

**ROSCOMMON WAY EXTENSION PHASE 1
CANVEY ISLAND
ESSEX**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCHING
AND TEST PITTING**



Essex County Council

FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT

May 2010

ESSEX HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY

Site name/Address: Roscommon Way Extension Phase 1, Canvey Island	
Parish: Canvey Island	District: Castle Point
NGR: TQ 77400 83000	Site Code: CARW 09
Type of Work: Archaeological evaluation by trial-trenching and test pitting	Site Director/Group: Mark Germany, Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit
Date of Work: 22/9/09 to 24/9/09 and 29/4/10	Size of Area Investigated: Seven trenches and five test pits, totalling 400m ²
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Southend Museum	Client: Essex County Council Highways and Transportation
Further Seasons Anticipated?: No	Related HER Nos.:
Final Report: EAH Summary	Oasis No.: essexcou1- 76858
Periods represented: Modern	
SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:	
<p><i>Introduction</i></p> <p>The proposed construction of a new link road near Charsfleet Industrial Estate, Canvey Island was preceded by archaeological trial trenching and test pitting. The archaeological work was recommended and monitored by the Essex County Council Historic Environment Management team and was carried out in accordance with an archaeological brief and a written scheme of investigation (ECC HEM 2009; ECC FAU 2009).</p> <p>The proposed link road will cross former salt marsh and will run between the Northwick Road roundabout and Haven Road (Fig. 1). The east-west arm of the road comprises grazing land, and the north-south arm waste ground and rough scrub. The salt marsh was drained by Dutch engineers in the 17th century. The north-south arm of the road will replace an existing section of Roscommon Way.</p> <p><i>Geological and archaeological background</i></p> <p>The geology comprises alluvium above Terrace Gravel and London Clay. The alluvium contains layers and pockets of sand and peat and is c. 20m thick (Heath and McSwiney 2001). The nearest known peat deposit possibly suitable for palaeoenvironmental dating and sampling lies 6m to 7.5m below the present day ground surface, near the Northwick Road roundabout (<i>ibid.</i>, BH101).</p> <p>The trial trenching and test pitting were preceded by a geophysical survey, and a desk based assessment (Russel 2009; Pugh and Lord 2006). The geophysical survey found linear anomalies, which may have been geological in origin, and the desk based assessment established that the link road crossed no known archaeological sites, apart from a pill box from the Second World War. Archaeological sites in the wider vicinity include Iron Age and Roman salt extraction sites (red hills) along the shoreline, and a Roman wharf, settlement and fish processing site at Leigh Beck.</p> <p><i>Objectives</i></p> <p>The objectives of the archaeological trial-trenching and test-pitting were to investigate the geophysical linear anomalies and to assess the east-west arm of the road for archaeological and palaeo-environmental deposits.</p> <p><i>Method</i></p> <p>Due to access restraints the archaeological work was undertaken in two phases. The first phase, undertaken in September 2009, consisted of the excavation of six trenches (ET1 to</p>	

ET6) and five test pits (TP1 to TP5) (Figs 1 and 2). The trenches measured 1.8m wide and between 20 and 50m long, and the test pits 1.8m wide, c. 3m long and 2m deep. Test pit TP1 was located at the eastern end of trench ET1, test pit TP2 at the north-western end of trench ET3, and test pit TP3 at the western end of trench ET5. Test pits ET4 and ET5 were sited near the proposed road's south-western corner.

The second phase, undertaken in April 2010, consisted of the excavation of a seventh evaluation trench (ET7) at the eastern end of the proposed new link road. This trench was 40m long by 1.6m wide. The trenches and test pits in both phases of work were dug under archaeological supervision by a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-bladed bucket.

Results

The trenches and test pits uncovered brown (2, 6, 7 and 8) and grey (3) inclusion-free alluvial layers beneath c. 0.4m of topsoil (1) and modern overburden (4 and 5) (Fig. 3; Plates 1 to 5). Modern ceramic field drains were noted in ET7. The surface of layer 2 contained amorphous thin patches of grey silt clay (9), possibly the result of it having been previously disturbed by bioturbation and/or standing water. There were no archaeological features or artefacts.

Conclusions

The results of the trial trenching and test pitting, supported by the results of the earlier geophysical survey and desk based assessment, suggest that the route of the proposed road scheme contains no significant archaeological remains on or close to the surface, apart from the pill box which still stands near Haven Road. The absence of archaeological remains probably reflects the existence of the site as salt marsh until the 17th century as this would have made it unattractive to permanent settlement.

The test pits did not establish if archaeological or palaeoenvironmental remains survive within the alluvium at a deeper level but if present they are unlikely to be affected by the development. The alluvial layers remain undated, but probably predate the reclamation of the area by the Dutch during the 17th century.

Previous Summaries/Reports:-

ECC FAU 2009 *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Trial Trenching and Test Pitting. Roscommon Way Extension Phase 1, Canvey Island, Essex.* ECC FAU wsi 2117

ECC HEM 2009 *Archaeological Evaluation of Geophysical Survey Results on Land for the Roscommon Way Road Extension, Canvey Island*

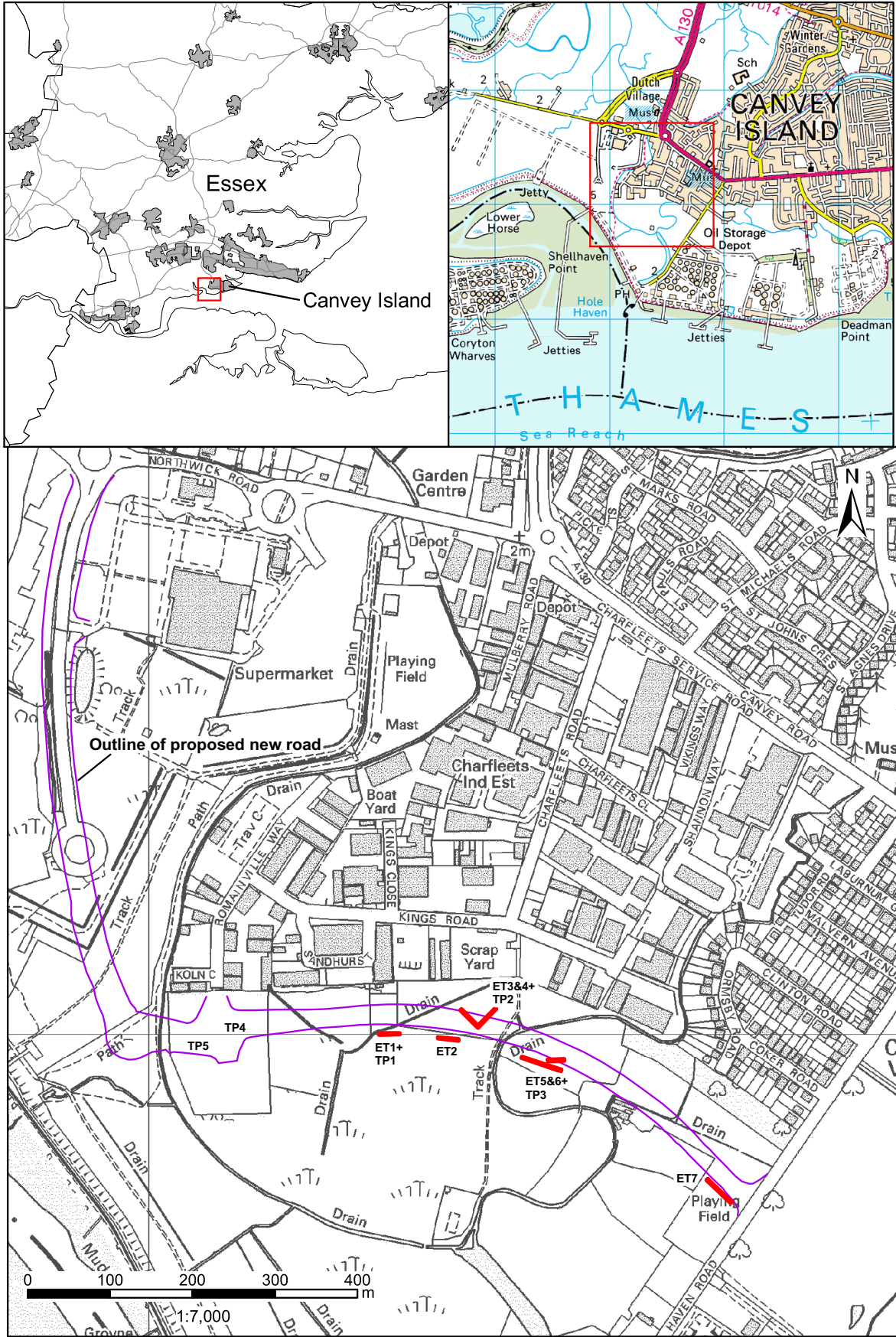
Heath, L. and McSwiney, S. 2001 *Ground Contamination and Geotechnical Assessment of Northwick Road, Canvey Island, Essex.* White Young Green Environmental Ltd

Pugh, G. and Lord, J. 2006 *Archaeological Desk Based Assessment. Roscommon Way, Canvey Island, Essex.* CgMs Consulting

Russel, C. 2009 *Fluxgate Gradiometer Survey of Land near Roscommon Way, Canvey Island, Essex.* Archaeology South East, Project No. 3728, Report No. 2009043

Author of Summary: Trevor Ennis

Date of Summary: May 2010



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Fig.1. Site location

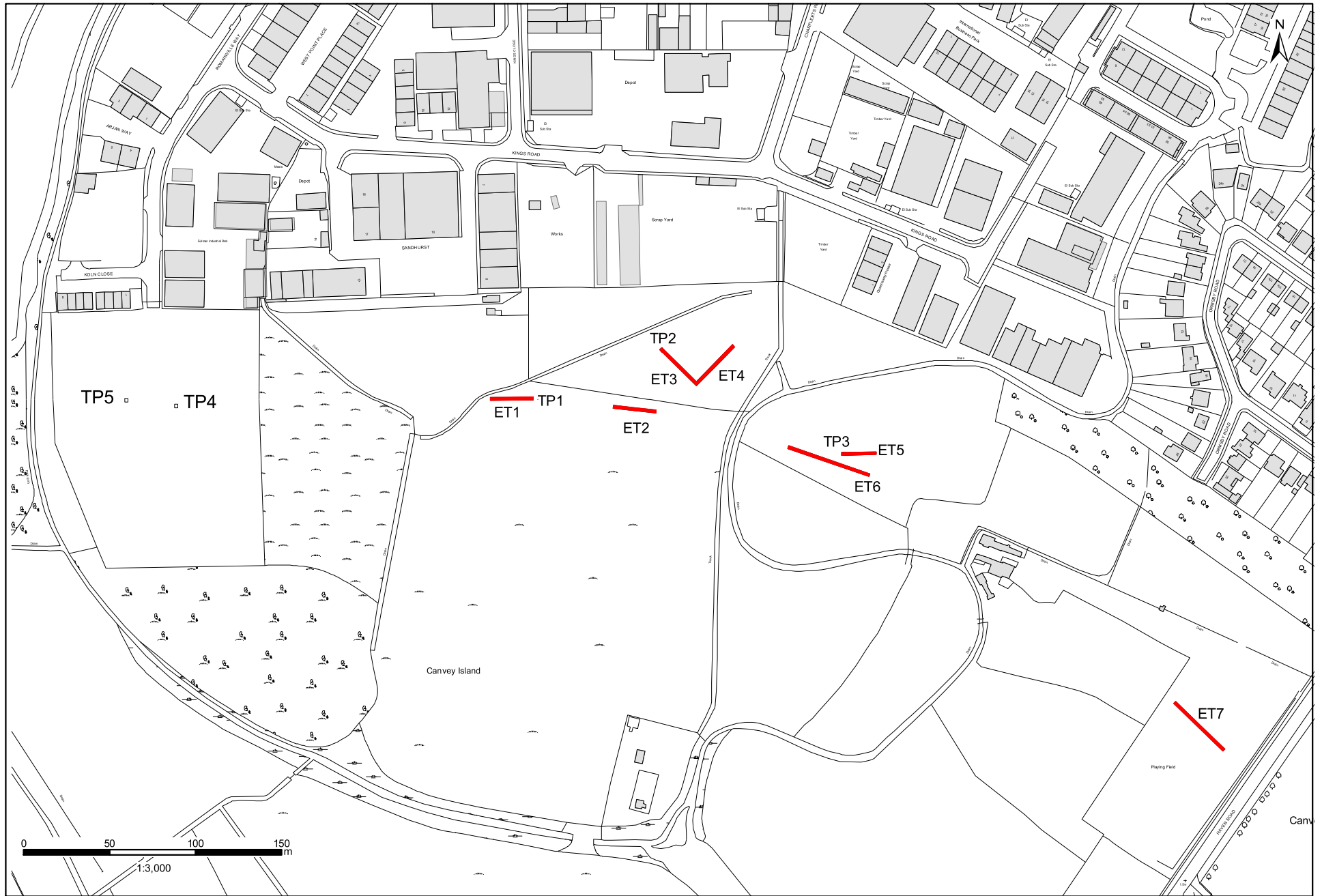


Fig.2. Evaluation trench and test pit location

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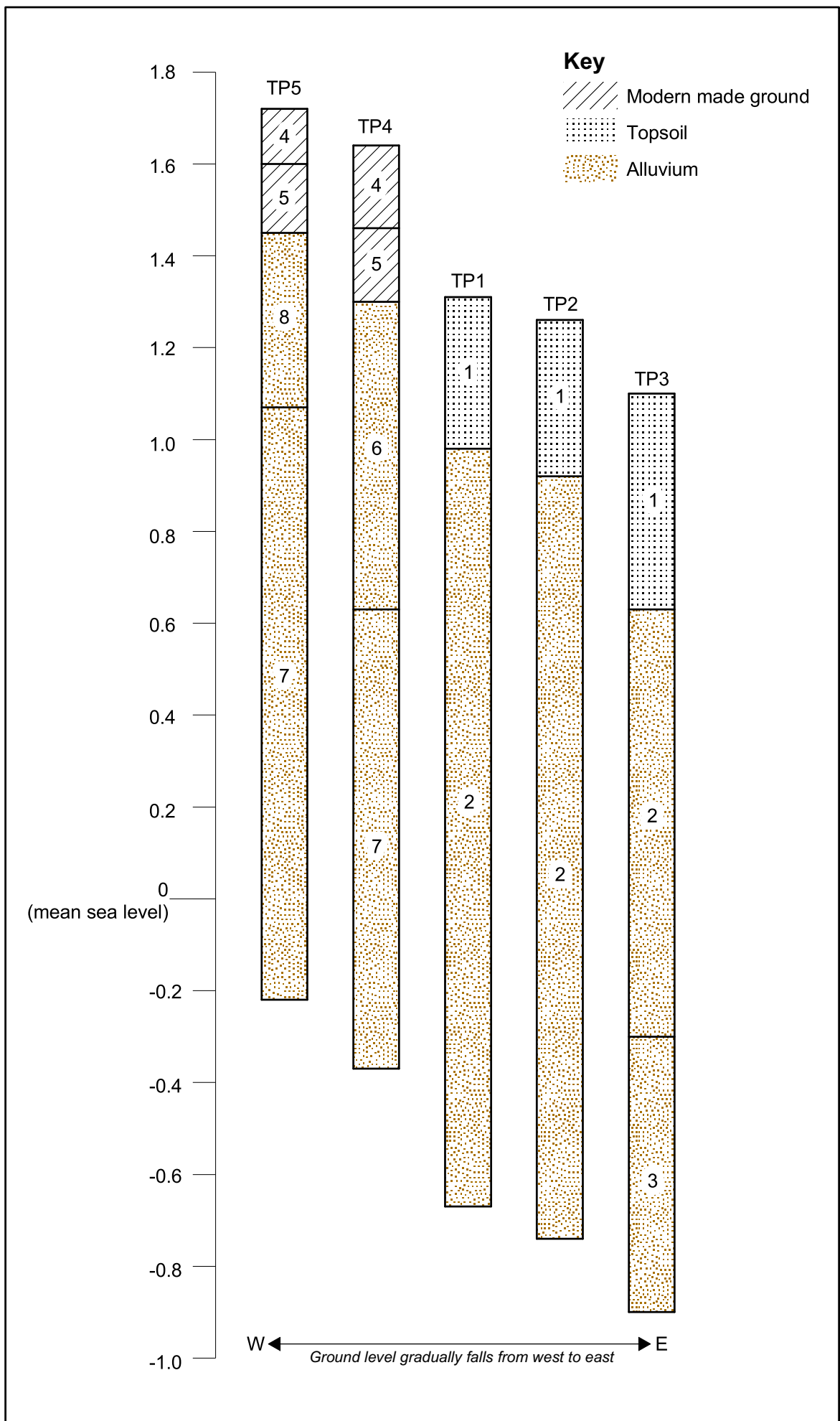


Fig.3. Test pit sections



Plate 1. Trench ET1 and test pit TP1, looking east. 2m scale



Plate 2. Trench ET2, looking north-west. 1m scale



Plate 3. Trench ET6, looking west



Plate 4. Test pit TP5, looking north-west. 2m scale



Plate 5. Trench ET7, looking north-west. 1.5m scale