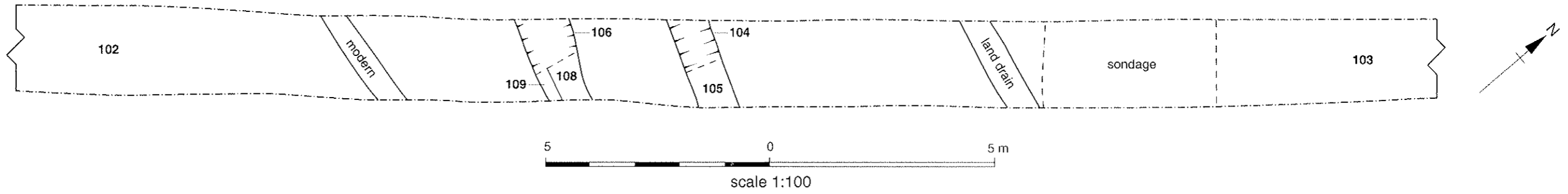
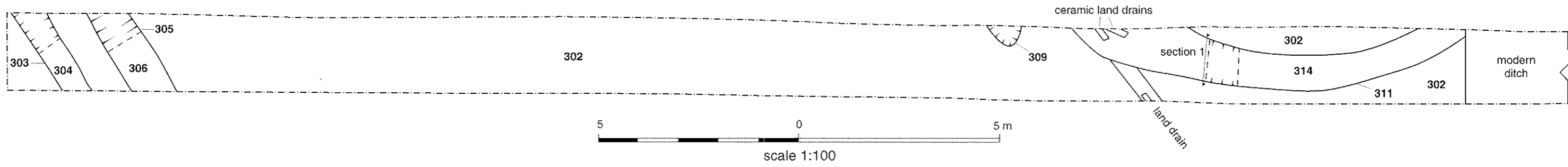


Figure 2: Trench locations

Trench 1



Trench 3



Trench 5

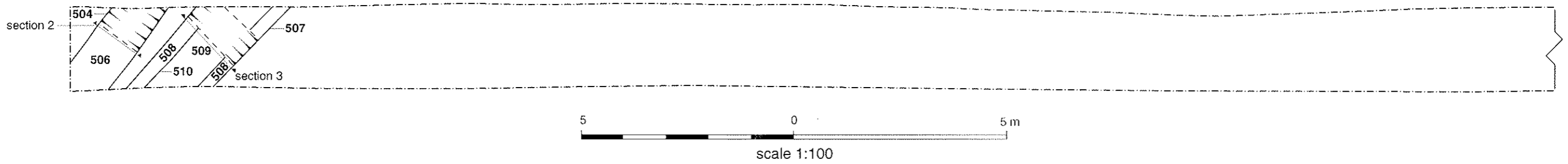
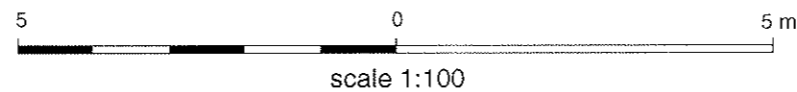
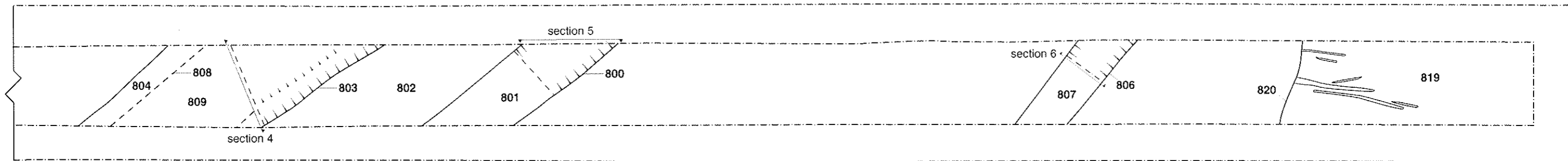


Figure 3: Plans of Trenches 1, 3 and 5

Trench 8



Trench 12

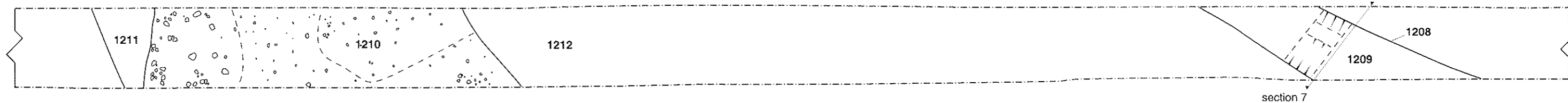


Figure 4: Plans of Trenches 8 and 12

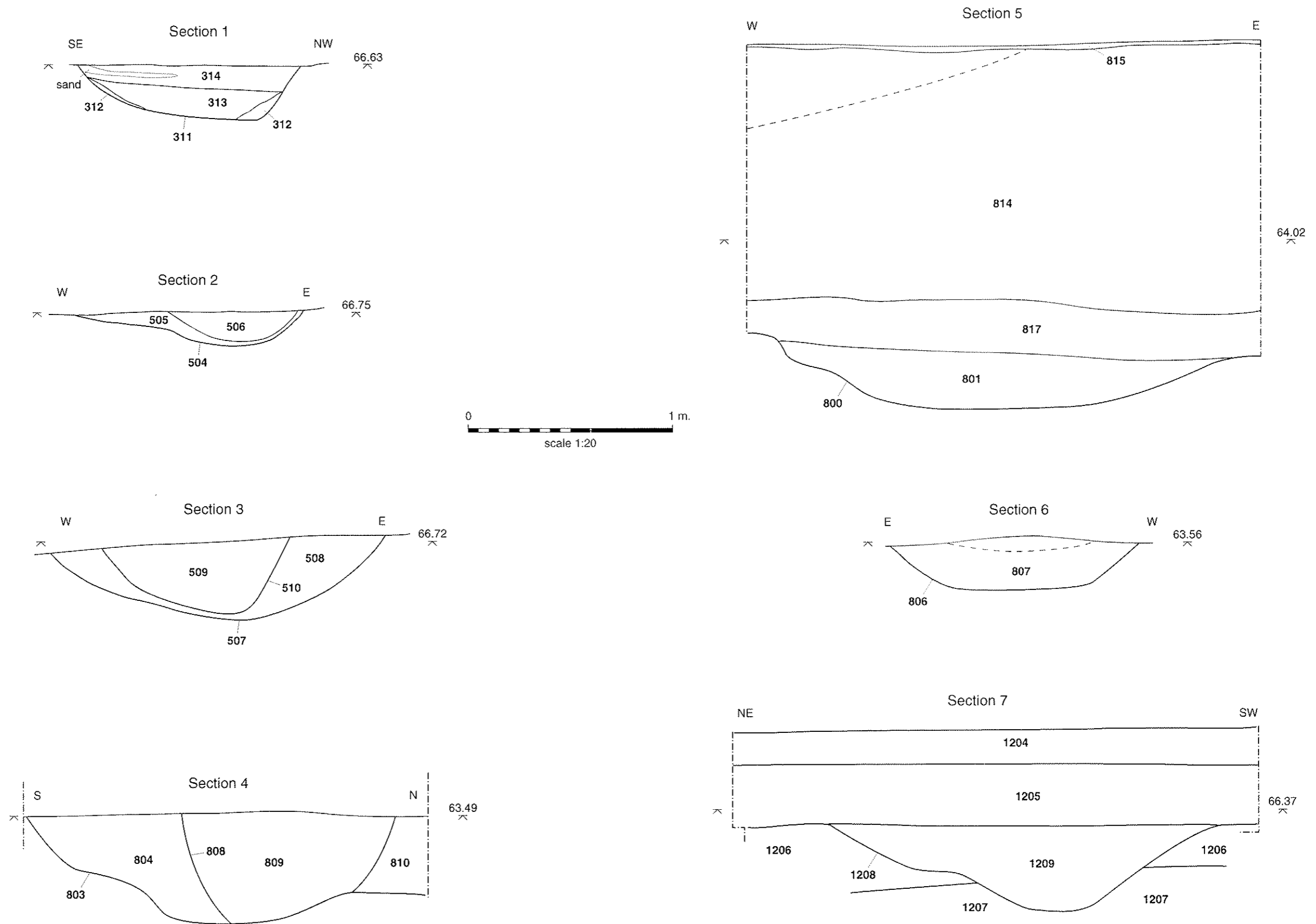


Figure 5: Sections





Plate 1: Trench 12 looking west



Plate 2: Road surface 1210 looking north-west



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