



## **Monitoring Report No. 91**

**12a Ivy Hill  
Aghaislone  
Lisburn  
Co. Antrim**

**AE/07/130**

Brian Sloan

## Site Specific Information

*Site Address:* 12a Ivy Hill, Lisburn, Co. Antrim (Fig. 1 and 2)

*Townland:* Aghalislone

*SMR No:* ANT:064:077

*State Care*   *Scheduled*   *Other* ✓

*Grid Ref:* 2554 6827

*County:* Antrim

*Excavation License No:* AE/07/130

*Planning Ref / No.:* S/2006/1152/F

*Date of site visit:* 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2007

*Archaeologists Present:* Brian Sloan

### *Brief Summary:*

The application site is situated close to the site of a scheduled Barrow (ANT 064:077). Monitoring of topsoil stripping was necessitated to assess the impact that development would incur on this monument and any surrounding sites of archaeological importance. The site had undergone topsoil stripping prior to archaeological mitigation and had been left open to the elements for some time. Consequentially, soil had washed over the site and had become overgrown with weeds, necessitating the re-stripping of the application site to the surface of the

subsoil. Numerous fragments of burnt flint, a bi-polar core (suggesting Bronze Age activity in the vicinity), fragments of nineteenth-century glazed ceramics and an Irish 6d coin (dated 1928) were recovered from the spoil heap of the initial site clearance. However, nothing of archaeological significance was observed during the monitoring exercise. It is recommended that no further archaeological mitigation is necessary at the application site.

*Current Land Use:* Green field site

*Intended Land Use:* Residential

## **Brief account of the monitoring**

### *Introduction*

The application site is located at 12a Ivy Hill, Aghalislone, Lisburn, Co. Antrim. The site is just outside the city of Lisburn, lying approximately 4km north-west of its centre and at a height of approximately 150m above sea level (Figure 1). The application site is situated on the south-east facing slope of White Mountain, with panoramic views to the east, south and west. The application site is located in a roughly rectangular field, the boundaries of which are defined by hedgerows and young saplings planted within the last 5 years (Michael Brady *pers comm.*). The surrounding area is rich in archaeological sites and monuments (Figure 2)

The monitoring took place as part of the planning application for the construction of a new dwelling (Figure 4), and was requested by Gina Baban: Caseworker with Environment and Heritage Service: Built Heritage. It was requested due to the proximity of the application site to the location of a scheduled Barrow dating from the Bronze Age (ANT 064:077) and the possibility that there may be previously unrecorded remains associated with this monument.

### *Account of the excavations*

The original research design for this project stipulated that the entire footprint of the proposed location for the dwelling should be subject to monitoring of topsoil stripping. However, upon arrival onsite, it was evident that the site had been stripped of the topsoil prior to archaeological mitigation (Plate 1). The application site had been left open following this episode of topsoil stripping and had become covered with soil wash due to the recent inclement weather and overgrown with weeds. The site was re-stripped to the surface of the natural subsoil (Plate 4) to assess the presence and survival of any archaeological features.

On inspection of the spoil heap from the initial site clearance, several fragments of burnt flint were recovered. This was in addition to a flint core that exhibited bi-polar flaking technology whereby the core was placed upon an 'anvil' stone prior to striking. Characteristic of this technology are areas of 'crushing' on both the proximal and distal

ends of the flake scars on the core, produced when the force of percussion travels through the core and 'bounces' back upon coming into contact with the anvil stone. This technology is characteristic of Bronze Age flint knapping technology, and is present in lithic assemblages from the local area dating to the Bronze Age, for example the hut site at Ballyutoag, Co. Antrim (Macdonald et al 2005, 50). Numerous sherds of nineteenth-century glazed ceramics were also recovered from the spoil heap.

The application site was stripped with the aid of a mini-digger, equipped with a smooth-edged 'sheugh' bucket. As stated above, the site had already undergone topsoil stripping prior to archaeological mitigation. A simple stratigraphic sequence was encountered in the monitoring exercise (Plate 5). The sod and topsoil (Context No. 101) consisted of a mid to dark brown silty loam and was approximately 0.2m deep. A thin layer of soil wash (Context No. 102) was present lying directly on the natural subsoil (Context No. 103). The soil wash (Context No. 102) consisted of a mid brown silty loam and was a thickness of approximately 0.03m across the site.

Upon removal of the soil wash (Context No. 102) a linear feature was observed running roughly east-west across the application site. A small cutting was excavated across this feature and was found to be the remnants of a spade cultivation ridge (Plates 2 and 3). The sides of the cut of this feature (Context No. 105) were shallow (maximum of 0.05m deep) and the base was slightly concave to flat. The cut (Context No. 105) was approximately 0.45m wide). A single sherd of transfer printed glazed ceramic dating to the nineteenth-century was recovered from the fill (Context No. 104) of this feature.

The natural subsoil (Context No. 103) was encountered at an average depth of 0.25m below the surface of the sod and topsoil (Context No. 101). The natural subsoil (Context No. 103) consisted of glacially derived, mid to dark orange sandy clay.

### *Discussion*

The monitoring exercise carried out at 12a Ivy Hill, Aghalislone, Lisburn Co. Antrim proved that nothing of archaeological significance is present in the application area and therefore no further archaeological work is recommended. The presence of

the burnt fragments of flint and the flint core are curious. Thermally shattered pieces of natural flint were observed within the subsoil (Context No. 103) and it is possible that the burnt fragments originated from this deposit. The core, being of probable Bronze Age date, may relate to prehistoric activity in the area. The application site is situated beside a Bronze Age Barrow (ANT 064:077), although due to the unstratified recovery position of the flint core, any relationship between it and activity at the monument remains speculative.

It is not recommended that the site is published, apart from a short piece in the annual 'Excavations Bulletin'.

## References

Macdonald, P., Carver, N. & Yates, M. 2005. 'Excavations at McIlwhans Hill, Ballyutoag, County Antrim'. *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* Vol 64, (2005) 43-62.

**Archive:**

*Finds:*

Finds recovered from the monitoring exercise are stored in the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology, Queen's University Belfast.

*Photographs:*

15 digital images, held by the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork, School of Geography, Archaeology and Palaeoecology, Queen's University Belfast

*Plans / Drawings:* N/A

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



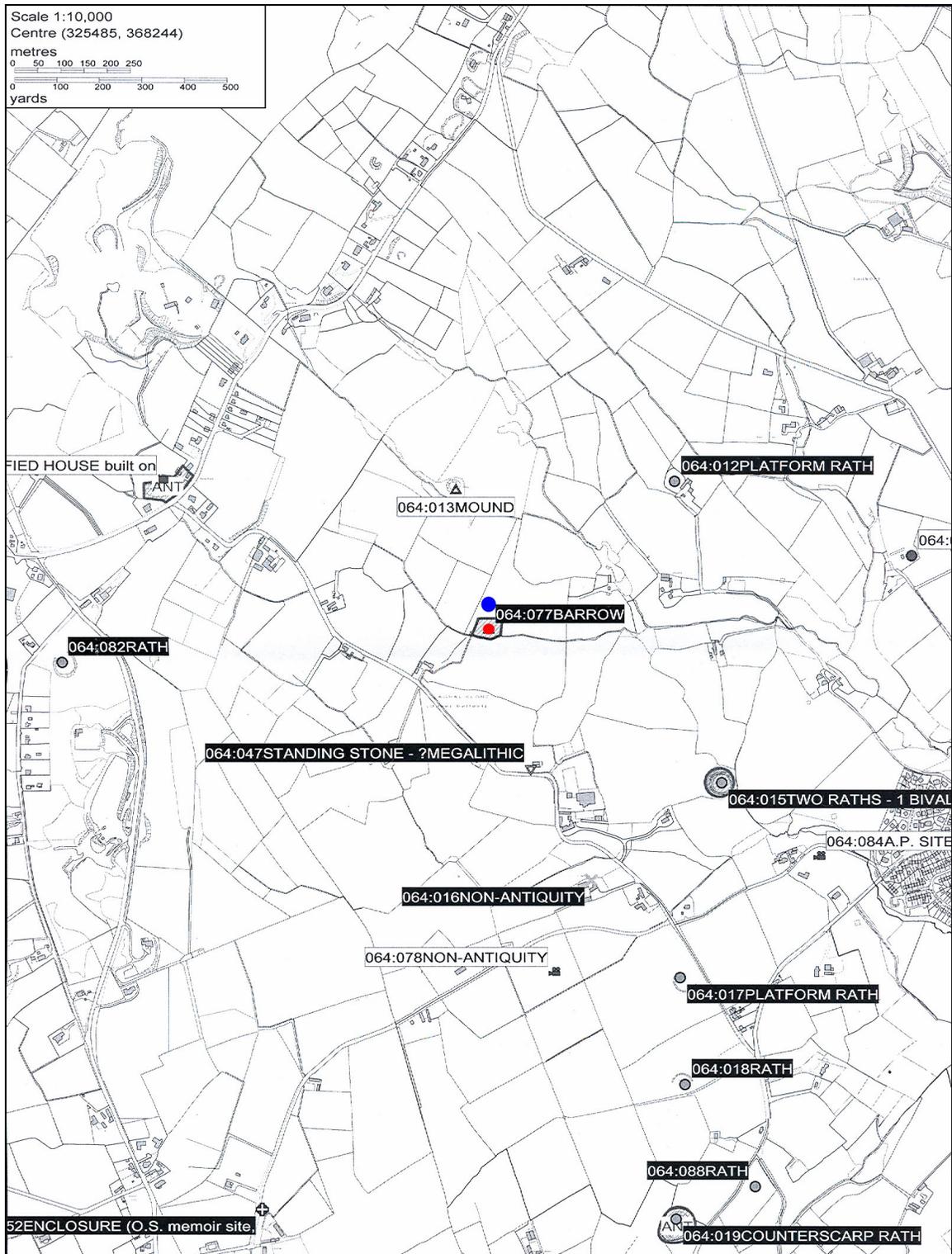


Figure 2: Detailed location map showing application site (blue dot) and surrounding archaeological sites and monuments.

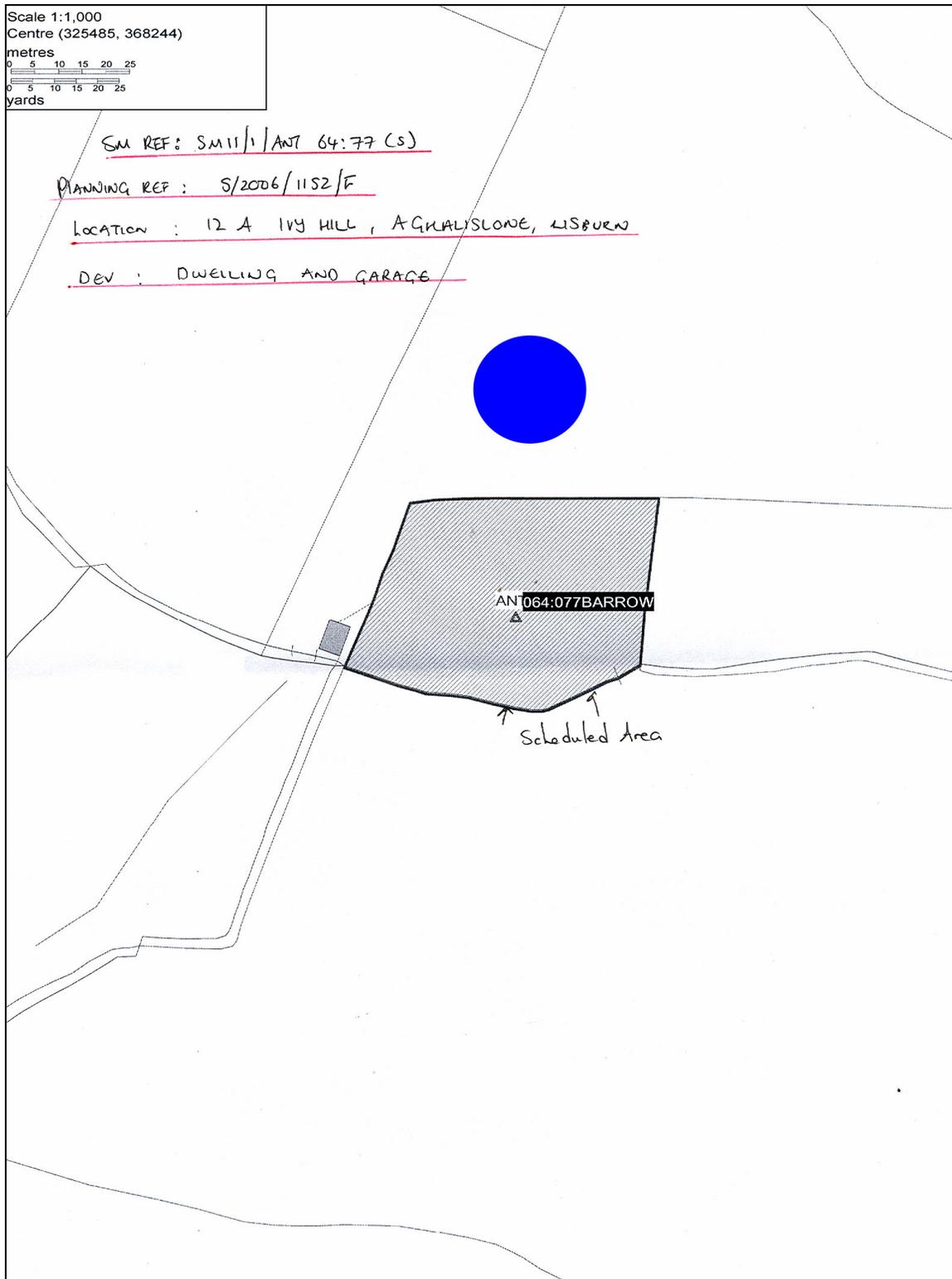


Figure 3: Detailed map showing location of application site (blue dot) as provided by the Environment and Heritage Service.

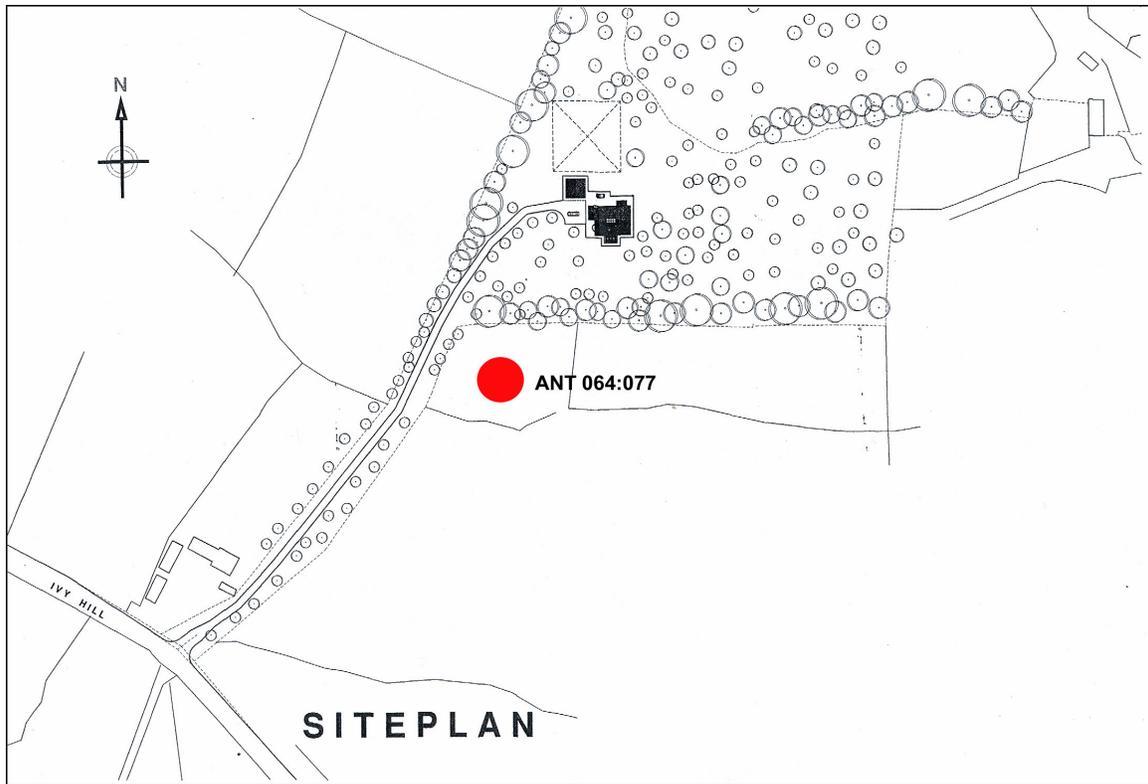


Figure 4: Architects plan of the proposed dwelling in relation to the scheduled Barrow (ANT 064:077, red dot).



Plate 1: Application site prior to the monitoring exercise, showing area that had previously been stripped, looking north-east.

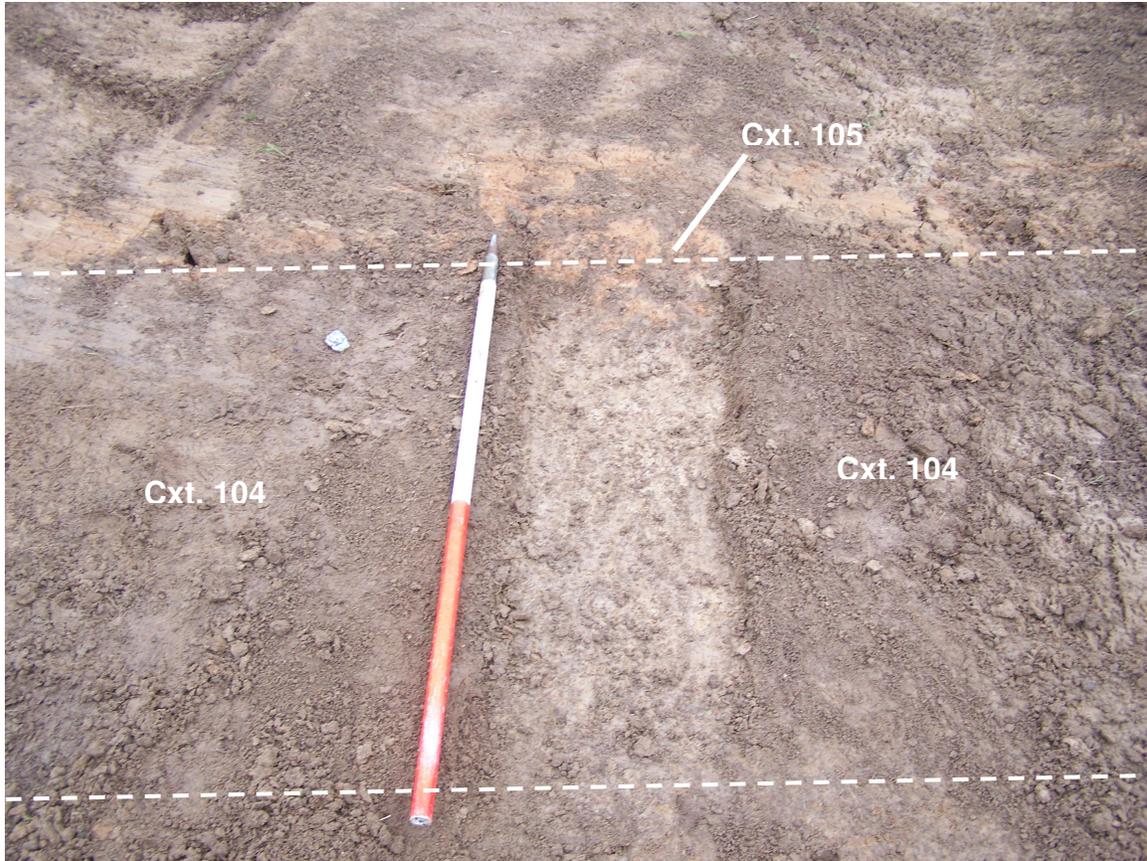


Plate 2: Spade cultivation ridge showing cut (Context No. 105) and fill (Context No. 104), looking north.

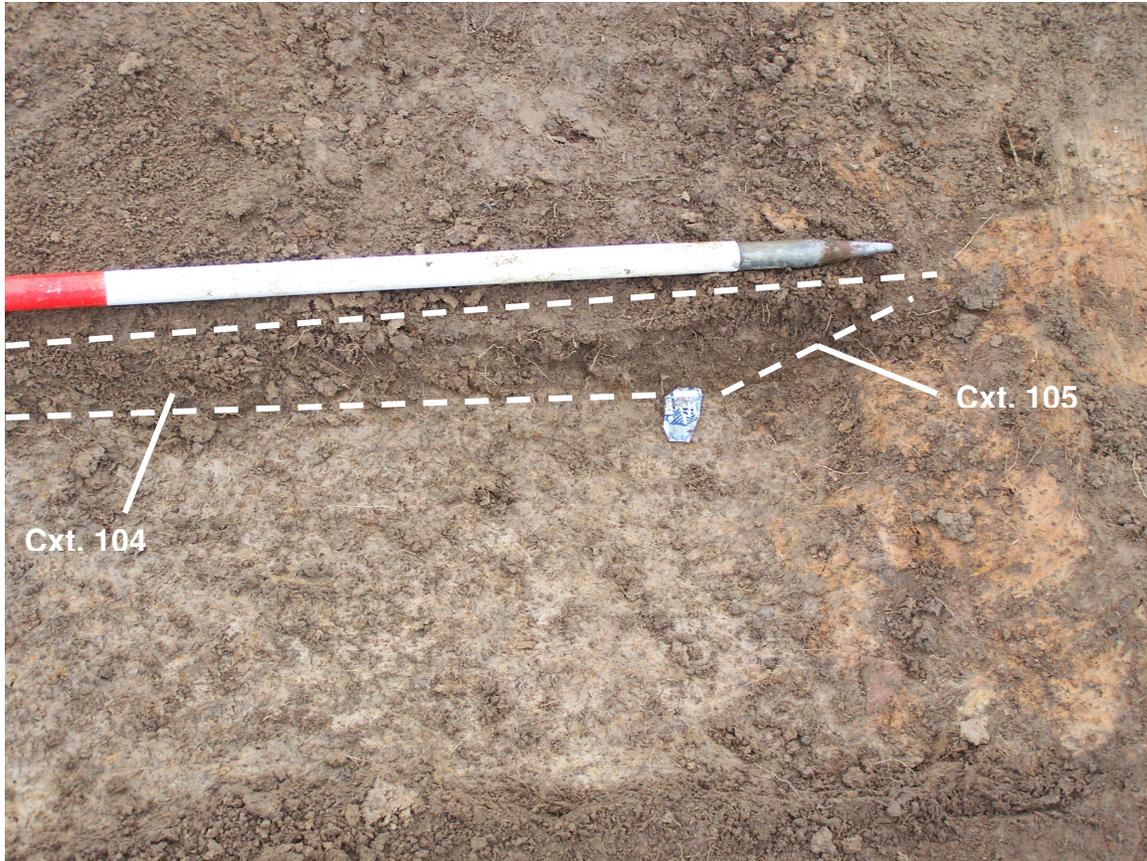


Plate 3: East facing section of cutting across spade cultivation ridge (Context 105) showing sherd of transfer printed glazed ceramic recovered from the fill (Context No. 104).



Plate 4: Application site following excavation to the surface of the natural subsoil (Context No. 103), looking north-east.



Plate 5: South-east facing section of the application site.