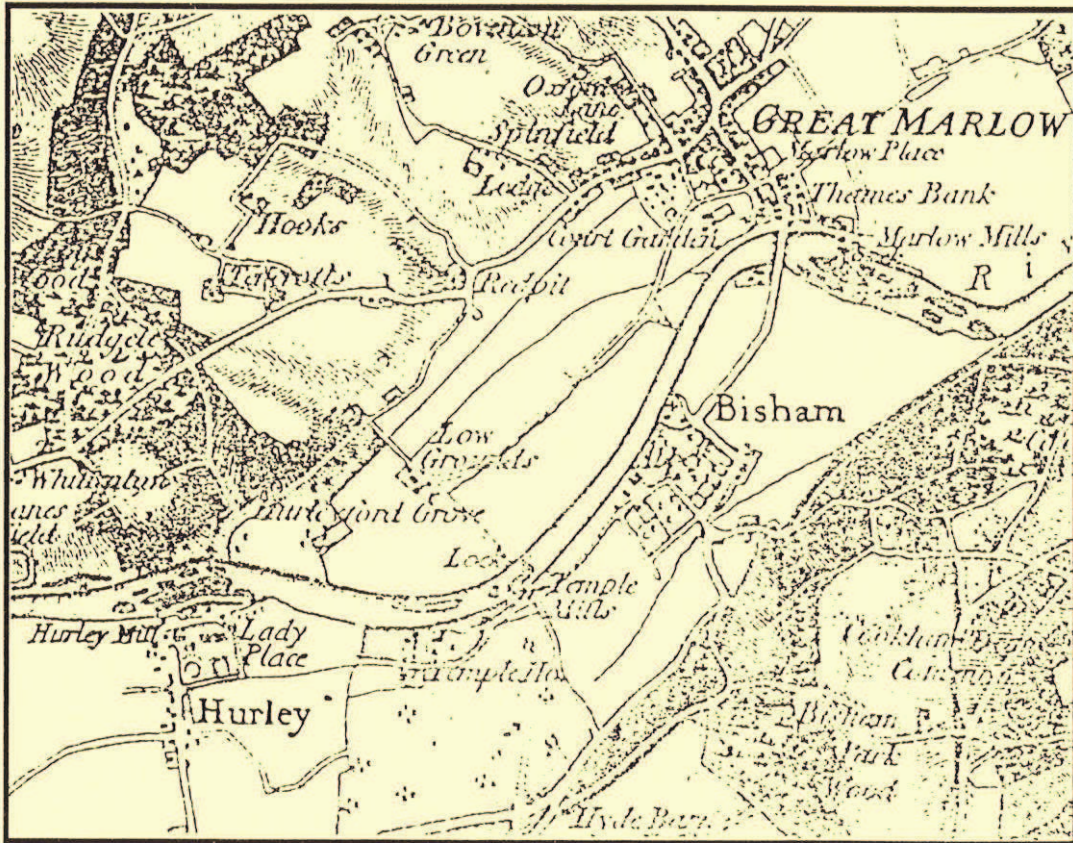


St Mary's Church, Hurley, Berkshire.

Archaeological Evaluation Report



Oxford Archaeological Unit

January 1997

ST. MARY'S CHURCH, HURLEY.

**ST. MARY'S CHURCH, HURLEY,
BERKSHIRE.**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

SU82588410

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

JANUARY 1997

ST. MARY'S CHURCH, HURLEY.

ST. MARY'S CHURCH, HURLEY, BERKSHIRE.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

SU82588410

Prepared by: <i>V. Macnaught</i>
Date: <i>10.1.97</i>
Checked by: <i>JR Scott</i>
Date: <i>10.1.97</i>
Approved by: <i>JR Scott</i>
Date: <i>10.1.97</i>

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

JANUARY 1997

**ST. MARY'S CHURCH, HURLEY,
BERKSHIRE.**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

LIST OF CONTENTS

	SUMMARY	1
1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	Location and scope of work	1
1.2	Geology and topography	1
1.3	Archaeological and historical background	1
2	EVALUATION AIMS	2
3	EVALUATION METHODOLOGY	2
3.1	Sample size	2
3.2	Fieldwork methods and recording	2
4	RESULTS	3
4.1	Trench 1	3
4.2	Trench 2	4
5	OVERALL INTERPRETATION	4
6	CONCLUSIONS	5

Bibliography and references

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory

Appendix 2 Assessment of Pottery from St. Mary's Church, Hurley.

List of Figures

- Fig. 1 Site location map
Fig. 2 Trench location plan
Fig. 3 Trench 1, plan 1/1 and section 1/1
Fig. 4 Trench 2, plan 2/1 and sections 2/1 and 2/2.

SUMMARY

The Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out a field evaluation at St. Mary's church, Hurley, Berkshire on behalf of the church. The site lies within the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Hurley Priory and Ladye Place Manor. The evaluation revealed important stratified archaeological deposits which span from the 12th to the 19th centuries.

The earliest feature discovered was a large early medieval ditch, which was overlain by a thick medieval dump layer. A late medieval mortar floor was then laid down and again was sealed by a further possibly post-dissolution dump. Four post-medieval rubble built foundations, possibly for boundaries or outbuildings in the grounds of the Ladye Place Manor, were then constructed, and after their demolition and clearance a final dump sealed the site prior to the formation of a thick garden soil.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

In December 1996 the Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out a field evaluation at St. Mary's church, Hurley (Fig. 1), on behalf of the church with regard to the extension of the existing burial ground southwards into an adjacent garden. The site lay within the grounds of Hurley Priory, a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 19020) and is approximately 240 sq metres in area. Planning permission has already been granted for the extension but the church was advised by English Heritage, Babbie Public Services (consultants for Berkshire County Council) and the Archaeological Advisor to the DAC that an evaluation should be carried out prior to Scheduled Ancient Monument consent being granted for the extension.

1.2 Geology and topography

The site lies on the Thames flood plain gravel terrace, at 30 m above OD just S of the present burial ground of St. Mary's church. It is situated within the grounds of a fairly modern bungalow called Monks Garden. The land has been used recently as a lawn, vegetable plot and compost area and previously as a market garden and pasture. To the north lies St. Mary's church, part of the original Benedictine Priory and to the north-east are the remains of the vaulted brick cellars of Ladye Place Manor. The site is separated from these historic sites by a high brick wall and wooden fence.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

St. Mary's Church, Hurley stands on the site of Hurley Priory, a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 19020), which was founded by Geoffrey de Mandeville between 1085 and 1087 as a Benedictine House subject to Westminster Abbey. Geoffrey founded the Priory for the salvation of his soul, and those of his wife Lecline's, and of Athalais his first wife, his heirs and his successors (VCH ii 1907 p73).

The Priory was dissolved on the 3rd July 1536 and granted to Westminster Abbey which was itself dissolved on the 16th Jan 1540, all its lands being forfeit to the crown (VCH ii 1907 p76). The site then passed through a series of hands until it was acquired by Sir John Lovelace in 1550. He demolished all but the nave of the church and incorporated the land into his new mansion, the Ladye Place. The Lovelaces remained Lords of the Manor throughout the 16th and 17th centuries (VCH iii 1923). Eventually the lands passed to Sir George East who demolished the old manor in 1837.

Since then the grounds have been used as pasture, market gardens and more recently as a residential area.

At present all that remains above ground of the medieval Benedictine Priory are a rectangular moat which still partially survives on the north and east sides, two fishponds and various standing remains including the refectory, part of the northern cloister range (c. 1300 AD) and the priory wall. A brick built crypt which survives in the garden of Hurley Lodge to the south-east of the church, is associated with Ladye Place Mansion. The line of the moat has been projected through the area for the proposed burial ground extension and it is possible that buildings associated with the southern range of the priory, or outbuildings associated with the Mansion may have extended this far. Excavations have shown the nave of the present church to have Anglo-Saxon origins (Pevsner 1966 p157). The church, refectory, priory wall, gatehouse and archway are not covered by the scheduling, but the ground beneath all of them is.

2 EVALUATION AIMS

- i) The general purpose of the evaluation was to establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the proposed area.
- ii) To determine, as far as is reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeology.
- iii) To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features.
- iv) To make available the results of the investigation.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Sample size

The evaluation was based upon a 10 % sample of the extension area, and consisted of two trenches (Fig. 2) each measuring 7.5 m long and 1.85 m wide, and set at right angles to each other.

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

Under the Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent for the evaluation, no structural or burial deposits could be removed during excavations within the scheduled area.

With this in mind the following methods were used.

The overburden was removed, under close archaeological supervision, by a 2.5 tonne mini mechanical excavator, using a toothless ditching bucket. The trenches were cleaned by hand and the revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds. All archaeological features were planned and excavated, and their sections drawn at 1:20 scale. All features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (Wilkinson, 1992).

4 RESULTS

4.1 Trench 1 (Fig. 3)

The trench was aligned North to S and machine excavated to the first significant archaeological level which occurred at 0.84 m. Geological deposits were not reached although a sondage was hand excavated to 1.42 m through dump deposits 0.98 m from the north end of the trench. The following is the archaeological sequence revealed.

The deepest deposits revealed in the sondage were dump layers 1/009 and 1/015 the extent of which were not revealed. However it is significant that these deposits contained two fragments of glazed tile and one sherd of Brill/ Boarstall ware which suggests a 13th- to 14th- century date. Dump layer 1/005, situated close to the northern balk, was also similar to 1/009 but it was not excavated due to the restrictions of space within the trench. Finds from the surface cleaning of 1/005 also suggest a medieval date, and it is possible that both 1/005 and 1/009 are contemporary dump deposits within a larger feature. Layer 1/009 was overlain by a medieval mortar floor 1/010, which extended from 1.23 m from the north end of the trench to the southern balk. It contained whitish yellow mortar which was very well preserved and on its northern edge was an intermittent line of small pieces of limestone. This could suggest that the floor was situated within a rubble built structure, the stones representing the remnants of a robbed out wall, or that the edge of the floor was lined to demarcate its function from the activities outside the floor area. This floor was sealed by dump layers 1/008 and 1/011, and a soil horizon 1/004 which contained 18th- century brick as well as a sherd of pottery dateable from the 15th- to the mid 18th- centuries. This also helps to suggest a medieval date for the mortar floor, which once out of use, was sealed by a post-medieval dump and soil horizon.

Overlying these layers was a wall foundation 1/003, aligned north to south and running the full length of the trench. It was constructed out of flint and limestone rubble with occasional tiles and was laid on top of layer 1/004 which suggests a post-medieval date for the wall. The wall appears not to have been set particularly deep, suggesting that its structural strength would not have been great. It is bonded with a cream coloured lime mortar and could be associated with a division within the mansion grounds or the foundation of a rubble built out building. An alignment of six limestone blocks possibly indicating a bottom course for the wall at the southern end of the trench may indicate that the wall was faced. A second construction trench 1/016 cut through wall 1/003 at a point 0.50 m from the

northern end of the trench. This later feature contained back-fill layers 1/014 and 1/013 and a post-medieval wall foundation 1/012. The latter wall is probably similar in character to 1/003, but it was constructed using laid brick as well as flint rubble. This suggests that the wall is 18th- century or later in date and possibly indicates a later division within the manor's estate or again a possible outbuilding. Both walls 1/003 and 1/012 were largely robbed out, before a soil horizon 1/002 was formed over the entire trench.

A possible 18th- century or later pit 1/006 is the latest feature in the trench and located at the south-west corner where it cuts through layer 1/002. It was filled by 1/007 which contained a large quantity of tile. This could either be interpreted as a construction or demolition pit, where excess materials were dumped. The whole trench was then covered by a thick garden soil 1/001.

4.2 Trench 2 (Fig. 4)

The trench was aligned east to west and machine-excavated to the first significant archaeological horizons. These were located at a depth of 0.40 m at the western end of the trench and at 0.88 m at the eastern end where gravel natural 2/010 was encountered.

Cutting the natural gravel 2/010 was a ditch 2/001, aligned west-south-west to east-north-east. Its full width was not revealed but it terminated or turned towards the south-east 2.88 m from the eastern balk. The ditch was 0.98 m in depth, from the gravel natural, and contained one heavily root disturbed fill 2/002 which contained a sizeable assemblage of pottery sherds, early medieval S.E. Oxfordshire wares, early medieval shelly wares, and London wares, which date the ditch to the mid 12th to the mid 13th centuries. This ditch was overlain by a possible soil horizon 2/003 which possibly formed in the later medieval and early post-medieval period and appears to have extended throughout the whole evaluation trench. Significantly this layer contained no brick, which perhaps suggests a medieval date. This layer was cut by a post-medieval construction cut 2/013 which was approximately 2.60 m from the western end of the trench and contained a gravel and tile primary fill 2/012. Overlying 2/012 were two structures probably contemporary with each other. The more easterly, was a rubble built wall 2/005 aligned N to S and loosely constructed with limestone and flint rubble. The other structure 2/006, is a floor or foundation footing for a wall constructed from the same materials with the occasional tile, and bonded together with cream mortar which extends under the western balk and parallel to 2/005. These two structures are overlain by a layer of soil 2/004 which contained 18th- century brick. A thin layer of chalk 2/011 which was a later possibly 19th- century path, running north to south overlay 2/004. To the east overlying 2/003 was a demolition layer 2/009 containing large quantities of flint and chalk rubble, and a dump layer 2/008 which extend to 3.33 m from the eastern balk. The final deposit overlying the whole trench was a garden soil 2/007.

5.0 OVERALL INTERPRETATION

The evaluation revealed features and deposits of archaeological importance in both trenches. The earliest feature discovered was an early medieval ditch located in

trench 2. This can be best interpreted as a land or field boundary within the grounds of the Priory. The ditch was then overlain by a dump layer which although morphologically different from the earliest deposits in Trench 1, probably relate to the same site process. A late medieval mortar floor, possibly within an out building of the priory, was then constructed in the area of trench 1 and when this went out of use another sequence of dumps and soil formations followed possibly in the post-dissolution period. A wall foundation was then constructed in trench 1 which was later cut by a second wall on a different alignment. Both these post-medieval wall foundations could relate to boundaries within the grounds of Ladye Place manor or to possible outbuildings, unfortunately the scale of the evaluation could not elucidate this. Two rubble built foundations or footings discovered within trench 2 could be broadly contemporary structures to those found in trench 1 and it could be suggested that these are also the foundations or footings to post-medieval boundary walls or outbuildings. But the 1830's first edition of the O.S. Map of the area (frontispiece) could alternatively suggest that these structures are the rubble foundations to a circular drive for the mansion. All the walls and structures were heavily robbed out and cleared before a final dump of soil sealed the whole site and a thick garden soil formed.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation produced stratified archaeological deposits which span from the C12th to the C19th. These important deposits can be associated and give us an insight into the history of the scheduled ancient monuments of Hurley Priory and Ladye Place Mansion.

Neil Macnab
January 1997.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

Wilkinson, D (ed) 1992 *Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual*, (First edition, August 1992).

Victoria County Histories - Berkshire ii 1907

Victoria County Histories - Berkshire iii 1923

Berkshire Sites and Monuments Record : SMR file AA 60131/1, SAM 19020

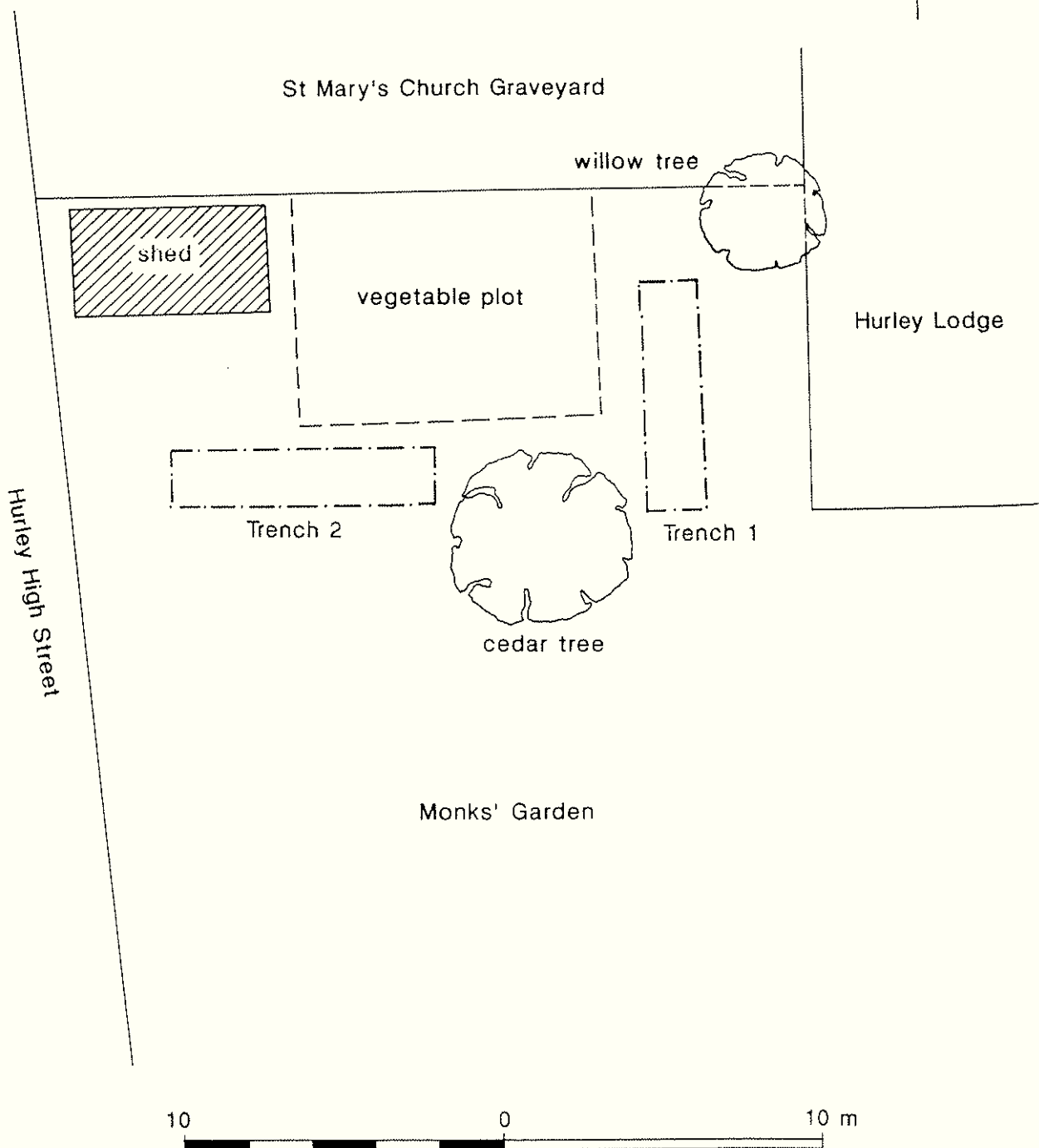
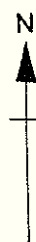
Pevsner, N. (1966) *The Buildings of England, Berkshire*.

Appendix 1

Archaeological Context Inventory

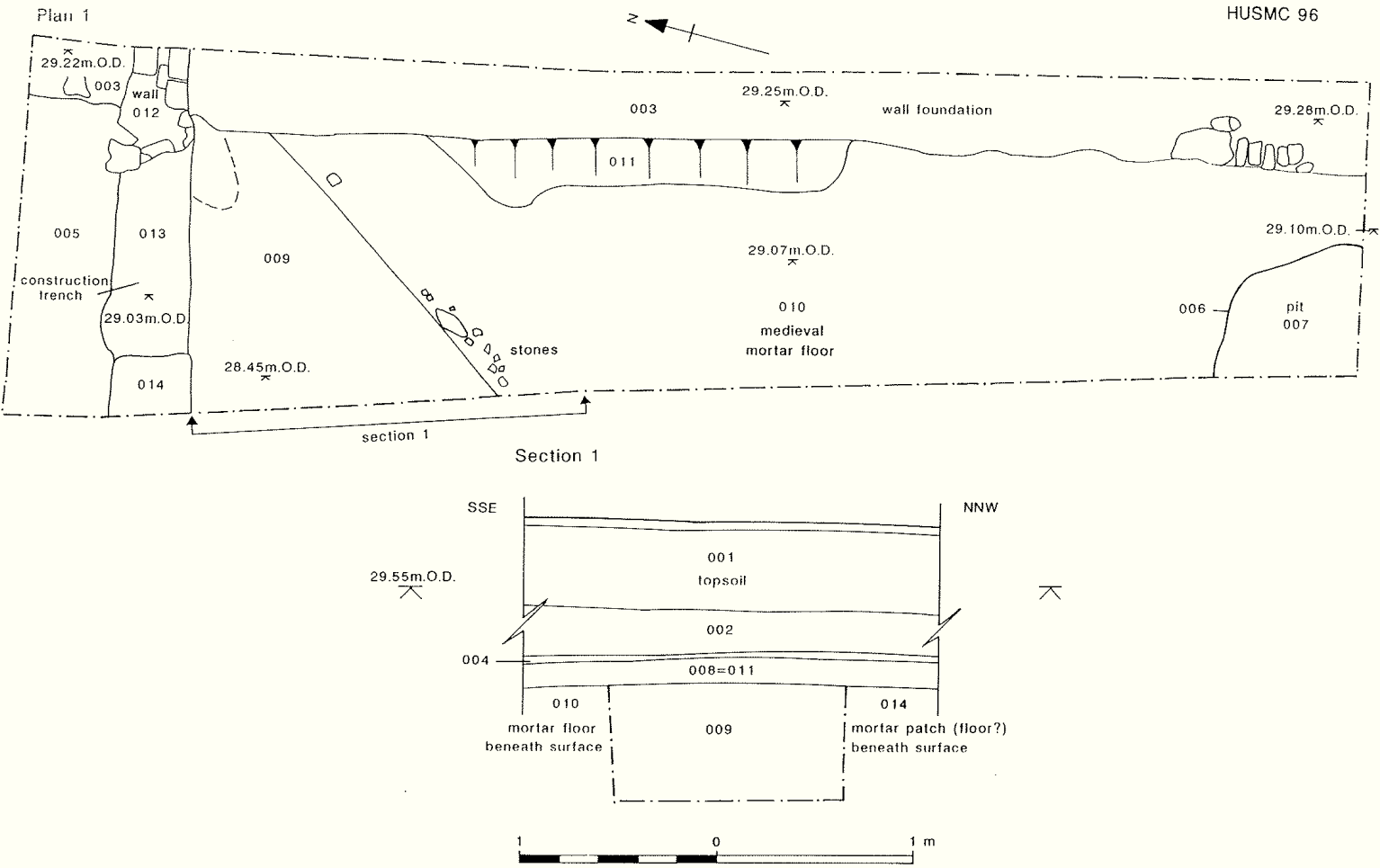
Trench	Cut	Type	width (m)	thick. (m)	Comment	Finds	No.	Date
001								
	001	layer		0.22	garden soil			
	002	layer		0.12	dump layer or former soil horizon	tile brick frags	4 2	C18th
	003	struct	7.5+ X 0.48	0.20	foundation wall	tile	2	
	004	layer		0.04	dump layer or former soil horizon	pot frags tile brick frags Bone - sheep - rabbit	1 11 4 2 1	1400 - 1750 AD C18th
	005	layer			dump layer or former soil horizon	pot frags tile brick frag? Bone - sheep - cattle	1 9 1 1 1	1075 - 1200 AD
	006	cut			pit			
	007	fill		0.44	fill of 006	tile	3	C18th
	008	layer		0.11	dump, make up			
	009	layer			dump layer	pot frags tile tile (glazed) flint flake iron nail bone - sheep	1 56 2 1 1 2	1200 - 1400 AD med
	010	struct			mortar floor			
	011	layer		0.12	dump layer			
	012	struct	0.68 x 0.30	0.30	wall			
	013	fill	1.18 x 0.40		fill of foundation trench			
	014	fill	0.41 x 0.28		fill of foundation trench			
	015	fill			same as 009			
	016	cut	1.18 x 0.40		foundation trench			
002								
	001	cut	1.5+	0.98	ditch			
	002	fill	1.5+	0.98	fill of 001	pot frags tile tile (glazed) charcoal Bone - sheep - rabbit/bird	31 1 1 2 6 2	1150 - 1250 AD med
	003	layer		0.65	dump layer or former soil horizon	tile	5	
	004	fill	2.6+	0.44	fill of 013	tile brick glass Bone - cattle - deer?	23 8 1 12 1	C18th C13th
	005	struct	1.85 X 0.38	0.20	rubble wall			
	006	struct	1.85 X 0.80	0.16	mortar floor, wall foundation			
	007	layer		0.38	garden soil			
	008	layer	2.4+	0.18	dump			

Trench	Ctx	Type	width (m)	thick. (m)	Comment	Finds	No.	Date
	009	layer	3.12	0.48	rubble dump			
	010	layer			gravel natural			
	011	layer	1.7+	0.06	chalk path			
	012	fill	2.6+	0.05	fill of 013			
	013	cut	2.6+	0.42	construction trench			



Trench location plan

figure 2



Trench 1: plan and section

figure 3

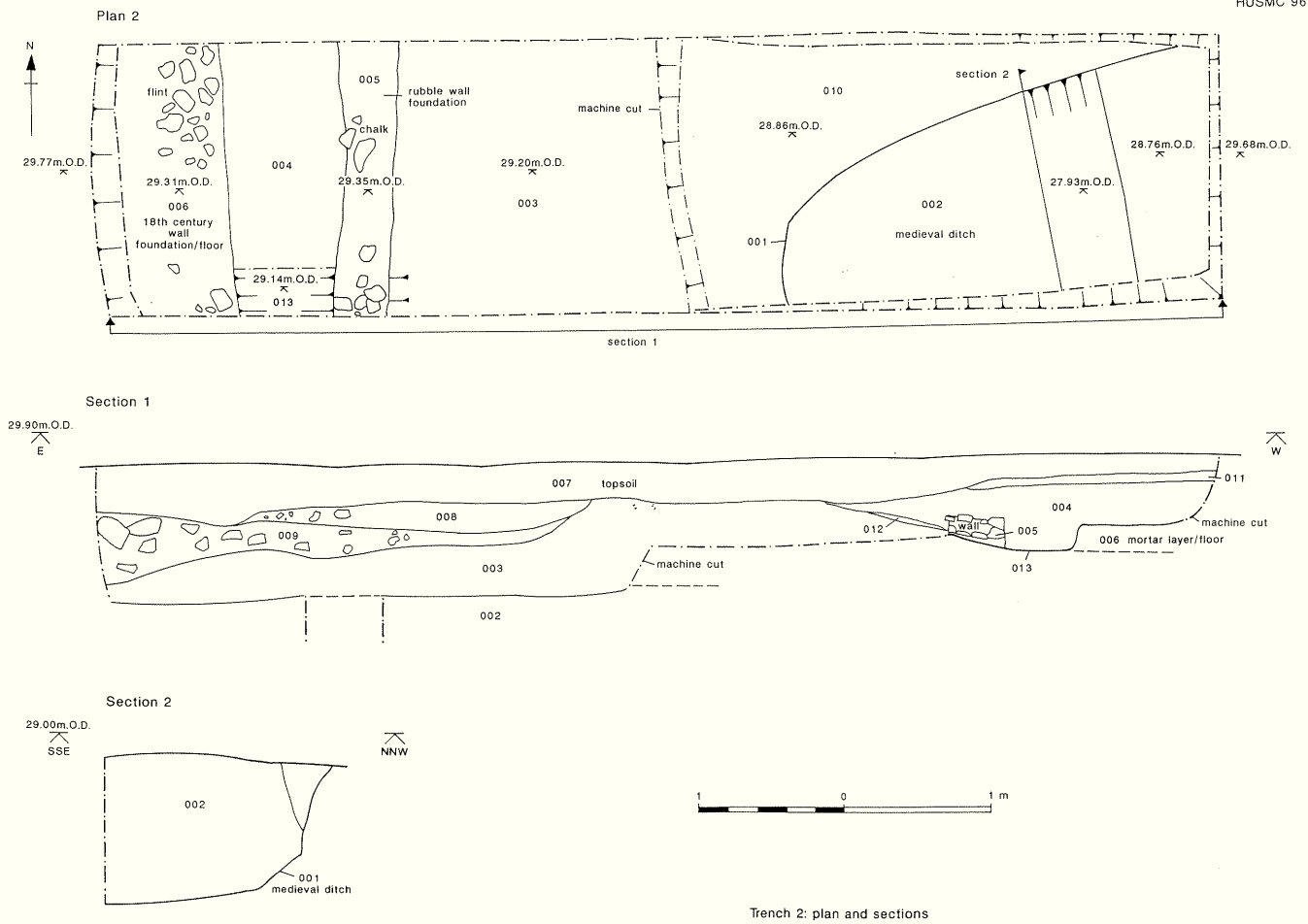


figure 4



OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES
Telephone: 01865 243888 Fax: 01865 793496



Director: David Miles B.A., F.S.A., M.I.F.A.
Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited. Registered Office: Janus House, Osney Mead
Registered Charity Number: 285627 Private Limited Company Number: 1618597