

Swan Hotel Streatley Berkshire

New Staff Accommodation at
No 3 Church Croft Cottages



Archaeological Watching Brief



Oxford Archaeology

26th October 2002



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Signed... 

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Swan Hotel, Streatley, Berkshire (New staff accommodation at 3 Church Croft Cottages)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

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SUMMARY

In January 2002 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at the Swan Hotel, Streatley, Berkshire (NGR SU5946 8082). The work was commissioned by Nike Construction Ltd in advance of construction of new staff accommodation for the Swan Hotel at 3 Church Croft Cottages. The watching brief revealed no archaeological deposit or features and the area of development had been open land on the river flood plain. Remains of the construction of the old extension and garage were revealed.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In January 2002 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at the Swan Hotel, Streatley, Berkshire (Figs 1 & 2). The work was commissioned by Nike Construction Ltd in respect of a planning application for new staff accommodation.
- 1.1.2 No formal project brief was set by West Berkshire Council. Discussions took place between Veronica Fiorato, Principal Archaeological Officer and OA as to the best way to monitor the works.
- 1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation detailing how it would undertake a watching brief during the building work.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site is just within the limit of the county line separating West Berkshire from Oxfordshire (Goring). The underlying geology is Thames Gravel and the site lies at c. 58 m OD.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the watching brief was prepared for the WSI for the project (OA, 2002) and is reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 The archaeological background to the immediate environs is limited, though archaeological finds are common on the Thames Floodplain. Oxford Archaeology undertook a survey north of the site as part of the impact assessment for the Transco Newbury Reinforcement Pipeline in 2000 (OAU 2000), and some of that information is summarized here.
- 1.3.3 Streatley is situated on the Roman Road that runs from Dorchester on Thames to Silchester and is just south of the ancient Icknield Way. Margery has suggested that the name Streatley is derived from the road (Margery, 1967, 165) though it is unclear whether the present settlement has Roman origins.

- 1.3.4 Roman find spots are known from SMR entries north of Streatley (OAU 2000). Across the river at Gatehampton Farm evidence of occupation from the prehistoric to the Saxon period is known (OAU 1995).
- 1.3.5 An evaluation north-east of this site across the river identified a probable Saxon ditch at Thames Bank, Goring (OAU 1998).
- 1.3.6 In the medieval period Streatley is named as an ancient parish in Domesday, as is Goring. The church of St Mary is medieval with a short perpendicular west tower, while expansion in the post-medieval period is indicated by Georgian houses flanking the High Street (Pevsner, 1966, 230).

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 site was cleared and ground levelled prior to the excavation of the foundation trenches to the new building (Fig.3). The foundation trenches were then excavated by a mini excavator with a 0.8 m wide bucket. The trenches were opened in a number of phases and filled with premix concrete.
- 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

- 3.1.1 The trenches cut through a topsoil layer of dark greyish brown silty sand loam (1), which varied in thickness (0.15 – 0.30 m) due to landscaping of the garden and the levelling of site prior to excavation. This overlay a 0.8 m thick layer of subsoil (2) with lenses of dark reddish brown and light reddish silty clay loam with flint nodules, charcoal and chalk flecks. This represented a slow build up of alluvium deposits across the river flood plain. These layers overlay the natural (3) of light reddish clay with flint gravel and nodules with outcrops of chalk with flint nodules.
- 3.1.2 Two features were observed during the excavation of the trenches. The first was part of a garden feature (4) (Fig. 5, section 1) with vertical sides rounding to a uneven

base (1.15 m wide and 1.1 m in depth) and filled with a dark brown silty clay loam (5).

- 3.1.3 The second was a spread of very dark greyish silty clay containing a lot of late 20th century building and garden rubbish (65%). This filled a large subcircular feature (see Fig. 4) that had a shallow concave profile (6) and represented a dump of material buried in the garden from the construction of the old extension and garage to No 3 Church Croft Cottage.
- 3.1.4 A large quantity and area of building debris had been mixed within the topsoil around the front of the old extension. A number of modern service trenches 0.3 m wide and 0.5 m in depth were observed running into the property.

3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 No finds were retained from the site.

3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 3.3.1 No environmental samples were taken from the site.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The results from the watching brief revealed no archaeological deposits or features other than modern intrusions. This suggests that historically the site was open land on the edge of the river floodplain, and was regularly flooded, leaving a build up of alluvium over the site. Some disturbance from the construction of the old extension and garage, and later garden landscaping, was observed.

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				Topsoil	None
2	Layer				Subsoil	None
3	Layer				Natural	
4	Cut	1.10 m	1.15 m		20 th Century Garden Feature	
5	Fill				Fill of Feature	None
6	Cut	1.3 m	2.6 m	6.5 m	Building Rubbish Pit	
7	Fill				Rubbish Fill	None

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

D Wilkinson, 1992, *OAU Fieldwork Manual*

OA, 2002, *The Swan Hotel, Streatley, West Berkshire, WSI report for Watching Brief*

OAU, 2000, *Newbury Reinforcement Pipeline. Environmental Statement on Cultural Heritage.*

OAU, 1998, *Thames Bank, Goring, Oxon. Archaeological Evaluation Report.* Client report, unpublished

Margery I D, 1967 *Roman Roads in Britain.* John Baker. London

Pevsner N, 1966, *Buildings of England.* Berkshire. Penguin.

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Swan Hotel, Streatley, Berkshire

Site code: STSW 02

Grid reference: NGR SU 5946 8082

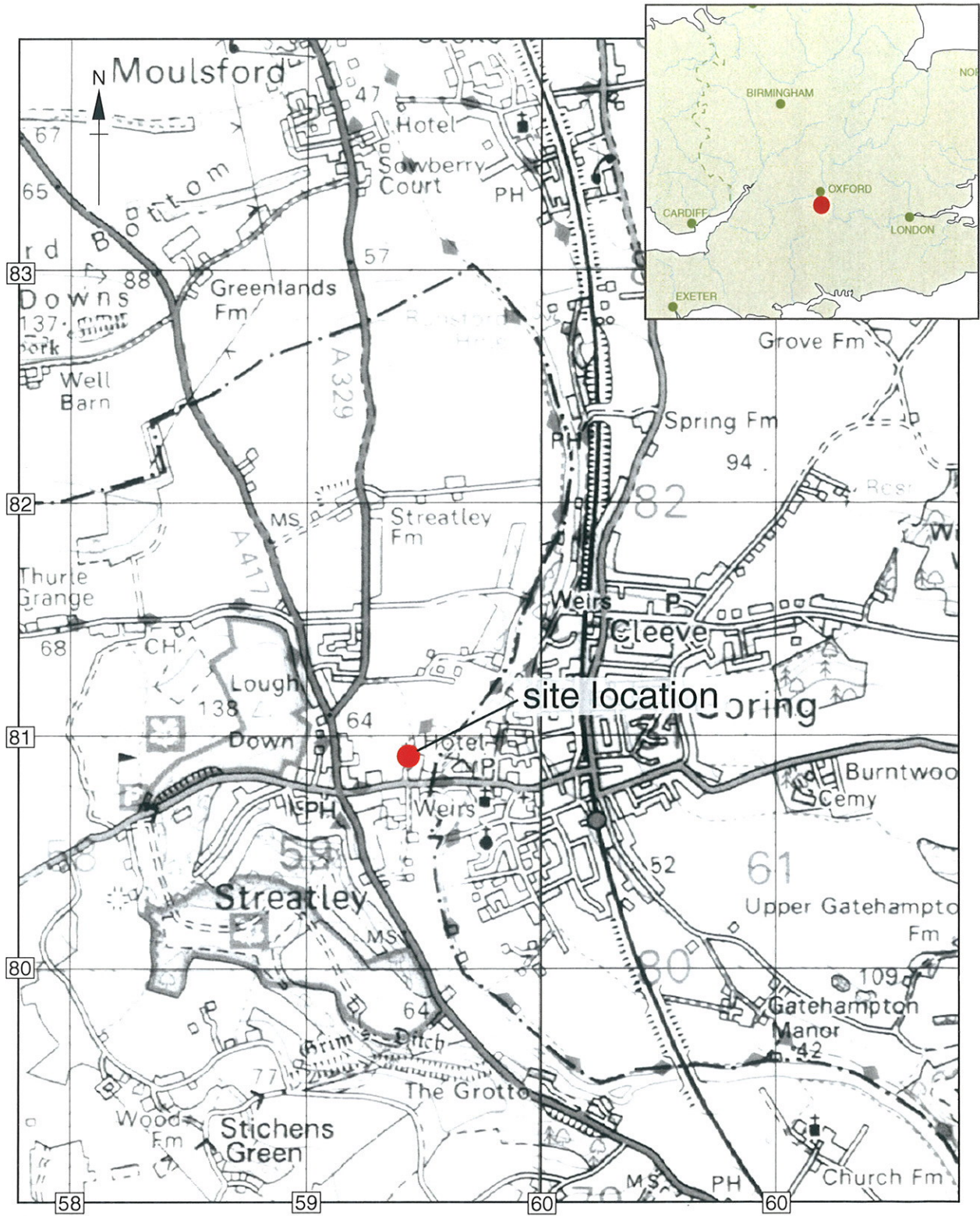
Type of watching brief: Ground works for new building

Date and duration of project: A total of four site visits from the 14th January 2002 to 21st January 2002.

Area of site: Area approximately 30 x 16 m

Summary of results: No archaeological deposits or features were recorded and the area of the site was open land on the river flood plain.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with West Berks. Heritage Service, The Wharf, Newbury, Berks, RG14 5AS in due course.



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Figure 1: Site Location

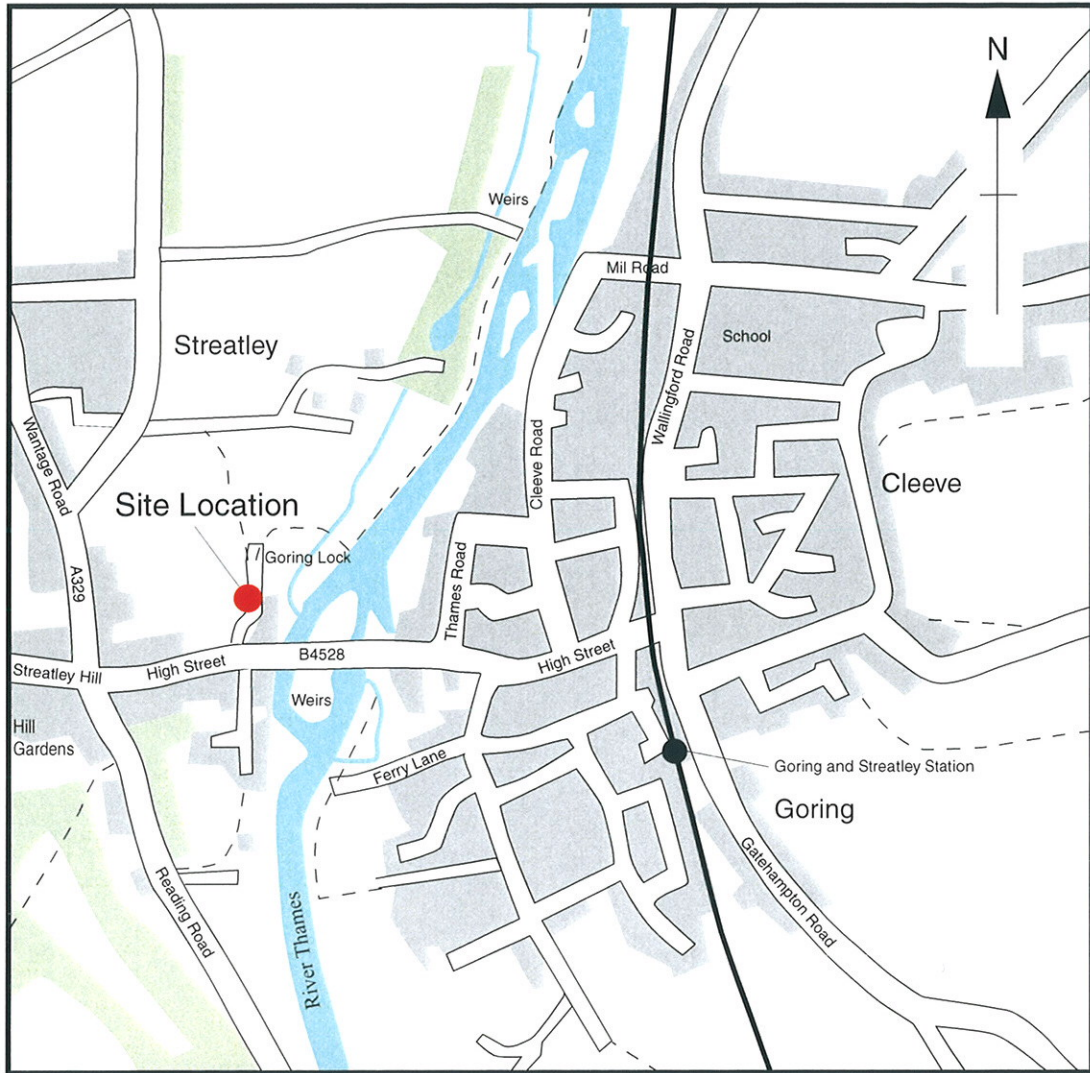


Figure 2: Site Location

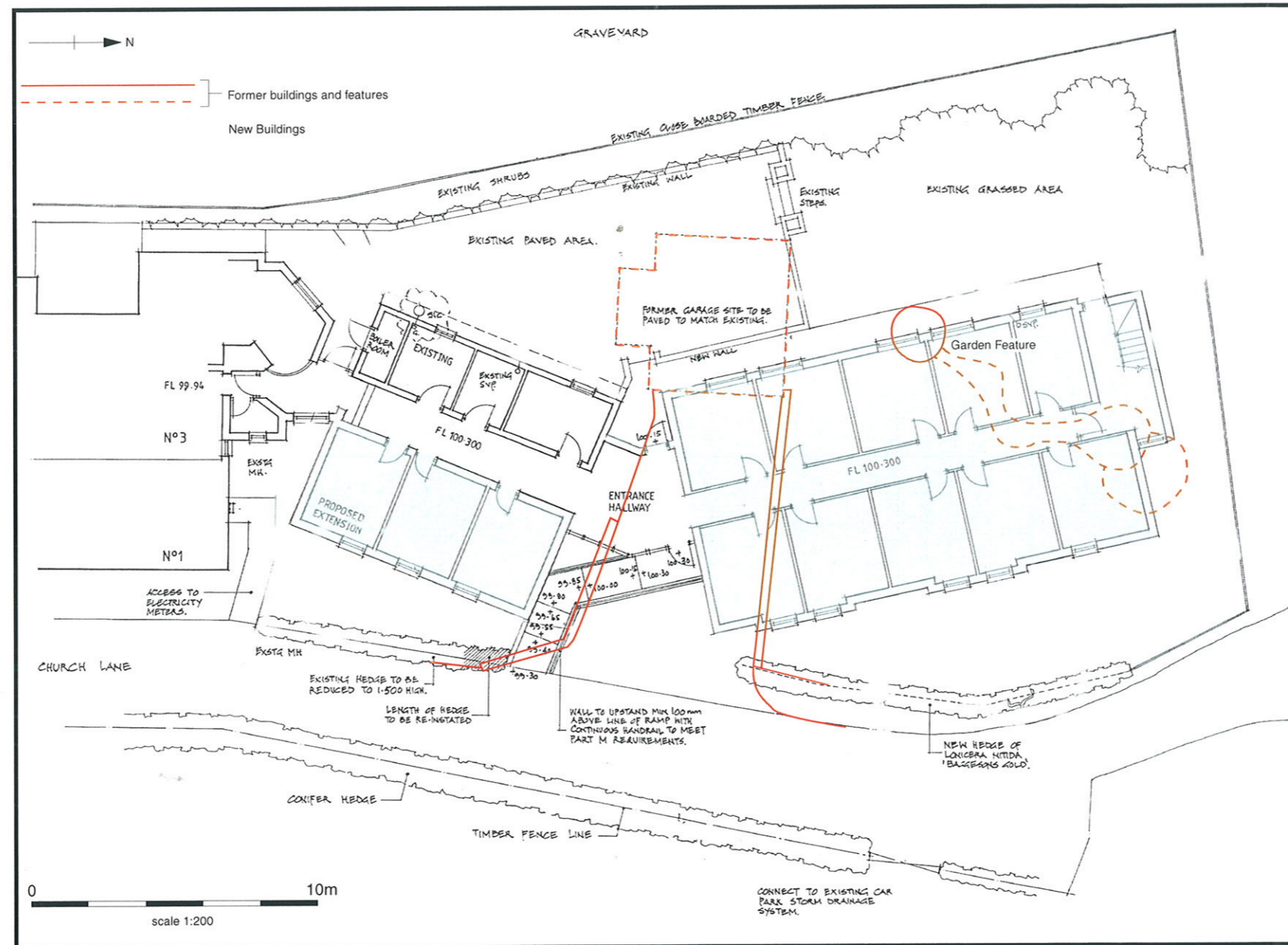


Figure 3: Site Plan Showing Location of New Buildings

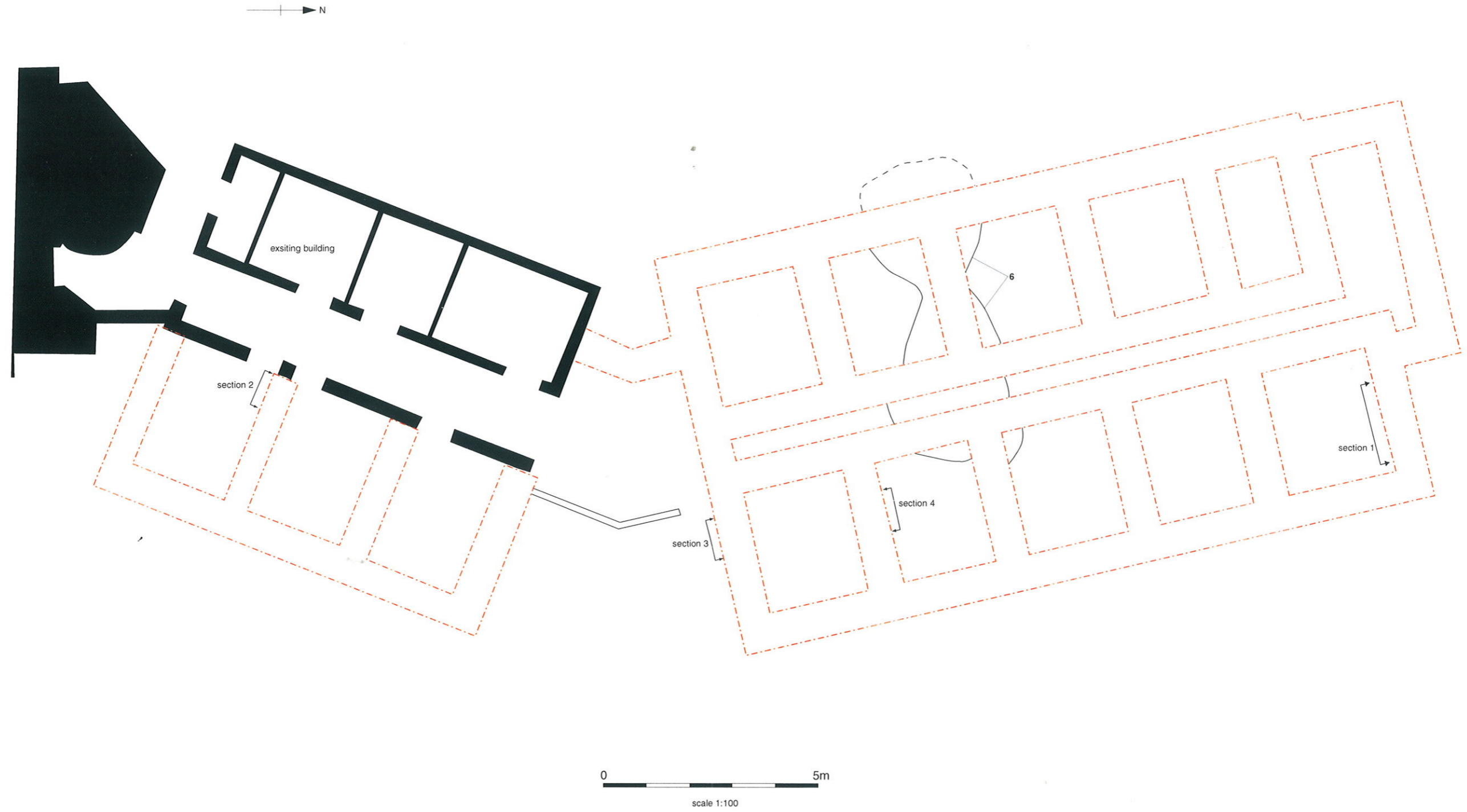


Figure 4: Plan of Footings Showing Features and Sections

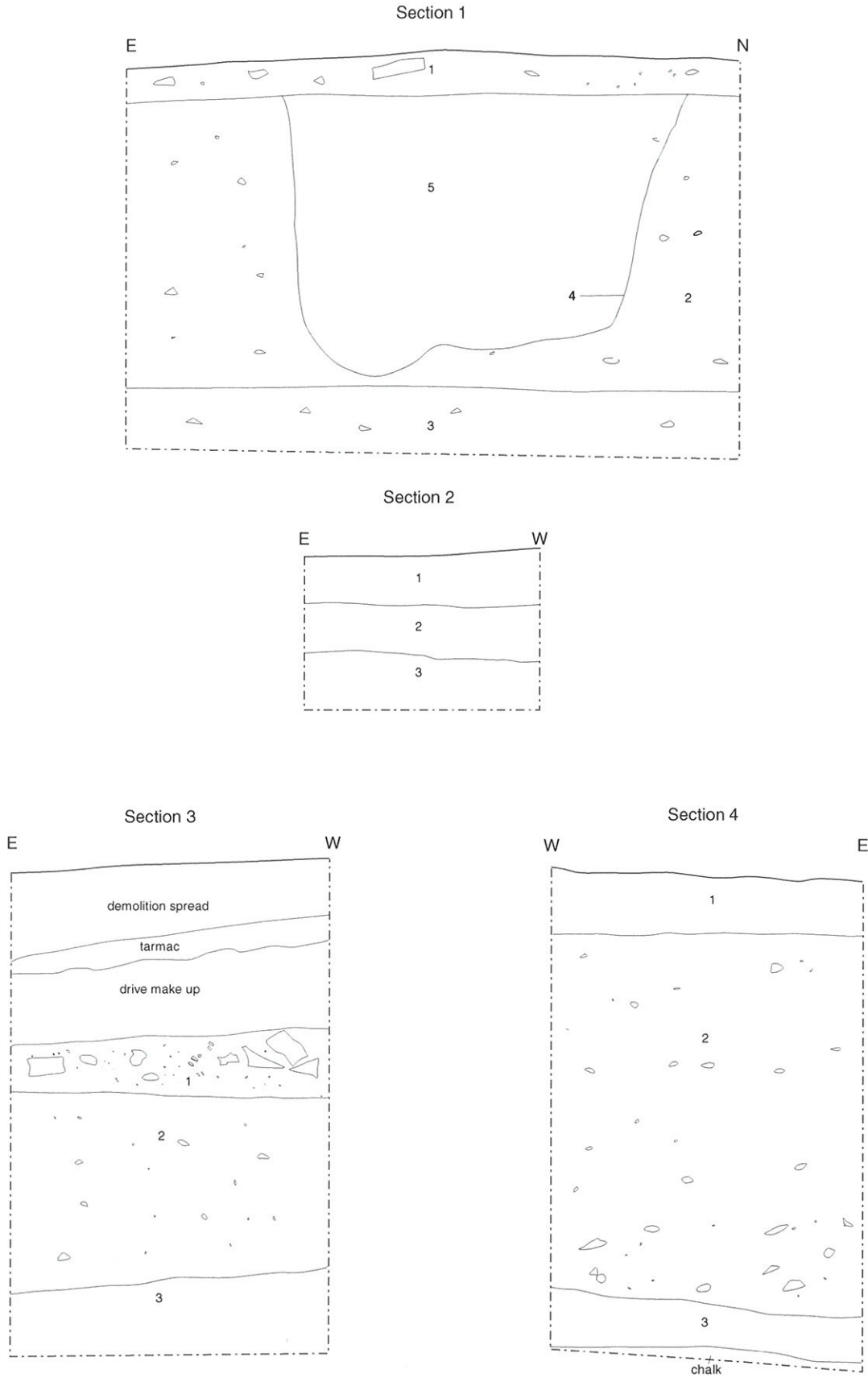


Figure 5: Sections



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