

Radlett 500

Radlett Road Estate
Colney Street
St Albans



Phase 2 Archaeological Evaluation Report



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Radlett 500, Radlett Road Estate, Colney Street, St Albans

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION PHASE 2

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SUMMARY

In November 2008 Oxford Archaeology (OA) undertook Phase 2 of an archaeological field evaluation at Radlett 500, Colney Street, St Albans on behalf of Bilton plc. This revealed no archaeological deposits.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 On 13th and 14th November 2008 OA completed Phase 2 of a two-part field evaluation at Radlett 500, Colney Street, St Albans on behalf of Bilton plc (part of the SEGRO group) (Fig. 1). A Specification was produced by SEGRO following the guidelines for an archaeological evaluation set by the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS). A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was produced by OA (2008a) in accordance with the specification and agreed with the District Archaeologist prior to commencing the site investigation. This investigation was designed to inform the planning application pre determination.

1.1.2 The development site is centred upon NGR TL 156 019 to the south of the M25 and north of Radlett. The Radlett Phase 500 area comprises 1.97 hectares of an industrial estate on the eastern side of Watling Street/Radlett Road (the A5183). Adjacent to the southwestern boundary of the application area is a cleared site, also in the ownership of Bilton plc. During the evaluation this area was partly occupied by site offices for the construction of Phase 400 and does not form part of this development application.

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site slopes down from the north to south and the River Colne. The location of the evaluation trenches has a change of slope of approximately 5 m from c. 71 m to c. 66.0 m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

1.2.2 The geology of the site is Glacial Gravel overlying Upper Chalk.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The development area lies within the boundary of site AS.R.37 (Policy 111) defined within the St Albans District Plan (Chapter 14, p166) which has recorded finds from the Palaeolithic-Saxon periods, and also includes the medieval village of Hansteads. Approximately 500 m to the southeast is the known Roman Kiln site at Houndswood (A.S.R.41).

1.3.2 Phase 1 (Trenches 1-3) of the archaeological evaluation was undertaken by OA in October 2008 (OA 2008b). This investigated the southern and western parts of the development area without encountering archaeological deposits.

2 EVALUATION AIMS

2.1 General aims

2.1.1 The investigation aimed to establish the archaeological potential of the site prior to redevelopment. To achieve this the general objectives were:

- to establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the proposal area,
- to determine and confirm the character of any remains present, without compromising any deposits that may merit detailed investigation under full area excavation,
- to determine or estimate the date range of any remains from artefacts or otherwise,
- to characterise any underlying archaeological strata down to undisturbed geology without significantly impacting upon significant younger (overlying) deposits where possible,
- to determine the geo-archaeological and palaeo-environmental potential of any archaeological deposits encountered,
- to establish what archaeological remains/deposits may be affected by any proposed development,
- to make available the results of the investigation to inform the planning application and the potential for any further mitigation strategy.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork

3.1.1 The evaluation (Phase 2) comprised four trenches (Trenches 4-7) each measuring 15 m x 2 m (Fig. 2).

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

3.2.1 Prior to the fieldwork the former warehouse buildings were demolished. All non archaeological deposits were excavated by a machine fitted with a toothless bucket and under close supervision to the top of the underlying geology or any archaeological deposits.

3.2.2 Each trench and all deposits were issued with unique context numbers, and context recording was carried out in accordance with established OA practice (Wilkinson 1992) and the Institute of Field Archaeologist's *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations, 1999*. The stratigraphy of each trench was recorded even where no archaeological deposits were identified.

3.2.3 Black-and-white negative and digital photographs were taken during the works. Site plans were drawn at an appropriate scale. Section drawings of sample sections of stratigraphy were drawn at a scale of 1:20.

3.3 **Finds**

3.3.1 No finds were encountered during the course of the evaluation.

4 **RESULTS: GENERAL**

4.1 **Soils and ground conditions**

4.1.1 The site is located on an industrial estate, the majority of which comprises standing structures and hard surfaces with small areas of rough vegetation.

4.1.2 The southern part of the site adjacent to the River Colne has been built up to form the terrace on which the estate is partly located.

4.1.3 Trench 4 was excavated through a tarmac surface car park in the south-east corner of the site. Trenches 5 and 7 were excavated through the concrete floors of standing warehouses and Trench 6 was excavated through a concrete surface in the northern central portion of the site.

4.1.4 Geotechnical investigation at the site by WSP (2008) had previously investigated the soil sequence and identified the geological deposits of Upper Chalk, encountered approximately 10.80 m below ground level (bgl), overlain by Lower Glacial Gravels 2.10-8.40 m bgl, overlain by Cohesive Glacial Till 0.1-4.75 m bgl, overlain by Upper Glacial Gravels 0.10-0.50 m bgl and modern Hardstanding and Made Ground 0.00-0.03 m bgl. The Phase 1 evaluation conformed to parts of this sequence.

4.2 **Distribution of archaeological deposits**

4.2.1 No archaeological deposits were identified during the course of the evaluation.

5 **RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS**

5.1 **Trench descriptions**

Trench 4 (Fig. 3 section 401)

5.1.1 The underlying natural in Trench 4 comprised a light orange-brown clay with gravel inclusions (403) that equates to the Cohesive Glacial Till defined in the geotechnical investigation. The surface of this deposit was noted at 65.45 m aOD. This was overlain by a dark grey clay layer with brick inclusions (407) encountered at 65.62 m aOD. This may represent a buried topsoil and was overlain by a series of modern made ground deposits (404, 405 and 406) totalling 0.64 m thick. The made ground deposits comprised various quantities of brick and gravel and were capped by a layer of tarmac (401). These deposits raised the ground level up to an average height of 66.25 m aOD.

Trench 5 (Fig. 3 section 501)

- 5.1.2 The underlying natural in Trench 5 comprised a mid orange brown clay with gravel and chalk inclusions (502). This was encountered at 68.46 m aOD and represents the surface of the Cohesive Glacial Till deposit. This was overlain by a made ground foundation layer comprising broken bricks and sand (501) and capped by a 0.3 m thick layer of concrete (500) which formed the factory floor which was levelled off at a height of 69 m aOD.

Trench 6 (Fig. 3 section 601)

- 5.1.3 The underlying natural in Trench 6 comprised a mid orange brown clay with gravel and chalk inclusions (603). This was encountered at a depth of 68.27 m aOD and represents the Cohesive Glacial Till. This was overlain by two rubble make-up layers (601 and 602) comprising fine gravel and rubble rich clay respectively and capped with a 0.32 m thick concrete surface (600) with a surface level of 68.90 m aOD.

Trench 7 (Fig. 3 section 701)

- 5.1.4 The underlying natural in Trench 7 comprised a mid orange brown clay with gravel and chalk inclusions (702). This was encountered at a depth of 65.23 m aOD, sloping sharply at the southern end of the trench to a depth of 64.76 m aOD and represents the Cohesive Glacial Till. This was overlain by a layer of dark brownish black clay (703), which may represent a buried topsoil. This deposit was encountered at a depth of 65.69 m aOD and was overlain by a 0.26 m thick rubble levelling deposit (704) for the concrete factory floor (701) with a surface height of 65.92 m aOD.

6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION**6.1 Reliability of field investigation**

- 6.1.1 The combined Phase 1 and 2 excavated trenches represent a 1% sample of the overall development area. Although this may be considered as a relatively low sample level the conclusive (negative) results recorded for each trench, without mitigating circumstances, give little reason to doubt that this aptly reflects the potential of the site for the presence of archaeological remains.

6.2 Overall interpretation***Summary of results***

- 6.2.1 Each excavated trench encountered the Cohesive Glacial Till that overlies the Lower Gravel deposit within the Colne Valley. No archaeological deposits or features were encountered within any of the trenches and the development area had clearly been subject to landscaping, probably as part of the original development of the estate. The slope identified in Trench 7 shows where the ground level originally dropped off towards the river prior to the modern landscaping.

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Ctxt No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Thick. (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i>Date</i>
004					
	401	Layer		Tarmac	
	402	Layer		Natural	
	403	Layer		Natural	
	404	Layer		Made Ground	
	405	Layer		Made Ground	
	406	Layer		Made Ground	
	407	Layer		Buried Topsoil	
005					
	500	Layer		Concrete	
	501	Layer		Made Ground	
	502	Layer		Natural	
006					
	600	Layer		Concrete	
	601	Layer		Made Ground	
	602	Layer		Made Ground	
	603	Layer		Natural	
007					
	701	Layer		Concrete	
	702	Layer		Natural	
	703	Layer		Buried Topsoil	
	704	Layer		Made Ground	

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY

- IFA, 1999 *Institute of Field Archaeologists Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation (1999)*
- OA, 2008 a Radlett 500, Radlett Road Estate, St Albans, Hertfordshire. Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation.
- OA, 2008 b Radlett 500, Radlett Road Estate, Colney Street, St Albans. Archaeological Evaluation Report. Unpublished Client Report
- Wilkinson, D, 1992 *OA Fieldwork Manual*
- WSP, 2008 Phase I Geo-Environmental Assessment. Phase 500, Colney Street, Radlett Road, Radlett

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Radlett 500, Radlett Road Estate, Colney Street, St Albans

Site code: SARAD08

Grid reference: TL 156 019

Type of evaluation: Four 15 m x 2 m trenches

Date and duration of project: 13th and 14th November 2008

Area of site: 1.97 ha

Summary of results: In November 2008 Oxford Archaeology (OA) undertook Phase 2 of an archaeological field evaluation at Radlett 500, Colney Street, St Albans on behalf of Bilton plc. This revealed no archaeological deposits.

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



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Figure 1: Site location

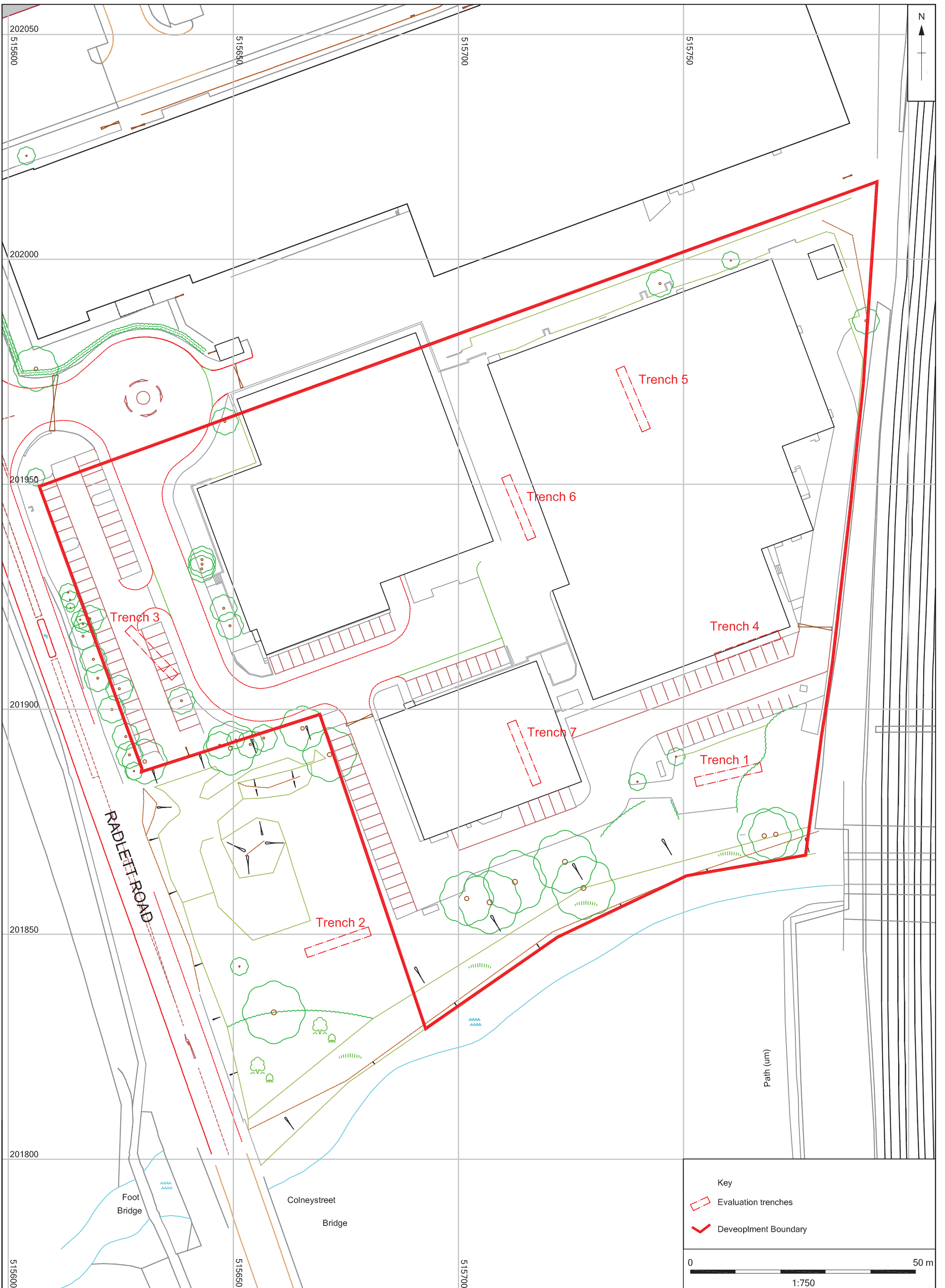


Figure 2: Trench location plan

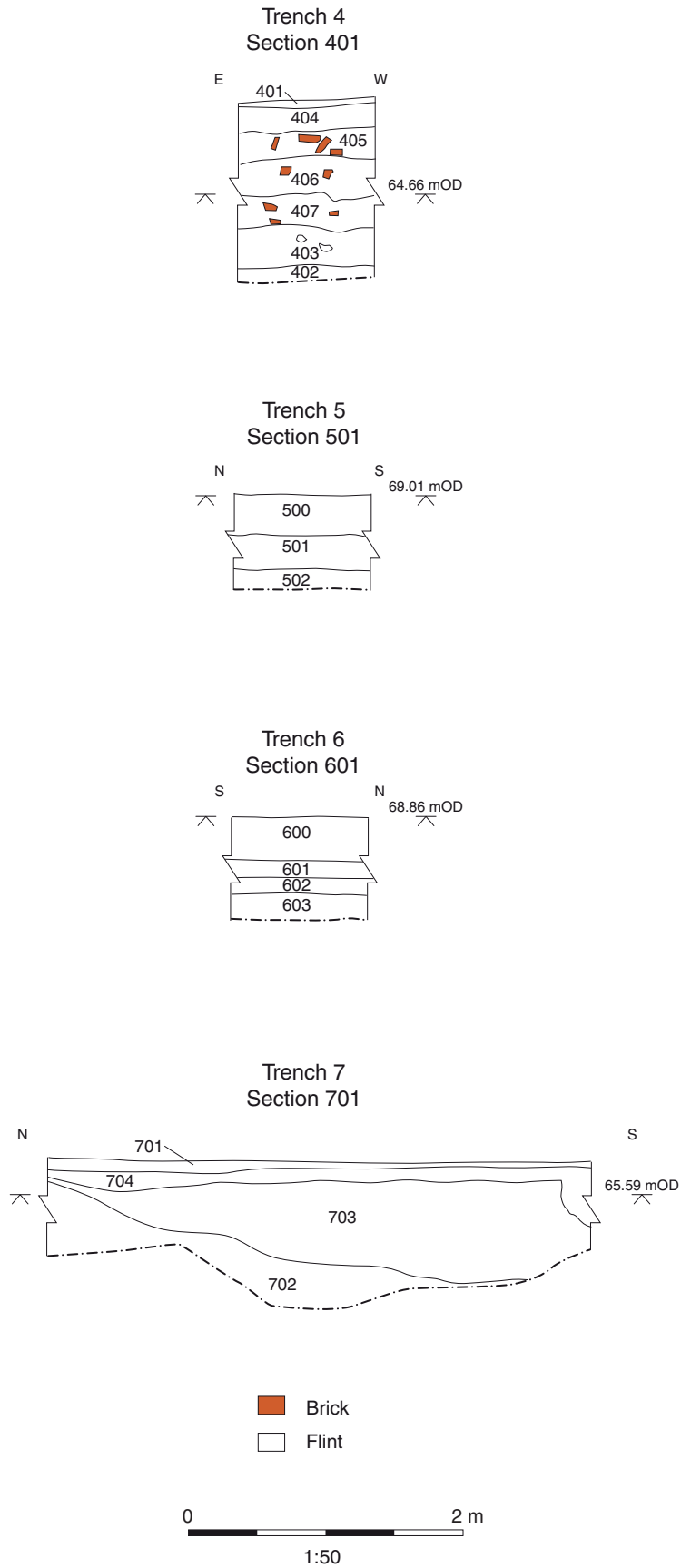


Figure 3: Sections 401, 501, 601 & 701



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