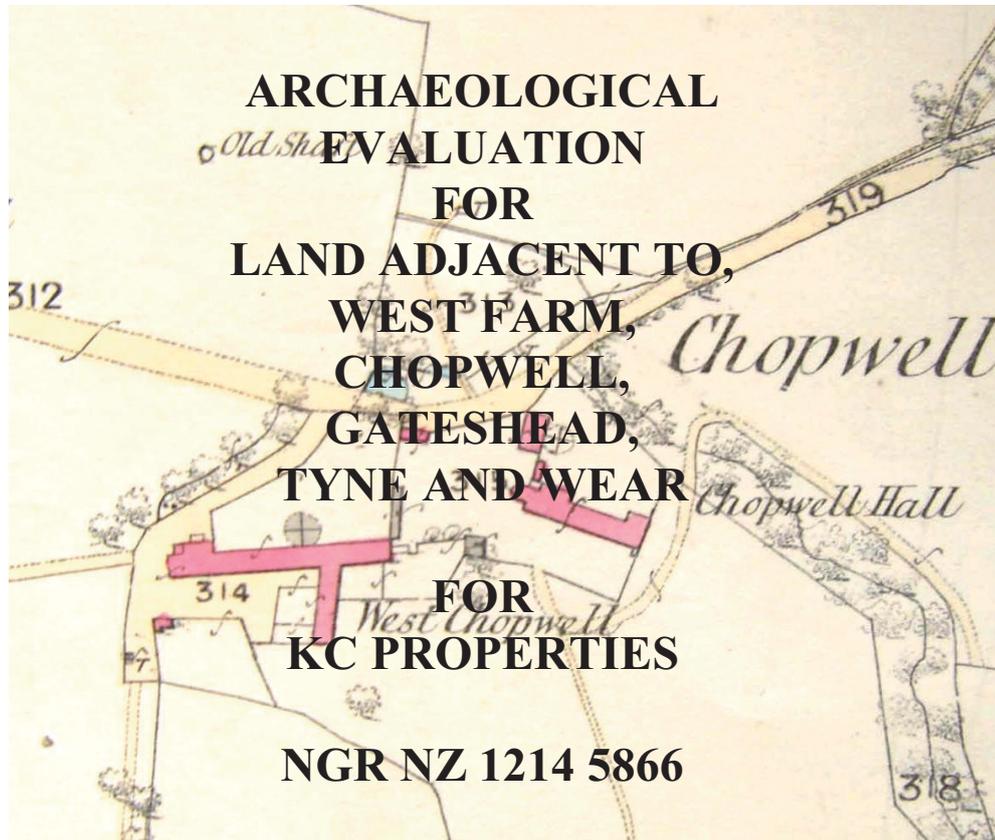


NORTH PENNINES ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Client Report No. CP/498/07

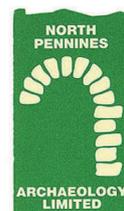


OASIS REFERENCE: northpen3-26856

PLANNING REFERENCE: DC/07/00241/FUL

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17 June 2007



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In May 2007, North Pennines Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by Kim Moore of KC Properties to undertake an archaeological evaluation in advance of a proposed redevelopment of land adjacent to West Farm, Chopwell, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear (NGR NZ 1214 5866). Planning permission has been granted for a single detached dwelling house on the site of a recently demolished barn to the rear of the farm; however, a recent desk-based assessment of the site undertaken by NPAL (Peters 2007) highlighted that the site lies within the presumed extent of Chopwell medieval grange, and also lies within close proximity to Chopwell Hall and its earlier predecessor. Previous archaeological works in the area have failed to find traces of either the hall or medieval grange, but research has shown the archaeological importance of the area.

As a consequence, the Tyne and Wear Archaeology Officer, Jennifer Morrison, requested one evaluation trench to be excavated on the site of the proposed building, measuring 10m in length and 1.5m in width. The trench was to be machined down to natural subsoil and then hand-cleaned and recorded.

The evaluation produced no structural, environmental or archaeological remains. The trench was cleaned and recorded, and then backfilled on the verbal instruction of Jennifer Morrison. No further work will be required on this part of the site.



Plate 1. The trench during excavation, looking north.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

North Pennines Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Kim Moore of KC Properties for commissioning the project, and for her assistance throughout the work.

North Pennines Archaeology Ltd would also like to extend their thanks to Jennifer Morrison, Tyne and Wear Archaeology Officer, Newcastle City Council.

The archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Tony Liddell, Project Supervisor, and Cat Peters, Assistant Supervisor. The report was written by Tony Liddell, with historical input from Cat Peters. The illustrations were produced by Tony Liddell. The project was managed by Matt Town, Senior Project Officer for NPA Ltd, and Frank Giecco, Technical Director for NPA Ltd. The report was edited by Matt Town.

1. INTRODUCTION AND LOCATION

1.1 Location

- 1.1.1 Planning permission has been granted for a single detached dwelling house on the site of a recently demolished barn, to the south-west of the main building complex of West Farm, Chopwell, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear (NGR NZ 1214 5866). A site location plan can be seen in *Figure 1*. The development site lies within a semi-urban context at the western fringe of the village of Chopwell, with rural fields visible to the north and east. The current ground surface lies at approximately 182m OD.
- 1.1.2 The site at present consists of a vacant plot of previously developed land. The present ground surface in the area of the evaluation trench is the result of demolition rubble as well as recent activity on the site, including the preparation of much of the north-eastern part for use as a car parking facility. External soil has also been added in the southern and eastern sections of the development site, and further spoil has also been used to cover the former car parking area in the north-east section.
- 1.1.3 The natural subsoil of the area consists of a glacial drift of brown boulder clay, the Lodgement Till. This survives up to a maximum of 30m in thickness outside the buried channels, but over most of the district, is less than 10m thick, and dips down towards the River Tyne. Boulder clay is the most widespread of the Quaternary deposits and covers between 50 and 60% of the district. In general it is a tough, over consolidated dark brown, grey-brown or dull yellow-brown silty, sandy clay, which generally contains abundant clasts of assorted bedrock lithologies, many of relatively local derivation (BGS 1998).

1.2 Circumstances of the Project

- 1.2.1 Newcastle City Council were consulted regarding a planning application submitted for a proposed development located on land adjacent to West Farm, Chopwell, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear (Planning Reference DC/07/00241/FUL; NGR NZ 1214 5866). The proposed development is for a single detached dwelling house on the site of a recently demolished barn.
- 1.2.2 The site lies within the presumed extent of Chopwell medieval grange, designated as an area of potential archaeological importance in the Urban District Policy (Ref HER ENV19). It also lies within close proximity to Chopwell Hall and its earlier predecessor. Previous archaeological works in the area have failed to find traces of Chopwell Hall, or the medieval grange (Timescape Surveys 2003; Tyne and Wear Museums 2004), but research has shown the archaeological importance of the area (Tyne and Wear Museums 2003). A post-medieval raised track way comprising fragments of sandstone was discovered from the works, which may have been a track way for a colliery waggonway (Tyne and Wear Museums 2004). As a result, in accordance with PPG16 and UDP policy ENV19, the Tyne and Wear Archaeology Officer advised the South Tyneside Planning Authority that an archaeological evaluation should be undertaken to evaluate the potential for archaeology to survive sub-surface. North Pennines Archaeology Ltd. (NPAL) were commissioned by Kim Moore of KC Properties to undertake the required archaeological evaluation of the site.

- 1.2.3 This report sets out the results of the fieldwork in the form of a short document outlining the findings of the evaluation, followed by a statement of the archaeological potential and recommendations for the area.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 *Project Design*

2.1.1 No project design was required at the request of the Tyne and Wear Archaeology Officer; all fieldwork conformed in accordance with the Project Specification produced by Jennifer Morrison, Tyne and Wear Archaeology Officer for Newcastle City Council and all fieldwork methodology was consistent with the relevant standards and procedures of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA), and generally accepted best practice.

2.2 *Archaeological Evaluation*

2.2.1 The evaluation consisted of the excavation of a single trial trench, measuring 10m in length by 1.5m in width, aligned north-south as illustrated in *Figure 1*, and excavated to the depth of natural subsoil.

2.2.2 In summary, the main objectives of the evaluation were:

- to establish the presence/absence, nature, extent and state of preservation of archaeological remains and to record these where they were observed;
- to establish the character of those features in terms of cuts, soil matrices and interfaces;
- to recover artefactual material, especially that useful for dating purposes;
- to recover palaeoenvironmental material where it survived in order to understand site and landscape formation processes.

2.3 *Archive*

2.3.1 The full archive has been produced to a professional standard in accordance with the current English Heritage guidelines set out in the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage, 2nd Ed. 1991). The archive will be deposited within an appropriate repository, and a copy of the report given to the County Historic Environment Record, where viewing will be available on request. The archive can be accessed under the unique project identifier NPA 07 WFC-A.

2.3.2 North Pennines Archaeology support the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) project. This project aims to provide an online index and access to the extensive and expanding body of grey literature created as a result of developer-funded archaeological fieldwork. As a result, details of the results of this assessment will be made available by North Pennines Archaeology, as a part of this national project.

3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 *Historical Background*

- 3.1.1 This historical background is compiled mostly from secondary sources, and is intended only as a brief summary of historical developments around the study area.
- 3.1.2 ***Bronze Age (c. 1,800BC- 600BC)***: the earliest known evidence for human activity in the vicinity of the development site exists in the form of a round barrow (Young 1980, 5), located c. 550m to the north-east of the development site. The occurrence of a Bronze Age burial mound in the vicinity of Chopwell suggests habitation sites should also occur in the vicinity. A rectilinear enclosure has been speculated to the south and east of the development site, in addition to circular features to the immediate east (Mabbitt 2003, 13), although no features of a prehistoric origin were found during excavations on the site (McKelvey 2004). There is no evidence of activity in the area during the Iron Age or Roman periods.
- 3.1.3 ***Early Medieval (c. 410 AD- 1066)***: the name ‘Chopwell’ is considered to have Anglo-Saxon origins (Hordon and Wright 1995, 3). In 1153 the manor is referred to as ‘Ceoppa’s or Ceappa’s weille’, and in 1278 as ‘Cheppewell’ and later as ‘Chapwell’ (ibid, 4). It is not clear whether ‘Ceoppa’ is a reference to the name of an individual, or whether it derives from the Anglo-Saxon word for cattle. The later part of the name means ‘spring’, ‘well’, or ‘watering place’.
- 3.1.4 ***Medieval (c.1066- 1485)***: the medieval settlement of Chopwell, known as a grange, is thought to have lain just to the east of the development site. An early reference to Chopwell occurs in the late 12th century when Bishop Pudsey granted the manor to Newminster Abbey, in return for similar lands at Wolsingham (Tomlinson 1898, 255). A grant dating to 1315 by the Bishop of Durham refers to the existence of quarries or coal mines in Chopwell (*fassatum*), showing early utilisation of natural resources in the area (Fowler 1876).
- 3.1.5 Recent research on the adjacent site to the east and south of the development site, concluded from aerial photographic evidence that the area around the development site appears to be at the centre of a shrunken medieval village (Mabbitt 2003, 13). The occurrence of a shrunken medieval village in the environs of the development site could have major implications for the possibility of medieval archaeology surviving on site.
- 3.1.6 ***Post-Medieval (c. AD 1485- 1900)***: after the dissolution of the monasteries the lands of Chopwell Grange passed to the Swinburn family, who became the sitting tenants. The land was later confiscated in 1569, much of it being retained by the Crown, but the remainder was granted to Sir Robert Constable on whose death in 1595, the land was again seized, and leased to Ambrose Dudley. In 1604 the estates were restored to the Constable family, who renewed the lease to Dudley (Tomlinson 1898). Hordon and Wright (1995) state the date of construction of Chopwell Hall at 1615, and the Hall once stood on part of the present development site.
- 3.1.7 By the middle of the 17th century the estate had passed to the Clavering family, and in the 17th century to the Cowper family. In 1799, the family estates of the Cowper family

were sold and Chopwell Hall, Horsegate and Broomfield were purchased by the Rector of Ryton (Hordon and Wright 1995, 4). The Clavering estate plan of 1721 (NRO 390/M/142) shows a large house/tower on the site of the later Chopwell Hall, and could be the hall in one of its earliest forms. It is also shown on the Cowper Estate plan of 1793. Evidence from Trade Directories shows that by 1828, it had become a farming estate, with the farm tenanted by Thomas Snowball (Parson and White 1828, 186). Indeed, earlier evidence from documentary sources reveals that Chopwell Hall was also known as Chopwell East Farm in 1808 (DRO D/CG6/372). By the production of the First Edition Ordnance Survey Map, Chopwell Hall is depicted as an L-shaped building within an irregular-shaped enclosure. By 1890 the small outbuilding at the west side of the farmyard had been rebuilt, and the west end of the main range had been altered. By 1940 the western end of the Hall had been demolished, and the whole complex by 1950.

- 3.1.8 In addition to Chopwell Hall, one of main residences may well have been West Chopwell Farmhouse, which was in existence by 1828, for ‘Allison, Gavin - farmer’ is cited as being in occupation of ‘West Chopwell’, at that time (Parson and White 1828, 185). The Historic Environment Record for the site gives a possible construction date as comparable to Chopwell Hall, citing 1721. This is presumably related to the Clavering Estate Plan of that date, where it was first documented, and could therefore date to the early 17th century if Hordon and Wright’s assertion of 1615 is correct (Hordon and Wright 1995). Parts of this building survive on site today, though whether they are later replacements or the original is difficult to say. The outbuildings have recently been demolished due to lack of foundations and safety issues (Kim Moore *pers. com.*).

4. EVALUATION TRENCH RESULTS



Plate 2. The Evaluation Trench, looking south.

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The evaluation trench was aligned north-south. The trench was excavated by machine under close archaeological observation, to a length of 10m and a width of 1.5m, the dimensions as stipulated in the brief prepared by the Tyne and Wear Archaeology Officer. The trench was excavated to natural subsoil, and then further excavated down to a depth of c.1.2m, to test the nature of the clay natural.
- 4.1.2 The stratigraphy encountered was recorded, and the trench location was tied into the Ordnance Survey. All deposits were levelled with respect to Ordnance Datum.
- 4.1.3 The evaluation trench was planned and the west-facing section recorded (see *Figure 2*).

4.2 The Results

- 4.2.1 The 10m x 1.5m trench was excavated as directed and it was found that a deep deposit of modern overburden (**100**) covered the area, thinning out towards the southern end of the trench (from a maximum depth of 0.70m in the north to 0.45m in the south). This

- was the result of demolition of a previous building adjacent to the excavation area, as well as a levelling process, and consisted of mixed sands, soils and rubble. Directly beneath (100), in the southern 4.5m of the trench, was a sheet of black terram geotextile matting (105), used to aid in previous landscaping of the site. Beneath the terram was (104), a very compact dark brown/grey silty soil which was a product of the terram compaction, and resembled an old deposit of topsoil. This deposit existed to a maximum depth of 0.25m.
- 4.2.2 Beneath the modern overburden (100) and the compacted topsoil (104) was a deposit of mixed brown clay and soil, highly disturbed, which can be interpreted as a subsoil deposit over the site; the only find from this deposit was a piece of modern red plastic. This context, (103), measured on average a depth of 0.27m.
- 4.2.3 Cut from the base of (103) was what appeared to be a large post hole (see *Figure 2*), with the cut [106] (0.40m wide) extending straight down through (102) and (101) and below the depth of the excavation. The fill of cut [106] was (107), a mixed clay and soil matrix with chunks of wood. The wood was soaked in coal-tar creosote, and so a modern date for the feature is likely. The feature is likely to be an old fence post for the farm boundary.
- 4.2.4 Beneath the disturbed subsoil (103) was a compact mixed orange and brown clay with inclusions of stones, (102). (102) seemed to be the upper disturbed horizon of natural subsoil (101), with an average depth of 0.50m before reaching the solid (101). Context. (101) itself, the natural subsoil, was a compact dark brown/orange boulder clay with frequent inclusions of stones. The Ordnance Datum height for the top of (101) was measured at 180.85m OD at the northern extent of the trench, with the southern extent measuring 180.45m OD.
- 4.2.5 No structures or deposits of archaeological interest or value were discovered during the excavation of this trial trench.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 *Conclusions*

- 5.1.1 Although the evaluation trench produced no archaeological remains of any kind, the potential for medieval archaeology in the surrounding area remains high due to its proximity to the site of Chopwell Hall and earlier medieval grange. The potential for post-medieval remains associated with West Farm also remains high.
- 5.1.2 Based on the lack of any archaeological remains in the evaluation trench, and the nature of the lack of buried topsoils and ploughsoils, it can be presumed that in the area of the trench itself, landscaping had occurred in antiquity essentially removing all such material down to the undisturbed natural clay. This may have been during construction works around the extant buildings to create a flat, solid area on which to build.

5.2 *Recommendations*

- 5.2.1 Due to the lack of an archaeological presence within the evaluation trench it is recommended that no further work is required on this particular area of the farm.
- 5.2.2 However, due to the potential for medieval and post-medieval activity in the surrounding area, it is recommended that further evaluation takes place on any other groundworks outside the current area.

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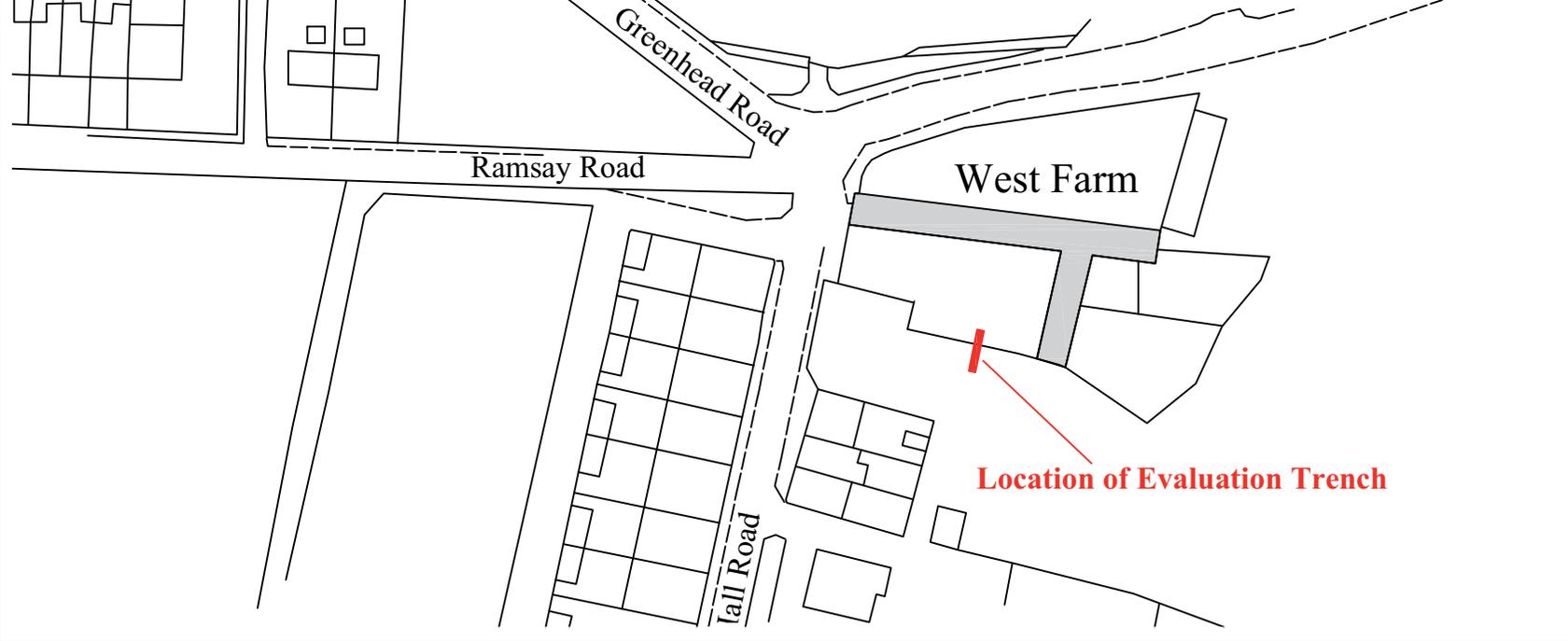
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APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT LIST

Context	Type	Description
100	Deposit	Modern overburden, sands, soils and rubble.
101	Natural	Dark brown/orange clay natural subsoil.
102	Natural	Brown/orange clay natural subsoil horizon.
103	Deposit	Brown mixed clay and soil subsoil.
104	Deposit	Compact dark brown silty soil, buried topsoil.
105	Deposit	Terram sheet.
106	Cut	Cut for modern post hole.
107	Fill	Fill of cut (106).

Table 1. List of Contexts.

APPENDIX 2: FIGURES



PROJECT:
West Farm, Chopwell

DRAWING No:
1

Scale various

DRAWN BY: TL
DATE: 09/05/2007



TITLE:
Location Plan and Maps

COMMISSIONED BY:
KC Properties

Figure 1 : Location Plan and Maps



PROJECT:

West Farm, Chopwell

DRAWING No:

2

Scale 1:50

DRAWN BY: TL

DATE: 09/05/2007

180.86m OD

TITLE:

Plan and Section

COMMISSIONED BY:

KC Properties

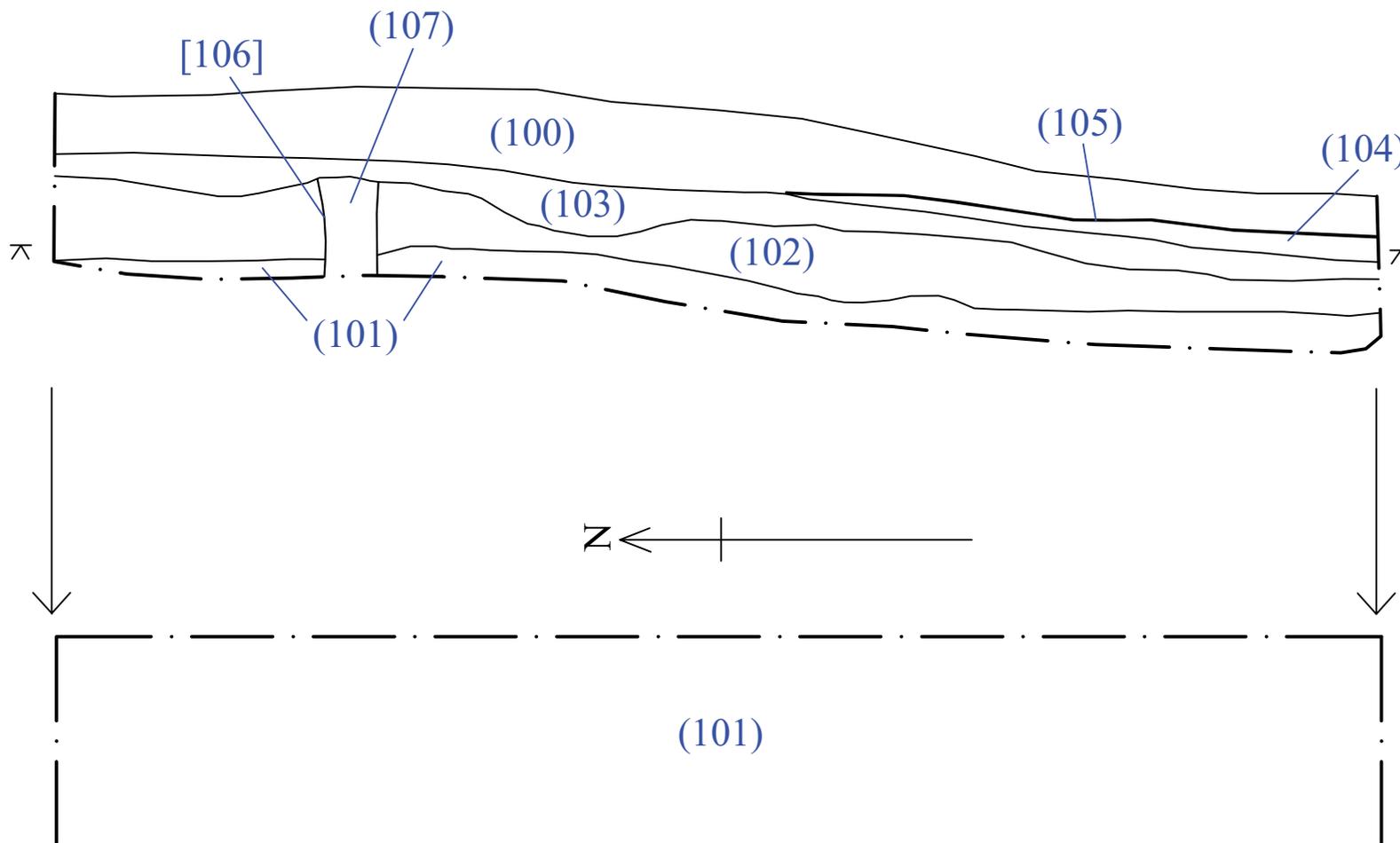


Figure 2 : Section and Plan of Development Area