



Upper Horsehall Farm, Chisbury, Wiltshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report





**UPPER HORSEHALL HILL FARM,
CHISBURY, WILTSHIRE**

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Mr and Mrs J Murray to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Upper Horsehall Hill Farm, Chisbury, comprising the construction of extensions and associated infrastructure to the pre-existing building, centred on NGR 426235 166770.

The works consisted of monitoring the groundworks and landscaping associated with the construction and record any archaeology that was encountered. The work aimed to identify the date, extent, character, and preservation of the underlying archaeological remains, in particular the possible remains of a medieval settlement located immediately to the south of the pre-existing building.

The fieldwork revealed a number of medieval and post-medieval ditches and discrete features located to the east of the pre-existing building. In addition four discrete features of unknown date were also identified during the drainage ground works to the south-east. Three prehistoric worked flint flakes were also recovered but were residual. In summary, the archaeology of the site comprises land division ditches of medieval date which were used throughout the period and fell out of use when the existing building was constructed, thus changing the function of the surrounding landscape.

The fieldwork was carried out intermittently from the 15th of December 2010 to the 1st of April 2011.

Acknowledgements

This project was commissioned by Mr & Mrs J Murray (owners) and Wessex Archaeology is grateful to them in this regard. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Andy Nicholls of Ken Briggs Construction and John Bibby of Yiangou Architects LIP for their help and co-operation throughout the course of the works. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank the Wiltshire Council Archaeology team for their collaboration on this project.

The fieldwork was carried out intermittently by Rebecca Fitzpatrick, Jon Martin, Piotr Orczewski, Vasilis Tsamis, Phil Harding, and Matt Kendall. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Damian De Rosa. This report was compiled by Matt Kendall and edited by Caroline Budd. The specialist report was prepared by Lorraine Mephram (finds) and illustrations were compiled by Linda Coleman.

**UPPER HORSEHALL HILL FARM,
CHISBURY, WILTSHIRE****Watching Brief Report****1 INTRODUCTION****1.1 Project Background**

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Mr & Mrs J Murray (owners) to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Upper Horsehall Hill Farm, Chisbury, Wilts (hereafter 'the Site') centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 426235 166770 (see **Figure 1**)
- 1.1.2 Planning consent (ref. E/10/0032/FUL and E/10/1060/FUL) was granted by Wiltshire Council (WC) for the erection of an oak-framed outbuilding to provide ancillary accommodation, on a site to the north-east of the farmhouse.
- 1.1.3 The Wiltshire Historic Environment Record (HER) indicates that *"the proposed development area potentially lies within an area of archaeological interest. Immediately to the south, and bordering on the development site is a cropmark complex of a probable medieval settlement. It is likely that the proposed development will disturb or destroy archaeological remains associated with this area of known archaeology"*.
- 1.1.4 Due to the archaeological potential of the Site, it was required that an archaeological watching brief be carried out to monitor all landscaping and groundworks associated with the development, to ensure that the archaeological interest of the Site was properly safeguarded and recorded. A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Wessex Archaeology and approved by Wiltshire Council in advancement of the monitoring (WA 2010). This document laid out the methods and standards to be employed throughout the work.

1.2 Scope of Investigation

- 1.2.1 The area monitored during the watching brief and discussed in this report comprises the new access drive and forecourt, the new outbuilding, and the drainage works located to the south-east of the pre-existing building. The subsoil was mechanically reduced to the natural Clay with Flints on all areas.

1.3 Site location, topography and geology

- 1.3.1 The Site lies to the north-west of the village of Chisbury; situated between Marlborough and Hungerford. The property sits at a height of 160m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), with land dropping quite steeply to the south-west and north-west, and more gently to the east.
- 1.3.2 The underlying geology of the Site is mapped as Clay with Flints, overlying Upper Chalk of the Cretaceous Period (British Geological Survey, 1:63,300 Sheet 267).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1.1 The archaeological potential of the Site derives from its proximity to a cropmark complex suggestive of a medieval settlement, immediately to the south.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1.1 The principal aim of the watching brief was to provide further information concerning the presence/absence, date, nature and extent of any buried archaeological remains and to investigate and record all archaeological features revealed during groundworks.

4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1.1 The monitoring of the Site was undertaken by maintaining a presence during the groundwork associated with the redevelopment, notably the construction of the new outbuilding, the new access drive, and the trenches for the associated drainage of the new development. The groundwork was carried out under constant archaeological supervision using either a two or 14 ton 360° tracked excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket. The mechanical excavation proceeded in spits to the top of the uppermost archaeological horizon or to the intended formation depth, whichever was encountered first. The machine excavated arisings were stored in a centralised location and were scanned for artefacts at regular intervals from both the topsoil and subsoil. Monitoring was not undertaken during the preparation of the area of the proposed walled garden as these works did not extend to a depth that would have impacted upon the underlying archaeological horizon.
- 4.1.2 Archaeological features and deposits were subsequently hand cleaned and sample excavated as per the methodology set out in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2010). Features and deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's *pro forma* record sheets and a unique numbering system for individual contexts, and were planned at a scale of 1:20. Sections were drawn at 1:10. All principal strata and features were related to the Ordnance Survey datum. The monitored areas were located using a Leica GPS survey system. Following all investigation and recording, the areas were then backfilled.
- 4.1.3 A photographic record of the watching brief was maintained through digital images. The photographic record illustrated both the detail and general context of the archaeological remains revealed, and the Site as a whole.

5 FIELDWORK RESULTS

5.1 Deposit Sequence

- 5.1.1 The majority of the Site was covered with a grey brown silty loam topsoil which was well rooted by vegetation and went to a depth of 0.25m below the existing ground surface. The topsoil overlay a 0.25m thick dark brown silty clay subsoil which contained occasional CBM fragments. Below this level the natural Clay with Flints appeared and continued to the maximum depth excavated.

5.2 Archaeological Features

- 5.2.1 Nine archaeological features were identified during the watching brief monitoring works (see **Figure 1**). A summary table of contexts is provided in **Appendix 1**.
- 5.2.2 Two ditches were identified in the new forecourt area; **[008]** and **[031]** (see **Plate 1**). Ditch **[031]**, ran on a NE-SW alignment with a slight curve to the SE on the eastern edge of the access drive. Pottery sherds recovered from the ditch indicate a medieval date. Ditch **[008]** ran on the same alignment away from the pre-existing house in a NE direction for 8m before terminating. While no dating evidence was recovered from this feature, the proximity to **[031]** suggests that it is of the same period.
- 5.2.3 In the same area as the medieval ditches, two other features were also identified; **[010]** and **[032]**. Feature **[010]** was the burial of an immature pig, while there was no dating evidence for the skeleton, it is probably of post-medieval date. The location of this feature near to the pre-existing house is most likely coincidental and it was probably buried before the house was built. Ditch **[032]** was identified running across the drive and forecourt area on an N-S alignment and cut ditch **[031]** (see **Figure 1**). Pottery sherds recovered from the ditch give a late post-medieval date and may relate to the main building or the ancillary buildings which have now been demolished.
- 5.2.4 Away from the main building, five additional features were identified during the monitoring of drainage works; **[020]**, **[022]**, **[024]**, **[027]**, and **[028]**. Features **[020]**, **[022]**, **[027]**, and **[028]** are linear features while **[024]** is a pit. Due to the nature of the drainage works only a small section of these features were exposed in plan and it is therefore difficult to determine the function and date of them. However, they do suggest a period of human activity on the site which, given the charcoal concentrations recorded in some of the deposits, may have been related to domestic activity.

6 ARTEFACTS

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 A small quantity of finds was recovered during the watching brief, deriving from five feature fills and a subsoil context; some unstratified finds were also collected. Quantities by material type are given in **Appendix 2**. The small assemblage includes material of prehistoric, medieval and post-medieval date.

6.2 Prehistoric

- 6.2.1 Prehistoric finds comprise three worked flint flakes. These are not chronologically distinctive, and a broad date range of Neolithic or Bronze Age is suggested. The flakes were clearly residual in later contexts, occurring alongside medieval pottery in subsoil **[018]** and ditch **[031]**.
- 6.2.2 Two pieces of burnt, unworked flint (from ditches 031 and 032) may also be of prehistoric date; this material type is intrinsically undatable, but is often taken as an indicator of prehistoric activity however, in these ditch contexts it should be viewed as residual.

6.3 Medieval

- 6.3.1 Eleven of the 15 pottery sherds recovered are of medieval date. All are coarsewares, either flint-tempered or flint/chalk-tempered. Both types are typical of the 'Kennet Valley' ceramic tradition, which has a distribution covering west Berkshire and north-east Wiltshire. The tradition has a lengthy currency, from at least the 11th through to the 14th century. There is one diagnostic sherd here, a jar rim; the sherds are most likely to date to the 12th or 13th centuries.
- 6.3.2 Medieval sherds provide the only dating evidence for ditch **[031]**, and for subsoil **018**.

6.4 Post-medieval

- 6.4.1 The remaining four sherds are post-medieval, and comprise three coarse redwares and part of a modern (19th/20th century) stoneware cylindrical preserve jar. These sherds came from ditch **[032]** while two were found unstratified.
- 6.4.2 The five pieces of glass recovered, all from ditch **[032]**, are all post-medieval, deriving from green wine bottles of early post-medieval date. The fragments include a rim/neck and a base fragment, probably from an 'onion' form (c. 1680-1730), two base fragments which are probably from 'mallet' forms (c. 1730-60).

6.5 Undated

- 6.5.1 Animal burial **[012]** contained the partial skeleton of an immature pig (ribs, scapula, pelvis and long bones). The date is unknown but is most likely to be post-medieval.
- 6.5.2 Two further animal bones from ditch **[031]** include a cattle metapodial and a large mammal long bone.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL

- 7.1.1 No material suitable for environmental analysis was demonstrated to be present within the monitored areas.

8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1.1 There is evidence of human activity on the Site from the medieval period through to the present day in the form of field or boundary ditches. Whilst these tie in with the possibility of a medieval settlement being located on the Site, the low level of features recorded does not provide evidence for the medieval settlement hypothesis. This lack of archaeology could be explained through general landscaping of the area when the main house was being built. This may have removed the bulk, and possibly all, of the remains of settlement.

9 ARCHIVE

9.1 Preparation and Deposition

9.1.1 The complete archaeological project archive will be prepared in accordance with Wessex Archaeology's Guidelines for Archive Preparation and in accordance with *Archaeological Archives: a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation* (AAF 2007). Currently Wiltshire Heritage Museum, Devizes is not in a position to accept archives and therefore the archive will be held at Wessex Archaeology's offices until such time as this situation changes or an alternative depository is found. The archive will be prepared in accordance with the Museum's archive preparation standards.

9.2 The Archive

9.2.1 The project archive was prepared in accordance with the guidelines outlined in Appendix 3 of *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991) and in accordance with the *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage* (UKIC 1990). It comprises a ring-bound file containing a watching brief attendance form, site 'day book', trench record sheets, photographic register and *Written Scheme of Investigation*.

9.2.2 The archive is currently held at Wessex Archaeology's office building under the site code **72531**.

9.3 Discard Policy

9.3.1 Given the small quantity of finds recovered, and their date range, retention for long-term curation is not recommended, and these finds will be discarded prior to archive deposition

9.4 Copyright

9.4.1 This report may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (e.g. Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey), or the intellectual property of third parties, which we are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferrable by Wessex Archaeology. You are reminded that you remain bound by the conditions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of the report.

10 REFERENCES

- Geological Survey of England and Wales 1971, Hungerford, Drift Geology. Sheet 267 1:63,360
- Wessex Archaeology 2010, *Upper Horsehall Hill Farm, Chisbury, Wilts, Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Watching Brief*, report ref. 72531.01, March 2010

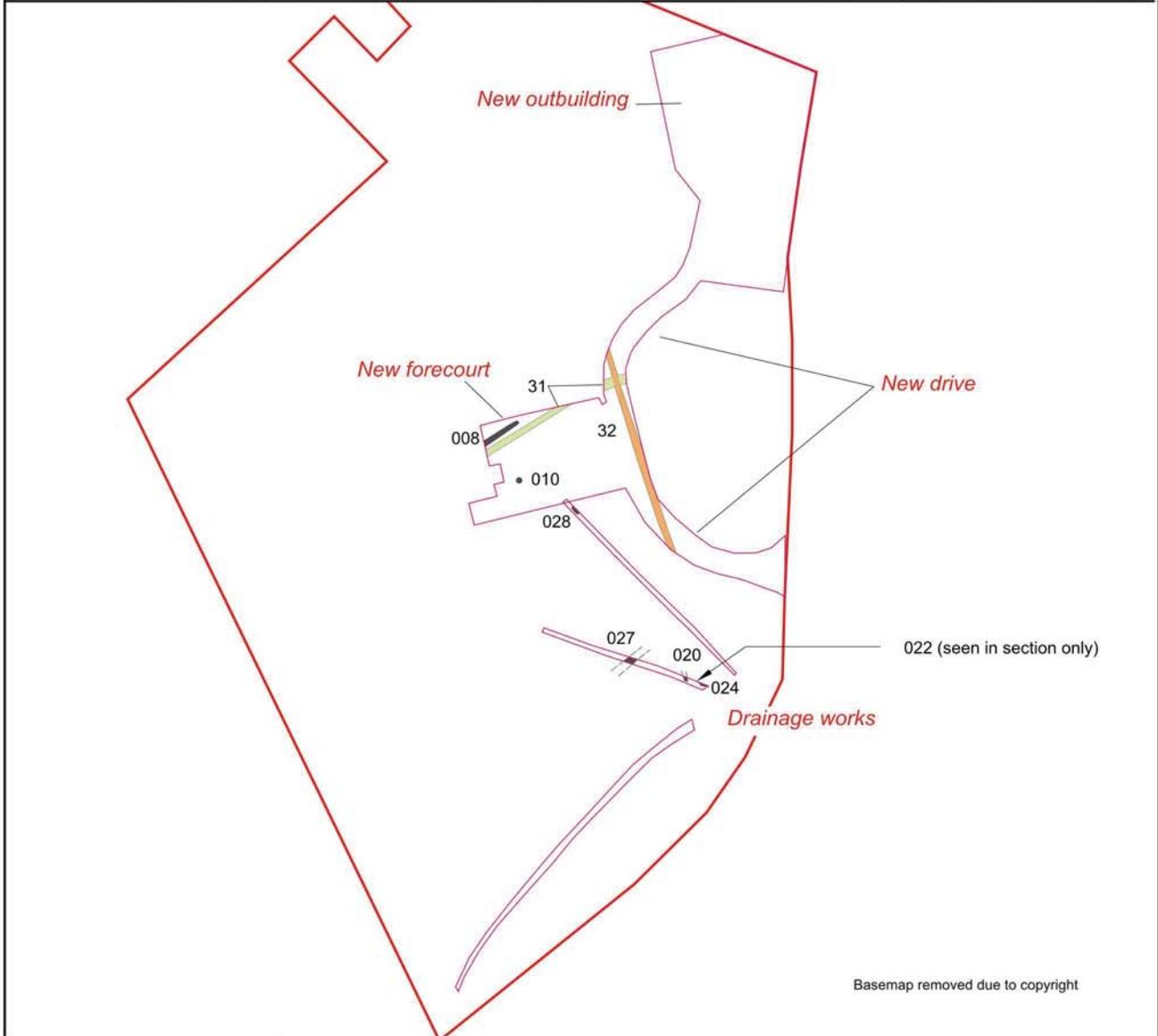
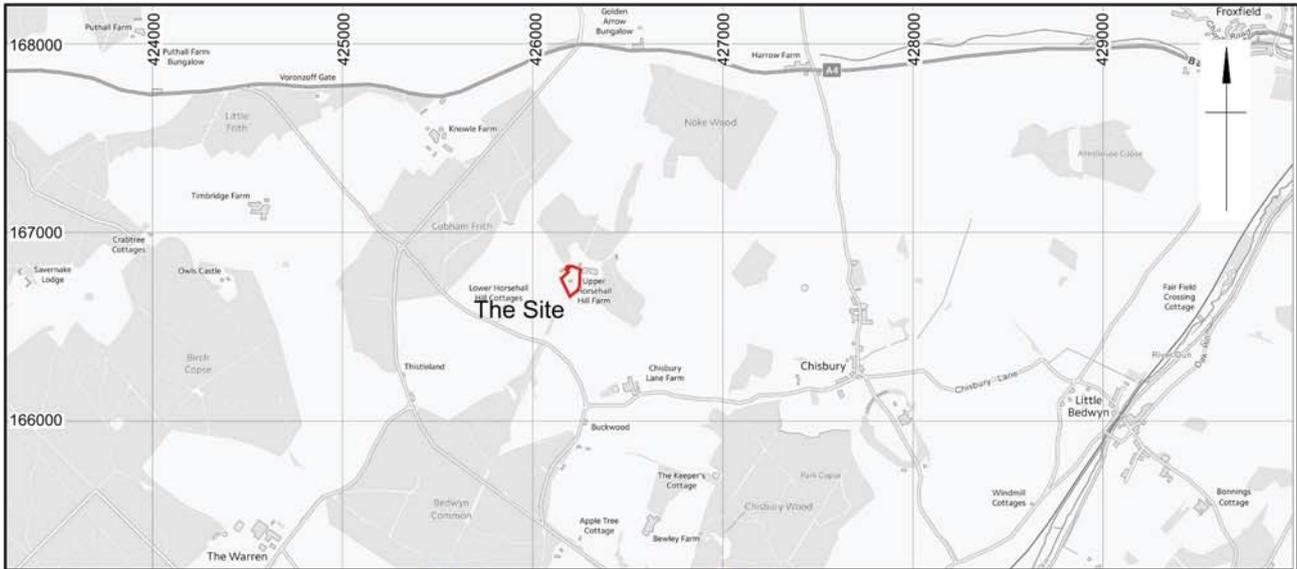
APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT SUMMARY TABLE

Context	Description	
001	<i>Layer</i>	Topsoil
002	<i>Layer</i>	Subsoil
003	<i>Layer</i>	Natural
004	<i>Cut</i>	Linear N-S aligned ditch running across the new drive and forecourt area. post-medieval in date.
005	<i>Fill</i>	Fill of [004] . Mid greyish brown silty clay loam containing occasional flint gravel inclusions and post-medieval artefacts. Derived from natural infilling over a prolonged period.
006	<i>Cut</i>	Linear NE-SW aligned ditch running across the new forecourt area. Medieval in date.
007	<i>Fill</i>	Fill of [006] . Mid brownish grey clay loam containing rare flint gravel inclusions and artefacts. Derived from natural infilling.
008	<i>Cut</i>	Linear NE-SW aligned ditch running from the house and terminating within the new forecourt area. Running alongside [006] and of unknown date, possibly medieval.
009	<i>Fill</i>	Fill of [008] . Mid brownish grey clay loam containing rare flint gravel inclusions, burnt flint, and charcoal deposits. Derived from deliberate backfilling.
010	<i>Cut</i>	Animal burial of post-medieval date.
011	<i>Fill</i>	Mid brownish grey silty clay. Deliberate backfill of animal burial [010] .
012	<i>Skeleton</i>	Animal skeleton (immature pig).
013	<i>Cut</i>	Linear N-S aligned ditch. Continuation of [004] and cuts an earlier ditch [015] . Post-Medieval in date.
014	<i>Fill</i>	Fill of [013] . Dark greyish brown silty clay loam containing occasional flint gravel inclusions and post-medieval artefacts. Derived from natural infilling over a prolonged period.
015	<i>Cut</i>	Linear E-W aligned ditch. Continuation of ditch [006] and of medieval date.
016	<i>Fill</i>	Fill of [015] . Mid brownish grey clay loam containing rare flint gravel inclusions and artefacts. Derived from natural infilling.
017	<i>Layer</i>	Topsoil from the drainage trenches.
018	<i>Layer</i>	Subsoil from the drainage trenches.
019	<i>Fill</i>	Fill of [020] . Dark greyish brown silty clay containing occasional chalk inclusions and charcoal flecks. Derived from natural infilling.
020	<i>Cut</i>	N-S aligned gully seen in one of the drainage trenches. Possible drainage gully or beam slot. Unknown date.
021	<i>Fill</i>	Fill of [022] . Dark grey silty clay containing rare chalk inclusions. Derived from deliberate backfilling.
022	<i>Cut</i>	An unknown feature as it is only seen in the N section of the drainage trench but unlikely to be a natural feature. Unknown date.
023	<i>Fill</i>	Fill of [024] . Very dark greyish brown silty clay containing charcoal inclusions. A couple of artefacts were recovered from the corresponding spoil heap but these may have been from (018)
024	<i>Cut</i>	Circular pit located at the extreme eastern end of the drainage trench. Faint traces of it can also be seen on the western side of the septic tank pit. Unknown function and date.
025	<i>Fill</i>	Fill of [027] . Greyish brown silty clay containing sparse rounded pebbles. Derived from natural infilling.
026	<i>Fill</i>	Very dark grey silty clay containing large concentrations of charcoal. Primary fill of [027] and has been deposited from the western side of the feature.
027	<i>Cut</i>	E-W aligned ditch seen in one of the drainage ditches. Runs parallel with the pre-existing house and possibly perpendicular to [020]. Mid brownish grey clay loam containing rare flint gravel inclusions and artefacts. Derived from natural infilling.
028	<i>Cut</i>	Terminus of a possible gully located in one of the drainage ditches.

		Unknown date and function.
029	<i>Fill</i>	Fill of [028]. Light brownish grey silty clay containing abundant rounded pebbles. Derived from natural infilling.
030	<i>Fill</i>	Fill of [028]. Light greyish brown silty sandy clay containing no inclusions or artefacts. Derived from low energy natural infilling.
031	<i>Group</i>	Group number comprised of [006] and [015].
032	<i>Group</i>	Group number comprised of [004] and [013].

APPENDIX 2: ALL FINDS BY CONTEXT (NUMBER / WEIGHT IN GRAMMES)

Context	Animal Bone	Burnt Flint	CBM	Worked Flint	Glass	Pottery
005		1/18	2/375		3/96	3/80*
007	2/120					4/59
012	1/546					
014			1/73		2/183	1/5*
016		1/37		2/9		2/18
018				1/36		1/1
unstrat.						4/121*
TOTAL	3/666	2/55	3/448	3/45	5/279	15/284



Basemap removed due to copyright

- The Site
- Watching brief area
- Medieval feature
- Post-medieval feature
- Undated feature



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Site location plan

Figure 1



Plate 1: North-east facing section of linears **008** and **31**



Plate 2 West facing view of linears **31** and **32** pre-excavation

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