

8 Hare and Hounds Lane,
Stockingford, Nuneaton,
Warwickshire:

An Archaeological
Watching Brief

**Project no.1308
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**8 Hare and Hounds Lane, Stockingford, Nuneaton, Warwickshire:
An Archaeological Watching Brief**

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SUMMARY

A watching brief was carried out at number 8 Hare and Hounds Lane, Stockington, Nuneaton (NGR SP 434881 291177) in April and May 2005. Birmingham Archaeology was commissioned to carry out the work by the developer, Roy Flanagan, in order to comply with conditions placed on planning application (TP/0535/02). The site was located in an area that had been the focus of an extensive pottery industry dating from the 13th and 14th centuries (SMR MWA 7370). Several phases of excavation in the 1960s and 70s revealed that the preservation of multiple kiln complexes was good. Some forty-two kilns were excavated on nineteen sites, revealing that the complex was a major production centre.

The watching brief monitored the excavation of service trenches, during which an archaeological layer 0.2-0.4m deep was revealed across the site. It contained a large quantity of medieval pottery, dated from the 13th to the 15th centuries. No cut features were observed, and only one trench actually cut through this medieval layer to the natural subsoil below. The layer contained relatively large quantity of pottery, some of which was poorly fired and blistered. Two fragments of kiln superstructure were also recovered, and it was noted that none of the pottery showed evidence of sooting. It is therefore likely that this layer represents a dump of waste material from the surrounding kiln complexes.

8 Hare and Hounds Lane, Stockingford, Nuneaton: An Archaeological Watching Brief

1 INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the results of an archaeological watching brief that was carried out at 8 Hare and Hounds Lane, Stockingford, Nuneaton (NGR SP 434881 291177, Fig. 1) in April and May 2005. Birmingham Archaeology was commissioned to carry out the work by the developer, Roy Flanagan, in order to comply with conditions placed on planning application (TP/0535/02).

The work was carried out in accordance with the 'Brief for Archaeological Work: 8, Hare and Hounds Lane, Nuneaton, Warwickshire, Amendment to TP/0535/02' prepared by Warwickshire Museum, March 2005 and a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Birmingham Archaeology (Appendix I). The brief required the monitoring of all remaining ground works associated with the construction of a bungalow by a qualified archaeologist.

2 SITE LOCATION

The site occupies the northern part of the plot for Number 8 Hare and Hounds Lane, Stockingford, Nuneaton (Fig. 2). The underlying geology is Till (British Geological Survey [England and Wales Sheet 169] Warwick, Solid and Drift Geology, 1994).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The development area lies to the southwest of Nuneaton close to the Parish of Chilvers Coton. This district was the focus of an extensive pottery industry dating from the 13th and 14th centuries (SMR MWA 7370). Several phases of excavation in the 1960s and 70s revealed that the preservation of multiple kiln complexes was good (Mayes and Scott, 1984). Some forty-two kilns were excavated on nineteen sites, revealing that the complex was a major production centre. Analysis of the ceramic evidence indicated that production began in the 13th century with fine white wares, and continued, producing a range of goods and wares including Midlands Purple, and Cistercian and Slip Wares into the 17th century.

Sites 2 and 3 out of the 19 excavated by Mayes and Scott (1984) were both within 25m of number 8 Hare and Hounds Lane. Site 2 contained 6 kilns dated to 1300-1375. Site 3 contained 8 kilns, dated to the 13th and early 14th centuries. Large quantities of pottery were recovered from both sites.

More recent work in the immediate vicinity of the site includes the discovery of a Chilvers Coton 'C' Ware pottery waster dump at the western end of Orkney Close (Coutts, 1997, 86). A flue belonging to a pottery kiln and a near complete vessel dating to the 14th century were excavated immediately to the south of the site on Tenlons Road (Scott, 1996, 86). A scatter of pottery was also recovered during archaeological monitoring in Cornish Crescent, to the east of the site, and quantities of waste material recovered to the west on Heath End Road.

The intensity and extent of the pottery complex is reflected by the number of sites listed on the Warwickshire Sites and Monuments Record, which are annotated on Fig. 2. The area under investigation sits in the middle of these kilns and it was therefore identified as being likely to contain either dumps of wasters or, possibly, more kilns.

4 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

Important archaeological information regarding the development of the pottery complex was thought to survive within the bounds of the proposed development area. Therefore:

- All remaining ground works associated with the development were machine excavated under direct archaeological supervision.
- A total of five service trenches were monitored in total (Fig. 3)
- All archaeological deposits and features were sampled and their potential for environmental and industrial analysis assessed.
- All ceramics and small finds were retained, the overall co-ordination of the finds strategy was the responsibility of Erica Macey (Finds Officer).
- All finds were processed during and immediately following the fieldwork. An immediate assessment was made of any special conservation requirements.
- The full site archive includes all artefactual and/or ecofactual remains recovered from the site.
- Recording was by means of pre-printed pro-forma record cards for contexts and features, supplemented by plans (at 1:20 and 1:50), sections (at 1:10 and 1:20), and monochrome and colour print and slide photography.

5 RESULTS

The natural subsoil which consisted of light brown clay was located c.0.5m below the current ground surface to the rear of the property and at roughly the same level at the front (1007). There was up to 1.2m of modern overburden overlying the whole site. To the rear of the property this clay was excavated to a depth of 0.7m below current ground level (Plate 1). The clay had some charcoal flecking towards the top of the deposit, however, it appeared to be very solid and homogenous. Further testing of this layer to prove that it was the natural subsoil was not possible. The presence of charcoal may suggest that it was a layer of redeposited material, however, charcoal can be found within natural alluvial deposits, and the clay was very solid and had the general appearance of undisturbed ground. To the front of the property the top of this probable natural layer was not fully exposed (Plate 2).

Overlying the natural subsoil was a mid/dark brown silty-clay which was very heavily charcoal flecked, and contained medieval pottery. This layer was c.0.2m deep to the rear of the property (1002) and 0.4-0.5m deep at the front (1006, Fig. 3). Throughout this layer small fragments of unfired or under fired clay fragments were noted, these were too soft to

collect. A total of 46 pottery fragments was collected from 1006. No animal bone or other finds associated with general domestic refuse were observed.

The pottery was datable to the 13th-15th century and represented a variety of wares. The majority of the material was underfired, and consequently very abraded. There was also a blistered fragment and 8 badly, or over fired fragments as well as 2 fragments of kiln superstructure. No sooting was noted suggesting that the vessels had never have been used and were probably therefore wasters (Stephanie Rátkai pers. comm.).

To the rear of the bungalow, in Trench 5, the medieval layer was overlain by a mixed horizon (1001) that contained 6 fragments of pottery, and 0.3m of topsoil (1000). At the front the medieval layer was overlain by 0.2m of red builders sand (1005) supporting a concrete paved surface (1004) at the front. Overlying the pavement was a layer of modern overburden (1003) that contain bricks and plastic along with pottery dated from the 13th through to the early 19th century. The overburden varied in depth from 0.1m-0.8m in depth.

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

No cut features were visible in any of the trenches that were monitored. However, the depths of the trenches prohibited exploration of the natural subsoil, as only one trench cut through the medieval layer. Therefore, it is possible that archaeological deposits survive *in-situ* across much of the site.

The presence of poorly fired and blistered pottery, two fragments of kiln superstructure and the lack of sooting on any of the fragments suggests that the pottery is waste material from one, or several, of the surrounding kilns. The lack of domestic refuse, such as animal bone, within the layer concurs with this. The pottery dated from the 13th-15th centuries, so it is clearly not from a dump of waste pottery from a single pottery. This suggests that this area was used for dumping waste material from the kilns over a span of several hundred years, and that, subsequent earthmoving activities has generally mixed up what were probably once properly stratified layers into one very mixed spread.

7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Kristina Krawiec and Emma Hancox carried out the watching brief. Thanks go to Stephanie Rátkai for her comments on the pottery, and to Jonathon Parkhouse and Emma Stocks who monitored the project on behalf of Warwickshire County Council. Emma Hancox wrote the report which was illustrated by Nigel Dodds. Kirsty Nichol managed the project on behalf of Birmingham Archaeology and edited this report.

8 REFERENCES

- Coutts, C. 1997 *Nuneaton, Chilvers Coton* in West Midlands Archaeology 40.
- Mayes, P. and Scott, K. 1984 Pottery Kilns at Chilvers Coton, Nuneaton. *The Society for Medieval Archaeology, Monograph No. 10*.
- Scott, K. 1996 *Nuneaton, Chilvers Coton* in West Midlands Archaeology 39.

Warwickshire Museum 2005 Brief for Archaeological Work: No. 8, Hare and Hounds Lane, Stockingford, Nuneaton.

9 APPENDIX 1

**8, Hare and Hounds Lane, Stockingford,
Nuneaton
Planning Application No. TP/0535/02
Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological
Watching Brief
Developer: Roy Flanagan
Architect: R. John Craddock Associates
Archaeological Contractor: Birmingham
Archaeology**

THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM



Birmingham Archaeology

1.0 Introduction

This document is based upon information contained in the 'Brief for Archaeological Work: 8, Hare and Hounds Lane, Nuneaton, Warwickshire, Amendment to TP/0535/02' prepared by Warwickshire Museum, March 2005.

It outlines the proposed programme of work required to undertake an Archaeological Watching Brief at the above site. Any variation in the scope of the work would be agreed with the Planning Archaeologist, prior to implementation.

The proposals are for the construction of a detached bungalow.

2.0 Site location

The site occupies the northern part of the plot for Number 8 Hare and Hounds Lane, Stockingford, Nuneaton (NGR SP 434881 291177). The underlying geology is Till (British Geological Survey [England and Wales Sheet 169] Warwick, Solid and Drift Geology, 1994).

3.0 Archaeological background

The proposed development area lies to the southwest of Nuneaton close to the Parish of Chilvers Coton. This district was the focus of an extensive pottery industry dating from the 13th and 14th centuries (SMR MWA 7370). Several phases of excavation in the 1960s-70s revealed that the preservation of multiple kiln complexes was good (Mayes and Scott, 1984). Some forty-two kilns were excavated on nineteen sites, revealing that the complex was a major production centre. Analysis of the ceramic evidence indicated that production began in the 13th century with fine white wares, and continued, producing a range of goods and wares including Midlands Purple, and Cistercian and slip wares, into the 17th century.

More recent work in the immediate vicinity of the site includes the discovery of a Chilvers Coton 'C' Ware pottery waster dump at the western end of Orkney Close (Coutts, 1997, 86). A flue belonging to a pottery kiln and a near complete vessel dating to the 14th century was excavated immediately to the south of the site on Tenlons Road (K. Scott, 1996, 86). A scatter of pottery was also recovered during archaeological work in Cornish Crescent, to the east of the site, and quantities of waste material recovered to the west on Heath End Road.

4.0 Aims and Methodology

Important archaeological information regarding the development of the pottery complex may survive within the bounds of the proposed development area. It is thus proposed that:

- All remaining groundworks associated with the development will be machine excavated under direct archaeological supervision.
- All archaeological deposits and features will be sampled and their potential for environmental and industrial analysis will be assessed. The full site archive will include all artefactual and/or ecofactual remains recovered from the site. The overall co-ordination of the finds strategy will be the responsibility of Erica Macey (Finds Officer) all ceramics and small finds will be retained. All finds will be processed during and immediately following the fieldwork. An immediate assessment will be made of any special conservation requirements. If any finds require stabilisation, advice will be sought from specialists in artefact conservation and will be conserved. Otherwise, finds will be stored in the appropriate conditions to minimise deterioration (for example, dry storage in Stewart boxes with silica gel where necessary).
- Any human remains disturbed by the works will be recorded *in-situ* and excavated in accordance with Home Office guidelines.
- Recording will be by means of pre-printed pro-forma record cards for contexts and features, supplemented by plans (at 1:20 and 1:50), sections (at 1:10 and 1:20), and monochrome and colour print and slide photography.

5.0 Reporting

The results of the field evaluation will be described in an illustrated report that will conform to the guidelines laid out in Section 8 of the Brief (Warwickshire Museum 2005).

Four copies of the report will be submitted to the County Sites and Monuments Record, and one to the relevant Local Planning Authority Officer within 6 months of the completion of the fieldwork. A summary report will be submitted for inclusion in West Midlands Archaeology and/or appropriate national period journals.

6.0 Staffing

The project will be monitored for Birmingham Archaeology by Kirsty Nichol (Project Manager, Birmingham Archaeology) and supervised on-site by an appropriately qualified member of staff. Specialist staff will be consulted as appropriate. CVs for all members of staff involved in the project can be provided upon instruction.

Specialist staff will be, where appropriate:

- Dr Lawrence Barfield - flint artefacts and small finds.
- Dr Wendy Smith-charred plant remains
- Emma Hancox - animal bone.
- Dr James Greig - pollen and plant macro-fossils.
- Dr David Smith - micro-fauna.
- Dr Susan Limbrey - soils.
- Dr Ann Woodward - prehistoric ceramics.
- Stephanie Rátkai - medieval, post-medieval pottery and small finds.

- Dr Megan Brickley - human bone

7.0 Archive

The site archive will be prepared according to guidelines set down in Appendix 3 of the Management of Archaeology Projects (English Heritage, 1991), the Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage (UKIC, 1990) and Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological collections (Museum and Art Galleries Commission, 1992). It is intended that the archive will be deposited with an appropriate museum, such as that at Warwick, with the prior notification and agreement of the museum. The *Conditions for the Acceptance of Archaeological Material from Excavations and Fieldwork*, as stated by the museum, will be adhered to.

8.0 Timetable

The current timetable provides for the commencement of works on Monday 18th April 2005.

9.0 General

Birmingham Archaeology is a Registered Archaeological Organisation with the Institute of Field Archaeologists. All staff will adhere to the Code of Conduct of the Institute.

The project will follow the requirements set down in the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavations (Institute of Field Archaeologists 1994).

Any items suspected to be 'Treasure' will be reported in accordance with *The Treasure Act 1996*.

10.0 References

Coutts, C. 1997 *Nuneaton, Chilvers Coton* in West Midlands Archaeology 40.

Mayes, P. and Scott, K. 1984 Pottery Kilns at Chilvers Coton, Nuneaton. *The Society for Medieval Archaeology, Monograph No. 10*.

Scott, K. 1996 *Nuneaton, Chilvers Coton* in West Midlands Archaeology 39.

Warwickshire Museum 2005 Brief for Archaeological Work: No. 8, Hare and Hounds Lane, Stockingford, Nuneaton.

Birmingham Archaeology
12th April 2005

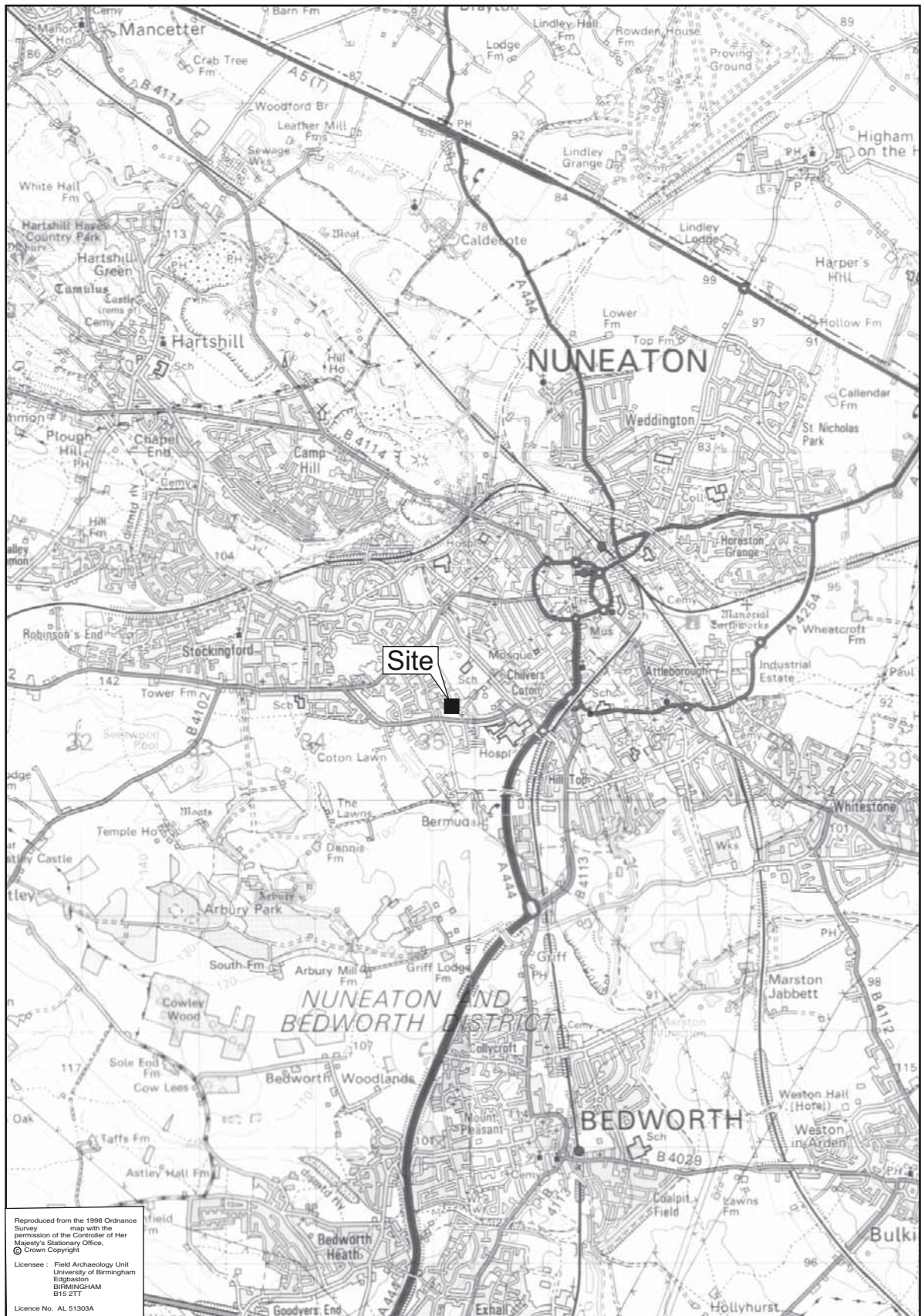


Fig.1



Fig.2

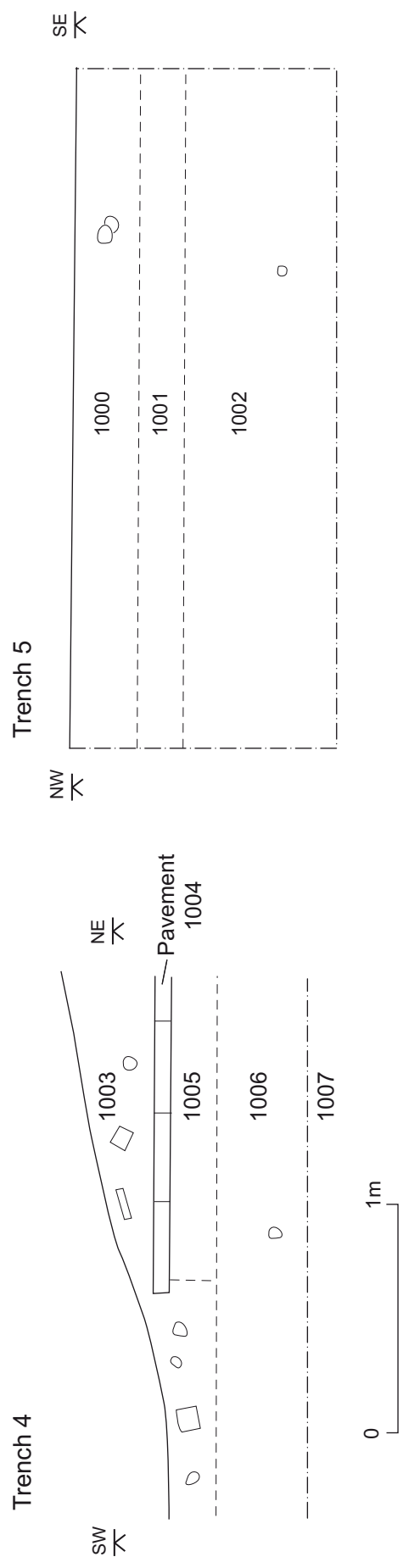
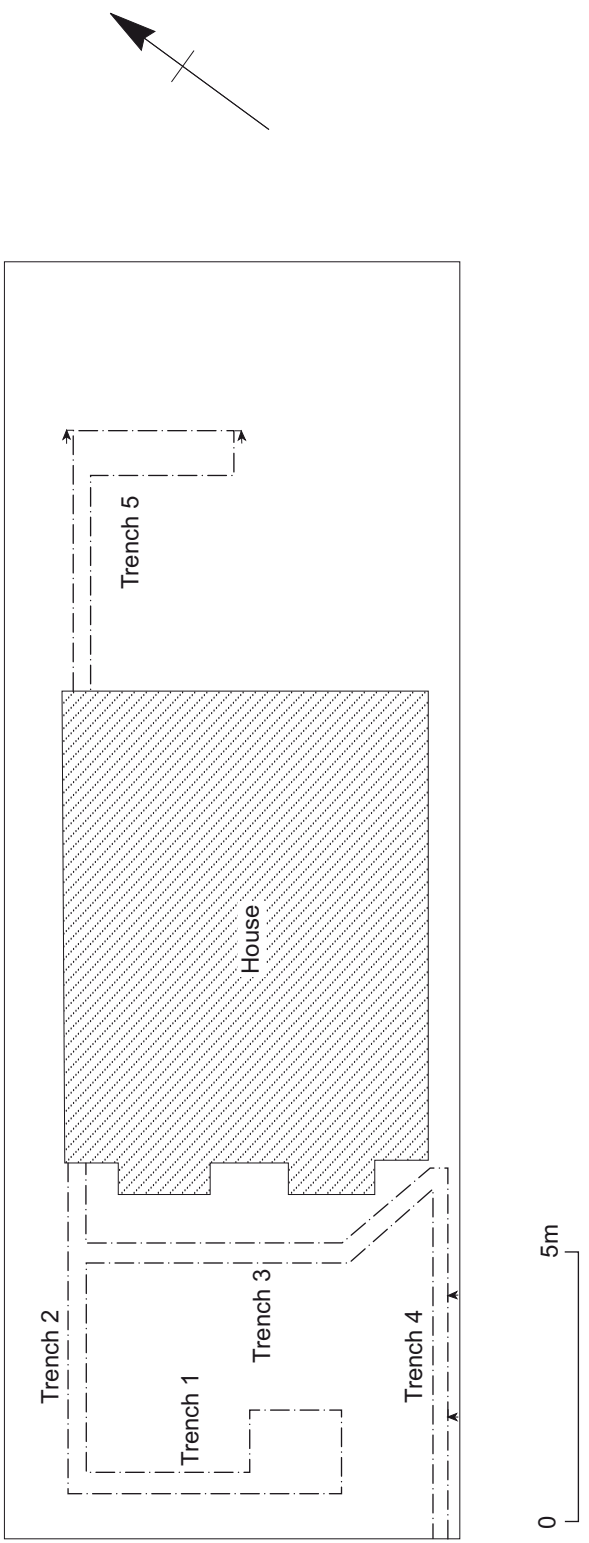


Fig.3



Plate 1 Trench 5



Plate 2 Trench 3