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**Results of an Archaeological Watching Brief  
 off Green Bank, Shepeau Stow, Lincolnshire  
 (Planning Application Reference: H02/1048/99)**

**NGR TF 3060 1230**

prepared by

*John Samuels Archaeological Consultants*

on behalf of

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**Site Code: GBSS00**

**Acc. No: 2000.11**

**JSAC 628/00/02**

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on land off Green Bank, Shepeau Stow, Lincolnshire**

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*Summary*

*Home Aspirations Ltd. were granted full planning permission with conditions, by South Holland District Council for the construction of a four bedroomed detached house and garage on a plot of land off Green Bank, Shepeau Stow, Lincolnshire. A condition of the permission stated that an archaeological watching brief should be maintained during all groundworks associated with the development.*

*Artefacts dating from the Iron Age period and later have been recorded close to the site. A series of cropmarks to the north and south have been plotted from aerial photographs and it was considered possible that these features could extend into the development site.*

*The archaeological watching brief recorded two pits containing modern dumping material and a recently infilled boundary dyke. No archaeological deposits were encountered during the watching brief.*

## **1.0 Introduction**

### *1.1 Site Location and description*

1.1.1 Shepeau Stow is located in the administrative district of South Holland and within the Civil Parishes of Gedney Hill and Crowland, although the site lies within Crowland parish. Shepeau Stow is located approximately 7km northeast of Crowland.

1.1.2 The site is located on the north side of Green Bank centred on NGR TF 306 123 and at an approximate height of 3m above sea level (see Figure 1). The site comprised an area of level ground with a dyke forming the eastern boundary. An area of concrete was noted which formed the hardstanding base of a former building (garages/workshops).

1.1.3 Local soils at the site are Wisbech Association (812b) comprising deep stoneless calcareous coarse silty soils overlying marine alluvium (SSEW 1983). The earliest deposit encountered during the watching brief comprised a firm, yellowish brown silty clay and represents marine alluvium.

### *1.2 Planning and Project Background*

1.2.1 Home Aspirations Ltd. submitted a planning application to South Holland District Council to develop land off Green Bank, Shepeau Stow, Lincolnshire (Planning Application: H02/1048/99). The development comprises the construction of a four bedroomed detached house with detached double garage.

1.2.2 The Local Planning Authority, South Holland District Council, approved the planning application in December 1999 subject to certain conditions. Condition 5 states:

*'Arrangements shall be made for an archaeologist recognised by the Local Planning Authority to monitor all stages of the development involving ground disturbance in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by that authority before development is commenced. A report of the archaeologists findings shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority within one month of the last day of the watching brief, and shall include arrangements for the conservation of artefacts removed from the site.'*

*Reason: The site is of archaeological interest.*

1.2.3 Home Aspirations Ltd. commissioned *John Samuels Archaeological Consultants* to prepare a specification of works for the proposed development (JSAC 628/00/01) and was agreed with the County Archaeological Officer (LCC). The document detailed the objectives and methodology for the archaeological watching brief which was to be maintained during earthmoving operations for residential development on land to the north of Green Bank, Shepeau Stow, Lincolnshire.

1.2.4 This document reports the results of the watching brief and conforms to the requirements of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 : Archaeology and Planning* (DoE, 1990). It is in accordance with current best archaeological practice and the appropriate national standards and guidelines, including:

*Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1994);

*Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage, 1991);

*Code of Conduct* (Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1994);

*Archaeological Handbook* (Lincolnshire County Council, 1998).

- 1.2.5 This report was written by Jenny Young BA, AIFA in consultation with Nansi Rosenberg BA, MA, PIFA.

## **2.0 Archaeological Background**

- 2.1 Shepeau Stow lies within the civil parishes of Gedney Hill and Crowland, 7km northeast of Crowland and 3km northwest of Gedney Hill. The area has been extensively surveyed both by Phillips 1950 publication "*The Fenland in Roman Times*" and more recently by the Fenland Project funded by the Department of the Environment (now English Heritage), both which identified sites of archaeological interest within the Fens.
- 2.2 Phillips publication "*The Fenland in Roman Times*" (1950) analysed aerial photographs and other data to produce evidence of an extensive series of cropmarks to the south and north of the site. It is possible that these extend into the site. Material of Roman date comprising industrial material and pottery have been collected close to the site.
- 2.3 Fieldwalking by the Fenland Project identified sites of archaeological interest close to Shepeau Stow, although ground conditions within this area are thought to have hindered and reduced the retrieval process (Hayes & Lane 1992).
- 2.4 Research carried out by the Fenland Project has identified that during the Mesolithic to Middle Bronze Age periods, the area surrounding Shepeau Stow became increasingly wet caused by marine flooding. By the end of the Middle Bronze Age, Shepeau Stow was located on the fen edge.
- 2.5 During the Iron Age and Roman periods conditions worsened and Shepeau Stow became an area of marsh. To the south of the development site at NGR TF 3050 1160, a wheel-made carinated pot of apparent Late Iron Age date was discovered buried in a black layer 1.5m below silt. To the north of the development, sites of Roman date were identified by the Fenland Survey.
- 2.6 During the Saxon and Medieval periods the marsh retreated, helped by land reclamation. However, few sherds of pottery dating from this period were recovered by the survey.
- 2.7 Documentary evidence for the existence of Shepeau Stow is also sparse. No mention is made in the Domesday Survey (1086) or the later Lindsey Survey (1115-8). The first mention of Shepeau Stow is made in 1343 where reference is made to "*Shephe*" (Cameron 1998). The word *shephe* is thought to derive from the Old English 'scēp' and 'ēa' meaning 'the river where the sheep are found'.

### **3.0 Objectives**

- 3.1 The presence of archaeological material, recorded near to the application area, promoted the Archaeological Officer (LCC) to recommend that a watching brief be maintained during groundworks on the site. A specification for the watching brief (JSAC 628/00/01) was prepared and approved by the Archaeological Officer for Lincolnshire.
- 3.3 An archaeological watching brief has been defined as '*a programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons within a specified area or site...where there is the possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the preparation of a report and ordered archive*' (IFA, 1994).
- 3.4 The overall objective of the watching brief was to monitor all ground disturbance during the course of the development, in order to establish whether any archaeological deposits survived within the site; and to ensure their preservation by record where they may not be left *in situ*. This required limited excavation in order to define the date, extent and importance of any such remains.
- 3.5 The Watching Brief was undertaken with the specific objective of establishing whether any archaeological remains existed and if so, to identify, record, and determine their significance. Groundworks were monitored by a qualified archaeologist and any archaeological remains revealed were recorded in accordance with the MOLAS recording system. Site drawings and photographs were taken during groundworks.



#### **4.0 Results**

- 4.1 The development area was stripped of vegetation and topsoil, using a mechanical excavator using a toothless ditching bucket prior to the excavation of footings (Plate 1). The footings for the house and garage plot were excavated to a width of 0.6m and a depth of 0.9m.
- 4.2 A dark brown humic silty topsoil (001) was revealed beneath the vegetation layer, which was stripped across the site to a maximum depth of 0.35m below the present ground surface. A recently infilled dyke was revealed in plan forming the eastern boundary (see Plate 2) and could be seen as an earthwork extending northwards outside the development area (see Figure 2 for location).
- 4.3 Two pits were recorded during the topsoil strip and excavation of the house footings (see Figure 2 for their location). A pit [003], measuring 1.3m wide x 0.7m deep, with concave sides and base was revealed in section (see Figure 3). This pit contained a dark brownish black silt (004) and contained modern dumping material comprising metal, plastic and broken bottles.
- 4.4 A second circular pit [005] (1.4m wide x 0.7m deep) also with concave sides and base, contained a dark yellowish brown silt fill (006) (see Figure 4 and Plate 3). Modern dumped material comprising metal, plastic and broken bottles as well as the skeletal remains of a dog were also recorded within this deposit.
- 4.5 Both pits ([003] & [005]), were recorded cutting through the natural geology (002) and dumped deposits within these pits were sealed by the topsoil. A section drawing detailing a typical profile of geological deposits encountered during the watching brief appears as Figure 5. No archaeological artefacts or features were encountered during groundworks.

## **5.0 Discussion**

- 5.1 No archaeological deposits were encountered during groundworks associated with the development. A layer of vegetation, topsoil and concrete was recorded across the site and sealed modern dumped deposits. A recently infilled boundary/drainage ditch formed the eastern boundary of the site. This was only seen in plan and was not disturbed by the development during groundworks.
- 5.2 The use of the site as garages and workshop has had some impact on underlying geological deposits. The complete absence of archaeological artefacts or features would suggest that either previous development on the site has removed such remains or they never existed. The surrounding landscape is generally on the same flat level as the study site and it is assumed therefore that very little levelling or soil removal has occurred on the site previously. One would for this reason expect that if archaeological remains existed on the site, then these would have been encountered during the topsoil stripping stage of groundworks associated with the development. The watching brief has therefore recorded a negative archaeological result.

## **6.0 Figures**

Figure 1 : Site location

Figure 2 : Site location illustrating location of archaeological features and sections drawn

Figure 3 : South facing section drawing of modern pit cut [003]

Figure 4 : West facing section drawing of modern pit cut [005]

Figure 5 : Sample section (west facing) illustrating the soil profile recorded at the site

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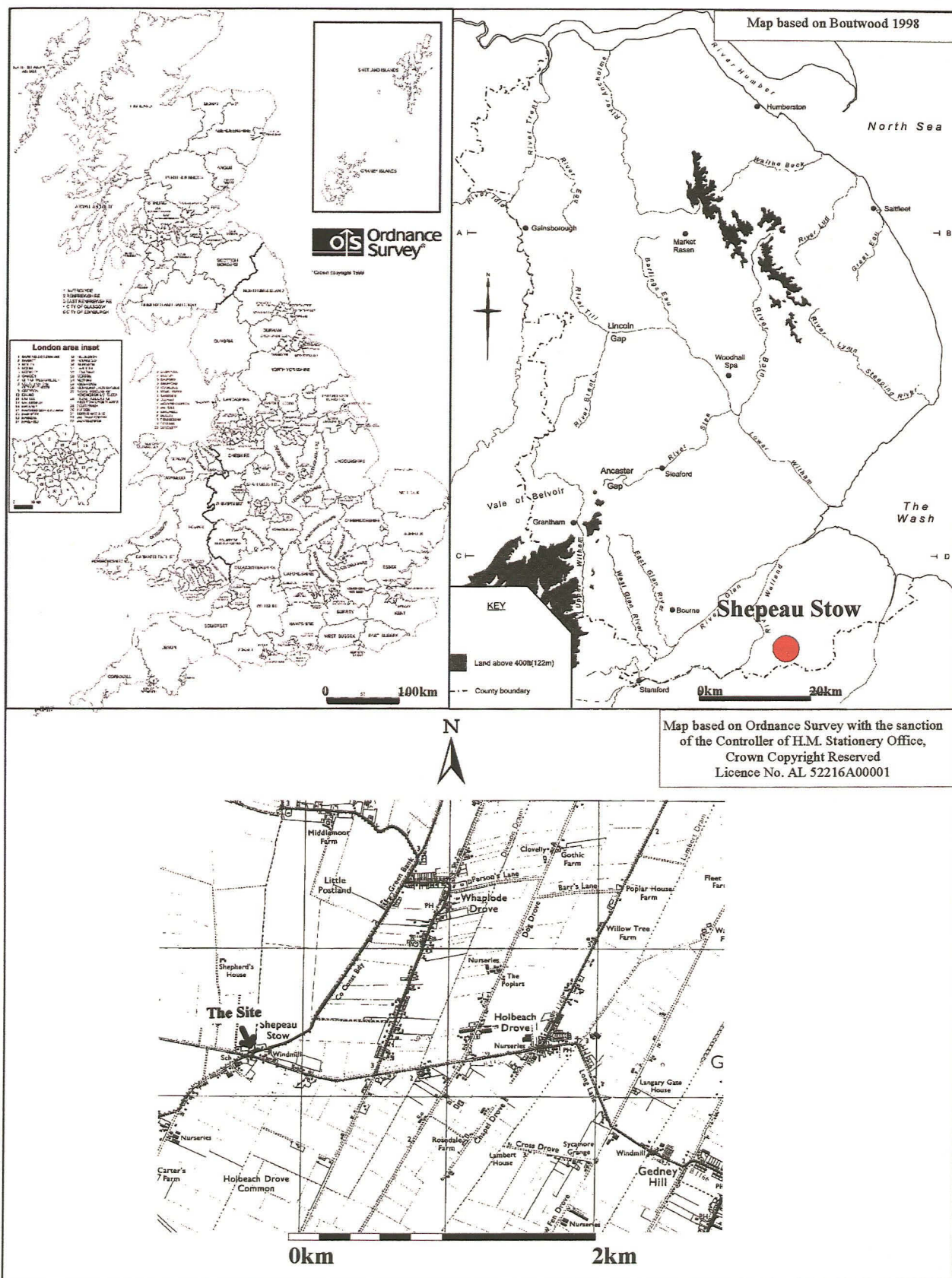
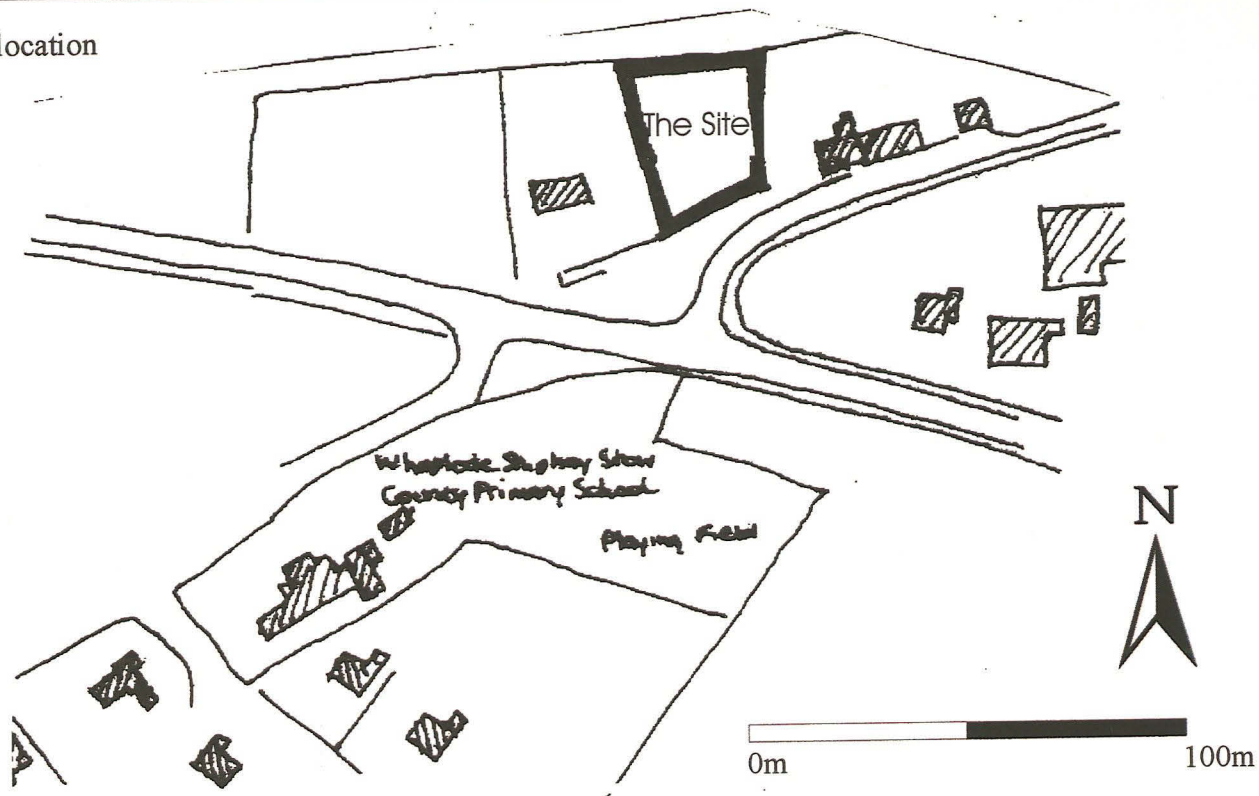
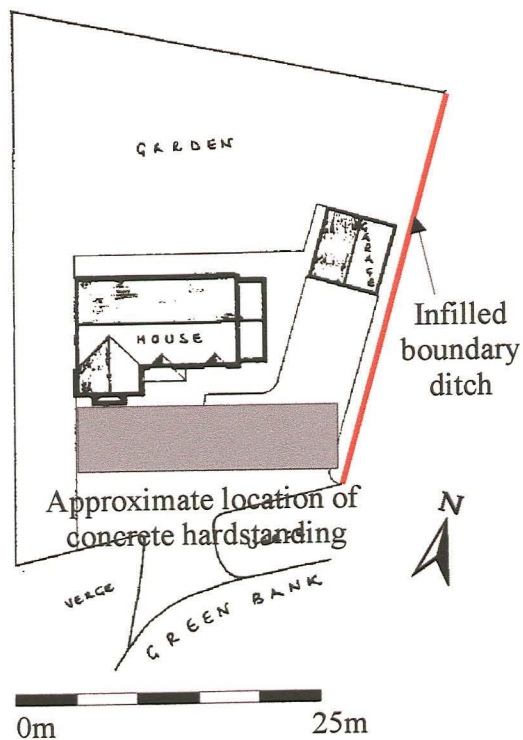


Figure 1. Site location

Site location



Site layout



Foundation plan illustrating location  
of pits [003], [005] and sample section drawn

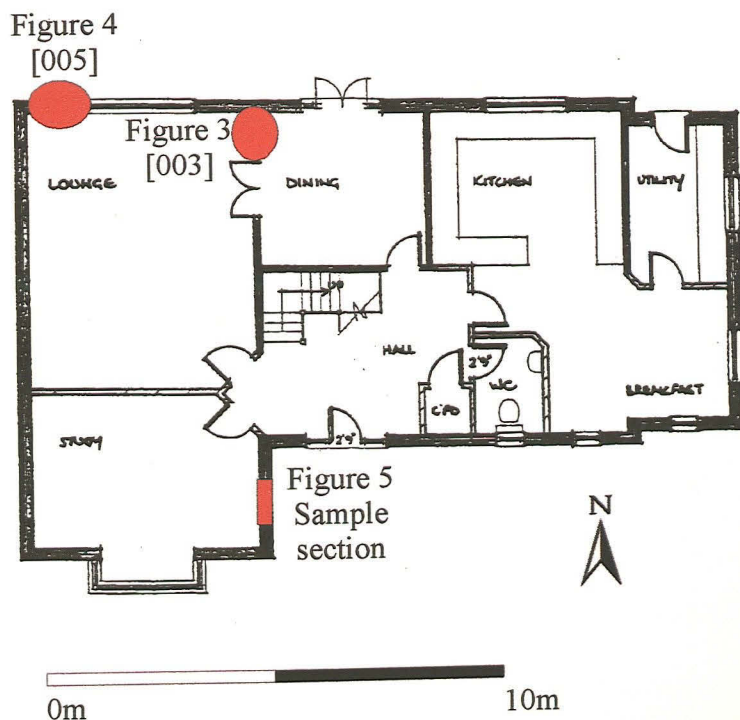


Figure 2. Site Location

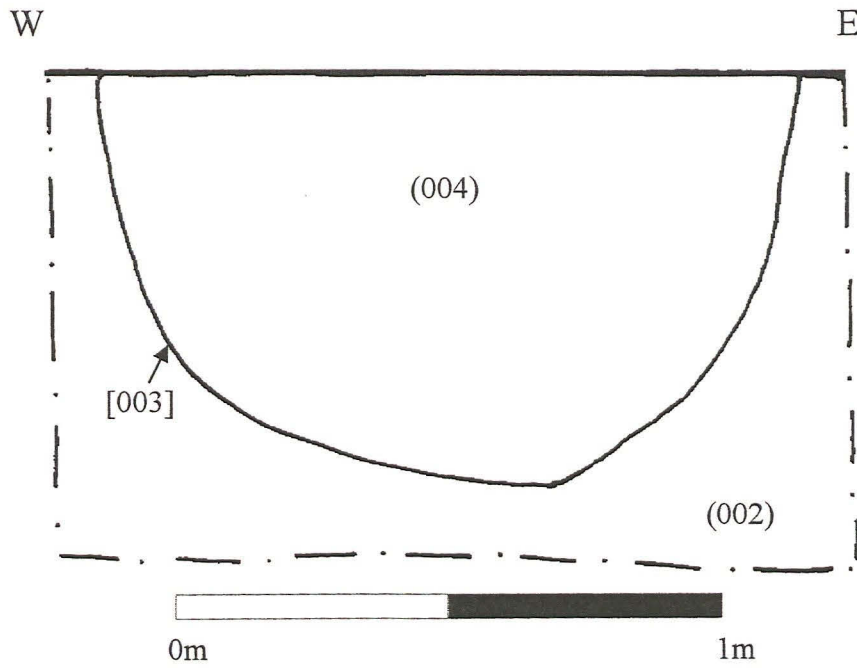


Figure 3. South facing section drawing of pit cut [003]

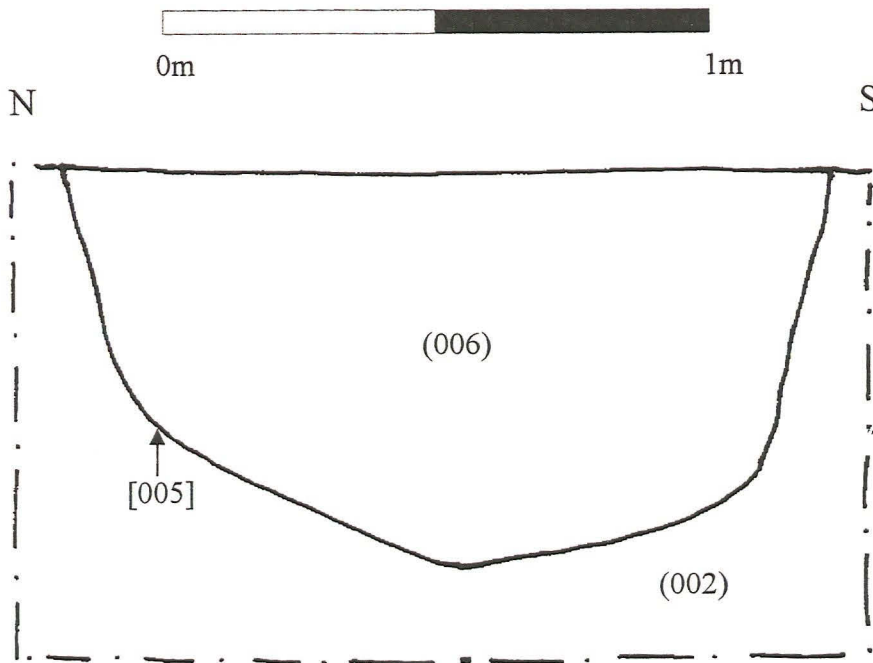


Figure 4. West facing section drawing of pit cut [005]

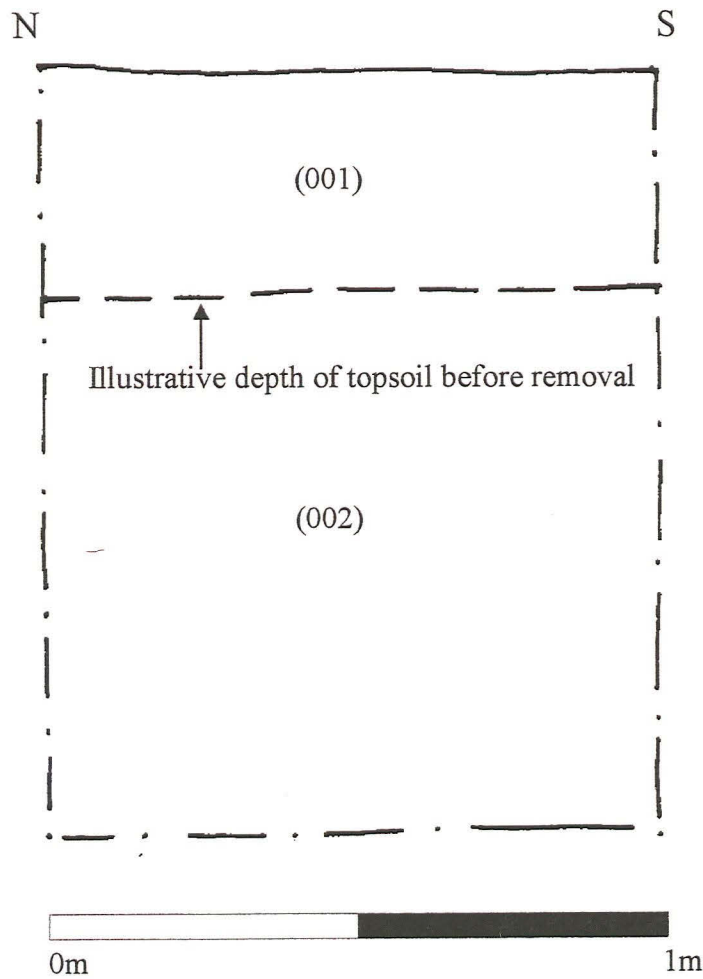


Figure 5. Sample section (west facing) illustrating the soil profile recorded at the site

**7.0 Plates**

Plate 1 : General site shot illustrating the site after topsoil stripping

Plate 2 : General shot illustrating the line of the recently infilled dyke

Plate 3 : Pit cut [005]





**Plate 1 : General site shot illustrating the site after topsoil stripping**



**Plate 2 : General shot illustrating the  
line of the recently infilled dyke**



**Plate 3 : Pit cut [005]**

## **8.0 References and sources**

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**Appendix A:  
Context Summary**

<b>Context No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
001	Firm, dark brown humic silt	Topsoil
002	Firm, yellowish brown silty clay	Natural alluvial deposits
003	Cut with concave sides and base (1.3m wide x 0.7m deep)	Pit
004	Firm, dark brownish black silt containing modern dumping material	Fill of cut [003]
005	Cut with circular cut with concave sides and base (1.4m wide x 0.7m deep)	Pit
006	Dark, yellowish brown silt containing modern dumping material	Fill of cut [005]