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**Wath Quarry
Hovingham
North Yorkshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

**MAP
2004**

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Hovingham
North Yorkshire
Archaeological Watching Brief**

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**Wath Quarry,
Hovingham,
North Yorkshire
Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

Non-technical Summary

An Archaeological Watching Brief was conducted by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd. at Wath Quarry, near Hovingham, North Yorkshire, during June 2004. The work involved monitoring topsoil stripping operations in advance of an extension to the quarry area.

During a topsoil strip for a previous extension to the quarry in 2000 a prehistoric hengi-form barrow was identified, recorded and excavated by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd (MAP 2003). The current Watching Brief identified three small pits of prehistoric date that may have been associated with the barrow. A fourth pit of probable medieval date was also revealed. This feature probably represented a saw-pit.

1. Introduction

1.1 An Archaeological Watching Brief was undertaken by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd. on a southward extension to Wath Quarry, Wath parish, near Hovingham, North Yorkshire (SE 6785 7447, Fig. 1), during June 2004. The work involved monitoring topsoil-stripping operations in advance of the extension of the quarry.

1.2 All work was funded by Lafarge Aggregates Ltd.

1.3 All maps within this report have been produced from the Ordnance Survey with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Crown Copyright. Licence No. AL 50453A.

2. Site Description

2.1 The area monitored during the Watching Brief measured approximately 1 hectare. It consisted of former arable land that was situated directly to the

south of the present quarry workings on a level area at the crest of a north-facing escarpment. The elevation of the site was approximately 80m AOD. Although formerly an arable field, the site had been left uncultivated in anticipation of quarrying and at the time of the Watching Brief was under a cover of loose scrub, weeds and wildflowers. The 2004 extension area was bounded by fencing on the south side and soil bunds to the west and east.

- 2.2 The quarry itself is situated immediately to the south the B1257 Helmsley to Malton road, on the southern side of western part of the Vale of Pickering (Fig. 1).

3. Geology

- 3.1 The solid geology at the site consists of Jurassic, Corallian limestone, with overlying soils of the Elmton 2 Association (Mackney *et al.* 1983).

4. Archaeological and Historical Background

- 4.1 The site lies within an area whose soils are conducive to the formation of cropmarks, and much of the information on the background to prehistoric sites in the vicinity derives from this source.
- 4.2 A number of presumed prehistoric cropmark sites exist both adjacent to and within the quarry. A reference to a ring-ditch within the quarry (SMR ref: 2.147.483.647, SE 678745) refers to the feature that was excavated in 2000 (MAP 2003). To the east of the quarry, over the parish boundary into Fryton, the cropmarks of triple system of ditches (probably representing a major boundary) merge with a multiple ditch system that runs parallel to the Malton-Hovingham road. Ring-ditches are recorded north-east of the point where these boundary ditches merge, and also in the field immediately to the east of the quarry.

- 4.3 The cropmark ring-ditches are the remains of ploughed-out round barrows, a number of which were excavated by Canon Greenwell in Slingsby parish during the 19th century. (Kinnes and Longworth 1985, nos. 138-50). The closest of these is situated in the south-west part of Slingsby parish, approximately 3 km from the current site. The excavation of this feature yielded Collared Urns and Food Vessels of the Middle Bronze Age.
- 4.4 A possible Roman Marching Camp has been identified at Diana Hill c. 400m to the west of the quarry (Welfare and Swan 1995, 145). Cropmarks show a rectangular system of ditches, with slightly rounded corners, enclosing an area of 4.9 ha.
- 4.5 The parish and settlement name 'Wath' is derived from the Old Scandinavian word for 'ford', presumably referring to the point where the supposed Roman road running from Malton to Hovingham crossed Wath Beck.
- 4.6 At the time of the Domesday Survey Wath was a berewick (manorial subdivision) of Hovingham, in the possession of Hugh, son of Baldric. The Stapleton family later became the owners, Roger de Stapleton holding Wath in the reign of Henry III, and Nicholas de Stapleton obtaining rights of free warren in 1272. Wath later joined the Mowbray fee, the manor passing to Sir Charles Cavendish in 1629, and eventually to the Earl of Carlisle.
- 4.7 The medieval settlement at Wath was abandoned, the only surviving habitation being Wath Farm. Substantial earthworks exist in the field to the west of the quarry, representing traces of the deserted village and manor house. Indeed, the site of Wath Hall is marked on the First Edition County Series map, and human burials found in this area suggest that a chapel also existed there.

5 Previous Archaeological Work.

- 5.1 An Archaeological Watching Brief, conducted at Wath Quarry during the previous extension in 2000, revealed a circular ditched feature, the obvious

importance of which led to a full excavation (Figs. 2 and 3). The feature proved not to be a conventional 'ring ditch' or round barrow in that it was composed of six discontinuous ditch segments, rather than being an uninterrupted ditch. The ditch segments varied greatly in length, depth and width, being more substantial on the south-west side. Excavation of the ditch recovered pottery and flint tools and flakes, mainly from the upper fills, the finds assemblage dating mainly to the late 4th to the late 3rd millennia BC.

- 5.2 A central grave contained the skeleton of an adult male, who had been buried in a crouched position on his right side. There were no grave-goods or other dating material within the grave.
- 5.3 Three shallow pits were located outside the western circuit of the ring-ditch. These contained quantities of pottery, worked flints and animal bone, and were 'domestic' in character.
- 5.4 The form of the site, with its interrupted rather than continuous ditches, suggested that it was a hengiform monument of Neolithic date that appeared to have been modified in the early Bronze Age by the excavation of the central grave.

6. Methodology

- 6.1. The removal of topsoil was undertaken under full archaeological supervision by a mechanical back-acting excavator, fitted with a toothless bucket (Pls. 1 and 2).
- 6.2 Archaeological features were half-sectioned to determine function and record their form, and then fully excavated to recover the maximum number of artefacts and environmental information.
- 6.3 All work was carried out in line with the Institute of Field Archaeologists Code of Conduct (IFA 1999).

- 6.4 All artefacts were retained for specialist analysis.
- 6.5 Bulk samples were recovered from representative contexts to ensure the recovery of environmental information.
- 6.6 All archaeological deposits were recorded according to correct principles of stratigraphic excavation on MAP's *pro forma* context sheets, which are compatible with the MoLAS recording system.
- 6.7 The full extent of archaeological deposits were recorded in plan at a scale of 1:20 on drawing film. Sections of features and individual layers were drawn at a scale of 1:10. All drawings included Ordnance Survey Datum spot-heights.
- 6.8 A Total Station Theodolite was used to precisely locate the position of archaeological features in relation to adjacent permanent boundaries.

7. Results (Figs. 3, 4 and 5)

- 7.1 A total of four features were identified during the Watching Brief (Fig. 3). All the features had been cut into the natural limestone bedrock. Three features were of prehistoric date, whilst the fourth was of probable medieval date.

7.2 Prehistoric Features

- 7.2.1 The prehistoric features consisted of three small pits (contexts 1002, 1004 and 1008). Pit Cut 1002 was of sub-oval plan and steep-sided, flat based profile. The feature measured 0.80m x 0.50m x 0.10m deep and had been excavated to a height of 81.11m AOD (Pls. 3 and 4). It was filled by a single deposit of sandy silt (context 1001). Deposit 1001 contained large quantities of burnt bone and one small fragment of prehistoric pottery.
- 7.2.2 Specialist analysis of the cremated bone from Pit 1002 suggested that the material was of animal, rather than human, origin. The feature did not

represent a cremation burial, but was rather a rubbish-pit associated with “domestic” (i.e. food preparation) activity on the site.

7.2.3 Pit Cut 1004 was situated approximately three metres to the south of Pit 1002. It was of sub-circular plan, with a steep-sided, flat-based profile and measured 0.50m in diameter x 0.10m deep (Pl. 5). The feature was excavated to a height of 81.07m AOD and was filled by a deposit of stony silt (context 1003) that contained a single sherd of prehistoric pottery.

7.2.3 Pit Cut 1008 was situated approximately 50m to the east of Pit 1004 and was of sub-circular plan, with a steeply-sloping bowl-shaped profile. The feature measured 0.50m in diameter x 0.15m deep and was excavated to a height of 79.18m AOD (Pl. 6). It was filled by a deposit of sandy silt (context 1007) that contained numerous sherds of prehistoric pottery, flint fragments and un-burnt animal bones. This assemblage was again characteristic of domestic occupation activity.

7.2.4 The pottery from Pit Fill Deposits 1001, 1003 and 1007 was identified as Peterborough ware, a type common in the later Neolithic period and which dates from the late 4th to early 3rd millennia BC.

7.3 Probable Medieval Feature

7.3.1 Pit Cut 1006 was located approximately 30m to the east of Cut 1002 and was of elongated sub-oval plan. The feature had steeply-sloping sides, a flat base and measured 4.0m x 0.70m x 0.70m deep (pls. 7 and 8). It had been excavated to a height of 79.00m AOD and was filled by a single deposit of stony silt (context 1005) that contained two sherds of medieval pottery. These proved to be Gritty Wares of 12th to 13th century date.

7.3.2 Pit Cut 1006 was something of an enigma in that, although the feature had clearly been carefully excavated to a well-defined size and shape, there was little else that suggested a possible function for it. There was, for example, no trace of industrial residues, ash or bone within Deposit 1005 and no evidence

of in-situ burning around the edges of the feature. Similarly, there was no evidence of a lining, superstructure or internal features. In the absence of any other evidence, the length and depth of the feature suggest it may have been a saw-pit. In such a saw-pit, logs would have been sawn longitudinally by hand by a band-saw worked by two operatives. One would have worked from above whilst the other would have worked from below the log, which would have been suspended above the long trench-like pit. Since earthworks associated with the Deserted Medieval Village of Wath lie in fields to the west of the quarry, it may be hypothesised that Feature 1006 represents the felling and preparation of local timber, presumably for building, at the periphery of the village.

- 7.4 All the features listed above were sealed by a 0.20m-0.30m deep deposit of stony ploughsoil (context 1000) that extended over the entire site. Deposit 1000 was situated directly above the natural limestone bedrock (Pls. 9 and 10)

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 Despite the shallow depth of soil cover and the severe vertical truncation by modern ploughing evident on site, the 2004 Watching Brief at Wath Quarry located several features of archaeological significance.
- 8.2 The three prehistoric features (Pit Cuts 1002, 1004 and 1008) dated to the late 4th to early 3rd millennia BC and were of contemporary date to the hengiform monument excavated in 2000. All three features contained residues of an essentially “domestic” nature and it may be that they represent rubbish pits associated with a small temporary settlement or camp established in the vicinity during the creation of the monument.
- 8.3 The remaining feature (Pit Cut 1006) provided evidence of medieval activity on the site. The likely focus for this activity is the Deserted Medieval Village of Wath, situated in fields to the east of the quarry.

8.4 Given the wealth of archaeological features uncovered during both the 2000 and 2004 quarry extensions, it is true to say that any further southerly expansion of the quarry has the potential to encounter further archaeological features that may range in date from the prehistoric to medieval periods.

9. Bibliography

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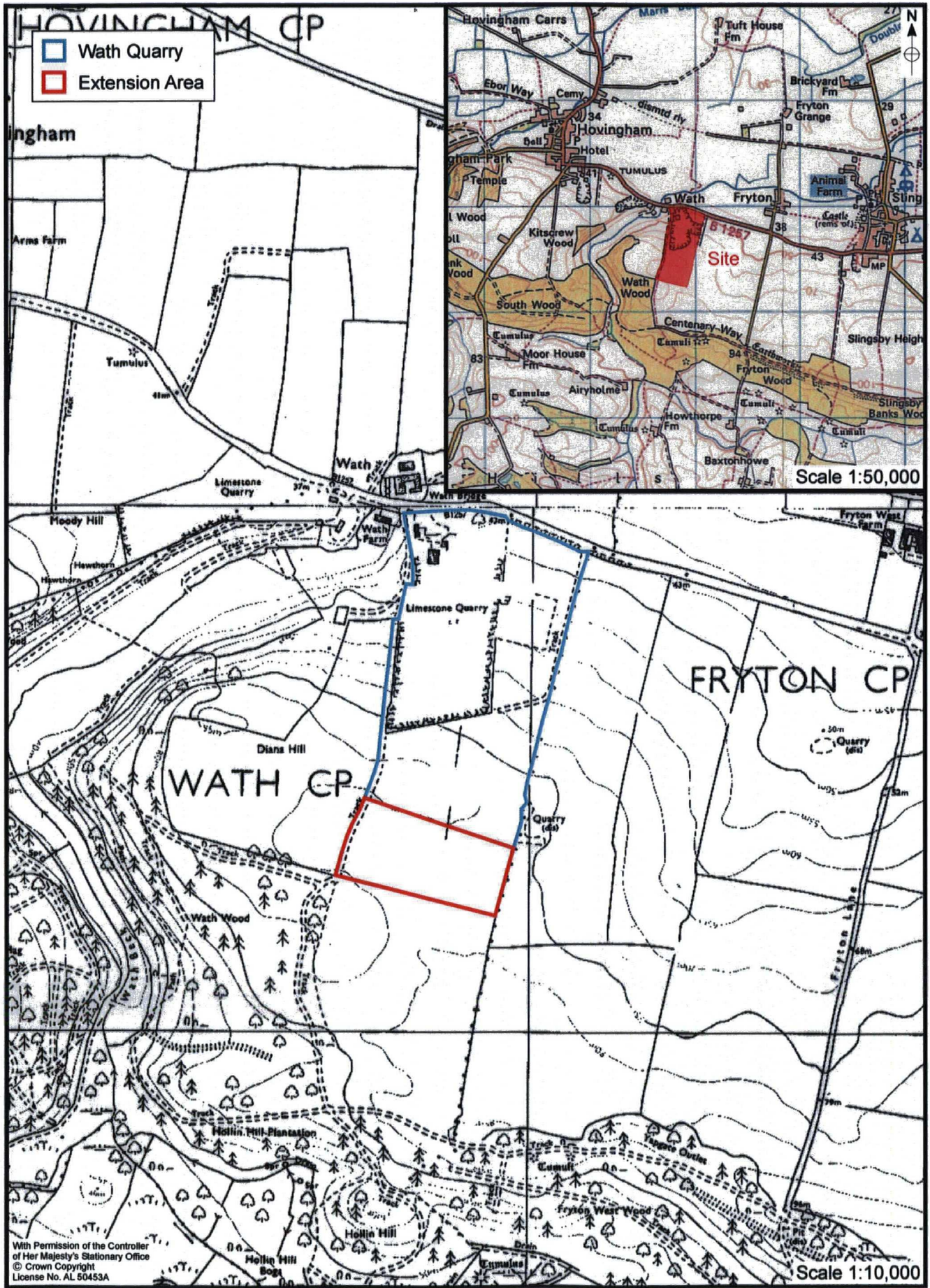


Figure 1. Site Location



Figure 2. Area of Watching Brief

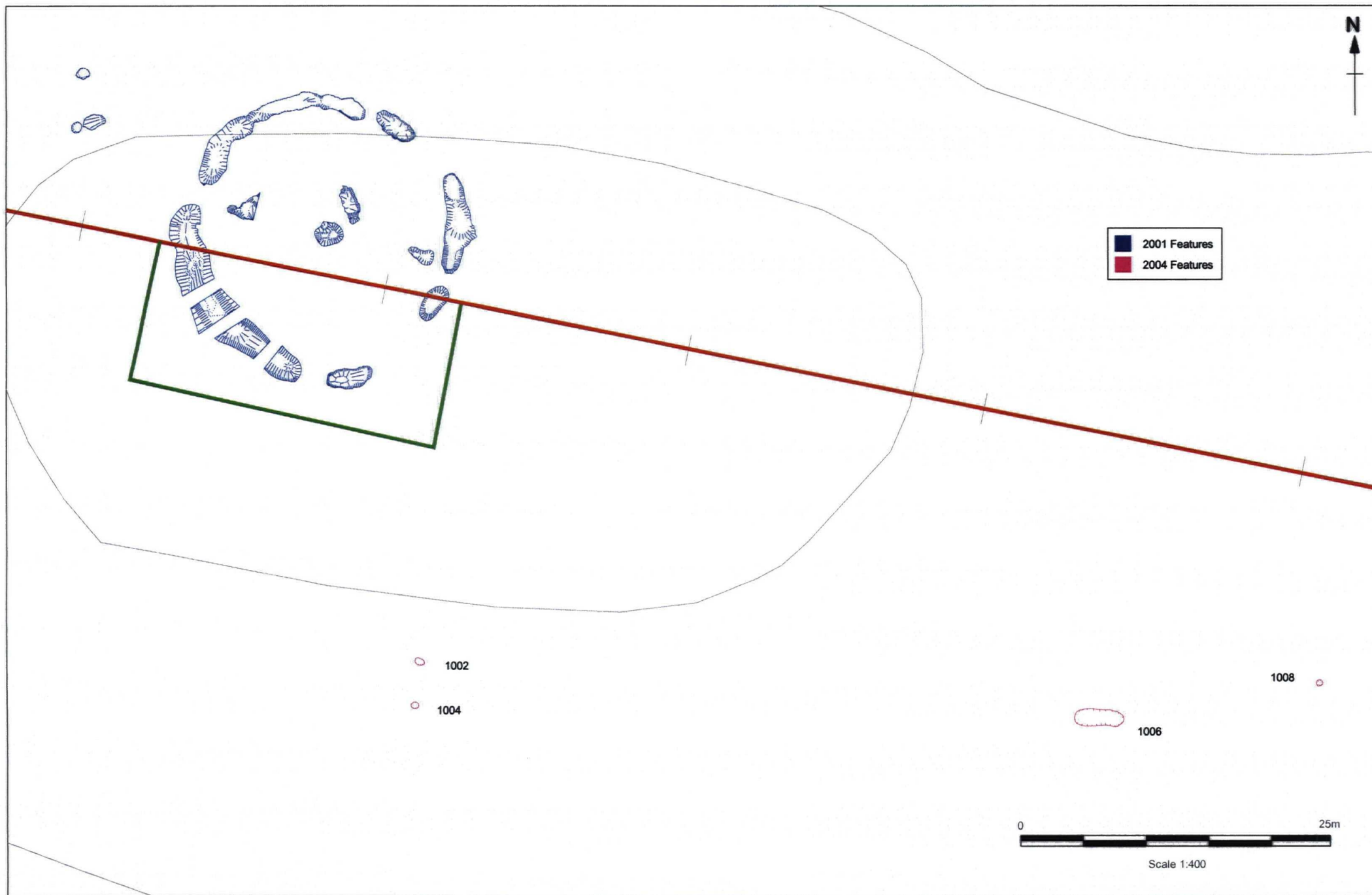


Figure 3. Archaeological Features

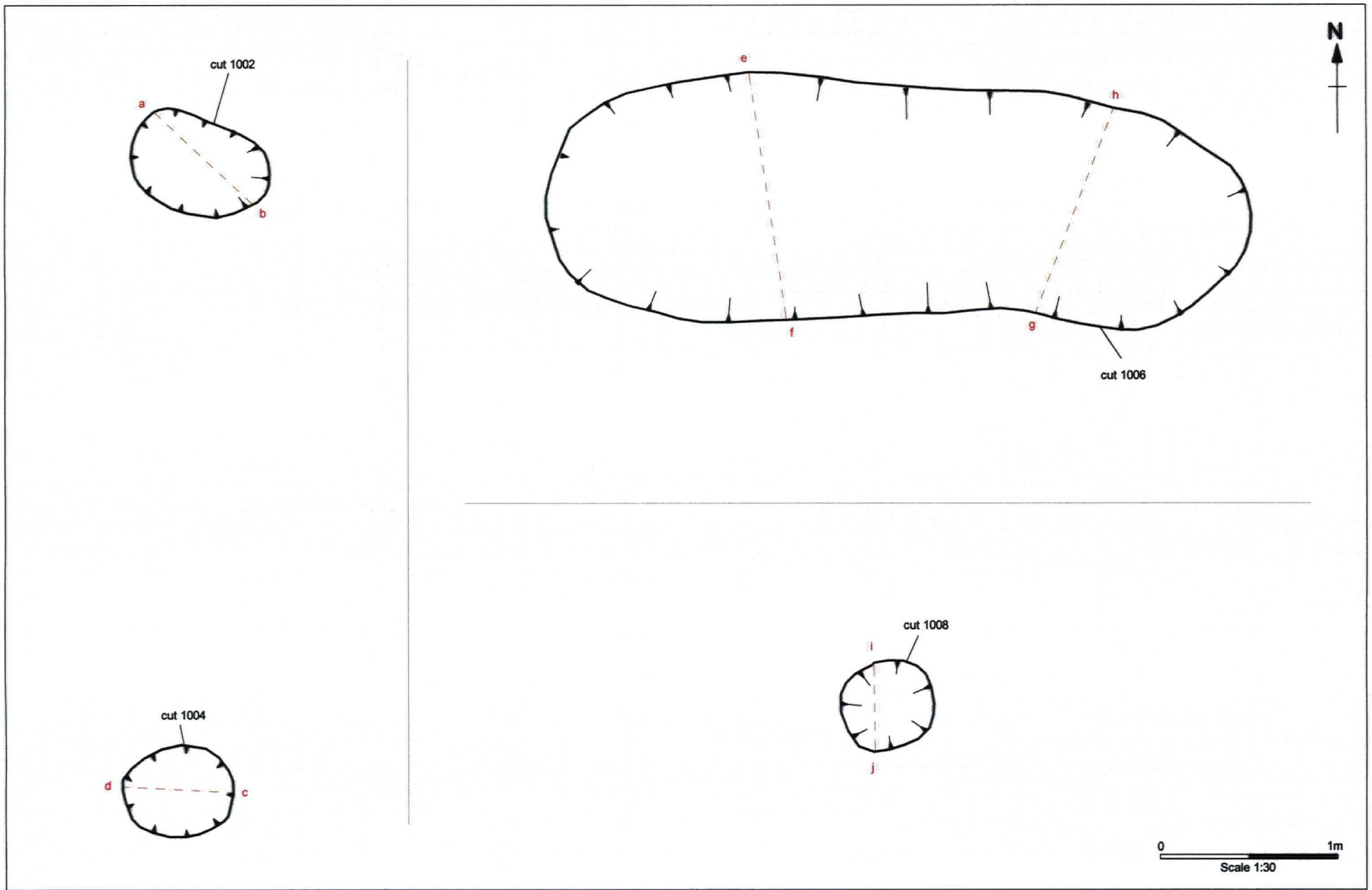


Figure 4. Plan of Watching Brief Features

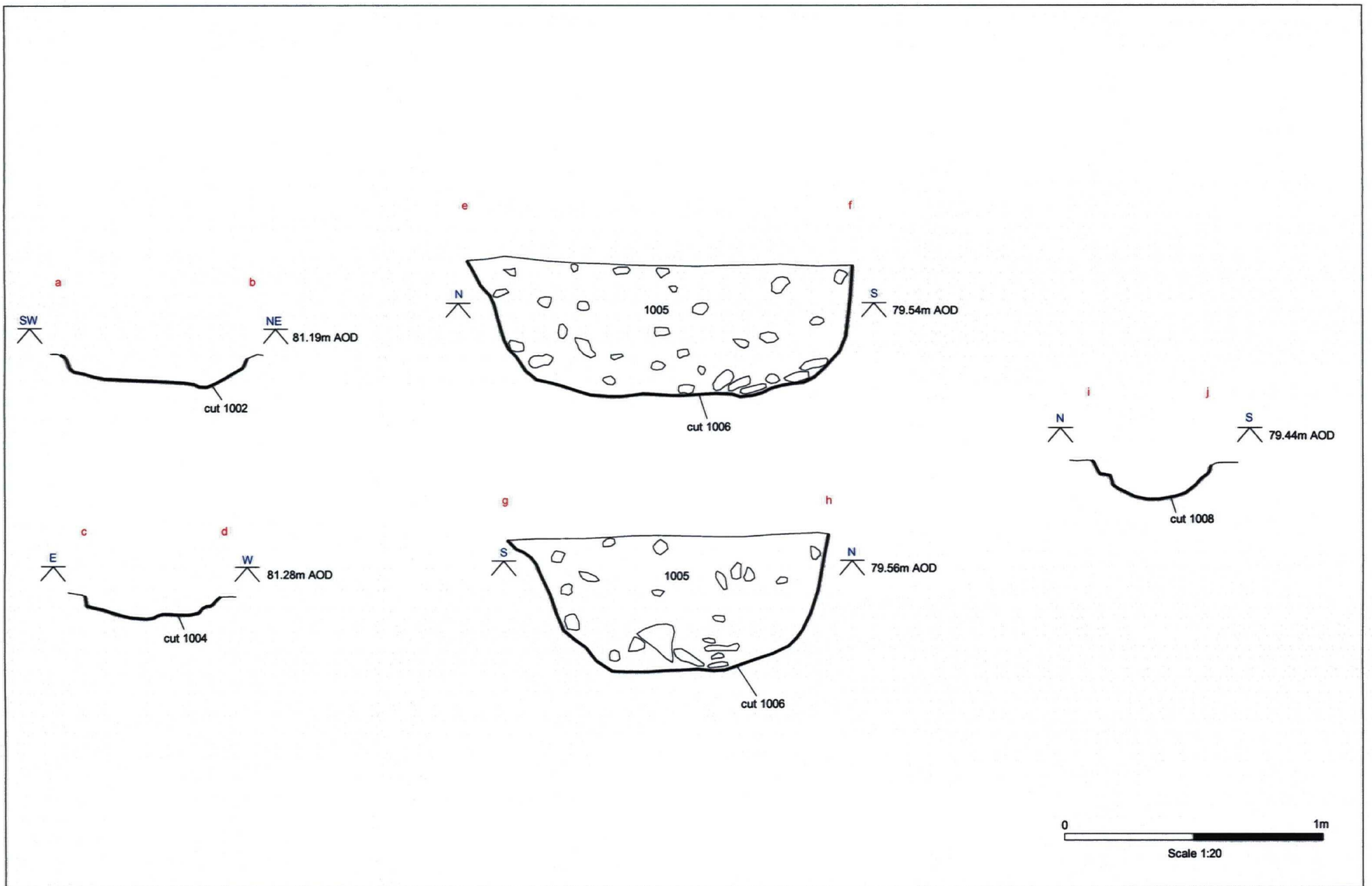


Figure 5. Watching Brief Sections



Plate 1. General view of topsoil strip. Facing North-west



Plate 2. General view of topsoil strip. Facing East



Plate 3. Pit fill Deposit 1001. Facing South



Plate 4. Pit Cut 1002. Facing North-east



Plate 5. Pit Cut 1004. Facing South



Plate 6. Pit Cut 1008. Facing North

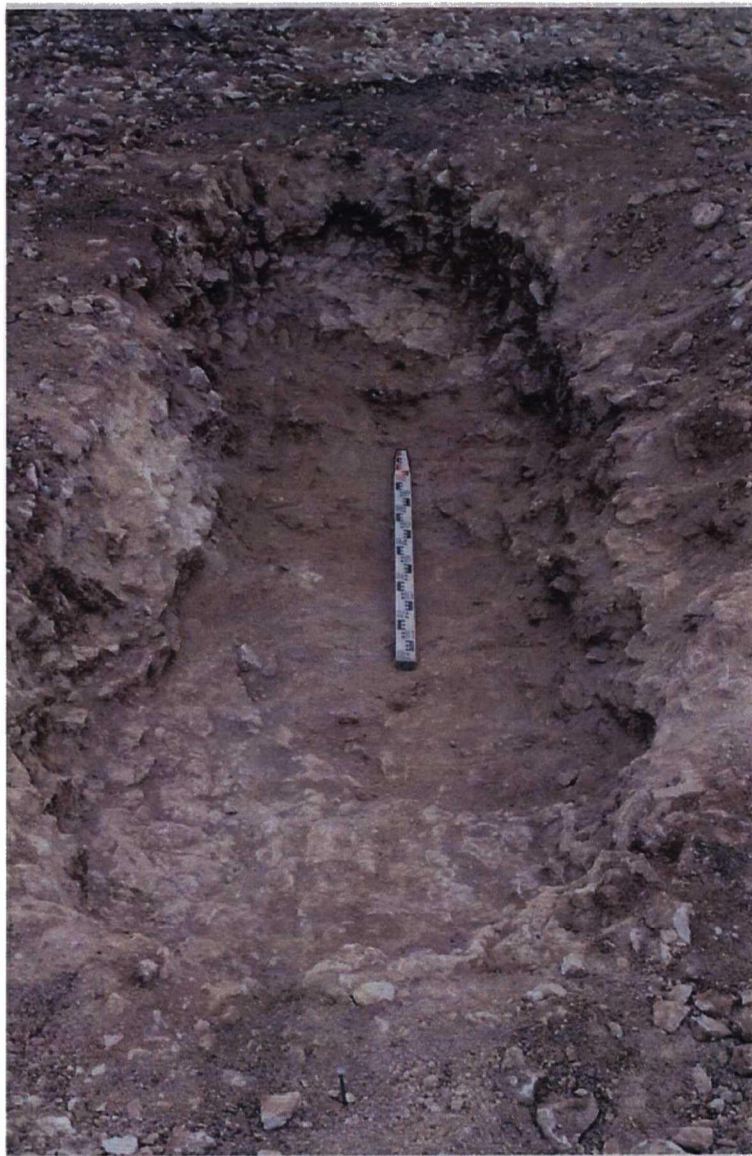


Plate 7. Pit Cut 1006. Facing East



Plate 8. Pit Cut 1006. Facing South-east



Plate 9. General view of stripped area. Facing East



Plate 10. General view of topsoil strip. Facing North-east

APPENDIX 1

Context Listing

<i>Context</i>	<i>Description</i>
1000	Ploughsoil
1001	Deposit; 7.5YR 7/8; sandy silt; fill of Cut 1002
1002	Cut; pit filled by 1001
1003	Deposit; 10YR 5/3; sandy silt; fill of Cut 1004
1004	Cut; pit filled by 1003
1005	Deposit; 10YR 5/3; sandy silt; fill of Cut 1006
1006	Cut; pit filled by 1005
1007	Deposit; 10YR 3/2; sandy silt; fill of Cut 1008
1008	Cut; pit filled by 1007

APPENDIX 2

Finds catalogue

<i>Context No:</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Weight (g)</i>	<i>Spot date</i>
1001	Pottery		1 Peterborough Ware		3 Neolithic
1003	Pottery	1	Peterborough Ware	4	Neolithic
1005	Pottery	2	Gritty Ware		
1007	Animal bone	36	34 teeth (cattle)	416	undated
			2 unidentified bone		
	Pottery	82	Peterborough Ware	251	Neolithic
			3 rim, 80 body		
	Flint	20	4 bladelet frags	23	Prehistoric
			1 reworked flake		
			15 primary flakes		

APPENDIX 3

Drawing Archive Listing

<i>Drawing Number</i>	<i>Scale</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	1:20	Plan	Cuts 1002+1004
2	1:10	Profile	Cut 1002
3	1:10	Profile	Cut 1004
4	1:10	Section	Cut 1006
5	1:10	Section	Cut 1006
6	1:20	Plan	Cut 1006
7	1:20	Plan	Cut 1008
8	1:10	Profile	Cut 1008

APPENDIX 4

Photographic Archive Listing

Film 1: Colour Print

<i>Frame</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Scale</i>	<i>Facing</i>
1	I.D. Shot	N/A	North
2	General view of topsoil strip	N/A	South-east
3	Pit Fill Deposit 1001	N/A	South
4	Pit Cut 1002	N/A	North-east
5	Pit Cut 1002	N/A	North-east
6	Pit Cut 1002	N/A	North-east
7	Pit Cut 1002	N/A	North-east
8	Pit Cut 1004	N/A	South
9	Pit Cut 1004	N/A	South
10	Pit Cut 1004	N/A	East
11	Pit Cut 1004	N/A	South
12	Pit Cut 1004	N/A	South
13	Pit Cut 1006	N/A	South-east
14	Pit Cut 1006	N/A	South-east
15	Pit Cut 1006	N/A	South-east
16	Pit Cut 1006	N/A	South-east
17	Pit Cut 1006	N/A	East
18	Pit Cut 1006	N/A	East
19	Pit Cut 1006	N/A	East
20	Pit Cut 1006	N/A	East
21	Pit Cut 1006	N/A	East
22	Pit Cut 1006	N/A	East
23	Bedrock surface in vicinity of 1006	N/A	South
24	Bedrock surface in vicinity of 1006	N/A	South
25	Bedrock surface in vicinity of 1006	N/A	South
26	Deposit 1007	N/A	North
27	Pit Cut 1008	N/A	North
28	Pit Cut 1008	N/A	North
29	Pit Cut 1008	N/A	North
30	Pit Cut 1008	N/A	North
31	General view of area after topsoil strip	N/A	East
32	General view of area after topsoil strip	N/A	East
33	General view of area after topsoil strip	N/A	East
34	General view of area after topsoil strip	N/A	North
35	General view of area after topsoil strip	N/A	West
36			

Appendix 5

Archaeological Team Information

Fieldwork

Nigel Cavanagh
Sophie Langford

Excavation and digital survey.
Digital survey assistant.

Post-excavation

Charles Rickaby

Finds processing.

Report

Nigel Cavanagh
Dave Knight

Text.
CAD and Illustrations.