## TWO HIDES FARM, WATFORD, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

## Report on an Archaeological Evaluation Trial Trenching

## Prepared on behalf of Bowler Energy TPA Report Number 092/2013

## August 2013

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Area 06 curvilinear feature at Two Hides Farm

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Date	September 2013
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Signed	September 2013
Date	
Report Number	092/2013
Status	Final Report

#### SUMMARY

- Trent & Peak Archaeology was commissioned by Bowler Energy to carry out an archaeological evaluation (trial trenching) following the ground works for the construction of two wind turbines. The work was conducted in order to ascertain the nature, depth, extent and state of preservation of any archaeological remains present on the site.
- The work was carried between the 11<sup>th</sup> July and the 17<sup>th</sup> July 2012 with archaeological monitoring from Trent & Peak Archaeology.
- The turbines were to be situated in Two Hides Farm, to the east of Watford, Northamptonshire, centred on SP60793 68581 at a height of 130m OD.
- Geologically, the site is situated on deposits of:
  - Bedrock: Dyrham Formation of interbedded siltstone and mudstone.
  - Superficial: Till, Mid Pleistocene Diamicton (BGS 2012).
- A total of seven trenches were excavated, sited with the agreement of the Assistant County Archaeologist (Liz Mordue) and the client.
- The archaeological excavation was preceded by the stripping of the soil with a toothless ditching bucket. All areas were excavated under archaeological supervision.
- Archaeological features were identified in Area 06 (turbine 2) and Area 07 (between turbine 1 and 2).
- Recording and observation of sections revealed a consistent stratigraphic sequence of clay overlain by deposits of silt and modern topsoil in all trenches.
- Area 01, 02, 03, 04 and 05 were archaeologically sterile. In Areas 06 and 07 cut features comprising one pit and three linear features were present.
- In Area 06 pottery, the base of a single vessel was recovered from the fill of a curvilinear feature, 0004, which may be the corner of an enclosure. The pottery has been dated to the Iron Age and its secure stratagraphic location within the fill probably dates the feature.
- The features in Area 07 may be contemporary with the ditch in Area 06 but the absence of any finds or other dating material makes any conclusion uncertain.
- The archaeological features are concentrated in the southern part of the site to the south and to the east of the wind turbine platform.
- A small number of post medieval and modern finds were recovered from trenches at the northern end of the site indicating a low level of activity in this period.

#### REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION (TRIAL TRENCHING) AT TWO HIDES FARM

#### WATFORD, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE 460730 268540

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Trent & Peak Archaeology was contracted by Bowler Energy to undertake archaeological evaluations (trial trenching), subsequent to ground-works associated with the construction of two wind turbines on land at Two Hides Farm, Watford, Northamptonshire centred on SP60793 68581. Figure 1.

1.2 The evaluations (trial trenching) were carried between the  $11^{th} - 17^{th}$  July 2012. The project was supervised by Richard Parker and was managed by Howard Jones.

## 2. PROJECT BACKGROUND

2.1 The wind turbines are situated on land owned by Bowler Energy. Figure 2.

2.2 The underlying geology consists of **Bedrock**-Dyrham Formation interbedded siltstone and mudstone; **Superficial**- Till, Mid Pleistocene Diamicton (BGS 2012).

2.3 The site lies to the southeast of Watford where earthworks, characteristic of medieval occupation, and ridge and furrow ploughing to the south, have been noted.

2.4 Cropmarks to the north east of the site, close to the village of Long Buckby, suggest the presence of prehistoric enclosures and associated activity (Trent & Peak 2012).

2.5 The evaluation, (trial trenching), was carried out after the wind turbine bases had been excavated. In order to recover information from this phase of groundwork the spoil heaps were examined and a metal detector survey was undertaken.

## 3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Watford is a village and civil parish in the Daventry district, county of Northamptonshire. It is bounded by Long Buckby on the East, on the North by Winwick, Ashby St. Ledgers on the west and on the South by Welton.

3.2 The village of Watford is recorded in the Domesday Book (1086) where it is written that Gilbert the Cook held two hides of land from the crown in Watford at the time of the Conqueror's survey. It is also mentioned that these lands were previously the freehold of Thor, suggesting a prior occupation (Wheelan 1874; Williams & Martin 2002).

3.3 The south-eastern edge of Watford, are earthworks related to probable medieval settlement activity. Ridge and furrow ploughing survives to the south. Together these indicate the occupation and land usage in the medieval period

3.4 Cropmarks located to the north east of the site suggest the possible existence of prehistoric enclosures.

## 4. OBJECTIVES

4.1 The objectives of the evaluations, (trial trenching), within the development area were to identify the presence of any archaeological remains to be affected by intrusive aspects of the development and to achieve an appropriate level of *preservation by record*. Where practical (within the constraints of the trial trenching), this will include an assessment of the overall extent, date and state of preservation of archaeological remains. Any features of geoarchaeological significance will also be recorded and where there is the potential for palaeoenvironmental data, an appropriate level of sampling will be undertaken.

4.2 The excavation of trial trenches was undertaken in order to assess the archaeological and/or palaeoenvironmental potential of the area in the immediate vicinity of the platforms of two wind turbines that had been erected and a cable trench linking them prior to the trial trenching taking place.

4.3 All excavated and recorded features as well as recovered artefacts were analysed in the light of the research agendas as set out in the above, specifically:

 Medieval To establish more accurately the date of regular settlement plans; To understand the pattern and evolution of rural settlements (Lewis 2006:211); To investigate the morphology of rural settlements (Knight *et al.* 2012).

**Prehistory** To investigate the evidence for the change from open to enclosed landscapes; To understand the emergence of 'ladder settlements' and 'village' like clusters as identified in the Trent Valley and Northamptonshire (Willis 2006:130):

Investigate the landscape context of rural settlements (Knight et al. 2012).

4.4 All archaeological excavations potentially provide an opportunity to recover palaeoenvironmental samples, which contribute to an understanding of the nature of the landscape and the used to which it was put.

## 5. METHODOLOGY

5.1 Prior to the excavation the area of the trenches was scanned with a CAT scan in order to locate any services that were not shown on the services plan supplied by the client.

5.2 The machining process was carried out with a wheeled excavator with a back actor using a 1.6 m toothless ditching bucket, under archaeological supervision.

5.3 Seven trial trenches were excavated with approximately 1.6m x10m (Areas 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06) and 1.6m x 30 m (Area 07), sited with the agreement of the Assistant County Archaeologist, at locations adjacent to the ground disturbed by the development. These, along with the archaeological features identified, were located by GPS, Leica CS15/GS15 RTK Differential GNSS prior to excavation.

5.4 The topsoil was removed followed by subsequent layers in spits of 200 to 250mm.

5.5 Trench sections and plans were hand cleaned and recorded on drafting film in pencil at a scale of 1:20 showing:

Context numbers;

Colour and textural changes;

Principal slopes represented as hachures;

Levels expressed as O.D. values, or levelled to permanent features if a benchmark is absent;

Sufficient details to locate the subject in relation to OS 1:2500 mapping.

5.6 Photographs were taken using black & white and digital imagery recording each context (*as per* Brown 2007) as well as general views illustrating the principal features of the excavation.

5.7 All features were given a unique context number (i.e. 0001) and all finds a unique finds code (i.e. AAA).

5.8 All finds of medieval date or earlier were recorded three dimensionally whilst postmedieval finds were recorded by context/spit. The archaeological material was cleaned and stored as recommended in "First aid for finds" (United Kingdom Institute for Conservation 1987) and marked with the site and find codes.

5.9 All the recording resulted in the present report, prepared 'in line with the guidelines of the IfA Institute for Field Archaeologists (2008).

5.10 The spoil from the excavations was stacked separately by layer to the sides of the trenches and reinstated in stratagraphic order.

#### 6. RESULTS

#### 6.1. Area 01, Figure 3a.

Area 01, orientated north-north east/south-south west, 10m x 1.6m, was excavated to an average depth of 630mm with a deeper sondage (1200mm) at the northern extent. The topsoil, (0001), overlay an orange/brown silty clay with decayed stone inclusions, (0002) which is interpreted as an undisturbed glacial deposit (diamicton).

6.1.1 The stratigraphic sequence recorded in the trench section was as follows:

Context	Thickness (mm)	Description
0001	400 mm	Friable mid brown silty loam.
0002	230 mm, extending to a depth of 800mm in the sondage.	Mid orange brown silty clay. Decayed stone inclusions.

6.1.2 There were no archaeological features or deposits present in Area 01. A single fragment of modern tile, AAH, was recovered from the top soil, 0001.

#### 6.2. Area 02, Figure 3b, Plate 2.

Area 02, orientated north west/south east, 10m x 1.6m was excavate4d to an average depth of 700mm with a deeper sondage at north western extent. The topsoil, (0001), overlay an orange/brown silty clay with decayed stone inclusions, (0002), which is interpreted as an undisturbed glacial deposit, (diamicton).

6.2.1 The stratigraphic sequence recorded in the trench section was as follows:-

Context	Thickness (mm)	Description
0001	210 mm	Friable mid brown silty loam.
0002	500 mm	Mid orange/ brown silty clay.
		Decayed stone inclusions

6.2.2. There were no archaeological features or deposits present in Area 02. A single fragment of slate, AAR, was recovered from the top soil, 0001.

#### 6.3. Area 03, Figure 4, Plate 3.

Area 03, orientated north east/south west, 10m x 1.6m was excavated to an average depth of 600mm with a deeper sondage at the south west extent to a depth of 800mm. The topsoil, (0001), overlay orange/brown silty clay with decayed stone inclusions, (0002), which is interpreted as undisturbed glacial deposit, (diamicton).

6.3.1 The strategraphic sequence recorded in the trench section was as follows:-

Context	Thickness (mm)	Description
0001	360 mm	Friable mid brown silty loam.
0002	340 mm	Mid orange brown silty clay.

6.3.2. There were no archaeological features or deposits present in Area 03. A fragment of modern glass, AAI, a single sherd of 19<sup>th</sup> century pot, AAJ and a fragment of modern tile, AAK were recovered from the topsoil, 0001.

#### 6.4. Area 04, Figure 5, Plate 4.

Area 04, orientated north-north east/south-south west, 10m x 1.6m was excavated to an average depth of 400mm with a deeper sondage at its north- north east extent to a depth of 800mm. The topsoil, (0001), overlay an orange brown silty clay with decayed stone inclusions interpreted as an undisturbed glacial deposit, (diamicton).

6.4.1 The strategraphic sequence recoded in the trench section was as follows:-

Context	Thickness (mm)	Description
0001	260 mm	Friable mid brown silty loam.
0002	480 mm	Mid orange brown silty clay.

6.4.2 There were no archaeological features or deposits present in Area 04. Three shards of 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery, AAL. AAM, AAN, were recovered from the top soil, 0001.

#### 6.5. Area 05, Figure 6, Plate 4.

Area 05, orientated east/west, 10m x 1.6m was excavated to an average depth of 600mm with a deeper sondage at its western extent to a depth of 1116mm. Topsoil, (0001), overlay an orange brown silty clay with decayed stone inclusions interpreted as an undisturbed glacial deposit, (diamicton).

6.5.1 The strategraphic sequence recorded in the trench section was as follows:-.

Context	Thickness (mm)	Description
0001	305 mm	Friable mid brown silty loam
0002	910 mm	Mid orange brown silty clay.

6.5.2 There were no archaeological features or deposits present in Area 05 and no artefacts uncovered.

#### 6.6. Area 06, Figure 7, Plate 5 and Plate 6.

Area 06, orientated north west/ south east, 10m x 1.6m was excavated to depth of 900mm. Topsoil, (0001), overlay an orange/brown silty clay, (0002). Cut in to the sub soil, (0002), was a ditch, (0004), and a possible re-cut, (0008). The ditch may be interpreted as the corner of an enclosure. The re-cut, (0008), only visible in section but not in plan, was on the north east edge of the ditch, (0004).

6.6.1 The stratigraphic sequence recorded in the ditch section was as follows: -

Context	Thickness (mm)	Description	
0001	340 mm	Friable mid brown silty loam	
0002	315 mm	Mid orange brown silty clay.	
0004	580mm	Curved linear running through section twice. Bowl shaped ditch, recut of 0008.	
0004 (a)		Friable mid orange brown clay loam with <1% of stones. Fill of 0004	
0008		Re cut of 0004	
0008 (a)	263 mm	Friable mid grey orange	

#### brown clay loam. Fill of 0008

6.6.2 The exposed part of the ditch, (0004), is orientated northeast/south west before turning almost east/west and the likelihood is that it forms part of a rectilinear feature, possibly an enclosure. Alternatively it may be part of a circular feature. A heat affected stone, AAB, was recovered from the surface of the ditch, (0004), as was pottery, AAA, which a preliminary assessment (Elliott) has suggested is later prehistoric and a single piece of bone, AAC. The preservation of the bone, ovi-caprid vertebrae, is good, shows no signs of butchery and may be intrusive. The heat affected stones and the pottery finds were in very close proximity to each other, (Figure 7, Plan), and may be associated with one another. All were visible on the surface of the ditch, (0004), but firmly embedded in the fill and can be interpreted as being broadly contemporary with it rather than the finds, AAA, AAB), being there by chance.

6.6.3 A single piece of flint, AAQ, possibly a core, was recovered from the sub soil, 0002.

## 6.7. Area 07, Figure 8, Plate 7, Plate 8 and Plate 9.

Area 07, orientated north south, 30m x 1.6m, was excavated to an average depth of 1000mm. The top soil, (0001), overlay a mid orange/brown silty clay, (0002). Cut into the sub soil, (0002) were three features; a ditch, (0005), orientated north east/ south west, a further ditch, (0006), parallel to 0005 and a pit, (0007). None of the features were totally uncovered and there extent and orientation is based on those parts of then revealed in the base of the trench. Below the subsoil, (0002), a layer of yellow brown silty clay, (0009), was recorded. A partly revealed layer, (0010), of light brown silty clay was recorded in the base of the section.

Context	Thickness (mm)	Description
0001	465 mm	Friable mid brown silty loam
0002	280 mm	Mid orange brown silty clay.
0005		Cut of linear ditch.
0005 (a)	230 mm	Secondary fill of 0005 - firm mid-brown grey clay loam with orange mottles.
0005 (b)	125 mm	Primary fill of 0005 – mid brown grey clay loam
0006	230 mm	Cut of linear ditch
0006 (a)	110 mm	Secondary fill of 0006 - firm mid brown grey clay loam.
0006 (b)	128 mm	Primary fill of 0006 - firm light brown grey clay loam.
0007		Large circular pit.
0007 (a)	190 mm	Primary fill of 0007 -firm mid grey brown clay loam.
0007 (b)		Secondary fill of 0007 - firm light yellow grey clay loam with mid yellow mottles.
0009	150 mm	Friable yellow orange brown silty clay.
0010	85 mm	Firm mid grey light brown mottled silty clay.

6.7.2 A single sherd of probable 18<sup>th/19th</sup> century slipware, AAO, was recovered from the exposed surface of the pit, 0005. It was not embedded in the fill of the pit, (0005), but 'loose' on its surface. This single shard of pottery is unlikely to date the pit and may well have originated in the layers above it. There were no finds present in the remaining features, (0006, 0007), recorded and excavated in Area 07. The dating of the features and the relationship between them and the possible prehistoric feature in Area 06 currently remains uncertain.

**6.8** Examination of the spoil heaps from the excavation of the wind turbine bases.

6.8.1 The spoil heaps were examined In order to recover any ceramic or organic remains. There were none present. A small lead fragment, (AAG), was recovered during the visual inspection of the spoil heaps.

6.8.2 A metal detector survey was carried out which recovered a 19<sup>th</sup> century half penny, (AAD), two 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century buttons, (AAE, AAF).

6.8.3 The metal finds recovered from the spoil heaps are broadly contemporary with ceramic finds recovered mainly from the topsoil of the evaluation trenches.

#### 7. DISCUSSION

7.1 Seven trenches were opened and recorded during the course of the evaluation. Of these two, Area 06 and Area 07 demonstrated the presence of archaeological features.

7.2 Part of a possible enclosure, in Area 06, has been interpreted on the basis of securely stratified pottery as conceivably being prehistoric. The ditch may be seen as part of the features known from crop mark evidence to exist to the north east of the site, around the village of Long Buckby, that have been interpreted as prehistoric or Romano-British (Monument number 962240, faint ditches seen on APs; Monument number 962735, rectangular enclosure, possible prehistoric or Romano-British, seen on APs.) (Pastscape)

7.3 Two ditches and a probable pit recorded in Area 07 are currently undated, there being no finds present from the excavated fills. Any attempt therefore to link then with the possible enclosure recorded in Area 06 will be speculative and cannot be shown or refuted without further work.

7.4 There were no medieval remains present in the evaluation trenches although there are recorded medieval sites close to the village of Watford; Monument number 341706, deserted medieval village; Monument Number 341703, a possible medieval park. (Pastscape)

7.5 Ceramic finds and finds recovered from the metal detector survey are all post medieval/modern in date. The metal work, one low denomination coin and two buttons are probably the result of casual loss. The ceramic finds were recovered from the topsoil of the evaluation trenches suggesting a low level of rubbish disposal from the nearby farm house rather than the product of field manuring.

#### 8. CONCLUSION

8.1The evaluation has demonstrated that land to the east and south of the southerly wind platform has preserved below ground significant archaeological features.

8.2 In the case of the possible enclosure, Area 06, the pottery recovered suggests a prehistoric for the feature. Other features recorded in Area 07 are currently undated and their relationship to each other and to the possible enclosure remains unclear.

8.3 The archaeological features present on the sit are concentrated to the south and the east of the southerly wind turbine. All other trenches were archaeologically sterile apart form a small number of finds relating to the recent past.

8.4 A small number of post medieval and modern finds were recovered from trenches around the northerly wind turbine base suggesting a low level of activity in these periods when presumably the land was pasture. These finds were recovered from the top soil or from the spoil from the excavation of the bases for the wind turbines.

8.5 There were no finds or features indicating activity in the Roman or medieval periods.

8.6 The low level of post medieval/modern finds recovered in the course of the trial trenching indicate that the land was pasture rather than in arable production possibly from the late medieval/ early modern period onwards.

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BGS, Geology of Britain Viewer :- http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer.

Pastscape: - http://www.pastscape.org.uk/mapsearch.aspx

#### **APPENDIX 1**

## Index of Archive and Arrangements for Deposition

Field Records	Description	Number
Watching brief record sheets	Record of visit and work carried out	5
Drawing record sheets	List of drawings made on site	1
Photographic record sheets	List of photographs taken on site	2
Context records sheets	Record of contexts recorded on site	0
Site drawings on permatrace sheets	Section drawings @1:20 on A3 permatrace	8
Photographs:-		
Digital	All views	97
B&W (with negatives)	Recorded sections	0
Finds	Tile	1
	Pottery	7
	Flint	1
	Bone	1
	Stone, heat affected	1
	Slate	1
	Lead Coins	1
	Buttons	1
	Buttons	2
		<b>L</b>
Documents	Description	Number
Written scheme of investigation	Statement of the aims, objectives and methodology for the project.	1
Health & Safety	Safe working statement & risk assessment	1
Report to client	Report of findings of the trial trenching.	1

#### Archive Deposition.

The archive is currently held in the offices of Trent & Peak Archaeology, Unit 1, Holly Lane, Chilwell, Nottingham, NG9 4AB.

The finds will remain the property of the client with deposition to the relevant regional museum subject to their approval. Currently museums in Northamptonshire are not accepting archives.

The paper and digital archive generated by TPA will remain the property of the Unit until deposited within the appropriate public archive.

## APPENDIX 2 Summary Finds List

Find Code	MATERIAL	OBJECT/DATE	CONTEXT	Area
AAA	Pottery	Indet. Prehistoric base and body sherd	0004	06
AAB	Stone	Heat affected, Prehistoric	0004	06
AAC	Bone	Ovi-caprid	0004	06
AAD	Copper Alloy	18 <sup>th</sup> /19 <sup>th</sup> century half penny	U/S	Spoil heap
AAE	Copper Alloy	18 <sup>th</sup> /19 <sup>th</sup> century button	U/S	Spoil heap
AAF	Copper Alloy	18 <sup>th</sup> /19 <sup>th</sup> century button	U/S	Spoil heap
AAG	Lead	Fragment - undated	U/S	Spoil heap
AAH	Clay	Tile - undated	0001	01
AAI	Glass	19 <sup>th</sup> century fragment	0001	03
AAJ	Pottery	Course Earthenware with internal glaze. 17 <sup>th</sup> – 18 <sup>th</sup> C.	0001	03
AAK	Tile	19 <sup>th</sup> century fragment	0001	03
AAL	Pottery	White glazed Earthenware plate. Early 19 <sup>th</sup> C.	0001	04
AAM	Pottery	Blue/white glazed buff Earthenware ornamental lion decoration. 19 <sup>th</sup> C	0001	04
AAN	Pottery	Blue/white transfer decorated rim sherd. 19 <sup>th</sup> C.	0001	04
AAO	Pottery	Slipware18 <sup>th/19th</sup> century fragment	0005	07
AAP	Pottery	Blue/white sprig decoration rim sherd. 19 <sup>th</sup> C.	0001	07
AAQ	Flint	Core, prehistoric	0002	06
AAR	Slate	Fragment	0001	02

## Appendix 3 Summary Context List

Context	Area	Description
0001	01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07	Friable mid brown silty loam
0002	01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07	Mid orange brown silty clay.
0004	06	Curvilinear ditch
0005	07	Cut of pit.
0005 (a)	07	Secondary fill of 0005 - firm mid-brown grey clay loam with orange mottles.
0005 (b)	07	Primary fill of 0005 – mid brown grey clay loam
0006	07	Cut of linear ditch
0006 (a)	07	Secondary fill of 0006 - firm mid brown grey clay loam.
0006 (b)	07	Primary fill of 0006 - firm light

		brown grey clay loam.
0007	07	Linear ditch.
0007 (a)	07	Primary fill of 0007 -firm mid
		grey brown clay loam.
0007 (b)	07	Secondary fill of 0007 - firm
		light yellow grey clay loam
		with mid yellow mottles.
0008	06	Re cut of 0004
0009	07	Friable yellow orange brown
		silty clay.
0010	07	Firm mid grey light brown
		mottled silty clay.

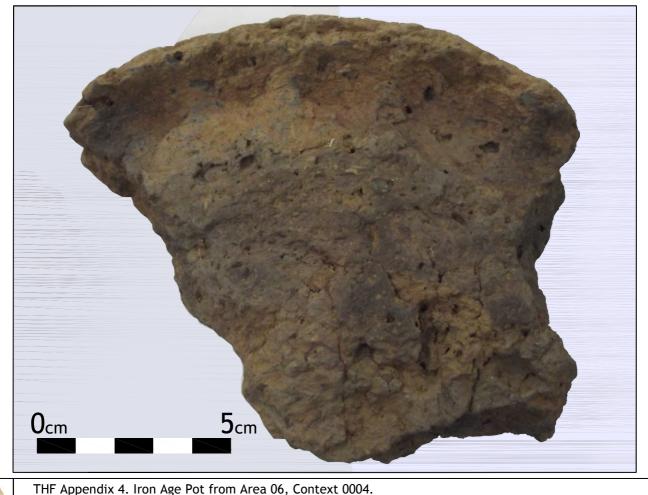
# Appendix 4. Prehistoric Pottery from Area 06, Context 0004.

**Date:** Iron Age. Closer dating not possible due to a lack of typological diagnostic features.

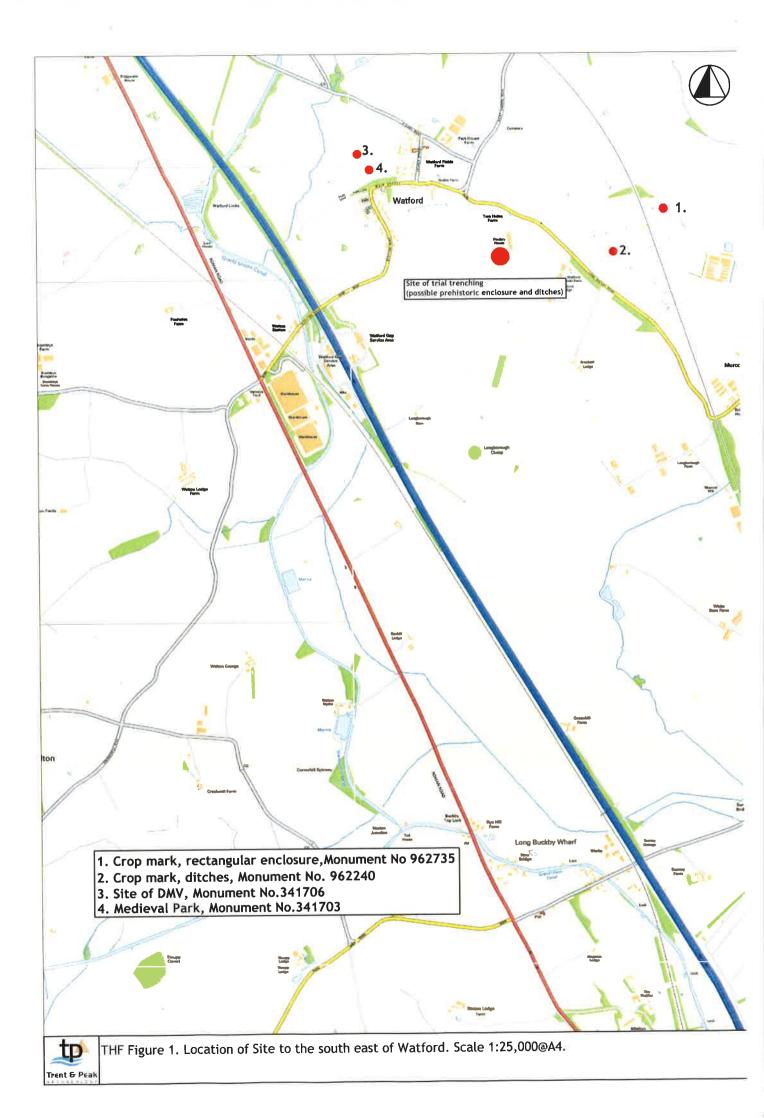
**Condition:** The pot shows little sign of abrasion suggesting that it has remained in its original place of deposition or has been redeposited from a context such as a midden. About a quarter of the base survives but none of the body of the pot.

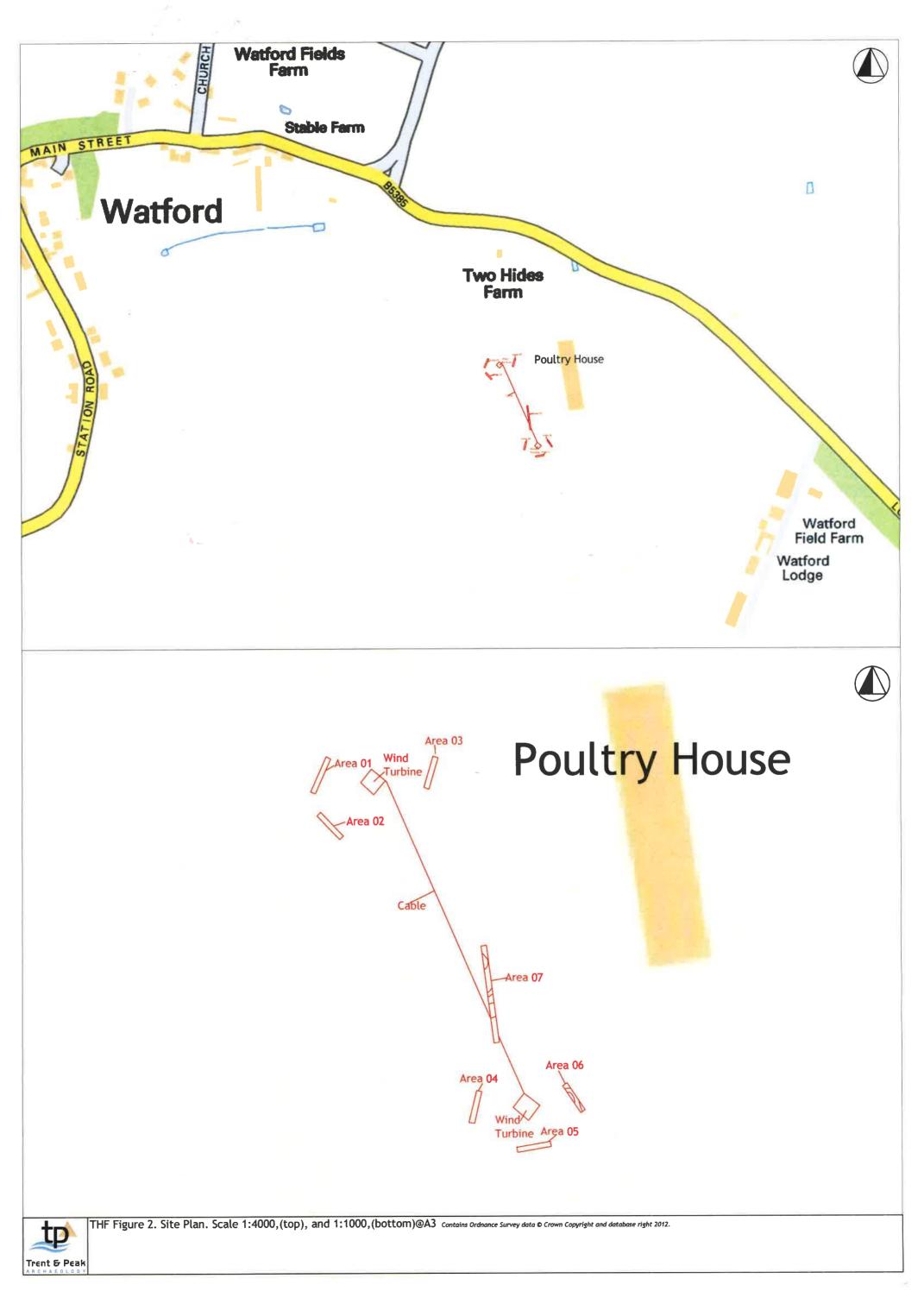
Form: Flat base of a pot with calcareous inclusions that have leached out leaving small irregular voids throughout the fabric. Two large sherds were recovered and seven small sherds all belonging to the same vessel. The two large sherds are parts of the base but do not fit together. When complete the base would have had a diameter of c.18cms.

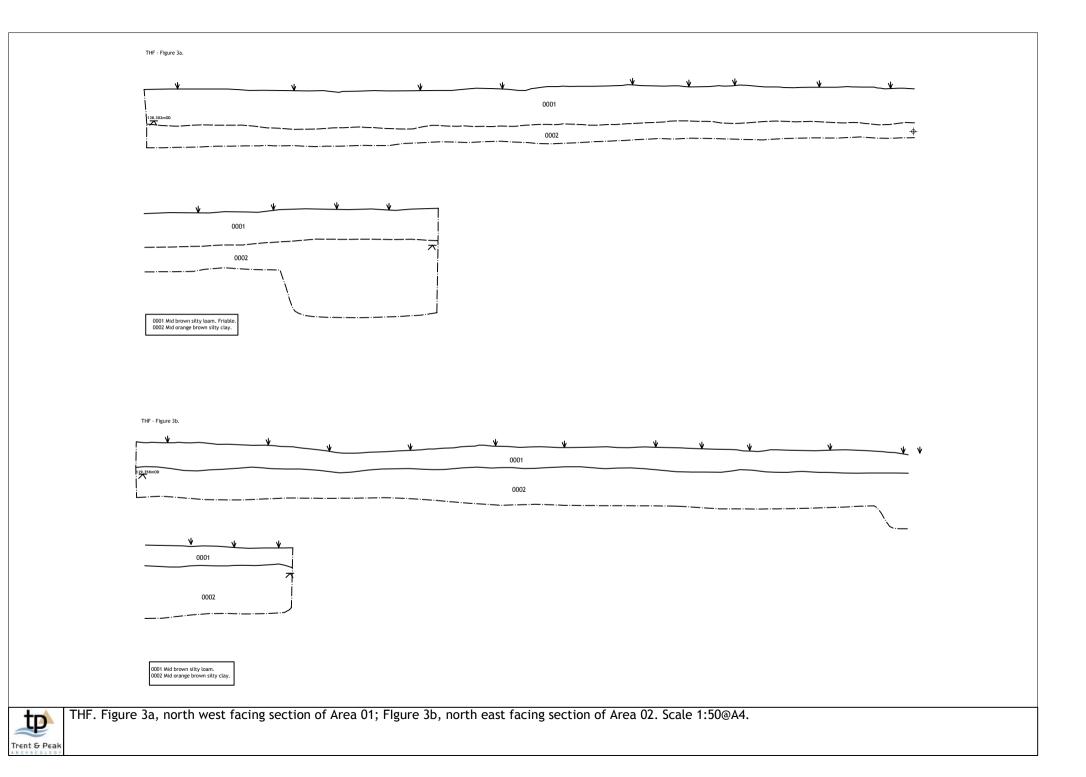
Structure: Finger tip impressions around the internal edge of the base indicate that it was made separately from the body, (none of which was present). The body was probably built up with coils. The finger tip impressions have created a lip to which the coil could have been attached. The horizontal fracture shows that the body had separated from the base prior to its deposition.

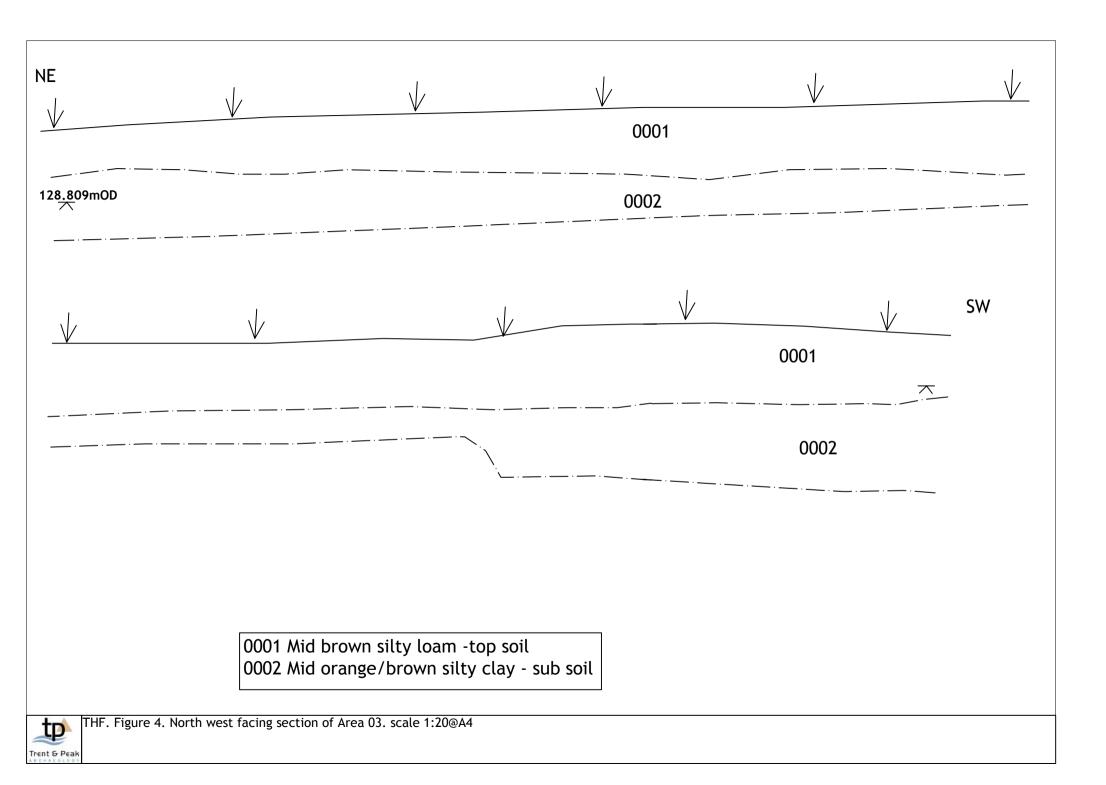


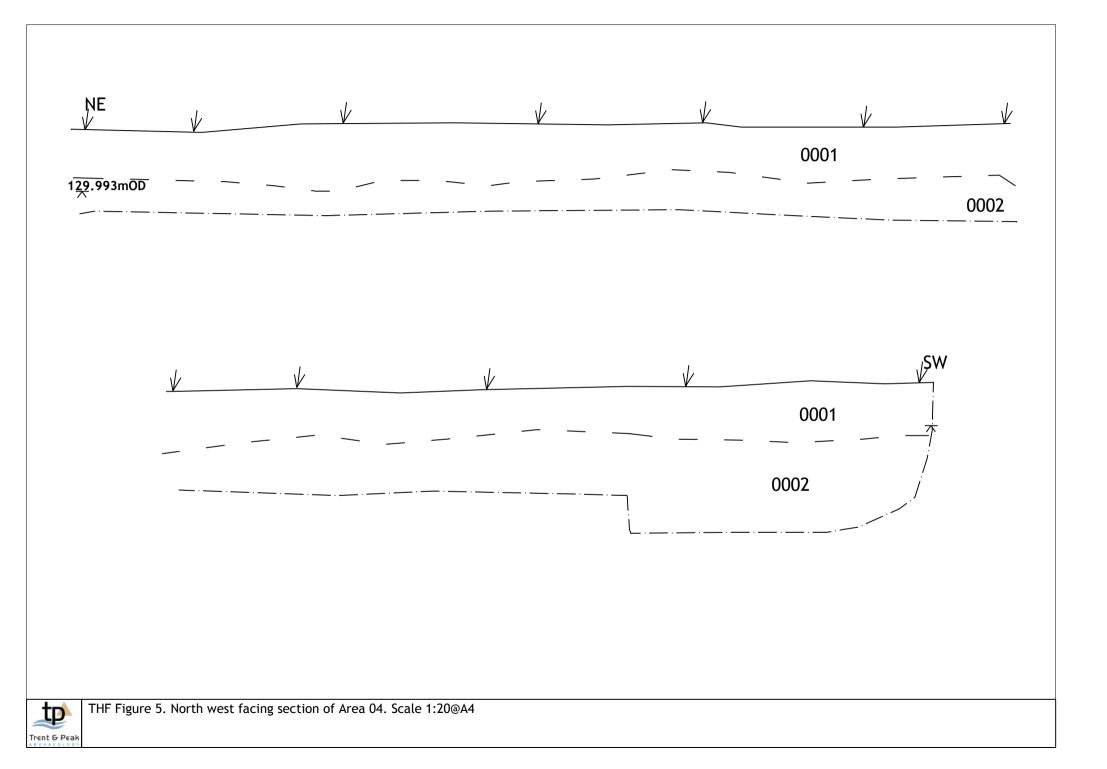


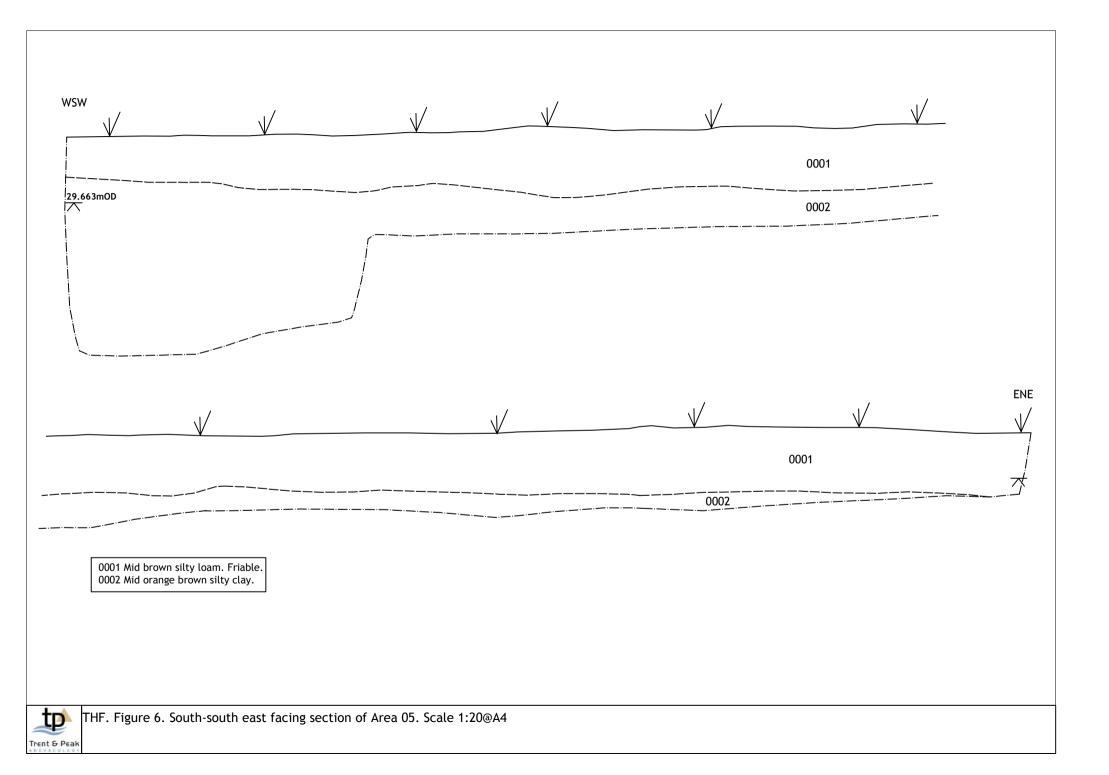


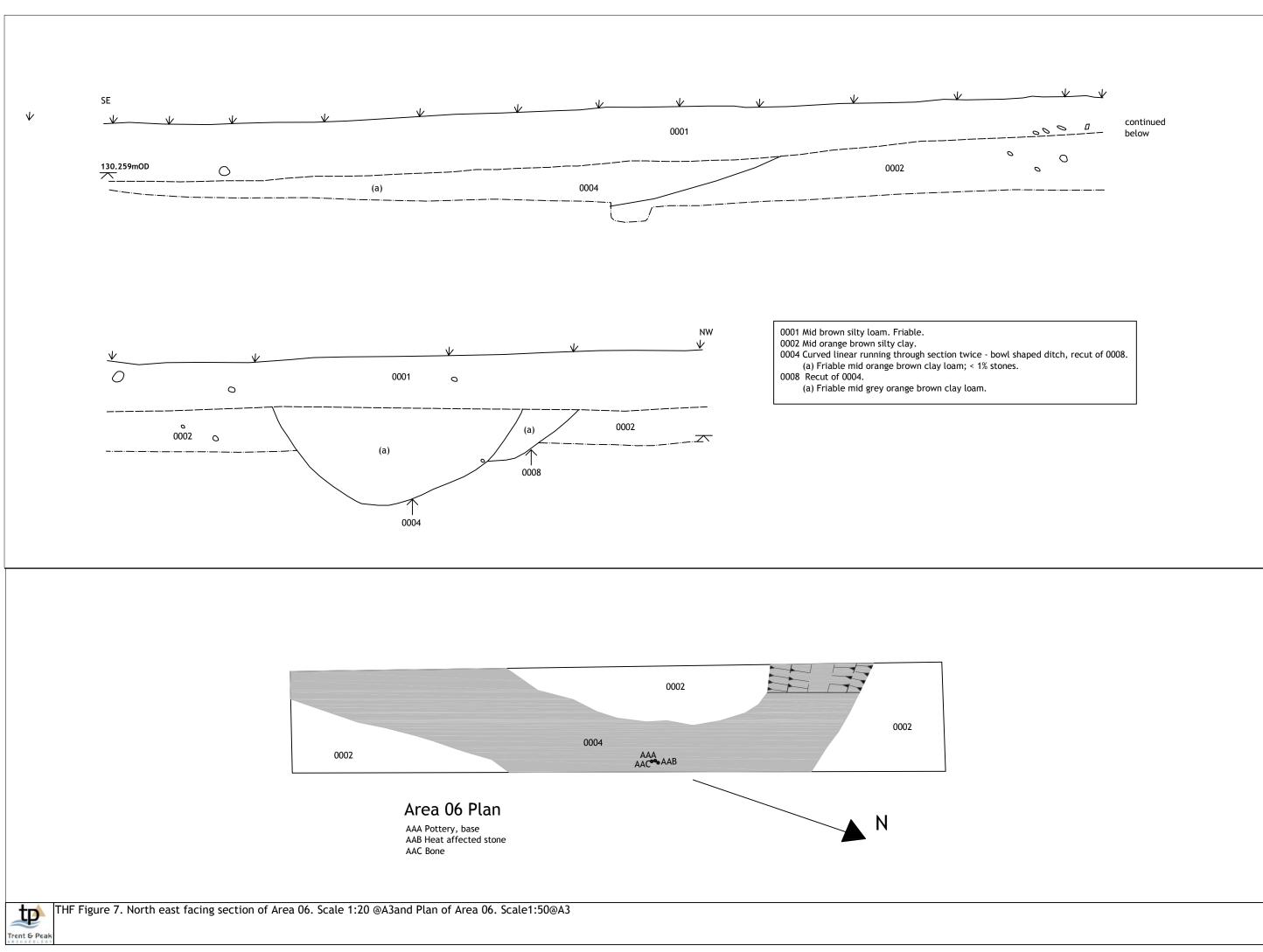












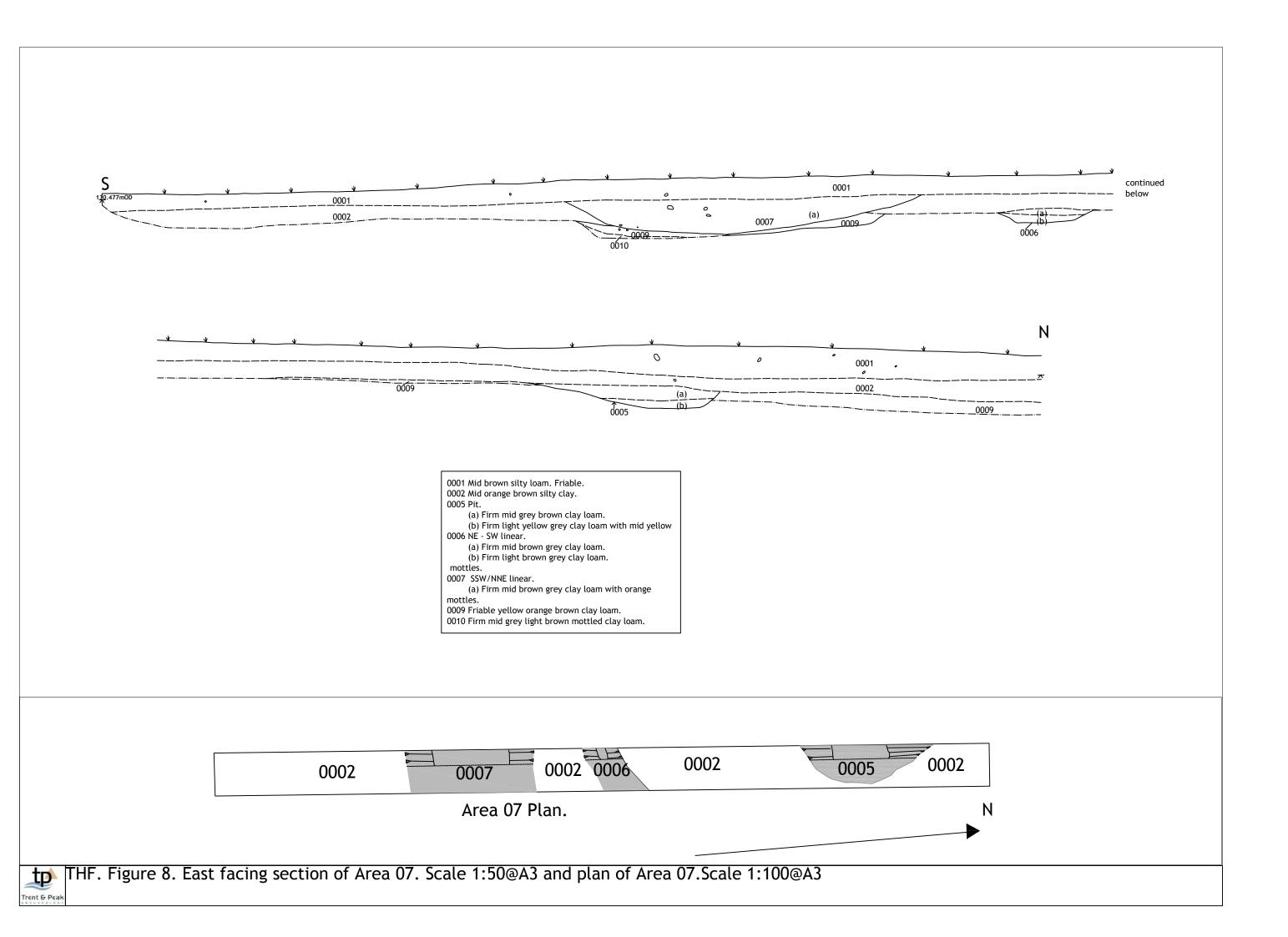




Plate 1 Area 02 looking north west.



Plate 2 Area 03 looking north east.



Plate 3 Area 04 looking south



Plate 4 Area 05 looking west



Plate 5 Area 06 looking south east



Plate 6 Area 06 with excavated section of 0004 Looking south west.



Plate 7 Area 07 looking north



Plate 8 Area 07 with excavated section of 0006 Looking west.



Plate 9 Area 07 with excavated section of 0007 Looking north west