

4 South Street Wendover Buckinghamshire



Archaeological Evaluation Report



Oxford Archaeology

20th January 2003

Client Name: Sidleys

Issue N^o: 1

OA Job N^o: 1564

Planning Ref N^o: 02/00186

NGR: SU 8677 0770

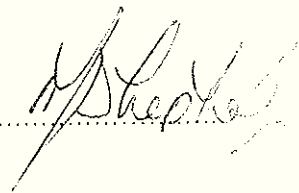
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Date: 20th January 2003

Signed.....



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SUMMARY

In December 2002, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at 4 South Street, Wendover, Buckinghamshire (NGR SU 8677 0770) on behalf of Sidleys Chartered Surveyors. The evaluation revealed a pit of probable 15th century date, a post-medieval property boundary or garden ditch and several post-medieval domestic rubbish pits. These latter features are probably associated with documented properties on the site in the 17th and 18th centuries. A layer of roofing tile observed above the level of these features probably relates to the demolition of these structures.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In December 2002 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at 4 South Street, Wendover, Bucks on behalf of Sidleys Chartered Surveyors. The work was undertaken in respect of a planning application for the construction of two new houses (Planning Application No. 02/00186).
- 1.1.2 The development site is situated at land immediately to the south of South Street, Wendover, Buckinghamshire (NGR SU 8677 0770) and is 0.05 hectares in area. (Fig. 1).
- 1.1.3 A project brief was set by Buckinghamshire's Archaeological Officer, David Radford. OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation detailing how it would implement the requirements of the brief (OA 2002a). OA undertook the site work on December 3rd and 4th 2002. The site supervisor was Bryan Matthews.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 Wendover lies at the mouth of a gap in the Chilterns, and on the ancient route of the Icknield Way. The development site lies at 130 m OD and the underlying geology comprises Lower Chalk overlain by Icknield Loam.
- 1.2.2 The site is situated on ground that slopes down gently towards the Northeast, where it fronts on to South Street.
- 1.2.3 The site was previously used as a garden, with paths, small trees and an upstanding greenhouse.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the evaluation has been the subject of a separate desk study (OA 2002b), the results of which are summarised below. A Gazetteer of references used in the text is included in the Appendices.
- 1.3.2 *Previous investigations:* There are no known archaeological sites or finds within the area of the proposed development. There have been three archaeological investigations in the vicinity. A watching brief at Wendover House (OA 9), c 650 m

from site, identified a number of medieval and post-medieval features. Excavations at Heron Cottage (OA 6), c 430 m from the site identified evidence for early medieval and medieval settlement. A watching brief in St. Mary's Churchyard (OA 3), c 550 m from site identified a medieval pit.

- 1.3.3 *Prehistoric*: Palaeolithic flint workings have been found on the Chilterns c 20km to the north-east of Wendover, at Caddington. A Neolithic flint blade (OA 20) has been found in a back garden in Pound Street. The Upper Icknield Way that passes through Wendover runs within 20 m of this site. A ranch boundary of probable Bronze Age date is known on the scarp overlooking Wendover. The hillfort of Boddington Hill (c 700 m to the east of the Study Area), is of Iron Age date.
- 1.3.4 *Roman*: Wendover lies c 1.8 km to the south and east of the Lower Icknield Way, a Roman Road which connects with Akeman Street c 3.5 km to the north of the town. Roman period finds include OA 1 - Romano-British pottery found to the north west of the site; OA 4, 5, 8, and 9 - Roman coins; OA 12 - an inhumation of either Romano-British or Saxon date at Wendover House
- 1.3.5 *Early medieval*: Wendover is first mentioned as a settlement in its own right in a charter of c 970 AD as *Waendofron*, and as *Wendouvre* in Domesday when it was a Royal manor accounting for 24 hides, with land for 26 ploughs, meadow for 3 ploughs, and 2 mills. Saxon pottery sherds in association with a possible flint cobbled surface (OA 6) c 400m to the south-west of the site have been located.
- 1.3.6 *Later medieval*: The core of the original medieval borough is likely to have been what is now Pound Street, South Street, High Street and North Street. A second, probably earlier core to the south focuses around the church, which has 12th century origins. The borough contained 121 burgages in the 13th century and extended over an area of 30 to 40 acres. Substantial quantities of pottery, (OA 3, 6, 7, 9, 14 and 15) have been recovered together with a probable medieval house platform (OA 15).
- 1.3.7 *Post-medieval*: from a map of 1620, it can be seen that developed street frontages had evolved in the town, and houses are shown on the South Street frontage. A map of Wendover of 1768 depicts two buildings on the site but by 1880 these appear to have gone, with a single building depicted in the north part of the site. No buildings are depicted on the site by the time of the 1961 OS map. Traces of the platforms of the buildings are still visible today set into the slope of the site (OA 2002b).

2 EVALUATION AIMS

- 2.1.1 To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the proposed development area.
- 2.1.2 To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present giving attention to all archaeological periods. The specific aim was to establish whether any early-post medieval remains, for example property boundaries and occupation deposits, existed on the development site. The potential survival of the house platforms thought to survive here was to be investigated.

- 2.1.3 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features and to make available the results of the investigation.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork

- 3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of two trenches forming a single 'T' shaped area within the centre of the site. The trenches measured 15 m (WNW-ESE) x 9 m (SSW-NNE) and were 1.6 m wide (Figs 2 & 3). The overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision by a JCB mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket.
- 3.1.2 On-site constraints, including trees, meant that the trenches had to be moved from the positions proposed in the WSI. The trenches were inspected by David Radford for Buckinghamshire CC prior to backfilling.

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. All archaeological features were planned and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20 or 1:10. 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 from features and also from spoil-tips as appropriate. Within contexts where post-medieval finds were abundant, a representative selection of the finds was taken. The trenches and spoil-tips were scanned with a metal detector to locate metal finds. Finds of special interest were given a unique small find number.

3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence

- 3.4.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were encountered.

3.5 Presentation of results

- 3.5.1 A description of soils and ground conditions is given and the general distribution of archaeological deposits stated. This is followed by a description of the trenches according to the stratigraphic sequence, starting with the earliest or lowest deposits encountered.
- 3.5.2 As both trenches were machined together in a 'T' shaped arrangement to form in effect one trench, a single series of context numbers was issued on site beginning at 100 for use in Trenches 1 and 2. A description of the finds is also given, followed by a discussion and interpretation of the results.

4 RESULTS: GENERAL

4.1 Soils and ground conditions

4.1.1 The underlying geology of the site is of Lower Chalk, which is overlain by Icknield Loam. Generally the site was well drained, although heavy rain at the time of the evaluation produced some localised puddling and generally made excavation more difficult.

4.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits

4.2.1 Trench 1 revealed a ditch and four pits. Trench 2 contained a small amount of obviously modern disturbance but no archaeological features.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Descriptions

Natural Deposits

- 5.1.1 The underlying natural (103) contained frequent natural flints and occasional silt pockets. All of the revealed features were cut from this level.
- 5.1.2 The earliest feature was a patchy shallow spread of material (120) within the eastern corner of the trench. The spread was of poorly defined shape and consisted of mottled pinkish brown and pale yellowish brown silts. This deposit was not excavated and may represent a localised variation in the natural (Fig.3).

Medieval feature

- 5.1.3 A single medieval feature (118) was observed at the east end of Trench 1. This feature was only partially revealed within the trench and as such measured at least 0.32 m deep by 0.35 m wide and 2.03 m long. It had straight sloping sides and a flat base. Its was filled by a orange brown silty sand (119) that contained 12 sherds of medieval pottery dated after 1450 (see 5.2 below) and probably of 15th century date. The feature is probably a pit or possibly a part of a ditch.

Post-medieval Boundary Ditch

- 5.1.4 The silty spread (120) was cut by a ditch aligned approximately ESE-WNW. The ditch (contexts 109 = 113 = 116,) was sectioned where it was seen to have relationships with three later pit features (Fig. 3). The ditch measured up to 1.3 m wide by 0.45 m deep and had straight 45° angled sides and a broad flat base. It was filled by pale brown to greyish brown silty clay (108 = 112 = 115).
- 5.1.5 Pottery of late 17th century date was recovered from fill 108, together with roof tile, brick fragments and glass, occasional animal bone and clay pipe stem, indicating a post-medieval date for the feature.

Post-medieval pit features

- 5.1.6 Two pits (107, 111) were cut through the fill of the ditch (Fig.4), while a third pit feature (114) adjacent to the ditch is likely to have been open at the same time as the ditch and is therefore contemporary with it.

- 5.1.7 Pit 107 cut fill 108 of the ditch. The pit was 0.55 m deep and 2.2 m in diameter. The basal fill (106) was a brown clay silt containing sherds of late 17th century pottery. This was overlain by a brown silty clay (105) that exhibited greenish-grey mottles indicative of cess material. The final pit fill (104) was a dark brown silt loam containing sherds of early 18th century pottery, an illegible copper alloy coin and a possible lead stylus (see 5.2 below).
- 5.1.8 Pit 111 cut the fill (112) of ditch 113. The pit was 0.25 m deep and 2.5 m in diameter with shallow sides sloping to a flat base. The pit fill comprised a light grey-brown silty clay (110) that produced a sherd of Roman pottery, clearly residual, and clay pipe fragments.
- 5.1.9 The interpretation of a further pit feature (114) was hindered by the similarity of the soils filling the feature and the adjacent ditch (116). No definite relationship could be established between the two features from observation of the section, and it is likely that the two features were open at the same time, or that the ditch was wider at this point for some reason. Pit 114 was identified beyond the south and north edges of ditch 116 and had a vertical south edge and a shallow north edge. The feature measured 1.3 m in width and was 0.22 m deep.
- 5.1.10 The bulk fill of the feature (115) proved impossible to differentiate from the soil filling the ditch; late 17th century pottery was recovered from 115. Overlying 115 was a deposit of yellow-brown silty clay (117). This material was markedly different to the underlying soils suggesting that it was re-deposited material filling in the hollow of the underlying ditch and pit. Two sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from the deposit, which were clearly residual by the time the deposit was formed, as it overlay material containing post-medieval pottery.

Soil layers

- 5.1.11 Two separate soil layers (101 and 102) overlay the revealed features (Fig. 4). The lower of these layers (102) was only observed at the north end of Trench 1. It consisted of a 0.3 m thick layer of pale brown silty clay that contained a noticeable band of roofing tiles at its lower interface, which is presumably from a nearby building demolition. Pottery of early 18th century date was recovered from this layer.
- 5.1.12 The upper soil (101 above 102) was similar grey-brown silty clay, although without such a noticeable banding of finds. It measured up to 0.2 m in thickness and appeared throughout both trenches. Layer 101 was covered by up to 0.2 m of recently cultivated dark brown silty loam topsoil (100).

5.2 Finds

Pottery by Duncan H Brown

- 5.2.1 An assemblage of 63 sherds, that totals 33 individual vessels, was recovered from eight contexts. The material was sorted by context, ware type, vessel type, sherd type and decorative style, and quantified by rim percent, weight in grams, sherd count and maximum vessel count. Rim diameter, glaze colour and glaze distribution has also been recorded where appropriate. Recording took place in January 2003. Each

these finds need not be regarded as rarities. There is therefore nothing unusual in this assemblage to indicate any particular social or economic status for this site.

Animal Bone by Bethan Charles

- 5.2.11 A total of 15 fragments (360g) of bone were recovered. The bone was recovered from contexts 104, 105, 106, 108, 110 and 117. Over half of the material was identified to species and included six fragments of cattle bone, a fragment of a pig skull and a horse tooth. Most of the cattle bone had butchery marks and is likely to be domestic refuse. The remaining unidentified bone consisted of rib and vertebrae fragments thought to belong to cattle and sheep. The small quantity of bone does not provide much information regarding the diet and economy of the site, however it is notable that preservation of the bone is good.

Clay pipe by Leigh Allen

- 5.2.12 A total of fourteen clay pipe fragments was recovered. Thirteen of these are pipe stem fragments with diameters in the range of 6-8 mm; the remaining piece is a plain undiagnostic bowl fragment.

Context 106: 7 pipe stem fragments

Context 108: 1 pipe stem and 1 bowl fragment

Context 110: 2 pipe stem fragments

Context 117: 3 pipe stem fragments

- 5.2.13 All of the pieces are typical of types in use in the 17th and 18th centuries. The bowl fragment exhibited no distinguishing decoration and is a plain piece.

Ceramic Building Materials by Leigh Allen

- 5.2.14 A total of 48 fragments of ceramic building material were recovered. The majority of the assemblage comprises fragments of peg tile with the occasional abraded fragment of brick. There are no complete examples but there is a peg tile with a measurable width. The material is all of post-medieval date.

Context	Tile type	No. Fragments	Width	Thickness	Perforation diameter
102	Brick frag.	1		-	
102	Brick frag.	1		40mm	
102	Misc frags	8			
102	Peg tile	Fragment with perforation		12mm	12mm
102	Peg tile	corner fragment with perforation		13	incomplete
102	Peg tile	5		13mm	
102	Peg tile	1		13mm	
102	Peg tile	2		14mm	
104	Brick frag.	1		60mm	
104	Brick frag.	1		38mm	
104	Brick frag.	1		37mm	
104	misc frag.	1			
104	Peg tile	1 corner frag with perforation		13mm	16mm

104	Peg tile	corner frag with perforation		13mm	15mm
104	Peg tile	upper half with 2 perforations	162mm	13mm	12mm
104	Peg tile	1		11mm	
104	Peg tile	1		11mm	
104	Peg tile	1		12mm	
104	Peg tile	1		13mm	
108	misc frag.	2			
108	Peg tile	2		13mm	
110	Misc frags	3			
110	Peg tile	fragment with 2 perforations		13mm	13mm
110	Plain tile	1		13mm	
112	Misc frag.	1			
112	Plain tile	1		15mm	
112	Peg tile	2		12mm	
112	Peg tile	1		13mm	
115	Peg tile	1		13mm	12

5.2.15 The majority of the peg tiles have a thickness of 11-13 mm and two perforations in the upper end. The near complete example has a measurable width of 162 mm. The perforations are in some cases quite poorly applied. An example from context 104 has been created by pushing a tool from the front face but has barely broken the surface at the back of the tile. None of the brick fragments are complete enough to comment on although the fabric in all cases appears light and friable.

Glass by Leigh Allen

5.2.16 A total of 18 fragments of bottle glass were recovered. The small assemblage comprises rim, body and base fragments from a number of post-medieval vessels.

Context 104 : 2 neck fragments with string rims
 Context 105: Complete base from a large heavy dark-green wine bottle
 Context 106: 1 body sherd
 Context 108: 9 body sherds and 3 fragments from 2 separate bottle bases

5.2.17 The base and rim fragments are all from large, heavy dark-green glass wine bottles of 'onion' or 'mallet' form dating to the 17th and 18th century.

Metal Objects by Leigh Allen

5.2.18 A total of four metal objects were recovered. The small assemblage comprises two iron objects - a strip and a nail - a copper alloy coin/disc and a lead point. The objects are in poor condition the coin is very badly corroded.

5.2.19 The possible copper alloy coin (SF 101) from context 104 has very little original metal remaining, there are no details visible on either face and it is possible that it is a plain disc or button.

5.2.20 The iron strip from context 117 is rectangular, broken at one end and with a perforation at the other end. The nail was recovered from context 108.

- 5.2.21 The lead object (SF 102) from context 106 has a rectangular section and tapers to a point, it is possible that it is a writing although it is rather short. An example of a writing lead of similar size was recovered from Winchester (Biddle and Brown 1990, 745-746, Fig.212, No.2316) where it is suggested that it may have been mounted in a wooden handle.

6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 6.1.1 All of the features revealed contained plentiful finds and formed a clear stratigraphic sequence. A small amount of modern disturbance was noted but this was readily identified within the overlying soil layers during the initial machining. There is a slight possibility that some of the finds were intrusive but some care was taken to ensure collected finds were well stratified within excavated contexts.

6.2 Overall interpretation

- 6.2.1 The single pit of medieval date aside, all of the revealed features appear to be post-medieval, with most finds dating to the 16th/ 17th century. Some early 18th century material was also recovered.
- 6.2.2 The east-west ditch probably represents a property boundary, possibly a former garden boundary, whilst the later pits appear to be simple rubbish pits. The presence of quantities of tile as well as fragments of brick indicates these were spread from near-by building demolition, although there was no direct evidence of buildings within the trenches.
- 6.2.3 The finds assemblage comprises domestic items, none of which suggest any particular high status for this site.
- 6.2.4 The excavated evidence appears to corroborate the documentary evidence for buildings on the site from at least 1620 (and arguably before if the medieval pottery recovered from pit 118 is taken to indicate occupation debris). Certainly by 1768 maps depict buildings on the site but by 1880 these appear to have gone; no evidence for Victorian or later occupation material was discovered. The extensive layer of tiles is suggestive of demolition debris from the buildings on the site.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trenches 1 & 2							
Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Findings	Date
100	Layer	Turf line	0.2			Pot, glass, bone, CBM	Post-med
101	Layer	Upper subsoil	0.35			Pot, CBM, Pipe stem	Post-med
102	Layer	Lower subsoil	0.3			Pot, CBM, Pipe, bone	Post-med
103	Layer	Weathered chalk					
104	Fill	Fill of 107	0.23			Pot, glass, bone, Pipe	Post-med
105	Fill	Fill of 107	0.35			Pot, glass, CBM	Post-med
106	Fill	Fill of 107	0.55			Pot, bone, glass, Pipe	Post-med
107	Cut	Rubbish pit	0.55	2.2	2.2		Post-med
108	Fill	Ditch fill	0.4			Pot, bone, CBM, Pipe	Post-med
109	Cut	Ditch	0.45	1.3			Post-med
110	Fill	Fill of 111	0.25			Pot, CBM, Pipe	Post-med
111	Cut	Pit	0.25	2.5	2.5		Post-med
112	Fill	Fill of 103	0.3				Post-med
113	Cut	Ditch	0.3	1.2			Post-med
114	Cut	Pit	0.36	1.3			Post-med
115	Fill	Fill of 114/ 116	0.36			Pot, bone, CBM, Pipe	Post-med
116	Cut	Ditch	0.36	0.6			Post-med
117	Fill	Fill of 114/ 116	0.2			Bone, glass, pipe stem, metal	Post-med
118	Cut	Pit or ditch	0.32	0.35+	2.03+		Post-med
119	Fill	Fill of 118	0.32			Pottery	Med
120	Layer	Patchy spread					Undated

APPENDIX 2 GAZETTEER OF KNOWN ARCHAEOLOGY

OA No.	Description	NMR/SMR No.
1	Possible site of a medieval defended site	SMR 2034
2	Medieval socketed armour piercing arrowhead. Found in 1949.	SMR 2374
3	Pit or occupation layer containing 12 th – 14 th century pottery. Found during a watching brief in 1984.	SMR 5379 UID 657096
4	Two unidentifiable bronze Roman coins. Found in 1965.	SMR 2487
5	Bronze Roman coin c. AD 100-150. Found in 1978	SMR 4375
6	c. 200 sherds of medieval pottery collected during gardening in 1978. Also a possible flint cobble layer with associated finds (Saxon and Medieval) identified in 1979.	SMR 4414 NMR 869767 UID 641701
7	47 medieval pottery sherds and a Jetton of Ed.III – Rich.II. Found in 1991.	SMR 4415
8	Bronze Roman coin AD 40-180. Found 1990.	SMR 0439 NMR 344148
9	Manor House – Wendover House. Elizabethan style. Formal garden, ornamental pond, park. Skeleton found in 1960 during construction work. Two Roman coins found nearby by metal-detector.	SMR 1528 UID 1353806
10	Watermill established by 1295, and abandoned in 1824.	SMR 4538 NMR 869086

		/ 869087
11	Canal and adjacent gasworks.	SMR 1569
12	Inhumation, no dating evidence, probably Romano-British or Saxon. Discovered by a home-owner while gardening and subsequently excavated.	SMR 5167 NMR 1193071
13	Site of probable medieval windmill.	SMR 4022
14	House platform near church.	SMR 2205
15	Possible motte, more likely a medieval House platform. Although site may all be upcast from pond excavation.	SMR 2205
16	Site of a medieval hospital and chapel. The site has now been re-developed.	SMR 2461 NMR 344163
17	The site of a post medieval windmill, later steam powered	
18	Alleged cross-ridge dyke, seen on an aerial photograph, the negative and print are now destroyed. The site however probably represents old chalk workings and tracks.	NMR 344139
19	Windmill. Tower mill for processing cereals. Built between 1796 and 1804.	SMR 4019 NMR 497541
20	Part of a Neolithic grey flint blade with utilised edges. Found 1964.	SMR 0960

APPENDIX 3 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

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OA 2002b *Land at Pound Street and South Street, Wendover, Buckinghamshire: Desktop Assessment, OA, July 2002*

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

APPENDIX 4 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: 4 South Street, Wendover, Buckinghamshire.

Site code: WESS 02

Grid reference: SU 8677 0770

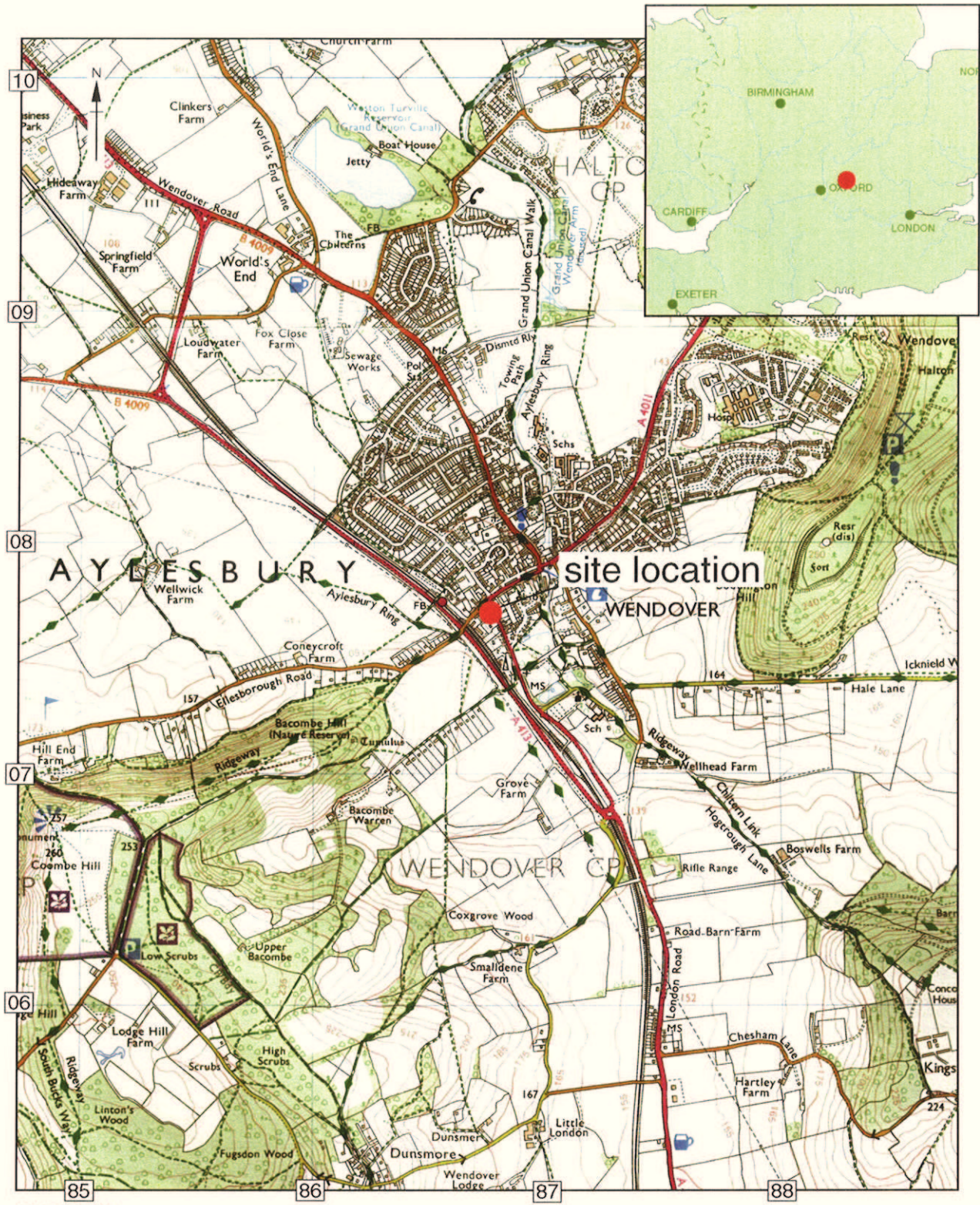
Type of evaluation: Two-trench evaluation in former gardens.

Date and duration of project: 3-4th December 2002.

Area of site: 0.05 hectares.

Summary of results: One medieval pit, a post-medieval late 17th/early 18th century plot boundary ditch and rubbish pits of post-medieval date were excavated, sealed beneath soil layers of 18th/19th century date.

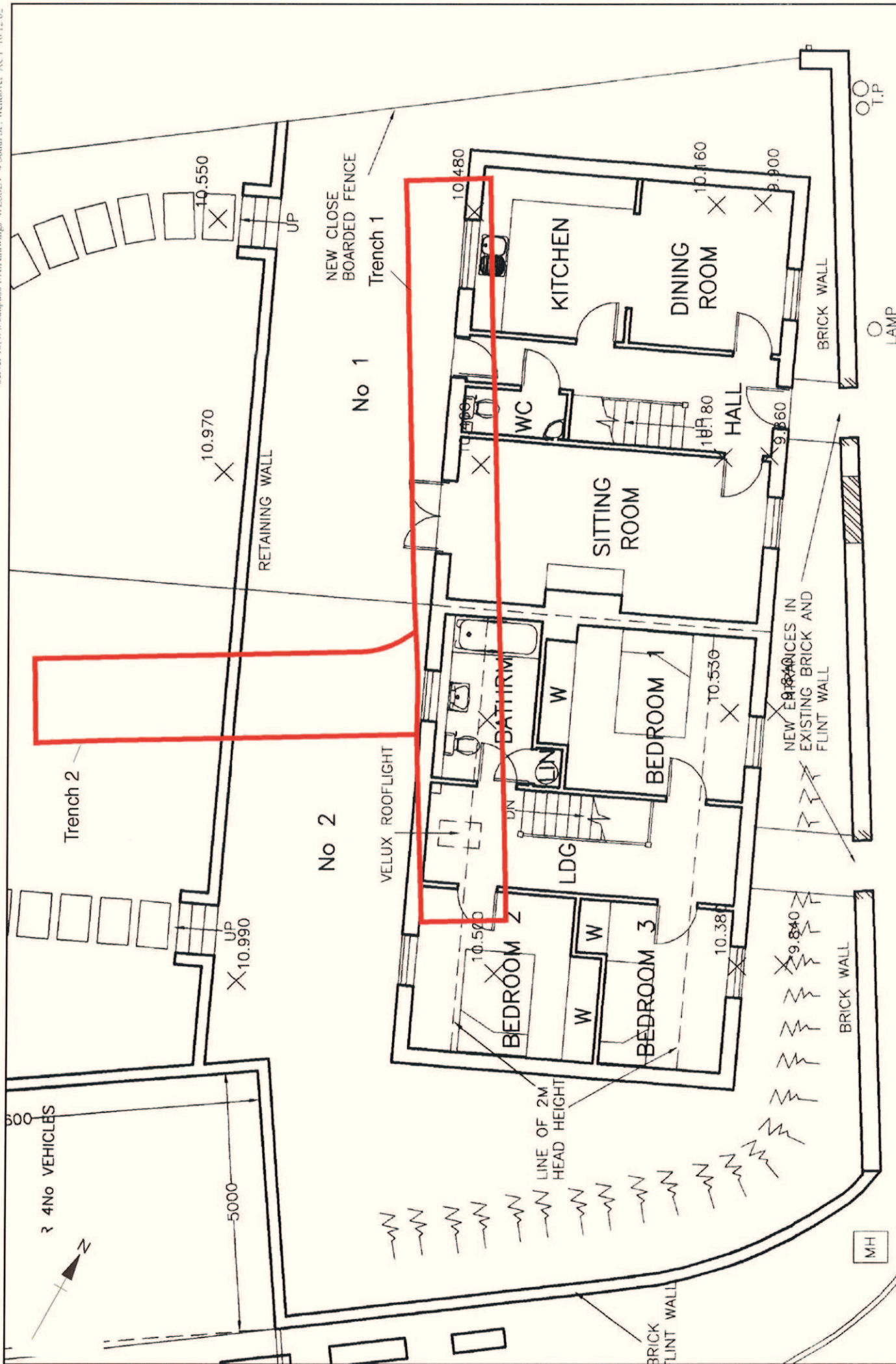
Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museums Service in due course, under the following accession number: AYBCM. 2002.130



Scale 1:25,000

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Figure 1: Site location



1:100

Figure 2: Trench location plan



Plan 1

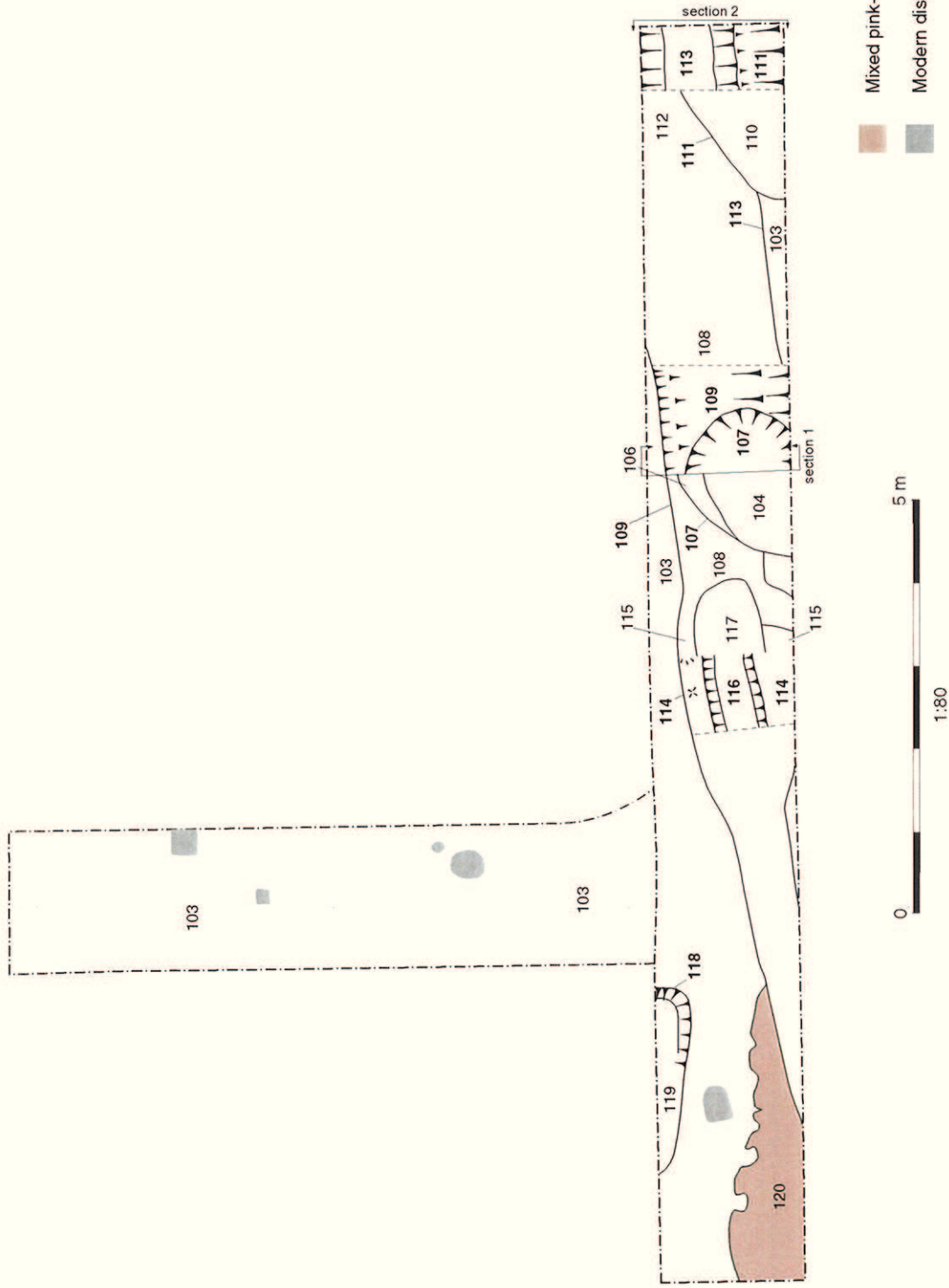
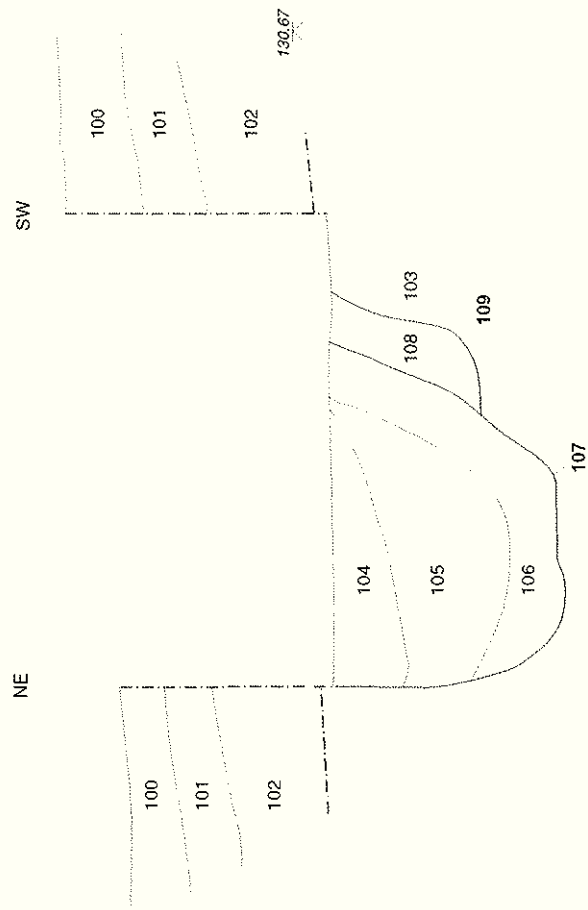


Figure 3: Trench Plan

Trench 1
Section 1



Trench 1
Section 2

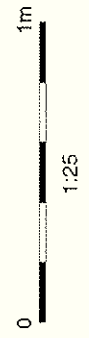
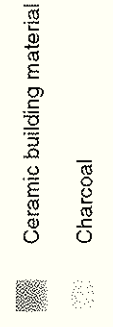
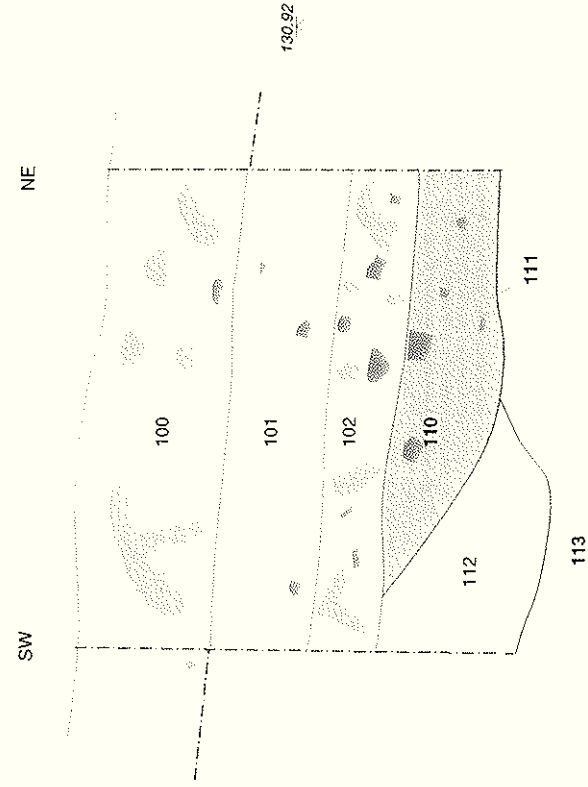


Figure 4: Sections 1 and 2



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