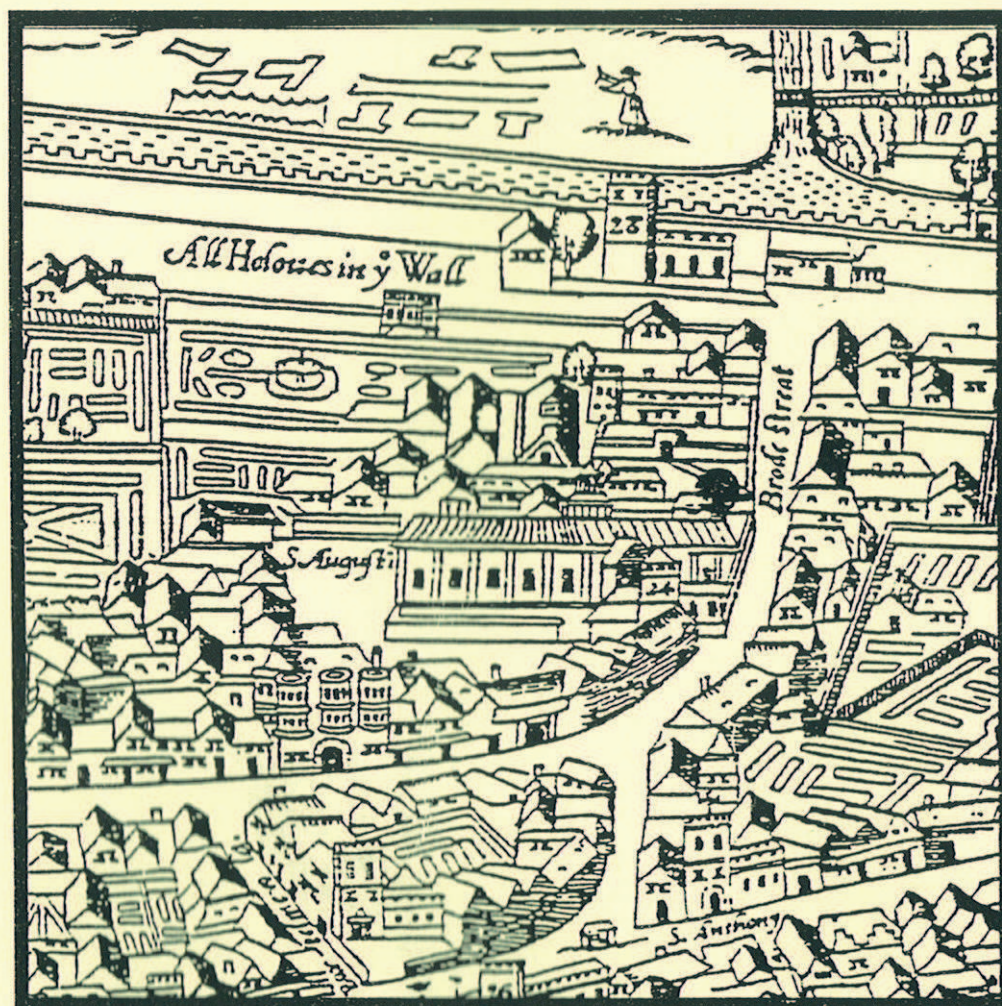


111 Old Broad Street  
London EC2

City of London

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Archaeological Investigation



OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

May 1995

## 111 OLD BROAD STREET, LONDON EC2

### Archaeological Investigation Report

#### Summary

A small excavation in the basement of 111 Old Broad Street clarified the apparent results of the earlier evaluation, revealing wall foundations probably relating to the Medieval Friary and evidence of Roman activity.

#### Introduction Fig. 1, 2.

The Oxford Archaeological Unit was commissioned by Grosvenor Developments, through Dr. P. Wardle (Consultant), to undertake an archaeological investigation on the site, as a part of the plans to redevelop 111-115 Old Broad Street.

The site is located within the eastern precinct of the house of the Hermit Friars of St Augustine of Hippo, popularly known as the 'Austin Friars'. Excavations in parts of the precinct (Cater, 1912; 1915), Grimes 1968, and Greatorex and Watson 1989) have established a fairly clear ground plan of the Friary, with the exception of the East end of the Church.

An evaluation was undertaken by the Museum of London Archaeological Service (MOLAS) in September/October 1994, in the basement and sub-basement of the site, to determine the degree of preservation of archaeological deposits and any constraints that would follow on future development of the site.

The apparent results of the evaluation Test Pit 4a were deemed to require clarification by further excavation, to enable a judgement to be made on the positioning of a proposed pile and pile cap.

#### Methodology

An area 4 m x 2 m of the concrete basement floor slab was removed. This area incorporated the 2 m x 1 m Test Pit 4a (TP4a).

The modern floor make-up was removed, and the resulting surface cleaned by hand, establishing the exact limits of TP4a, and defining the archaeological horizon.

By minimal excavation of hitherto undisturbed archaeological deposits to the S of TP4a, the interpretation of the archaeology was clarified. It was decided, in consultation with Dr. Wardle, that the contingency for further excavation to a maximum depth of 1 m would not be necessary.

All on-site recording was undertaken in accordance with the requirements and practices of the OAU Field Manual (ed D. Wilkinson 1992).

The investigation trench was called Test Pit 4b.

All archaeological contexts were numbered in a continuous sequence from 100; where such contexts correspond to those revealed in the evaluation, the evaluation context number appears in square brackets [ ]. Hence context 107 [39].

The site work took place on the 18th and 19th April 1995.

### Results Fig. 3, 4.

Stratigraphically, the earliest deposit was a layer of brownish red silty clay 113, containing 30% flinty gravel, noted at the S end of TP4b. This survived at a level of OD 10.56 m. It was cut by a possible pit 111, itself heavily truncated to the W and N by later activity.

111 contained a fill (112) of dark brown silty clay with approximately 40% crushed chalk. Sufficient was excavated to retrieve one small piece of red clay tile, and a small sherd of 2nd century Roman pottery.

Sealing the fill 112, but surviving only in a narrow N-S strip, was an apparently dumped layer of dark brown sandy silt (109), up to 0.20 m deep, which in section showed evidence of lenses of pale reddish brown sand/sandy silt within it.

Cutting the N end of 109, and oriented W-E was the S face, and some of the core, of a wall foundation 107[39]. Approximately 0.85 m of the length of the wall was revealed, in the SE corner of TP4b. It was cut to the W by a modern pipe trench (105), and had evidently been removed, to the N, by TP4a.

The surviving S face, of roughly worked medium/large chalk blocks was revealed to a depth of 0.20 m. The wall continued below the bottom of the excavation. The core of the wall comprised chalk rubble in a matrix of mid brown decayed mortar and grey clay. A fragment of red tile, provisionally dated as medieval was retrieved from within the wall fabric, during the cleaning of the wall surface.

Dumped against the S face of 107 was a coarse compacted gravel layer (108), up to 0.15 m deep, filling a vertical sided, flat bottomed feature (110) which was evident as a N-S cut through the layer 109. This cut did not appear to have truncated the underlying 112 and 113.

Sealing the top of the gravel 108 and the wall 107 was a thin crust of compacted

silty clay and mortar lenses (103), approximately 0.06 m deep. This was cut, on the W side of TP4b, by a N-S pipe trench (105), apparently contemporary with the existing basement floor. Where 103 survived, it was sealed by the gravel make-up (104) for the floor slab.

Beyond the N limit of TP4a, excavation was severely restricted by the manhole (106) associated with the pipeline (105). Only a small area of a layer of sand 114, which appeared to be dumped, was revealed. This was not excavated.

The backfill of TP4a was not excavated, beyond the retrieval of a small deposit of redeposited human bone, presumably the same bones found in the evaluation.

### Discussion

An insufficient area of the earliest deposit (113) was exposed to enable a confident interpretation of it to be made. Conceivably it could represent a supra-natural brickearth, overlying natural gravel. Equally it could be a dumped deposit; if so, it can be tentatively dated to before the 2nd century, given the dating evidence found in the feature 111.

Interpretation of the chalk foundation (107)[39] is hampered by apparent inconsistencies in the evaluation report. The plan of the chalk foundation [39] appeared to be 180° out in its orientation, and the sections did not correspond in their definition of archaeological interfaces.

Although any interpretation of stratified deposits within a trench the size of TP4a would be difficult, the interpretation of the chalk foundation as representing the junction of an E-W foundation with two N-S foundations is not convincingly born out, either by the evidence of TP4b or examination of the records of TP4a.

No evidence was seen, either in plan or in section, for the continuation of the wall to the N in the small area opened in TP4b.

Clearly the W-E face of 107 found in TP4b indicates that there is no continuation of the footing to the S. Whereas the evaluation interpretation suggests a continuation of the footing to the N, the section of the E side of TP4a indicates a stepped face, presumably oriented W-E. A measurement from the lower face on TP4a to that found in TP4b suggests a foundation base width for a W-E wall of approximately 2.0 m. (see Fig 4)

It would therefore be reasonable to argue that the footing is that of a single W-E wall, and, from the tentative dating evidence retrieved, possibly represents part of the N wall of either the nave or the chancel of the medieval church.

As noted in TP4b, this wall is truncated by the modern pipe trench to the W, but appears to continue beyond the trench to the E.

S of the wall 107 the dumped gravel 108 could represent the make up for a contemporary floor, since removed. The overlying crust of mortar and compacted

silt, 103, which spread over the wall remains, presumably represents the trampled construction surface of the modern basement floor.

The presence of a the manhole 106, and the pipeline trench 105 could explain the large cut [33], seen in the W side of TP4a, as being the construction cut for the drain. The sandy deposit, 114, revealed in the N of TP4b, is presumably the equivalent of [35], and also represents modern backfilling.

The human bones were probably disturbed originally by the construction of the drain, and presumably indicate a burial in the vicinity.

### Conclusion

It is apparent that, where not truncated by existing modern concrete beams, pile caps and drains, archaeological deposits of considerable depth survive to a height of approximately 10.80 m O.D.

It appears likely that the safest interpretation of the revealed deposits is that they represent the N wall of the nave or chancel of the medieval Church, and that there is evidence of earlier, Roman activity.

Given the known areas where the archaeology has been destroyed or truncated (including the area of TP4a), the most vulnerable area for the construction of further piles and caps would appear to be immediately to the E of TP4b.

Alan Hardy  
OAU May 1995

OLD BROAD STREET. LONDON EC2 OBT95

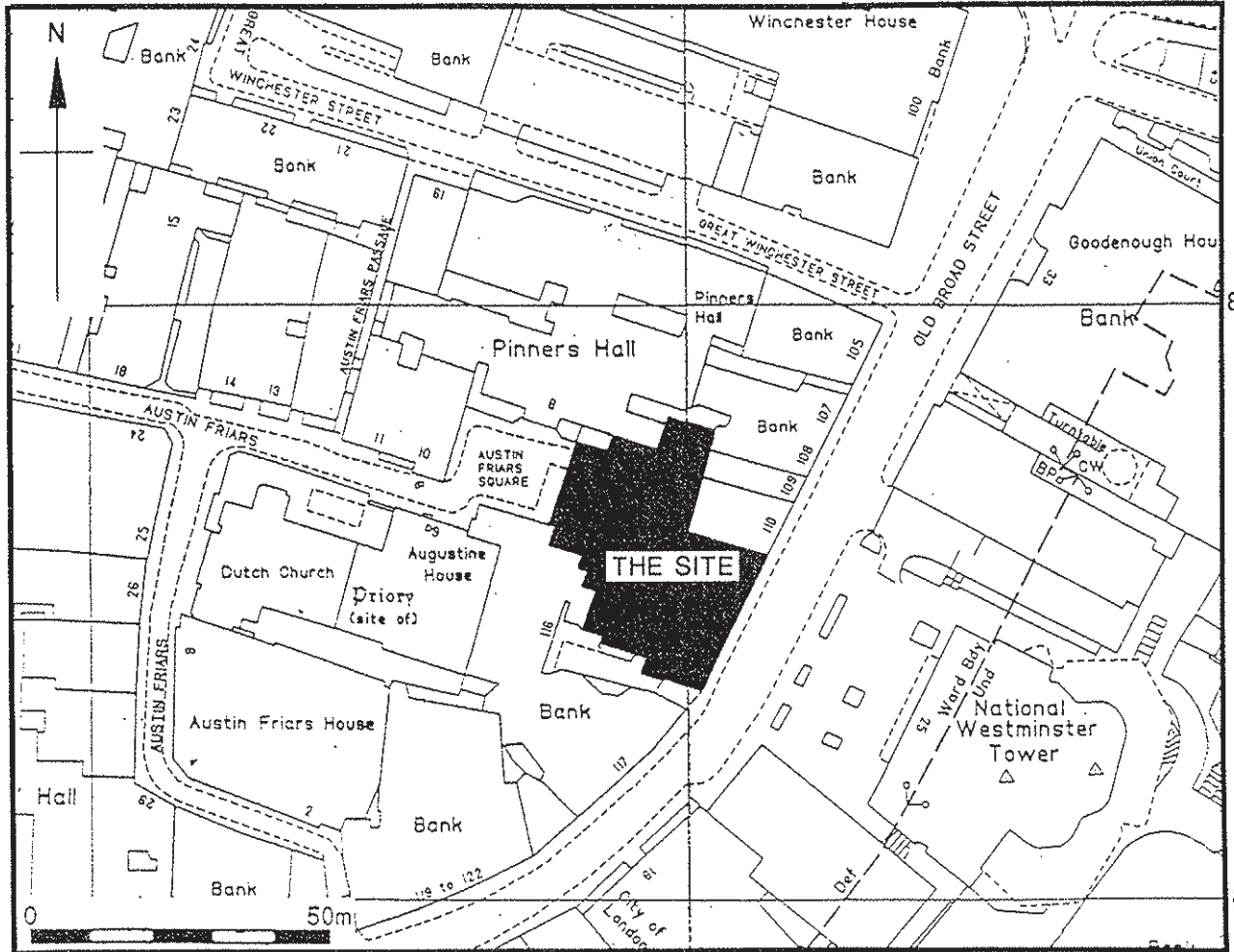
TEST PIT 4b STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX

102		Backfill	\	) TP4a
		Cut	/	
101				
		Concrete Slab		
100 [33]		Make up for 100		
104 [34]				
106	105	104	Manhole, Drain, Backfill	
			Construction surface	
103			Medieval floor make up	
108			Cut for 108	
110			Medieval Chalk Wall	
			Medieval(?) build up	
107 [39]			Fill of 111	
			Roman(?) Pit	
109			Supra-natural or dumped layer	
112				
111				
113				

3290

3300

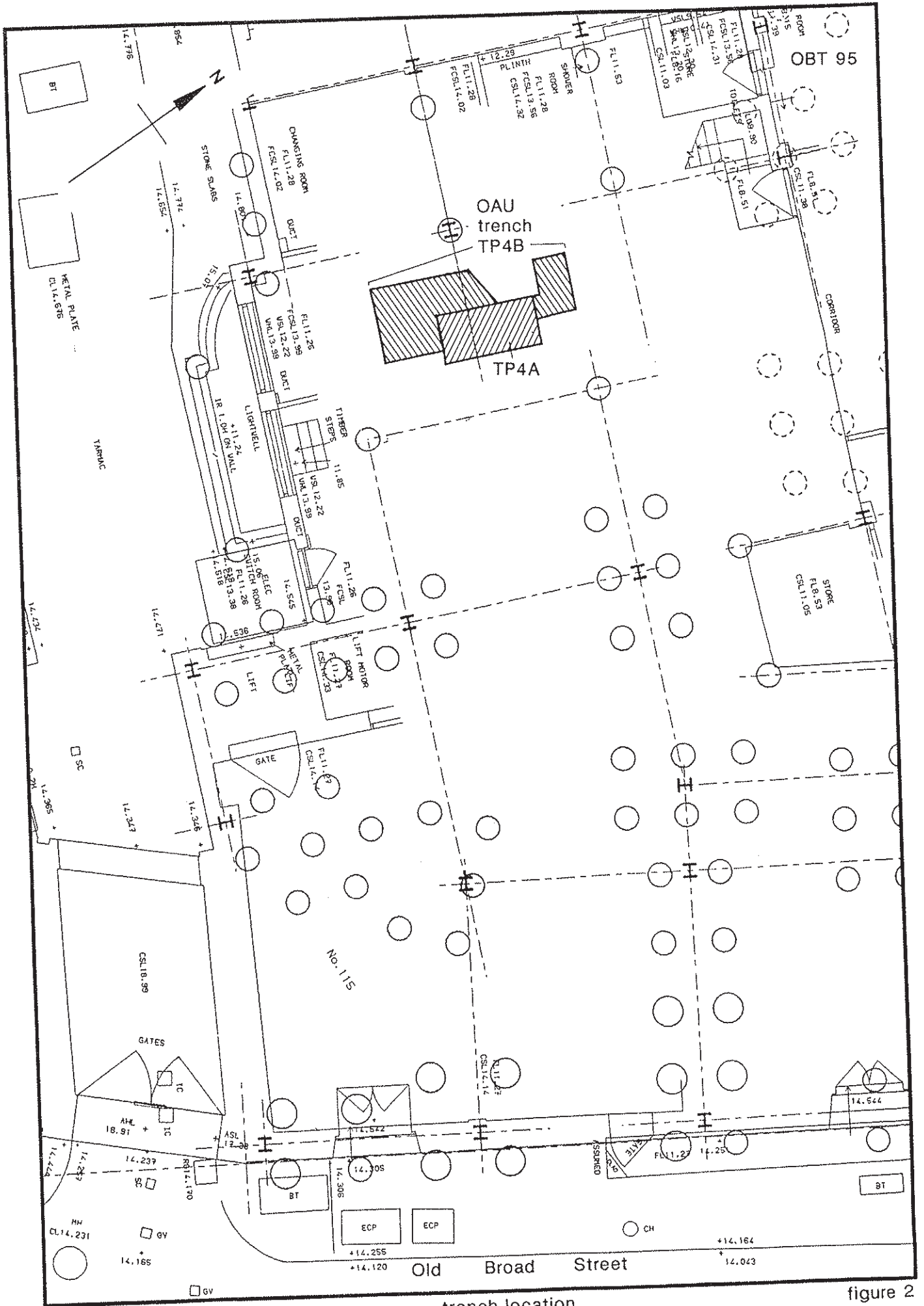
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scale 1:1250

site location

figure 1

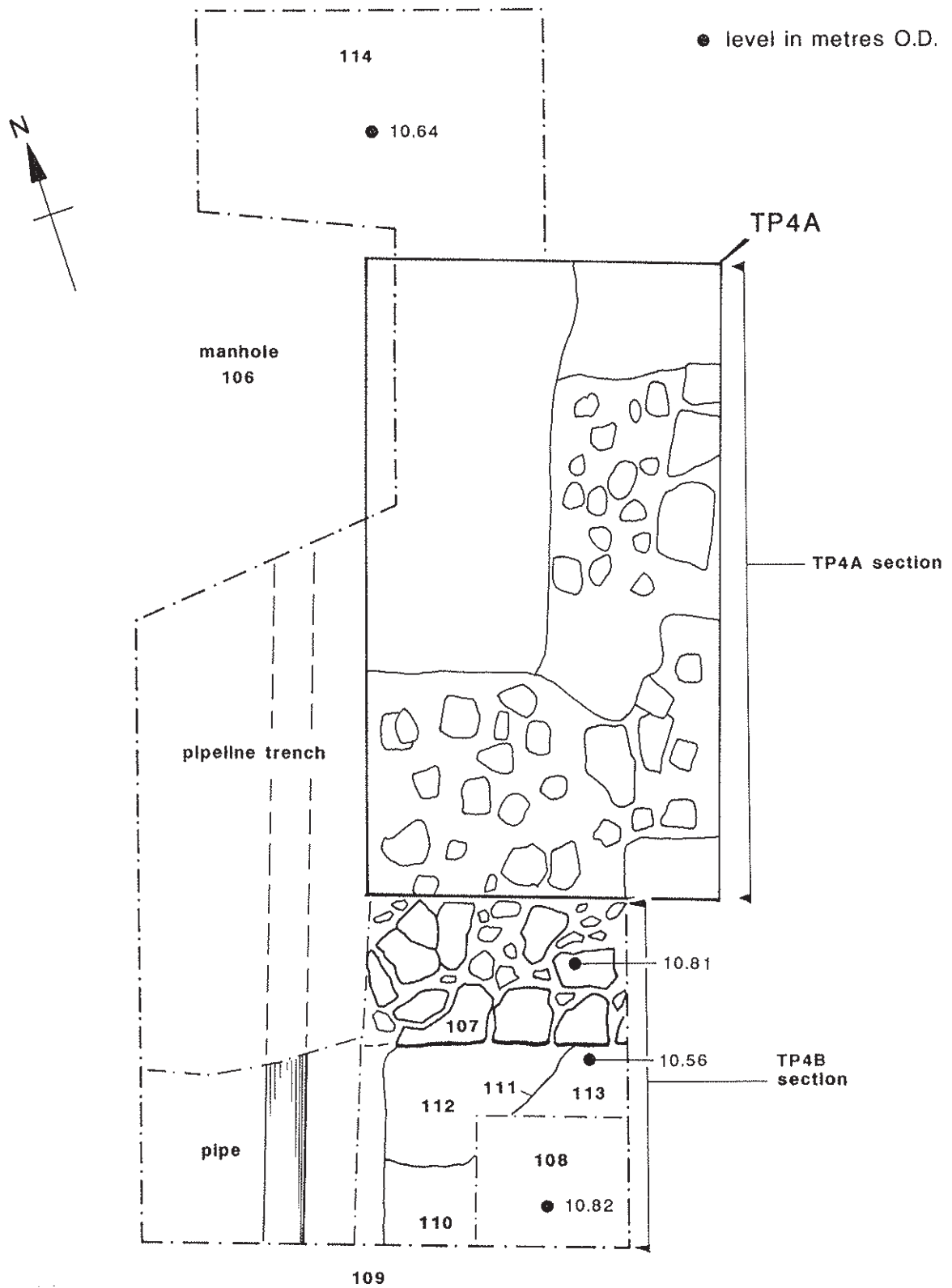


scale 1:100

trench location

figure 2

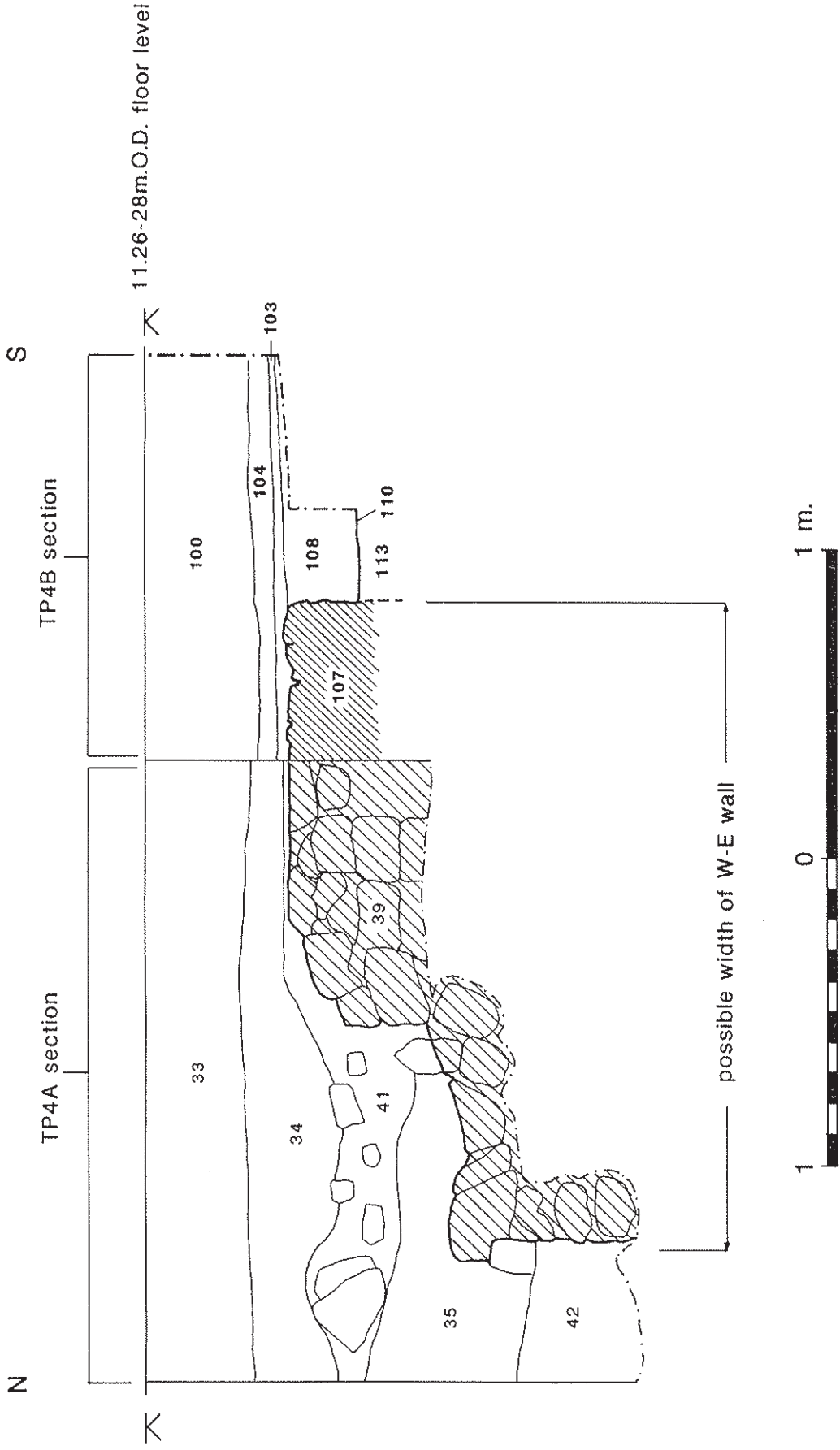




scale 1:20

trench plan

figure 3



scale 1:20

N-S section

figure 4