

EAST OXFORD (OX)
HORSPATH

OXH06CW8
321/98

John Perryman Associates

St Giles Church, Horspath, Oxfordshire

NGR SP 5720 0480

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT



Oxford Archaeological Unit

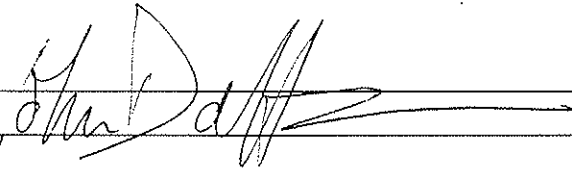
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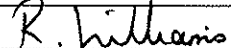
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

Prepared by: 

Date: 19/6/98

Checked by: 

Date: 19/6/98

Approved by:  HEAD OF FIELDWORK

Date: 25/6/98

Oxford Archaeological Unit

June 1998

Summary

In May 1998 the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) undertook a watching brief at St Giles Church, Horspath, Oxon (NGR SP 5720 0480). No archaeological features were seen and no finds were retrieved.

1 Introduction (Fig. 1)

The development proposal comprised the provision of new drainage around the south side of the church, by means of the excavation of a new French drain.

The watching brief was commissioned by John Perryman Associates, the project architects, on behalf of St Giles Church. It was undertaken in consultation with the Diocesan Advisory Committee's Archaeological Advisor, Mr David Miles.

2 Background

St Giles Church dates from the 12th century, although there is comparatively little of the original fabric remaining. The nave is of the late 12th century, and the south transept was added approximately a century later.

The tower was originally constructed c. 1400, as was the high arch that joins it to the nave. The roof was lowered in the 15th Century, and new square-headed windows, similar to those in Magdalen College which date to c. 1480, were inserted into the side walls of the chancel and north of the nave.

In 1840 the Early English east wall, with its three lancet windows, was pulled down and replaced with a chancel in revived Perpendicular style. The 15th Century side windows were also replaced at this time. Shortly after, in 1844, the gallery in the tower, to which both Magdalen and the Earl of Abingdon had contributed, was also demolished.

The north transept was added in 1852 in a comprehensive programme which also saw the rebuilding of the north wall of the nave, the re-roofing of the nave and south transept and the demolition of a small clerestory (Bird 1966).

This watching brief is further to one undertaken by the OAU at the church in 1992 (OAU 1992), during the provision of a new French drain on the north side of the church.

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), in order to secure the preservation by record of any archaeology, the presence and nature of which could not be established in advance.

4 Methodology

One inspection visit was made to the site after notification of commencement of works from the subcontractors, Wooldridge and Simpson. All excavation was by hand and was undertaken by the subcontractors.

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)

The French drain was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.50 m, revealing:

- (1) – topsoil; 0.12 m of loose mid gray silty clay loam with 5% coarse subangular gravel, sealing:
- (2) – subsoil/graveyard soil; a firm mid brown gray clay loam with 2% coarse subangular mixed silt and gravel, consistent to the base of the cut.

Deposit (2) contained concentrations of loose broken limestone pieces (collectively numbered as (3)). These occurred randomly throughout this deposit, but appeared to be particularly common at the south-west corner of the church.

The drain channel also exposed the large limestone block foundations of the base of the tower, which extend out 0.25 m from the wall face.

6 Discussion

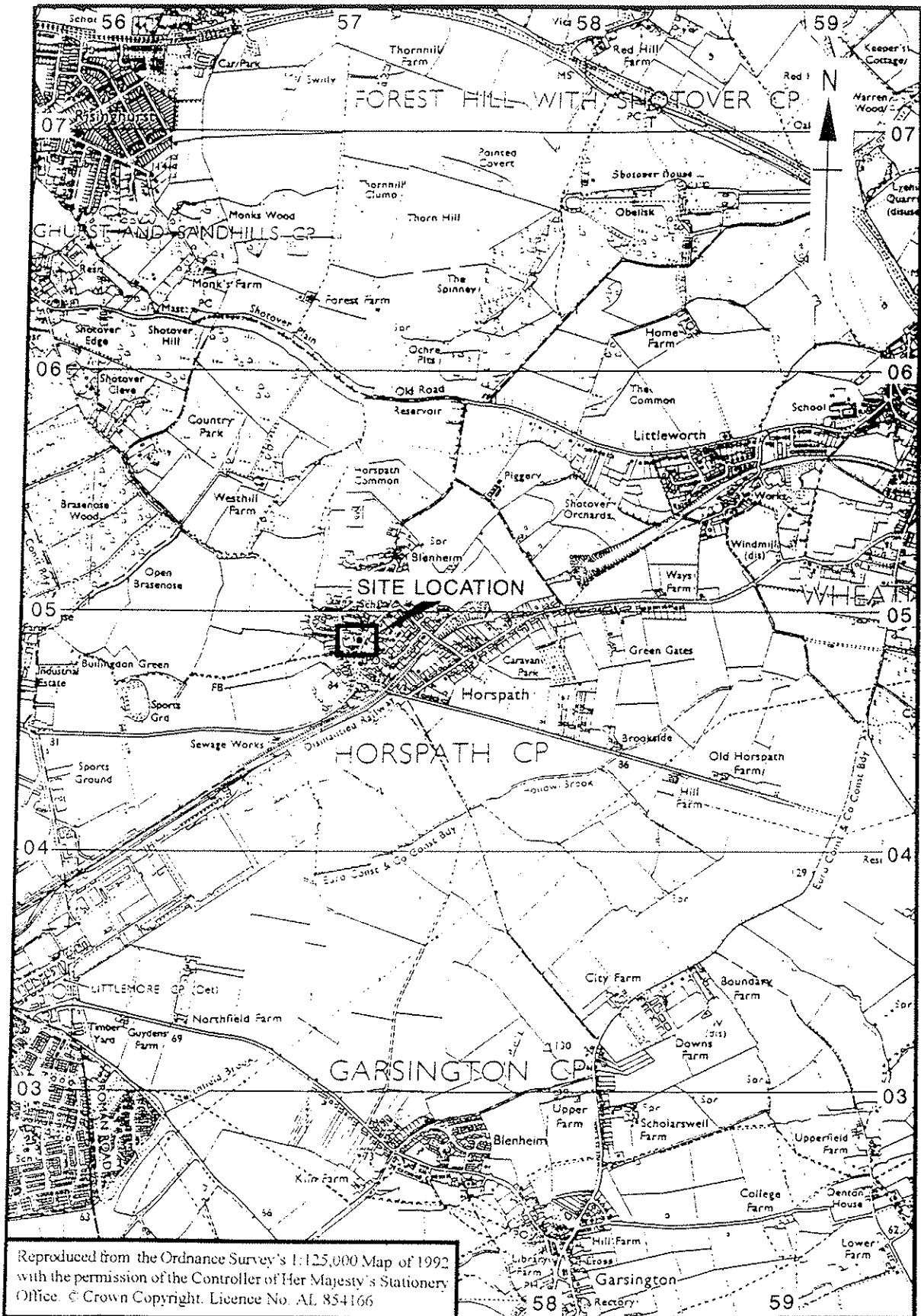
Neither features nor finds were located during the watching brief. The identification of construction/demolition rubble in the trench section correlates with the findings of the 1992 watching brief (OAU 1992) in which large quantities of rubble and mortar were seen along almost the entire length of the north wall of the church.

References.

Bird, Rev. S W H 1966 *A Guide to the Parish of St Giles, Horspath*

OAU 1992 St Giles Church, Horspath. Watching Brief Report

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

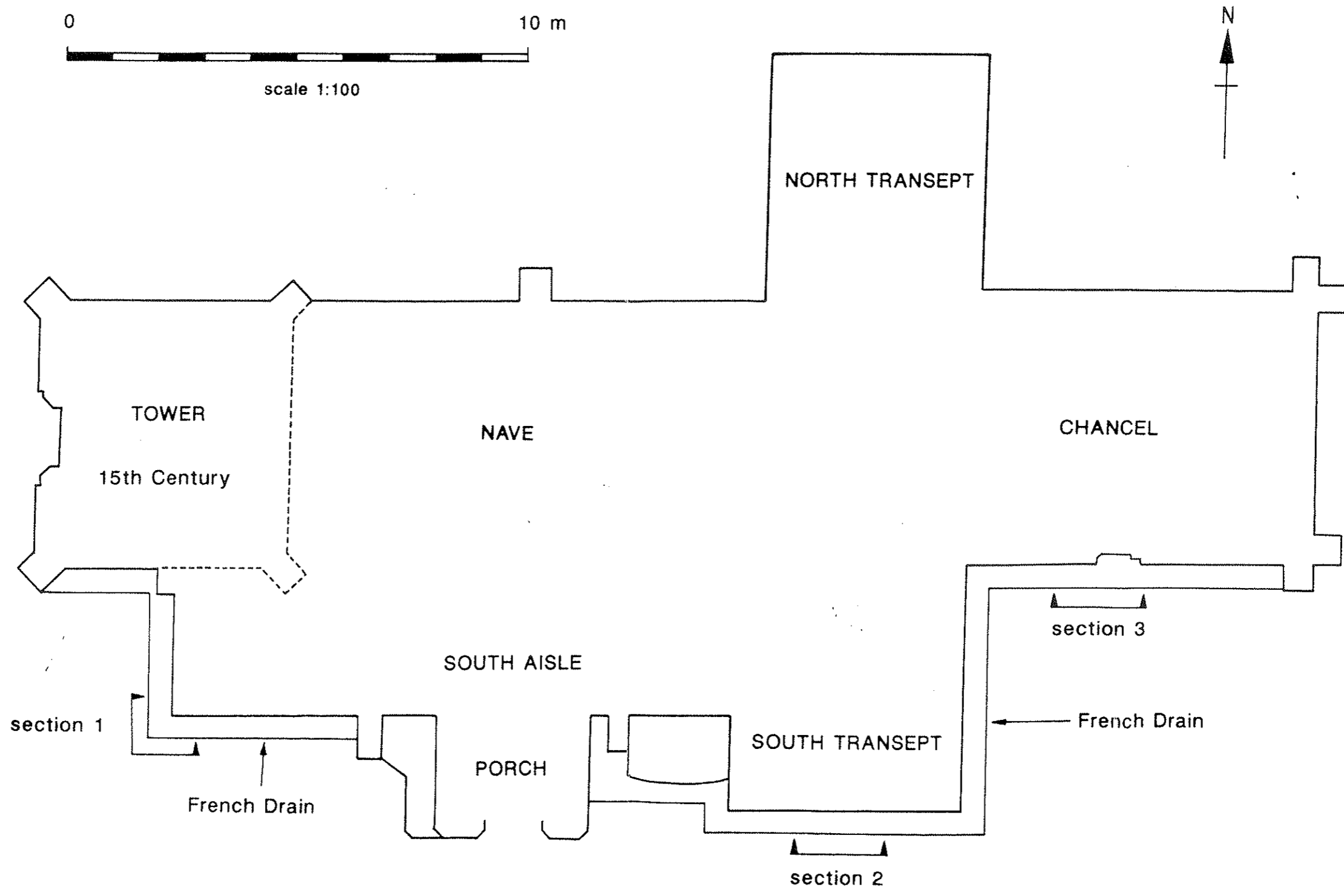


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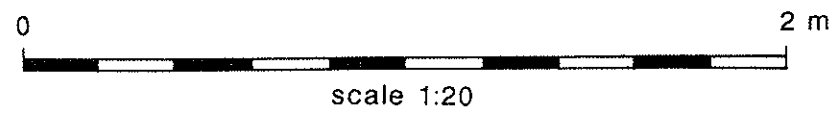
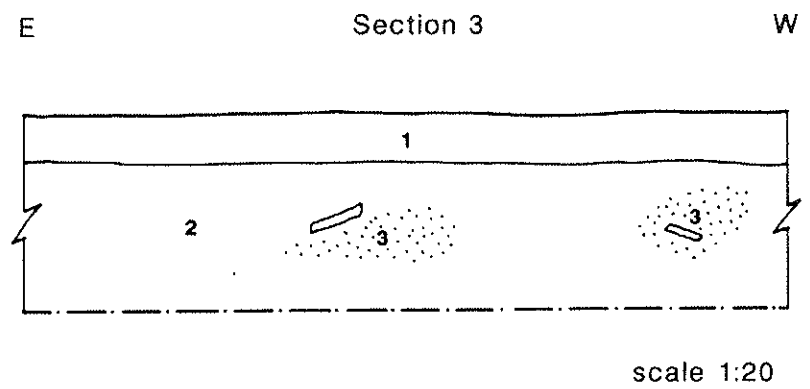
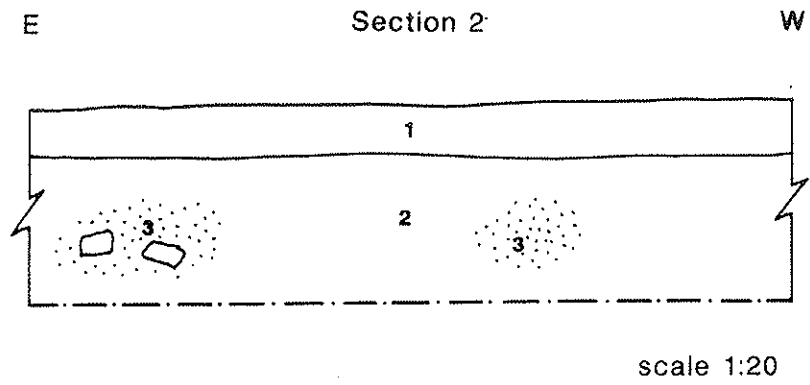
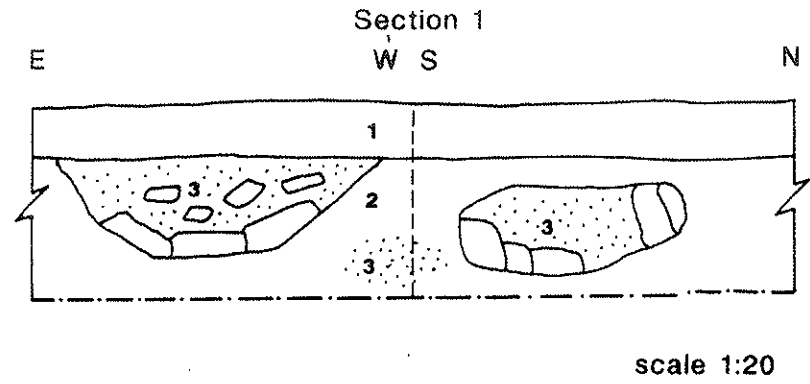
Location of site

Figure 1



Site plan

Figure 2



Sections

Figure 3



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