Evaluation Report No. 148

19 Coltrim Lane
Drumrot (td.)
Moneymore
Co. Londonderry

Licence No. AE/07/239

David McIlreavy

Site Specific Information

Site Name : 19 Coltrim Lane

Townland : Moneymore

County : Londonderry

Grid Ref. : IH 8470881167

SMR No. : LDY 48:33

Current Land Use *:* Agricultural

Intended Land Use *:* Residential

State Care : Scheduled [ ]
Other [**X**]

Excavation Licence No : AE/07/239

Planning Ref / No. : I/2007/0243/F

Dates of Monitoring : 16/11/2007

Archaeologist Present : David McIlreavy

Brief Summary

An archaeological evaluation was carried out at a site in the townland of Drumrot, Co. Londonderry as part of a planning application for a new dwelling. An enclosure shown on the 1st Edition OS map sheet for the area was noted as running under the currently upstanding outbuildings.

Some features of potential archaeological interest were uncovered as a result of this evaluation, a potential ditch feature and a charcoal spread. It was recommended that the features be preserved in situ.

Type of monitoring

Three test trenches were archaeologically excavated by back acting mechanical digger, fitted with a 1 metre wide toothless bucket. All the test trenches were excavated to the glacial subsoil unless significant archaeological deposits were encountered.

The context record for each test trench was created using the standard context recording method. Individual features, were identified, were planned (Scale 1:10 and 1:20 as appropriate), and photographed both prior to, during and post excavation. All archaeologically excavated features were half sectioned and sampled. In addition to photography and illustrations, the site context record was augmented by a site diary.

Separate registers of photographs and samples taken as part of the evaluation were maintained as part of the site records.

Size of area opened

The initial evaluation methodology (see Fig. 1) was amended, in conjunction with the EHS: Built Heritage Caseworker, due to the proximity of underground power cables near some of the outbuildings. Consequently three test trenches were excavated, approximately 25, 20 and 10 metres in length. All test trenches were 1 metre in width. A total area of 55 m² was archaeologically excavated during the evaluation.

Brief account of the monitoring

Introduction

The evaluation took place as part of the planning application for the construction of a new dwelling, and was requested by Edith Gowdy (Caseworker with Environment and Heritage Service: Built Heritage) due to the proximity of the proposed development site to a enclosure marked on the 1st Edition OS map (LDY 048:033).

The proposed development site is located in the townland of Drumrot, Co. Londonderry. The site is located on a small hill amongst drumlins, approximately 2 km SW of Moneymore, and comprises an irregularly shaped paddock approximately 1563 m², adjoining a group of farm outbuildings. A wire and post fence delineated the exterior of the proposed development site, with some mature trees and planting to the western and northern areas of site. An earthen bank to the western boundary of the development site is considered to be a modern dump of material and not of archaeological significance.

Whilst the initial evaluation methodology suggested four trenches close to the farm outbuildings, the landowner noted that buried utilities crossed the area. Consequently, In conjunction with the EHS: Built Heritage Caseworker the trench layout was amended to avoid those areas where utilities had been identified.

Excavation

The evaluation consisted of the archaeological supervision of three mechanically excavated test trenches (Fig), excavated to the glacial subsoil level.

Trench 1

Trench 1 was excavated NE – SW for 30 metres, with a width of 1 metre. The trench was excavated to glacial subsoil level (Context No. 106), or to potential archaeological deposits.

With the removal of the turf layer in Trench 1 a dark brown layer of topsoil (Context No. 101) was uncovered, approximately 0.20 metres in depth. This layer directly overlay the subsoil for the majority of the trench, however, the layer was noticeably shallower at the SE edge of the trench. The topsoil layer (Context No. 101) had no noticeable inclusions, and appeared to consist of a 70:30 loam:sand matrix. The dark coloration of the topsoil would imply that it had been improved agriculturally, but the depth and level of distinction between the topsoil and subsoil would seem to imply that it had not been deep ploughed in this area.

At approximately 2 metres from the SW end of the trench, a dark red sandy clay (Context No. 102) was uncovered, immediately underlying the topsoil layer. This layer extended across the trench running SSW-NNE. On excavation of Context No. 102, at approximately 0.60 metres below the surface of the topsoil, a lens of dark grey sandy clay (Context No. 103) with a maximum depth of 10 cm. The deposit had a noticeable curve extending for 1.35 metres longitudinally. Separated from this deposit was a similar lens of material, of trapezoidal shape, approximately 20 cm at its maximum depth and 5 cm at its minimum. The composition of this lens (Context No. 104) was analogous to that of Context No. 103, dark grey sandy clay. The two lens of material were separated by an area of red sandy clay that is considered to be homogenous with Context No. 102.

The lens of material overlay approximately 1 metre of red sandy clay, at its maximum width 2.20 metres, and at base approximately 1 metre width. Whilst some stone inclusions where noted throughout this fill it is considered that no discernible concentrations could be discerned. Layer of Context No. 102 overlay a pinkish red sandy clay with frequent stony inclusions (Context No. 105), considered to be the glacial subsoil.

No artefacts were recovered from this trench.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was excavated NE – SW for 32 metres, with a width of 1 metre. The trench was excavated to glacial subsoil level (Context No. 202), or to potential archaeological deposits.

With the removal of the turf layer a dark brown layer of topsoil (Context No. 201) was uncovered approximately 0.20 metres in depth at the NE end of Trench 2, to approximately 0.40 metres at the SW end of the trench. Underlying the topsoil layer at the NE end of the trench was a red sandy clay analogous with Context 102. This layer

(Context No. 203) extended approximately 25 – 26 metres SW, where it met a brown/orange sandy clay with frequent stony inclusions (Context No. 202), taken to be the glacial subsoil level.

At the NE end of the trench, a feature was exposed consisting of a half trapezoidal shape (see Plate). The outer line of the feature was identified by a line of charcoal (Context No. 204) that extended around its perimeter, approximately 2 cm wide initially. This layer of charcoal abutted a dark grey clay fill (Context No. 205) that extended to the trench edge. This feature was archaeologically excavated in half section to expose any further fills that were not visible at this point. The dark grey clay fill was excavated to reveal that the charcoal that lined the edge of the feature extended below it to the trench edge. The charcoal lining (Context No. 204) was excavated, revealing that its maximum depth was approximately 1 cm. The maximum depth of the feature was assessed to be c. 5 cm, which may indicate that the feature had been truncated, although to what extent was not obvious. No further features were noted for the remainder of the red sandy clay layer (Context No. 202).

To the SW end of the trench, running obliquely SE – NW a feature consisting of three parallel lines of material. The larger feature (Context No. 206) closer to the NW edge of the trench consisted of a light brown sandy fill (207) with frequent stone inclusions. The feature was approximately 45 cm in width and 23 cm in depth, with a U shaped basal profile. No finds were recorded from this feature. Running parallel to this feature was a narrower strip of grey sand (Context No. 208; fill Context No. 209), which on excavation ran at an acute angle towards the SW edge of the trench. Noted at the SW edge of the trench was another line of grey sandy (Context No. 210; fill Context No. 211), which reflected the profile of the similar feature (Context No. 212). On excavation of these features it was noted that the grey sandy features were actually the same deposit, and that the light brown sandy clay was fill material (Context No. 213). Therefore Context Nos. 208-213 probably represent a single feature, with a grey sand basal fill extending to the sides of the feature 9although it was noted that the depth of the material at the sides is noticeably shallower than at the bottom. It is also noted that as the feature (Context Nos. 208-213) extends parallel to the feature (Context No. 206), that they are actually connected.

No further features were identified for the remainder of Trench 2, and no artefacts were recovered from the excavation. Three samples were recovered from the charcoal feature.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was excavated NW - SE for 15 metres, with a width of 1 metre. The trench was excavated to glacial subsoil level (Context No. 30), or to potential archaeological deposits. At the NW edge of excavation, a dark brown topsoil (Context No. 301) layer overlay the glacial subsoil (Context No. 302). No features were recorded for this area of the trench, however, approximately 8 metres from the NW edge of excavation a deposit of red sandy clay (Context No. 303) , analogous with that found in Trench 1

and 2 was noted, running at an oblique angle (SW-NE) across the trench. No features were recorded for this deposit, and no artefacts recovered.

Interpretation

It is considered that the red sandy deposit in Trench 1 is indicative of a leveled bank feature, which filled the potential ditch feature at the SW edge of excavation. Certainly the cultivation furrows running S-N across Trench 1 would seem to indicate that the area had been used for cultivation, but also that the area to the NE of the red sandy clay deposit had not been covered by this reddish clay during the cultivation episode. It might be suggested that at least some form of bank, however slighted, may have existed at this time. The dark grey clay deposits or lenses noted in the potential ditch feature might suggest that whilst the ditch had filled up relatively quickly with bank material, there had been a depression visible in the ground prior to the final leveling of the bank.

The presence of glacial subsoil to the SW end of Trench 2 would seem to indicate that the bank feature and potential ditch are part of a curving structure. The extension of red sandy clay for the remainder of Trench 2 may be indicative of more bank leveling. It is anticipated that the red clay material also filled a ditch in this area, at least to the SW edge of the red sandy clay deposit, and potentially to the NE edge of excavation. The charcoal feature uncovered to the NE are of Trench 2 was constructed on top of the red sandy clay deposit, and therefore may be considered to be later than the leveling of the bank. However, this does not indicate when the bank and potential ditch were leveled and filled respectively. The parallel feature to the SW of the trench may be interpreted as a potential palisade/fence and filled drainage ditch, the angle of their crossing of the trench may indicate that they were contemporary with a bank or ditch and radiated from it.

Trench 3 did not exhibit any features on the glacial subsoil, or on the red sandy clay deposit, although the presence of glacial subsoil as distinct from the presumed bank material may indicate that it represents the interior of an enclosure, and the red sandy deposit is the remains of a leveled bank. When the results of the test trenches are considered in conjunction with the OS 1834 1st Edition map for the area, it would seem that the potential bank and ditch structure suggested by the evaluation is not that indicated in the 1834 edition. Indeed the evaluation would seem to suggest that the structure indicated by the evaluation was a curvilinear structure that respected the ringwork noted in the OS map.

It may be interpreted that the structure suggested by the test trenches had been at least filled prior to the composition of the 1834 OS maps, when even the main enclosure was shown as being partially removed in places. In terms of identification it might be suggested that the feature (refer to as ringwork 2) is part of a conjoined rath, with possible indications of associated structures (parallel features in Trench 2). The size of the suggested enclosure (potentially 40 m in diameter), and the suggestion that

these may be a conjoined rath site would prove an interesting addition to the NISMR record.

Recommendations

It is thought that the planned development would have a significant impact on previously unrecorded archaeological remains in the green field site to the west of the farm buildings at this location. It is recommended that geophysical survey may be employed to establish if the structure suggested by the evaluation is indeed a ringwork, and its relation to the enclosure noted by the OS 1st Editions.

Because of the potential significance of the site, an article should be prepared for the Ulster Journal of Archaeology, and a short summary of the evaluation for the annual *'Excavations'* bulletin.

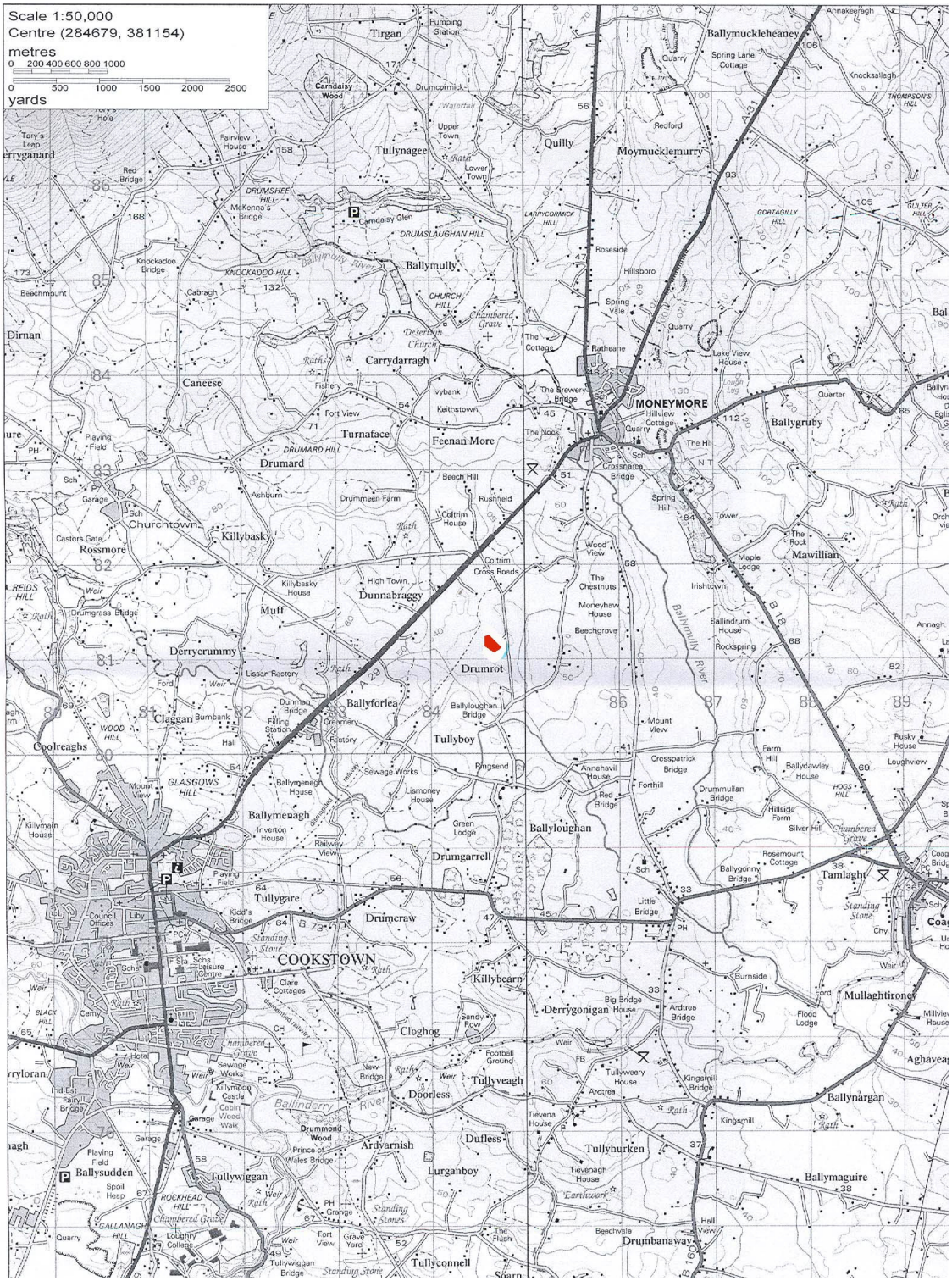

Fig. 1 Location map of the development site, NE of Cookstown, highlighted in red.

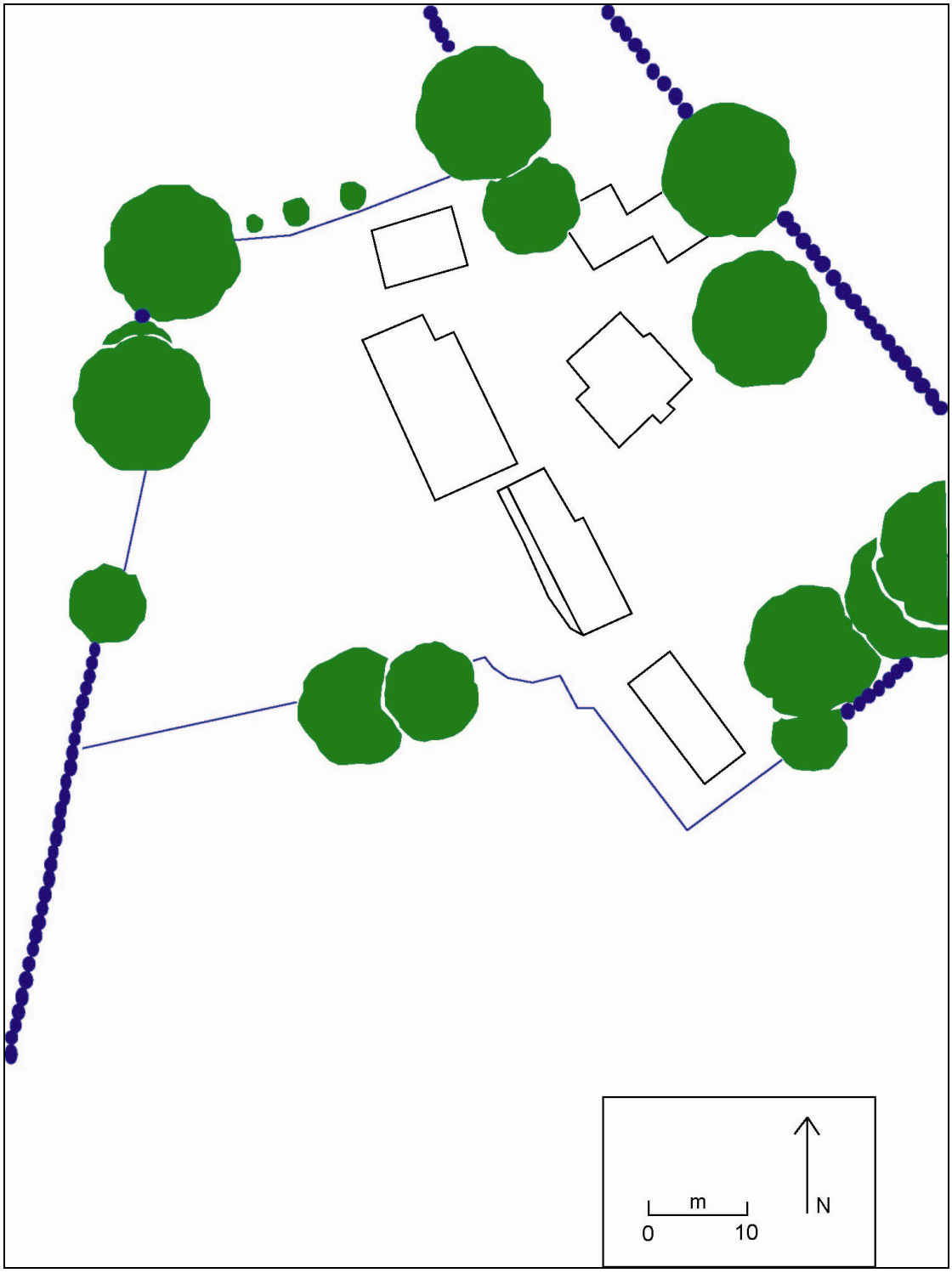

Fig 2. Plan of proposed development site, showing extant buildings.

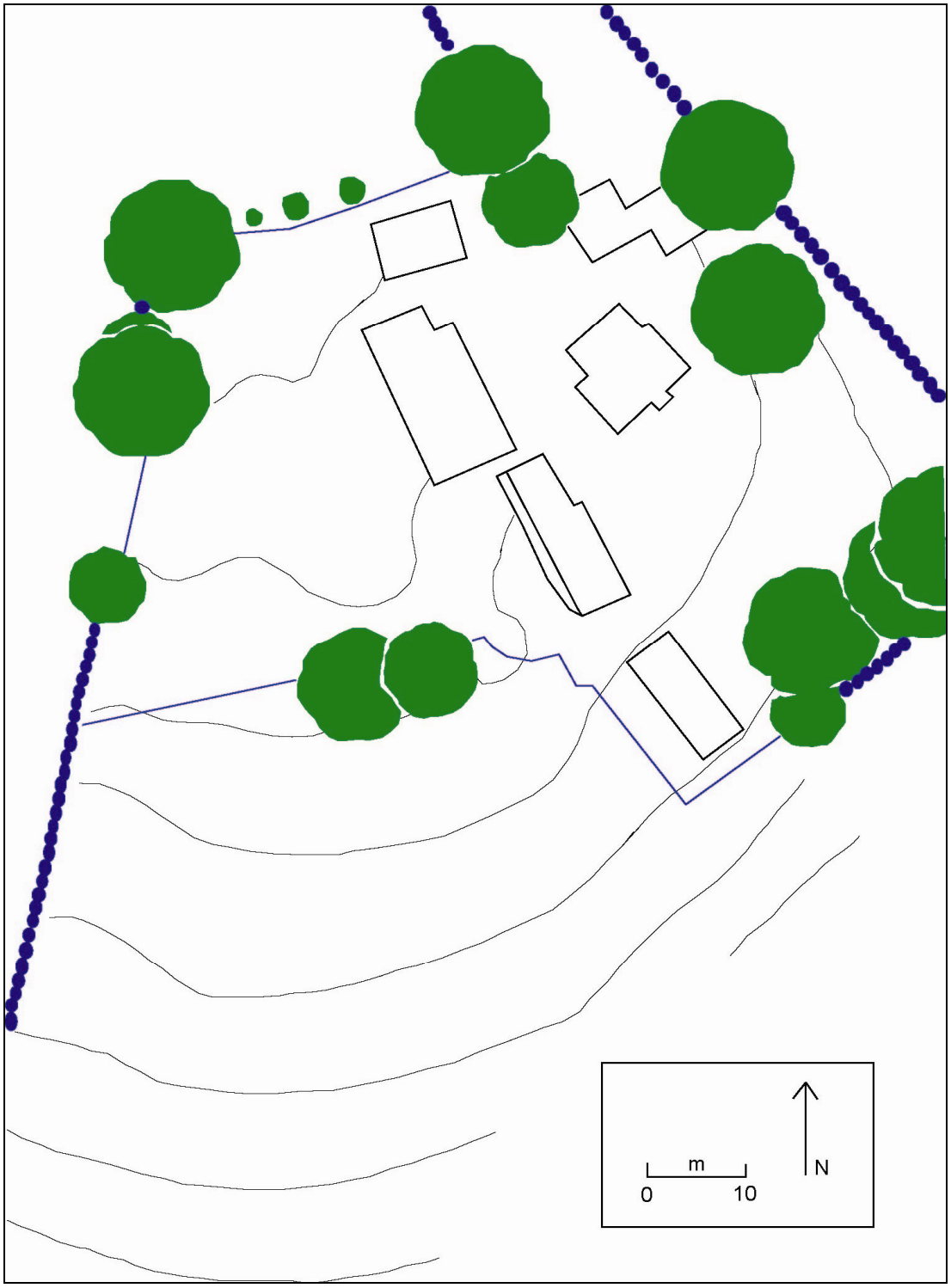

Fig. 3 Plan of development site showing extant buildings and contours.

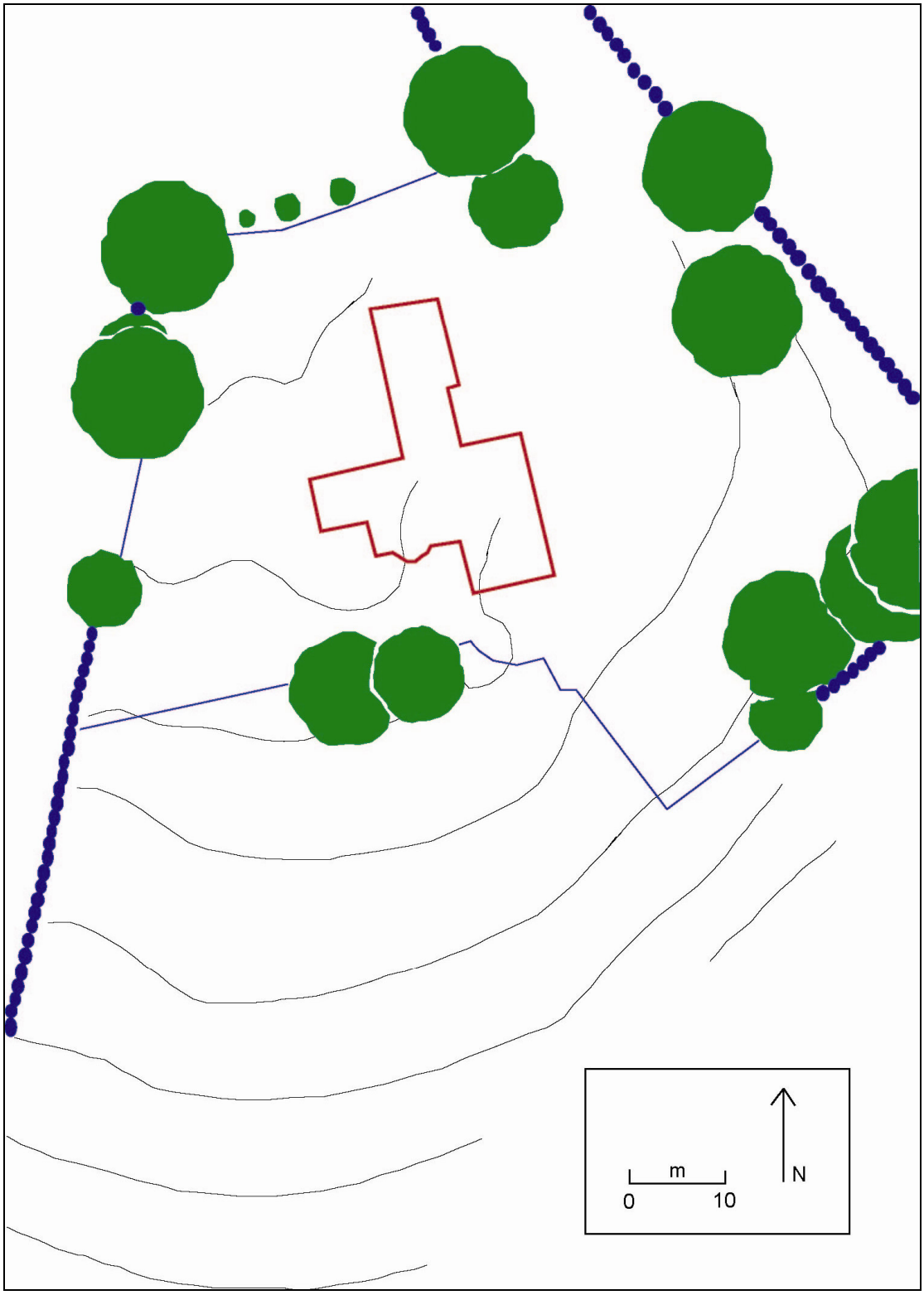

Fig. 4 Plan of development site showing proposed house location (in red).

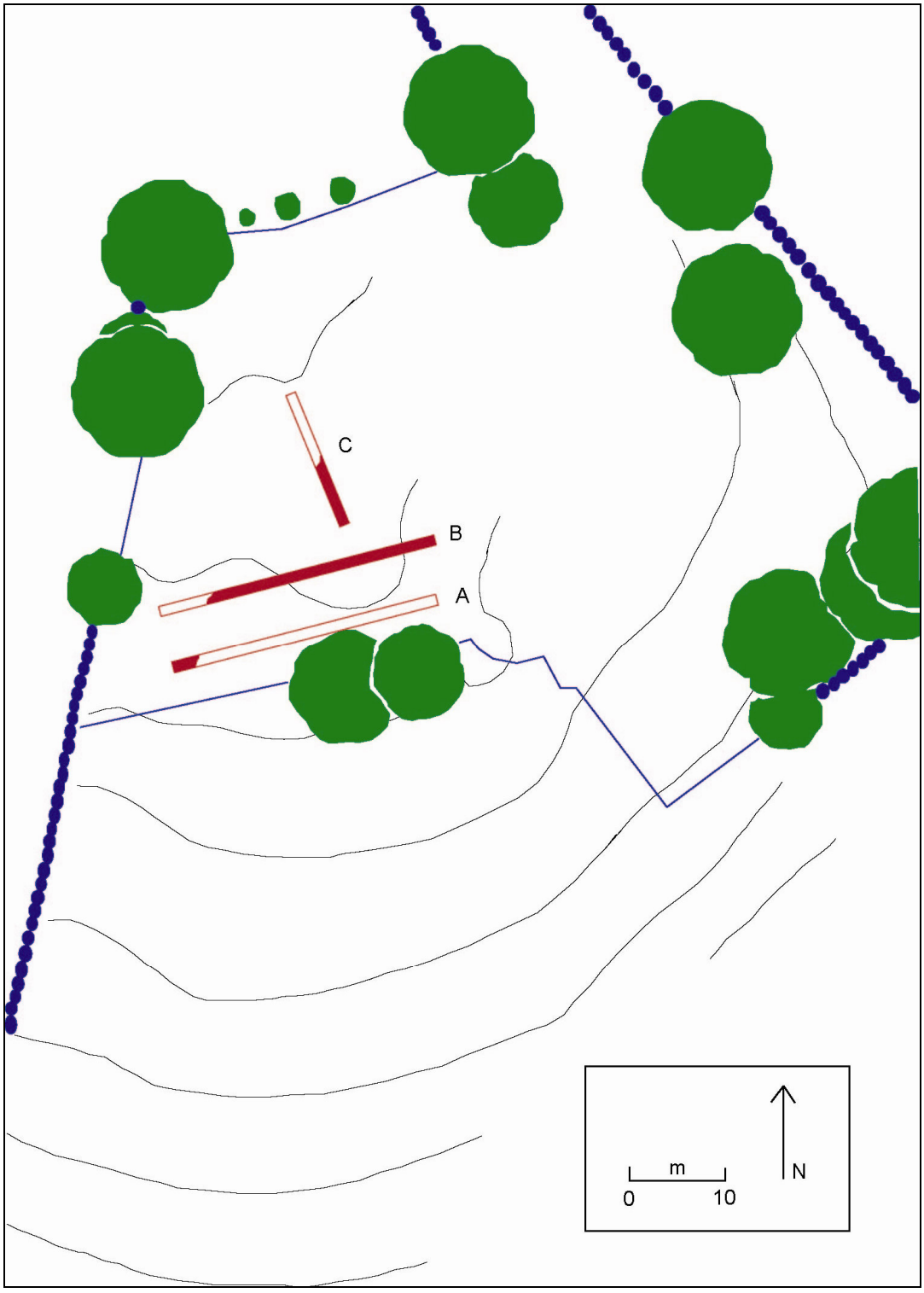

Fig. 5 Plan of development site showing the location of archaeological test trenches. The red blocks of colour indicate where red sandy clay was encountered.

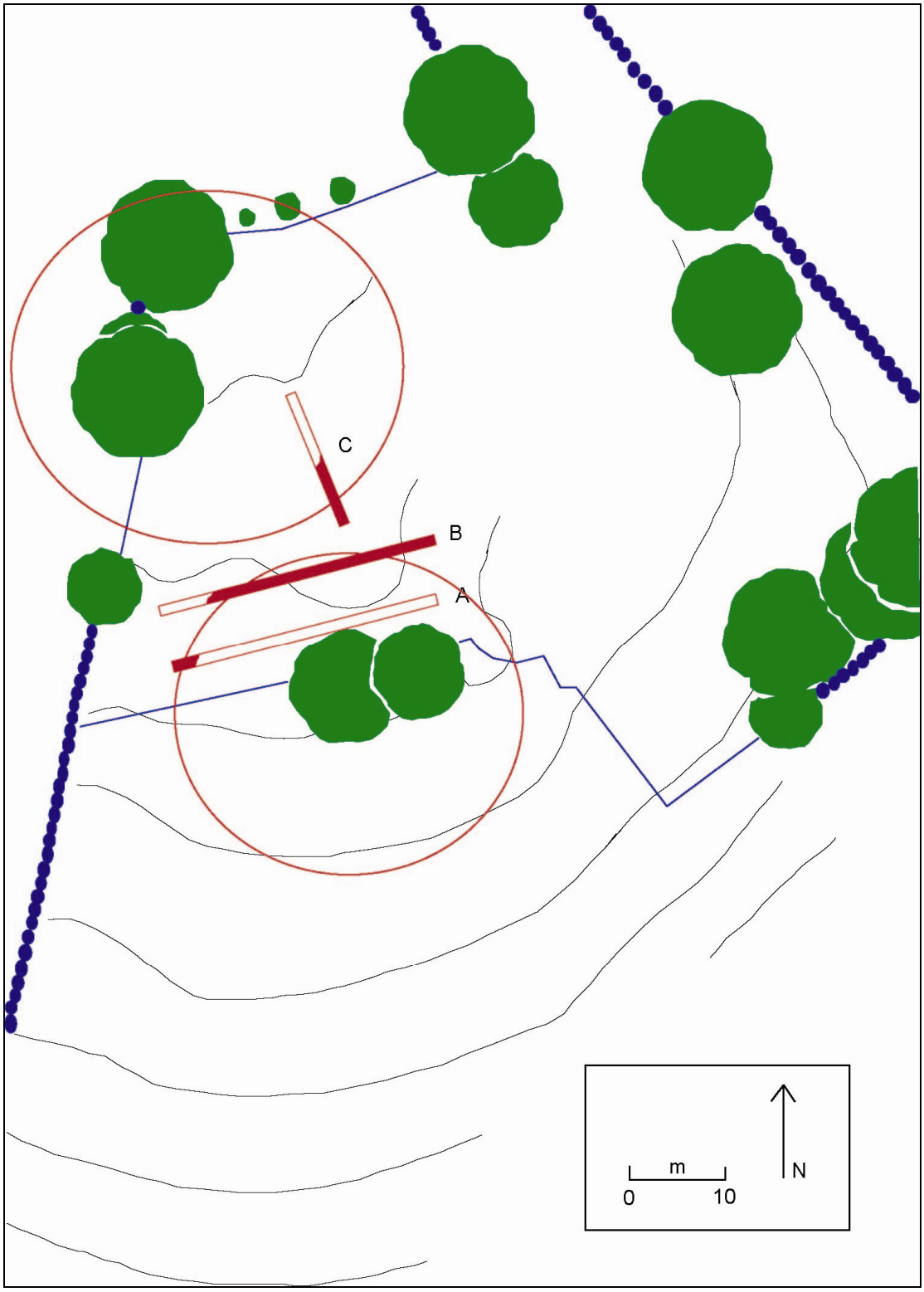

Fig. 6 Plan of development site using the 1832 marked enclosure (upper circle) and red sandy clay spread shown in the test trenches to indicate potential second enclosure.

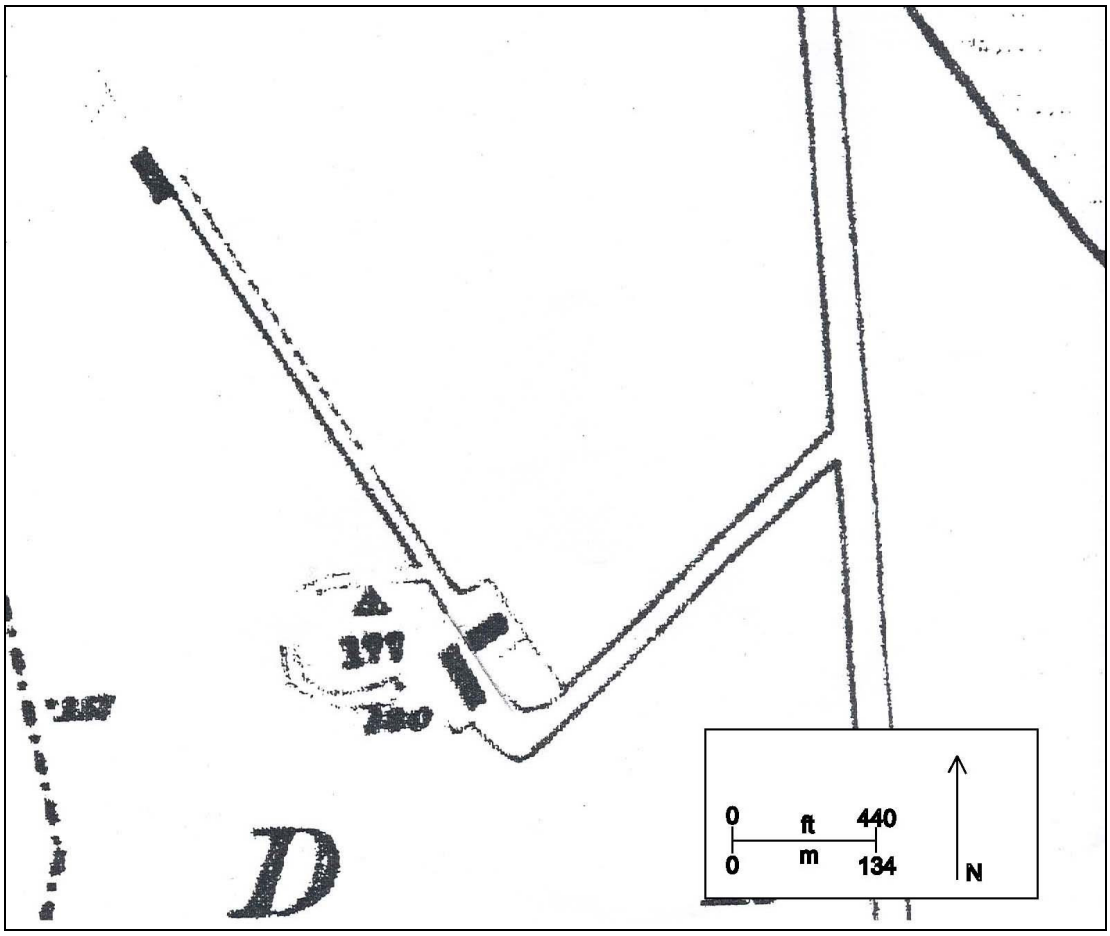

Fig. 7 The development site as shown on 1832 1st Edition OS map, showing a large enclosure. This has been superimposed on the development site in Fig. 6

Context Nos.

Context Nos.	Description
101	Dark brown loam/sand topsoil
102	Dark red sandy clay
103	Dark grey sandy clay
104	Dark grey sandy clay
105	Pinkish red sandy clay
106	Cut
107	Grey sandy loam (fill of C106)
108	Cut
109	Grey sandy loam (fill of C108)
110	Cut
111	Grey sandy loam (fill of C110)
112	Light brown/orange boulder clay with infrequent stony inclusions
201	Dark brown loam/sand topsoil
202	Light brown/orange boulder clay with finrequent stony inclusions
203	Dark red sandy clay
204	Cut
205	Charcoal
206	Dark grey clay fill
207	Cut
208	Light brown sandy clay with frequent stony inclusions
209	Cut
210	Grey sandy clay
211	Cut
212	Grey sandy clay
213	Light brown sandy clay
301	Dark brown loam/sand topsoil
302	Light brown/orange boulder clay with infrequent stony inclusions
303	Dark red sandy clay

Plate 1 General shot of development site, looking NE.

Plate 2 General shot of development site, looking SE.

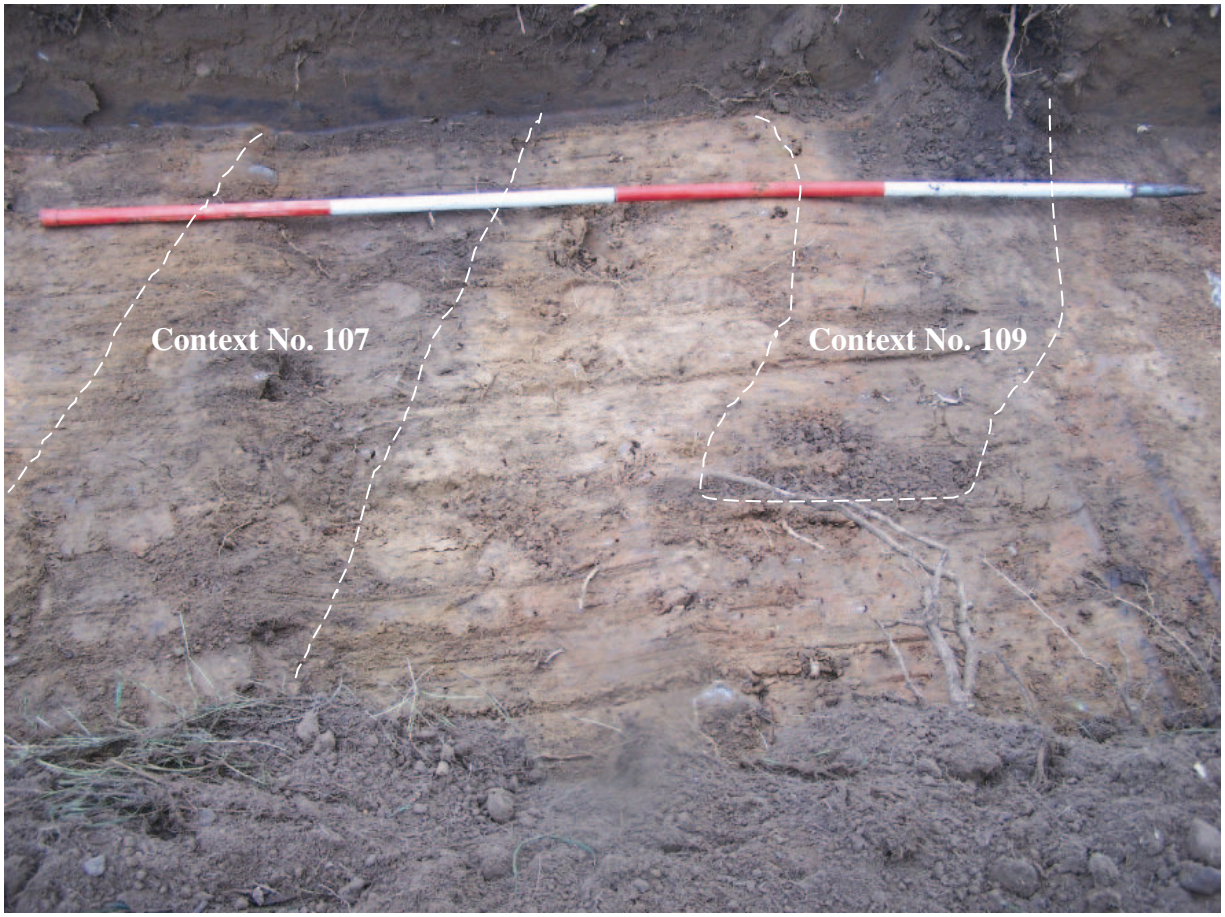

Plate 3 Truncated cultivation furrows, running across Trench 1, looking SE.

Plate 4 Looking NE along Trench 1 at the boundary of the red sandy clay spread and the glacial subsoil.

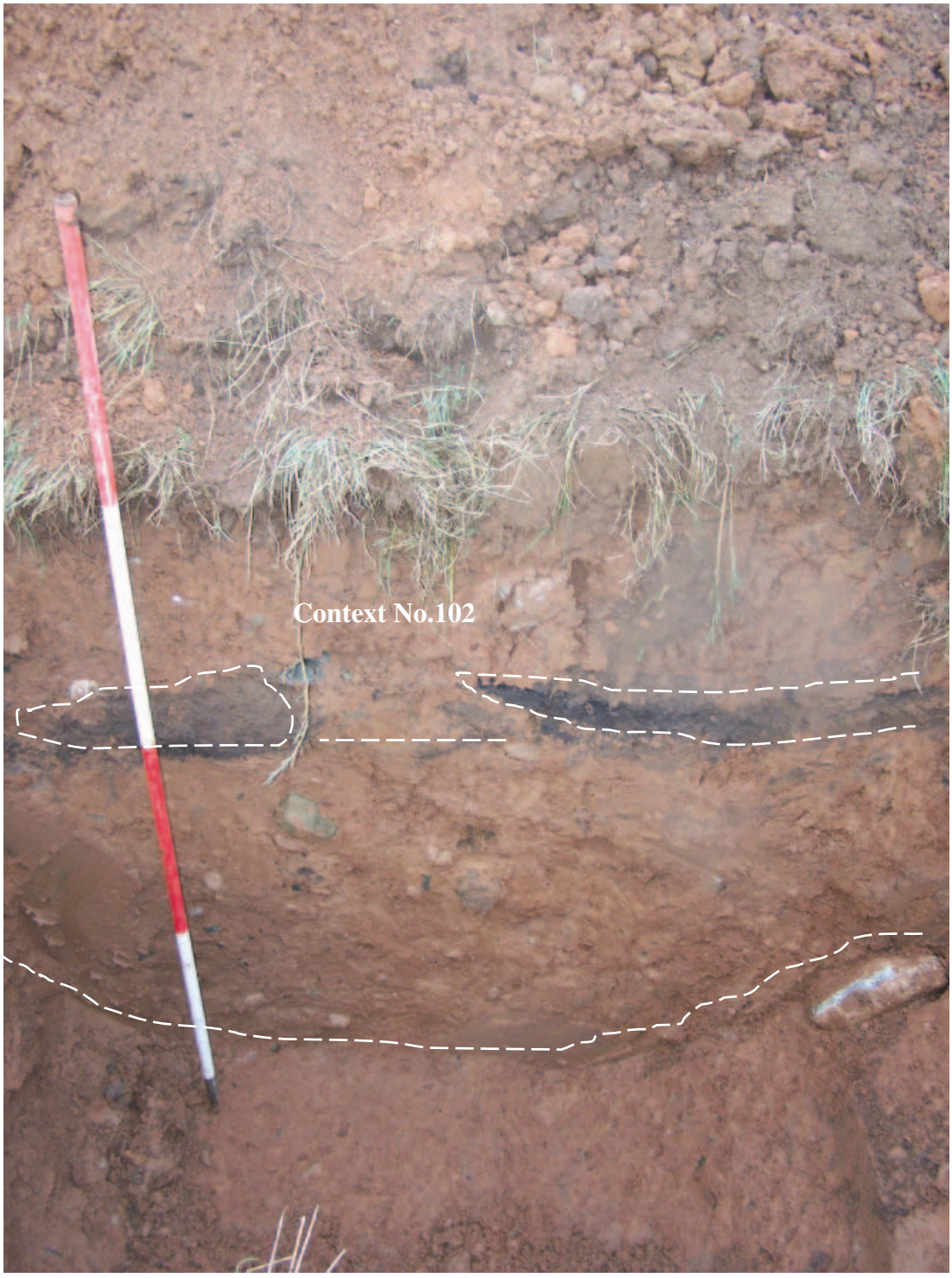

Plate 5 Lookin