

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
AT
PEMBURY HOSPITAL, TONBRIDGE ROAD,
PEMBURY, TUNBRIDGE WELLS, KENT

NGR 561544 141370

On behalf of

Laing O'Rourke Construction South Limited

APRIL 2008

REPORT FOR Laing O'Rourke Construction South Ltd
Bridge Place
Anchor Boulevard
Admirals Park
Crossways
Dartford
DA2 6SN

PREPARED BY Gwilym Williams

FIELDWORK 10 - 20 March 2008

REPORT ISSUED 10 April 2008

ENQUIRES TO *John Moore Heritage Services
Hill View
Woodperry Road
Beckley
Oxfordshire OX3 9UZ
Tel/Fax 01865 358300*

Site Code PEPH 08
JMHS Project No: 1806

CONTENTS

	Page	
<i>SUMMARY</i>	1	
1 INTRODUCTION	1	
1.1 Site Location		
1.2 Planning Background		
1.3 Archaeological Background		
2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION	2	
3 STRATEGY	3	
3.1 Research Design		
3.2 Methodology		
4 RESULTS	4	
4.1 Area B Trenches 1-7	6	
4.2 Area A Trenches 8-12	8	
4.3 Reliability of Techniques and Results	11	
5 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS	11	
5.1 Pottery		
5.2 Charcoal		
6 DISCUSSION	11	
7 BIBLIOGRAPHY	12	
APPENDIX 1 Archaeological Context Inventory	13	
 FIGURES		
Figure 1	Site and trench location	2
Figure 2	Trenches 1 -3	5
Figure 3	Trenches 4 & 5	7
Figure 4	Tonbridge Union Workhouse and gardens	8
Figure 5	Trenches 6, 8-11	9
Figure 6	Trench 12	10

Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an evaluation of land at Pembury Hospital, Pembury. The remains of 16th – 17th -century charcoal burning or bonfire activity were observed, as well as beds related to the hospital grounds. Evidence for large-scale reduction of the underlying geology prior to the erection of prefabricated buildings associated with the hospital was also recorded, in addition to similar reduction from the turn of the nineteenth century associated with the Tonbridge Union Workhouse, which preceded Pembury Hospital.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site location (Figure 1)

The site is located on land at Pembury Hospital, on the former site of prefabricated buildings and a nineteenth-century building of the Tonbridge Union workhouse, near Tunbridge Wells in Kent. The site is located to the north west of Pembury centred on NGR 561487 141354. The underlying geology is Ardingly Sandstone and Tunbridge Wells Sand.

1.2 Planning Background

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council applied a condition to the planning consent for redevelopment at the hospital grounds (Ref: TW/07/0295). The condition stipulated an archaeological watching brief; however, in view of the complexity of the ground works and the potential for delays to the project through the discovery of unanticipated archaeological remains, it was agreed that a programme of trial trenching across the site would be a more appropriate approach, with the proviso that in the event of further archaeological mitigation being deemed necessary, any further phase of archaeological work would follow on directly from the trial trenching based on a brief assessment of the results of the evaluation fieldwork.

Kent County Council Heritage Conservation prepared a *Brief* for the work recommending that the site be investigated by trenching totalling ten 30m trenches and two 15m trenches, with contingency for a second stage of further works. Inspections were made to determine whether trenches were to be extended for further excavation or to be backfilled.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The Wealden forest in which Pembury now stands was a wooded place from the earliest times until the middle ages. The Tunbridge Wells Sand geology that characterises the area means that Pembury would have been less thickly-wooded than areas on the clays to the north and south and may have constituted a more open, heathland environment in some places, as it does today. Tester (1951) suggests that Wealden stream valleys were used as access routes through the thickest forest that grew on the clay, to the less dense woodland higher up on the sand. Such a theory puts Pembury in an attractive position, as it is equidistant from the heads of numerous nearby rivulets, going off in all directions.

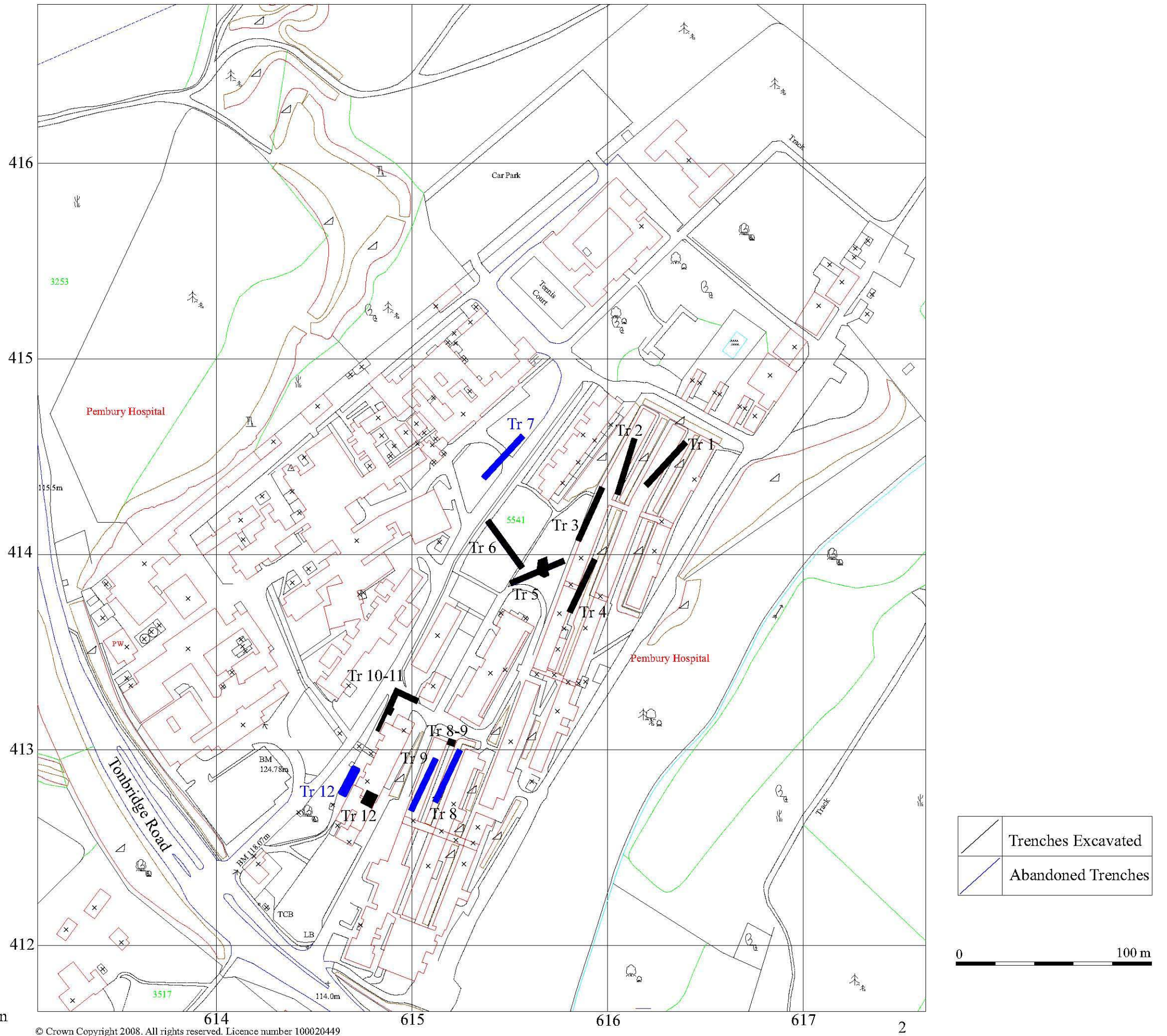


Figure 1. Trench and site location

We know that The Weald was criss-crossed by trackways in prehistory and work at High Rocks in Tunbridge Wells and Castle Hill on the nearby A21 gives us a glimpse of how the area was used by people. Stone and bronze artefacts must have originated from outside the forest, yet have been found discarded, or purposely buried as a hoard in one case, in the parish. This concentration of known prehistoric spotfinds is greater than in many other parts of The Weald and may mean that Pembury lay on or near a significant spot where travellers' paths crossed or even where an early settlement stood. Alternatively, this level of finds may be reproduced across the Weald but they have only been recognised and given importance here at Pembury by chance. The application site is around 300m north of the find of a Neolithic axe and other stone tools are recorded closer to the village centre.

There is no known archaeological evidence from Roman activity in Pembury and aside from some Romano-British activity found at High Rocks, none at all away from the two Roman roads that crossed the forest to link London with the coast and to serve the iron industry. Again however, the lack of intensive fieldwork in the area has affected our picture of its past. Iron and timber may well have been exploited nearby during the period but evidence of this work has not yet been identified.

The Saxon period is one where settlement and forest clearance in the Weald is believed to have become much more common and Pembury's name being a corruption of an Old English name meaning 'the fortified place of Peppa' (English Placenames Society). Saxon remains are often difficult to see and the location of the settlement or any other activity at this period is not known. The line of a possible medieval ditch boundary may continue into the site from the west. Evidence of medieval and post-medieval use of the woodland may survive on site. Several earlier phases of development at the hospital, and the development of the nineteenth century workhouse that preceded it are likely to have had localised impacts on any buried remains but undisturbed areas appear to survive in places. Certain of the structures at the site are of heritage interest as examples of nineteenth and twentieth century institutional architecture and remains of these may be encountered in the trenches.

The above background is taken from the Kent County Council Heritage Conservation specification.

Archaeology South-East undertook a watching brief during geotechnical testpitting at the site of the hospital. An indicative assessment was able to be made of the degree of truncation of the potential archaeological horizon across the site. Three areas with higher potential for surviving archaeological remains and two with a lower potential were identified (Archaeology South-East 2008).

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

- Assessing the likely impact of the proposed development on the archaeological remains using the results of the fieldwork

- Assessing the impact of past development on the site's archaeological potential, especially from the hospital.
- Assessing the potential of the site to contain nationally important remains
- Establishing the degree of Roman and medieval activity on the site
- Establishing the degree of prehistoric activity on the site
- Contributing to the environmental and landscape history of the area

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Methodology

The development site was subject to evaluation through the machine excavation of trenches with a further contingency trench (30 linear metres) to be dug as agreed with the Heritage Conservation Group.

In Area A, three trenches, each measuring 30m x 3m, and two trenches each measuring 15m x 3m were to be excavated. In Area B, 7 trenches measuring 30m by 3m were to be excavated. The proposed trench layout was designed with respect to the results of observations made during geotechnical site investigations (Archaeology South-East, 2008), and to avoid areas which are believed to have been destroyed by the foundations of former buildings.

A flat bladed bucket was used for excavation of the evaluation trenches. The recording was in accordance with Kent County Council's *Manual of Specifications* for Archaeological 'Evaluation – Trial Trenching Requirements, Part B', and followed IFA guidelines (1994) and the requirements of Kent County Council Heritage Conservation's Brief.

Amendment to the methodology was subject to approval by the Heritage Conservation Group. The extent of truncation across the site indicated that very little survived earlier than the reduction associated with the construction of the ancillary hospital buildings. Additionally the presence of services entailed the moving of Trenches 12 and 11, as well as the abandonment of Trench 7; the presence of car-parking and a pile of rubble measuring c. 15m in height over Trenches 9 and 8 resulted in these two trenches being combined as a single test-pit. Excavation was by 13 tonne using a ditching bucket.

4 RESULTS

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers in [] indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material.

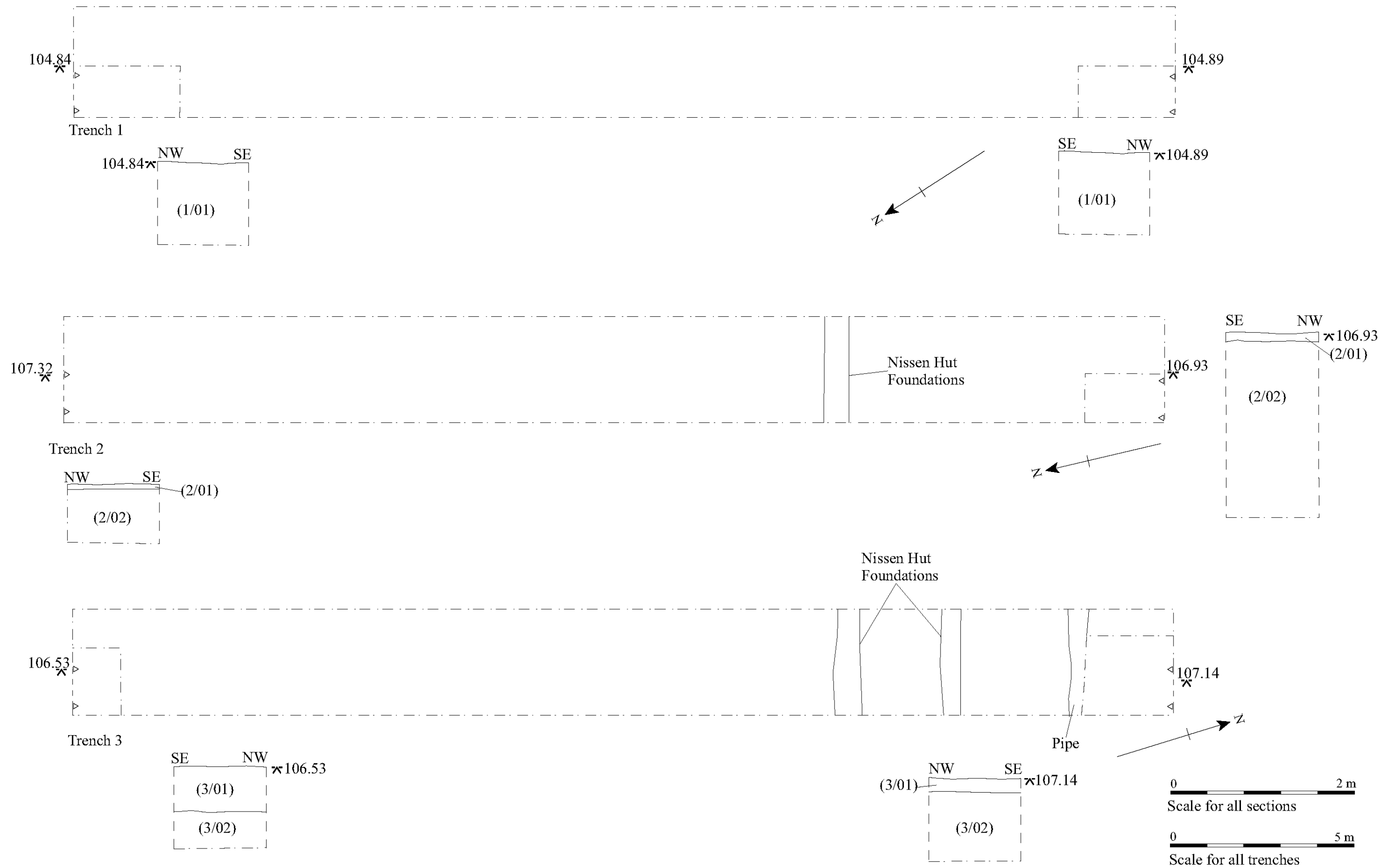


Figure 2. Trenches 1-3

4.1 Area B Trenches 1-7 (Figures 2, 3, 4 & 5)

Trenches 1-4 were located on the eastern side of the area with archaeological potential within the proposal area. All four trenches were of limited depth – less than 0.2m. The natural sandstone was observed in all four trenches – (1/01), (2/02), (3/02) and (4/02); this was test-pitted to ascertain that it was not redeposited. Sealing this was a scree of sandstone and building material (2/01), (3/01) and (4/01). It was not recorded in Trench 1 due to it being less than 0.02m thick.

Trench 1 revealed that heavy truncation had removed all deposits above the Tunbridge Wells Sand. In Trenches 2 and 3 footings associated with the Prefab huts, previously located along the terrace, were observed cut into the Tunbridge Wells Sand. Trench 4 also revealed significant truncation of the overlying deposits. Test-pits excavated at the ends of these four trenches revealed the Ardingly Sandstone located between 0.05m and 0.2m below the Tunbridge Wells Sand.

Trench 5 revealed an extensive area of burnt material (5/06) measuring 4m by 3m overlying the natural, Tunbridge Wells Sand (5/03). The deposit was a maximum of 0.28m thick and comprised lumps and lenses of charcoal in a silty sand matrix. It was truncated by the later features [5/08], [5/09] and (5/11). The lenses of charcoal within the deposit (5/06) varied between 0.02m and 0.1m thick. The feature did not appear to have been cut, rather it seemed to be located in a depression, with a pronounced circular depression slightly off-centre; this may indicate where a mottle peg was placed during the wood-stacking for the construction of a charcoal-burning kiln. Although the postulated kiln was not apparently a cut feature, later truncation associated with the hospital precludes further analysis of the feature.

The truncation of the postulated charcoal-burning kiln was caused by two east/west aligned linear features – [5/08] and [5/09]. These were separated from one another by a deposit of redeposited subsoil (5/11), the same as (5/01). The linear cuts were filled with redeposited natural (5/07) and (5/10), respectively. The deposit (5/07) shows particularly clear evidence of truncation, and is subsequently sealed – as is (5/10) – by (5/01), the subsoil. These two linear features are close together – c. 0.2m separate them – and may well be part of an originally single cut garden feature, backfilled with subsoil (5/11), and which was redug and subsequently backfilled with the natural (5/07) and (5/10). Similar linear features were excavated by the author at Littlemore Hospital, Oxford (Williams, 2007), and interpreted as part of the gardens for the hospital. Photographs of the hospital from the early 1900s show the land used for market gardening (Fig. 4).

To the north of these features was a narrow gully (5/12), c. 0.2m wide and in line with a similar gully in Trench 6, [6/05]. It was recorded in section but was not investigated further.

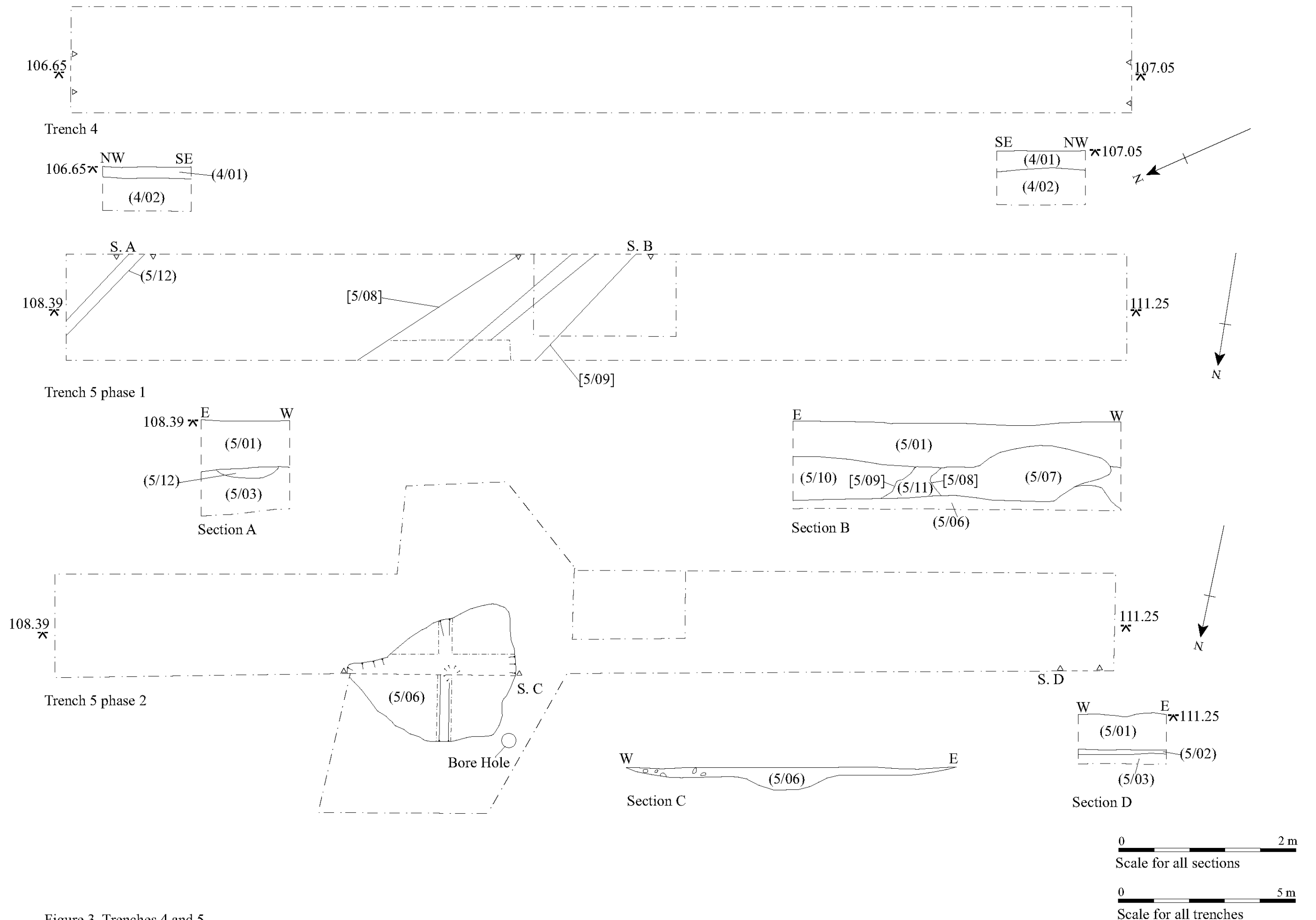


Figure 3. Trenches 4 and 5



Figure 4. Tonbridge Union Workhouse and gardens (Higginbotham, 2008)

Trench 6 was located to the west of Trench 5, and was largely empty. The natural (6/03) was overlain by a dump of redeposited natural – (6/02) – at the northwest end. At the southeast end the natural (6/03) was overlain by (6/04) which was cut by a narrow gully [6/05], measuring 0.2m wide and deep. The gully was observed to measure 4m long within the trench and extended into Trench 5, as (5/12). It was filled with brown grey clay sand (6/06); no dating was recovered from the fill. These features were sealed by a subsoil (6/01) of brownish grey clay sand loam.

Trench 7 was abandoned due to the presence of services across the entire area of the proposed trench.

4.2 Area A Trenches 8-12 (Figures 5 & 6)

Trenches 8 and 9 were combined due to the pile of rubble overlying the emplacement of Trench 8, which appeared in any case to have been truncated by reduction associated with the hospital, and the site car park, which was over Trench 9, and which was also heavily truncated. The Trench 8-9 revealed the natural, (8-9/04), Ardingley Sandstone, overlain by a dump of redeposited sand (8-9/03), containing fragments of modern pipe. It was not possible to ascertain whether the redeposited natural was Ardingley Sandstone or Tunbridge Wells Sand as it was heavily reworked. It was however sealed by a layer of greenish grey sandy silt (8-9/02), itself sealed by a dump of black or dark grey, gravelly make-up (8-9/01). On the western edge of the test-pit the footings of a prefab building were observed to be c. 0.6m deep. This test-pit, which measured 3m by 3.5m and was 1.25m deep, demonstrated that extensive areas of the site, both on the upslope and the downslope, had been truncated as part of the public works for the construction of the hospital. With the agreement of the Heritage Conservation Group Archaeological Officer, no further work was carried out here to extend the area of trenching.

To the west of this trench, Trenches 12, 11 and 10 were opened upslope of Trench 8-9. Trenches 11 and 10 were also combined as Trench 11, due to services, had to be moved north, with it then extending into the south wall of Trench 10. The sequence for the two trenches is the same; many modern services and other interventions were observed in the trench. The same sandstone (10-11/03) as seen in Trench 8-9 was also observed in Trench 10-11; this was sealed by loose sandy clay (10-11/02), which was only observed at the north end of Trench 11. Sealing (11/03) and (10-11/02) was a loose dump (10-11/01) of bluish grey clay.

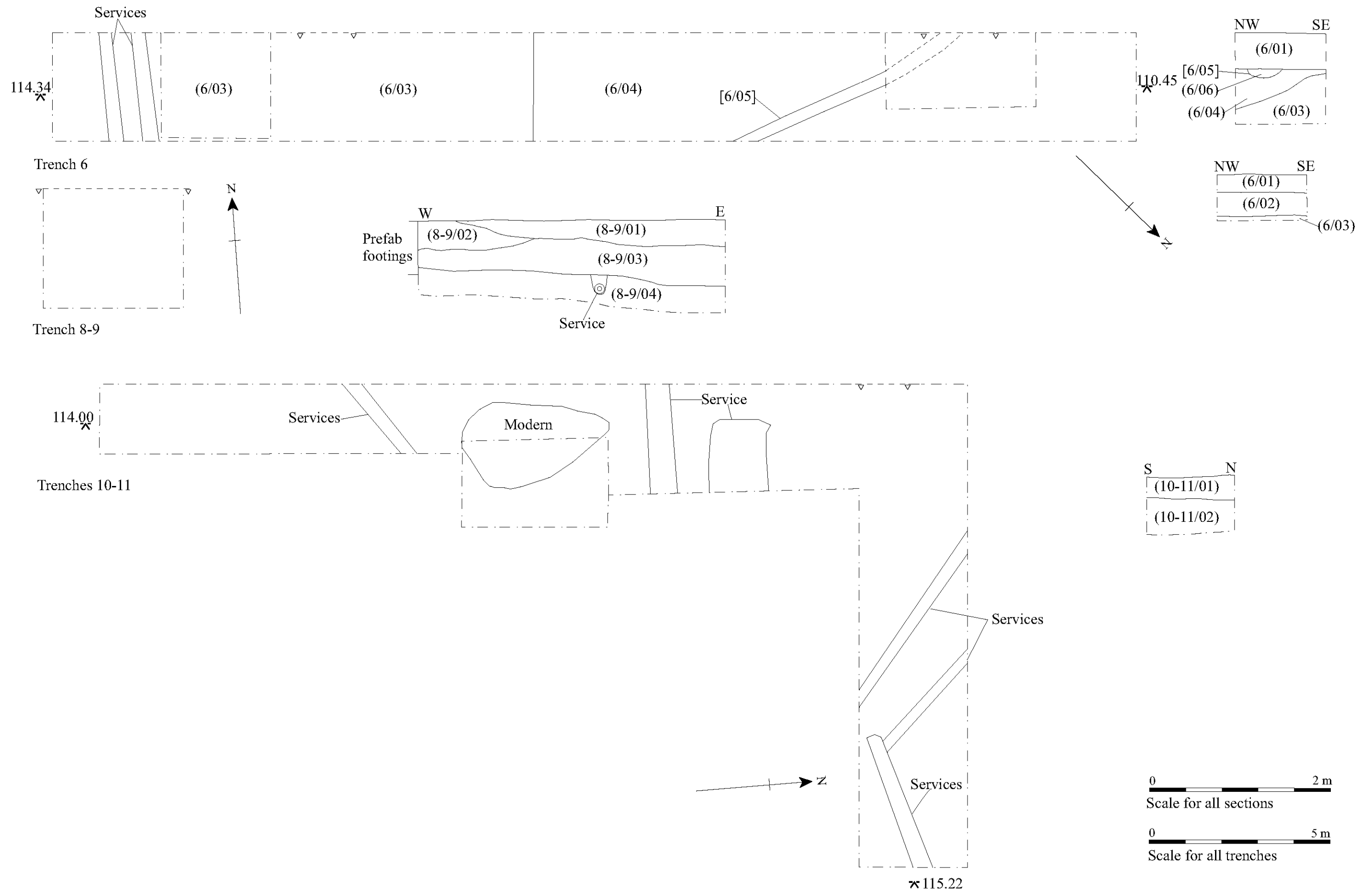


Figure 5. Trenches 6, 8-11

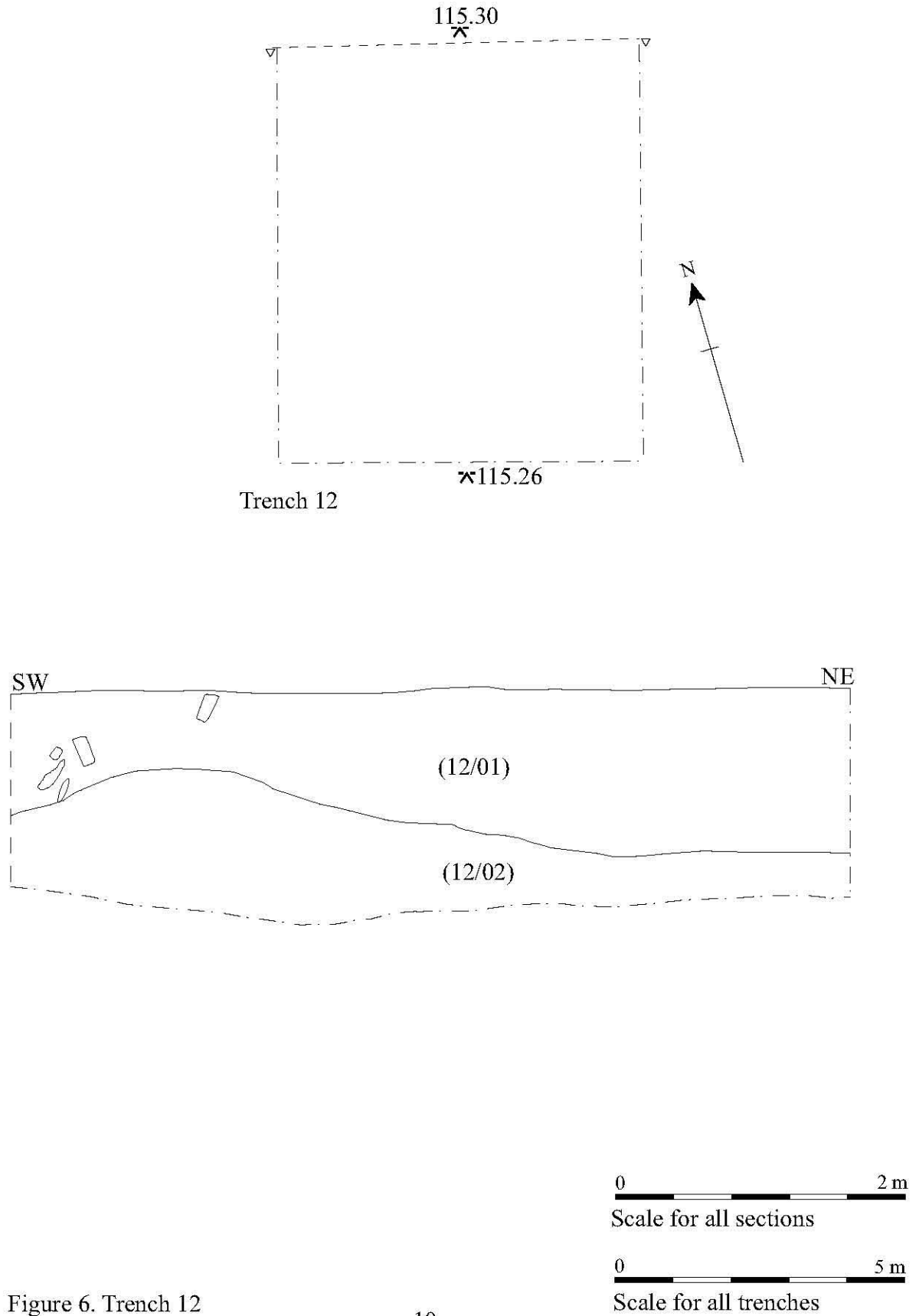


Figure 6. Trench 12

Trench 12 was located to the southeast of Trenches 10-11. It measured 7.5m by c. 6m; the sequence revealed natural sandstone (12/02), sealed by a dump (12/01) of made ground comprising dark grey clay with brick and tarmac through it. The slope from west to east is clearly shown in the section (Fig. 6).

4.3 Reliability of Techniques and Results

The reliability of results is considered to be good. The archaeological evaluation took place during largely dry and frequently overcast weather, on an active construction site. However, particularly bad weather was experienced on the 10th and 11th March.

5 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS

5.1 Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised a single sherd weighing 6g from Trench 5, context 6. It is a sherd of glazed Red Earthenware of mid 16th – 17th century date.

5.2 Charcoal by Dr. Mark Robinson

The charcoal from deposit (5/06) was of well preserved oak and beech charcoal along with some possible birch charcoal. It is all of roundwood between ten and twenty years old. It has the characteristic of fuelwood from a managed source rather than burnt branchwood, scrub clearance or burnt building debris. It is not clear whether the charcoal was the result of burning the wood or was prepared charcoal.

6 DISCUSSION

The evaluation indicated that the site had been extensively truncated during the post-war period of the hospital's life, and only the area around Trenches 5 and 6 appeared not to have been affected by any truncation. Photographs (Higginbotham, 2008) show the site to be largely agricultural at the beginning of the 19th century. The prefab huts cannot be accurately dated but are similar to other post-war prefabs (English Heritage 2008) and do not appear on the 1938 OS map of the site, which means they should be assigned a post-war date.

These prefab buildings were located on terraces dropping from west to east, where Trenches 1, 2, 3, 4, 8-9, 10-11 and 12 were laid out. Trenches 1-4 revealed traces of these post-war prefabs, which may be as late as the 1950s when building works were carried out on the site of the present hospital. The Trench 8-9 revealed that the depth of the footings for some of the prefabs could be in the region of 0.6m; Trench 8 was originally located within the foot-print of such a prefab. Trenches 10-11 were located over an access road between the labour cells and an ancillary building to the north where extensive services and earth-moving had removed all potential archaeological horizons. Trench 12, which due to the presence of services was moved to the east, was located within the footprint of the labour cell of the Tonbridge Union workhouse, which is clearly terraced into the hillside on the photograph (Fig. 4).

It is not possible to assert incontrovertibly that the linear features observed in Trench 5, [5/08] and [5/09], are garden features such as raised beds for horticulture or edging beds to areas for cultivation. The photograph from the early 1900s (Fig. 4) shows that the area was open and apparently under cultivation. Map searches suggest that the area where Trenches 5 and 6 were located was never built on and these may well be part of plot divisions within the workhouse grounds. The two undated linear features cut a burnt area, which may relate to charcoal burning or bonfire activity carried out at the site. The central depression is strongly suggestive of a charcoal kiln, although the absence of a channel or ditch surrounding the kiln might raise the question as to whether it is a charcoal burning kiln. The date 16th to 17th century date from the single sherd of pottery places the kiln hypothesis in question. The two linear features are from after this date.

The impact of the current development is extremely limited; indeed the impact of the post-war public works was more significant than had been anticipated. This is frequently the case with public works such as hospitals, universities and similar major infrastructure projects (Williams 2007b). As a consequence, only limited archaeological remains associated with the Tonbridge Union Workhouse were identified in addition to the evidence for extensive post-war earth-moving for the expansion of the hospital after the late 1940s when the hospital was taken into the NHS.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Archaeology South-East 2008 *An Archaeological Watching Brief during Geotechnical Testpitting at the site of Pembury Hospital, Tonbridge Road, Pembury, Kent*. Unpublished client report.

English Heritage 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects*

English Heritage 2006 *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment*

English Heritage 2007

<http://viewfinder.english-heritage.org.uk/story/intro.aspx?storyUid=44> consulted 26th March 2008

Higginbotham, P 2008

<http://www.workhouses.org.uk/index.html?Tonbridge/Tonbridge.shtml> consulted 26th March 2008

Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1994 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations*

Williams G, 2007a *An archaeological Evaluation for the Institute of Reproductive Sciences, Armstrong Road, Littlemore, Oxford* Unpublished Client Report JMHS

Williams G 2007b *An archaeological Evaluation at Boldrewood Campus, Southampton* Unpublished Client Report JMHS

APPENDIX I

CONTEXT TABLE

APPENDIX – ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context	Type	Description	Depth	Width	Length	Interpretation
1/01	Layer	Sandstone and silty sand	>0.9m	>3m	>30m	Natural
2/01	Layer	Grey yellow silty sand, rubble	c. 0.1m	>3m	>30m	Surface scree
2/02	Layer	Sandstone and silty sand	>1.4m	>3m	>30m	Natural
3/01	Layer	Grey yellow silty sand, rubble	c. 0.5m	>3m	>30m	Surface scree
3/02	Layer	Sandstone and silty sand	>0.7m	>3m	>30m	Natural
4/01	Layer	Grey yellow silty sand, rubble	c. 0.20	>3m	>30m	Surface scree
4/02	Layer	Sandstone and silty sand	>0.7m	>3m	>30m	Natural
5/01	Layer	Mid brown clay loam	c. 0.45m	>3m	>30m	Subsoil
5/02	Layer	Mid brown silty clay & charcoal	c. 0.12m	1.7m	50.00	Subsoil
5/03	Layer	Light brown orange patches silty sand	>0.1m	>3m	>30m	Natural
5/04		DELETED				
5/05		DELETED				
5/06	Layer	Black silty sand & charcoal	c. 0.3m	c. 3m	c. 4m	Charcoal spread; possible kiln?
5/07	Fill	Mid orangey yellow sand; redeposited fill of [5/08]	c. 0.3m	c. 1.4m	>3m	Fill of possible garden feature
5/08	Fill	Flat bottomed; rounded sides; linear	c. 0.3m	c. 1.4m	>3m	Cut of possible garden feature
5/09	Fill	Flat bottomed; rounded sides; linear	c. 0.5m	c. 1.2m	>3m	Cut of possible garden feature
5/10	Cut	Mid orangey yellow sand redeposited fill of [5/09]	c. 0.5m	c. 1.2m	>3m	Fill of possible garden feature
5/11	Deposit	Mid brown clay loam; associated with [5/08] and [5/09]	c. 0.35m	c. 0.4m	>1.5m	Redeposited material within possible beds?
5/12	Deposit	Mid brown grey clay sand	Unk.	c. 0.2m	c. 3.2m	Possible linear; same as [6/05]?
6/01	Layer	Mid brown grey clay loam	c. 0.2m	>3m	>30m	Subsoil
6/02	Layer	Brown orange silty/clay sand	c. 0.25m	c. 3m	c. 1.5m	Redeposited natural
6/03	Layer	Light brown orange patches silty/clay sand	>0.45m	>3m	>30m	Natural
6/04	Layer	Dark brown orange patches silty/clay sand	c. 0.3m	>3m	c. 10m	Redeposited natural
6/05	Fill	U-shaped linear; NW/SE	c. 0.2m	c. 0.2m	>6m	Gully or other garden feature
6/06	Cut	Mid brown grey clay sand. Fill of [6/05]	c. 0.2m	c. 0.2m	>6m	Fill of gully feature
8-9/01	Layer	Dark blackish grey silty clay; gravel	c. 0.3m	3.2m	3.2m	Subsoil
8-9/02	Layer	Dark greenish grey sandy silt	c. 0.3m	3.2m	3.2m	Dump of levelling deposit
8-9/03	Layer	Mid reddish brown sandy silt	c. 0.5m	3.2m	3.2m	Redeposited mixed natural
8-9/04	Layer	Light orange yellow clay sand	c. 0.4m	3.2m	3.2m	Natural
10-11/01	Layer	Mid blue grey clay	c. 0.35m	>3m	Tr 10 & 11	Made ground
10-11/02	Layer	Mid orange yellow clay sand	c. 0.3m	3m	>1.5m & Tr 10	Made ground
10-11/03	Layer	Light orange yellow silty sand	Unk.	3m	Tr 10 & 11	Natural
12/01	Layer	Mid Greyish Brown Firm Clay	0.8-1.1m	6.5m	7m	Made ground
12/02	Layer	Mid Greyish Brown Firm Silty Clay	0.15	6.5m	7m	Natural