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## Land south of Low Road And East of Forge Lane Halton Lancashire

Archaeological Evaluation

Report No. Y340/18

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East of Forge Lane  
Halton, Lancashire**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

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## **SUMMARY**

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by CFA Archaeology on Land south of Low Road and east of Forge Lane, Halton during February 2018. Nineteen trenches were excavated across the proposed site of a new development in order to evaluate any potential surviving archaeological remains identified by a geophysical survey. There were no archaeological remains other than a lynchet and undated field boundary, though some medieval and post-medieval pottery was recovered.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) during March 2018 on Land south of Low Road and east of Forge Lane, Halton (Fig.1, NGR SD 507 648). The work was commissioned by Orion Heritage on behalf of Story Homes, and was carried out in accordance with a specification produced by Orion Heritage and agreed with Lancashire Archaeological Advisory Services (LAAS). This stage of the work was carried out in advance of the proposed construction of a residential development and associated landscaping.

### **1.1 Site Location and Description**

The development site was bounded by Low Road to the north, Forge Lane to the west and south and residential housing to the east. The development site covered an area of 7ha, consisting of three parcels of pasture land. To the east end of site there was a steep hill to the north and east.

The underlying geology of the site comprised of Pendle grit member of sandstone and siltstone, with underlying superficial deposits of Glaciofluvial deposits of Devensian sand and gravel (BGS 2018)

### **1.2 Historical and Archaeological Background**

The development site is located in the village of Halton in Lancaster. The village has a history dating back to before the Norman and has a church dating from 1190. The remains of an 11th century motte and bailey castle are to the north west of the site.

### **1.3 Previous Archaeological Work**

There has been no previous invasive archaeological work on the development area. A geophysical survey on the site (Sumo 2017) has informed the location of the trenches, which targeted geophysical anomalies identified as plough furrows and possible boundaries (Fig. 1).

An archaeological excavation was undertaken in 2002 (OAN 2002) to the east where a large Mesolithic to Bronze Age flint scatter was found as well as evidence for medieval and post-medieval farming activity.

### **1.4 Project Aims**

In accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation, the primary aim of the evaluation was to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of, and record at an appropriate level, any archaeological remains within the proposed development area.

## 2. WORKING METHODS

CFA Archaeology Ltd is a registered organisation (RO) with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (Cifa). CFA Archaeology follows all relevant Cifa and Historic England Standards and Guidance (Cifa 2014a-b and EH 2008).

Nineteen trenches (each measuring 30 m x 2 m) testing anomalies identified by the geophysical survey, were excavated along with several ‘blank’ areas (Figure 1). All overburden was removed using a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket under continuous archaeological supervision, to expose the uppermost horizon of archaeological remains or natural geology. Sample sieving for pottery and worth flint was also undertaken.

Linear features (ditches and gullies) were sample excavated at a minimum of 10% of their length and a minimum of 1m per section at regular intervals where encountered. Intersections were investigated to establish relationships between features. Pits and post holes were sampled at a minimum of 50%.

Archaeological remains were recorded by means of photographs, drawings and written records conforming to Cifa standards (Cifa 2014a) and CFA’s quality manuals. All features were planned and drawn at appropriate scales. The trenches, section lines and drawing points were surveyed using an industry standard Trimble GPS. The same equipment was used to establish levels above Ordnance Datum for the trenches.

All finds were treated in accordance with relevant guidance (CIFA 2014b). Modern finds were recorded and then discarded.

A summary of the results of archaeological works will be submitted for inclusion in OASIS. The OASIS reference is cfaarcha1-312685

An inventory of the primary archive is listed in the table below, and will be deposited in line with the guidelines of the Lancashire County Museums.

Phase	File/Box No.	Description	Quantity
Evaluation	File no. 1	Context register sheets	1
		Context sheets	6
		Drawing register	1
		Permatrace sheets A3	2
		Trench record sheets	19
		Digital photographic register sheets	2

**Table 2.1: Inventory of Primary Archive**

### 2.1 Trial Trenching

Nineteen trial trenches (Appendix 1) were excavated within the site boundary, with several trenches targeting geophysical anomalies (Fig.1). Deposits were removed in even, shallow spits by a JCB 360 excavator equipped with a 1.80m wide smooth-bladed ditching bucket. All mechanical excavation work was carried out under constant archaeological supervision. Any further excavation required to fulfil the objectives of the evaluation was carried out by hand. One trench could not be excavated due to the constraint of an un-marked water main and there was not sufficient space to relocate the trench.

### 3. RESULTS

A context summary forms Appendix 1 and Trench summaries Appendix 2. The following results should be read in conjunction with figures 1-3. All trenches except 4 and 7 were recorded as having no archaeological remains present.

Topsoil on the site consisted of mid brown, grey silty sand (001) that varied in depth across the site from 0.10-0.65m. This sealed the subsoil that measured between 0.10-0.80m in thickness. It consisted of mid orange brown, alluvial silty sand (002) and was present in all trenches at the western end of site. The natural substrate for the site consisted of an orange brown sand and gravel (000).

Trench 4 was excavated across a bank on the western end of site that disappeared further to the south. This bank or lynchet (003 figs 2.3 and 3.1) was made up of a collection of rounded and sub-angular stone and cobbles in varying sizes from 0.10 – 0.85m in diameter. The bank and stone layer was 5m in width and 1.10m in depth. The stones were above a layer of silty sand (004). Two sherds of pottery were recovered from the lynchet that date to the 11th to 13th century and late 18th century.

Trench 7 contained the remains of a probable field boundary (figs 2.4 and 3.3, 006) that consisted of a collection of stones similar to that of the lynchet (003), in a silty sand matrix. This had been truncated by modern ploughing, as a number of stones were recorded to the east and appears to look like a tip line.

## **4. SPECIALIST REPORTS**

### **4.1 Pottery**

By Chris Cumberpatch

The pottery assemblage consisted of three sherds weighing 16 grams from the Lynchet (003) within Trench 4. The details are summarised in Appendix 3.

#### *Results*

The earliest sherd, the rim of a jar or cooking pot, was of medieval type and probably dated to the period between the later 11th and 13th centuries. The square-sectioned rim and buff fabric, tempered with quartz, is typical of domestic pottery of the period and has parallels across the north of England.

The remaining two sherds of pottery were both of 18th-century date. The smaller sherd was typical of the Late Blackware type with a fine red fabric and black glaze internally and externally. The larger, the rim of a dish or bowl, had a buff fabric containing sparse quartz and white rock fragments and was coated internally with a thin red slip to give a finish similar to that of Late Blackware. Both types are typical products of the 18th century vernacular tableware industry (Cumberpatch 2014), an important but much neglected aspect of the post-medieval pottery industry.

#### *Discussion*

The assemblage is too small for any detailed conclusions to be presented but would seem to indicate activity on the site in the medieval and later post-medieval periods. The nature of this activity is unclear from the pottery.

### **4.2 Flint**

By Martin Lightfoot

A single flint scraper was recovered from the topsoil of Trench 11. The flint was a tertiary flake with a slight retouch along one edge. The scraper was a dull blue colour and weighed 5g. Although recovered from topsoil and evidently residual, it is likely to date to the Bronze Age and indicates activity from this period in the wider area.



## **5. CONCLUSION**

The geophysical anomalies tested by the evaluation did not prove to be archaeological in origin and were changes in the natural substrate from bands of sand to gravel. The bank recorded in Trench 4 proved to be the remains of lynchet; a ridge formed along the downhill side of a plot caused by the movement of soil and stone from ploughing or erosion. Given the pottery evidence it is possible that the lynchet started to form as early as the 11th to 13th century.

Similarly, the field boundary targeted by Trench 7 had similar stones within the matrix of the fill but was on flat ground and may have formed a bank or hedge line before being removed and ploughed out.

It is recommended that the finds assemblage should be deposited at the appropriate local museum where it will be available for future research.

## 6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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### Online Resources

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## APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMERIES

No.	Description
1	<p>The trench was orientated north-west to south-east and the topography flat.</p> <p>Topsoil in the trench measured 0.42m-0.42m in depth and overlay a band of mid orange/greyish brown friable silty sand, measuring 0.85m-0.85m in thickness. Underlying this was the natural substrate.</p> <p>A modern land drain was identified in the trench, running north-south through trench.</p>
3	<p>The trench was orientated north to south and the topography was a very slight downwards slope from the North to the South.</p> <p>Topsoil in the trench measured 0.42m-0.42m in depth and overlay a band of mid orange/greyish brown friable silty sand, measuring 0.85m-0.85m in thickness. Underlying this was the natural substrate.</p> <p>No archaeological features were identified within the trench.</p>
4	<p>The trench was orientated east to west and the topography was a very slight downwards slope from the east to the west.</p> <p>Topsoil in the trench measured 0.35m-0.40m in depth and overlay a band of mid orange/greyish brown friable silty sand, measuring 0.15m-0.17m in thickness. Underlying this was the natural substrate.</p> <p>A linear earthwork was identified with large regular cobbles, and was a mid greyish brown. It was approximately 4m wide and 4m from the east end of the trench.</p>
5	<p>The trench was orientated north east to the south west and the topography was flat.</p> <p>Topsoil in the trench measured 0.50m-0.43m in depth and overlay a band of mid orange/greyish brown friable silty sand, measuring 0.30m-0.20m in thickness. Underlying this was the natural substrate.</p> <p>Modern disturbance was identified alongside a possible linear 7m was the north east end of the trench.</p>
6	<p>The trench was orientated north west to the south east and the topography was flat/very slight downwards slope from the north west to the south east.</p> <p>Topsoil in the trench measured 0.45m-0.45m in depth and overlay a band of mid orange brown friable silty sand, measuring 0.25m-0.15m in thickness. Underlying this was the natural substrate.</p> <p>No archaeological features were identified within the trench.</p>
7	<p>The trench was orientated north west to the south east and the topography was flat/very slight downwards slope from the north west to the south east.</p> <p>Topsoil in the trench measured 0.25m-0.40m in depth and overlay a band of mid orange brown friable silty sand, measuring 0.20m-0.20m in thickness. Underlying this was the natural substrate.</p> <p>A linear feature was identified in the trench, approximately 8m in width. A second possible linear was also identified.</p>
8	<p>The trench was orientated north west to the south east and the topography was flat/very slight downwards slope from the north west to the south east.</p> <p>Topsoil in the trench measured 0.45m-0.30m in depth and overlay a band of mid orange brown friable silty sand, measuring 0.15m-N/A in thickness. Underlying this was the natural substrate.</p> <p>No archaeological features were identified within the trench.</p>
9	<p>The trench was orientated west to the east and the topography was flat/very slight downwards slope from the south to the north.</p> <p>Topsoil in the trench measured 1.0m-0.35m in depth and overlay a band of mid orange brown friable silty sand, measuring 0.35m-N/A in thickness. Underlying this was the natural substrate.</p> <p>No archaeological features were identified within the trench, other than some re-deposited modern fill.</p>

No.	Description
10	<p>The trench was orientated north to the south and the topography was flat/very slight downwards slope from the east to the west.</p> <p>Topsoil in the trench measured 0.50m-0.40m in depth and overlay a band of dark brown friable silty sand, measuring 0.25m-0.20m in thickness. Underlying this was the natural substrate.</p> <p>No archaeological features were identified within the trench.</p>
11	<p>The trench was orientated east to the west and the topography was flat/very slight downwards slope from the east to the west.</p> <p>Topsoil in the trench measured 0.50m-0.40m in depth and overlay a band of mid greyish brown friable silty sand, measuring 0.25m-0.20m in thickness. Underlying this was the natural substrate.</p> <p>No archaeological features were identified within the trench.</p>
12	<p>The trench was orientated east to the west and the topography was flat/very slight downwards slope from the east to the west.</p> <p>Topsoil in the trench measured 0.35m-0.35m in depth and overlay a band of mid orange brown friable silty sand, measuring 0.25m-0.25m in thickness. Underlying this was the natural substrate.</p> <p>No archaeological features were identified within the trench.</p>
13	<p>The trench was orientated east to the west and the topography was flat/very slight downwards slope from the east to the west.</p> <p>Topsoil in the trench measured 0.35m-0.35m in depth and overlay a band of mid orange brown friable silty sand, measuring N/A-0.15m in thickness. Underlying this was the natural substrate.</p> <p>No archaeological features were identified within the trench, other than modern disturbance from the middle of the trench to the west end. One flint was found in the middle of the trench.</p>
14	<p>The trench was orientated east to the west and the topography was the bottom of a steep hill from north to the south.</p> <p>Topsoil in the trench measured 0.35m-0.35m in depth and overlay a band of mid orange brown friable silty sand, measuring N/A-0.15m in thickness. Underlying this was the natural substrate.</p> <p>No archaeological features were identified within the trench.</p>
15	<p>The trench was orientated north to the south and the topography was across a steep hill that ran north east to south west.</p> <p>Topsoil in the trench measured 0.20m-0.24m in depth and overlay a band of mid orange brown friable silty sand, measuring 0.34m-0.35m in thickness. Underlying this was the natural substrate.</p> <p>No archaeological features were identified within the trench.</p>
16	<p>The trench was orientated east to the west and the topography was at the top of a gentle slope at which trench 14 is at the bottom of.</p> <p>Topsoil in the trench measured 0.20m-0.36m in depth and overlay a band of mid orange brown friable silty sand, measuring 0.30m-N/A in thickness. Underlying this was the natural substrate.</p> <p>No archaeological features were identified within the trench.</p>
17	<p>The trench was orientated south east to the north west and the topography was at the top of a hill, with the south east end dropping slightly with the fall of the hill.</p> <p>Topsoil in the trench measured 0.30m-0.50m in depth and overlay a band of mid orange brown friable silty sand, measuring 0.61m-N/A in thickness. Underlying this was the natural substrate.</p> <p>No archaeological features were identified within the trench.</p>
18	<p>The trench was orientated south to the north and the topography was a slight downwards slope from north to the south.</p>

No.	Description
	<p>Topsoil in the trench measured 0.41m-0.20m in depth and overlay a band of mid orange brown friable silty sand, measuring 0.18m-0.14m in thickness. Underlying this was the natural substrate.</p> <p>No archaeological features were identified within the trench.</p>
19	<p>The trench was orientated east to the west and the topography was a slight downwards slope from north to the south.</p> <p>Topsoil in the trench measured 0.31m-0.32m in depth and overlay a band of mid orange brown friable silty sand, measuring 0.32m-0.21m in thickness. Underlying this was the natural substrate.</p> <p>No archaeological features were identified within the trench. There was a possible field drain at the east end of the trench.</p>
20	<p>The trench was orientated south east to the north west and the topography was a slight downwards slope from north to the south.</p> <p>Topsoil in the trench measured 0.37m-0.50m in depth and overlay a band of mid orange brown friable silty sand, measuring 0.16m-0.29m in thickness. Underlying this was the natural substrate.</p> <p>No archaeological features were identified within the trench.</p>

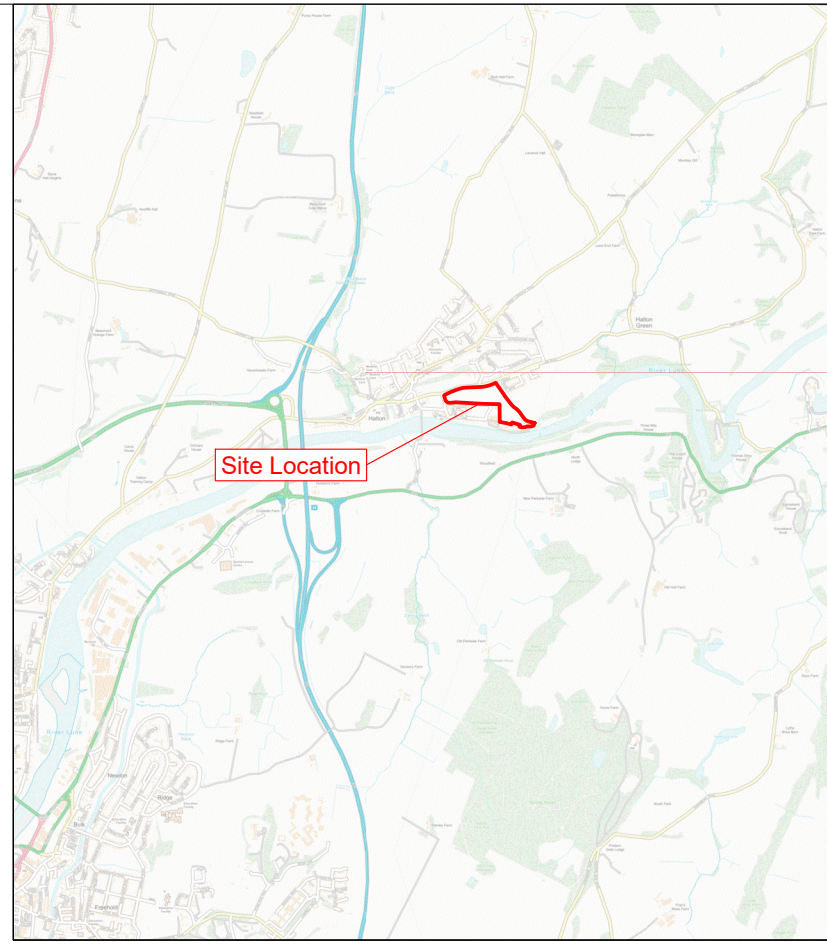
## APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT SUMMARY

Context	Trench	Type	Fill of	Width (m)	Length (m)	Max Depth (m)	Description
100	Site	Topsoil	-	-	-	0.30	Topsoil. Dark brown silty clay.
101	Site	Subsoil	-	-	-	0.20	Subsoil. Mid brown silty clay.
102	Site	Natural	-	-	-	-	Natural. Orange
103	6	Fill	105	2.10	1.80	0.10-0.2	Secondary fill of ditch. Dark grey brown silty clay with occasional charcoal/coal flecks and small rounded stone
104	6	Fill	105	2.10	1.80	0.2-0.35	Primary fill of ditch, Grey blue with mottled yellow firm clay. Sterile in Nature
105	6	Cut	-	2.10	1.80	0.50	East-west orientated linear cut of ditch, slightly stepped sides and a concave base. Filled by 103 and 104. Truncated by modern plough furrows and field drains.

## APPENDIX 3: Pottery Quantification

Trench	Context	Type	No	Wt	ENV	Part	Form	Decoration	Date range	Notes
4	3	Buff Gritty ware	1	12	1	Rim	Jar/CP	U/Dec	LC11 <sup>th</sup> – C13 <sup>th</sup>	Square-section rim w/ slightly dished top; buff w/ grey core; common sub-angular quartz up to 1mm, mainly 0.5mm – 1mm
4	3	Late Blackware	1	1	1	BS	Hollow ware	Brown glaze int & ext	C18 <sup>th</sup>	Fine red fabric
4	3	Slip Coated ware	1	3	1	Rim	Dish/bowl	Thin red slip int under brown glaze int	C18 <sup>th</sup>	Fine buff fabric w/ sparse quartz & white grit
		<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>3</b>					

**FIGURES 1 – 3**



**Key:**

- Site Boundary
- Trench Outline
- Archaeological Feature
- Modern Feature
- Ridge and Furrow



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Title:  
 Site location and Trench Plan with Geophysical interpretation

Project:  
 Land off Low Road, Halton, Lancashire

Client:  
 Orion Heritage

Scale at A3:  
 1:1700

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Report No: Y340/18	Fig. No: 1
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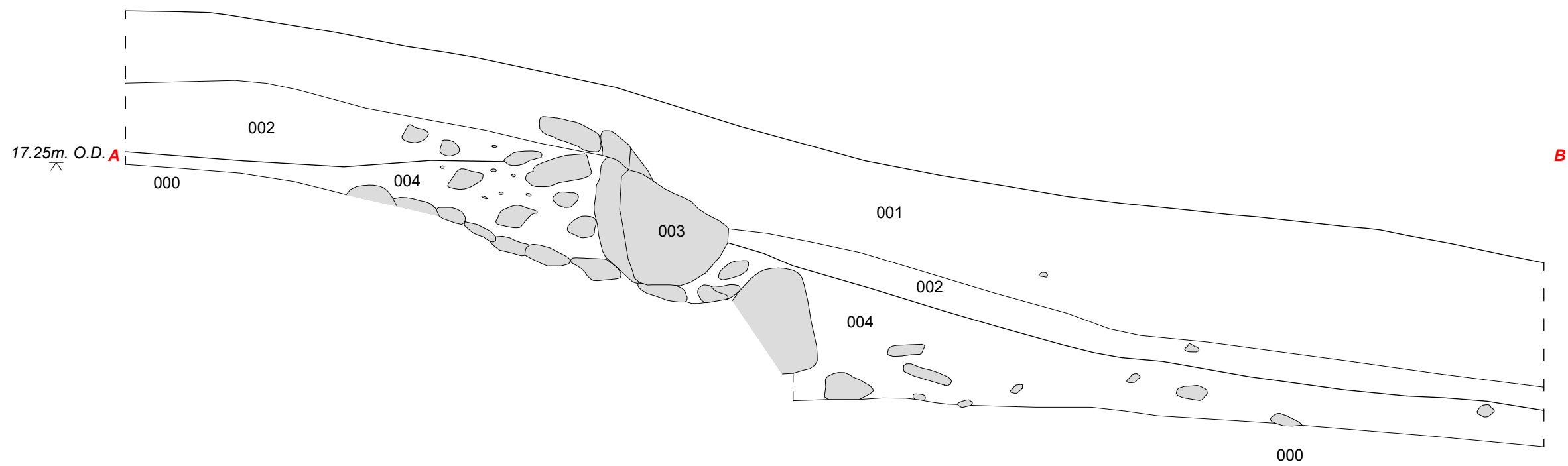


Fig. 2.1 - N-facing section of lynchet 003 in Trench 4

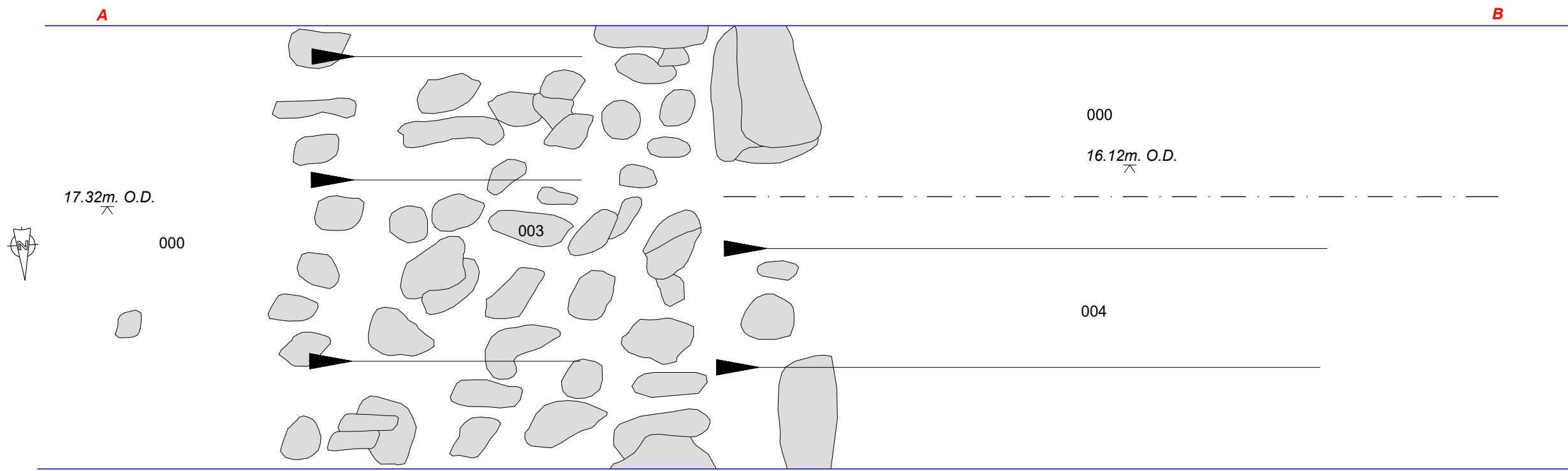


Fig. 2.2 - Plan of lynchet 003 in Trench 4



**Key:**

- Trench Outline
- Stone
- Stone Void

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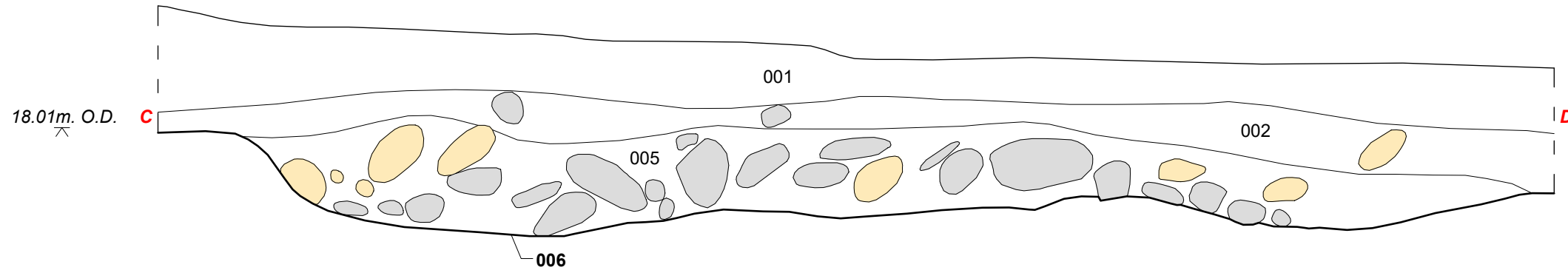


Fig. 2.3 - N-facing section of ditch 006 in Trench 7

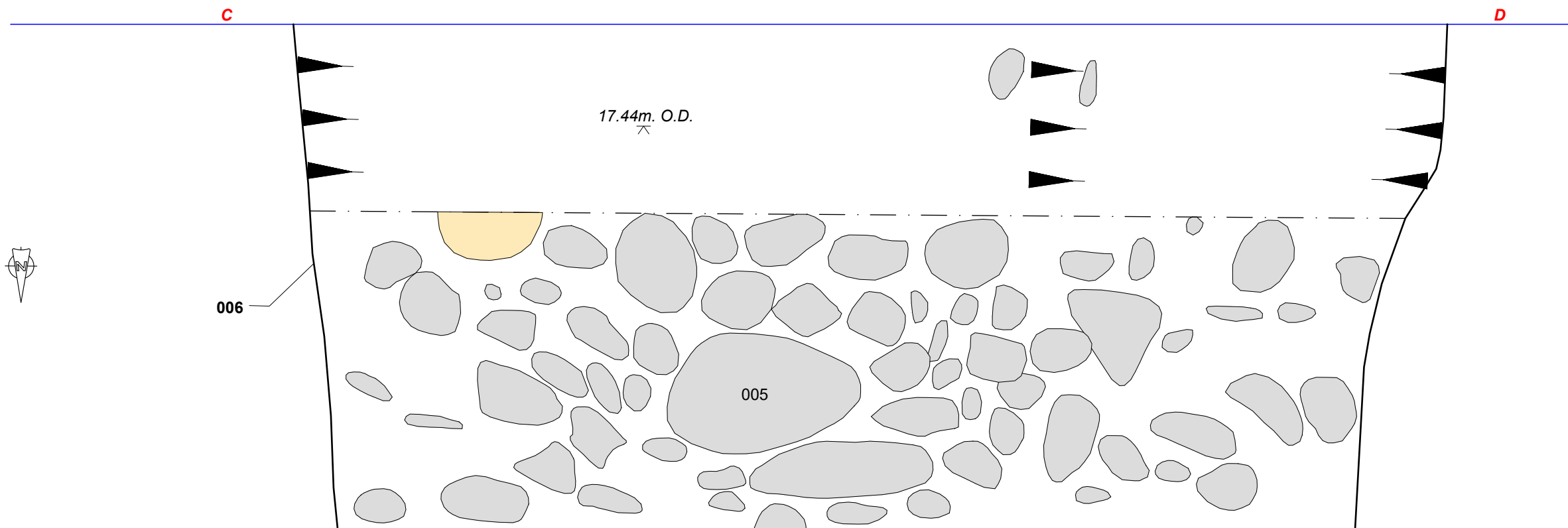


Fig. 2.4 - Plan of Ditch 006 in Trench 7



**Key:**

- Trench Outline
- Stone
- Stone Void

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Fig. 3.1 - North-facing section of Lynchet 003



Fig. 3.2 - Oblique north-facing section of 006

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Fig. 3.3 - East end of Trench 16 looking West

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