

Watching Brief Report

**LAND TO THE REAR OF
207 NEW CROSS ROAD,
NEW CROSS,
LONDON SE14 5UH**

National Grid Reference: TQ 35862 76916

Site code: NEC17

13th September 2018

Watching Brief Report

**LAND TO THE REAR OF
207 NEW CROSS ROAD,
NEW CROSS,
LONDON SE14 5UH**

London Borough of Lewisham

on behalf of Crenns Developments Limited

National Grid Reference
TQ 35862 76916

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SUMMARY

This report presents the results of a watching brief carried out by Isambard Archaeology between 20th November 2017 and 18th July 2018.

It has been completed in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) required by Condition 8 of planning permission DC/17/102357, dated 31st August 2017, issued by the London Borough of Lewisham for: *'the construction of 2, three storey, three bedroomed single family dwellinghouses with green roofs, integral garages and associated landscaping to the rear of 207 New Cross Road, SE14'*.

The report was commissioned by Crenns Developments Limited.

The archaeological watching brief was designed to determine the presence or otherwise of Roman Watling Street which has been found in the surrounding area and whose projected alignment passes through the site and to formulate an appropriate archaeological mitigation strategy as appropriate. It monitored the excavation of the main groundworks which comprised of the excavation of foundation/boundary wall, underpinning and the main basement trenches.

No previous archaeological work has been carried out on this site. It is therefore an opportunity to investigate potentially undisturbed ground.

The archaeological deposits were consistent across the whole of the site and comprised of: topsoil, a loose dark brown sand with organic material and frequent roots; made ground/fill, a loose dark brown sand with frequent gravel and coarse brick gravel to 30mm in diameter and frequent roots; and natural, Langley Silt clay, a stiff orange brown sandy clay with scattered medium to coarse sub-grounded and subangular flint gravel to 50mm in diameter.

Natural, Langley Silt clay, was recorded at a depth of 1.7m below ground level at 4.0m OD.

No archaeological features were recorded or finds retained.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

An archaeological watching brief during groundworks on land to the rear of 207 New Cross Road, New Cross, London, SE14 5UH was undertaken by Isambard Archaeology between November 2017 and July 2018.

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Isambard Archaeology which set out the strategy and methodology to be followed during the watching brief (Francis, 2017). It should be referred to for information on the site (section 1.2); planning background (section 1.3); the archaeological and historical background (section 2.0); and the initial assessment of the archaeological potential (section 4.1).

No previous archaeological research or intrusive investigation has been undertaken on this site and a desk-top assessment was not prepared as part of the planning submission.

The unique site code issued by the Museum of London is NEC17.

1.2 The site

A detailed description of the site location, geology and topography has been provided in the WSI (Francis, 2017, 1-2). A summary is provided here.

Site location

The site forms the rear garden to 207 New Cross Road, New Cross, London, SE15 5UH. It lies to the north of no. 207 which in turn lies to the north of New Cross Road, the current A2. It is rectangular in shape, covers an area of c.243m² and measures c.27m north/south by c.9m east/west (figure 1).

The centre of the site is at TQ 35862 76916.

Geology

The site lies on a superficial deposit of clay and silt of the Langley Silt Member (formerly known as brickearth) laid down during the Devensian Stage of the last ice age, c.110,000-11,700 years ago. The solid geology of the area comprises of sand, silt and clay of the Lambeth Group (formerly known as Woolwich and Reading Beds) laid down during the Thanetian and Ypresian Ages, c.59.2-47.8 million years ago (www.mapapps.bgs.ac.uk, first accessed 27th September 2017).

A soil investigation undertaken by R Carr Geotechnical Services in August 2017 confirmed the geology (Carr, 2017, 1).

Groundwater was not encountered within 5m of the site surface (Carr, 2017, 4).

Topography

The site is generally level at c.5.7m OD.

1.3 Planning background

The legislative and planning framework has been provided in the WSI (Francis, 2017, 3-8).

The watching brief was carried out in order to discharge condition 8 of planning permission no. DC/17/102357 issued by the London Borough of Lewisham on 31st August 2017 for: 'The

construction of 2, three storey, three bedroomed single family dwellinghouses with green roofs, integral garages and associated landscaping to the rear of 207 New Cross Road, SE14'.

1.4 Aims and objectives

The aims of the watching brief were to answer the research questions proposed in the WSI which are:

- Is there any evidence for Roman Watling Street *in situ* and if so what is its extent, date, state of preservation and importance?;
- Is there any evidence for Roman roadside activity either *in situ* features or residual finds and how do they relate to other Roman finds found in the area?; and
- What are the latest deposits identified and can they be related to the current building?

This report answers the research questions following the conclusion of the site work and suggests if any further work is required.

1.5 Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Crenns Developments Limited, the owners and developers of the site who have commissioned and agreed to fund the archaeological watching brief and to Kamil Glebocki of KLG Construction Ltd, the main contractor, for his help on-site.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

The archaeological and historical background was set out in the WSI (Francis, 2017, 8-9). It is reproduced here.

2.2 Greater London Historic Environment Record

A search of the Greater London Historic Environment Record (GLHER)(report no. 13574) shows that there are 34 designated and non-designated heritage assets within a c.500m radius of the centre of the site taken to be TQ 35862 76916 (the study area): three Archaeological Priority Areas; 16 Grade II listed buildings; 13 monuments; and two buildings.

The GLHER also shows that there have been 28 previous archaeological investigations within the study area: 12 desk-based assessments; one heritage audit; one historic building survey; five watching briefs; eight evaluations; and one geotechnical survey.

Designated and non-designated heritage assets

The designated and non-designated heritage assets which are within close proximity (c.100m) of the site are:

The Thames and Ravensbourne Terrace Gravels Archaeological Priority Area which are commonly associated with evidence of successive prehistoric communities including enclosed fields and open settlements. The site lies within this APA.

Watling Street and the 'Deep-Ford' and New Cross APA's are both within the vicinity of the application site.

Roman Watling Street follows the southern limit of the Thames gravel terrace and crossed the Ravensbourne via a ford on its way from London to Canterbury. The modern A2, Old Kent

Road/New Cross Road follows the alignment of the Roman road. New Cross Road diverts from its straight alignment at Billington Road c.165m to the north west of the site. If the road is projected in a straight alignment from this point then it would take the Roman road close to or through the site.

The New Cross APA lies to the east of the site and is where the medieval village centre was established.

No. 207 New Cross Road forms part of a terrace of early-mid 19th century houses which is Grade II listed. Nos. 221 and 227 New Cross Road are also Grade II listed. No. 227 is a mid- 19th century villa of 2 storeys and basement and no. 227 is an early-mid 19th century pair of cottages.

Archaeological fieldwork entries

A number of archaeological fieldwork projects have been undertaken in the study area. The closest to the site, and which have the greatest bearing on it, are:

A desk-top assessment and evaluation were carried out by Compass Archaeology in 2001 for a site in Hatcham Park Mews just to the north and east of the site. The desk-top assessment concluded that this site had potential for the discovery of the Roman road, Watling Street, which the current A2 New Cross Road, follows; Roman roadside features such as buildings or burials; and for Saxon and medieval archaeological remains (Densem, 2001, 18).

The evaluation was carried out to provide information on actual presence or absence of such remains and their extent, date, state of preservation and importance. The natural sand with gravel was cut by a small diamond shaped post hole containing a sherd dating to 1480-1650. The overlying soil had been thoroughly re-worked by historical market gardening activity and contained a range of pottery including a degraded piece of Samian ware, a piece of Roman sand-tempered ware and a few 19th century sherds. The overlying deposits were of late 19th century or modern date and the sequence was capped by rubble and make-up for the current brick paving that forms the car park surface.

The evaluation had produced essentially negative results as no prehistoric, Roman, Saxon or medieval features or layers were found except for two sherds of Roman pottery which were recovered from a residual context. The small diamond shaped post medieval posthole perhaps formed part of a fence line (Single, 2001, 1).

2.3 Cartographic Sources

The terrace of houses fronting New Cross Road, of which no. 207 forms a part, were built in 1841-2 (Coulter, 1986, 4) and is first shown on the Deptford Tithe Map of 1844. Prior to this the site would have been open, being used for market gardening. Their footprint has remained the same since then as shown on Google Earth from 2017.

3.0 THE WATCHING BRIEF

3.1 Introduction

The field work was carried out in accordance with the guidelines set by English Heritage (2008), the Chartered Institute for Field Archaeologists (2014) and Historic England (2015); and the methodology set out in the WSI (Francis, 2017, 10-11).

3.2 Methodology

The contractors excavated the foundation/boundary wall and underpinning trenches by hand and the main basement trench by a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a 0.75m ditching bucket over a period of nine months under supervision from IA.

The foundation/boundary wall, underpinning and the main basement trenches were excavated to a depth of 2.0m.

The exposed deposits were examined for finds and/or buried features. Individual deposits were described on the drawings but did not produce any significant finds and were therefore not recorded separately by context.

A trench location plan was prepared at a scale of 1:100 based on Knapps Hicks *Foundation and Ground Floor Layout* drawing no. 34399/S/002 C (figure 2). Trenches were located by offsetting from adjacent standing walls and shown on the location plan.

Two sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20 and numbered contexts, where appropriate, were allocated.

The heights of archaeological layers were recorded relative to Ordnance Datum from the survey drawing prepared by Gryphon Surveys by measuring from the ground level adjacent to the trench.

A general photographic record was made.

The site has produced one area plan; two section drawings; three context records; and 16 photographs. These are currently held by Isambard Archaeology. No finds were retained. Following the preparation of the site archive it will be deposited with the Museum of London under site code NEC17.

3.3 Results

The area of the watching brief covered c.243m², measuring c.27m by c.9m.

The archaeological deposits were consistent across the whole of the site. Ground level was recorded at 5.7m OD. A layer of topsoil (1), 0.3m in thickness was recorded below this at 5.3m OD. This comprised of a loose dark brown sand with organic material and frequent roots. Below this was a layer of made ground/fill (2), 1.4m in thickness and recorded at 4.0m OD. This comprised of a loose dark brown sand with frequent gravel and coarse brick gravel to 30mm in diameter and frequent roots. Below this was the natural geology: Langley Silt clay (3) which comprised of a stiff orange brown sandy clay with scattered medium to coarse sub-grounded and subangular flint gravel to 50mm in diameter (figures 3 and 4 and plates 1 and 2).

No archaeological features were recorded or finds retained.

4.0 DISCUSSION

4.1 Original research aims

The original research aims were:

- Is there any evidence for Roman Watling Street *in situ* and if so what is its extent, date, state of preservation and importance?

There is no evidence for Roman Watling Street.

- Is there any evidence for Roman roadside activity either *in situ* features or residual finds and how do they relate to other Roman finds found in the area?

There is no evidence for any Roman roadside activity.

- What are the latest deposits identified and can they be related to the current building?

No archaeological deposits were identified.

4.2 Significance of the data

As there were no archaeological deposits identified the significance of the data is low.

5.0 ARCHIVE

5.1 Preparation and deposition

The records for the watching brief will be arranged to comply with the Museum of London's, *General Standards for the preparation of archaeological archives* (MoL, 2009) and will be deposited within 12 months following the completion of the fieldwork under site code NEC17.

Due to the limited potential of the material and significance of the data a short note of the results of the watching brief will be prepared for publication in the annual round-up from the London Archaeologist.

Digital PDF/A copies of this report will be distributed to the client, London Borough of Lewisham, Historic England, the Archaeological Data Service, GLHER and the local studies library.

6.0 REFERENCES

Carr, R (2017) Report on Subsoil Investigations at 207 New Cross Road, London, SE14 5UH. R Carr Geotechnical Services. *Unpublished client report*.

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014) Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief. *CIFA, Reading*.

Coulter, J (1986) The Browning House at New Cross. *Browning Society Notes, vol. 15, nos. 2-3, 2-17*.

Densem, R (2001) Hatcham Park Mews, New Cross, London, SE14 An Archaeological Desk-top Study. Compass Archaeology. *Unpublished client report*.

English Heritage (2008) Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment, Project Planning Note 3: Archaeological Excavation. *EH, Swindon*.

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Historic England (2015) Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service Guidelines for Archaeological Projects in London. *HE, London.*

Knapps Hicks (Jan 2018) *Foundation and Ground Floor Layout* drawing no. 34399/S/002 C.

Museum of London (2009) General Standards for the preparation of archaeological archives deposited with the Museum of London. *MoL, London.*

Single A (2001) Report on an Archaeological Evaluation at Hatcham Park Mews, New Cross, London, SE14 in the London Borough of Lewisham. Compass Archaeology. *Unpublished client report.*

<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> Geology of Britain Viewer. First accessed 27th September 2017.

APPENDIX 1: NMR OASIS ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT FORM

OASIS ID: isambard1-324974

Project details

Project name	Watching brief on land to the rear of 207 New Cross Road, New Cross, London, SE14 5UH
Short description of the project	A watching brief took place between November 2017 and July 2018 on land to the rear of 207 New Cross Road, New Cross, London, SE14 5UH during the excavation of foundation trenches for the construction of two houses. The watching brief covered an area of c.243 sq.m. and was centred at TQ 35862 76916. Ground level was recorded at 5.7m OD and natural deposits of Langley Silt clay, at 4.0m OD. No archaeological deposits or finds were recorded.
Project dates	Start: 20-11-2017 End: 18-07-2018
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	NEC17 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON LEWISHAM DEPTFORD AND NEWCROSS Land to the rear of 207 New Cross Road, New Cross, London, SE14 5UH
Postcode	SE14 5UH
Study area	243 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 35862 76916 51.474366838614 -0.043516775733 51 28 27 N 000 02 36 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 3.7m Max: 4m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Isambard Archaeology
Project brief originator	Isambard Archaeology
Project design originator	Isambard Archaeology

Project director/manager	Andrew Francis
Project supervisor	Andrew Francis
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Crenns Developments Limited

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Physical Archive notes	N/a
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Archive notes	N/a
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Contents	"other"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Drawing","Microfilm","Plan","Report"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Watching brief on land to the rear of 207 New Cross Road, New Cross, London, SE14 5UH
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Francis, A
Date	2018
Issuer or publisher	Isambard Archaeology
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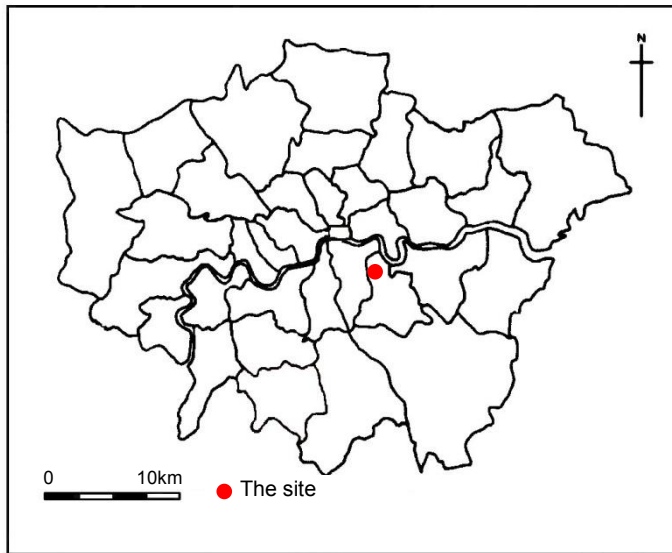


Figure 1. Site Location Plan.

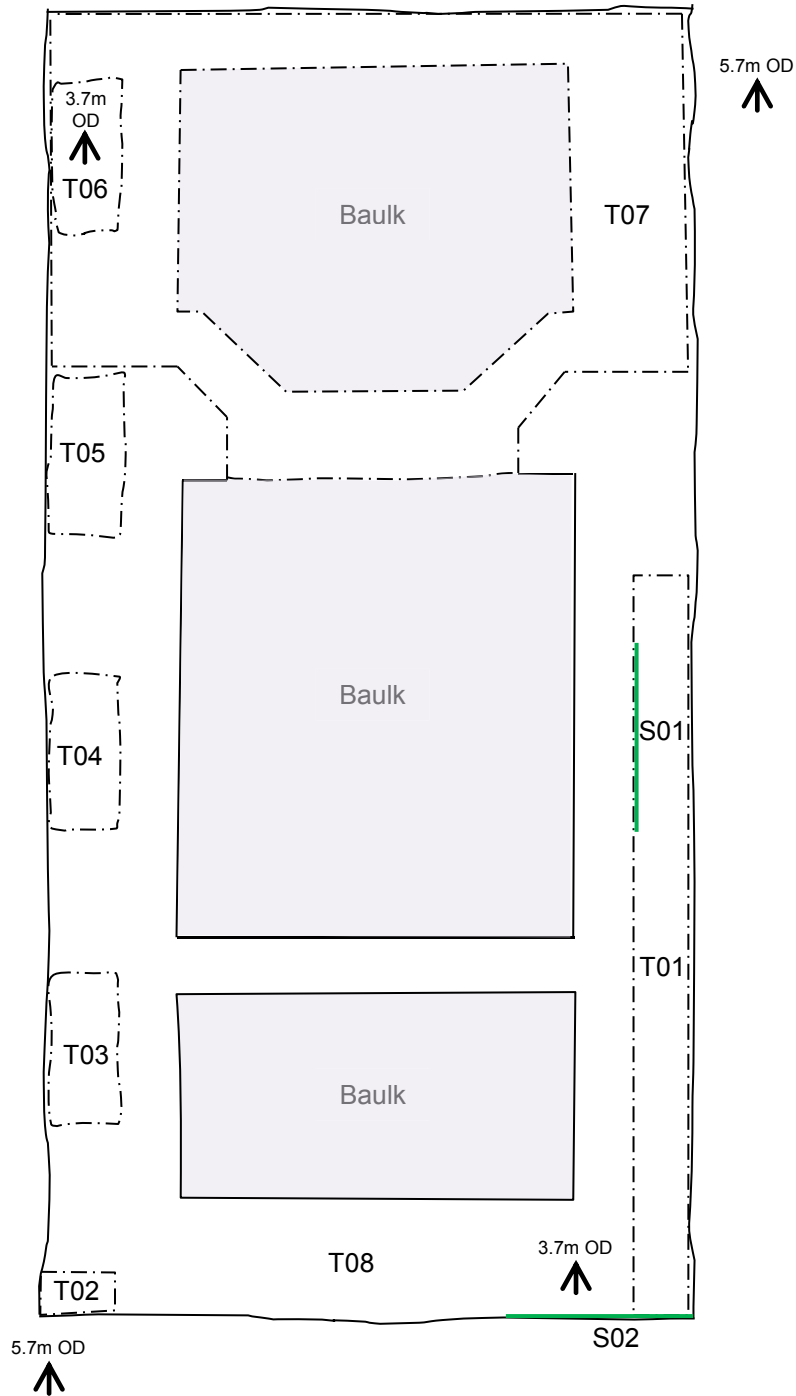


Figure 2. Trench and section location plan, scale 1:100.

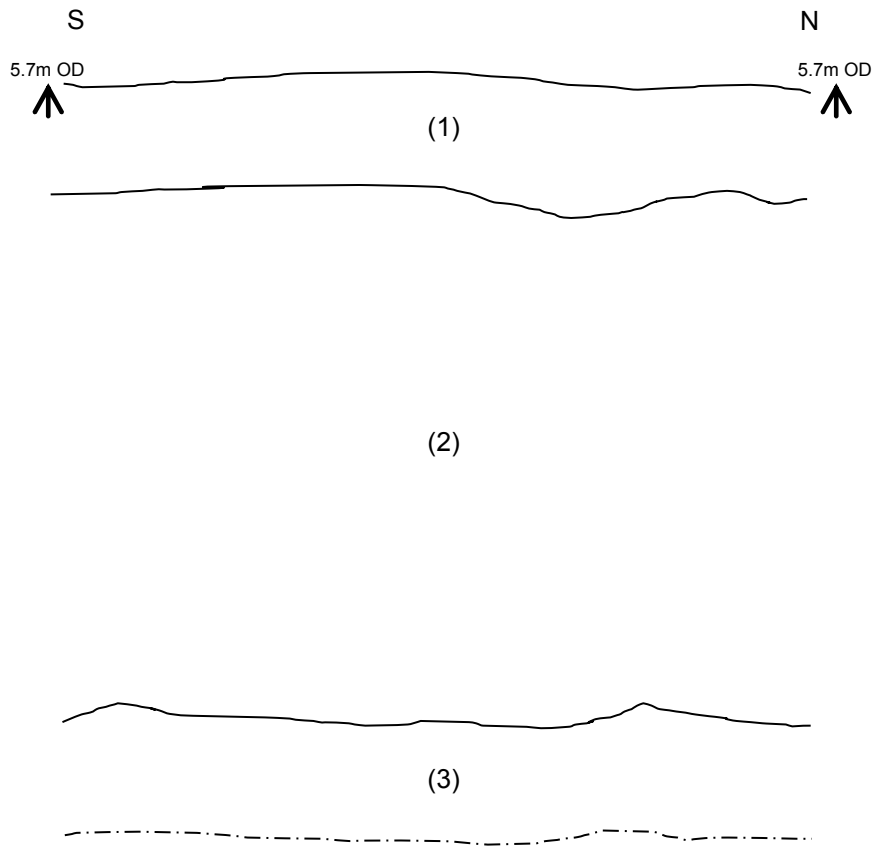


Figure 3. Foundation/boundary wall trench 01 west section, length 2.5m, scale 1:20.

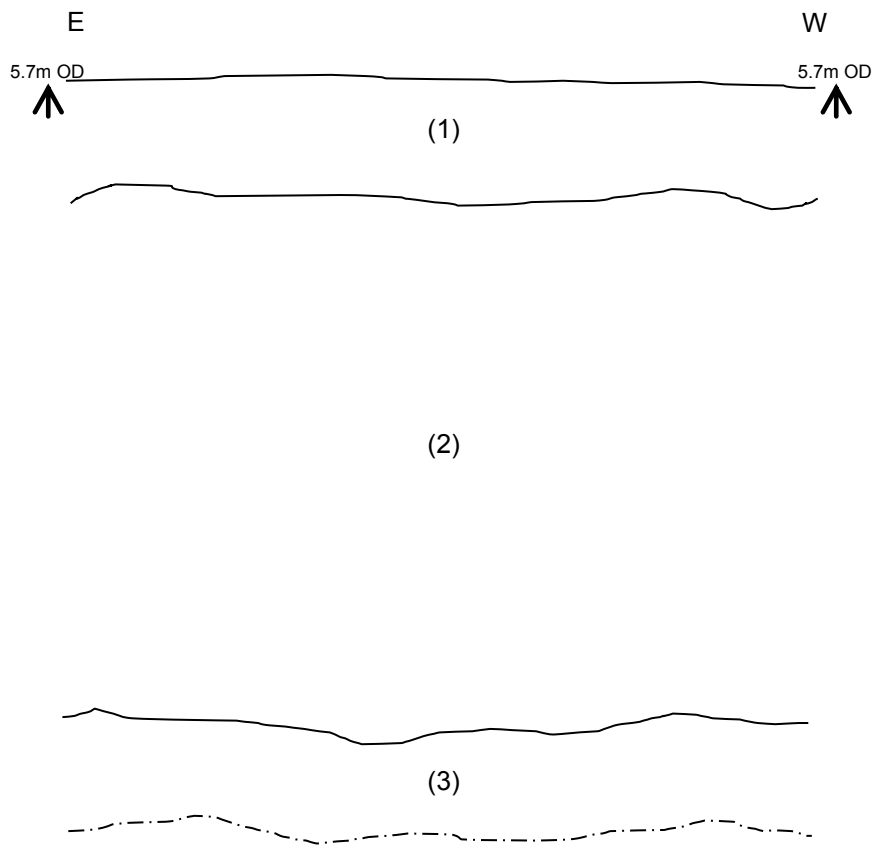


Figure 4. Main basement trench 08 south section, length 2.5m, scale 1:20.



Plate 1. Main basement trench looking north.



Plate 2. Main basement trench looking south.