



**Former Whitbread Training Centre Site,  
Abbey Street, Faversham, Kent  
Interim Archaeological Report Phase 1  
*November 2009***

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# **SWAT. Archaeology**

Former Whitbread Training Centre  
Abbey Street  
Faversham  
Kent

NGR 601720 161595

## **Interim Archaeological Report Phase I**

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November 2009

Issue 1

Illustrated by G. A. Moody and E. J. Boast

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## **1. Introduction**

Between February and April 2009 SWAT Archaeology carried out phase 1 of archaeological excavations at the former Whitbread Training Centre Site, Abbey Street, Faversham, Kent (NGR 601720 161595; Figure 1) in advance of the conversion of existing buildings, the construction of a part two and a half, part three storey commercial building along with associated access, car parking and services (Planning reference SW/05/0377). A predetermination archaeological evaluation had been carried out on the site between 18th and 20th of August 2008 establishing the presence of a possible structure with pits, post holes and an intact-flag Stone floor dating to the medieval period (Figure 2; Britchfield 2008).

Due to the restricted space on the site, the excavation was to be carried out in two stages. The full excavation of the first phase of the site – Phase I took place between February and April 2009 and was commissioned by Gilcrest Homes Ltd. The work was conducted in accordance with a specification issued by Adam Single of Kent County Council Heritage Conservation Group.

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## **2. Site Description**

The former Whitbread Training Centre is located on the junction of Abbey Street and Church Street, Faversham, approximately 100m west of St Mary of Charity Church. The site centre is taken to be at NGR 601720 161595. The site encompasses approximately 1100 sq. metres at an approximate height of 7 - 8m above Ordnance Datum (AOD). The site comprised former brewery buildings along the southern and eastern extents of the site, parts of which have now been demolished. The site is within the historic parish of Faversham and the administrative area of Swale Borough Council.

On the mapping of the British Geological Society the site is shown to be lying on deposits of Head Brickearth which overlie Thanet Beds.

## **3. Methodology (Figure 2)**

Following partial demolition of the existing buildings on the eastern extent of the site, the area of the site fronting Abbey Street was stripped of its overburden and deposited on the eastern part of the site. The exposed surface of the site was cleaned by hand to define the features, and an initial plan of the site was produced. All excavation of archaeological features was

undertaken by hand using a single context system of recording. Plans and sections were recorded on drafting film and context descriptions were recorded on pro forma context sheets. A digital photographic archive was produced for the site. Levels taken on the features were related to the Ordnance Survey Datum by a temporary Bench Mark with the value of 8.13 metres located on the ground surface of the adjacent Public House car park.

#### **4. Historical Background**

Faversham is a port and market town based on a settlement of Saxon or earlier origin. Iron Age and Roman settlement remains including a villa building are known from excavations carried out at Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School to the east of the site. Other Roman structural remains have been observed in Faversham Church.

Faversham is thought to have been a Saxon *villa regalis* – royal estate centre from the sixth century AD. The town stands on Faversham Creek which is a narrow navigable waterway located approximately 2 kilometres inland of its confluence with the Swale and Thames estuaries and Faversham was probably selected because of its potential as a trading harbour. According to an archaeological assessment of the town carried out in 2004 (KCC 2004) the possible site of a Royal House and lands was located to the north east of the site which later became the site of St Saviours Abbey in the medieval period. Following the dissolution, St Saviours Abbey later became Abbey Farm.

An earlier church is located to the west of the site on the site of the present parish church. In the Saxon period, the location of the main settlement of Faversham is likely to have centred to the south west of the site, around a crossroads at the head of the Faversham tidal creek close to what is now St Ann's Cross near Tanner's Street, Tanner's Green and West Street. A market was also present in this location.

The site is located within an area of medieval tenement plots fronting Abbey Street, not far from the early medieval market place located in the area around the Guildhall.

#### **5. Site Narrative**

The following narrative is based on a preliminary stratigraphic matrix. The ceramic spot dating for this site has not yet been fully completed but where dating has been available this has been added to the matrix to give a broad indication of the date of features present. Inevitably the phasing of the site into dated groups will alter when the full ceramic assemblage has been assessed when the issues of intrusion and residuality within the assemblage can be fully addressed. Broad phase plans have been produced (Figures 3-10) illustrating the location of cuts within the excavation area.

Due to the large numbers of features excavated a selection of sections from the deeper features have been illustrated, representing a transect from north to south across the site. The location of the sections are shown on Figure 11 and illustrated on Figure 12.

Based on the evidence of the preliminary spot dating, the majority of cut features excavated date to a late 15th - mid 16th century date. Residual pottery from earlier periods (11th, 12th and 13th centuries) is present within these features. Earlier phases of features date to the 13th and 14th centuries.

Two early stratigraphic features; a linear ditch (cut 238 and 215) and sub rectangular cut (cut 485) may be of Iron Age or Saxon date (*pers comm.* G. Morley) and possibly Saxon date respectively. The date of the ceramic assemblage from these features is yet to be established. The features from each phase are described in stratigraphic order and are cut into natural geology unless otherwise stated.

#### *Possible Prehistoric or Saxon ditch (Figure 3)*

This ditch is the earliest feature encountered on the site, although the fills do not contain dateable artefacts it may relate to activity encountered nearby at Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School. It is also possible that it may be associated with one of the phases of activity predating the mid 16th century.

Two segments of a ditch with a V shaped profile aligned north west – south east (cuts 238 and 215) were excavated, measuring approximately 0.3 metres deep. The ditch survived at the north west and south eastern end of the site with the central portion of the ditch presumably truncated by later activity. The ditch was cut by a possible mid 16th century posthole (cut 305) at the north western end and pit 187 at the south eastern end of its alignment establishing its early stratigraphic situation.

#### *Possible Saxon Sunken feature (Figure 3)*

Cut 485 (Figure 12, Section 485) was sub rectangular in plan with a sharp break of slope at the top and near vertical stepped sides. Its base was located at a level of 5.69 m AOD. It was filled by deposits representing primary silting of the cut and possible fills of post holes or beam slots. It was cut by a later pit (cut 174; not illustrated) filled with burnt clay which may be contemporary with this feature. The upper fill of pit 174 was cut by a pit (cut 555) of mid 16th century date, establishing the early date by stratigraphic position.

#### *Early 13th Century (Figure 4)*

A group of postholes (Group 551: cuts 538, 540, 542, 544, 546, 548 and 550) located in the northern eastern area of the site were associated with a linear feature (cut 164) which also contains evidence that post holes and stake holes were present within it. Pottery of early 13th century date is contained within cut 164. Cut 164 may represent the remains of a wall foundation. A further posthole (cut 162) was associated with the beam slot, stratigraphically this group lay directly below the mechanical stripping of the site (100).

The fills of a quarry pit (cut 377) were cut by a contemporary pit (cut 469). The quarry pit was also cut by a pit of a later date (cut 385).

The upper fill of a curvilinear feature (cut 455) was cut by a short gully (cut 452) of late 15th century date. Cuts 377, 469 and 455 all contained pottery of early 13th century date.

An early levelling deposit (259; not illustrated) containing pottery of early 13th century date was cut by pit 256 which could be contemporary with this period although it contained no dated artefacts. The fills of pit 256 were cut by a pit of mid 16th century date (cut 242).

The fills of two post holes (cuts 405 and 407) located in the southern area of the site were truncated by the cut for a modern drain (cut 190). The fill of cut 407 contained pottery of early 13th century date.

#### *Mid 13th century (Figure 5)*

Pit 385 (Figure 12, section 312) cut the fills of an early 13th century pit (pit 377). A remnant of garden soil or levelling deposit containing 17th century pottery (291) overlaid the pit.

The fills of pit 508 have not been dated but they were cut by another pit (268) which contained pottery of mid 13th century date, the upper fill of pit 268 was cut by a later pit probably of the mid 16th century (cut 295).

#### *Mid 14th century (Figure 6)*

In this phase a rubbish pit (cut 120) contained pottery of mid 14th century date. It lay directly below the horizon of the mechanical stripping of the site (100).

### *Late 14th century (Figure 6)*

The fills of the earliest pit in this phase (cut 514; not illustrated) were cut by a later pit (cut 501; not illustrated) containing residual pottery of mid 13th century date. Pit 501 could be contemporary with pit 514. Pit 514 was also cut by a pit of possible 16th century date (cut 423). Pit 501 was cut by pit 499 containing pottery of mid 16th century date.

The fills of a pit (cut 558) not yet dated, was cut by a later pit (cut 522; Figure 12, section 522) containing pottery of late 14th century date. Pit 522 was cut by a pit (cut 521) of mid 16th century date.

A pit lined with stake holes (pit cut 293; stake holes cuts 323, 327, 321, 329, 325) contained pottery of late 14th century date, the feature was stratigraphically below deposit 291 containing 17th century pottery.

The relationship between two pits (cuts 276; not illustrated, and 193; not illustrated) is unclear. The fill of pit 193 contains late 14th Century pottery and both could be contemporary. The upper fill of pit 193 was separated from the overlying mid 16th century deposit (278=470) by interface 279=128.

### *Late 15th Century (Figure 7)*

A short gully (cut 452) contained pottery of late 15th century date and cut the fills of an early 13th century curvilinear feature (cut 455). It was overlain by deposit 291 a levelling deposit of 17th century date.

Another square pit (cut 272) containing pottery of late 15th century date was cut by a modern pipe trench (cut 106).

A possible post pad (cut 428; Figure 12, section 282) which has not yet been dated and a rubbish pit (cut 483) containing demolition material of late 15th century date were cut by a flat bottomed feature (cut 282) which also contained pottery of 15th century date. The fills of cut 282 (Figure 12, section 282) were cut by a pit (cut 335, Figure 12, section 282) of mid 16th century date and a shallow pit (cut 471) not yet dated but may possibly be of 17th century date.

### *Mid 16th Century*

The majority of dated features located on the site date to this phase. Most are located in the southern and central part of the site.

A pit (cut 242) contained pottery of mid 16th century date and cut the fills of an early 13th century phase pit (cut 256). Pit 242 was cut by a post hole (cut 236; not illustrated) and overlain by a deposit (387; not illustrated) both of a later undated stratigraphic phase. Both of these features (deposit 387 and cut 236) directly underlie the machine stripping of the site (100).

At the southern end of the site, wall 486 (cut 124), two postholes (cuts 341; not illustrated and 348; not illustrated) and a rectangular pit (cut 213; Figure 12, section 213) all of mid 16th century date were cut by a later hexagonal pit (315) of a similar date.

A post hole (cut 305) and a pit (cut 187) cut the possible prehistoric ditch. Posthole 305 and pit 187 have not yet been dated but could be associated with this 16th century phase. Pit 187 was surrounded by a group of stake holes (Group 1000; cuts 217, 219, 221, 223, 225, 227). Three other stake holes located close by may also be associated with this pit (Group 1001; cuts 286, 288 and 284).

The stake holes (group 1001) and the upper fill of a small undated pit (cut 302; not illustrated) were separated by an interface (cut 279=128) from a deposit (278=470; not illustrated) containing mid 16th century pottery. Deposit 278=470 was overlaid by deposit 127=277=280 (not illustrated ) containing 17th century pottery.

A pit of probable mid 16th century date (cut 295) cut the fills of mid 13th century pit 268. The upper fill of the hexagonal shaped pit was cut by the grave for a dog (cut 254) with mid 16th century pottery in the fill. The grave also cut the upper fills of linear feature 215=238, posthole 305 and pits 187 and 295. Pit 295 was also cut by two postholes (cuts 122 and 262) which may also be associated with this phase. The dog's grave (cut 254) was separated by an interface (126 ) from the overlying deposit (210). A dump of tile (210; not illustrated) was overlaid by a deposit of mortar with some tile and brick and containing pottery of mid 16th century date (125; not illustrated). Post holes 122 and 262 and deposit 125 were directly below the machine stripping horizon (100).

The fills of a shallow pit (378) was cut by two further pits of similar depth (cuts 374 and 363); the fills of the pits have not yet been dated but the upper fills of pits 374 and 363 were cut by a rubbish pit (cut 361) containing pottery of mid 16th century date. Rubbish pit 361 was cut by a square waste pit (cut 142) containing mid 16th century pottery. The upper fill of cut 142 was directly below the mechanical stripping horizon (100).

Cut 501 (late 14th century phase) and 503 (to be dated; Figure 12, section 503) were cut by a sub circular waste pit (cut 499) containing pottery of mid 16th century date in the fills. Pit 335 cut the fills of an earlier pit (cut 282 15th century phase). The upper fill of pit 499 was cut by undated pit 511 and pit 335 (Figure 12, section 503) which contains pottery of mid 16th century date. A pit (cut 509/521) cut the fills of (cut 522) of late 14th century phase, and also the upper fill of an undated vertical sided well shaft (cut 482) measuring over 1.6 metres deep and pit 511. Pit 521/509 contains pottery of mid 16th century date. The fills of pit 509 are cut by pit 432 and 312 (Figure 12, section 312) both of which contain residual pottery of late 14th century date; 312 also contained residual pottery of late 15th century date.

The upper fill of pit 335 was cut by pit 355; another pit (cut 423; Figure 12, section 355) of possible 16th century date cut the fills of pit 514 of late 14th century phase. Pit 355 was cut in turn by pit 351. The following sequence of inter cutting pits lay stratigraphically one above the other; 351, 134=249 and 132 (not illustrated), the fill of 132 was overlaid by 17th century levelling deposit 291.

The upper fills of a small rectilinear pit (cut 274) and an irregular shaped cess pit (cut 299); both undated, were cut by pit 231, a large, shallow rectilinear cut containing pottery of mid 16th century date. The fill of a heavily truncated feature, possibly a pit (cut 338; not illustrated) presently undated, was cut by a sub rectangular rubbish pit (cut 266) which also cut the upper fill of pit 231. The fill of pit 266 was cut by a heavily truncated circular pit (cut 264) which contained residual 13th century pottery. The fill of pit 264 was cut by pit (cut 229), containing mid 16th century pottery and itself truncated by a modern pipe trench 106.

The fills of two undated pits possibly of mid 16th century date which are as yet undated (cuts 492; not illustrated, and 435) were cut by a pit (Cut 434) containing pottery of mid 16th century date. It also cut a sub rectangular pit (cut 530=372; not illustrated). The upper fill of 492 was also cut by another pit containing pottery of mid 16th century date (cut 158). The upper fill of pit 434 is also cut by pit 433 which contains pottery of mid 16th century date, firmly locating the fills of 434 between mid 16th century features.

A sequence of pits can be dated to the mid 16th century by pottery within pit 555 (along with residual 11th century pottery), although currently only pottery dating between mid 13th to late 14th centuries has been identified in them. The 16th century pottery could be intrusive and these pits belong to an earlier date.

At the northern end of the site, the 16th century pit 555 cut the upper fill of pit 174 (Saxon phase). The upper fills of 555 (Figure 12, section 485; not illustrated in plan) were cut by an

oval feature (cut 425) containing mid 13th century pottery. A series of deposits (393, 392 and 391; not illustrated) overlying the pit may represent levelling up of the area. The upper deposit (391) was cut by a rectangular pit (cut 182); containing early 12th century pottery and a circular pit (cut 176), both pits were cut by a later post medieval cellar (cut 109). Pit 182 was cut by a sub rectangular cut (cut 371) whose fills were in turn cut by a flat bottomed linear cut (172) containing 14th century pottery. The two features (cuts 371 and 172) may be contemporary and associated with each other. The upper fill of cut 172 was immediately below the horizon of machine stripping of the site (100) as were the upper fill of pit 433 and possible post pad 136.

### *17th Century (Figure 9)*

A further series of inter-cutting features date to the 17th century at the earliest (in stratigraphic order: cut 331, 247, 136). Cut 331, a possible posthole; cut 247, a pit containing a wooden barrel or bucket; and cut 136 a possible post pad, date to the 17th century at the earliest.

The fill of an undated oval shaped rubbish pit (cut 492; not illustrated) was cut by a pit approximately 1.8 metres deep (cut 158; Figure 12, section 158) and filled by a series of laminated deposits containing pottery ranging from the late 15th to 17th centuries. The upper fill of the pit was immediately below the machine stripping horizon (100).

A remnant of garden soil or levelling deposit (291; not illustrated) contained pottery of 17th century date and overlay the upper fills of pits 385, 312 and 293 and gully 452. This soil was cut by modern pipe trench 106.

A shallow pit (cut 471) possibly of 17th century date, cut the fills of an earlier pit (cut 282, late 15th century phase). The upper fills of pit 471 were cut by an undated rubbish pit (cut 209) which was in turn cut by a 17th century garden feature (205=207) and a shallow square pit (cut 314; not illustrated) of the same date. The garden feature (205=207) was cut by a post hole or small pit (cut 203) containing residual pottery of mid 14th and late 15th century date. The upper fill of pit/posthole 203 and square pit 314 were truncated by a modern pipe trench (cut 190).

Deposit 278=470 (not illustrated); containing 16th century pottery overlaid deposit 127=277=280 (not illustrated) which contained 17th century pottery, this lay immediately below machine stripping of the site (100).

### *Undated Features*

A group of features not yet spot dated (cuts 409, 414 and 412) were located in the western part of the site, each cut by modern pipe trench (104). Cut 409 was a cess pit with vertical sides and flat base, cut by modern pipe trench 104.

Cut 414 was a shallow U shaped pit with an uncertain stratigraphic relationship with Pit 414 and cut 412. Cut 412; a pit or posthole may cut the fill of pit 414 and artefact dating may clarify the relationship. The fill of pit/posthole 412 was cut by modern pipe trench 104.

Two inter cutting features (in stratigraphic order: cut 184, 516) extended under the limit of excavation on the north eastern side of the site, finds within the fills have not yet been dated but the excavator noted that the pits may be dated to a medieval phase of the site. Pit 184 was shallow, the fill was cut by pit 516 which extended under the limit of excavation and was not fully excavated. A circular posthole (cut 170) cut the fill of pit 516 which was itself cut by the foundations for a cellar (cut 109). The circular posthole (cut 170) directly below machine stripping of the site (100) along with another sub rectangular posthole (cut 290) and three circular postholes (cut 166, cut 388, cut 390).

### *Post Medieval Cellar*

At the northern end of the site, the cut for a cellar (cut 109 and 112) had truncated earlier deposits. The walls of the cellar were intact (walls 108 and 111) and the backfill of the structure (107 and 110) was truncated by a modern sewer pipe (cut 102).

### *19th century*

A linear pit (cut 118; not illustrated) overlaid by a crushed mortar layer (199) contained 19th century pottery. The mortar layer was cut by another pit (cut 195) filled with demolition material and capped by a layer of crushed brick (200) representing recent ground makeup and a deposit of black tarmac (201) cut by a modern sewer pipe (cut 115).

## **6. Discussion**

A possible prehistoric or Saxon ditch represents the earliest feature on the site. The ditch extends along the southern boundary of the excavation area of phase 1 and may continue along the same alignment to the south east. No finds were contained within the ditch and dateable artefacts could be recovered from the fill if it is encountered elsewhere on the site. Iron Age remains are known to have been found near the site at Queen Elizabeth Grammar School.

A feature in the northern part of the site *may* represent the sunken component part of a Saxon Sunken Featured Building (SFB) or cellar. Dating is yet to be confirmed. Other similarly dated features may be represented elsewhere on the site.

Pits and remains of a timber structure of indefinite function from the early 13th century appear to cluster in the north eastern area of the site. Mid 13th century pits are located in the central and southern part of the site.

The mid and late 14th century features are again mainly represented by pits. Stake holes within the base of pit 293 indicate an internal structure. The late 15th century phase is represented by medium to large pits and a short gully.

The majority of archaeological activity on the site appears to date to the mid 16th century, located mainly in the southern half of the site with the highest concentration in the central area. It is reasonable to see three broad divisions in the site which might reflect subdivisions to the rear of tenement plots fronting Abbey Street. During the excavations on the site the Project Officer observed that the excavation area showed signs of division into three or more plots, each of a similar width accommodating rubbish pits with similar fills and a well (*Pers comm.* G. Morley). The southern part of the site includes the remains of a substantial wall foundation (486) which may form part of a garden feature or similar structure. A cluster of inter cutting pits was located in the central part of the site and further pits are located in the northern part of the site. Relatively few 17th century features were identified, sparsely distributed across the site.

In general the area of excavation has suffered severe truncation from the construction of a cellared building at the northern end of the site, levelling and the insertion of substantial drains and other service pipes across the site.

## **7. Acknowledgements**

SWAT Archaeology would like to thank Gilcrest Homes for commissioning and funding the work and to Adam Single of Kent County Council Heritage Conservation Group for his input and assistance during Phase I of the excavations. The Project Officer for the site was Geoff Morley who was assisted by Emma Boast, Bartec Cichy, Pawel Cichy, Piotr Cichy, Paul Hart, Marcus Headifen, Simon Holmes, Julie Martin, Dan Quinlan, Natasha Ransom and Richard Wooley. The project was directed by Dr Paul Wilkinson. Site survey was carried out by J. Madden of Digitise This.

## **8. References**

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Kent County Council. 2004. *Faversham – Kent. Archaeological Assessment Document. Kent Historic Towns Survey.* Kent County Council.

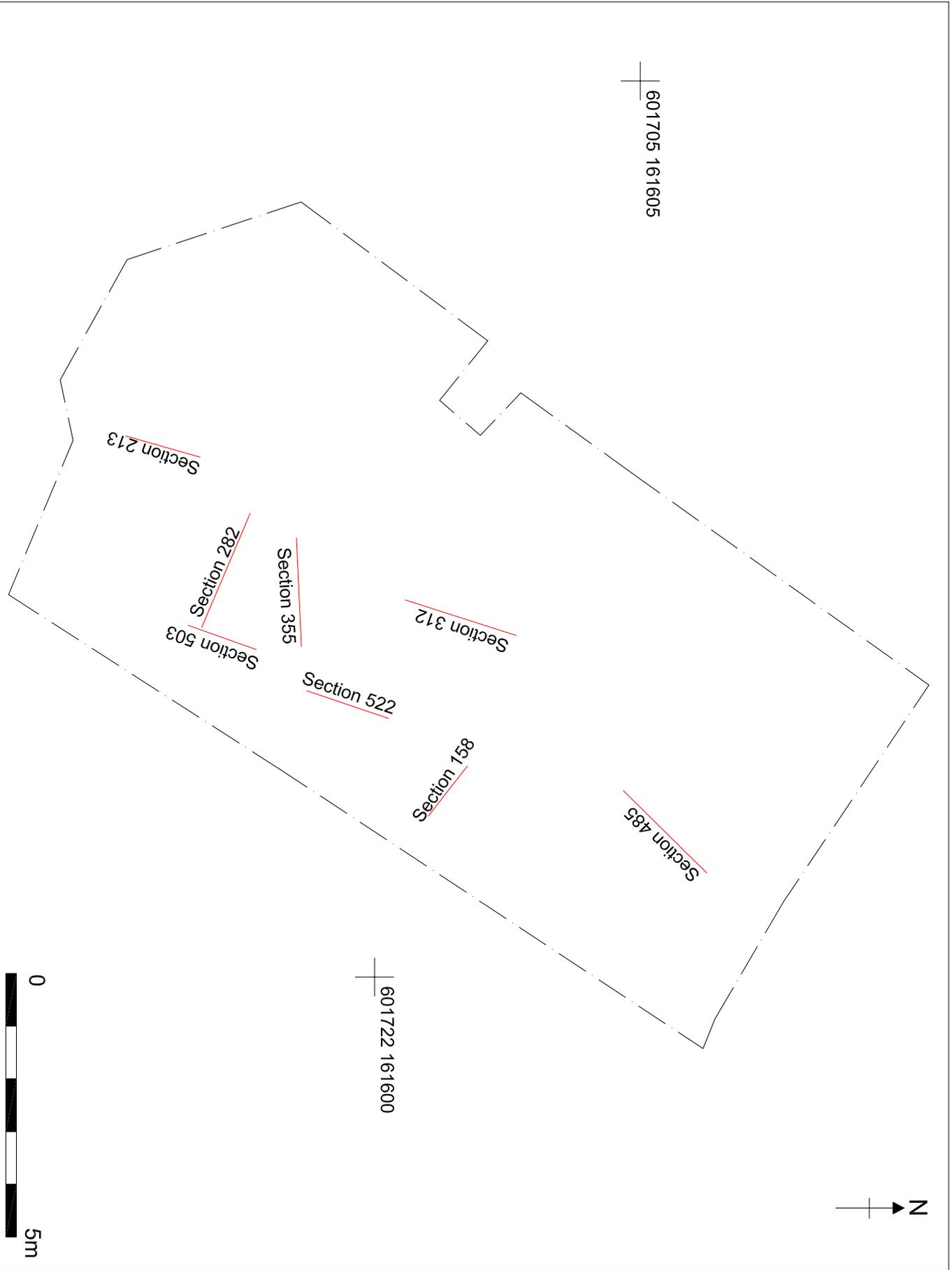


Figure 11. Section locations. Scale as shown.

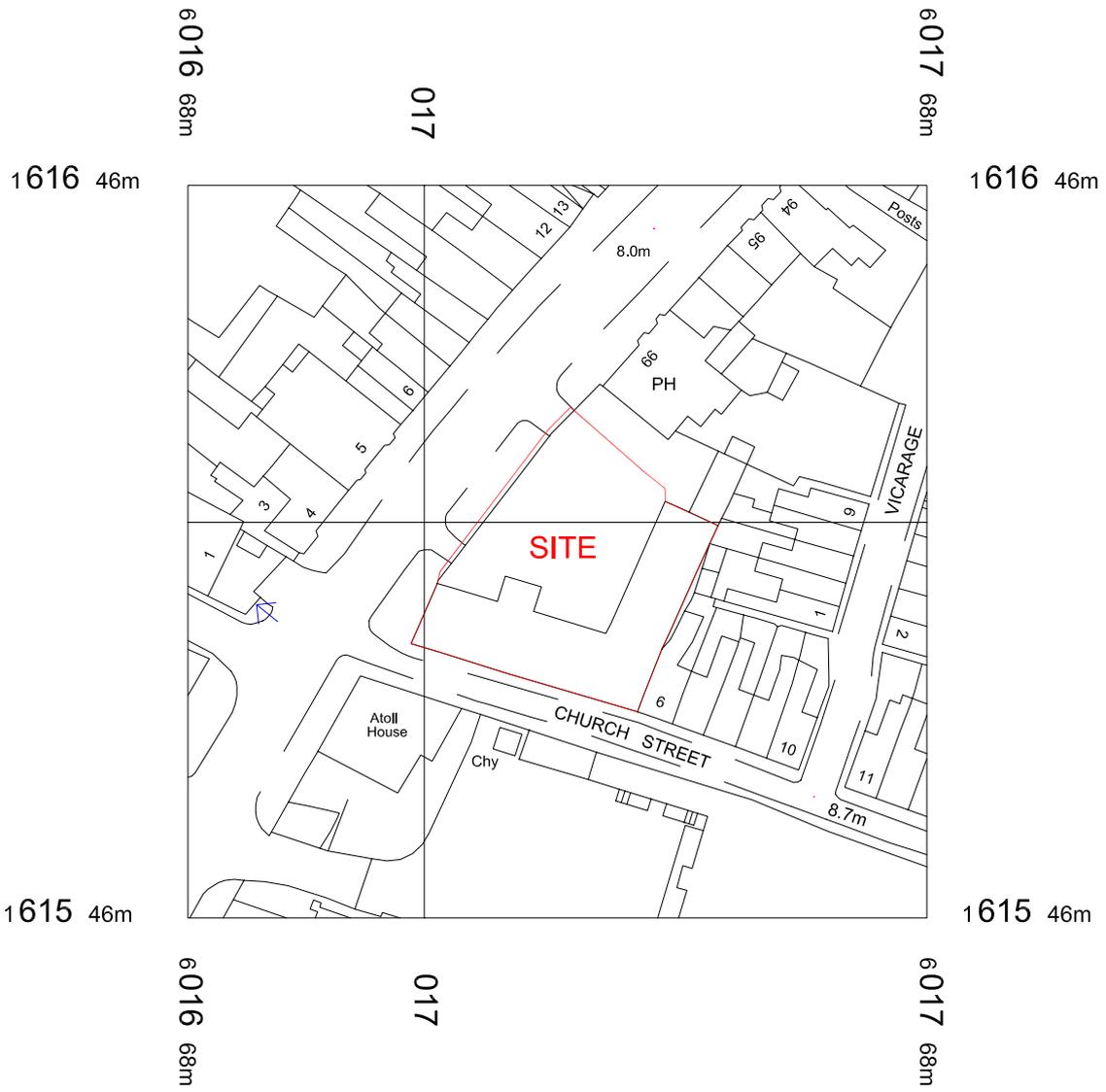


Figure 1. Site location plan. Scale 1:1000

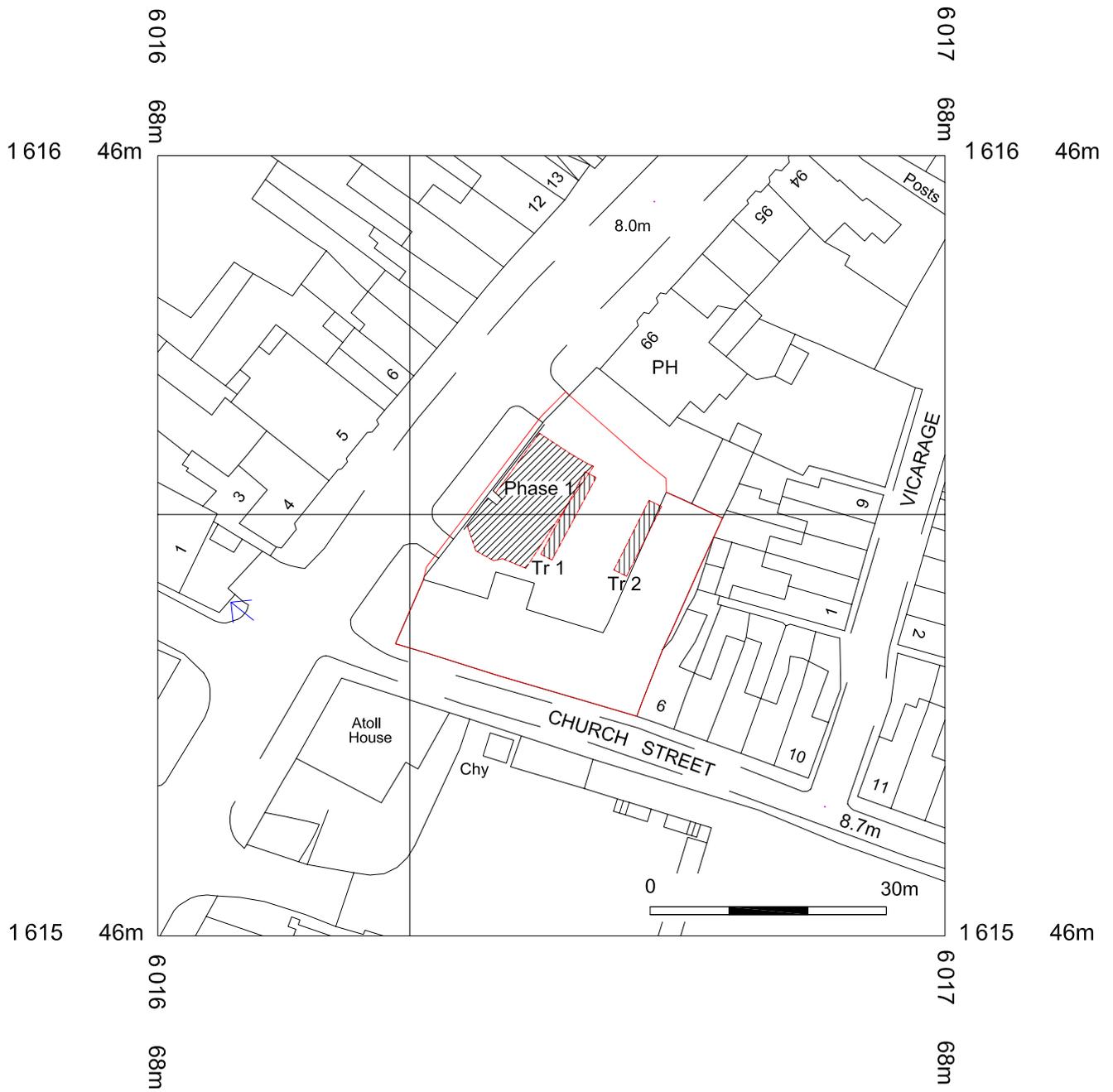


Figure 2. Location of evaluation trenches and phase 1 excavations. Scale as shown

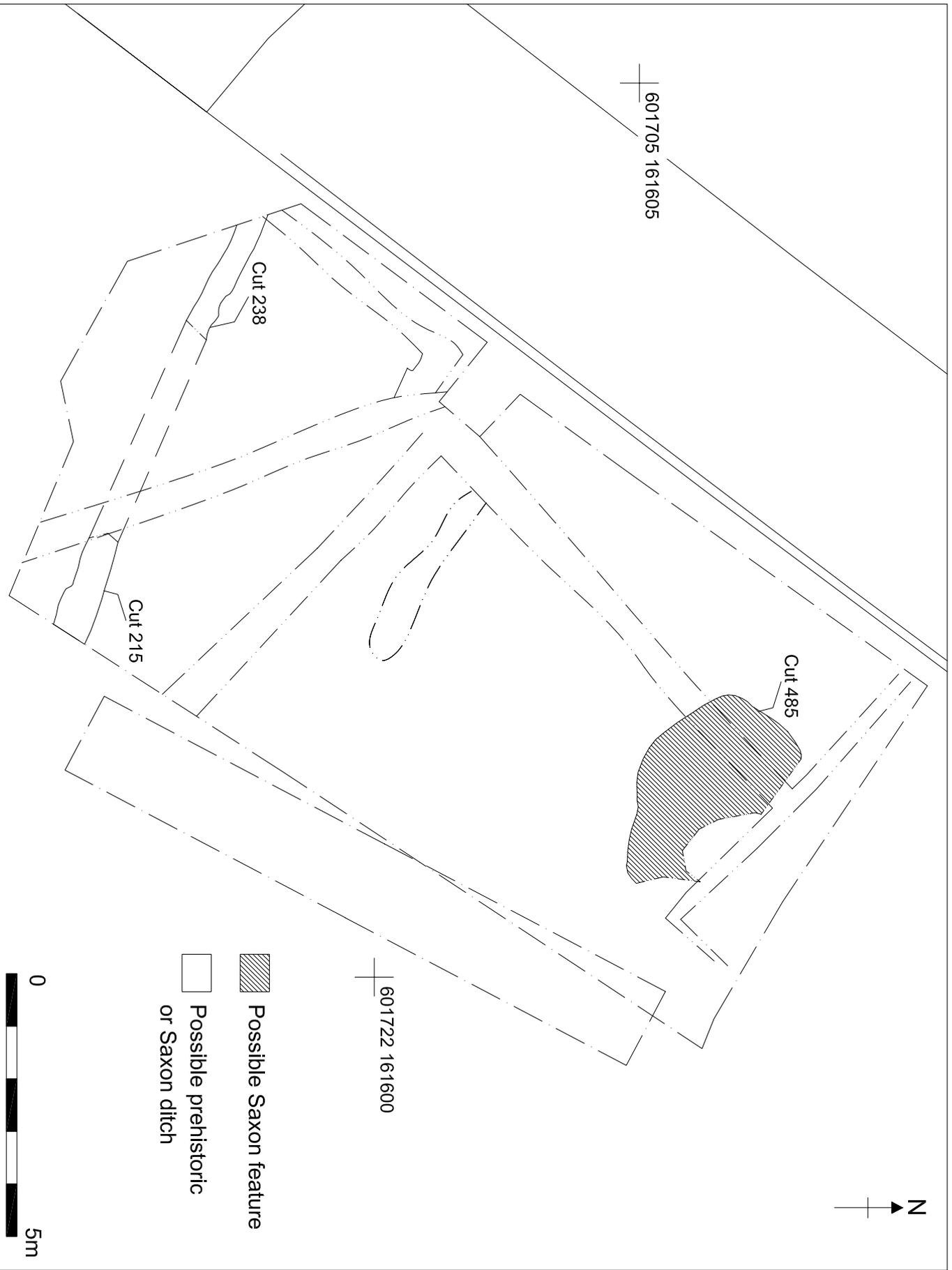


Figure 3. Possible prehistoric and/or Saxon features. Scale as shown.

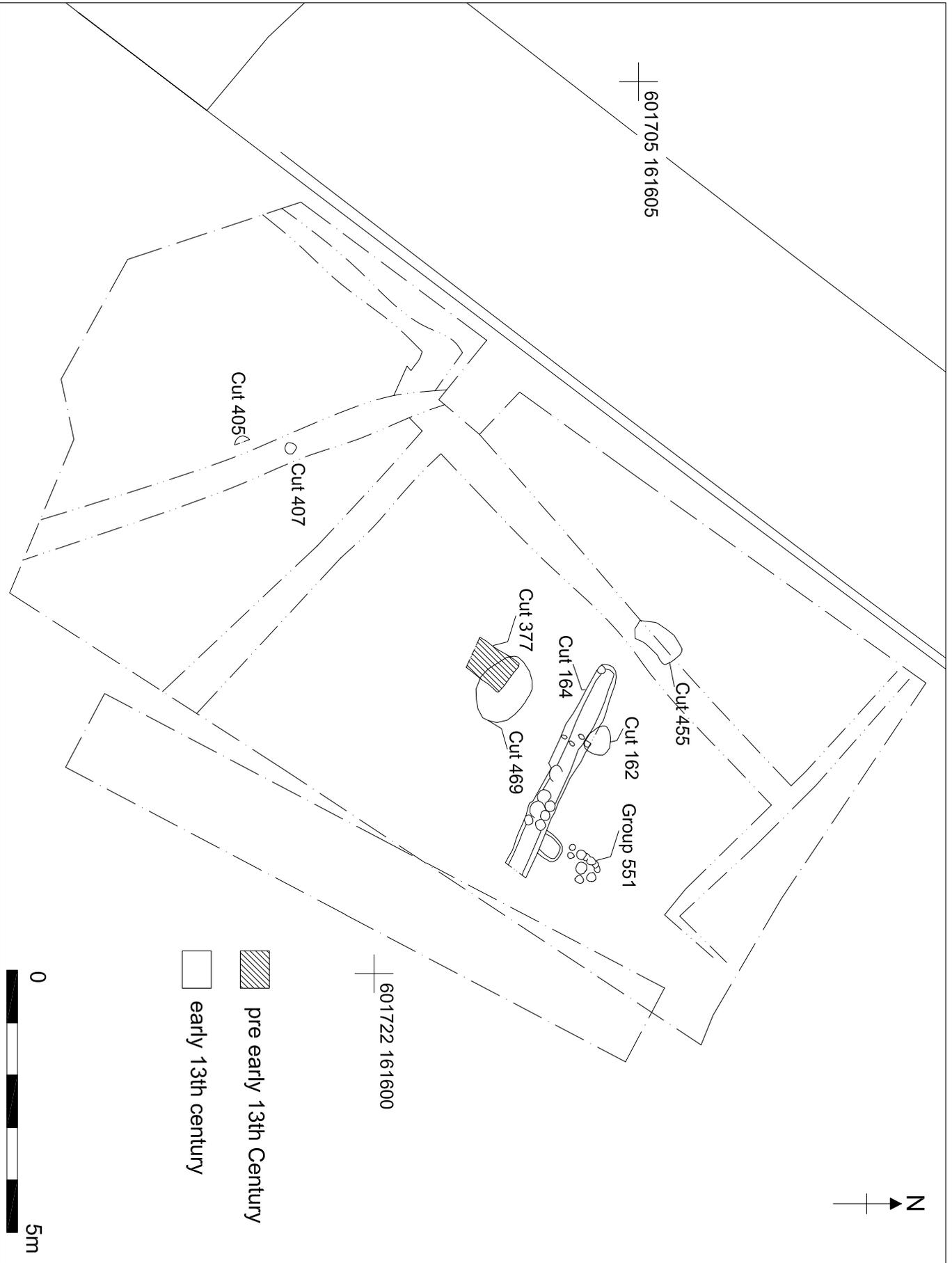


Figure 4. Early 13th century features. Scale as shown.

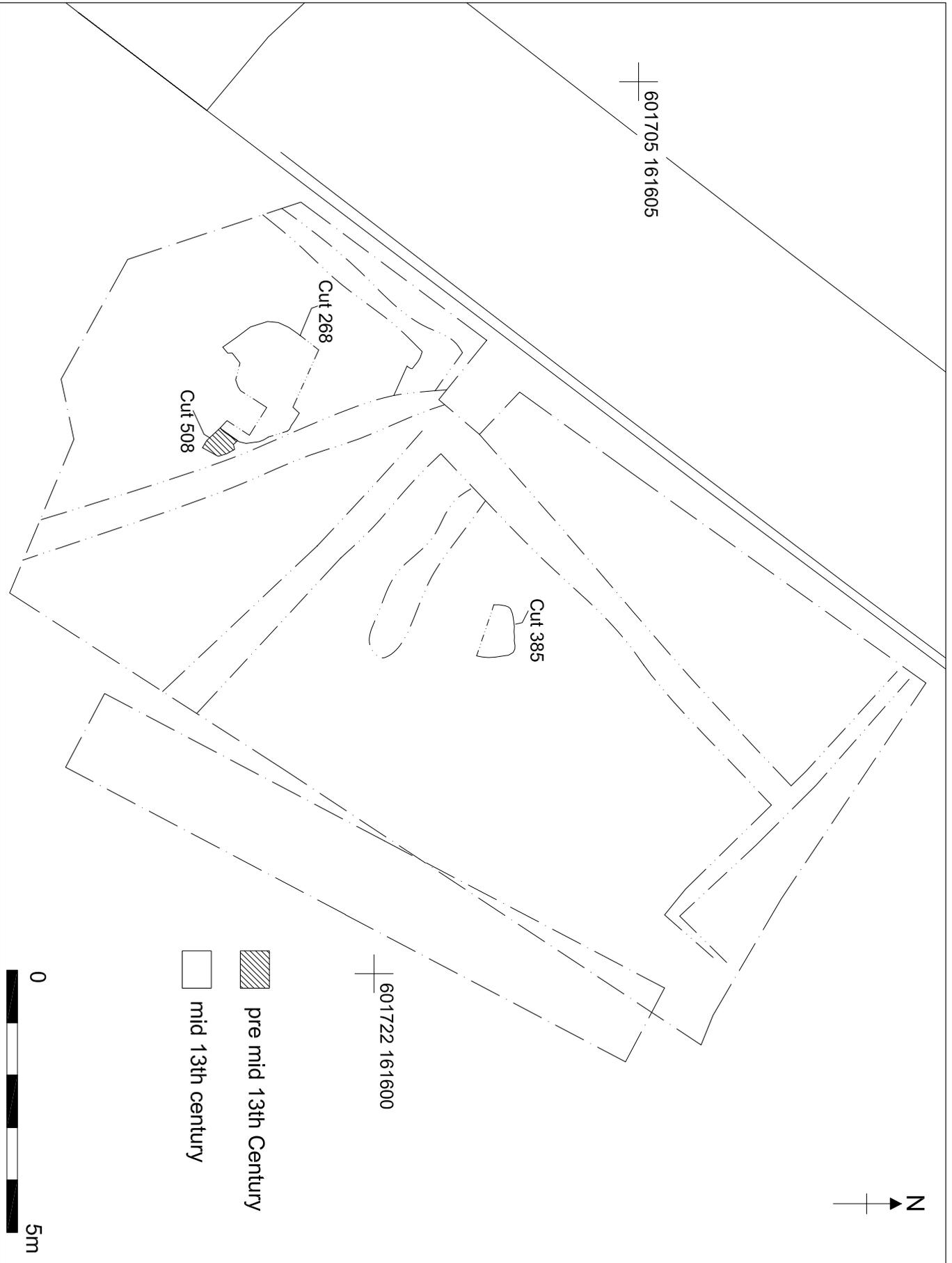


Figure 5. Mid 13th century features. Scale as shown.

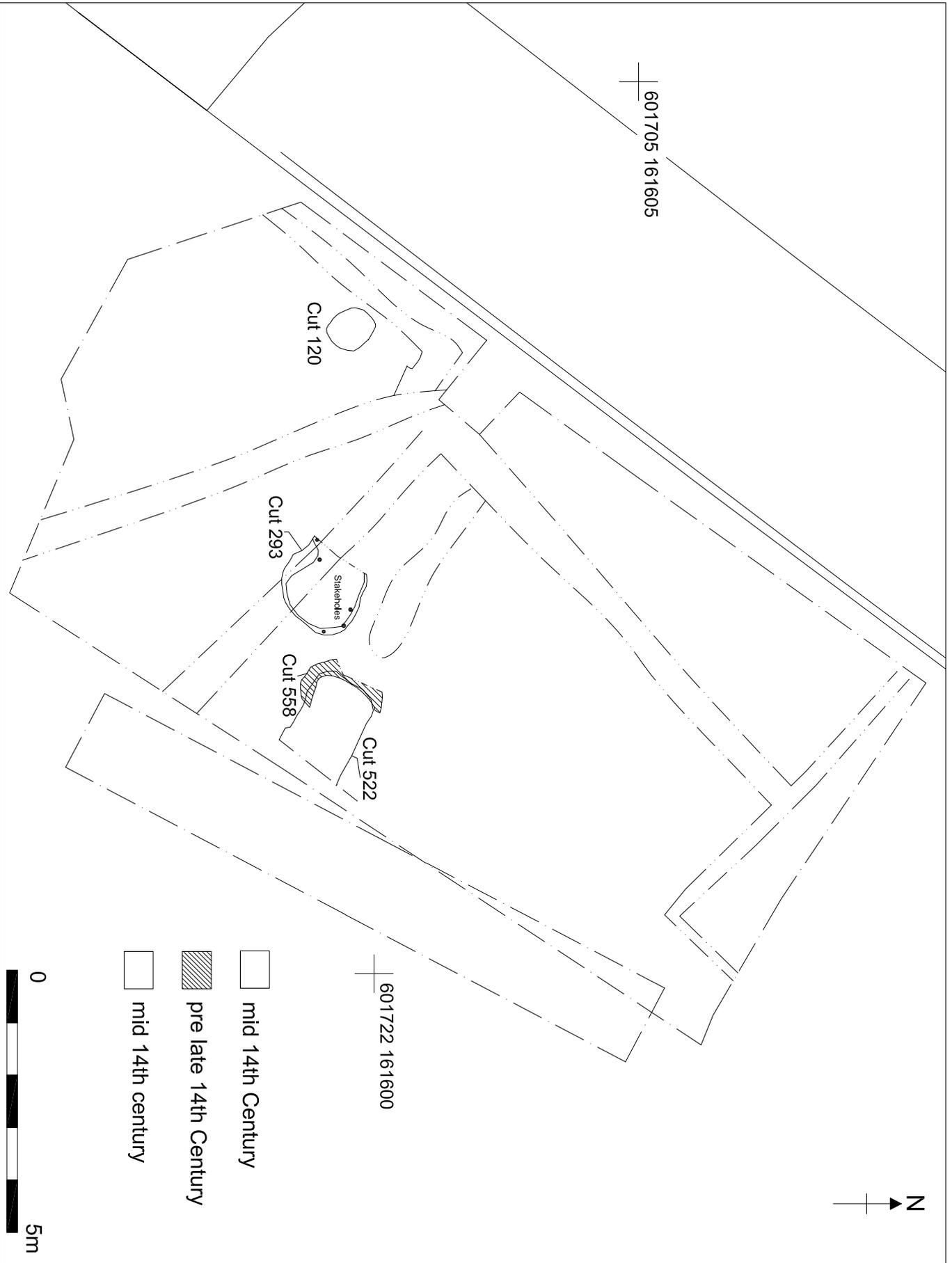


Figure 6. Mid and late 14th century features. Scale as shown.

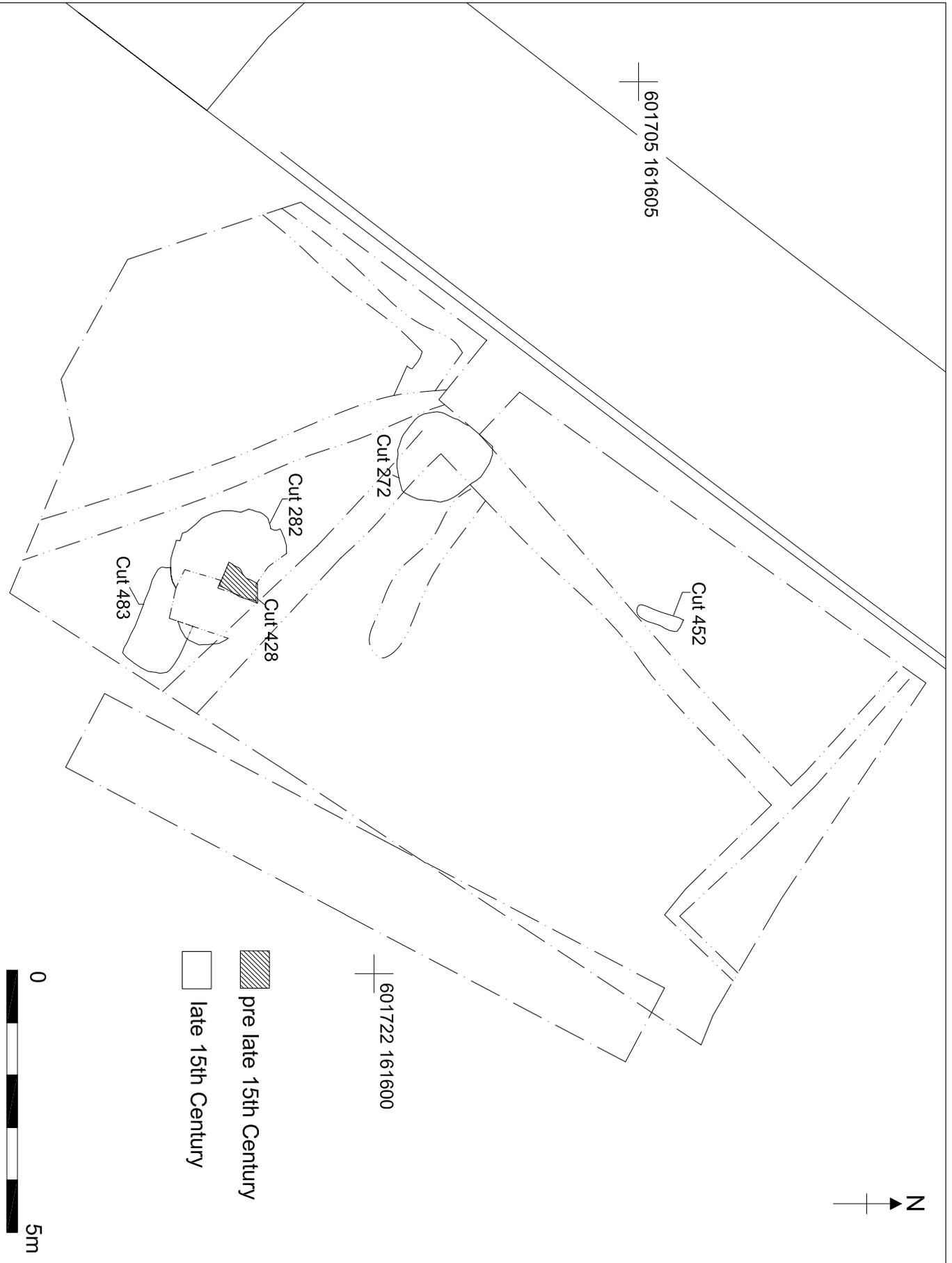


Figure 7. Late 15th century features. Scale as shown.



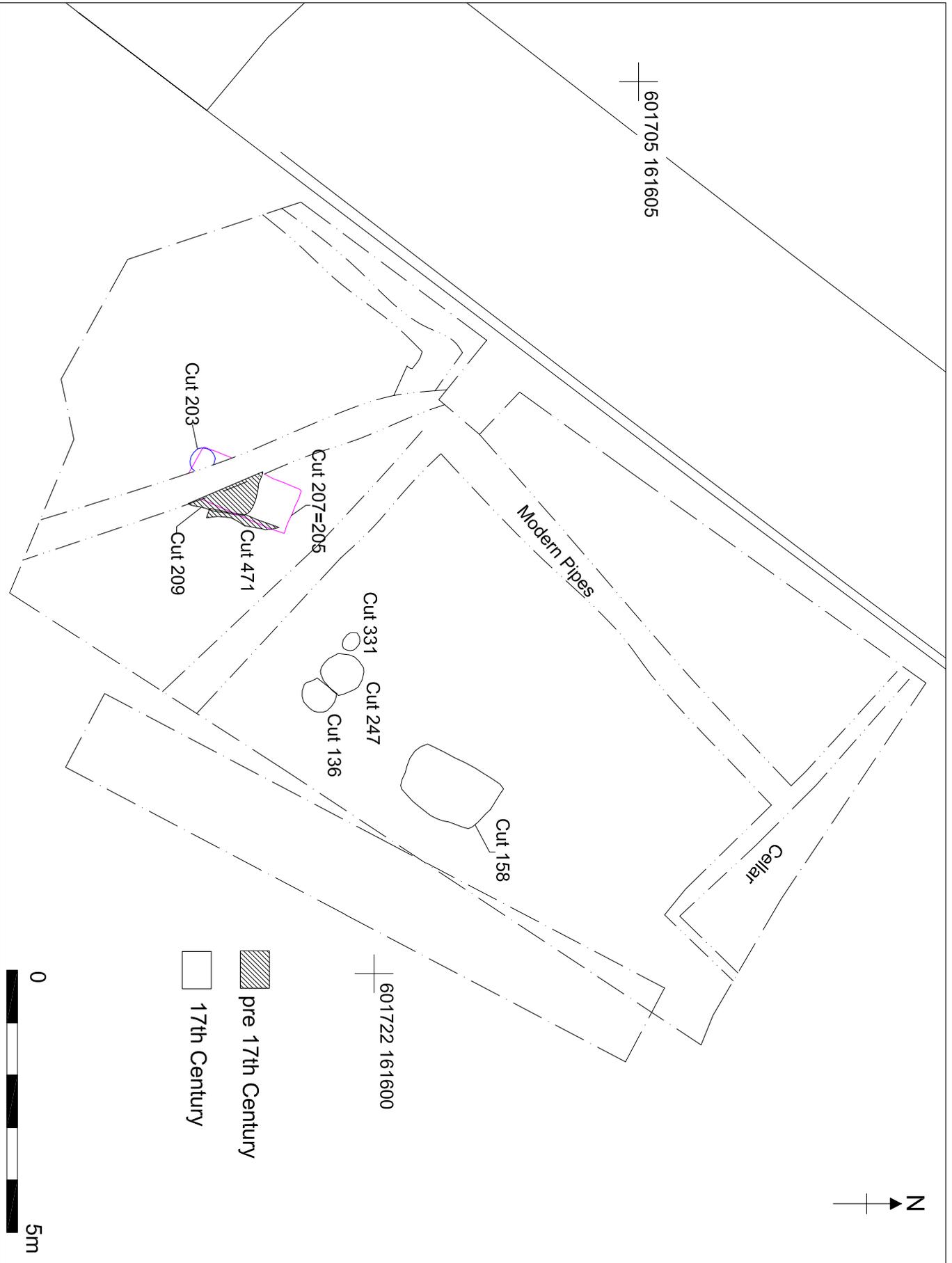


Figure 9. 17th century features. Scale as shown.

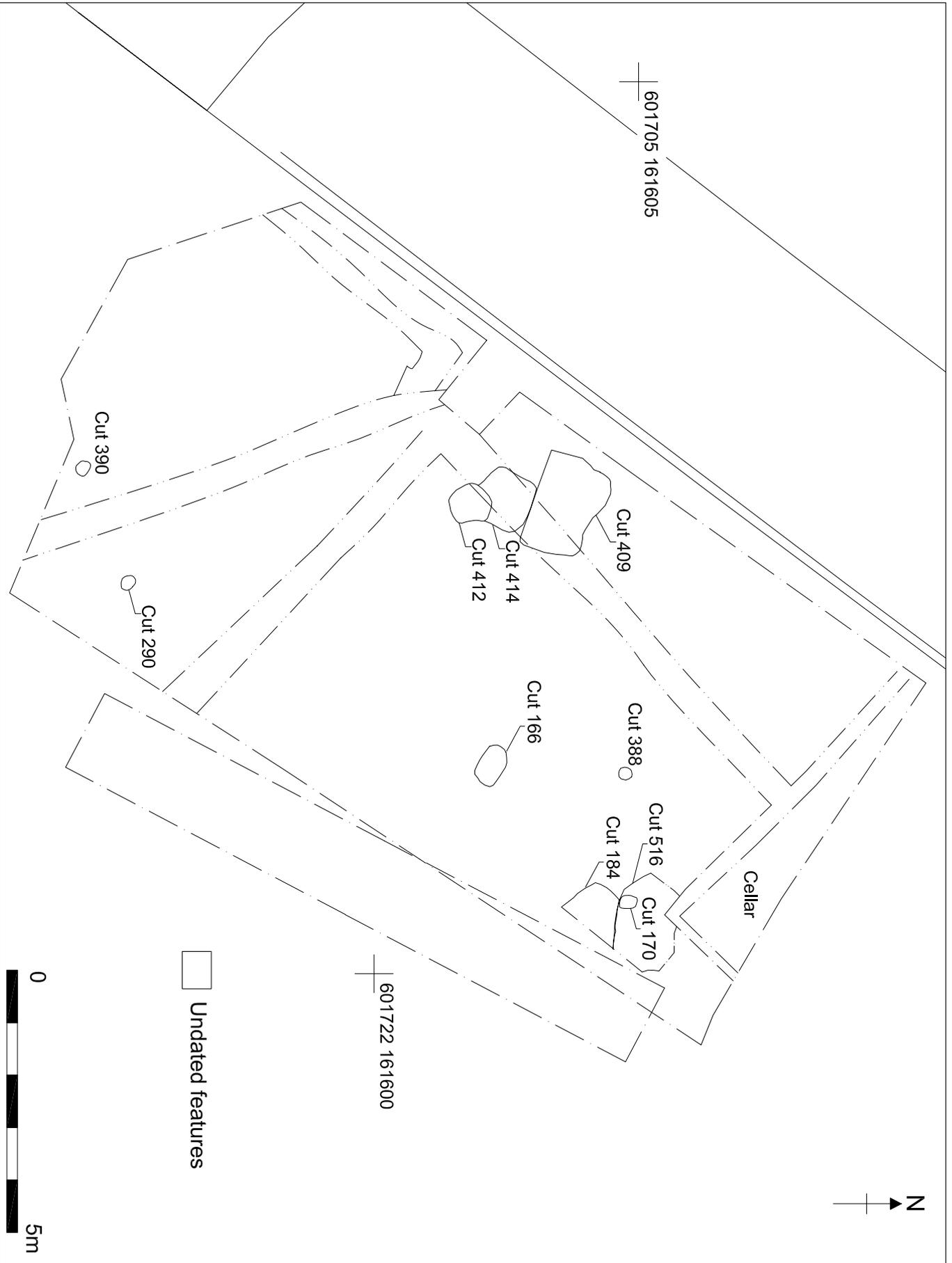
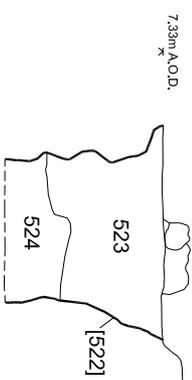
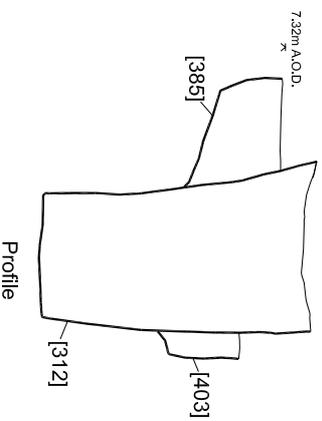
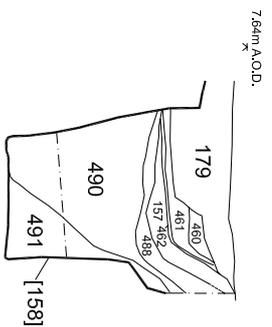
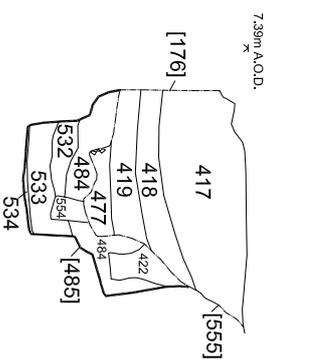


Figure 10. Undated features. Scale as shown.

Datum 8.13m A.O.D.



Datum 8.13m A.O.D.

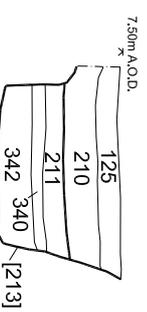
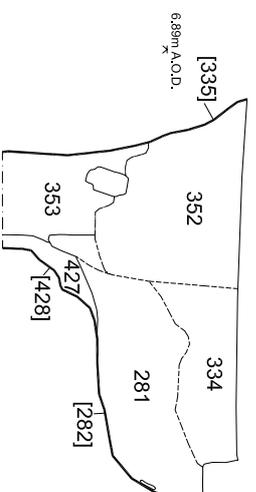
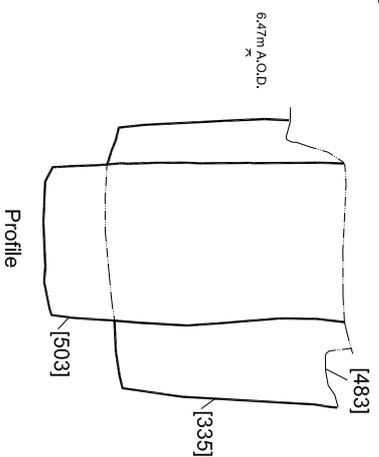
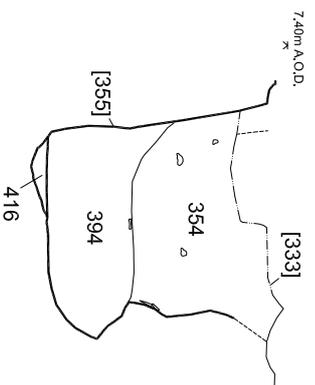


Figure 12. Feature sections