PLOT ADJACENT TO 'TREETOPS', MERRIFIELD ROAD, WAINFLEET ALL SAINTS, LINCOLNSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

NGR:	TF 5014 5907
Planning Ref.:	S/194/2305/09, S/194/0574/11
Archive acc. no.:	LCNCC: 2012.170
Site code:	STWM12
PCAS job no.:	TBC

Prepared for

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On behalf of Mr. and Mrs. P. Hudson

by

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January 2013

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Summary

An archaeological evaluation consisting of a single trench was undertaken on a plot adjacent to 'Treetops', Merrifield Road, Wainfleet All Saints, Lincolnshire to inform a planning application for the construction of a house with integral single garage.

The archaeological scheme of works was to have taken the form of a monitoring programme during associated groundworks, but the foundation trenches for the building had been excavated without monitoring taking place. The planning condition is now thus to be discharged by the excavation of an archaeological trench on the site, in lieu of the original stipulation.

The archaeological evaluation revealed a series of alluvial episodes within the development area which was devoid of archaeology.

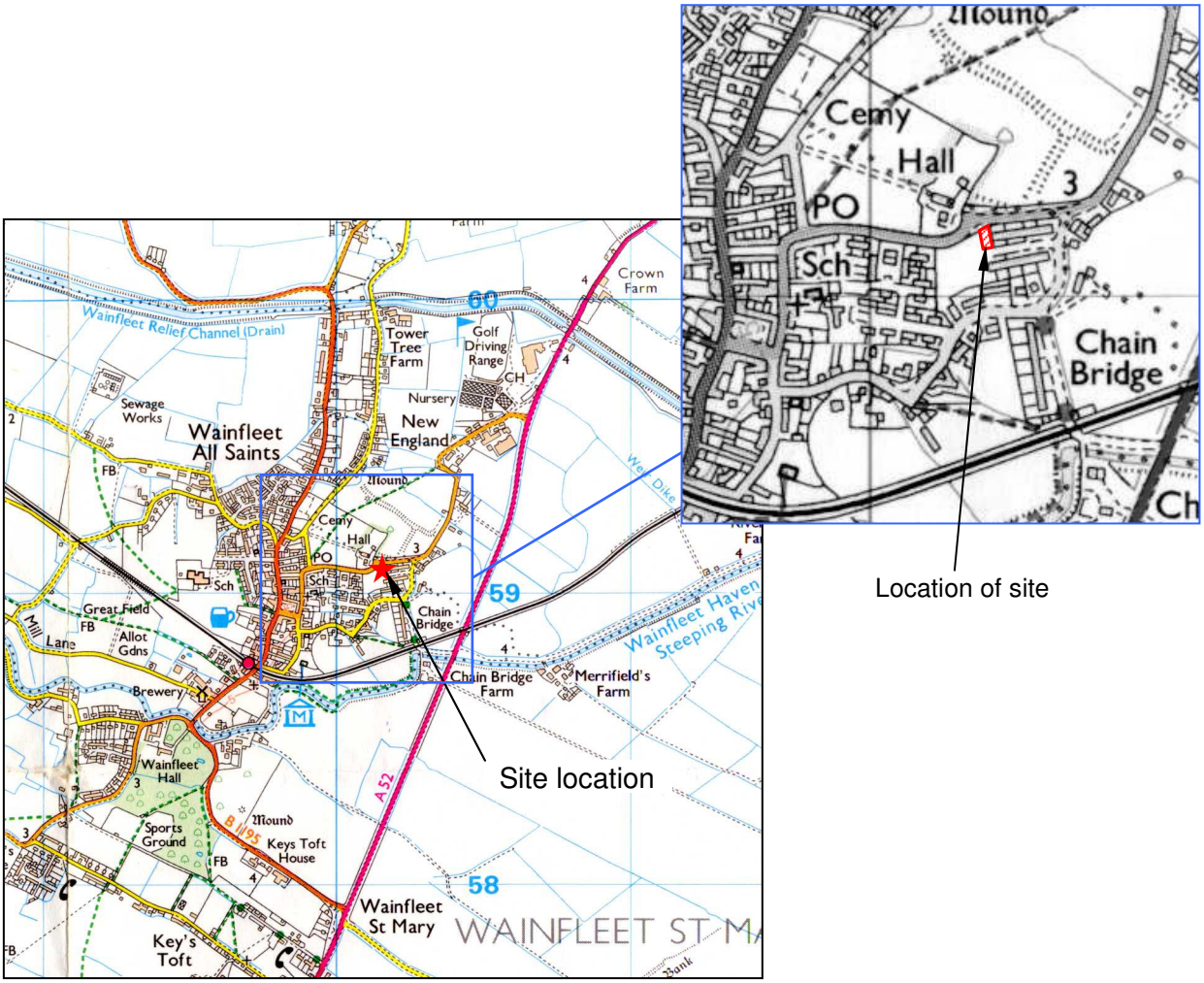

Figure 1: Site location plan at scale 1:25,000, with an enlarged detail plan at scale 1:10, 000. The site is marked in red on both plans. OS mapping © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. PCAS Licence No. 100049278.

1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd (PCAS) was commissioned by M. A. V. Damms, on behalf of Mr. and Mrs. P. Hudson, to carry out an archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to 'Treetops', off Merrifield Road in Wainfleet All Saints. A single 12m long trench was excavated to inform a planning application for the construction of a house with integral garage.

2.0 Location and description (figs. 1 and 2)

The village of Wainfleet All Saints lies in the administrative district of East Lindsey, approximately 6km south-west of the town of Skegness and 4.4km to the north-west of the mean high water mark of the modern coastline. It is positioned on the north bank of the Steeping River, which flows into the North Sea near Gibraltar Point.

The site lies between the old Skegness Road (now supplanted by the A52, which bypasses Wainfleet on the seaward side) and Merrifield Road. It consists of one roughly rectangular plot, adjoined by housing to the east and undeveloped land to the west.

The central National Grid Reference of the site is TF 5014 5907.

3.0 Geology and topography

The drift geology across the site is recorded as silt and clay alluvium; the site lies just on the coastal side of the wide band of Older Storm Beach Deposits on which the greater part of Wainfleet All Saints stands. The underlying solid geology ranges from Cretaceous Roach Formation ferruginous oolitic clay and limestone to Claxby Ironstone Formation ferruginous oolitic clay (BGS, 1996).

The site lies on level reclaimed land, below the 5m AOD contour line.

4.0 Planning background

Outline planning permission for the construction of nine dwellings with associated garages and the formation of a public footpath link to Skegness Road was granted in March 2010 (ref. no. S/194/2305/09).

Full planning permission for the erection of a house with integral single garage on the same site was granted in April 2011 subject to the implementation of a scheme of archaeological works designed to ensure the recording or preservation of any archaeological deposits potentially affected by the construction groundworks (ref. no. S/194/0574/11).

The archaeological scheme was to have taken the form of a monitoring programme during the development groundworks, but the foundation trenches of the building were cut without monitoring taking place. The planning condition is now to be discharged by the excavation of an archaeological trench instread, in lieu of the original stipulation.

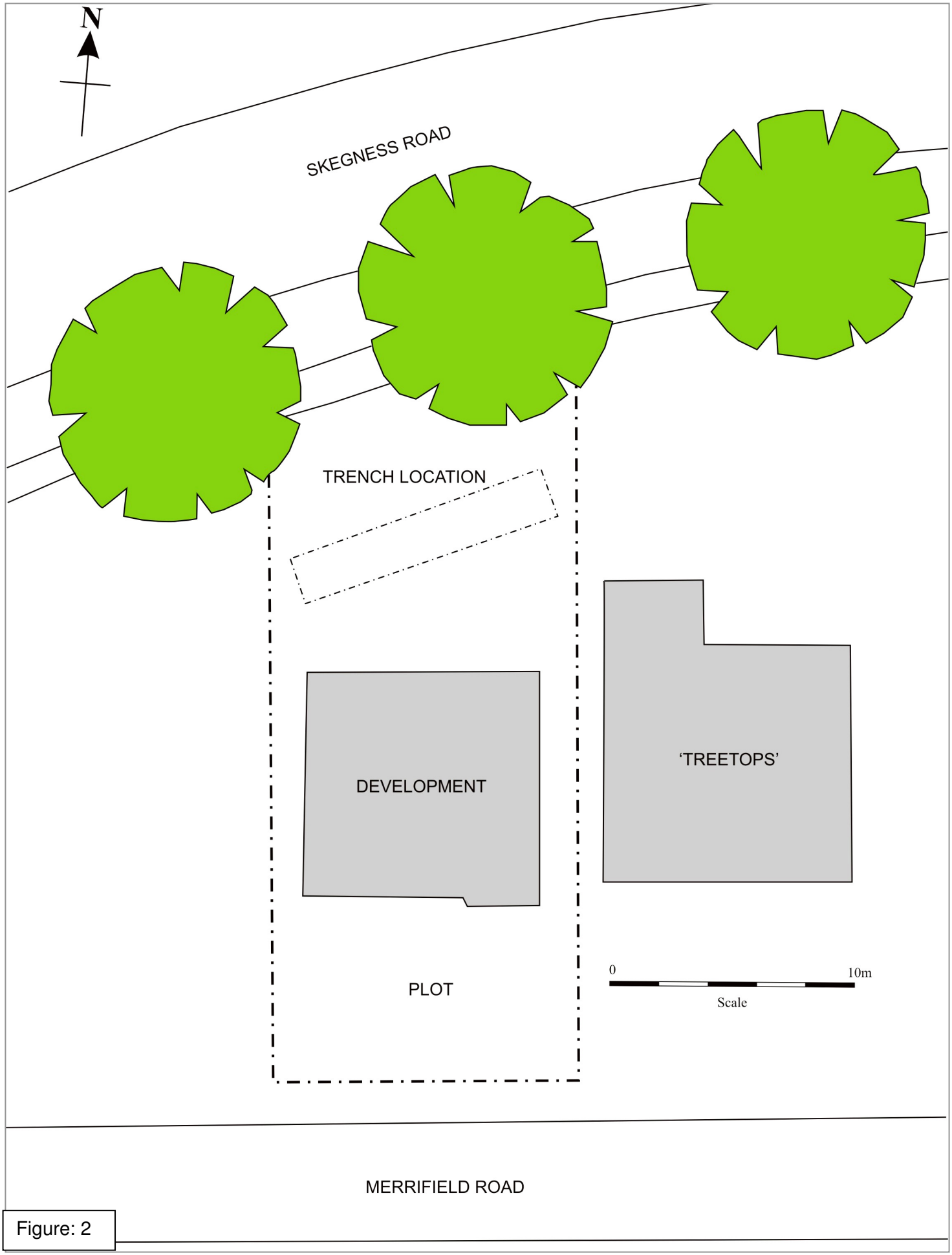
N
SKEGNESS ROAD
TRENCH LOCATION
DEVELOPMENT
'TREETOPS'
PLOT
0
10m
Scale
MERRIFIELD ROAD

Figure: 2

5.0 Archaeological and historical background

The Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record contains no records of sites or findspots pre-dating the Middle Ages within a 250m radius of the development site, and it is likely that the prehistoric and Roman coastline lay to the west of the site and the modern village.

The name *Wainfleet* is of Anglo-Saxon origin, derived from the Old English *wægn*, a wagon, and *fleot*, a creek or stream, indicating that the settlement was founded at a place where traders' or farmers' wagons could ford the River Steeping (Cameron, 1998).

The earliest known reference to any of the Wainfleet villages is in the Domesday Survey of 1086 AD, which records a unified settlement of *Wemflet* or *Wenflet*, divided between five landowners. The lands of the Bishop of Durham, Gilbert of Ghent, Jocelyn son of Lambert and Eudo son of Spirewic had between them a total population of 23 taxable households farming arable and meadow land, and included nine salt-houses; the possessions of the fifth landowner, Earl Hugh, cannot be ascertained, as his holdings in Wainfleet were a detached part of his manor of Greetham, and it is not recorded how much of his extensive lands or how many of his 20 salt-houses were specifically associated with Wainfleet (Williams and Martin, 1992). The existence of a minimum of nine salt works indicates that much of Wainfleet's coastline must have been dedicated to salt production from at least the 11th century AD.

The produce of the medieval salt-houses was transported inland via a network of roads, some roads through the Fens being built for this specific purpose, including the 'Saltergate' from Wainfleet to Fishtoft. Wainfleet also controlled the waterborne trade on the River Steeping: this was exclusively local trade to and from the South Wolds, and so Wainfleet never became a significant Lincolnshire port on the scale of Boston or Torksey (Platts, 1985).

During the Middle Ages, Wainfleet was divided into three parishes, each named after the saint to whom its church was dedicated: all three were administered by local ecclesiastical foundations. The church of Wainfleet All Saints was granted to Bardney Abbey by Philip de Kyme in 1170: the grant is confirmed in a charter of Richard I, and includes a small amount of arable land and an adjoining salt pan within the parish. Wainfleet St. Thomas belonged to Kyme Priory: its church or chapel was gone by the 1650s, and the parish was subsumed into Wainfleet All Saints (Oldfield, 1829).

Wainfleet continued to function as a minor port into the 16th century, but fen drainage programmes diverting local watercourses into the Witham, added to the general accumulation of silt afflicting all the east coast ports, eventually put an end to trade on the River Steeping (Platts, 1985). John Leland's Itinerary, compiled in the mid-16th century, describes *'Wainfleet, which has been a very good town, with two parish churches. Within living memory small boats used to come up as far as the school. But the harbour now is going to ruin'* (Chandler, 1993). Local salt manufacture also declined in the post-medieval period and the construction of a sea bank in 1641, separating the salt-workings from the sea by almost 1km, appears to have put an end to it (Gardner, 2004). A moated manor house was built on the seaward side of Wainfleet All Saints in c. 1549. The house burnt down in 1866, and was replaced on the same site by the present Northolme Hall, but the earthwork remains of its 'moat', actually a double waterway connecting to modern drainage, with other earthworks possibly representing garden features, can still be seen directly to the north of 'Treetops' and the adjacent plot, on the other side of the Skegness Road (HER ref. 41712).

After the construction of the 1641 sea bank, the coastline continued to be pushed back, with a further bank built in each following century. The present position of Wainfleet All Saints is some distance from the original medieval settlement, having migrated towards the coast (the original church of All Saints, left a mile to the west of the modern town, was demolished in 1809, and a replacement built within the town). During the Middle Ages, the local coastline

would have been in the vicinity of the present route of the A52, allowing the highest tides to enter the salt processing works (Gardner, 2004).

6.0 Methodology

A single trench was excavated between the existing house foundations and the earthworks of the former manor house opposite, located on the other side of Skegness Road to the north. The trench measured 12m x 2m (fig. 2 & 3) and was excavated by machine equipped with a 0.75m toothless bucket, removing a 0.2m deposit of hardcore laid down to consolidate the area around the already excavated plot. Subsequent excavation removed topsoil, subsoil and alluvial deposits to a depth of 1.06m whereupon the trench was cleaned by hand and recorded in plan at 1:50 scale and a representative section drawn at 1:20.

7.0 Results (fig 3)

The earliest deposit encountered comprised a clean, mid grey brown natural alluvium (106), sealed by a dense, 0.26m thick deposit of alluvial silt (105) containing fine orange flecks of iron panning, possibly indicative of standing water. This in turn was covered by a thin wash of pale yellow brown silt (104), probably derived from periodic flooding/water logging of the site.

The next phase of deposition appeared to comprise subsoil/alluvial interface (103), covered by subsoil (102) and topsoil (101). The original turf/pasture layer had already been removed and replaced by hardcore (100) during the construction of the footings for the development.

8.0 Discussion and conclusion

The intervention proved negative in terms of locating any indications of the manorial earthworks that are visible beyond Skegness Road encroaching within the development area. The alluvial deposits exposed by the evaluation trench appeared to reflect periodic flooding/inundations, possibly dating from the 16th century when fen drainage programmes were implemented, although no dating evidence was found to support this theory. However, periodic flooding and drainage issues appear to be prevalent within the immediate environs. According to local knowledge, a large 'hollow' situated approximately 100m to the south west used to flood and freeze during winter to such an extent that local children were able to 'skate' on its surface (local resident, *pers.comm*).

9.0 Effectiveness of methodology

Intrusive intervention was an appropriate method of evaluating this small site. The body of data produced will be sufficient to inform the planning process.

10.0 Project archive

Arrangements are currently in progress to deposit the site archive, currently in the custody of PCAS Ltd., at The Collection, Lincoln. An archive accession number has been granted; the projected archive deposition date is February 2013.

11.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd. would like to thank M. A. V. Damms on behalf of Mr. and Mrs. P. Hudson for this commission. Thanks are also due to Jan Allen, Archaeological Adviser to East Lindsey District Council, for her advice during the fieldwork.

12.0 References

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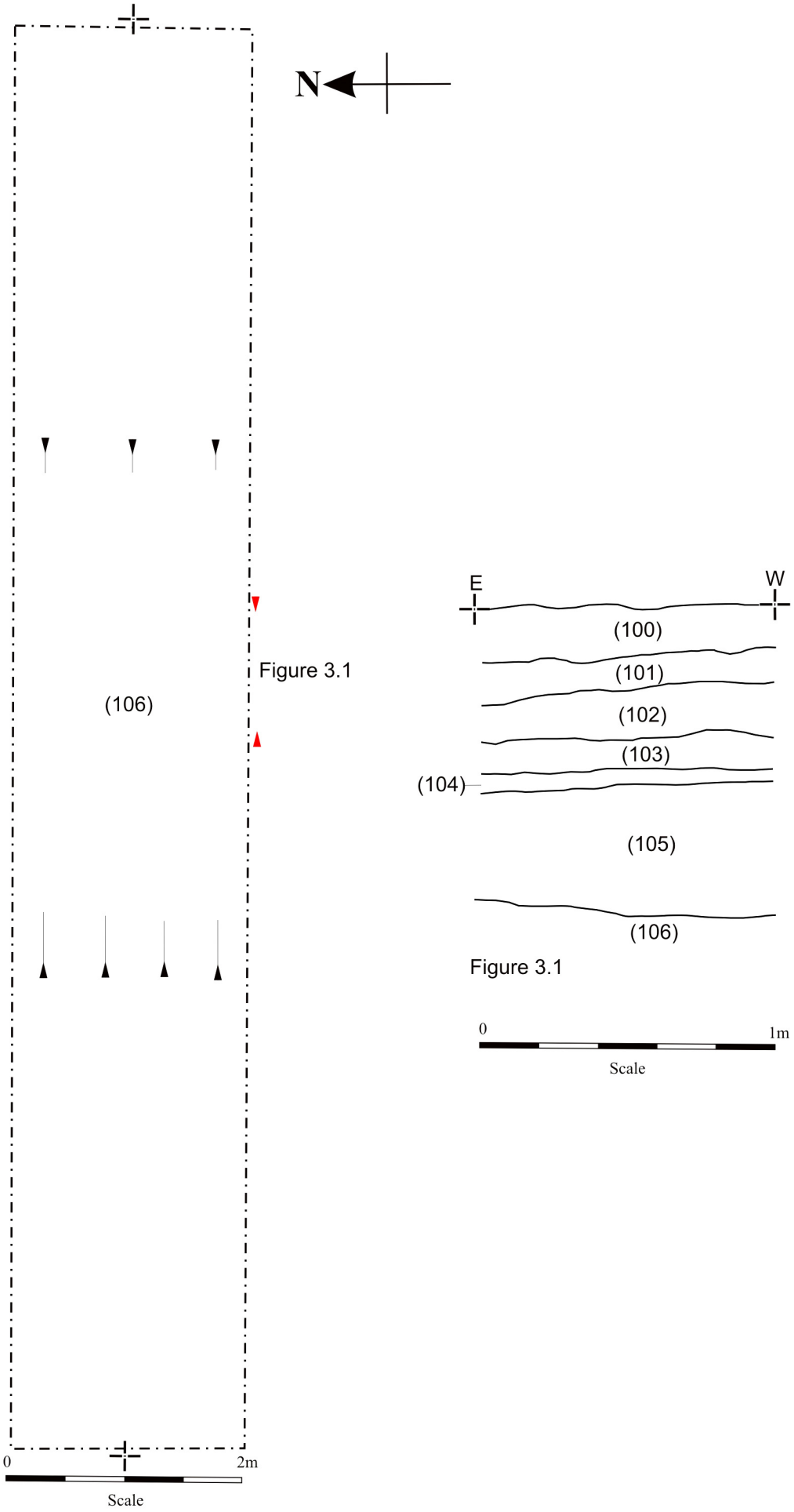

Figure 3: Trench plan and representative section.

Appendix 1: Colour Plates

Plate 1: General location of plot looking north from Merrifield Road.

Plate 2: General location of plot looking north east.

Plate 3: Excavated trench looking north east.

Plate 4: Representative section looking south west.

Appendix 2: Context Summary

Context no.	Type	Description
100	Layer	Hardcore consolidation, 0.2m thick.
101	Layer	Dark brown clay silt topsoil with fine root inclusions, 0.14m thick.
102	Layer	Mid brown clay silt subsoil, 0.2m thick.
103	Layer	Mid brown clay silt with orange mineral staining. Subsoil-alluvial interface, 0.1m thick.
104	Layer	Pale yellow brown silt. Alluvial wash, 0.06m thick.
105	Layer	Mid grey brown alluvium with orange mineral staining, 0.26m thick.
106	Layer	Mid grey brown 'clean' alluvium.