

**Archaeological Evaluation at land to the rear
of 1 & 2 Forge Meadow, Stone-In-Oxney,
Tenterden, Kent**

August 2008

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**Land to the rear of 1 & 2 Forge Meadow,
Stone-In-Oxney,
Tenterden, Kent**

Archaeological Evaluation Assessment

NGR: 594032 127837

Site Code: SIO-EV-08

**Report for
B & M Consulting**

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION ON LAND TO THE REAR OF 1 & 2 FORGE
MEADOW, STONE-IN-OXNEY, TENTERDEN, KENT
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION ASSESSMENT

NGR: 594032 127837

Site Code: SIO-EV-08

SUMMARY

Under the direction of Dr Paul Wilkinson, Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out an archaeological evaluation of land to the rear of 1 & 2 Forge Meadow, Stone-In-Oxney, Tenterden, Kent, on 1st-2nd June 2008 and 1st August 2008. The evaluation, comprising trial trenching was undertaken in order to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (Kent County Council 2008) in discussion with the Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council. Four evaluation trenches were originally requested, revealing the presence of undated post holes and a modern ditch.

With the exception of a few modern features, plough scars and natural undulations, no significant archaeological finds or features were encountered throughout the duration of the evaluation. A common stratigraphic sequence was recognised across the site comprising topsoil overlying subsoil and natural geology. No archaeological features or finds were present on site. Intact archaeological horizons have been shown to survive at a depth approximately 0.5m below the existing ground level. Truncation of the assessment site was relatively minimal, evident only by the existence of low impact post holes and plough scars. With this in mind it is suggested that proposed development will have no archaeological impact.

INTRODUCTION

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) was commissioned by B & M Consulting to carry out an archaeological evaluation at the above site. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (KCC 2008) and in discussion with the Archaeological Officer, Heritage & Conservation, Kent County Council. The evaluation was carried out between June and August 2008.

PLANNING BACKGROUND

A planning application (07/01487/AS) for the erection of six bungalows along with associated access, car parking and services at the above site was submitted to Ashford Borough Council (ABC). Kent County Council Heritage and Conservation (KCCHC), on behalf of Ashford Borough Council, requested that an *Archaeological Evaluation* be undertaken in order to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains and to provide a rapid assessment of existing buildings extant within the site. The following conditions were attached to the planning consent:

No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Requirements for the archaeological evaluation comprised trial trenching targeting a minimum of 5% of the impact area, with trenches designed to establish whether there are any archaeological deposits at the site that may be affected by the proposed development. The results from this evaluation will be used to inform KCCHC and ABC of any further archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary in connection with the development proposals.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND TOPOGRAPHY

The proposed development site is located on the periphery of the village of Stone-In-Oxney, to the rear of Forge Meadow. The site centre is taken to be at NGR 594032 127837. The site encompasses c 0.4 hectares and currently comprises former farmland in an un-kept condition, with the southern extent of the site laid to lawn, at an approximate height of 7-14m above ordnance datum (AOD). The site is within the historic parish of Stone-cum-Ebony and the administrative area of Ashford Borough Council. The site is shown on the mapping of the British Geological Society as lying on deposits of Wadhurst Clay with Marine Alluvium (sand)¹ which overly Thanet Beds.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The development site lies on the edge of the former sea channel that surrounded the Isle of Oxney. It has a fascinating history of change and much of the settlement pattern of the area is a product of the creeks and channels feeding Romney Marsh². The Isle of Oxney would have formed an attractive place for settlement for communities exploiting the resources of Romney Marsh since prehistoric times. A number of circular cropmarks are known along the northern side of the Isle of Oxney and there are also a number of moated sites noted in the Historic Environment Record on the Isle of Oxney³.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the evaluation, as set out within the Archaeological Specifications was to:

¹ Kent County Council (2008: 4.2)

² Kent County Council (2008: 5.1)

³ Kent County Council (2008: 5.2)

- i) Establish whether there are any archaeological deposits at the site that may be affected by the proposed development. The excavation is thus to ascertain the extent, depth below ground surface, depth of deposit, character, significance and condition of any archaeological remains on site.
- ii) Establish the extent to which previous development on the site has affected archaeological deposits.

Additional aims were to:

- iii) Gather sufficient information to enable an assessment of the potential and significance of any archaeological remains to be made and the impact development will have upon them.
- iv) Enable an informed decision to be made regarding the future treatment of any archaeological remains and consider any appropriate mitigatory measures either in advance of any planning application and/or during development.

Specific aims included:

- v) Establishing whether deposits of palaeoenvironmental interest associated with the former Rother Sea Channel extend onto the development site;
- vi) Contribution to the understanding of past human activity and changing environments and landscapes on the Isle of Oxney.

METHODOLOGY

Trial trenching commenced on the 2nd June 2008, with the excavation of three trenches; each measuring 1.5m in width and between 20m and 23m in length (see below). The presence of badgers and newts within the proposed development area resulted in a temporary period off site (approximately 1 month), after which the fourth and final trench was excavated. Trench locations were allocated by KCC forming part of the specification. Following the removal of modern overburden, each trench was initially scanned for surface finds prior to more extensive mechanical excavation. Excavation was carried out using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, removing the overburden to the top of the first recognisable archaeological horizon, under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist. Trenches were subsequently hand-cleaned to reveal features in plan and carefully selected cross-sections through the features were excavated to enable sufficient information about form, development date and stratigraphic relationships to be recorded without prejudice to more extensive investigations, should these prove to be necessary. All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with KCC and IFA standards and guidance. A complete photographic record was maintained on site, which included working

shots during mechanical excavation, following archaeological investigations and during backfilling.

A single context recording system was used to record the deposits. A full list is presented in Appendix 1. Layers and fills are recorded (**100**). The cut of the feature is shown [**100**]. Context numbers were assigned to all deposits for recording purposes; these are used in the report (in **bold**). Each number has been attributed to a specific trench with the primary number(s) relating to specific trenches (*i.e.* Trench 1, **100+**, Trench 2, **200+** etc.)

MONITORING

Curatorial monitoring was carried out during the course of the evaluation by KCC at which time, methodologies and preliminary results were discussed.

RESULTS

A common stratigraphic sequence was recognised across the site comprising topsoil/overburden overlying buried subsoil and the natural geology. The topsoil/overburden (**100**, **200**, **300** etc.) consisted of friable dark grey brown slightly silty clay overlying a buried subsoil (**101**, **201**, **301** etc.) comprising pale orange grey sandy silt. A clear line of horizon gave way to natural geology (**102**, **202**, **302** etc.) where mechanical excavation ceased and careful examination and investigation for truncating features was carried out. Appendix 1 provides the stratigraphic sequence for all trenches.

Trench 1

(20 x 1.5m) Fig. 3

Aligned approximately north-south, Trench 1 was located within the northern extent of the site (Fig. 2). The trench was excavated to a depth of approximately 0.47m below the existing ground level, with topsoil (**100**) extant to a depth of c.0.21m and subsoil (**101**) to a depth of c.0.26m. Four anomalies were originally identified within this trench, two of which proved to represent plough scars [**106**]. Within the southern extent of the trench a single post hole [**104**] measured approximately 0.23m in diameter, with a depth of 0.17m, comprising a fill of light brown sandy clay with fragments of a partially decayed post. Adjacent and beneath the eastern baulk, a pit (or possible ditch terminus [**109**]) measured 0.44m in width with a depth of 0.05m. A lower fill (**107**) comprised mottled black dark grey and brown silty clay with frequent charcoal and occasional rounded stones directly underlying mottled orange grey silty clay (**108**). No archaeological finds or features were encountered within this trench.

Trench 2

(22.3 x 1.5m) Fig. 4

Located within the central area of the proposed development site and aligned east-west, Trench 2 measured 22.3m in length, to a depth of approximately 0.42m below the existing ground level. The most prominent feature within this trench consisted of a heavily truncated

ditch [213] measuring approximately 0.47m in width and 0.16m in depth. Aligned northeast-southwest, the ditch possessed near vertical sides and an undulated concave and pointed base that gave way to a fill comprising dark brown silty clay (212). No dateable finds were associated with this feature, which was also located, and subsequently investigated, within Trench 4 (see below). To the immediate west, a post hole [209] measured 0.27m in diameter, with a depth of 0.27m. Two fills were recorded within this feature, the upper fill consisting of mottled black, dark grey and brown silty clay with frequent charcoal inclusions (207), while the lower fill comprised mottled orange grey silty clay (208). Directly adjacent and to the east, a shallow pit [211] also contained a charcoal rich fill consisting of grey brown sandy clay (210). Both of these features possessed fragments of white and blue (willow patterned) china fragments and therefore assigned a modern date. Within the eastern extents of the trench, two very shallow features [204] & [215] were recorded as potential ditches, although they may represent little more than natural undulations. Two plough scars were also present within this trench, one of which was partially excavated [206], however, no dateable material was present within the mid grey brown silty clay fill (205).

Trench 3

(19m x 1.5m) Fig. 3

Aligned east-west, Trench 3 was located within the southern extent of the site (Fig. 2). The trench was excavated to a depth of approximately 0.47m with topsoil (300) extant to a depth of c.0.21m and subsoil (301) to a depth of c.0.26m. Three anomalies were originally identified within this trench, two of which proved to be isolated areas of natural fragmented sandstone (304), with the remaining representing a naturally filled undulation [303] filled by the overlying subsoil (301).

No archaeological finds or features were encountered within this trench.

Trench 4

(22.7m x 1.5m) Fig. 6

Located within the eastern extent of the development area and aligned northeast-southwest, Trench 7 measured 21.5m in length and possessed a single linear feature [404], which aligned perfectly with that recorded within Trench 2 [213]. In this particular instance, however, the provenance was obtained by the presence of white bone china within the fill (403). Natural deposits [402] were sealed by the buried soil (401) at a depth of 0.41m below the existing ground level. No archaeological features were recorded within this trench.

PROJECT CONSTRAINTS

No constraints were associated with this project. The presence of Greater Crested Newts within the proposed development area resulted in a brief (approximately 1 month) period off site, after which the evaluation continued.

CONCLUSION

The archaeological evaluation has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification. With the exception of a few modern features; plough scars and natural undulations, no significant archaeological finds or features were encountered throughout the duration of the evaluation. A common stratigraphic sequence was recognised across the site comprising topsoil overlying subsoil and natural geology. No archaeological features or finds were present on site. Intact archaeological horizons have been shown to survive at a depth approximately 0.5m below the existing ground level. Truncation of the assessment site was relatively minimal, evident only by the existence of low impact post holes and plough scars. With this in mind it is suggested that proposed development will have no archaeological impact.

This evaluation has, therefore, assessed the archaeological potential of land intended for development. The results from this work will be used to aid and inform the Archaeological Officer (KCC) of any further archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary in connection with the development proposals.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SWAT would like to thank B & M Consulting for commissioning the project. Thanks are also extended to Kent County Council for their advice and assistance, in particular Ben Found (Archaeological Officer). Finally, thanks are due to the site team who assisted the author, namely: Paul Wilkinson, James Madden and Dan Quinly. All surveying and illustrations were produced by Digitise This. This report was edited and collated by Dr Paul Wilkinson (SWAT).

David Britchfield, October 2008

SUMMARY OF SITE ARCHIVE

Quantity of Archaeological Records

Photographs: 36 digital images, 10 Colour Slides

Drawings: Two A3 permatrace site drawings, comprising feature plans (and associated sections).

Finds: See Appendix B

Context Register including: Context Register (1), Drawings Register (1), Photographic Register (1), Levels Sheets (x), Environmental Samples Register (x), Environmental Sheets (x) and Context Sheets (36)

REFERENCES

IFA (1999) *Standards and Guidance for Field Archaeological Evaluations*

Kent County Council (2008) *Specification for Archaeological Evaluation at Land to the rear of 1 & 2 Forge Meadow, Stone-In-Oxney, Tenterden, Kent*

Museum of London Archaeological Services (1994) *Archaeological Site Manual*. 3rd ed.

APPENDIX 1 – Context summary

Forge Meadow, Stone-In-Oxney

Site Code: SIO-EV-08

Context Number	Trench	Type	Interpretation	Description	Fill of	Filled by	Illustration No	Artefact dating	Comments (Alignment/soil type/Group Number etc)	Assigned Period
100	1	L	Topsoil	Dark grey brown silty clay with occasional rounded stone and moderate rooting	x	x	Fig. 3	x		
101	1	L	Subsoil	Pale orange grey sandy silt with rare rounded and angular stone	x	x	Fig. 3	x		
102	1	L	Natural	Pale orange grey sandy silt with rare rounded and angular stone and occasional fragmented sandstone	x	x	Fig. 3	x		
103	1	F	Fill of post hole	Light brown grey sandy clay	104	x	Fig. 3	x		Undated
104	1	C	Post hole	x	x	103	Fig. 3	x		
105	1	F	Fill of 306	Mid grey brown silty clay	106	x	Fig. 3	x		Undated
106	1	C	Plough scar	x	x	105	Fig. 3	x		
107	1	F	Fill of pit	Mottled black dark grey and brown silty clay with frequent charcoal and occasional rounded stones	109	x	Fig. 3	x	Secondary fill	Undated
108	1	F	Fill of pit	Mottled orange grey silty clay	109	x	Fig. 3	x	Primary fill	Undated
109	1	C	Pit?	Possible ditch terminus?	x	107 & 108	Fig. 3	x		
200	2	L	Topsoil	Dark grey brown silty clay with occasional rounded stone and moderate rooting	x	x	Fig. 4	x		
201	2	L	Subsoil	Pale orange grey sandy silt with rare rounded and angular stone	x	x	Fig. 4	x		
202	2	L	Natural	Pale orange grey sandy silt with rare rounded and angular stone and occasional fragmented	x	x	Fig. 4	x		

Context Number	Trench	Type	Interpretation	Description	Fill of	Filled by	Illustration No	Artefact dating	Comments (Alignment/soil type/Group Number etc)	Assigned Period
				sandstone						
203	2	F	Fill of ditch/gully	Light brown grey sandy clay	204		Fig. 4	x		Undated
204	2	C	Ditch/gully	x	x	203	Fig. 4	x		
205	2	F	Fill of plough scar	Mid grey brown silty clay	206	x	Fig. 4	x		Undated
206	2	C	Plough post hole	x	x	205	Fig. 4	x		
207	2	F	Fill of 209	Mottled black dark grey and brown silty clay with frequent charcoal and occasional rounded stones	209	x	Fig. 4	x	Secondary fill	Undated
208	2	F	Fill of post hole	Mottled orange grey silty clay	209	x	Fig. 4	x	Primary fill	Undated
209	2	C	Post hole	x	x	207 & 208	Fig. 4	x		
210	2	F	Fill of pit	Moderate grey brown sandy clay with occasional fragments of burnt clay/daub	211	x	Fig. 4	x		Undated
211	2	C	Pit	Shallow pit	x	210	Fig. 4	x		
212	2	F	Fill of ditch	Dark brown silty clay with occasional crushed daub staining	213	x	Fig. 4	x		Modern
213	2	C	Ditch	X	x	212	Fig. 4	x		
214	2	F	Fill of ditch/gully		215	x	Fig. 4	x		Undated
215	2	C	Possible ditch/gully		x	214	Fig. 4	x		
300	3	L	Topsoil	Dark grey brown silty clay with occasional rounded stone and moderate rooting	x	x	Fig. 5	x		
301	3	L	Subsoil	Pale orange grey sandy silt with rare rounded and angular stone	x	x	Fig. 5	x		
302	3	L	Natural	Pale orange grey sandy silt with rare rounded and angular stone and occasional fragmented sandstone	x	x	Fig. 5	x		
303	3	C	Undulation	Natural undulation on the upper surface on the natural geology.	x	301	Fig. 5	x		
304	3	L	Natural	Natural Brash. Mottled light brown orange and dark red brown	x	x	Fig. 5	x		

Context Number	Trench	Type	Interpretation	Description	Fill of	Filled by	Illustration No	Artefact dating	Comments (Alignment/soil type/Group Number etc)	Assigned Period
				fragmented sandstone						
400	4	L	Topsoil	Dark grey brown silty clay with occasional rounded stone and moderate rooting	x	x	Fig. 6	x		
401	4	L	Subsoil	Pale orange grey sandy silt with rare rounded and angular stone	x	x	Fig. 6	x		
402	4	L	Natural	Pale orange grey sandy silt with rare rounded and angular stone and occasional fragmented sandstone	x	x	Fig. 6	x		
403	4	F	Fill of ditch	Dark brown silty clay with occasional crushed daub staining	404	x	Fig. 6	Modern	Same feature as [213]	Modern
404	4	C	Ditch	x	x	403	Fig. 6	x		

APPENDIX 2 – KCC Summary Form

Site Name: <i>Former Whitbread Training Centre Land to the rear of 1 & 2 Forge Meadow, Stone-In-Oxney, Tenterden, Kent</i>	
SWAT Site Code: <i>SIO-08-EV</i>	
Site Address: <i>Forge Meadow, Stone-In-Oxney, Tenterden, Kent</i>	
<p>Summary: <i>Under the direction of Dr Paul Wilkinson, Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out an archaeological evaluation of land to the rear of 1 & 2 Forge Meadow, Stone-In-Oxney, Tenterden, Kent, on 1st-2nd June 2008 and 1st August 2008. The evaluation, comprising trial trenching was undertaken in order to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (Kent County Council 2008) in discussion with the Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council. Four evaluation trenches were originally requested, revealing the presence of undated post holes and a modern ditch.</i></p> <p><i>With the exception of a few modern features, plough scars and natural undulations, no significant archaeological finds or features were encountered throughout the duration of the evaluation. A common stratigraphic sequence was recognised across the site comprising topsoil overlying subsoil and natural geology. No archaeological features or finds were present on site. Intact archaeological horizons have been shown to survive at a depth approximately 0.5m below the existing ground level. Truncation of the assessment site was relatively minimal, evident only by the existence of low impact post holes and plough scars. With this in mind it is suggested that proposed development will have no archaeological impact.</i></p>	
District/Unitary: <i>Ashford</i>	Parish: <i>Stone-cum-Ebony</i>
Period(s):	
Tentative: <i>Modern</i>	
NGR (centre of site : 8 figures): <i>NGR: 594032 127837</i> (NB if large or linear site give multiple NGRs)	
Type of archaeological work (delete)	
<i>Evaluation</i>	
Date of Recording: <i>June-July 2008</i>	
Unit undertaking recording: <i>Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT)</i>	
Geology: <i>Wadhurst Clay with Marine Alluvium (sand) which overly Thanet Beds.</i>	
Title and author of accompanying report:	
<i>Britchfield, D (2008) Land to the rear of 1 & 2 Forge Meadow, Stone-In-Oxney, Tenterden, Kent: Archaeological Evaluation</i>	
Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate) <i>As above</i> (cont. on attached sheet)	
Location of archive/finds: <i>SWAT</i>	
Contact at Unit: <i>Paul Wilkinson</i>	Date: <i>6th October 2008</i>

APPENDIX 3 – Figures

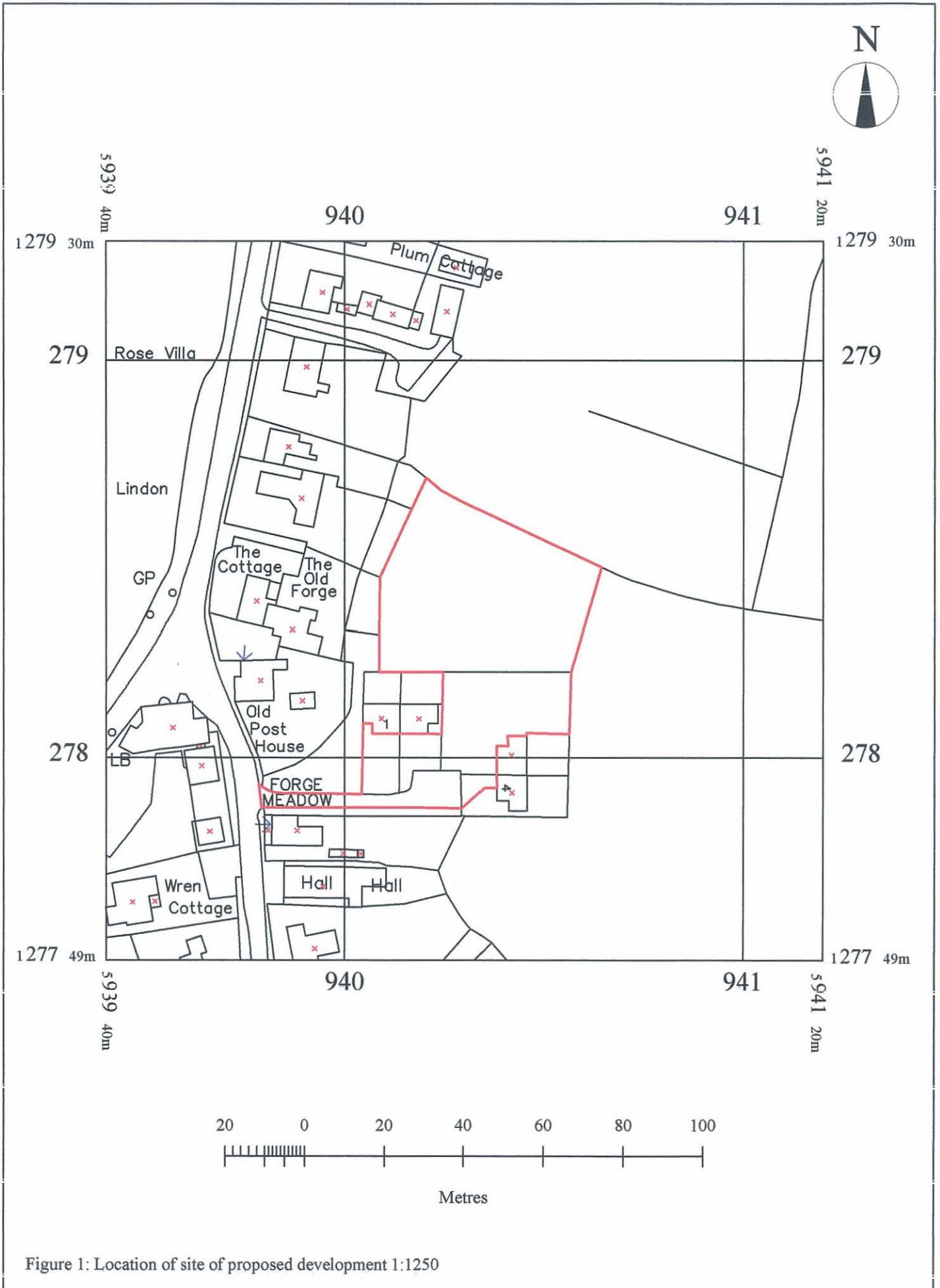


Figure 1: Location of site of proposed development 1:1250

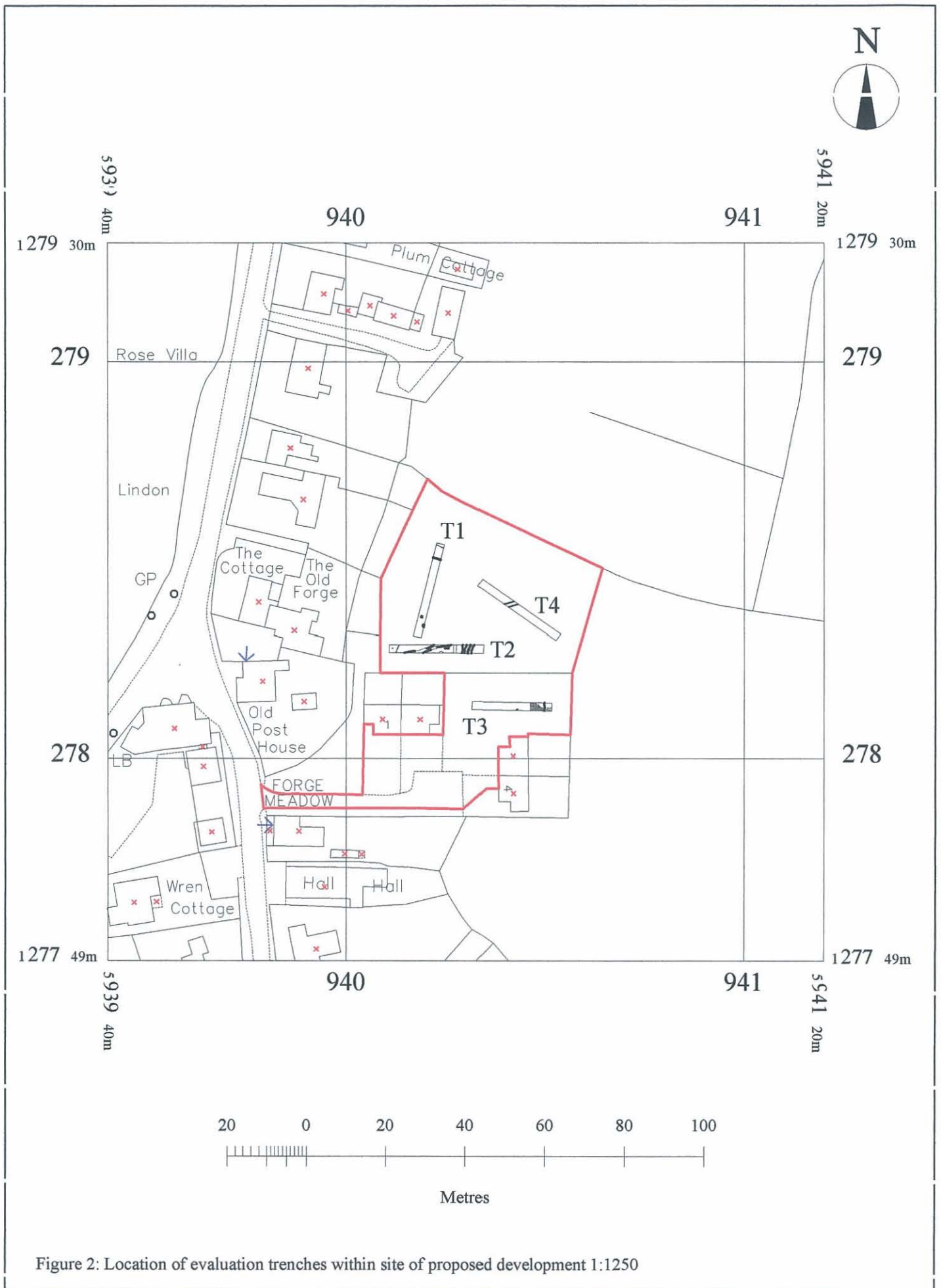


Figure 2: Location of evaluation trenches within site of proposed development 1:1250

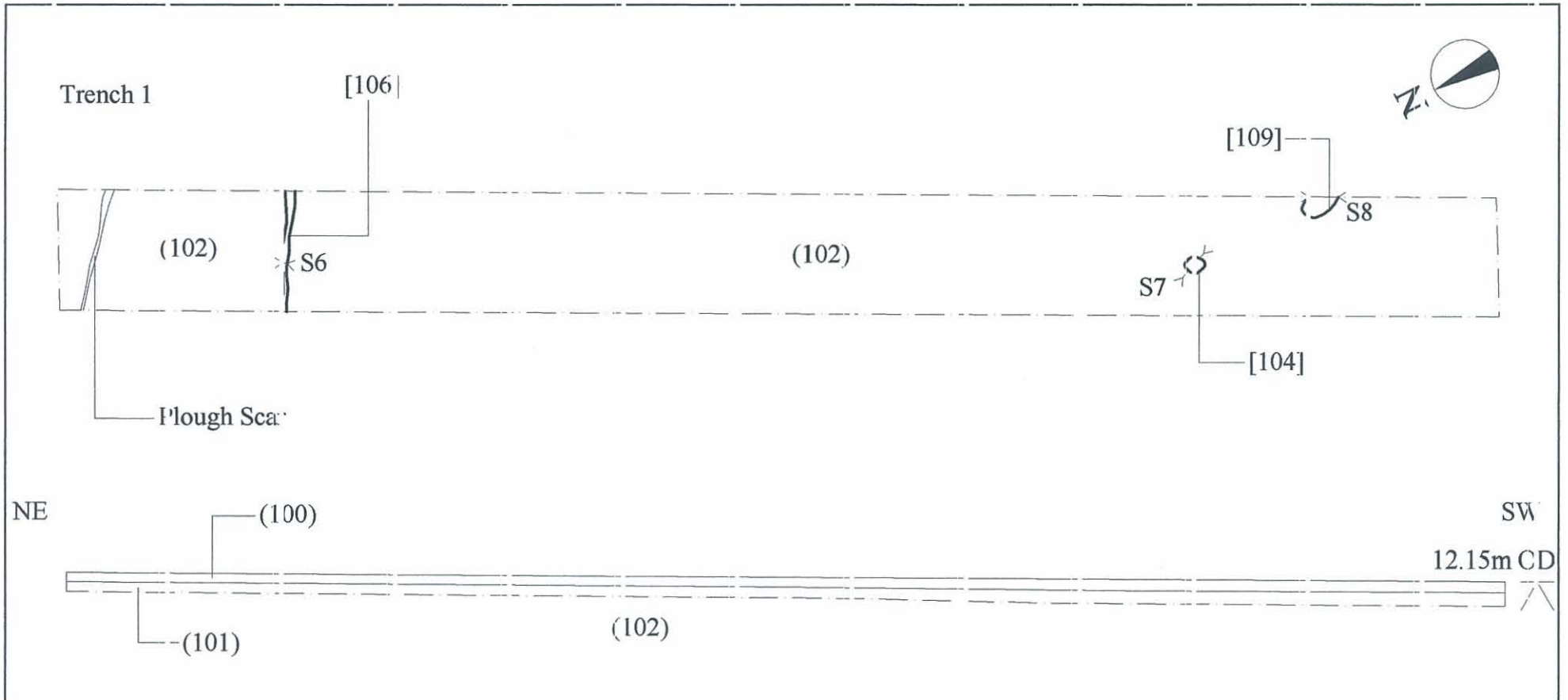


Figure 3a: Trench 1 - Plan and Sect on 1:100

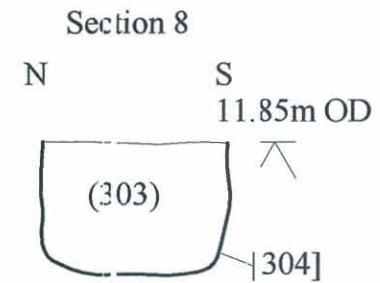
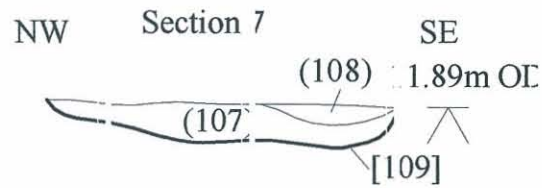
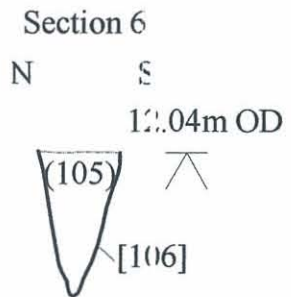


Figure 3b: Trench 1 - Sections 1:10

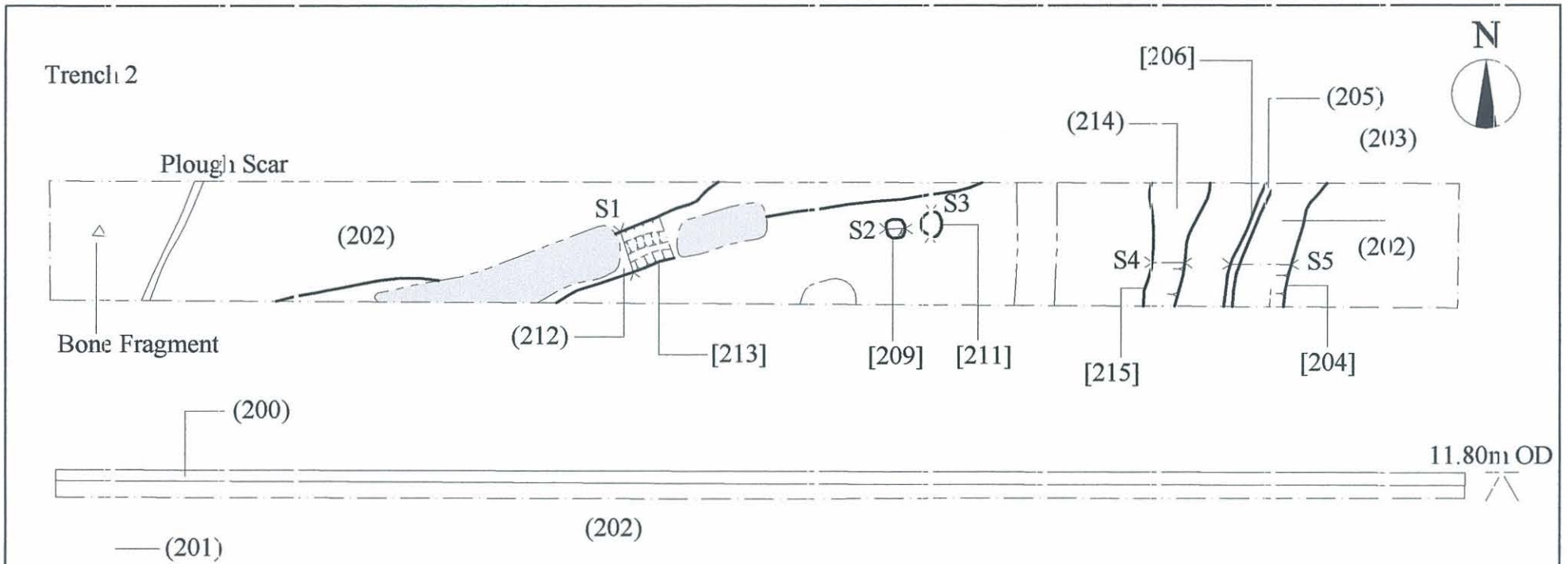


Figure 4a: Trench 2 - Plan and Section 1:100

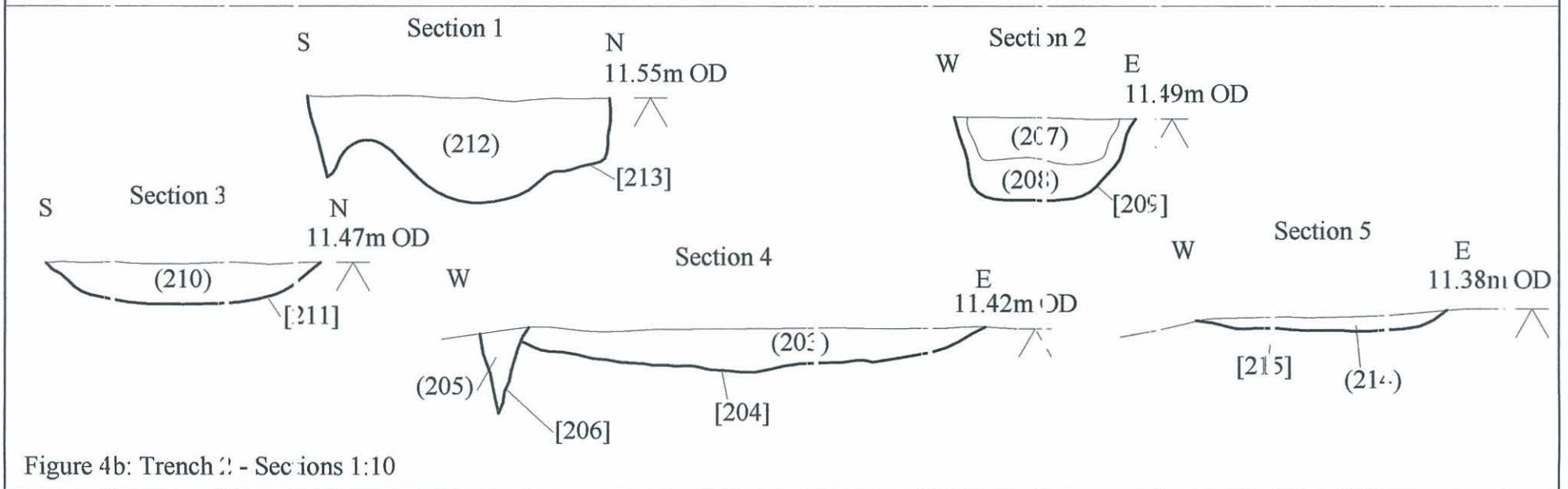


Figure 4b: Trench 2 - Sections 1:10

Trench 3

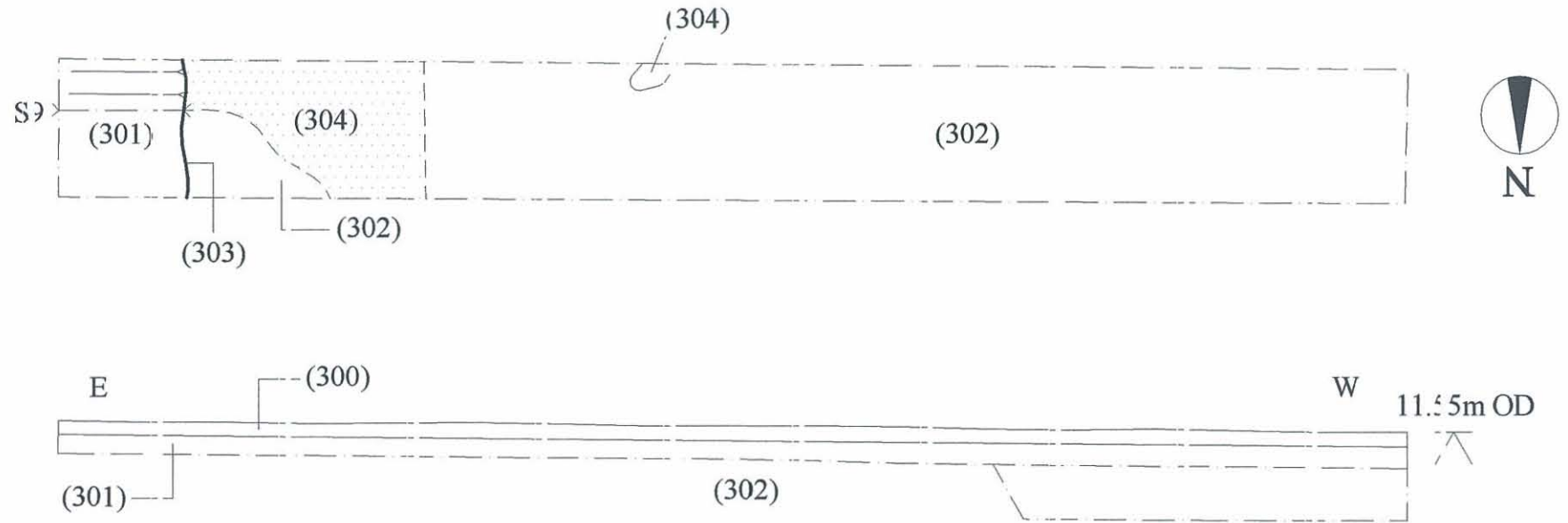


Figure 5a: Trench 3 - Plan and Sect on 1:100

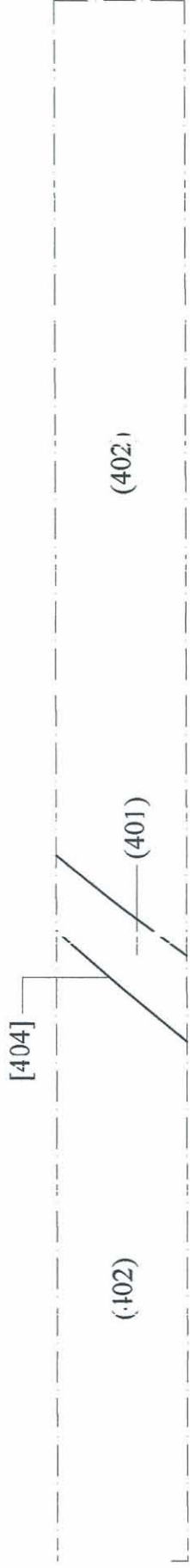
Section 3



Figure 5b: Trench 3 - Section 1:20



Trench 4



NW

SE

(400)

11.42m OD

(401)

(402)



Figure 6: Trench 4 - Plan and Section 1:100