

**42 Highdown Hill Road,
Emmer Green, Reading, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Westbuild Homes**

By Danielle Millbank
Thames Valley Archaeological Services
Ltd

Site Code HSR 07/51

June 2007

Summary

Site name: 42 Highdown Hill Road, Emmer Green, Reading, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7119 7699

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 11th and 12th June 2007

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Danielle Milbank

Site code: HRR 07/51

Area of Site: 0.18 ha

Summary of results: No archaeological features or finds were encountered.

Monuments identified: None

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Reading Museum in due course.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 26.06.07
	Steve Preston ✓ 26.06.07

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Report 07/51

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at 42 Highdown Hill Road, Emmer Green, Reading, Berkshire (SU 7119 7699) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Guy Deakin of Westbuild Homes, Hunters Lodge, Rectory Road, Padworth Common, Reading RG7 4JB.

Planning permission (app no 06/01043/FUL) has been gained from Reading Borough Council for the construction of new housing following demolition of 42 Highdown Hill Road. This consent is subject to a condition pertaining to archaeology requiring that a field evaluation is undertaken prior to commencement of groundwork activity.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the Borough Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr David Thomason of Berkshire Archaeology, archaeological adviser to Reading Borough Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Danielle Milbank and Kayleigh Harrison on the 11th and 12th of June 2007 and the site code is HRR 07/51. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Reading Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on Highdown Hill Road, Emmer Green, to the north of Reading and Caversham (Fig. 1). The underlying geology is mapped as plateau gravels (BGS 1971), and a sandy gravel geology was observed in the trenches excavated during this fieldwork. The site is flat overall and lies at approximately 79m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The site is within an area where prehistoric and Roman finds have been recorded in the Berkshire Sites and Monuments record. Most notable is the finding of a hoard of three socketed axes of late Bronze Age date and an Iron Age coin at Emmer Green Primary School, with Roman coins and a Palaeolithic stone tool also recorded. A recent watching brief at the school, however, found nothing of interest (Oram 2001). To the south-west of the

site, evidence for Roman occupation was discovered in the 1960s and to the south-east, Iron Age deposits have recently been encountered in an evaluation (Ford 2006). Recent evaluations at Highdown Hill Road and Highdown School revealed a single undated ditch (Ford 2005; Milbank 2006).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development, and specifically any Roman features or artefacts. This was to be achieved by the excavation of five trenches, each 12m in length and 1.6m wide, to provide approximately a 5% sample of the area, and to be situated in the footprint of the proposed development.

Results

Five trenches were excavated with a JCB-type machine with a toothless ditching bucket under continuous archaeological supervision, and all spoilheaps were monitored for finds. Due to space constraints, trenches were shifted slightly and trenches 2 and 3 were shortened, with the agreement of the council's archaeological adviser. However, the machine was fitted with wider bucket than anticipated and the overall area evaluated was slightly greater than 5% of the site area. A list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Plate 1)

This trench was aligned SE-NW, measured 16.4m long and excavated to a depth of 0.52m. The stratigraphy was mixed demolition rubble, topsoil and gravel 0.30m thick. This overlay dark brown silt subsoil with frequent gravel inclusions, 0.10m thick. This overlay the orange sandy gravel geology. No archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 2 (Plate 2)

Trench 2 was aligned SE-NW, measured 5.8m long, and was 0.62m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of topsoil 0.20m thick, which overlay subsoil (as above) 0.25m thick. This overlay the orange sandy gravel geology. No archaeological deposits were encountered.

Trench 3

This trench was aligned SSW-NNE, measured 11m long, and was 0.68m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of topsoil 0.20m thick, which overlay subsoil (as above) 0.17m thick. This in turn overlay the sandy gravel natural, truncated in two areas by a soakaway and a modern pit containing coal and metal (not retained). No archaeological features were encountered.

Trench 4 (Plate 1)

This trench was aligned approximately W-E, measured 14.80m long and was 0.62m deep. Topsoil 0.28m thick overlay subsoil (as above) 0.20m thick. This overlay the orange sandy gravel. No archaeological features were encountered.

Trench 5 (Plate 2)

This trench was aligned approximately W-E, measured 12.70m long and was 0.90m deep. Topsoil 0.33m thick directly overlay the orange sandy gravel. No archaeological features were encountered.

Conclusion

Despite the archaeological potential of the area, the trenches exposed no features or deposits of archaeological significance, and showed that other than modern truncations, the underlying sand and flint gravel geology of the site remains largely undisturbed. On the basis of these results, the site has no archaeological potential.

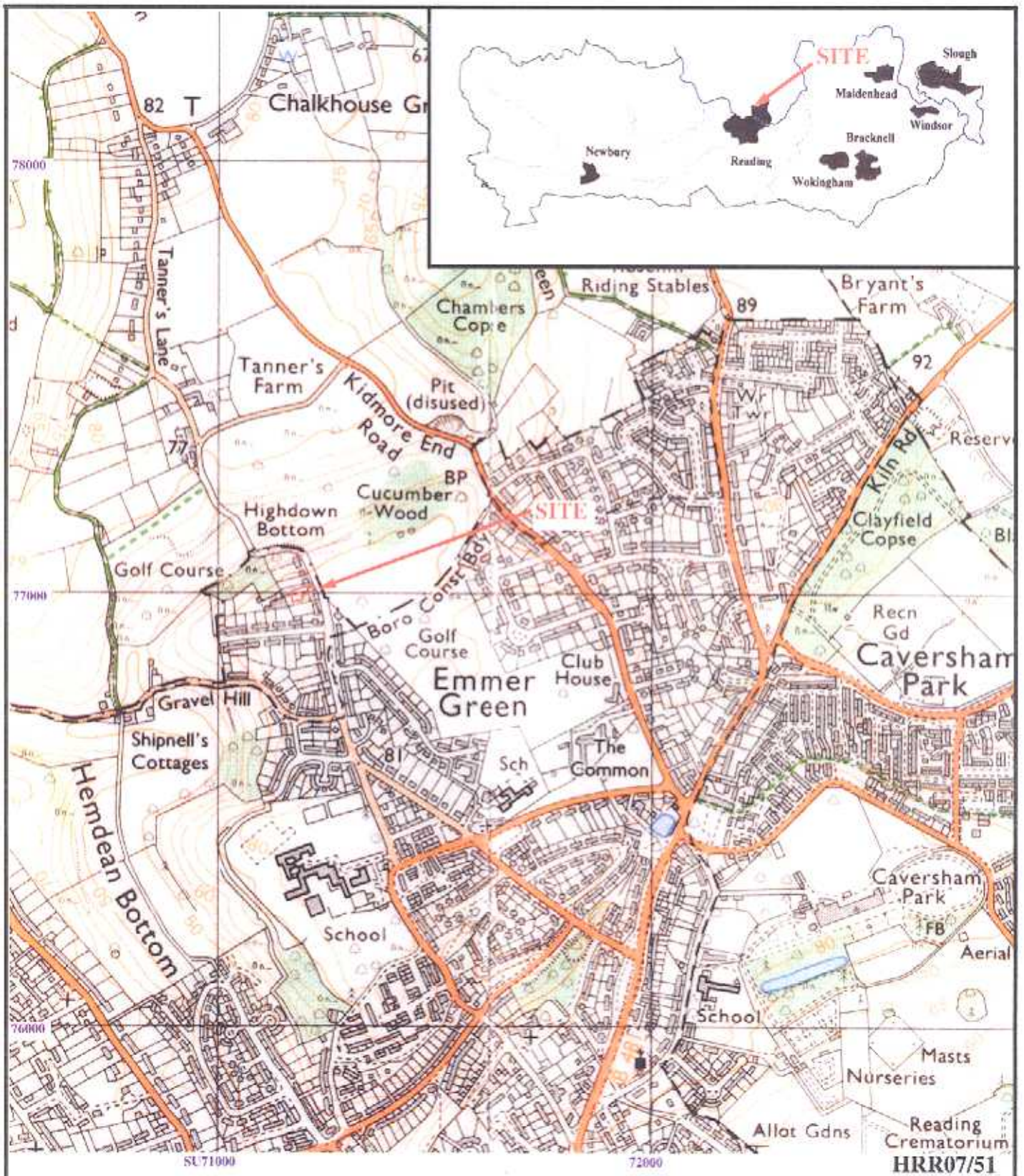
References

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- Ford, S, 2006, 'Cedarcot, Lyefield Court, Emmer Green, Reading, Berkshire; an archaeological evaluation', Thames Valley Archaeological Services rep 06/132, Reading
- Milbank, D, 2006, 'New Hall, Highdown School, Emmer Green, Reading, Berkshire; an archaeological watching brief', Thames Valley Archaeological Services rep 06/84, Reading
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- PPG16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO

APPENDIX I: Trench details

0m at W or S end

<i>Trench No.</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	16.40	1.8	0.52	Aligned SW-NE. 0.00m-0.30m demolition rubble, onto 0.30m-0.40m dark brown silt subsoil with frequent gravel, onto orange sand and flint gravel.
2	5.80	1.8	0.34	Aligned SSW-NNE. 0.00m-0.20m topsoil, onto 0.20m-0.45m subsoil, onto orange sand and flint gravel.
3	11.00	1.8	0.68	Aligned SSW-NNE. 0.00m-0.20m topsoil, onto 0.20m-0.37m subsoil onto orange sand and flint gravel.
4	14.80	1.8	0.62	Aligned W-E. 0.00m-0.28m topsoil, onto 0.28m-0.48m subsoil, onto orange sand and flint gravel. [Plate 1]
5	12.70	1.8	0.90	Aligned W-E. 0.00m-0.33m topsoil, onto orange sand and flint gravel. [Plate 2]



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Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 1. Location of site within Emmer Green and
Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site on
Highdown Hill Road.

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Scale: 1:1250.

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42 Highdown Hill Road, Emmer Green, Reading, Berkshire 2007

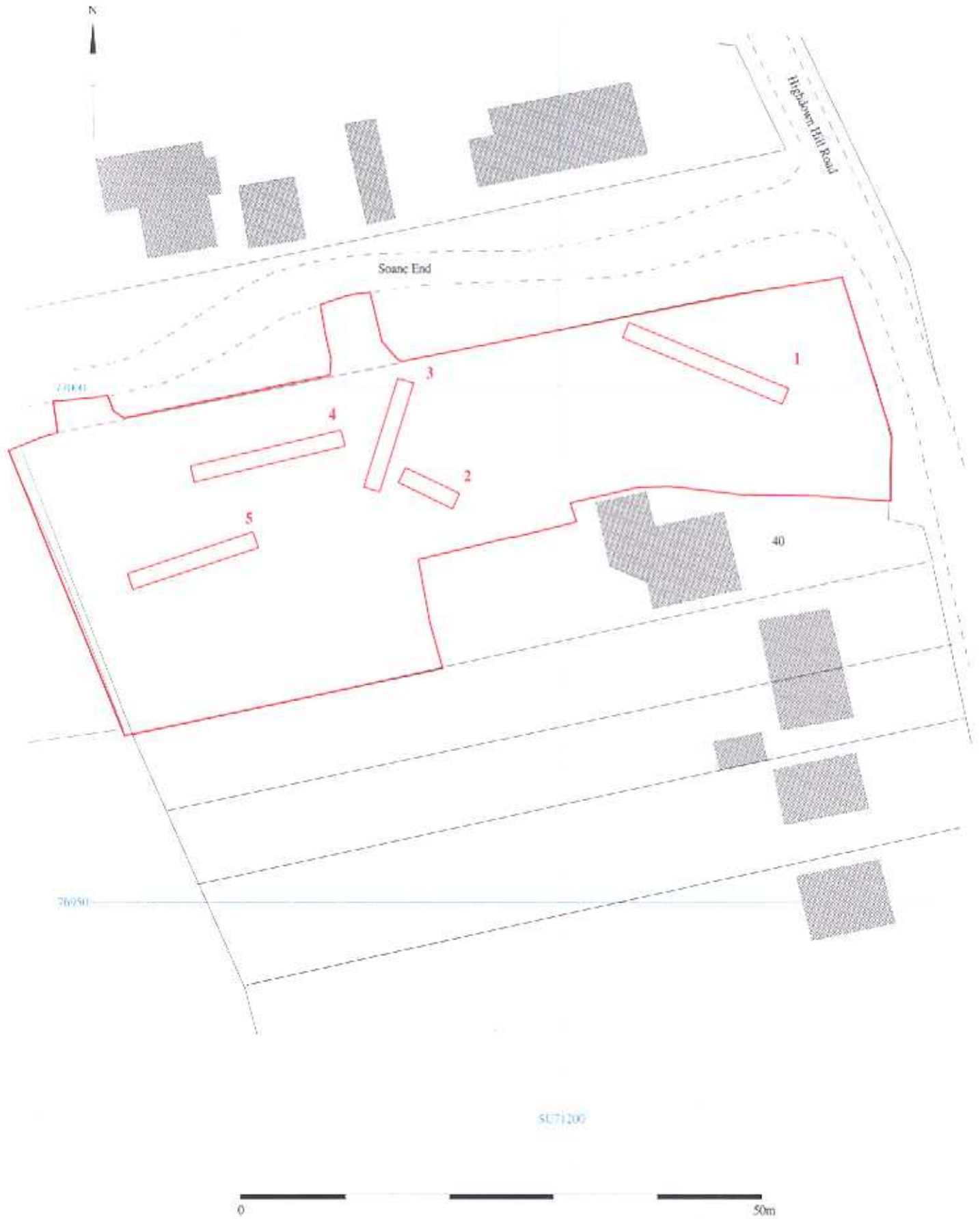
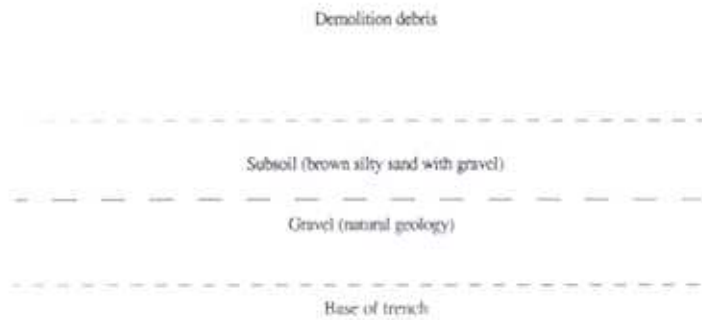


Figure 3. Location of trenches.

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Trench 1

29.6m ACD



Trench 3

29.9m

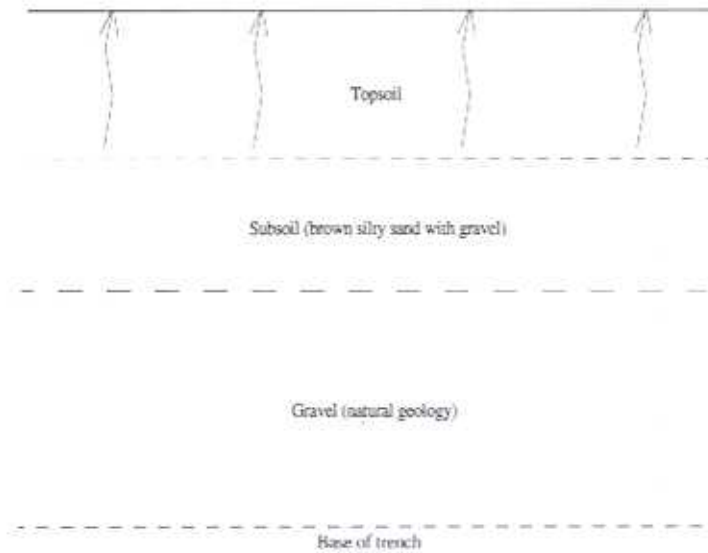




Plate 1. Trench 4 looking east. Scales: 0.5m and 1m.



Plate 2. Trench 5 looking east. Scales: 0.5 and 1m.