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**SEAMER ROAD CORNER, FALSGRAVE, SCARBOROUGH.**

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**REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION.  
OSA REPORT No: OSA04EV11.**

JANUARY 2005.



**OSA**

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4010 parish

## Report Summary.

01/00490/FL

**REPORT NO:** OSA04EV11. S 9508  
**SITE NAME:** Seamer Road, Falsgrave, Scarborough. E 2499  
**COUNTY:** North Yorkshire. C 1212  
**NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE:** TA 0330 8791. M 24207  
**ON BEHALF OF:** Chevin Housing Group  
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 25<sup>th</sup> November to 1<sup>st</sup> December 2004  
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**PERIODS REPRESENTED:** Romano British and Early Modern

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## 1.0 Abstract.

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*An archaeological evaluation was carried out by On-Site Archaeology on land along Seamer Road, Falsgrave on behalf of Chevin Housing Group. The evaluation comprised the excavation of one trial trench in order to determine the character and date of archaeological deposits on the development site. The evaluation took place over five days from the 25<sup>th</sup> November to the 1<sup>st</sup> December*

*One archaeologically significant feature was revealed during the evaluation. A pit of uncertain date was sealed by a sequence of plough-soil deposits, the lowest of which may have been of Romano-British date. The archaeological sequence was completed by floors, services, and structures of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century date. A small assemblage of possible Romano British and Early Modern finds was collected.*

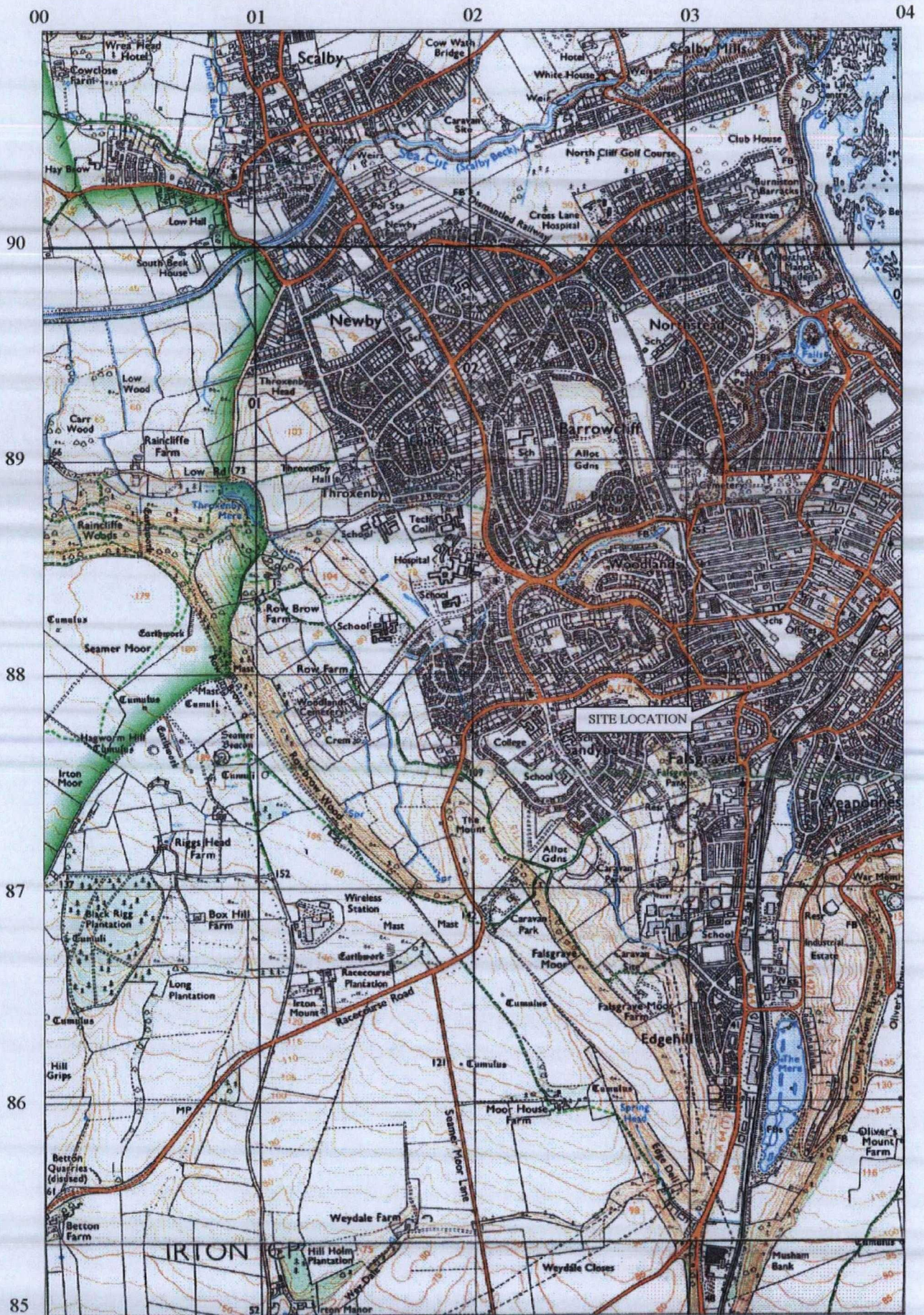


Figure 1. Site Location (NGR TA 0330 8791).

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## 2.0 Site Location, Geology, Topography and Land Use.

The site is located at NGR SE 0330 8791 in the historic core of Falsgrave, which is now a suburb of Scarborough. The site lies to the southeast of the juncture of Falsgrave Road and Seamer Road. At the time of the evaluation the site was built up, and occupied by disused commercial and storage properties around a central courtyard. The evaluation trench was positioned within the courtyard. The underlying geology of the site is glacial drift.

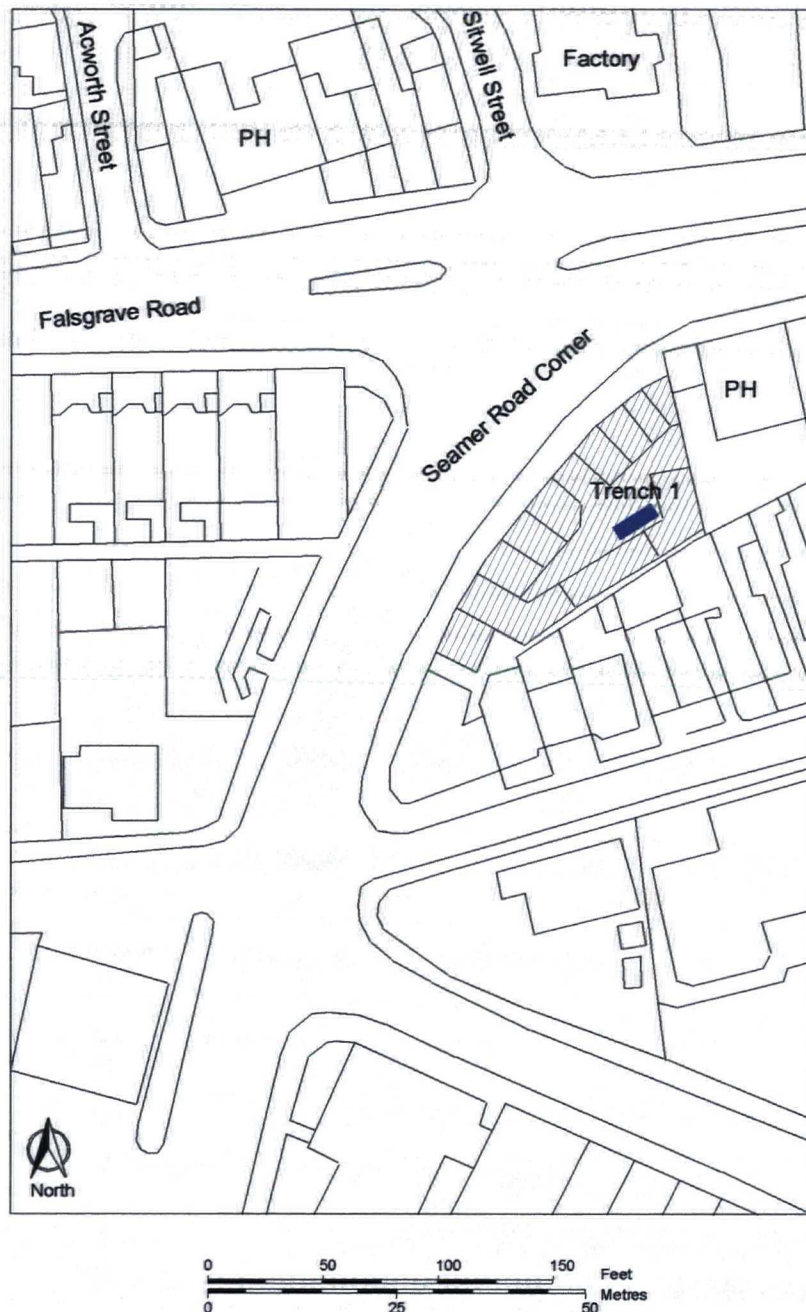


Figure 2. Trench location plan. (Scale 1:1000)

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### 3.0 Archaeological Background.

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Falsgrave today is a suburb of Scarborough, while at the time of the Domesday survey it was probably the administrative, judicial, economic and ecclesiastical centre for the region. In 1086 Falsgrave was a royal centre with jurisdiction over 21 settlements. Located probably at the head of the Ramsdale Valley, Falsgrave is likely to have originally meant “Hval’s valley” in Old Norse, (Pearson, 200?). This location is slightly to the south of the centre of modern Falsgrave. The movement of the settlement was a probable result of the Turnpike Act of 1752 that essentially bypassed the medieval village, but followed a long period of decline during which Falsgrave was eclipsed by Scarborough.

Archaeological evidence for medieval Falsgrave is limited, although Neolithic, Bronze Age, and Roman finds have been made (Pearson, 200?) Excavations in 1978 at Scalby Road and in 1994 at the former site of Snowdrift Laundry nearby, both failed to reveal any significant medieval occupation. These sites were in the modern centre of Falsgrave and may support the theory that the medieval centre was to the southeast. The development site is between the proposed medieval centre and the modern one and as such may help locate medieval Falsgrave.

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## 4.0 Methodology.

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A trench measuring 6m by 2m was laid out in the courtyard at the centre of the site, so as to avoid the majority of the services. This was then excavated by a 360° tracked excavator using a 1.8m toothless ditching bucket to the level of the first significant archaeological horizon. Much of the centre of the trench was taken up by working drains and a gas pipe, so limiting further excavation in that area. The exposed surfaces were then cleaned by hand in order to detect any archaeological features revealed through textural or colour changes in the deposits.

Standard *On-Site Archaeology* techniques were followed throughout the excavation. This involved the completion of a context description for each deposit or cut encountered, along with plans and/or sections drawn to scale. Heights above Ordnance Datum (AOD) were calculated by taking levels from a Temporary Benchmark (TBM), which was then tied in with an existing Ordnance Survey Benchmark on the side of a building on the north side of Falsgrave Road). A photographic record of the deposits and features was also maintained.



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## 5.0 Results.

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### 5.1 Trench 1 (See Figs 3-7).

The geological natural was seen at a depth of 0.87m BGL (Below Ground Level) at both ends of the trench. It consisted of a light brown orange sandy clay deposit (1023). Cutting the natural in the southeastern corner of the trench was a shallow pit [1027]. The pit had concave sides and base and was over 0.70m long and over 0.50m wide, with a maximum depth of 0.06m. The top of this feature was at 0.90m BGL. The pit was filled by a light yellow grey silty sand fill (1026), which had a greenish tinge indicative of an organic component.

Sealing pit [1027] was a light red brown silt clay deposit (1029) that was between 0.05m and 0.19m thick. One sherd of possible Romano-British pot and one fragment of daub were recovered from this deposit, which was interpreted as an early plough-soil. Sealing this was a similar deposit that was also thought to be plough-soil. Deposit (1020) was a light to mid grey brown sand clay silt that was between 0.17m and 0.35m thick. One un-datable brick fragment was recovered from this deposit.

In the southwest portion of the trench post-hole [1022] was seen to cut deposit (1020). It is possible that the post-hole was cut from a slightly higher level, but this was not seen during the machining of the trench. Post-hole [1022] was oval in plan and measured 0.72m by 0.48m and was 0.39m deep. It had vertical sides and a flat base, and had a mid grey brown clay silt and brick fragment primary fill (1025), and a mottled mid grey clay silt and light yellow brown clay secondary fill (1021). Glass bottle fragments and post-medieval pantile was recovered from fill (1021).

Ploughsoil deposit (1020) was sealed by a similar deposit (1019). This was a mid to dark grey sand clay silt 0.0 to 0.14m thick. Over this was the first of a sequence of floor and occupation deposits. Deposit (1018) was a light orange and yellow brown mortar floor that was 0.05m thick, and was seen across the southwestern half of the trench. The other half of the trench had a different surface, and the dividing line between the two surfaces was truncated by later service trenches. The hypothetical dividing line between the surfaces was probably a wall of the building contemporary with the surfaces.

Over the mortar floor (1018) was a black cinder occupation layer (1017) that was 0.04m thick. This too was only present in the southwestern half of the trench, indicating differential usage in the two areas. Over (1017) was a deposit of mid red brown silt clay (1016) that was 0.05m thick. This deposit was very similar to the underlying natural and was almost certainly related to the excavation of service trench [1012]. Deposit (1016) therefore was a layer of trampled upcast from the excavation of the service trench. Three sherds of early modern pot, one fragment of pantile and a fragment of a wooden tool were recovered from the deposit.

Service trench [1012] was aligned southwest to northeast and was seen over a distance of 5.5m, with a width of approximately 1.1m. The full extent of the feature was not found at a depth of 0.57m. The service trench held a mottled pink brown silt clay and light yellow brown

clay fill (1011) that was similar to trample layer (1016). At the top of this fill, in the centre of the trench, were a number of loosely placed bricks. These were probably capping for the service within the building. Within the fill was a line of wooden shuttering, presumably to contain the concrete cap over a drain pipe at the base of the trench.

The building clearly continued in use after the excavation of the service trench, as occupation deposit (1013) was laid down over it. This black cinder deposit was identical to the earlier occupation layer (1017), and suggests that the use of the room had not changed. This occupation layer was sealed by a very light grey sandy mortar floor (1010), that was only 0.02m thick.

As mentioned earlier the contemporary surface in the northeastern end of the trench was different from those in the southwestern end. Here, a dark grey silt sand and gravel levelling layer (1028) supported a red brick floor bonded with dark grey mortar (1009). These bricks appeared water worn, suggesting that they were part of an external surface. An assemblage of early modern finds was recovered from the bedding layer (1028). This comprised 8 sherds of pot and five glass bottle fragments all dating to the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century or later.

Cutting the mortar floor (1010) was a possible post-hole [1015] with moderate concave sides and a concave base. This feature measured 0.37m by over 0.25m and was 0.28m deep. It held a mixed mid grey clay sand fill (1014). This was sealed by a mixed light cream brown crushed mortar deposit (1024), which appeared to be compacted like a surface. This possible surface was contained by the hypothetical wall and was not present over the external brick floor (1009). Within this deposit was an iron gas pipe that was aligned southwest northeast.

Cutting the brick floor (1009) was service trench [1007] that was aligned approximately east-west. This steep sided linear cut measured over 2.8m in length 0.55m wide and over 0.55m deep. It held a mottled mid grey clay sand silt fill (1006) and a ceramic drainpipe. Over the drain, although the relationship was unclear due to similar fills, was deposit (1008). This mixed light tan brown and pink brown sand silt and mortar deposit sealed the trench to a depth of 0.11-0.24m. This deposit was a make up deposit for the current yard surface, through which a service trench [1005] was cut. The trench was aligned southwest northeast in the centre of the trench, along the probable position of the wall dividing the brick floor from the mortar floors. Cut [1005] had steep straight sides and measured over 2.0m by 0.62m wide and over 0.30m deep. A mixed mid to light grey brown clay silt (1004) filled the service over a ceramic drainpipe.

In the southeastern corner of the trench deposit (1008) was also cut by a construction cut [1003] for a foundation. This vertical and straight sided cut was over 1.33m in length, over 0.22m wide and over 0.50m deep, and aligned similarly to the trench. It held a light pink orange brick structure in English bond, bonded by light tan brown sandy mortar (1002). Over this the cut was filled by mixed light red brown and mid grey sand clay and clay silt fill (1001). This structure is cut from a high level in the sequence so is likely to relate to the buildings that currently occupy the site. It may be part of the foundation for one of the buildings or a brick surround for a drain.

The trench was sealed by a concrete surface designed to look like granite sets, which had been overlain by tarmac. Both of these surfaces are of probable late 20<sup>th</sup> Century date.

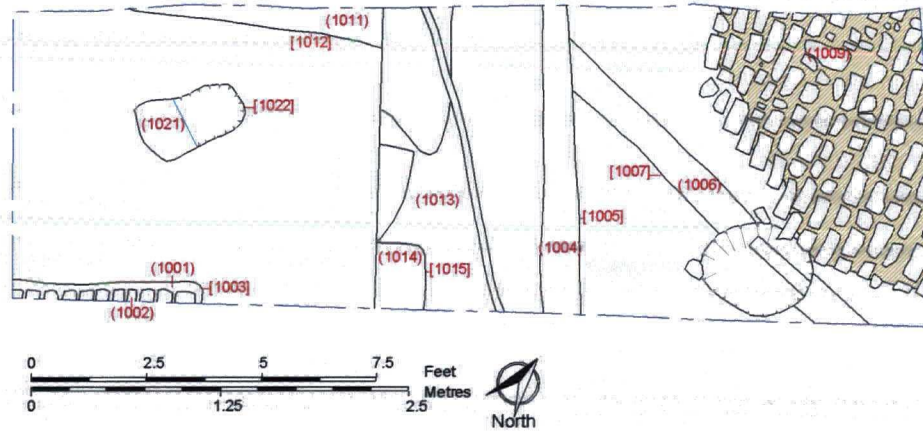


Figure 3. Post excavation plan of Trench 1. (Scale 1:50).

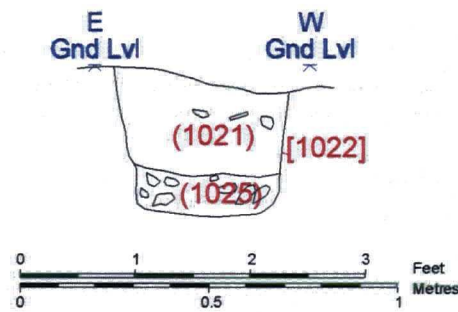


Figure 4. North facing section of [1022]. (Scale 1:20).

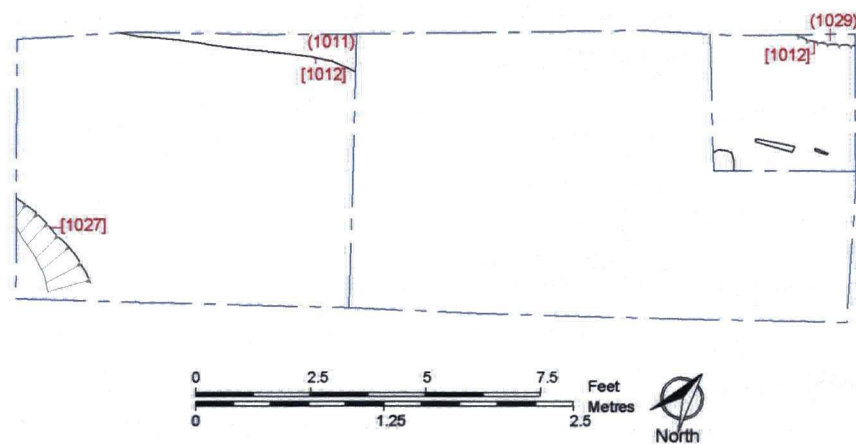


Figure 5. Post excavation plan of Trench 1, showing [1027] & [1012]. (Scale 1:50).

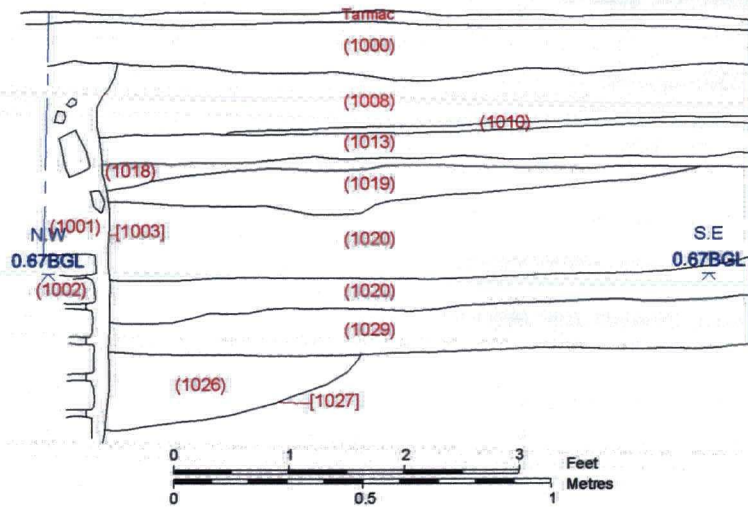


Figure 6. Northeast facing section of Trench 1. (Scale 1:20)

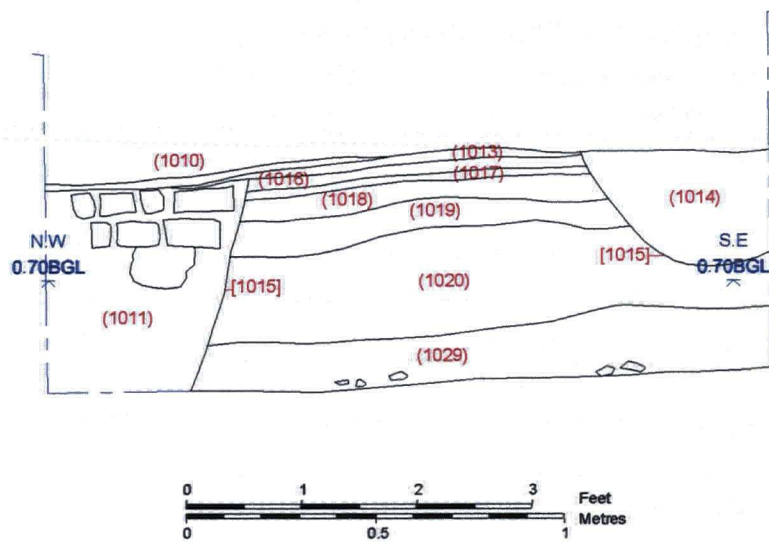


Figure 7. Southwest facing section of Trench 1. (Scale 1:20).