

Eton College

Proposed Car Park, Barnes Pool, Baldwin's Shore, Eton,
Berkshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

NGR SU 967 777

Planning Application 98/77687

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

April 1999

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Prepared by: C. Bell
Date: 23-4-99
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Date: 27-4-99
Approved by: R. Williams
HEAD OF FIELDWORK
Date: 27/4/1999

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

April 1999

SUMMARY

In April 1999 the Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out a field evaluation at Barnes Pool, Eton, Berkshire on behalf Eton College. No significant archaeological remains were discovered and it was revealed that the development area has been heavily affected by deep post-medieval disturbance.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

Over a period of five days in April 1999 the Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out a field evaluation consisting of five trenches at Barnes Pool, Baldwin's Shore, Eton, Berkshire on behalf of Eton College in respect of a planning application for the construction of a Car Park (Planning Application No. 98/77687). The work was carried in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by the OAU following a specification set by Babbie Archaeological Services on behalf of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. The site lay to the rear of properties on the east side of Eton High Street (SU 967 777) and was 0.509 ha. in area (Figs 1 and 2).

1.2 Geology and topography

The site lies at Barnes Pool off Baldwin's Shore and is bounded by Baldwin Stream to the east, Sunbury Court and Porny C of E School to the south and by the rear of nos 1-12 High Street on the west (Fig. 2). The underlying geology is river terrace gravel (Geological Survey Map, Sheet 269). The west edge of the site lies at c. 20 m AOD, and the ground slopes down from there towards the stream and the River Thames. Prior to the evaluation the site was occupied by a tarmac car park, lock-up garages, sheds and disused gardens.

1.3 Archaeological background

The site lies within the historic core of medieval Eton, and retains what appear to be the boundaries of the original burgage plots that were laid out approximately at right angles to the High Street and ran down to Baldwin Stream. It was believed that in addition to the medieval boundaries between these plots, the site might contain evidence of associated medieval activity in the back yards of these tenements.

The site is situated just north of the 12th-century suburb of Windsor which was known as *Underore*, as defined in 'Historic Towns in Berkshire' by Astill (1978). Medieval Eton is thought to extend from Windsor Bridge to Baldwin's Bridge, though little is known from excavations in Eton itself except at King's Stable Street, where excavation by OAU revealed evidence of activity from the Norman period to the late medieval (Pugh 1998). It is possible that the development of Eton followed a similar pattern to Windsor as the two settlements were linked by a ford and in 1236, a bridge. Excavation by Wessex Archaeology in Jennings

Yard (Hawkes and Heaton 1993), on the south of the river, revealed the remains of substantial medieval buildings within a ditched enclosure or moat. Excavations at the ABC cinema by Wessex Archaeology revealed that the area of *Underore* was probably an island.

The site lies close to the Thames and adjacent to one of its minor tributaries. Cropmarks and excavations of the gravels close to the Thames in the surrounding area (notably at the Eton Rowing Lake, the Maidenhead-Windsor Flood Alleviation Channel, at Cippenham and at Eton Wick) have demonstrated the density of prehistoric and Roman activity in this area. A significant multi-period settlement with evidence of prehistoric, Roman and Saxon activity is known from Agar's Plough only 1 km to the north-east (Ford 1991 unpublished).

2 EVALUATION AIMS

The aims of the evaluation were to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the proposal area and to determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality, date, and depth of any archaeological remains present. Additionally the evaluation aimed to establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features, and to make available the results of the investigation.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Sample size and scope of fieldwork

The evaluation consisted of five machine-excavated trenches supplemented by hand investigation of selected archaeological deposits and features. The trenches were excavated in the positions indicated on Figure 3. Trenches 1-5 were 28, 20, 40, 20 and 17 m long respectively; Trenches 1-4 were 1.6 m wide, Trench 5 was 1.8 m wide. The evaluation represented a 4 % sample of the study area. Excavation was not generally carried below a depth of 1.2 m for safety reasons, and because of the limited impact of the proposed development.

The trenches were positioned to provide overall coverage of the site while avoiding unnecessary disturbance to trees that would not be affected by the proposed development. In addition, the trench layout was designed to provide sections through the site both along the length of one of the medieval burgrave plots (Trenches 3 and 5) and across the line of the plots (Trenches 1 and 4). The edge of the Baldwin Stream was investigated (as far as was practicable) in Trench 3, and the area closest to the tenements fronting the High Street by Trenches 1 and 5.

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

The overburden was removed by a mechanical excavator under close archaeological supervision. The trenches were then cleaned by hand, planned

and photographed. Sections were drawn where appropriate. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

4 RESULTS

4.1 Presentation of results

Trench descriptions are presented below. A summary of all contexts and finds is presented in the archaeological context inventory (Appendix 1)

4.2 General stratigraphy

The underlying natural soil at the west end of the site (Trench 5) was a fine calcareous sandy gravel, which was found at a depth of 0.80 m beneath the present ground surface. This dipped down to the east (Trenches 2 and 3), and was overlain by a build-up of alluvial silty clay, which from a sondage dug in Trench 2 appeared to bottom on further clay alluvium, probably late Pleistocene, at a depth of 1.8 m. The alluvial build-up had no visible stratification within it, and was sterile.

4.3 Trench descriptions

4.3.1 *Trenches 1, 4 and 5*

These three trenches were located in the western half of the site and revealed a similar sequence of deposits. In each of the trenches the removal of the topsoil and layers of modern rubble exposed numerous inter-cutting post-medieval features, comprising large rubbish pits, shallow north – south aligned ditches and linear-irregular trenches of uncertain function. In addition, there were also areas of ill-defined disturbance. All of these features contained varying quantities of late 18th and 19th-century pottery, glass, brick and tile. These late deposits were machined out in parts of the trenches to ensure that no earlier features or deposits lay beneath, but none were found, and many of the post-medieval features were not bottomed at a depth of 1.2 m, where excavation ceased. No trace was found of any medieval boundaries to the supposed medieval burgrave plots.

4.3.2 *Trenches 2 and 3 (Fig. 4)*

Trench 2 was situated in the north-east corner of the site. Trench 3 ran through the central area of the site extending to the eastern boundary. The features and deposits revealed in these two trenches were similar in character to those seen in Trenches 1, 4 and 5, predominantly comprising post-medieval rubbish pits shallow trenches and ditches and areas of deeper disturbance (305). However, the deeper disturbances were less dense in this half of the site, and in areas where it remained undisturbed, the top of the alluvium (303) was cut through by a number of smaller post-medieval pits and postholes (307, 312, 314). In Trench 3 one of these smaller pits (307) contained a dog burial. One wide but shallow ditch on a south-west to north-east alignment was found crossing both trenches (cut 205 = 309).

4.4 Finds

4.4.1 Many of the deposits encountered in the evaluation contained large quantities of 18th and 19th-century pottery and glass. Only a representative sample of this material was retained for analysis (see below). A record of all contexts containing post-medieval finds is listed in Appendix 1.

4.4.2 *Pottery* (by Paul Blinkhorn)

Thirty-two sherds of post-medieval pottery, with a total weight of 675 g, were retrieved for analysis. The sampled pottery by context and fabric type is shown in Table 1.

Fabrics

Border Wares: Generic term for the pottery industry of the Hampshire/Surrey border area which began in the late 15th/early 16th century (Pearce 1992). The range of fabrics comprised fine, sandy whitewares with an off-white to buff fabric and with yellow, green olive or brown glaze, and fine redwares with clear green to olive or brown glaze (ibid. 1). The manufacture of whitewares ceased during the 18th century. Produced a wide range of late medieval and early post-medieval vessel types.

Red earthenwares, c 1500-1750. Orange or red sandy ware with internal green or orange glaze. Produced in a wide range of utilitarian forms.

Tin-Glazed Earthenwares, c AD1550-1700. Fine white earthenware, occasionally pinkish or yellowish core. Thick white tin glaze, with painted cobalt blue decoration, occasionally manganese purple and ochre.

Westerwald Stonewares. Hard, dense white fabric, usually decorated with cobalt blue slip. Later examples can have manganese purple slip. Common in London by c AD1630 (Gaimster 1997, 86), and still in production today.

Staffordshire Slipware. AD1680-1750. Fine cream fabric with white slip and pale yellow lead glaze, commonest decoration is feathered dark brown trailed slip. Chiefly press-moulded flat wares, although small bowls and mugs etc are known.

Chinese Porcelain: Hard, slightly translucent white fabric with a clear glaze, often with hand-painted polychrome decoration. Known in Europe from the 13th century, but did not become common until the 16th century (Whitehouse 1972, 63).

Creamwares. Cream-coloured earthenware, made from the same calcinated flint clay as Staffordshire white salt-glazed stonewares (Jennings 1981, 227), although Creamwares were fired at a different temperature and have a lead glaze. First made in the 1740's, in a wide range of tablewares.

English Yellow-glazed earthenwares, c. 1785-1835. Hard, white, slightly sandy fabric with an applied thick yellow lemon glaze, made in a general range of utilitarian forms.

Table 1: Sampled pottery by context and fabric type

	Border Ware		Red Earthen-ware		Tin-Glazed Earthen-ware		Westerwald/Cologne Stoneware		Staffordshire Slipware		Chinese Porcelain		Cream-ware		Yellow Ware		Misc 19 th /20 th C wares		
Cnxt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
111			1	42													2	17	1 st
207											1	6					1	5	1 st
209																	6	32	1 st
211																	5	57	1 st
213			1	18															16 th
306	1	15	1	26			1	47			1	10	1	19					18 th
308													1	1	1	5			18 th
310													1	5					18 th
313																	2	19	19 th
315													1	2					18 th
501			1	99	1	10			1	237									17 th
507									1	13									17 th
Total	1	15	4	185	1	10	1	47	2	250	2	16	4	27	1	5	16	130	

Chronology

Most of the pottery assemblages are 18th and 19th century. Context 213 could be as early as the 16th century, but the single sherd of Red Earthenware from the deposit is abraded, and highly likely to be redeposited. Two contexts from Trench 5 could date to the 17th century or early 18th century.

4.4.3 Other finds (by Kayt Smith)

Animal bone was retrieved from contexts 213, 504, 503 and 308, identified as cow, sheep and dog respectively. Thirteen pieces of ceramic building material (CBM), namely fragments of brick and tile were recovered from a number of contexts. A small amount of post-medieval glass comprising a complete glass vial and four glass fragments, was also recovered.

Context	Material	No. Fragments	Wt (g)
206	CBM	2	112
207	CBM	1	2
209	Glass	3	4
211	Glass	1	3
213	CBM	4	384
213	Bone	4	30
308	Bone	13	28
310	Glass	1	18
310	CBM	1	5
313	CBM	1	52
315	CBM	3	48
503	CBM	1	73
503	Bone	1	5
504	Bone	1	80
Total		37	834

5 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 Reliability of field investigation

Despite the numerous trees in the proposal area a good spatial distribution of trenches was achieved representing a 4 % sample. Ground water seeping through from the adjacent stream made excavation difficult in the eastern half of Trench 3. However, given the nature of the deposits discovered this did not affect the reliability of the results.

5.2 Overall interpretation

5.2.1 Summary of results

Deep post-medieval disturbance was encountered throughout much of the site. No trace of any earlier features was found beneath these later deposits, or in the small areas which survived between these disturbances, and no redeposited earlier finds were recovered from any of the post-medieval features.

5.2.2 Conclusions

No significant archaeological deposits were located within the proposal area and no finds earlier than 17th-century in date were recovered. Any earlier deposits that may have existed within the proposal area have previously been destroyed by deep post-medieval disturbance.

6 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE

6.1 The Archive, including the finds, will be deposited with Reading Museum.

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Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory

Abbreviations used

FS Finds sampled

FNR Finds not retained

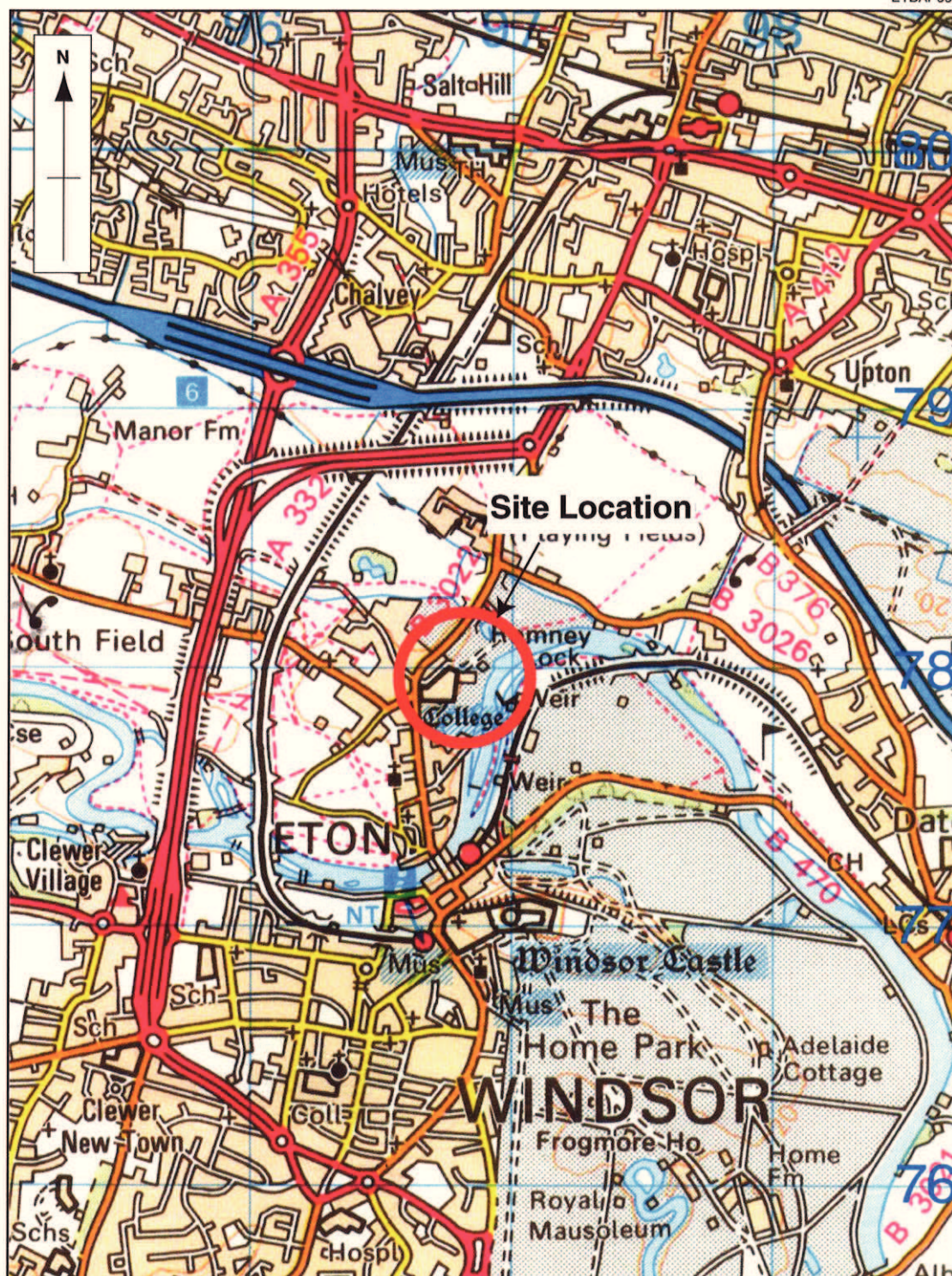
Post-med Post-medieval

CBM Ceramic building material

Trench	Ctxt	Type	width (m)	Thic k. (m)	Comment	Finds	No.	Date
1								
	101	Layer		0.70	Topsoil			
	102	Fill		0.40	Fill of 103	Pot/glass	FNR	Post-med
	103	Cut	1.2	0.40	Rubbish pit			
	104	Fill		0.15	Fill of 105	Pot/glass	FNR	Post-med
	105	Cut	0.30	0.15	Shallow N-S ditch			
	106	Fill		0.10	Fill of 107	Pot/glass	FNR	Post-med
	107	Cut	0.30	0.10	N-S shallow ditch			
	108	Layer		0.20	Rubble dump			
	109	Layer		0.45	Soil dump			
	110	Layer			Alluvium (disturbed)			
	111	Fill		0.45	Fill of 112	Pot/CBM	FS	Post-med
	112	Cut	0.	0.45	N-S linear disturbance			
	113	Fill		0.60	Fill of 114	Pot/CBM	FNR	Post-med
	114	Cut	0.60	0.60	N-S linear disturbance			
	115	Layer		0.25	Rubble dump	Pottery	FNR	Post-med
	116	Fill		0.30	Fill of 117	Pot/glass/ CBM	FNR	Post-med
	117	Cut	0.28	0.30	Undefined disturbance			
2								
	201	Layer		0.40	Topsoil			
	202	Later		0.20	Recent buried soil			
	203	Layer		0.50	Alluvium			
	204	Layer			Alluvium			

	205	Cut	1.80	0.45	NNE-SSW ditch			
	206	Fill		0.30	Primary fill of 205	Pot/CBM	FNR	Post-med
	207	Fill		0.20	Secondary fill of 205	CBM	FS	Post-med
	208	Cut	0.28	0.20	N-S slot/gully			
	209	Fill		0.20	Fill of 208	Pot/glass	FS	Post-med
	210	Cut	1.10	0.12	Shallow pit			
	211	Fill		0.12	Fill of 210	Pot/glass/ CBM	FS	Post-med
	212	Cut	3.5	0.60	Deep E-W linear disturbance			
	213	Fill		0.40	Primary fill of 212	Pot/bone/ CBM	FS	Post-med
	214	Fill		0.25	Secondary fill of 212			
3								
	301	Layer		0.20	Topsoil			
	302	Layer		0.20	Rubble	Pot/glass	FNR	Post-med
	303	Layer			Alluvium			
	304	Layer			Alluvium			
	305	Cut	1.50	0.80	Deep disturbance			
	306	Fill		0.80	Fill of 305	Pot/glass/ CBM	FS	Post-med
	307	Cut	0.40	0.10	Animal grave			
	308	Fill		0.10	Fill of 307	Dog bones	FS	Post-med
	309	Cut	1.80	0.45	NNE-SSW ditch, same as 205			
	310	Fill		0.30	Fill of 309	Pot/glass/ CBM	FS	Post-med
	311	Fill		0.20	Fill of 309			
	312	Cut	0.20	0.10	Posthole			
	313	Fill		0.10	Fill of 312	CBM	FS	Post-med
	314	Cut	0.35	0.10	Posthole			
	315	Fill		0.10	Fill of 314	Pot/CBM bone	FS	Post-med
4								
	400	Layer		0.35	Topsoil			
	401	Layer		0.20	Recent buried soil	Pot/CBM	FNR	Post-med
	402	Layer			Alluvium (disturbed)			

	403	Layer			Alluvium			
	404	Fill		0.40	Fill of 405	Pot/CBM	FNR	Post-med
	405	Cut	1.80	0.40	Area of disturbance			
	406	Fill		0.15	Fill of 407			
	407	Cut	0.50	0.15	Linear disturbance			
	408	Fill		0.20	Fill of 409	Pot	FNR	Post-med
	409	Cut	0.50	0.20	Linear disturbance (tree-throw hole ?)			
	410	Fill		0.40	Fill of 411	Pot/glass/CBM	FNR	Post-med
	411	Cut	1.10	0.40	N-S linear disturbance			
5								
	500	Layer		0.06	Modern tarmac surface			
	501	Layer		0.40	Buried topsoil	Pot/CBM	FS	Post-med
	502	Cut	1.80	0.50	Rubbish pit			
	503	Fill		0.30	Fill of 502	Bone/CBM	FS	Post-med
	504	Layer		0.50	Soil dump	Bone	FS	Post-med
	505	Cut	1	0.50	E-W linear disturbance			
	506	Cut	1	0.60	E-W linear disturbance			
	507	Fill		0.50	Fill of 505	Pot	FS	Post-med
	508	Fill		0.60	Fill of 506			
	509	Layer			Alluvium			
	510	Layer			Alluvium			
	511	Layer			Alluvium			



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scale 1 : 25 000

Figure 1 : Site Location

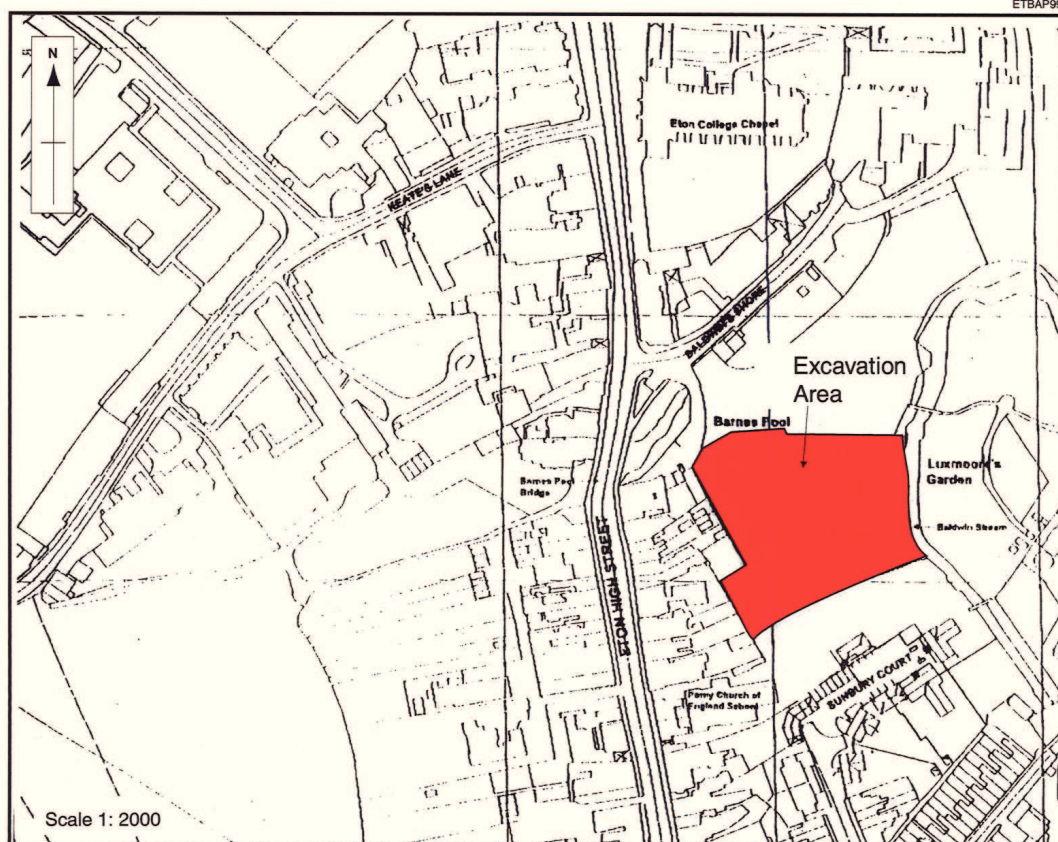


Figure 2 : Position of Excavation Area.

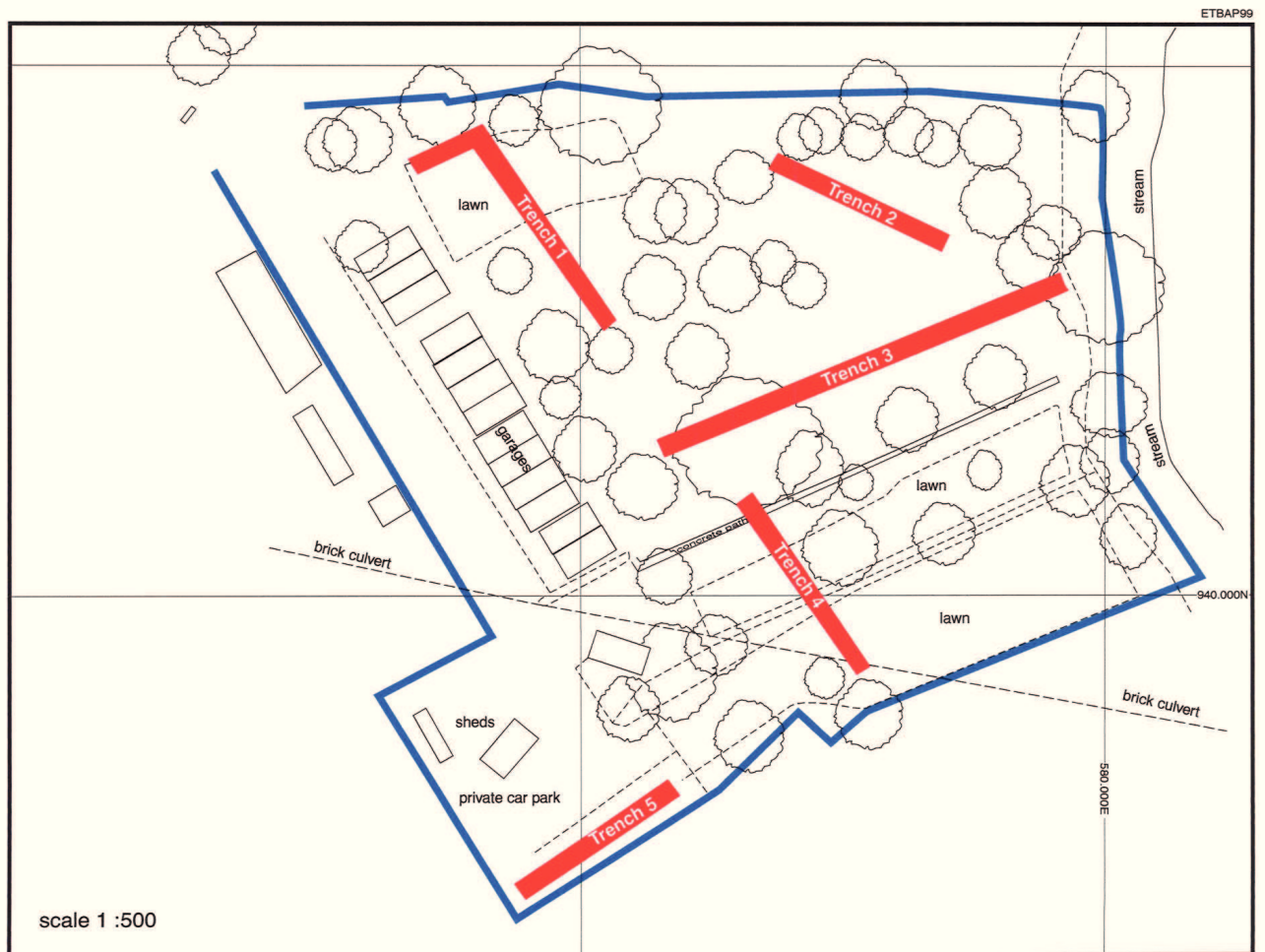


Figure 3 : Trench location plan.

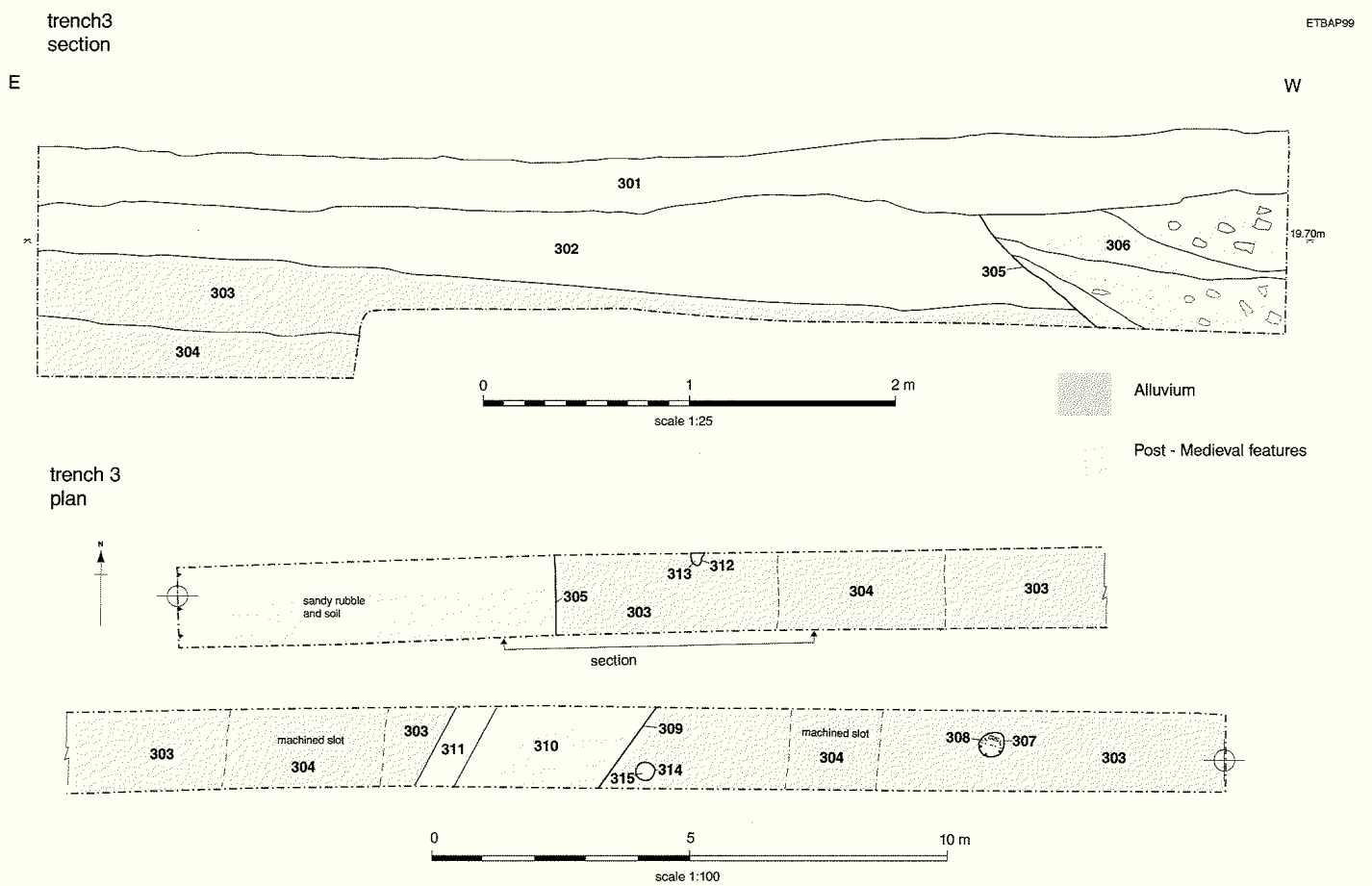


Figure 4 : trench 3, plan and section.



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