



Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**WATCHING BRIEF
FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME
UPSTREAM FROM DODFORD MILL
WEEDON, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

Joe Abrams BA AIFA



July 2002

ASC:FDW01/2

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Letchworth House
Chesney Wold, Bleak Hall,
Milton Keynes MK6 1NE
Tel: 01908 608989 Fax: 01908 605700
Email: mka@archaeological-services.co.uk
Website: www.archaeological-services.co.uk



SITE DATA

ASC site code:	FDW01	Project No:	328
County:	Northampton		
District:	Daventry		
Town:	Weedon		
Parish:	Weedon CP & Dodford CP		
NGR:	SP 6059 5915		
Extent of development:	Storage Lagoon (borrow pit) - maximum dimensions - 300m x 80m. Dam maximum dimensions – 455m x 51m		
Present land use:	Open countryside		
Desk-based assessment:	Not required		
Client:	Edmund Nuttall Ltd Site Offices Dodford Mill Off Evendon Road Woodway Northamptonshire NN7 4WS		
Contact name:	Simon Spink/Gary Patterson		
Telephone:		Fax:	

CONTENTS

Summary

1. Introduction	5
2. Setting.....	6
3. Archaeological & Historical Background	9
4. Aims & Methods	10
5. Results	11
6. Conclusions	17
7. Acknowledgements	18
8. Bibliography.....	19
9. Archive	20

Appendices:

1. Details from Field Monitoring Sheets	21
2. Selected Sketches from Field Monitoring Sheets.....	24
3. Context Summary	38
4. Depth of Deposits – Test Pits 1 – 8, Borrow Pit	39

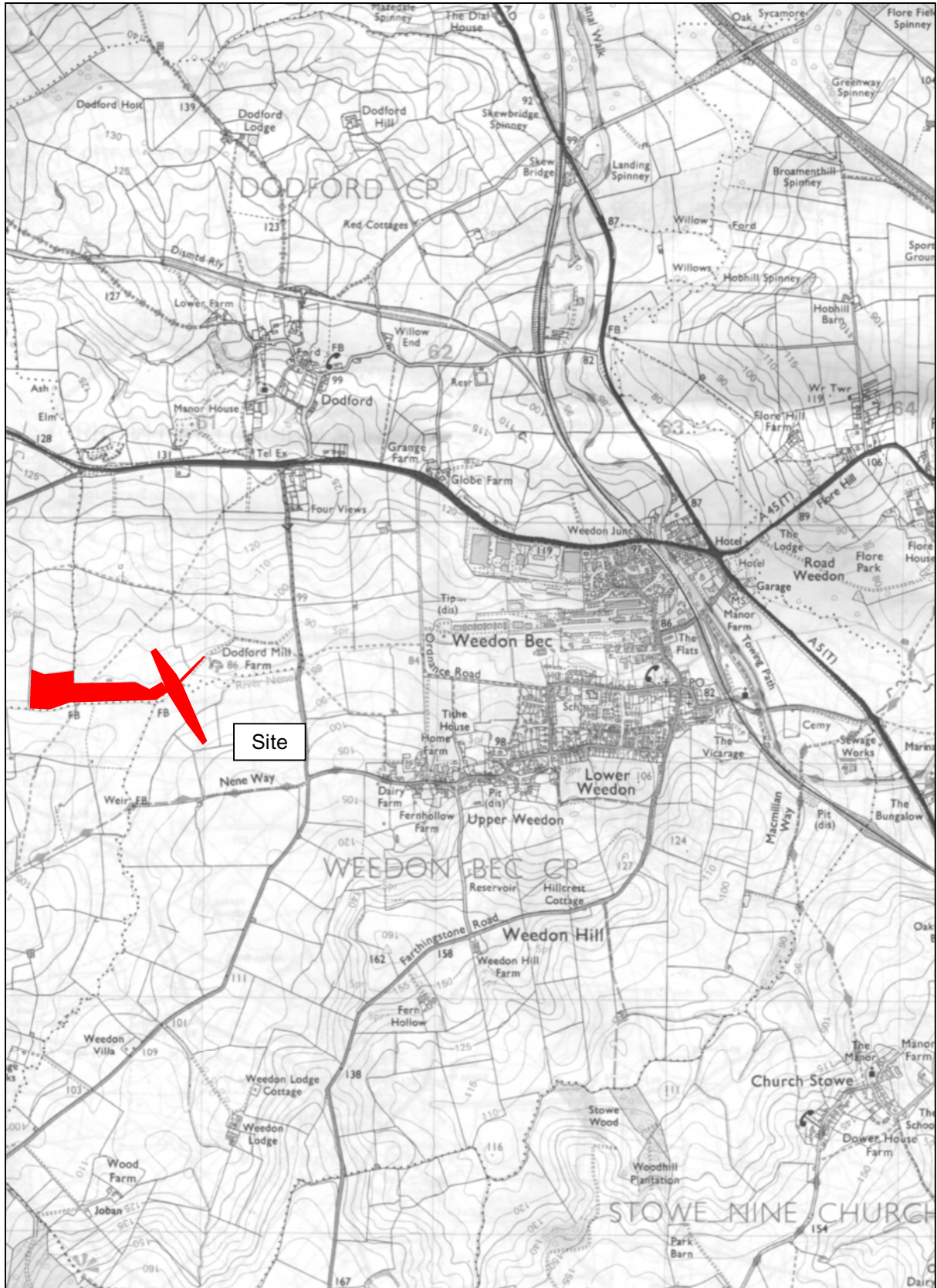
Figures:

1. General location.....	4
2. Dam Area	7
3. Borrow Pit and Spoil storage Areas	8
4. Extract from 1 st Edition 6” map, 1890.....	9

Plates:

Cover: Dam Area after topsoil stripping

1	Piece of waterlogged timber recovered from layer 8, culvert trench	11
2	Topsoil stripping on river diversion	12
3	Excavation of River diversion through alluvium and natural subsoil	12
4	South facing section of culvert trench, showing layer 8	12
5	Culvert trench during excavation	12
6	South field Dam Area during topsoil stripping	14
7	Ditch [11] west facing section	14
8	North field Dam Area during topsoil stripping	14
9	Segment excavated through Layer 14	14
10	Borrow pit during topsoil stripping	15
11	Excavation of Borrow pit through alluvium.....	15
12	Ditch [13] south facing section.....	16
13	Spoil storage area during topsoil stripping.....	16



Based upon the 1999 Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 map, with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
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Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)

Summary

Between May and July 2002 a watching brief was carried out by Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd (ASC) during the construction of a Flood Alleviation Scheme upstream from Dodford Mill, Weedon, Northamptonshire. Two post Medieval field boundaries were recorded. No other significant archaeological features were recorded at this site. However during the excavation of a culvert in the Dam Area, several large pieces of un-worked waterlogged timber were recorded within layer of apparently naturally derived material. These are believed to be of considerable antiquity as they were from a sealed layer c5m below the present ground level.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The project was commissioned by Edmund Nuttall Ltd, and was carried out according to a Brief prepared by G.J. Phillips, Archaeological Planning Assistant, Northamptonshire Heritage, and a project design prepared by ASC:FDW01/1.
- 1.2 The watching brief at Dodford Mill, Weedon was commissioned in response to a PPG16 (archaeology and planning) planning condition imposed by the local planning authority, Northamptonshire County Council. The condition was placed due to the proximity of the development area to Dodford Mill a listed building c150m to the northeast. The existence within the development area of archaeological features associated with the Mill was considered a possibility. Topsoil stripping and other excavation activities also raised the possibility of recording previously unknown sites within the alluvium. It was expected that any archaeological remains present within the development area would have been severely damaged or destroyed by the ground works associated with the construction of the Dam and Borrow pit.

2 Setting

- 2.1 The site is upstream from Dodford Mill Farm, near Weedon, Northamptonshire (NGR SP 6059 5915: Fig 1). It lies in open countryside *c*150m to the south-west of the mill. The Dam area (Fig 2) was used most recently for arable crops, the borrow pit and spoil storage areas (Fig 3) were under pasture.
- 2.2 The Dam area of the site is aligned northwest – southeast crossing the river valley, the elevation of this area varied from 88m OD at its lowest point adjacent to the River Nene, to *c*93m OD at its northern and southern extremes. The borrow pit and spoil storage areas lie immediately west of the Dam area, alongside the River Nene at an elevation of 88m OD rising to 93m OD in the northern part of the spoil storage area. The entire site is bordered by arable farmland.
- 2.3 The natural soils of the area are derived from clay and have been classified as belonging to the Oxpasture Association, and are described as ‘fine loamy over clayey and clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging. Some slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged clayey soils’ (Soil Survey 1983, 572h).

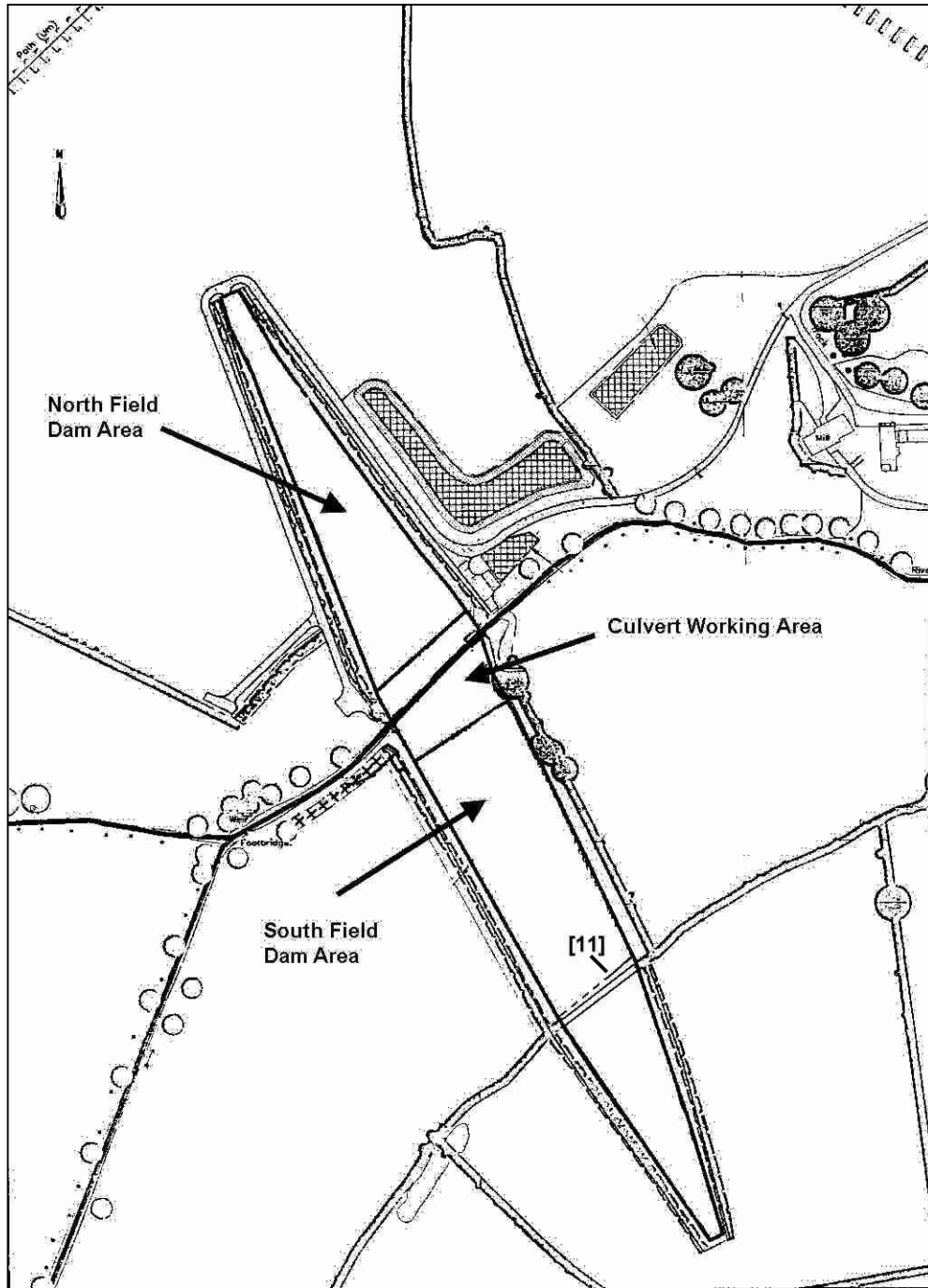


Figure 2: Dam Area (based on scale 1:1250)

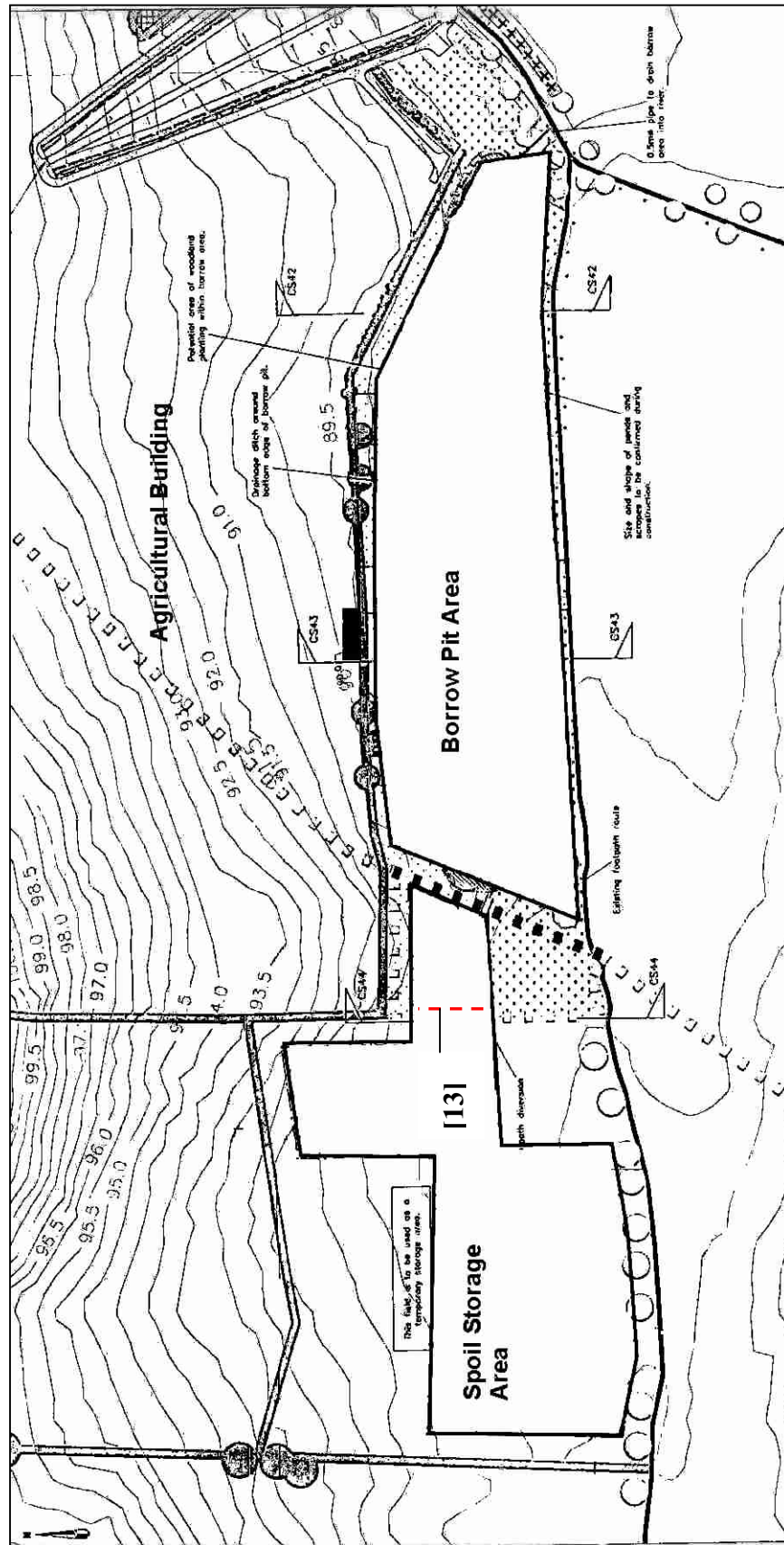


Figure 3: Borrow Pit and Spoil storage Areas (based on scale 1:1250)

3 Archaeological & Historical Background

- 3.1 No archaeological sites are recorded within the site of the dam and borrow pit. However, Dodford Mill is a listed building with an intact mill leat. It was considered possible that remains associated with the mill would have been recorded in the area affected by the works for the Flood Alleviation Scheme.
- 3.2 Little was recorded by the Royal Commission for Historic Monuments England for the parishes of Dodford and Weedon. No prehistoric remains were noted for Dodford, and only some flints from an unknown location were noted for Weedon. Finds of Roman material, including coins have been made in Dodford near to Roman Watling Street. Dodford was first recorded in 944 AD, and it appeared in the Domesday Book (Morris 1976). It possessed an extensive area of settlement remains that possibly indicated a planned settlement (RCHME 1981).---
- 3.3 An evaluation in Church Street, Weedon Bec produced evidence of Roman, Saxon and Medieval activity, including late Saxon or Medieval plot boundaries (South Midlands Archaeology 1995, 41). This site is close to Roman Watling Street, and may indicate limited Roman activity in this area. Another evaluation in New Street, Weedon Bec produced evidence of boundary ditches and a pit or well containing pottery dated between c1100 and 1400 AD (Murray 1997). Weedon Bec appeared in the Domesday Book, so finds of this date are to be expected in the village. At the time of the Domesday Survey the manor was held by Hugh of Grandmesnil, and along with 17 acres of meadow and 12 acres of woodland, a mill worth 40d was listed (Morris 1976).

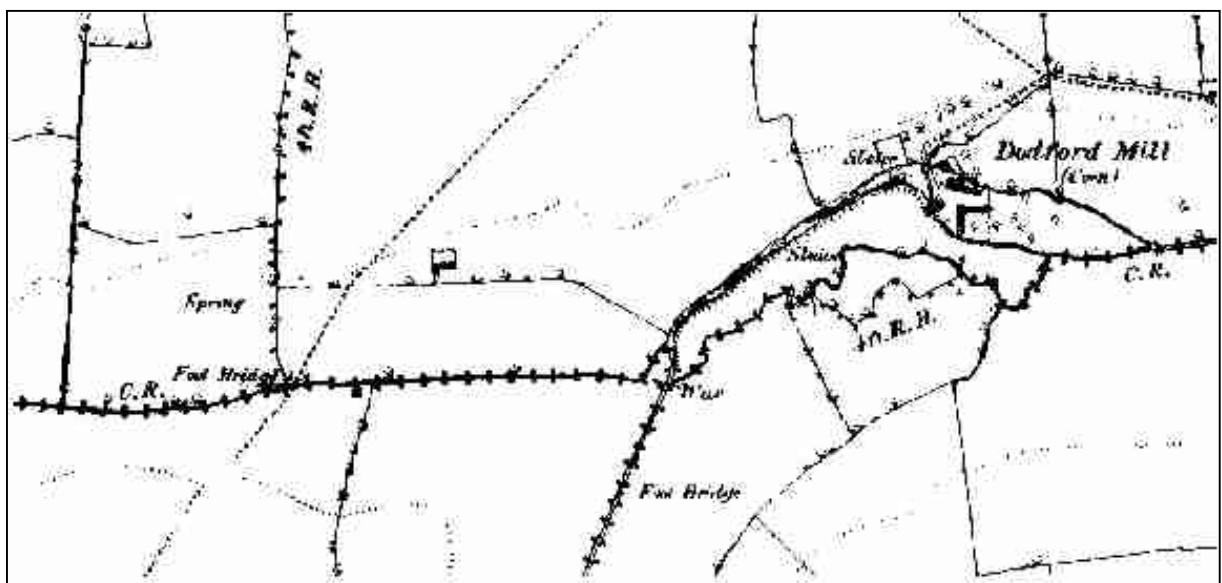


Figure 4: Extract from 1st Edition 6" map, 1890.

4 Aims & Methods

- 4.1 The aim of the Watching Brief was to ensure that, if archaeological features were revealed during the development, they could be adequately recorded, and if necessary, emergency salvage excavation undertaken.
- 4.2 The work was carried out according to the brief, which required (2) and (3.1):
- An archaeologist to carry out continuous archaeological observation of topsoil removal and recording of any important remains revealed.
 - An archaeologist should be present during all groundworks for foundations, drainage runs, access roads etc. A record should be made of the extent and depth of previous ground disturbance, and any archaeological features revealed should be cleaned and sampled sufficiently to demonstrate their general date and character and then recorded and planned appropriately.
- 4.3 The work was carried out in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Watching Briefs*, and the relevant section(s) of ASC's *Operations Manual*.
- 4.4 Each site visit was recorded on ASC's Site Monitoring Sheets. A photographic record (B&W prints, Colour slides and a selection of colour print and digital photographs) was also maintained throughout the watching brief. Plans of the development provided by the client (Figs. 2 and 3) were used as the basis for recording the location of archaeological features and finds.

5 Results

5.1 23 visits were made between 7 May 2002 and 9 July 2002. Details of the works observed in each visit can be seen in Appendix 1.

5.2 *The River Diversion And Culvert Construction Trench (Fig. 2)*

A river diversion channel was required ahead of the construction work. Topsoil stripping and the subsequent excavation of a channel to a depth of 2.8m recorded no archaeological features. This measured c90mL x 8.5mW x 2.8mD.

During the excavation of the Culvert Construction Trench, topsoil and alluvium were removed. The first phase these works involved the clearance of undergrowth from the banks and removal of river silts from the base of a c90m section of the River Nene. No archaeological features or stray artefacts were identified in either the base or the banks, and no finds were retrieved from the associated spoil heaps.

A working area 70mL x 26.5mW x 5mD was excavated. The distinctions between the various stratigraphic layers in the north facing section of this area were particularly clear (Appendix 2, sketch 7). Four layers of alluvium (2, 3, 4 and 5) were recorded, below these were 2 layers of natural clay subsoil (6 and 7). Perhaps the most significant of the layers observed in this series was layer 8 at the base of this section. This layer was black in colour and silty clay in character, it contained moderate amounts of waterlogged timber (Plate 1) of which two samples were taken. Neither of these samples or any of the other timbers examined during the project showed any signs of having been worked. This layer and all of its contents appear to have been naturally derived.

Other works, which involved archaeological monitoring in this phase of work, were the topsoil stripping for the plant access road, crane pad and spoil storage areas. None of these areas contained any archaeological features.



Plate 1: Piece of waterlogged timber recovered from layer 8, culvert trench.



Plate 2: Topsoil stripping on river diversion



Plate 3: Excavation of river diversion through alluvium and natural subsoil

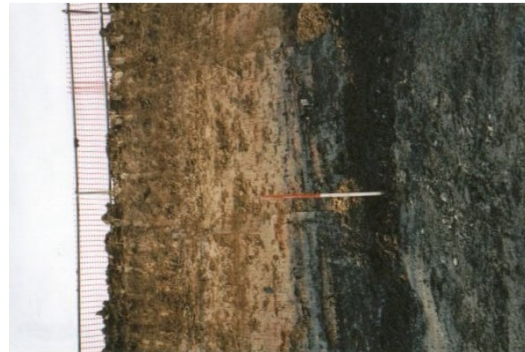


Plate 4: South facing section of culvert trench, layer 8 is visible



Plate 5: Culvert trench during excavation

5.3 *The Dam Area (Fig. 2)*

The Dam area measured *c*450m in length and varied in width from 51m in the centre to 7.5m in its northern and southern extremes. The River Nene split this area into two fields, referred to below as the northern and southern fields.

No archaeological features were recorded during the stripping of the northern field. Although an exploratory 4m x 0.5m segment (Plate 9) was hand excavated through a distinctive deposit in the southern part of this area (Appendix 2, Sketches 12 and 13). Layer 14 was recorded as a result, it is considered highly likely that this is part of an alluvial layer associated with regular flooding episodes in the low lying central part of the dam area.

One ditch [11] was recorded during the stripping of the southern field. Excavation produced no artefactual material, however several pieces of waterlogged wood were recorded. These were all un-worked and appeared to have been relatively recently deposited. This type of soil and the location of this ditch *c*100m upslope of the river would not have provided suitable conditions for the preservation of wood for any length of time. It is suggested that this ditch is a post medieval field boundary. Particularly as it is aligned broadly northeast-southwest *c*1m north of a present day field boundary on the same alignment. These ditches were also of similar proportions both being *c*1m wide and 0.5m deep. A ditch on this alignment is recorded on cartographic sources from the late 19th century (Fig. 4).

A drainage channel was cut down the western edge of the southern field, the dimensions of this channel were 100m x 0.8m x 1.0m. This channel was cut through the topsoil and alluvium layers, however no archaeological features were recorded in its sides or its base.



Plate 7: Ditch [11] west facing section.



Plate 9: Segment excavated through layer 14



Plate 6: South field in Dam area, during topsoil stripping



Plate 8: North field Dam area during topsoil stripping

5.4 *The Borrow Pit Area (Fig. 3)*

The borrow pit area was 300m in length and 80m wide, narrowing to 30m wide at the eastern end. Three phases of excavation work were monitored on this area, this included the excavation of eight test pits, the topsoil stripping of the entire field and the excavation of an alluvium layer in the western end of the field. One post medieval land drain was recorded, this was aligned east west, hand excavation recorded the existence of a ceramic pipe in the base of this linear feature.

The existence of a post medieval agricultural building was noted on the northern border of this field, the location of which is recorded by the 1st edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1890 (Figure 5). Features associated with it were considered a possibility within the borrow pit area, however topsoil stripping in the area adjacent to the building revealed no archaeological features.



Plate 10: Borrow pit during topsoil stripping



Plate 11: Excavation of Borrow pit through alluvium

5.5 *The Spoil Storage Area (Fig. 3)*

A piece of land 180m x 150m was used for spoil storage during the groundworks for the Dam and Borrow pit. During the preparation of this area topsoil was stripped from this field. One ditch [13] was excavated in this area. This was aligned north – south and contained one deposit 12, from which pieces of modern building material and glass were recovered. It is considered likely that this ditch was a post medieval field boundary similar to ditch [11] recorded in the dam area. Several sources back up this interpretation. Firstly, ditch [13] is aligned north-south in line with a hedgerow, and present day field boundary, c30m north of the excavated segment (Plate 12). Also, cartographic sources (Fig. 4) clearly show that this field boundary and very likely the ditch and hedgerow associated with it used to extend south to the river Nene directly through the development area.

A recognised hedgerow survey technique was used to assign an approximate date for the hedgerows surrounding the spoil storage area and borrow pit. Approximately 4 species were recorded per 30m, which for the Nene valley region suggests a date of 350 – 400 years for the establishment of the hedgerow field boundaries (Pollard *et al*, 1974).



Plate 12: Ditch [13] south facing section



Plate 13: Spoil storage area during topsoil stripping

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 Two post medieval field boundaries were recorded during this watching brief. In both cases associations with present day field boundaries, and 19th century cartographic sources were made. It is significant that the only archaeological features in the landscape are post medieval in date. These include Dodford Mill, ditch features [11] and [13], the agricultural building adjacent to the borrow pond and the numerous hedgerows and drainage ditch/field boundaries bordering the site. The complete lack of any stray finds in the topsoil or upper layers of alluvium would suggest that not only is there no settlement activity on the site, but that there is little chance of any within the vicinity prior to the post medieval period.
- 6.2 This may suggest that prior to this period the area was considered to be a marginal piece of land in the flood prone base of this valley, which has never been considered ideal for settlement or other activities.

7 Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to Simon Whalley of Edmund Nuttall Ltd for commissioning ASC to undertake this work. Thanks are also due to Gary Patterson (section engineer) and Simon Spink (site agent) for their on site support and co-operation during the works. Myk Flitcroft, Archaeological Planning Officer, Northamptonshire Heritage is due thanks for his interest and support during this project. The fieldwork was undertaken by Joe Abrams and Dave Fell and report preparation was undertaken by Joe Abrams of ASC Ltd.

8 Bibliography

Morris J. 1976 *Domesday Book: Northamptonshire*. (Chichester).

Murray, J 1997 *Land to the Rear of New Street, Weedon Bec, Northants: An Archaeological Evaluation*. Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust Report 307.

Phillips, G J 2001 *Flood Alleviation Scheme Upstream From Dodford Mill, Weedon: Brief For Archaeological Watching Brief*. Northamptonshire Heritage, Northamptonshire County Council.

Pollard, E, Hooper, M D and Moore N W 1974. *Hedges*. Collins.

RCHME 1981 *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in the County of Northampton. Volume III Archaeological Sites in North-West Northamptonshire*. London.

Soil survey 1983 *The 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).

9. Archive

9.1 The project archive comprises:

1. 23 Field Monitoring Sheets
2. 1 Context Register
3. 15 Context Sheets
4. 17 Sketch Plans
5. Photographic Registers
6. Black and white prints and negatives
7. Colour prints and negatives
8. Color slides
9. Report (this document)
10. CDROM
11. Project Design
12. Brief

Appendix 1: Details from Field Monitoring Sheets

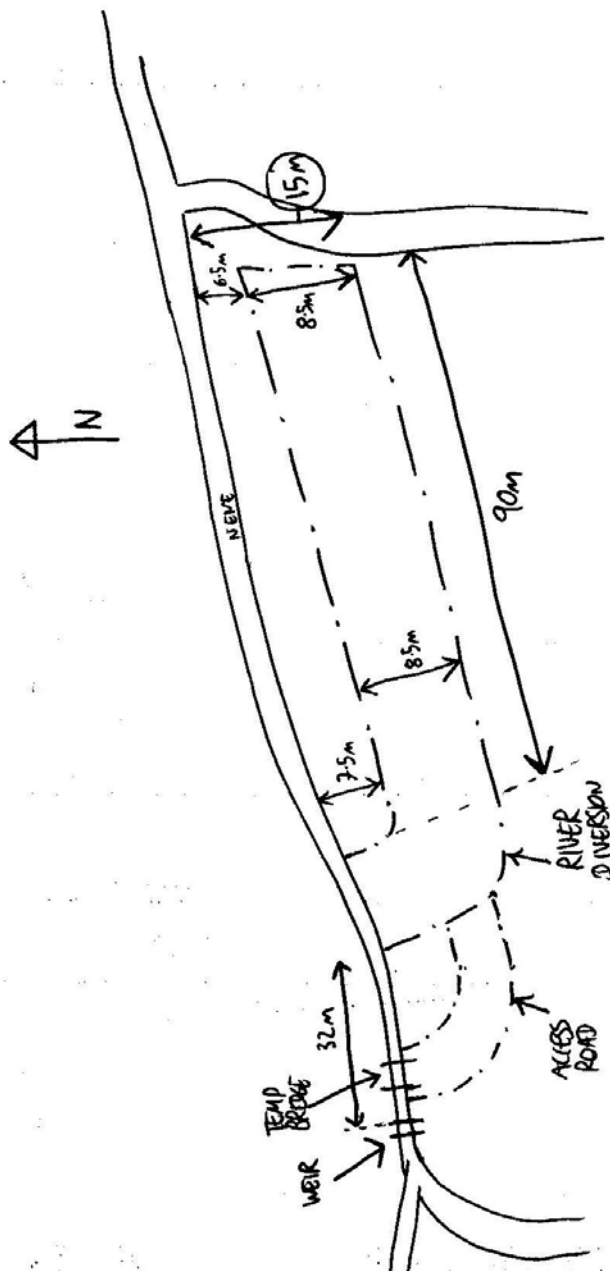
Date	Observations	Comments
7 May 2002	<p>1 - Topsoil removal on the river diversion area (Sketch 1). No archaeological features observed. Topsoil depth 0.40m. Area dimensions 90m x 8.5m.</p> <p>2 - Topsoil removal on the plant access road to the river diversion (Sketch 1). No archaeological features recorded. Topsoil depth 0.40m. Area dimensions c9m x 3m.</p> <p>3 - Topsoil stripping on spoil storage area (Sketch 2) on borrow pond. No archaeological features observed. Topsoil depth 0.40m. Area dimensions 50m x 10m.</p>	The River Diversion area will need to be watched a second time as the alluvium is removed.
8 May 2002	<p>1 – Removal of Alluvial clay and other natural clay layers from the river diversion (Sketch 3). Dimensions of river diversion channel were 8.5m wide at surface, 3m wide at base, 2.8m deep. The length of the channel cut today was 20m. Depth of Alluvium was 1m. No archaeological features recorded</p>	Return tomorrow to observe further excavation through alluvium.
9 May 2002	<p>1 – Continued to observe the cutting of the river diversion. The length of the channel cut today was 56m. Depth of Alluvium was 1m. No archaeological features recorded.</p>	Return tomorrow to observe topsoil stripping around ‘old’ river Nene channel and spoil storage areas on Borrow pit.
13 May 2002	Rain stopped plant from working on site.	Will return tomorrow to observe topsoil stripping around ‘old’ river Nene channel and spoil storage areas on Borrow pit.
14 May 2002	<p>1 – Topsoil stripping on a second spoil storage area in the borrow pit area (Sketch 4). No archaeological features observed.</p> <p>2 – Removal of river silts and undergrowth from the ‘old’ river Nene channel (Sketch 5). No archaeological features recorded.</p>	
16 May 2002	<p>1 – widening of ‘old’ river channel in order to create culvert working area (Sketch 7). Ground surface adjacent to old river channel was 89m OD, the base of culvert working area was excavated to 84.01m OD. The north facing section of the culvert working area (Sketch 8) recorded 4 layers of alluvium (2,3,4 and 5) and two layers of natural subsoil (6 and 7). Layer 8 was recorded below the above layers and was black in colour containing a high organic content and moderate amounts of waterlogged timber. Two pieces of wood were recovered as samples. No archaeological features recorded. Culvert working area was 70mL x 26.5mW x 5mD.</p>	No archaeological features, however layer 8 has the potential to preserve significant environmental remains. None of the timber was worked and all appeared to be natural in origin.
17 May 2002	<p>1 – Work on the culvert working area continued. A 22.5mL x 1.0mW x 1.0mD was excavated at the extreme west of the culvert working area, this was excavated to provide sump to dry out work surface, also afforded excellent opportunity to get a maximum depth for layer 8, which was 0.20m in the north facing section of culvert working area and 1.00m in the south facing section, There was a distance of 22.5m between these two points.</p>	

Date	Observations	Comments
21 May 2002	1 – topsoil stripping to widen the plant access road from compound to culvert working area, topsoil was not completely removed. No archaeological features recorded. 2 – some minor stripping observed at the extreme west of borrow pit area. No archaeological features recorded.	Will return tomorrow to observe the stripping of crane pad adjacent to 'old' river course. This pad should be 20m x 20m.
22 May 2002	1 – topsoil stripping for crane pad. In reality each of the four-foot pads for the crane was 2m x 2m. No archaeological features recorded.	
30 May 2002	1 – the excavation of 8 test pits in Borrow pit area (Fig. 5). These were excavated to depths varying from 3.5m to 3.8m. They ceased excavation once the clean blue natural subsoil was reached. See Appendix 4 for depth of deposits in individual test pits. No archaeological features recorded. Test pit 8 contained layer 8, and was also the closest test pit to the culvert working area. Test pits 9 and 10 were abandoned at this point as they were even closer to the culvert working area and the clay in this area was not considered worth testing.	
5 June 2002	1 – cutting of drainage channel through topsoil and alluvium west side on dam area south field (Sketch 14). This was 100mL x 0.8mW x 1.15mD. Topsoil depth was 0.30m, alluvium depth was 0.75m to 1.05m. Fieldwalked the south field of dam area – no finds retrieved. No archaeological features recorded.	
17 June 2002	1 – Topsoil stripping southern field Dam area. Topsoil varied from 0.40m to 0.30m as the stripping continued south, up the slope away from the valley bottom and the river Nene. No archaeological features recorded.	
18 June 2002	1 – Topsoil stripping southern field Dam area. No archaeological features recorded.	
19 June 2002	1 – Topsoil stripping southern field Dam area. Excavated and recorded Ditch [11] (Sketch 9), this was ditch aligned broadly east west c1m north of an existing field boundary in the southern field of the dam area (Fig. 3).	Forthcoming works include topsoil stripping on Borrow pit area and North field Dam area.
21 June 2002	1 - Topsoil stripping spoil storage area west of borrow pit. No archaeological features observed.	Borrow pit strip should start next week.
24 June 2002	1 – Topsoil stripping spoil storage area. Ditch [13] (Sketch 10 and 11) excavated, this was aligned north-south matched the alignment of a hedgerow in adjacent field. Fieldwalked the borrow pit area – no finds retrieved. Photographs taken of post medieval agricultural building on northern boundary of Borrow Pit. No archaeological features recorded.	
25 June 2002	1 - Topsoil stripping spoil storage area. No archaeological features recorded. 2 – Topsoil stripping on the north field dam area. Slot excavated through layer 14, this is most likely to be alluvium (Sketch 12 and 13). No archaeological features recorded.	
26 June 2002	1 - Topsoil stripping spoil storage area. No archaeological features observed. 2 – Topsoil stripping in Borrow Pit area. On post medieval land drain excavated, ceramic drain still present.	Will return to monitor Borrow pit area on Fri 28 June.
28 June 2002	1 – topsoil stripping central area of Borrow Pit area. 120m x 80m stripped today	Will return 1 July to see remainder of borrow pit stripped.

Date	Observations	Comments
1 July 2002	1 – Topsoil strip on eastern end of borrow pit. Topsoil strip on eastern end of borrow pit 2 – Topsoil strip on western extension of borrow pit. Topsoil strip on eastern end of borrow pit 3 – Quarrying of alluvium in western end of borrow pit. Topsoil strip on eastern end of borrow pit	
1 July 2002	4 - Topsoil stripping north field dam area. No archaeological features observed.	
2 July 2002	1 – Topsoil strip north field dam area. No archaeological features observed.	
3 July 2002	1 – Topsoil strip north field dam area. No archaeological features observed.	
9 July 2002	Final topsoil strip Borrow Pit. No Archaeological features observed	All topsoil stripping on the Dam area, borrow pit and spoil storage areas is now finished.

Appendix 2: Selected Sketches from Field Monitoring Sheets

Sketch 1

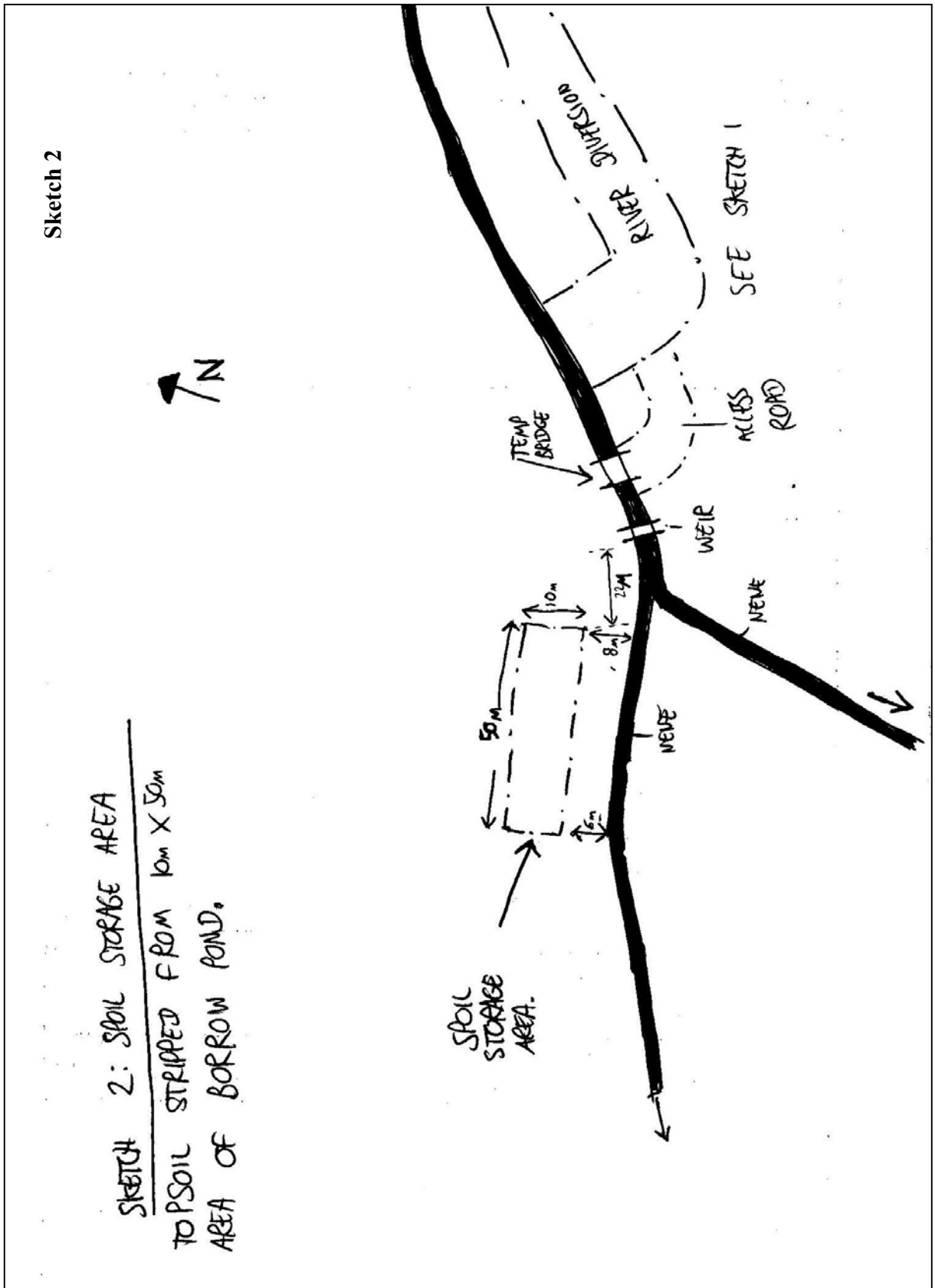


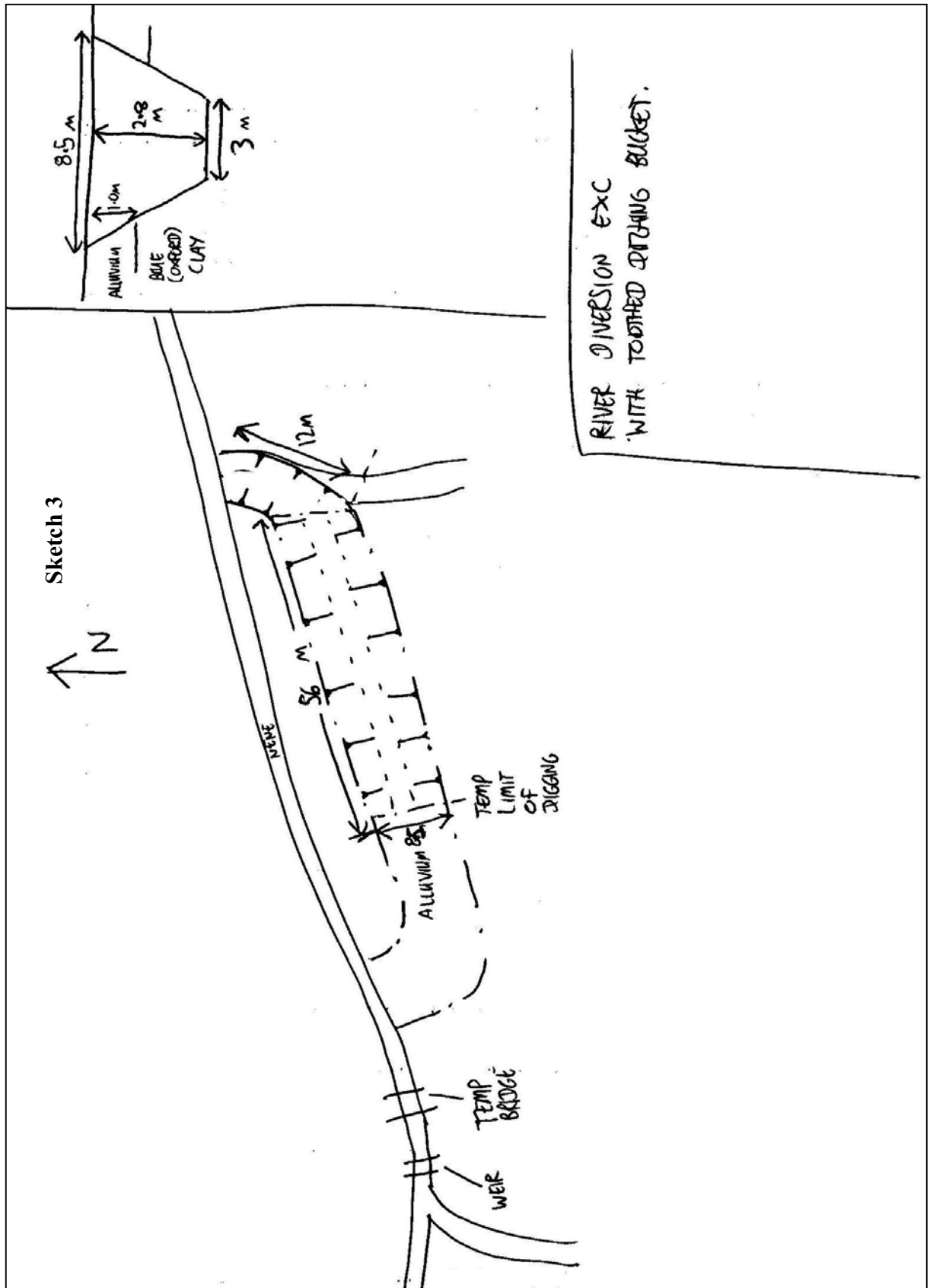
SKETCH 1: RIVER DIVERSION (TOPSOIL STRIP)

THE RIVER DIVERSION WILL BE RE-EXC ON 8/5/02, TO A DEPTH OF 2.5m.

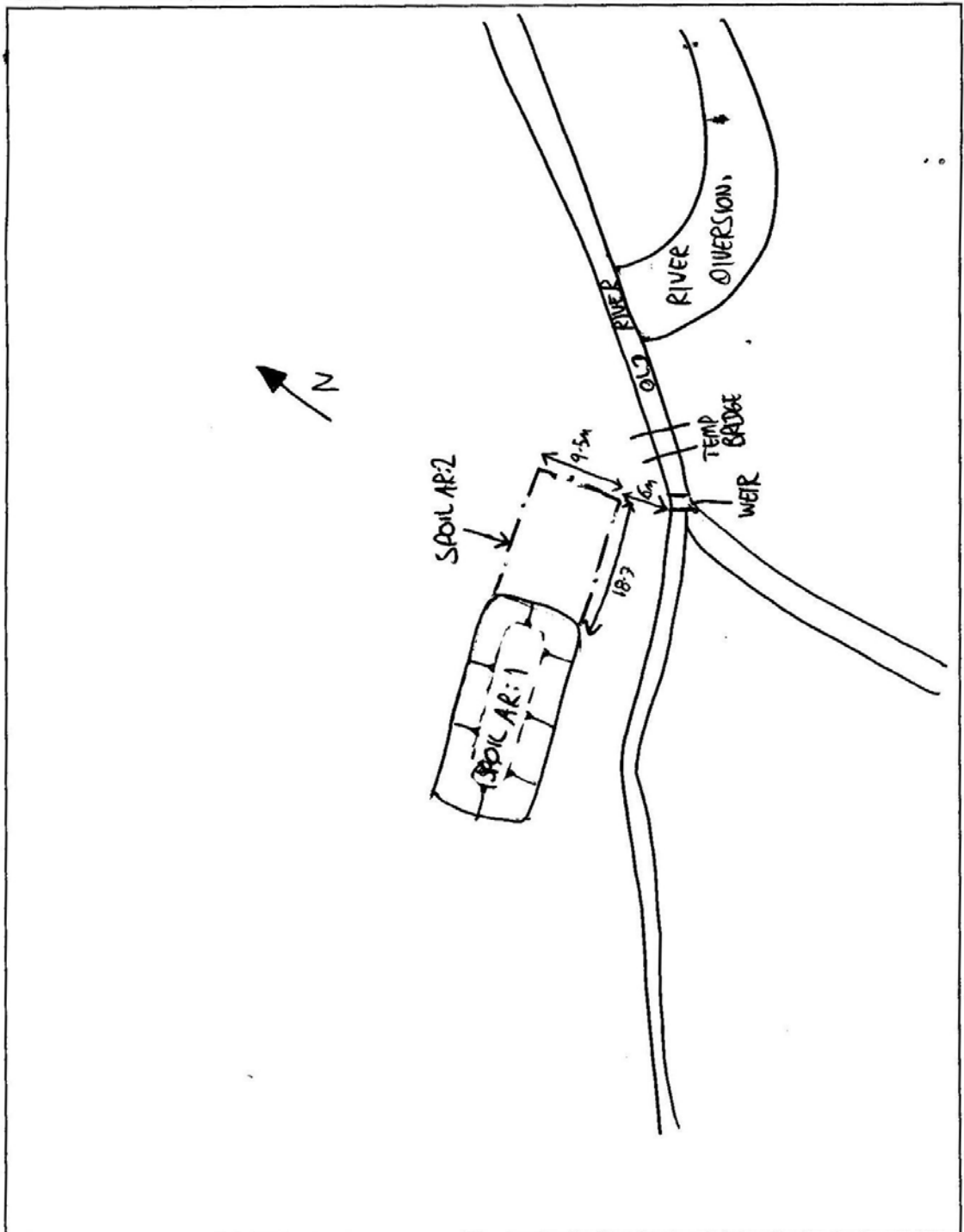
NOTE - TOOTHBUCKS BUCKET USED ON RIVER DIVERSION;

- TOOTH BUCKET WAS USED ON ACCESS ROAD - REST OF MACHINING WILL BE DONE WITH FLAT BLADED DITCHING BUCKET.





Sketch 4

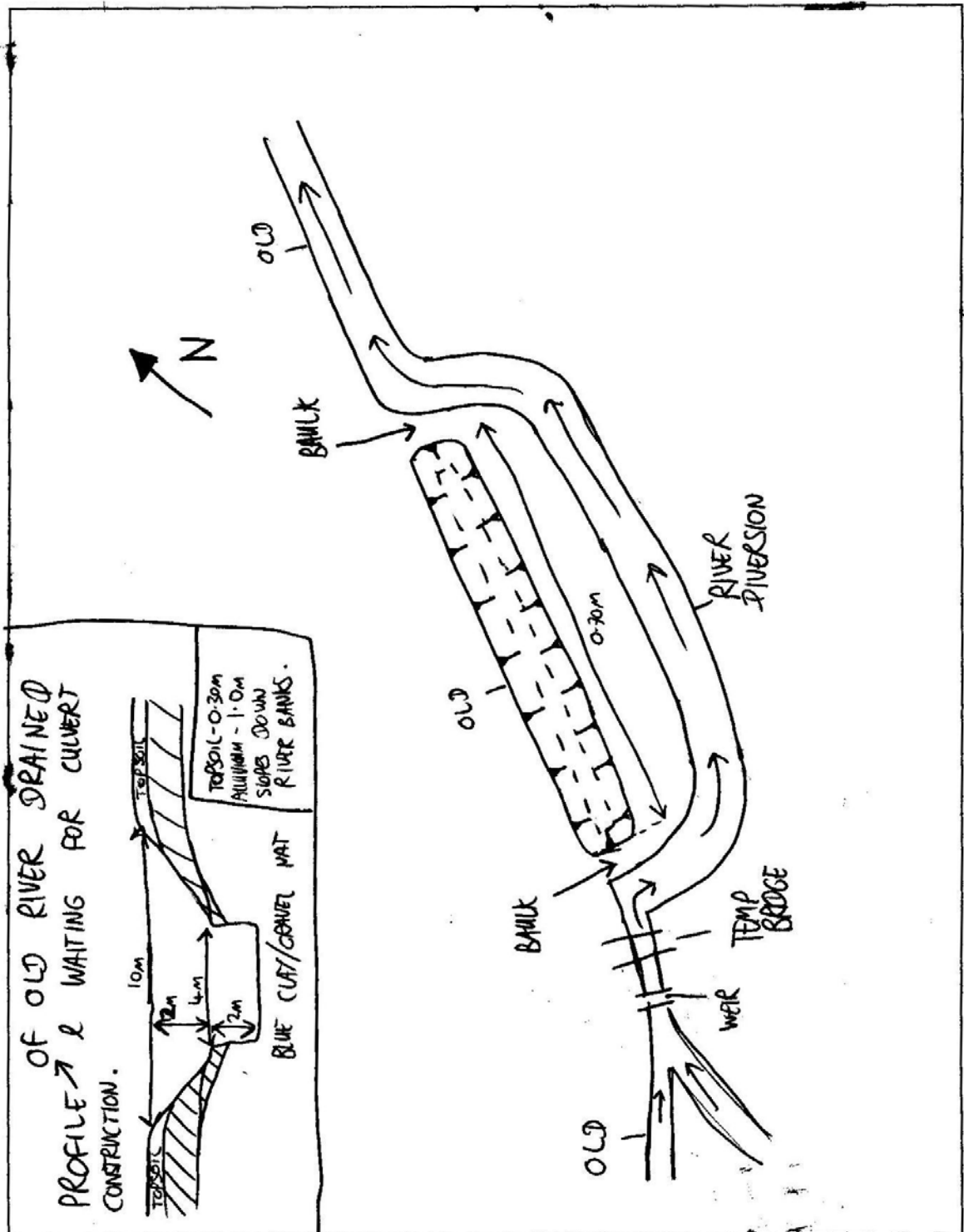


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Sketch 5

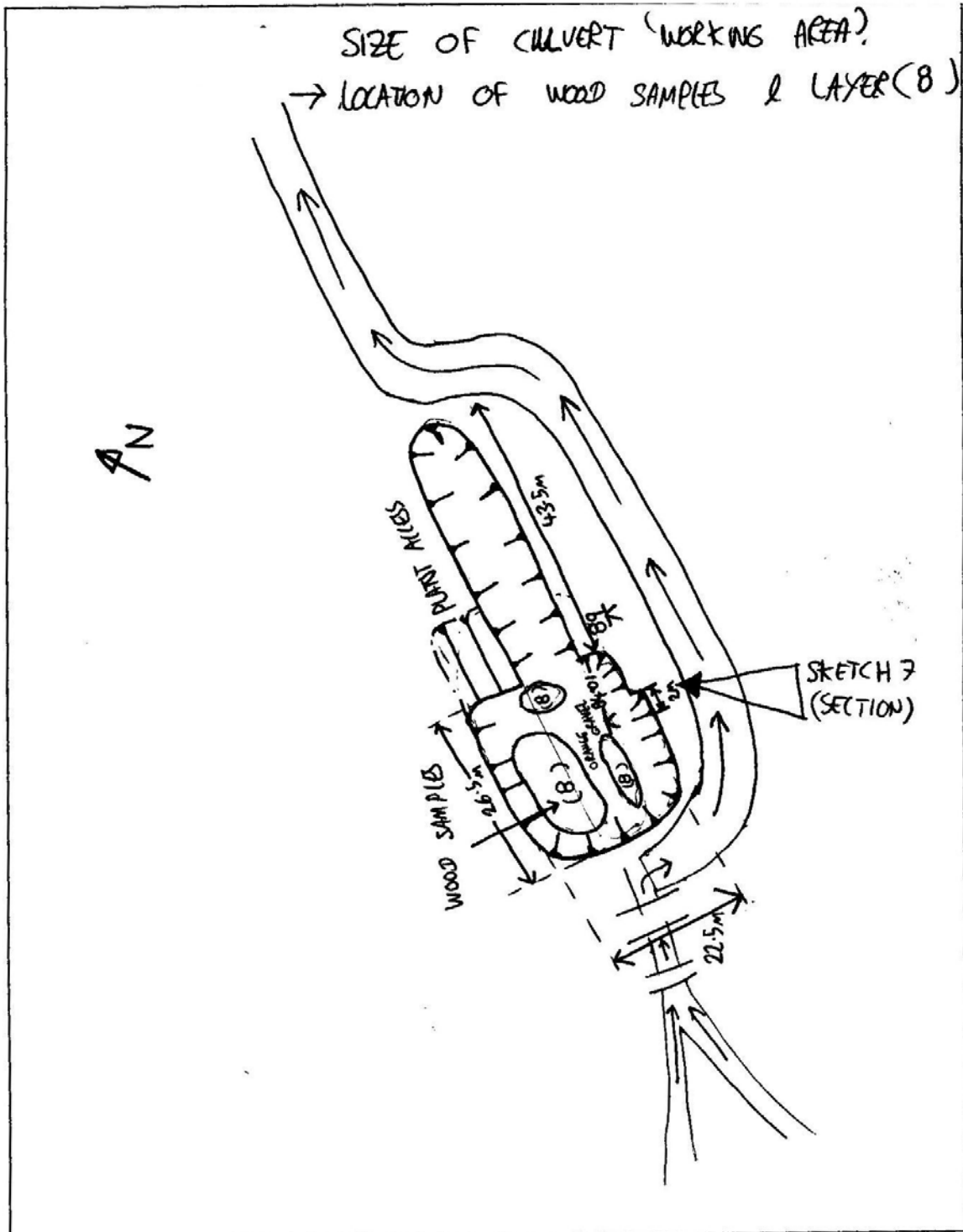


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Sketch 6

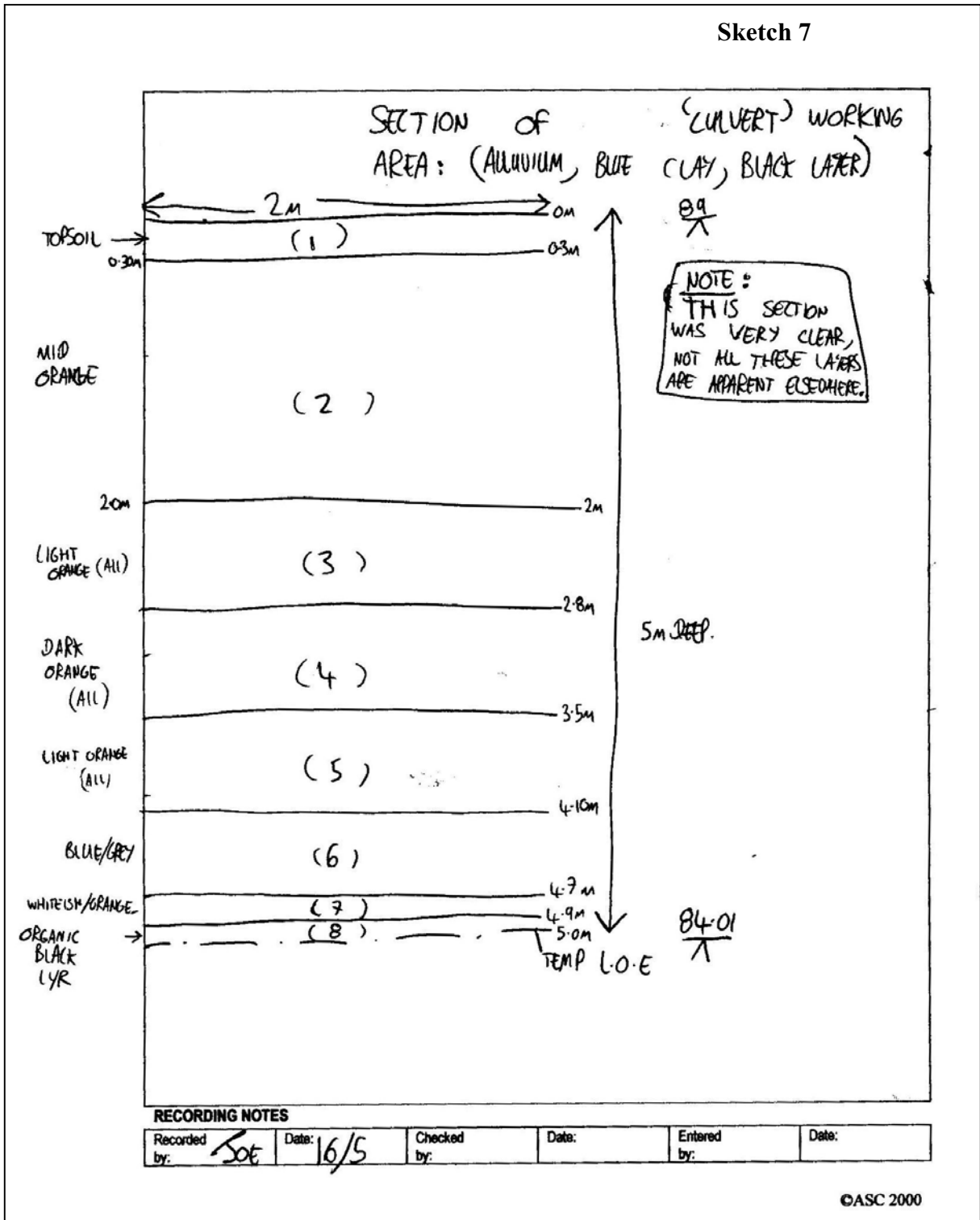


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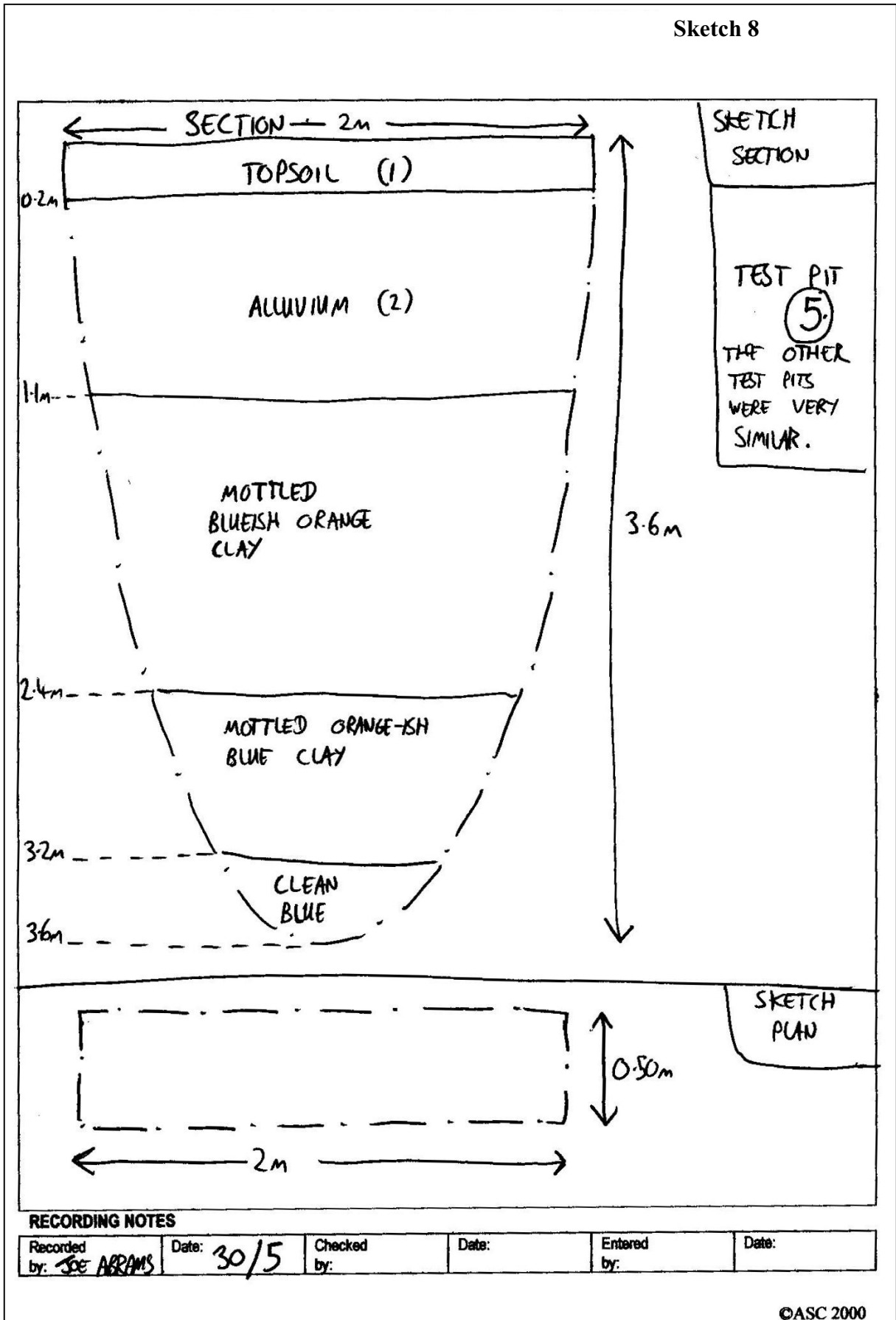
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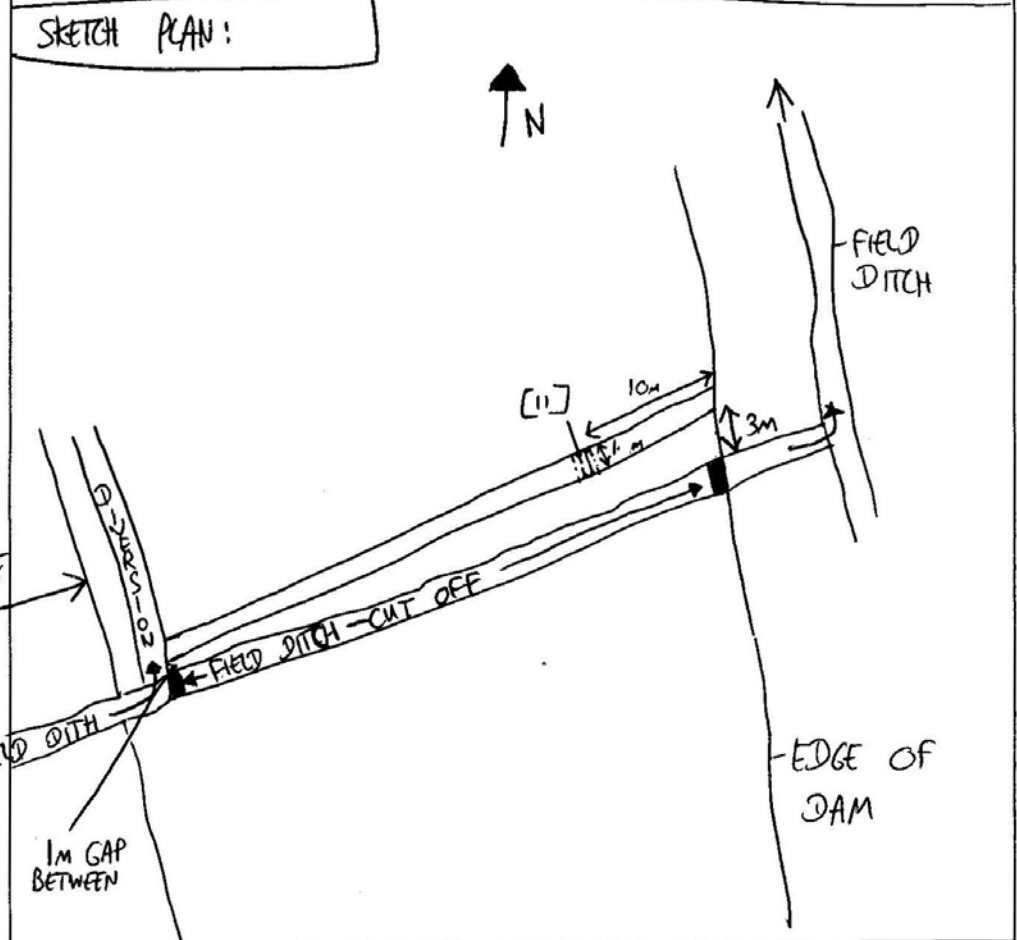
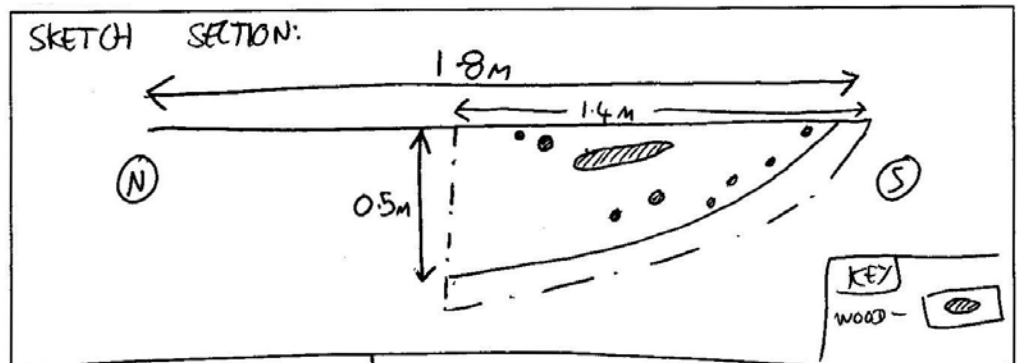
Sketch 7



Sketch 8



Sketch 9

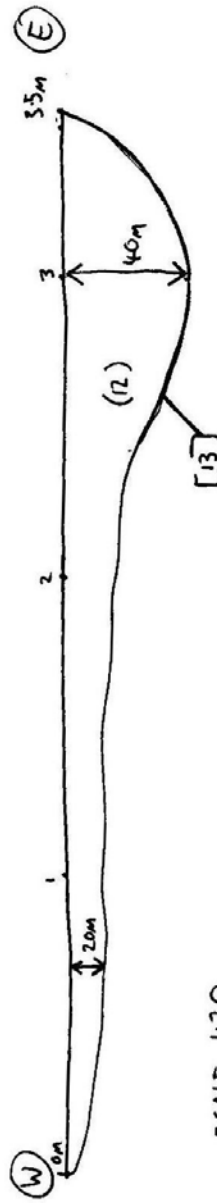


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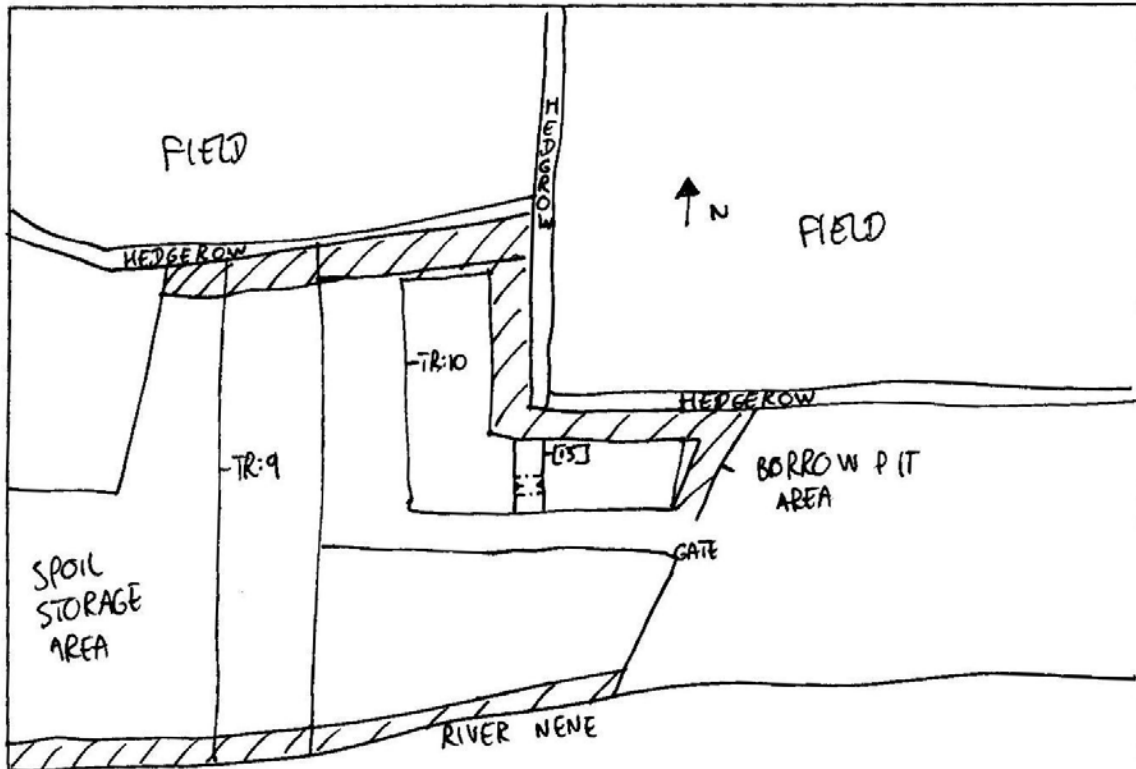
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Sketch 10



SCALE 1:20
SA 24/6
TR:10
FDW01

Sketch 11



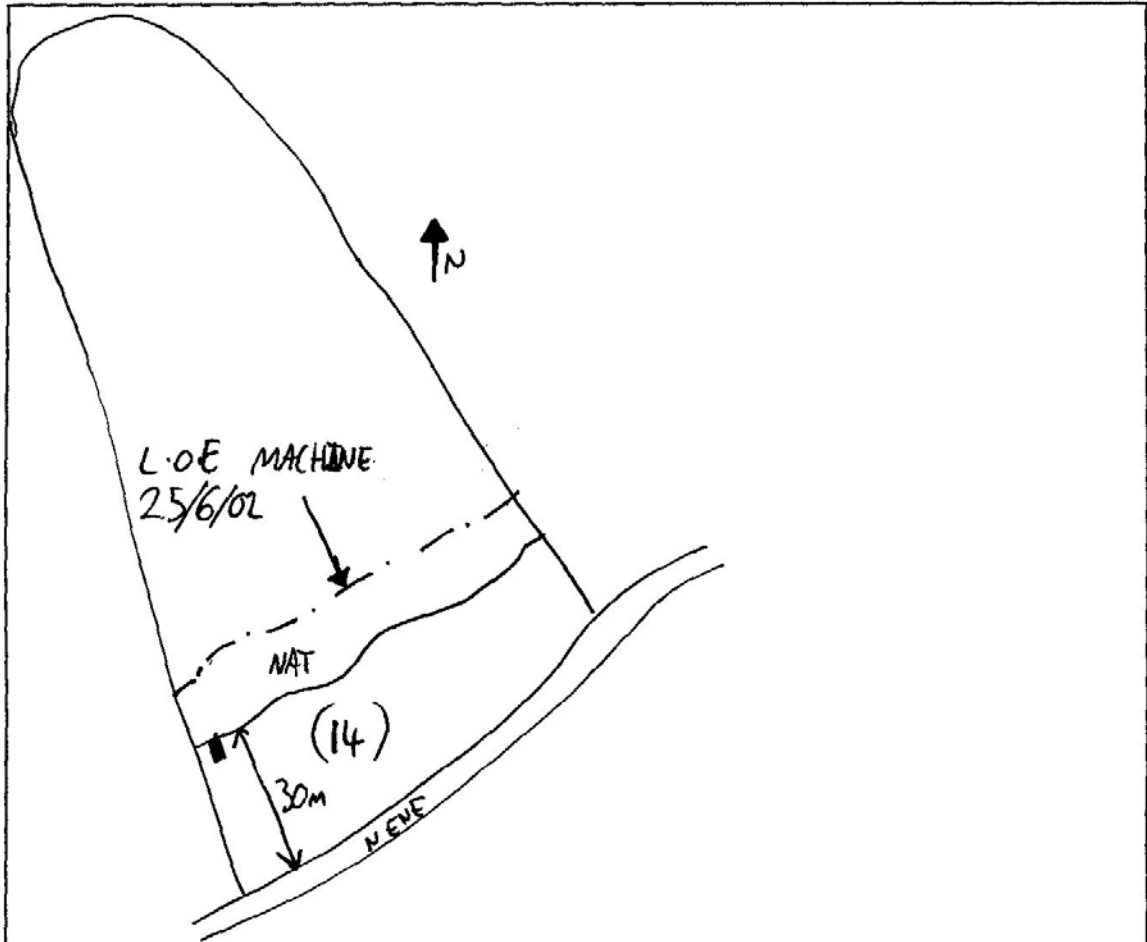
DITCH [13] WAS PERFECTLY ALIGNED WITH HEDGEROW & FIELD BOUNDARY RUNNING N-S IMMEDIATELY NORTH OF TR:10. IT IS HIGHLY LIKELY THIS FIELD BOUNDARY USED TO EXTEND SOUTH.

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Recorded by: SOE	Date: 24/6	Checked by:	Date:	Entered by:	Date:
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Sketch 12

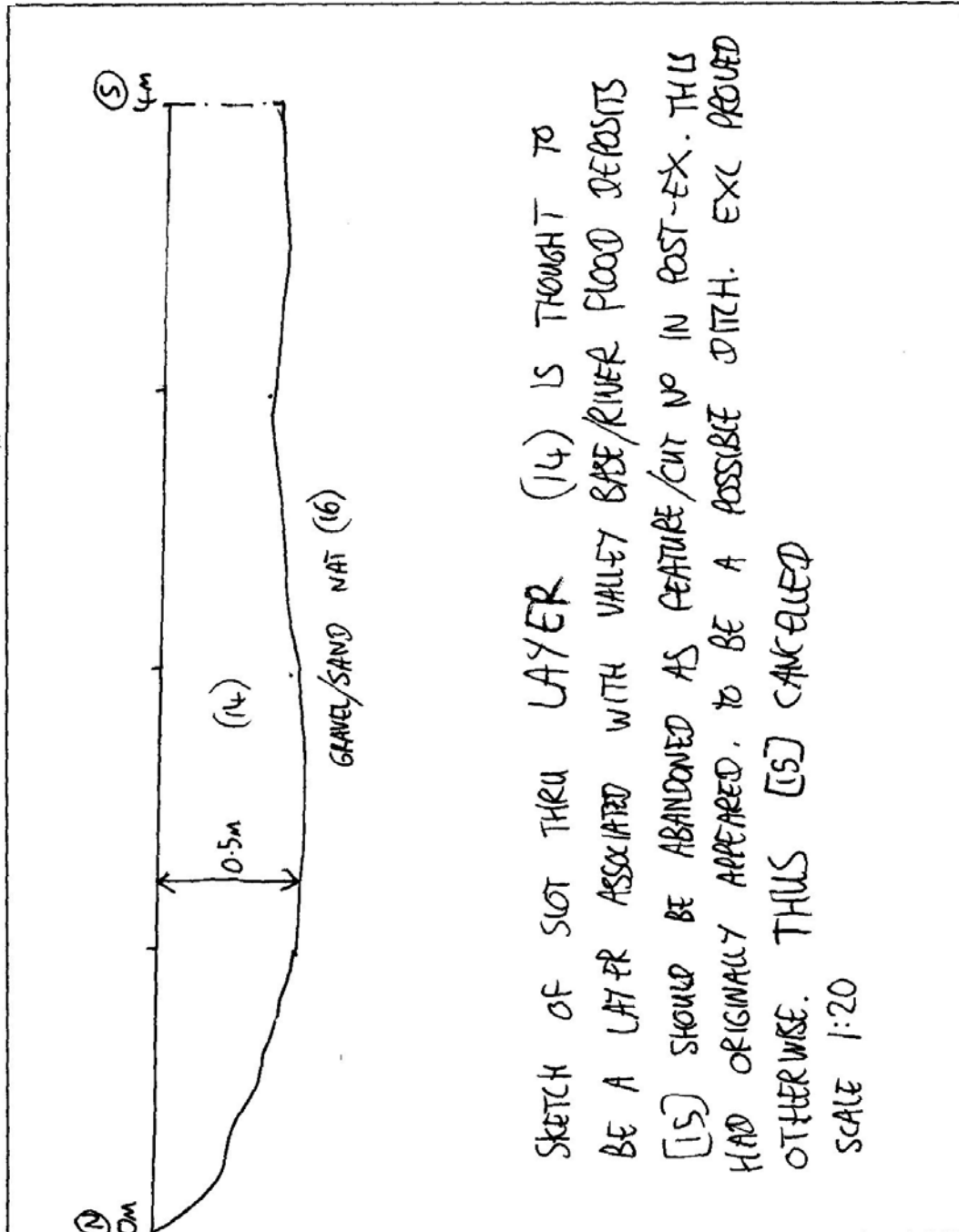


SKETCH DURING MACHINE STRIP
 OF NORTH FIELD DAM AREA.
 4M X 0.5M SLOT EXC THRU
 LAYER (14). LIKELY TO BE
 LAYER ASS WITH RIVER.

RECORDING NOTES

Recorded by: SOE	Date: 25/6/02	Checked by:	Date:	Entered by:	Date:
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Sketch 13



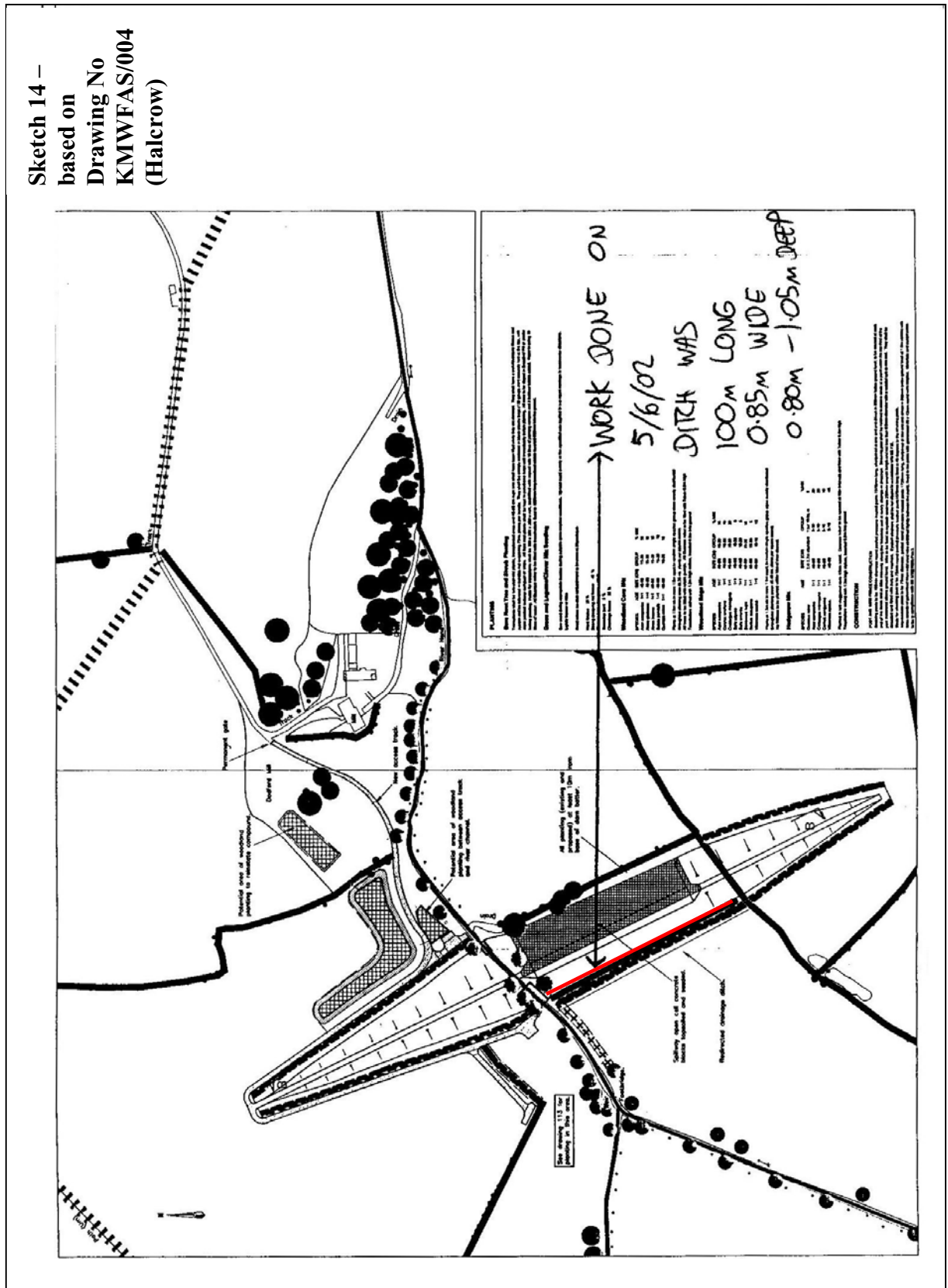
SKETCH OF SLOT THRU LAYER (14) IS THOUGHT TO BE A LAYER ASSOCIATED WITH VALLEY BASE/RIVER FLOOD DEPOSITS [15] SHOULD BE ABANDONED AS FEATURE/CUT NO IN POST-EX. THIS HAD ORIGINALLY APPEARED, TO BE A POSSIBLE DITCH. EXC PROVED OTHERWISE. THIS [15] CANCELLED
SCALE 1:20

RECORDING NOTES

Recorded by: /soe	Date: 25/6/02	Checked by:	Date:	Entered by:	Date:
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Sketch 14 –
based on
Drawing No
KMWFAS/004
(Halcrow)



Appendix 3: Context Summary

Context	Type	Description	Dimensions/ thickness of deposit (m)
1	Layer	Topsoil	0.40m
2	Layer	Alluvium	1m – 1.7m
3	Layer	Alluvium	0.80m
4	Layer	Alluvium	0.70m
5	Layer	Alluvium	0.60m
6	Layer	Natural clay subsoil	0.60m
7	Layer	Natural clay subsoil	0.20m
8	Layer	Layer containing organic material especially waterlogged wood	0.20m – 1.0m
9		CANCELLED	
10	Deposit	Fill of [11]	0.5m
11	Cut	Ditch cut	0.5m
12	Deposit	Fill of [13]	0.4m
13	Cut	Ditch cut	0.4m
14	Layer	Alluvium	0.5m
15		CANCELLED	
16	Layer	Natural subsoil	

Appendix 4: Depth of Deposits Test Pits 1 – 8, Borrow Pit

Test Pit No	Depth of topsoil	Depth of alluvium	Total depth of Test Pit
1	0.20m	0.9m	3.5m
2	0.20m	0.9m	3.5m
3	0.20m	0.9m	3.5m
4	0.20m	0.9m	3.5m
5	0.20m	0.9m	3.5m
6	0.20m	0.9m	3.7m
7	0.20m	1.6m	3.5m
8	0.20m	1.4m	3.8m

Note – the depths of the various natural subsoil layers below the alluvium are recorded in the site archive.