



128-136 HIGH STREET, PLAISTOW, E13 LONDON BOROUGH OF NEWHAM

Archaeological Evaluation Report



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May 2006

**128-136 HIGH STREET, PLAISTOW, E13
LONDON BOROUGH OF NEWHAM**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

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Non Technical Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by CARD Geotechnics Ltd (the Client) to undertake an archaeological evaluation at 128-136 High Street, Plaistow, E13 in the London Borough of Newham (the Site). The Site is centred on NGR 540590 183070 at a height of 10.00m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

The evaluation comprised of a single 5.5m x 3.0m trench, which was excavated in order to elucidate the nature and character of any archaeological remains that may be present on the Site and to assess their potential significance.

On the south east side of the trench, the remains of a petrol holding tank was uncovered at a depth of 9.60m aOD and the remains of a backfilled cellar was uncovered to the north of it, this extended past the depth of 7.8m aOD where the trench excavation ceased.

This report concludes that any archaeological deposits on the frontage of the property have probably been destroyed with the backfilled cellar and with petrol holding tanks truncating any deposits in nearby areas. Due to the limited area covered by the evaluation trench and the potential for archaeological deposits to survive further from the road, it is proposed that a watching brief be undertaken during the removal of the petrol holding tanks.

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank CARD Geotechnics Ltd for commissioning the project. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank David Divers of English Heritage Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS) for monitoring the work.

The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology (London) by Lawrence Pontin (Project Manager); the fieldwork was undertaken by Hilary Valler (Project Officer) who also compiled the report. Mark Roughley prepared the illustrations.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology undertook an archaeological evaluation at 128-136 High Street, Plaistow, E13 in the London Borough of Newham (the Site) centred on NGR 540590 183070 (**Figure 1**).

1.1.2 The evaluation was commissioned by CARD Geotechnics Ltd (the Client) and took place on the 26th & 27th of April 2006.

1.2 Planning Background

1.2.1 Planning consent for the redevelopment of the Site has been given with an archaeological condition attached to ensure an investigation of any surviving archaeological deposits.

1.2.2 Following observation of geotechnical boreholes and window samples, it was determined that an archaeological evaluation on the Site was appropriate.

1.2.3 The evaluation and preparation of this report have been undertaken in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation, which was prepared by Wessex Archaeology (Wessex Archaeology 2006) and approved by David Divers, the English Heritage GLAAS Archaeological Advisor to the London Borough of Newham.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 The Site

2.1.1 The Site is a disused petrol filling station with much of the central area filled with holding tanks for the petrol. It is on the corner of High Street (A112) and Winkfield Road, to the south of an area known as Broadway (**Figure 1**).

2.2 Topography and Geology

2.2.1 The modern ground level within the Site is approximately 10m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

2.2.2 The drift geology of the area comprises Flood Plain Gravel terraces of the Thames and Roding. This is underlain by Eocene London Clay (British Geological Society Drift Edition, Sheet 257).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Area of Archaeological Priority

- 3.1.1 The Site is defined within the London Borough of Newham Unitary Development Plan (adopted June 2001) as being within an Area of Archaeological Priority. The area is presumed to contain evidence of early post-medieval housing along the course of the historic West Ham Lane. Some evidence may also exist of Roman activity given the use of Roman building material in the medieval church of All Saints to the north and evidence of a Roman building found adjacent to Newham General Hospital, to the south, in 1964.
- 3.1.2 The Site appears on the 1st-edition Ordnance Survey map (1869) as parkland fronting onto the High Street. Prior to 1896 (2nd-edition Ordnance Survey map) a row of terrace houses had been built on the land fronting onto the High Street with gardens at the back of the properties. These were slightly set back from the road and therefore the north east side of the Site lays over the pedestrian walkway. These buildings were demolished prior to the compilation of the 1951 Ordnance Survey map which shows the Site clear of buildings. In the early 1960s, buildings were established along the north west side of the Site when it became a garage. It has continued in use as a garage in some form to the present date.

4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 4.1.1 The aims of the evaluation were to elucidate the nature and character of any archaeological remains which may be present on the Site, and to access their potential significance.

5 METHODOLOGY

5.1 Methodological Standards

- 5.1.1 All works were undertaken in compliance with the standards outlined in the Institute of Field Archaeologist's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations* (2001).

5.2 Health and Safety

- 5.2.1 The work was undertaken in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1992, and all other relevant Health and Safety legislations, regulations and codes of practice in force. A Risk Assessment was produced by Wessex Archaeology prior to the commencement of excavation.

5.3 Fieldwork

- 5.3.1 The fieldwork strategy is described in detail in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Wessex Archaeology 2006). In brief, the evaluation comprised the machine excavation of a single trench measuring 5.50m x 3.00m in plan (**Figure 2**) and excavated to a depth of 2.20m, with the trench being stepped

due to the size constraints of the trench. Excavation ceases within archaeological horizons at 2.2m depth from the ground surface.

- 5.3.2 Prior to the commencement of fieldwork, arrangements were made with the Museum of London for deposition of the archive and finds, and a Museum of London Site code was allotted (PLZ05).
- 5.3.3 The trench was located on the ground using tapes from known landmarks and features present on Ordnance Survey (OS) maps (e.g. boundaries or buildings).
- 5.3.4 The trench was dug using a mechanical excavator (JCB) fitted with a breaker to remove the reinforced concrete and a toothless grading bucket for spoil removal. This took place under the constant supervision of an appropriately qualified archaeologist.
- 5.3.5 All spoil was visually scanned for finds.
- 5.3.6 All exposed archaeological deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's pro forma recording system.
- 5.3.7 A complete drawn and photographic record of the trench was compiled. This included both plans and sections, drawn to appropriate scales (1:50 for plans and 1:20 for sections). The height of the trench was expressed in metres aOD and plans/sections were annotated with aOD heights.
- 5.3.8 A photographic record was also compiled of digital images.
- 5.3.9 On completion of fieldwork, the trench was backfilled with the agreement of David Divers of GLAAS.

5.4 Finds Collection and Retention

- 5.4.1 All collected finds were to be treated in accordance with the principles and practices set out by the Society of Museum Archaeologists (1993) and the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* (2001).
- 5.4.2 Where features or deposits were clearly modern, finds were examined, noted and discarded.

5.5 The Archive

- 5.5.1 The completed project archive will be prepared in accordance with *the Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage* (UKIC 1990).
- 5.5.2 The resulting archive will be copied onto microfiche to the standards accepted by the National Monuments Record (NMR).
- 5.5.3 One copy will be deposited with the Greater London Sites and Monuments Record (SMR); a further copy will be deposited with the NMR in Swindon.
- 5.5.4 The archive from the project, subject to the wishes of the landowner, will be deposited with the Museum of London.
- 5.5.5 Details of the evaluation will be entered into the online 'OASIS' database maintained by the Archaeological Data Service (ADS).

6 RESULTS

6.1 Character of Sequence and Stratigraphy

- 6.1.1 The results recorded during the evaluation reaffirm the development history of the north area of the Site, which was suggested during observations on the window samples and boreholes (Wessex Archaeology 2005) to be a backfilled cellar, fronting onto the High Street.
- 6.1.2 Details of the individual contexts and their levels aOD for the evaluation are contained in **Appendix 1**. A plan, representative section and plates of the trench are illustrated on **Figure 2**.

6.2 Pre-19th Century

- 6.2.1 No evidence for archaeological features prior to the 19th century was present within the evaluation trench.

6.3 19th & 20th Centuries

- 6.3.1 A single yellow brick wall (109) orientated NE/SW was present, which is evidence of the buildings which fronted onto the High Street containing cellars.
- 6.3.2 The area to the north west of the wall (109) is filled to a depth exceeding the 2.2m excavated (to 7.80m aOD) with context 113, a loose silty clay with frequent red brick rubble. This represents the backfill of a cellar at the front of the demolished building.
- 6.3.3 Evidence for slumping or the dumping of deposits was observed in the north east corner of the trench, with contexts 106, 107 and 108 small layered deposits.

6.3.4 Along the south eastern side of the trench, extending into the trench by 1.5m at a depth of 0.45m below ground level, is a petrol holding tank (**Figure 2: Plan**). This contains concrete which is surrounding the holding tank (111), a metal pipe (114) and a concrete slab over it (115).

6.3.5 Above the holding tank to the south of the wall (109) is a firm clay layer (105) and modern make up layers of sand (104, 103 & 102) related to the construction of the concrete surface. A layer of reinforced concrete (101) is present over the whole Site to a depth of 0.18m below ground surface.

6.4 The Finds

6.4.1 The only material recovered from the Site consisted of a metal advertising sign of modern date. This material was noted, photographed and retained.

6.5 Environmental Evidence

6.5.1 Due to the absence of any suitable deposits, no samples were taken for environmental analysis.

7 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

- 7.1.1 No evidence for archaeology dating prior to the 19th century was observed during the evaluation.
- 7.1.2 The results of the evaluation elucidate the observations made during previous interventions. They indicate that the Site has been subjected to significant modern disturbance as a result of the demolition of the 19th century residential buildings. The cellars have subsequently been backfilled with modern building rubble during the early to middle part of the 20th century. The full extent of the backfill is not evident as it extends below the level reached during excavation.
- 7.1.3 Evidence of the development of the Site was recorded with a petrol holding tank recorded on the south east side of the trench. Above this were the construction and make up layers of the modern concrete surface.
- 7.1.4 This report concludes that any archaeological deposits on the frontage of the property have probably been destroyed with the backfilled cellar and with petrol holding tanks truncating any deposits in nearby areas. Due to the limited area covered by the evaluation trench and the potential for archaeological deposits to survive further from the road it is proposed that a watching brief be undertaken during the removal of the petrol holding tanks.

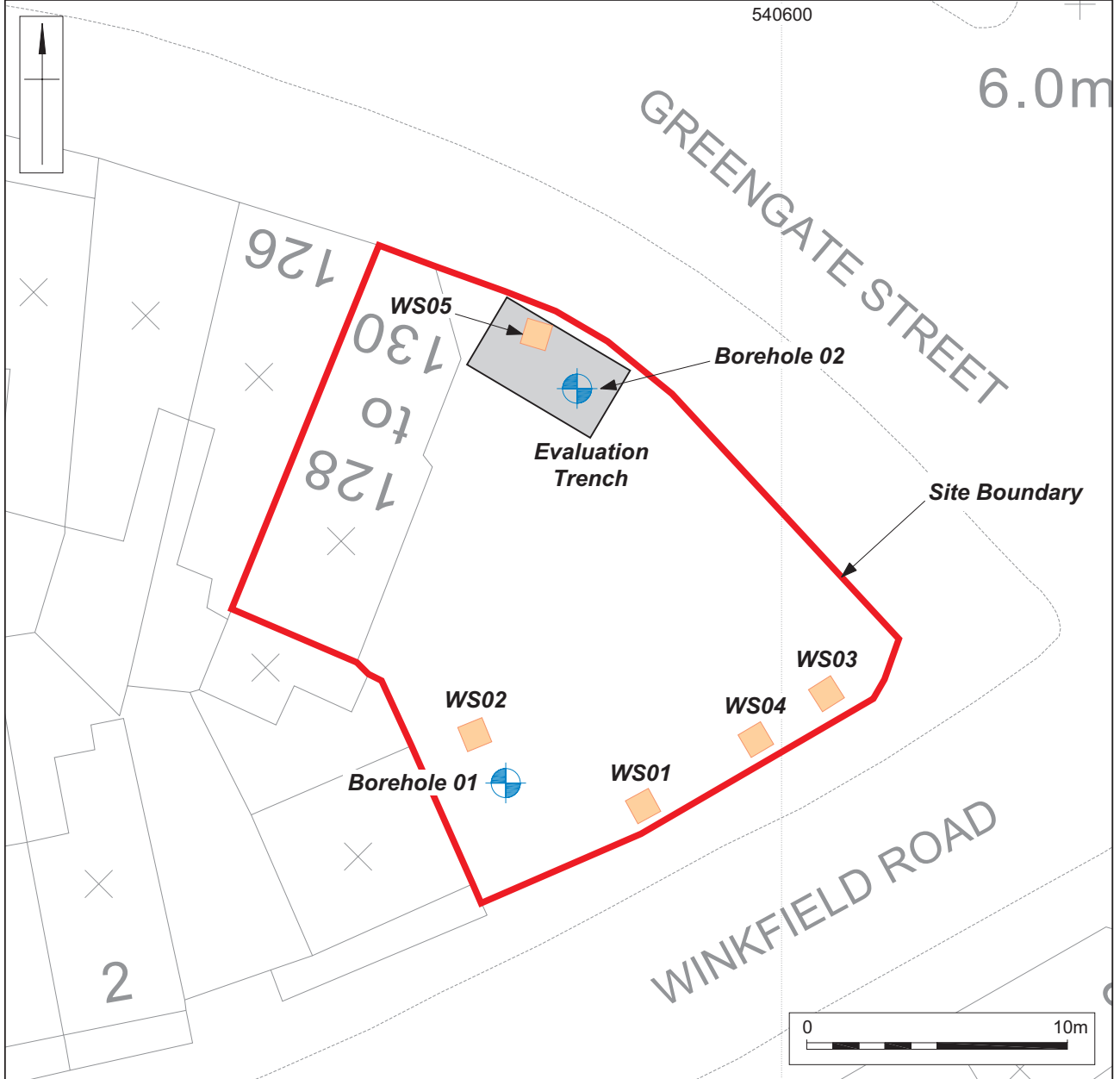
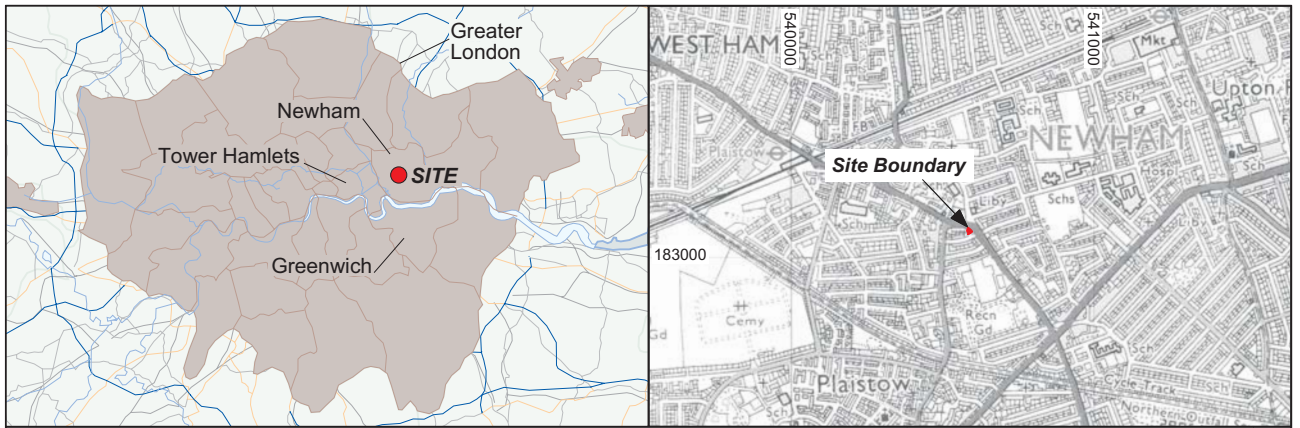
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9 APPENDIX 1 TRENCH SUMMARY TABLE

Trench Number 1	Dimensions: 5.50m X 3.00m Max. depth 2.20m		Ground Level 10.00 m aOD
Context No	Description	Keyword	Depth (m aOD)
101	Reinforced concrete	20 th century/ construction	10.00-9.88m
102	Mid orange coarse sand with moderate small rounded pebbles	20 th century/ make up	9.88-9.77m
103	Mid yellow coarse sand with occasional rounded pebbles	20 th century/ make up	9.77-9.67m
104	Mid yellow grey firm sand clay with small angular flint and moderate red brick rubble	20 th century/ make up	9.67-7.80m+
105	Pale orange brown firm silty clay with frequent small chalk fragments	20 th century/ make up	9.77-9.00m+
106	Mid yellow grey silty clay with occasional small-medium red brick fragments	20 th century/ slumped/ dumped deposit	9.40-9.00m+
107	Thin band of pale grey silty clay with mortar and small brick fragments, layer slopes down to north west	20 th century/ slumped/ dumped deposit	9.20-9.00m+
108	Mid orange grey silty clay with occasional small brick fragments, layer slopes down to north west	20 th century/ slumped/ dumped deposit	9.20-9.00m+
109	Yellow brick wall orientated NE/SW	Construction/ 19 th century	9.35-9.00m+
110	Cut for yellow brick wall (109)	Construction/ 19 th century	9.35-9.00m+
111	Concrete surrounding petrol holding tank	20 th century/ construction	9.35-9.00m+
112	Cut for concrete petrol holding tank and associated features (111, 114 & 115)	20 th century/ construction	9.35-9.00m+
113	Mid yellow brown loose silty clay with frequent red brick rubble	20 th century/ backfilled cellar	9.77-7.80m+
114	Metal pipe connected to petrol holding tank	20 th century/ construction	9.55-9.50m
115	Concrete slab over petrol holding tank	20 th century/ construction	9.55-9.25m

10 APPENDIX 2 OASIS SUMMARY



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Site Location Maps showing Location of Evaluation Trench, Window Samples & Boreholes

Figure 1

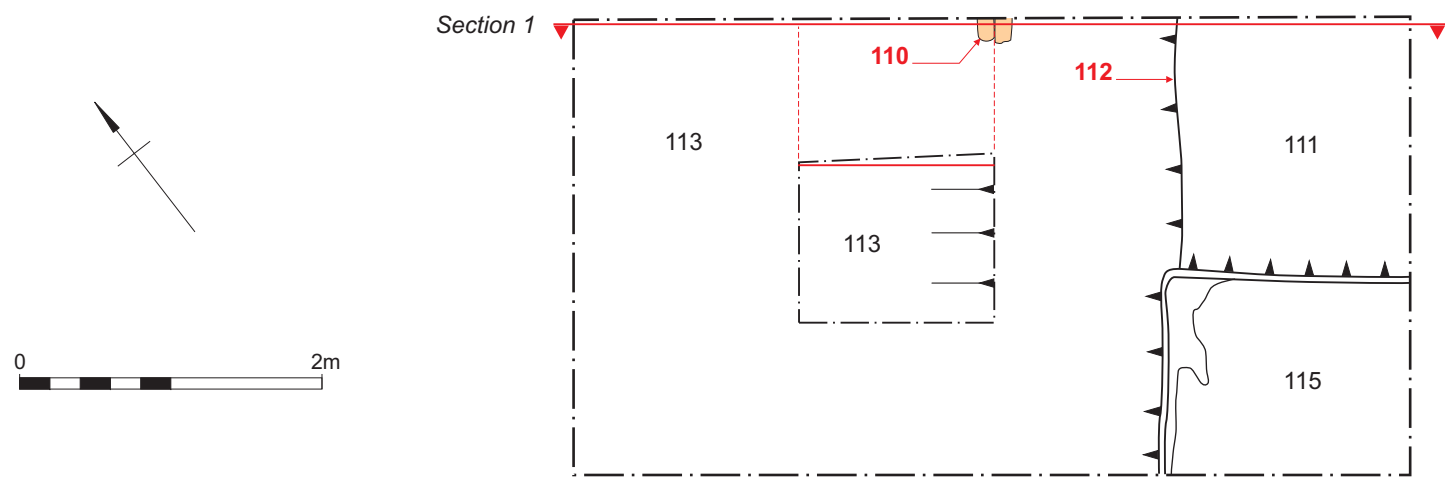
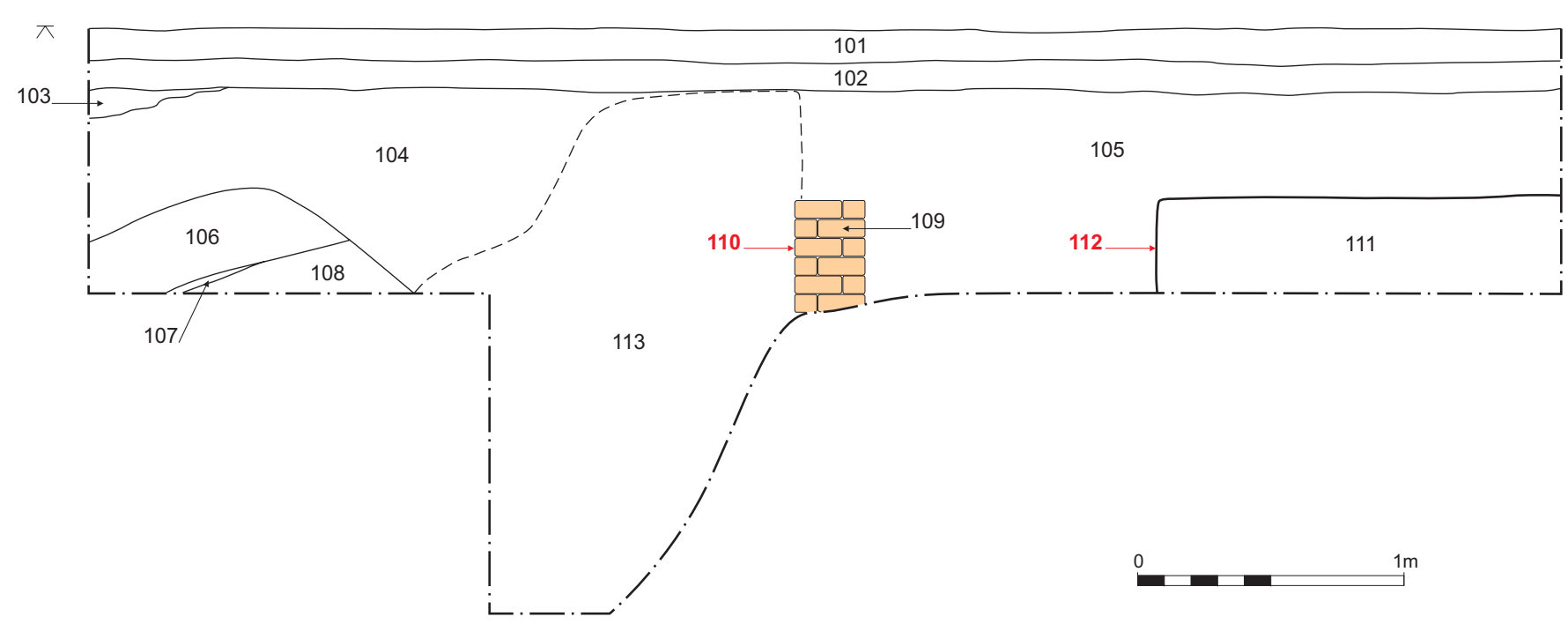


Plate 1: View of Evaluation Trench from north west

Section 1

NORTH WEST



SOUTH EAST



Plate 2: Oblique view of Evaluation Trench and south west facing Section 1 from south west



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