New Water Feature
Thame Park
Thame
Oxfordshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

oxfordarchaeology

December 2006

Client: Dr Paul Matthews

Issue N^{O}: 1
OA Job N^{O}: 7018
NGR: SP 7166 0375

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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Cover Plate: View of the front of Thame Park with Trench 7 in foreground.

SUMMARY

In September 2006 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at Thame Park, Thame, Oxfordshire (NGR SP 7172 0377) on behalf of the owner Dr Paul Matthews. The evaluation revealed surviving monastic building and deposits at 0.3 m to 0.5 m below the existing surface with later post-medieval structures from around 0.20 m.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In September 2006 OA carried out a field evaluation at Thame Park, Thame, Oxfordshire (Fig. 1) on behalf of Dr Paul Matthews in respect of proposals for a new water feature on the site of the 19th-century fountain in front of the house. A Written Scheme of Investigation (OA 2006) was agreed with Paul Smith, County Archaeologist, Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service. The proposed development area covers approximately 45 m x 35 m, and is situated immediately in front of the main house (west wing), centred on the site of the existing fountain. Five trial trenches, approximately 2 m wide with a total length of 60m were excavated in the area of the proposed water feature. lSix 1 m sq test pits were also excavated on the line of a proposed new circular driveway.

1.2 Topography and Geology

1.2.1 Thame Park (SP 7172 0377) is situated approximately 1 mile south of Thame, lying on a flat river plain which is bordered to the south and east by the Chiltern hills (Fig. 1). The park is generally flat in nature with rising ground to south of the house and also across the extent of New Park to the south-east.

1.2.2 The Park is situated on a geological drift boundary between the Gault formation of grey mudstone with sporadic layers of phosphatic nodules and pebbles, and the geologically more recent deposit of clay head. A band of Alluvium runs on an approximate north to south alignment through Thame Park. (BGS 1994 sheet 237).

1.3 Archaeological background

1.3.1 The archaeological background to the evaluation has been the subject of a recent desk-based study (OAU 2001). This provides full details about the archaeological and historical background and the nature, character and extent of the extant historic buildings.

1.3.2 The site has also been subject of a number of recent small-scale archaeological investigations, the reports of which appear as appendices to the desk-based study (OAU, February and April 2001). These works have located the main Abbey Church and cloisters to the NW of the current house but have also demonstrated the survival of significant below-ground archaeological deposits in the area of the house.

Excavation to the east of the house identified intact monastic deposits relating to a kitchen, possibly attached to the infirmary (now the north wing).

2 EVALUATION AIMS

The aims of the fieldwork were:

2.1.1 To identify the location in plan and depth of any archaeological deposits

2.1.2 To characterise those deposits with regard to the activities they represent and their date.

2.1.3 To assess the condition, level of preservation and significance of any deposits

2.1.4 To provide information sufficient to assess the likely impact of the proposed water feature and produce a proposal for mitigating that impact.

2.1.5 To minimise disturbance of archaeological deposits.

2.1.6 To take the opportunity provided by the excavation to investigate aspects of the archaeology of the site;

2.1.7 To assess the construction/function of any buildings/structures associated with the abbey

2.1.8 To investigate evidence for phased building and post monastic activity

2.1.9 To determine the location, nature and date of any pre-abbey structures or deposits

2.1.10 To make available the results of the investigation through a report lodged with the County Sites and Monuments Record and an archive lodged with the County Museum.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork

3.1.1 The work consisted of six 1m sq test pits along the line of the new driveway, three to the north and three to south of the driveway. In addition three long trenches were excavated along and across the centre of the proposed new water feature, with smaller trenches added later to the north and south of the existing fountain (Fig. 2). The overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision by a 360° mechanical mini excavator fitted with a toothless bucket.

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

3.2.1 The trenches were cleaned by hand and the revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds and environmental samples. All archaeological features were planned and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20. All features were photographed using colour slide and black and white

print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

3.3 Finds

3.3.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and generally bagged by context. Finds of special interest were given a unique small find number.

4 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

4.1 Description of deposits

Test Pit 1 (Figs 2 and 5 - Section 200)

4.1.1 The pit was excavated to a depth of 1 m. It cut into a ground make up layer of compacted dark grey brown silty sand (10002) with occasional sandstone inclusions. Sealing this was a 0.6 m deep layer of dark brown silty clay (10001) containing substantial quantities of rubble, and forming a make up and levelling layer of the garden. Layer 10001 was sealed below a dark grey brown silty sand topsoil (10000).

Test Pit 2 (Figs 2 and 5 - Section 201)

4.1.2 The pit was excavated to a depth of 1 m and was excavated 0.5 m into the natural dark grey brown silty clay (10006). Overlying this was a 0.10 m deep dark grey brown silty clay (10005) with inclusions of CBM and stone rubble. Sealing this was a layer of dark brown silty clay (10004), containing stone rubble, which itself was overlaid by a dark grey brown silty sand topsoil (10003).

Test Pit 3 (Figs 2 and 5 - Section 202)

4.1.3 The pit was excavated to a depth of 0.5 m revealing the top of a loose layer of stone rubble and CBM fragments (10009) representing a demolition layer. Overlying this was a 0.20 m deep levelling layer of grey brown silty clay (10007), which was sealed below a 0.15 m deep layer of dark grey brown silty sand topsoil (10008).

Test Pit 4 (Figs 2 and 5 - Section 203)

4.1.4 The pit was excavated to a depth of 0.56 m, exposing the top of a badly damaged wall (10010) of rough sandstone blocks in a light yellowish brown mortar bond. This was overlaid by a layer of mid grey brown silty clay (10013) containing stone and CBM fragments. This was sealed below a light brown silty clay (10012) levelling layer. Overlying these was a 0.10 m deep layer of dark grey brown silty sand topsoil (10011).

Test Pit 5 (Figs 2 and 5 - Section 204)

4.1.5 The pit was excavated to a depth of 0.55 m and revealed the top of a dark grey brown silty clay layer (10017). Sealing this was a similar layer, 0.24 m deep, of dark greyish brown silty clay (10016), which was itself overlain by a 0.20 m dark grey brown silty

sand levelling layer (10015). Sealing later 10015 was a 0.20 m deep layer of dark grey brown silty sand topsoil (10014).

Test Pit 6 (Figs 2 and 5 - Section 205)

4.1.6 The pit was excavated to a depth of 0.50 m and cut into a dark grey brown silty clay (10021) with fragments of stone demolition layer. Sealing this was a 0.22 m deep layer of dark greyish brown silty clay (10020), which was overlain by a 0.10 m deep layer (10019) of dark grey brown silty sand containing building rubble and fragments of CBM. Sealing layer 10019 was a 0.20 m deep layer of dark grey brown silty sand topsoil (10018).

Trench 7 (Figs 2, 3 and 5 - Sections 206, 207)

4.1.7 The trench was aligned W-E in line with the front of the house, and measured 20 m long and 1.5 m wide. It was machined to a depth ranging from 0.35 m to 0.70 m with a small sondage taken to a depth of 1.3 m below the level of the driveway into the top of the natural reddish brown silty sand with flinty gravel (10041). Overlying this was a 0.30 m deep layer of mid brown clay (10040), and old soil horizon, which was sealed below a 0.22 m deep compact light brown clay (10039). Overlying layer 10039 was a 0.12 m deep layer of grey brown silty clay (10034), which was cut by a NW-SE oriented trench (10036), measuring 0.5 m x 0.6 m x 0.26 m, and representing the robbing of the underlying mortared rubble footing (10037). The robbing backfill (10035) was a mix of silty clay, gravel and charcoal. Respecting the west side of both the footing and the robber trench was a compact light grey brown silty clay layer (10038) containing stone fragments, which possibly form the base to a floor, or a trampled surface. Overlying layer 10034 on the east side of wall 10037 was a layer of mixed grey and light brown silty clay (10033), which was possibly a construction or demolition layer. This was overlaid by a dump of grey brown silty clay (10032), containing fragments of sandstone, tile and worked stone.

4.1.8 Approximately 4 m to the east of footing 10037 was a NE-SW oriented wall footing (10043), measuring 0.85 m x 0.20 m in section, and exposed for a length of 3.3 m. At its north east end the beginning of a return to the north-west was identified. The wall was constructed of rough limestone and sandstone blocks within a soft sandy mortar bond. To the west of the wall was a mixed grey and light brown silty clay (10047), overlying layer 10032. To the east of wall 10043 was a reddish brown silty sand (10048 and 10059), overlaid by a 4.3 m wide path or roadway (10046) constructed of a base of compacted stone rubble, superimposed by layers of compacted gravel. Between the path and wall 10043 was a shallow depression, whose lower fill was a loose very dark grey brown silty sand (10044) containing a large quantity of stone roof tile fragments. butting up to the remains of the wall footing, and probably representing material accumulating around the building during its demolition. This material respected the backfill of loose light reddish brown sandy mortar and small sandstone fragments (10042) of the robber trench that had removed the superstructure of wall 10043, indicative of the process of demolition.

4.1.9 Layer 10044 was overlaid by a layer of grey brown silty clay (10045), and levelling material represented by a layer of dark grey brown clay (10031). At the west end of the trench this layer had been truncated by a shallow cut (10049) that was filled with a series of compacted clay and gravel layers (10023, 10024, 10025, 10026 and 10027) forming the make up and earlier surfaces of the 19th century driveway. These layers respected, or had been cut by a narrow 0.32 m wide and 0.35 m deep foundation trench (10028) of a small kerb around the central island. The foundation survived as a 0.15 m deep concrete footing (10029) overlaid by the robbing backfill (10030) of the kerb itself. Sealing these features was the very dark grey brown silty sand (10022), the topsoil of the present gardens.

Trench 8 (Figs 2, 4 and 6 - Section 212)

4.1.10 Trench 8 was located on the east side of the fountain aligned W-E and measured 15 m long and 1.5 m wide, with an average depth of excavation of 0.70 m. The earliest deposit revealed was a spread of yellowish brown sandy mortar (10074 = 10087), possibly representing the backfill robbing of a wall associated with wall 10061 in Trench 9 (see below).

4.1.11 Layers 10074 and 10087 appeared to be cut, or respected by feature 10098, which was exposed but not excavated along the eastern side of the southern half of the trench. The fills of the feature, 10088 and 10073, mixes of light brown silty clay with inclusions of small stones, were themselves overlaid by a 0.10 m deep layer dark grey brown silty sand (10072) containing building debris, which was itself sealed by a 0.16 m deep levelling layer of light grey brown silty sand (10065) with mortar and stone fragments.

4.1.12 Layer 10065 respected a pitched stone pavement (10097), exposed in the northern part of the trench, extending for a distance of 5.5 m towards the northern end of the trench. The north-western corner of the pavement was just exposed against the western baulk, suggesting that the orientation of the pavement was W-E.

4.1.13 Butting against pavement 10097 was a relatively stone-free layer of silty clay (10064), which may represent a contemporary topsoil. This was sealed by a further layer of sandy clay material (10102), and finally a modern topsoil (10063). This was overlain by a 0.25 m - 0.30 m deep layer of mid grey brown silty clay, containing CBM, mortar and stone fragments (10101/10102), which itself was sealed by a 0.25 m deep layer of very dark grey silty clay with CBM and stone inclusions (10063), which represented the modern topsoil.

4.1.14 At the eastern end of the trench, and sealed by the topsoil, a soakaway was partially revealed, comprising a brick and stone filled pit (cxts 10092 - 10096), associated with a ceramic drain (10091), set within a service trench (10090), which ran west to the crossing of Trenches 8 and 9, cutting through pavement 10097.

Trench 9 (Figs 2, 4, 5 - Section 207; Fig. 6 - Sections 209, 210 and 213)

4.1.15 Trench 9 was situated on the east side of the fountain and aligned N-S, crossing Trench 8 and measuring 30 m long x 1.5 m wide. The trench was excavated to a general depth of 0.7 m with a deeper exploratory sondage in each half of the trench. In the southern half of the trench a stone slab surface (10111) was revealed at a depth of *c*1.5 m (74.35 m OD). The surface was overlaid by a 0.2 m deep layer of very dark grey brown clay silt (10058), which contained fragments of 13th century pottery, Overlying the south side of the layer was a light blue grey clay with stone fragments (10056). A compact layer of yellowish brown sandy mortar (10057) which contained fragments of 19th-century pottery and worked stone overlay both these deposits.

4.1.16 Overlying layer 10057 was a 0.18 m deep layer of dark grey brown silty clay (10054 and 10055) forming a levelling layer. This was overlain to the west by a dump of light grey brown mortar and rubble (10053) and a dark grey brown clay silt (10052). A possible shallow ditch, or possible terrace edge, oriented N-S, was represented in section by its infilling deposit pale silty clay (10051). Towards the southern end of the trench layer 10055 was cut by a probable wall robber trench (10068) aligned NW-SE, and measuring 0.5 m wide. Its fill (10069) comprised a light yellowish brown sandy clay mortar with stone fragments.

4.1.17 At the north end of the trench the sondage was excavated to a depth of 1.3 m revealing a 0.2 m deep layer of grey silty clay (10067). This was cut by a construction trench (10060), for N-S aligned wall 10060, which was exposed along the northern half of the Trench. The footing was 1.3 m wide in section with a 0.30 m off-set on the exposed western side (see Section 209). It was constructed of rough sandstone and limestone blocks bonded with a coarse sandy mortar. Against the west side of the wall was a 0.15 m deep layer of mid grey brown clay silt (10103) possibly an accumulated (or dumped) topsoil representing the contemporary ground surface. This was overlain by a thin layer of yellowish brown sandy mortar (10102), possibly a construction or demolition layer. Another 0.10 m deep layer of mid grey brown sandy silt (10085) overlay this and was itself sealed below a demolition and rubble spread of yellowish brown sandy mortar (10074) the residue from the robbing of the superstructure of wall 10061.

4.1.18 Layer 10074 was cut by a NE-SW aligned robber trench (10062) measuring 0.68 m wide x 0.62 m deep, with vertical sides and a flat base. The trench was filled by a mid brown silty clay with fragments of stone and CBM tile (10066). This was sealed by levelling layer (10065), also recorded in the junction of Trenches 8 and 9 as contemporary with pavement 10097 (see above). Layer 10074 and was overlaid by a general spread of demolition material (10072), including CBM and stone fragments, and a levelling layer of silty sand (10071).

4.1.19 At the north end of the trench the layer 10065 was overlain by a 0.25 m - 0.50 m deep layer of grey brown clay (10064 = 10051), itself overlaid by a 0.25 m deep layer of very dark grey silty sand (10063 and 10050) topsoil.

Trench 10 (Figs 2, 3 and 6 - Sections 214 , 215)

4.1.20 The trench was situated on the south side of the fountain and measured 5 m long and 1.2 m wide. It was excavated to a general depth of 0.75 m with a sondage in the south-east corner. The earliest exposed deposit was a layer of yellowish brown silty clay containing building debris (10110). This was sealed by a mixed deposit (10109) of blue grey clay, containing patches of charcoal, stone fragments and a fragment of glazed medieval floor tile. A small dump of yellowish brown sandy clay (10108) was exposed in the south-west corner of the trench. All these layers were sealed below a compact layer of brown clay (10107) with stone and CBM tile fragments. A further layer of mid grey brown silty clay (10106) sealed layer 10107, and was itself overlaid by a 0.18 m deep layer of very dark grey silty sand topsoil (10105).

Trench 11 (Figs 2, 3 and 6 - Section 211)

4.1.21 The trench was situated to the north of the fountain and measured 5 m long and 1.3 m wide. The trench was excavated to a general depth of 0.5 m with a sondage at its northern end to a depth of 0.7 m. The earliest deposit exposed was a layer of light reddish brown silty clay (10082) with inclusions of charcoal and gravel. This layer butted against the top of stone footing (10075), which measured 1.54 m x 0.47 m in area. The south-east facing side of the footing appeared to be roughly faced, and may suggest that the original wall was oriented NE-SW and situated just beyond the north end of the trench.

4.1.22 Overlying layer 10082, and also butting against footing 10075 was a layer of silty clay with inclusions of stone and stone roof tile (10081). A sequence of layers of silty clay (10078, 10077 and finally topsoil 10076) completed the stratigraphy.

4.2 Finds

4.2.1 A small assemblage of finds were recovered during the evaluation and are listed below:

Animal Bone

4.2.2 A total of 14 fragments of animal bone were recovered from site. The table below gives the quantification's for each context.

Table 1: Quantification of animal bone by context

Context	Trench	No of Fragments	Weight (g)	Material
10066	9	4	28	Animal Bone
10057	9	4	34	Animal Bone
10055	9	5	11	Animal Bone

10054	9	1	17	Animal Bone

Plaster

4.2.3 One fragment of plaster, weighing 3 grams, was recovered from context 10055 (Trench 9).

Worked stone

4.2.4 Seven pieces of stone were retained. Six of these are architectural blocks with tooled faces. One has a cross carved into one of its faces. The seventh fragment is a small chip (not listed). These seem most likely to be medieval in date. A total of 44 fragments of probable roof stones were also retained, some of these with suspension holes and of varying sizes. These are of locally available Jurassic sandstones. The bulk were from a single context (10044).

4.2.5 A brief list is given below but the items were not recorded or examined in any detail.

Table 2: Quantification of worked stone/roof stone by context

Context	Trench	Description	Lithololgy
10057	9	Dressed block with pentagonal profile and with a cross carved into one end	Shelly limestone
10057	9	Dressed architectural block	Shelly limestone
10031	7	Dressed architectural block	Shelly limestone
10031	7	Dressed architectural block	Shelly limestone
10057	9	Dressed architectural block	Shelly limestone
10057	9	Dressed architectural block	Shelly limestone
1044	7	37 fragments of roof stones, some with suspension holes (14,706g)	Fine grained limestone, probably Jurassic
1031	7	Six fragments of roof stones, some with suspension holes (1837g)	Fine grained shelly limestone, probably Jurassic
1054	9	One fragment of roof stone (76g)	

Pottery

4.2.6 The pottery assemblage comprised six sherds with a total weight of 69 g. Five were medieval, from the same vessel, the other 19th century. The medieval sherds were recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series OXAM: Brill/Boarstall ware, AD1200 – 1600. 5 sherds 65 g (Mellor 1994).

4.2.7 The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*.

Table 3: Pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds

		OXAM		19th		
Context	**Trench**	No	Wt	No	Wt	Date
10057	9			1	4	19thC
10058	9	5	65			13thC
Total		5	65	1	4	

Ceramic Building Material

4.2.8 A total of 207 fragments of ceramic building material were recovered from the excavations. Almost all of the assemblage comprises fragments of plain, unglazed roof tile. There are 4 examples with peg holes and one with a complete width of 170mm. This roofing material is late medieval/post-medieval in date.

4.2.9 Of more specific interest is a fragment of decorated floor tile recovered from context 10109 (Trench 10). The fragment is unusually thick and is decorated with a curving strip and the remains of two five-petalled flowers in a thick cream coloured inlay covered by a light brown glaze. In the 13th and 14th centuries a major centre of manufacture of such tiles was located at Penn in Buckinghamshire; the tiles were commonly used as flooring in the principal buildings of religious houses. This fragment should be illustrated in any future report and parallels sought for its decorative design.

4.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

4.3.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified during the course of the evaluation.

5 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

5.1.1 The evaluation did - to at least some degree, achieve all of the aims as detailed in the Written Scheme of Investigation (OA 2006). The following discussion will first consider the interpretation of the archaeological evidence, and then review the parameters of the potential impact of the proposed development on the archaeology remains in situ.

5.2 General

5.2.1 No evidence of structures or activity pre-dating the abbey was revealed, which prompts the tentative conclusion that the area was open land (or possibly woodland) at the time of the abbey's foundation.

5.2.2 Evidence relating to both the abbey and the post-medieval landscaping episodes was found, and reasonably clear levels can be concluded for the archaeological horizons.

5.3 Test Pits

5.3.1 The six test pits were sited around the perimeter of the proposed new driveway, three on the north side, three on the south. Two (Test Pits 1 and 2) were excavated to a depth of 1 m, the others were limited to approximately 0.50 m - 0.60 m, dependent on the level at which possibly significant archaeology was reached. Only one trench (No. 4) revealed structural remains, in the form of a stone wall footing. This wall coincides with the east side of a rectangular anomaly (denoted 'A') revealed in the geophysics survey, and confirms that the anomaly represents a stone building.

5.3.2 In all other test pits the sequence of revealed deposits suggested successive landscaping episodes, although it was clear that these layers were very mixed and contained stone and tile demolition most likely deriving from the abbey buildings. It is important to note that the landscaping appeared to have the effect of raising the level of the land, rather than reducing it.

5.4 Trenches

5.4.1 From the results of earlier intrusive and non-intrusive investigations, it is apparent that the principal claustral buildings conformed to an orientation distinctly different to that of Thame Park House, and its predecessor, the abbot's lodgings. Thus, while walls and linear features revealed in the trenches and conforming to the monastic orientation can be assigned a probable medieval date with some confidence, features oriented on the line of Thame Park House my either be post-medieval elements of landscaping or structures, contemporary with the House, or conceivably remains of monastic structures associated with the abbot's lodging.

5.4.2 *Trench 7* The south-east corner of a substantial stone structure was exposed, on a similar orientation to the rectangular building identified by the geophysical survey. An associated wall was also revealed, but on a slightly different alignment. The presence of a substantial quantity of stone roof tile fragments in the adjacent demolition deposits give a likely indication of the roof construction. The weight of stone roof tiles meant that they were usually reserved for substantial buildings with thick walls. The function of the building was probably associated with that of the rectangular building to the north-west, and from comparison with the customary Cistercian monastic layout it could part of the lay brothers range or service buildings.

5.4.3 The stone and gravel surface to the east may be the western edge of a service courtyard, likely to be associated with the kitchens, or alternatively a N-S road or trackway, giving lay brothers access to the west side of the cloister without impinging upon the monks' service building to the east.

5.4.4 *Trenches 8 and 9* were located along the axes of the proposed cruciform pool. Structural evidence exposed included the flagstone surface in the east end of Trench 9. The depth of the surface, and the presence of an accumulation of silty clay over it, suggests that it is likely to be a drain floor, or possibly the base of a cistern. The

presence of medieval pottery in the overlying layer supports a proposed medieval date, and therefore a monastic association.

5.4.5 The substantial stone footing at the west end of Trench 9 - oriented N-S probably represents the eastern wall of a substantial building. The southern wall of the structure is defined by the robber trench in Trench 8. The demolition of this structure seems to have taken place before the construction of the W-E pitched stone pavement in the eastern part of Trench 8. This could still mean that both are medieval, although it is perhaps more likely that the pavement is a post-medieval construction relating to one of the episodes of landscaping. The pavement surface is at least some 0.20 m higher than the general (medieval) horizon in these two trenches (see Figure 3, Section 213), which is additional support (but nevertheless not proof) for the contention that it is a post-medieval construction.

5.4.6 *Trenches 10 and 11* Neither trench revealed the density of structural remains evident in Trenches 8 and 9, although a small part of a ?curved wall was revealed in the north end of Trench 11. In both cases the general stratigraphy was fairly uncomplicated, giving the impression that this area was relatively open, in both the medieval and post-medieval periods.

5.5 The preservation of the archaeological remains

5.5.1 Clearly the excavation of small test pits and narrow trenches can never allow firm conclusions. However, the evidence of the level of archaeological survival in situ seems fairly consistent across the site, and generally confirms the initial expectations.

5.5.2 All the monastic structures have been demolished to at least ground level, and some of the footings have been partially or completely robbed. No ground level floor surfaces have survived in situ, although some of the sandy layers adjacent to the walls may represent bedding layers for floor surfaces. Not surprisingly, sunken features appear to have survived intact - like the drain/cistern - but have been backfilled.

5.5.3 While there is a background scatter in most of the layers excavated, of stone and CBM fragments, no doubt deriving from the monastic complex, there are very few domestic finds like pottery and bone. However, this is not an unusual occurrence in monastic houses where they typically maintained relatively rigorous waste disposal regimes.

5.5.4 The general level of demolition of known monastic remains seems fairly consistent across the area, whether that be the claustral buildings to the north and north-west, or the possible structures associated with the abbot's lodging to the south-east. This suggests either a thorough and well-planned demolition programme after the Dissolution, or more likely a methodical levelling of the area during the 18th or 19th century landscaping. The documentary sources imply that elements of the medieval claustral buildings survived as visible ruins or earthworks until at least the early 19th century (see OAU 2001, Section 5.3.2).

5.5.5 Similarly the structural remains of the post-medieval landscaping appear to be recorded at a fairly consistent level across the site.

5.6 Impact of the proposed development

5.6.1 At the time of the fieldwork the general ground level over the entire evaluated area was recorded at between 75.38 m OD and 75.87 m OD; the average height in the central part of the site, in the area of the proposed water feature was between 75.80 OD and 75.90 m OD. Figure 7 shows comparative levels OD for the present ground level and estimated archaeological horizon across the site.

5.6.2 The evidence from the test pits indicates that, with one exception, the archaeological horizon is at a level at least 0.50 m below present ground level. However, it should be noted that many of the pits displayed sections through indeterminate stratigraphy, difficult to categorise in such circumstances. In contrast the stone footing in Test Pit 4, part of the monastic complex, clearly survives to a height of 75.60 m OD, just 0.27 m below the ground level at that point. In terms of the perimeter of the new driveway, only the north-west quadrant, therefore, appears to be is vulnerable, where monastic remains survive and are potentially relatively close to the present ground surface.

5.6.3 The excavated evidence suggests that construction of the driveway at the level of the existing surface, or built up from that will have no impact on buried archaeological remains. It is possible that below this, to a depth of around 200mm below present ground surface, groundworks could be undertaken with no impact (this allows for a 70mm buffer above the highest recorded level of archaeological remains. Any proposals would be subject to the scrutiny and agreement of the local planning authority.

5.6.4 The five trenches in the centre of the site, over the area of the proposed water feature, indicate a more consistent range of levels for the upper surviving part of the archaeological horizon, varying from 75.10 m OD (0.75 m below present surface) to 75.40 m OD (0.45 m below present surface); in these trenches the frequent presence of wall footings and intact surfaces allow a more accurate definition of the archaeological horizon.

5.6.5 As is explained above, it is not possible on the basis of the data collected to be totally certain which elements are of monastic origin and which are parts of the post-medieval buildings and landscaping. Therefore, largely on the basis of alignment, it may well be that monastic remains (as opposed to post-medieval remains) do not survive intact in the central area above a level of *c* 75.20 m OD (approximately 0.65m below present surface).

5.6.6 In summary groundworks impact down to around 0.45 m should not impact on archaeological remains of any date, although this would expose the upper surface of probable post-mediaeval remains at this level. Any groundworks below this level risk impacting on archaeological remains, with certain medieval monastic remains surviving al least from 0.65 m below present surface.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench	*Cxt No*	*Type*	*Width (m)*	*Depth. (m)*	*Comment*	*Finds*
1						
	10000	Layer		0.20 m	Topsoil	
	10001	Layer		0.60 m	Make up	
	10002	Layer		0.30 m	Make up	
2						
	10003	Layer		0.15 m	Topsoil	
	10004	Layer		0.15 m	Make up	
	10005	Layer		0.10 m	Make up	
	10006	Layer		0.50 m	make up	
3						
	10007	Layer		0.15 m	Make up	
	10008	Layer		0.15 m	Topsoil	
	10009	Layer		0.20 m	Make up	
4						
	10010	Wall	0.30 m		Wall	
	10011	Layer		0.10 m	Topsoil	
	10012	Layer		0.10 m	Make up	
	10013	Layer		0.20 m	Make up	
5						
	10014	Layer		0.20 m	Topsoil	
	10015	Layer		0.15 m	Make up	
	10016	Layer		0.15 m	Make up	
	10017	Layer		0.08 m	Make up	
6						
	10018	Layer		0.18 m	Topsoil	
	10019	Layer		0.06 m	Make up	CBM and iron object (nail)
	10020	Layer		0.20 m	Make up	
	10021	Layer		0.05 m	Make up	
7						
	10022	Layer		0.20 m	Topsoil	
	10023	Layer		0.15 m	Driveway make up	

Trench	*Cxt No*	*Type*	*Width (m)*	*Depth. (m)*	*Comment*	*Finds*
	10024	Layer		0.22 m	Driveway make up	
	10025	Layer		0.18 m	Driveway make up	
	10026	Layer		0.20 m	Driveway make up	
	10027	Layer		0.11 m	Driveway make up	
	10028	Cut	0.32 m	0.34 m	Foundation cut	
	10029	Fill		0.15 m	Wall Footing	
	10030	Fill		0.18 m	Backfill	
	10031	Layer		0.12 m	Clay levelling layer	Stone tile and fragments
	10032	Layer		0.15 m	Demolition layer	
	10033	Layer		0.18 m	Construction /demolition layer	
	10034	Layer		0.12 m	Disturbed soil make up	
	10035	Fill	0.60 m	0.20 m	backfill from wall robbing	
	10036	Cut	0.60 m	0.30 m	Foundation trench	
	10037	Structure	0.60 m	0.08 m	Wall foundation	
	10038	Layer		0.20 m	Floor make up	
	10039	Layer		0.22 m	Make up layer	
	10040	Layer		0.28 m	Disturbed soil make up	
	10041	Natural			Brick earth natural	
	10042	Fill	0.90 m	0.20 m	backfill from wall robbing	
	10043	Wall	0.85 m	0.20 m	Wall	
	10044	Layer		0.35 m	Demolition material against wall	Shell, CBM and stone tile

Trench	*Cxt No*	*Type*	*Width (m)*	*Depth. (m)*	*Comment*	*Finds*
	10045	Layer		0.40 m	Demolition layer	
	10046	Layer	4.3 m	0.23 m	Gravelled surface	
	10047	Layer			Demolition layer	
	10048	Layer			Disturbed soil make up	
	10049	Cut		0.60 m	Driveway construction	
	10059	Layer			Disturbed soil make up	
8						
	10073	Fill			Fill of robber trench	
Trench	*Ctxt No*	*Type*	*Width (m)*	*Depth. (m)*	*Comment*	*Finds*
8						
	10074	Layer			Demolition layer	
	10089	Fill			Fill of service trench	
	10090	Cut	0.40 m	0.25 m	Service trench	
	10091	Fill			Fill of service trench	
	10092	Cut	0.45 m	0.60 m	Drain construction cut	
	10093	Structure	0.45 m	0.60 m	19th C Brick drain	
	10094	Layer		0.30 m	Driveway make up	
	10095	Cut	0.70 m		Construction cut	
	10096	Structure			Garden feature	
	10097	Layer	7 m	0.22 m	Pitched stone surface	
	10098	Cut			Robber trench	

Trench	*Cxt No*	*Type*	*Width (m)*	*Depth. (m)*	*Comment*	*Finds*
	10099	Cut	1.3 m		Service trench	
	10101	Layer			Demolition	
	10102	Layer		0.05 m	Construction make up	
	10103	Layer		0.15 m	Construction make up	
	10104	Layer		0.10 m	Demolition layer	
9						
	10050	Layer		0.20 m	Topsoil	
	10051	Layer		0.50 m	Clay levelling layer	
	10052	Layer		0.15 m	Demolition layer	
	10053	Layer		0.20 m	Demolition layer	
	10054	Layer		0.18 m	Disturbed soil make up	CBM tile, Bone
	10055	Layer		0.18 m	Disturbed soil make up	CBM tile, Shell, Plaster
	10056	Layer		0.35 m	Demolition layer	
	10057	Layer		0.40 m	Demolition layer	Pottery, CBM tile, Bone, Shell
	10058	Layer		0.20 m	Silted up material	Pottery, CBM tile, Shell
	10060	Cut		0.35 m	Foundation trench	
	10061	Wall		0.70 m	Wall	
	10062	Cut	0.70 m	0.60 m	Robber trench	
	10063	Layer		0.20 m	Topsoil	
	10064	Layer		0.50 m	Clay levelling layer	
	10065	Layer		0.16 m	Demolition layer	
	10066	Fill			Fill of robber trench	Iron Obj (nail), CBM tile, Bone

Trench	***Cxt No***	***Type***	***Width (m)***	***Depth. (m)***	***Comment***	***Finds***
Trench	***Ctxt No***	***Type***	***Width (m)***	***Depth. (m)***	***Comment***	***Finds***
9						
	10067	Layer		0.30 m	Disturbed soil make up	
	10068	Cut	0.50 m		Robbed wall	
	10069	Fill			Fill of robber trench	
	10071	Layer		0.08 m	Demolition layer	
	10072	Layer		0.12 m	Demolition layer	
	10073	Fill			Fill of robber trench	
	10074	Layer			Demolition layer	
	10083	Layer			Demolition layer	
	10084	Layer			Demolition layer	
	10085	Layer		0.10 m	Demolition layer	
	10087	Layer			Demolition layer	
	10088	Fill			Fill of robber trench	
	10101	Layer		0.10 m	Demolition layer	
10						
	10105	Layer		0.18 m	Topsoil	
	10106	Layer		0.30 m	Make up layer	
	10107	Layer		0.15 m	Clay levelling layer	CBM tile
	10108	Layer		0.08 m	Demolition layer	
	10109	Layer		0.40 m	Demolition layer	Glazed floor tile
	10110	Layer			Demolition layer	

Trench	*Cxt No*	*Type*	*Width (m)*	*Depth. (m)*	*Comment*	*Finds*
	10111	Stone slab surface			Cistern or drain floor?	
11						
	10075	Wall	0.47 m	0.23 m	Pitched stone wall	
	10076	Layer		0.30 m	Topsoil	
	10077	Layer		0.22 m	Clay levelling layer	
	10078	Layer		0.20 m	Levelling layer	
	10079	Layer		0.03 m	Demolition layer	
	10080	Layer			Demolition layer	
	10081	Layer		0.21 m	Demolition layer	
	10082	Layer			Demolition layer	

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

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OAU 2001 Thame Park Oxfordshire, Heritage Assessment and Survey

OAU February 2001 North Wing Evaluation

OAU February 2001 Watching brief on electric cables

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OAU February 2001 Bartlett-Clark Consultancy, Geophysical report

OAU April 2001 The rear courtyard, trench evaluation

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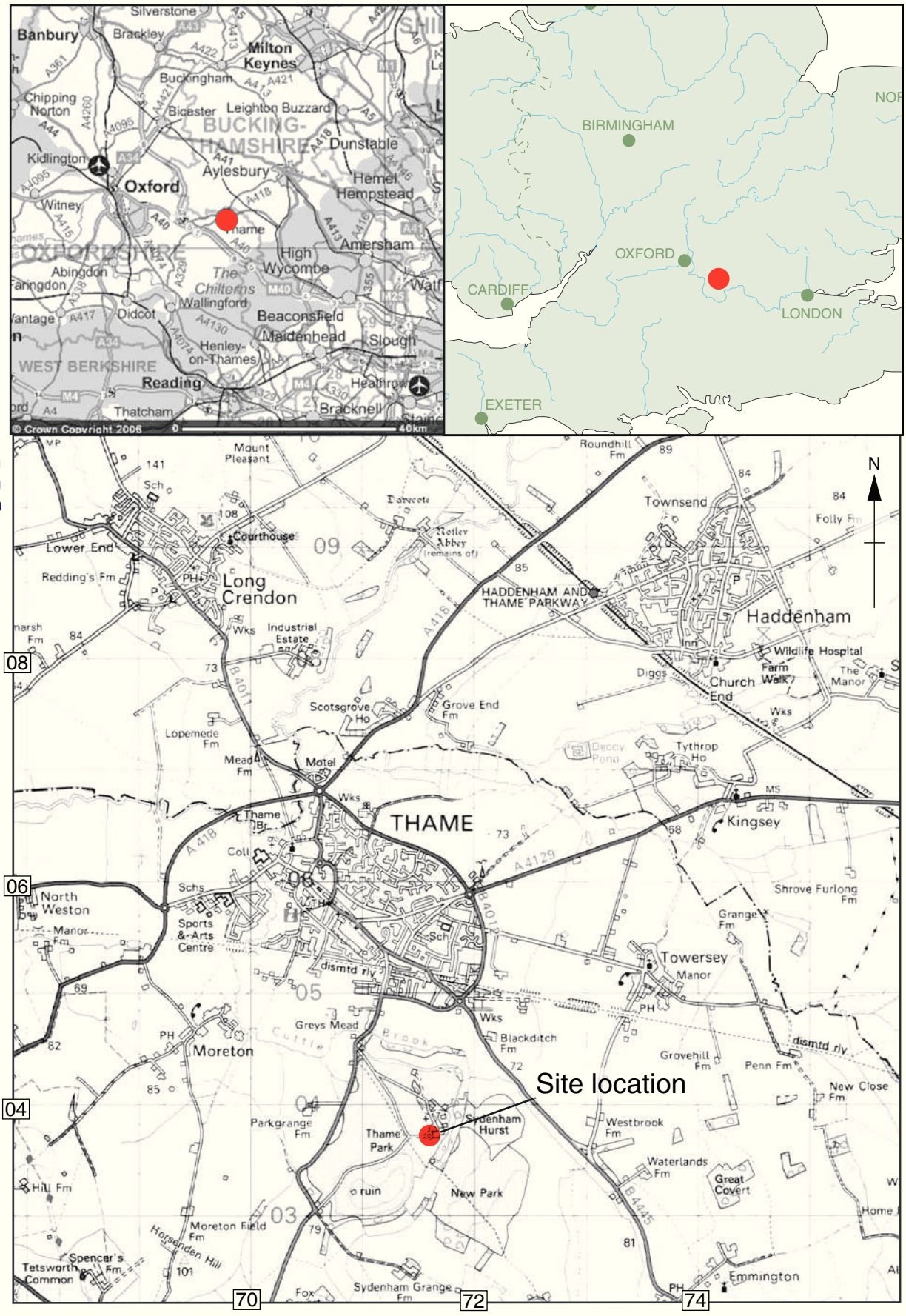
APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: New Water Feature, Thame Park, Thame, Oxfordshire
Site code: THAPK 06
Grid reference: NGR SP 7166 0375
Type of evaluation: Evaluating archaeological potential in area of new water feature and driveway.
Date and duration of project: Total of ten days from the 18/9/2006 to 28/9/2006.
Area of site: Six 1 m square test pits and 78 m of trenches.
Summary of results: The evaluation revealed surviving monastic and possibly post-medieval buildings, structures and deposits at 0.3 m to 0.5 m below the surface in the site of the new water feature.
Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course, under the following accession number: OXCMS 2001.2



Scale 1:50,000

Figure 1: Site location

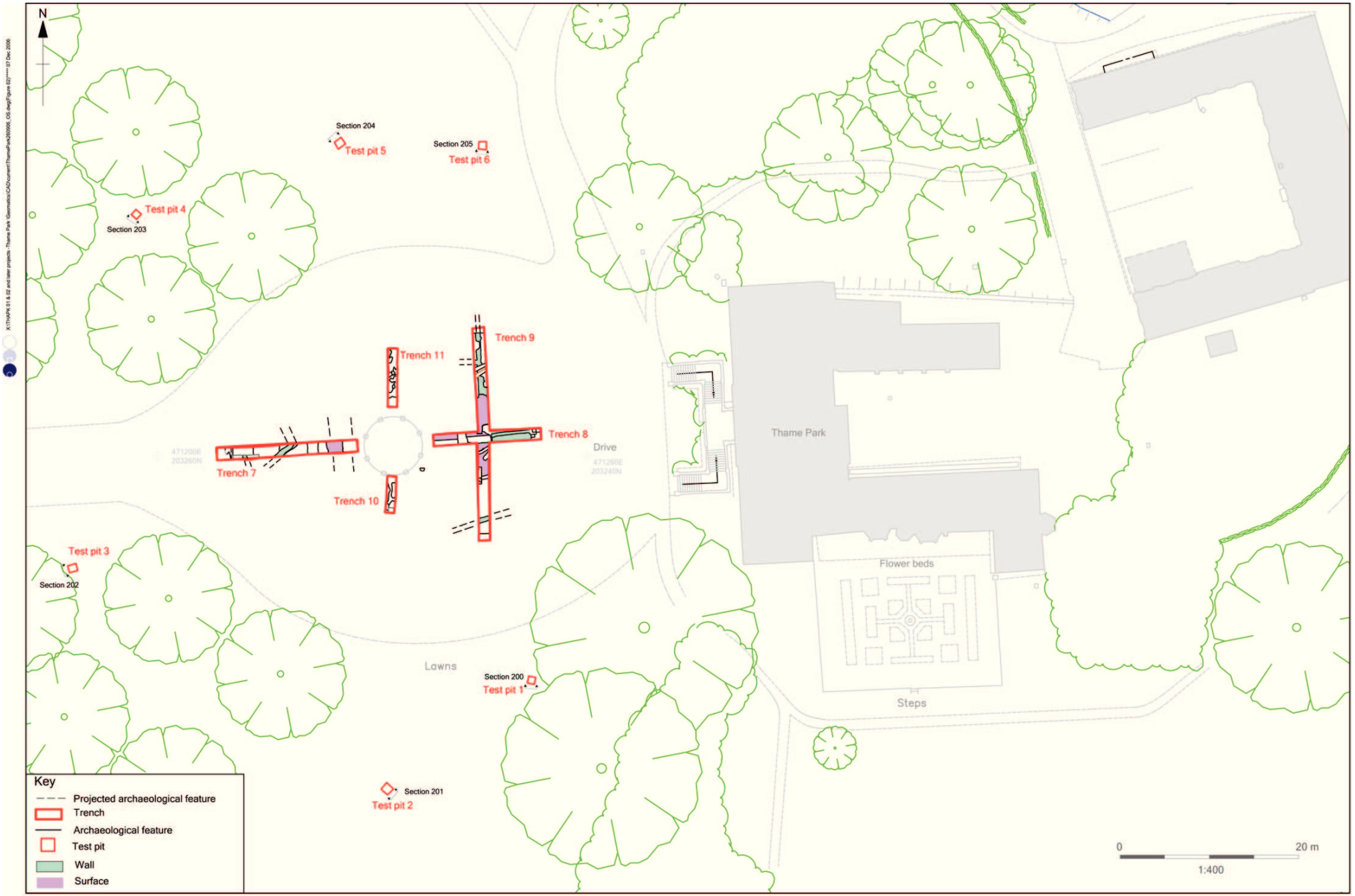


Figure 2 : Trench plan

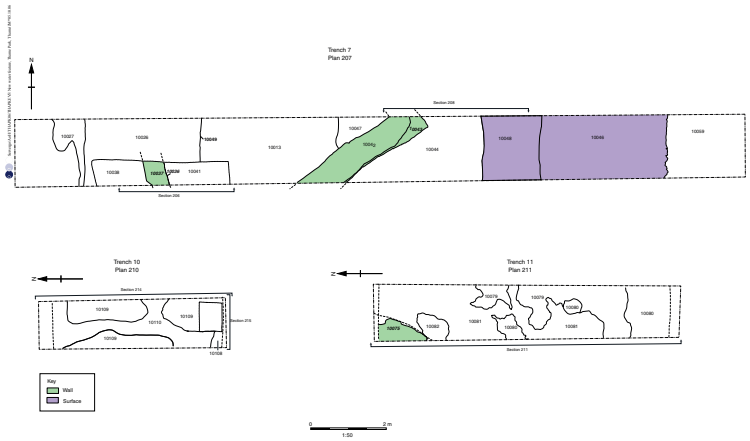


Figure 3: Trenches 7, 10 and 11, plans

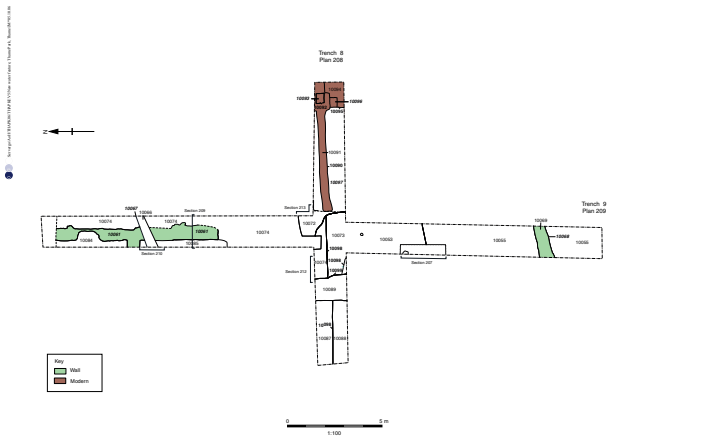


Figure 4: Trenches 8 and 9, plans

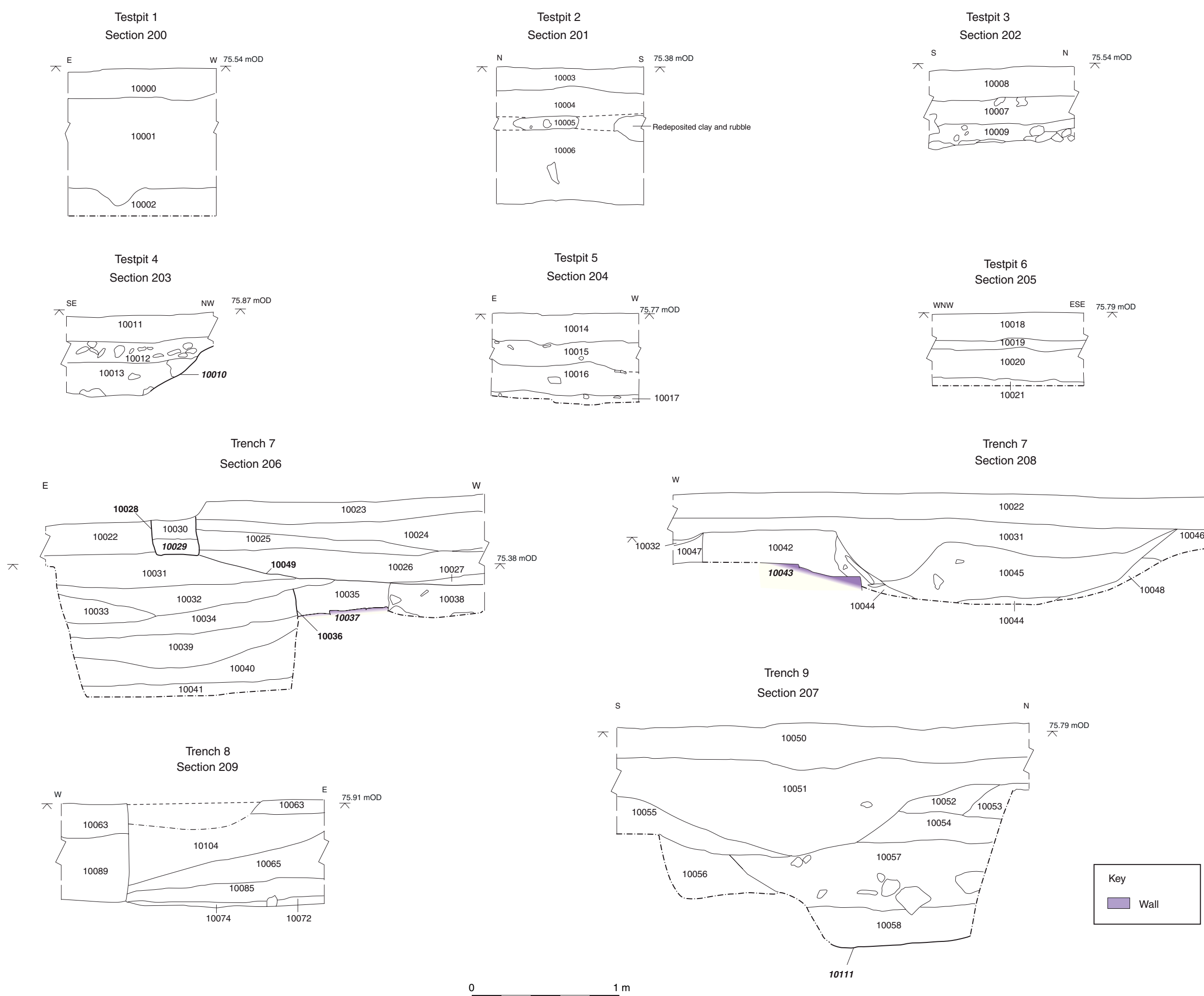


Figure 5: Testpits 1 - 6, Trenches 6 - 8 sections

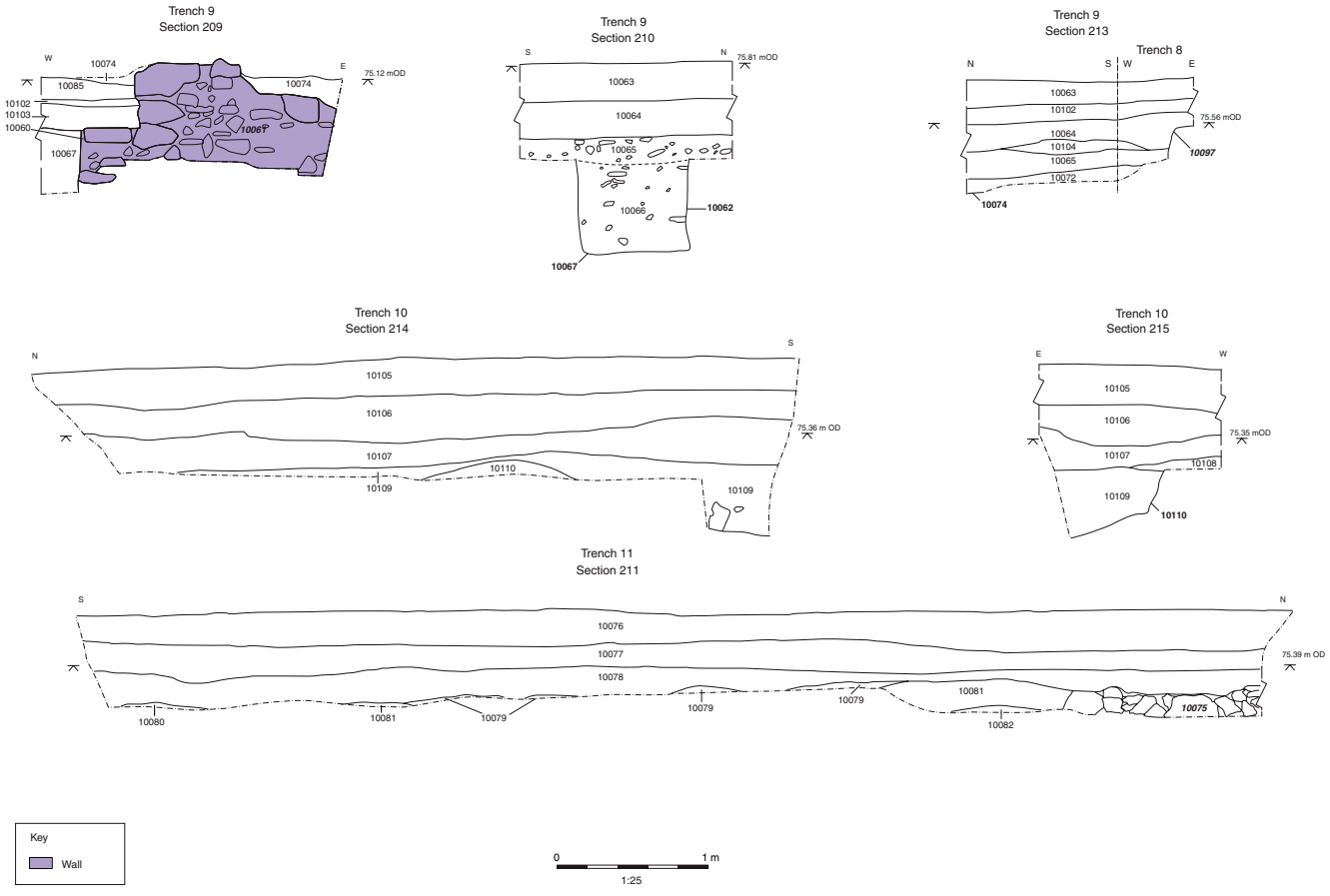


Figure 6: Trenches 9 - 11 sections

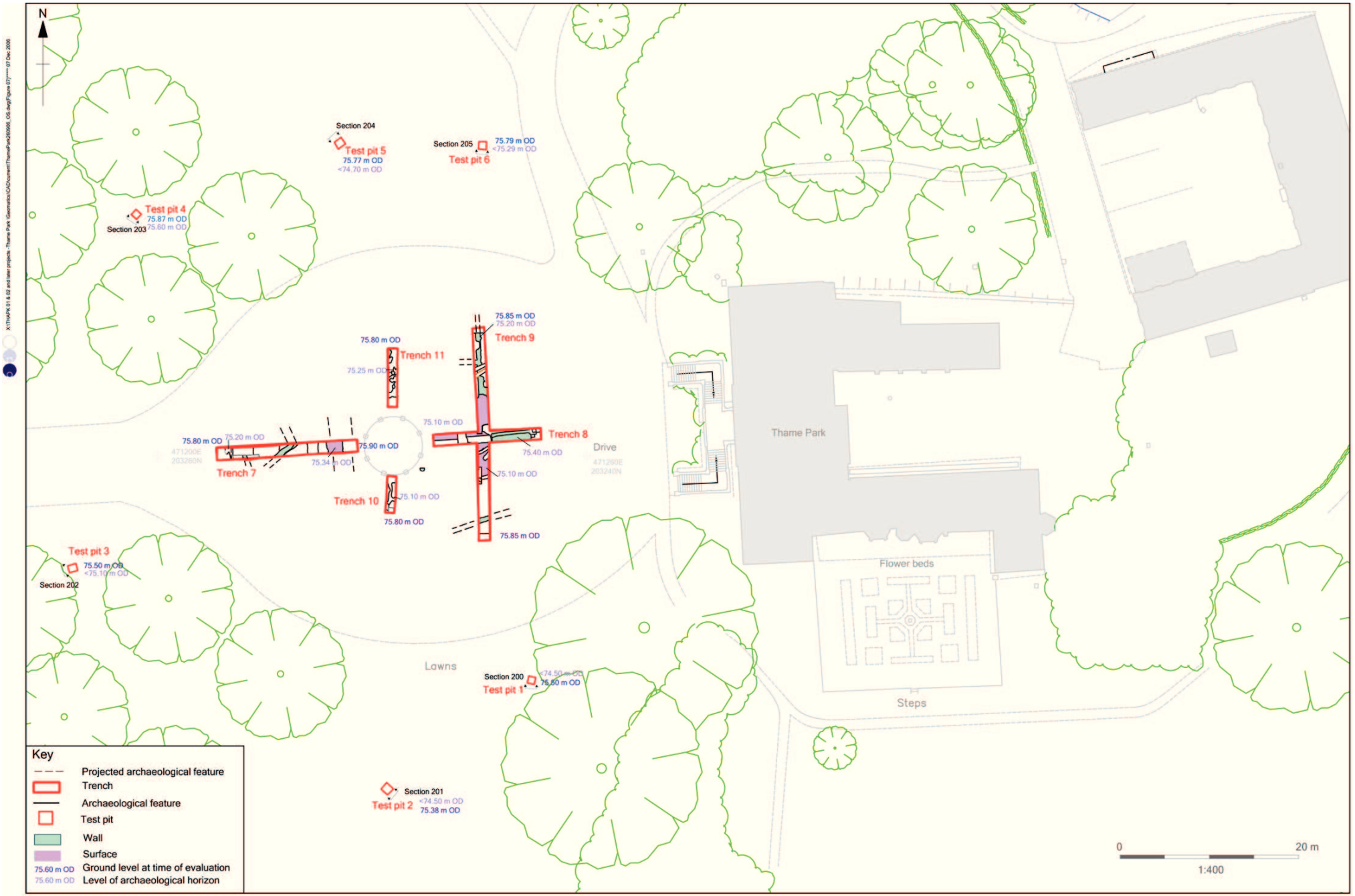


Figure 7: Comparative levels of moden ground surface and estimated archaeological horizon