

The Wren's Hotel Group

49 Thames Street, Swan Hotel, Windsor, Berkshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

NGR SU 9675 7714

Planning Application No. 01/80933

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SUMMARY

The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) carried out an archaeological field evaluation of a proposed development site at 49 Thames Street Windsor, Berkshire. The work was undertaken for Crapnell Chamberlain Associates, acting on behalf of The Wren's Hotel Group. No significant archaeological features were revealed during the evaluation, however, a possible late medieval horizon was identified in the lower level of the trench, which was sealed by a series of post-medieval leveling layers.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

The Oxford Archaeological Unit OAU carried out a field evaluation at the rear of 49 Thames Street, Windsor, Berkshire (Fig. 1) from the 31 July to the 3 August 2001. The work was undertaken for Crapnell Chamberlain Associates on behalf of The Wren's Hotel Group in respect of a planning application for erection of (a part 3/2) story extension at the rear to provide hotel accommodation (Planning Application No. 01/80933). A brief was set for the evaluation by Babcie Group on behalf of the Local Planning Authority and a WSI was prepared (OAU 2001) and detailed how the Oxford Archaeological Unit would satisfy the term of the Brief. The development site is situated to the north-east of Windsor and represents a 10% sample of the proposed development site.

1.2 Geology and topography

The underlying geology is first terrace river gravel overlain by alluvial silts and made ground. The land is level at *c* 20.39 m OD and is situated to the rear of 49 Thames Street, inside an out-building.

1.3 Archaeological historical background

The site is situated on the Thames gravels, which are of high archaeological potential particularly for evidence of prehistoric settlement. The site is located close to the base of Windsor Castle embankments and early fortifications. Excavations at the ABC cinema in Windsor in 1993 revealed that the area covered by *Underore* (12th-century suburb of Windsor) was probably an island at some point in the post-glacial period. Subsequent work at Jennings Yard, Windsor revealed the remains of a 12-13th-century waterside building within a moated enclosure, along with substantial artefactual assemblages and a group of eight partially articulated horse skeletons.

Archaeological evaluation and excavation was undertaken in 1997 and 1998 at the adjacent site of King Stable Street, Eton, by Thames Valley Archaeological Services and Oxford Archaeological Unit respectively. The results of these investigations revealed deposits with a chronology ranging from early medieval to the late post-medieval periods. It was concluded that the site contained archaeological remains relating to the medieval origins and development of Eton.

1.4 Acknowledgements

The OAU gratefully acknowledge the help and assistance of Mr Pete Fasham County Archaeological Officer of Babcie Environmental, who monitored the field evaluation.

2. EVALUATION AIMS

- 2.1 To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the proposal area.
- 2.2 To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and the date of any archaeological remains present.
- 2.3 To determine or confirm the approximate extent of the remains.
- 2.4 To determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present.
- 2.5 To determine or confirm the likely range, quality and quantity of the artefactual evidence present.
- 2.6 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

The field evaluation comprised one trench within the development area (Fig. 2). This trench measured 2.50 m x 2.0 m and 1.20 m in depth, representing a 10% sample of the proposed development area. The trench was situated to the rear of the property, inside the out-building, located to the southern extent of the building complex.

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

The internal concrete flooring was broken out using a suitable breaking machine and all further excavation was carried out by hand. The trench was planned at 1:20 scale in stages and all sections were drawn at 1:20. A colour and black and white photographic record was made. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (Wilkinson, 1992).

3.3 Finds

Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and bagged by context. Where relevant, finds of special interest were to be given a unique small find number.

3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence

No deposits of potential palaeo-ecological significance were located, therefore no environmental samples were taken.

4. RESULTS: GENERAL

4.1 Soils and ground conditions

The general soil type was brown to dark-brown, silt-loam garden soil. The underlying gravel geology was not reached.

4.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits

The lowest two layers identified during the evaluation suggest medieval activity in the immediate area, the nature of which is uncertain.

No archaeologically significant negative features were identified during the evaluation.

5. RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

5.1 Description of the deposits (for a summary of the context data see Appendix 1)

5.1.1 Trench 1 (Figs 3 and 4)

The trench was located in the southern area of the development site, against the north and eastern walls of the current out-building, and was excavated to a depth of 1.20 m below the current surface level (20.39 m OD), as specified. The gravel natural was not reached during the course of the evaluation.

The lowest horizon identified comprised a dark-greyish-brown, silt-loam heavily flecked with shell fragments (21), which appeared to have been a garden soil. No finds were recovered from this deposit. This was sealed by a thick dark-brown, silty-loam (13) that contained CBM inclusions and a small quantity of pottery, thought to date to the late medieval period (see paragraph 5.2.1). The two clay pipe stems recovered from this deposit are thought to be intrusive. This layer is also thought to represent a garden soil deposit.

Construction cut 17, for limestone wall 18, cut into layer 13. The function of the wall was unclear, however, it appears to have been reused as a foundation for wall 15.

A compact deposit (10) appeared to represent a leveling layer, which was thought to have been laid prior to the construction of the out-building. The deposit contained a high frequency of gravel and charcoal and was overlain by the brick built north wall of the out-building (22), orientated north-east - south-west. Wall 15, orientated north-west - south-east, represented the eastern wall of the out-building. Both walls were constructed of brick in English Bond and bonded with cement.

The interior of the out-building appears to have been deliberately backfilled with a loose dark-brown, silty-loam deposit (11), similar to the garden soils identified lower down. A brick-drain (4) was built directly on leveling layer 11. A series of deposits were then dumped on top of the structures to level the area (see Fig. 4, Section 1) and a rough brick-surface (7) appeared to have been laid, possibly as a temporary surface. These were finally capped by a concrete platform (1), which forms the internal floor of the present out-building.

5.2 Finds data

The finds included pottery, ceramic building material, clay tobacco pipes, glass, metal and shell from made ground deposits. The finds have been listed and quantified in the Context Inventory in Appendix 1.

5.2.1 *Medieval and post-medieval pottery*

A total of 46 sherds of medieval and post-medieval pottery were recovered from 10 contexts. Only one of the contexts (13) contained pottery of medieval date.

Layer 13 was of interest as it contained material of a possible late-medieval date. A total of nine sherds were recovered, of which one was identified as Brill Borstal Ware (c 1350-1600) and a further three sherds were identified as medieval domestic wares.

Approximately 40% of the assemblage was recovered from the upper layers (1, 2 and 5) and included late 18-19th century Creamware and post-medieval red ware with brown-glazed interiors (date range of 1600+). Layer 10 also contained red ware with brown-glazed interiors, along with a single piece of 'willow pattern' and a fragment of glazed ceramic tile (blue and yellow flower pattern on a white background).

5.2.2 *Clay pipe*

The majority of the clay pipe recovered comprised broken stem fragments. However, one complete bowl (Oswald Type 8) was recovered from layer 11, which was dated to the late 17th to early 18th century.

5.3 Environmental data

As no significant archaeological deposits were located no environmental samples were taken.

5.3.1 *Animal bone*

(Identification by Bethan Charles)

A total of 26 bones were recovered by hand from two dump deposits. From this number 13 were identified to species consisting of 1 cattle metacarpal from context 10 and 2 cattle and 7 sheep bones from context 13. Elements with butchery marks included a sheep humerus, rib, and femur, and a cattle rib along with four unidentified fragments from a large animal (cattle probably). In addition to the animal bone a small amount of oyster shell was recovered from both contexts 10 (2 fragments) and 13 (3 fragments).

Four of the bones were measured as defined by von den Driesch (1976), however, as so few elements were recovered the measurements are not included in this report. (All measurements can be found in the archive).

The bones from the site tell us little about the economy of the site, and are likely to represent domestic refuse.

6. DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Reliability of field investigation

The investigation covered 10% of the proposed development area. The results indicate the presence of a series of deposits that appear to represent made-ground, which seal a series of garden soil deposits. The limited results of the field evaluation are thought to represent a reliable indication of limited domestic activity.

6.2 Overall interpretation

6.2.1 *Summary of results*

The results of the evaluation produced data of limited archaeological significance within the depth excavated.

The presence of late medieval pottery in layer 13 and a shell rich garden soil (21), the most significant deposits encountered, indicate late medieval activity in the immediate area, the nature of which is currently unclear.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

A. von den Driesch, 'A Guide to the Measurement of Animal Bones from Archaeological Sites' *Peabody Museum Bulletin 1* (1976).

OAU, 2001 *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation at 49 Thames Street, Windsor, Berkshire* (July 2001)

Wilkinson, D (ed) 1992 *Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual*, (First edition, August 1992)

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Ctxt No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Thick. (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i>Find</i>	<i>No./wt</i>	<i>Date</i>
001								
	1	Layer		0.20	Concrete	-	-	
	2	Layer		0.21	Rubble dump/leveling	Pot, bone clay pipe metal CBM glass	11 8 8 5 4 5	PM PM PM PM PM PM
	3	Layer		0.14	Leveling material, same as context 5	Pot CBM	4 1	PM PM
	4	Str	0.54	0.45	Brick drain	-	-	
	5	Layer		0.14	Leveling material	Pot, clay pipe	4 2	PM PM
	6	Fill		0.33	Fill to brick drain	-	-	
	7	Str	0.65 m	0.10	Brick surface	-	-	
	8	Cut	0.70	0.30	Shallow scoop	-	-	
	9	Layer		0.30	Back fill / garden soil	Pot clay pipe CBM	1 1 1	PM PM PM
	10	Layer		0.16	Dumping / leveling	Pot, bone clay pipe CBM shell	12 5 3 8 2	PM PM PM PM PM
	11	Layer		0.46	Garden soil /dump	Pot, bone clay pipe CBM Shell	2 2 3 6 1	PM PM PM PM PM
	12	Fill		0.20	Fill dump to cut 8	Pot, clay pipe shell	1 2 1	PM PM PM

	13	Layer		0.38	Garden soil	Pot, bone clay pipe CBM shell	9 28 2 18 4	Med PM PM PM PM
	14	Layer		0.08	Dump / leveling	Shell	1	PM
	15	Str			Brick wall	-	-	
	16	Fill			Fill to construction cut 17	Pot clay pipe glass metal shell	2 1 1 1 2	PM PM PM PM PM
	17	Cut	0.20		Construction cut	-	-	
	18	Str			Stone wall	-	-	
	19	Fill		0.30	Fill to cut 20	Pot	1	PM
	20	Cut	1.10	0.30	PM cut	-	-	
	21	Layer			Garden soil	-	-	
	22	Str			Brick wall	-	-	

SUMMARY OF THE SITE DETAILS

Site name: 49 Thames Street, Swan Hotel, Windsor

Site code: WISH01

Grid reference: NGR SU 9675 7714

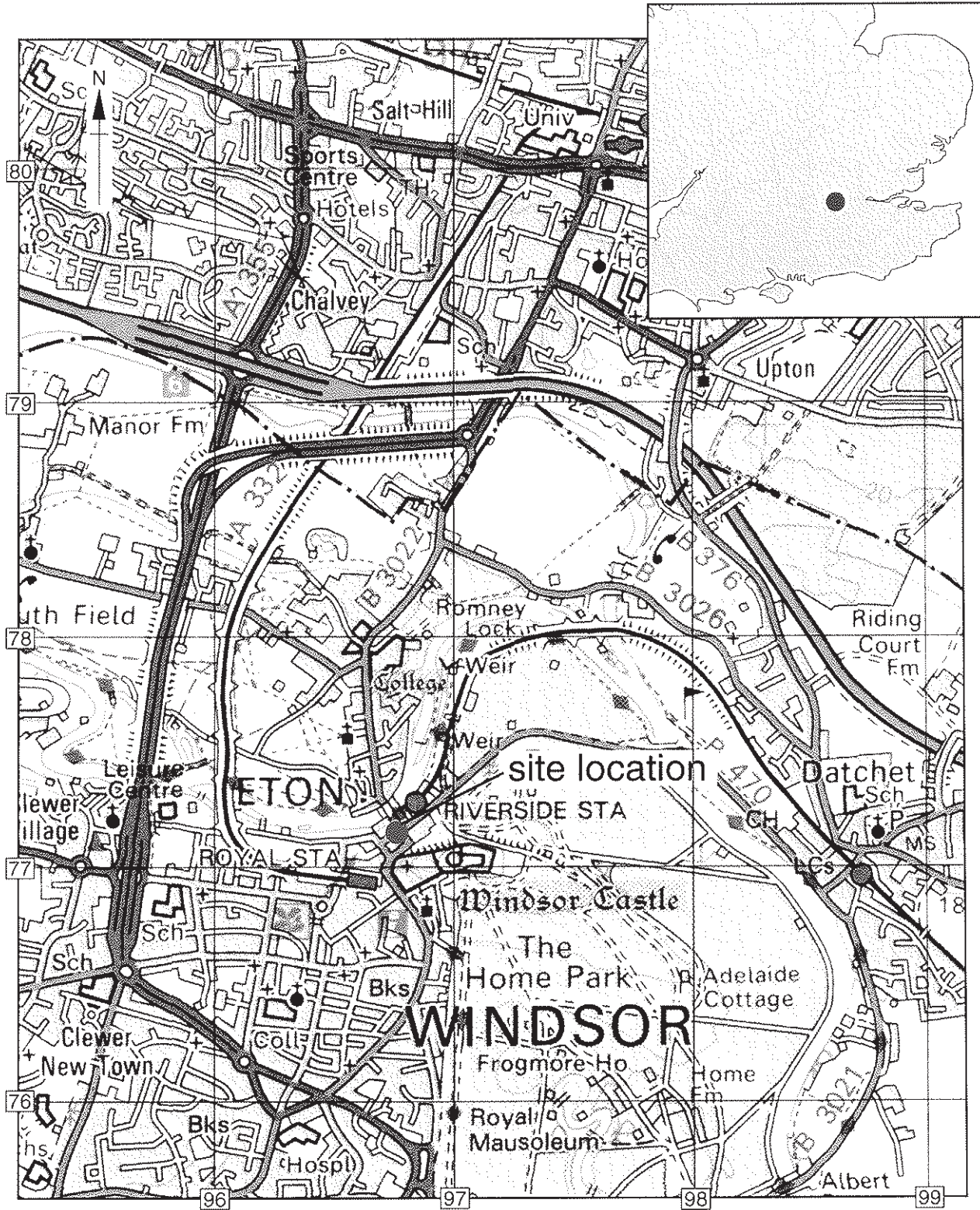
Type of evaluation: Hand excavated trench; 2.50 m x 2.00 m x 1.20 m

Date and duration of project: 31 July to 3 August 2001

Area of site: 5 m²

Summary of results: No significant archaeological features were revealed, however, a potential medieval horizon was identified in the lower level of the trench.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OAU, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Reading Museum in due course, under the following accession number: (currently awaited).



Scale 1:25,000

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Figure 1: Site location.

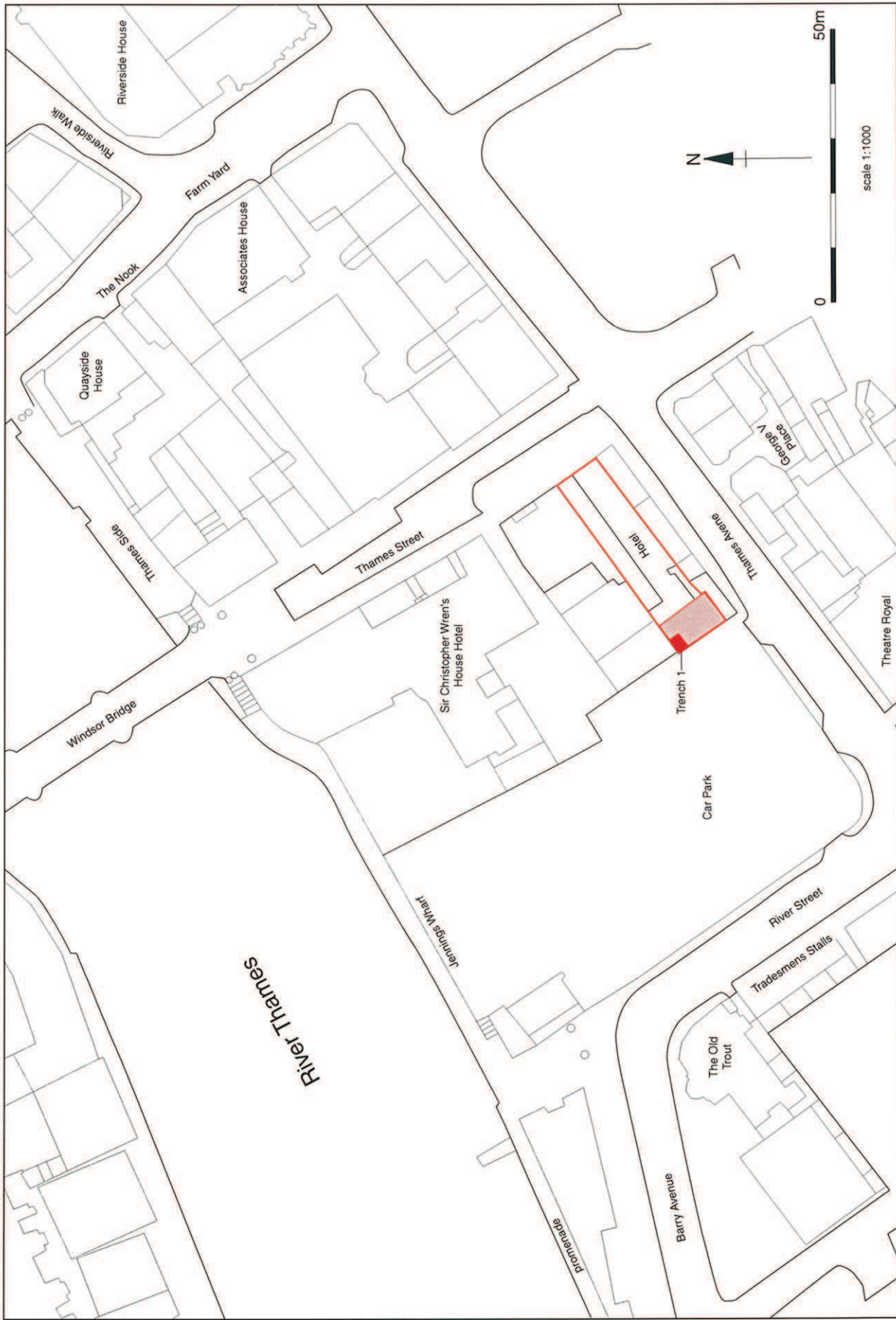


Figure 2 : Trench Location.

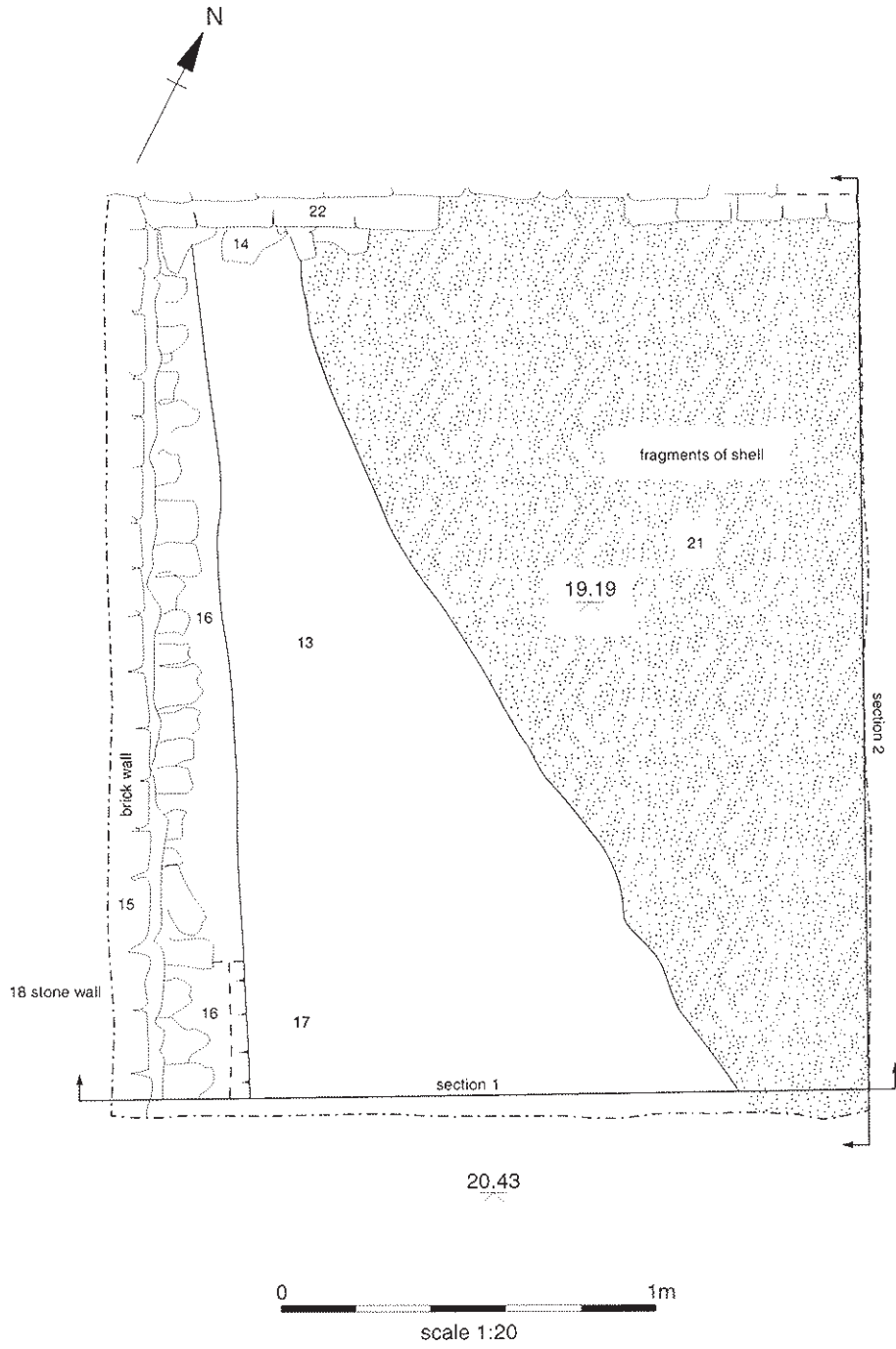


Figure 3 : Plan 1 Trench 1.

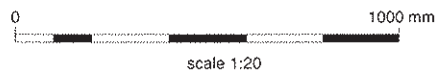
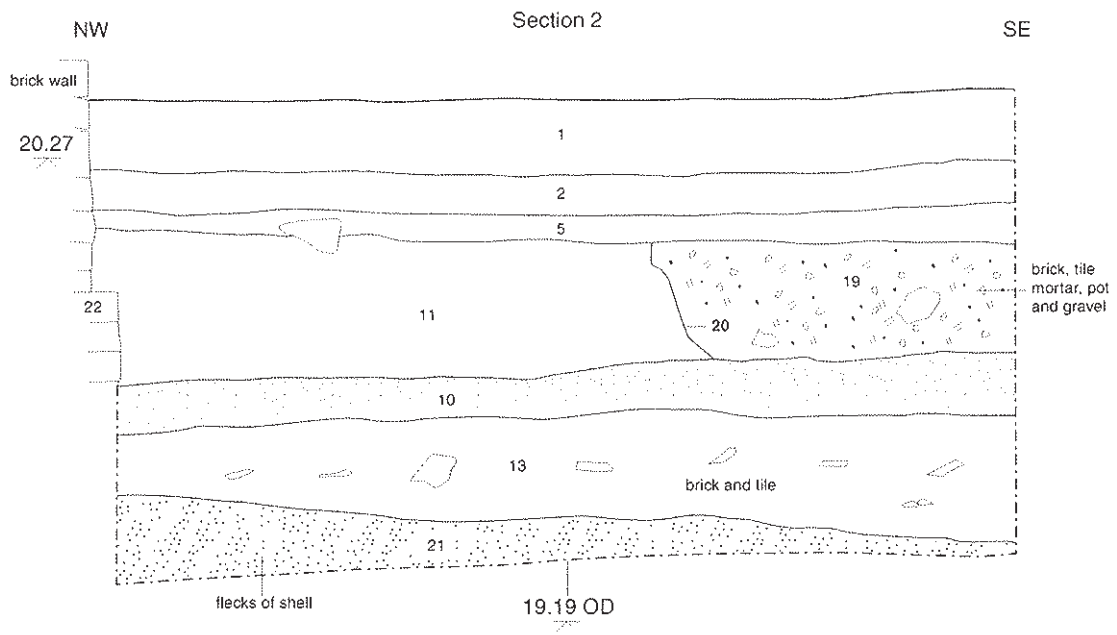
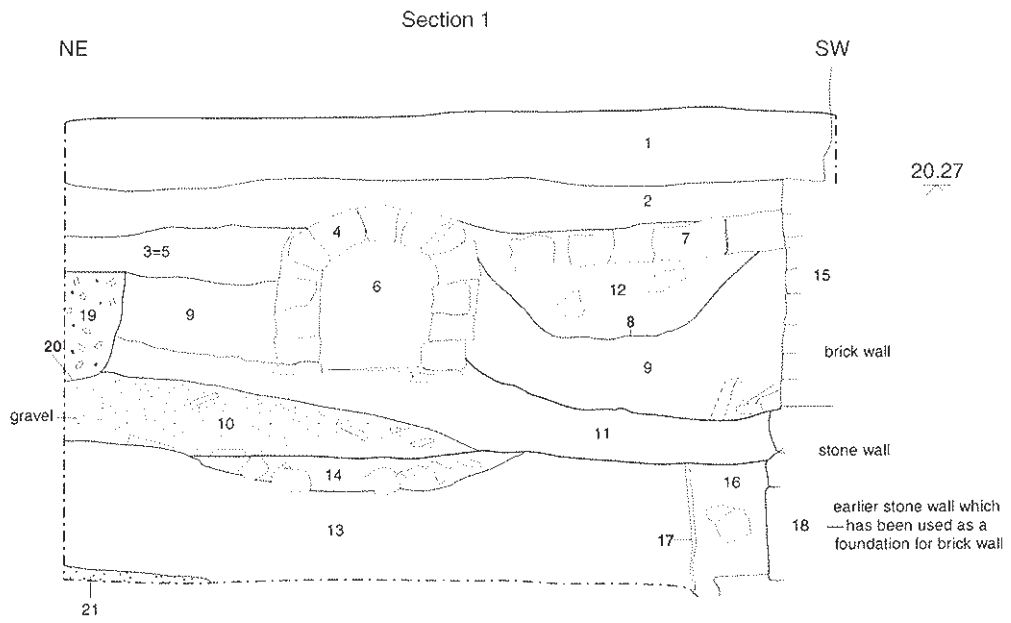


Figure 4 : Sections 1 and 2.



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