

WOOD STREET, WALLINGFORD, OXON ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION GRID REF. SU 6089 DISTRICT: S.OXFORDSHIRE.

INTRODUCTION

An evaluation was undertaken by the Oxford Archaeological Unit in October 1993 at the site of a former garage in Wood Street. The work was necessitated by proposed development and construction of two new properties. The work was carried out on behalf of P. Crudginton, fishmonger, who proposes to sell the current property. The site lies within the historic core of the town, founded in Saxon times, and tenth to eleventh century remains had been excavated c 200 m away, also in Wood Street. It was thought that development area lay in the back of a burgage plot running back from the High Street.

STRATEGY

A trench measuring 2 m x 1.2 m was hand excavated inside the building. The size was dictated by the presence of services still in use. The results are detailed below.

RESULTS

Beneath the concrete floor which dates to the early 1950's lay successive deposits of clearly modern debris (bricks, glass, metal, etc) in a matrix of sandy clay. These layers overlay the traces of a brick built structure, recently robbed, and deduced from local knowledge to be the remains of an air raid shelter/bunker built in the second world war. Further excavation to find possible earlier levels in the trench was not possible, as the depth of modern infill up was present to a depth of c 1.40 m and a small sondage dug into it suggested a far greater depth. It is possible that this small structure represents an entrance to a deeper sunken building. The property owner testified to having backfilled such a structure prior to construction of the current building.

THE FINDS

The finds require little comment: white china, bricks and a metal key were recovered from the backfill. One curio was the presence of a quite well preserved oil lamp. All finds were of modern date.

DISCUSSION

The trench was quite small and located of necessity towards the front of the building. It was therefore not possible to ascertain the extent of the brick structure encountered. However the floor of the current building is c 0.75 m above the level of the road and is presumably so owing to the presence of this structure. It is highly likely that due to the presence of this modern feature all significant archaeological levels will have been destroyed.

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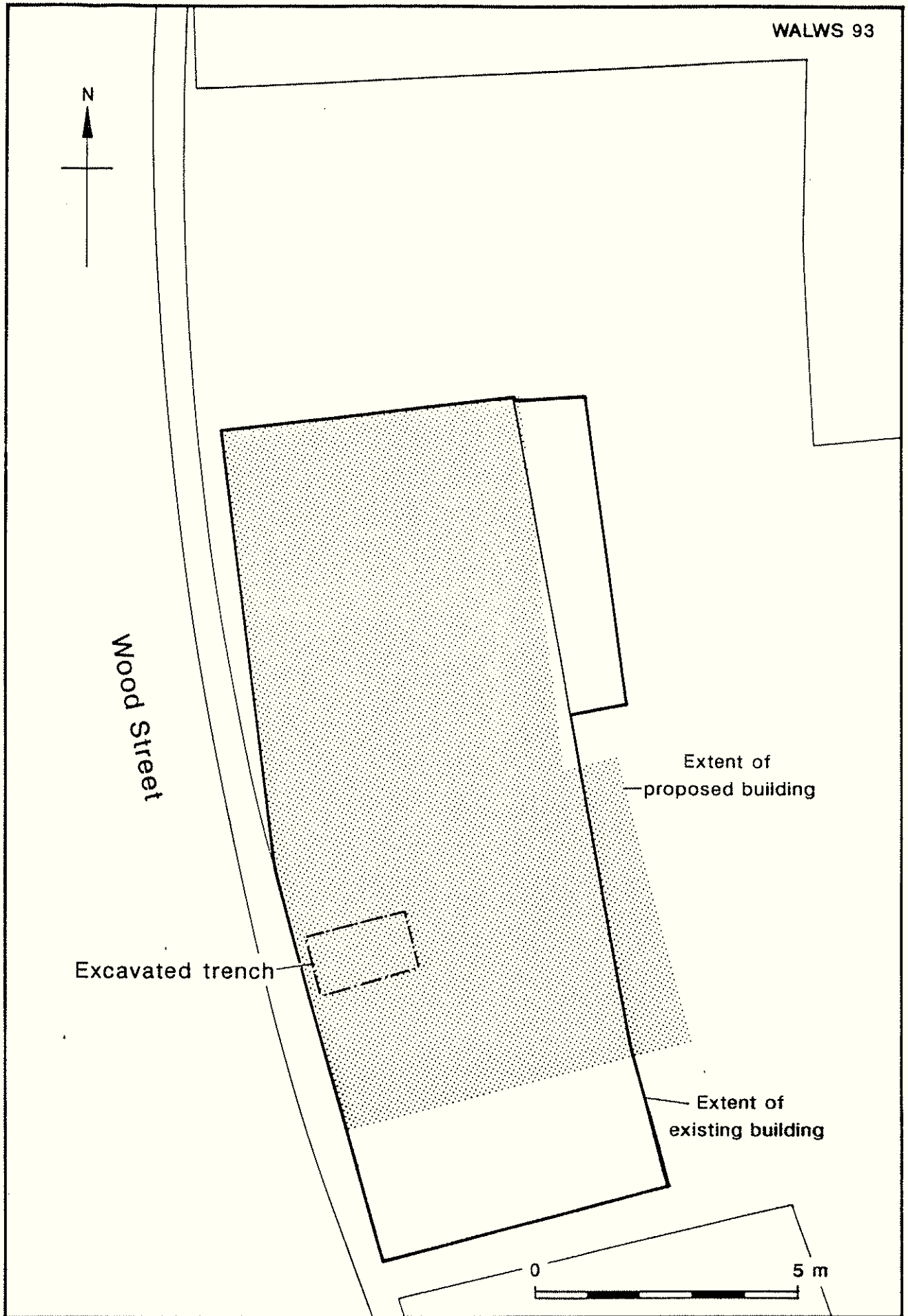


figure 2