

NAU Archaeology

Report No. 1274

**An Archaeological Window Sampling
Evaluation at Caistor Hall Hotel
Caistor St. Edmund, Norfolk**

NHER 49021 CBN

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December 2007

BAU 1544

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Location: Caistor Hall Hotel
District: Caistor St. Edmund
Grid Ref: TG 2359 0375
HER No.: 49021 CBN
Date of fieldwork: 29th March 2007

Summary

In March 2007 NAU Archaeology undertook a window sampling survey to the rear of Caistor Hall Hotel. A total of ten samples were taken on an area of land proposed for a conservatory extension to the hotel.

The deposits were mainly characterised as late post-medieval landscaping or garden soils which included a few fragments of late post-medieval brick and tile.

The earliest deposits were from a layer of silty-sand just above the natural sand. This layer appears to equate to a bio-turbed soil horizon of Roman-British date encountered in an earlier evaluation also conducted by NAU Archaeology.

1.0 Introduction

The proposed development area centres upon a proposed conservatory extension to the rear of Caistor Hall Hotel.

The project was commissioned by Alan Irvine, Chartered Surveyor, on behalf of the Hotel's owner Gordon Selvage.

The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, following the guidelines set out in *Planning and Policy Guidance 16 — Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990). The results will enable decisions to be made by the Local Planning Authority with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.

The site archive is currently held by NAU Archaeology and on completion of the project will be deposited with Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service, following the relevant policy on archiving standards.

2.0 Geology and Topography

The site is located c. 360m south-east of the River Tas at a height of c. 10m OD. The natural geology specific to the area of the site consists predominantly of glacial sand. The underlying solid geology of the region is of Upper Chalk. This is overlain by Boulder Clay, mainly Lowestoft and other Anglian tills and some glacial sands and gravels. Some river alluvium appears in the vicinity from the archaic course of the River Tas (Funnel, 1994).

3.0 Brief Archaeological and Historical Background

Caistor Hall (NHER 9817) is a Grade II listed building, dating back to the early 19th Century when it was built for the Dashwood family. The hotel is located c. 350m north-east of the Roman town of Venta Icenorum (NHER 9786). Cropmarks of

possible buildings exist within the vicinity of the hotel (NHER 9859), and finds of coins and other artefacts have been recovered from the grounds.

Excavations have revealed various Roman features over the years, including, in 1846 a building (NHER 9818) interpreted by the excavator as a tomb of 3rd Century date. In 1938, excavations by Surgeon-Commander F.R Mann discovered within the grounds a metalled road, running in a north-easterly direction from the corner of Venta Icenorum towards a Roman temple site (NHER 9787) c. 400m north-east of the hotel.

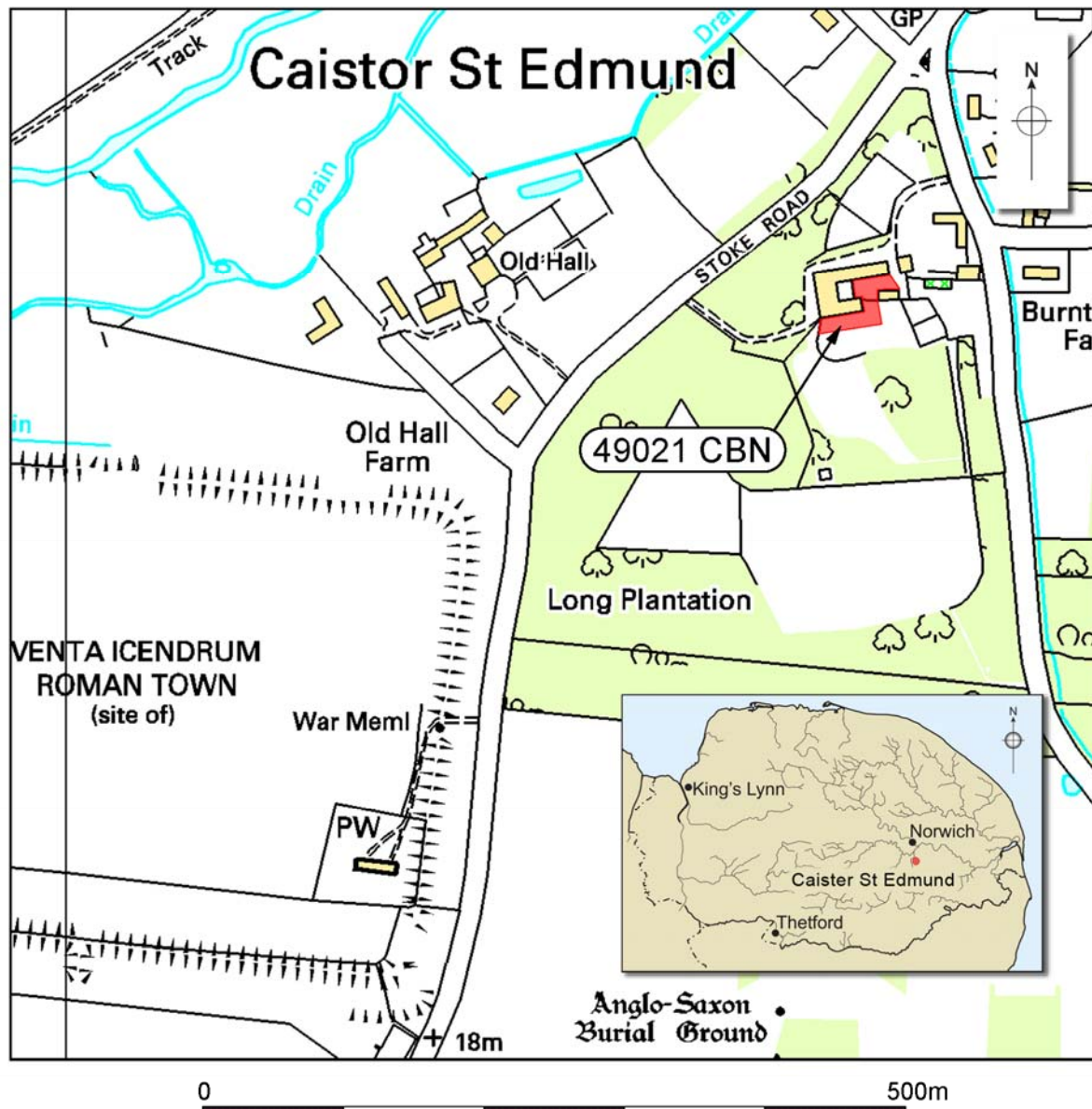


Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:5000

Local Authority No.100019340

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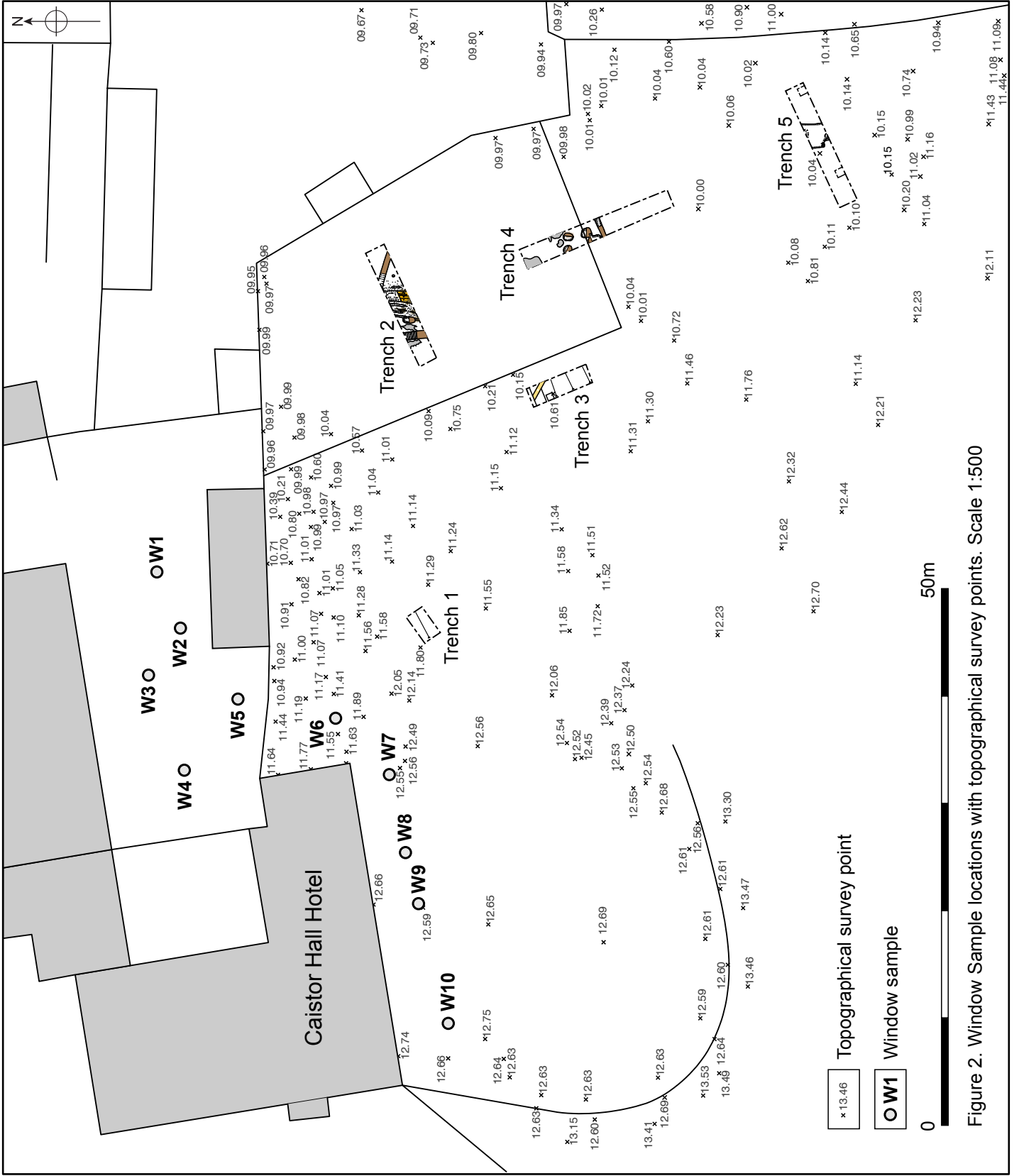


Figure 2. Window Sample locations with topographical survey points. Scale 1:500

Trial trenching in 2006 by NAU Archaeology immediately to the south-east of the survey area discovered several features of the later Romano-British period (NHER 49021CBN NAU Report 1239). These included pits, ditches and a wheel rutted roadway. Evidence for a sunken feature building (SFB) was revealed with large numbers of late Roman finds recovered from its fill. A bioturbed soil horizon was observed above the natural sand which was also dated to the Romano-British period.

4.0 Methodology

The objective of this evaluation was, via window sampling, to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence or absence and location of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.

The samples were taken by the Norfolk Partnership Laboratory.

The sample cores were cleaned and their stratigraphic sequence recorded. A suitable log was created which includes detailed descriptions and measurements of the deposit sequences. Due to the lack of suitable deposits, no environmental samples were taken.

5.0 Results

Table 1 describes the deposits encountered in stratigraphic order above the natural sands and Table 2 describes the depths of significant deposits. Detailed logs for each window sample are illustrated at the back of this report (Figs 3 to 7).

Sample No.	Deposit	Description	Thickness	Sieved Finds
1	101	Garden soil/make-up: Dark brown clay-silt, with occasional charcoal and chalk flecks and lumps. Occasional flint stones.	0.72m	-
	102	?Garden make-up: Mid orange-brown sand-silt-gravel. Poss. also part of levelling for garden.	0.16m	Ceramic Building Material x4
	103	Uncertain horizon: Dark grey-brown sand-silt.	0.34m	-
	104	Bioturbed Horizon: Mid grey-brown sand-silt. Just above natural.	0.16m	Worked flint x1
2	105	Garden make-up: Mid orange-brown sand-silt-gravel. Poss. also part of levelling for garden.	0.42m	-
	106	?Garden make-up: Dark brown clay-silt, with occasional charcoal and chalk flecks and lumps. Occasional flint stones. Poss. part of garden make-up. Equivalent to (101).	0.76m	Ceramic Building Material x4, burnt flint x2, bottle glass x1
	107	Bioturbed Horizon: Mid grey-brown sand-silt. Just above natural. Equivalent to (104)	0.11m	-
3	108	Topsoil: Dark brown silt-loam with Organic/vegetable matter inclusions.	0.18m	-

Sample No.	Deposit	Description	Thickness	Sieved Finds
	109	?Garden make-up: Mid brown-orange silt-sand-gravel. Frequent brick and mortar fragments. Equivalent to (102)	0.27m	Ceramic Building Material x3
	110	?Garden make-up: Dark brown clay-silt. Equivalent to (101).	0.69m	Burnt flint x1
	111	Bioturbed Horizon: Mid grey-brown silt-sand. Just above natural. Equivalent to (104)	0.13m	Roman pot sherd x1
4	112	Topsoil: Dark brown sand-silt with Organic/vegetable matter inclusions. Equivalent to (108)	0.19m	-
	113	?Garden make-up: Mid orange-brown clay-silt. Same as (10).	0.24m	-
	114	?Possible pit: Mid grey-brown sand-silt, with occasional brick fragments and flint stones.	>1.57m	Post-medieval pot x1
5	115	Topsoil: Mid grey-brown sand-silt. Organic and root inclusions. Equivalent to (108)	0.14m	-
	116	?Garden make-up: Mid orange-brown clay-silt. Frequent flint inclusions and ashy lenses, also mortar and brick fragments. Equivalent to (102)	0.34m	-
	117	?Garden make-up: Dark brown sand-silt, with occasional flints and charcoal and chalk flecks and fragments. Equivalent to (101).	0.42m	-
	118	Bioturbed Horizon: Mid grey-brown silt-sand. Equivalent to (104)	0.39m	-
6	119	?Garden make-up: Mid brown-orange gravely silt-clay.	Up to 0.37m	-
	120	?Garden make-up: Dark brown clay-silt. With occasional flint and charcoal flecks. Equivalent to (101).	0.63m	-
7	121	?Garden make-up: Dark brown clay-silt. With occasional flint and charcoal flecks. Equivalent to (101).	Up to 1.38m	Ceramic Building Material x1
	122	Uncertain horizon: Dark brown sand-silt-gravel.	0.14m	-
8	123	?Garden make-up: Mid orange-yellow gravel-sand. Equivalent to (19).	Up to 0.34m	-
	124	?Garden make-up: Dark brown clay-silt, with occasional mortar and brick fragments. Equivalent to (101).	0.92m	Ceramic Building Material x4, Mortar lump x1, Post-medieval pot x4
9	125	?Garden make-up: Mid orange-brown gravel-sand. Equivalent to (19).	Up to 0.17m	-
	126	?Garden make-up: Dark brown sand-silt, with occasional flint stones, brick, tile and charcoal fragments and roots. Equivalent to (101).	Up to 1.48m	Ceramic Building Material x5, Post-medieval pot x1, Clay tobacco pipe x1
	127	Bioturbed Horizon: Mid grey-brown silt-sand. Equivalent to (104)	0.07m	-

Sample No.	Deposit	Description	Thickness	Sieved Finds
10	128	Garden soil: Mid yellow-brown silt-sand.	0.10m	-
	129	?Garden make-up: Dark brown sand-silt, with occasional flint stones, brick and tile fragments. Equivalent to (101).	Up to 1.19m	-
	130	Bioturbed Horizon: Mid grey-brown silt-sand. Equivalent to (104)	0.43m	-

Table 1. The logged deposits in stratigraphic order

Window Sample	Depth of deposits above potentially archaeological significant horizons	Thickness of 'Romano-British Horizon' if present	Depth to Natural Sands
1	0.88m	0.16m	2.10m
2	1.18m	0.11m	1.29m
3	1.14m	0.13m	1.27m
4	?Pit of late post-medieval date below 0.43m of overburden	-	-
5	0.90m	0.39m	1.29m
6	-	-	1.00m
7	1.24mm	-	1.52mm
8	-	-	1.26mm
9	1.65mm	0.07m	1.72mm
10	1.29mm	0.43m	1.72mm

Table 2. Depths of significant deposits

6.0 The Finds

Introduction

The finds material from the site is presented in tabular form with basic quantitative information in Appendix 1: Finds Recovered From Sieved Deposits.

In addition to this summary, more detailed information on specific finds is included below.

6.1 Pottery (Appendix 2)

The samples produced a total of 8 fragments of pottery, weighing a total of 0.209kg.

Methodology

The assemblage was quantified (counted and weighed) by form and fabric (see Appendix 2). The research for the post-Roman pottery was based on the typology of Norwich ceramics established by Jennings (Jennings 1981).

Roman pottery

A single body sherd of Roman date (0.011kg) was recovered from the layer of 'bioturbed' soil (111) seen in window sample No.3. The sherd is a micaceous black-surfaced red-ware of unsourced local production (Fabric code MBRW), dating from the 2nd to 4th century AD.

Archaeological Window Sampling evaluation at Caistor Hall Hotel
NHER 49021 CBN

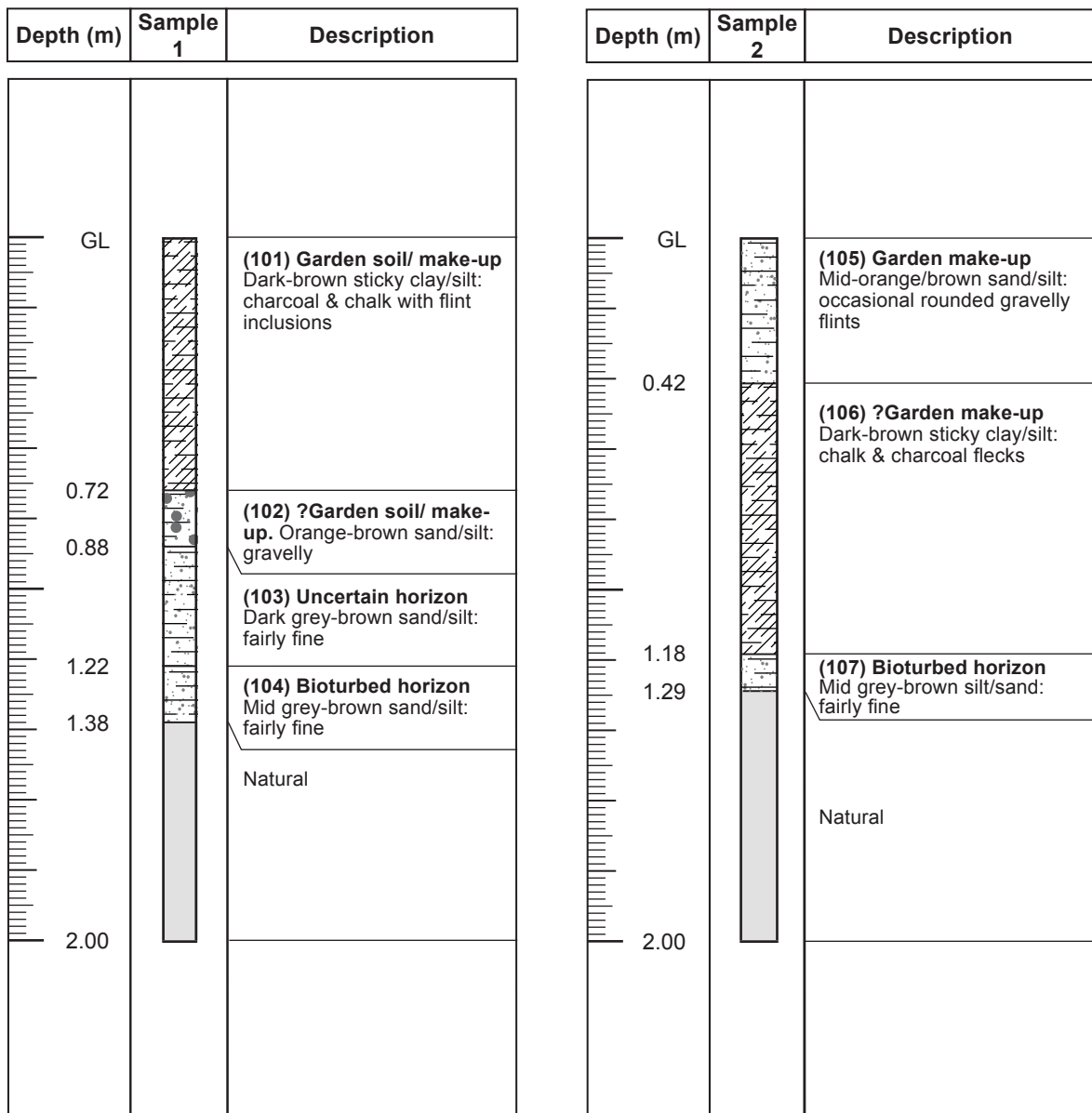
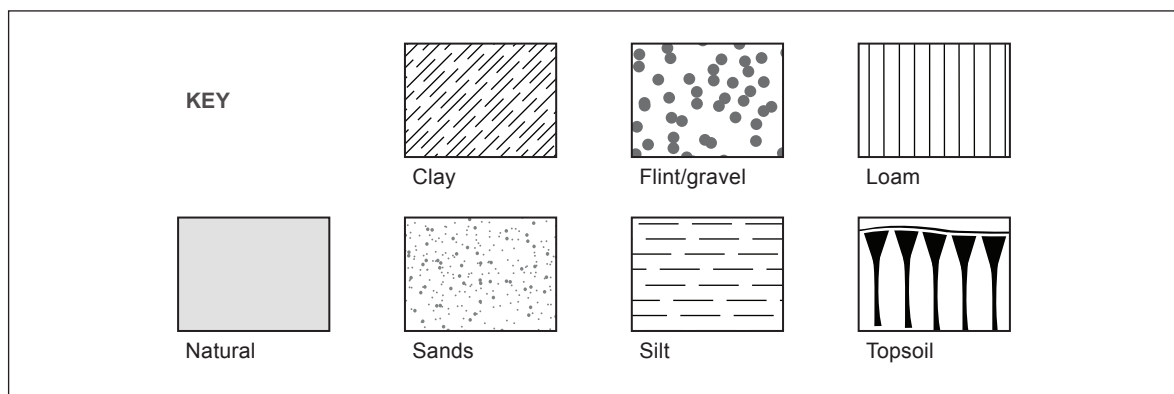


Figure 3. Description of window samples: cores 1 & 2. Scale 1:20



Archaeological Window Sampling evaluation at Caistor Hall Hotel
NHER 49021 CBN

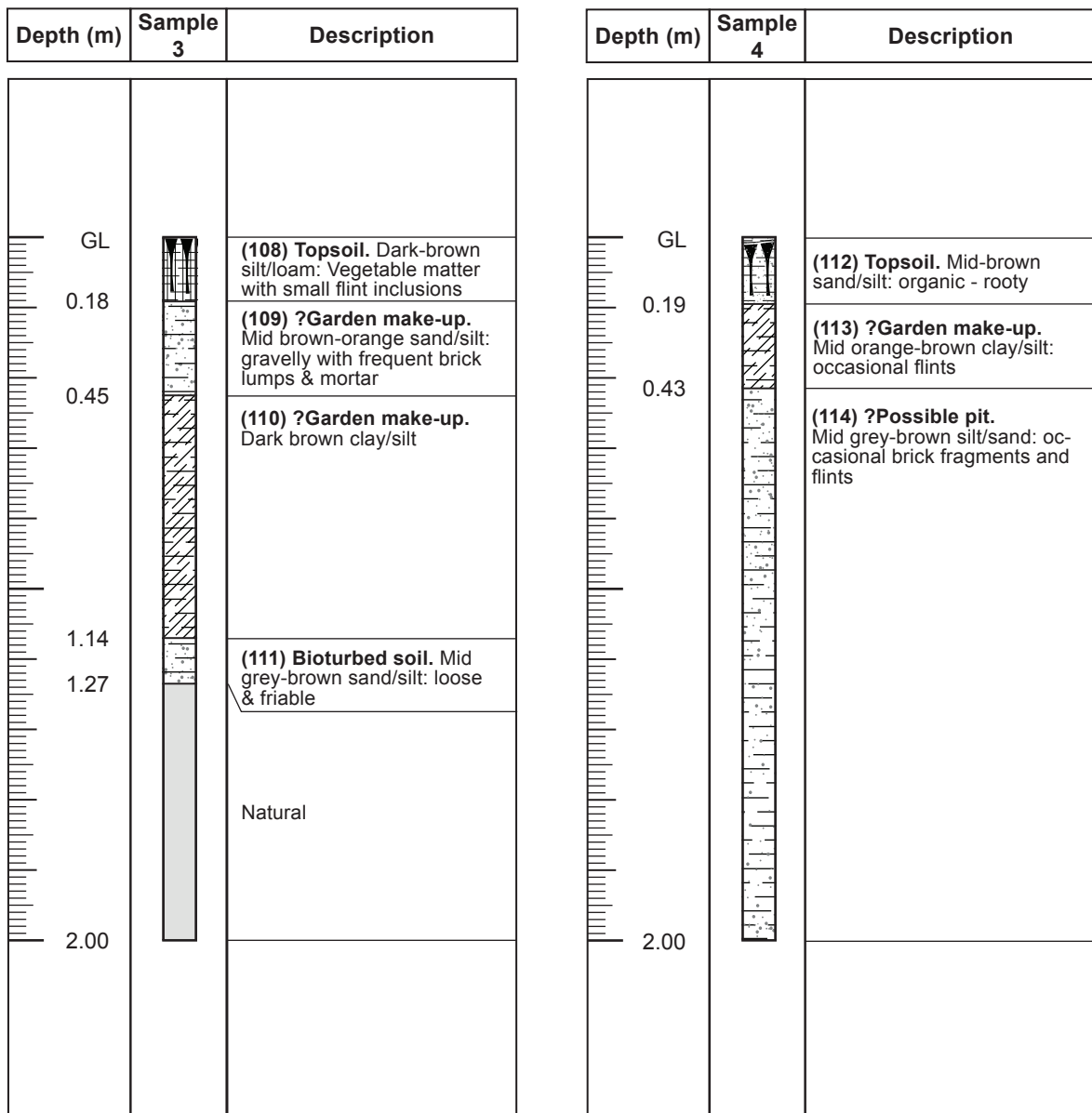
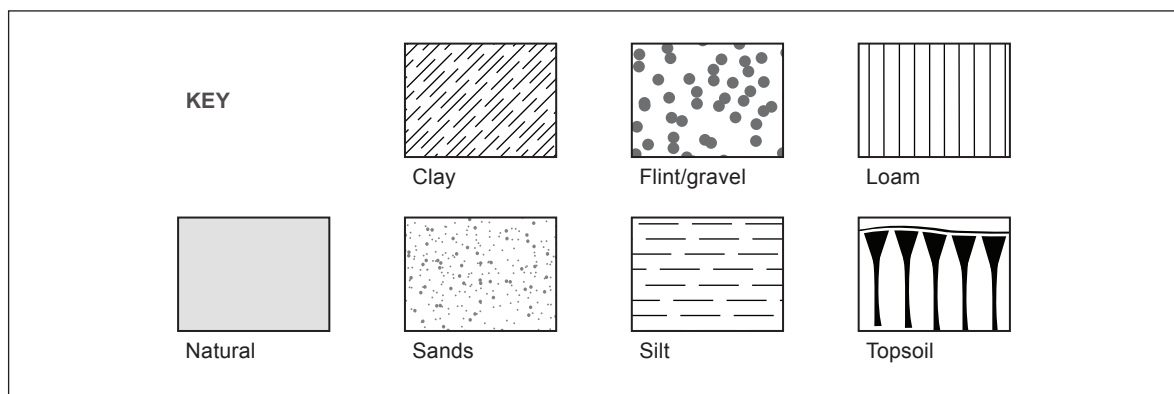


Figure 4. Description of window samples: cores 3 & 4. Scale 1:20



Archaeological Window Sampling evaluation at Caistor Hall Hotel
NHER 49021 CBN

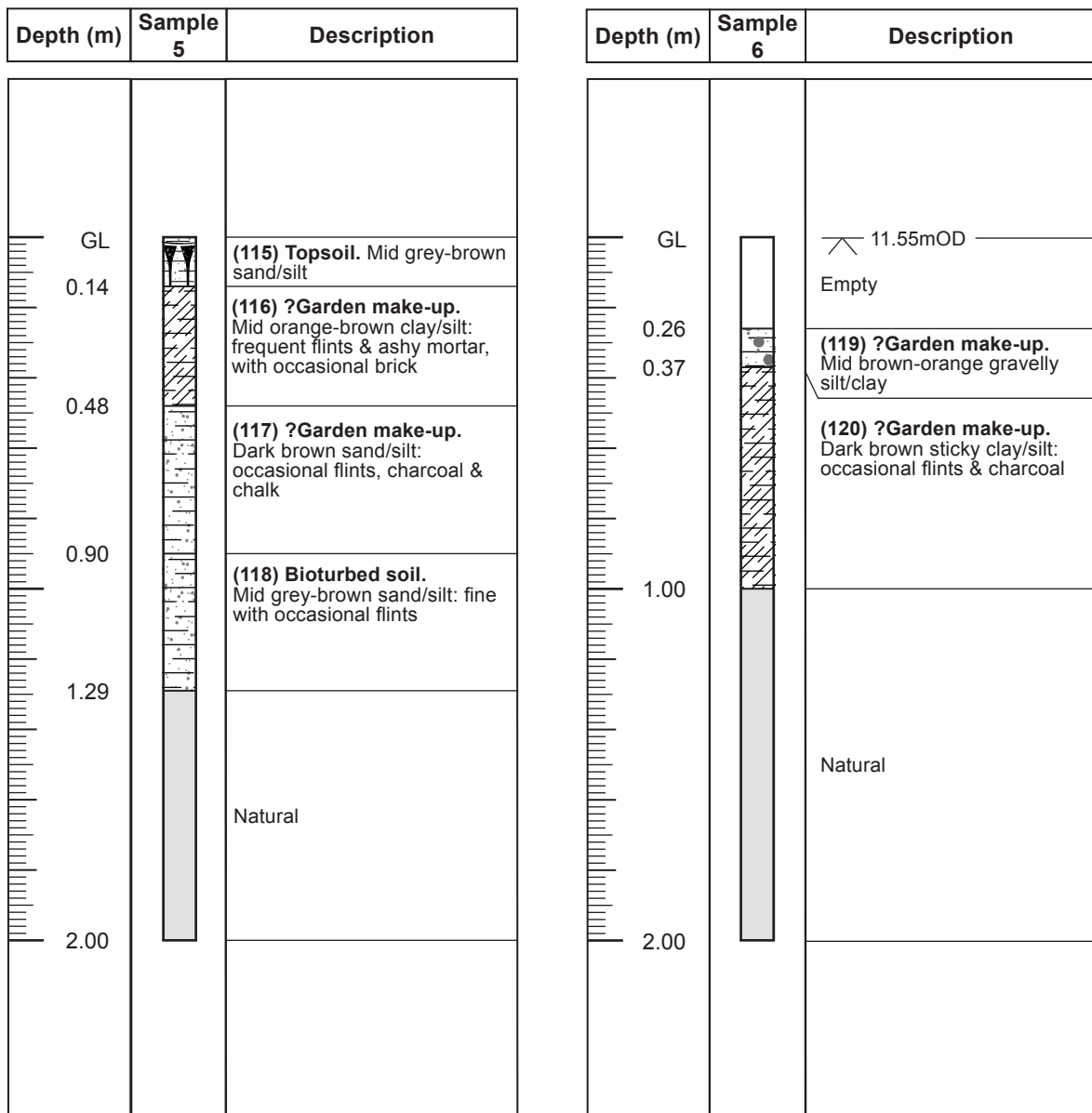
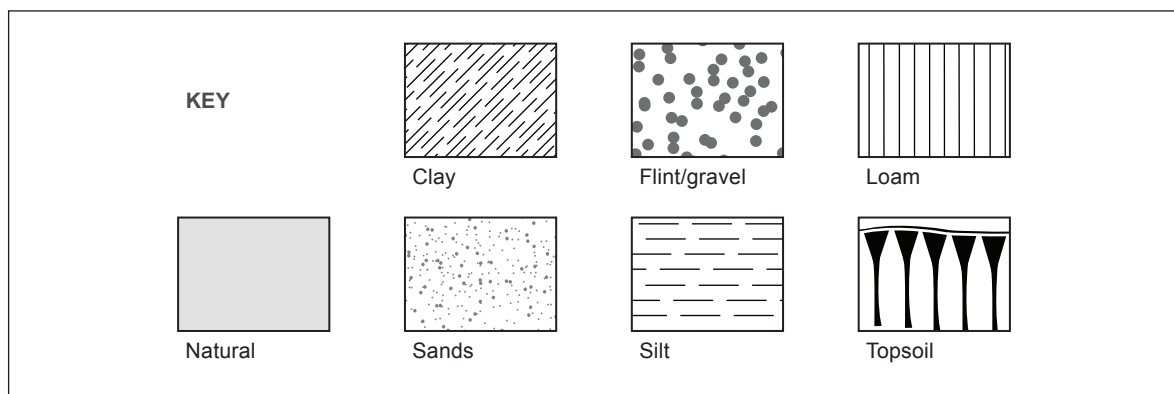


Figure 5. Description of window samples: cores 5 & 6. Scale 1:20



Archaeological Window Sampling evaluation at Caistor Hall Hotel
NHER 49021 CBN

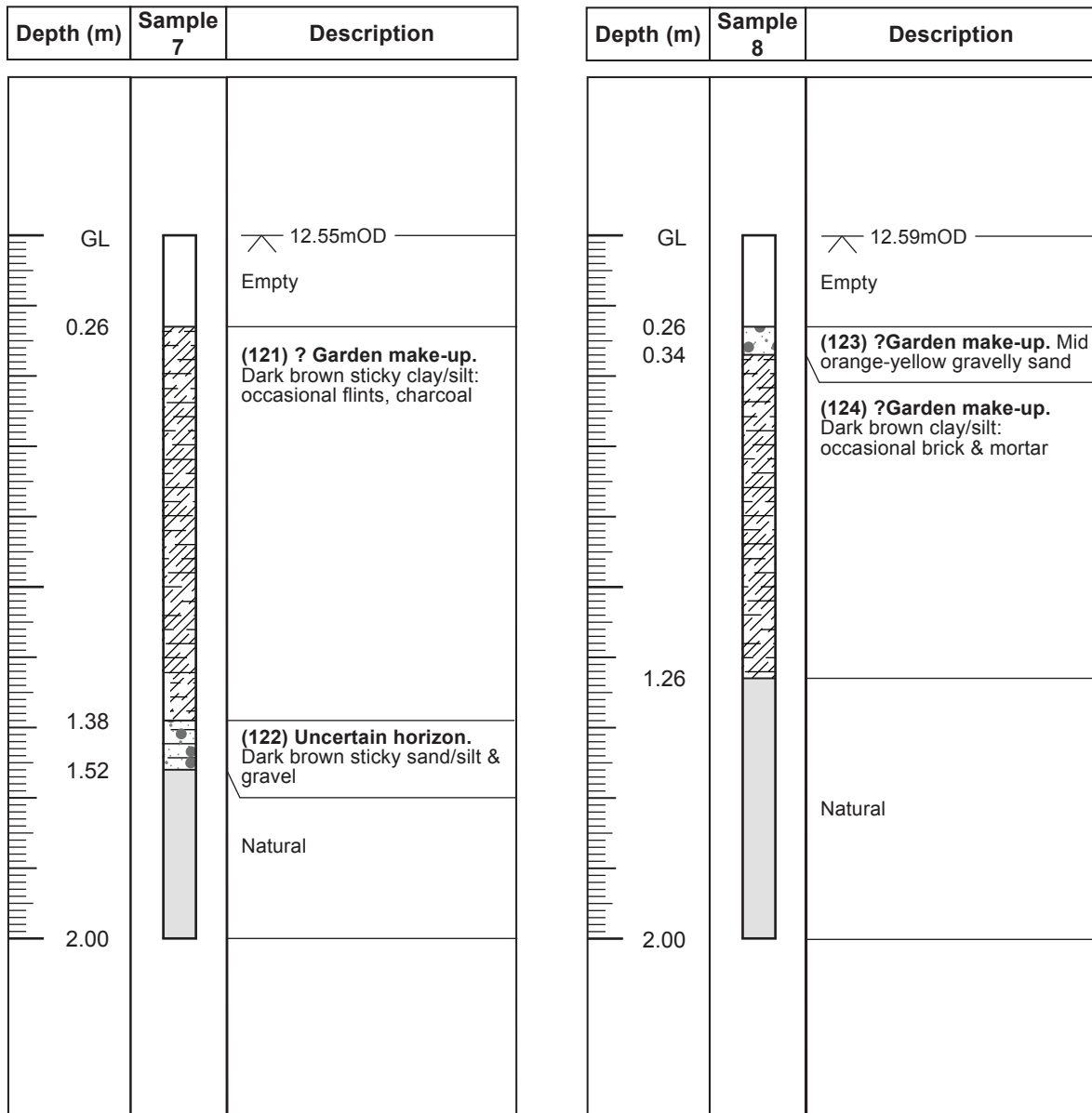
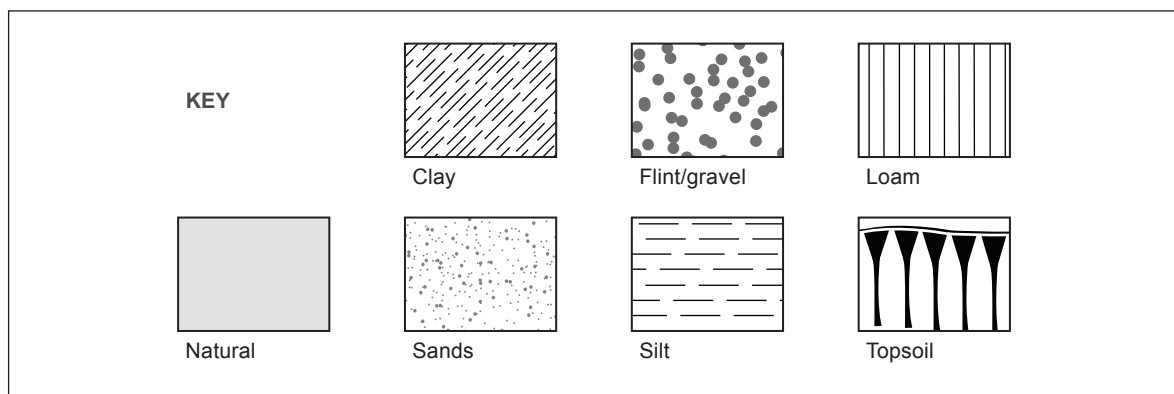


Figure 6. Description of window samples: cores 7 & 8. Scale 1:20



Archaeological Window Sampling evaluation at Caistor Hall Hotel
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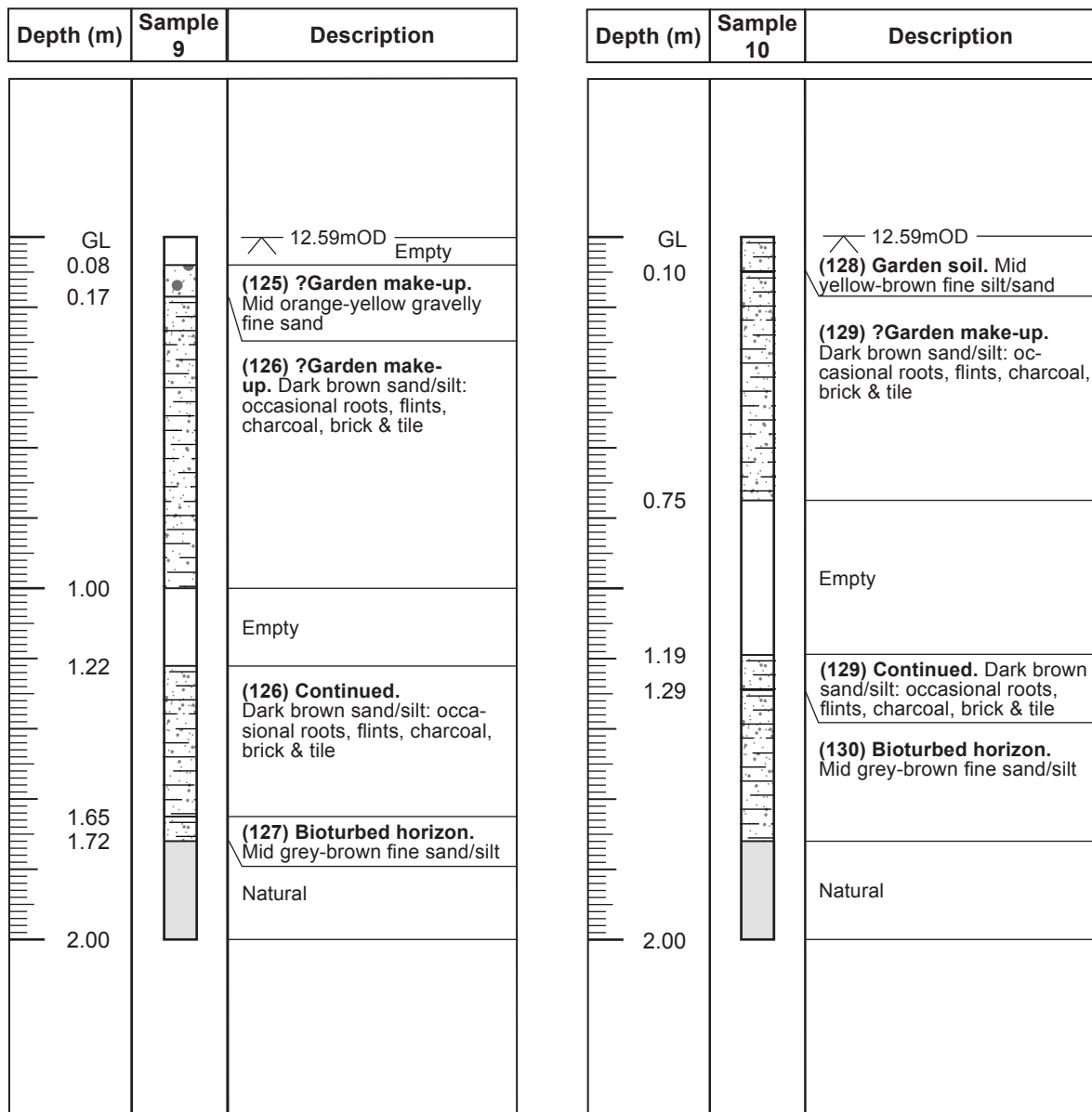
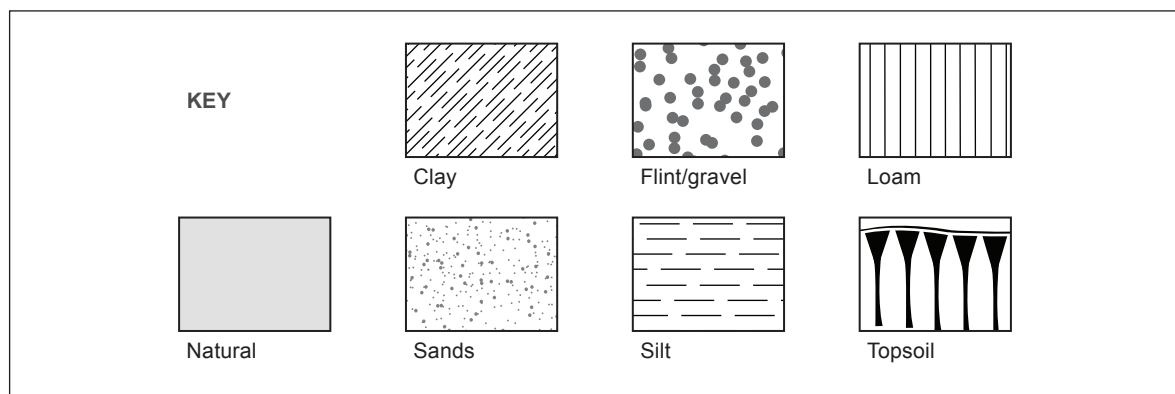


Figure 7. Description of window samples: cores 9 & 10. Scale 1:20



Post medieval pottery

The samples produced three body sherds of Glazed Red Earthenware (0.125kg) dating from around the 17th to 19th century. One piece of Victorian flower-pot was also recovered (0.050kg) along with three fragments of Cologne/Frechen stoneware (0.023kg) dating from the 16th – 18th century.

6.2 Ceramic Building Material (Appendix 1)

The samples produced 20 examples of ceramic building material weighing a total of 1.273kg. The majority of the assemblage is made up of post-medieval land drain fragments, consisting of nine pieces weighing a total of 0.605kg.

The remaining material consists of six fragments of post-medieval brick, dating from the 17th to 19th century (0.316kg) and four pieces of roof tile also of 17th to 19th century date (0.120kg). A single fragment of burnt medieval brick was found with a manufacture date from the 14th to 15th century (0.232kg).

6.3 Flint (Appendix 3)

One small squat primary flake was recovered from the 'bioturbed deposit' (104). It has a hinge fracture at its distal end and was probably struck by hard hammer. It is likely to be of later prehistoric date (later Neolithic to Iron Age).

Three pieces of burnt flint were also found, one from this same deposit and the remainder from garden make-up layers. They are updatable by form and may have been deliberately burnt (for example as a means of heating water or food) or may have been accidental inclusions in a fire.

Other finds (Appendix 1)

Other finds recovered from sieving include one piece of post-medieval bottle glass, a single fragment of clay tobacco pipe stem and one lump of modern mortar.

7.0 Conclusions

The ten samples demonstrate a common set of layers extending almost uniformly throughout the survey area. Most of these layers can be characterised as late post-medieval to Victorian landscaping and make-up layers.

The only layer of more certain antiquity appears to lie above the natural sand in the form of a relatively thin mid greyish-brown silty-sand which appeared in all but four of the sample windows taken. This silty-sand varied in thickness from 0.007m to 0.039m and a single Roman pot sherd of a 2nd to 4th century date was retrieved from this layer in Window Sample No.1. Trial trenching on the site in 2006 revealed what appears to be the same deposit; characterised as a Romano-British 'bioturbed sub-soil' which contained Roman pottery dating from the 1st to 4th century AD (Emery, 2007). This earlier phase of work also identified several cut features of a later Romano-British date which included pits and ditches along with a wheel rutted roadway. Evidence for an Early Saxon Sunken Feature Building was also discovered which contained a large number of Romano-British finds.

Recommendations for future work based upon this report may be made by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology.

Acknowledgements

The window sample cores were cleaned and logged by Rebecca Crawford. The finds were processed by Lucy Talbot, the flint by Sarah Bates, the post-Roman pottery was reported on by the author and the Roman pottery was identified by Alice Lyons. Thanks to the Norfolk Laboratory for undertaking the window sampling.

The report was edited by Andy Hutcheson and produced by David Dobson.

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Appendix 1: Finds Recovered From Sieved Deposits

Window Sample	Context	Material	Quantity	Weight (kg)	Spot Date
1	102	Ceramic Building Material	4	1.022	17 th – 18 th century
	104	Flint - worked	1	-	-
2	106	Ceramic Building Material	3	0.095	18 th – 19 th century
		Flint - burnt	2	0.017	-
		Glass - bottle	1	-	Post-Medieval
3	109	Ceramic Building Material	3	0.219	18 th – 19 th century
	110	Flint - burnt	1	0.089	-
	111	Pottery	1	0.011	2 nd – 4 th century
4	114	Pottery	1	0.038	17 th – 19 th century
7	121	Ceramic Building Material	1	0.232	14 th – 15 th century
8	124	Ceramic Building Material	4	0.348	19 th – 20 th century
		Mortar	1	0.022	Post-Medieval
		Pottery	4	0.073	16 th – 19 th century
9	126	Ceramic Building Material	5	0.257	19 th – 20 th century
		Pottery	2	0.087	17 th – 19 th century
		Clay Pipe	1	0.001	Post-Medieval

Appendix 2: Pottery

WS	Context	Fabric	Form	Quantity	Weight (kg)	Object Date
3	111	BSRW	Body	1	0.011	2 nd – 4 th century
4	114	GRE	Body	1	0.038	17 th – 19 th century
8	124	FLOWERPOT	Body	1	0.050	19 th century
	124	GSW Cologne/Frechen	Body	3	0.023	16 th – 18 th century
9	126	GRE	Body	2	0.087	17 th – 19 th century
TOTAL				8	0.209	

Appendix 3: Flint

Window Sample	Context	Type	Quantity
1	104	Flake	1
2	106	Burnt frag.	2
3	110	Burnt frag.	1