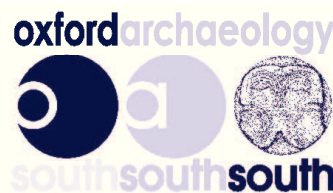


Cable Trenching, Datchet Road to Chapter Mews, Windsor, Berkshire



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



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Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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Summary

In July 2012 Oxford Archaeology undertook a watching brief during the upgrading of electricity cables between Datchet Road and Chapter Mews in Windsor, Berkshire. The excavations revealed the truncated remnants of a wall possibly originating from the 17th or 18th century overlain by a soil deposit containing tile fragments ranging in likely production date from the 15th-19th centuries. The remainder of the observed deposit sequence comprised layers of made ground and hard landscaping associated with the present day Chapter Mews development.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 As part of their commitment to maintaining the electrical supply and service, SSE undertook the replacement and refurbishment of the low voltage power cables from Datchet Road and along Chapter Mews, Windsor, Berkshire. The scheme required the replacement of cable within existing service trenches combined with the installation of new cables and trenches to adequately maintain the supply to all of the properties.
- 1.1.2 Prior to the works, discussions between SSE and Fiona MacDonald of Berkshire Archaeology (BA) identified that the cable trench to the south of Number 20 Chapter Mews would coincide with an area of archaeological potential. SSE subsequently commissioned Oxford Archaeology (OA) to undertake the archaeological works. As part of the project planning OA issued a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) to Fiona MacDonald detailing how OA would implement the requirement for the watching brief (OA 2012). This was approved prior to the start of the fieldwork which was completed between 13th-27th July 2012.

1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site is located on the southern edge of the Thames flood plain with the rise up towards Windsor Castle situated immediately to the south and south-east. Chapter Mews rises from 21m aOD at its junction with Datchet Road to 25m aOD at its southern end. The cable trench area is centred upon national grid reference SU 9683 7715.
- 1.2.2 Chapter Mews itself is constructed on two levels with an approximate 3.5m difference in height. The lower level is accessed from Datchet Road and comprises numbers 7-10 and numbers 19-23. The higher level is accessed from Thames Street and includes numbers 1-6 and 11-18. The two levels are separated by a terrace wall and landscaping linked by a flight of steps.
- 1.2.3 The bedrock geology of the area is Seaford chalk formation and Newhaven chalk formation. Superficial geology consists of Shepperton gravels (British Geological Survey <http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer>).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background presented here is a repeat of that prepared for the WSI. This was compiled using relevant information taken from the Victoria County History of Berkshire together with other public sources.
- 1.3.2 There is a notable lack of documentary sources for the town of Windsor prior to the Norman Conquest. Analysis of the Domesday Book indicates that the area of the town



of Windsor had a small population, with an average of 2.5 people and only 0.5-1 plough team per square mile (Astill 2002. 2-3). In c 1070, William I constructed Windsor Castle and by 1110 Henry I had shifted the royal residence from Old Windsor Manor to the castle. The hub of the town was the market square with its parish church, established in 1184 located to the south of the castle. The offshoots of the central area of the town spread out from the castle hill toward lower ground (Astill 2002. 4-5). In the reign of Henry I the town was granted by Empress Matilda to Reading Abbey, in whose keeping it remained until the dissolution (Ditchfield & Page 1923. 66).

- 1.3.3 Edward I made Windsor a Free Borough and granted the town its first Charter in 1276 at which time New Windsor was the county town of Berkshire. In 1314 this distinction was transferred to Reading as Windsor's location at the far eastern end of the county was considered too inconvenient.
- 1.3.4 The town around the Castle has remained small for a number of centuries, development of land to the east and south being prevented by the surrounding Crown land that comprises the Home Park and Windsor Great Park. The land to the north was similarly unavailable for expansion and land alongside the river, regularly flooded and would not have been appropriate for the construction of homes or factories. This led to any development spreading towards the west following the line of Peascod Street.
- 1.3.5 In Norden's survey of the Honor of Windsor, dated 1607, the immediate area is shown as terraced housing with large yards to their rear clustered around the rising ground around the base of the castle, a similar picture is depicted in Hollar's map of 1672.
- 1.3.6 In the late 1840s there was a major reorganisation of the lands around the castle to the east, where previously enclosed areas were opened up to become The Home Park, while to the south of the new Datchet Road and Victoria Bridge, public access was no longer possible.
- 1.3.7 In 1892 St Georges Choristers school moved to the foot of the castle motte, to its present site in the Travers' College adjoining the Chapter garden, immediately east of Chapter Mews, which was formerly home to the Naval Knights of Windsor.

Previous Archaeological Work

- 1.3.8 Archaeological investigations have been undertaken at both the Swan Hotel and the Adam and Eve Public House in Thames Street located approximately 100m to the west. Both the investigations showed evidence for activity and occupation from the 11th -13th centuries until present.
- 1.3.9 In 2002 an evaluation was undertaken at 11-12 Chapter Mews which recorded an undated linear feature. No evidence of the medieval Canon's Cemetery which had been believed to be on the site was observed.



2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The aims of the watching brief were to:

- (i) record any archaeological deposits encountered during the course of ground intrusions,
- (ii) seek to establish the extent, nature and date of any archaeological deposits encountered within the scope of the ground intrusion,
- (iii) secure the analysis, conservation and long-term storage of any artefactual/ecofactual material recovered from the site,
- (iv) disseminate results through the production of a grey literature report.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 The watching brief was conducted as a series of site visits during the cable trench excavations which had the potential to impact upon archaeological deposits. These comprised the re-excavation of existing cable trenches and the excavation of new trenches. All the trenches were excavated using a machine fitted with a 0.5m wide toothless bucket.

2.2.2 Where the work was monitored this was completed under close archaeological supervision with the deposits carefully removed to reveal the surface of the underlying geology or any potential archaeological deposits until the required installation depth was reached.

2.2.3 All spoil generated by the machine excavations was examined for the presence of archaeological artefacts.

2.2.4 All features and deposits were issued with unique context numbers, and context recording was in accordance with established OA practices. Bulk finds were collected by context. Black-and-white negative photographs and a digital photographic record was maintained of the excavated trenches, general settings and archaeological sections.

2.2.5 A site plan showing the location of the trenching and the positions of any recorded sections or features was maintained (Fig. 2). Section drawings of features and sample sections of trenches were drawn at a scale of 1:20 (Fig. 3).



3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 The majority of the trenching from Datchet Road to the centre of Chapter Mews was to be excavated within an existing electricity supply trench (Fig. 2). Because of this previous disturbance this length of trenching had a very low archaeological potential and was not closely monitored. Other lengths of trenching, specifically the east-west branches, were to be excavated in deposits that were suspected to be previously undisturbed and these were excavated under direct archaeological supervision.
- 3.1.2 Each length of trenching is described separately below followed by an overall discussion and interpretation. General descriptions are given with dimension details in the Appendix A context inventory.

Trenching between Datchet Road and the centre of Chapter Mews

- 3.1.3 Although this trench was not closely monitored, sections of it were open during the later works and the observations were recorded. Within these was exposed the existing power supply cable wholly within the backfills of a sequence of intercutting service trenches including the power supply, telephone, gas and foul water drains. No archaeologically significant deposits or features were observed or likely to have been impacted upon by the excavation of this part of the trench.

Trenching between numbers 7 and 20 Chapter Mews

- 3.1.4 This section of the cable trench was approximately 25m long and 0.5m wide by 0.7m deep. Part of this followed the line of a pavement serving flats 7-10 before continuing to the west and linking into the N-S alignment of trench up to Datchet Road (Figs 2 and 3, Sections 1-3).
- 3.1.5 The base of the trench exposed a layer of light greyish brown silty clay (13) at a depth of 0.35m below pavement level. This deposit produced a number of fragments of both brick and tile together with lime mortar and charcoal flecking. The brick and tile derived from a range of periods from the 15th-19th centuries. Above this was a layer of mixed yellow brown clayey silt and sand (12) which contained numerous fragments of modern brick along with lumps of cement mortar. Above this was sand (11) which formed a bedding layer for the existing concrete slab pavement (10).
- 3.1.6 Towards the junction of the trench with the N-S alignment of cable, the top three courses of a north-south aligned brick wall (17) were exposed (Section 3). This wall was constructed using a plain hand moulded red brick, measuring 0.22m x 0.10m x 0.065m in size, bonded with a lime mortar. These had been laid as a wall or foundation two bricks thick using English Stretcher bond. Overlying Wall 17 and exposed throughout the base of the trench elsewhere was a continuation of the layer of light greyish brown silty clay (13) similarly overlain by layer 12. Within the area of the access road layer 12 was covered by a compacted layer of flints and sub-angular pebbles within a yellowish brown sand matrix which also contained small fragments of modern brick (16). A sand bedding layer (15) had been laid directly above this forming a bed for the brick pavers (14) forming the surface of the existing access road.

Trenching fronting numbers 13-19 Chapter Mews

- 3.1.7 This trench ran alongside the steps joining the two levels of the Mews before turning westwards to run alongside the northern edge of the upper access road (Fig. 2).



Exposed within the base of this trench was a layer of light grey-brown clayey silt (19) (Fig. 3, Section 4). This contained both chalk and charcoal flecking together with fragments of modern brick. This was overlain by the topsoil of the existing flower bed (18).

3.2 Finds

3.2.1 Fragments of brick and tile were observed within layers 12, 13 and 19. The fragments observed within layers 12 and 19 were modern in date and their presence was recorded but they were not retained. The fragments observed within layer 13 displayed characteristics indicative of earlier manufacture and a representative sample was retained. A detailed report on these artefacts is presented in Appendix B. In summary the assemblage comprised roof tile and brick fragments deriving from a range of periods from the 15th-19th centuries.

3.2.2 No other dating evidence or artefacts were encountered.

3.3 Environmental remains

3.3.1 No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling were encountered during the course of the watching brief.



4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The north-south aligned brick wall 17, was constructed of bricks whose size suggests a 17th- to 18th-century date. No other associated walls were observed during the course of the watching brief and it is unclear if this formed part of a building or might possibly have been part of a boundary wall.
- 4.1.2 Layer 13 overlay wall 17 and contained fragments of building material debris ranging in date from between the 15th-19th centuries. The absence of other artefacts or occupation debris within layer 13 may indicate that this material was imported and used to raise or level the ground within this area.
- 4.1.3 Layer 12 produced a number of brick fragments identical to those used to construct the present day Chapter Mews flats. All layers above this were, therefore, associated with the current development and existing landscaping.
- 4.1.4 Other than wall 17 and the demolition material within layer 13, no finds or features pre-dating the 20th century were observed during the course of the watching brief. This lack of evidence of activity, particularly occupation debris, may indicate that the site has been truncated but it is more probable that the depth of excavation was insufficient to impact upon archaeologically significant deposits.



APPENDIX A. ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context	Type	Depth	Width	Length	Comments	Finds	Date
10	Surface	0.05m	1.8m	> 10m	Modern concrete slab pavement	-	C20th
11	Layer	0.07m	1.8m	> 10m	Sand bed for paving slabs	-	C20th
12	Layer	0.2m	> 2m	>10m	Construction debris associated with the present day flats	Brick, glazed sewer pipe, cement mortar	C20th
13	Layer	> 0.4m	> 2m	> 10m	Made ground, possible demolition debris	Brick, tile	C17th / C18th
14	Surface	0.1m	4m	> 20m	Access road surface built using brick pavers	Brick	C20th
15	Layer	0.12m	4m	> 20m	Sand bed for brick pavers	-	C20th
16	Layer	0.18m	>3m	> 4m	Modern made ground/ levelling layer	-	C20th
17	Wall	> 0.2m	0.22m	> 0.5m	Truncated base of a N-S aligned brick wall	Brick	C17th / C18th
18	Layer	0.25m	3m	23m	Present day flower bed	-	C21st
19	Layer	> 0.3m	3m	23m	Made ground/ landscaping	Brick	C20th



APPENDIX B. CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL

by John Cotter

B.1.1 The CBM assemblage comprised of 8 pieces weighing a total of 2224g collected from a single context (13). These were examined and spot-dated during the present assessment stage following standard Oxford Archaeology procedures and the data recorded on an Excel spreadsheet. A range of material dating from perhaps the 15th to the late 18th or 19th century is present.

Date and nature of the assemblage

B.1.2 The assemblage consisted of large fresh sherds of flat orange-red roof tile (mainly peg tile) and a single brick end. Most of the roof tile appears to be of fairly crude pre-modern appearance and probably dates to the 15th-17th century.

B.1.3 One softer red piece could be of 17th-century date. The smallest piece however (possibly a pantile?) is in a soft red post-medieval fabric and has a moulded or chamfered edge - both features suggesting a probable late 18th- to 19th-century date.

B.1.4 The brick end is in a soft orange-red fabric and is only 45mm. thick (x 114mm wide). At first sight this appears to be a Tudor brick but closer inspection shows it to be unusually neatly made and heavily worn on one of its main faces. These features suggest it is probably a floor brick and more likely to be of late 18th- or 19th-century date.

Context	Spot-date	No of pieces	Weight	Comments
13	15th-17th century/ Late 18th-19th century	7	1158g	Mostly large fresh fragments of an orange-red peg tile. 1x edge frag from L18/19C soft red roof tile or pantile with chamfered/moulded or trimmed edge. Large fresh frags prob late med & early post-med peg tile incl complete width soft red poss 17-18C tile (163mm wide x 14mm thick). Another complete width 155mm in overfired purplish-red fabric. This and others poss 15-17C? Incl corner frag with circular nailhole
13	Late 18th- 19th century	1	1066g	Complete end frag soft orange-red brick 45mm thick x 114mm wide. Initially looks Tudor but very neatly made & heavily worn on one main side suggesting a purpose made floor brick - probably L18/19C
Total		8	2224g	



APPENDIX C. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

Astill G.G. 2002

Windsor in the Context of Medieval Berkshire

*Ditchfield P.H. and
Page W. (eds) 1923*

Victoria County History: Berkshire, Volume 3

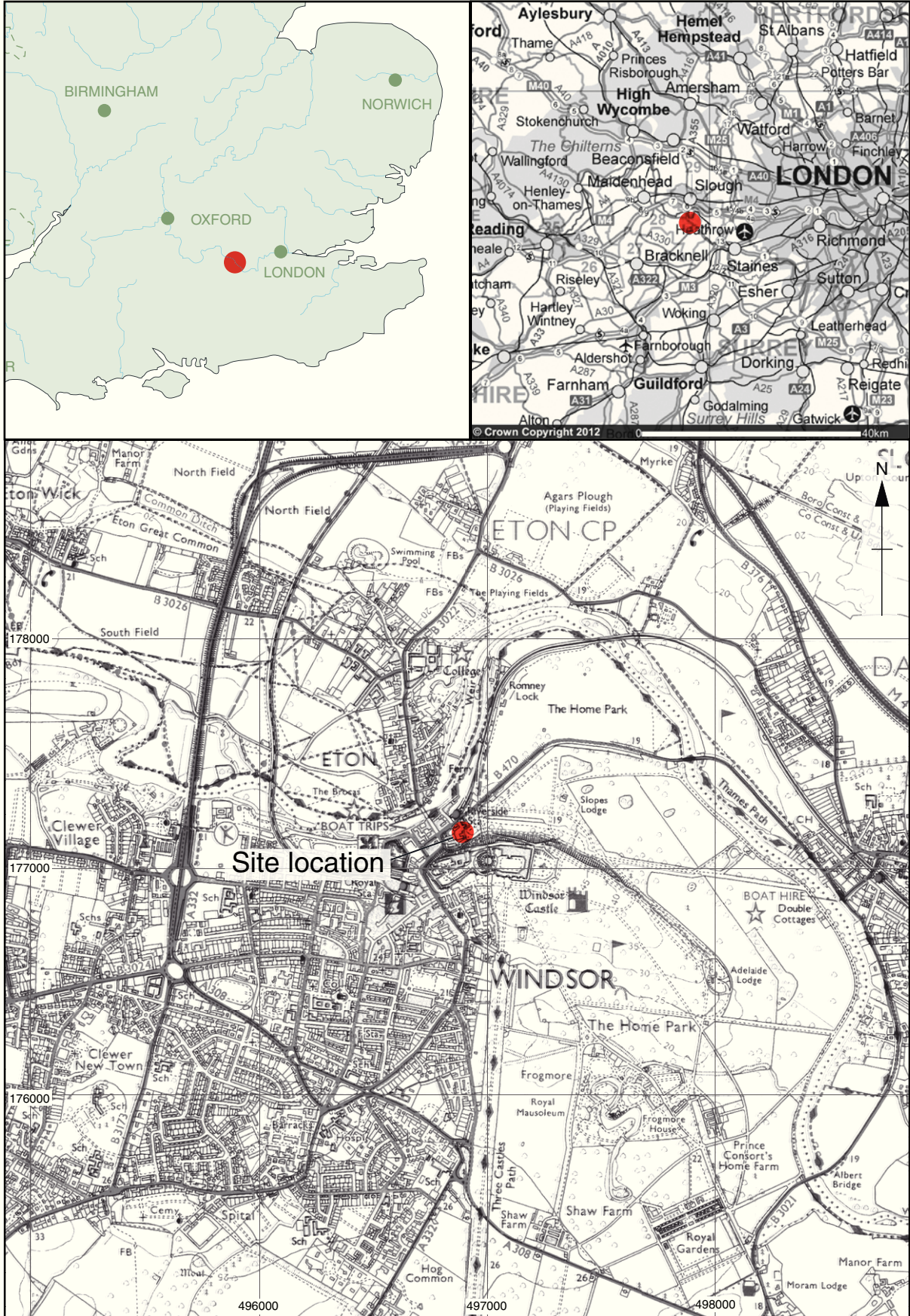
OA 2012

*Cable Trenching, Datchet Road to Chapter Mews, Windsor, Berkshire:
Written Scheme of Investigation. Unpublished document*



APPENDIX D. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name:	Cable Trenching, Datchet Road to Chapter Mews, Windsor, Berkshire
Site code:	WIDARD 12
Grid reference:	Centred at SU 9683 7715
Type of watching brief:	Machine excavation of electrical cable service trench
Date and duration of project:	Between 13th and 27th July 2012
Area of site:	Approximately 400m ²
Summary of results:	In July 2012 Oxford Archaeology undertook a watching brief during the upgrading of electricity cables between Datchet Road and Chapter Mews in Windsor, Berkshire. The excavations revealed the truncated remnants of a wall possibly originating from the 17th or 18th century overlain by a soil deposit containing tile fragments ranging in likely production date from the 15th-19th centuries. The remainder of the observed deposit sequence comprised layers of made ground and hard landscaping associated with the present day Chapter Mews development.
Location of archive:	<p>The archive is currently held at Oxford Archaeology's head office at Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES.</p> <p>There is currently no receiving museum for this project area. OA will hold the archive for the foreseeable or until a point when new accessions are accepted for this area.</p>



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Figure 1: Site location

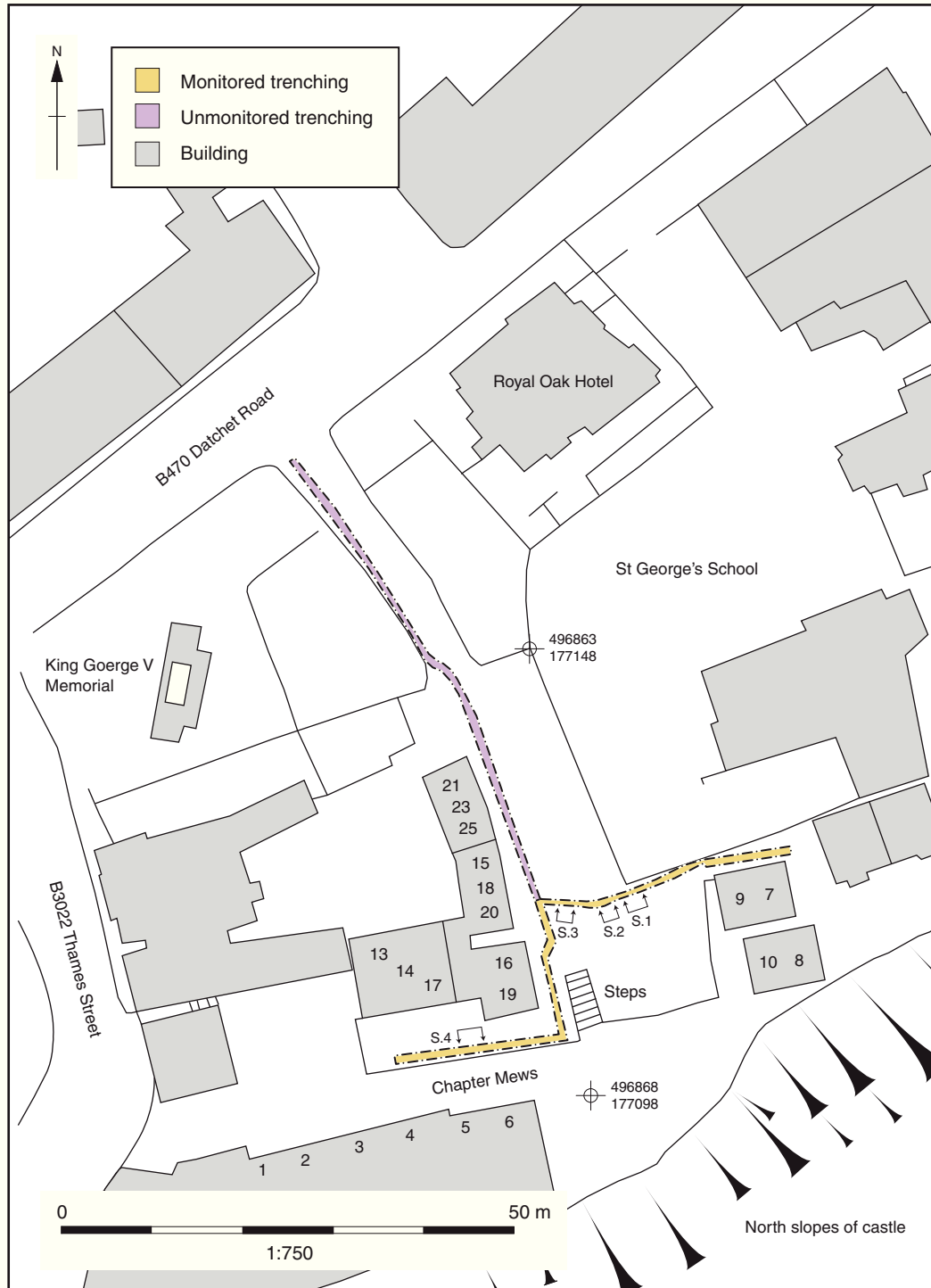


Figure 2: Trench location

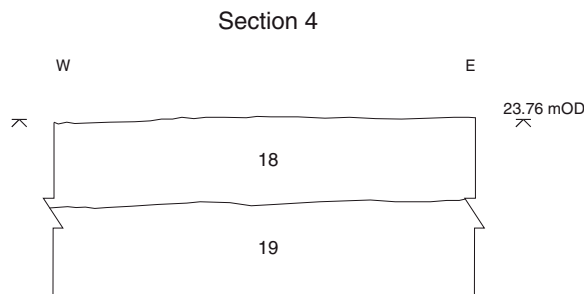
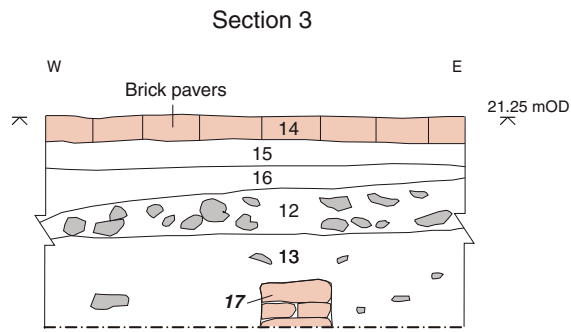
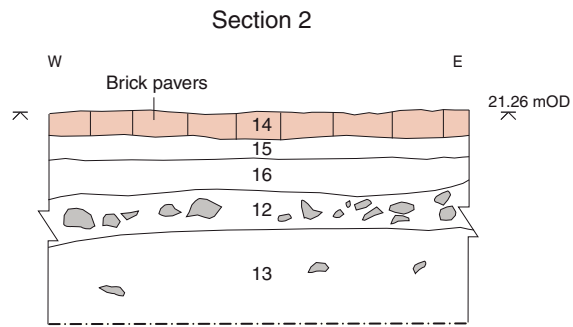
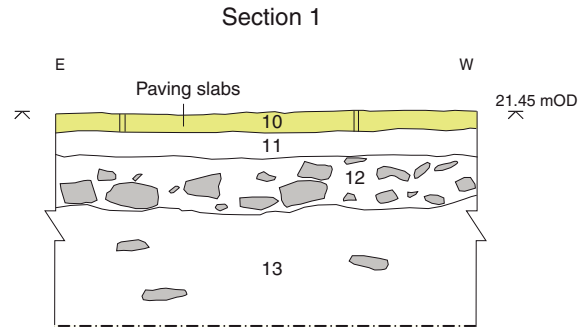


Figure 3: Sections 1-4



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