

# Oxford City Bowls Club, Marston Ferry Road, Oxford



## Archaeological Watching Brief



**Oxford Archaeology**

27th May 2002

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**Oxford Architects**

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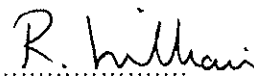
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## SUMMARY

*In April and May 2002 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Oxford City Bowls Club, Marston Ferry Road, Oxford, (NGR SP 5110 0882). The work was commissioned by Oxford Architects in advance of the construction of new college accommodation and new 6 rink indoor bowls centre. The watching brief revealed that the site had up to the construction of the bowling club been a pasture field with a pond.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In April and May 2002 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Oxford City Bowls Club, Marston Ferry Road, Oxford (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Oxford Architects in respect of a planning application for college accommodation and new 6 rink indoor bowls centre (Planning Application No.98/00073/NF).
- 1.1.2 An advice note for archaeological monitoring was prepared by Brian Durham, the City's Archaeologist on behalf of Oxford City Council as regards to the development.
- 1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation detailing how it would meet the requirements of the programme (OA, 2002).

### 1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies at 63 m above OD, and is situated on river gravels over Oxford Clay and is 35 m x 42 m in area.

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the watching brief was prepared from a desk top assessment (OAU, 2000) for the WSI for the project (OA, 2002) and is reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 No archaeological sites or finds have been recorded from within the proposal area, although the general area has produced archaeological remains dating from the prehistoric period through to the post-medieval period. Neolithic artifacts were recovered from the opposite side of the Banbury Road (just to the west of the site).
- 1.3.3 The Banbury Road itself is thought to lie on the route of a Roman road. Roman finds have been recovered during the original development of the suburb, to the southwest of the proposal area, particularly between St Margaret's Road and Frenchay Road.
- 1.3.4 A small number of Saxon finds are known from the adjacent Gods Little Acre site, and 200 m to the north of the bowls club a Saxon spearhead was recovered in 1957, though it was not thought to have been in-situ.

## 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 make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

### 2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The existing bowling green (Fig. 2) and part of the raised flowerbed was lowered by a 360° machine to reduced ground level. Then the foundations were excavated and concrete poured in sections.
- 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* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

## 3 RESULTS

### 3.1 Description of deposits

#### 3.2 *Bowling Green*

- 3.2.1 The area of the old bowling green consisted of thin layer of turf over a layer of ash. This overlay the disturbed very dark grayish brown silty sand topsoil (3) and mid brown silty clay (4) subsoil from the construction of the bowling green, which overlay the natural (5) (Fig. 3, section 4).

#### 3.3 *Raised Flower Bed*

- 3.3.1 The raised flower bed to the north of the site (Fig. 2) consisted of imported topsoil (1) on a 0.6 m thick layer of light brown silty clay ground make up (2) (Fig. 3, section 3), which overlay the old topsoil (3) over the natural. In the north west corner a large sub circular feature (6) (Fig. 2) (12 x 4 m) was exposed and was filled by a dark brown silty clay loam (7) and represented a filled in post medieval pond.
- 3.3.2 The whole site was very wet with a high water table, which meant that the site was badly disturbed by the present groundwork and construction of the bowling greens. A number of land drains were observed of pitched limestone or ceramic pipe, as well a number root hole and natural features (Fig. 2).

### 3.4 Finds

- 3.4.1 No finds were recovered from the site

### 3.5 Palaeo-environmental remains

3.5.1 No environmental samples were taken during the watching brief.

## 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1.1 The results from the watching brief suggest that the area has always been flood plain and used for pasture. Drainage is likely to have been a problem and a pond may have been provided to water live stock.

## 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	0.3 m			Topsoil of flower bed	None
2	Layer	0.6 m			Made up ground	None
3	Layer	0.2 m			Topsoil	
4	Layer	0.3 m			Subsoil	
5	Natural					
6	Cut		4 m	12 m	Pond	
7	Fill				Fill of pond	None

## APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

OA, 2000 *158 Banbury Road/1 Marston Ferry Road, Oxford* Archaeological Evaluation Report

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

OA, 2002 *Oxford City Bowls Club, Marston Ferry Road, Oxford* Written Scheme of Investigation

## APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

**Site name:** Oxford City Bowls Club, Marston Ferry Road, Oxford

**Site code:** OXMRB 02

**Grid reference:** NGR SP 5110 0882

**Type of watching brief:** Ground works for new indoor bowling ring and parking.

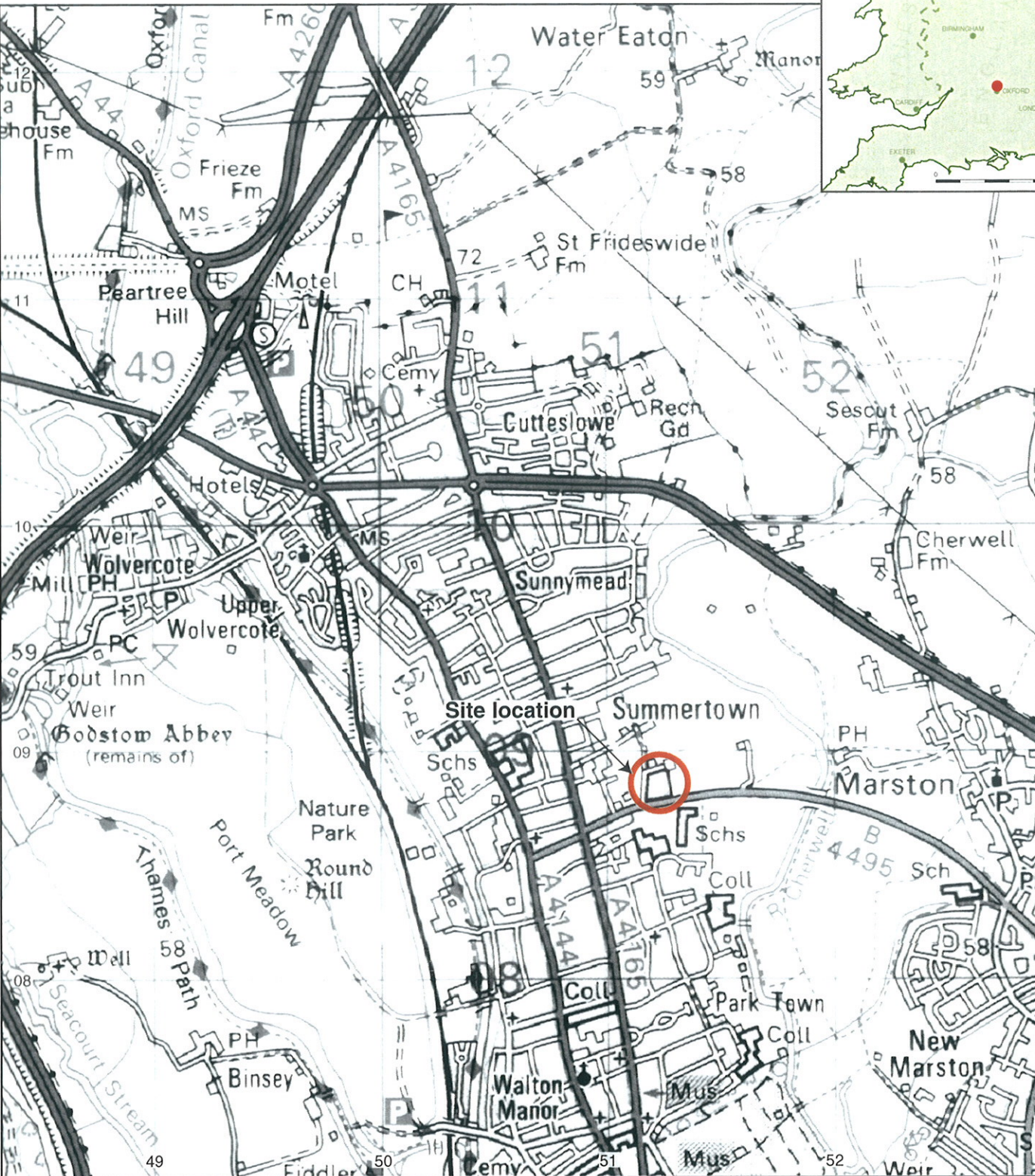
**Date and duration of project:**

**Area of site:** 35 x 42 m

**Summary of results:** The watching brief revealed that the site had up to the construction of the bowling club been a pasture field with a pond.

**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: 2002.96



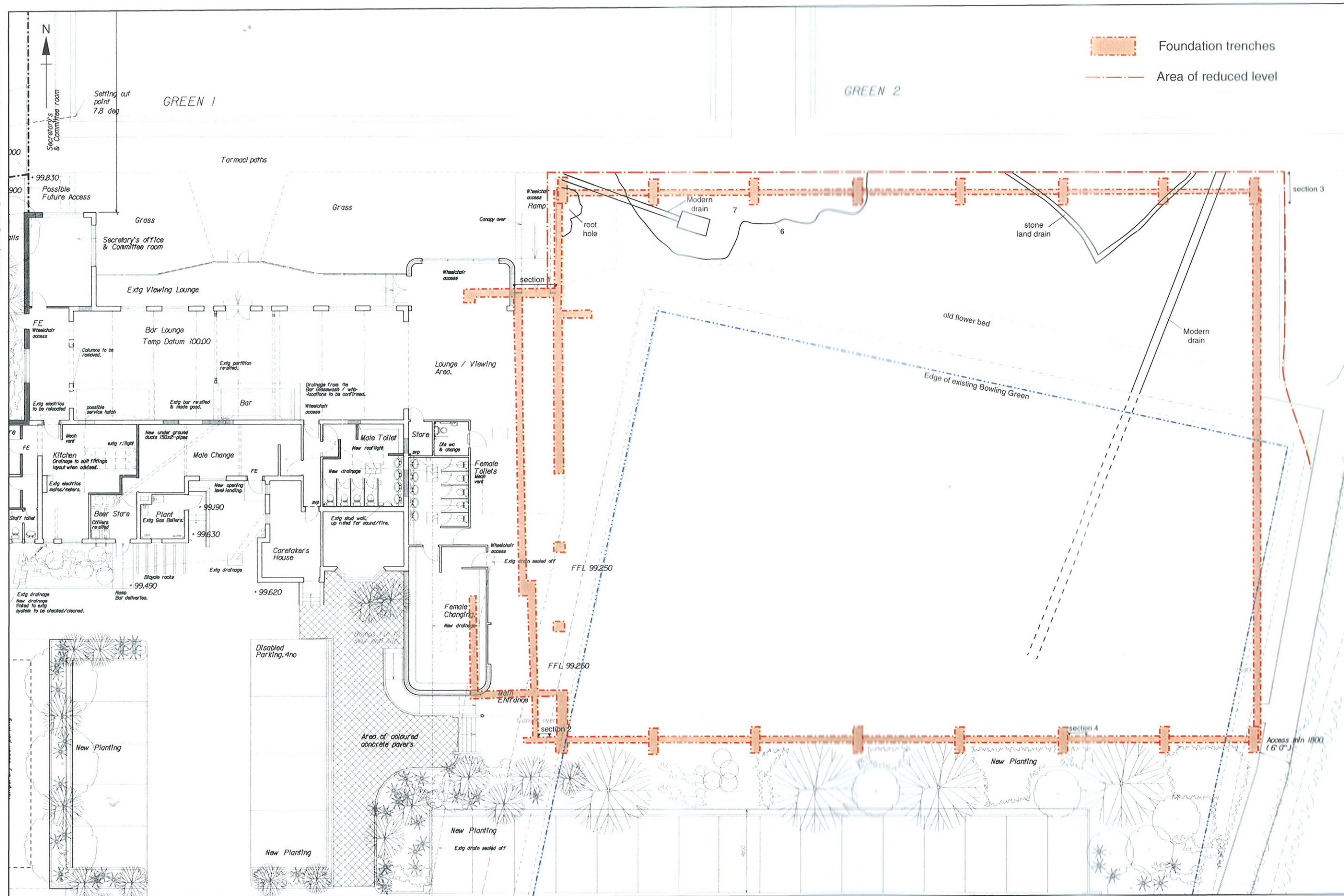


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Scale 1:25000

Figure 1: Site location

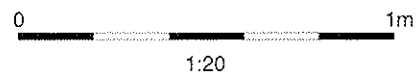
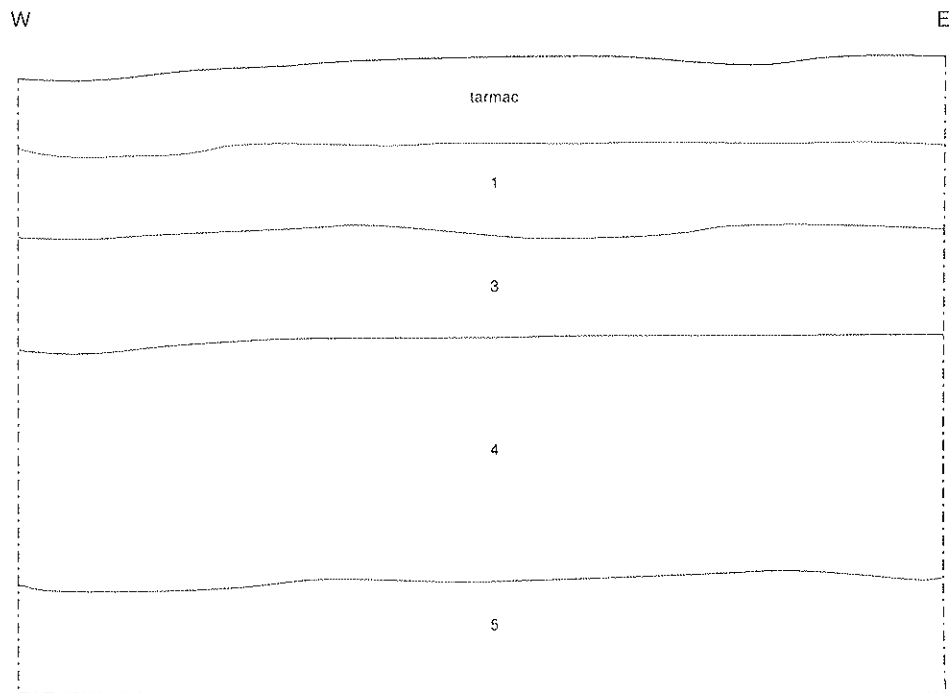




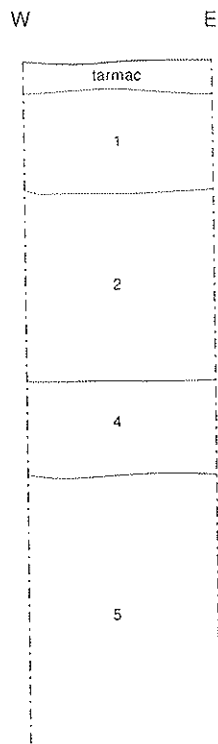
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Figure 2: Study Area

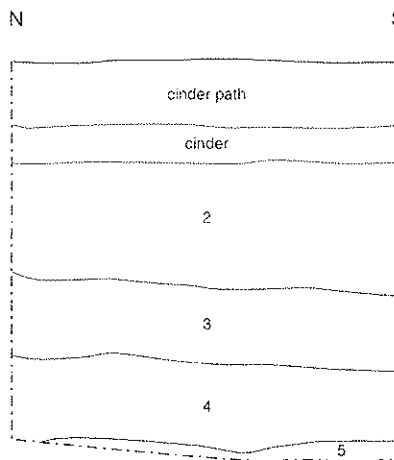
Section 1:



Section 2:



Section 3:



Section 4:

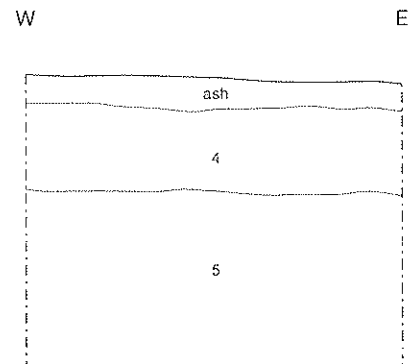


Figure 3: Sections



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