

**10 Turk Street/rear of 53 High Street,
Alton, Hampshire**

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Mr Choudhary

by Andy Taylor

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code HSA 07/107

August 2007

Summary

Site name: 10 Turk Street/rear of 53 High Street, Alton, Hampshire

Grid reference: SU 7175 3925

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 21st August 2007

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Andy Taylor

Site code: HSA 07/107

Area of site: 280 sq m

Summary of results: Pits and layers of medieval date were encountered towards the front of the site

Monuments identified: Occupation layers and pits dating to the medieval period

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Hampshire Museum Service in due course.

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 10.09.07 Steve Preston✓ 10.09.07

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Report 07/107

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out 10 Turk Street/rear of 53 High Street, Alton, Hampshire (SU 7175 3925) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Choudhry of 12 Quinneys, Cambridge Road West, Farnborough, Hampshire, GU14 6RA.

A planning consent has been gained on appeal (APP/M1710/A/05/1189196) by East Hampshire District Council for the construction of an apartment block with ground floor parking. The consent is subject to a condition (6) relating to archaeology.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, Archaeology and Planning (PPG16 1990), and the District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Stephen Appleby, Senior Archaeologist with Hampshire County Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andy Taylor and Aiden Colyer on 21st -23rd August 2007 and the site code is HSA 07/107. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Hampshire Museum Service.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on an L-shaped parcel of land on the south side of Turk Street and the rear of 53 High Street, Alton, Hampshire (Fig. 2). The site slopes gradually from the south west to the north east and is bounded by shops to the west and east and a car park to the south. The underlying geology comprised river and valley gravels (BGS 1990), which was observed in Trench 1. The site lies at a height of *c.* 104m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site is derived from the location within the historic core of the town. Alton is one of a large number of small towns in Hampshire, and the south of England generally, known to have medieval or Saxon origins, but from which little detailed archaeological evidence has been recovered. few large scale archaeological excavations have taken place in Alton or the surrounding area (Hughes 1976, 23-28), although a

number of smaller projects in recent years, such as watching briefs and evaluations, have shed some light on the archaeological background to the town (Edwards 2002). Intensive medieval occupation has been identified at a number of locations along the High Street as well as later medieval buildings fronting the street. Fieldwork in the rear of burgage plots, is likely to encounter pit digging and rubbish disposal of the inhabitants of the properties on the street frontage (Taylor and Hammond in press). However, on occasion, deposits are also found which reflect the trade of the occupants and help reconcile archaeological and documentary sources for the use of the site.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development.

Specific aims of the project were;

To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on the site.

To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.

To determine if archaeological deposits and finds representing medieval occupation are present on the site.

Two trenches were excavated using a JCB type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under constant archaeological supervision. These were to be 10m long and 1.6m wide. Spoilheaps were monitored for finds.

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Results

Two trenches were dug as intended measuring 7.7m and 10.2m in length (Fig. 3).

Trench 1

This trench measured 10.20m in length and 0.64m deep. The stratigraphy revealed was uncomplicated and consisted of a brick surface overlying brick rubble (made ground) overlying gravel natural. No archaeological finds or deposits were observed.

Trench 2 (Plates 1 and 2)

This trench measured 7.70m in length and 1.10m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of Tarmac overlying brick rubble made ground. This was overlying a light grey silty clay (buried topsoil) overlying a mid grey silty clay. At

this point within the stratigraphic sequence medieval pottery was encountered. The trench was hand cleaned revealing two possible pits (1 and 2), an area of crushed chalk (52), which may represent a possible floor and another light grey layer (54) (Fig. 4). A small slot was excavated into pit 1, which measured 0.60m in length, 0.67m wide and 0.20m deep. This produced 21 sherds of 15th/16th century pottery, 14 pieces of animal bone, a copper-alloy spoon and a clipped coin. The chalk layer produced a single small sherd of 15th/16th century pottery and the light grey layer (54) produced four similar small sherds. The other possible pit (2) produced 7 sherds of pottery with a wider date range (14th to 16th century) but could easily be contemporary. These were not investigated further due to the depth of the trench and questionable stability of the trench side and it was felt these deposits would be best examined under area excavation conditions.

Finds

The Pottery by Jane Timby

Introduction

The archaeological work resulted in the recovery of an assemblage of 34 sherds of pottery, weighing 329g, dating to the medieval period. In addition one fragment of ceramic building material (CBM) was recovered. Pottery was recovered from five separate contexts, two identified as possible pits. Generally speaking the material is quite well fragmented with an average sherd weight of 9.4g. For the purposes of the assessment the assemblage was scanned to assess its likely chronology and quantified by sherd count and weight for each recorded context. The resulting data are summarized in Appendix 3.

Medieval

Most of the wares present appear to be of local origin coming from the Surrey-Hampshire border industries. The largest assemblage comprising some 21 sherds came from pit 1 (51). This includes seven sherds of green glazed Surrey whiteware, 13 sherds of red-fired earthenware (red Border ware) some with a clear (brown) glaze, one sherd of scratch-marked fine black sandy ware and one sherd of coarser sandy unglazed jar.

Surrey whitewares become common from the late 14th, and the thin walled cups, which appear to be present in this group, are generally dated from the 15th century (Pearce and Vince 1988). A small rim sherd may be from a lobed cup. It is difficult to distinguish the early products from the later 16-17th century wares especially with such a small group. The red Border wares largely date to the 16th and 17th centuries (Pearce 1992). Scratch marked ware is most commonly dated to the 11th-13th century and this sherd is likely to be residual in this group. The unglazed jar sherd resembles one of the fabrics associated with the Farnham kiln

(Timby 1982) but could equally be from the Alice Holt potteries (Lyne and Jefferies 1974) and is also probably residual dating from the later 12th-14th century.

Further sherds of Surrey green glazed whiteware are present in contexts 52, 53 and 54 suggesting likely contemporaneity. Pit 2 (54) produced six sherds including a large piece from an imported stoneware handled jug, probably Siegburg ware. This was amongst the earliest of the continental stonewares to be imported into Britain and is first documented from the 14th century but is more common in the 15th century. A sherd from a green glazed jug also came from this feature, which is probably a regional import.

The two bodysherds from context (50) are probably slightly later in date and are provisionally dated to the 16-17th century.

Animal Bone by Ceri Falys

A small assemblage of 29 pieces of animal bone was recovered from three separate contexts within Trench 2, weighing a total of 250g (Table 1). The preservation of the remains was fair, although all elements were fragmented and demonstrated varying degrees of surface discoloration and damage by root activity. Contexts 51 and 52 both contained skeletal elements from a cow-sized species and a sheep/goat sized animal. Two sheep/goat sized elements were identified in context 53. No evidence of butchery was observed, and no further information was able to be retrieved from these remains.

Brick and Tile

42 pieces of ceramic building material were recovered weighing a total of 1756g (Appendix 4). One has a peg hole, but otherwise the pieces are unremarkable; all are likely to be late medieval or early post-medieval.

Metalwork

Pits 1 and 2 and rubble layer 52 produced eight metal items (Appendix 5). From Pit 1 came a square-sectioned iron shaft tapering to a flatter point, probably a small chisel; a copper-alloy coin, very thin, clipped neatly in half, unfortunately illegible, but probably a halfpenny, dating any time from the 13th to 18th century; a fine copper-alloy hook probably a fishing hook; and a fragment (approximately the middle half) of a knife blade. All of these are likely to be contemporary with the pottery from this pit (15th/16th century).

Pit 2 produced a small copper alloy item, perhaps a button hook or half or a set of tweezers; and an unidentified lump.

Rubble layer 52 produced a flat iron disk, completely covered in chalk adhering to corrosion product, now unidentifiable; possibly an ornamental mount or a small hand-held mirror case, although neither of these would usually be made in iron.

All the items would be at home in a late medieval or early post-medieval setting (the iron disk, if it is a mirror case, could possibly be Roman). All the items should be x-rayed for closer identification.

Conclusion

The evaluation has identified medieval occupation deposits towards the front of the Turk Street frontage of the site, though not on the street front itself. These deposits comprised pits, probably from domestic rubbish disposal as well as a possible floor layer of crushed chalk. Further deposits were evident along the trench with at least one other layer beneath Pit 1. As natural gravel was not observed in Trench 1 it is not possible to say how deep these deposits will continue downwards. The rear of the site did not produce any archaeological deposits. Further work would be required to locate the full extent of the archaeological deposits on the site and to determine their nature.

References

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APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at S or W end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	10.20	1.80	0.64	0.00m-0.08m brick surface; 0.08m-0.59m made ground; 0.59m-0.64m+ gravel natural geology.
2	7.70	1.80	1.10	0.00m-0.05m Tarmac; 0.05m-0.48m made ground; 0.48m-1.00m light grey silty clay buried soil; 1.00m-1.10m mid grey silty clay. Pits 1 and 2; layers 52 and 54. Natural geology not observed [Plates 1 and 2]

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
2	1	51	Pit	15-16th century	Pottery
2	2	54	Possible pit	16-17th century	Pottery
2		50	Buried Soil	Post-medieval	
2		52	Chalk Layer	15-16th century	Pottery
2		53	Light Grey Layer	15-16th century	Pottery

APPENDIX 3: Pottery summary by context

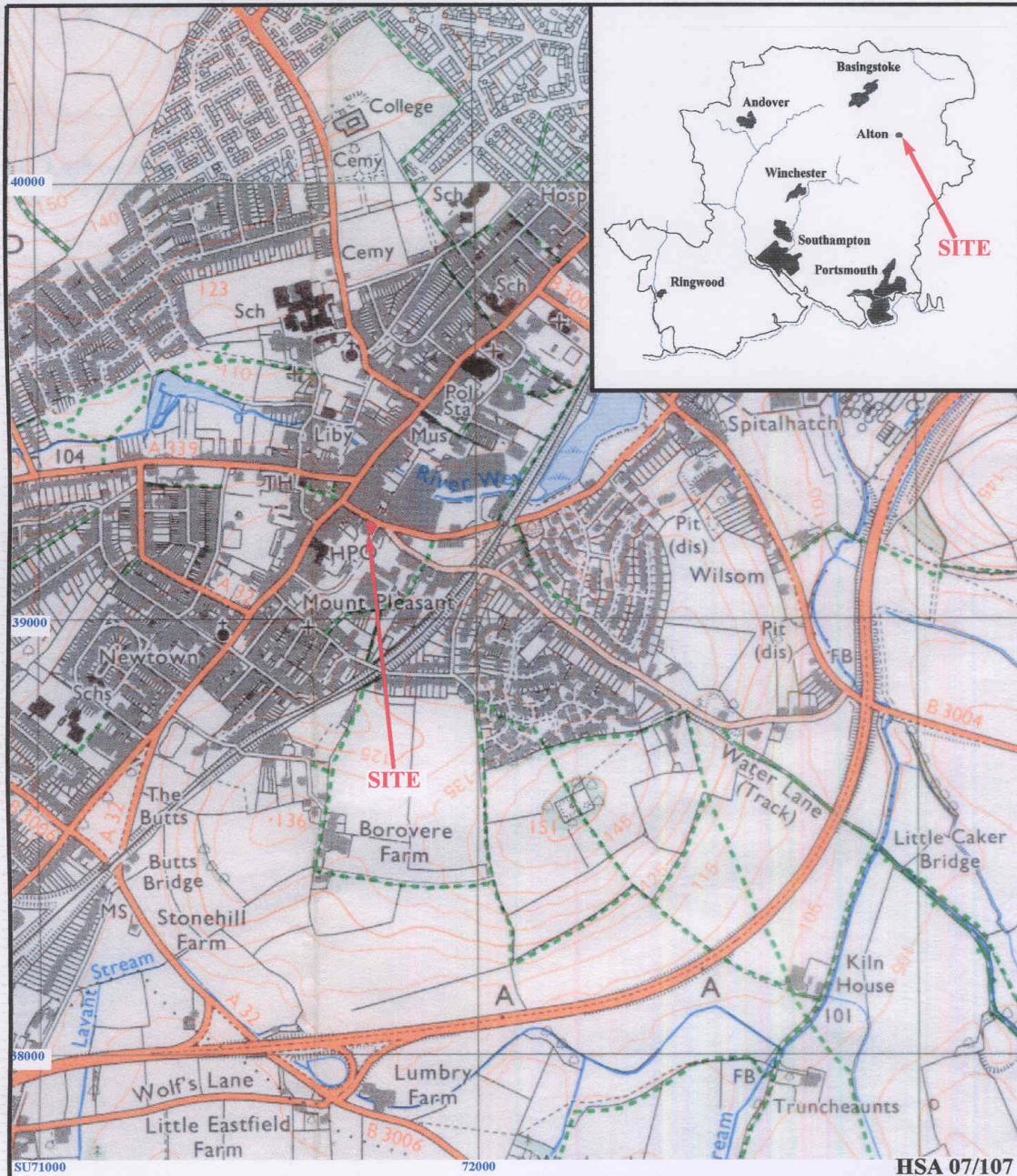
<i>Tr</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Local</i>	<i>import</i>	<i>cbm</i>	<i>Tot No</i>	<i>Tot wt (g)</i>	<i>Date (century AD)</i>
2		50	2			2	32	16-17th
2	1	51	21			21	114	15-16th
2		52	1			1	5	15-16th
2		53	4			4	21	15-16th
2	2	54	4	2	1	7	157	14-16th
TOTAL			32	2	1	35	329	

APPENDIX 4: Ceramic building material summary by context

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>
2		50	Buried Soil	10	445
2	1	51	Possible Pit	14	703
2		52	Chalk rubble layer	1	188
2		53	light grey brown layer	7	222
2	2	54	Possible Pit	10	198

APPENDIX 5: Metalwork summary by context

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Metal</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Comment</i>
2	1	51	Pit	copper alloy	3	Clipped (cut in half) copper alloy coin, very thin , very worn, illegible, probably halfpenny. Small fine-pointed hook, now in two pieces. Fishing hook?; Fragment of knife blade, 63mm long, 14mm at widest, tapering to 10mm, very corroded.
2	1	51	Pit	iron	1	Square-sectioned iron shaft, some corrosion product attaching, possibly chisel? 84mm long.
2	1	51	Pit	lead	1	Triangular spoon; circular-sectioned shaft 60mm long, 5mm diam, bowl 35mm long, 30mm wide at widest (incomplete). Presumably originally silvered? Apothecary's spoon?
2		52	Chalk rubble layer	iron	1	Large flat (perhaps slightly concave?) iron disk, surface virtually all corrosion product and concretions, unidentified. 55mm diam. Possibly a mirror case? (Cf Egan and Pritchard 1991, no1716.) or strap mount.
2	2	54	Pit	iron	1	Unidentified iron lump
2	2	54	Pit	copper alloy	1	Copper alloy ?button hook, tapering from blunt end to fine point, now twisted, originally 55mm long, 13mm at broad end. Possibly one arm of set of tweezers?

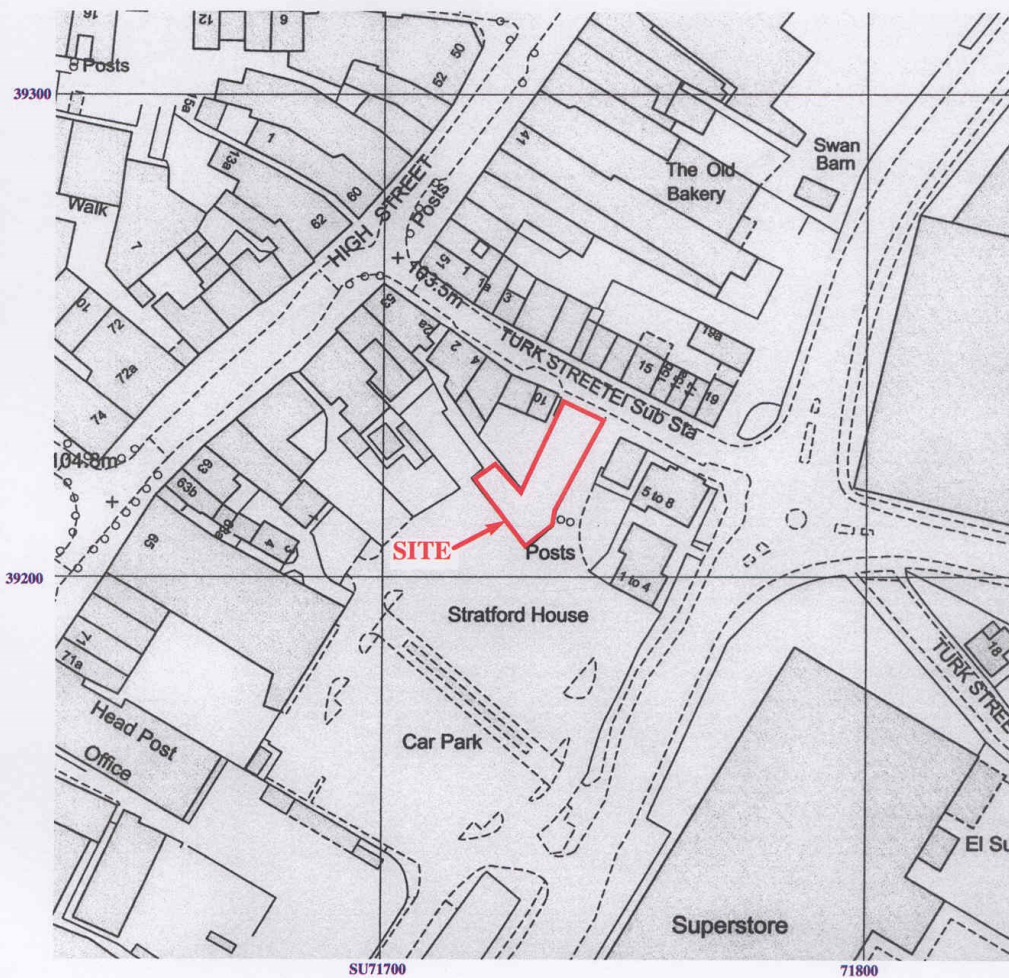


**10 Turk Street/Rear of 53 High Street,
Alton, Hampshire, 2007
Archaeological evaluation**

Figure 1. Location of site within Alton and Hampshire.

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**10 Turk Street/Rear of 53 High Street, Alton,
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site in relation to Turk Street and High Street.

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10 Turk Street/rear of 53 High Street, Alton, Hampshire, 2007



Figure 3. Detail location of trenches.

10 Turk Street/rear of 53 High Street, Alton, Hampshire, 2007

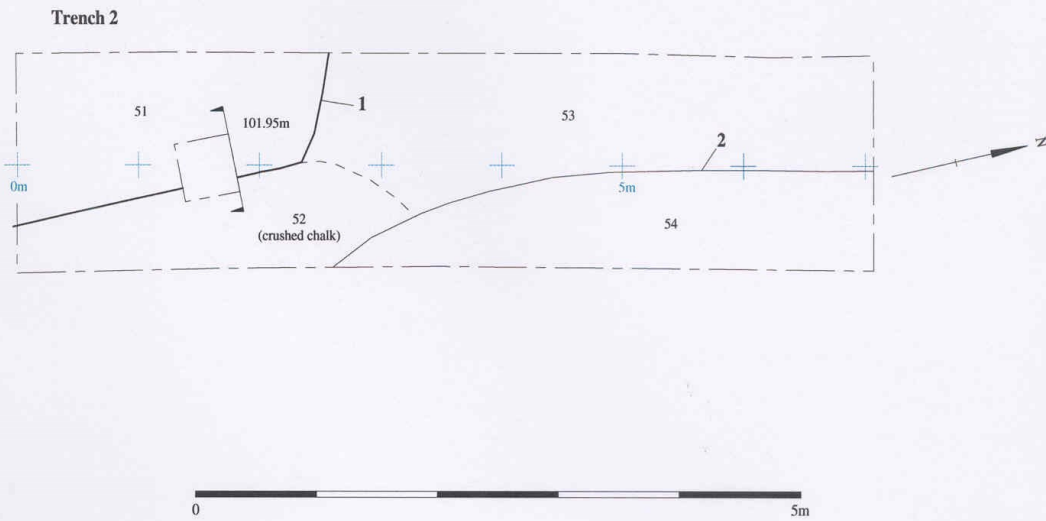


Figure 4. Trench Plan

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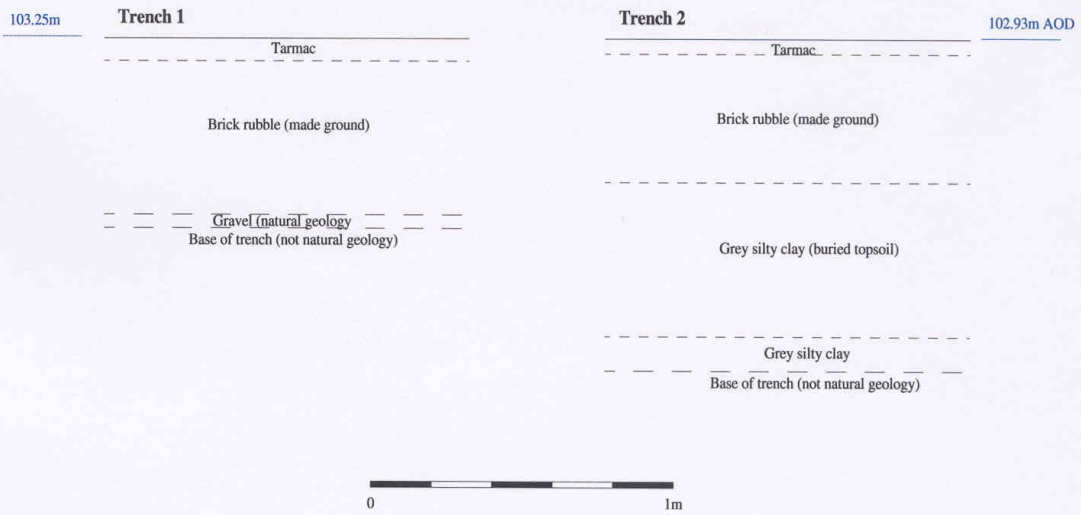
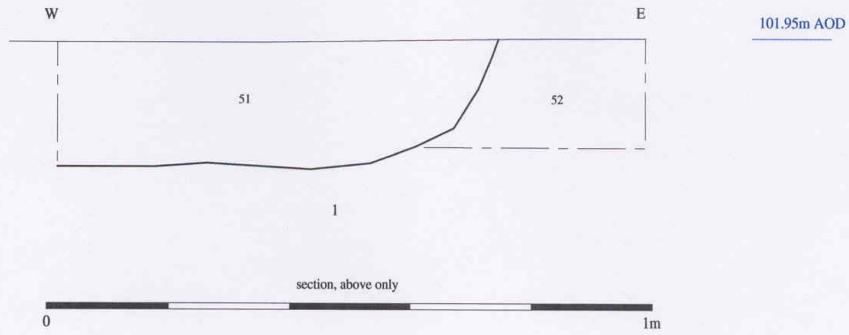


Figure 5. Section of Pit 1 and layer 52; sections of trenches.



Plate 1. Trench 2 looking south west; pre-excavation of base; scale 1m



Plate 2. Trench 2, Pit 1; north east facing section, horizontal scale 0.5m, vertical scale 0.1m.