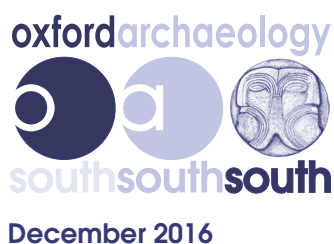




# Corpus Christi College, Oxford, New Sub Main Works

## Archaeological Watching Brief Report



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## Corpus Christi College, Oxford: New Sub Main Works

### *Archaeological Watching Brief Report*

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illustrated by Conan Parsons and Charles Rousseaux*

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## Summary

*Between 15<sup>th</sup> August and 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2016 Oxford Archaeology carried out an intermittent watching brief at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, on works to replace sub-mains cables. Two sections of cable trench were monitored, and three test pits were observed to inform the depth of a third section of trench, also subsequently monitored. Evidence for burials associated with the 16th chapel was encountered, including the capping of a stone and brick burial vault which contained a coffin observable through a void in the structure. Some disarticulated human bone was also recovered and reburied on the site, providing evidence for additional disturbed burials in the area. A rubbish pit dating from 1650-1700 contained pottery and animal bones, including a rare example of a turkey bone from this date. Walls and pillar bases from earlier incarnations of the College buildings were also recorded.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Corpus Christi College to undertake a watching brief of the site of a proposed new sub main works (Fig. 1).
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken as permitted development. A brief was set by David Radford, the Oxford City Archaeologist, detailing the Local Authority's specification for work (OCC 2016). This document presents the results from the works carried out.
- 1.1.3 The works included the excavation of new cabling trenches re-cut through previous trenches in The Grove and parts of the Front Quad. Cables were also placed in newly cut trenches within the Front Quad, Cloister Quad and The Grove. Three test pits were excavated along the cable route on the north side of the Cloister Quad (Fig. 2).
- 1.1.4 All work was undertaken in accordance with local and national planning policies.

### 1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies within the centre of Oxford, to the south of Merton Street, and is centred on SP 51633 06003 (Fig. 1).
- 1.2.2 The site is located on the southern edge of the second river gravel terrace and the underlying geology is Oxford Clay (BGS website). The site is mostly level, and lies at c 60m OD.

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background to the site was described in the brief (OCC 2016), and is summarised below.
- 1.3.2 The site is of interest because it is located within the extent of the late Saxon burh, the medieval walled town and the precinct of Corpus Christi College. The college was founded in c 1517 by Bishop Fox, and was extended over the site of a number of early 14th century academic halls that fronted onto Oriel Street and Merton Street, including Urban Hall and St Christopher Hall. The college is located in the eastern sector of the city against the former line of the town wall and on the line of the hypothesised primary late Saxon burh defences. The College originally comprised a single quadrangle on the Merton Street frontage which was later expanded to the south.

- 1.3.3 Archaeological investigations have recorded remnants of the 14th century Canterbury College boundary wall along with the remains of an earlier road and medieval tenements on the western side of the college. Possible evidence of the late Saxon defensive primary burh ditch has also been recorded to the rear of the college. The town wall has also been examined.
- 1.3.4 Archaeological investigations in 2000 at the Emily Thomas Building recorded several rubbish pits and a well containing fragments of 11th-13th century pottery which may relate to the former academic hall known to have existed on the site. The presence of animal bone of both cattle and sheep along with environmental evidence from the well indicate the area may have seen use as a farmyard or kitchen area. At the Emily Thomas Building on the eastern side of the college 11th-13th century deposits were recorded at a depth of 0.4m to 0.5m below ground level.
- 1.3.5 An excavation by Oxford Archaeology in 2008 on the site of the new college auditorium identified late Saxon burials related to the nearby precinct of St Frideswide; a large ditch possibly defensive in character and evidence for industrial activity in the medieval period (tanning). Additionally pits likely to be related to the foundation of the college, and elements of the 16th century garden layout were encountered.
- 1.3.6 In 2013 archaeological observations during the excavation of an electric cable trench at Merton Grove in the Grove Garden of Merton College, recorded an apparent midden deposit comprising a large quantity of oyster shells, and Brill Boarstall Ware pottery from the late 14th to 16th century. The midden pit was recorded at a depth of 180mm below ground level. Unstratified material associated with high-status medieval buildings in the form of glazed ridge and floor tiles was also recovered (Jessop Consultancy 2013).
- 1.3.7 Geophysical survey and bore hole investigations by Oxford Archaeology and limited trial trench excavation by Museum of London Archaeology were undertaken in 2015 in the Garden Quadrangle. The field work established a sequence of dumped layers of soil and mortar which were clearly mixed given the residual pottery in the lowest deposits. The earliest layers appeared to date from the medieval period, perhaps the 13th century, although earlier ceramics present suggest early medieval activity in the vicinity. The sequence of deposits continued through to the 16th to 17th century and confirmed the sequence identified in the auger holes by Oxford Archaeology. The single feature found was probably an 18th century path. The results of this work suggest that if the primary burh ditch is located under Corpus Christ College then it is likely to be located further east.

## 2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims

- To identify and record any significant archaeological remains revealed during the ground works, with particular regard to remains of medieval and post-medieval date.
- To interpret any remains with regard to the known archaeology of the College and grounds and appropriate resource assessments and agendas.
- To mitigate the impact of the intrusive works through preservation by record.

## 2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 A watching brief was maintained on all the areas of newly cut trench and the three test pits that were excavated ahead of the Trench 4 works to test for archaeological potential, particularly human inhumation burials. The sections of reused trench around the north and east side of the Front Quad were not monitored. Trench 1 (Fig. 2) was not monitored due to a miscommunication between the construction contractor and the archaeologists.
- 2.2.2 All deposits encountered were recorded with photographs, a scaled location plan and drawn section and a written description. All finds, excluding the human remains, were recovered and stratigraphically located and reports produced. Any human remains were recorded and then reburied on site by the OA Osteoarchaeologist, and their presence noted on the context record.
- 2.2.3 A visit was made by the City Archaeologist on the 18th August to discuss the archaeological monitoring of the works.

## 3 RESULTS

### 3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 The deposits encountered throughout the excavations were mostly associated with the later development of the cloisters and quads of the College. A burial vault, pillar bases and a limestone wall were found in the three test pits along the north side of the Cloister Quad (Fig. 4). A further two walls were encountered in Trench 4 (Fig. 4).

#### ***Trench 1***

- 3.1.2 The trench excavated in this area was not monitored by an archaeologist (Fig. 2). A limestone wall with a yellowish sandy mortar of a substantial width was reported to have been encountered just south of the buildings on Merton Street.

#### ***Trench 2***

- 3.1.3 The deposits were recorded in the west end of the trench (Plate 1). The eastern half of the trench was not investigated due to the presence of asbestos (Fig. 3). At the western end of the trench the lowest deposit comprised a layer of garden soils, 10, a firm mid yellowish-brown mottled silty clay. This was sealed by layer 9, a mid yellowish silty sand containing flecks of degraded mortar and limestone fragments. Towards the eastern end of the trench the lowest deposit encountered was 11, a firm mid greenish brown clayey silt containing charcoal flecks and degraded shell. Both 10 and 11 were sealed by rubble deposit, 8, the basal layer for the current quad stone slab surface 7 (Fig. 5, Sections 3 and 4).

#### ***Trench 3***

- 3.1.4 The trench was located in a grassed area (Figs 2 and 3; Plate 2). The earliest deposit encountered was 2, described as a subsoil deposit, which contained pottery dating to 1600-1675, and clay pipe dating to 1650-1700 (Fig. 5, Sections 1 and 2). A pit, 6, was identified, but not fully investigated as the base was below the impact depth of 500mm below the ground surface. The pit cut layer 2, and had steep sloped and slightly concave sides (Fig. 5, Section 1; Plate 3). The earliest pit fill encountered, 5, was a firm, light yellowish-brown silty clay with no inclusions. This was overlain by 4, a loose, mid yellowish white silty clay with degraded mortar inclusions. The upper fill, 3, was a dark brownish-grey clay silt with charcoal, degraded animal bone including a rare (for

this date) turkey bone (see Appendix C. 6), and oyster shell inclusions. Fill 3 also contained pottery dating to 1650-1700 (see Appendix C.1). The upper fill of the pit was sealed by topsoil 1 (Fig. 5, Sections 1 and 2).

#### **Trench 4**

- 3.1.5 Three test pits (numbered 1-3; Fig. 4) were excavated ahead of the trench to test for archaeological potential. These are described below, after the trench descriptions.
- 3.1.6 A north-south aligned wall, 33, was constructed from irregular shaped limestone blocks each measuring approximately 0.25m by 0.2m by 0.1m (Fig. 4; Plate 10). A single course of the wall was visible which was bonded with mid brownish-yellow coarse sandy mortar. The wall measured 0.8m wide and a length of 0.3m could be seen within the confines of the trench. Around 2.2m to the east, a further length of north-south orientated wall, or fragment of surface, 34, was much narrower than 33 (Fig. 4; Plate 11). It was constructed from irregular, roughly hewn limestone slabs, 0.09m by 0.05m by 0.03m to 0.17m by 0.15m by 0.04m. One course of the wall was visible in the trench which was bonded with a pale greyish-pink coarse sandy mortar. The wall measured 0.2m wide and a length of 0.3m was visible.
- 3.1.7 At the eastern end of the trench, where it turned to the north, a ceramic drain pipe (49) and a metal pipe (50) ran parallel to one another. These were sealed by a 0.1m thick levelling deposit, 47, consisting of a firm, dark greyish-brown clayey sand with a high content of building rubble, frequent irregular and angled limestone fragments and occasional broken flagstones, presumably from an earlier floor. Towards the western end of the trench layer 47 was partially sealed by layer 48, which was 0.08m thick and survived for 0.8m along the trench, continuing beyond the trench limits to the north (Fig. 6, Section 8).
- 3.1.8 The features and deposits in Trench 4 were sealed by a levelling deposit, 31, which was a 0.2m thick mid greyish-brown layer containing construction rubble. Deposit 31 also contained residual pottery dating from 1580-1650, and ceramic tile dated 1820-1950. This was in turn sealed by a concrete layer, 32, which retained the current tiled floor, 14 (Section 8, Fig. 6; Section 10, Fig. 7; Plate 9).

#### **Trench 5**

- 3.1.9 The trench contained modern services and the full depth of 700mm could not be reached (Fig. 4; Plate 12). The earliest deposit encountered was a firm mid greyish-brown silty sand layer, 46, with occasional limestone fragments (not illustrated). This was cut by the construction cut 43 for a drain 39 that connected to a brick manhole 40 (Fig. 7, Section 9). Cut 43 was backfilled with a greyish brown silty sand, 44, and the drain had an associated stopcock retained in brick structure 41. The trench contained concrete slab, 45 as a base for a set of stone steps (Fig. 7, Section 9). The services were sealed by a bedding layer 37 for a flagstone floor 35 and a bedding layer 38 for a cobbled floor 36 (Figure 7, Section 9; Plate 12).

#### **Test Pit 1**

- 3.1.10 The earliest deposit uncovered a firm dark greyish-brown garden type soil, 19, with occasional charcoal fleck inclusions. It was cut by the construction cut 16, for wall 15. (Fig. 5, Section 5.). The construction cut which was backfilled with deposit 18, which had spread over the remnant of the wall when the upper courses were removed, and was a light greyish-yellow sandy silt with mortar and occasional angular limestone inclusions. The wall, 15, was constructed from roughly hewn limestone blocks each measuring around 0.2m by 0.1m by 0.05m. The bonding material was a coarse light

grey sandy mortar. At least 3 courses of the wall survived, and it was not investigated below impact depth. Sitting on the upper remaining course of wall 15 was a stone footing, (12), probably the foundation of a pillar. It was constructed from roughly hewn limestone blocks, at least one course deep. It measured 0.2m wide by 0.2m long and up to 0.2m high and continued beyond the limits of the test pit. A layer of mid yellow-brown sandy silt with mortar and occasional charcoal flecks (17) overlay deposit 18, and abutted 12. Layer 17 was sealed by 20, 0.05m thick bedding layer for the current stone tile floor (14) that runs the length of the cloister. (Plate 4).

### **Test Pit 2**

- 3.1.11 The earliest feature in Test Pit 2 was a west-east aligned wall, 21, constructed from limestone blocks which measured around 0.14m by 0.33m by 0.13m. They were possibly faced on the north side but this was obscured by later deposit 23. The wall survived to two courses high and was bonded with pale greyish-pink sandy mortar. The exposed area of wall measured 0.35m wide by 0.75m long and 0.24m thick (Fig. 5, Section 6; Plate 6). Butting against the wall was deposit, 23, a firm dark greyish brown mixed mortar and sandy silt with frequent pale pinkish mortar flecks. Constructed directly above wall 21 was a probable pillar foundation, 24, made from limestone blocks measuring 0.25m by 0.2m and faced on the north side. A single course survived with a thin layer of pale pinkish-grey mortar on the north face. Wall 21 was sealed by a levelling deposit, 22, which also abutted 24. Layer 22 was a firm dark greyish-brown mixed sandy silt with frequent degraded mortar fragments and occasional small red brick and limestone fragments. This was overlain by a levelling layer, 25, a firm very dark grey- brown sandy silt with frequent pale greyish brown mortar, occasional brick and charcoal fleck inclusions. Layer 20 which appeared to post-date 25, was 0.12m thick and extended beyond the limits of the test pit. Layers 20 and 25 supported tile floor 14 (see above).

### **Test Pit 3**

- 3.1.12 The earliest remains were a wall, 28, and a burial vault, 30 between which a stratigraphic relationship could not be established within the limits of the Test Pit (Fig. 5, Section 7). The wall, 28, was constructed from roughly hewn limestone blocks approximately 0.2 by 0.1m in an ashlar bond pattern. Two courses of the wall were revealed and it continued below impact depth. The bond was a soft pale pinkish-grey sandy mortar. The wall was aligned west to east and the faced side was to the north.
- 3.1.13 The capping of the vault (30) was only partially revealed within the test pit. It was constructed from roughly hewn, irregular shaped, angular, flat limestone slabs ranging in size from 0.12m by 0.08m by 0.03m to 0.25m by 0.12m by 0.05m. Two courses were revealed within the test pit and these were bonded with a pale greyish-white coarse sandy mortar. The dimensions of the vault within the confines of the test pit were 0.7m by 0.4m and it continued beyond the test pit limit. The vault was aligned west to east. There was a void in the capping and a brick lined grave shaft or burial vault was observed with a torch. Four courses of red brick could be seen on the north side. An iron coffin, which may have only been the skin of the coffin, with stud decoration on the edges of the lid could be seen. The lid of the coffin was intact. The brick lining and coffin were not further recorded.
- 3.1.14 Both the vault (30) and the wall (28) were sealed by a backfill deposit (29). This was a 0.3m thick dark grey-brown sandy silt deposit with frequent mortar, angular limestone and occasional red brick fragments. It contained occasional disarticulated human bone, presumably from a disturbed burial nearby. The bone was reburied within the test pit.

Pottery recovered from 29 dated from 1480-1550 and clay pipe from 1650 to 1700. Deposit 29 was sealed by a 0.1m thick mixed soil layer, 27, very similar in composition to 29 but with a significantly higher mortar content. This was in turn sealed by the concrete bedding layer, 26, which was 0.07m thick and supported tile floor 14.

- 3.1.15 One of the tiles forming surface 14, and adjacent to Test Pit 3 had an inscription reading "J. L. 1820". The initial 'L' may be an 'E' but the surface was worn (Plate 8). The tile was photographed and recorded but could not be reinstated or retained as it was cracked and fragmented upon removal.

## 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The watching brief revealed evidence for burials within the cloister quad, relating to the 16th century chapel situated to the north. A burial vault uncovered within Test Pit 3, (Trench 4), was noted to contain an intact iron coffin with stud decoration. The vault was sealed by soils containing material dated to seventeenth-century, which contained disarticulated human bone, presumably associated with other, disturbed burials.
- 4.1.2 The walls (33 and 34) also uncovered in Trench 4 could relate to the 14th century academic halls that the current cloisters and quads of Corpus Christi College replaced. The earlier buildings fronted onto Oriel Street and Merton Street.
- 4.1.3 A fill from a pit (6) in Trench 3 produced some interesting evidence for the diet of the inhabitants of the college in the second half of the 17th century, and was located in the Merton Grove area of the site where previous midden deposits have been located. In addition to the cattle and sheep bones recovered, the pit also contained bones from guinea fowl or pheasant, a woodcock, a pigeon and a turkey. Both the domestic fowl and the pigeon specimens were tarsometatarsi from juvenile individuals, perhaps suggesting that they were bred specifically for the table. The most significant of these finds though is undoubtedly the turkey bone, a tibiotarsus.
- 4.1.4 Corpus Christi becomes just the 55th site in Britain on which a specimen of this bird from this date has been found. As might be expected of a bird introduced to the British Isles from the New World in the 16th century AD, many of these sites are high status and are often near major ports. Of particular relevance to this discussion, one of the other 55 sites is also in Oxford and also dated to the seventeenth century AD (see Appendix C.6 below). This find thus gives further support for the period at which this novelty became available in Oxford and, more widely, in the country, and in combination with the other bird bones recovered, suggests that the diners in seventeenth century Corpus Christi were quite wealthy. It may or may not be coincidence that all of the bird bones recovered were leg bones – the turkey bone, in particular, representing what today would be associated with a 'turkey drumstick'.
- 4.1.5 The depths of these investigations, (up to 0.3m), meant that the earlier deposits dating to the 11th and 13th centuries found in the previous excavations for the Emily Thomas Building were not reached in these excavations.
- 4.1.6 The areas of investigation were limited in width and depth, often with services and modern disturbance obscuring the deeper remains. The burial vault, 30, and the pit, 6, were not fully investigated and remain *in situ* below impact depth.



## APPENDIX A. ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context	Type	Depth	Width	Length	Comments	Finds	Date
1	Deposit				Topsoil		
2	Deposit	0.3m			Subsoil	Pottery	1600-1650/75
						Clay pipe	c 1650-1700
						Animal bone	-
3	Fill	0.24	0.3m	2.72m	Fill of refuse pit	Pottery	1650-1700
						Animal bone	
4	Fill	0.12m	0.3m	1.58m	Fill of refuse pit	-	-
5	Fill	0.06m	0.3m	0.7m	Fill of refuse pit	-	-
6	Cut	0.3m	0.3m	2.72m	Refuse pit cut	-	-
7	Structure	0.1m			Stone floor slab	-	-
8	Deposit	0.04m			Bedding for floor	-	-
9	Deposit	0.2m			Mortar and rubble levelling	-	-
10	Deposit	0.2m			Garden soil	-	-
11	Deposit	0.28m			Garden soil	-	-
12	Structure	0.1m	0.2m	0.2m	Stone foundation for pillar	-	-
13	Deposit	0.05m	0.7m	0.7m	Concrete	-	-
14	Structure	0.05m	0.35m	0.35m	Stone tiled floor	-	-
15	Structure	0.2m	0.35m	0.5m	Stone and mortar deposit - wall	-	-
16	Cut	0.25m	0.5m	0.65m	Construction cut	-	-
17	Deposit	0.2m			Mixed soil and mortar	Animal bone	-
18	Deposit	0.25m	0.5m	0.5m	Construction cut fill	-	-
19	Deposit	0.25m	0.15m	0.15m	Layer cut by 16	-	-
20	Deposit	0.05m	0.35m	0.7m	Concrete	-	-
21	Structure	0.24m	0.35m	0.75m	Wall	-	-
22	Deposit	0.35m			Mixed layer overlying wall 21	-	-
23	Deposit	0.25m	0.4m		Layer under 22	-	-
24	Structure	0.2m	0.25m		Stone pillar foundation	-	-
25	Deposit	0.12m	0.3m	0.3m	Levelling layer under concrete 20 and stone floor 14	-	-
26	Deposit	0.07m	0.7m	0.7m	Concrete	-	-
27	Deposit	0.1m	0.35m	0.7m	Soil below concrete 26	-	-
28	Structure		0.1m	0.4m	Wall	-	-
29	Deposit		0.35m		Soil overlaying vault 30	Pottery	c 1480-1550
						Clay pipe	c 1650-1700
						Human bone – not retained	-
30	Structure		0.4m	0.7m	Vault	-	-
31	Deposit	0.2m	3.0m	25.0m	Rubble	Pottery	c 1580-1650
						Clay pipe	c 1620-



Context	Type	Depth	Width	Length	Comments	Finds	Date
							1680?
						Ceramic building material	c 1820-1950
						Iron (Fe) nails	-
						Glass	-
						Human bone – not retained	-
32	Deposit	0.15m			Concrete	-	-
33	Structure	0.1m	0.2m	0.25m	Structure – Surface	-	-
34	Structure	0.04m	0.2m	0.3m	Small structure	-	-
35	Structure	0.08m	0.5m	0.5m	Flagstone floor	-	-
36	Structure	0.05m	0.5m	0.9m	Cobbles to south of floor 35	-	-
37	Deposit	0.07m	1.0m	1.2m	Bedding layer for floor 35	-	-
38	Deposit	0.09m	0.5m	0.8m	Bedding for cobbles 36	-	-
39	Structure			1.3m	19th century drain	-	-
40	Structure		0.7m		Brick surround of manhole for drain 39	-	-
41	Structure	0.4m	0.15m	0.4m	Brick structure housing stopcock	-	-
42	Deposit	0.4m	0.8m	1.7m	Layer below bedding layer 37	-	-
43	Cut			1.0m	Construction cut	-	-
44	Fill		0.3m	1.0m	Backfill of construction cut 43	-	-
45	Deposit	0.2m			Concrete foundation for stairs	-	-
46	Deposit		0.3m	0.6m	Layer cut by construction cut 43	-	-
47	Deposit	0.1m			Levelling deposit	-	-
48	Deposit	0.08m	0.2m	0.8m	Mortar dump?	-	-
49	Structure				19th century drain	-	19th C
50	Structure		0.07m	1.3m	Metal pipe	-	-

## APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

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## APPENDIX C. FINDS REPORTS

### C.1 Pottery

*By John Cotter*

#### **Introduction**

- C.1.1 A total of 40 sherds of pottery weighing 1297g were recovered from four contexts. This is all of post-medieval date. The condition of the material is generally good - particularly the large fresh 17th-century group from Context (3). Taken together with the clay pipe evidence (see below), there is a strong 17th-century dating emphasis to the assemblage. Domestic pottery typical of Oxford sites is represented. Given the small size of the assemblage a separate catalogue has not been constructed and instead the pottery is simply described and spot-dated below. Fabric codes referred to are those of the Museum of London (MoLA 2014). No further work is recommended.

#### **Context (2) Spot-date: c 1600-1650/75**

- C.1.2 7 sherds (142g). Large fresh body sherd (bo) from a Martincamp Type 3 spherical costrel (MART3) in hard reddish earthenware with grey-brown external surfaces/margins. From the village of that name in Normandy (a fairly uncommon type from Oxford sites). 5x Frechen stoneware (FREC, 89g) from two jugs or 'bellarmine'. One has part of a quite finely detailed ?heraldic medallion of c 1580-1630 with florid swirling foliage along sides of (missing) shield. Rattail handle on another FREC sherd from the latter vessel. Handle and neck from the second FREC vessel. 1x green-glazed Border ware (BORDG) dish basal sherd (c 1550-1700).

#### **Context (3) Spot-date: c 1650-1700**

- C.1.3 31 sherds (1129g). Mid/late 17C group; mainly large fresh sherds. 3x tin-glazed earthenware (TGW) including Rim/near-profile from deep hemispherical charger-type bowl in with blue horizontal line decoration int and intersecting blue arcs border above this with plain horiz lines on flanged rim, single pale yellow horiz line int under blue ones; footring base missing but probably some sort of symmetrical standard sun-wheel type motif with surviving blue terminals/curlicues (probably c 1640-1680?). Two plain white TGW sherds (1 vess?). 10x Frechen stoneware (FREC, 481g) bellarmine jugs: 9 of these joining (fresh/modern breaks) to form upper half profile with complete handle and grimacing M17C mask with hourglass-shaped mouth and stylised beard; on front of body is trace of applied medallion showing head of stylised heraldic supporter beast and part of a crown (right side), possibly something commonplace like the Arms of Amsterdam? 1x complete FREC top from second vessel with most of M17C mask with long nose and trace of beard; handle stub. 7x yellow-glazed Border ware (BORDY), some joining; min 3 vess incl thickened everted pipkin rim, base of tripod pipkin, rim and complete short hollow finial-shaped handle from a bowl-like skillet. 4x green-glazed Border ware (BORDG); incl joining sherds from dish base, rim from conical bowl with short flanged rim, rim from pipkin with external lid-seated rim - mainly unglazed with large splashes of green/olive glaze int and on flange ext. 7x post-medieval red earthenware (PMR). Min 4 vess incl rim and knob-like handle from small pipkin, rim from deep conical bowl with plain upright rim, 2 joining bos from large jar/cauldron, large bo from a large conical vessel with dark brown glaze all over int and ext - possibly a drinking vessel or tall slender jug?

#### **Context (29) Spot-date: c 1480-1550**

- C.1.4 1 sherd (7g). Body sherd from globular drinking mug in Raeren stoneware (RAER).

**Context (31) Spot-date: c 1580-1650**

- C.1.5 1 sherd (19g). Pad base from smallish drug jar (albarello) in Anglo-Netherlands style tin-glazed earthenware (TGW). Glaze has bluish-grey tint all over int and ext. Typical blue horizontal line decoration ext.

**C.2 Clay pipe**

*By John Cotter*

**Introduction**

- C.2.1 A total of seven pieces of clay pipe weighing 34g were recovered from three contexts. The condition of the material is fairly poor. Given the small size of the assemblage a separate catalogue has not been constructed and instead the pipes are simply described and spot-dated below.

**Context (2) Spot-date: c 1650-1700**

- C.2.2 Description: 5 pieces (30g): 1x complete bowl Oxford Type A (c 1630-1655) probably burnt/reddish. 1x 17C broken bowl base with no rim surviving, medium-sized circular heel, stem bore diameter of c 2.8mm, fairly good burnish, probably second half of 17C (could be Type B or C, latter up to c 1720?). 3x fairly fresh early/mid 17C stem fragments with stem bores in 3-4mm range.

**Context (29) Spot-date: c 1650-1700**

- C.2.3 3 pieces (9g): Stem fragments. Stem bore diameters in c 2.8-3mm range.

**Context (31) Spot-date: c 1620-1680?**

- C.2.4 1 piece (3g): Stem fragment. Fairly fresh. Stem bore diameter of c 4mm.

**C.3 Metal finds**

*By Ian Scott*

- C.3.1 There are just two iron nails from context 31. The larger nail looks to be a modern 4 inch wire nail with small flat circular head now heavily encrusted with corrosion products (L: 105 mm). The second nail is smaller and has a rectangular cross section, is broken and encrusted with corrosion (L extant: 67mm). The latter is not closely datable.

**C.4 Glass**

*By Ian Scott*

- C.4.1 The only glass is a small piece of weathered pale green window glass. Probably post medieval, but small fragments of window glass cannot be dated closely (29mm x 24mm; Th: 1.6mm)

**C.5 Ceramic building material**

*By John Cotter*

- C.5.1 A single piece of CBM was recovered. This has not been separately catalogued but is described below. No further work is recommended.

**Context (31) Spot-date: c 1820-1950**

- C.5.2 1 piece (138g). Fragment from the rim/collar area of a brown salt-glazed stoneware drainpipe. Rim tip missing. The inside of the rim collar has horizontal thread-like grooving or keying. At some point the collar has been cut (accidentally?) with a rotary saw - possibly very recently?

**C.6 Animal bone**

*By Lee Broderick*

- C.6.1 A total of 35 animal bones were recovered from the site, mostly associated with contexts dated to the seventeenth century. All of the material was hand-collected.
- C.6.2 The specimens were in moderate condition and belonged mostly to caprines (sheep – *Ovis aries* and goats – *Capra hircus*) (27.1% of NISP), followed by domestic cattle (*Bos taurus taurus*) (12.5% of NISP). It was possible to identify one of the caprine specimens (a mandible) as being specifically a sheep. Unfortunately, this was among the material recovered from undated deposits but the animal was between 2 and 5 months old at death (Greenfield & Arnold, 2008). Also from a young animal, the domestic cattle metatarsal from context 2 was unfused distally and so came from an animal under 20 months of age at death (Silver, 1969).
- C.6.3 Ten of the specimens (17.9% of NSP) showed some evidence of butchery. Although four of these were cut marks there was also evidence of more heavy butchery, associated with more industrial processes – a caprine radius from context (3) was chopped through at the distal end and an undated cattle femur and four large mammal vertebrae were sawn through axially, suggesting that the carcass had been divided in two at the abattoir. Three of the specimens had also been gnawed by scavengers or pets – two by a dog (one from context 17 and one from context 2, dated c. AD1650 -1700, and one by a cat (also from context 2).
- C.6.4 The most interesting deposit was context 3, dated to c. AD 1650-1700. In addition to the cattle and sheep found throughout the assemblage, this pit fill also contained single specimens of juvenile domestic fowl (most likely *Gallus gallus*, but there is a small possibility that the specimen is in fact from a guinea fowl [*Numida* sp.] or pheasant [*Phasianus colchicus*]), a woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*), a pigeon (*Columba* sp.) and a turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo* although, similarly to the domestic fowl specimen, the possibility that the specimen in fact comes from a peafowl [*Pavo cristatus*] must be acknowledged). Both the domestic fowl and the pigeon specimens were tarsometatarsi from juvenile individuals, perhaps suggesting that they were bred specifically for the table. The most significant of these finds though is undoubtedly the turkey bone, a tibiotarsus. Corpus Christi becomes just the 55th site in Britain on which a specimen of this bird has been found in a context of this date. As might be expected of a bird introduced to the British Isles from the New World in the 16th century AD, many of these sites are high status and are often near major ports (Fothergill, 2014). Of particular relevance to this discussion, one of the other 55 sites is also in Oxford and also dated to the seventeenth century AD (Wilson, 1984). This find thus gives further support for the period at which this novelty became available in Oxford and, more widely, in the country, and, in combination with the other bird bones recovered, suggests that the diners in seventeenth century Corpus Christi were really quite wealthy. It may or may not be coincidence that all of the bird bones recovered were leg bones – the turkey bone, in particular, representing what today would be associated with a ‘turkey drumstick’.



- C.6.5 The domestic cattle metacarpal from context (3) exhibited a lesion on the proximal articular surface consistent with osteochondrosis, which has been linked to more rapid growth and, thus, to the 'improvements' made to cattle in the Early Modern period (Sewell, 2010).

## C.7 Summary of site details

Site name:	Corpus Christi College, Oxford: New Sub Main Works
Site code:	OXCSUB16
Grid reference:	Centred at NGR SP 51633 06003
Type of watching brief:	Watching Brief on trenching works associated with the installation of a new sub main.
Date and duration of project:	The project ran from 15 <sup>th</sup> August 2016 to 23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2016. The Watching Brief was carried out over 9 days during this period.
Area of site:	0.3 hectares
Summary of results:	Between 15 <sup>th</sup> August and 23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2016 Oxford Archaeology carried out an intermittent watching brief at Corpus Christi College, Oxford on works to replace sub-mains cables. Two sections of cable trench were monitored, and three test pits were observed to inform the depth of a third section of trench, also subsequently monitored. Evidence for burials associated with the 16th chapel was encountered, including the capping of a stone and brick burial vault which contained a coffin observable through a void in the structure. Some disarticulated human bone was also recovered and reburied on the site, providing evidence for additional disturbed burials in the area. A rubbish pit dating from 1650-1700 contained pottery and animal bones, including a rare example of a turkey bone from this date. Walls and pillar bases from earlier incarnations of the College buildings were also recorded.
Location of archive:	The archive is currently stored at Oxford Archaeology, Janus House, Osney Mead before deposition with the Oxfordshire County Museum Service under the accession number OXCMS:2016.120.



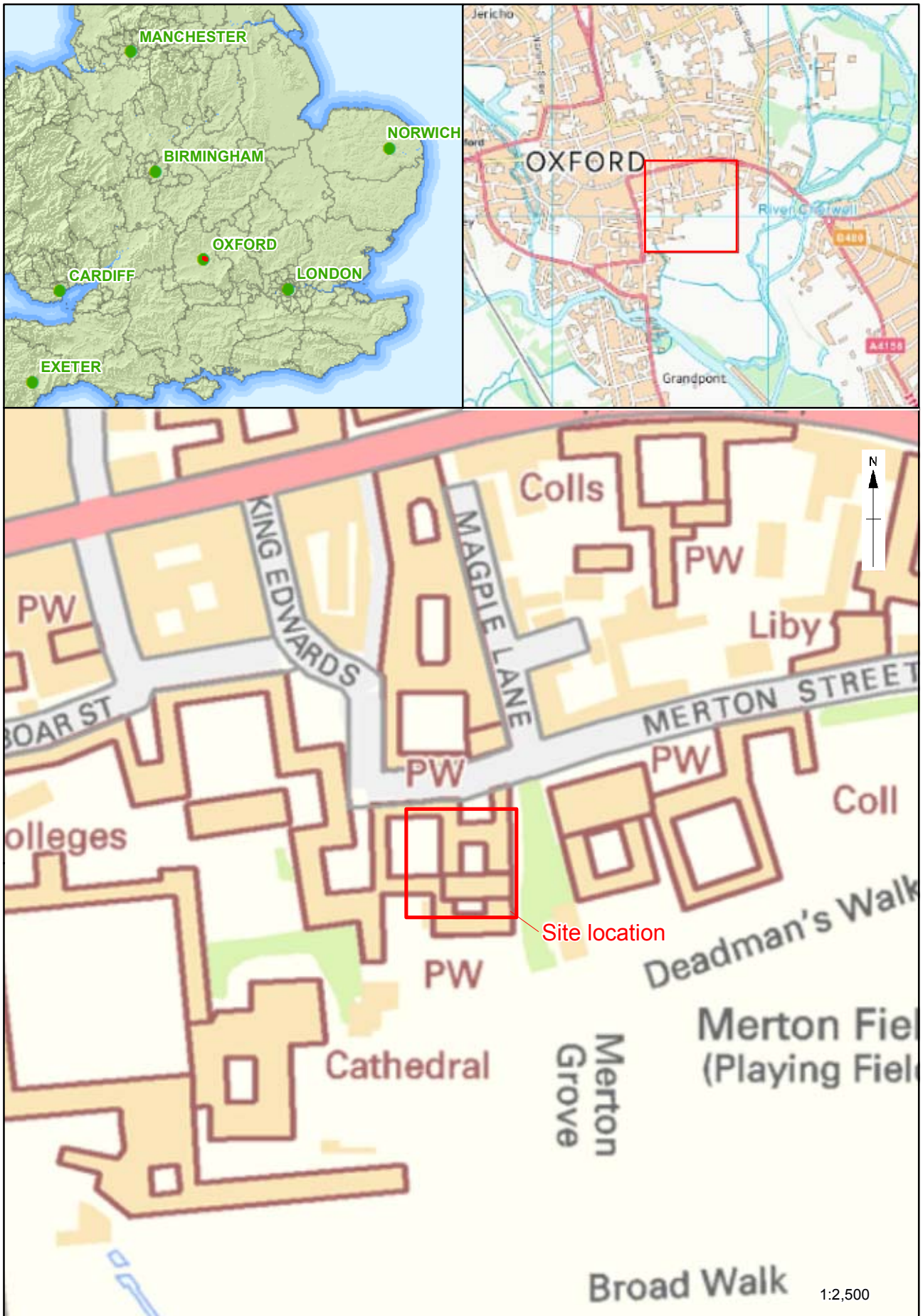


Figure 1: Site location

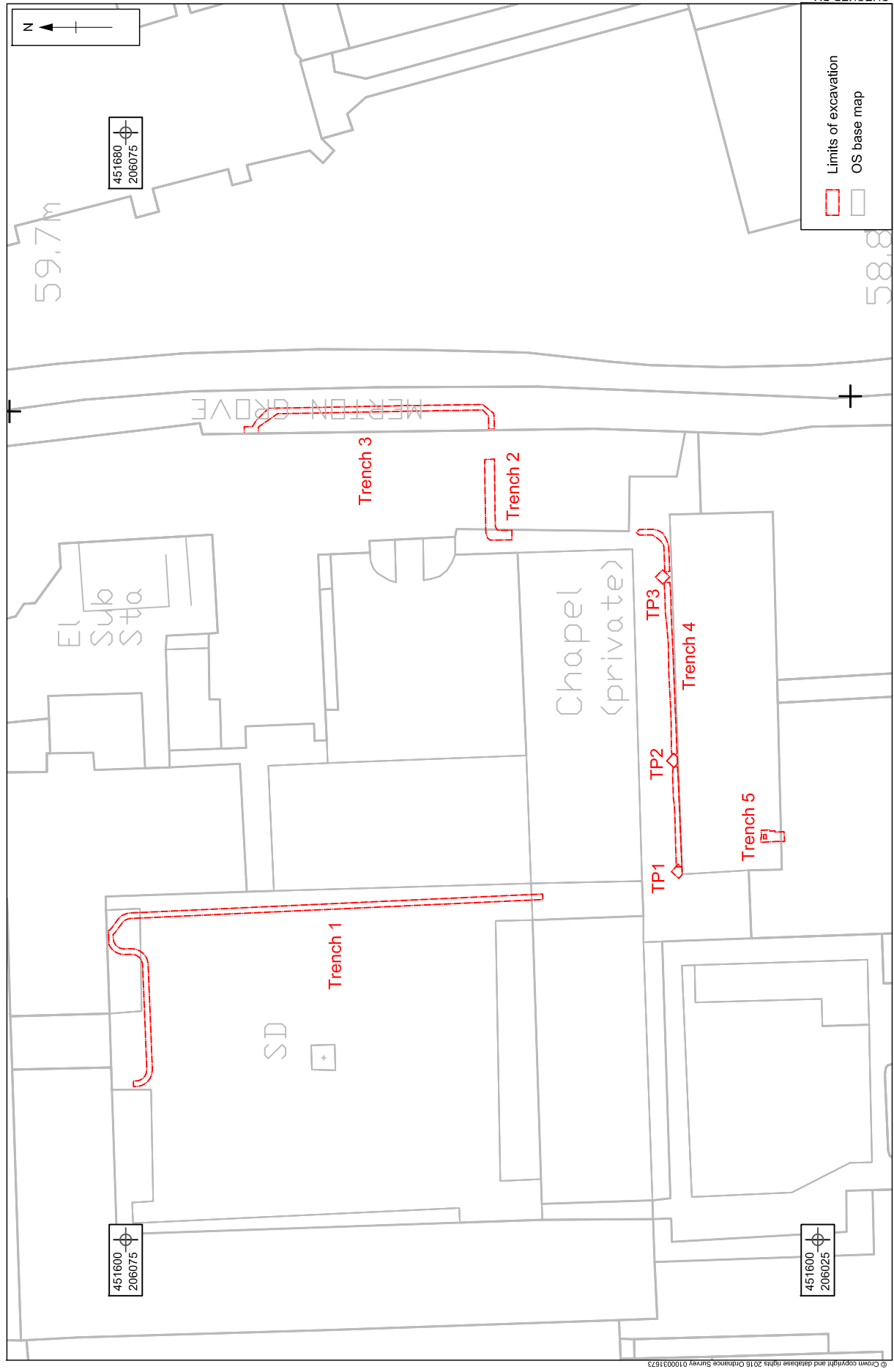


Figure 2: Location of watching brief areas

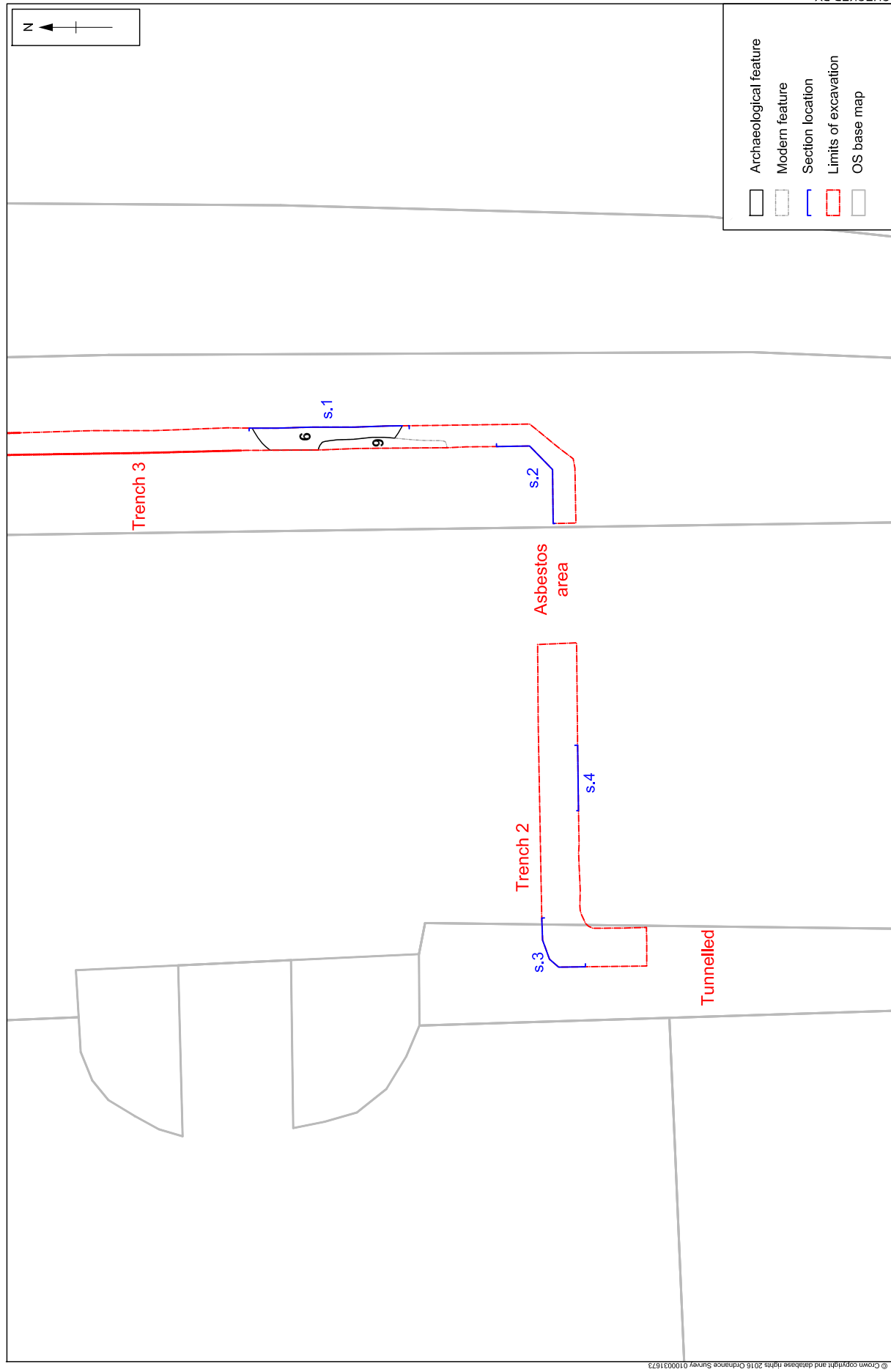


Figure 3: Archaeological remains in trenches 2 and 3

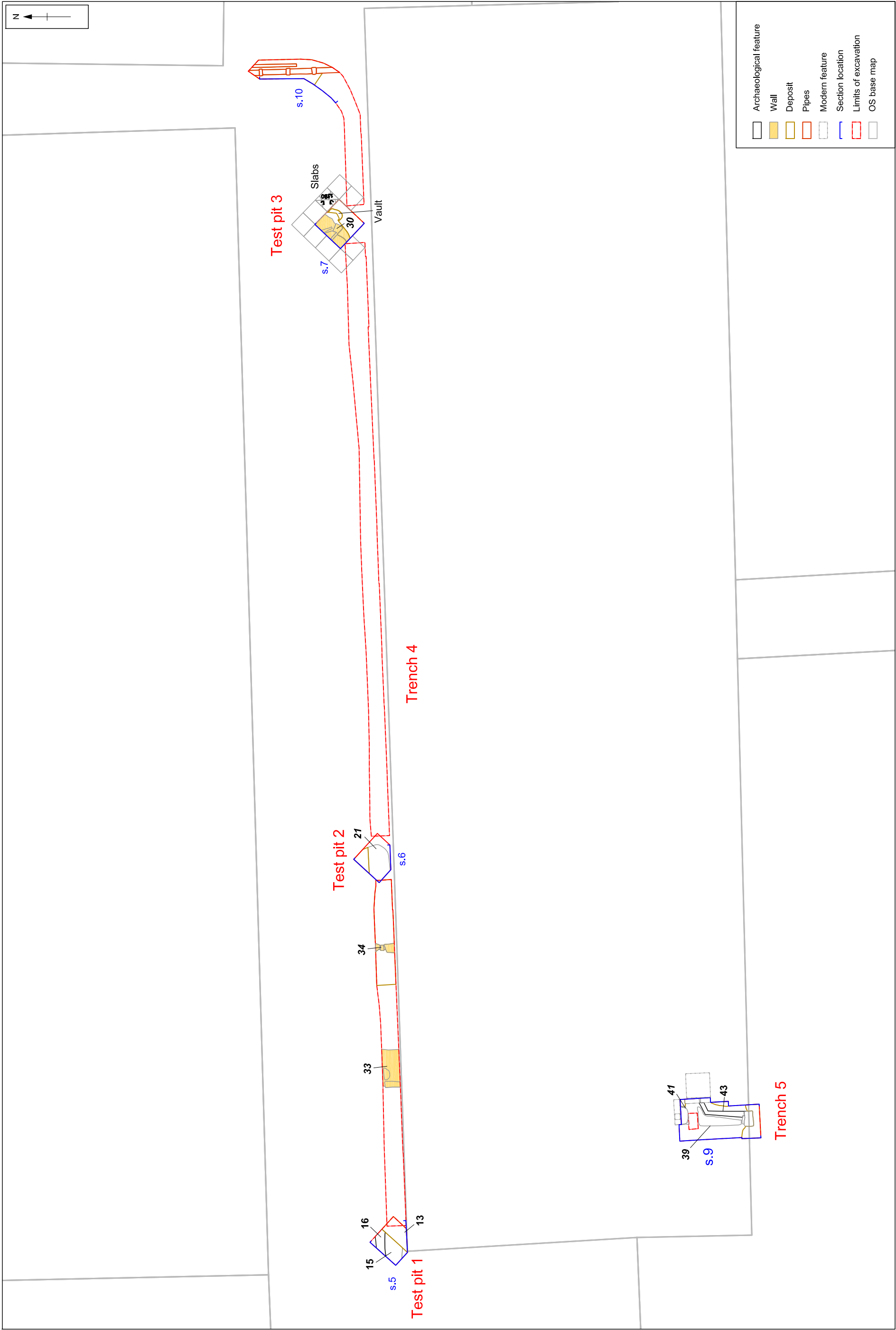


Figure 4: Archaeological remains in trenches 4 & 5 and test pits 1-3

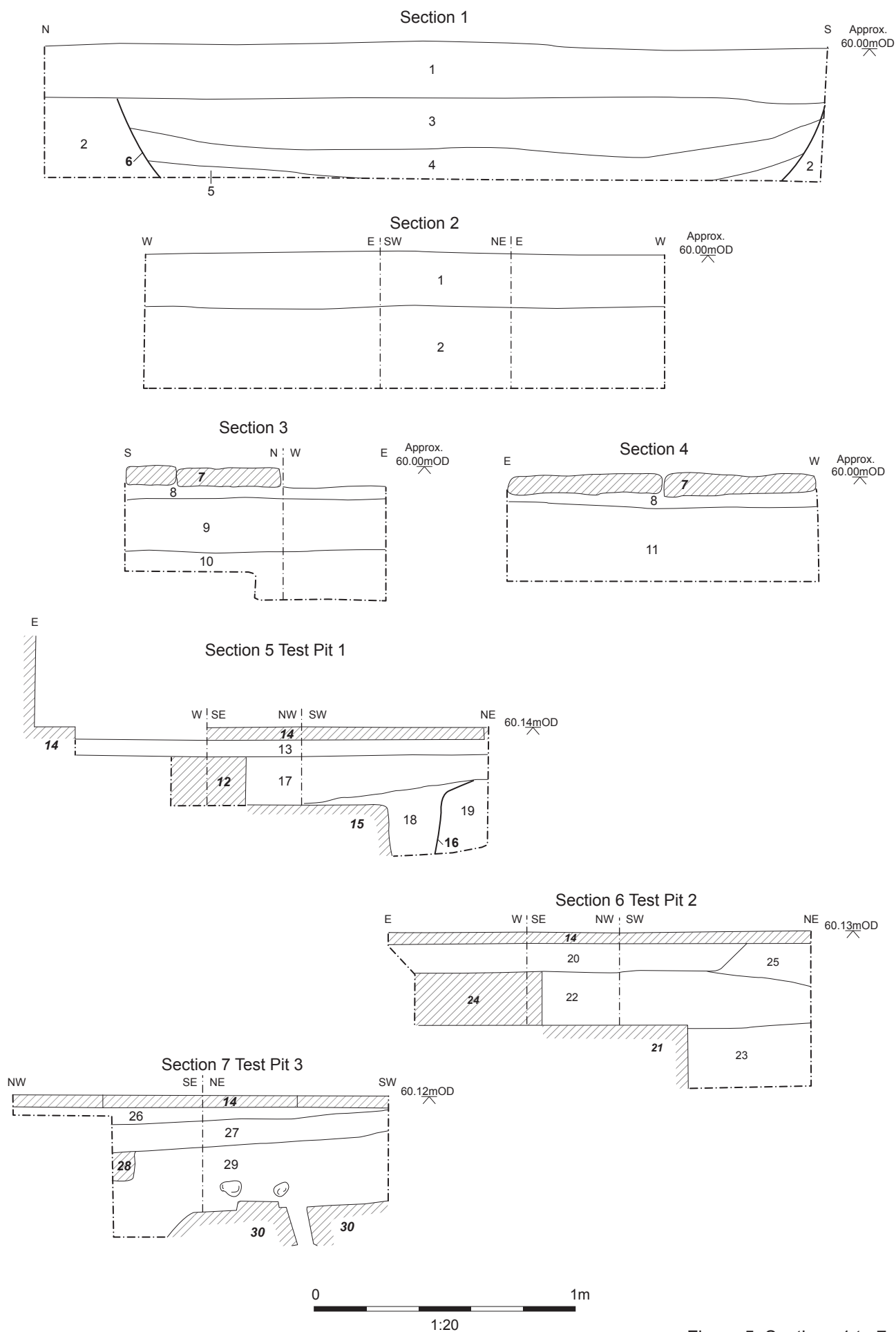


Figure 5: Sections 1 to 7

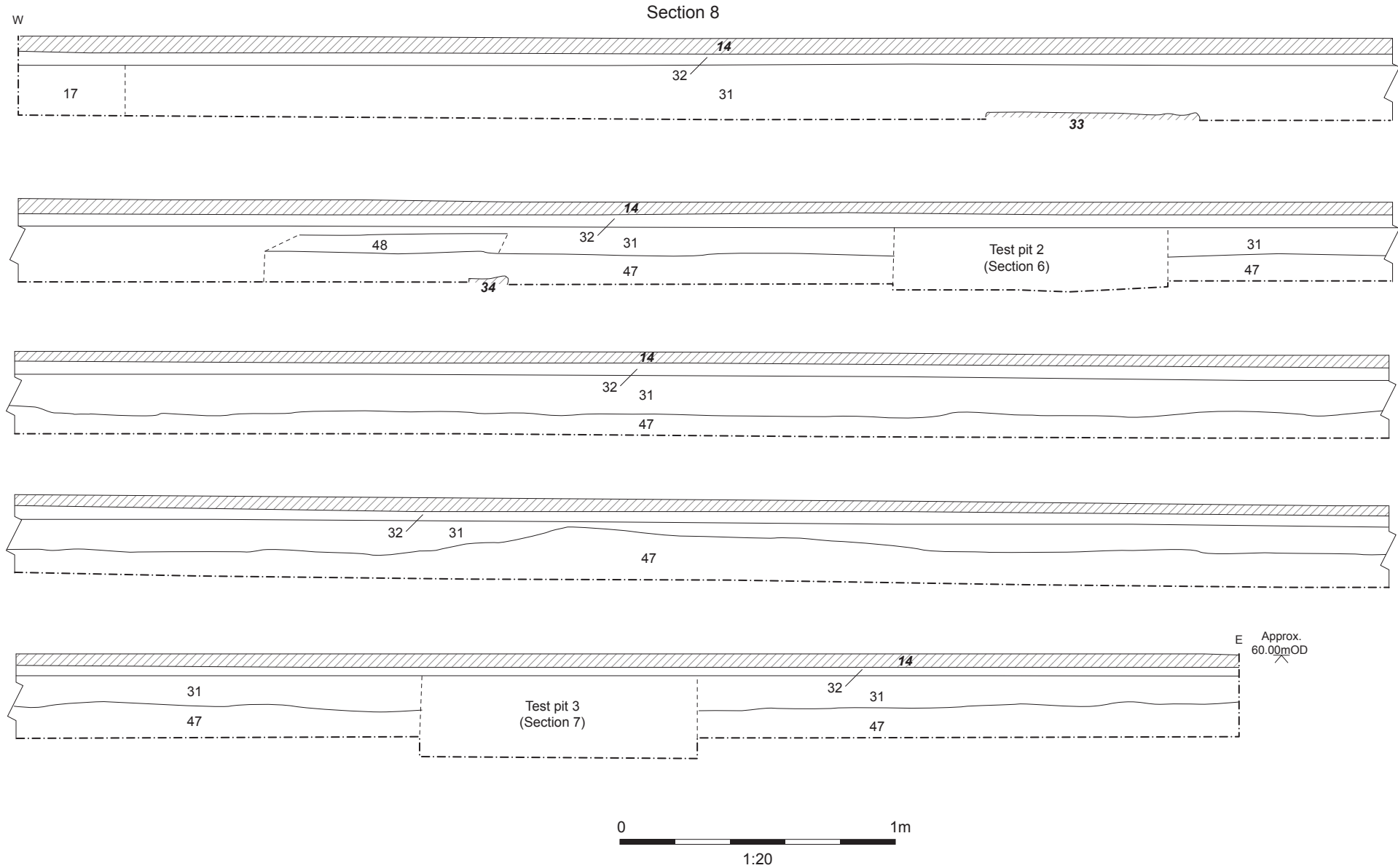


Figure 6: Section 8

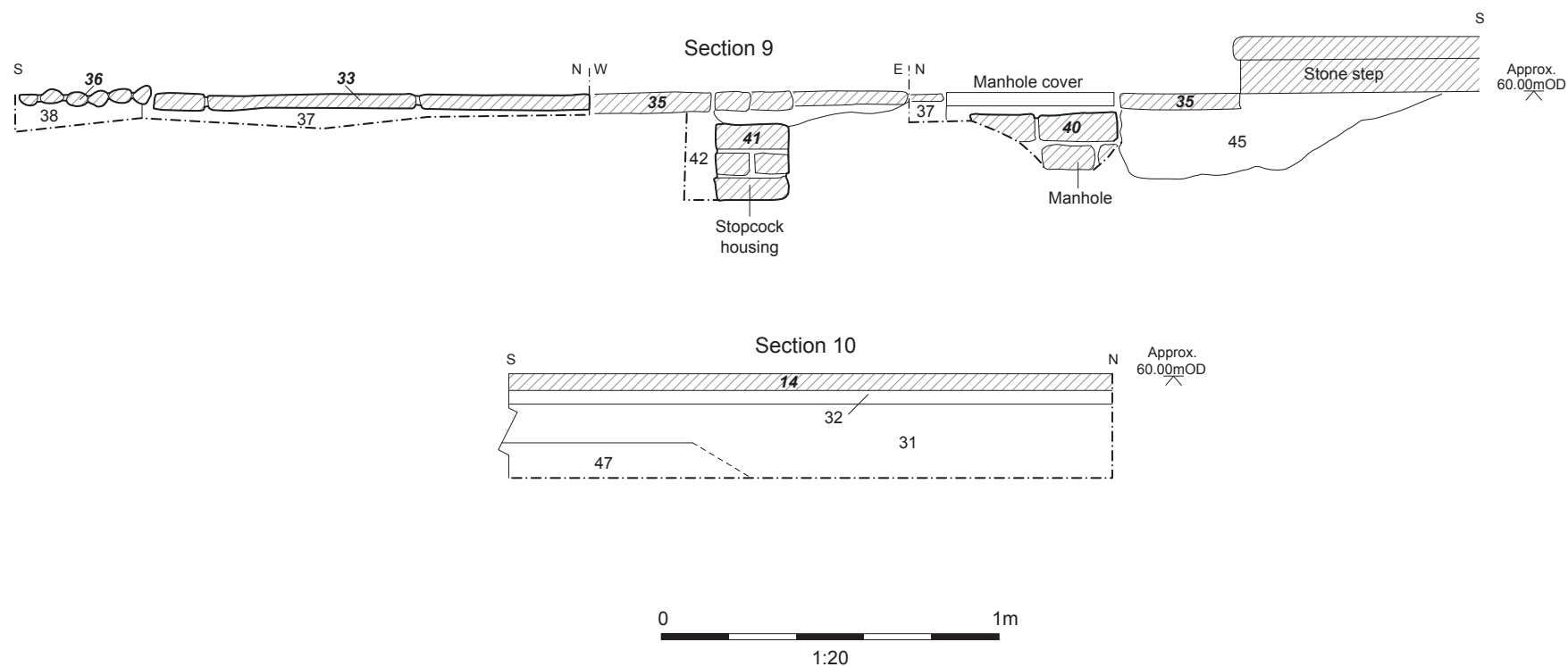


Figure 7: Sections 9 and 10





Plate 1: Trench 2 excavated, view to south



Plate 2: Trench 3 excavated, view to north



Plate 3: Trench 3, rubbish pit 6, east facing section 1





Plate 4: Test Pit1, view to south east



Plate 5: Test Pit 2, view to south west





Plate 6: Test Pit 2, south east facing section



Plate 7: Initialled stone floor tile by Test Pit 3, view to west







A photograph showing a significant section of a concrete sidewalk and curb that has been removed or broken away. The exposed area reveals dark, moist soil and a metal rebar. A red and white striped measuring rod is placed vertically on the right side of the hole to provide a sense of scale. To the left, a metal railing with vertical bars is visible. The surrounding concrete surface is cracked and uneven, with some debris and loose soil scattered around the excavation site.

Plate 12: Trench 5, view to south







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