

**REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION ON LAND OFF WOOD
STREET, DONCASTER,
SOUTH YORKSHIRE.**

APRIL 1994

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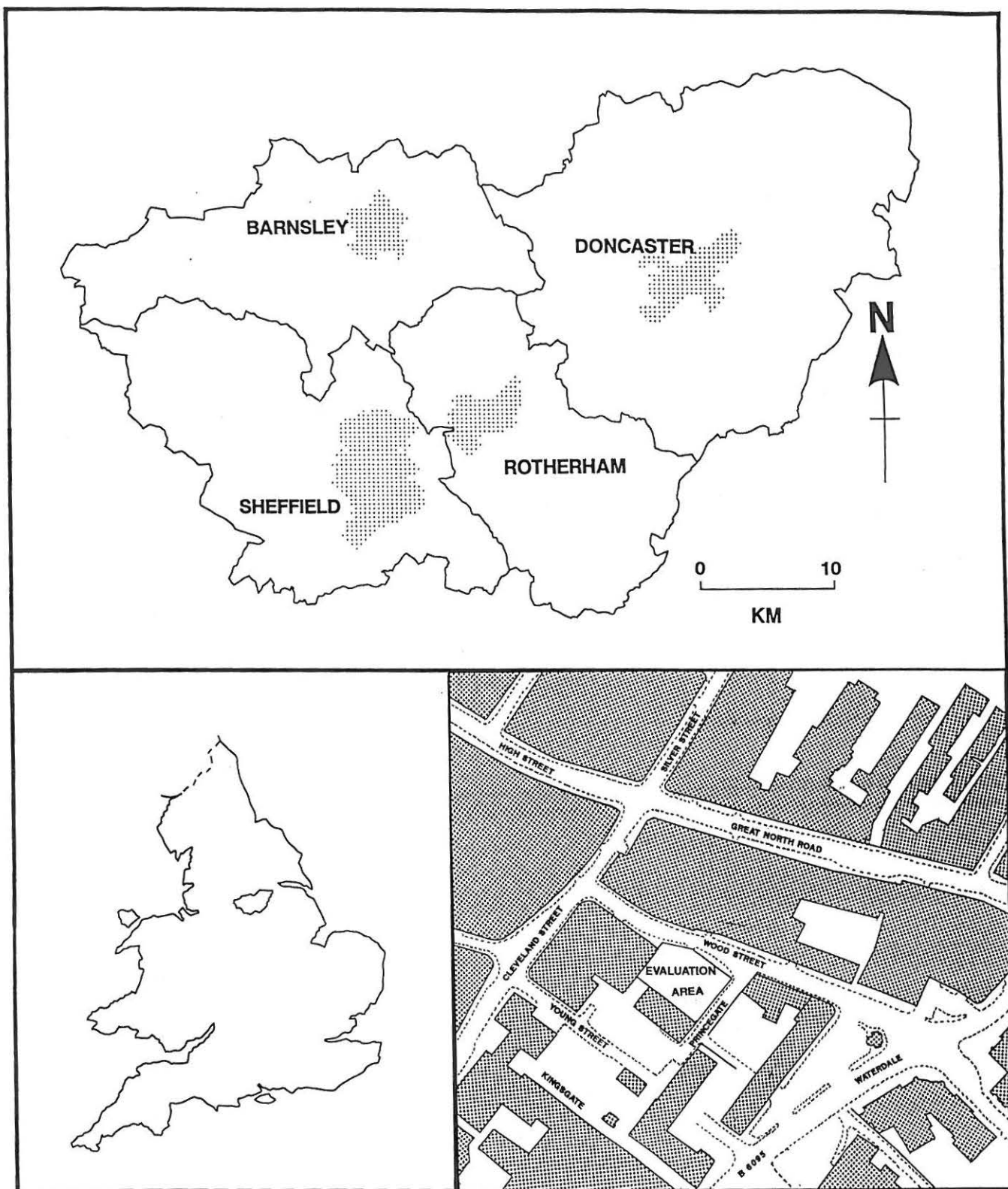
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1) Site Location

1) SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation has been carried out on land off Wood Street, Doncaster. This was in response to a proposal to develop the area as a five storey office block. The site was formally occupied by Doncaster MBC education offices, constructed in the 19th century. This appeared to have involved ground disturbance to a relatively deep level. This left a limited area in which it was useful to carry out the evaluation. A single trench was excavated which was found to contain remains dated to the Romano-British period.

2) INTRODUCTION

The site at Wood Street (NGR SE 5766 0313) is located on the fringe of the town centre of Doncaster (Fig. 1). Following the demolition of the former Doncaster MBC education offices an application was submitted for the construction of a five storey office block on 0.42 ha of land (Planning Application no. 93/33/3671/FUL P). A scheme of this sort clearly involves a good deal of ground disturbance and so is liable to affect any archaeological remains which may exist.

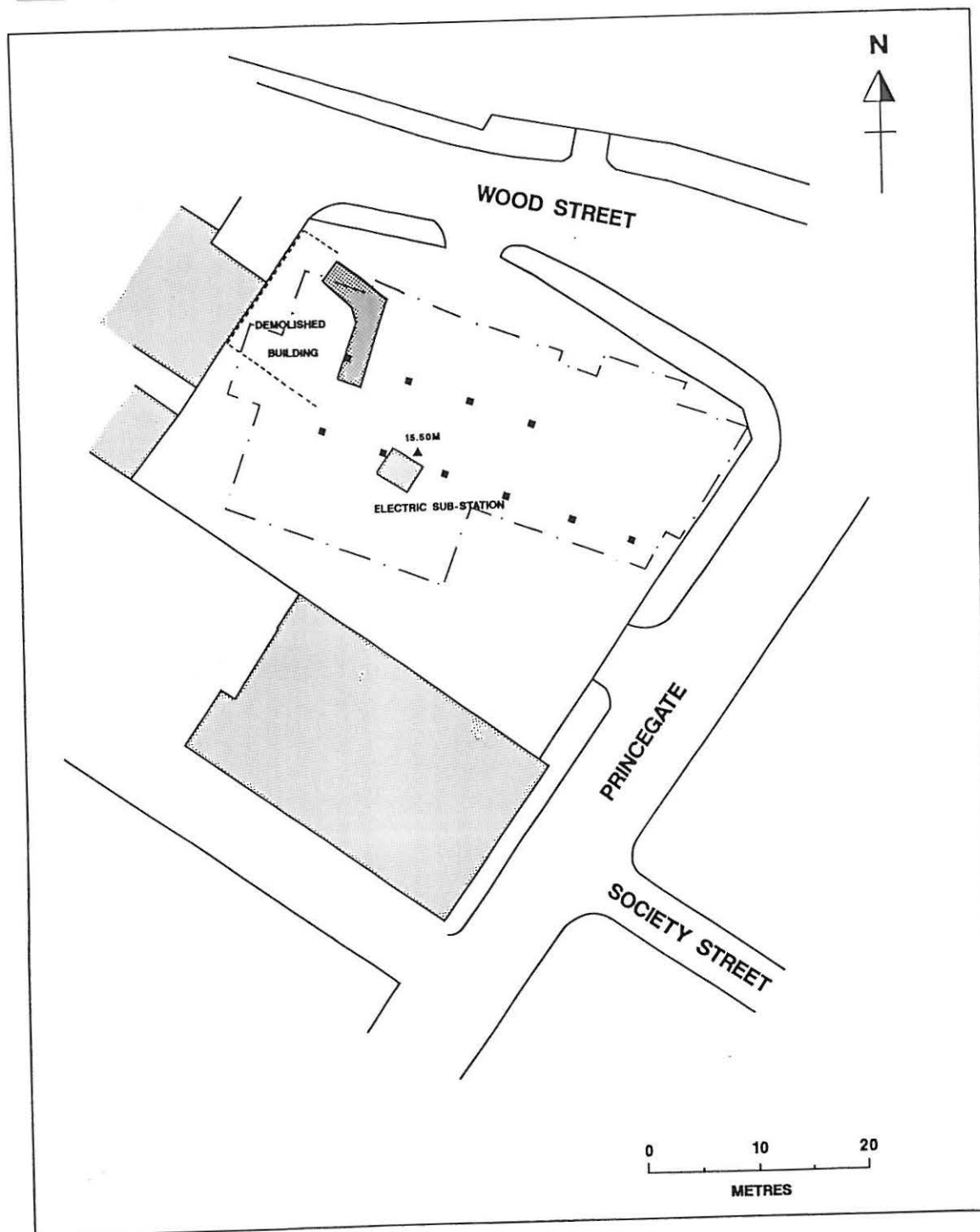
The site lies close to the medieval and Roman town of Doncaster. The medieval town ditch is known to have enclosed the area within a line now formed by Cleveland Street, Silver Street and Market Road. It is known that suburbs developed outside of this line and the site in question may have been involved in this. Also, at the time of the construction of the town ditch in the 12th century, the area around the site was part of an area used for agricultural purposes.

The main Roman road through Doncaster is known to have followed the line of High Street and Hall Gate. This led to Lincoln in the south and Castleford in the north. It was important to the development of the town as it was likely to have been the lowest crossing point of the river. It was also the highest navigable point for river traffic. This situation continued into the medieval period, when the Great North Road passed through Doncaster on the same route.

Given the scale of the proposed development and the location of the site a recommendation was made by South Yorkshire Archaeology Service that an archaeological evaluation be carried out prior to any development work. As a result of this the Monaghan Partnership, acting for the developers, contracted the South Yorkshire Archaeology Field and Research Unit (SYAFRU) to carry out the work.





3) METHODOLOGY

Prior to the start of the evaluation, an inspection was made of the site. Demolition rubble covered much of the southern part of the area. This was the remains of the former education offices, which had not been cleared. It was also noted that this part of the site appeared to have been affected by cellaring. It was at a lower level than the land to the north. Three engineers test pit had been excavated and remained open. They showed at most a very minimal depth of undisturbed deposit overlying natural



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-  Buildings
-  Excavated Area
-  Proposed Buildings
-  Piling for Proposed Buildings

TITLE
2) Trench Location

SITE
Doncaster, Wood Street

CODE DWS 94	DATE April 1994
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ground.

It was therefore obvious that the evaluation should be restricted to the northern part of the site. Given the limited extent of this area it was decided that a single trench would be significant (Fig. 2). This was excavated as near as possible to the street frontage while avoiding the existing services.

The trench was machine dug, under archaeological supervision. It was excavated in successive spits and halted when archaeological features or natural ground was reached. This was noticed at a depth of 1.3 to 1.5 metres below the present ground surface.

All subsequent excavation was carried out by hand, by qualified staff of SYAFRU. Archaeological features can be recognised by a difference in soil texture or colour. Where this was noticed it was investigated by excavation, preferably by half-sectioning. All archaeological features were drawn to scale in both plan and section. These were levelled in metres above ordnance datum (metres A.O.D.). Artefactual remains were recovered for later analysis and a written record sheet was made for each individual cut and deposit. A full photographic record was kept throughout using both black and white print and colour slide film. Finally, a brief survey was made of the site in order to accurately plot the location of the trench.

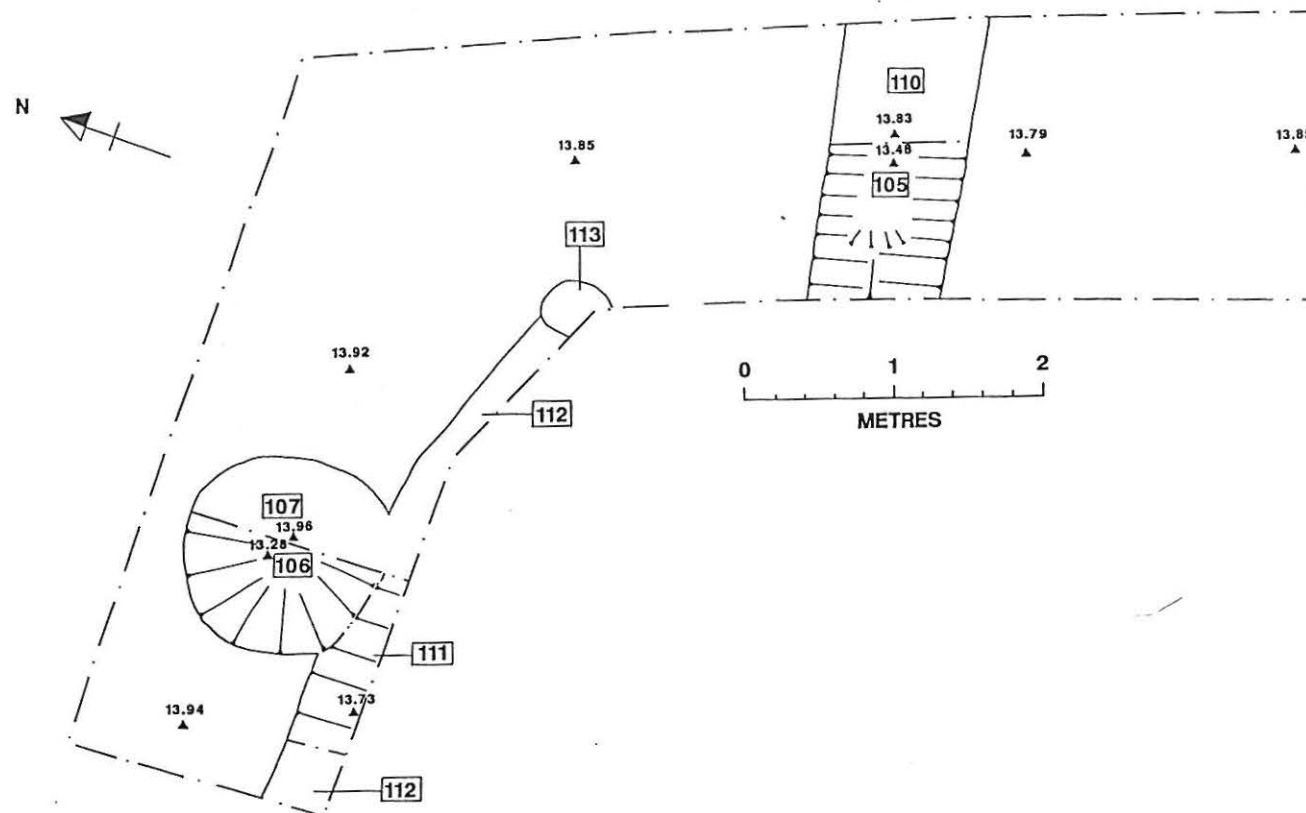
4) RESULTS

The trench was excavated to a maximum of approximately 1.35 metres below the present ground surface (13.6 m.A.O.D.). A series of layers of concrete and rubble made up the upper metre of the trench (100, 101 and 102). This was found to be overlying a buried topsoil layer (103) which consisted of a dark brown clayey silt. This layer had been truncated in a number of places by later intrusions. Underlying 103 was a silty sand subsoil layer (104). This was directly overlying the natural material.

A number of intrusions were found cutting through these deposits and are visible in the long section (fig. 5). Two of these (113 and 115) were found cutting through at the surface of layer 103. These both continued into the natural material but 115 was found to be the deeper. They both contained dark silt sand fills, with some brick rubble being included in the upper fill of 115. Given their stratigraphic location and nature of the fills it is safe to assume that these are late post-medieval features at the earliest.

Two features (105 and 111) are visible in the section cutting through the surface of the subsoil layer, 104. A further feature was also found which is assumed to be cut at the same level, though it does not appear in section. Feature 105 (Figs. 3 and 4) was a ditch located in the southern half of the trench on an east-west alignment. It measured a little under 1.8 metres wide at the surface and had a depth of 0.7 metres. The single fill of the ditch (110) consisted of a dark yellowish brown silt material. A number of finds were recovered from the fill of this feature. These included pottery fragments, iron, glass and teeth. Only small quantities of each of the above were found. The pottery appeared to be Roman in date.

The two other archaeological features found (106 and 111, Figs. 3 and 4) were located in the northern part of the trench. Feature 111 was a partially exposed ditch on an east-west



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TITLE
3) Trench Plan

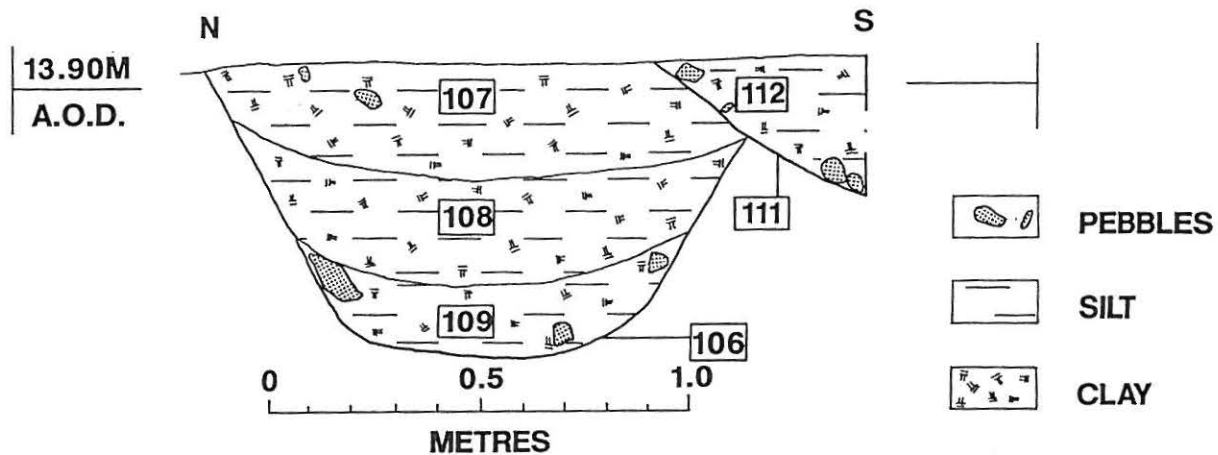
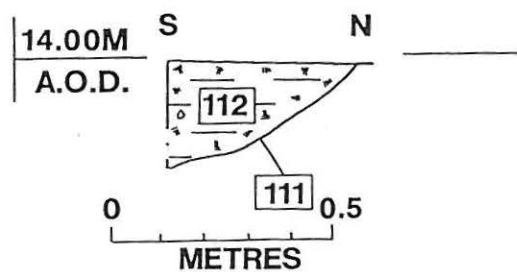
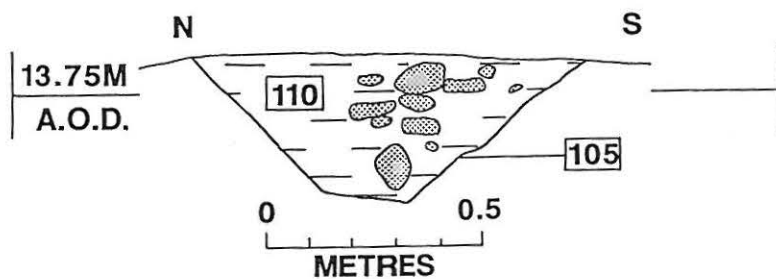
SITE
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TITLE
4) Feature Sections

SITE
Doncaster, Wood Street

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SCALE

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alignment. It was found cutting, and therefore post-dating, an adjacent pit (106). This pit measured 1.4 metres wide at the surface and had an excavated depth of 0.6 metres. The profile of this ditch reveals evenly sloping sides with a flat base. Three separate fills were identifiable within this pit. The upper two of these fills (107 and 108) had a very similar silt clay texture but were distinguishable by the darker colour of the upper fill. They both contained pottery which appeared to be largely of local production. Fill 107 also contained a grinding stone of millstone grit. The basal fill (109) had a similar matrix to 108 but contained a much higher proportion (30-40% approx.) of the rounded river gravel which occurs naturally in this area.

Ditch 111 was only partially exposed within the excavated area, and so a profile of this feature was not obtainable. The little that was available showed it to have a gradual break of slope and an evenly sloping edge on the north side. The fill (112) consisted of dark reddish brown silt clay and contained a few sherds of locally produced Roman greyware pottery.

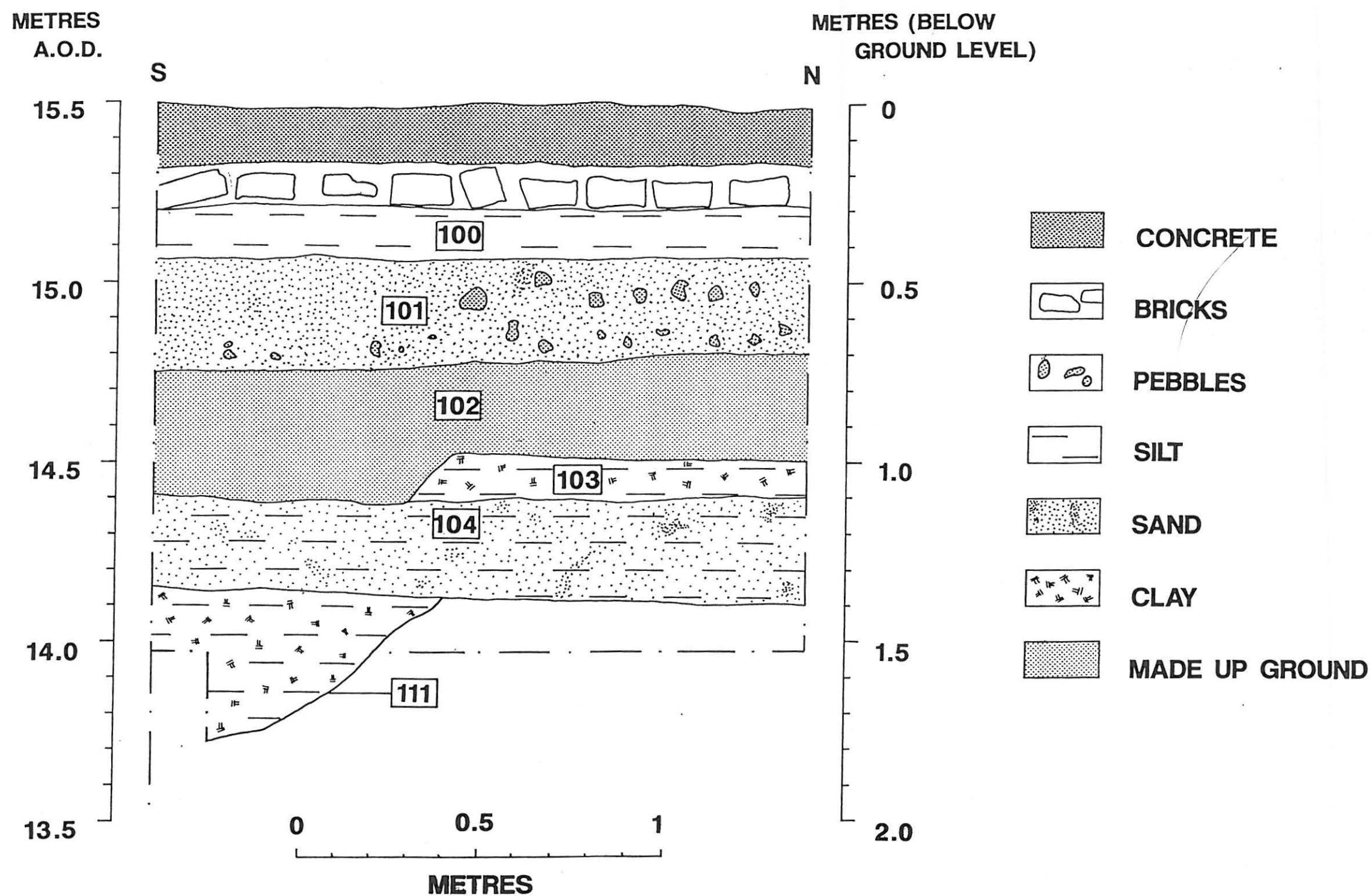
5) DISCUSSION

The results of this evaluation have demonstrated the presence of preserved archaeological remains at a depth of approximately 1.3 metres below the current ground surface (14.15 metres A.O.D.). The pottery recovered from within the fills of these features is readily identifiable as Roman in date, and consisted mainly of locally produced greyware. The limited extent of the excavated area precludes any interpretation of the nature of the occupation represented by the features. However, the presence of a pit suggests a somewhat more intensive form of occupation than simply field boundary ditches. This is supported to some extent by the presence of the grinding stone, a find type more normally found within a domestic context.

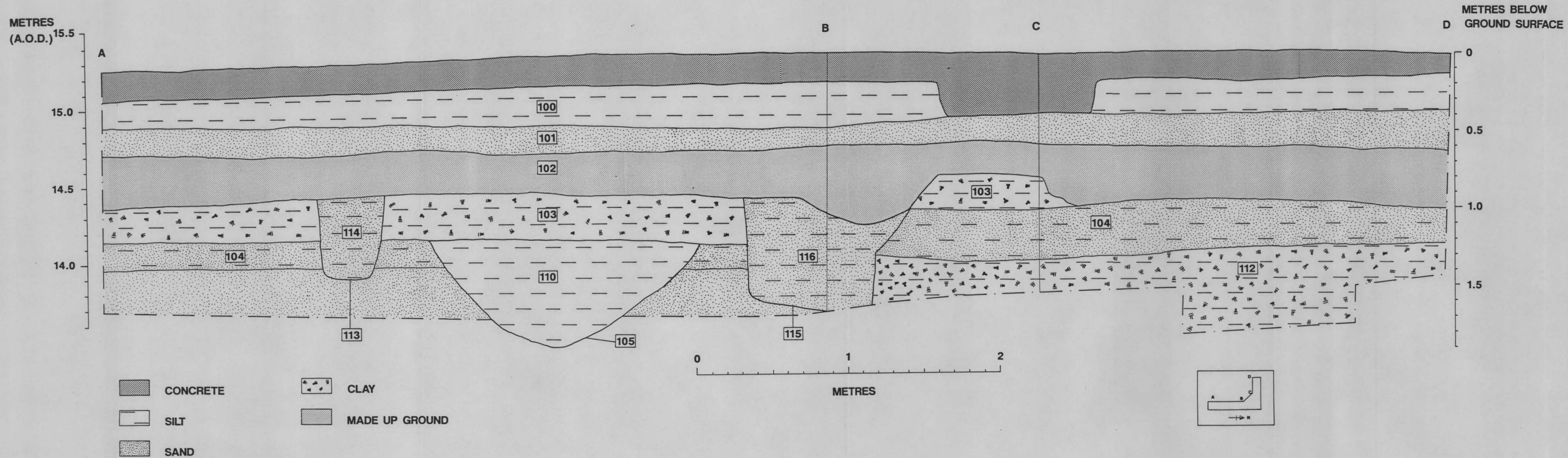
It is also worth noting that the extent of these preserved remains are extremely unlikely to cover the full extent of the development area. The land now occupied by the remains of the former education offices appears to have been truncated to a far greater depth by modern development. An inspection of three engineers test pits showed no potential archaeological layers in this area.

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TITLE 6) Short Section	
SITE Doncaster, Wood Street	
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SCALE	DRAWN GRH



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TITLE
5) Long Section

SITE
Doncaster, Wood Street

CODE **DATE**
DWS 94 **April 1994**

SCALE **DRAWN**
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