

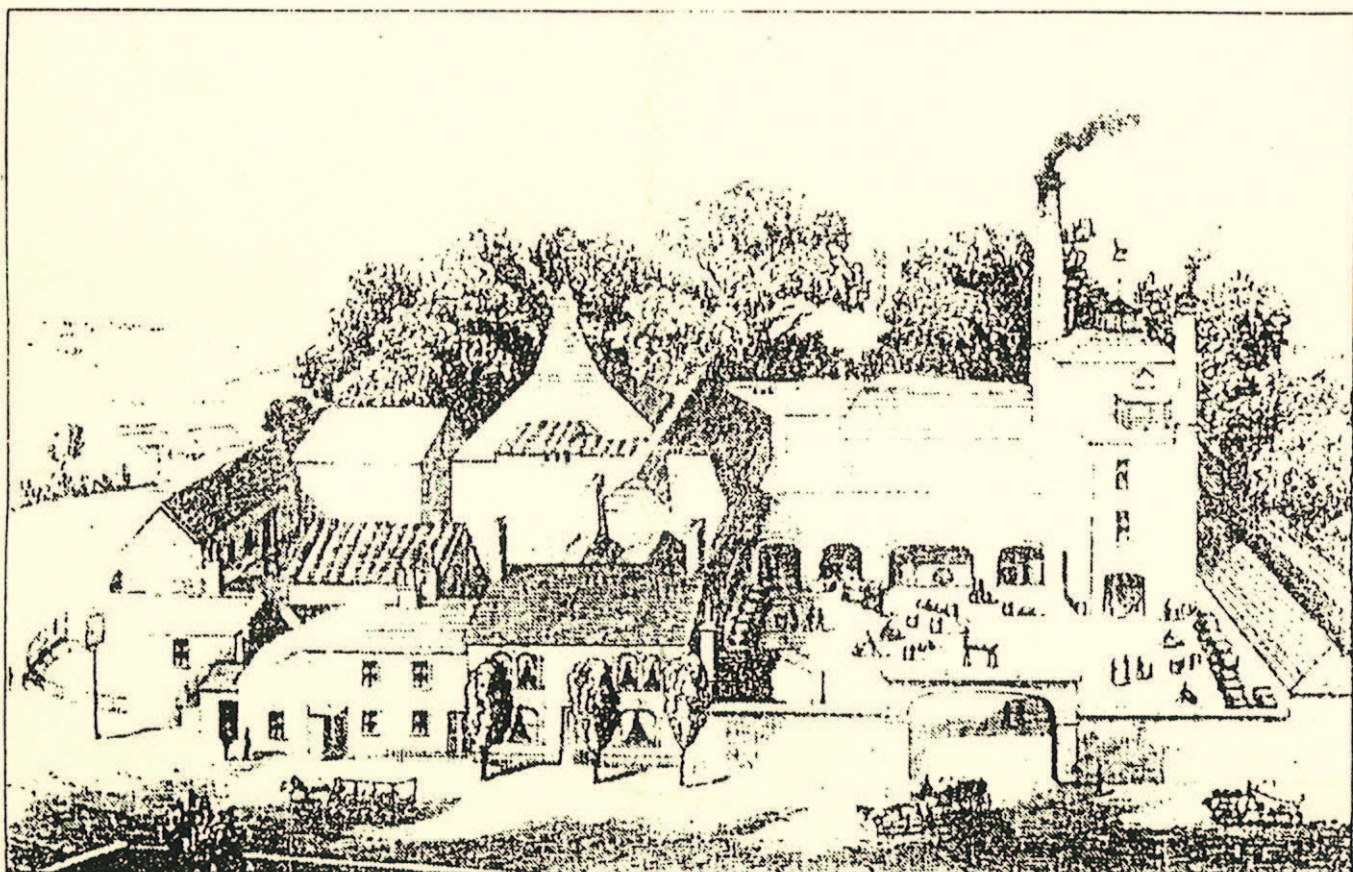
Mr Sandy Richardson

The Royal Stag Brewery, Wooburn, Buckinghamshire

*NGR SU 9098 8787*

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT**

Planning Ref. No. 96/05164/FUL



A DRAWING of the Stag brewery site some 100 years ago.

Oxford Archaeological Unit

June 1998

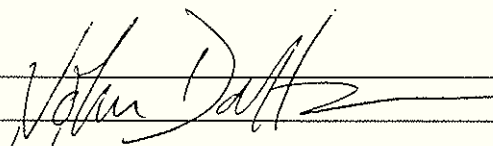
Mr Sandy Richardson

**The Royal Stag Brewery, Wooburn, Buckinghamshire**

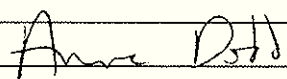
NGR SU 9098 8787

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT**

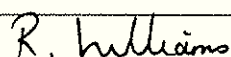
Planning Ref. No. 96/05164/FUL

Prepared by: 

Date: 23/6/98

Checked by: 

Date: 23/6/98

Approved by:  HEAD OF FIELDWORK

Date: 25/6/98

**Oxford Archaeological Unit**

**June 1998**

### **Summary**

*In May 1998 the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) undertook a watching brief at the Royal Stag Brewery in Wooburn, Buckinghamshire (NGR SU 9098 8787). No archaeological features were seen; 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup>-century white china was identified but not retained.*

### **1 Introduction (Fig. 1)**

The development proposal (planning application no. 96/05164/FUL) comprised the excavation of footings prior to the commercial redevelopment of the site.

The watching brief was commissioned by the main contractor, Mr Sandy Richardson, on the advice of the Local Planning Authority. It was undertaken to a brief set by, and a WSI agreed with, the County Archaeological Officer.

### **2 Background (Fig. 2)**

The Royal Stag Works incorporates the fabric of an 18<sup>th</sup>-century brewery. The brewery, owned by Mr Thomas Williams, was worked by steam; the water used in the brewing process was obtained from an artesian well, approximately 300 feet in depth.

Following its closure as a working brewery, the site was converted for light industrial use. The conversion substantially retained the buildings of the old brewery, although somewhat modernised and extended. The former bottling plant and main store remains an imposing two-storey building with a substantial cellar. Also surviving are a single-storey stable block at the north-west corner of the site and three cottages, 'The Staghouse', 'Stag Cottage', and 'Wayside'. The last of these used to provide office space for the brewery before its conversion into a private house. 'The Staghouse' and 'Stag Cottage' both preserve the name of 'The Stag' public house which was situated on the western side of the site and fronted onto the main road. It closed with the brewery and subsequently has been demolished. 'The Harrow' public house, immediately adjacent to the east of the site, still exists as a building but has closed and will shortly be converted into residential accommodation.

The site lies adjacent to an archaeological notification area, where quantities of medieval and post-medieval pottery and a mortar platform containing tile and brick were recorded during works associated with the construction of a water pipeline during 1987 (Chaffey 1990). Six kg of medieval sherds were recovered, and were seen to be in close association with the platform, which was located c. 0.20 m below the turf line.

### **3 Aims**

The aims of the watching brief were to record any archaeological remains exposed on site during the course of the works to established standards (Wilkinson 1992), in order to secure the preservation by record of any archaeology, the presence and nature of which could not be established in advance.

#### 4 Methodology

One inspection visit was made to the site by prior arrangement with the main contractor, who undertook all excavation using a 360 mechanical excavator.

Within the constraints imposed by Health and Safety considerations the deposits exposed were cleaned, inspected and recorded in plan, section and by colour slide and monochrome print photography. Written records were also made on proforma sheets. Soil descriptions use *estimated* percentages based on the use of standard charts for the approximation of percentage of inclusion types in soil deposits.

#### 5 Results (Figs 3 and 4)

The excavation of footings was monitored with a constant presence on site. The footings were pulled at an average depth of 2.5 m through brick rubble and two concrete aprons, all of which had been installed in the late 1950s/early 1960s. All sections observed revealed the following sequence:

The present unreinforced concrete yard surface, 0.25 m thick, sealed;

- (1) – 0.80 m of brick rubble, sealing;
- (2) – a second unreinforced concrete apron, basement level for the demolished buildings, 0.25 m thick, sealed;
- (3) – approximately 0.45 m of gray silty/gravelly fill with much modern housebrick, tile and rubble, sealed;
- (4) – silty gray alluvial clay in lenses; where this was not seen it was replaced by:
- (5) – natural silty medium-coarse subrounded gravel with medium-large flint nodes.

Assorted Victoriana and 19<sup>th</sup>-century bottle glass and ceramics were present throughout deposits (1) and (3) but were not retained. Deposit (3) also produced slate and white china immediately above deposit (4), the natural clay.

#### 6 Discussion

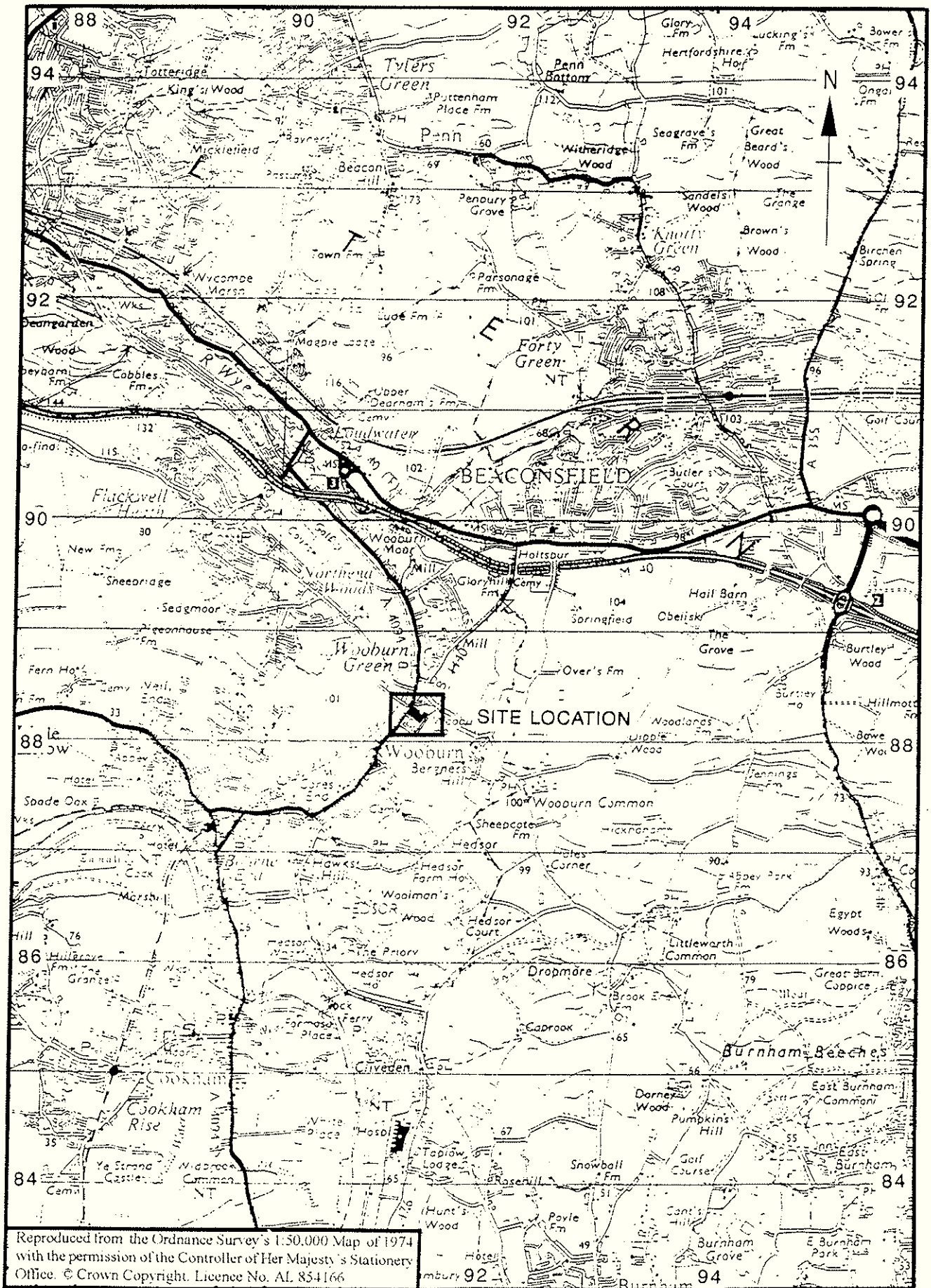
None of the works monitored impacted on any medieval archaeology. All deposits seen and recorded relate to the working life and demolition of the Royal Stag Brewery. All the artefactual evidence seen was late post-medieval, mainly 19<sup>th</sup>-and 20<sup>th</sup>-century in date.

The alluvial clay filled hollows in and sealed the natural gravel, except in those places where peaks in the natural topography allowed the gravel to show through. Despite careful examination of these deposits, no cut features were seen.

**References.**

Chaffey, J 1990 Hedsor Reservoir and Wycombe/Slough Link Main J Chess Valley Arch and Hist Soc, pp 26-31

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



scale 1:50,000

Location of site

Figure 1



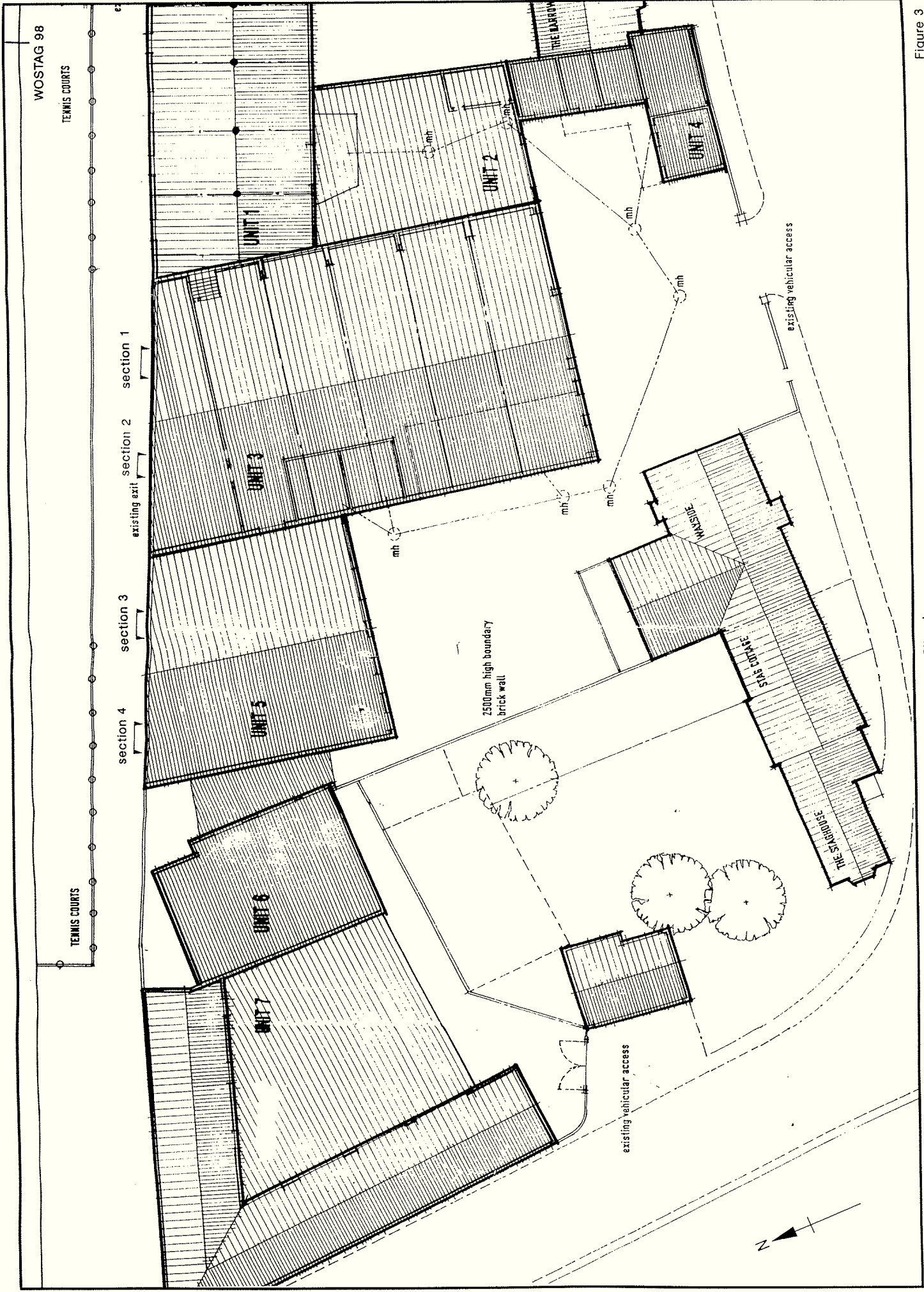
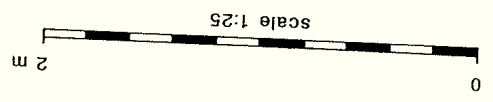
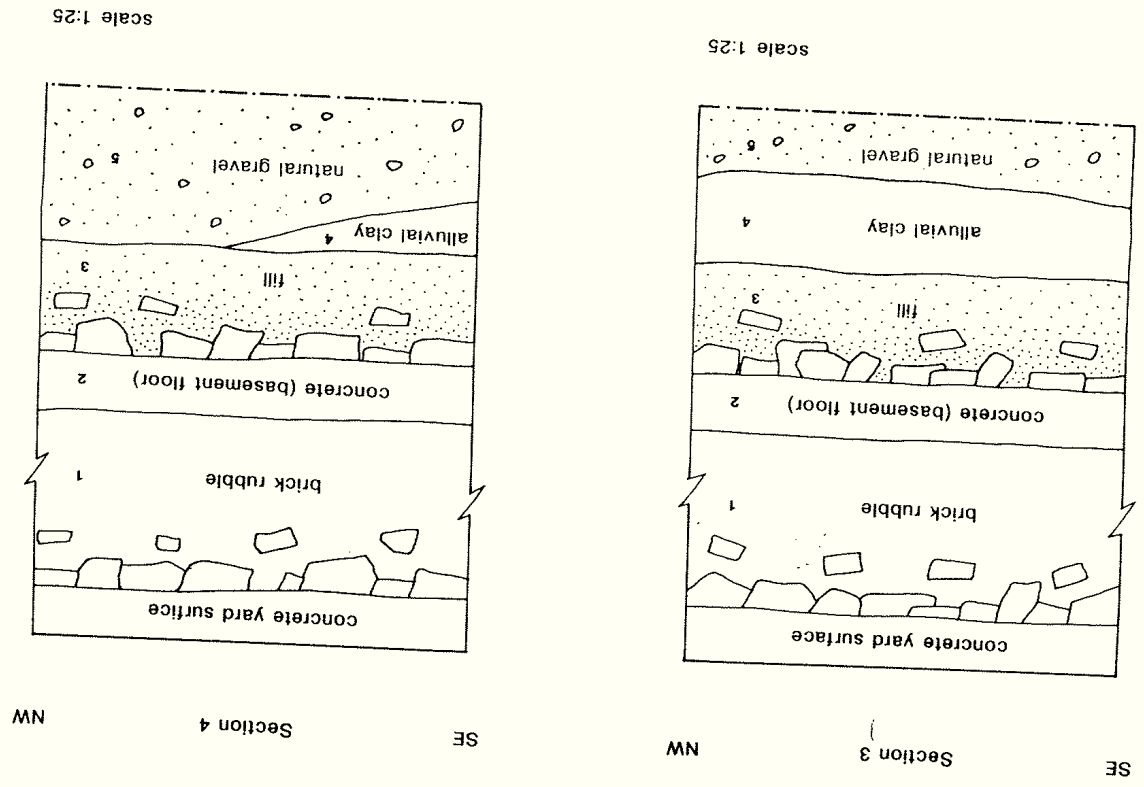
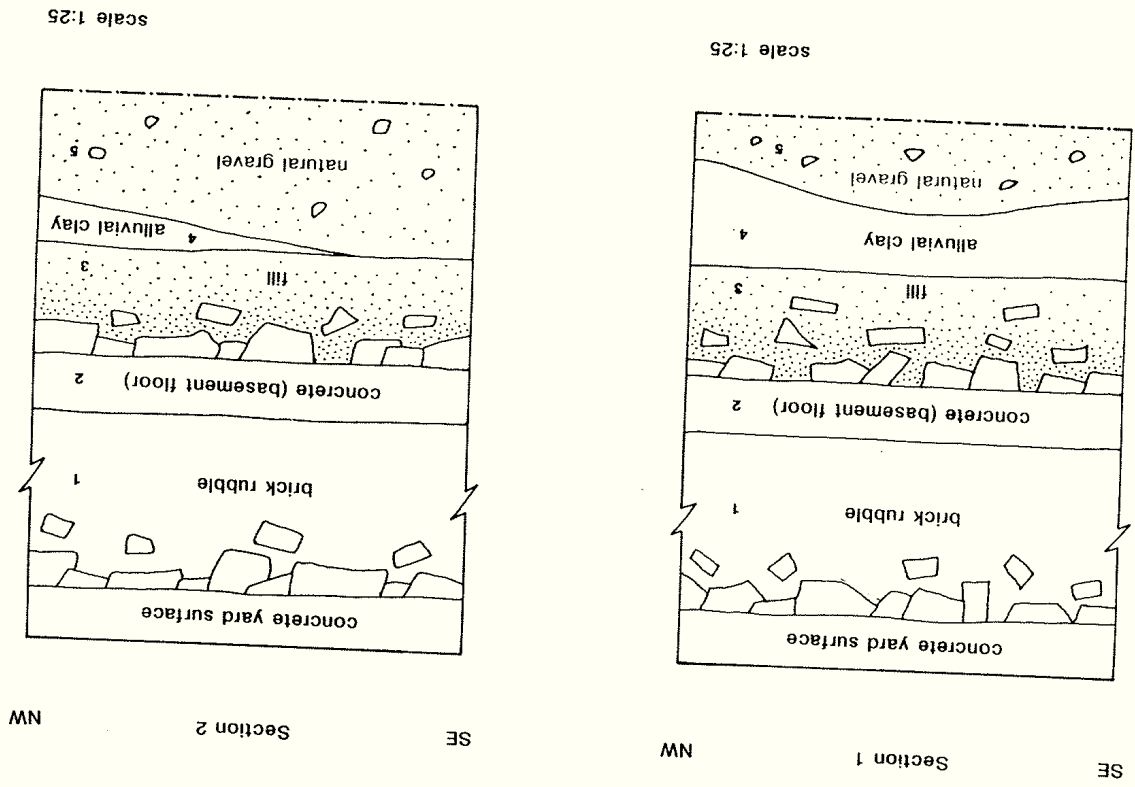


Figure 3

Site plan

scale 1:200





Sections

Figure 4



## OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES

Tel: 01865 263800 Fax: 01865 793496

email: [oau-oxford.demon.co.uk](mailto:oau-oxford.demon.co.uk)



---

Director: David Miles B.A., F.S.A., M.I.F.A. Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited.  
Private Limited Company Number: 1618597 Registered Charity Number: 285627.  
Registered Office: Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES