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Relocation of ACE Centre
Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre, Oxford

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

NGR SP 5478 0658

97/619/NO

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

October 1997


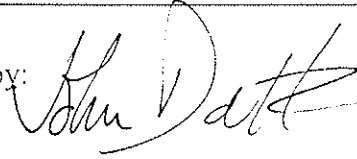
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NGR SP 5478 0658

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Prepared by: 
Date: 14 Oct 1997
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Date:

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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SUMMARY

The Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out a field evaluation at Nuffield Orthopaedic Hospital on behalf of ACE Centre. The evaluation test-pit aimed to identify a probable kiln shown on a magnetometer survey. The test-pit (1m x 1.5m x 0.95m in depth) directly above the magnetometer signal did not reveal a Roman Kiln site but rather a sequence of ploughsoils which contained eleven Iron Age and Romano British sherds. An iron rod and concrete rubble in the test-pit is likely to account for the strong magnetometer signal.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work (Figs 1 and 2)

1.1.1 On 19 September 1997 the Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out a field evaluation at Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre on behalf of ACE Centre in respect of a planning application for the relocation of the Training Centre for ACE (Aids to Communication in Education) Centre relocation, Planning Application No. 97/619/NO. The work was agreed between the Oxford Archaeological Advisory Service and Oxford Archaeological Unit. The development site lies just north of the Mary Marlborough Centre and the Wellcome Trust on the Windmill Road Oxford.

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site lies on sand at 98m above Ordnance Datum (OD). The site is currently mown grass lawn with trees and shrubs fronting Windmill Road.

1.3 Archaeological Background

1.3.1 The site is within an area of Oxford which is well known for Romano-British pottery kilns. Pottery kilns have been located around the Oxford area which became a substantial industry in the early second century and by the early to mid-fourth century had become one of the major pottery producers of Roman Britain (Young 1977).

2 EVALUATION AIMS

2.1 The test-pit aimed to investigate 'magnetic anomaly (B)' located in the geophysical survey (see Archaeogeophysical Report, Bartlett 1997). This magnetic anomaly displayed the properties expected from a buried pottery kiln.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork methods and recording

3.1.1 The hand dug test-pit measured 1m x 1.5m and it was located directly above magnetic anomaly (B). The test-pit was planned at a scale of 1:50 and a sample section draw at 1:20. The test-pit was photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

4 RESULTS DESCRIPTIONS (Fig. 3)

4.1 The light brown natural sand (6) was located at 0.95m below the present ground surface. This was directly overlain by a disturbed layer of sand (5).

4.2 The disturbed sand was overlain by former ploughsoils (3 & 4). These two deposits were very similar in character and they produced eight sherds of Roman pottery and a single piece of Roman tile. The unstratified pottery recovered during backfilling are also likely to have been from these ploughsoils.

4.3 The ploughsoils were overlain by modern layers of rubble and topsoil (1 & 2) a large metal rod was revealed amongst the concrete rubble in deposit 2.

5 FINDS by Paul Booth

5.1 Iron Age and Romano-British pottery

5.1.1 The sherds were generally quite small and some were abraded. A single sherd in fabric group E80 is likely to have been 1st-century date, although not necessarily pre-conquest. All the remaining sherds are likely to have been the products of the immediately local Roman pottery industry. Only a single rim was found, however (a white mortarium of Young 1977 type M22, dated AD 240-400), so little precision is possible in dating. The other material could be assigned to a date range covering most of the Roman period. The present assemblage does not suggest production in the very near vicinity of the test-pit, but this cannot be regarded as certain. A single fragment of Roman tile was also found.

6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 The test-pit demonstrated that the magnetic anomaly B was not the site of a Roman kiln. It is likely that the iron rod and concrete rubble in layer 2 were creating a very similar magnetic response to a pottery kiln. The eleven sherds of pottery from the test-pit indicates some Roman activity in the area. A greater quantity of pottery, as well as fired clay kiln lining, would be expected if the test-pit was in the immediate vicinity of a pottery kiln. The depth of earlier ploughsoils is not unusual for these light sandy soils and this cultivation may post-date the Roman period. The results suggest, although there is some depth of ploughsoils (0.50m), there is limited disturbance from more recent building development associated with the hospital.

A Parkinson
January 1998
Oxford Archaeological Unit

Bibliography and references

- Bartlett A.D.H 1997 *Nuffield Hospital, Headington, Oxford Report on Archaeogeophysical Survey* Sept.1997
- Wilkinson, D (ed) 1992 *Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual*, (First edition, August 1992)
- Young, C J, 1977 *Oxfordshire Roman pottery*, Brit Archaeol Rep (Brit Ser) **43**, Oxford.

Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory OXNUOC 97

Test-pit	Ctxt	Type	width (m)	thick. (m)	Comment	Finds	No.	Date
Test-pit 1								
	1	Layer		0.20-0.26	Turf and topsoil			
	2	Layer		0.11-0.16	Building rubble and soil			
	3	Layer		0.20-0.23	Former ploughsoil	Pot	4	RB
						Tile	1	RB
	4	Layer		0.25	Former ploughsoil	Pot	4	RB
	5	Layer		0.10	Disturbed natural sand			
	6	Layer		-	Natural Sand			
	7	-			Unstratified pottery	Pot	2	RB
NB. Date shows date of pottery. RB = Romano-British								

Appendix 2

Oxford Archaeological Unit fabric/ware codes for pottery OXNUOC 97
from contexts 3, 4 & 7.

Fabric	Description	Number of sherds	weight (g)	Form
M22	Oxon white mortarium	2	43	1 rim
E80	Grog-tempered 'Belgic type' fabrics	1	4	-
O10	Fine Oxon oxidised coarse ware	2	7	-
O80	Coarse tempered oxidised ware	2	9	-
R10	Fine Oxon reduced coarse ware	2	16	-
R30	Medium sandy Oxon reduced coarse ware	2	10	-
Tile		1		

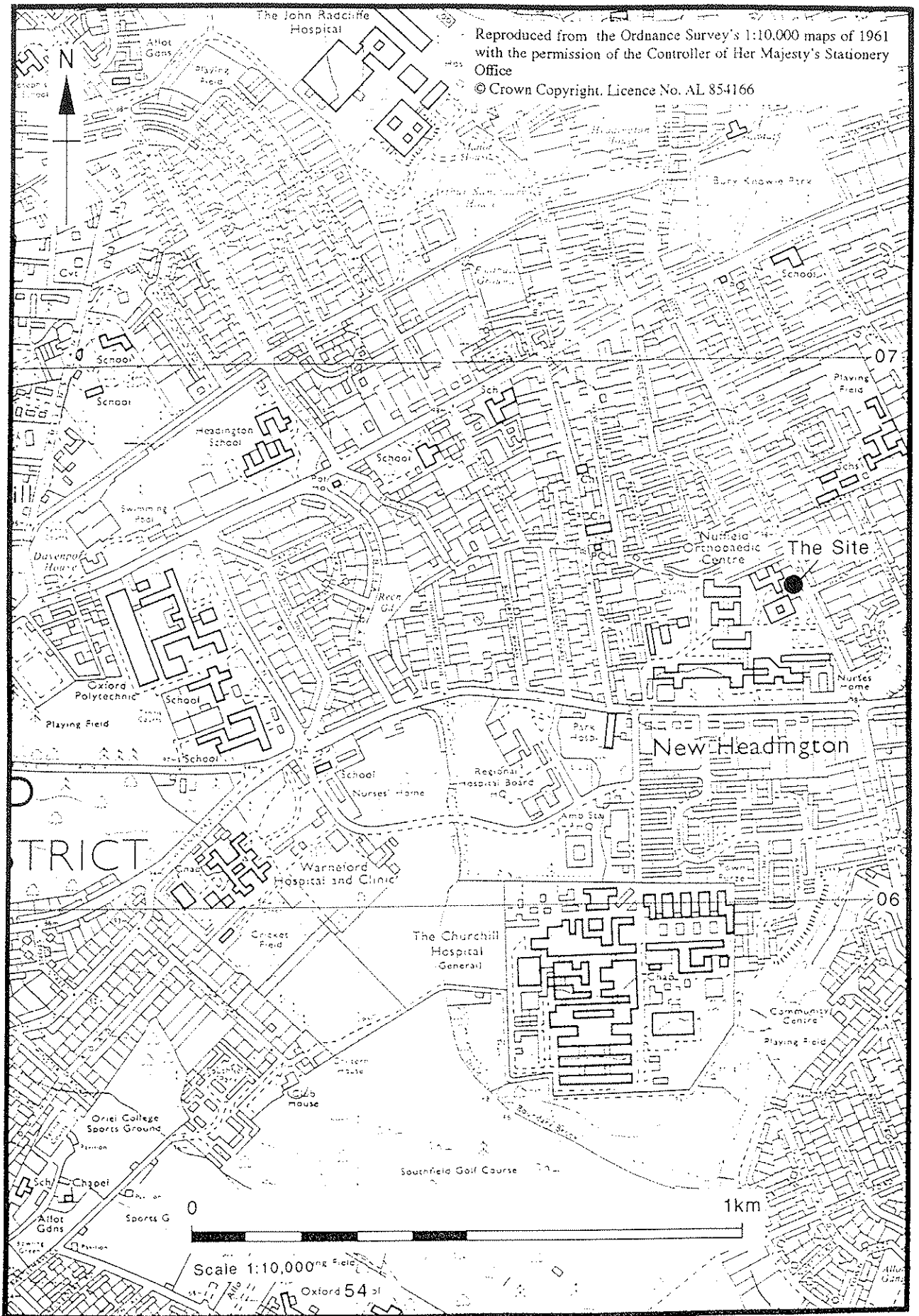


Figure 1: Site Location Plan

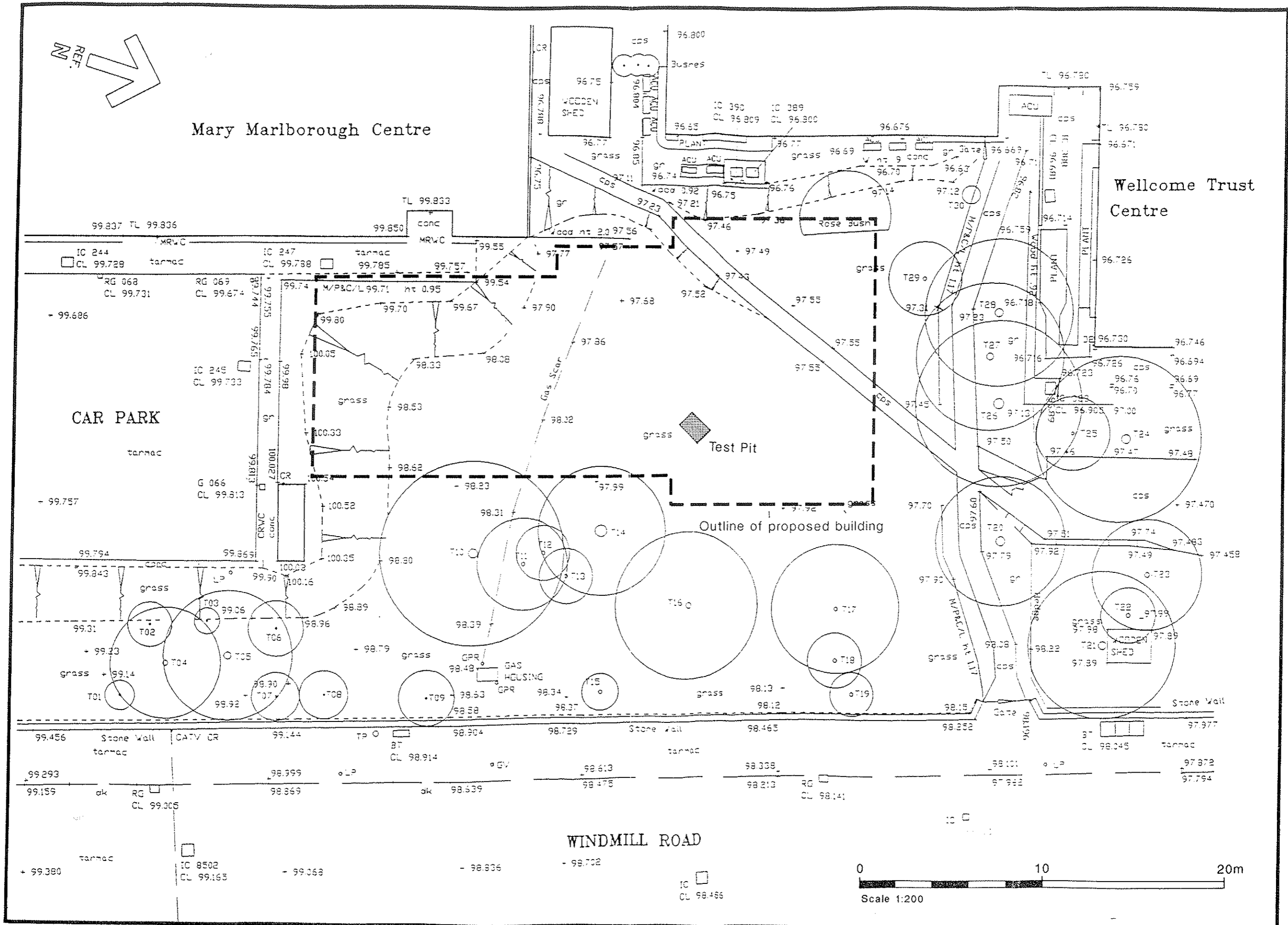


Figure 2: Trench Location Plan

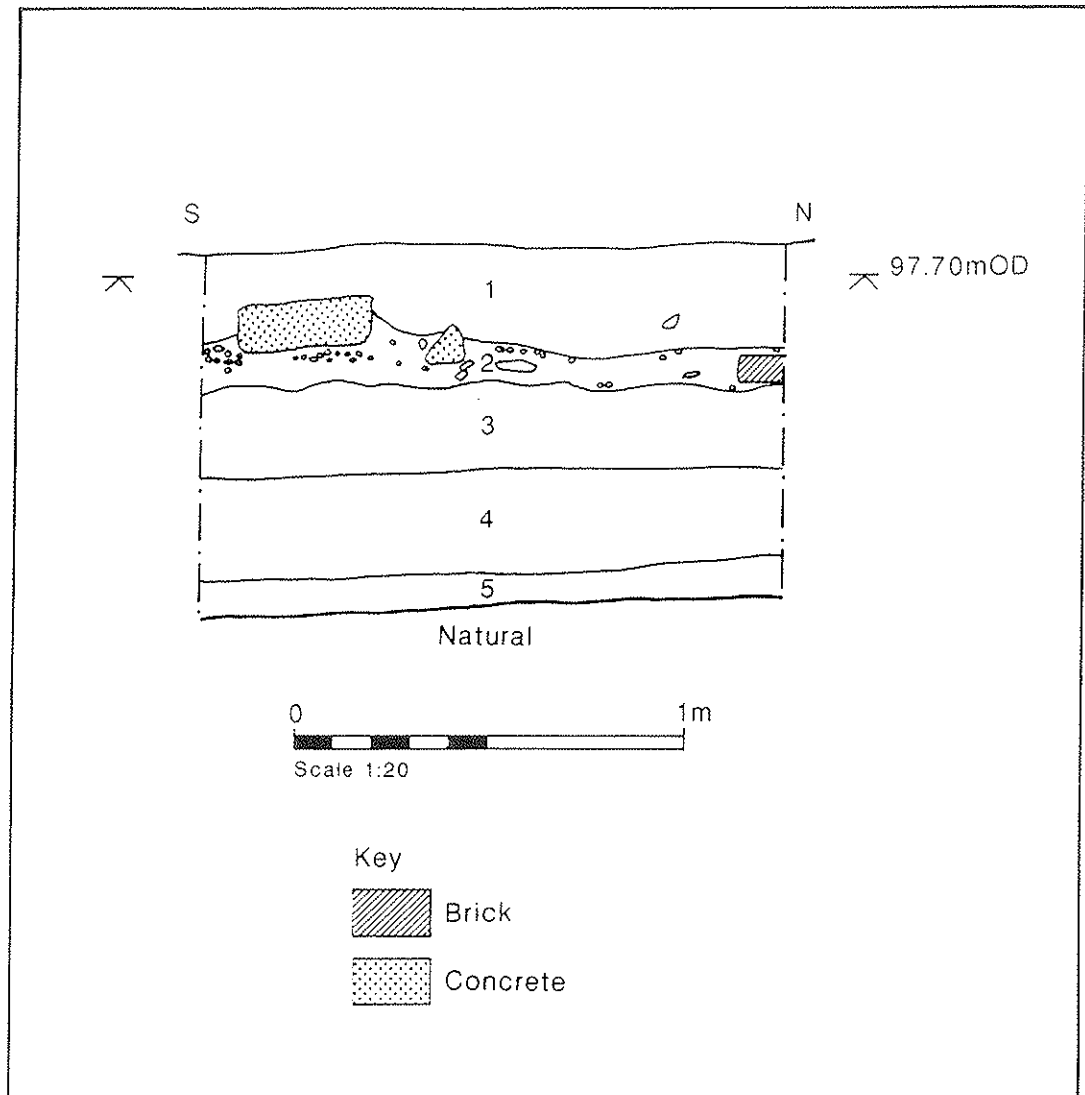


Figure 3:East Facing Section



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