

St Andrew's Church Kingham Oxfordshire



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Oxford Archaeology

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St Andrew's Church, Kingham, Oxfordshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

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Cover Plate: View of the church from the south.

SUMMARY

In January 2005 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at St Andrew's Church, Kingham, Oxfordshire (NGR SP 25750 23700). The work was commissioned by Alfred Graves and Sons Ltd in advance of the excavation of service trench for a new water pipe and sewer. The watching brief revealed a number of unmarked graves.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at St Andrew's Church, Kingham, Oxfordshire (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Alfred Graves and Sons Ltd in respect of the excavation of service trench for a new water pipe and sewer.

1.1.2 A project brief was set by Julian Munby, Diocesan Archaeological Advisor to the Diocese of Oxford (DAC 2004).

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site lies on lias over inferior oolite at 120 m above OD. The church is situated to the south of the village at the end of Church Street.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological background to the watching brief was prepared from the project brief (DAC 2004) and is reproduced below.

1.3.2 The nave, north aisle and west tower of St Andrew's Church are mainly mid 14th and 15th century in date. The chancel was rebuilt in 1688 and the south aisle added and extensive restoration work carried out in 1852-3. The fabric is dressed and coursed ironstone with limestone ashlar dressings. The ground immediately around the church is noticeably higher than the surrounding churchyard.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 To identify and record the presence/absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.

2.1.2 To determine the extent to which human remains survive and the presence of burial vaults and graves.

2.1.3 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The trench was marked out running east to west from the proposed outlet for new toilet and to connect into the drain from the Kingham House just to the north of the church. The trench was excavated by a mini excavator using a 0.5 m wide bucket. The trench was to a depth of 1 m with a fall from west to east into the drain, but due to the discovery of brick vaults the trench depth was kept to 0.8 m below ground level for the water pipe (Fig. 2).
- 2.2.2 All archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:100 and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20. All excavated features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. A general photographic record of the work was made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (OAU 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits (Figs 3 and 4)

- 3.1.1 The service trench was 37.6 m east to west across the graveyard and turned 3 m northwards from the eastern end. It was 0.5 m wide and was 1 m in depth for the first 8 m and then was excavated to 0.8 m from the east end of the vault 15. The trench cut into a cultivated grave yard soil of light reddish brown silty sand (3). This layer had been cut by a number of features. These consisted of a charnel pit (4), which was partly exposed with a steep sloping side, but its base was below impact level. It measured 3 m x 0.5 m x 1.1 m and was filled with a dark brown silty sand loam (5) containing a lot of charnel. This had been sealed by a 0.2 m thick spread of 19th century building construction debris from the north aisle, which consisted of loose light reddish brown silty sand (2) with a lot of mortar and stone fragments and was observed for 17.5 m along the trench.
- 3.1.2 To the west of this two graves were observed in the trench. These were grave 9, which was partly exposed in trench with vertical sides, but base below impact. It measured 1.6 m x 0.5 m x 0.6 m and was filled by a light reddish brown silty sand (10) with patches of gravel. The second grave 11 was also partly exposed in the trench. It measured 2.1 m x 0.5 m x 0.5 m and contained two fills. The first a light yellowish brown silty sand (12), which was overlain by a dark grey brown (13) old disturbed topsoil. In this and the overlying graveyard topsoil (1) the fragments of a headstone and foot stone on a broken ledger stone. The foot stone was inscribed **W B 1826** and the inscription of the headstone fragments read: *Sacred to - died 6th May 1808 Aged - Her loss will*. In neither grave was the burial exposed.
- 3.1.3 The 19th century building construction debris layer (2) had been cut by construction pits of two vaults 6 and 14. Pit 6 was partly exposed and measured 2.2 m x 0.5 m x 1.1 m with vertical sides, but its base was below impact. Exposed in this was a

rectangular brick lined vault (7) with a single skin barrel top and was built of bricks with a mortar bond. Overlying this was a loose dark reddish brown silty sand (8) filling in the pit. Directly to the east of this was a second pit 14, which measured 2.2 m x 0.9 m x 1.5 m and contained a 'coffin' shaped brick lined vault (15), of which only six courses of brick work was exposed with a mortar and stone cap, possibly supported on a wooden frame now rotted away. The remains of a lead coffin lining was visible, but not disturbed. Filling the grave over this vault was a light reddish brown silty sand loam (16). Overlying this was a 0.2 m thick concrete base (17) with two courses of limestone fragments. This was a monument base to the burial, which had been levelled off below the level of the graveyard. Sealing all these features was a 0.2 m thick very dark grey brown silty sand (1) cultivated graveyard topsoil.

3.2 **Finds**

- 3.2.1 A large quantity of charnel remains from burials were recovered during the excavation of the trench. These were retained on site and reburied in one of the vaults exposed during the excavation.

3.3 **Palaeo-environmental remains**

- 3.3.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified during the watching brief.

4 **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1.1 The watching brief revealed a number of graves and a charnel pit. The charnel pit and grave 9 at the east end of the trench were undated. The grave 11 was dated to the early 19th century by the fragments of its headstone levelled out in the topsoil above it. The two brick lined vaults were late 19th century as they both cut through a construction debris layer (2) spread out around the north aisle. This dated from when the church was renovated in 1852-3. The location of these vaults was unknown due to the clearing of the north area of the graveyard in the early 1940's and the removal of the headstones to their present position along the north boundary of the graveyard.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Length</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i> Finds</i>
1	Layer	0.2 m			Topsoil	Charnel
2	Layer	0.2 m			19th Century Construction/demolition layer	
3	Layer	0.6 m			Old graveyard soil	
4	Cut	1 m	0.5 m	3 m	Charnel pit	
5	Fill				Fill of pit 4	Charnel
6	Cut	1.1 m	0.5 m	2.3 m	Grave cut for brick vault 7	
7	Structure	0.6 m	0.5 m	2.2 m	Brick vault	
8	Fill				Fill of grave 6	
9	Cut	0.6 m	0.5 m	1.6 m	Grave cut	
10	Fill				Fill of grave	Charnel
11	Cut	0.5 m	0.5 m	2.1 m	Grave cut	
12	Fill				Fill of grave	Charnel
13	Fill				Fill of grave	
14	Cut	1.5 m	0.9 m	2.2 m	Grave cut for brick vault 15	
15	Structure	1.5 m	0.7 - 0.9 m	2 m	Brick vault	
16	Fill				Fill of grave	
17	Structure	0.2 m		2.2 m	Monument base	

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

DAC 2004 St Andrew's Church, Kingham Archaeological Recording Specification

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: St Andrew's Church, Kingham, Oxfordshire

Site code: KISAC 04

Grid reference: NGR SP 25750 23700

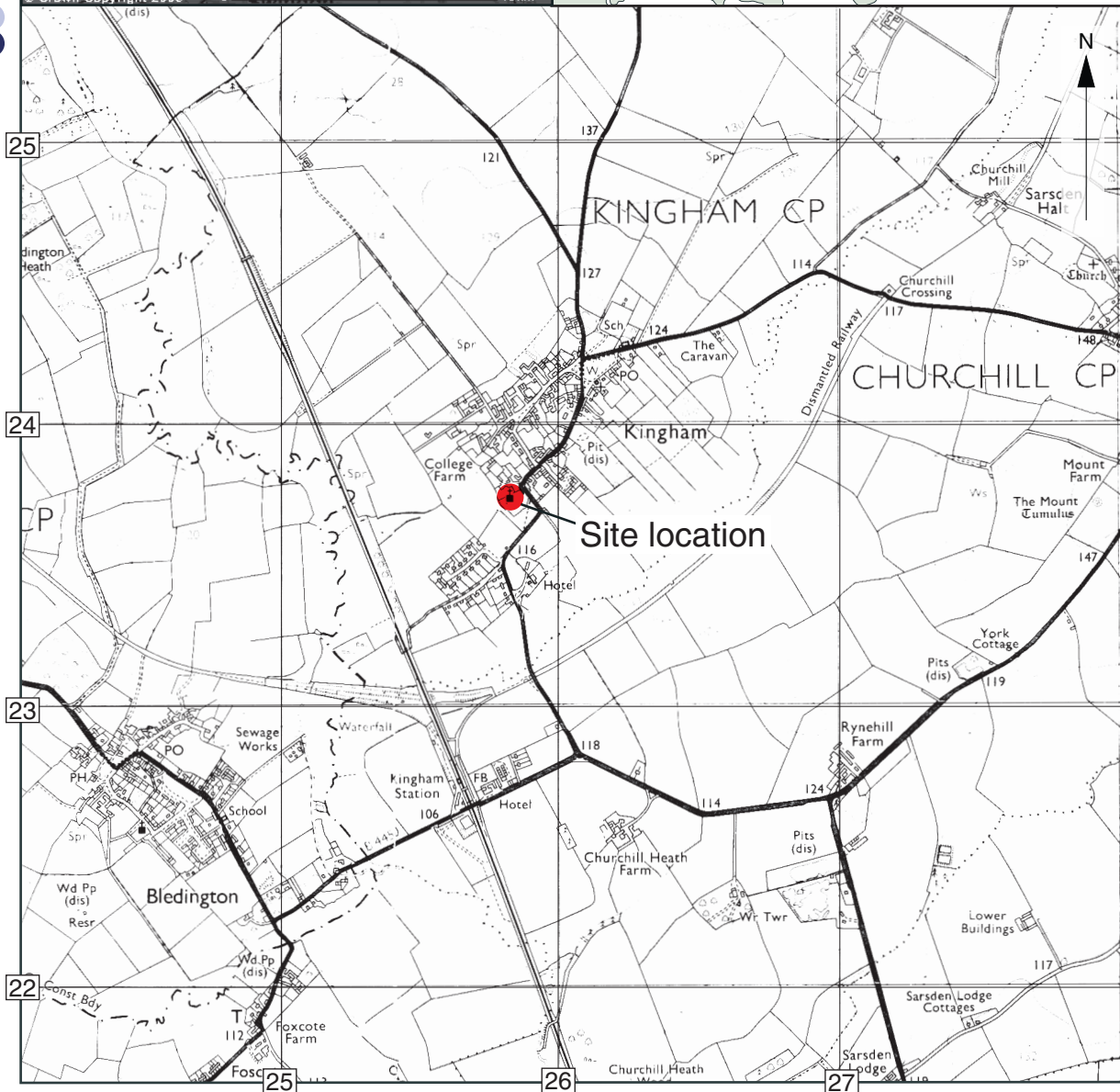
Type of watching brief: Excavation of service trench across graveyard.

Date and duration of project: Three site visits from the 24th to 26th January 2005.

Area of site: 37.6 m x 0.5 m

Summary of results: The watching brief revealed a number of unmarked graves

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course, under the following accession number: OXCMS:2004.70



Scale 1:25,000

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Figure 1: Site location

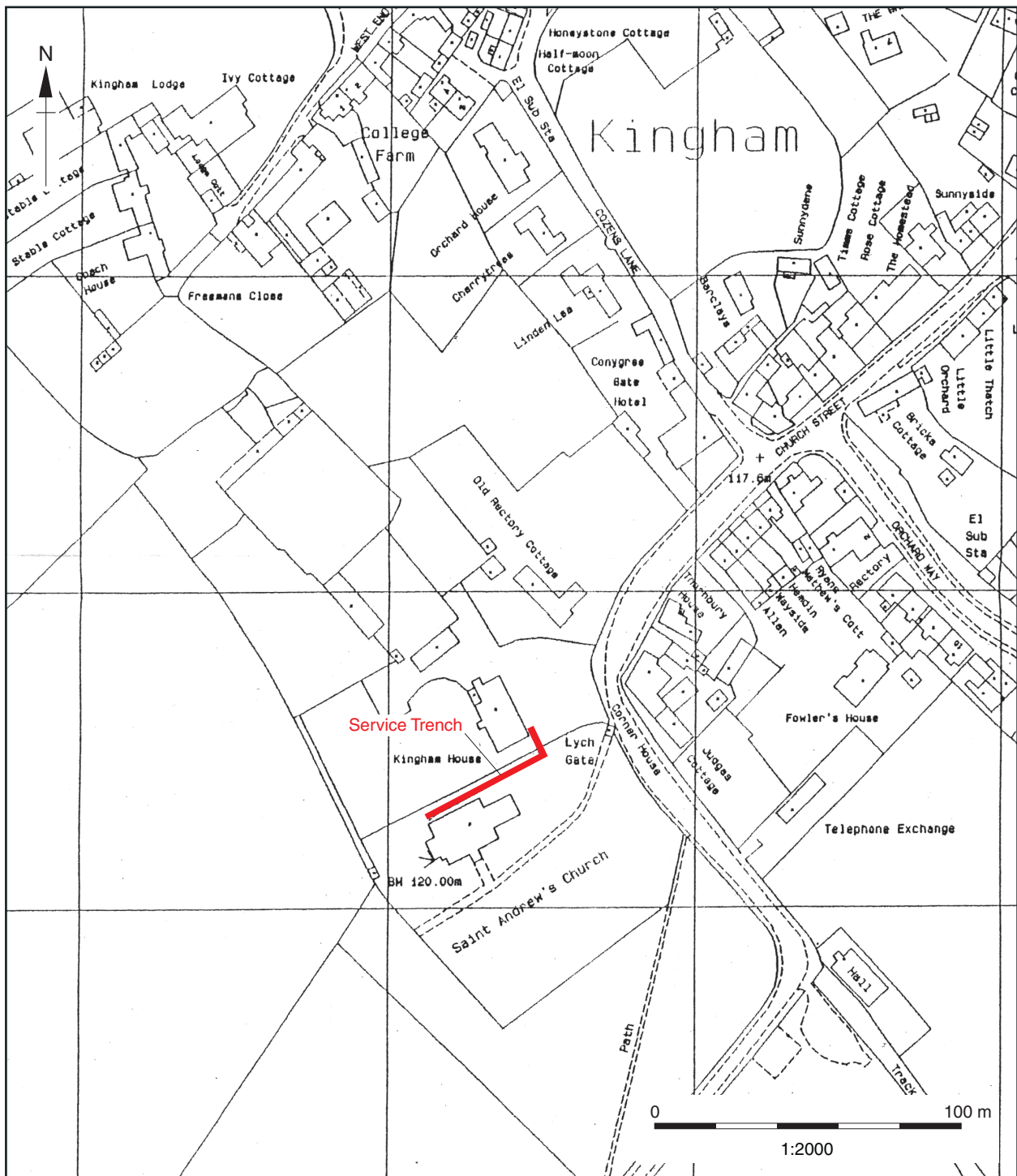
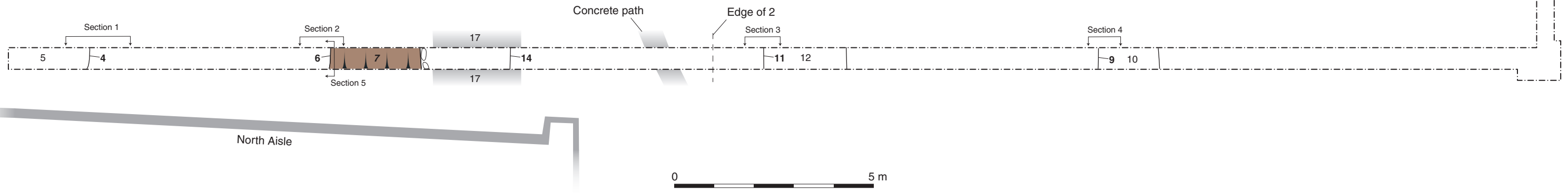


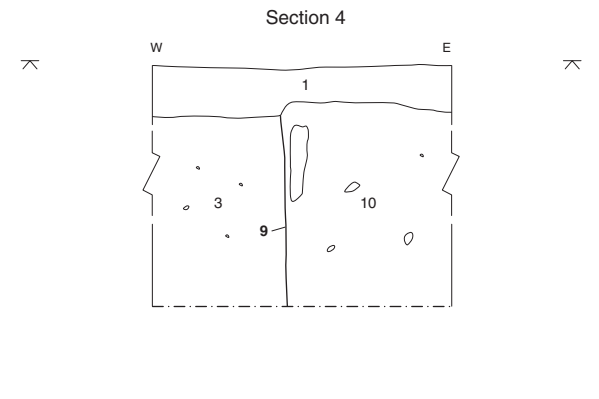
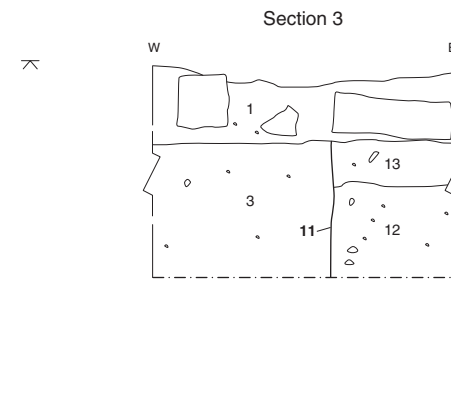
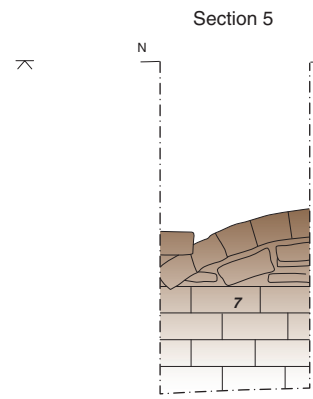
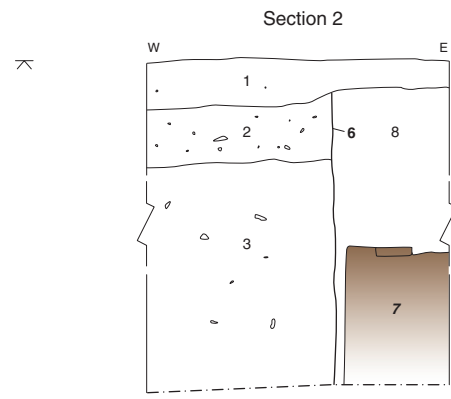
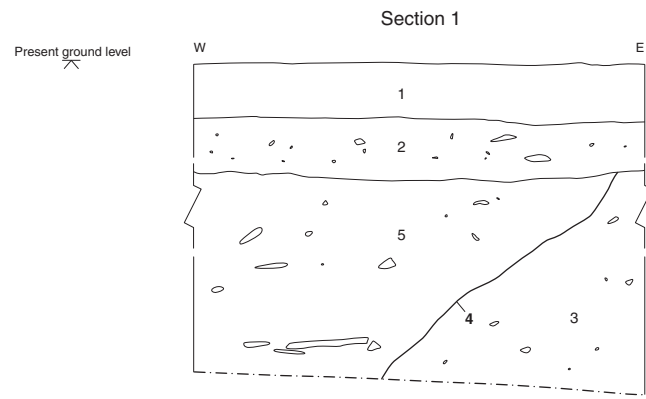
Figure 2: Trench location



Trench Plan



Plan scale: 1:100



Section scale: 1:25

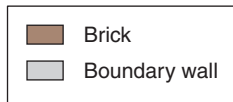


Figure 3: Service trench and sections



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