



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AND
EXCAVATION**

AT

**BEECHWOOD PARC,
TRURO, CORNWALL**

NGR SW 8370 4525

On behalf of

CgMs Consulting Ltd

MAY 2012

REPORT FOR CgMs Consulting Ltd
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REPORT ISSUED 10th May 2012

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Site Code TRTR 11
JMHS Project No: 2387
Archive Location The archive is currently held at John Moore Heritage Services and will be deposited with the Royal Cornwall Museum with accession code 2011.49.

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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological watching brief and excavation on land at Beechwood Parc, Truro, Cornwall. The archaeological watching brief led to a small-scale excavation. Archaeological features and pottery of late Iron Age and Romano-British date were recorded at the south-eastern part of the development area.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

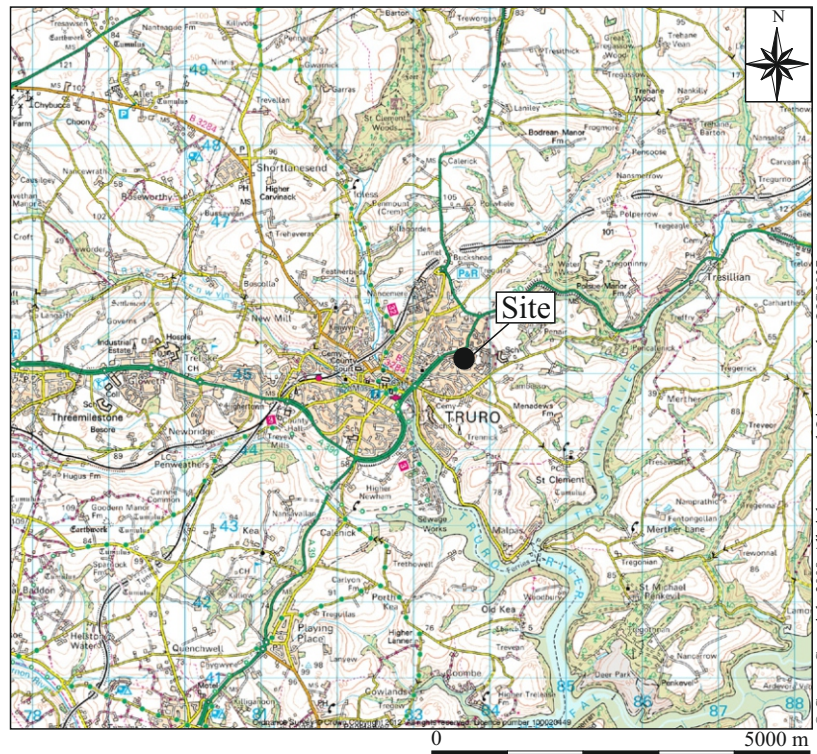
The development area at Beechwood Parc (hereafter referred to as ‘the Site’) is approximately 4 hectares in overall extent and located on the north-eastern edge of Truro, just to the south-east of the A39 Tregolls Road, and centred at NGR 8370 4525 (Figure 1). The area developed for housing is bordered to the north by Tinney Drive, and to the south, east and west by a small stream, with existing residential properties on its far southern side. The underlying geology consists of interbedded Sandstone and Argillaceous Rocks of the Portscatho Formation (British Geological Survey Sheet 352, 1990), overlain by Head deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel. The existing stream is associated with palaeochannel alluvial deposits of clays and fine silts.

The existing ground level slopes markedly to the south and south-east from *circa*. 54 metres above Ordnance Datum (OD) to *c.* 24m OD at the low land by the stream. Until recently, the Site consisted of grass pasture, rough ground and scrub woodland.

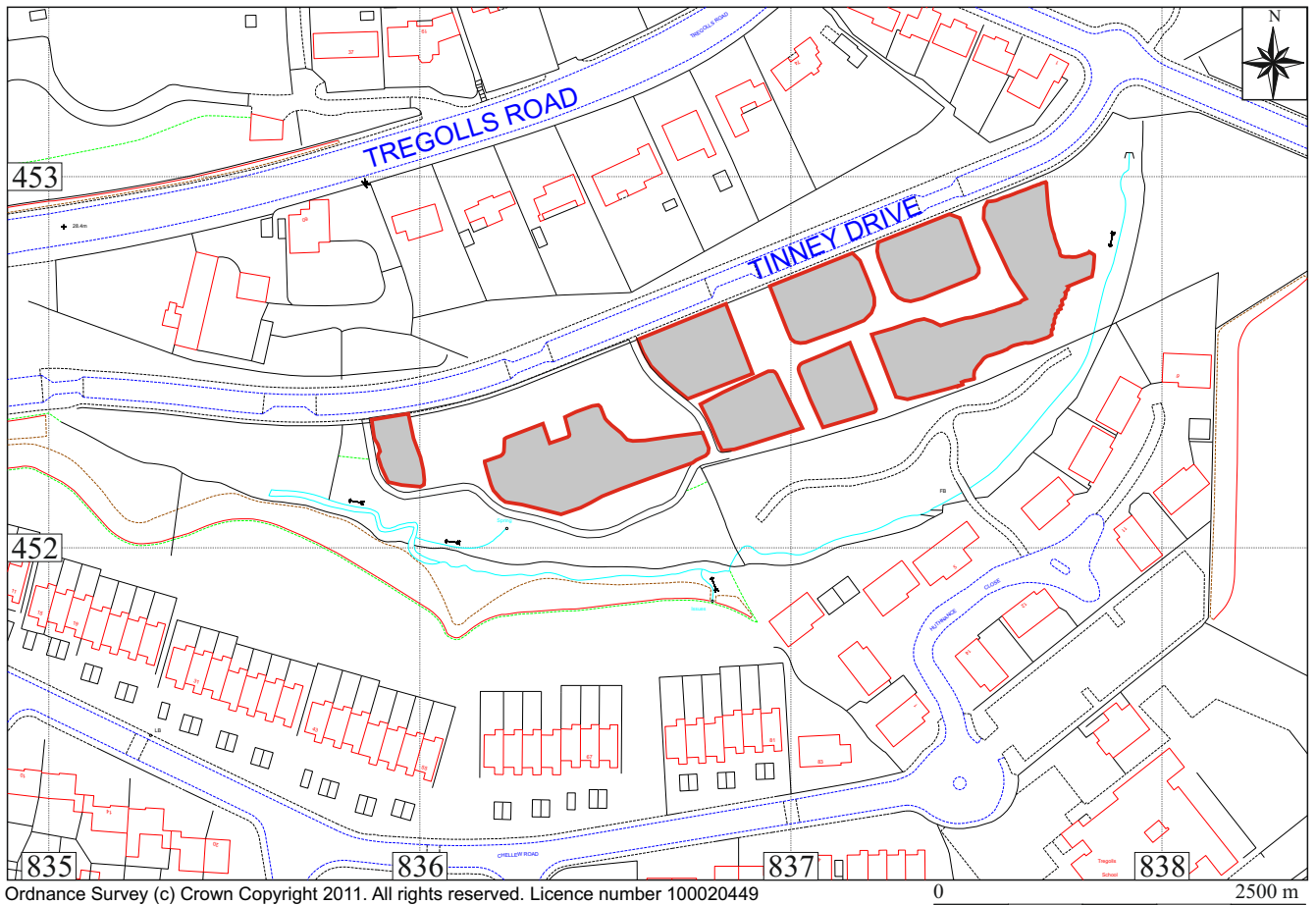
1.2 Planning Background

Planning permission was sought by Wainhomes for the construction of 61 dwellings and associated works in May 2010 (C1/PA03/O747/10/M). Prior to this, Wainhomes commissioned CgMs Consulting to undertake a desk-based assessment (Smalley 2010). Following preliminary consultation with the Historic Environment Planning Advice Officer (HEPAO) at Cornwall Council, a recommendation was made for a pre-determination evaluation to inform the application. Due to ecological constraints within the Site, however, it was agreed with the HEPAO that the desk-based study provide a sufficient level of information to support a planning application and that should any further requirement for additional fieldwork be necessary, this could be adequately secured by a suitably worded condition attached to the planning permission (Smalley 2010, 20).

Mr Daniel Ratcliffe, the HEPAO at Cornwall Council, did consider that there was a possibility that below ground archaeological remains might survive within the area of the Site, and an archaeological condition was thus duly attached to the planning application. No brief was provided by the HEPAO, but following discussions between CgMs Consulting and Daniel Ratcliffe it was agreed that a programme of archaeological stripping, mapping and recording would be implemented across the areas proposed for residential development, ahead of any construction work. This work would identify and record any archaeological features in order to mitigate the effects of the development on any surviving archaeological remains.



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Figure 1. Site location

A Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared by CgMs Consulting to satisfy the requirements of the Brief (Pugh and Smalley 2011). This Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) proposed the methodology by which the archaeological evaluation was to be carried out. John Moore Heritage Services (JMHS) was then commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of Wainhomes to undertake this work. The WSI was accepted by the Historic Environment Planning Advice Officer of Cornwall Council Mr Dan Ratcliffe, and the watching brief was undertaken by staff of John Moore Heritage Services during the 4th- 5th August and the 25th August 2011. A second stage watching brief begun on the 18th September 2011 identified archaeological features in the south-eastern part of the Site, and a small-scale open-area excavation followed on directly from this, finishing on the 14th October 2011. A third and final stage of work on the Site took place on the 9th-12th January 2012, during which several further archaeological features were recorded.

Mr Greg Pugh of CgMs Consulting and Mr Dan Ratcliffe of Cornwall Council made several visits to the Site during the course of the archaeological work in order to monitor the fieldwork and agree the scope and extent of excavation.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The Site was identified as being of archaeological potential by Cornwall Council as it lay within an area categorised as Anciently Enclosed Land on the Historic Landscape Characterisation study of Cornwall (e.g. Herring 2008; Kirkham 2003), representing more irregular fields of medieval or earlier origin documented before the 17th century (Smalley 2010, 10). There was no previously recorded evidence for prehistoric or Romano-British activity within or immediately adjacent to the Site, however, and no evidence that the area was utilised for settlement.

The desk-based assessment noted this lack of evidence for prehistoric activity on and around the Site (Smalley 2010, 12-13). Archaeological excavations at Nancemere (Gossip 2005) *c.* 700m north-west of the Site recorded a Bronze Age ring ditch and Bronze Age pits. Iron Age occupation in the general area consisted of the regionally distinctive circular settlements or 'rounds', which were often occupied through the Romano-British period and sometimes into the post-Roman period, as with Trethurgy Round near St Austell, inhabited from the mid-2nd century AD through to the 6th century AD (Quinnell 2004). Polwhele Round (SAM 32968) survives as an earthwork *c.* 800m to the north of the Site, as does another at Penventinnie to the west of Truro (Smalley 2010, 12). Additionally, the place-names Carveth and Carvedras, incorporating the Cornish *ker* (a fort or round) may hint at the former existence of other rounds within or close to the modern extent of Truro (Kirkham 2003, 13).

A geophysical survey (GSB 2009) *c.* 500m north of the Site identified possible prehistoric or Romano-British settlement possibly associated with the nearby Polwhele Round, whilst the Nancemere excavation also identified a Romano-British enclosure and associated field system (Gossip 2005). An excavation in 1973-4 *c.* 110m east of the Site (ECO1334) identified a small carved stone head thought to be of Romano-British date, although these objects are notoriously hard to provenance. Any late prehistoric or Roman-period activity in the area was therefore considered therefore likely to have been confined to that of agricultural practices associated with nearby settlement activity situated on higher ground (Pugh and Smalley 2011, 4).

Tregolls Farm, *c.* 200m south of the Site, may have been part of Tregolls Manor documented from the 17th century onwards, but which might have had medieval origins (Smalley 2010, 14). The Site might have lain within land belonging to one or more early medieval/ medieval farmsteads south and east of the Site (Penarth, HER 18988; Lambessow, HER 18956; Penair, HER60162 and Tresemble, HER 25265). Martyn's 1748 map of Cornwall and a 1785 map of Tregolls (Smalley 2010, figs. 2-3) indicate that in the post-medieval the Site was located south of an estate called Vineyard, and north-west of Tregolls Manor. The southern boundary of the Vineyard estate may have been the small stream running through the development area, once called the Horney Brook. The track leading to Vineyard is shown as extending over 'common land', and field parcels 16, 18, 19, 26 and 27 are known as Horney Brook's Meadow, Lower Gatley's Meadow, Little Meadow and Great Meadow respectively.

The road which became the A39 Tregolls Road was constructed in the mid 1820s (Kirkam 2003, 24-25), and its completion allowed access to expanding residential areas on the north-western edge of Truro during the late 19th and 20th century. The Union Workhouse constructed approximately 160m north of the Site in 1851 is now a Grade II Listed Building (HER 1406408).

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the CgMs Consulting Written Scheme of Investigation (Pugh and Smalley 2011, 6) were to:

- Establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains;
- Determine the extent, condition, nature, character, date and significance of any archaeological remains encountered;
- To establish the nature of the activity on the site;
- To record, in mitigation of their loss, any significant archaeological remains likely to be destroyed by this development;
- To recover any environmental evidence from archaeological features;
- To identify any artefacts relating to the occupation or use of the site, and;
- To provide further information on the archaeology of Cornwall from any archaeological remains encountered.

3.1 Research Design

In response to the WSI produced by CgMs Consulting (Pugh and Smalley 2011), JMHS carried out the archaeological work. This required that an archaeologist be present during all ground works associated with the development, and that any surviving remains which would be disturbed or destroyed by the development should be archaeologically excavated and recorded.

3.2 Methodology

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in the CgMs WSI (Pugh and Smalley 2011, 7-10), and agreed with the HEPAO of Cornwall Council.

Tracked 25 tonne 360-degree excavators fitted with toothless 1.5m wide ditching buckets provided by the principal site contractor to Wainhomes were used to strip the topsoil and subsoil, after which any archaeological deposits and features revealed were then cleaned by hand using hoes and recorded in plan before being excavated and recorded at an appropriate level. In one part of Area 2 a JCB excavator was used instead, due to demand on the larger 360-degree machines. Archaeological features had written, drawn and photographic records made of them, and all deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers without brackets indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in brackets () show feature fills or deposits of material. All artefacts were collected and retained, and areas without archaeology had record photographs taken of their stripped areas. The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (2008) and the principles of MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

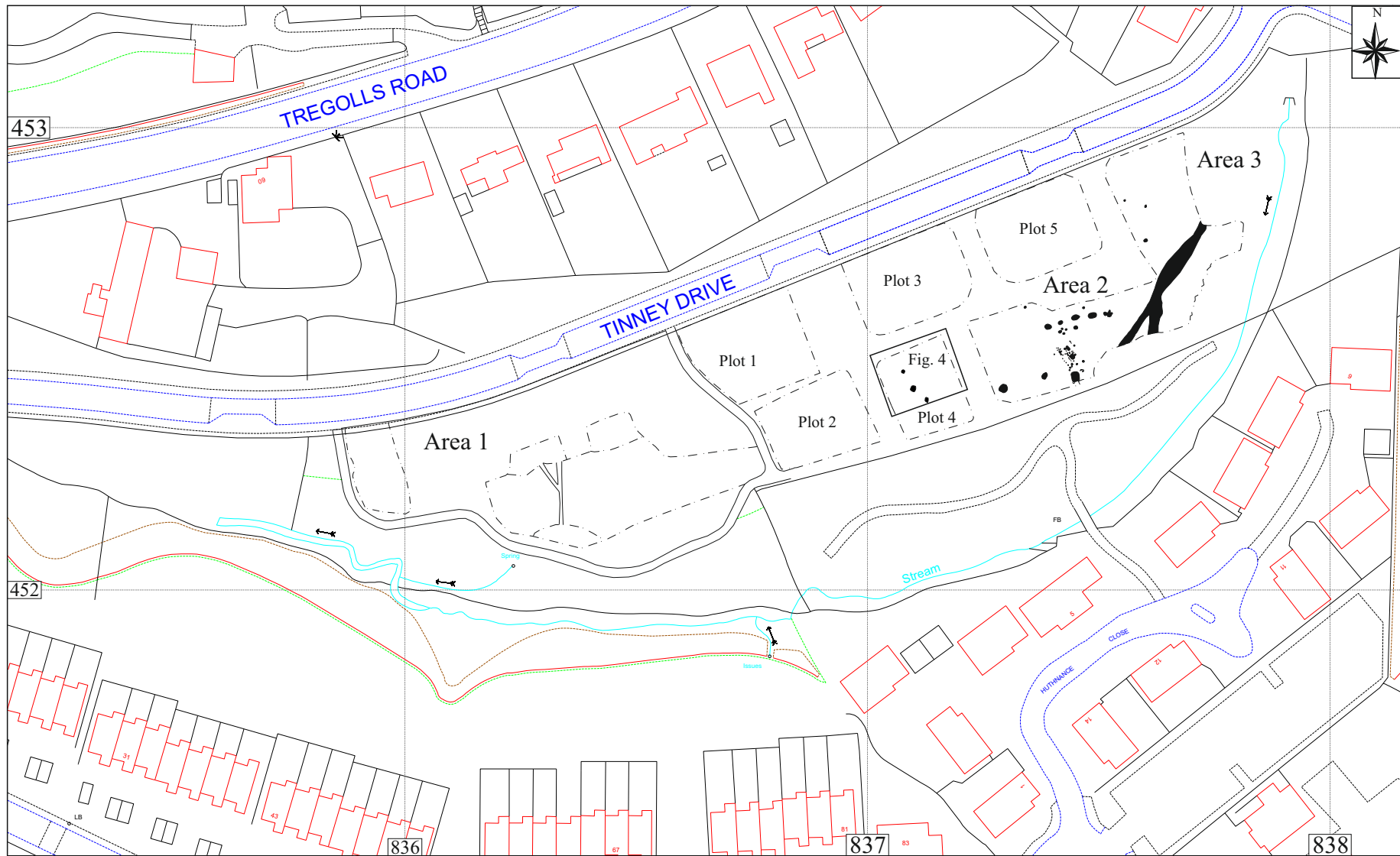
4 RESULTS

4.1 The Archaeological Results

The first area to be stripped (Area 1) was on the western, lower-lying part of the Site (Fig. 2). The watching brief on this area during the 4th- 5th August 2011 did not identify any significant archaeological features or deposits (see below). The only features recorded were probably relatively recent in date.

This initially appeared to be the case for Area 2 as well, as the site stripping for house plot footings along the northern and western stretch of this part of the Site on the 18th September did not reveal any archaeological remains (Plots 1-3). The areas between these plots were not reduced in level, and so did not require archaeological monitoring. Plot 5 did not contain any archaeological features either. Overnight, several features weathered out of Plot 4, however, and were recognised the following day. Subsequent stripping of this southern and eastern part of Area 2 (Plots 6-7) established that postholes, pits and ditches survived, and the excavation and recording of these features therefore proceeded immediately. Whilst the excavation work was in progress, and following a site meeting with Mr Greg Pugh of CgMs Consulting and Mr Dan Ratcliffe of Cornwall Council, the south-western part of Area 2 was also stripped, though only a few additional features were recorded.

The last phase of archaeological work took place in January 2012, when part of a large stockpile of material at the north-eastern part of the Site was removed prior to house construction. Recorded as Area 3, only a few additional archaeological features were identified in this part of the Site (see below).



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0 m 500 m

Figure 2. Overall plan of site and location of excavated areas

One notable feature of Beechwood Parc was the presence of made ground and colluvium or 'hill wash' deposits extending across much of the Site. Above Plots 1-2 the mid-reddish brown clayey silt colluvial subsoil (100) was 0.10-0.25m thick, but this increased to the north and east, with up to 0.66m of colluvium at Plots 3 and 5 (Plate 1). The colluvium decreased to the south, and was only *c.* 0.05-0.10m thick across the southern edge of Area 2. This colluvium contained prehistoric worked flint and post-medieval and early modern pottery, but also one sherd of Middle Bronze Age gabbroic pottery (see Quinnell below).

The made ground deposits consisted of mixed redeposited subsoil, topsoil, chippings and sand, and contained modern plastic and metal, brick, concrete and breeze blocks, much of it probably derived from the construction of Tinney Drive and the modern houses to the north and east of the Site. Again, this made ground increased significantly in depth to the north and east of the Site, and was up to *c.* 1m thick in Plot 5 and the north-eastern part of Area 2. It also became thicker to the north of Area 1. The remains of several large sub-square pits were also identified in Area 1, Plot 3, Plot 5 and the north-eastern part of Area 2. These features were up to 3m long and 2m wide, and were filled with mixed subsoil and topsoil, and also contained modern material including concrete, metal and plastic. These represented the remains of recent geotechnical test pits. In places considerable bioturbation had been caused by roots and burrowing animals, especially along the southern edge of Area 2 where the colluvial subsoil was at its thinnest. The root disturbance was more pronounced within the most charcoal-rich features.

At the extreme south-eastern corner of Area 2, palaeo-channel deposits of alluvial clays were recorded, associated with earlier courses of the existing stream. These characteristically blue-grey gleyed deposits were partly waterlogged and for much of the excavation the south-eastern corner lay underneath a shallow pool of standing water (Plate 2). In January 2012 this area was machined during the insertion of drainage pipes, the work being monitored by JHMS staff. No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were identified.

Elsewhere across the Site, the natural subsoil (05/107) consisted of compact, light yellow brown, light orange brown or grey brown sandy clayey silts or sandy clays, with darker brown or dark grey brown silty mottles often caused by root or small mammal activity. The natural subsoil also contained tabular sandstone, mudstone and shale fragments, along with angular quartz fragments and quartz pebbles.

4.2 Area 1 (Figs. 2 & 3)

Area 1 was located at the south-western part of the Site, with the ground level sloping steeply to the south and south-west.

Only four cut features were identified in Area 1. Feature 04 was an irregularly shaped feature approximately 10m long and 8m wide. It was not excavated, as its mixed fills (02) and (03) contained early modern or modern brick and tile fragments, slate fragments, metal objects including wire, and late 19th and early 20th century glass and pottery. This was probably a waste pit or dump of relatively recent date. Sub-square feature 12 that also contained early modern or modern material in its fill (11) was either another waste pit or a geotechnical test pit (see 4.1 above).

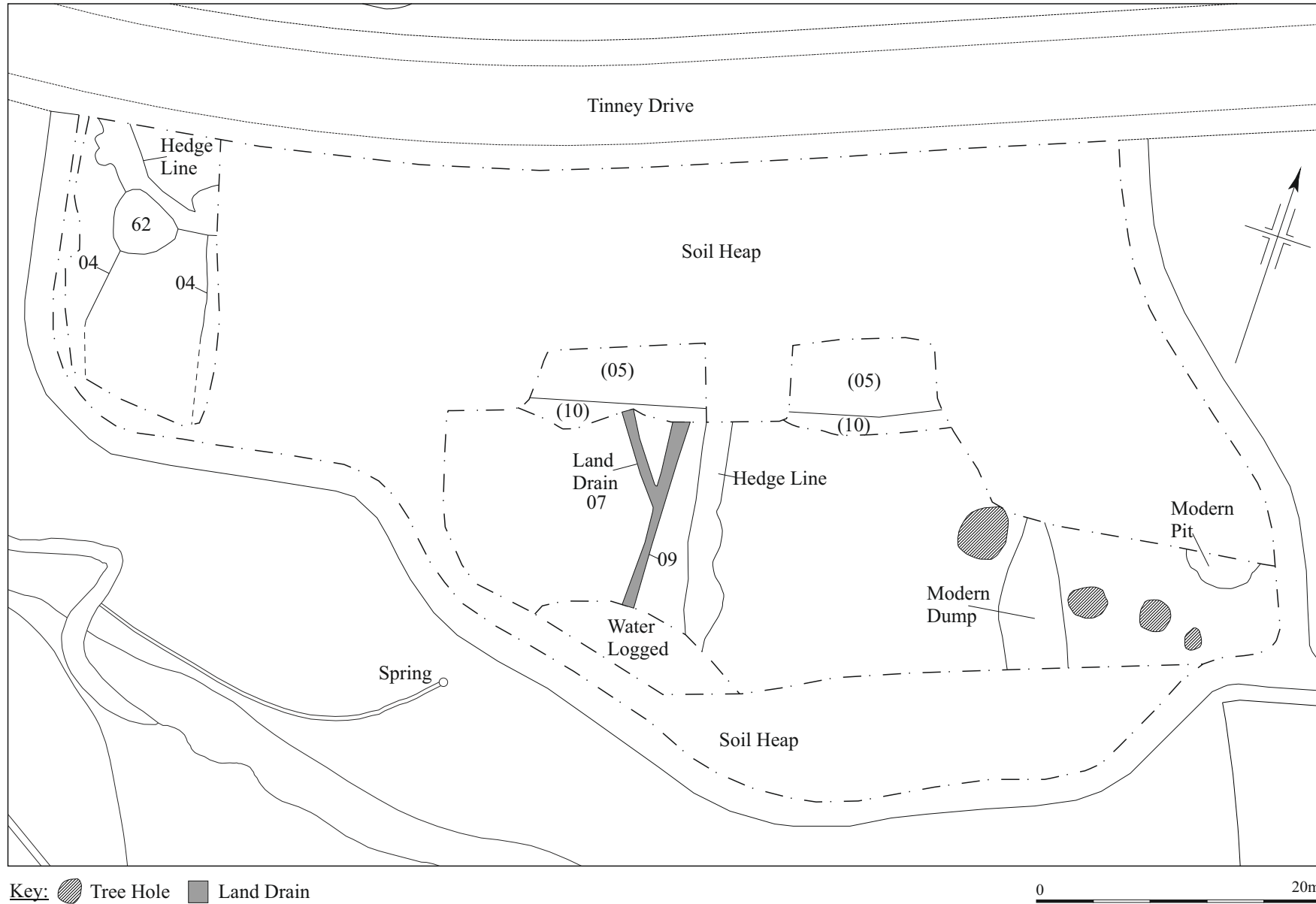


Figure 3. Area 1 plan

Cut 09 was a linear feature on a broadly north-south alignment, up to 130m long and 1.5m wide, and containing mid-grey brown clayey silt (08) with occasional sandstone fragments. Although not excavated, this was probably a post-medieval or early modern boundary ditch. A field boundary on approximately the same position and orientation is depicted on the St Clements Tithe Map of 1842 and the District Plan of 1869 (Pugh and Smalley 2011, figs 6-7), although by the time of the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey maps of 1880 this had apparently been removed (ibid. fig. 8).

Leading into ditch 09 was cut 07, a narrow, very regular rectilinear feature 0.40-0.50m wide and on a north-west to south-east alignment. It was filled with (06), mid-grey brown clayey silt with large quantities of small limestone fragments. This was a land drain, and although it was not excavated it was probably of relatively recent date as it appeared broadly contemporary with ditch 09, and its stone filling also suggests it was a 'French drain' which was a type that became popular from the mid to late 19th century. Similar features were identified in Area 2 (see below).

No other features were identified in Area 1.

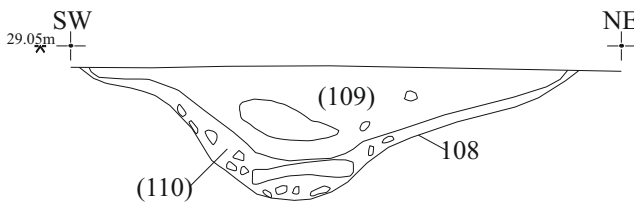
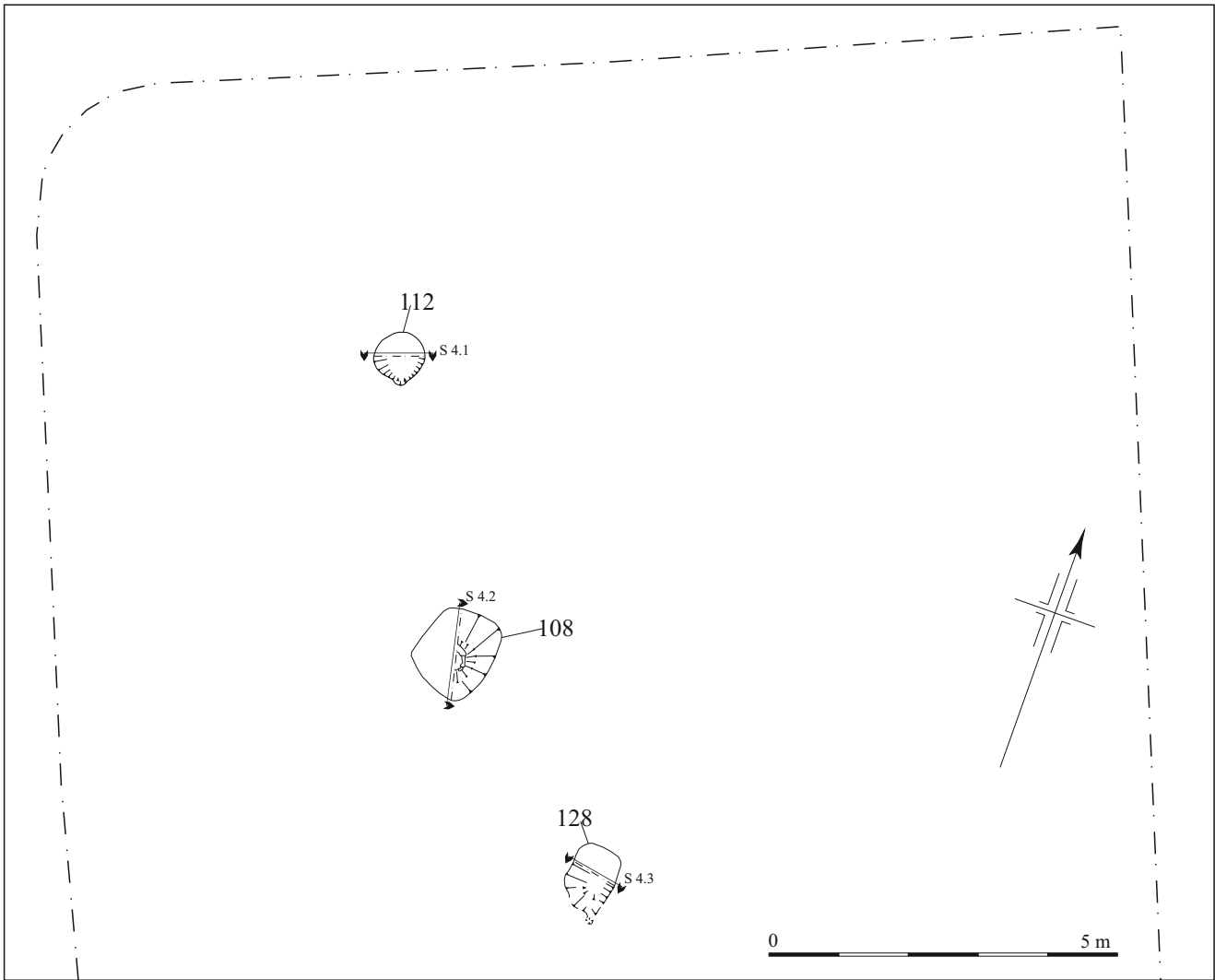
4.3 Area 2

A series of narrow, rectilinear features on broadly north-east to south-west alignments were identified extending across Area 2 following stripping. Up to 0.50m wide, these often had quite stony fills and were clearly additional early modern or modern land drains similar to the example recorded in Area 1. These features were not recorded, although they were planned as later intrusions where they intersected with archaeological features.

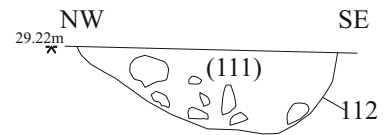
4.3.1 The western pit group

The features first identified in Area 2 were located in the stripped area of Plot 4. Cut 108 was a pit 1.32m long, 1.20m wide and up to 0.34m deep (Fig. 4, Section 4.1). It was broadly sub-square or sub-oval in plan, with rounded corners, and sides that were initially relatively gentle but which then sloped much more steeply down to a rounded concave base. The upper fill (109) was 0.24m thick and consisted of friable mid-grey brown clayey silt with occasional small sandstone and quartz fragments, moderate charcoal flecks and one large burnt sandstone fragment up to 0.24m long. The lower fill (110) was dull orange brown to bright orange red in colour, and consisted of compact scorched or burnt clay with burnt sandstone, shale and quartz fragments, the majority concentrated in the concave base of the cut (Plate 3). No finds were recovered from either fill, and sampling of both fills only produced small quantities of *Quercus* (oak) charcoal (see Robinson below).

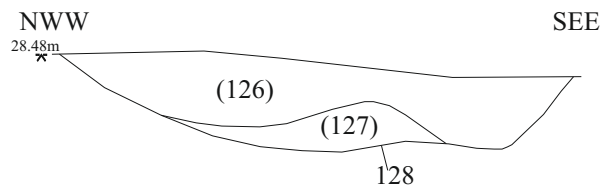
Pit 108 exhibited many features that were subsequently identified with many of the other pits recorded on the Site. It had a distinctively 'dished' or bowl-shaped profile, with a deeper, steeper-sided concave base at the centre of the cut, and its upper tertiary fill appeared to be the result of gradual silting over time rather than deliberate backfill. The primary fill was either a layer of redeposited burnt material, or more likely was at least in part the result of scorching or burning of the natural subsoil sides of the feature. Many of the pits excavated in Areas 2 and 3 to greater or lesser degrees displayed some scorching of their sides (but see Discussion below).



Section 4.1



Section 4.2



Section 4.3



Figure 4. Plan and sections of the western pit group, Area 2

Just over 3m north-west of 108 was another smaller, shallower pit or posthole cut 112. This was roughly circular in plan and 0.80m long, 0.70m wide and up to 0.20m deep, with relatively steep sides and a rounded, largely flat base (Fig. 4 Section 4.2). Its single fill (111) was mottled light yellow brown and mid-grey brown clayey silt with frequent subangular sandstone fragments less than 0.08m long, and which contained one heavily corroded iron object, possibly a nail. This feature did not exhibit any scorching, and may have been backfilled with partly re-deposited natural subsoil.

Approximately 3m south-west of 108 was cut 128, a shallow sub-oval or sub-rectangular feature 0.96m long, 0.70m wide but only 0.13m deep (Fig. 4, Section 4.3). It had very gently sloping sides that were irregular and poorly defined in places, and it had been disturbed by root or small mammal activity. Whilst it might not have been an anthropogenic feature at all, its 0.08m thick upper fill (126) was mid to dark reddish brown sandy silt that appeared to have been scorched or burnt, although it only contained a small quantity of charcoal. The lower fill (127) was a mixture of dark reddish brown sandy silt and light yellow brown clayey silt with angular shale and mudstone fragments, and this was probably partly re-deposited natural subsoil. No finds were recovered from this feature, and the asymmetric profile of fill (127) might even suggest that this was a shallow tree throw hole, albeit one that had apparently partly filled up with scorched material.

Further to the east, two additional pit features were uncovered when the intervening area between Plot 4 and Plot 6 was stripped (Fig. 5). Pit 135 was probably originally sub-circular in plan, and at least 1.10m long, 1.78m wide and up to 0.50m deep (Fig. 6, Section 6.1). It had initially relatively gentle sides which then shelved more steeply down into a concave, bowl-shaped base. Its upper fills (136), (137) and (138) were mostly friable dark or mid-grey brown sandy silty loams or clayey silts with occasional small sandstone or mudstone fragments, and these were likely to have derived largely from silting. Fill (139) was 0.28m thick and consisted of pink or orange-red sandy clayey silts with angular fragments of sandstone, slate and quartz, along with charcoal flecks. This appeared to be a dump of burnt material. Below it was another layer of grey brown silty loam (140), and then the primary fill of the feature layer (141), up to 0.10m thick and again comprising pink and orange sandy clay with charcoal and burnt or heat affected sandstone, slate and quartz (Plate 4). Although there had been some scorching of the pit sides which were slightly pinkish in colour and 'crispy' in texture, it was unclear if this had been the result of hot material being deliberately dumped within it rather than *in situ* burning.

The north-western side of pit 135 appeared to have been re-cut by later pit 146, a smaller sub-rounded feature 0.74m long, 1.60m wide and up to 0.32m deep (Fig. 6, Section 6.1). Its upper fill (147) was another mid-grey brown silty loam, above a highly compact, much more mixed and mottled light yellow brown and mid-grey brown sandy clayey silt (148), which seemed to be partly comprised of redeposited natural subsoil. The deposit interface between (147) and (148) had a distinct but unusual convex, even funnel-shaped profile. Although pit 146 did appear to truncate 135, it is nevertheless also possible that this interface was actually a result of backfilling, and that originally the two features were linked and 'open' at the same time. The two features might even have had some form of specialist or even 'industrial' function. No finds were recovered from either feature.

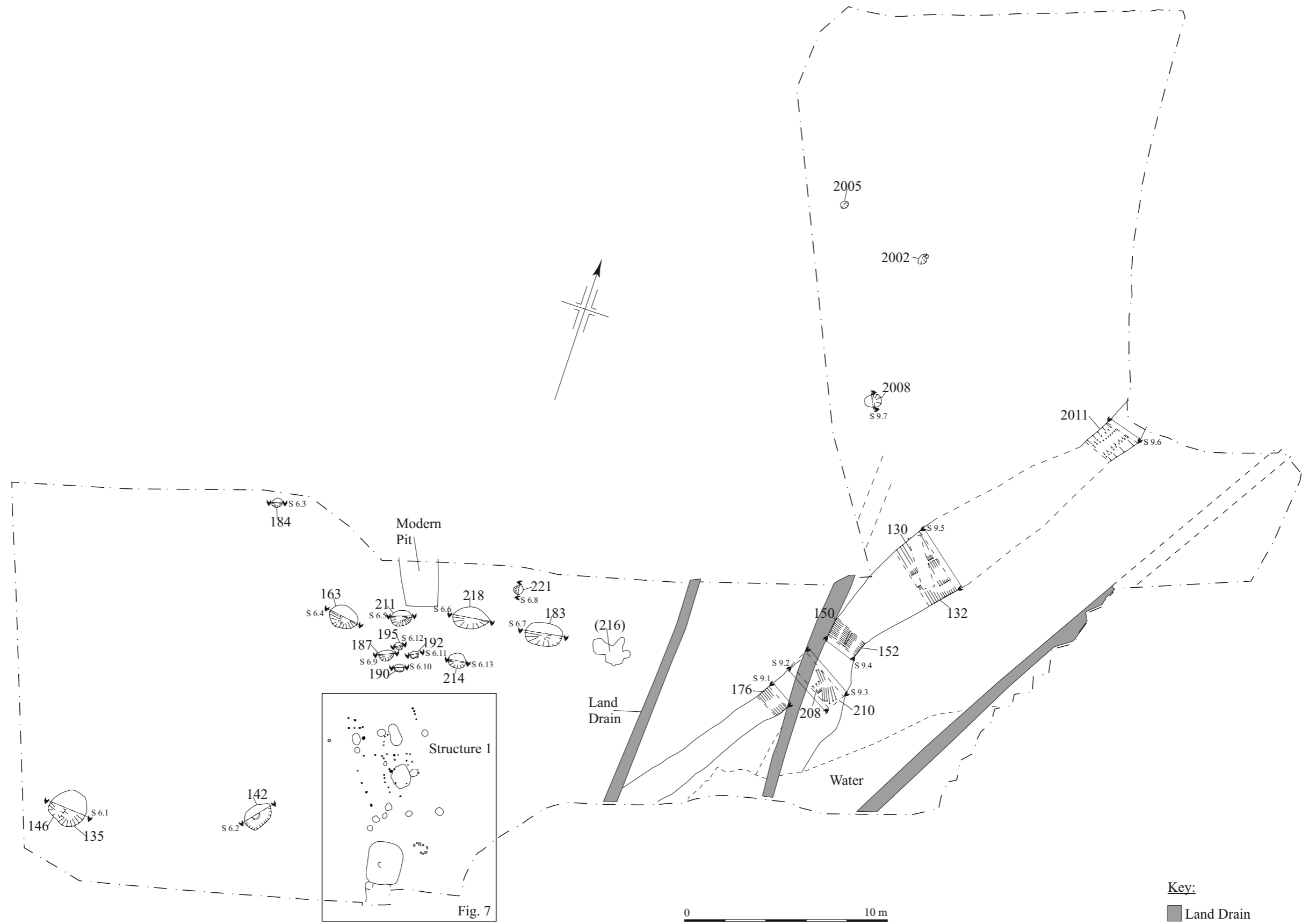


Figure 5. Plan of Areas 2 and 3

Approximately 8m to the east of pits 135/146 was pit 142, a sub-oval feature 1.40m long, 1.20m wide and 0.41m deep, with a notably asymmetric profile (Fig. 6, Section 6.2). The south-western and southern sides were much steeper than those to the north-east, and the feature again had a concave bowl-shaped base. Its upper fill (143) was mid-grey brown clayey sandy loam and its secondary fill (144) was a mix of yellow brown and orange brown sandy clay, but the primary fill (145) consisted of mid-orange brown clay and burnt stone, with little evidence for scorching of the pit sides. No finds were recovered from this feature.

4.3.2 The northern pit group

Another group comprising large and small pits was recorded along the northern edge of Area 2 (Fig. 5). Several outlying features were identified, but there was also a markedly linear arrangement of pits, and a cluster of smaller features. Most of these features contained a mixture of more silty fills and burnt clay material but not necessarily charcoal, and only some exhibited heavily scorched sides. Few contained any artefacts, and full details of the fills are listed in Appendix 1. Whilst some of the upper fills appeared similar to the overlying colluvium (100), others were visibly different as they contained orange or reddish heat-affected material.

Pit 184 was sub-circular in plan, 0.48m long, 0.46m wide and 0.12m deep, with quite gentle sides and a rounded, gently concave base (Fig. 6, Section 6.3). Its upper fill (185) was mottled light yellow, pink, and orange red clayey sand, with a lower fill (186) of compact yellow, red and orange clay. No finds were recovered. This small feature seemed to be the outlier of a larger group of features 6m to the south-east starting with pit cut 163, which was oval in plan and 1.45m long, 1m wide and 0.30m deep (Fig. 6, Section 6.4). This too had initially gentle sides and a steeper, rounded concave base, and seemed to have marked scorching or burning around the sides. The lower fill (166) was compact red, yellow and black clayey sand with charcoal flecks and large quantities of angular quartz fragments (Plate 5). Samples of deposit (166) indicated that the charcoal was of *Betula* (birch), *Aldis* (alder) and *Quercus* (oak) (see Robinson below). Its middle fill (165) was more compact mottled grey brown, light yellow and pink sandy silty clay with slate, quartz and charcoal. One piece of worked flint was recovered from this layer. The upper fill (164) was mid-grey brown sandy silty loam with sandstone, slate and quartz fragments and charcoal flecks.

Pit 211 was oval-shaped and 1m wide, 0.75m wide and 0.26m deep, with initially gentle sides and a steeper, bowl-shaped concave base (Fig. 6, Section 6.5). Its upper fill (212) was mottled yellow, mid-brown, pink, orange and red clayey sand with charcoal flecks, whilst the lower fill (213) was largely light yellow brown but with mottles of the pink, orange and red material and angular quartz fragments. No finds were recovered. Pit 218 was markedly elliptical in plan and 1.80m long, 1.15m wide and 0.24m deep, with very gentle sides and a gently concave base (Fig. 6, Section 6.6, Plate 6). Its single mid-brown to reddish brown clayey silt fill (217) contained some sandstone and quartz fragments, and charcoal flecks, but did not produce any finds.

Cut 183 was sub-oval in plan and 1.80m long, 1.18m wide and 0.22m deep, with gently sloping sides and a concave base (Fig. 6, Section 6.7). Its single fill (134) consisted of mixed light yellow brown, orange and red clayey silty sand and angular sandstone and quartz fragments, with much of the heat-affected material concentrated in the upper part of the fill. This may well have been re-deposited, dumped material.

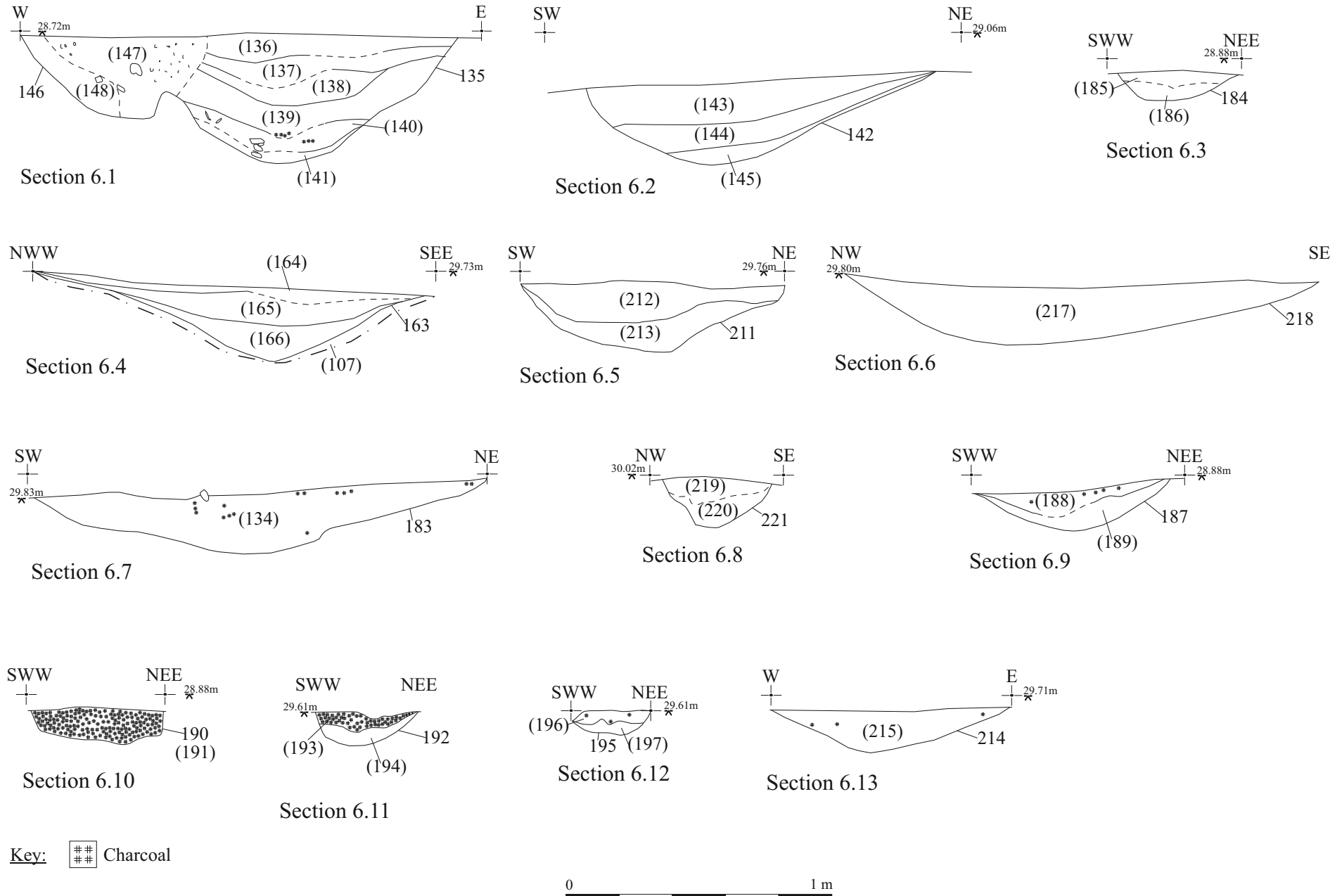


Figure 6. Sections of pits

Just 2m north-west of pit 183 was cut 221, a smaller oval feature 0.50m long, 0.41m wide and up to 0.19m deep, with steep sides to the north but more gentle sides at the south, dropping to a gently concave base (Fig. 6, Section 6.8). Its upper fill (219) was mottled light yellow brown dark grey brown and reddish brown sandy silt, with occasional mudstone and quartz fragments and charcoal flecks. The lower fill (220) was similarly mixed and mottled, though generally redder in colour, and the interface between them was rather diffuse and unclear – both fills may thus have been dump deposits. No finds were recovered from cut 183 or 221.

On the same general alignment as pits 163, 211, 218 and 183, another area of darker and partly burnt material was identified, consisting of light to dark grey clayey silt with significant quantities of ash and charcoal. Initially it was thought that this layer (216) would be the upper fill of another sub-oval pit, but it was very irregular in shape, up to *c.* 5m long and 3.50m wide (Fig. 5). It proved to be only 0.02-0.05m thick, and lay partly within three irregular and shallow interlinked depressions up to 2m long and 1.40m wide. These depressions were either very shallow ‘scoops’ in the natural subsoil, or possibly the remains of small tree-throw holes. Deposit (216) was probably just a thin spread of material that may have been derived from the same burning or heating activities which also produced the material that was deposited into the pits. The layer was not sampled as it was very thin, and consequently the possibility of contamination was too high. The underlying natural subsoil appeared ‘crispy’ and discoloured in places, and it may be that hot ashes had been spread around on the original ground surface.

A cluster of four small oval or sub-circular pits or postholes was also identified (Plate 7). Cut 187 was 0.78m long and 0.50m wide, and up to 0.16m deep (Fig. 6, Section 6.9). It had gently sloping sides and a slightly concave base, and its upper fill (188) was reddish brown and pink loamy or clayey sand with some quartz fragments and moderate quantities of charcoal. The lower fill (189) was more compact, light yellow brown clayey sand with sandstone and quartz fragments, probably incorporating redeposited natural subsoil. Cut 190 was 0.45m long, 0.40m wide and up to 0.14m deep, with steep sides and a largely flat base (Fig. 6.10). Its single black fill (191) consisted of *c.* 80-90% alder charcoal in a silty sand matrix. This feature became visible during machining of the colluvium (100), so it is not clear from what level this feature was actually dug. That it formed such a tight spatial group with pits 187, 192 and 195 would suggest that these features were contemporary, however.

Cut 192 was 0.36m long, 0.30m wide and 0.12m deep (Fig. 6.11). It had an asymmetric profile, with very steep western sides but more gentle eastern sides, and a very charcoal-rich (*c.* 80%) black upper fill (193). The lower fill (194) consisted of pale yellow loamy sand and quartz fragments, probably re-deposited natural subsoil. Cut 195 was approximately 0.30m in diameter but only 0.07m deep, with very gently sloping sides and a slightly irregular but generally concave base (Fig. 6, Section 6.12). The upper fill (196) was mid-grey brown silty loamy sand with some sandstone and quartz fragments, and occasional charcoal flecks. The lower fill (197) was more light yellow loamy sand derived from natural subsoil. No finds were recovered from any of the four pit or posthole features. Approximately 1.5m to the east of the four small pits or postholes was cut 214, an oval feature 0.90m long, 0.75m wide and 0.16m deep, with very gentle sides and a gently concave base (Fig. 6, Section 6.13). Its single fill (215) consisted of mottled yellow orange, pink and red loamy sand with quartz fragments and charcoal, which did not produce any finds.

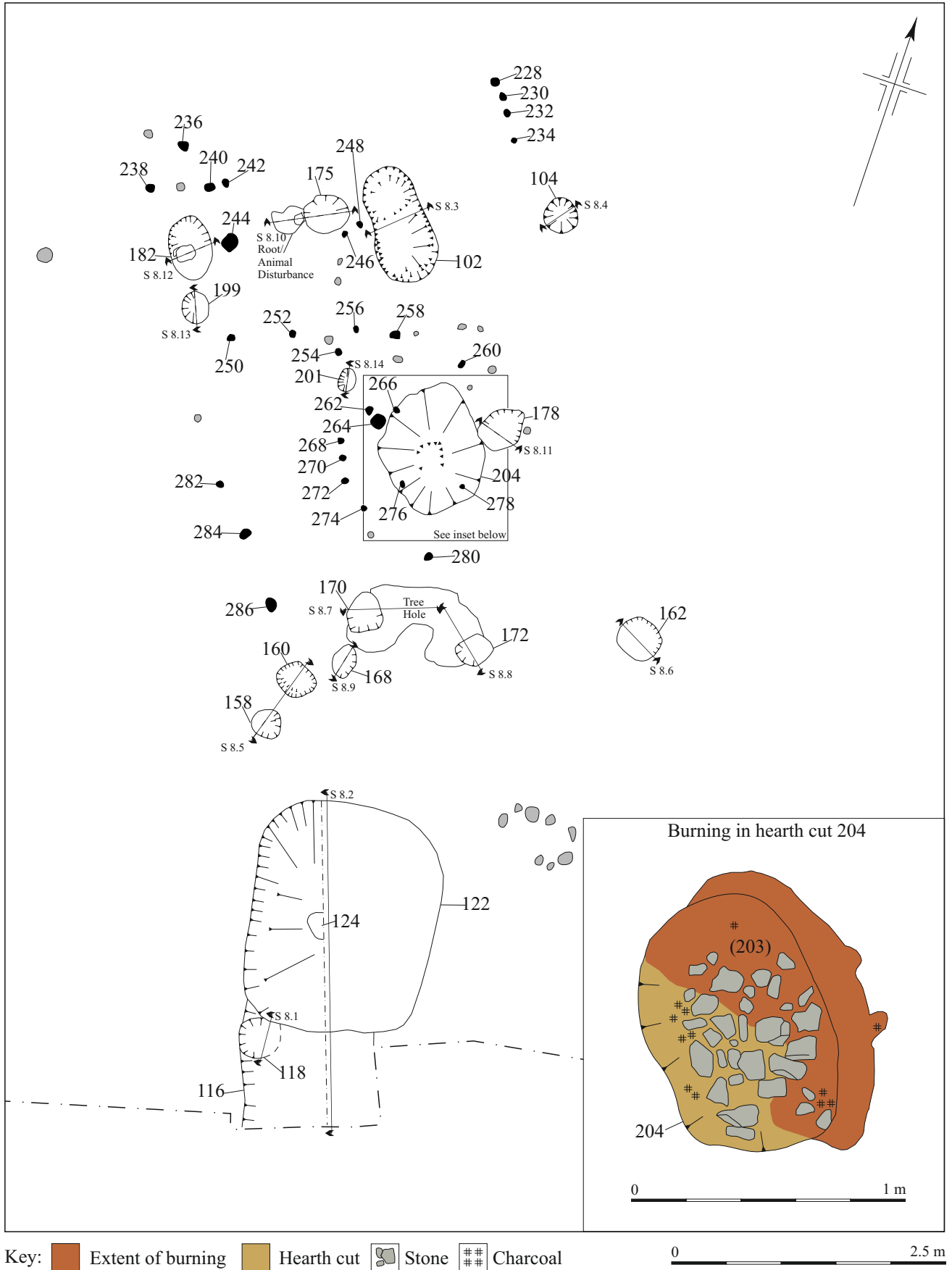


Figure 7. Area 2 - detailed plan of Structure 1
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4.3.3 Southern pits and Structure 1

At the extreme southern edge of the Site, two intercutting features were identified. Cut 116 was either the terminal of a ditch or a subrectangular pit up to 1.30m wide and 0.30m deep, with steep sides, a flat base and at least 1.30m of its length revealed in plan (Figs. 7-8, Section 8.2; Plate 8). There was a circular posthole 118 cut into the north-western side of cut 116, 0.30m in diameter and 0.17m deep (Fig. 8.1). Its fill (119) was mottled light yellow and brown clayey silt, sealed by the primary fill of cut 116 which consisted of compact and hard grey black alder charcoal and clay up to 0.06m deep (121). This appeared to be a deposit that had then been burnt *in situ*, perhaps by the material that had been deposited above it. The secondary fill (117) was up to 0.24m thick and consisted mostly of burnt sandstone and quartz fragments up to 0.08m long, along with large quantities of charcoal, and it was probably a dump deposit. It contained one sherd of possibly residual Middle Bronze Age pottery.

Both fills of 116 were cut by pit 122, a subrectangular feature with rounded corners that was 1.92m long, 1.70m wide and 0.34m deep, with initially steep sides that had a distinctive break in slope towards the base, after which they sloped more gradually towards the largely flat base (Fig. 8, Section 8.2). There was a shallow rounded depression 124 in the base 0.26m in diameter and only 0.06m deep. This might have been the base of a post, and its fill (125) consisted of mid-brownish grey clayey silt. Its stratigraphic relationship with 122 was unclear, but it seems likely that it was dug into the base of the pit when the latter was still 'open', rather than the pit truncating it.

Pit 122 had slight evidence for scorching on the lower sides and base of the feature, though this did not appear to have been the result of more intense heat one might associate with *in situ* burning. This may mean that the burnt material was dumped into the feature as hot embers. Pit 122 contained a series of fills containing burnt stone and charcoal, with an upper mottled yellow and mid-brown clayey silt (114), dark grey black charcoal and clay (115), dark grey clay (123), compact mottled light brown grey and reddish orange clay and charcoal (120), and a primary fill of light yellow brown sandy clay with charcoal and burnt sandstone (113) which in part was re-deposited natural subsoil. Fill (115) was composed almost entirely of charcoal, including carbonised twig, and palaeo-environmental sampling also recovered hazelnut shells, birch and hawthorn and/or apple, in addition to some burnt sloe, hawthorn and black bindweed seeds. One tiny sherd of Late Iron Age or Romano-British pottery was also recovered from a soil sample of this fill.

Less than a metre to the north of pit 122 was the south-western corner of Structure 1, some features of which had been recognised early on during the stripping of Plot 6. When the immediate area was carefully cleaned back, a series of pits, postholes and stakeholes became visible (Plates 9-10), forming part of what is considered to be a rectangular structure 4m long on its north-west to south-east axis, and 3.60m wide on its north-east to south-west alignment (see Discussion). This appears to have been a relatively lightweight building. Structure 1 had four possible corner postholes – cuts 104, 158, 162 and 182. Posthole 104 at the north-east corner was 0.32m long, 0.29m wide and up to 0.55m deep, with very steep, in some places near-vertical sides and a rounded, concave base (Fig. 8, Section 8.4). Its fill (103) was mid to dark grey brown sandy silt, darker in the middle and becoming more clayey towards the base of the feature. Rapidly dug in watching brief conditions and although no postpipe *per se* was identified within it, large tabular mudstone fragments up to 0.20m long excavated

near the centre of fill (103) had almost certainly been used as post-packing. One granite stone was a fragment of a probable quern (see Gilbert below), and the packing stones seem to have collapsed inwards on themselves, probably after the removal of a wooden post. The darker material at the centre of the fill was probably the silted-up void left when the post was removed.

Posthole 162 at the south-east corner was 0.35m in diameter and 0.46m deep, with steep sides and a rounded, concave base (Fig. 8, Section 8.6). Its single fill (161) was mid-greyish brown clayey silt, and a void in this material near the base of the posthole may again reflect where a post was removed. Posthole 158 was 0.27m in diameter and 0.20m deep, with quite steep sides and a gently concave base (Fig. 8, Section 8.5). Its single fill (157) was mid-grey brown clayey silt with occasional sandstone and mudstone fragments, and charcoal flecks. Only 0.25m to the north of 158 was posthole 160, which was 0.35m long, 0.33m wide and 0.49m deep, with steep sides and a markedly concave, almost pointed base (Fig. 8, Section 8.5). The fill (159) was dark grey brown clayey silt with charcoal flecks and large sandstone fragments up to 0.20m long, the latter almost certainly once packing stones. It was not clear if posthole 158 or 160 comprised the original south-western corner of Structure 1, but one was probably a later repair or replacement of the other.

Between postholes 158 and 160 and posthole 162 were several shallow features that might have represented additional supports for a roof, or a wattle and daub or hurdle wall. Cut 168 was 0.32m long and 0.28m wide, and up to 0.15m deep with irregular but relatively steep sides and a concave base (Fig. 8, Section 8.9). Its fill (167) was light grey brown clayey silt with charcoal flecks. Cut 170 was sub-oval in plan, 0.40m long, 0.30m wide and 0.15m deep, with moderately steep sides and a flat base (Fig. 8, Section 8.7). Its dark grey brown clayey silt fill (169) contained significant quantities of burnt sandstone and quartz, charcoal and one flint flake. Cut 172 was 0.30m long, 0.25m wide and only 0.10m deep, with more gently sloping sides and a gently concave base (Fig. 8, Section 8.8). The mid-grey brown clayey silt fill (171) contained some small stone fragments and charcoal flecks, but no finds. Postholes 170 and 172 may have been dug through a pre-existing tree-throw hole, but it is also possible that some disturbance post-dated these features. Both their fills were underneath an irregular 0.05m thick spread of grey black clayey silt and charcoal (173), which was up to 1.20m long and 0.90m wide, and had accumulated within a slight hollow. Although there were definitely anthropogenic postholes present, this area had also clearly been disturbed by tree roots and small mammal burrowing.

The north-west corner of Structure 1 was formed by posthole 182, an oval feature 0.60m long, 0.38m wide and up to 0.22m deep with regular, near-vertical sides and a flat or gently concave base (Fig. 8, Section 8.12; Plate 11). Its lower fill (181) was up to 0.14m thick and consisted of mottled light yellow brown and dark grey brown clayey silt with occasional mudstone and quartz fragments and frequent charcoal lumps and flecks. The upper fill (180) was mottled mid to dark grey brown sandy silt, with one very large (0.25m long) subrounded granite block and other large fragments of slate and mudstone, along with significant quantities of hazel charcoal. The large stones were clearly packing for a timber post, but they actually formed the majority of the volume of fill (180). There was very little room for an upright, so it is possible that at least some of the largest stones were originally on the ground surface around a timber post prior to its removal, and had fallen into a void once the post was removed.

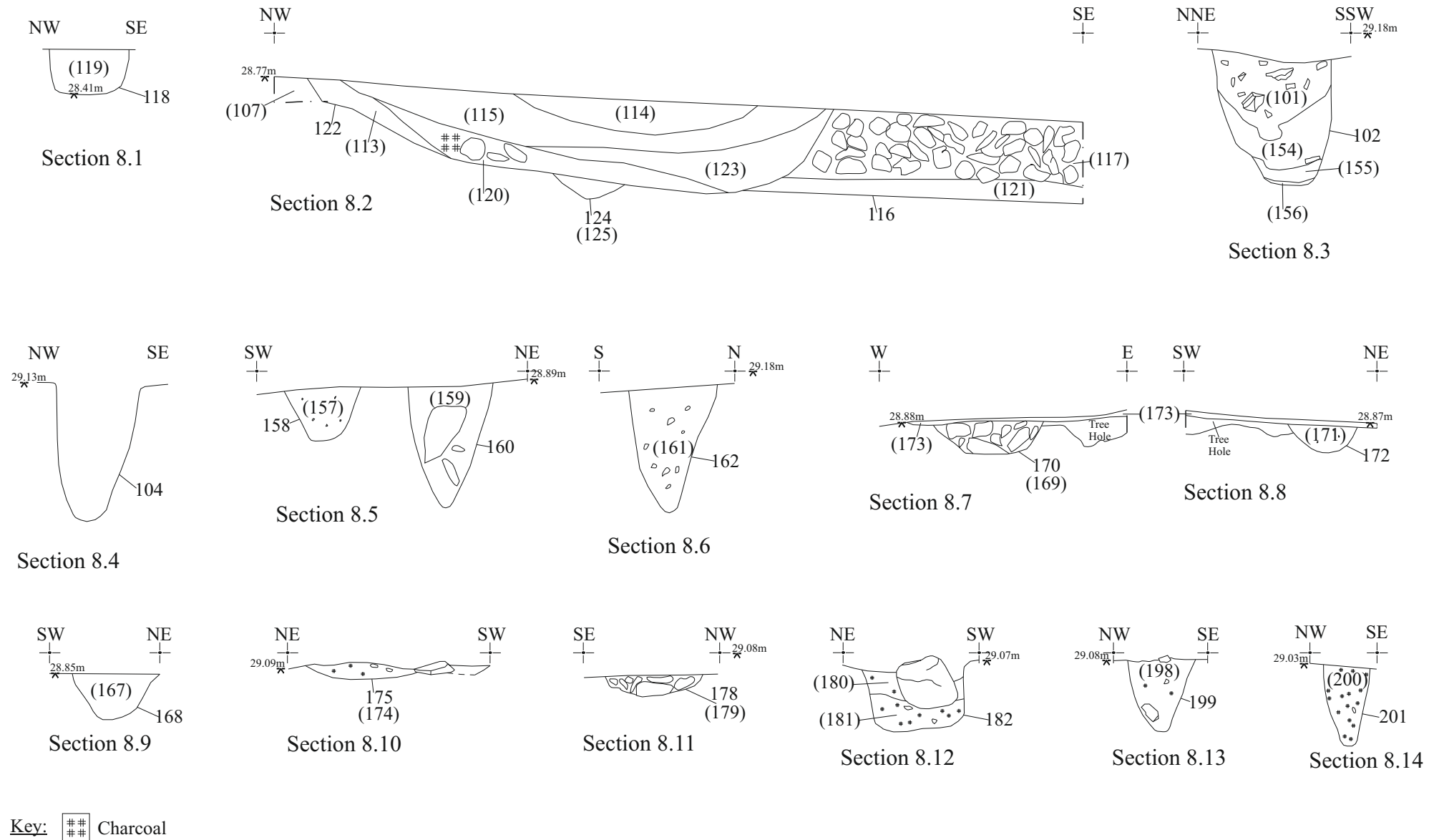


Figure 8. Area 2 - Structure 1 sections

As with the south-western corner and southern extent of Structure 1, the north-west and northern part of the building also had additional postholes. South of cut 182, posthole 199 was 0.26m long, 0.25m wide and 0.28m deep, with very steep sides and a concave, almost pointed base (Fig. 8, Section 8.13). Its single fill (198) was mottled mid-grey to dark grey brown sandy silt with some quartz and mudstone fragments, ash and charcoal flecks. This may have been a repair or replacement for posthole 182, or additional support. Nearly 1m east of posthole 182 was cut 175, a possible subrounded feature 0.42m long, 0.31m wide but only 0.07m deep. It had quite steeply sloping, regular sides to the north but to the west these were more irregular, gradual and had also been disturbed by roots or burrowing animals (Fig. 8, Section 8.10). The single fill (174) was a mottled light yellow brown, mid-grey brown and dark grey-black sandy silt with small quartz and mudstone fragments, and charcoal flecks.

Just to the east of 175 was cut 102, which was slightly over the midline of Structure 1. It was broadly oval in plan and 0.90m long, 0.44m wide and up to 0.51m deep, and was noticeably narrower at its mid-point forming an almost 'figure 8' shape in plan. The smooth and regular sides were very steep to the north and north-east, and even slightly undercut to the south-west, but there was a slight break in slope to the north and north-east (Fig. 8, Section 8.3). The base was flat to the south, but in the northern half noticeably rounded and gently concave, and slightly deeper. The primary fill (156) was a thin layer of dark grey brown ashy silt only 0.01m thick, which was only really present in the northern, deeper half of the feature, below a thin layer of mottled light yellow brown and light orange sandy clayey silt (155) up to 0.06m thick, which was probably re-deposited natural subsoil. This in turn was below a 0.21m thick deposit (154) of mottled light to mid-grey brown sandy ashy silt with some small quartz and mudstone fragments, but also frequent lumps and flecks of alder and oak charcoal (Plate 12). In the southern half of the feature, one especially large, tabular stone was set horizontally at the interface between (154) and (155) (Plate 13). The upper fill (101) was mottled dark grey brown and dark grey sandy silt with frequent burnt and heat-affected mudstone and shale fragments, and frequent charcoal lumps and flecks. Some of the stone in the northern half of the feature was set vertically and appeared to form a box-like arrangement within layer (101), and this was probably the packing for an upright post. No clear postpipe was identified, but the interface between (154) and (101) was indistinct, loose and 'dished' in profile, and may reflect where a post was withdrawn. One sherd of cord-impressed Middle Bronze Age pot was recovered from the surface of fill (101) when it was first being cleaned up.

During this initial cleaning, cut 102 was thought to be a small pit, oven or industrial feature of some kind. Although some light scorching was visible on its sides, however, there was no sign of more intense *in situ* burning that might have characterised an oven, hearth or furnace. The scorching may simply have been derived from hot ash and charcoal being dumped into the feature. The flat stone near the base of the southern half of the feature was probably a post-pad stone, whilst the stones in its northern half were probably post packing. This suggests that 102 was a double posthole, but the posts may have been of slightly different heights, and it is unclear whether they were actually contemporary or not. Unfortunately, the section was excavated across the width of feature 102 at its mid-point, rather than longitudinally, so it was not immediately clear that this could have been a double posthole. Although there may have been one or two posts acting as additional roof supports, but the otherwise relatively insubstantial nature of Structure 1 might argue against this. Alternatively, and perhaps more likely, cut 102 may have formed the

post settings for a frame or stand of some sort, perhaps with a specific purpose associated with hearth cut 204 to the south.

Near the centre of Structure 1 was cut 204, an irregular feature 1.22m long, 0.90m wide and up to 0.18m deep, with gentle sides to the north and east, but steeper edges to the west and south (Plan 7). The base was generally slightly concave, but there was also a sub-square depression at the centre of the feature, with several large, tabular sandstone fragments set or pressed into it. The lowest fill (203) within cut 204 consisted mostly of burnt mudstone and shale fragments set within a reddish orange, dark grey black and mid to dark grey sandy silt matrix, with moderate quantities of alder and oak charcoal lumps and flecks (Plate 14). The stone and sides of the cut had been burnt, especially to the north, east and south-east, and there may have been several 'firings' within this feature as there were laminated layers of stone and burnt material. The upper fill (202) consisted of mottled orange brown and mid to dark grey brown sandy silt with angular quartz and mudstone fragments, most of the latter being burnt. This deposit was mixed with charcoal and some of the underlying burnt material, and had been disturbed by rootlets.

Cut 204 was a clearly a hearth or oven. Beneath the lower fill (203) and driven into the sides of the feature were several small stakeholes – cuts 266, 276 and 278. These may have supported stands or frameworks. Deposit (203) was extremely similar to fills (117) and (115) and (120) in cuts 116 and 122, and it is likely that raked out material from the hearth had been dumped into these two nearby features. On the eastern side of hearth 204 was cut 178, an irregular feature 0.44m long, 0.30m wide but only 0.08m deep, with quite steep sides and a gently concave base (Fig. 8, Section 8.11). Its fill (179) consisted of 80-85% burnt sandstone and mudstone fragments in a matrix of dark grey brown clayey silt with large quantities of charcoal, and this may have been derived from hearth cut 204.

Several small postholes or stakeholes may have been associated with hearth 204. Cut 201 was 0.17m wide, 0.14m wide and 0.31m deep, with steep, near-vertical sides and a markedly concave or pointed base (Fig. 8, Section 8.14). The single fill (200) was very dark grey brown sand silt with frequent charcoal lumps and flecks. Cut 264 was a large stakehole 0.14m long, 0.12m wide and 0.12m deep, with steep sides and a pointed base. Cuts 260 and 262 were small individual stakeholes, but cuts 268, 270, 272 and 274 formed a broadly north-west to south-east line 0.30-0.40m to the west of cut 204. One possible additional stakehole in this alignment was not excavated.

Extending in a north-west to south-east orientated line along the western edge of Structure 1 were stakeholes 282, 284, and 286. Another possible additional stakehole in this alignment was not excavated. To the north of hearth cut 204 and extending in a roughly NWW-SEE line were stakeholes 250, 252, 254, 256 and 258, plus several probable but unexcavated examples (Fig. 7). Several stakeholes located around the north-western corner of Structure 1 included cuts 236, 238, 240, 242, 246 and 248; whilst extending from the north-east corner to the north-west were stakeholes 228, 230, 232 and 234. These stakeholes were 0.06-0.08m in diameter and up to 0.12m deep, and had similar mottled dark grey brown sandy silt fills, with occasional small stones and charcoal flecks but no finds. The stakeholes shown on Fig. 7 were either confirmed excavated features, or probable unexcavated features that were in the same alignments as verified examples. These stakeholes probably represented hurdle or wattle and daub panels forming walls, windbreaks and/or internal partitions.

4.3.4 Area 2 and 3 ditches

During the soil stripping, a series of linear features were identified extending across the eastern and south-eastern edge of Area 2. The natural subsoil in this lowest-lying part of the Site consisted of blue grey alluvial clays and silts, which were palaeochannel fills of one or more precursors of the existing stream channel just a few metres to the south. The alluvial clays readily held water, and indeed for much of the September-October 2011 excavation period there was a pool of standing water covering part of this south-eastern area.

Three modern land drains of the same type observed in Area 1 were present on north-south and north-east to south-west orientations, draining down into the low-lying alluvial area (Fig. 5). Two of these land drains truncated an earlier linear feature or features, which proved to be a series of intercutting ditches extending for at least 32m on broadly south-west to north-east alignments. Their combined width was up to 4.20m. The ditches curved slightly to the north, following a slight break in slope in the natural subsoil which sloped down to the south and south-east, and they too had clearly once drained into the palaeochannel.

Ditch cut 176 was up to 1.35m wide and 0.28m deep, with quite gently sloping, slightly irregular sides, and an irregular but concave base. Although only one cut and two fills were recorded, there were some indications of a possible recutting episode – the base of the ditch had a noticeable ‘double dip’ profile, and there was a slightly convex area of natural subsoil in between the two concave depressions along the base of ditch 176 which might be further evidence of this (Fig. 9, Section 9.1). The primary fill at the base of the south-eastern depression contained much gravel and was noticeably more stony than the rest of fill (177), which otherwise consisted of compact or plastic mid-grey clay and clayey silt up to 0.14m thick. Above this was (149), mid-brown to grey brown clayey silt recorded as (105) during initial cleaning.

Ditch cut 176 was on a north-east to south-west alignment converged with another ditch further to the east, orientated NNE-SSW. A hand-dug section was excavated at the junction of these two linear features, but unfortunately a modern land drain had destroyed evidence for the stratigraphic relationship between the two archaeological features. Ditch cut 208 was probably the same as cut 176, but it was only just visible in the north-east facing section as a feature with one visible steep-edge at least 0.40m wide and 0.22m deep with a gently concave base. The single fill (207) was grey brown clayey silt similar to (105) and (149). Its south-eastern edge had been truncated by the modern land drain, but further to the south-east the second ditch was recorded as cut 210. The nature of this feature was not at all clear, and although it was planned and also recorded in two sections, it was very different in profile in each. In the north-east facing section (Fig. 9, Section 9.2), 210 appeared to be a shallow gully or slot 0.16m deep but very broad, and its edges were not readily discernible. It was filled by (209), brownish grey clayey silt with some small quartz and slate fragments, but very similar to the upper alluvial ditch fills recorded in other sections. In the opposite, south-east facing section, cut 210 was even more shallow, and to the north-west almost appeared to have a partly concave base, though this was probably where cut 176/208 was situated (Fig. 9, Section 9.3). If it was the latter, then no relationship between the two cuts and their fills could be elucidated. Above (209) was layer (129), a shallow mid-brown clayey silt with some quartz and slate fragments. This may have formed above a shallow depression created by both ditches.

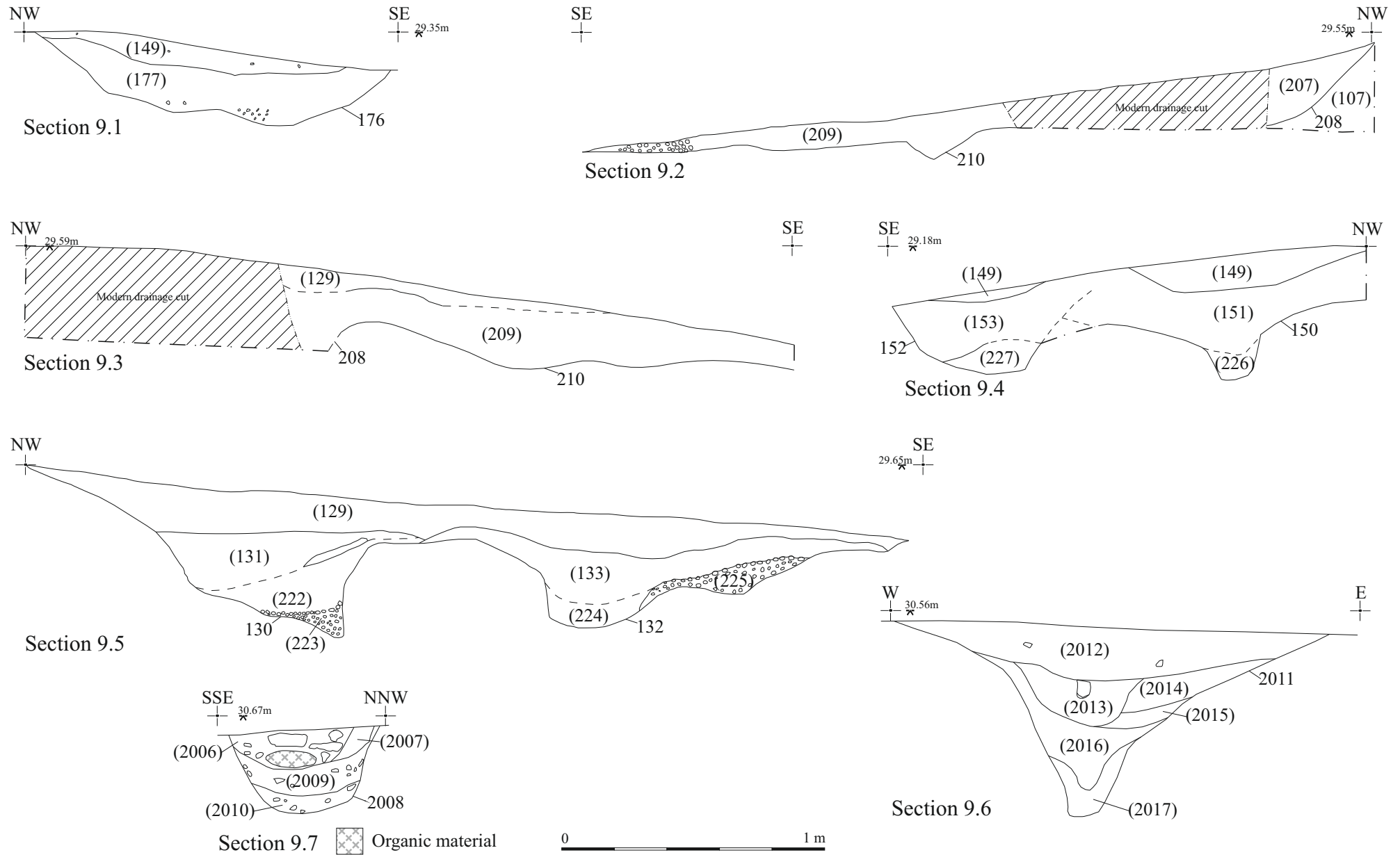


Figure 9. Sections of ditches and Area 3 pit cut 2008

Just 1-2m to the north-west, another hand-dug section was excavated to try and ascertain the stratigraphic relationship between ditch 176/208 and 210. Cut 150 was the north-western ditch, equivalent to 176/208, and was at least 1.15m wide and 0.46m deep (Fig. 9, Section 9.4). It had relatively gently sloping sides, but a distinct slot at the base of the feature with much steeper sides. This could have been a spade-dug slot, but might also have been the result of fluvial erosion. The north-western edge of cut 150 was unclear due to truncation by a modern land drain; whilst its relationship with cut 152 to the south-east was also uncertain. The primary fill of cut 150 was compact, dark grey gravel and clayey silt (226) up to 0.10m thick with frequent quartz fragments and small pebbles. Above this was (151), mid-grey clay with occasional small quartz fragments.

Ditch cut 152 to the south-east was at least 0.65m wide and 0.32m deep, and its primary fill (227) was another dark grey gravel and clayey silt deposit, similar to (226) (Fig. 9, Section 9.4). This fill had a noticeably convex upper interface, and was either a dump deposit or else may have been deposited quite quickly by alluvial action. The main fill of cut 152 was another mid-grey clayey silt (153), very similar to (151). This similarity in fills made discerning the relationship between ditches and 150 and 152 extremely difficult. Both features were also overlain by deposit (149), mid-brown clayey silt with occasional mudstone and quartz fragments that was equivalent to (129), and which had clearly formed within the shallow depression left by the two silted up ditches. In the one recorded section of ditches 150 and 152 (Fig. 9.4) these appeared as two separate shallow tertiary fills, but in the opposite south-west facing section (not illustrated) it was just one single thin layer.

Approximately 4m to the north-west, another hand-dug ditch section was excavated to try and establish the relationship between the two ditches, at a point where a geotechnical test pit had already caused disturbance. Ditch cut 130 was the north-western feature, equivalent to 176/208/150. It was 1.10m wide and 0.52m deep, and had a noticeably asymmetric profile with an initially quite gently sloping north-western edge becoming much steeper towards the base of the cut, whereas the south-eastern side was initially much steeper and then became almost vertical (Fig. 9, Section 9.5). The narrow slot at the base of the cut appeared to undercut the south-eastern edge, and was the result of active fluvial erosion. The primary fill (223) was light grey brown and orange brown gravel and clay with frequent pebbles and quartz fragments, beneath dark grey brown and blue grey clayey silt (222). The upper deposit (131) was mid-grey clayey silt, and this produced a worked flint flake.

Ditch cut 132 was 1.50-1.70m wide and up to 0.43m deep, with an irregular and asymmetric profile that featured initially quite gently sloping sides, but which then became steeper, especially on its north-western side. It also had a 'double dip' profile at its base with two concave depressions, and this might indicate the presence of an otherwise unidentified recut (Fig. 9, Section 9.5). Although the deposit interfaces were indistinct, the primary fill seemed to consist of compact mid-brown to orange brown gravel and clayey silt with frequent mudstone, shale and quartz pebbles and fragments (225). This appeared to be beneath blue grey and grey brown clayey silt (224), which was very similar to layer (222) in adjacent ditch cut 130. The uppermost ditch deposit was (133) which comprised mid-grey clayey silt with occasional mudstone and quartz fragments. It is possible that the interface between deposits (224) and (133) above, and (225) below, actually marked a recut episode, but this could not be satisfactorily established. In section there were also faint indications that

ditch 130 had cut ditch 132, but again this was by no means clear. The shallow depression formed by both silted up ditches was filled by a single tertiary fill (129), the same as deposits (129) and (149) recorded in sections elsewhere. During the excavation of this particular section, however, two sherds of gabbroic pottery likely to be of 1st century BC to mid-2nd century AD date were recovered from fill (129), roughly above ditch cut 130.

The fills of both ditches 130 and 132 were very hard to differentiate from the underlying alluvial palaeochannel deposits, and this made it hard to define the edges of the cuts of the two features. Although it is possible that the lower gravel-rich fills (223) and (225) were actually natural deposits and that the lower interfaces of the ditches were not clearly identified, the sides of both ditches did seem to have experienced erosion from fast-moving water, so it is thought more likely that such deposits were laid down within anthropogenic cut features.

The removal of a large bund of stockpiled earth and the topsoil and subsoil lying beneath it led to a final phase of archaeological work in January 2012. The line of the ditches was observed to continue further to the north-east, though the width of the fill appeared to narrow considerably. One additional hand-dug section was excavated, approximately 11m further to the north-east of cuts 130 and 132. In contrast to most of the previous ditch sections, only one ditch cut was readily apparent at this point. Cut 2011 was 1.65m wide and 0.75m deep, with initially relatively gentle sides then becoming much more steep, with a narrow slot forming the base of the feature (Fig. 9, Section 9.6). The primary fill (2017) consisted of mixed yellow and orange grey sandy clayey gravel, beneath mid-grey clayey silt with some quartz fragments (2016) that was similar to the alluvial fills recorded in other excavated ditch segments. This layer was up to 0.24m thick, and was beneath a series of smaller deposits including orange yellow sand and gravel (2015), firm grey clay (2014), and mixed and mottled yellow brown and grey sandy clay with frequent gravel (2013). Fill (2012) extended across the full width of cut 2011, and was mid-grey brown clayey silt with occasional mudstone and quartz fragments and charcoal flecks. One piece of worked flint was recovered from this upper deposit, which was probably equivalent to (129/149).

The marked narrowing of the previously double ditches to one apparent single cut was unusual, but the interface between (2016), and (2013) and (2015) above, might have actually represented a recut of an earlier feature. Thus, moving downslope from the north-east, the line of one single but recut feature diverged slightly into two distinct ditches – ditch 130/150/208, and ditch 132/152/210, which shortly afterwards then split completely into two separate ditches on different alignments, one of which was represented by ditch cut 176, although this could also itself have been recut. There thus seemed to have been a complex sequence of ditch digging episodes, most of which could not be placed in a stratigraphic sequence.

4.4 Area 3 pits

Apart from the continuation of the known ditches from Area 2 (see above), only three archaeological features were recorded during monitoring of the newly stripped Area 3 (Fig. 5). The continuation of several land drains was also identified, along with two additional sub-square geotechnical test pits along the northern edge by Tinney Drive. Due to time restrictions these modern cuts were not formally planned or recorded.

Cut 2002 was a sub-oval feature 0.28m long, 0.25m wide but only 0.08m deep. It had very gradually sloping sides and a gently concave base. Its lower fill (2001) was mottled light yellow brown and black clayey silt with charcoal 0.07m thick, beneath a 0.01m thick layer of black charcoal (2000). Nearly 5m to the north-west was oval cut 2005, 0.35m long, 0.25m wide and up to 0.06m deep. It had irregular and very gradually sloping sides with a gently concave base, and it too had a primary fill of light yellow brown or grey yellow clayey silt (2004), underneath a thin layer of black charcoal 0.05-0.10m thick (2003). No finds were recovered from either feature, and although they could have been the truncated bases of postholes or small pits, similar to 192 and 195 in Area 2, they might also have represented relatively modern disturbance. Cut 2005 in particular had diffuse, irregular interfaces and may have resulted from animal or root activity. No section was drawn of either shallow feature.

Further to the south was cut 2008, a small oval pit 0.67m long, 0.57m wide and up to 0.33m deep. It had quite regular, steep sides dropping to a gently concave base (Fig. 9, Section 9.7). The primary fill (2010) consisted of mottled light yellow brown and light grey sandy clay with small quartz and shale fragments, and this was below fill (2009), mottled light brown and orange brown sandy clay. Both these deposits probably consisted mostly of redeposited natural subsoil. The upper fill (2007) was mottled light yellow brown and mid-brown sandy clayey silt with large quantities of angular shale and quartz fragments up to 0.15m long, and scattered charcoal flecks. One small flint flake was also recovered from this layer. Some stones were burnt with many set on edge around the sides of the pit, as well as packed tightly together in the middle forming a small cist-like structure with a small void filled with a trace of reddish brown friable material, possibly decayed organic material. There was not enough of this material to sample, however.

No other archaeological features were identified in Area 3, and following discussion with Mr Greg Pugh of CgMs and Mr Dan Ratcliffe of Cornwall Council the area was signed off.

4.5 Reliability of Techniques and Results

The reliability of the results is considered to be good. The archaeological work generally took place in relatively clement conditions with average or good light and visibility, and usually in dry conditions.

5 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS

5.1 The Pottery by Henrietta Quinnell

5.1.1 Middle Bronze Age

Both sherds from (100) and (101) are considerably abraded and likely to be redeposited. The sherd from (117) has some edges which are rather less abraded and some which are probably the result of more recent breakage. The sherd from (100) has worn traces of cord impressed decoration which is entirely typical of the Middle Bronze Age in Cornwall (Quinnell 2008, fig. 3, nos. 1-2). It is made, as is most of the pottery of this period, from gabbroic clays originating on the Lizard.

The sherds from (101) and (117) are described as of ‘gabbroic admixture’ fabric. They are made of Lizard gabbroic clay to which non-gabbroic rock inclusions have been added. This admixture is the most frequent Middle Bronze Age variant of gabbroic fabric and recent work is showing that gabbroic clays were transported around the county and beyond, often mixed with local material (Quinnell 2012). The precise nature of the inclusions in the sherds from (101) and (117) has not been identified; and they are probably of different materials. Recent work at Nancemere on the eastern side of Truro produced evidence of Middle Bronze Age activity and also evidence for the transport and mixing of gabbroic clay (Quinnell in prep).

It should be noted that gabbroic admixture fabrics and Trevisker pottery are also found in the Early Bronze Age in Cornwall and that the fabric is also used for other vessel types current at that time such as Collared Urns (Parker Pearson 1990). Early Bronze Age pottery is extremely rare, however, except in funerary/ritual contexts. Neither of the sherds from (101) or (117) have any typological or decorative features. From their general appearance they can be regarded with reasonable confidence as Middle Bronze Age but this cannot be absolutely certain.

5.1.2 Late Iron Age/Early Roman Period

Two sherds probably from the same vessel from (129) are in a very thin variant of well-made gabbroic fabric, as is the sherd from (115). Both form and fabric are distinctive of the Late Iron Age, after *c.* 100 BC, and of the early Roman period in Cornwall until *c.* AD 150. The sherds from (129) are from a small thin version of a Trethurgy Type 1 jar, a style which went out of use around AD 150 (Quinnell 2004, 112, Fig. 54). The Trethurgy Type series is now the standard for the gabbroic pottery of Roman Cornwall, and the fabric was in almost universal use. The sherd from (115) is probably from the tip of the rim of a similar Type 1 jar and therefore of broadly similar date. There is also evidence for Roman period activity including an enclosure at Nancemere as quoted above.

Table 1: Pottery

Context	Description	Fabric, sherd nos. and weight	Broad date
(100)	Colluvium	Gabbroic 1s/4g	Middle Bronze Age
(101)	Fill of posthole 102	Gabbroic admixture 1s/7g	Middle Bronze Age
(129)	Fill of ditch 130	Well-made gabbroic 2s/14g	1 st century BC to mid-2 nd century AD
(115)	Fill of pit 122	Gabbroic admixture 1s/14g	1 st century BC to mid-2 nd century AD
(117)	Fill of pit 116 <4>	Gabbroic admixture 1s/35g	Middle Bronze Age

5.1.3 Comment

The sherds provide little information about the contexts in which they were found, and only relate to broad activity in the area. No further work on them is recommended. The presence of part of a possible flat rotary quern in posthole fill (104), however, might suggest that the structure of which it formed part was Late Iron Age or later in date. Current doctoral research by Susan Watts at Exeter University strongly suggests that there is no reliable evidence for rotary querns in Cornwall before *c.* 100 BC. It may be significant that the two periods definitely

identified correspond with those known from Nancemere a short distance to the north-west, with the later occupation starting in the Later Iron Age.

The other sherds from (100) are all post-medieval or early modern/modern in date.

5.2 The Worked Stone and Flint *by David Gilbert*

5.2.1 Flint

Ten pieces of struck flint from eight individual contexts, were recovered during the fieldwork. The raw material consists of brown to honey coloured flint and brown-grey chert-flint. The flake terminology used follows Andrevsky (1998, 104).

The majority of the artefacts show sign of damaged and can probably be considered to be residual within the contexts from which they were recovered. The majority of the assemblage appears to be struck using the hard hammer technique. The lack of primary flakes and cores suggests that knapping was not taking place on the site.

The plano-convex knife is pressured flaked on the dorsal surface, creating a cutting edge along one edge and an ergonomic holding position along the other. It is likely to be of a Neolithic date, although early Bronze Age examples are known in England (Pitts 1978).

Obviously with such a small assemblage it is difficult to accurately date the associated activity, but it would seem to represent infrequent inhabitation from the late Mesolithic into the Bronze Age. No further work is recommended.

Table 2: Struck flint

Context	Artefact	L (mm)	W (mm)	B (mm)	Notes
(100)	Plano-Convex Knife	31	22	9	Broken
(100)	Tertiary Flake	38	12	6	Broken
(100)	Uncorticated Flake	28	18	8	Thermal fractured
(129)	Secondary Flake	37	20	7	
(131)	Secondary Flake	28	20	7	Broken
(134)	Blade	51	16	4	Broken
(165)	Tertiary Flake	25	15	3	Broken
(169)	Secondary Flake	28	21	8	Damaged
(2006)	Blade	11	7	1	proximal end only
(2012)	Blade	32	16	5	proximal end only

5.2.2 Quern stone

A fragment of a quern was recovered from context (103). This was 152mm long, 82mm and 54mm thick. The raw material is locally-derived granite, and hand specimen analysis suggests that this is from the Carnmenellis-Land's End group.

The quern is rounded in its plan, and interestingly both the upper and lower surfaces have been ground smooth. This may perhaps indicate that the quern's useable lifespan was extended through utilising both surfaces. It is probably part of a saddle quern, although it is too fragmentary to be certain and there remains the possibility

that it is part of a rotary quern. If the latter is the case then it is likely to be Late Iron Age in date, as Susan Watts' current doctoral research at Exeter University strongly suggests that there is no reliable evidence for rotary querns in Cornwall before *c.* 100 BC (H. Quinnell *pers. comm.* 2011).

5.3 Palaeo-environmental Remains *by Hayley McParland and Mark Robinson*

5.3.1 Introduction and methodology *by Hayley McParland*

A total of 19 environmental samples were taken from features within Area 2 of the Site, ranging in volume from 10 litres from small pits and postholes, to 40l for linear features such as ditches. The samples were primarily processed for the recovery of charred plant remains and charcoal, though they were also examined for any evidence of mollusca and materials representative of metalworking.

The samples were processed outside using a 'Siraf'-style flotation tank, using meshes of 0.5mm aperture for both retention of the flot and the residue. Following air-drying the floated material was fractionated to 5mm, 2mm and 0.5mm, then a percentage was assessed using a stereo-zoom microscope.

5.3.2 Initial assessment *by Hayley McParland*

Several samples were selected for processing in order to assess the palaeo-environmental potential of the assemblage. All of the ditch fills sampled were processed, though only a quarter were processed in detail to assess the potential of the material. This is due to the fact that ditch fills often contain very little palaeo-environmental material. Initially, four samples of pits or postholes were processed in their entirety to assess the potential for the recovery of palaeo-environmental material within these samples.

The ditch fills had been subject to significant bioturbation, demonstrated by the presence of modern root material and snails including *Cecilioides* sp. which are modern burrowing species. Little palaeo-environmental material of any merit was present. The samples taken from the pits generally demonstrated lower levels of modern root penetration and mollusca, suggesting less disturbance. The preliminary findings suggested that posthole and pit contexts were relatively secure. No waterlogged plant remains were identified in any of the samples.

The results of the preliminary assessment of the ditch contexts are detailed in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Preliminary palaeo-environmental assessment results of ditch contexts

Context	Sample No.	Context Type	Sample Vol.	Flot Vol.	Plant remains			Bone	Charcoal	Comment	Further analysis
					Grain	Chaff	Weed				
(131) Ditch 130	7	Ditch fill	40 l	5 ml	No	No	No	No	~	9 l of sample processed for assessment, fully assessed. 50% modern roots present. Occ. small charcoal frags present.	No
(133) Ditch 132	8	Ditch fill	40 l	75 ml	No	No	~	x	~	8 l of sample processed for assessment, fully assessed. 40% modern roots present. Potential coal frags. <i>Vicia/Lathyrus</i> present & 1 unidentified seed.	No
(151) Ditch 150	10	Ditch fill	36 l	<5 ml	No	No	No	x	No	9 l of sample processed for assessment, fully assessed. 50% modern roots present, <10 microscopic frags of bone present but unidentifiable. No charcoal or seeds present. 100% scanned.	No
(153) Ditch 152	11	Ditch fill	40 l	50 ml	No	No	No	No	~	9 l of sample processed for assessment, fully assessed. 25% modern roots present. Rare micro. charcoal frags present.	No
(177) Ditch 176	13	Ditch fill	36 l	50 ml	No	No	~	No	~	9 l of sample processed for assessment, fully assessed. 40% modern roots present. Small amounts of undiagnostic charcoal frags, as well as some charred weed seeds, possibly <i>Vicia/Lathyrus</i> . Small frags of micaceous material present.	No

Key to table: ~ = Present x = <10 xx = <25 xxx = >50 xxxx = >100 xxxxx = >200

Given the relative lack of scientifically and securely dated palaeo-environmental material from Cornwall in general, and the potentially industrial nature of the archaeology present, it was recommended that all of the pit fills which had been subject to a preliminary assessment should be subject to full analysis; and that all unprocessed pit and posthole fills should be processed for the recovery of charred plant remains due to the relatively good preservation of this material on the Site.

No further processing or assessment was thought appropriate for the ditch fill samples, due to the lack of diagnostic material within them. It was therefore recommended that the remainder of the unprocessed ditch samples should be discarded.

5.3.3 Analysis of carbonised plant remains by Mark Robinson

Nineteen samples totalling 371 litres were taken from a range of contexts for charred plant remains. Some of the pits contained very high concentrations of charcoal.

Samples were floated onto a 0.2mm mesh, and the dried flots were scanned under a binocular microscope in order to identify charcoal, seeds, chaff and other remains. A representative range of charcoal was picked out, broken transversely and examined at up to x50 magnification, enabling ring-porous taxa to be identified. When a fragment of diffuse-porous wood was noted, it was broken in the appropriate planes and examined under high-power incident-light microscopy at magnifications of up to x400. An estimate was made of the abundance of each taxon of charcoal. The results for the 15 samples to contain charcoal are given in Table 4 below. Very large quantities of charcoal were present in two samples – 560g in Sample 12 and 740g in Sample 17. Sample 3 was the only sample to contain seeds and nutshell fragments. It was sorted and the remains identified under a binocular microscope at magnifications of up to x500. The results are given in Table 5 below.

Charcoal of *Alnus glutinosa* (alder) and *Quercus* sp. (oak) predominated in the archaeological features at Tregolls Road, although Sample 14 from pit 182 contained a high concentration of *Corylus avellana* (hazel) charcoal. Charcoal of Pomoideae (species such as hawthorn or apple) with *Betula* sp. (birch) was also present in several samples, although only in low concentrations. The highest concentrations of charcoal were from the pits. While it is not obvious what activity generated the charcoal, the quantity of charcoal was so great that it is unlikely that it resulted from domestic activity alone. The two main woody taxa, alder and oak, are both woodland trees, alder favouring wet soils. Hazel also readily grows under woodland conditions. Species of thorn scrub such as hawthorn do not seem to have been a major source of fuel.

The most numerous charred remains in Sample 3 from pit 122 were nutshell fragments of *Corylus avellana* (hazel). The sample also contained a few stones of *Prunus spinosa* (sloe) and *Crataegus* cf. *monogyna* (hawthorn), along with some seeds of *Fallopia convolvulus* (black bindweed). The hazel nutshell fragments are likely to have been food waste, whilst the fruits of sloe and hawthorn are edible even if not to modern taste. It is not obvious, however, why seeds of black bindweed were present. This is an annual plant which readily grows as a weed of cereals, but cereal remains were absent. These results support the evidence from the charcoal in suggesting that the late Iron Age or Romano-British site was not a settlement undertaking subsistence agriculture, but was performing a specialised activity dependant on woodland for a ready supply of fuel.

Table 4: Charcoal from Beechwood Parc, Truro

Context	Sample No.	Vol.	Pomoideae indet. hawthorn, apple etc	<i>Betula</i> sp. birch	<i>Alnus glutinosa</i> alder	<i>Corylus avellana</i> hazel	<i>Quercus</i> sp. oak
(109) Pit 108	1	27	-	-	-	-	+
(110) Pit 108	2	24	-	-	-	-	+
(115) Pit 122	3	48	++	+	-	+	++++
(117) Pit 116	4	27	-	-	-	+	+++
(120) Pit 122	5	12	-	-	+	-	+++
(121) Pit 116	6	27	-	-	+++	-	-
(131) Ditch 130	7	9	-	-	-	-	+
(101) PH 102	9	27	+	+	++++	-	+++
(154) PH 102	12	27	-	-	++++	-	+++
(180) PH 182	14	16	-	-	-	++++	+++
(166) Pit 163	15	10	-	+	+	-	++
(202) Hearth 204	16	18	+	+	+	-	++
(191) Pit 190	17	10	-	-	++++	-	-
203 Hearth 204	18	27	-	-	+	-	+
(217) Pit 218	19	27	-	-	++	-	++

Key to table: + present ++ some +++ frequent ++++ very frequent

Table 5: Charcoal ID from pit 122, layer (115)

Feature: 122			
Context: (115)			
Sample No.: 3			
Volume (litres): 48			
Genus & species	Name		Quantity
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	sloe		2
<i>Crataegus cf. monogyna</i>	hawthorn		3
<i>Fallopia convolvulus</i>	black bindweed		3
<i>Corylus avellana</i> nutshell fragments	hazel		72

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Neolithic and Bronze Age Activity

A small number of worked flint pieces were recovered from across Areas 2 and 3, the majority probably in residual contexts. Middle Bronze Age gabbroic pottery sherds were found as isolated sherds from the colluvium layer (100), along with post-medieval and early modern sherds; on the surface of fill (101) in posthole 102 in Structure 1, and in fill (117) of pit cut 116. With the possible exception of the flint from pit 2008 (see below), these flints and sherds were almost certainly residual in later contexts. What they do demonstrate, however, is the existence of some Neolithic and Bronze Age activity in the general area. Some of the Middle Bronze Age sherds were relatively large and unabraded without the characteristically ‘rolled’ and worn appearance of much residual material. This may suggest that although it was residual, it was derived from some form of inhabitation nearby, perhaps a task-specific site.

6.2 The Pits

No readily dateable artefacts were recovered from any of the excavated pits. Pits 163 and 183 produced a single worked flint from each, and at least some of this lithic material might have been Bronze Age in date. This might suggest that at least some of the pits were prehistoric features. No Bronze Age pottery was recovered from any of the bowl-shaped pit features, however. Only one sherd of this date was found in pit 116, which was somewhat different in form to the bowl-shaped pits and probably more closely associated with Structure 1, and that sherd was probably residual in a later Iron Age or early Romano-British context.

Alternatively, the bowl-shaped pits were associated with Structure 1, and thus possibly of later Iron Age and early Romano-British in date. One corroded iron object was recovered from fill (111) of pit 112, and this would support a later date, but given the root and small mammal disturbance present on the Site this could equally be a later intrusive object. With the exception of some outlying pits, there does appear to have been a spatial relationship between Structure 1 and the main group of pits in Area 2. In particular, the line of pits 163, 183, 211 and 218, and the cluster of four pits 187, 190, 192 and 195, all seem to have articulated with Structure 1 in a manner which suggests

that the structure may have been upstanding when the pits were dug. Similar bowl-shaped features were recently excavated at Tremough near Penryn, and although detailed post-excavation analyses have yet to take place, initial interpretations suggest that these were later Bronze Age or early Iron Age in date (J. Gossip pers. comm.).

The purpose of the pits is also unclear. Although a few bowl-shaped pits exhibited scorching on their sides, for example cuts 108, 135 and 184, there was comparatively little evidence for intense *in situ* burning. Indeed, with these few exceptions much of the burnt and heat-affected soil and stone within the pits seemed to be the product of the dumping of deposits from elsewhere. As with Structure 1 (see below), no 'industrial' residues were recorded from any of the pits during their excavation, and the palaeo-environmental samples taken from some of them proved disappointing. No burnt bone was identified, and although some bowl-shaped pits produced carbonised plant material, this was almost all wood charcoal of alder, oak and hazel. The lack of finds, charred cereal grains and the sheer quantity of charcoal make it unlikely that these pits related to any 'domestic' activity. It is possible that at least some of the pits could have functioned as charcoal clamps, if they had been covered with some of superstructure to create a reductive atmosphere inside. The slow-burning, reduced atmosphere required for charcoal production may have created less intense heat, accounting for the relatively light scorching. Such superstructures could have been temporary coverings such as wattle and daub domes or of branches, and these might leave relatively little trace.

The proximity of the pits to the stream may have been an important consideration in their location. Burnt mounds are a type of prehistoric site that often seem to have been located near to water sources, and these are were frequently characterised by large quantities of burnt stone and charcoal. The stone or timber-lined troughs often associated with burnt mound sites were absent though, and no concentrations of burnt stone were visible in the alluvium during soil stripping. It is possible, however, that low mounds of burnt stone and/or trough features might survive elsewhere along the edge of the modern stream channel.

Pit 2008 in Area 3 had different characteristics to most of the other pit features – it had steep sides and a U-shaped profile, and its upper fill (2006) was packed with stone, around the edges of the cut and also forming a small, cist-like stone structure at the centre of the pit. The small void created by this stone arrangement contained a friable reddish brown material that might have been the decayed remains of some form of organic object or substance. Part of a worked flint blade was also recovered from near the centre of this feature. This feature has many similarities to later Neolithic, Beaker and Bronze Age stone-lined pits that have been found elsewhere in the south-west peninsula at sites such as Tremough, along the route of the Sennen to Porthcurno pipeline, and at Boscaswell (Gossip and Jones 2007; Jones forthcoming a, forthcoming b; Jones and Quinnell 2006; Jones, Taylor and Sturgess forthcoming). These appear to have been used for both prosaic refuse disposal in association with cooking or settlement activity, but also more structured funerary and 'placed' deposits of artefacts.

Pits 116 and 122 were also different in form to the bowl-shaped pits, but seemed to have a much closer spatial and/or functional association with Structure 1. In addition to large quantities of burnt stone and oak charcoal, the charred remains from pit 122 included carbonised hazelnut shell fragments, sloe and hawthorn stones, and black bindweed seeds. Much of this may represent general food waste re-used as fuel on a hearth.

6.3 Structure 1

Structure 1 appears to have been a sub-square or rectangular structure approximately 4m long on a north-west to south-east axis, and 3.60m wide on a north-east to south-west alignment. The four ‘corners’ of Structure 1 were thus formed by postholes 104, 162, 158/160 and 182 which are thought to have been for the primary load-bearing posts; with postholes and larger stakeholes such as 199, 244 and 175 to the north and north-west and 168, 170 and 172 to the south perhaps potential additional supports. Although it is possible that the four main ‘corners’ were merely an ‘internal’ four post central structure within a larger circular roundhouse or rectangular building, there is no evidence for any such larger building. It is thus different to nearly all of the known later prehistoric or Romano-British round and oval structures excavated elsewhere in Cornwall (e.g. Gossip and Jones 2007; Quinnell 2004). Despite disturbance caused by root penetration and small mammal burrowing, the fact that several lines of stakeholes survived suggests that some evidence of such walls should have been apparent if these had originally been present.

Structure 1 does not seem to have been an especially robust building, and may well have been a small roofed lean-to, perhaps with largely open sides, although it is possible that turf or ‘shillet’ (shale) walls would have left no below-ground traces. Stakeholes 282, 284 and 286; and 238, 240 and 242, along with postholes/stakeholes 168, 170, 172, 175, 244, 246 and 248; may represent either wattle and daub walls, or more likely hurdle wind breaks. The eastern side of the building did not produce any evidence for such features, either as a result of slightly greater truncation, or perhaps because in Cornwall the prevailing winds are from the west and south-west. There was a slight break in slope along the line of stakeholes 282, 284 and 286 that became evident during trowelling, and the area east of this within Structure 1 certainly seemed to have been subject to greater compaction or trampling.

It was not clear whether there had ever been two contemporaneous postholes within double posthole 102, but although this feature might have merely represented additional support for a roof, the fact that it was backfilled with ashy hearth rake-out material might suggest that it had a more specific function, possibly linked to the almost centrally-placed hearth 204. Indeed, the ashy fills of 102 would suggest that the posthole was dug after the hearth began to be used. Hearth 204 also seems to have generated much of the burnt stone, ash and charcoal deposited in pits 116 and 122. Stakeholes 260, 262 and 264, along with stakeholes 266, 276 and 278, and perhaps features 201 and 178, may have been the remnants of supports or frameworks associated with the hearth. The line of stakeholes formed by 268, 270, 272, 274 and 280 may have been an additional windbreak, or might have represented a subdivision within Structure 1, though the former seems more likely, especially as these features matched the slightly curving north-west to south-east edge of hearth 204. The broadly east-west line of stakeholes 250, 252, 254, 256, and 258 might have marked another windbreak or internal partition.

Exactly what hearth 204 was used for is unclear. The almost complete lack of any material culture and carbonised grain from Structure 1 and the rather intense burning in and around hearth 204 do suggest that it was not a ‘domestic’ dwelling’, and its unusual form may thus have been the product of a specialist function. It was clearly generating large quantities of ash, charcoal and burnt stone, and unlike the majority of the pits the

hearth cut and the stone within it seems to have been subjected to relatively intense heating. Hearth 204 had several layers of burnt stone, but these might have merely represented some of the last 'firings', as they had filled in the stone 'box' structure that appeared to be an integral part of the centre of hearth. Pit cuts 116 and 122 had fills containing ash, charcoal and burnt stone that were probably derived from hearth 204, especially layers (117) and (120), and this suggests that the hearth had been subject to numerous 'rake-out' episodes. No residues such as iron slag or hammerscale, or copper alloy, glass or fuel ash slag were detected in or around the hearth, either during excavation or through examination of soil samples. Similarly, no traces of any grog or pottery or tile wasters were found in any of the features on the Site. This would therefore seem to rule out any 'industrial' activities taking place. At the same time, very few carbonised seeds were identified, so cereal parching or processing is also unlikely.

Given that large quantities of charcoal were present, including short lengths of whole carbonised roundwood twigs, then charcoal production is perhaps the most likely purpose for the practices being carried out at Structure 1. Nevertheless, the structure is rather different in form to historically recorded charcoal clamps, and it is not clear how the reduction atmosphere associated with charcoal clamps could have been achieved. The evidence for more intense heat and the possible windbreaks might even suggest an oxidised process, perhaps using bellows. With the exception of cuts 116 and 122, it is also uncertain if Structure 1 was linked to most of the nearby pits (see above).

No immediate published parallels have been identified for Structure 1, either in Cornwall or other regions elsewhere in Britain, and its date is also problematic. Recent fieldwork by the Cornwall Archaeology Unit at Tremough just outside Penryn, however, identified a subrectangular structure 5m long and 3.5m wide, with deep corner postholes containing large packing stones (J. Gossip pers. comm.). This building may have been late Bronze Age or early Iron Age in date.

One flint flake was found in posthole 170, but this was probably residual. One sherd of Middle Bronze Age pottery was recovered from upper fill (101) of posthole 102, and a fragment of a granite quern was retrieved from posthole 104. If the latter was part of a rotary quern, then this might indicate a late Iron Age or later date. One sherd of Middle Bronze Age pottery was recovered from fill 117 in pit 116, but a sherd of late Iron Age or early Romano-British pottery was found in fill 115 in pit 122. These two features had fills with ash, charcoal and burnt stone that were probably derived from hearth 204. Clearly, although in the present absence of any scientific dating for the Site these few finds can only hint at a possible date, on the present limited evidence a later Iron Age or early Romano-British date does appear most likely.

6.4 The Ditches

Whatever their role as potential boundary features, the ditches excavated in Areas 2 and 3 were clearly also implicated in drainage. Their fills consisted in part of blue-grey alluvial clayey silts, and some excavated sections evinced erosion of the ditch sides by running water. The fact that they followed the contour to some extent and extended towards the lowest-lying part of the Site, and into the area of palaeochannel deposits, also suggests their role in drainage. Although much of the area to the east of and south-east of the ditches was situated beyond the limits of the Site, the bowl-shaped pits,

Structure 1 and the evidence for burning were all situated to the west of the ditches, on a relatively level area of higher ground.

Establishing the date of the ditches is also problematic. Three small pieces of worked flint were recovered from ditch fills (131), (129) and (2012), the latter two deposits which had accumulated in the slight hollows left by the ditches and which were similar to the overlying colluvium. These could all therefore be residual pieces. Two sherds of late Iron Age or early Romano-British pottery were found in deposit (129) above ditch cut 130, but this was hardly a secure context. The ditches thus need not have been contemporary with either Structure 1 or the pits, although a later Iron Age or Romano-British date is on balance still considered the most likely.

6.5 Conclusions

Although enigmatic, the archaeological features recorded at Beechwood Parc, Truro probably reflect some sort of specialist activity, possibly charcoal production. These practices may have taken place during the later Iron Age and Romano-British period, and probably deliberately made use of a locale close to running water and woodland.

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PLATES



Plate 1. Machining and groundwork in Area 2 looking north-west, showing the increasing depth of colluvium and made ground towards Tinney Drive.



Plate 2. South-east corner of Area 2 after initial machining, looking SSE, showing gleyed palaeo-channel deposits, standing water and the line of the recut ditches extending from lower left to upper right.



Plate 3. Pit cut 108 looking south-west, showing burnt stone and scorched layer (110).



Plate 4. Pit cut 135 (right) and later pit cut 146 (left), looking north. The large quantity of burnt stone and soil forming layers (139) and (141) in cut 135 is apparent.

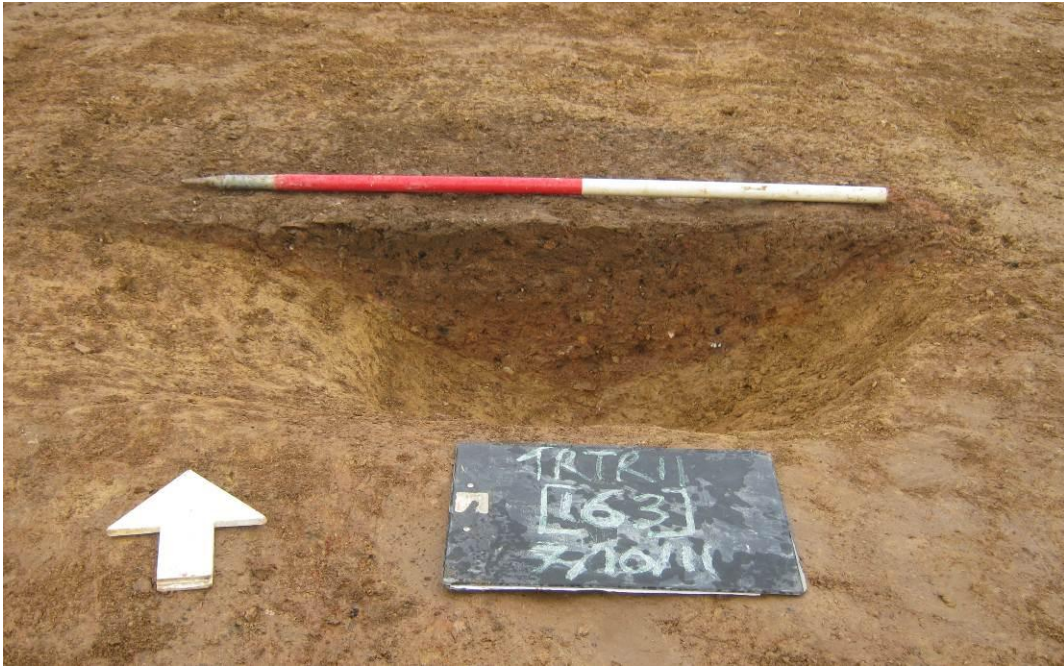


Plate 5. Pit cut 163, looking north.

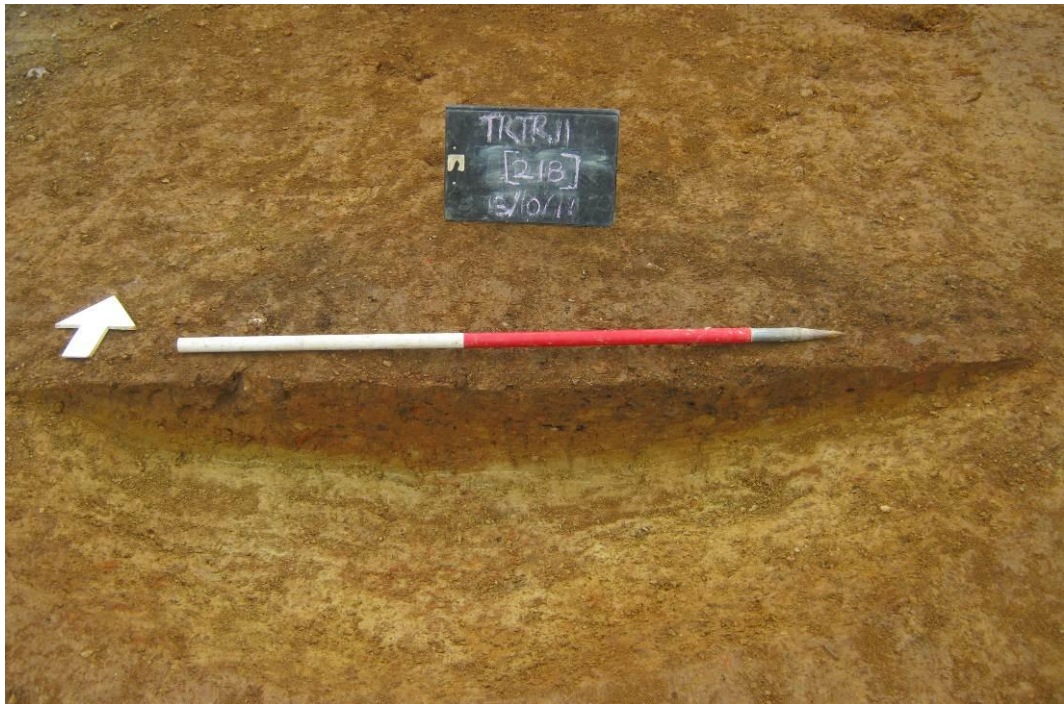


Plate 6. Pit cut 218, looking NNW.



Plate 7. Pit/posthole cuts 187, 190, 192 and 195, looking north-west.



Plate 8. Pit cut 116 (right) and later pit cut 122 (left), looking north-east. The large quantities of burnt stone and charcoal in layer (117) in pit 116, and (115) and (120) in pit 122 are apparent.



Plate 9. Structure 1 looking south-east, showing postholes 104 (left), 102 (centre) and 182 (right). Hearth cut 204 is at the centre just beyond the photographic scales, and pits 116 and 122 are visible in the background by the southern boundary fence of the Site.

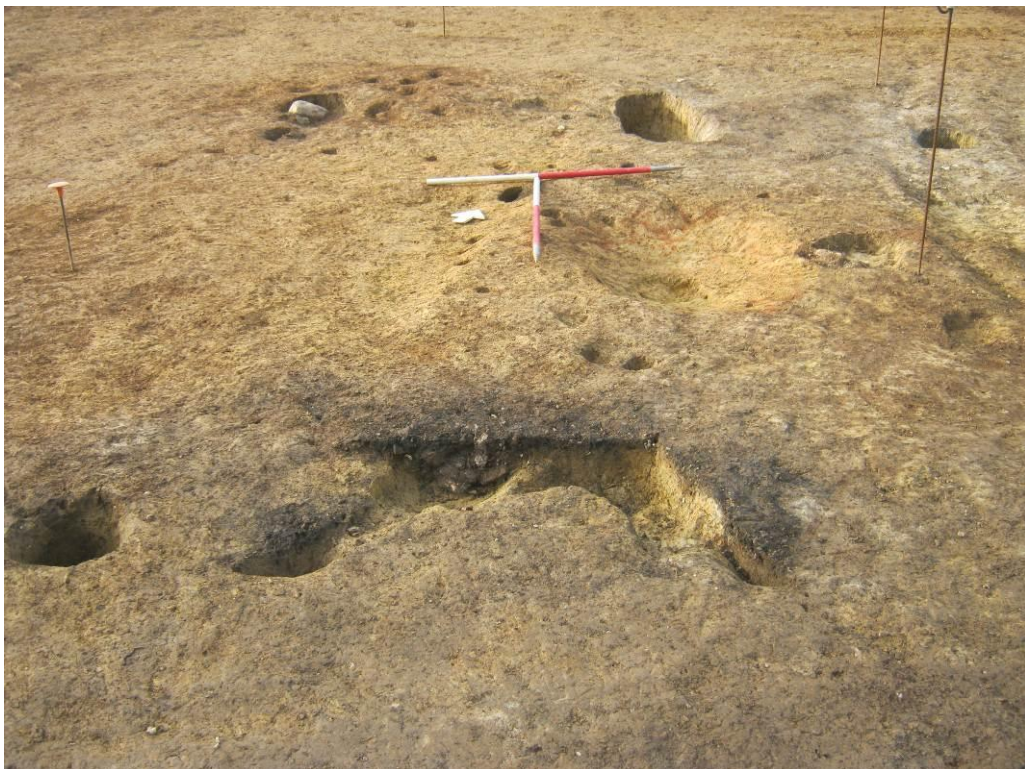


Plate 10. Structure 1 looking north-west, showing postholes 160 and 168 (bottom left), 170 and 172 (bottom centre), and hearth 204 near the photographic scales. Postholes 182 (top left), 102 (top centre) and 104 (top right) are visible beyond.



Plate 11. Working shot of posthole 182 under excavation, looking south-east, showing the large packing stones *in situ*.



Plate 12. Half-section across posthole 102, looking south-east.



Plate 13. Posthole 102 looking south-east, with postpad stone in southern half of feature.



Plate 14. Hearth cut 204 showing burnt stone layer (203), looking north-west.



Plate 15. Ditch cut 176 in section looking north-east, also showing ditch cut 210/152 to the right. A modern land drain cuts across the junction between the two ditches.



Plate 16. Ditch cuts 130 (left) and 132 (right) in section, looking north-east. The undercutting by fluvial erosion at the base of ditch 130 is especially notable. The rectangular feature truncating the ditches at an angle in the foreground is a modern geotechnical test pit.



Plate 17. Ditch cut 2011 in Area 3, looking north.



Plate 18. Pit cut 2008 in section, looking south-west. Note the burning and the concentration of stone in the upper fill.