

Chilbolton Court Winchester Hampshire



Archaeological Evaluation Report



Oxford Archaeology

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Chilbolton Court, Winchester, Hampshire

NGR SU 4650 2925

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

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SUMMARY

In April 2003, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at Chilbolton Avenue, Winchester, Hants (NGR SU 4650 2925) on behalf of Banner Homes Limited.

The evaluation was initially programmed to consist of eleven trenches, but due the density of trees, some of which are subject to preservation orders, it was only possible to access the proposed locations of three of the trenches. These trenches uncovered a number of disused service pipe trenches but no archaeological features. One sherd of Roman pottery was recovered. A watching brief on a service trench revealed extensive layers of imported soil overlying the natural chalk.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In January and February 2003, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at Chilbolton Avenue, Winchester, Hants (NGR SU 4650 2925) on behalf of Banner Homes Limited.
- 1.1.2 Planning permission was granted by Winchester City Council for the development of a number of residential properties at the site, which comprises an area of land c 1 km to the west of the historic core of the city, at the junction of Sarum Road, Chilbolton Avenue and Romsey Road.
- 1.1.3 An archaeological condition was attached to the planning permission requiring a programme of archaeological investigations, in accordance with PPG 16 and policies of the Winchester District Local Plan, owing to the possibility of encountering archaeological remains during any groundwork.
- 1.1.4 A desk-based assessment detailing the archaeological and historical background of the development area was undertaken by OA as the first stage of the pre-planning determination relating to the development (OA 2002a).
- 1.1.5 The assessment studied entries held at The Hampshire County Council Sites and Monuments Record (HCCSMR), the Winchester Museum Service Sites and Monuments record (WMSSMR), aerial photographs, tithe maps and included visual site inspections.
- 1.1.6 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared detailing how Oxford Archaeology (OA) would implement the archaeological works (field evaluation) required by the Winchester City Council Sites and Monuments Officer (OA 2002b).
- 1.1.7 Following consultation with Winchester Museum, a watching brief was agreed for the initial stages of the groundworks in April 2003, after the initial stages of trial trenching encountered problems - see section 5 below.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The development comprised a sub-rectangular area of land measuring c 200 m x 200 m, located c 1.1 km to the west of the historic core of the city of Winchester, Hampshire. The site lies within the administrative area of the city of Winchester.
- 1.2.2 The underlying geology comprises upper Cretaceous Chalk sealed by areas of drift valley gravel and alluvium.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the evaluation was the subject of a separate desk study (OA 2002a), the results of which are summarised below.
- 1.3.2 The earliest securely dateable find from the vicinity of the development area dates to the Bronze Age. A possible ploughed out Bronze Age barrow lies some 700 m to the north-east of the site, and a Bronze Age inhumation burial is known c 350 m south-west of the site. Evidence of 'Celtic' field systems has been identified over large areas of Winchester.
- 1.3.3 The Roman town and eventual Civitas Capital of *Venta Belgarum* was established by the end of the 1st century AD. It was protected by earthen ramparts and ditches, the earthwork circuit having been completed from 180-200 AD with walls and bastions in place by the 4th century.
- 1.3.4 Characteristically straight roads were constructed heading north towards Silchester and north-west towards Cirencester and in time six roads radiated from *Venta Belgarum*: the Roman Road to Old Sarum lies immediately north of the development site. Beyond the centre of *Venta Belgarum*, the Scheduled remains of an Iron Age/Romano-British farmstead and associated field system are located on Teg Down.
- 1.3.5 The desk-based assessment concluded that there was little potential for the recovery of archaeological evidence dating to the early medieval and post-medieval periods.

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 OA extends its thanks to Banner Homes for providing plans of the development. OA's Andy Simmonds supervised the fieldwork.

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.
- 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 FIELDWORK METHODS AND RECORDING

3.1 Methodology

- 3.1.1 The investigation was programmed to consist of eleven trenches located so as to avoid known services and areas which had suffered truncation by the student accommodation buildings which until recently occupied the site.
- 3.1.2 However the proposed locations of trenches 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11 could not be accessed as they were within dense trees some of which were subject to protection orders. Consequently, only trenches 3, 4 and 7 were excavated (and see section 5 below).
- 3.1.3 These trenches were opened by machine and then cleaned by hand. 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 detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and generally bagged by context. Finds of special interest were given a unique small find number.

3.3 Palaeo-environmental evidence

- 3.3.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were encountered during the evaluation.

4 RESULTS: TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS

4.1 Description of deposits

Trench 3

- 4.1.1 Trench 3 was fifteen metres long, aligned north-east to south-west in the central part of the development site. The natural geology, a hard white chalk (301), was exposed at 122.1 m OD at the south-west end, sloping down to 121.5 m OD at the north-east end. It was cut by three disused modern pipe trenches, two of which converged on a soak-away located just south of the trench. These services presumably relate to the recently demolished student accommodation buildings. The chalk was overlain by a layer of topsoil 0.3 m thick (300).

Trench 4

- 4.1.2 Trench 4 was located on the west side of the site, adjacent to the car parking area. It was 4.5 m long. The natural chalk (400) was encountered at a depth of 0.1m below current ground level, at 123.17 m OD. A modern drain pipe servicing the existing student accommodation buildings occupying the south-western part of the site ran north-south along the length of the trench, draining into a soak-away at the trench's

north-east corner. The topsoil overlying this trench (401) was 0.1 m thick, and considerably disturbed by the root system of a tree-stump located next to it on its western side. Root disturbance from this source also effected the surface of the chalk.

Trench 7

- 4.1.3 Trench 7 could not be excavated in its intended location, as there was not enough room between the fence on its west side and the existing road surface to its east. The trench was therefore moved a short distance to the south. The trench was 15 m long, aligned north-east to south-west with a maximum depth of 0.5 m. Undisturbed natural chalk (700) was exposed at 119.19 m OD, overlain by a layer of topsoil (701) varying in thickness from 0.3 m at the north-east end to 0.5 m at the south-west end. A single sherd of Romano-British pottery was retrieved from the topsoil.

5 THE WATCHING BRIEF

- 5.1.1 Following consultation with Winchester Museum, a watching brief was agreed for the initial stages of the groundworks in April 2003. The site had clearly been disturbed previously by other developments here, including the importing of land fill material, and nothing of archaeological significance was reported.
- 5.1.2 The location of a possible ancient boundary ditch to the south-east of the site was not confirmed by the cutting of a deep sewer service trench. The trench was up to 3.5 m deep into the underlying natural chalk.

6 FINDS

- 6.1.1 A single sherd of Roman Grey Ware, dating to the 2nd or 3rd centuries was retrieved from the topsoil of Trench 7.

7 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

- 7.1.1 The reliability of the investigation will obviously have been effected by the inability to access eight of the eleven trenches. The trenches that could be excavated were those located in the central part of the site, so it is possible to be confident of the results of the evaluation in this area. The rest of the site, and in particular the slopes leading down to Chilbolton Avenue and Romsey Road, has not effectively been investigated.
- 7.1.2 The trenches that were excavated encountered some disturbance from modern service trenches, but there was no indication that this had impacted on any archaeological features.
- 7.1.3 The evaluation uncovered no archaeological features, the only find being a sherd of second or third century Roman Grey Ware from the topsoil in Trench 7. The central part of the site was found to have been subject to some disturbance by modern service trenches associated with the student accommodation buildings which until recently occupied the site. This area is surrounded on its east and south sides by an arc of terraced ground where the student accommodation stood.

- 7.1.4 It is unlikely that any archaeological features will have survived the terracing of this area and the construction of these structures, some of whose foundations were up to 3 m deep. Beyond this, on the tree-covered lower slopes fronting onto Chilbolton Avenue and Romsey road, there is some potential for the survival of archaeological deposits, but this area could not be investigated due to the density of the trees.

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>No./wt</i>	<i>Date</i>
3	300	Layer	-	0.3	Topsoil	-	-	-
3	301	Layer	-	-	Chalk	-	-	-
4	400	Layer	-	-	Chalk	-	-	-
4	401	Layer	-	0.32	Topsoil	-	-	-
7	700	Layer	-	-	Chalk	-	-	-
7	701	Layer	-	0.3-0.6	Topsoil	1 sherd pottery	1	Roman

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

OA 1992 *Fieldwork Manual* (1st edition, ed. D Wilkinson)

OA 2002a *Desktop Assessment Chilbolton Court Romsey Road / Chilbolton Avenue, Winchester*

OA 2002b *Land at Chilbolton Court, Winchester, Hampshire. Written Scheme of Investigation for an archaeological evaluation*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Chilbolton Avenue, Winchester, Hampshire

Site code: WINCM AY125

Grid reference: SU 4650 2925

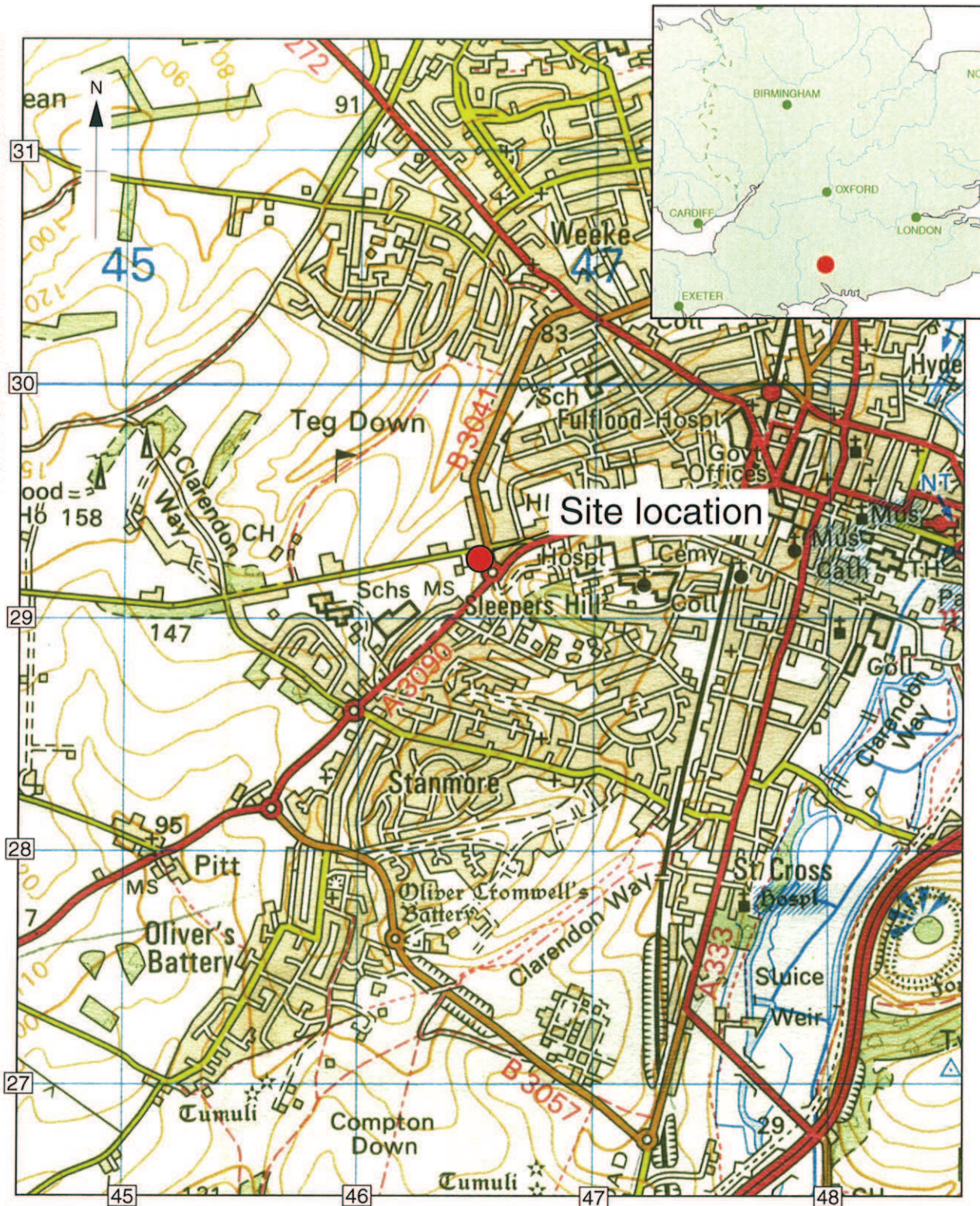
Type of evaluation: Trial trenching supplemented by a watching brief

Date and duration of project: April 2003

Area of site: 200 m x 200 m

Summary of results: Three of the proposed trenches were opened and these uncovered a number of disused pipe trenches but no archaeological features. One sherd of Roman pottery was recovered from the investigation.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Winchester Museum in due course, under the following accession number: WINCM AY125



Scale 1:25,000

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Figure 1: Site location



Figure 2: Trench location plan

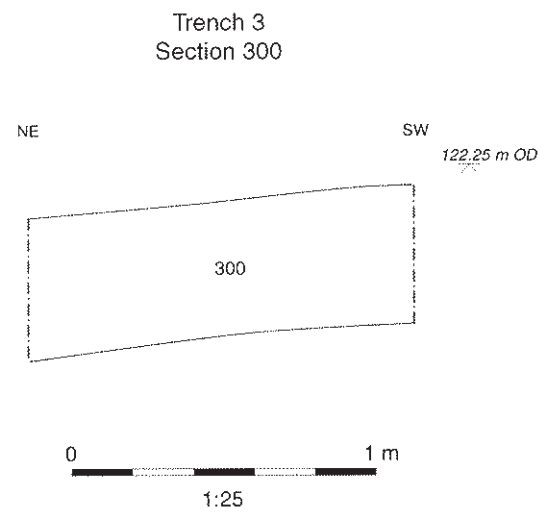
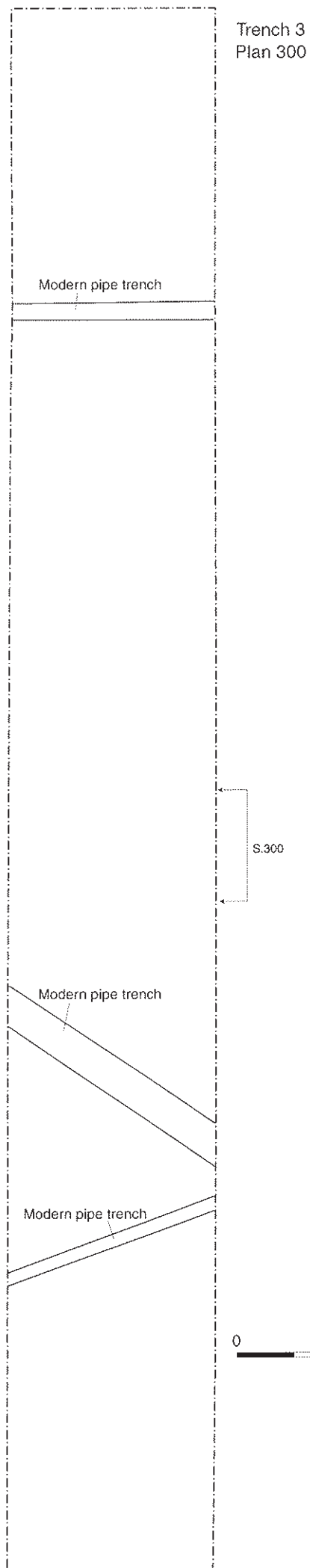


Figure 3: Trench 3 Plan and Section

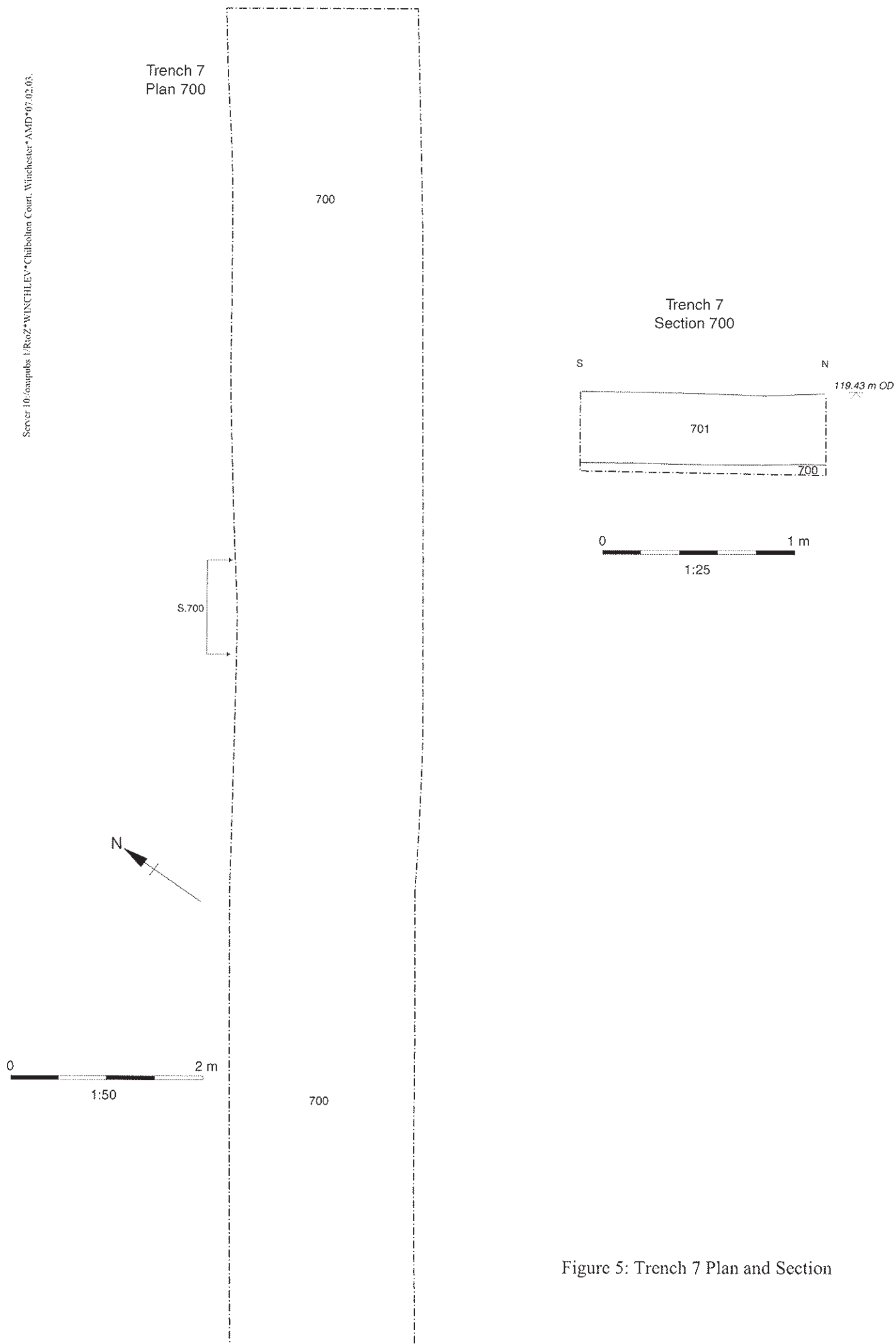


Figure 5: Trench 7 Plan and Section



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