

**54 HIGH STREET,
BALDOCK,
HERTFORDSHIRE.**

NGR: TL 246 336

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

February 2015
Report No. 1034



ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANCY, MANAGEMENT & FIELD SERVICES

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Quality Assurance

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Date: 5th February 2015.

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SUMMARY

Between 30th June and 9th December 2014 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief on land at 54 High Street, Baldock, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 246 336). The project was commissioned by CgMs Consulting.

The watching brief identified a number of archaeological features, these consisted of a linear of later Iron Age date, two possible post-holes, one of which was post-Roman and three probable post-Roman wells. Probable well [304] was most likely well [307] identified during the evaluation and post-hole [405] present within the watched area could be related to the post-Roman collection of features (four post-holes and a pit) investigated in Trench 1 during the evaluation phase of works.

Modern disturbance in the form of service cuts and cellering was present throughout the watched area. This may have removed/truncated further archaeological deposits within the study area.

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.

LOE

Limit of excavation

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 30th June and 9th December 2014 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief on land at 54 High Street, Baldock, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 246 336). The project was commissioned by CgMs Consulting.
- 1.2 The project was conducted in accordance with the approved Specification, prepared by CgMs Consulting (2014) and CIfA Standards and Guidance on Archaeological Evaluation (2008).
- 1.3 This document presents the findings of the archaeological watching brief and evaluation and complies with the specification set out in MoRPHE (English Heritage, 2006).

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Planning permission (13/00275/1) has been granted for the demolition of a former police station and police house and the subsequent erection of four 4 bedroom dwellings, two 3 bedroom dwellings and two 2 bedroom dwellings, along with 16 associated car parking spaces, landscaping and ancillary works.
- 2.2 The underlying geology comprises *Holywell Nodular Chalk Formation* and *New Pit Chalk Formation* (undifferentiated) – chalk (BGS – on-line viewer).
- 2.3 Following the completion of an archaeological evaluation by Foundations Archaeology (2014), Hertfordshire County Council required an archaeological watching brief on the construction of the proposed development.
- 2.4 The evaluation revealed the presence of later Medieval-early Post-medieval features. These comprised a well, along with four pits, one of which was associated with four possible postholes. The complete lack of pottery within any of the trenches suggested that the site was most likely to have been situated at the periphery of settlement focus and may have been set within a yard, or area set aside for specialist activities.
- 2.5 The site has been the subject of an archaeological desk-based assessment (CgMs 2012), which concluded that the site had a moderate/good potential for late Iron Age remains, a good potential for Roman remains and a limited moderate potential for Medieval remains. There was a generally low/limited potential for all other periods.

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 achieved through the pursuit of the following objectives:

i) to define and identify the nature of the archaeological deposits on site, 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 Intrusive groundworks (Figure 2) were carried out under the constant direction of the attending archaeologist and were recorded in order to identify archaeological finds and deposits. Both the non-significant overburden and the footing trenches were excavated by a mechanical excavator using a toothless grading bucket. 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

5.1 There appeared to be three distinct areas of stratigraphy within the watched areas. Footings 1 and 2 contained a mixed layer of loose brown clay silt and demolition rubble, between 0.44 to 0.50m thick, which sealed a light brown friable clay silt subsoil, which was between 0.10m thick at the eastern side and 0.50m thick at the western side. This layer contained frequent chalk lumps and sealed the natural chalk. Footings 3 and 4 contained the same mixed demolition deposit present in footing 1 and 2, although here it was only up to 0.3m thick. This sealed a light grey/brown friable silt clay, up to 0.45m thick which contained occasional stone and chalk inclusions. This was in turn sealed by a loose mid brown silt deposit, up to 0.05m thick, with frequent chalk inclusions, which directly sealed the natural chalk. In contrast footings 5 to 8 contained only a single layer of light brown clay silt, up to 0.5m thick, with frequent chalk inclusions, which directly sealed the natural chalk.

5.2 Archaeological features were present in footings 1, 2, 3 and 5. As we received the footing plan after the commencement of the watching brief, the numbering of the features does not correspond with the footing numbers but with the order of the excavated works. All features appeared to be sealed by the basal layer identified and were cut into the natural chalk.

- 5.3 A single feature was present in footing 5, possible post-hole [104], which was 0.23m wide and 0.24m deep. The feature contained (105), a mid brown friable clay silt, with occasional charcoal and CBM inclusions.
- 5.4 Footing 2 contained two features, substantial cut feature [203] and linear [205]. The full extent of possible well [203] could not be investigated due to health and safety concerns but was at least 1.38m wide, a minimum of 1m long and at least 1m deep. The cut had almost vertical sides and contained (204), a loose light brown clay silt, which yielded frequent large tile/CBM fragments, frequent chalk and occasional charcoal inclusions. The CBM was post-Roman and was similar in appearance to that found during the evaluation. Linear [205] was present for a length of over 2.2m, was 0.4m wide and 0.27m deep. The cut was orientated approximately east-west and contained two distinct fills, the main fill, (206), was a mid brown friable clay silt, with frequent chalk and charcoal inclusions. The fill also yielded a large quantity of animal bone and 11 sherds of well preserved later Iron Age pottery. At the northern edge of the feature was a lens of re-deposited natural (207).
- 5.5 Contained in footing 3 was substantial cut feature [304]. The cut was sub-square in plan with a width and length of 1.15m and depth of over 3m where excavation was halted for health and safety concerns. The cut contained at east two fills, the basal fill, (305), was a loose mid brown clay silt with occasional charcoal inclusions. This deposit was visible for up to 1.8m and contained animal bone and large fragments of tile/CBM, this was visually similar to that identified in the evaluation, however due to the depths of the deposit a sample of this could not be obtained. The top half of the cut appeared to contain a mix of (305) and chalk, this appeared to be backfill from evaluation trench 3 and cut [304] most likely represented well [307] identified and part excavated during the evaluation phase of works.
- 5.6 Footing 1 contained two features, well [403] and possible post-hole [405]. Cut [403] was only partly identified within the footings but was at least 0.9m in diameter and over 1.28m deep, where excavation was stopped due to health and safety concerns. It contained (404), a dark brown silt clay with very frequent chalk and tile/CBM throughout. The tile/CBM was similar to that identified in (204) and (305). Post-hole [405] was only partly identified within the footings but was sub-circular in plan, with vertical sides. The cut was at least 0.4m in diameter and over 0.8m deep, but could not be bottomed. The feature contained at least two distinct fills, the basal fill, (406), was a light brown grey silty clay over 0.65m thick, which contained a large quantity of animal bone and frequent chalk inclusions. The secondary fill, (407), was a mid brown grey silty clay, 0.2m thick, which contained frequent chalk inclusions but no artefactual evidence.
- 5.7 Modern disturbance in the form of services were present throughout the watched area. Also present was a large negative cut within footing 7, which most likely represented cellering.

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The watching brief identified a number of archaeological features, these consisted of a linear of later Iron Age date, two possible post-holes, one of which was post-Roman in date and three probable post-Roman wells. Probable well [304] was most likely well [307] identified during the evaluation and post-hole [405] present within the watched area could be related to the post-Roman collection of features (four post-holes and a pit) investigated in Trench 1 during the evaluation phase of works.
- 6.2 Modern disturbance in the form of service cuts and cellering was present throughout the watched area. This may have removed/truncated further archaeological deposits within the study area.
- 6.3 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology, but will be deposited within 12 months with the North Hertfordshire District Council Museums Service. 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 Rob Bourn of CgMs Consultancy Ltd., Andy Instone of Hertfordshire County Council, Keith Fitzpatrick-Matthews of North Hertfordshire Museums Resource Centre and the on-site workers for their assistance during the course of this project.

Appendix 1: Pottery Report

Summary

The watching brief resulted in the recovery of 11 sherds of pottery weighing 330 g recovered from the fill (206) of a ditch [205]. The material is in relatively good condition with one particularly large piece from a cordon-necked bowl/jar and some smaller bodysherds. The sherds all come from handmade vessels and broadly share the same fabric: a grog-tempered ware with variable amounts of accompanying fine quartz sand. This ware corresponds with Stead and Rigby (1986, 260), fabric 2. The assemblage comprises one large rimsherd from the above mentioned bowl/jar and 10 bodysherds in brown, black or oxidised wares. Three sherds have incised scored decoration and the bowl is decorated with a zone of tooled diagonal lines on the shoulder. Several of the sherds have a burnished finish.

The assemblage is very typical of that previously encountered at Baldock, largely in the area to the north-east of the High Street where settlement and burials have been found dating to the later Iron Age (ibid).

Reference

Stead, I M, and Rigby, V, 1986, *Baldock. The excavation of a Roman and pre-Roman settlement, 1968-72*, *Britannia* monog 7

Catalogue: Ditch [205] (206)

1. Single large rim and body sherd from a necked-cordoned bowl/jar decorated with a zone of diagonal tooled lines on the shoulder. Handmade. Fired to an even black colour. Wt. 149 g.
2. Three bodysherds in grog-tempered ware with deeply scored irregular lines. Handmade. Wt. 90 g.
3. Six plain bodysherds from handmade vessels. Some burnished. Wt. 83 g.
4. One oxidised grog-tempered bodysherd. Handmade. Wt. 8g.

Appendix 2: Bone Assessment

Post-excavation assessment of the animal bone from High Street, Baldock (HSB14)

Introduction

The animal bone included in this assessment was hand-collected during the watching brief in 2014. A total of 66 pieces of bone weighing 866g were recovered, of these, 25 bones were identified to species.

Methods

The bones analysed for this report were identified to species using diagrams from Reitz and Wing (2008) and Abel's (2012) visual online guide. The animal bone was scanned and the following recorded; number of fragments, weight of bones in grams, bone type, suggested species, age (mature/immature) and state (including obvious pathology and modifications such as butchery, burning, gnawing etc).

Species

The animal species identified was dominated by three domestic species; cattle, sheep/goat and pig/boar. The assemblage is presented in Table 1.

Age

Based on observation of fusion of long bones and size, the sheep/goat bones in the assemblage appeared to be immature, whereas the pig/boar and cattle bones all appeared adult or could not be categorized by age.

Modifications

Pathology

Two bones in the assemblage indicated changes indicative of pathology. In deposit (206), the antero-lateral surface of a pig/boar mandible showed some re-modelling. In deposit (404), the left proximal tibia of a cow showed a high degree of porosity to the epiphyseal surface and proximal part of the shaft. The remaining part of the surface of this partial bone was in good condition, therefore reducing the likelihood that this porosity had a taphonomic cause, and supporting the hypothesis that it was caused by malnutrition or disease.

Butchery

Five bones in the assemblage showed cut marks. Deposit (206) contained four cut-marked bones. A sheep/goat vertebra exhibited a laterally orientated fine cut mark to the left posterior articular process. An unidentified fragment had two small, v-shaped knife notches to its broken side. A fragment of unidentified flat bone exhibited multiple fine cut marks, which were all directionally similar, perhaps indicating fine butchery with a small knife.

Deposit (404) contained one cut-marked bone. A partial left proximal tibia showed two pronounced cut marks. These were orientated antero-medially to infero-laterally and penetrated approximately 4-5mm into the cortical bone surface. One of the two cut-marks was located on the broken distal surface of the partial bone, indicating that it was the likely cause of disassociation of the proximal part of the bone from the distal.

Taphonomic changes

All bones in contexts (404) and (406) exhibited complete surface bleaching, indicating prolonged surface-exposure at some point. Five bone fragments from context (206) also indicated such bleaching, whereas the remainder of the bones from (206) were unbleached. The five bleached fragments from (206) also indicated significant surface abrasion/weathering, in contrast to the other bones from (206) which exhibited good surface preservation. The bleached and abraded fragment must, therefore, have been exposed at the surface to a greater extent than the other bones in the fill.

Bibliography

Abel, S. M. (2012) *Bone Identification: A visual guide for forensic anthropologists, law enforcement, and naturalists* <http://www.boneid.net/Elements.html> (last accessed 18/12/2014)
Reitz, E. J. and Wing, E. S. (2008) *Zooarchaeology* (Second Edition). Cambridge University Press.

Table 1: Animal Bone

Context No	Element (C = complete, P = partial, F = fragment)	Species	Age (Mature/ Immature)	Pathology?	Butchery (all marks described here made pre-deposition)	Other (e.g. taphonomy)
206	metapodial (C)	Ovis/Capra	immature			post-deposition damage to posterior mid-shaft
206	vertebra (C)	Ovis/Capra	immature		fine cut-mark to left posterior articular process, orientated laterally	unfused epiphysis is present
206	right tibia (P)	Ovis/Capra	Small size suggests immature			proximal epiphysis missing
206	right mandible (P)	Sus scrofa		Some remodelling to antero-lateral surface		contains one partial tusk (canine) and three premolars, one of which is broken (post-dep)
206	right mandible (P)	Sus scrofa				contains two premolars
206	right mandible (P)	Ovis/Capra	Small size suggests immature			
206	mandibular ramus (F)				2 x v-shaped knife-notches to broken part of fragment	
206	rib? (F)					
206	unidentified flat bone (F)				multiple fine cut marks	
206	cranial (F)					
206	left rib (F)					
206	cranial (F)					
206	cranial (F)					
206	cranial (F)					
206	cranial (F)					bleached and surface significantly abraded/weathered
206	cranial (F)					bleached and surface significantly abraded/weathered
206	rib (F)				2 x cut-marks, orientated proximo-distally	
206	rib (F)					
206	rib (F)					
206	rib (F)					
206	rib (F)					
206	rib (F)					
206	long bone (F)					
206	long bone (F)					
206	incisor (C)	Sus scrofa				roots intact - lost post-mortem
206	incisor (C)	Sus scrofa				roots intact - lost post-mortem
206	incisor (C)	Sus scrofa				roots intact - lost post-mortem
206	canine (tusk) (P)	Sus scrofa				
206	premolar (C)	Sus scrofa				roots intact - lost post-mortem
206	premolar (C)	Sus scrofa				roots intact - lost post-mortem
206	molar (C)	Sus scrofa				roots intact - lost post-mortem
206	unidentified (F)					bleached and surface significantly abraded/weathered
206	unidentified (F)					bleached and surface significantly abraded/weathered

206	unidentified (F)					bleached and surface significantly abraded/weathered
206	unidentified (F)					bleached and surface significantly abraded/weathered
206	unidentified (F)					bleached and surface significantly abraded/weathered
206	unidentified (F)					
206	unidentified (F)					
206	unidentified (F)					
206	unidentified (F)					
404	P1 (1st phalanx) (C)	Bos taurus				bone bleached
404	midshaft metapodial (?) (P)	Bos taurus				bone bleached
404	left proximal tibia (P)	Bos taurus		high degree of porosity to epiphysial surface and proximal part of shaft, possible causes include disease and malnutrition	2 x pronounced cut marks on disto-medial part of shaft	bone bleached but otherwise in very good condition, which reduced likelihood of taphonomy as a cause of localised porosity.
404	unidentified (F)					fragment bleached
406	left frontal (P) with left corneal process and horn core (P)	Bos taurus				bone bleached
406	left frontal (F), left temporal (F), left corneal process with hore core (P)	Bos taurus				bone bleached
406	right frontal (F), right temporal (F), right corneal process with horn core (C)	Bos taurus				bone bleached
406	right fronto-temporal (F), right corneal process (P) with horn core (F)	Bos taurus				bone bleached
406	horn core (P)					bone bleached
406	corneal process (F) with horn core (F)					bone bleached
406	horn core (F)					bone bleached
406	right occipital condyle (P)	Bos taurus				bone bleached
406	left zygomatic (P)	Bos taurus				bone bleached
406	zygomatic (P)	Bos taurus				bone bleached
406	left temporal (P)	Bos taurus				bone bleached
406	left occipital condyle (P)	Bos taurus				bone bleached
406	cranial (F)					bone bleached
406	cranial (F)					bone bleached
406	cranial (F)					bone bleached
406	cranial (F)					bone bleached
406	cranial (F)					bone bleached
406	unidentified (F)					bone bleached
406	unidentified (F)					bone bleached
406	unidentified (F)					bone bleached

Table 2: Bone Summary

	Context	Weight (g)	Number of whole bones	Number of loose teeth	Number of partial bones	Number of fragments	All pieces of bone
	206	281	2	7	5	28	42
	404	143	1	0	2	1	4
	406	442	0	0	1	19	20
Total		866	3	7	8	48	66

Appendix 3: Miscellaneous finds

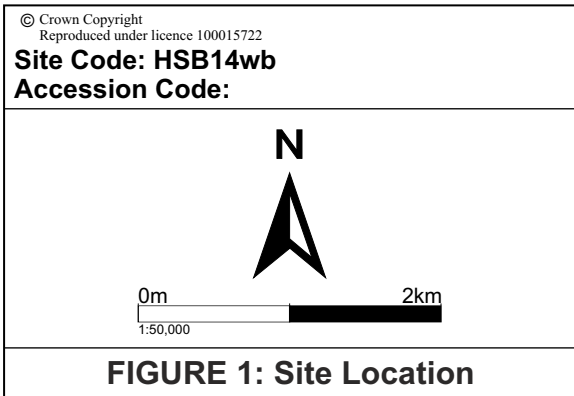
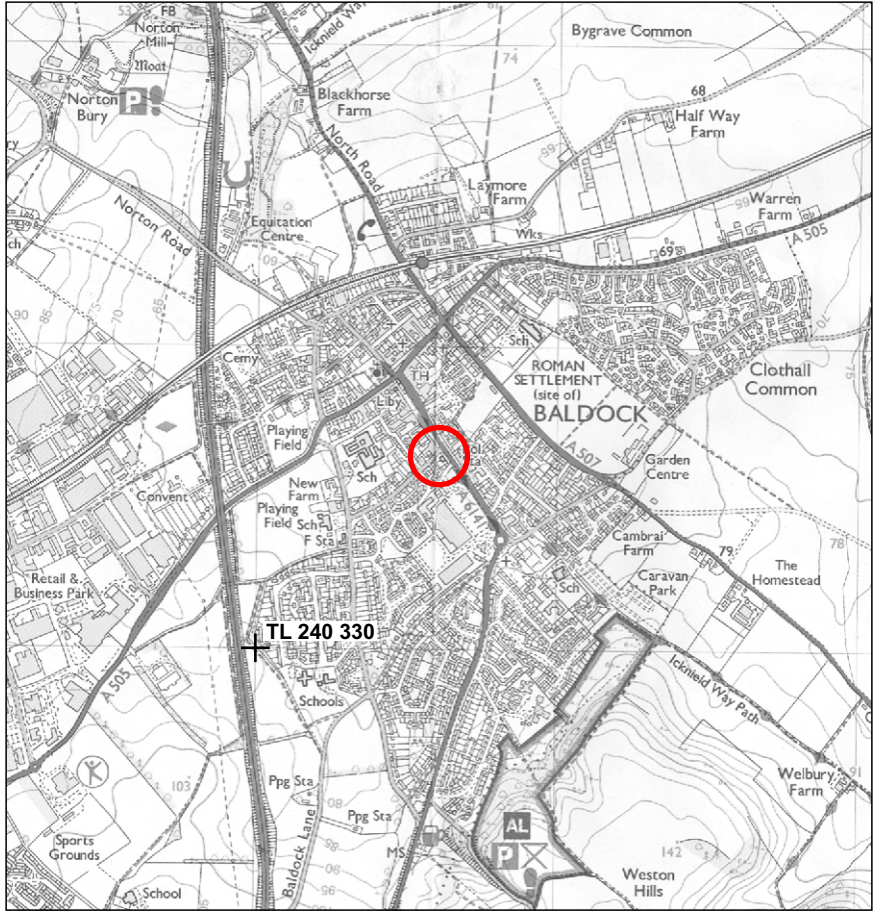
Table 1: Miscellaneous finds

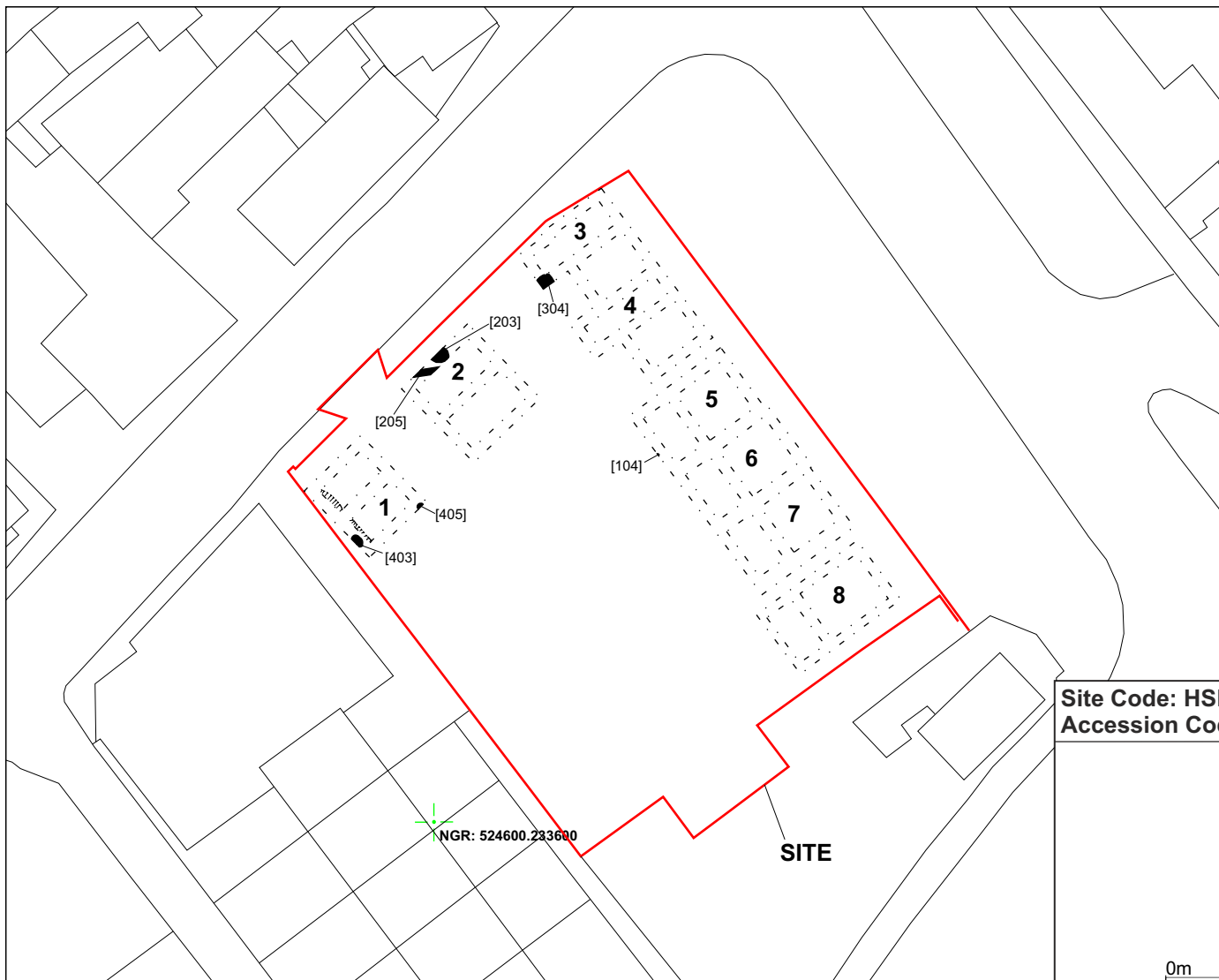
Context	Bone	Pottery	CBM
203			1
206	42	11	
404	4		23
406	20		
Total	66	11	24

APPENDIX 4: HER Summary

HERTFORDSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY SHEET

Site name and address: 54 High Street, Baldock, Hertfordshire SG7 6BL		
County: Hertfordshire		District: North Hertfordshire
Village/Town: Baldock		Parish: Baldock
Planning application reference: 13/00275/1		
HER Enquiry reference:		
Funding source: CgMs Consulting (developer funded)		
Nature of application: Brown field development		
Present land use: Former police station		
Size of application area: 1200sqm		Size of area investigated:
NGR (to 8 figures minimum): TL 2461 3361		
Site code (if applicable): HSB14		
Site director/Organization: Foundations Archaeology		
Type of work Evaluation and Watching Brief		
Date of work:	Start: 31/3/14	Finish: 9/12/14
Location of finds & site archive/Curating museum: Currently Foundations stores/ North Hertfordshire District Council Museums Service		
Related HER Nos:		Periods represented: Iron Age, Medieval-early Post medieval
Relevant previous summaries/reports Foundations Archaeology, 2014 54 High St, Baldock, Hertfordshire Report No. 958		
Summary of fieldwork results: The watching brief identified a number of archaeological features, these consisted of a linear of later Iron Age date, two possible post-holes, one of which was post-Roman and three probable post-Roman wells. Probable well [304] was most likely well [307] identified during the evaluation and post-hole [405] present within the watched area could be related to the post-Roman collection of features (four post-holes and a pit) investigated in Trench 1 during the evaluation phase of works. Modern disturbance in the form of service cuts and cellaring was present throughout the watched area. This may have removed/truncated further archaeological deposits within the study area.		
Author of summary: Tracy Michaels BSc ACIfA		Date of summary: 18/5/15





Site Code: HSB14wb
Accession Code:

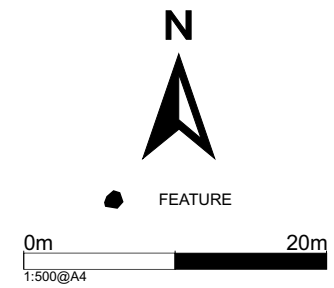
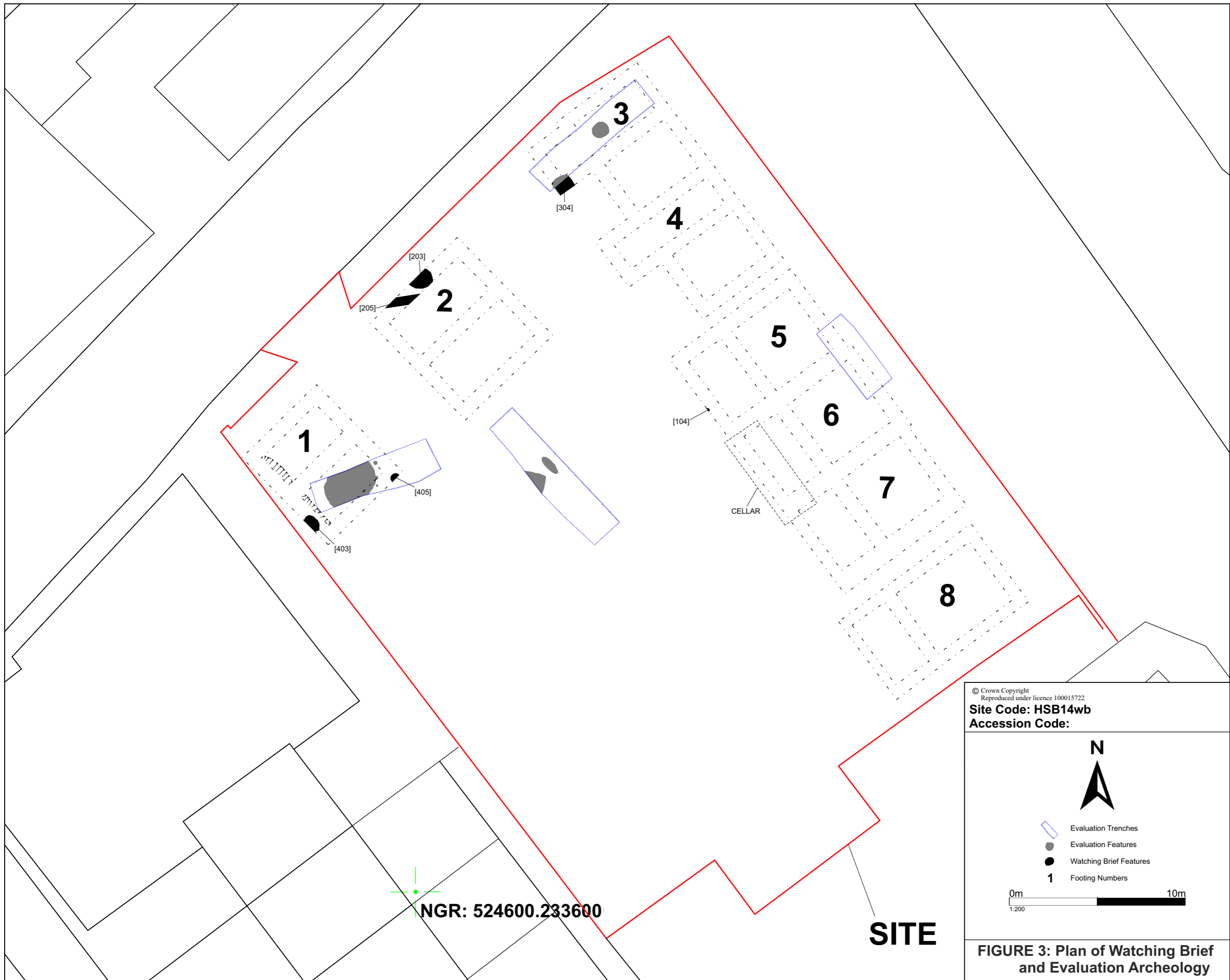



FIGURE 2: Plan showing footings and features



© Crown Copyright
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Accession Code:

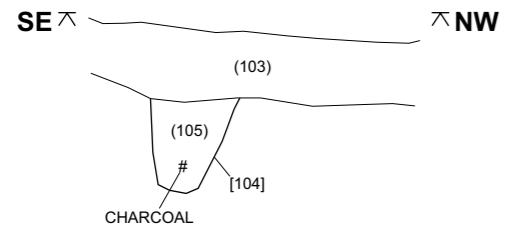
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 Evaluation Trenches
 Evaluation Features
 Watching Brief Features
 1 Footing Numbers

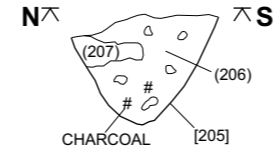
0m 10m
 1:200

FIGURE 3: Plan of Watching Brief and Evaluation Archeology

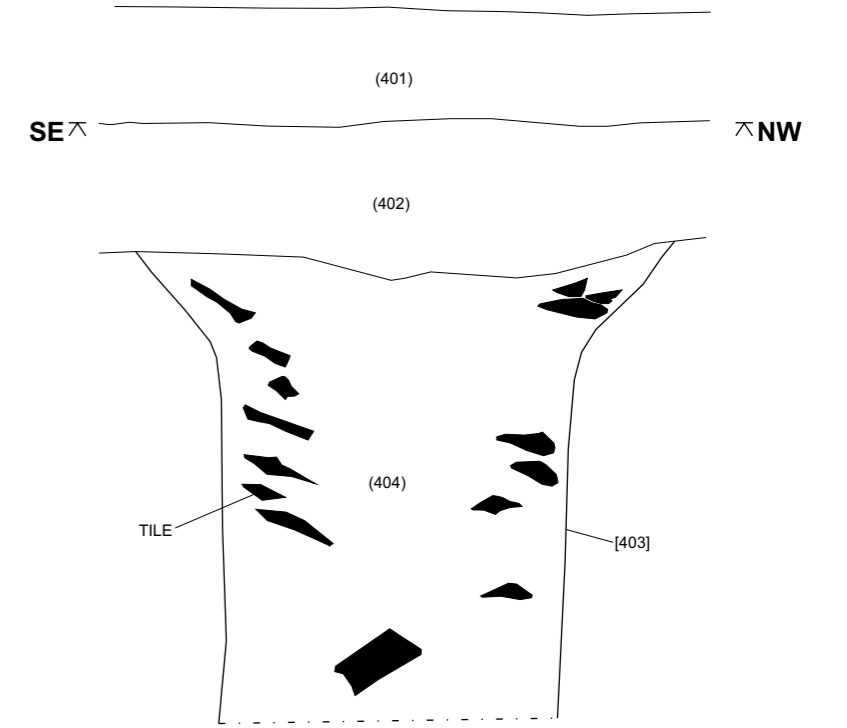
NORTHEAST FACING SECTION [104]



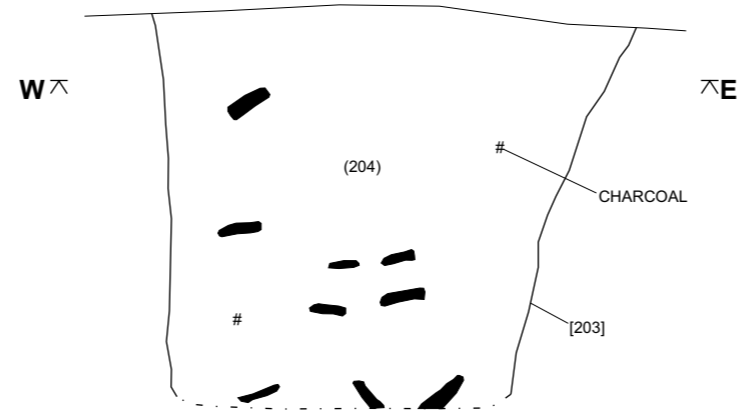
WEST FACING SECTION [205]



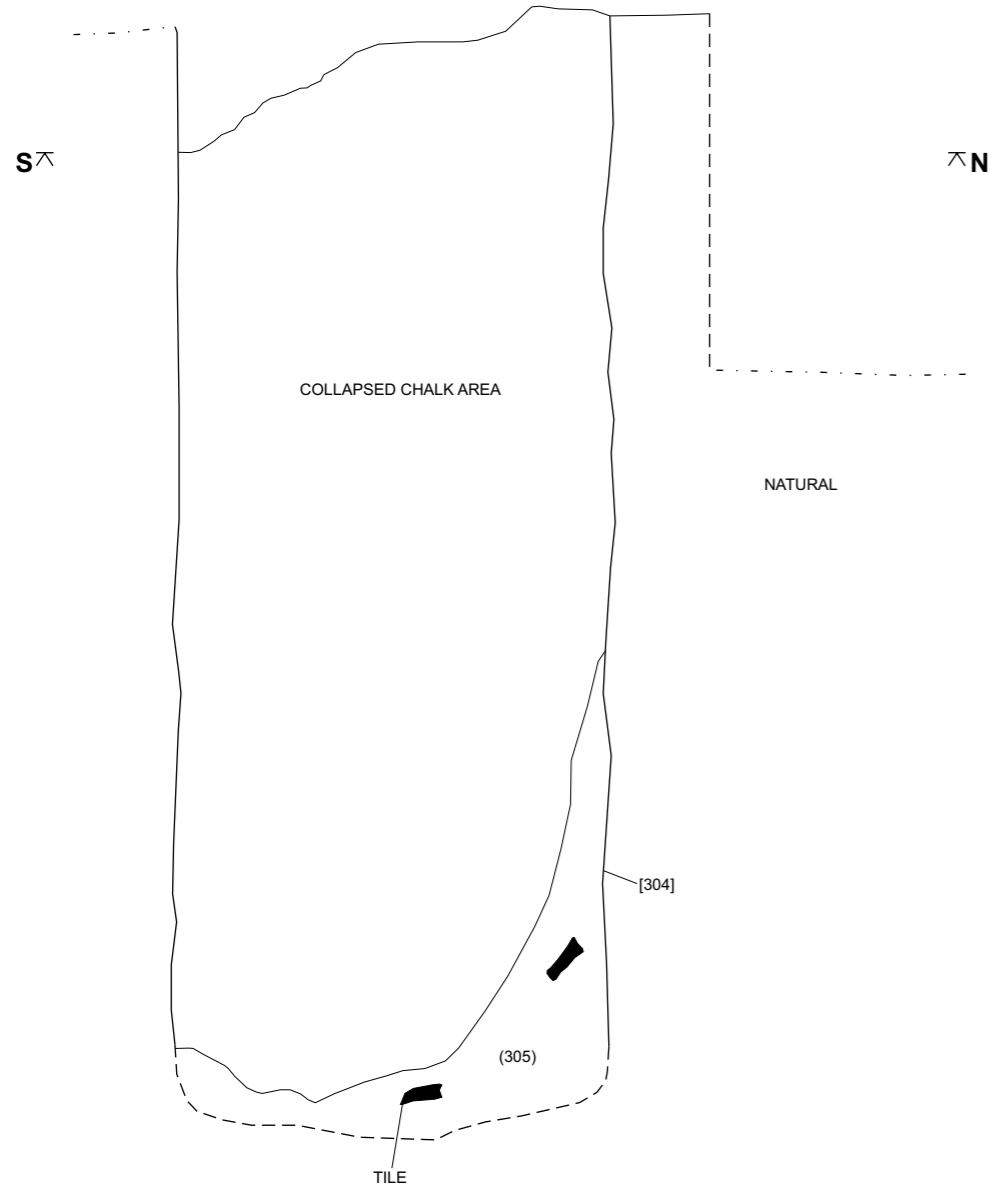
NORTHEAST FACING SECTION [403]



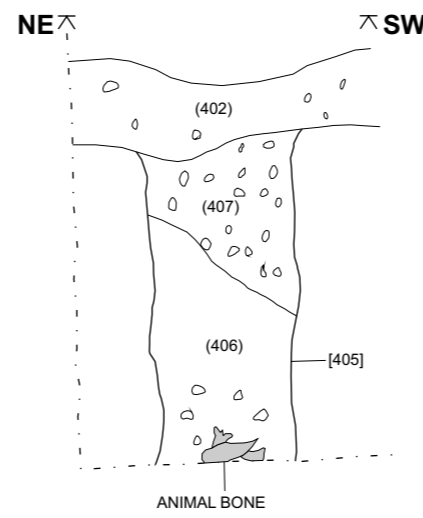
SOUTH FACING SECTION [203]



EAST FACING SECTION [304]



NORTHWEST FACING SECTION [405]



Site Code: HSB14wb
Accession Code:



FIGURE 4: Sections



EAST FACING SECTION [304]



NORTHWEST FACING SECTION [405]



NORTHEAST FACING SECTION [403]

Site Code: HSB14wb

Accession Code:

FIGURE 5: Photographs