
ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION, INVESTIGATION
AND RECORDING ('WATCHING BRIEF') AT CHAPEL
LANE, LANGTOFT, EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE

By Chris Fern BA MA FSA

Nov – Dec 2009



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Site: Chapel Lane, Langtoft

Site Code: LANG'09

County: East Riding of Yorkshire

NGR: TA 0110 6670

Planning Application No: DC/06/09476/PLF

SMR No: SMR/PA/CONS/13847

Development: Erection of one dwelling on land to the east of The Dowers, 2 Chapel Lane, Langtoft

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Plate 2: South-facing section of wall-foundation trench (2 x 1m survey pole)

Plate 3: Soakaway pit (1 x 1m survey pole)

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 An archaeological 'watching brief' was carried out on 24th and 30th November 2009 by *Fern Archaeology* during ground-works associated with a development at Chapel Lane, Langtoft, East Riding of Yorkshire.
- 1.2 With the permission of *Humber Archaeological Partnership*, the curatorial body for *East Riding Local Planning Authority*, monitoring was ended on the 30th November, in the absence of significant discoveries, with no further archaeological requirement for the drainage/sewerage pipe-trenches.
- 1.2 No archaeological features were identified, though the site's stratigraphic sequence was recorded (**Figure 3**). Of note is a late post-medieval (19th-20th century) 'yard' surface (C1003) and a layer (C1001) interpreted as a possible 'flood wash' deposit, derived perhaps from either the 'great flood' of 1657 or 1888. In addition, two sherds of medieval pottery (13th-14th century) were recovered, unstratified, during machining (**Appendix 2**).

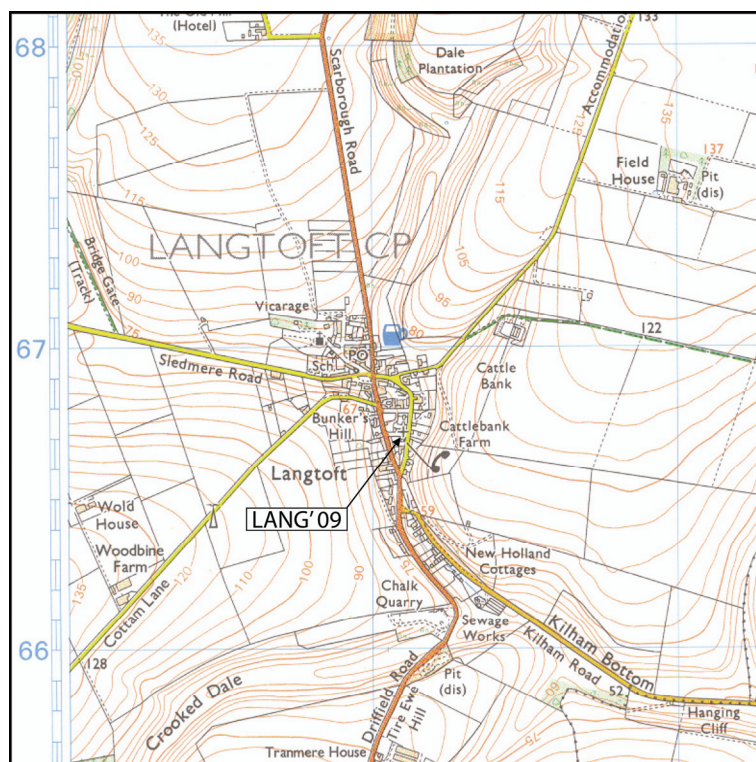


Figure 1: Location map of Langtoft (1/25000)

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2 SITE, LOCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1 A scheme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording (i.e. 'watching brief') was operated during ground-works for a house extension at Chapel Lane, Langtoft, East Riding of Yorkshire, Appl. no. DC/06/09476/PLF. This is at National Grid Reference (NGR) TA 0110 6670 (**Figure 1**).

- 2.2 The archaeological monitoring was in response to a standard archaeological planning condition placed on the development by East Riding County Council, on the advice of *Humber Archaeology Partnership* (HAP) (Evans 2007). The condition states: 'No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details (cf. PPG16, para.30; Circular 11/95, Model Clause 55).
- 2.3 It was the opinion of HAP that 'it is likely...that any ground-works in this area will encounter archaeological deposits of the medieval and later periods, with the possibility of evidence for earlier occupation'.
- 2.4 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the site was produced in advance of works by *Fern Archaeology* (Fern 2009), submitted on 12th October 2009 and approved by HAP on 21st October 2009. The site works and this report have been undertaken in accordance with the WSI document.
- 2.5 The site code allocated for the project is LANG'09.
- 2.6 The site is located on a gentle slope in the middle of the village of Langtoft, which itself is set within a cleft-valley of the Yorkshire Wolds, stretched along a section of the Driffield-to-Scarborough Road (B1249). At this point the land stands at 61m AOD (*Above Ordnance Datum*). The upper geology in this area comprises chalk gravel in a brown clay matrix (C1000).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The village and parish of Langtoft are in the historic Dickering Wapentake. The settlement is at least medieval in origin, though archaeological discoveries in the vicinity suggest human occupation in earlier periods, including 'ladder-type' Iron Age/Roman settlement (Bulmer 1892; Evans 2007).
- 3.2 The *lang* (long) - *toft* (homestead) place-name refers to the original linear development of a small settlement along the Driffield-to-Scarborough Road. It probably derives from Old Scandinavian, but is first recorded in Domesday Book, AD 1086 (Mills 2003).
- 3.3 In 1657, and again in 1888, the village suffered flash flooding. These 'great floods', that issued from the spring-line of the surrounding hills, were sufficiently powerful that fields and gardens were in places completely denuded of their foliage and soil, being stripped to the chalk bedrock, and left covered in mud and boulder stones (Bulmer 1892).

- 3.4 Opposite, and immediately east of the site, stand two 19th-century non-conformist religious houses. To the north, St. Mary's is a former Wesleyan Methodist church, built in 1874. The Primitive Methodist chapel beside the site was built in 1839 and later became the school house. A bench-mark on St. Mary's is recorded, on the First Edition Ordnance Survey 6" to 1 mile, as 61.52m AOD.
- 3.5 The historical Ordnance Survey maps show that no structures have stood on the site since at least the latter half of the 19th century.

4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The supervising archaeologist was Chris Fern.
- 4.2 The guidelines for archaeological excavation, issued by *The Institute of Field Archaeologists* (1994), were adhered to throughout.
- 4.3 An archaeologist was present to monitor all ground-works (that penetrated below the topsoil/modern overburden) associated with the development. Since the ground-level of the site was to be built-up for the new dwelling, no ground-levelling was undertaken, beyond the removal of vegetation. The excavation of the wall-foundation trenches and a soakaway pit, as shown in **Figure 2**, was completed in two days. On account of the lack of archaeology, the site was deemed to have a very low potential for any discoveries. Hence, with the permission of HAP (given on 9th December 2009), monitoring was ended at this point, with drainage and sewerage works facilitated without archaeological observation.
- 4.4 A back-acting mechanical excavator was used, fitted with a toothless bucket.
- 4.5 The site stratigraphy and the archaeological features observed were recorded as follows and in accordance with the WSI (Fern 2009):
- 1) with a single context recording system (starting at C1000), using the *Munsell* soil system. The site context records are shown in (**Appendix 1**);
 - 2) with 10 megapixel digital photography (in the absence of archaeology 35mm photography was not used);
 - 3) by drawing sections on *permatrace* paper at 1/20 scale;
 - 4) and by collecting all finds that pre-dated AD1900. These are listed in (**Appendix 2**).
- 4.6 Heights AOD for the ground-works were recorded in relation to the benchmark on the former St. Mary's Methodist Church.

5 FIELDWORK RESULTS

- 5.1 The foundation trenches for the new building, with a rectangular footprint of 9.10m x 8.15m, were excavated using a JCB-type mechanical digger, under constant archaeological supervision (**Figure 2: Plate 1**). At the front of the site these were excavated to a depth of up to 1.00m, but at the rear, where the ground slopes away, they were only 0.60m deep. The excavated depth equated to approximately 60m AOD. A separate soakaway was excavated to approximately 0.70m depth (**Plate 3**).
- 5.2 The site stratigraphy was photographically recorded and a section drawn (**Figure 3; Plates 1–2**): the uppermost soil layer comprised a black loam topsoil (C1004), up to 0.25m deep. Beneath this was a layer of chalk (C1003), up to 0.08m deep. In places a layer of sand replaced the chalk. This layer is interpreted as evidence of a rudimentary ‘yard’ surface, laid down (according to local knowledge) when the plot was used in the recent past (in the 20th century) as a farm storage area.



Plate 1: View of the wall-foundation trenches looking north-west.

- 5.3 A buried soil (C1002), from appearance a relic topsoil or ploughsoil, was identified beneath the chalk ‘yard’ surface. This was a very dark-grey silty clay/loam, up to 0.35m depth. No finds were recovered to date this layer, though it is suspected of being post-medieval in date.
- 5.4 Sealed beneath layer C1002 and overlying the natural geology, was a layer of yellowish-brown clay (C1001), mixed with chalk gravel, small fragments of coal and charcoal flecks, and possibly ceramic (CBM) flecks. In appearance

this layer was very similar to the natural geology beneath it, but for the smaller fragmentation of its chalk elements, its looser compaction and apparent cultural inclusions (charcoal, tile, coal particles). As such, it appears to represent a disturbed natural soil. It is possible that this layer is the result of one of the historically recorded 'great flood' episodes, comprising predominantly natural material brought down off the surrounding hillsides by a cascade that, as the sources suggest, was deposited over a ground-surface stripped of topsoil.

- 5.5 The natural geology (C1000) was a brown clay with frequent chalk fragments and gravel.



Plate 2: South-facing section of wall-foundation trench (2 x 1m survey pole)

6 FINDS By Jane Young

- 6.1 Two medium-sized medieval sherds, in a fairly fresh condition, were recovered, unstratified, during machining (**Appendix 2**). The basal sherd is from a Staxton-type jar of 13th- to 14th-century date which may have been made in the Vale of Pickering, although similar types were made elsewhere in East and North Yorkshire. The other sherd is from a decorated Brandsby-type jug of late 13th- to 14th-century type. This ware type was produced in the area of the Howardian Hills and is a major type found in medieval deposits in York.

- 6.2 All finds have been cleaned, marked and packaged, in accordance with the *First Aid for Finds* manual (Watkinson and Neal 2001). They are detailed in **Appendix 2**. All are archive stable and do not require specialist conservation or storage.



Plate 3: Soakaway pit (1 x 1m survey pole)

7 INTERPRETATION

- 7.1 The following phased interpretation of the site is suggested:

- Phase N:** (Natural) upper geology – C1000
- Phase 1:** (Post-medieval period), 17th-19th century – C1001 (flood wash?), C1002 (buried soil)
- Phase 2:** (Late post-medieval period), 20th century – C1003 (rudimentary 'yard' surface)
- Phase M:** (Modern) – C1004 (topsoil)

- 7.2 Therefore, the earliest deposits on the site are tentatively identified as of post-medieval date (c. AD1550-1900), though no dating evidence was found to confirm this. In particular, it is speculated that a layer of redeposited natural soil (C1001) may be a 'flood wash' layer, possibly derived from one of the historically recorded 'great floods' of 1657 and 1888.

- 7.3 Besides these periods, the two unstratified medieval pottery sherds confirm earlier occupation of the site.

8 ARCHIVE

- 8.1 The client has agreed to deposit the archive with *East Riding of Yorkshire Museum Service* (ERYMS), who have agreed to accept it, with the exception of the unstratified finds. For this reason, the two sherds of medieval pottery will not be given to the museum, but will instead be retained by *Fern Archaeology*, who shall gladly grant all reasonable access to all *bona fide* parties.

9 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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APPENDIX 1: archaeological context descriptions

Context	Type	Interpretation	Profile	Plan	Munsell Colour	Stratigraphic Relationship	Soil/Stone Type	Inclusions	Dimensions (cm) Length – Width – Depth	Date (<i>period</i>)	Phase
1000	layer	upper geology	layer	unseen	10YR 5.3	<u>under</u> : C1001	clay	frequent chalk fragments and gravel	** - ** - **	NATURAL	N
1001	layer	'disturbed' upper geology –possible flood wash?	layer	unseen	10YR 5.4	<u>under</u> : C1002; <u>over</u> : C1000	clay	frequent chalk gravel, CBM flecks?, charcoal flecks, coal fragments	** - ** - 42	POST-MEDIEVAL?	1
1002	layer	buried soil	layer	unseen	10YR3.1	<u>under</u> : C1003; <u>over</u> : C1001	silty clay/loam	frequent chalk gravel, CBM, charcoal flecks	** - ** - 35	POST-MEDIEVAL	1
1003	layer	'yard' surface	layer	unseen	-	<u>under</u> : C1004; <u>over</u> : C1002	chalk/sand	chalk fragments	** - ** - 8	LATE POST-MEDIEVAL	2
1004	layer	topsoil	layer	unseen	10YR 2.1	<u>over</u> : C1003	loam	chalk gravel, pebbles, modern CBM, charcoal flecks	** - ** - 20	MODERN	M

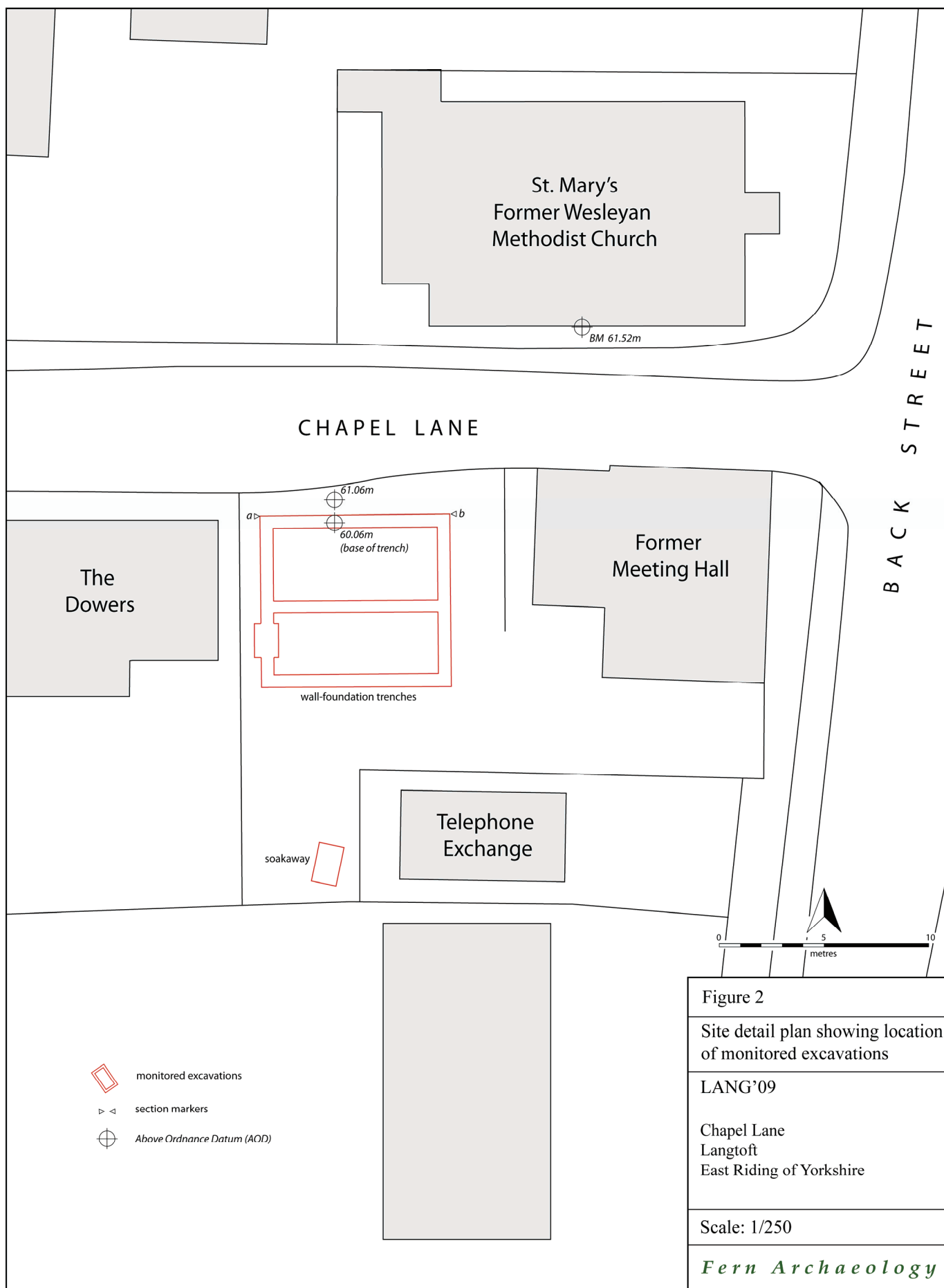
APPENDIX 2: pottery archive for Langtoft, LANG'09
(by Jane Young)

Context	Find No.	Material	Cname	quantity	part	Fabric	Sub-fabric	form	decoration	Notes	Date
Unstrat.	1	ceramic	STAX	1 sherd	base	Staxton-type ware	-	jar	-	fairly fresh condition, ext. sooting	13th-14th century
Unstrat.	1	ceramic	BRANS	1 sherd	body	Brandsby-type ware	-	jug	multiple applied vertical strips	fairly fresh condition; dark reduced lustrous glaze	mid/late 13th-14th century

APPENDIX 3: archive index

The following articles have been deposited with East Riding of Yorkshire Museums Service (ERYMS).

Class	Index No.	Description
Archive CD	1.1	Archive CD comprising: WSI pdf (1 file); Report pdf (1 file); ceramic archive (1 file); HAP advice letter; digital photos of site and archaeology (24 files); drawings (5 files).
WSI	1.2	A4 paper hardcopy of WSI.
Report	1.3	A4 paper hardcopy of Report: <i>Archaeological Observation, Investigation and Recording ('Watching Brief') at Chapel Lane, Langtoft, East Riding of Yorkshire.</i>
Original Site Record	1.4	A3 <i>Permatrace</i> drawing of archaeological section, 1:20 scale.
Correspondence document	1.5	Letter by D. Evans, of HAP, to Ms Oates of ERCC LPA, 15/02/07
Original Architect Plan	1.6	Paper hardcopy plan drawing, by <i>Sancton Drawing</i> (architect), of foundation layout, 1/50 scale.
Original Architect Plan	1.7	A4 paper hardcopy plan drawing, by <i>Sancton Drawing</i> (architect), of site location, 1/1250 scale.
Original Architect Plan	1.8	A3 paper hardcopy of development plan, by <i>Sancton Drawing</i> (architect), 1/100 scale.
Original Site Record	1.9	A4 paper hardcopy level survey record sheet.
Specialist Report	1.10	A4 paper hardcopy: <i>Pottery Archive for Langtoft (LANG 09)</i> , by Jane Young



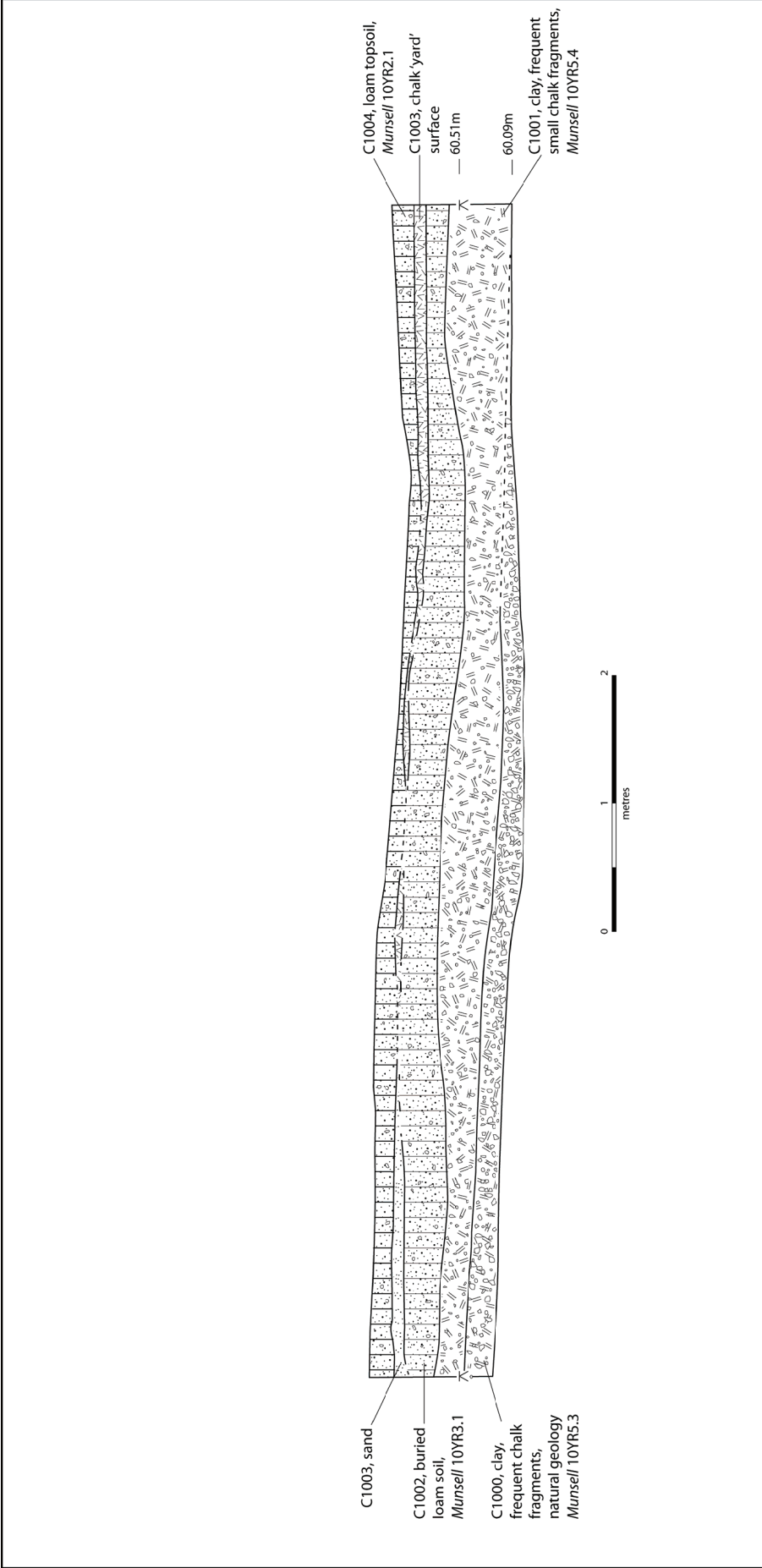


Figure 3
South-facing section <i>a - b</i>
LANG'09
Chapel Lane Langtoft East Riding of Yorkshire
Scale: 1/50
<i>Fern Archaeology</i>