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Historic Building Recording


Site & Landscape Survey

Interpretation, Design & Display

**Moor Road,
Stainburn, Cumbria**

Archaeological Evaluation

Report No. Y088/13

 01274 864245

 01274 878494

 yorkshire@cfa-archaeology.co.uk

 www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk

CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Unit 22
Moorlands Business Centre
Balme Road
Cleckheaton
BD19 4EZ

Tel: 01274 864 245
Fax 01274 878494

email: Yorkshire@cfa-archaeology.co.uk
web: www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk

Author	Mark Bell BA
Illustrator	Shelly Werner BA MPhil PhD
Editor	Martin Lightfoot BA MA MifA
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Summary

CFA Archaeology undertook an archaeological evaluation at Stainburn, Cumbria between the 11 and 12 of March 2013. Nine trenches were excavated. A former field boundary, an area of hard standing and evidence of ridge-and-furrow cultivation were identified. Although no finds were retrieved, the features probably represent post-medieval agricultural activity and land division.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

The evaluation was commissioned by Story Homes. A Written Scheme of Investigation was produced by CFA dated 18 January 2012 (CFA 2012). The work was intended to mitigate the destruction of buried archaeological remains through preservation by record should they be encountered, and was undertaken in accordance with the WSI in order to comply with planning condition (Ref JNP/2110935). The CFA code and number for the project is MOOS2/2101.

1.2 Site Location and Description

The village of Stainburn is located 2km to the east of the town of Workington, Cumbria (Figure 1). The proposed development area is located within a 5.87ha field of improved pasture. The field sloped downhill to the west and was between 38m and 56m above the ordnance datum (AOD), although some flatter areas were noted. The field was bounded to the north-west by residential properties and the north-east by Moor Road with further residential dwellings beyond. To the south-east was pasture and to the west was the embankment of the A66.

Stainburn is located on the Middle Pennine Coal Measure; signifying bedrock deposits of mudstone, siltstone and sandstones and superficial deposits of Diamicton, Devensian till (BGS 2013). The soils are described as 'seasonally waterlogged fine loamy over clayey soils' (SSEW 1983).

1.3 Aims and Objectives

In general the project aims were:

'The aim of the evaluation is to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development, should they exist on the site. The evaluation will specifically test possible archaeological remains identified as geophysical anomalies.'

1.4 Previous Archaeological Work

No invasive archaeological work is known to have taken place on the site, although a desk-based assessment (DBA) and geophysical survey have been undertaken (CFA 2011). The DBA identified former field boundaries that were recognised by the

geophysical survey as linear anomalies. A number of amorphous anomalies were identified as being “likely to represent a combination of agricultural practices and drainage” (CFA 2011, p7).

2. WORKING METHODS

2.1 Trial Trenching

Nine trial trenches between 10m to 25m long were excavated which totalled 270m². The trenches were positioned to target geophysical anomalies that had been identified across the site by geophysical survey (CFA 2011) as displayed in Figure 1.

The trenches were excavated by a machine equipped with a smooth bladed ditching bucket under direct archaeological supervision. Topsoil was removed to natural subsoil or the first significant archaeological horizon, whichever was reached first. Any further excavation required to fulfil the objectives of the evaluation was carried out by hand. Standing surface water was noted around Trenches 1-3.

Trench positions were located using industry standard electronic surveying equipment and all trenches were backfilled on completion of the fieldwork.

2.2 Standards and Guidance

CFA Archaeology is a registered organisation (RO) with the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA). All work was conducted in accordance with relevant IfA Standards and Guidance documents (IfA 1994), the WSI and CFA’s standard methodology.

2.3 Monitoring

The archaeological evaluation was monitored by the Historic Environment Officer for Cumbria County Council, who was informed in advance of the works taking place and maintained contact during the works.

2.4 Archiving

The project archive, comprising all CFA record sheets, plans and reports, will be ordered according to current guidelines and to nationally recognised standards (Brown 2011) in order to be deposited at the relevant museum within an agreed timescale. The Oasis reference for the project is cfaarcha1-147596.

3. RESULTS

Numbers in parentheses in the following text refer to contexts, a full description of which is contained in Appendix 1.

3.1 General

Generally the excavated topsoil (001) comprised mid greyish-brown silty-clay and was between 0.3m and 0.4m deep. A 0.05m-0.2m deep subsoil (002) comprising sterile, light grey silty-clay was identified in trenches 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7. The natural substrate (000) was generally described as yellowish-orange sandy-clay with common sub-angular to sub-rounded stone cobbles (Figure 2-3). The occurrence of stone inclusions was greater in trenches 1, 2, and 3 which were located towards the bottom of the slope. The stones had probably accumulated as a result of colluvial activity and ploughing (Figure 4). Rubble field drains were recorded in most trenches and were located between the horizon of the subsoil (002) and the natural substrate (000) (Figure 5).

3.2 Archaeological Features

The linear anomalies identified by geophysical survey and targeted by trenches 4 and 7 were the remains of cultivation furrows. The furrows were generally 2m wide with a flattish base and had been horizontally truncated by ploughing. The maximum depth of cultivation furrow encountered was 0.2m in Trench 7 (Figure 6).

Two of the curvilinear anomalies in Trench 5 were identified as hard standing deposits of sub-angular stones and cobbles between 0.05m and 0.2m in diameter within a matrix of dark grey friable clayey-silt (005, 006) (Figure 7). Further investigation revealed that the hard standing deposits had been truncated by a ditch (003) on the same north-west to south-east orientation as the ridge-and-furrow. The ditch was 0.48m deep and 1.9m wide with a rounded base. It contained a single fill of friable greyish-brown clayey-silt (004) (Figs 8a and 8b). The ditch was probably a field boundary of post-medieval origin that had been cut through the previous hard standing deposits. The hard standing was probably placed to act as a platform within an agricultural setting, perhaps as an area for a hayrick.

4. CONCLUSIONS

CFA Archaeology undertook an archaeological evaluation on land off Moor Road, Stainburn, Cumbria. Nine trenches were excavated to investigate various geophysical anomalies within the field. Aside from a number of modern land drains, the evaluation identified the presence of ridge-and-furrow cultivation, a relict field boundary of probable post-medieval date and an area of hard standing. No significant archaeological features were identified and no finds were retrieved.

5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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IfA 1994 *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*, Institute for Archaeologists, Revised October 2008.

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BGS, 2013, British Geological Survey.
<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html>.
Last consulted on 9 April 2013

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Context Summary

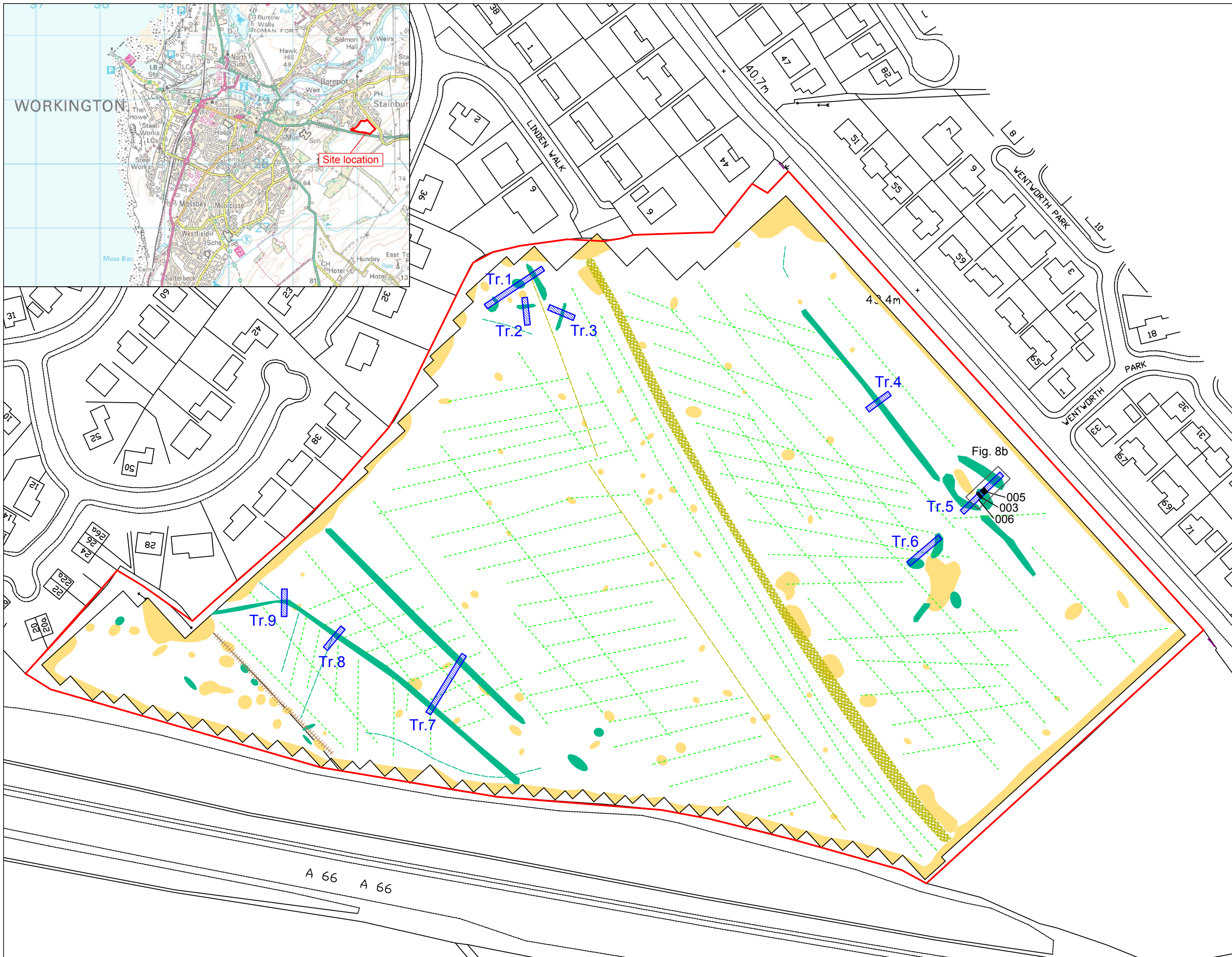
Context no.	Trench	Type	Description
000	All	Deposit	Natural substrate: Yellowish-orange, gravelly/stony glacial till.
001	All	Deposit	Topsoil: Mid-greyish brown clayey-silt. 0.3-0.4m D.
002	All	Deposit	Subsoil: Soft sterile light-grey silty-clay. 0.05-0.2m D.
003	5	Cut	Cut of north-west/south-east orientated shallow ditch. >1.7m L 1.9m W 0.48m D.
004	5	Fill	Friable, light greyish-brown, clayey-silt.
005	5	Deposit	Hard standing deposit consisting of sub-angular stones. 1.3m W >0.2m D.
006	5	Deposit	Hard standing deposit consisting of sub-angular stones. 2m W 0.3m D.

Appendix 2: Photographic Register

Digi No	Contexts/description	Facing	Conditions
1	Post-excavation shot of Trench 4	North	Bright
2	Relict cultivation furrow in Trench 4	North	Bright
3	Trench 7 following topsoil removal	North	Bright
4	Trench 8 following topsoil removal	North	Bright
5	Trench 5 following topsoil removal	North	Bright
6	Shot of deposits 005 and 006 in Trench 5	South	Bright
7	Trench 6 following topsoil removal	West	Bright
8	Trench 9 following topsoil removal	South	Bright
9	Natural deposit of stone in Trench 1	West	Bright
10	Trench 1 following topsoil removal	North-east	Overcast
11	Trench 2 following topsoil removal	South-west	Overcast
12	Trench 3 following topsoil removal	North-east	Overcast
13	Relict cultivation furrow in Trench 7	West	Overcast
14	Oblique shot of north-west facing section of Trench 5	South	Overcast
15	Oblique shot of north-west facing section of Trench 5	North	Overcast
16	North-west facing section of Ditch 003	South	Overcast
17	Oblique shot of Cultivation furrow in Trench 4	North-east	Bright
18	Hard standing deposit 005 in Trench 5	South-west	Overcast
19	Working shot of topsoil removal at Trench 1 showing surface water	East	Bright
20	Cultivation furrow at north-east of Trench 7 facing north-west	North-west	Overcast
21	Oblique shot of cultivation furrow in Trench 7 facing north	North	Snowing
22	Shot of ridge and furrow cultivation earthworks facing west	West	Bright
23	Working shot of site facing east	East	Bright

Appendix 3: Drawing Register

Dwg No.	Sheet No.	Scale	Plan / Section	Description/contexts
1	1	1:20	S	North-west facing section of Trench 5
2	1	1:50	P	Scale plan of Trench 5



- Key:
- Former Field Boundary
 - ?Former Field Boundary
 - Agricultural - Former ploughing / Drainage
 - Drain / Culvert
 - Uncertain Origin
 - Ferrous
 - Site Boundary
 - Excavation Trench

CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD
 CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD
 Unit 22
 Moorland's Business Centre
 Balme Road, Cleckheaton
 West Yorkshire, BD19 4EZ
 T: 01274 864245
 F: 01274 878494
 yorkshire@cfa-archaeology.co.uk

Fig. No: 1 Revision: A

Title:
 Site location and plan of
 evaluation trenches

Project:
 Moor Road, Stainburn
 Cumbria

Client:
 Story Homes

Scale at A3:
 1:1250

Drawn by: TB Checked: MB Report No: Y088/13



Fig. 2 - Post-excitation shot of Trench 4



Fig. 3 - Post-excitation shot of Trench 7



Fig. 4 - Natural deposit of stone in Trench 1



Fig. No: 2-4		Revision: A	Project: Moor Road, Stainburn, Workington, Cumbria
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Fig. 5 - Post-excavation shot of Trench 8 showing stone field drain



Fig. 6 - Cultivation furrow in Trench 7



Fig. 7 - Hardstanding deposits 005 and 006 in Trench 5

Fig. No: 5-7		Revision: A	Project: Moor Road, Stainburn, Workington, Cumbria		
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Key:

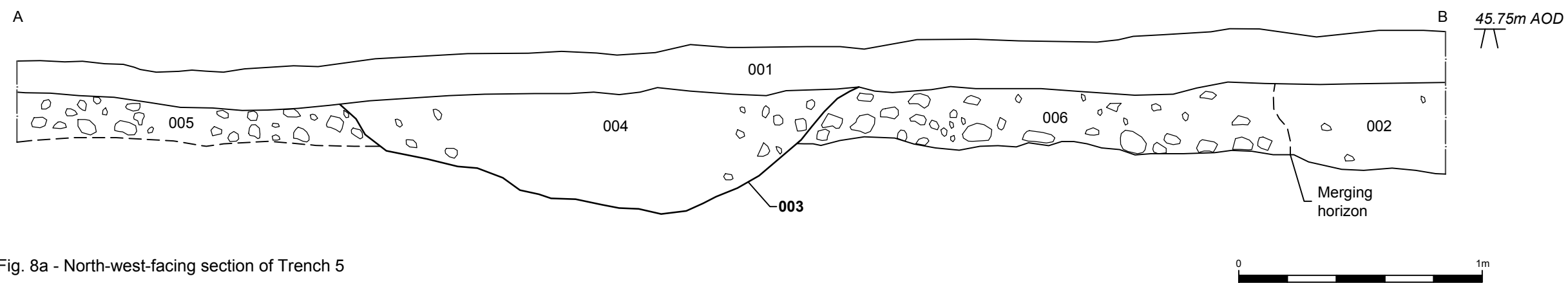


Fig. 8a - North-west-facing section of Trench 5

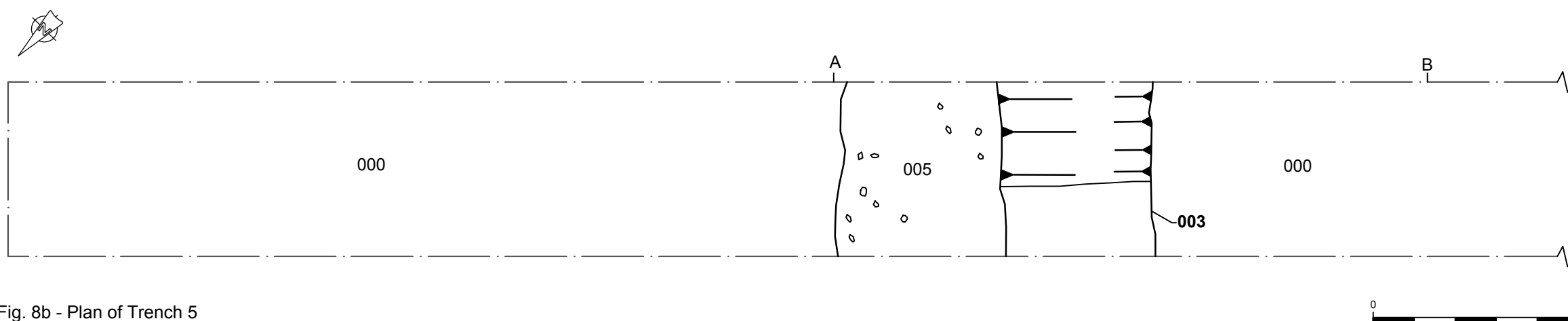


Fig. 8b - Plan of Trench 5

