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Beaumont's Yard, High Street Pinner, Middlesex

Archaeological Evaluation
Museum of London Site code: BMS 95

NGR TQ 1224 8962

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

March 1995

BEAUMONT'S YARD, HIGH STREET, PINNER, MIDDLESEX

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION 1995

MUSEUM OF LONDON SITECODE: BMS95

**A report on the evaluation undertaken between 13/02/95 and 15/02/95
at the Beaumont's Yard, High Street, Pinner.**

NGR TQ12248962

Oxford 01/03/95

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1 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) undertook an evaluation in High Street Pinner in the London Borough of Harrow for MBK Architects Ltd on behalf of Glaston Estates in February 1995. Three trenches were excavated; two within a standing warehouse on the site of Beaumont's Yard and one external to the warehouse in an open yard behind. The evaluation was carried out ahead of a proposed residential development.

The trenches were located within areas that would be directly affected by the residential development and represent a 3.5 % sample of the development area.

It seems likely that the construction of the standing warehouse between 1940 and 1959, saw the necessity to level the area off. The earliest feature identified during the evaluation was a NE/SW-aligned linear feature (315) found in trench 3A (figure 3), which had a U-shaped profile and contained two sherds of pottery dated between the 12th and 14th centuries. Contexts 103, 209, 210, 308, and 325 possibly represent redeposited gardendsoil/ploughsoil, derived from the rectangular tenement plots present on the Harrow Inclosure map of 1817. It would seem that the structures seen on the 1817, 1834 etc maps and those identified in trench 3 are the remains of workshops, formerly part of the wheelwright business. A foundation trench (207) and a NE/SW-aligned red-brick wall (205) identified in Trench 2, represent an earlier phase to the present warehouse.

2 INTRODUCTION

The OAU undertook an evaluation in High Street, Pinner in the London Borough of Harrow for MBK Architects Ltd on behalf of Glaston Estates, between the 13th and 15th of February 1995. Three trenches were excavated within areas directly affected by the proposed residential development and represent a 3.5 % sample of the development area (figure 2).

The aim of the evaluation was to provide an assessment of the nature, location, extent, significance and date/period of all archaeological deposits encountered, and to offer a provisional interpretation.

3 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The site is situated at NGR TQ12248962 and comprises a rectangular area of approximately 1120 square metres. High Street, Pinner delimits the southern end of the site, which is fronted by buildings dating predominantly to the Tudor period. A pedestrian way, Bishop's Walk, defines the northern and western boundaries, and a car park bounds the site to the east.

The High Street has a steep gradient. OS spot heights indicate a difference of 7.5 metres from the south-western end (48.9 m OD) to the north-eastern end, next to St John The Baptists Church (56.4 m OD).

Beaumont's Yard is situated at the back of 27 High Street. A warehouse/shed with a concrete yard surface to the north is located on the site. Three evaluation trenches were excavated, two within the warehouse/shed and one in the yard behind (figure 1).

The natural geology within the proposed development area is Gravel overlain by Clay. No geotechnical survey had been carried out in the proposed development area.

4 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND **by Ianto Wain**

4.1 Archaeological Background of the area

There is very little recorded archaeology in the immediate area surrounding the site and very little is known about the settlement pattern of the area prior to the 13th century. The site is situated on higher ground/gravels close to the river and it would seem reasonable to assume that there could have been some settlement of the development area prior to historic references. However, there is little evidence to support this: only one prehistoric findspot is recorded for the immediate environs of the development area which consisted of two (undated) flint spearheads found in the grounds of East House in the 1930's (GLSMR 052019). Druett (1937 3) mentions the discovery of 'earthen banks which indicate that the present roads forming a circle from the High St, along Marsh Road and back by Nower Hill are built in the ditch of an ancient enclosure'. This would place the prehistoric enclosure just to the south of the development area with its western bank being formed by the river Pinn and Pinner Marsh. No further evidence was identified to support the enclosure banks cited by Druett. The principal archaeological site in the area is Grims Ditch the projected course of which runs approx 1 km to the north. This monument still remains something of an enigma: it is usually ascribed to the 5th or 6th century (VCH 170) and described as either a defensive barrier or a political or hunting boundary. However, excavations in 1957 uncovered a large amount of late Iron Age ('Belgic') pottery which would date Grims Ditch to a much earlier period. Druett has also pointed out the existence of a sarsen stone at the corner of Elmpark Road and West End Lane, both of which are marked on the earliest detailed map of the area (Rocque 1756) which may suggest that they are, as Druett suggests, of some antiquity. Druett has also suggested that the church is sited on the site of a prehistoric burial mound although there is no supporting evidence. There is very little evidence for Roman activity in the vicinity of the site although the VCH (169) mentions Roman coins, pottery and stonework from Waxwell, Bury Pond Hill and Pinner Road.

4.2 Medieval Settlement

There is only very slight evidence of Saxon or early medieval activity at Pinner: a Saxon coin reportedly from Pinner was exhibited in a recent British Museum exhibition about Saxon England, and one sherd of Anglo-Saxon pottery was reportedly found during excavations to the rear of nos 19-25 High St (P. Clark *pers*

comm). The first documentary reference to Pinner comes in 1232 (*de pinnora* 'of Pinner'): A church had been constructed by 1240 and while it was rebuilt in 1321, the ground plan and north east wall may date from the 13th century church. The medieval settlement pattern of small hamlets and farms linked by a maze of lanes across a large common was apparent by the 14th century: by 1315 Pinner appears to have been one of these hamlets: The church was consecrated in 1321 and in 1336 Pinner was granted a weekly market and an annual fair.

Excavations in the area of the development site have revealed some evidence of this medieval settlement. Early medieval pottery was recovered from a layer of hillwash at no 2 Grange Gardens Pinner, just to the south of High St. Trial trenching to the rear of nos 19-25 Pinner High St (GLSMR 052139) by the Pinner and Hatch End Local History Society revealed a V-shaped ditch, containing 13th century coarse grey ware, running obliquely across the site as well as an 18th century mortar mixing pit. However later development had destroyed any trace of earlier buildings. Excavations by the Inner London Archaeological Unit uncovered medieval pottery at a site to the south of High St (GLSMR 052177). A rescue excavation on the site of the new Sainsbury's store in Station Approach revealed the footings of a medieval rubble building (R Whytehead *pers comm*).

4.3 Archaeological Background of the Development Area

There is very little recorded archaeology in the vicinity of the development site, the only site recorded by the Greater London Sites and Monuments Record being the excavation conducted by the Pinner and Hatch End Local History Society to the rear of nos 19-25 High St (see above). The site lies to the rear of no 27 High St, a Grade II Listed Building. The DoE (Listed Building) description gives the date of this building as Late 16th or early 17th with 19th century front to no 25 and 18th century front to no 27. However, the SMR describes it as a 15th century hall house which was altered in the late 16th century and divided into two tenements at the end of the 17th century. This question was not resolved during the fieldwork carried out.

4.4 Map sources and the Development Area

The post-medieval history of the development site can be fairly accurately traced from the study of the 18th and 19th century map sources and from documentary sources. The earliest detailed maps of the area (Rocque 1756, Messeder 1759) which probably reflect the medieval topography of the site, show settlement being clustered along High St with other centres of settlement at Pinner Green, West End and East End. To the south lies Pinner Marsh and open fields. The first map which is sufficiently detailed to show individual buildings and the demarcation of the development area is the Harrow Inclosure map of 1817 which shows the Beaumonts Yard as a rectangular tenement (no 1518) extending from the back of High St as far as the River Pinn. Situated just to the rear of no 27 High St is an L-shaped building, which is mirrored to the east by a similar building in the yard to the rear of Queens Head Inn. The next map, an 1834 map of the hamlet of Pinner, although described as being based on the 1817 Harrow Inclosure map and

similar in all other respects, appears to show that the building to the rear of no 27 has disappeared, although the building in the adjoining yard still remains. After this date the history of the site can be traced from the OS 25" maps: the first of these dates from 1864 and shows a very similar layout of buildings to that marked in 1817, suggesting that the non-appearance of the building to the rear of no 27 in 1834 may have been a mis-mapping. Both L-shaped buildings still survive and the area to the north of these structures as far as the Pinn is marked as gardens and/or orchards. To the north of the L-shaped building lies a small structure which would appear to be an outhouse or shed.

The existence of these buildings was further traced on Ordnance Survey 25" dating from 1896, 1913, 1932, 1935 and 1940. Although there were minor variations to the layout of the yard, mainly revolving around the appearance or disappearance of the small shed or outbuilding at the rear of the property, it appears from the cartographic evidence that in the main these buildings can demonstrate continuity between 1817 and 1940. However after 1940, where the coverage changes to 1:1250 there is quite a marked change in the buildings of the yard (the first post-war edition is dated 1959) and it would appear that sometime between 1940 and 1959 the 18th/19th century buildings in Beaumont's Yard were demolished to be replaced by the current structures/ warehouses.

5 METHODOLOGY AND STRATEGY

Trenches were excavated by a JCB 801 mini-excavator, using a 1.5 m toothless ditching bucket down to the first significant archaeological horizons, or in their absences to natural subsoil. The resulting surfaces were cleaned, planned, levelled, and photographed; where applicable a sample section was excavated through the fills of features. The finds strategy complied with the Carver finds retrieval strategy; a sample of finds from the overburden was kept for analysis, and all finds were kept from hand excavated contexts of potentially significant deposits. It was agreed that should palaeoenvironmental deposits of interest be located then advice on sampling would be sought from MOLAS Environmental Section. Recording was carried out in accordance with English Heritage's London Region Archaeological Guidance Paper: 3 (Standards and Practices in Archaeological fieldwork) Nov. 1992 and the OAU field manual (edited David Wilkinson 1992).

To comply with health and safety regulations and to ensure that the trench would in no way be hazardous, no excavation continued beyond a depth of 1.2 m.

DESCRIPTION OF ARCHAEOLOGY

6.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 was a NE/SW-aligned trench, 6 x 2 m in dimension, located in the external yard surface at the rear of Beaumont's Yard. Its position, close to the course of the river Pinn (figure 1), suggested that deposits associated with the watercourse, possibly of palaeoenvironmental significance could be encountered. Seven contexts were identified and recorded.

A yellow clay (106), superficial natural, was identified at a depth of 49.38 m OD (1 m below ground surface BGS), the extent of excavation. A friable light grey silty clay (103) overlay natural clay (106) and contained abraded ceramic building material and pottery, dated between the 18th and 20th centuries. Layer 103 was cut by a NW/SE-aligned vertical sided and flat based drainage trench (105) which was filled by a mid-brown silty clay (104). A thick (0.4 m) layer of dark brown humic silt (102) which contained pottery dated between the 19th and 20th centuries, overlay fill 104 and layer 103. A thin band of silty sand which contained large quantities of ceramic building material overlay layer 102 and was below the present concrete ground surface (100), recorded at a depth of 50.39 m OD.

6.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 was a NW/SE-aligned trench, 8 x 2m in dimension, and was excavated between an internal partition wall and the north western end of the warehouse. Seventeen contexts were identified and recorded.

A yellow clay (211), superficial natural, was identified at a depth of 50.06 m OD (1.1 m BGS), the extent of excavation, sloping gradually from the south-eastern to north-western end of the trench (figure 4). The clay was cut by a shallow oval shaped feature (213) which had dimensions of 0.5 x 0.2 x 0.04 m and had been severely truncated. Feature 213 was filled by a light greyish brown silty clay (212) which contained flecks of chalk. Fill 212 and natural clay 211 were overlain by a light greyish brown silty clay (210) which contained pottery and ceramic building material including two residual sherds of early medieval date. The overall assemblage recovered from layer 210 dated between the 17th and 19th centuries. A mid-greyish brown silty clay (209) was stratigraphically above layer 210 and contained pottery dated between the 19th and 20th centuries.

Layer 209 was overlain by a thin band of silty clay (208) which was cut by a vertically sided foundation trench (207), which contained a concrete foundation (206) that comprised fragmented red-brick and tile within a chalky ballast mortar. The concrete foundation (206) was overlain by seven courses of a NE/SW-aligned red-brick wall (205) of alternating header and stretcher bond and was two courses thick.

The overlying stratigraphic sequence was interrupted where deposits abutted the north-western and south-eastern side of wall 205 (figure 4). The south-eastern sequence is stratigraphically earlier in date and follows.

A thick (0.6 m in depth) dark grey silty clay (216) which contained brick and tile overlay layer 208 and was below a thin band of dark grey silt (215) which contained ash and cinder. Layer 215 was overlain by a layer of broken tile and brick (202), below the present concrete ground surface (214).

The north-western sequence stratigraphically above wall 205 comprised a dark greyish brown silty clay (204), above layer 208, which was overlain by a dark brown humic silty loam (203). Layer 203 was overlain by a layer of broken concrete and brick (201), and was below the present concrete ground surface (200).

6.3 Trench 3

Trench 3 was a NW/SE-aligned trench, located in the front portion of the warehouse/shed in Beaumont's yard. It was divided into two parts to avoid damaging a load bearing supporting pillar (figure 3), and the sub-divisions have been labelled trenches 3A and 3B. Situated in the front of the yard closest to the High Street frontage, it was anticipated that structural remains were most likely to be recovered in this trench. Initial excavation in Trench 3A revealed an L-shaped red-brick wall (304). Subsequent excavation continued within the area enclosed by wall 304, believed to be internal to the structure. 24 contexts were recorded in trenches 3A and 3B.

6.3.1 Trench 3A

A yellow clay (309), superficial natural, was identified at a depth of 50.57 m OD (0.5 m BGS), the extent of excavation. The clay was cut by a NE/SW-aligned linear feature (315) with a U-shaped profile, which had dimensions of 1 x 0.23 m and a depth of 0.05m, although severely truncated. The feature was filled by a light grey clay (314) which contained two sherds of pottery dated between the 12th and 14th centuries. Natural clay (309) and fill 314 were overlain by a thin band of light grey silty clay (308), from which two sherds were recovered and dated between the 17th and 18th centuries. Layer 308 was cut by a sub-rectangular vertical sided posthole (313), with dimensions of 0.34 x 0.24 x 0.55 m. The posthole was filled by a dark grey silty clay (312), a yellowish brown clay with greyish mottles (311) and a yellowish brown clay (310). A light brown mortar (305) which contained broken red-brick and tile overlay fill 310 and was overlain by a layer of compact white chalk nodules (303). A mid-brown silty clay which contained brick and tile (302) sealed layers 303 and 305. Layer 302 was overlain by a layer which comprised ballast and pebbles (301), and was below the present concrete ground surface (300).

6.3.2 Trench 3B

A yellow clay (326), superficial natural, was identified at a depth of 50.75 m OD (0.5 m BGS), the extent of excavation. This was overlain by a thick (0.3 m) mid-grey sandy silt (325) which contained pottery and tile, dated between the 17th and 19th centuries. Layer 325 was cut by a an oval vertical sided flat based posthole, with visible dimensions of 0.23 x 0.18 m and a depth of 0.45 m. Posthole 327 was filled by a dark grey silty clay (328) which contained occasional flinty pebbles. Fill 328 was sealed by a mid-yellowish brown clay (324). The clay layer 324 was observed throughout the trench and was below 3 courses of an irregular bonded NW/SE-aligned red-brick wall (322). No construction cut was identified for wall 322; a layer of sand and ballast (321) overlay the wall and was below the present concrete surface (320).

6.4 Pottery assessment by Lucy Bowen

57 sherds of pottery were recovered from an assemblage dated predominantly between the 17th and 19th century. The assemblage contained utilitarian vessels

such as bowls and pans. Later 18th to 19th century material includes Creamwares and Pearlware bowls.

Two contexts contained medieval pottery. A context provisionally interpreted as a disturbed natural (210), contained an assemblage including sherds from Surrey Whiteware jugs and post-medieval red earthenwares. Very abraded early medieval sandy and chalky sherds of mid-10th to 12th century date were identified within this assemblage, and are likely to be residual. The excavated portion of a fill from a severely truncated gully (314), contained only two sherds of South Hertfordshire Greyware dated between the mid-12th to 14th-century date.

A provisional analysis of bricks taken from walls 205, 304, and 322 suggested that they are dated later than 1690, when frogging started, and earlier than 1837 when mechanised manufacture starts.

7 CONCLUSION

7.1 The three trench excavations offer an opportunity to show the variation in the natural geology in cross-section from the High Street frontage to the south-east, through to within 30 m from the river Pinn to the north-west. As would be expected the natural clay slopes from the High Street down towards the river. Natural clay was identified at 49.38 m OD in Trench 1, 50.06 m OD in trench 2, 50.57 m OD in Trench 3A and 50.75 m OD in Trench 3B. It seems likely that the construction of the standing warehouse between 1940 and 1959, saw the necessity to level this area off, resulting in progressively deeper layers of dumped deposits to compensate for the sloping natural.

7.2 The position of Trench 1, close to the course of the river Pinn (figure 1), suggested that deposits associated with the watercourse, possibly of palaeoenvironmental significance could be encountered. No associated deposit were recovered, and no structural evidence to suggest previous waterfront activity. A light grey silty clay (103), dated between the 18th and 20th centuries overlay natural. This deposit together with 209, 210, 308, and 325 possibly represents redeposited garden soil/ploughsoil, derived from the rectangular tenement plots present on the Harrow Inclosure map of 1817, which shows Beaumonts Yard as a rectangular tenement (no 1518) extending from the back of High St as far as the River Pinn.

7.3 The earliest feature identified during the evaluation was a NE/SW-aligned linear feature (315) found in trench 3A (figure 3), which had a U-shaped profile and contained two sherds of Hertfordshire Greyware pottery dated between the 12th and 14th centuries. Although severely truncated by more recent activity, this gully would not be out of character when compared with a V-shaped ditch, containing 13th century coarse grey ware identified during trial trenching to the rear of nos 19-25 Pinner High St (GLSMR 052139) by the Pinner and Hatch End Local History Society.

7.4 The foundation trench (207), identified in Trench 2, which contained a concrete foundation (206) overlain by seven courses of a NE/SW-aligned red-brick wall (205), possibly represents an earlier phase to the present warehouse. On inspection a break in the brick work was noticed in Bishop's Walk in the approximate position of the identified wall. Section 2 demonstrates that make-up layers and the concrete surface change either side of the wall, and show stratigraphically that make-up to the north-west of the wall represents a more recent event. It is possible therefore that an extension to the warehouse was made in more recent times.

7.5 The most germane point to arise from the study of the documentary sources comes from Druetts 1937 book where he states that no 27 High St is (in 1937) occupied by the 'oldest business in the village' the wheelwrights Beaumont and Sons: the business was founded in 1760 and is carried on today by Mr Ernest Beaumont, a direct descendant of the founder. For 176 years there has been no break in the family connection and the business has not moved from the place where it started.

It would seem that the structures seen on the 1817, 1834 etc maps (see 4.4 Map sources and the Development Area), and subsequently those identified in trench 3 (figure 3), are the workshops of the wheelwright business. The dating evidence from contexts associated with the walls is imprecise, although brick samples and historic documentation suggest that these structures dated between the late 18th and the 20th centuries. Two large postholes identified in trenches 3A and 3B (313 and 313), cut layers interpreted as redeposited plough/gardensoil, dated between the 17th and 19th century. It is likely that these are the remains of a timber framed outhouse building associated with the wheelwrights.

Rob Early
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2 March 1995

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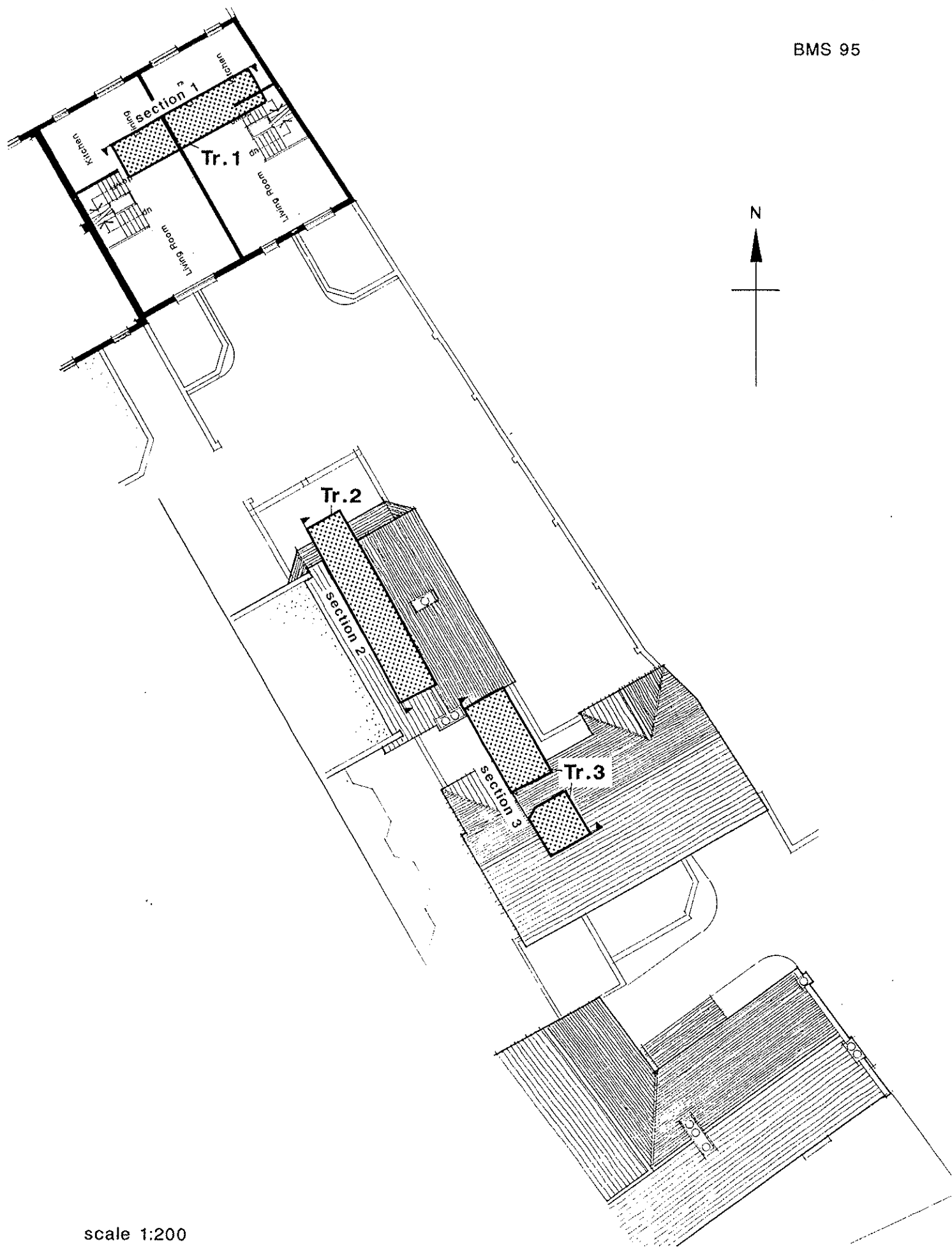
Map Sources

- John Rocque. 1746. Map of London and Ten Miles Around.
- 1756 Map of Middlesex.
- Isaac Messeder 1759 *A plan of the roads, lanes, commons, greens and other waste of the manor and parish of Harrow on the Hill in the County of Middlesex and demesne lands.* GLROMX ACC 643 2nd deposit plan A
- 1817 Harrow Inclosure map
- 1834 A map of the Hamlet of Pinner in the parish of Harrow on the Hill.
- 1865 OS 1st edn 25" Middlesex sheets 10/2 and 10/6
- 1896 OS 2nd edn 25" Middlesex sheets 10/2 and 10/6
- 1913 OS 3rd edn 25" Middlesex sheets 10/2 and 10/6
- 1932 OS 25" Middlesex sheet 10/2
- 1935 OS 25" Middlesex sheet 10/6
- 1940 OS 25" Middlesex sheets 10/2 and 10/6
- 1974 OS 1:1250 TQ 1289 SW
- 1995

APPENDIX 1 SUMMARY OF STRATIGRAPHY

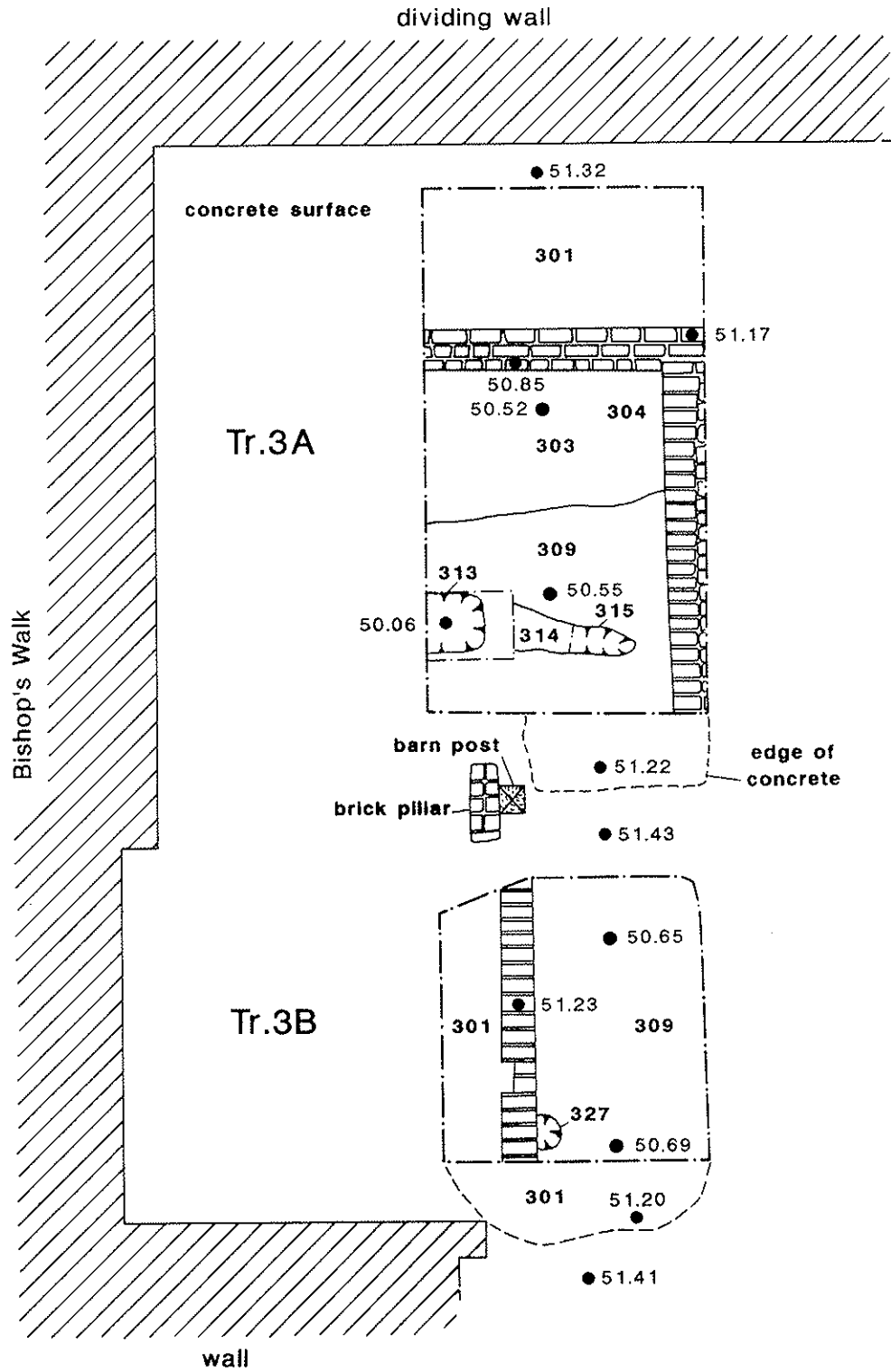
Context Nos.	Type of Context	Depth (m)	Level (m OD)	Comments
100	Deposit	0.08-0.20	50.39	Concrete Surface
101	Deposit	0.11	50.19	Make-up
102	Deposit	0.4	50.08	Redeposited Garden soil
103	Deposit	0.3	49.68	?Post-medieval Garden soil/ ploughsoil
104	Deposit	0.43	49.68	Fill of drain
105	Cut	0.43	49.68	Drain Cut
106	Deposit	Unknown	49.38	Natural Clay
200	Deposit	0.18	51.27	Concrete Surface
201	Deposit	0.20	51.09	Make-up
202	Deposit	0.15	51.16	Make-up
203	Deposit	0.4	50.86	?External Garden soil derived deposit
204	Deposit	0.1	50.68	Post-medieval dump
205	Wall	0.60	51.12	Wall for earlier phase of Warehouse
206	Wall	0.44	50.66	Foundation for earlier phase of Warehouse
207	Cut	0.50	50.66	Cut for foundation 206
208	Deposit	0.04	50.66	Lens of demolition debris
209	Deposit	0.30	50.62	?Ploughsoil/ Garden soil
210	Deposit	0.26	50.32	?Disturbed natural
211	Deposit	Unknown	50.06	Natural Clay
212	Deposit	0.05	50.24	Fill of natural hollow
213	Cut	0.05	50.24	Cut for natural hollow
214	Deposit	0.16	51.28	Concrete Surface
215	Deposit	0.10	50.96	Make-up
216	Deposit	0.6	50.88	Make-up

300	Deposit	0.1	51.34	Concrete Surface
301	Deposit	0.03	51.2	Make-up
302	Deposit	0.26	51.16	Clay based Make-up
303	Deposit	0.21	50.90	Compact chalk: ?foundation for internal floor
304	Wall	0.26	51.17	L-shaped section of red-brick wall
305	Deposit	0.17	50.87	?Repatching of floor
306	Wall /foundations	0.3	50.85	Stepped red-brick foundation wall
307	Cut	0.03		Cut for foundation wall
308	Deposit	0.06	50.64	?Ploughsoil/Garden soil
309	Deposit	Unknown	50.57	Natural Clay
310	Deposit	0.12	50.64	Redeposited natural clay, used as a fill for posthole 313
311	Deposit	0.2	50.64	Fill of posthole 313
312	Deposit	0.12	50.17	Primary fill of posthole 313
313	Cut	0.55	50.64	Deep posthole
314	Fill	0.05	50.57	Fill of shallow ?gully
315	Cut	0.05	50.57	?Shallow gully
320	Deposit	0.2	51.43	Concrete Surface
321	Deposit	0.15	51.25	Make-up
322	Wall	0.23	51.33	3 Courses of a red- brick wall
324	Deposit	0.15	51.17	Make-up derived from natural clay
325	Deposit	0.4	51.07	?Ploughsoil/Garden soil
326	Deposit	Unknown	50.75	Natural Clay
327	Cut	0.45	50.93	Post-hole , obscured by the side of the trench
328	Deposit	0.45	50.93	Fill of posthole 327



scale 1:200

figure 2

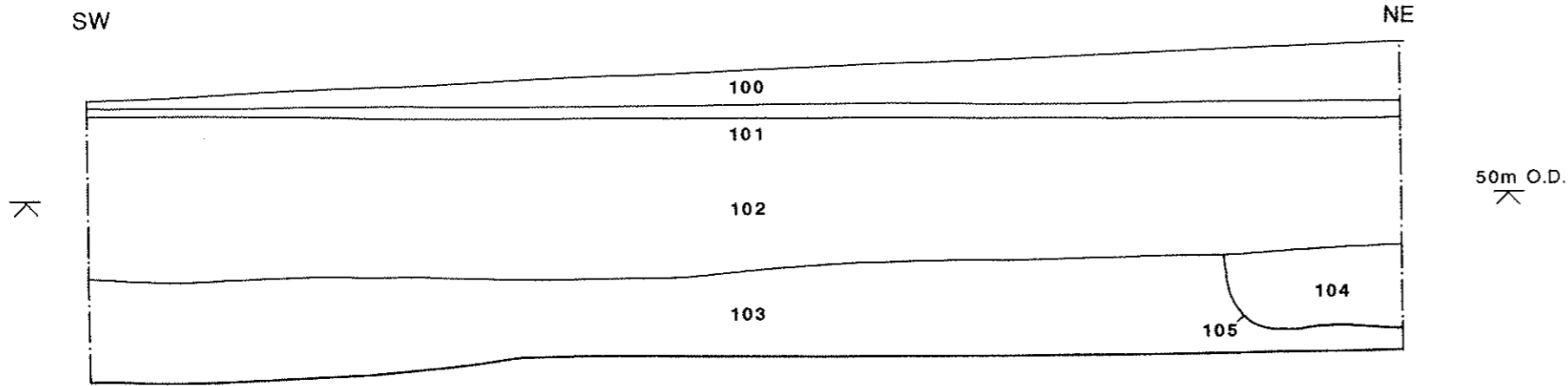


● Levels in m O.D.

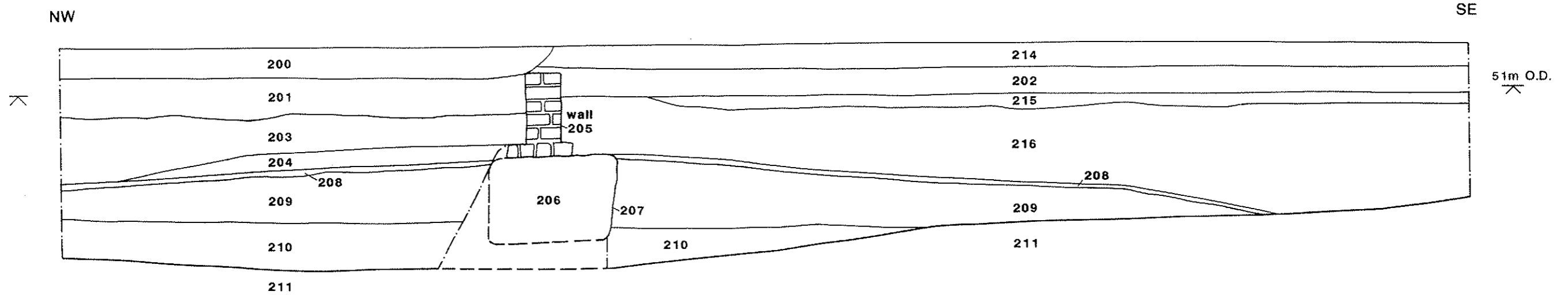
scale 1:50

figure 3

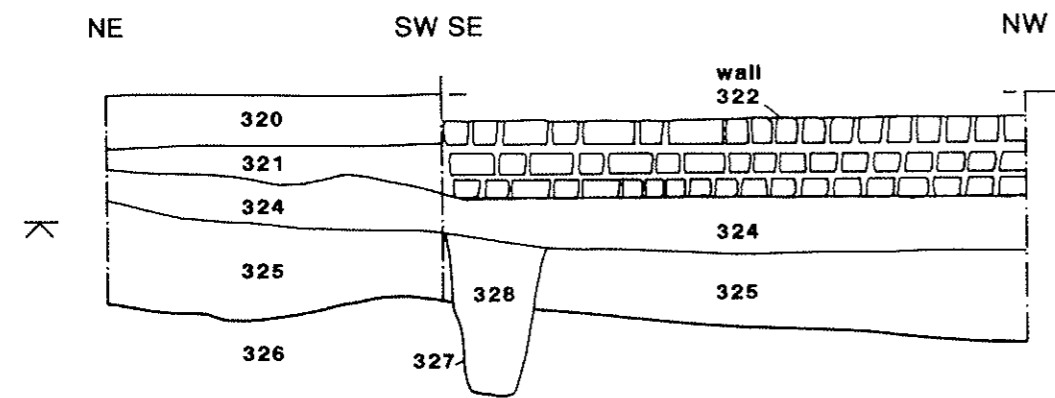
Trench 1 section 1



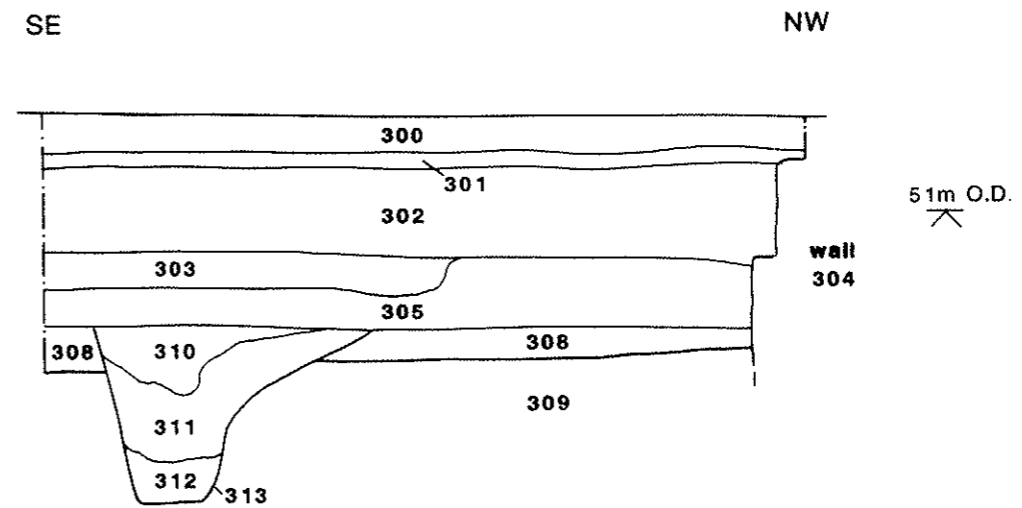
Trench 2 section 2



Trench 3B section 3



3A



scale 1:25

figure 4



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