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**Fulford School  
Fulford  
York**

**NGR SE 6135 4924  
Archaeological Evaluation**

**MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd  
February 1999  
Site Code YORYM 1999.31**

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**Fulford School, Fulford  
York**

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# **Fulford School, Fulford York**

## **Archaeological Evaluation**

### **Introduction**

During two weeks in January 1999 MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd carried out an archaeological evaluation on the site of a proposed Sports Hall at Fulford School, York.

The site lies to the south-west of the main buildings of Fulford School, in the area of an existing rugby pitch (Fig. 1 - SE 6135 4924). The school tennis courts lie on a platform immediately to the west, with agricultural land to the south and south-west. The site forms a level expanse at an elevation of c. 12.50m AOD.

The evaluation was undertaken so as to assess the impact of the construction of the proposed Sports Hall on any archaeological deposits there, information that could then be used to determine a mitigation strategy and the scale of any future archaeological work that might be necessary. An Archaeological Specification was prepared by John Oxley, Principal Archaeologist of York City Council, to establish the form that the evaluation should take.

This report contains a short consideration of the archaeological and historical background of the site, and sets out the results of the excavation of the four trenches comprising the field evaluation.

All work was funded by Fulford School.

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### **Archaeological and Historical Background**

Fulford School is situated c. 2km south of the core of the Roman, Anglo-Scandinavian and medieval city of York, and c. 500m east of the medieval village of Fulford.

The Sites and Monuments Register records the find-spot of a flint scraper at a point c. 200m north-west of the site. Further flints were found in the Fulford area in 1906, and in the 1930s and 1950s.

A large-scale evaluation was carried out by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd in the spring and summer of 1996 on the proposed Germany Beck development site, which

forms 16ha of agricultural land immediately south of Fulford School (MAP 1995 and 1996).

Fieldwalking recovered flint artefacts, along with prehistoric, roman, medieval and later pottery. A subsequent geophysical survey (conducted by Geophysical Surveys of Bradford) showed the presence of north - south ditches and probable enclosures (GSB 1996).

The results of the fieldwalking and geophysical surveys were used to locate a total of sixty-four evaluation excavation trenches. The finds assemblage suggested activity in the Neolithic period and the Bronze Age, followed by the creation of regular enclosures or fields represented by later Iron Age and Roman linear ditches.

Post-Roman activity in the area is a reflection of the development of Fulford village. That Fulford was in existence prior to the Norman conquest is shown by its recording in the Domesday Book, where it is variously referred to as *Fuletorp*, *Foleforde* and *Fuleford*. The name means "foul" or "dirty ford" (Smith, 1937), presumably referring to the point where the York - Doncaster road crosses Germany Beck; it was probably this location that saw the defeat of the army of the northern Earls by Hardrada's vikings in 1066.

The multiple Domesday references show that there were a number of manors at Fulford, and by the 14th century there are references to Water Fulford and Gate Fulford. By the 19th century the settlement was being referred to as plain "Fulford" or "Gate Fulford".

The medieval village was seemingly aligned north to south along the York to Doncaster road, with strip-like properties running eastwards from Main Street (the present A19) to Back Lane (now School Lane). Back Lane gave access for animals into the rear of the medieval properties. The plan of the medieval village puts the site of Fulford School firmly in one of the village's medieval Open Fields, this idea being supported by the presence of ploughed out ridge and furrow along with abraded medieval pottery at the Germany Beck site.

The First Edition (1850s) of the Ordnance Survey map (6" / 1: 10560 scale) shows the site to be in an area of fields with hedged boundaries. In the 1930s housing development spread eastwards along Heslington Lane, and York City Football Club established their training ground, Fulfordgate, on the site. Fulford School itself was built in the early 1960s, the training ground having been sold.

## **Methodology**

The Archaeological Specification called for the excavation of 4 trenches to undisturbed natural deposits, and the excavation of a 50% sample of any archaeological deposits or

features penetrating natural. Areas of modern disturbance were to be given low priority. The position of the trenches was formalised by the project architects, McNeil and Beechey (Fig. 2). There was a need to leave the existing rugby pitch intact, so that Trench 4 lay outside the area to be effected by the proposed development, and all trenches were outside the building footprint as proposed in July 1998.

All excavation, from the turf to natural deposits, was carried out by hand. All archaeological deposits were recorded under the single context planning and recording system; post-medieval and modern features were drawn on composite plans. Planning was carried out at 1:20 scale, with two faces of each trench, plus segment sections of archaeological features, being drawn at 1:10 scale. Written records were kept on *pro forma* context sheets, and a photographic record was compiled in monochrome and colour print in 35mm format.

All finds were washed and marked with Yorkshire Museum Accession Number 1999.31.

## **Results**

Two of the excavated areas (Trenches 3 and 4) contained cut features of probable later prehistoric/Roman date. Trench 4, along with Trench 2, also contained a horizon seemingly associated with medieval and post-medieval (i.e. pre-enclosure) cultivation. Modern features were located in all of the trenches.

Rather than describe the trenches separately, the results laid out below form a period by period narrative for the excavation as a whole.

## **Natural Deposits**

Natural deposits in the trenches varied from compact brown clay in Trench 3, to slightly silty medium sands in the other trenches. The depth from the present ground level at which natural occurred also varied, from 0.30m in Trench 3 (c. 11.70m AOD), to 0.55m in Trench 2 (c. 12.25m AOD), 0.60m in Trench 1 (c. 11.95m AOD), and between 0.60m and 0.85m in Trench 4 (c. 12.20 - 11.95m AOD). The extent to which these levels reflect the original slope of the natural is open to question as it seems probable that certain areas will have been artificially reduced by agriculture and modern levelling. Also, the west to east downward slope of the surface of the natural in Trench 4 (Fig. 5) could be due to the influence of Feature 4006 in the eastern part of the trench.

## **Later Prehistoric / Roman Features**

As stated previously, cut features of probable early date were encountered in Trench 3 (context 3011) and Trench 4 (context 4006).

Context 3011 (Fig. 4) was a straight-sided linear feature on a north-west to south-east alignment, with a relatively shallow, rounded profile. The sole fill (context 3010) was a sandy silt containing no finds. The relative narrowness and shallowness of this feature suggests that it had functioned as a gully rather than forming a significant boundary. The paleness of the fill suggests an early date as more modern deposits can be assumed to have a higher humic content. If one can use negative evidence, the absence of finds from 3011 also suggests some antiquity as it is reasonable to expect an amount of dateable material from medieval and post-medieval features.

Context 4006 (Fig. 5) was situated in the north-east corner of Trench 4, but unfortunately lay only marginally within the excavated area, a factor which hampers its interpretation. This cut was at least 1.1m wide and 0.5m deep; the general alignment of its slightly curving western edge was north-west to south-east. The fills (contexts 4004 and 4005) were brownish silty sands, 4005 contained a sherd of Roman Greyware, the only find from the feature. It is uncertain whether this feature was a pit or a ditch, though the latter seems more likely given the paucity of finds from it. A Roman date seems reasonable given the presence of the sherd of Greyware.

### **Post Medieval Deposits**

These deposits were represented by similar layers of yellowish brown silty sands (contexts 2006 and 4003 - Figs. 3 and 5) which rested above the natural in Trenches 2 and 3. Both layers contained abraded sherds of ?Iron Age, Roman, medieval and post-medieval date, along with clay tobacco pipe fragments. Additionally, context 2006 yielded a flint scraper and a flint flake. Given the wide date range of the finds from these two contexts they can be interpreted as part of a horizon of soil that accumulated during medieval and post-medieval cultivation.

### **Modern Features**

All four trenches showed considerable evidence of the modern use of the site. The first modern feature was an east to west aligned ceramic field drain, in a steep-sided cut, visible in both Trench 1 and Trench 2 (contexts 1010 and 3007 - Fig. 3) . There was a subsequent episode of ploughing (context 1008 - Fig. 3) across the drain in Trench 1; similar north to south plough scars (contexts 2008, 2013, 3005 and 3009) in Trenches 2 and 3 were probably part of the same process. A layer of dark grey silt (context 1006 - Fig. 3) in Trench 1 was the presumed remains of a ploughsoil associated with this cultivation phase.

In Trenches 1 and 3 mixed deposits of loamy soil with patches and lenses of yellowish clay (context 1005 and 3001 - 3 and 5) overlay the old ploughsoil. Clearly recently dumped material because of its mixed nature and associated modern finds, these deposits are assumed to represent levelling for the present rugby pitch. Also associated with sport

was the remains of a large wooden post (contexts 2010/1) in Trench 4, part of a former goal post. The sporting use of the site was also reflected by the presence of a series of clinker-filled drains with ceramic pipes at the bases (contexts 1002, 1004, 3003 and 4002 - Figs. 3 and 5). A broader cut in Trench 2 which contained a plastic pipe (context 2005 - Fig. 3) would seem to be a replacement of an earlier ceramic drain (the fill, context 2004, contained a flint flake). Having excavated at the site during a wet winter, the need for drainage there is all too clearly understood.

A deep humic layer of topsoil (contexts 1000, 2000, 3000 and 4000 - Figs. 3, 5 and 6) covered all of the trenches, representing the well-tended sports-field surface.

## Discussion

The earliest activity at Fulford School was indicated by the three residual worked flints from Trench 2. The fact that worked flints, the only late Neolithic/Bronze Age artifacts from the excavation, were found in the same small area hints that there may have been a concentration of early activity at this location. As with the Germany Beck site there was a lack of early prehistoric (i.e. Neolithic or Bronze Age) features, though gully 3011 might just possibly relate to such an early activity phase.

Gully 3011 perhaps more readily relates to the later Iron Age/Roman linear features recorded at Germany Beck. The presence of Roman pottery (albeit a single sherd) in cut 4006 suggests a link between this feature and the landscape of later Iron Age/Roman boundaries known at Germany Beck, as does the background of Roman pottery from the assumed pre-enclosure cultivation deposits.

In the same way that Late Iron Age/Roman cultivation of the Fulford School site probably reduced traces of earlier prehistoric activity, so medieval, post medieval and modern cultivation, followed by the creation of the sports pitch and the building of the school, have all successively eroded evidence of preceding land use.

## References

- GSB (1996) *Fulford III. Survey No. 96/51.*
- MAP (1995) *A Desktop Study of the Proposed Development at Germany Beck, Fulford.*
- MAP (1996) *Germany Beck, Fulford - Archaeological Sample Excavations.*
- Smith, A. H. (1937) *The Place-Names of the East Riding of Yorkshire and York.*

# APPENDIX 1

## Context List

Context	Description
1000	Deposit, 10 YR 3/2 clay silt (modern topsoil)
1001	Fill of 1002, clinker with ceramic pipe (modern drain)
1002	Linear cut (modern drain cut)
1003	Fill of 1004, clinker with ceramic pipe (modern drain)
1004	Linear cut (modern drain cut)
1005	Deposit, 10 YR 3/2 clay silt with 10 YR 4/6 clay (modern levelling)
1006	Deposit, 10 YR 4/1 clay silt (pre-playing field ploughsoil)
1007	Fill of 1008, 10 YR 4/1 clay silt (modern plough furrow fills)
1008	Series of linear cuts (modern plough scars)
1009	Fill of 1010, 10 YR 4/1 clay silt with 10 YR 6/4 clay and ceramic pipe (modern field-drain)
1010	Linear cut (modern field-drain cut)
2000	Deposit, 10 YR 3/2 loamy silt (turfsoil)
2001	Deposit, 10 YR 3/2 loamy silt (topsoil)
2002	Fill of 2003, 10 YR 4/2 (modern disturbance)
2003	Linear depressions (?wheel ruts associated with modern levelling)
2004	Fill of 2005, 10 YR 3/2 clay silt (modern drain fill)
2005	Linear cut (modern drain cut)
2006	Deposit, 10 YR 4/6 silty sand (old ploughing horizon)
2007	Fill of 2008, 10 YR 4/2 sandy silt (modern plough scars)
2008	Linear cuts (modern plough scars)
2009	Fill of 2011, timber post (remains of modern goal post)
2010	Fill of 2011 (modern goal post)
2011	Post hole cut (modern goal post)
2012	Fill of 2013, 10 YR 4/2 sandy silt (plough scar)
2013	Linear cut (modern plough scar)
3000	Deposit, 10 YR 3/2 loamy silt (modern topsoil)
3001	Deposit, 10 YR 4/2 silty clay (modern dumping)
3002	Fill of 3003, clinker with ceramic pipe
3003	Linear cut (modern drain)
3004	Fill of 3005, 10 YR 4/2 (modern plough scar)
3005	Linear cut (modern plough scar)
3006	Fill of 3007, 10 YR 4/2 (modern land drain)
3007	Linear cut (modern land drain cut)
3008	Fill of 3009, 10 YR 4/2 (modern plough scar)
3009	Linear cut (modern plough scar)
3010	Fill of 3011, 10 YR 4/4 sandy silt (gully fill)
3011	Linear cut (gully cut)
4000	Deposit, 10 YR 3/2 fine sandy silt (modern topsoil)
4001	Fill of 4002, clinker with ceramic pipe (modern drain)
4002	Linear cut (modern drain cut)
4003	Deposit, 10 YR 4/6 silty sand (old ploughing horizon)
4004	Fill of 4006, 10 YR 5/4 silty sand (feature fill)
4005	Fill of 4006, 10 YR 5/3 fine sand (feature fill)
4006	Cut (ditch or ?pit cut)

## APPENDIX 2

### Finds Catalogue

Context	Type	Description	Weight	Spot Date
1000	Pottery	Total Pottery - 14 sherds 1 sherd Gritty Ware 1 sherd Humber Ware 2 sherds Nottingham type Stoneware (1 rim) 1 sherd English Salt glazed Stoneware (base) 1 sherd Black Ware 4 sherds Modern White glazed earthenware 3 sherds 19th Century Stoneware bottle (2 handle, 1 rim) 1 porcelain doll fragment	0.120 kg	modern
	Clay Tobacco Pipe	1 stem fragment	0.020 kg	
	Brick/Tile	5 fragments	0.500 kg	
1005	Pottery	Total Pottery - 4 sherds 1 sherd Humber Ware 3 sherds White glazed earthenware	0.025 kg	modern
	Glass	1 modern glass stopper	0.050 kg	
1006	Pottery	Total Pottery - 27 sherds 1 sherd Gritty Ware 1 sherd Brandsby type Ware 4 sherds Humberware 4 sherds Post-medieval red ware 2 sherds Black Ware 1 sherd Nottingham type stoneware 4 sherds 19th Century stoneware 10 sherds modern pottery	0.020 kg	modern
	Brick/Tile	5 fragments	0.100 kg	
	Clay Tobacco Pipe	2 clay pipe stem		
	Metal	2 Copper Alloy Objects		
2001	Pottery	Total Pottery - 9 sherds 1 sherd York Glazed Ware 3 sherds Humber Ware 1 sherd Red Ware base 1 sherd Nottingham type stoneware 3 sherds modern white glazed	0.10 kg	
	Brick/Tile	6 fragments	0.350 kg	
2002	Pottery	Total Pottery - 4 sherds 1 sherd Gritty Ware 1 sherd Cistercian Ware 1 sherd Nottingham type stoneware 1 sherd modern white glazed	0.020 kg	modern
	Brick/Tile	3 fragments	0.025 kg	

	Animal Bone		0.025 kg	
2004	Pottery	Total Pottery - 5 sherds	0.050 kg	? 16th century
		2 sherds Gritty Ware		
		2 sherds York Glazed Ware		
		1 sherd Cistercian Ware		
	Brick/Tile	1 fragment	0.005 kg	
	Small Find 3	Flint Flake		
2006	Pottery	Total Pottery - 18 sherds	0.25 kg	18th century
		2 Roman Greyware		
		5 Gritty Ware		
		6 York Glazed Ware (1 base)		
		2 Staxton-type Ware		
		1 Humber Ware		
		1 Cistercian base		
		1 Black Ware		
	Brick/Tile	3 fragments	0.030 kg	
	Small Find 1	Flint end scraper		Late Neolithic/EBA
	Small Find 2	Flint flake		Any
2007	Pottery	Total Pottery - 2 sherds	0.020 kg	15th century
		1 York Glazed Ware		
		1 Humber Ware		
3001	Pottery	Total Pottery - 8 sherds	0.10 kg	modern
		2 Staffordshire slipware (1 rim)		
		2 Red Ware (1 handle)		
		1 Black Ware		
		3 modern white glazed		
	Animal Bone	1 cow tooth	0.025 kg	
	Brick/Tile	1 fragment	0.150 kg	
	Clay Tobacco Pipe	2 stem fragments	0.010 kg	
4000	Pottery	Total Pottery - 11 sherds	0.010 kg	modern
		1 Roman Greyware		
		1 Humber Ware		
		2 Red Ware		
		3 Staffordshire Yellow Glazed Ware		
		1 Nottingham type stoneware		
		1 Wedgwood Basalis ware		
		2 modern white glazed		
	Brick/Tile	1 fragment	0.010 kg	
	Metal	Copper Alloy object		
	Glass		0.050 kg	

4003	Pottery	Total Pottery - 9 sherds	0.20 kg	17/18th century
		1 Iron Age		
		1 Roman Greyware rim (2nd/3rd century)		
		1 Roman Orangeware		
		1 Gritty Ware		
		2 York Glazed Ware		
		1 Cistercian base		
		2 Red Ware (1 base)		
	Brick/Tile	11 fragments	0.350 kg	
	Clay Tobacco Pipe	1 bowl fragment (early 1800s- 'Yorkshire bulbous' type)	0.025 kg	
		3 stem fragments		



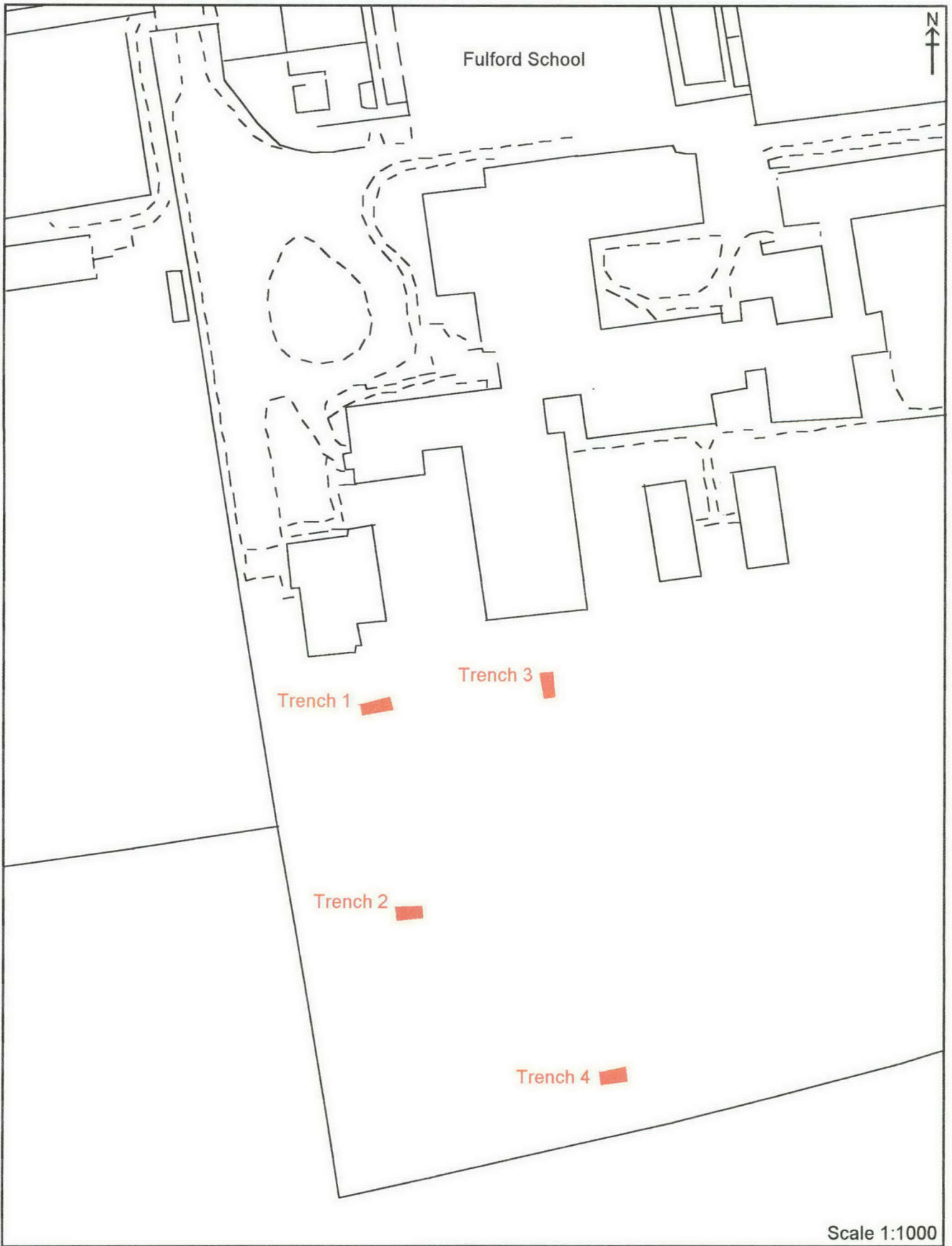


Figure 2. Trench Location Plan.

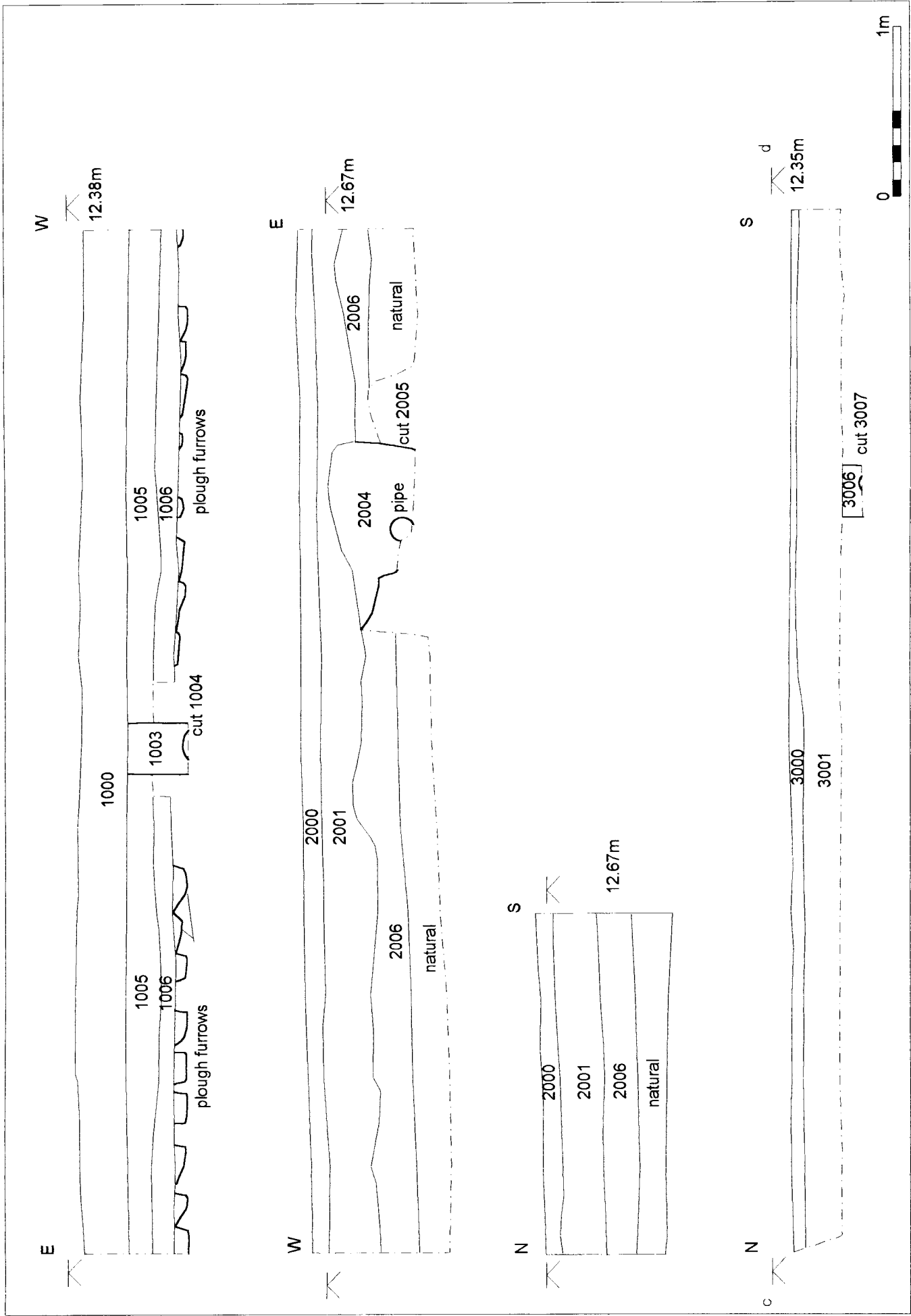


Figure 3. Trenches 1, 2 and 3 sections.

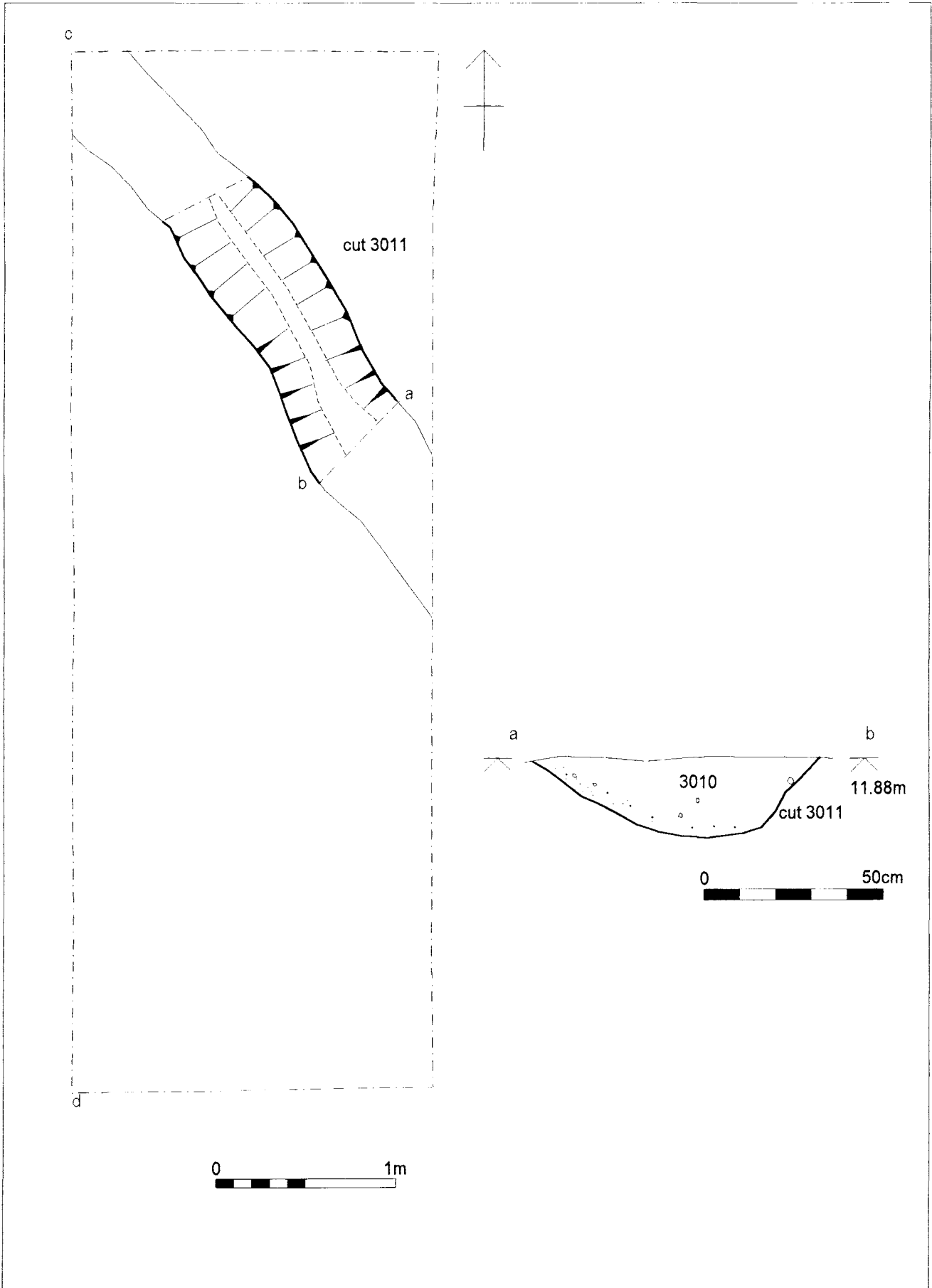


Figure 4. Trench 3, Feature 3011 - Plan and Section.

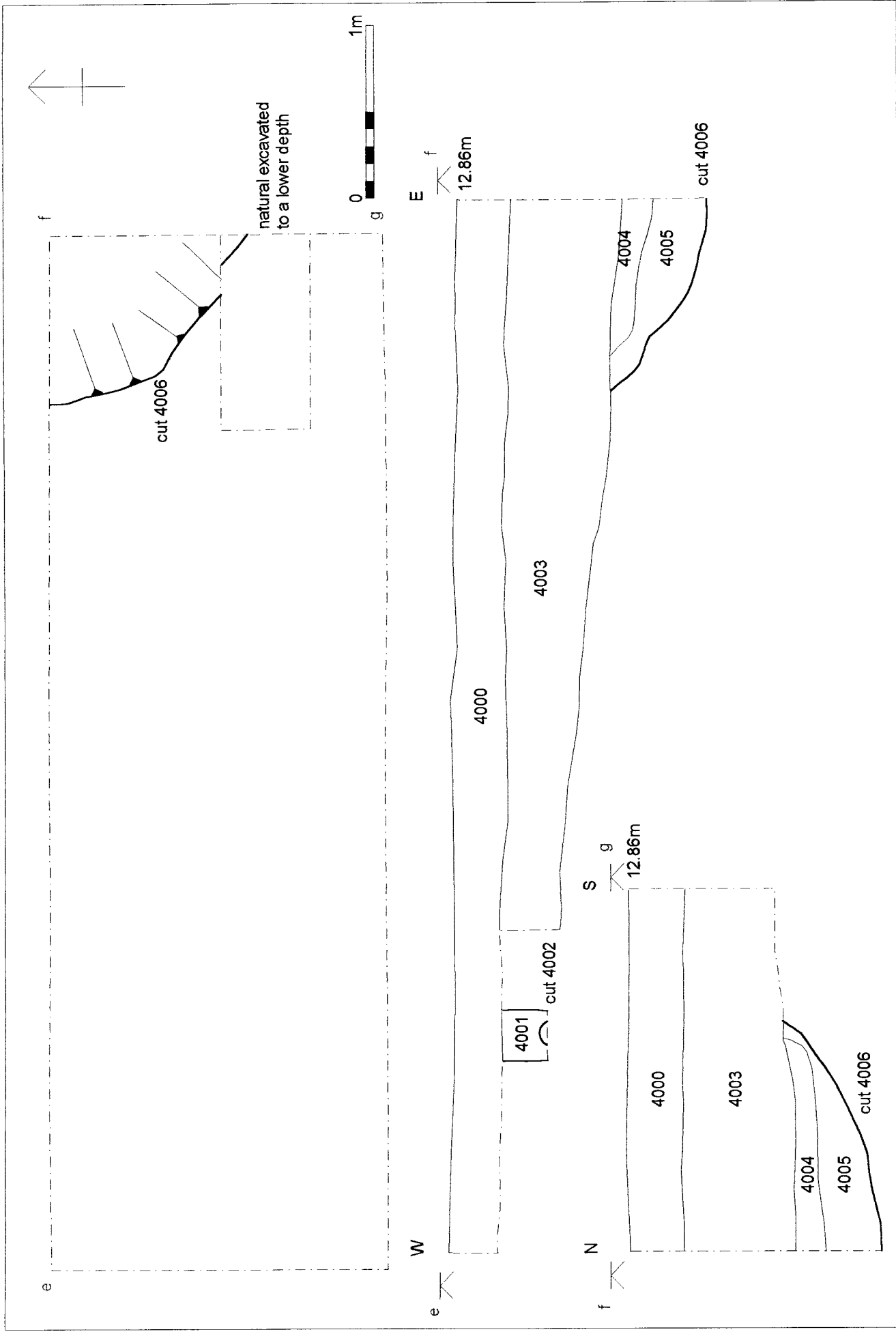


Figure 5. Trench 4, Feature 4006 - Plan and Section.

## APPENDIX 3

### Ceramic Building Materials

S Garside-Neville

#### Introduction

This is a small sample of material, comprising nine small to medium bags.

#### Roman material

There is one definite piece of Roman brick, plus another fragment which may be Roman.

#### Medieval Material

Plain is present throughout the sample. Plain tile can take the form of nib tile or peg tile, or a combination of both. There was no indication which it might be. Some of this material may have been used and manufactured into the post medieval period. There was one fragment of over-fired brick that might be medieval, but is too small confirm.

#### Post medieval material

The bulk of the sample comprised post medieval items. Pan tile is present, along with pipe and ridge tile.

#### Conclusion

This material should be retained for further study, at which time it should be recorded by a recognised ceramic building materials specialist.

#### Context Listing

Context	Form/s	Date Range Date	Spot
1000	Pan tile, Ridge (post med), Pipe	Post med	17th+
1006	Plain, Pipe/Tile	Post med	Post med
2001	Plain, Pipe/Ridge	Post med	Post med
2002	?Roman brick, Plain	?Roman- Post med	Med- Post med
2004	Plain	Med- Post med	Med- Post med
2006	Plain, Roman brick	Roman- Post med	Med- Post med
3001	?Pan tile	Post med	Post med
4000	?Pot (abraded)	?Roman	?Roman
4003	Plain, Brick (post med), Brick (overfired, med)	Med-Post med	Post med

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