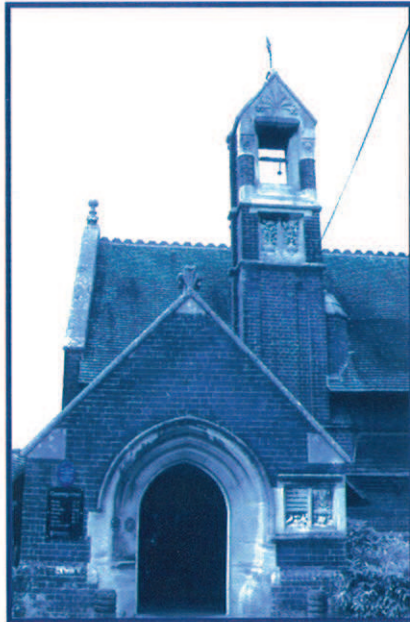


Romsey
HA

ROMLIBWB



Romsey Library Extension
Station Road
Romsey
Hampshire

**Archaeological
Watching Brief Report**



Oxford Archaeology

September 2005

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**Romsey Library, Station Road,
Romsey, Hampshire*****ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT*****CONTENTS**

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SUMMARY

In August 2005 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Romsey Library, Station Road, Romsey, Hampshire (NGR SU 35428 21451). The work was commissioned by Hampshire County Council in advance of an extension to the public library. The watching brief revealed the foundations of the existing library building and the buried topsoil from the construction of the building in the 1870s.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In August 2005 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Romsey Library, Hampshire (SU 35428 21451) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Hampshire County Council in respect of a planning application for an extension to the existing Grade II listed building.
- 1.1.2 A project brief was set by Hampshire County Council (HCC 2005) in line with PPG15, PPG16 and the Local Plan Policies.
- 1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief. This included monitoring all ground works and making available the results of the investigation (OA 2005).

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site is situated in the centre of Romsey and is currently in use as a library.
- 1.2.2 The site lies on sand, brickearth and pebbles of the Bracklesham Beds at approximately 18 m above OD, and is 0.04 hectares in area

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the watching brief was prepared for the WSI for the project (OA 2005) and is summarised below.
- 1.3.2 The site lies immediately adjacent to an area defined as having archaeological importance as defined in the English Heritage / Hampshire County Council *Extensive Urban Survey of Hampshire's Historic Towns (HCC 2005)*. The building on the site dates from 1871 and is Grade II listed. It was formerly the National School and was designed by William Eden Nesfield, a supporter of the 'Gothic Revival' and student of Pugin. Nesfield was also a collaborator of the artists Whistler and Moore.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence/absence, extent, condition, quality, character and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.
- 2.1.2 To preserve by record any archaeological remains which the groundworks would remove or damage within the development area.
- 2.1.3 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The watching brief consisted of 2 visits to the site to monitor the progress and extent of the excavations and to record any remains exposed during the works.
- 2.2.2 All archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:100 and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20. All excavated 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).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 The foundation trenches (Fig. 2) were excavated to a total depth of 0.92 m below present ground level onto a layer of compact dark reddish brown silty sand (1) (Fig. 3, section). This deposit became lighter and more gravelly in the lower 0.06 m of the section.
- 3.1.2 Directly above this was a 0.2 m thick mid brown silty sand loam (2) which contained occasional charcoal flecks, indicative of a modern soil horizon.
- 3.1.3 The foundation cut (4) for the existing 1871 library building was cut vertically through deposits 1 and 2 to a depth of 0.72 m. The foundations (5) for the standing library were built within this cut and consisted of nine courses of red brick, bonded with a light brown sandy mortar, laid in English Bond style. The three lowest courses were stepped out from the main wall by 0.14 m. All the bricks measured 0.23 m x 0.11 m x 0.06 m.
- 3.1.4 The foundation cut (4) was subsequently backfilled by a dark grey brown silty sand loam containing occasional patches of gravel and charcoal (6), 0.6 m deep.
- 3.1.5 Overlying deposits 2 and 6 was a layer of grey brown silty sand loam (3), 0.17 m thick containing mortar and gravel inclusions. This was likely to be a topsoil horizon which has been disturbed during the construction of the 1870s building.

3.1.6 A compact dark grey brown silty sand deposit (7) with frequent coarse gravel, flint and stone inclusions overlaid deposit 3 and formed a levelling layer for the overlying modern tarmac surface.

3.2 **Finds**

3.2.1 No finds were recovered during the watching brief.

3.3 **Palaeo-environmental remains**

3.3.1 No deposits suitable for paleo-environmental sampling were encountered during the watching brief.

4 **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

4.1.1 The watching brief did not identify any archaeological remains in the foundation trenches. It did however shed light on the construction of the existing 1870s building, revealing the dimensions of the original foundation cut (4) and the stepped style of the brick foundations.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Height</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>
1	Layer	0.4 m	-	-	Alluvial deposit	-
2	Layer	0.2 m	-	-	Subsoil	-
3	Layer	0.17 m	-	-	Buried topsoil	-
4	Cut	0.6 m	0.26 m	0.8 m	Foundation cut	-
5	Structure	-	-	-	Foundation plinth to 1871 building	-
6	Fill	0.6 m	0.26 m	0.8 m	Backfill of foundation trenches	-
7	Layer	0.15 m	-	-	Made ground	-

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

HCC, 2005 Romsey Library, Station Road, Romsey: *Archaeological Watching Brief and Building Recording*

OAU, 1992 Field Manual (ed. Wilkinson D)

OA 2005 Romsey Library, Station Road, Romsey: *Written Scheme of Investigation*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Romsey Library, Station Road, Romsey

Site code: A2005.21

Grid reference: SU 35428 21451

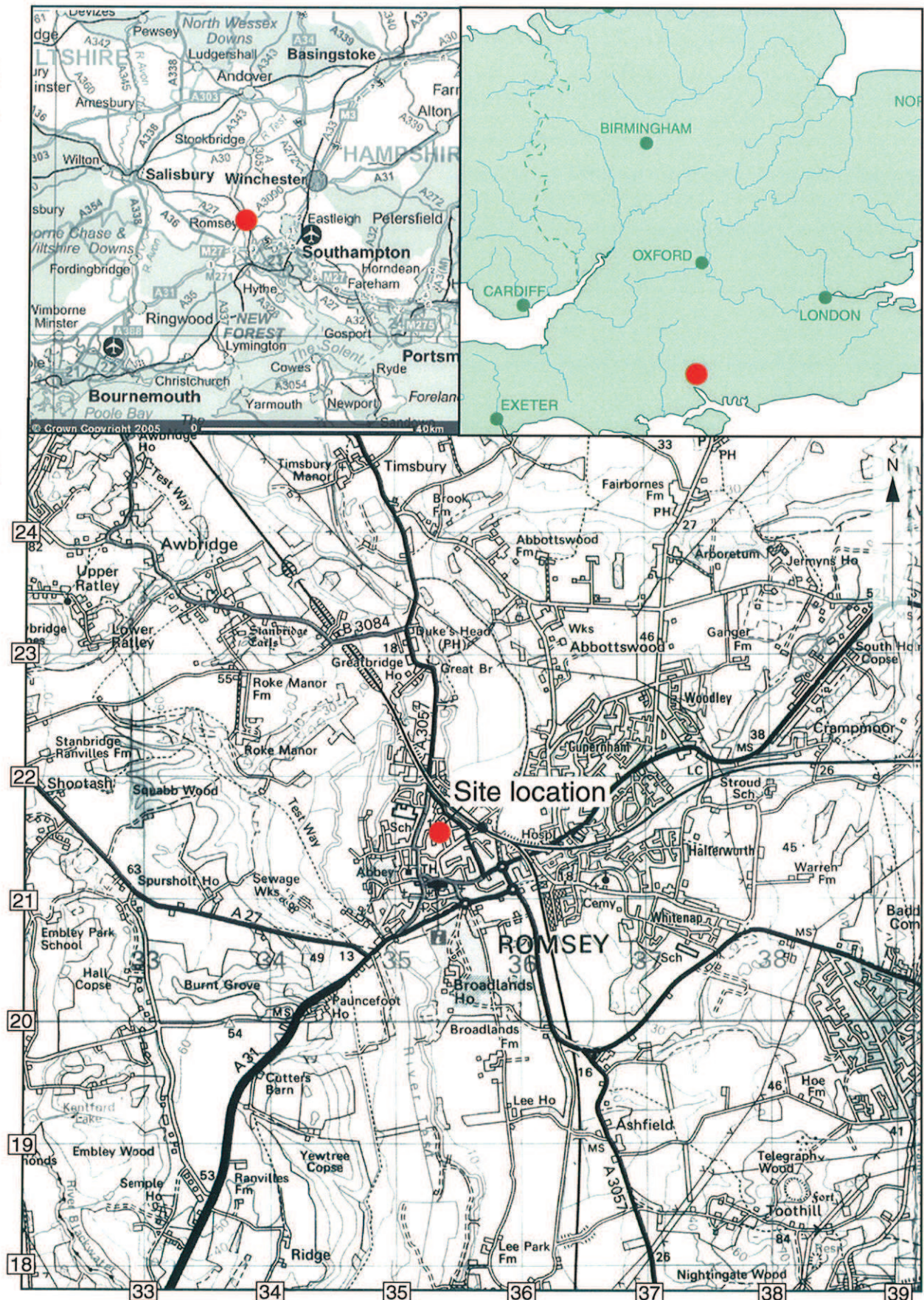
Type of watching brief: Monitoring of groundworks during the construction of an extension to Romsey library

Date and duration of project: 2 visits to site between 18th and 22nd August 2005

Area of site: 400 m²/0.04 ha

Summary of results: The watching brief revealed the foundations of the existing library building and the buried topsoil from the construction of the building in the 1870's.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Hampshire County Museums Service in due course, under the following accession number: A2005.21



Scale 1:50,000

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Figure 1: Site location

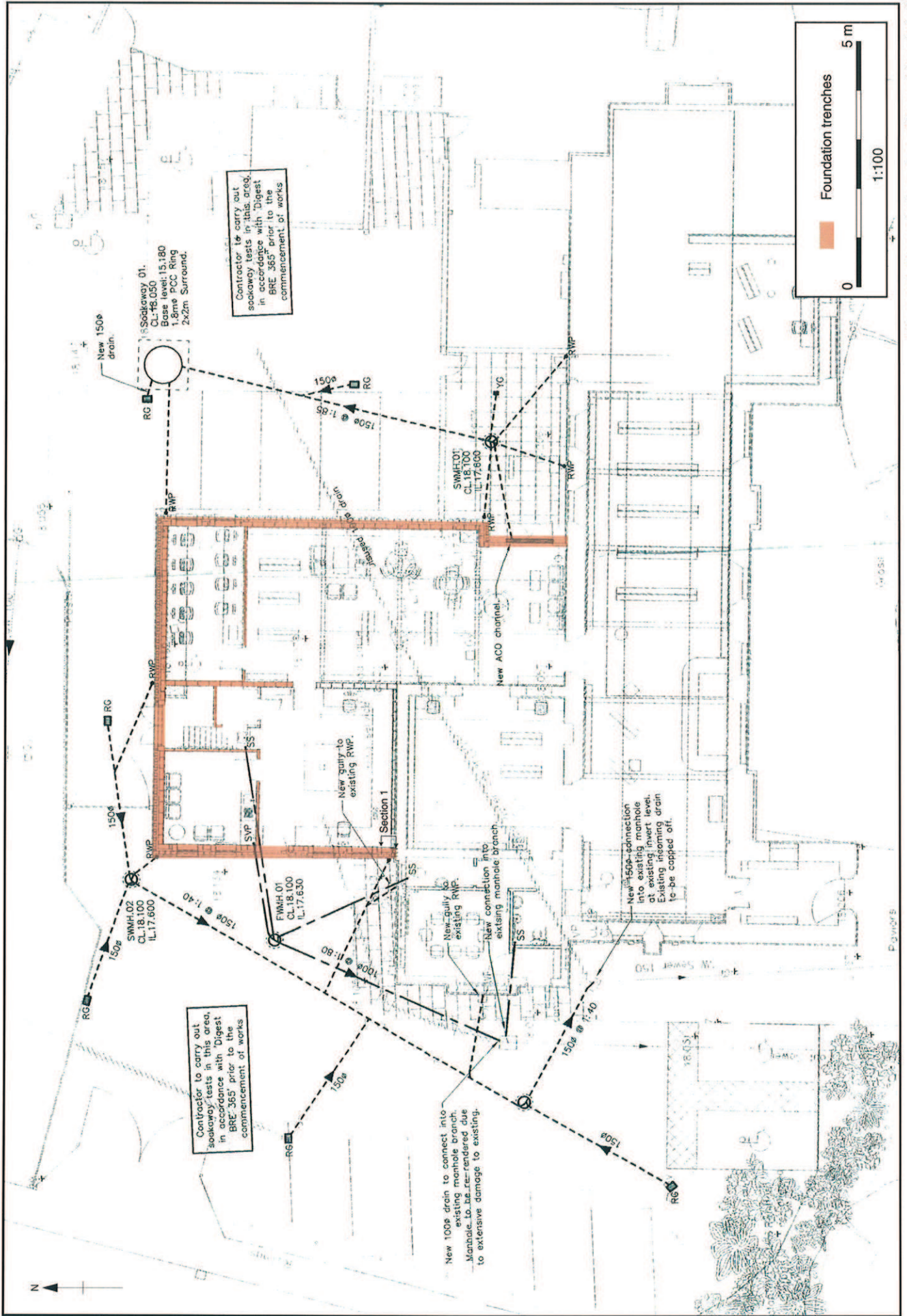


Figure 2: Foundation plan of watching brief

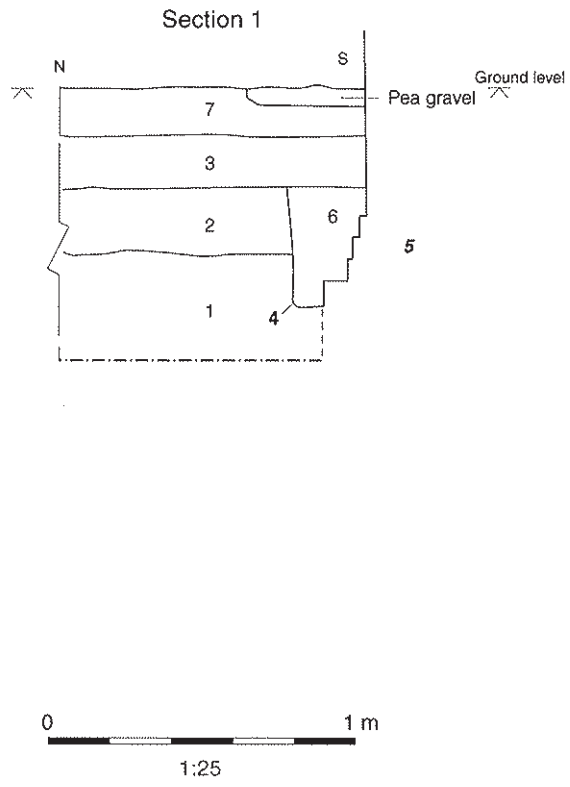


Figure 3 : Section of foundation trench



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