

**19 HIGH FIELDS  
GREAT DUNMOW  
ESSEX:  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING**



Essex County Council

**FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT  
January 2011**



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ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING**

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**19 HIGHFIELDS  
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**SUMMARY**

Client: Ms. L. Frater  
FAU Project No.: 2254  
NGR: TL 6248 2179  
Planning Application No.: UTT/0273/10/FUL  
Site Code: GDH10  
Dates of Fieldwork: 07/06/10, 09/06/10, 11/06/10

An archaeological monitoring and recording project was undertaken during the groundworks for an extension to the existing house at 19 High Fields, Great Dunmow, within the proposed limits of the Roman small town. The main objectives of the investigation were to identify the nature and longevity of any Roman evidence found within the site and the impact it might have upon the interpretation of the economy of the Roman town.

Two Roman probable gullies aligned north-east to south-west were revealed in the northernmost footing that were cut through the subsoil and sealed by topsoil. Due to poor visibility during the machine excavation of the footings, no finds were recovered directly from the features but pottery dating between the late 2nd and 4th centuries was found within the topsoil/subsoil, in the area of the gullies. No further features or finds were identified.

The gullies are likely to represent small-scale Roman activity on the periphery of the Roman small town. The projected course of the Roman road Stane Street runs roughly north-west to south-east, close to the northern site boundary, and as the gullies run perpendicular to the road this may therefore may represent drainage or plot/field boundaries.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This report presents the results of a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording at 19 High Fields, Great Dunmow (TL 6248 2179), conducted by Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) during the excavation of footings for an extension to the existing house. The fieldwork was undertaken in response to a condition (UTT/0273/10/FUL) placed upon the development by Uttlesford District Council following advice from Essex County Council Historic Environment Management team (ECC HEM), given in line with Planning Policy Guidance note 16 (now replaced by Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment). The fieldwork was carried out in accordance with a brief issued by ECC HEM (2010) and a written scheme of investigation provided by ECC FAU (2010), and was monitored by ECC HEM on behalf of the local planning authority.

Bound and digital copies of this report will be supplied to Ms. L. Frater (including a copy for the Local Planning Authority), ECC HEM and the Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER). A digital copy of the report will be uploaded on the online access to the index of archaeological investigations ([www.oasis.ac.uk](http://www.oasis.ac.uk)). The site archive and copies of the report will be deposited at the Saffron Walden Museum.

## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Location, Geology and Topography (Fig. 1)**

The development site comprises a residential property and garden at 19 High Fields, to the west of the centre of Great Dunmow (TL 6248 2179). The house occupies the southern third of the site, with the northern area comprising garden with mature trees along the borders. It is bounded by High Fields to the south and by property boundaries to the east and west. The north of the site backs on to the playing field of Great Dunmow Junior School. The local solid geology comprises London Clay Formation clay silt and sand overlain by drift geology of Kesgrave Catchment Subgroup sand and gravel.

### **2.2 History and Archaeology**

The following archaeological background utilises the Essex Historic Environment Record (HER) and the Historic Town Assessment for Great Dunmow (Medlycott 1998) held at County Hall, Chelmsford.

The development lies within the built-up area of the Roman small town at Great Dunmow. The projected line of Stane Street, the Roman road from Colchester (Camulodunum) to St Albans



(Verulamium), runs very close to the northern site boundary, c. 20m to the north of the new extension.

A watching brief at the neighbouring property (no. 17 High Fields) revealed no archaeological features or finds (EHER 16232). However, Romano-British pottery was recovered at the northern end of the garden of no. 13 High Fields, further to the west of the current development (EHER 13877). Roman cremation burials and occupation material were recovered during archaeological investigations at Dunmow Junior School c. 110m to the north of the property (EHER 19657). Further Roman funerary evidence was discovered around 100m to the south-east of the site (EHER 13870). It is thought possible that the cemetery may have extended north towards Stane Street. An archaeological excavation at Redbond Lodge, around 280m to the east of the site, revealed extensive evidence of Roman occupation, including burials and a shrine (EHER 13864-13869; Wickenden 1988). The burials were dated to the late 1st to late 2nd centuries including three possible casket burials. The shrine dates to the 4th century.

There is no evidence to indicate that the site was occupied during the medieval period. In fact it would appear that the focus of the town shifted to Church End and then moved back to its original location by the 12th century. A market was granted by 1219 and the main medieval occupation was focussed along the High Street to the east of the site. Historic cartographic sources indicate that the site remained agricultural until the mid-20th century development of High Fields.

### **3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

#### **3.1 Aims**

3.1.1 The general aim of the archaeological monitoring was to identify and record any surviving archaeological remains prior to their damage or destruction by the development.

#### **3.2 Objectives**

3.2.1 The specific objectives of the project were as follows:

- To identify surviving evidence relating to the Roman town and the nature of that occupation;
- To define the longevity of the settlement;
- To examine the economy of the Roman settlement including industrial, domestic and commercial production.

## 4.0 METHOD

The archaeological work comprised the monitoring of groundworks likely to expose archaeological remains, principally the cutting of foundations. The foundations were excavated using a tracked mechanical excavator using a toothed bucket. The brief (ECC HEM 2010) and WSI (ECC FAU 2010) specified that two areas of groundworks were to be monitored; one area comprised the extension with the other comprising the area of the garage, to the east of the extension. Groundworks for the garage were not monitored and as a result the following fieldwork results refer only to the area of the extension.

The ECC Field Archaeology Unit adhered to *IFA* standards and by-laws (IFA 1997), and especially the *IFA's Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavations* (IFA 1999), and ALGAO's *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003) throughout the project. The ECC FAU is a registered archaeological organisation with the *IFA*.

## 5.0 FIELDWORK RESULTS

Initial levelling groundworks comprised a partial topsoil strip; the west of the development area was reduced by up to 0.6m while the east was considerably shallower at around 0.30m. Footings up to 1.8m in depth were then cut into the reduced ground revealing a further 0.25m of topsoil overlying 0.35m of subsoil above natural orange mixed sand, gravel and clay (Fig. 1). Full details of the archaeological deposits encountered can be found in Appendix 1.

Two features (4 and 6), possible gullies, crossed the northern footing on a north-east to south-west alignment (Fig. 2, Plate 1). They contained similar sandy clayey silt fills and though no finds were recovered directly from their fills a collection of late 2nd to 4th century Roman pottery, bone fragments and ceramic brick and tile were recovered from within the topsoil in the same area of excavation. It was impossible to differentiate the feature fills from the topsoil and subsoil during excavation due to the use of a toothed bucket. Examination of the footing section after excavation showed that both features were sealed by the topsoil and cut into the subsoil.

## 6.0 FINDS

by Alan J Jacobs

### Introduction

Finds, consisting primarily of unabraded Roman pottery, were received from a single unstratified context (1-topsoil/subsoil). All of the material has been recorded by count and weight, in grams, by context. The finds are described and tabulated below (Appendix 2).

## **Roman Pottery**

All fabrics are defined by the Essex County Council Type Series (Going 1987) unless otherwise stated.

The assemblage primarily consisted of small amounts of coarse ware fabrics with a wide date range (Appendix 2). Only a single sherd of a fine ware, Nene Valley Ware (NVC Fabric 2) was recovered. This was an unusual example of a high flared rim with flattened outer edge and handle connecting directly to the back of the rim, similar forms date from the late 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries (Symonds and Wade 1999, p279, 159, Cam 171/358).

Most of the coarse ware sherds were dateable only to the Roman period in general; however, an example of a small flared rim jar of Hadnam Grey Ware (HAR Fabric 36) was present, this was similar to examples dating from 270/280AD to 400AD (Going 1987, p22, E6.1/1).

Two forms were present in Black Burnished Ware 2 (BB2, Fabric 41), the first a small everted rim jar, possibly a cooking pot, with a thickened everted rim dated from the late 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries (Symonds and Wade 1999, p367, 155, Cam 299). The second form was a small straight sided bowl that dated broadly from the late 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries, although the lack of external decoration would indicate a 3<sup>rd</sup> century date for this vessel (Symonds and Wade 1999, p362, 23, Cam 40b)

The date ranges of the Roman pottery fabrics recovered indicate ongoing activity in this area over a broad period of time. The un-abraded nature of many of the sherds would indicate the presence of surviving archaeological features nearby. However the small amount of material recovered would suggest limited activity in this area, primarily of late 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> century date.

## **Other finds**

Only three abraded fragments of Roman roof tile, one of which was burnt, and a single un-abraded fragment of cattle phalange were recovered from the site (Appendix 2). The bone had been split and could be seen as indicating Roman domestic activity in the area.

## **Conclusion**

This small group of artefacts indicates little more than the presence of nearby Roman activity, with the lack of material from sealed contexts limiting any further conclusions from the group beyond a general late 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> century date for activity in this area, which would fit in with previous excavations undertaken in Great Dunmow (Wickenden 1988). The lack of abrasion of the artefacts surviving in the topsoil does however suggest that they have not been moved very far from their

original place of deposition and indicates the possibility of further Roman features surviving in this area.

## **8.0 CONCLUSION AND ASSESSMENT**

The archaeological monitoring and recording programme revealed two late 2nd to 4th century Roman probable gullies, aligned north-east – south-west and perpendicular to the projected course of Stane Street, which is thought to run roughly north-west to south-east close to the northern site boundary. Though little can be determined from the presence of such short lengths of gully, they may represent a plot boundary or drainage system running south from Stane Street.

The line of a town enclosure has been tentatively located to the north of Stane Street, with no return proposed to the south of the road, perhaps suggesting that the occupied area was confined to the north of the road. This might be supported by the presence of one small and one very large cemetery to the south of the road, both of which would be expected to be located outside the settlement area. A watching brief at the neighbouring property revealed no archaeological features or finds and Romano-British pottery was discovered in the northern end of no. 13 High Fields, to the west of the site. The evidence therefore suggests that the gullies at no. 19 represent small-scale activity around the margins of the Roman small town. Evidence of Roman activity would be anticipated to survive further to the north, closer to the road.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The ECC FAU would like to thank Ms. L. Frater for commissioning and funding the archaeological investigation.

The archaeological fieldwork was undertaken by Phillippa Sparrow. The finds were processed by Phillippa Sparrow, analysed by and reported upon by Alan J. Jacobs. The figures were drawn by Andrew Lewsey.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brown, N & Glazebrook, J.	2000	<i>Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties, 2. research agenda and strategy</i> , E. Anglian Archaeol. Occ. Paper <b>8</b>
ECC HEM	2010	<i>Archaeological monitoring at 19 Highfields, Great Dunmow.</i>
Going, C, J	1987	<i>The Mansio and other Sites in the south eastern sector of Caesaromagus: The Roman pottery</i> , Chelmsford Archaeological Trust, Rep 3.2, Council for British Archaeology, Res report 62.
Gurney, D.	2003	<i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England</i> , E. Anglian Archaeol. Occ. Paper <b>14</b>
Medlycott, M.	1998	<i>Great Dunmow: Historic Towns Project Assessment Report</i> ECC Planning
Symonds, R, P and Wade, S	1999	<i>The Roman Pottery from excavations in Colchester 1971-86</i> Colchester Archaeology. Rep. 10
Wickenden, N	1988	<i>Excavations at Great Dunmow, Essex</i> East Anglian Archaeology.41.

## APPENDIX 1: FIELDWORK DATA

All dimensions are given in metres.

Context	Feature	Type	Measurements	Description
1	-	Topsoil	Across site	Dark brown sandy silt. Very frequent rounded gravel. Loose.
2	-	Subsoil	Across site	Mid to light yellow brown sand and gravel. Loose.
3	-	Natural geological deposit	Across site	Bright orange sand, gravel and clay.
4	5	Gully	0.85m+ x 0.8m x 0.3m	Cut of pit located in north-west corner of northern footing. Extended beyond both north and south section and therefore could be a gully. Fairly steep regular sides and flattish base. Mid grey brown sandy clayey silt with frequent rounded pebbles. Friable.
6	7	Gully	0.85m+ x 0.69m x 0.51m	Cut of pit located in north-west corner of northern footing. Straight, steep edges and flat base. Extended to north and south of footing. Light to mid grey brown sandy clayey silt with frequent rounded pebbles. Friable.

## APPENDIX 2: FINDS

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
1	Topsoil/subsoil	16	398	Pottery	Roman
1	Topsoil/subsoil	3	68	Tile.	Roman
1	Topsoil/subsoil	1	50	Animal Bone	Roman?
Total	Topsoil/subsoil	20	516		

Table 1 Finds quantification

Description	Fabric Name	Fabric number	Count	Weight	Date Range
Nene Valley Colour Coat	NVC	2	1	76	2 <sup>nd</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup>
Mica Dusted Ware	MIC	12	2	6	1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup>
Miscellaneous Red Ware	RED	21	2	32	Mid 4 <sup>th</sup> 1 <sup>st</sup> -
Hadham Grey Ware	HAR	36	3	48	Mid 4 <sup>th</sup> 1 <sup>st</sup> -
Fine Grey Ware	GRF	39	1	4	Mid 4 <sup>th</sup> 1 <sup>st</sup> -
Black Burnished Ware Category 2	BB2	41	3	142	Late 2 <sup>nd</sup> to mid 4 <sup>th</sup>
Storage jar fabric	STOR	44	2	46	Mid 4 <sup>th</sup> 1 <sup>st</sup> -
Coarse Reduced Grog Tempered Ware	GROGC	53	2	44	Mid 4 <sup>th</sup> 1 <sup>st</sup> -
	Total		16	398	Mid 4 <sup>th</sup> 1 <sup>st</sup> -

Table 2 Roman pottery quantification

## **APPENDIX 3: ARCHIVE INDEX**

### **GDH10 19 HIGH FIELDS, GREAT DUNMOW, ESSEX: ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING**

#### **Index to the Archive**

File containing:

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Brief for evaluation
- 1.2 WSI for evaluation

#### **2. Research Archive**

- 2.1 Evaluation report
- 2.2 Finds report
- 2.3 CD Rom containing pdf version of report and digital images

#### **3. Site Archive**

- 3.1 Context record register
- 3.2 Original context records 1 - 7
- 3.3 Photographic register
- 3.4 Photograph contact sheet
- 3.5 Miscellaneous maps and plans

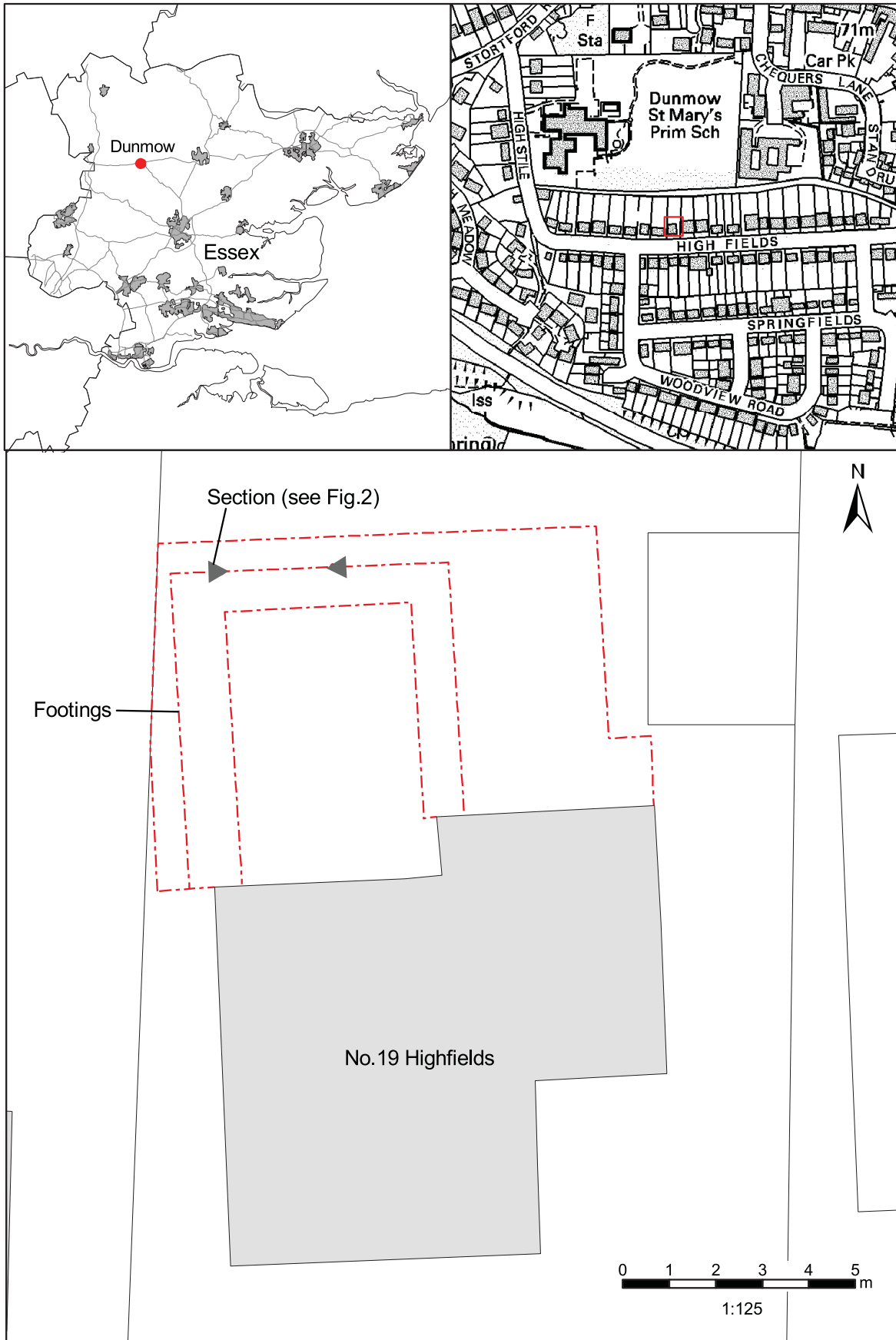
#### **Not in File:**

Site Drawings (1 permatrace sheet)  
Finds occupy less than one box.



## APPENDIX 4: ESSEX HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY

<b>Site Name/Address:</b> 19 High Fields, Great Dunmow, Essex	
<b>Parish:</b> Great Dunmow	<b>District:</b> Uttlesford
<b>NGR:</b> TL 6248 2179	<b>Site Code:</b> GDH10
<b>Type of Work:</b> Archaeological Monitoring and Recording	<b>Site Director/Team:</b> Phillippa Sparrow ECC FAU
<b>Dates of Work:</b> 07/06/10, 09/06/10 & 11/06/10	<b>Size of Area Investigated:</b> c. 25m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Curating Museum:</b> Saffron Walden Museum	<b>Funding Source:</b> Ms. L. Frater
<b>Further Work Anticipated?</b> No	<b>Related HER Nos.</b> None
<b>Final Report:</b> Summary in EAH	<b>OASIS Ref:</b> essexcou1-78099
<b>Periods Represented:</b> modern	
<b>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</b>	
<p>An archaeological monitoring and recording project was undertaken during the groundworks for an extension to the existing house at 19 High Fields, Great Dunmow, within the proposed limits of the Roman small town. The main objectives of the investigation were to identify the nature and longevity of any Roman evidence found within the site and the impact it might have upon the interpretation of the economy of the Roman town.</p> <p>Two Roman probable gullies aligned north-east to south-west were revealed in the northernmost footing that were cut through the subsoil and sealed by topsoil. Due to poor visibility during the machine excavation of the footings, no finds were recovered directly from the features but pottery dating between the late 2nd and 4th centuries was found within the topsoil/subsoil, in the area of the gullies. No further features or finds were identified.</p> <p>The gullies are likely to represent small-scale Roman activity on the periphery of the Roman small town. The projected course of the Roman road Stane Street runs roughly north-west to south-east, close to the northern site boundary, and as the gullies run perpendicular to the road this may therefore represent drainage or plot/field boundaries.</p>	
<b>Previous Summaries/Reports:</b> None	
<b>Author of Summary:</b> P. Sparrow	<b>Date of Summary:</b> January 2011



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Fig.1. Site location

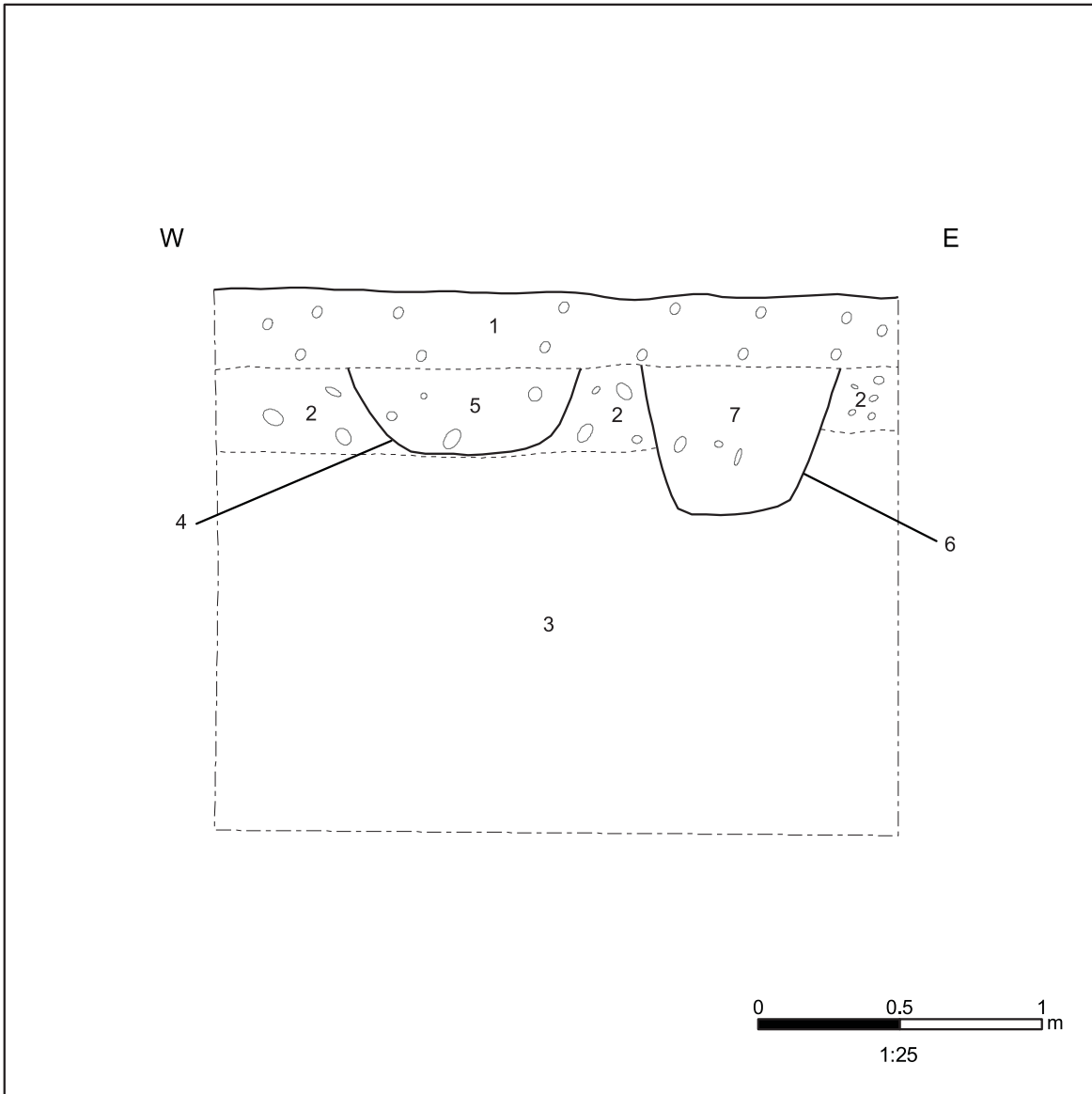


Fig.2. Section

## PLATES



Plate 1. Gullies 4 and 6, looking north. 2m scale