

NORFOLK ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Report No. 790

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at Ulph Place, Burnham
Market, 2002-2003**

34581 BVM

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Local Authority No.076759

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Location: Ulph Place, Burnham Market
Grid Ref: TG 8368 4225
HER No.: 34581 BVM
Date of Fieldwork: 21st to 22nd March, 27th to 28th November, 23rd December 2002 and 3rd February 2003.

Summary

Observations of groundworks at Ulph Place generally confirmed earlier conclusions concerning the deposit sequence on the site (Bates 2001; Penn 1999), with natural gravels overlain in places by flood deposits (of possible medieval date), over which developed a coarse loamy soil. In one place, a rectangular clay-lined pit of unknown date and function was recorded, sealed by the putative flood deposit.

1.0 Introduction

Fig. 1

The site lies in an area of current development in the village of Burnham Market, a medieval market town. The work was carried out for Townsfolk Ltd of Brancaster.

This archaeological watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (NLA Ref: 6.12.99 AJGR) and a Method Statement prepared by the Norfolk Archaeological Unit (NAU Ref. 978 (May 2000)).

The site archive is currently held by the Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service, following the relevant policy on archiving standards.

2.0 Geology and Topography

The site overlies an area of valley gravel within a former small embayment of the River Burn. The river also provides direct access to the sea to the north. The underlying geology of the surrounding area is chalk. Recent excavations have recorded valley gravels under early soils and a later flood deposit of sandy silts of possible medieval date.

Surveying was carried out from an OS benchmark on an adjacent building in Overy Road, just to the east of the development site. This benchmark has a value of 6.57m OD.

3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

The background to the site has been set out in earlier reports on work here (Bates 2001; Penn 1999). Those reports noted that the number of finds of Middle and Late Saxon date from the immediate area had indicated the existence of an important settlement, perhaps with overseas connections. A focus upon the embayment of the river was thought likely, providing a natural harbour for small boats.

Within an area of known Anglo-Saxon activity, trenches dug in 1999 have already produced evidence of Middle and Late Saxon activity close by. Evidence for medieval flood deposits over Middle and Late Saxon soils was recorded.

4.0 Methodology

The objective of this watching brief was to record any archaeological evidence revealed during groundworks for the proposed dwellings.

The Brief required that (subsequent to the excavation of a north-to-south trench, reported in Bates 2001) a watching brief should be carried out on groundworks for new buildings, access road and service installations.

This was undertaken within the contractors programme of works, intermittently over a period of some months.

Only part of the foundations (three trenches) were initially dug. At a subsequent date, during completion of the foundations, the groundworks for the four houses were observed.

Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds were retained for inspection, other than those which were obviously modern.

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using the NAU *pro forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

A level was transferred from an Ordnance Survey benchmark of 6.57m OD on a building to the east of the development site.

Site conditions varied throughout the year, with wet weather during the later visits hampering the recording of deposits and features.

5.0 Results

Fig. 2

Trench 1

Trench 1 was 0.85m wide by 16.2m long and 1.2m deep, laid out south-west to north-east across Houses 1 and 2. Trench 1 revealed a natural bright gravel at between 1.2m and 1.4m below the present ground surface, overlain by a mid grey brown sandy loam, c.0.5m deep. This was overlain in turn by modern make-up and demolition layers between 0.4m and 0.5m deep.

Trench 2

Trenches 2 and 3 were laid out as one, with a central gap of 3.2m, north-west to south-east across House 4. Trench 2 was 0.85m wide by 6.1m long and up to 1.5m deep. The natural gravel was recorded at 1.2m below the present surface, and was overlain by mid grey brown sandy loams, a mid grey sandy clay and 0.4m of modern make-up and demolition deposits.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was 1.0m wide by 5.0m long and 1.5m deep, laid out across House 4. Like Trenches 1 and 2, a natural gravel was found between 1.1m and 1.3m below the present surface, with mid grey brown sandy loam under 0.7m-0.8m of modern deposits.

House 2 Groundworks

Figs. 2, 3 & 4

The excavation of foundations for House 2 was observed. The foundation trenches were 0.70m wide and between 1.0m and 1.20m deep, reaching the natural gravel in most places. This was overlain by a pale brown silty loam, with fragments of chalk ([1001]), c.0.40m in thickness, which became darker and stonier towards its base, where it merged into the natural gravels. This in turn was overlain by a mid grey silty loam, c.0.50m thick ([1000]), possibly make-up. This deposit ([1000]) produced pottery and fragments of bottles of 19th century date and later. A modern topsoil ([1006]) overlay this.

The remains of a recently-demolished building were recorded close to the existing cottages (floor levels).

Approximately 9m to the north of the existing cottages, a rectangular clay-lined 'tank' ([1003]) about 1m deep, was recorded in the foundation trench (Fig. 3). The interior was battered, tapering to a narrower flat base, with clay 'walls' or lining ([1004]) between 0.35m and 0.45m thick. The 'tank' cut the natural gravel ([1002]) and was sealed by [1001], the possible flood deposit. Its fill ([1005]) was entirely sand and gravel (derived from [1002]) but neither its date nor function are known.

House 3 Groundworks

Fig. 2

Excavation of the groundworks for House 3 were observed. These were between 1.0m and 1.2m deep and reached the deposit of bright gravel ([1009]) already recorded in Trenches 1, 2 and 3. This gravel was also overlain by a mid grey-brown sandy loam ([1008] and [1011]). In places this underlay modern deposits of make-up and recent demolition. This layer ([1011]) also produced a single sherd of unglazed medieval pottery, probably local.

House 4 Groundworks

Fig. 2

Observations were carried out on the groundworks of House 4, at the south end of the development site. Two wells were recorded, towards the east and west ends of the foundations.

The groundworks revealed a deposit some 1.10m deep of dark brown loamy soil, with pieces of brick and mortar rubble, at A.

At B, there was some 0.50m of mixed soil and chalk, with mortar and brick rubble, over some 0.70m of dark brown silty loam, with chalk and flints, over natural gravel.

6.0 The Finds (Appendices 2 and 3)

Finds from this work were very few and mostly from later deposits. House 2 groundworks ([1000]) produced pottery of 19th century date and House 3 groundworks ([1011]) a single sherd of medieval pottery. The only probable significant feature, the clay-lined tank ([1003]) produced no finds to indicate date or function.

7.0 Conclusions

The work has confirmed the existence over a wide area of the soil sequence recorded earlier, to the immediate east, where natural gravels were overlain by a cultural soil and what appeared to be flood silts, possibly of medieval date. Here too, the major element in the later soil sequence was a coarse silty loam. Finds from this work seemed to indicate a lack of Saxon activity here, on this site between the two streams, the earliest finds dating to the medieval period.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to Mr J Symington of Townsfolk Ltd for commissioning this work and for advice from Roger Howard of JS Hay during the work. John Ames, Mick Boyles, John Percival and Kenneth Penn carried out the watching brief. Finds were examined by Richenda Goffin and Lucy Talbot. The report was edited by Alice Lyons and produced and illustrated by Maggie Footitt.

Bibliography

- Bates, S., 2001 *Report on an Archaeological Excavation and Watching Brief at Ulph Place, Burnham Market, Norfolk*, NAU Report 514 (unpublished)
- Penn, K. J., 1999 *Report on an Archaeological Evaluation at Ulph Place, Burnham Market, Norfolk*, NAU Report 444 (unpublished)

Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context	Category	Location	Description	Period
1000	Deposit	House 2	Mid dark grey silty loam. Under [1006], over [1001]	Post-medieval
1001	Deposit	House 2	Pale brown clay/silt. ?Flood deposit	?Medieval
1002	Deposit	House 2	Orange brown gravel/sand. Natural deposit?	?Natural
1003	Cut	House 2	Cut for 'tank'	?Medieval
1004	Deposit	House 2	Pale orange brown clay. 'tank' lining	?Medieval
1005	Deposit	House 2	Orange brown sand/gravel. Fill of 'tank'	?Medieval
1006	Deposit	House 2	Brown silty loam topsoil	Modern
1007	Deposit	House 3	Modern concrete, clay/brick surfaces	Modern
1008	Deposit	House 3	Dark grey-brown sandy loam, occasional stones	Post-medieval
1009	Deposit	House 3	Gravel	Natural
1010	Deposit	House 3	Dark loam, chalk fragments. Cut by [1012]	Modern
1011	Deposit	House 3	mid grey-brown loam. Below [1010], over [1009]	Post-medieval
1012	Deposit	House 3	Modern concrete etc. cuts [1010]	Modern
1013	Deposit	House 3	Grey soft loam, with small stones	Post-medieval
1014	Cut	House 3	Pit, cuts [1013]. Contains [1015]	Post-medieval
1015	Deposit	House 3	Soft black loam, fragments chalk and small stones	Post-medieval
1016	Cut	House 3	Pit, cuts [1015]	Post-medieval
1017	Deposit	House 3	Grey clay/chalk, with brick. In [1016]	Post-medieval
1018	Deposit	House 3	Grey loam. Below [1017]	Post-medieval
1019	Deposit	House 3	Mixed dark loam and chalk fragments	Modern
1020	Deposit	House 3	Chalk. Below [1019], over [1021]	Modern
1021	Deposit	House 3	Grey loam. Over [1023]	Modern
1022	Deposit	House 3	Sandy loam with small stones, grey	Post-medieval
1023	Deposit	House 3	Hard red-brown sandy loam in [1024]	Post-medieval
1024	Cut	House 3	Pit?. Cuts [1022], below [1021]	Post-medieval
1025	Cut	House 3	Cut for [1026], cuts [1021], [1022]	Post-medieval
1026	Deposit	House 3	Yellow chalk clay. Below [1019]	Post-medieval
1027	Cut	House 3	Pit. Cuts [1022], contains [1028]	Post-medieval
1028	Deposit	House 3	Dark grey loam, in [1027]	Post-medieval

Appendix 2: Finds by Context

Context	Material	Quantity	Weight (kg)
1000	Post-medieval pottery	18	0.515
1000	Post-medieval bottle glass	3	-
1011	Medieval pottery	1	0.001

Appendix 3: The Pottery

Context	Fabric	Form	Quantity	Weight (kg)	Date
1000	Ironstone china	Cooking pot	1	0.044	1800 to 1900
1000	Pearlware	Dish	2	0.058	1770 to 1850
1000	Pearlware?	Body	1	0.022	1770 to 1851
1000	Transfer printed ware	Jar	1	0.029	1780 to 1900+
1000	Transfer printed ware with colour transfers	Dish	1	0.017	1780 to 1900+
1000	Transfer printed ware with colour transfers	Dish	1	0.015	1780 to 1900+
1000	Refined white earthenware	Dish	1	0.004	1800 to 1900
1000	Pearlware	Bowl	2	0.013	1770 to 1850
1000	Pearlware	Jar	3	0.018	1770 to 1850
1000	Porcelain	Cup	1	0.033	18th to 20th century
1000	Porcelain	Cup	1	0.018	18th to 20th century
1000	Transfer printed ware	Bowl	1	0.013	1780 to 1900 onwards
1000	Ironstone china	Base	1	0.055	1800 to 1900
1000	Refined white earthenware?	Base	1	0.053	1800 to 1900
1000	Ironstone china?	Body	1	0.01	1800 to 1900
1011	Early medieval/local medieval unglazed ware	Body	1	0.001	11th to 14th century, probably 11th to 12th century

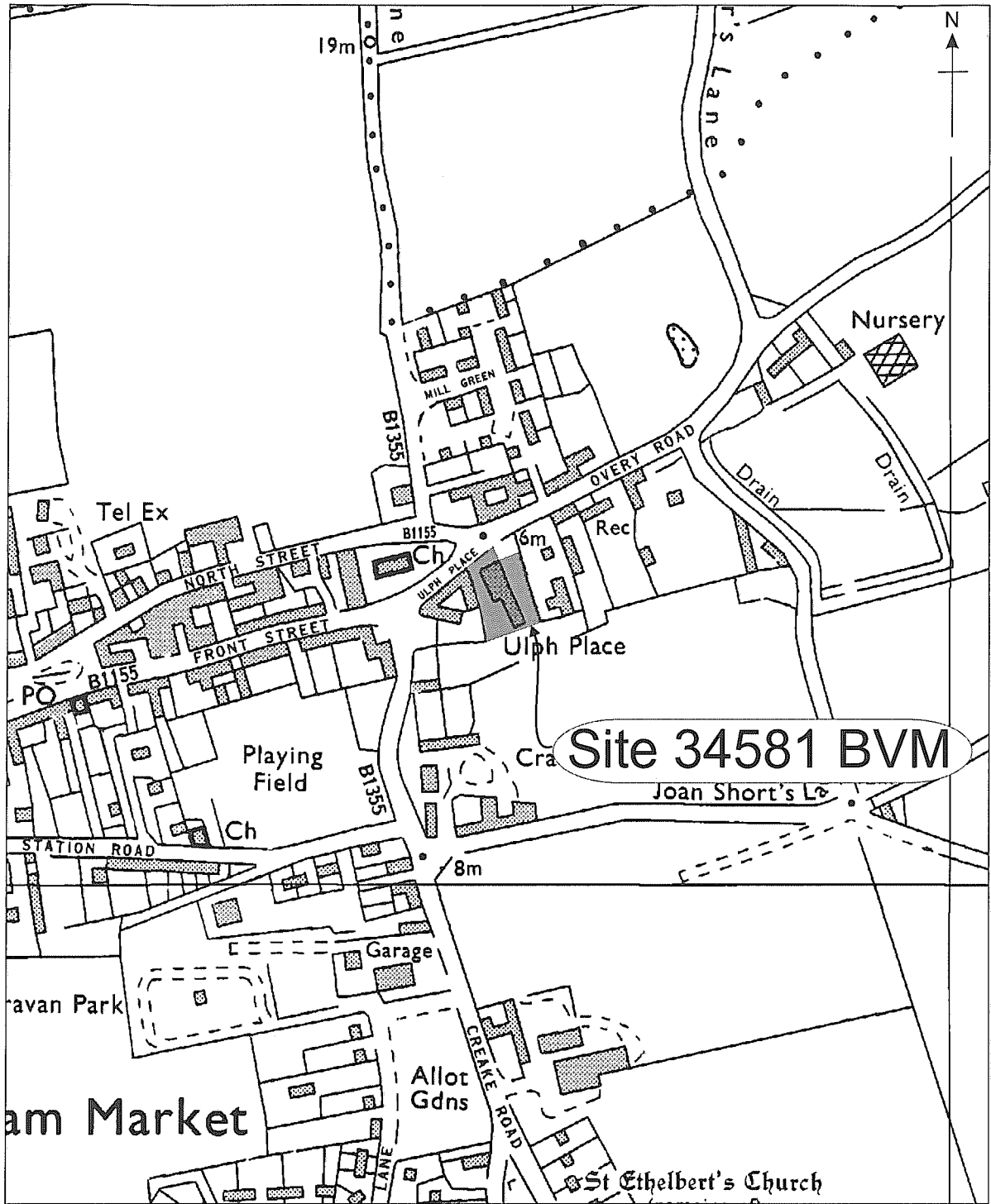


Figure 1. Site Location. Scale 1:5,000

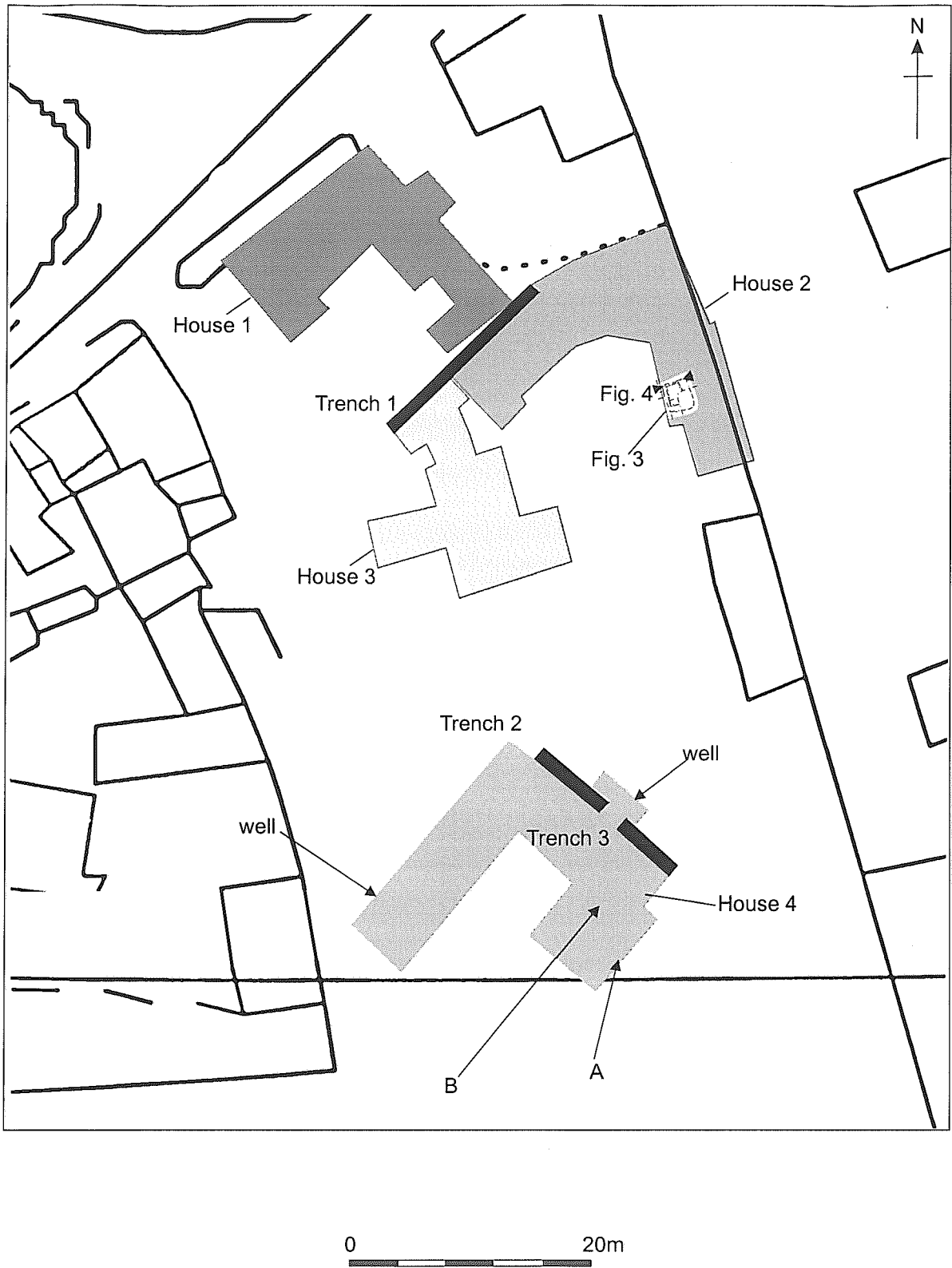


Figure 2. Location of Trenches 1 - 3 and Houses 1 - 4. Scale 1:500

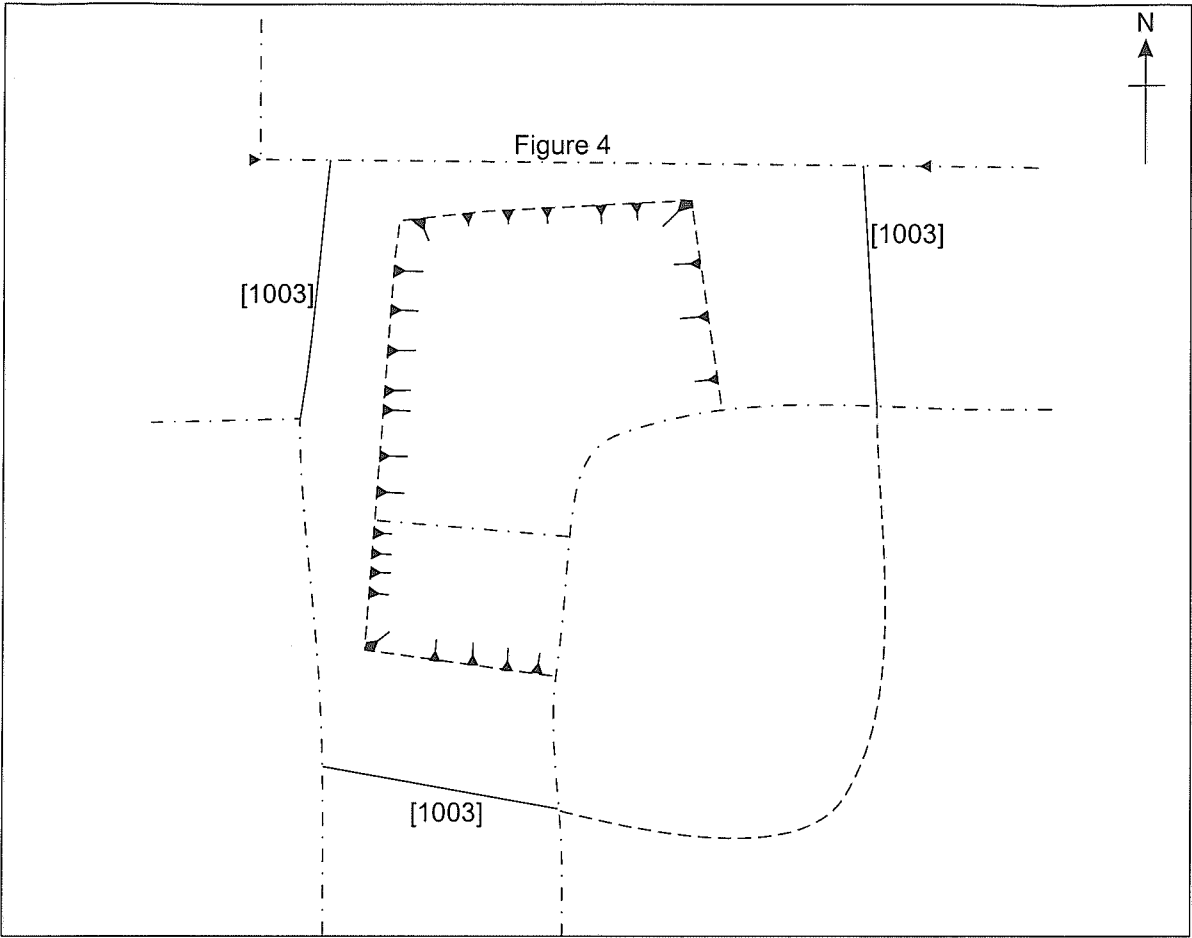


Figure 3. Pit [1003], plan. Scale 1:20

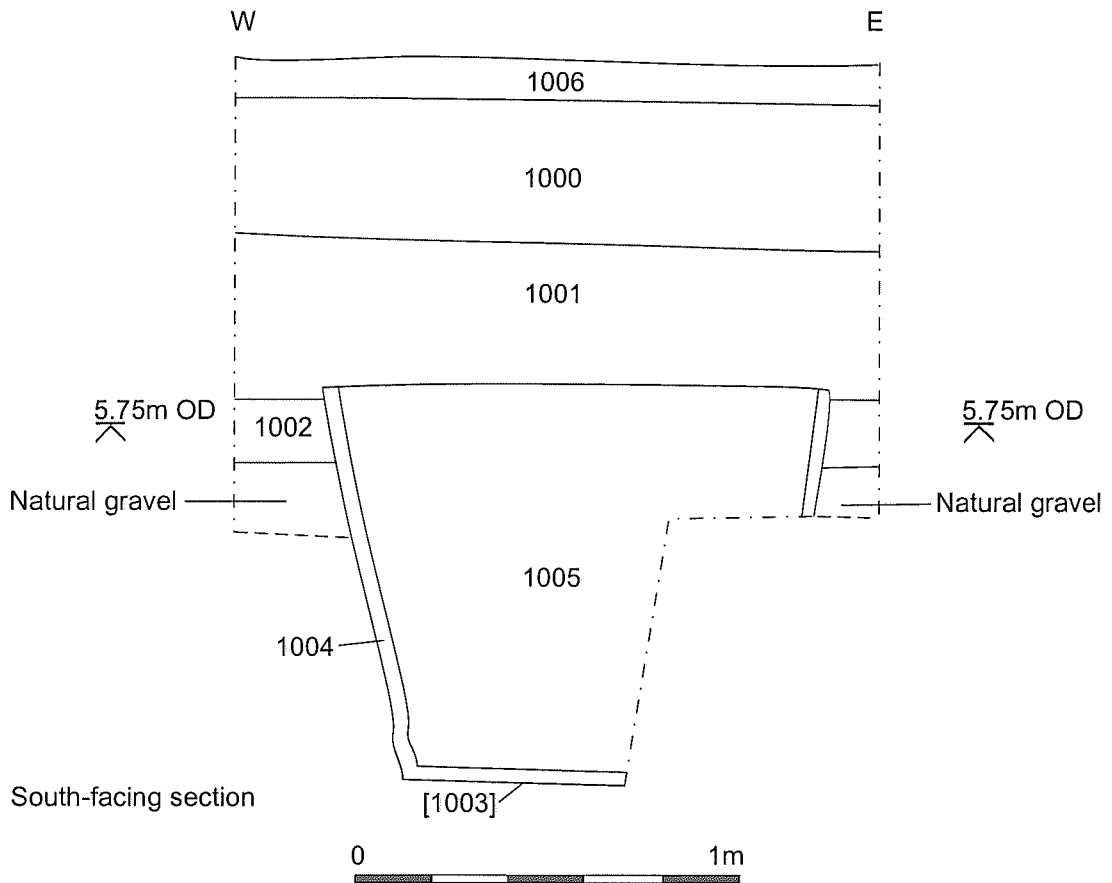


Figure 4. Pit [1003], section. Scale 1:20

