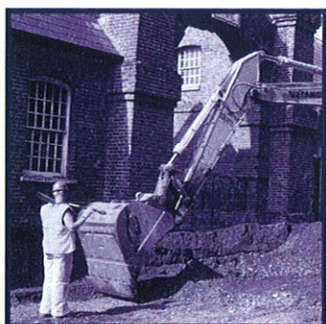


St Peter and St Paul's Church Buckingham Buckinghamshire



Archaeological Watching Brief



Oxford Archaeology

27th March 2002

Client Name: Basil Wyatt

Issue N^o: 1

OA Job N^o: 1095

NGR: SP 6946 3375

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Illustrated by Roz Smith

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SUMMARY

In October, December 2001 and January 2002 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at St Peter and St Paul's Church, Buckingham, Buckinghamshire (NGR SP 6946 3375). The work was commissioned by Basil Wyatt & Son Ltd in advance of internal renovations in the west end of the church and the excavation of a service trench located on the south side of the church. The watching brief revealed that the church was built onto the ground make up of the castle mound and that the site had been cleared and levelled prior to its construction.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In October, December 2001 and January 2002 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at St Peter & St Paul's Church, Buckingham, Buckinghamshire (Figs 1 and 2). The work was commissioned by Basil Wyatt & Son Ltd in respect of internal renovation work in the west end of church and the excavation of new service trench.
- 1.1.2 A project brief was set by Julian Munby Diocesan Archaeological Adviser to the Diocesan of Oxford.
- 1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies on geology of cornbrash over great oolite at approximately 85 m above OD. The site is situated on the castle mound in the centre of the town.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The church of St Peter & St Paul's was built in 1780 and was situated on the site of the castle mound in the centre of the town. This church replaced the 13th century church that stood in the churchyard to the south. This finally collapsed in 1776 after a number of repairs to the tower after it had partially collapsed in 1698.
- 1.3.2 The site for the new church was given by Earl Verney, at the request of the town. Earl Tempal undertook to build the new church, with its first stone being laid on the 25th November 1777 by Robert Bartlett Esq. The new church was built in debased Gothic, or semi-Grecian style and was oblong in shape with a tower and spire at the west end. The church was renovated in the early 19th century with the erection of a gallery at the west end and was reconstructed in 1862 by Scott.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence, 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 A test pit was dug on the site of the new foundation of the new extension of the gallery. A service trench was excavated along the south east side and into the church for a drain and gas supply.
- 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

3.2 Test pit in the church

- 3.2.1 A rectangular test pit (4) was excavated (1.35 x 1.05 x 1 m) with steep sloping sides and flat base (Figs 3 & 5, section 1). The sides sloped in due to compact clay material making the excavation difficult to excavate. The test pit cut through a concrete floor and a number of layers. The first was a 0.20 m thick layer of loose light greyish white sandy grit (1) with mortar flecks, fragments of brick, mortar, stone, worked stone, wood and bone. This represented construction debris and floor make up from the 19th century works.
- 3.2.2 Below this a thin layer of reddish brown silty clay loam (2) with charcoal flecks, small stones and pebbles, pottery, bone and nails was the original topsoil/construction layer on the site during the building of the church in 1777. This overlay a compact dark greyish clay (3) with patches of brown and light reddish brown, charcoal flecks and fine gravel. This was the material that was used to make up the castle mound.

3.3 Service Trench

- 3.3.1 The contractors using a mini-excavator excavated a 0.5 m wide service trench (Fig. 4). This varied in depth (0.35 m to 1 m) due to the fall of the pipe to the ground surface. The trench exposed a series of soil layers (Fig. 5, sections 2 & 3). These consisted of a layer of topsoil of dark greyish brown silty sand loam (5) 0.3 m to 0.5 m thick. This overlay subsoil of light reddish brown silty sand loam (6) with

fragments of stone and gravel. This appears to represent soil material levelling the ground around the church.

- 3.3.2 Below the topsoil and subsoil layers was a layer of material which consisted of yellowish brown silty sand (7) with a lot of stone rubble (65%) and mortar. This appears to be mix of demolition and construction material from the construction of the church and lies on the dark grey clay (3) make up of the castle mound.
- 3.3.3 At the south end of the trench a large feature (8) (23.6 m x 1.7 m x 0.5 m) (Fig 5, section 3) cut through layer (7) and was sealed below the topsoil. It was filled by a dark greyish clay (9) with patches of dark brown silty clay, mortar and stone fragments and represents a series of tips of material into a large pit/hollow in the top of the mound. No dating material was recovered from the feature, but it is thought to postdate the existing church construction as it cuts construction/demolition layer (7).
- 3.3.4 In the areas were the trench crossed the tarmac surface. It was noted that the tarmac was laid on a 0.14 m thick layer of compacted gravel, overlying the subsoil (6). At the north end of the trench. Lenses of hardcore and worked stone with soil similar to the subsoil were observed compacted under the tarmac of the entranceway.

3.4 **BT Cable Trench**

- 3.4.1 This was a 0.3 m narrow trench that was no deeper than 0.45 m below the surface. It ran from the manhole F2 (Fig. 4) to the gateway at the west end of the churchyard. It then ran down Church street to connect to the BT system. The trench cut through topsoil (5) and at the west end approximately 10 m from the gateway the topsoil thinned to 0.3 m overlying construction and demolition layer (7).

3.5 **Finds**

- 3.5.1 A number of finds were recovered from the two construction layers in the test pit from inside the church. These are listed below in context order:

Context 1: Two fragments of animal bone.

A fragment of CBM tile

Two fragments of worked stone, one from a memorial monument and the other fragment of decorative moulding.

Context 2: Five fragments of animal bone.

Two iron nails.

Three sherds of a dark green glazed cup or beaker from the late 17th Century.

3.6 **Palaeo-environmental remains**

- 3.6.1 No environmental samples were taken from the site.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The results from the watching brief suggest that any remains of the castle within the area of the church had been demolished and removed and the top of the mound had been levelled. The castle mound had been constructed of compacted clay. This had been overlain by a layer of demolition and construction material from the site clearance and building of the church in 1777. Outside the church it would appear that the site was built up with soil and landscaped.

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	0.20 m			Construction layer	
2	Layer	0.06 m			Construction layer	
3	Layer	Not fully excavated			Castle mound make up	
4	Cut				Test Pit	
5	Layer	0.3 – 0.5 m			Topsoil	None
6	Layer	0.3 – 0.4m			Subsoil	None
7	Layer				Construction/Demolition layer	None
8	Cut	0.5 m	1.7 m	23.6 m	Pit/ Hollow	
9	Fill	0.4 m			Fill of cut 8	None

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

D Wilkinson, 1992, *OAU Fieldwork Manual*

George Lipscome, 1847, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Buckinghamshire.*

Royal Commission Historical Monuments (England), 1908, *Buckinghamshire (North)*

J.J.Sheahan, 1861, *History and Topography of Buckinghamshire.*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: St Peter & St Paul's Church, Buckingham, Buckinghamshire

Site code: BUCPP 01

Grid reference: NGR SP 6946 3375

Type of watching brief: Test pit in church prior to construction of new gallery and services trench along south east side of church.

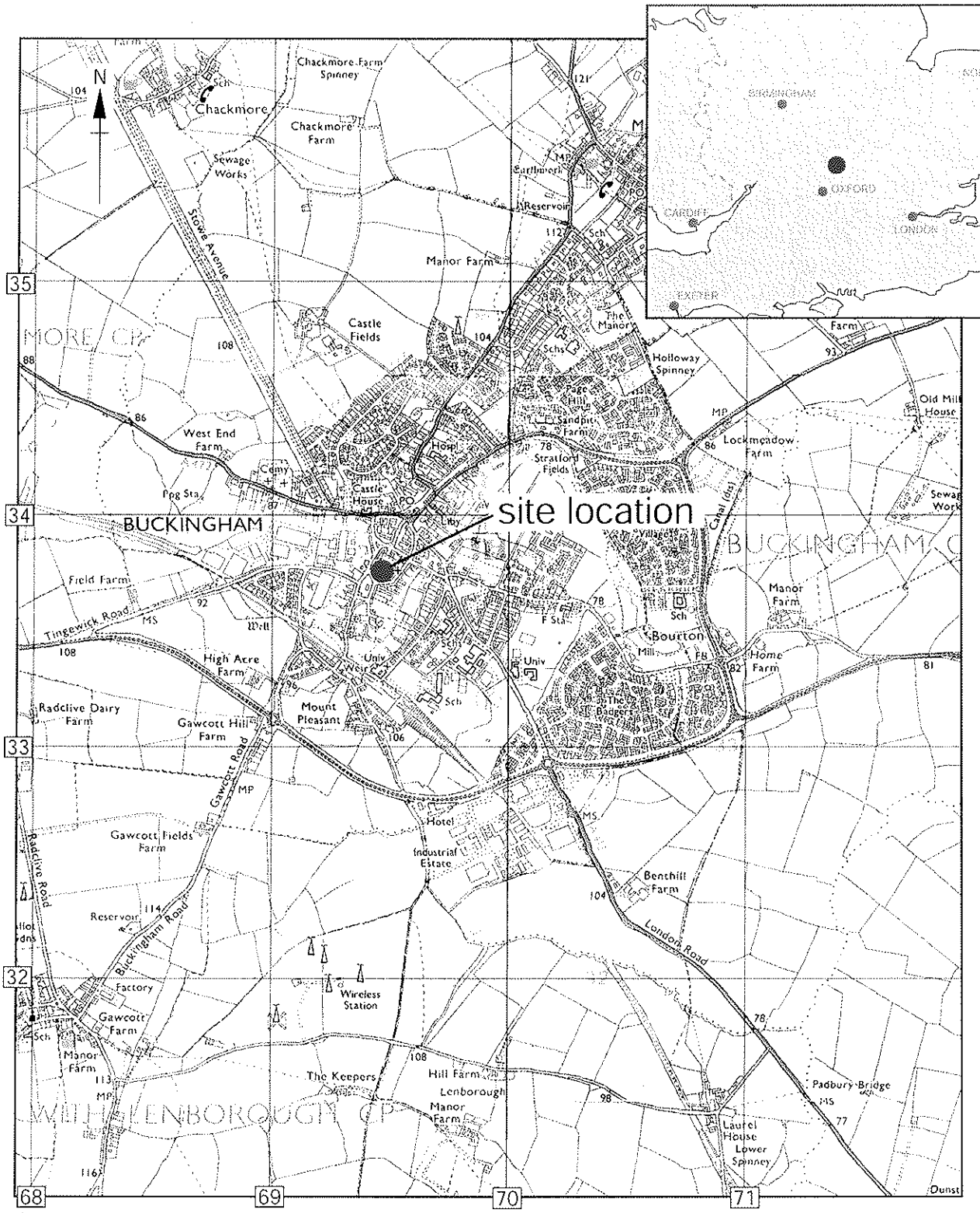
Date and duration of project: Three site visits from October to December 2001 and one visit in January 2002.

Area of site:

Summary of results: The castle mound was cleared and levelled for construction of the church in 1777.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum, Technical Center, Tring Rd, Halton, Aylesbury, HP22 5PJ in due course, under the following accession number: AYBCM 2001.97

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Scale 1:25,000

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Figure 1: Site Location



not to scale

Figure 2: Site Location

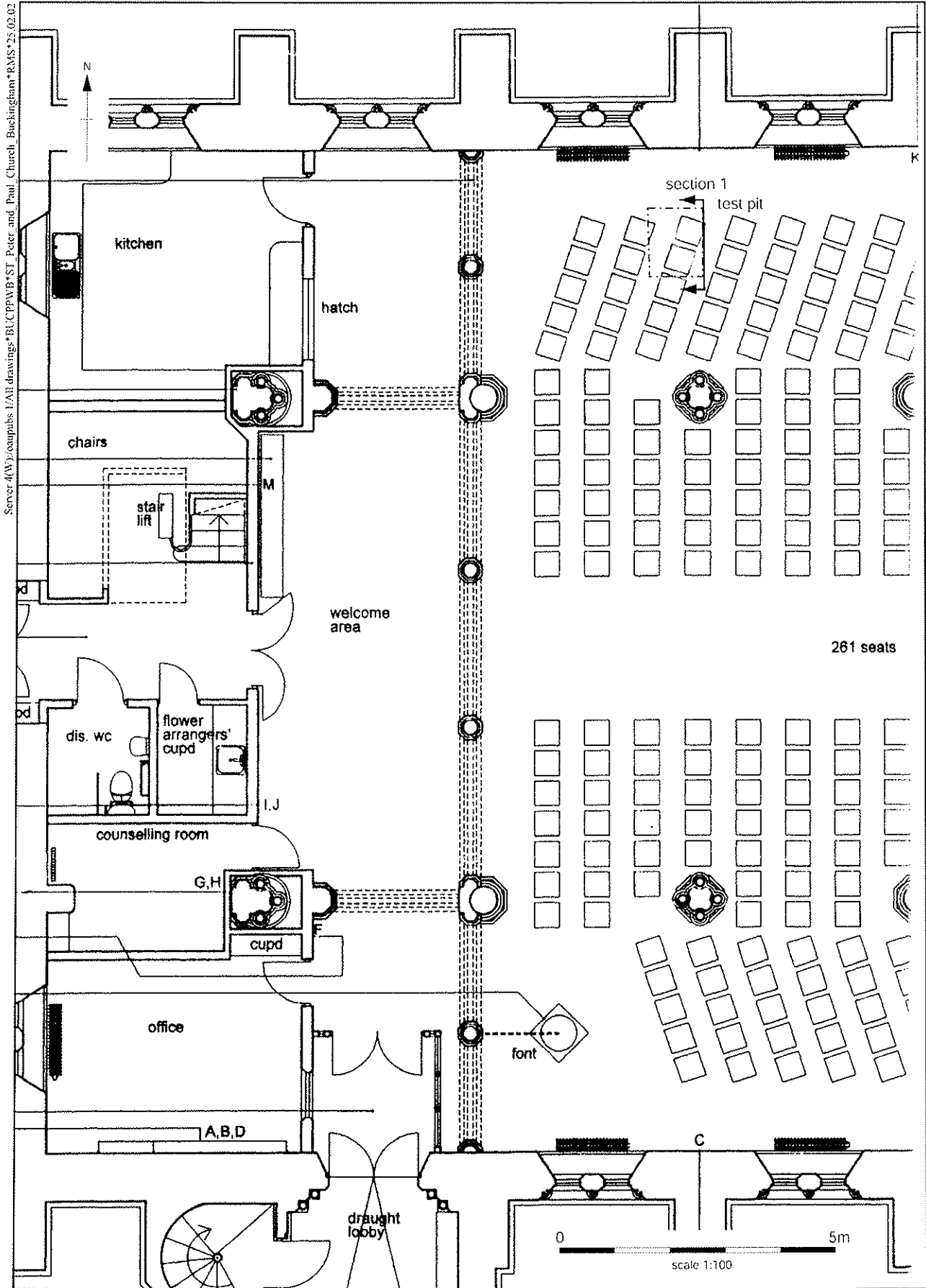


Figure 3: Location of Test Pit and Section 1 inside Church

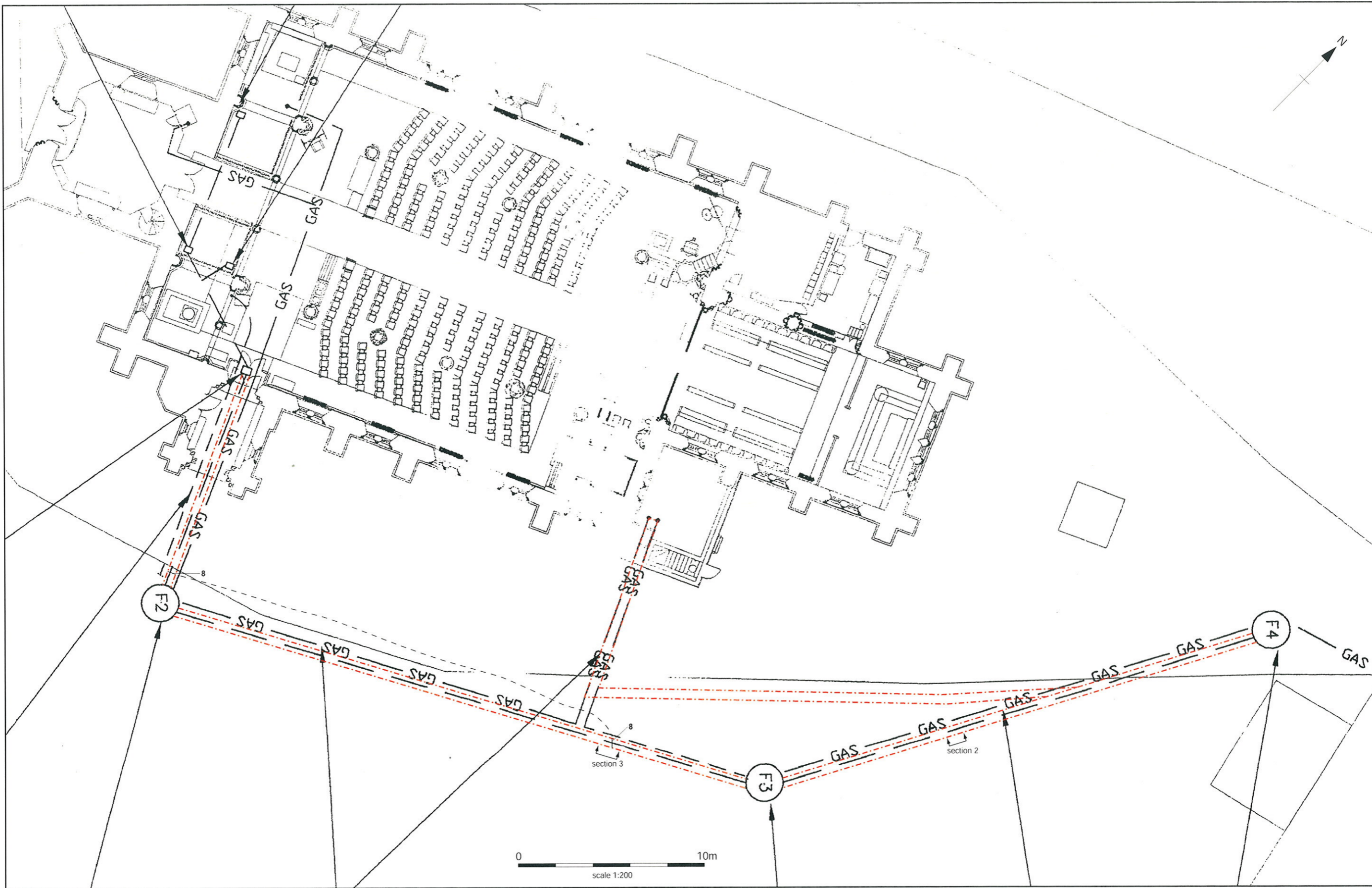


Figure 4 : Plan of Service Trenches with Location of Sections 2 and 3

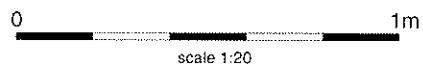
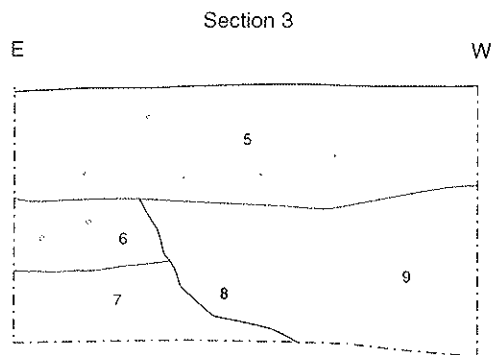
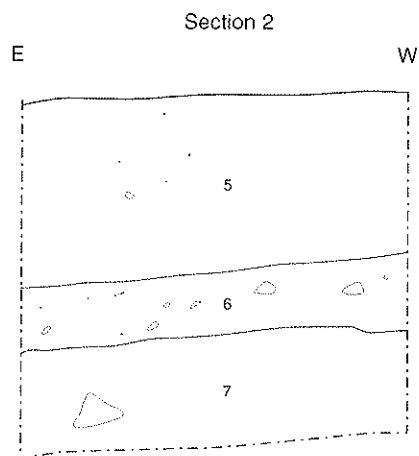
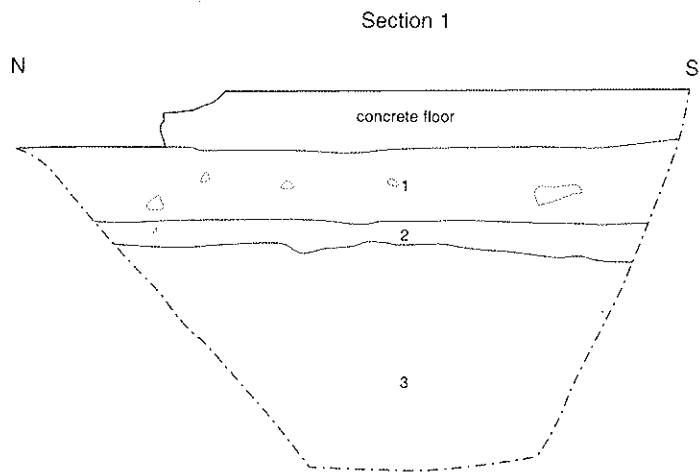


Figure 5: Sections



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