



**Northamptonshire  
County Council**

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## Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological Strip and Record on Land  
at Middle End Barn,  
Middle End, Leckhampstead,  
Buckinghamshire  
June 2006



Tim Upson-Smith

September 2006

Report 06/136

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**Northamptonshire Archaeology**

2 Bolton House  
Wootton Hall Park  
Northampton NN4 8BE

w. [www.northantsarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.northantsarchaeology.co.uk)

t. 01604 700493/4

f. 01604 702822

e. [sparry@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:sparry@northamptonshire.gov.uk)



## STAFF

Project Manager: Antony Walsh BA

Fieldwork: Tim Upson-Smith BA, PGDip,  
David Haynes

Text: Tim Upson-Smith

Pottery: Paul Blinkhorn BTech

Other finds: Tora Hylton

Illustrations: Jacqueline Harding HND, BA

## QUALITY CONTROL

	Print name	Signed	Date
Verified by	Antony Walsh		
Checked by	Pat Chapman		
Approved by	Andy Chapman		

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL STRIP AND RECORD ON LAND**  
**AT MIDDLE END BARN,**  
**MIDDLE END, LECKHAMPSTEAD,**  
**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**  
**JUNE 2006**

Planning Application Number: 06/00962/APP

**Site:** Middle End Barn, Middle End, Leckhampstead

**NGR:** SP 47279 23761

*Abstract*

*An archaeological strip and record excavation was carried out by Northamptonshire Archaeology during the groundworks for the construction of a new stable on land at Middle End Barn, Leckhampstead, Buckinghamshire. The excavations revealed a small pit and a pond. Finds recovered included pottery and part of a pewter candle holder which were probably early post-medieval in date.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

Northamptonshire Archaeology were commissioned by Mr S Gill to undertake an archaeological strip and record excavation during development at land at Middle end Barn, Leckhampstead, Buckinghamshire in June 2006 (NGR SP 47279 23761, Fig 1).

Planning permission had been granted by Aylesbury Vale District Council for the erection of a stable block on land which had previously been pasture (Planning Application Number: 06/00962/APP). As a condition of the permission an archaeological excavation was required following a brief issued by Mr David Radford, Archaeological Officer, Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (Radford 2006).

### **1.1 Topography and geology**

The development area (c 209 m<sup>2</sup>) is located to the South of Chequers House in Leckhampstead Middle End. The site is located on the edge of Great Oolite and cornbrash limestone (<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/index.htm>) at 91m AOD.

## 1.2 Historical and Archaeological Background

The development lies within Middle End, which is believed to be one of the foci of the dispersed medieval settlement pattern characteristic of Leckhampstead village, and the surrounding area of Buckinghamshire (Radford 2006).

Leckhampstead lies within an area covered by the University of Leicester's Whittlewood Project, currently researching the origins of the dispersed settlement pattern in the area. As part of the project, earthworks have been recorded relating to the shrunken medieval village at Middle End (CAS0540002000) and field walking was undertaken which recovered medieval pottery from the vicinity of the development. Pottery was also recovered from a series of test pits excavated in and around Leckhampstead in the summer of 2002 ([www.le.ac.uk/elh/whittlewood/index.htm](http://www.le.ac.uk/elh/whittlewood/index.htm)).

Two test pits, numbers 45 and 46, were excavated in the grounds of Chequers House, Middle End, immediately to the north west of the development site. Pottery recovered from the pits suggested that the probable medieval occupation identified during field walking, in the field immediately east of the site, continued under the present Chequers house.

Other sites known within a 1km search of the area include the site of the former manor house and moat known as the Toy relating to the shrunken village, the church of St Mary and probable Civil War battery earthworks.

## 2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the archaeological excavation was:

*...to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains which may be threatened by the proposed development*

The following specific objective was identified in the Brief:

*Establish the presence/absence of Saxon/medieval/post-medieval occupation on the site and, if present, determine the date and character of that occupation with particular reference to the origins of settlement at Middle End.*

*[and] to determine:*

- *the level of truncation of buried deposits*
- *the level of preservation of deposits within negative features*
- *site formation processes*

*In addition, where suitable deposits survive, the archaeological evaluation will seek to establish the environmental potential of the site.*

### 3 RESULTS

A series of visits were made during the removal of the topsoil and the reduction in ground level for the concrete slab footing of the new stables.

At the northern end of the excavation the formation level for the foundation slab was reached before the undisturbed natural geology and no archaeological features were visible (Fig 2).

At the south the undisturbed natural geology was orange sandy clay (003) at a depth of 0.65m. Two archaeological features were revealed; pit [005] and a probable pond [006] (Fig 2).

The pit [005] was oval in plan, with a stepped profile and a flat base, 2.5m long, 1.6m wide and 0.28m deep (Fig 3, section 1). The fill (004) was dark brown grey silty clay, which contained two sherds of post-medieval pottery and tile.

The pond [006] continued beyond the south-east limit of the excavation. It had a shallow sloping profile and was at least 7.6m long, 2.7m wide and 0.75m deep (Fig 3, section 2). Its primary fill (009) consisted of firm dark grey brown silty clay 0.1m deep. This was overlain by (008) dark grey brown clay loam 0.37m thick, and containing frequent large irregular limestone fragments. Thirteen sherds of late medieval pottery were recovered from (008) and part of a pewter candlestick (Table 1; Plate 1). The upper fill of the feature (007) was dark brown grey clay loam 0.26m thick

Both features were sealed by the subsoil (002), a mid grey brown loamy clay 0.35m thick, which in turn was overlain by the topsoil a dark grey brown loam (001) 0.3m thick.

### 4 FINDS

#### 4.1 Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprises 14 sherds with a total weight of 235g. It was recorded using the coding system of the Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit type-series (e.g. Mynard and Zeepvat 1992; Zeepvat et al. 1994), as follows:

MC1: Shelly Coarseware. AD1100-1400. 1 sherd, 12g.

MC6: Potterspury Ware. AD1250/75-?1600. 7 sherds, 149g.

TLMS3: Late Medieval Reduced Ware. Mid 14th – early 16th century. 5 sherds, 39g

TLMS12: Red Earthenware. 16th – 19th century. 1 sherd, 35g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*.

All the fabrics are well-known in the region, and indicate that there was activity at the site from around the mid-14th century to the post-medieval period. The assemblage consists mainly of plain bodysherds, however, there is a rimsherd from a reduced ware jug and a lug from a Potterspury ware costrel; a specialist vessel used for the transportation of personal supplies of liquid. These are rare but known products of the Potterspury industry.

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

	MC1		MC6		TLMS3		TLMS12		
Context	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	Date
4			1	6			1	35	16thC
8	1	12	6	143	5	39			M14tC
Total	1	12	7	149	5	39	1	35	

#### 4.2 Other Finds by Tora Hylton

Part of a pewter candle holder was recovered from the fill of the pond (context 008) (Fig 3, section 2). Although incomplete (the base is missing), characteristically it resembles a ‘bunson’ type, with the stem/socket and base manufactured in two pieces and joined by a metal rivet (Brownsword 1985).



Plate 1 Pewter candlestick, context (008), late 15th to late 16th century

The cylindrical socket has an internal measurement of 19mm and is embellished with three groups of circumferential grooving, a decorative trait seen on candlesticks from about the middle of the 15th century. These mouldings become heavier and duplicated at the rim of the socket in later examples (Michaelis 1993, 42-43). The base of the socket angles to the stem, which measures 80mm long and has a bladed knop 25mm above the base of the stem. At the base of the stem a patch of ferrous corrosion indicates that the rivet for connecting the socket/stem to the base of the candle holder was made from iron.

Candle holders of this type generally date from the late 15th to late 16th century. They have been recovered from a wide area of England and a similar example has been recovered from London (Egan 2005, fig 69, 337).

## **5 CONCLUSION**

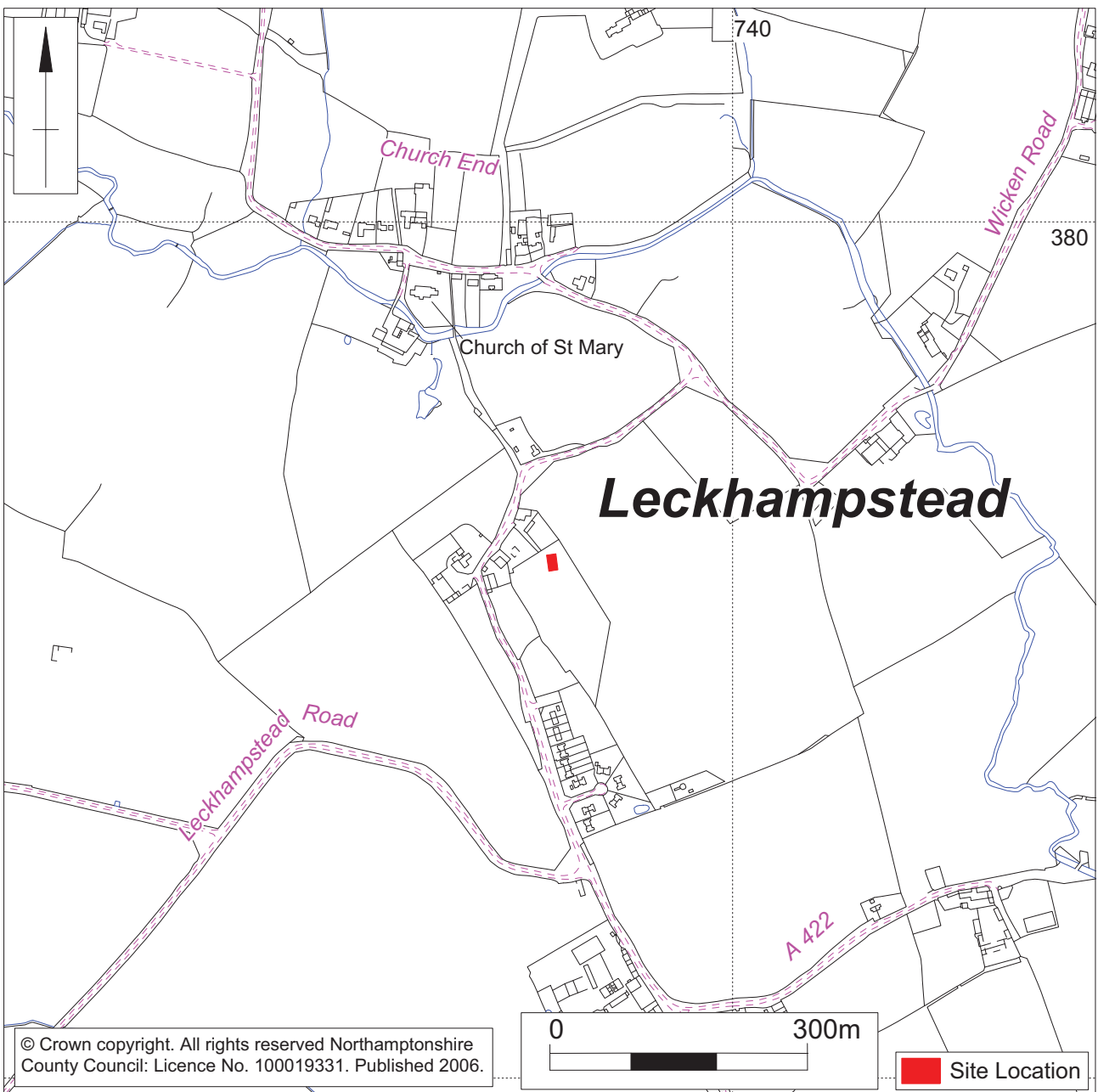
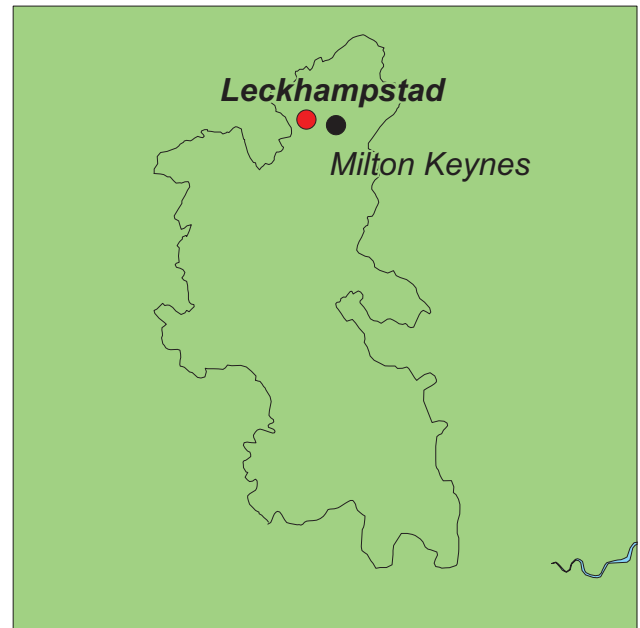
Two features of early post-medieval date were excavated and recorded, consisting of a pit and a probable pond. Although neither of the features represents occupation the finds recovered suggest that there was occupation nearby. The pit was probably for the disposal of domestic refuse. The presence of large stones within the main fill of the pond suggests it was deliberately backfilled.

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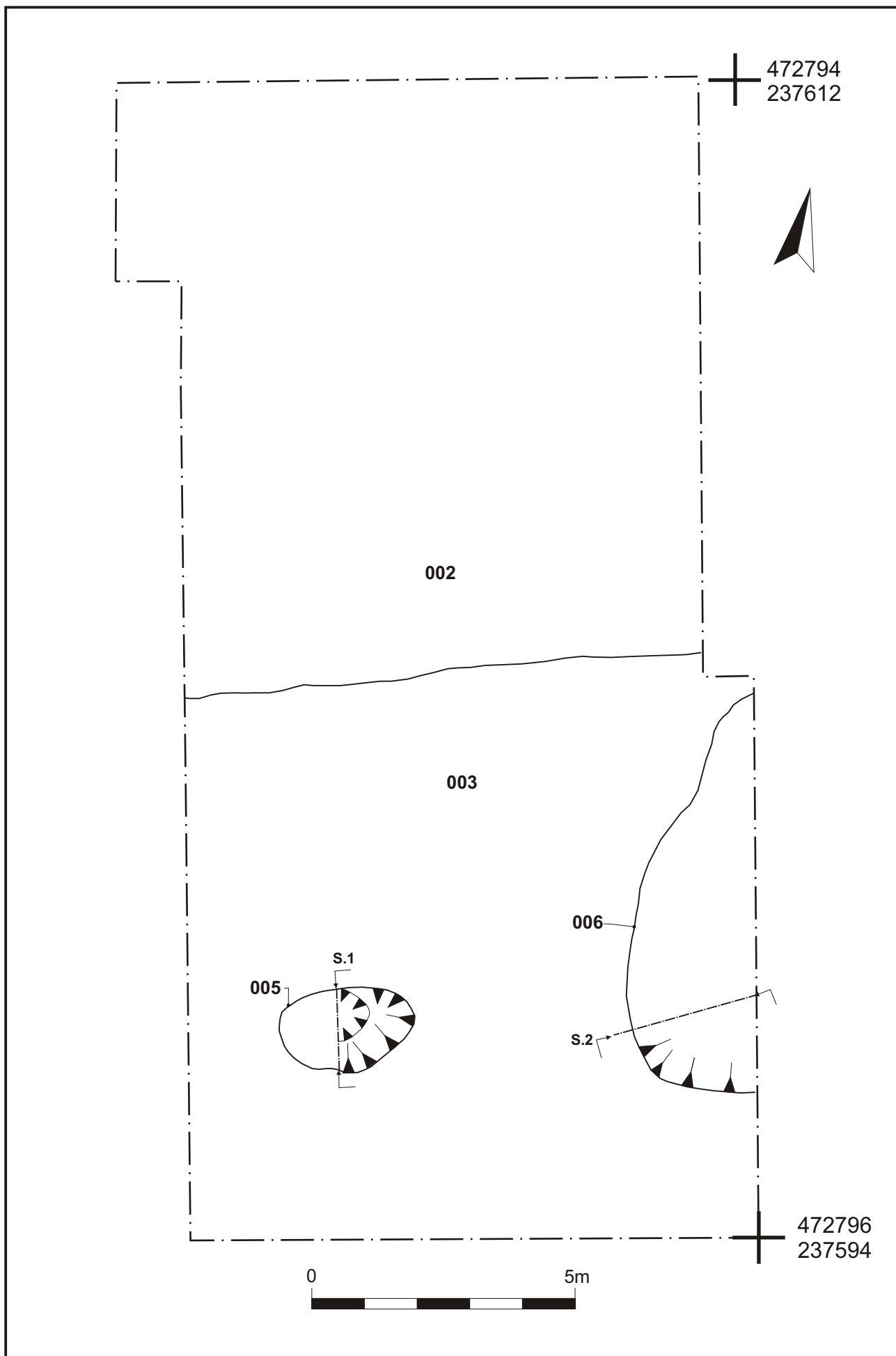
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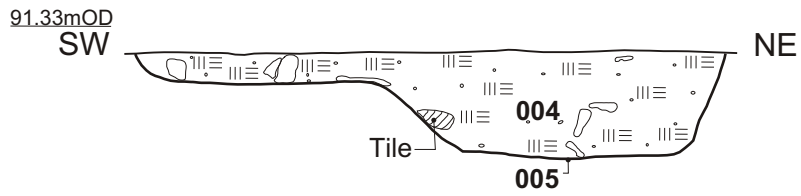


Site Location Fig 1

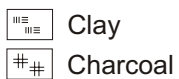
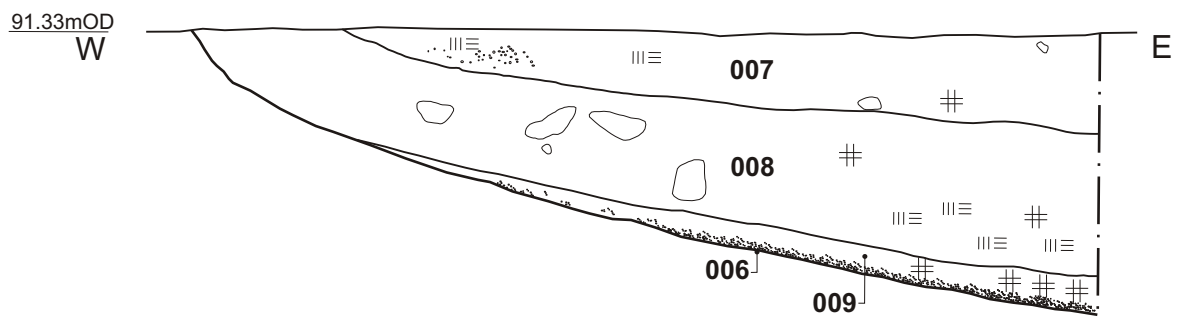


Plan of Trench Fig 2

## Section 1



## Section 2



Sections 1-2 Fig 3