

Archaeological Strip, Map and  
Sample Excavations of Land  
between 28 & 30 & Rear of Garages,  
Lower Rainham Road, Rainham,  
Gillingham, Kent



Date: 10/10/2013

NGR 579365 168687

Site Code: GILL-EV-13

(Planning Application MC/09/2540)

Report for  
M & M Property Services

**SWAT. ARCHAEOLOGY**

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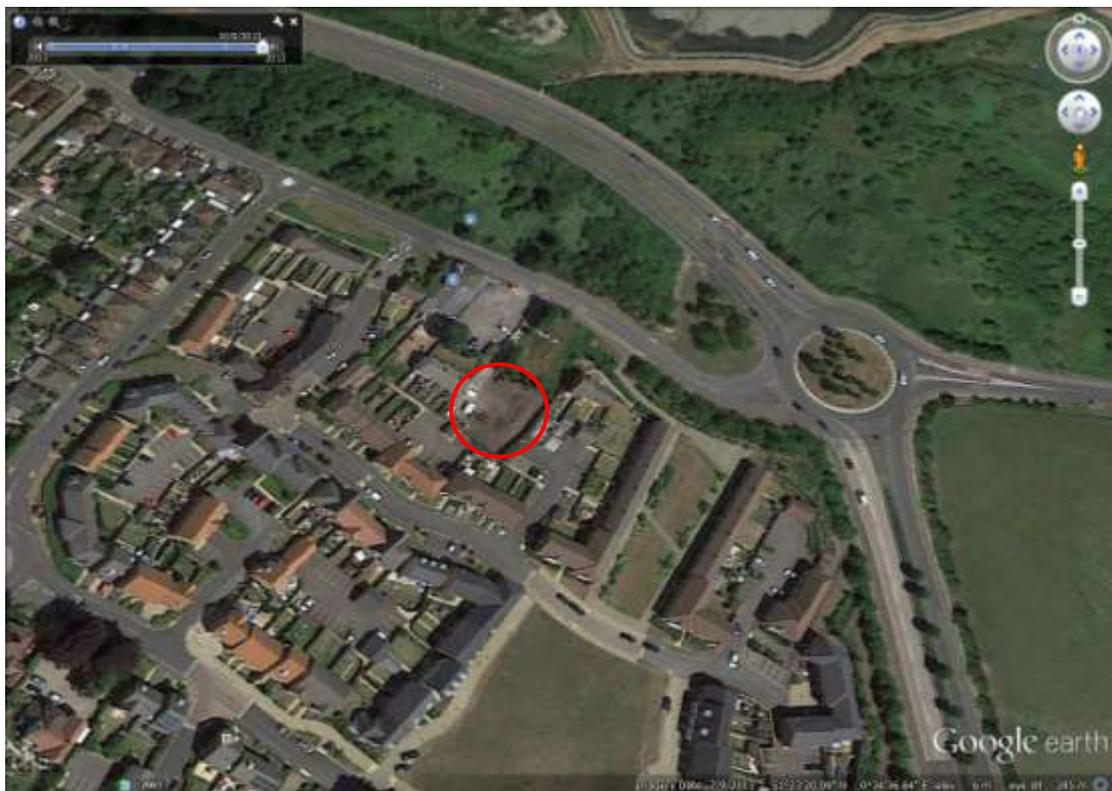


Plate 1. Google Earth aerial view of site. Eye altitude 282m. Date of image 7/9/2013.

## **Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample Excavations of Land between 28 & 30 & Rear of Garages, Lower Rainham Road, Rainham, Gillingham, Kent**

### **Summary**

*Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) has carried out an archaeological strip, map and sample on land just off Lower Rainham Road, Gillingham (Plate 1). A planning application (MC/09/2540) for the construction of two pairs of 2 bedroomed semi-detached houses with bin enclosure and associated car parking was submitted to Medway Council whereby the Council requested that an Archaeological Programme of Works be undertaken in order to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains. The initial work, an Archaeological Evaluation was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (KCC 2012) and in discussion with the Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council. The Archaeological Evaluation consisted of one trench which encountered archaeological features.*

*Subsequently, the Archaeological Officer (KCC) requested that an Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample Excavation be undertaken to an Archaeological Specification supplied by KCC. The strip, map and sample excavation took place between July 2<sup>nd</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> where a number of archaeological features were exposed, recorded and sampled. However, none contained dating material, but a number of sherds of Roman pottery and fragments of Roman building ceramics were retrieved from an unstratified context.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT) was commissioned by Nigel Miller of M & M Property Services to carry out the required archaeological work at the above site. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (SWAT 2013) and in discussion with Ben Found, Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council. The archaeological works was carried out from the 2<sup>nd</sup>-12th July 2013.

### **SITE DESCRIPTION AND TOPOGRAPHY**

The site is located between 28 and 30 Lower Rainham Road and is set back from the road behind a building site with laid concrete foundations. The area under investigation is a rectangular plot of land of about 730 sq metres and is accessed to Lower Rainham road by a track which runs along the east side of the car park of the adjacent public house-the Gillingham Arms. Part of the site is currently used as a car park for the adjacent houses to the west and is bounded to the south by new development.

The site measures around 26m x 12.50m and is centred at NGR 579365 168687. According to the maps of the British Geological Survey, (1:50,000) the site has Bedrock Geology of Thanet Sand Formation, Sand, Silt and Clay with Superficial Deposits of Clay and Silt. The site is located

in what was once arable land south of the River Medway. The site averages 7mOD.

## **PLANNING BACKGROUND**

Planning consent MC/09/2540 was approved by Medway Council (MC). Medway Council requested that an archaeological programme of works be undertaken in order to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains. The Local Planning Authority (MC) placed the following condition on the planning consent:

*16) No development shall take place (except as may be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority) until the developer has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.*

*Reason: To safeguard the archaeological interest in the site in accordance with Policy BNE21 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.*

Requirements for the initial archaeological investigation comprised trial trenching targeting a representative 4% sample of the impact area with one trench which was designed to establish whether there were any archaeological deposits at the site that may be affected by the proposed development. Consequently it was agreed with the Archaeological Officer that a Archaeological strip, map and sample excavation should be implemented and SWAT Archaeology undertook the archaeological works to a Archaeological Specification written by Ben Found, Archaeological Officer KCC.

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL and HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The site lies in an area that is rich in archaeological remains with sites and finds from prehistory through to the modern period. In particular an important Romano-British site located immediately adjacent and to the south of the development site.

**Prehistoric remains** from communities exploiting the resources of the River Medway have been found south of the development site whilst archaeological investigation on the higher ground to the south revealed prehistoric remains from the Neolithic through to the Middle Iron Age. Field systems from the Late Iron Age have been found at Grench Manor (TQ 78 NE 458) which may have extended as far as the development site.

**Romano-British remains** in the vicinity (TQ 76 NE 384) include a complex site of over 20 buildings and structures including a Roman road, ditches and quarry pits which may have been found on the development site.

**Medieval remains** in the vicinity include an Anglo-Saxon burial discovered to the west of the development site and medieval remains associated with the Grench moated manor house (TQ 76 NE 1138). In the post-medieval period early mapping by the Ordnance Survey show a predominantly agricultural landscape.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of the additional archaeological work aside from the general objectives laid out in the initial KCC archaeological specification were to:

- to clarify the character and extent of the archaeological remains identified during the earlier evaluation;
- to understand the character, form, function and date of any archaeological activities present on the site;
- to include analysis of the spatial organisation of such activities on the site through examination of the distribution of artefactual and environmental assemblages;
- to identify if there is any further evidence for Romano-British activity on the site and relate this to previous findings;
- to clarify whether there are further graves or grave-like features on the site and to investigate these appropriately;
- to place any findings into the wider prehistoric, Romano-British and early-medieval landscape and relate this to existing archaeological understanding of the area; and
- to contribute to an understanding of the environmental history of Gillingham.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Archaeological monitoring took place from 12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> July 2013. All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the KCC specification Part B. A single context recording system was used to record the deposits, and context recording numbers were assigned to all deposits for recording purposes. These are used in the report and shown in bold. All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with KCC and IFA standards and guidance. Following machining, all faces of the excavation areas that required examination were cleaned using appropriate hand tools. All investigation of archaeological deposits was by hand, with cleaning, examination and recording both in plan and section. Plans were drawn to a scale of 1:20, and full or representative sections at a scale of 1:10. Contexts were numbered sequentially and recorded on pro-forma context sheets. OD heights were obtained by GPS survey.

## **MONITORING**

Curatorial advice was available during the course of the evaluation.

## **RESULTS**

An area c.624sqm was stripped of the topsoil (100) and the underlying subsoil (101). This subsoil only survived along a 3m wide strip parallel with the south – east perimeter, the remainder had been removed, probably for brickearth extraction, before 1900.

The topsoil varied in depth according to its location on the site; being thinnest at the edge of the north – east facing escarpment (0.28m) and thickest further ‘up hill’ to the south (0.52m). It covered several modern features (post holes and rubbish pits) and one very late archaeological feature (cess tank (115)). The topsoil is a relatively recent import arriving sometime after the extraction of the brickearth and after the appearance of the post holes and rubbish pits. Truncating the topsoil was a further series of post holes, rubbish pits and two rectangular, machine cut slots. These machine cut slots are most likely to be geo-test pits.

The subsoil comprised of a mix of dark grey soil and silty brickearth and where it survived, had a continuous thickness of 0.23m. Sealed by the subsoil was a thin (0.09m) layer of ‘hill wash’ (102). This comprised of a silty brickearth mixed with small abraded pieces of burnt flint. This layer also contained a ‘background noise’ of Roman material (pottery and CBM) and an ephemeral presence of prehistoric flint flakes. This layer sealed the natural occurring gravels.

Within the gravels were a series of archaeological features – all situated within the 3m wide strip along the south – east perimeter, having survived the extraction of the brickearth. Feature [104], a shallow rectangular cut (L: 2.20m W: 0.95m D: 0.24) was filled by re-deposited gravel (103). Aligned east – west, it is possible that this feature represents the basal remains of a grave cut, though no skeletal remains or artefacts were present. Feature [106] was also a shallow rectangular cut (L: +0.95m W: 0.85m D: 0.16m) filled with re-deposited gravel (105). Again, it is possible that this feature represents the basal remains of a grave cut, though no skeletal remains or artefacts were present. Feature [108] comprised of a short, rectangular cut (L: 1.09m W: 0.76m D: 0.04m) filled with re-deposited gravel (107). Feature [110] was also a short, rectangular cut (L: 1.60m W: 0.76m D: 0.21m) filled with re-deposited gravel (109). Feature [112] was a large post hole (L: 0.65m W: 0.50m D: 0.40m). It was roughly oval in shape and was filled with re-deposited brickearth (111). This feature cannot be accurately dated but pre-dates the extraction of the brickearth.

The removal of the topsoil exposed a large rectangular, brick built cess tank (115) situated within the south – east corner of the site. The cess tank measured 4.70m in length and 1.50m in width. It had a depth of 1.57m and it was located within construction cut [116]. The interior brick face at the north – east end had a purpose built recess, its purpose unknown. The cess tank contained a 0.60m thick layer (114) of silt at the base. This was sealed by a brick demolition layer (113). It is assumed that this demolition material was the remains of the cess tanks’ super-structure. The topsoil (100) sealed the layer of demolition.

The removal of the topsoil along the south – west perimeter of the site exposed a mixed deposit of natural brickearth and natural silt. Within this was a tentative archaeological feature [118]. This feature was linear in shape (L: 4.50m W: 0.90m D: 0.09m) and was filled with a

very clean and artefact free light grey silt (117). The function of this feature, if archaeological, is unknown.

## **FINDS**

Three fragments of Roman brick *Lydion* and *Bipedalis* were recovered from context (102). In addition two fragments of *tegulae* were recovered. The one angular flange profile suggests Early Roman (1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century). All this ceramic building material is broken up, abraded and residual. The four Roman pottery sherds are:

Sherds : 4 (weight : 21gms)

3 sherds MR Upchurch-type ware (c.150-200/225 AD)

1 sherd LR grog-tempered ware (c.275/350-400 AD probably)

Likely context date: LC4-EC5 AD

Comment : The MR sherds are small but fairly fresh, the LR sherd is moderately worn, indicating it may have been a little residual before being incorporated in the deposit of (102).

## **DISCUSSION**

The development site at Lower Rainham Road was a disappointment. The Archaeological potential from the known archaeological remains in the surrounding landscape are extensive and important, and yet very little of this archaeological potential was found on the development site. None of the investigated archaeological features had any cultural material and are therefore undatable. The potential for burials was indicated from a possible grave revealed in the evaluation phase of the archaeological investigation but this potential was not apparent in the subsequent archaeological strip, map and excavation phase of the work. On removal of the overlying topsoil (100) and the surviving subsoil (101), the Archaeological Strip and Map Excavation revealed that extensive truncation had taken place. This truncation may have been for the extraction of brickearth. This activity has severely impacted upon the archaeological resource, leaving only an ephemeral presence, compared to that revealed by Pre-Construct Archaeology, immediately to the south of this excavation.

## **CONCLUSION**

The archaeological strip, map and excavation has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification. A common stratigraphic sequence was recognised across the site comprised of topsoil **(100)**, subsoil **(101)** and 'hill wash' **(102)** overlaying the natural gravel.

Some archaeological activity was found during the monitoring programme which will inform the Archaeological Officer KCC of the archaeological potential of site.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

SWAT would like to thank Nigel Miller of M & M Property Services for commissioning this project. Thanks are also extended to Ben Found, Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council

for his advice and assistance.

Paul Wilkinson supervised the fieldwork, assisted in the field by Simon Holmes. Illustrations were produced by Jonny Madden for *Digitise This*. The project was managed by Paul Wilkinson.

Dr Paul Wilkinson MifA

10<sup>th</sup> October 2013

## REFERENCES

### Bibliography

Kent County Council (KCC), (2012) *Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation of Land between 28 & 30 & rear of Garages, Lower Rainham Road, Rainham, Gillingham, Kent.*

Kent County Council (KCC), (2013) *Specification for an Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample Excavations of Land between 28 & 30 & rear of Garages, Lower Rainham Road, Rainham, Gillingham, Kent.*

Kent County Council Archaeological Specification 'B'

SWAT Archaeology. *An Archaeological Evaluation of Land between 28 & 30 & rear of Garages, Lower Rainham Road, Rainham, Gillingham, Kent.*

Wilkinson P. *Swale Archaeological Survey*. 2000

Institute for Field Archaeologists (IfA), Rev (2011)\_*Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Strip, Map and Record.*

### Maps

Ordnance Survey Surveyors Drawings 1798

Ordnance Survey 1st Edition (1871-1890)

Ordnance Survey 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (1897-1900)

Ordnance Survey 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (1907-1923)

Ordnance Survey 4<sup>th</sup> Edition (1929-1952)

### Websites

Kent Landscape Information System <http://extranet7.kent.gov.uk/klis/home.htm>

Exploring Kent's Past <http://www.extranet7.kent.gov.uk/ExploringKentsPast/>



**Plate 2. View of strip (facing north-west)**



**Plate 3. View of strip (facing south-east)**



**Plate 4. View of feature 104 (looking south)**



**Plate 5. View of feature 112 (looking south-east)**



**Plate 6, View of feature 110 (looking north-east)**



**Plate 7, View of feature 108 (looking north-east)**

**APPENDIX 1 – Kent County Council HER Summary Form**

<b>Site Name:</b> <i>Site adjacent to 28 &amp; 30 Lower Rainham Road, Gillingham, Kent</i>	
<b>SWAT Site Code:</b> <i>GILL/SMS/13</i>	
<b>Site Address:</b> <i>As above</i>	
<b>Summary:</b> <i>Swale &amp; Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out an archaeological monitoring on land between 28 &amp; 30 &amp; rear of Garages, Lower Rainham Road, Gillingham, Kent. A planning application for the construction of two pairs of 2 bedroom semi-detached houses at the above site was submitted to Medway Council (MC) whereby Kent County Council Heritage and Conservation (KCCHC), on behalf of Medway Council requested that an Archaeological Evaluation followed by Archaeological Strip, Map and sample Excavation be undertaken in order to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains. The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements set out within an Archaeological Specification (KCC 2013) and in discussion with the Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council.</i> <i>The Archaeological monitoring revealed a a number of archaeological features and Roman cultural material</i>	
<b>District/Unitary:</b> <i>Medway</i>	
<b>Period(s):</b> <b>Tentative:</b>	
<b>NGR (centre of site : 8 figures):</b> <b>(NB if large or linear site give multiple NGRs):</b> <i>NGR 579365 168687</i>	
<b>Type of archaeological work (delete)</b> <i>Archaeological monitoring</i>	
<b>Date of Recording:</b> <i>July 2013</i>	
<b>Unit undertaking recording:</b> <i>Swale &amp; Thames Survey Company (SWAT)</i>	
<b>Geology:</b> <i>Brickearth and Gravel</i>	
<b>Title and author of accompanying report:</b> <i>Wilkinson P. An Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample Excavations of Land between 28 &amp; 39 Rear of Garages, Lower Rainham Road, Gillingham, Kent</i>	
<b>Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate)</b>  <i>As above</i> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(cont. on attached sheet)</b></p>	
<b>Location of archive/finds:</b> <i>SWAT</i>	
<b>Contact at Unit:</b> <i>Paul Wilkinson</i>	<b>Date:</b> <i>10/10/13</i>



1:1500@A4



Figure 1: Location of Site

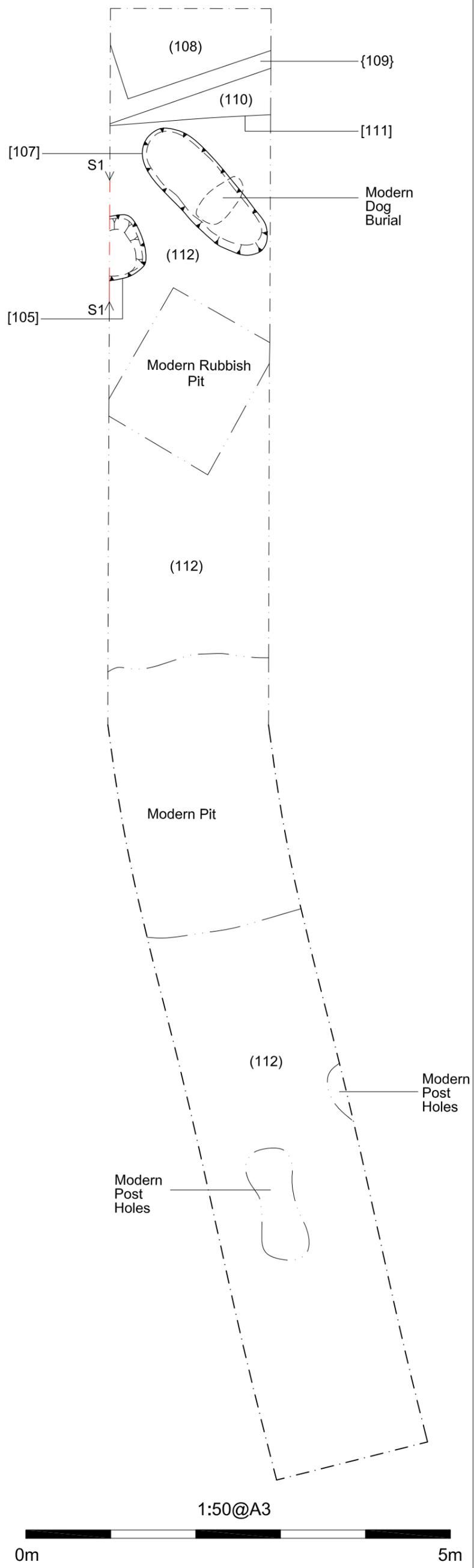
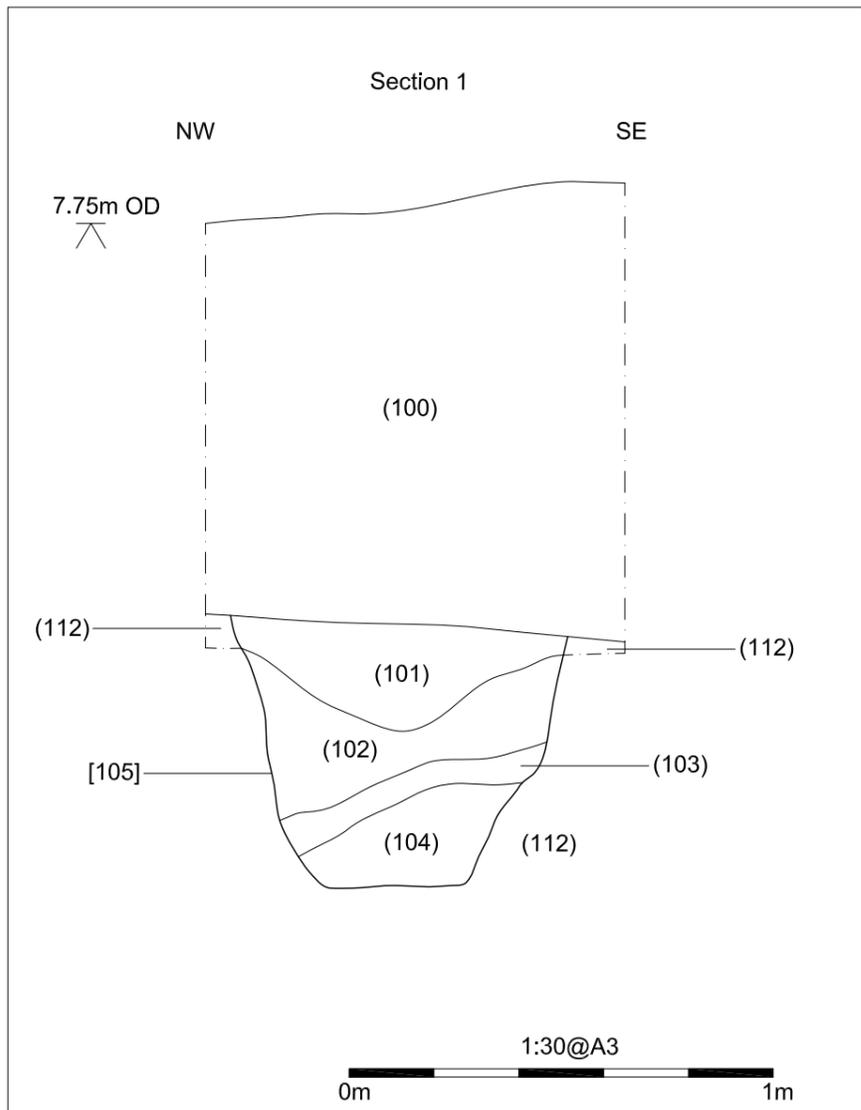


Figure 2: Trench 1; Plan and Section

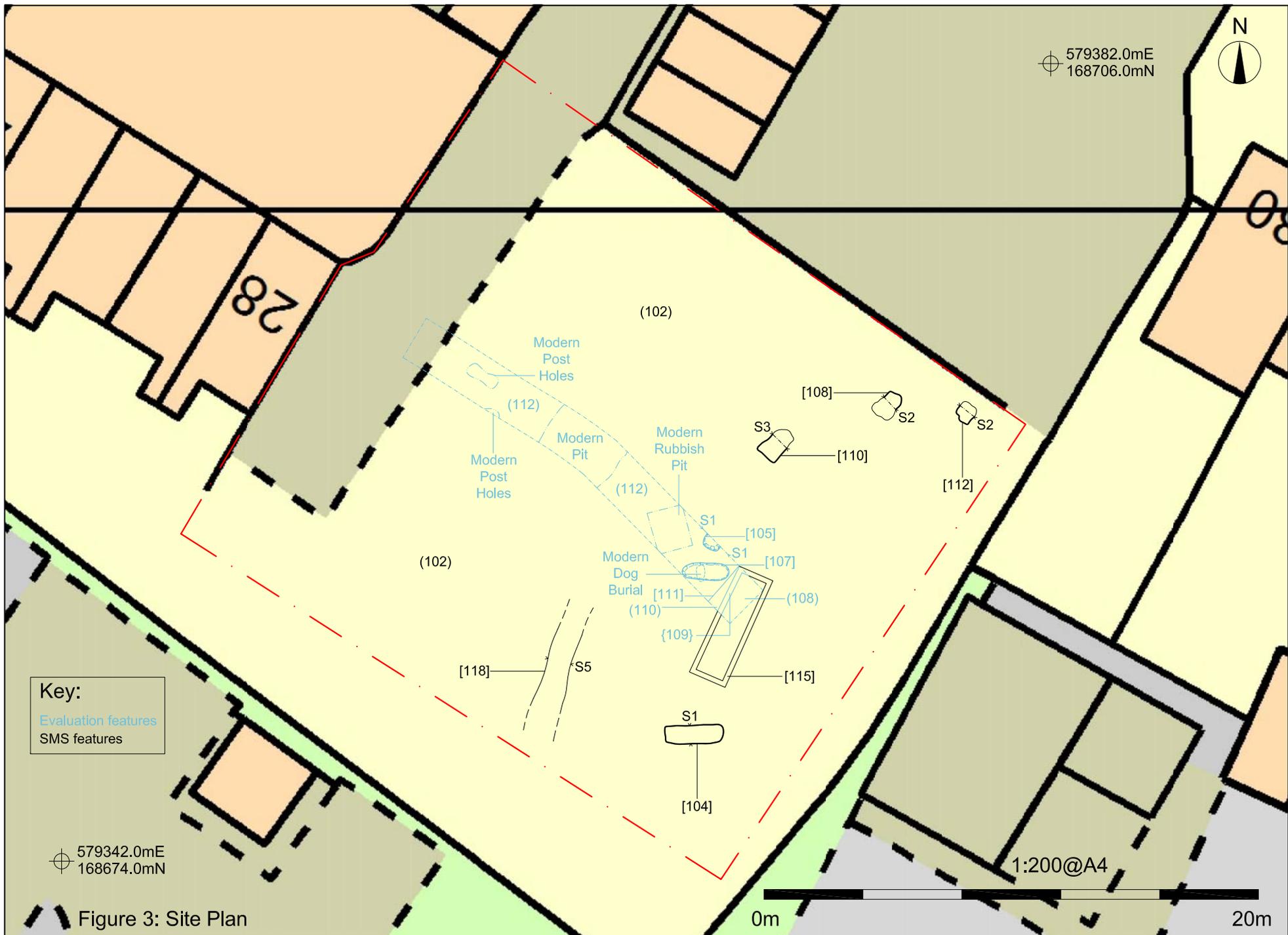


Figure 3: Site Plan

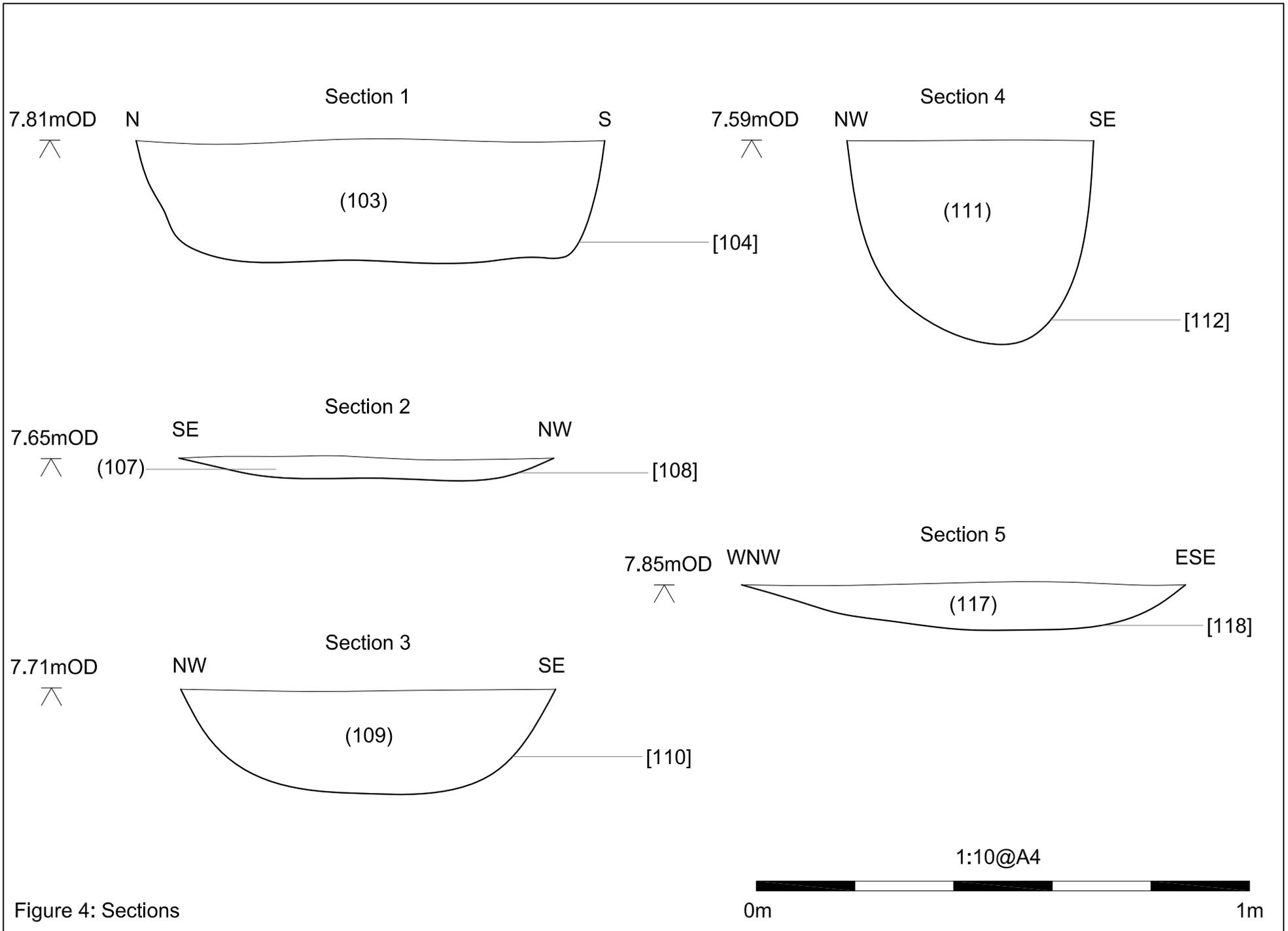


Figure 4: Sections