

**Transport Research Laboratory,
Crowthorne, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Legal and General Property Limited**

by Sarah Coles and Clare Challis
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code TRL01/31

March 2002

Summary

Site name: Transport Research Laboratory, Crowthorne, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 847 656

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 28th February–15th March, 3rd and 4th April, 2002.

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Sarah Coles

Site code: TRL 01/31

Area of site: 3.6ha

Summary of results: No archaeology was observed and no finds were retrieved from the trenches located within the core of the development proposal. Trenches placed across an earthwork complex peripheral to the main development area provided information on its nature but failed to provide details of its date and function.

Monuments identified: Earthwork enclosure

Location and reference of archive: Thames Valley Archaeological Services, 47-49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading, RG1 5NR.

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Transport Research Laboratory, Crowthorne, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Sarah Coles and Clare Challis

Report 01/31b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at the Transport Research Laboratory, Old Wokingham Road, Crowthorne, Berkshire (SU 847 656) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Vic Dunham of Peter Brett Associates, 16 Westcote Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 2DE on behalf of Legal and General Property Limited. A planning application, including an Environmental Statement, has been made to Bracknell Forest Borough and Wokingham District Councils for the construction of new buildings on a 3.6ha parcel of land at the Transport Research Laboratory, Old Wokingham Road, Crowthorne, Berkshire. The consent is subject to a condition relating to archaeology. This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and Bracknell Forest Borough and Wokingham District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Kev Beachus of Babcic Environmental, archaeological advisers to Wokingham District and Bracknell Forest Councils. The fieldwork was undertaken by Sarah Coles, Clare Challis, Nick Crosson and Danielle Colls on 28th February–15th March 2002 (Phase 1) and 3rd–4th April 2002 (Phase 2). The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Reading Museum Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located to the north east of Crowthorne in an area closely wooded with conifer plantation. Crowthorne lies to the south-east of Wokingham and to the south-west of Bracknell on an area of higher ground (Fig. 2). The site lies at approximately 80m above Ordnance Datum on geology mapped as Bracklesham Beds (BGS 1981); in the trenches this was observed as a clayey silt with gravel.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in an input to an Environmental Statement (Hardy 2001). This notes the presence of two earthworks on the southern part of the site in an area possibly required

for ancillary construction works, balancing ponds or landscaping. The first cartographic evidence depicting the earthworks dates from 1827 (Hardy 2001, fig 3). These earthworks originally comprised a rectangular enclosure with a further earthwork with a right-angled bend to the east. The earthworks consist of banks and ditches that have in part been destroyed by the construction of modern roads, drains and a compound for the research facility. In particular, the northern and southern elements of the enclosure have been destroyed. A stream traverses the enclosure from east to west.

The Sites and Monuments Record search for a 1km radius revealed sites of archaeological interest such as Caesar's Camp Iron Age hillfort to the east and a Bronze Age ring ditch to the north-west. Archaeological finds within the same search area include a Neolithic arrowhead to the west of the area and an Iron Age coin found in the area of Caesar's Camp.

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. These objectives were to be met by digging 63 trenches, each 1.6m wide and 10m long, using a machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under continuous archaeological supervision. Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present the stripped areas were to be cleaned using the appropriate hand tools. Sufficient of the archaeological features or deposits exposed were to be excavated to satisfy the aims of the brief. The work was carried out in a manner that would not compromise the integrity of any archaeological features that might warrant preservation *in situ* or might better be excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation. All spoil heaps 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

Sixty-three trenches were dug in locations as close as possible to their intended positions as shown in Figure 2. The trenches were 1.6m–1.7m wide and ranged in length from 2.40m to 20.90m and in depth from 0.13m to 0.62m. In order to establish an understanding of the geological sequence on the site, two test pits were dug at the end of Trenches 13 and 18.

Trenches 1, 32, 33, 34 (Figs 3–5) and (Plate 3)

These trenches were all placed through earthworks in the southern part of the site and were between 1.6m and 1.7m wide and excavated to a depth of between 0.30–0.60m. All revealed the same stratigraphy: leaf litter and brown silty clay topsoil onto the natural geology. They were all excavated to the surface of the natural but revealed no archaeological finds or means by which the earthworks could be dated.

The main enclosure ditch, revealed in Trenches 1 and 32, was from 5 to 6m wide but only 0.3–0.4m deep with an almost flat base. The banks comprised no more than a greater thickness of topsoil/subsoil than elsewhere, surviving to a height of c. 0.4m.

The earthwork to the east, examined by Trench 34 was a more pronounced feature with a ditch 0.35m deep with a shallow V-shaped profile which was 4.4m wide. The banks of this earthwork, although more pronounced, were nevertheless only comprised of topsoil/subsoil. The bank was somewhat more pronounced on the east (inner) side than on the west, both in height (0.7m above the top of the ditch, compared to 0.3m on the west) and width (c. 1.7m).

Trench 33 was located within the enclosure but did not reveal any archaeological deposits.

Trenches 3–12, 14–17, 19–28, 30, 31, 36–39, 42–53, 58–61 (Plates 2 and 4)

These trenches were all 1.6–1.7m wide and excavated to a depth between 0.13m and 0.57m. All revealed the same stratigraphy: leaf litter and brown silty clay topsoil onto the natural clayey silt with gravel inclusions. No finds or features were recovered during the excavation of these trenches, nor from a search of the spoilheaps.

Trenches 2, 13, 35, 40, 41, 57, 62, 63 (Plate 1)

These trenches were all 1.6–1.7m wide and excavated to a depths ranging between 0.32–1.0m. All revealed the same stratigraphy: topsoil onto a made ground containing a combination of orange gravel, concrete, brick and Tarmac fragments, orange clay, metal and rubber pieces. No features or pre-modern finds were uncovered during the excavation of these trenches, nor from a search of the spoilheaps.

Trenches 54–56

These trenches were placed through reinforced concrete and were between 2.40–2.78m in length and excavated to a depth 0.44–0.58m. The stratigraphy consisted of reinforced concrete directly overlying orange clay natural.

Conclusion

Only three trenches (1, 32 and 34) revealed features of archaeological interest. These trenches were located across the earthworks and showed a shallow ditch and banks. A third trench (33) was located within the enclosure but failed to reveal any archaeological deposits. No finds were recovered from any of these trenches which could be used to date these features. This earthwork is comparable to one located to the south-east of Twyford at Ruscombe Lakes (SU 805760). The Ruscombe enclosure is larger, comprising a square area of one hectare, enclosed on all sides by banks and ditches which have now been reduced by ploughing (Ford and Hazell, 1985). Trial trenching of the Ruscombe enclosure revealed a shallow ditch, without providing any dating evidence. The lack of finds from both enclosures suggests they are unlikely to have been used as settlement enclosures and were presumably for the corralling of stock. It is speculated that they both may date from Medieval or later times.

The main area of the development site revealed no finds or deposits of archaeological interest and development of the site will be most unlikely to have any impact on archaeological deposits.

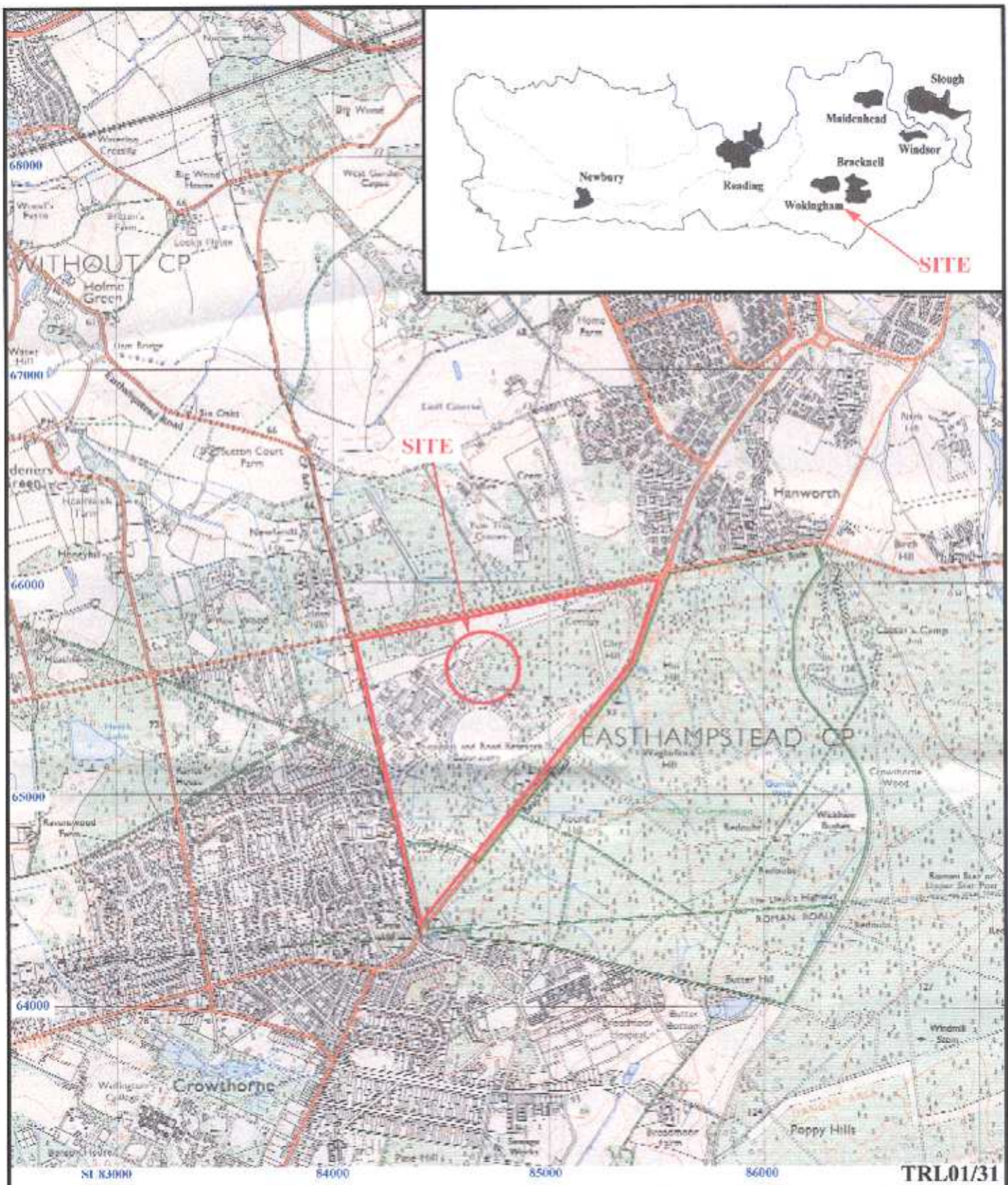
References

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- Hardy, L, 2001, Transport Research Laboratory, Crowthorne, Berkshire, 'Archaeological and Historical Input for an Environmental Statement', Peter Brett Associates, (Thames Valley Archaeological Services, report 01/31, Reading)
- PPG16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO

APPENDIX 1: Trench details
0m at S or W

Trench No.	Length (m)	Breadth (m)	Depth (m)	Comment
1	10.20	1.70	0.60	0.35m topsoil onto natural. A ditch is visible however there are no fills or a defined cut, the ditch varies from approximately 4.50–5.15m wide.
2	12.50	1.60	1.0	0.10m topsoil onto 0.80m made ground onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
3	9.80	1.60	0.41	0.32m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
4	10.50	1.50	0.57	0.48m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
5	10.40	1.60	0.32	0.31m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
6	10.60	1.65	0.26	0.22m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
7	11.00	1.65	0.18	0.12m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
8	10.00	1.60	0.13	0.10m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
9	10.50	1.55	0.23	S end 0.14m topsoil onto natural. N end 0.20m Redeposited natural onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
10	12.20	1.65	0.22	0.18m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, No finds.
11	10.00	1.60	0.30	0.02m topsoil onto 0.10m made ground onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
12	10.60	1.50	0.14	0.02m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
13	10.40	1.60	E0.32 W0.62	E end 0.12m topsoil onto 0.20m made ground onto natural. W end test pit. No archaeology, no finds.
14	10.00	1.65	0.30	0.15m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
15	11.20	1.70	0.31	0.19m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
16	10.60	1.60	0.51	0.34m Redeposited natural onto 0.17m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
17	11.00	1.70	0.55	0.50m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
18	11.00	1.65	E0.55 W0.40	F end Test pit 0.25m topsoil onto 0.25m modern disturbance, onto natural. W end 0.30m topsoil onto natural.
19	10.00	1.80	0.20	0.14m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
20	9.50	1.60	0.40	0.30m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
21	10.70	1.60	0.40	0.25m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
22	11.00	1.60	0.30	0.10m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
23	10.00	1.70	0.40	0.25m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
24	10.00	1.60	0.30	0.25m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
25	9.50	1.65	0.40	0.30m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
26	10.20	1.60	0.30	0.20m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
27	10.00	1.60	0.45	0.35m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
28	11.10	1.80	0.45	0.25m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
29	10.70	1.65	0.40	0.20m topsoil onto 0.20m made ground onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
30	10.50	1.70	0.20	0.15m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
31	11.40	1.75	0.21	0.06m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
32	20.90	1.61	E0.23 W0.45	Located across enclosure earthwork. E end 0.08m topsoil onto natural. Middle 0.35m topsoil onto 0.40m fill (50) of cut 1 (ditch), 5.50–6.0m wide, onto natural. No finds. W end 0.08m topsoil onto 0.23m made ground onto natural.
33	10.30	1.60	0.48	Located within earthwork enclosure. 0.48m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
34	11.00	1.70	0.60	Located across earthwork. 0.25m topsoil onto natural. A ditch is visible; however there are no fills or a defined cut, the ditch is approximately 4.40m wide. The ditch is undatable as there are no finds.
35	10.80	1.60	0.82	0.18m topsoil onto 0.64m Made Ground onto natural
36	9.80	1.50	0.26	0.16m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
37	10.00	1.50	0.28	0.09m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
38	10.00	1.50	0.22	0.10m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
39	10.20	1.50	0.25	0.16m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
40	10.60	1.65	0.42	0.10m topsoil onto 0.14m made ground, onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
41	6.30	1.75	0.35	0.04m topsoil onto 0.26m made ground onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
42	10.80	1.70	0.35	0.30m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
43	10.80	1.70	0.16	0.03m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
44	10.10	1.70	0.19	0.07m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
45	10.20	1.60	0.21	0.18m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
46	10.60	1.70	0.32	0.15m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
47	11.50	1.66	0.28	0.20m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
48	10.50	1.60	0.40	0.19m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
49	10.80	1.50	0.14	0.09m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
50	10.20	1.80	0.27	0.09m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
51	10.20	1.60	0.22	0.20m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
52	10.10	1.50	0.24	0.13m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
53	11.20	1.60	0.26	0.20m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
54	2.78	1.80	0.44	0.34m Reinforced concrete onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
55	2.20	1.70	0.50	0.36m Reinforced concrete onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
56	2.40	1.40	0.58	0.28m Reinforced concrete onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
57	4.40	1.60	0.50	0.09m topsoil onto 0.41m made ground onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
58	10.20	1.60	0.37	0.28m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.

<i>Trench No.</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
59	10.60	1.50	0.28	0.05m Leaf litter onto 0.08m Redeposited natural, onto 0.08m buried topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
60	10.70	1.50	0.43	0.43m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
61	10.50	1.60	0.24	0.15m topsoil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
62	3.50	1.60	0.70	0.30m topsoil onto 0.16m Made Ground onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.
63	6.00	1.60	0.85	0.20m Tarmac onto 0.42m Made Ground onto 0.18m Buried Soil onto natural. No archaeology, no finds.



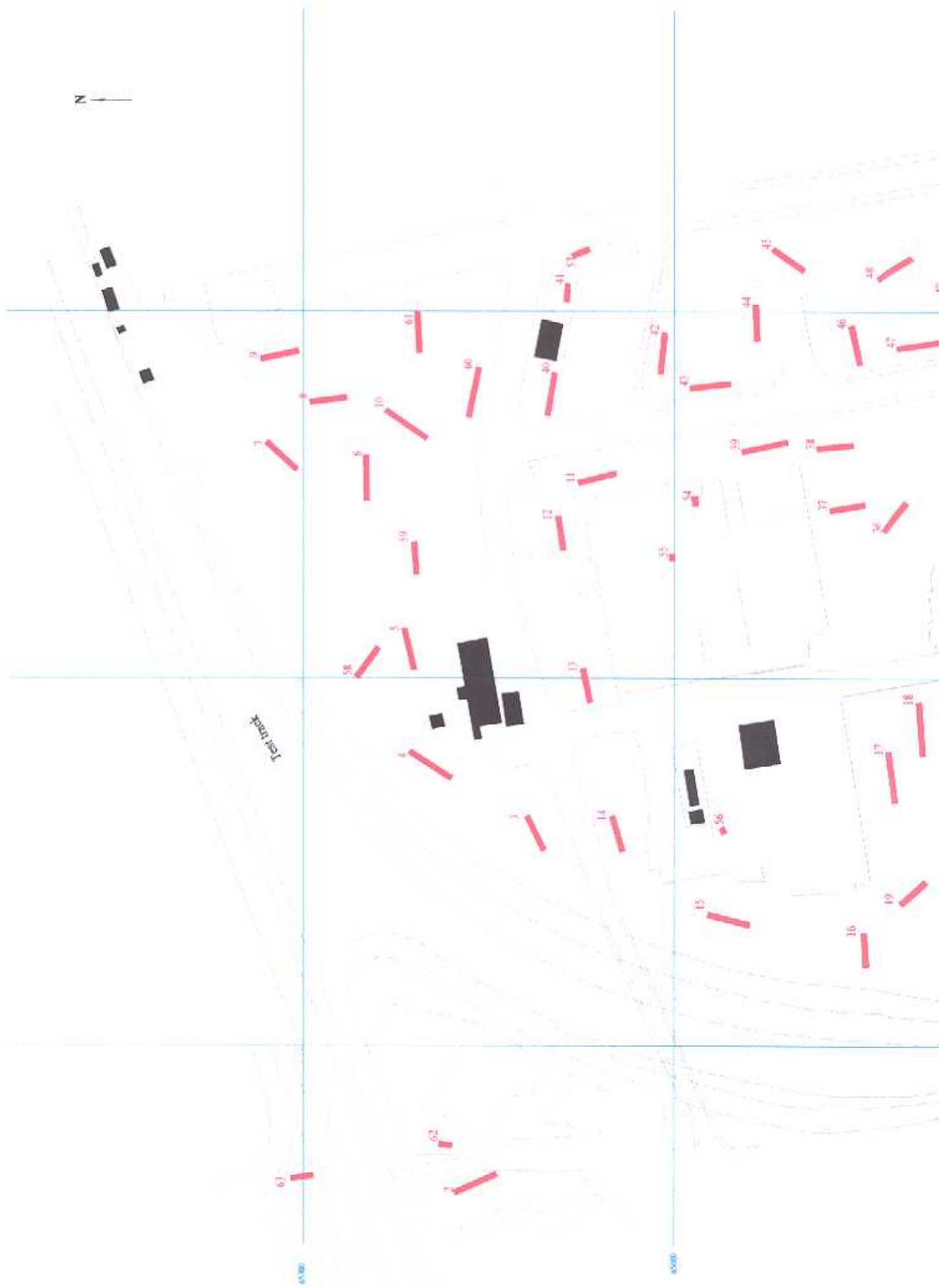
Transport Research Laboratory, Crowthorne,
Berkshire, 2001

Figure 1. Location of site within Crowthorne and
Berkshire.

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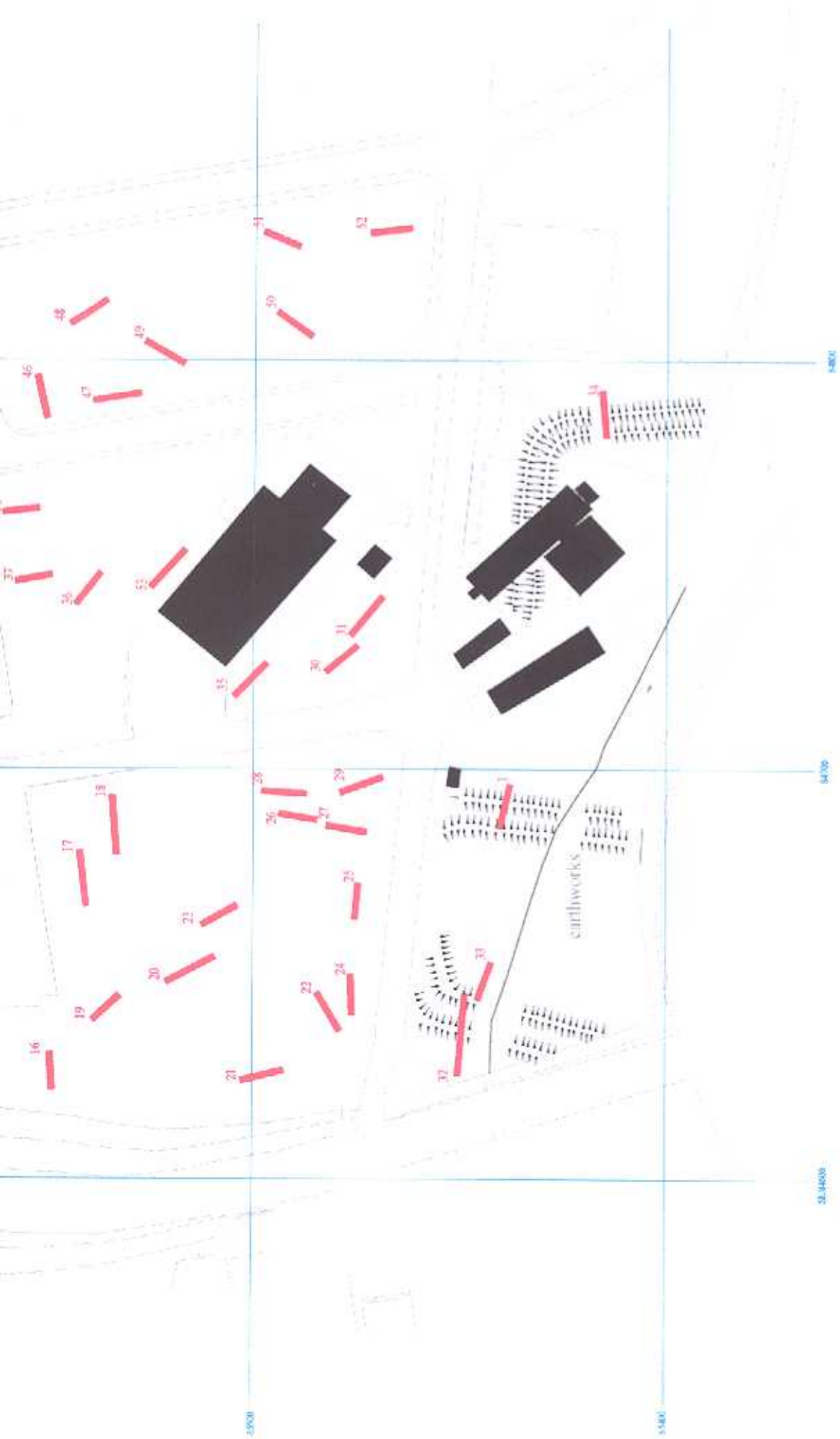


Figure 2. Locations of trenches on the site.

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Trench 32



Trench 34



Figure 3. Plans of earthworks examined in Trenches 32 and 34.

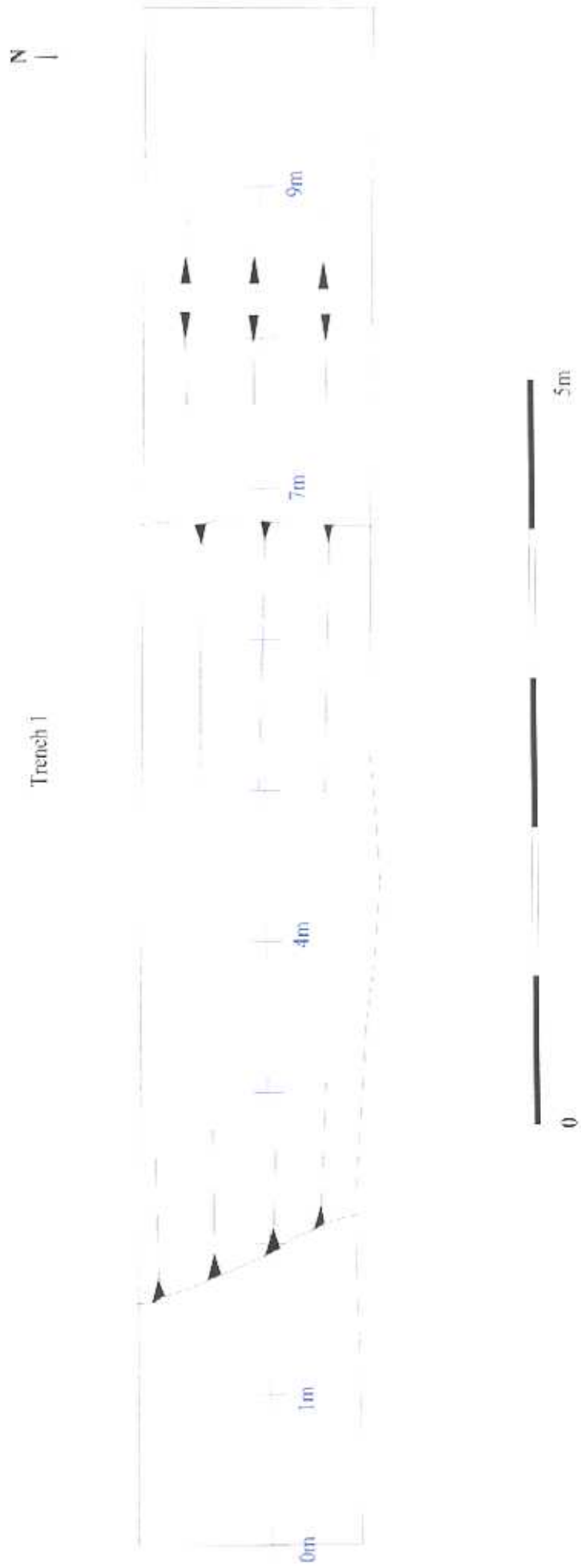


Figure 4. Plan of earthwork examined in Trench 1.

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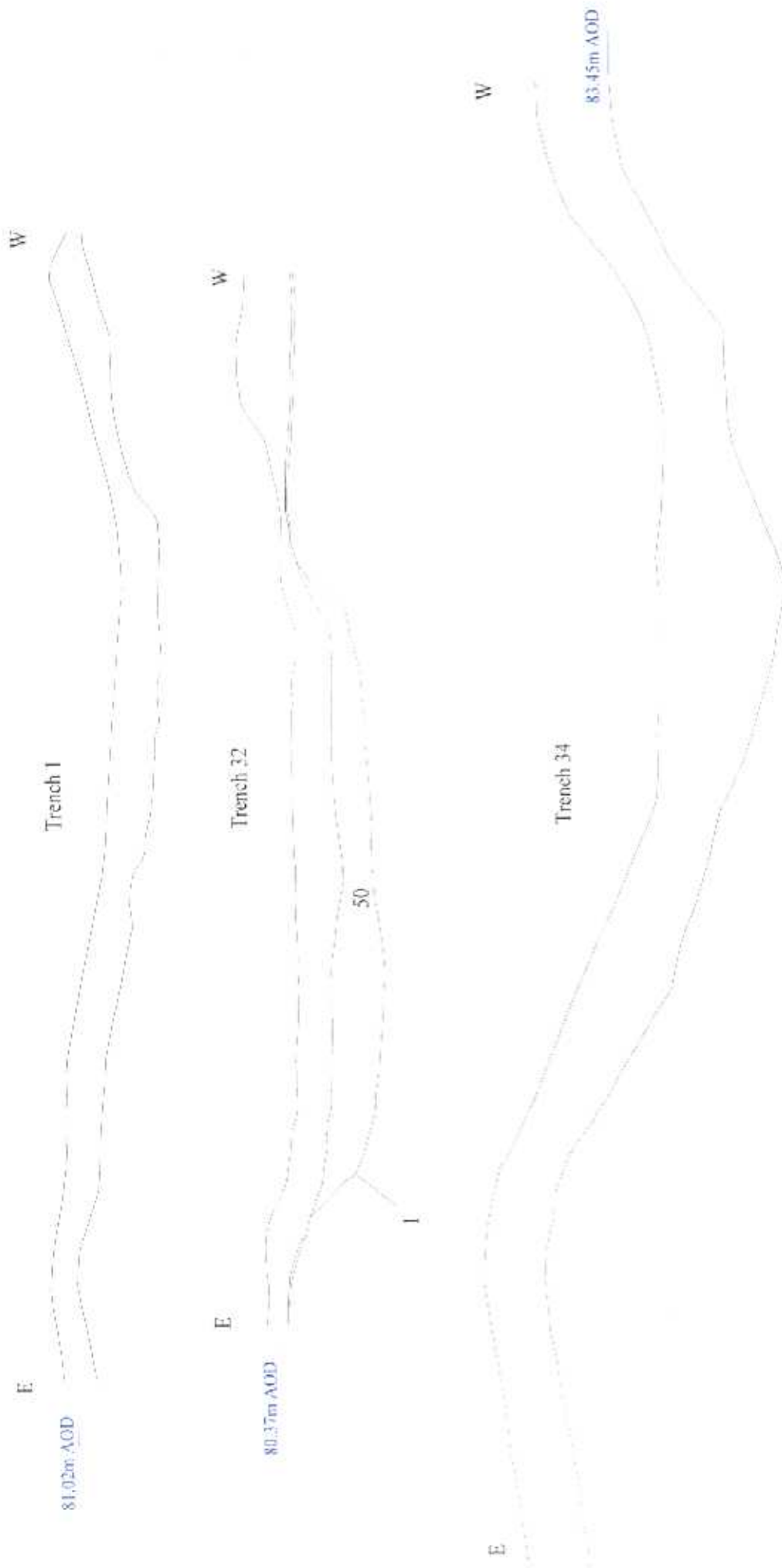


Figure 5. Sections of all tracks examined at Trenches 1, 32 and 34.



Plate 1. Trench 40 looking west, scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Trench 12 looking west, scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 3. Trench 34 looking south-west, across earthwork enclosure, scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 4. Trench 61 looking east, scales: 2m and 1m.