

The site grids at Crickley Hill 1969-1993

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The excavations at Crickley Hill, which took place between 1969 and 1993, made use of several different site grids during the dig. In part this is because the scale of the excavation increased considerably from the initial seasons, requiring a different approach. In addition, a number of the excavated areas could more easily be recorded using bespoke coordinates differing from the main site method. The purpose of this paper is to describe the methods used, so that the different coordinate systems in the archive can be understood and compared. In total, ten different coordinate systems were employed during the excavation.

1. The main site grid

The majority of the site by area was excavated using the main site grid, which covered the hill in squares each of 10 metres by 10 metres. The baseline was set out in 1972 to be convenient for the site, running from just north of the entrance directly across the flat central area in an approximately East-West direction. Site North used on all main grid diagrams and coordinates are measured from this baseline.

Squares on this grid are identified by a letter/number pair, with A1 being just inside the entrance to the South of the baseline. Letters increase to the West, numbers increase to the South. The highest Northing number used, down on the Dark Age cuttings, is 17. To the North of the baseline, number jumps from 1 to 99, with numbers decreasing as they proceed North. Thus, the South to North sequence of squares would be A3 - A2 - A1 - A99 - A98 etc. The most northerly square excavated was Northing 90. Letters proceed from A to Z, omitting I (but including O). There are a few squares to the East of the A row, and these are given the AA suffix. Thus AA7 is immediately to the East of A7. At the West end of the site, Z is followed by ZA, then ZB. The most North Westerly excavated square on this grid is ZB90 and the most South Easterly square used was J17.

Within each main site grid square, locations were for the most part recorded by simple Easting and Northing measurements from the SW corner of the square. Most measurements were rounded down to the nearest half a metre, except for very specific points such as section nails and key finds which show measurements down to centimetres. Thus a typical find location might be Cutting C6, 4.5E 3.0N. This was often written simply as cutting and four digits, i.e. C6 4530.

However, up until about 1975, a different method was used for recording locations within squares. This was by triangulation from key site pegs given names (usually letters) at the start of each season. The position of these pegs is normally recorded in the site supervisor cutting book (the green book). Precise measurements in cms were recorded from two convenient pegs and recorded with the peg names. Thus in this system a typical find location might be Cutting D3, Peg E3 345 cms, Peg D3 678 cms. Finding the precise location needs a triangulation calculation, bearing in mind that the location must be in the specified cutting.

The naming convention for squares in the main site grid evolved during the CH72-74 seasons. Initially, a very convoluted system of naming involving the letter B followed by a Roman numeral and further letters and numbers was used. The description of this system in Volume 1 of the excavation report is incorrect. Conversion to actual cutting ids is best achieved with the following conversion table. Note that the peg names used in CH72 are at the NE corner of the relevant square (i.e. Peg C2 is at the NE corner of square C2). This is unlike the general later convention of the origin of each square being the SW corner. Take care with CH72 cutting names which omit the number in brackets e.g. BX rather than BX(1). Initially in the season each 20mx10m cutting (i.e. in this case both C1 and C2) were described as BX etc. Only later in the season was the bracket suffix added, as further squares were opened.

CH72 - main site grid cutting conversions

A1 - A2 - A3 = BXII (or sometimes BXII(1)), BXII(2), BXII(3)
B1 - B2 - B3 - B4 = BXI (or sometimes BXI(1)), BXI(2), BXI(3), BXI(4)
C1 - C2 - C3 - C4 = BX (or sometimes BX(1)), BX(2), BX(3), BX(4)
D1 - D2 - D3 = BIX(1), BIX(2), BIX(3)
E1 - E2 - E3 = BIXe(1), BIXe(2), BIXe(3)
F2 = BVIII (note that BVIII was also used in CH71 in a different location)
G2 = BVIII(e)

In CH73 this system was changed in favour of that used for the rest of the excavation, except that cutting ids were preceded by 'B/'. Thus cutting C5 is shown as B/C5. This prefix was dropped in later seasons.

2. Early cuttings - AI - AXIV

The 1969-1973 cuttings around the rampart entrance used a different cutting notation. These cuttings were set out to be convenient for the ramparts and other features. They were numbered with the letter A and Roman Numerals, from AI to AXIV. AXI wasn't used for some reason. The location and dimensions of these cuttings are shown in Volume 1 of the report. Find and cutting locations were measured using the triangulation method from named pegs at the corners of the cuttings. In order to keep these secure, they were stepped back from the actual cutting edge by 50 cms each way. See the early supervisor logs for peg names and positions.

When it came to laying out the main site grid in 1972, the main site baseline was set to match the alignment of the main E-W axis of the relevant entrance cuttings. Figure 1 shows the precise interface between the two grids. Cutting plans AXIII and AXIV abut directly with cuttings A99-A4, and plans show how these two grids meet here.

3. Later rampart cuttings - AXV - AXIX

Four later rampart cuttings also used the A followed by a Roman numeral notation. They are all off the site grid and at an angle to it.

AXV was the large rampart cutting just south of the National Trust boundary in CH79. It was laid out to be perpendicular to the line of the rampart, and locations were measured by triangulation. While its general location is well known, I have found no formal accurate measurement of the location of this cutting with respect to the site grid. Its SW corner is on the East edge square B11, at about 10.0E 5.5N.

AXVI was the cutting outside the main line of the ramparts in CH81, investigating a possibly outer ring of rampart. It is some way to the East of the current entrance. Well outside the area of the main site grid. [how were points fixed]. The location of this cutting is shown in the supervisor note book - Peg Z being 46.4m ENE from the NE peg of main grid square B7 (See Fig 2).

AXVII was the big cutting at the southern end of the main rampart on National Trust land alongside the Dark Age village. Its location with respect to the main site grid was recorded precisely at the time on plan - See Fig 3. The long axis of the cutting is approximately 150 degrees East of site grid North. The NW corner of the cutting is close to the SW corner of site grid square H17, with an approximate site grid location of H18 E1.0 N9.9. Locations within the cutting were measured by triangulation.

AXVIII cutting name was not used. AXIX was a small 3m x 10m cutting in CH88 towards the North end of the main rampart, intending to investigate where it turns to the West. It was set out at right angles to the line of the rampart as a 12m x 3m transect not on the site grid, and angled with the

long axis approximately NNE-SSW. The SW corner is in square AA97, about 3.0E 1.0N but I have not been able to ascertain the exact location.

4. Early exploratory cuttings - BI-BVIII

CH71 saw exploratory cuttings in two areas of the interior while the entrance cuttings were being completed. These cuttings were identified with the B prefix, followed by Roman numerals. Note these are distinct from the system used in CH72, even though BVIII was used in both seasons (for different locations).

BI was an 8m x 5m cutting aligned approximately with the main site grid in square H2. Three further extensions were opened - BV to the North, BVI to the East and finally BVII to complete the square to the NE. The area extended eventually to a little over 16m E-W and 10m N-S (plus 50 cms baulks between each cutting). This covered parts of squares J2, H2 and G2. Features were included in the Feature Plans of those squares when opened in CH74, allowing correlation.

BII was a 5mx5m square diagonal to site grid mostly in F99. SW corner of BII is F99 3.4E 1.8N. Three further extensions were named BIII, BIV and BVIII. The junction of BII with BIV is F99 6.6E 0.9N. The location of this cutting against the main site grid is shown outline by dashed lines on Fig 4.

5. Early Neolithic cuttings - CI-CVa

Early examination of the Neolithic ramparts was carried out in CH71 and CH72, using cuttings set out to suit the topography rather than using the (then embryonic) main site grid. These cuttings were numbered with the prefix letter C and Roman numerals. It is difficult to precisely locate these cuttings except by reference to plans for later cuttings which show the previous limits of these excavations.

CH71 saw cuttings CI located in main site grid L2/L3 and CII to the SW in site grid squares N3-N4. Both were irregular shapes, but about 15m square each (for CII shape, see Fig 5). CH72 saw CIII due N of CII and the much larger CIV S of CI, effectively completing the quartet of cuttings. CIV was reopened in CH75, with slightly different edges, and this season of digging was called CIVa. Figure 5 shows an aerial photograph of the CH72 season and gives a good idea of the location and position of CIII and CIV in the foreground of the larger Iron Age cuttings.

In CH75 a further two cuttings were opened to investigate the turn of the Neolithic defences on the Northern hill slope. These were named CV and CVa. CV starts aligned with the site grid with its SW corner approximately equivalent to the SW corner of site square L97. The cutting then turns East by 45 degrees to pick up the Neolithic ditches. This is well shown on the plans. CVa was a small 8mx5m cutting which is essentially an extension of CV on the downslope end. The CV and CVa plans share the position of Peg O to collate the two.

6. Other off-grid and exploratory cuttings - D and E

Several later off-grid exploratory cuttings used the D and E prefix with Roman numerals.

DI was the first examination of the Long Mound, opened in CH75. It was a 8m x 3m sondage at about 45 degrees to the site grid. The SE corner of this cutting was in site square T2, at approximately 4.0 E 9.6 N, and appears on T2 site plans, notably Plan 4 of T2 West (see Fig 6).

EI and EII were two CH77 cuttings to investigate the Iron Age rampart on the western point of the hill. They were laid out as other rampart cuttings - perpendicular to the line of the rampart and therefore off the main site grid. EI was the initial cutting, followed by two small extensions, named EIIa and EIIb in the site notebook but these cutting names do not seem to have been widely used in recording. EIIc was a much more substantial cutting to the South, separately planned and finds

and features separately recorded. The relationship between the two cuttings is shown in Figure 7. I have been unable to find a record of the precise location of these cuttings relative to the main site grid. However based on published maps, it appears that the Eastern edge of these cuttings (approximately Peg W in Figure 7) is close to the junction between main grid squares ZC90-ZD90-ZC91-ZD91.

EII appears not to have been used. EIII was a small 2m square evaluation cutting opened in CH84 and excavated to about site Plan 1 level. Two plans were made of the cutting and there were a few finds. It is described as 'a test excavation for the following season' but I have been unable to find any record of its location. Presumably it was on the North scarp slope near the Sacred Circle. Since it was only excavated to Plan 1 level, and if it was included in a future season's cuttings, it will have been swept up that way.

7. CH82 cuttings outside the rampart - F/A2 etc

The CH82 season opened a series of cuttings outside the rampart (i.e. to the East) alongside the big AXVII rampart cutting. These cuttings used a different naming convention, and align only approximately to the main site grid north axis. Unhelpfully, the sequence of North and East naming is opposite to the main grid. Thus, the two cuttings alongside the rampart are named F/AA2 and F/AA3 (F/AA2 is the northern one). The next two to the East are F/A2 and F/A3, with F/B2 and F/B3 to the east of those. F/AA2 and F/AA3 are each only 5m wide E-W - locations to the West of this were counted as part of AXVII. There is a useful sketch layout, with precise positions of the interface between these cuttings and AXVII - see Fig 8.

8. CH82 cuttings inside the rampart - CQ, CR etc

CH82 also opened the first cuttings on the Dark Age settlement in the South of the site. These cuttings used a completely separate grid naming convention and alignment. The four cuttings were set out on the same axis as the rampart cutting AXVII alongside. They were named CQ, CS, CR and CT and the layout is shown on the attached diagram. Consequently the grid north used that season on those squares is different. When part of this cutting was reopened in CH83 it was excavated using the correct main site grid - H17/J17 in this area, and the adjacent areas opened in CH86 also used the main site grid. The relationship between CQ/CR etc and the main site grid is shown in Fig 3.

9. CH90 Northern Rampart cutting - JP1/JP2

In CH90, a 6m wide transect was opened across the Northern slope of the hill to pick up the rampart lines there. As with many rampart cuttings, these were laid out to be perpendicular to the rampart rather than being aligned with the site grid. It ran in total for about 31m in a NNE-SSW direction. For historical reasons, this transect received the names JP1 (the majority of the cutting) and JP2 (the southern 6m section). The southern end of this transect is close to the boundary of P95/P96/Q95/Q96. There is a helpful diagram showing the location in the Supervisor finds book (see Fig 9). Finds within this cutting were recorded using the main site grid.

10. Long Mound CH90-91

Rather unhelpfully, our prehistoric forebears chose to set out the Long Mound at 45 degrees to our main site grid. This made for some challenging planning and frames set out on the grid were at a difficult angle to the mound topography. For more than ten years this difficulty was tolerated successfully. However for reasons best known to those at the time, some time around CH90 or CH91, this method was abandoned for squares in the V98/V97 area.

Features in this area were planned conventionally up until Plan 4. After that, the grid was realigned to be parallel to the Long Mound, with planning areas named 'Long Mound A (LMA)' etc up to

LMD. There is a large format plan which shows these areas very approximately. The NW corner of V97 into W97 NW of the cross-baulk was named LMA. SE of the cross-baulk, the centre and SW flank of mound was planned as LMB and the NE flank of mound as LMC. Plans made in these areas show the main site grid squares marked, so they can be lined up. A separate, ill-defined, 'Special Area' appears to be the central area of V98. Happily there is a very good, although huge, Feature Plan for the whole area of V97-V98-W97-W98.

LMD is part of U98, opened in CH91. A triangle of U98 was excavated and planned with V98. Then the cutting was extended to NE and this section planned off grid, parallel to the Long Mound as LMD. - a rectangle about 8m long and 3m wide all in U98. U98 grid boundary are marked on these plans.

This system appears to have been abandoned in CH92 and CH93, with planning reverting to the normal site grid method.

Appendices

Figure 1. Precise junction between Entrance grid and Main site grid

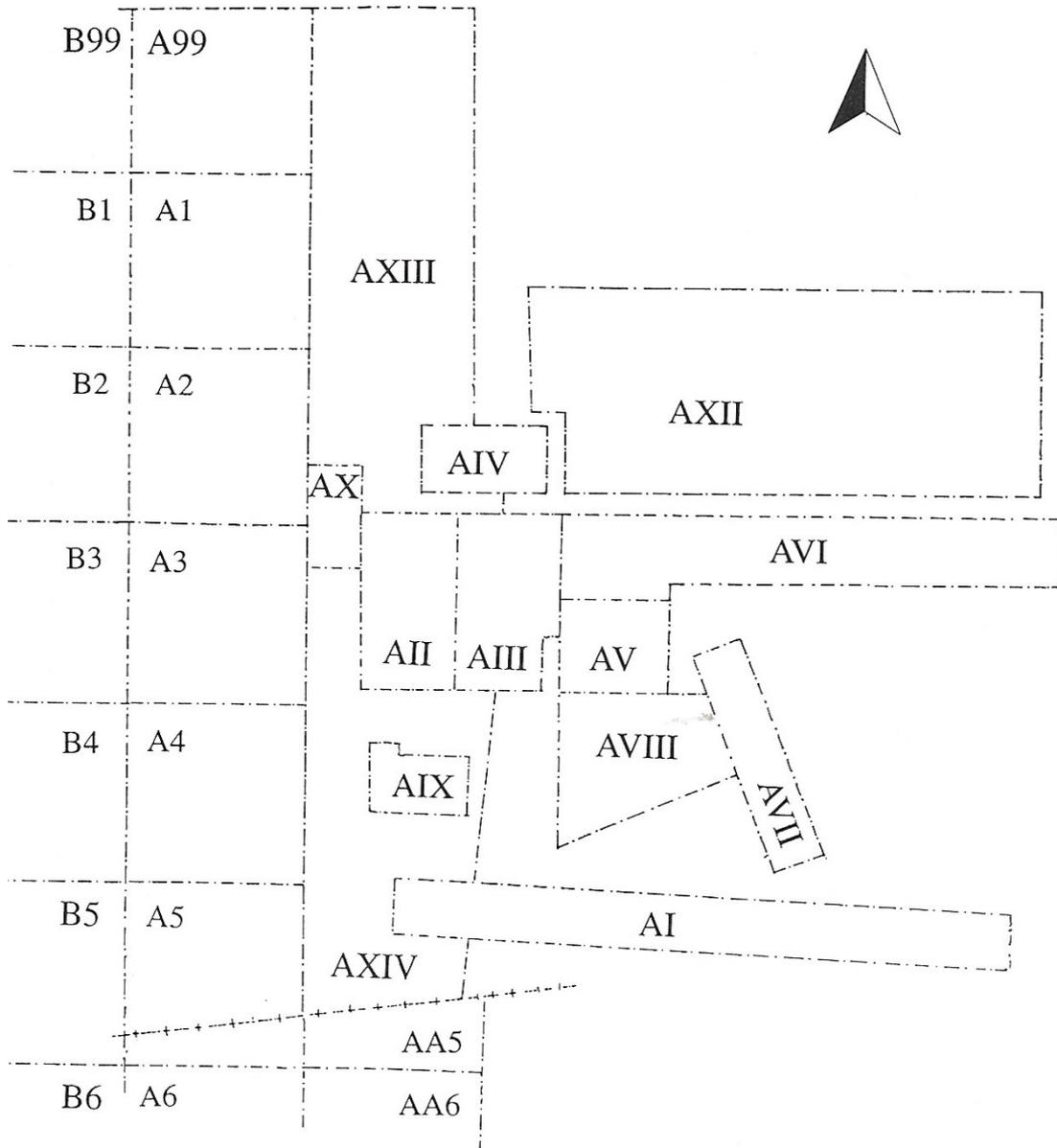


Figure 2. AXVI cutting location - from AXVI Supervisor site notebook

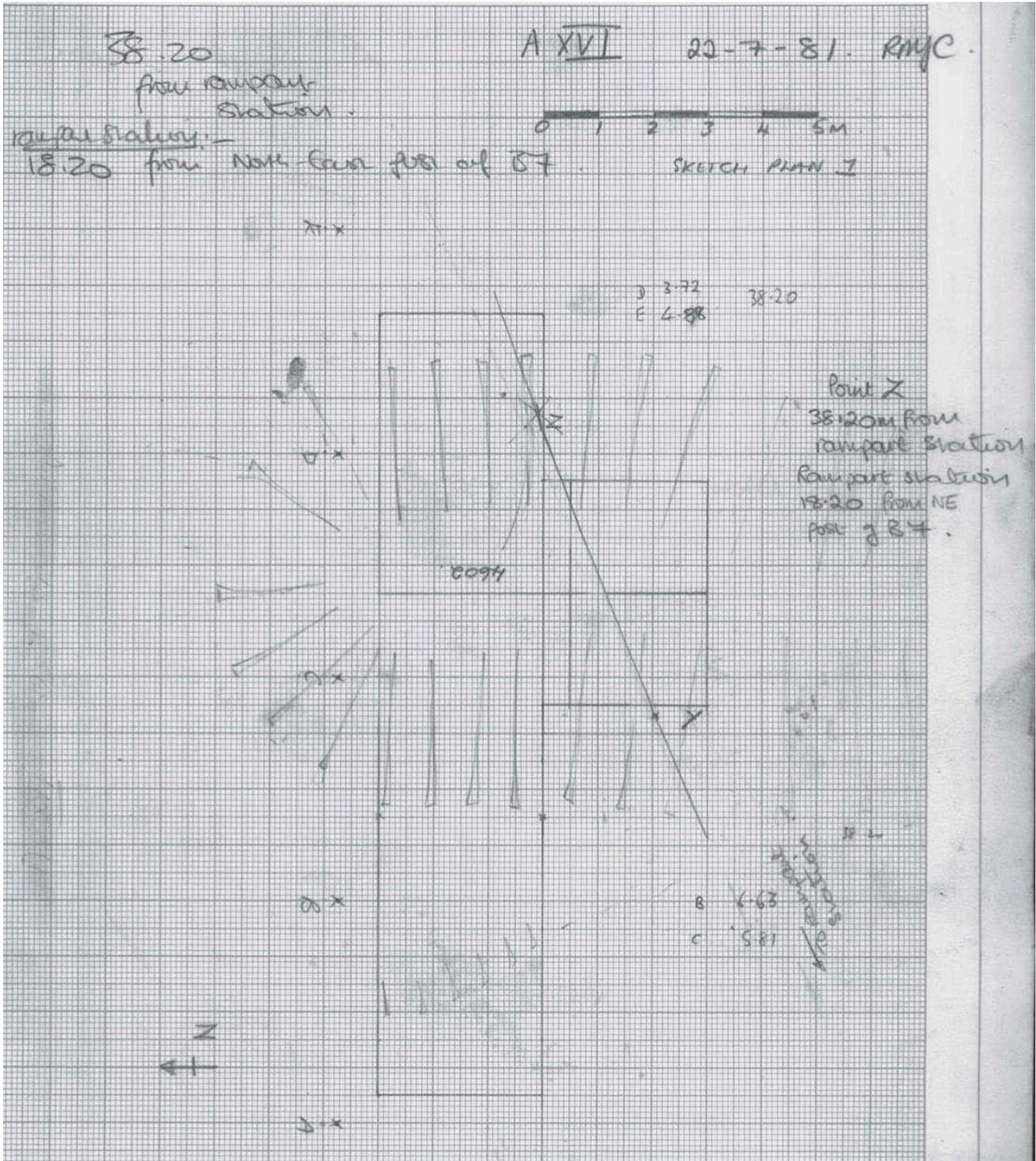


Figure 3. AXVII/CQ/CR/CS/CT relationship to main site grid

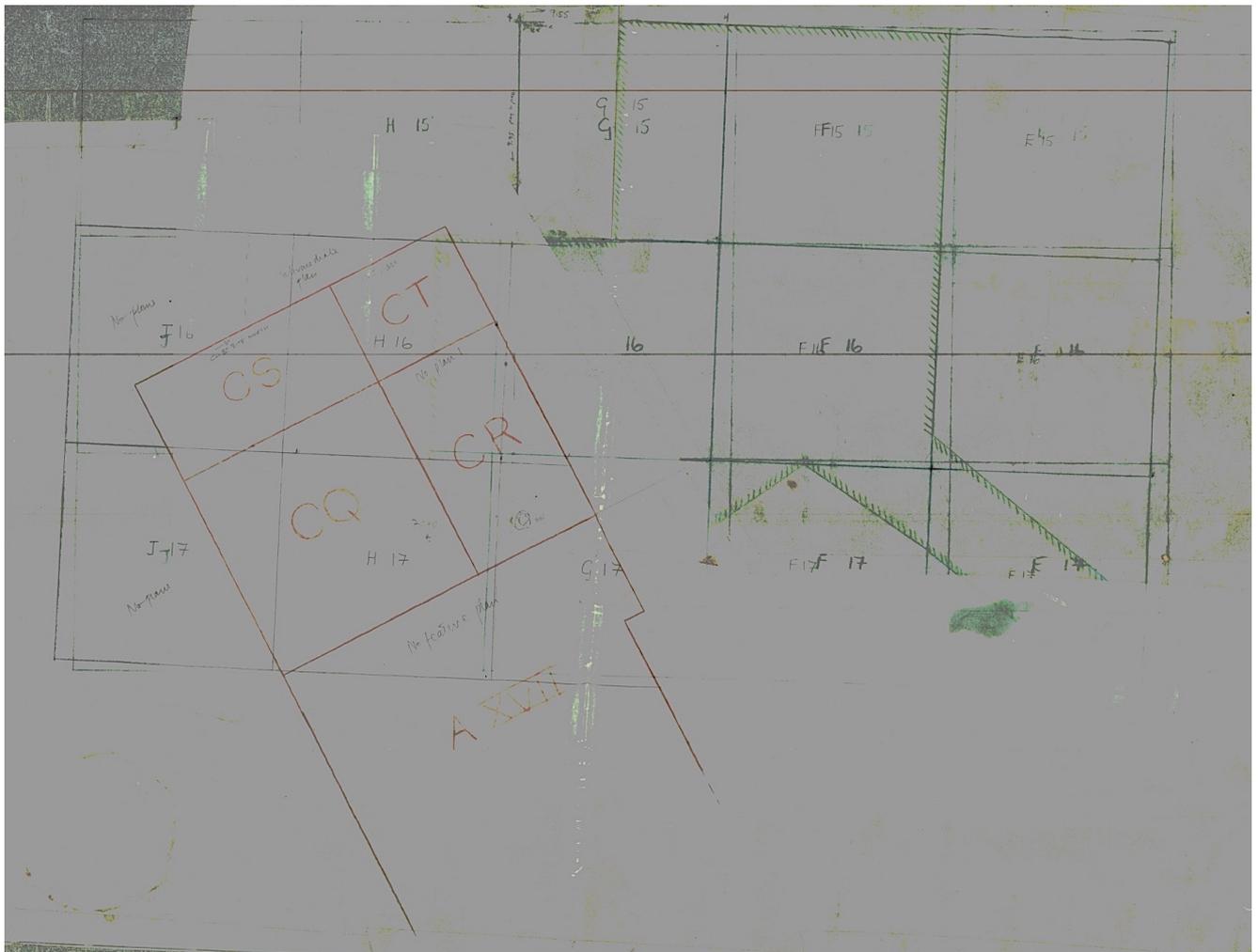


Figure 4. BII etc cutting location - F1-F99-G1-G99 Supervisor site notebook

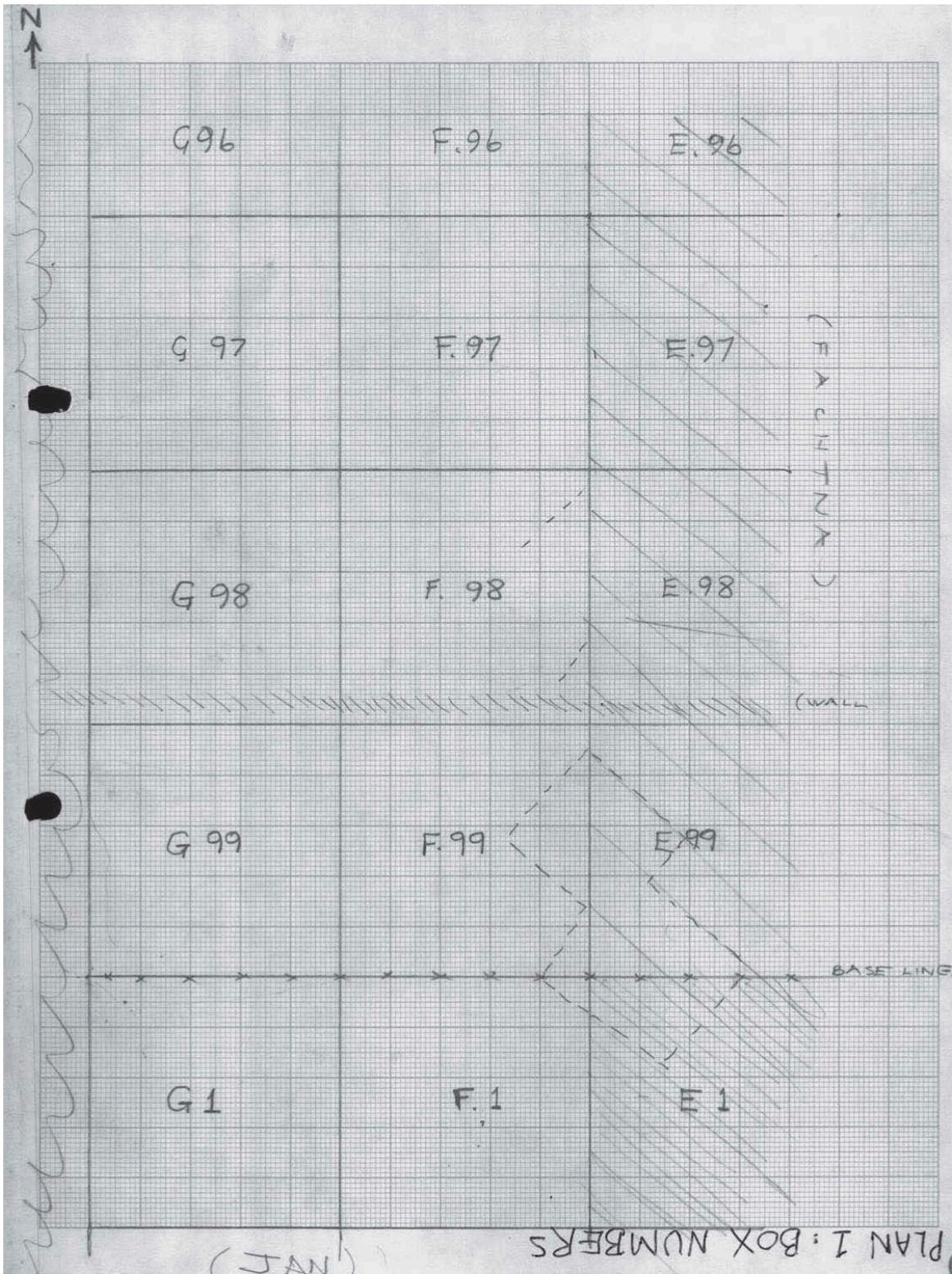


Figure 5. Aerial photograph of the CH72 cuttings, showing CIII and CIV in the foreground. North is to the left of the photo. (photograph Copyright © Philip Dixon)



Figure 6. Cutting DI location shown on T2 Plan 4 West (in the middle at the top)

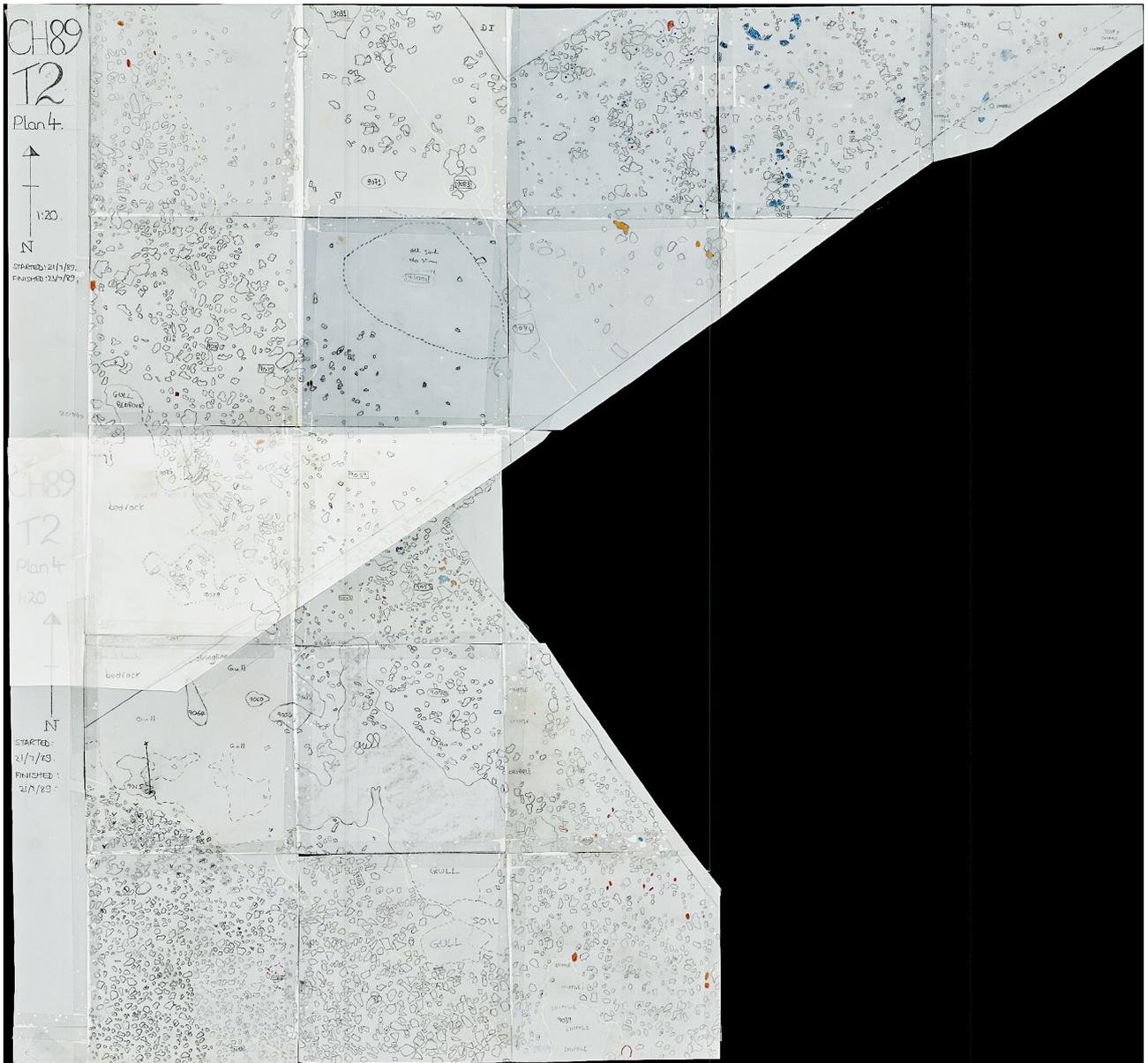


Figure 7. E1 and E1c cuttings relationship - from E1 Supervisor site notebook

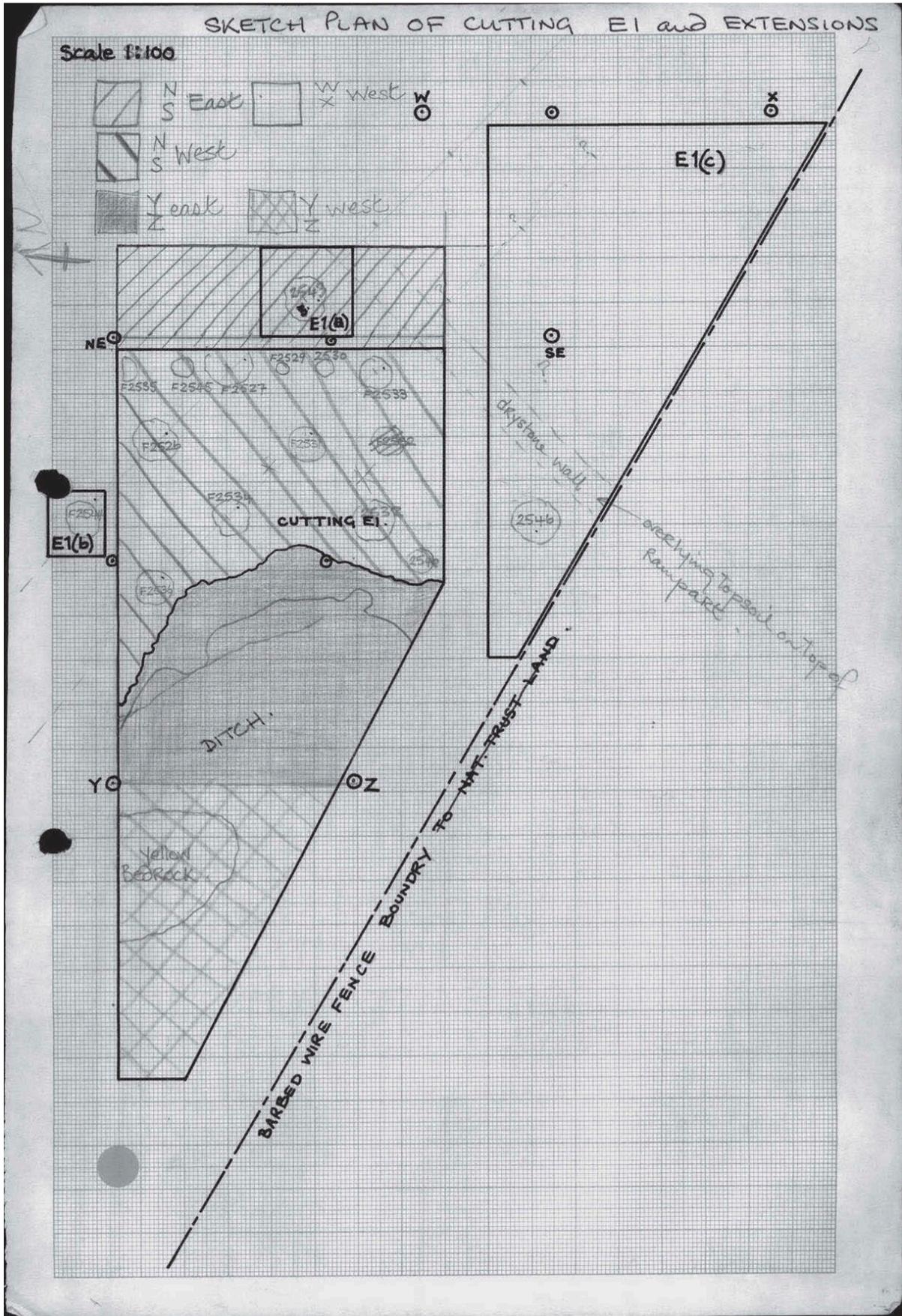


Figure 9. JP1/JP2 location from supervisor finds book.

