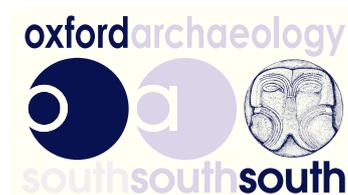


The Vicarage White Horse Lane Whitchurch



Archaeological Evaluation Report



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The Vicarage, White Horse Lane, Whitchurch, Buckinghamshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Table of Contents

Summary.....	4
1 Introduction.....	5
1.1 Location and scope of work.....	5
1.2 Geology and topography.....	5
1.3 Archaeological and historical background.....	5
2 Evaluation Aims and Methodology.....	9
2.1 Aims.....	9
2.2 Specific aims.....	9
2.3 Methodology.....	9
3 Results.....	10
3.1 Introduction and presentation of results.....	10
3.2 Ground conditions and general soils.....	10
3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits.....	10
3.4 Trench 1.....	10
3.5 Trench 2.....	11
3.6 Trench 3.....	11
3.7 Trench 4.....	12
3.8 Finds summary.....	13
4 Discussion.....	14
4.1 Reliability of field investigation.....	14
4.2 Interpretation.....	14
4.3 Significance.....	15
Appendix A. Trench Descriptions and Context Inventory.....	16



Appendix B. Finds Reports.....	20
B.1 Assessment of the post-Roman pottery.....	20
B.2 Clay tobacco pipe.....	21
B.3 The ceramic building material (CBM).....	21
B.4 The glass.....	22
B.5 The Bone.....	22
B.6 The stone.....	22
Appendix C. Environmental Reports.....	23
C.1 Environmental samples.....	23
Appendix D. Acknowledgements.....	24
D.1 OA Project Team.....	24
Appendix E. Bibliography and References.....	25
Appendix F. Summary of Site Details.....	26



List of Figures

- Fig. 1 Site location
- Fig. 2 Trench location plan
- Fig. 3 Trenches 1 and 3
- Fig. 4 Trench 4
- Fig. 5 Sections

Plates

- Plate 1 Trench 1
- Plate 2 Trench 2, section 200
- Plate 3 Trench 3, section 301
- Plate 4 Trench 4, posthole 405
- Plate 5 Trench 4, hearth group 414
- Plate 6 Trench 4, hearth with stones removed



Summary

Oxford Archaeology was commissioned by the Diocese of Oxford to undertake an archaeological evaluation within the grounds of the Vicarage and the neighbouring church hall in advance of submission of a planning application for re-development. The evaluation was undertaken in November 2011 and consisted of three trial trenches and a single test pit. The excavations were targeted upon the footprints of proposed new building development and represented an approximate 20% sample of the new build footprint.

Trench 1 contained the remains of a tree throw which extended beyond the northern trench limit and a small area of root action. The tree throw contained fragments of 19th century pottery and several fragments of residual late medieval pottery.

Trench 2 was devoid of archaeological remains.

Trench 3 contained a re-cut ESE-WNW orientated ditch. Fragments of late medieval pottery were recovered from both phases of the ditch along with fragments of residual Anglo-Saxon pottery. The ditch was sealed by 0.70m of modern overburden.

Trench 4 contained two small areas of bioturbation, an undated mortar-filled posthole and the remains of a hearth base constructed from fragments of unworked limestone. An extension to Trench 4 revealed the extent of the hearth and demonstrated that no associated features survived within the extended area. Fragments of tile recovered from the hearth and overlying deposit dated to the 14th-16th century. Some of the tile was burnt and soot stained suggesting it had possibly been re-used and incorporated as hearth edging. Pottery in the overlying demolition/levelling layer dated to the 17th-18th century.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 Between the 21st and 24th of November 2011 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological evaluation within the grounds of the Vicarage and the neighbouring church hall, situated along White Horse Lane, Whitchurch, Buckinghamshire (Fig. 1). The work was carried out on behalf of the Diocese of Oxford in advance of submission of a planning application for redevelopment of the site. The proposed redevelopment consists of demolishing the existing church hall, constructing two new detached dwellings and carport, and constructing a replacement church hall with associated parking.
- 1.1.2 The proposed development site is centered on National Grid Reference SP 802 207, on the southern side of White Horse Lane, immediately south of the Church of St John the Evangelist, at the western limit of Whitchurch Conservation Area. Three trial trenches and a single test pit were excavated by mechanical excavator within the footprints of the proposed areas of new build. Trench 1 was targeted upon the footprint of the new church hall situated within the current overgrown garden to the north of The Vicarage and immediately south of the neighbouring Church of St John. Trench 2, situated within the current car park to the north of the church hall, was targeted upon the footprint of building plot 1. Trench 3, the test pit, was located in the grassed area to the rear of the church hall and targeted upon the footprint of the carport. Trench 4 was located in the overgrown vegetable garden of the Vicarage, immediately to the south of the Church Hall and was targeted upon the footprint of building plot 2. During the works, Trench 4 was extended at the request of Eliza Alqassar, Planning Archaeologist for Buckinghamshire County Council, in order to clarify the extent and nature of a possible hearth-like feature discovered at the extreme SW end of the trench (Fig. 2).

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The geology of the area is Portland Stone formation - limestone (British Geology Survey, Sheet 219).
- 1.2.2 The development site currently comprises the grounds of The Vicarage and Church Hall. The site slopes very gently from a high point of approximately 139.65m above Ordnance Datum (OD) at the north of the site, to a low point of 136.40m OD at the south-western corner of the development.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background of the site has been the subject of a desk-based assessment by Thames Valley Archaeological Services in 2008 and a Heritage Statement by West Waddy in 2011 (TVAS 2008; West Waddy 2011). This background is briefly summarised below.

General background

- 1.3.2 Whitchurch is located in the hundred of Cotslow and deanery of Muresley and lies about five miles from Aylesbury on the road to Buckingham. The name Whitchurch derives from the old English hwit cirice, and translate to 'white church', and this almost certainly means 'stone built church'. The site itself lies close to the 13th century church and may therefore also be close to the core of the Saxon settlement which would have been based around the Saxon church that preceded the current one.



Prehistoric

- 1.3.3 No evidence for prehistoric settlement has been found in the immediate vicinity of the village, nor have any stray finds been recorded.

Roman / Saxon

- 1.3.4 A coin minted in the reign of Tacitus Marcus Claudius (AD 275) was recovered somewhere in the village in 1891.
- 1.3.5 There is a local tradition that a Roman and later Saxon burial ground (HER 0244100000) was located c 470m to the SW of the former castle site. A Saxon burial was said to have been found in the outer bailey of the castle, c 200 m to the WNW of the site, with the main burial ground located in the Chattle/Chattle Stream field. This is probably the field now called 'The Streams' which is bisected by the Chattle Stream. There are no obvious signs of a burial ground in the area although the site has not been archaeologically investigated.
- 1.3.6 The village itself appears to have Saxon origins with a church built there c AD 1000. This supposedly had a circular tower and was the only church in the district to be constructed from stone, giving the village its name, from the Saxon 'White Church'.
- 1.3.7 Saxon metalwork has been found c 600m to the north west of the site in the mid-1980s. (HER0541800000). This was a coin described as a 'uniface sceat' possibly from a series X of the type with an animal on one side and a blank reverse.

Medieval

- 1.3.8 The manor was anciently in the Giffards Earls of Buckingham, afterwards in the Bolebecs. From the Bolebecs this manor passed by a female heir to the Veres Earls of Oxford, by whom it was sold in the reign of Queen Elizabeth to the family of Waterhouse. It was afterwards successively in the families of Watson and Smith. In 1695, it was purchased for a son of Sir Edward Smith, Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas in Ireland, by the family of Reynolds, from whom it soon afterwards passed to the Russells. In or about the year 1720, it was purchased of Governor John Russell by the family of Rowlands of Caerau, in the isle of Anglesea.
- 1.3.9 Whitchurch is listed in Domesday in 1086 with one Hugh of Bolbec holding the manor from a Walter Giffard. The area covered eight hides and there were 14 villagers and two smallholders.
- 1.3.10 A later Hugh De Bolebec built the motte and bailey castle (HER0030600000) that stood at the northern end of the village during the civil war in 1147, c 230m to the NW of the site. Little is known of the castle buildings although the keep was apparently constructed from stone. A watching brief in 1979 recorded some of the motte fills but failed to locate the edge of the ditch itself. Further earthworks (HER0030600001) to the north of the castle site and c 260m to the NW of the site have recently been interpreted as a possible second motte and bailey site.
- 1.3.11 In 1245 the village was granted the right to hold a weekly market and a fair on the festival of St John (8th May) by King Henry III (HER0400000000). A weekly market is still held on a Monday on a place called 'Market Hill'. The principal part of the village is centred on the old market place which extended from the south side of Market Hill to the north side of Oving Road.
- 1.3.12 A number of surviving documents from the 14th century suggest that two deer parks were located around the village (HER0538000000). 'Little Park' and 'Great Park' are



both referred to in a grant of free warren dating from 1330. Evidence for these parks also appears in the number of field names in the area that contain the name 'Park'. A map of 1770 also shows 'Great Park' and 'Little Park' to the south and west of Castle Mount.

- 1.3.13 The old Saxon church was replaced in the 13th century with the parish church of St John (HER0457600000), c 100m to the NE of the Site, with the chancel and nave being the oldest surviving sections of the building. The chancel was rebuilt in the 14th century with aisles added and the west tower built in the 15th century.

Post-medieval

- 1.3.14 Bolebec Castle was finally demolished after the civil war in 1657 (HER0030601000) although some of the earthworks are still visible. The castle keep is reported to have stood against the moat, near the south west corner of Market Hill Close. Traces of the foundations are still visible on the summit of the mound. Much of the stone from the castle was reused to build houses in the village as well as on repairs to the parish church.
- 1.3.15 The current vicarage for the parish church was built in 1845 by the incumbent vicar Rev A. Turner (HER0640800000). The architect is unconfirmed. However, there is speculation that it may be William Railton, the designer of Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square. It was listed Grade II in April 2006.
- 1.3.16 The Vicarage is located immediately to the south and east of the L-shaped development site and occupies the site of the former priest's house that was described in 1822 as a three-bay structure 'of low character'. There is some debate regarding the exact location of the earlier vicarage and it does not appear on Jefferys' plan of 1770. It remains a possibility that the current vicarage may not occupy the same location as the earlier structure and the gardens to the north have been proposed as a possible location (West Waddy, 2011). The vicarage ceased in its original function on the death of the last incumbent and is now a let. The vicarage garden (HER0640801000) survives intact from the construction of the property. The garden is important as a landscape setting for the church and is a Grade II Listed structure. The site borders this garden to the north and west.
- 1.3.17 Silk manufacture began in the village in the 1830s and continued up to the early 20th century. Joseph Sheahan in his 'History and topography of Buckinghamshire' said that about 30 women were employed in this industry, while others were involved in lace making. The small group of houses used in these industries was known local as 'Little London'. Sheahan also stated that brick and tile manufacture was extensive in the area. The remains of a brick and tile kiln (HER 0430800000) are located c 460m to the SE of the site. The remains of a post-medieval lime kiln (HER0513100000) are located c 260m to the NE of the site.

Modern

- 1.3.18 A late 19th century country house at the southern end of the village (HER0944600000), c 200m to the SE of the site, was used as a site for experimental munitions during WWII and came to be known as 'Churchill's Toyshop'.
- 1.3.19 Incendiary bombs fell on two locations to the north and south of the village during WWII (HER0945800000 and HER0945700000), c 200m to the NE and 600m to the SW of the site respectively.



Buildings

- 1.3.20 The High Street is lined with a number of Listed Buildings; while a Grade II Listed post-medieval building (HER1162600000) is located on the northern side of White Horse Lane itself, opposite the site.

Previous archaeological investigations

- 1.3.21 No previous archaeological investigations are known to have taken place within the development area. However, the car park of the adjacent White Horse public house was subject to archaeological evaluation in 2010 (John Moore Heritage Service 2010). The investigation revealed a quarry pit containing 15th century pottery and two additional pits containing similarly dated pottery. Evidence for post-medieval quarrying and the remains of a 19th century stone building potentially fronting onto White Horse Lane was also recorded.

2 EVALUATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The aims and objectives of the evaluation were to:

- (i) clarify the presence/absence and extent of archaeological deposits within the site;
- (ii) identify, within the constraints of the evaluation, the date, character, condition, significance, quality and depth of any surviving remains within the site;
- (iii) assess the degree of existing impacts to sub-surface horizons and to document the extent of archaeological survival of buried deposits.

2.2 Specific aims

- 2.2.1 The specific aims of the evaluation is to:

- (i) identify whether any garden features associated with earlier landscaping at the Vicarage are present within the trenches, particularly within the trenches situated within the new church hall plot (Trench 1) and Plot 2 (Trench 4);

2.3 Methodology

- 2.3.1 The site was evaluated by means of three trenches and a single test pit. Recording followed the methodology outline the OA's Field Manual (Wilkinson 1992).

- 2.3.2 Trench dimensions were as follows:

- Trench 1 - 10 x 1.5m
- Trench 2 - 6 x 1.5m
- Trench 3 (test pit) - 3 x 3m
- Trench 4 - 9 x 1.5m

- 2.3.3 Trench 4 was extended during the course of the site investigation with a trapezoid addition at the south-eastern end of the trench measuring approximately 23 square metres.

- 2.3.4 The total area investigated during the evaluation was 73.1 square metres representing a 3.71% sample of the overall development area and an approximate 20% sample of the proposed building footprints.

- 2.3.5 The trenches and test pit were excavated by mechanical excavator, fitted with a flat-bladed bucket working under archaeological control, to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the natural geology, whichever was encountered first.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

- 3.1.1 Section 3.3 summarises the results from each trench. Detailed context descriptions are presented in the context inventory (Appendix A) and within the descriptive text in Section 3.3 where appropriate.

- 3.1.2 Finds reports are presented in Appendix B. Discussion and interpretation of this evidence can be found in Section 4.

3.2 Ground conditions and general soils.

- 3.2.1 Ground conditions were good throughout the evaluation. The natural geology varied slightly between the trenches. Solid limestone was encountered only at the eastern end of Trench 1. The natural geology in all other trenches appeared to be weathered limestone and clay.

3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits

- 3.3.1 Trenches 1 and 2, situated to the north of the development area, were devoid of archaeological remains. The archaeological features encountered during the evaluation were located in Trenches 3 and 4, to the south of the development area.

3.4 Trench 1 (*Figs 3 and 5: Section 101 and 102; Plate 1*)

- 3.4.1 Situated to the north of the Vicarage, between the house and the church, the trench was positioned within an overgrown garden area planted with mature trees and shrubs. The trees and shrubs had been cleared within the trench footprint prior to excavation. The ground sloped noticeably from a high point of 138.70m above Ordnance Datum (OD) to the east dropping rapidly to 138.32m OD. The location of Trench 1 was modified from that proposed in the written scheme of investigation in order to assess whether this rapid change in elevation could be associated with former garden features, such as the remains of a wall. Subsequent excavation demonstrated that this change in elevation was not associated with any archaeological features and appeared to be of natural origin.



Plate 1: Trench 1

- 3.4.2 No archaeological remains were discovered within Trench 1. Overlying the natural clay and limestone was a mid green brown clayey silt, interpreted as subsoil which was overlain by the present topsoil consisting of a dark greyish brown silt.
- 3.4.3 Two areas of bioturbation were recorded within the trench: a small circular patch of root disturbance to the east (103) and the remains of a large tree hole extending beyond the trench limits to the west (105). Context 103 contained a single fragment of modern

window glass and was interpreted as bioturbation associated with the roots of a small shrub.

- 3.4.4 Tree throw 105 measured 3.3m in length, extended 1.4m into the trench and was preserved to a maximum depth of 0.12m. No clear relationship could be established with the subsoil. Two large fragments of blue transfer-printed whiteware and a single fragment of redware flowerpot dating to the 19th century were recovered from fill 106. In addition, two residual fragments of late medieval grey ware cooking pot with fresh external sooting were also recovered from the same deposit.

3.5 Trench 2 (Plate 2)

- 3.5.1 Trench 2, situated within the current car park area for the existing Church Hall, contained no archaeological remains. The natural geology, a light yellow grey sandy clay (200) encountered at approximately 0.64m below current ground level, was overlain by subsoil (201) consisting of mid green grey silty clay with occasional fragments of limestone. Overlying the subsoil was a thin remnant of the former topsoil comprising mid brown grey sandy clay with occasional small fragments of CBM and fine roots. This deposit had been truncated by the foundation base layer for the current car park (203) which consisted of firm light cream sandy clay with frequent fragments of crushed limestone. The base layer was overlain by a thin layer of dark orange yellow silty sand with occasional fragments of crushed brick (204), which was sealed with the modern tarmacadam layer.



Plate 2: Trench 2, section 200

3.6 Trench 3 (Figs 3 and 5: Section 301; Plate 3)

- 3.6.1 Situated in the grassed area at the rear of the existing Church Hall, Trench 3 was excavated as a 3 x 3m square test-pit and was targeted upon the footprint of the proposed carport. The natural geology was encountered at 137.19m OD, approximately 0.70m below the current ground level.

- 3.6.2 The trench contained a single feature, probably a ditch with a re-cut. The 2.10m wide flat-bottomed feature extended just beyond the northern limit of the excavation area (304/306). Ditch 304 contained a single firm light grey brown silty clay with frequent flecks of limestone and charcoal. The ditch appeared to be re-cut on its northern side (306) and contained a single dark grey brown silty clay with occasional flecks of charcoal and limestone fragments. Both fills contained fragments of animal bone and pottery. Fragments of late medieval pottery were recovered from both ditches, along with four sherds of residual Anglo-Saxon pottery.



Plate 3: Trench 3, section 301



- 3.6.3 A 40 litre palaeo-environmental sample was taken from deposit 307 for further finds retrieval and an assessment of any charred plant remains (See Appendix C). An additional eight fragments of late medieval pottery were recovered from the sample.
- 3.6.4 The upper fills of ditch 304/306 appeared to be truncated by 0.24 m thick deposit of loose light grey silty clay with frequent fragments of crushed limestone (303). An inactive six-inch diameter glazed ceramic pipe was observed within this layer. Deposit 303 was overlain by 0.23m of friable mid green grey silty clay interpreted as subsoil, which was in turn, overlain by 0.22m of topsoil. In total, approximately 0.70m of overburden sealed the medieval ditch.

3.7 Trench 4 (Figs 3 and 5: Sections 400, 401 and 403, Plates 4, 5 and 6)

- 3.7.1 This trench was targeted upon the footprint of Plot 2, situated in the extant overgrown vegetable patch at the south-west corner of the rear garden of the Vicarage. The trench was positioned in order to remain at least 1m away from the wooden power pole and stay rod located within the garden as instructed by the electrical distribution supplier. The trench was extended from its proposed 8m length, as specified in the written scheme of investigation, at its south-eastern end to clarify the extent of a burnt deposit. The extended trench measured 9m.
- 3.7.2 The natural geology of weathered limestone (405) was overlain by an interface of weathered limestone and clay (404). This deposit was overlain by subsoil consisting of mixed light brown silty clay with occasional flecks and patches of limestone (403), which in turn was overlain by a layer (401) comprising light grey brown silty clay with frequent fragments of crushed limestone, patches of mortar and occasional flecks of charcoal. This layer was interpreted as a levelling layer and may be the same as layer 303 in Trench 3. Layer 401 was sealed by a thick layer of modern garden soil comprising an organic rich dark brown silty clay.
- 3.7.3 Four features were observed within Trench 4; two areas of bioturbation, a posthole and an area of heat-affected stones, possibly representing a hearth.
- 3.7.4 The two areas of bioturbation were recorded at opposite ends of the trench. Feature 407 was observed at the north-west end of the trench and consisted of a small irregular circular patch of soft loose mid brown grey silty clay cut into the limestone geology. At the south-eastern end of the trench, feature 409 extended from the northern trench edge. This feature had an irregular profile and contained a single soft mid brownish grey silty clay. The irregular profiles and soft loose fills suggested the features derived from bioturbation.
- 3.7.5 Posthole 405 was observed in the south-west facing trench section (Plate 4). This square-cut posthole was filled with a firm light yellow white mortar, probably used to set the post in place. No remains of a post survived.
- 3.7.6 The posthole cut subsoil 402 and was sealed by deposit 401/411. No finds were recovered from the feature. Pottery recovered from the sealing layer 401/411 dates to the 17th-18th century suggesting a tentative date prior to this for the posthole.



Plate 4: Trench 4, posthole 405

A discrete feature (group 414) was situated at the south-eastern end of the trench (Fig. 5, section 400). A layer of limestone cobbles (412) was set into the

natural clay, which had been heat-affected (413) indicated by a pinkish red hue to the underlying clay. Overlying the stones was a layer of friable dark grey brown silty clay containing frequent fragments of small and medium sized ceramic building material (CBM) and occasional fragments of charcoal and rare fragments of mortar (411). The deposit was interpreted as a demolition/levelling layer and was considered to be the same deposit as 401.

3.7.7 Group 414, visible only in the trench section, was interpreted as a possible hearth. The area around the feature was extended for further clarification and investigation at the request of Eliza Alqassar. An area of approximately 23m² was opened around the feature in an E-W extension to the trench which revealed the limits of group 414 and demonstrated that there were no associated features within the area. Group 414 was completely excavated as a result of the further works.

3.7.8 Context 412 consisted of a series of limestone cobbles and a number of fragments of tile which were confined to the south-eastern edge of the feature (Plate 5). None of the stones appeared to be worked. The stones were set into a bedding layer clay onto the natural underlying clay which had subsequently become fire-reddened. A representative sample of the stones were retained for assessment, although no additional information could be ascertained (see Appendix B6).



Plate 5: Trench 4, hearth group 414

3.7.9 Examination of the underlying heat-affected deposit did not reveal the presence of a cut for the hearth. The feature appeared to have been constructed directly onto the underlying subsoil. The red colouring of the heat-affected clay dissipated away from the source of the heat, towards the edges of the feature. The most intense red colouring, potentially identifying the source of the heat, was slightly off centre in the area and contained no overlying stones.

3.7.10 The absence of stones in the northern half of the feature was initially thought to have been the result of later robbing when the hearth fell out of use. However, as excavation proceeded it became apparent that this area of the feature did not contain the bedding layer of clay in which the stones in the southern half had been set (Plate 6). Rather than the stones being robbed out, it appeared that they were never present. The absence of stones and/or ash deposits may suggest that some kind of container or grate, was originally placed here.



Plate 6: Trench 4, hearth with stones removed

3.7.11 The tiles recovered from the south-eastern edge of context 412 were identified as fragments of medieval pegtile. Possible fragments of later medieval floortiles were also recovered. These fragments were tentatively assigned to the 14th-16th century based upon the resemblance of the fabric to 14th century Penn/Chiltern decorated floortiles. Two additional tiles displayed heavily sooted worn edges. A concentration of similarly dated broken tile fragments were noted within context 411 as well as pottery dating from the 17th-18th century. The concentration of tile was particularly pronounced over



the south-eastern half of the hearth and spread beyond the south-eastern limit of the trench extension. These tiles also included fragments with broken burnt/sooted edges.

3.8 Finds summary

- 3.8.1 Few finds were recovered during the evaluation. All finds originated from Trenches 1, 3 and 4. No finds were observed or recovered from Trench 2.
- 3.8.2 Further information on the finds is included in Appendix B.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 4.1.1 Ground conditions were good throughout the evaluation and there was good visibility in all trenches. Overall the evaluation is considered to be an accurate indicator of the nature and extent of archaeological remains within the site boundary.

4.2 Interpretation

- 4.2.1 Archaeological remains were only encountered in Trenches 3 and 4, situated to the south of the development area at the rear of the existing church hall. No evidence for earlier structural garden features or an earlier vicarage, as proposed by West Waddy (2011), was discovered within Trench 1. The tree throw and bioturbation observed in Trench 1 is likely to be associated with the existing vegetation.
- 4.2.2 The feature discovered within Trench 3 has been interpreted as a medieval ditch dated roughly to the 14th-16th century. However, only a limited area of the feature was exposed within the confines of the trench and it remains a possibility that this feature is a pit. Medieval pits and evidence for quarrying dating to the 15th century were recorded during archaeological investigations at the rear of the adjacent White Horse public house. Residual Anglo-Saxon pottery was also recovered from the ditch in Trench 3 suggesting the possibility of activity dating to this period within the immediate area.
- 4.2.3 The stone feature in Trench 4 has been interpreted a hearth base. No evidence for any associated *in situ* floor or structure remained, although ceramic floor tiles were present within the overlying demolition layer. These tiles, dating to the 14th-16th century may represent the destroyed remains of a contemporary floor surface, although tiles of a similar date were recovered from the hearth structure suggesting they may be residual and incorporated into a later feature. Pottery dating from the 17th-18th century recovered from the overlying demolition layer, suggesting the feature had fallen out of use by this period. The unworked nature of the stones forming the hearth base suggests the feature is unlikely to be associated with a high status building and the stones are probably locally derived. The absence of associated domestic refuse may suggest the hearth was situated in an outhouse or shed away from the focus of domestic activity.
- 4.2.4 Although the stones had clearly been subjected to heat intense enough to cause the underlying clay to become fire-reddened, no charcoal or ash deposits were observed overlying the stones. This may suggest the fire was contained within a metal grate that retained the ash deposits.
- 4.2.5 No clear evidence for any features associated with the hearth were observed within the initial evaluation trench or subsequent trench extension. It is possible that the single mortar-filled posthole is associated as it is also sealed by demolition/levelling layer 401/411. No dating evidence was recovered from the posthole and therefore any



association with the hearth must remain tentative. A concentration of tile and CBM within layer 401/411 to the south-eastern end of the trench that extended beyond the excavation suggests that any associated surviving structural remains may be situated in that area.

- 4.2.6 The dating evidence from both the hearth and ditch in Trench 3 appears to be broadly contemporary and may suggest that the two features are related.

4.3 Conclusion and significance

- 4.3.1 The evaluation has demonstrated the presence of archaeological remains at the southern end of the development. The remains, consisting of a re-cut ditch, posthole and stone hearth, date to at least the late medieval period and may well be later.
- 4.3.2 Previous landscaping and development of the site have had minor impacts upon the surviving remains. Although the ditch in Trench 3 has suffered limited truncation from previous landscaping, probably associated with the construction of the existing church hall, a significant proportion of the feature remains. The ditch is currently overlain by 0.7m of overburden.
- 4.3.3 The evaluation demonstrated that no significant features associated with earlier landscaping at the Vicarage survived within the trenches. It is possible, however, that the undated mortar-filled posthole recorded with Trench 4 is associated with earlier landscaping. It is also possible that this posthole is associated with a structure that once contained the hearth base in observed within Trench 4.
- 4.3.4 Overall, the archaeological remains discovered within the southern area of the development are likely to be of local significance providing additional, albeit limited information concerning the later medieval period in Whitchurch.



APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
General description				Orientation		NW-SE
Situated to the north of the house, Trench 1 was devoid of archaeological remains. One tree throw and a small area of bioturbation was observed within the trench.				Avg. depth (m)		0.69
				Width (m)		1.5
				Length (m)		10
Contexts						
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Comment	Finds	Date
100	Layer		0.28	Modern topsoil. Dark greyish brown soft silt.		
101	Layer		0.49	Subsoil. Mid greenish brown clayey silt.		
102	Layer			Natural geology. Light yellowish brown sandy clay with medium sized sub-angular limestone.		
103	Cut	0.28	0.06	Small circular area of bioturbation with a concave base and shallow sloping sides. Probably created by the rootball of a small shrub. Filled by 104.		
104	Fill	0.28	0.06	Fill of 103. Soft dark greyish brown silt.	Glass	19-20th century
105	Cut	3.3	1.4	Half circular feature extending beyond the NE trench limit with a rounded base and shallow sloping sides. Interpreted as a tree hole. Filled by 105.		
106	Fill	1.06	0.12	Fill of 105. Loose mid greyish brown silt.	Pottery, CBM	19th century
107	Fill	0.6	0.12	Fill of 105. Loose mixed redeposited natural consisting of light yellow brown clay and limestone.		

Trench 2						
General description				Orientation		NW-SE
Situated within the current car parking area of the church hall, Trench 2 was devoid of archaeological remains. The modern car park has truncated the previous topsoil horizon.				Avg. depth (m)		0.65
				Width (m)		1.5
				Length (m)		6
Contexts						
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Comment	Finds	Date
200	Layer			Natural geology. Firm light yellow grey sandy sand. Overlain by		



				201.		
201	Layer		0.32	Subsoil. Firm mid greenish grey silty clay. Overlies 200.		
202	Layer		0.18	Truncated topsoil. Mid brownish grey clayey silt. Overlies 201.		
203	Layer		0.08	Firm light cream sandy clay. Overlies 202.		
204	Layer		0.04	Loose dark orangey yellow silty sand with occasional fragments of CBM, moderate sub-rounded and sub-angular small stones. Overlies 203.		
205	Layer		0.02	Tarmacadam. Overlies 204.		

Trench 3						
General description					Orientation	N/A
This 3 x 3m test pit contained an E-W orientated re-cut ditch. The ditch sealed by 0.70m of overburden including a levelling deposit and the current topsoil.					Avg. depth (m)	1
					Width (m)	3
					Length (m)	3
Contexts						
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Comment	Finds	Date
301	Layer		0.22	Topsoil. Friable dark grey brown silty clay. Overlies 302.		
302	Layer		0.23	Subsoil. Friable mid green grey silty clay with occasional small sub-angular fragments of limestone. Overlies 303.		
303	Layer		0.24	Modern overburden. Loose light to mid grey silty clay with frequent fragments of sub-angular stone, CBM. Remains of 6 inch diameter ceramic glazed pipe. Probable levelling layer. Overlies 307, 305, 309.		
304	Cut		0.62	Cut of flat bottomed ditch. Irregular southern edge/side. Only a small part of the northern side was visible within the confines of the trench. Filled by 304.		
305	Fill		0.62	Fill of 304. Firm light grey brown silty clay with frequent flecks of limestone and charcoal.	Animal bone, pottery	c1350-1550?
306	Cut		0.62	Re-cut of ditch 304. Moderate sloping sides, flat base.		
307	Fill		0.62	Fill of 306. Firm dark grey brown	Animal bone,	c1200-1400?



				silty clay with occasional flecks of charcoal and limestone fragments.	pottery	
308	Layer			Natural geology. Firm light yellow brown weathered limestone with slight clay content. Overlies 309.		
309	Layer		0.36	Firm mixed dark brown to red brown silty clay with occasional patches of limestone and occasional patches of root disturbance. Possible original subsoil.		

Trench 4						
General description					Orientation	NW-SE
Trench 4 contained two small areas of bioturbation, a single square posthole filled with mortar and an small area of heat affected stones set into a clay matrix which has become heat affected - possible a small garden incinerator base of hearth.					Avg. depth (m)	0.7
					Width (m)	1.5
					Length (m)	9
Contexts						
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Comment	Findings	Date
400	Layer		0.54	Topsoil. Soft dark grey brown silty clay. Organic garden soil with frequent fine roots and occasional small charcoal flecks. Remains of raised garden beds across the trench. Overlies 401.		
401	Layer		0.25	Modern overburden. Light grey brown silty clay with frequent fragments of crushed limestone, occasional patches of mortar, flecks of charcoal, and small CBM flecks. Very similar to deposit 303 in Trench 3. Overlies 402.		
402	Layer		0.33	Firm to stiff mixed light brown red silty clay with occasional patches and flecks of crushed limestone. Subsoil. Overlies 403.		
403	Layer		0.15	Natural geology. Interface between the subsoil and underlying limestone geology. Light green brown silty clay with patches of limestone. Overlies 404.		
404	Layer			Natural geology. Weathered limestone within a light yellow brown clay matrix. Becoming slightly chalky at the SE end of		



				the trench.		
405	Cut	0.38	0.3	Cut of posthole. Visible only in section. Steep sides - near vertical, flat base. Filled by 406.		
406	Fill	0.38	0.3	Fill of 405. Firm light yellow white, mortar.		
407	Cut	0.54	0.09	Bioturbation. Sub-circular with an uneven base and shallow sides. Truncated base of bioturbation probably caused by rootball of small shrub. Filled by 408.		
408	Fill	0.54	0.09	Fill of 407. Soft mid brownish grey silty clay.		
409	Cut	0.3	0.08	Bioturbation. Oval, extending beneath the NW trench limit. Irregular base with sloping sides. Interpreted as the remains of disturbed/removed tree roots.		
410	Fill	0.3	0.08	Fill of 409. Soft mid brownish grey silty clay with mixed patches of light grey brown silty clay.		
411	Layer	>1.4	0.17	Friable dark grey brown silty clay with rare flecks of mortar and occasional flecks and frequent fragments of pegtile towards the base of the deposit. Same as 401.	Pottery, CBM	c1600-1750?
412	Layer	1	0.1	Limestone cobbles. Partially robbed to the NW. Overlies 413.	CBM	14-16th century?
413	Layer	1.4	0.14	Firm mid orange to dark red silty clay. Heat affected with no visible inclusions, although a single fragment of CBM was recovered from this deposit. Variations in colour appear to reflect distance from source of heat. Not contained within a cut. Essentially just heat affected 403.	CBM	14-16th century?
414	Group			Group for hearth base. Included 412, 413 and 415		
415	Layer	1.3	0.02	Soft light pink clay/mortar. Thin layer underlying stones 412. Probably used to bond stones 412 to the ground.		



APPENDIX B. FINDS REPORTS

B.1 Assessment of the post-Roman pottery

By John Cotter

Introduction and methodology

- B.1.1 A total of 15 sherds of post-Roman pottery weighing 251g were recovered from four contexts. The pottery was examined and spot-dated during the present assessment stage. For each context the total pottery sherd count and weight were recorded on an Excel spreadsheet, followed by the context spot-date which is the date-bracket during which the latest pottery types in the context are estimated to have been produced or were in general circulation. Comments on the presence of datable types were also recorded, usually with mention of vessel form (jugs, bowls etc.) and any other attributes worthy of note (for example, decoration etc.).

Date and nature of the assemblage

- B.1.2 The assemblage is of mixed condition with some large fresh 19th-century sherds and a mixture of smaller fresh and worn sherds in earlier wares. The earliest and perhaps the most significant pottery here comprises four small sherds in Anglo-Saxon organic tempered ware (c 400-800 AD) from contexts 305 and 307. These represent three vessels including a jar rim and body sherds from two other vessels. These are all residual in contexts containing later medieval pottery. The medieval pottery comprises body sherds of local grey sandy wares including a finer fabric probably dating to the 13th-14th centuries and a coarser fabric (Late medieval reduced ware) dating to c 1350-1550. A couple of 17th/18th-century local glazed earthenwares are also present (context 411) as well as a typical Victorian blue transfer-printed dish and a probable redware flowerpot (context 106). No further work is recommended.

Context no.	Spot-date	Count no.	Weight (g)	Comments
106	c 1825-1900	5	183	Joining sherds from sub-square blue transfer-printed whiteware (TPW) dish - 19C. Bs glazed late redware (PMR). ?Burnt plain redware rim - prob from 19C flowerpot? Bs lated reduced (dark grey) ware (LMRD) c1350-1550 prob from cookpot with ext sooting - fresh
305	c1350-1550?	3	25	Prob 3 vess - all bodysherds. 2 poss LMRD greywares but in finer fabric than above. 1 sooted ext. Not impossible that these could be earlier - 13/14C? 1x small bs in fine grey sandy ware with organic tempering - prob Anglo-Saxon c400-800 AD
307	c1200-1400?	5	25	2x bss fine sandyware - 1 in greyware & 1 with weakly oxid ext surface, both poss earlier version of LMRD, both sooted. 3x sherds (1 vess?) in Anglo-Saxon organic-tempered ware in fabric similar to above. 1 from a plain jar rim, the other 2 joining bss from sherd with ext sooting and poss specks of ?accidental glaze or some post-deposition substance?
411	c1600-1750	2	18	Hard-fired PMR ?cup base with int black glaze and



				ext splash. Bs copper-green glazed ?cup/mug with horiz grooves - poss Brill or other local kiln, buff sandy fabric
Total		15	251	

B.2 Clay tobacco pipe

By John Cotter

- B.2.1 A single small piece of pipe stem (1g) was recovered from deposit 106. This is slender with a narrow stem bore suggesting a 19th-century date. No further work is recommended.

B.3 The ceramic building material (CBM)

By John Cotter

- B.3.1 The CBM assemblage comprises 18 pieces weighing 1252g. These came from four contexts. These have been recorded on an Excel spreadsheet in a similar way to the pottery (see above). The only undatable piece is a scrap of orange tile from the 19th-century context 106. The other three contexts produced large fresh pieces of medieval peg tiles (including some with circular nailholes). These are quite thick and mostly have an orange-red sandy fabric but a few pieces are in a more distinctive pale buff-brown fabric with limestone sand or grits on the underside. The fabric of these resembles 14th-century Penn/Chiltern decorated floor tiles and on this basis the tiles here are tentatively dated to the 14th-16th centuries. Two tile fragments from two separate tiles display a battered and worn edge which is also heavily burnt/sooted. These may derive from a hearth formed of on-edge peg tiles, or less likely from the inner face of a tile-built oven of some sort. No further work is recommended.

Table 2: Ceramic Building Material

Context no.	Spot-date	Count no.	Weight (g)	Comments
106	med/pmed	1	2	Scrap worn orange tile - no orig surfaces
411	14-16C?	4	180	Orange sandy and pale brown pegtile frags as in (412) below incl orange tile with broken burnt/sooted edge - poss from on-edge tiled hearth or oven wall?
412	14-16C?	12	1062	Large & small fresh frags med pegtile, mostly orange sandy up to 18mm thick, circ nailholes. Some in more refined orange sandy fabric - poss later med? 2 in different pale brown-buff sandy fabric like Penn/Chiltern floortiles (14C) w sparse flint and shell inclusions plus coarse iron oxide, the underside is gritted with white ? limestone. 1 tile has a battered worn and burnt/sooted edge - poss used in a hearth of on-edge tiles or an oven wall?
413	14-16C?	1	8	Worn orange sandy pegtile scrap - med?
Total		18	1252	



B.4 The glass

Identified by Ian Scott

Context no.	Description	Date
104	A single sherd of modern window glass.	19th/20thC

Recommendations

B.4.1 The assemblage is generally of low potential and requires no further work.

B.5 The Bone

Identified by Lena Strid

Context no.	Description
305	5 medium mammal longbone fragments, 1 unidentifiable fragment, 19g
307	2 medium mammal longbone fragments, 1 horse astragalus chopped into two parts, 1 cattle tibia fused distal end, 1 cattle calcaneus chopped fragment, 5 unidentifiable fragments, 159g
413	1 sheep humerus fragment with cut marks on shaft, gnawed by a dog, 18g

Recommendations

B.5.1 The assemblage is generally of low potential and requires no further work.

B.6 The stone

Identified by Ruth Shaffrey

Context no.	Description
412	5 pieces of burnt limestone, all with a layer of fire-reddened clay on underside, 6396g

Discussion

B.6.1 5 pieces of burnt stone, set in a bedding layer of fire-reddened clay, were recovered from context 412. These probably formed part of a hearth or similar construction.

Recommendations

B.6.2 The assemblage is generally of low potential and requires no further work.



APPENDIX C. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

C.1 Environmental samples

By Julia Meen

Introduction

- C.1.1 A single environmental sample was taken during the evaluation at the Vicarage, Whitchurch in November 2011. Sample 1 was taken from the upper fill of an intercutting ditch for the recovery of charred plant remains (CPR), but also for the recovery of additional artefacts which might provide a more definite date for the feature. The sediment was a dark greyish brown (2.5Y 4/2) clay loam, with subangular stone pebbles making up approximately 15% of its volume. It was firm and formed irregular clods.

Methodology

- C.1.2 40L was processed for the recovery of CPR by water flotation using a modified Siraf style flotation machine. The flot was collected on a 250µm mesh and the heavy residues sieved to 500µm and dried in a heated room, after which the residues were sorted by eye for artefacts and ecofactual remains. The CPR flot was scanned for plant remains using a binocular microscope at approximately x15 magnification.

Results

- C.1.3 Sample 1 produced a flot of 60ml, of which approximately one quarter was scanned. Although the flot was quite sandy and contained frequent modern roots, the charred plant assemblage was fairly diverse and showed good preservation. Bread wheat (*Triticum aestivum*) grains were fairly common, and clinkered indeterminate cereal grains occurred frequently, including several which could be identified as genus wheat (*Triticum*). In addition, three *Triticum* rachis fragments of possible free-threshing type were observed. Several examples of oat/brome grass (*Avena/Bromus* sp) were noted, as well as a single oat (*Avena* sp) awn. Legumes of both 4mm and 2mm type occurred commonly. Several fragments of indeterminate seed capsule and a single fragment of hazel (*Corylus avellana*) nut shell were present. Charred weed seeds were observed fairly frequently, with small grasses (*Poaceae*), five examples of stinking chamomile (*Anthemis cotula*), three of probable dock (*Rumex* sp.), and one of *Galium* cf. *aparine* (cleaver) observed. A charred seed of flax (*Linum* sp) was also noted. Charcoal was present in small quantities, although was mostly limited to items less than 2mm in size, which are not further identifiable. Several indeterminate cereal grains were also recovered from the 4-2mm heavy residue.

Discussion and Recommendations

- C.1.4 The good preservation and range of species present in this sample demonstrates that charred plant remains survive at this site and so other, significant assemblages of charred plant material may be expected in other as yet excavated features. The presence of free-threshing wheat and legumes indicates that agricultural activity was being undertaken in the vicinity of the ditch and the concentration perhaps signifies dumped material rather than representing intrusion from air-borne background waste. The absence of any definite glume wheats implies a Saxon or later date for the feature, as glume wheats fell increasingly out of favour from Saxon times onwards.
- C.1.5 The charred flax seed identified from this sample implies cultivation or processing of flax,



either for linen or oil. The seed was of a large size and hence of cultivated type and is distinguishable from the much smaller, native variety of flax found in Britain.

- C.1.6 If additional excavation is undertaken at this site in the future, further sampling may be able to elaborate upon the agricultural regime at which this single sample hints. In this case, standard 40L bulk samples should be taken from a range of potentially datable features across the site and should be in accordance with the most recent sampling guidelines (eg. Oxford Archaeology, 2005 and English Heritage, 2011).



APPENDIX D. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

D.1 OA Project Team

D.1.1 The fieldwork was undertaken by Katrina Anker and Kevin Moon. The report was written by Katrina Anker with contributions from John Cotter, Julia Meen, Ian Scott, Ruth Shaffrey and Lena Strid and illustrated by Julia Collins and Emily Plunkett. The archive will be prepared for deposition by Leigh Allen, Susan Rawlings and Nicola Scott. The project was managed for OA by Katrina Anker.



APPENDIX E. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

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APPENDIX F. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: The Vicarage, White Horse Lane, Whitchurch, Buckinghamshire

Site code: WHVIC 11

Grid reference: SP 802 207

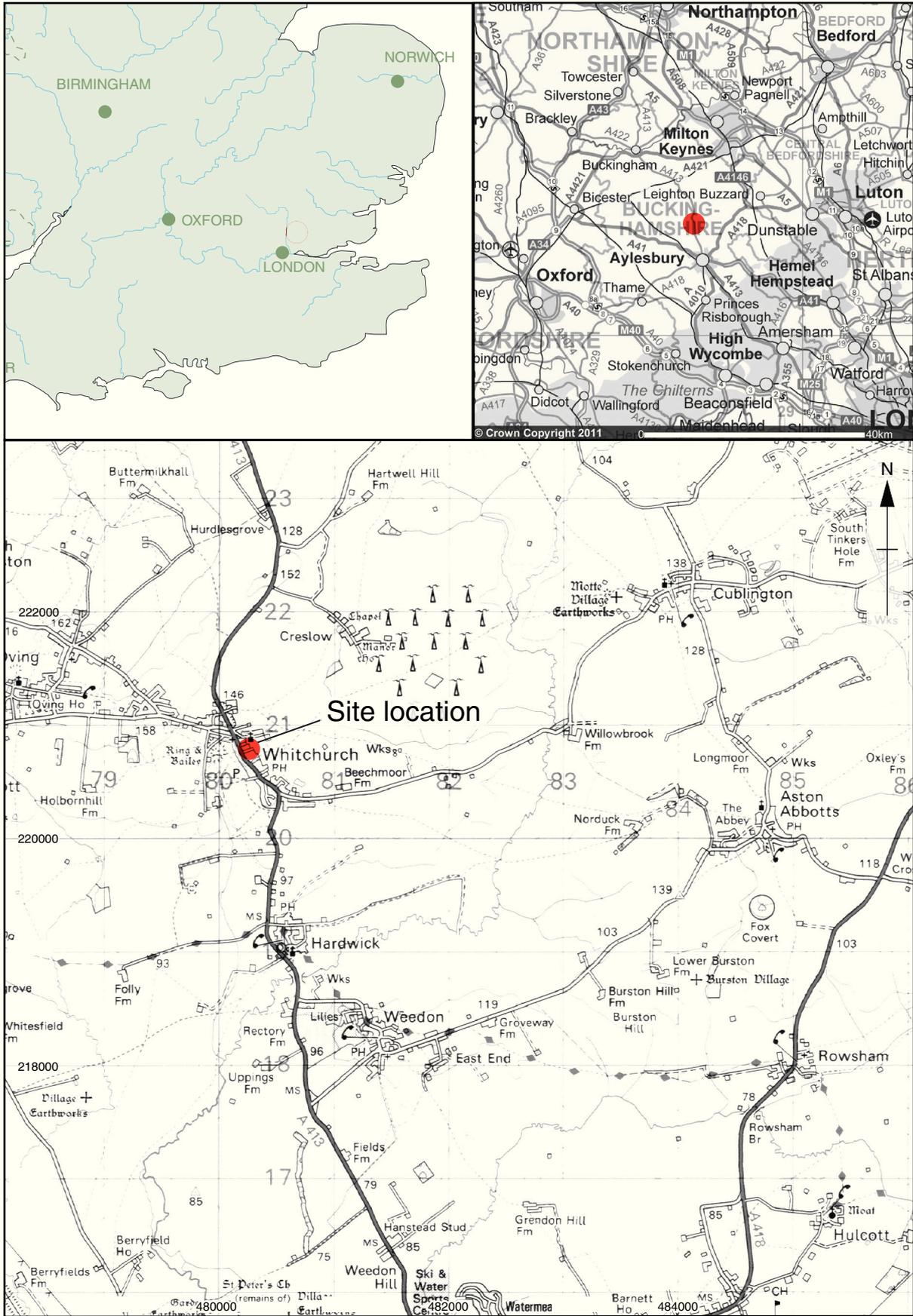
Type: Evaluation consisting of four trial trenches.

Date and duration: 21st - 24th of November 2011

Area of site: Approximately 1966m²

Summary of results: Trench 1 revealed a single tree throw and bioturbation most likely associated with the contemporary garden. No archaeological remains were observed within Trench 2. Trench 3 contained a re-cut ditch with fragments of pottery dating from the 14th-16th century. Several residual fragments of Anglo-Saxon pottery were also recovered from the feature. Trench 4 contained a single, mortar filled posthole and the remains of a stone hearth, both within the sides of the trench. A subsequent extension to the trench ensured that the hearth feature was exposed in its entirety. No further features were uncovered in the trench extension. Both the hearth and the posthole were sealed by a demolition/levelling layer containing 17th-18th century pottery.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum in due course, under the following accession number: AYBCM:2011.240.



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Figure 1: Site location



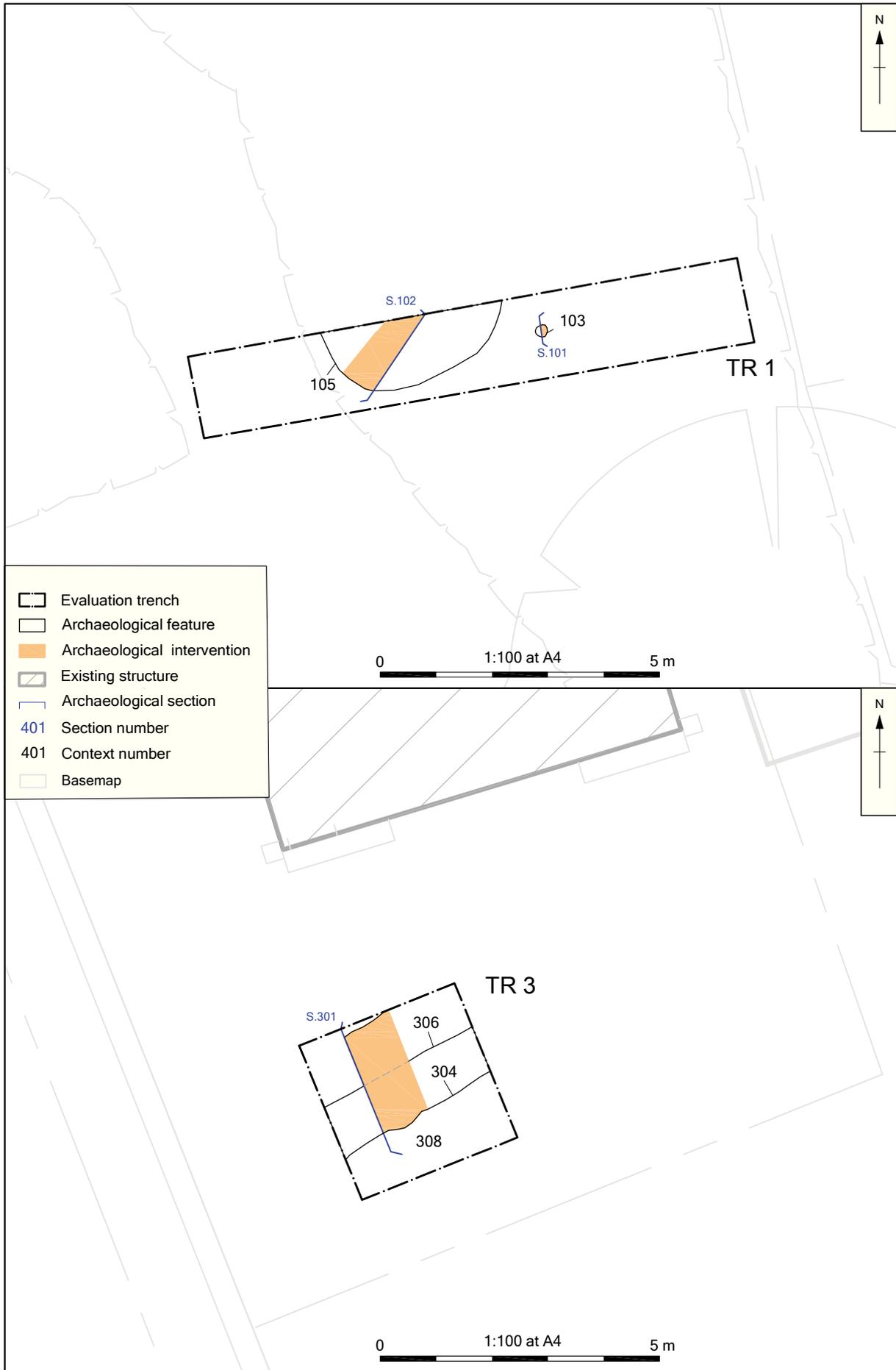
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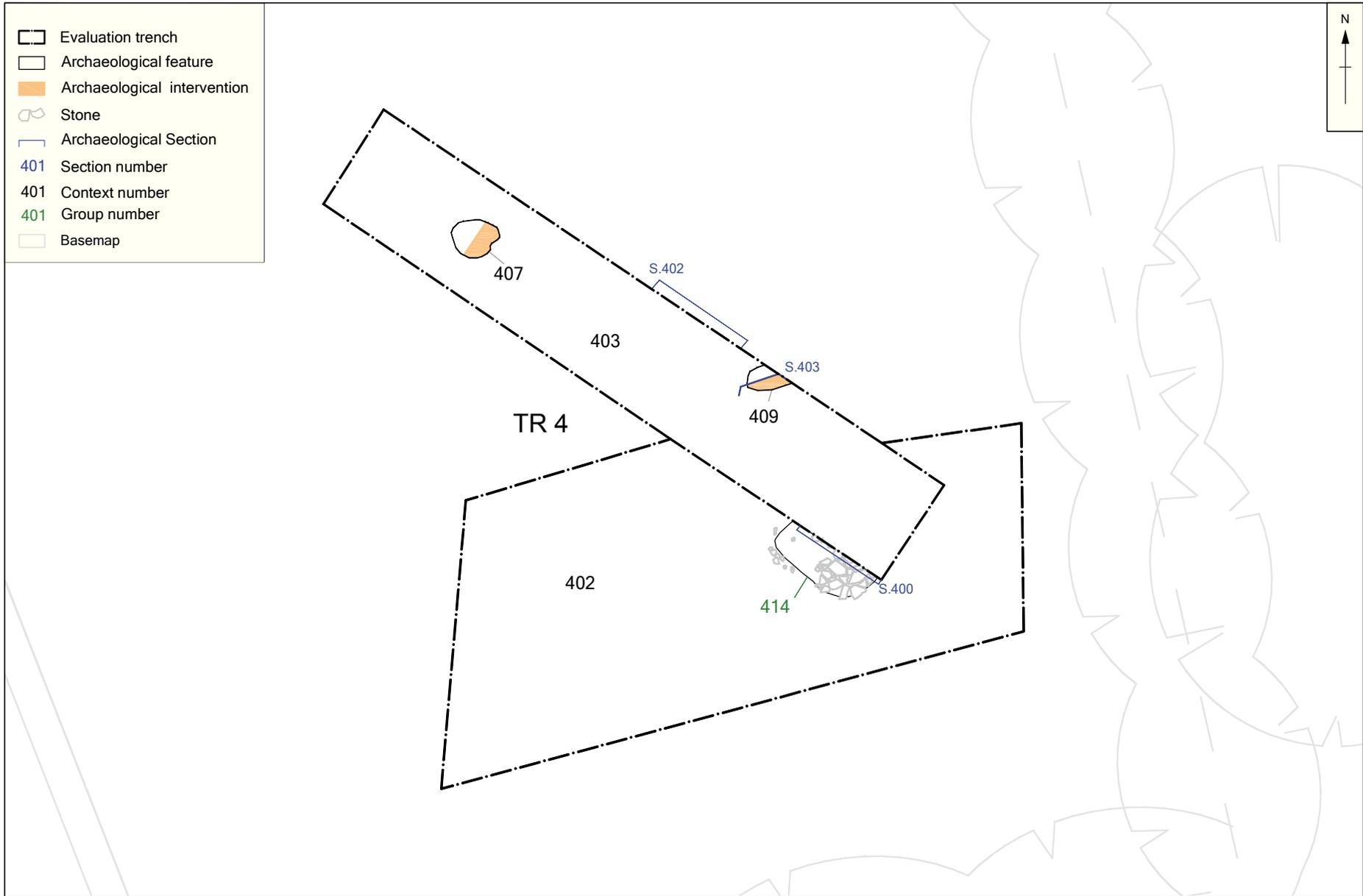
Figure 2: Trench location plan

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CHECKED BY:

Figure 3: Trenches 1 and 3



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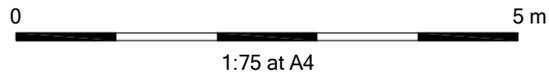


Figure 4: Trench 4

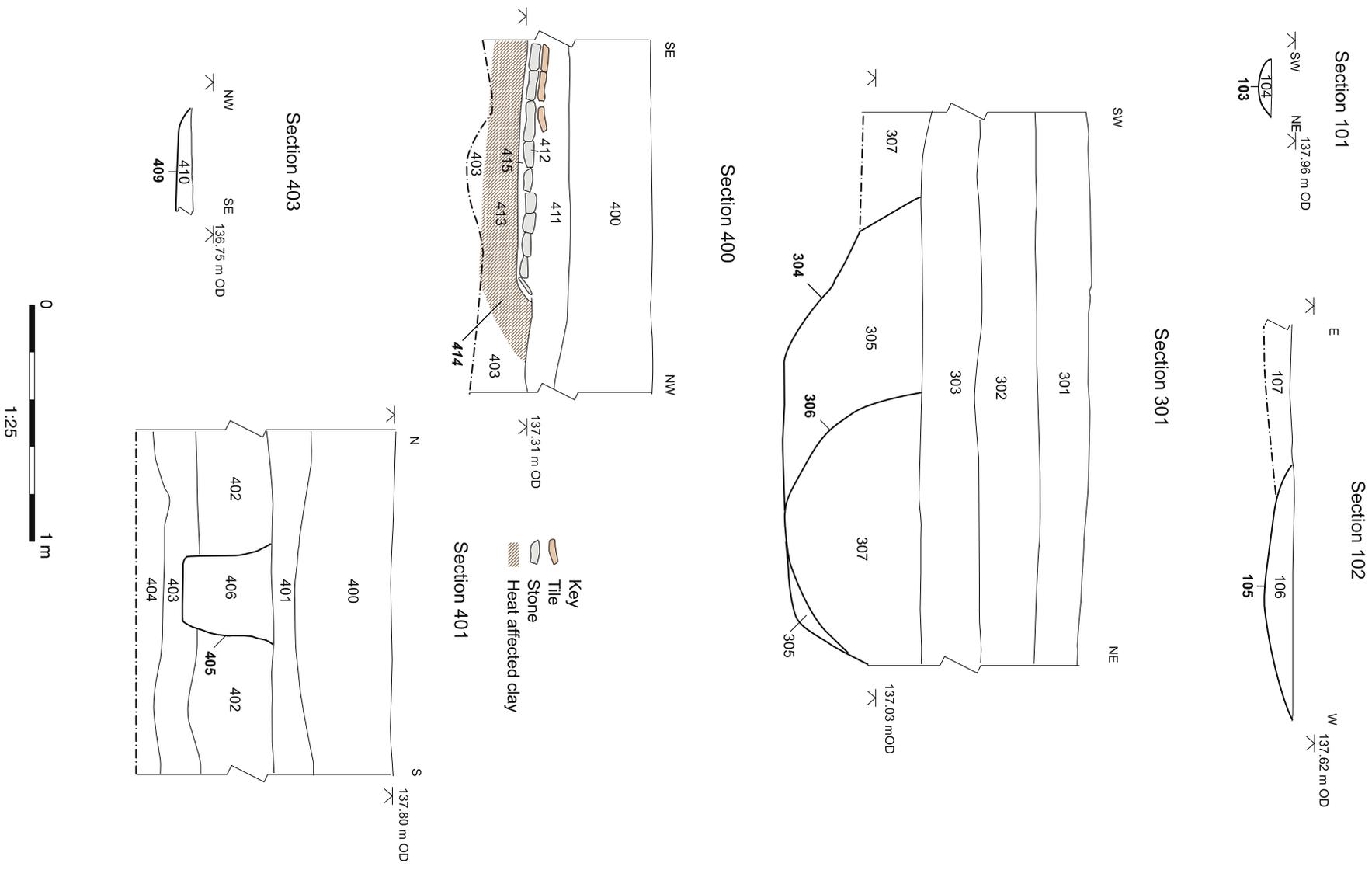


Figure 5: Sections