



ANNAMINE NURSERY  
JOCKEY LANE  
YORK

A Report on an  
Archaeological  
Evaluation

By Gareth Dean

**ANNAMINE NURSERY,  
JOCKEY LANE,  
YORK**

**REPORT ON AN  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

by

**Gareth Dean MA PIFA**

*Cover illustration:*

Trench 6 on completion of excavations, looking north-west

©2004. York Archaeological Trust, Cromwell House, 13 Ogleforth, York YO1 7FG  
Tel: (01904 663000 Fax: (01904 663024 Email: [enquiries@yorkarchaeology.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@yorkarchaeology.co.uk)  
Registered Charity No: 509060

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### **List of Abbreviations**

OD	Ordnance Datum
YAT	York Archaeological Trust
YAJ	Yorkshire Archaeological Journal
RCHMY	Royal Commission of Historical Monuments York

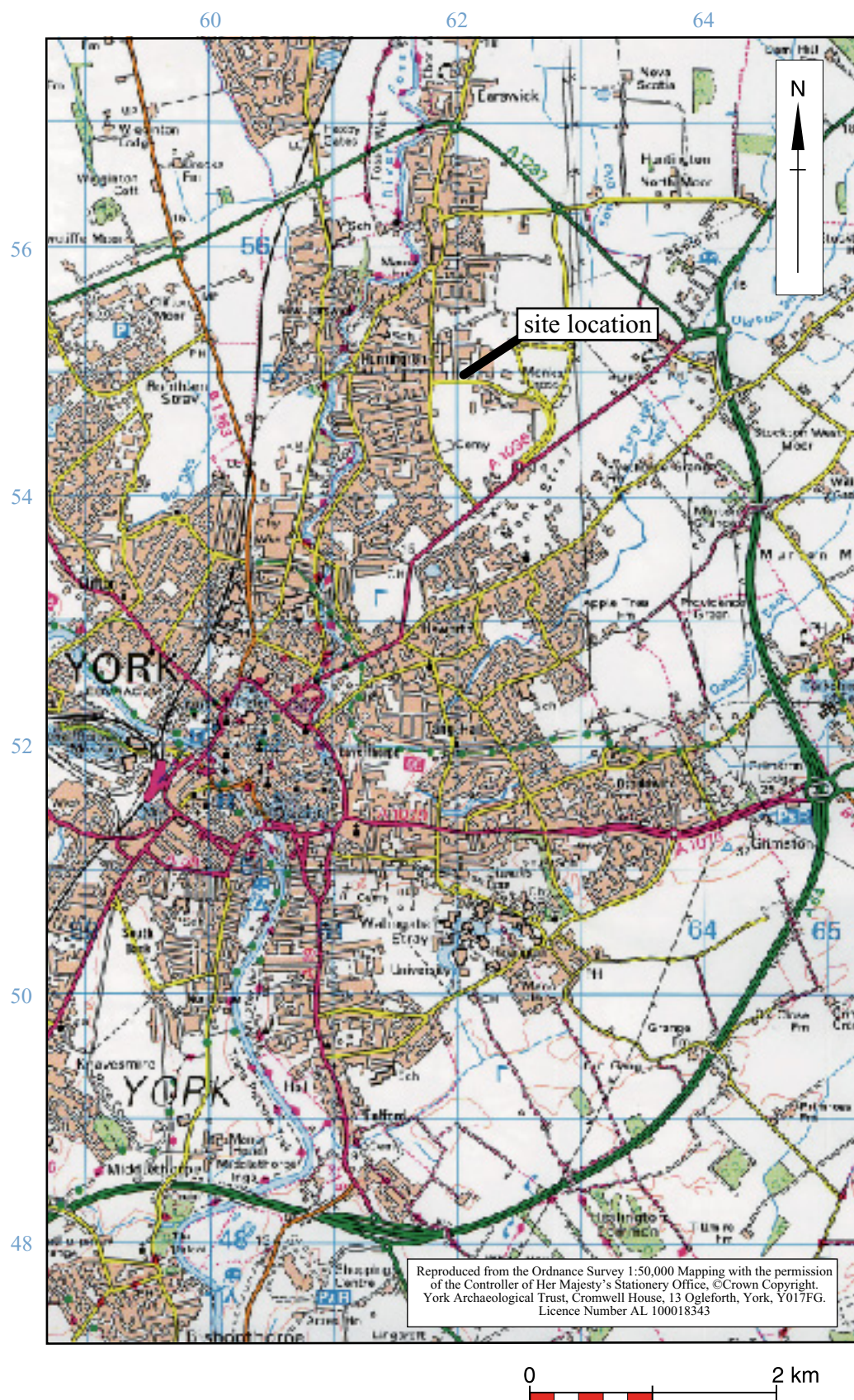


Figure 1 Site location

## **ABSTRACT**

*York Archaeological Trust excavated seven evaluation trenches on land at the rear of Annamine Nurseries, Jockey Lane, York between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> August 2004. The evaluation was hampered by the adverse weather conditions and one trench (Trench 2) was abandoned due to flooding. Post-medieval and modern features were identified in the other trenches, the most recent of which were associated with the use of the site as a nursery. The other features recorded were the remains of post-medieval ridge and furrow ploughing aligned north-south, an alignment reflected in the modern property boundaries. Pottery from the fill of the furrows ranged from the 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by the York Archaeological Trust at Annamine Nursery, Jockey Lane, York (NGR SE 61945493; Fig. 1) between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> August 2004. The work was carried out for Barrett Homes, York to a specification approved by the Principal Archaeologist for City of York Council

The site archive is currently stored by the York Archaeological Trust under the museum accession code YORYM: 2004.351.

## **2. METHOD STATEMENT**

Seven trenches were excavated in the open area (Fig. 2) to the rear of the nursery buildings. The trenches measured 10m x 2m and had an average depth of 0.45m.

The modern overburden was removed by a wheeled mechanical excavator and the trenches were then hand cleaned and any potential archaeological features were then hand excavated. Trench 2 was abandoned after partial recording due to flooding after heavy rain. Recording followed the procedures laid down in the York Archaeological Trust *Fieldwork Recording Manual* (2004). Plans were drawn of all the trenches at a scale of 1:50 and sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10. A series of 35mm colour and digital photographs was taken.

## **3. LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY**

The site is located just over 4km north-east of the centre of York and around 1km south-east of the village of Huntington. All land in the locality is low-lying, typically around 14.5m – 15m OD and is relatively flat. Two watercourses flow through the area, the River Foss just over 1km to the west and the Tang Hall Beck 1km to the east.

The underlying solid geology of the area is of Bunter and Keuper sandstones, (Geol. Surv., 1959). This is overlain by drift geology of Warp and Lacustrine clay. The area of investigation is currently maintained as an open field, occasionally ploughed in the past by the nursery for cultivating plants. Prior to the nursery the land was used for farming. The site is surrounded by modern developments associated with the Monk's Cross commercial development.

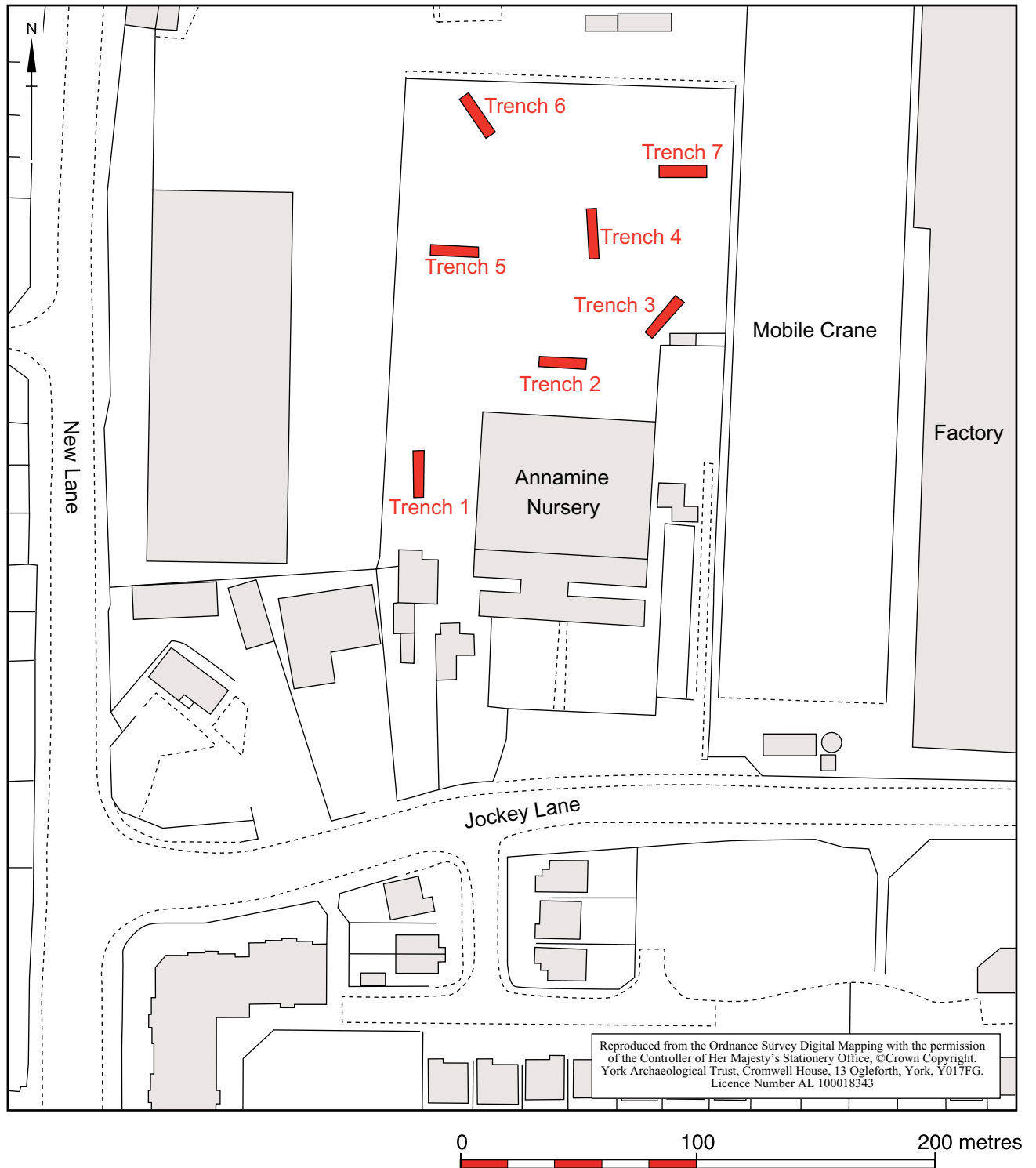


Figure 2: Trench locations

#### **4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The evaluation at Annamine Nursery was carried out because little is known of the archaeology of this area but discoveries in the surrounding area have shown the potential for archaeology from a variety of periods to be exposed.

There is known prehistoric activity in the area around Monk's Cross. Work prior to the construction of Monks Cross Park and Ride (SE625545) identified a Neolithic pit, a curvilinear ditch (possibly for an enclosure) and part of a major landscape boundary, and a pit alignment of probable Bronze Age or Iron Age origin that was later re-defined by a broad shallow cut, and remained visible until at least the 2nd century AD (Johnson 2004). In the surrounding area a circular ditch of possible Iron Age date was excavated north of Hopgrove Farm (SE63805530) and some 3.5km to the north-west at Rawcliffe Moor (SE59205630), ditches and probable hut circles are likely to relate to part of an Iron Age settlement.

The site lies approximately 4km north-east of the Roman legionary fortress and associated urban settlement. In the known and postulated disposition of Roman roads in the area (Brinklow 1986) the site probably lies approximately 400m north-west of Road 4, which ran from York – Malton.

Features of Romano-British date, probably relating to a farmstead, have been located c.2.5km to the east at Stockton Moor West (SE 6480 5450). Approximately 1.5km to the south-east of the site at Apple Tree Farm (SE 6325 5300), a pottery production site has been located (Lawton 1992-3). Earlier work by Peter Wenham in the same area had recorded the discovery of three coffined burials, two within gritstone sarcophagi, during the course of drainage works. In addition a metalled road, aligned west-south-west / east-north-east and held likely to have been in use from the early 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> century, was also discovered. Quantities of Roman pottery were recovered whilst these drainage works were carried out and also during building operations on the nearby Ashley Park housing estate (Johnson 2004). Around 1km south of the site, near 210 Stockton Lane (SE 6246 5325), 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> century pottery that is thought to be derived from occupation, rather than burials, was discovered in the 1940s, (YAJ, 1943, 424). Approximately 0.5km to the south two Roman camps were identified by aerial photography, one of which was excavated by the York Archaeological Trust (Johnson 2004). Two other known Roman Camps are known on the periphery of York, at Bootham Stray approximately 3km to the west of Monk's Cross (RCHMY1, 47).

During the Anglo-Scandinavian period little is known of the area and it is during the post-medieval (1550-1850) and modern (1850-present) periods that the area sees large scale alterations. The 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey of 1853-54 shows the area of the site as open fields, divided by north-south boundaries either side of Jockey Lane with the railway line cutting across the fields to the north. One farm is shown to the north of Jockey Lane, known as Breck Farm. The area between Jockey Lane and the railway is marked on the maps as 'The Brecks', meaning heath land or marginal land. Later maps show the development of the area around Annamine Nursery. The 1958 Ordnance Survey shows that the area that becomes the nursery is occupied by Brecks Farm- moved from its location in 1853-54; that site is shown as Pigeoncote Farm- and the land immediately to

the west of the site is occupied by a brewery. It is the development since the 1980s of the Monks Cross industrial and retail park that sees the most alteration to the area, with the nursery surrounded today by modern industrial units.

## **5. THE EVALUATION**

### **5.1 Trench 1 (Figs 3-4)**

#### **5.1.1 Natural**

The natural in this trench, located 14.38 and 14.5m OD and was quite mixed- largely by modern root disturbance from an oak tree located on the western side of the trench. Despite this two natural subsoil types were evident within the trench. At the northern end of the trench the natural consisted of firm, orange yellow clay sand (1001). At the southern end of the trench was a firm orange yellow clay (1008) that appeared to overlay 1001).

#### **5.1.2 Modern**

Cut through the natural (1008) was a land drain aligned north-east/south-west (1007). Overlying the natural was a sequence of mixed deposits (1003-7) that had been heavily disturbed by root action from the oak tree mentioned above. These contexts were either firm, orange brown sandy silt between 0.2-0.1m thick, or a firm, light grey sandy silt. There was also a pale grey sand (1009) that had a high concentration of iron panning 0.2m thick. Sealing these deposits was the mid-grey brown clay silt topsoil (1002) 0.3m thick, of the present ground surface.

### **5.2 Trench 2**

#### **5.2.1 Natural**

The natural in the trench consisted of firm, grey orangey brown clay (2002) at 14.4m OD.

#### **5.2.2 Modern**

Overlying the natural was a firm, pale grey silty sand clay 0.2m thick (2001) that was heavily disturbed by root activity. Directly above this was the mid-grey brown clay silt topsoil (2000) 0.3m thick.

### **5.3 Trench 3 (Figs 5-6)**

#### **5.3.1 Natural**

The natural was located at 14.21m OD and consisted of a firm yellow orange sandy clay (3003).



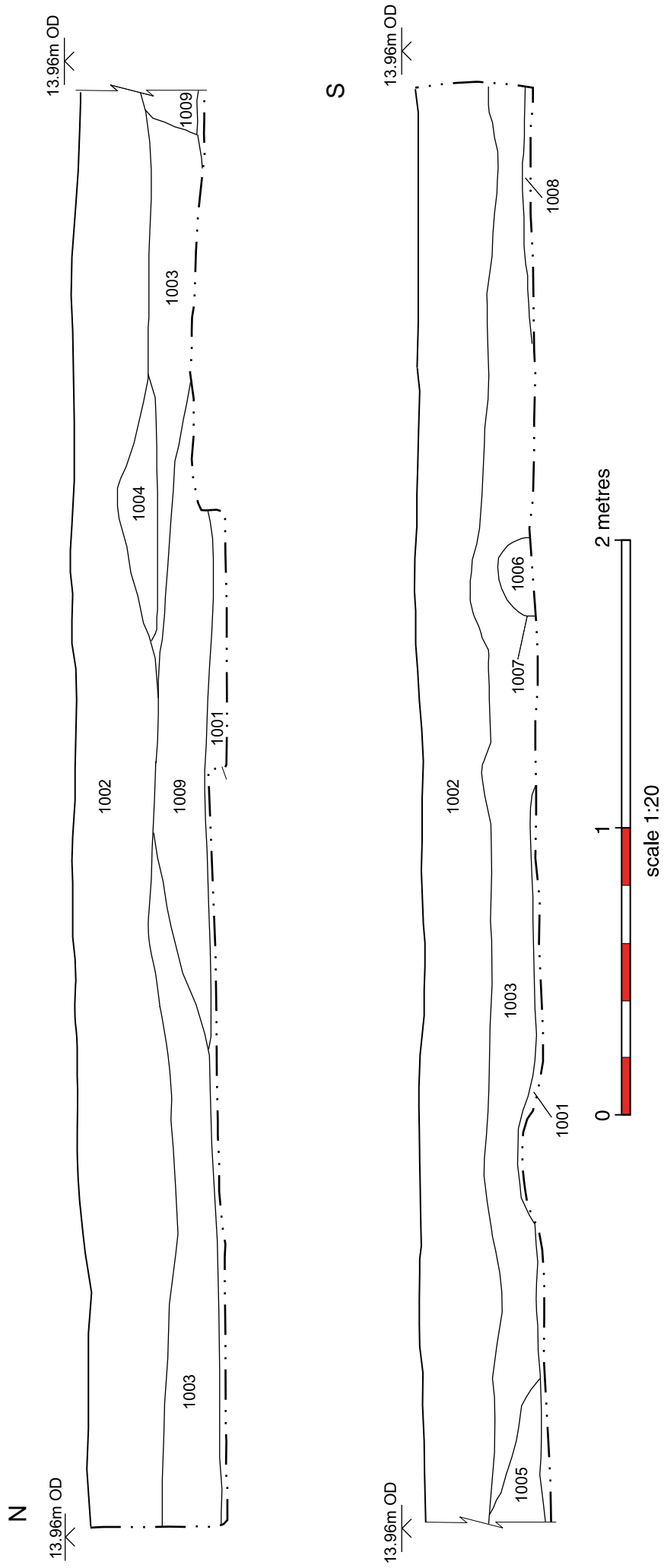


Figure 3: Trench 1, west facing section on completion of excavation

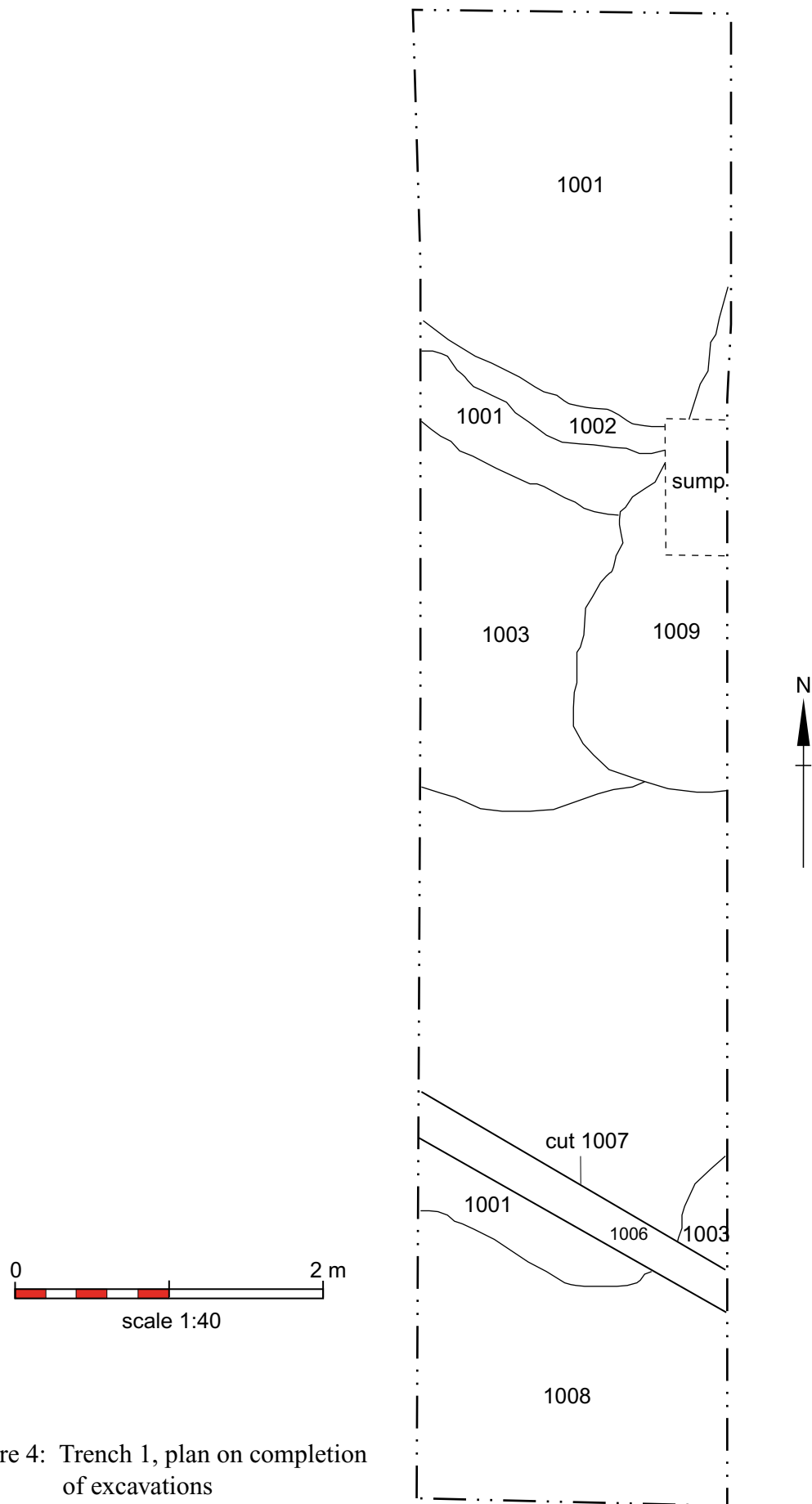


Figure 4: Trench 1, plan on completion of excavations

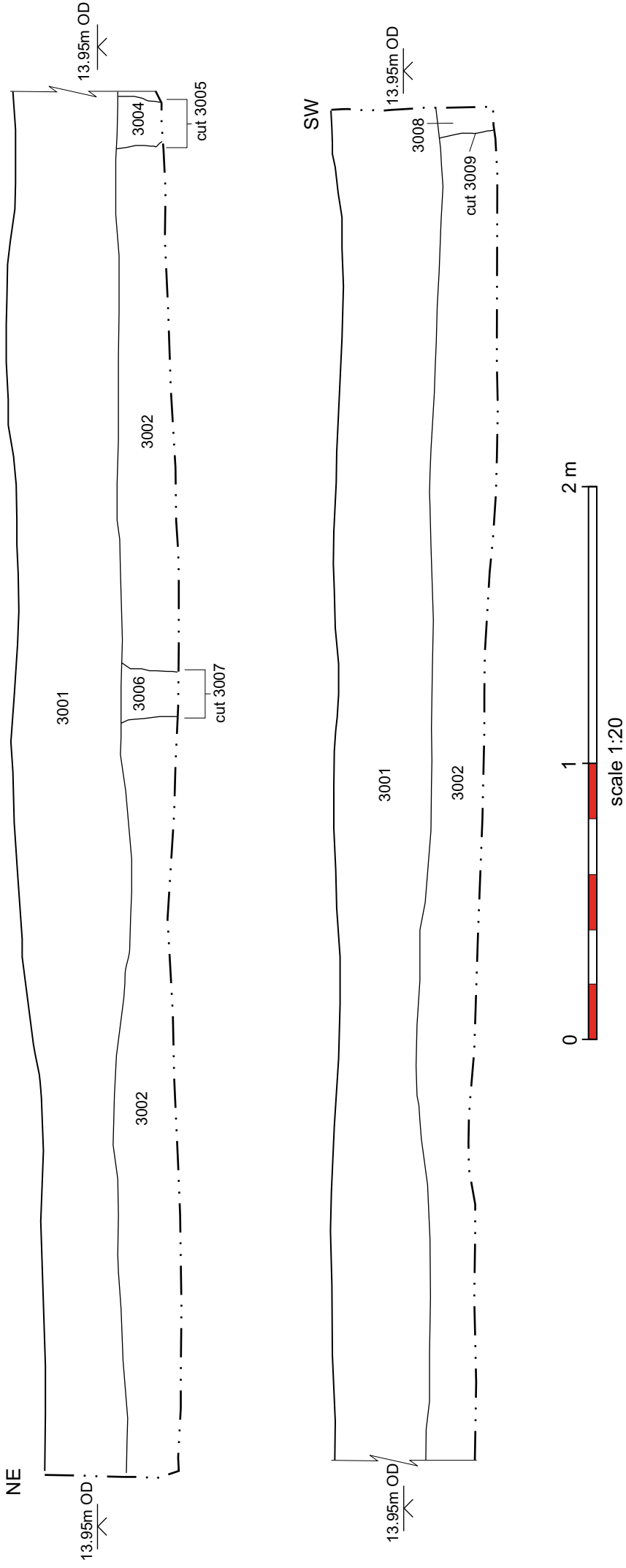


Figure 5: Trench 3, north-west facing section on completion of excavation

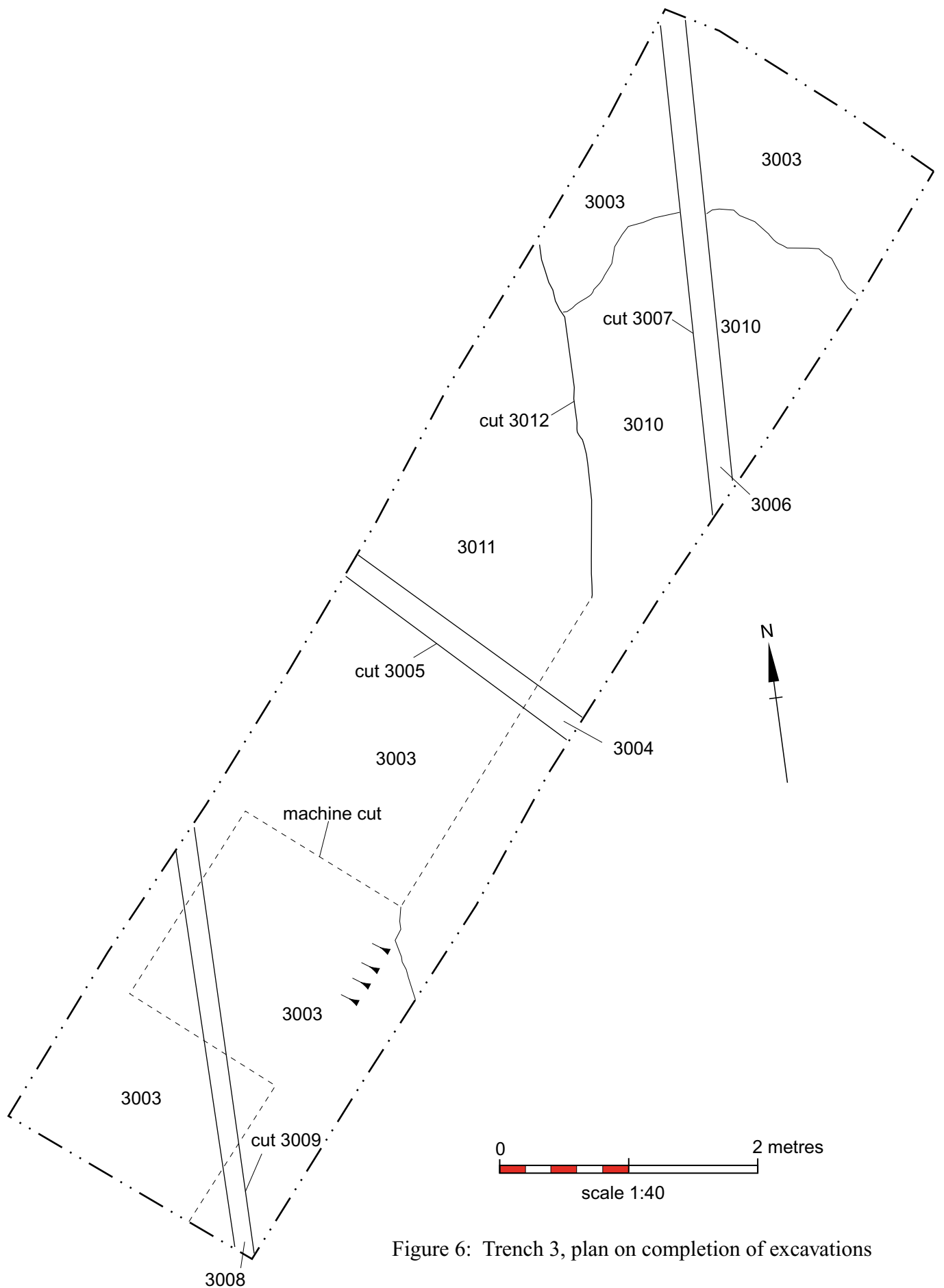


Figure 6: Trench 3, plan on completion of excavations

### **5.3.2 Post-Medieval**

The majority of the trench was taken up by a broad, shallow, linear feature (3012). This was aligned north-south, filled with a compact mid-brown grey sandy silt (3011) 0.13m thick with occasional charcoal flecks and fragments of coal.

### **5.3.3 Modern**

Overlying the furrow was a 0.2m thick deposit of firm, grey-brown sandy silt that may represent some form of subsoil. Cut through this deposit into the natural was a sequence of land drains. One land drain (3006), aligned north-south, was located at the north-east end of the trench. Cut through this feature were two further land drains. One was aligned north-west/south-east (3005) from the fill of which (3004) was recovered a fragment of a slip ware cup dating to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The other (3009) was aligned north-south. Sealing these deposits was the modern topsoil, 0.4m thick, of mid-grey brown clay silt (3001).

## **5.4 Trench 4 (Figs 7-8)**

### **5.4.1 Natural**

The natural, consisted of either a firm yellow orange clay (4002), or firm orange brown clay sand (4003) located at 14.2m OD.

### **5.4.2 Modern**

Cut through the natural was a series of irregular features (4004 and 4006) that probably represent modern plant root runs associated with the nursery. A ditch (4010) was observed at the southern end of the trench aligned east-west. The cut for the ditch was steep-sided with a slightly concave base. The ditch was filled with a firm, light grey sandy silt (4011) 0.1m thick. Sealing the ditch and the two amorphous features was a subsoil (4003) of light grey brown clay silt sand 0.1-0.15m thick. This had been cut through by a modern feature (4008) that was filled with a mixed, mid-grey brown clay silt and was thought to be a modern plant root run. Directly above this was a 0.3m thick mid-grey brown clay silt topsoil (4000).

## **5.5 Trench 5 (Figs 9-11)**

### **5.5.1 Natural**

The natural subsoil consisted of a firm orange brown clay sand (5003) and a firm orange brown clay (5004) at 14.58m OD.

### **5.5.2 Post-Medieval - Modern**

Cut through the natural was a ditch (5006) aligned east-west which was recorded running along the northern side of the trench and is probably a continuation of the ditch described above. Ditch 5006 was filled with a clean, firm, dark grey sandy silt (5005) 0.25m thick.

A series of land drains was also identified cutting through the natural. One of the drains (5012) was aligned north-south and was quite shallow; it was broken during machining off of the modern top soil. The two other field drains were on a north-east/south-west alignment (5008, 5010). Directly above these features was a firm, mid-grey brown silt sand (5002) 0.2m thick, sealed by the dark grey brown silt sand, 0.38m thick, of the modern overburden (5001).

## **5.6 Trench 6 (Figs 12-13)**

### **5.6.1 Natural**

The natural within this trench consisted of a firm, yellow orange clay sand (6001) and a firm, orange brown clay (6002) at 14.54m OD.

### **5.6.2 Post Medieval - Modern**

Cut through the natural were two land drains (6005 and 6007) aligned north-east/south-west. At the south-eastern end of the trench there was a shallow cut (6007) filled with a mid-brown silt sand (6008) 0.3m thick that may be the base of a post-medieval furrow aligned north-south. Directly above these features was a firm mid-grey brown silt sand (6004) 0.1m thick. This deposit contained one fragment of medieval tile and two sherds of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century pottery. Sealing this was 0.22m thick dark grey brown silt sand of the modern top soil (6003).

## **5.7 Trench 7 (Figs 14-15)**

### **5.7.1 Natural**

The natural subsoil, located at 14.31m OD, consisted of a firm-plastic, yellow-brown clay sand (7000 and 7016).

### **5.7.2 Post-Medieval**

There was also evidence in this trench for at least three north-south aligned post-medieval plough furrows (7001, 7014 and 7017). These features consisted of shallow cuts filled with a compact light grey silt sand with inclusions of brick fragments, charcoal and clinker. One sherd of pottery from these features dated from the 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The features were on average 0.1m deep. These deposits were sealed by a subsoil up to 0.2m thick of firm, mid-dark grey silt sand (7003; 7008)

### **5.7.3 Modern**

Cut through this deposit was a land drain (7004) aligned north-south. At the eastern half of the trench was a modern subsoil (7015) consisting of a firm mid-grey sandy silt. This deposit sealed one of the plough furrows (7014) and two of the land drains (7012; 7022). One land drain aligned north-east/south-west (7023) were located within the trench. Cut through this sub-soil was a pit for a plant's root bole (7006). These deposits were sealed by the 0.5m thick firm, mid-grey brown silt sand of the modern topsoil (7021).

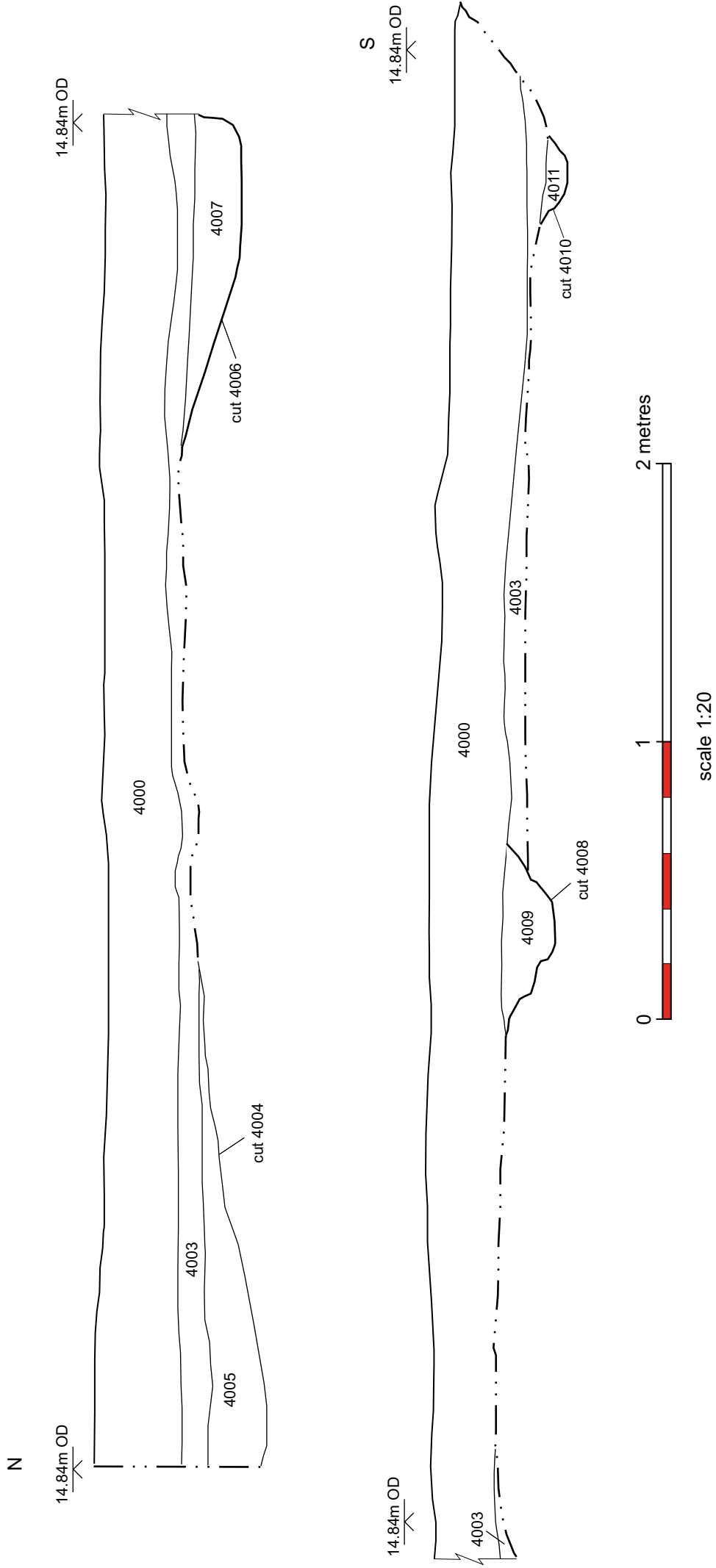


Figure 7: Trench 4, west facing section on completion of excavation

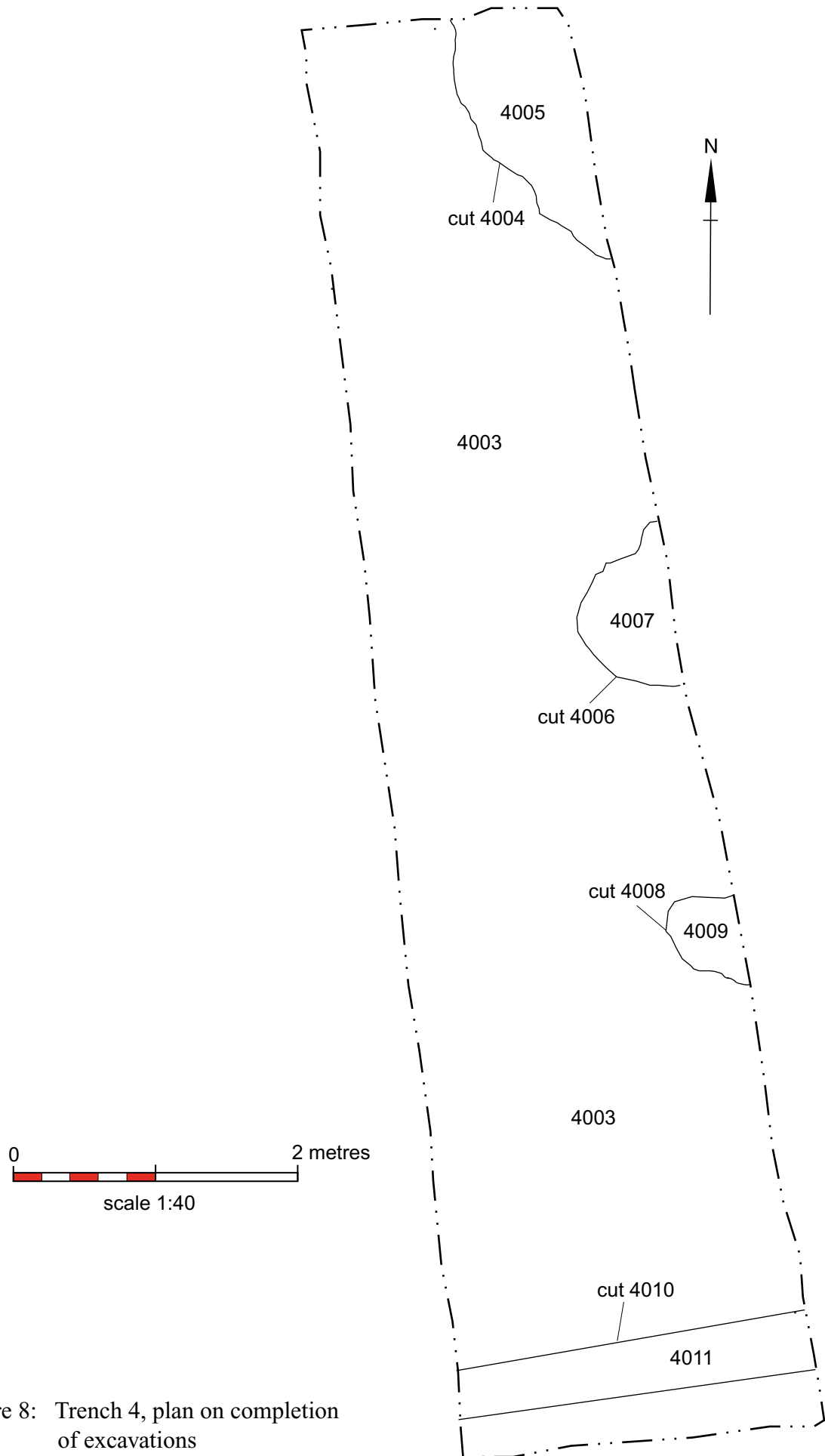


Figure 8: Trench 4, plan on completion of excavations



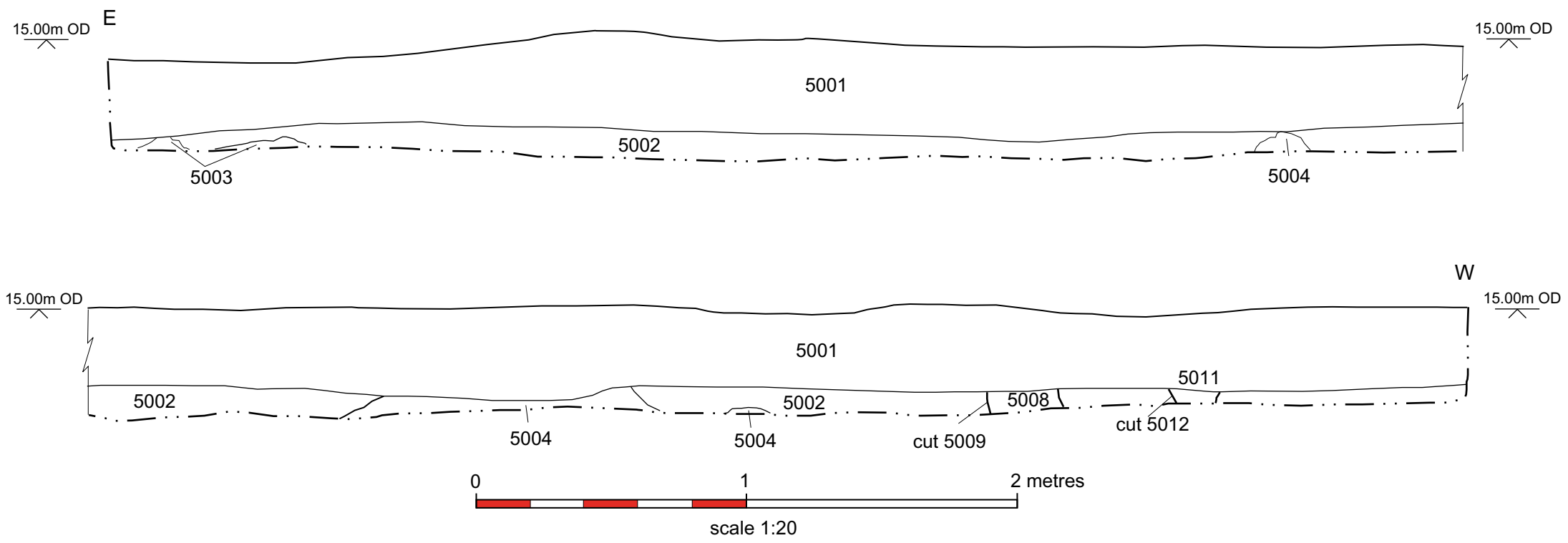


Figure 9: Trench 5, north facing section on completion of excavation

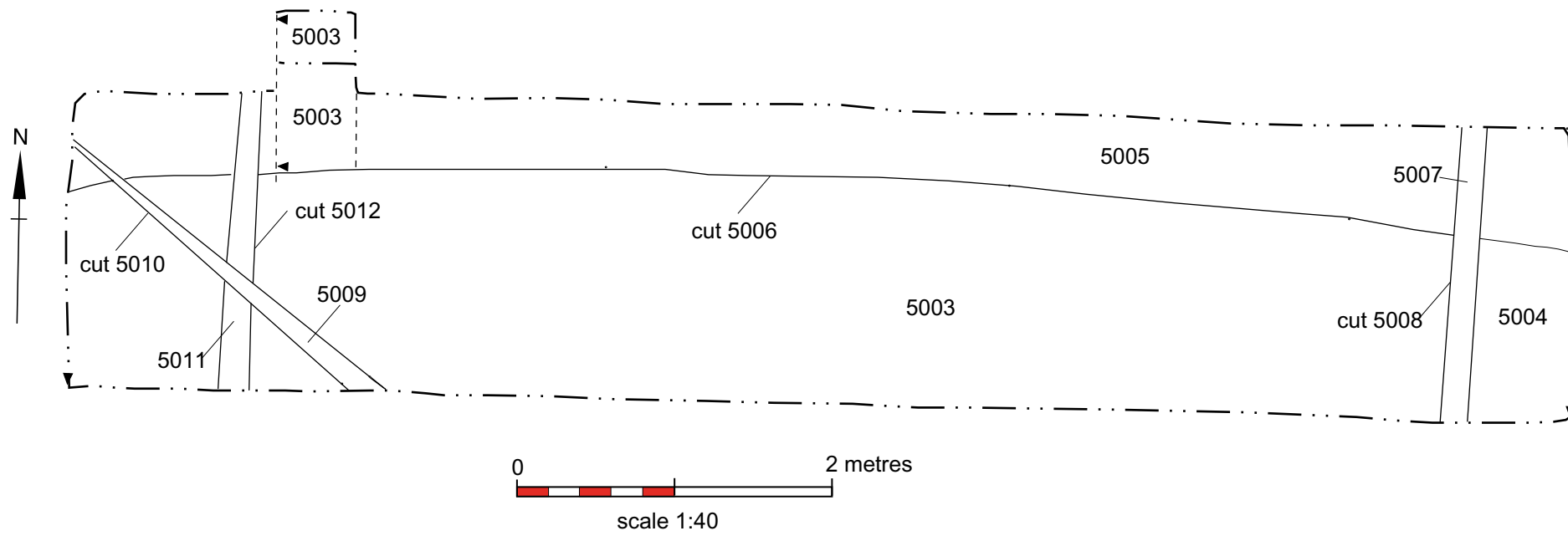


Figure 10: Trench 5, plan on completion of excavations

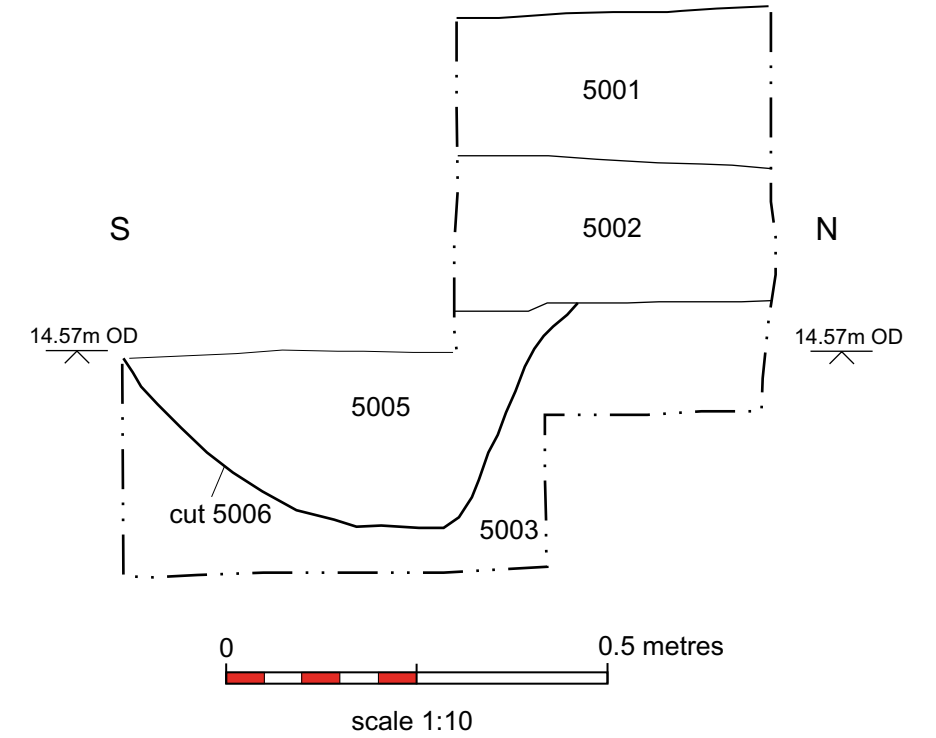


Figure 11: Trench 5, section through ditch cut 5006

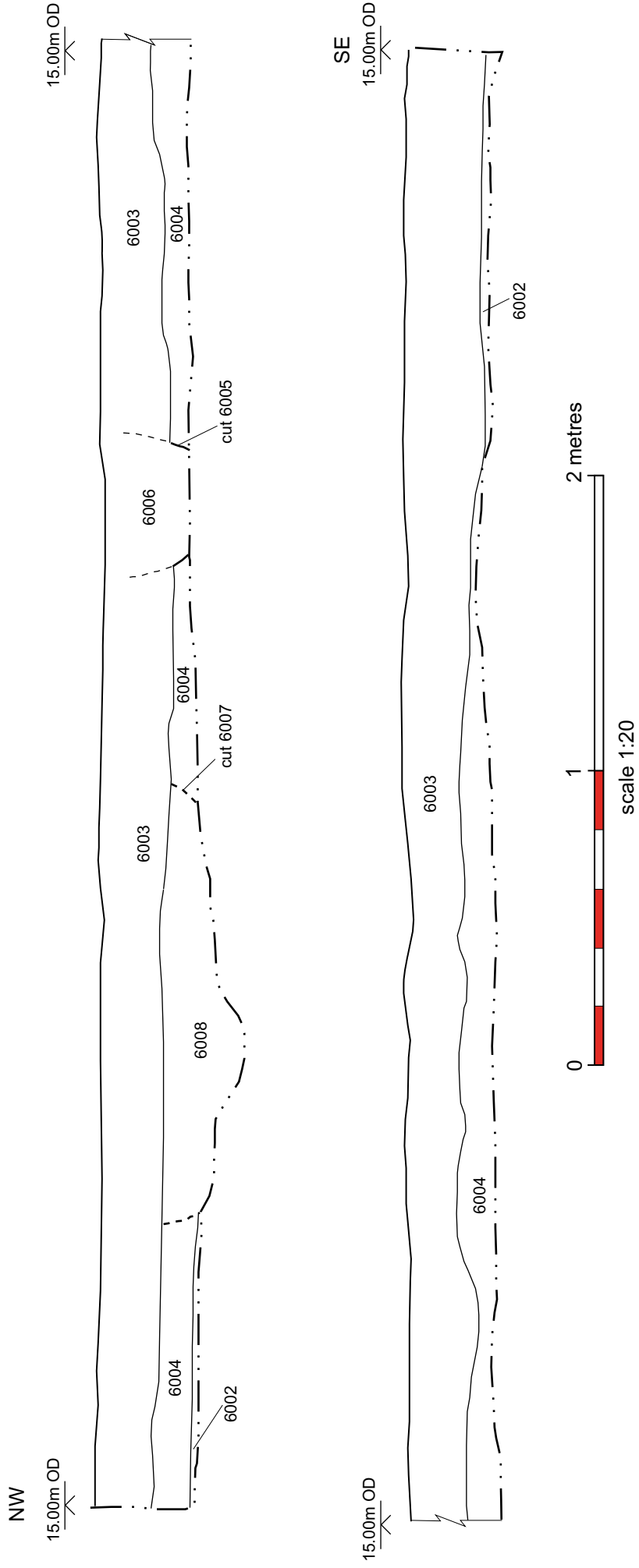


Figure 12: Trench 6, south west facing section on completion of excavation

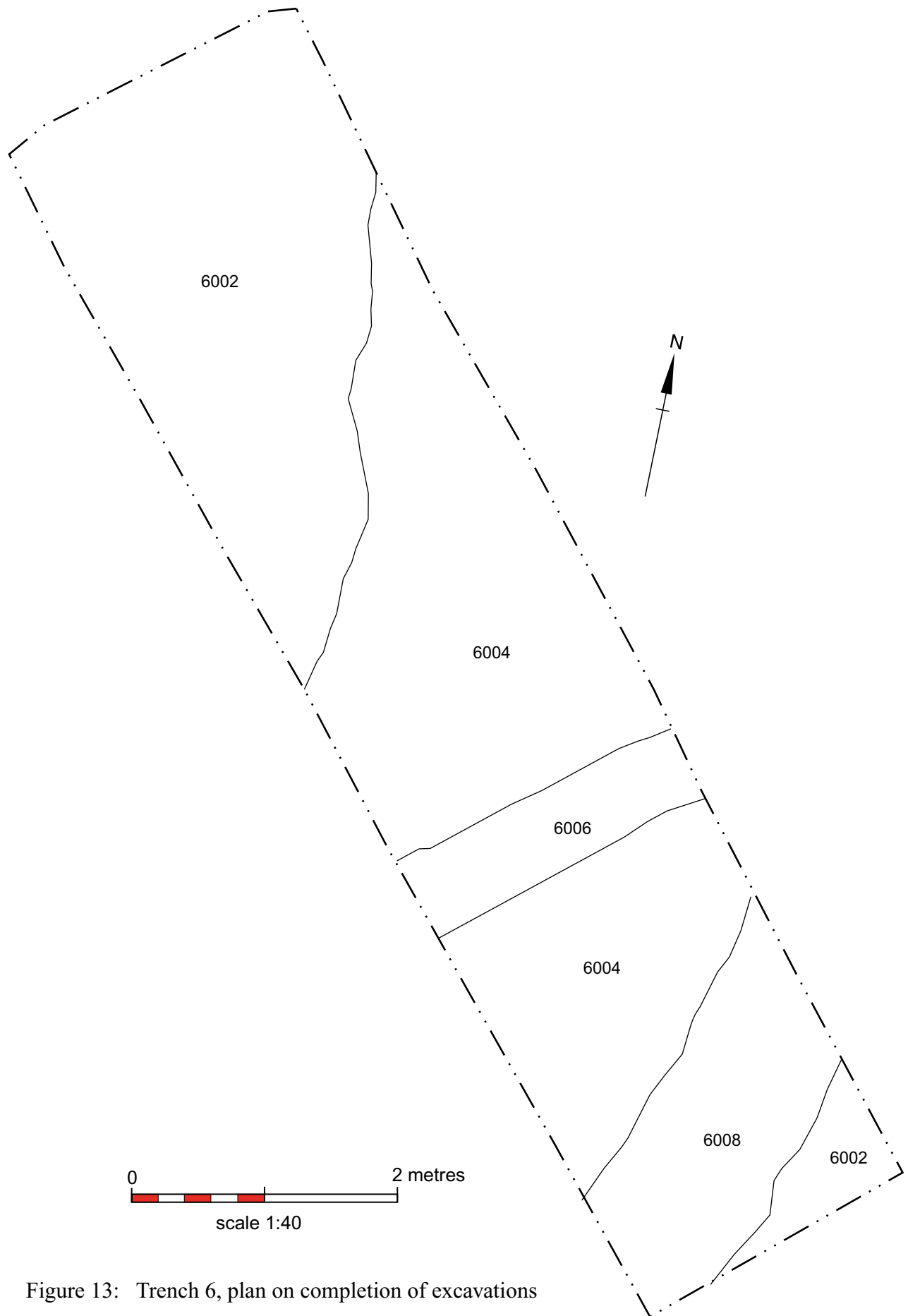


Figure 13: Trench 6, plan on completion of excavations

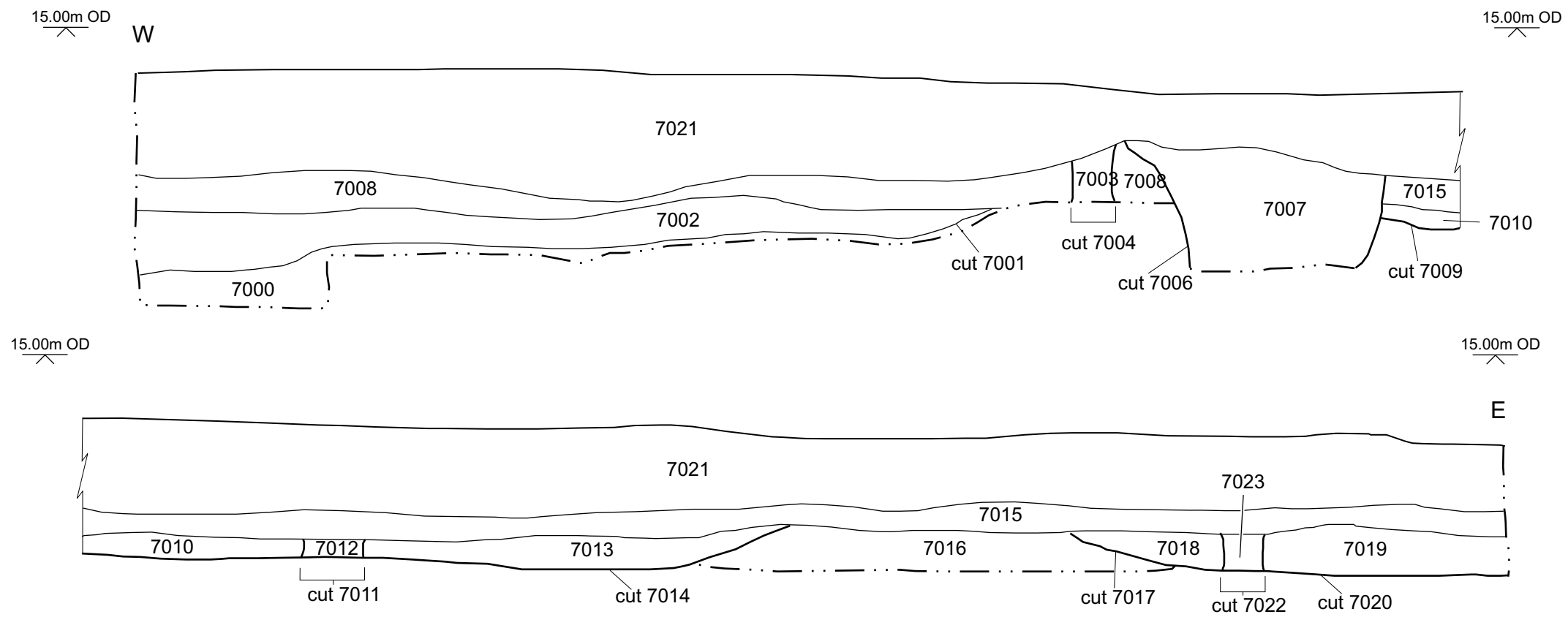


Figure \* West facing section, Trench 1

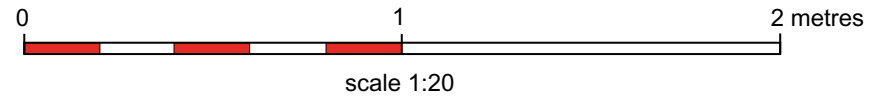


Figure 14: Trench 7, south facing section on completion of excavation

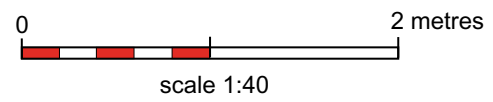
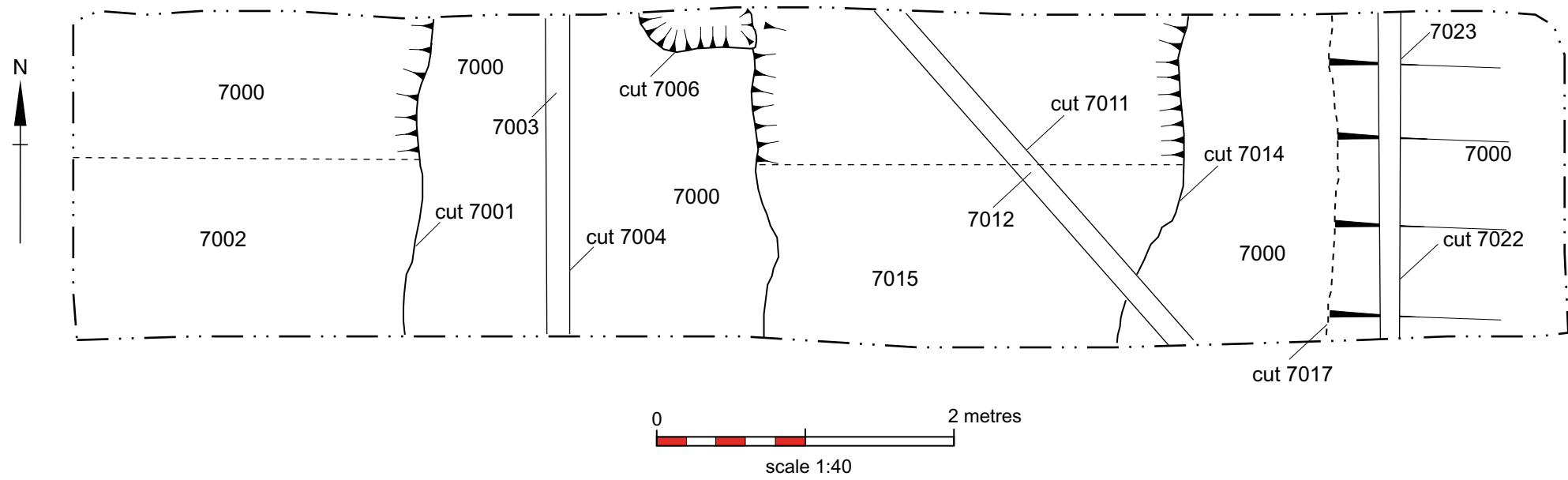


Figure 15: Trench 7, plan on completion of excavations

## **6. CONCLUSION**

The evaluation trenches exposed evidence for post-medieval ploughing probably dating from the late 16<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. One ditch aligned east-west was recorded in Trenches 4 and 5 and although no dating evidence was recovered from it, the orientation would suggest that it is of a post-medieval date. A series of irregular features associated with the use of site by the nursery was also found in the form of several irregular pits associated with the root boles of plants. The modern topsoil was found to be generally deeper on the eastern side of the site than on the west. On the western side the topsoil was between 0.3m and 0.4m deep, whereas on the eastern side it was up to 0.6m deep.

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