

SUNDRIDGE (KE)

SUBSEV

Combe Bank School

Combe Bank School, Sundridge, Kent

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

NGR TQ 4797 5585

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January 2001

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January 2001

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SUMMARY

In December 2000, the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) carried out a field evaluation in the grounds of Combe Bank School, Sundridge, Kent, on behalf of Combe Bank School. The evaluation revealed evidence for landscaping of the grounds during the 18th Century or later, as well as a number of possible garden bedding trenches. No other archaeological features were present.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In December 2000, the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) carried out a field evaluation in the grounds of Combe Bank School, Sundridge, Kent (Fig.1), on behalf of Combe Bank School, in respect of a planning application (SE/99/0382 & 0381) for an extension of the school's gymnasium. The work was undertaken according to a Specification set by Kent County Council (October 2000). The development site is presently occupied by a grassed area with concrete slab pathways, and a tennis court.

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site lies on Clay-with-flints over Gault Clay with current ground level at approximately 100m aOD. The site is situated on ground which slopes down to the north and west.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The following is reproduced from the Specification.

1.3.2 Combe Bank School is housed in historic Grade I and Grade II listed buildings set within the Grade II* listed gardens of the former Combe Bank Estate. The buildings were originally constructed in the second quarter of the 18th Century by Roger Morris for Colonel John Cambell, later Duke of Argyle. The application site is approximately 180 m east of where several Roman urns were discovered in the 17th century (SMR TQ 45 NE 8).

1.4 Evaluation aims

1.4.1 The aims of the evaluation, as set out in the Specification, were as follows:

1.4.2 To establish whether there are any archaeological deposits at the site which may be affected by the proposed development.

1.4.3 To ascertain the extent, depth below ground surface, depth of deposit, character, significance and condition of any archaeological remains on site.

1.5 Scope of fieldwork

- 1.5.1 The evaluation consisted of three trenches each measuring 10 m long and 1.60 m wide (Fig. 2). The overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision by a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket.

1.6 Fieldwork methods and recording

- 1.6.1 The trenches were cleaned by hand and the revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds. All archaeological features were planned and sections along the full length of each trench were drawn at a scale of 1:20. Each trench was photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

1.7 Finds

- 1.7.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and bagged by context.

1.8 Palaeo-environmental evidence

- 1.8.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were encountered during the evaluation.

1.9 Presentation of results

- 1.9.1 In the following sections the deposits are described trench by trench. There is additional comment on the finds and the reliability of the results. A context inventory, including finds lists, is included in Appendix 1. The stratigraphy of each trench is described individually, from earliest to latest, and a discussion and interpretation of the archaeology then follows.

2 RESULTS: GENERAL

2.1 Soils and ground conditions

- 2.1.1 The site is located on garden soils of clay loam overlaying a Clay-with-flints subsoil and firm Gault Clay.
- 2.1.2 No significant archaeological evidence was encountered. Trench 1 revealed evidence for post medieval landscaping activity probably associated with the construction of the 18 th-century buildings in the grounds. Undisturbed natural Clay-with-flints was encountered in all the trenches at depths of between 0.90 and 1.50m below the modern ground surface.

3 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

3.1 Trench 1 (Fig. 3)

3.1.1 Trench 1 was located in an area of lawn to the south of the tennis courts.

3.1.2 A mid blue-grey gault clay (106) was recorded at a depth of c.1.50m below the ground surface. Tenacious, mid-brown Clay-with-flints (105) was encountered at approximately 1.36 m below ground surface (98.33 m OD). Layer (105) was overlain by Layer (104) which in turn was overlain by Layer (103). Both were light yellowish brown silty clays. Layer (103) contained a fragment of pottery which has been dated to the mid 18th-century. It was truncated by two features, [112] and [114], which may be associated with earlier garden features, and a shallow pit [116]. They were overlain by Layer (102), a buried garden soil. Layer (102) was cut by a pit, [107], which was at least 3m long and 1.3m deep and filled by layers 108 and 109. It was overlain by Layer (101) which was in turn cut by a service trench, [110]. The topsoil was a dark brown clay loam (100).

3.2 Trench 2 (Fig. 3)

3.2.1 Trench 2 was located at the western end of the tennis courts to the north of the swimming pool building. The trench was oriented north-east to south-west.

3.2.2 Natural Gault clay (203) was encountered at a depth of approximately 1 m below the ground surface (97.69 m OD). This was overlain by mid brown Clay-with-flints (202) which in turn was overlain by a tenacious light brown silt clay (201), perhaps an earlier garden soil. The topsoil (200) was a dark brown clay loam.

3.3 Trench 3 (Fig. 3)

3.3.1 Trench 3 was located at the western end of the tennis courts to the north of the swimming pool building and 12 m the west of Trench 2. Natural Gault clay (303) was encountered at a depth of approximately 0.90 m below ground (97.59 m OD). It was overlain by mid brown Clay-with-flints (302) at a depth of c 0.5m below the ground surface, which was in turn overlain by a dark brown silt clay (301). The topsoil (300) was a dark brown clay loam.

3.4 Pottery

3.4.1 A single sherd of 18th century pottery was retrieved from Context 103 in Trench 1.

4 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1.1 Very little of archaeological interest was found during the evaluation, although the sequence of layers, pits and other features recorded within Trench 1 may be associated with 18th century, or later, landscaping and garden bedding trenches. Trenches 2 and 3 were found to be devoid of archaeology, although the layer underlying modern topsoil, Layers (201) and (301) respectively, may represent former garden soils.

- 4.1.2 Undisturbed natural clays were revealed in all of the trenches. The top of the natural bedrock sloped down from the east down to the west from its highest point in Trench 1 to its lowest in Trench 3 by approximately 1 m.
- 4.1.3 The integrity of the stratigraphic evidence encountered during the evaluation is believed to be good.

APPENDIX I - ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cxtr No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Thick. (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>No./wt</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	100	Layer	>1.60	0.21	Modern topsoil and turf			
1	101	Layer	>1.60	0.18	Levelling Horizon			
1	102	Layer	>1.60	0.30	Garden Soil			
1	103	Layer	>1.60	0.42	Subsoil	Pot	1	18 th C
1	104	Layer	>1.60	0.24	Subsoil			
1	105	Layer	>1.60	0.34	Natural gravel			
1	106	Layer	>1.60	0.20	Natural Clay			
1	107	Cut	3.75	1.40	Service Trench			
1	108	Fo 107	3.75	0.57	Dump/fill			
1	109	f.o 107	0.78	?	Dump/fill			
1	110	Cut	0.37	0.64	Pipe Trench			
1	111	F.o 111	0.37	0.64	Electric Pipe			
1	112	Cut	0.79	0.28	Garden Feature			
1	113	F.o 112	0.79	0.28	Fill of Garden Feature			
1	114	Cut	1.90	0.24	Garden Feature			
1	115	F.o 114	1.90	0.24	Fill of Garden Feature			
1	116	Cut	1.44	0.39	Pit/Garden Feature			
1	117	F.o 116	1.44	0.39	Fill of Pit/Garden Feature			
2	200	Layer	>1.60	0.30	Topsoil/turf			
2	201	Layer	>1.60	0.30	Subsoil			
2	202	Layer	>1.60	0.37	Colluvium			
2	203	Layer	>1.60	0.37	Natural			
3	300	Layer	>1.60	0.28	Topsoil			
3	301	Layer	>1.60	0.30	Subsoil			
3	302	Layer	>1.60	0.38	Colluvium			
3	303	Layer	>1.60	0.26	Natural			

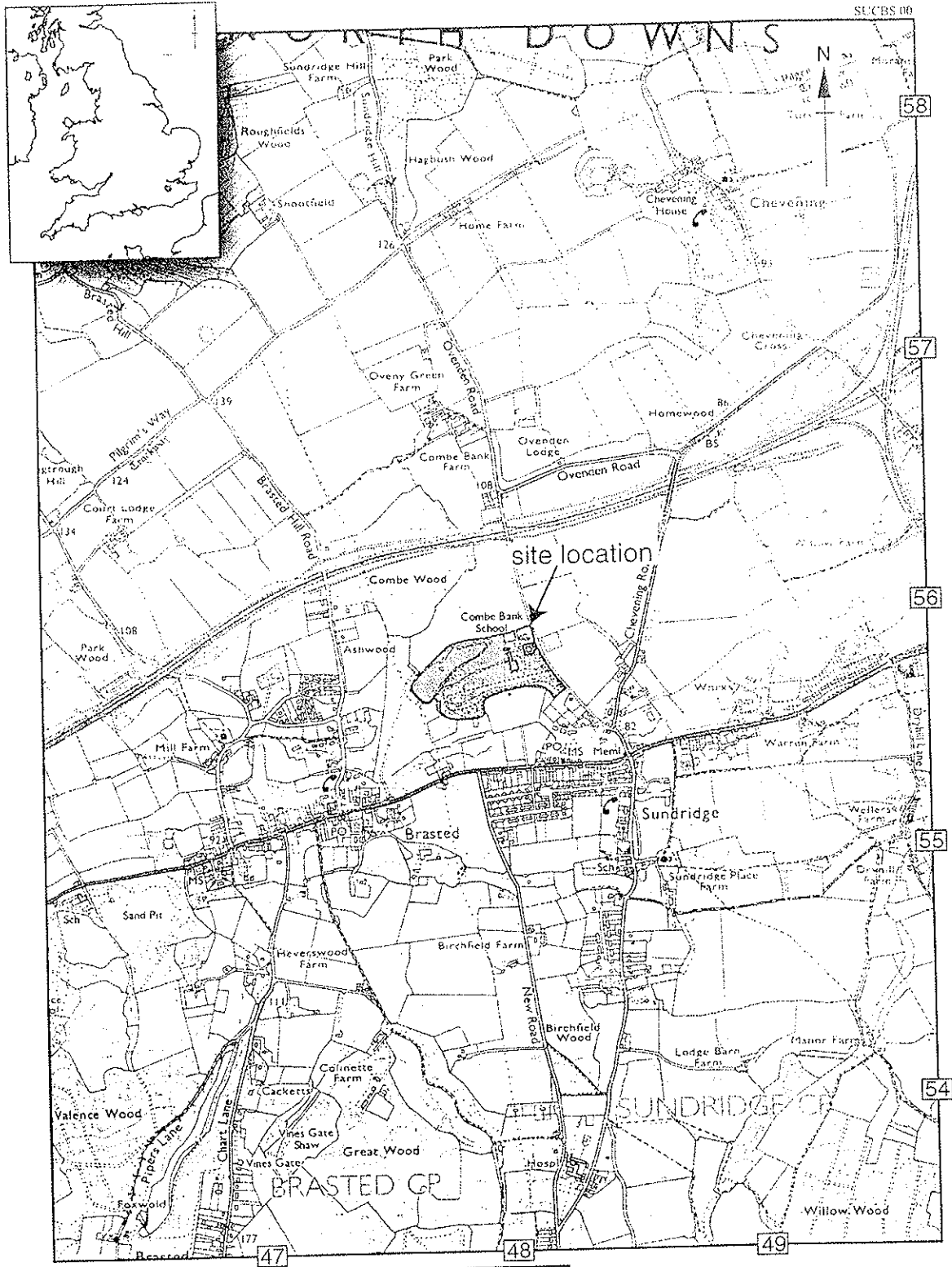
APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

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Specification for an archaeological evaluation in
advance of new teaching and sports facilities at
Combe Bank School, Combe Bank Drive, Sundridge,
Kent.

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Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual (unpub.)



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Figure 1: Site location plan.

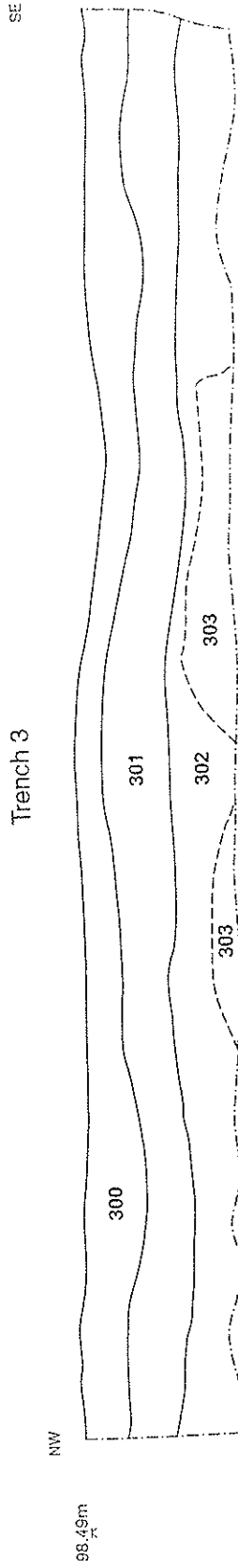
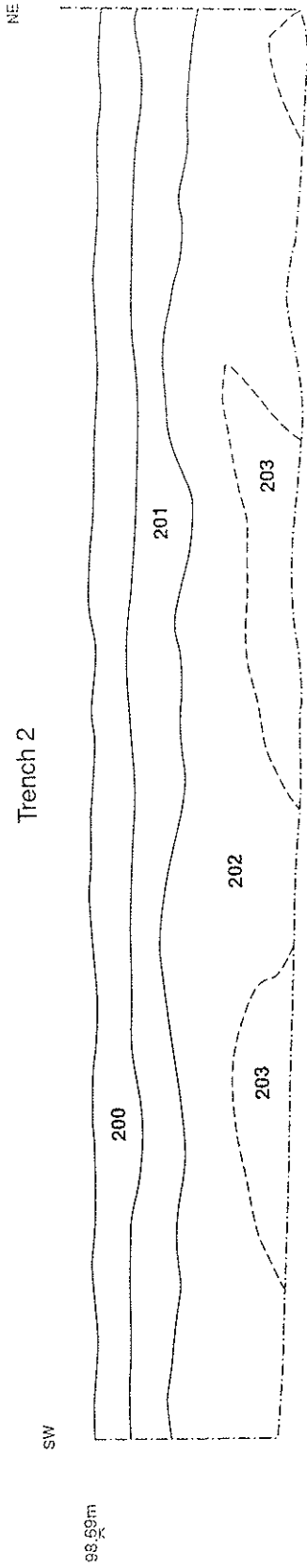
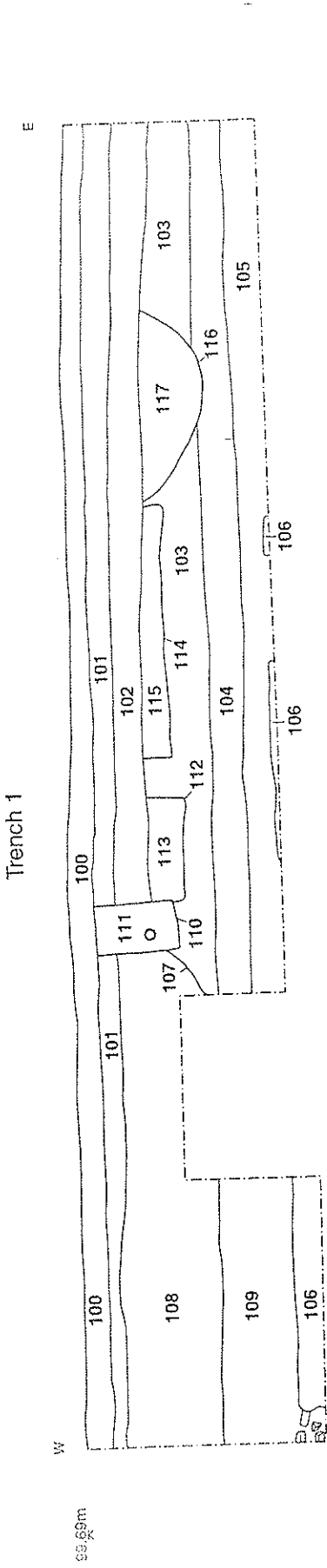


Figure 3: Trenches 1, 2 and 3, sections.

SU/755/09

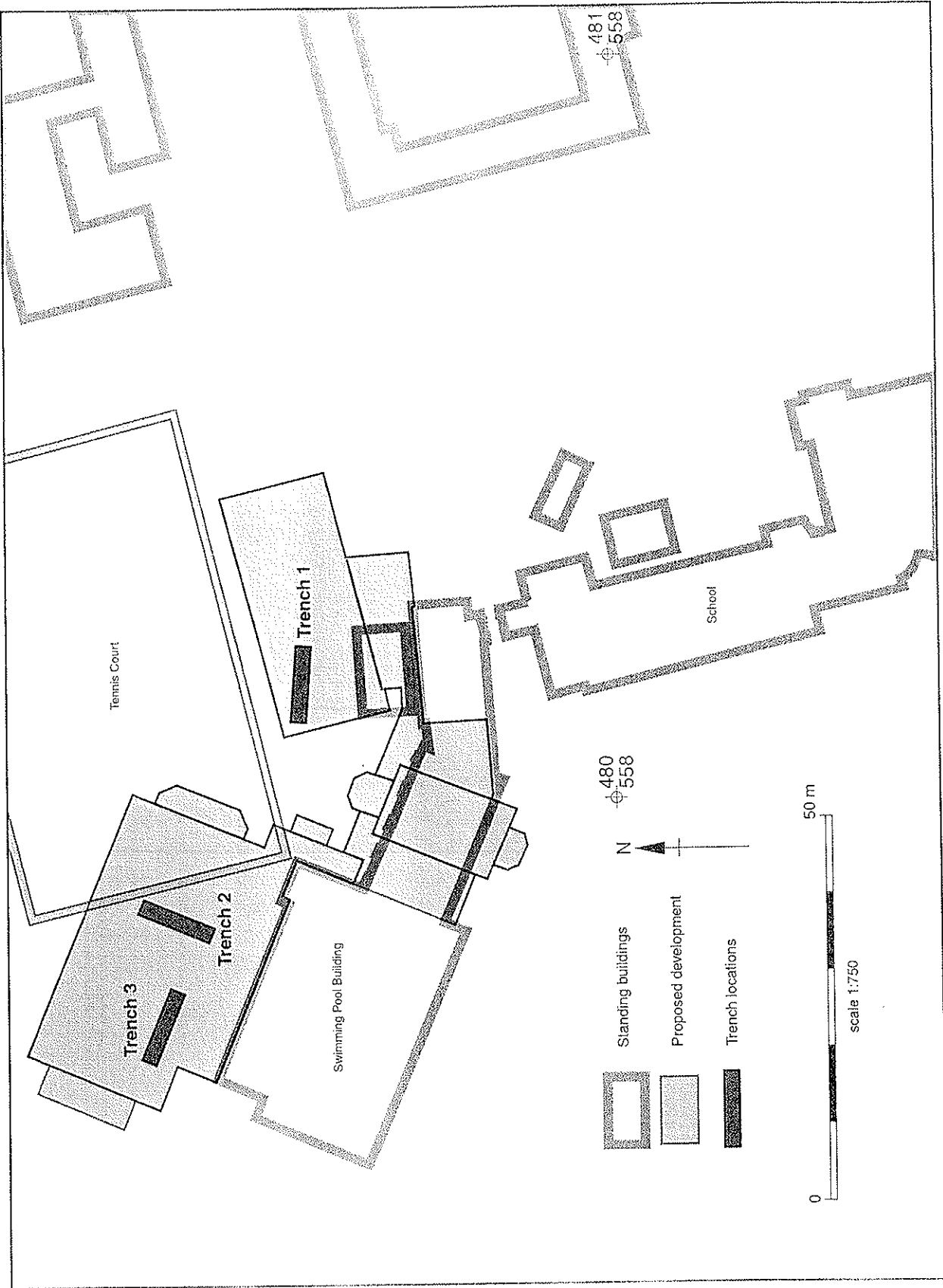
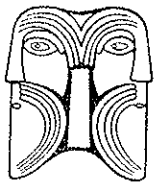


Figure 2: Trench location plan.



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