

OXHECEEV

East Oxford Health Centre
Manzil Way
Oxford



Archaeological Evaluation Report



Oxford Archaeology

March 2005

Client: MOWLEM

Issue N^o: 1

Planning Ref N^o: 05/00164/FUL

NGR: SP 5320 0575

Client Name: MOWLEM

Client Ref No:

Document Title: East Oxford Health Centre, Manzil Way, Oxford

Document Type: Evaluation

Issue Number: 1

National Grid Reference: SP 5320 0575
Planning Reference: 05/00164/FUL

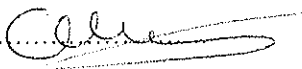
OA Job Number: 2623
Site Code: OXHECE 05
Invoice Code: OXHECEEV
Receiving Museum: Oxfordshire County Museum Service
Museum Accession No: OXCMS:2005.13

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Document File Location H:\PROJECTS\Oxfordshire OX\Oxford City OC\5253
East Oxford Health Centre, Manzil Way EV\evREP.doc

Graphics File Location Server 10:/oaupubs
1_ItoQ*OXHECE05*OXHECEEV*East Oxford Health
Centre, Manzil Way, Oxford*GS*22.03.05

Illustrated by Georgina Slater

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

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SUMMARY

On 2nd and 3rd March 2005 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at the site of the new East Oxford Health Centre, Manzil Way, Oxford (NGR: SP 5320 0575) on behalf of Mowlem. The evaluation revealed extensive truncation of deposits within the north and west of the site and buried post-medieval soil horizons within the remainder. No significant archaeology was observed during the course of the evaluation.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 On 2nd and 3rd March 2005 OA carried out a field evaluation on the site of the new East Oxford Health Centre, Manzil Way, Oxford (NGR: SP 5320 0575) on behalf of Mowlem in respect of a planning application for a new primary health care resource centre (Planning Application No. 05/00164/FUL). An archaeological condition was attached to the planning permission by Brian Durham the City Archaeologist for Oxford City Council and OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) showing how it would meet these requirements (OA, 2005).

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The development site is situated on the eastern edge of the city centre (Fig. 1). The site itself is bounded to the west by residential dwellings, to the south by a public open space and to the east and north by public highways. The site itself is currently occupied by the old healthcare centre and occupies an area of approximately 1.6 hectare at roughly 65 m above OD. The underlying geology within the western portion of the site is upper Oxford clay while the solid geology of the eastern portion of the site is Temple Cowley member comprised of fine grained sandstones, sands and siltstones overlain by dark grey silty sandstone - West Walton formation (BGS sheet 237).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological background to the evaluation has been the subject of a separate desk study (OA, 2003), an abridged version of which is presented below. The site itself has produced some archaeological evidence.

Historical Background

1.3.2 The development area lies close to both Headington and Cowley Parishes. The name Headington is derived from the Saxon personal name "Hedena" and appears to have been the nucleus of a great royal manor in the late Saxon period. Most of Headington once lay within the bounds of the forests of Shotover and Stowood, and until relatively recently traces of common scrub and woodland could be found on the higher ground of the parish. The arable land of the parish appears to have been cultivated on a three-field system from the 13th to 19th century.

- 1.3.3 Cowley parish derives its name from “Cufa’s” wood or clearing and dates from the Anglo-Saxon period, and is mentioned in the Domesday book of 1086. The main medieval areas of occupation lay at Church Cowley, round the church and Temple Cowley round the Templar’s Preceptory.
- 1.3.4 The earliest map of the area is Bernard de Gomme’s map of 1644 showing the Parliamentary defences as seen by the Royalist position within the City of Oxford. Bearing in mind the stylisation of 17th century maps and the fact that de Gomme was plotting features that he could only see at a distance it appears to show the defences running across the western side of the development area following the approximate line of the 95 m OS contour.
- 1.3.5 Both the Jefferys’ county map of 1769 and the Davis county map of 1797 shows the development area as open fields, which are named as part of Cowley Fields on the Davis map. The line of the present day Cowley Road is clearly shown on both maps. The Cowley Tithe Map and Award (1853) shows the area was a combination of allotment, arable and meadow with one field given over partly to pasture. The area of the development was maintained as open fields until the construction of the workhouse in 1862-5 when it became the garden and approach road to the workhouse as depicted on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1876.
- 1.3.6 The earliest evidence for use of Headington stone is in the New College building accounts of 1396-7, with the Headington quarries being the chief source of supply of stone for Oxford’s buildings up to middle of the 18th century. By the 19th century it was still used locally and the hardstone was used for kerbing up to recent times, with the enclosure award of 1856 setting aside three 1 acre plots for quarries for the surveyors of highways. There is a known quarry approximately 100 m north-west of the site, it is however thought to be of post-medieval date and therefore from the later phase of more local use.

Archaeological background

- 1.3.7 There is no evidence of prehistoric activity within the development area. However, various finds of Neolithic to Bronze age date have been found in the general Cowley Marsh area. It is thought that in the Bronze age places like the marsh at Cowley would have been used periodically for grazing pigs, while at Headington the forests would have been seasonally exploited. A hoard of 11 bronze palstaves was discovered at Leopold Street, 300m south of the site (Emery 1974). Isolated discoveries of Roman pottery and coins have both be made within 200m of the proposed development.
- 1.3.8 By the early medieval period the area would have been largely agricultural land with clear ridge and furrow visible in South Park to the north-west of the site. A medieval boundary wall and ditch were located west of the proposed development area.
- 1.3.9 A trenched excavation was undertaken on the site of the mosque, immediately to the north-east of the development area, prior to its construction. This investigation looked for the line of the Royalist Civil War defences, however, no remains of the ditch were found and it is now thought that they lie further west and closer to East Avenue (OA 2003).

2 EVALUATION AIMS

- 2.1.1 To establish the presence or absence, extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of archaeological remains within the proposal area. In particular, evidence of the Parliamentary defences as shown in Bernard de Gomme's map of 1644.
- 2.1.2 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features.
- 2.1.3 To make available the results of the investigation.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork

- 3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of four trenches (Fig. 2). Trench 1 was located in the north-east corner of the site and measured 14 m long by 3 m wide, Trench 2 was located parallel to Manzil Way in the east of the site and measured 5.5 m long by 1.8 m wide. Trench 3 was located almost in the centre of the site and excavated as a "L" shape with a 20 m long by 1.8 m south-west by north-east aligned arm and a 5 m long, 1.8 m wide south-east to north-west aligned arm. Trench 4 was sited in the south-west corner of the development area and measured 13 m long by 1.8 m wide.
- 3.1.2 The overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision by a mechanical excavator (JCB) fitted with a 1.8 m wide toothless grading bucket. Excavation by machine proceeded in spits down to either undisturbed natural deposits or to the first significant archaeological horizon, whichever was encountered first.

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

- 3.2.1 The trenches were cleaned by hand and any revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and where possible, to retrieve finds and environmental samples. The trenches and any archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:50 and the sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20. All features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OA Field Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

3.3 Palaeo-environmental evidence

- 3.3.1 No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling were encountered during the course of the evaluation.

3.4 Presentation of results

- 3.4.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below, with the stratigraphic accounts of each trench described individually, followed by an overall discussion and interpretation.

4 RESULTS: GENERAL

4.1 Soils and ground conditions

- 4.1.1 The site was located on level ground, comprising tarmac and made ground over natural in Trenches 1 and 2 and modern landscaping deposits sealing original ground levels within Trenches 3 and 4. The boundaries of the layers and edges of the cut features were well defined. The water table was encountered within the bases of Trenches 3 and 4.

4.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits

- 4.2.1 No significant archaeological deposits were encountered in any of the trenches.

5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

5.1 Description of deposits

Trench 1 (Fig. 3)

- 5.1.1 A layer of undisturbed natural grey clay (15) was reached at 0.8 m below ground level. This was overlaid by a 0.18 m thick layer of olive-brown clay (14) which contained charcoal flecking, but no dating evidence and may represent a buried soil horizon. Sealing this context was a 0.35 m thick layer of crushed limestone (13), a layer of modern made ground. A 0.18 m thick layer of fine gravels (12) overlaid this and formed the base for a 0.06 m thick tarmac surface (11).

Trench 2 (Fig. 4)

- 5.1.2 The stratigraphy within this trench was similar to Trench 1, with a layer of natural grey clay (25) reached at a depth of 0.75 m below ground level. This was overlaid by a 0.3 m deep layer of greyish brown clay (24), which produced charcoal flecking but again no dating evidence, and is a buried soil horizon. Cut into the surface of this layer was a 0.7 m wide, linear feature (27) which ran parallel to Manzil Way and was filled by a mixed grey and yellow clay (26). This backfill produced 19th and 20th century bottle glass and pottery which suggests that this was a modern service trench. Sealing the backfill of this feature was a layer of crushed limestone (23) between 0.15 m and 0.3 m in depth, a layer of modern made ground which supports the layer of fine gravels (22) underneath the tarmac surface (21).

Trench 3 (Fig. 5)

- 5.1.3 An undisturbed natural greyish-brown clay (34) containing many flecks of limestone was reached at a depth of 0.8 m below ground level. Within the northern extent of the trench this was overlaid by a 0.25 m thick layer of yellow-brown clay (36), a layer of possible colluvium. Cut into this layer were several ceramic land-drains suggesting that this area was agricultural in nature during the post-medieval period. Sealing the colluvium was a 0.2 m deep layer of olive brown clay (35), containing charcoal flecking. This probably represents a buried soil, possibly a ploughsoil. Towards the southern extent of the trench both layers 35 and 36 had been truncated completely with a 0.4 m deep layer of modern made ground (33), composed of grey clay and

construction debris resting directly onto the natural clay 34. This was overlaid with another layer of made ground (32) composed of mixed clay and gravels. A modern landscaping layer of dark grey-brown clay loam (31) ran the length of the trench, sealing both 32 and 35.

Trench 4 (Fig. 6)

5.1.4 The presence of a gas main not shown on the service drawing meant the southernmost 3 m of the trench was only partially excavated. A layer of clean yellow brown clay (45), a probable colluvium was reached at 0.6 m below ground level. This was overlain by a layer of grey-brown silt clay (44), 0.18 m deep, which contained charcoal flecking and 19th century pottery and represents a buried topsoil. This was sealed by a layer of made ground 0.1 m to 0.18 m thick composed of light grey clay (43). Cut into the surface of this layer was a 1.2 m wide linear feature with steeply sloping sides (46), excavated to a depth in excess of 0.8 m deep and filled with mixed grey and yellow clays (46), a backfill composed of redeposited material. The presence of fragments of frogged brick, window glass and transfer printed pottery suggests a 20th century service trench. Sealing the backfill 46 and layer 43 was a 0.15 m thick layer of dark yellow-brown clay (42), a layer of modern made ground. Completing the section was a 0.2 m to 0.3 m deep layer of dark brown clay loam (41), a modern landscaping layer.

5.2 Finds

5.2.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and bagged by context. All the finds recovered were of late post-medieval date (19th and 20th century) and comprised fragments of frogged brick, window and bottle glass and transfer printed pottery.

6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Reliability of field investigation

6.1.1 The positioning of trenches was originally determined in order to locate the position of the Parliamentarian defensive ditches, if present, on the site. The relocation of the trenches in order to avoid services has introduced a margin of error which may need to be resolved during the watching brief stage. However the similarity of the lower deposits within all the trenches gives a reasonable confidence that the interpretation can be applied throughout the development area.

6.2 Overall interpretation

6.2.1 The results of the evaluation show that a high degree of truncation has taken place within the areas of trenches 1 and 2 with only the lowest subsoil deposits surviving. A degree of truncation has taken place within the southern half of Trench 3 but the original stratigraphy has survived within the northern half of Trench 3 and entirely within the area of Trench 4. This stratigraphy was consistent with agricultural use of the land evidenced by the presence of ceramic land drains within the colluvium, prior to the construction of the original 20th century health centre. All the trenches were excavated down to undisturbed deposits in order to determine if the Parliamentarian

defence works were present, however none were found. All the datable deposits fell within the 19th and 20th centuries. No earlier or significant archaeology was observed during the course of the evaluation.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Ctxt No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
1						
	11	Layer	0.1 m	Modern tarmac surface	-	C20th
	12	Layer	0.18 m	Gravel base for tarmac	-	C20th
	13	Layer	0.35 m	Crushed stone	-	C20th
	14	Layer	0.15 m	Buried subsoil	-	-
	15	Layer	> 0.25 m	Natural clay	-	-
2						
	21	Layer	0.06 m	Modern tarmac surface	-	C20th
	22	Layer	0.15 m	Gravel base for tarmac	-	C20th
	23	Layer	0.3 m	Crushed stone	-	C20th
	24	Layer	0.25 m	Buried subsoil	-	-
	25	Layer	>0.18 m	Natural clay	-	-
	26	Fill	>0.2 m	Backfill of 27	Bottle glass, brick	C20th
	27	Cut	>0.2 m	Modern service trench	-	C20th
3						
	31	Layer	0.25 m	Modern landscaping layer	-	C20th
	32	Layer	0.3 m	Modern made ground	-	C20th
	33	Layer	0.4 m	Modern made ground	Brick, glass, iron	C20th
	34	Layer	>0.2 m	Natural clay	-	-
	35	Layer	0.22 m	Buried soil horizon	-	C20th
	36	Layer	0.2 m	Colluvium	-	-
4						
	41	Layer	0.2 m	Modern landscaping layer	-	C20th
	42	Layer	0.15 m	Modern made ground	-	C20th
	43	Layer	0.18 m	Modern made ground	Brick	C20th
	44	Layer	0.28 m	Buried post-medieval topsoil	Brick, pottery	C19th /C20th
	45	Layer	>0.5 m	Colluvium	-	-
	46	Fill	>0.75 m	Backfill of 47	Brick, pottery, glass	C20th
	47	Cut	>0.75 m	Modern service trench	-	C20th

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

Emery F, 1974 *The Oxfordshire landscape*

IFA, 1999 *Standard and Guidance for archaeological evaluations*

OA, 2003 *Manzil Way Oxford: Archaeological Desk Based Assessment.*

OA, 2005 *East Oxford Health Centre, Manzil Way, Oxford: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*

OAU, 1992 *Field Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson)

VCH 1967 *The Victoria History of the Counties of England: A history of the county of Oxford*

VCH 1979 *The Victoria History of the Counties of England: A history of the county of Oxford*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: East Oxford Health Centre, Manzil Way, Oxford

Site code: OXHECE 05

Grid reference: SP 5320 0575

Type of evaluation: 4 machine excavated trenches

Date and duration of project: 3rd and 4th March 2005, Two days

Area of site: 1.6 hectares

Summary of results: Modern made ground overlying post-medieval agricultural soils

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: OXCMS:2005.13



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Figure 1: Site location

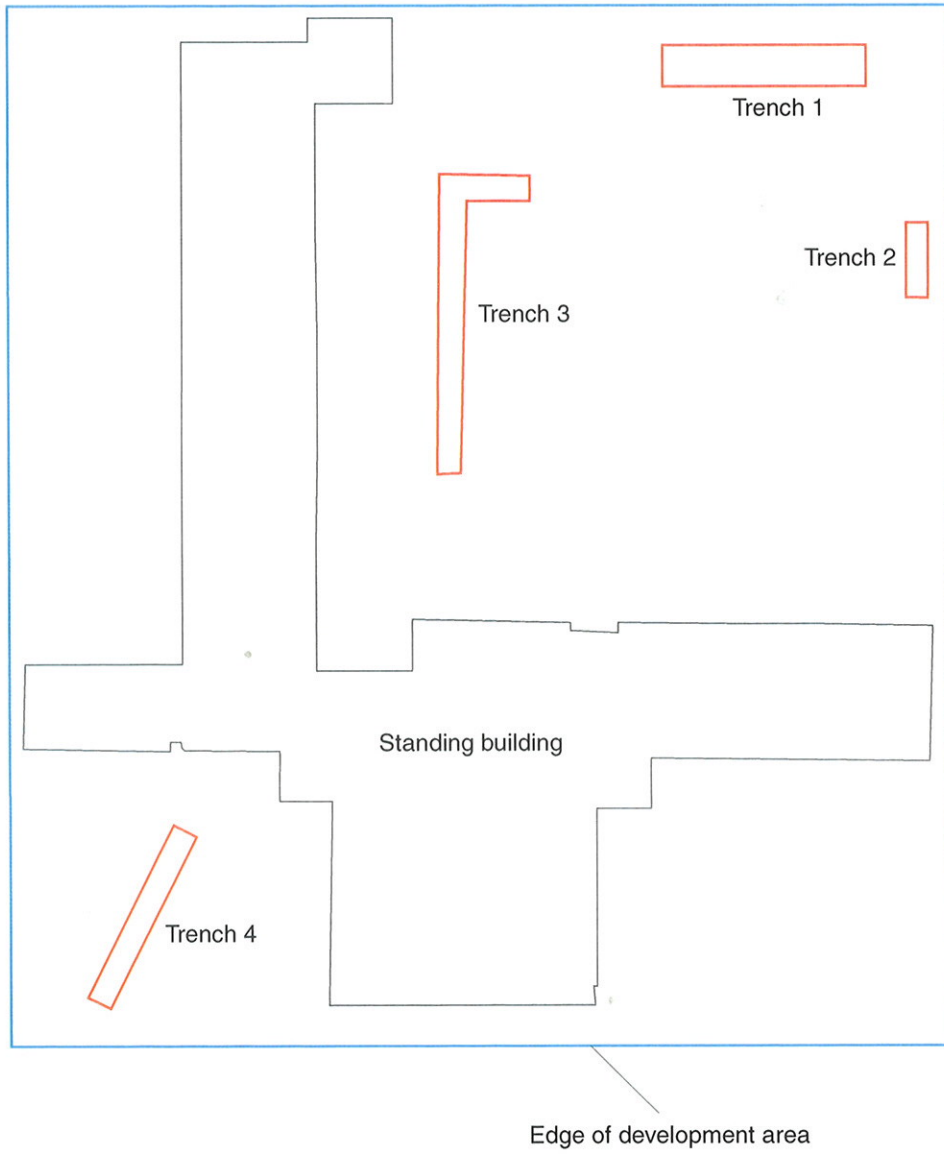


Figure 2: Trench location plan

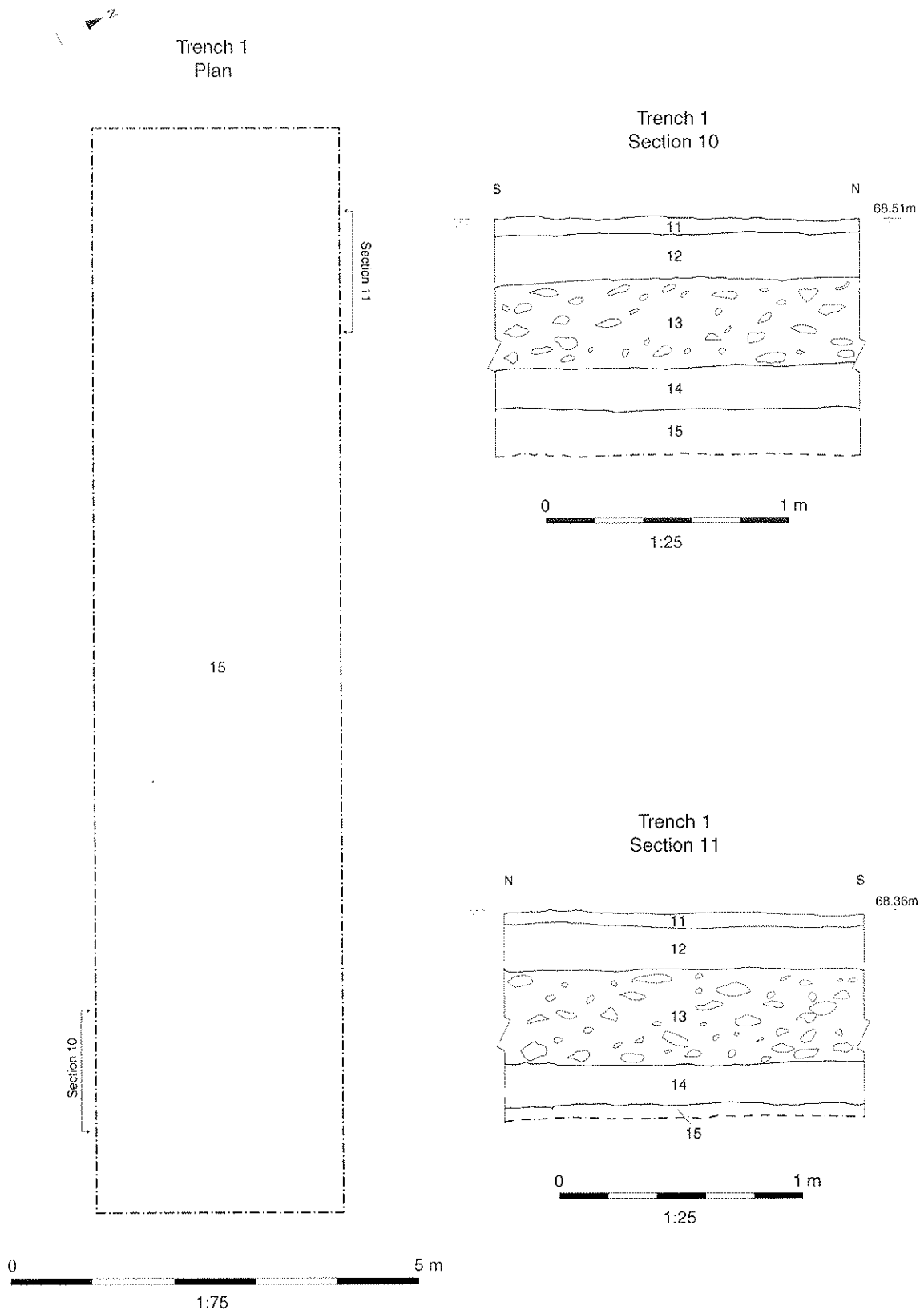
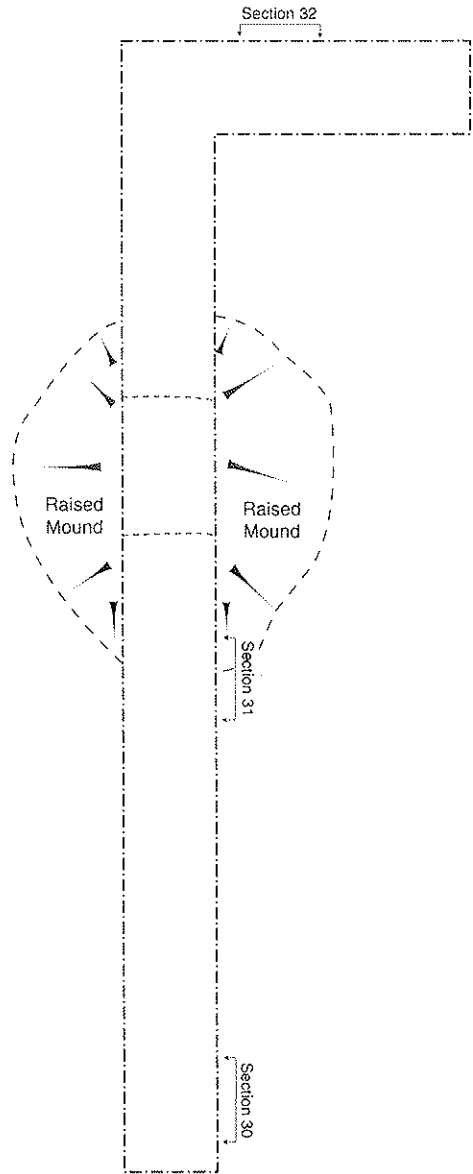


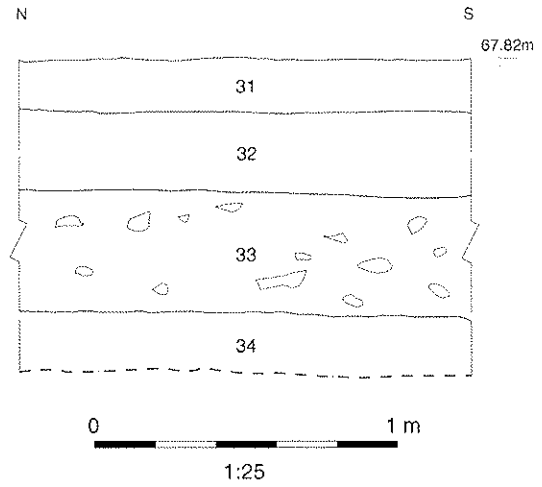
Figure 3: Trench 1, Plan and sections



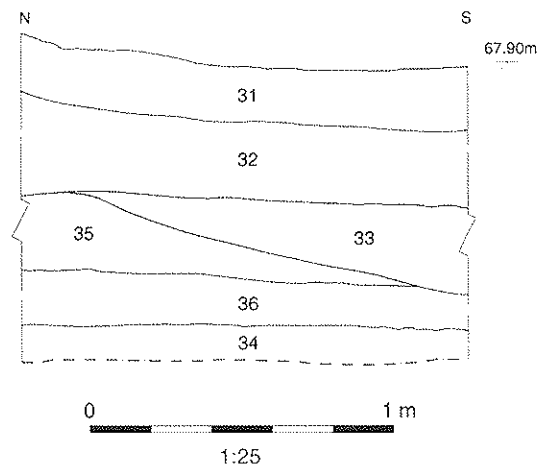
Trench 3 Plan



Trench 3 Section 30



Trench 3 Section 31



Trench 3 Section 32

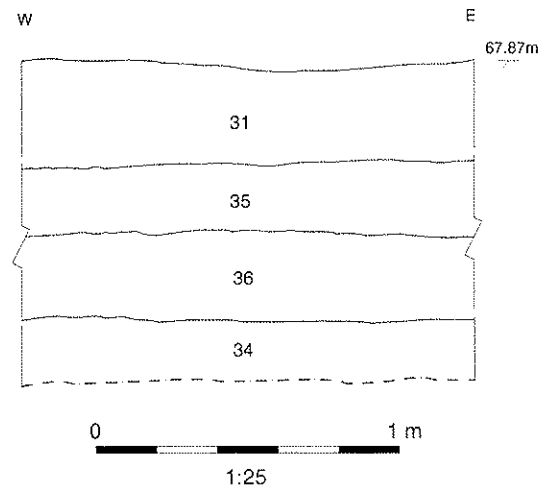


Figure 5: Trench 3, Plan and sections

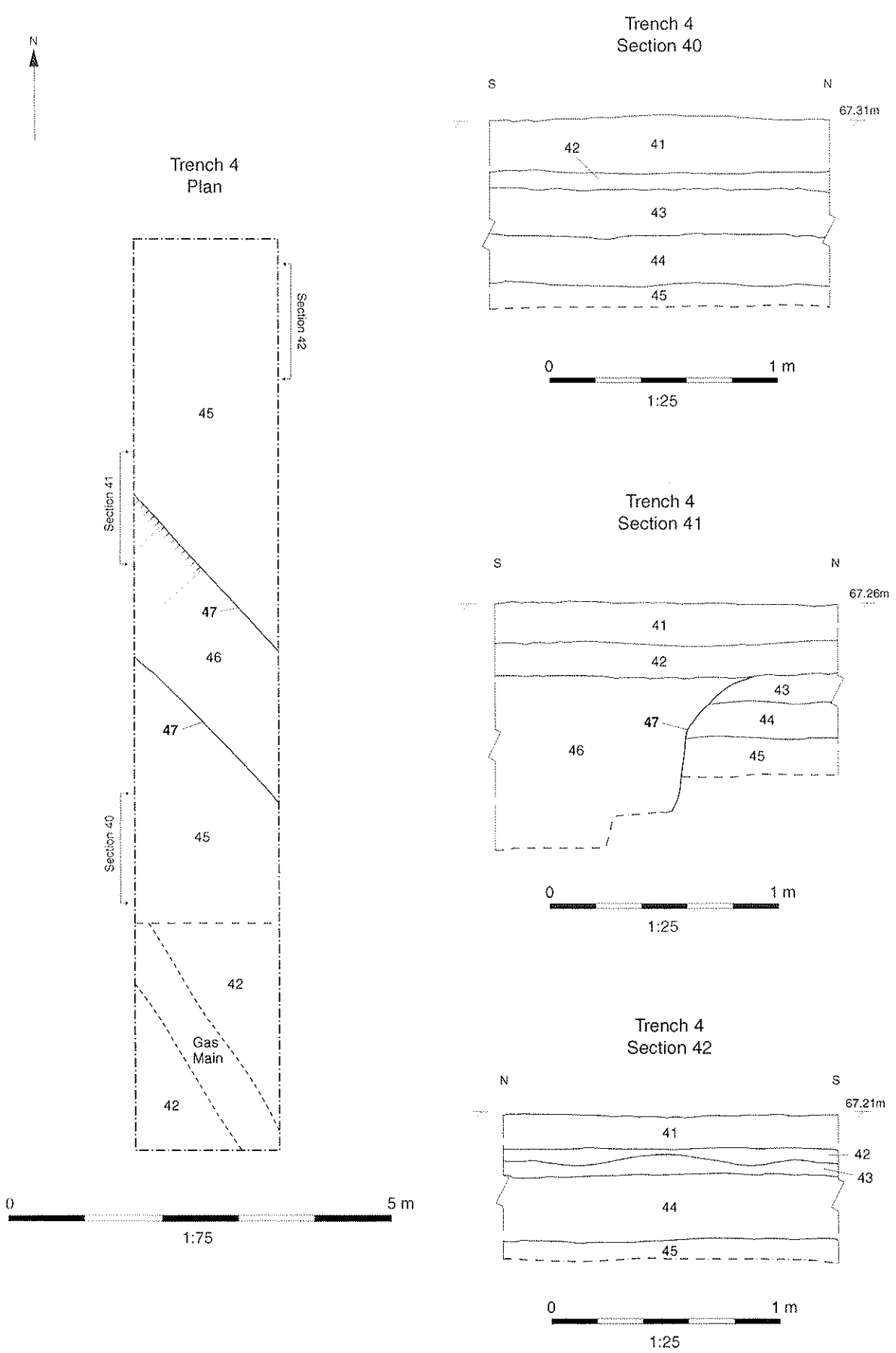


Figure 6: Trench 4, Plan and sections



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