Kingsclere Road, Overton, Hampshire

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council

by M J Saunders

Thames Valley Archaeological Services

Site Code KRO00/46

July 2000

Summary

Site name: Land to the east of Kingsclere Road, Overton, Hampshire

Grid reference: SU 51550 50450

Site activity: Evaluation trenching.

Date and duration of project: 20th-25th July 2000

Site code: KRO00/46

Area of site: 2.5 hectares

Summary of results: The evaluation identified a number of ditches probably representing elements of a field systems although only two were datable; one probably of the Roman period and one double ditch possibly of the Medieval period.

Monuments identified: Field boundary ditches.

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. It is anticipated that the archive will be deposited with the Hampshire Museum Service in due course.

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Report 00/46

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land to the east of Kingsclere Road, Overton, near Basingstoke, Hampshire (SU 5155050450) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Colin R Chance, Head of Property Services, The Borough of Basingstoke and Deane, Civic Offices, London Road, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG21 7EA.

A planning application is to be made to Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council to redevelop the site for residential use. A programme of archaeological work in the form of evaluation trenching has therefore been requested by Mr David Hopkins, Archaeological Officer for Hampshire County Council, who advises the Borough on archaeological matters. This has been requested in order to provide further information on the site's archaeological potential so as to enable an informed decision to be made when drawing up a strategy to mitigate the effects of the development on any archaeological remains. This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Policy and Planning Guidance Note *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990) and the Borough policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr David Hopkins and monitored by Mr Ian Wykes. The fieldwork was undertaken by Sarah Coles assisted by Ruth Appleby and Richard Oram between the 20th and 25th of July, 2000. The site code is KRO00/24

Location, Topography and Geology

Overton is situated between Basingstoke and Andover on the north side of the Test Valley. The site itself is located towards the north of Overton on the eastern side of Kingsclere Road and south of the Foxdown Estate (Figs 1 and 2). It occupies an irregular area of *c*. 2.5 hectares of sloping ground currently covered by long grass. According to geological maps (BGS 1975) the site lies on Upper Chalk and this was confirmed in the evaluation trenches.

Archaeological Background

A brief for the site prepared by Mr David Hopkins of Hampshire County Council Archaeology Section has highlighted the potential of the site. The site lies in an area rich in archaeological remains with an undated cropmark enclosure visible from the air (probably of Iron Age or Roman date) and with evidence for Roman occupation recorded in the vicinity. Roman coins are also recorded as having been found in gardens backing onto the site itself.

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. This was to be achieved by digging 16 trenches, each 20m long and 1.6m wide located in the positions shown on Figure 2. This would provide a 2.5% sample of the development area. All trenches were to be dug using a JCB-type excavator fitted with a toothless bucket and under continuous archaeological supervision. All certain or possible archaeological features were to be cleaned using the appropriate hand tools and sufficient of these excavated to fully satisfy the terms of the brief. All spoilheaps were to be monitored for finds and a metal detector used to aid the recovery of metal finds.

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

Results

Sixteen trenches were initially dug, ten of which contained no archaeological features or deposits. However, a number of features were found in Trenches 4, 5, 6, 11, 12 and 15 (Figs 3, 4 and 5). These comprised a number of ditches interpreted as elements of field systems. In order to clarify the nature of features found within Trench 12, two further short trenches (17 and 18) were also dug.

Trench 4 (Fig. 3)

Trench 4 contained a single linear feature (8) that ran lengthways along the trench for a distance of 12m. It was 0.33m deep (Fig. 5, section 8) but its full width could not be ascertained as it lay partly beneath the eastern side of the trench. A single sherd of post-Medieval pottery was recovered from the base of the trench but the ditch itself contained no datable finds.

Trench 5 (Fig. 3)

Trench 5 also contained a single linear feature (7), which was 0.34–0.40m wide (Fig. 5, sections 7 and 9). It crossed the trench from near the southern end, dividing into two narrow gullies before going beneath the western baulk. The total length of this feature within the trench was 3.9m. Six sherds of Roman pottery were recovered from its fill (60) and a single fragment of tile was retrieved from the spoilheap.

Trench 6 (Fig. 3; Plate 1)

Trench 6 contained two linear features, both orientated approximately east–west and crossing the full width of the trench. Feature 1, towards the northern end of the trench, was 0.80m wide and 0.38m deep (Fig. 5, section 1). It contained only two small fragments of indeterminate bone. Feature 2 was more substantial being 1.88m wide and 0.46m deep (Fig. 5, section 2). It appeared to have been cut by two other features, possibly small pits (13 and 14). Alternatively, they may represent partial recutting of the ditch. No finds were present within the fills of 2, 13 or 14 and all remain undated.

Trench 11 (Fig. 3)

Trench 11 contained a single V-shaped ditch (3), which crossed the trench in approximately a north–south direction. Its length within the trench was 7.60m and it was 1.60m wide and 0.50m deep (Fig. 5, section 3). It contained two fills (54 and 56), although no finds were present in either. A single sherd of 2nd century Roman samian pottery was recovered from the spoilheap together with a fragment of tile, also possibly Roman.

Trench 12 (Fig. 4)

Trench 12 contained what at first appeared to be two ditches aligned approximately north–south but following excavation each proved to be a pair of ditches. Ditches 5 and 11 lay next to one another toward the eastern end of the trench and ditches 4 and 12 were further to the west. It was not possible to make any distinction in the fills of each pair of features, nor to determine whether the pairs were contemporary, or which cut the other. Consequently, the same fill numbers were allocated to each pair, i.e. fill 55 to ditches 4 and 12 and fill 57 to ditches 5 and 11. Ditches 4 and 12 had a total width of 1.70m with the more easterly of the two being 0.50m deep (Fig. 5, section 4). Ditches 5 and 11 had a total width of 1.65m with the deeper of the two being 0.48m in depth (Fig. 5, section 5). No finds were present in any of these features. Two sherds of possibly late Medieval pottery were recovered from the spoilheap.

Trench 15

Trench 15 contained a single linear feature (6), which crossed the trench on an approximate east–west alignment for a distance of 1.60m. This ditch was 1.15m wide and 0.33m deep (Fig. 5, section 6). No dating evidence was recovered from either of its two fills.

Trench 17

Trench 17 was 2.50m long and positioned to examine whether a continuation of ditches 4 and 12 in Trench 12 could be located. A further pair of ditches were present (10 and 15) and it seems probable that they equate to ditches 4 and 12. These had a total width of 1.70m and a maximum depth of 0.50m. No dating evidence was present in either feature.

Trench 18

Trench 18 was 2.90m long and similarly dug to see whether ditches 5 and 11 in Trench 12 extended to the south. Another pair of ditches were discovered (9 and 16) and as in the previous trench it is probable that they are a continuation of 5 and 11. Features 9 and 16 had a combined width of 1.10m and a maximum depth of 0.66m. A single sherd of pottery recovered from feature 9 has been identified as Medieval in date.

Finds

Pottery by Jane Timby

The evaluation produced a small collection of 19 sherds of pottery weighing 180gms and two fragments of tile. Material of Roman, Medieval and post-Medieval date was present. The assemblage was scanned to assess its likely date range and the information is summarized in Table 1.

The material was in generally poor condition in terms of sherd size although surface finishes were preserved. Sherds were recovered from nine individual trenches, mainly from surface collection.

Roman

Eight sherds of Roman date were identified. At least one of the tile fragments with grog temper (from Trench 11) is also likely to be of Roman origin. The sherds (7) mainly comprise orange or grey sandy bodysherds of indeterminate date other than Roman. Six of these came from feature 7 in Trench 5 and one from Trench 7. A single sherd from a Central Gaulish samian dish (Dragendorff type 35) was recovered from Trench 11. This type was imported in some numbers throughout the 2nd century.

Medieval

Five sherds were tentatively identified as Medieval although two from Trench 12 may be early post-Medieval. The other sherds came from Trench 18 and as unstratified spoilheap finds. The pieces were in all cases very small and abraded making positive identification uncertain. A single sherd came from ditch 9 (63).

Post-Medieval

Six bodysherds of post-Medieval date (18th century onwards) were present from Trenches 3, 4, 13 and as unstratified finds. In all cases the sherds were glazed red earthenwares popular from the later 17th century onwards.

The scatter of pottery does not imply very intensive occupation in the immediate locality, however the Roman sherds are of some interest in confirming Roman occupation.

Table 1: Quantification of pottery

Trench	*Context*	*Roman*	*Med*	*Pmed*	*Tot no*	*Wt*	*Tile*	*Date*
-	u/s	0	2	1	3	32		?Med/Pmed
3	spoilheap	0	0	1	1	3		Pmed
4	0-15m	0	0	1	1	43		Pmed
5	[7] (60)	6	0	0	6	22		Roman
7	field drain fill	1	0	0	1	3		Roman
7	spoilheap	0	0	0	0	0	1	?date
11	spoilheap 15m south end	1	0	0	1	3		Roman, 2nd
11	spoil 5-10m	0	0	0	0	0	1	?Roman
12	spoilheap 0-10m	0	2	0	2	14		?late Med
13	spoilheap 0-10m	0	0	2	2	35		Pmed
18	feat [9] (63)	0	1	0	1	3		Med
-	u/s	0	0	1	1	22		Pmed
TOTAL		*8*	*5*	*6*	*19*	*180*	*2*	

Struck flint by Steve Ford

Thirty pieces of struck flint, including a scraper, were recovered from the evaluation (see also Fig. 2). None are diagnostic in themselves and the flints can only be assigned a general prehistoric date.

Table 2: Catalogue of flint

Trench	*Feature/fill/spoilheap*	*No.*	*Comment*
5	7 (60)	4	flakes
5	0-10m	1	flake
5	10-20m	1	core
8	15m	1	flake - ?ploughstruck/modern
10	10m	1	spall
11	3 (54)	1	flake
11	5-10m	3	flakes
12	4 (55)	1	scraper
12	5 (57)	3	core fragment, flake, spall
13	0-10m	2	flakes
15	15m	1	retouched flake
18	9 (63)	2	flake, core scraper

Burnt flint

One piece of burnt flint weighing 28gms was recovered from ditch 9 (63) in Trench 18 and one piece weighing 4gms from the spoilheap of Trench 18.

Conclusion

The evaluation has been partially successful in identifying some archaeological potential on the site. The trenching has revealed finds of several periods and has identified a number of ditches; one is probably of Roman date (ditch 7, Trench 5), and one pair of ditches are Medieval or later (ditch 9/16, Trench 18, same as ditches 5 and 11, Trench 12). The other ditches are undated.

The ditches would appear to be a part of field systems or boundary markers rather than enclosures, for example around occupation areas. The finds of pottery are few and abraded and probably represent material included within manure spread onto farmland. No other occupation deposits such as rubbish pits, postholes or ring gully houses were identified.

The few struck flints point to some prehistoric activity in the area but the quantity recovered is low for a chalkland setting where raw material is easily obtained. It is more likely that it represents casual loss, or finds from manuring, rather than that of an extensive and dense occupation site.

References

BGS, 1975, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 283, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth

PPG 16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Department of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance Note 16, HMSO

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

Trench No.	*Length (m)*	*Breadth (m)*	*Depth (m)*	*Comment*
1	20.40	1.6	0.30	0.25m of topsoil onto natural chalk.
2	20.90	1.6	0.30 (NW), 0.50 (SE)	NW – 0.25m of topsoil onto natural chalk; SE – 0.45m of topsoil onto natural chalk.
3	20.50	1.6	0.50	0.40m of topsoil onto natural chalk.
4	20.50	1.6	0.60	0.30m topsoil over 0.15m of subsoil onto natural chalk. Feature 8.
5	20.40	1.6	0.65 (N), 0.85 (S)	N – 0.30m of topsoil over 0.30m of subsoil onto natural chalk; S – 0.30m of topsoil over 0.50m of subsoil onto natural chalk. Feature 7.
6	21.30	1.6	0.40 (N), 0.60 (S)	N – 0.35m of topsoil onto natural chalk; S – 0.25m of topsoil over 0.30m of subsoil onto natural chalk. Features 1, 2, 13 and 14.
7	21.27	1.6	0.31	0.24m of topsoil onto natural chalk.
8	20.50	1.6	0.42	0.32m of topsoil onto natural chalk.
9	20.65	1.6	0.41	0.31m of topsoil onto natural chalk.
10	21.50	1.6	0.50 (N), 0.84 (S)	N – 0.20m of topsoil over 0.25m of subsoil onto natural chalk; S – 0.30m of topsoil over 0.50m of subsoil onto natural chalk.
11	21.05	1.6	0.55 (N), 0.60 (S)	N – 0.30m of topsoil over 0.18m of subsoil onto natural chalk; S – 0.35m of topsoil over 00.18m of subsoil onto natural chalk. Feature 3.
12	21.00	1.6	0.75	0.25m of topsoil over 0.31m of subsoil onto natural chalk. Features 4, 5, 11 and 12.
13	20.46	1.6	0.36	0.30m of topsoil onto natural chalk.
14	21.00	1.6	0.35	0.30m of topsoil onto natural chalk.
15	20.50	1.6	0.86	0.35m of topsoil over 0.30m of subsoil onto natural chalk. Feature 6.
16	20.30	1.6	0.65	0.30m of topsoil over 0.32m of subsoil onto natural chalk.
17	2.50	1.6	0.40	0.30m of topsoil onto natural chalk. Features 10 and 15.
18	2.90	1.6	0.50 (W), 0.45 (E)	W – 0.35m of topsoil onto natural chalk; E – 0.40m of topsoil onto natural chalk. Features 9 and 16.

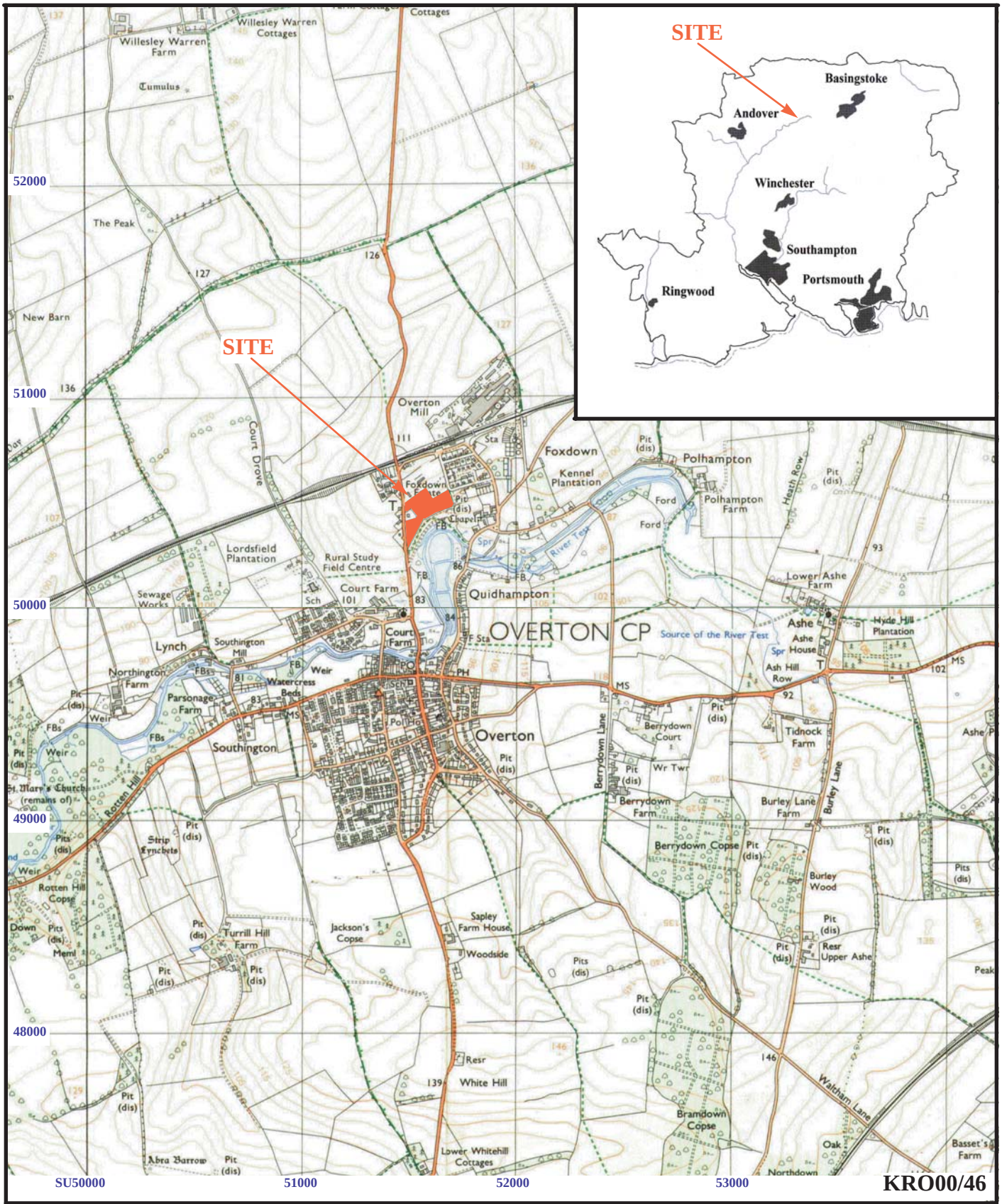

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Figure 1. Location of site within Overton and Hampshire.

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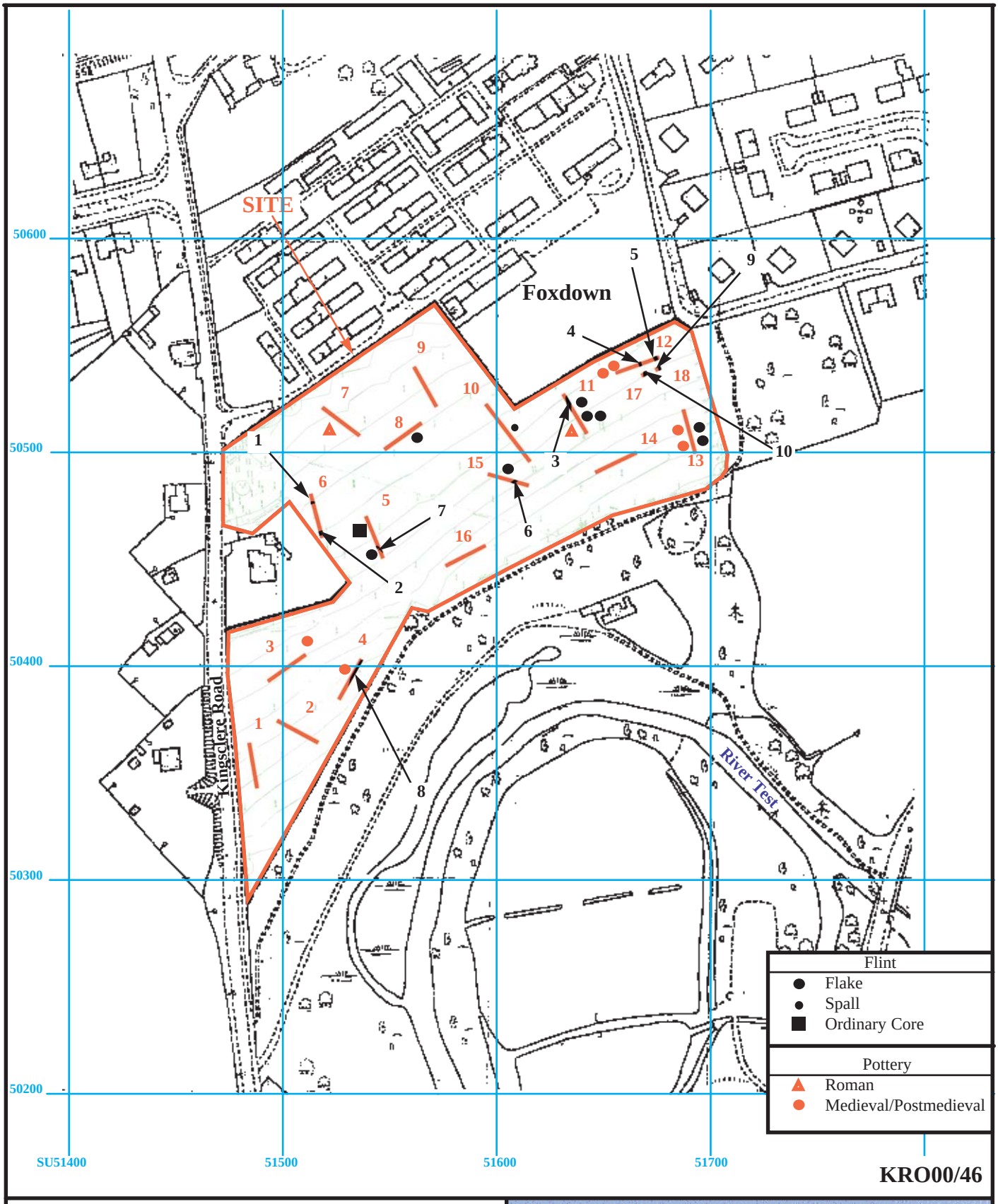

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Figure 2. Location of trenches showing all archaeological features and flint finds and pottery from spoilheaps.

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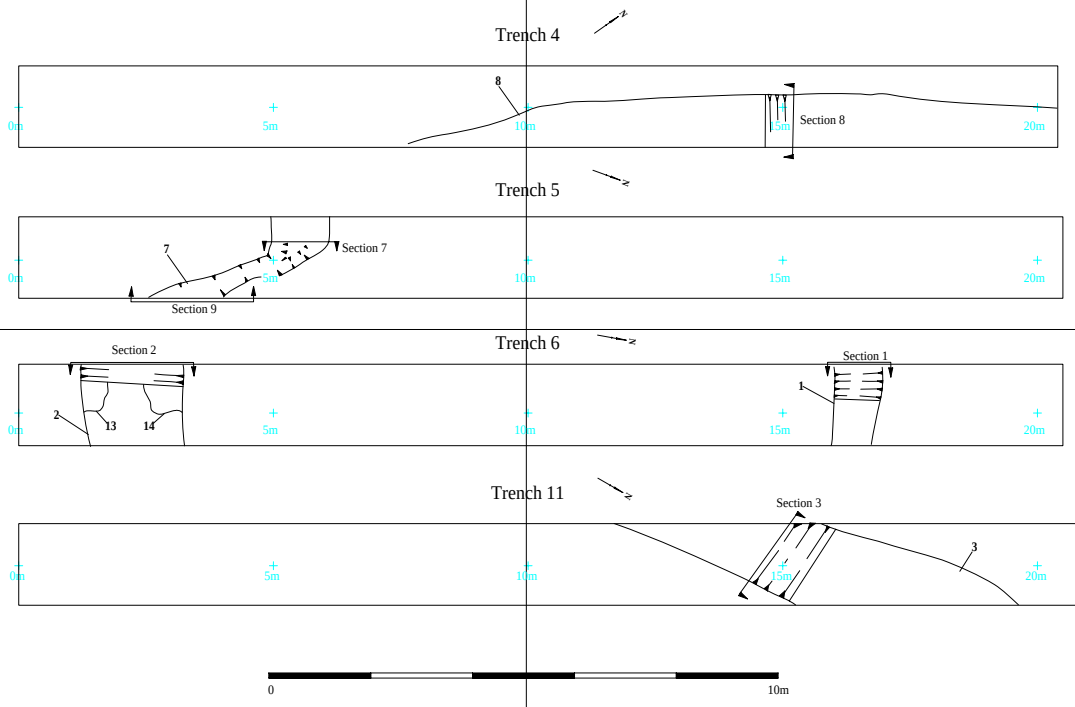

Figure 3. Plans of trenches 4, 5, 6 and 11 showing all archaeological features. KRO00/46

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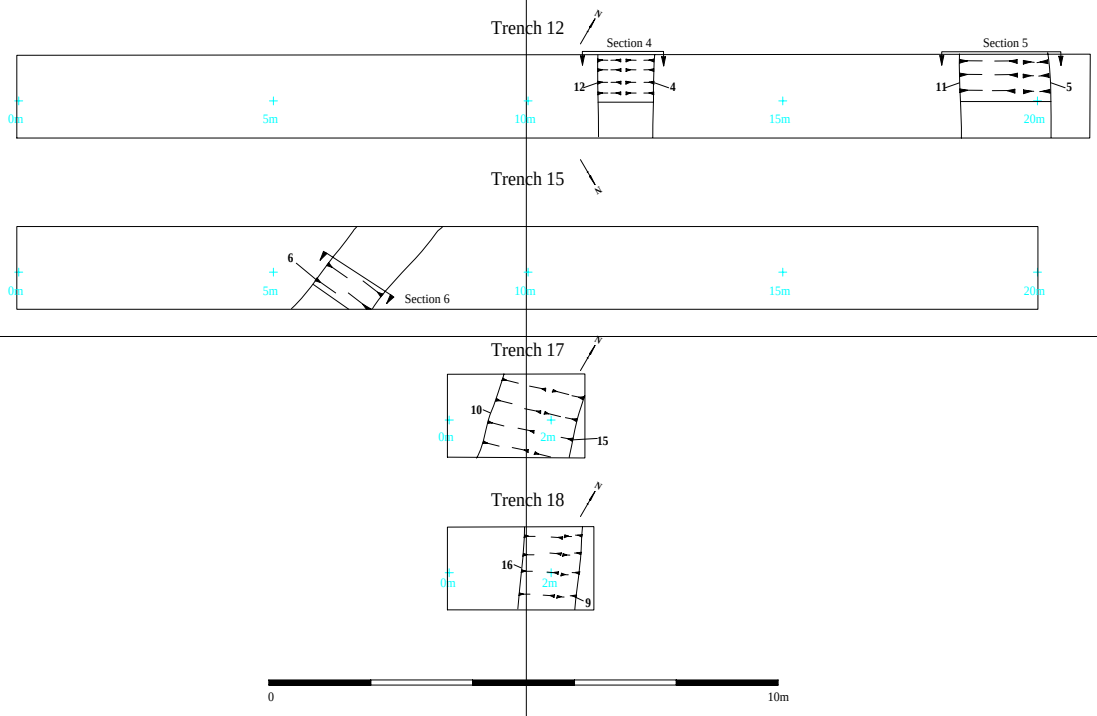

Figure 4. Plans of trenches 12, 15, 17 and 18 showing all archaeological features. KRO00/46

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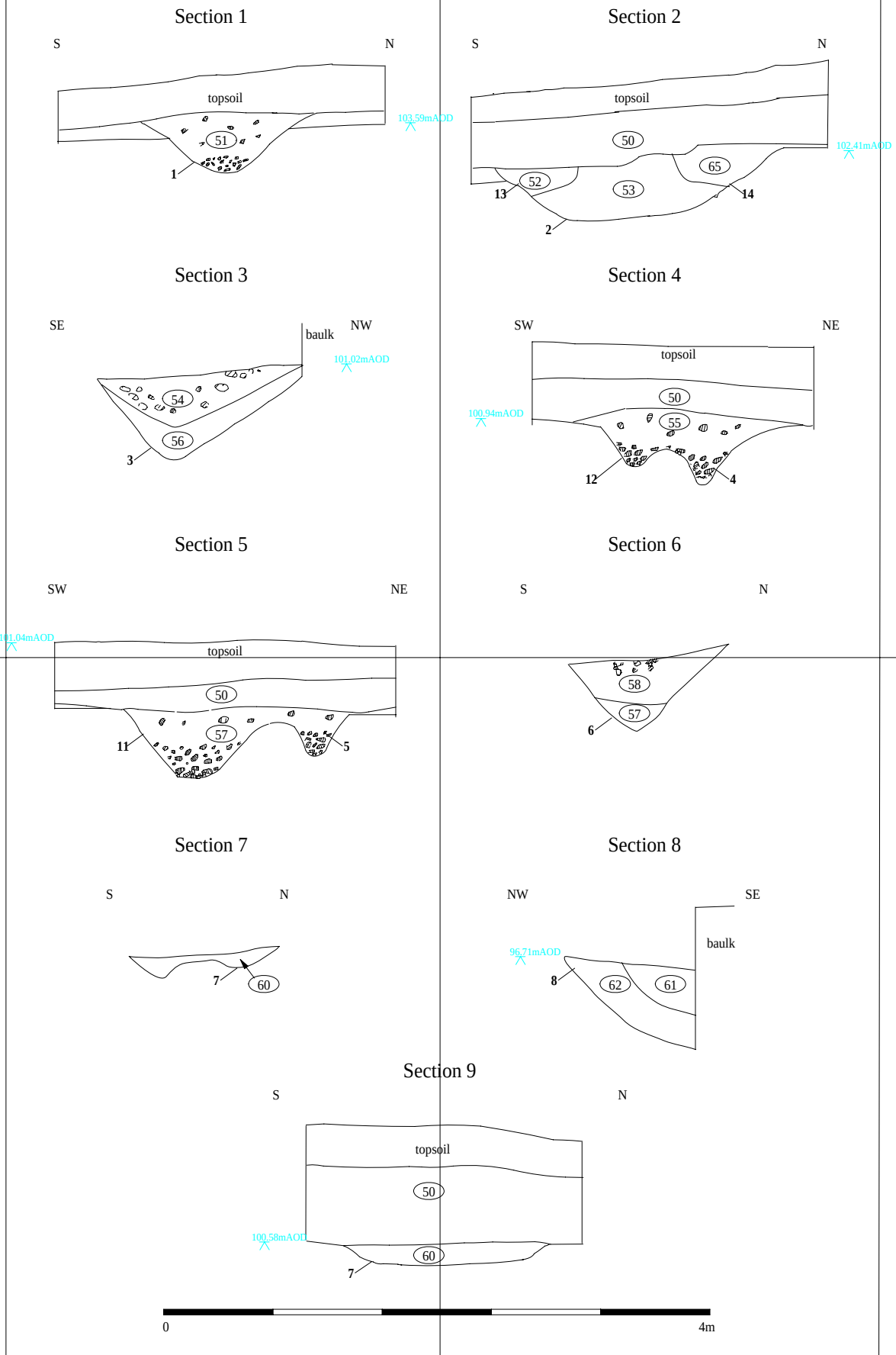

Figure 5. Sections 1-9.

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Plate 1. Trench 6 looking south, working shot showing ditches 1 and 2 under excavation.

Plate 2. Trench 9 looking north, scales: 1m and 2m.