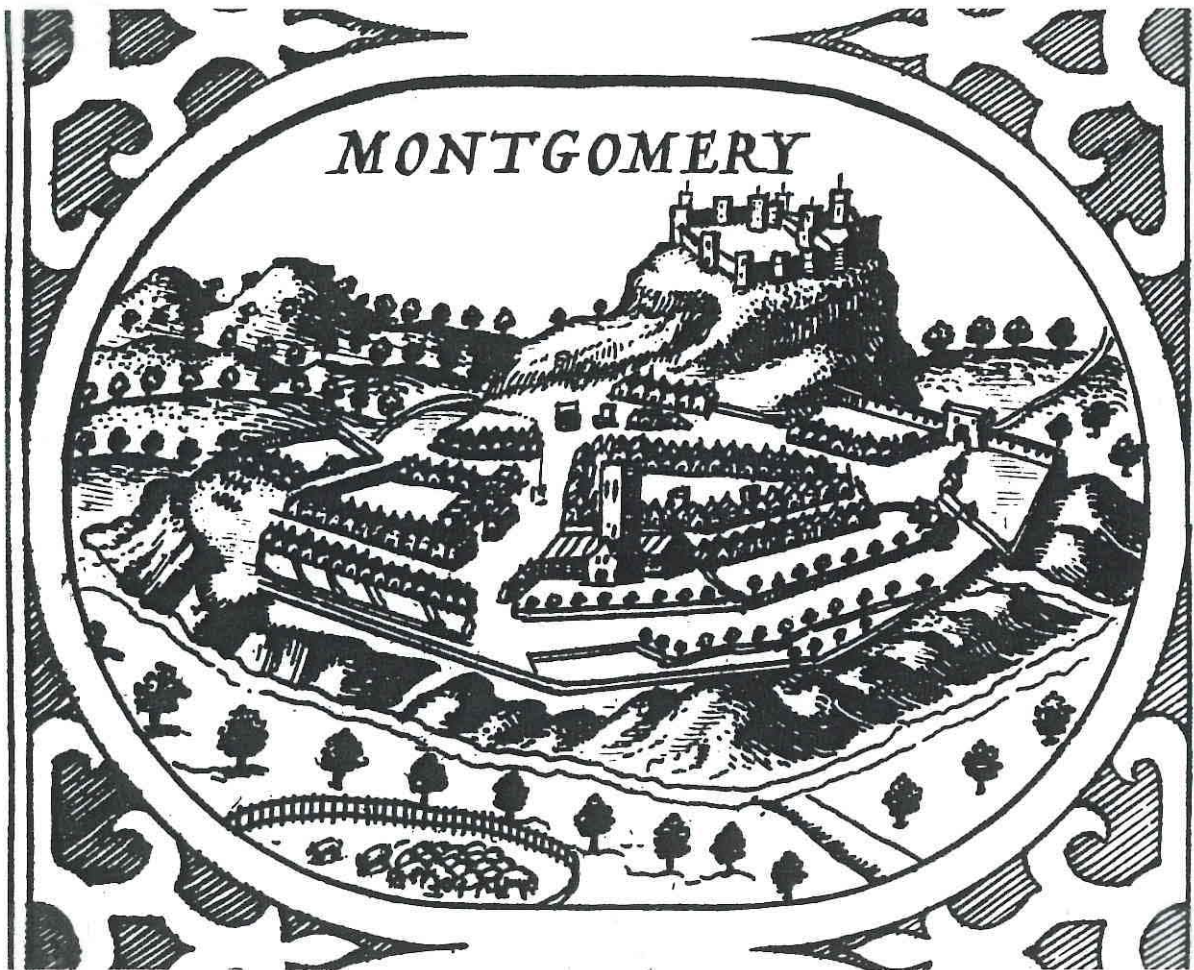


THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Gaol Road, Montgomery, Powys
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



Report No 322

Report No 322

Gaol Road, Montgomery, Powys
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

NW Jones

June 1999

Report for Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments on behalf of M Broxton

The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust

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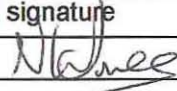
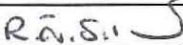
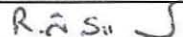
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CPAT Report Record

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In May 1999, the Contracts Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust was invited to submit a quotation and specification to Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments, on behalf of M. Broxton, for an archaeological evaluation of a development plot bounded by Pool Road and Gaol Road in Montgomery, Powys (SO 2230 9692). The quote was accepted by Cadw and the work was subsequently carried out during June 1999, with the report prepared immediately afterwards.
- 1.2 The Curatorial Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, in their capacity as archaeological curators for the county, determined that an archaeological evaluation was required to assess the potential impact of the development on the archaeological resource. Accordingly, a Brief (No INV 266, dated 2/6/99) was prepared, detailing the scheme of works required.
- 1.3 Planning permission had been granted in 1990, prior to the implementation of PPG 16, and consequently the developer was not committed to the funding of any archaeological work, although a condition of planning consent allowed for such work to be undertaken. A watching brief had previously been carried out by CPAT in 1998 during the excavation of foundation trenches for the first phase of the development, with funding being provided by Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments.

2 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 2.1 The area of the development occupies a plot at the junction of Pool Road and Gaol Road (fig. 1). The western half of the plot, fronting Pool Road, had already been developed and the area of the evaluation was therefore restricted to the rear of the plot, partly fronting onto Gaol Road.
- 2.2 Topographically, the present ground levels slope both west to east, away from Pool road, and also south to north, away from Gaol Road. Consequently, the lowest area of the plot was the north-east corner, an area prone to flooding. In general, levels fall from around 134m OD along Pool Road to 129.80m at the rear of the plot. The overall level of the plot lies 0.80m below the surface of Gaol Road. The remaining area of the development plot had been substantially raised by recent dumping of rubble. This was removed to the level of the former ground surface prior to the evaluation being undertaken.
- 2.3 The underlying solid geology consists of Wenlock calcareous shales which emerge at the surface in places on the steep slopes to the west of the town. Soils overlying the bedrock are stagnogley silty clay loams of the Cegin Series (Rudeforth *et al.* 1984).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The town of Montgomery originated in the earlier part of the 13th century and developed in conjunction with Montgomery Castle. Construction of the Castle began in 1223, and by 1227 borough status had been granted to the town. Although the town was prosperous during the medieval period, it is evident that there must have been some stagnation in subsequent growth since several areas of the town shown by Speed in 1610 as being occupied are today only vacant plots (Britnell & Jones 1989, 41).
- 3.2 Speed's map suggests that there were dwellings located on the eastern side of Pool Road in early 17th century, and it is reasonable to assume that these were of medieval origin. Excavations in 1984 and 1987 confirmed the presence of medieval structures c. 100m to the south of the development area, consisting of a house platform occupied by two successive structures of medieval date with associated occupation features (Britnell & Jones 1989).
- 3.3 Although Pool Road is essentially of medieval origin, Gaol Road would appear to be a relatively recent thoroughfare, presumably associated with the construction of the Town Gaol in 1830-2.
- 3.4 The initial phase of the present development comprised four houses built along the Pool Road frontage. The watching brief conducted during the excavation of foundations for those four houses revealed evidence for a possible building platform, although with no clear evidence for the associated structure or its date (Hankinson 1998).

- 3.5 The second phase of development was located along the Gaol Road frontage, within an area which was formerly waterlogged. It was assumed that this may have been connected with the former line of the Shite Brook, a medieval open sewer which ran through the town. This raised the possibility that significant environmental deposits might be disturbed or destroyed by the development, and one of the key objectives of the evaluation was to determine the potential for such deposits and make adequate provision for sampling and reporting.

4 EVALUATION

- 4.1 The evaluation was undertaken between 14 and 17 June 1999, excavating an L-shaped trench at the location indicated in the Brief. The trench measured 15 x 2m east-west, parallel to Gaol Road, and 10.7 x 2m extending away from Gaol Road (fig. 2). Although it had been intended for both trenches to be 15m in length, the north-south trench was restricted by the presence of a manhole. A full written and photographic record was maintained throughout and a summary of the Site Archive is presented in Appendix 1. All planning was undertaken using total station survey equipment, with levels related directly to OS Datum and the survey fixed to control points identified on modern OS maps. Numbers in brackets in the following text refer to individual context numbers.
- 4.2 Modern topsoil and post-medieval soil layers were mechanically excavated to a maximum depth of 1.70m. The base and sections of the trench were subsequently cleaned by hand and examined for any significant archaeological features or deposits. The excavations were hampered by a constant flow of water in the base of the trench and work was only possible by intermittently pumping water from the trench.
- 4.3 In the east-west arm of the trench (fig. 4) the natural subsoil, consisting of stiff yellow clay (16), was revealed at the base towards the western end. This was overlain by a layer of grey brown silty clay (15) up to 0.10m thick. Above this was a layer of grey-brown stiff clay (14) up to 0.3m thick, which had been cut by a feature running roughly north-south (17), consisting of a narrow trench 0.6m wide filled with small stones up to 0.15m across. It was difficult to determine the nature of this feature, although it may have been a foundation trench for an insubstantial wall, or alternatively a field drain.
- 4.4 The feature was sealed beneath a thin layer of rubble (13), predominantly composed of roofing slate, forming the base of a succession of layers of dumped material (contexts 11, 12, 19), all of which contained finds of 18th or 19th-century date. This dumped material appear to be confined to the southern end of the evaluation trench, with the layers dipping and tailing off to the north.
- 4.5 The section of the north-south arm of the trench (fig. 4) consisted of a layer of brown-grey clay loam (2) up to 0.3m thick lying below the topsoil (1). This in turn overlay a yellow-grey stiff clay (7) at the southern end, both layers containing some post-medieval pottery, as well as a layer of compact clay (3) at the northern end. Beneath layers 3 and 7 was a further layer of compact clay (4) up to 0.20m thick. For the northern half of the section the base of the trench was formed by the surface of a gravelly layer (5), raised at one point into a slight bank, which contained several sherds of medieval pottery. This layer, together with layers 3 and 4, may have been the result of natural deposition, containing only residual finds.
- 4.6 A limited programme of augering (Appendix 1) was undertaken along the base of the trench. In the north-south arm of the trench this revealed that the gravel layer (5) extended for up to 0.35m below the base of the trench, beneath which were varying layers of humic peaty clay and silty clays containing organic material up to a depth of 0.70m below the base of the trench. Beneath this lay clean gravel or clean yellow-grey stony clay. Along the other section of the trench augering revealed the natural clay to be rising from east to west until visible in the base of the trench at the western end. Above the natural humic silty layers were again seen to contain organic material. The depth and nature of the trench meant that further assessment of these deposits was unfeasible and was also considered unnecessary since these deposits were unlikely to be affected by the development.

5 FINDS

- 5.1 The evaluation produced a small assemblage of medieval pottery (12 sherds, 252g) typical of locally produced wares of the 13th and 14th centuries. Examination of the fabrics using a x8 hand lens revealed them to be comparable to those recovered from the excavations at Pool Road in 1984-7. The fabrics are coded according to the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust Pottery Fabric Series (Courtney and Jones 1989).

Fabric MB12: moderately hard fabric, smooth or rough feel, finely irregular or smooth fracture. Reduced cores and oxidised surfaces. Inclusions are rare to moderate rounded to angular quartz up to 0.5mm, sparse to moderate soft red iron minerals to 1mm, fine quartz and muscovite and rare rock inclusions.

Fabric MB15: hard fabric, rough feel with irregular fracture. Inclusions are rounded to angular rock fragments up to 2mm, moderate rounded to angular quartz up to 1mm, sparse soft red iron minerals and fine quartz and muscovite.

Fabric MB16: hard fabric, rough feel and irregular fracture. Inclusions are abundant rounded rock fragments up to 2mm, sparse to moderate rounded to angular quartz to 0.5mm, sparse soft red iron minerals and fine quartz and muscovite.

Fabric MC3: Herefordshire micaceous. Hard fabric, rough feel and finely irregular fracture. Oxidised or reduced cores and oxidised surfaces. Inclusions are abundant rounded to angular quartz and some plagioclase feldspars up to 0.5mm, biotite up to 1mm, fine muscovite, sparse sandstone and siltstone.

Context 5

1 sherd (64g) of a jug strap handle with incised line decoration and patchy green glaze. Part of rim attached, diameter 11cm, 17%. Fabric MB12.

1 sherd (58g) of a jug strap handle with stab decoration and patchy light green glaze. Fabric MB12.

1 sherd (41g) of a jug/jar with internal green glaze spots. Firing defect where another vessel has been partly attached to the interior. Fabric MB12.

1 sherd (15g) of a jug strap handle with green glaze. Fabric MB15.

3 miscellaneous jug body sherds with green glaze. Fabric MB12.

1 body sherd (5g) from a cooking pot. Fabric MB16.

Context 8

1 body sherd (4g) from a jug with externally mottled glaze and rouletted decoration. Fabric MC3.

Context 15

2 body sherds (32g) from a cooking pot. Fabric MB16.

1 body sherd (12g) from a jug with clear/green glazed spots. Fabric MB15.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The evaluation produced no evidence for medieval occupation within the areas investigated. Although a small assemblage of medieval pottery was recovered it seems likely from its general condition that the sherds were residual and are not necessarily indicative of sealed medieval deposits.
- 6.2 It was clear from the evaluation that the area was prone to waterlogging. However, no waterlogged environmental deposits were encountered within the trench. Augering did however reveal a series of humic layers beneath the base of the trench which appeared to contain organic matter including small fragments of wood. These deposits were at a depth of over 1.8m below ground level and therefore well beneath the level of disturbance likely to result from the development. There was no evidence to indicate the existence of the Shite Brook within this area.

- 6.3 The evidence would suggest that the present ground surface is at least 1.7m above the natural subsoil, with the level of Gaol Road being 0.80m higher again. The lowest deposits encountered, lying directly on the natural, consisted of a series of silty-clay layers and a layer of gravel which, although containing some abraded medieval pottery, may have been the result of natural build up or hill wash. The majority of the stratigraphy close to Gaol Road appears to have been deposited within a fairly short time period, possibly in association with the construction of Gaol Road around 1830. This effectively raised the ground level by up to 1.10m and may have formed a causeway to carry the road across an area of boggy ground. Further to the north, the general level of the ground appears to have been raised by a build up of garden or cultivation soils up to 1.2m thick.

7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 7.1 The writer would like to thank the following: Glyn Owen and Richard Hankinson, who undertook the evaluation; Mr M. Broxton, the site developer, and his site staff for their help and co-operation during the evaluation; Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments, for funding the evaluation.

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Rudeforth, C.C., Hartnup, R., Lea, J.W., Thompson, T.R.E., and Wright, P.C. 1984. *Soils and their use in Wales*, Bulletin No 11. Harpenden: Soil Survey of England and Wales.

APPENDIX 1
AUGER SAMPLES

See fig. 3 for location. Measurements are below base of trench

| | | |
|----|------------|---|
| 1 | 0.00-0.40m | gravel (5) |
| | 0.40-0.68m | brown humic peaty clay |
| | 0.68-0.70m | grey gravel |
| 2 | 0.00-0.35m | gravel (5) |
| | 0.35-0.51m | brown gravel with plant/wood remains |
| | 0.51-0.74m | brown peaty clay with plant/wood remains |
| | 0.74-0.77 | clean grey gravel |
| 3 | 0.00-0.50m | grey gravel (5) |
| | 0.50-0.80m | brown gravel |
| 4 | 0.00-0.26m | grey silt with plant/wood remains |
| | 0.26-0.46m | brown silt with plant/wood remains |
| | 0.46-0.69m | dark brown silt with plant/wood remains |
| | 0.69-0.80m | natural yellow grey stony clay |
| 5 | 0.00-0.23m | grey silt |
| | 0.23-0.53m | grey brown silt |
| | 0.53-0.62m | dark brown humic silt with plant/wood remains |
| | 0.62-0.75m | natural grey brown stony clay |
| 6 | 0.00-0.34m | grey brown silt with plant/wood remains |
| | 0.34-0.73m | natural |
| 7 | 0.00-0.60m | grey silt merging to brown humic silt with plant/wood remains |
| | 0.60-0.65m | natural |
| 8 | 0.00-0.54m | grey silt merging to brown humic silt with plant/wood remains |
| | 0.54-0.78m | natural |
| 9 | 0.00-0.45m | grey silt merging to brown humic silt with plant/wood remains |
| | 0.45-0.64m | natural |
| 10 | 0.00-0.35m | grey silt merging to brown humic silt with plant/wood remains |
| | 0.35-0.65m | natural |
| 11 | 0.00-0.32m | grey silt merging to brown humic silt with plant/wood remains |
| | 0.32-0.52m | natural |
| 12 | 0.00-0.43m | grey silt merging to brown humic silt with plant/wood remains |
| | 0.43-0.62m | natural |
| 13 | 0.00-0.38m | pale brown humic silt |
| | 0.38-0.47m | grey brown humic silt |
| | 0.47-0.60m | natural |
| 14 | 0.00-0.45m | pale grey brown silt |
| | 0.45-0.47m | grey brown clay silt |
| | 0.47-0.60m | natural |
| 15 | 0.00-0.23m | grey clay |
| | 0.23-0.41m | brown humic silt |
| | 0.41-0.44m | grey brown clay silt |
| | 0.44-0.63m | grey compact clean clay |
| | 0.63-0.73m | natural |

- | | | |
|----|------------|-----------------------------|
| 16 | 0.00-0.22m | grey compact clay |
| | 0.22-0.33m | yellowish-grey natural clay |
| 17 | natural | |

APPENDIX 2

SITE ARCHIVE

- 1 Black and white film
- 1 Colour slide film
- 1 Colour print film
- 19 Context record forms
- 12 sherds medieval pottery
- EDM survey file gaoldr.pts

APPENDIX 3

SPECIFICATION

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The development of a block of land bounded by Gaol Road and Pool Road, Montgomery (SO22309692), involves the construction of 8 dwellings Planning Application M19582), 4 of which have already been constructed.
- 1.2 The plot has a high archaeological potential relating to former Medieval street frontages and yard/rubbish deposits, and a condition of planning consent allows for non-developer funded archaeological investigation. Accordingly, a Brief (INV 266, dated 11/05/99) has been prepared by The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, acting in their role as archaeological curators for the county, detailing the scheme of works required.

2 Objectives

- 2.1 The objectives of the evaluation are:
 - 2.1.1 to reveal by means of trial trenching and environmental sampling, the nature, condition, significance and, where possible, the chronology of the archaeology within the area of the proposed development in so far as these aims are possible;
 - 2.1.2 to record any archaeology revealed in the evaluation trenches;
 - 2.1.3 to prepare a report outlining the results of the field evaluation and incorporating sufficient information on the archaeological resource for a reasonable decision to be taken regarding the archaeological provision for the area affected by the proposed development;
 - 2.1.4 to identify and recommendation options for the management of the archaeological resource, including any further provision for that resource where it is considered necessary.

3 Methods

- 3.1 Strategic trial trenching will take the form of 2 trenches, each 15m long by 2m wide. Where required these will be taken to a maximum depth of 1.2m below the existing ground surface. Consultation with the client and the curator will be necessary before this depth is exceeded.
- 3.3 The evaluation will be undertaken using standard evaluation procedures:
 - 3.3.1 removal of modern overburden by machine;
 - 3.3.2 evaluation of the archaeological deposits by hand trowelling to establish their importance and integrity, but avoiding any unnecessary disturbance of the deposits. All features encountered will be examined as fully as appropriate to fulfil the requirements of the evaluation and within the constraints imposed by time and safety considerations.
 - 3.3.3 all archaeological contexts recorded using the standard numbered context system employed by CPAT. All significant contexts to be planned and/or drawn in section at appropriate scales (as defined in the Curatorial Brief), and photographed in monochrome and colour. All drawn records will be related to control points depicted on modern maps and to Ordnance Datum.
 - 3.3.4 all archaeological artefacts and environmental samples recorded and processed in a manner appropriate to the material involved. Those requiring conservation or other specialist treatment will be stored in a stable environment until such times as they can be examined by a specialist. All finds, except

those deemed to be Treasure Trove, are the property of the landowner. It is anticipated that they will be donated to the appropriate local or regional museum, subject to agreement being reached with the landowner and the museum curator.

- 3.4 If environmental deposits are encountered a specialist will be called upon to visit the site and provide advise regarding a strategy for sampling. Appropriate samples will then be taken and submitted to the environmental specialist for assessment and a written report.
- 3.5 Following the on-site work an illustrated and bound report will be prepared according to the principles laid out in the Curatorial Brief (section 7). This will be in A4 format and contain conventional sections on: Site location, Topography and Geology; Historic Background; Excavation; Environmental Assessment; Conclusions and Recommendations and References, together with appropriate appendices on archives and finds.
- 3.5 The site archive will be prepared to specifications laid out in Appendix 3 in the Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage, 1991).

4 Resources and Programming

- 4.1 The evaluation will be undertaken by a small team of two skilled archaeologists under the direct supervision of an experienced field archaeologist, who will also be responsible for undertaking the desk-based assessment. Overall supervision will be by Mr R.J.Silvester, a senior member of CPAT's staff who is also a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.
- 4.2 All report preparation will be completed by the same field archaeologist who conducted the evaluation.
- 4.3 Environmental advise and services will be provided by Prof. M.Walker, University of Wales, Lampeter.
- 4.4 It is anticipated that the assessment and evaluation will take no more than 4 days in all and that the subsequent report would be prepared immediately thereafter, dependent on the client's instructions and the arrangement of a suitable timetable. A report on any environmental samples will be produced as soon as possible, although the likely timing cannot be estimated at this point. The date of commencement, at the time of writing, has yet to be agreed with the client, and will be dependent on the state of the site and negotiated access. The archaeological curator will be informed of the detailed timetable and staffing levels when agreement has been reached with the client.
- 4.5 Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.
- 4.6 CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance.

N.W.Jones
12th May 1999

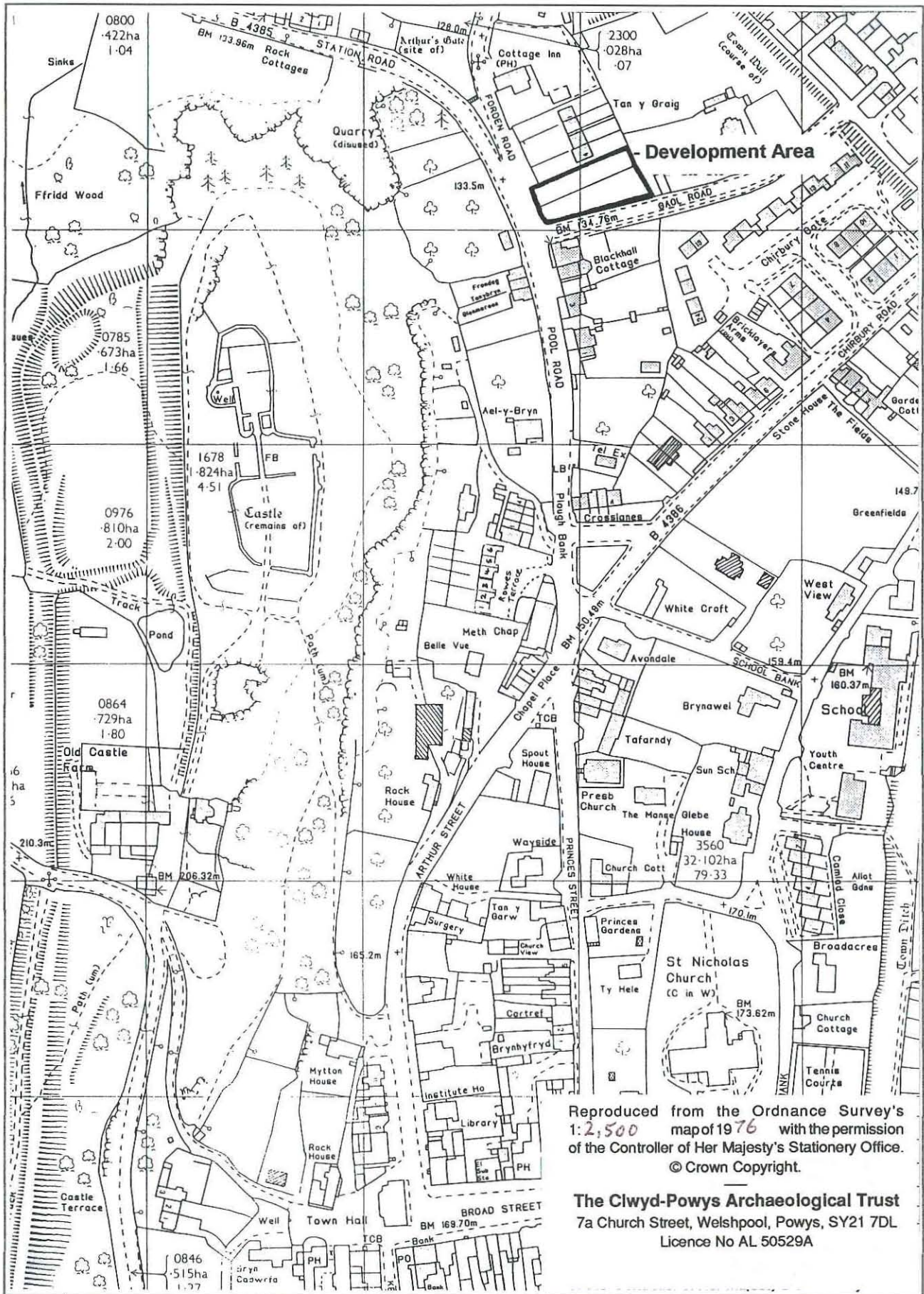


Fig. 1 Location. Scale 1:2,500

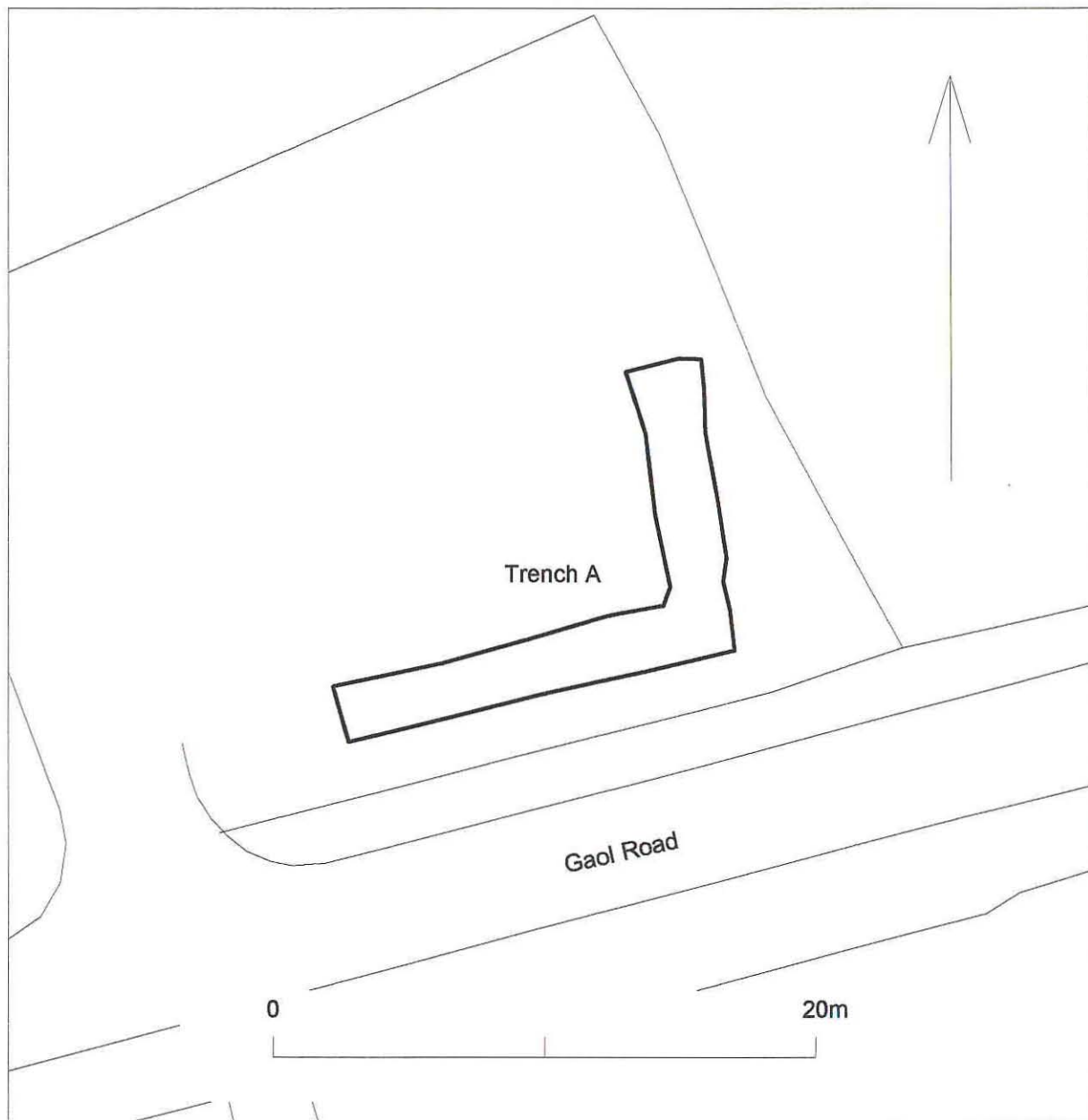


Fig. 2 Trench location. Scale 1:250

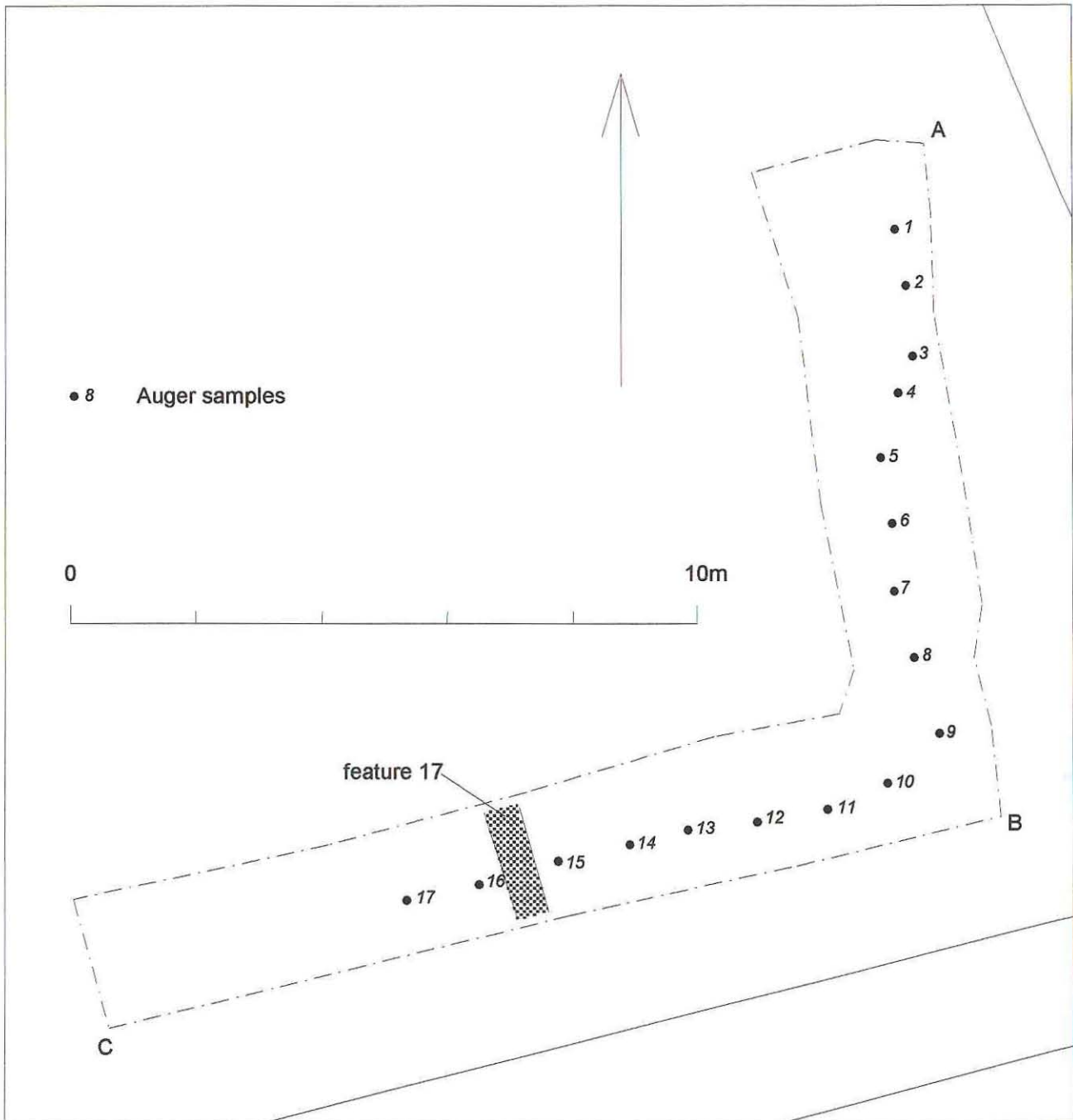


Fig. 3 Plan of excavation trench. Scale 1:100

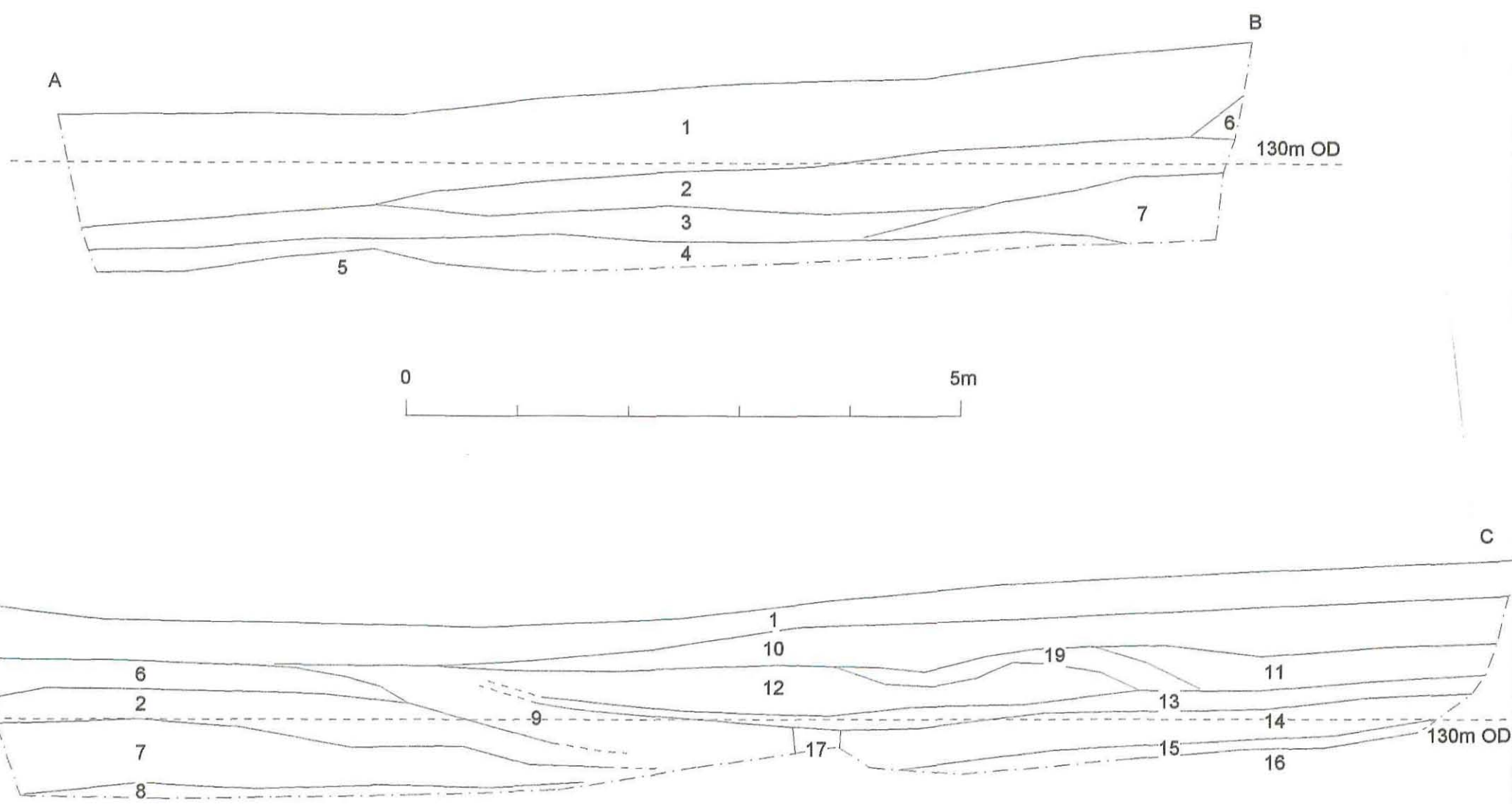


Fig. 4 Trench sections. Scale 1:50.