

**Land to the rear of Aberdeen House,  
Bridge Street, Colnbrook, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation**

**for Mr S De Havilland**

by M J Saunders

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code AHC00/70

**November 2000**

## Summary

**Site name:** Land to the rear of Aberdeen House, Bridge Street, Colnbrook, Berkshire

**Grid reference:** TQ 0268 7703

**Parish:** Horton

**Site activity:** Evaluation trenching

**Date and duration of project:** November 24th 2000

**Site code:** AHC00/70

**Project manager:** M John Saunders

**Project supervisor:** M John Saunders

**Area of site:** 0.23 hectares

**Summary of results:** No archaeological features or deposits were present. Alluvial deposits present in one evaluation trench. The area of development appears to have been built up by Victorian dump deposits, possibly to prevent flooding from the Colne Brook.

**Monuments identified:** None

**Location and reference of archive:** The site archive is currently held by Thames Valley Archaeological Services, 47–49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5NR and will be deposited with Reading Museum in due course.

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	Melanie Hall ✓ 30.11.00

# Land to the rear of Aberdeen House, Bridge Street, Colnbrook, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by M John Saunders

Report 00/70

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land to the rear of Aberdeen House, Bridge Street, Colnbrook, Berkshire, SL3 OJ0 (TQ 0268 7703) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr S De Havilland, of the same address.

An application for planning permission (application no. 11245) has been made to Slough Borough Council for the construction of a new house a short distance to the rear of Aberdeen House. As the site lies within an area of archaeological potential it is possible that it may contain archaeological remains. In order to provide sufficient information on the archaeological potential of the site to enable the planning authority to make an informed and reasonable decision on a mitigation strategy to limit the effects of the development, the implementation of a field evaluation in the form of trial trenching has been requested. This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Policy and Planning Guidance Note, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990) and the Borough's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr K Beachus, Archaeologist for Babbie, who advise Slough Borough Council on archaeological matters relating to planning. The fieldwork was undertaken by M John Saunders assisted by Lisa Hardy on November 24th 2000. The site code is AHC00/70.

## Location, Topography and Geology

The site is located to the rear of Aberdeen House, on the south side of Bridge Street, Colnbrook, which lies to the south-east of Slough and south of the M4 motorway (Fig. 1). The Colne Brook lies a little to the east. The whole site occupies an area of c. 0.23 hectares, is generally level at a height of c. 21m above Ordnance Datum and is currently used as a garden. According to geological maps (BGS 1981) the underlying geology is floodplain gravel and this was confirmed in the evaluation trenches.

## **Archaeological Background**

A brief prepared by Mr K Beachus of Babbie has highlighted the potential of the development area. The site lies close to the centre of the historic core of Colnbrook, a settlement which developed alongside the road from London to Bristol. John Rocque's map of 1761 shows the site lying close to the centre of the village at that time. It also lies near to the Colne Brook itself and this river valley is generally rich in archaeological deposits of prehistoric, Roman and Saxon date. This is illustrated by aerial photographs, chance finds and from the results of excavations (Lacaille 1963; Ford 1987). A Neolithic causewayed enclosure has been excavated at the southern end of the Colne Valley near Staines (Robertson-Mackay 1987).

## **Objectives and Methodology**

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological or palaeoenvironmental deposits within the area of development. The work was to be carried out in a manner that would not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits that might warrant preservation in-situ or might better be excavated under conditions of full excavation. It was therefore proposed to dig three trenches each 5m long and 1.6m wide using a JCB-type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under constant archaeological supervision. The trenches were to be located as close as possible to the positions shown on Figure 2, but positioned to avoid services and retained trees, etc. All certain or possible archaeological features or deposits were to be hand cleaned using the appropriate tools and sufficient of these excavated to satisfy the terms of the brief. All spoilheaps were to be monitored for finds.

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

## **Results**

### Trench 1 (Plate 1)

Trench 1 was 5m long and 1m deep and aligned NE-SW along the western boundary of the site. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.34m of topsoil over 0.66m of made ground with brick and tile inclusions, above a light brown gravel natural. Two possible pits were apparent in the sides of the trench, both filled with the made ground or infill. Victorian pottery and glass was recovered from the spoil of both of the upper contexts. Below 0.96m there was a rapid ingress of water.

### Trench 2 (Plate 2)

Trench 2 was 5m long and 1.70m deep (Fig. 3) and was aligned approximately north–south across the centre of the site. Here the stratigraphy consisted of 0.34m of topsoil over 0.65m of blackish-brown made ground, over 0.30m of silty gravel, which overlay 0.20m of grey alluvium. Below this there was a clearly defined horizon onto a deposit of what appeared to be lime, although it is more likely that this represents a laid down river deposit of marl. Below 1.50m there was again a rapid ingress of water and the instability of the trench sides soon led to their collapse. Only brick, tile, modern china and glass bottles were recovered from the spoil. A brick wall crossed the trench at its extreme eastern end; this represented the former continuation of the western boundary wall of the driveway running back from the street frontage.

### Trench 3

Trench 3 was 5m long and 1.15m deep and aligned parallel to the northern boundary of the site. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.34m of topsoil over 0.20m of light brown silty gravel, over 0.61m of blackish-brown made ground, onto natural gravel. The made ground contained fragments of brick, tile and animal bone, together with Victorian china and glass bottles. No archaeological features were present.

## **Conclusion**

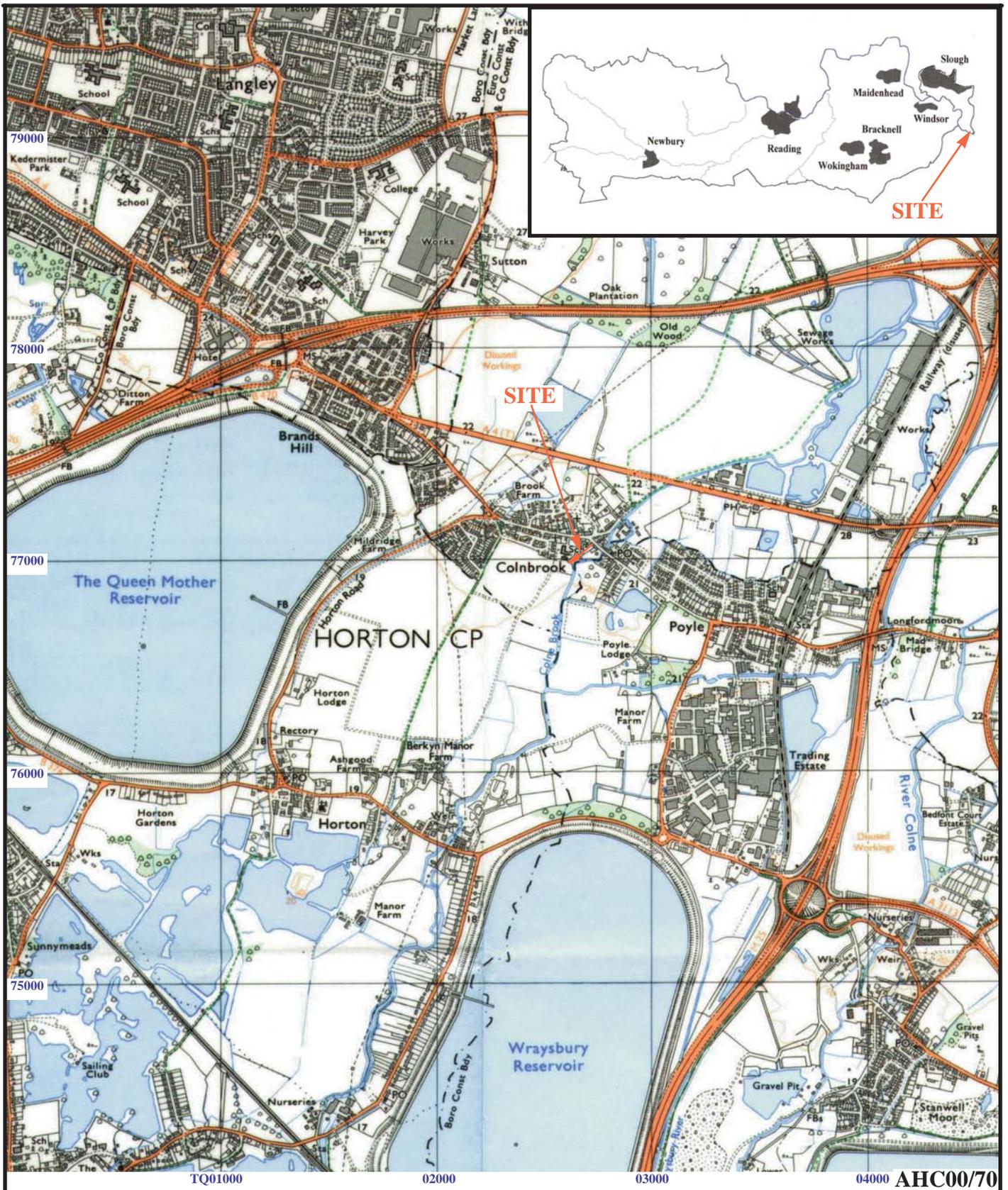
The evaluation has shown that no archaeological features or deposits earlier than the Victorian period are likely to be damaged or destroyed during the course of groundworks for the new development. The evaluation has, however, shown that the site was at one time liable to periods of flooding, as demonstrated by the deposits of alluvium and marl in Trench 2. It seems very probable that, in order to alleviate this problem, the ground level was raised during the Victorian period by the dumping of refuse deposits.

## **References**

- BGS, 1981, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 269, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Ford, S, 1987, *East Berkshire Archaeological Survey*, Berkshire County Council Department of Highways and Planning Occasional paper 1, Reading
- Lacaille, A D, 1963, 'Mesolithic industries beside Colne waters in Iver and Denham, Bucks', *Rec Buckinghamshire* **17**, 143–181
- PPG 16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Department of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance Note 16, HMSO
- Robertson-Mackay, R, 1987, 'The Neolithic causewayed enclosure at Staines, Surrey: excavations 1961–63', *Proc Prehist Soc* **53**, 23–128

**APPENDIX 1: Trench details**

<i>Trench no.</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	5.00	1.6	1.00	0.34m of blackish-brown topsoil over 0.66m of made ground with brick, tile and glass inclusions onto natural gravel. Two possible pits present, probably for the extraction of ballast. No archaeological features or deposits earlier than Victorian.
2	5.00	1.6	1.70	0.34m of topsoil over 0.65m of made ground over 0.30m of silty gravel over 0.20m of grey alluvium over marl. No archaeological features or deposits earlier than Victorian.
3	5.00	1.6	1.15	0.34m of topsoil over 0.20m of light brown silty gravel over 0.61m of blackish-brown made ground with brick, tile and glass inclusions onto natural gravel. No archaeological features or deposits earlier than Victorian.



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 Berkshire, 2000**

Figure 1. Location of site within Colnbrook and Berkshire.

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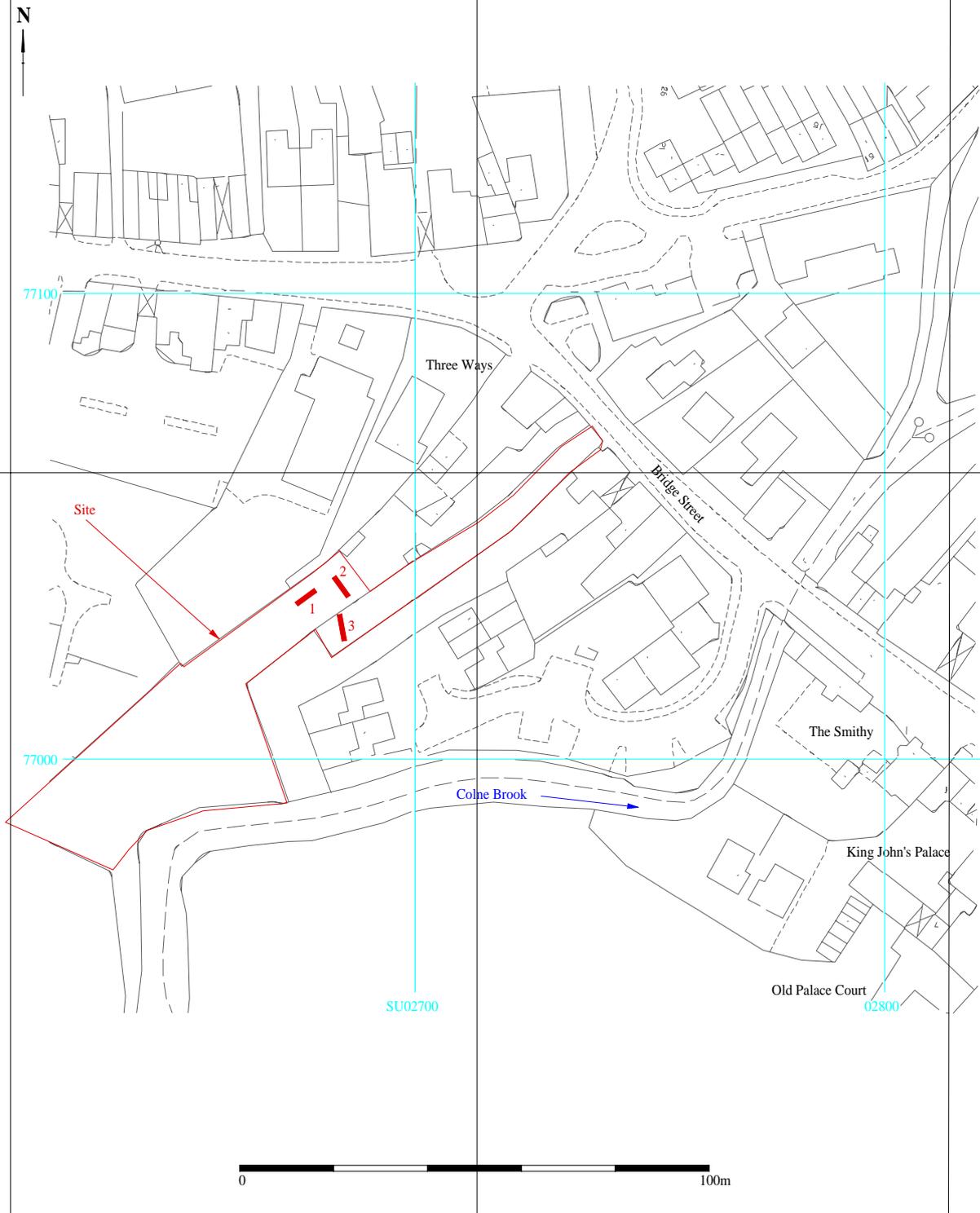


Figure 2. Location of site showing evaluation trenches.

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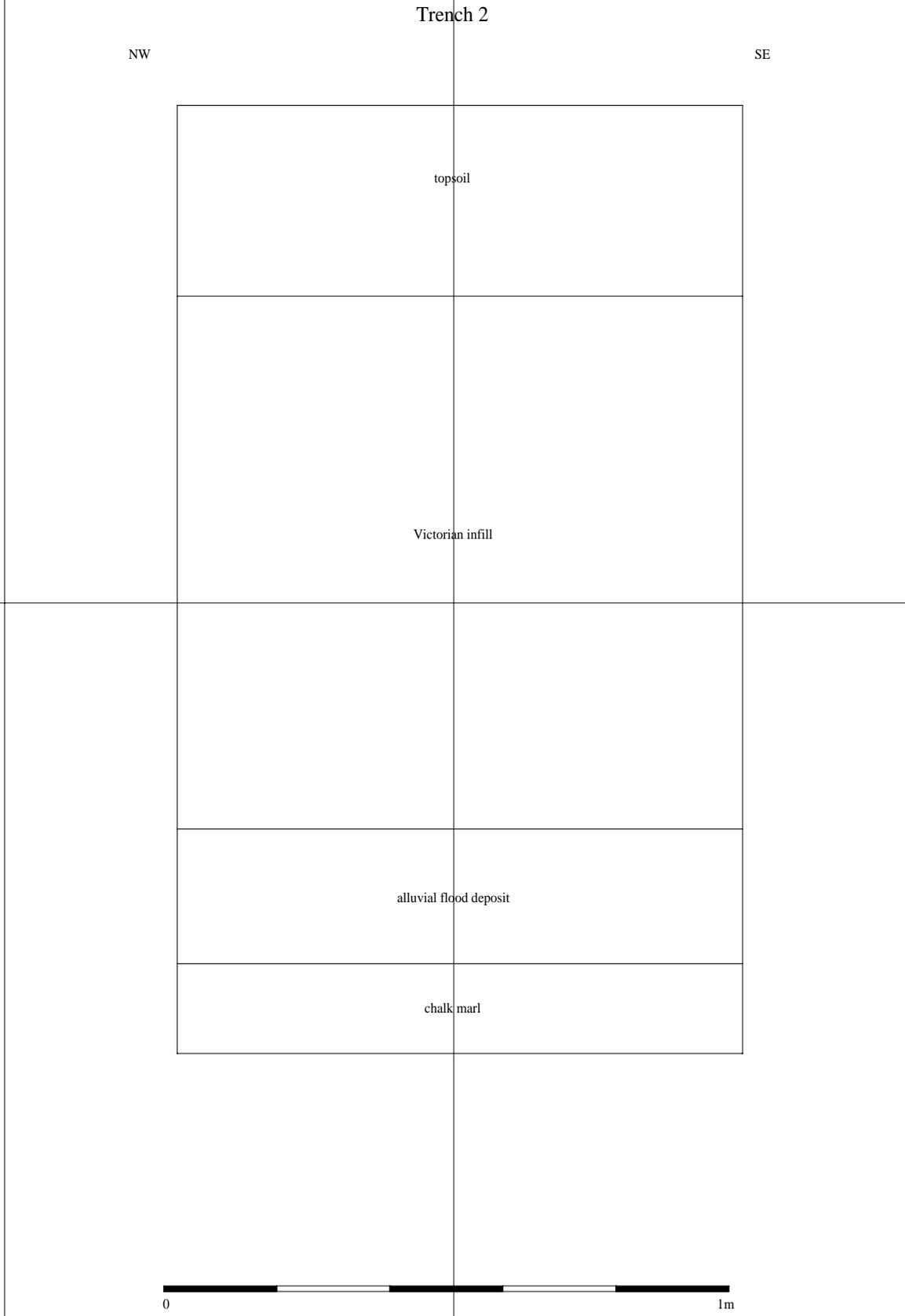


Figure 3. Representative section, Trench 2.

AHC00/70



Plate 1. Trench 1 looking north east, scales: 1m and 2m.



Plate 2. Trench 2 looking north east, scale: 2m.