

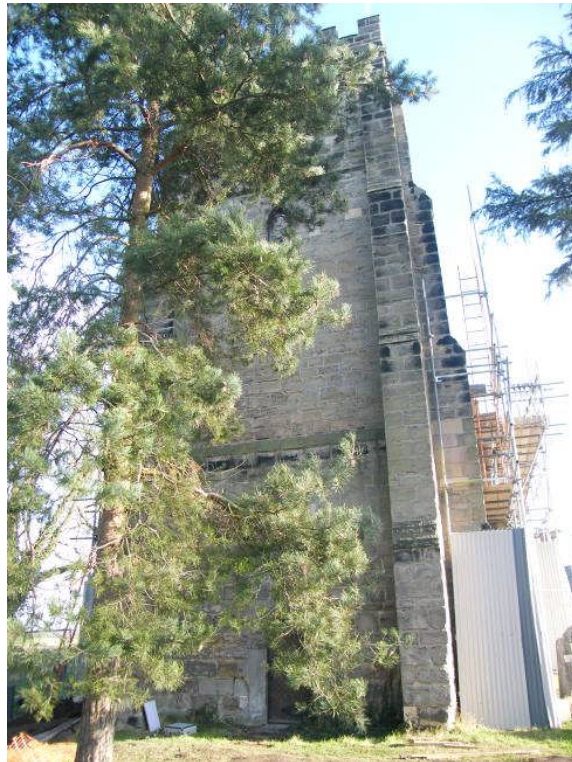
HOLY TRINITY CHURCH NORTON-JUXTA-TWYCROSS LEICESTERSHIRE

A Report on the Archaeological Watching Brief

2012.

L.Platt

Project Code: JUX



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SUMMARY

- Trent & Peak Archaeology was contracted by Midland Stonemasonry Limited through Peter Rogan, Architect and the PCC of Holy Trinity Church to conduct a watching brief on new drainage within the church yard of Holy Trinity Church, Norton-Juxta-Twycross, Leicestershire.
- The existence of a church at Norton-Juxta-Twycross prior to 1066 is indicated within the Domesday Survey, which recorded the presence of a priest under the ownership of Countess Godgifu (Godiva).
- The intrusive groundworks monitored during the course of the watching brief comprised five soakaways and eight drainage trenches.
- The soakaways were 1m x 1m square and varied in depth from 1.2m to 1.4m. The depth of the drainage trenches varied from 650mm to 350mm and had an average width of 400mm.
- All of the soakaways produced disarticulated human bone and articulated burials. None of the human remains were removed from site. Intact burials were left *in-situ* and the disarticulated bone reburied when the soakaways were backfilled.
- In two of the soakaways, Area 03 and Area 05 ephemeral evidence for coffins was indicated by soil stain outlines, left by the rotten wood of the coffins. Four corroded apparent iron coffin nails were also recovered.
- None of the articulated burials could be associated with the existing grave stones in the church-yard, the earliest of which date to the mid 18th century. It is likely that the intact burials predate the existing graves in the church-yard, and are therefore of early post-medieval or medieval in origin.
- A small assemblage of four medieval pottery sherds was recovered. This comprised two sherds of Chilvers Coton 'C' ware and two sherds of Potters Marston ware dating to the 12th -14th century. These add to the relatively limited evidence for medieval activity in Norton-Juxta-Twycross, indicating the use of relatively local/regional wares during this period.
- One piece of decorated medieval floor tile of c.15th century date was recovered, indicating the likely flooring once present within the church. The patterning is of a repeating design of four semi-circles ornamented with dots, possibly representing a variant of a similar design from the chapel site at Bradgate House. This find is a significant addition to the corpus of known decorated medieval floor tiles in Leicestershire.

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CONTENTS

SUMMARY

CONTENTS

List of Figures

List of Plates

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1. INTRODUCTION.....	5
3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.....	5
4. METHODOLOGY.....	5
5. RESULTS: FIELD WORK.....	6
6. FINDS REPORTS.....	11
7. CONCLUSIONS.....	13
REFERENCES.....	14

FIGURES

PLATES

List of Figures

Figure 1: Location of Norton Juxta Twycross

Figure 2: Site Plan

Figure 3: Area 01 north and east facing sections.

Figure 4: Area 02, north facing section

Figure 5: Area 03, east facing section and plan.

Figure 6: Area 04, north facing section.

Figure 7: Area 05, north facing section and plan

Figure 8: Representative sections of Areas 06, 07 and 08, drainage trenches.

Figure 9: Representative sections of Areas 09 and 10, drainage trenches.

List of Plates.

Plate 1: Area 01 with exposed burial Looking south

Plate 2: Area 01 overall shot. Looking south

Plate 3: Area 02 with exposed burial. Looking south

Plate 4: Area 03 with linear stains from the edges of a coffin. Looking south

Plate 5: Area 04 with exposed burial. Looking south

Plate 6: Area 05 with exposed burial. Looking west

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The fieldwork and report was carried out by L.Platt. Finds processing was by A. Wilson. The Medieval Tile Report was by L.Elliott and the Medieval Pottery Report by P.Blinkhorn. The much appreciated help was received from the Project Architect Peter Rogan. The archaeological project methodology was approved by the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor Mike Hawkes. Thanks are due to the staff of Midlands Stonemasonry limited for their help and co-operation during the archaeological monitoring and recording.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Trent & Peak Archaeology were contracted by Midland Stonemasonry Limited via Peter Rogan, Architect and the PCC of Holy Trinity Church to carry out a watching brief on new drainage at Holy Trinity Church, Norton Juxta Twycross, Leicestershire.

1.2. The church lies on the north side of the village on Orton Lane, centred on SK32274 07054, to the west of the hall (Figure 1).

1.3. The site is c.106m OD lying on a base geology of Gunthorpe Mudstone (BGS 1:50,000).

1.4. The purpose of the new drainage groundwork was to assist in stabilising the foundations of the church.

1.5. The watching brief covered intrusive ground works that included five soakaways and eight drainage trenches. (Figure 2). The watching brief was carried out in line with the Written Scheme of Investigation 2011 supplied to and approved by the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor for Leicestershire, Mike Hawkes.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The existence of a church at Norton-Juxta-Twycross prior to 1066 is indicated within the Domesday Survey (Williams & Martin 2002, 632), which recorded the presence of a priest under the ownership of Countess Godgifu (Godiva). Later the advowson of the church passed to the Priory of Belvoir until the Dissolution.

2.2. The current church fabric consists of early 14th century material (largely comprising the tower) the rest has been heavily restored in circa 1841 (Pevsner 1984, 335). A small spire on the tower is recorded in Nichols (1791), but this was removed in 1890.

2.3. Present within the church-yard are two recumbent effigies of a knight and lady, with the earliest surviving gravestone originating in the 18th century.

2.4. Several archaeological watching briefs have been carried out within the adjacent historic village core of Norton-Juxta-Twycross (NMR Excavation Index). A number of sites have produced medieval pottery as well as cobbled surfaces. Amongst the most significant evidence for medieval occupation was domestic rubbish pits of 11th to 14th century date found on Main Street (Clarke 1999).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 All intrusive ground work was carried out by the staff of the principal contractor (Midland Stonemasons). All drainage trenches and soakaways as detailed within the Written Scheme of Investigation were hand excavated under archaeological supervision.

3.2. All excavated areas were given an individual two digit area number e.g. soakaways comprised 01-05, drainage trenches 06-13. The locations of all intrusive groundwork were marked on a site plan (Figure 2).

3.3 Sections of all observed soakaways and drain trenches were recorded by drawing at a scale of 1:20 and by photography (digital and 35mm black and white film).

3.4. All contextual changes were given a unique four digit context number starting from 0001 and marked on section drawings.

3.5. All finds including human bone were given a unique three letter finds code starting at AAA, and their find spot indicated on the appropriate section drawing.

4. RESULTS.

A basic sequence was present across the site of topsoil 0001 overlying disturbed subsoil 0004 (grave-earth), which in turn overlay natural red clay 0005 and yellow clay 0006 (and some times grey clay). Localised variations that were recorded related largely to burials and there associated grave-cuts.

4.1 Area 01- Soakaway (Figure 3, Plate 1).

4.1.1. This comprised a 1m x 1m area excavated to a depth of 1.4m. On its southern edge a grave cut 0007, backfilled with material 0002 was present. At the base of the grave an undisturbed skeleton AAO, was revealed. Only parts of its left side including the skull were uncovered. There was no sign of any surviving coffin survived. The remainder of the grave lay beyond the southern limit of the excavation.

4.1.2. To the north of the grave two layers were observed in section, 0004 and 0005. 0004 has been interpreted as light brown silty loam subsoil disturbed by repeated burial (grave-earth). This overlay red clay 0005 a natural subsoil, which along with yellow clay 0006, appear to form the top of the superficial deposits present above the Gunthorpe Mudstone underlying the whole church site.

The following is a summary of the deposits recorded in 01.

Context	Description	Thickness
0001	Mid brown loam (topsoil)	200mm
0002	Light brown mixture of topsoil 0001 and sandy silt. (Backfill of grave)	1000mm
0003	Yellow sand (Backfill of grave).	120mm
0004	Mid to light brown silty loam (Grave-earth)	600mm
0005	Stiff red clay	600mm
0006	Stiff yellow clay	60mm observed
0007	Cut of grave	

4.2 Area 02- Soakaway (Figure 4, Plate 2).

4.2.1. This comprised a 1m x 1m area excavated to a depth of 1.6m. At its southern limit a grave cut, 0015, and backfill, 0010 were recorded. In the base of the grave part of the skull and upper arm bones, AAP, of an undisturbed adult burial were recorded. The grave extended beyond the southern and eastern limits of the excavation. In the base of the grave a badly rusted iron nail, AAD, was recovered. This has been interpreted as a coffin nail. No further evidence of the coffin was visible.

4.2.2. A redeposited sherd of medieval pottery AAF was recovered from the grave-cut fill 0010. This has been identified as a sherd of Potter's Marston Ware, 1100-1300 in date.

The following is a summary of the deposits recorded in 02.

Context	Description	Thickness
0001	Mid brown loam (topsoil)	200mm
0004	Mid to light brown silty loam (Grave-earth)	360mm
0010	Redeposited mixture 0001, 0011, 0012, 0013 (Backfill of grave)	1200mm
0011	Blue grey clay (natural)	200mm observed
0012	Yellow coarse sand (localised redeposited material)	200mm
0013	Stiff red clay (same as 0005)	400mm
0015	Grave cut	

4.3 Area 03- Soakaway (Figure 5, Plate 3),

4.3.1. A 1m x 1m area excavated to a depth of 1.4m. On its southern side a grave-cut 0009 and its backfill 0014 were recorded. The grave was cut through the topsoil 0001 and subsoil 0004 and into 0008 stiff red clay (same as 0005), the same sequence recorded in Areas 01 and 02.

4.3.2. 0017 which has been interpreted as the outline stain left by a decomposed coffin lay at the base of the excavation. No skeletal remains were uncovered and it is likely that the stain represents the top of the coffin with the skeleton remaining undisturbed below. There were no finds recovered from Area 03.

The following is a summary of the deposits recorded in 03.

Context	Description	Thickness
0001	Mid brown loam (topsoil)	100mm
0004	Mid to light brown silty loam (grave-earth)	860mm
0008	Stiff red clay (same as 0005)	440mm
0009	Grave-cut	
0014	Backfill of grave mix of 0001/0004	1220mm
0016	Grey clay (Natural)	60mm observed
0017	Out-line of coffin, identifiable as a stain in the surrounding grey clay, 0016, in the base of the excavation.	

4.4. Area 04-Soakaway (Figure 6, Plate 4).

4.4.1. A 1m x 1m area excavated to a depth of 1200 mm. Topsoil 0001 and subsoil 0004 were recorded in the sections consistent with the sequence observed in 01, 02 and 03. At a depth of 900mm a layer of sticky brown clay 0023 (resembling a disturbed 0005) was observed in the north facing section. The layer was also seen protruding into the east and west facing sections of the area. A human long bone, AAQ (adult femur) was observed within this deposit. The presence of the long bone and the east/west orientation of the deposit support the interpretation of an *in-situ* burial.

4.4.2. A large assemblage of disarticulated human bone was uncovered during the course of the excavation which included 10 skull fragments, 2 pieces of pelvis, 6 long bones from the upper arm, 2 lower leg bones (tibia), 7 rib fragments and 6 phalanges (fingers or toes). Many of these bones showed signs of previous disturbance (possibly from burial AAQ) with spade or shovel cuts on some and breaks that were clearly not new being filled with earth.

The following is a summary of the deposits recorded in 04.

Context	Description	Thickness
0001	Mid brown loam (topsoil)	300mm
0004	Light to mid brown silty loam (grave-earth)	440mm
0023	Light brown sticky silty clay	280mm

4.5. Area 05-Soakaway (Figure 7, Plate 5).

4.5.1. A 1m x 1m area was excavated to a depth of 1000mm. Topsoil 0001 and grave-earth 0004 was present. However the bulk of the area was encompassed by 0019 a mixed deposit of reddish clay with 15% sandstone chippings and lumps of blue clay very similar to 0020 recorded in the base of the excavation. This material appears to represent disturbance and mixing of 0004 and the natural red (0005/0019) and grey clay (0020) due to burial.

4.5.2. In the south facing section of the excavation human remains, AAR, were recorded at a depth of 680mm. The bones, mainly long bones appeared to be jumbled (disarticulated) and consisted of at least three femurs. There was no sign of a grave-cut and the bones appeared to lie at the base of 0019. They may suggest the backfill of a grave slightly to the south of the limit of excavation.

4.5.3. A second set of human remains, AAS, was recorded in the northern section of the excavation. These comprised the articulated lower leg bones (tibia/fibula) of a single individual. Although no grave-cut was visible AAS is probably the eastern end of an otherwise undisturbed burial.

4.5.4. Immediately to the north of AAS two corroded iron nails were recovered, AAH and AAI. A horizontal stain, 0018 is interpreted as the remains of a coffin outline associated with AAS. The blue clay in 0019 suggests that the layer had on occasion been dug through to the lower layer, 0020 elements of which had been mixed in with the backfill.

The following is a summary of the deposits recorded in 05.

<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Thickness</i>
0001	Mid brown loam (topsoil)	100mm
0004	Light to mid brown silty loam (grave-earth)	100mm
0019	Reddish brown silty clay with sandstone chippings and lumps of blue clay	900mm
0020	Blue/grey clay (natural)	100mm observed

4.6. Area 06-Drainage trench (Figure 8).

4.6.1 Area 06 comprised a drainage trench connecting 01 to new drainage around the foundations of the church, a distance of 8m. Excavated to a depth of 460mm only the topsoil, 0001 and the disturbed subsoil 0004 (grave-earth) were exposed.

4.6.2. Two residual medieval pottery sherds AAJ and AAK were recovered from grave-earth 0004 at a depth of 255mm. These have been identified as Chilvers Coton 'C' ware dating to c.1300-1475.

The following is a summary of the deposits recorded in 06.

<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Thickness</i>
0001	Mid brown loam (topsoil)	220mm
0004	Light to mid brown silty loam	260mm observed

4.7. Area 07-Drainage trench (Figure 8).

4.7.1. This comprised a drainage trench connecting 02 to new drainage around the foundations of the church, a distance of 7m. Excavated to a depth of 500mm only the topsoil 0001 and the disturbed subsoil 0004 (grave-earth) were exposed. There were no finds uncovered during the excavation of the trench.

4.7.2. One sherd AAC of medieval pottery was recovered from the spoil from the excavation of 07. This was identified as Potter's Marston ware of 1100-1300 date.

The following is a summary of the deposits recorded in 07.

Context	Description	Thickness
0001	Mid brown loam (Topsoil)	200mm
0004	Light to mid brown silty loam (grave-earth)	300mm

4.8 Area 08-Drainage trench (Figure 8).

4.8.1. Area 08 comprised a drainage trench connecting 05 to new drainage around the foundations of the church, a distance of 6m. Excavated to a depth of 520mm only the topsoil, 0001 and the disturbed subsoil 0004 (grave-earth) were exposed. A small amount of disarticulated bone was observed during the excavation of the trench but no further finds.

The following is a summary of the deposits recorded in 08.

Context	Description	Thickness
0001	Mid brown loam (topsoil)	200mm
0004	Light to mid brown silty loam (grave-earth)	320mm

4.9. Area 09-Drainage trench (Figure 9).

4.9.1. Area 09 comprised a drainage trench connecting 03 to new drainage around the foundations of the church. Excavated to a depth of 520mm only the topsoil 0001 and disturbed subsoil 0004 (grave-earth) were exposed. A small amount of disarticulated bone was observed during the excavation of the trench, but no further finds.

The following is a summary of the deposits recorded in 09.

Context	Description	Thickness
0001	Mid brown loam (topsoil)	200mm
0004	Light to mid brown silty loam (grave-earth)	320mm

4.10. Area 10-Drainage trench (Figure 9).

4.10.1. Area 10 comprised a drainage trench connecting 04 to new drainage around the foundations of the church. Excavated to a depth of 650mm only the topsoil 0001 and the disturbed subsoil 0004 (grave-earth) were exposed.

4.10.2. A small amount of disarticulated bone was observed while two sherds of 17th/18th century pottery, AAM (Mottled Ware) and AAL (Blackware) were recovered from 0004 at a depth of 310mm.

The following is a summary of the deposits recorded in 10.

Context	Description	Thickness
0001	Mid brown loam (topsoil)	230mm
0004	Light to mid brown silty loam (grave-earth)	420mm

4.11. Area 11-Drainage trench

4.11.1. Area 11 comprised a drainage trench running north-west from the north corner of the chancel to the junction of 07 and 12. Excavated to a depth of 500mm only the topsoil 0001 and the disturbed subsoil 0004 (grave-earth) were exposed.

The following is a summary of the deposits recorded in 11.

<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Thickness</i>
0001	Mid brown loam (topsoil)	100mm
0004	Light to mid brown silty loam (grave-earth)	300mm

4.12. Area 12-Drainage trench

4.12.1. Area 12 comprised a drainage trench running east-west from the junction of 07 and 11 connecting with 13. Excavated to a depth of 350mm only the topsoil 0001 and disturbed subsoil 0004 (grave-earth) were exposed.

4.12.2. Fourteen incomplete fragments of unglazed plain ceramic roof tile of varying fabric were recovered close to the north-side of the chancel. These are undated but could be late medieval to post-medieval in date (lacking any indentifying characteristics). These probably represent waste from tiles salvaged from the roof of the church.

The following is a summary of the deposits recorded in 12.

<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Thickness</i>
0001	Mid brown loam (topsoil)	100mm
0004	Light to mid brown silty loam (grave-earth)	250mm

4.13. Area 13-Drainage trench

4.13.1. Area 13 comprised a drainage trench running north-east from the north wall of the nave and connecting with 12. Excavated to a depth of 350mm only the topsoil 0001 and the disturbed subsoil 0004 (grave-earth) were exposed.

<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Thickness</i>
0001	Mid brown loam (topsoil)	100mm
0004	Light to mid brown silty loam (grave-earth)	250mm

N.B.

In all cases the width of the drainage trenches did not exceed 400mm.

5. FINDS REPORTS

5.1. Medieval Pottery. By Paul Blinkhorn

5.1.1. The pottery assemblage comprised 4 sherds with a total weight of 62g.

5.1.2. It was recorded using the conventions of the Leicestershire County type-series (Sawday 1994), as follows

CC2: **Chilvers Coton 'C' ware**, 1300-1475. 2 sherds, 40g.
 PM: **Potter's Marston ware**, 1100-1300. 2 sherds, 22g.

5.1.3. The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1.

5.1.4. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. The fabric types are typical of contemporary sites in the region, and indicate that there was activity at the site in the 12th – 14th centuries.

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

Finds code	Context No	PM		CC2		Date
		No	Wt	No	Wt	
AAG	U/S	1	10			U/S
AAJ AAK	0004			2	40	14thC
AAF	0010	1	12			12thC
	Total	2	22	2	40	

5.2. Medieval Decorated Glazed Floor Tile. By Lee Elliott

5.2.1. One piece (AAE) of decorated medieval floor tile of c.15th century date was recovered from 13 close to the north side of the chancel. The tile indicates the likely flooring once present within the church.

5.2.2. The patterning is of a repeating design of four semi-circles ornamented with dots, with potential pointed petal or quatrefoil in centre. It possibly represents a variant of a similar design from the chapel site at Bradgate House (Whitcomb 1956, 114-115, design 209). The brick mansion with chapel at Bradgate was begun c.1490.

5.2.3. This find is a significant addition to the corpus of known decorated medieval floor tiles in Leicestershire.

5.2.4. Description

Incomplete fragment (of former square tile) 19mm thick with a hard red-brown fabric containing varying inclusions up to 5mm in size. Overall glaze is worn away but cream inlay survives. Part of slightly bevelled side present along one edge. Pale brown sandy mortar survives on sanded base.



Medieval decorated tile fragment AAE



Example of similar tile pattern
from Bradgate House.
(after Whitcomb 1956)



Example of tiles placed to form
repeat pattern

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 In total five soakaways and eight drainage trenches were monitored during the course of the watching brief.

6.2. The soakaways varied in depth between 1.2 and 1.4m. The drainage trenches varied in depth between 650mm and 350mm. Recording focussed on those trenches over 450mm deep as specified under the WSI.

6.3. All the intrusive groundworks produced disarticulated human bone. All of this was retained on site to be included in the backfill of the soakaways and drainage trenches.

6.4. All of the soakaways 01 to 05 uncovered articulated human burials or evidence thereof in the form of stains in the ground left by the decaying wood of the coffins. Identification of the remains was limited to the presence of adult and recognizable individual bone types due to the limited size of the excavation areas. With the co-operation of the contractor it was possible to leave all articulated remains *in-situ*.

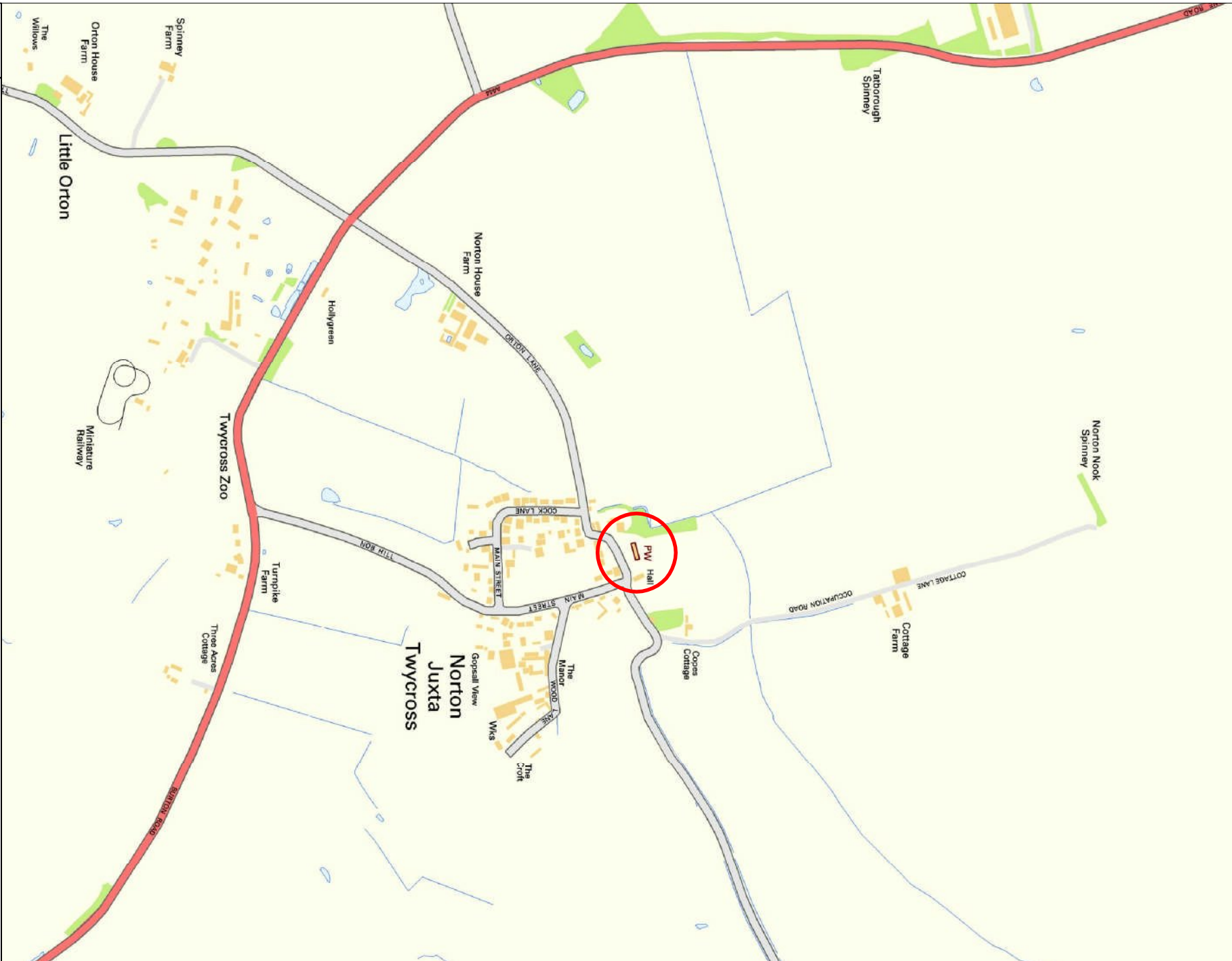
6.5. None of the articulated or *in-situ* burials were associated with the surviving gravestones, the earliest of which date to the mid 18th century. This suggest the remains are either early post-medieval or earlier (possibly medieval) in date. The disarticulated remains are likely to represent shallower and therefore possibly medieval burials, disturbed and redeposited by later deeper burials.

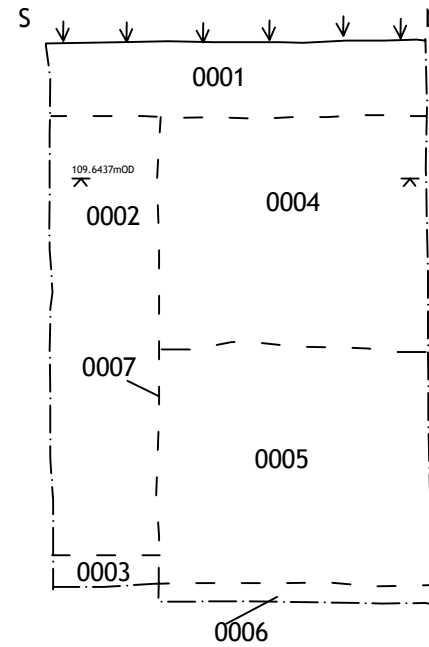
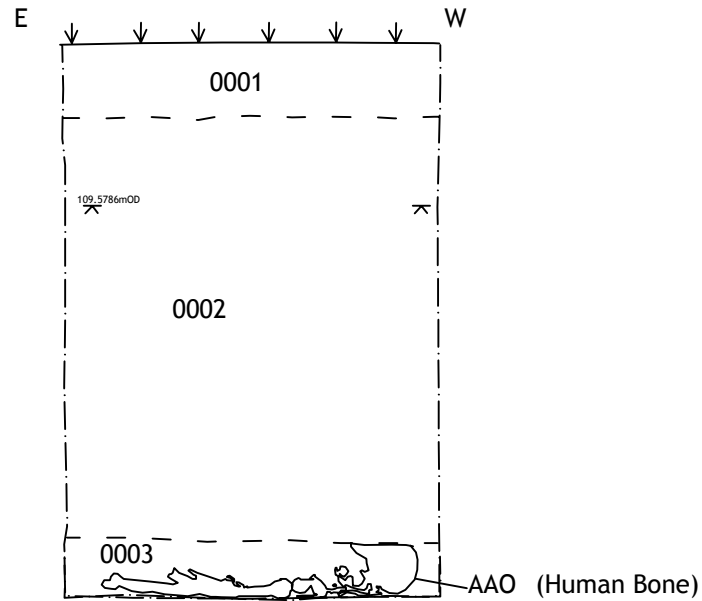
6.6. The small assemblage of medieval pottery dating from the 12th to 14th centuries and the wares present, Chilvers Coton 'C' ware (from near Nuneaton) and Potter's Marston (outside Leicester) adds to the relatively limited evidence for medieval activity in Norton-Juxta-Twycross and its local/regional trade links.

6.7. Of further significance was the discovery of the decorated glazed tile fragment which hints at the former flooring of Holy Trinity Church during the medieval period, while adding to the known corpus of tile design identified within Leicestershire.

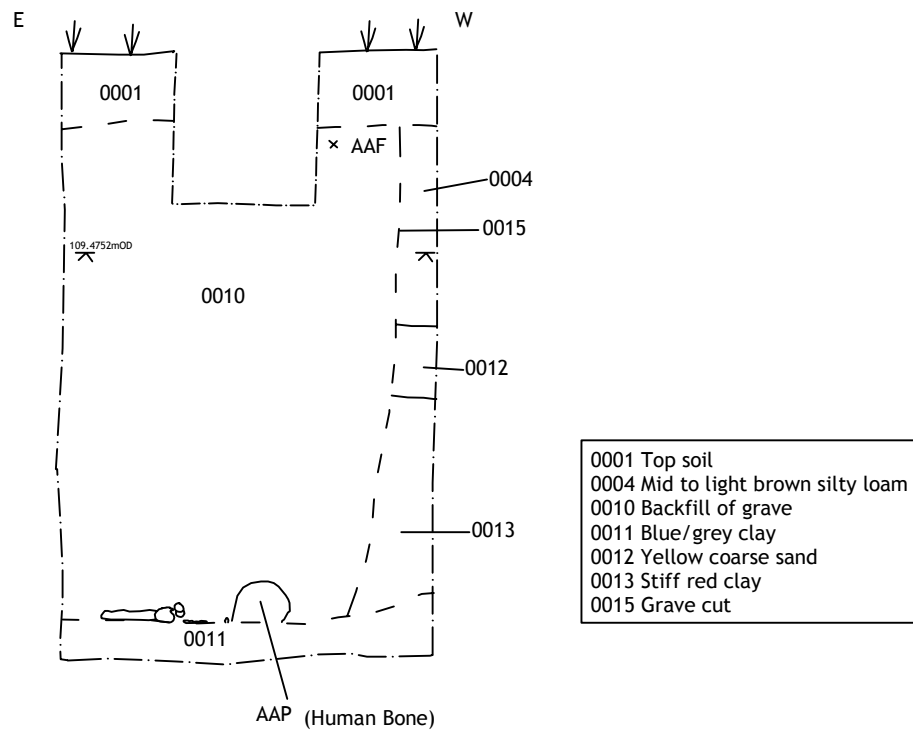
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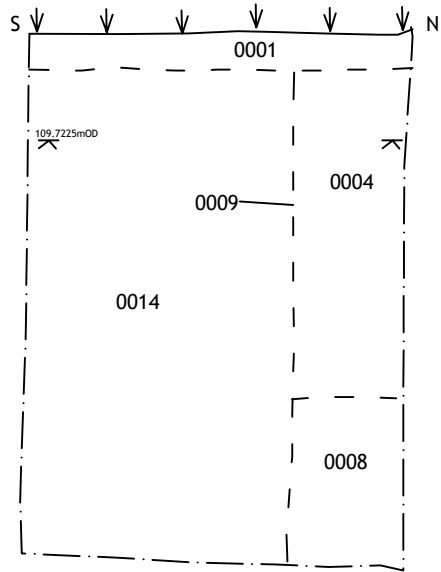
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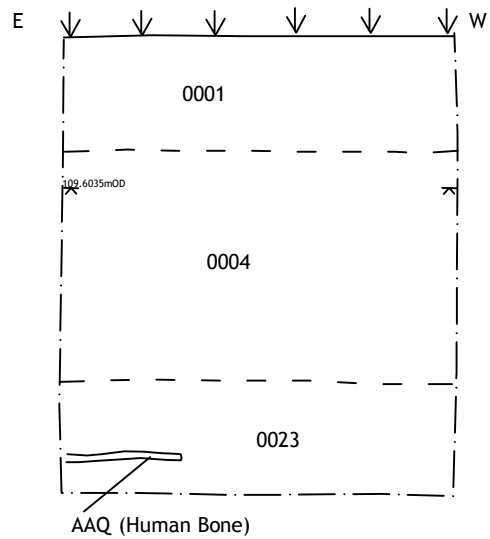


- 0001 Top soil
- 0002 Backfill of grave
- 0003 Yellow sand, part of grave backfill
- 0004 Light brown silty loam,
sub soil (grave earth)
- 0005 Red Clay
- 0006 Yellow clay
- 0007 Grave cut

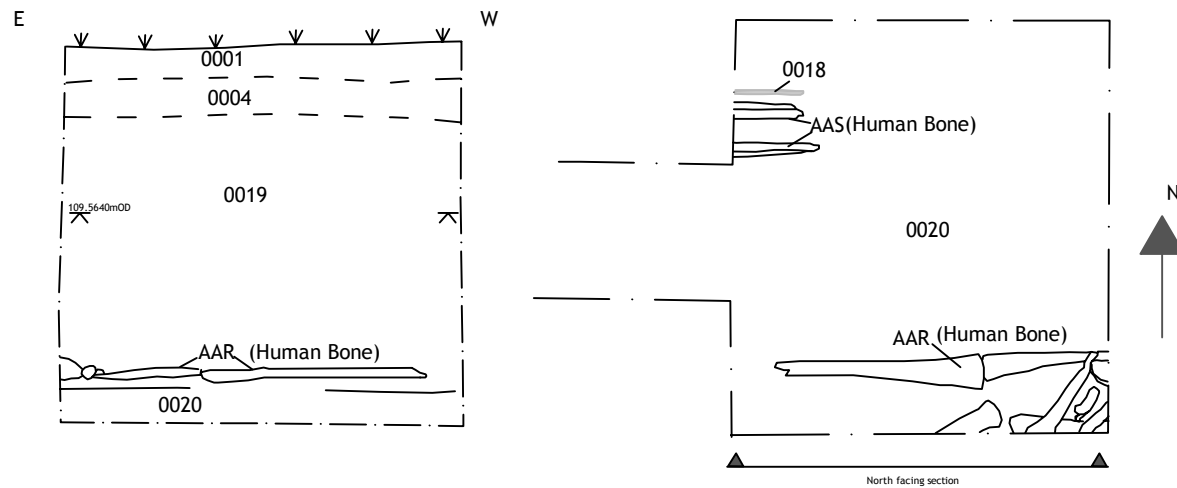




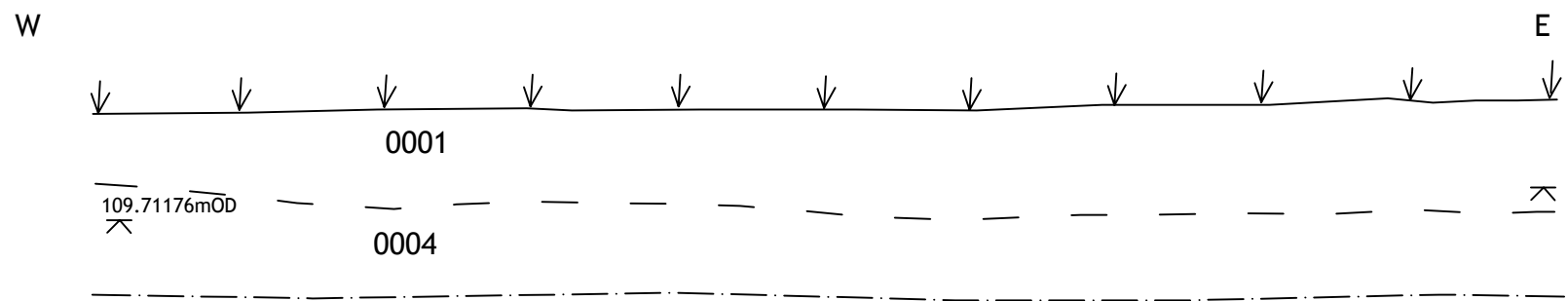
- 0001 Top soil
- 0004 Mid to light brown silty loam
- 0008 stiff red clay
- 0009 Grave cut
- 0014 Backfill of grave
- 0016 Grey clay
- 0017 Outline of coffin as a stain in the base of the excavation



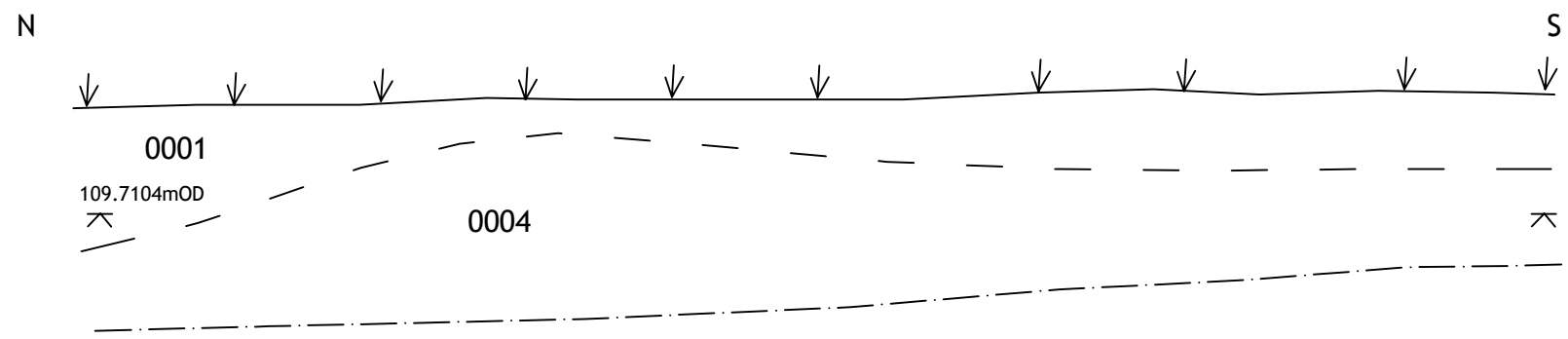
0001 Top soil
 0004 Light to mid brown silty loam
 0023 Light brown sticky silty clay



- 0001 Top soil
- 0004 Light to mid brown silty loam
- 0018 Stain in base of excavation left by coffin
- 0019 Reddish brown silty clay with sandstone chippings and lumps of blue clay
- 0020 Blue/grey clay

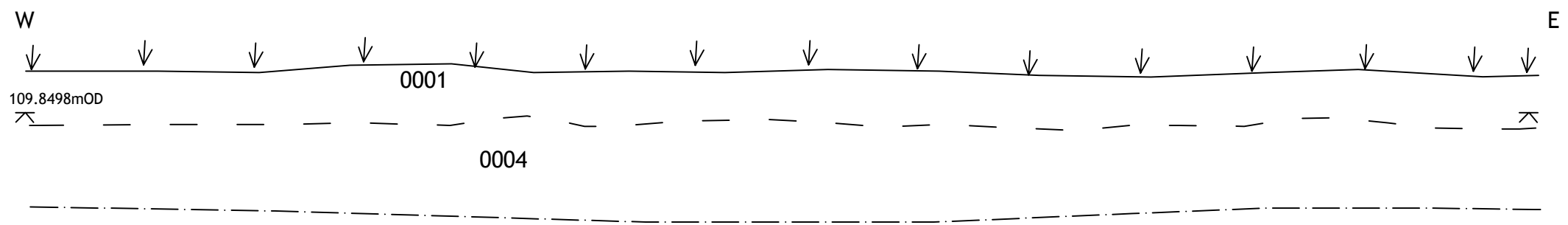


Area 06

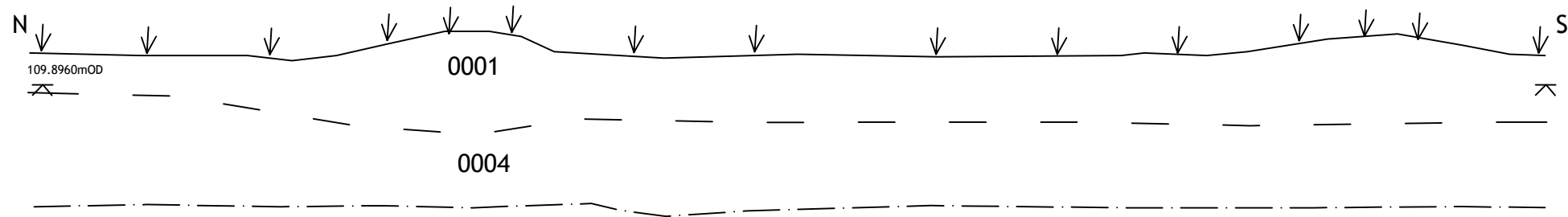


Area 07

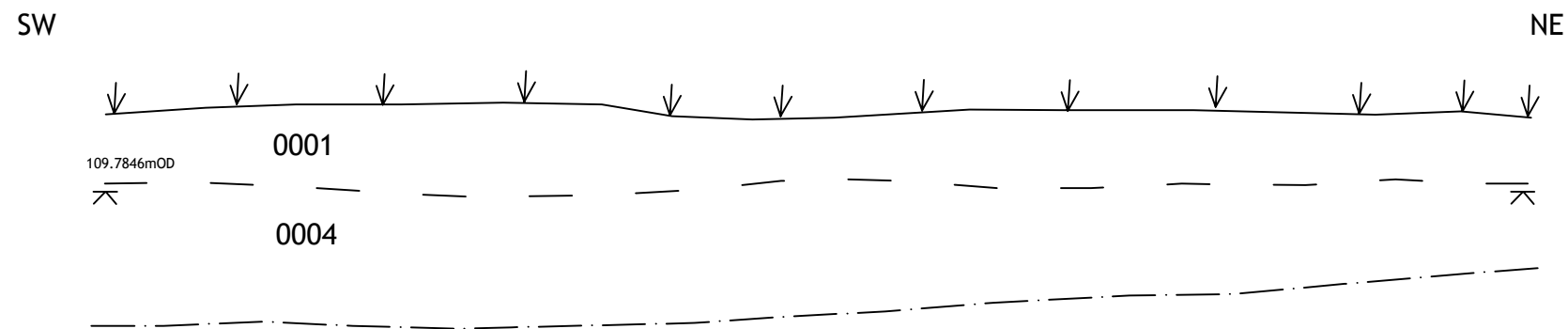
0001 Top soil, mid brown loam
 0004 Subsoil, mid to light brown silty loam (grave earth)



Area 08



Area 09



Area 10

0001 Top soil, mid brown loam
 0004 Subsoil, mid to light brown silty loam (grave earth)



Plate 1: Area 01 with exposed burial.



Plate 2: Area 01 overall shot. Looking south.



Plate 3: Area 02 with exposed burial.



Plate 4: Area 03 with linear stains from the edges of a coffin. Looking south



Plate 5: Area 04 with exposed burial. Looking south.



Plate 6: Area 05 with exposed burial. Looking west.