

**CHRIST CHURCH,
CRICKLADE STREET,
SWINDON,
WILTSHIRE.**

NGR: SU 1575 8387

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



July 2013
Report No. 895

Quality Assurance

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SUMMARY

Between 2nd May and 10th June 2013 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief on the site of a new community hall at Christ Church, Cricklade Street, Swindon, Wiltshire (NGR: SU 1575 8387). The work was commissioned by Tom Marriot of Timberworks Europe.

The archaeological works comprised the monitoring of the groundworks associated with foundations and services associated with the construction of a new community hall.

The archaeological monitoring identified that the greater part of the excavations did not penetrate deeply into the substrate. Deep excavations were undertaken for a septic tank, a soakaway and associated service trenches; the latter two excavations were partially undertaken without the presence of an archaeologist.

A single possible undated pit was identified within the cut for the septic tank. No other archaeological features, deposits or finds, which demonstrably pre-dated the modern period, were present within the investigated areas.

No evidence for the disturbance of human remains was encountered during the course of the works.

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.

Post-medieval

The period from *c.* AD 1500 onwards.

Prehistoric

The period prior to the Roman invasion of AD 43. Traditionally sub divided into; Palaeolithic – *c.* 500,000 BC to *c.* 12,000 BC; Mesolithic – *c.* 12,000 BC to *c.* 4,500 BC; Neolithic – *c.* 4,500 BC to *c.* 2,000 BC; Bronze Age – *c.* 2,000 BC to *c.* 800 BC; Iron Age – *c.* 800 BC to AD 43.

Romano-British

Term used to define the fusion of indigenous Iron Age traditions with invasive Roman culture. Traditionally dated AD 43 to *c.* AD 410.

Saxon

The period between AD 410 and AD 1066.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Between 2nd May and 10th June 2013 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief on the site of a new community hall at Christ Church, Cricklade Street, Swindon, Wiltshire (NGR: SU 1575 8387). The work was commissioned by Tom Marriot of Timberworks Europe.
- 1.2 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2011). The WSI conformed to the principles of NPPF (2012), the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*, issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (2008) and *Standards for Archaeological Assessment and Field Evaluation in Wiltshire* (CAS 1995).
- 1.3 This document presents the findings of the archaeological watching brief and complies with the specification set out in MoRPHE (English Heritage, 2006).

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Planning permission (Ref. No. S/12/0565) relating to the demolition and replacement of the community centre at the Church has been granted by Swindon Council.
- 2.2 The development site is located close to the historic core of the town, in an area that was not developed until the 19th century, although there had previously been some ribbon development along Cricklade Street during the post-medieval period.
- 2.3 Christ Church itself was constructed in 1851 to replace the medieval Holy Rood church, which had been located to the south in the centre of Old Town, but had proved too small for the growing population of the town. The site of the new church was previously undeveloped land and the now demolished community centre, built approximately 40 years ago, was formerly the rear garden of one of the cottages fronting Cricklade Street. The new community centre is to be built on the footprint of the old centre within an area defined by two east-west aligned parallel stone walls, the northernmost of which forms the southern boundary of the churchyard.
- 2.4 The site was identified as containing the potential for the preservation of archaeological features and deposits and the presence of post-medieval human remains could not be ruled out. This did not prejudice the archaeological works against evidence relating to other periods.

3 AIMS

- 3.1 The aims of the archaeological watching brief 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; as well as to make recommendations for management of the resource, including further archaeological works if necessary.

3.2 These aims were achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:

i) To define and identify the nature of archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible;

ii) To attempt to characterize 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 All groundworks associated with the development were mechanically excavated, whilst under archaeological observation. Spoil tips were visually scanned for finds.

4.2 All excavation and recording work was undertaken in accordance with the WSI and the Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual.

5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 The excavations associated with the construction of the new hall comprised a shallow perimeter trench measuring 0.80m wide by 0.3m deep with a series of north-south aligned cross-trenches excavated at 3m intervals along the length of the building. The cross trenches each measured 0.80m wide by 0.3-0.4m deep (Figure 2). None of these trenches penetrated through to natural ground.

5.2 A number of deeper excavations were also undertaken towards the rear of the site for a new septic tank, soakaway and linking service trenches. The excavations for the septic tank measured 3.5m long x 3.5m wide by 4m deep; natural solid limestone was reached at a depth of 0.80m (136.95m OD) below the modern ground surface and was overlain by a 0.55m thick subsoil layer of dark grey brown silt sand (102). The subsoil was overlain by a 0.25m thick layer of dark grey silty sand (101) with frequent brick and other debris partly formed by the previous construction works undertaken on the site for the old church hall, and partly from the demolition associated with its removal as part of the current project.

5.3 A single archaeological feature [103] in the form of either a pit or a ditch terminus was located in the northeastern section edge within the septic tank excavation, cut into the natural. The feature measured 0.60m north-south by

0.58m deep, with steep sloping sides and a relatively flat base. The east-west dimensions could not be fully ascertained, as the feature extended beyond the section edge (Figure 3). It contained a dark orange brown sandy silt with flecks of charcoal (104). No finds were recovered from this feature.

- 5.4 A soakaway, measuring 1.5m long by 1.5m wide by was excavated within the churchyard through a black humic churchyard soil (105) and was linked to the septic tank via a service trench measuring 0.4m wide. The excavation of these features was undertaken without notification and consequently the base of the trench and the soakaway had been infilled without archaeological monitoring. Spoil tips were examined in detail to attempt to identify the presence of any disturbed human remains, but no evidence of burials was present.
- 5.5 No archaeological artefacts pre-dating the 20th century were recovered during the course of the project. These finds were all unstratified and were not retained.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The watching brief has identified a single undated feature within the area of the septic tank. The feature could not be definitively interpreted as it fell only partially within the excavation area, although it clearly did not represent any form of grave-cut. Natural deposits were only otherwise revealed in the soakaway and linking service trench, although in neither case were these observed by an archaeologist, although limestone fragments in the resulting spoil clearly indicated that the excavations had penetrated through the top of the natural. No artefactual or ecofactual material was identified within the spoil, however, and it can be stated with some degree of confidence that no burials were impacted upon by the works, although other features comparable with feature [103] may have been present but not observed in the soakaway and service trench. Further features may also be preserved beneath the new hall.
- 6.2 None of the remaining excavations penetrated through the subsoil, which showed little evidence for disturbance and was very different in character from the black humic graveyard soil identified in the soakaway.
- 6.3 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology, but will be deposited within 12 months with Swindon Museum. A short note will be submitted for publication in the relevant journal and an OASIS form will also be submitted to ADS.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

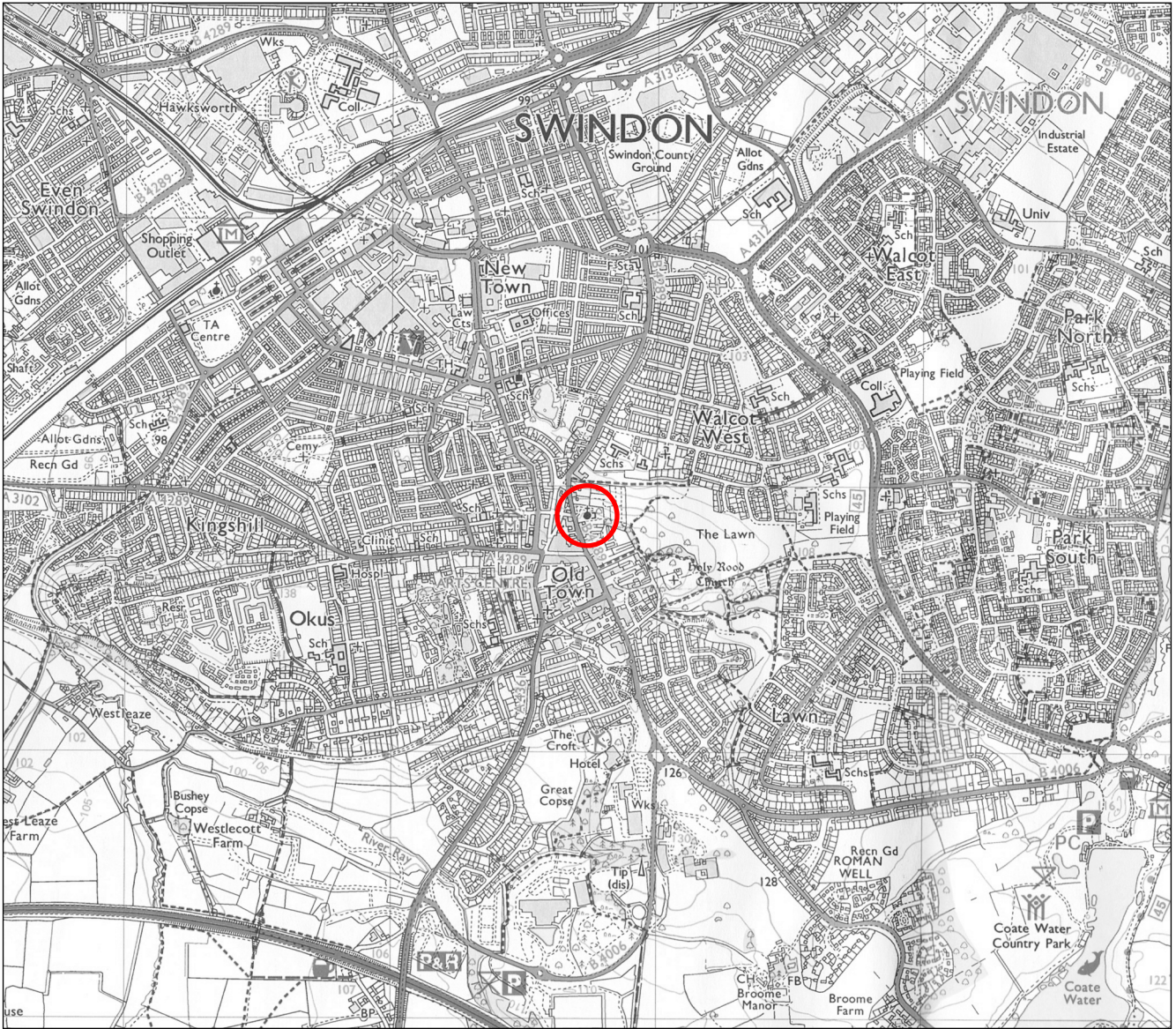
Foundations Archaeology would like to thank Stephen Grosvenor acting on behalf of Christ Church, Tom Marriott of Timberworks Europe, Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger of Wiltshire Council and the groundworkers for their assistance during the course of this project.

APPENDIX 1: The Stratigraphic Data

CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	CUTS/LATER THAN	CUT BY/EARLIER THAN
TP 1; 2.4m long, 1.4m wide and 1.19m deep. Natural = not encountered.						
101	2.4	1.4	0.04	Modern ground surface; hardcore.	102	na
102	2.4	1.4	0.35	Layer of black loam.	103	101
103	2.4	1.4	0.49	Layer of re-deposited natural gravel and dark soil. Contained occasional small pieces of chalk, which were possibly related to layer 204.	104	102
104	2.4	1.4	0.36	Layer of brown sand silt clay.	?	103
The test pit was heavily root disturbed throughout.						
TP 2; 1.6m long, 1m wide and 1.15m deep. Natural = not encountered.						
201	1.6	1	0.05	Modern ground surface; hardcore.	202	na
202	1.6	1	0.3	Layer of mixed black loam and gritty silt sand.	203	201
203	1.6	1	0.5	Layer of orange brown sand, gravel and clay.	204	202
204	1.6	1	0.06	Intermittent layer of small chalk lumps, which contained occasional pieces of Post-medieval roof tile.	205	203
Possible surface.						
205	1.6	1	0.28	Layer of brown sand silt clay, which was similar to 104.	?	204
TP 3; 4.4m long, 2.6m wide and 2.47m deep. Natural = orange brown gravel and sand.						
301	4.4	2.6	0.69	Modern overburden; mixed soils and brick-rubble.	302, 303, nat.	na
302	4.2	2.6	1.96	Brick-built cellar wall; orange red bricks, bonded by a dark beige cement. Associated with floor 303.	nat.	301
303	4.2	2.6	?	Brick-built cellar floor; orange red bricks, bonded by a dark beige cement. Situated to the northwest of wall 302. Not excavated.	nat.	301
TP 4; 1.5m long, 1.5m wide and 1.45m deep. Natural = orange brown gravel.						
401	1.5	1.5	0.15	Modern ground surface; hardcore.	402	na
402	1.5	1.5	0.22	Layer of black loam.	403	401
403	1.5	1.5	0.59	Layer of mid brown mixed sand, gravel and clay.	nat.	402

CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	CUTS/LATER THAN	CUT BY/EARLIER THAN
				TP 5; 1.5m long, 1.3m wide and 1.48m deep. Natural = orange brown gravel.		
501	1.5	1.3	0.15	Modern ground surface; hardcore.	502	na
502	1.5	1.3	0.25	Layer of black loam.	503	501
503	1.5	1.3	0.67	Layer of mid brown mixed sand, gravel and clay.	nat.	502
				TP 6; 1.3m long, 1.3m wide and 1.6m deep. Natural = orange brown gravel and sand.		
601	1.3	1.3	0.15	Modern ground surface; hardcore.	602	na
602	1.3	1.3	0.21	Layer of brick rubble.	603	601
603	1.3	1.3	0.75	Layer of dark brown sand, which contained frequent CBM, glass and concrete fragments.	nat.	602
				TP 7; 1.3m long, 1.3m wide and 1.58m deep. Natural = orange brown gravel and sand.		
701	1.3	1.3	0.17	Modern ground surface; hardcore.	702	na
702	1.3	1.3	0.17	Layer of brick rubble.	703	701
703	1.3	1.18	0.71	Layer of dark brown sand, which contained frequent CBM, glass and concrete fragments.	706	702
704	1.3	0.13	1.1	Brick wall; east-west aligned brick wall, which comprised orange-red, unfrogged bricks bonded by a beige-grey cement. Extended beneath the limit of excavation; probable cellar wall. Abutted by fill 706,	[705]	706
				contained within cut [705].		
[705]	1.3	0.27	0.42	East - west aligned wall footing cut, which had a near vertical profile. Extended beneath limit of excavation.	nat.	704
				Contained cellar wall 704 and fill 706.		
706	1.3	0.15	0.42	Wall footing packing fill; brick rubble, which contained occasional glass fragments.	704	703
				TP 8; 1.8m long, 1.6m wide and 1.42m deep. Natural = orange brown gravel.		
801	1.8	1.6	0.82	Modern ground surface; mixed soil and brick rubble.	803, 805	na
[802]	?	0.66	0.57	Cut feature with steep sides and a rounded base. Contained fill 803. Not visible in any other	nat.	803
				section within the test pit.		
803	?	0.66	0.57	Fill of feature [802]; dark brown sand silt gravel, which contained occasional charcoal flecks.	[802]	801

CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	CUTS/LATER THAN	CUT BY/EARLIER THAN
[804]	?	0.82	0.56	Cut feature with a steep northern edge and a flat, sloping base. Contained fill 805. Not visible in any other section within the test pit.	nat.	805
805	?	0.82	0.56	Fill of feature [804]; loose mid brown soil and rubble, which contained occasional CBM and brick fragments.	[804]	801
				TP 9; 1.2m long, 1.2m wide and 1.06m deep. Natural = orange brown gravel.		
901	1.2	1.2	0.21	Layer of light grey clay sand gravel, which contained a fragment of clay smoking pipe.	nat.	902
902	1.2	1.2	0.17	Layer of light brown clay sand, which contained frequent chalk flecks.	901	903
903	1.2	1.2	0.38	Modern ground surface; dark brown loose clay silt sand.	902	na



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Site Code: CCS13
Accession Code:

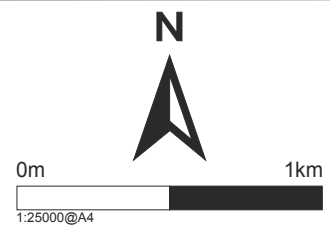
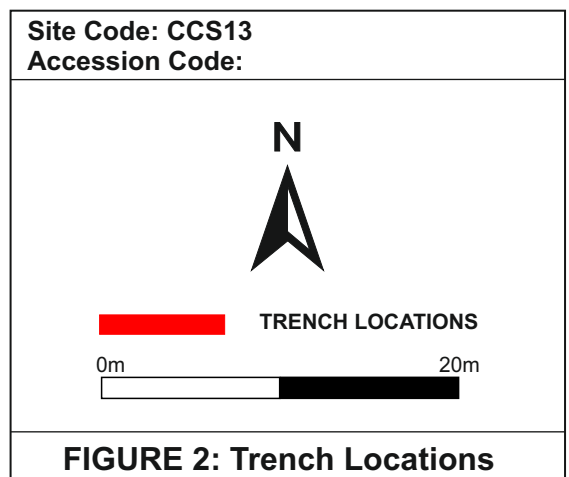
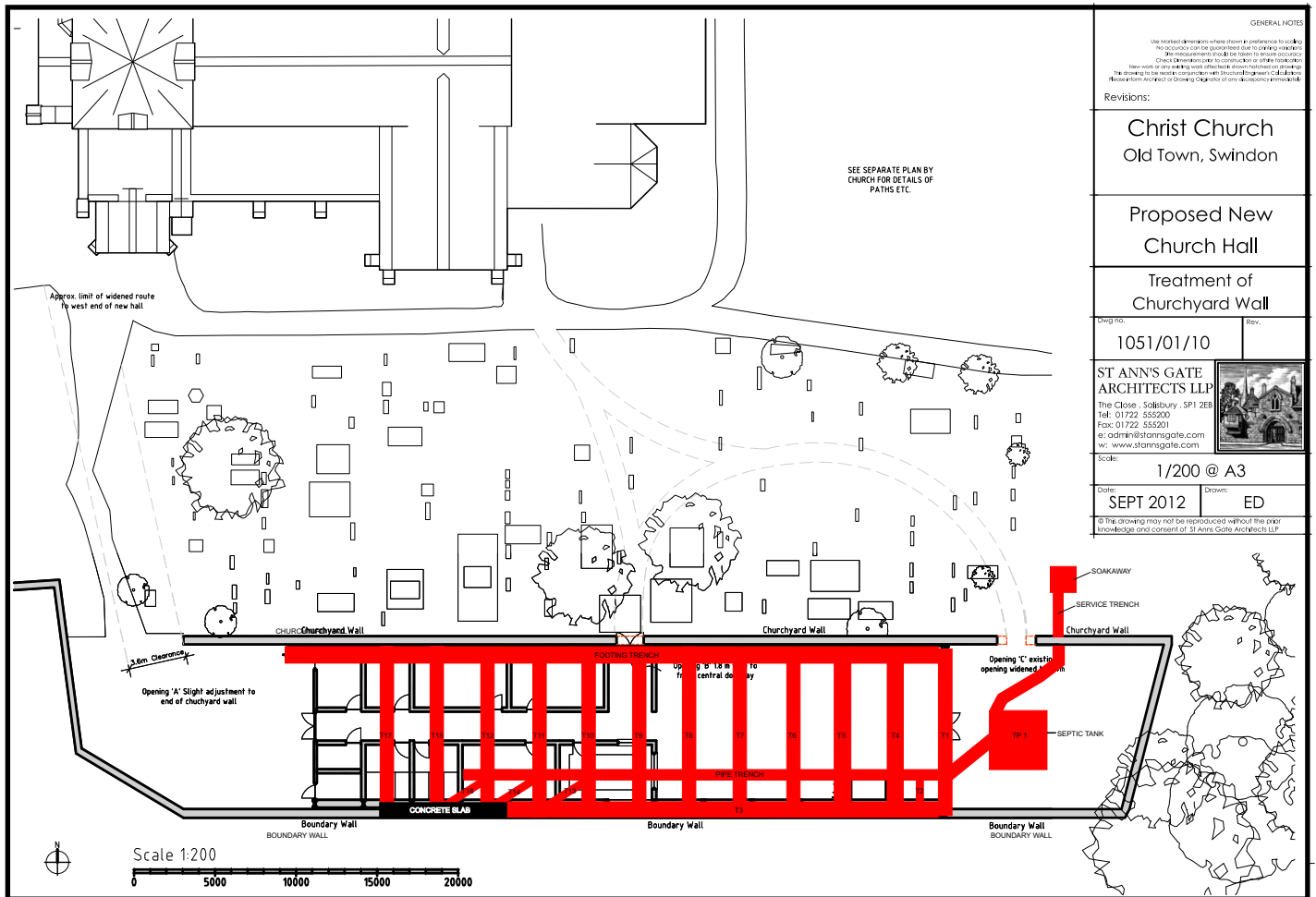
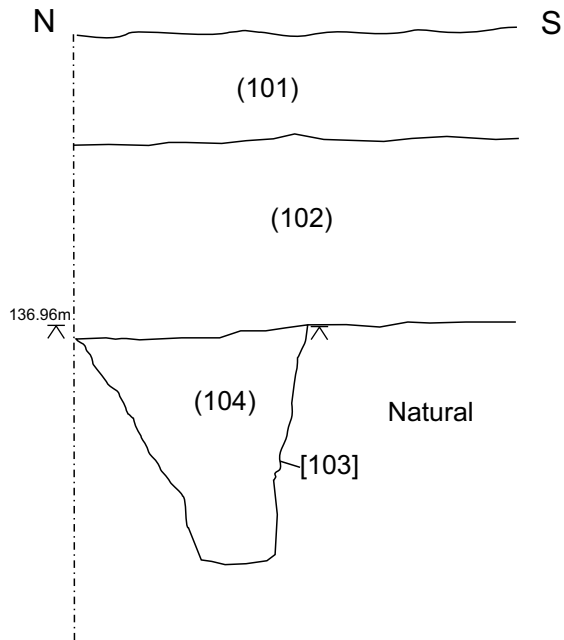


FIGURE 1: Site Location



WEST FACING SECTION OF SEPTIC TANK EXCAVATION



Site Code: CCS13
Accession Code:



FIGURE 3: Feature [103]