THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

The Smithfield Livestock Market, Welshpool, Powys

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

CPAT Report No 795

CPAT Report Record

Report and status

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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May 2006

Report for J Ross Developments Ltd

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cover: Aerial view of Welshpool Smithfield. Photo CPAT 05-c-002

CONTENTS

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

The potential site of the Smithfield Livestock Market in Welshpool has been the subject of a two-stage archaeological evaluation, comprising desk-based study and strategic trial trenching, the results from which have provided an indication of the archaeological potential of the site.

The evaluation identified several areas within the main Smithfield site, to the south of Mill Lane, where archaeologically significant features have been revealed. In general, the preservation of these features has been aided by the depth of cultivation soils which have previously accumulated across much of the site from the medieval period onwards.

The three evaluation trenches on the northern side of Mill Lane produced no evidence for archaeologically significant features, although deep medieval cultivation soils were uncovered.

The desk-based study highlighted the significance and potential of high status Roman artefacts which came to light in 1959 during the excavation of a drain. Although the present evaluation revealed no further artefacts, a possible stone surface and a post-hole were identified which, from a comparison with the earlier excavation report, may be contemporary with the Roman discoveries and were sealed beneath medieval cultivation soils.

To the east of the site two large ditches were identified which appear to date from the 13th to 14th-centuries, or earlier. The proximity of these features to Domen Gastell motte and bailey suggest that they may well be associated. The existence of the ditches, and the presence nearby of the Lledan Brook, suggest that important environmental information may be preserved in any potentially waterlogged deposits that could be present in the lower levels of the site.

A deliberately terraced area and a shallow gully were identified towards the south-east corner of the main Smithfield site which were sealed by medieval deposits, and may suggest the existence of a structure. On the western side of the main site a layer of deliberately dumped stony material was identified which might have formed a surface or hard-standing, and was sealed beneath medieval cultivation soils.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In September 2005 the Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) was invited by Mr R A Jones of J Ross Developments Ltd to prepare a specification and quotation for undertaking an archaeological evaluation on the site of the Smithfield Livestock Market, Mill Lane, Welshpool, Powys, in connection with proposals to redevelop the site for retail and residential use. The evaluation was the subject of a brief drawn up by Mr M Walters of the CPAT Curatorial Section (CPAT EVB 591), acting in his capacity as archaeological curator for the region and archaeological advisor to the local authority.

1.2 The first phase of the evaluation consisted of a desk-based study which was completed in December 2005 (Jones 2005). This was followed in April 2006 by a programme of strategic trial excavations, the results from which form the subject of this report. For the sake of clarity and completeness the results from the already circulated, desk-based study have also been included within the present report as section 3.

2 LOCATION AND GEOLOGY

2.1 The area of the assessment lies to the east of the present town centre of Welshpool, occupying land on either side of Mill Lane (Fig. 1; SJ 2296 0746). The proposed development occupies the site of the existing livestock market (4.5ha), to the south-east of the town centre.

Fig. 1 Area of the proposed development and known archaeological sites

2.2 The solid geology of the area mainly consists of undivided Ludlow and Wenlock Series siltstones and mudstones belonging to the Silurian period, though there is some local faulting which has exposed Caradoc Series siltstones and mudstones of the Ordovician period (1994

British Geological Survey map). The soils of the area generally consist of fine silty and loamy soils belonging to the Denbigh 1 Association (1983 Soil Survey of England and Wales map).

3 DESK-BASED STUDY

3.1 The desk-based study involved the examination of all the readily available primary and secondary documentary, cartographic, pictorial, and photographic sources for the immediate area. Repositories consulted included the following: the Regional Historic Environment Record (HER), held by CPAT at Welshpool; the National Monuments Record, maintained by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales (RCAHMW) in Aberystwyth; the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth; and Powys County Archives in Llandrindod Wells.

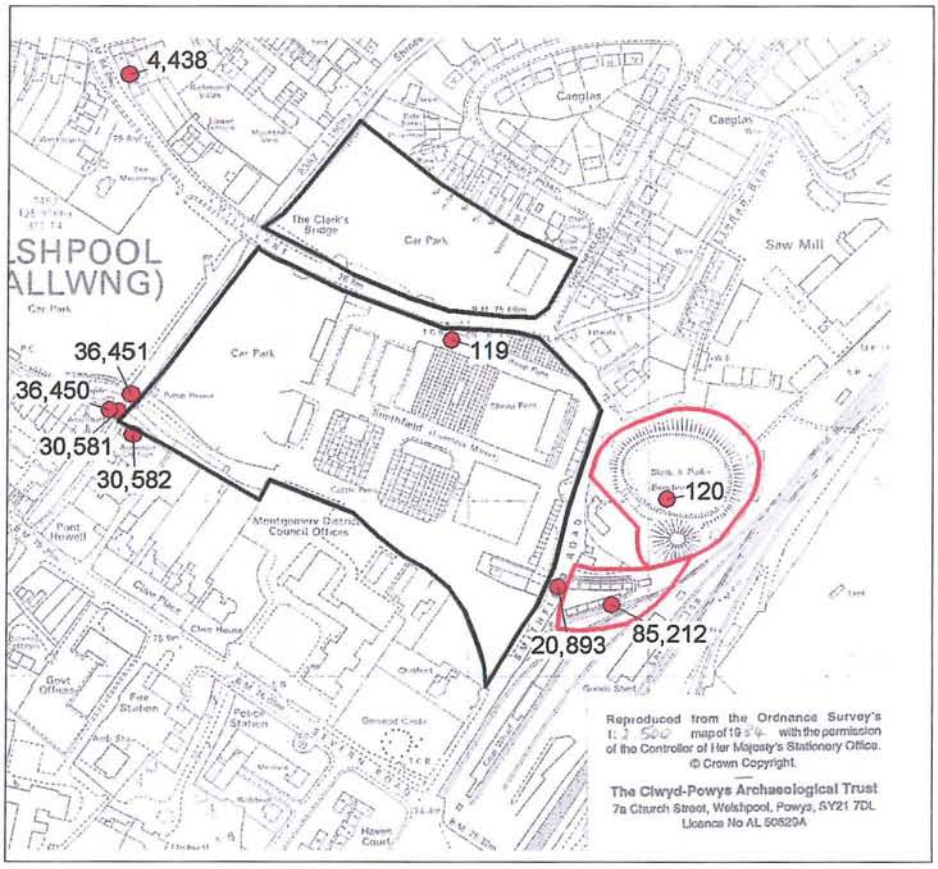

Fig. 2 Area of the proposed development and surrounding archaeological sites and scheduled areas (outlined in red)

Prehistoric period

3.2 Although there are no recorded prehistoric archaeological sites in the vicinity of the proposed development there is nevertheless the potential for buried deposits of this period within the area. Evidence from the wider area around Welshpool suggests that this part of the Severn Valley was extensively occupied during prehistory, particularly from the Neolithic onwards. To the south of Welshpool there is a nationally important complex of Neolithic and Bronze Age funerary and ritual monuments, while to the north of the town there is evidence for later prehistoric farming in the form of defended enclosures and field systems. In general, sites of this period are located on the river terrace above the floodplain, in a similar position to that of the proposed development.

Romano-British period

3.3 Although the origins of the present town lie in the medieval period, there is evidence of occupation dating back to the Roman period. During construction works at the Smithfield in 1959 a probable burial deposit of Roman date was found (PRN 119; Fig. 1), and this was partially excavated by the National Museum of Wales some months later, in July 1960. All of the objects recovered were consistent with grave goods, although no trace of a pit, cist or other burial feature was identified.

3.4 The artefacts were of extremely high quality and included three bronze *paterae* (dishes) and a bronze ewer (jug), which were placed in a bronze cauldron and wrapped in a fine linen cloth and may have been packed in leaves. A sixth vessel was a wooden bucket with a bronze bull's head handle, similar to an example from Kent. There was also an iron fire-dog which dates from AD 150-200, two iron stands, the remains of a glass bottle and some sherds of pottery. From the nature of the artefacts George Boon of the National Museum concluded that they were likely to be associated with the grave of a native Cornovian chieftain.

3.5 The limited excavations in 1960 revealed no evidence of any Roman stratigraphy, with no more than an old ploughsoil lying directly above the subsoil. The finds appear to have been recovered from the surface of the natural subsoil which lay around 0.3m below the earliest layers associated with the Smithfield, and about 0.9m below the tarmac surface. It appeared that the artefacts had all been deposited within an area about 1.2m across, and a patch of wood ash, a few sherds of pottery and an iron nail were identified *in situ*. An unknown quantity of pottery was also uncovered during the initial construction works, but none of this was retained (Boon 1961, 13-31). There are no other reports of any other Roman artefacts or deposits having been discovered at the Smithfield, either during its construction or during any subsequent works.

Early medieval period

3.6 Welshpool is said to have been the site of churches founded by St Cynfelyn and his brother Llywelyn in the 6th century AD; the foundation of the latter has since been associated, at least traditionally, with the 'Old Church' which is known formerly to have stood on the east side of Mill Lane, immediately to the south of Salop Road (see Fig 2; PRN 4438). The most recent church on the site was erected in 1587 but was destroyed by fire in 1659, though some of its masonry remains were still visible until the 19th century (Soulsby 1983, 265). Part of its associated graveyard was identified during rescue excavations by CPAT in 1986-7, when seventeen burials were located. Radiocarbon dates suggested that they belonged to the 13-14th century (Blockley 1987, 24-6). Further work in 1997 revealed the possible site of Capel Llewelyn (PRN 4438) in a garden to the rear of 37 Salop Road. It may be then that the line of Mill Lane broadly followed the western boundary of the graveyard (PRN 16386).

Medieval period

3.7 Domen Gastell, a motte and bailey castle (PRN 120; Fig. 2) lies immediately to the east of the proposed development area. It may have been constructed as early as 1111, although the earliest possible reference to it dates from 1196 (Silvester 1992, 167). There has been some suggestion that a settlement developed around the castle, but no firm evidence has yet been found to substantiate this hypothesis. The site has been statutorily designated as a scheduled ancient monument (SAM No. Mg019).

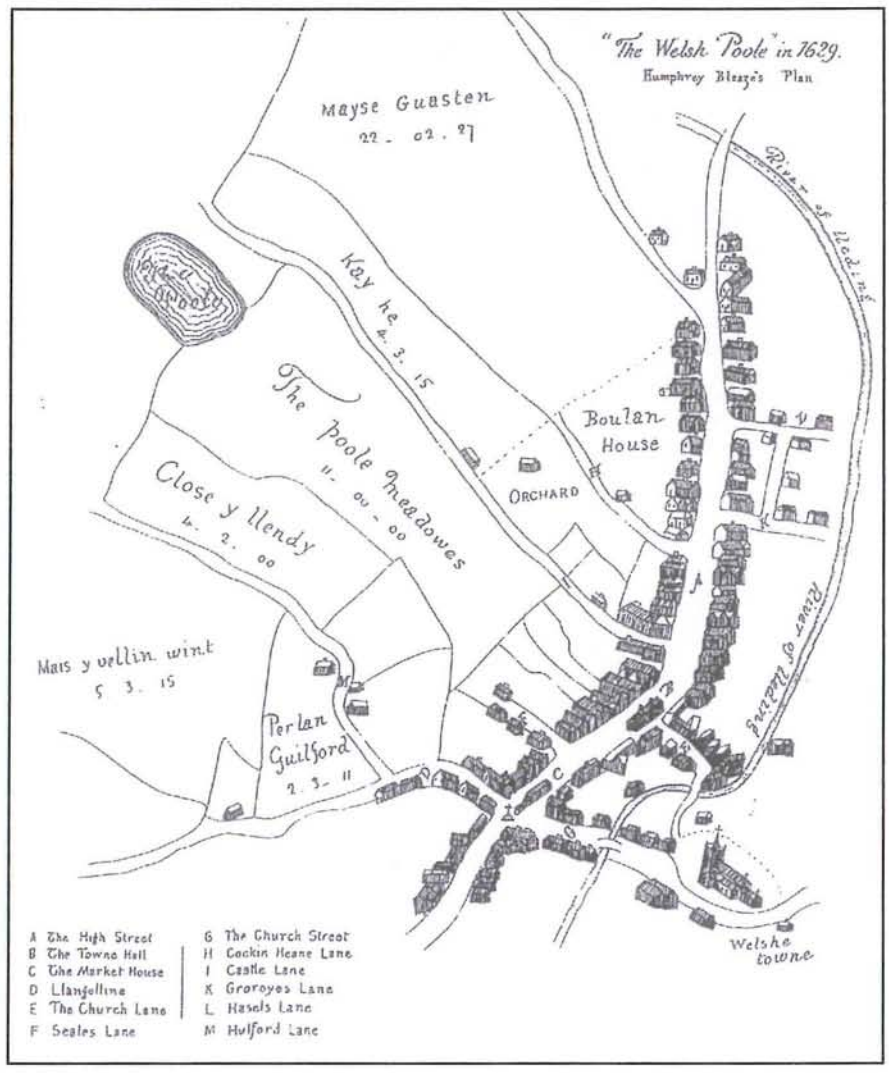

Fig. 3 Map of Welshpool by Humphrey Bleaze, 1629

3.8 The present town of Welshpool resulted from a deliberate attempt by Gruffudd ap Gwenwynwyn, Prince of Powys, to establish a new borough. As such, this was a planned town which owed little to any existing settlement (Soulsby 1983, 266). The burgesses received a foundation charter in the 1240s and a market was recorded there in 1252 (Silvester 1992, 167). The new town adopted a basically linear plan, centred on High Street and Broad Street, with some development also along Church Street, Berriew Street and Severn Street. Interestingly, the parish church of St Mary's, which was refounded around 1250, lies further to the east, away from the centre of the town and in an area recorded by Humphrey Bleaze on his map of 1629 as 'Welshe town' (Fig. 3). While this, the earliest map of Welshpool, does not show the area of the proposed Smithfield development, it is clear that the location is within the general area of 'Welshe town', and it is conceivable that Mill Lane was part of an early Welsh settlement which emerged between the motte and bailey castle and Capel Llewelyn.

3.9 An archaeological evaluation, undertaken in the grounds of The Moorings in the summer of 2002, provided tentative evidence for occupation in this area during the 13th and 14th century, although no structures were identified. The depth of deposits sealing the medieval contexts suggested that the plot remained largely unoccupied for a considerable period and may have been in agricultural or garden use from perhaps the 14th-century onwards.

Post-medieval and modern

3.10 A mapped survey of the Manor of Leighton, including parts of Welshpool, in 1663, shows Mill Lane and depicts the area later occupied by the Smithfield on the south side of the road as fields, named as 'maes', suggesting an area of open fields which would have originated in the medieval era. Interestingly, it does not indicate any buildings along Mill Lane. Copyright restrictions prevent the reproduction of the map in this report

3.11 A survey of the Estate of Mrs Victoria Lloyd, surveyed by John Rocque in 1747 shows Mill Lane and Salop Road; there are no indications of any buildings on the street frontage, but this could be because the area then was under different ownership and was thus not mapped in any detail. The condition of the map and copyright restrictions prevent its reproduction in this report. Although other pre-19th-century depictions of Welshpool are available, none shows the area of the evaluation.

3.12 The first accurate cartographic depiction of Welshpool is provided by a post-1780 map of Powis Estate (NLW/Powis Castle/M17-18), and a later version of the same map dated 1800 (NLW/Powis Castle/M20). Copyright restrictions prevent the reproduction of either map in this report. The maps do not show the area of the Smithfield, but do include the area east of Severn Street although no buildings were depicted in this area.

3.13 The north-western boundary of the development area is formed by the waterway now known as the Montgomery Canal, which was built in stages between 1794 and 1821, and ran from the Shropshire Union Canal at Frankton Locks to Newtown. The canal was an agricultural rather than an industrial waterway and was primarily constructed to carry and distribute lime for agricultural purposes from the Llanymynech Quarries (Hughes 1988, 9).

3.14 Beyond the western corner of the assessment area is a group of structures related to the canal, all of which are statutorily protected as Grade II listed buildings (Fig. 2). The Lledan Brook Aqueduct (PRN 30581) is a fine example of the engineering associated with the canal, and is of considerable interest for its engineering as well as for its architectural character. On the western side of the aqueduct, brick retaining walls to either bank of the brook flank the pool below a circular weir (PRN 36450). This was probably rebuilt with the aqueduct in 1836, and existed to divert water to Domen corn mill, now demolished, which lay at the end of Smithfield Road, under the line of the Welshpool and Llanfair Light Railway, near the present entrance to the Smithfield. Welshpool Aqueduct Cottage (PRN 30582) is an excellent example of a canal-side house which retains much of its original character and detail. The house was built as part of a second phase of development of the canal wharf, and was in use as the canal agent's house by the mid 19th century (Hughes 1988).

3.15 The 1840 Tithe Survey for Pool parish, Lower Division, Trefnant Fechan, Town etc. (Fig. 4) depicts the area later occupied by the Smithfield, showing it as a series of fields, the recorded names for which are listed below. The Lledan Brook is shown crossing the area, and alongside it there is a small building. To the east is Domen Mill, with its feeder leat (or artificial feeder channel) running from the canal-side weir.

469 Field below the canal	Meadow
478 Rail Meadow	Meadow
479 Little Mill Meadow	Meadow
510 Part of Mill Meadow	Meadow
511 Domens mill house,	buildings and fold
512 Bowling Green	intrenchment
533 Field adjoining Greenwood Cottage	Meadow
534 Greenwood	Cottage and garden
535 Greenwood	Cottage and garden
536 Clerks Field	Meadow

537	Slang adjoining Clerks Field	Meadow
538	Barn Field	Meadow

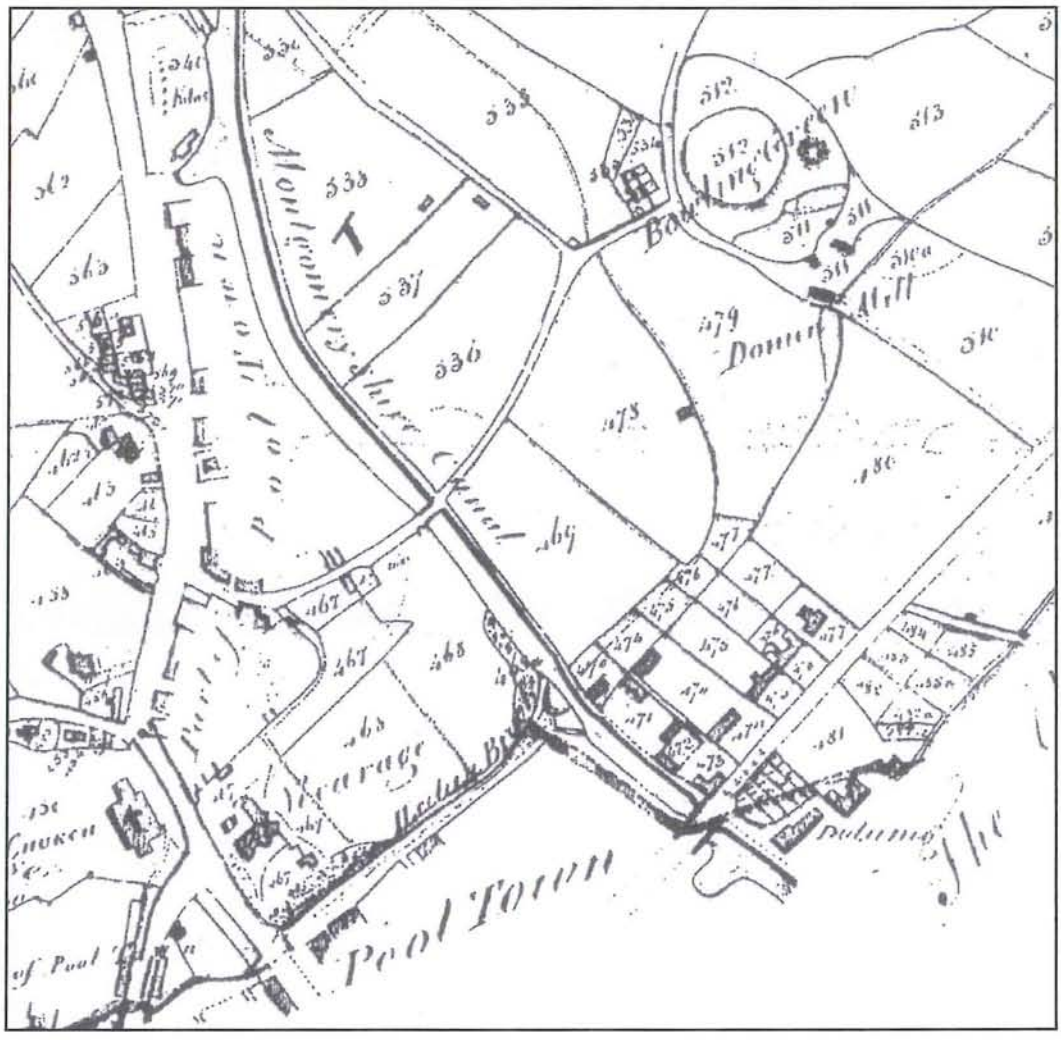

Fig. 4 1840 Tithe Survey for Pool parish, Lower Division, Trefnant Fechan, Town etc

3.16 Immediately to the north of the aqueduct is a bridge (PRN 36451) built to carry the Welshpool and Llanfair Railway over the canal. The bridge, which is a Grade II listed building, has stone abutments with rusticated terminal piers on the east side and rough rubble to the west, while cast-iron girders form the span. The bridge is a unique surviving relic of the light railway in its length through the town; the bridge also forms part of a group of structures associated with the canal.

3.17 It is not known precisely when the Smithfield was constructed although it was in existence by 1875 (Boon 1961, 14), and it is depicted on the large-scale Ordnance Survey (1:500) town map of Welshpool in 1885 (Fig. 4). Although the Smithfield has undergone some changes, particularly in more recent years, the overall layout of the main area is similar to that depicted in 1885 and a number of the Victoria buildings survive.

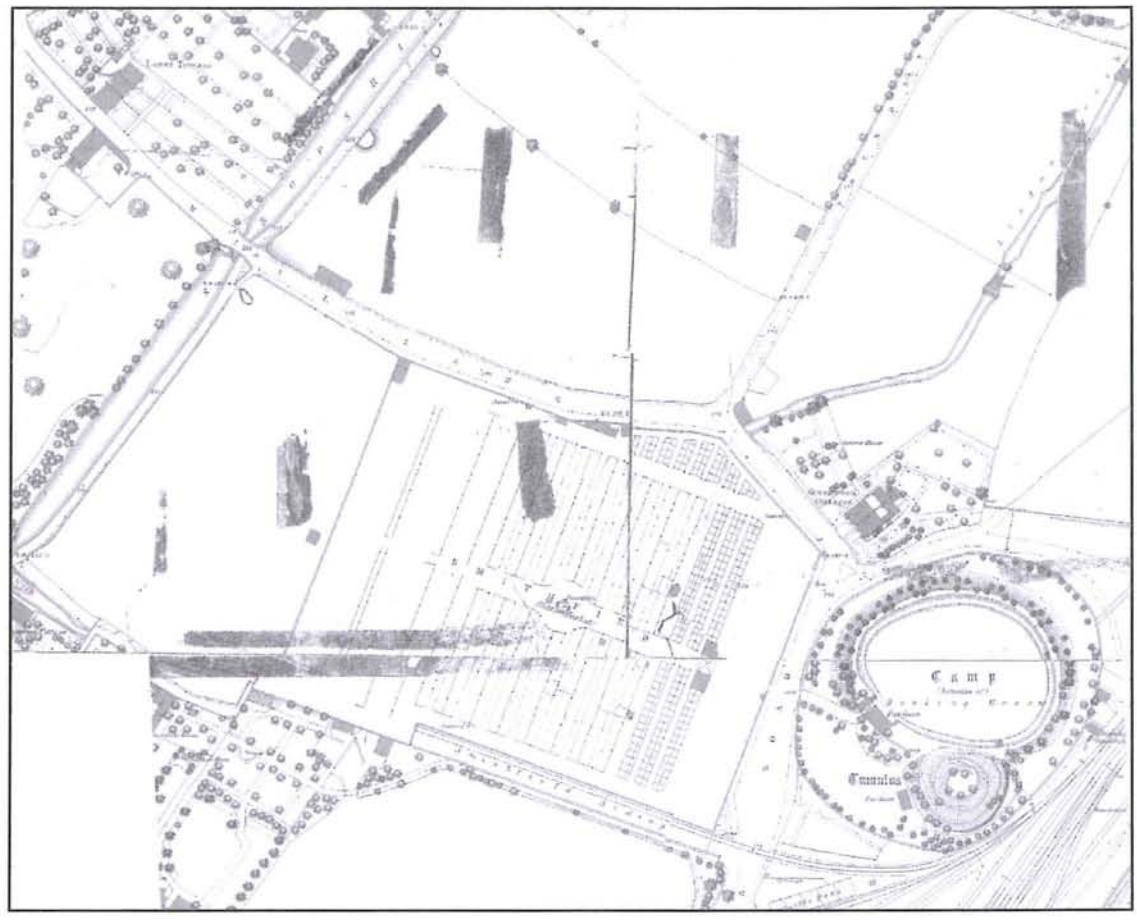

Fig. 5 Ordnance Survey 1:500 plan of Welshpool, 1885

3.18 The 1885 Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 5) shows railway sidings extending from the main line to the south side of the Smithfield. This course was later adopted by the Welshpool and Llanfair Caereinion Railway Company which was formed in 1898, and the railway opened (PRN 85862) in 1903. It was taken over by the Great Western Railway in 1921 and closed by British Rail in 1956.

3.19 On the eastern side of Smithfield Road there is a rare surviving interchange facility between the narrow and broad gauge railways. Built 1903 to provide a connection between the Welshpool and Llanfair Railway (narrow gauge) and the Cambrian Railways (later Great Western) (standard gauge), it remained in use until 1956. Three parallel rails in the transfer dock (PRN 85212) allowed access for both standard and narrow gauge rolling stock to the same platforms. The site is a scheduled site of national importance and is a rare surviving railway transfer dock, believed to be the last surviving example in Wales, and possibly Britain.

3.20 During the First World War the horse repository in Smithfield was used as a prisoner of war camp (PRN 70235).

4 EVALUATION

4.1 The evaluation in April 2006 consisted of 7 trenches (Fig. 6) of varying length, the locations of which were determined following discussions with the Curator and a representative from the Livestock Market. The results from the desk-based study had indicated two areas where it was thought the archaeological deposits might survive: the site of the Roman artefacts discovered in 1959-60, and the corner of the site closest to Domen Gastell motte and bailey. Two trenches were located to investigate the possibility of medieval occupation along Mill Lane, while the remaining three trenches were located in areas where access was possible, but where there was no known archaeological potential. The locations of the trench were recorded by meaning of total station surveying.

4.2 In each of the trenches the modern overburden was removed by machine under close archaeological supervision to the surface of the first recognisable archaeological horizon. Thereafter all excavation was undertaken by hand. The evaluation was essentially non-destructive and designed to determine the depth at which archaeologically sensitive deposits survived, together with their nature condition and significance. Contexts were recorded on individual record forms and drawn and photographed as appropriate. All photography was in 35mm format black and white prints and colour slides. A summary of the site archive is provided in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Fig. 7)

4.3 Trench 1 measured 9m by 1.50m, aligned north-east to south-west, and was located along the north-western boundary of the site, to the north of Mill Lane. Removal of the modern tarmac surface (45) and associated levelling aggregate (46) revealed a sequence of dumped deposits and cut features overlying the natural clay subsoil to a depth of *c.* 1.40m below the present ground surface. A sondage was machine-excavated at the south-western end of the trench to test the natural deposits which were waterlogged in this area.

4.4 At the based of the sondage the natural subsoil comprised a soft, loose, grey clay (64) with *c.* 40% angular stones. This material was overlain by a 0.40m-thick band of firm, inclusion-free, naturally deposited clay (39) which varied from light orange-brown to light greenish-grey.

4.5 The remains of a stepped cut (63) was identified in the base of the trench in the central area, cutting into the natural subsoil (39). This may represent the base of a clay extraction pit which was subsequently filled with a succession of dumps. The basal fill was a sticky, soft, grey clay (44) 0.55m thick, which in turn was overlain by an iron-streaked brownish-grey clay (61) to the south, and a yellowish-grey clay silt (65) in the central area. Overlying (65) was a distinctly brownish spread of clay (43) which contained occasional fragments of animal bone and sherds of green bottle glass. A curving drainage gully (40) which appeared to have been backfilled at its southern extent with blocks of grey clay (42) had been cut through this deposit (43). Subsequent dumps of material (56, 55, 54 and 47) appear to represent further levelling of the area after the extraction of the clay which in places had been disturbed by animal burrowing (57) and (58). It is probable that this sequence of deposits and cut features represents exploitation of the natural clays in this area for the construction of the canal in the late 18th – early 19th centuries, and may represent the remains of the semi-circular feature depicted in approximately this position by the Ordnance Survey in 1885 (Fig. 5).

4.6 Towards the northern end of the trench a pit (51) was identified which cut through the uppermost of the levelling deposits. The pit measured 1.40m in diameter with a depth of 0.50m and contained two fills. The primary fill (53) was a mixed yellowish-brown to greyish-brown clay with occasional charcoal flecks and fragments of wood and red brick. Overlying this was similarly mixed material (52) but with a high proportion of gravel.

4.7 In the central area of the trench a second pit (48) had also been cut from the same stratigraphic level. This measured 1.75m in diameter with a depth of 0.35m. The primary fill (49) was a near cemented, brownish-grey gravelly material, overlain by a loose dark brownish-grey clay silt (50) containing *c.* 50% stones and gravels. Both these pits appear to date to the later 19th or early 20th century, and may relate to the development of area in relation to the Smithfield.

Trench 2 (Fig. 8)

4.8 Trench 2 measured 10m by 1.50m, was aligned north-west to south-east and located along the southern boundary of the site to the north of Mill Lane. Machine removal of the modern tarmac and aggregate (01 and 02) revealed the natural subsoil, a grey sandy gravel (07), at a depth of *c.* 1.50m, beneath which a sondage identified an underlying pinkish-orange clay (08).

4.9 The subsoil was overlain by a sequence of later deposits the earliest of which was a 0.17m-thick yellowish-orange, fine silty clay (05), which was interpreted as a natural alluvial deposit. Overlying this was a 0.60m-thick band of mid-brown silty clay containing charcoal flecks and pottery sherds dating to the 13th-14th centuries. This presumably represents an early plough soil, reflecting cultivation of the area during the medieval period.

4.10 An overlying layer of dark grey, silty clay (03), 0.10m thick, was dated on ceramic evidence to the post-medieval period, and is consistent with the use of the area as meadow and pasture, prior to the construction of this part of the Smithfield.

Trench 3 (Fig. 9)

4.11 Trench 3 measured 9.50m by 1.50m, and was aligned northeast to southwest along the eastern boundary of the site to the north of Mill Lane. A series of deposits were removed by machine to a depth of *c.* 1.20m, and a sondage at the north-eastern end of the trench was machine excavated in order to test the natural deposits, with a further hand-dug slot at the opposite, south-western end. These revealed a natural subsoil (131) of gravelly silt containing large (up to 0.20m diameter) rounded and sub-angular stones, overlain by a further natural deposit (130) of pinkish-orange clay and pebbles.

4.12 Three successive layers of probable cultivation soil were identified, overlying the natural subsoils. The earliest of these (18) consisted of a 0.50m thick, reddish-brown silty clay with occasional pebbles and flecks of charcoal. This in turn was overlain by a mid brown silty clay (17) which varied in thickness from 0.26m to 0.53m. The uppermost cultivation soil (16) comprised a 0.20m-thick greyish-brown clay silt with pebbles and occasional flecks of charcoal.

4.13 Cutting through the upper layer (16) in the central area of the trench was a relatively shallow pit-like feature with a diameter of 2.40m, concave sides and a level base. This feature contained a single fill (14), a bluish-grey silt, and was interpreted as a possible pond.

4.14 Subsequent layers appear to represent levelling and make-up material, presumably laid when the area became incorporated into the livestock market, and comprising a total maximum thickness of 0.85m. A 40mm-thick band of yellowish-grey sand (13) was intermittent across the trench. This was overlain by a mixed dark greyish-black sandy silt (12) containing fragmented brick, stone, gravel and charcoal flecks, and a discontinuous band of greyish-yellow clay (11). A layer of stone (10) extended across the trench, overlain with a compacted surface of pinkish-red gravel and sand (09), over which a turf layer has subsequently grown.

Trench 4 (Fig. 10)

4.15 Trench 4 measured 7.00m x 1.80m, was aligned north-west to south-east and located towards the northern extent of the main Smithfield site, adjacent to the area where the Roman artefacts were discovered in 1959-60 (Boon 1961). It became apparent upon removal of the modern tarmac surface that further excavation would have to continue by hand as the trench was crossed obliquely by a ceramic drain pipe (20) which was thought to be still in use. Accordingly, sondages were excavated by hand on either side of the pipe, leaving a baulk in place for support, and effectively dividing the trench into two. The sondages revealed the natural subsoil, a mid yellowish-orange clay (34), at a depth of *c.* 1.15m below the tarmac surface, and overlain by a series of deposits. To the south-west of the pipe these deposits had been removed by a cut feature filled with bluish-grey silty clay (28), the alignment of which appeared to have been respected by the later pipe.

4.16 To the north-west of the pipe, above the natural subsoil, a band of light yellowish-brown, silty sand (33), *c.* 0.10m thick, contained occasional flecks of charcoal and angular stones and was interpreted as the original ground surface. Cutting this material was a circular post-hole (36) measuring 0.35m in diameter and 0.32m in depth, with near vertical sides dropping to a level base. The fill (35) comprised a light brown, silty sand containing several large sub-angular and rounded packing stones, and occasional flecks of charcoal. No dating evidence was retrieved for this feature, but it was sealed beneath material containing medieval (13^{th}-14^{th} century) pottery and may therefore relate to the Roman activity previously identified in this area.

4.17 Sealing the fill of the post-hole was a distinctly stony deposit (32), consisting of a light brown silty clay containing 10-20% sub-angular and rounded pebbles, several corroded iron objects (probable nails), a single fragment of ironworking slag, and three very small sherds of abraded, possibly medieval, pottery. This deposit appeared deliberately laid and may represent a metalled surface or deliberate dump of stony material.

4.18 Two subsequent cultivation deposits were identified. The earliest (31), was a 0.30m-thick layer of mid brown, soft silty clay with occasional charcoal fragments and several sherds of 13^{th}-14^{th} century pottery. This was overlain by similar material (30), but with a higher quantity of charcoal and small pebbles, and several sherds of post-medieval pottery. It is possible that this layer had been truncated by later levelling activity as it was only 0.14m thick at its greatest extent. Sealing this post-medieval cultivation soil was a band of firm, dark greyish-brown, silty clay (29) with up to 5% charcoal fragments which was interpreted as the former topsoil, prior to the construction of the Smithfield in the late 19^{th} century.

4.19 A levelling deposit of light greyish-brown clay (27) containing fragmented red brick sealed the former topsoil and extended across the trench. This had been cut by the insertion of two drains, a larger 0.23m diameter (9") ceramic pipe (20) in cut (21), and a smaller linked ceramic pipe (132) in cut (133). Further levelling and make-up layers (24, 25 and 26) sealed the drain pipes, prior to the insertion of a later iron pipe (22) in (23). The uppermost deposit consisted of the modern tarmac surface (19).

Trench 5 (Fig. 11)

4.20 Trench 5 measured 10m by 1.5m, was aligned north-east to south-west and was situated to the west of the Smithfield site, adjacent to the canal. Machine removal of the current tarmac surface (66) and associated fragmented brick levelling material (67), revealed a series of deposits overlying the natural subsoil which was revealed in a sondage as a dark yellowish-brown, loose sandy gravel (75) at a depth of *c.* 1.60m.

4.21 Extending across the entire trench, and continuing beyond the limits of the excavation, was a *c.* 0.15m-thick stony deposit (74) overlying the natural subsoil. This deposit comprised a dark yellowish-brown clay matrix with *c.* 70% flat stones and river cobbles, and a further *c.* 20%

gravel, which appeared to form a deliberately laid rough surface or possible stone dump, of unknown date. Although generally level, the layer appeared to drop slightly at the north-eastern end.

4.22 Sealing the stony layer was a relatively thin (0.10m–0.36m) band of dark yellowish-brown clay containing occasional flecks of charcoal. This in turn was sealed by a 0.30m-thick, light yellowish-brown silty clay (72), which may represent an early cultivation soil. Subsequent cultivation activity resulted in a build-up of deeper plough soils overlying layer 72. Context 71 consisted of a 0.60m-thick band of dark yellowish clay silt with few inclusions except for occasional pebbles. This in turn was sealed by a very dark brown, 0.55m-thick layer of cultivation soil (70), which again contained few inclusions except for occasional stones and sherds of post-medieval pottery.

4.23 A later post-medieval pit (69), with a diameter of 3.30m and a depth of 0.44m, cut through deposit 70 in the central area of the trench. It contained a single fill (68), a brown silty clay with few inclusions except for occasional flecks of charcoal, which was sealed by the modern fragmented brick levelling layer (67).

Trench 6 (Fig. 12)

4.24 Trench 6 measured 10.20m by 1.50m, was aligned approximately north to south and located in the north-eastern corner of the main Smithfield site. As in Trench 4, machine excavation was hindered by the presence of service drains and pipes just below the tarmac (76). Accordingly, much of the trench was excavated by hand, leaving a ceramic pipe atop a baulk of unexcavated material. This effectively divided the trench into two which therefore only allowed suggested links to be made between contexts identified on either side of the baulk which could not be confirmed without the removal of the pipe. An additional encumbrance was a lead water pipe which necessitated a step at the southern end of the trench. Archaeologically significant deposits were identified at a depth of 1.50m below the current ground (tarmac) surface which were only investigated by augering owing to health and safety considerations.

4.25 The natural subsoil was identified during auguring at the northern end of the trench (125), and in plan at the southern end of the trench (94). It comprised a very firm and distinctly stony deposit of brownish or yellowish-grey clay. The stone component made up *c.* 70% of the total and consisted of rounded and sub-angular stones (including mudstones) up to 0.12m in diameter, with additional gravelly material of *c.* 15%.

4.26 A 0.20m-thick spread of light brownish-yellow silty clay (93) at the southern end of the trench was observed tipping down northwards for a distance of *c.* 3.40m from the step at the southern end of trench, and overlying the natural subsoil (94). Two further spreads of similar material to either side of the baulk were considered to represent the same context, and were interpreted as the original ground surface in this area (103/126), which was confirmed by augering to be 0.33m thick, lying directly above the natural subsoil.

4.27 At the northern end of the trench two ditches were identified which appeared to link just beyond the eastern limit of the trench, both of which had been cut through deposit 103/126. The northernmost ditch (98) was aligned north-east to south-west, but only the southern edge lay within the area of excavation. Auguring confirmed at least three fills, the earliest identified (but probably not the primary fill) being a 40mm-thick, dark grey, soft, silty clay (99). Patches of soft, dark purplish-black material, originally interpreted as possible organic deposits, were subsequently identified as decayed mudstones. Overlying this material was a dark yellowish-brown, loose silty gravel (100) with a thickness of at least 0.35m. The upper fill of the ditch (101) was a very soft and plastic, brown silty clay, with frequent charcoal and occasional gravel and mudstone fragments, from which several sherds of 13th to 14th-century pottery were recovered.

4.28 The second ditch (97) was aligned north-east to south-west, cutting through deposits 103/126 and 93, although the relationship with the latter was not clear. Two fills were identified, the earliest of which was a yellowish-brown, soft consistent silty clay with *c.* 2% gravel (96). The upper fill (95) was a mid brownish-yellow, soft, silty clay which was assumed to be the same as layer 102 to the west of the baulk. It was not possible to determine a clear relationship between the two ditches as their confluence was just beyond the limits of the trench. However, it is possible that they were broadly contemporary, and may be related in some unspecified way to the nearby the motte and bailey.

4.29 Sealing the upper fills of both ditches, and continuous across the entire trench, was a layer of light yellowish-brown, soft silty clay (92), generally 0.30m thick although variable to the south, and containing 13th to 14th-century pottery. This material was interpreted as a medieval plough soil which formed after the ditches had silted and been abandoned. This was sealed by a 0.50-0.60m-thick deposit of yellowish-brown silty clay (91) which had a probably similar but post-medieval origin. The topsoil prior to the construction of the Smithfield in the later 19th century was represented by band of dark greyish-brown, firm silty clay (90) with occasional charcoal and brick fragments.

4.30 Two layers of levelling and make-up material associated with the construction of the Smithfield were identified. The lowest (89) was a mixed grey and yellow firm clay which was overlain by a spread of loose angular and sub-angular stones (88) up to 0.20m in diameter.

4.31 Several modern features cut through the stone spread, including a water pipe (87) within a shallow trench (85), and a small pit (85). The modern tarmac surface (76) had been laid upon a layer of stony aggregate (77).

Trench 7 (Fig. 13)

4.32 Trench 7 measured 9.50m by 1.50m, was aligned north-east to south-west, and was located along the eastern edge of the carpark towards the south-east corner of the main Smithfield site. The uppermost deposits were removed by machine to a depth of *c.* 1.10m, revealing the natural subsoil, a stony yellowish-grey clay (124). There appeared to be a deliberate terracing of the subsoil in this area, creating a lower lying area to the south. A layer of brown silty gravel (123) had accumulated in this lower lying area, and also existed as a thin, patchy spread on the slightly higher terrace to the north.

4.33 A butt-ended gully (119) was identified cutting through layer 123, aligned north-west to south-east along the upper edge of the terrace. The gully was 0.35m wide and deepened towards the south to a maximum of 0.24m, continuing south-east beyond the limits of excavation. It contained a single fill (118) of yellowish-brown silty clay with occasional rounded stones, charcoal and possible burnt daub flecks.

4.34 The gully was sealed by a 0.10m-thick layer of reddish-brown silty clay (122) which followed the terrace edge down into the lower lying area, but then became diffuse at its interface with the underlying deposit (123). A subsequent deep accumulation of brown silty clay (121) levelled the formerly terraced area, and extended across the entire trench. This material was 0.45m thick towards the south, thinning to 0.20m in the north, and was interpreted as a medieval cultivation deposit. In turn this was sealed by a later cultivation deposit (120) of light yellowish-brown, clay silt containing sherds of post-medieval pottery.

4.35 The area appears to have suffered some water-logging, as depicted by a band of bluish-grey, iron mottled silty clay (117) overlying the cultivation layers. Two successive drainage features were identified towards the northern end of the trench, which interestingly respected the alignment of the earlier gully (119). The earliest drain (116) contained two fills (128 and 113),

which had been cut by the insertion of a later drain (112) with associated glazed ceramic pipe (115).

4.36 The depression above the drain cuts had been infilled with a layer of reddish silty sand (109) before subsequent levelling of the entire trench area with stone chip and gravel aggregate (108), prior to surfacing with the current, modern tarmac layer (107).

5 FINDS

5.1 The evaluation produced a relatively small assemblage of medieval pottery, comprising 39 sherds (120g), 27 sherds of which came from cultivation soils in trenches 4 and 6. Four sherds were recovered from the upper fill of one of the ditches (98) in trench 6 and the remainder consisted of residual finds in later deposits.

5.2 The fabrics are broadly similar to those found elsewhere in northern Montgomeryshire, consisting of sandy micaceous wares thought to date to the 13th and 14th centuries. Vessel forms included cooking pots and jugs or jars.

5.3 A total of 61 sherds (459g) of post-medieval pottery was recovered, 34 of which came from cultivation soils and the remainder from the fills of various features.

5.4 The evaluation also produced a small collection of miscellaneous finds, including clay pipe stems, bottle glass, iron nails, brick and tile and two fragments of slag.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The evaluation identified several areas where archaeologically significant features have survived, despite later disturbance associated with the activities in and around the Smithfield. In general, the preservation of these features has been aided by the depth of cultivation soils which have previously accumulated across much of the site. Between 0.30m and 0.60m of undisturbed medieval or earlier cultivation material was observed in all of the trenches except Trench 1, where post-medieval disturbance had removed any earlier material.

6.2 The desk-based study highlighted the significance and potential of the Roman artefacts which came to light in 1959 during the excavation of a drain. Trench 4 was positioned to investigate this area and, although no further artefacts were recovered, a possible stone surface and a post-hole were identified which, from a comparison with the earlier excavation report (Boon 1961), may be contemporary with the Roman discoveries. These were sealed beneath cultivation soils which, on the basis of pottery evidence, are likely to be medieval in date.

6.3 To the east of the site, Trench 6 revealed two large ditches, the upper fills of which contained 13th to 14th-century pottery. The proximity of these features to Domen Gastell motte and bailey suggest that they may well be associated. One possibility is that they may have acted as leats carrying water from the Lledan Brook to infill the defensive ditch surrounding the motte and bailey. The existence of the ditches, and the presence nearby of the Lledan Brook, suggest that important environmental information may be preserved in any potentially waterlogged deposits that could be present in the lower levels of the site.

6.4 A deliberately terraced area and a shallow gully in Trench 7 were sealed by medieval deposits, and may suggest the existence of a structure. In Trench 5, on the west of the site a layer of deliberately dumped stony material, possibly forming a surface or hard-standing, was also sealed beneath medieval cultivation soils.

6.5 The three evaluation trenches on the northern side of Mill Lane produced no evidence for archaeologically significant features, although deep medieval cultivation soils were uncovered.

7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

7.1 The writers would like to thank the following people for their assistance during the project: Ian Grant, Richard Hankinson, Wendy Owen, Gary Foster and Sue Stubbs, of CPAT; Alan Williams, of J R Pickstock; the staff of the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth; and the staff of the National Monuments Record, Aberystwyth.

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1994 British Geological Survey map of Wales (Solid edition at 1:250,000 scale).

APPENDIX 1

PROJECT ARCHIVE

Site archive
133 context record forms
5 A1 site plans
2 colour slide film
2 black and white negative film
2 colour print films
30 Digital images
Photographic catalogue
Context Register
Drawings Register
Levels Register

FINDS CATALOGUES

Medieval pottery catalogue

Trench	Context	Sherds	Weight (g)	Comment
1	41	1	8	Cooking pot rim
1	41	3	4	Cooking pot body sherds
1	55	1	3	Jug or jar body
4	30	1	2	Green glazed jug or jar
4	31	1	17	Jug or jar base
4	31	1	3	Rouletted body sherd
4	31	3	6	Misc body sherds
4	32	3	2	
6	91	3	10	Misc body sherds
6	92	1	4	Cooking pot rim
6	92	1	6	Green glazed jug or jar
6	92	1	6	Internally glazed body sherd
6	92	18	28	Misc body sherds
6	101	1	9	Cooking pot body sherds
6	101	1	7	Jug or jar body sherd
6	101	2	5	Misc body sherds
		39	**120g**	

Post-medieval pottery catalogue

Trench	Context	Sherds	Weight (g)	Comment
1	50	11	212	19th-century
1	54	2	17	Slipware
1	54	10	31	18th to 19th-century
1	55	1	3	Post-medieval
1	55	3	27	18th to 19th-century
4	30	2	38	Slipware
4	30	2	8	18th to 19th-century

5	70	8	17	19th-century
6	91	1	6	Post-medieval
6	91	2	17	Slipware
6	91	19	83	19th-century
		61	**459**	

Miscellaneous finds catalogue

Trench	Context	Material	Comment	Number	Weight (g)
1	41	Bottle glass		1	4
1	43	Bottle glass		1	4
1	41	Brick/tile		1	154
1	54	Clay pipe		2	5
4	32	Iron	Nails	2	12
4	32	Slag		1	14
5	70	Clay pipe		2	3
5	71	Slag		1	3
6	91	Iron	Nails	10	92
6	91	Brick/tile		9	119
6	91	Clay pipe		18	27

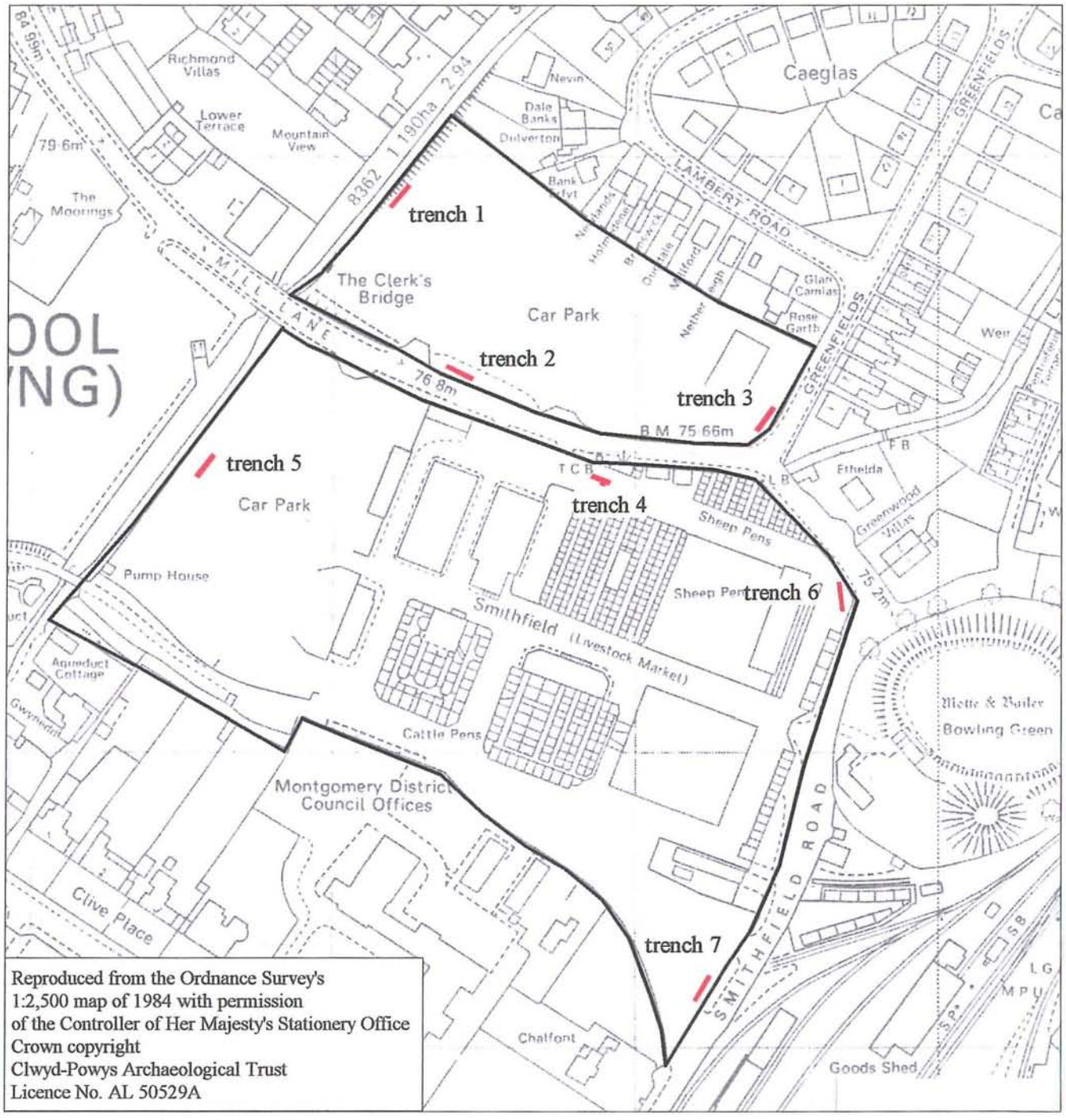

Fig. 6 Location of evaluation trenches, scale 1:2,000

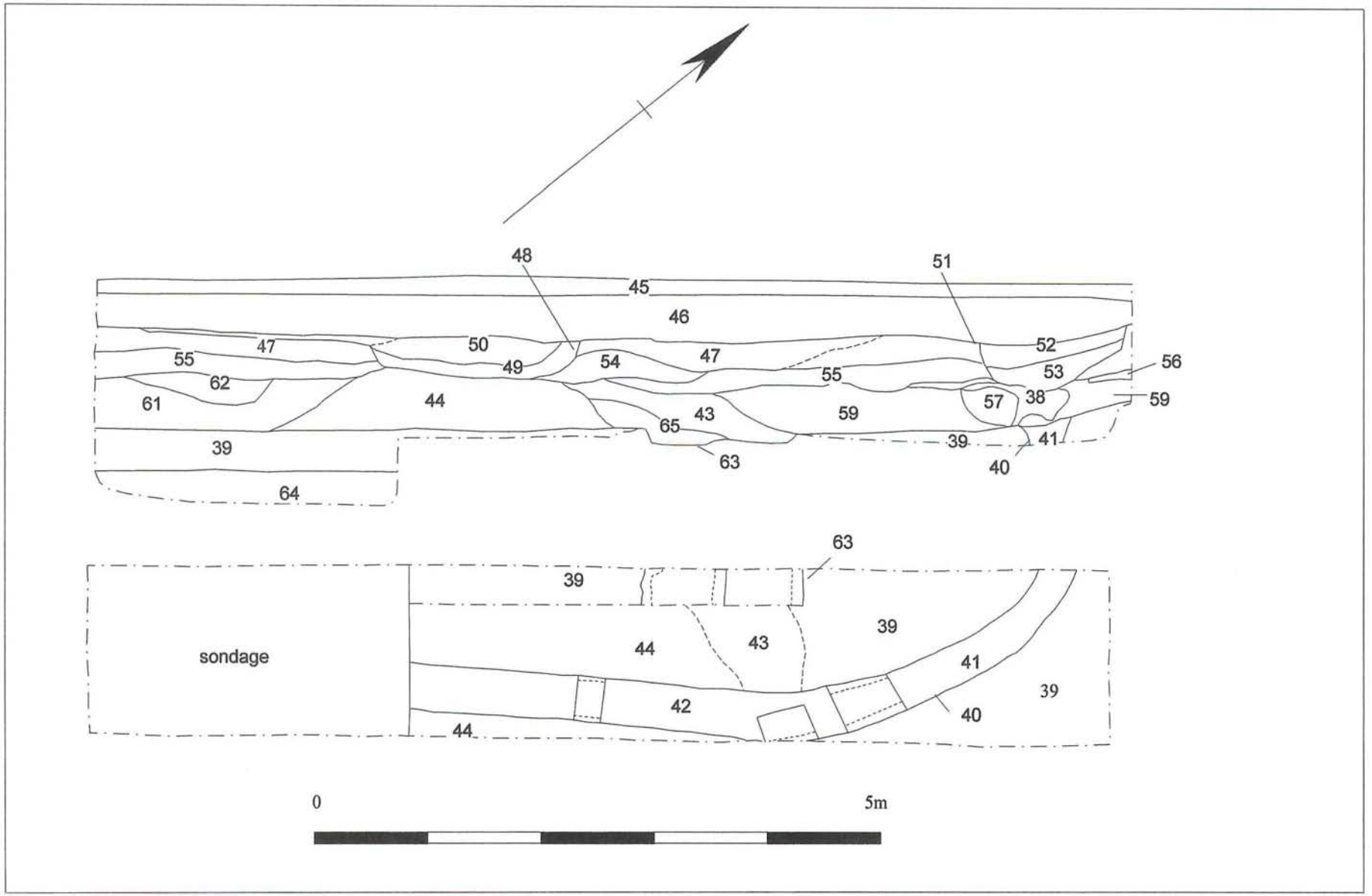

Fig. 7 Trench 1 plan and section, scale 1:50

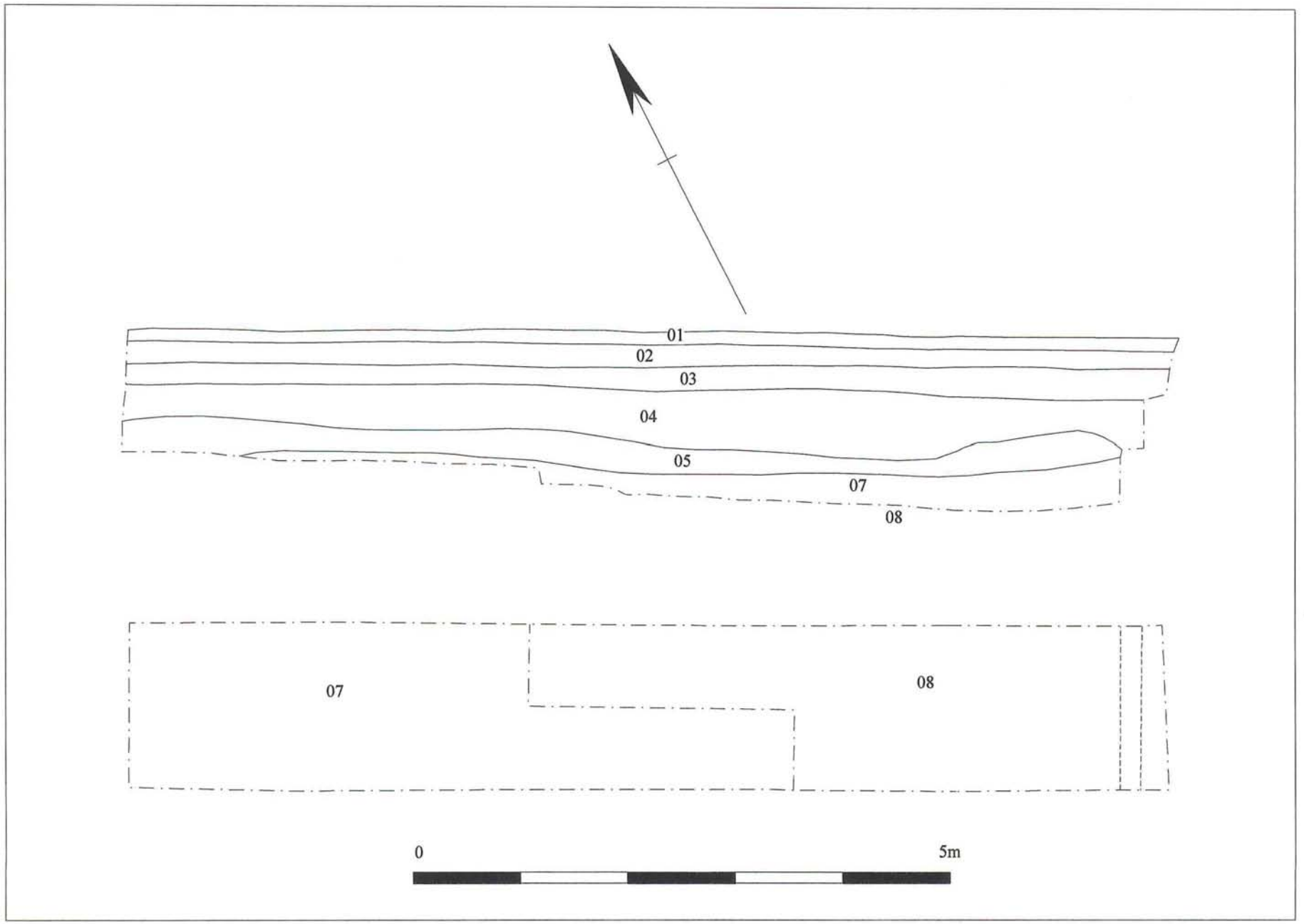

Fig. 8 Trench 2 plan and section, scale 1:50

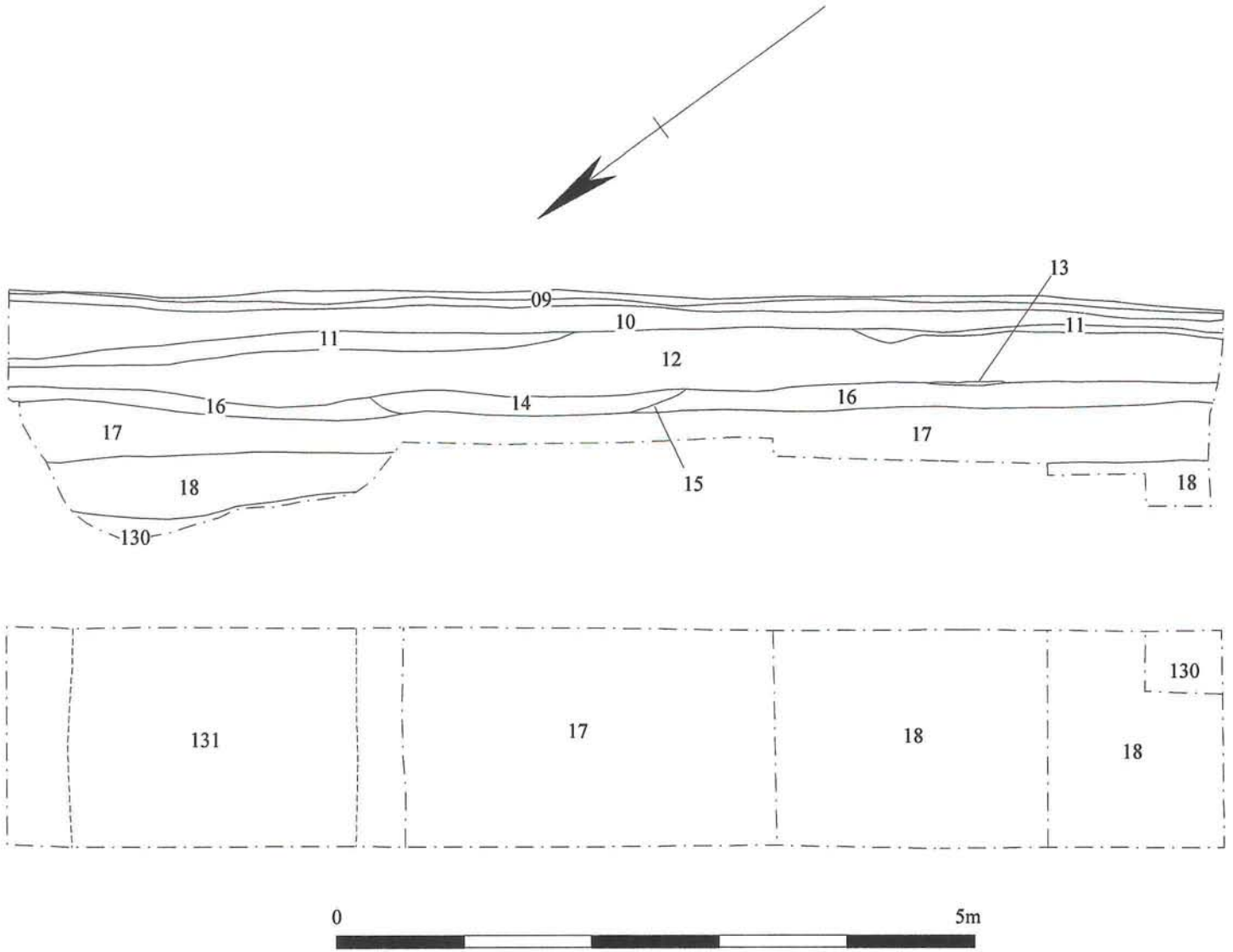

Fig. 9 Trench 3 plan and section, scale 1:50

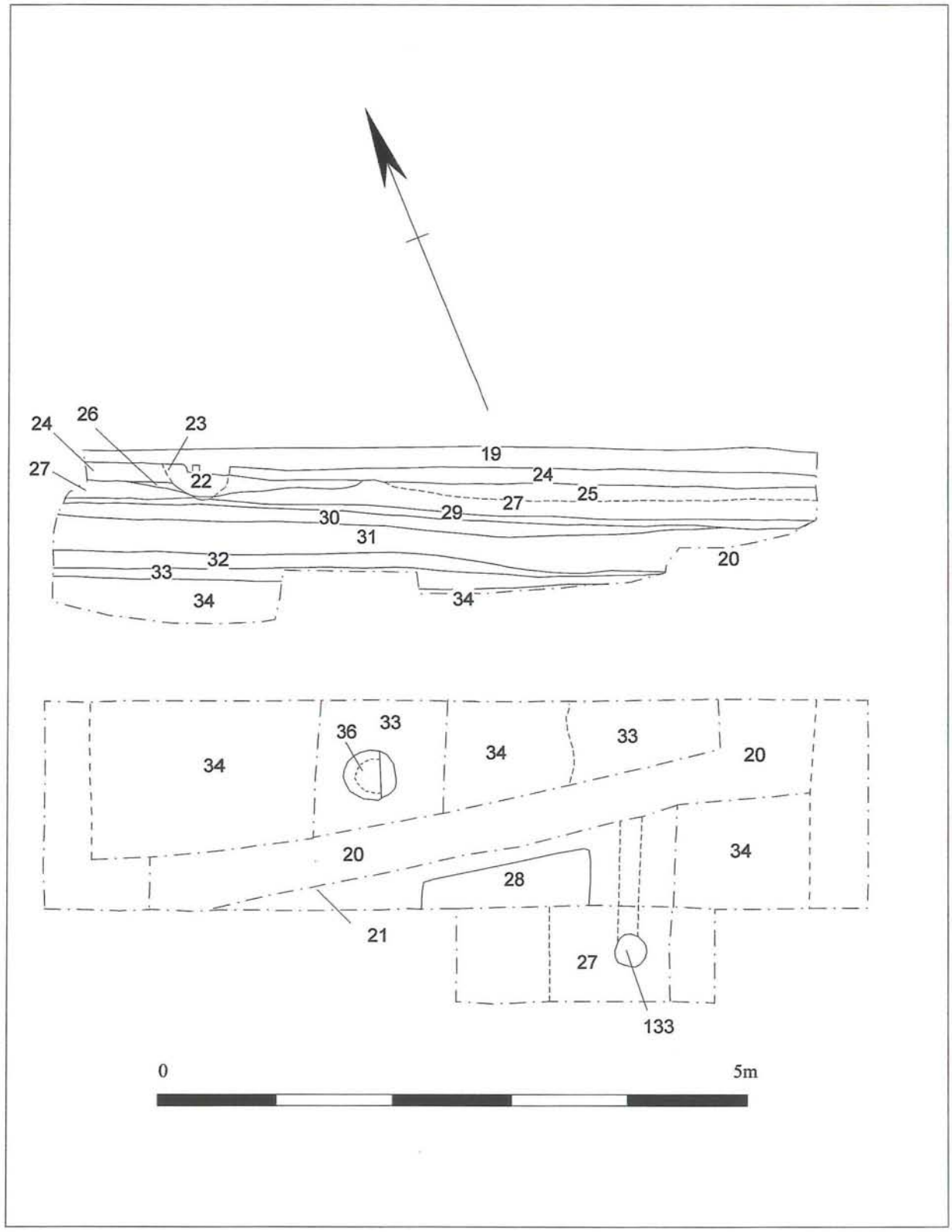

Fig. 10 Trench 4 plan and section, scale 1:50

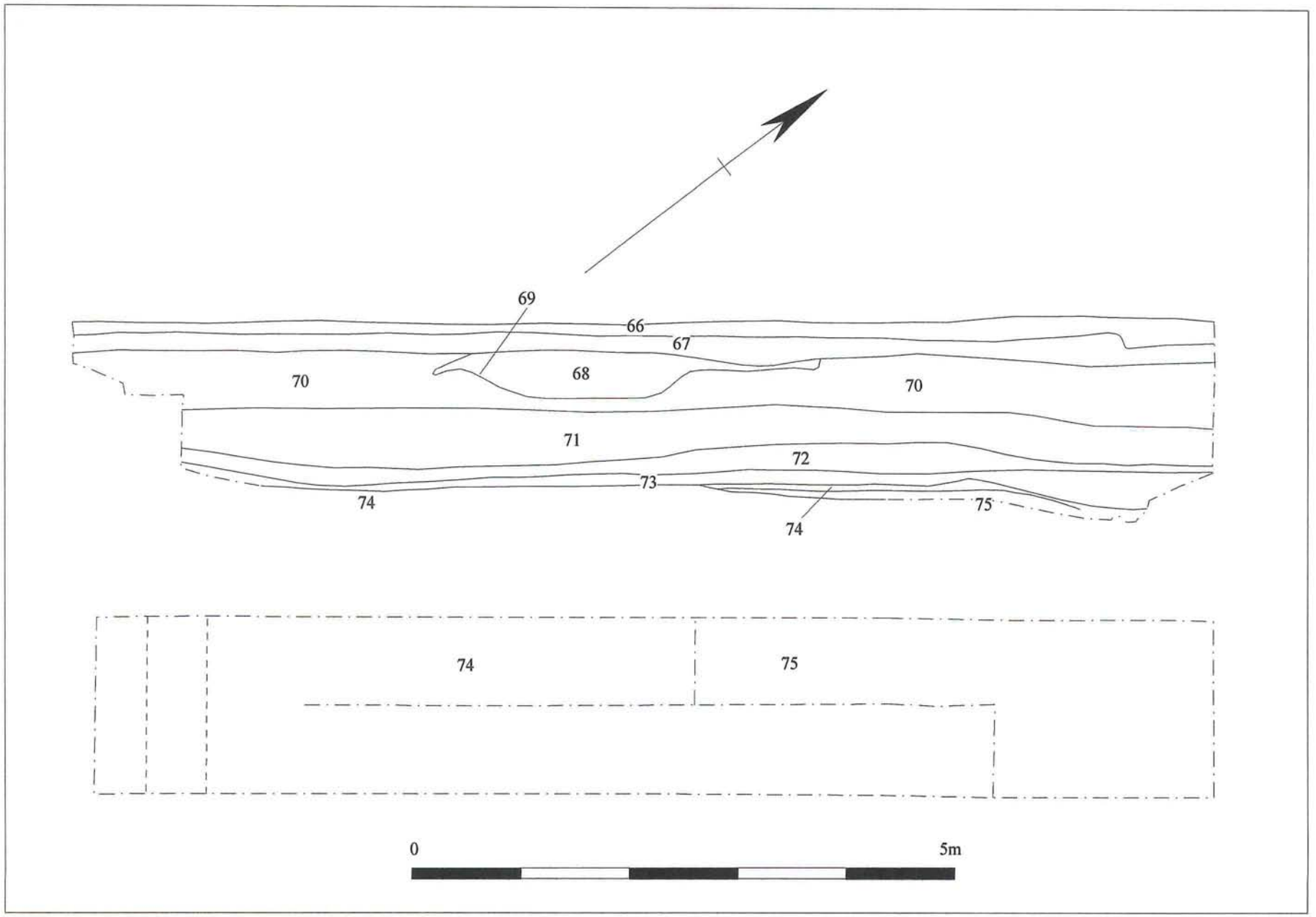

Fig. 11 Trench 5 plan and section, scale 1:50

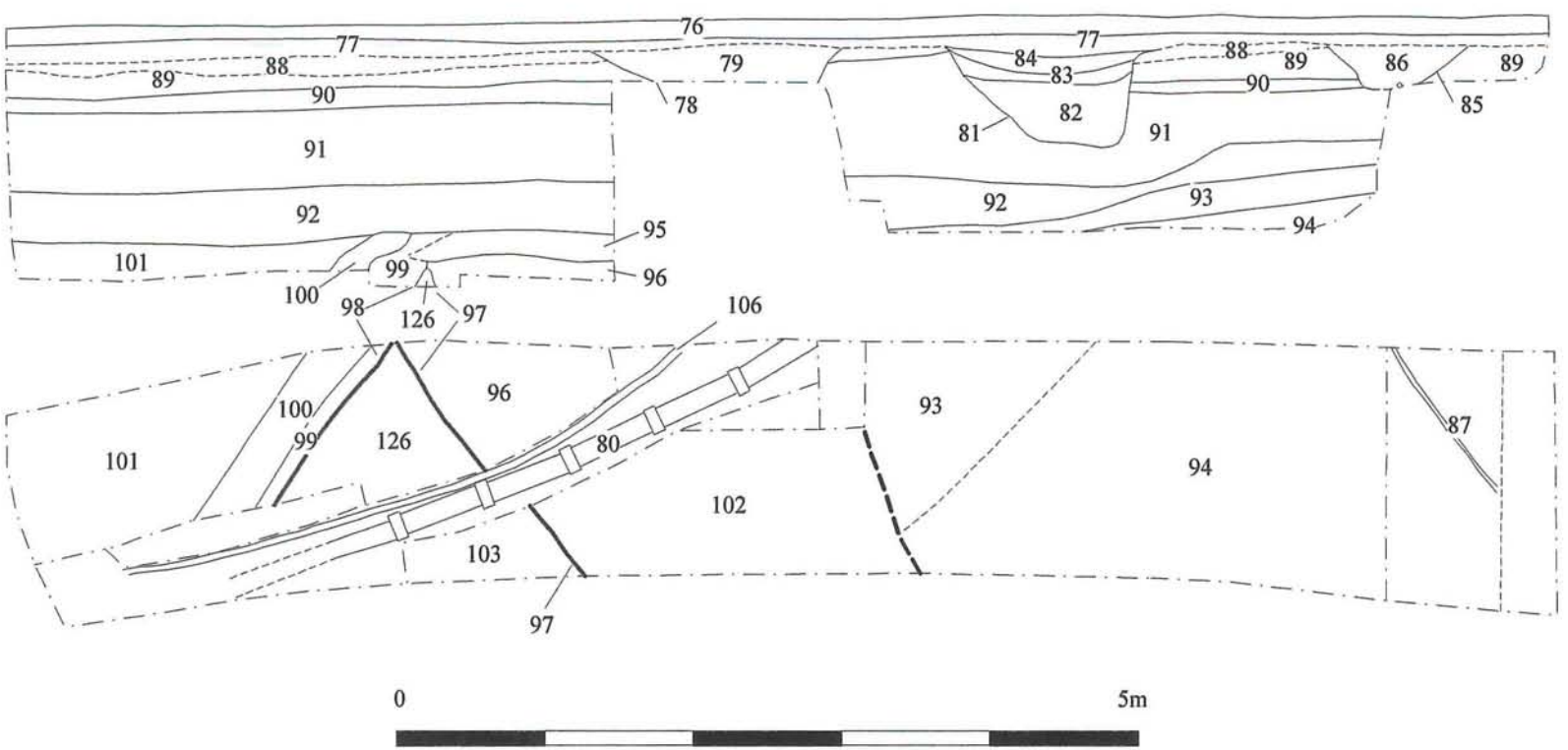

Fig. 12 Trench 6 plan and section, scale 1:50

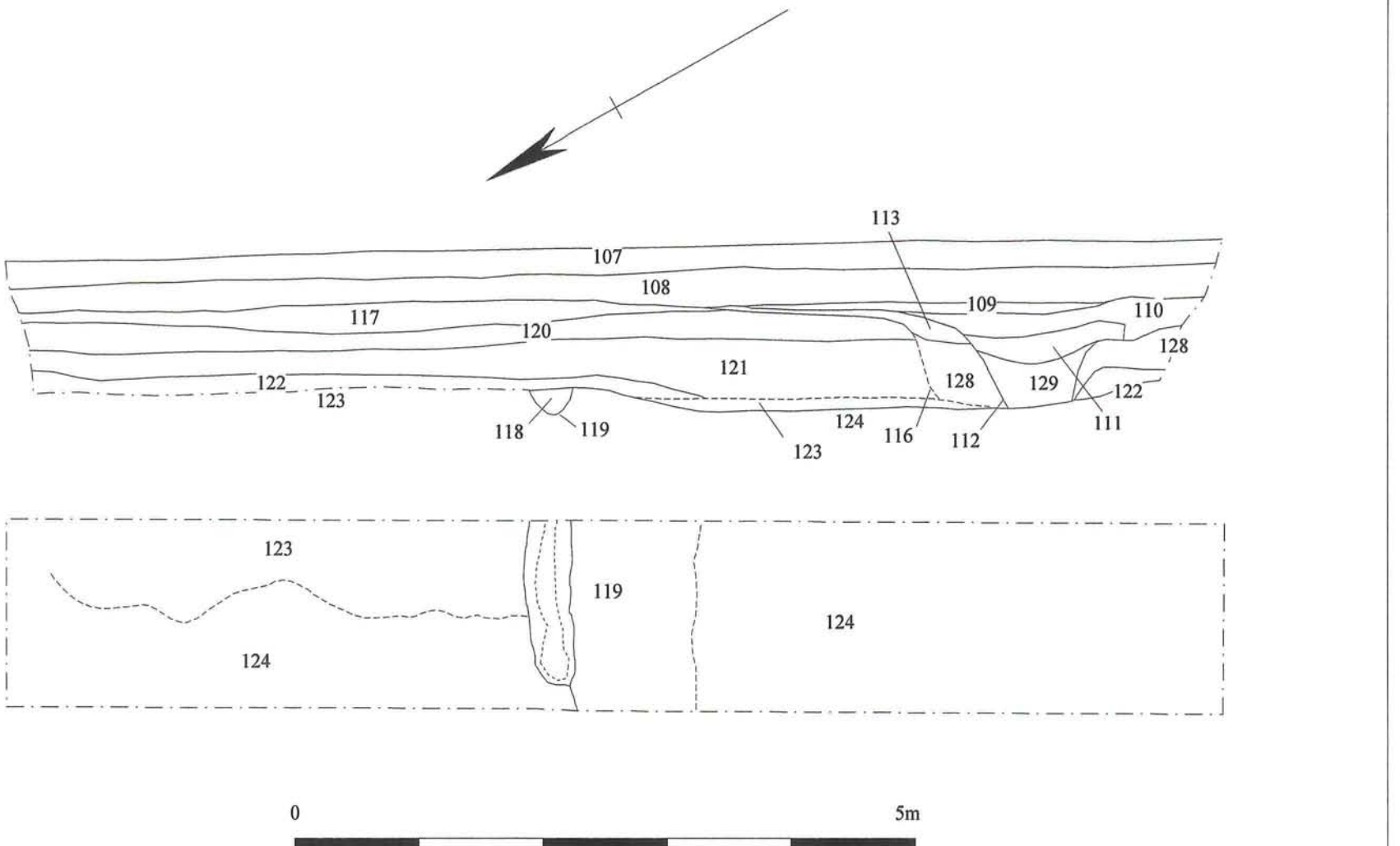

Fig. 13 Trench 7 plan and section, scale 1:50

Plate 1 Trench 1 showing gully 40 and late 18th to 19th-century fills beyond

Plate 2 Trench 2 showing natural subsoil and cultivation deposits in the section.

Plate 3 Trench 3 viewed from the south.

Plate 4 Trench 4 showing stone surface 32 and pipe trench 21

Plate 5 Trench 4 showing post hole 36

Plate 6 Trench 5 showing stone spread 74

Plate 7 Trench 6 showing ditches 97 and 98

Plate 8 Trench 7 showing gully 119