

**Archaeological
monitoring and recording
at the rear of 6-8a South Street,
Rochford, Essex
February-March 2003**

**report prepared by
Ben Holloway**

**on behalf of
Allied Construction**

HAMP code: RF15
NGR: TQ 8762 9043
CAT project code: 03/2a
Southend Museum accession code: SOUMS: A 2003.1



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CAT Report 227
May 2003

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EHCR summary sheet

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1 Summary

Observations were made during archaeological monitoring and recording on the excavation of an engineering trench and the ground-beams for a housing development at the rear of 6-8a South Street, Rochford, Essex. The only features of archaeological interest were three post-medieval pits and a post-medieval well.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 This is the archive report on archaeological monitoring and recording which was carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) on the site at the rear of 6-8a South Street in Rochford during February and March 2003.
- 2.2 An engineering trench and ground-beam trenches were excavated at NGR TQ 8762 9043 by the contractor using a mechanical excavator with a toothless ditching bucket. The trench was excavated layer by layer, and any features observed were investigated and recorded before the next layer was removed (Figs 1-2).
- 2.3 All fieldwork was done in accordance with a specification agreed with the Heritage Advice Management and Promotion (HAMP) group officer from Essex County Council.
- 2.4 The code of conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) was followed, as was the IFA's *Standard and guidance for a watching brief* (1999).

3 Archaeological background

The information summarised here is from Medlycott 1999 (pp 10-11).

Rochford received its market charter in 1257 and from this point developed to become the market town for the surrounding area. The medieval street pattern is formed by a crossroads of North Street, South Street, East Street and West Street with the market place at the centre.

The development site is situated within the historic medieval core of the town in an area of medieval ribbon development.

It was expected that evidence of tenement plots from the 13th century and later periods would be found during the excavation. Other buried remains expected from the rear of medieval and post-medieval houses and shops would be outbuildings, yard areas, wells, ovens, cellars, and rubbish-pits.

It is possible that Anglo-Saxon remains survive on the site, although the Saxon and early medieval village at Rochford are thought to have been focused more to the west, around St Andrew's Church and the Hall, which was a manorial centre.

The standing buildings surrounding the development site are mainly 18th century in date, and many of these are listed, including one on the frontage of the development site which is listed as Grade II.

Previous archaeological investigations have found that archaeological deposits average between 1m and 2m in depth and are relatively undamaged by recent disturbance. Soil conditions are conducive to the preservation of faunal remains and artefacts such as ceramics, building materials and metal.

4 Aim

The aim of the monitoring and recording was to identify and record any archaeological remains exposed during the excavation of an engineering trench and of the ground-beams. This would allow the date, importance and condition of any remains to be assessed. The date of the earliest occupation on the site needed to be established and if possible, the change from medieval to post-medieval also studied, as well as any evidence of Rochford's trade links through the investigation of any imported pottery and pottery from London.

5 The trenches

5.1 Engineering trench (Figs 3, 5, 7)

The trench was 600mm wide, 3.60m long, and 900mm deep. Three features were observed during the excavation of this trench. These were a brick cellar wall or footing for demolished outbuilding (Feature or F1), a modern rubbish-pit (F2), and a natural glacial feature (F3). Four layers were observed during the excavation of the engineering trench. These are listed as Layer or L1-L4 and are described in the context and soil description lists (sections 12.1 and 12.2). F1 was cut and sealed by L1. F2 was cut into the natural clay L3 and was sealed by the topsoil L1.

5.2 Ground-beam trenches (Figs 4, 6, 7)

A series of sixteen connecting ground-beam trenches (trenches GB1-GB16) were dug in the building footprint as shown on the trench plan (Fig 4). The trenches were all 500mm wide and excavated to a depth of between 800mm and 1m. As in the excavation of the engineering trench, four layers were observed (L1-L4). These are described in the context and soil description lists (sections 12.1 and 12.2). During the excavation of the ground-beam trenches, a further five features were observed. The trenches which contained features (trenches GB4, GB5 and GB12) and a trench which is representative of the site (trench GB3) are described below.

5.3 Trench GB4

The trench was excavated to a depth of 1m, and 300mm of topsoil L1 seals London Clay L3. The clay is 300mm thick and seals deposits of highly compacted glacial sands and gravel L4. A feature was observed in Trench 4; this was a post-medieval rubbish-pit F5. The pit was sealed by topsoil (L1) and was cut through the London Clay (L3) and on into the natural (L4). The feature contained pottery, glass and clay tobacco pipe.

5.4 Trench GB5

Trench 5 was excavated to a depth of 900mm before geological deposits were encountered. No L1 topsoil was present in this trench. In place of topsoil (L1) there is post-medieval brickwork from the footing F7. The brickwork F7 seals another post-medieval rubbish-pit F6 the pit cut the London Clay L3 and the natural sand and gravel L4. The pit contained pot, glass and clay tobacco pipe.

5.5 Trench GB12

Within Trench 12, a post-medieval well (F4) was observed, and the trench was excavated to a greater depth than the other ground-beam trenches to allow the removal of F4, with 300mm of topsoil L1 sealing the London Clay (L3) which seals natural geological sands and gravels (L4). The feature was sealed by the topsoil (L1) and cut through the London Clay (L3) and on into the natural geological sands and gravels (L4).

5.6 Trench GB3

Trench 3 was excavated to a depth of 1m. No features were observed in Trench 3, but it is a good representation of the majority of the sixteen ground-beam trenches that were excavated, with 400mm of topsoil (L1) sealing a thin band of loosely compacted gravel which is 100mm thick (L2). The gravel band seals a 300mm-thick layer of London Clay (L3) which in turn seals natural glacial sands and gravels (L4).

6 Finds

6.1 Finds list

Finds no	Small finds no	Context	Description	Phase	Weight (g)
1	-	F1	Brick	post-medieval	1623
1	-	F1	Brick	post-medieval	1646
2	-	F2	Slate	modern	55
2	-	F2	Glass	modern	24
2	-	F2	Pot	modern	55
2	-	F2	Tile	modern	95

2	-	F2	Metal shop sign advertising 'Adkin and Son of London tobacco'	modern	1478
3	-	U/S	Tile	modern	79
3	-	U/S	Pot	modern	9
3	-	U/S	Clay tobacco pipe	post-medieval	8
5	-	F5	Clay tobacco pipe	post-medieval	33
5	-	F5	Fe horseshoe	post-medieval	300
5	-	F5	Animal bone	-	366
5	-	F5	Oystershell	-	58
5	-	F5	Coal	-	18
5	-	F5	Glass	post-medieval	259
5	-	F5	Pot	post-medieval	110
6	-	L1	Glass	post-medieval	27
6	-	L1	Pot	post-medieval	1034
7	-	F6	Glass bottle	post-medieval	643
7	-	F6	Fe horseshoe	post-medieval	282
7	-	F6	Pot	modern	157
18	-	L1	Tile	post-medieval	187
18	-	L1	Glass	post-medieval	29
18	-	L1	Oystershell	-	78
18	-	L1	Pot	modern	3177
15	-	L1	Glass	post-medieval	127
15	-	L1	Pot	modern	26
15	-	L1	Bone	-	45
11	-	L1	Slate	modern	48
11	-	L1	Pot	modern	5
11	-	L1	Clay tobacco pipe	post-medieval	5
11	-	L1	Oystershell	-	9
12	-	U/S	Glass	post-medieval	150
17	-	L1	Bone	-	209
17	-	L1	Oystershell	-	12
17	-	L1	Coal	-	5
17	-	L1	Pot	post-medieval/ modern	84
17	-	L1	Tile	modern	218
17	-	L1	Glass	post-medieval/ modern	298
4	-	L1	Glass	modern	35
4	-	L1	Tile	post-medieval/ modern	186
4	-	L1	Brick	post-medieval	5163
9	-	F7	Brick	post-medieval	2200
10	-	L1	Glass	post-medieval	35
10	-	L1	Fe nail	post-medieval	3
10	-	L1	Pot	modern	150

6.2 Pottery

Pottery from the engineering trench and the ground-beam trenches came from the post-medieval topsoil L1 and rubbish-pits F2, F5 and F6. Fifty sherds were recovered at a total weight of 4807g. All of the pottery is datable to the post-medieval and modern periods and breaks down as follows (fabric codes after Cotter 2000).

Fabric 48d	modern china, including a complete tea bowl (19th/20th century)
Fabric 45m	modern stoneware (19th/20th century)
Fabric 42	border ware (mid 16th/17th century)
Fabric 46	tin-glazed earthenware, includes tea bowl and fragments of an apothecary jar (late 16th-mid 18th century)
Fabric 40	post-medieval red earthenware (17th/19th century).

6.3 Other finds

As well as the pottery, a selection of other datable material was recovered from the engineering and ground-beam trenches. This material includes 18th-century clay tobacco-pipe stems and bowls, and modern bottle and window glass, as well as fragments of 19th-century medicine bottles, modern roofing slate, post-medieval brick, post-medieval/modern roof tile, and a metal shop sign advertising 'Adkin and Son of London tobacco'. As with the pottery recovered from the site, the material is all datable to either the post-medieval or modern periods.

6.4 Small finds

by Nina Crummy

SF 1 (8) F5. Post-medieval rubbish-pit. Three small fragments of a copper-alloy strip, all plano-convex in section, but this form may be the result of expansion during corrosion. Length 13, 15, and 29mm, max width 6mm.

SF 2 (14) L1. Post-medieval topsoil. Iron or steel stirrup iron with oval foot, the top split and forced open, and the slot for the stirrup leather is missing. Width of foot 119mm. The form is modern and still in use.

SF 3 (16) F4. Post-medieval well. Part of an iron table knife with a plain bone handle. The blade has a whittle tang that has partly split the handle as it corrodes. The handle has flat upper and lower faces and rounded edges and end; it tapers slightly towards the blade. Surviving length 117mm, handle length 90mm, width tapering from 19mm to 15mm. The form belongs chiefly to the 19th century and the first part of the 20th century.

7 Discussion and interpretation

Eight features were identified during the excavation of the engineering trench and the ground-beam trenches. These consisted of three post-medieval rubbish-pits (F2, F5, F6), a post-medieval well (F4), post-medieval brickwork (F1 and F7), a modern concrete footing (F8), and a natural glacial or peri-glacial feature (F3).

The material from the rubbish-pits appears to be of a domestic or light industrial nature and is of a type that would be expected in domestic midden deposits in yards and gardens, such as pottery, glass fragments and animal bone. The material all dates to the post-medieval or modern periods and presumably relates to the buildings with street frontages which did not extend far enough back to reach the site. Domestic activity on the site is also indicated by the presence of the well F4.

The brickwork F1 and F7 seems to be part of the same structure and appears to be the footprint of an outbuilding dating to the post-medieval period. The concrete footing F8 is modern and is associated with a workshop which was demolished in the 1960s.

The nature of the features and the material which was recovered from them indicate that activity on the site took place during the post-medieval and modern periods and appears to be of a domestic or light industrial nature.

8 Acknowledgments

The Colchester Archaeological Trust would like to thank Allied Construction for commissioning and funding the project and Barry Larman, Allied Construction, for his assistance.

The project was monitored by Richard Havis, HAMP officer for Essex County Council. The project was managed by Howard Brooks and the site work was carried out by Ben Holloway of CAT.

9 References

- Cotter, J, 2000 *Post-Roman pottery from excavations in Colchester, 1971-85*, Colchester Archaeological Report 7
- Medlycott, M, 1999 *Rochford: historic towns project*, Essex County Council Planning

10 Glossary

Anglo-Saxon context	period from around AD 430 to AD 1066 specific location on an archaeological site, especially one where finds are made
feature	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain, a floor; can contain 'contexts'
HAMP	Heritage Advice Management and Promotion group
IFA	Institute of Field Archaeologists
medieval	period from AD 1066 to Henry the VIII
modern	period from the 19th century onwards to the present
NGR	National Grid Reference
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
post-medieval	after Henry VIII to around the late 18th century
U/S	unstratified

11 Archive deposition

The paper and digital archive is held at Colchester Archaeological Trust, 12 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3NF, but it will be permanently deposited with Southend Museum under the accession code SOUMS: A 2003.1.

12 Site data

12.1 Site context list

Location	Context	Description	Context date
Engineering trench & trenches GB1-GB16	L1	Topsoil	modern
Engineering trench	L2	Coarse gravel	natural
Engineering trench & trenches GB1-GB16	L3	London Clay	natural
Engineering trench & trenches GB1-GB16	L4	Compacted sand and gravel	natural
Trench GB4	L5	Sand dump	modern
Engineering trench	F1	Cellar wall/footing	post-medieval
Engineering trench	F2	Rubbish-pit	modern
Engineering trench	F3	Glacial feature	natural
Trenches GB11-GB12	F4	Well	post-medieval
Trench GB4	F5	Rubbish-pit	post-medieval
Trench GB5	F6	Rubbish-pit	post-medieval
Trench GB5	F7	Wall footing	post-medieval/modern
Trench GB12	F8	Concrete	modern

12.2 Soil descriptions

Location	Context	Description
Engineering trench & trenches GB1-GB16	L1	Grey ashy silt, occasional brick flecks, some plant and animal activity
Engineering trench	L2	Large loose stones with occasional sandy patches
Engineering trench & trenches GB1-GB16	L3	Yellow/grey heavy London Clay: natural geology
Engineering trench & trenches GB1-GB16	L4	Orange/yellow sand and gravel: natural glacial deposit
Trench GB4	L5	Orange fine sand
Engineering trench	F1	Post- medieval brickwork
Engineering trench	F2	Dark brown ashy silt, some burnt patches
Engineering trench	F3	Loose large stones, grey sandy gravel
Trenches GB11-GB12	F4	Post-medieval/modern brickwork
Trench GB4	F5	Mid-dark brown silty clay, occasional burnt patches
Trench GB5	F6	Mid-dark brown silty clay, occasional burnt patches
Trench GB5	F7	Post-medieval/modern brickwork
Trench GB12	F8	Modern poured concrete

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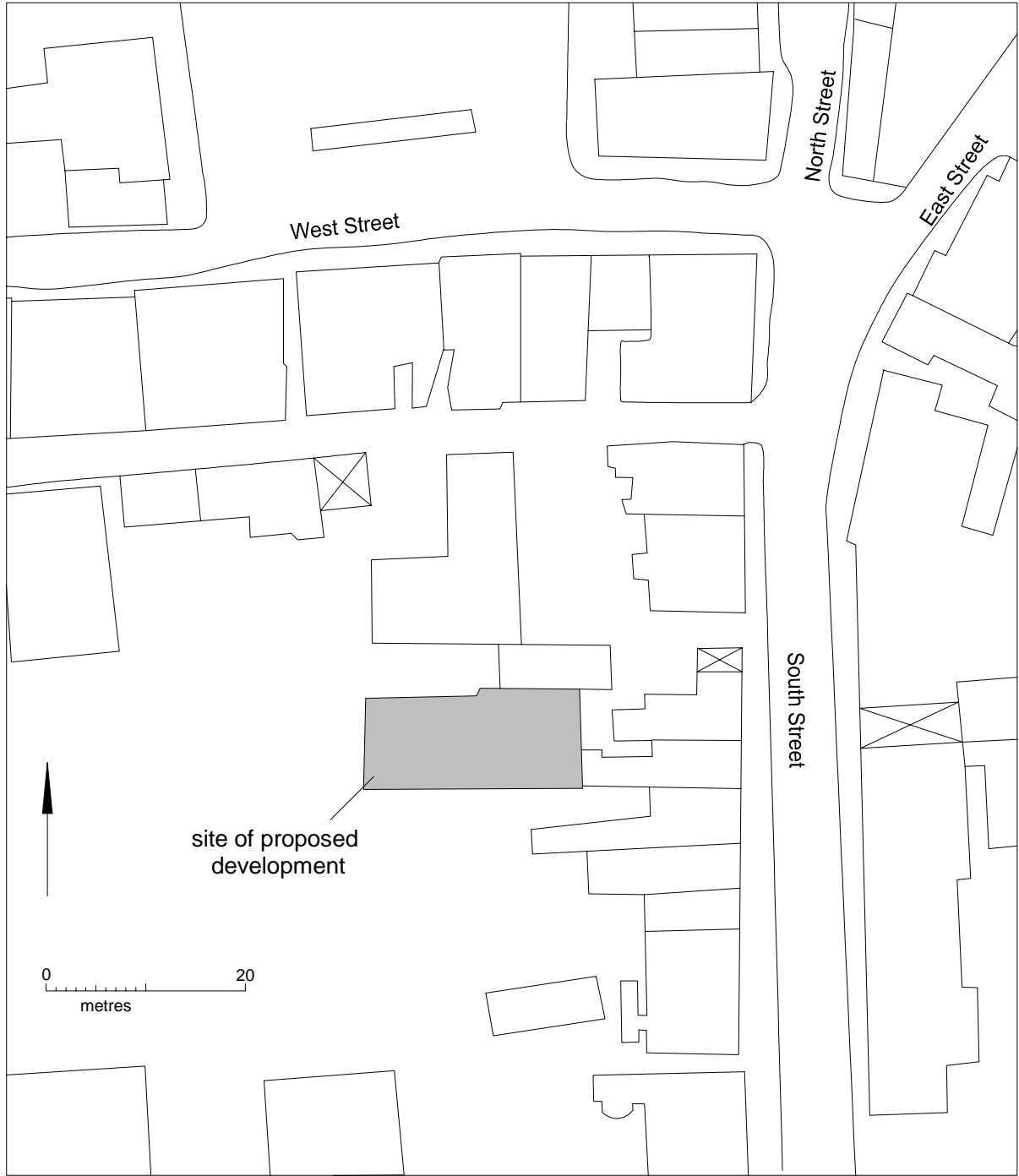
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Essex Heritage Conservation Record/ *Essex Archaeology and History*

Summary sheet

Site address: the rear of 6-8a South Street, Rochford, Essex	
Parish: Rochford	District: Rochford
NGR: TQ 8762 9043	Site code: RF15
Type of work: Monitoring and recording	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: February-March 2003	Size of area investigated: 50m square
Location of finds/curating museum: Southend Museum (SOUMS: A 2003.1)	Funding source: Developer
Further seasons anticipated? No	Related EHCR nos:
Final report: CAT Report 227 and summary in <i>EAH</i>	
Periods represented: post-medieval/modern	
Summary of fieldwork results: Observations were made during archaeological monitoring and recording on the excavation of an engineering trench and the ground-beams for a housing development at the rear of 6-8a South Street, Rochford, Essex. The only features of archaeological interest were three post-medieval pits and a post-medieval well.	
Previous summaries/reports: None	
Author of summary: Ben Holloway	Date of summary: 9th May 2003



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Fig 1 Site location plan.

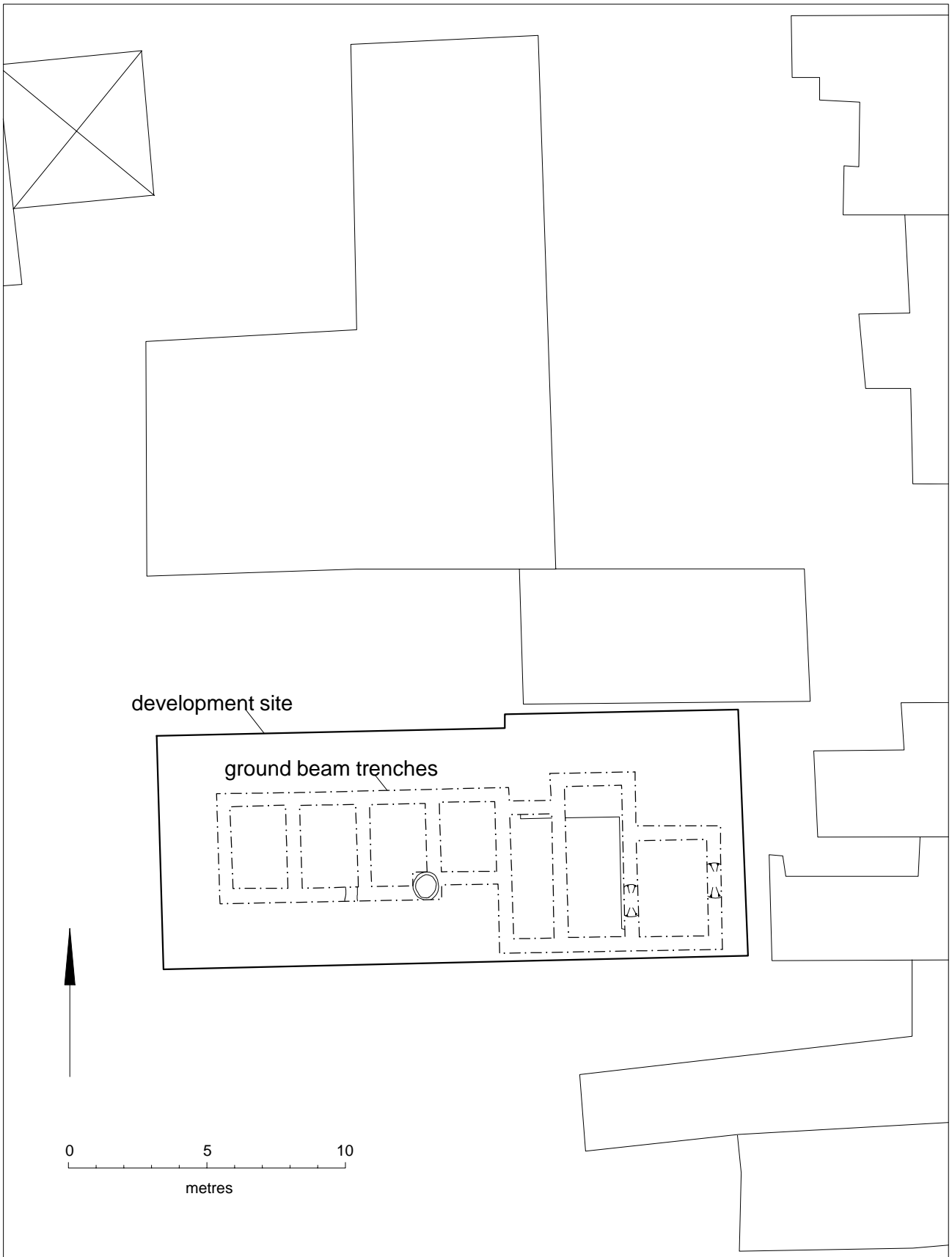


Fig 2 Ground beam trenches: location plan.



Fig 3 Engineering trench: location plan.

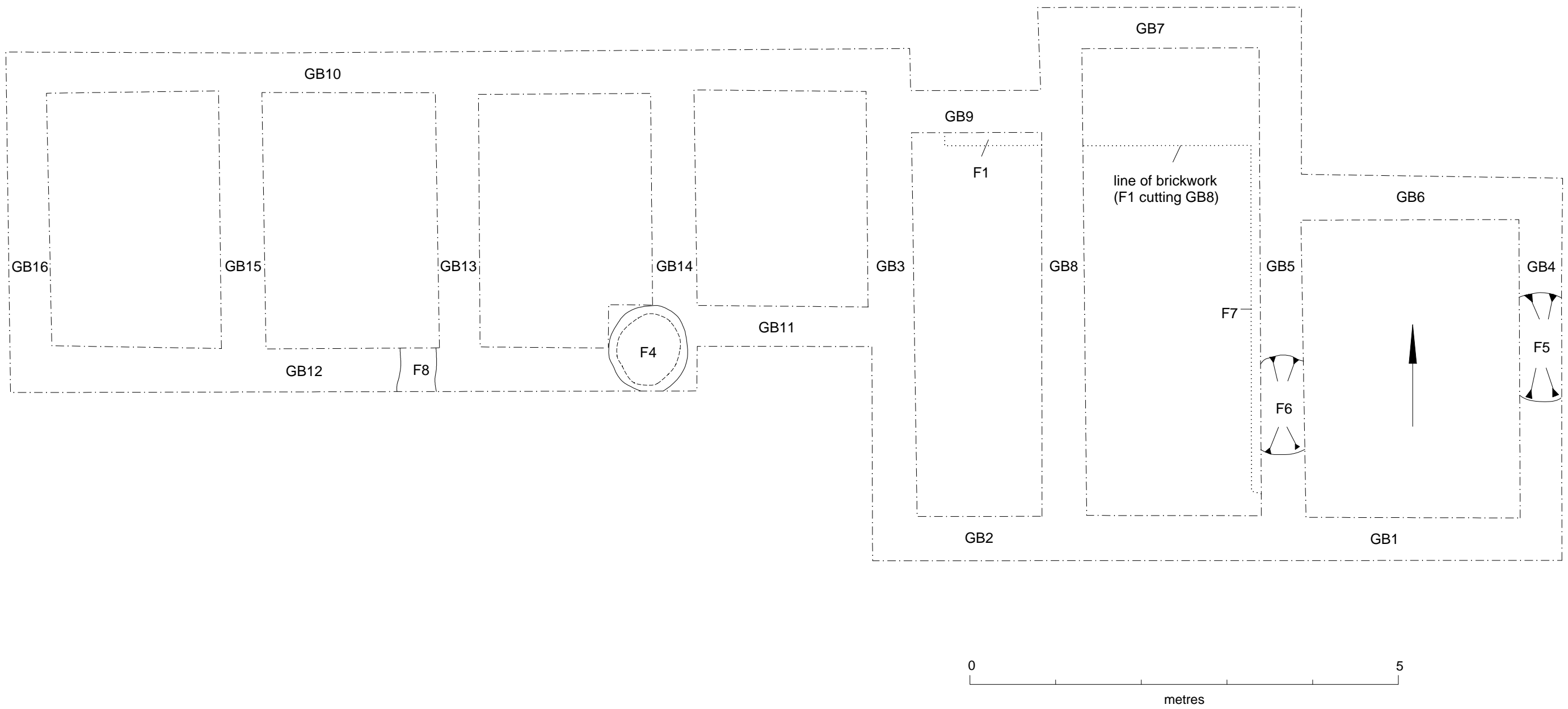


Fig 4 Ground beam trenches: plan.

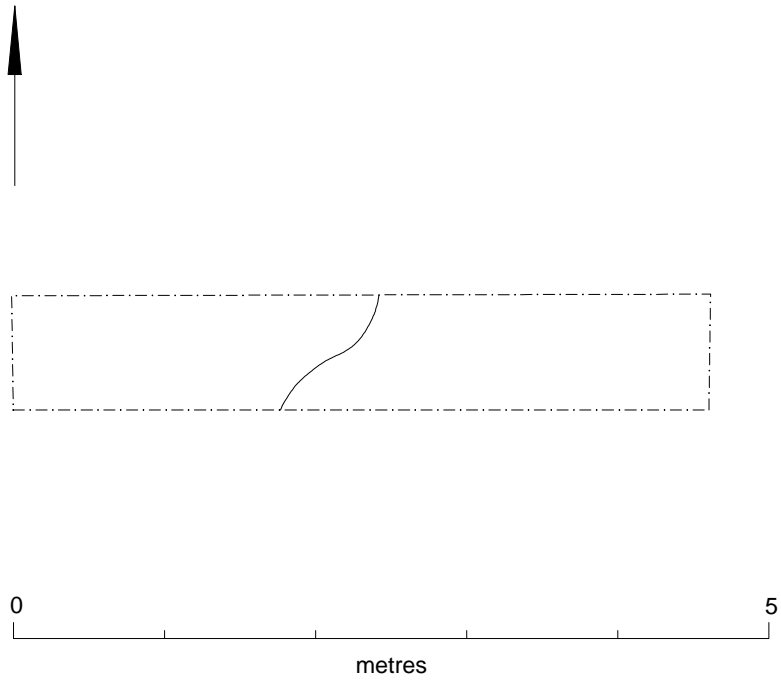


Fig 5 Engineering trench: plan.

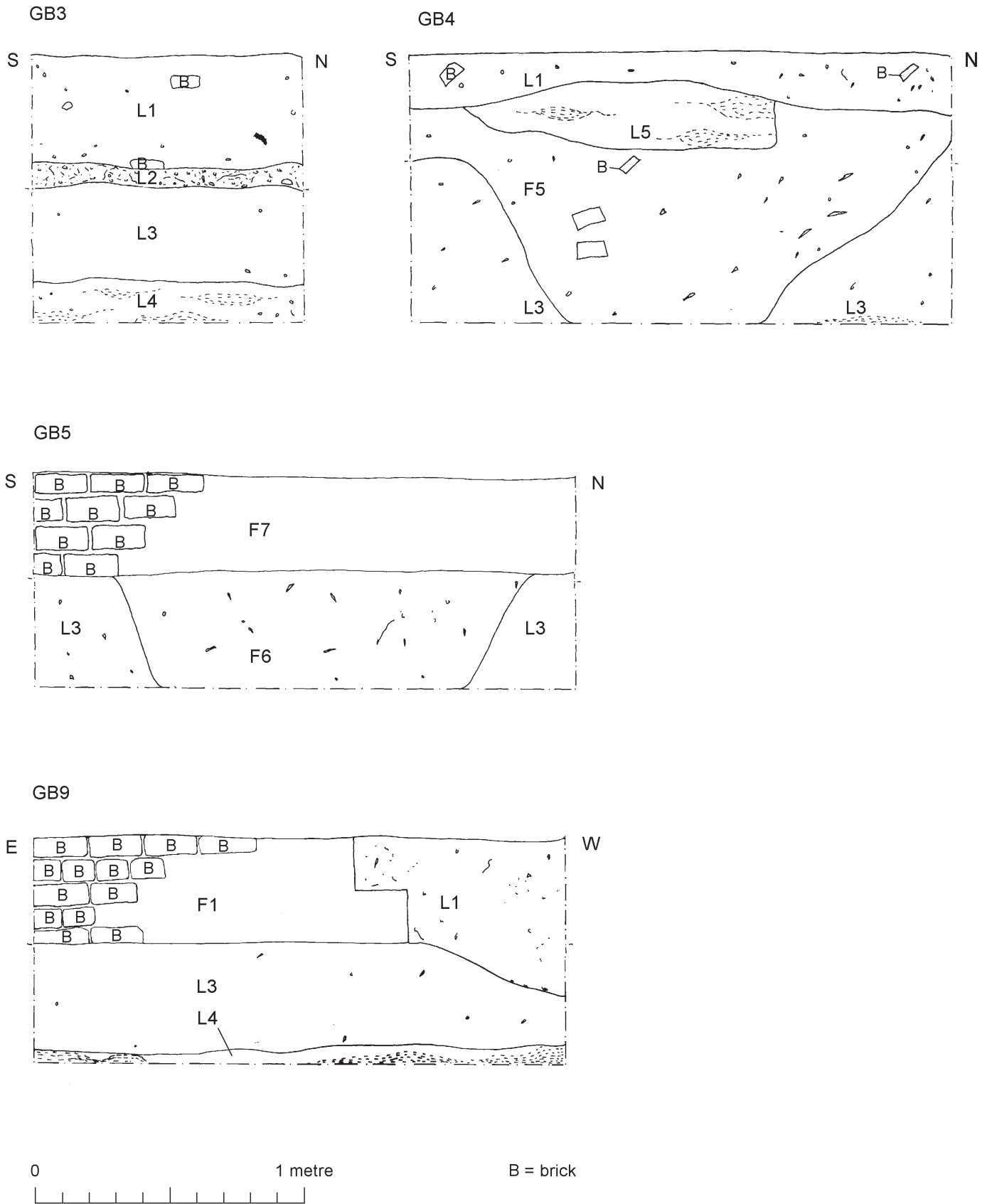
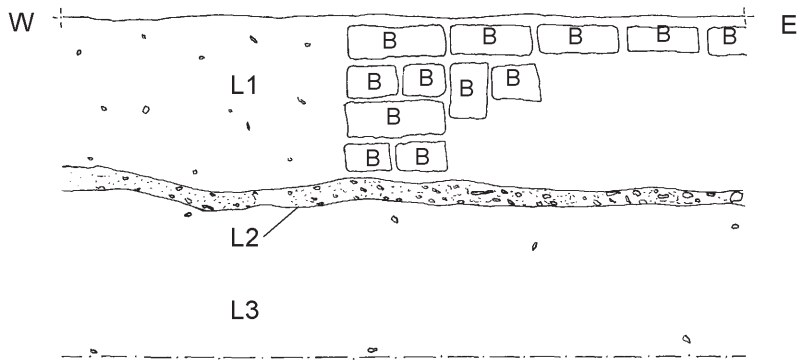
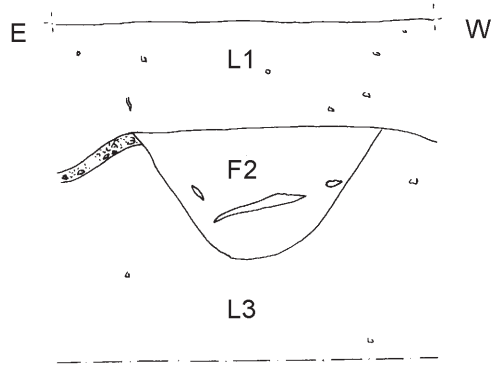


Fig 6 Section sheet 1: ground beam-trenches GB3, GB4, GB5, GB9.



B = brick

Fig 7 Section sheet 2: engineering trench.