90 - 93 Broad Street
Reading
Berkshire

Archaeological Evaluation

Oxford Archaeology

19th February 2002

Client Name:
John Mowlem and Company PLC

Issue N^{O}: 1
OA Job N^{O}: 1136
Planning Ref N^{O}: 00/07330/FUL/KM
NGR: SU 7142 7342

Client Name:	John Mowlem & Company PLC
Client Ref No:	RD/N5543
Document Title:	90-93 Broad Street, Reading: Archaeological Evaluation
Document Type:	Evaluation
Issue Number:	1
National Grid Reference:	SU 7142 7342
Planning Reference:	00/01330/FUL/KM
OA Job Number:	1136
Site Code:	REBS01
Invoice Code:	REBSEV2
Museum Accession No:	-
Prepared by:	Dave Thomason
Position:	Project Supervisor
Date:	25th January 2002
Checked by:	Dan Poore
Position:	Project Manager
Date:	1st February 2002
Approved by:	R J Williams Signed.....
Position:	Director: Business Development and Operations
Date:	19th February 2002
Document File Location	Projects on Server 5\REBSEV2_BROAD_STREET_READING\Eval Rep
Graphics File Location	Server 4\oaupubs1\alldrawings\REBSEV_BROAD_STREET_READING
Illustrated by	Anne Dunkley

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 Archaeological Unit Limited is a Registered Charity No: 285627

John Mowlem & Company PLC

90-93 Broad Street, Reading, Berkshire

NGR SU 7142 7342

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

SUMMARY

Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at 90-93 Broad Street, Reading, Berkshire (NGR SU 7142 7342), on behalf of John Mowlem and Company PLC. The evaluation revealed the remains of walls, floors and basements belonging to 19th-century properties that would have fronted Chain Street, to the east of the site. A flint wall had been incorporated into one of the properties, but had originally been part of an earlier structure, as it was abutted by a rammed chalk floor which was seen to be significantly earlier than one of the 19th-century walls. Below this floor were dumped layers overlying medieval pits and ditches.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In January 2002, OA carried out a field evaluation at 90-93 Broad Street Reading, Berkshire on behalf of John Mowlem and Company PLC in respect of a planning application for the re-development of the former Boots the Chemist site (Planning Application No.00/01330/FUL/KM). A brief was set by and a OA Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) subsequently agreed by Kevin Beachus of the Babtie Group, Archaeological Advisors to Reading Borough Council. The development site is situated at NGR SU7142 7342 and is 0.12 hectares in area (Fig. 1). The evaluation trench was situated to the south-east of the development area in a location where, from the engineers survey plans, no intrusion from current basement structures was expected (Fig. 2).

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site lies on brick-earth and second terrace gravels overlying clay and Upper Chalk bedrock. The site is located between the Rivers Kennet and Thames at *c* 45 m above OD. The site is situated on land previously occupied by Boots the Chemist which has now been demolished as part of the current programme of redevelopment for the site. The development area is bounded on the eastern side by Chain Street, and by Broad Street to the north. The Church of Saint Mary's lies to the south of the site and the new Oracle shopping complex is located approximately 200 m to the south east.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological background to the area under evaluation has been the subject of a separate desk study (*Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd, November 2000*), the results of which are summarised below. The site itself had produced no significant archaeological evidence prior to this phase of fieldwork.

1.3.2 Though no archaeological finds or deposits have been recorded on the proposal site, it lies in an area of known archaeological and historical significance. Limited evidence of activity during the prehistoric and Roman period has been recorded in the centre of Reading. Most recorded activity of this date is focused beyond the town, particularly to the south of the River Kennet. However, the lack of evidence in the town centre is likely to be due to destruction of such deposits during Reading's expansion rather than the absence of settlement or activity during these periods.

1.3.3 The town of Reading is thought to have been founded during the Saxon period, when it was likely to have been focused on the site of St Mary's Church, which lies to the immediate south of the proposal site. Documentary evidence (specifically the Anglo Saxon Chronicles) suggests it was a Royal vill. A fortified camp built by the Danes in 870-871 lies to the east of the site, where the Kennet joins the Thames. Pagan Saxon burials (5th century) have also been found at the mouth of the Kennet. The County Sites and Monuments Record indicates the Saxon town (RD3906) as being located to the south of St Mary's Church. The existing church has remains of Saxon date within its structure and a burial and a coin hoard dating to the 9th-century have also been recorded within the church burial grounds (RD 11341). Otherwise the archaeological record for this part of Reading is limited and any additional data would be highly significant.

1.3.4 During the medieval period Reading expanded rapidly, mostly to the north of the old Saxon town. The proposal site would have been at the heart of the medieval settlement, with properties fronting on to Broad Street. Broad Street and Friar Street were the main thoroughfares at the time. The arrival of the Abbey, to the east of the proposal area, in the early 12th-century encouraged the further expansion of the town and further increased the importance of Broad Street, which runs up to the Abbey. Medieval sherds have been found to the immediate west of the proposal site, but archaeological data relating to the street frontage and the medieval tenements likely to have occupied the proposal site and the surrounding area is very limited.

1.3.5 Cartographic evidence indicates that the proposal site has been occupied by buildings since the 16th century. Until at least the mid 1870's, these buildings focused on the north and east frontages, with the rear areas used as yards and gardens, but by 1900 only the south-west corner was unoccupied by buildings (1st edition OS 25 inch map).

1.3.6 The demolished building (formerly Boots the Chemist) was mostly modern, but there was some evidence of earlier (Victorian or Edwardian) masonry. There is also potential for the survival of foundations and other structural remains of earlier buildings within the existing building.

1.3.7 Major excavations were carried out by OA (then Oxford Archaeological Unit) on the site of the Oracle shopping complex in 1997-98. The nearest site to the evaluation area was located immediately to the south-east of the junction between Gun Street and Minster Street. The excavation of the site revealed a very well preserved

sequence of domestic and industrial activity either side of the Holy Brook dating from the Saxon period, with evidence for timber framed buildings of late Saxon date, overlain by two phases of medieval stone hall, with a 15th-century tannery and the 17th-century Oracle workhouse constructed over the medieval structures (*B. Ford, D. Poore, and D. Wilkinson, April 1999*).

2 EVALUATION AIMS

2.1.1 To determine or confirm the general nature of the remains present.

2.1.2 To determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of the remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence.

2.1.3 To determine or confirm the approximate extent of the remains.

2.1.4 To determine the condition and state of preservation of the remains.

2.1.5 To determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present.

2.1.6 To determine or confirm the likely range, quality and quantity of the artefactual evidence present.

2.1.7 To determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence and the forms in which such evidence may be present.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork

3.1.1 The fieldwork followed a programme of building recording carried out by OA on the fabric of the standing building prior to its demolition, the results of which are reported on separately. The trenched evaluation work was carried out post-demolition and comprised a single trench covering a 10% area of the area of the development site not occupied by the basements that formed part of the Boots building (Fig. 2).

3.1.2 The intention was to achieve a 10% sample of the non-basemented area. The trench was initially machined to a width of 4.4 m, in anticipation of the need for a step 1.2 m wide around the 2 m width of the trench itself, to allow for working at depths exceeding safety limits. This strategy was maintained for 4 m from the south-eastern end of the trench, until it became clear that the depth to the natural deposits did not exceed safety limits. The remainder of the trench was simply machined at a width of 2 m, to an overall length of 10 m. The overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision by a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket.

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

3.2.1 The trench was located by an OA surveyor using a Leica Series 300 Total Station. Trench edges and grid points were tied in using survey data supplied by John Mowlem and Company Plc.

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

3.3 Finds

3.3.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and were bagged by context number. See Section 5.2 for further detail on the finds.

3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence

3.4.1 Soil samples were taken of a layer which was cut by medieval features, and thought to represent evidence of early cultivation on the site. See Section 5.2 for further detail.

3.5 Presentation of results

3.5.1 The individual structures, cuts and deposits are described below, starting with the earliest and ending with the most recent. Using the stratigraphic matrix and the pottery spot dates, the sequence has been broken down into four broad phases: medieval, early post-medieval, later post-medieval and modern, and described phase by phase. Undatable deposits and features have in some cases been allocated to phases based on feature type and inclusions within deposits (such as building material), and as such the phasing should be treated as very tentative at this stage.

3.5.2 The more significant remains are then discussed and provisional interpretations offered.

4 RESULTS: GENERAL

4.1 Distribution of archaeological deposits

4.1.1 The majority of the proposed development area is heavily truncated by basements which formed part of the now demolished building. This phase of the evaluation of the development area targeted an area situated at the south-eastern limit of the site which is known to lie outside those basements, and as a result a well preserved sequence of medieval and post-medieval deposits was found, with only partial truncation caused by basements and structures associated with 19th-century occupation of the site.

5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

5.1 Description of deposits

Natural sub-soils (Figs 3, 4, 5a and 5b)

5.1.1 The earliest deposits encountered were the naturally formed deposits of the second terrace gravels (21) and the overlying orange brown silty-sand brick-earth (22). The upper limit of deposit 22 was encountered at *c* 42.70 m OD at the south-eastern end of the trench.

Medieval

5.1.2 Overlying deposit 22, and seen across the entire length of the trench, was a layer (23=128) which, while similar in consistency to the brick-earth, was olive-brown and contained a lower percentage of sand. It was up to 0.3 m thick and contained a single sherd of highly abraded white slipped, but un-glazed, pottery. As this sherd was recovered during the processing of a soil sample from this deposit, it was not seen by Paul Blinkhorn (and thus is not mentioned in his report), and has therefore been examined by Jane Timby, who tentatively identifies it as Roman. The soil sample is discussed in Section 3.4.

5.1.3 Deposit 23=128 was cut by several pits and possible ditches. Cut 25 (Figs 3 and 5) was an east-west aligned ditch located in the south-east corner of the trench which had been truncated by later basement structures. The ditch was 0.70 m wide and was seen to extend 1.10 m within the trench. This feature survived to a depth of *c* 0.5 m and was filled by a single deposit (26) of dark brown clay silt from which 12th-13th century pottery was recovered. Pit 27 was seen in Section 100 (Fig. 5a) at the south-east end of the trench and was 0.3 m deep and 0.75 m wide; its fill (28) was similar to deposit 26.

5.1.4 Pit 54 (Fig.5b) was 0.5 m wide at its upper observed limit. This cut had very steep side, and contained two fills (79 and 55) both of which contained 12th-13th century pottery. Also located in the eastern part of the trench was pit 52 (Fig.5b) which cut the fills of pit 54. This feature was roughly circular in plan with the sides initially being cut to an almost vertical angle and breaking to a slightly convex angle of *c* 50°. This pit was *c* 1.4 m wide and *c* 0.75 m deep, and was filled by a single deposit (133) of compact grey black clay silt.

5.1.5 Located fairly centrally in the trench was a cluster of intercutting features, the earliest of which were pits 115 and 116 (Figs 4 and 6b). Cut 115 appeared to have a relatively straight eastern edge that curved slightly towards the north-west before being truncated. Pit 115 contained a single fill (113) of dark grey brown clay loam material which contained charcoal flecks and occasional flint gravels, as well as 12th-13th century pottery. Cut 116 was a circular pit 0.7 m wide and excavated to a

depth of 0.12 m. It was filled by 117, a dark grey brown sandy loam with occasional charcoal flecking.

5.1.6 Pit 77 (Figs 4 and 6b) was circular in plan and cut the fills of features 115 and 116, with a diameter of 1.20 m and a depth of at least 0.55 m. The sides of the cut were seen to be steep sloping to a flat base. This pit had two fills, the primary fill (78) being a loose dark sandy loam 0.26 m thick, and the upper fill (114), also a dark loam 0.30 m thick (Figs 4 and 6). Pottery (13th century?) and animal bone were recovered from deposit 78.

5.1.7 Located at the western end of the evaluation trench was a group of five discrete pits: 94, 97, 101, 119 and 121 (Fig. 4) all of which cut through the possible ploughsoil deposit 128 (= 23). Pit 101 was 0.48 m wide and was filled with 96, a black brown clay silt deposit; it was not excavated. Cut 94 was a square or rectilinear feature that was 1.5 m wide and 0.1 m deep but was not fully excavated. The upper fill (95) was a black brown clay silt with occasional flecks of charcoal and lime mortar. Pit 97 was a square feature 1 m wide and 0.12 m deep. This feature had a single fill (98) of compacted mid brown clay silt and appeared truncated. Pit 119 had been truncated and was circular in plan and 0.8 m wide and 0.2 m deep, containing a single fill (120) of similar material to deposit 98, which contained 12th-13th century pottery. Pit 121 was circular in plan and had also been truncated. It was 0.9 m wide and 0.16 m deep and was filled with a single remaining clay silt deposit 122.

5.1.8 Cut 99 (Fig. 4) was only observed in plan at the western end of the trench. It was circular in form and was c 0.5 m wide, filled by a dark clay loam deposit (100) with occasional flecks of charcoal and mortar. This feature was heavily truncated by a later feature.

5.1.9 Overlying the fills of features 235 and 27 was deposit 29 (Fig. 5a), a layer of friable dark grey clay loam that was 0.30 m thick. Layer 29 was only observed in the eastern half of the trench, and contained 12th-13th century pottery. Layer 61 directly overlay deposit 29, and was 0.2 m thick; it was very similar in appearance to deposit 29 and therefore probably of a similar origin.

Early post-medieval

5.1.10 Cut 105 was a pit or possibly a ditch which truncated the upper fill (113) of cut 115 (Fig. 4) and was seen in section 105 at an oblique angle with a width of 1.20 m. This cut was not fully excavated, although it was seen to have two fills, 118 and 112. The first of the two fills (118) was a compact mid green brown silty sand of almost cessy material, the thickness of which was unknown. The upper deposit was (112) a compact mid brown grey sandy clay 0.20 m thick with an unknown extent. 16th-17th century pottery was recovered from this context.

5.1.11 Cut 103 was poorly defined but may have been a ditch (Fig. 4 and 6b). It was c 0.6 m wide and c 0.5 m deep, with sides sloping at 45^0. It contained five fills (110, 111,

109, 53 and 108) with probably residual 12th-13th century pottery recovered from fill 53. Cut 103 truncated pits 54, 77 and 105.

5.1.12 A possible east-west aligned linear cut (104), which had 45^0 sides sloping to a flat base, was seen to cut the fills of feature 103 (Fig. 6b). This cut had a width of 1.8 m and a depth of 0.4 m, and was filled by deposits 107 and 106. A flint wall (007) was seated over the deposit 106, and was centrally located over the same alignment as linear 104, which therefore may be its construction cut. This wall consisted of unworked flint nodules bonded with lime mortar (Fig. 3). The wall was revealed to a length of 3.5 m and a width of 0.34 m, and was 0.6 m deep. The structure was seen to sit on a slight off-set foundation protruding from its western face, constructed of flint and limestone blocks that were roughly square cut. Wall 007 was abutted by deposits 39 and 60 on its eastern side. These were clayey deposits that had a combined thickness of 0.6 m; deposit 60 contained 16th-17th century pottery. A compacted, or 'rammed' chalk and mortar floor or yard surface (006) abutted the eastern face of wall 007 and overlay make-up deposits 60 and 39. The surface was *c* 0.25 m thick and extended approximately 3 m to the east. Surface 006 was located at *c* 43.80 m OD.

5.1.13 Deposits 68 and 67 overlie the chalk surface 006 and are both grey black clay-silts that may represent horizons of occupation associated with surface 006. Deposit 68 was 0.02m thick and deposit 67 was 0.08 m thick. Both included 2-5% charcoal flecks.

5.1.14 Pit 51 cut surface 006 and deposits 68 and 67 (Figs 3 and 5), and was 1.2 m wide and recorded to a depth of 1 m - the bottom of this feature was not reached. It was circular in plan and had vertical sides. It was filled by a single homogeneous deposit (50) of degraded white calcareous material, probably lime. The fill of this pit was in turn cut by two circular features, the earliest of which was cut 56. This was 0.3 m in diameter and was observed to a depth of 0.15 m with a single fill (57) containing 16th-17th century pottery. This was truncated on its eastern edge by cut 58, a similar feature that had a diameter of 0.22 m and a depth of 0.2 m. This was filled by a single deposit 59 which contained residual 12th-13th century pottery. Both 56 and 58 seem to have been dug at an angle to the perpendicular, explaining their appearance in the section (Fig 5b).

5.1.15 A series of deposits, 89, 90, 91, 92 and 93 (Fig. 5a) appeared to have been dumped over the area of medieval pits 101, 94, 97, 119 and 12 at the western end of the trench. They had a combined thickness of 0.4 m and appeared to be designed to make-up the ground level. These layers contained substantial amounts of mortar and building debris, along with 16th-17th century pottery in deposit 89.

5.1.16 Cut 30 was located at the eastern end of the trench (Fig. 5a) and had a 'v'- shaped profile with a maximum width of 0.65 m and a depth of 0.6 m. The sides were very steep, sloping at 75^0 to a narrow concave base. This was filled by a single deposit

(31) of compacted flint and chalk. As the feature was only seen in section it is not clear whether it was linear or discrete.

Later post-medieval

5.1.17 At the western end of the trench, a series of substantial features were seen cutting from within 0.4 m of current ground level (only 18 and 129 are illustrated) and severely truncating earlier deposits, including early post-medieval dump deposit 17 (see above). Linear 129 was aligned east-west and had steep straight sides sloping at 80^0; it was 1.20 m wide and 1 m deep (Fig. 4). It was filled by a single deposit (130) which was a conglomerate of cement and brick rubble. North of this feature was a series of vertical cuts, including 18, which ran north-south for the short distance to the baulk. As with 129, these were filled with mixed soils and demolition deposits made up largely of brick and tile rubble. A pit with a 'v' shaped profile (16) cut into the fill of these features but was only seen in section. 19th century pottery was recovered from its fill, a loose rubble (19).

5.1.18 Overlying these features were layers of demolition debris (70 and 71). These were 0.16 – 0.20 m thick and consisted of fragmented ceramic building material and crushed mortar. Deposit 62 which overlay layer 17 was composed of degraded mortar and was 0.05 m thick (Fig. 6).

5.1.19 Group 131, at the western end of the trench, comprised walls 11 and 009 and the various contexts that made up the associated floor levels of 14 and 15 (Fig. 3). Wall 11 was an east-west aligned structure of red frogged bricks which was constructed with an English Bond form (stretcher header stretcher). It was 0.3 m wide and was observed for a length of 4.4 m. This wall was cut through the fill of cut 129 and butted the western face of wall 007, thereby re-using the alignment of the earlier flint wall to create a return to the west. Wall 009 was a brick addition to the southern end of wall 007, presumably to extend its original alignment. 009 was constructed from red frogged brick with a hard sandy mortar bond. This also was built in English Bond style and was 0.3 m wide with an exposed length of 1 m and a surviving height of 0.4 m. Butting these two wall additions was a mortar bedding layer (88) which was 0.03 m thick. This was a setting deposit for brick floor 14 and tile gully 102. Floor 14 was constructed from frogged red bricks laid on their edge and set at a right angles to the east-west wall 11. The open ceramic gully 102 was set along the line of the north-south wall 007 and it appears that the floor and gully were laid at the same time, with the bricks of the floor cut to accommodate the line of 102 when the joints met. The drainage tiles were 0.28 x 0.15 x 0.07 m and the exposed length of the drain run was 3.5 m.

5.1.20 A secondary phase to the construction of this structure comprised an additional surface placed over the brick floor 14, the gully 102 and the inner face of walls 007, 11, and 009. This phase began with the laying of a levelling skim of a sandy cement preparation layer (87) which then was overlain by a screed floor (15) and wall

coverings 12, 008 and 10. The screed was *c* 0.06 m thick and was laid to level of *c* 43.33 m OD.

5.1.21 At the eastern end of the trench were three contemporaneous structures (grouped as 76 (north), 001 (central) and 75 (south)). These were basements aligned with the north-south road to the east, Chain Street (Figs 2 and 3). The construction cut for this group of structures (49, filled by 73) was cut through the fill of lime pit 51, truncating its eastern edge and cutting down into natural brick-earth 22. Wall 003 was the main north-south rear wall for the three basements. It was constructed from red frogged brick in English Bond with a width of 0.4 m and an exposed length of 4.2 m. The bricks were laid as headers with a line of stretchers lain on the inner face for added thickness and support. This sequence was alternated by course. Wall 004 was an east-west aligned structure constructed as a single English Bond (single header, double stretcher). This wall was 0.24 m wide and was exposed to a length of 1.6 m, forming a partition between Group 76 and Group 001. Structure 001 was the central of the three basements. This was formed by walls 003, 004 to the east and north respectively and pier 005 and east-west wall 47 to the south. Pier 005 was a square structural support, possibly relating to an access or stairwell that was unexposed and related to the south-east basement, Group 75. 005 was 0.6 m square with three exposed off-sets of single course bricks at approximately half a brick width, inferring a load bearing structure. Wall 47 was an east-west partition of a narrow single course and, unlike the other walls described, was constructed in a stretcher bond which has less load bearing capacity and tensile strength than the English Bond used elsewhere. Group 001 also included floor 002 which was constructed from un-frogged bricks and three floor tiles 0.3 m square. These bricks and tiles were clearly re-used , possibly from a previously demolished structure that once stood nearby. Group 75 comprised east-west wall 47 and north-south wall 46, which probably formed a continuation of the previously described wall 003.

Modern

5.1.22 Service 34 cut wall 003 and floor 002 during the continued use of the basement structure 001, as a rebuild in the floor and wall could clearly be seen (Fig. 3). This cut housed a ceramic drain. The basements were backfilled with demolition debris 48 (fill of cut 74, possibly the cut for removal of wall 003) which was very loose material 1.5 m thick. Deposits 40 to 44 and 84, which in-filled structure 131 at the western end of the trench, seemed to be contemporary with deposit 48. These were deposits of mortar debris and building material dumps, were fairly compact and had a combined thickness of 0.8 m.

5.1.23 Cutting through the upper in-filling deposits was a man-hole structure (36) which was used as an access to drain 34. This structure was constructed from red frogged bricks and was 1.2 m square and disused by the time of the demolition.

5.1.24 All of these deposits were overlain by a concrete floor slab associated with the demolished building.

5.2 Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

Introduction

5.2.1 The pottery assemblage comprised 78 sherds with a total weight of 3068 g. All of the pottery was medieval or later, and consisted of types well known in Reading. Consequently, the fabrics were given the same codes as used for the material from the Reading Waterfront excavations (Underwood, 1997), as follows:

- FL: Flint-tempered ware. 12th – 13th century. 1 sherd, 8 g.
- SM: Medieval sandy ware. 12th – 13th century. 25 sherds, 394 g.
- SI: Medieval Sandy ware II. 12th – 13th century. 1 sherd, 4 g.
- Ssg: Medieval Sandy Glazed ware. 12th – 13th century. 6 sherds, 69 g.
- Sg: Surrey whiteware. Mid 13th – mid 15th C. 4 sherds, 35 g.
- Mg: 'Tudor Green' type ware. 15th – 16th century. 1 sherd, 4 g.
- SBf: Cologne/Frechen Stoneware. Late 15th – 17th century. 5 sherds, 697 g.
- REW: Red Earthenware. Mid 16th – late 18th century. 12 sherds, 509 g.
- BEW: Border Ware. Mid 16th – 18th century. 5 sherds, 228 g.
- TNG: Tin-glazed Earthenware. 17th – early 18th century. 1 sherd, 44 g.
- REWSL: 'Metropolitan'-type slipware. 17th century. 2 sherds, 655 g.
- WHSG: Staffordshire White Salt-Glazed Stoneware. 1720 – 1800. 6 sherds, 53 g.
- WHEW: Mass-produced white earthenwares. 19th – 20th century. 9 sherds, 368 g.

5.2.2 The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. The dates have been adjusted in relation to the evidence of the stratigraphic record.

Chronology

5.2.3 The range of ware types present indicates that there has been activity at this site from the immediate post-conquest period to the present day. Some later medieval wares, such as Cistercian ware and transitional earthenwares, are not represented, but this could easily be as much distortion caused by the relatively small assemblage size as chronologically significant. Further work should clarify the issue.

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

	FL		SM		SI		Ssg		Sg		Mg		SBf		REW		BEW		TNG		REWSL		WHSG		WHEW		
Cntx	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	Date
2																									1	10	19thC?
13															1	116									3	226	20thC
17															1	25	1	10									16thC?
19													5	697	5	177	2	35	1	44	2	655	6	53	1	6	19thC
26			1	30																							12thC??
29			6	107																							12thC?
48															1	55									1	21	19thC
53			1	61																							16thC?
55	1	8																									L11thC?
57															1	23											16thC?
59			1	9																							16thC?
60			1	23							1	4			1	9	1	29									16thC
69																									3	105	19thC
78			4	27			3	16	1	2																	M13thC
79			1	7																							12thC?
89			2	52											1	83	1	154									16thC
112							1	31							1	21											16thC
113			8	78	1	4	2	22																			12thC?
120									3	33																	M13thC
Total	1	8	25	394	1	4	6	69	4	35	1	4	5	697	12	509	5	228	1	44	2	655	6	53	9	368	

Animal Bone by Bethan Charles

Introduction

5.2.4 A total of 74 fragments (2313g) of bone were recovered by hand during the evaluation. Many of the bones were re-assembled reducing the fragment count to 58.

Methodology

5.2.5 The calculation of the species recovered from the site was done through the use of the total fragment method. All fragments of bone were counted including elements from the vertebral centrum, ribs and long bone shafts.

5.2.6 It was attempted to separate the sheep and goat bones using the criteria of Boessneck (1969), Prummel and Frisch (1986) in addition to the use of the reference material housed at OA. However, since no goat bones were positively identified all caprine bones have been recorded as sheep.

5.2.7 The ageing of the animals was based on tooth eruption and epiphyseal fusion. Silver's (1969) tables alone were used to give timing of epiphyseal closure for the cattle and sheep (All data can be found in the primary recording). Cattle tooth eruption and wear was measured using Halstead (1985) and Grants (1982) tables.

5.2.8 The sex of the animals was ascertained depending on the preservation of indicative fragments of bone. Metrical data was recorded on all suitable complete and fragmented bones as defined by von den Driesch (1976).

Results

5.2.9 The majority of the bones were in good condition with little attritional damage. Butchery marks were identified on 18 of the cattle and sheep bones indicative of carcass dismemberment. Two fragments of sheep bone from 13th-century deposits were burnt and one fragment from context 66 had canine tooth marks.

5.2.10 The majority of the assemblage appears to be indicative of butchery waste mostly consisting of fragments from the skull, feet and ribs. Elements from cattle and sheep were the most numerous identified from within the assemblage. It appears from the small collection that cattle may have provided most of the meat at the site. A small number of cattle horncores were recovered from context 112. This may only be butchery waste or may indicate that the inhabitants were treating animal hides. A single pig tooth was identified from context 78.

5.2.11 One fragment of fallow deer bone was identified from a 13th-century pit. Fallow deer was thought to have been introduced to Britain by the Normans and is not uncommon during the medieval period. Rabbit bones were found in both the early and late medieval period. Rabbit was also introduced to Britain during the early medieval period.

Table 2. Total number of animal bone according to period

Period	Context	Cattle	Sheep	Pig	Fallow Deer	Rabbit	Unidentified	Total
Medieval	**26**	1	2	0	0	0	0	3
	66	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
	78	8	4	1	1	0	9	23
	120	4	0	0	0	1	3	8
Early post-medieval	**17**	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	60	1	0	0	0	0	2	3
	89	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
	112	7	1	0	0	1	1	10
Later post-medieval	**19**	1	3	0	0	0	1	5
Total		26	10	1	1	2	18	58

Potential

5.2.12 The assemblage recovered from the evaluation demonstrates the good preservation of the bone from the site. Environmental sampling is likely to provide additional information on variety of diet, particularly with the recovery of smaller bones such as bird, fish and small mammal. The small number of bones recovered from the site provide a superficial indication as to the typical animal husbandry practices and status of the inhabitants during separate periods of occupation. However, additional

work will almost certainly further illuminate our understanding of the economy of the site.

Carbonized plant remains and charcoal by Dana Challinor

5.2.13 Two samples were taken during the evaluation for the recovery of charred plant remains from two locations within the same deposit, layer 023. The samples were processed by flotation using a modified Siraf-type machine, with the flot collected on a 250μm mesh. After air-drying the flots were scanned for material under a binocular microscope at x10 and x20 magnification.

5.2.14 Both of the flots were small in size but dominated by charred material. Both contained similar assemblages, with no obvious differences. Wood charcoal was abundant with a mix of taxa present, including *Quercus* sp. (oak), *Prunus* sp. (cherry/blackthorn), Maloideae (apple, pear, hawthorn) and *Alnus/Corylus* (alder/hazel). All of these taxa are native British trees and therefore appropriate for any period. Reasonable quantities of cereal grain were also present - *Triticum* sp. (wheat) and hulled *Hordeum* sp. (barley) were noted. No chaff was evident and there were few charred weed seeds. Large amounts of uncharred *Sambucus nigra* (elder) seeds were, however, present. Other charred material included *Corylus avellana* (hazel) nutshell. Fish bones and scales were noted in both flots.

5.2.15 It is likely from these results that the sampled layer contained discarded domestic refuse with a range of foodstuffs present. There was little obvious modern contamination, although the elder seeds could be relatively late. The charred material was well preserved and indicates the potential for good economic information from any further excavations at the site.

6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Reliability of field investigation

6.1.1 The stratigraphic evidence encountered during the evaluation was well preserved, with significant deposits encountered 0.3 m below current ground level (bgl), and a sequence extending to a depth of 1.5 m bgl. The sequence was well dated by the pottery recovered, and can be broken into broad phases as described above. Even though truncation had occurred from 19th-century basement construction and modern services, the loss of stratigraphy was limited.

6.2 Overall interpretation

Summary of results

6.2.1 From previously gathered information, and the evidence under examination from the 1998-99 excavations at the Oracle shopping complex (OAU 1999), it was expected

that significant archaeological evidence of medieval occupation of Reading town centre would be encountered at this location. Later evidence of occupation through to the present day was also expected, as the area under evaluation was thought not to have been truncated by modern basement construction, as was the rest of the site.

6.2.2 The layer 23 (=128) that overlies the natural brick-earth appears to be a buried horizon. It has been suggested that this may represent an early medieval (or even earlier) plough soil, but only limited evidence for this was recorded during the evaluation (a single, small and highly abraded sherd of possibly Roman pottery) . The consistency of the deposit is very similar to that of the natural sandy silt material, but with marked discoloration. It is possible that this darker hue may be caused by leeching from the occupation and dump deposits directly overlying this layer. However, if this was the case, one would expect a gradual decrease in hue relative to depth from the overlying deposits, and not such a consistent colour change throughout the 0.25 m thickness of the deposit. The evidence recovered from the soil samples that were taken seems to suggest that this was a layer formed during a period of domestic occupation of the site, judging from the amount of organic refuse (cereal grain, hazel nutshell and fish bones and scales) found within the samples. This layer, being the earliest evidence of occupation on the site, may be the only indicator of activity relating to the Saxon Minster, assumed to have been located at or near the current site of St. Mary's Church, immediately to the south-west of the development area.

6.2.3 The earliest pits, ditches and layers are evidence of medieval domestic occupation of the site. The pits are probably rubbish pits located to the rear of early tenements fronting on to Chain Street. Broad Street was one of the main thoroughfares through the centre of the town, and it may be that the occupation of this area could be linked to domestic, artisan or industrial activities.

6.2.4 Ditch 25, located in the south-eastern corner of the trench, may indicate original boundary between the medieval tenements that have been projected from known medieval street frontages onto Chain Street. The pottery recovered from the fill of this feature was dated to the 12th-13th century. Pits 52 and 54 are also likely to have been refuse pits, with dark fills including pottery and some fragments of building material.

6.2.5 The earliest features encountered in the centrally excavated slot (Figs 4 and 6) did not provide conclusive evidence as to their function or character. Due to the width and depth of the slot, these features were not fully exposed or excavated, but pottery from the slight interventions that were made into the fills made their date of 12th-13th century fairly secure. It is possible that the north-south alignment of the linear feature 115 may be associated with the east-west line of ditch 25, forming an enclosure.

6.2.6 Three of the early features at the western end of the trench were also likely to have been rubbish pits, but dating evidence (13th century pottery) was only recovered from the fill of 119. The remaining two pits, also undated, were distinctive in that they were square or rectilinear; neither were exposed to their full extent and there function cannot be defined.

6.2.7 Deposits that seem to seem to represent early post-medieval dumping and levelling on the site were seen throughout the trench. Above these deposits are the surviving remains of the early post-medieval occupation of the site, specifically wall 007 and the associated chalk floor 006. This wall was constructed from flint nodules and occasional limestone and was a common construction technique from the 12th century onwards. The levelling horizons below it do provide dating evidence, pointing to a possible 16th-century origin. 16th century pottery was also recovered from features immediately pre and post-dating floor 006. It is unclear from the evidence of the evaluation what this wall was a part of. It can be assumed that it would have been part of a domestic building and the off-set foundation identified on the western face of the wall could relate to this being the original internal face, providing a seat for a wooden floor. Neither the east or western face of the wall were finished to a higher standard, making the identification of the internal and external face more difficult to ascertain. The associated chalk floor (006) appears to be fairly roughly laid and uneven. This may be indicative of an external yard surface and the horizon overlying this (068) may represent a phase of disuse being a mixture of silt and debris material.

6.2.8 The large lime filled pit (51) that was seen to truncate the eastern edge of the floor 006, may indicate industrial utility possibly associated with Chain Street. The pit may reflect the on-site manufacture or mixing of lime. If so, upon excavation one might expect to find that the pit was lined with either fired clay or a wattle wall, possibly with an air intake located to the north (unexcavated area) and in-situ burning horizons of charcoal and the raw material at the base of the feature. The pit was certainly large enough for this activity, and it may be that cuts 56 and 58 represent posts that either supported a cover for the pit, or they may even have been associated with the paddles that would have been attached to a horizontal cross beam to perform the mixing procedure (1991, Blair and Ramsay, p.24).

6.2.9 A significant part of the continuation of occupation of the site must be the re-use of existing alignments from the medieval street grid. As can be seen from the plans of the site (Figs 2, 3 and 4), the walls and structures encountered during the evaluation all follow the same north-south alignment of Chain Street to the east of the trench. This re-use of alignment is clearly represented by the secondary use of the wall 007 during the 19th century with the additional return of wall 011 and the extension to the south with the abutment 009. This re-use of existing structural alignment is an excellent indicator as to just how little the overall organisation of the central street system of Reading has altered during the past 700 years.

Significance

6.2.10 The site evaluated provided a useful insight into a sequence of relatively intact urban stratigraphy in an area of high archaeological potential. Heavy basement truncation has occurred elsewhere and the site has provided a rare opportunity to examine an element of the town's archaeological sequence, which is a quickly disappearing resource.

6.2.11 It is clear that there is a significant concentration of medieval and later activity in the area of investigation. This concentration is made even more significant due to the amount of truncation, and indeed, total removal of associated and contemporary horizons from the surrounding area.

7 IMPACT OF THE DEVELOPMENT

7.1.1 The impact on this area will be total as the construction of a basement is an integral part of the new development.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

CTX No.	Type	Width(m)	Thick(m)	Comment	Finds	No./Wt (g)	Date
1	Group			Basement			
2	Structure		0.08	Floor - Part of 1	pot	1 sherd	19th C
3	Structure	0.3		Wall - Part of 1 & 76			
4	Structure	0.24		Wall - Part of 1 & 76			
5	Structure	0.6		wall - Part of 75			
6	layer		0.2	Chalk surface			
7	Structure	0.37		Flint wall			
8	layer		0.03	screed lining on 7			
9	Structure	0.25		Wall addition to 7			
10	layer		0.03	screed lining on 9			
11	Structure	0.25		Wall			
12	layer		0.03	Screed lining on 11			
14	Structure		0.07	Brick Floor			
15	layer		0.08	Screed surface			
16	cut	0.9		Pit			
17	layer		1.2	Soil dump	pot/bone	2 sherds / 1 bone	16th C
18	cut	0.45	1.3	Demolition pit			
19	fill		1.4	fill of 16	pot/bone	22 sherds / 5 bone	19th C
21	layer			River Gravel Terrace			
22	layer			sandy silt natural			
23	layer		0.23	Buried horizon			
24	layer			Solution hole			
25	cut	unknown	0.5	Ditch			
26	fill		0.5	Fill of 25	pot/bone	1 sherd/ 3 bone	12/13th C
27	Cut	0.75	0.3	Pit			
28	fill		0.3	Fill of 27			
29	layer		0.3	Garden soil ?	pot	6 sherds	12th C?
30	cut	0.5	0.6	Pit			
31	fill		0.6	Fill of 30			
32	layer		0.24	demoltion layer			
33	layer		0.2	levelling layer			
34	cut	0.6	1.5	drain cut			
35	fill		1.5	fill of 34			
36	Structure	1.5		Man-hole			
37	cut	1.5		cut for 36			
38	fill			fill of 36			
39	layer		0.24	levelling layer			
40	layer		0.23	in-fill			
41	layer		0.34	in-fill			
42	layer		0.15	in-fill			

43	layer		0.1	in-fill			
44	layer		0.3	in-fill			
45	layer		0.15	in-fill			
46	Structure	0.32		Wall			
47	Structure	0.22		Wall			
48	layer		1.2	in-fill	pot	2 sherds	19th C
49	cut	0.5	0.9	Basement construction cut			
50	fill		0.95	Fill of 51			
51	cut	1.2		Pit			
52	cut	1.3	0.75	Pit			
53	fill		0.3	Fill of 103	pot	1 sherd	16th C
54	cut			Pit			
55	fill		0.4	Fill of 54	pot	1 sherd	11/12th C
56	cut	0.3	>0.2	Post-hole?			
57	fill	0.3	>0.3	fill of 56	pot	1 sherd	16th C
58	cut	0.25	>0.3	Post-hole?			
59	fill	0.25	>0.4	fill of 58	pot	1 sherd	16th C
60	layer		<0.6	dumping/levelling	pot/bone	4 sherds / 3 bone	16th C
61	layer	4	0.2	Garden soil ?			
62	layer	0.66	0.03	dumping of mortar			
63	cut	1.1	0.7	cut for 36			
64	fill		0.7	gravel fill of 63			
65	cut	0.28	0.3	Pit?			
66	fill	0.28	0.3	fill of 65	bone	2 bones	medieval?
67	layer		0.08	debris deposit over 68			
68	layer		0.02	occupation deposit over 006			
69	fill		0.74	fill of 126	pot	3 sherds	19th C
70	layer		0.12	dump of degraded mortar material			
71	layer	0.1	0.3	demoltion layer around wall 11			
72	fill	0.6	0.6	rubble fill of 18			
73	fill		0.8	fill of 49			
74	cut	unknown	>1.1	demolition/in-fill cut of basements			
75	Group	unknown	unknown	basement structure			
76	Group	unknown	unknown	basement structure			
77	Cut	>1.3	unknown	Pit?			
78	fill	>1.3		fill of 77	pot/bone	8 sherds / 23 fragments	Mid. 13thC
79	fill		<0.6	Primary fill of 54	pot	1 sherd	12th C?
84	layer		0.3	demoltion/levelling			
85	layer		0.3	demoltion/levelling			
86	layer		0.12	mortar/building debris			

87	layer		0.02	bedding layer for 15			
88	layer		0.03	bedding layer for 14			
89	layer	2.4	0.26	dump/levelling layer	pot/bone	4 sherds / 3 bone	16th C
90	layer		0.08	demolition			
91	layer		0.2	levelling layer			
92	layer		0.03	clay sealing deposit			
93	layer	2.4	0.04	clay mortar capping			
94	cut	1.2	unknown	square cut/well/pit			
95	fill		unknown	fill of 94			
96	fill		unknown	fill of 101			
97	cut	0.98	0.15	truncated pit			
98	fill	0.98	0.15	fill of 97			
99	cut	0.5	unknown	pit cut			
100	fill	0.5	unknown	fill of pit 99			
101	cut	>0.48	unknown	Pit?			
102	Structure	0.15		ceramic gully			
103	cut	2	0.45	truncated pit?			
104	cut	0.7	0.6	construction cut for 007??			
105	cut	<1	unknown	Pit?			
106	fill		0.3	secondary fill of cut 104			
107	fill		0.2	primary fill of 104			
108	fill		0.2	fill of 103			
109	fill		0.1	fill of 103			
110	fill		0.4	fill of 103			
111	fill		0.12	fill of 103			
112	fill		0.3	fill of 105	pot/bone	2 sherds / 10 bone	16th C
113	fill	1	0.35	fill of 115	pot	11 sherds	12th C?
114	fill	0.96	0.3	fill of 77			
115	cut	unknown	unknown	Pit?			
116	cut	0.7	>0.12	Pit?			
117	fill	0.7	>0.12	fill of 116			
118	fill			fill of 105			
119	cut	>0.75	>0.19	pit			
120	fill	>0.75	>0.19	fill of 119	pot/bone	3 sherds / 8 bone	Mid. 13thC
121	cut			Pit?			
122	fill			fill of 121			
123	Structure	0.32	0.1	single course modern wall			
124	fill		1.3	fill of 127			
125	layer		0.98	rubble infilling			
126	cut	0.6	0.66	trench cut/pit?/demolition			
127	cut	0.5	1.3	trench cut/demolition			

128	layer		0.3	same as 23, buried soil			
129	cut	1	1	trench/foundation cut			
130	fill	1	1	cemented rubble fill of 129			
131	Group			Basement			
132	cut	1.3	0.94	Demolition pit?			
133	fill		0.7	fill of 52			

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

Blair, J, and Ramsay, N, (Ed.), 1991 *English Medieval Industries*

Boessneck, J. 1969 Osteological Differences in Sheep (*Ovis aries* Linné) and Goat (*Capra hircus* Linné), in D. Brothwell and E. Higgs (eds) Science in Archaeology. *Thames and Hudson*. 331 - 358

Fell, D, Archaeological Services and Consulting Ltd, 2000 An Archaeological Desk Based Assessment : 90-93 Broad Street, Reading

Ford, Poore and Wilkinson (OAU), 1999 The Oracle Site, Reading Berkshire : Phase I Post-Excavation Assessment and Research Design

Grant, A., 1982 The Use of Tooth Wear as a Guide to the Age of Domestic Ungulates. In Wilson, B et al. Ageing and Sexing Animal Bones from Archaeological Sites. *BAR British Series 109.*

Halstead, P., 1985 A study of Mandibular teeth from Romano-British contexts at Maxey. In F. Pryor and C. French. Archaeology and environment in the lower Welland valley. Clo. 1. East Anglian Archaeology Report 27:219-224.

Oxford Archaeology, 2001 90-93 Broad Street Reading : Written Scheme of Investigation

Prummel, W and Frisch, H,-J. 1986 A Guide for the distinction of species, sex and body size in bones of sheep and goat. *Journal of Archaeological Science XIII. 567 – 77*

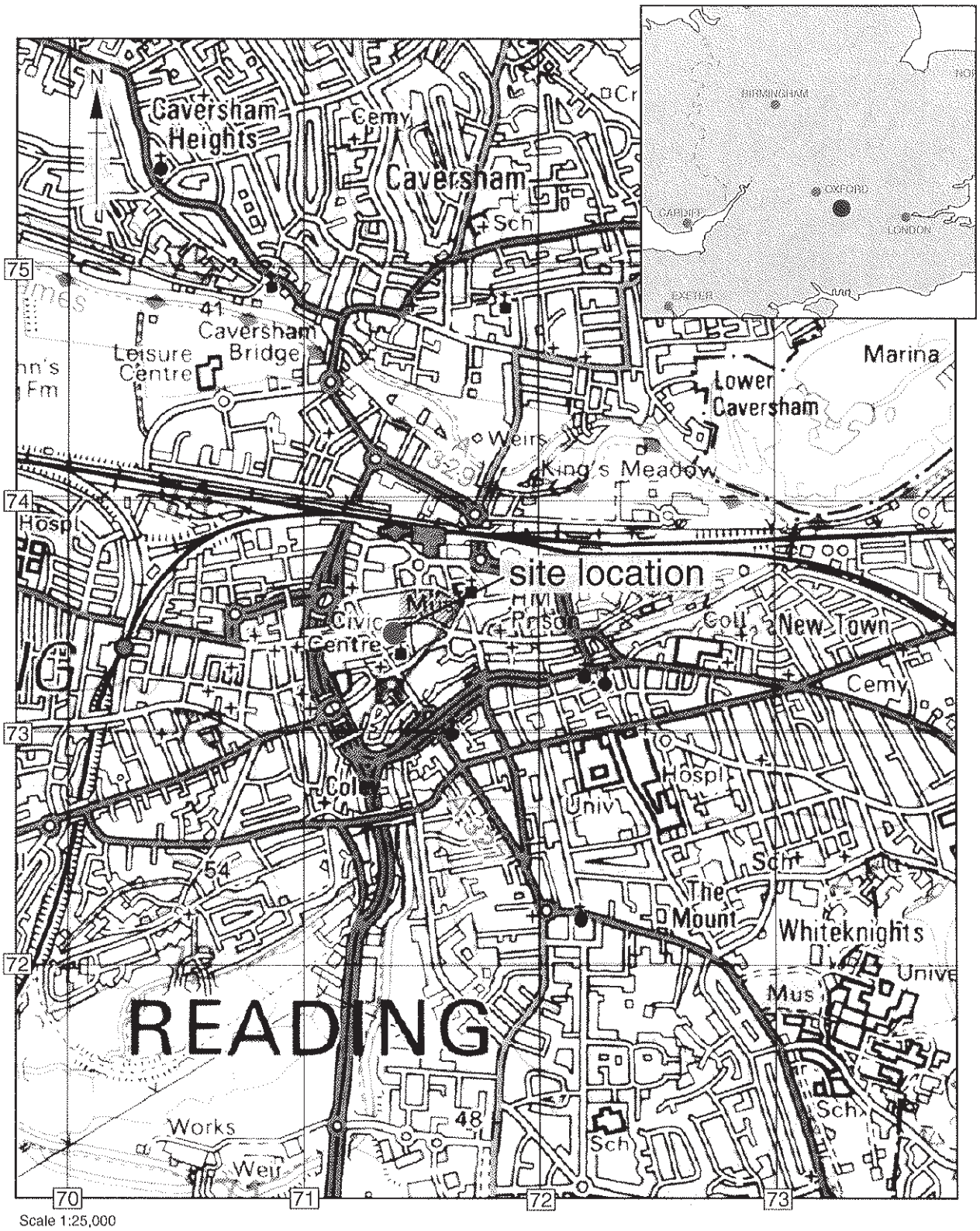
Silver, I.A. 1969 The Ageing of Domestic Animals. *Science in Archaeology. Edited by Don Brothwell and Eric Higgs. Thames and Hudson.*

Underwood, C, 1997 Pottery in JW Hawkes and PJ Fasham Excavations on Reading Waterfront Sites, 1979-1988 *Wessex Archaeol Rep* **5**, 142-161

Von den Driesch, A., 1976 A Guide to the Measurement of Animal bones from Archaeological Sites. *Peabody Museum Bulletin 1.*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: 90-93 Broad Street Reading
Site code: REBS 01
Grid reference: SU 7142 7342
Type of evaluation: Single trench
Date and duration of project: 07/01/02 – 18/01/02 (10 days)
Area of site: 0.02 ha
Summary of results: A well preserved stratigraphic sequence was recorded: medieval pits and ditches, early post-medieval structures and 19th century structures including basements.
Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with the Museum of Reading in due course.



Scale 1:25,000

Figure 1: Site Location

Server 4(W):/oaupubs 1/All drawings*REBS EV*Broad Street, Reading*AMD*29.01.02

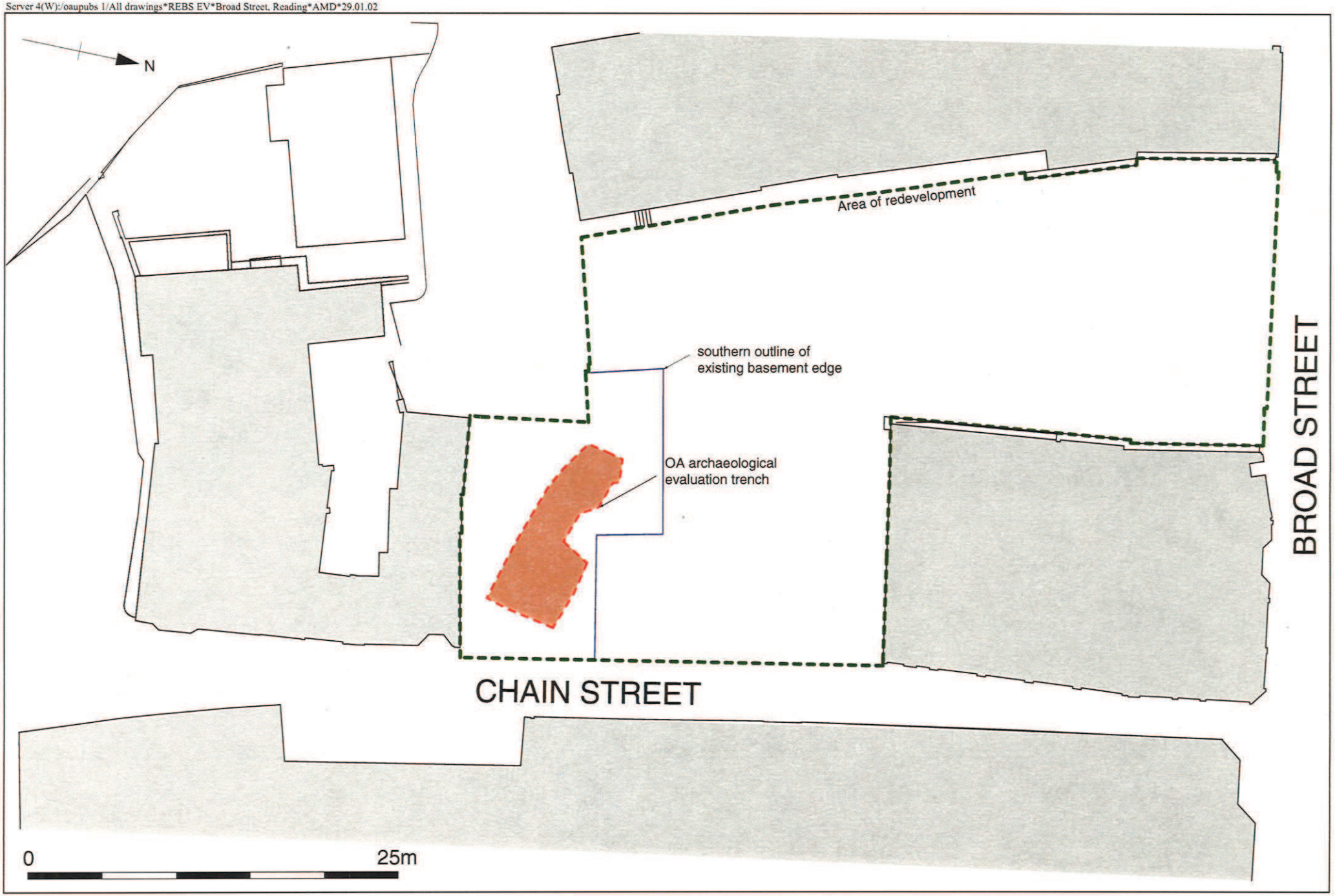
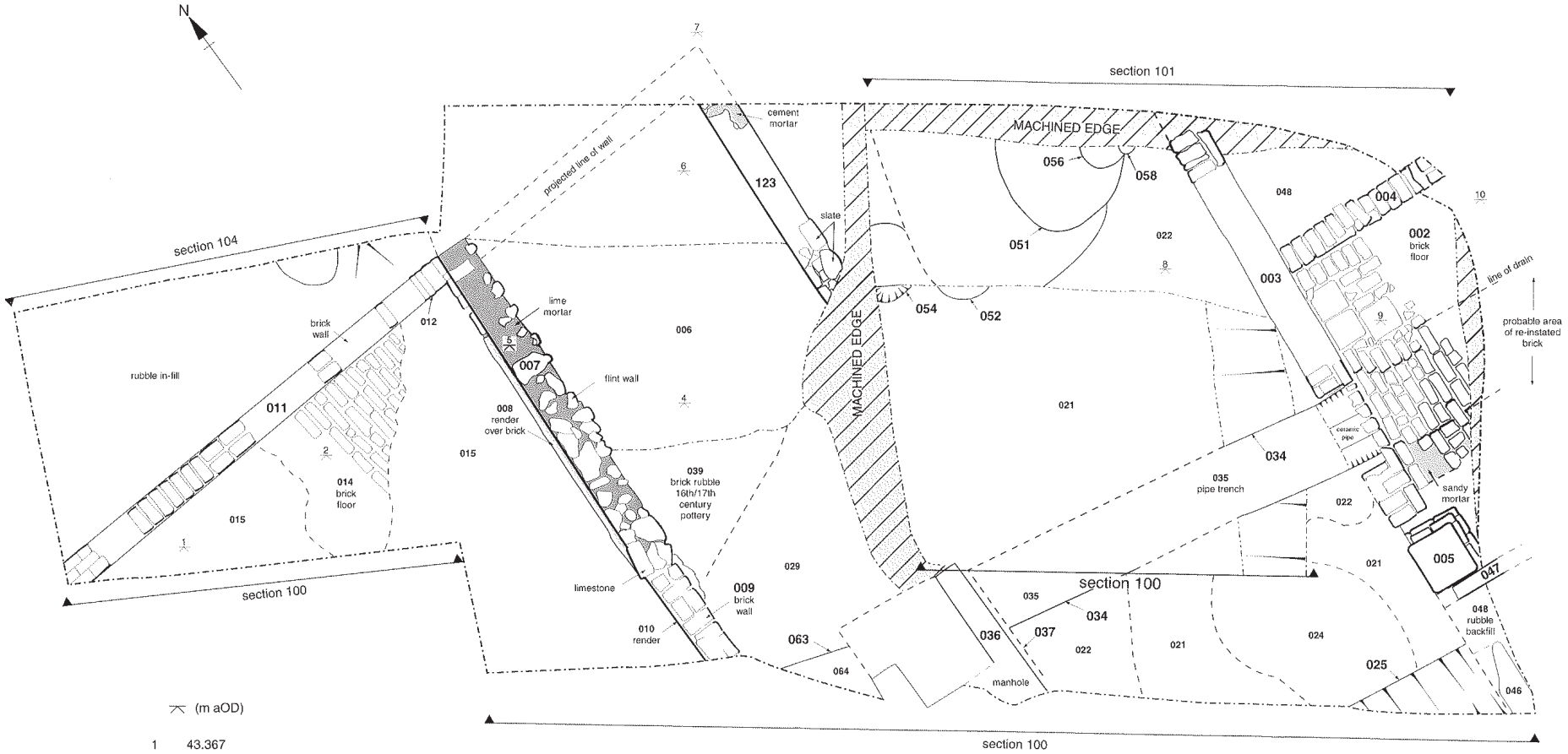


Figure 2: 90-93 Broad Street, Reading, Trench Location



(m aOD)

1	43.367
2	43.337
3	43.597
4	43.777
5	43.887
6	43.927
7	43.967
8	42.747
9	42.557
10	43.847

Group 001 comprised 002, 003, 004, 005 and 047
Group 075 comprised 046 and 047
Group 076 comprised 003 and 004
Group 131 comprised 007, 009, 011, 014, 015, 008 and 012

0 2m

Scale 1:40

Figure 3 : Trench plan 100

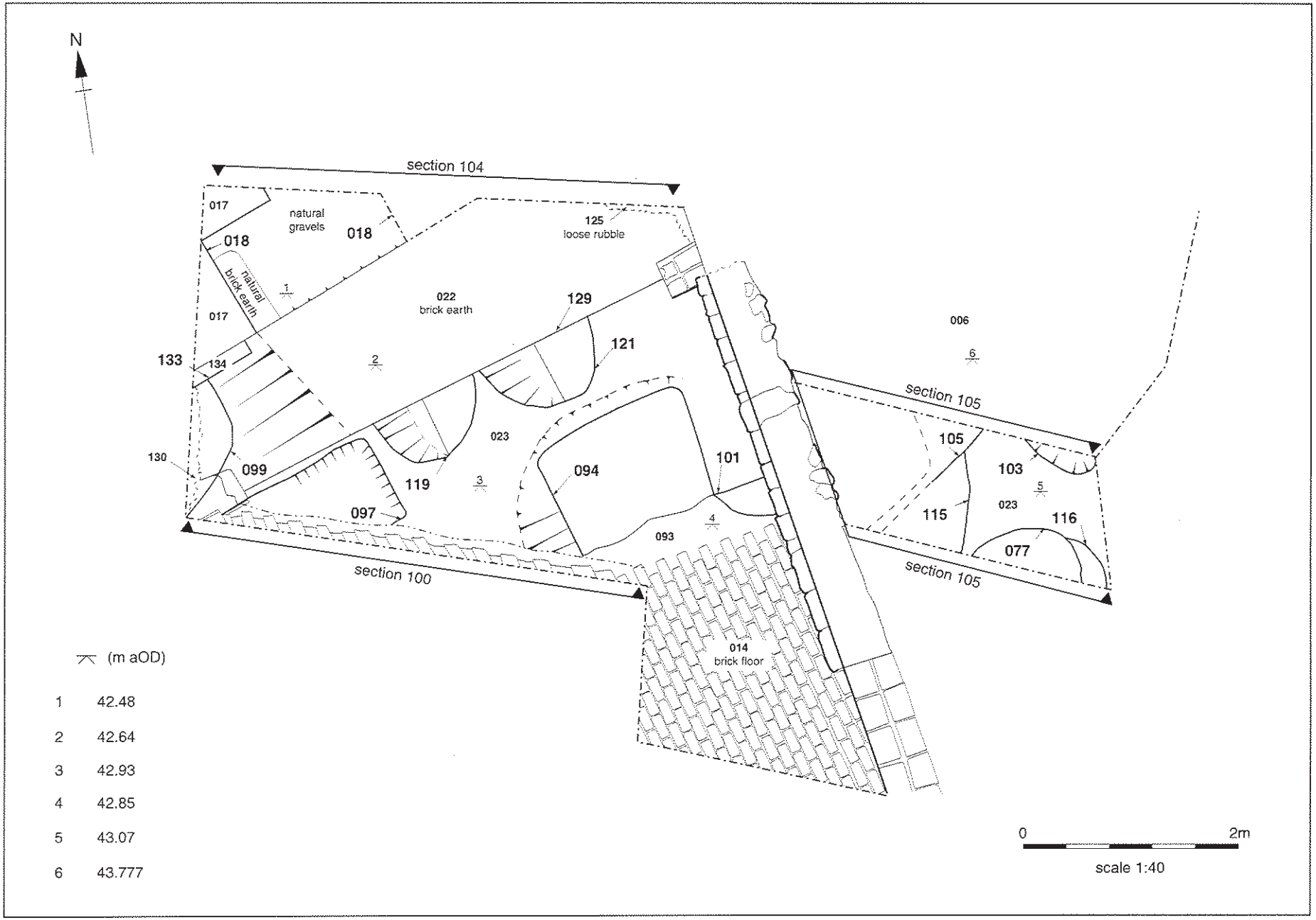


Figure 4: Trench plan 104/105 - overlay

Figure 5a: Section 100

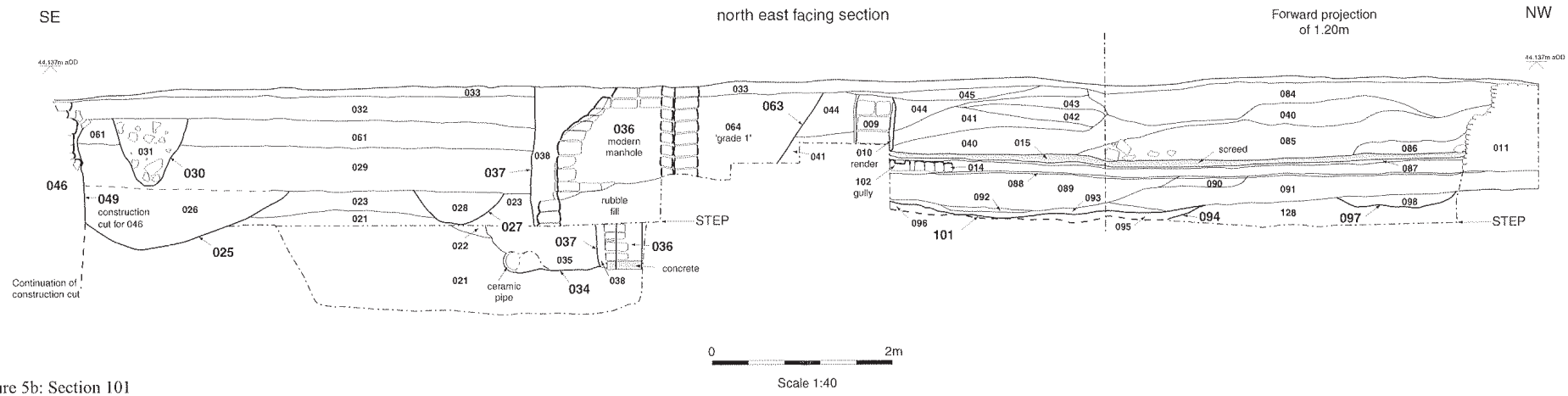


Figure 5b: Section 101

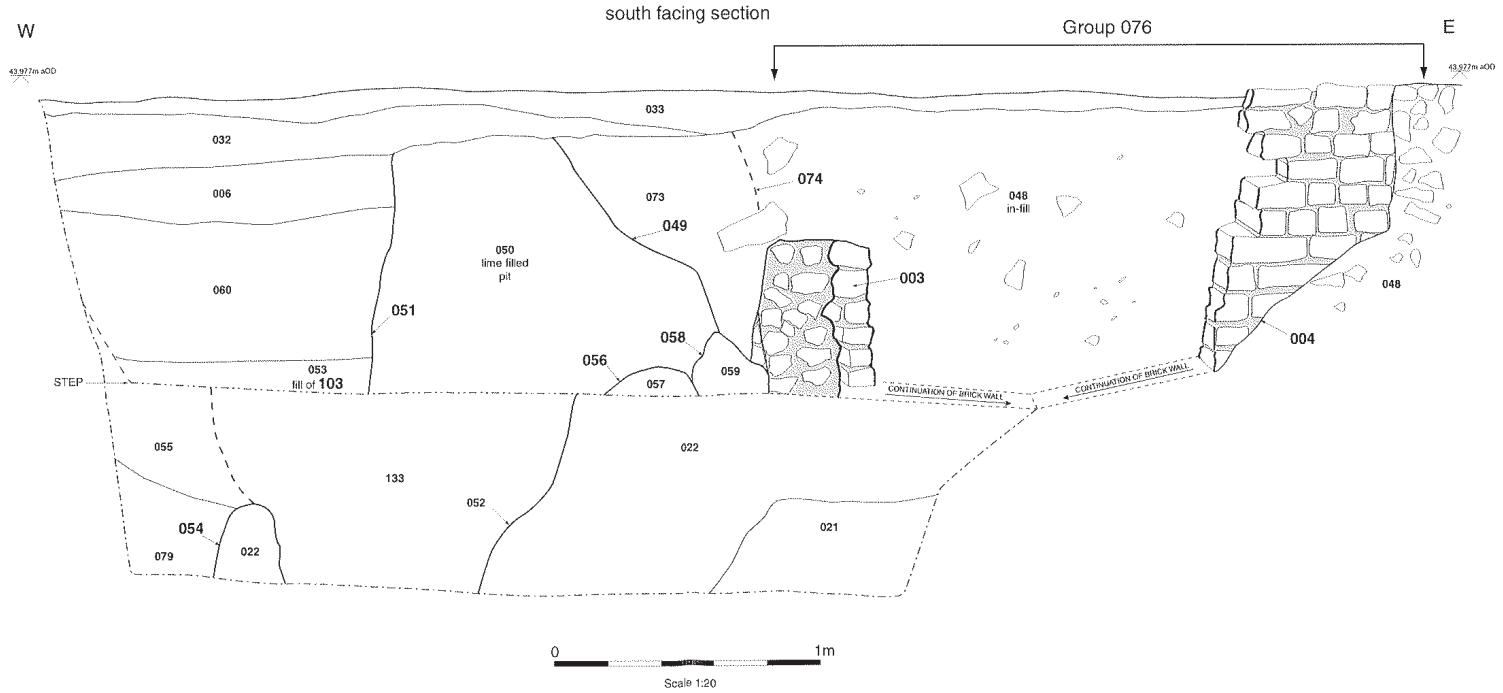


Figure 5: Trench Sections 100 and 101

Figure 6a: Section 104

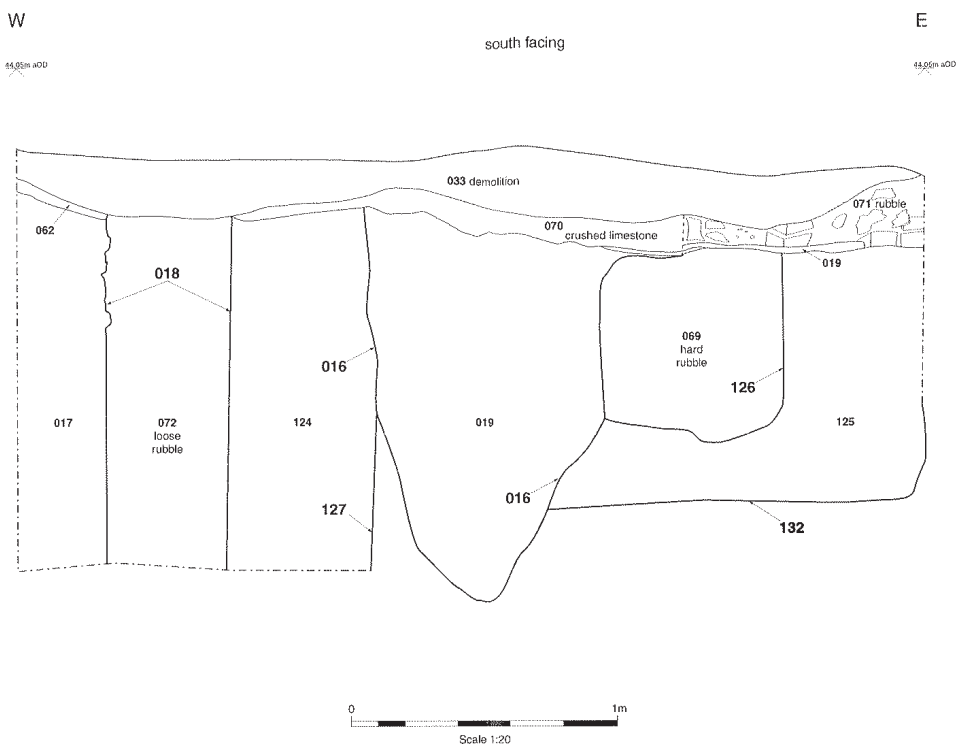


Figure 6b: Section 105

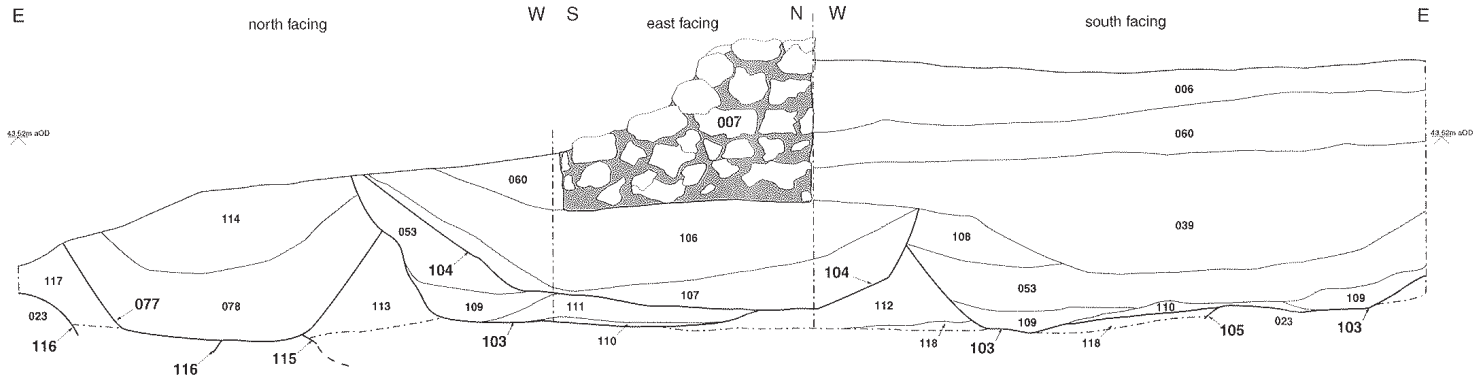


Figure 6: Trench Sections 104 and 105

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 848666
f: (0044) 01524 848606
e: lancinfo@oxfordarch.co.uk
w:www.oxfordarch.co.uk

Director: David Jennings, BA MIFA FSA

Oxford Archaeological Unit is a
Private Limited Company, N°: 1618597
and a Registered Charity, N°: 285627

Registered Office:
Oxford Archaeological Unit
Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES