

St Dunstan's Church Cranford Park London Borough of Hillingdon



Archaeological Evaluation Report



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Issue	Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by	Signature
1	Brian Dean Project Officer	Louise Loe Head of Heritage Burials Dept	Dan Poore Head of Fieldwork	

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Janus House

Osney Mead

Oxford OX2 0ES

t: +44 (0) 1865 263800

e: oasouth@thehumanjourney.net

f: +44 (0) 1865 793496

w: oasouth.thehumanjourney.net

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St Dunstan's Church, Cranford Park

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Written by Brian Dean

and illustrated by Markus Dylewski

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Summary

On 27th July 2012 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Ian Angus of Carden and Godfrey Architects to undertake a test pit excavation at St Dunstan's Church, Cranford Park, Middlesex, as part of proposed building alterations.

The work was undertaken in order to meet the requirements of the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor. The scope of work was established following discussions with Geoffrey Hunter, Head of Care of Churches, and Robert Whytehead (in his capacity as Diocesan Archaeological Advisor for London). All work was carried out in accordance with local and national planning policies (specifically NPPF Section 12 and local policies) and with the Written Scheme of Investigation (OA 2012).

The test pit was located within an overgrown area to the west of the main churchyard. No burial deposits or any other form of archaeological activity was observed during the excavation.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 The site under investigation lay within the grounds of St Dunstan's Church, Cranford Park in the London Borough of Hillingdon centred on National Grid Reference TQ 10118 78178. St Dunstan's church is located immediately south of the M4 motorway and west of the A312. It is bordered by the access road to the south with open agricultural land beyond that. To the west, north and east the area is woodland.
- 1.1.2 The scope of work was to assess the deposits present within the area of a proposed soak-away.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies in an area of two different geologies. There may be some surviving upper deposits of brickearth overlying drift geology deposits. To the north, the drift geology is of the Taplow Gravel Formation, formed up to 2 million years ago during the Pleistocene Period. To the south, it consists of the Langley Silt Member (wind blown clays and silts). Both of these overlie the solid geology of the London Clay Formation (clay, silt and sand), formed approximately 34 to 55 million years ago in the Palaeogene period (British Geological Survey; <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html>)

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The following background has been prepared with reference to Cherry and Pevsner (1991), St Dunstan's church guides (1938 and undated) and listed building (2012) and RCHME (1937) entries.
- 1.3.2 The parish of Cranford is first mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 and a priest is mentioned in association with it, which suggests a church existed. Originally the church was dedicated to St John the Baptist, with Cranford being referred to as 'Cranford St John'. During the medieval period the church was re-dedicated to St Dunstan (the 10th century Abbot of Glastonbury). There are records of the Advowson (the right in English law of a patron to present, to the Diocesan Bishop, a nominee for appointment to a vacant ecclesiastical benefice or church living). In 1217 This was held by Roger of Cranford, by 1231 the advowson was held by John and Aveline.
- 1.3.3 By 1287 the Knights Templars acquired the presentation, with some land, from Simon and Euphemia Weyf of Acton (Reynolds 1962). This association ceased when the Knight's Templar were abolished (1308) and changed to the Knight's Hospitallers. The first recorded rector was Walter de Sutton in 1310.
- 1.3.4 There are records of Bishop Roger of Lichfield presenting a priest to the living in 1363. Records also show that by 1365 the Abbot and Convent of Thame (near Oxford) were in possession of the Advowson. With the dissolution of Religious Houses by Henry VIII, the Cranford Park Estate and Advowson were given by the King to Henry, Lord Windsor, and it remained within the family until 1604. In 1604 the estate was purchased by Sir Roger Aston, one of King James' ministers. In 1618 the manor was purchased by Elizabeth Lady Berkeley, in whose estate it has remained to the present day. This is with the exception of the adjacent mansion which was demolished in 1939, leaving only the 18th century stables to the west of the church.



- 1.3.5 St Dunstan's Church is a Grade II* Listed Building, English Heritage listed Building No. 202944; first listed in 1949 (<http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/en-202944-church-of-st-dunstan-hayes>).
- 1.3.6 The listed building entry describes the church as being probably 13th century with a 15th century tower, an early 18th nave and 20th century vestry. The nave and chancel are separate (both under pitched roofs), with the tower to the west and the modern vestry to the north-west. There are four vaults under the church, including a 17th century one in the chancel to the Berkeley family, one in the nave dating to 1780 to the Gregory family and two others near the church doors (Reynolds 1962).
- 1.3.7 While the exterior of St Dunstan's is relatively modest in design and scale, the interior is of particular interest because there is a medieval wall painting of early 14th century and 15th century date, a variety of quality fixtures and fittings and an impressive collection of monuments, dating from the early 17th century onwards.
- 1.3.8 A blocked lancet in the chancel is probably 13th century, and possibly also the chancel. Although the majority of the tower (excluding the belfry level) dates to the 15th century, restoration works, undertaken in 2006, determined that the ceiling is medieval. Elements dating to the 16th and 17th centuries include a priest's doorway in the north-east corner of the chancel, which was unblocked and made into a window during early 20th century restorations (Church of St Dunstan 1938) and the monuments in the chancel. The monuments include one in marble to Elizabeth, Lady Berkeley (died 1636) and one to the Aston family by William Cure, which was erected by 1613, (Reynolds 1962) and shows the figures of Sir Roger Aston, his two wives, four daughters, and infant son. Also in the chancel are tablets to Thomas Fuller (died 1661) and Sir Charles Scarborough (died 1693). On the south wall are two large matching tablets erected c. 1700 to the 8th Lord Berkeley (died 1658) and the 1st earl (died 1698).
- 1.3.9 Eighteenth century elements of the church include brick buttresses, which were probably added before the 18th century. The belfry, also in brick, was added in 1716. The nave, also perhaps of the 15th century, was destroyed by fire in 1710, which also damaged the tower and the chancel arch. The nave was rebuilt in brick by Elizabeth, Countess Dowager of Berkeley, in 1716. It comprises two bays and has round-headed windows and a south doorway with stone quoins, voussoirs and cornice. The marble font was given to the church in 1716, also by Lady Berkeley.
- 1.3.10 In 1895 the church was extensively restored by J L Pearson. The tie-beam roof on the nave was renewed, the gallery was removed, and the vestry was added against the north wall of the tower (Church of St Dunstan 1938). According to parish records the tower was rebuilt in 1940.
- 1.3.11 In 1936-7 there were further extensive restorations (by Martin Travers) during which the church was entirely closed. The present gallery was erected, the chancel was restored, and the remains of a 15th-century fresco was discovered over the east window. The vestry to the north-west is a 1950s addition, probably replacing a late 19th century one. The church was still lit by gaslight in 1958. The chancel ceiling was restored in 2006 and was found to be of medieval date.
- 1.3.12 In terms of documents and other artefacts associated with St Dunstan's Church there are baptism and marriage registers dating from 1564. The burial register dates from 1566. The ancient plate consists of a chalice and paten (1639), a flagon (1649), and two patens (1650 and 1698), (RCHME 1937,12).



2 EVALUATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The aims and objectives of the archaeological investigation were:

- To identify if any graves or tombs may be shown to lie within the area of the proposed soak-away, within the limitations of the test pit
- To explore the presence, depth and concentration of burials in this area
- To establish the degree of likely disturbance to burials, or any other archaeological deposit, caused by the proposed development
- To inform all parties of the results
- To consider any appropriate mitigation strategies

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 A summary of OA's general approach to excavation and recording can be found in Appendix A of the Written Scheme of Investigation (OA 2012). Standard methodologies for Geomatics and Survey, Environmental evidence, Artefactual evidence and Burials can also be found in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Appendices B, C, D and E respectively).

2.3 Site specific methodology

2.3.1 Site specific methodologies in relation to the test pit were as follows:

- The test pit location was agreed and set out by the relevant parties and access granted
- The test pit measured 1m x 1.5m and was manually excavated
- The test pit was excavated to a maximum depth of 1m
- The excavated material was stored in a spoil heap adjacent to the test pit
- The completed test pit was fenced off using orange hazard fencing so as to create a visual barrier
- The test pit was not backfilled

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

3.1.1 The results of the test pit investigation are detailed below. This includes a comprehensive description of all deposits encountered, followed by a discussion of the significance of said deposits. The different deposits are also listed in tabular form in Appendix A.

3.2 General soils and ground conditions

3.2.1 The test pit was located within an area of rough ground to the west of the main churchyard. The area was overgrown with nettles and other undergrowth flora, as well as marked root activity from adjacent shrubs and trees. The area was well drained.



- 3.2.2 A top soil deposit (100) was observed comprising a moderately firm, dark grey brown, sandy silt. This was present to a depth of 0.2m and contained occasional mixed rubble and flint. The deposit clearly extended beyond the limits of the test pit.
- 3.2.3 Immediately underlying the top soil was a deposit of made ground (101), which was 0.46m thick and extended beyond the limit of the test pit. This comprised a firm, mid brown grey sandy silt. It contained a high percentage of mixed rubble (including brick, stone and modern domestic waste) and flint. A modern drain was encountered in this deposit, lying on the east side of the test pit and running NW-SE.
- 3.2.4 The lowest deposit encountered was a second layer of made ground (102). This comprised a firm, mid yellow brown, silty sand with frequent rubble inclusions. This was excavated to a maximum thickness of 0.34m and extended beyond the limits of the test pit.

3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits

- 3.3.1 No archaeological deposits were observed during the excavation of the test pit.

3.4 Finds summary

- 3.4.1 No artefactual evidence or ecofactual evidence was recovered from the excavation.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 4.1.1 The excavation of the test pit provided reliable evidence for the deposits present in the area under investigation. It allowed a clear illustration of the deposits that would be encountered during the installation of the soak-away. The test pit did not, however, illustrate the typical graveyard deposits which would apply elsewhere in the churchyard.

4.2 Evaluation objectives and results

- 4.2.1 The primary aim of the excavation was to identify the presence of burial deposits within the area of the proposed soak-away. This aim was met and the results show that in this proposed area no burial deposits were identified.

4.3 Interpretation

- 4.3.1 The results obtained from the test pit excavation reveal a lack of burial activity in this area of the churchyard. This may be a result of previous disturbance and/or removal of burial deposits in this area. As the current ground level is broadly equal to that of the main churchyard it may be inferred that the ground in the area of the test pit was previously reduced and then filled by the extant deposits. The volume of rubble and waste (from brick fragments to plastics) supports this interpretation and also suggests a modern date for the impact.
- 4.3.2 The underlying geology was not attained at any point during the excavation of the test pit, hence it is unclear how the level of impact relates to the deposits elsewhere within the churchyard.



4.4 Significance

- 4.4.1 The results are significant in as much as they show a high level of impact from previous activity on the site. This must be tempered with the fact that the results can only be viewed in relation to this specific area of the churchyard.
- 4.4.2 Previous excavations in other churchyards illustrate the probable depths of graves in both medieval and post-medieval churchyards. At the medieval church of All Saints, Laleham, Surrey the highest burials were between 0.78m and 0.81m (OA 2008a). Post-medieval burials at St Nicholas's Church, Chadlington, Oxon (OA 2008b) were found to be between 0.44m and 0.66m deep whilst at St Mary's Church, Longworth, Oxon were between 0.8m and 1.5m deep (OA 2007a). However at St Nicholas's Church, Forest Hill, Oxon the highest burials were found at between 0.2m and 0.3m below ground level (OA 2007b).
- 4.4.3 These findings suggest a relatively broad range for the minimum depth of burial deposits. As such, if the ground adjacent to the area of the soak-away is subject to intrusive works or ground reduction there remains a high probability that graves or funerary structures will be encountered - even at a minimal depth.
- 4.4.4 Despite the significant depth of deposits in the area of the test pit no burials or funerary structures were observed here. Further work which will be necessary for the installation of services linking from the vestry to the soak-away may however result in the discovery of burials and as such may require archaeological supervision during the intrusive phase of these works.

**APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY**

Test Pit 1						
General description				Orientation		E-W
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of top soil and made ground deposits. No underlying geology was observed within the maximum limits of the excavation.				Avg. depth (m)		1
				Width (m)		1
				Length (m)		1.5
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
100	Layer	-	0.2	Topsoil	-	-
101	Layer	-	0.46	Made ground deposit	-	-
102	Layer	-	0.34	Made ground deposit	-	-



APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

- Cherry B and Pevsner N 1991 *The Buildings of England: London 3, North-West*, 311-2.
- Church of St Dunstan (Cranford) 1938 *History of the Parish and Church of St Dunstan*, London
- OA 2007a *St Mary's Church, Longworth, Oxfordshire. Archaeological Watching Brief Report.*
- OA 2007b *St. Nicholas' Church, Forest Hill, Oxfordshire. Archaeological Watching Brief Report.*
- OA 2008a *All Saints' Church, Laleham, Surrey. Archaeological Evaluation Report.*
- OA 2008b *St Nicholas' Church, Chadlington, Oxfordshire. Archaeological Watching Brief Report.*
- OA 2012 *St Dunstan's Church, Cranford Park, London Borough of Hillingdon. Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation.*
- RCHME 1937 *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Middlesex*, HMSO.
- Reynolds S 1962 *A History of the County of Middlesex: Volume 3: Shepperton, Staines, Stanwell, Sunbury, Teddington, Heston and Isleworth, Twickenham, Cowley, Cranford, West Drayton, Greenford, Hanwell, Harefield and Harlington.*
- Undated A Brief history of St Dunstan, Cranford Park www.saintdunstan.org.uk
- Listed Building Entry 2012 <http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/en-202944-church-of-st-dunstan-hayes>



APPENDIX C. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: St Dunstan's Church, Cranford Park

Site code: SDN 12

Grid reference: TQ 510118 178178

Type: Evaluation/Test Pit

Date and duration: 27/7/2012; one day

Area of site: 1m x 1.5m

Summary of results: On 27th July 2012 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Ian Angus of Carden and Godfrey Architects to undertake a test pit excavation at St Dunstan's Church, Cranford Park, Middlesex as part of the proposed building extension.

The work was undertaken in order to meet the requirements of the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor. The scope of work was established following discussions with Geoffrey Hunter, Head of Care of Churches, and Robert Whitehead (in his capacity as Diocesan Archaeological Advisor for London). All work was carried out in accordance with local and national planning policies (specifically NPPF Section 12 and local policies) and with the Written Scheme of Investigation (OA 2012).

The test pit was located within an overgrown area to the west of the main churchyard. No burial deposits or any other form of archaeological activity was observed during the excavation.

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



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Figure 1: Site location

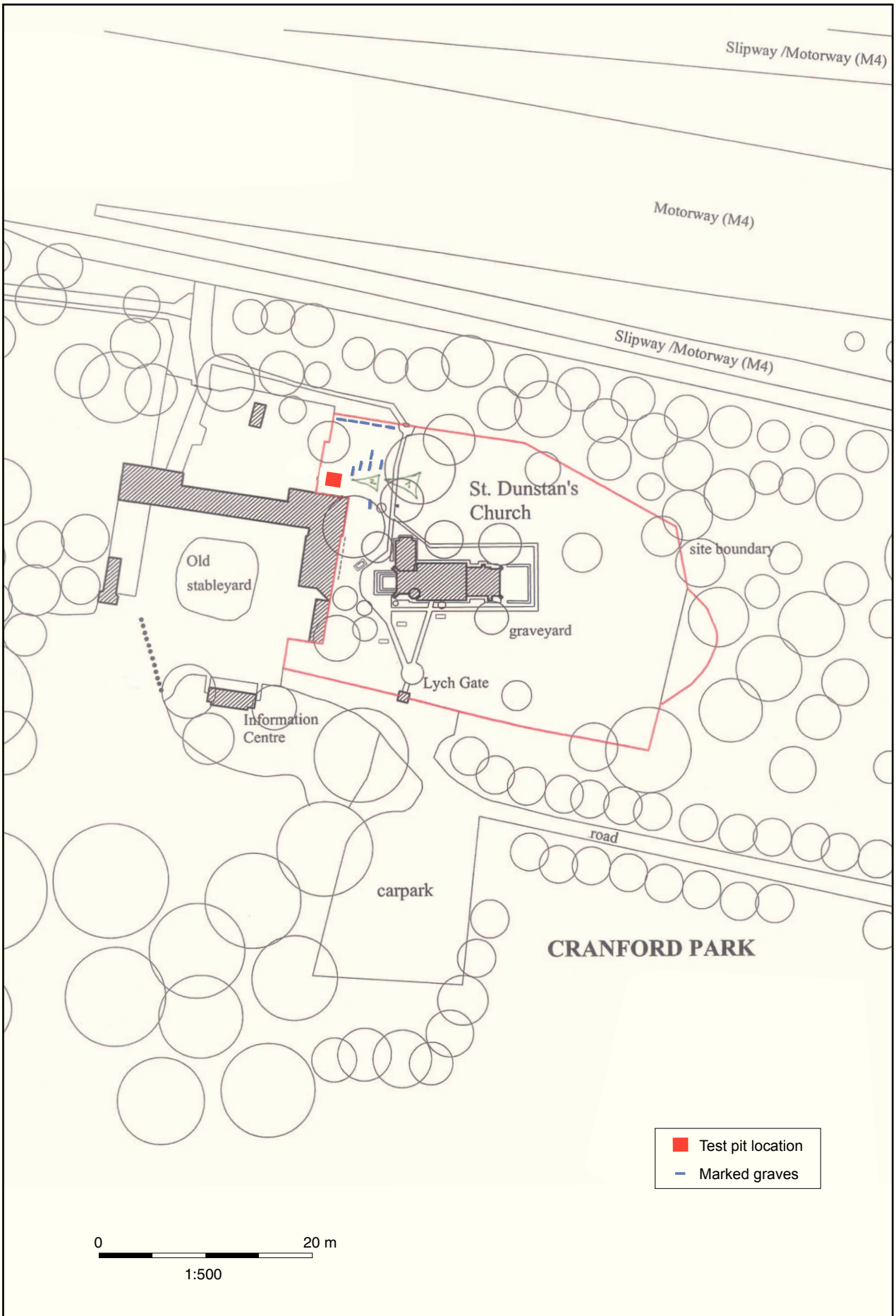


Figure 2: Test pit location (after Carden & Godfrey Architects)

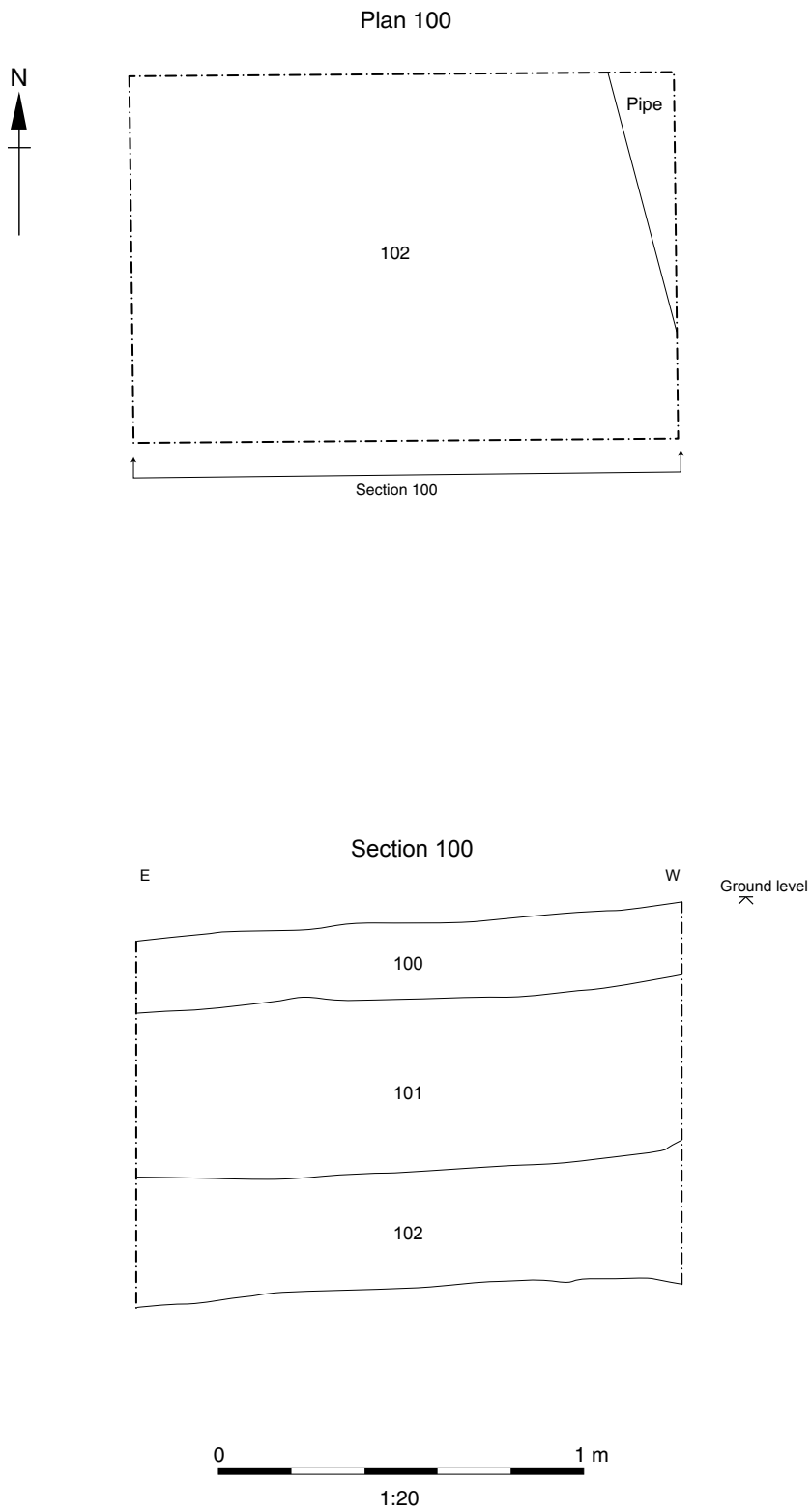


Figure 3: Plan and section of test pit



**Head Office/Registered Office/
OA South**

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES

t: +44 (0) 1865 263 800
f: +44 (0) 1865 793 496
e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk
w: <http://thehumanjourney.net>

OA North

Mill 3
Moor Lane
Lancaster LA1 1GF

t: +44 (0) 1524 541 000
f: +44 (0) 1524 848 606
e: [oanorth@thehumanjourney.net](mailto: oanorth@thehumanjourney.net)
w: <http://thehumanjourney.net>

OA East

15 Trafalgar Way
Bar Hill
Cambridgeshire
CB23 8SQ

t: +44 (0) 1223 850 500
f: +44 (0) 1223 850 599
e: [oaeast@thehumanjourney.net](mailto: oaeast@thehumanjourney.net)
w: <http://thehumanjourney.net>



Director: David Jennings, BA MIFA FSA

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