

**86 and 90 High Street,  
Wargrave, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**For Mrs Jane Jones**

by Pamela Jenkins

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code  
86HSW05/40

**May 2005**

## Summary

**Site name:** 86 and 90 High Street, Wargrave, Berkshire

**Grid reference:** SU 7844 7851

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 3rd May 2005

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Pamela Jenkins

**Site code:** 86HSW 05/40

**Area of site:** 900 sq m

**Summary of results:** No archaeology was observed nor finds recovered

**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.

*This report may be copied for bona fide research or planning purposes without the explicit permission of the copyright holder*

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 31.05.05
	Steve Preston ✓ 31.05.05

# **86 and 90 High Street, Wargrave, Berkshire An Archaeological Watching Brief**

by Pamela Jenkins

**Report 05/40**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 86 and 90 High Street, Wargrave, Berkshire (SU 7844 7851) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mrs Jane Jones of Ash Tree Cottage, 90 High Street, Wargrave, Berkshire, RG10 8DE.

Planning consent (F/2004/3039) has been granted by Wokingham District Council to construct a new access road and car turntable at the rear of the two properties. This has been gained subject to a condition relating to archaeology which requires a watching brief to be carried out during groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the District's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Fiona MacDonald, Principal Archaeologist for Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the District. The fieldwork was undertaken by Pamela Jenkins on 3rd May and the site code is 86HSW05/40.

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 south of the river Thames within the historic medieval core of Wargrave on the east side of the High Street; the rears of the properties are adjacent to the church (Fig. 2). It lies approximately 40m above Ordnance Datum and the underlying geology as mapped and as observed on site is valley gravel (BGS 1971).

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of this site is large due to its position within what is thought to be the historic medieval core of Wargrave. Wargrave was considered to have urban status in the Middle Ages (Astill 1978) but little is known about this settlement from archaeological sources. The site lies on the High Street which is considered to be one of the main streets of the settlement. The rear of properties in medieval times are often associated with rubbish disposal or industrial activities with the main structures present on the street frontage.

At a more general level of interest, Wargrave lies within the archaeologically rich Thames Valley with a wide range of site types, finds and periods represented (Ford 1987). Relatively recent fieldwork to the south west of the town has revealed a wide range of sites with Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age periods being represented by scatters of struck flint and Roman and Saxon sites being represented by scatters of pottery and a cropmark complex visible from the air (Ford 1997; Gates 1975).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits which would be affected by the groundworks. This was to involve the examination of areas of topsoil stripping, landscaping, ground reduction and the digging of trenches for foundations of the car turntable and services. Spoilheaps were to be monitored for finds.

## **Results (Figs 3 and 4)**

The watching brief eventually comprised two components; the stripping of topsoil for the new access route and turntable, and the excavation of a soakaway. The turntable was originally to be an electrically driven type which would have required a large pit for the motor. However, the turntable installed was a hand driven type which did not require such a pit.

### *The soakaway*

The soakaway measuring 1.20m x 1.20m was excavated to a depth of 1.20m in order to reach the natural geology. A cut (1) was observed directly below 0.26m of turf and topsoil. This was backfilled with a very crumbly pale brownish white chalk (52) which contained no other inclusions or finds. It was seen to cut the underlying garden soil (51) which contained occasional fragments of post-medieval and modern material and was therefore not of archaeological importance. It was probably a previous soakaway.

### *The access road*

A strip 3m wide along the southern edge of property number 86 continuing for approximately 25m has been designated as an access road and turntable area. This was stripped of 0.20–0.26m of turf and topsoil to reveal only a modern made up layer. No natural geology was exposed. A cut was visible within this layer, again backfilled with chalk and in alignment with soakaway 1, and is likely to represent some a drainage cut.

## **Finds**

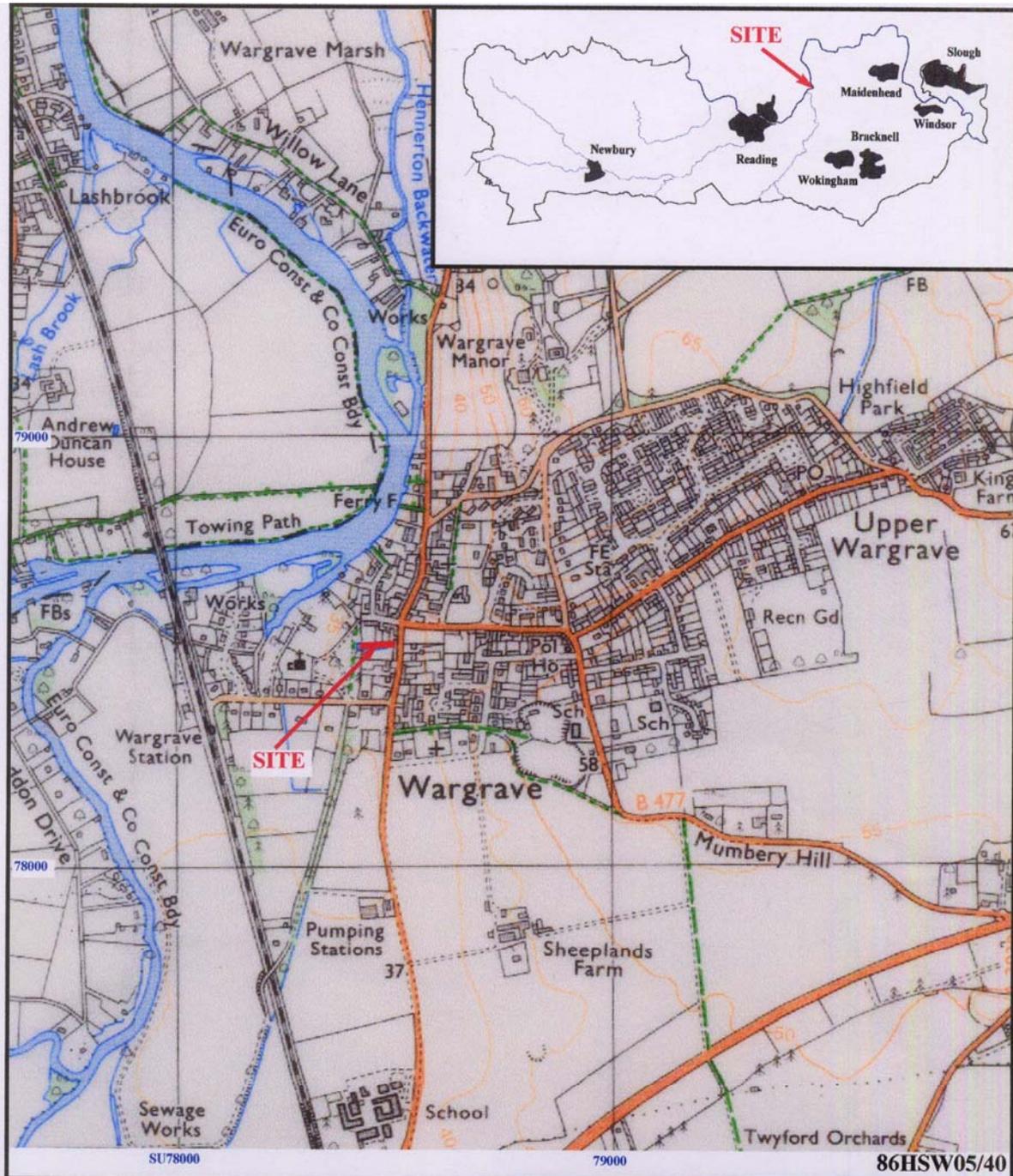
No finds were recovered.

## **Conclusion**

Apart from the soakaway, the groundworks only comprised removal of turf and topsoil and were not deep enough to expose the archaeologically relevant layers. No archaeological deposits were observed and no finds recovered.

## **References**

- Astill, G G, 1978, *Historic towns in Berkshire; an archaeological appraisal*, Berkshire Archaeol Comm Publ 2  
Reading
- BGS, 1971, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 268, Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Ford, S, 1987, *East Berkshire Archaeological Survey*, Berkshire County Council Dept Highways and Planning  
Occas Pap 1, Reading
- Ford, S, 1997, 'Loddon Valley (Berkshire) fieldwalking survey', *Berkshire Archaeol J* 75, (for 1994–7), 11–33
- Gates, T, 1975, *The Thames Valley, An archaeological Survey of the River Gravels*, Berkshire Archaeol Comm  
Pubn 1, Reading
- PPG 16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO

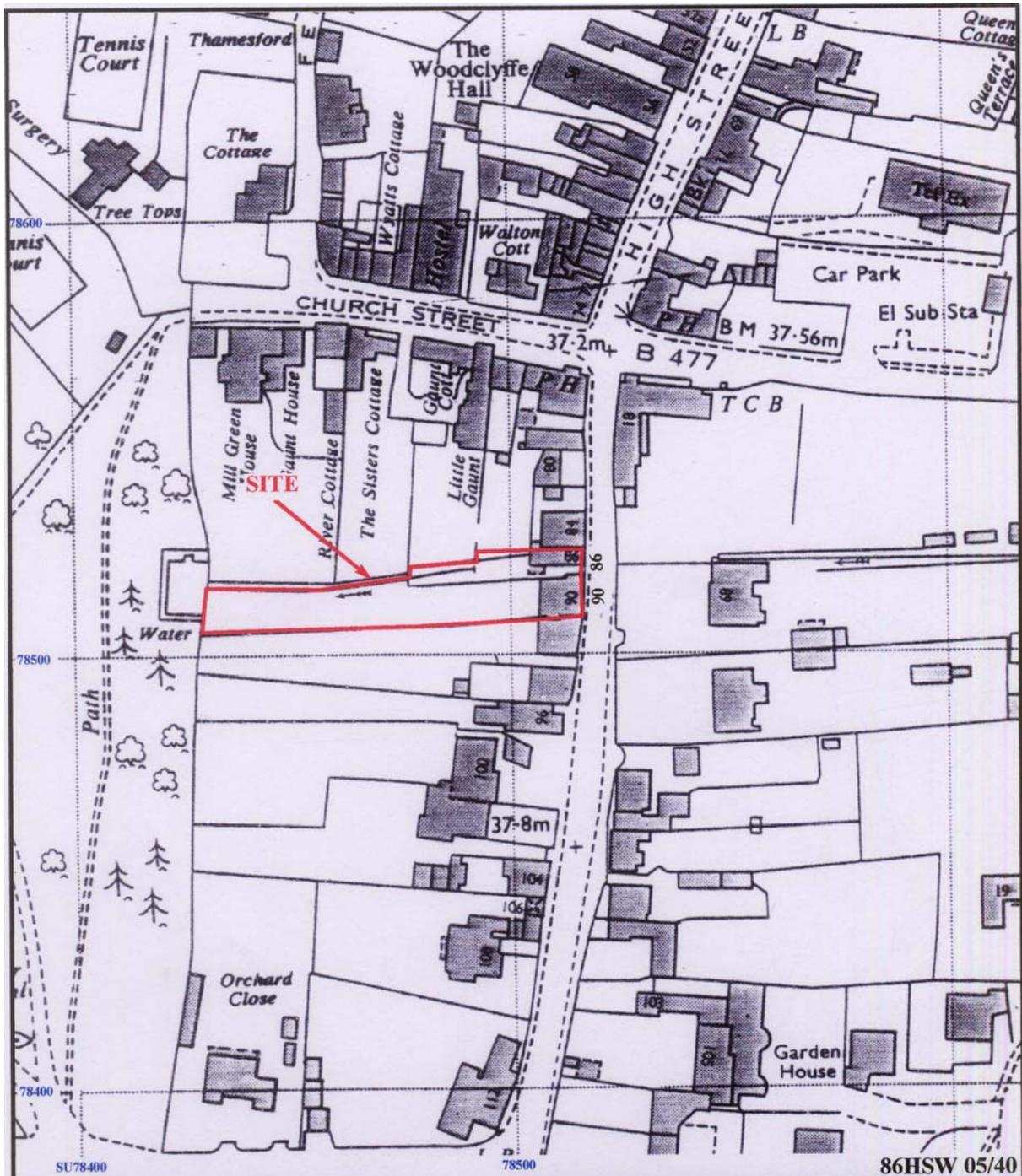


**86 and 90 High Street, Wargrave, Berkshire, 2005  
An Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 1. Location of site within Wargrave and Berkshire.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Pathfinder 1172 SU67/77  
at 1:12500.  
Ordnance Survey Licence 100025880

THAMES VALLEY  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SERVICES

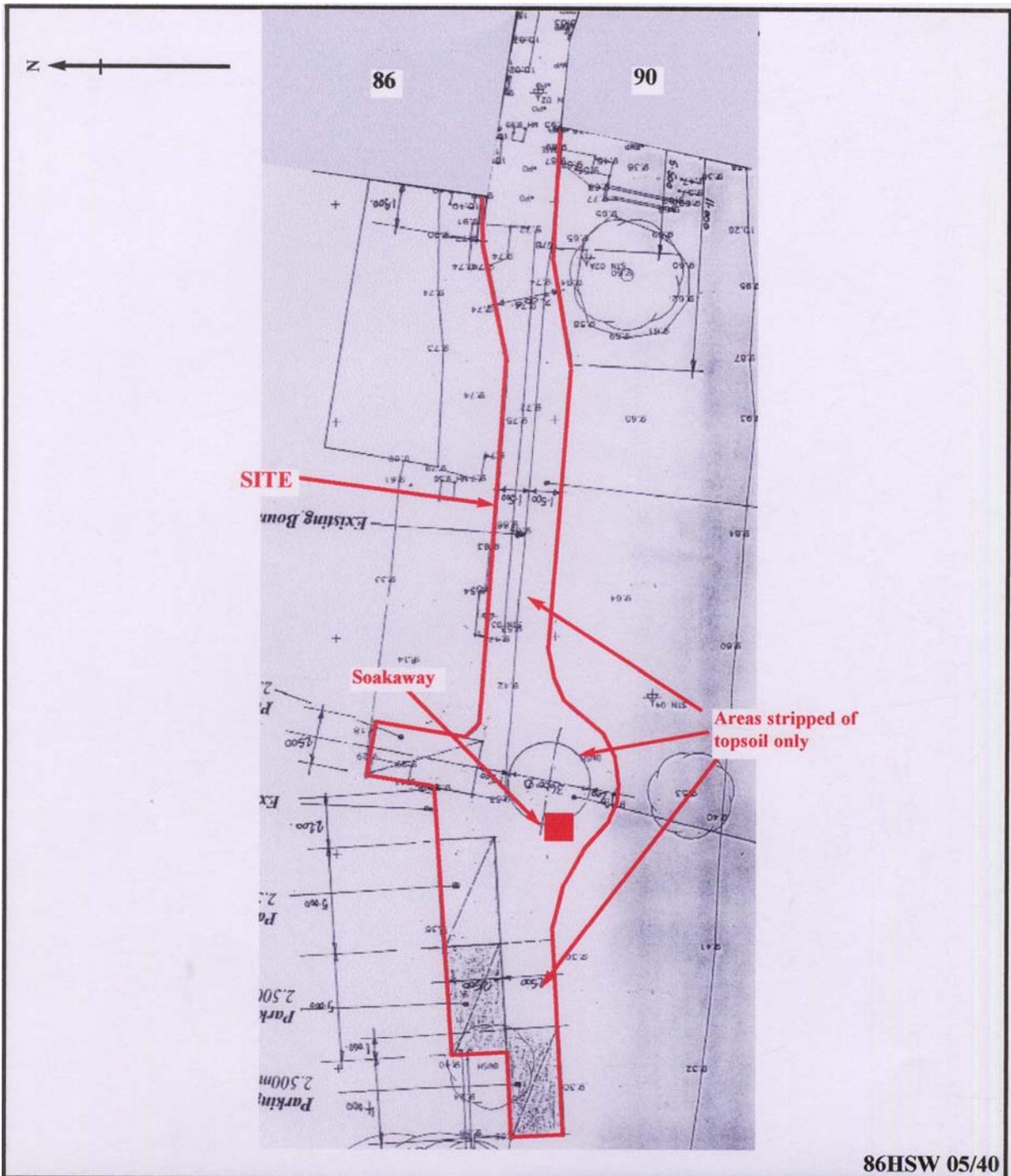


**86 and 90 High Street, Wargrave, Berkshire 2005  
An Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 2. Detailed location of site within Wargrave.

Scale: 1:1250

THAMES VALLEY  
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**  
 SERVICES



**86 and 90 High Street, Wargrave, Berkshire 2005  
An Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 3. Detailed location of watching brief on the site.

Scale: 1:250

THAMES VALLEY  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SERVICES

# 86 and 90 High Street, Wargrave, Berkshire, 2005

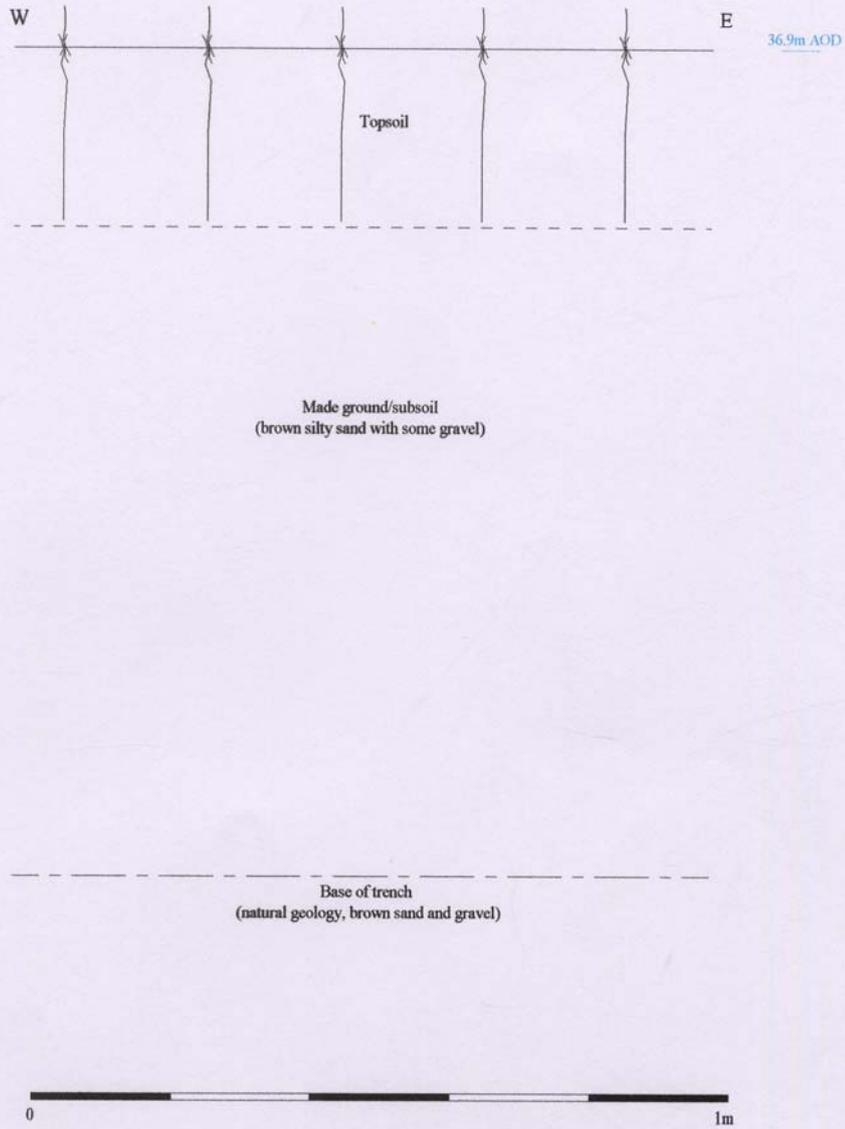


Figure 4: Representative section of soakaway pit.

86HSW05/40