

# Chequers Public House Fingest Buckinghamshire



## Archaeological Evaluation Report



**Oxford Archaeology**

September 2004



**Client:**  
**W H Brakspear and Sons PLC**

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OA Job N<sup>o</sup>: 2386  
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## **Chequers Public House, Fingest, Buckinghamshire**

### ***ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION***

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## SUMMARY

*On the 20th and 21st of September 2004 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at the Chequers Public House, Fingest, Buckinghamshire (NGR: SU 7770 9109) on behalf of W H Brakspear and Sons PLC. The evaluation revealed extensive colluvial deposits and garden soils, however post-medieval activity had truncated any potential archaeological deposits adjacent to the building itself.*

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 On the 20th and 21st of September 2004 OA carried out a field evaluation at the Chequers Public House in Fingest, Buckinghamshire (NGR: SU 7770 9109) on behalf of W H Brakspear and Sons PLC. This was in respect of a planning application for the construction of a single storey extension, demolition of existing outbuildings and erection of a detached annexe (Planning Application No. 04/5856).
- 1.1.2 A brief (BCAS 2004) was set by, and a WSI (OA 2004) was agreed with the Buckinghamshire County Council Archaeological Officer, David Radford.
- 1.1.3 The development site is situated within the centre of the village of Fingest (Fig. 1) and consists of a building fronting the main road with a beer garden and car parking to the rear. The site is bounded to the north by a public highway, to the east and west by residential properties and to the south by farmland.

#### 1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The Chequers Public House lies at the base of a wide, shallow dry valley which runs north to south through the village of Fingest. The site itself follows the slope with a gradual gradient running from north to south the length of the development area. The site occupies an area of 0.25 hectares with the highest point approximately 80 m OD. The underlying geology is chalk overlain by Valley Gravels (BGS, Map 254 1979).

#### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the evaluation was prepared for the WSI (OA 2004), and which is presented below. The site itself has produced no archaeological evidence. There is one location with potential archaeological remains adjacent to the development site, the 12th century church with possible manorial boundary banks visible (CAS4498).
- 1.3.2 The development site lies to the rear of a grade II listed early 18th century Inn (CAS13057901), within the historic core of the village of Fingest. The name of the settlement may be Scandinavian in origin. Fingest is not mentioned in the Domesday book but the manor is thought to have been granted to ST Albans Abbey c1067 - 1119 AD (CAS4498)(BCAS 2004).

- 1.3.3 The application site lies adjacent to the 12th century church, where two banks are visible in the field and may be part of the manorial boundary (CAS4498). Ivy Cottage, a 17th century farmhouse lies directly to the east of the application site. A Roman cremation, thought to be third century in date, was discovered 200 m to the north in 1937 (CAS889)(BCAS 2004).

## 2 EVALUATION AIMS

- 2.1.1 To establish the presence or 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. In particular to identify the relationships of any Roman, Saxon, medieval or post-medieval deposits on the site to the development of the settlement.
- 2.1.3 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features.
- 2.1.4 To signal, before the destruction of the material in question, the discovery of a significant archaeological find, for which the resources allocated are not sufficient to support a treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.
- 2.1.5 To make available the results of the investigation.

## 3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Scope of fieldwork

- 3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of two trenches both measuring 1.8 m wide (Fig. 2). Trench 1 was a linear trench 10 m long dug within the footprint of the proposed extension, while Trench 2 was a "L" shaped trench dug within the footprint of the proposed detached annexe. Both arms of this trench measured 10 m in length and were aligned north-south and east-west. The length of the trenches totalled 30 m as specified in the *brief*. However the discovery of services (electricity and foul water) at the eastern end of Trench 1 reduced its length to 8.5 m.
- 3.1.2 The overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision by a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket. Excavation by machine proceeded by spits down to either undisturbed natural deposits or to the first significant archaeological horizon, whichever was encountered first.

### 3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

- 3.2.1 The trenches were cleaned by hand and any revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and, where possible, to retrieve finds and environmental samples. The trenches were planned at a scale of 1:50 and the sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20. The trenches and sections 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 collected by context. All the finds recovered were of post-medieval (19th and 20th century) origin and were evaluated on site, but were not retained.

### 3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence

- 3.4.1 No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling were identified during the evaluation.

### 3.5 Presentation of results

- 3.5.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below, with the stratigraphic accounts of each trench described individually, followed by an overall discussion and interpretation.

## 4 RESULTS: GENERAL

### 4.1 Soils and ground conditions

- 4.1.1 The site is located on a very shallow slope, comprising modern tarmac overlying disturbed ground within Trench 1 and garden soils overlying natural deposits within Trench 2. The boundaries of the layers and the edges of the cut features were well defined. Soil conditions were moist with no waterlogging.

### 4.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits

- 4.2.1 No significant archaeological deposits were encountered in either trench.

## 5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

### 5.1 Description of deposits

#### *Trench 1 (Fig. 3, Sections 1 and 2)*

- 5.1.1 A tenacious pale greyish brown silt clay (7) containing many small flint pebbles was reached at a depth of between 0.8 m and 0.95 m below ground level. This was a very clean deposit and represents a naturally formed colluvium. This was overlain by a layer of a tenacious mid greyish brown silt clay (6) between 0.15 m and 0.25 m deep, again a colluvial deposit. This was sealed by a 0.3 m thick layer of a pale brown silt clay (5) containing flecks of weathered chalk and representing another colluvial event. Cutting this layer was a 0.9 m wide, 0.35 m deep modern sewer pipe trench (11), backfilled with redeposited soils (10) and a 19th century brick lined cess pit (13), backfilled with domestic rubbish (12, mostly broken marmalade jars). Layer 5 and both fills were overlaid by a layer of crushed brick, glazed tile and lime mortar (4), up to 0.2 m deep, a layer of demolition debris probably from an outside toilet associated with the cess pit. At the eastern end of the trench this was overlaid by a layer of a dark grey clay loam (9) 0.15 m deep, representing a layer of made ground. A layer of reinforced concrete (8) 0.2 m thick extended over both 4 and 9 within the eastern half of the trench and this was butted up to by a 0.1 m thick deposit of cinders



and ash (3) overlain by a 0.1 m deep layer of gravel (2) within the western half. Both these deposits were sealed by a 0.05 m thick layer of modern tarmac(1), the present day carpark surface.

### ***Trench 2 (Fig. 5, Sections 3, 4 and 5)***

- 5.1.2 At the northern end of the north-south arm of this trench a layer of natural weathered chalk and flint pebbles (17) was reached at a depth of 0.6 m below ground level. At the southern end of this arm and throughout the east-west arm this was overlaid by a tenacious light brown clay silt (18) containing many small to medium sub-angular flint pebbles over 0.15 m in depth. This deposit is a colluvial layer similar to 7 within Trench 1. Overlying 18 and extending over 17 was a 0.2 m thick layer of a friable pale greyish brown clay silt (16) containing many small rounded flint pebbles, again a colluvial deposit. This was sealed by a 0.2 m to 0.25 m deep layer of a greyish brown clay silt (15), a probable subsoil or earlier garden soil. Completing the sections was a 0.25 m thick layer of a friable greyish brown silt loam (14), the present day topsoil and turf.

## **6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION**

### **6.1 Reliability of field investigation**

- 6.1.1 The percentage sample of the proposed intrusive works (15%), and the similarity of the lower deposits in both trenches gives a high confidence that the interpretation will apply throughout the development area.

### **6.2 Overall interpretation**

- 6.2.1 Within Trench 1 a high level of post-medieval intrusion has taken place, truncating any original ground levels or features, and cutting down into the top of the colluvial deposit (5) throughout the length of the trench. It is therefore unlikely that any archaeological deposits or features have survived elsewhere within the footprint of the building extension.
- 6.2.2 Trench 2 showed that only a limited amount of activity had taken place within the footprint of the proposed annexe, notably those concerned with horticultural or agricultural working.
- 6.2.3 The presence of successive colluvial deposits within both trenches is consistent with the sites location within a dry valley and probably represent pre-historic events, although the actions of Neolithic and Bronze age deforestation cannot be discounted.



## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1 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						
	1	Surface	0.0 m - 0.05 m	Tarmac carpark	-	C20th
	2	Layer	0.05 m - 0.1 m	Gravel base for tarmac	-	C20th
	3	Layer	0.1 m - 0.2 m	Cinders and ash, made ground	-	C20th
	4	Layer	0.2 m - 0.4 m	Demolition debris	Brick, Glazed tile	C19th/C 20th
	5	Layer	0.4 m - 0.65 m	Colluvium	-	-
	6	Layer	0.65 m - 1.0 m	Colluvium	-	-
	7	Layer	1.0 m - >1.1 m	Colluvium	-	-
	8	Layer	0.05 m - 0.25 m	Colluvium	-	-
	9	Layer	0.25 m - 0.4 m	Made ground	Brick	C19th
	10	Fill	0.4 m - 0.75 m	Backfill of pipe trench	Brick, Salt glazed pipe	C19th/C 20th
	11	Cut	0.4 m - 0.75 m	Sewer pipe trench	-	C19th/C 20th
	12	Fill	0.4 m - >1.1 m	Backfill of cess pit	Pottery, Brick	C19th/C 20th
	13	Structure	0.4 m - >1.1 m	Brick lined cess pit	Brick	C19th/C 20th
2						
	14	Layer	0.0 m - 0.25 m	Topsoil and turf	-	C20th
	15	Layer	0.25 m - 0.42 m	Subsoil	-	-
	16	Layer	0.42 m - 0.6 m	Colluvium	-	-
	17	Layer	0.6 m - >0.75 m	Weathered chalk	-	-
	18	Layer	0.6 m - >0.8 m	Colluvium	-	-

**APPENDIX 2    BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES**

BCAS, 2004 *The Chequers Inn, Fingest. Brief for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

IFA, 1999 *Standard and Guidance for archaeological watching briefs*

OA, 2004 *Chequers Public House, Fingest, Buckinghamshire - Written Scheme of Investigation*

OA, 2004 *Oxford Archaeology Environmental Sampling Guidelines*

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

**APPENDIX 3    SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS**

**Site name:** Chequers Public House, Fingest, Buckinghamshire

**Site code:** FICP04

**Grid reference:** SU 7770 9109

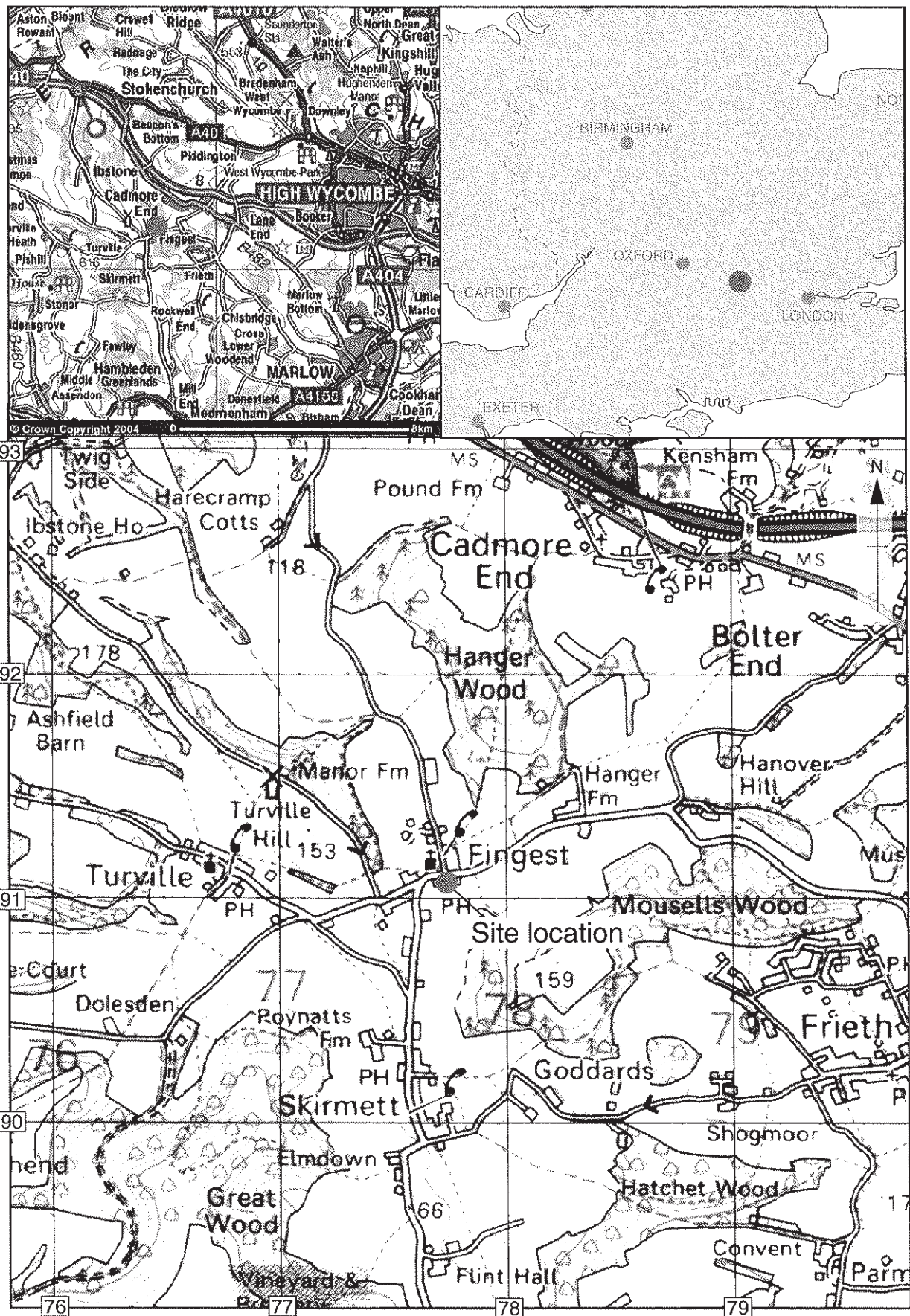
**Type of evaluation:** 2 machine excavated trenches

**Date and duration of project:** 20th and 21st of September 2004, 2 days

**Area of site:** 0.25 hectare

**Summary of results:** Extensive colluvial deposits and garden soils, northern extent of site heavily truncated by post-medieval activity

**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museums Service in due course.



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Figure 1: Site location

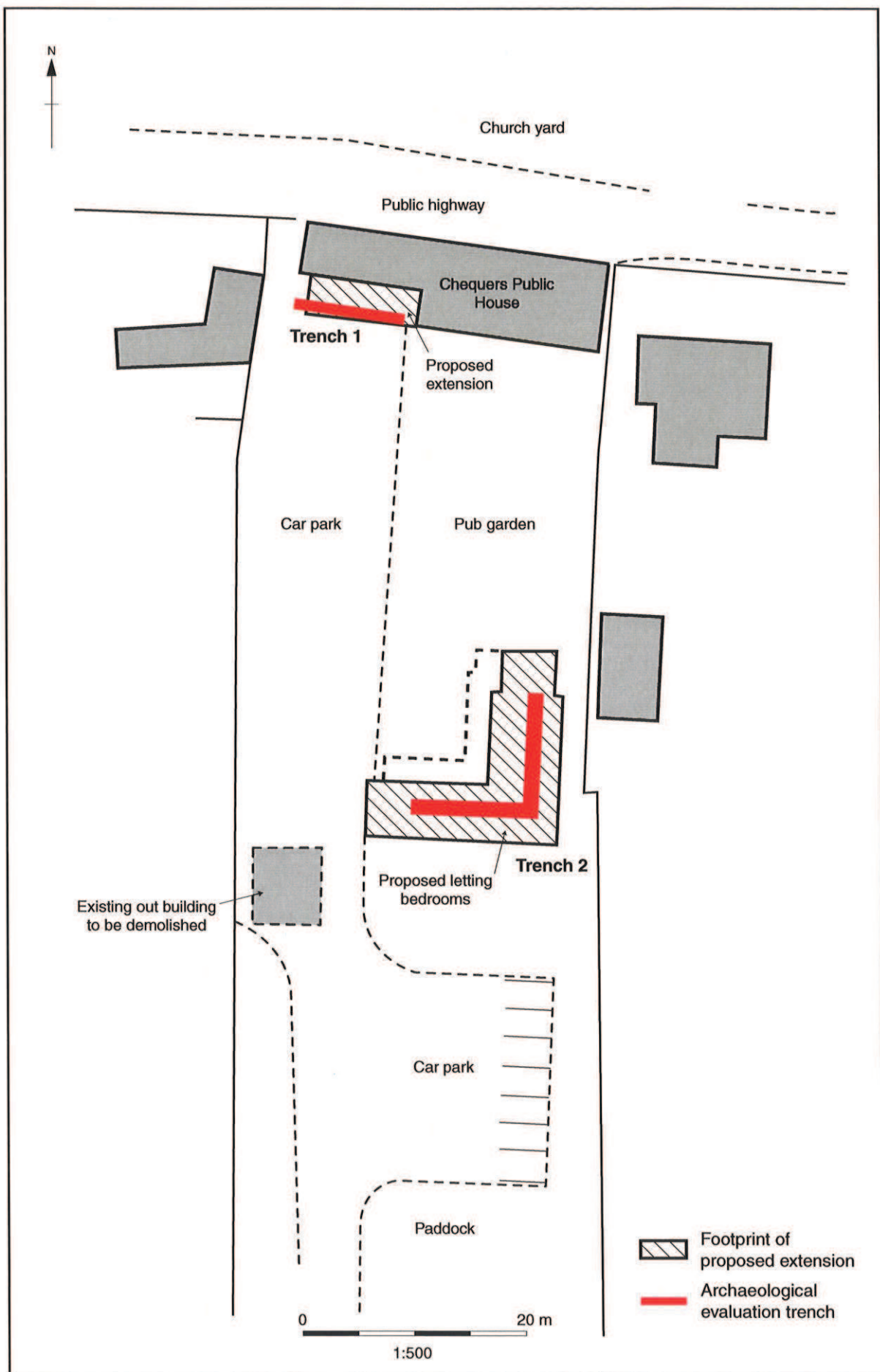


Figure 2: Trench location plan



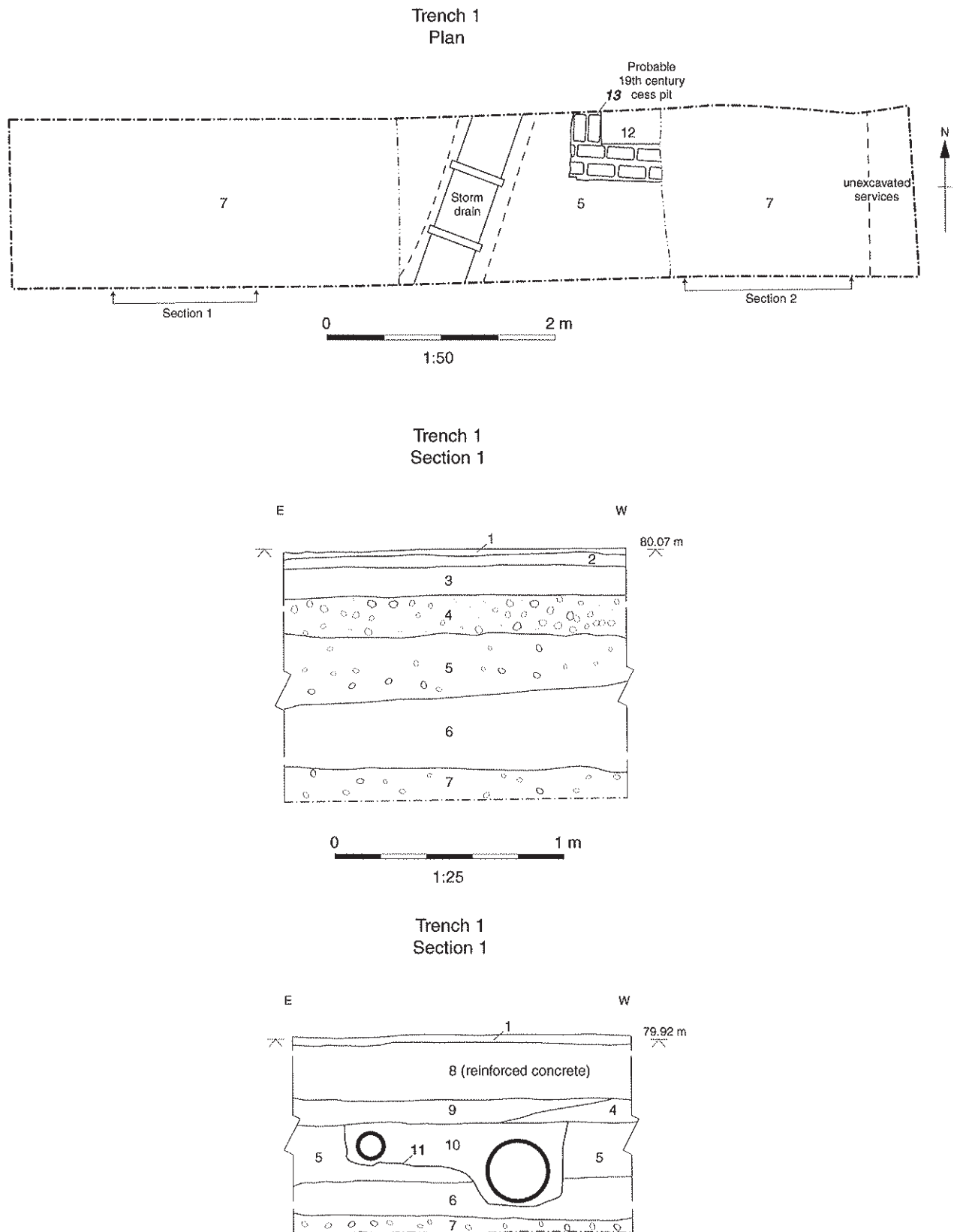


Figure 3: Trench 1 plan and sections

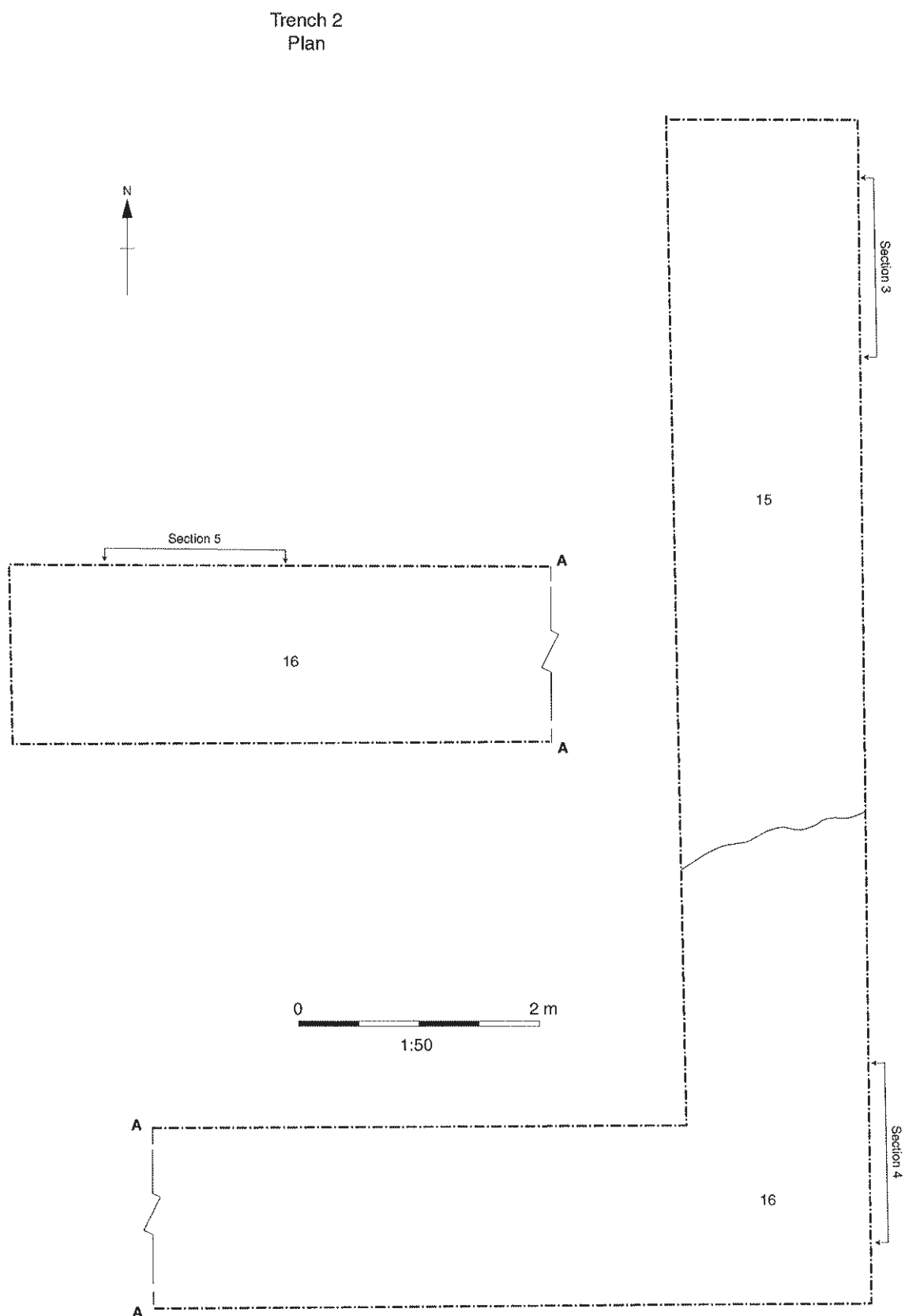
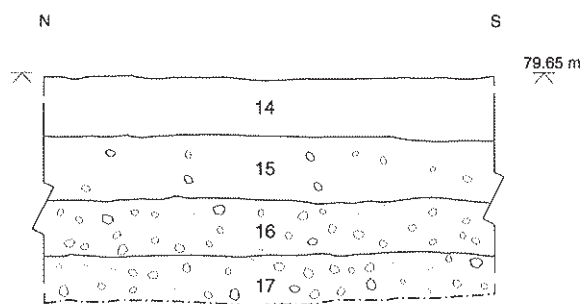
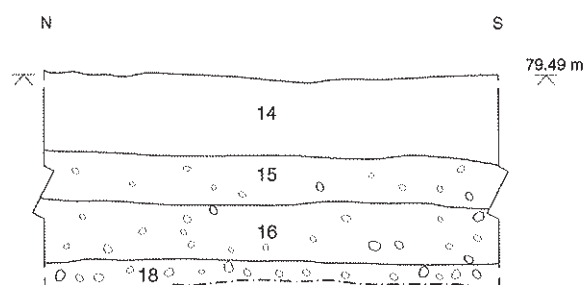


Figure 4: Trench 2 plan

Trench 2  
Section 3



Trench 2  
Section 4



Trench 2  
Section 5

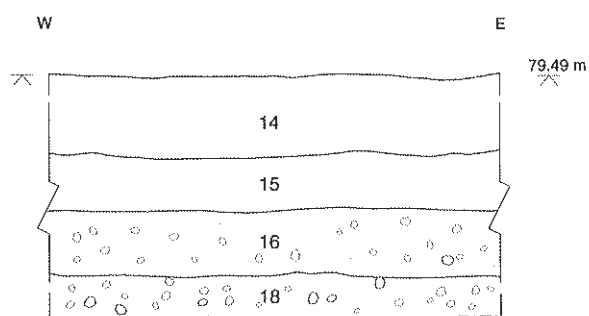


Figure 5: Trench 2 sections





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