

**RIVER GREEN HOUSE  
GREAT CHESTERFORD  
ESSEX**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**



**Essex County Council  
Field Archaeology Unit  
May 2000**

**RIVER GREEN HOUSE**  
**GREAT CHESTERFORD**  
**ESSEX**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

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	ECC Historic Environment Management
	Essex Historic Environment Record

***As part of our desire to provide a quality service, we would welcome any comments you may have on the content or the presentation of this report.***

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**RIVER GREEN HOUSE**  
**GREAT CHESTERFORD**  
**ESSEX**  
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

**SUMMARY**

Client: Mr Colin Day  
Planning application: application just submitted  
FAU Project No.: 1915  
NGR: TL 5072 4272  
Site Code: GC 46  
OASIS ID: essexcou1-41991  
Date of Fieldwork: 1st to the 2nd May 2008

*An archaeological evaluation by test pits was undertaken at River Green House, Great Chesterford by the Essex CC Field Archaeology Unit on behalf of Mr Colin Day, to support a planning application to rebuild the existing house over a slightly larger footprint. The development is located in an area of high archaeological potential in a suburb to the south-east of the Roman walled town, and at the southern edge of the medieval village.*

*Two 1.5m x 1.5m test pits were excavated by hand, one to the north-west of the existing house (TP A) and one to the south-east (TP B). Test pit A contained a large uneven pit containing artefacts of late medieval date, the top 0.45m being truncated by subsequent landscaping and a modern soak-away trench. Test pit B contained no significant archaeological remains other than a buried soil of late medieval date which had been truncated by later landscaping events. A modern pipe trench has also disturbed deposits.*

*Any groundworks below a depth of 0.45m may have an impact on archaeological deposits of late medieval date, but these are considered to be of limited significance.*

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

An archaeological evaluation by test pits was carried out at River Green House, Great Chesterford to support a planning application to demolish the existing house and build a new one over a slightly larger footprint. The evaluation was carried out by the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) on behalf of the applicant, Mr Colin Day, in response to a brief prepared by the Essex County Council Historic Environment Management team (ECC HEM).

Copies of this report have been supplied to Mr Colin Day, including a copy for Uttlesford District Council Planning Department, the Essex CC Historic Environment Management team, the Essex Historic Environment Record and Saffron Walden Museum. A digital copy of this report has been uploaded onto the Online Access to Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis>). The site archive and finds will be deposited at Saffron Walden Museum.

## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Location and topography (Fig 1)**

River Green House is located off Church Street/South Street, south-east of All Saints parish church and on the northern bank of the river Cam (TL 5072 4272). It lies at the south-eastern edge of the former Roman town, in the area of the medieval village. The site has been landscaped to create a level plot with a large dwelling and a detached garage. It is bounded on the east by a low flint wall with a high conifer hedge behind which it extends to the river Cam to the south. The river forms the southern extent of the property and a high hedge marks the west and north boundaries. The test-pitted areas consisted of a turf lawn with a maximum thickness of 0.20m and a paved area using 0.05m thick slabs laid on 0.04m of gravelly sand.

### **2.2 Geology**

The uppermost geological strata consist of the gravel terrace of the river Cam, overlain in places by orange sandy clay.

### **2.3 History and archaeology**

River Green House lies at the southern edge the medieval village to the south-east of the walled Roman town, which is designated a scheduled monument. The following background is based on an assessment of the archaeology and history of Great Chesterford given in the historic town

assessment report (Medlycott 1999), an account of fieldwork carried out by the Great Chesterford Archaeology Group (Collins 1996) and in published and unpublished reports on recent fieldwork.

There is evidence from around the mill and the parish church that this area was a suburb of the Roman town. There is an antiquarian record of a second walled enclosure in the area of the churchyard to the west of the site. An earlier flint foundation, undated but probably Roman, has been found beneath the northern churchyard wall, and a north-south flint foundation has been recorded within the churchyard to the south of the church (Ennis 2001). To the south of the churchyard, at Bishops House, a small excavation recorded several phases of Roman occupation dating from the 2nd to the late 4th centuries (Garwood 2004). The latest phases included a 4th-century timber building succeeded by a substantial late 4th-century stone building. The Roman deposits were around 0.5-0.6m thick, beneath a 0.5m thickness of topsoil. A remarkable hoard of Roman ironwork was found in a pit in the grounds of Bishops House in 1854, cut by a grave containing four human skeletons and Roman grave goods. A Roman burial has also been found in the grounds of the Vicarage, to the west of the site, while Roman pits and gullies have been recorded to the east, on the south side of South Street (Brooks and Wallis 1991, site GC1).

At the South Street site (Brooks and Wallis 1991, site GC1) a pit containing Saxo-Norman pottery, dating to the 10th-12th centuries, was also recorded.

### **3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

The general aim of the evaluation was to ‘... determine, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality ...’ of any archaeological remains present (ECC HEM 2008) in accordance with the regional research framework (Brown and Glazebrook 2000). More specific aims include:

- Identification of any surviving evidence relating to the Roman town and medieval village and the nature of that occupation
- Defining the longevity of the settlement
- Examining the economy of the Roman and medieval settlement including industrial, domestic and commercial production
- Studying samples from any surviving organic deposits
- Examining all elements of burial and ritual activity
- Investigating the evidence for Late Iron Age to Roman and Roman to Saxon transition periods, if present



## **4.0 METHOD**

Modern overburden and topsoil was removed by hand-excavation. All archaeological features and deposits were then excavated by hand using standard ECC FAU procedures, with stratigraphic contexts described on proforma site recording sheets, and plans being drawn at 1:20 and sections at 1:10. A photographic record, consisting of digital images, was maintained on selected individual features as well as more general trench shots. Levels were taken on the present ground and exposed surfaces of each trench and the position of each trench was located to the existing building. Finds were collected for dating and characterisation purposes.

IFA standards and by-laws and ALGAO's Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England (Gurney, 2003) were adhered to during the fieldwork, which was monitored by Mr R Havis of ECC HEM on behalf of Uttlesford District Council.

## **5.0 FIELDWORK RESULTS**

The evaluation consisted of two hand-dug 1.5m x 1.5m test pits. Full contexts details are given in Appendix 2.

### **5.1 Test pit A**

Test pit A was located 3.40m from the north-west facing wall of the existing building (Fig 1, Plate 1). It was hand-excavated to a depth of 1.20m to the top of natural sandy gravel.

One large irregular pit [1] of late medieval date was revealed, filled by a single mid brown sandy clay deposit (2) which contained animal bone (Fig 1, Plate 2), two fragments of pottery dating to the late 13th-14th century and a fragment of peg-tile. The top of the feature was truncated by a landscaping deposit (3) in which fragments of pottery dating from the 13th century to the late 18th century were present. Pit [1] appears to be the result either of quarrying for gravel or the removal of trees, backfilled in a single event with a small amount of domestic refuse being thrown in. A fine retouched blade of Mesolithic date was present and although residual it does suggest early post-glacial activity in the area.

### **5.2 Test pit B**

Test pit B was located 1.90m north-east of the north-east facing wall of the existing building and was hand-dug to a depth of 0.90m to the top of natural sandy clay (Fig. 2, Plate 3).

A sequence of deposits was recorded in this trench (Fig. 3, Plate 4), but only the primary layer (8) is thought to be of medieval date, represented by one medieval pottery sherd, with the overlying layers (5), (6), and (7) being later landscaping layers.

## **6.0 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL MATERIAL**

Finds were recovered from five contexts, across two test pits (A and B). All of the finds have been recorded by count and weight, in grams, by context. Full quantification details can be found in Appendix 3. The finds are described by category below.

### **Pottery**

Five contexts produced pottery, amounting to 15 sherds, weighing 142g, almost all of which is of medieval or later date (see below). A single small sherd of Roman pottery, from a dish in fine grey ware, was recovered from the fill of pit 1. This is residual in the feature.

#### **Medieval and later pottery** by Helen Walker

A small amount of pottery, fourteen sherds, weighing 136g, was excavated from five contexts. Medieval coarse ware comprising a late 13th to 14th century-type cooking pot rim, and a wheel-thrown body sherd of a similar date, was excavated from pit 1 and layer 8. Also with a probable 13th to 14th century date are two green-glazed fine ware sherds from layer 3. These resemble Scarborough Ware phase I, but as this ware is usually only found at ports and coastal sites, they may have a more local origin. A mixture of pottery was found in layer 3, with other sherds spanning the 15th to late 18th centuries. Modern pottery was recovered from layers 5 and 7.

### **Roof tiles**

Three pieces, weight 270g, of post-medieval roof tile were recovered; one from the fill of pit 1 and the remainder from layer 3 (both test pit A).

#### **Worked flint** by Tony Blowers

There is a single worked piece from the fill of pit 1. This is a fine retouched blade of Mesolithic date and is residual in the feature.

### **Animal bone**

Two contexts in test pit A produced animal bone, weighing a total of 1347g. Most of the weight, however, is accounted for by the presence of a cattle skull in two large sections, recovered from

the fill of pit 1. All of the bone is in good condition and, apart from the skull and a sheep/goat horn core from the same context, is fragmentary. The bone elements were identified, where possible, using Schmid (1972). Most of the identifiable bones are from cattle, although sheep/goat was also present and a bone from a bird-wing, probably domestic fowl, came from layer 3. The cattle skull has a large hole in the centre front, probably indicating slaughter by pole-axing. The skull is accompanied by two sherds of medieval pottery, so dating evidence is slim. All of the bone is derived from domestic food animals and probably represents butchery waste.

### **Other finds**

These occurred as single items; an iron nail came from the fill of pit 1, a small oyster shell and a burnt flint came from layer 3, and a piece of dark green modern bottle glass came from layer 5.

### **Comments on the Assemblage**

Finds are present in small numbers, perhaps only to be expected at a location towards the edge of the medieval village. Most of the assemblage is post-medieval or modern, with hints of medieval and Roman activity in the vicinity.

Further work is not required on any of the material. All of the finds should be retained, although discard of the more recent items could take place at the archiving stage. The finds occupy one box.

## **7.0 CONCLUSIONS**

The results of the evaluation are somewhat fragmentary; however, it is clear that the extensive and important Roman remains seen in the area of the walled town to the north-west of the site either did not extend this far south-east or have subsequently been truncated by later landscaping activity. No Saxon and only limited medieval evidence was present.

Test pit A to the rear of the house revealed a large irregular pit which is probably of late medieval date and may have been backfilled as part of an early landscaping project. The suggestion of quarrying sand and gravel has to be considered.

Test pit B to the front of the house contained no archaeologically significant features and it is conceivable that this area has not been subject to intrusive human activity in the past due to the presence of flooding from the river Cam. It is evident that extensive landscaping has taken place, presumably to raise the land above the flood level but this has been in the more recent past.

The existence of an early flint wall curving along the eastern boundary of River Green House may be the original extent of church-owned land.

Overall little evidence of prehistoric, Roman or Saxon activity survives in either of the investigation areas, although any groundworks deeper than 0.45m may impact on late medieval archaeological remains. These, however, are considered to be of limited significance.

### **Acknowledgements**

This project was commissioned and funded by Mr Colin Day and special thanks are due to Mr Colin Day for his assistance throughout the project. The monitoring officer was Mr R Havis of ECC HEM on behalf of Uttlesford District Council. P Allen managed the project and the author carried out the excavation with the assistance of J Hewitt. Finds were processed by P McMichael. The finds were assessed by J Compton and H Walker and the illustrations were prepared by the author and A Lewsey.

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## APPENDIX 1: TRENCH DATA

Trench No	Co-ordinates	Orientation
A	TL50717,42726	
B	TL50731,42717	

## APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT DATA

Context No	Type	Filled by	Fill of	Trench	Notes	Date
1	Pit	2		A	Large irregular pit, 0.90m+ wide	
2	Fill		1	A	Mid brown sandy clay	
4					Number not used	
3	Layer			A	Dark greyish brown silty clay, 0.35m thick	
5	Layer			B	Dark brown loam with fragments of building material, 0.14m thick	
6	Layer			B	Dark brown loam with frequent pieces of building material, 0.08m thick	
7	Layer			B	Dark brown loam with rare flecks of chalk, 0.30m thick	
8	Layer			B	Mid brown silty clay occasional small rounded flint nodules and chalk pieces, 0.34m thick	

## APPENDIX 3: FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL DATA

### Finds data

All weights in grams

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
2	1	1	4	Iron nail	-
		60	1295	Animal bone; cattle skull in two main pieces; horn core, sheep/goat; scapula, glenoid cavity and long bone shaft, large mammal; fragments	-
		1	2	Flint blade	Mesolithic
		1	134	Roof tile fragment, encrusted	Post med.
		2	50	Pottery; rim and body sherds	Medieval
		1	8	Pottery; dish body sherd, fine grey ware	Roman
3	Layer	5	52	Animal bone; cattle incisor and part of maxilla; humerus, distal end, medium-sized mammal; bird coracoid	-
		1	4	Shell; oyster, one valve, pierced with 3mm hole	-
		1	22	Burnt flint	-
		2	136	Roof tile fragments, one with peg hole	Post med.
		6	34	Pottery; rim and body sherds	Med/post med.
		5	Layer	1	8
2	14	Pottery; rim and body sherds	Modern		
7	Layer	3	22	Pottery; rim and body sherds	Modern
8	Layer	1	14	Pottery; body sherd	Medieval

## Archive tables

### Pottery data

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
2	1	2	50	Rim and body sherds	Medieval
		1	8	Dish body sherd, fine grey ware	Roman
3	Layer	6	34	Rim and body sherds	Med/post med.
5	Layer	2	14	Rim and body sherds	Modern
7	Layer	3	22	Rim and body sherds	Modern
8	Layer	1	14	Body sherd	Medieval
		<b>15</b>	<b>142</b>		

### Animal bone data

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description
2	1	60	1295	Cattle skull in two main pieces; horn core, sheep/goat; scapula, glenoid cavity and long bone shaft, large mammal; fragments
3	Layer	5	52	Cattle incisor and part of maxilla; humerus, distal end, medium-sized mammal; bird coracoid
		<b>65</b>	<b>1347</b>	

### Other finds data

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
2	1	1	4	Iron nail	-
		1	2	Flint blade	-
		1	134	Roof tile fragment, encrusted	Post med.
3	Layer	1	4	Shell; oyster, one valve, pierced with 3mm hole	-
		1	22	Burnt flint	-
		2	136	Roof tile fragments, one with peg hole	Post med.
5	Layer	1	8	Glass; dark green bottle body sherd, no weathering	Modern

### Finds from test pit A

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
2	1	1	4	Iron nail	-
		60	1295	Animal bone; cattle skull in two main pieces; horn core, sheep/goat; scapula, glenoid cavity and long bone shaft, large mammal; fragments	-
		1	2	Flint blade	-
		1	134	Roof tile fragment, encrusted	Post med.
		2	50	Pottery; rim and body sherds	Medieval
		1	8	Pottery; dish body sherd, fine grey ware	Roman
		3	Layer	5	52
3	Layer	1	4	Shell; oyster, one valve, pierced with 3mm hole	-
		1	22	Burnt flint	-
		2	136	Roof tile fragments, one with peg hole	Post med.
		6	34	Pottery; rim and body sherds	Med/post med.

### Finds from test pit B

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
5	Layer	1	8	Glass; dark green bottle body sherd, no weathering	Modern
		2	14	Pottery; rim and body sherds	Modern
7	Layer	3	22	Pottery; rim and body sherds	Modern
8	Layer	1	14	Pottery; body sherd	Medieval

## **APPENDIX 4: ARCHIVE INDEX**

**SITE NAME: River Green House Great Chesterford (GC46)**

### **Index to the Archive**

File containing:

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Brief for Evaluation
- 1.2 Written Scheme of Investigation for Evaluation

**2. Research Archive**

- 2.1 Client Report
- 2.2 Finds Reports

**3. Site Archive**

- 3.1 1 Context Record Registers
- 3.2 Original Context Records 01 to 8 (Ctx 4 void)
- 3.3 1 Plans Register
- 3.4 1 Sections Register
- 3.5 1 Levels Register
- 3.6 1 Photographic Register
- 3.7 2 Permatrace Plan sheets
- 3.8 1 Permatrace Section sheets
- 3.9 2 Trench Sheets

**4. Not in Files:**

- 4.1 1 Box of Finds



## APPENDIX 5: EHER SUMMARY SHEET

<b>Site Name/Address:</b> River Green House Great Chesterford	
<b>Parish</b>	<b>District:</b> Uttlesford
<b>NGR:</b> TL 5072 4272	<b>Site Code:</b> GC 46
<b>Type of Work:</b> Evaluation	<b>Site Director/Group:</b> Tony Blowers, ECC FAU
<b>Date of Work:</b> 1st to 2nd May 2008	<b>Size of Area Investigated:</b> 4.5 sq m
<b>Location of Finds/Curating Museum:</b> Saffron Walden Museum	<b>Funding Source:</b> Mr Colin Day
<b>Further Work Anticipated?</b> Yes	<b>Related EHER Nos:</b> EHER 13864-13869
<b>Final Report:</b> EAA Summary	<b>OASIS ID:</b> essexcou1-41991
<b>Periods Represented:</b> Medieval/ Post-medieval/ Modern	
<b>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</b>	
<p>An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by ECC FAU, on behalf of Mr Colin Day, at River Green House, Great Chesterford, to support a planning application to demolish the existing house and rebuild it over a slightly larger footprint. The development is located in an area of high archaeological potential, either within or immediately outside the suggested extent of a Roman small town to the north-west and the medieval village to the north.</p> <p>Two 1.5m x 1.5m test pits were excavated by hand, one to the north-west of the existing house (TP A) and one to the south-east (TP B). Test pit A contained a large uneven pit, possibly a shallow quarry, containing artefacts of late medieval date, the top 0.45m being truncated by subsequent landscaping and a modern soakaway trench. Test pit B contained no significant archaeological remains other than a buried soil of late medieval date which had been truncated by later landscaping events. A modern pipe trench has also disturbed deposits.</p> <p>Any groundworks below a depth of 0.45m may have an impact on archaeological deposits of late medieval date, but these are considered to be of limited significance.</p>	
<b>Previous Summaries/Reports:</b>	
<b>Author of Summary:</b> Tony Blowers	<b>Date of Summary:</b> May 2008



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Fig.1. Site location

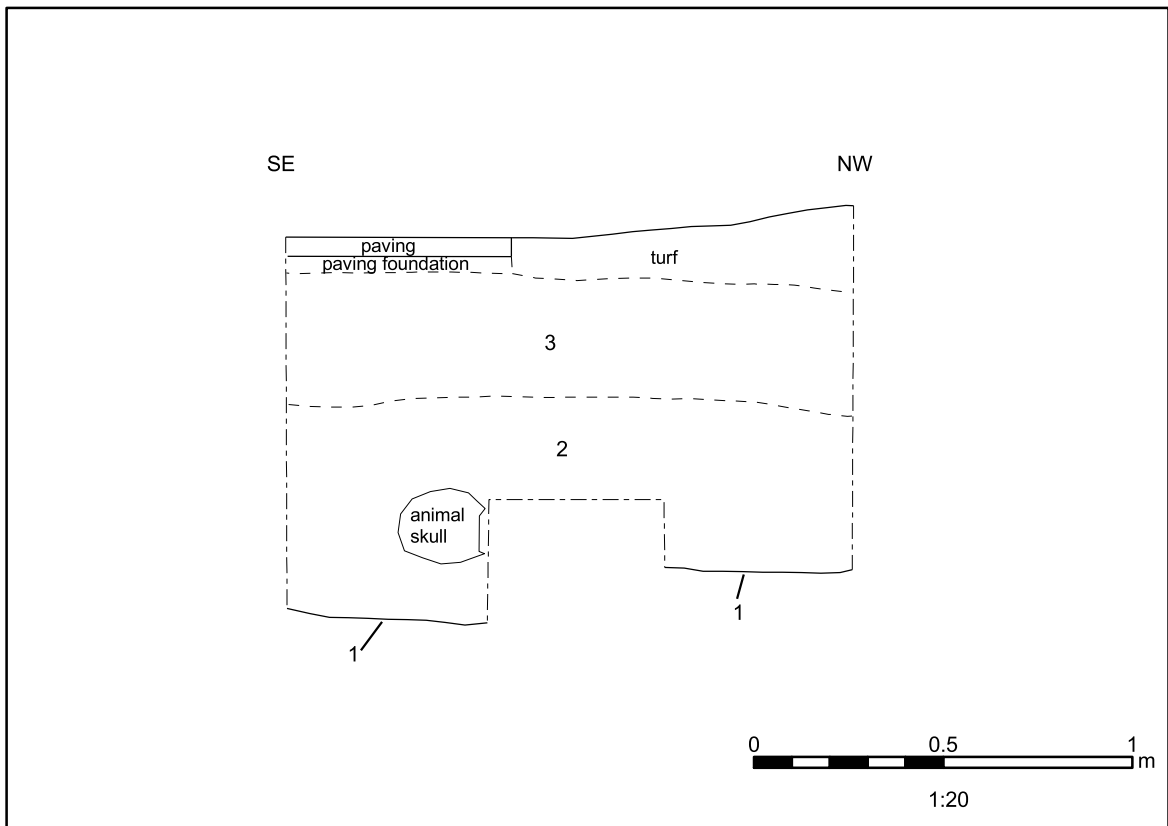
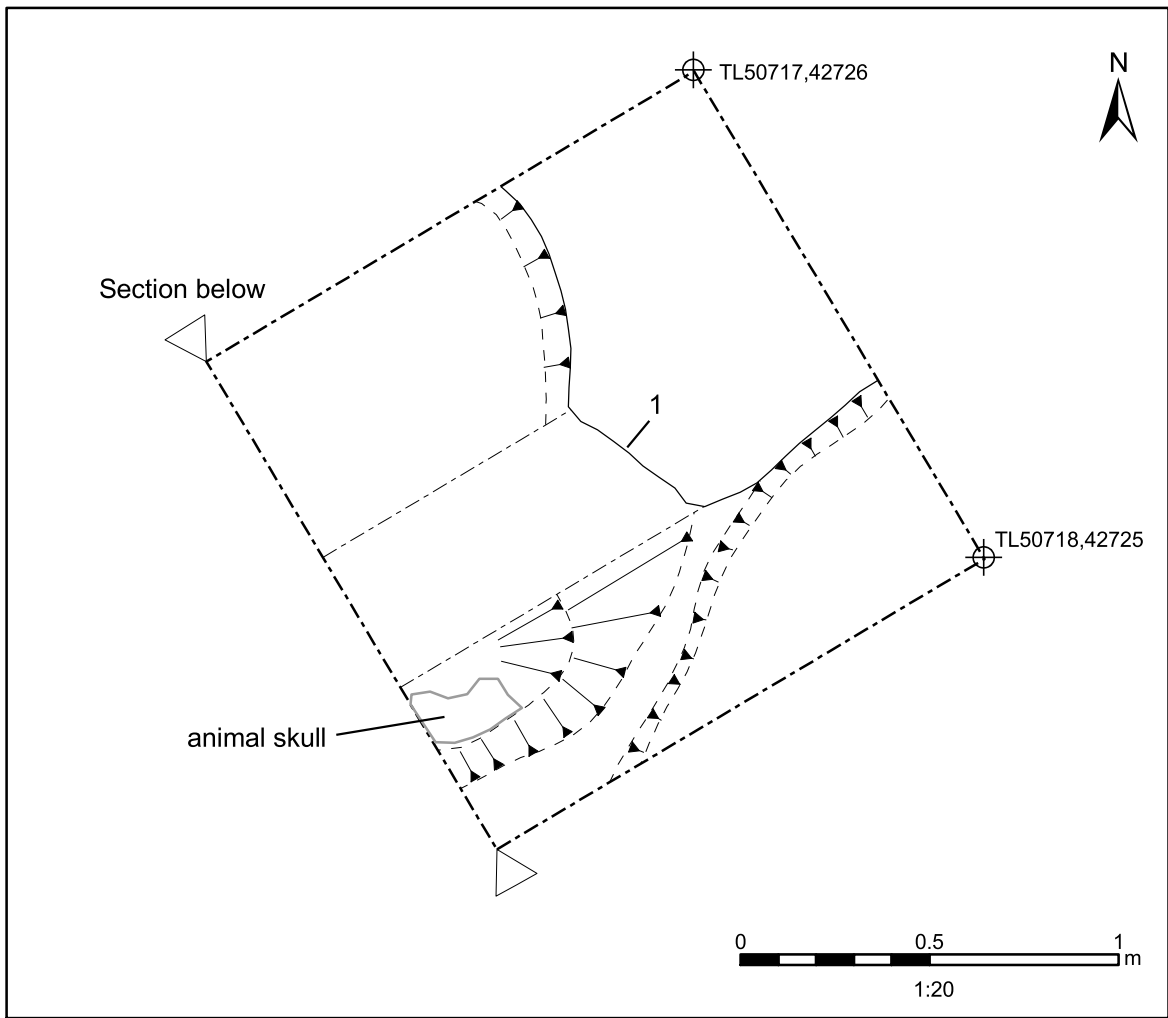


Fig.2. Test Pit A

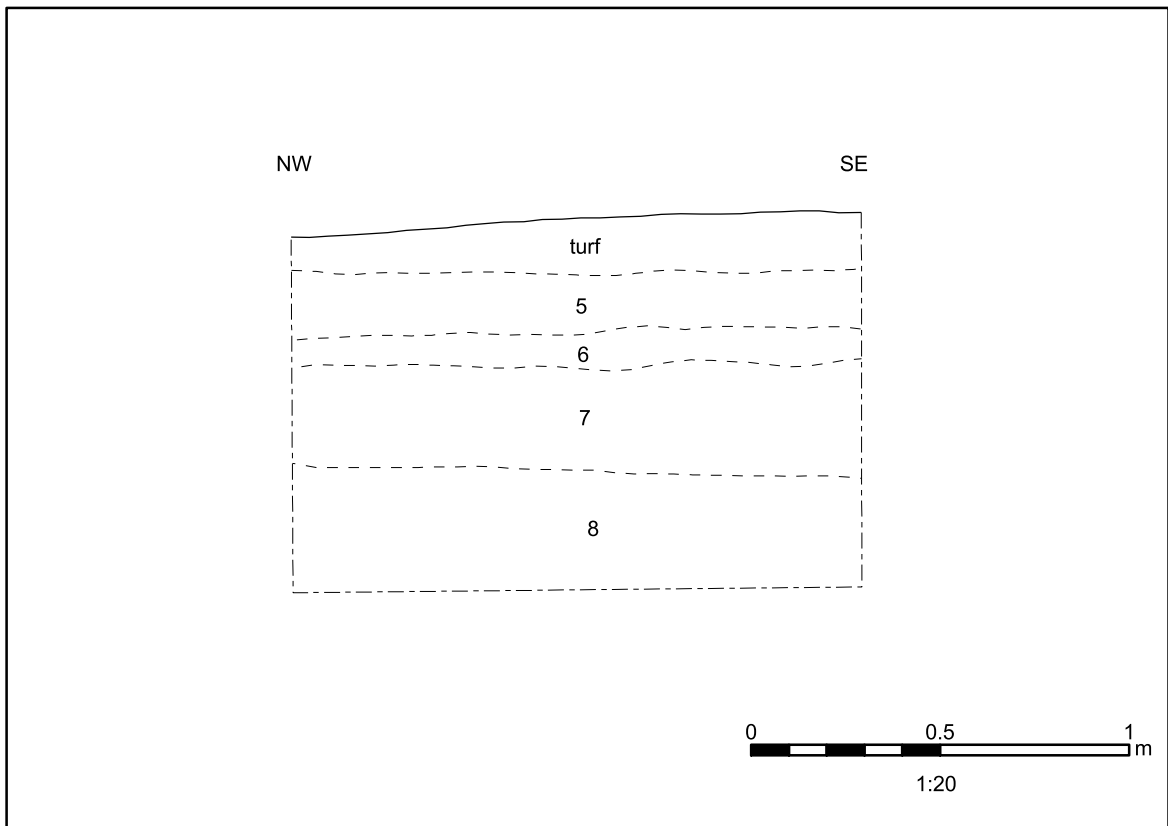
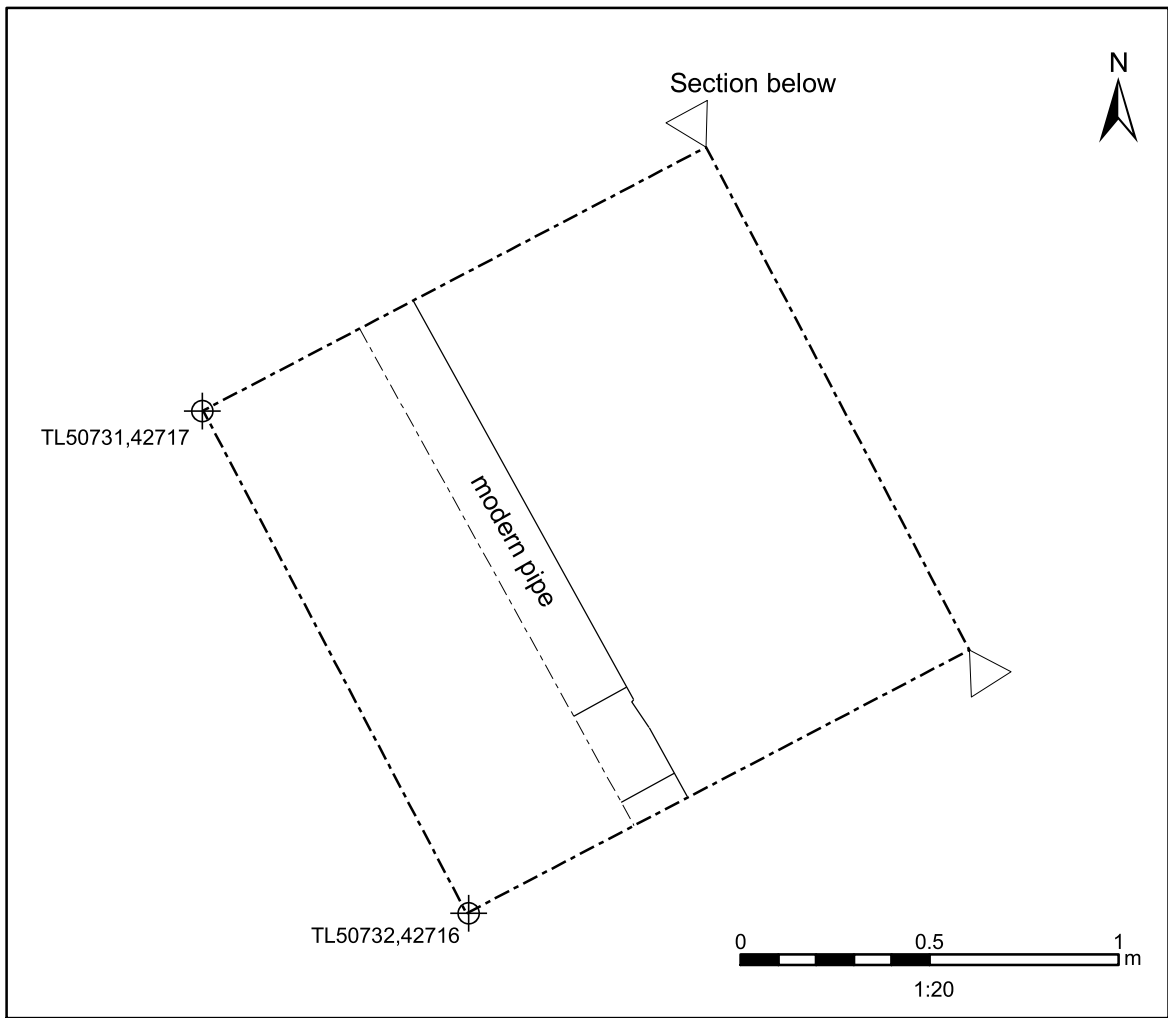


Fig.3. Test Pit B



Plate 1 Test Pit A



Plate 2 Test Pit A Animal bone





Plate 3 Test Pit B



Plate 4 Test Pit B