

**Medical Centre Developments Ltd**

**111-117 High Street, Yiewsley.**

***ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT***

**NGR TQ 060 804**

**Planning Ref: 6948Y/991340**

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**October 2000**

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Prepared by: EC.Stafford Date: 9/10/00
Checked by: Richard Brown Date: 7/10/00
Approved by: R. Hulham Date: ASSISTANT DIRECTOR 18/10/2000

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# 111-117 High Street, Yiewsley.

## *ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION*

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## SUMMARY

*The Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out a field evaluation at 111-117 High Street, Yiewsley, on behalf of Medical Centre Developments Ltd. No significant archaeological remains were identified within the area of proposed redevelopment. Extensive disturbance and truncation of underlying gravel terrace deposits, caused by 19th century and later building activity, was apparent over a large part of the site.*

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In October 2000 the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) undertook a field evaluation at 111-117 High Street, Yiewsley (Fig.1) on behalf of Medical Centre Developments Ltd. The work was carried out in mitigation of a condition attached to planning permission (Planning Application No. 6948Y/991340) granted for redevelopment of the site as a Health Centre.
- 1.1.2 The work was carried out according to a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by the OAU in response to a brief set by R. Whytehead of English Heritage (GLAAS) as archaeological advisor to the London Borough of Hillingdon.
- 1.1.3 The development site is situated in a built up area on the west side of the High Street at its junction with St Stephen's Road (NGR TQ 060 804). It is rectangular in shape and approximately 30m wide by 50m long.

#### 1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site is located at an elevation of approximately 30m OD, situated on Taplow brickearths overlying terrace gravels of Quaternary age.
- 1.2.2 The brickearths form part of the 'Langley Silt Complex' which typically resemble a loessic silty loam laid down by aeolian action during the Late Devensian. In the Yiewsley area, however, the basal brickearth deposits are thought to exhibit stratification suggestive of alluvial or colluvial processes. Thermoluminescence dates for these basal deposits range from 75,000BP to in excess of 150,000BP (Gibbard *et al.* 1987).

- 1.2.3 The Lynch Hill and Taplow Gravels mainly consist of flint, sandstone, quartzite and chalk and directly overlie London Clay bedrock

### 1.3 **Archaeological and historical background**

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background has been detailed in section 1.2 of the brief and will not be repeated here. To summarize, the site lies towards the northern end of the likely extent of the medieval village of Yiewsley, and also on the Lynch Hill gravel terrace that is rich in finds of Palaeolithic flint implements.
- 1.3.2 With reference to more recent history past editions of Ordnance Survey maps show that in 1866 the site was part of an open field bounded to the east by Yiewsley High Street. In 1895 properties are shown set back from the High Street with gardens extending to the west. By 1935 the properties extend forward towards Yiewsley High Street.

## 2 **EVALUATION AIMS**

### 2.1 **Specific**

- 2.1.1 The aim of the evaluation was to assess whether any remains of medieval or early post-medieval buildings survived within the area of development, and to assess the sub-clays and gravels for the presence of early prehistoric flintwork and to relate it to any distinctive horizons within the subsoils.

### 2.2 **General**

- 2.2.1 To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the development area and to determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality, date, depth below ground surface and depth of any archaeological remains present.
- 2.2.2 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features.
- 2.2.3 To provide information so that an appropriate strategy of archaeological intervention can be implemented.
- 2.2.4 To make available the results of the investigation.

### 3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Scope of fieldwork

3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of two trenches each measuring 15 m in length. The depth of excavation required the trenches to be stepped, achieving a width of 2m at final excavation. The location of the trenches are shown in Figure 2. The position of services within both trenches meant that the full 15m length could not be achieved to the base of excavation.

3.1.2 Topsoil and overburden were removed under close archaeological supervision by a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The clayey terrace deposits were examined for archaeological features, and were subsequently reduced by machine to the formation level of the basement of the new building. A close watch was made for insitu lithics contained within these deposits, with particular attention paid to the interface with the underlying gravels.

#### 3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

3.2.1 The trenches were cleaned by hand and planned. Sections were drawn at scales of 1:20. Each trench 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).

#### 3.3 Finds

3.3.1 No Finds were recovered during the course of the excavation.

#### 3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence

3.4.1 None of the deposits offered potential for environmental analysis.

#### 3.5 Presentation of results

3.5.1 Section 5 includes individual context descriptions, with deposits and features described from earliest to latest. Context information is summarised in the context inventory (Appendix 1).

## 4 RESULTS: GENERAL

### 4.1 Soils and ground conditions

- 4.1.1 A large part of the site was covered by tarmacadam, concrete hardstandings and rough grass. Beneath this lay substantial deposits of made-up ground, modern intrusion and demolition debris. Service pipes were located at several points within the immediate vicinity of the trenches contained within the basal makeup layers. These deposits overlie, and largely truncate the surface of the clayey terrace deposits. No difficult ground conditions were encountered within these deposits. The water table appeared to be contained within the terrace gravel deposits at a depth of approximately 1.9m below ground level.

### 4.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits

- 4.2.1 No archaeological features were identified in either trench.

### 4.3 Description of deposits

#### 4.3.1 Trench 1 (Section 1. Fig. 3)

The surface of the terrace gravels (9) was exposed in the base of Trench 1 at the southern-most end at a depth of 1.73m below ground level (27.7m OD). These deposits consisted of coarse to fine bedded flint gravel contained within a sandy matrix. The clasts were sub angular to angular and increased in density with depth. Clayey terrace deposits directly overlay the gravel. At least three distinct units were identified within these deposits. The basal unit consisted of a clean continuous deposit of stiff orangey brown mottled clay (10) with a maximum thickness of 0.42m. This was abruptly overlain by a discontinuous, poorly sorted, flint gravel in a silty clay matrix (11). This unit appeared to be highly variable both spatially and with depth reaching a maximum thickness of 0.38m. This unit was in turn overlain by 0.4m of soft orangey brown silty clay (12) containing occasional angular/subangular flint clasts. The interface however between these deposits appeared to be somewhat diffuse in places. The surface of the uppermost unit was clearly truncated and disturbed containing occasional brick and tile derived from the overlying makeup layers (15). In addition the interface between the two deposits was distinctly abrupt.



No prehistoric flintwork, insitu or otherwise, was identified in any of the terrace deposits.

Layer 15 consisted of a variable mid/dark greyish brown silty clay up to 0.81m in depth and containing substantial amounts of brick, tile and porcelain. A series of cut features were recorded truncating these layers (13, 16 and 18). All proved to be of recent origin with the occurrence of nineteenth century or later brick and tile and fragments of porcelain contained within their fills.

#### 4.3.2 Trench 2 (Section 2. Fig. 3)

Terrace gravels were exposed in the base of Trench 2, again at the southern most end. The gravels however in this trench, appearing at a much higher level (28.94m OD) than in Trench 1 at 0.83m below ground level, were directly overlain by modern demolition debris (3). A discrete lens of mid yellowish brown clayey silt 0.16m thick was identified at the interface between the gravel and the makeup layers and may equate with similar deposits identified in Trench 1. The surface of the terrace deposits again appeared to be substantially disturbed by modern intrusion containing occasional brick and tile.

The northern-most end of Trench 2 contained the basement of a building (struc. 22), identified by a series of foundation walls of 19<sup>th</sup> century or later brickwork, faced with plaster (6) and associated with a concrete floor (5). The basement appeared to have been backfilled quite recently with brick rubble, gravel and concrete (7). Fragments of modern porcelain as well as plastic and Styrofoam were also identified within this fill. A similar deposit (8) was recorded to the west of this structure in Trench 2 suggesting the basement extends westwards beyond the limits of the trench.

The concrete floor of the basement marked the limit of excavation at the northern end of Trench 2. This fell short of the foundation level of the proposed new building by some 0.2m. It was however felt that removing the floor was unnecessary since a substantial degree of disturbance would be envisaged beneath derived from the construction of this building. In addition since the limits of the basement were clearly defined (Fig. 2) it was thought unnecessary to remove all of the modern backfill.

Layer 3 was located at the southern end of the trench directly overlying terrace gravels it consisted of a variable mid greyish brown silty clay with frequent brick, concrete, tarmac, plastic and porcelain and was interpreted as debris associated with the demolition of the adjacent building (struc. 22).

## 5 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

### 5.1 Reliability of field investigation

The positioning of the trenches in the evaluation covered a good proportion of the site.

### 5.2 Overall interpretation

#### *Summary of results*

The deposits encountered during the excavations consist of terrace deposits of Quaternary age directly overlain and truncated by modern makeup layers.

The clayey terrace deposits exhibited a high degree of variability containing substantial deposits of poorly sorted flint gravel suggesting a colluvial origin. This is consistent with similar deposits identified within the locality of Yiewsley. No prehistoric flintwork was identified within these deposits. In addition the surface of these deposits appeared to be substantially truncated and disturbed by modern intrusion and the overlying makeup layers. NO archaeological features were recorded at this level.

The location of the backfilled basement located in Trench 2, immediately adjacent to Yiewsley High Street, together with the very recent material contained within it, suggests that it belongs to the most recent phase of construction identified on the 1935 Ordnance Survey maps. The recent features encountered in Trench 1 most probably relate to the gardens that existed in that area of the site as shown from the 1895 Ordnance survey maps.

The results of the fieldwork and the known recent history of the site suggest that the areas beyond the limits of the trenches are unlikely to differ archaeologically from those evaluated and are probably subject to a similar degree of disturbance and truncation. The character of the deposits recorded abutting the western side of the backfilled basement (Section 2) suggest this structure extends westwards and one may expect truncation of the terrace deposits to a considerable depth in this area of the site.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX I ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Ctxt No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Thick. (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>No./wt</i>	<i>Date</i>
002	1	Deposit		>1.38	Terrace gravels			
	2	Deposit		0.16	Silty clay terrace deposit			
	3	Deposit		0.84	Demolition debris			Modern
	4	Deposit		0.28	Hardcore/tarmac			Modern
	5	Deposit		>0.15	Basement floor			Modern
	6	Deposit		>1.52	Basement walls			Modern
	7	Deposit		1.52	Basement fill			Modern
	8	Deposit		1.52	Basement fill			Modern
001	9	Deposit		>0.1	Terrace gravels			
	10	Deposit		0.42	Clay terrace deposit			
	11	Deposit		0.38	Gravel/clayey terrace deposit			
	12	Deposit		0.4	Silty clay terrace deposit			
	13	Cut	5.32	1.03	Ditch			Modern
	14	Deposit	5.32	1.03	Ditch fill			Modern
	15	Deposit		0.81	Made-up ground			Modern
	16	Cut	2.17	0.85	Pit			Modern
	17	Deposit	2.17	0.85	Pit fill			Modern
	18	Cut	>0.95	0.74	Pit			Modern
	19	Deposit	>0.95	0.74	Pit fill			Modern
	20	Deposit	0.37	0.68	Demolished wall			Modern
	21	Deposit		0.07	Hardcore/tarmac			Modern
002	22	Structure			Basement			Modern

**APPENDIX 3    BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES**

Gibbard, P.L., Wintle, A.G., & Catt, J. A., 1987, Age and Origin of clayey silt brickearth in West London, England. *Journal of Quaternary Science* 2, pp3-9

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

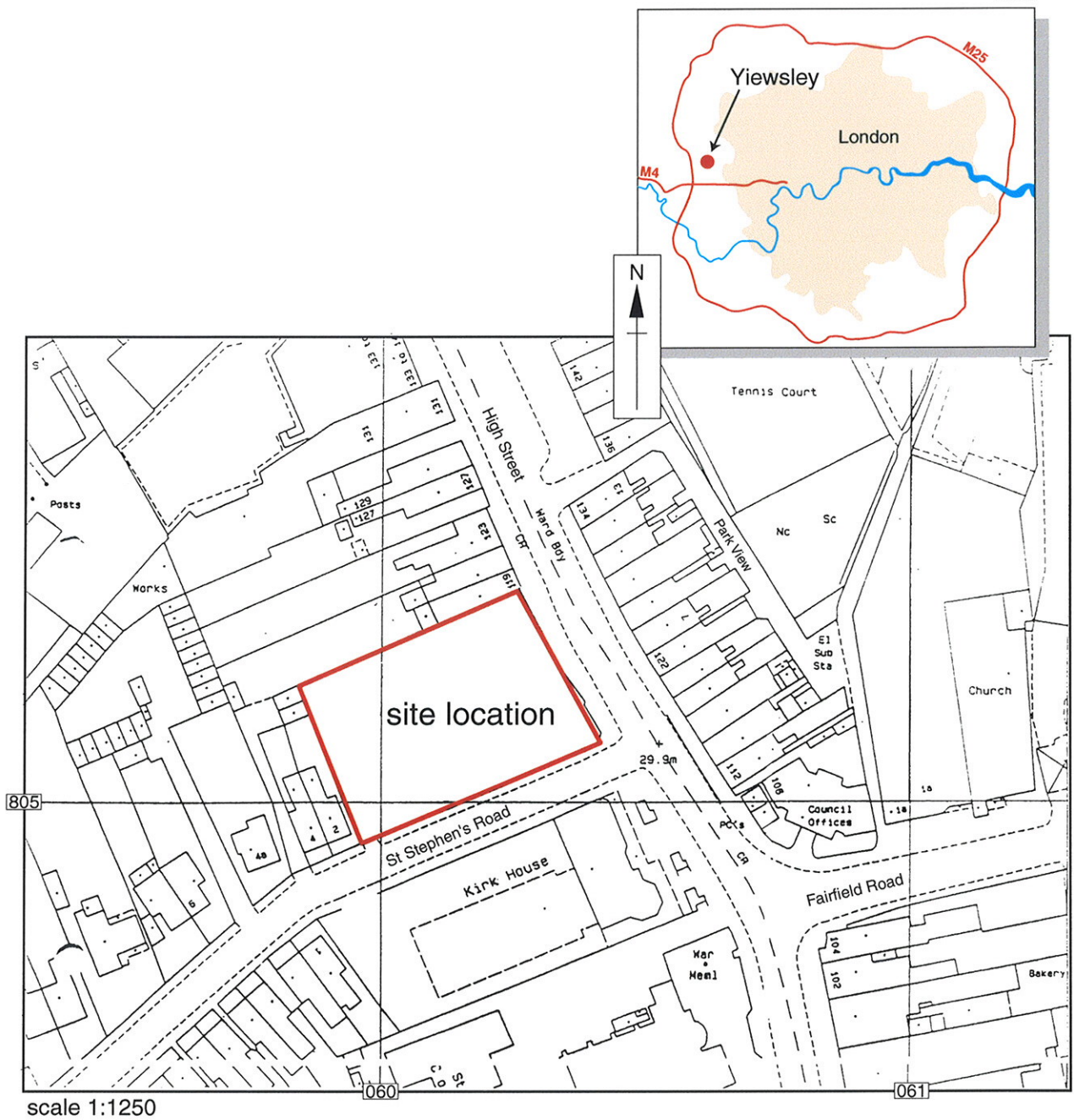


Figure 1: Site location

0604  
8054



0600  
8050

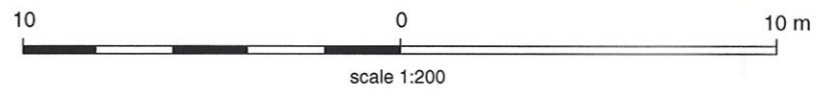


Figure 2: Trench plans

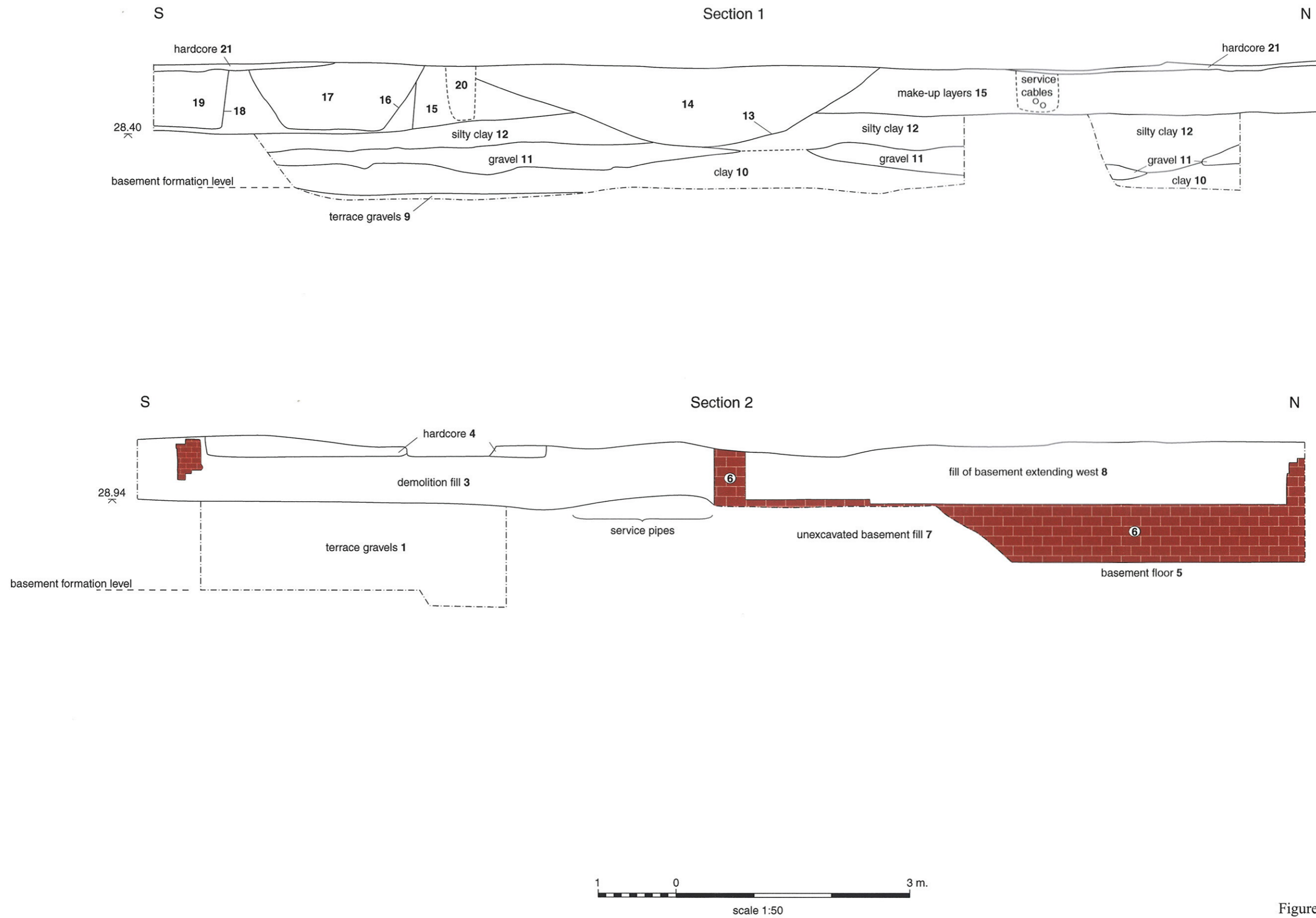


Figure 3: Trench sections



## OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES

Tel: 01865 263800 Fax: 01865 793496

email: [postmaster@oau-oxford.demon.co.uk](mailto:postmaster@oau-oxford.demon.co.uk)



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Director and Chief Executive: David Jennings B.A., M.I.F.A. Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited.  
Private Limited Company Number: 1618597 Registered Charity Number: 285627.  
Registered Office: Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES