

**A WATCHING BRIEF AT CHURCH FARM,  
STANTON LACY, SHROPSHIRE 2013**

by  
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A report for  
**EARL OF PLYMOUTH ESTATES (HOLDINGS) LTD**

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

**1.1** In July 2013 work began on the erection of an extension to an existing agricultural building at Church Farm, Stanton Lacy, Shropshire, SY8 2AE. The hamlet of Stanton Lacy is situated 4km north of the centre of the market town of Ludlow in south Shropshire. Church Farm is on the northern edge of the hamlet (NGR: SO 496 789).

**1.2** The development site was located within 10 metres of a known cropmark of a ring ditch (Historic Environment Record [HER] No 04795) probably formed by the infilled ditch around a Late Neolithic to Early Bronze Age funerary site. A number of other archaeological features lay to the north and northwest of the development site. These included the cropmarks of further possible ring ditches between 100m and 260m north of Church Farm (HER 04796, HER 04952, and HER 04056), and the site of a Roman building (HER 03038) about 70m northwest of the farm buildings. The development site was therefore deemed to have moderate to high archaeological potential.

**1.3** There was a possibility that archaeological remains might be encountered and impacted on during the groundworks for the barn extension. Because of the potential significance of the archaeological resource, it was considered necessary that the groundworks be accompanied by an archaeological watching brief during the ground disturbance. The Archaeology Service, Shropshire Council, was commissioned to undertake the archaeological work.

**1.4** The aim of the watching brief was to allow for the preservation by record of any archaeological remains that might be encountered during the groundworks.

## **2 THE WATCHING BRIEF.**

**2.1** The excavations for the extension to the agricultural building were carried out on the 16<sup>th</sup> July 2013. The excavation was carried out with a JCB excavator under archaeological supervision. The turf and topsoil (Figure 4; 1) were removed from an area 10m wide by 36m long to a depth of up to 0.1m along the east side of the existing barn (Figure 3). The area was then reduced by a further 0.4m depth. These removed deposits comprised a subsoil of dark reddish brown clay loam (4) 0.2m thick over a dark reddish brown compact sandy clay (5) 0.2m thick. Along the western edge of the area was a band of modern stone chippings (Figure 3; 2) laid down when the existing barn was erected. Elsewhere these deposits rested on a compact reddish brown clay glacial natural (8). A water pipe ran at a depth of 0.5m below the ground surface in a cut 0.15m wide (9) across the northern end of the area.

**2.2** Cut into the subsoil was a feature running southeast – northwest 1.7m wide (Figure 3; 7) filled with a dark reddish-brown sandy clay with grit and gravel. It was unclear whether this was a man-made or natural feature. Similar features further to the south (11 & 13) proved to be of natural origin.

**2.3** A series of eight foundation pits 1m square by 0.9m deep were then excavated down the eastern side of the excavated area for the foundations for the new barn extension. In the four northern pits only the natural red clay (Figure 4; 8) was encountered. In the southern four pits, this clay was seen to overlie further banded clay and silt deposits (14, 16, & 18) sandwiching a layer of more organic silty clay with black decayed organic matter (15 & 17).

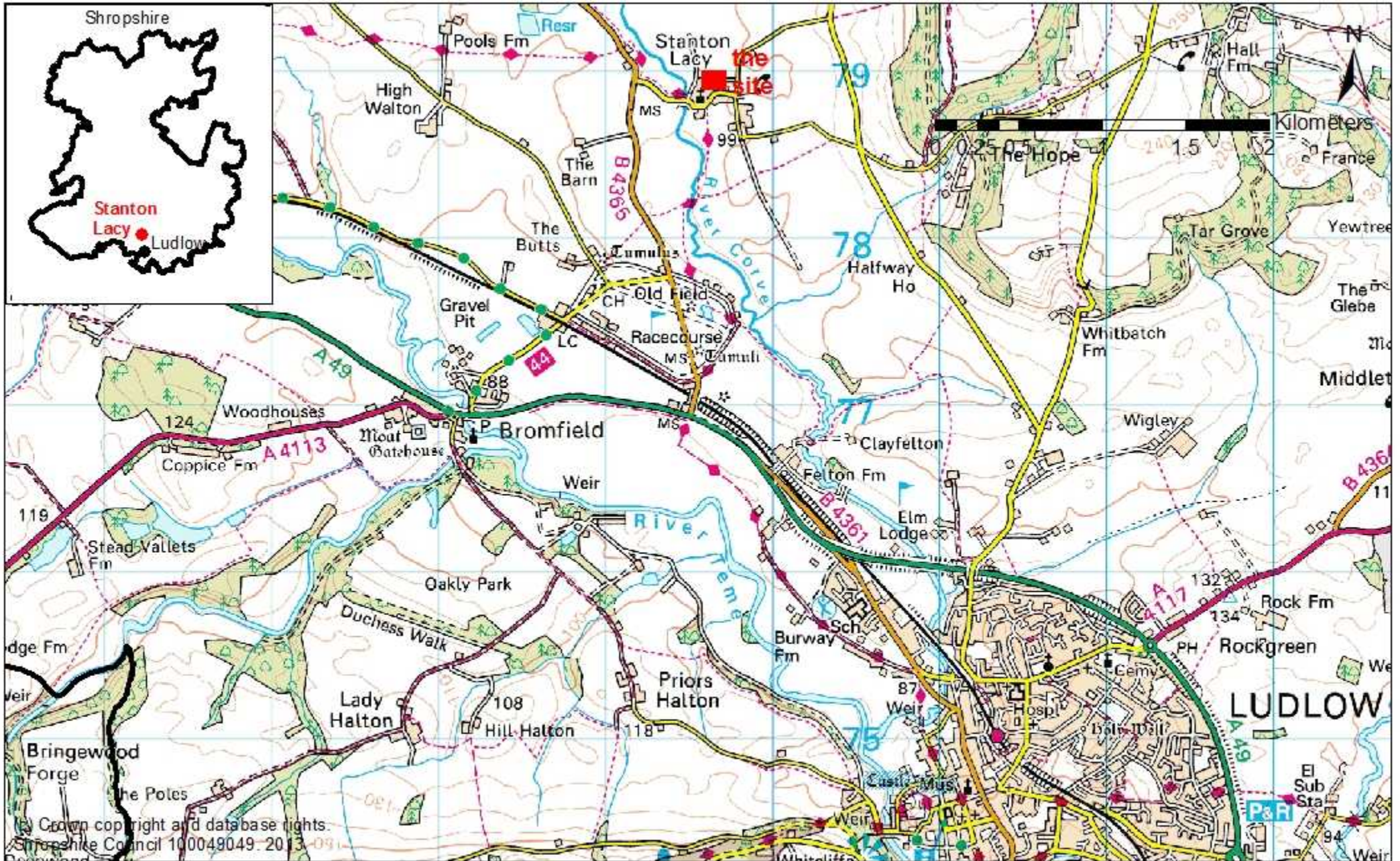
**2.4** No significant archaeological features or deposits were encountered during the excavations.

### **3 REFERENCES**

- Carver, M O H, ed**, 1991: *Prehistory in Lowland Shropshire*, TSAHS vol. LXVII, 1991  
**Hughes, G, & Woodward, A**, 1995: *Excavations at Meole Brace 1990 and at Bromfield 1981-1991*, TSAHS vol. LXX, 1995, pp1-170  
**Whimster, R**, 1989: *The Emerging Past: Air Photography and the Buried Landscape*, RCHME

### **ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>HER</b>	County Historic Environment Record, Shirehall, Shrewsbury
<b>OS</b>	Ordnance Survey
<b>RCHME</b>	Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England
<b>SA</b>	Shropshire Archives, Castle Gates, Shrewsbury
<b>SCAS</b>	Shropshire Council Archaeology Service
<b>TSAHS</b>	Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society
<b>TSAS</b>	Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society



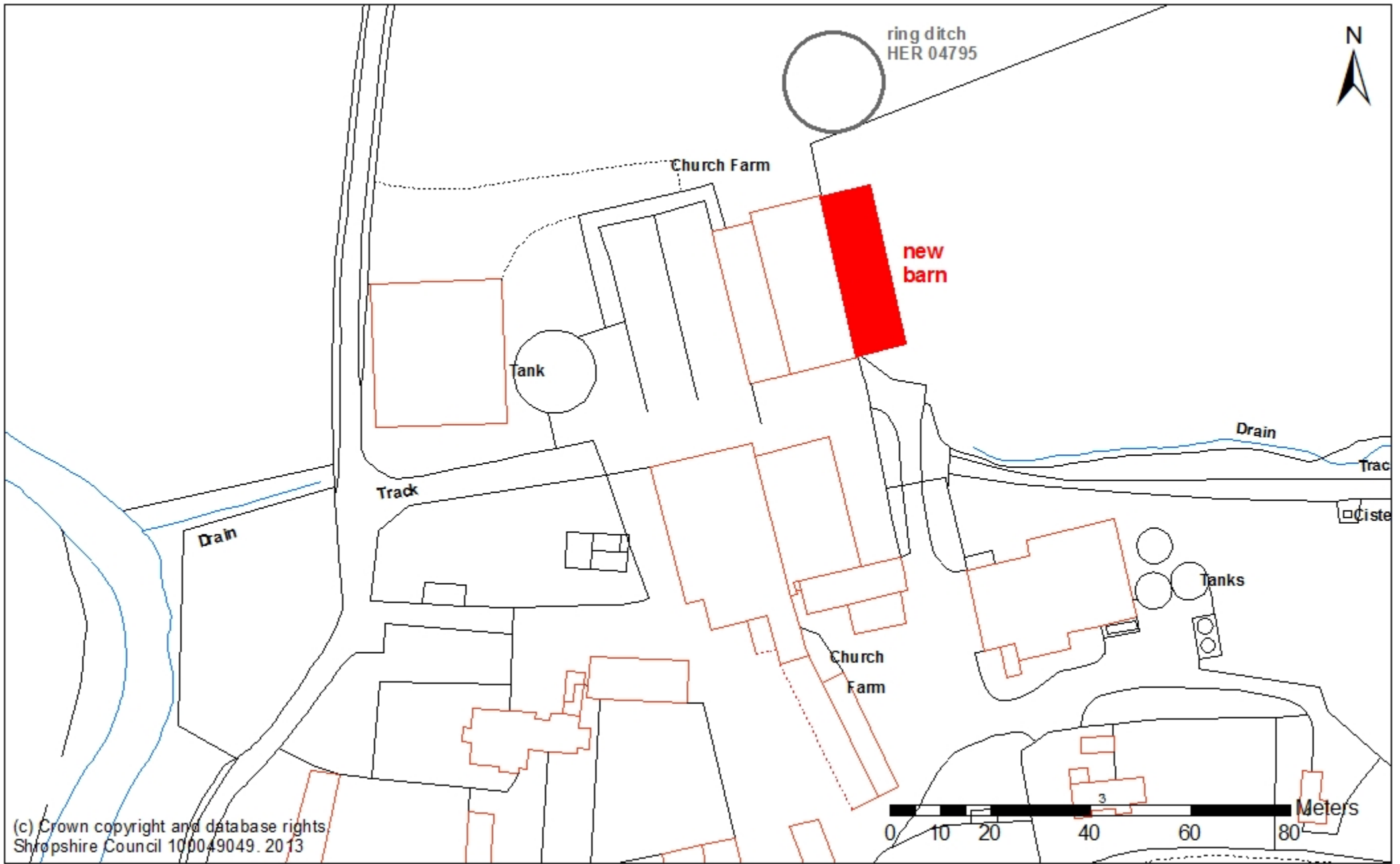
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Figure 1: The location of the site

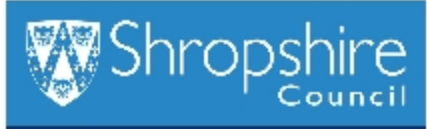
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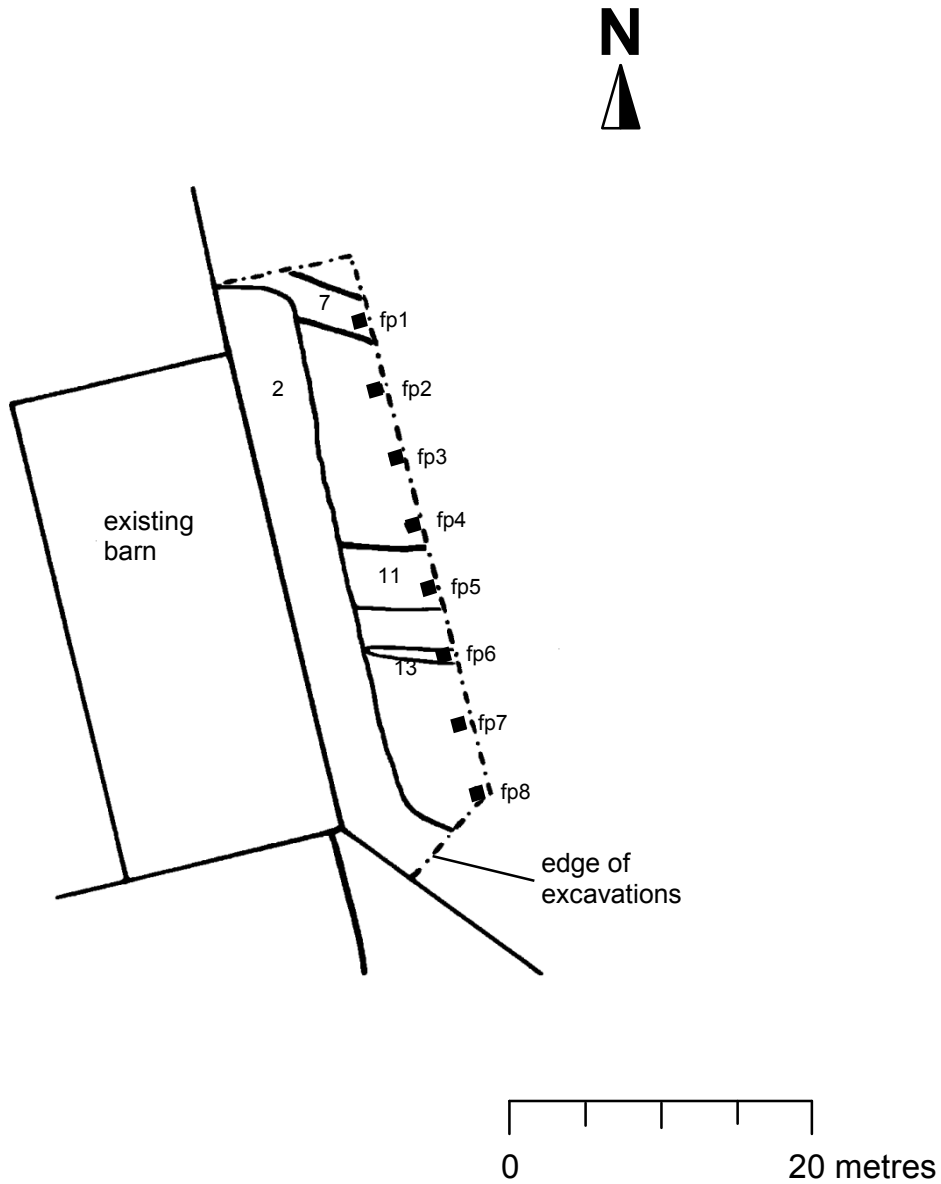


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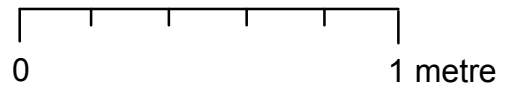
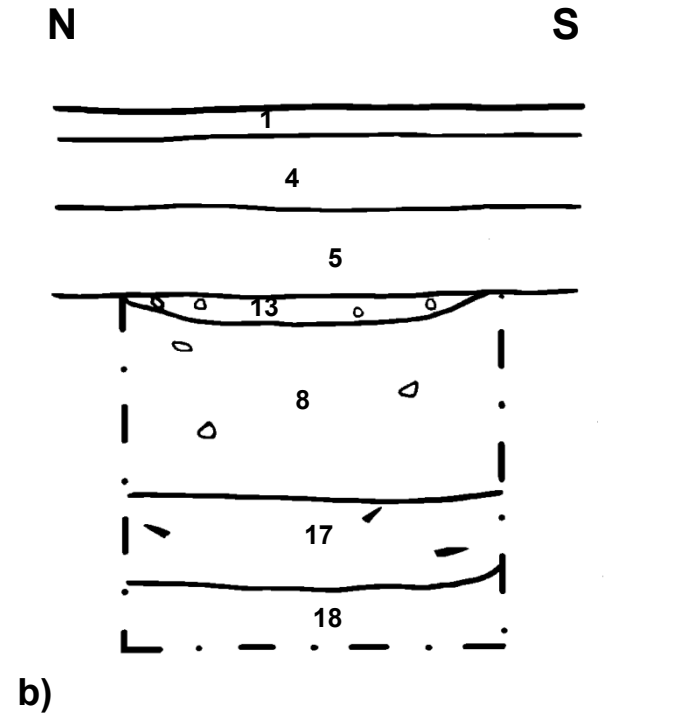
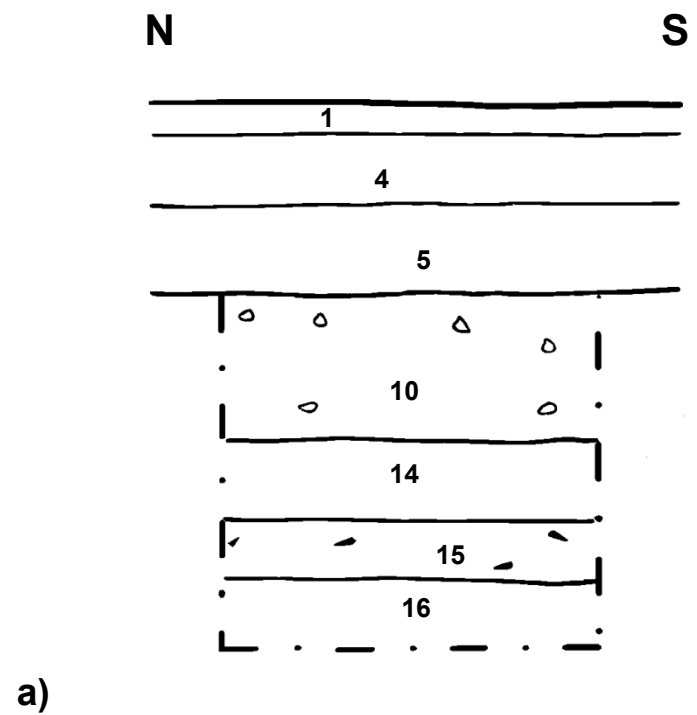
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 Figure 2: The location of the new barn

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Figure 3: The location of the topsoil strip and the foundation pits (fp1-8), and archaeological features noted in the text; scale 1:500



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Figure 4: West-facing sections through (a) foundation pit 5 and b) foundation pit 6; scale 1:20



Photo 1: The development site, looking N



Photo 2: The site stripped of topsoil and overburden, looking S



Photo 3: Foundation pit 6, looking SE, scale bar 1m