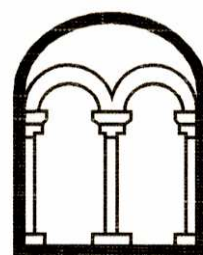


**CHURCH END NURSERIES
CHURCH END
WILLINGTON
BEDFORDSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION, INVESTIGATION,
RECORDING, ANALYSIS AND PUBLICATION**

Albion
archaeology



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Project: CE2274
Bedford Museum accession no. BEDFM: 2013.54
OASIS ref. albionar1-161671

Document: 2014/173
Version 1.0

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2nd October 2014

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Preface

Every effort has been made in the preparation of this document to provide as complete a summary as possible within the terms of the method statement. All statements and opinions in this document are offered in good faith. Albion Archaeology cannot accept responsibility for errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by a third party, or for any loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in this document.

Acknowledgements

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to carry out the archaeological works by Toybox Properties Ltd. The project was monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by Geoff Saunders of the Historic Environment Team of Bedford Borough Council.

Fieldwork was carried out by Slawomir Utrata (Assistant Supervisor). This report has been prepared by Slawomir Utrata. All Albion projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).

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Version History

Version	Issue date	Reason for re-issue
1.0	03/10/2014	n/a

Key Terms

Throughout this document the following terms or abbreviations are used:

BBC	Bedford Borough Council
HER	Bedford Borough Council's Historic Environment Record
HET	Bedford Borough Council's Historic Environment Team
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
LPA	Local Planning Authority (Bedford Borough Council)
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation



Non-technical Summary

Planning permission 12/01993/FUL for a detached dwelling and double garage at Church End, Willington was granted by Bedford Borough Council.

As the proposed development was located within an area of archaeological sensitivity, the Historic Environment Team (HET) of Bedford Borough Council recommended that a condition was attached to the planning consent requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological works. The works were to comprise observation of construction groundworks and the investigation, recording, analysis and publication of any revealed archaeological remains.

This report details the works carried out on the detached dwelling only. Following archaeological observation of the groundworks for the dwelling, and review of the findings, the HET agreed that further observations of the garage works would not be necessary.

Archaeological observation of the groundworks associated with the house construction was undertaken on 3rd March 2014.

The monitoring of the groundworks of the development area produced little of archaeological interest. Identified features included a large probable quarry pit and a possible ditch. They produced no artefacts but both cut the subsoil. As the latter is typically a product of medieval or post-medieval ploughing, it is likely that the observed features are post-medieval or later in date.

The only possibly earlier feature was a NW-SE orientated gully. As it was roughly parallel to the existing Church End road, it probably marked a plot boundary and /or served as a field drain.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Project Background*

Planning permission (12/01993/FUL) for a detached dwelling and double garage at Church End, Willington was granted by Bedford Borough Council.

As the proposed development was located within an area of archaeological sensitivity, the Historic Environment Team (HET) of Bedford Borough Council recommended that a condition was attached to the planning consent requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological works. This advice was in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework – Section 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment¹.

The HET issued a brief detailing the archaeological works required at the site (BBC 2013). They were to comprise observation of construction groundworks and the investigation, recording, analysis and publication of any revealed archaeological remains.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to carry out the programme of archaeological work in accordance with methodologies described in a Written Scheme of Investigation (Albion Archaeology 2013), which was approved by the HET prior to commencement of site works.

This report details the works carried out on the detached dwelling only. Following archaeological observation of the groundworks for the dwelling, and review of the findings, the HET agreed that further observations of the garage works would not be necessary.

1.2 *Site Location and Description*

The development site is located on the northern edge of Willington, on the west side of Church End road, and immediately to the south of the former Bedford to Sandy railway line, which currently forms a cycle path (Figure 1). It comprises a plot of land c. 0.17ha in area, centred on grid reference TL 10482 50127.

The site lies at approximately 23.5m OD with the underlying drift geology comprising sands and gravels of the Stoke Goldington and Felmersham Members of the Ouse Valley Formation.

1.3 *Archaeological and Historical Background*

The village of Willington (HER 17076) is medieval in date and is the location of a scheduled medieval moated site (HER 769), known locally as the “Danish Dock”. The moat is connected to the River Great Ouse by inlet and outlet channels and incorporates a riverside dock. Part of it survives as a regular water-filled pond.

¹ National Planning Policy Framework, published by the Department for Communities and Local Government (2012). Available at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/nppf>.



A rectangular earthwork, interpreted as a medieval moat and located c. 130m to the west of the development site, was identifiable on aerial photographs taken in the 1940s; it had been filled in and flattened by the 1970s (HER768).

The remains of the medieval Willington Manor complex are located 200–300m to the south of the development site (HERs 434, 435, and 995).

The development site lies within the Great Ouse valley which is a landscape rich in archaeological remains. Approximately 200m to the south-west are numerous cropmarks identified on both vertical and oblique aerial photographs taken over a number of years (HER1618). Subsequent investigations in the area ahead of gravel extraction have confirmed the presence of a number of nationally important ritual monuments of likely late Neolithic/early Bronze Age date together with evidence indicating the possible reuse of some of these monuments during the Saxon period. These remains are part of a wider prehistoric ritual landscape located in this part of the Ouse Valley both to the north and south of the river (HERs 585, 594, 1478, 1480, and 15222).

An Iron Age occupation site was investigated during the 1950s, c. 250m to the north-east of the development site (HER10807). Romano-British occupation was identified a further 100m to the north of this during archaeological investigations undertaken in the 1980s (HER14456).

1.4 Project Objectives

The principal objective of the archaeological fieldwork was to monitor and supervise all groundworks associated with the proposed development that had the potential to reveal archaeological remains, and to investigate, characterise and record any archaeological deposits encountered within them.



2 METHODOLOGY

A detailed methodology is provided in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Albion Archaeology 2013).

Archaeological observation of the groundworks associated with the house construction was undertaken on 3rd March 2014. All groundworks that had the potential to impact upon archaeological remains were archaeologically monitored. They comprised the excavation of a foundation trenches, measuring c. 0.75m wide and 0.65–0.85m deep (Figure 2). The groundworks associated with creating the access route and services were less than 0.3m deep and, as only the ploughsoil would be disturbed, archaeological supervision was not necessary.

A mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-edged ditching bucket was used to carry out the excavations.

Archaeological features and deposits encountered were investigated and recorded in accordance with Albion's *Procedures Manual*. Spoil heaps were checked on a regular basis for archaeological artefacts recovery.

Throughout the project the standards set out in the following documents were adhered to:

Albion Archaeology	<i>Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork</i> (2 nd edn, 2001).
Bedford Borough Council	<i>Procedure for Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition with Registered Museums in Bedfordshire. Version 2.8</i> (2010)
English Heritage	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment</i> (2009) <i>Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation</i> (Second Edition) (2011)
East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14	Gurney, D. <i>Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England</i> (2003)
IfA	<i>By-Laws and Code of Conduct</i> <i>Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation</i> (updated 2008) and <i>finds</i> (updated 2008) <i>Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief</i> (2008)

The project archive will be deposited with Bedford Museum (accession no. BEDFM: 2013.54). This report will be uploaded onto the Archaeology Data Service's OASIS website (albionar1-161671).



3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

The monitored groundworks revealed three undated archaeological features which are described below. Detailed information on all features and deposits can be found in the Appendix.

3.2 Overburden and Alluvial Deposits

The overburden was homogenous in character across the site. The ploughsoil (1) comprised a dark brown grey silty sand, 0.3m thick. The subsoil (2) was mid grey brown sandy silt and varied in thickness from 0.05–0.15m (Figure 3). The whole area had formerly been used for cultivation over considerable period of time by the family of the current landowners in connection with their nursery business².

The underlying layer of alluvial deposits (3) was 0.25–0.35m thick and comprised mid orange brown sandy silt (Figure 3).

3.3 Undisturbed Geological Deposits

Undisturbed geological strata were revealed c. 0.65m below the ground surface and consisted of mid orange sandy gravel.

3.4 Archaeological Features

In the south and west of the main building excavations two large features cutting subsoil were identified.

A probable large quarry pit [6] was visible in several parts of the foundation trench (Figure 2). It was > 15m long, > 5.5m wide and 0.7–0.8m deep and extended beyond the investigated area to the south and west. It contained two fills. The lower fill (7) comprised decayed white limestone rubble; the upper fill (8) was grey brown sandy silt.

Towards the west of the foundation excavations a probable substantial ditch [9] was observed (Figure 4). The feature was only partially excavated and, therefore, its full extent was not observed. The exposed section of the feature measured 6m long, 1.5m wide and at least 0.85m deep. It truncated the quarry pit [6]. Given the very limited area of investigation, an alternative interpretation of the feature is that it could represent another episode of quarrying.

Neither of these features produced any finds but as they both cut the subsoil it has to be assumed that they are relatively modern in date.

A gully (4) was identified beneath the subsoil (Figure 2). It was NW-SE orientated, at least 4.5m long and 0.2m wide. As it was not visible in the trenches located further to the north-west, it can be assumed that it terminated within the development area. No finds to date the feature were recovered from

² Pers. comm. James Wilkinson.



the fill but it was stratigraphically the earliest feature encountered at the site. It was roughly parallel to the existing Church End road and may mark a plot boundary and /or have served as a field drain.



4 CONCLUSIONS

The monitoring of the groundworks of the development area produced little of archaeological interest.

Identified features included a large probable quarry pit and a possible ditch. They produced no artefacts but both cut the subsoil. The latter is typically the product of medieval or post-medieval ploughing, so it is likely that the feature are post-medieval or later in date.

The only possibly earlier feature was a NW-SE orientated gully. As it was roughly parallel to the existing Church End road, it probably marked a plot boundary and / or served as a field drain.



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6 APPENDIX

6.1 Context Summary

No.	Type	Description	Excavated
1	Ploughsoil	Friable dark brown grey silty sand occasional small stones. 0.3m thick.	✓
2	Subsoil	Friable mid grey brown sandy silt occasional small stones. 0.05-0.15m thick.	✓
3	Alluvium	Friable mid orange brown sandy silt occasional small stones. 0.25-0.35m thick.	✓
4	Gully	Linear NW-SE sides: near vertical base: concave dimensions: max breadth 0.22m, max depth 0.2m, min length 4.5m.	✓
5	Fill	Friable dark brown grey sandy silt. 0.2m thick.	✓
6	Quarry	Irregular sides: steep base: uneven dimensions: min breadth 5.5m, max depth 0.8m, min length 15m	✓
7	Lower fill	Compact light grey white limestone. 0.05-0.15m thick.	✓
8	Upper fill	Friable mid grey brown sandy silt. Mixed deposit. 0.25-0.5m thick.	✓
9	Feature	Irregular sides: steep dimensions: min breadth 1.5m, min depth 0.85m, min length 6m. Feature only partially uncovered in the foundation trenches. May be side of a ditch or quarry pitting.	
10	Fill	Friable dark brown grey sandy silt occasional small stones. At least 0.85m thick.	
11	Natural	Firm mid orange brown sandy gravel frequent small-medium stones.	

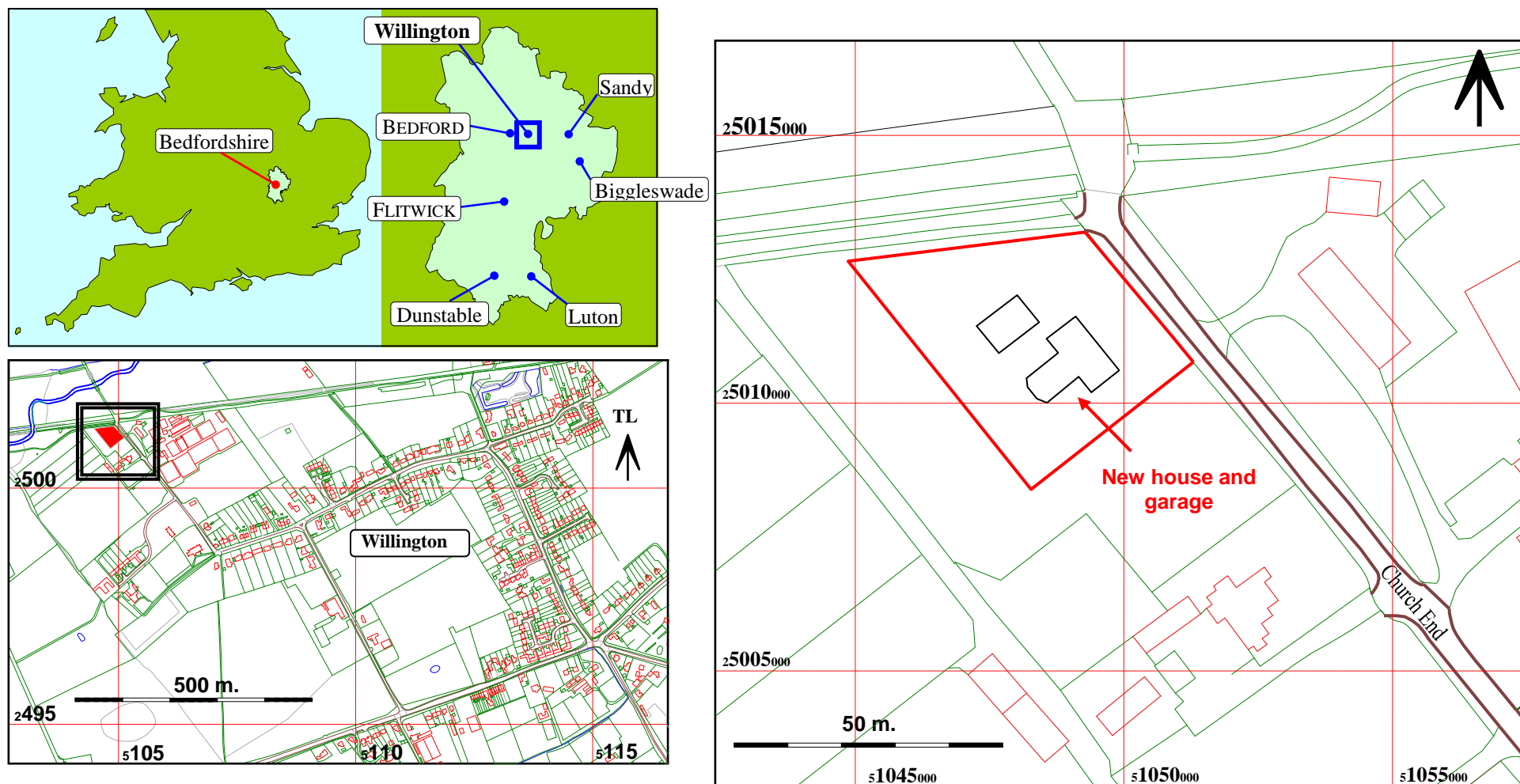


Figure 1: Site location

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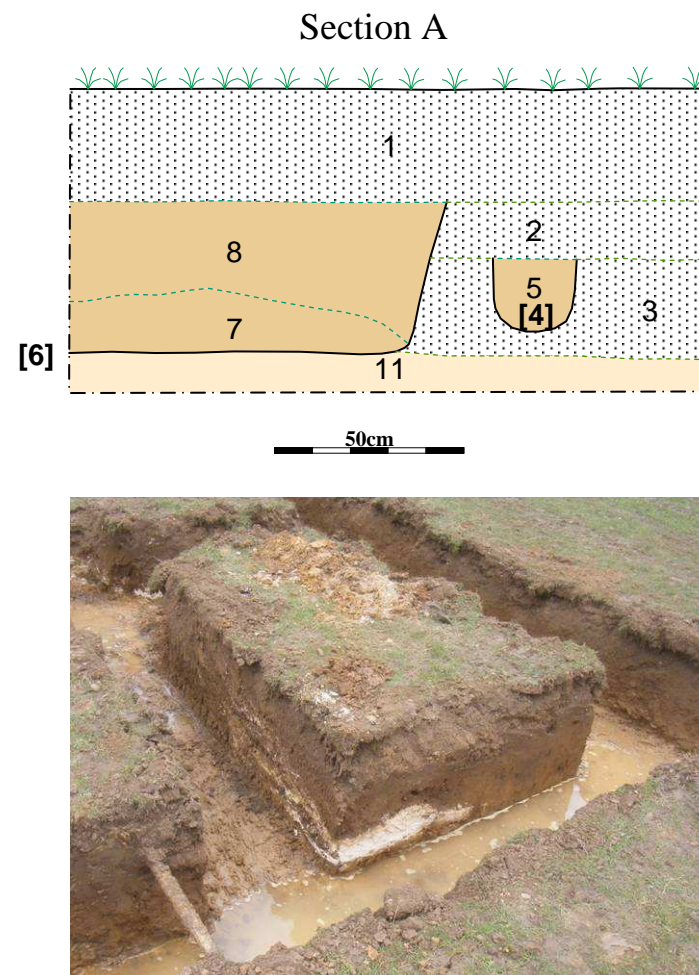
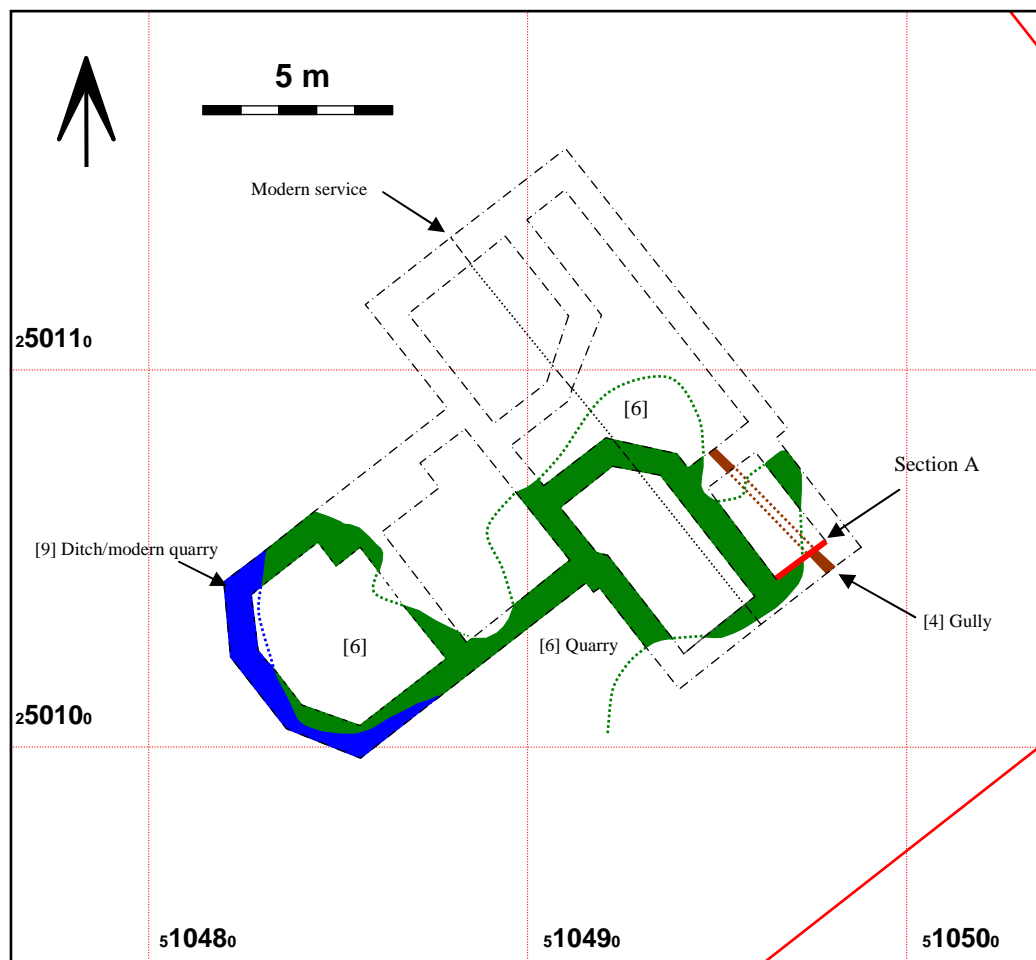


Figure 2: Results



Figure 3: Soil profile

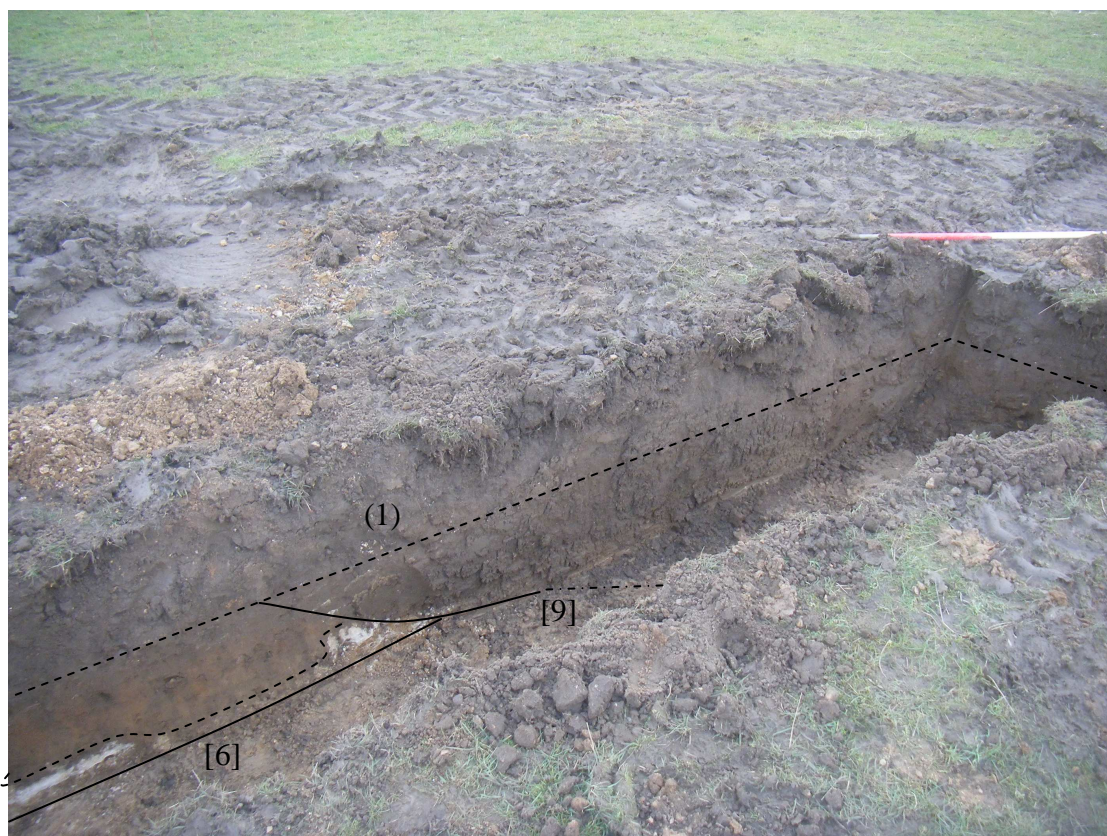


Figure 4: Ditch/quarry [9] in the NW-facing section

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