

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT:

**24 CHURCH STREET, ELSHAM,
NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE**

Planning Reference PA/2008/0560
NGR: TA 03617 12517
AAL Site Code: ELCS 10
North Lincolnshire Site Code: ELAS
OASIS Reference Number: allenarc1-72551



Report prepared for Mr Craig Leaning

By
Allen Archaeology Limited
Report Number 2010006

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Summary

- An intermittent archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the groundworks for a new double garage on land at 24 Church Street in Elsham, North Lincolnshire.
- There is limited evidence of prehistoric and Romano-British activity near to the site, and an Anglo-Saxon cremation cemetery has been excavated to the east. A medieval priory and hospital was established in the village in the 12th century. Its exact location is not known, although a number of burials found during groundworks c.80m to the west are likely to be associated with the priory/hospital site.
- The watching brief involved the inspection of the excavated footings for the new double garage, exposing a number of small pits and post holes containing pottery of medieval and post-medieval date.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Allen Archaeology Limited (hereafter AAL) was commissioned by Mr Craig Leaning to carry out an intermittent archaeological watching brief during the groundworks for a new double garage on land at 24 Church Street in Elsham, North Lincolnshire.
- 1.2 The excavation, recording and reporting conforms to current national guidelines, as set out in the Institute for Archaeologists '*Standards and guidance for archaeological watching briefs*' (IfA 1994, revised 2001 and 2008). All appropriate English Heritage guidelines on archaeological practice were also followed (www.helm.org/server/show/nav.7740) as well as the methodologies set out in the AAL specification (Clay 2010).
- 1.3 The documentary and physical archive will be submitted to North Lincolnshire Museum within twelve months of the completion of the report, where it will be stored under the museum site code ELAS.

2.0 Site Location and Description

- 2.1 The proposed development area is situated within the administrative district of North Lincolnshire in the village of Elsham, approximately 14km east-north-east of Scunthorpe. The site is situated to the north-east of the village core, and immediately to the south-west of the Church of All Saints. The site centres on NGR TA 03617 12517 and lies at a height of approximately 35m above Ordnance Datum.
- 2.2 The local geology comprises Ancholme Group Clay, overlain by Blown Sand (British Geological Survey 1983).

3.0 Planning Background

- 3.1 Full planning permission was granted '*to erect a detached domestic garage, covered barbeque area and boundary wall*' at 24 Church Street, Elsham (Planning Application Reference PA/2008/0560). Permission was granted subject to conditions, one of which was for the undertaking of an intermittent archaeological watching brief. The watching brief comprised the inspection of all groundworks for the scheme, and the recording of any archaeological remains exposed, effectively '*preserving the archaeology by record*'. This approach is consistent with the guidelines that are set out in *Archaeology and Planning: Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (1990).

4.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 4.1 Prehistoric activity in the vicinity of the site is restricted to the discovery of a Bronze Age palstave in the 19th century, broadly located in the 1km grid square TA 03 12 (Archaeology Data Service Reference NMR_NATINV-78874 (hereafter ADS)), and a flint scraper and flakes of uncertain date found approximately 1km south-east of the site (ADS Reference NMR_NATINV-78903). Three ditches recorded during the excavations for a gas pipeline c.1km to the south-south-east produced animal bone, a human femur and Iron Age pottery (ADS Reference NMR_NATINV-78896).
- 4.2 A possible cultivation soil containing Romano-British pottery of 2nd century AD or later date has been recorded during a watching brief at 16 Church Street, c.80m to the west of the current site. A small quantity of residual Roman material was also recovered during this fieldwork (AAL forthcoming). The only other evidence of Roman activity nearby is a carinated vessel that

was found in Elsham chalk quarry, c.600m north-east of the site (ADS Reference NMR_NATINV-78856).

- 4.3 Anglo-Saxon activity is well represented in the parish. Just under 1km to the east of the site, excavations in advance of the new A15 exposed a major Anglo-Saxon cemetery, comprising over 600 cremations and four inhumations, dating to the 6th century AD (Sawyer 1998). A single sherd of 5th to 8th century pottery was recovered during monitoring at 16 Church Street, to the west of the site (AAL forthcoming). The place name is also of Old English origin, meaning 'Elli's homestead, estate (Cameron 1998).
- 4.4 In the Domesday Book, four landowners are listed; the Bishop of Bayeux, the Bishop of Lincoln, Roger of Poitou and Geoffrey Alselin (Morgan and Thorn 1986). Subsequently, at some point during the 12th century, land was acquired in Elsham for the construction of a hospital for the poor. This soon developed as a priory and was dissolved in 1536 (ADS Reference NMR_NATINV-78875).
- 4.5 The exact location of the priory is unknown, although a recent watching brief at 16 Church Street (less than 100m to the west) exposed approximately eleven east – west aligned adult inhumations and a possible charnel pit, cutting a cultivation soil of probable Roman date. Although not closely dated, the burials reflect Christian burial practices and were sealed by a late medieval ploughsoil, and are considered very likely to be associated with the former priory and hospital (AAL forthcoming).
- 4.6 Immediately to the north-east of the site is the parish church of All Saints, which has some Norman elements but was extensively rebuilt in 1873-4 (Pevsner and Harris 2002).
- 4.7 The estate of Elsham was acquired by the Corbett family in 1788, who gradually rebuilt and extended an existing 18th century house at Elsham Hall, to the south-west of the village. The Hall also contains a late 18th century orangery, 19th century stables and a walled kitchen garden of 19th century date. The building was extensively remodelled in 1933 by Guy Elwes (Pevsner and Harris 2002).

5.0 Methodology

- 5.1 The inspection of the foundations for the new garage was carried out by Kevin Trott of AAL on Wednesday January 20th 2010. The boundary wall to the site and the new barbecue area had already been completed prior to AAL being commissioned.
- 5.2 The groundworks were carried out on the day prior to the inspection visit, and were excavated using a tracked excavator fitted with a 0.8m wide toothless bucket. All exposed plan and section surfaces were inspected for any archaeological features and deposits to determine the stratigraphic sequence. Each context was recorded on pro-forma AAL context record sheets, accompanied by plan and section drawings at appropriate scales. A photographic record was maintained in both colour slide and monochrome formats, with selected digital shots included as an appendix to this report (see Appendix 1).
- 5.3 Each deposit, layer or cut was allocated a unique identifier (context number), and accorded a written description, a summary of these are included in Appendix 2. Two digit numbers within square brackets reflect cut features (e.g. pit [06]).

6.0 Results (Figures 2 – 3)

- 6.1 The uppermost deposit recorded throughout the site was a modern topsoil layer of dark grey silty clay, 01, deposited by the current landowner approximately five years ago. This sealed a thin layer of a former topsoil or ploughsoil, 03, which contained two sherds of 19th/20th century Transfer Printed Ware, and a sherd of 18th century Nottingham Stoneware. This in turn sealed a c.0.2m thick grey/brown sandy silt, 04, containing frequent poorly sorted chalk rubble. At the base of the stratigraphic sequence was the natural geology, a yellow/brown sand, 05. Towards the north-west corner of the site, where it was sealed directly by modern topsoil 01, the natural sand was of a mottled grey/brown hue, 02.
- 6.2 Layer 04 was cut by a single steep-sided pit or posthole, [08], containing a brown silty sand fill, 09, with a single sherd of 16th to 17th century Toynton/Bolingbroke Ware. Two further features were sealed by layer 04; a wide shallow pit [06], measuring c.2.2m wide and 0.2m deep and a steep-sided pit or posthole, [10], approximately 0.7m wide and 0.25m deep. Both contained similar fills of dark brown silty sand, 07 and 11 respectively. Each contained a single sherd of pottery – a 12th/13th century North Lincolnshire Early Medieval Shelly Ware from 07, and a sherd of 10th to 12th century Lincolnshire Fine-shelled Ware from 11.

7.0 Discussion and Conclusion

- 7.1 The watching brief exposed two features of probable medieval date, although the dating evidence was tentative, being based on a single small sherd from each feature. These features offer little interpretive potential, other than to reflect probable medieval activity in the area, potentially related to the postulated Elsham Priory. Evidence for this priory may have recently been identified c.80m to the west of the site at 16 Church Street. Here a number of burials were recorded, as well as a possible charnel pit and robber pits for structures of medieval date (AAL forthcoming).
- 7.2 The two features were sealed by layer 04, which contained frequent poorly sorted chalk rubble. This may possibly be demolition rubble from the abandonment and disuse of the priory buildings during the Dissolution in the mid 16th century, although there was no absolute dating evidence available to confirm this.
- 7.3 Layer 04 was cut by a pit containing a single 16th/17th century pottery sherd. Again, dating a feature based on a single sherd is somewhat tentative, although it provides a broad date for the feature and a *terminus ante quem* (the latest time the event may have happened) for the layer through which it is cut.
- 7.4 The sequence accords well with that identified at 16 Church Street to the west (AAL forthcoming), where the medieval burials and other features were sealed by a late medieval soil horizon, which also contained frequent chalk rubble.

8.0 Effectiveness of Methodology

- 8.1 The intermittent watching brief methodology was appropriate to the scale and nature of the development. It has identified the presence of a small number of features of limited archaeological significance, producing dating evidence of medieval to post-medieval date.

9.0 Acknowledgements

- 9.1 Allen Archaeology Limited would like to thank Mr Craig Leaning for this commission.

10.0 References

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11.0 Site Archive

- 11.1 The documentary and physical archive is currently in the possession of Allen Archaeology Limited. It will be submitted to North Lincolnshire Museum within twelve months of the completion of the project, and will be stored under the museum site code ELAS.

Appendix 1: Colour Plates



Plate 1: General view of the site, looking north-west



Plate 2: Foundation trench section showing pit [06], looking south-west



Plate 3: Foundation trench section showing pit or posthole [10], looking south-east

Appendix 2: Post-Roman Pottery Archive

By Jane Young

context	cname	full name	form type	sherds	vessels	weight	part	action	description	date
03	TPW	Transfer printed ware	large plate	1	1	7	base	discarded	blue transfer print	19th to 20th
03	TPW	Transfer printed ware	large	1	1	3	base	discarded	blue transfer print	19th to 20th
03	NOTS	Nottingham stoneware	bowl	1	1	15	rim	discarded		18th
07	NLEMS	North Lincolnshire Early Medieval Shelly	jar	1	1	32	base		ext soot from 2cm above basal angle upwards; int soot on base only; internal white deposit	mid 12th to early/mid 13th century
09	TB	Toynnton/Bolingbroke	bowl	1	1	11	rim		misfired int oxid glaze; flake	16th to 17th
11	LFS	Lincolnshire Fine-shelled ware	jar ?	1	1	5	BS		flake	late 10th to late 12th

Appendix 3: Context Summary List

Context No.	Type	Description	Interpretation
01	Layer	Very dark grey silty clay, occasional modern CBM, plastic. Seals 02 and 03	Modern topsoil. Deposited c. 5 years ago
02	Layer	Mottled grey/brown sand	Natural sand. Same as 05
03	Layer	Dark grey sandy clay, occasional chalk fragments. Sealed by 01	Former topsoil/ploughsoil
04	Layer	Greyish brown sandy silt, frequent poorly sorted chalk rubble. Sealed by 01, seals 05	Soil horizon containing possible demolition material
05	Layer	Yellow/brown sand	Natural sand. Same as 02
06	Cut	Shallow sides and flat base. Contains 07, cuts 05	Wide, shallow pit
07	Fill	Dark brown silty sand. Sealed by 04	Natural silting of [06]
08	Cut	Steep sided, flat base. Contains 09, cuts 04	Pit/posthole
09	Fill	Dark brown silty sand, occasional gravel. Sealed by 03	Natural silting of [08]
10	Cut	Moderately steep sides, flat base. Contains 11, cuts 05	Pit/posthole
11	Fill	Dark brown silty sand. Sealed by 04	Natural silting of [10]

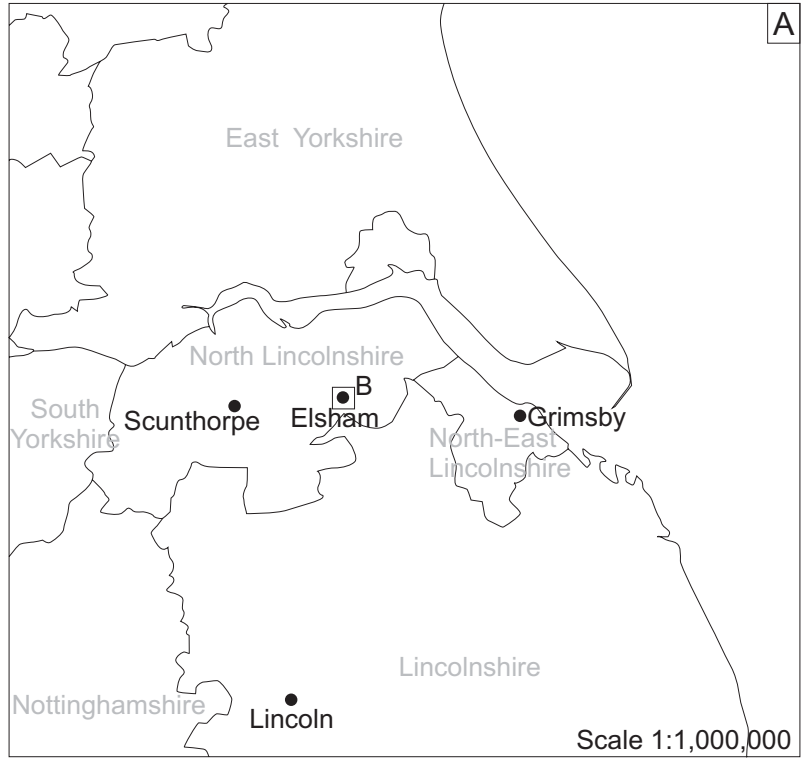
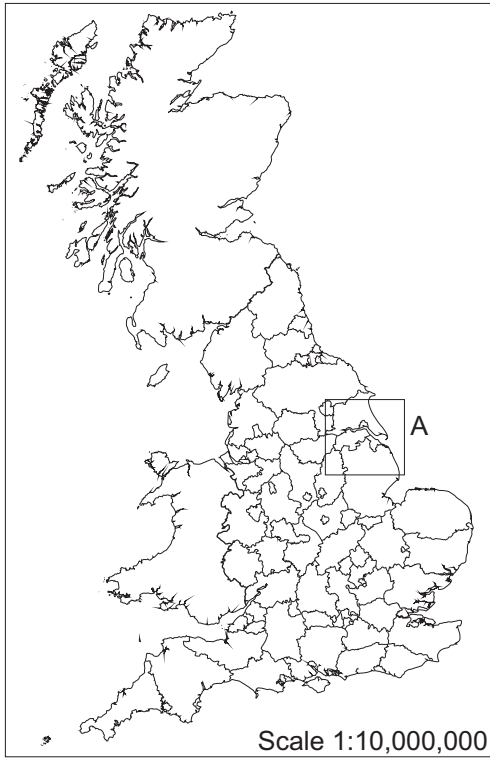


Figure 1: Site location at scale 1:25,000, with site outlined in red
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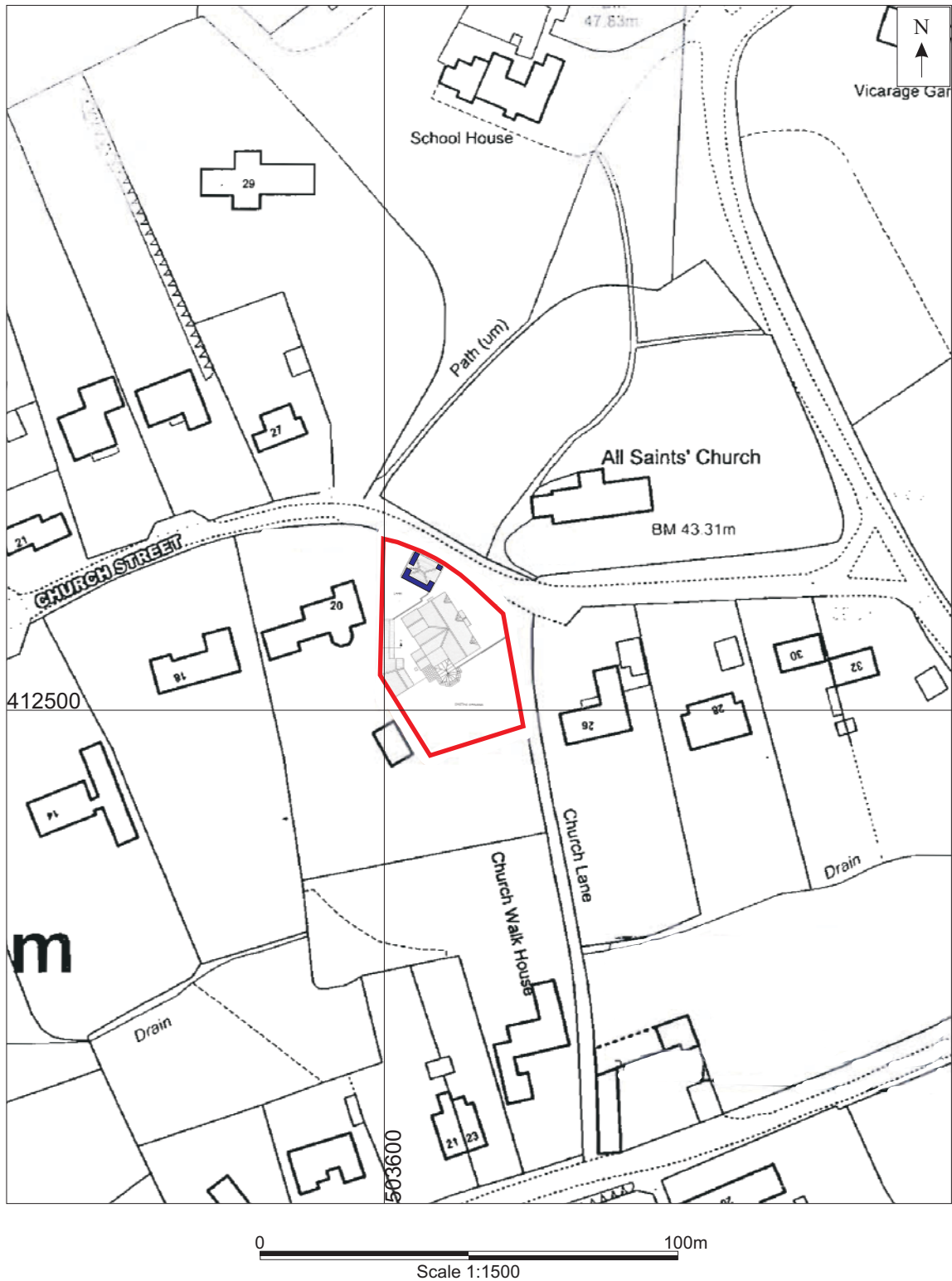


Figure 2: Site location plan at scale 1:1500, with the development area outlined in red. Areas monitored shown in blue

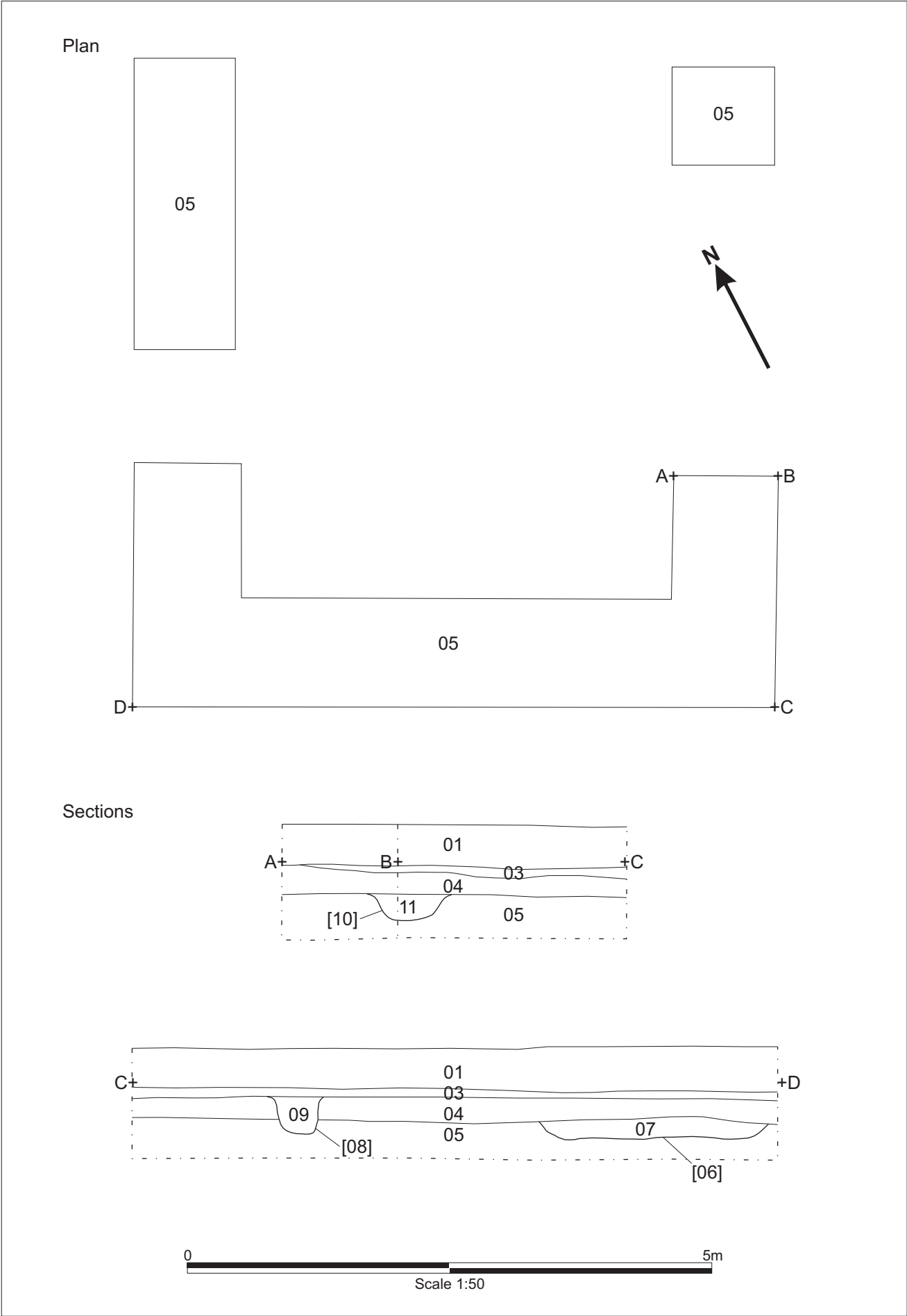


Figure 3: Plan and section of archaeological features at scale 1:50