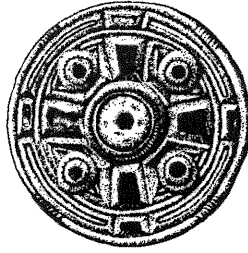


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Archaeological Field Unit

**Swans Corner, Mill Lane, Whittlesford:
An Archaeological Evaluation**

Steve Hickling

December 2004

Cambridgeshire County Council

Report No. 779

Commissioned by *Caroline Lock*

Swans Corner, Mill Lane, Whittlesford: An Archaeological Evaluation

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Editor: Aileen Connor

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SUMMARY

On the 21st December 2004, the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit conducted an archaeological evaluation, consisting of one small trench, at Swans Corner, Mill Lane, Whittlesford.

The evaluation produced 3 features of uncertain function and containing no datable finds. Two features, with light coloured and compact fills appeared quite early. The small amount of topsoil present and the uneven ground surface suggests that there has been a great amount of disturbance, perhaps efforts to level the area.

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Drawing Conventions

Sections

Plans

Limit of Excavation -----

Cut _____

Cut - Conjectured -----

Soil Horizon -----

Soil Horizon - Conjectured -----

Intrusion/Truncation -----

Top of Natural _____

Top Surface _____

Break in Section -----

Cut Number 118

Deposit Number 117

Ordnance Datum $\frac{18.45\text{m ODN}}{\Delta}$

Limit of Excavation _____

Deposit - Conjectured -----

Natural Features -----

Intrusion/Truncation -----

Sondages/Machine Strip -----

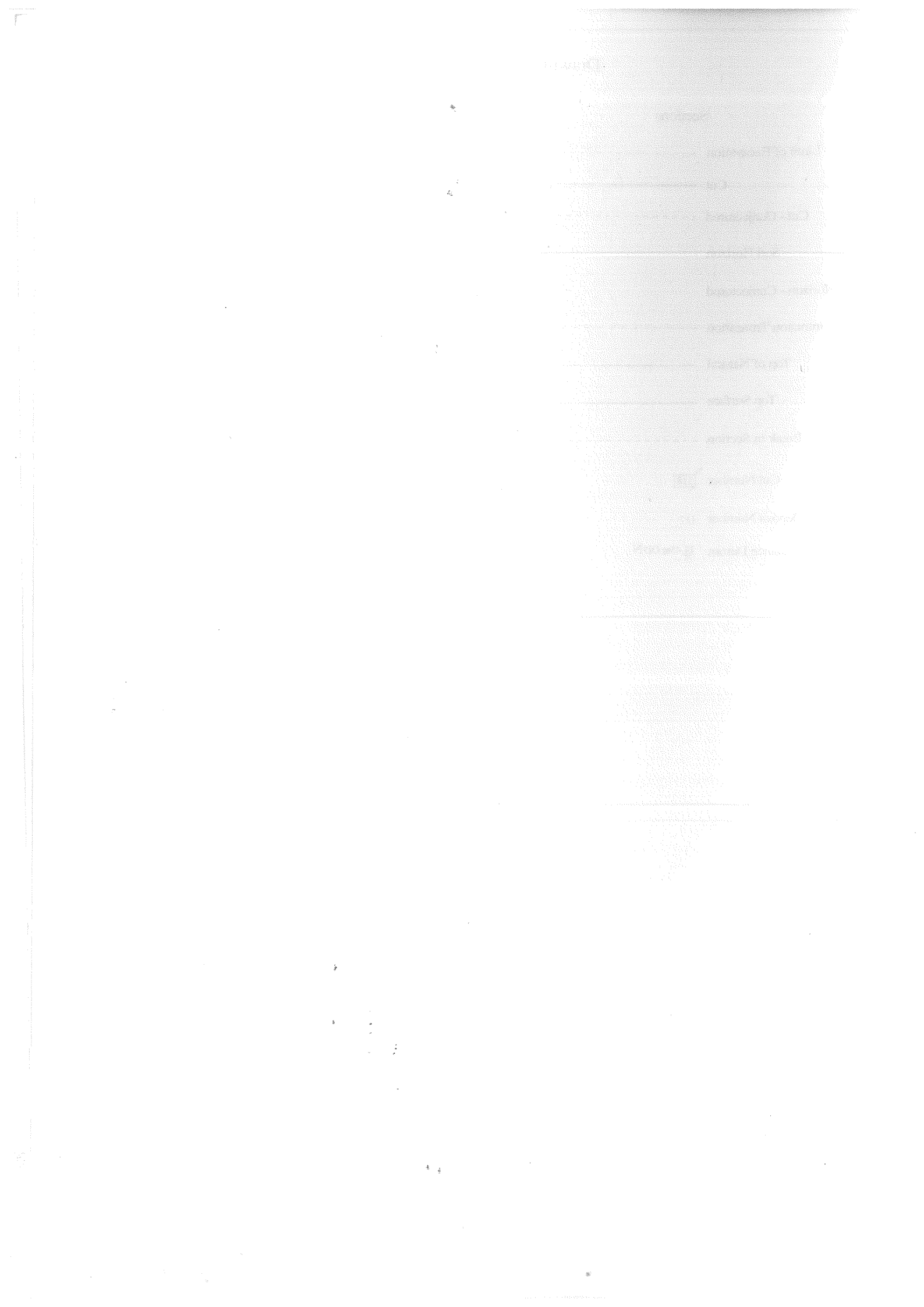
Illustrated Section S.14 _____

Excavated Feature

Excavated Slot

Modern Deposit

Cut Number 118



**Swans Corner, Mill Lane, Whittlesford:
An Archaeological Evaluation**
TL 4772 4845

1 INTRODUCTION

During December 2004, the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit (AFU) conducted an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching at Swans Corner, Whittlesford, Cambridgeshire. The work was carried out at the request of Caroline Lock in order to fulfil a Brief for Archaeological Investigation issued by Andy Thomas, Principal Archaeologist, Land Use & Planning, Cambridgeshire County Council, in advance of the construction of a new stable block.

The site is located at the end of Mill Lane, Whittlesford, adjacent to the bridge over the river Cam.

2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

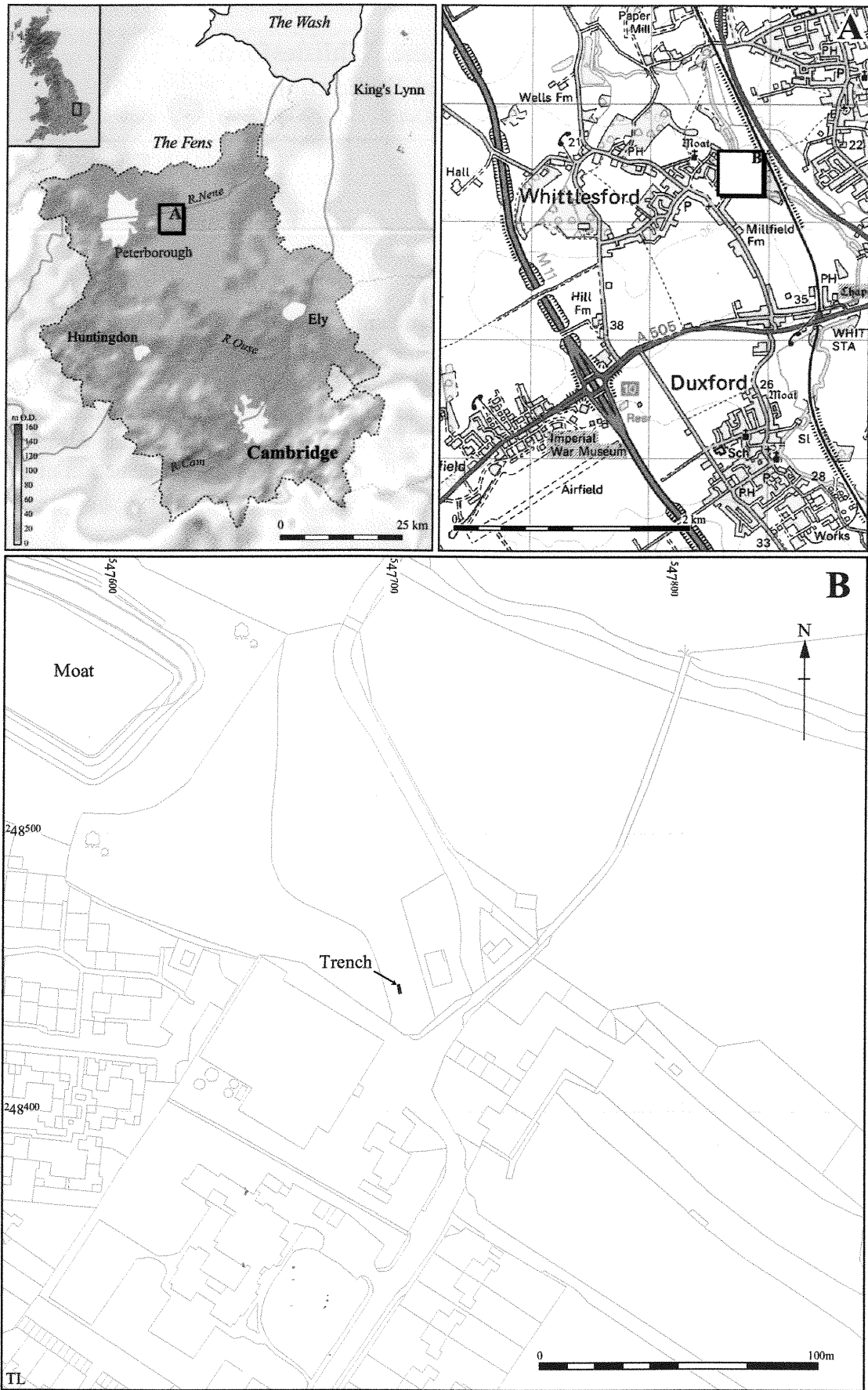
The site is located on river terrace gravels (British Geological Survey, Sheet 205, Saffron Walden, 1:50,000), at a height of 21m OD.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The site is within the historic core of the village. The parish church of St Mary and St Andrew (SMR 04271, Norman with evidence of Anglo-Saxon origins) is located 360m to the west, while the moated site of Whittlesford Manor (SMR 01001) is 200m to the northwest. Excavations here in 1994 revealed late medieval and early post medieval remains (SMR11415). Excavations at Butts Green, just to the south of the manor, revealed medieval features (SMR11513). Traces of earthworks (SMR 11256) in the vicinity may be related to the medieval development of the village.

A map dating from the 1830s (C. Lock, pers. com.) show the site as containing two buildings and belonging to the watermill (built in the mid 18th century).

Later in the 19th century the site was within the park belonging to Whittlesford Manor, and adjacent to a water mill, which is still standing.



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Figure 1 Location of the evaluation trench.

The 1891 Ordnance Survey map shows an enclosure with the same boundaries as the modern Swans Corner, but with no buildings depicted within it.

Archaeological monitoring was undertaken during the construction of the new house at Swans Corner but, due to the limited nature of the intrusive ground works, no archaeological remains were identified (SMR ECB393, AFU report B29).

In modern times, the site of the proposed stable block was used as a small-scale rubbish dump.

4 **METHODOLOGY**

One trial trench 3.3m long and 1m wide was excavated using a 1.5-ton minidigger fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under archaeological supervision. The topsoil was mechanically removed to the top of natural geology.

The exposed surfaces were cleaned in order to clarify any features or deposits. All exposed features and deposits were excavated and recorded according to AFU standards and practises.

5 **RESULTS**

An average of 0.1m of topsoil was stripped off revealing a chalky gravel natural subsoil. Three features were present, probably pits. Feature **02** was probably circular in shape, 0.66m in diameter and 0.28m deep. Its fill was a light greyish brown chalky silty clay. Feature **03** was probably in the region of 1m wide and 0.2m deep. Its fill was a loose, dark, gravel rich silt, identical to the topsoil. Feature **05** was probably circular and 0.15m deep. Its fill was a light to mid grey chalky silty clay with gravel and chalk lumps. No finds were recovered from any of these features.

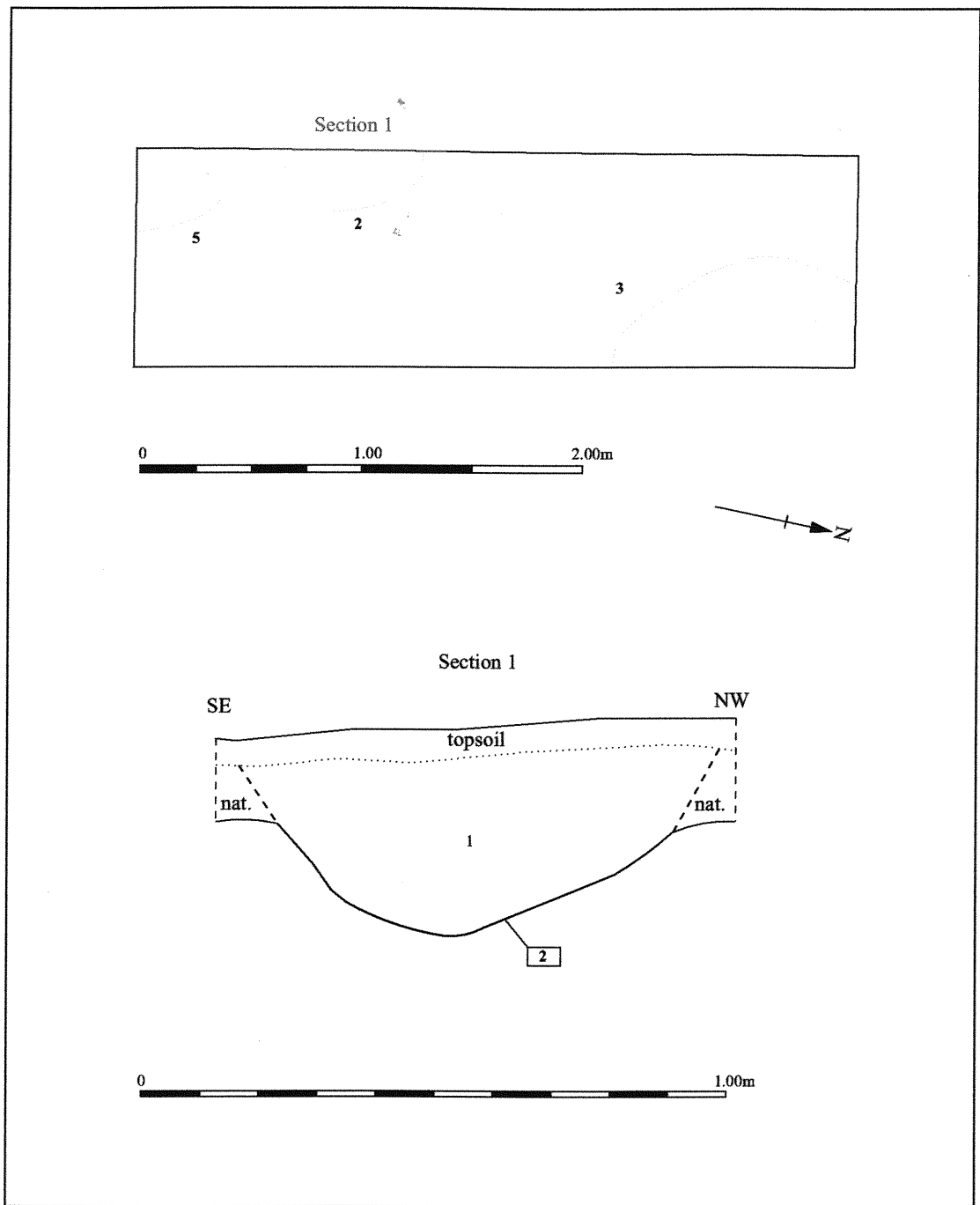


Figure 2 Trench Plan with the section of Feature 02

6 CONCLUSION

The evaluation produced three features, probably pits, none of which contained datable finds. Pit 03, was probably the most modern since it was filled with topsoil, it may be associated with the site being used as a rubbish dump. The other two features, with their much lighter and denser fills were probably cut considerably earlier, although it was not possible to establish when. The presence of pit 03 and the small amount of topsoil present suggests that there has been a great amount of disturbance in the recent past, perhaps associated with landscaping.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank Caroline Lock who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by Aileen Connor. Carlos Silva produced the illustrations.

The brief for archaeological works was written by Andy Thomas, County Archaeology Office, who visited the site and monitored the evaluation.

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