

Bulstrode Park Gerrards Cross Buckinghamshire



Building Recording and Archaeological Watching Brief Report



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Bulstrode Park, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire

BUILDING RECORDING AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

CONTENTS

Summary.....	2
1 Introduction	2
1.1 Scope of work.....	2
1.2 Location, geology and topography	2
1.3 Archaeological and historical background	3
2 Project Aims and Methodology.....	4
2.1 Aims	4
3 Results	4
3.1 Description of buildings	4
3.2 The Watching Brief.....	7
4 Results	8
4.1 Description of deposits.....	8
5 Discussion And Conclusions.....	9
Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory	11
Appendix 2 Bibliography and References	11
Appendix 3 Summary of Site Details.....	12

LIST OF FIGURES

- Fig. 1 Site location
 Fig. 2 Site plan prior to demolition
 Fig. 3 Plan of new building foundations
 Fig. 4 Sections

- Plate 1 Western end of the Print shop
 Plate 2 Eastern end of the Print shop
 Plate 3 East gable of the Print shop
 Plate 4 North wall of the Staff cottage
 Plate 5 East wall of the Staff cottage
 Plate 6 South and west walls of the Staff cottage
 Plate 7 Eastern end of the Workshops
 Plate 8 Hearth in “Farriers” shop
 Plate 9 Western end of the Workshops
 Plate 10 Fireplace in office/tackroom
 Plate 11 Modern extension to workshops

SUMMARY

In November and December 2007 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an historic building recording action and an archaeological watching brief at Bulstrode Park, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire (NGR: SU 9865 8845). The work was commissioned by WEC International in advance of the demolition of existing workshops and a staff cottage and the erection of 8 new dwellings. The watching brief revealed that the staff cottage originally formed the eastern end of a much larger structure. Evidence for the continued development of the workshops together with evidence for another bay of the workshops and an outside toilet were observed during the excavation of the foundations for the northern block of new dwellings. No evidence for any phases of construction of the house earlier than the 19th-century, or for any other significant archaeology was encountered.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 In November and December 2007, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an historic building recording action and an archaeological watching brief at Bulstrode Park, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire (NGR: SU 9865 8845). The work was commissioned by WEC International in respect of a planning application for the demolition of an existing print shop, external workshop and staff bungalow and the erection of eight dwellings (Planning Application No.04/0250).
- 1.1.2 A project brief was set by David Radford, the Archaeological Officer representing Buckinghamshire County Council requiring that the historic buildings undergo archaeological recording prior to demolition of the buildings and for an archaeological watching brief to be undertaken during the period of groundworks for the new dwellings.
- 1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief (OA, 2007).

1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 Bulstrode Park is situated approximately 4.5 km south-east of Beaconsfield and 1 km north-west of Gerrards Cross (Fig. 1). The main house and buildings are sited on the top of a gently rising hill within the centre of the park. The development site is located on level ground, immediately outside the footprint of the current Bulstrode House and ancillary buildings situated to the south and west. The underlying geology is glacial sand and gravel, bounded to the east and south by a band of mottled clay, sand and pebbles, which in turn gives way to a band of soft white chalk and then to river gravels and dry valley deposits (Geological survey of Great Britain, sheet no 255). The site is located at approximately 70 m above OD. The site originally

contained a staff cottage, a large print shop, a range of workshops and several modern garages prior to its development (Fig. 2).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 A desk-based assessment of the proposed site was carried out by OA in August 2005. A full background to the site can be obtained from the report (OA 2005).
- 1.3.2 Bulstrode Park is thought to have been the site of a medieval manor and from the 17th century onwards it has been the site of a park and garden. The current estate is a Grade II Registered Park and Garden (CAS1540) which incorporates Bulstrode House (Grade II) and the Pigeon Tower (Grade II).
- 1.3.3 A house was built on the site of the current Bulstrode House by the infamous Judge Jeffries between 1676-85. This was an imposing red brick building with a 70 m long south front masking two courts. According to English Heritage summary parks and gardens description, the courts were separated by the hall of the previous manor house, although it is unclear what the origins of this 'manor' are.
- 1.3.4 In 1706 the estate was sold to William Benedinck, the first Earl of Portland, who spent much time improving the estate and completed the wings of Jeffries' house and laid out the surrounding gardens (Vitruvius Britannicus, 1739). The Earl may have been aided by Henry Wise (1653-1738) and Claude Desgots (Harris, 1979). The second Duke of Portland employed Stiff Leadbetter to remodel the house in the 1740s and it was again remodelled *c* 1806-09 for the third Duke by James Wyatt (1747-1813), who created a castellated west wing. The second Duchess of Portland subsequently developed the garden and imported plant species from around the world.
- 1.3.5 From 1739 Humphry Repton (1752-1818) landscaped the existing mid 18th-century park and re-modelled the gardens. Repton wrote at some length about Bulstrode in his Enquiry (1803). The fourth Duke of Portland sold the estate to the Duke of Somerset in 1810, whose son demolished the west wing and in 1860-2 enlarged the house and remodelled the gardens, creating a formal garden over the cellars of the old wing. During the early 20th century, Sir John Ramsen, fifth Baronet, carried out extensive planting and after the Second World War the estate was divided. The house is now occupied by the Headquarters of the Worldwide Evangelization Crusade.
- 1.3.6 A watching brief conducted by OA during the installation of a new drainage system within the area of the buildings encountered no structural evidence of earlier constructions, however deep deposits of landscaping (made ground) associated with the earlier phases of construction were encountered (OA, 2006).

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

Watching Brief

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence or absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.
- 2.1.2 To preserve by record any archaeological remains (if present) that the development may remove or damage during site preparation, the excavation of ground beams and pile heads and any additional services.
- 2.1.3 To make available the results of the investigation.

Building Recording

- 2.1.4 This was to produce a record of the buildings, prior to their demolition. The work concentrated on a photographic record of the building's structure, construction and where applicable, their development. The record will be available for public consultation in the future.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of buildings

The Print Shop (Fig. 2, Plates 1-3)

- 3.1.1 This building measured 23.9 m long by 11.9 m wide and butted up to the eastern face of the stable block. The building appears to have been constructed in 2 phases, the western block (Plate 1), which butts up to the stable block, and the eastern block which is joined to the east end of the western block (Plate 2).
- 3.1.2 The western block measured 10.3 m long by 11.90 m wide, with the height at the eaves 2.3 m rising to 5.2 m at the apex of the gable. The building was constructed using a plain red machine made brick measuring 0.217 m by 0.112 m by 0.065 m bonded with a cement mortar laid using English stretcher bonding. The windows were constructed using rolled steel bars, with 3 equally sized (1.9 m X 1.3 m) windows sited in the north wall and a single 1 m square window located in the south wall. The roof was constructed using corrugated asbestos sheeting over steel angle iron trusses. The ridge of the roof was slightly off centre to the north, with the southern side of the roof at a more shallow pitch than the northern.
- 3.1.3 The eastern block measured 13.6 m long by 11.9 m wide, 2.3 m at the eaves rising to 5.6 m at the apex of the gable. This part of the building was constructed with a red machine made facing brick of the same size to that used in the western block, laid with cement mortar using English stretcher bonding. The brickwork between the two blocks was tied in to each other. In the north wall of the block were two 1.9 m by 1.3

m windows identical to those in the western block and a smaller 0.85 m wide by 1.3 m high window showing the same method of construction. Also within the north wall was a pair of sliding wooden doors, each measuring 2.3 m high by 1.5 m wide. These were mounted on external steel tracks opening to either side of the doorway. In the south wall were three 1 m square windows, although these appear to be a later addition with evidence of new brickwork blocking up a normal sized doorway and a much larger double doorway. The floor level of the building is approximately 0.9 m above ground level on this side of the building. It is possible that these doorways may indicate use as a loading bay in the past. As with the western block the roof was constructed using angle iron trusses and covered with corrugated asbestos sheeting.

- 3.1.4 Within the east gable of the building were a double set of wood and glass doors centrally placed and measuring 2.1 m high by 1 m wide (Plate 3).
- 3.1.5 Internally the western block had 2 store/boiler rooms each 2.8 m wide by 5 m long built against the south wall. The eastern block had two offices and a storeroom built in the south-east corner of the building, each measuring 2.5 m by 3 m, and all constructed using stud and plasterboard partitions.

The Staff Cottage (Fig. 2, Plates 4-6)

- 3.1.6 This measured 11.1 m by 6.7 m and was located east of the Print Shop leaving a 1.4 m wide passageway between the two. The building itself appears to have been originally much longer and has been shortened in the past and converted into a dwelling.
- 3.1.7 The north, south and east walls were all constructed of a plain red brick measuring 0.222 m x 0.10 m x 0.062 m laid using Flemish stretcher bonding with a lime mortar. The west wall consists of clay tiles hung on a single skin brick wall (Plate 6), and which possibly represents an original internal wall.
- 3.1.8 The roof was constructed using slate with a mixture of glazed ridge ties on the horizontal ridge and zinc flashing along the ridges on the hipped gable end.
- 3.1.9 The 3 windows in the north wall measure 1.6 m wide by 1 m high, 1.1 m wide and 1 m high and 0.3 m wide and 1 m high respectively (Plate 4). These were constructed using rolled steel framing and are probably replacement windows, possibly installed when the building was converted into a cottage. The east wall had a 1.1 m wide by 1 m high window leading into the kitchen and a 0.38 m wide by 0.48 m high window leading into the bathroom (Plate 5). Also within the east wall were 3 bricked up windows, 2 measuring 0.9 m wide by 0.8 m and 1 measuring 0.8 m square.
- 3.1.10 In the south wall were 3 windows, 2 measuring 1.6 m wide by 1 m high opening from a bedroom and the living room, and a 0.3 m wide by 0.4 m high window opening from what may have originally been the pantry (Plate 6). As on the northern wall these were rolled steel construction and were most likely replacement windows. The

wall was built using a similar brick and construction to the north and east walls, although there was a casellated decorative spur of brickwork rising above the south-east corner of the cottage.

- 3.1.11 The internal walls and the chimney stack were of brick construction but built using a darker, harder brick than the external walls suggesting that they may have been inserted at a later date. The surviving fire surrounds appear to be modern replacements.
- 3.1.12 Following the demolition of the Print Shop and removal of the concrete floor the foundations of the northern wall of the cottage could be seen to extend for a further 17 m to the west before returning to join the southern wall, showing that the cottage was once part of a much larger building, presumably reduced in length when the Print Shop was built.

The Workshops (Fig. 2, Plates 7-11)

- 3.1.13 These comprised a large workshop with an attached office and a small windowless room on the eastern end. The range measured a total length of 18 m along its southern edge and 4.7 m in depth. The buildings were built using a simple single pitched roof sloping down from a 3.8 m high northern wall down to 2 m high along the southern edge sloping down into towards the courtyard.
- 3.1.14 The range shows a consistent build throughout its length although the two parts are on different alignments (Plates 7 and 9). The southern, eastern and the internal walls were constructed using a handmade frogged red brick measuring 0.23 m x 0.105 m x 0.062 m laid using Flemish Stretcher bond with a lime mortar. Their size suggests a mid to late 19th-century date.
- 3.1.15 The rear wall of the range was formed by building up the top of the garden/boundary wall, which combined with the fact that the other walls were not keyed into the boundary wall suggests that the construction of the workshops occurred after the construction of the garden/boundary wall. The roof was constructed using half king-post trusses supporting wooden purlins and rafters and dark grey slates. This method of construction is contemporary with the bricks suggesting that this was the original roof.
- 3.1.16 The southern wall of the range appears to have been initially constructed with a different window and door arrangement to that recorded prior to demolition with several later brick inclusions observed surrounding two of the window frames suggesting that they were later alterations.
- 3.1.17 Located on the eastern end of the range was a 2.3 m wide by 4.7 m deep separate room (Plate 7). This had no windows but had a brick built hearth and chimney stack in the north-west corner of the room (Plate 8). A later steel door and frame had been

built into the southern wall using plain red machine-made brick measuring 0.217 m by 0.112 m by 0.065 m.

- 3.1.18 The centre of the range comprised a 12.6 m long by 4.7 m depth open workshop with a wedge shaped office accessed off its eastern end (Plate 9). This office measured 3 m along the southern wall and 4.5 m along the northern wall and ran the full depth of the building. The north-east corner of the office contained a fireplace which shared a chimney with the hearth in small room to the east (Plate 10).
- 3.1.19 Attached to the western end of the workshop was a later 5 m long by 4.1 m wide brick built extension running northwards (Plate 11). This was constructed using a plain red hand made brick measuring 0.225 m x 0.115 m x 0.068 m laid using “Bastard” English stretcher bonding. This had a single pitched roof sloping to the east covered with corrugated iron sheeting. A single 1 m square window had been built into the eastern wall. The brick size and the use of corrugated iron sheeting suggest that this was a late 19th-early 20th-century construction.
- 3.1.20 The workshop appears to have been originally accessed though a 3.8 m wide doorway in the northern wall, with 2 iron hinge pins still being visible on each side of the doorway (which now leads into the extension rather than a roadway). There were also a 3.8 m wide doorway and a 1.34 m wide doorway in the southern wall, however the eastern doorway was later blocked by a wooden frame covered with weather boarding and a wooden frame window measuring 1 m square. The western doorway was reduced in size down to a normal sized door using a similar wooden frame covered with weather boarding. This also had two 1 m wide by 0.6 m high wood framed windows inserted. The wide original doorways suggest that this may have served as a coach house in the past, possibly with the office at the eastern end serving as a tack or harness room. The small room at the eastern end of the range may have served as Blacksmiths or Farriers shop. The lack of windows and the height of the hearth also point to this use.
- 3.1.21 Following the demolition of the modern garage butting the eastern end of the range a further set of foundations were exposed suggesting that the range extended a further 2.5 m to the east, with a small 1.2 m square structure attached to the north-eastern corner. these may indicate possibly another small workshop and an outside toilet respectively.

3.2 The Watching Brief

- 3.2.1 Following the demolition of the above buildings a watching brief was undertaken during the excavation of the foundation trenches for the replacement dwellings.
- 3.2.2 This was undertaken as an archaeological presence during the machining of the trenches. These were excavated by a tracked excavator fitted with a 0.7 m or 0.4 m wide bucket as required.

3.2.3 The contractors used an arbitrary benchmark during the excavation of the foundations and no definitive spot heights were available. A plan of the excavations was maintained at a scale of 1:200 (Fig. 3). Any recorded sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20. All excavations and any features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. A general photographic record of the work was also made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OA Field Manual* (ed, D Wilkinson, 1992).

4 RESULTS

4.1 Description of deposits

Northern Block

4.1.1 Within the area of the northern block of new dwellings the underlying natural, a yellow-brown coarse sand (3) was encountered at a depth of between 0.5 m and 0.7 m below the current ground level (Fig.4, Sections 1, 2 and 3). This was overlaid by a dark orange brown angular gravel in a clay silt matrix (2). This layer measured between 0.4 m and 0.5 m in depth, with the depth increasing towards the east and south of the site.

4.1.2 In the area of the old workshop Layer 2 was cut by a 0.65 m wide by 0.4 m deep linear feature (6) (Fig. 4, Section 2). Built within this was a 0.35 m wide brick foundation (4) using red brick measuring 0.23 m x 0.105 m x 0.062 m. The position of the wall and the brick showed this to be the original footing for the south wall of the workshop range. Backfilling the remainder of the trench was a mid brown clay silt (5).

4.1.3 Within the area of the modern garage Layer 2 was cut by a 0.6 m wide by 0.3 m deep linear trench (9) (Fig. 4, Section 3). Built within trench was another 0.35 m wide brick foundation using similar a red brick (7). The brick and the alignment of the foundations with the southern wall of the workshop range suggests that this probably formed a continuation of the workshop range which may have been demolished prior to the construction of the modern garage. Further investigation showed that this foundation continued across this area forming a 2.5 m wide by 4.7 m deep continuation of the eastern end of the workshops.

4.1.4 The construction trench was backfilled by a dark brown clay silt (8). Overlying the truncated foundations 7 and Layer 2 within the area of section 1 was a 0.12 m deep layer of demolition debris (1).

Southern Block

4.1.5 The southern block of new dwellings was excavated over the site of the old Print Shop. Following the demolition of the building and the removal of the floor layers it

was revealed that the area had been heavily truncated in the past, with no evidence of the original ground surface observed.

- 4.1.6 At the western extent of this area the underlying dark red-brown coarse sand (11) was encountered at a depth of 0.6 m below the current ground level (Fig. 4, Section 4). This was overlaid by a 0.2 m deep layer of red-brown angular gravel (10), both these layers probably represent natural deposits. The concrete floor of the print shop was cast directly on the surface of layer 10.
- 4.1.7 In the centre of this area the natural sand 11 was encountered at a greater depth of 0.55 m below the current ground level (Fig. 4, Section 5). This was overlaid by 0.55 m depth of the angular gravel 10. Cut into the surface of layer 10 was a 0.8 m wide 0.6 m deep foundation trench (14). Built within this trench were brick footings (13) constructed of plain red brick measuring 0.222 m x 0.10 m x 0.062 m laid using Flemish stretcher bond with a lime mortar. Filling the rest of the foundation trench was a dull grey-brown silt clay (12). After machining this area, these footings could be traced eastwards towards the north wall of the staff cottage, where it could be seen that these footings and the footings for the staff cottage were a continuous whole.
- 4.1.8 A return of these footings could be seen to turn southwards towards the truncated rear wall of the print shop (Fig. 3). Together these footings suggest a building measuring 27.4 m by 6.5 m occupied this area of the site prior to the construction of the Print Shop, and that the staff cottage represented a much shortened and adapted eastern end of this building.
- 4.1.9 The size of bricks and the method of construction of this footing suggest a mid 19th-century date which would correspond with the Duke of Somerset's son's remodelling of the House and grounds during 1860-2. Assuming that the staff cottage retained the original building roof profile, the single storey construction and the long, narrow ground plan suggests a possible stable block. The garden wall forming the northern border of the yard appears to date from the same period of construction.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1.1 The watching brief combined with the information gained during the building recording suggest that this area of the house was subject to a large scale building programme during the 19th century.
- 5.1.2 The staff cottage represented the truncated remains of a much larger east-west running building positioned to the east of the main stable block. This appeared to be constructed in the mid 19th-century. While no definitive clue to the original use of this building could be derived from the standing structure it is probable that this was originally a secondary stable block.

- 5.1.3 The garden wall running along the north and east sides of the yard employs a similar size of brick and construction and may relate to the same phase of construction. There appears to have originally been a large gated entrance within the centre of the north run of this wall which suggests that the soil now piled up against the northern side of the wall was a later development. A surviving gateway approximately 15 m west of the workshops now exits directly onto the face of a steeply sloping earth bank would also suggest that the ground levels were originally the same on each side of the wall.
- 5.1.4 The workshops appear to have been constructed at a slightly later date evidenced by the butt joint formed by the north-south walls with the garden wall and also by the use of a slightly more modern frogged brick, possibly indicating a late 19th-century date.
- 5.1.5 These workshops appeared to have originally extended further to the east, with evidence for a further bay of the building together with the brick footings for a possible outside toilet being observed during the excavation of the foundations for the northern block of new dwellings. This bay was presumably demolished prior to the construction of the 20th-century garage which occupied this area prior to demolition.
- 5.1.6 The eastern bay of the surviving workshops appears to have been originally outfitted for use as a farriers shop with a hearth and no windows.
- 5.1.7 The western end of the workshops may have originally been built as a coach house with a possible tack/harness room built at one end, with its fireplace sharing a chimney with the farriers shop.
- 5.1.8 The later extension at the western end appears to be of early 20th-century construction and runs through the original gateway in the garden wall. It was unclear during the demolition whether the foundations for this extension were excavated through the earth banked up against the north face of the garden wall or if the earth was banked up later. What is clear that this access was no longer in use by this time.
- 5.1.9 The print shop was of 20th-century construction. Its design has similarities to the Ministry of Works buildings erected during the course of the 2nd World War and it is probable that it dates to this period, and may relate to the use of the park for Anti Aircraft Artillery training during the war. The joint between the 2 phases of the building may indicate a later extension or is possibly indicative of building material shortages both during the war and in the immediate post war period.
- 5.1.10 No evidence for phases of construction of the house prior to the 19th-century were observed during the course of the watching brief.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i> Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	Layer	0.15 m - 0.2 m	-	Demolition layer	Brick, glass	C21st
2	Layer	0.45 m	-	Natural gravel	-	-
3	Layer	> 0.4 m	-	Natural sand	-	-
4	Structure	0.4 m	0.3 m	Brick foundations for south wall of workshop range	Brick	C19th
5	Fill	0.4 m	0.65 m	Backfill of foundation trench	Brick	C19th
6	Cut	0.4 m	0.65 m	Foundation trench	-	C19th
7	Structure	0.3 m	0.35 m	Continuation of the south wall of the workshop range	Brick	C19th
8	Fill	0.3 m	0.6 m	Backfill of the foundation trench	Brick	C19th
9	Cut	0.3 m	0.6 m	Foundation trench	-	C19th
10	Layer	0.2 m	-	Natural gravel	-	-
11	Layer	> 0.6 m	-	Natural sand	-	-
12	Fill	0.6 m	0.8 m	Backfill of foundation trench 14	Brick	C19th
13	Structure	0.7 m	0.6 m	Brick footings, truncated remains of a much longer original building	Brick	C19th
14	Cut	0.6 m	0.8 m	Foundation trench	-	C19th

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

BCAS, 2006 *Design Brief for an Archaeological Watching Brief and Building Recording*

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

OA, 2000 *OA Environmental Guidelines for sampling*

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

OA, 2005 *Land at Bulstrode House, Gerrards Cross : Desk Based Assessment*

OA, 2006 *Bulstrode Park, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire: Archaeological Watching Brief report*

OA, 2007 *Bulstrode Park, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief and Photographic Record*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Bulstrode Park, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire

Site code: GEBUL 07

Grid reference: SU 986 884

Type of watching brief: Building recording of standing structure prior to demolition and watching brief during the excavation of foundations for 8 new dwellings.

Date and duration of project: 20/11/07 to 14/12/07, 6 site visits

Area of site: 1500 m²

Summary of results: The watching brief showed that the staff cottage originally formed the eastern end of a much larger structure. Evidence for the continued development of the workshops together with evidence for another bay of the workshops and an outside toilet were observed during the excavation of the foundations for the northern block of new dwellings. No evidence for any phases of construction of the house earlier than the 19th-century or for any other significant archaeology was encountered.

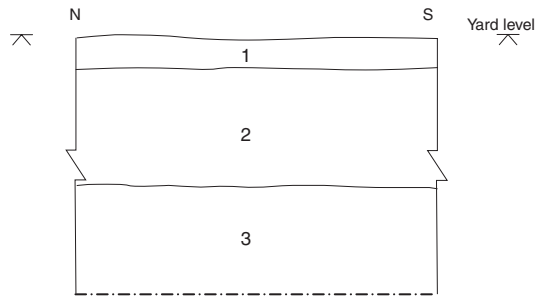
Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museums Service in due course, under the following accession number: AYBCM:2007.203



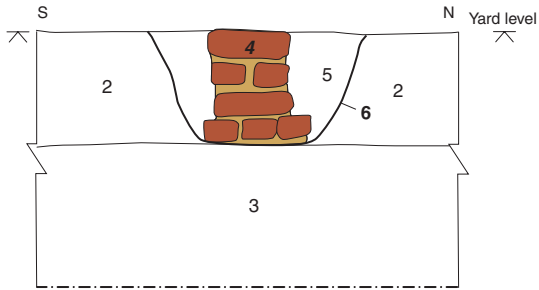
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Figure 1: Site location

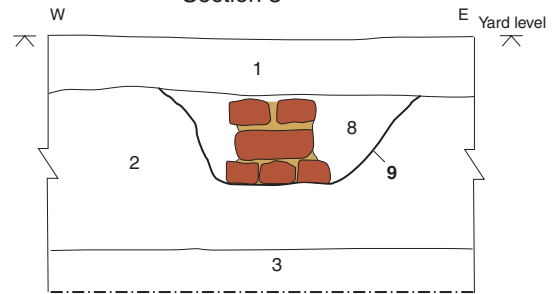
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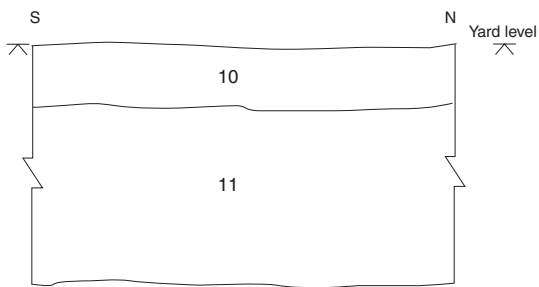
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Section 3



Section 4



Section 5

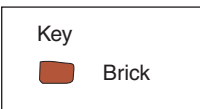
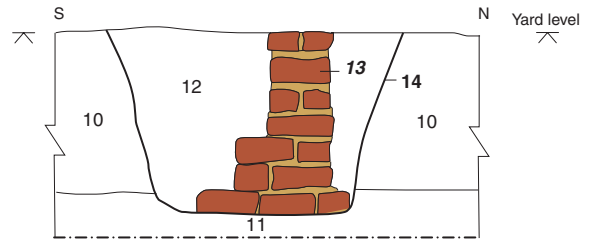


Figure 4: Sections

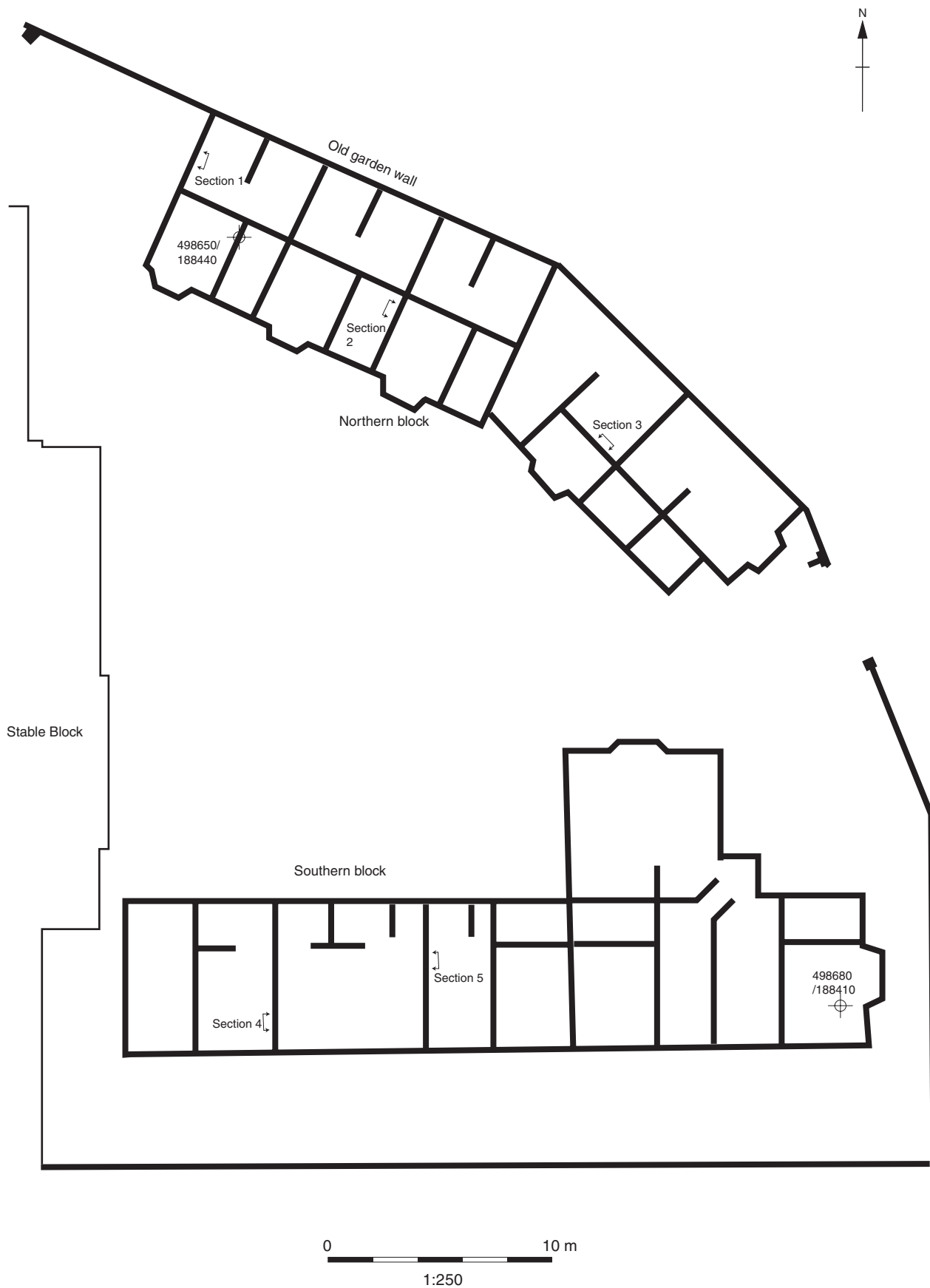


Figure 3: Plan of the building foundations

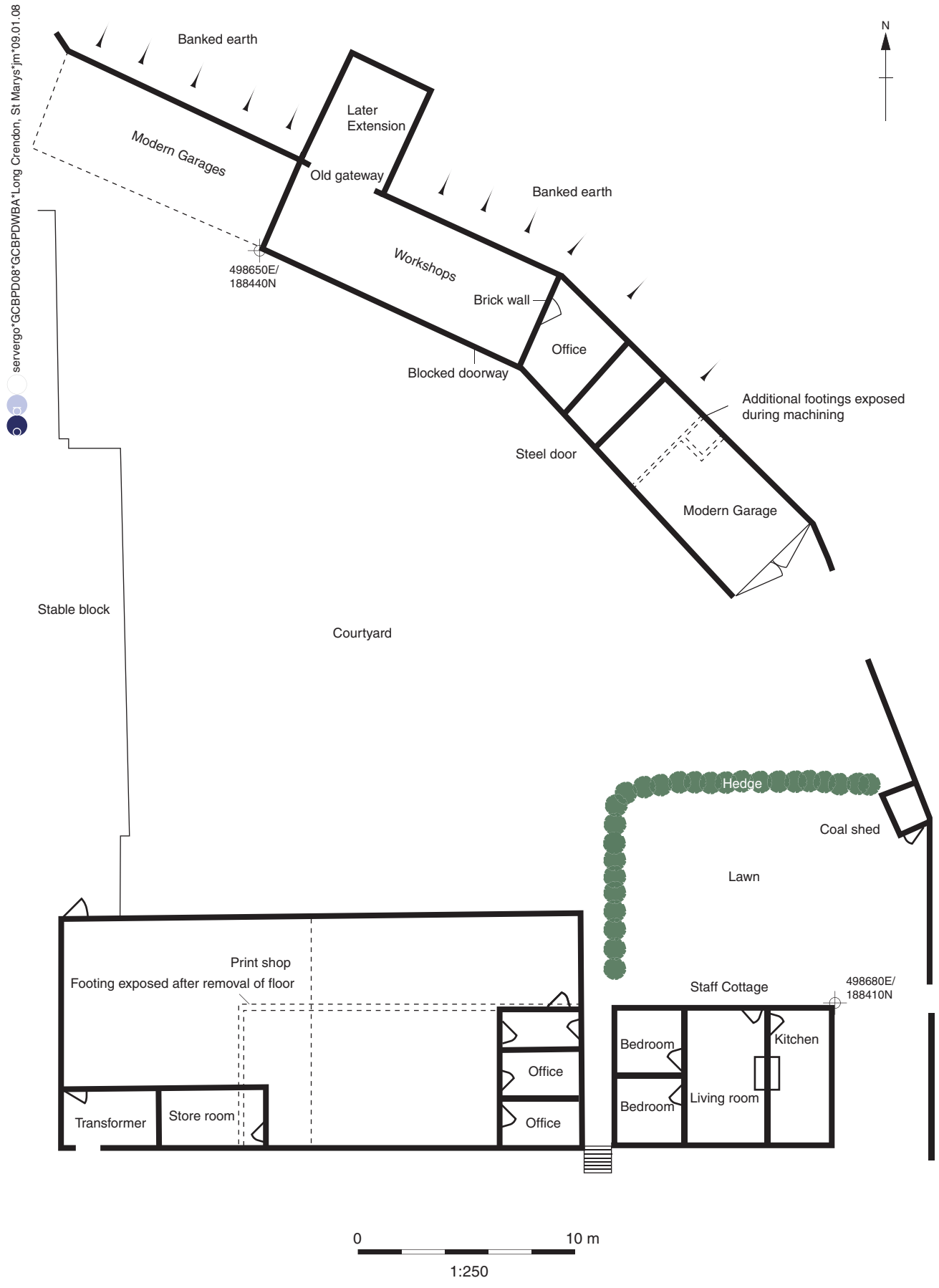


Figure 2: Site plan prior to demolition



Plate 1: Western end of print shop



Plate 2: Eastern end of the print shop



Plate 3: East gable of print shop



Plate 4: North wall of print shop



Plate 5: East wall of staff cottage



Plate 6: South and west walls of the staff cottage



Plate 7: Eastern end of the workshops



Plate 8: Hearth in "Farriers" shop



Plate 9: Western end of workshops



Plate 10: Fireplace in office/ tackroom



Plate 11: Modern extension in workshops



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