

**PRIOR'S PIECE,
MILL STREET,
PRESTBURY,
CHELTENHAM,
GLOUCESTERSHIRE.**

NGR: SO 969 240

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

March 2013

Report No. 872

Quality Assurance

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SUMMARY

On the 29th and 30th August 2012 Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological watching brief during the construction of a house extension and a new garage at Prior's Piece, Mill Street, Prestbury (NGR: SO 969 240). The work was commissioned by Spirit Architecture on behalf of Mr and Mrs Taylor.

The groundworks for the new garage, which consisted of the construction of a foundation slab, were completed prior to the archaeologist's arrival on site and, as such, were not monitored. The archaeological works, therefore, comprised the monitoring of the excavation of footing trenches for the extension.

The watching brief identified a wall, a possible pit and a possible posthole.

The wall and the pit were present at a depth of approximately 1.2m below Modern ground, were sealed by numerous layers and deposits and, as such, were most likely to be archaeological remains. The wall shared a similar alignment to Prior's Piece and probably represented a former part of the building, or an associated ancillary structure.

It was possible to demonstrate that the posthole represented later activity.

GLOSSARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Archaeology

For the purpose of this project archaeology is taken to mean the study of past human societies through their material remains from prehistoric times to the modern era. No rigid upper date limit has been set, but AD 1900 is used as a general cut-off point.

CBM

Ceramic building material.

Medieval

The period between the Norman Conquest (AD 1066) and *c.* AD 1500.

Natural

In archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site.

NGR

National Grid Reference from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

OD

Ordnance datum; used to express a given height above sea-level.

OS

Ordnance Survey.

Roman

The period traditionally dated between AD 43 and *circa* AD 410.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On the 29th and 30th August 2012 Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological watching brief during the construction of a house extension and garage at Prior's Piece, Mill Street, Prestbury (NGR: SO 969 240).
- 1.2 The project was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by Foundations Archaeology (2012). The works were carried out in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (2008) and *Archaeological Guidance Paper 4: Archaeological Watching Briefs: (guidelines)* issued by English Heritage (London Region).
- 1.3 This document presents the findings of the archaeological monitoring.

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Planning permission (Ref. No. **12/00399/FUL**) has been granted by Cheltenham Borough Council for the construction of a two storey rear extension and single storey rear conservatory extension at Prior's Piece, Prestbury. A separate planning permission (Ref. No. **12/00825/FUL**) has also been granted for the construction of an associated garage and alterations to an existing boundary wall.
- 2.2 The name Prestbury probably means "Priests fortified place", derived from Anglo-Saxon *preost* and *burh*. Prestbury appears in the Domesday Book of 1086 as Presteberie, part of the property of the church of Hereford. In 1249 the Bishop of Hereford was granted permission to hold a weekly market, along with an annual fair.
- 2.3 The site is located approximately 70m northwest of St. Mary's Church, which dates to the 12th century, and it is situated within the Medieval settlement core of the village.
- 2.4 The site therefore contained the potential for the preservation of features and deposits predominately relating to the Medieval period. This did not prejudice the monitoring works against the recovery of data relating to other periods.
- 2.5 In accordance with the general principles of National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF) and the archaeological policies of Cheltenham Borough Council, a programme of archaeological mitigation was required as a condition of both planning permissions.

3 AIMS

3.1 The aims of the archaeological monitoring were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits in order to provide sufficient information to establish the nature, extent, preservation and potential of any surviving archaeological remains.

3.2 These aims were to be achieved by the pursuit of the objectives as stated below:

i) to identify, define and record any archaeological deposits and date these where possible;

ii) to attempt to characterise the nature of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning of features present on the site;

iii) where possible, to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence and recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 The monitored groundworks comprised the excavation of foundation footing trenches for the house extension, as shown in Figures 2 and 3.

4.2 The groundworks for the new garage, which consisted of the construction of a foundation slab, were completed prior to the archaeologist's arrival on site and, as such, were not monitored.

4.3 All monitored mechanical excavation was undertaken by use of an excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket, whilst under constant archaeological observation. Where potential archaeological features or deposits were present, they were manually investigated and, if necessary, recorded in accordance with the WSI. Spoil tips were scanned for unstratified finds. All recovered archaeological artefacts were allocated a context reference number and retained. Modern artefacts were noted and discarded.

5 RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 A full stratigraphic description of all contexts identified in the course of the project is detailed in Appendix 1 and a summary discussion is given below.

5.2 The footing trenches were 0.65m wide, 1.2m – 1.4m deep and were excavated through, and into, numerous undated layers and deposits (101), (102), (103), (104), (111), (112), (113) and (114).

- 5.3 Wall (106) was present at the base of the footing trench. It shared a similar alignment to Prior's Piece and was likely to represent a former part of the building, or an associated ancillary structure.
- 5.4 Possible pit [107]/(108) was situated at the base of the footing trench, immediately to the east of wall (106). The feature was not excavated and, therefore, remained undated; however, its location beneath layer (111) suggested that it was most likely to be of some antiquity.
- 5.5 Possible posthole [109]/(110) was undated; although it was demonstrably stratigraphically later than wall (106) and pit [107]/(108).
- 5.6 The archaeological watching brief has identified a wall, a possible pit and a possible posthole. The wall and the pit were both present at a depth of approximately 1.2m below Modern ground, were sealed by numerous layers and deposits and, as such, most likely represented archaeological remains. It was possible to demonstrate that the posthole represented later activity.
- 5.7 After consultation with the archaeological advisor to Cheltenham Borough Council, the wall and the pit were left *in-situ*, and were covered with a Terram type material, prior to the deposition of the new-build concrete foundations.
- 5.8 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology, but will be deposited within 12 months with Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum. A short note will be submitted for publication in the relevant local archaeological journal and an OASIS form will also be submitted to ADS.

6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Foundations Archaeology. 2012. *Prior's Piece, Mill Street, Prestbury, Cheltenham: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*. Unpublished.

IfA. 2008. *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*. Institute for Archaeologists.

7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

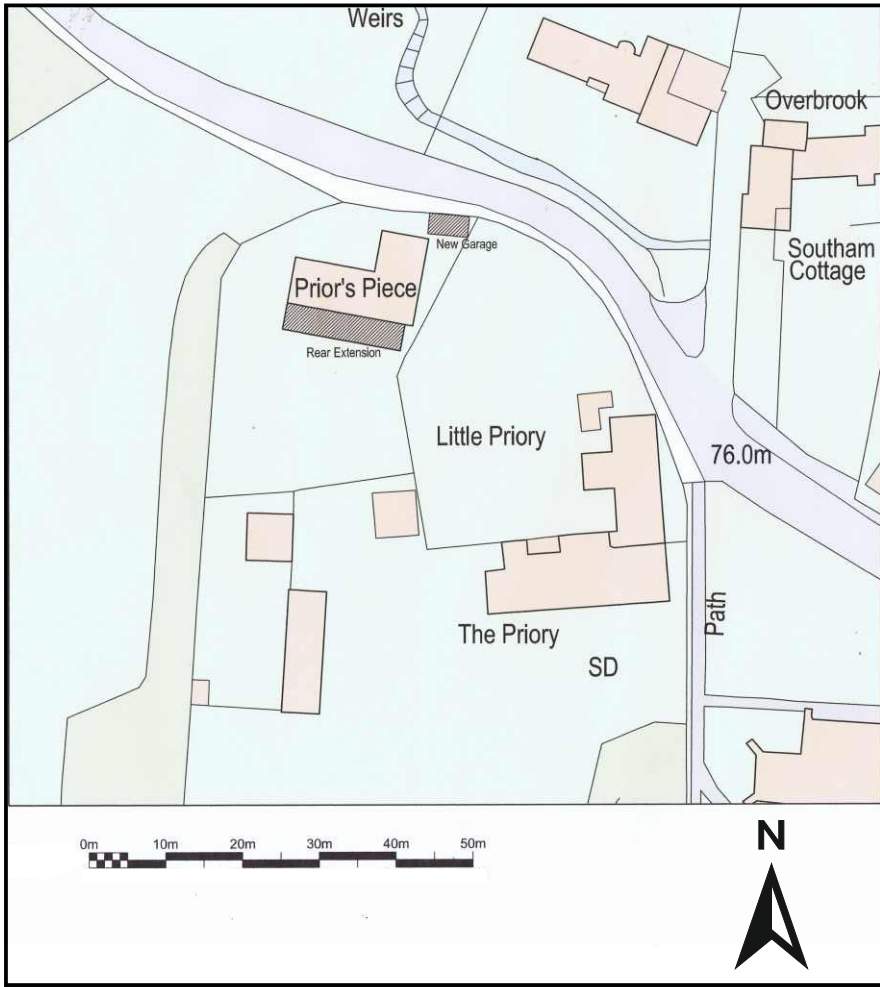
Foundations Archaeology would like to thank Charles Parry of Gloucestershire County Council and Matthew Hollingsworth of Spirit Architecture for their help during the course of the project.

APPENDIX 1: Stratigraphic Data

CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	CUTS/LATER THAN	CUT BY/EARLIER THAN
101	na	na	0.24	Modern ground surface; layer of Modern gravel and grit.	102	na
102	na	na	0.74	Layer of dark brown-black silt, which contained frequent charcoal flecks.	110, 103, 114	101, 113
103	na	na	0.83	Layer of dark brown sand clay, which contained frequent charcoal flecks. Contained lens 104.	?	102
104	?	2.7	0.08	Lens of light grey charcoal and ash. Situated within layer 103. Contained a single, very abraded small sherd of possible Medieval pottery.	?	102
105				void.		
106	1.8	0.63	?	North-northeast - south-southwest aligned linear deposit of beige, irregularly shaped limestones, which probably represented the top of a dry-stone wall/foundation. No associated wall trench cut was visible, therefore uncertain relationship with deposit 112.	?	111
[107]	0.6	0.35	0.05	Sub-circular feature, possibly a pit; part of which was present at the base of the footing trench. Contained fill 108.	112	108
108	0.6	0.35	0.05	Fill of feature [107]; mottled orange-grey clay sand, which contained frequent charcoal flecks.	[107]	111
[109]	0.4	0.13	0.51	Sub-circular feature, possibly a posthole, which was partially present within the footing trench. The feature had near vertical sides and contained fill 110.	111	110
110	0.4	0.13	0.51	Fill of feature [109]; black-grey sand clay, which contained frequent charcoal flecks and occasional limestone fragments.	[109]	102
111	na	na	0.53	Layer of orange-grey-brown clay sand, which contained occasional small limestone fragments and occasional charcoal flecks.	106, 108	102, [109]
112	?	?	0.04	Deposit of beige brown plastic clay sand, which contained occasional limestones and occasional charcoal flecks. Located at the base of the footing trench in the vicinity of sections 001 and 002. Uncertain relationship with wall 106.	?	[107]
113	na	na	0.32	Modern ground surface; turf.	102	na
114	na	na	0.69	Layer of orange-red sand.	?	102
				A small assemblage of animal bone fragments and pieces of oyster shell was recovered as unstratified material.		

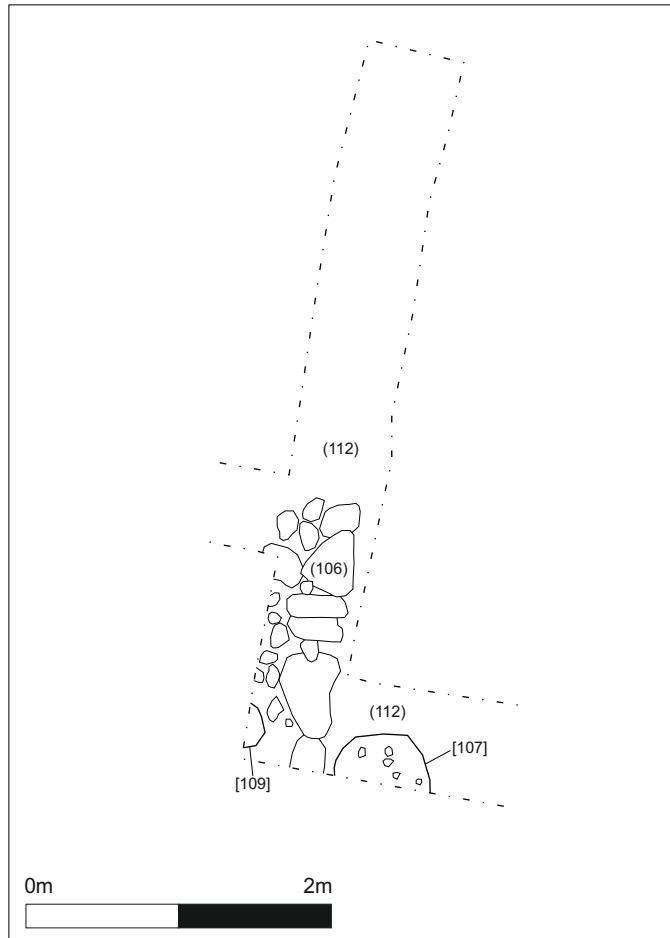
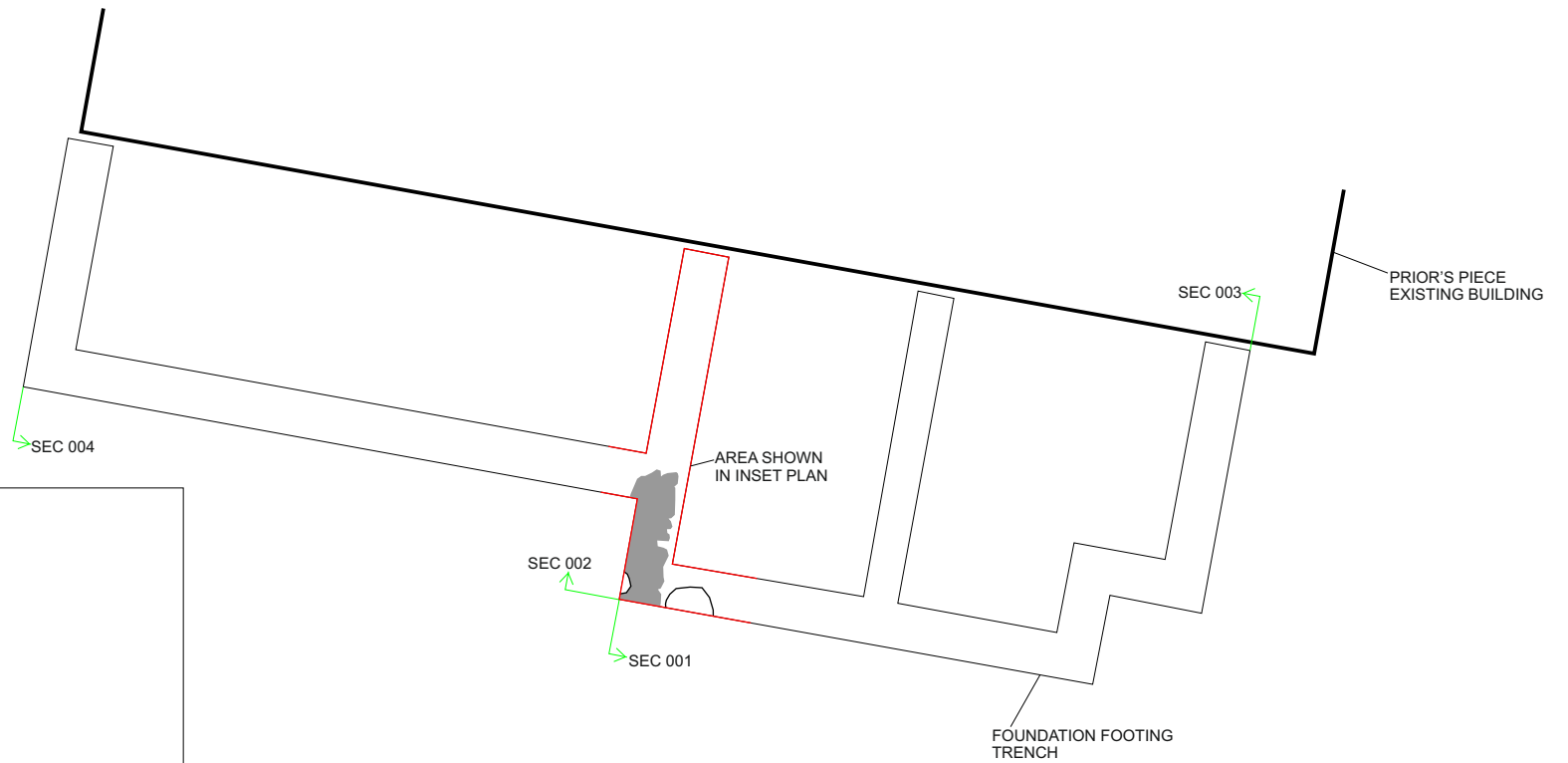


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FIGURE 1: Site Location



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**FIGURE 2: Site Plan Showing
Location of Rear
Extension and New
Garage**



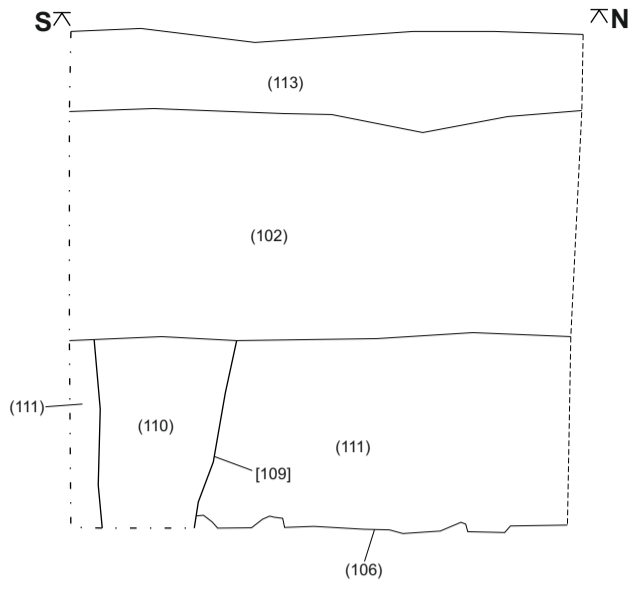
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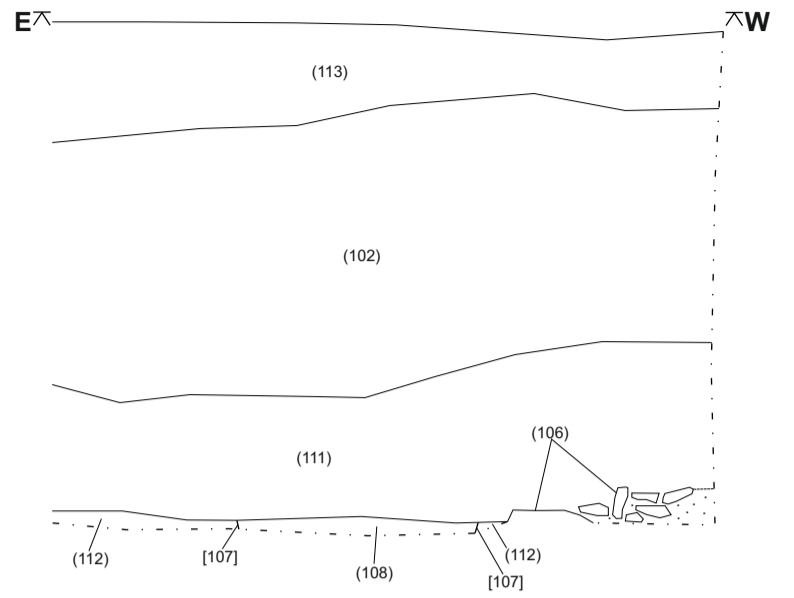
0m 4m

FIGURE 3: Plans Showing Archaeological Features

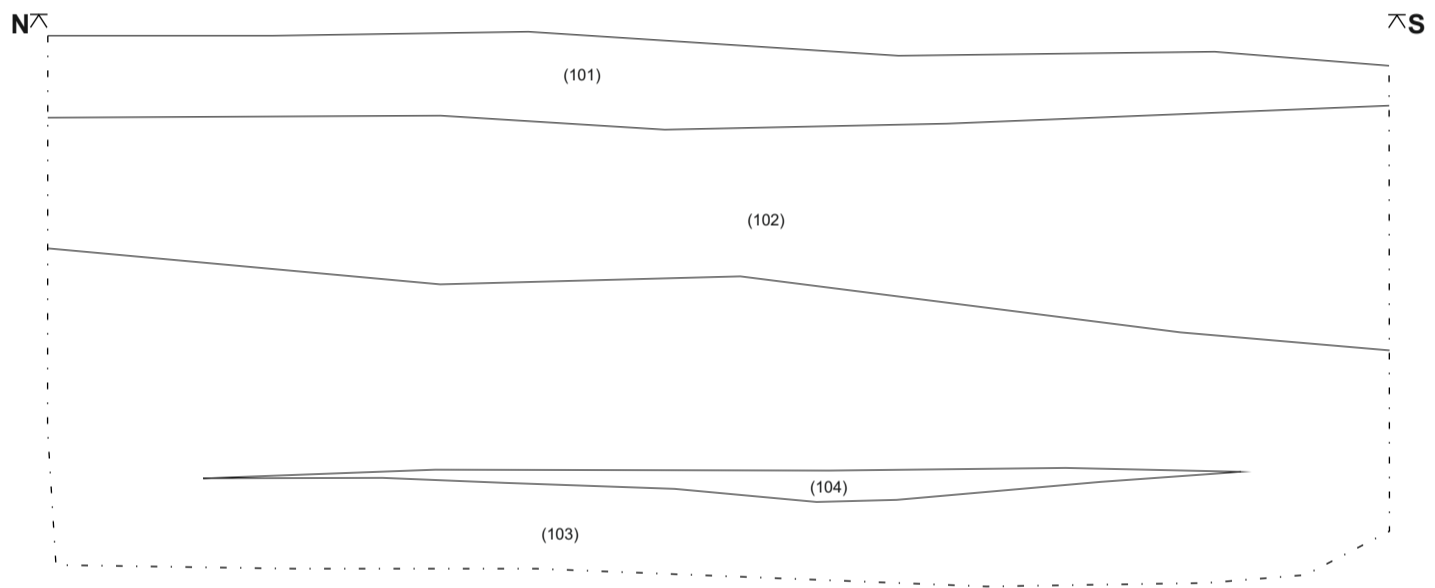
SEC 001: EAST FACING FOOTING SECTION



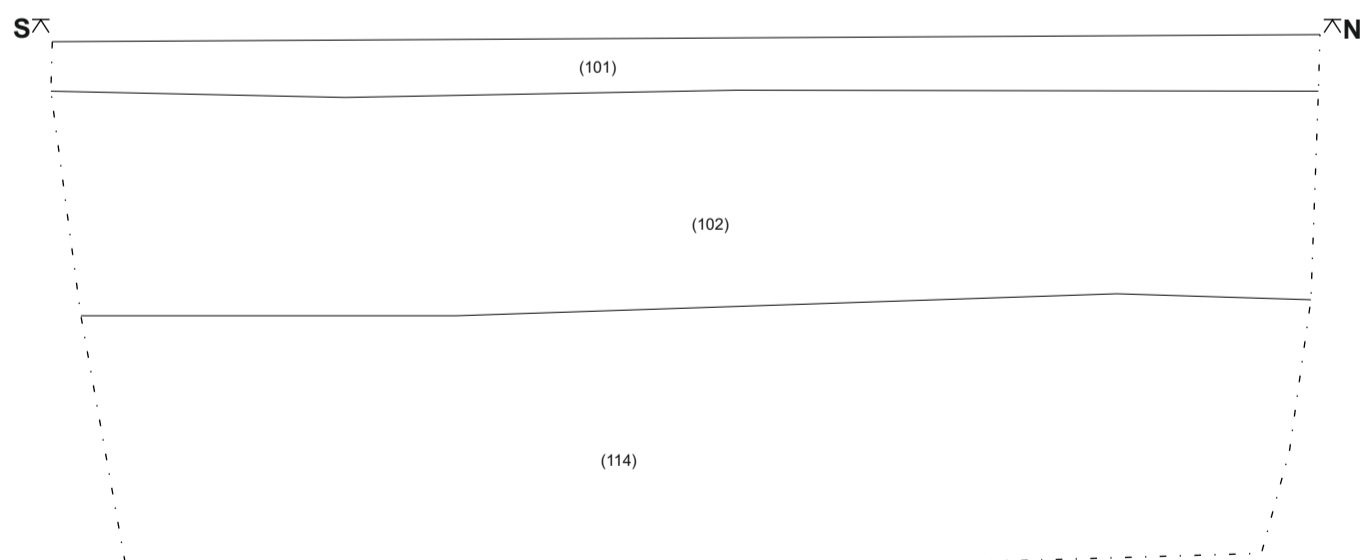
SEC 002: NORTH FACING FOOTING SECTION



SEC 003: WEST FACING FOOTING SECTION



SEC 004: EAST FACING FOOTING SECTION



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0m 1m

FIGURE 4: Sections