

# Power Cable Burial Broad Hinton to Avebury Wiltshire



## Archaeological Watching Brief Report



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# Avebury, Wiltshire Power Cable Burial

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Front cover: Trenching at Manor Farm, Broad Hinton

## SUMMARY

*Between September 2007 and January 2008, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief on land between Broad Hinton (NGR: SU 105 769) and Avebury (NGR: SU 097 699) in Wiltshire. The work was commissioned by Scottish and Southern Energy Plc (SSE) in advance of the burial of overhead power lines. The watching brief revealed examples of earlier field boundaries, chalk and clay quarry pits, 2 hollow ways and a possible trackway and several pits. All the datable archaeological features relate to the post-medieval period. No evidence for continuations of the stone circle or processional avenues north of Avebury was observed.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Between September 2007 and January 2008, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief on land between Broad Hinton (NGR: SU 105 769) and Avebury (NGR: SU 097 699) in Wiltshire (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Scottish and Southern Energy Plc (SSE) in respect of a proposal to bury existing overhead power lines as part of an ongoing scheme to beautify the World Heritage Site.
- 1.1.2 A project brief was set by Sue Farr of the Wiltshire County Archaeological Service.
- 1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief (OA, 2007).

### 1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The development area is a linear cable trench of approximately 5.5 km length, that runs from adjacent to the Avebury Museum almost due north to Manor Farm, Broad Hinton. The cable trenches were cut through open farmland primarily in use as grazing pastures or arable fields. The underlying geology is alluvium over lower chalk in the area of Broad Hinton with a band of valley gravel running between Winterbourne Monkton and west of Avebury (Geological Survey of Great Britain sheet no. 266). The level of the trench runs from approximately 153 m AOD at Avebury rising gradually to 192 m AOD at Broad Hinton.

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the watching brief was prepared for the WSI for the project (OA, 2007) and is reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 Avebury along with Stonehenge forms England's most famous and culturally powerful collection of prehistoric monuments. In 1986 Avebury was designated a World Heritage Site (WHS) under the UNESCO World Heritage Convention. Much

has been written about Avebury and its associated monuments, indeed it is beyond the scope of this document to detail the archaeological and historic background to the WHS. English Heritage, in 1998 published the Avebury World Heritage Site Management Plan which details the then known sites, monuments and historic buildings within the WHS and their current state and landuse (EH, 1998).

- 1.3.3 As part of the background of the watching brief a desktop survey was undertaken in order to determine the character of any known sites along the line of the proposed cable trench. This information has been drawn from the Management Plan (EH, 1998) and from a recent search of the Sites and Monuments Records (SMR). Whilst the SMR records over 330 sites within the WHS, only a small number of known sites are known to be directly effected by the cable trench. Of these there are only three known sites on the route of the new cabling. The sites are set out from the southern end of the proposed works and following the works as they progress northward.
- 1.3.4 *NGR: SU 096 699 - Field North of Manor Farm*
- 1.3.5 Works here were originally conceived to be the beginning of the cabling process. This part of the scheme will now be undertaken as the second phase, after works at Manor Farm Winterbourne Monkton (see below).
- 1.3.6 Data provided by Wiltshire County Council Archaeological Service in the form of plotted cropmarks show that the field immediately north of Manor Farm (and indeed most of the environs) are cluttered with archaeological features. The features comprise what appear to be multi-phase enclosures and ditches including possible hut circles. Some of the features appear as earthworks on the ground. These features respect and almost completely avoid the north-south boundary of the field formed by a stream.
- 1.3.7 SSE Plc have elected to cut the trench as close to the course of the stream as possible, in order to minimise the detrimental impact on the archaeological remains.
- 1.3.8 *NGR: SU 095 717(centred) - Manor Farm, Winterbourne Monkton*
- 1.3.9 As the route of the cable trench is followed northwards, it passes through the fields owned by and immediately west of Manor Farm. This part of the route falls within the vicinity of Windmill Hill (780 m to the west) and a number of barrow mounds including at least one long barrow.
- 1.3.10 Because of the proximity of known Ancient Monuments, SSE Plc have elected to undertake open cut trenching here to mitigate any disturbance to archaeological features or deposits. Trenching to the north and south is to be carried out with mole trenches.

- 1.3.11 *NGR: SU 098 742 - Site of Medieval Village of Richardson*
- 1.3.12 At this point on the route the cable trench is to skirt along the eastern boundary of the field containing the known remains and earthworks of the former medieval village of Richardson, south of Rabson Manor in Winterbourne Bassett. As with the route at Manor Farm, Avebury the route here is designed to minimise the risk to the archaeological remains.
- 1.3.13 *NGR: 104 769 - Manor Farm, Broad Hinton*
- 1.3.14 This is the northernmost end of the proposed route and the final stretch of open cut trenching. Broad Hinton has its origins in the medieval period and it is thought that the fields to the south and west of the present day settlement may contain deposits relating to the medieval history of the village.

## 2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence or absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.
- 2.1.2 To preserve by record any archaeological deposits or features that may be disturbed or destroyed during the course of any intrusive groundworks.
- 2.1.3 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

### 2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The work of burying the power cable was undertaken as open trenching on its passage through archaeologically sensitive areas. The watching brief was undertaken as a continuous archaeological presence during the excavation of the trench. The trench was dug by a tracked excavator fitted with a 0.4 m wide toothless bucket. Excavation proceeded in spits until the required depth of excavation (1.2 m) was achieved. The sides and base of the trench were closely examined for archaeological evidence and the spoil was examined for dating evidence. Because of the width of the trench and the unstable nature of the ground, all recording was done from the top of the trench.
- 2.2.2 Plans showing the extent and location of these trenches were maintained during the course of the work with the location of any observed archaeological features noted. Where any archaeological features were observed their sections were recorded at a scale of 1:20. All features and any recorded sections were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. A general photographic record of the work was also made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OA Field Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).



### 3 RESULTS

#### 3.1 Description of deposits

3.1.1 The fieldwork was conducted within 4 distinct geographical locations and these will be described separately followed by an overall discussion and conclusion.

*NGR: SU 096 699 - Fields North of Manor Farm, Avebury (Fig. 3)*

3.1.2 These works consisted of approximately 650 m length of 0.4 m wide by 1.3 m deep trenching dug from the west bank of a tributary of the River Kennet, through fields to the north of Manor Farm, Avebury Trusloe to the outskirts of the village of Avebury.

3.1.3 In the field immediately west of the tributary of the River Kennet a series of probable field boundary ditches were observed.

3.1.4 As the trench approached the western edge of the field a north-south feature was encountered (Fig. 6, Section 10).

3.1.5 The underlying natural chalk (34) was encountered at a depth of 0.55 m below ground level. Cut into the surface of this deposit was a 2.3 m wide ditch with steeply sloping sides (37). The depth of the trench at this point was insufficient to expose the base of the feature. This was a north-south aligned feature running approximately parallel to the existing western boundary of the field. The lowest recorded part of this feature was filled by a light brown clay silt (36) whose depth was in excess of 0.3 m. The remainder of the ditch was filled by a 0.4 m deep deposit of pale brown clay silt (35). This was sealed by a 0.35 m deep layer of red-brown silt clay (33), a probable earlier phase of ploughsoil. Overlying this was a 0.25 m deep layer of dark grey-brown clay loam (32) the present day topsoil and turf.

3.1.6 This ditch is a probable old field boundary, possibly filled in when the 18th and 19th century field boundaries were established. Since an earlier phase of ploughsoil (33) seals the ditch fills it suggests that this ditch may be medieval in origin.

3.1.7 As the trenching turned southwards, a small pit was encountered (Fig. 6, Section 11). This was a circular feature with vertical sides (39) cut into the surface of the natural chalk, 34. This feature was only visible in the western side of the trench, but could be seen partially in plan as the trench was excavated. The pit was approximately 0.8 m in diameter and 0.55 m deep. it was filled by a dark red-brown clay silt (38), which unfortunately failed to produce any dating evidence.

3.1.8 Located approximately 30 m further south was an east-west oriented ditch, (41) (Fig. 5, Section 12). This was cut into the top of the natural chalk 34 and measured 2.7 m wide with a depth in excess of 0.8 m. The profile of this ditch was similar to Ditch 37 and is probably associated with it. The ditch was filled with a pale red-brown clay silt (40), which again did not produce any dating evidence. These fills were sealed by a

0.25 m deep layer of the silt clay subsoil (33) and a 0.2 m deep layer of the topsoil (32).

- 3.1.9 A second east-west running ditch was encountered approximately 60 m further to the south (44) (Fig. 6, Section 13). This ditch displayed a similar profile to Ditch 41, with steeply sloping sides and measured 2.3 m wide with a depth in excess of 0.8 m. The base of the ditch was filled with a dark brown clay silt (43) over 0.45 m in depth with the upper 0.35 m depth of the ditch filled with a dark grey-brown silt clay (42). This feature appeared to run parallel to Ditch 41 and to an existing east-west boundary ditch partially visible 60 m south of Ditch 44. Similarly to Ditches 37 and 41 the fills were sealed by the subsoil (33) and the topsoil (32).
- 3.1.10 Located just within the gateway of the field was a third and final east-west running ditch (46) (Fig. 7, Section 14). This ditch was cut into the surface of the natural chalk and had steeply sloping sides, and as with the others the depth of the cable trench failed to expose the full profile of the ditch. This ditch ran parallel to Ditches 41 and 44 and to the existing southern boundary hedge of the field. As with the other ditches, the ditch fills were sealed by the subsoil (33) and the topsoil (32).
- 3.1.11 No further features were encountered until the trench entered the low lying area approximately 300 m to the south. Here the underlying chalk natural (34) tipped downwards to be overlain by a layer of pale yellow-brown silt clay (49), in excess of 0.6 m deep (Fig. 7, Section 15), this was a very clean deposit and probably represents a layer of alluvium. This was overlain by a layer of grey silt clay (48) measuring between 0.4 m and 1 m in depth, a probable second layer of alluvium. Overlying this was a 0.2 m deep layer of dark grey-brown clay loam (47), the present day topsoil and turf.
- 3.1.12 As the trench crossed over the stream the route passed through a field containing numerous visible earthworks located immediately north of Manor Farm (Fig 5). Based on a plan of the features provided by Wiltshire County Council a route was chosen following the southern edge of the field and the line of the stream in order to minimise the impact of the excavations.
- 3.1.13 Within the northern extent of the field a possible earlier occupation layer was observed in the base of the trench (Fig. 7, Section 16). This layer was exposed in the section and the base of the trench and was a dark grey silt clay (50), which contained occasional charcoal flecking, part of a harness buckle and fragments of abraded pottery. This deposit was only exposed within a limited 75 m length of the trench. Sealing this deposit was a 0.4 m deep layer of the silt clay alluvium (49), which in turn was overlaid by a 0.4 m deep layer of the silt clay alluvium (48). A 0.15 m deep layer of topsoil and turf (47) completed the section.
- 3.1.14 At the southern end of the field the trench crossed the return of one of the features recorded in the plan of the cropmarks (Fig. 7, Section 17).

- 3.1.15 The underlying natural at this point was a pale yellow-brown silt clay alluvium (49). This was overlaid by a second 0.5 m deep layer of alluvium (48), a grey silt clay. Cut into the top of this deposit was a 1.15 m wide by 0.35 m deep linear feature (52). This took the form of a wide, shallow ditch, “V” shaped in profile. This feature appears to be part of the boundary ditch delineating the outside of the settlement, with the trench cutting across a return possibly marking an entranceway. This was filled by a brown silt clay with chalk flecking (51), a probable silting deposit.
- 3.1.16 Sealing the feature was a 0.2 m deep layer of dark grey-brown clay loam (47), the present day topsoil and turf.
- 3.1.17 The route of the cable was drilled from this point in order to run under the tributary to emerge in a field east of the stream. During the excavation of the launching pit adjacent to Section 17 a large number of irregularly shaped limestone blocks were observed within the topsoil (46). These appeared to be a dump of loose material rather than a collapsed structure. These stones are similar to those used to construct the three arched bridge spanning the tributary immediately to the south-east and it is possible that they represent unused material brought in during its construction.
- 3.1.18 At the exit pit (Fig. 7, Section 24) the underlying natural valley gravel (79) was encountered at a depth of 1.5 m below the current ground level. This was overlaid by a 0.7 m deep layer of the light grey clay silt alluvium (49), which produced a large animal bone. This was sealed by a layer of grey-brown silt clay alluvium (48), 0.6 m deep. Sealing this was a 0.2 m deep layer of the present day topsoil and turf (47).

*NGR: SU 095 717 (centred) - Manor Farm, Winterbourne Monkton*

- 3.1.19 In the fields to the north-west of Manor Farm a small section of open trenching was dug in order to investigate a known feature (Fig. 2 and 3, Fig. 6, Section 1).
- 3.1.20 The underlying natural was a layer of green-grey clay silt (4) encountered at a depth of 0.7 m below ground level. This was overlaid by a band of laminated green sandstone 0.25 m thick (3). Overlying this was a 0.12 m deep layer of yellow-green clay silt (92), a probable layer of weathered natural. Cut into the surface of this deposit was a 6.9 m wide by 1 m deep feature (8). This was aligned east-west and cut across the trench at right angles. The base of the feature was filled by a 0.18 m deep deposit of pale brown clay silt (7), probably washed in topsoil. This was overlaid by a 0.45 m deep layer of grey brown silt clay (6), probably washed in after the feature went into disuse. The top of the cut was filled by a 0.2 m deep layer of yellow-brown silt (5), probably also washed in material. The fills were sealed by a 0.25 m deep layer of grey-brown clay loam (1), the present day ploughsoil. The continuation of the feature was visible as a shallow depression running eastwards across the field towards a noticeable gap in the tree line bordering the eastern edge of the field and a sunken road running further eastwards. It is probable that this feature represents a “hollow way” or sunken road, possibly a pack road running across the edge of the downs, which had fallen into disuse and subsequently filled up with hill wash.

- 3.1.21 On the southern edge of this area a 900 m length of open trenching was dug from the southern edge of Avenue Farm (SU: 100 715) to the eastern bank of a tributary of the River Kennet (SU: 099 705) (Figs. 2 and 3). Approximately 15 m south of the Southern edge of Avenue Farm a small pit was observed in the western side of the trench (Fig. 6, section 2). The underlying natural at this point was a pale brown silt clay (11), formed by weathering of the underlying chalk, encountered at a depth of 0.5 m below ground level. This was overlaid by a 0.25 m deep layer of dark orange-brown silt clay (10), a probable layer of earlier ploughsoil. Cut into the surface of this deposit was a 1.3 m diameter by 0.6 m deep vertical sided pit (13). This was filled with a dark red-brown silt clay (12), which produced no dating evidence.
- 3.1.22 Thirty-five m further south two east-west boundary ditches were encountered (Fig. 6, section 3). This area was slightly lower-lying than the previous section and the underlying natural at this point was a continuation of the pale brown silt clay (11), encountered at a depth of 1 m below ground level. This was overlaid by a layer of red-brown silt clay (16), a probable alluvial deposit, measuring up to 0.7 m in depth. Cut into the surface of this deposit were two parallel east-west aligned ditches (18) and (20). Ditch 18 measured 4.9 m wide and had steeply sloping sides. The top 0.7 m depth of the feature was exposed in the trench side, although the depth of excavation was insufficient to expose the full profile of the ditch. The ditch was filled by a dark red-brown silt clay (17) which produced no dating evidence. Located 1 m to the south was Ditch 20. This measured 3.5 m wide and also had steeply sloping sides. As with Ditch 18 only the top 0.7 m depth of this feature was exposed in the side of the excavation. The ditch was filled by a dark red-brown silt clay (19). Lying within the top of the fill was a large Saren stone measuring 1.6 m by 1 m by 0.6 m, although it was unclear if this stone was within the fill or had been deposited later and had sunk into the fill. The fills of the ditches were sealed by a 0.25 m deep layer of dark orange-brown silt clay (10), a probable layer of earlier ploughsoil, which was overlaid by a 0.25 m deep layer of dark grey brown clay loam (9), the present day ploughsoil.
- 3.1.23 Located 35 m further south, another small pit (15) was encountered (Fig. 6, section 4). This feature was cut into the surface of the weathered natural 11, encountered at a depth of 0.4 m below the current ground level. This circular feature measured 1.1 m in diameter by 0.75 m deep (15) and was excavated with vertical sides and a flat base. It was filled by a dark grey-brown clay silt (14). No dating evidence was recovered.
- 3.1.24 Approximately within the centre of a field located immediately west of East Farm (SU 10095 71237) another small pit was encountered (Fig. 6, Section 5). The underlying natural, (11), was reached at a depth of 0.4 m below the current ground level. This was overlaid by a 0.2 m deep layer of the earlier ploughsoil (10). Cut into the surface of this deposit was a circular pit (22). This measured 1.1 m in diameter by 0.45 m deep and had vertical sides with a flat base. It was filled with a dark red-brown clay silt (21). No dating evidence was recovered.

- 3.1.25 A possible area of ridge and furrow was observed at NGR: SU 1011 7106 (Fig. 6, Section 6). The underlying natural was a pale brown weathered chalk (25), a probable continuation of layer 11, and was encountered at a depth of 0.35 m below the current ground level. The surface of this was cut by a 5.5 m wide by 0.25 m deep linear feature (27). This was aligned east-west and ran parallel to the current field boundaries. Filling the feature was a pale red-brown silt clay (26). It was sealed by a 0.25 m deep layer of light red-brown silt clay (24), a probable layer of earlier ploughsoil. This was overlaid by a 0.18 m deep layer of dark grey-brown clay loam (23), the present day ploughsoil. The width and relative shallowness of this feature suggests that it may be the remnants or earlier ridge and furrow which has survived post-medieval levelling of the field.
- 3.1.26 The shallow base of a truncated pit was observed at NGR: SU 10133 70961 (Fig. 6, Section 7). A continuation of the weathered natural 25 was encountered at a depth of 0.5 m below the current ground level. Cut within the surface of this layer was a circular feature, 1.6 m in diameter by 0.4 m deep (29). This had vertical sides and a flat base and was filled by a dark grey-brown silt clay (28). This deposit had evidence of chalk flecking suggesting deliberate backfilling, however no dating evidence was recovered. The feature was sealed by a 0.25 m deep layer of the earlier ploughsoil (24) overlaid by a 0.18 m deep layer of the present day ploughsoil (23).
- 3.1.27 In the centre of the field (NGR: SU 10129 70973) an east-west aligned ditch was encountered (Fig. 6, Section 8). The continuation of the weathered natural (25) was observed at a depth of 0.5 m below the current ground level. This was cut by a 3.5 m wide linear feature (31), which had steeply sloping sides, but whose full depth was not exposed in the section. This was filled with a red-brown clay silt (30). Sealing the fill was a 0.25 m deep layer of the earlier ploughsoil (24), which in turn was overlaid by a 0.2 m deep layer of the present day ploughsoil (23). The location and alignment of the ditch suggests that it once formed part of a field boundary dividing the current field into two.
- 3.1.28 At the south-east corner of the field (NGR: SU 10156 70654), a cable jointing pit was excavated (Fig. 6, Section 9). The weathered natural, (25), was encountered at a depth of 0.75 m below the current ground level. This was overlaid by a 0.5 m deep layer of the earlier ploughsoil (24), which was sealed by a 0.25 m deep layer of the modern ploughsoil (25).

*NGR: SU 104 769 - Manor Farm, Broad Hinton*

- 3.1.29 This section comprised 650 m length of 0.4 m wide by 1.3 m deep trenching. The majority of this trench was through open pasture with several large features visible within two of the fields (Fig. 2 and 3).
- 3.1.30 Approximately 80 m north-east of the Broad Hinton to Wootton Bassett road the trench crossed a large linear feature (Fig. 7, section 18). The underlying natural, a probable alluvium, was a yellow-grey clay (55) containing abraded fragments of

stone was encountered at a depth of 0.8 m below ground level. This was overlaid by a layer of dark grey clay silt (54) measuring between 0.2 m and 0.3 m in depth which probably represents an earlier layer of ploughsoil. Cut into the surface of this layer was a 22 m wide by 2.6 m deep linear feature (58). This ran north-west to south-east and was clearly visible running towards the centre of the village of Broad Hinton. The base of this feature was filled by a light grey-brown silt clay (57), measuring up to 0.7 m deep. This deposit produced fragments of 18th century brick and pottery. Overlying this was a 0.6 m deep layer of dark grey brown clay loam (56) which also contained lenses of orange brown clay and chalk flecking. The nature and composition of these deposits suggest that they were part of a scheme to deliberately backfill the feature. Overlying the fills was a 0.25 m deep layer of dark grey-brown clay loam, the present day topsoil and turf.

- 3.1.31 Located approximately 110 m to the north-east were two boundary ditches (Fig. 7, Section 19). The underlying natural had changed by this point to a laminar chalk bed (59), encountered at a depth of 0.7 m below the current ground level. This was overlaid by a 0.35 m deep layer of the earlier ploughsoil (54). Cut into the surface of this deposit were two parallel north-west to south-east aligned ditches. The southernmost of these measured 4.9 m wide, had steeply sloping sides (63) and was in excess of 0.95 m deep. The depth of the trench was insufficient to expose the full depth of the ditch. The ditch was completely filled by a dark grey-brown silt clay (62) which produced fragments of post-medieval brick and pottery suggest that it may represent deliberate backfilling. The northernmost ditch measured 3.9 m wide and also had steeply sloping sides (65), and was in excess of 1 m deep. This was filled by dark grey brown clay silt (64), very similar to fill 62, and may also represent deliberate backfilling.
- 3.1.32 Located at the north-eastern corner of the field, 40 m further north from section 18 was a large roughly circular feature (Fig. 7, Section 20). The underlying natural chalk, (59), was encountered at a depth of 0.75 m below the current ground level. This was overlaid by a 0.5 m deep layer of the earlier ploughsoil (54). The circular feature (61) measured approximately 8.2 m diameter at the top of the cut, had shallow sloping sides, and measured approximately 2.5 m in diameter in the base of the cable trench. A depth of 1 m was exposed in the section of the cable trench, although the full depth of the feature was not exposed. The feature was filled with a dark grey-brown silt clay (60), which also contained lenses of yellow-brown clay suggesting that it may be deliberate backfill. The size of the feature suggests that it may be a possible quarry pit, probably for collecting chalk for lime burning.
- 3.1.33 A side spur was dug off the main cable trench between sections 18 and 19 in order to connect the cable to an existing line of poles (Fig. 7, Section 21). The underlying natural was the laminated chalk (59), encountered at depth of 1 m below the current ground level. This was overlaid by a 0.3 m deep layer of the yellow-grey alluvium (55), which in turn was overlaid by a 0.4 m deep layer of the earlier ploughsoil (54). Cut into the surface of layer 54 was an approximately circular pit with very steep

sides and a flat base, measuring 3.9 m in diameter by 0.6 m deep (68). The base of this feature was filled by a 0.2 m deep layer of a dark grey-brown silt loam (67). This probably represents a silting deposit which occurred when the pit was still open. The remainder of the pit was filled by an orange-brown silt clay (66). This feature produced fragments of post-medieval brick suggesting that it was the result of deliberate backfilling. The lack of artefacts in the fills suggests that it was dug as a quarry pit, probably for clay extraction, rather than as a rubbish pit.

- 3.1.34 A second side spur was dug off the main trench running around the western edge of the cricket pitch before turning eastwards and running along the rear of the gardens fronting Yew Tree Lane. At the rear of the school garden two south-east to north-west boundary ditches were observed (Fig. 7, Section 22). The underlying natural was a continuation of the chalk deposit (59), overlaid by a 0.5 m deep layer of the earlier ploughsoil (54). Cut into the surface of this deposit was a 4.5 m wide ditch, in excess of 1 m deep with steeply sloping sides (71). The base of this cut was filled with a grey-brown clay silt (70), a probable silting deposit, while the upper 0.45 m depth of the ditch was filled with a light grey brown silt clay (69) containing many chalk fragments suggesting that it may have been the result of deliberate backfilling. The north-eastern edge of this feature was truncated by a later recut, which was a 2.8 m wide by 1 m deep ditch with steeply sloping sides (73). This was filled with a light grey-brown silt clay (72). The fills of the ditches was sealed by a 0.25 m deep layer of the modern topsoil (53). The alignment of these two ditches suggests that they may be the continuation of the boundary ditches 63 and 65. Close examination of the cricket pitch showed a faint possible cropmark linking sections 19 and 22 suggesting that this may be the case.
- 3.1.35 As the trench turned to the south-east following the garden boundary two south-west to north-east running ditches were exposed (Fig. 7, Section 23). As in the previous section the underlying natural was laminated chalk (59), overlaid by a 0.5 m deep layer of the earlier ploughsoil (54). The earliest of the ditches was a 2.9 m wide ditch with steeply sloping sides (78). Approximately 0.9 m depth of the feature was exposed in the side of the trench, although the depth of excavation was insufficient to expose the full depth of the feature. The base of the ditch was filled by a dark grey-brown clay silt (77), a probable silting deposit. The remainder of the upper 0.45 m depth of the ditch was filled with a light grey-brown clay silt (76), which was also a probable silting deposit. Truncating the south-eastern edge of this feature was a 2.6 m wide by 0.7 m deep ditch (75), a probable recut. This was filled with a grey-brown clay silt (74), a probable silting deposit. The alignment of these two ditches and their relationship suggests that Ditches 75 and 78 are returns of Ditches 73 and 71 respectively.
- 3.1.36 No further features were encountered in the remainder of the trenching.

### 3.2 Finds

3.2.1 The majority of the finds observed within the various layers of ploughsoil comprised post-medieval pottery, glass, brick and tile. These artefacts were probably deposited as a result of post-medieval manuring practise and their presence was recorded but they were not retained. All finds predating the post-medieval period and those from deposits sealed by the present day plough soil were retained. These finds included pottery and stone roofing tile.

### 3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

3.3.1 Due to the method of machining it was considered that any samples recovered from either the machine bucket or from the spoil would be too contaminated for meaningful analysis. The nature of the trench precluded collecting samples from the trench sides by hand.

## 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1.1 While for the most part the siting of the cable trenches was chosen to avoid known archaeological sites 24 potential archaeological features were observed during the course of the watching brief.

### *Trenching at Manor Farm, Broad Hinton (Fig. 4)*

4.1.2 The wide linear depression (58), observed at SU 10197 76887 (Fig. 7, Section 18) appears to be part of a sunken way leading to the probable building platforms observed in the field immediately to the south. Although no dating evidence was recovered from its fills it probably dates to the late medieval/early post-medieval periods. It may represent an earlier alignment of the Broad Hinton to Wootton Bassett road.

4.1.3 The two ditches, 63 and 65, observed at SU 10306 76980 (Fig. 7, Section 19) are probably earlier field boundary ditches. Their alignment running north-east to south-west appears to respect the existing field alignments and they may represent features removed to enlarge the field. The spacing between the two suggests that there may have originally been a hedge between the two, although this may be co-incidence and that one represents the recut of the other. No dating evidence was recovered from their fills.

4.1.4 The large pit (61) encountered at SU 10354 77018 (Fig. 7, Section 20) is a probable quarry pit dug to extract the underlying chalk probably for lime burning since the chalk appears to be too soft for building material. Again no dating evidence was recovered from the primary fills, although there was evidence to suggest that it had been backfilled and levelled in the recent past.

4.1.5 A second quarry pit (68) was observed at SU 10283 76975 (Fig. 7, Section 21) which may have been dug for clay extraction since the alluvial clays overlie the natural



chalk at this point. It is unknown if the clay was used for pottery production or used as a component in daub. As in pit 61 the feature appears to have been open for a period of time before being backfilled in the 19th/20th-centuries.

- 4.1.6 On the edge of Broad Hinton a ditch (71) and its recut (73) (Fig. 7, Section 22) and their returns 75 and 78 respectively (Fig. 6, Section 23) were observed centred at SU 1036 7684. Their alignment suggests that 71 and 73 may be continuations of ditches 63 and 65 and there is a suggestion of a cropmark linking the 2 sections. Their location may represent the original corner of the field which appears to have been encroached upon by gardens belonging to modern residential developments on the northern edge of the village. As before no dating evidence was recovered from their fills.

#### *Trenching north-west of Winterbourne Monkton*

- 4.1.7 The majority of the trenching was done using a mole plough to install the cable within this area; however a length of open trenching was excavated over a known archaeological feature in order to record its section.
- 4.1.8 Within this section (located at SU 09155 72381, Fig. 6, Section 1) a wide east-west feature (8) was observed. Its alignment could be traced as a shallow feature within the surface of the field to a hollow running through woodland to the east. Its form and alignment suggests that it was originally a “hollow way” running across the downs possibly leading to Wotton Bassett in the north-west. It may represent an old pack way.

#### *Trenching south-west of Winterbourne Monkton*

- 4.1.9 Open trenching started again immediately south of Avenue Farm. A small pit (13) was encountered at SU 10004 71462 (Fig. 6, Section 2). No dating evidence was recovered and its purpose is unknown. Similar pits (15 and 22) were encountered at SU 10042 71361 (Fig. 5, Section 4) and SU 10095 71237 (Fig. 5, Section 5); again no dating evidence was recovered.
- 4.1.10 The east-west aligned ditches (18 and 20) observed in section 3 (SU 10015 71419) probably represent earlier boundary ditches. Their alignment respects a boundary of a property fronting the main road which suggests they may originally have been burgage plot boundaries. The saren stone observed in the top of ditch 20 may have been the result of modern agriculture using the hollow left by the filled-in ditch to dispose of a ploughing obstruction rather than deliberate burying.
- 4.1.11 The wide shallow linear feature 27 (SU 10114 71057, Fig. 6, Section 6) probably represents truncated remains of medieval ridge and furrow with modern agricultural practises having levelled the remainder. There is the possibility that it may represent a trackway.

- 4.1.12 Feature 29 (SU 10133 70961, Fig. 6, Section 7) is a circular pit similar to 13, 15 and 22. It predates the earlier ploughsoil 24, but no dating evidence was recovered and its purpose is unknown.
- 4.1.13 The east-west running ditch, (31), observed at SU 10129 70973 (Fig. 6, Section 8) is a probable field boundary/drainage ditch. Its alignment respects the current field boundaries and it probably represents an earlier boundary backfilled in order to enlarge the field.
- 4.1.14 Although there was no definitive dating evidence recovered from Pits 13, 15, 22 and 29 a possibility that they may be the truncated base of stone sockets was discussed. Pits 13 and 22 cut through the earlier ploughsoil 10 and would be too late in date to be considered. It was felt that 15 and 29 were too regular in excavation, which together with the absence of any sarsen stone fragments within their fills would mitigate against their being sockets for standing stones. It has been suggested that they may have originally contained parish boundary markers, boundary stones or roadside markers.

#### *Trenching north of Manor Farm, Avebury*

- 4.1.15 The north-south running ditch, (37), observed on the western side of the River Kennet (SU 09909 70581, Fig. 6, Section 10) appears to be an earlier field boundary ditch, probably backfilled when the field was enlarged. The small pit, (39), (SU 09874 70554, Fig. 6, Section 11) may represent a fence post hole dating from before the field was enlarged.
- 4.1.16 The present day field appears to have been originally split into 3 smaller paddocks with evidence of three backfilled north-west to south-east aligned ditches being observed within the trench sides (Ditches 41, 44 and 46, Sections 12, 13 and 14 respectively). No dating evidence was recovered, however they probably date to the post-medieval period.
- 4.1.17 Within the area of the probable DMV west of Avebury the trenching was relocated to avoid the majority of the features observed on the geo-physical survey (Fig. 5). However the return of one of the boundary ditches (52) was encountered in section 17.

#### *Conclusions*

- 4.1.18 The features observed are consistent with the agricultural use of the land together with evidence of trackways predating the existing road network. The majority of the dating evidence recovered fell within the post-medieval period and may relate to later use of the Downs after the enclosure acts.
- 4.1.19 No evidence for the stone circle and processional avenues observed south of Avebury continuing to the north and north-west was observed.

- 4.1.20 The low incidence of both features and recovered artefacts may be a product of both the rural setting of the works and the thin linear nature of the trenching, with only a small percentage of the available area being observed.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	Layer	0.26 m	-	Ploughsoil	Brick, pottery, glass	C19th/ C20th
2	Layer	0.12 m	-	Weathered natural	-	-
3	Layer	0.2 m	-	Layer of laminated limestone	-	-
4	Layer	> 0.5 m	-	Layer of silt/ mudstone	-	-
5	Fill	0.2 m	6.9 m	Upper fill of hollow way	-	-
6	Fill	0.45 m	5.5 m	Middle fill of hollow way	-	-
7	Fill	> 0.18 m	2.0 m	Primary fill of hollow way	-	-
8	Cut	1.0 m	6.9 m	Hollow way or sunken road, date unknown	-	-
9	Layer	0.25 m	-	Modern ploughsoil	Brick, pottery, glass	C19th/ C20th
10	Layer	0.25 m	-	Subsoil, possible earlier plough soil	-	-
11	Layer	> 0.85 m	-	Weathered natural chalk	-	-
12	Fill	0.6 m	1.3 m	Fill of Pit 13	-	-
13	Cut	0.6 m	1.3 m	Small undated pit	-	-
14	Fill	0.75 m	1.1 m	Fill of Pit 15	-	-
15	Cut	0.75 m	1.1 m	Small undated pit	-	-
16	Lens	0.7 m	c60 m	Very wide lens of alluvium	-	-
17	Fill	> 0.7 m	4.9 m	Fill of Ditch 18	-	-
18	Cut	> 0.7 m	4.9 m	E-W running boundary ditch, possibly an old field boundary ?	-	-
19	Fill	> 0.7 m	3.5 m	Fill of Ditch 20	-	-
20	Cut	> 0.7 m	3.5 m	E-W running boundary ditch, possibly an old field boundary ?	-	-
21	Fill	0.45 m	1.1 m	Fill of Pit 22	-	-
22	Cut	0.45 m	1.1 m	Small undated pit	-	-
23	Layer	0.2 m	-	Modern ploughsoil	Brick, pottery, glass	C19th/ C20th
24	Layer	0.3 m	-	Earlier plough soil	-	-

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
25	Layer	> 0.7 m	-	Weathered top of natural chalk	-	-
26	Fill	0.25 m	5.5 m	Fill of plough furrow 27	-	-
27	Cut	0.25 m	5.5 m	Truncated remains of possible ridge and furrow	-	-
28	Fill	0.4 m	1.6 m	Fill of Pit 29	-	-
29	Cut	0.4 m	1.6 m	Small undated pit	-	-
30	Fill	> 0.7 m	3.5 m	Fill of Ditch	-	-
31	Cut	> 0.7 m	3.5 m	Probable E-W running boundary ditch, date unknown	-	-
32	Layer	0.25 m	-	Present day plough soil	Brick, glass, bone	C19th/ C20th
33	Layer	0.35 m	-	Subsoil, possible earlier plough soil	-	-
34	Layer	> 0.75 m	-	Natural chalk	-	-
35	Fill	0.4 m	2.3 m	Upper fill of Ditch 37	-	-
36	Fill	> 0.3 m	1.6 m	Primary fill of Ditch 37	-	-
37	Cut	> 0.75 m	2.3 m	Probable E-W running boundary ditch, date unknown	-	-
38	Fill	0.55 m	0.8 m	Fill of Pit 39	-	-
39	Cut	0.55 m	0.8 m	Small undated pit	-	-
40	Fill	> 0.7 m	2.7 m	Fill of Ditch 41	-	-
41	Cut	> 0.7 m	2.7 m	Probable boundary/drainage ditch, runs E-W down slope, date unknown	-	-
42	Fill	0.35 m	2.3 m	Upper fill of Ditch 44	-	-
43	Fill	> 0.45 m	1.5 m	Primary fill of Ditch 44	-	-
44	Cut	> 0.8 m	2.3 m	Probable boundary/drainage ditch, runs E-W parallel to 41, date unknown	-	-
45	Fill	> 0.8 m	2.9 m	Fill of Ditch 46	-	-
46	Cut	> 0.8 m	2.9 m	Probable boundary/drainage ditch, runs E-W parallel to 41 and 44, date unknown	-	-
47	Layer	0.18 m	-	Present day topsoil and turf	Pottery, brick, clay pipe	C19th/ C20th

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
48	Layer	Up to 1.05 m	-	Alluvium	-	-
49	Layer	> 0.6 m	-	Alluvium	-	-
50	Layer	> 0.45 m	-	Possible occupation layer	Pottery, iron	-
51	Fill	0.3 m	0.8 m	Fill of ditch 52	-	-
52	Cut	0.3 m	0.8 m	Return of probable enclosure ditch	-	-
53	Layer	0.18 m	-	Modern topsoil and turf	Brick	C20th
54	Layer	0.25 m	-	Earlier plough soil	-	-
55	Layer	> 0.75 m	-	Alluvial clay	-	-
56	Fill	0.6 m	Up to 22 m	Deliberate backfilling/levelling of feature 58	-	C18th
57	Fill	0.7 m	Up to 15 m	Primary fill of feature 58, possible deliberate post-med backfilling of cut	Pottery, brick	C18th
58	Cut	1.5 m	22 m	Possible hollow way ?	-	-
59	Layer	> 0.6 m	-	Natural chalk	-	-
60	Fill	> 1.0 m	8.2 m	Probable deliberate backfilling of feature 61	-	-
61	Cut	> 1.0 m	8.2 m	Possible quarry pit, cuts deep into the natural chalk, probably post-med, but no dating evidence recovered	-	-
62	Fill	> 1.0 m	4.9 m	Probable deliberate backfilling of Ditch 63	Pottery, brick	C19th/ C20th
63	Cut	> 1.0 m	4.9 m	North-south running field boundary	-	-
64	Fill	> 1.0 m	3.9 m	Probable deliberate backfilling of Ditch 65	-	C19th/ C20th
65	Cut	> 1.0 m	3.9 m	North-south running field boundary	-	-
66	Fill	0.5 m	3.9 m	Upper fill of Pit 68, probable deliberate backfill.	Brick	C18th/ C19th
67	Fill	0.2 m	2.8 m	Primary fill of Pit 68, probable silting deposit	-	-
68	Cut	0.7 m	3.9 m	Pit, possibly dug for clay extraction	-	-

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
69	Fill	0.45 m	4.5 m	Upper fill of Ditch 71, probably deliberate backfilling	-	-
70	Fill	0.65 m	3.8 m	Primary fill of Ditch 71, probable silting deposit	-	-
71	Cut	> 1.0 m	4.5 m	North-south running boundary ditch, probable continuation of Ditch 63	-	-
72	Fill	1.0 m	2.8 m	Fill of Ditch 73, probable silting deposit	-	-
73	Cut	1.0 m	2.8 m	North-south running boundary ditch, probable continuation of Ditch 65	-	-
74	Fill	0.7 m	2.6 m	Fill of Ditch 75, probable silting deposit	-	-
75	Cut	0.7 m	2.6 m	East-west running boundary ditch, probable return of Ditch 71	-	-
76	Fill	0.45m	2.9 m	Upper fill of Ditch 78, probable silting deposit	-	-
77	Fill	> 0.45 m	2.6 m	Primary fill of Ditch 78, probable silting deposit	-	-
78	Cut	> 0.9 m	2.9 m	East-west running boundary ditch, probable return of Ditch 73	-	-
79	Layer	> 0.25 m	-	Valley gravels	-	-

**APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES**

- EH 1998 *Avebury World Heritage Site Management Plan*
- IFA 2001 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*
- OA 2000 *OA Environmental Guidelines for sampling (first edition, July 2000)*
- OA 2007 *Avebury Power Cable Burial, Wiltshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*
- OA 1992 *Fieldwork Manual, (Ed. D Wilkinson, first edition, August 1992)*

**APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS**

**Site name:** Avebury Power Cable Burial, Wiltshire

**Site code:** AVPOBU 07

**Grid reference:** SU 105 769 to SU 097 699

**Type of watching brief:** Machine excavation of cable trench

**Date and duration of project:** September 2007 to January 2008

**Area of site:** c2.2 hectares

**Summary of results:** The watching brief revealed examples of earlier field boundaries, chalk and clay quarry pits, 2 hollow ways, a possible trackway and several pits. All the datable archaeological features relate to the post-medieval period. No evidence for continuations of the stone circle or processional avenues north of Avebury was observed.

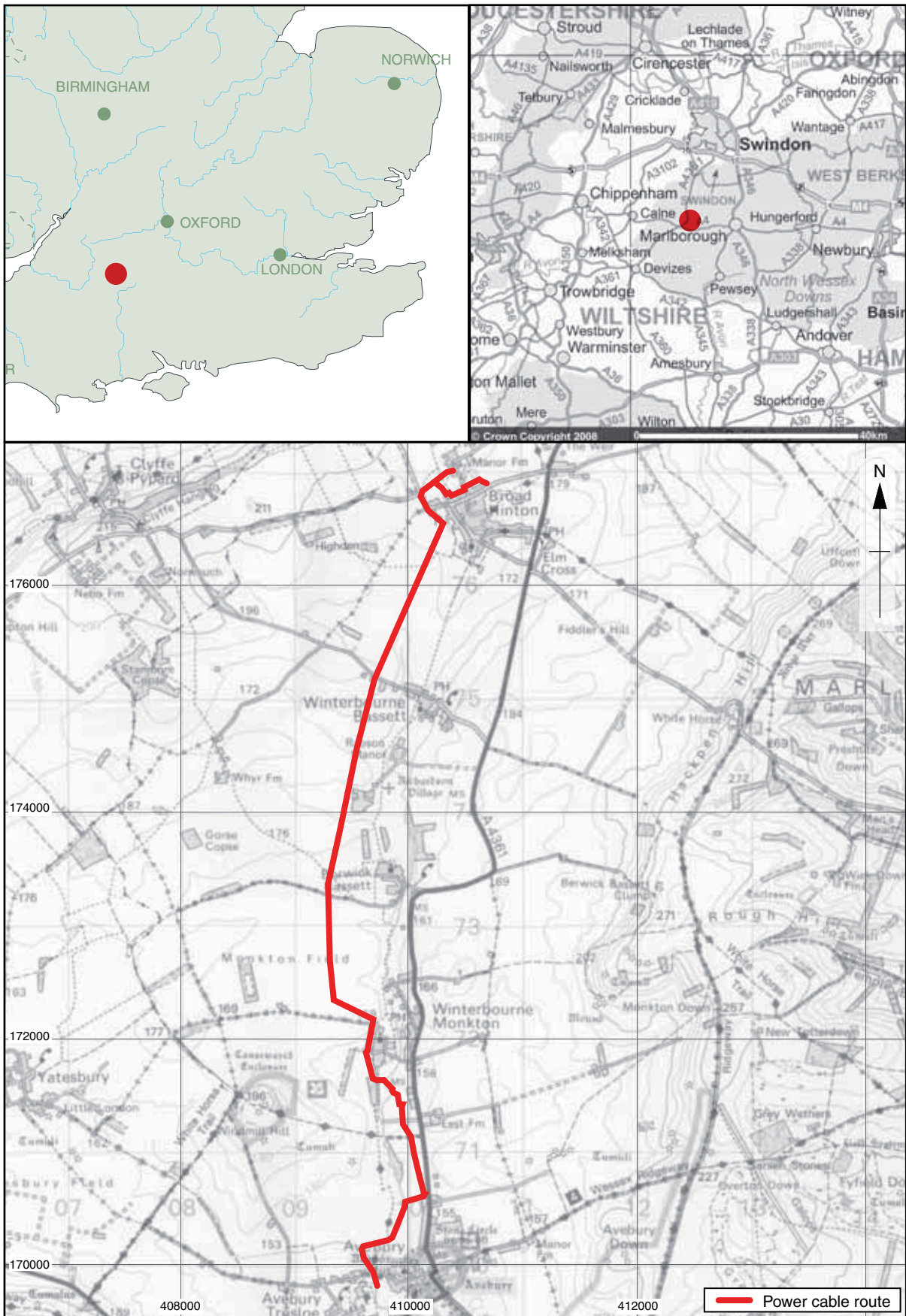
**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Wiltshire County Museums Service in due course.







\\Server21-dbl\invoice codes a thru h\VA\_invoice codes\AVPOBUWB\Avebury Power Cable Burial\HRB'5.11.08



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Figure 1: Site location



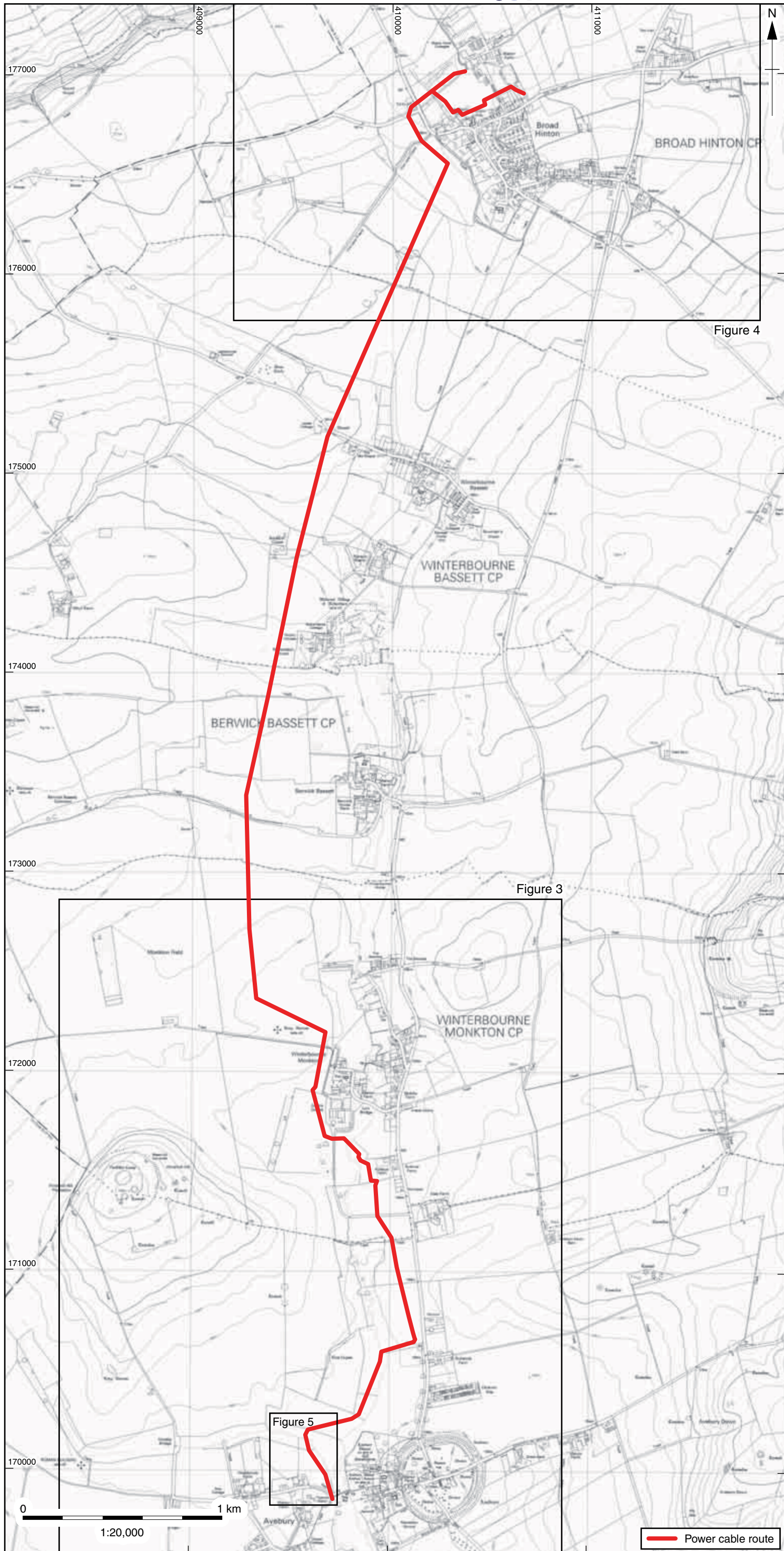


Figure 2: Location of power cable showing location of figures 3 & 4



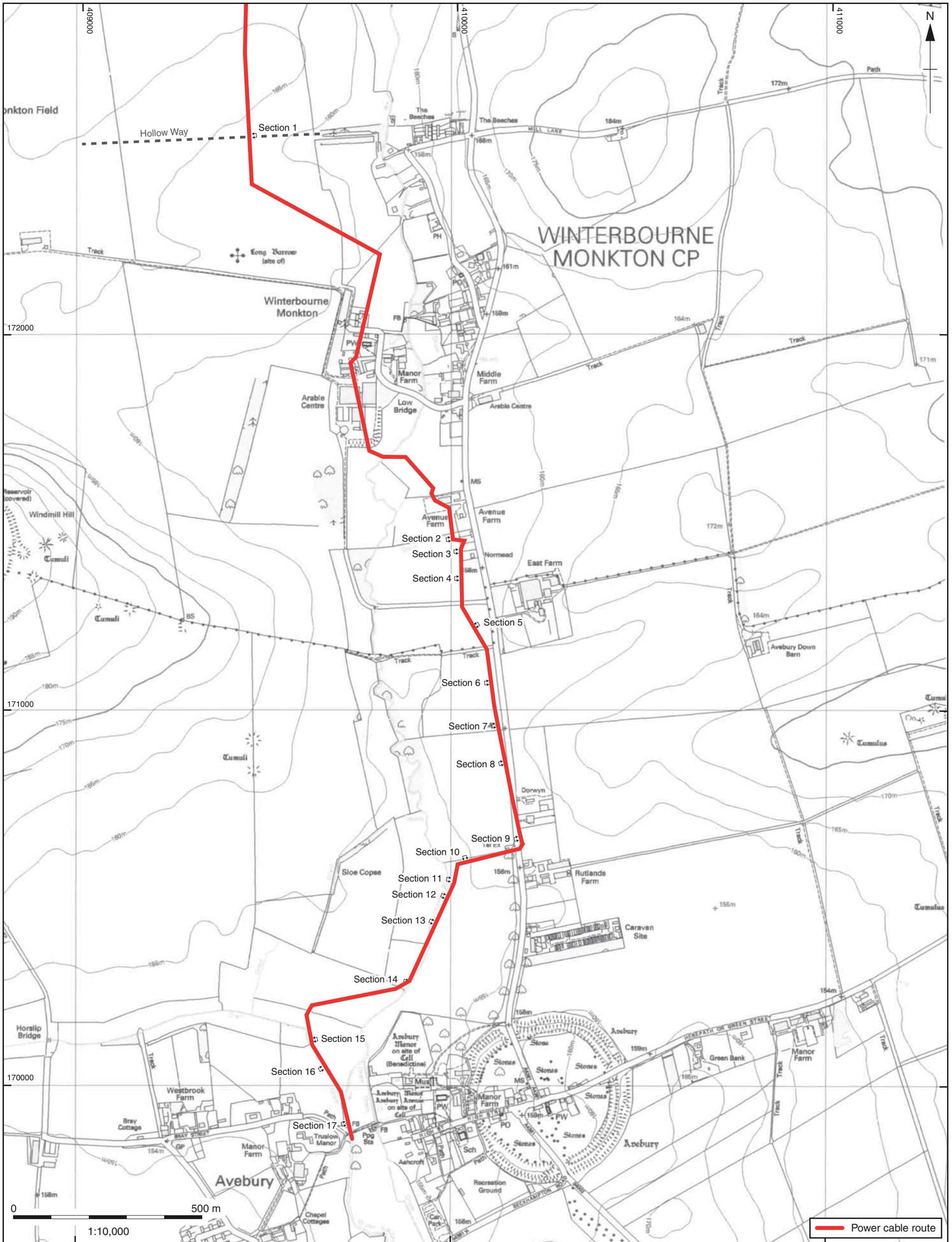


Figure 3: Location of sections 1-17





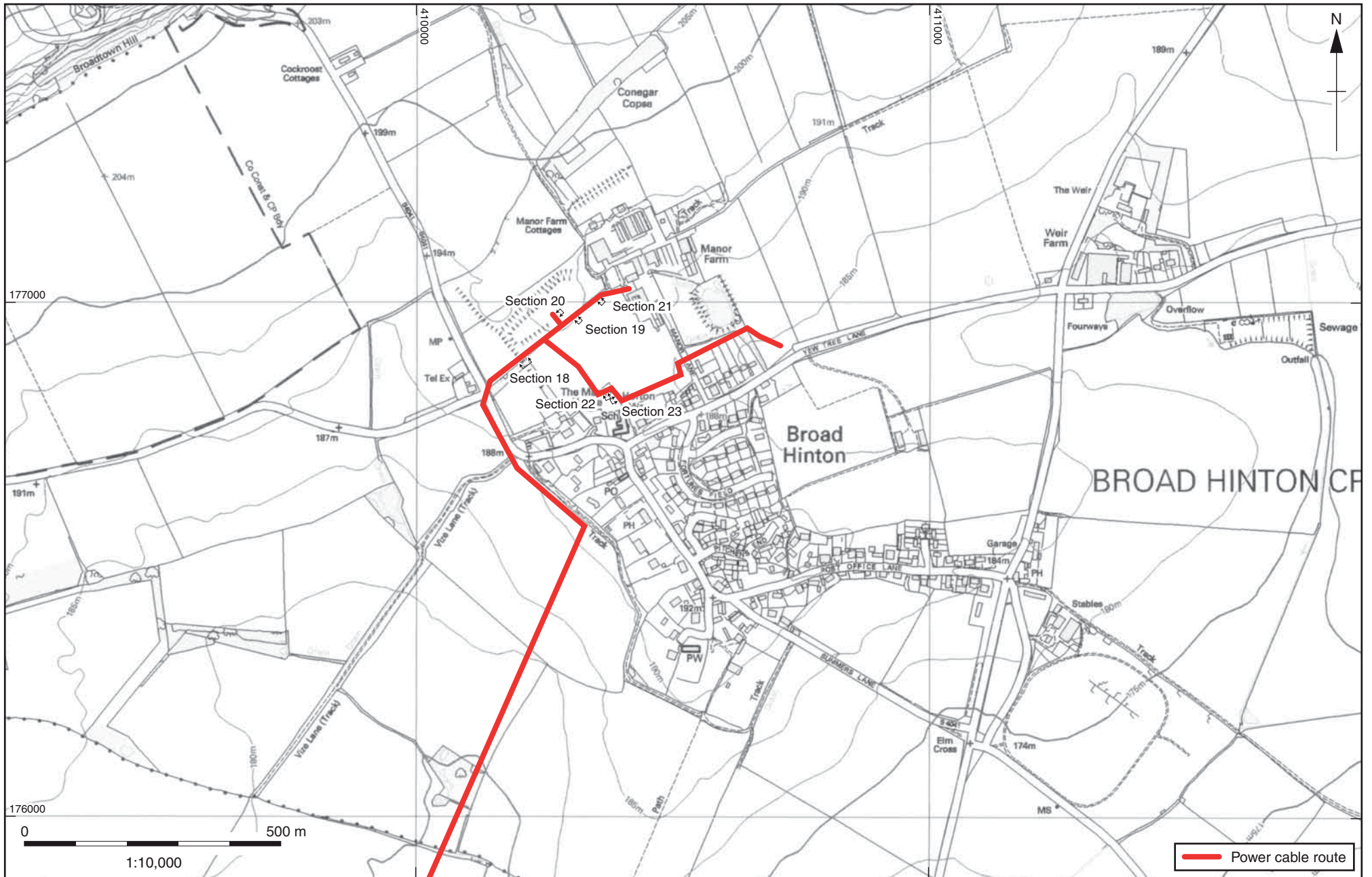


Figure 4: Location of sections 18-23



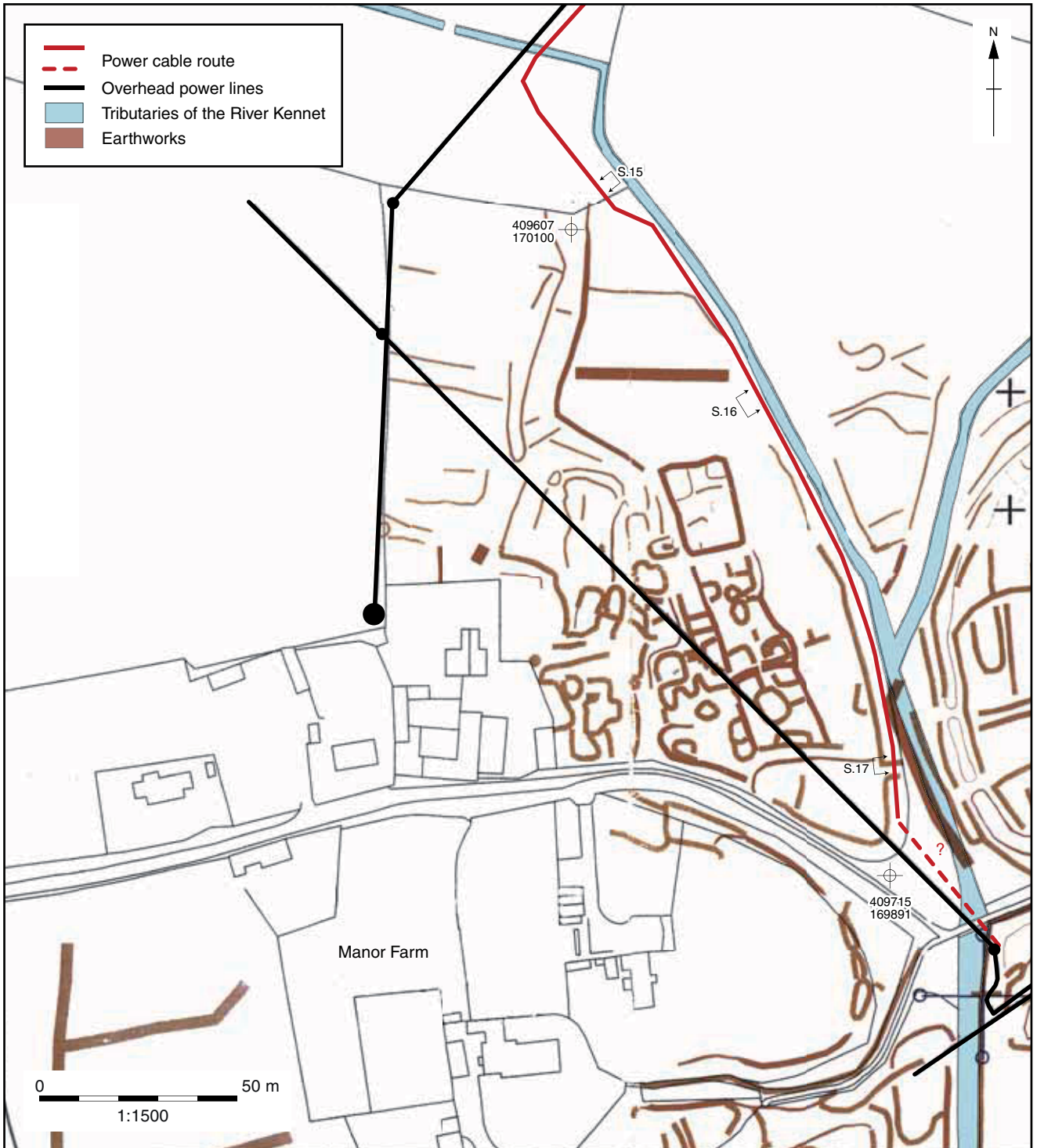


Figure 5: Details of trenching in earthworks north of Manor Farm, Avebury



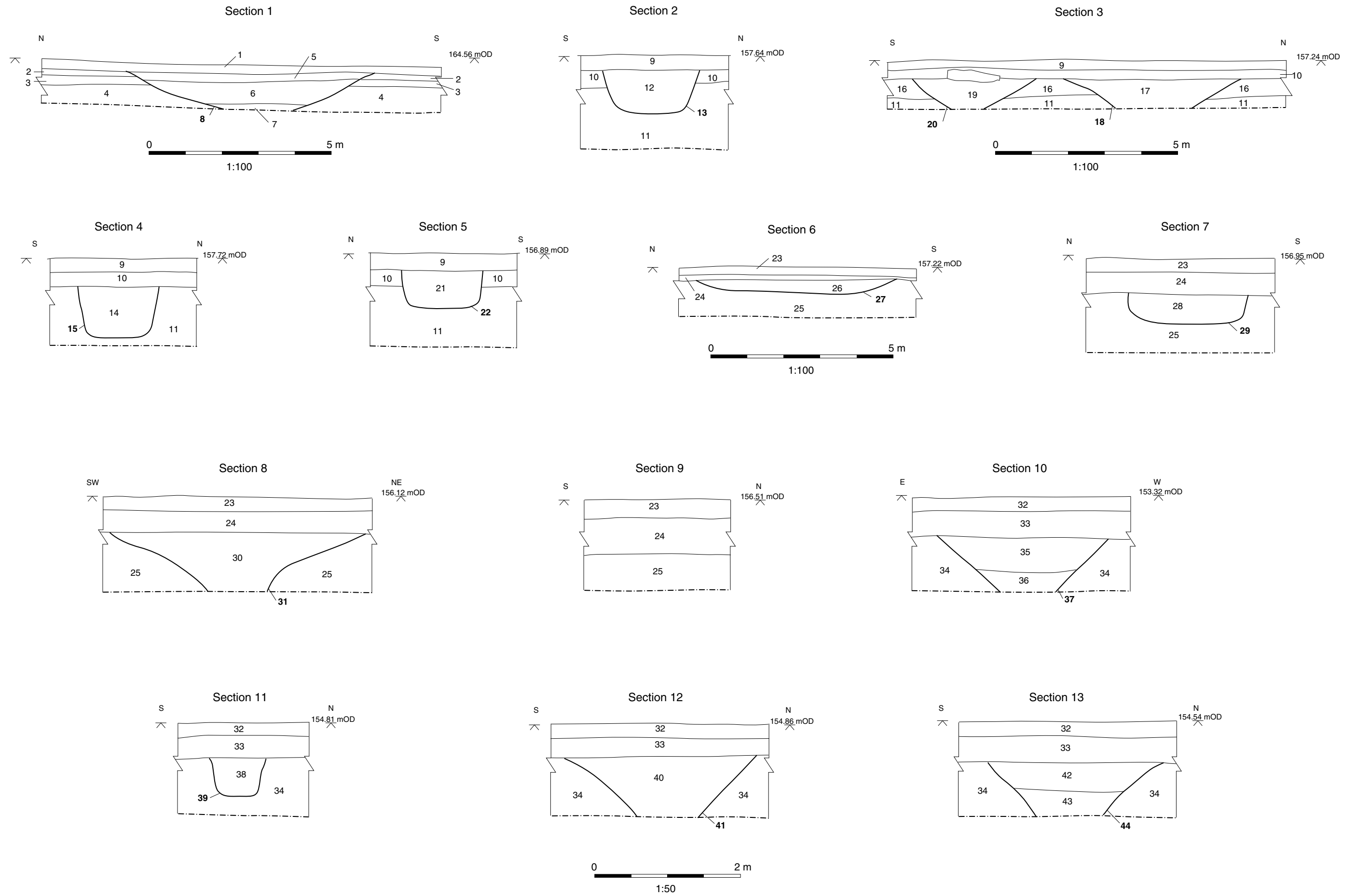


Figure 6: Sections 1-13



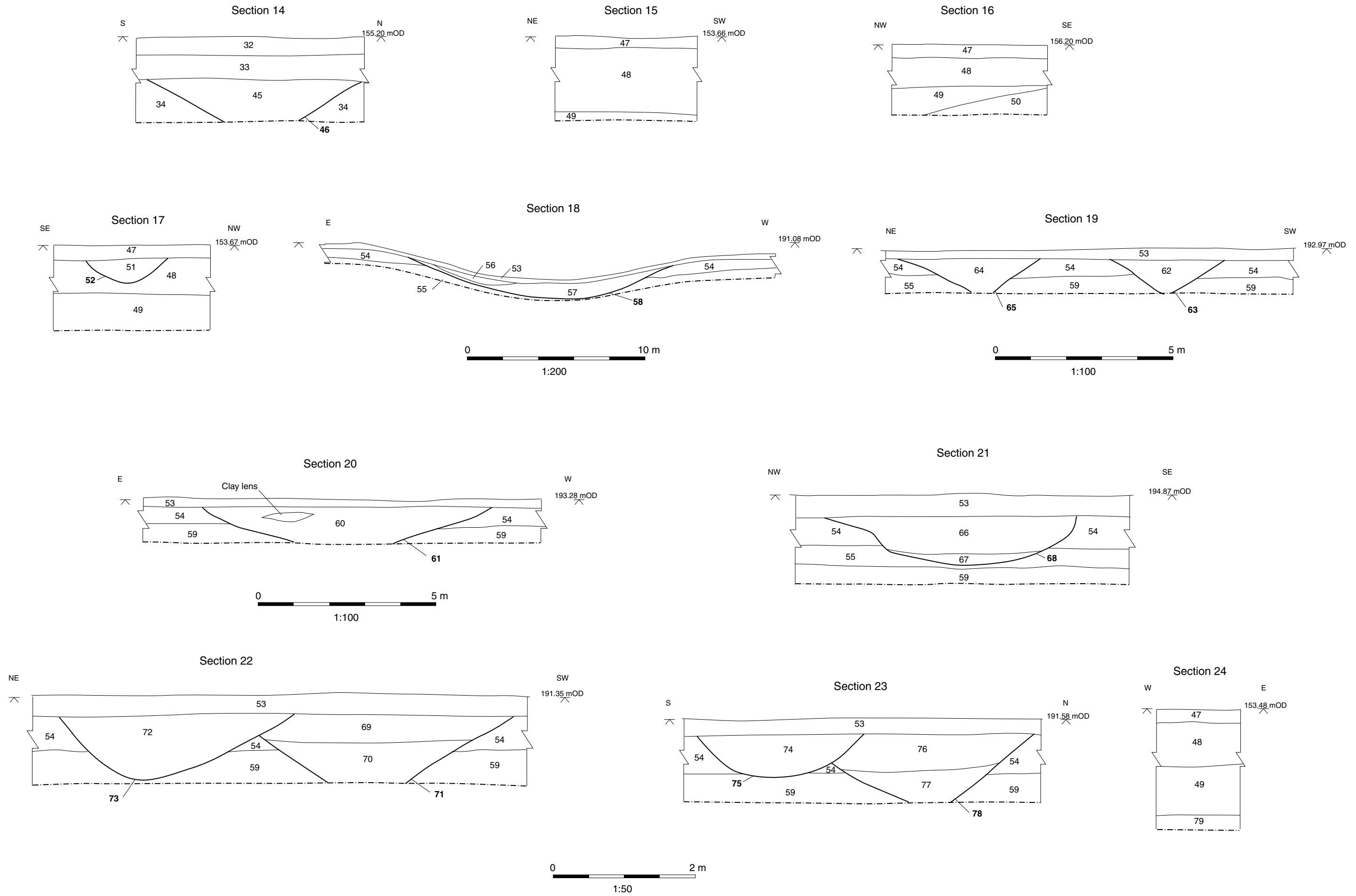


Figure 7: Sections 14-24

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