

Archaeological Evaluation on Land at Howt Green Farm, Sheppey Way, Bobbing, Kent

Site Code: HGF/2/-EV-17

NGR: NGR Site Centre: 589611 166037

Planning Application Number: SW/16/507789



Report for A C Goatham & Son

20/11/2017

SWAT ARCHAEOLOGY

Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company

The Office, School Farm Oast, Graveney Road

Faversham, Kent ME13 8UP

Tel; 01795 532548 or 07885 700 112

info@swatarchaeology.co.uk www.swatarchaeology.co.uk

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Summary

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) were commissioned by A C Goatham & Son to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at Howt Green Farm, Sheppey Way, Bobbing, Kent. The archaeological works were monitored by the Kent County Council Principal Archaeological Officer.

The fieldwork was carried out in October 2017 in accordance with an archaeological specification (KCC 2017) submitted to the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of works.

The Archaeological Evaluation consisted of five trenches, which encountered a relatively common stratigraphic sequence comprising topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology. Despite the potential for archaeological remains and relatively good preservation conditions, no archaeological features were recorded, and with no residual finds within the subsoil.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) were commissioned by A C Goatham & Son to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at Howt Green Farm, Sheppey Way, Bobbing, Kent (**Figures 1, 2**). A planning application (SW/16/507789) was approved by Swale Borough Council (SBC) for the construction of a new cold store, an extension on the east side of the existing cold store and a lagoon in the orchard to the east, on condition that a programme of archaeological work is undertaken.

1.1.2 In mitigation of the potential impact that the development may have on the buried archaeological resource Kent County Council Heritage & Conservation (KKCHC), who provide an advisory service to SBC, requested that the programme of works comprising an archaeological evaluation followed by appropriate mitigation measures, if considered necessary. This recommendation was subsequently added as a Condition (3) to the planning approval, which stated that;

3. Prior to the commencement of development hereby approved, the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, shall secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written specification and timetable which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded.

(SW/16/507789/FULL, Condition 3)

1.1.3 The fieldwork was carried out in October 2017 in accordance with an archaeological specification prepared by KCC Heritage (2017), prior to commencement of works, and in discussion with Simon Mason, the Principal Archaeological Officer, at KKCHC. A copy of the Specification is provided in **Appendix 3**.

1.2 Site Description and Topography

The proposed site was located northwest of Sheppey Way in the hamlet of Howt Green within a large orchard and parking area that was partially grubbed out to make way for the development and on an area of rough, disturbed ground southwest of the orchard within the farm yard.

Bounded by existing orchards to the north and east, Sheppey Way to the southeast and farm buildings to the west, the site was relatively L shaped and measured approximately 0.3819 ha and sloped gently to the southeast at approximately 24.30m to 25.67m aOD (above Ordnance Datum). Google Earth images showed a change of use sometime between 2007 and 2011 when the arable field was turned over to orchard. Earlier Ordnance Survey maps show the development site was an arable field from at least 1870.

According to the British Geological Survey, the site lies on Head deposits, and the archaeological evaluation revealed pale brown sandy silty clay in the form of Brickearth as exposed superficial geology below the surface.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

SWAT Archaeology has been involved in significant archaeological work at Coleshall Farm in Iwade, just over a kilometre north of the proposed development site. These ongoing works have revealed an extensive range of human activity from Neolithic pits (c.3350-2800BC) to Medieval field systems (c.1125-1350AD) (Wilkinson 2012). Prior to the work carried out by SWAT, Pre-Construct Archaeology (PCA) found evidence of Mesolithic to Iron Age remains in the neighbouring vicinity (Bishop & Bagwell 2005) and later Medieval activity in 2000 (PCA Unpublished document 2000). Just over a kilometre south of Howt Green Farm, Canterbury Archaeological Trust in 2008 uncovered a large high status Migration Period Anglo Saxon cemetery and earlier prehistoric ring ditches at The Meadows between Bobbing and Sittingbourne (Weekes 2012).

In April and May 2014 SWAT Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation at Howt Farm followed on by a strip, map and sample excavation that revealed the presence of prehistoric field systems comprising ditches, elongated pits, drainage gullies and other agricultural activity concentrated within an area located to the west of a large linear feature group, a possible hollow way or trackway. This large linear feature was provisionally interpreted as potential track way or hollow way leading to the Iwade settlement, located approximately 1k to the north and investigated by SWAT Archaeology and Pre Construct Archaeology.

The evidence for pottery making, provisionally dated to the Beaker Period, was discovered to the east of the centrally located large linear. The industrial features comprised a 'one shot' pottery kiln exposed during the evaluation. A refuse pit and adjacent post-holes located in the vicinity of the kiln were found during the excavation. The results from the excavation suggest that prehistoric activity from the Early Bronze Age into the Late Iron Age may have centred around the

trackway as an important access route through this area south of the Swale and its marshlands (SWAT 2015).

There are additional listings in the Historical Environment Record (HER) of recorded findings close to Howt Green Farm. Between 2000 and 2002 Thames Valley Archaeological Services carried out excavations at the site of a new crematorium and cemetery off of Stickfast Lane, approximately half a kilometre southwest of the development site. Work in 2000 revealed late Bronze Age to early Iron Age pits, ditches and gullies (HER Number TQ 86 NE 135), and further work in 2002 exposed post Medieval activity (HER Number TQ 86 NE 137).

2.1.1 Further details of previous discoveries and investigations within the immediate and wider area may be found in the Kent County Council Historic Environment Record and have been summarised in the Specification produced by KCC Heritage (2017).

2.2 Overview

2.2.1 The potential of this area has been assessed in relation to the proximity of known archaeological remains. The proposed development is located in an area that is archaeologically sensitive, close to the historic route to Sheppey and to the discovery of later prehistoric remains. The development of the adjacent Cold Store discovered remains of Bronze Age and Iron Age date that are expected to occur in the present site.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Specific Aims (KCC 2017)

3.1.1 The specific aims of the archaeological fieldwork are set out in the Specification (Appendix 2). These were to;

‘To determine the potential for archaeological remains to be present within the area of proposed development, groundwork and how they would be affected by such works. The location, nature, significance and condition of any archaeological remains present should be assessed and clearly set out in the evaluation report’.

3.2 General Aims

3.2.1 The general aims of the archaeological fieldwork were to;

- establish the presence or absence of any elements of the archaeological resource, both artefacts and ecofacts of archaeological interest across the area of the development;

- ascertain the extent, depth below ground surface, depth of deposit if possible, character, date and quality of any such archaeological remains by limited sample excavation;
- determine the state of preservation and importance of the archaeological resource, if present, and to assess the past impacts on the site and pay particular attention to the character, height/depth below ground level, condition, date and significance of any archaeological deposits.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 All fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the methodology set out in the Specification (KCC 2017) and carried out in compliance with the standards outlined in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standards Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations (CIfA 2014).

4.2 Fieldwork

4.2.1 A total of five evaluation trenches were proposed within the extents of the Site (Figure 1).

4.2.2 Each trench was initially scanned for surface finds prior to excavation. Excavation was carried out using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, removing the overburden to the top of the first recognisable archaeological horizon, under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist.

4.2.3 Where appropriate, trenches, or specific areas of trenches, were subsequently hand-cleaned to reveal features in plan and carefully selected cross-sections through the features were excavated to enable sufficient information about form, development date and stratigraphic relationships to be recorded without prejudice to more extensive investigations, should these prove to be necessary. All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with KCC and CIfA standards and guidance. A complete photographic record was maintained on site that included working shots; during mechanical excavation, following archaeological investigations and during back filling.

4.3 Recording

4.3.1 A complete drawn record of the evaluation trenches comprising both plans and sections, drawn to appropriate scales (1:20 for plans, 1:10 for sections) was undertaken. The plans and sections were annotated with coordinates and aOD heights.

4.3.2 Photographs were taken as appropriate providing a record of excavated features and deposits, along with images of the overall trench to illustrate their location and context. The record also

includes images of the Site overall. The photographic record comprises digital photography. A photographic register of all photographs taken is contained within the project archive.

- 4.3.3 A single context recording system was used to record the deposits. A full list is presented in Appendix 1. Layers and fills are identified in this report thus (100), whilst the cut of the feature is shown [100]. Context numbers were assigned to all deposits for recording purposes. Each number has been attributed to a specific trench with the primary number(s) relating to specific trenches (*i.e.* Trench 1, 101+, Trench 2, 201+, Trench 3, 301+ etc.).

5 RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 A total of five evaluation trenches were mechanically excavated under archaeological supervision.

5.2 Stratigraphic Deposit Sequence

- 5.2.1 A relatively consistent stratigraphic sequence was recorded across the majority of the Site comprising topsoil sealing an intact subsoil which overlay the natural clay geology.
- 5.2.2 The topsoil generally consisted of mid grey brown silty clay, moderate roots and occasional small rounded stones, topped with grass, overlying the subsoil which consisted of light to mid orange brown silt clay. Natural geology comprised relatively soft light orange brown silty clay.
- 5.2.3 Appendix 1 provides the stratigraphic sequence for all trenches. Figures 1-2 provide a site plan and trench location plan while Plates 1-6 include selected site photographs.

5.3 Overview

- 5.3.1 No archaeological features or finds were recorded within any of the five trenches.

6 FINDS

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 No pottery and flint was retrieved from the archaeological investigation.

7 DISCUSSION

7.1 Archaeological Narrative

- 7.1.1 Despite the potential for the presence and survival of archaeological remains no archaeological features were recorded within any of the five trenches.

7.1.2 The presence of the subsoil would suggest that preservation levels are relatively high and that if archaeological remains were present then they would have suffered minimal disturbance.

7.2 Conclusions

7.2.1 The archaeological evaluation has been successful in fulfilling the primary aims and objectives of the Specification. Development proposals are unlikely to impact on archaeological remains. Further archaeological mitigation, should it be necessary, will need to be determined in consultation with the Kent County Council and local planning authority.

7.2.2 This evaluation has, therefore, assessed the archaeological potential of land intended for development. The results from this work will be used to aid and inform the Principal Archaeological Officer (KCC) of any further archaeological mitigation measures that may be necessary in connection with any future development proposals.

8 ARCHIVE

8.1 General

8.1.1 The Site archive, which will include; paper records, photographic records, graphics and digital data, will be prepared following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2009; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).

8.1.2 All archive elements will be marked with the site/accession code, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive comprises 1 file/document case of paper records & A4 graphics

9 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

9.1.1 SWAT would like to thank A C Goatham & Son for commissioning the project. Thanks are also extended to Simon Mason, Principal Archaeological Officer, Kent County Council, for his advice and assistance.

9.1.2 Peter Cichy supervised the archaeological fieldwork; illustrations were produced by Bartek Cichy. David Britchfield (MCIfA) produced the draft text for this report which was edited by Dr. Paul Wilkinson (MCIfA).

10 REFERENCES

ADS 2013. Caring for Digital Data in Archaeology: a guide to good practice, Archaeology Data Service & Digital Antiquity Guides to Good Practice

Brown, D.H., 2011. Archaeological archives; a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation, Archaeological Archives Forum (revised edition)

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English Heritage 2002. Environmental Archaeology; a guide to theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation, Swindon, Centre for Archaeology Guidelines

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SWAT Archaeology 2015, Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample Assessment Report at Howt Green Farm, Sheppey Way, Bobbing, Kent

11 APPENDIX 1 – TRENCH TABLES

Trench 1	Dimensions: 33m x 1.1m Ground Level: 25.19m aOD (N)		
Context	Description	Interpretation	Depth (m)
101	Dark grey brown silty clay, moderate roots and occasional small rounded stones	Topsoil	0.00-0.15
102	Pale grey silt	Subsoil	0.15-0.23
103	Light orange brown silty clay	Natural	0.23+

Trench 2	Dimensions: 26m x 1.1m Ground Level: 25.83m aOD (E)		
Context	Description	Interpretation	Depth (m)
201	Pale grey brown silty clay, moderate roots and occasional small rounded stones	Topsoil	0.00-0.12
202	Light to mid orange brown silt clay with rare rounded stones and one modern intrusion	Subsoil	0.12-0.24
203	Light orange brown silty clay	Natural	0.24+

Trench 3	Dimensions: 22.50m x 1.1m Ground Level: 24.39m aOD (E)		
Context	Description	Interpretation	Depth (m)
301	Dark grey brown silty clay, moderate roots and occasional small rounded stones	Topsoil	0.00-0.18
302	Pale grey silt clay with rare rounded stones and two modern intrusions	Subsoil	0.18-0.33
303	Light orange brown silty clay	Natural	0.33+

Trench 4	Dimensions: 21.50m x 1.1m Ground Level: 24.27m aOD (S)		
Context	Description	Interpretation	Depth (m)
401	Dark grey brown silty clay, moderate roots and occasional small rounded stones	Topsoil	0.00-0.20
402	Light to mid orange brown silt clay with rare rounded stones with numerous modern intrusions	Subsoil	0.20-0.30
403	Yellow orange brown silty clay	Natural	0.30+

Trench 5	Dimensions: 26m x 1.1m Ground Level: 23.41m aOD (S)		
Context	Description	Interpretation	Depth (m)
501	Dark grey brown silty clay, moderate roots and occasional small rounded stones	Topsoil	0.00-0.15
502	Pale to mid grey brown silt clay with rare rounded stones with one modern land drain	Subsoil	0.15-0.24
503	Light orange brown silty clay	Natural	0.24+

12 APPENDIX 2 – KCC HER FORM

Site Name: Archaeological Evaluation on Land at Howt Green Farm, Sheppey Way, Bobbing, Kent

SWAT Site Code: HGF/2/-EV-17

Site Address: As above

Summary:

Swale & Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) were commissioned by A C Goatham & Son to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land at Howt Green Farm, Sheppey Way, Bobbing, Kent. The archaeological works were monitored by the Kent County Council Principal Archaeological Officer.

The fieldwork was carried out in October 2017 in accordance with an archaeological specification (KCC 2017) submitted to the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of works.

The Archaeological Evaluation consisted of five trenches, which encountered a relatively common stratigraphic sequence comprising topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology. Despite the potential for archaeological remains and relatively good preservation conditions, no archaeological features were recorded, although modern features were present within the subsoil.

District/Unitary: Swale Borough Council

Period(s):

NGR (centre of site to eight figures) NGR 589611 166037

Type of Archaeological work: Archaeological Evaluation

Date of recording: October 2017

Unit undertaking recording: Swale and Thames Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology)

Geology: Brickearth

Title and author of accompanying report: SWAT Archaeology (2017) Archaeological Evaluation on Land at Howt Green Farm, Sheppey Way, Bobbing, Kent

Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate)

See above

Location of archive/finds: SWAT. Archaeology. Graveney Rd, Faversham, Kent. ME13 8UP

Contact at Unit: Paul Wilkinson

Date: 20/11/2017



Plate 1. View of Trench 5 (looking NNW)



Plate 2. View of Trench 4 (looking NNW)



Plate 3. View of Trench 2 (looking E)



Plate 4. View of Trench 2 (showing modern feature and looking W)



Plate 5. Modern feature [405] Trench 4 (looking SW)



Plate 6. Modern feature [407] Trench 4 (looking SSW)

SITE SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

Specification for an archaeological evaluation at Howt Green Farm, Sheppey Way, Bobbing, Kent

1. Summary:

- 1.1 This specification sets out the requirements for an archaeological evaluation of land proposed for the development of a new cold store with associated hard standing, a cold store extension and a lagoon at Howt Green Farm, Sheppey Way, Bobbing 9 8QT. The results of the evaluation are intended to inform whether further archaeological mitigation is required as part of a programme of archaeological works secured on the planning permission for the development.

2. Site Location & Description:

- 2.1 The site is located to the north west of Sheppey Way in Bobbing. The site is an extension to an existing agricultural yard and includes an area that is presently cropped or orchard. The new development is generally irregular L shaped including part of the existing yard and an orchard. National Grid Reference is NGR 589611 166037.

3. Planning Background & Nature of Development:

- 3.1 The proposed development comprises the construction of a new cold store to the south of the site adjacent to Sheppey Way, and extension on the east side of the existing cold store and a lagoon in the orchard to the east.
- 3.2 Swale Borough Council has granted planning permission for the development reference SW/16/507789. On the advice of the County Archaeologist a condition securing a programme of archaeological works has been attached to the consent.

(3) Prior to the commencement of development hereby approved, the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, shall secure 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.

- 3.3 The present evaluation trial trenching **is the first part of the programme of archaeological works required by Condition 3**. The results of the work will inform any further archaeological investigation that may be needed to complete the programme of archaeological works and fully satisfy the planning condition.

4. Geological & Topographical Background:

According to the maps of the British Geological Survey, the site lies on Head deposit.

5. Archaeological & Historical Background Potential

- 5.1 The proposed development is located in an area that is archaeological sensitive, close to the historic route to Sheppey and to the discovery of later prehistoric remains. The development of the adjacent Cold Store discovered remains of Bronze Age and Iron Age date that are expected to occur in the present site. **An initial stage of evaluation should be to obtain the most up to date information of that work from SWAT Archaeology and overlay a plan of the previous findings with the present development works to confirm trial trench locations.**

6. Specific Aims of the Archaeological Work:

- 6.1 To determine the potential for archaeological remains to be present within the area of proposed development groundwork and how they would be affected by such works. The location, nature, significance and condition of any archaeological remains present should be assessed and clearly set out in the evaluation report.

7. Methodology:

- 7.1 The archaeological contractor will excavate 5 mechanical trenches each measuring 1.8m or 2m wide and 30m length as indicated on the attached indicative trenching plan. The trenches are designed to provide adequate assessment of the area proposed for the new building and the lagoon. Depending on the overlay of the previous findings a sixth trench may be needed in the area of the lean to extension of the present cold store.
- 7.2 It is accepted that there may be site constraints that limit the location of trenches but the evaluation should seek to address the indicated trench layout as much as possible. Amendments should be agreed with the County Archaeologist to ensure that the objectives of the work are being adequately addressed.
- 7.3 A contingency of 20m of trenching or test pits should be allowed for in the event that trenches need extending or additional testing of projected features is required.

8. Site Recording:

- 8.1 See Part B. A full record of the stratigraphy of each trench should be kept and overburden deposits and modern features recorded accurately to enable future mitigation design as appropriate.

9. Site Reporting and Archiving:

- 9.1 The report should be in accordance with the part B generic requirements but must include a detailed analysis of the archaeological deposits on the site and how they may potentially be impacted by development as proposed. The significance of the archaeology should be fully assessed and set out with reference to national criteria for assessing significance of archaeological remains.
- 9.2 A copy of the report should be made available to the Historic Research Group of Sittingbourne and the Sittingbourne Heritage Museum.

10. Monitoring:

- 10.1 Regular monitoring visits by the County Archaeologist will be arranged by the Archaeological Contractor.

11. General:

- 11.1 All work should be carried out in accordance with the general requirements for evaluation set out in Part B of this specification and in accordance with the attached figure illustrating the proposed trench layout.

**Simon Mason
Principal Archaeological Officer
Kent County Council**

6.6.17

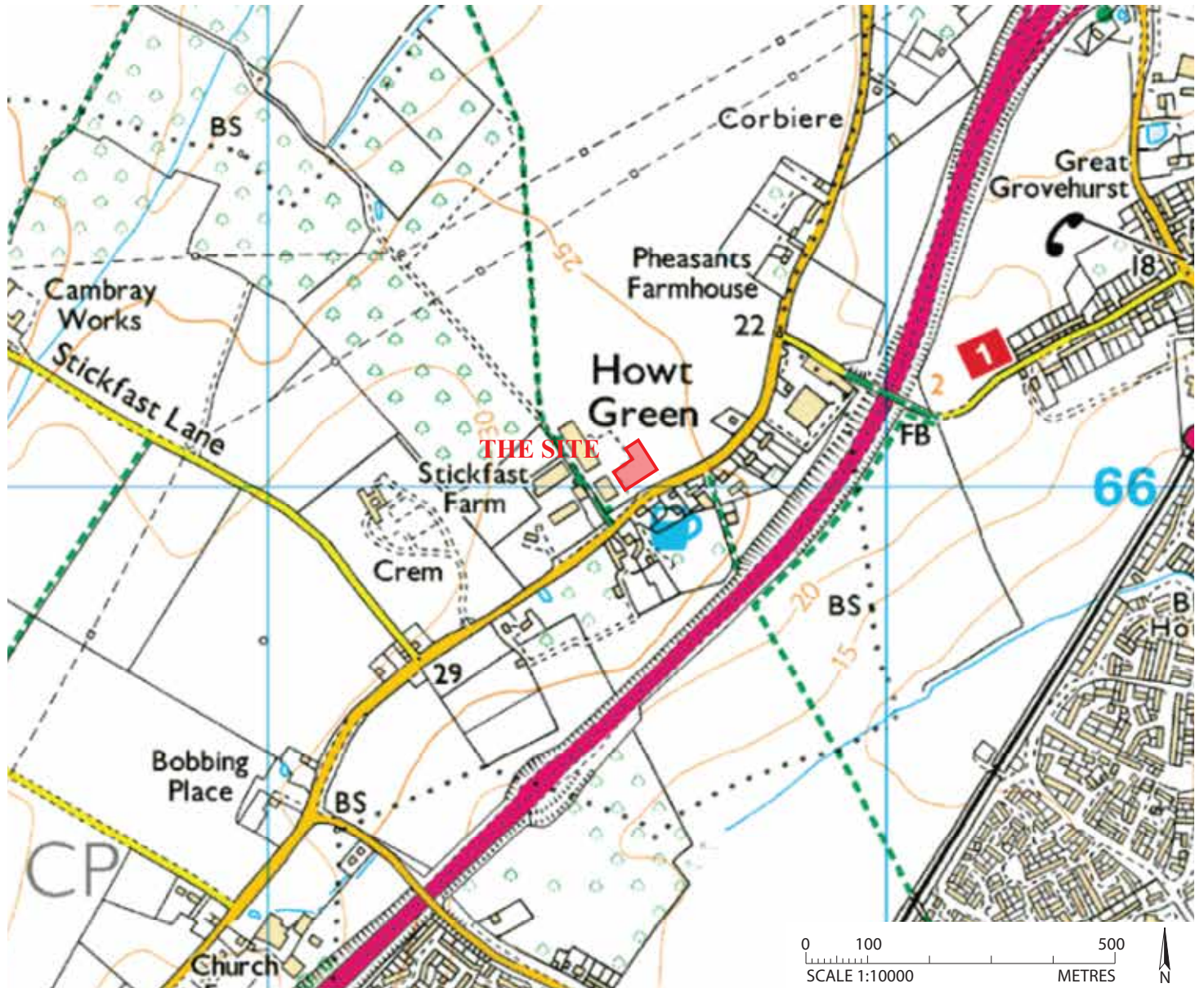


Figure 1: Site location map, scale 1:10000.

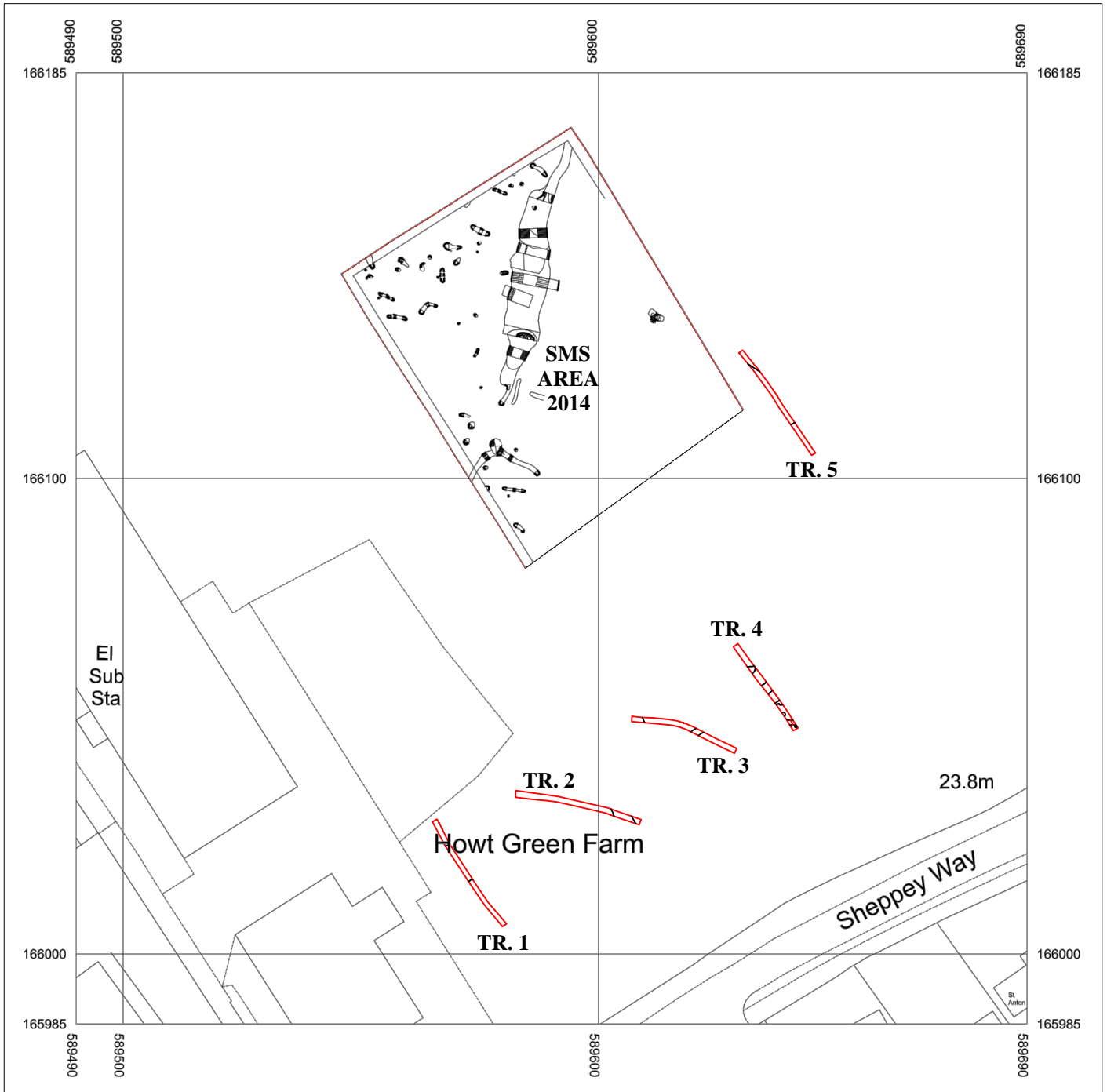


Figure 2: Trench location, scale 1:1250

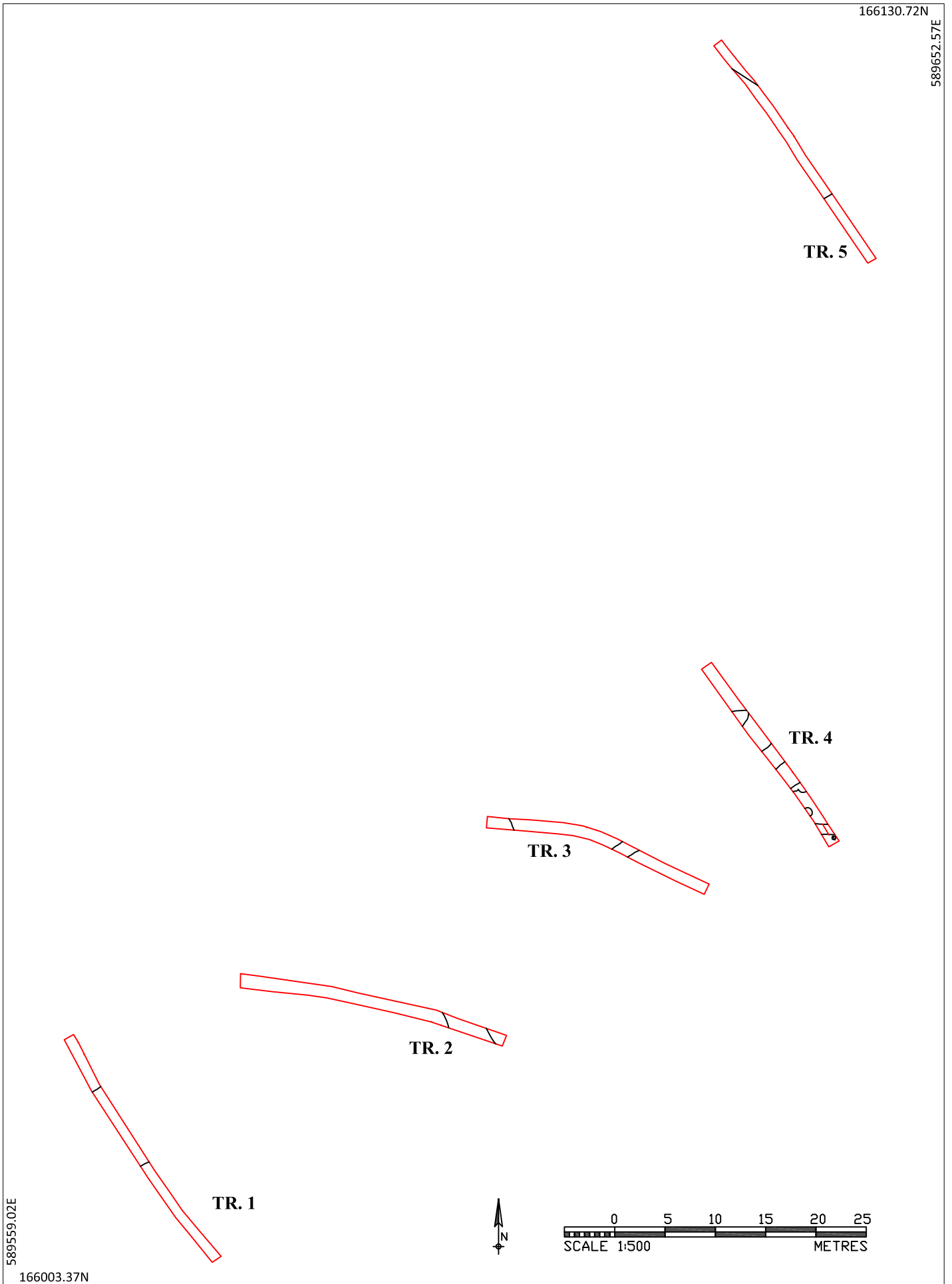


Figure 3: Trench location, scale 1:500

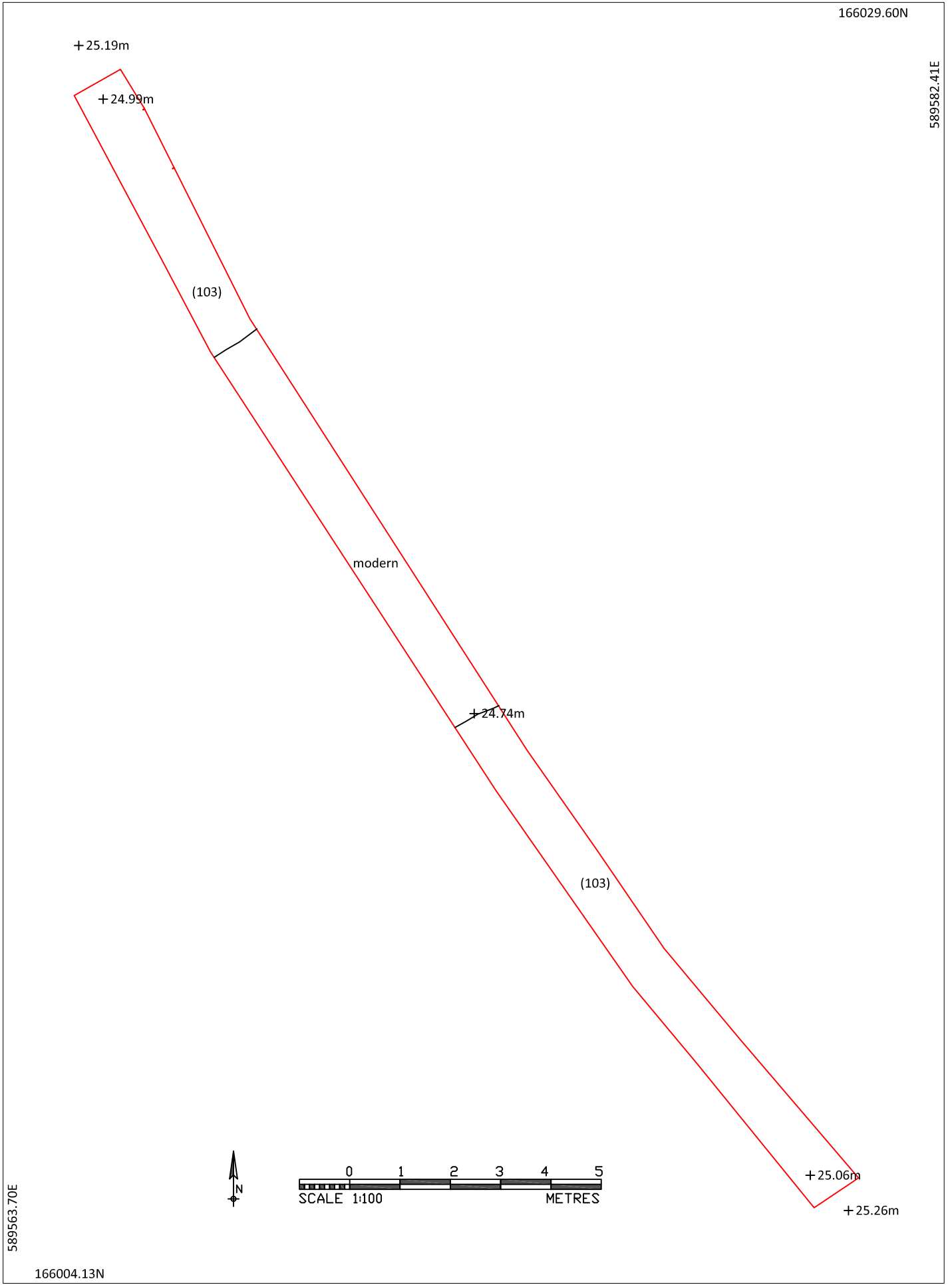


Figure 4: Trench 1

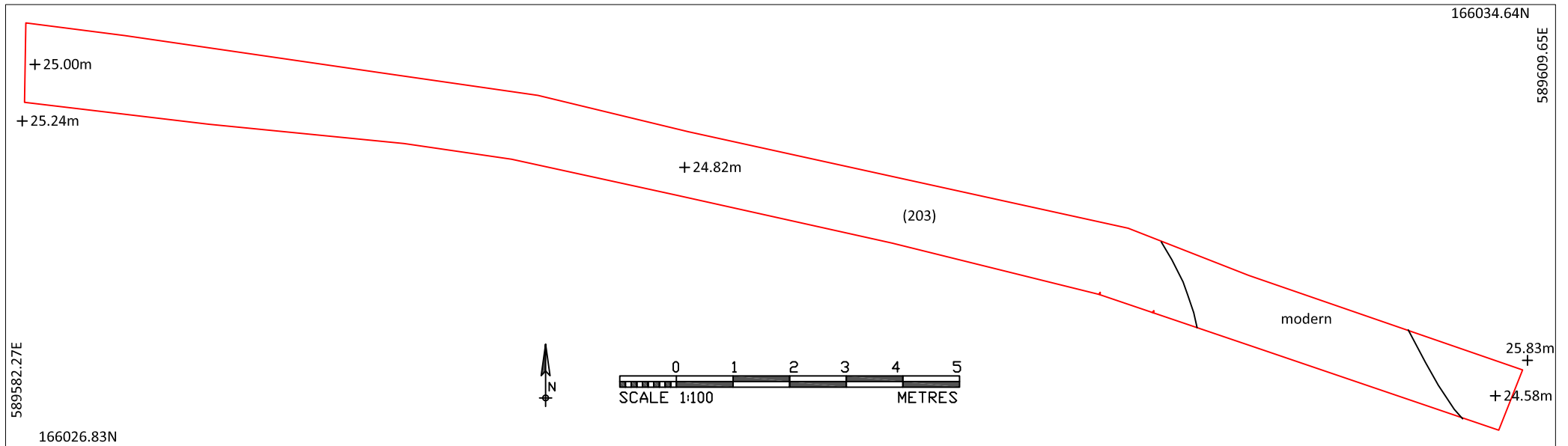


Figure 5: Trench 2

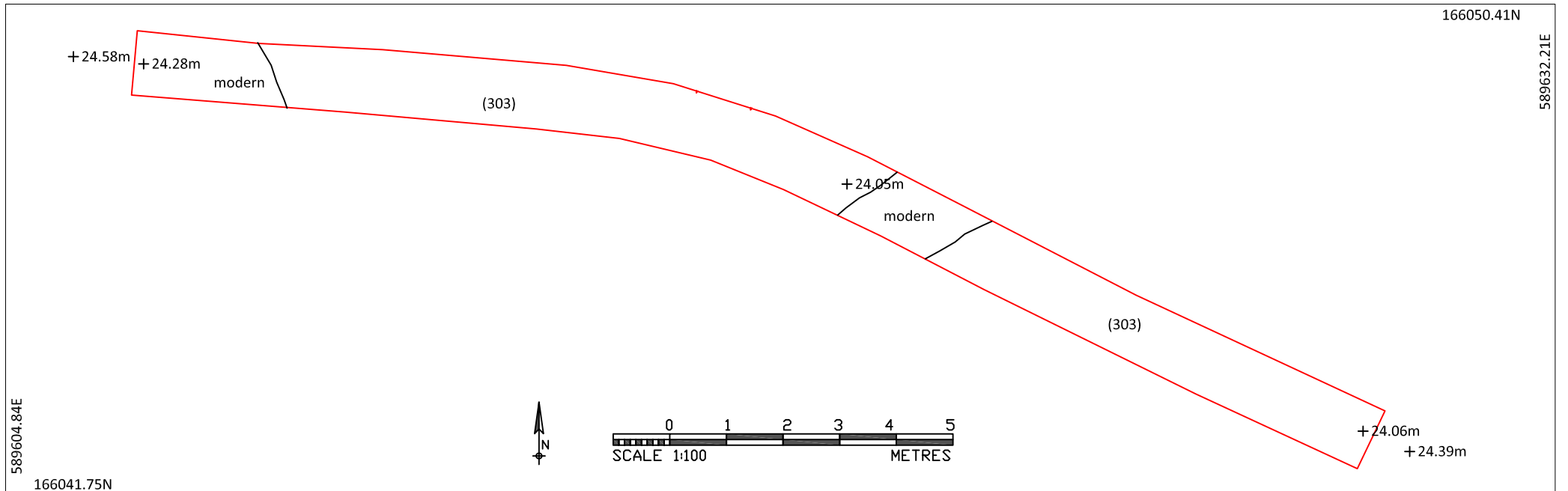


Figure 6: Trench 3

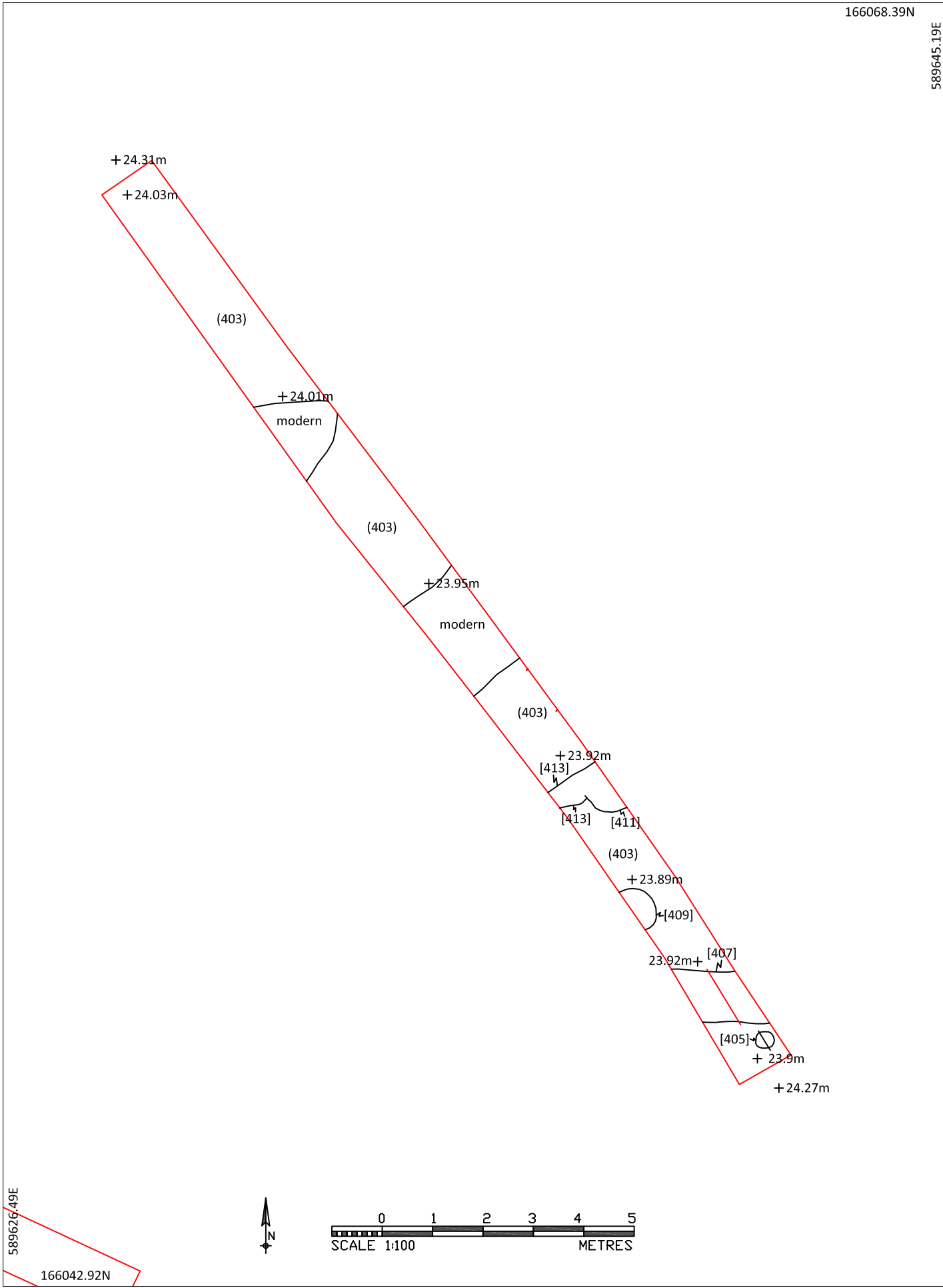


Figure 7: Trench 4

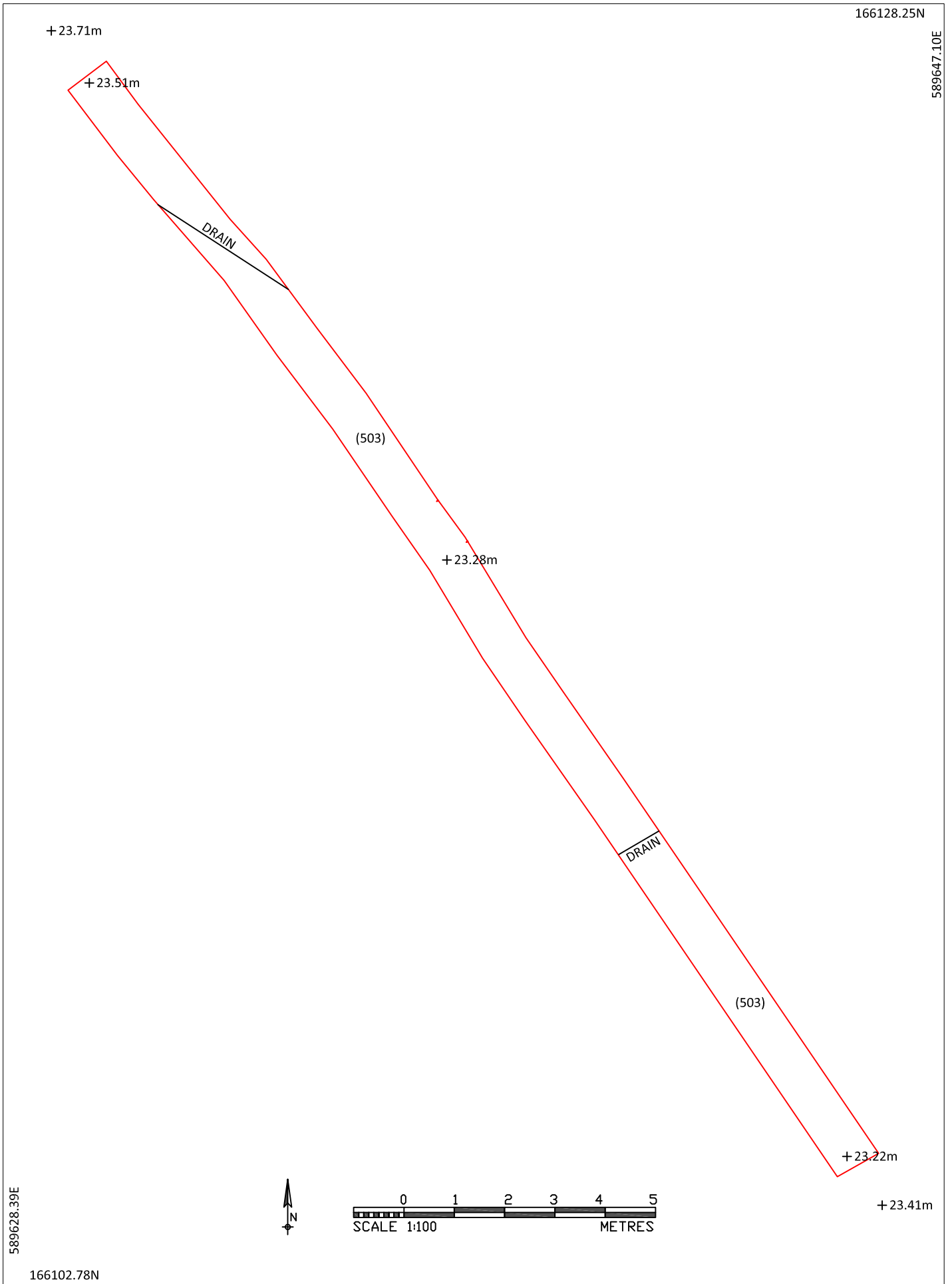


Figure 8: Trench 5

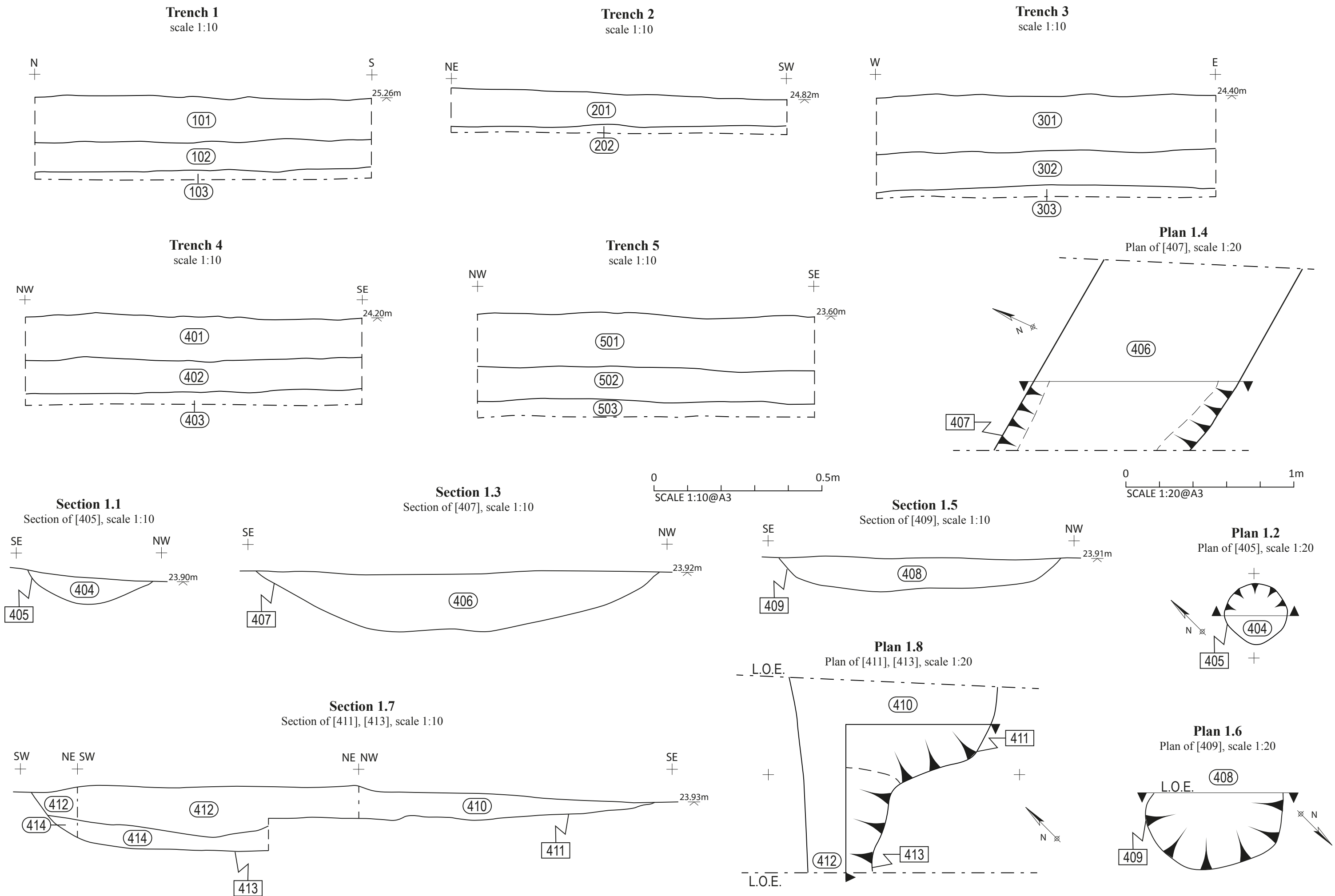


Figure 9: Representative sections of trenches, feature's sections and plans