Aldhurst Farm, Leiston, Suffolk. LCS 180

Archaeological Evaluation Report

SCCAS Report No. 2014/133

Client: AMEC E&I UK Ltd. on behalf of EDF Energy

Author: Linzi Everett

February 2015

HER Information

Report Number:	**2014/133**
Site Name:	**Aldhurst Farm, Leiston**
Planning Application No:	**DC/14/4224/FUL**
Date of Fieldwork:	**8th - 12th November 2014**
Grid Reference:	**TM 4500 6352**
Commissioned by:	**AMEC E&I UK Ltd.**
Curatorial Officer:	**Matthew Brudenell**
Project Officer:	**Linzi Everett**
Oasis Reference:	**suffolkc1- 197026**
Site Code:	**LCS 180**

Digital report submitted to Archaeological Data Service:
http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit

Disclaimer

Any opinions expressed in this report about the need for further archaeological work are those of the Field Projects Team alone. Ultimately the need for further work will be determined by the Local Planning Authority and its Archaeological Advisors when a planning application is registered. Suffolk County Council's archaeological contracting services cannot accept responsibility for inconvenience caused to the clients should the Planning Authority take a different view to that expressed in the report.

Prepared By: Linzi Everett
Date: February 2015

Approved By:
Position:
Date:
Signed:

Contents

List of Figures

List of Plates

List of Tables

List of Appendices

Summary

Seven trenches were excavated on land at Aldhurst Farm, Leiston, in order to characterise the date, nature and extent of potential archaeology prior to the creation of a wetland habitat. In addition, the trenches were positioned in order to identify the interface between dry land and former wetland.

A number of ditches were recorded, some of which could be related to boundaries shown on historic maps. One ditch, present in two trenches in the eastern part of the site, is likely to be a WWII, or at least recent, feature. Abraded medieval pottery sherds were recovered from the surface of the field around Trench 2.

1. Introduction

A trial trench evaluation was carried out on land at Aldhurst Farm, Leiston (LCS 180; TM 4500 6352). The proposed development area (hereafter referred to as 'the site') consisted of an area of *c*.9.8 hectares.

The evaluation was carried prior to submission of a planning application (DC/14/4224/FUL) for the creation of a wetland habitat, according to a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) by AMEC E&I UK Ltd., and A Risk Assessment and Method Statement (RAMS) prepared by Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service (SCCAS)/AMEC, detailing the archaeological methodology and risk assessment (Appendix II).

The trial trenching was conducted by the Field Team of SCCAS on the 8th-12th December 2014. The site has been recorded with the Suffolk Historic Environment Record (HER) code LCS 180.

2. Geology and topography

The site comprises a narrow strip, orientated broadly east to west, to the north of the town of Leiston. The evaluation area is generally low lying arable land (in the region of 5m OD) at the base of a gentle south to north slope. It is bounded by a drainage channel to the north, roads to the east and west and arable land to the south. The underlying geology of the area consists of Red Crag overlain with sands and gravels, with overlying deposits of sandy alluvium and outcrops of peat.

3. Archaeology and historical background

The sites potential was based on its location close to a number of sites and findspots recorded in the Suffolk HER which are fully described in a desk based assessment prepared for the site (AMEC, 2014). Prehistoric evidence includes two mesolithic maceheads (LCS 005; MSF806) found in a clay pit and two

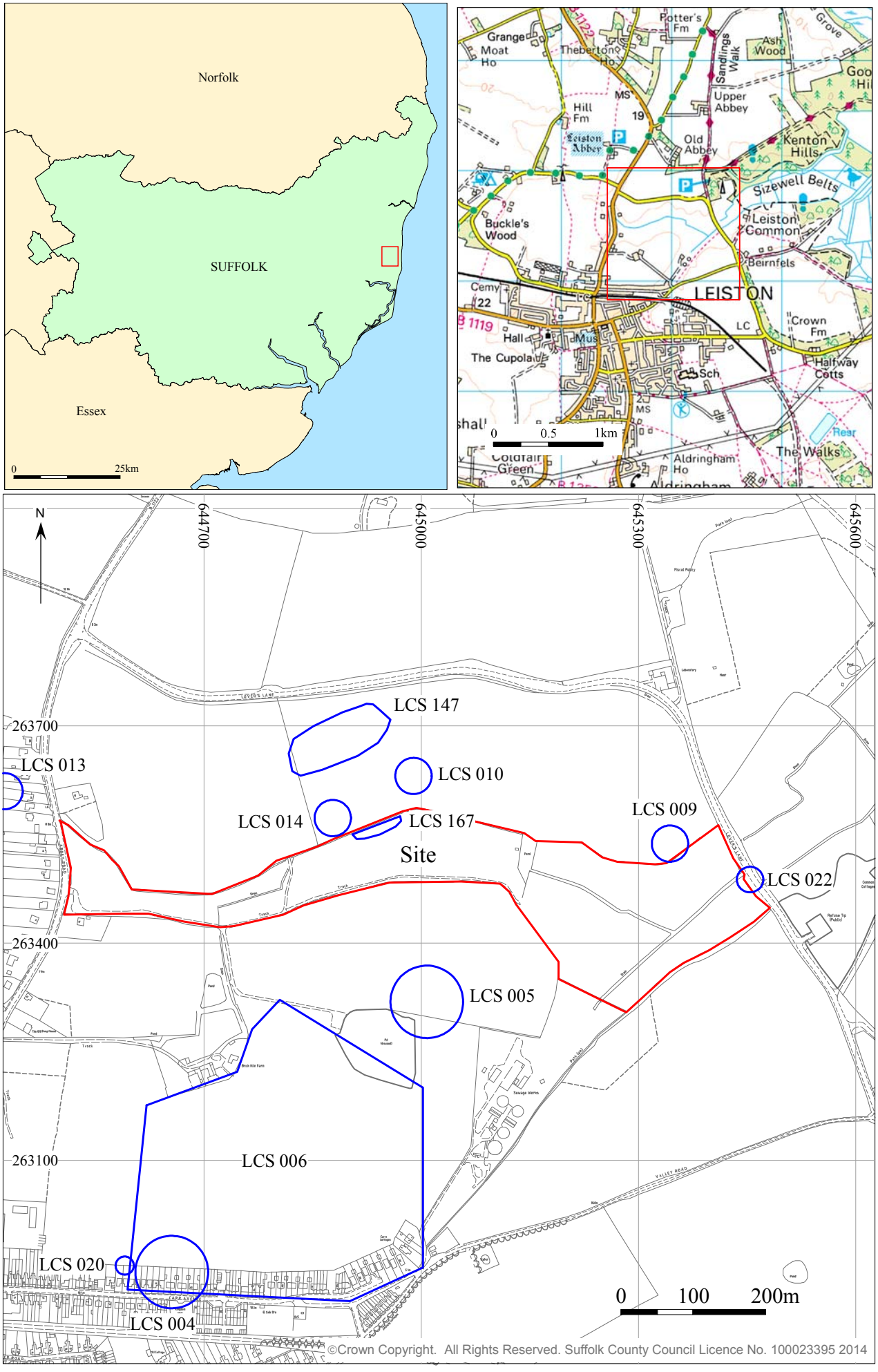

Figure 1. Site location (red), showing Historic Environment Record entries (blue)

Bronze Age cinerary urns (LCS 004; MSF2343). Undated cropmarks to the south of the site (LCS 006; MSF4001 and LCS 020; MSF14093) may also include Prehistoric elements, and a dense scatter of burnt flints (LCS 167; MSF26807) could be remains of a Bronze Age burnt mound, albeit no longer in-situ.
The Roman period is represented by two Roman coins (LCS 013; MSF11527) and pottery sherds (LCS 010; MSF11524 MSF12096) found in association with medieval pottery. Other scatters of medieval material (LCS 009; MSF11903 and LCS 014; MSF12097) and eight Henry II pennies (LCS 147; MSF26809) are recorded immediately north of the site.
A post-medieval bridge is shown on Hodkinson's map dated 1783 (LCS 022; MSF16889).

4. Methodology

Trenching was conducted using a tracked machine equipped with a 1.8m wide toothless ditching bucket. All machining was observed by an archaeologist standing adjacent to the trench. Topsoil and overburden layers were removed by machine to reveal undisturbed natural subsoil and/or archaeological deposits, to a maximum depth of 0.6m. Where the required level was not reached by 0.6m, small areas were machined to the required depth and backfilled immediately that appropriate records had been made of the depth and nature of deposits revealed.

The base of each trench was examined for features or finds of archaeological interest. The upcast soil was examined visually for any archaeological finds and subject to metal detector survey. Records were made of the position and length of trenches and the depths of deposits encountered.

The site has been given the Suffolk HER code LCS 180. All elements of the site archive are identified with this code. An OASIS record (for the Archaeological Data Service) has been initiated and the reference code suffolkc1-197026 has been used for this project.

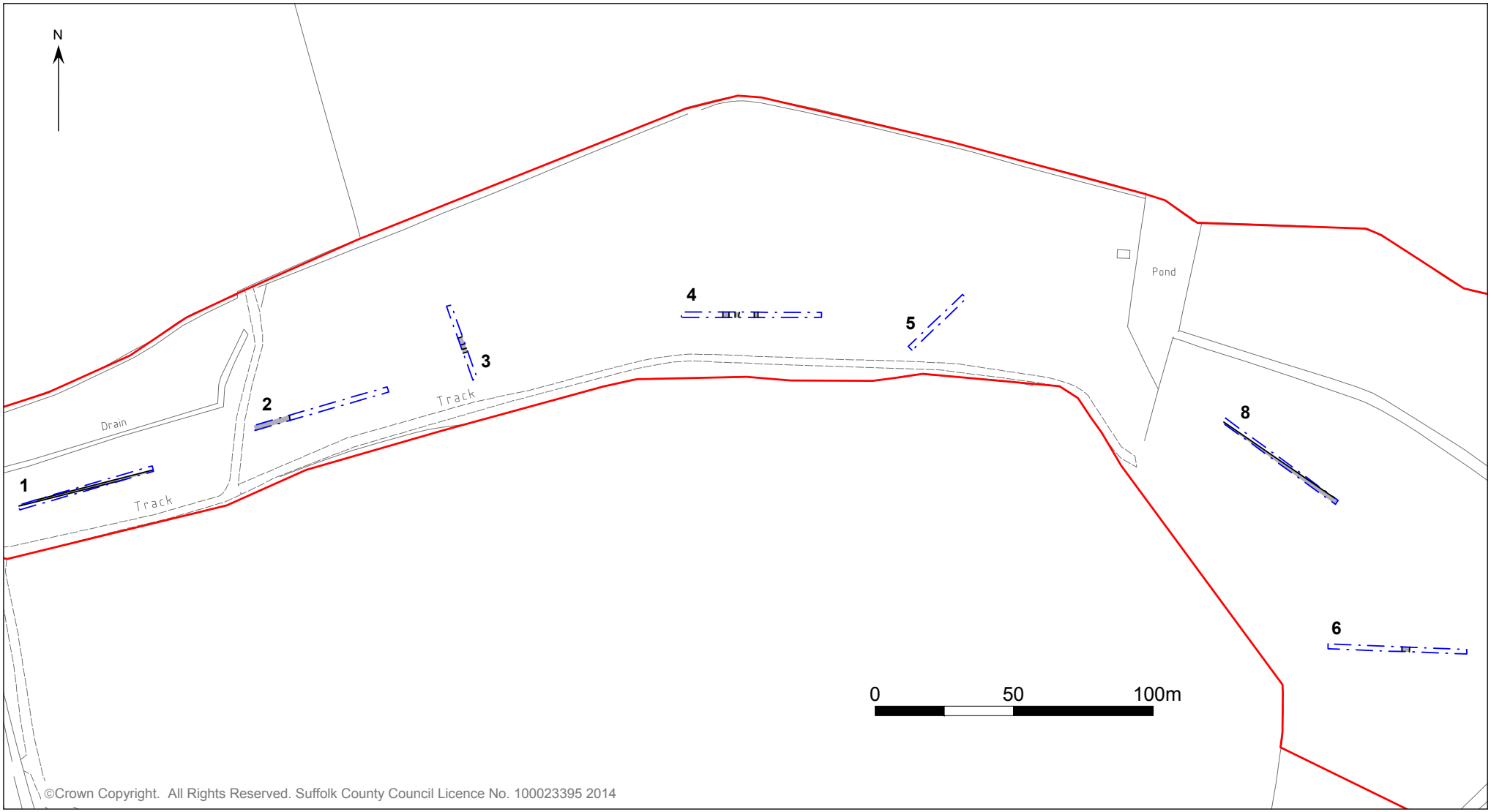

Figure 2. Location of trenches with features shown in grey

5. Results

Seven trenches were excavated across the site (Fig. 2), the dimensions of which are recorded in Table 1. A total area of 549 square metres was excavated. An eighth trench (Trench 7) planned on the extreme eastern edge of the site, was not excavated as borehole information had shown the area to be entirely peat deposits.

Trench	Length	Area	Features
1	50m	90m²	0003
2	50m	90m²	0005
3	28m	50.4m²	0006; 0008
4	50m	90m²	0012; 0014; 0016; 0018
5	27m	48.6 m²	-
6	50m	90m²	0019
8	50m	90m²	0019

Table 1. Trench dimensions

The natural subsoil varied within the trenches and from trench to trench but largely comprised fine sands, either waterborne or associated with dry land deposits. Topsoil consisted of a mid-dark grey brown loamy clay, slightly sandy, with occasional chalk flecks in Trenches 1-5 (assigned context number 0001), whilst in Trenches 6 and 8, it was a dark brown sandy clay loam, numbered 0023. In both cases, the topsoil averaged *c*.0.3m thick and had been heavily ploughed.

Trench 1 (Fig. 3)

Topsoil between 0.25m-0.3m thick was stripped from the trench, beneath which was an alluvial deposit of dark grey brown silty clay (0002). Once a depth of 0.6m was reached, test sections were machine excavated through the alluvium which showed layer 0002 to be up to 0.36m thick and to seal a WSW-ENE aligned ditch throughout the length of the trench. Ditch 0003 (Plate 1) was visible in each of the machined test sections and had an average width of 0.75m wide and may relate to a boundary shown on the 3rd edition Ordnance Survey map, dated 1924 (Fig. 18). It was filled by 0004, a grey brown silty clay, largely indistinguishable from the sealing alluvial layer. A 20th century cartridge cap was recovered from the ditch fill.

Seeping groundwater gradually filled each of the machine excavated test sections.

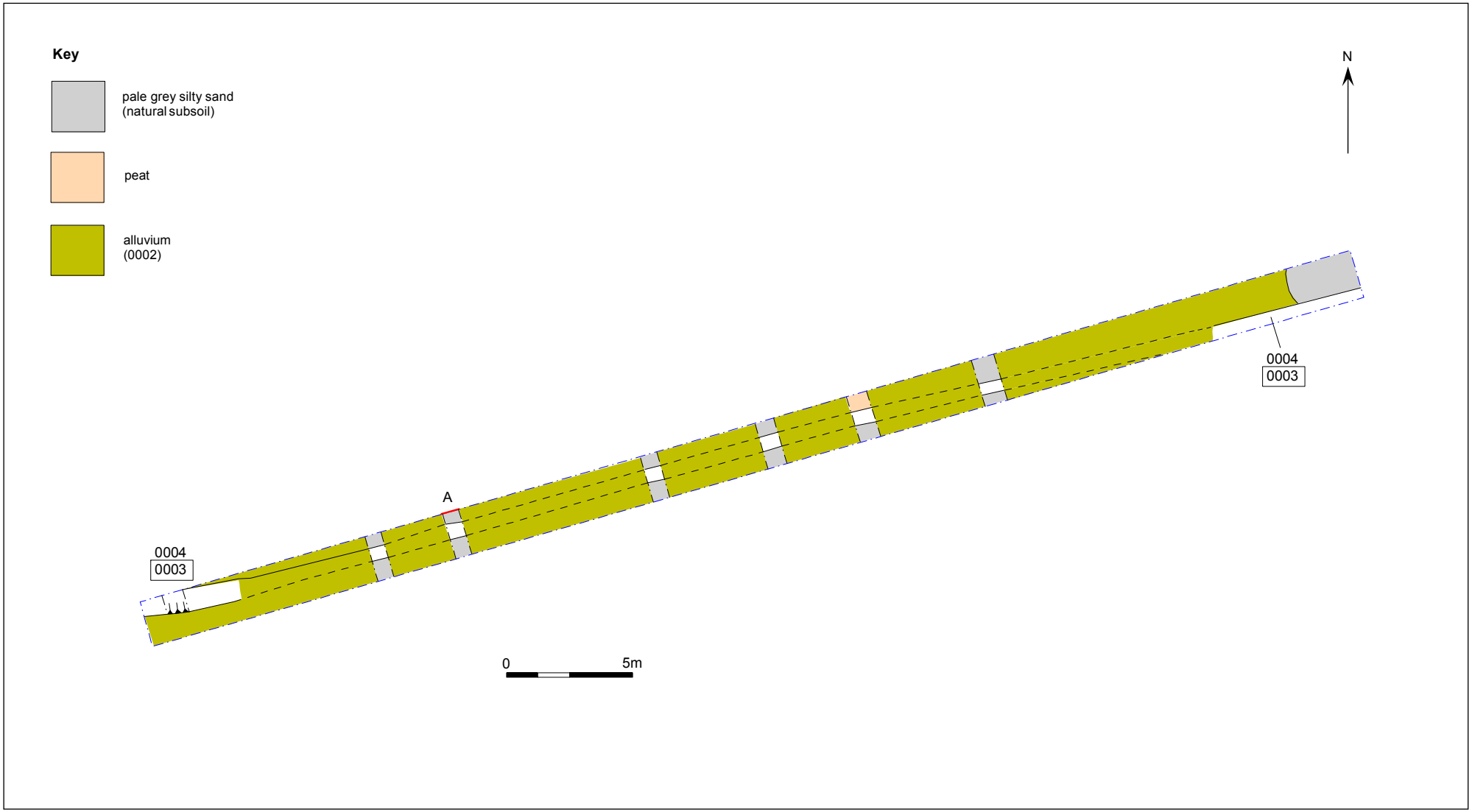

Figure 3. Plan of Trench 1

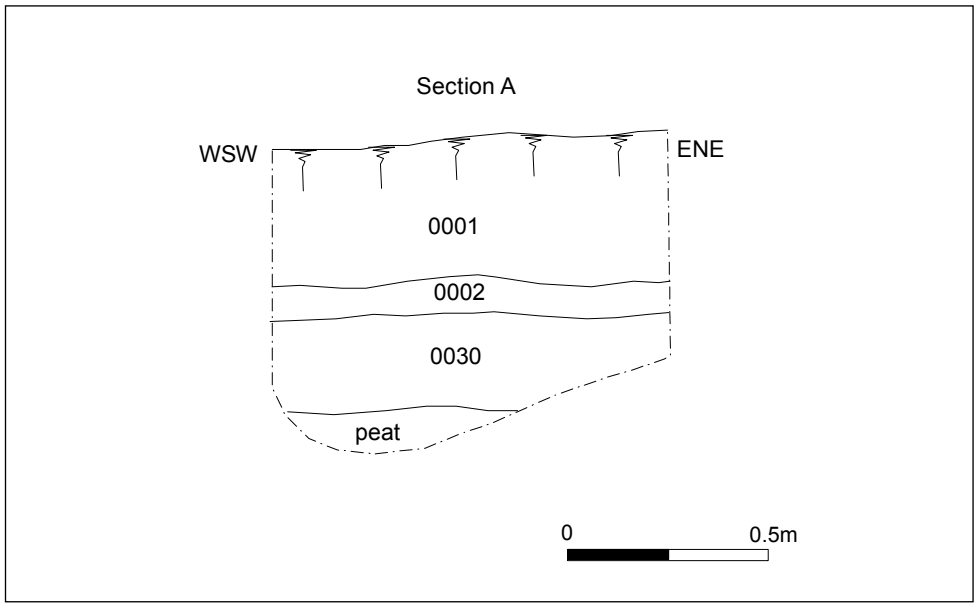

Figure 4. Soil profile at section A, Trench 1

Plate 1. Ditch 0003, looking west

Plate 2. Section A, looking north

Trench 2 (Fig. 5)

The first 13.5m of the western end of the trench was excavated through a large, deep pit, 0005, filled by layers of mid brown sandy silt and clean yellow sand. It was excavated by machine to a depth of 1.1m at which point plastic bags, modern brick and lumps of concrete were encountered, confirming it was backfilled in recent history (Plates 3 & 4). It is likely to relate to a feature shown on the 3rd edition Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 18).

The remaining length of the trench comprised alternate patches of pale greyish brown silty sand and dark brown peaty sand sealed by ploughed topsoil up to 0.3m thick, over which was 0.2m of loose, hillwashed sand.

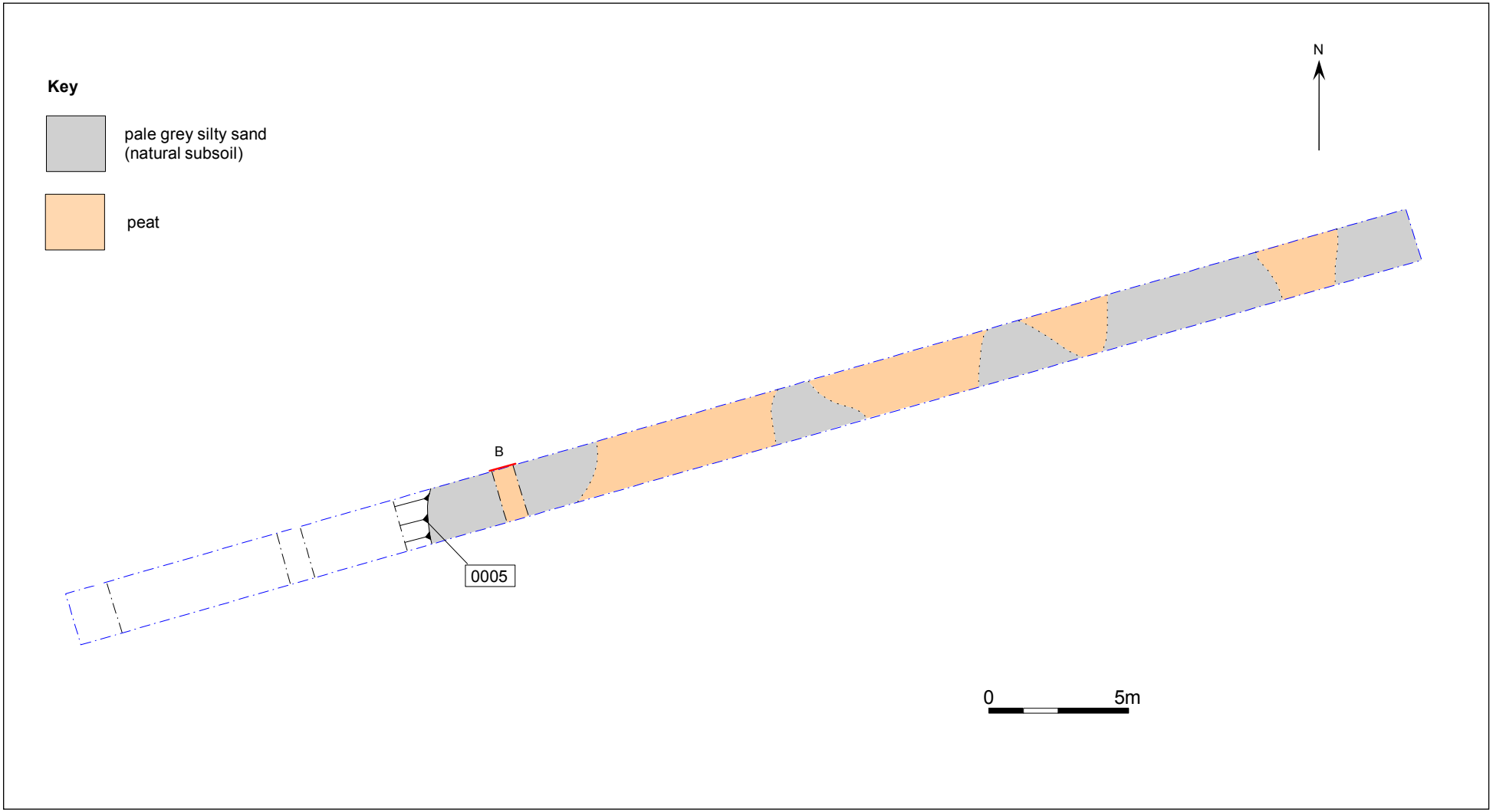

Figure 5. Plan of Trench 2

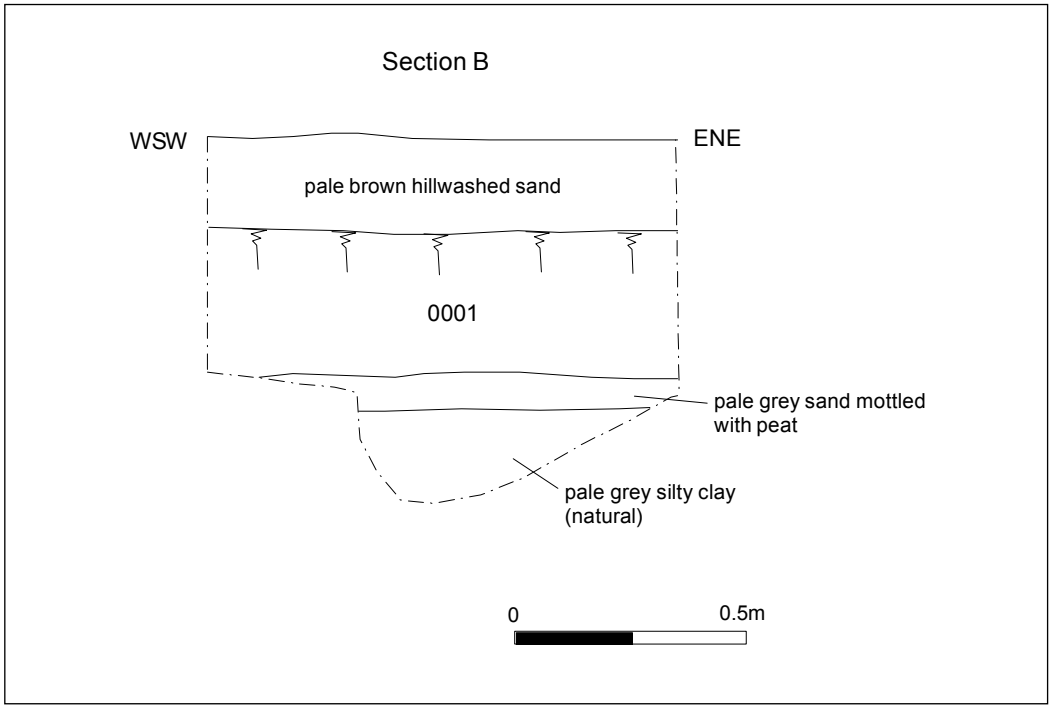

Figure 6. Soil profile, Trench 2

Plate 3. Pit 0005, looking north

Plate 4. Eastern edge of pit 0005, looking north

Trench 3 (Fig. 7)

0006 was an E-W aligned ditch, visible immediately below 0.5m of topsoil. It measured 5.4m wide and over 0.7m deep, with gently sloping sides breaking to a rounded base. It was filled by 0007, a homogenous mid to dark humic sandy clay silt from which a single heat altered flint was recovered but not retained. The ditch appeared to have been recut by a narrower ditch, 0008, which measured *c*.2m wide, with steeper sides. Three distinct fills were recorded within this ditch. The basal fill, 0011, was a dark brown humic layer likely to be associated with standing water in the base of the cut. This was sealed by 0010, a mid grey silty clay over which was 0009, a layer of humic dark grey brown silty sandy clay. No finds were recovered from ditch 0008. It is likely that these two ditches relate to a boundary shown on the 3rd edition Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 18).

Excavation of the trench was stopped at 28m once a transition from dry land deposits to alluvial/wetland deposits was observed in the northern end.

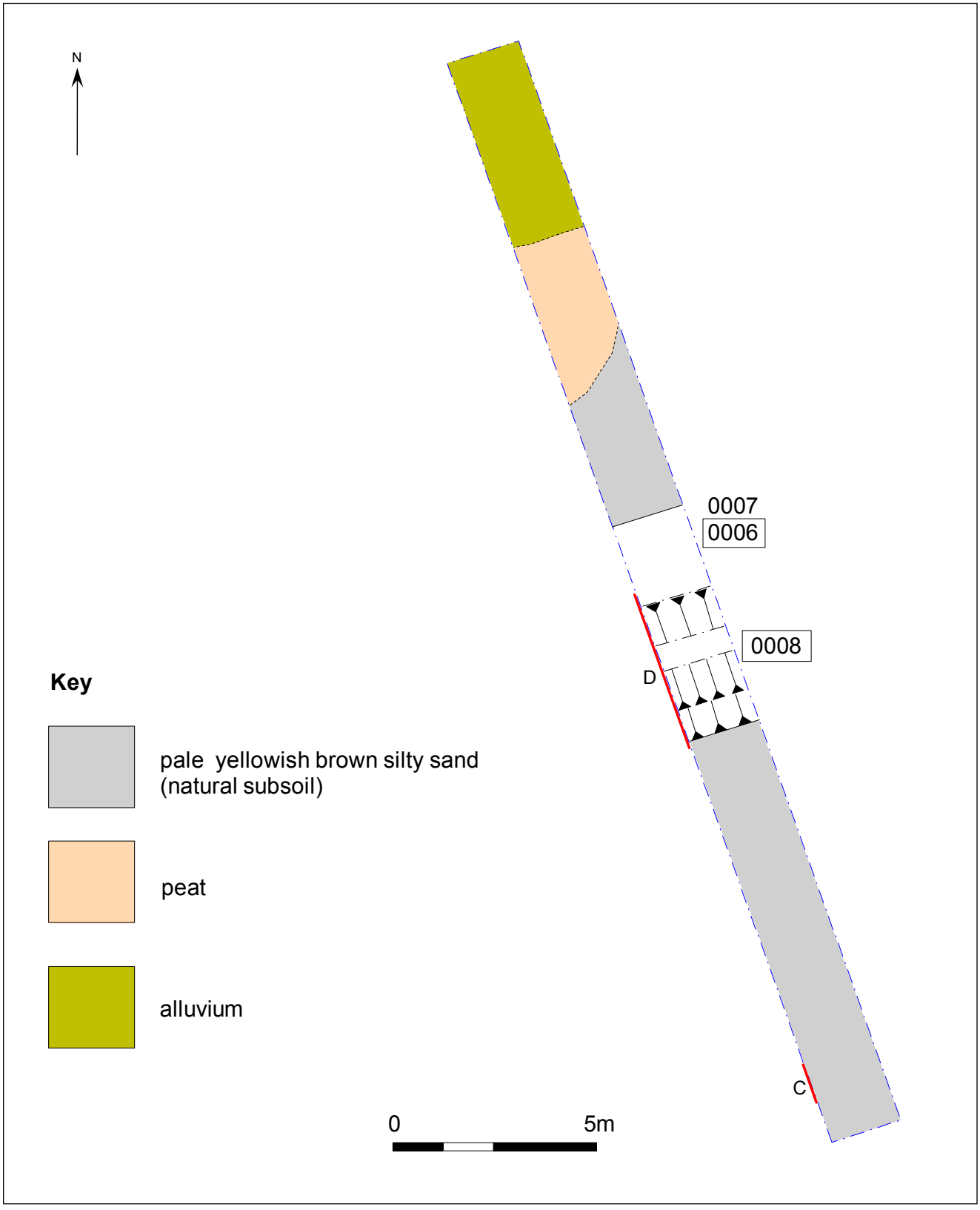

Figure 7. Plan of Trench 3

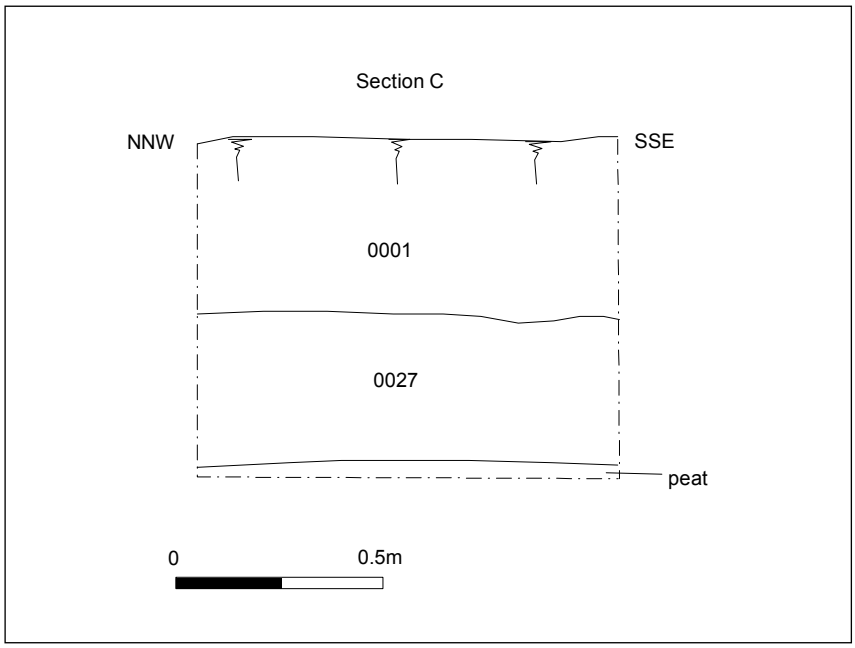

Figure 8. Trench 3 soil profile

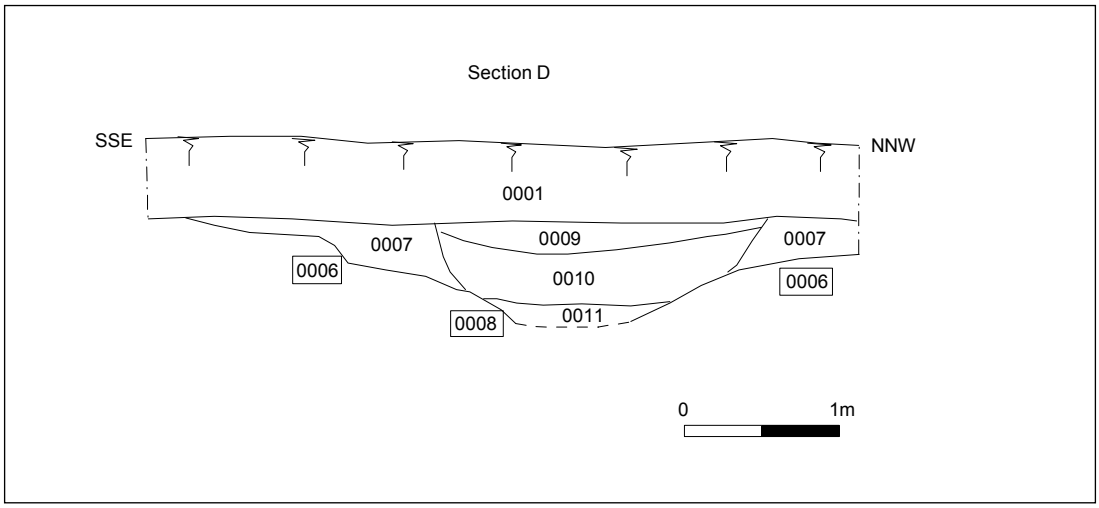

Figure 9. Ditches 0006 and 0008

Plate 5. Oblique view of ditches 0006 and 0008

Trench 4 (Fig. 10)

0.4m of topsoil was stripped from the length of the trench, revealing a pale grey brown sand natural subsoil in the western half of the trench, with one small patch of a peaty deposit. Approximately halfway along the trench, a thin layer of subsoil, 0018, was observed below the topsoil, gradually getting thicker towards the east and present throughout the eastern end of the trench. 0018 comprised a dark brown clay sandy silt mottled with dark brown sand patches and flecked with charcoal and occasional CBM. A test excavation through this layer showed it sealed a rhizome dense peat.

Three N-S aligned ditches were recorded in the centre of the trench. 0012 and 0014 were parallel, separated by a gap of 2.4m. 0012 measured 2.1m wide and 0.77m deep, and was filled by 0013, a mid to dark brown humic silty sand, rather like the topsoil, which contained brick fragments and concrete. 0014 was 1.3m wide and 0.95m deep, and filled by 0015, which was very similar to 0013 but included layers of a course, orange imported sand. These two ditches are likely to relate to a boundary shown on the 3rd edition Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 18).

0016 measured 1.2m wide and 0.8m deep, with a ‘u’ shaped profile (Fig. 11). Its fill, 0017, was like 0013 and 0015, very similar to the topsoil, gradually darker and more humic towards the base of the cut. No finds were recovered.

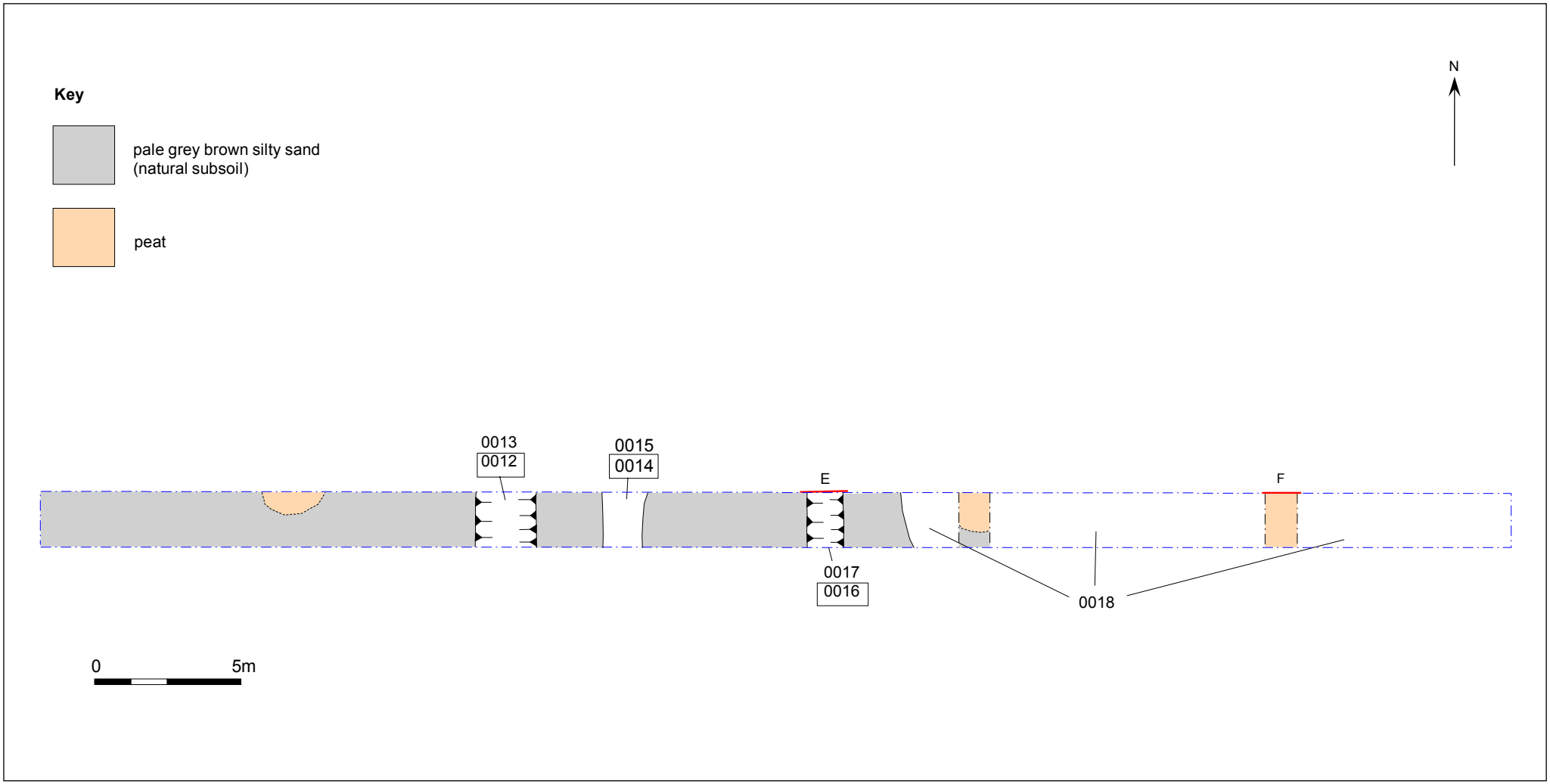

Figure 10. Plan of Trench 4

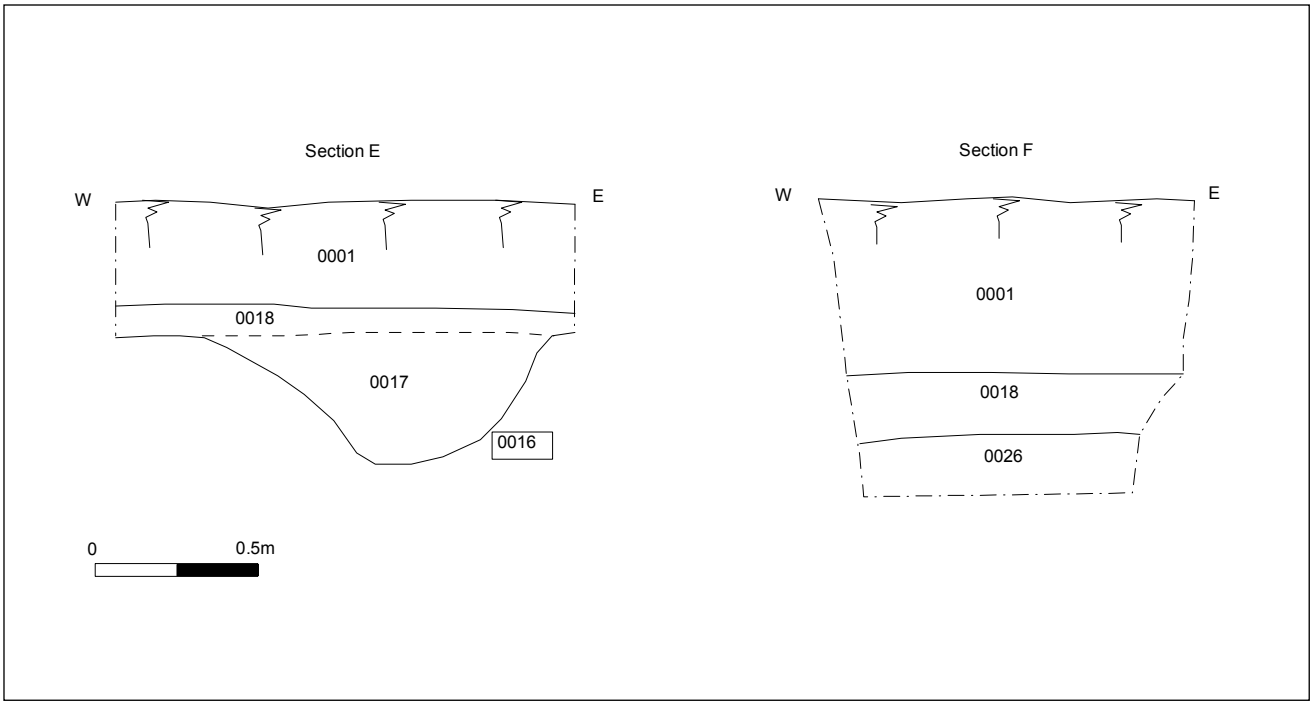

Figure 11. Trench 4 sections

Plate 6. Trench 4, looking east

Trench 5 (Fig. 12)

In the southern end of the trench, a dark brown silty sand mottled with patches of grey brown silty sand (0028) layer was revealed below 0.4m of topsoil. A test excavation through this deposit showed it to be 0.24m thick, sealing a 0.26m thick layer of pale brownish yellow silty sand subsoil, mottled with peat lenses (0029), which in turn sealed peat deposits (Fig. 13).

No cut features were identified in the trench, excavation of which was stopped at 27m once a transition from dry land deposits to alluvial/wetland deposits was observed in the NE end.

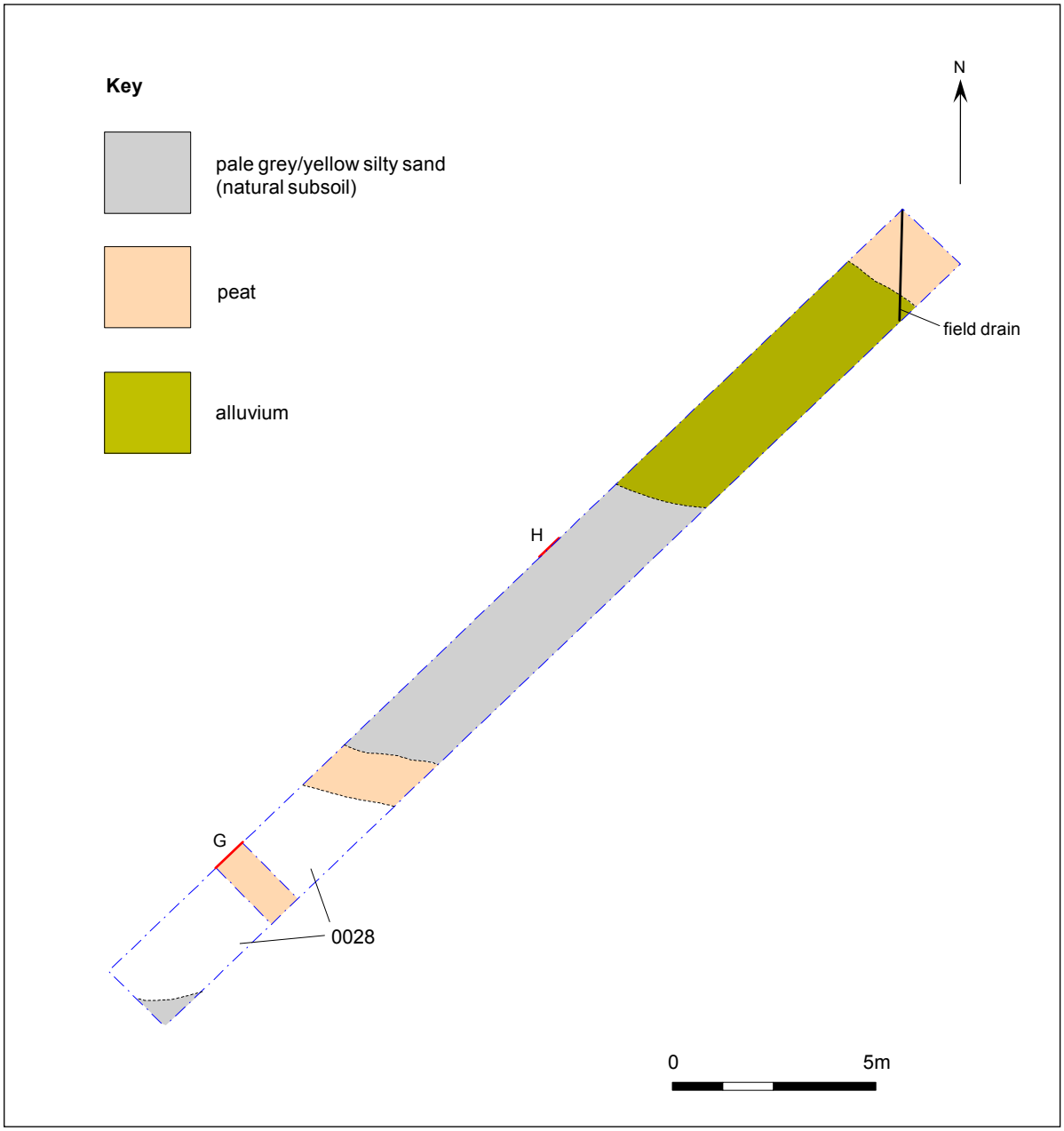

Figure 12. Plan of Trench 5

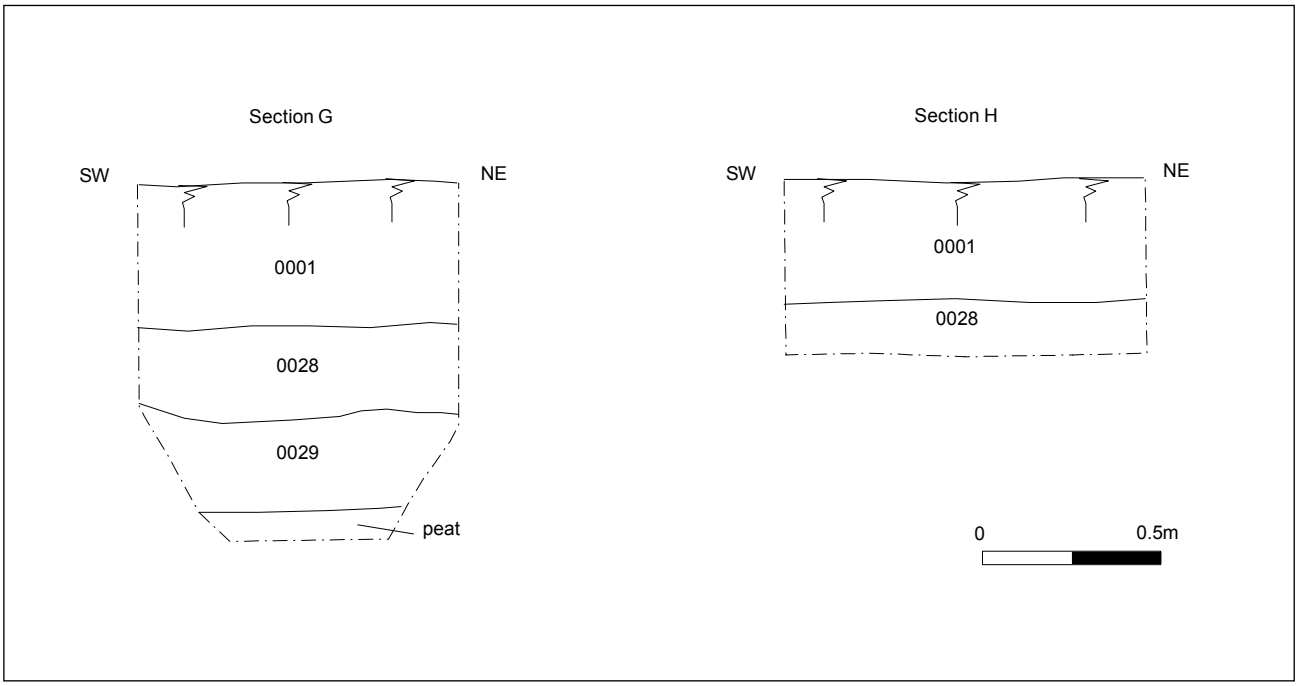

Figure 13. Trench 5 sections

Plate 7. Soil profile G, Trench 5

Plate 8. Soil profile H, Trench 5

Trench 6 (Fig. 14)

0019 was a N-S aligned ditch measuring 2.2m wide which cut across the ditch. It was machine excavated to a depth of 0.8m, showing a steep eastern edge breaking to a flattish base, whilst the western edge sloped gently from the top over, becoming steeper towards the base. Three distinct fills were observed within the cut. The upper fill, 0020, was a mid brown silty clay sand mixed with clean orange sand. 0021 was the main fill of the ditch and comprised a fairly homogenous clean orange sand, sealing 0022, a thin layer of dark brown humic and wet silty sand. The bottom of the excavated section rapidly filled with seeping groundwater which resulted in the base of the cut not quite being established.

No other features or deposits were present within the trench which was characterised by 0.3m of dark brown sandy clay loam ploughed topsoil sealing a uniform pale greyish yellow silty sand natural subsoil.

Plate 9. Trench 6, looking east

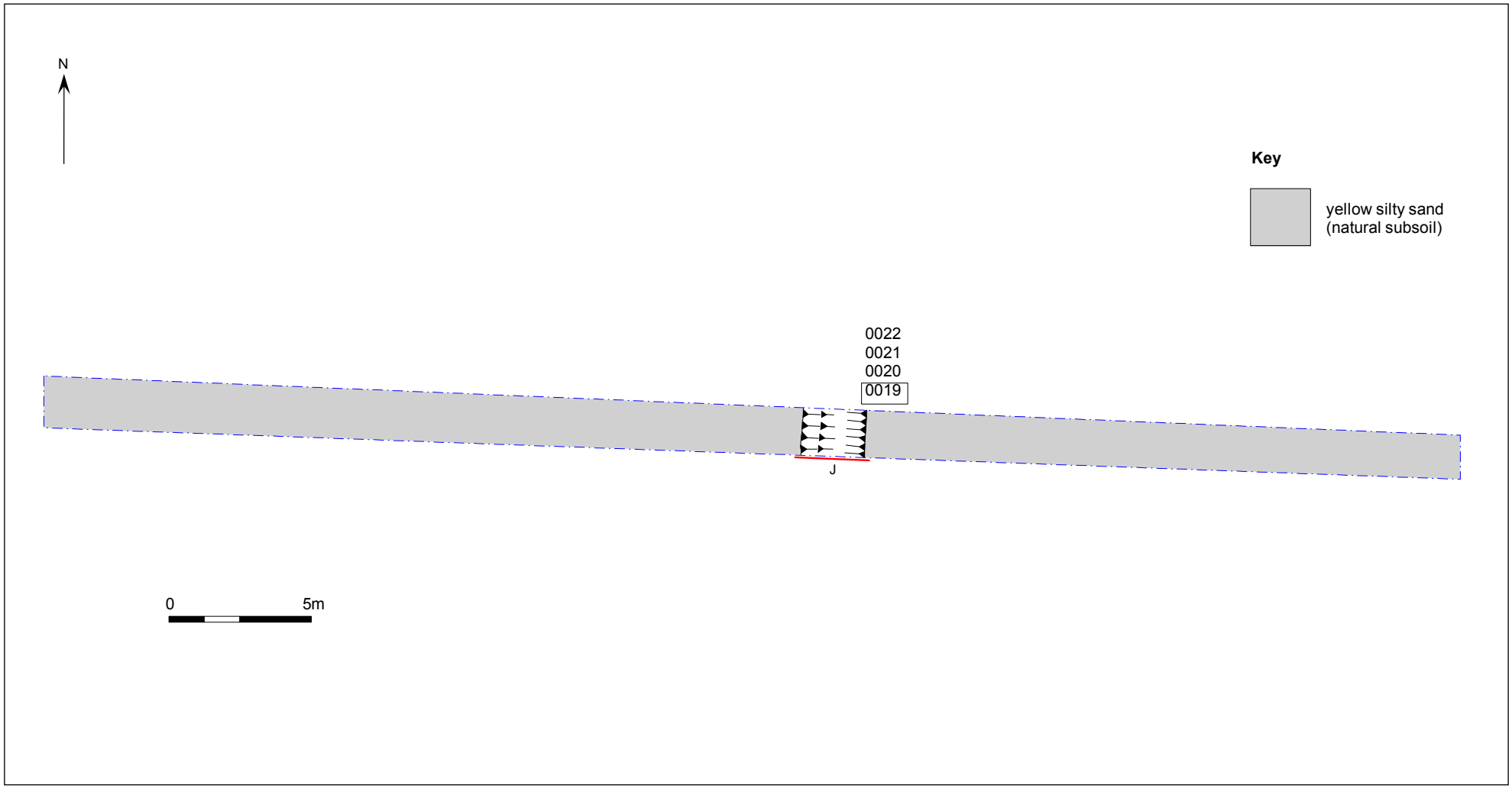

Figure 14. Plan of Trench 6

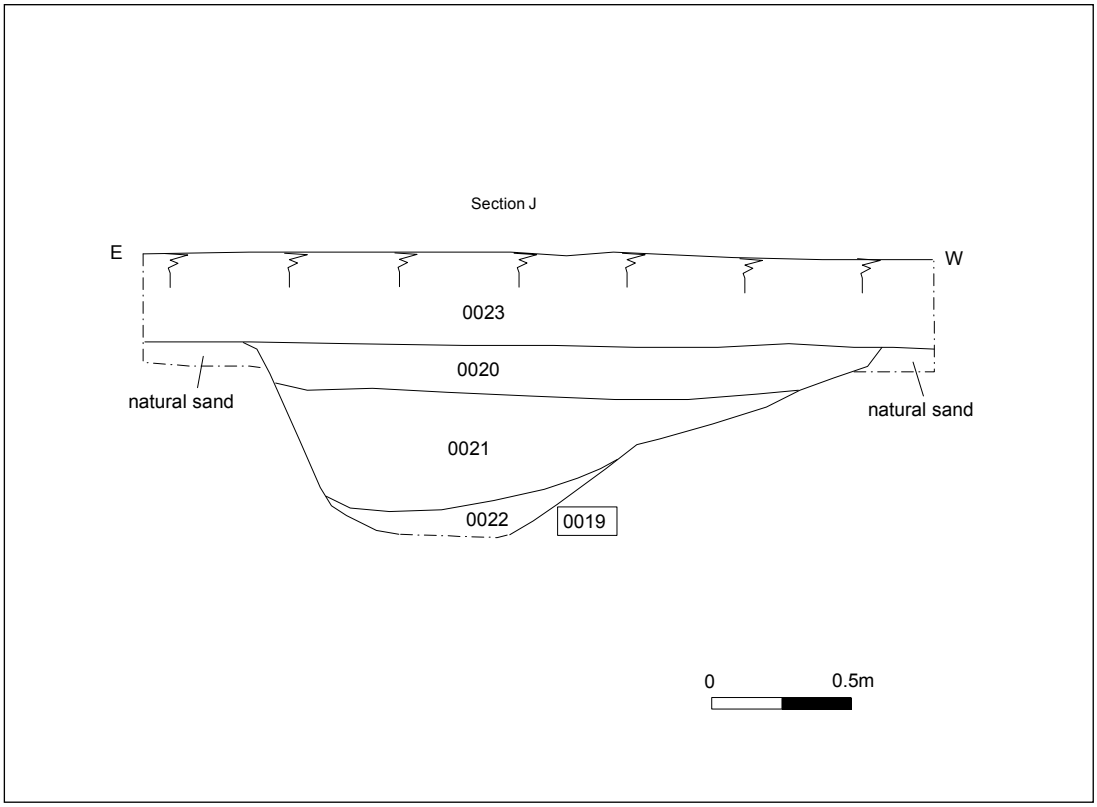

Figure 15. Ditch 0019

Plate 10. Ditch 0019

Trench 7

Trench 7 was located on the extreme eastern edge of the site, as shown on plans in the RAMS document (Appendix II). As borehole information had shown the area to be entirely peat deposits, a decision was made not to excavate this trench.

Trench 8 (Fig. 16)

A NW-SE ditch was partially exposed throughout the southern side of the trench. Although it was on a very different alignment to 0019 seen in Trench 6, it was assigned the same context number as the dimensions, profile and orange sand fill with a humic layer at the base appeared to be identical in both trenches and it seems likely that they represent the same ditch.

The natural subsoil in Trench 8 comprised a uniform damp pale grey silty sand, over which thin layers of dark brown peat (0025) and mid grey brown clay (0024) were observed below *c.*0.3m of ploughed topsoil.

Plate 11. Ditch 0019, looking SE

Plate 12. Trench 8 soil profile

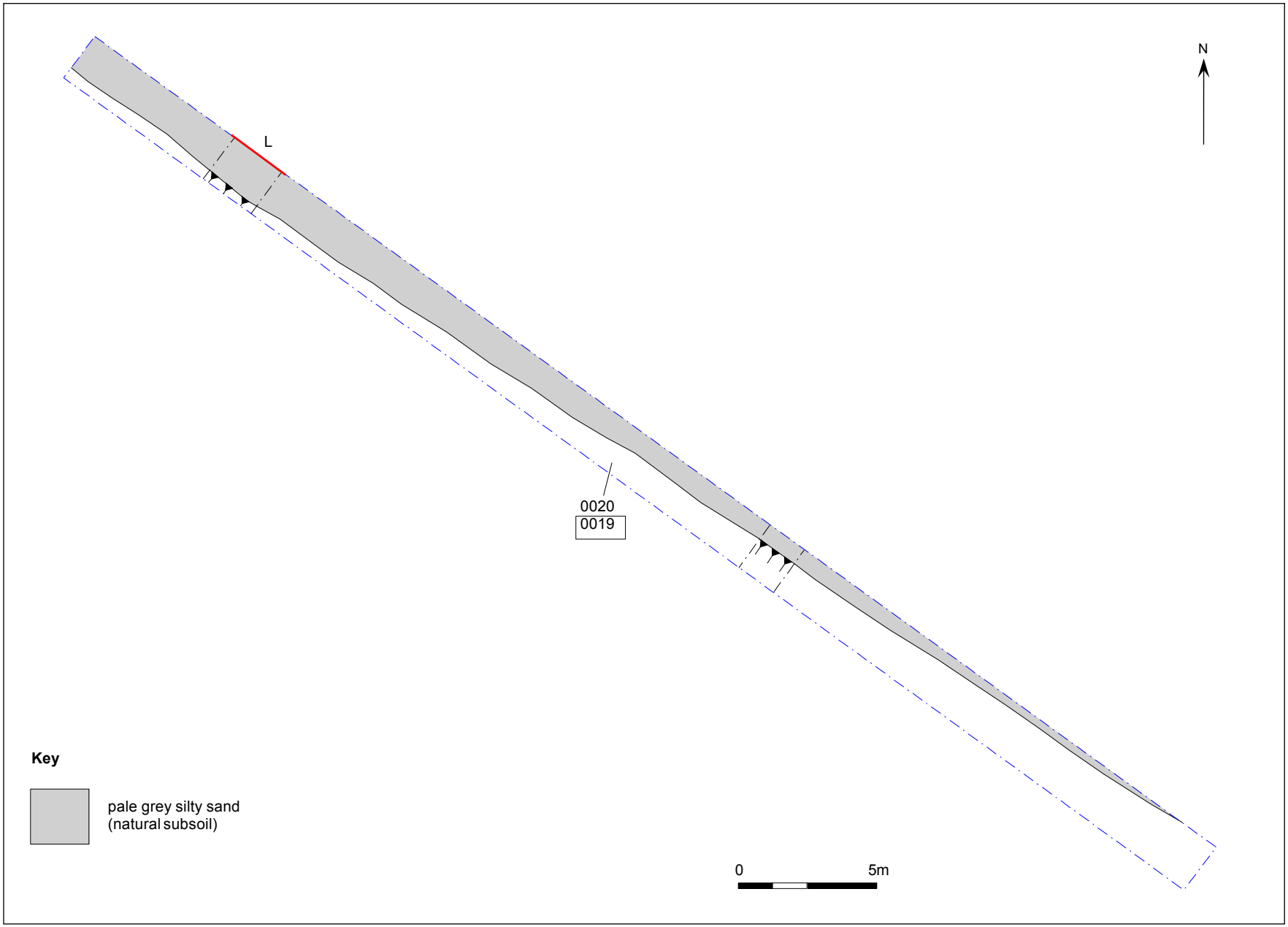

Figure 16. Plan of Trench 8

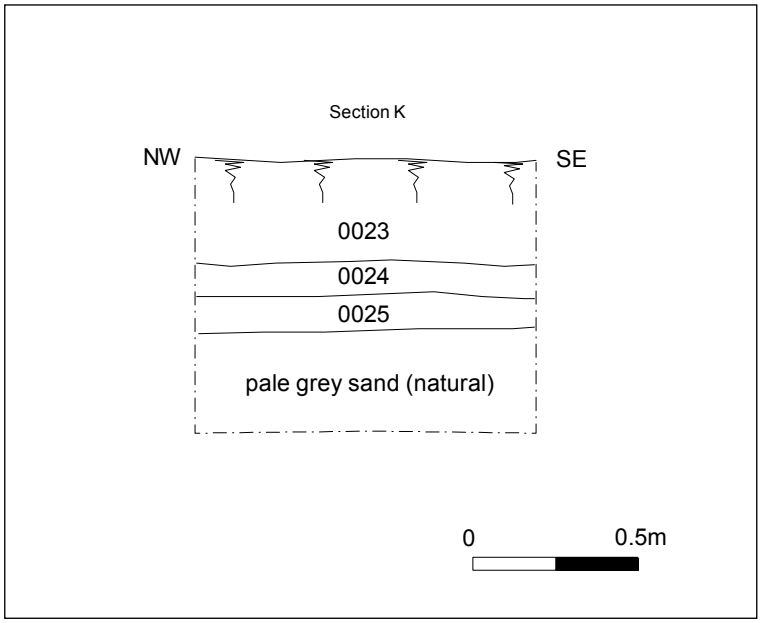

Figure 17. Trench 8 soil profile

6. Finds evidence

Richenda Goffin

A total of eight fragments of pottery weighing 75g was recovered from the ploughed field surface around Trench 2.

Six fragments of medieval coarseware were present weighing 49g. The group consists mainly of body sherds of wheelthrown greywares, some of which are abraded. A small number of Hollesley-type wares are present, together with coarser, sandier sherds, some of which are reddish-brown in colour. One of the fragments is from the base of a jar which has sooting on the exterior. A single rim of a slightly micaceous jar, pale reddish brown on the outside but with a grey interior, has a fully developed squared rim dating to the 13th-14th century. Two additional sherds of late medieval and transitional ware (LMT) were also identified (26g). They consist of the sagging base of a jar with external splashed glaze and a single unglazed body sherd. Both fragments date to the 15th-16th centuries.

7. Discussion

Trenching revealed very little of archaeological significance, with cut features limited to modern ditches, a single modern pit and two undated ditches which are most likely to be of recent origin. Ditch 0019 recorded in Trenches 6 and 8 is not known from historic maps and may be recent in origin, given its uniform fill of what appears to be imported sand and sharp edges. A damp, humic layer in its base suggests the presence of standing water in the feature for some time before it was backfilled but the purpose of the ditch remains unclear. It could be a modern drainage ditch but it is also possible that it represents some kind of military feature such as a practice trench.

The only finds recovered during the trenching exercise were eight sherds of pottery collected from the weathered surface of the field around Trench 2, six of which were medieval sherds and two late medieval. Scatters of medieval pottery are recorded directly north of the drainage channel forming the northern boundary of the site (LCS 009 and LCS 014, Fig. 1) but it is possible that the sherds collected here arrived at the field via manuring or travelled down the slope to the south with hillwashed material.

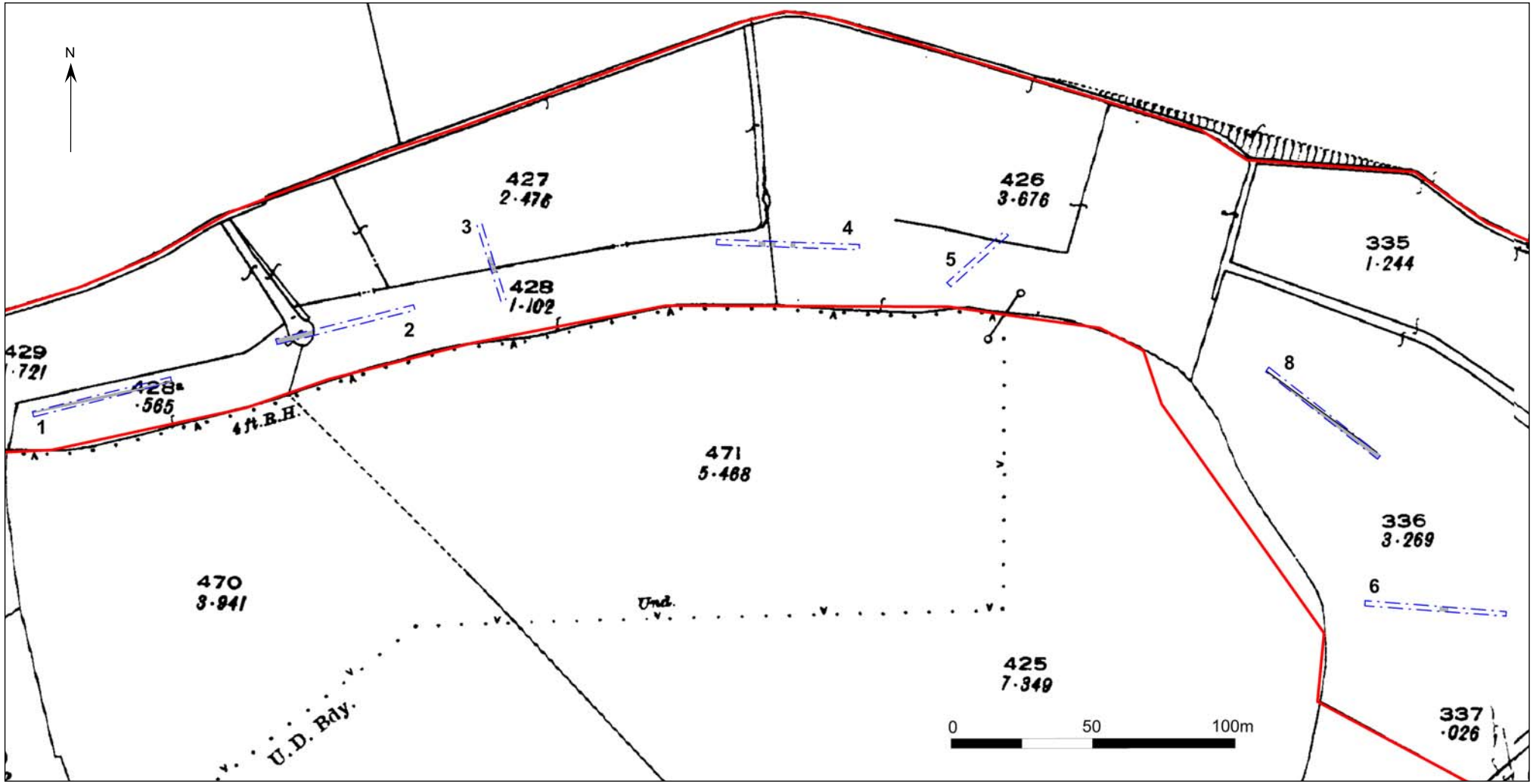

Figure 18. 3rd edition Ordnance Survey map, 1924, overlain with excavated trench plans. Features shown in grey.

8. Archive deposition

The archive is lodged with the SCCAS at its Bury office under the HER reference LCS 180. A summary of this project has also been entered onto OASIS, the online archaeological database, under the reference suffolkc1-197026.

Digital archive: R:\Environmental Protection\Conservation\Archaeology\Archive\ Leiston\LCS 180 Aldhurst Farm

Appendix I

Context No	Feature No	Feature Type	Description/Interpretation
0001	0001	Layer	Topsoil in Trenches 1-5. Ploughsoil, consisting of a mid-dark grey brown loamy clay, slightly sandy, with occasional chalk flecks. 0.25m-0.45m thick
0002	0002	Layer	dark grey brown silty clay, likely alluvial deposit present below topsoil 0001 through the whole trench. 0.08m-0.25m thick, seals layer 0030
0003	0003	Ditch Cut	Narrow ditch, approximately WNW-ESE throughout the length of Tr 1. Likely to relate to a boundary extant on the 3rd edition OS map, 1927
0004	0003	Ditch Fill	a grey brown silty clay, largely indistinguishable from alluvial layer 0002. Shotgun cartridge cap recovered from the fill as a metal detector find but not retained
0005	0005	Pit Cut	Large deep pit, filled by layers of mid brown sandy silt and clean yellow sand. Machine excavated to a depth of 1.1m where plastic bags, modern brick and lumps of concrete were present. Eastern pit edge machine excavated, shows the feature to gradually slope awat to the W. Makes up first 13.5m of the W end of the trench. Associated with a feature shown on the 3rd ed OS map, 1927
0006	0006	Ditch Cut	E-W aligned ditch, 5.4m wide and over 0.7m deep, with gently sloping sides breaking to a rounded base. Recut by ditch 0008. Associated with a field boundary shown on the 3rd ed OS map, 1927
0007	0006	Ditch Fill	homogenous mid to dark humic sandy clay silt. One heat altered flint observed but not retained
0008	0008	Ditch Cut	E-W aligned, c.2m wide, a likely recut of ditch 0006
0009	0008	Ditch Fill	upper ditch fill, humic dark grey brown silty sandy clay
0010	0008	Ditch Fill	central ditch fill, mid grey silty clay
0011	0008	Ditch Fill	dark brown humic layer likely to be associated with standing water in the base of the cut
0012	0012	Ditch Cut	N-S aligned ditch, 2.1m wide and 0.77m deep, flattish base. Parallel with and 2.4m W of ditch 0014
0013	0012	Ditch Fill	mid to dark brown humic silty sand, rather like topsoil, contained brick fragments and concrete
0014	0014	Ditch Cut	N-S aligned ditch, 1.3m wide and 0.95m deep, rounded base. Parallel with and 2.4m E of ditch 0012
0015	0014	Ditch Fill	mid to dark brown humic silty sand, rather like topsoil, with patches/layers of clean orange sand. Occasional modern brick fragments
0016	0016	Ditch Cut	N-S aligned ditch, 1.2m wide, 0.8m deep, with a ‘u’ shaped profile
0017	0016	Ditch Fill	mid to dark brown humic silty sand, rather like topsoil, gradually darker and more humic towards the base
0018	0018	Layer	dark brown clay sandy silt mottled with dark brown sand patches and flecked with charcoal and occasional CBM. Likely subsoil layer starting thin about halfway along the trench and getting thicker to the E, up to c.0.5m thick below the topsoil
0019	0019	Ditch Cut	Large ditch visible WSW-ENE throughout the length of Tr 8 and cutting NE-SW across Tr 6. 40° angled NW side, shallower SE side breaking to a flattish base
0020	0019	Ditch Fill	mid brown silty clay sand mottled with coarse yellow sand
0021	0019	Ditch Fill	Coarse, yellow sand with patches of mid brown silty clay sand

Context No	Feature No	Feature Type	Description/Interpretation
0022	0019	Ditch Fill	dark brown humic silty sand at the base of the ditch cut
0023	0023	Layer	Topsoil in Trenches 6 and 8. Dark brown sandy clay loam. No pre-modern finds
0024	0024	Layer	Mid brownish grey clay
0025	0025	Layer	Thin layer of dark brown sandy peat present 0.4m deep in the W end of Tr 8, 0.1m thick
0026	0026	Layer	Dark brown woody peat layer in east end of Tr 4, sealed by 0018
0027	0027	Layer	Mid orangey brown silty sandy clay subsoil layer in Tr 3, sealing peat and alluvium. Starts c.21m from the S end of the trench, increasing to up to 0.4m thick where the trench was stopped.
0028	0028	Layer	Mid yellowish brown silty sand layer sealed by topsoil in Tr 5
0029	0029	Layer	Pale brownish yellow silty sand subsoil, mottled with peat lenses, in Tr 5
0030	0030	Layer	mid-pale brownish grey clay mottled with dark orangey brown sand patches

OASIS ID: suffolkc1-197026

Project details

Project name	LCS 180 Aldhurst Farm, Leiston
Short description of the project	Seven evaluation trenches were excavated within an area proposed as a compensatory wetland habitat
Project dates	Start: 08-12-2014 End: 06-02-2015
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	LCS 180 - HER event no.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Cultivated Land 3 - Operations to a depth more than 0.25m
Monument type	DITCH Modern
Monument type	DITCH Uncertain
Monument type	PIT Modern
Significant Finds	CERAMIC Medieval
Methods & techniques	"Sample Trenches"
Development type	Not recorded

Project location

Country	England
Site location	SUFFOLK SUFFOLK COASTAL LEISTON LCS 180 Aldhurst Farm
Study area	9.80 Hectares
Site coordinates	TM 4499 6358 52.2152579207 1.58682604797 52 12 54 N 001 35 12 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service
Project brief originator	Consultant
Project design originator	Consultant
Project director/manager	Andrew Tester
Project supervisor	Linzi Everett
Type of sponsor/funding body	Consultant on behalf of client

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service
Physical Archive ID	LCS 180
Physical Contents	"Ceramics"
Digital Archive recipient	AHDS
Digital Archive ID	LCS 180
Digital Contents	"Ceramics"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service
Paper Archive ID	LCS 180
Paper Contents	"Ceramics"
Paper Media available	"Correspondence","Photograph","Unpublished Text"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	2014/133 LCS 180 Aldhurst Farm, Leiston
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Everett, L.
Other bibliographic details	2014/133
Date	2015
Issuer or publisher	SCCAS
Place of issue or publication	SCCAS