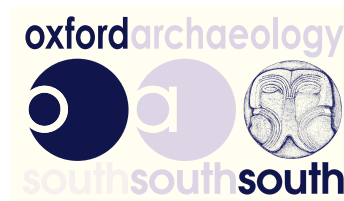


12a Friars Entry Oxford



Archaeological Excavation and Watching Brief Report



January 2013

Client: OISE Holdings Ltd


Issue No: 1

OA Job No: 5515

NGR: SP 5114 0643



Client Name: OISE Holdings Ltd
 Client Ref No:
 Document Title: 12a Friars Entry, Oxford
 Document Type: Excavation and Watching Brief Report
 Issue/Version Number: 1
 Grid Reference: SP 5114 0643
 Planning Reference: 11/01814/FUL
 OA Job Number: 5515
 Site Code: OXFREN 12
 Invoice Code: OXFRENEV
 Receiving Museum: Oxfordshire County Museum Service
 Museum Accession No: OXCMS:2012.154
 Event No:

Issue	Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by	Signature
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 Graphics File Location \\San-access\invoice codes i thru q\O_codes\OXFRENEV
 Illustrated by Hannah Kennedy

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12a Friars Entry, Oxford

Excavation and Watching Brief Report

Written by Steve Leech

and illustrated by Hannah Kennedy

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Summary

Between the 17th and 21st December 2012, Oxford Archaeology carried out an an excavation and watching brief at 12a Friars Entry, Oxford. The works consisted of the archaeological excavation of a test-pit and a watching brief during the excavation of five site investigation test pits.

Modern made ground was recorded in all test pits to the full depth of excavation. No archaeological deposits were encountered.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Adrian James Architects on behalf of OISE Holdings Ltd to undertake an archaeological excavation and watching brief at the site of proposed student accommodation at 12a Friars Entry, Oxford (centred on NGR SP 5114 0643).
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken as a condition of Planning Permission (planning ref: 11/01814/FUL). A brief has been set by the Oxford City Archaeologist (Oxford City Council 2012) detailing the Local Authority's requirements for work necessary to discharge the planning condition.
- 1.1.3 This document reports on the implementation of Stage 2 of those requirements (archaeological trial pit excavation and watching brief during site investigation test pits). Stage 1 of the requirements (building recording) was undertaken by Adrian James Architects and their report is included at Appendix D.
- 1.1.4 All work was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (Oxford Archaeology 2012) and with local and national planning policies.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site is bounded to the north by Friars Entry, to the west by an English language school, to the south by Red Lion Square and to the east by Debenham's department store. The site is situated within the historic core of Oxford and is part of the Oxford Central Conservation Area (Fig. 1).
- 1.2.2 The site is currently occupied by a former electricity sub station within a former coach house or stable of Victorian date.
- 1.2.3 The site is situated on drift geology on the Summertown-Radley gravel terrace, which is part of the Second Gravel Terrace of the Thames sequence. The underlying solid geology is of the Oxford Clay formation. The ground level at the site is flat at 63.2m OD.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background to the site has been described in detail in a desk-based assessment (John Moore Heritage Services 2008), and further summarised in the brief; that summary is reproduced below:
- 1.3.2 The desk-based assessment notes the high potential for buried archaeological remains at the site, which lies in an area known to have been developed from at least 1675. The site also lies in an area where there is potential for Late Saxon and medieval activity. The site is of interest because the recovery of sherds of Ipswich Ware pottery from two excavations in Beaumont Street (70m to the north of the site) which suggests a possible focus of early activity in the vicinity of the later burh, perhaps dating to the 8th - 9th century. The site is also of interest because of the unusual road layout in this location that may reflect an alternative access from the medieval town towards the 12th century Royal Beaumont Palace and the later Carmelite Friary.
- 1.3.3 The sub station occupies a brick built Victorian building that may have served as a stables or coach house for a nearby Inn.



- 1.3.4 An archaeological excavation and watching brief was considered necessary for this site because of the potential for medieval and post-medieval remains at this location. There is also a lesser potential for pre-medieval activity as prehistoric, Roman and Saxon remains have been recovered from the immediate vicinity (John Moore Heritage Services 2008, 40).

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 The excavation and watching brief were undertaken by Steve Leech, Jim Mumford and Victoria Skipper of Oxford Archaeology. We would like to thank OISE Holdings Ltd for funding the works. David Radford monitored the works for Oxford City Council.



2 EVALUATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The aims of the investigation, as set out in the brief, were, as far as possible, to gather sufficient information to generate a reliable predictive model of the extent, character, date, state of preservation and depth of burial of important archaeological remains, including associated palaeo-environmental deposits, within the study area and the potential for proposed ground works to impact on significant archaeological remains.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 It was proposed to excavate five geotechnical test pits (Fig. 2). Test Pits 1-4 were subject to an archaeological watching brief during their excavation. The excavation of an additional test pit (Test Pit 4b) was also monitored.

2.2.2 Test Pit 5 was located at the site of a proposed crane base and it was proposed to expand it to an area of 2x2m through archaeological hand-excavation. In the event, the presence of modern service ducts restricted the area available for excavation and, in consultation with the Council Planning Archaeologist, the test-pit was reduced in area.

2.2.3 A summary of OA's general approach to excavation and recording can be found in Appendix A of the WSI. Standard methodologies for Geomatics and Survey, Environmental evidence, Artefactual evidence and Burials can also be found in the WSI (Appendices B, C, D and E respectively).

2.2.4 Site specific methodologies were:

- (i) During the excavation of Test Pit 5, sufficient features would be sampled by hand excavation to achieve the objectives of these works. A representative sample of discrete features, such as post holes and pits, would be half-sectioned. Linear features would be sectioned. If deeply stratified deposits were encountered it may have been appropriate to excavate sample boxes and/or examine the stratigraphy revealed in the section of excavated cut features.
- (ii) During the archaeological watching brief, the presence/absence of archaeological features would be noted. If features were identified then sufficient work would be done to date, characterise and record the remains in accordance with project objectives.



3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

3.1.1 Individual trench details including sizes, orientations and depths of deposits are shown in the tables that form Appendix A. General stratigraphic data, ground conditions, the distribution of archaeological features and the descriptions of these are contained within the section below.

3.2 General soils and ground conditions

3.2.1 All the trenches were excavated through modern made ground. The excavation of the trenches was conducted in dry conditions.

3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits

3.3.1 No archaeological deposits were encountered.

3.4 Trench 1

3.4.1 This trench was 0.8m x 0.8m and 0.5m deep. The deposit sequence consisted of concrete, 0.2m thick, overlying modern made ground consisting of rubble, 0.3m thick.

3.5 Trench 2

3.5.1 This trench was 0.7m x 0.5m and 0.5m deep. The deposit sequence consisted of concrete, 0.2m thick, overlying modern made ground consisting of orange sand, 0.3m thick which overlay a cable duct.

3.6 Trench 3

3.6.1 This trench was 0.7m x 0.5m and 0.5m deep. The deposit sequence consisted of concrete, 0.2m thick, overlying a modern made ground of orange sand, 0.3m thick.

3.7 Trench 4

3.7.1 This trench was 1.8m x 1m and 0.3m deep. It revealed modern made ground of sand and bricks, 0.3m thick, overlying a series of cable ducts along with a number of disused service cables.

3.8 Trench 4a

3.8.1 This trench was 1.4m x 0.7m and 0.3m deep. It revealed modern made ground of sand and bricks, 0.3m thick, overlying a series of cable ducts.

3.9 Trench 5

3.9.1 This trench was 1.2m x 0.7m and 0.55m deep. The stepped brick and concrete foundation for the adjacent shop was overlain by modern made ground (502), more than 0.55m thick, consisting of sandy clay and building rubble (Fig. 3). A modern plastic doll pierced with nails was recovered from deposit 502 (Plate 1).



4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 4.1.1 The excavation and recording of the test pits was carried out in dry conditions with good light. There were no conditions that might have biased or prejudiced the conclusions of the evaluation.

4.2 Interpretation

- 4.2.1 Test pits 4, 4a and 5 were located in the entrance yard, off Friars Entry, and all revealed modern made ground deposits to the full depth of excavation. An additional test trench had previously been excavated from west-east across the entry yard at its northern end. This revealed a series of cable ducts and other services running north-south and occupying much of the width of the yard.
- 4.2.2 Within the standing building, the test pits again revealed made ground to the full depth of excavation, in most cases overlying cable ducts and other services.
- 4.2.3 It is, therefore, clear from the excavation and watching brief that considerable disturbance has been caused by the construction of adjacent buildings and the laying of services throughout the site area.
- 4.2.4 The full depth of made ground was not established in any of the test pits and it remains possible that archaeological deposits survive at a greater depth although any such deposits are likely to have been disturbed, at least in part, by recent activity.



APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
General description				Orientation		-
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of modern made ground, no natural horizons were encountered.				Avg. depth (m)		0.5
				Width (m)		0.8
				Length (m)		0.8
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
100	Layer	-	0.5	Modern made ground	-	-

Trench 2						
General description				Orientation		-
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of modern made ground, no natural horizons were encountered.				Avg. depth (m)		0.5
				Width (m)		0.5
				Length (m)		0.7
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
200	Layer	-	0.5	Modern made ground	-	-

Trench 3						
General description				Orientation		-
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of modern made ground, no natural horizons were encountered.				Avg. depth (m)		0.5
				Width (m)		0.5
				Length (m)		0.7
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
300	Layer	-	0.5	Modern made ground	-	-



Trench 4						
General description				Orientation		N-S
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of modern made ground, no natural horizons were encountered.				Avg. depth (m)		0.3
				Width (m)		1
				Length (m)		1.8
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
400	Layer	-	0.3	Modern made ground	-	-

Trench 4a						
General description				Orientation		N-S
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of modern made ground, no natural horizons were encountered.				Avg. depth (m)		0.3
				Width (m)		0.7
				Length (m)		1.4
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
401	Layer	-	0.3	Modern made ground	-	-

Trench 5						
General description				Orientation		N-S
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of modern made ground, no natural horizons were encountered.				Avg. depth (m)		0.55
				Width (m)		0.7
				Length (m)		1.2
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
500	Layer	-	0.55	Modern made ground	-	-
501	Wall	-	-	Modern Wall	-	-
502	Layer	-	0.1	Modern made ground	-	-



APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

John Moore Heritage Services, 2008 12A Friars Entry, Oxford: Archaeological Desk Based Assessment

Oxford Archaeology, 1992, Fieldwork Manual, (Ed. D Wilkinson, first edition, August 1992)

Oxford Archaeology, 2012 12a Friars Entry, Oxford: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Excavation and Watching Brief

Oxford City Council, 2012 Brief for building recording, archaeological test pit and watching brief during preliminary site investigations and subsequent archaeological mitigation if required



APPENDIX C. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: 12a Friars Entry, Oxford

Site code: OXFREN 12

Grid reference: SP 5114 0643

Type: Excavation and Watching Brief

Date and duration: December 2012, 1 week

Summary of results: Modern made ground was recorded in all test pits to the depth of excavation. No archaeological deposits were encountered.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with the Oxfordshire County Museum Service in due course, under the following accession number: OXCMS:2012.154



APPENDIX D. HISTORIC BUILDING RECORD

Historic Building Record Level 2

VERSION: 1.1

DATE: November 23rd 2012

ADRIAN JAMES

ARCHITECTS

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LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Location Plan

Figure 2: Site Plan showing approximate locations of camera

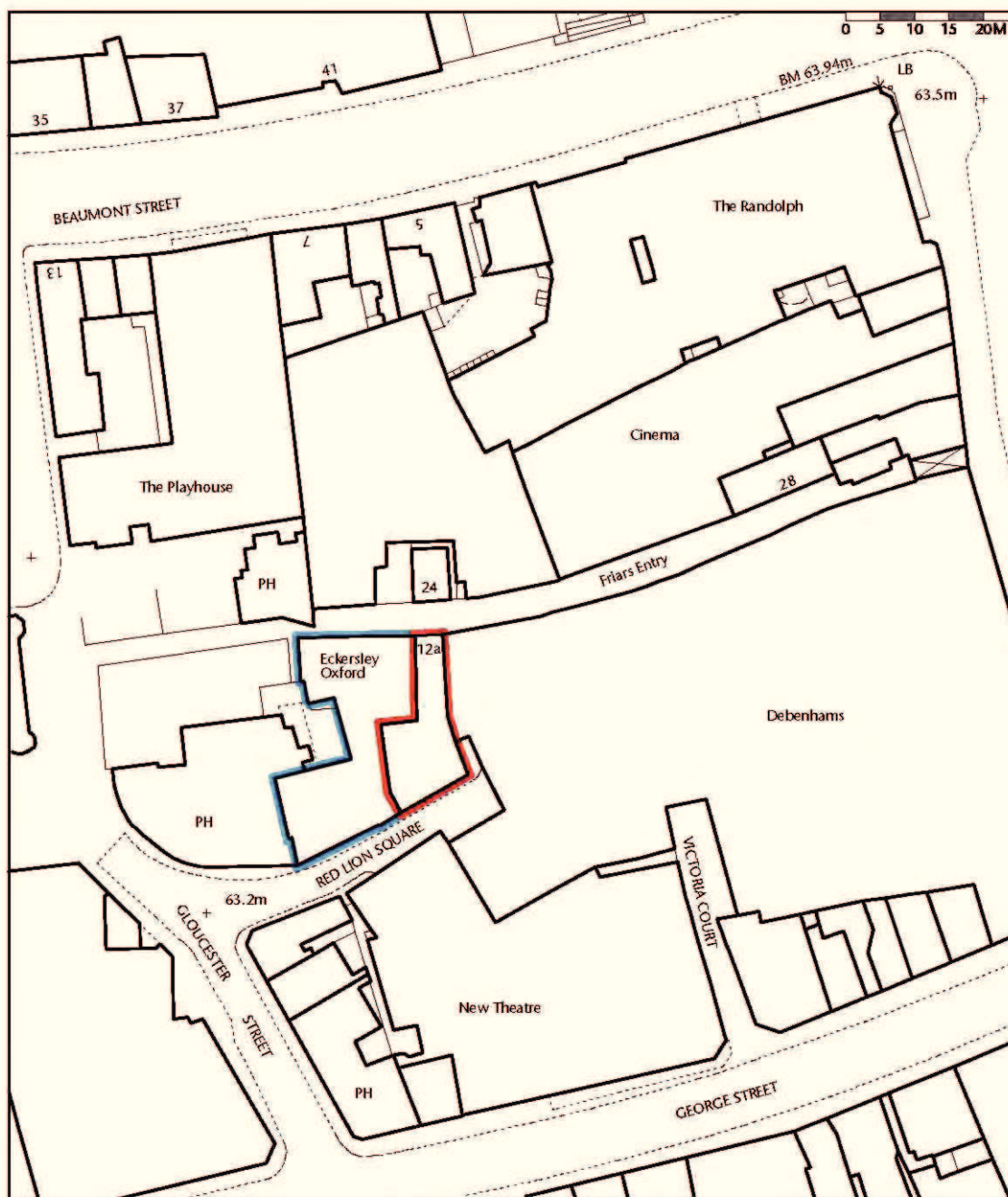
Figure 3: Plan of Ground Floor showing approximate locations of camera

Figure 4: Plan of First Floor showing approximate locations of camera

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Historic Building Record relates to Planning Permission **ref. 11/01814/FUL** and Conservation Area Consent **ref. 11/01815/CAC**, and has been requested by OCC planning authority as a planning condition. It was also agreed with the planning authority that the level 2 of recording would be required.

The site lies at 12A Friars' Entry and occupies a parcel of land between Friars' Entry and Red Lion Square, centred on National Grid Reference SP 5115 0643, within the Central Conservation Area, on the fringes of the historic core of the city. These two streets are located on the northern side of George Street which is the line of the city wall, and west of Magdalen Street, which is the line of the historic north entrance into Oxford through the North Gate; Gloucester Green is to the west of the site and Beaumont Street lies to the north (see Figure 1: Location Plan below).



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Figure 1: Location Plan (showing application site in red)

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF BUILDING

The site comprises a nineteenth-century structure fronting onto Red Lion Square which houses the electric substation, and derelict ground which lies to the south of Friars' Entry, at the west end of the Debenhams's complex.

This report uses for its historic context the report by John Moore Heritage Services of July 2008. The Ordnance survey maps of 1876 and 1900 therein show six back-to-back units on the site, the OS map of 1921 shows a single building, suggesting it is late Victorian/Edwardian. No further paper evidence exists. The form of the building suggests it may have been a stable or coach house for a nearby inn.

The building displays little of interest apart from brickwork-arched openings in the south wall, forming the entrance doors (altered) to the substation, two of which are going to be retained. Of the parts to be demolished the interiors have little or no architectural or historic interest or importance, except that the structure is an example of early concrete and steel framed construction: this applies to the roof and the first floor, which is to be retained.

The first floor exterior has a projecting central steel girder as a lifting gantry fixed to the concrete roof structure. This is the only noteworthy element in the façade above the ground floor arches.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This report is compiled by Adrian James Architects in compliance with the recommendations in English Heritage's "Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice".

The photographic recording was undertaken during several site visits in 2011 and 2012 and photographs were taken using digital cameras. Photographers were:

- Harold Grant of Central Building Contractors Ltd, Oxford OX2 0ER
- Stephen Williams of Price & Myers Engineers, Oxford OX1 3EX
- Adrian James of Adrian James Architects, Oxford OX2 0AL.

Due to the site restrictions it was not always possible to take all photographs perpendicular to the elevations and in the case of a south (principal) elevation a photomontage was produced.

The measured survey site plan and floor plans included in this record were prepared by Milton Keynes Surveys Ltd.

4.0 PLAN AND PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD

4.1 EXTERIOR

The approximate locations and direction of the camera are illustrated in Figure 2 below.

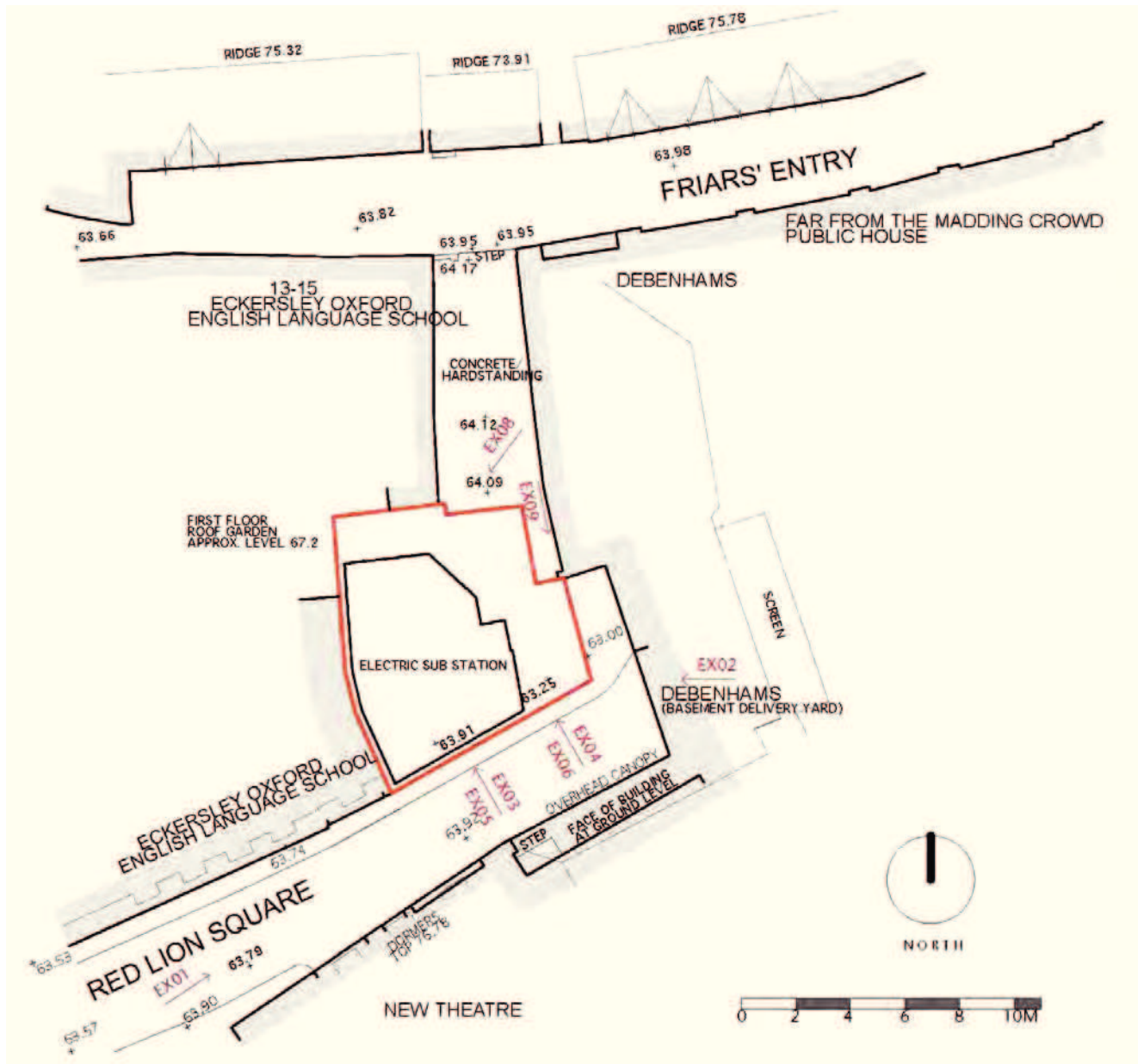


Figure 2: Site Plan showing directions and approximate locations of camera (photographs EX01-EX09)



Context Photo: View from Gloucester Street and Red Lion Square corner towards Debenhams delivery yard



Photo EX01: South elevation to Red Lion Square, looking towards Debenhams delivery yard



Photo EX02: South elevation to Red Lion Square as seen from Debenhams delivery yard



Photo EX03



Photo EX04



Photo EX05



Photo EX06



South elevation to Red Lion Square photomontage



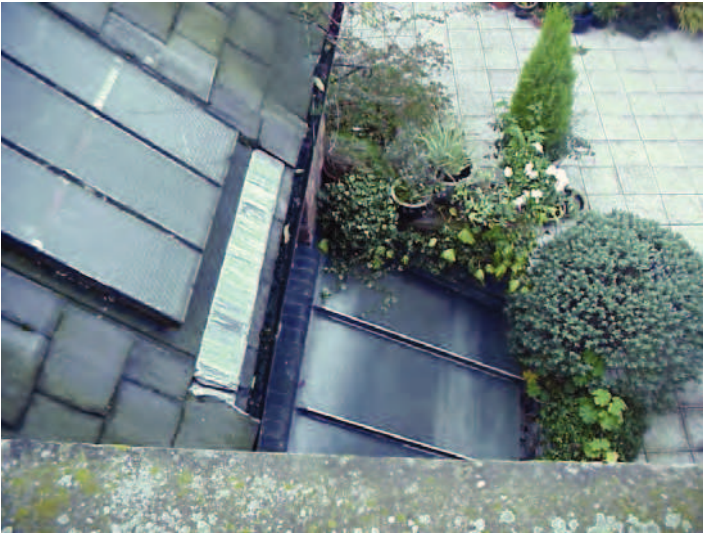
Photo EX07



Photo EX08



Photo EX09



Skylights in the first and ground floor roofs seen from flat roof



Flat roof seen from Debenhams building



Flat roof

Additional exterior photographs in context

4.2 Interior – Ground Floor

The approximate locations and direction of the camera are illustrated in Figure 3 below.

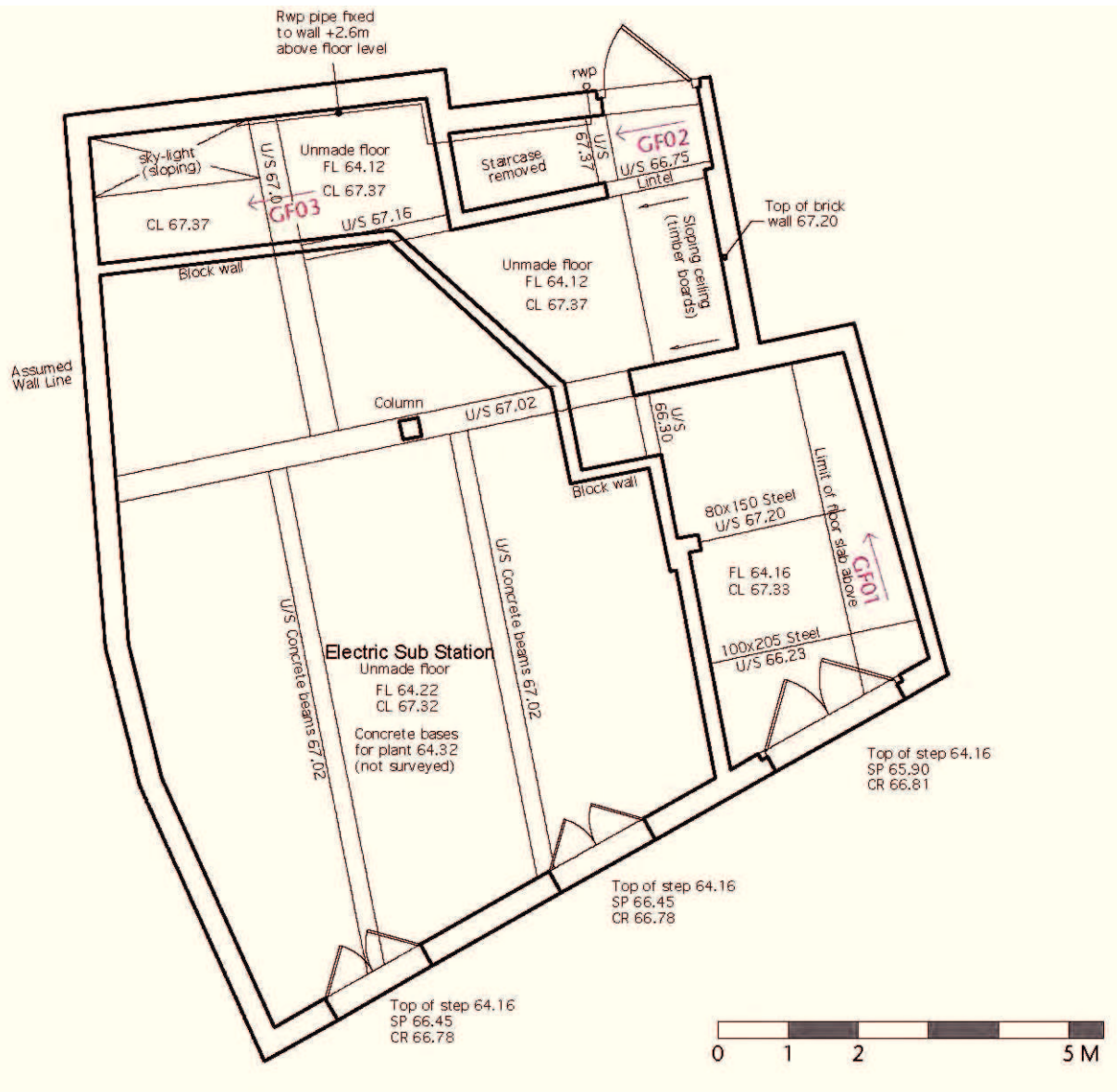


Figure 3: Plan of Ground Floor showing directions and approximate location of camera (photographs GF01-GF03)



Photo GF01



Photo GF02



Photo GF03

4.3 Interior – First Floor

The approximate locations and direction of the camera are illustrated in Figure 4 below.

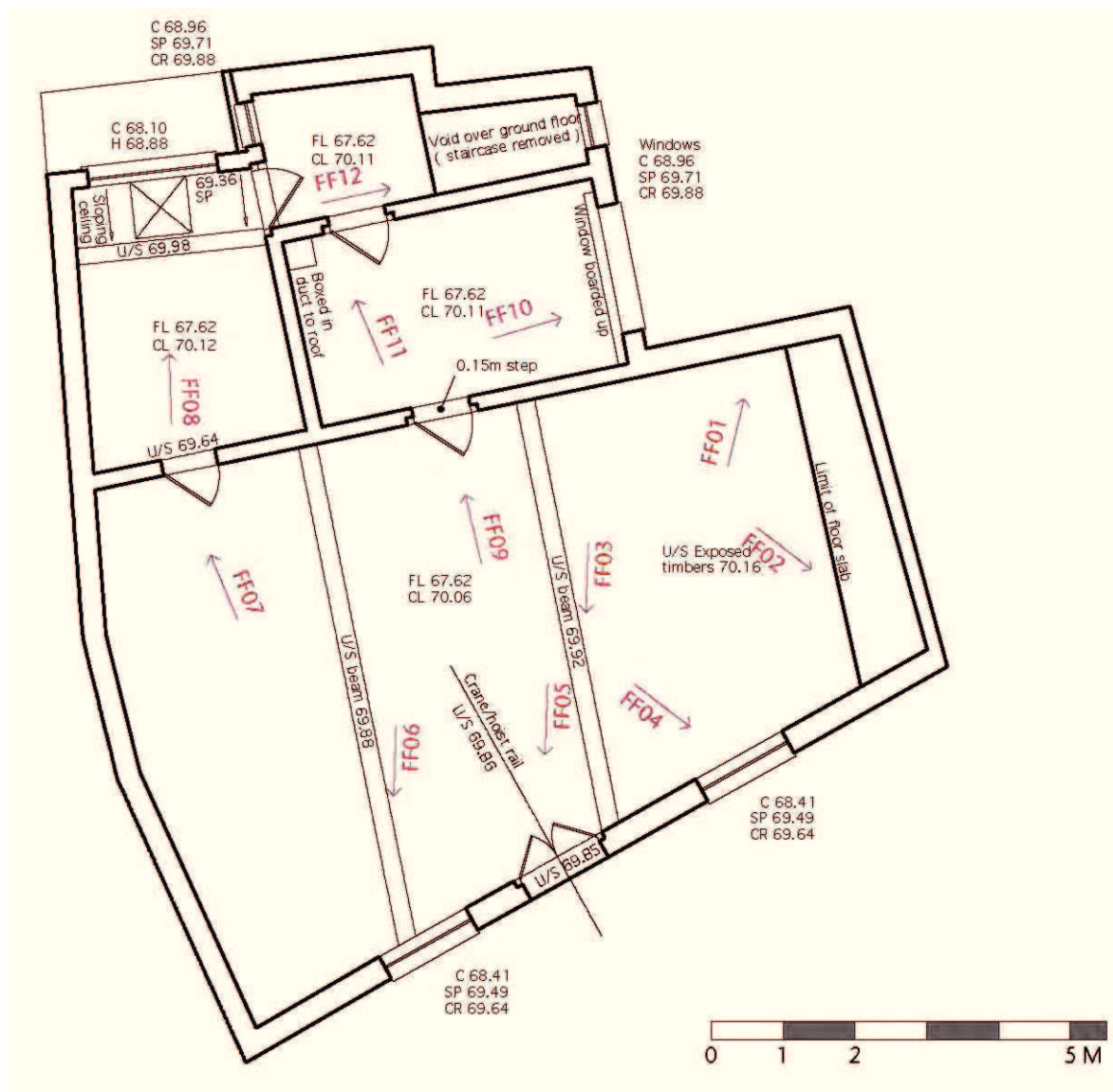


Figure 4: Plan of First Floor showing directions and approximate location of camera (photographs FF01-FF12)



Photo FF01



Photo FF02



Photo FF03



Photo FF04



Photo FF05



Photo FF06



Photo FF07



Photo FF08



Photo FF09



Photo FF10



Photo FF11



Photo FF12

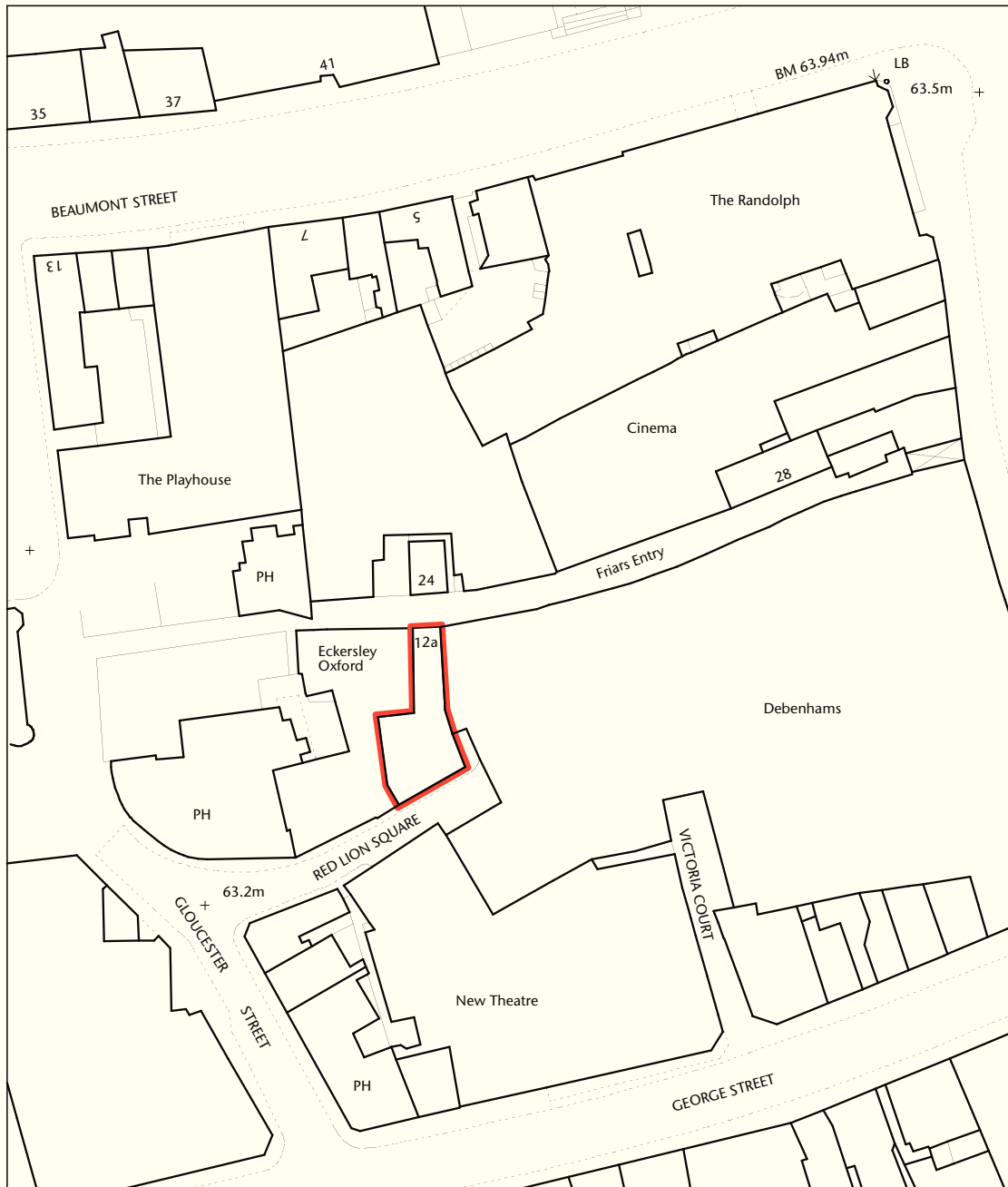


Figure 1: Site location

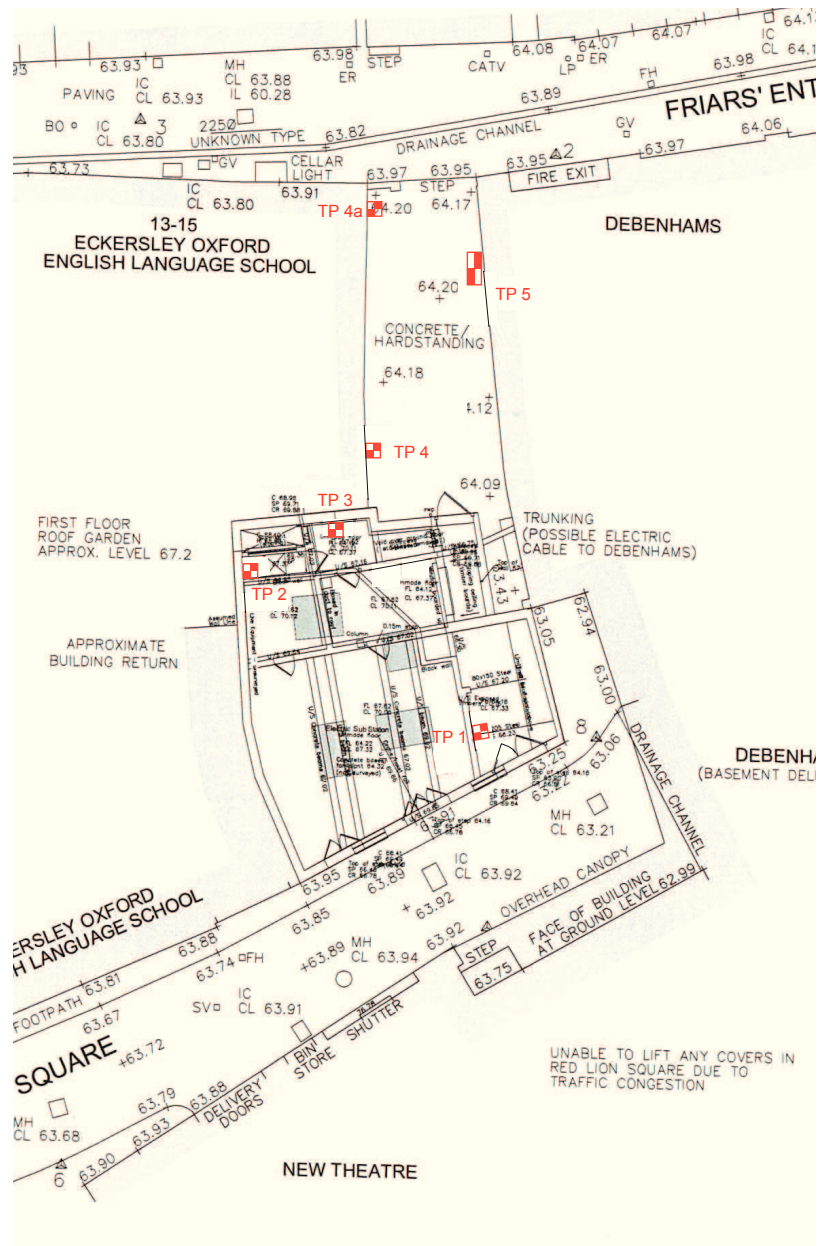


Figure 2: Test pit locations

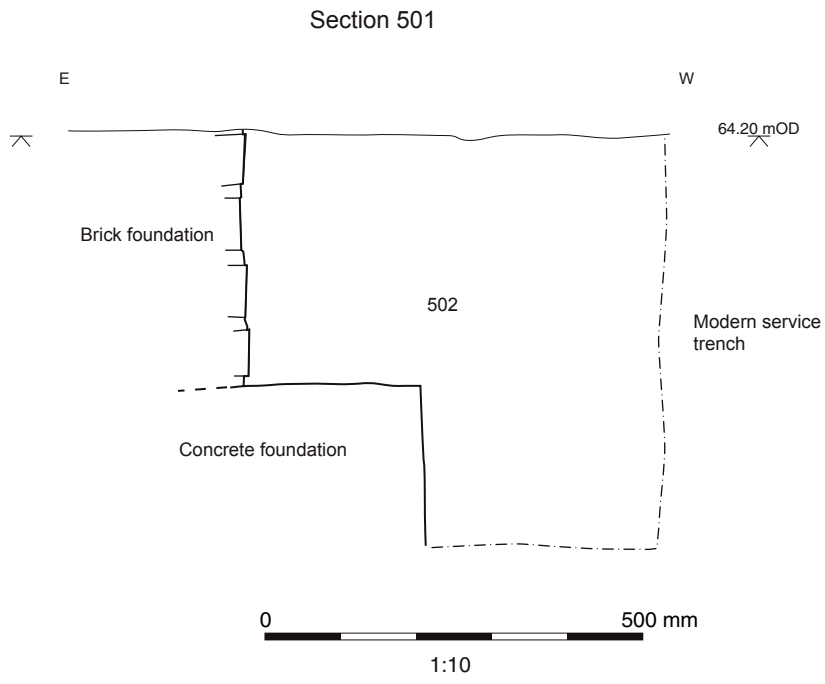


Figure 3: Test Pit 5: Section 501



Plate 1: Doll recovered from Test Pit 5



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