

Mill Lane, Byfleet, Surrey

**An Archaeological Evaluation (Phase 1)
for Rectory Homes Ltd**

by Richard Oram
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code MLB05/100

November 2005

Summary

Site name: Mill Lane, Byfleet, Surrey.

Grid reference: TQ 0675 6080

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 2nd November 2005

Project manager: Joanna Pine

Site supervisor: Richard Oram

Site code: MLB05/100

Area of site: 0.89 ha

Summary of results: No archaeological deposits or finds were encountered

Monuments identified: None

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Weybridge Museum in due course.

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| Report edited/checked by: | Steve Ford✓ 17.11.05 Steve Preston✓ 17.11.05 |
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Mill Lane, Byfleet, Surrey, 2005 An Archaeological Evaluation, phase 1

by Richard Oram

Report 05/100

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land at Mill Lane, Byfleet, Surrey (TQ 0675 6050) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Jason Tyrrell of Rectory Homes Ltd, Thame House, Thame Road, Haddenham, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP17 8DA.

Planning consent has been granted by Woking Borough Council to construct new dwellings on a parcel of land of c. 0.89 ha adjacent to Manor Farm, on the east side of Mill Lane, Byfleet, Surrey. The consent is subject to a condition relating to archaeology, which requires a programme of investigation prior to groundworks. This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the Borough Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Gary Jackson, Archaeological Officer for Surrey County Council, advising the Borough.

As a result of contractual and tenancy arrangements, the site is to be developed in two phases. The archaeological investigation is therefore also to be implemented in phases, with two separate reports for the evaluation and a third report for building recording of a World War II anti-aircraft tower. This report covers the first phase development only. The fieldwork was undertaken by Richard Oram and Natasha Bennett in November 2005, and the site code is MFB05/100. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Weybridge Museum in due course.

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a desk-based assessment (CPM 2002) which examined an area much larger than the current proposal site. In summary, no known archaeological deposits are recorded for the site or from immediately adjacent areas but a range of sites and finds of prehistoric Roman and later date or recorded from surrounding areas within a similar topographic setting.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located in the parish of Byfleet, on the east edge of the existing village. It lies to the north and west of the River Wey and is bounded to the north by Mill lane and to the west by the rear gardens of domestic properties (Fig. 1). The southern part of the site (phase 2) is still occupied by structures. The site is roughly flat

at approximately 17m above Ordnance Datum with some of the phase 1 area, on the western edge, being covered by concrete hard-standing. The underlying geology is mapped as Lower Gravel Terrace (BGS 1976) and this was encountered on site as sand.

Archaeological background

The site lies approximately 1km north-east of an Iron age settlement discovered on the southern bank of the River Wey during the construction of a sewage works in the 1920s (CPM 2002). This consisted of hut remains and a number of pottery kilns. A Roman pottery kiln was also discovered in this area whilst a Roman occupation site was recorded approximately 800m to the west of Manor Farm itself and two possible dug out canoes were found close to the manor house, south-east of the site, although one of these was apparently burnt by the finder as firewood (CPM2002). A number of other find spots of flint tools attest to the use of this area in prehistory but there is little evidence for the site itself (Cotton 2004).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development. Specific aims were to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site, and to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.

This report covers the first phase of the evaluation only with the other phase and the building recording being reported separately. In this phase four trenches were dug, 20m long by 1.6m wide, to the north of the existing buildings that currently cover the area of phase 2. These trenches were located to intersect the footprints of the proposed new structures. Overburden was removed by a JCB-type machine under constant archaeological supervision. All spoil heaps were monitored for finds and all possible features were hand cleaned and excavated.

Trench 4 had to be dug at a slightly different angle from that proposed, to allow for fencing around current demolition works. Trench 4 could not be excavated to its full depth along its full length due to a field drain crossing the trench at the far south-west end. The remainder of the trench was excavated to the natural geology.

All trenches were aligned broadly SW–NE.

Results

Trench 1

This trench revealed 0.35m of topsoil onto 0.41m of red/brown silty sand. This in turn lay upon a brown/red silty sand which was the natural geology. The red/brown sand might also have been a natural deposit but was removed after checking that no features cut it. No archaeological deposits of any kind were noted in this trench.

Trench 2 (Plate 1)

This trench was excavated through 0.35m of topsoil onto above a red/grey clayey silt subsoil. This in turn overlay a red/grey silty sand natural, which was cut into to a depth of 0.11m. This revealed no archaeological deposits or finds of interest.

Trench 3 (Plate 2)

This trench revealed 0.37m of topsoil above 0.10m of red /grey clayey silt. This in turn overlay red/yellow silty sand natural that was cut into to a final depth of 1.15m below ground level to confirm that it was the natural geology. Two modern field drains crossed the trench but no archaeological deposits or finds of interest were present.

Trench 4

This trench was revealed 0.35m of topsoil above red/yellow silty sand. This in turn overlay the natural yellow/white silty sand below 0.61m. The trench was continued down for a further 0.61m and revealed a mottled red/yellow sand natural at a depth of 1.22m, which was heavily iron panned. No archaeological features or finds were noted in this trench.

Conclusion

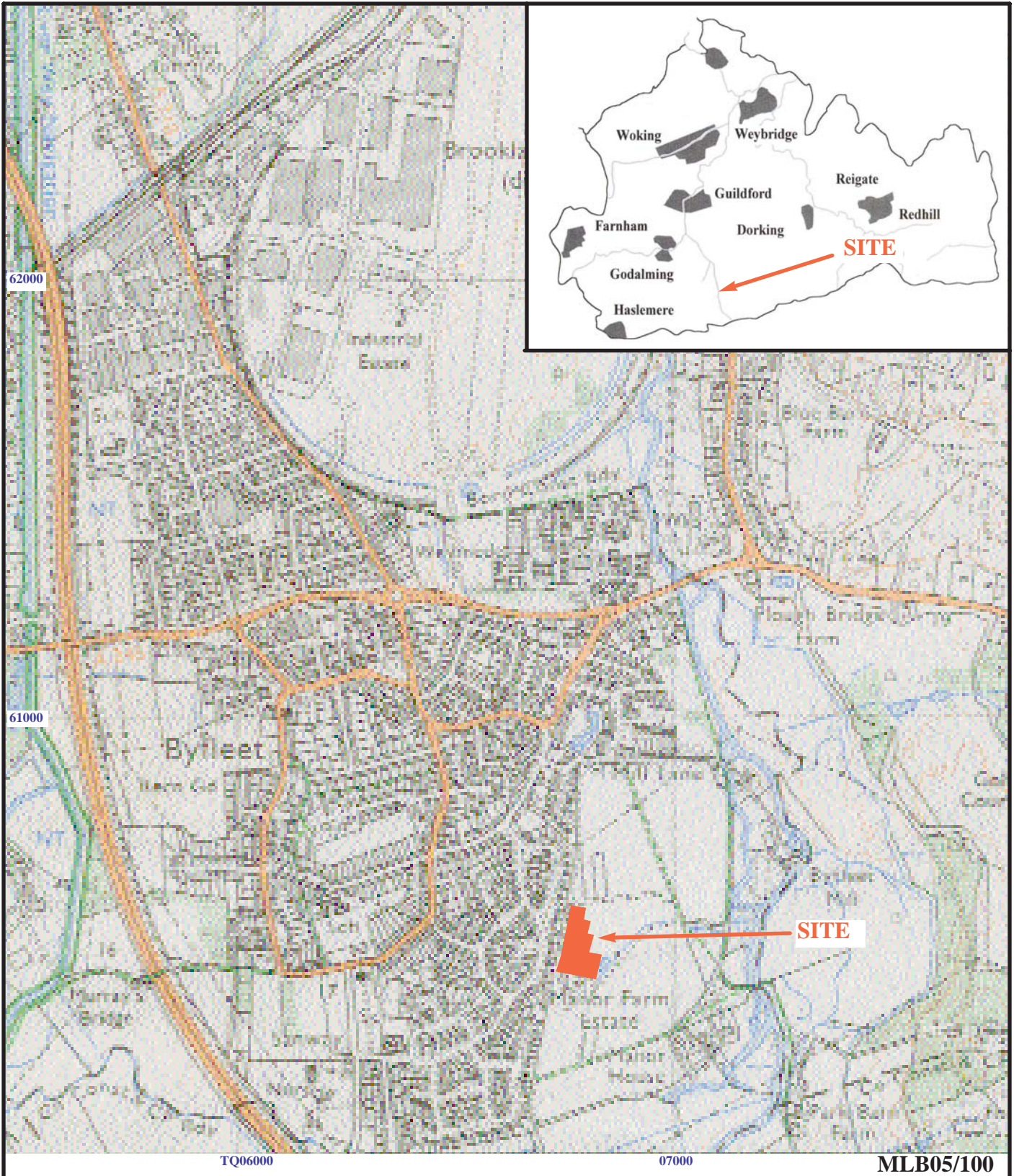
Four trenches were excavated as part of this phase of evaluation in an area that has until fairly recently been undeveloped. The site itself appears to have been arable land on Rocque's map of the 1760s with little or no additional development until the present (CPM 2002). None of the trenches opened in this phase of work found archaeological deposits or features. In all cases the trenches were excavated into the natural sand to ensure that no archaeological deposits were overlooked. No artefacts of archaeological interest were recovered from the spoilheaps. It is considered therefore that the archaeological potential of this site is low.

References

- BGS, 1976, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 283, solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Cotton, J, Crocker, C and Graham, A (eds), 2004, *Aspects of archaeology and history in Surrey*, Guildford
- CPM, 2002, 'Manor Farm, Mill Lane, Byfleet, Surrey: An Archaeological Assessment', Coln St Andrews
- PPG16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO

APPENDIX 1: Trench details
 0m at S or W end

| <i>Trench No.</i> | <i>Length (m)</i> | <i>Breadth (m)</i> | <i>Depth (m)</i> | <i>Comment</i> |
|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|--|
| 1 | 19.6 | 1.6 | 0.76 | Topsoil 0-0.35m, onto natural red brown silty sand 0.35m+ |
| 2 | 21.5 | 1.6 | 0.76 | Topsoil 0-0.35m onto subsoil, red grey clayey silt, 0.35m-0.65m onto natural red yellow silty sand 0.65m+ [Plate 1] |
| 3 | 20.1 | 1.6 | 1.15 | Topsoil 0-0.37m onto subsoil, red grey clayey silt, 0.37m-0.47m onto natural red yellow silty sand 0.47m+ [Plate 2] |
| 4 | 20 | 1.6 | 1.22 | Topsoil 0-0.35m onto red yellow silty sand, 0.35m-0.61m, onto natural yellow white silty sand 0.61m+ |



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Figure 1. Location of site within Byfleet and Surrey.

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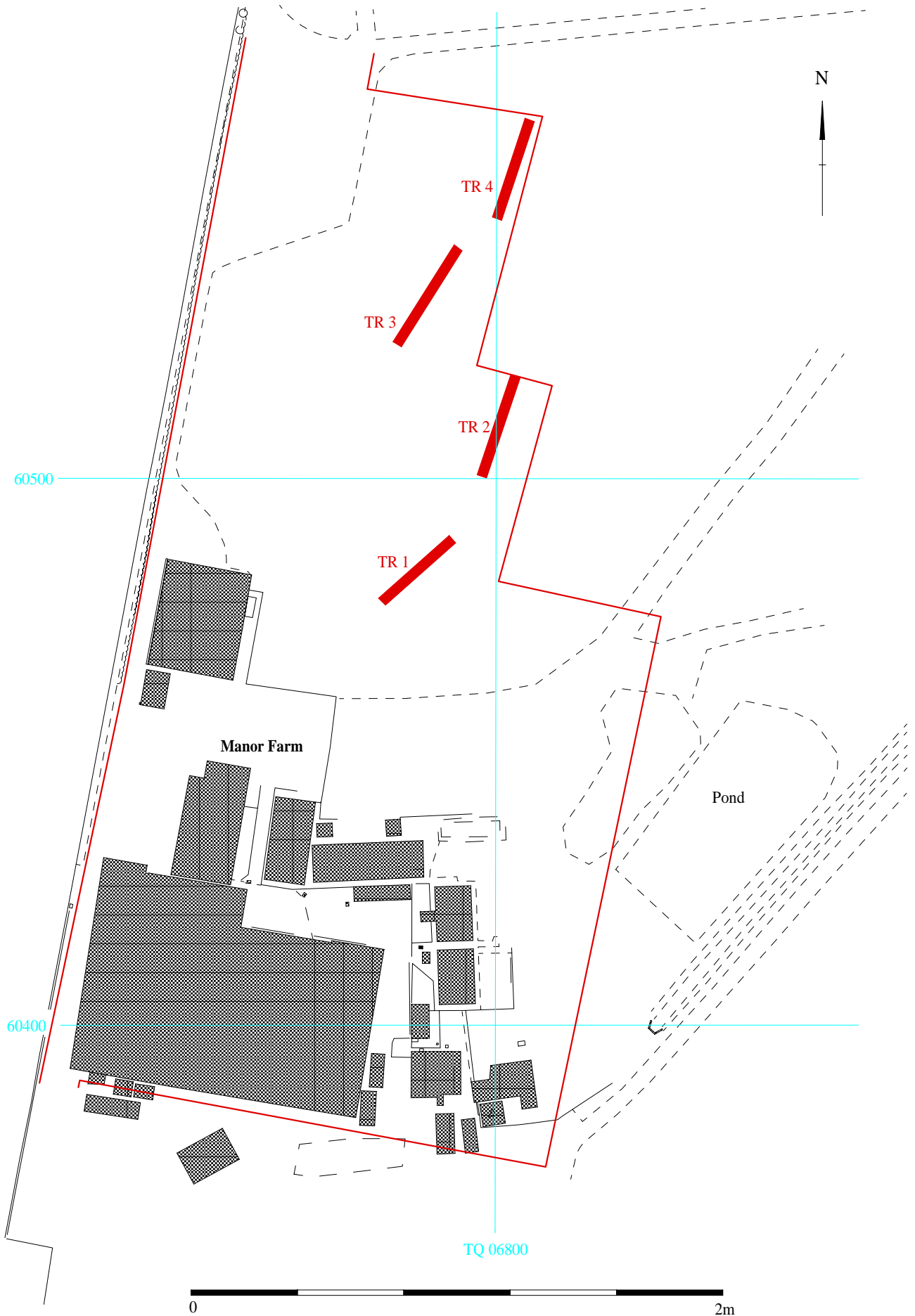


Figure 2. Location of trenches

Mill Lane, Byfleet, Surrey, 2005

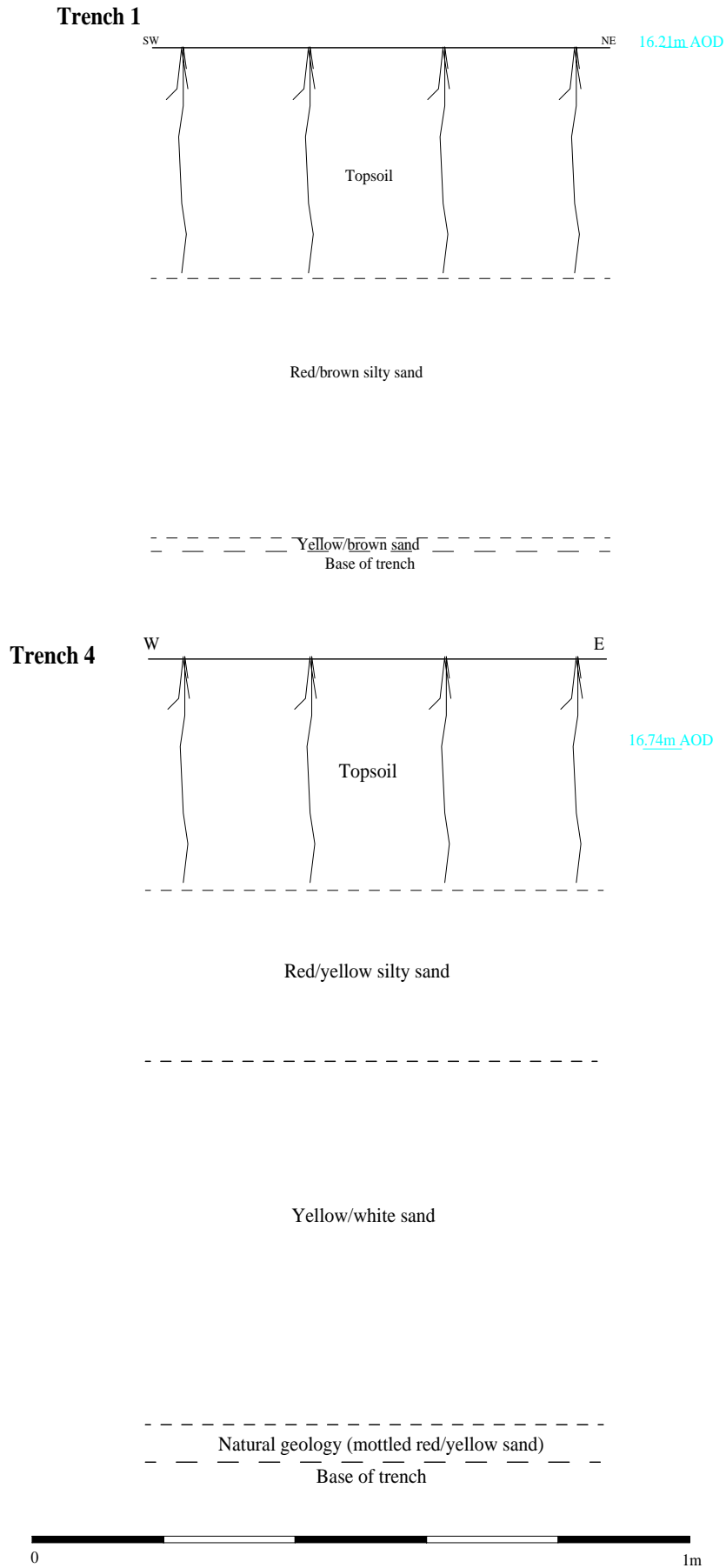


Figure 3. Representative sections of trenches.



Plate 1. Trench 2, looking north. Scale: 1m



Plate 2. Trench 3, Looking south west. Scale: 1m