

EAST OXFORD (OX)
COWLEY

OXCRWB
973/97

Bewley Homes

Elder Stubbs, Cricket Road, Cowley, Oxford.

NGR SP 5370 0461

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

Planning Ref. No. 97/156/NF

Oxford Archaeological Unit

April 1998

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Date: *2/4/98*

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Date: *29/4/98*

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Date: *29/4/1998*

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Summary

In June and November 1997 the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) undertook a watching brief at Elder Stubbs, Cricket Road, Cowley, Oxford (NGR SP 5370 0461). No archaeological features were seen and no finds were retrieved.

1 Introduction

The development proposal (Planning Application no. 97/156/NF) comprised the excavation of drain runs and footings prior to the construction of 34 new houses to the east of Cricket Road.

The watching brief was commissioned by Bewley Homes on their own behalf and was undertaken to a brief set by and a WSI agreed with the Oxford Archaeological Advisory service (OAAS).

2 Background (Fig. 1)

The site lies in an area about which almost nothing is known. In the latter half of the 19th century the area became known as Cowley Marsh; its relatively dry nature today is probably the result of a combination of land raising and improved drainage. It is therefore possible that an historic wetland environment could be preserved in the area, and roads such as Rymers Lane and Cricket Road may preserve the line of former trackways across the marsh, leading from the site of Church Cowley village towards Oxford.

As a consequence of this, the site was considered to have the potential to contain preserved waterlogged and/or organic deposits.

The land use on the site prior to the commencement of groundworks was as allotments. The underlying geology is Oxford clay.

3 Aims

The aims of the watching brief were to record any archaeological remains exposed on site during the course of the works to established standards (Wilkinson 1992) to secure the preservation by record of any archaeology, the presence and nature of which could not be established in advance.

4 Methodology

Separate inspection visits were made to the site by prior arrangement with the main contractor for groundworks. Excavation was both by JCB and by 360 mechanical excavator. Maximum depth of dig for both services and footings was 2 m.

Within the constraints imposed by Health and Safety considerations the deposits exposed were cleaned, inspected and recorded in plan, section and by colour slide and monochrome print photography. Written records were also made on proforma sheets.

Soil descriptions use *estimated* percentages based on the use of standard charts for the approximation of percentage of inclusion types in soil deposits.

5 Results (Figs 2 and 3)

Heavy modern disturbance, from drainage works unrelated to the present scheme, was seen in the vicinities both of Cricket Road and Cricket Lane, to a depth of up to 2 m. The area immediately behind the Cricket Road frontage was disturbed both by recent drainage works and by invasive root action from a former hedge.

Three deposits were identified and were seen in all trenches dug to the maximum depth of 2 m.

- (1) - dumped gravel/made ground, 0 - 0.52 m.
- (2) - mottled gray/orange alluvial clay, 0.52 - 0.85 m.
- (3) - Oxford clay, 0.85 - 2.00 m.

No further deposits were seen, nor any cut features.

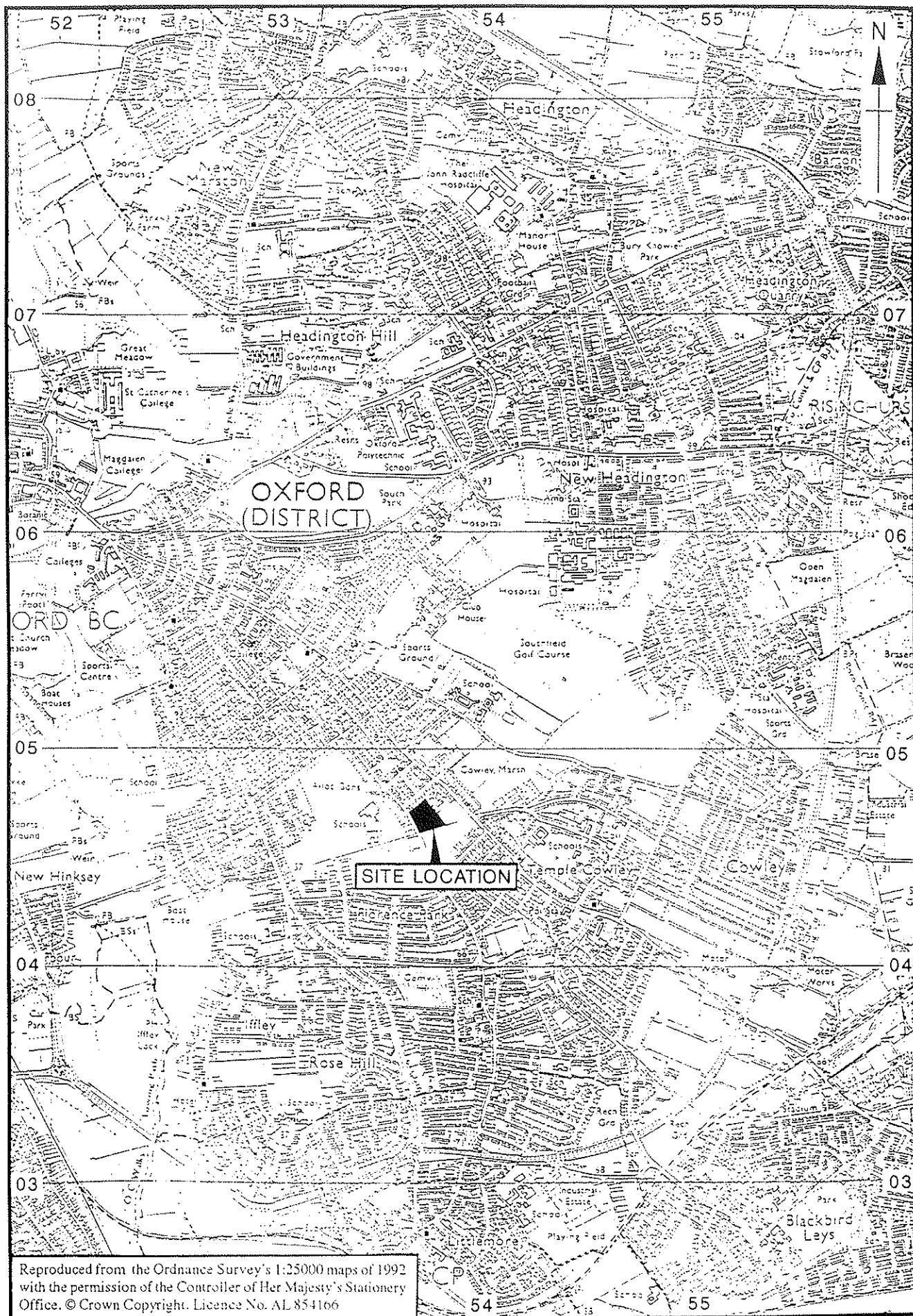
6 Discussion

No waterlogged deposits were identified during the course of the watching brief; in some cases the Oxford clay was seen directly to underlie the present ground surface. If the former marsh is still in existence as a waterlogged deposit, then it lies outside the development area.

John Dalton
OAU
April 1998.

References.

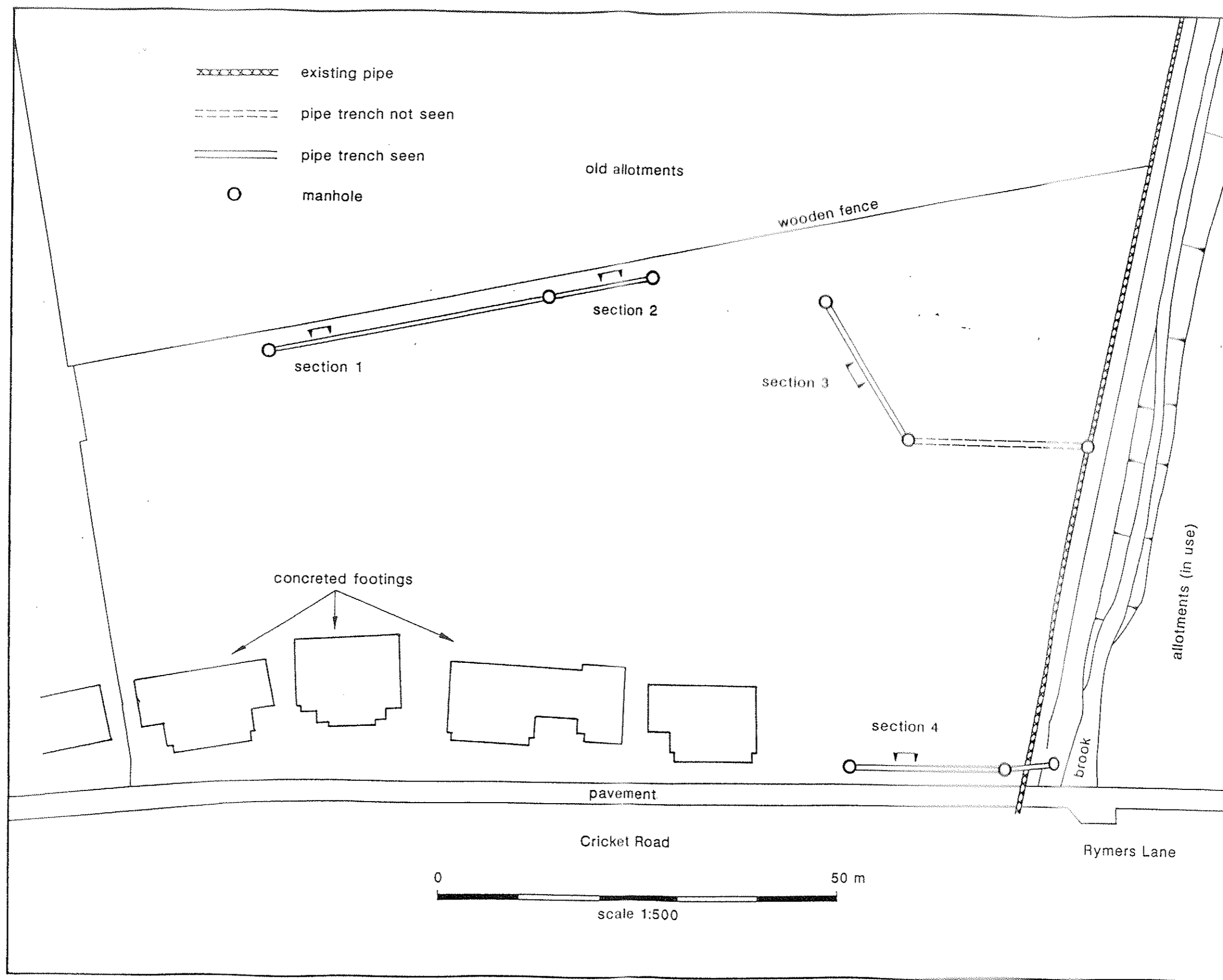
Wilkinson, D (ed) 1992 Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual, (First edition, August 1992).



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Location of site

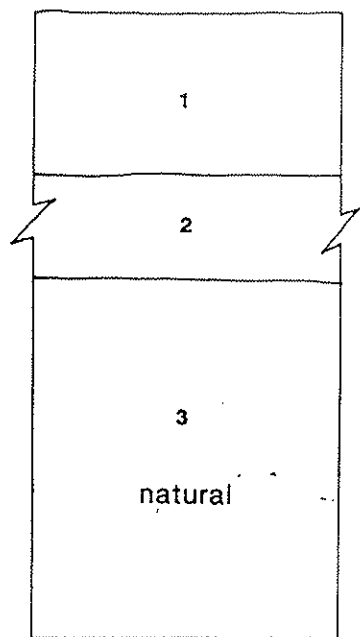
Figure 1



Site plan

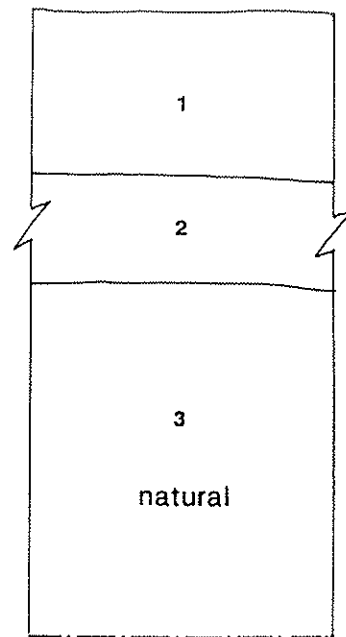
Figure 2

NW Section 1 SE



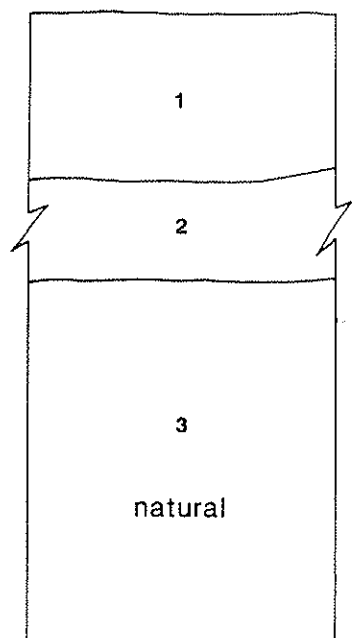
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NW Section 2 SE



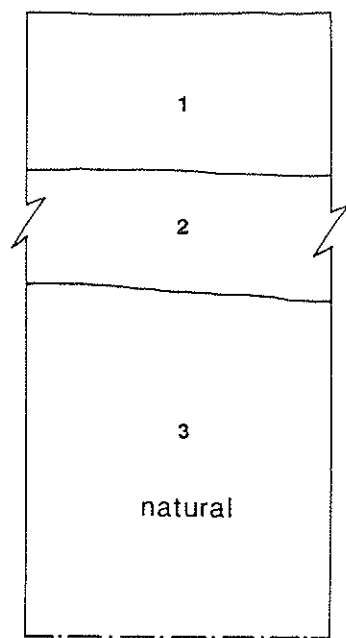
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NE Section 3 SW

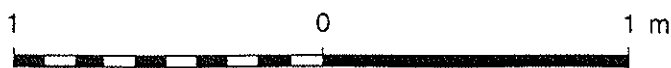


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NW Section 4 SE



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Sections

Figure 3

