

Marlbrook Hall Farm  
Harvest Hill Lane  
Meriden  
Warwickshire



**Archaeological Evaluation**



**Oxford Archaeology**

21th May 2002

**Client Name:**  
**Cassidy Developments**

Issue N<sup>o</sup>: Draft

OA Job N<sup>o</sup>: 1317

Planning Ref N<sup>o</sup>: SAM 300010

NGR: SP 26471 84140

**Client Name:** Cassidy Developments

**Client Ref No:**

**Document Title:** Marlbrook Hall Farm, Harvest Hill Lane, Meriden,  
Warwickshire

**Document Type:** Evaluation

**Issue Number:** 1

National Grid Reference: SP 26471 84140

Planning Reference: SAM 30010

OA Job Number: JN 1317

Site Code: MEMH02

Invoice Code: MEMHEV

Museum Accession No:

Prepared by: Andrew D.B. Holmes

Position: Project Officer

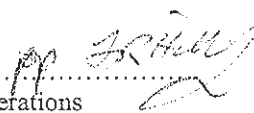
Date: 14th May 2002

Checked by: Jon Hiller

Position: Senior Project Manager

Date: 15th May 2002

Approved by: Robert Williams

Signed.....

Position: Director: Business development and operations

Date: 17th May 2002

Document File Location U:\OA\oa\WBEV\Warwcks\MarlbrookHallEV\Rep.doc

Graphics File Location \\Server4\oaupubs1\All drawings\MEMHhall  
farm\*\*RMS\*

Illustrated by Roz Smith

**Disclaimer:**

*This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and should not be relied upon or used for any other project without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and prior written authority of Oxford Archaeology being obtained. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for the consequences of this document being used for a purpose other than the purposes for which it was commissioned. Any person/party using or relying on the document for such other purposes agrees, and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Oxford Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the person/party by whom it was commissioned.*

**Oxford Archaeology**

© Oxford Archaeological Unit Ltd 2002

Janus House

Osney Mead

Oxford OX2 0ES

t: (0044) 01865 263800

f: (0044) 01865 793496

e: [info@oxfordarch.co.uk](mailto:info@oxfordarch.co.uk)

w: [www.oxfordarch.co.uk](http://www.oxfordarch.co.uk)

Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited is a Registered Charity No: 285627

**Marlbrook Hall Farm, Harvest Hill,  
Meriden, Warwickshire**

*ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION*

CONTENTS

Summary..... 2

1 Introduction ..... 2

    1.1 Location and scope of work ..... 2

    1.2 Geology and topography ..... 2

    1.3 Archaeological and Historical background ..... 2

2 Evaluation Aims ..... 3

3 Evaluation Methodology ..... 3

    3.1 Scope of fieldwork ..... 3

    3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording ..... 3

    3.3 Finds ..... 4

    3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence..... 4

    3.5 Presentation of results ..... 4

4 Results: General..... 4

    4.1 Soils and ground conditions ..... 4

    4.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits ..... 4

5 Results: Descriptions ..... 4

    5.1 Description of deposits ..... 4

    5.2 Finds ..... 5

6 Discussion And Interpretation..... 5

    6.1 Reliability of field investigation..... 5

    6.2 Overall interpretation ..... 5

Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory ..... 6

Appendix 2 Bibliography and references..... 6

Appendix 3 Summary of Site Details..... 6

LIST OF FIGURES

- Fig. 1 Site location map
- Fig. 2 Trench location plan
- Fig. 3 Trench 1 - Plans and sections

## SUMMARY

*In May 2002, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at Marlbrook Hall Farm, Harvest Hill, Meriden, Warwickshire (NGR SP 26471 84140) on behalf of Cassidy Developments. The farm is on the site of a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 30010, a medieval moated manor complex.). A sandstone and tile wall foundation built into the underlying subsoil was identified to the west of the present hall building. The wall was situated over the site of a causeway on the line of the extant moat. Post-medieval tile and pottery were associated with the structure. The wall is much later in date than the original manor site and the likelihood is that it formed part of an outbuilding in the post-medieval period.*

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In May 2002 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at Marlbrook Hall Farm, Harvest Hill, Meriden, Warwickshire (Fig. 1) on behalf of Cassidy Developments in respect of the proposed extension and refurbishment of the main house. A brief (WM 2002) was set by and a Written Scheme of Investigation (OA 2002) agreed with the Planning Archaeologist for Warwickshire County Council. Scheduled Monument Consent had been granted, with a condition requiring the implementation of archaeological works to be agreed with Planning Archaeologist for Warwickshire County Council.

1.1.2 The site is located on Harvest Hill Lane at Marlbrook Hill Farm (NGR SP 26471 84140). The site lies at approximately 175 m OD and the area of the proposed development is sited within a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 30010).

#### 1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site is situated on land that gradually slopes to the south. The underlying geology is Corley Sandstone of the Keresley Member, overlain by glacial and post-glacial deposits of sands, gravels and clays (BGS 169, 1994).

#### 1.3 Archaeological and Historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological background was researched at the Warwickshire SMR for the purposes of this report, comprising a 250 m search around the known monument.

1.3.2 The proposed development site is located within a medieval moated site that comprises a water filled moat, a post-medieval standing building and earthworks thought to be associated with earlier structures on the site. Marlbrook Hall (SMR No. 240- SI424) is an early post-medieval manor house derived from an outbuilding of the original hall.

1.3.3 The house is in good condition, 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century in date, and constructed of red brick with flush casement windows and consists of two storeys and an old tiled roof. The north-east part of the present house is of timber frame and thin brick construction and

does not appear to have been part of the outbuilding. A square moat (SMR No. 3131-SI585) encloses a large area to the north, east and west of the house and is complete apart from a small part of the southern arm which was filled in when an addition to the present house was built.

- 1.3.4 The moat is water filled apart from the west arm and part of the north arm. Loose stones found within the area of the moat in the orchard, could indicate the site of an earlier larger house and associated outbuildings long since disappeared.
- 1.3.5 A cropmark of a broad ditch running SW-NE towards Marlbrook Hall is visible to the north of Shaft Lane (SMR No. 10567-SI122). Meighs Wood, (SMR No. 4586-SI699) which is nearby, is classified as ancient woodland, (West Midlands Inventory of Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodlands, NCC 1989).
- 1.3.6 The proposed extension is situated on a causeway spanning the south-western arm of the moat. The nature of any buried remains beneath this causeway was unclear at the time of the evaluation, but the possibility that significant deposits, possibly including waterlogged remains that might survive here, was considered.

## 2 EVALUATION AIMS

- 2.1.1 To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the proposal area.
- 2.1.2 To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present.
- 2.1.3 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features.
- 2.1.4 To make available the results of the investigation.

## 3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Scope of fieldwork

- 3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of a single trench measuring 3.5 m x 2.5 m wide (Fig. 2). The overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision by a mini-excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. This was undertaken in 5 cm deep spits and the underlying deposits were closely inspected prior to the removal of each successive spit.

### 3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

- 3.2.1 The trench was cleaned by hand and any revealed features and structures were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds and environmental samples, if appropriate.
- 3.2.2 All archaeological features within the trench were planned at 1:20 and the trench sections drawn at a scale 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 evaluation and generally bagged by context. Finds of special interest were given a unique small find number.

### 3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence

- 3.4.1 There were no deposits encountered during the evaluation deemed suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling.

### 3.5 Presentation of results

- 3.5.1 The general results are followed by a description of the trench. These are followed in turn by a description of the finds and a discussion of the results. A separate table giving detailed information on individual contexts is presented in Appendix 1.

## 4 RESULTS: GENERAL

### 4.1 Soils and ground conditions

- 4.1.1 The site is located on Corley Sandstone of the Keresley Member overlain by glacial and post-glacial deposits of sands, gravels and clays. The clay natural seen at the base of the trench was overlain by a disturbed sandy clay subsoil, which was in turn overlain by a modern clay loam topsoil.

### 4.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits

- 4.2.1 Archaeological features and deposits were confined to the north-west and south-west of the trench where a sandstone and tile structure was identified.

## 5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

### 5.1 Description of deposits

#### *Trench 1(Fig. 3)*

- 5.1.1 At the base of the trench was a light orange natural clay containing occasional sandstone pieces (3), the Corley sandstone. This was seen to slope gradually towards the south-west of the trench. A small sondage was excavated into the layer north end of the trench to determine the nature of the deposit. It was overlain by a tenacious orange brown sandy clay subsoil (2), up to 0.42 m in depth.
- 5.1.2 The subsoil and natural were cut by a foundation trench (4) for a sandstone and tile wall (5) that was aligned north-west/south-east and located in the south-west end of the trench. The structure was over 2.35 m long by 0.56 m wide and the standing remains were 0.58 m tall. The structure was constructed using roughly hewn sandstone pieces that measured up to 0.4 m x 0.25 m in size with occasional re-used roofing tiles. The structure was bonded with a tenacious dark brown sandy clay (6) from which came a single very small glazed pottery sherd.

- 5.1.3 The subsoil (2) was also cut by a small trench (7) that contained a modern ceramic drainpipe. The trench was 0.2 m deep and 0.12 m wide and the pipe was 0.08 m in diameter. This pipeline ran parallel with line of the wall (5). Both the drain cut infill and the wall were sealed by a dark brown clay loam (1) containing a small sherd of painted pottery, a small stem from a clay pipe fragment, brick, tile and mortar, presumably demolition material, which was 0.18 m deep.

## 5.2 Finds

### *Pottery, Clay Pipe and Ceramic Building Material*

- 5.2.1 A glazed pottery sherd was recovered from layer (6) and a painted and glazed pottery sherd and a fragment of clay pipe came from layer 1. All date to the post-medieval period, and six pieces of roofing tile recovered from wall 5 date to the same period.

## 6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

### 6.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 6.1.1 The evaluation covered a 4.5% sample of the area of the new building and is believed to be a satisfactory representation of the presence or absence of any archaeological remains within the area of the proposed new building. While there is evidence of previous demolition in the topsoil, there does not appear to have been any disturbance of archaeological deposits below this level.

### 6.2 Overall interpretation

- 6.2.1 The stone and tile wall (5) cut both the natural and the subsoil, neither of which are re-deposited. It was noticeable that the natural slopes gradually to the south-west, roughly in line with the moat (Fig. 3 - section 2), though the significance of this is unclear.
- 6.2.2 The causeway across the moat appears from this evidence to have comprised original natural deposits between the ends of the original moat, as there was no evidence for waterlogged deposits from previous water channel within the trench.
- 6.2.3 The function of wall 5 is unclear. The finds from the bonding deposit (6) suggest that the wall was constructed much later than the original moated site, and that it is not part of the medieval manor complex. Although the wall superficially is on the alignment of the moat (extending to the north-west), this is unlikely to have been significant. The foundation was roughly constructed, suggesting an insubstantial superstructure, and the most likely function for the wall is that it formed part of an outbuilding in the manor grounds in the post-medieval period.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX I ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Context No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i> Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
1							
	1	Deposit	-	0.18	Topsoil	Pottery	Post-med
	2	Deposit	-	0.42	Subsoil	-	-
	3	Natural	-	-	Natural clay	-	-
	4	Cut	>2.35 x >0.56	0.58	Construction cut	-	-
	5	Structure	>2.35 x >0.56	0.58	Stone and tile foundations	Tile	Post-med.
	6	Fill	>2.35 x >0.56	0.58	Bond deposit of foundation wall	Pottery, clay pipe	Post-med.
	7	Cut	0.12	0.2	Mole drain	-	-

## APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales), Sheet 169, Coventry, 1:50,000 Series, (Solid and Drift Edition, 1994)

OA 1992 *Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D. Wilkinson, first edition, August 1992)

OA 2002 *Marlbrook Hill Farm, Harvest Hill Lane, Meriden Written Scheme of Investigation*

Warwickshire Museum 2002 *Brief for archaeological work: evaluation of proposed extension site and archaeological mitigation of proposed service runs and septic tank construction Marlbrook Hall Farm, Harvest Lane, Meriden, Warwickshire*

## APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

**Site name:** Marlbrook Hall Farm, Harvest Lane, Meriden, Warwickshire

**Site code:** MEMH 02

**Grid reference:** SP 26471 84140

**Type of evaluation:** Single 3.5 m x 2.5 m trench

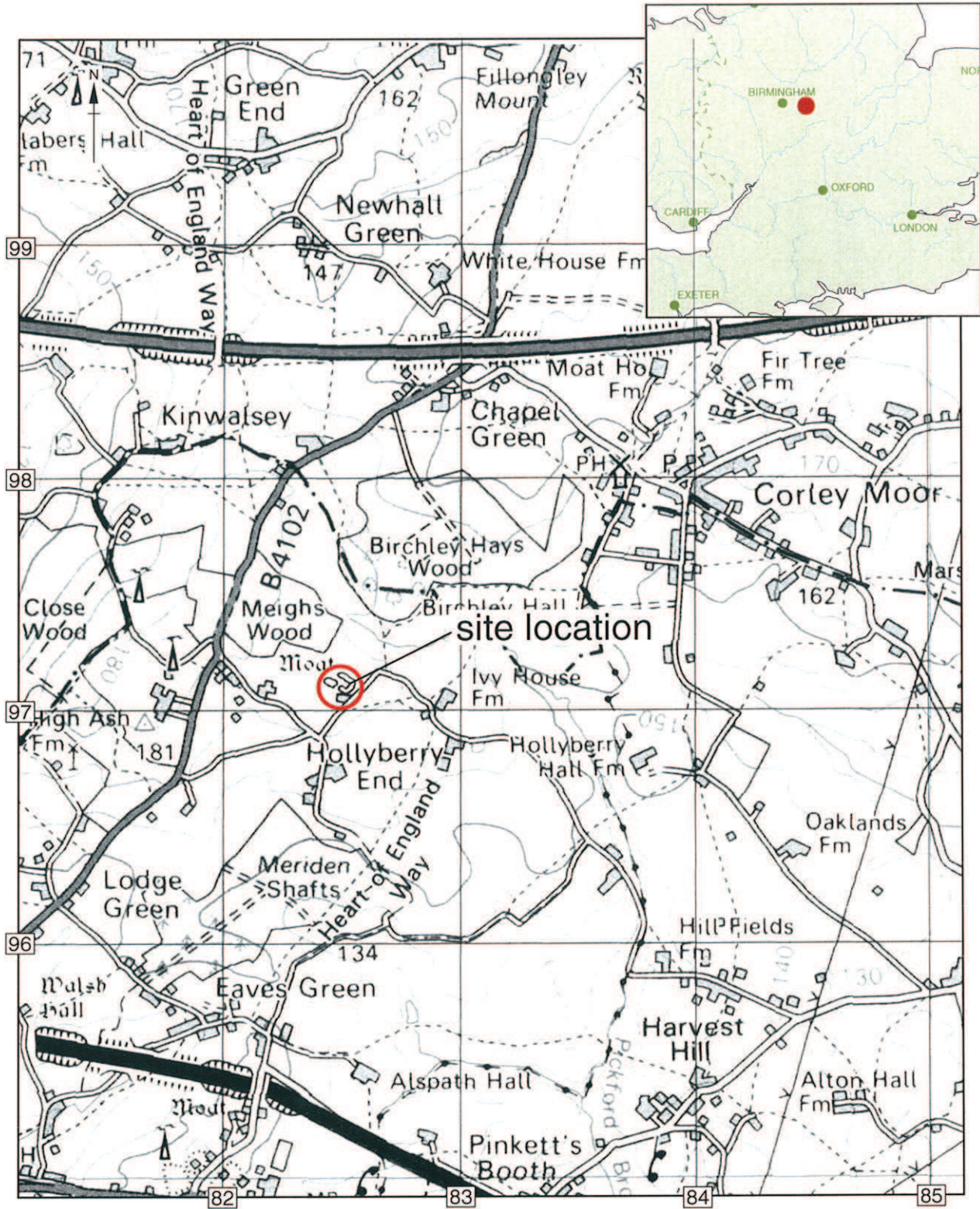
**Date and duration of project:** 8<sup>th</sup> May 2002

**Area of site:** 48 m<sup>2</sup> (extension area)

**Summary of results:** Sandstone foundation structure of unknown function, probably part of a post-medieval outbuilding.

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





Scale 1:25,000

Reproduced from the Landranger 1:50,000 scale by permission of the Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office  
© Crown Copyright 1996. All rights reserved. Licence No. AL 100005569

Figure 1: Site location

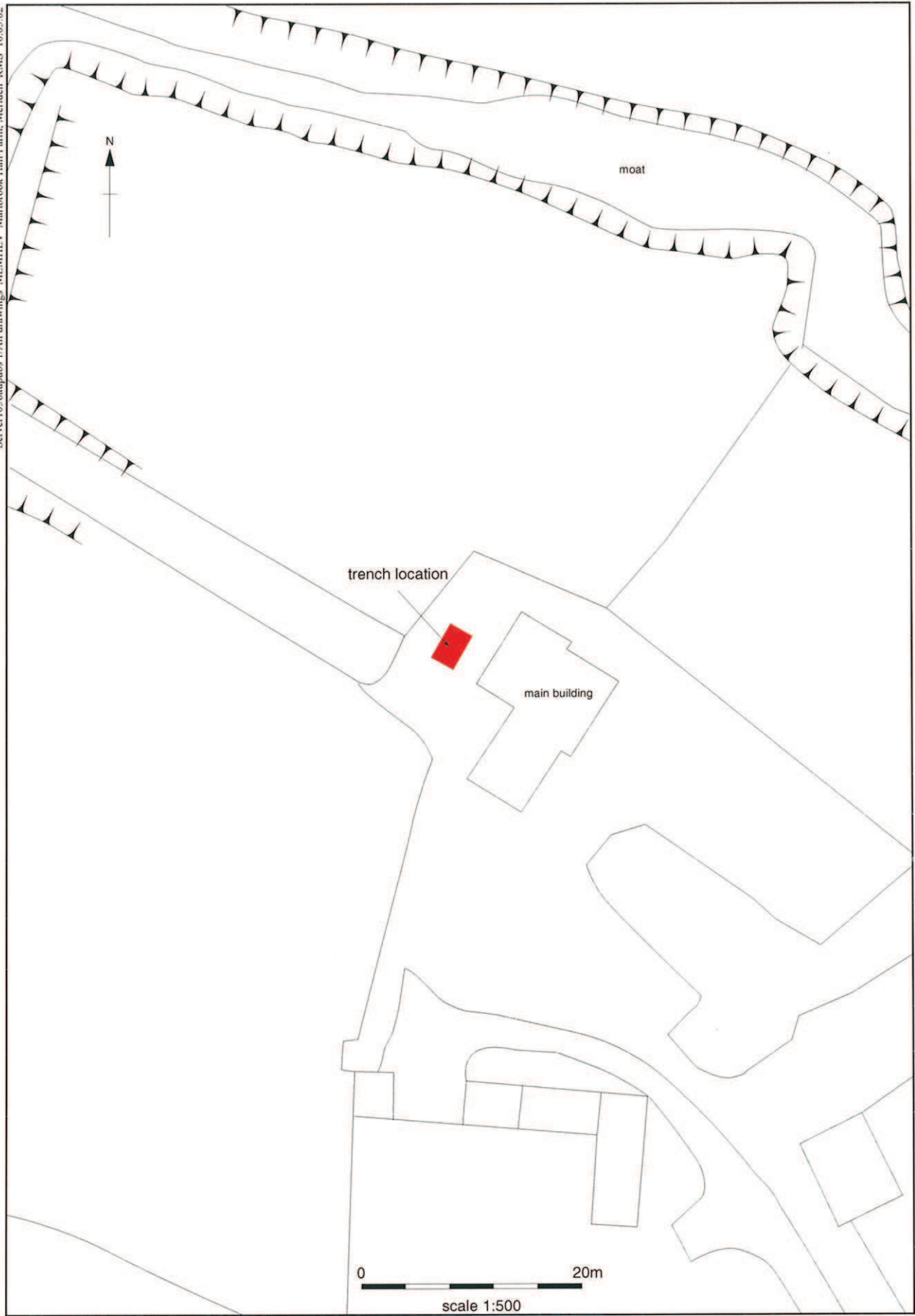


Figure 2: Trench Location Plan

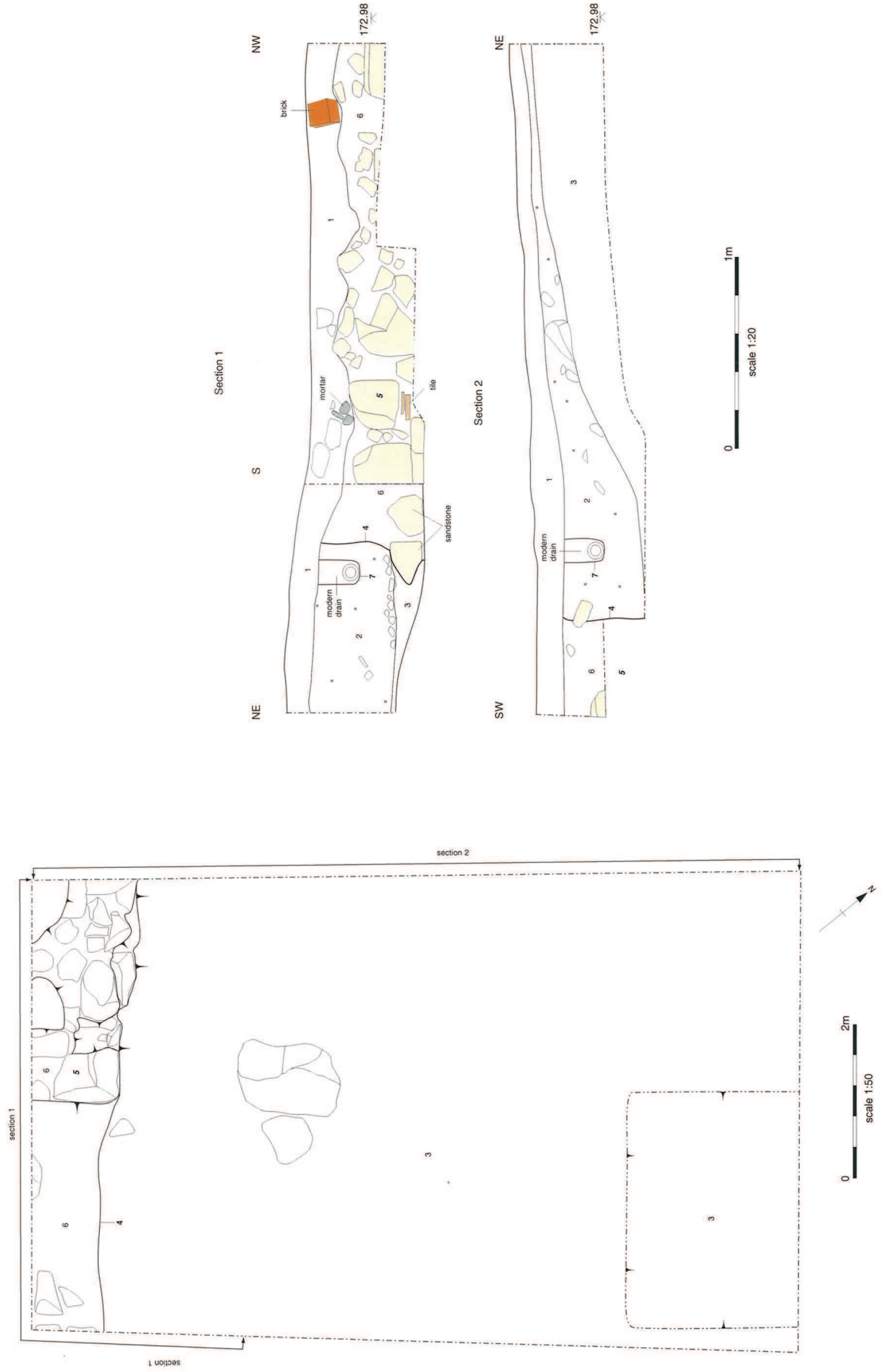


Figure 3: Plan, Sections 1 and 2



### **Oxford Archaeology**

Janus House  
Osney Mead  
Oxford OX2 0ES

t: (0044) 01865 263800  
f: (0044) 01865 793496  
e: [info@oxfordarch.co.uk](mailto:info@oxfordarch.co.uk)  
w: [www.oxfordarch.co.uk](http://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](mailto:lancinfo@oxfordarch.co.uk)  
w: [www.oxfordarch.co.uk](http://www.oxfordarch.co.uk)

**Director:** David Jennings, BA MIFA FSA



Oxford Archaeological Unit is a  
Private Limited Company, N<sup>o</sup>: 1618597  
and a Registered Charity, N<sup>o</sup>: 285627

**Registered Office:**

Oxford Archaeological Unit  
Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES