

Watching Brief during  
removal of unauthorised  
dumped material  
at Woodham Walter Hall  
Woodham Walter  
Essex



**Archaeological  
Watching Brief Report**



May 2012

**Client: Prestige Properties Ltd.**

OA East Report No: 1321  
OASIS No: oxfordar3-125844  
NGR: TL 8135 0653

***Watching Brief during removal of unauthorised dumped material***

***at Woodham Walter Hall, Woodham Walter, Essex***

***(also known as Falconers Lodge, Oak Farm Road)***

*Site Code: WWFL11*

*Finance Code: XEXWAL11*

*Colchester Museum Accession No : COLEM 2012.22*

*OASIS number:oxfordar3-125844*

*EHF Nos. 7783, 7781-5, 47422, 8580-1*

*NGR: TL 8135 0653*

*Date of Works: October to December 2011*

*Report No: 1321*

*Excavator: Kate Clover*

*Illustrations: Stuart Ladd*

*Client: Prestige Properties Ltd*

*Report Date: May 2012*

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## Summary

*Between the 31st October and 22nd December 2011 OA East carried out an archaeological watching brief at Falconers Lodge, Woodham Walter, near Maldon. This is on the northern side of the medieval moated site formerly housing Woodham Walter Hall (TL 8135 0653). The site was designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument in 2010 (National Monument No 35552).*

*Between 2007 and 2010 the previous owner of the site carried out unauthorised dumping of material to the north of the earthworks in order to level up the sloping valley side. The monitoring was carried out during work to remove modern dumped materials. The material had been dumped to the north of a broad east-west earthwork dam. The dumped material was removed using a mechanical excavator. Former, pre-dumping, ground levels were restored including exposing the bank of the medieval dam.*

## 1 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 1.1.1 The area of modern dumping which was subject to the watching brief (hereafter 'the Site') lies to the south-east of the village centre of Woodham Walter, off Oak Farm Road (Fig. 1).
- 1.1.2 The underlying geology of the Site is glacially laid gravels. It is located on the side of a valley which slopes towards the east, down to a small stream that flows north into the River Chelmer. The Site lies at between 28m and 34m OD (pre-dumping heights).
- 1.1.3 The Site is bounded to the south by an earthwork dam, to the east by the stream channel and to the north and west by ploughed fields.

## 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1.1 The information below is mainly taken from the English Heritage Schedule for the Monument (2010) and from the Written Scheme of Works for the watching brief (Grover Lewis Associates, 2011).
- 2.1.2 The site lies on the northern side of the Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) of 'Woodham Walter Hall and associated garden earthworks' (National Monument No 35552). The site was the manor of the Fitzwalter Family who built the Hall in the late 15<sup>th</sup> or early 16<sup>th</sup> century. The monument comprises a rectangular ditched platform – the former site of the hall and walled garden. Further earthworks to the north, east and south-east of the house platform are also included in the scheduled area and suggest more informal landscaping and diversion of a stream course to create water features and a deliberately designed formal approach to the hall. Two surviving east-west earthwork dams to the north of the house platform controlled water flow within the stream valley, creating large expanses of water to provide a setting for the hall and its formal gardens (Fig. 2). One such expanse of water previously filled the area to the north of the northern dam, where the recent dumping took place. This northern dam is breached at its west end by a sinuous depression, possibly an overflow leat which would have filled the shallow bay to the north (Figs. 2 and 3).
- 2.1.3 In c. 1830 a single storey dwelling, Falconers Lodge, was built at the south-western part of the watching brief Site (Ryan, 1989, 86). This brick building was erected on top of the dam, and the land to the north and east formed part of its gardens. In 2007 Falconers Lodge was a burnt-out shell and has since been demolished to ground slab level. The RCHME surveys (Figs. 2 and 3) show Falconers Lodge with a small swimming pool enclosure and summer house to the north-east of it. They also depict a set of steps on the northern side of the dam, seemingly providing access to the gardens and swimming pool enclosure. These steps, the majority of the dam bank, the swimming pool and the ground slab to the summer house had been covered over by the dumped material. The suggested overflow leat (see 2.1.2) at the western end of the northern dam had also been partially infilled.
- 2.1.4 The Royal Commission for Historic Monuments, England (RCHME, now part of English Heritage) carried out a detailed earthwork survey of the whole Woodham Walter Hall site in 1987-8. Their earthwork survey is re-produced in this report as Fig. 2. They described the earthwork dam as being 21m wide at its base and 10m at its top. At its eastern end, where the dam was breached by the stream channel it was 5.5m in height.

- 2.1.5 A topographic survey of the Site was carried out by RCHME in 2003 and the resulting plan contains a series of pre-dumping spot heights across the Site (Fig.3).

### 3 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1.1 Maldon District Council issued an enforcement notice requiring removal of the dumped material under archaeological supervision. English Heritage issued the brief. The current site owner (Prestige Properties Ltd) employed the services of Grover Lewis Associates Ltd who wrote a Written Scheme of Works (WSW) for removal of the dumped material. Scheduled Monument Consent was obtained prior to the work being carried out.
- 3.1.2 All work was carried out using a mechanical excavator, with the supervising archaeologist carrying out some minor hand excavation and cleaning of archaeological features. A toothed bucket was employed to remove the bulk of the modern dumped material and a toothless ditching bucket was used when the original ground surface/bank was neared in order to avoid damaging archaeological remains.
- 3.1.3 The general aims of the project, as set out in the WSW were:  
To ensure the efficient removal of the un-authorized dumped material in such a way that the archaeological interest of the monument is protected and maintained.  
To ensure that undisturbed archaeological remains within the area are not damaged in the course of works  
To allow appropriate archaeological recording of any unexpected archaeological remains exposed in the course of works.
- 3.1.4 The area of the watching brief was located on the northernmost part of the SAM, to the north of an east-west aligned earthwork dam.
- 3.1.5 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using OA East's *pro-forma* sheets. Plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales. Digital photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.
- 3.1.6 A GPS was used to take OD heights after the removal of the dumped material. This was compared with the heights on the 2003 pre-dumping RCHME topographic survey (Fig. 3) to check that the right levels had been reached.
- 3.1.7 Site conditions were favourable.

### 4 RESULTS

- 4.1.1 Over twenty visits were made between 31st October and 22nd December 2011, first by James Drummond-Murray and subsequently by Kate Clover. Before removal of dumped material commenced, a 1.8m wide sondage was cut into the material banked up against the north face of the dam, using a toothless ditching bucket. This sondage (Sondage 1) was located approximately halfway along the course of the dam (Fig. 3). The aim was to find the edge of the bank of the dam and to use this as a guide to its projected course. The sondage located the edge of the dam (see 4.1.6).

- 4.1.2 The mechanical excavator commenced removal of dumped materials from the eastern side, near the stream course, and worked westwards. The watching brief confirmed that the thickness of the dumped material decreased westwards with the rise of the valley slope. Only shallow depths of deposits were present around the site of Falconers Lodge. There was also a decrease of depth of dumped material from south to north. At the northern boundary of the site there was seen to be approximately 0.4m thickness of modern dumped material. The maximum thickness of dumped material was at the south-eastern corner, near the course of the stream. Here the material was up to 3m deep and completely engulfed the lower bank of the dam (Plate 4).
- 4.1.3 The modern dumped material consisted predominantly of an orange gravelly clayey silt. Interleaved with this and showing in section as obvious tip lines was a greyish brown sandy silt (Plate 4). Both deposits contained concrete lumps and modern bricks. Approximately 16m west of the stream course and just to the north of the dam a thick deposit of black humic material had been dumped prior to the orange and the greyish brown deposits. This black material contained modern brick, concrete and textile and is part of the same dumping event (Plate 4).
- 4.1.4 On the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of November the filled in swimming pool was uncovered (Plate 3). As shown on the topographic survey the pool occupied a raised area (Fig. 3). The paving slabs surrounding the pool to the south were still *in situ*. The material immediately covering the paving slabs was a yellowy brown silty clay, 0.4m thick. Adjacent to the swimming pool, on its east side was the ground slab to the summer house. The western wall to the summer house still survived to 0.8m height but had been previously completely engulfed by the modern dumped materials.
- 4.1.5 The steps showing on the RHCME surveys leading down from the top of the bank of the dam were exposed on the 6<sup>th</sup> December. These were located where they were anticipated to be, approximately halfway along the dam. The actual steps had been largely destroyed although some concrete blocks with granite slabs on top were still present. The steps were bounded on the east and west by a brick wall. The western brick wall survived to a height of 0.6m. The eastern brick wall was no longer standing but surviving blocks of brick were seen loose in section. 1970s 'commons' bricks had been used. The style of the bricks and the mortar used indicate that the steps were less than 40 years old (Plates 1, 5 and 6).
- 4.1.6 The earthwork bank to the dam was exposed during the watching brief (context 006) as the modern dumped material (context 001) was carefully cleared away from it. A section drawing was made of a 3m stretch of the earthwork bank (Fig. 4; Plate 5; Section 1). The bank was covered by a mid to dark brown friable sandy silt topsoil (context 002). Roots from recently felled trees were visible and there was common peg-tile present. A small amount of topsoil was removed from the northern face of the bank in order to record the structure of the bank. The bank was seen to have been formed in three layers. The lowest metre of bank consisted of a compact light orangey brown sandy silt with common small gravel (005). This deposit had been contaminated by the modern dumped material and was tinged bluey grey in places. The tree roots present were also a light blue colour and were very smelly. Above 005 was a compact light orangey brown sandy silt with common peg tile fragments (004). The transition from 005 to 004 was indistinct. The upper layer comprised a compact light to mid brown sandy silt, with common peg-tile (003).



- 4.1.7 The bank was recorded as nearly 3m high near the steps. Its height reduced to zero at the western end by Falconers Lodge. At the eastern end by the stream it stood to approximately 3m high (Fig. 3). The reduction in height by Falconers Lodge was partly due to the natural rise in slope at this western end of the site and partly due to denudation by the builders of the Lodge. Here the dam had been reduced and flattened to create a platform for the former dwelling (Plate 6, right foreground).
- 4.1.8 The top of the dam had also been cut into just south of the former Falconers Lodge building (Plate 6, middle right). It is not known when this truncation occurred but it may have been at the time of building Falconers Lodge.
- 4.1.9 North of the dam the removal of the modern dumped material exposed a mid-brown sandy silt subsoil. Some topsoil remained in places but most of the former topsoil had been removed. This probably took place just prior to the dumping of the modern material; the topsoil being exported for use elsewhere.
- 4.1.10 The GPS heights taken after the removal of the dumped material were compared with those marked on the RCHME topographic survey of 2003 to check that the right levels had been reached. A slight problem with the comparison is that the RCHME heights are all between approximately 15m-16m too high i.e. they are all between 44m and 50m rather than between 28m and 34m. However by comparing the relative heights one can see that the right levels have been achieved.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1.1 At least 575 lorry-loads of material were removed from the site under archaeological supervision. The former, pre-dumping, ground levels were restored including exposing the bank of the medieval dam.
- 5.1.2 No dating evidence was retrieved from the earthwork dam apart from peg-tile. It is thought to have been constructed at the same time as the Hall i.e. late 15<sup>th</sup> or early 16<sup>th</sup> century.

## 6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 6.1.1 The author would like to thank Prestige Properties Ltd who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by James Drummond-Murray, the watching brief was carried out by Kate Clover and the GPS survey by David Brown.
- 6.1.2 The brief for archaeological works was written by Deborah Priddy of English Heritage, who visited the site and monitored the watching brief.

## 7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

- English Heritage, 2011 *Brief for the removal of unauthorised dumped material under archaeological supervision:Woodham Walter Hall, Woodham Walter, Essex. National Monument Number 35552*
- Grover Lewis Associates, 2011 *Written Scheme of Works for removal of unauthorised dumped material under archaeological supervision:Woodham Walter Hall, Woodham Walter, Essex*
- RCHME 1988 *Woodham Walter, Essex:Archaeological Survey Report*
- Ryan, P 1989 *Woodham Walter, A Village History*

## APPENDIX A. OASIS REPORT FORM

### Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-125844		
Project Name	Watching Brief during removal of unauthorised dumped material at Woodham Walter Hall, Woodham		
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start	31-10-2011	Finish	22-12-2011
Previous Work (by OA East)	No	Future Work	Yes

### Project Reference Codes

Site Code	WWFL11	Planning App. No.	ENF/11/00082
HER No.		Related HER/OASIS No.	7783, 7781-5, 47422, 8580

### Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt: Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS 5

### Please select all techniques used:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Field Observation (periodic visits)	<input type="checkbox"/> Part Excavation	<input type="checkbox"/> Salvage Record
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Excavation (100%)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Part Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Systematic Field Walking
<input type="checkbox"/> Full Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Recorded Observation	<input type="checkbox"/> Systematic Metal Detector Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysical Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote Operated Vehicle Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Test Pit Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Open-Area Excavation	<input type="checkbox"/> Salvage Excavation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Watching Brief

### Monument Types/Significant Finds & Their Periods

List feature types using the [NMR Monument Type Thesaurus](#) and significant finds using the [MDA Object type Thesaurus](#) together with their respective periods. If no features/finds were found, please state "none".

Monument	Period	Object	Period
Dam	Medieval 1066 to 1540		Select period...
	Select period...		Select period...
	Select period...		Select period...

### Project Location

County	Essex	Site Address (including postcode if possible)
District	Maldon	WB during removal of unauthorised dumped material at Woodham Walter Hall
Parish	Woodham Walter	
HER	Essex	
Study Area		National Grid Reference
		TL 8135 0653

### Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	English Heritage
Project Design Originator	Grover Lewis Associates Ltd
Project Manager	James Drummond-Murray
Supervisor	Kate Clover

### Project Archives

Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
n/a	OA East but eventually Colchester Museu	OA East but eventually Colchester Museu
	Accession ID COLEM 2012.22	Accession ID COLEM 2012.22

### Archive Contents/Media

	Physical Contents	Digital Contents	Paper Contents
Animal Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ceramics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Glass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leather	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Metal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stratigraphic		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Survey		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Textiles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Bone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Stone/Lithic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

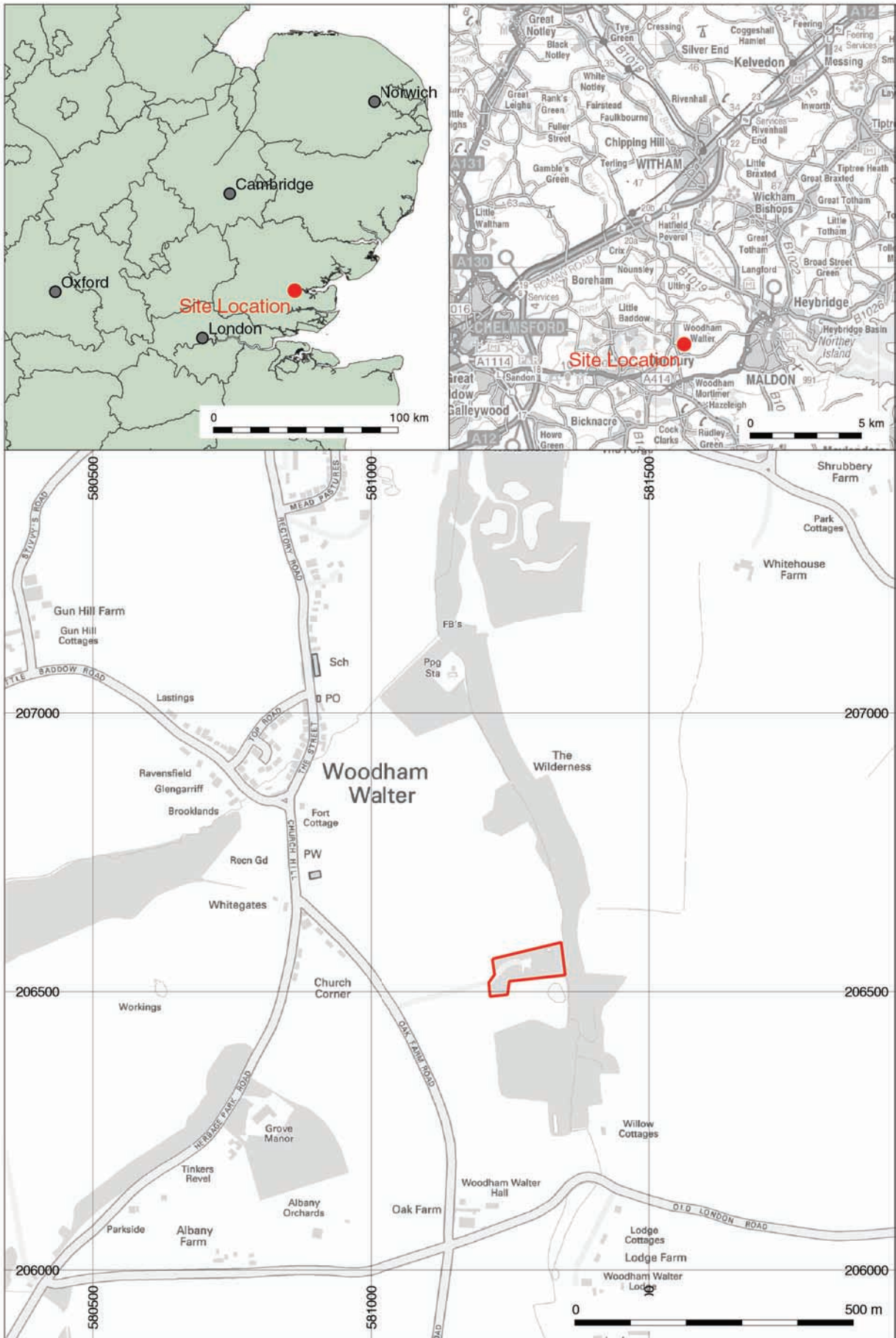
Digital Media	Paper Media
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<input type="checkbox"/> GIS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Context Sheet
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Correspondence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Images	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Diary
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Illustrations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drawing
<input type="checkbox"/> Moving Image	<input type="checkbox"/> Manuscript
<input type="checkbox"/> Spreadsheets	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Map
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Matrices
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Text	<input type="checkbox"/> Microfilm
<input type="checkbox"/> Virtual Reality	<input type="checkbox"/> Misc.
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Research/Notes
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photos
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plans
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sections
	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey

#### Notes:

There may be further work to take levels on the leat

APPENDIX B. ESSEX HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY SHEET

<b>Site name/Address:</b> Watching Brief during removal of unauthorised dumped material at Woodham Walter Hall, Woodham Walter, Essex (also known as Falconers Lodge, Oak Farm Road)	
<b>Parish:</b> Woodham Walter	<b>District:</b> Maldon
<b>NGR:</b> TL 8135 0653(c)	<b>Site Code:</b> WWFL11
<b>Type of Work:</b> Watching Brief	<b>Site Director/Group:</b> Oxford Archaeology East
<b>Date of Work:</b> October to December 2011	<b>Size of Area Investigated:</b>
<b>Location of Finds/Curating Museum:</b> Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service 2012.22	<b>Funding source:</b> Developer
<b>Further Seasons Anticipated?:</b> Yes	<b>Related HER Nos:</b> 7783, 7781-5, 47422, 8580-1
<b>Final Report:</b> no 1321	
<b>Periods Represented:</b> Medieval	
<p><b>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</b></p> <p><i>Between the 31st October and 22nd December 2011 OA East carried out an archaeological watching brief at Falconers Lodge, Woodham Walter, near Maldon. This is on the northern side of the medieval moated site formerly housing Woodham Walter Hall. The site was designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument in 2010 (National Monument No 35552).</i></p> <p><i>Between 2007 and 2010 the previous owner of the site carried out unauthorised dumping of material to the north of the earthworks in order to level up the sloping valley side. The monitoring was carried out during work to remove modern dumped materials. The material had been dumped to the north of a broad east-west earthwork dam. The dumped material was removed using a mechanical excavator. Former, pre-dumping, ground levels were restored including exposing the bank of the medieval dam.</i></p>	
<b>Previous Summaries/Reports:</b> RCHME 1988 Woodham Walter, Essex, Archaeological Survey Report	
<b>Author of Summary:</b> Kate Clover	<b>Date of Summary:</b> May 2012



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Figure 1: Site location

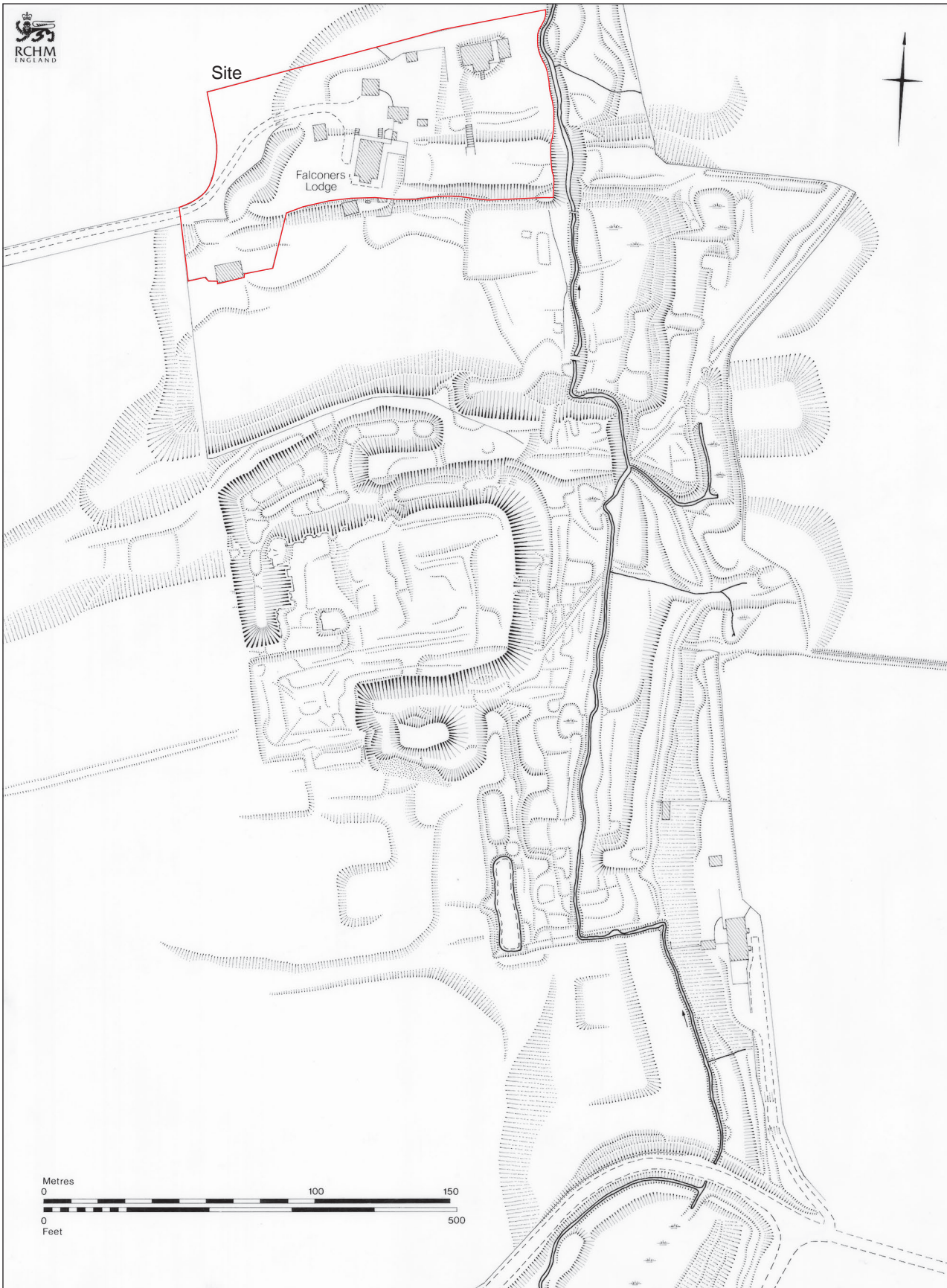


Figure 2: RCHME earthwork survey of Woodham Walter Hall, 1987-88  
Reproduced with permission of English Heritage

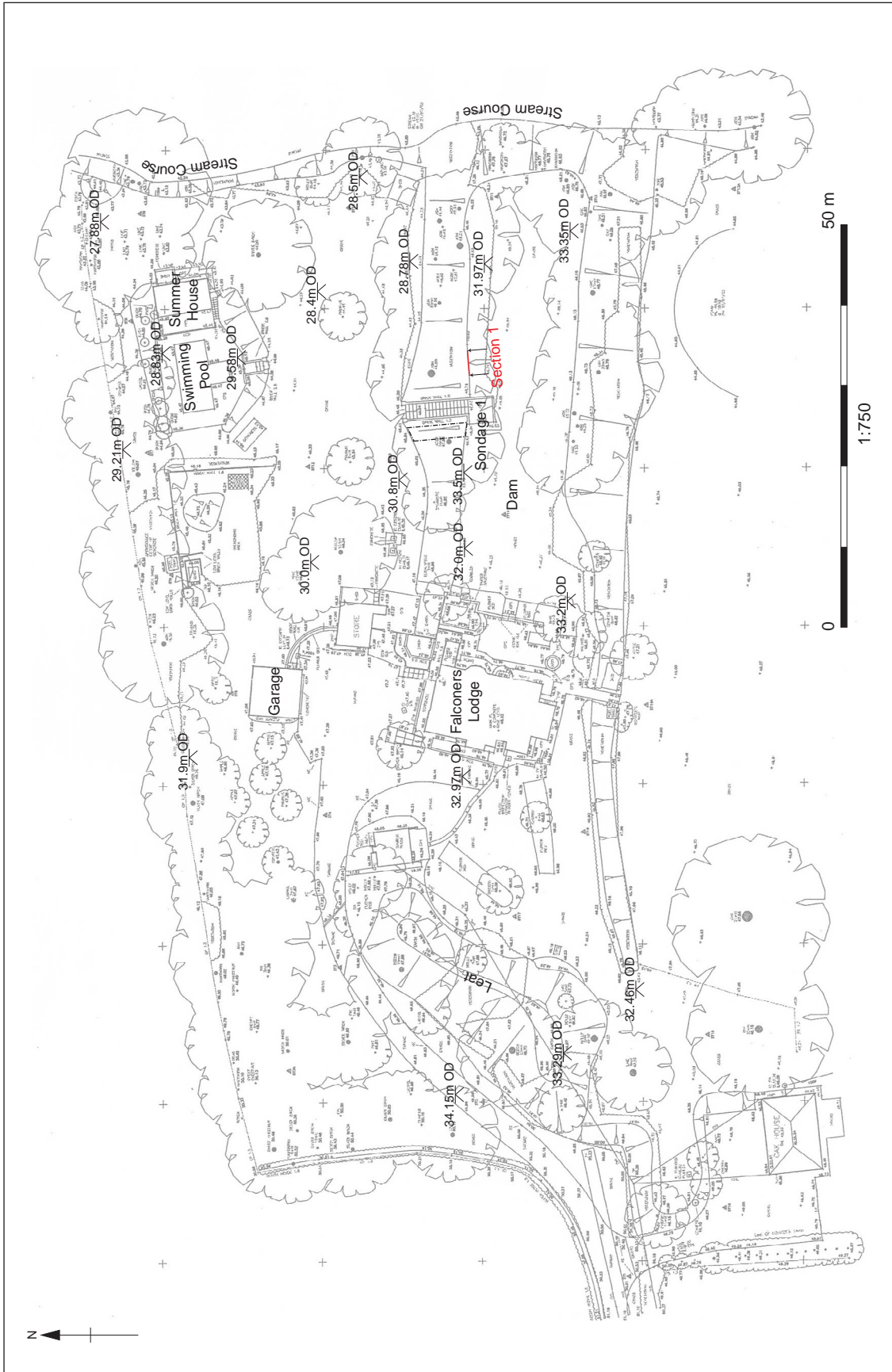


Figure 3: RCHME topographic survey of the site 2003.  
Level: metres OD after removal of dumped material December 2011



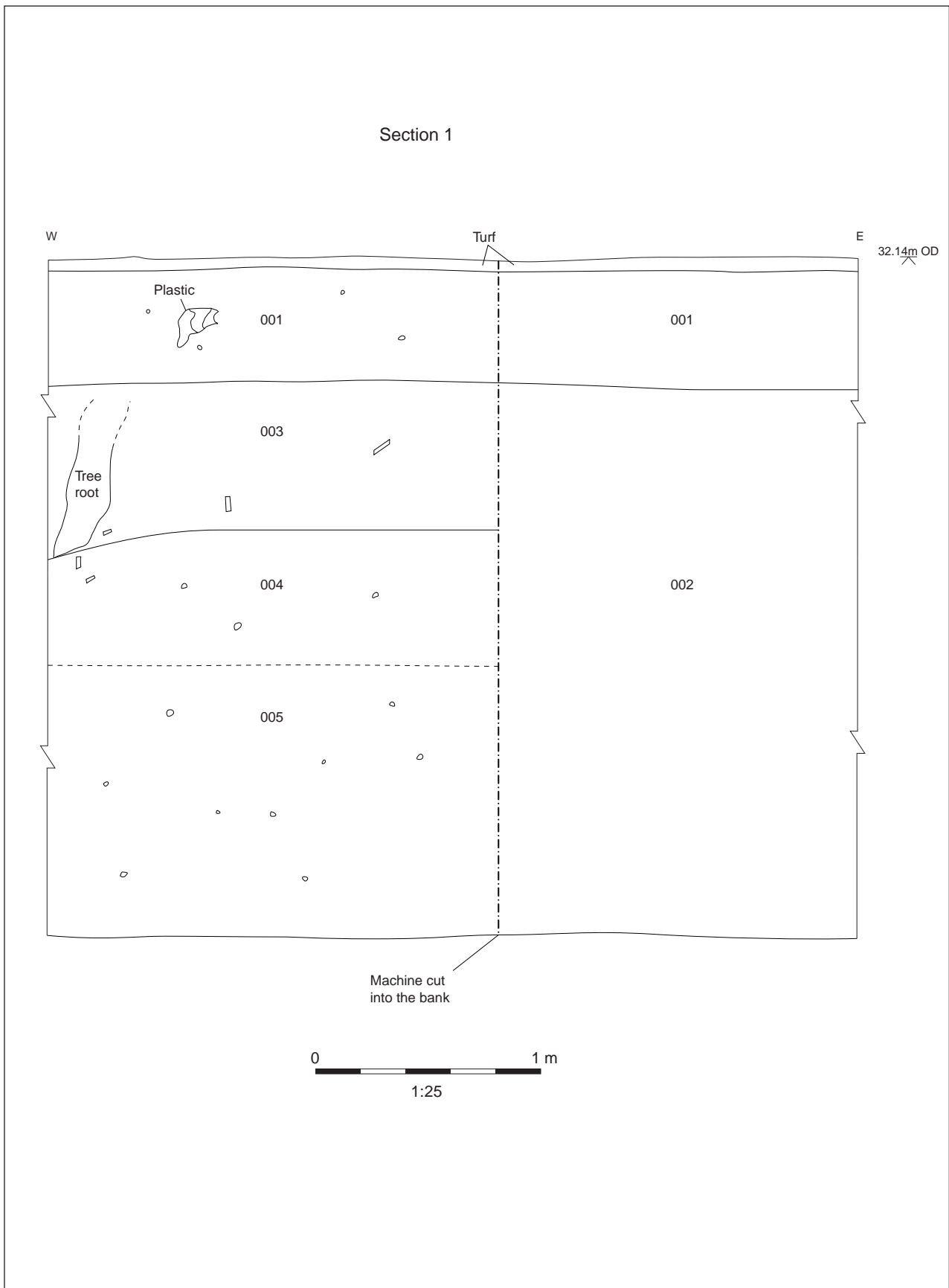


Figure 4: North-facing section of part of the exposed dam



Plate 2: The site of the swimming pool at the eastern end of the site, before removal of dumped material. View from the west.



Plate 3: Removal of dumped material over the swimming pool. View from the east.



Plate 4: The eastern end of the site, showing 3m thickness of dumped material against the dam. View from the north.

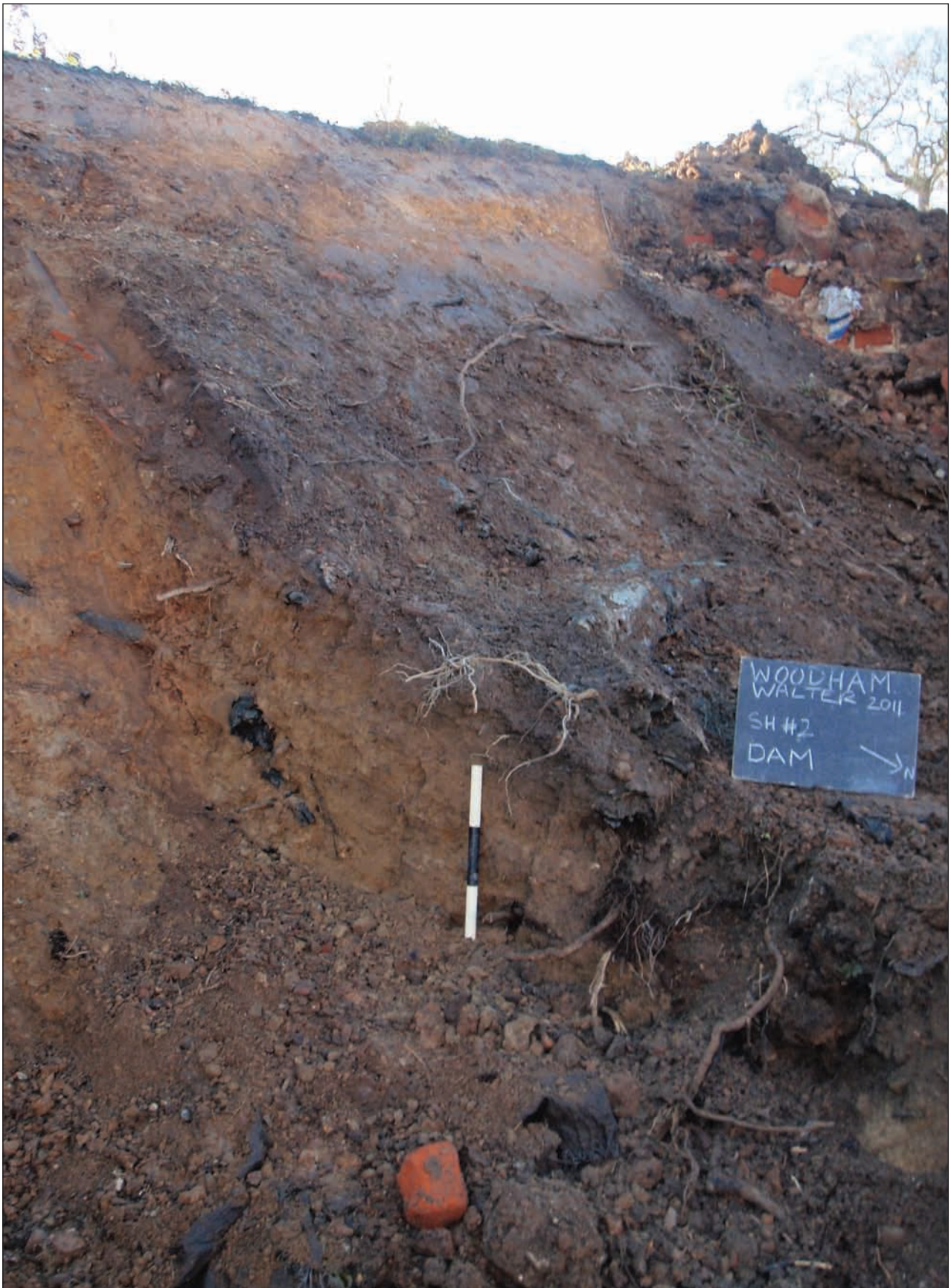


Plate 5: Section of the dam after removal of dumped material, with the steps in the background. View from the north-east.



Plate 6: The site after removal of dumped material. The dam and the site of Falconer's Lodge to the right; the swimming pool to the extreme left. View from the west.



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