

5 Sunning Avenue
Sunningdale
Ascot
Berkshire



Archaeological Evaluation Report



Oxford Archaeology

December 2003

Client Name:
Nightingale Developments Ltd.

Issue N^o: 1
OA Job N^o: 2096
Planning Ref N^o: 03/84001
NGR: SU 9407 6662

Client Name: Nightingale Development Ltd.
Client Ref No:
Document Title: 5 Sunning Avenue, Sunningdale, Ascot, Bershire
Document Type: Evaluation
Issue Number: 1
National Grid Reference: SU 9407 6662
Planning Reference: 03/84001
OA Job Number: 2096
Site Code: ASSUN 03
Invoice Code: ASSUNEV
Receiving Museum: Reading
Museum Accession No: TBC

Prepared by: Mike Sims
Position: Supervisor
Date: 19th December 2003

Checked by: Andrew Holmes
Position: Contracts Officer
Date: 22th December 2003

Approved by: Nick Shepherd
Position: Head of Fieldwork
Date: 24th December 2003

Signed.....



Document File Location H:\PROJECTS\Berkshire\Windsor & Maidenhead
W&M\4917 Sunning Avenue, Sunningdale\evRep.doc
Graphics File Location Server 10:/oaupubs 1/Ato H*ASSUNEV*5 Sunning
Avenue, Sunningdale*LM*09.12.03
Illustrated by Lucy Martin

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Oxford Archaeology

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Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES
t: (0044) 01865 263800
f: (0044) 01865 793496

e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk
w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk

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SUMMARY

On the 3rd December 2003, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at 5 Sunning Avenue, Sunningdale, Ascot, Berkshire on behalf of Nightingale Development Ltd. The evaluation revealed deep deposits of post-medieval topsoil overlying natural alluvial silts and sand. A modern soakaway, wastepit and drain was identified. No further archaeological features or deposits were observed, although demolition deposits related to the former house (20th century) were observed throughout the site.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 On the 3rd December 2003 OA carried out a field evaluation at 5 Sunning Avenue, Sunningdale, Ascot, Berkshire on behalf of Nightingale Development in respect of a planning application for redevelopment of the site (Planning Application No. 03/84001). A brief was set by, and a WSI was agreed with Kevin Beachaus of the Babbie Group, representing the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (Babbie 2003, OA 2003).

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The development site is presently a levelled area of ground following the demolition of the former dwelling at 50 m OD. The site was bound to the south by Sunning Avenue, to the north by a School playing field and to the east and west by private dwellings (NGR: SU 940 662)(Fig.1) and occupies roughly 0.1 hectares, situated on sand and pebbles, part of the Bagshot beds.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1.1 The archaeological background to the evaluation was the subject of a separate study during preparation of the WSI, the results of which are summarised below.

2.1.2 The site of the proposed new dwelling is located immediately to the south of the line of the Roman Road from Silchester to London, known as the Devils Highway. There is a possibility that the site may contain other remains from the Roman period.

2.1.3 The site and its immediate locale has produced no other archaeological evidence to date.

3 EVALUATION AIMS

3.1.1 To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the proposed development area.

3.1.2 To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present.

3.1.3 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features.

3.1.4 To make available the results of the investigation

4 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

4.1 Scope of fieldwork

4.1.1 The evaluation consisted of three trenches measuring 10 m long by 1.8 m wide, representing a 10 % sampling of the site (Fig.2). Trench 1 was aligned roughly south west by north east along the northern edge of the building footprint, Trench 2 was aligned roughly south east by north west across the eastern edge of the footprint and Trench 3 was aligned roughly north south along the western edge of the footprint.

4.1.2 The overburden was removed by a mechanical excavator (JCB) fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under close archaeological supervision. Because of live electrical services at the south east end of Trench 2, its location was moved along its axis 2 m to the north-west from its original agreed position.

4.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

4.2.1 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.

4.2.2 The trenches and archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:50 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).

4.3 Finds

4.3.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and bagged by context.

4.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence

4.4.1 No deposits suitable for Paleo-environmental sampling were identified during the evaluation.

4.5 Presentation of results

4.5.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below, with the stratigraphic inventory of each trench in Appendix 1. Section 7 comprises an overall discussion and interpretation.

5 RESULTS: GENERAL

5.1 Soils and ground conditions

5.1.1 The site was located on level ground, with Trench 1 cutting through garden and landscaping deposits and Trenches 2 and 3 composed of demolition debris over buried soils. The boundaries of the layers and the edges of the cut features were clearly defined. Conditions were dry and visibility was good.

5.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits

5.2.1 Distribution of the archaeological deposits and features was equally sparse between the three trenches.

6 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

6.1 Description of deposits

Trench 1 (Fig. 3 Plan 1)

6.1.1 The natural encountered at the base of this trench was a fine very pale yellow sand (105), containing lens of Fullers earth. This natural was cut by a steeply sloped pit (104) (Fig.4 Section 1), measuring 0.4 m deep by at least 2.5 m by 1 m wide. Pit 104 was filled with a friable dark brown silt loam (103) containing C19th brick and pottery fragments. This feature and the natural sand was then sealed by a layer of a friable dark grey sandy loam (102) approximately 0.25 m thick, representing buried topsoil. Cutting through 102 was a modern soak-a-way (106), with vertical sides approximately 2 m² by at least 0.6 m deep, associated with the demolished house. A yellow clay sand (101), excavated to form the soak-away was cast up to the east end of the trench, forming a layer 0.12 m deep, overlying the buried topsoil. Overlying 106, 101 and 102 was a layer of a friable mid brown sandy silt (100), measuring 0.25 m thick, representing a modern landscaping layer.

Trench 2 (Fig. 3 Plan 2)

6.1.2 The base of this trench was a fine very pale yellow natural sand (206). This was overlaid by a layer of friable pale brown sandy clay (205) (Fig.4 Section 2), ranging in depth from 0.1 m to 0.2 m. Cutting through 205 were two modern features, a modern drainage trench (202) and a modern pit (204). 202 measured 0.6 m wide by 0.4 m deep and ran south-west by north-east across the trench. This French drain was filled with a mixture of silts and fragments of brick and concrete (201). Pit 204 was a vertically sided feature with a flat base measuring 0.8 m² by 0.6 m deep and was filled with a tenacious yellow sandy clay (203) which contained brick fragments identical to those from the demolished house. Sealing these modern features was an overall of yellow brown clay sand (200), measuring 0.3 m deep, containing numerous fragments of demolition debris from the recently demolished house.

Trench 3 (Fig. 3 Plan 3)

6.1.3 As with the previous trenches, this trench was excavated down to the top of the same natural sand (303) (Fig 4 Section 3). Overlying 303 was a layer of a friable pale brown sandy clay (302), not seen at the northern end of the trench but gradually increasing in depth to over 0.3 m deep at the southern end. Cutting through 302 and 303 at the southern end of the trench was a modern soak-away (304), measuring roughly 3 m² by 0.6 m deep. This was filled by a mixture of silty clay and fragments of brick and concrete (201), associated with the demolished house. An overall layer of a yellow brown clay sand (300) sealed the length of the trench. This ranged in depth from 0.3 m to 0.6 m in deep and containing numerous demolition debris this represents the same phase of post-demolition levelling as 200 in Trench 2.

6.2 Finds

- 6.2.1 All the finds recovered, dated to the late 19th and 20th centuries and included bottle glass, transfer printed pottery and fragments of brick and tile. These finds were evaluated and recorded on site but were not retained.

7 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

7.1 Overall interpretation

- 7.1.1 The evaluation produced no evidence of significant activity prior to the 19th century within the footprint of the proposed new dwelling.
- 7.1.2 The presence of a buried topsoil directly overlying the natural sand in Trench 1 suggests that the area may have originally been arable in nature, possibly as market gardens prior to development in the 19th and 20th century.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Ctxt No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth. (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i> Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
1						
	100	Layer	0.0 m - 0.25 m	Modern landscaping or levelling layer	Pottery, Brick, Bottle glass	C20th
	101	Layer	0.25 m - 0.4 m	Cast up material from 106	-	C20th
	102	Layer	0.4 m - 0.6 m	Buried topsoil	Pottery, Brick	C20th
	103	Fill	0.4 m - 0.75 m	Backfill of Pit 104	Pottery, Brick	C20th
	104	Cut	0.4 m - 0.75 m	Probable rubbish pit	-	C19th
	105	Layer	0.4 m	Natural sand	-	-
	106	Cut	0.25 m - 0.7 m	Modern soak-a-way	Brick	C20th
2						
	200	Layer	0.0 m - 0.3 m	Levelling layer	Brick, Tile, Iron	C20th
	201	Fill	0.3 m - 0.55 m	Fill of French drain 203	Brick, Concrete	C20th
	202	Cut	0.3 m - 0.55 m	French drain	-	C20th
	203	Fill	0.3 m - 0.9 m	Fill of Pit 204	-	C20th
	204	Cut	0.3 m - 0.9 m	Pit	-	C20th
	205	Layer	0.3 m - 0.6 m	Sandy clay	-	-
	206	Layer	0.6 m	Natural Sand	-	-
3						
	300	Layer	0.0 m - 0.3 m	Levelling layer	Brick, Tile, Iron	C20th
	301	Fill	0.3 m - 0.9 m	Fill of 304	Brick, Tile, Concrete	C20th
	302	Layer	0.3 m - 0.6 m	Sandy clay	-	-
	303	Layer	0.6 m	Natural sand	-	-
	304	Cut	0.3 m - 1.2 m	Modern soak-away	-	C20th

APPENDIX 2 REFERENCES

- Babtie, 2003 *Brief for an Archaeological Evaluation at 5 Sunning Avenue, Ascot, Berkshire*
- OAU, 1992 *Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D. Wilkinson)
- OA, 2003 *5 Sunning Avenue, Sunningdale, Ascot, Berkshire Written Scheme of Investigation*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: 5 Sunning Avenue, Sunningdale, Ascot, Berkshire

Site code: ASSUN 03

Grid reference: SU 9407 6662

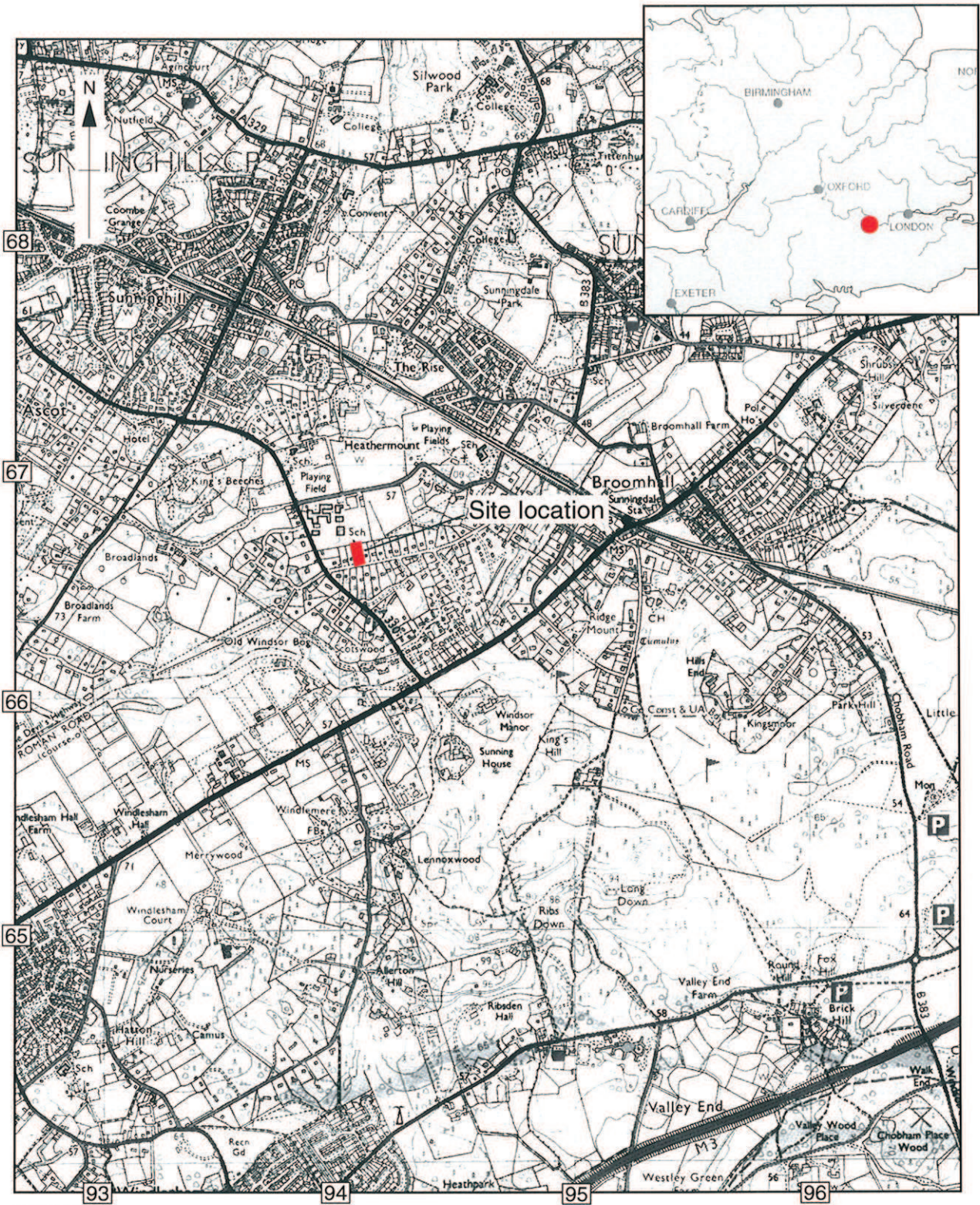
Type of evaluation: 3 trenches, each 10 m x 1.8 m

Date and duration of project: 3rd December 2003, 1 day

Area of site: 0.1 Hectare

Summary of results: A 19th century soak-away, drain and rubbish pit were found. No evidence for earlier 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 Reading Museum in due course



Scale 1:25,000

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Figure 1: Site location

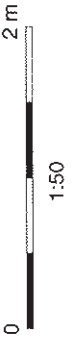
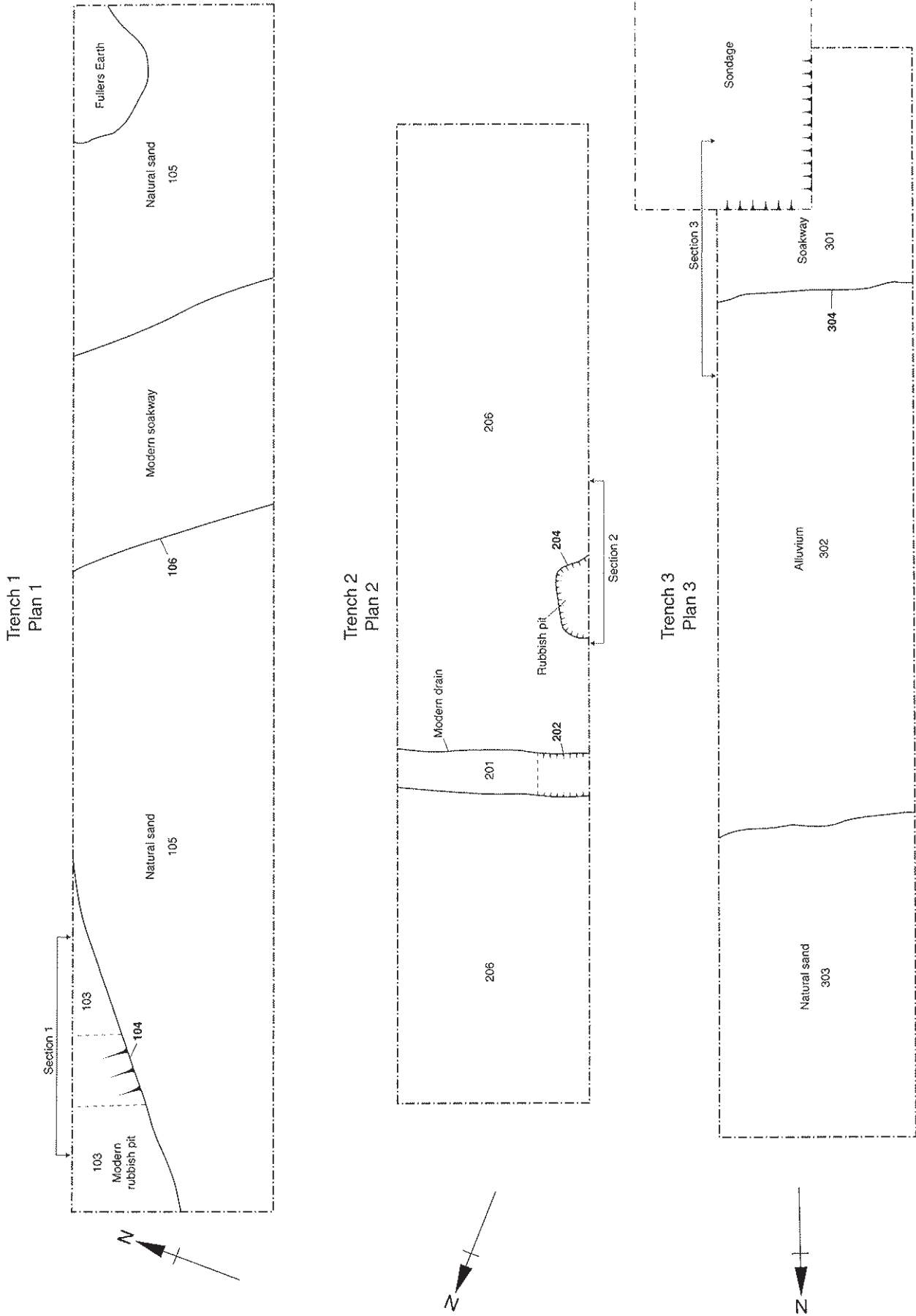


Figure 3: Trench plans

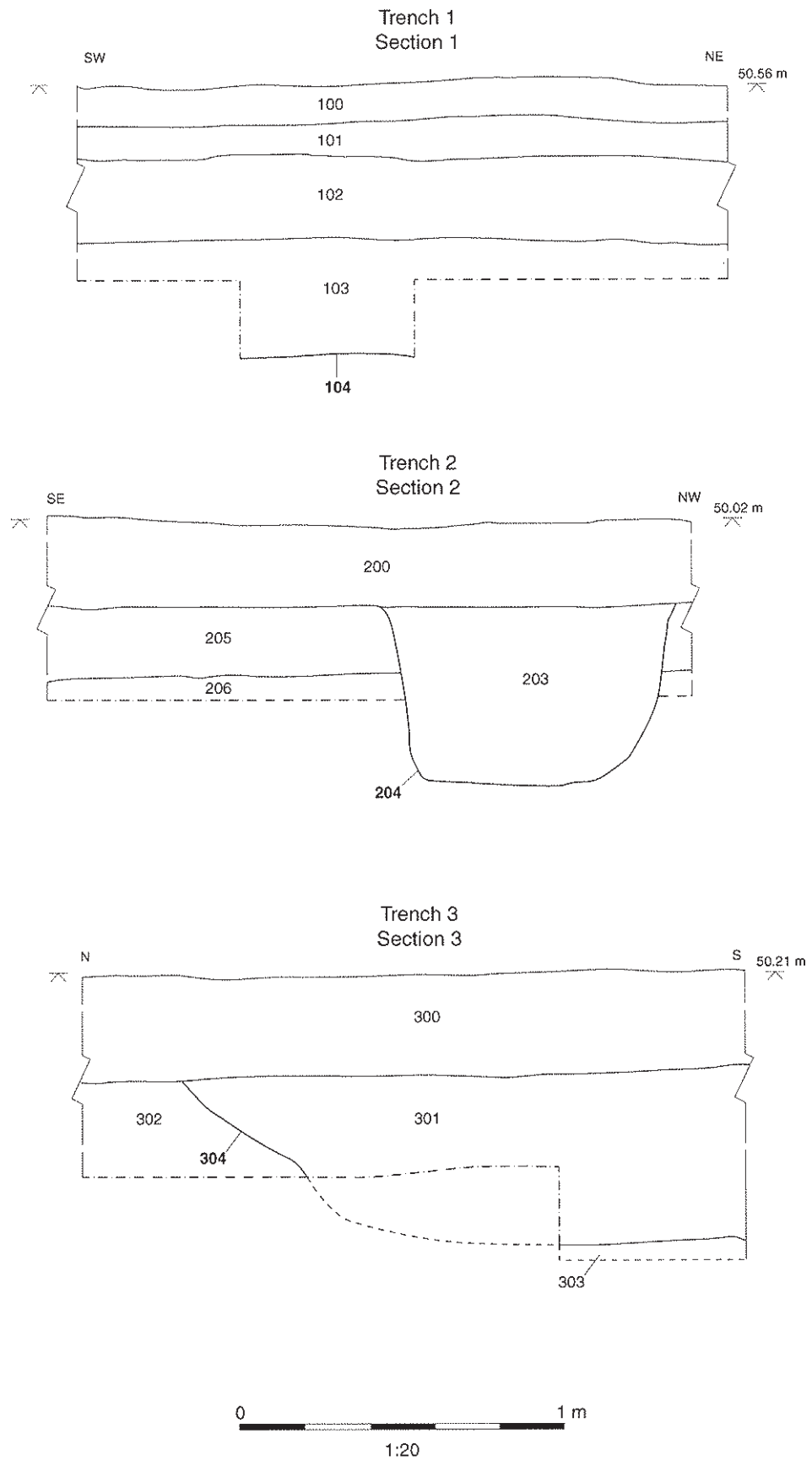
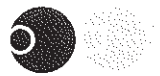


Figure 4: Trench sections



Oxford Archaeology

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES

t: (0044) 01865 263800
f: (0044) 01865 793496
e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk
w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk



Oxford Archaeology North

Storey Institute
Meeting House Lane
Lancaster LA1 1TF

t: (0044) 01524 541000
f: (0044) 01524 848606
e: lancinfo@oxfordarch.co.uk
w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk



Director: David Jennings, BA MIFA FSA

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