

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

**AT**

**LAND ADJACENT TO ROSE COTTAGE, MILL ROAD,**

**SHABBINGTON, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

**SP 662 0687**

*On behalf of*

*Eitan Lee Al*

**NOVEMBER 2007**

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## **Summary**

*The evaluation found some medieval activity on the site in the form of a gully and two pits dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> century or later. There then appears to have been a period when the site was used for horticulture or similar before a building was erected in the vicinity. This building was demolished in the 19<sup>th</sup> century before the site reverted to a garden or similar.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)**

The site is located to the north of Rose Cottage, at the corner of Mill Road and the lane leading to Franklins Farm, Shabbington (NGR SP 6662 0687). The underlying geology is Upper Jurassic Kimmeridge Clay, with undifferentiated Quaternary glaciofluvial deposits as overlying drift geology.

### **1.2 Planning Background**

A planning application has been submitted to Aylesbury Vale District Council for the erection of a dwelling and new access at Rose Cottage, Mill Road, Shabbington. Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (BCAS) advised that a programme of archaeological works should be undertaken due to the site's potential for archaeological remains. BCAS prepared a *Brief* for the work recommending that the site should be investigated by trenching totalling 10m in length.

### **1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background**

An archaeological evaluation was considered necessary for this site because it lies within the historic core of Shabbington on the junction of historic route-ways where development has the potential to affect Saxon, medieval and post-medieval deposits.

Recent work in Shabbington includes an earthwork survey at the Willows, Mill Road (JMHS, 2006) as well as a desk based assessment, evaluation and excavation at The Bungalow, Ickford Road (OA, 2002. OA, 2004; TVAS, 2006). The work at Ickford Road produced medieval boundary ditches and a number of pits and postholes of 11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century date.

Before the Norman Conquest Shabbington was held by Wigold of Wallingford and at Domesday the settlement was held by Miles Crispin and comprised 12 villagers, 7 smallholders and 6 slaves, a fishery with 100 eels and a mill from the manor of Sobintane. After the Conquest it was incorporated into the forest of Bernwood. From 1299 it was held by the Knights Hospitallers, who lost control of it in the 14<sup>th</sup> century (VCH, 1969, 102).

Extensive village earthworks survive south and east of the church and a street and four house platforms north-east of the church were surveyed prior to being developed in the 1960s. From this development a number of Roman, 13<sup>th</sup> century and post-medieval pottery sherds were recovered (CAS 565; Gowing, 1964, 305-306). The medieval manor is thought to have been located on the south side of the churchyard

Figure 1. Site and Trench location

where three fishponds are located and where stone and tile have been noted (also CAS 565).

An archaeological desk-based assessment, evaluation and excavation were undertaken at The Bungalow, Ickford Road, Shabbington in 2004, west-north-west of the current site. The evaluation produced evidence for significant 11-13<sup>th</sup> century activity including a rectangular enclosure ditch, substantial amounts of 11-13<sup>th</sup> century pottery, traces of iron working and well-preserved charcoal plant remains including cereal grain and wood charcoal. (Oxford Archaeology 2004, Oxford Archaeology 2004a). The results suggest that the boundary ditch enclosed an area of early settlement within the village. The subsequent excavation revealed further curvilinear ditches and large pits of medieval date along with quantities of slag and animal bone (TVAS, report forthcoming).

The initial assessment of the village morphology at Shabbington suggests a loosely nucleated single row plan stretching northwards from the church. There is probably a more complex sequence of development. Two straight (early/roman?) roads would also intersect at Shabbington Church and there are hints of a 'lost' lane to the west of the main street. The line of one of the Roman roads (CAS 2035) crosses the north-west side of the field surveyed. An earthwork survey held by the SMR and carried out before the construction of Kimbells Close shows a slight holloway.

## **2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the site.
- To aim to gather sufficient information to generate a reliable predictive model of the extent, character, date, state of preservation and depth of burial of important archaeological remains (and associated palaeo-environmental deposits) within the area of study.
- In this case the following specific objectives have been identified:
  - To identify any remains of Saxon, medieval or post medieval settlement and related boundary features
  - To interpret the evaluation results in relation to the evolution and topography of the village of Shabbington.
- To determine the impact of the proposed development on any remains present.
- To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation.

## **3 STRATEGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

In response to a *Brief* issued by BCAS a scheme of investigation was designed by John Moore Heritage Services (JMHS) and agreed with BCAS and the applicant. The work was carried out by JMHS and involved the excavation of one trench across the site.

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in a *Written Scheme of Investigation* agreed with the BCAS. The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994) and the principles of MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

### 3.2 Methodology

A 10.5m long, 2.2m wide trench was excavated by a 3 tonne excavator equipped with a ditching bucket (Fig. 1). The trench was excavated to the top of the natural except for the north-western 2m of the trench. The resultant surfaces were cleaned by hand where necessary, prior to hand excavation of identified archaeological features.

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and sections drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was produced. The trench was backfilled after recording.

## 4 RESULTS

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers in [ ] indicate cut features i.e. ditches; while numbers in ( ) show feature fills or deposits of material. A general description of the feature fills is given. CBM refers to ceramic building material.

The natural undisturbed ground was hard medium grey-white, mottled orange, clay with chalk flecking and limestone fragments (05). Cut into this material were two small pits and a gully (Fig. 2).

The gully [06] was straight and was seen for 2.2m. It was 380mm wide and 80mm deep with sides at 30-40° from the horizontal and a narrow flat base (Fig. 2). It was filled by dark green-grey clay with 5% content of small stone containing six sherds of Brill-Boarstall ware dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> century or later (07). The gully was cut at its south-east end by a small pit [08], which was oval in shape measuring 800x500mm. It was 50mm deep with sides at an angle of 30-40° and a flat base. It was filled by white-grey clay (09) containing small stone. This pit also cut a larger pit [10] that was at least 2.25m wide; it continued beyond the extent of the trench. It was 160mm deep with sides 15°. The fill of the pit was mid white-grey clay with 2% small stone and three sherds of Brill/Boarstall ware pottery dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> century or later (11).

Sealing the features was a compact layer of green-grey clay with 5% small stone some 160mm thick (04). This in turn was sealed by a demolition layer (03) of dark brown-grey sandy clay with 5-10% small stone and 30% limestone pieces. This was 160mm thick and was not fully machine-excavated in the north-west end of the trench. The

Figure 2. Trench 1 Plans and Sections



demolition layer was cut at the north-west end of the trench by a late post-medieval or modern feature (12).

Sealing the demolition layer was a deposit of loose mid black gravelly sandy clay, 240mm thick covering the whole trench (02). This in turn was overlaid by topsoil of mid black sandy gravelly clay (01).

## 5 THE FINDS

### 5.1 The Medieval and Post-medieval Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 29 sherds with a total weight of 558g. It was mainly of post-medieval to modern date, although a single group of medieval material was also noted. It was recorded using the coding system of the Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit type-series (e.g. Mynard and Zeepvat 1992; Zeepvat et al. 1994), as follows:

MC9: *Brill/Boarstall Ware*. 1200-?1600. 9 sherds, 84g.

PM8: *Red Earthenware* 16<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> century. 16 sherds, 417g.

PM25: *White Earthenware*. Late 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> century. 4 sherds, 57g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*.

*Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type*

Context	MC9		PM8		WHEW		Date
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
1					2	44	19thC
2			5	94	1	11	19thC
3			11	323	1	2	19thC
7	6	14					13thC
11	3	70					13thC
Total	9	84	16	417	4	57	

### 5.2 Other finds

#### Glass

Part of a soda bottle made by Soda Stream Ltd. Soda Stream was invented in 1903. Three other sherds of green vessel glass. All from recent feature (12).

A sherd of decorated white glass beaker from (02).

#### Iron

One complete and one part horseshoe, both from demolition debris (03).

### Animal bone

Animal bone surviving in good condition was found in layer (02) and fill (07) of the gully. The hard clay nature of the deposits hinders retrieval of bone in complete form.

### Roof tile

Roof tile was recovered from contexts (01, 02 & 03). Significant quantities were present in the demolition debris (03).

### Clay tobacco pipe

A fragment of pipe-stem was recovered from context (02). Three fragments of pipe-stem a part of a bowl were found in demolition debris (03). The bowl is a type G17 dating to c. 1640-70 (Oswald 1975)

## **5.3 Environmental**

No deposits were suitable for assessing environmental potential.

## **6 DISCUSSION**

Some medieval activity on the site is attested by the presence of a gully and a pit [10]. Given that pit [08] is sealed by deposit (04) it probably also belongs to this phase. The pottery contained within two of these features dates no earlier than the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

The medieval activity is sealed by a general deposit which may be an agricultural or horticultural soil that has truncated the earlier features. This in turn is sealed by a demotion deposit dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The presence of limestone and roof tiles suggests a building in the general area that was demolished in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The 17<sup>th</sup> century clay tobacco pipe is residual in the demolition material. Deposits above contained pottery dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> century and later.

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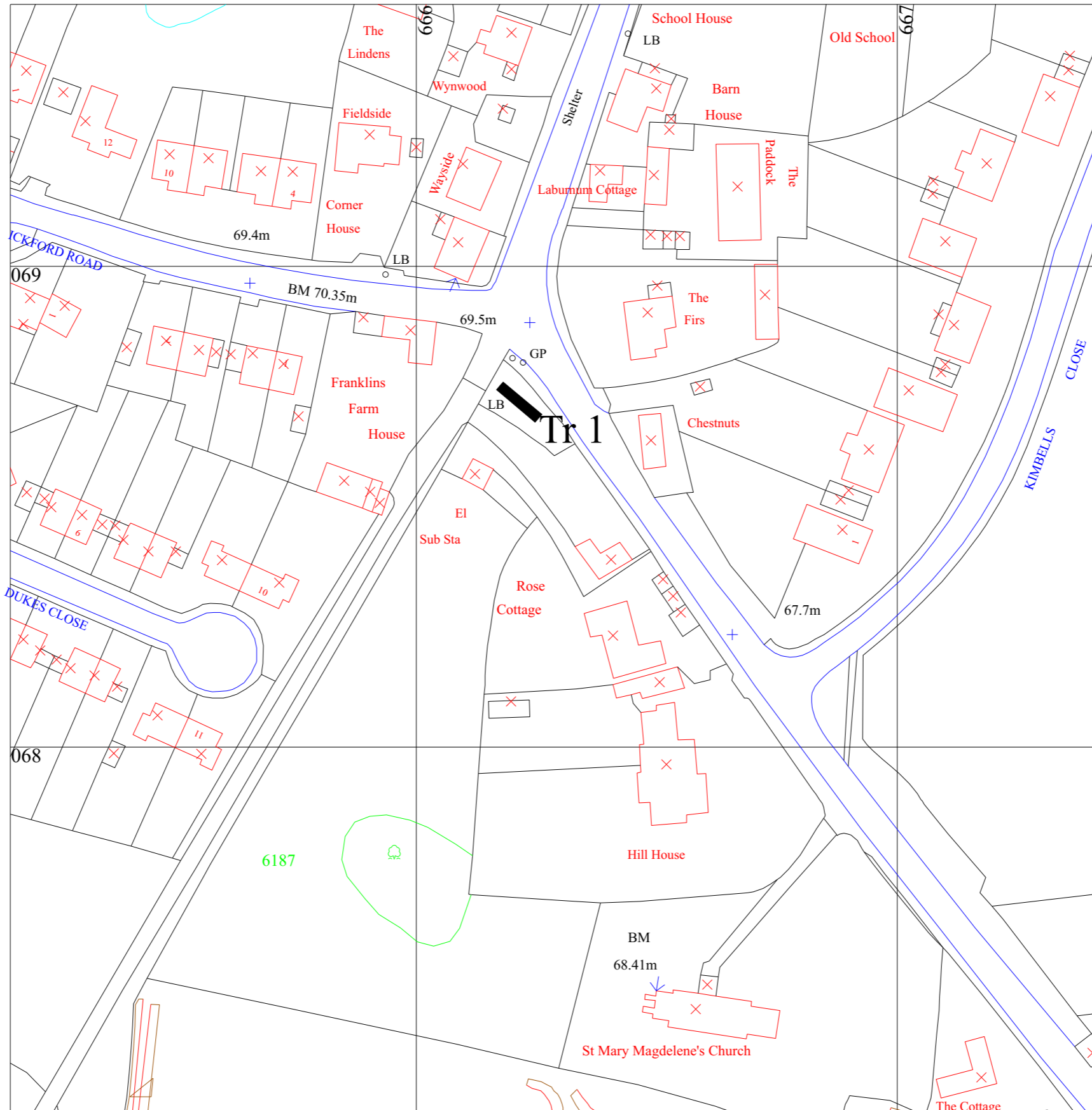
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**APPENDIX – ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY**

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Findings	Date
<b>Trench 1</b>			0.74	2.2	10.5		
01	Layer	Topsoil	0.22	Tr.	Tr.	Pottery, CBM	Modern
02	Layer	Garden deposit	0.24	Tr.	Tr.	Pottery, CBM, glass bone, clay pipe	19th
03	Layer	Demolition	0.16	Tr.	Tr.	Pottery, CBM, clay pipe, horseshoes	19th
04	Layer	Horticultural	0.16	Tr.	Tr.	-	
05	Layer	Natural	-	Tr.	Tr.		
06	Cut	Gully	0.08	0.38	2.20+	-	Medieval
07	Fill	Fill of [06]	0.08	0.38	2.20+	Pottery, Bone	Medieval
08	Cut	Pit	0.08	0.50	0.80	-	?Medieval
09	Fill	Fill of [08]	0.08	0.50	0.80	-	?Medieval
10	Cut	Pit	0.16	0.75+	2.25+	-	Medieval
11	Fill	Fill of [1/10]	0.16	0.75+	2.25+	Pottery	Medieval
12	Feature	Pit	-	0.80+	2.20+	Glass	



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Figure 2. Trench Plan and Sections

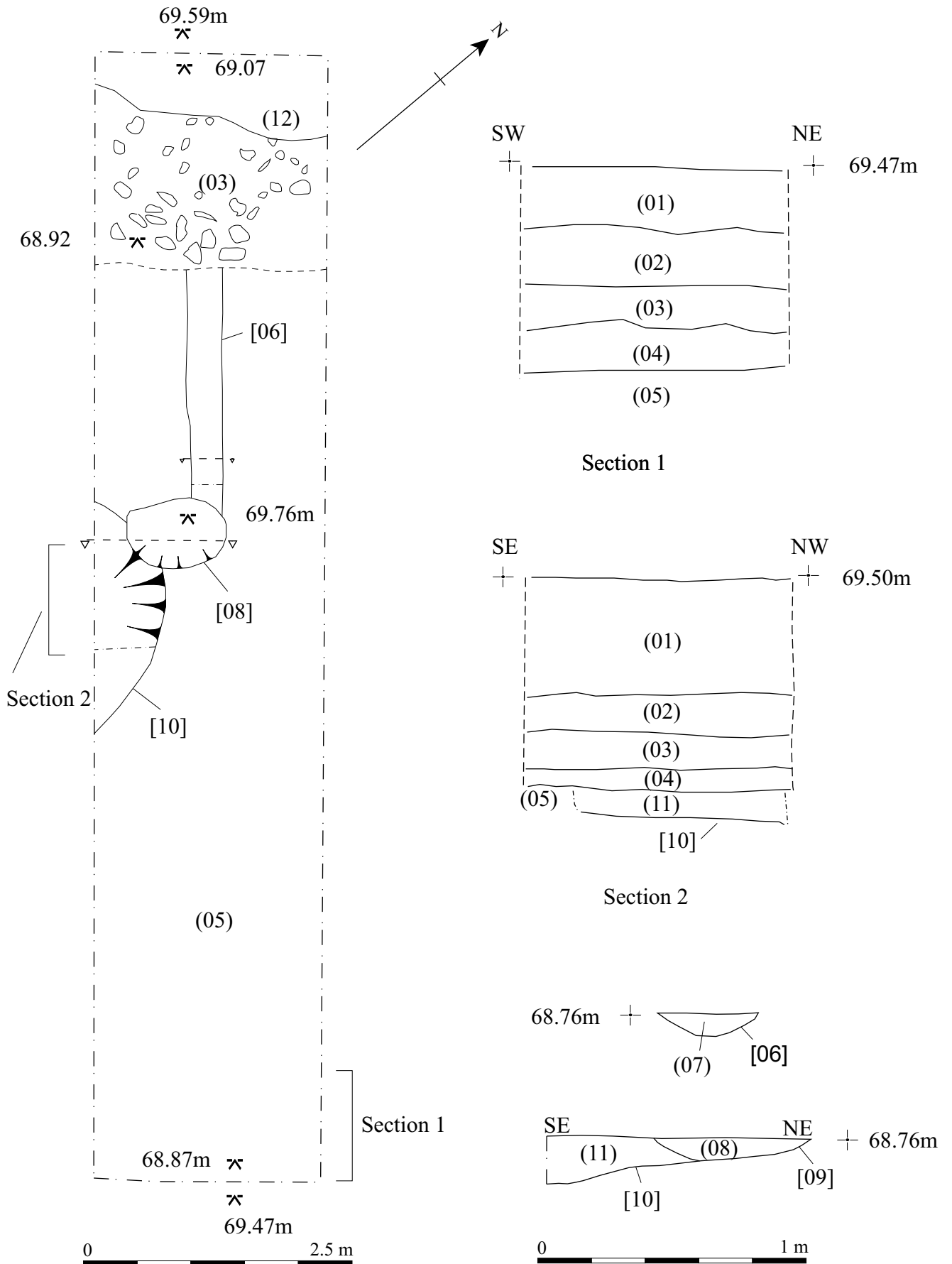


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