

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF LAND  
ON EPSOM ROAD, MERROW, GUILDFORD  
ON THE SITE OF A PROPOSED  
PARK AND RIDE FACILITY**



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*Summary*

*An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by the Surrey County Archaeological Unit (SCAU) on the area of a proposed Park and Ride facility at Epsom Road, Merrow. The work was recommended by a written scheme of investigation which identified the site as having good archaeological potential. Six features of archaeological interest were identified within four of the thirteen trial trenches excavated. The features included two very large pit features (probable chalk pits), two small pits and two gullies. One of the gullies is thought to be natural in origin; the other five features are of probable prehistoric date. The proposed development involves the reduction of the site by 0.7m, therefore it is recommended that an archaeological watching brief be undertaken on the controlled strip of the area of high archaeological potential around trenches 6, 9 and 12.*

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The Surrey County Archaeological Unit (SCAU) carried out an archaeological evaluation of land on Epsom Road, Merrow on the site of a proposed Park and Ride facility between 9<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> May 2007 (fig 1). The written scheme of investigation undertaken by SCAU in March 2007 (Shaikhley 2007, 13) recommended the archaeological evaluation as the next stage of work. The assessment identified the site as having good archaeological potential which required further archaeological investigation (Shaikhley 2007, 1).

1.2 SCAU were commissioned to undertake the archaeological evaluation by Guildford Borough Council.

## **2.0 METHODOLOGY**

2.1 A total of thirteen trial trenches were excavated within the development area using a 360° tracked excavator with a 1.8m wide toothless ditching bucket (fig 2). The trenches were located in a pattern that had been agreed prior to the start of the work in order to provide a balanced sample of the site; the locations of trenches 3 and 6 were adjusted slightly from the agreed locations in order to avoid two soil bunds. All but two of the trenches were 30m long; trenches 3 and 6 were 31m and 34m long respectively. All of the trenches were 1.85m wide, but trenches 6 and 12 were partially widened in order to reveal the full extent of two large features (contexts 104 and 105) identified within them (fig 2).

2.2 The machining of the trial trenches was carefully watched for the occurrence of any features of archaeological interest, and the spoil heaps were scanned for any artefacts.

## **3.0 RESULTS**

3.1 A total of six features of archaeological interest, two very large pits, two small pits and two gullies, were revealed cutting the natural chalk within trenches 4, 6, 9 and 12

and these are described below (fig 2). The two large features (contexts 104 and 105) were partially sampled by controlled machine sampling due to their size. The remainder of the features were excavated entirely by hand in order to determine their date, character and extent.

3.2 The stratigraphy revealed within the thirteen trial trenches varied across the site, gradually increasing in depth from east to west. Trenches 2, 3, 5, 6, 9 and 12 in the eastern half of the development area were 0.30-0.35m deep, with a stratigraphy of 0.25-0.30m topsoil, over 0.0-0.10m mid-brown loamy subsoil with chalk fragment inclusions overlying the natural chalk. Trenches 1, 4, 7, 8, 10, 11 and 13 in the western half of the area were 0.40-0.60m deep with a stratigraphy of 0.25-0.30m topsoil, over 0.15-0.30m mid-brown loamy subsoil with chalk fragment inclusions overlying the natural chalk.

### 3.3 Trench 2

A single unstratified sherd of Roman pottery was recovered from the excavated spoil of trench 2.

### 3.4 Trench 4

A narrow gully (context 102) was revealed running north-west to south-east across the western end of the trench (fig 3). The gully was sampled by the excavation of segment 103 which revealed it to be of irregular width (0.40-0.50m) and depth (c0.30m) with a fill of mixed beige/mid-brown loam which was devoid of finds. The nature of the fill and the irregular character of the feature suggested that it is natural in origin.

### 3.5 Trench 6

Three features of archaeological interest were revealed within trench 6: a small, shallow pit (context 111), a pit or possible gully (context 113) and a very large pit (context 105) (fig 4). Pit 111 was 0.15m deep with a single homogenous fill of mid-brown loam with lumps of flint. Finds recovered from pit 111 included a sherd of Iron Age pottery, six pieces of baked clay (one of which is a possible loom weight fragment), a possible struck flint flake and forty-eight pieces (1.014kg) of burnt flint (tables 1-4). The recovery of the

Iron Age pottery sherd provides a probable date for the infilling of the pit.

Feature 113, an elongated pit or gully terminus, was revealed at the eastern end of trench 6 aligned north-west to south-east (fig 4). It was sampled by the excavation of segment 112 which revealed it to be 0.26m deep with gently shelving sides infilled with mid-brown loam with frequent inclusions of flint and chalk fragments. Three small fragments of Bronze Age pottery were recovered from the excavated segment providing a possible date for the infilling of the feature (table 1).

Large pit feature 105 was revealed in the western half of trench 6; it had an irregular outline, but was approximately 8-9m wide (figs 4 & 6). The feature was sampled by the excavation of a partially hand-cut, but mainly machine-cut, trench across the centre of the feature (context 107). The trench was carefully machined in 0.10m spits to a depth of c0.80m but the feature was not bottomed. The finds recovered during the excavation of trench 107 were labelled according to the depth from which they were recovered (tables 1-7). Layers were not clearly distinguishable during this excavation, but subsequent cleaning of the section and base indicated that trench 107 had revealed a sequence of fill layers within feature 105 (contexts 114-115 and 125-145, appendix 1). These layers were more complex at the eastern and western ends of the trench suggesting that feature 105 had originally been created by the excavation of a number of intercutting pits, probably as chalk pits. The fill layers were generally composed of brown loam mixed with varying amounts of chalk inclusions. A small circular lens of black, charcoal-rich silty loam (context 108) was revealed at the centre of feature 105 at a depth of 0.80m (at the bottom of the trench 107) from which two small pieces of struck flint were recovered. The bottom of feature 105 tapered gently towards its centre; layer 115 was bottomed over layer 134 at the south side of 107, but not over much of the rest of the trench. The depth of the trench had already reached safe limits and was beyond the proposed depth of the excavation for the proposed development.

The finds recovered from the fill of trench 107 include twelve sherds of pottery of Bronze Age to Iron Age date from depths of 0.10-0.65m. Other finds include 152 pieces of burnt flint (5815g) from throughout the fill, 2 iron nails from within the upper 0.30m of the feature, four fragments of baked clay (including a possible loom weight fragment and a very large shaped piece of baked clay weighing 652g), four fragments of degraded

animal bone and six pieces of humanly struck flint. A fragment of modern brick and a fragment of medieval/post-medieval tile were recovered from depths of 0.25m and 0.30m respectively.

The recovery of the prehistoric pottery and an abundance of burnt flint from the main body of the pit fill (from depths of 0.10-0.65m) suggests that feature 105 is of prehistoric date. The recovery of the two fragments of brick and tile from the upper 0.30m of fill are likely to be intrusive finds introduced by ploughing activity.

### 3.6 Trench 9

A shallow, circular pit (context 109) was identified at the northern end of trench 9 (fig 3). The pit was 0.10m deep with a single homogenous fill of mid-brown loam with occasional fragments of charcoal and numerous lumps of flint. Finds recovered from the pit fill included a sherd of Iron Age pottery and two very small fragments of medieval/post-medieval tile. The presence of the tile fragments suggests a medieval or later date for the infilling of pit 109. Conversely, it is also possible that the pit could be of prehistoric date and that the small tile fragments are intrusive, due to the fact that other features of probable prehistoric date (contexts 104, 105, 111 and 113) lie in the near vicinity.

### 3.7 Trench 12

A second very large feature (context 104) was revealed within trench 12 (figs 3 & 5). Pit 104 was c7m wide with an irregular outline. Due to its large size, feature 104 was sampled by the machine excavation of a sample trench (context 106) across its centre. The trench was carefully machined in 0.10m spits to a depth of 0.90m but was not bottomed; any finds were labelled according to the depth from which they were recovered (tables 1-6). A deep modern pit (context 110) was observed to have been cut through the western side of feature 104 to a depth of at least 0.90m. Pit 110 was easily distinguishable as modern due to its dark soily fill and the inclusion of a piece of modern china.

Layers were not clearly distinguishable during the excavation of trench 106, but subsequent cleaning of the section and base indicated that trench 106 revealed a sequence

of fill layers within feature 104 (contexts 116-124, appendix 1). The main fill of the feature was a mid-brown loam (context 116) with lenses of fragmented chalk (contexts 118-121), overlying a lower layer of loose dirty chalk fragments (context 117). The base of feature 104 shelved down gently towards its centre. Basal layers 123 & 124 were not excavated as the trench had already reached safe limits and was beyond the proposed depth of the excavation for the development (layers 123 and 124 were not observed at the southern edge of the trench so did not appear on the section drawing). On the section, layer 122 looks as if it separates two pits, although it was unclear if 122 was a fill layer or a discoloured layer of natural chalk. The section drawing suggests that feature 105 is possibly the result of the excavation of a number of intercutting chalk pits similar to feature 105 in trench 6.

The finds recovered from trench 106 included two sherds of Roman pottery (one from the surface of the feature and one from a depth of 0.30m) and nine pottery sherds of Bronze Age to Iron Age date from depths of 0.25-0.75m. Other finds include eight fragments of animal bone in a very degraded condition, two flakes of struck flint, fourteen fragments (283g) of burnt flint, and three small fragments of medieval/post-medieval tile (the latter of which were recovered from the surface and at a depth of up to 0.20m).

The majority of the pottery recovered from feature 104 is of prehistoric date and provides a possible date for its infilling. The recovery of the two sherds of Roman pottery and the three small tile fragments from within the upper 0.30m of the feature suggests that they may be intrusive finds resulting from ploughing activity.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 Six features of archaeological interest were revealed within four of the trial trenches. One of the features, context 102, appears to be of natural origin; the remaining five features (contexts 104, 105, 109, 111 and 113) are of probable prehistoric date, and were located within the eastern half of the development area where the overburden is relatively shallow (0.30-0.35m). The most likely function of the two large features 104 and 105 is that of chalk pits dug to mine the chalk. The recovery of the three sherds of Roman pottery provides evidence for activity of Roman date in the near vicinity.

The proposed Park and Ride development involves the reduction of the site by c0.7m which would remove the topsoil, subsoil and upper part of the natural chalk through which the archaeological features are cut. Any other features of archaeological interest that may lie within the development area will therefore be at risk of damage or destruction. Therefore it is recommended that an archaeological watching brief be undertaken on the controlled strip of the area of archaeological potential indicated by the identification of the features within trenches 6, 9 and 12 (fig 2).

### **Bibliography**

Shaikhley, N, 2007 *A written scheme of investigation for the conduct of an archaeological trial trench evaluation at the proposed Park and Ride site, Epsom Road, Merrow, Guildford, Surrey*



Context	Part of	Depth (cm)	Trench	weight (g)	BA	LBA/EIA	MIA	IA	Rom	Mod	Total
100	-	-	2	4	-	-	-	-	1	-	<b>1</b>
104	104	surface	12	5	-	-	-	-	1	-	<b>1</b>
106	104	25	12	9	-	2	-	-	-	-	<b>2</b>
106	104	30	12	8	-	-	-	-	1	-	<b>1</b>
106	104	40	12	16	1	-	-	-	-	-	<b>1</b>
106	104	45	12	9	1	-	-	-	-	-	<b>1</b>
106	104	55	12	3	-	-	-	1	-	-	<b>1</b>
106	104	60	12	13	-	-	3	-	-	-	<b>3</b>
106	104	75	12	19	-	1	-	-	-	-	<b>1</b>
107	105	0-40	6	9	-	-	-	1	-	-	<b>1</b>
107	105	10	6	11	1	-	-	-	-	-	<b>1</b>
107	105	20	6	36	-	-	-	4	-	-	<b>4</b>
107	105	30	6	3	-	1	-	-	-	-	<b>1</b>
107	105	40	6	18	-	-	-	2	-	-	<b>2</b>
107	105	60	6	4	-	-	-	1	-	-	<b>1</b>
107	105	65	6	37	-	-	2	-	-	-	<b>2</b>
109	-	-	9	5	-	-	-	1	-	-	<b>1</b>
110	-	-	12	3	-	-	-	-	-	1	<b>1</b>
111	-	-	6	4	-	-	-	1	-	-	<b>1</b>
112	113	-	6	4	3	-	-	-	-	-	<b>3</b>
<b>Total</b>				<b>220</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>30</b>

Table 1 Merrow Park & Ride 2007: Pottery count and weight

Context	Depth (cm)	Part of	Trench	Weight (g)	No
106	25	104	12	13	1
106	30	104	12	75	1
106	45	104	12	102	6
106	50	104	12	55	1
106	55	104	12	38	5
107	0-10	105	6	94	5
107	0-20	105	6	1866	33
107	0-40	105	6	63	1
107	15	105	6	172	6
107	20	105	6	455	8
107	25	105	6	10	1
107	30	105	6	1072	24
107	40	105	6	248	7
107	50	105	6	278	6
107	55	105	6	65	3
107	65	105	6	411	6
108	80	105	6	67	4
111	-	-	9	1014	48
<b>Total</b>				<b>6098</b>	<b>166</b>

Table 2 Merrow Park & Ride 2007: Burnt flint

Context	Depth (cm)	Part of	Trench	Description	No
100			1	Possible flake	1
100	-	-	6	Flake	1
104	surface	-	12	Flake	1
106	30	104	12	Flake	1
106	45	104	12	Flake	1
107	10	105	6	Flake	1
107	15	105	6	Fragment	1
107	30	105	6	Flake	1
107	50	105	6	Cortical flake	1
108	80	105	6	Flake & fragment	2
111	-	-	6	Possible flake	1
<i>Total</i>					<i>12</i>

Table 3 Merrow Park & Ride, evaluation 2007: Struck flint

Context	Depth (cm)	Part of	Trench	Description	weight (g)	No
107	40	105	6	Lumps - 1 is possible loomweight fragment	22	2
107	50	105	6	Large lump	652	1
107	60	105	6	Lump	5	1
111	-	-	6	Lumps - 1 is possible loomweight fragment	51	6
<i>Total</i>					<i>730</i>	<i>10</i>

Table 4 Merrow Park & Ride: Baked clay

Context	Depth (cm)	Part of	Trench	Description	No
106	0-20	104	12	Fragment	1
106	40	104	12	Longbone fragment	1
106	45	104	12	Fragment	1
106	55	104	12	Tooth	1
106	90	104	12	Longbone fragment	1
106	40	104	12	Horse tooth	1
106	75	104	12	Longbone fragment	2
107	40	105	6	Longbone fragment	1
107	50	105	6	Fragment	1
107	65	105	6	Longbone fragment	1
115	80	105	6	Tooth	1
<i>Total</i>					<i>12</i>

Table 5 Merrow Park & Ride: Animal bone

Context	Depth (cm)	Part of	Trench	Date	Description	Number	weight (g)
104	Surface	104	12	M/Pmed	Tile fragment	1	2
106	0-20	104	12	M/Pmed	Tile Fragment	1	4
106	20	104	12	M/Pmed	Tile Fragment	1	11
107	25	105	6	Mod	Brick fragment	1	18
107	30	105	6	M/Pmed	Tile Fragment	1	10
109	-	-	9	M/Pmed	Tile fragments	2	6
110	-	-	6	M/Pmed	Tile Fragments	5	47
<i>Total</i>						<i>12</i>	<i>98</i>

Table 6 Merrow Park & Ride 2007: Brick and tile

Context	Depth (cm)	Part of	Trench	Description
107	20	105	6	Possible nail
107	30	105	6	Nail

Table 7 Merrow Park & Ride 2007: Metalwork

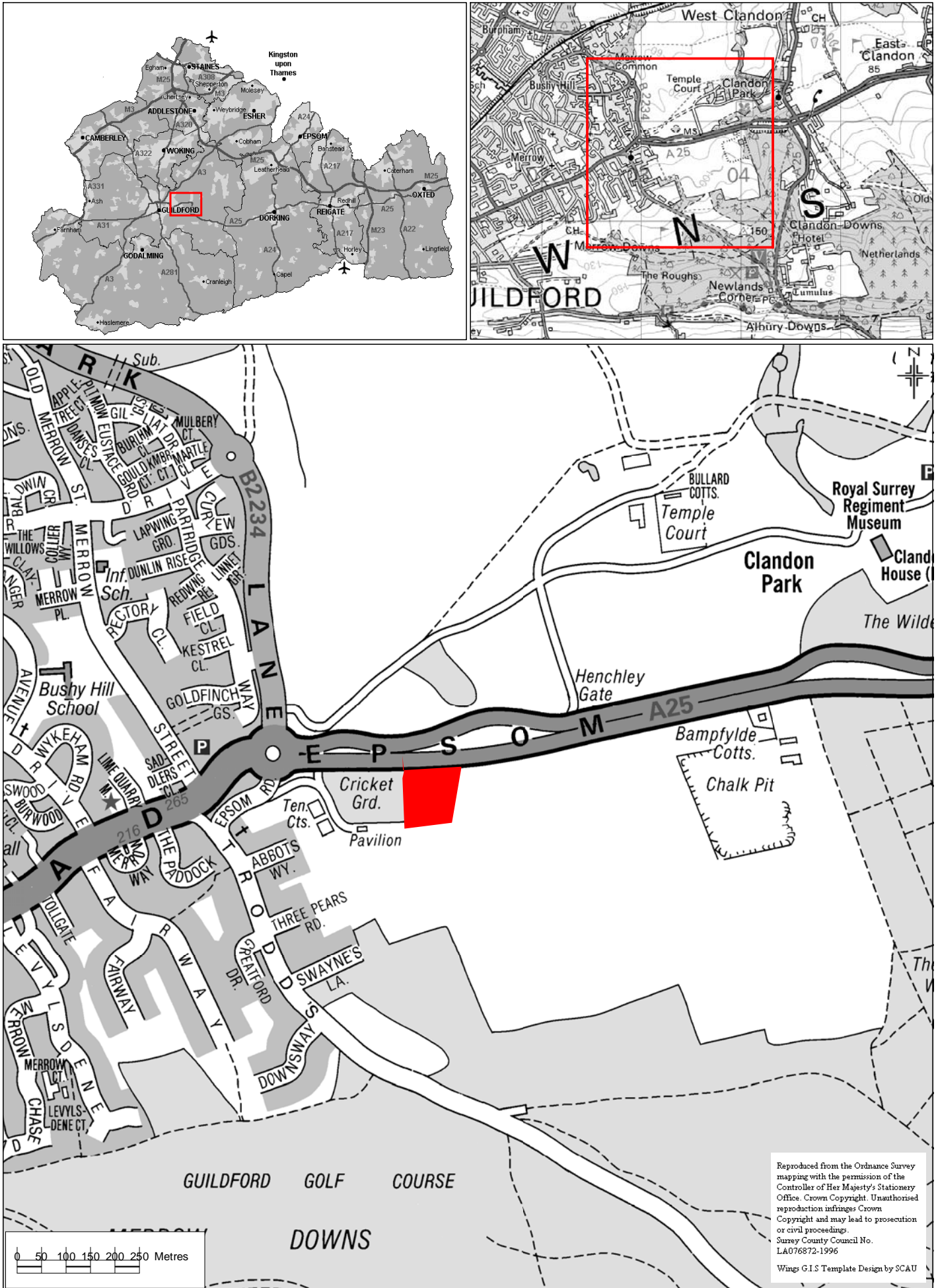
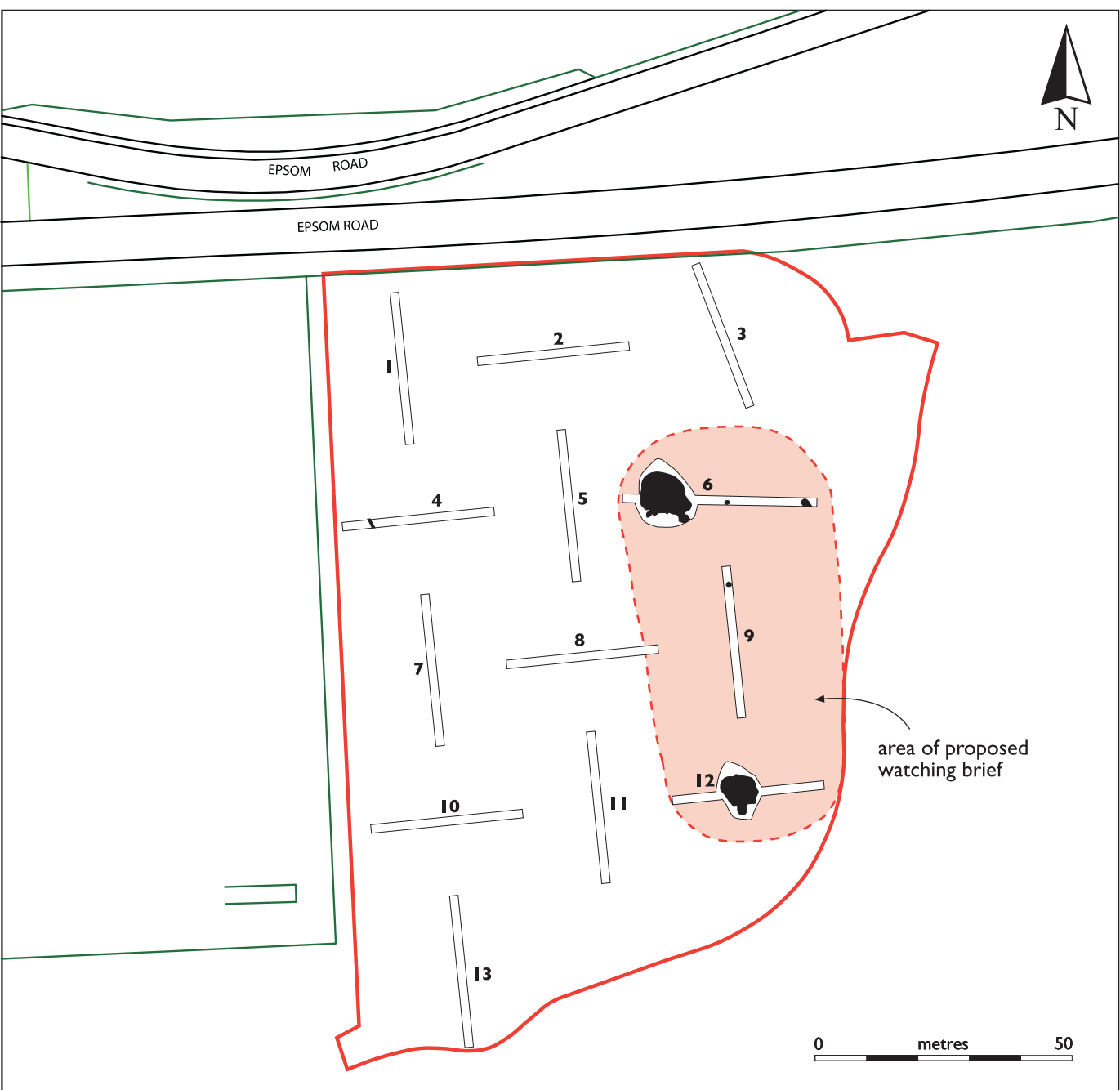
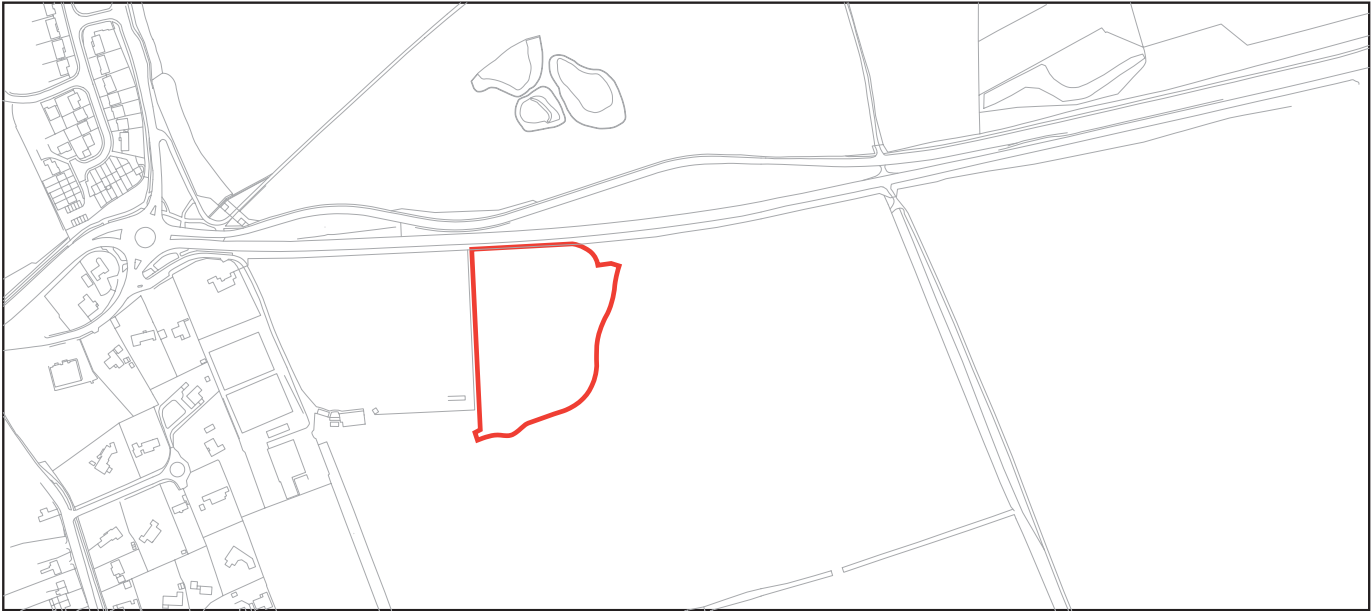


Figure 1 Merrow Park and Ride Development: site location



**Fig 2 Merrow Park and Ride:** location of evaluation trial trenches, showing the location of the archaeological features identified and the area of the proposed watching brief

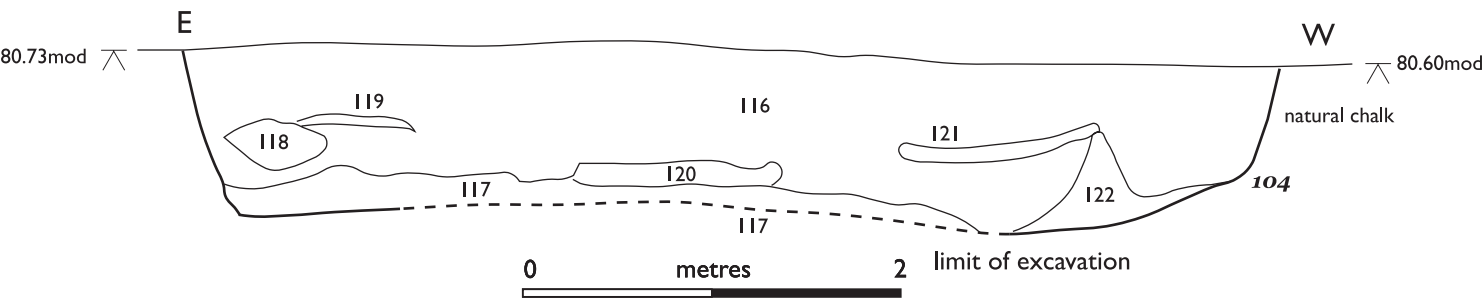
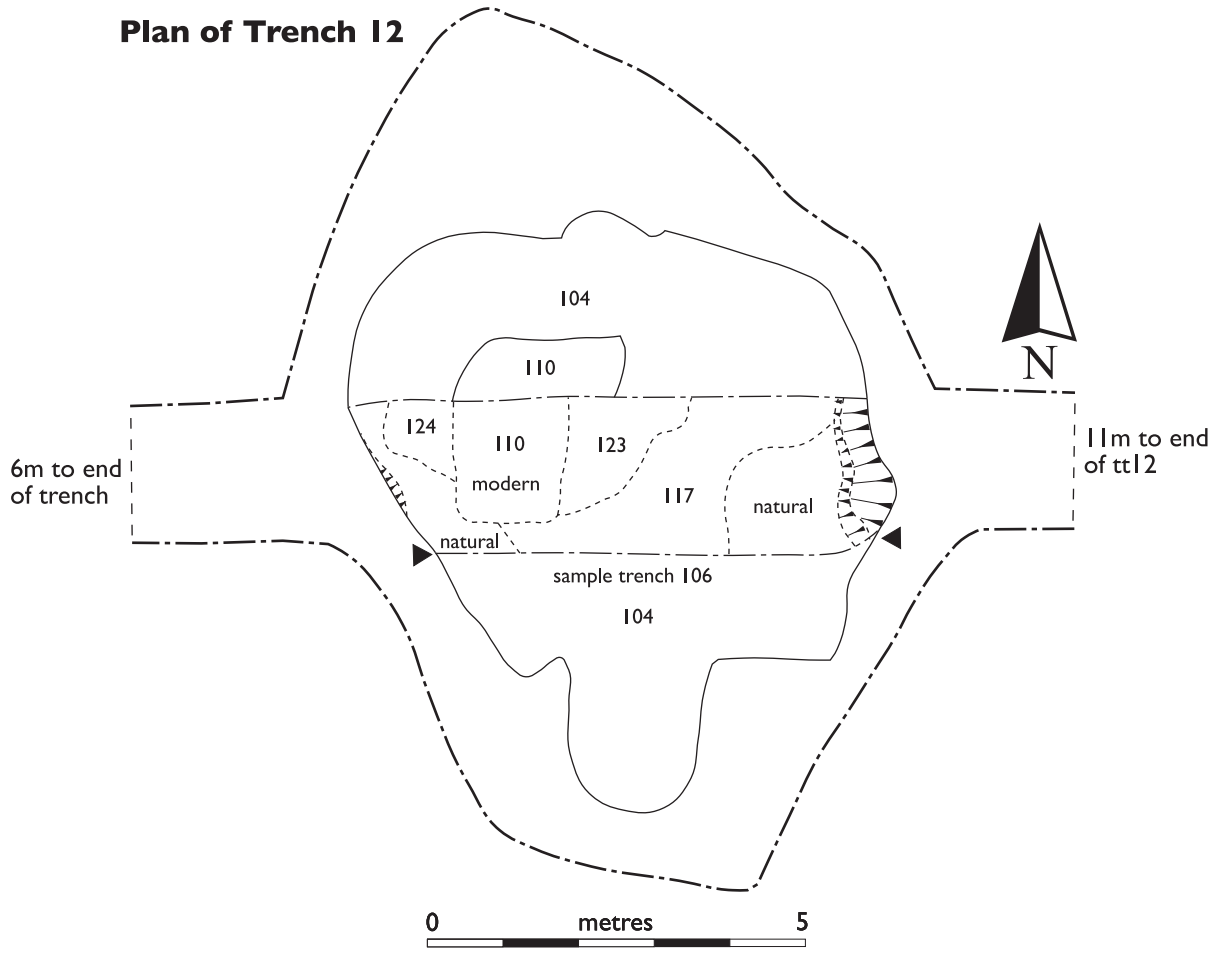
**Plan of Trench 4**



**Plan of Trench 9**



**Plan of Trench 12**



**Fig 3 Merrow Park and Ride: plan of features 102, 104 and 109 and section of feature 104**

# Plan of Trench 6

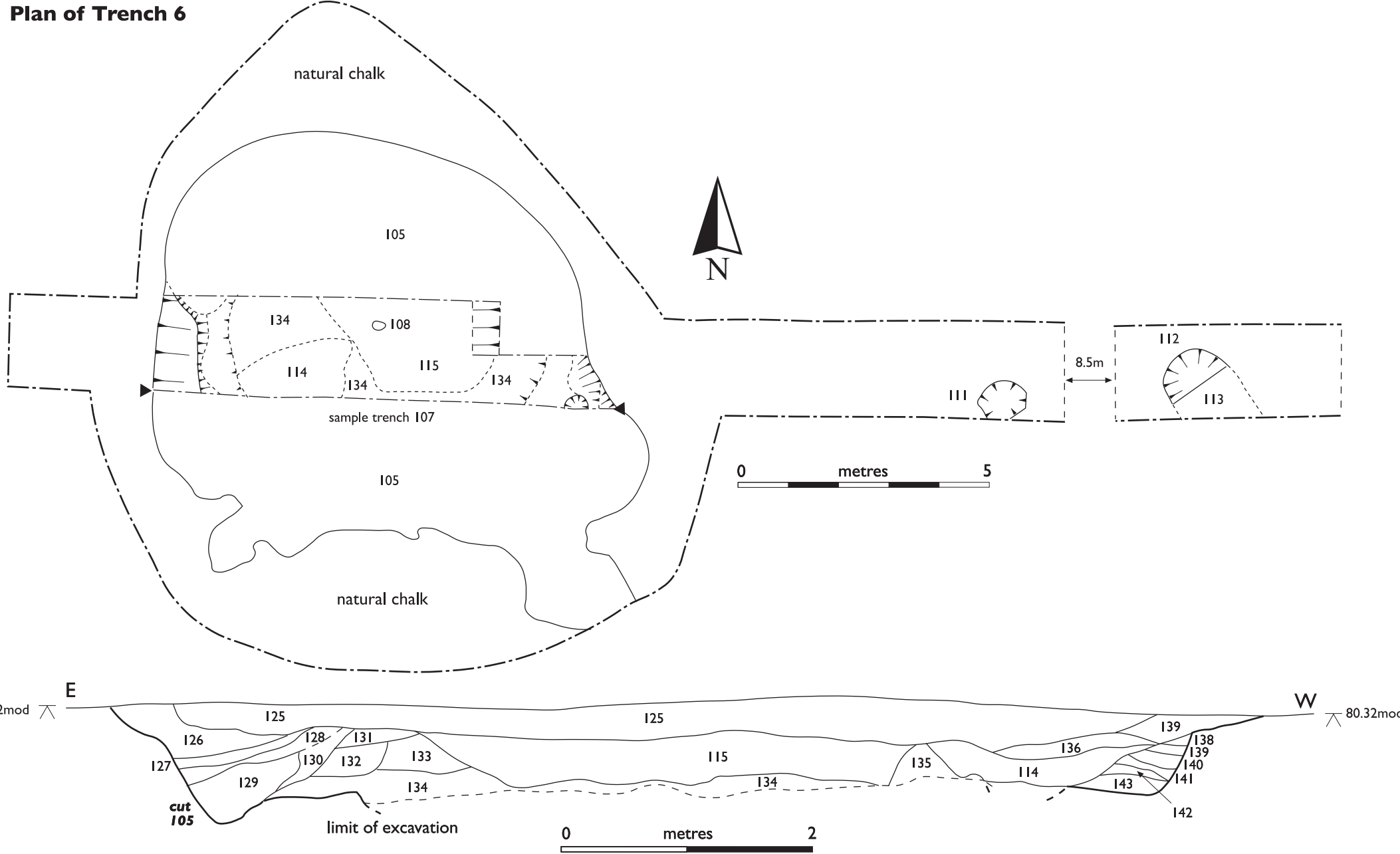


Fig 4 Merrow Park and Ride: plan and section of feature 105 in trench 6

Fig 5 Merrow Park and Ride: feature 104 in trench 12 (looking south-east)

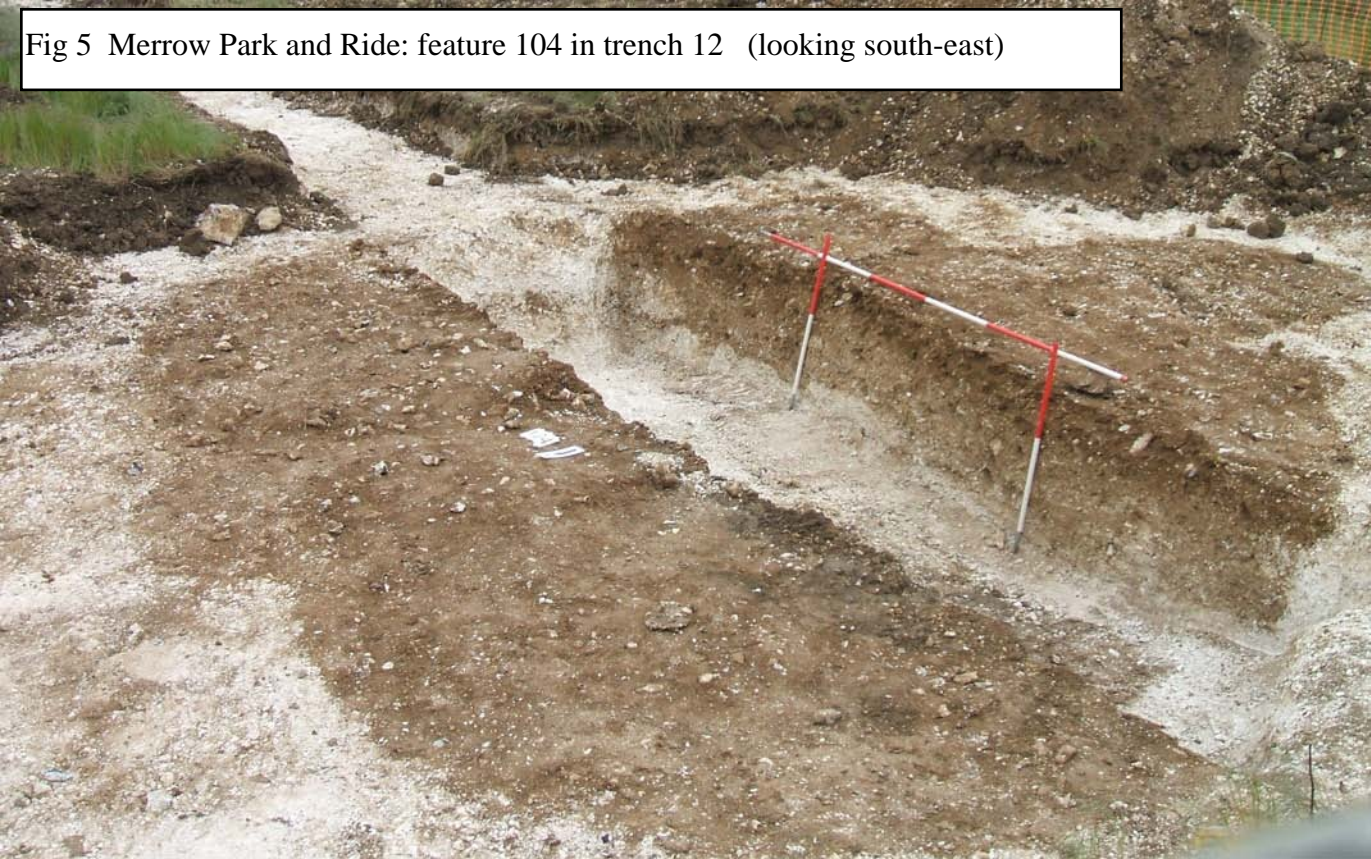




Fig 6 Merrow Park and Ride: feature 105 in trench 6 (looking south-west)

