

The Amphitheatre College of All Saints Maidstone Kent



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Oxford Archaeology

June 2003

Client: Maidstone Borough Council

Issue N^o: 1

OA Job N^o: 1824

NGR: TQ 759 554

Client Name: Maidstone Borough Council

Client Ref No:

Document Title: The Amphitheatre, College of All Saints, Maidstone, Kent

Document Type: Watching Brief

Issue Number: 1

National Grid Reference: TQ 759 554


Planning Reference:

OA Job Number: JN : 1824
Site Code: MNEMG 2003.10
Invoice Code: MACAS WB
Receiving Museum: Maidstone Museum
Museum Accession No: MNEMG 2003.10

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Document File Location U:\OAU\Small Works\The Amphitheatre,All Saints
College,Maidstone.doc

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SUMMARY

On June 11th 2003 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at The Amphitheatre, College of All Saints, Maidstone, Kent NGR:TQ 759 554. The work was commissioned by Kent Highways in advance of excavation of a cable trench for installation of CCTV at the site. The watching brief revealed a succession of modern landscaping and garden deposits. No archaeological remains were encountered.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 On 11th June, 2003 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at The Amphitheatre, College of All Saint's, Maidstone, Kent, NGR TQ 759 554. . The work was commissioned by Maidstone B. C in respect of scheduled monument consent for installation of a CCTV and associated works at national monument SAM 24348.
- 1.1.2 A project brief was agreed with Peter Kendell representing English Heritage (EH), in accordance with the instructions detailed by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in granting scheduled monument consent. A written Scheme of Investigation detailing how OA would meet the requirements of the brief was produced and approved by EH.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies on Lower Greensand overlain by alluvial deposits from the River Medway at approximately 12 m above OD. The site is situated on open grass and gardens on the eastern bank of the River Medway and is roughly 0.8 hectares in area

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 There is little evidence of prehistoric settlement in central Maidstone, though the Medway Valley has demonstrated activity from the Palaeolithic onwards, and both Neolithic and Bronze Age metal work has been found outside of the centre. Little evidence of Iron Age activity has been found though Roman remains are extensive.
- 1.3.2 A number of Roman buildings and cemeteries have been found in the Maidstone area including an Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Wheeler Street, north of the High Street though no evidence of associated Anglo-Saxon settlements have been found.
- 1.3.3 Maidstone is one of a series of major manors of the archbishops of Canterbury. The Amphitheatre site forms part of Maidstone College, founded in 1395 which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 24348) and specifically includes the ruined medieval gatehouse located at the southern end of the college. Immediately to the north of the Amphitheatre site is the former inlet in the River Medway where the 19th century OS maps show a ford and a ferry once existed. North of this area is the 14th

century All Saint's Church and directly north of the church is the Archbishop's Palace; built in the 10th, and rebuilt in the 14th and again in the 16th centuries, positioned on the bank of the river.

- 1.3.4 The Gateway, Front Range and River Tower of Maidstone College built in the 14th century lie to the north-east of the Amphitheatre site. Flanking the remainder of the eastern edge of the site is the Master's House of Maidstone, a grade II* listed medieval L-shaped building. Former buildings of the College Farm are also shown on the 19th century OS maps to the south, while the site itself contains remains of the medieval precinct wall of the college.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence or absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.
- 2.1.2 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The excavation of the trench was undertaken by a mini excavator using a 0.3 m wide toothless bucket under the supervision of a qualified archaeologist.
- 2.2.2 A representative number of sections were recorded throughout the length of the trench. These were drawn at a scale of 1:20 and were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. A plan showing the location of these sections and the limit of the trench was recorded at a scale of 1:400. A general photographic record of the work was made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed, D Wilkinson, 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 A sealed a yellowish brown, friable sandy silt subsoil, (101), (104) and (107), a probable modern landscaping layer. This was sealed below a thick deposit of a dark grey, friable silty loam topsoil was evident in all the sections. (100), (103), (106) and (110). Between 0.15 m and 0.5 m in depth this represents a modern worked topsoil. The two remaining contexts, (102), a tarmac path and (109), a construction layer can be attributed to recent works carried out on the site.

3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 The only finds recovered were from the topsoil, These were 19th and 20th century in date and included Transfer printed ware, C.B.M., Clay pipe and Bottle glass. These finds were evaluated on site and were not retained. No other finds were recovered from any of the other deposits.

3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 3.3.1 No Paleo-environmental deposits were identified during the watching brief..

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The method of excavation and the conditions on the day,(good visibility, dry ground) provided optimum visibility to determine whether any archaeological deposits were present..
- 4.1.2 The landscaping and garden deposits on the site have clearly sealed any potentially surviving archaeological deposits such that within the shallow depth of the trench, no historical horizon was reached.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Height</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i> Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
100	Layer	0.2m to 0.5m	--	--	Imported topsoil for raised border	CBM, Pot, Glass, Clay Pipe	19 th /20 th century
101	Layer	Up to 1.2m	--	--	Made up ground	--	--
102	Structure	0.25m	3.0m	--	Modern path	None	--
103	Layer	0.1m	--	--	Buried topsoil	CBM	19 th /20 th century
104	Layer	0.1m	--	--	Subsoil	None	--
105	Layer	0.1m	--	--	Turf line	None	--
106	Layer	0.15m	--	--	Topsoil	CBM, Pot, Glass	19 th /20 th century
107	Layer	0.2m	--	--	Subsoil	None	--
108	Layer	0.15m	--	--	Imported topsoil	None	--
109	Layer	0.2m	1.4m	--	Construction debris	None	--
110	Layer	0.25m	--	--	Buried topsoil	CBM, Glass	19 th /20 th century

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

IFA 1999 *Standard and guidance for archaeological watching briefs*

OA 1992 *Fieldwork manual* (1st edition, ed. D Wilkinson)

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: The Amphitheatre, College of All Saints, Maidstone, Kent

Site code: MNEMG 2003.10

Grid reference: NGR: TQ 759 554

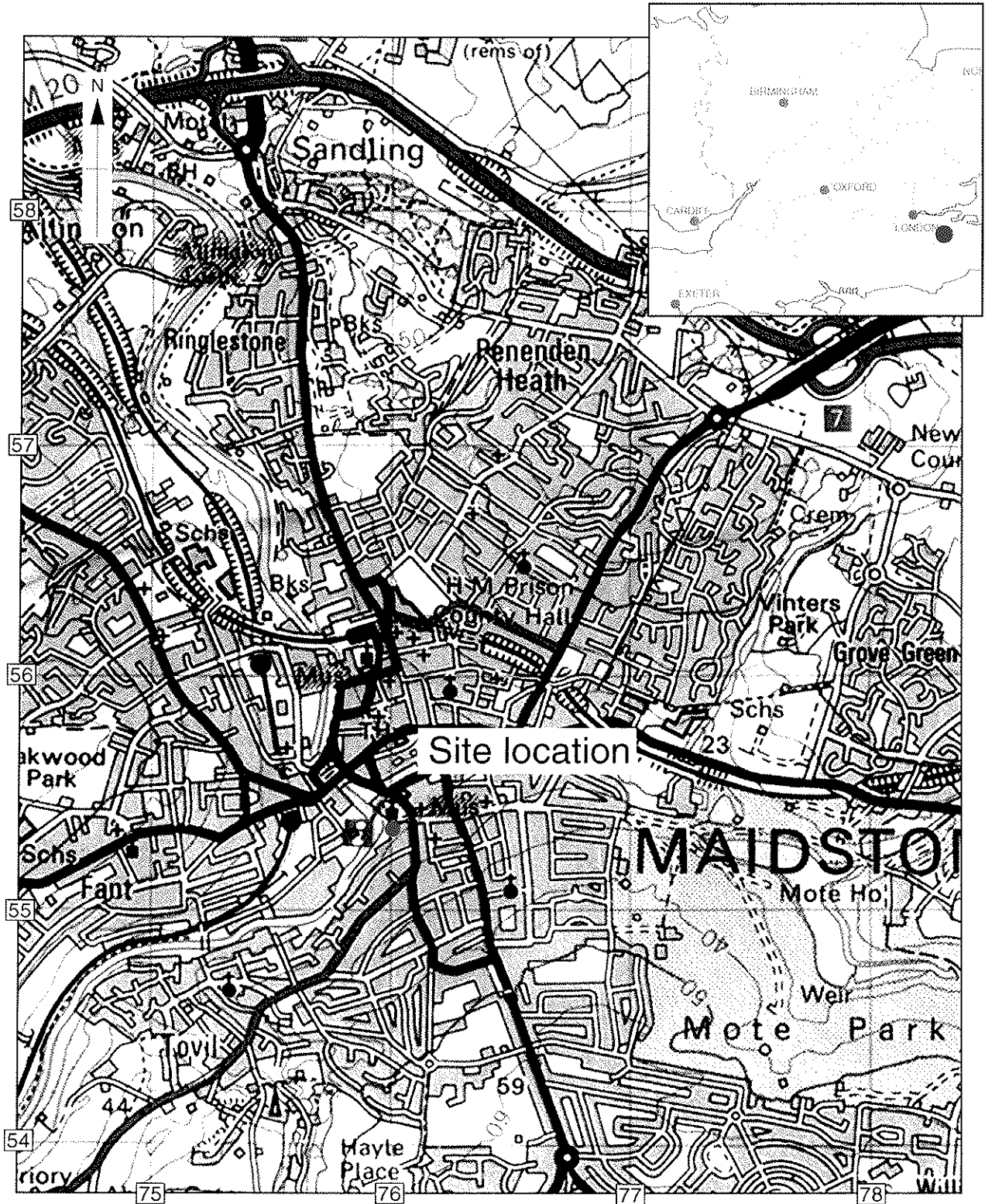
Type of watching brief: Monitoring of cable trench for CCTV.

Date and duration of project: 11th June 2003, Singleday

Area of site: 60m x 12m

Summary of results: No archaeology - Modern garden soils overlying landscaped deposits.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with the Sites and Monuments record at Maidstone Museum in due course, under the following accession number: MNEMG 2003.10



Scale 1:25,000

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Figure 1: Site location

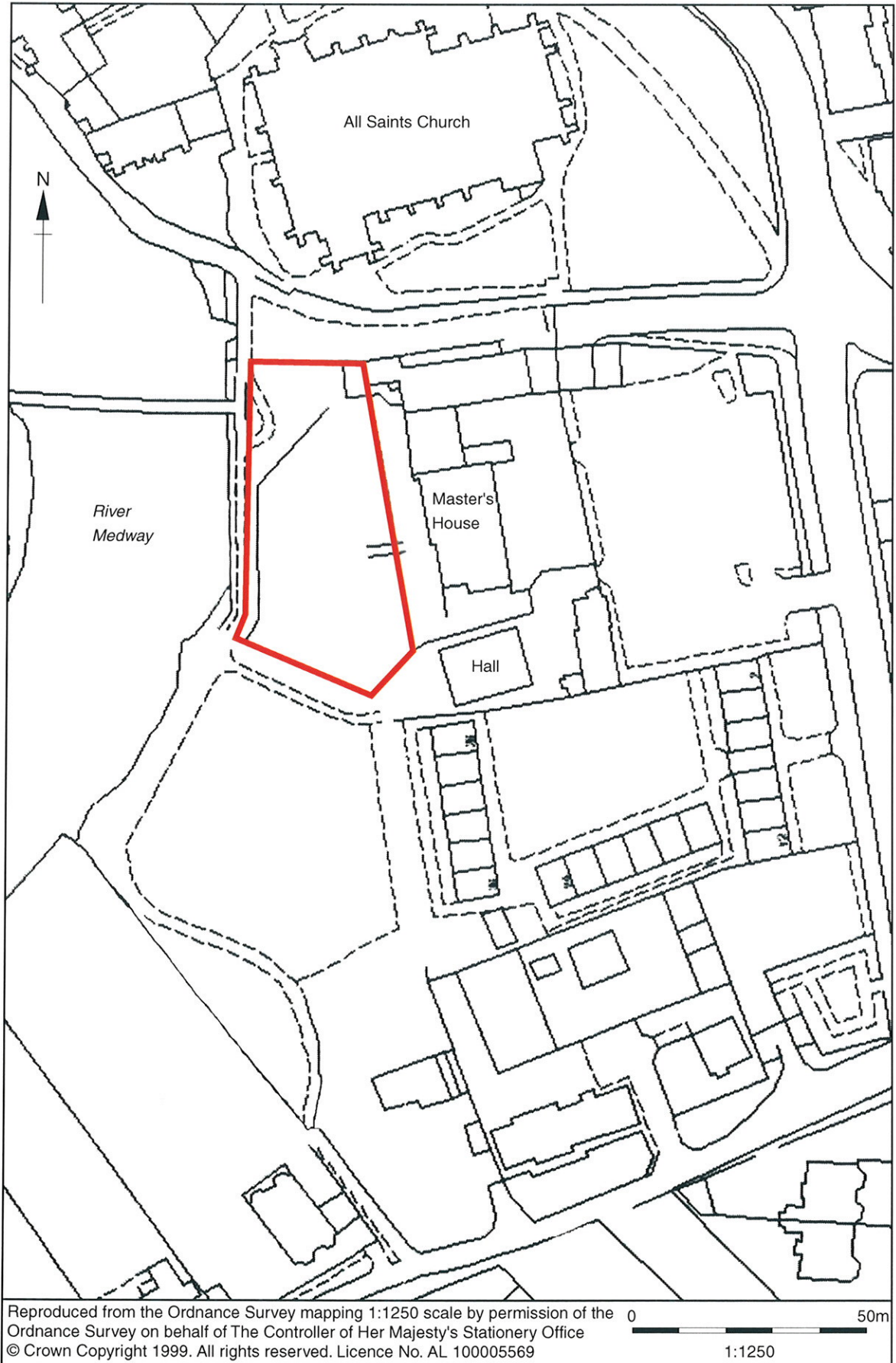


Figure 2: Site location

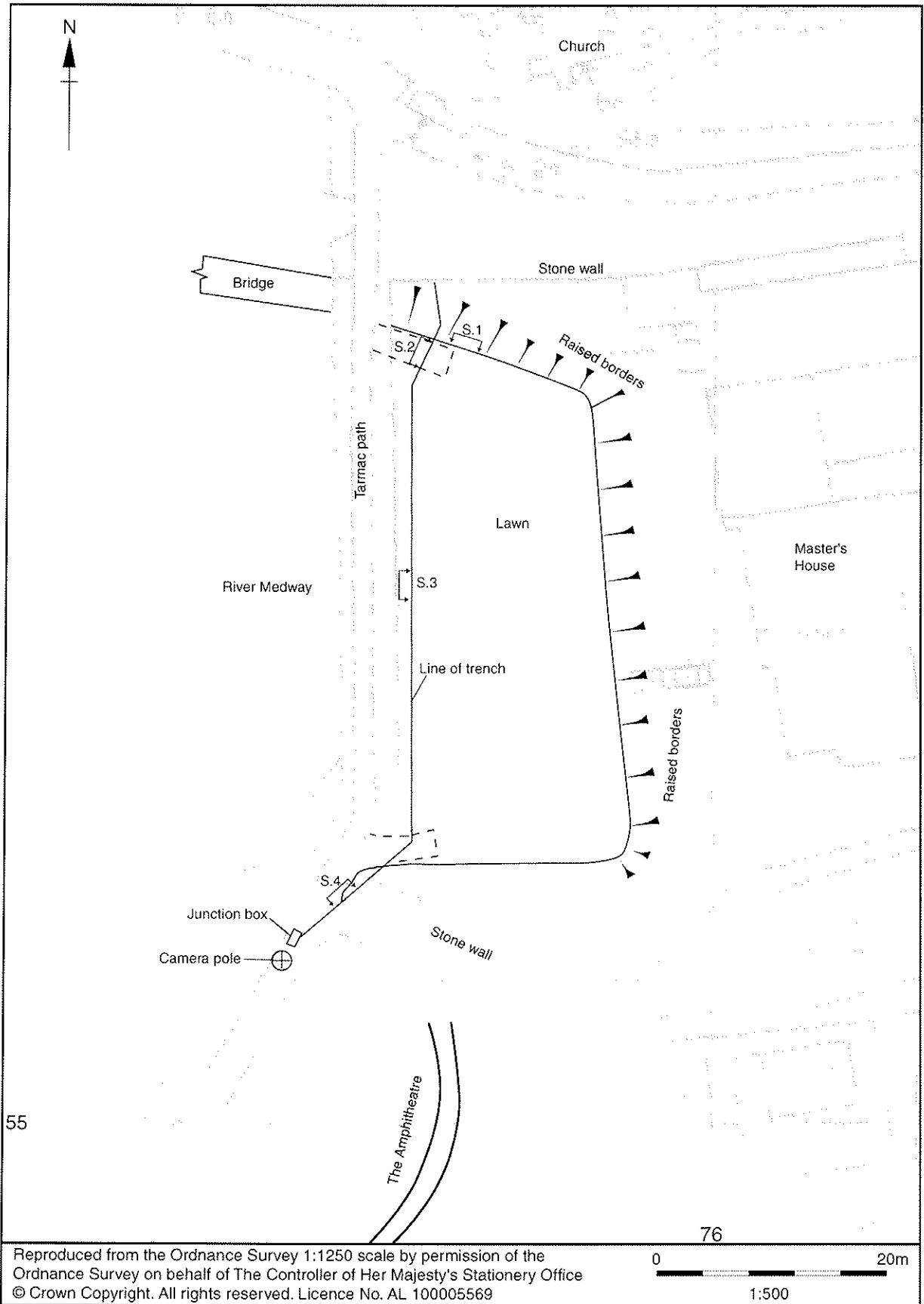
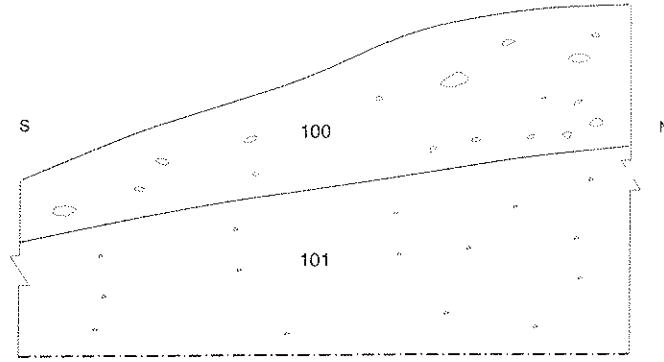
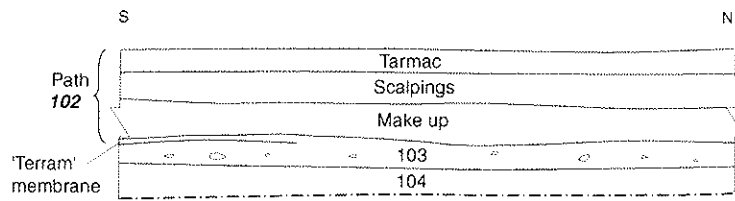


Figure 3: Plan showing extent of cable trench and location of sections

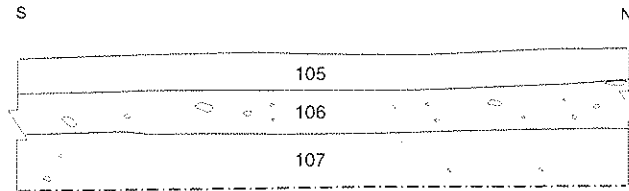
Section 1



Section 2



Section 3



Section 4

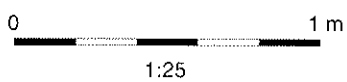
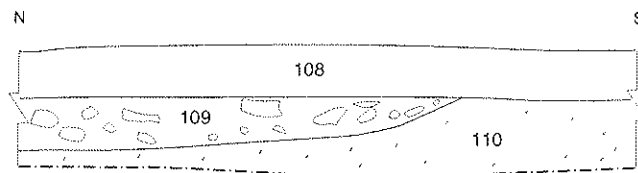

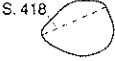










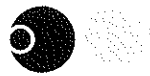


Figure 4: Sections 1 to 4

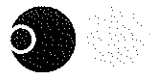
	Section line and number
	Interior section line and number
	Limit of excavation
	Sondage / Interior limit of excavation
	Fill line and number
	Cut line and number
	Structure number
	Unclear boundary
	Stones
	Hachures indicate inclination of slope inside excavated feature
	Levels
	Grid point



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