

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

SCCAS REPORT No. 2009/126

Land to the Rear of The Homestead, Rickingham Superior RKS 032

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HER Information

Planning Application No: 0732/07

Date of Fieldwork: 19th-20th February 2009

Grid Reference: TM 0464 7559

Funding Body: Wentworth Country Projects Ltd

Curatorial Officer: Jude Plouviez

Project Officer: Jo Caruth

Oasis Reference: Suffolkc1-61201

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

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Summary

An archaeological monitoring was carried out on land at the rear of The Homestead, Rickinghall, during the groundworks for a new house. The site lies at TM 0464 7559, close to an area from where a Roman inhumation burial, RKS 011 was recorded.

Archaeological evaluation and monitoring in 2003-4, RKS 030, on the former garden of The Homestead prior to the redevelopment of the whole site identified post-medieval pits and undated pits identified as possible former mineral extraction features. Seven more similar features were found during this monitoring, all undated and which, when mapped alongside those of RKS 030 form a north-south band c.28m wide.

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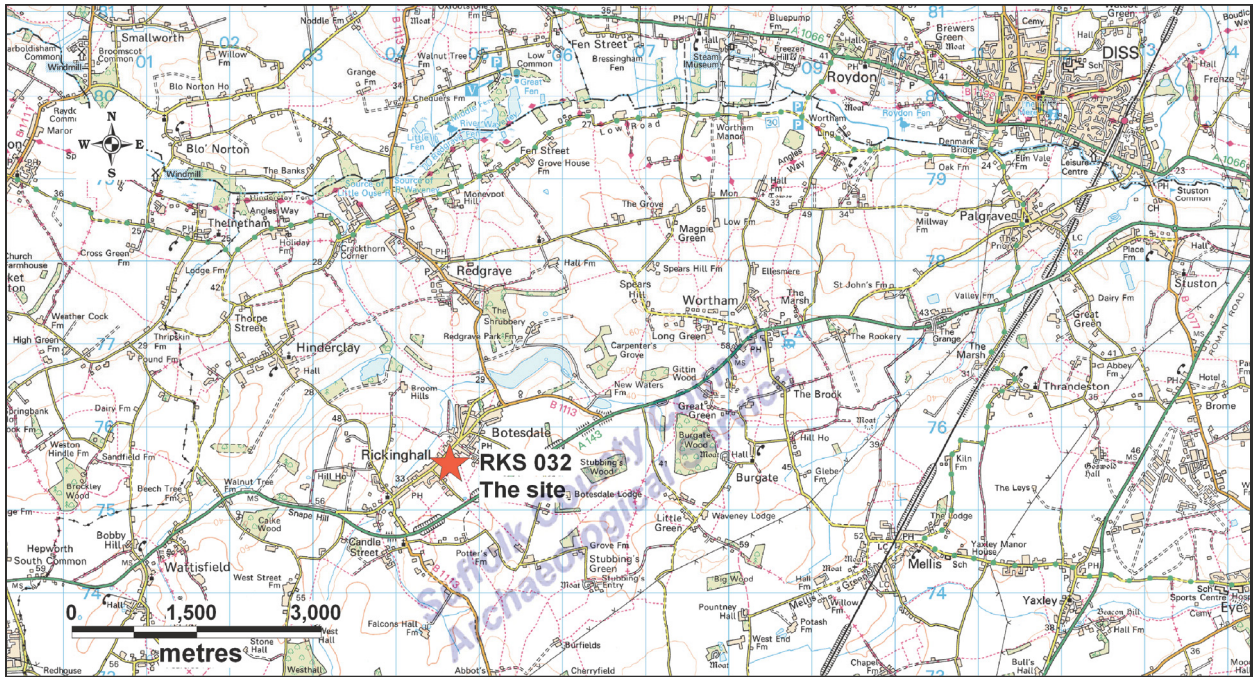
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1. Introduction

Archaeological monitoring was carried out during the excavation of footing trenches for a new detached house behind The Homestead at Rickinghall. The archaeological work was a condition on planning application 0732/07 and was carried out according to an outline Brief by Jude Plouviez following evaluation of the whole area in 2005. The site lies at grid ref: TM 0464 7559 (Fig. 1).



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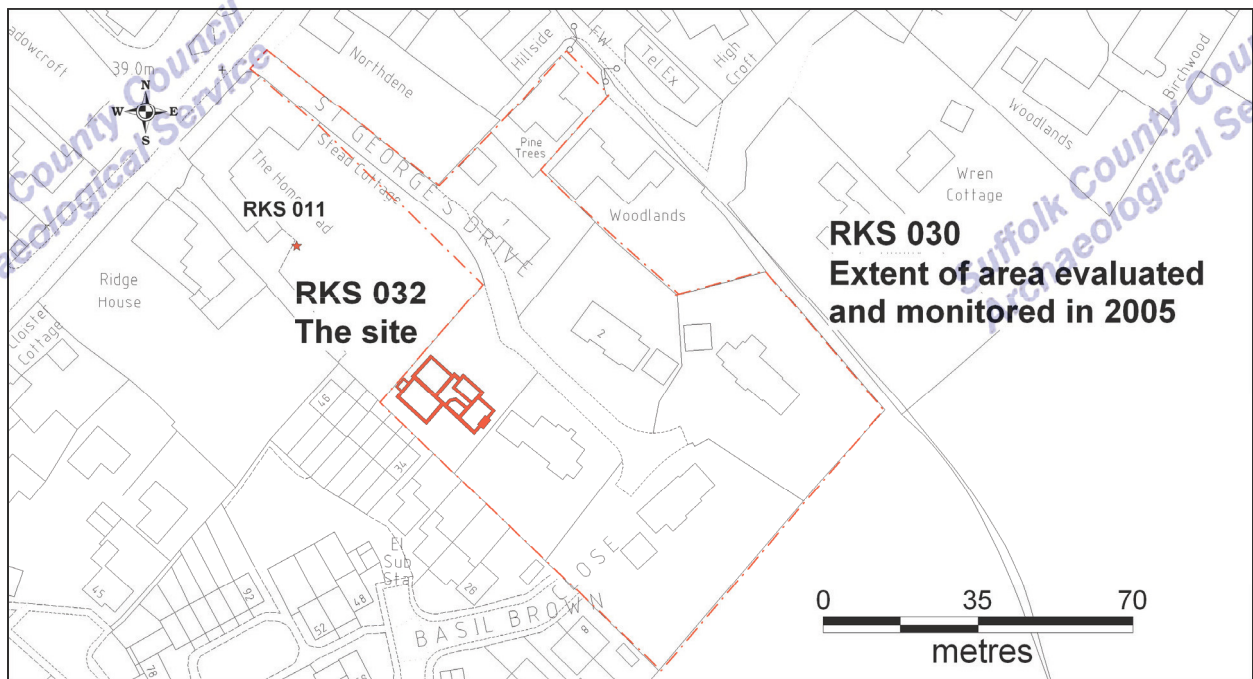
Figure 1. Site location

2. Geology and topography

The site lies on the south side of George's Drive on land that was once the garden of The Homestead, at c.40m OD on the south-east side of a tributary valley of the Waveney. The surface geology is a mix of sands and gravels with pockets of chalk, silt and clay.

3. Archaeological and historical background

Previous archaeological work in 2003-4 (RKS 030, Gill 2005) on the rest of the former Homestead garden had identified a band of extraction pits north of this plot and post-medieval pits and a well fronting the High Street, north west of this development area. An inhumation burial and a third or fourth century pot, RKS 011, had previously been recorded immediately behind the Homestead (Fig. 2).



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Figure 2. Site location and nearby sites

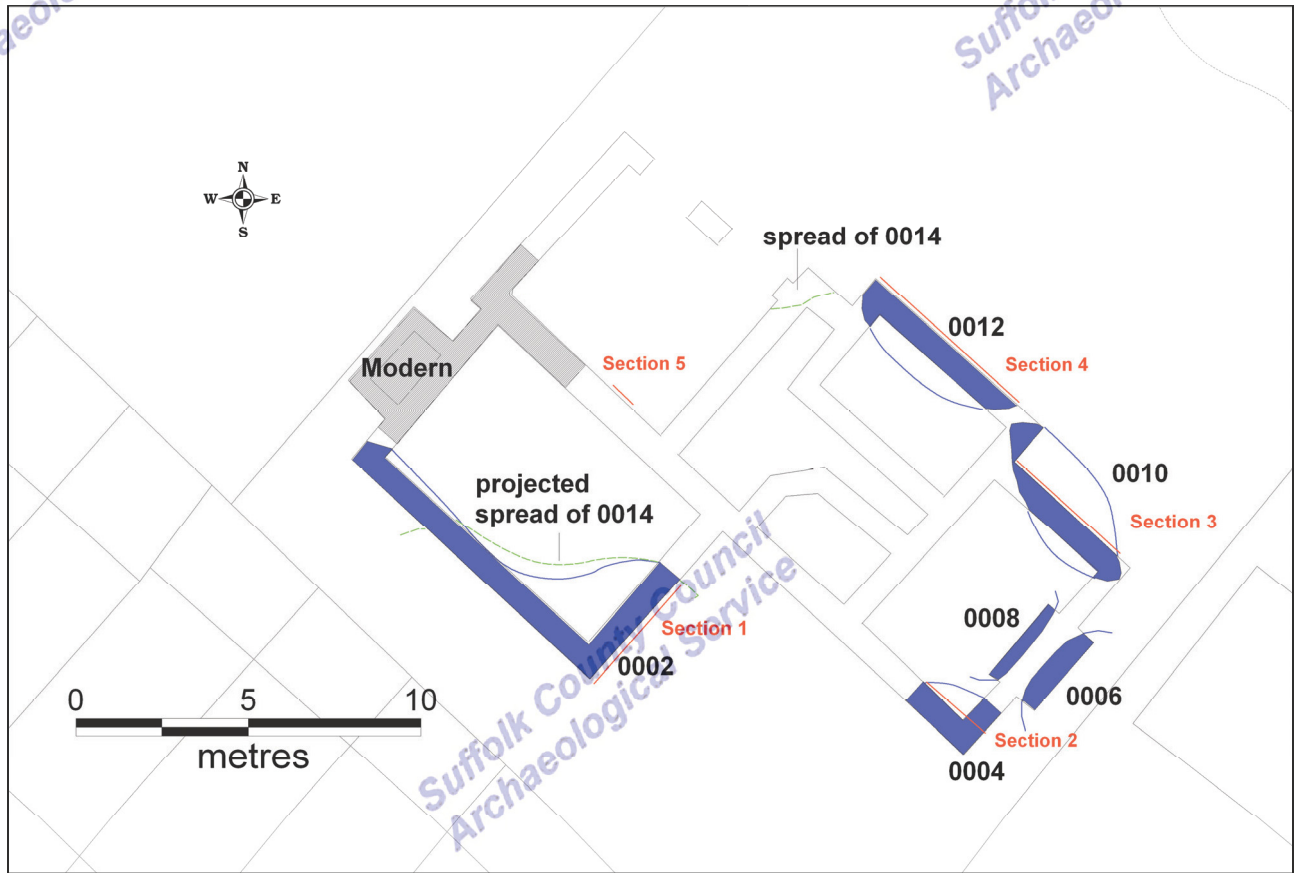
4. Methodology

All groundworks for the footings for the new house and garage were observed as they were excavated. Trench sections were cleaned and recorded, and where features could be seen these were hand sampled, and recorded at 1:20 in section and 1:100 in plan. Digital photographs were taken. Context data was recorded onto pro-forma SCCAS sheets and entered into an Access database. The site has been plotted onto the Ordnance Survey using the developer's site plan. A copy of the report has been lodged with the OASIS on-line database under reference Suffolkc1-61201.

5. Results

The work identified up to seven large pits, none of which were dated (Fig. 3). These all had sloped sides and a flat base and although none was seen in its entirety could be seen to range from between 2.5m and 4m long x at least 2.5m wide (Fig. 4) and all were of a similar depth with the base at between 0.95m and 1m below existing ground level. All were filled with a clean single fill of either pale yellow-brown very similar to the natural yellow sand, or clean pale chalky clay from which no finds were recovered and which contained no inclusions suggestive of nearby occupation or which could help identify a function. In form and fill these pits resembled the pits found during the 2003-4 work and which were interpreted as extraction pits which were dug and immediately backfilled with surplus material. On this site, in contrast to the RKS 030 area, most of

the pits were cut into sand rather than chalk, although pits 0010 and 0012 at the north end of the site were cut into yellow silty clay, but it is still possible that they result from mineral extraction.



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Figure 3. Thematic site plan

There were patchy spreads of chalky clay (0004 and 0014) found immediately below the topsoil across the site, which again was similar to a deposit found in 2003-4. At the north-east edge of the site the topsoil was more disturbed and had a higher clay content, 0016. This seemed to coincide with pits 0010 and 0012 which also had fills with a higher density of chalk and clay. This topsoil seemed to overlie a brown loam topsoil, 0015, containing some modern brick and tile fragments. Where there were no features, the topsoil lay directly over silty sand natural with a sharp interface suggesting that there had been some truncation of the natural sand surface.

The north-western footing was cut by a large modern disturbance.

No archaeological finds were recovered from the site.

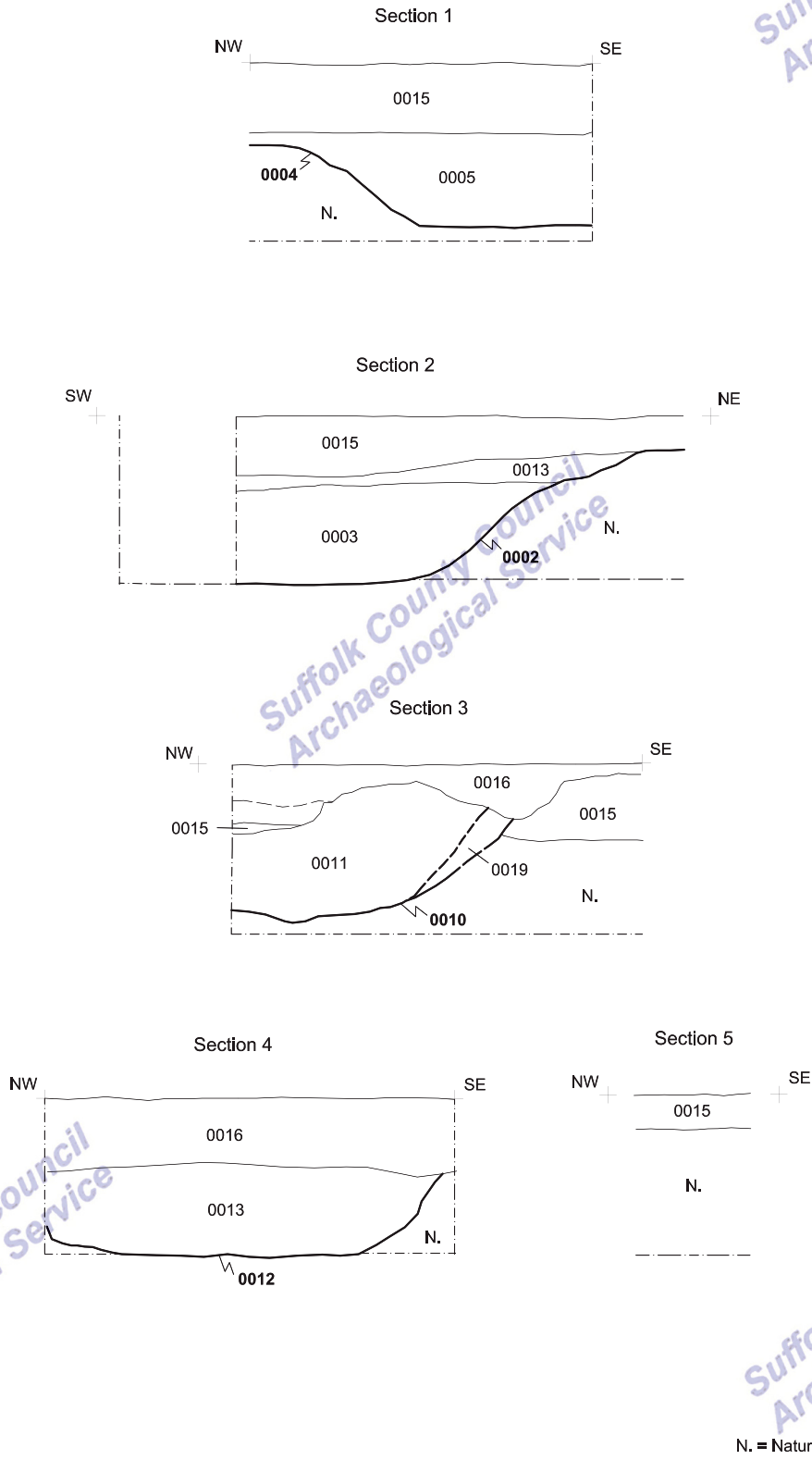
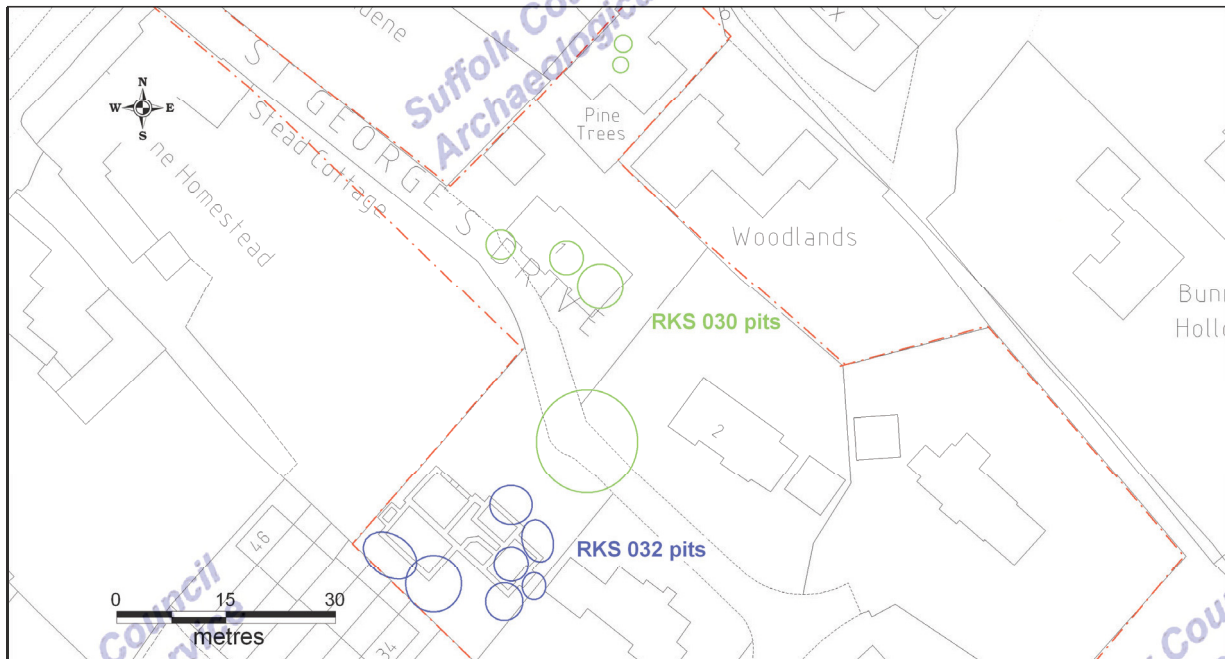


Figure 4 Sections, scale 1:40 on A4

6. Discussion and conclusion

This monitoring identified a continuation of the large pits found in 2003-4 during evaluation and monitoring of the area around this site. None of these pits were dated, but the clean, even, debris-free fills suggest that these were rapidly backfilled and that they were not immediately adjacent to intense occupation or used for rubbish disposal. It is possible that these pits were excavated in order to extract clay, sand or chalk as they offer no other evidence for a function, but this interpretation is not certain. It is possible that these pits are geological rather than archaeological, and that they represent solution holes through the underlying chalk, however these pits had flat bases and most did not penetrate through the sand into chalk which makes them more likely to be cut features than solution holes.

Examination of these results alongside those of 2003-4 seems to show a band of similar pits c.28m wide and running north-south aligned (Fig. 5).



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Figure 5. Location of pits from sites RKS 030 and RKS 032

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June 2009

7. Archive deposition

Paper and photographic archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds

Digital archive: T:\arc\archive field projects/ Rickinghall Superior/RKS032

Finds and environmental archive: None

8. Bibliography

Gill, D., 2005 Archaeological Monitoring Report, land to the rear of The Homestead, The Street, Rickinghall Superior, RKS 030. SCCAS report no. 2005/057

Appendix 1

RKS 032 Context List

context	feature	trench	identifier	description	finds	over	under	cuts	cutby	spotdate	period
0001			U/S	No for any unstratified finds (there were none)							
0002	0002		Pit cut	Pit visible in southern footing trench. Sloped sides and flat base. Covers an extensive area with oddly aligned edges and which may in fact be two pits, but no fill distinction to establish this. 63cm deep							0003
0003	0002		Pit fill	Clean yellow-brown silt almost like natural with no occupation debris (e.g. charcoal flecks etc.) . This lies under a layer of crushed chalk mixed with clay.		0002					0014
0004	0004		Pit cut	Pit visible in south-eastern corner trench with sloped sides and flat base. This lies directly under topsoil. Base at 0.95m below ground level							0005
0005	0005		Pit fill	Even homogeneous yellow-brown silt, similar to 0003 and like natural.		0004					0015
0006	0006		Pit cut	Pit seen in chimney footing at east edge of building. No section drawn. Base at 1m below ground level							0007
0007	0007		Pit fill	Even homogeneous yellow-brown silt, similar to 0003 and like natural.		0006					0015
0008	0008		Pit cut	Pit seen in chimney footing at east edge of building. No section drawn.							0009
0009	0008		Pit fill	Even homogeneous yellow-brown silt, similar to 0003 and like natural.		0008					0015
0010	0010		Pit cut	Pit with what appears to be a narrow oval cut, sloped sides and slightly undulating base, although throughout the edges were indistinct.							0011
0011	0010		Pit fill	Fill of 0010. Clean pale clay with chalk flecks. The clay in places was interleaved with sand, making it look geological.		0010					0016
0012	0012		Pit cut	Sloped sided, flat based pit							0013
0013	0012		Pit fill	Even homogenous brown silt fill		0012					0016
0014	0014		Layer	Layer of pale clay mixed with crushed chalk, found lying under topsoil and over pit fill 0003.		0003					0015
0015	0015		Layer	Topsoil over most of the site, brown silty sand with modern brick and tile fragments throughout.		0014					
0016	0016		Layer	Topsoil at north end of the site, looser, darker and with more clay within the matrix than 0015. Chalky clay within this is like both 0011 and 0014.		0011	0013				
0017	0017		Modern	Large modern disturbance which seems to be under the topsoil although this was not certain as the whole site had a general thin spread of modern material across it.							0015?

context	feature	trench	identifier	description	finds	over	under	cuts	cutby	spotdate	period
0018	0018		Layer	Another patch of chalk clay seen in the corner of a footing trench along the north edge of the site					0016		
0019	0010		Layer	Yellow clay on east edge of pit 0010, under 0011		0010		0011			

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