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Appl. No. 06/00931/MFUL: 11a Ruffa Lane/
Coronation Villa redevelopment

**Report of the archaeological watching brief
on land to the south of Ruffa Lane,
Pickering, North Yorkshire**

Site Code: PICK'07

June 2007

By Chris Fern BA MA

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SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Fern Archaeology on behalf of The Acrepark Group in May-June 2007. The works, application number 06/00931/MFUL, comprised the redevelopment of a combined 0.2ha plot, located to the south of Ruffa Lane, previously occupied by 11a Ruffa Lane and Coronation Villa (**Figure 1**).

A 380m² area was monitored with very minimal evidence of archaeology encountered: a single feature, probably a tree bowl, contained an abraded sherd of medieval pottery (**Figures 2-4**). This was overlain by an uncultivated buried soil of medieval to post-medieval date. Based on these findings it is suggested that the site was marginal to the settlement of Pickering before the post-medieval period, being probably meadow or pasture.

SITE LOCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The site, a combined rectangular plot of 0.23ha, is located to the south of Ruffa Lane and immediately east of the Eastgate Square carpark, in the town of Pickering, North Yorkshire (**Figure 1**). It is centered at National Grid Reference (NGR) SE 8006, 8388. Prior to development, the site was a double housing plot, occupied by 'Coronation Villa' and 11a Ruffa Lane, together with gardens, outhouses and a pond. The redevelopment comprised the demolition of dwelling 11a, with the incorporation of the early 20th-century Coronation Villa into a new housing scheme.

The land at this point slopes gradually from a height of c.41m AOD (*Above Ordnance Datum*) just to the north of the site to c.38.5m at its southern extent. 11a Ruffa Lane is terraced into this slope, c.1.8m below the level of Ruffa Lane.

The watching brief took place over 4 days on the 23rd-24th May and 4th-5th June 2007. A halt to active monitoring was called after this time, with the permission of North Yorkshire County Council, due to the absence of any significant archaeology in the areas observed (**Figure 1b**). The weather in this period was warm and sunny.

The site code allocated is **PICK' 07**.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Pickering is a historic market town with a church and castle of Norman date, and is reputed to have origins as far back as the late prehistoric period. Therefore, in view of the potential for archaeological remains relating to these periods, as well as the village's later formation, North Yorkshire County Council Heritage Section placed an archaeological watching brief condition on the development (**Appendix 3**).

The earliest 1st Edition 1854 Ordnance Survey Map shows the site area as enclosed field.

The underlying geology of the area is stoned glacial clay (**C1000**).

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used was that directed by North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) in their Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for an archaeological watching brief (**Appendix 3**). The standard established in *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (MAP2) (English Heritage 1991), and in *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief* issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA), was followed throughout both the fieldwork and post-excavation phases. The archaeological

contractor appointed for the project was Fern Archaeology. The supervising archaeologist for the duration was Chris Fern.

Topsoil and buried soils, of late post-medieval or modern date, were first removed under archaeological supervision using a 360° mechanical digger (**Figure 4b**). Subsequently encountered archaeological deposits, layers and structures were cleaned, recorded, and where possible, sampled by hand excavation to define their character and date. Full records of each context (C) were kept on a hand-held computer using a single context recording system and *Munsell Soil* classifications, which are detailed in **Appendix 1**. A full photographic record of the watching brief findings was made using colour digital photography (at 6 megapixel resolution). Standing sections were recorded on *permatrace* at 1/10 scale, with plans drawn at 1/20 scale. All of the recorded plans and sections have been reproduced here in a digitised format in **Figure 3**, with a selection of photographs shown in **Figure 4**. A record of ground levels was maintained throughout, relative to the *Ordnance Datum* (**Figures 2 and 3**).

In the post-excavation phase of work all finds were cleaned and organised as directed in the *First Aid for Finds* manual (Watkinson and Neal 2001).

A full archive for the excavation is included in **Appendix 4**.

FIELDWORK RESULTS

The overlying stratigraphic sequence and archaeology encountered during the watching brief was recorded with a separate context (C) number for each discreet layer, cut, deposit and structure. The location of the archaeological feature encountered is shown in **Figure 2**. Recorded sections and plans are illustrated in **Figure 3**. The context records are detailed in **Appendix 1**.

Two areas of the site were stripped that together comprise a total area of approximately 380m², amounting to a 16% sample of the whole site. These are hereafter referred to as Trench 1 and 2. The trenches were positioned in areas which offered the greatest potential, away from the terraced area of 11a Ruffa Lane (demolished), the pond, and Coronation Villa (retained). The watching brief was halted following the stripping of Trench 2, on account of the lack of archaeological features and finds.

Trench 1: comprised a c.189m² area located at the western boundary of the site. The stratigraphic sequence overlying the natural clay geology (C1000) is recorded in Section B (**Figure 3**). The overlying soil was made up of a 0.6m layer of dark brown topsoil loam (C1001) above a brown sandy clay, 0.2m deep (C1002). The only potential archaeological feature identified in the area was Pit C1004, which comprised an oval cut, 1.44m in length (**Figures 2-4**). This was filled with a brown silty clayey sand (C1003) that included a single abraded sherd of medieval pottery. This feature was only 0.1m deep, and it was the opinion of the excavator that this was a likely tree bowl.

Trench 2: again comprised a *c.*189m² area, this time located at the southeastern limit of the site. Section C records the layers overlying the natural clay. This confirms the sequence established in Trench 1, though at this point the topsoil was buried under layers of made-ground (1005), hardcore (1006) and concrete (1007). No archaeological features were encountered.

FINDS

All archaeological finds were hand-collected during excavation. The finds were excavated, have been cleaned and packaged, and will be marked and archived in accordance with the *First Aid for Finds* manual (Watkinson and Neal 2001). A summary of all the finds is to be found in **Appendix 2**. All finds have been retained for the archive.

A single small sherd of medieval pottery was recovered from Pit C1004. It is of a gritty fabric with green glaze, which dates it between the 12th and 13th centuries (Jennings 1992). Its heavily abraded condition and size, combined with the otherwise total absence of medieval pottery from the site, suggests that it is residual and intrusive, probably having traveled some distance from its original place of disposal.

Two fragments of 19th- to 20th-century clay tobacco pipe were recovered from the topsoil, together with sherds of 17th- to 19th-century *stoneware* and *blackware*.

INTERPRETATION

The following phased interpretation of the archaeology is suggested:

Phase N: natural clay geology – C1000

Phase 1: 12th-16th? century – Pit C1004

Phase 2: 16th?-18th? century – Layer C1002

Phase M: (Modern) 19th-20th century – Layer C1001

Phase 1: Pit C1004 is interpreted as a probable tree bowl. This was stratigraphically the earliest feature on the site, and is dated tentatively by a sherd of pottery to the medieval period. The sherd was heavily abraded and hence may have been already hundreds of years old when it was incorporated into the backfill.

Phase 2: C1004 was sealed by Layer C1002. This context contained no finds and so can only be dated in relative terms, as being later than C1004, but earlier than the modern topsoil. The lack of pottery from this buried soil argues against it being a ploughsoil and it is probable that it is an uncultivated soil of medieval to post-medieval date.

The overall lack of medieval archaeology and pottery encountered, with only one small abraded sherd recovered from a 380m² area, indicates that the site was marginal before the post-medieval period.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Fern Archaeology would like to thank in particular The Acrepark Group for funding and supporting the excavation and post-excavation requirements of the archaeology. Thanks are also extended to the Heritage Section at North Yorkshire County Council for their consultation and support.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cartographic Sources

1854 1st Edition Ordnance Survey 1:10560

Secondary Sources

English Heritage 1991. *Management of Archaeological Projects 2*, London

Institute of Field Archaeologists 1994. 'Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief'

http://www.archaeologists.net/modules/iconent/inPages/docs/codes/watch_brief.pdf

Jenning, S. 1992. *Medieval Pottery in the Yorkshire Museum*, York

Watkinson, D. and Neal, V. 2001. *First Aid for Finds*, London

APPENDIX 1: archaeological context descriptions

Context	Type	Interpretation	Profile	Plan	Munsell Colour	Stratigraphic Relationship	Soil/Stone Type	Inclusions	Dimensions (cm) Length – Width – Depth	Date (<i>period</i>)	Phase
1000	layer	subsoil	layer	unseen	10YR7.4	<u>Under:</u> C1002; <u>Cut by:</u> C1004	clay	sub-angular gravel and pebbles	*** -***- ***	NATURAL	N
1001	layer	topsoil	layer	unseen	10YR3.1	<u>Under:</u> C1005; <u>Over:</u> C1002	loam	charcoal flecks, clinker	*** – *** – 64	MODERN	M
1002	layer	buried soil	layer	unseen	10YR4.3	<u>Under:</u> C1001; <u>Over:</u> C1003, C1004	sandy clay	sub-angular gravel and pebbles	*** – *** – 20	MEDIEVAL/ POST-MEDIEVAL	2
1003	fill	pit/tree bowl	wide u-shape	oval	10YR4.1	<u>Under:</u> C1002; <u>Fill of:</u> C1004	silty clayey sand	sub-angular gravel and pebbles	82 – 144 – 10	MEDIEVAL	1
1004	cut	pit/tree bowl	wide u-shape	oval	-	<u>Under:</u> C1003; <u>Cuts:</u> C1000	-	-	82 – 144 – 10	MEDIEVAL	1
1005	layer	made-ground	layer	unseen	-	<u>Under:</u> C1006; <u>Over:</u> C1001	clay, hardcore, clinker, brick	sub-angular gravel , pebbles and cobbles	*** -***- 45	MODERN	M
1006	layer	hardcore	layer	unseen	-	<u>Under:</u> C1007; <u>Over:</u> C1005	hardcore, brick	brick	*** -***- 20	MODERN	M
1007	layer	concrete	layer	unseen	-	<u>Over:</u> C1006	concrete	-	*** -***- 12	MODERN	M

APPENDIX 2: archaeological finds

Context	Find No.	Material	Weight (g)	Type	quantity	Description	Date
1003	1	ceramic	1.6	pot	1 sherd	rim sherd of <i>Gritty Ware</i> with green glaze. Heavily abraded	13 th -14 th century
1001	2	ceramic	4.2	pot	1 sherd	body sherd of <i>blackware</i>	18 th -19 th century
1001	3	ceramic	18.9	pot	1 sherd	body sherd of <i>stoneware</i>	17 th -18 th century
1001	4	ceramic	9.3	clay tobacco pipe	1 frag.	bowl fragment decorated with a triskele of three-leaf clovers	19 th -20 th century
1001	5	ceramic	5.7	clay tobacco pipe	1 frag.	stem fragment	19 th -20 th century

**STANDARD WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION (WSI)
FOR LIMITED ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING (“WATCHING BRIEF”)**

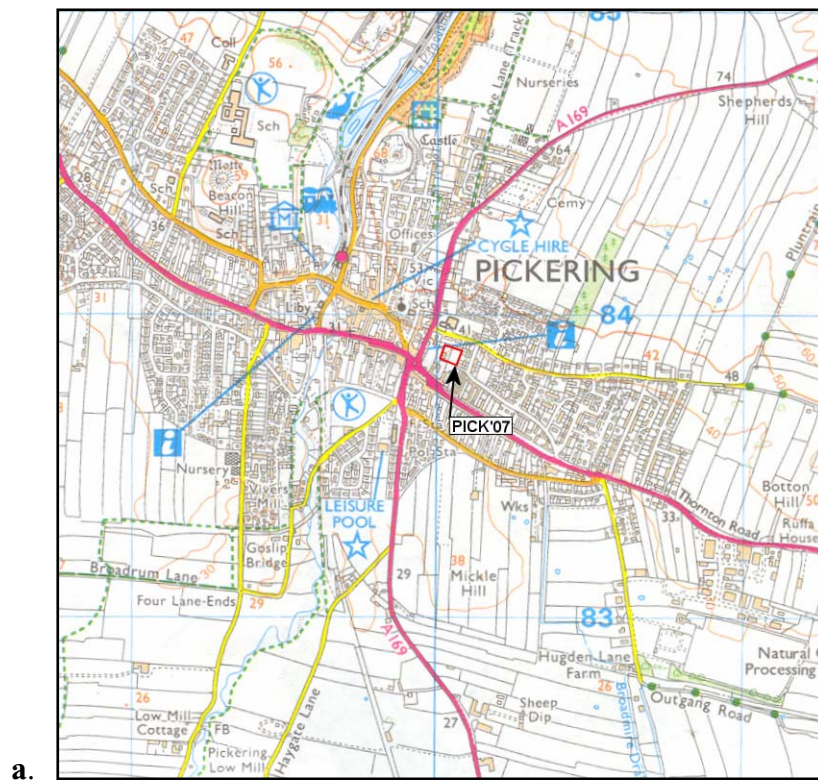
- 1 The purpose of the work is to record and recover archaeological remains which are:
 - a) affected by proposed development only to a limited and clearly defined extent,
 - b) not available or susceptible to standard area excavation techniques, or
 - c) of limited importance or potential.The work should not require the construction programme or development to be held up while archaeological investigation takes place, although some developers may give such a facility.
- 2 The WSI represents a summary of the broad archaeological requirements needed to comply with an archaeological planning condition or obligation. The scheme does **not** comprise a full specification or Bill of Quantities, and the County Council makes no warranty that the works are fully or exactly described. No work on site should commence until the implementation of the scheme is the subject of a standard ICE Conditions of Contract for Archaeological Investigation or similar agreement between the Developer and the Archaeologist.
- 3 The Archaeologist should notify by letter or e-mail the County Archaeology Service (archaeology@northyorks.gov.uk) at least 10 working days in advance of the start of work on site.
- 4 The removal of overburden (that is vegetation, turf, loose stones, rubble, made ground, Tamac, concrete, hardcore, building debris and topsoil) should be supervised by the Archaeologist contracted to carry out the WSI. The Archaeologist should be informed of the correct timing and schedule of overburden removal.
- 5 Removal of overburden by machine should be undertaken using a back-acting excavator fitted with toothless or ditching bucket only. Where materials are exceptionally difficult to lift, a toothed bucket may be used temporarily. Subsoils (B horizons) or deep, uniform fills of features may also be removed by back-acting excavator but only in areas specified by the Archaeologist on site, and only with archaeological supervision. Bulldozers or wheeled scraper buckets should not be used to remove overburden above archaeological deposits. Where reinstatement is required, topsoil should be kept separate from other soil materials.
- 6 Metal detecting within the development area, including the scanning of topsoil and spoil heaps, should only be permitted subject to archaeological supervision and recording such that metal finds are properly located, identified, and conserved. All metal detection should be carried out following the Treasure Act 1996 Code of Practice.
- 7 Where structures, finds, soil features and layers of archaeological interest are exposed or disturbed by construction works, the Archaeologist should be provided with the opportunity to observe, clean, assess, excavate by hand where appropriate, sample and record these features and finds. If the contractors or plant operators notice archaeological

remains, they should immediately tell the Archaeologist. The sampling of deposits for palaeo-environmental evidence should be a standard consideration, and arrangements should be made to ensure that specialist advice and analysis are available if appropriate.

- 8 Heavy plant should not be operated in the near vicinity of archaeological remains until they have been recorded, and the Archaeologist on site has allowed operations to recommence at that location. Sterile subsoils (C horizons) and parent materials below archaeological deposits may be removed without archaeological supervision. Where reinstatement is required, subsoils should be backfilled first and topsoil last.
- 9 Upon completion of fieldwork, samples should be processed and evaluated, and all finds identified, assessed, spot-dated, properly stored, and subject to investigative conservation as needed. A field archive should be compiled consisting of all primary written documents, plans, sections, and photographs. The Archaeologist should arrange for either the County Archaeologist or an independent post-excavation specialist to inspect the archive before making arrangements for the transfer of the archive to an appropriate museum or records office.
- 10 A summary report should be produced following NYCC guidelines on reporting. The report should contain planning or administrative details of the project, a summary of works carried out, a description and interpretation of the findings, an assessment of the importance of the archaeology including its historical context where appropriate, and catalogues of finds, features, and primary records. All excavated areas should be accurately mapped with respect to nearby buildings, roads and field boundaries. All significant features should be illustrated with conventionally-scaled plans, sections, and photographs. Where few or no finds are made, it may be acceptable to provide the report in the form of a letter with plans attached.
- 11 Copies of the summary report should be provided to the client(s), the County Heritage Section (HER), to the museum accepting the archive, and if the works are on or adjacent to a Scheduled Ancient Monument, to English Heritage. A licence should be granted to the accepting museum and the County Council to use the documentation arising from the work for its statutory functions and to give to third parties as an incidental to those functions.
- 12 Upon completion of the work, the Archaeologist should make their work accessible to the wider research community by submitting digital data and copies of reports online to OASIS (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/>). Submission of data to OASIS does not discharge the planning requirements for the Archaeologist to notify the County Archaeology Service of the details of the work and to provide the Historic Environment Record (HER) with a summary report on the work.
- 13 Under the Environmental Information Regulations 2005 (EIR) information submitted to the HER becomes publicly accessible, except where disclosure might lead to environmental damage, and reports cannot be embargoed as 'confidential' or 'commercially sensitive'. Requests for sensitive information are subject to a public interest test, and if this is met, then the information has to be disclosed. The Archaeologist should inform the client of EIR requirements, and ensure that any information disclosure issues are resolved before completion of the work. Intellectual property rights are not affected by the EIR.
- 14 The County Archaeologist should be informed as soon as possible of the discovery of any unexpected archaeological remains, or changes in the programme of ground works on site. Any significant changes in the archaeological work should be specified in a variation to the WSI to be approved by the planning authority. If there is a need to remove human remains, an exhumation licence should be obtained from the Department for Constitutional Affairs (coroners@dca.gsi.gov.uk), or a faculty obtained where the remains are buried in land consecrated according to the rites of the Church of England.

APPENDIX 4: archive

Project Location:	Ruffa Lane, Pickering		
Site Code:	PICK'07		
Description:	Material	Size	Quantity
field drawing labeled FD1	permatrace	A3	1
finds	various	details in Appendix 2	
client architectural site survey – with annotations	paper	A1	1
client architectural drawings	paper	A1	5
site diary	paper	A4	1
geotechnical report	paper	A4	17
NYCC WSI 01/2006	paper	A4	6
email correspondence: G. Falkingham to Acrepark Gp 26.10.06	paper	A4	1
email correspondence: D. Ball to C. Fern 06.12.06	paper	A4	1
email correspondence: D. Ball to G. Falkingham 13.04.07	paper	A4	1
email correspondence: S. Tilbury to C. Fern 05.06.07	paper	A4	1
modern OS map of site location – annotated with areas monitored	paper	A3	1
historic 1893 OS of site showing location	paper	A3	1
modern OS of Pickering	paper	A4	1
table of 'AOD HEIGHTS'	paper	A4	1
PICK' 07 report	paper	A4	18
archive CD	CD	-	2



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Figure 1a. Site location (Scale 1:25000); **b.** Location of monitored ground works (Scale 1:1250)

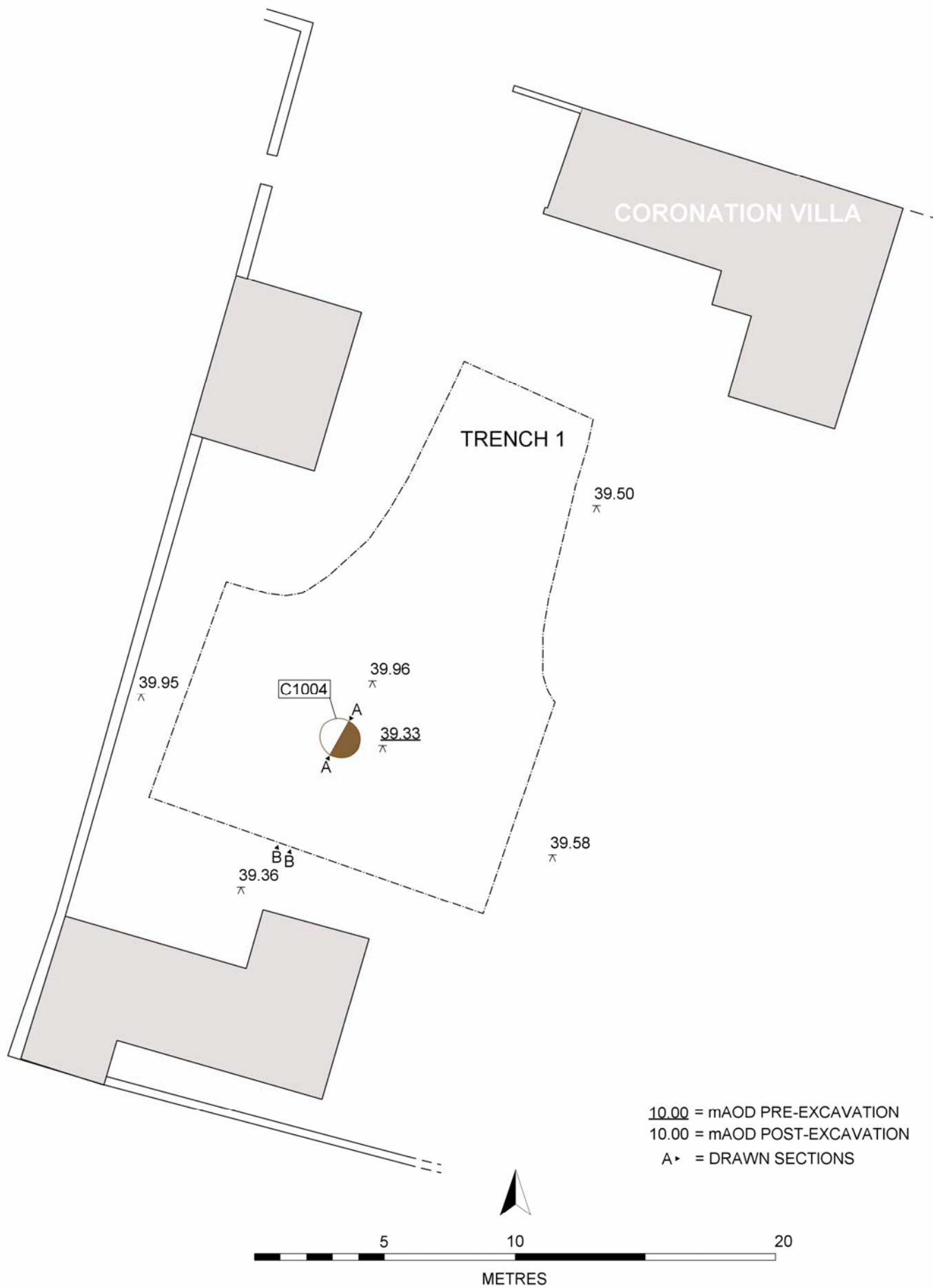


Figure 2. Trench 1 showing location of C1004 (Scale 1:200)

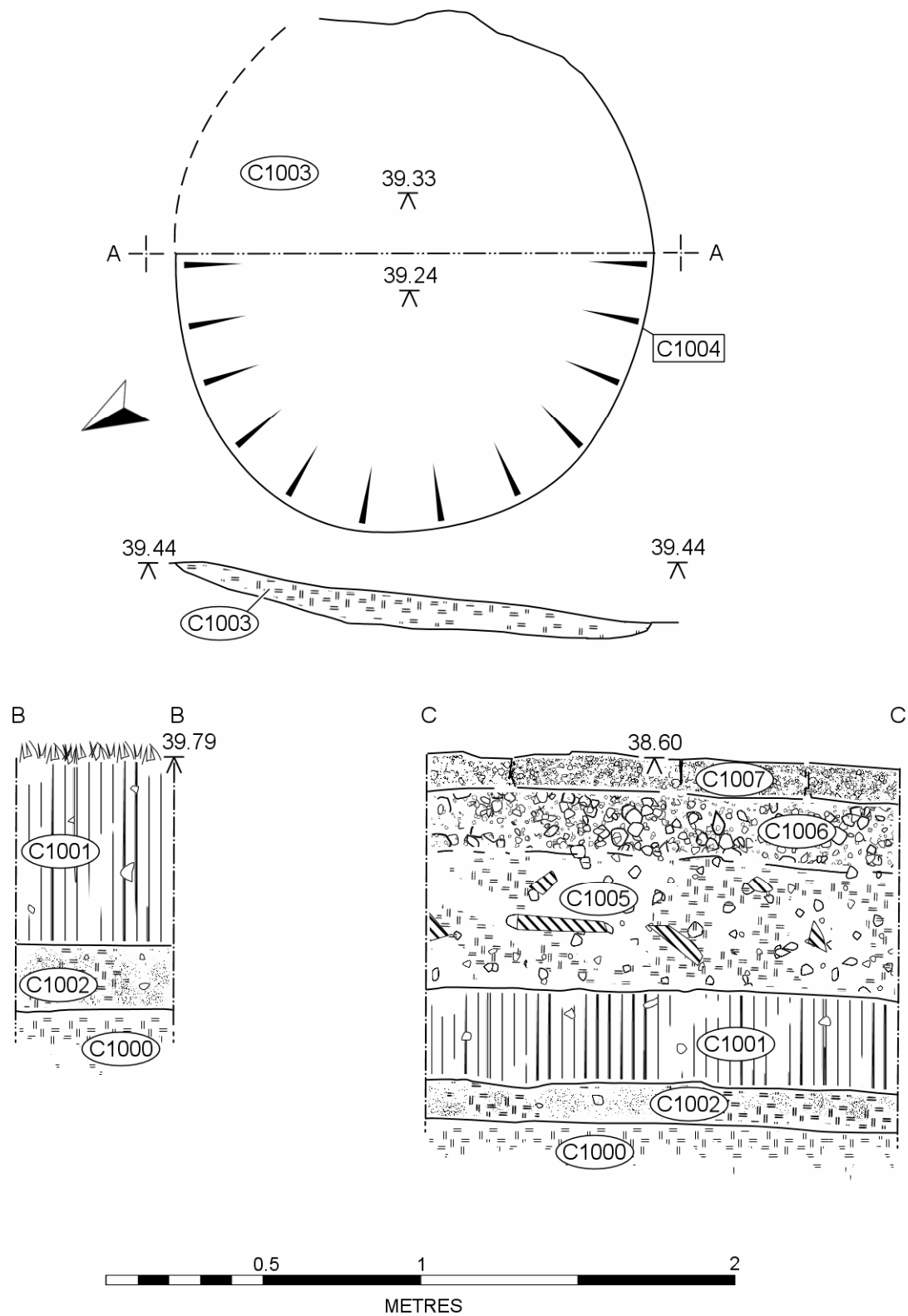


Figure 3. Plan of Pit C1004 and Sections A-C (Scale 1:20)



a.



b.

Figure 4a. Pit C1004 (1m scale-bar); **b.** Trench 1 looking south (1m scale-bar)