

**NORFOLK ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT**

Report No. 803

**An Archaeological Evaluation at  
12-14 West Avenue,  
Ormesby St Margaret, Norfolk**

38047 ZRS

Kenneth Penn

April 2003

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Local Authority No.076759

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Location: 12-14 West Avenue, Ormesby St Margaret  
Grid Ref: TG 4931 1508  
HER No.: 38047 ZRS  
Date of Fieldwork: 19th February 2003

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## **Summary**

*An evaluation was undertaken within the area of a single house at West Avenue, Ormesby St Margaret. Part of a pit, of uncertain but possibly post-medieval date was the only archaeological feature present.*

## **1.0 Introduction**

Fig. 1

The site, within the footprint of a proposed new dwelling, was located on the north side of West Avenue close to where previous archaeological work had been undertaken to the east and north-east (Bates 2002; Bates 2003). This earlier work revealed the existence of archaeological remains, the majority of which were dated to the medieval period and was interpreted as part of a post-hole building and other features. The possible presence of the medieval manor within the development area made an archaeological intervention on this site necessary. This work involved the evaluation of one area (measuring 4m x 4m) within the footprint of the proposed development, the results of which are detailed within this report.

The work was commissioned and funded by the landowner Mr Graham Chapman.

This archaeological evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a Method Statement prepared by the Norfolk Archaeological Unit (NAU Ref: JB/1207) and a Brief issued by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (NLA Ref: A R J Hutcheson 12/06/01).

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 underlying geology is of London Clay (British Geological Survey 1985). Overlying this are glacial deposits of clays, and sands and gravels which form an island rising above the marine and river alluviums of the surrounding valleys (Wade-Martins 1994, 14). This geological island is now known as the Isle of Flegg; it consists of the historical hundreds of West and East Flegg. The overlying soils are rich loams, which are some of the most productive soils in the county (Wade-Martins 1994, 18).

The area of the site lies in gardens and is virtually level with a surface height of c.4.50m OD. Overlying the undisturbed geological deposits was an orangey brown coloured clayey fine sand subsoil and the modern topsoil, each of which was up to 0.30m in depth.

## **3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background**

Ormesby is known to have had four churches in the medieval period (Batcock 1991, 161) although today only those of St Margaret, to the south east of Ormesby St

Margaret and St Michael, some distance to the east in Ormesby St Michael, are still standing. The Norfolk Historic Environment Record (HER) shows the site of St Peter's Church (Site 8648) as being about 500m to the south-west of the present site. The site of the fourth church, Ormesby St Andrew, is thought to be just to the south-east of the present site; the HER records the discovery of substantial foundations, possibly those of the church, in the garden of 21 West Road in 1927 (Site 11737).

Prior to the adjacent excavation in 2002, no previous archaeological work had been carried out in the vicinity of the site. Records suggest the garden of 12-14 West Avenue contains the site of the former 'Manor House' (Site 8580) which was still standing in 1836 and is shown on the 1888 Ordnance Survey map as a large building with attached outbuildings. It burnt down in the late 19th century. It is possible that this was also the site of the earlier medieval manor. The proximity of the possible site of the church also suggests that the present site lies within the medieval core of Ormesby.

Located approximately 250m to the south-west of the site lies an oval moat (Site 21501) which may have been associated with a track-way and a building with a vaulted undercroft, all possibly of medieval date. Another possible medieval moated site may have existed to the south at the site of Ormesby Hall (Site 8650). The line of an old road as well as cropmarks of field systems (Site 18320), just to the north of the site of St Peter's Church are also probably of medieval date and finds dating to that period have been recovered by metal detecting in that area.

The HER also shows cropmark evidence for a ring ditch and linear features of probable Bronze Age date (Site 12179) and other undated cropmarks (Site 19534) approximately 400m to the west of the site beyond the present built-up area.

## **4.0 Methodology**

Fig. 2

A single trench 4m x 4m was excavated. Machine excavation was carried out with a tracked 360° mini-excavator using a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Overburden was removed until the undisturbed geological deposits, or archaeological deposits, were revealed.

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

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 photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

Due to the lack of suitable deposits, no environmental samples were taken.

A level was transferred from an Ordnance Survey benchmark of 4.69m on the south-western corner of the Baptist Chapel on West Road.

## 5.0 Results

Figs. 2 & 3

Removal of the topsoil [001] and subsoil [002] to a ginger yellow clayey sand with patches of grit and gravel, interpreted as natural, revealed a single archaeological feature. This constituted an oval pit ([003]) only partly within the excavated area. This contained two fills, an upper fill ([004]) that graded down from the topsoil ([001]), and a lower fill ([005]). Both were compact dark grey sandy silts.

In the section, it could be seen that pit [003] cut the subsoil ([002]).

Dating of the pit from its finds was not possible; it contained just two small fragments of amorphous iron and a single residual prehistoric flint. The fact that it cut through the subsoil however, which produced several datable finds, suggests a post-medieval date for this feature.

## 6.0 The Finds (Appendix 2)

The finds were few and mostly post-medieval in date, except for five prehistoric flints that are discussed in more detail below. The only possible medieval objects were the pieces of brick or tile, but the absence of other datable material to confirm this early date means the possibility that these artefacts are also post-medieval cannot be discounted.

### The Flint (Appendix 3)

A total of five pieces of struck flint were recovered from the site. Four pieces were from context [002]. These include a piercer made of a flake with retouch along one side forming a protruding broad flat point, two small flakes and a small fragment of another flake. A thick broad flake, struck by hard hammer, came from context [004]. It has slight retouch along its steep distal end forming a scraper-like implement. The piece is edge-damaged but its blunt left distal point may also have been utilised.

The flints indicate activity in the vicinity of the site during the prehistoric period. The thick broad flake probably dates to the later prehistoric period (later Neolithic to Iron Age) and the other pieces may be of the same date.

## 7.0 Discussion and Conclusions

The evaluation demonstrated that only one archaeological feature of indeterminate date was present in the area examined. This feature, combined with the artefactual evidence, suggests that the focus of the medieval manor lies some distance away.

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

## **Acknowledgements**

The archaeological work was funded by Mr Graham Chapman, the landowner. His co-operation and assistance is gratefully acknowledged. The excavation was carried out by Kenneth Penn with Sarah Leppard. The finds were processed by Lucy Talbot, the pottery was identified by the author and the flint comments on by Sarah Bates.

The report was illustrated and produced by Maggie Foottit and was edited by Alice Lyons.

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## Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context	Type	Description	Phase
001	Deposit	Topsoil. Mid grey-brown sandy loam with few stones.	Post-medieval
002	Deposit	Subsoil. Paler grey-brown sandy loam with few stones. Cut by 003.	Post-medieval
003	Cut	Cut for oval pit. Cuts 002. Contains 004, 005	Undated
004	Deposit	Upper fill of 003. Grey brown sandy silt with occasional chalk fleck.	Undated
005	Deposit	Lower fill of 003. Dark grey-brown clay silt, with occasional pebbles and chalk fleck.	Undated

## Appendix 2: Finds by Context

Context	Period	Material	Description	Quantity (object count)	Spot date
001	Post-medieval	Pottery	Glazed red earthen ware	1	18th to 19th century
001	Post-medieval	Pottery	Transfer printed earthenware (willow pattern)	1	19th century
001	Post-medieval	Tile		4	
002	Later Neolithic to Iron Age	Flint	Flakes	4	
002	Post-medieval	Clay tobacco pipe		2	
002	Post-medieval	Glass	Vessel rim	1	
002	Post-medieval	Pottery	Unglazed sherd of red earthen ware	1	
002	Post-medieval	Pottery	Tin glazed earthen ware, grey slip	1	?18th century
002	Post-medieval	Pottery	Tin-glazed earthenware, white slip	1	?19th century
002	Post-medieval	Pottery	Salt-glazed stoneware.	1	19th century
002	Post-medieval	Ceramic building material	Brick and tile	6	
004	Later Neolithic-Iron Age	Flint	Flake	1	
004		Iron	Fragments	2	

## Appendix 3: Flint

Context	Type	Description	Number
002	Flake	Both are quite small	2
002	Flake	Small fragment	1
002	Piercer	Blade-like flake has retouch along left edge forming	1

		pronounced 'spur' or point	
004	Retouched flake/?scraper	Broad thick hh flake, slight retouch along one steep edge forms scraper-like piece	1

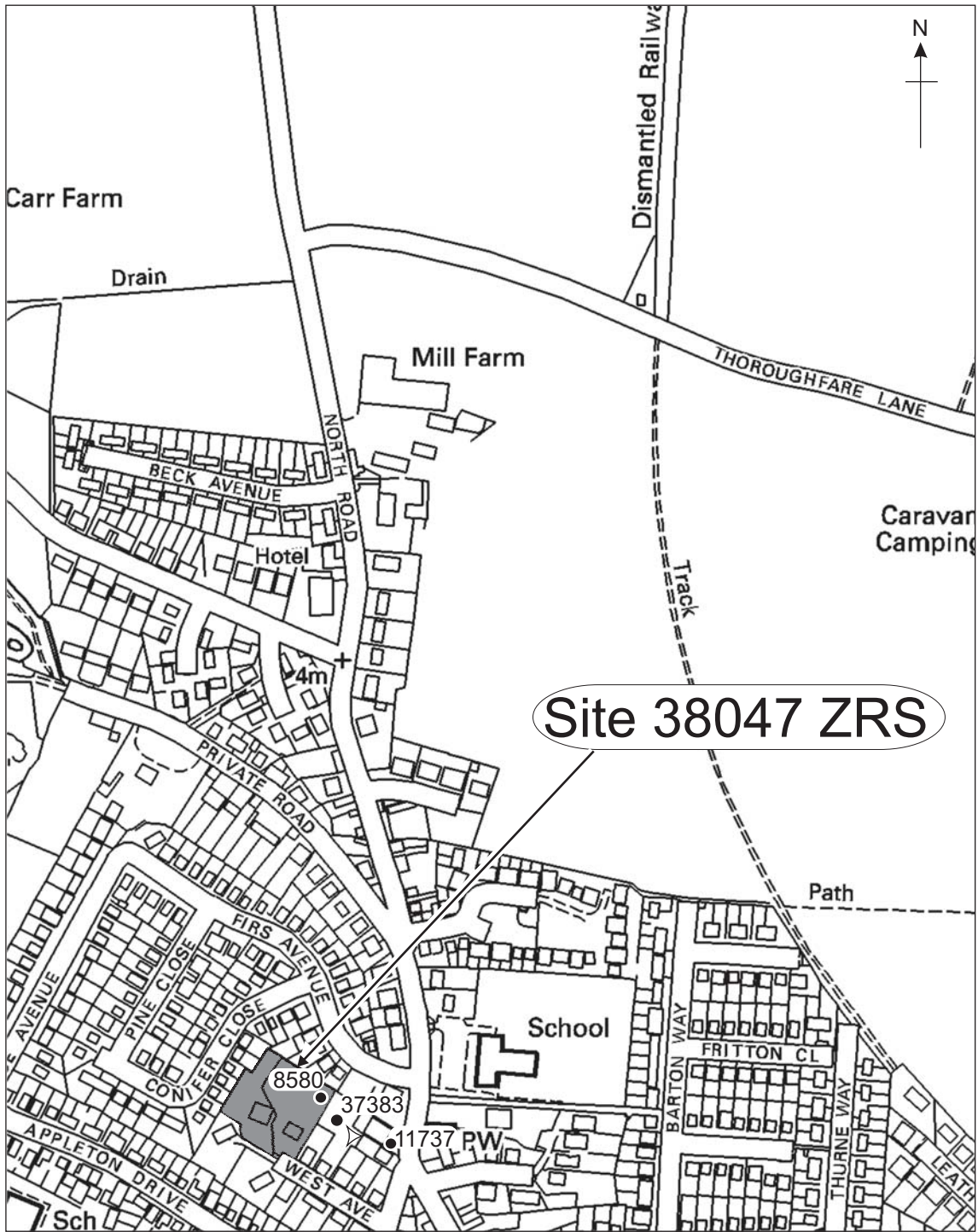


Figure 1. Site Location. Scale 1:5,000

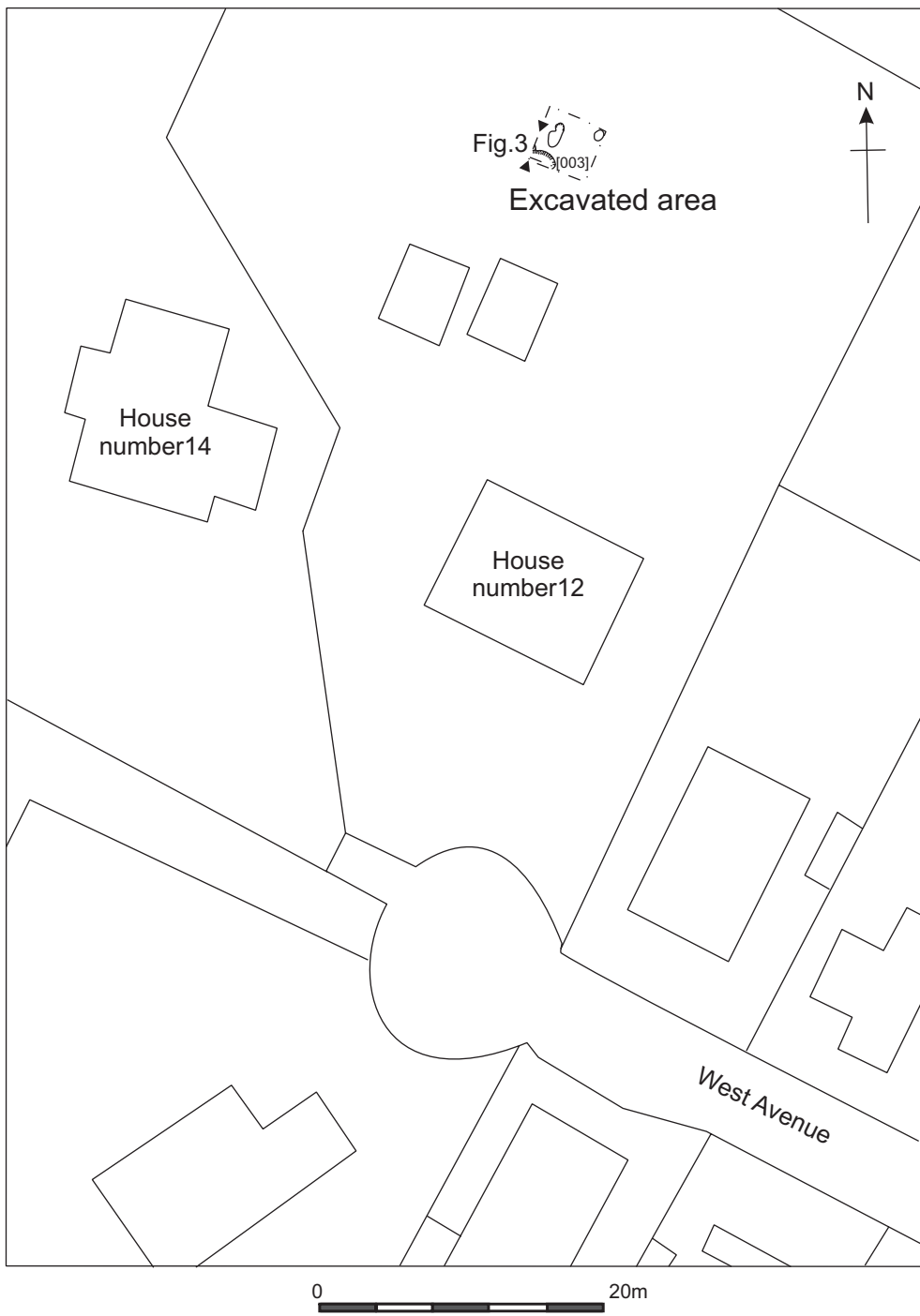


Figure 2. Trench Location. Scale 1:500

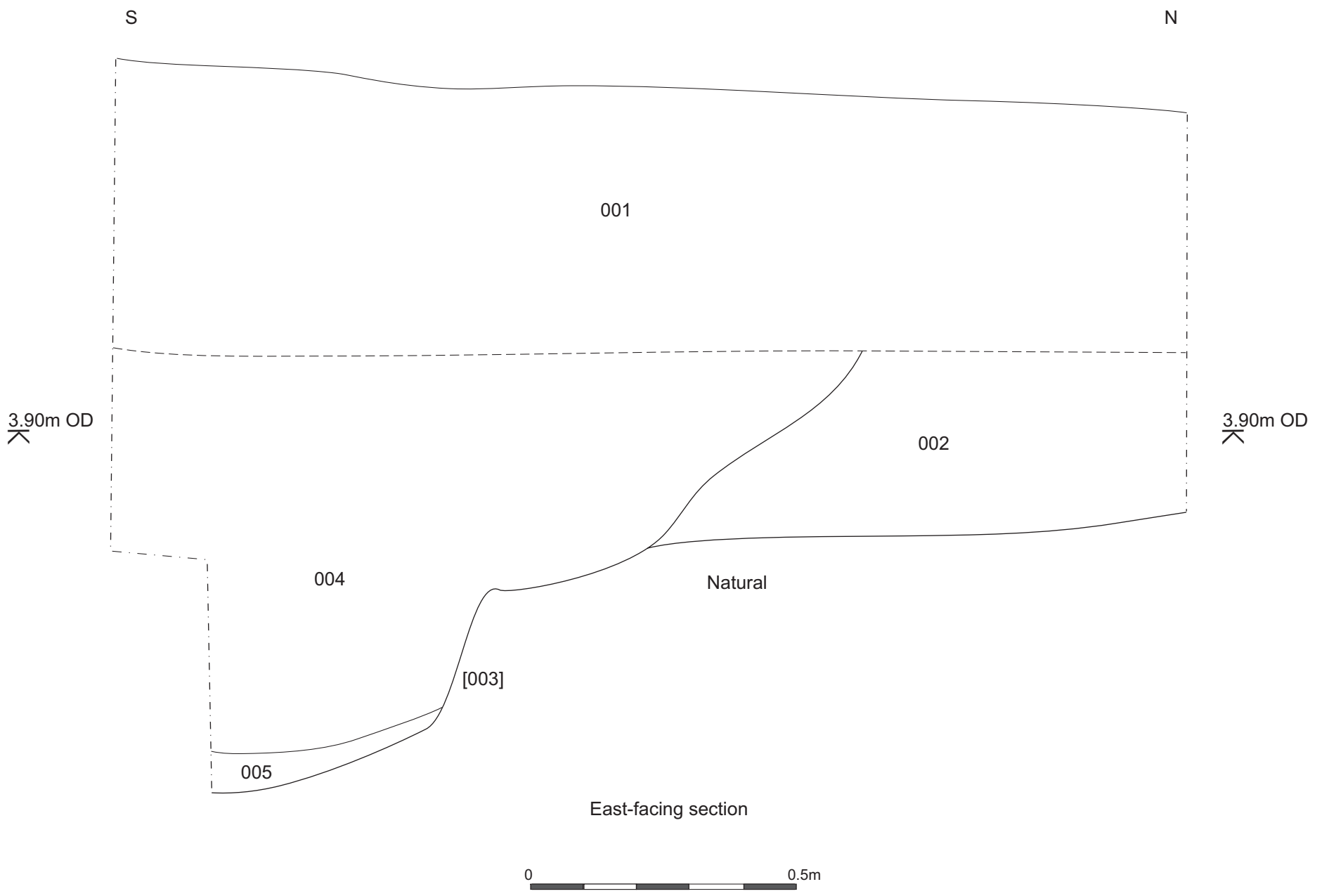


Figure 3. Section of Pit [003]. Scale 1:10