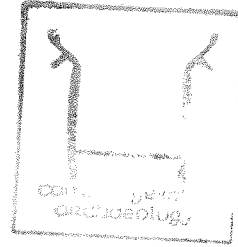
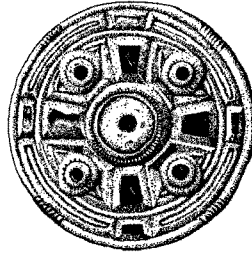


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Archaeological Field Unit

Archaeological Recording Brief at High Street Farm, West Wrattling. Phase II

T L Sutherland BSc, HND, PIFA

1995

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No. A47(Phase II)

Commissioned By J & J Alderton Ltd.

**Archaeological Recording Brief at High Street Farm,
West Wratting. Phase II**

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1995

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SUMMARY

A secondary phase of an archaeological watching brief was carried out at High Street Farm, West Wrating, Cambridgeshire (TL 6066/5200), during January 1995, in the plot to the south-east of the land in which Phase 1 was completed. The observations and recording continued during the excavation, by the contractor, of foundation trenches for a new domestic dwelling.

The trenches were 1.8 metres deep, 0.6 metres wide, and covered the area of the ground plan of the house. Several features were encountered, including a 0.20 metre wide by 0.20 metre tall, brick lined drain, a coursed and mortared pile of bricks, and a row of several loose bricks. A small pit, which was bisected by one trench, was seen to contain a lens of cinders in its fill. A large channel-like feature, which was truncated by several of the trenches, appeared to run in a north/south direction and contained a very wet, silty fill, resembling that of a pond. Its cut had very steep sides, a flat base and may possibly be a part of the former pond which stood close by until it was filled in, in 1994.

A collection of large rough stones, which appeared to lie on top of each other, were removed from the trench in the north of the site, although they lay at a greater depth than the other features and were completely isolated from any other context. Any interpretation should therefore be avoided.

No dating evidence was discovered in association with any of the features although all the bricks on the site appear to date from approximately the eighteenth or early nineteenth century.

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING BRIEF AT HIGH STREET FARM, WEST WRATTING. PHASE II

1 INTRODUCTION

West Wrattling lies 16 km east, south-east of the City of Cambridge. In January 1995, contractors acting on behalf of J & J Alderton Ltd., carried out trenching for building foundations at High Street Farm, fronting onto High Street, West Wrattling, Cambridgeshire (TL 56065/25200). The location of the site and the trenches are given in *Figure 1*. Archaeological observations were carried out and completed for the client in two half days by The Archaeology Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council.

2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The underlying geology is Chalky Boulder Clay (British Geological Survey 1932). The site lies at 117m OD, is generally flat with the land to the north-west and north-east gradually sloping away. The High Street runs in a north-west/south-east direction on the south-west of the site, whilst arable fields lie to the north-east.

The site area had been used as a garden in living memory and the area immediately to the north-west was built upon in December 1994. The Georgian farmhouse of High Street Farm lies immediately to the south-east in, what is now, a separate plot of land.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

To the rear of the property is an area of earthworks, described on the SMR as the possible remains of medieval settlement evidence, comprising several banks and ditches. Assessment work by the Cambridge Archaeological Unit, carried out in response to a proposed golf course (CAU 1991), however, suggested that these earthworks are the degraded remains of medieval field systems and a hollow way. As the site itself fronts onto the High Street it was thought that it may contain evidence of earlier, perhaps medieval, properties.

The enclosure map of 1813 Map (Ref. P184/26/2), and the 1885 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map (Ref. OS LV.4), show the present development area as containing no structures and the boundaries different to those recorded at present. A 1993 revised 1:2500 map shows boundaries similar to those on the 1885 OS map, but no structures, even though the remains of many of these boundaries are no longer visible on the surface.

Evaluation work, carried out by the Archaeology Field Unit of Cambridgeshire County Council, in the adjacent plot to the north-west, discovered the remains of an eighteenth / nineteenth century brick floor and a large boundary ditch containing large sherds of late medieval pottery (Sutherland 1995). These features can be identified as the remains of a building and a major field boundary, both of which are shown on the 1813 Inclosure.

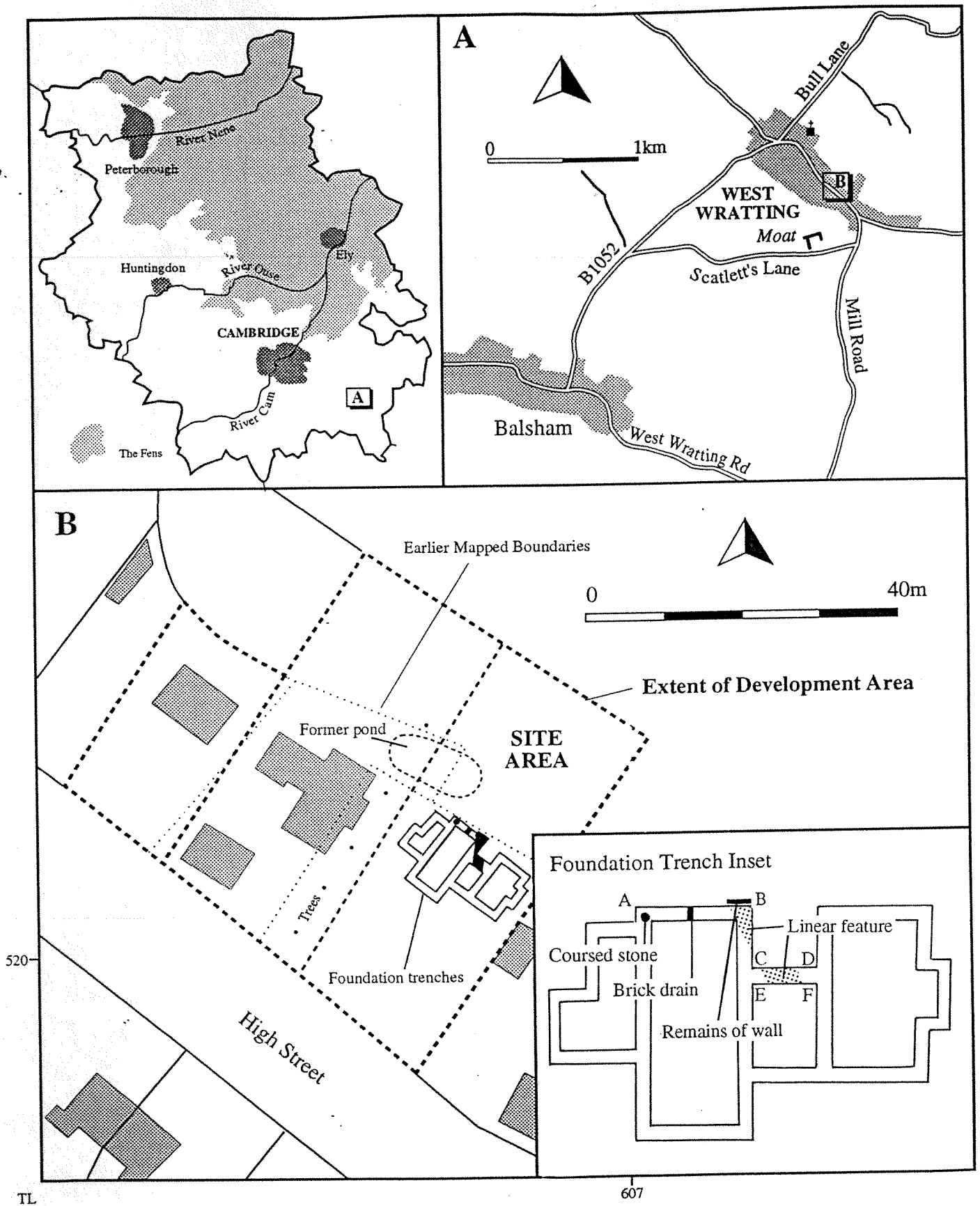


Figure 1 Location map showing archaeological features in the site area

4 METHODOLOGY

The foundation trenches were excavated with a mechanical excavator, using a 0.8 metre wide toothed bucket, to a depth of 1.8 metres. The depth of the trenches was determined by the close proximity of a number of very large trees.

Trenching was only carried out in the positions of the proposed foundations and therefore dictated the areas which would be investigated. After the topsoil had been removed from the site, the subsoils were examined for archaeological features, of which none were identified. Observations were carried out as the trenching progressed until the work was complete. Areas of archaeological interest were then photographed, recorded in plan and section and any artefactual evidence was retrieved and recorded.

5 RESULTS

The general area of the trenches had been recently disturbed when used as a location for a spoil heap for construction work on the adjacent plot to the west. This led to a great deal of material from elsewhere being spread across the site, resulting in unreliable upper contextual evidence. After the topsoil was removed this problem was generally resolved.

Several areas uncovered archaeologically stratified material of a particular interest.

5.1 Trench A-B

A very distinctive feature was that of a line of bricks (102, Fig 2) which crossed the trench, 1.3 metres below the old ground surface (Fig 1). This consisted of two parallel rows of bricks on their sides, capped by other bricks lying lengthways, which enclosed a void measuring 0.13 metres by 0.10 metres. The bricks were laid on a bed of yellow sand and gravel (103), which in turn lay on and within the clay natural which overlay the more solid geology (101). No cut could be seen relating to this feature.

A second area of laid bricks (112) could be seen in the subsoils to the east of the drain (Fig 2). These consisted of several layers of coursed brick 0.4 metres wide and 0.25 metres deep which were without mortar and lay approximately 0.4 metres below the old ground surface. They lay at the same depth as other bricks seen lying in the subsoils further to the north-west (111), although these seemed to be more randomly placed and on no particular level.

To the north-west of the bricks, and stratigraphically below them, one could clearly see a 'U'-shaped cut 106, which was filled with a primary fill of cinders (114), and a secondary fill of clayey soil (105). No artefacts were found in either of the fills.

All the bricks found within these contexts measured 4.5cm x 11.5cm x 23cm, and are of a mass produced, hard fired type from the mid to late eighteenth or early nineteenth century.

Underneath the coursed bricks (112), and below the subsoil, could be seen a very steep, flat bottomed cut **108**, which was greater than 1.1 metre wide and 1 metre deep (Fig 2). This contained a very silty fill (107), which held virtually no inclusions and no artefacts

Directly below **108**, was another very steep but narrow tapering cut **110**, which was 0.5 metres wide at the top but was deeper than the trench and so its depth and base could not be assessed. Its fill (109), was very similar to, if not the same as, that of (107).

During the excavation of the extreme north-west of this trench, an area of stones (113) could be seen in its cut (Fig 2). This consisted of several courses of limestone blocks which measured approximately 30 cm x 25cm x 6cm and lay at a depth of 1.8 metres from the old ground surface. No cut could be seen related to their deposition. As this feature lay in the centre of the trench, it was removed during excavation with no sign of it remaining in the sections, which indicated its narrow width.

5.2 Trench B-C

Below the subsoil, in the south-east side of the trench, a 1.2 metre deep and more than 1.8 metre wide cut **108**, could be clearly seen in the section. This adjoined the same feature in trench A-B.

5.3 Trench C-D

Below the subsoil, in the middle of the trench, a 2 metre wide area of differential material could clearly be seen (Fig 3). It was contained in a cut **105**, which had straight steep sides, a flat bottom and rounded corners. The fill (104), was identical to that of (107). This feature was mirrored to the south, in the opposite section of the trench, that is E-F.

6 INTERPRETATION

The laid bricks (112), appear to be the remains of a structure of some form, although due to their age (approximately eighteenth or nineteenth century), they can not be associated with any known mapped buildings as there are none on the site from 1813 onwards. This would indicate that it was earlier than 1813 although this feature's relatively insignificant proportions together with its location next to the farm house, suggest that it may represent the remains of a small out-building. It may also have been built in a later period out of older bricks.

The brick-lined void (102), which has been interpreted as a drain, would appear to be approximately contemporary with the other brick feature (112), as the bricks are of a very similar type, although again, earlier bricks may have been used in a later period. They are also very similar to those in the Georgian Farmhouse, which lies adjacent to the site, and so probably date to the mid to late 1700s. The present site formerly belonged to the farm and was used as a part of its garden until the plot was recently divided up. No structures are believed to have stood on the plot in living memory.

A negative feature **106**, which lies stratigraphically below the bricks (112), contains a primary cinder fill (114), which suggests that it was either a rubbish pit or a hole excavated to accept a sapling. Neither the primary or the secondary fills contained any artefacts. The placing of cinders or charcoal into a pit was a common practice when planting young apple trees for an orchard.

A different negative feature **108**, which also lies stratigraphically below the bricks (112), but has no direct relationship to **106**, has the appearance of a large pit or ditch. It contains a very fine silty fill (107), which is similar to that of pond sediments, in that they are very dark and give off a strong odour. It contained no inclusions or artefacts.

Directly below this feature, and possibly a part of it as it contains a very similar fill, lies another negative feature **110**, which could be seen as either a very narrow ditch or a deep, narrow pit. It also contained no inclusions or artefacts. If the two features are ditches then the higher may be a re-cut of the lower.

The coursed stones found in the north-west of trench A-B (113), were found in isolation and appear to have been deposited by human action. There was no evidence for a cut made to accept them, an anomaly which is paralleled by the brick drain (102). The date and function of this feature is unknown.

The negative feature **108**, seen in Trench B-C, should be seen as a part of feature **108** in Trench A-B, as it is connected to it across the corner of the trench and therefore its fill is the same.

Similarly, the negative feature **105** in Trench C-D, and its fill (104), is identical to those of (107) and (109) and so these features, that is **108**, **110**, and **105** may be one and the same.

Whether this feature was a ditch, a short water channel or a pond is debatable. There was no evidence for it in the other trenches further to the south, although it may represent the terminal of a longer ditch. Its fill suggests that it silted up before it was buried under the subsoils although a lack of dating evidence provides no clue as to when this happened or how old the feature is. A pond existed in the north of the site until 1994, when it was filled in as a part of the modern development, and this feature may once have been a part of it.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Sutherland, T.L., 1995, *Archaeological Recording Brief at High Street Farm, West Wratting. Report number A 47*, Archaeological Field Unit, Cambridgeshire County Council.

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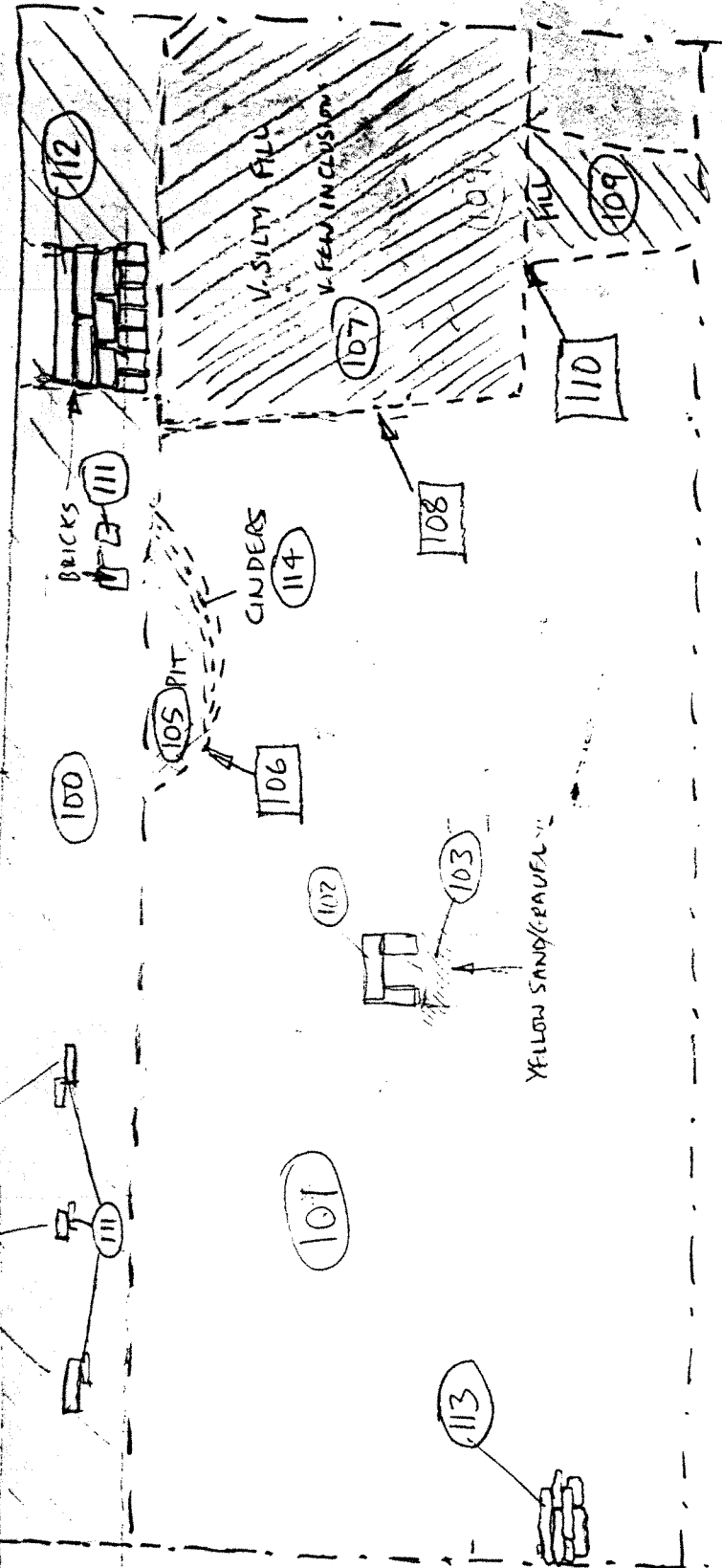
OLD GRAVING SURFACE

POSSIBLE LINE OF SMALL WALL

OLD GRAVING SURFACE

B

A



BRICKS

CINDERS

PIT

YELLOW SAND/GRAVEL

V. SILTY FILL

V. FEW INCISIONS

FILL

COURSED ? LIMESTONE?

IN ISOLATED AREA

SEEN IN CENTRE OF TRENCH (REMOVED)

HIGH STREET FARM

WEST WRATTLING

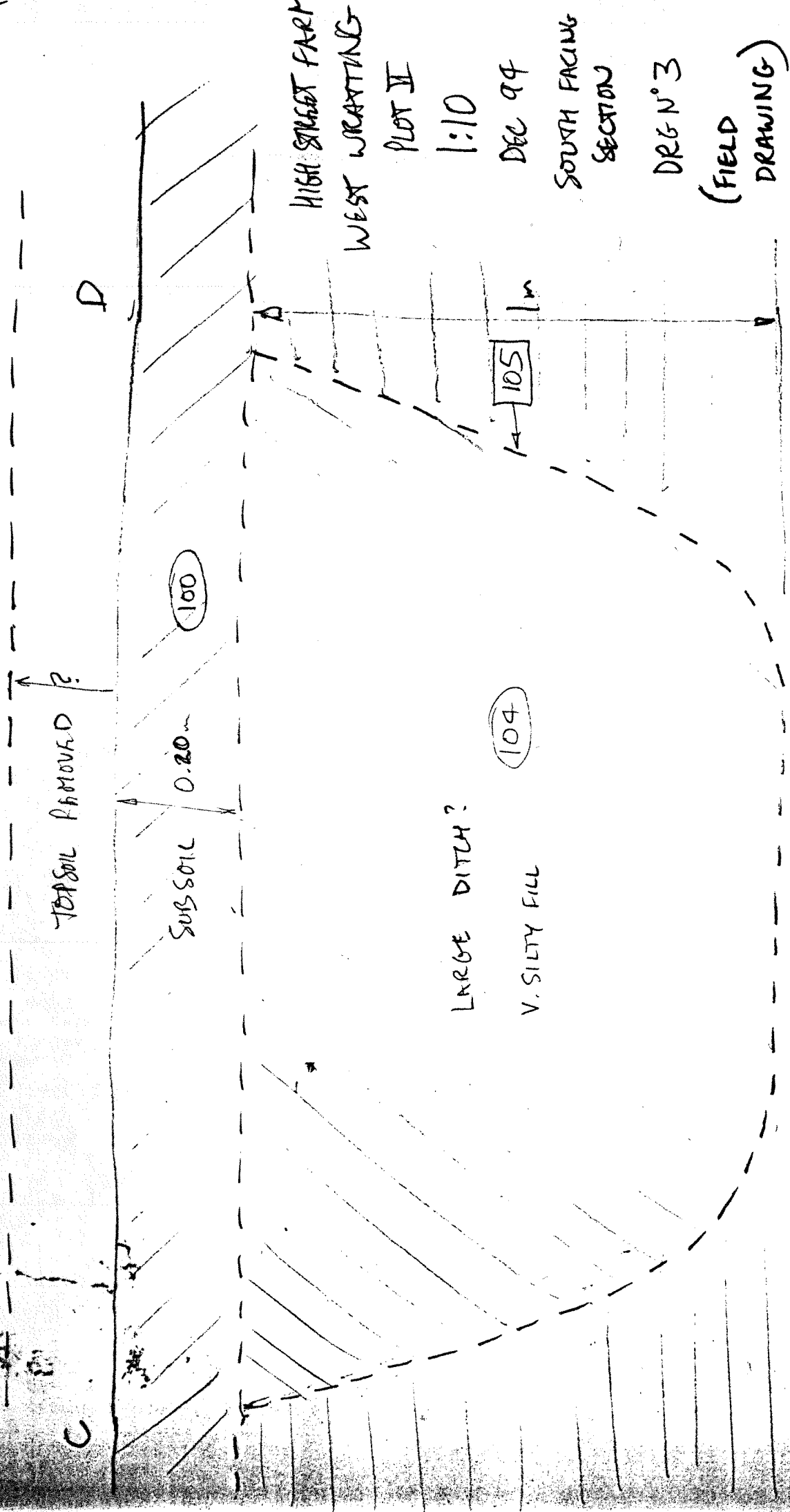
(FIELD DRAWING)

PLOT II

1:20

DEC 94

SOUTH FACING SECTION



HIGH STREET FARM
 WEST WREATHING
 PLOT II
 1:10
 DEC 99
 SOUTH FACING
 SECTION
 DRG N° 3
 (FIELD
 DRAWING)

HIGH STREET FARM
WEST WEATHING
PLOT II

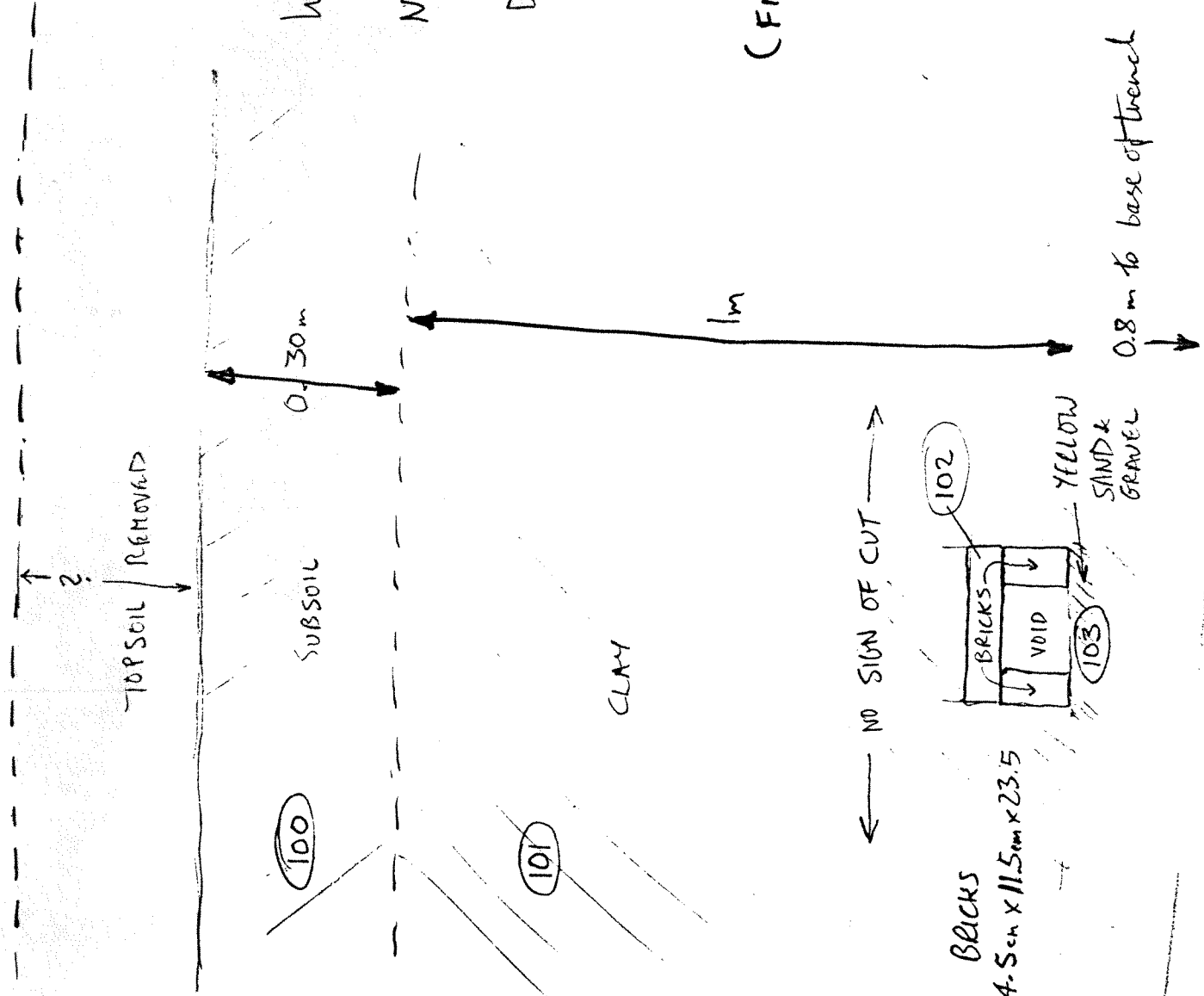
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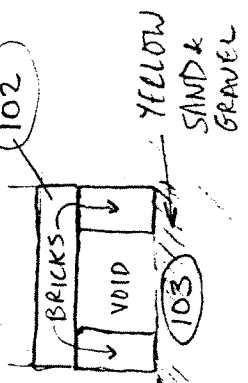
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DEG N° 2

(FIELD DRAWING)



NO SIGN OF CUT



BRICKS
4.5cm x 11.5cm x 23.5



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