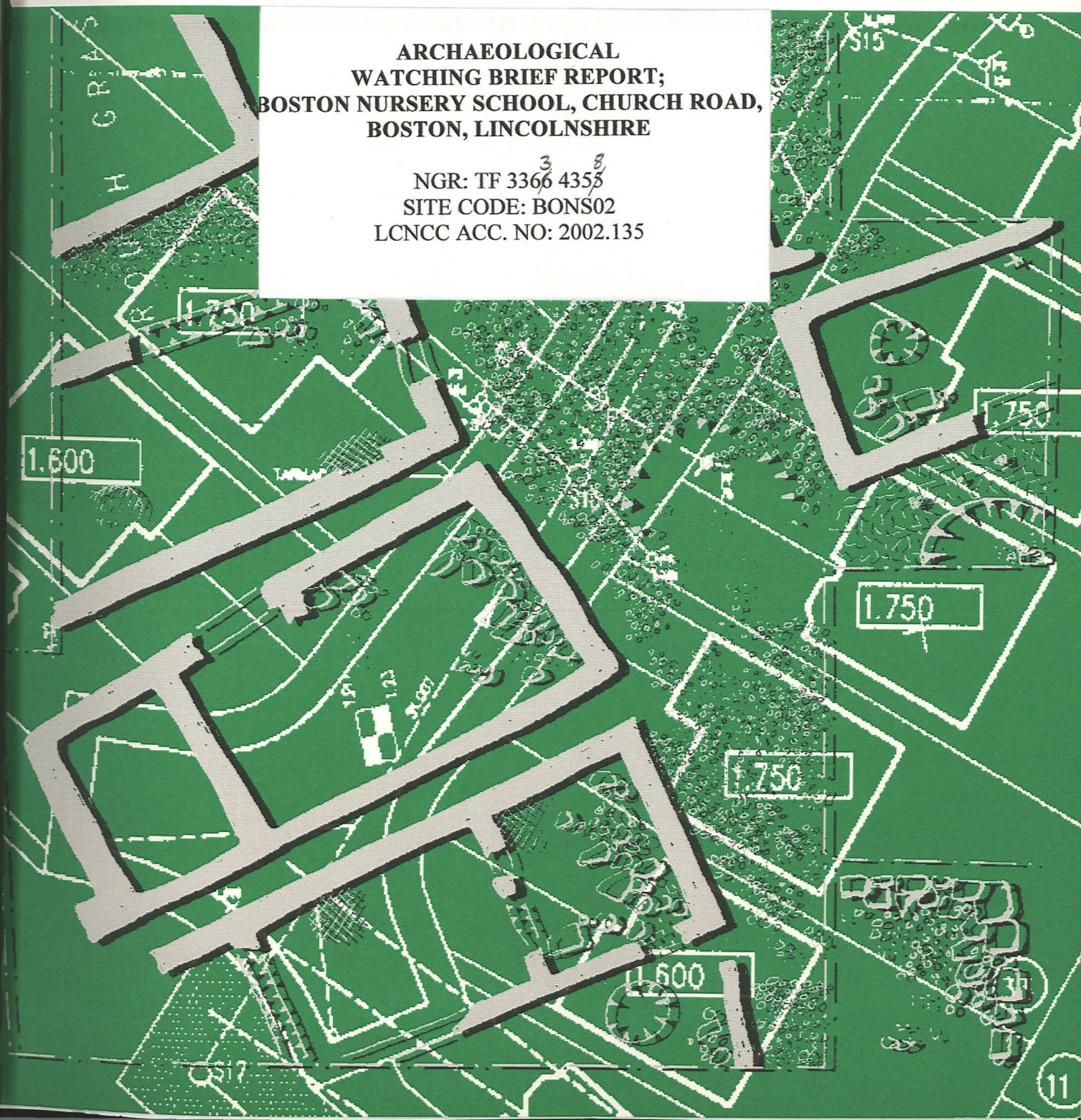


PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

L I N C O L N

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
WATCHING BRIEF REPORT;
BOSTON NURSERY SCHOOL, CHURCH ROAD,
BOSTON, LINCOLNSHIRE**

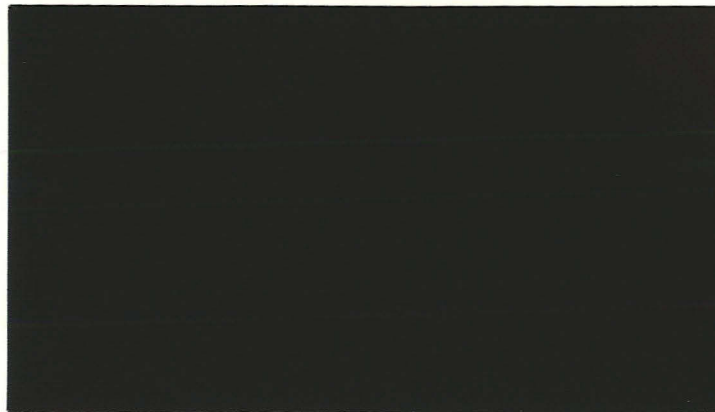
NGR: TF 3366 435³/₈
SITE CODE: BONS02
LCNCC ACC. NO: 2002.135



Conservation
Services

22 MAR 2002

Highways & Planning
Directorate



Event L12946

Source L17649

L17650

negative

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
WATCHING BRIEF REPORT;
BOSTON NURSERY SCHOOL, CHURCH ROAD,
BOSTON, LINCOLNSHIRE**

NGR: TF 3366³ 4358⁸
SITE CODE: BON502
LCNCC ACC. NO: 2002.135

Report prepared for
Hyder Business Services
by Chris Clay
March 2002

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Summary

- *An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the groundworks for an extension to Boston Nursery School, Church Road, Boston, Lincolnshire*
- *Previous fieldwork in the area has identified Romano-British pottery scatters, as well as two Middle Saxon grubenhauser, and a series of undated ditches and palaeochannels, which were exposed in the immediate vicinity of the development.*
- *The watching brief exposed no archaeologically significant deposits.*



Fig.1: General site location (scale 1:25,000)
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1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) was commissioned by Hyder Business Services to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks for an extension to Boston Nursery School, Church Road, Boston, Lincolnshire.

This report details the results of the fieldwork. It is written to conform to national and local guidelines as set out in the Lincolnshire County Council document *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook: A Manual of Archaeological Practice* (LCC, 1998).

2.0 Site location and description

Boston is situated in the south Lincolnshire Fens, approximately 45km south-east of Lincoln. The site is to the south-east side of the town in the parish of Skirbeck, on the east side of Church Road. The new extension comprises a community room, w.c. and cloakroom, adjoining the north side of the school. It centres on NGR TF 3366 4355, and lies at a height of approximately 3m above Ordnance Datum.

The local drift geology consists of Barroway Drove Beds; older marine and saltmarsh deposits of silty clay, believed to have been deposited during the Neolithic period. The solid geology is represented by Jurassic clays of the Ancholme Group (British Geological Survey, 1995).

3.0 Planning background

Full planning permission was granted for the construction of an extension to the existing school buildings. This permission was granted subject to the undertaking of an archaeological watching brief on all associated groundworks.

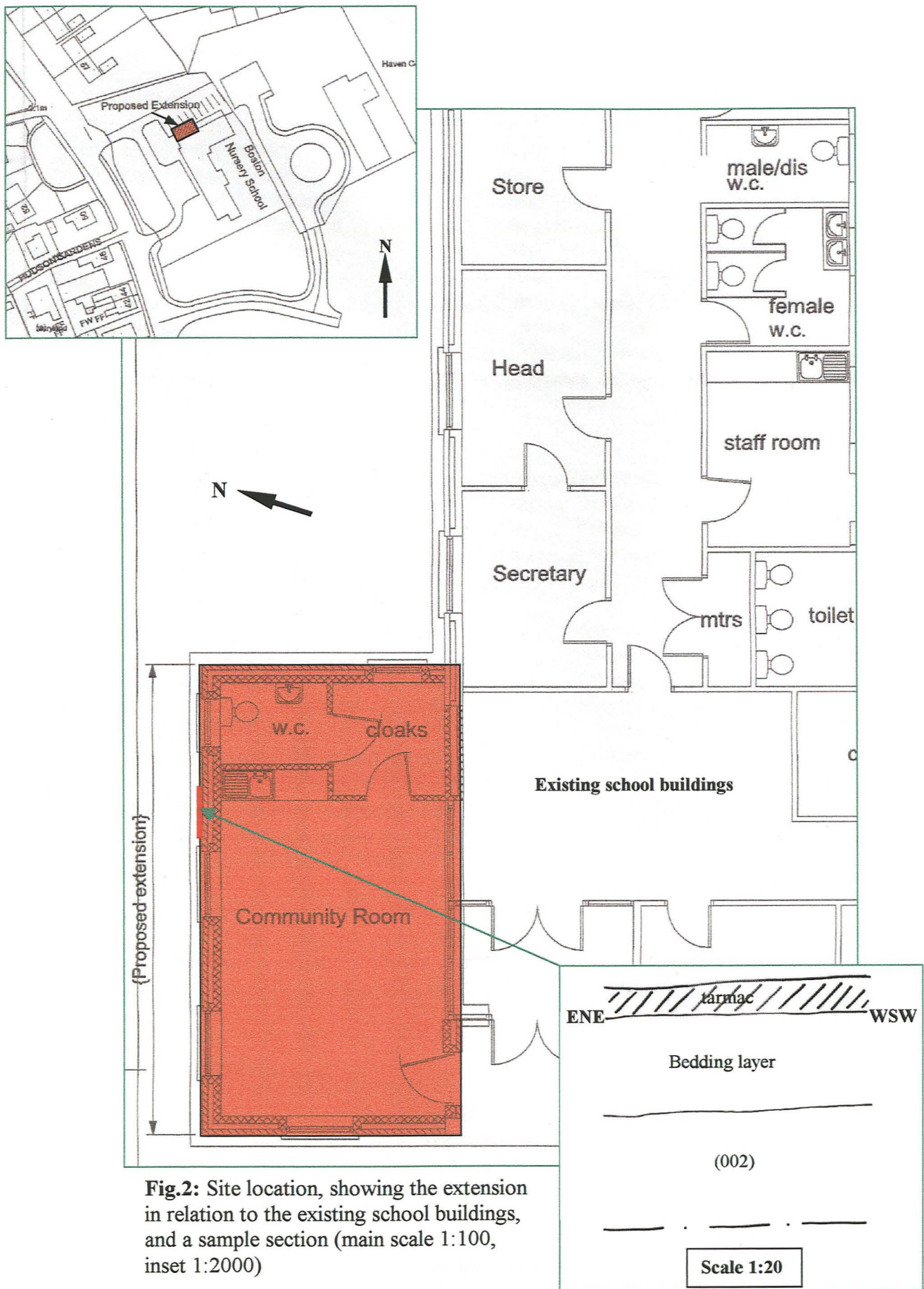


Fig.2: Site location, showing the extension in relation to the existing school buildings, and a sample section (main scale 1:100, inset 1:2000)

4.0 Archaeological and historical background

Evidence for prehistoric settlement in Boston is limited to isolated finds: it is possible that early settlement activity has been masked and punctuated by periods of flooding and alluvial deposition. The record for the Romano-British period is equally sparse, although Romano-British pottery sherds were recovered in 1960, during the construction of St. Nicholas School, approximately 200m east of the current site (Palmer-Brown, 1995a), and in 1970 during the construction of Woad Farm School (APS, 1996).

An extended watching brief and excavation during construction of the Nursery School and associated infrastructure revealed a series of undated linear ditches, palaeochannels, and two Saxon *Grubenhauser*, indicating localised settlement activity in the 8th century AD (Palmer-Brown, 1995a). A more substantial Saxon settlement of the 9th to 11th centuries was excavated at Whitehouse Lane, Fishtoft, c.1.5km to the south-east (Palmer-Brown, 1995b).

The above suggests that the focus for the later Saxon period settlement of Boston had its epicentre in the Fishtoft/Skirbeck area. Indeed, the Domesday Book does not have an entry for Boston itself. Much of the land in Fishtoft and Skirbeck formed jurisdictions of an estate of Count Alan, which was centred at Drayton. Land was also owned by Guy of Craon and Eudo son of Spirewic (Morgan & Thorne, 1986).

Boston emerged as a major port in the mid 11th century; its position on the Witham allowed imports to easily access to the large markets provided by the population of Lincoln, and an outlet for the export of locally produced salt, wool and corn (Owen, 1984).

The expanding wool trade led Boston to become second only to London as a commercial port, with the Wool Staple being moved from Lincoln to Boston in 1369. However, this prosperity was not to last, and by the early 15th century, the decline of the wool trade and the silting up of the river led to a slow decline in Boston's prosperity (Pevsner & Harris, 1989).

An archaeological evaluation was carried out on land immediately south of the current development. Four trenches were excavated, exposing an undated east-west palaeochannel and a series of alluvial deposits representing periodic flooding (Clay, 2002).

5.0 Methodology

The groundworks involved the removal an upper tarmac layer and underlying hardcore. Foundation trenches were then excavated around the north, east and west side of the extension. The groundworks were largely carried out using a JCB fitted with a 0.8m wide toothed trenching bucket. However, the numerous services exposed in the foundation trenches necessitated some hand digging.

All plan and section surfaces were examined and intermittently cleaned to clarify the stratigraphic sequence. Representative sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20, and

information was recorded on standard watching brief record sheets. A colour photographic record was also maintained, selected frames from which have been included in this report. The fieldwork was carried out by Simon Savage on February 20th, 21st, and 22nd, 2002.

6.0 Results

The uppermost deposit was the tarmac surface of a former car parking area, resting on a bedding of pinkish brown granite chips and sand. This had a total depth of approximately 0.5m. Throughout most of the foundation trenches, this sealed a mixed natural deposit, (002), consisting of interleaving layers of dark brown, blue and grey slightly silty clays. This was interpreted as an alluvial (flood) deposit.

In the south-east corner of the site, (002) was sealed by a dark greyish brown silty clay, (001), with a maximum depth of 0.3m. The exact nature of this deposit is uncertain, although it is most likely the result of disturbance caused by previous building work and modern services. No other deposits were exposed within the building footprint.

7.0 Discussion and conclusion

There was considerable disturbance resulting from services associated with the adjacent school buildings; drainage pipes, water, electricity and gas services were all exposed in the foundation trench for the extension. Furthermore, there had been truncation of the sub-surface deposits by the overlying hardcore and tarmac surface of the former car parking area. No archaeological features were exposed cutting through natural deposits.

The natural deposits exposed were identical to those seen during fieldwork carried out in 1995, and immediately to the south of the school in 2002. Both phases of work identified a series of blue/grey, unoxidised clays and compact brown silty clays (Palmer-Brown, 1995, Clay, 2002). These deposits are typical of the fenland environment; the blue/grey clays indicating discrete episodes of flooding, and the brown silty clays reflecting the natural accumulation of fenland silts.

8.0 Effectiveness of methodology

The watching brief methodology was appropriate to the development. It allowed a rapid assessment of the archaeological potential of the site, which was deemed to be low. A more detailed level of investigation was not required, as evidenced by the lack of archaeological remains, and the considerable disturbance of the sub-surface deposits by modern services.

9.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) would like to thank Hyder Business Services for this commission. Thanks also go to the sub-contractors for their cooperation during the watching brief.

10.0 References

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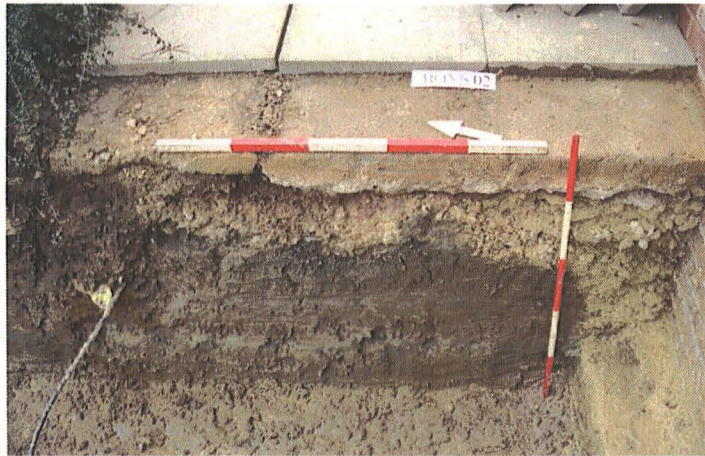
11.0 Site archive

The documentary archive for the site is currently in the possession of Pre-Construct Archaeology. This will be deposited at Lincoln City and County Museum within six months. Access to the archive may be gained by quoting the global accession number 2002.135.

APPENDIX 1: Colour Plates



Pl.1: General view of the site, looking south-west



Pl.2 (left): Representative section, looking east-north-east



Pl.3 (right): Representative section, looking north-north-west

APPENDIX 2: List of archaeological contexts

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
001	Layer	Redeposited material/disturbed subsoil?
002	Layer	Natural alluvial clays