

Down House Downe Bromley



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



May 2009

**Client: Caroe & Partners Architects
on behalf of English Heritage**

Issue No:1
OA Job No: 4413
NGR: TQ 431 611



Client Name: Caroe & Partners Architects on behalf of English Heritage
 Client Ref No: n/a
 Document Title: Down House, Downe, Bromley
 Document Type: Watching Brief Report
 Issue/Version Number: 1
 Grid Reference: TQ 431 611
 Planning Reference: n/a
 OA Job Number: 4413
 Site Code: DND09
 Invoice Code: DNDWB
 Receiving Museum: Museum of London (TBC)
 Museum Accession No: DND09
 Event No:

Issue	Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by	Signature
1	Rowan McAlley (Supervisor)	Alan Hardy (Senior Project Manager)	Dan Poore (Head of Fieldwork)	

Document File Location Projects on 'server1'\DNDWB_Down House Watching Brief
 Graphics File Location \\Servergo\invoice codes a thru h\D_invoice codes\DNDWB
 Illustrated by Markus Dylewski

Disclaimer:

This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and should not be relied upon or used for any other project without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and prior written authority of Oxford Archaeology being obtained. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for the consequences of this document being used for a purpose other than the purposes for which it was commissioned. Any person/party using or relying on the document for such other purposes agrees, and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Oxford Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the person/party by whom it was commissioned.

© Oxford Archaeological Unit Ltd 2009

Janus House
Osney Mead

Oxford OX2 0ES

t: +44 (0) 1865 263800

e: oasouth@thehumanjourney.net

f: +44 (0) 1865 793496

w: oasouth.thehumanjourney.net

Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited is a Registered Charity No. 285627



Down House, Downe, Bromley

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Written by Rowan McAlley

Illustrated by Markus Dylewski

Table of Contents

Summary.....	3
1 Introduction.....	4
1.1 Location and scope of work.....	4
1.2 Geology and topography.....	4
1.3 Archaeological and historical background.....	4
1.4 Acknowledgements.....	4
2 Watching Brief Aims and Methodology.....	5
2.1 Aims.....	5
2.2 Methodology.....	5
3 Results.....	6
3.1 Description of deposits.....	6
3.2 Finds and palaeo-environmental summary.....	6
4 Discussion And Conclusions.....	7
Appendix A. Bibliography and References.....	8
Appendix B. Summary of Site Details.....	9



List of Figures

- Fig. 1 Site location map
Fig. 2 Plan and sections of the foundation pit

List of Plates

- Plate 1 Section 101 looking north east
Plate 2 Section 101 looking north west



Summary

On 11th May 2009, Oxford Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief at Down House, Downe, Bromley, Kent (TQ 431 611) during the reordering of the outside seating area, specifically the excavation of a foundation pit for a parasol.

The watching brief revealed remains associated with the garden or yard to the rear of the house. These comprise a sequence of levelling layers and a gravel surface, most likely a yard surface. A drain pipe beneath the surface is likely to be contemporary with it. The area had subsequently been used as a garden, with a garden soil being deposited over the gravel surface, before the modern paved surface was laid down. Unfortunately, no artefacts were recovered that might help to date the deposits and enable this sequence to be directly correlated with phases in the development of the house and its grounds.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 On 11th May 2009, Oxford Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief at Down House, Downe, Bromley, Kent (TQ 431 611, Fig. 1) during the reordering of the outside seating area, specifically the excavation of a foundation pit for a parasol.
- 1.1.2 The work was commissioned by Caroe & Partners, Architects on behalf of English Heritage.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 Down House is a Grade II listed building set in a 7.2 ha estate located in the village of Downe, four miles south-west of Orpington, Bromley.
- 1.2.2 The site lies at c 178 m OD and the underlying geology comprises Upper Cretaceous Chalk (BGS Sheet 271, Solid and Drift 1:50,000).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 Down House has its origins in the 17th century, with many alterations during the 18th and 19th centuries. Charles Darwin was resident at Down House from 1842 until his death in 1882. Between 1886 and 1922, the building was used as a girls school, after which it was purchased by Sir George Buckston Browne, who converted it into a museum to Darwin (Overy 2004).
- 1.3.2 An archaeological evaluation has been carried out within the gardens, revealing a series of paths dating to the 19th century as well as the foundation of a garden shed and the remains of a tennis court, also dating to the 19th century. Architectural features suggested that the shed possibly post-dated Darwin's occupancy (PCA 2002).
- 1.3.3 The current monitoring works took place in the location of the scullery of the house. Previous works have uncovered the old scullery floor, as well as a cistern. The scullery was constructed during the 18th century and demolished in the 1960s. It was uncovered and recorded in 1996 (Keystone Historic Buildings Consultants 1998) (Fig. 2).
- 1.3.4 Down House was acquired in 1996 by English Heritage and reopened to the public as a museum of Charles Darwin's life and work (Overy 2004). In 2009 the gardens and greenhouse, in combination with the surrounding landscape, were submitted to UNESCO as the UK's nomination to become a World Heritage Site, due to the key role they played in Darwin's observations and experiments.

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 OA extends its thanks to Mark Stevenson of English Heritage for advice and background knowledge of Down House. The watching brief was carried out by Rowan McAlley and the project was managed by William Bedford. Illustrations were prepared by Markus Dylewski.



2 WATCHING BRIEF 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 impacted area.
- 2.1.2 To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the proposed development area.
- 2.1.3 To establish the presence or absence of any archaeological remains of any period that may be affected/destroyed by the works and add to the knowledge of the construction and use of Down House.
- 2.1.4 To signal, before the destruction of the material in question, the discovery of a significant archaeological find, for which the resources allocated are not sufficient to support a treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.
- 2.1.5 To make available the results of the investigation

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 An experienced archaeologist was in attendance to monitor the excavation of the pit for the parasol. It was excavated by hand.
- 2.2.2 A single pit was excavated, measuring c 0.50 m x 0.60 m and 1.2 m deep.
- 2.2.3 A plan of the foundation pit was drawn at a scale of 1:50, and a sample section at a scale of 1:10. A detailed digital photographic record was made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (Wilkinson 1992).



3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits (Fig. 2, Plates 1 and 2)

- 3.1.1 The natural geology, comprising orange clayey sand with some sub angular shaped flint nodules (112) was exposed in the lower part of the foundation pit, at a depth of 0.80 m below current ground level. It was overlain by a sequence of layers that may have been laid down as levelling deposits, with a total thickness of 0.50 m. The first of these, lying directly on the natural geology, was a thin deposit of grey soil (111) only 0.01 m thick, which was overlain by a layer of re-deposited natural clay 0.11 m thick (110). Above this lay a thin band of chalk and mortar (109), and a second layer of re-deposited natural clay that was 0.4 m thick (106).
- 3.1.2 Layer 106 was cut by a pipe trench (105) that was exposed at the north-western edge of the foundation pit and extended across the foundation pit on a NE-SW orientation, parallel to the rear wall of the house. The pipe trench was at least 0.30 m wide, and was exposed for a length of 0.60 m, continuing beyond the foundation pit in both directions. It was 0.50 m deep, and its base was filled by a deposit of concrete (107/108), laid as a foundation for a glazed ceramic drainpipe (113). The trench was back-filled with a mixed deposit of clay with some crushed brick and peg tile fragments.
- 3.1.3 The pipe trench was sealed by a gravel surface 0.05 m thick (103). Above this lay a layer of garden soil 0.14 m thick (102), which was sealed by the concrete bedding layer (101) for the modern paved surface, and, on the north-eastern side of the foundation pit, by further garden soil, which may have been part of a former flower bed.

3.2 Finds and palaeo-environmental summary

- 3.2.1 No artefacts were recovered during the course of the watching brief.
- 3.2.2 No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling were observed during the course of the watching brief.



4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The watching brief revealed remains associated with the garden or yard to the rear of the house. These comprise a sequence of levelling layers and a gravel surface, most likely a yard surface. A drain pipe beneath the surface is likely to be contemporary with it. The area had subsequently been used as a garden, with a garden soil being deposited over the gravel surface, before the modern paved surface was laid down. Unfortunately, no artefacts were recovered that might help to date the deposits and enable this sequence to be directly correlated with phases in the development of the house and its grounds.



APPENDIX A. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

English Heritage, 2006 *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment*

IFA, 1999 *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological*

Evaluation, Institute of Field Archaeologists

Keystone Historic Buildings Consultants, 1998 *The Historic Development of Charles*

Darwin's 'good, very ugly house', Down House, Downe, Bromley, unpublished client report

PCA, 2002 *Down House, Downe*, unpublished client report

OA, 2000 *OA Environmental Guidelines for sampling*

Overy, C. 2004 *Down House, Home of Charles Darwin, Making a Visit.*

Wilkinson, D, 1992 *Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual*, (ed. D Wilkinson)



APPENDIX B. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Down House, Downe, Bromley

Site code: DND09

Grid reference: NGR TQ 431 611

Type: Watching Brief

Date and duration: 11th May 2009

Area of site: 110 m²

Summary of results: The watching brief was carried out during the excavation of a foundation pit for a parasol. It revealed remains associated with the garden or yard to the rear of the house. These comprise a sequence of levelling layers and a gravel surface, most likely a yard surface. A drain pipe beneath the surface is likely to be contemporary with it. The area had subsequently been used as a garden, with a garden soil being deposited over the gravel surface, before the modern paved surface was laid down. Unfortunately, no artefacts were recovered that might help to date the deposits and enable this sequence to be directly correlated with phases in the development of the house and its grounds.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Museum of London.

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

[List of Projects](#) | [Search Projects](#) | [New project](#) | [Change your details](#) | [HER coverage](#) | [Change country](#) | [Log out](#)

Printable version

OASIS ID: oxfordar1-60862

Project details

Project name Down House, Downe, Bromley

On 11th May 2009, Oxford Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief at Down House, Downe, Bromley, Kent (TQ 431 611) during the reordering of the outside seating area, specifically the excavation of a foundation pit for a parasol. The watching brief revealed remains associated with the garden or yard to the rear of the house. These comprise a sequence of levelling layers and a gravel surface, most likely a yard surface. A drain pipe beneath the surface is likely to be contemporary with it. The area had subsequently been used as a garden, with a garden soil being deposited over the gravel surface, before the modern paved surface was laid down. Unfortunately, no artefacts were recovered that might help to date the deposits and enable this sequence to be directly correlated with phases in the development of the house and its grounds.

Short description of the project

Project dates Start: 11-05-2009 End: 11-05-2009

Previous/future work Yes / Not known

Any associated project reference codes DND09 - Sitecode

Any associated project reference codes DND09 - Museum accession ID

Type of project Recording project

Site status Listed Building

Current Land use Other 5 - Garden
Monument type LEVELLING Post Medieval
Monument type PIPE TRENCH Modern
Significant Finds NO FINDS None
Investigation type 'Watching Brief'
Prompt Planning condition

Project location
Country England
Site location GREATER LONDON BROMLEY ORPINGTON Down House, Downe
Study area 0.30 Square metres
Site coordinates TQ 431 611 51.3304423523 0.054263466199 51 19 49 N 000 03 15 E Point

Project creators
Name of Organisation Oxford Archaeology
Project brief originator English Heritage/Department of Environment
Project design originator Oxford Archaeology
Project director/manager Oxford Archaeology
Project supervisor W. Bedford
Type of sponsor/funding body Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body Caroe & Partners

Project archives
Physical Archive Exists? No
Digital Archive Oxford Archaeology

recipient
Digital Contents 'other'
Digital Media available 'Text'
Paper Archive recipient Museum of London
Paper Archive ID DND09
Paper Contents 'Stratigraphic','other'
Paper Media available 'Context sheet','Microfilm','Plan','Unpublished Text'

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title Down house, Downe, Bromley
Author(s)/Editor(s) McAlley, R
Date 2009
Issuer or publisher Oxford Archaeology South
Place of issue or publication Oxford
Description spiral bound client report

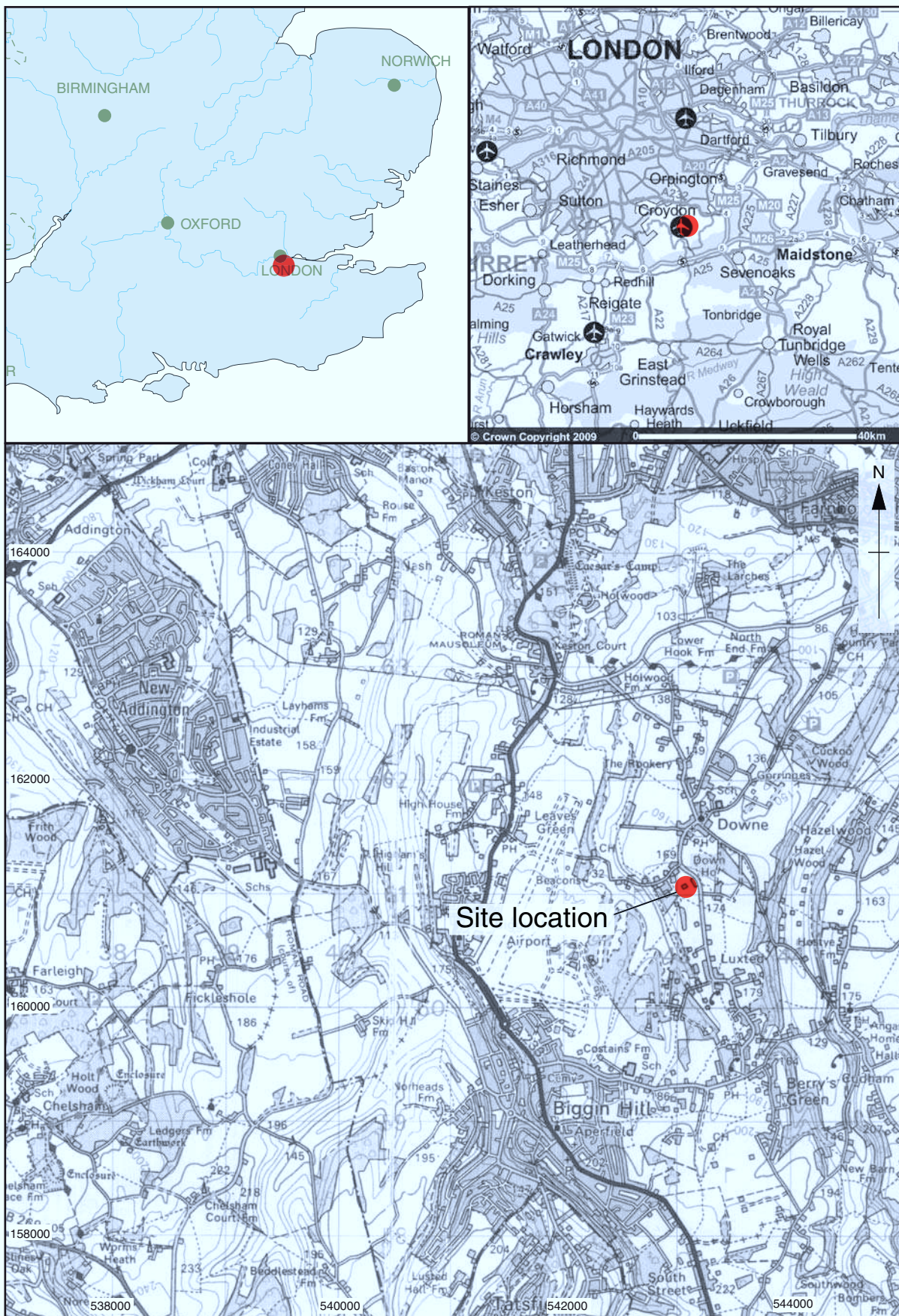
Entered by Nicola Scott (n.scott@oxfordarch.co.uk)
Entered on 17 June 2009

OASIS:

Please e-mail [English Heritage](#) for OASIS help and advice

© ADS 1996-2006 Created by [Jo Gilham and Jen Mitcham, email](#) Last modified Friday 3 February 2006

Cite only: /d1/export/home/web/oasis/form/print.cfm for this page



1:50,000

Reproduced from the Landranger 1:50,000 scale by permission of the Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright 1974. All rights reserved. Licence No. AL 100005569

Figure 1: Site location

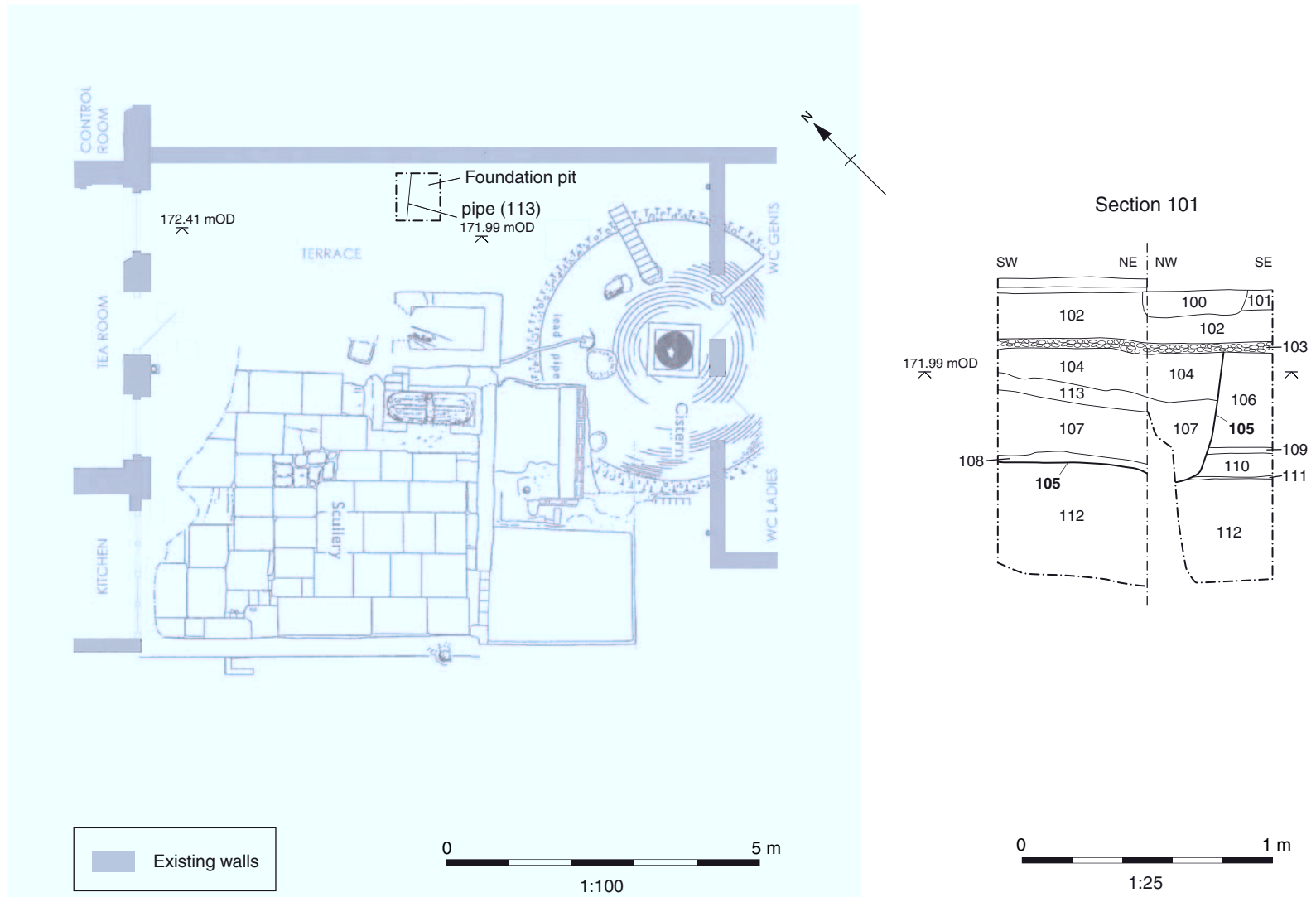


Figure 2: Site plan and section 101



Plate 1: Section 101 looking North-East



Plate 2: Section 101 looking North-West



OA South

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES

t: +44 (0) 1865 263 800
f: +44 (0) 1865 793 496
e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk
w: <http://thehumanjourney.net>

OA North

Mill 3
Moor Lane Mills
Moor Lane
Lancaster LA1 1GF

t: +44 (0) 1524 541 000
f: +44 (0) 1524 848 606
e: [oanorth@thehumanjourney.net](mailto: oanorth@thehumanjourney.net)
w: <http://thehumanjourney.net>

OA East

15 Trafalgar Way
Bar Hill
Cambridgeshire
CB23 8SQ

t: +44 (0) 1223 850500
f: +44 (0) 1223 850599
e: [oaeast@thehumanjourney.net](mailto: oaeast@thehumanjourney.net)
w: <http://thehumanjourney.net>

OA Méditerranée

115 Rue Merlot
ZAC La Louvade
34 130 Maugeio
France

t: +33 (0) 4.67.57.86.92
f: +33 (0) 4.67.42.65.93
e: [oamed@thehumanjourney.net](mailto: oamed@thehumanjourney.net)
w: <http://oamed.fr/>

Director: David Jennings, BA MIFA FSA



*The Oxford Archaeological Unit Ltd is a Private Limited Company, N^o: 1618597 and a Registered Charity, No: 285627
Registered Office: Janus House,
Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES*