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Buckinghamshire

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SUMMARY

On the 1st of September 2009 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Stowe House, Stowe, Buckinghamshire (NGR SP 670 375). This work was commissioned by Purcell Miller Tritton acting on behalf of the Stowe House Preservation Trust in advance of the excavation of a temporary turning area on the edge of the south lawn adjacent to the house. The watching brief revealed a deposit of made ground associated with the 18th/19th-century construction of the parterre overlain by the present day topsoil and turf. No evidence for any earlier phases of the house or garden was observed.

1 LOCATION AND SCOPE OF WORK

- 1.1 On the 1st of September 2009 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Stowe House, Stowe, Buckinghamshire (NGR: SP 670 375). The work was commissioned by Purcell Miller Tritton on behalf of the Stowe House Preservation Trust in advance of the construction of a new turning area.
- 1.2 The turning area was located on the northern edge of the south lawn, adjacent to the tarmac roadway running along the southern edge of the house at a level of approximately 130 m above OD (Fig. 1).

2 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 Following discussions with Gary Marshall the National Trust Archaeologist, it was agreed that the watching brief could proceed without the normal production of a formal brief or Written Statement of Investigation.
- 2.2 The watching brief was conducted as a continuous archaeological presence during the excavation of the turning area. These works consisted of an area measuring 24 m long by 8m excavated to a maximum depth of 0.25 m below the current ground level. The material was excavated using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket.

3 DESCRIPTION OF DEPOSITS

- 3.1 A layer of made ground composed of friable yellow-brown clay silt containing charcoal flecking, brick, tile, mortar and lenses of orange-brown silt clay was encountered at 0.1 m below the current ground level. This measured in excess of 0.15 m deep and was exposed throughout the base of the excavation. This was overlain by a layer of mid brown silt loam, the present day topsoil and turf forming the south lawn. Fragments of hand moulded brick, clay pipe stem and glazed earthenware and creamware pottery dating to the 18th and 19th-century were recovered from the made ground. These were evaluated on site but were not retained.

4 **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1 The layer of made ground is consistent with those observed during the 2003 excavations conducted approximately 40 m to the west, adjacent to the south steps (OA, 2003). This material was probably deposited during the construction of the southern terrace and the associated parterre during the late 18th and 19th centuries. No evidence for any earlier phases of Stowe House or the garden landscaping was observed.

5 **BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES**

IFA, 2001 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

OA, 2003 *Stowe House, Stowe, Buckinghamshire. Archaeological Excavation and Watching Brief Report*

OAU, 1992 *Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson)

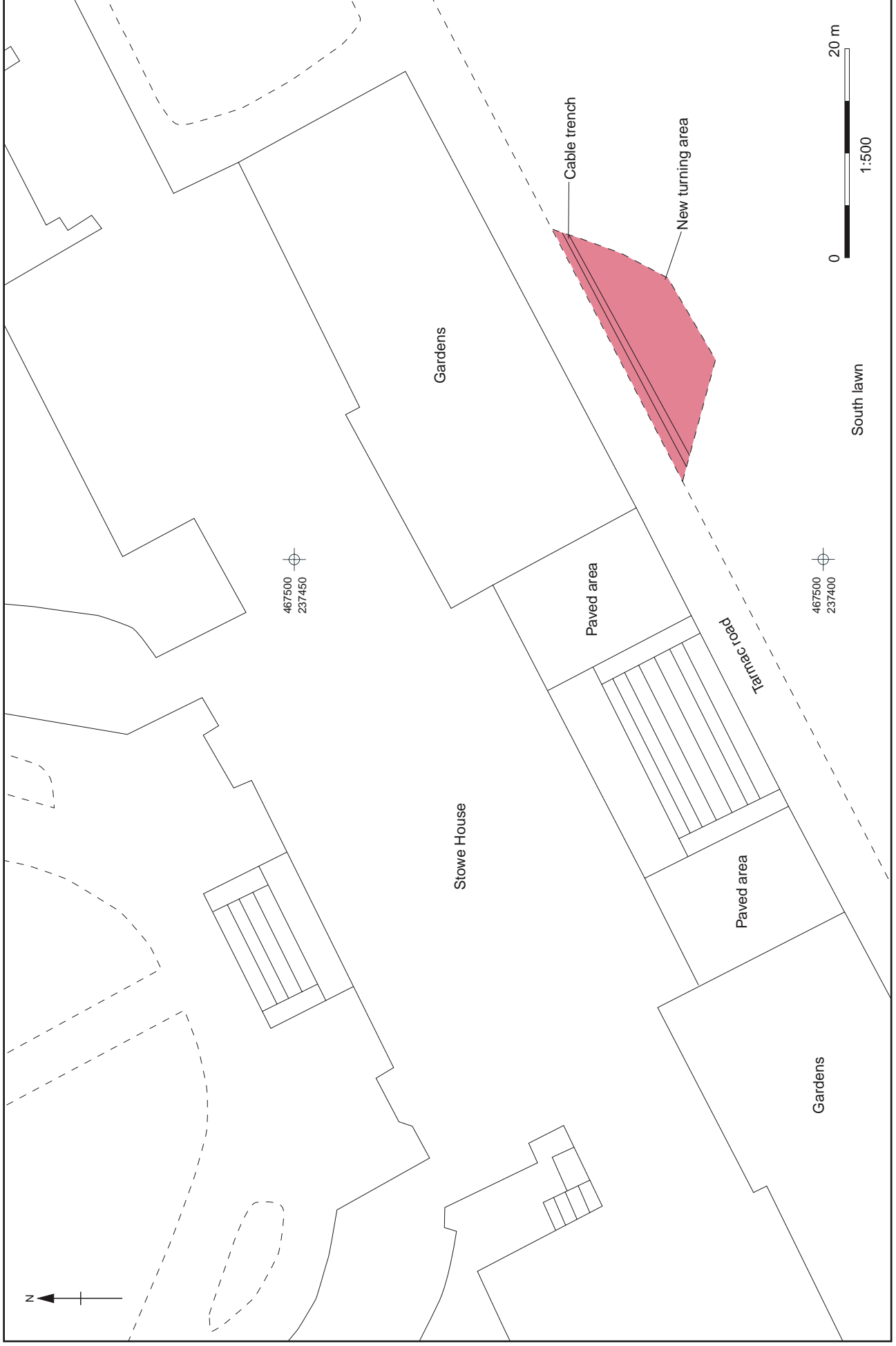


Figure 1: Location of new turning area



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