

Ebley Wharf Stroud Gloucestershire



Archaeological Evaluation Report



Oxford Archaeology

December 2003

Client: CgMs Consulting

Issue N^o: 1

OA Job N^o: 2081

NGR: SO 826 050

Client Name: CgMs Consulting

Client Ref No:

Document Title: Ebley Wharf, Stroud, Gloucestershire

Document Type: Evaluation

Issue Number: 1

National Grid Reference: SO 826 050

Planning Reference:

OA Job Number: 2081

Site Code: STGCM: 2003.60

Invoice Code: STEBLEV

Receiving Museum: Stroud Museum

Museum Accession No: STGCM: 2003.60

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Document File Location \\SERVER1\Smallworks\PROJECTS\Gloucestershire
GL\Stroud ST4881 Ebley Wharf\eval.doc

Graphics File Location
Illustrated by Amy Tiffany Hemingway

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Ebley Wharf, Stroud, Gloucestershire

NGR: SO 826 050

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SUMMARY

In November 2003 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at Ebley Wharf, Stroud, Gloucestershire on behalf of CgMs Consulting. Extensive deposits of made ground. Extensive deposits of made ground associated with 19th and 20th development were revealed. A possible medieval quarry was also observed within Trench 2.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In November 2003 OA carried out a field evaluation at Ebley Wharf, Stroud, Gloucestershire on behalf of CgMs Consulting prior to submission of a planning application for the redevelopment of Ebley Wharf.
- 1.1.2 A Specification for an Archaeological Field Evaluation was prepared by CgMs (CgMs 2003) and approved by Charles Parry, Senior Archaeological Officer for Gloucestershire. A Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared by OA (OA, 2003) in response to the Specification and agreed with the above parties.
- 1.1.3 The development site is situated adjacent to Westward Road and the former Stroudwater canal and is 0.7 hectares in area.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The development site is part of an industrial estate comprising single-storey industrial units and open tarmac covered areas and is between 34 m and 36 m OD. The underlying geology is Lower Inferior Limestone with overlying third main terrace gravels of the River Seven.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the evaluation has been the subject of a separate desk study (CgMs, 2003), the results of which are presented below. The site itself has produced limited archaeological evidence. There are some known listed buildings adjacent to the development site.
- 1.3.2 *Prehistoric:* There have been Mesolithic flint artefacts recovered from two sites to the east of the proposed development site, close to Westward Road.
- 1.3.3 *Romano-British:* Roman pottery has been recovered from No.308 Westward Road, to the north-west of the site, dating to the first to fifth centuries AD. A large number of Roman artefacts was recovered from Cashes Green to the NE of the site, including coins, pottery, a glass bead and building material, with further material recovered from a site immediately to the east of Cashes Green.
- 1.3.4 *Medieval:* The SMR contained an entry for a 14th century corn mill, established before 1317. Whilst its exact location is unclear it may coincide with the SW corner of the site, on the north side of the Stroudwater canal. Ebley mill was one of a series

of mills established along the River Frome during the Medieval period. Gravel quarrying during the early Medieval period was recorded during archaeological evaluation of the land immediately to the east of the site (SMR 16761) together with a fenced boundary, a sunken floored post built structure and a stone walled structure.

- 1.3.5 *Post-medieval*: The SMR contains one entry for the site in this period, the continued use of the medieval Ebley Mill complex in this period (SMR 3450) with a reference to a mill in 1677 and to a new corn mill in the early 18th century, these were located on a site now to the north of the Stroudwater canal and were replaced by a new mill on the south side of the canal c.1820. By 1839 a tithe map shows the site along with a stable, scouring house and drying ground on the north bank of the canal. In the 1885, 1923 and 1954 OS maps the site is shown unchanged, however by 1973 the site had been cleared and redeveloped as an industrial estate.

2 EVALUATION AIMS

- 2.1.1 To establish the presence or 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.
- 2.1.3 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features.
- 2.1.4 To make available the results of the investigation.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork

- 3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of eight trenches each measuring 10 m x 1.8 m (Fig 2). Due to constraints on site, only three of the eight trenches were excavated. Trenches 1 and 3 were not excavated due to their location being overlain by a large soil bund. A temporary access route crossed the location of Trench 6 and Trenches 7 and 8 were constrained by multiple live services.

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

- 3.2.1 The overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision by a JCB mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket down to the first archaeological horizon or natural geology, whichever came first. A further sondage was excavated in Trench 3 in order to reach the level of the natural.
- 3.2.2 Where relevant, the trenches were cleaned by hand and the revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds and environmental samples. All archaeological features were planned and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20. All features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OA Fieldwork Manual* (OAU, 1992).

4 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

4.1 Description of deposits

Trench 2 (Fig. 3)

- 4.1.1 No archaeological features were encountered. The underlying natural clay was only partially observed when excavation of a sondage at the western end of the trench was opened to a depth of *c* 4 m below the present ground level. The majority of this trench was excavated to a depth of 1.30 m. The natural clay was overlain by a series of clay levelling layers that appear to have been deposited to raise the ground surface in this area (Fig. 3). The clay layers (210-212) were cut by a large feature (208) whose function remains uncertain. The point of entry of the cut was the current ground surface. The full depth was not identified during the evaluation. The fills contained material of 20th century origin.

Trench 4 (Fig. 4)

- 4.1.2 This trench did not contain archaeological features. The natural clay was identified in a sondage at the western end of the trench at *c* 3.30 m below the present ground level. The evaluation identified a series of four clay layers. The full extent of the lowest clay layer (403) was only partially noted during the excavation of the sondage. This deposit contained occasional brick, tile and mortar of 20th century date. This was overlain by a further three clay layers all believed to be of no archaeological significance.

Trench 5 (Fig. 5)

- 4.1.3 Trench 5 did not contain any archaeological features. The sequence of layers was very similar to that of Trench 4, however, the bottom layer identified (503) was a dark brown silty material. The upper layers of clay appeared to have been laid to possibly try and stabilise the made ground.

4.2 Finds

- 4.2.1 Only 20th century brick, tile and mortar fragments were found. These were noted on site but not retained.

4.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 4.3.1 No deposits or features of any palaeo-environmental significance or interest were identified during the evaluation, therefore, no environmental samples were taken.

5 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 5.1.1 The spatial sampling of the field investigation was reduced to the southern half of the development site due to various on-site constraints. This gave a good indication of the archaeological potential to a depth of *c* 2 m in this area. While the northern half

of the site was not investigated, the depth and extent of made ground seen in the southern half may equally be reflected in the northern half.

5.2 Overall interpretation

Summary of results

- 5.2.1 The southern half of the site examined by the evaluation provided clear evidence of extensive disturbance of deposits. The natural was first encountered at a depth of 3.30 m below the present ground level, overlying which were exclusively made ground deposits. These deposits were seen to be cut (208) in Trench 2 and may be associated with medieval quarrying activity, in this case possibly for clay, which had been observed during an earlier evaluation on land immediately east of the site. The overlying deposits within this feature may then represent backfilling of the quarry, although the height of the cut and modern inclusions within these deposits suggests they are more likely attributed to 19th and 20th century building development and demolition phases associated with industry on the canal and river front.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Ctxt No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Thick. (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
2							
	201	Fill	-	0.40	Fill -dump/levelling	-	C20th
	202	Fill	-	0.20	Fill -dump/levelling	-	C20th
	203	Fill	-	0.32	Fill -dump/levelling	-	C20th
	204	Fill	-	0.14	Fill -dump/levelling	-	C20th
	205	Fill	-	0.47	Fill -dump/levelling	-	C20th
	206	Fill	-	0.28	Fill -dump/levelling	-	C20th
	207	Fill	-	0.12	Fill -dump/levelling	-	C20th
	208	Cut	5.0	-	Large feature	-	C20th
	209	Layer	-	0.42	Made ground	-	-
	210	Layer	-	0.10	Made ground	-	-
	211	Layer	-	-	Made ground	-	-
	212	Layer	-	-	Made ground	-	-
4							
	400	Layer	-	0.18	Made ground	-	C20th
	401	Layer	-	0.20	Made ground	-	-
	402	Layer	-	0.40	Made ground	-	-
	403	Layer	-	-	Made ground	-	-
5							
	500	Layer	-	0.10	Made ground	-	C20th
	501	Layer	-	0.30	Made ground	-	-
	502	Layer	-	0.11	Made ground	-	-
	503	Layer	-	-	Made ground	-	-

APPENDIX 2 REFERENCES

CgMs, 2003 *Specification for an Archaeological Field Evaluation, Ebley Wharf, Stroud, Gloucestershire*

OA, 2003 *Ebley Wharf, Stroud, Gloucestershire. Written Scheme of Investigation*

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

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Ebley Wharf, Stroud, Gloucestershire

Site code: STGCM: 2003.60

Grid reference: SO 826 050

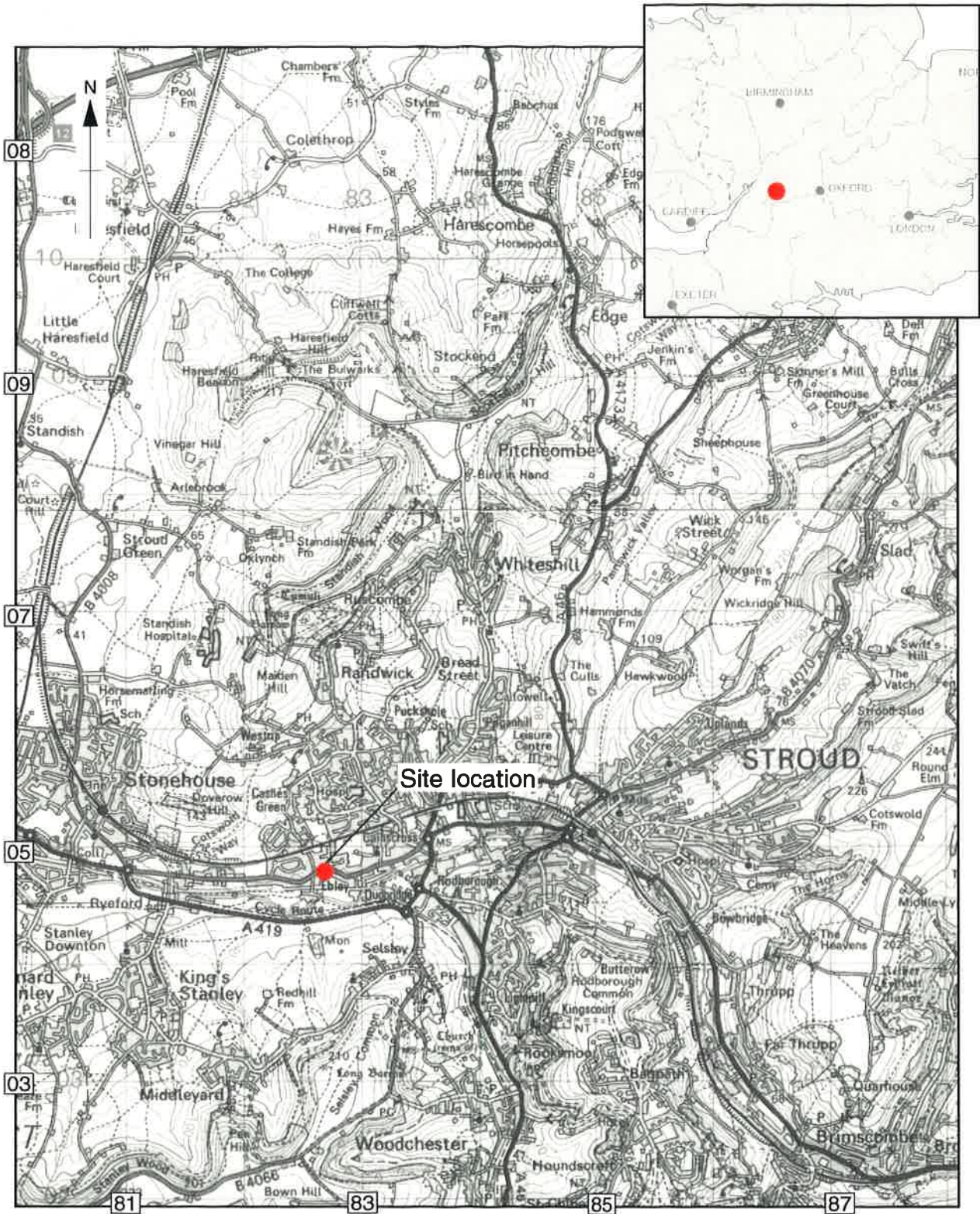
Type of evaluation: Three 10 m x 2 m trenches

Date and duration of project: 24-25th November 2003

Area of site: 0.7 ha

Summary of results: Extensive deposits of made ground associated with 19th and 20th development. Possible medieval quarrying observed within Trench 2.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with in due course, under the following accession number: STGCM: 2003.60



Scale 1:25,000

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Figure 1: Site location

Ebley Wharf, Stroud, Gloucestershire

Figure 2:
Trench location plan

Key

 Trenches as excavated

 Original location

Scale 1:750

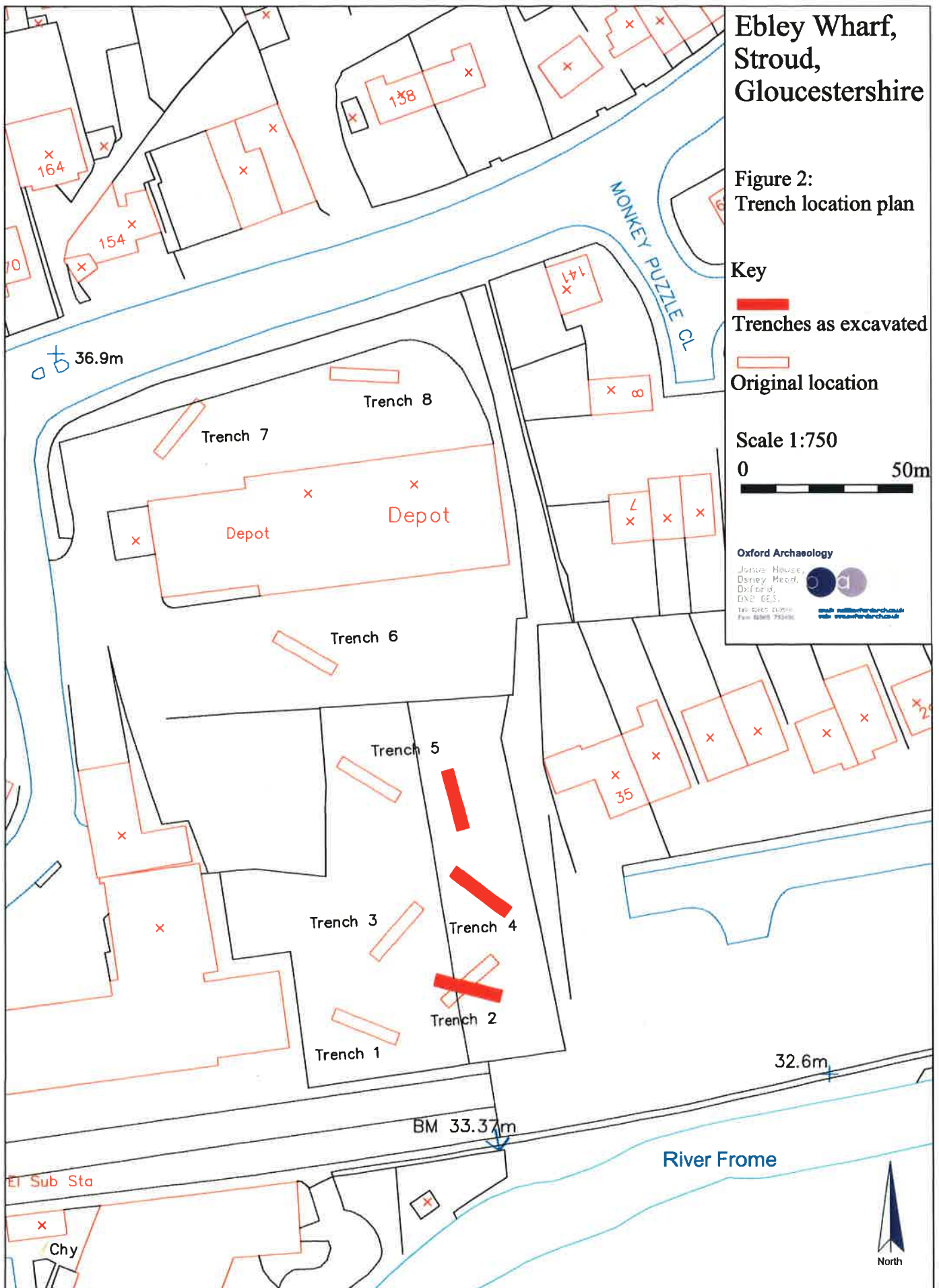
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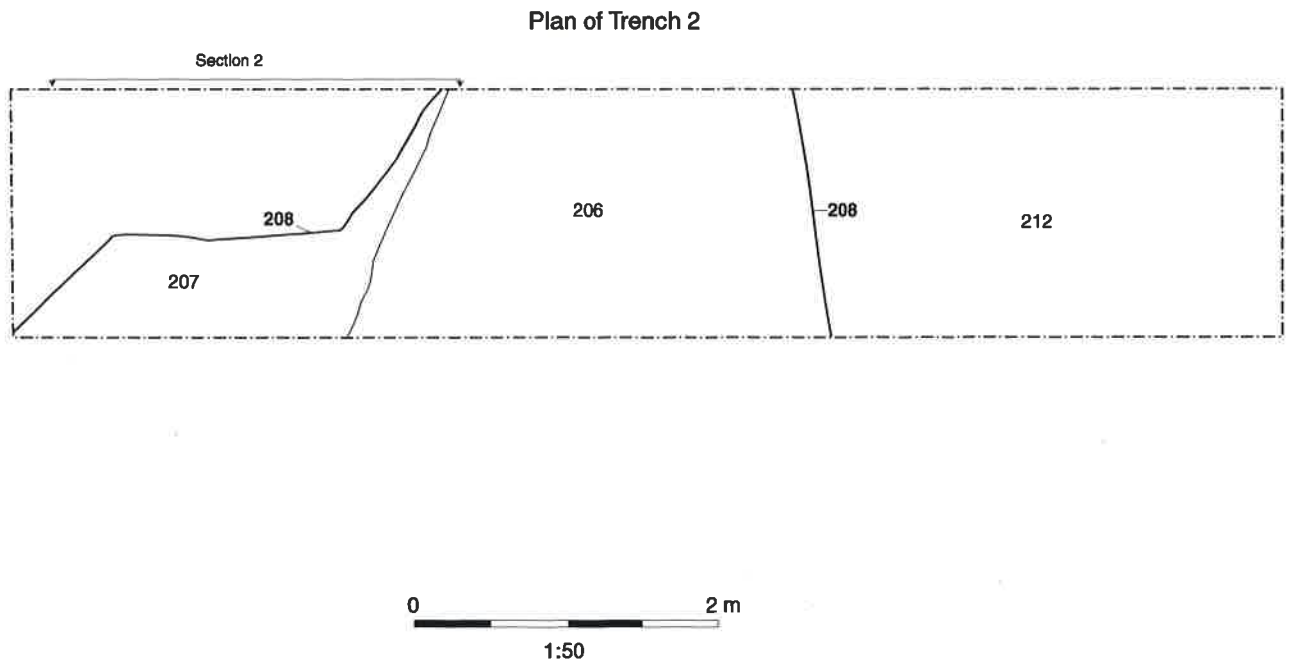
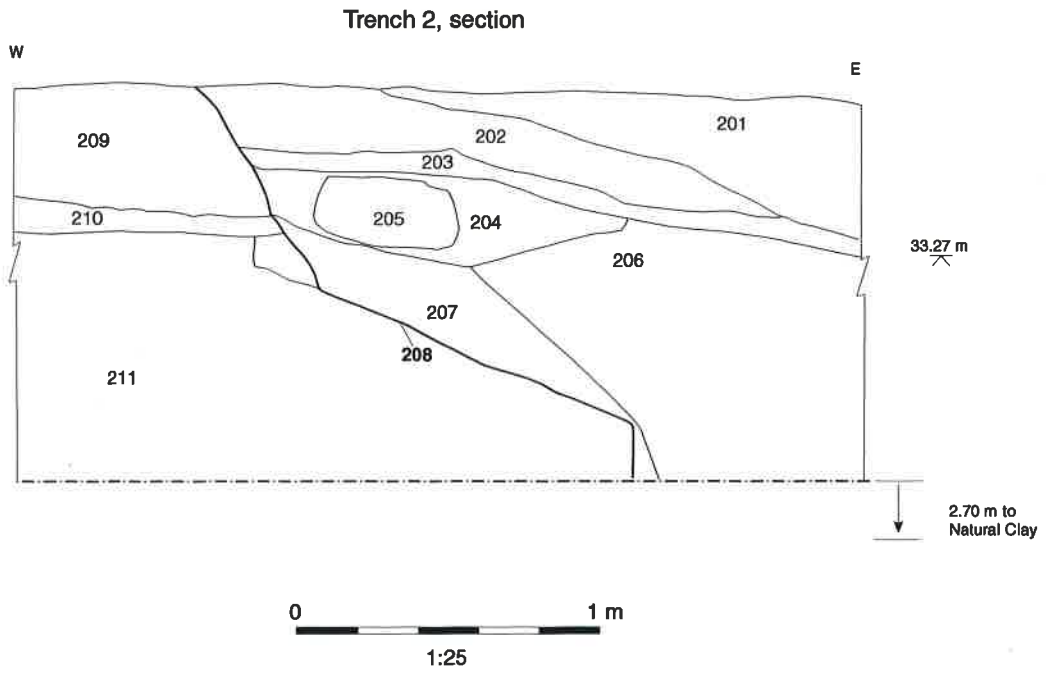


Figure 3: Plan and section through Trench 3

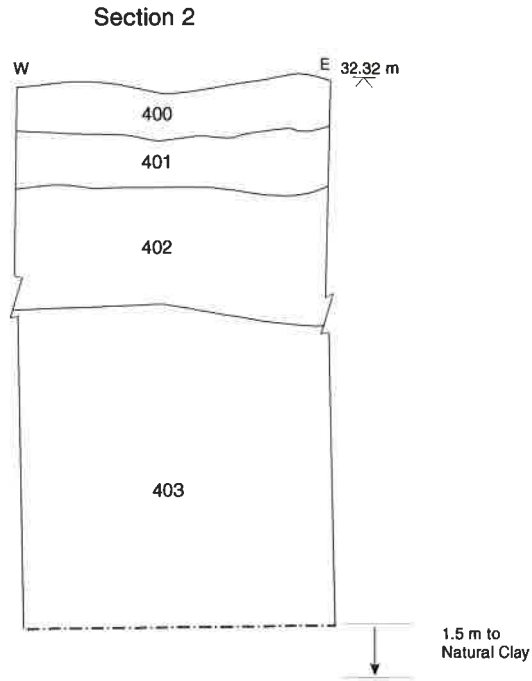


Figure 4: Trench 4, section

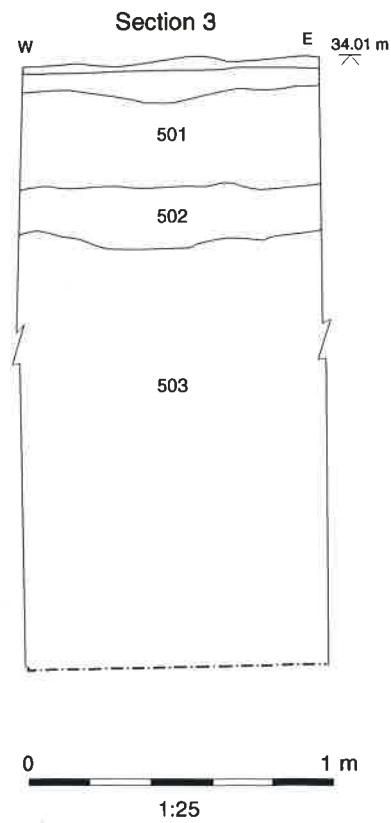


Figure 5: Trench 5, section



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