

**Archive report on an  
archaeological evaluation at  
Crossways Garage,  
Brook Street, Colne Engaine, Essex**

**November 2000**

**on behalf of  
R J Goodwin, Crossways Garage**



**Colchester Archaeological Trust**

12 Lexden Road,  
Colchester,  
Essex CO3 3NF

*tel./fax:* (01206) 500124

*tel.:* (01206) 541051

*email:* [archaeologists@colchester-arch-trust.co.uk](mailto:archaeologists@colchester-arch-trust.co.uk)

**CAT Report 114**

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# Archive report on an archaeological evaluation at Crossways Garage, Brook Street, Colne Engaine, Essex

## 1 Summary

*Five trenches were cut on this site, giving a 10% sample. Apart from a single post-medieval gully or ditch, no significant archaeological features were found. There were two unstratified pieces of abraded tile, possibly Roman in date. The presence of a modern set of building foundations at the east end of the site shows that there has already been some severe disturbance here.*

## 2 Introduction

- 2.1 This is the archive report on an archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching at Crossways Garage, Brook Street, Colne Engaine, Essex. The work was commissioned on behalf of R J Goodwin, through Andrew Stevenson Associates, and was carried out by Colchester Archaeological Trust between 14th and 16th November 2000. Post-excavation work took place from 17th to 24th November 2000.
- 2.2 The archaeological work was carried out according to a specification written by Colchester Archaeological Trust in response to a brief written by the Essex County Council Heritage Advice, Management and Promotions Section (HAMP). The project was monitored by HAMP.
- 2.3 Proposed work is the construction of nine dwellings, and is the subject of planning application BTE/PE/50516/00.
- 2.4 NGR for the site centre is TL 8495 3043.

## 3 Archaeological background

- 3.1 This site is adjacent to the church of St Andrew. Any medieval church site in Essex has the potential to be the location of early medieval and perhaps Saxon settlement. In some cases, the presence of Roman brick or tile in the church fabric shows that there was (somewhere in the vicinity) a Roman building which was used as a quarry when the church was built.

- 3.2** The Crossways Garage site lies close (125m) to the church of St Andrew, which has Roman brick and tiles in its flint rubble walls, and so has the potential to be the site of Roman, possibly Saxon, and medieval occupation (Fig 1). This has not been confirmed or refuted by excavation, but there is other Roman material in the vicinity - two **Roman** pottery urns were found in 1922 between this site and the church (Essex Heritage Conservation Record or EHCR 9365).
- 3.3** There is no evidence of **Saxon** activity in the vicinity of the church, but this is always a possibility close to medieval churches which must (in most cases) be of Saxon origin.
- 3.4** The principal evidence of **medieval** activity is St Andrew's Church itself (EHCR 9414-7). This has a 12th-century nave, a chancel rebuilt in the 13th century, and a west tower added probably in the 14th century.

## **4 Aim**

- 4.1** The aim of the archaeological work was to determine the location, character, extent, date, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains. Using this information, an informed decision could be made on any future necessary archaeological work.
- 4.2** Specific aims of the excavation were to assess: the evidence of Roman occupation; the medieval development of the area; surviving structural elements and their state of preservation; and the range of objects that were in use, as well as their status, the presence of imports, etc.

## **5 Methodology**

- 5.1** Five trenches were cut by JCB with a flat-edged ditching bucket under archaeological supervision. These were in the locations shown on Figure 2. Trench lengths were as follows: Trench 1 or T1 - 50m; T2 - 30m; T3 - 30m; T4 - 20m; and T5 - 20m. This gave a total trench area of  $150 \times 1.5 = 225 \text{ m}^2$ , which equates to slightly over 10% of the site area.
- 5.2** The trench bottoms were cleaned by hand, and all archaeological features were excavated by hand.

## 6 Results

### 6.1 Trench 1 (Fig 3)

After the machine-removal of the recently dumped topsoil layer (Layer 1 or L1), the principal discoveries in this trench were three modern concrete and brick walls (Feature 1 or F1, F2, F3). The wall structure was located in a slightly broader trench (see sections on Fig 3). The walls all cut L2, the old topsoil horizon. These were from a bungalow whose foundations were laid *circa* 1969<sup>1</sup>, but which was never finished. To the west of the modern footings, a shallow cut F7 was excavated. There were no finds and the cut remains undated.

### 6.2 Trench 2 (Fig 3)

The story of Trench 2 is much like T1. The principal remains were modern concrete and brick footings (F4 and F5). F4 appeared to be the south-east corner of the building, and it had a short spur of wall running off it to the north which was certainly a room divider.

### 6.3 Trench 3 (Fig 4)

After stripping of L1 and the old topsoil L2, a feature was revealed in this trench (F6). F6 was a small ditch, and the only certain archaeological feature on the site which was not demonstrably modern. Excavation of F6 produced a piece of peg-tile and a few tile scraps, which dates the feature to the medieval or probably post-medieval period.

### 6.4 Trench 4 (Fig 4)

Unlike T1-T3 which were cut through the open grass rear of the garage, this trench (T4) and T5 were cut into old car-parking areas. The top surface was a mixture of crushed tarmac pieces (L4) over a very disturbed dump layer (L5). Both of these layers stripped off to reveal natural L3. However, there was a peculiar greenish-looking feature (F9) covering a large part of the trench. During machining, a very oily smell was noticed in the topsoil above this feature, and the same smell was evident when its surface was scraped. Scrutiny of the section showed that there was an oily stain running from present ground level, through L4-L5, and into the natural L3. It therefore seems that F9 is simply an oil stain. A small sondage was made into F9 just to be sure. There were no finds, and the 'fill' was identical to the natural. There is no doubt that F9 is an oil stain and not a real feature.

### 6.5 Trench 5 (Fig 4)

This trench was cut through the old car-park area. Like T4, the top surface of Trench 5 was tarmac pieces (L4) over a dumped mixed deposit (L6). After removal of these layers, two features showed up. The first was a narrow clay-filled slot (F8), which was visible at site level and is therefore very recent, and a ditch-like feature (F10) with modern brick showing in its upper surface. It looked post-medieval or modern. Following the advice of Mr R Havis, the HAMP monitor, this feature was not dug.

## 7 Finds list

Trench	Context	Qt	Wt	Description	Date
1	u/s	2	53	peg-tile fragments, 10mm thick	medieval or post-medieval
1	u/s	1	27	tile fragment 15mm thick, possibly Roman	Roman?
1	u/s	1	10	tile fragment 10mm thick with grey core	undated - Roman?
3	F6	1	2	tiny tile fragment	undated
3	F6	1	190	peg-tile fragment with square peg hole	medieval or post-medieval
3	F6	2	5	undated tile or brick fragments	undated

u/s = unstratified  
weights are grammes

## 8 Discussion

Apart from a single post-medieval gully or ditch, no significant archaeological features were found here. There were two pieces of abraded red tile (unstratified from T1) which might be Roman in date. If so, they are the only clues that there may once have been Roman activity in this area (as suggested by the 1922 discovery of two Roman cremations nearby: EHCR 9365). The presence of a modern set of building foundations at the east end of the site shows that there has already been some severe disturbance here.

<sup>1</sup> pers comm Jennifer Smith

## 9 Archive deposition

The full archive is currently at CAT headquarters at 12 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex but will soon be deposited at Braintree Museum under accession number BRNTM 2000.4.

## 10 Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Jennifer Smith for commissioning the work on behalf of R J Goodwin, through the good offices of Andrew Stevenson Associates. Site work was directed by Howard Brooks and carried out by Nigel Rayner and Karly Weller. The project was monitored for HAMP by Richard Havis.

*Howard Brooks  
23rd November 2000*

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**Colchester Archaeological Trust**  
12 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3NF  
*tel/fax:* (01206) 500124  
*tel.:* (01206) 541051  
*email:* [archaeologists@colchester-arch-trust.co.uk](mailto:archaeologists@colchester-arch-trust.co.uk)

*checked by:* .....

*date:* .....

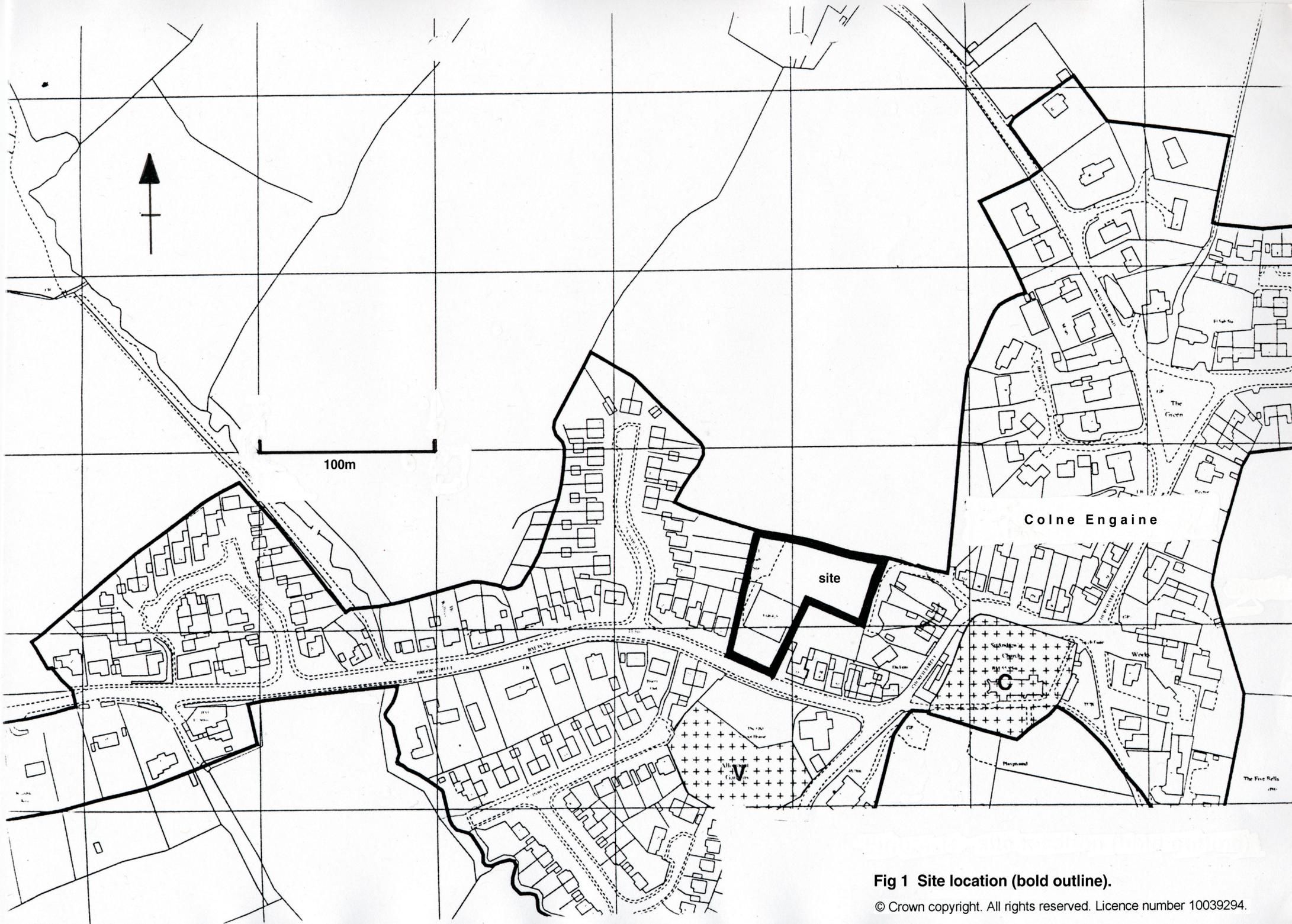
## Appendix: site data

### Context list

Trench	Context	Description	Cuts/seals	Finds date	Context date
1	F1	Concrete and brick wall	L2		modern
1	F2	Concrete and brick wall	L2		modern
1	F3	Concrete and brick wall	L2		modern
2	F4	Concrete and brick wall	L2		modern
2	F5	Concrete and brick wall	L2		modern
3	F6	Small ditch	natural	post-medieval	post-medieval?
1	F7	Shallow cut	natural		undated
5	F8	Slot	L4		modern
4	F9	Oily stain	natural		modern
5	F10	Ditch	natural		post-medieval?
1-3	L1	Recent dumped soil	L2		late 20th century
1-3	L2	Topsoil	F6, L3		post-medieval
1-5	L3	Natural			
5	L4	Crushed tarmac	L3		late 20th century
4	L5	Dumped deposit	L3		late 20th century
5	L6	Dumped deposit	F10, L3		late 20th century

### Soil descriptions

Context	Description
L1	Recent topsoil - dark grey brown sandy loam.
L2	Old topsoil - mixture of dark yellow brown and dark grey brown sandy clay.
L3	Orange brown clay with common small, medium and large stones.
L4	Crushed tarmac.
L5	Dark brown sandy loam with charcoal, brick fragments and patches of greenish grey which are probably staining from oil.
L6	Mixed orange brown sandy loam, with brick and mortar pieces.



**Fig 1 Site location (bold outline).**



Fig 2 Trench location.

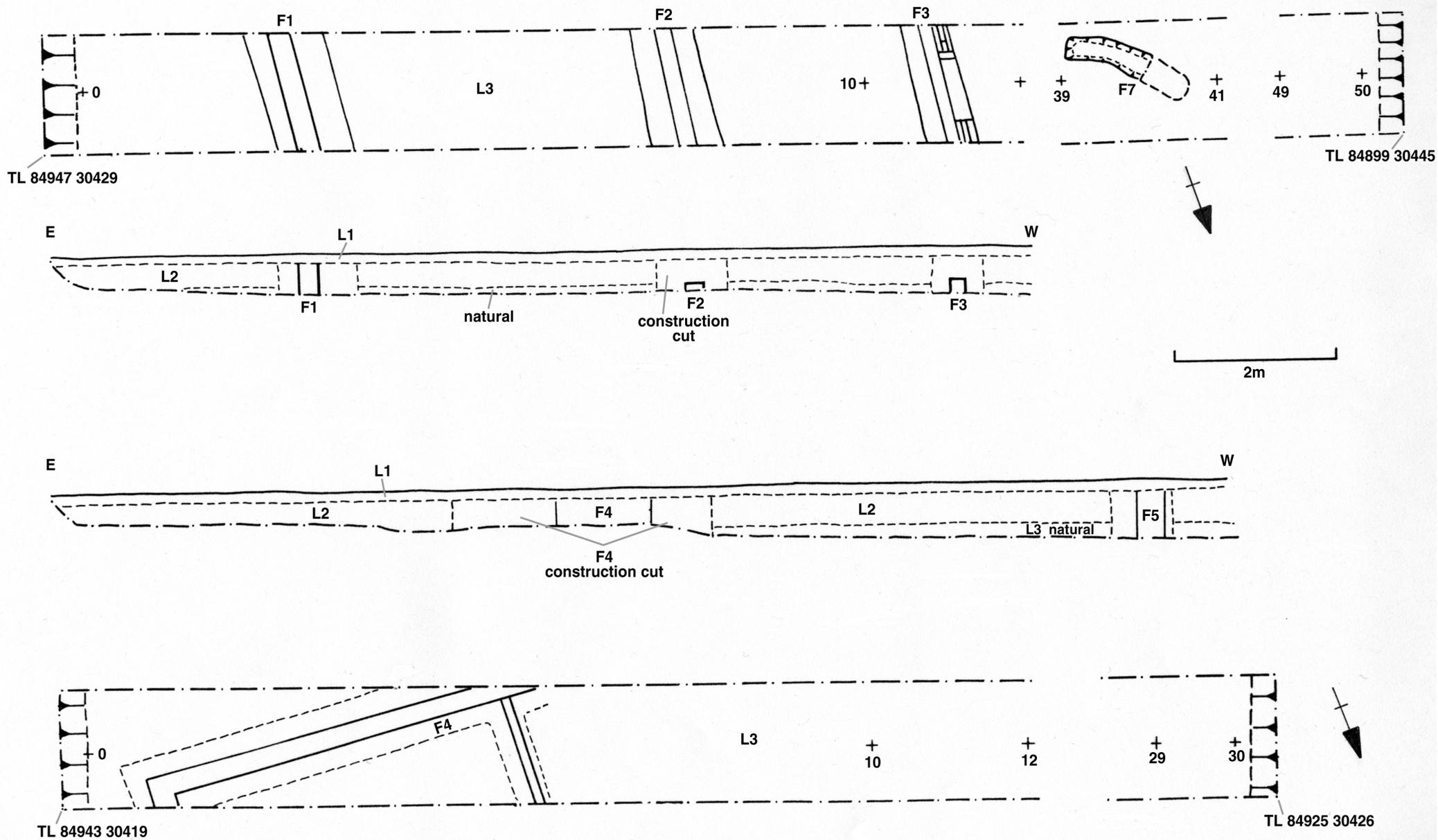


Fig 3 Plan and section of Trench 1 (above) and Trench 2 (below).

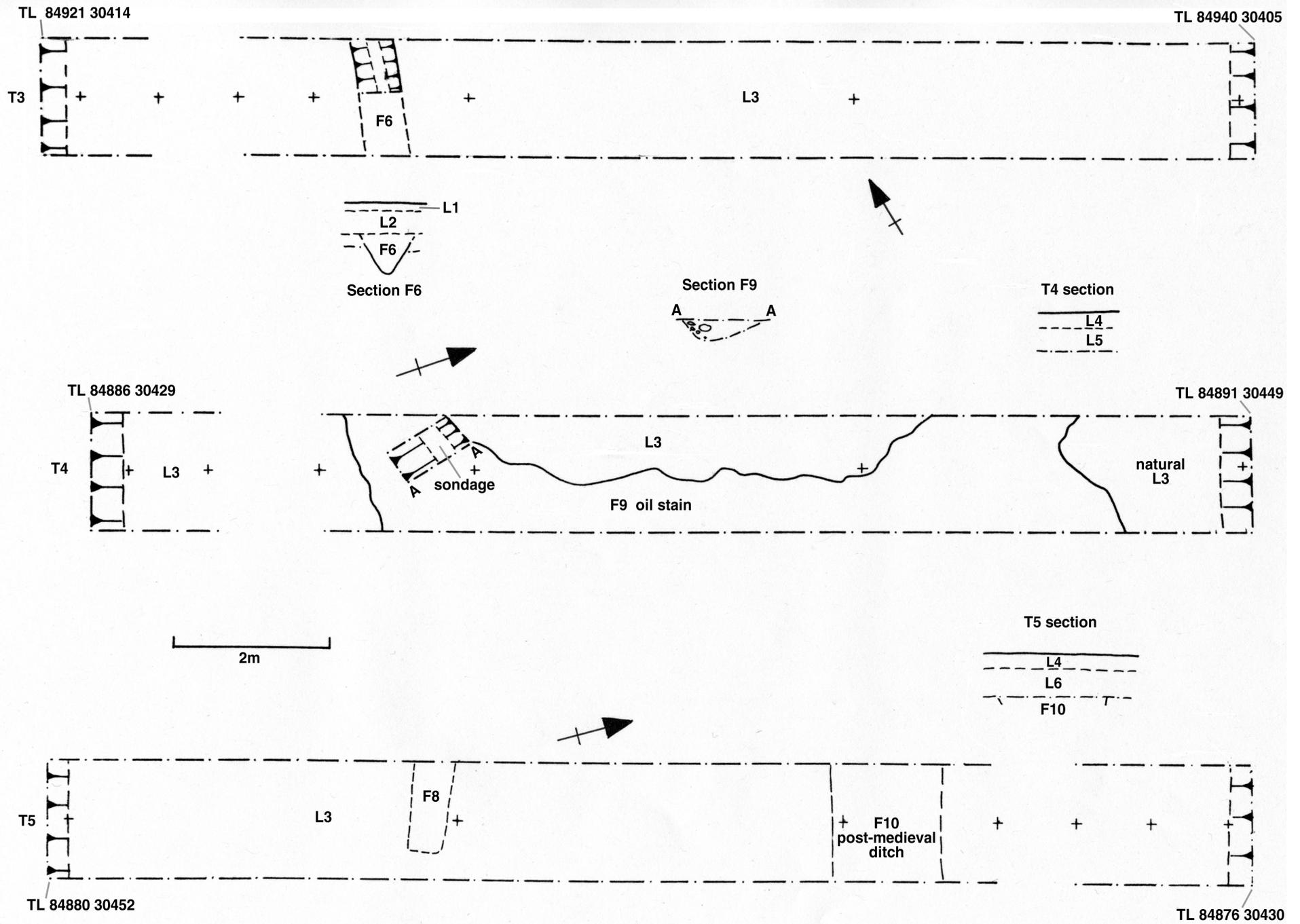


Fig 4 Plan and section of Trenches 3-5.