

**Archaeological Evaluation
By Trial Trenching On Land at Cottage Farm
Rockland St Peter
Norfolk**

Grid reference: TM 9845 9743
Planning Application No 3PL/2014/1050/F
HES No.: CNF 45294
HER No. ENF 135956
Oasis No. 201806

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Summary

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by trial trenching on land at Cottage Farm Rockland St Peter Norfolk. (TM 9845 9743). This was carried out in advance of the erection of a solar array "Land at Cottage Farm Rockland St Peter Norfolk". It has been written in response to an archaeological brief written by Kelly Powell, Norfolk County Council, Historic Environment Service, dated 11/11/2014.

Six 17 metre by 1.8 metre wide trenches were excavated within the array footprint of the proposed new solar farm.

The six evaluation trenches revealed no archaeology or finds of any kind.

1. Introduction and Planning background

1.1 An archaeological evaluation was carried out by trial trenching on land at Cottage Farm Rockland St Peter Norfolk. (TM 9845 9743). This was carried out in advance of the erection of a solar array "Land at Cottage Farm Rockland St Peter Norfolk". It has been written in response to an archaeological brief written by Kelly Powell, Norfolk County Council, Historic Environment Service, dated 11/11/2014.

1.2 The planning application (ref: 3PL/2014/1050/F) is subject to a pre-determination of archaeological work prior to grant of planning agreement. This specification provides an outline of the evaluation phase of the PoAW, the results of which will be assessed by the Historic Environment Service to make an informed planning decision.

1.3 The planning application was presented to the Breckland Borough Council for the erection of a solar panel array at Cottage Farm Rockland St Peter at NGR - (TL 9854 9743).

1.4 To ensure that satisfactory arrangements are made for the investigation, retrieval and recording of any possible archaeological remains on the site an archaeological investigation has been carried out, which complies with the policy of the Breckland District Council to allow proper investigation and recording of the site, which is potentially of archaeological and historical significance.

2. Site Location and Description (NGR: TL 9845 9743)

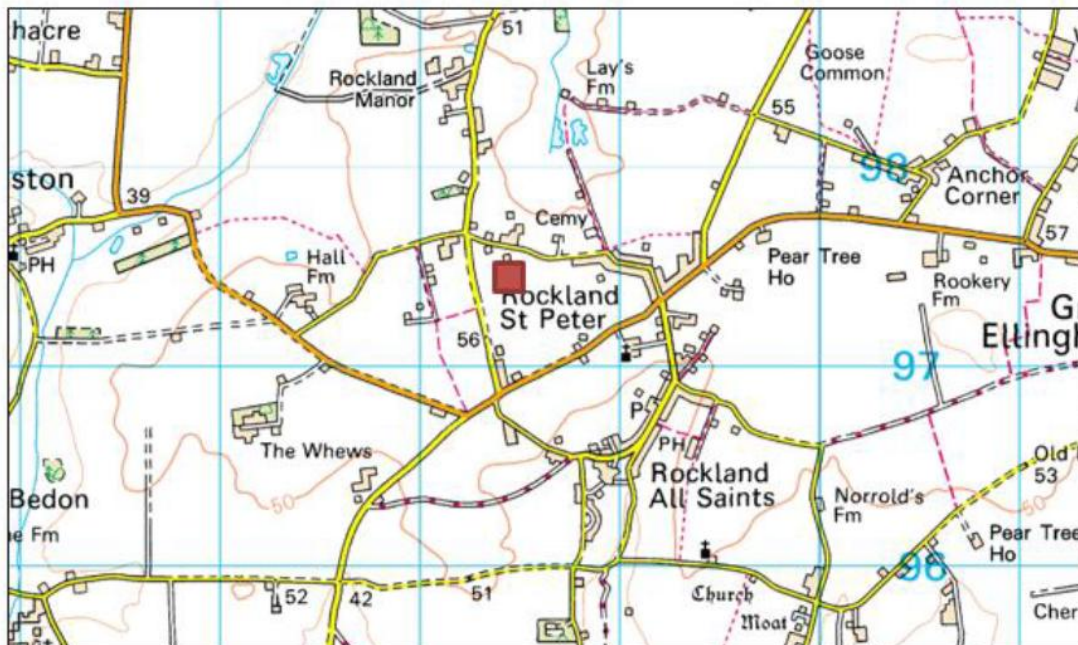


Figure 1. Site location

2.1 The proposed development site is located near to the village of Rockland St Peter, which is located a few miles north-west of Attleborough. The site is located to the south of Cottage Farm, c. 440m north of Bray's Lane, 130m east of Bell Lane and c. 120m south of Bell Road. The site is surrounded on all sides by open agricultural land of relatively flat countryside.

2.2 The overlying geology is of the *Lowestoft Formation* - Diamicton (Sand and gravels formed from river terraces - BGS 161).

3. Archaeological and Historical Background

3.1 Archaeological Background

The area around the proposed development has been extensively metal detected over the past fifteen years or so, resulting in an extremely large quantity of small finds which include coins and artifacts dating from the Iron age through to the post-medieval period, but noticeably in the Roman period, many of the finds date from this time. In addition Saxon evidence is well represented by the small finds made by metal detecting (NHER refs: 8966; 55467; 31699; 36655; 55024; 35591; 34984). Due to the sensitivity of these find spots, a map of these finds is not reproduced here.

The finds evidence, therefore suggests strong evidence for settlement activity in the Roman and Saxon periods and also an early Anglo Saxon cemetery at c. 500m north-west of the proposed development site. This is intimated by certain metal objects/finds, including Early Saxon wrist clasps and brooches normally associated with burials (HER ref: 34984). In addition and of more concern is the possibility of a Roman period cremation cemetery (HER ref: 34984) west of and adjacent to the site, which has been suggested by the find of Roman pottery jars, a beaker - all of a type used in cremation rites. The associated finds from the same location includes a copper-alloy strip, identified as from a bucket of the same period; finds of this type are also indicative of cremation sites in the Roman period.

3.2 Historical Background

The Domesday Book (1086) entry for Rocklands is very scant and states: *Tofttes: William de Warenne. Mill. White in his directory gives Rockland: " is a parish of scattered houses, five and a half miles south-east of Watton and four miles west of Attleborough, containing 399 souls and 999 acres of land" (White, W., 1845).*

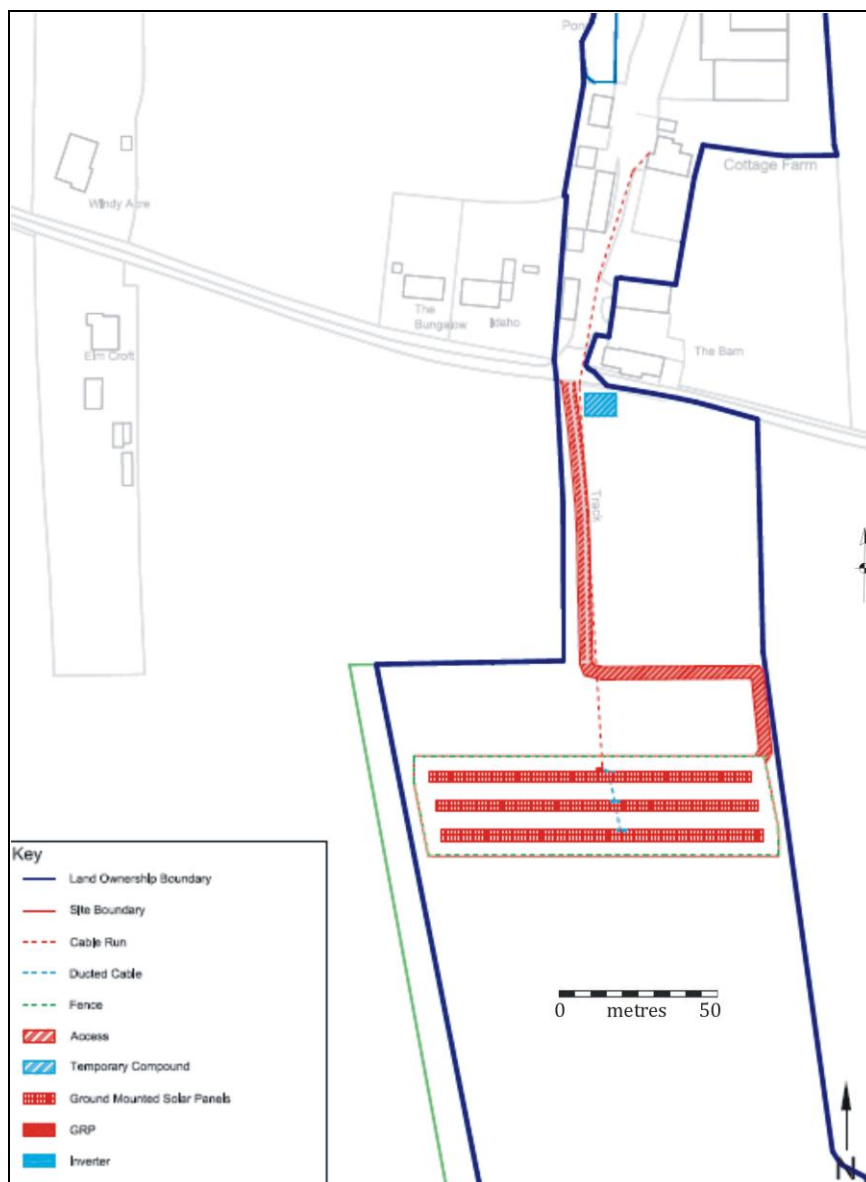
4. Results

Fieldwork

4.1 A plan of the six trenches, sixteen metres of 17m by 1.8 metres, was planned to a scale of 1:50; sections were drawn to a scale of 1:10.

4.2 A metal detector survey was carried out at all stages of the project.

4.3 A digital photographic record at 10 million pixels resolution will form part of the site archive to be curated at the Norfolk county Council. Site plans and sections were digitized to archive standard, reduced versions of which are included in this report.



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Figure 2. Block plan showing solar farm location

4.4 The Trenched Evaluation

The trenched evaluation consisted of six trenches measuring 17 metres long by 1.8 metres width, which were located in a grid fashion to test the area of the solar array (see fig. 2). Trench 1, located in the north-west corner of the proposed grid array consisted of a top soil (1000) to a depth of 0.31m, below this a subsoil (1001) to a depth of 0.40m, below this was re natural of silty sand and gravel (1002) to a depth of 0.08; total depth of trench, 0.79m. Trench 2, located in the north-east corner of the proposed grid array consisted of a top soil (1000) to a depth of 0.34m, below this a subsoil (1001) to a depth of 0.28m, revealing the natural (1002) of silty sand and gravel to a depth of 0.20m; total depth of trench, 0.82m. Trench 3, located in the centre of the proposed grid array consisted of a top soil (1000) to a depth of 0.32m, below this a subsoil (1001) to a depth of 0.37m, below this was re natural of silty sand and gravel (1002) to a depth of 0.12; total depth of trench, 0.81m. Trench 4, located in the centre of the proposed grid array consisted of a top soil (1000) to a depth of 0.38m, below this a subsoil (1001) to a depth of 0.24m, revealing the natural (1002) of silty sand and gravel to a depth of 0.24m; total depth of trench, 0.86m. . Trench 5, located in the south-west corner of the proposed grid array consisted of a top soil (1000) to a depth of 0.27m, below this a subsoil (1001) to a depth of 0.42m, below this was the natural of silty sand and gravel (1002) to a depth of 0.22; total depth of trench, 0.91m. Trench 6, located in the south-east corner of the proposed grid array consisted of a top soil (1000) to a depth of 0.24m, below this a subsoil (1001) to a depth of 0.28m, revealing the natural (1002) of silty sand and gravel to a depth of 0.18m; total depth of trench, 0.70m.

4.5 None of the trenches revealed any archaeology, and no finds were made from metal detecting the spoil from each of the trenches.

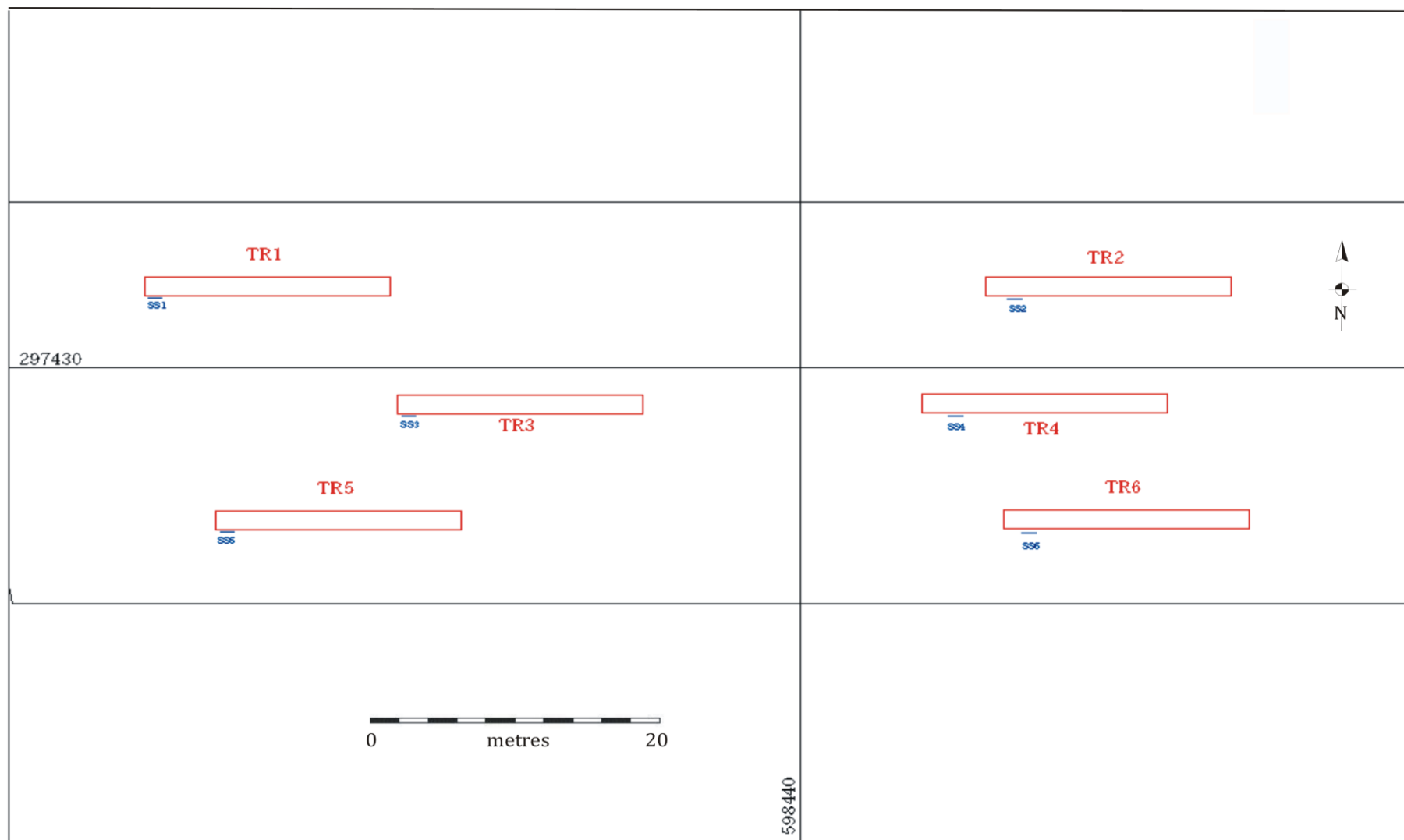


Figure 3. Plan of trenches

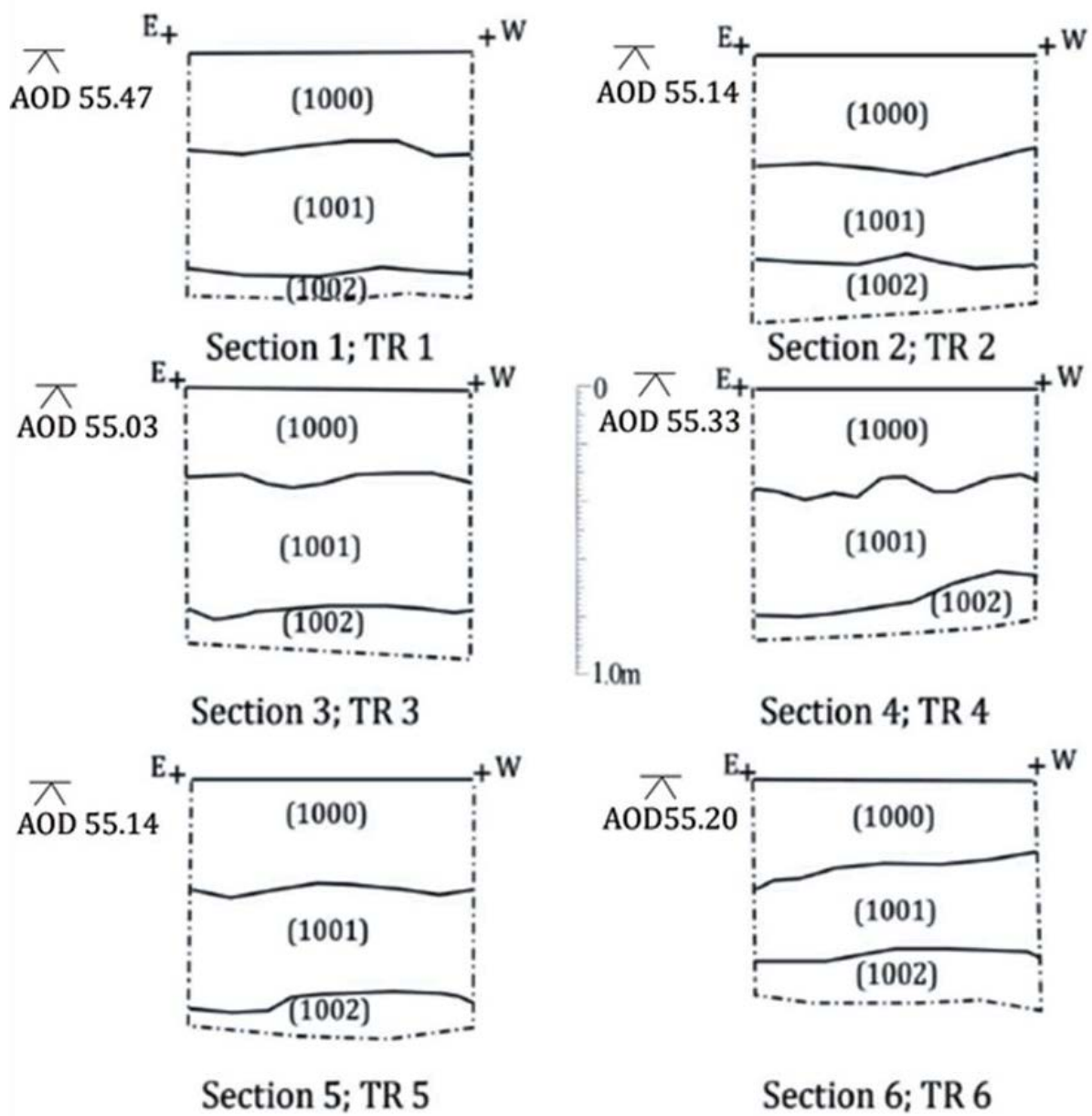


Figure 3. Sample Sections 1-6, scale 1:20

5. Interpretation

5.1 All six evaluation trenches failed to produce any archaeological features, which suggests that the area concerned was not inhabited or used for any purpose other than, probably, farming. The numerous finds located by metal detecting in close proximity does suggest that occupation evidence should exist in this area, but does not extend into the location of the proposed development.

6. Discussion

6.3 This evaluation has successfully shown that no archaeology will be compromised by the present development proposal.

7. Archive Deposition

7.1 The paper and photographic archive will be held at the Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service.

7.2 There are no physical finds.

7.3 A digital record and copies of the report can be viewed at the Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service.

7.4 The digital report may also be viewed at the following site:
<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/policy.html>.

8. Acknowledgements

8.1 The author would like to thank Mosscliff Environmental who commissioned this work and David of Cottage Farm, the owner of the land.

8.2 This report for archaeological evaluation was written by Dennis Payne BA (Hons) ACIfA (Archaeoserv), who also managed the project and carried out the field-work.

8.3 The fieldwork element of this project was assisted by Martin from Britannia Archaeology Ltd.

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White, W, (4th edition), 1884. *History, Gazetteer and Directory of Norfolk*, Sheffield.

Online References

PastScapes <http://www.pastscape.org/homepage/index.htm>

APPENDIX: Digital Images



Plate 1. Pre-excavation of site, view from the east



Plate 2. Sample section 1, Trench 1, from the north



Plate 3. Trench 1, post-excavation, from the east



Plate 4. Sample section 2, Trench 2, from the north



Plate 5. Trench 2, post-excavation, from the east



Plate 6. Trench 2, post-excavation, from the east (without shadow)



Plate 7. Sample section 3, Trench 3, from the north



Plate 8. Trench 3, post excavation, from the east



***Plate 9, Sample section 4, Trench 4, from the north
(storey board omitted)***



Plate 10. Trench 4 post-excavation, from the east



Plate 11. Sample section 5, Trench 5, from the north



Plate 12. Trench 5, post-excavation, from the east



Plate 13. Sample section 6, trench 6, from the north



Plate 14. Trench 6, post-excavation, from the east