

Watching Brief at Brandon Sewage Treatment Works, Suffolk



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



September 2011

Client: Anglian Water

OA East Report No: 1299

OASIS No: oxfordar3-105590

NGR: TL 7749 8647

Report Title

Watching Brief

Site Code: BRD 217

Date of Works: 19/7/2011 – 22/8/2011,

Report No: 1299

Excavator: Anthony Haskins

Client: Anglian Water

Report Date: 22/8/2011

Table of Contents

Summary	5
1 Geology and Topography	7
2 Archaeological Background	7
3 Methodology	7
4 Results	8
4.1 Car Park and Spoil Heap Areas.....	8
4.2 Wash-down Slab Area.....	8
4.3 Ducting and Pipework.....	9
4.4 Pump slab.....	9
5 Discussion and Conclusions	9
5.1 Car park, Spoil heap, Pump Slab, Pipework and Ducting areas.....	9
5.2 Wash-down Slab area.....	9
6 Acknowledgements	10
Bibliography	11
Appendix A. OASIS Report Form	12

List of Figures

- Fig. 1 Site location map
- Fig. 2 Trench plan
- Fig. 3 Sections

Summary

From the 20th July 2011, OA East carried out an archaeological watching brief at Brandon Sewage Treatment Works (TL 7749 8647). The monitoring was carried out during the excavation of an area for the construction of a new wash-down slab, and related ducting and pipework. Three further areas were excavated to create parking space, an area to store subsoil and an area for the construction of a new pump base. A single archaeological feature was identified within the area of the wash-down slab.

1 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 1.1.1 The site, located within the Brandon Sewage Treatment Works, lies on the edge of a flood plain south of the river Little Ouse. The flood plain is made up of chalk bedrock sealed by wind blown deposits and peat (Tester 2008, Craven 2007). The site is located at 5.3-5.9m OD.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1.1 Scattered sites around Brandon indicate the presence of Neolithic (BRD 193), Bronze Age (BRD 193), Iron Age (BRD 047) and some Roman (BRD 026/046) occupation.
- 2.1.2 The most substantial occupation of Brandon starts in the Middle Saxon period with an unnamed settlement located south of the River Little Ouse at Staunch Meadows; now the current recreation grounds to the north-west of the Sewage Treatment Works. A complete settlement with buildings, industrial area and at least one church were uncovered in a series of excavations (BRD 018) that started in the 1970's. This settlement was located on a sand bar island above the surrounding flood plain. The flood plain was made up of peat deposits (BRD 204). The settlement was built at the lowest crossing point of the Little Ouse and evidence of a causeway crossing the river was uncovered (Carr 1988, Craven 2007).
- 2.1.3 Evidence for at least 25 recognised buildings were discovered. These were of similar construction and had little evidence to identify the function of separate structures. A church was found within the settlement.
- 2.1.4 The high quality artefacts and ecclesiastical material recovered from the site would suggest some form of religious or monastic site. The main focus of the occupation was Middle Saxon with a date range of 600-900AD. A major landscape change was recorded and dates to circa 640AD.
- 2.1.5 The site went out of use around the 9th Century and is likely to coincide with the Danish occupation of Thetford. Around this time the settlement moves to the south of the Sewage Treatment plant. It was focussed around the area of St. Peter's church, the only grade 1 listed building in Brandon, located opposite the entrance to the sewage works. The earliest surviving parts of the church date to the 13th century (BRD 071/202) (Tester 2008).
- 2.1.6 Final abandonment of the area around St. Peter's church and the sewage treatment works occurred in the 15th - 16th century (Pocock). A recent housing estate was later built within this area.
- 2.1.7 Anglo-saxon material has also been recovered from the area of the Sewage plant itself (BRD 047/misc).

3 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1.1 The objective of this watching brief was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.
- 3.1.2 The Brief required that any archaeological features exposed during ground works were recorded and interpreted to an acceptable standard in accordance with IFA guidelines.
- 3.1.3 The area of investigation was located at the north-west edge of the current sewage treatment works. The slab was located 2m north of the sludge holding tanks and 5m

west of the aeration tank. The car park area was located at the end of the concrete road to the west of the slab area and spoil heap area was located north of the car park area. The ducting and pipework ran from the slab area to the south and east between the sludge holding tanks, the primary settlement tanks and the aeration tank. The pump slab was located between the two primary settlement tanks (fig. 2).

- 3.1.4 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using OA East's *pro-forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales digital photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.
- 3.1.5 Site conditions were generally good, with bright occasionally cloudy weather. The initial ground works for the car park, spoil heap and slab were carried out by a 2 tonne 360 mechanical excavator using a 1.2m ditching bucket. The machine was replaced with a 5 tonne 360 mechanical excavator using a 1.8m ditching bucket at the point it was realised a deeper excavated depth was needed to provide sufficient support for the wash-down slab. The machining was controlled by a banksman.
- 3.1.6 The ducting and pipework trenches were excavated using a 0.6m wide ditching bucket under the control of a banksman.
- 3.1.7 The Pump slab was excavated using the 5 tonne 360 mechanical excavator using a 1.8m ditching bucket.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Car Park and Spoil Heap Areas

- 4.1.1 The area excavated to extend the area for parking cars contained a single deposit (5). 5 was made up of a mix of recently redeposited sand, peat and topsoil, most likely formed during the construction of the concrete sewage tanks in the 1970's. This deposit was partially excavated to a maximum depth of 0.14m. As such no archaeological deposits were uncovered.
- 4.1.2 The area excavated for the spoil heap was located slightly to the north of the Car parking area. This again was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.14m. It contained a single deposit (6). 6 is likely to be the same deposit as 5. No archaeological deposits were located within this area

4.2 Wash-down Slab Area

- 4.2.1 The area excavated for the placement of the wash-down slab was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.83m in the south-east corner. Within the area of the wash down slab a single archaeological feature and three deposits were recorded.
- 4.2.2 The archaeological feature 1 was a small curvilinear gully running from a north-east to south-west alignment turning to an east west alignment (fig. 2/3 Section 1). It had a maximum depth of 0.20m and a maximum width of 0.45m. The Gully was shallow with gently sloping sides and a concave to flat base. The gully contained a single fill, (2), a light black-brown silty-sand. The entirety of the visible feature was excavated by hand for finds retrieval.
- 4.2.3 The remaining two deposits were composed of recently redeposited material (3 and 4). 3 was a firm/compact dark-black-brown sandy silt formed from redeposited peat mixed with topsoil and sand. 4 was a loose mid-grey-brown silty-sand formed from a mix of

sand, topsoil and peat. Both of these deposits seem to have been formed by a mix of the local peat, topsoil and sand (fig. 3 Section 2).

4.3 Ducting and Pipework

- 4.3.1 A series of trenches were put in to take electrical ducting and pipework to and from the wash-down slab. The ducting and pipework was primarily excavated to the south of the slab although one pipe trench was excavated north of the slab to the drill pit. The pipework was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.6m through redeposited material around the sewage tanks this material was similar and likely to be the same as 4, a mix of topsoil, peat and sand, most likely formed during the excavation of the sewage tanks in the 1970's. These trenches and pipework did not impact on archaeological levels.
- 4.3.2 Further excavation was carried out for a drill pit into the main drain north of the wash-down slab. The drill pit was excavated using a 1.8m ditching bucket and was 1.2 deep. The deposit excavated was the same as 4, a loose mid-grey-brown sandy-silt formed from redeposited material. The excavation was not deep enough to impact on archaeological levels.

4.4 Pump slab

- 4.4.1 An area of 5.2m by 6m was excavated to the south-east of the wash-down slab between the primary settlement tanks. This slab was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.55m and had no impact on archaeological features as it remained within the ground disturbed by the construction of the sewage works.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Car park, Spoil heap, Pump Slab, Pipework and Ducting areas

- 5.1.1 These areas were not excavated to a sufficient depth to impact on archaeological features.

5.2 Wash-down Slab area

- 5.2.1 The slab area uncovered the only archaeological feature **1.1** was a small curvilinear ditch that could be a segment of a ring gully forming an eaves drip for a round house, or part of an early boundary or drainage ditch. However, due to the small area uncovered the use of the gully could not be fully determined.
- 5.2.2 The worked flint recovered from within the feature would suggest a prehistoric date. This is supported by the fact it cuts into a wind blown sand. The wind blown sand certainly formed under the peat and may be a similar deposit to that identified under the peat within excavations carried out in the recreation grounds adjacent to the sewage treatment works. The excavation of the recreation grounds suggested the peat growth occurred from the late iron age (Tester 2008).

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 6.1.1 The author would like to thank Anglia water who commissioned and funded the archaeological work. The project was managed by James Drummond-Murray.
- 6.1.2 The brief for archaeological works was written by Jess Tipper, who monitored the watching brief.
- 6.1.3 The author would also like to thank Rob Pinchbeck of RMP site engineering for supplying a copy of the plans for the final location of the wash-down slab and roadway.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX A. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordar3-105590		
Project Name	Watching Brief at Brandon Sewage Treatment Works, Suffolk		
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start	19-07-2011	Finish	22-08-2011
Previous Work (by OA East)	No	Future Work	No

Project Reference Codes

Site Code	BRD217	Planning App. No.	
HER No.		Related HER/OASIS No.	

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 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
Gully	Early Prehistoric -500k to -4k		Select period...
	Select period...		Select period...
	Select period...		Select period...

Project Location

County	Suffolk	Site Address (including postcode if possible)
District	Forest Heath	Church Road Brandon Suffolk IP270 1R
Parish	Brandon	
HER	Suffolk County Council	
Study Area	120 sqm	National Grid Reference TL 774 864

Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	Jess Tipper
Project Design Originator	James Drummond-Murray
Project Manager	James Drummond-Murray
Supervisor	Anthony Haskins

Project Archives

Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
Suffolk County Council	OA East	Suffolk County Council
XSFBAT11	XSFBAT11	XSFBAT11

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"/>
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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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

Notes:



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Figure 1: Site location

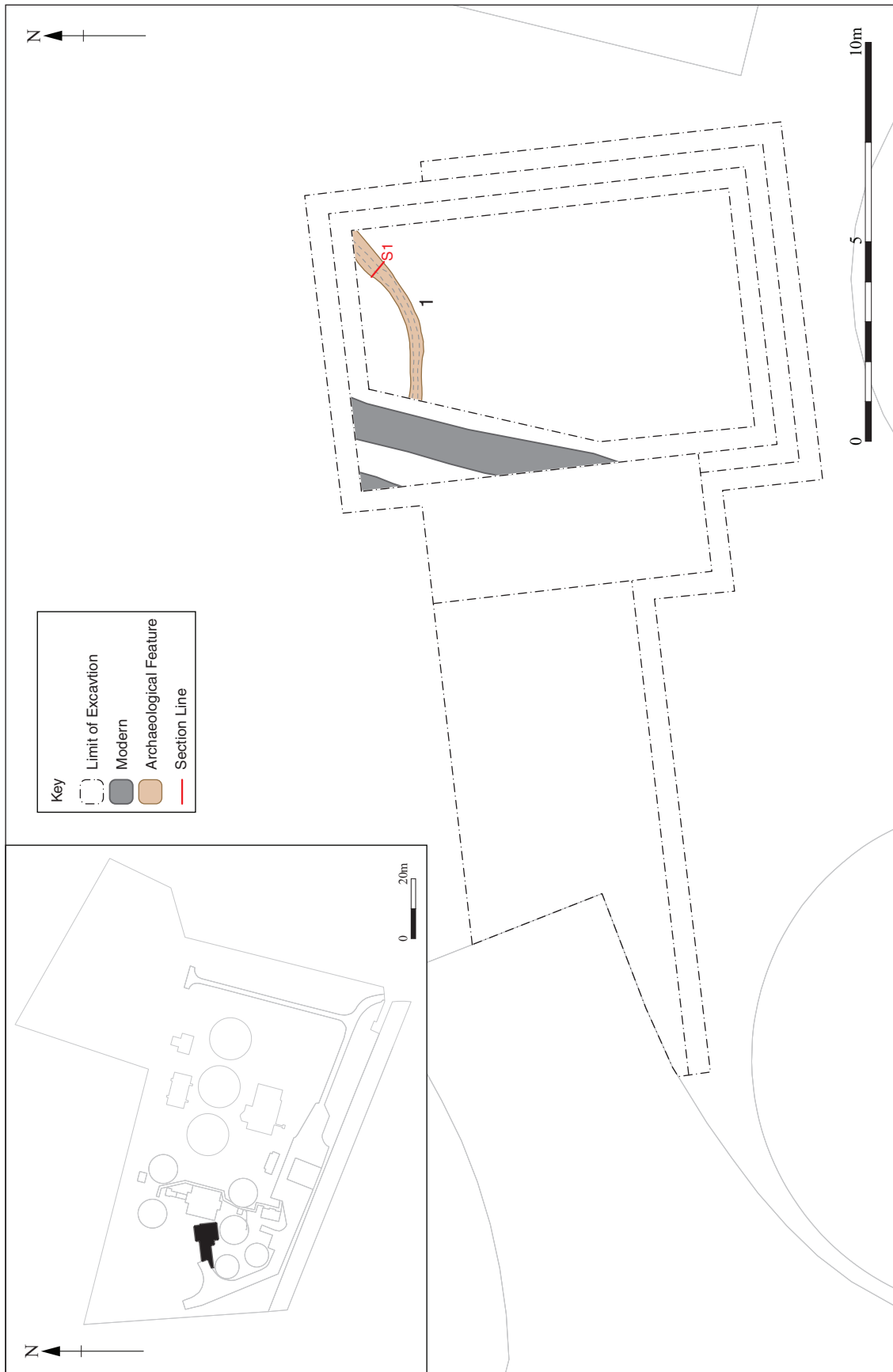


Figure 2: Trench Plan

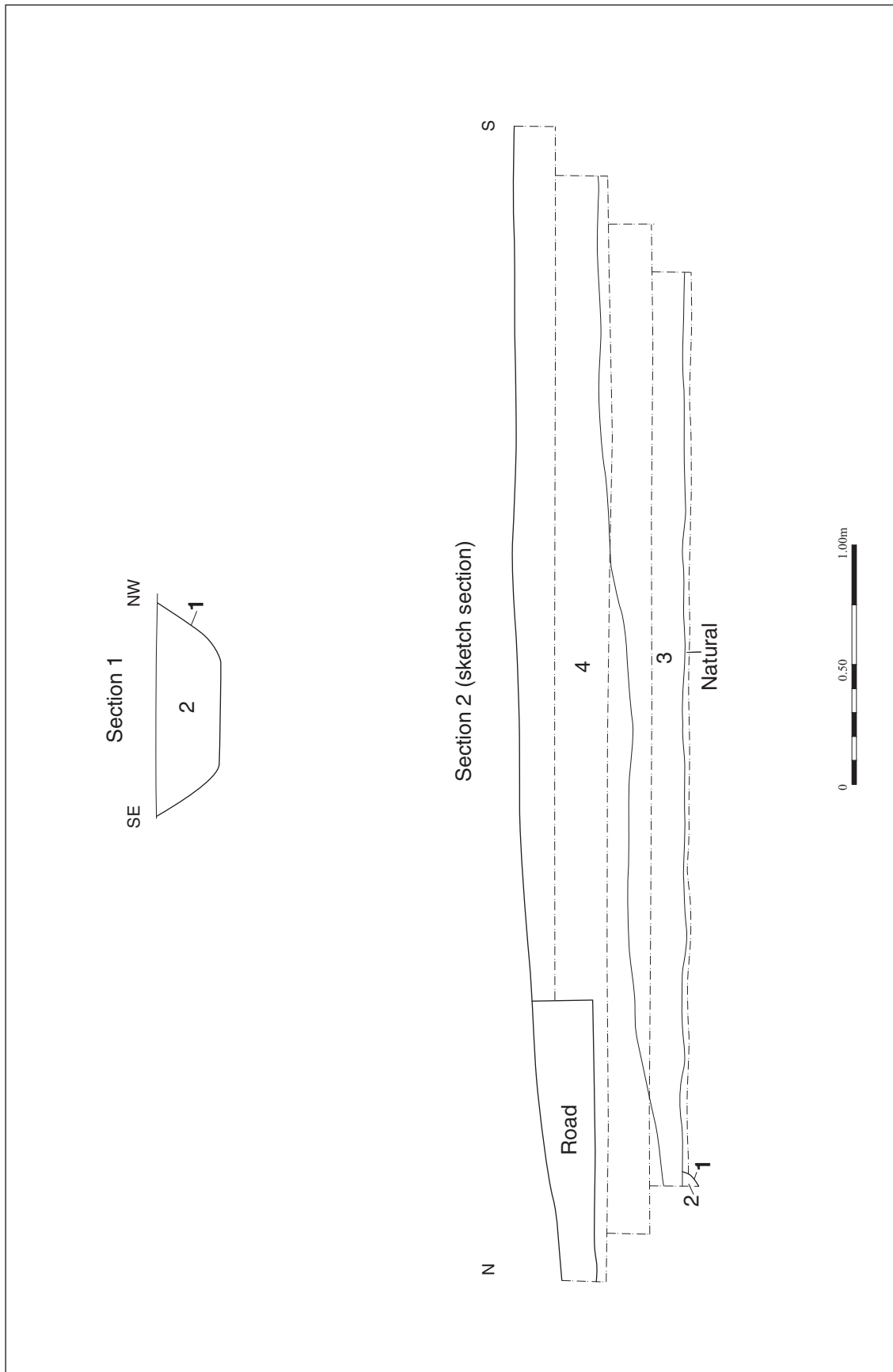


Figure 3: Sections (scale 1:25)



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