

**2 The Croft, Church Street,
Kintbury, West Berkshire**

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Mr Stanley Palmer

by Simon Cass

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code CCK 06/123

November 2006

Summary

Site name: 2 The Croft, Church St, Kintbury, West Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 3826 6692

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 25th–26th October 2006

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Simon Cass

Site code: CCK 06/123

Area of site: 1050 sq m

Summary of results: Several features, all of post-medieval or modern date, were found. Some residual pottery of Saxon and medieval dates was recovered. No Saxon or medieval features were present in the areas examined, so it is unlikely the development will affect significant archaeology, but the potential for such still exists within the broader site.

Monuments identified: None

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

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 2.11.06
	Steve Preston ✓ 31.10.06

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Report 06/123

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out 2 The Croft, Church St, Kintbury, West Berkshire (SU 3826 6692) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Stanley Palmer of Flat 2, 8 Donnington Square, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 1PJ.

A planning application (CWB2561) has been submitted to West Berkshire Council for the construction of a new garage and extensions to the existing house at this property. Due to the site's location within the historic (Saxon and Medieval) core of the village, its potential for archaeological remains was highlighted by Mr Duncan Coe of West Berkshire Heritage Service and an archaeological evaluation of the site requested.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Duncan Coe, Archaeological Officer for West Berkshire Heritage Service. The fieldwork was undertaken by Simon Cass and Paul Sanderson on the 25th and 26th of October 2006 and the site code is CCK 06/123. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at West Berkshire Museum in due course, given that permission is granted to deposit the finds.

Location, topography and geology

The village of Kintbury is located to the south of the Kennet and Avon Canal, approximately 10km to the west of Newbury along the A4. The site itself is located west of Church Street just to the south-west of the church and facing the graveyard across a small lane and is currently occupied by a small bungalow and two outbuildings (Fig. 2). The underlying geology is mapped as Upper Chalk (BGS 1947) and this was seen in all of the trenches. The site slopes down from approximately 105m above Ordnance Datum in the south, north towards the lane at a height 103.5m AOD.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site arises from its position in the immediate vicinity of the church, which is likely to be within the historic core of the village. Kintbury was first documented in the Late Saxon period as a royal manor (*Cynetanbyrig*) and is known to have had a Minster church. The placename (Old English: Kennetfort) has been taken to indicate that it was a defended site, although by the time of its first mention in AD935, 'burh' (dative 'byrig') no longer necessarily carried this connotation and it may have meant 'town', 'borough' or even just 'manor'. It was the hundredal centre at the time of Domesday Book (1086) and the manor was held partly by the king but mainly by the abbey of Amesbury. A market had been granted by 1267. Previous archaeological works in the village have exposed Saxon and medieval features and deposits, including human burials around 100m east of the site (Ford 1997) and have indicated Saxon and medieval occupation close to the church (Ford 1997; WA 1991). Evidence of Roman activity is also present in the vicinity.

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. The specific aims of this project are:

- To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on site;
- To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;
- To determine if any deposits of Saxon date are present which might represent either a Saxon minster church or manor complex;
- To determine if any deposits forming part of the medieval settlement lie within this site;
- To determine if any burial deposits are present on the site.

Three trenches were hand-excavated, measuring 2m, 2.5m and 4.8m long by 1.0m wide. Due to the presence of extant outbuildings it was necessary to move Trench 2 a short way east of its intended position.

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

Results

Trench 1 (Figs.3-5)

This trench was 2.5m long and orientated roughly east-west. It was approximately 0.35m deep and the stratigraphy consisted of topsoil/garden soil directly onto natural Upper Chalk. The topsoil was a mid brown

clayey silt with occasional small to medium stones and flints. This overlay two features, a gully and a pit, which cut the chalk. The gully (1) was aligned NNW-SSE and filled with a greyish brown clayey silt with sparse chalk fragments and moderate small stones. The pit (2) is possibly the corner of a square feature, filled with a mid greyish brown clayey silt with a lens of chalk fragments, and contained modern brick/tile and glass.

Trench 2 (Plate 1) (Figs.3-5)

This trench was 4.8m long and orientated north-south. It was 0.35-0.4m deep and the stratigraphy consisted of topsoil/garden earth again directly on top of natural Upper Chalk. This trench contained several features, mostly pits (5, 6, 7, 9). The fills of these features were all mid to dark greyish brown clayey silts with moderate chalk fragments, occasional stones and flints. Pit 6 had, in addition, a moderate amount of charcoal flecking. Pits 6, 7 and 9 were cut into a large feature (8=10) either a large pit or ditch, which occupied most of the trench, of probable modern or post-medieval date with brick/tile in its lowest observed fill (58), a mid greyish brown clayey silt. The upper fill (57) of this large feature was formed from a large amount of redeposited chalk and silty clay. Pit 9 also included some 19th-century pottery. Pit 5 provided no dating evidence but appeared to be of similar character to the others.

Trench 3 (Plate 2) (Figs.3-5)

This trench was 2.0m long and orientated SE-NW. It was 1.0m deep and the stratigraphy consisted of 0.5m of topsoil/garden soil (along the northern edge the top 0.2m was a loose gravel path) overlying pit 3. Pit 3 extended out of the trench on three sides and appeared to be 0.95m deep from the surface level. It was filled with a greyish brown clayey silt material with very frequent chalk fragments and flecking and occasional small stones and flints. Finds from this feature included modern metal, brick, tile, glass and modern pottery, along with three sherds of pottery dated to the 11th century. This in turn cut pit 4, which continued down another 0.65m. This feature was filled with a greyish brown clayey silt but with only moderate amounts of chalk, flints and stones in it. This lowest pit again provided brick/tile, glass and modern pottery, along with two sherds of 17th-century wares.

Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 13 sherds with a total weight of 224g. It comprised a mixture of early/middle Saxon, Saxo-Norman, medieval and post-medieval wares. The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Appendix 3.

The following fabrics were noted:

Early/middle Saxon wares: Undecorated, hand-built wares. Dense chaff temper rare sub-rounded calcareous material up to 2mm. The absence of decoration sherds makes it impossible to date the material other than to within the broad period AD450-850. 1 sherd, 56g.

St. Neots Ware type TI(1) c. AD900-1100 (Denham 1985). Wheel-thrown. Fabric as other types, although inclusions tend to be sparser, larger and more ill-sorted, usually weak to strong red, reddish-brown or black. Vessels usually jars, some with thumbled applied strips, 'Top Hat' vessels, large, upright rimmed bowls, lamps and (rarely) pitchers. 1 sherd, 6g.

Cotswolds-type ware: c. late 9th – early 13th century (Mellor 1994). Slow-wheel made. Fairly hard, dark blue-grey fabric with moderate sub-rounded white pink and grey quartzite up to 1mm. Sparse to moderate calcareous material, including ooliths, up to 2mm. Rare haematite up to 1mm. Mainly 'barrel' jars with triangular rims or more shouldered examples with high everted rims, bases usually sagging. Probably manufactured at a number of sources in the Cotswolds region. 2 sherds, 8g.

Newbury 'A/B' ware (Mephram 1997, 46-51). 11th – early 13th century. Handmade, with wheel-finished upper bodies. Sandy fabric with moderate angular white flint up to 2mm, rare rounded calcareous material up to 2mm. 3 sherds, 17g.

Post-medieval Redwares, Mid 16th – late 18th century. Fine sandy earthenware, usually with a brown or green glaze, occurring in a range of utilitarian forms. Such 'country pottery' was first made in the 16th century, and in some areas continued in use until the 19th century. Probably manufactured at a number of local centres. 5 sherds, 105g

Late English Stoneware. Mid 18th century +. White/grey stoneware with a white salt glaze. Made at numerous centres, such as Staffordshire, London and Nottingham, from the later 17th century onwards, in a wide range of utilitarian forms. 1 sherd, 32g.

Most of the pottery is well-known in the region, although a few sherds are worthy of comment. The sherd of early/middle Saxon pottery is the rim from a jar. The rim diameter is 240mm, and it is 10% complete. It is extremely well-made and hard-fired for such pottery. Mellor (1994, 36) has suggested that chaff-tempered pottery such as this may have been used alongside the earliest late Saxon wares in the region. Certainly, this sherd is exceptionally well-made and shows no signs whatsoever of abrasion despite occurring in topsoil. Furthermore, late Saxon pottery (a sherd of St. Neots ware) is present at this site.

The sherd of St. Neots ware occurred in a context with two sherds of Cotswolds-type ware. The three are almost certainly pre-conquest. This is suggested by the absence of Newbury A/B ware, which is common from the immediate post-Conquest period onwards, from that context. The group has been given an 11th century date, but it could easily be earlier. However, it comes from a pit that is clearly (stratigraphically) modern. It has been noted in securely-dated contexts of the late 9th century in Gloucestershire (Mellor 1994, 51), and seems to have steadily spread westwards until it was the dominant fabric in Oxford by the mid-11th century.

Conclusion

The results from these three trenches seem to indicate significant truncation in the relatively recent past in the immediate vicinity of the current building, becoming less dense further towards the front of the property. The presence of Saxon and medieval pottery in the topsoil and in clearly later features is, perhaps, only to be expected given the length of occupation in the village and the location of the site within the likely historic core. It is possible that features representing older phases of activity are still present within the site and one gully in found by the evaluation provided no dating evidence. However in the areas examined it would appear that any other earlier features have been severely truncated by modern action. It seems unlikely that significant features would be disturbed by the proposed development, although beyond that immediate footprint the potential for significant Saxon and medieval archaeology may remain.

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- WA, 1991, 'Kintbury Garage, Berkshire, Summary excavation', Wessex Archaeology rep W353, Salisbury

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at S or W end

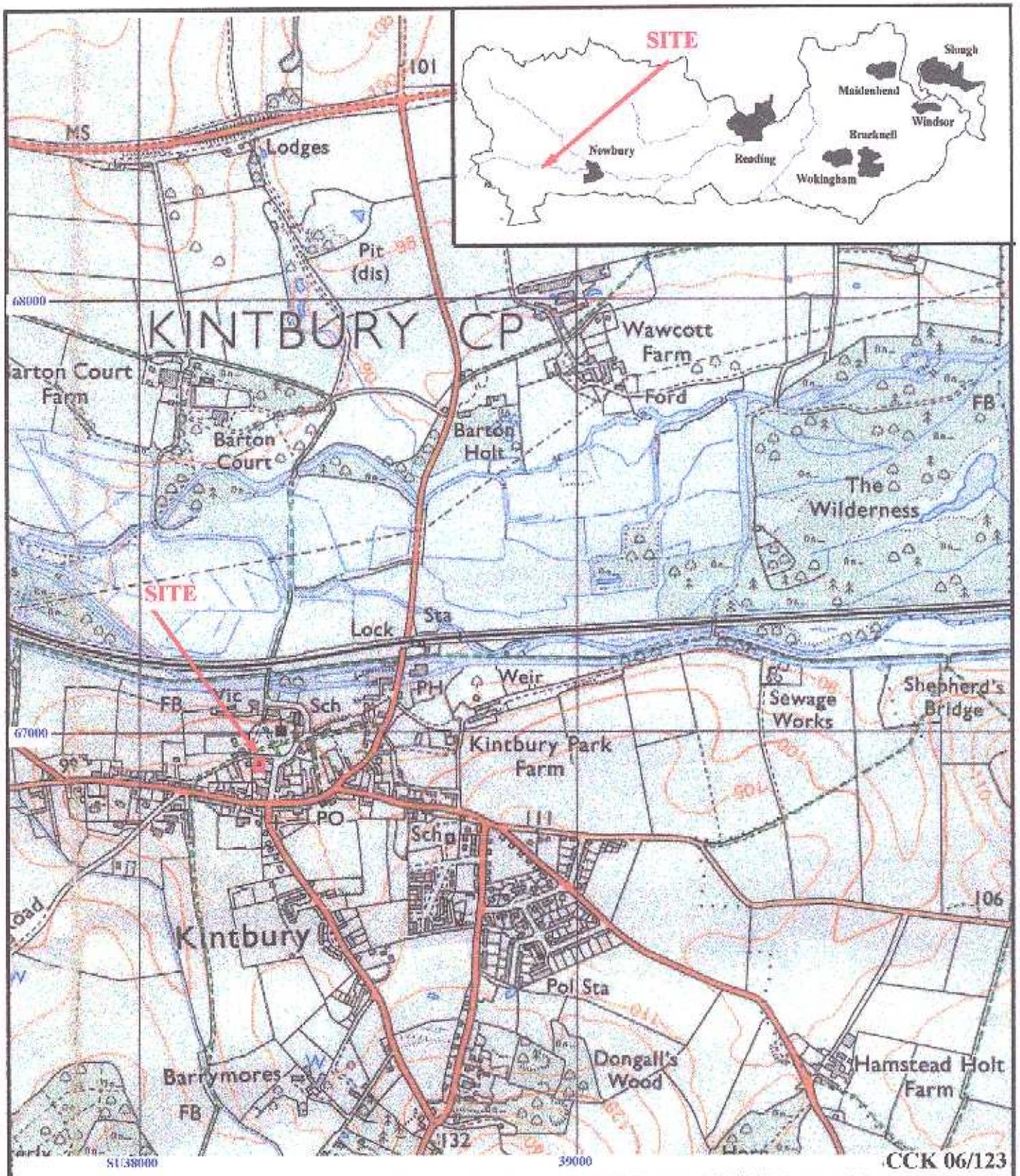
<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	2.5	1.0	0.35	0.00m-0.35m topsoil onto chalk. Gully 1, pit 2.
2	4.8	1.0	0.40	0.00-0.40m topsoil onto chalk. Pits 5, 6, 7 and 9. Ditch/ large pit 8 and 10. [Plate 1].
3	2.0	1.0	0.50	0.00-0.50m topsoil onto chalk. Pits 3 and 4. [Plate 2].

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
1	1	50	Gully	Unknown	None
1	2	51	Pit	Modern	Brick/Tile, Glass
3	3	52	Pit	Modern	Brick/Tile, Metal, Glass, Pottery, Stratigraphy
3	4	53	Pit	Modern	Brick/Tile, Metal, Glass, Pottery
2	5	54	Pit/Gully terminal	Unknown	None
2	6	55	Pit	Modern	Stratigraphy
2	7	56	Pit	Modern	Brick/Tile, Metal
2	8	57, 58	Large pit/Ditch	Modern	Brick/Tile
2	9	59	Pit	Modern	Brick/Tile, Pottery
2	10	60, 61	Large pit/Ditch	Modern	Brick/Tile

APPENDIX 3: Pottery catalogue by context by number of sherds and weight (in grams).

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Feature</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Early/Mid Saxon</i>		<i>St Neots</i>		<i>Cotswold</i>		<i>Newbury A/B</i>		<i>Red Wares</i>		<i>Late English stoneware</i>	
			<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>
3	3	52			1	6	2	8						
3	4	53							1	11	1	65		
2	9	59							1	2	4	40	1	32
2		Topsoil	1	56					1	4				
		Total	1	56	1	6	2	8	3	17	5	105	1	32



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An archaeological evaluation**

Figure 1. Location of site within Kintbury and
and Berkshire.

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Figure 3. Location of trenches within the site.

2 The Croft, Church Street, Kintbury, West Berkshire, 2006

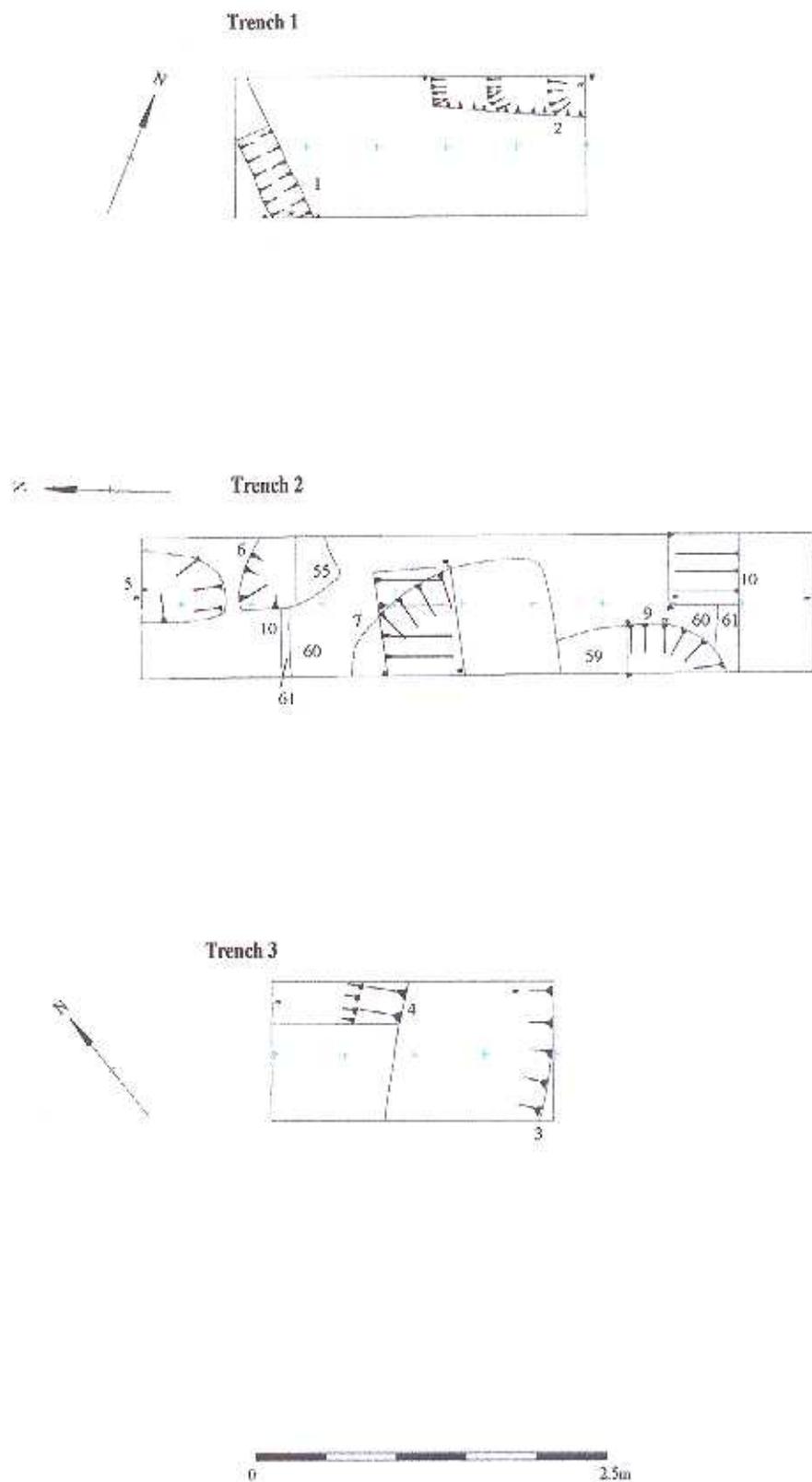


Figure 4. Trench plans.

2 The Croft, Church Street, Kintbury, West Berkshire, 2006

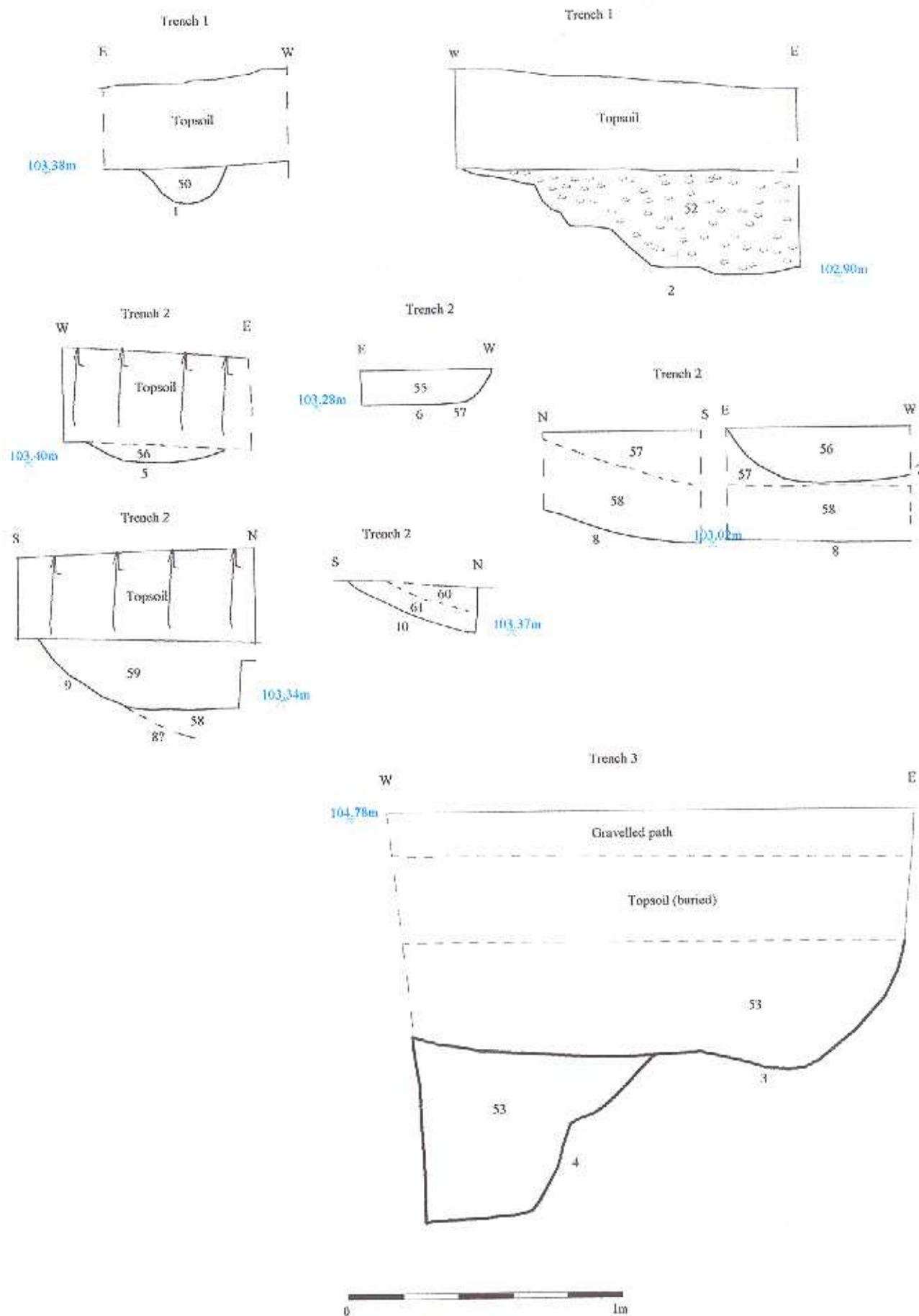


Figure 5. Sections.



Plate 1. Trench 2 looking south, showing feature 9 in foreground, 7 mid-trench; foreground scale 1m, mid-ground scale 2m.



Plate 2. Trench 3 looking west, with features 3 and 4; scales 2m, 1m