

OXFORD (OX)

OXBR5WB

Oxford County Council

Broad Street, Oxford

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

NGR: SP5130 0644

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October 2001

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NGR: SP5130 0644

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Date: 19th October 2001

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Date: 22/10/2001

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ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Date: *24/10/2001*

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October 2001

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SUMMARY

In October 2001 the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) carried out an archaeological watching brief in Broad Street, Oxford (NGR SP5130 0644). The watching brief was commissioned by Oxford County Council, in advance of the installation of hydraulic bollards across the road. The watching brief revealed layers of modern deposits, service pipes and road make-up down to a maximum depth of 1.1 m. No evidence of earlier street surfaces or archaeological horizons was revealed.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work (Fig. 1)

- 1.1.1 In October 2001 the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Broad Street, Oxford (NGR SP2130 0644). The work was commissioned by Oxford County Council in respect of plans to install hydraulic bollards across Broad Street, forming part of Oxford's local transport policy. The work was undertaken by contractors and comprised an inspection trench to examine the deposits down to the depth required for the installation of the bollards.
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken after conversations with the City's Archaeologist, Brian Durham, and in respect of an advice note. The methodology used for the watching brief was an extension of that undertaken during recent excavations in Cornmarket Street for the same client.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The investigation site lies at 64 m OD, at the west end of Broad Street, which runs approximately west to east. At the west end the road joins Cornmarket Street and Magdalen Street with Balliol College to the North. The memorial to the three martyrs is clearly visible from the works area. At the east end is the Sheldonian Theatre and the Bodleian Library, where the road joins Catherine Street and Holywell Street (Fig. 2)
- 1.2.2 The area of investigation was approximately 8 m x 0.6 m, with the excavated trench extending north-south across the road, between Balliol College and Nos. 1-5 Broad Street.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the watching brief was prepared for the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for a similar recent project in Cornmarket Street, which was also undertaken on behalf of Oxford County Council (OAU, 2000) and is summarised below.

- 1.3.2 Broad Street is one of the later medieval streets of Oxford at the northern extent of the medieval town and is depicted on Agas' maps of 1577/88 and Loggan's plan of the town (1675).
- 1.3.3 On the north side of Broad Street, Balliol College was founded in the late 13th-century and originally had a garden that extended into the line of the modern road. This was still visible on the 1675 map (Loggan) of the area at this time.
- 1.3.4 Along the south side of Broad Street is the line of the medieval town ditch that was sited outside of the City Wall, and was observed in 1912. The ditch was infilled and was built over by in the end of the 16th century.
- 1.3.5 Historically Broad Street was used for large markets and was nicknamed 'Horsemonger Street'. In the 19th century, excavations in Broad Street found the base of a stake, which was thought to be related to the hanging of the Three Martyrs. This now resides in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 The contractors were helpful at all times and OAU is grateful to Brian Durham for advice.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence/absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the construction work.
- 2.1.2 To signal, before the destruction of the material in question, the discovery of a significant archaeological find, for which the resources allocated are not sufficient to support a treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.
- 2.1.3 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 All deposits and the trench were planned at a scale of 1:100 and trench sections drawn at a scale of 1:20. A colour slide and black and white print photographic record was made of the work. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 At the base of the trench was a 0.6 m thick deposit of dark reddish-brown gravel (102), within which were a number of service pipes aligned N-S and E-W. The

deposit represents the backfill to the trenches for these services. This layer was seen to a maximum depth of 1.1 m within the trench (Fig. 3).

- 3.1.2 Deposit 102 was overlain by a layer of modern hardcore (101) approximately 0.22 m deep, which was sealed by the present tarmac surface (100) of the road, that is 0.2 m thick.

3.2 **Finds**

- 3.2.1 No finds were recovered during the course of this investigation.

3.3 **Palaeo-environmental remains**

- 3.3.1 No environmental samples were necessary due to the modern nature of the deposits.

4 **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1.1 The results of the watching brief were conclusive. The trench was excavated through the backfill of existing service trenches and did not reach a depth that would have encountered deposits of archaeological significance.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Height</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>
100	Layer	0.2 m	0.6 m		Tarmac	0
101	Layer	0.22m	0.6 m		Hardcore	0
102	Layer	0.73m	0.6 m		Modern rubble	0

APPENDIX 2 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Broad Street, Oxford

Site code: OXBRS 01

Grid reference: SP 5130 0644

Type of watching brief: Observation of trial trench

Date and duration of project: October 10th/11th 2001

Summary of results: Modern service backfill deposits to a depth of 1.16 m

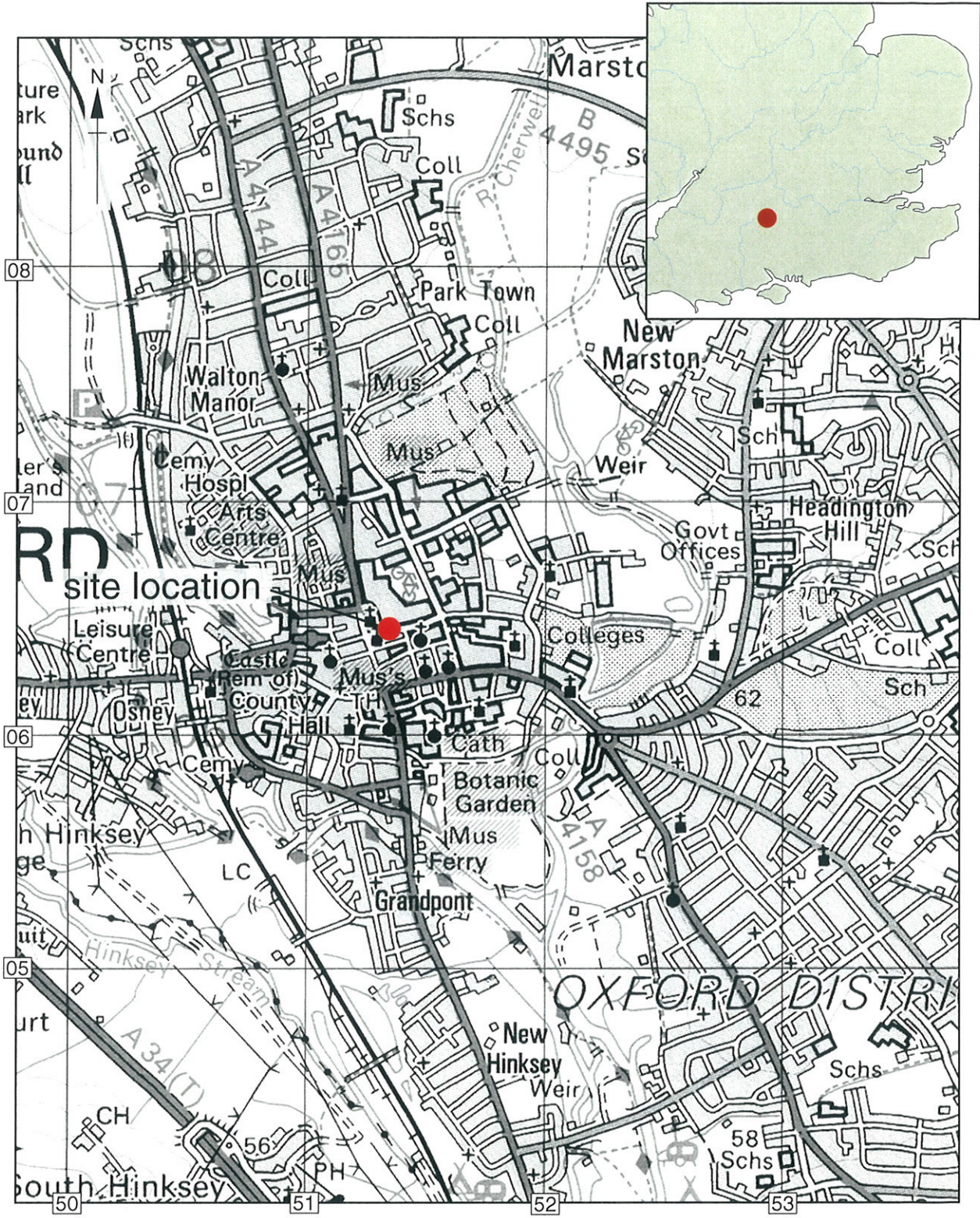
Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OAU, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course.

Appendix 3 Bibliography

OAU 1992 Fieldwork Manual (1st edition, ed. D Wilkinson)

OAU 2000 *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief at Cornmarket Street Oxford.*

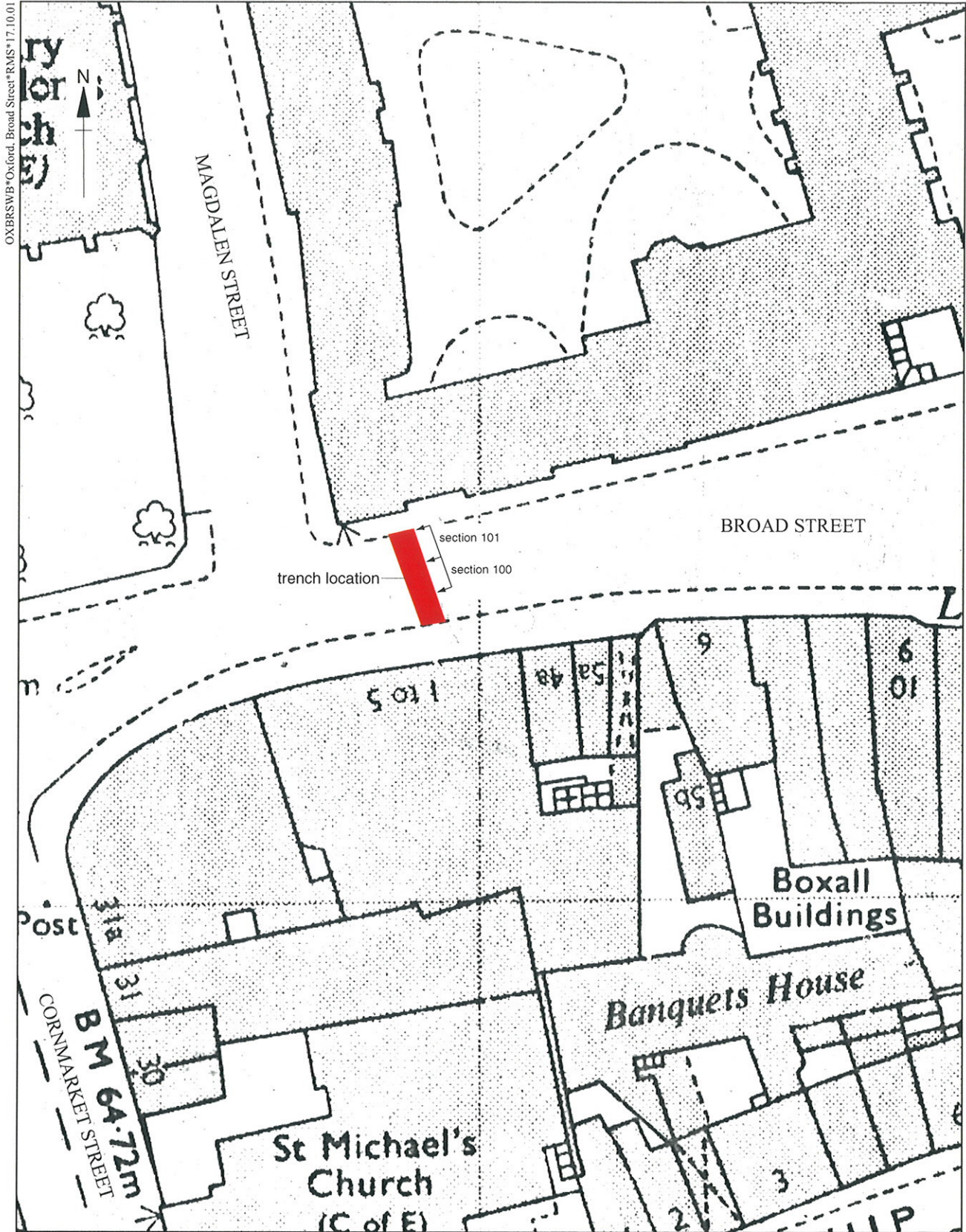
OXBRSWB*Oxford, Broad Street*RMS*17.10.01



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Figure 1: Site location.

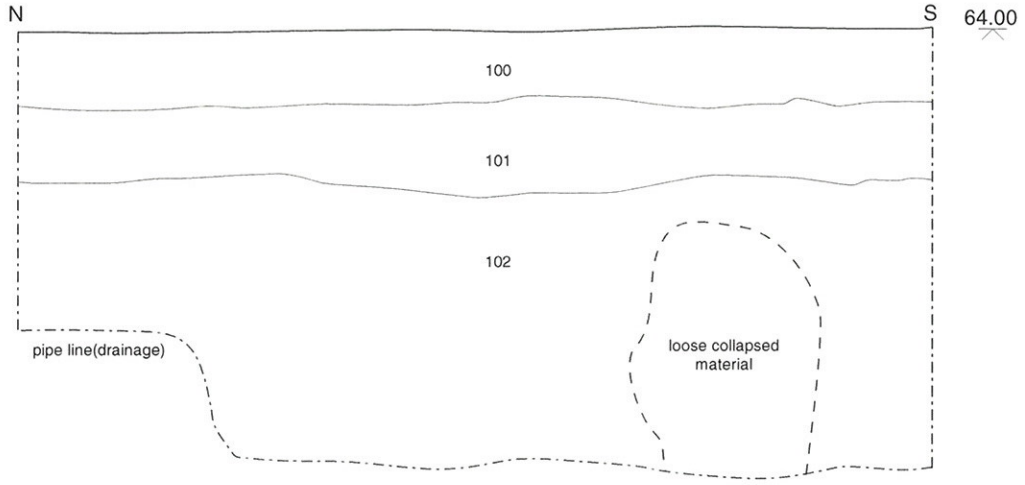


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Fig 2 : Trench Location Plan

Section 100



Section 101

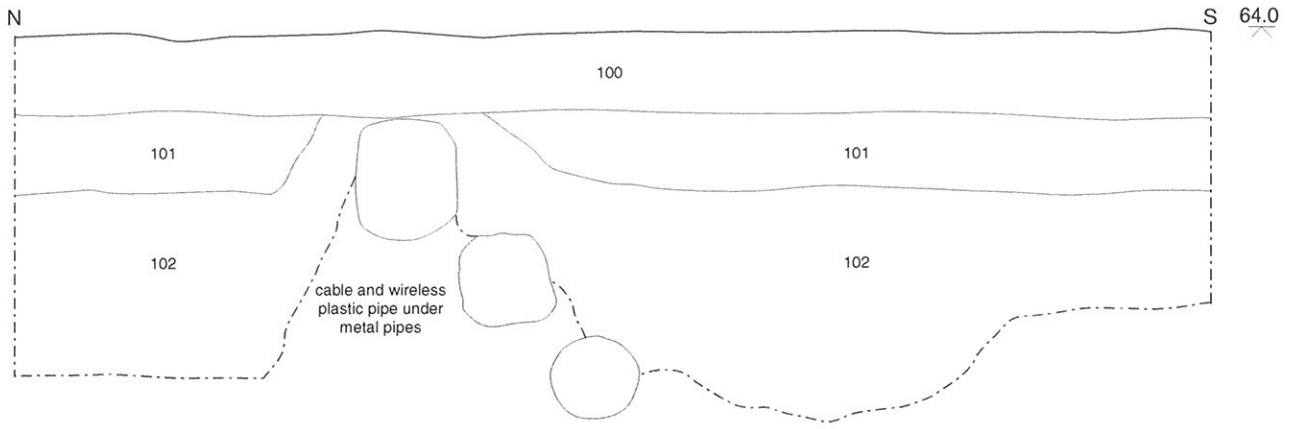
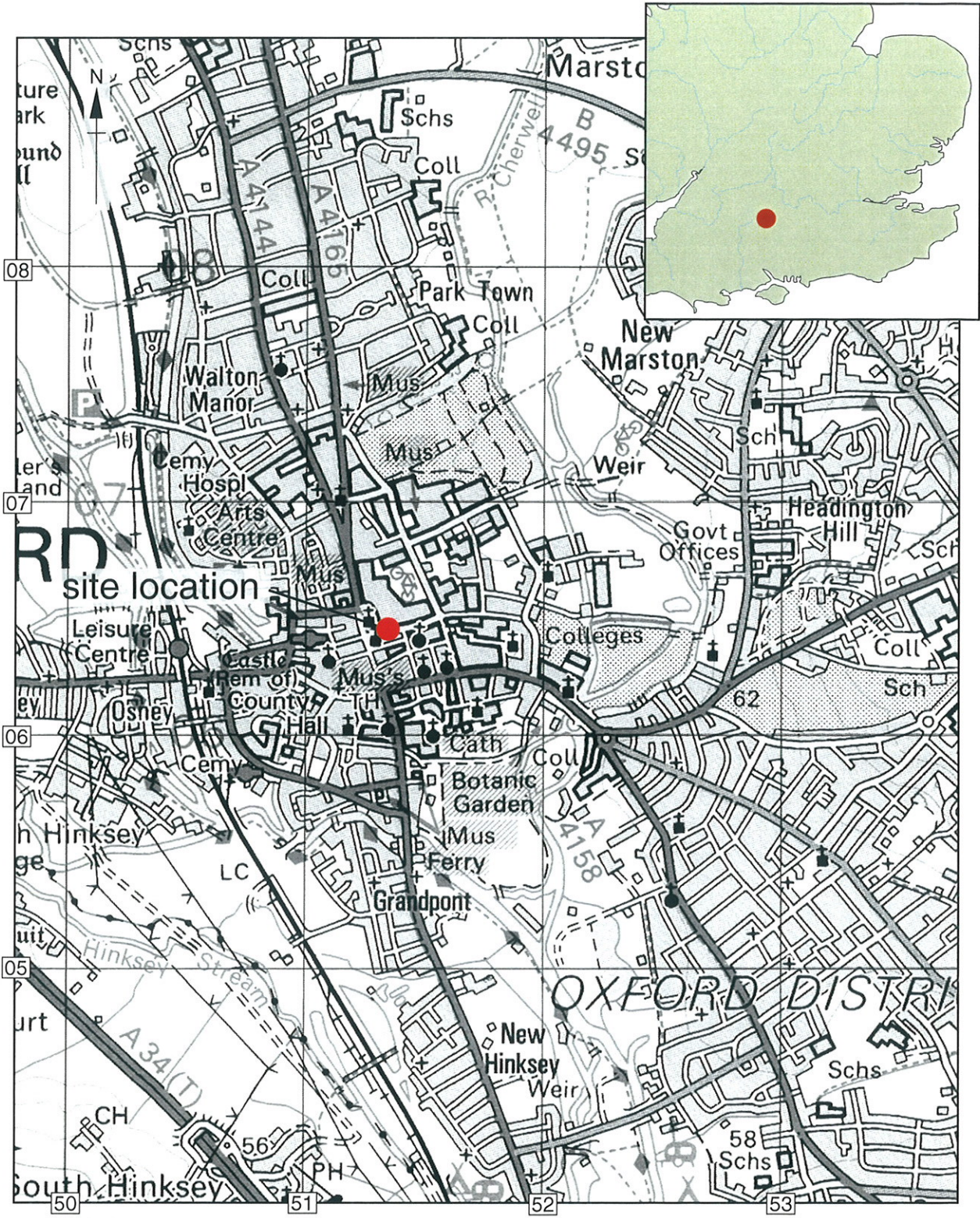


Figure 3 : Sections.

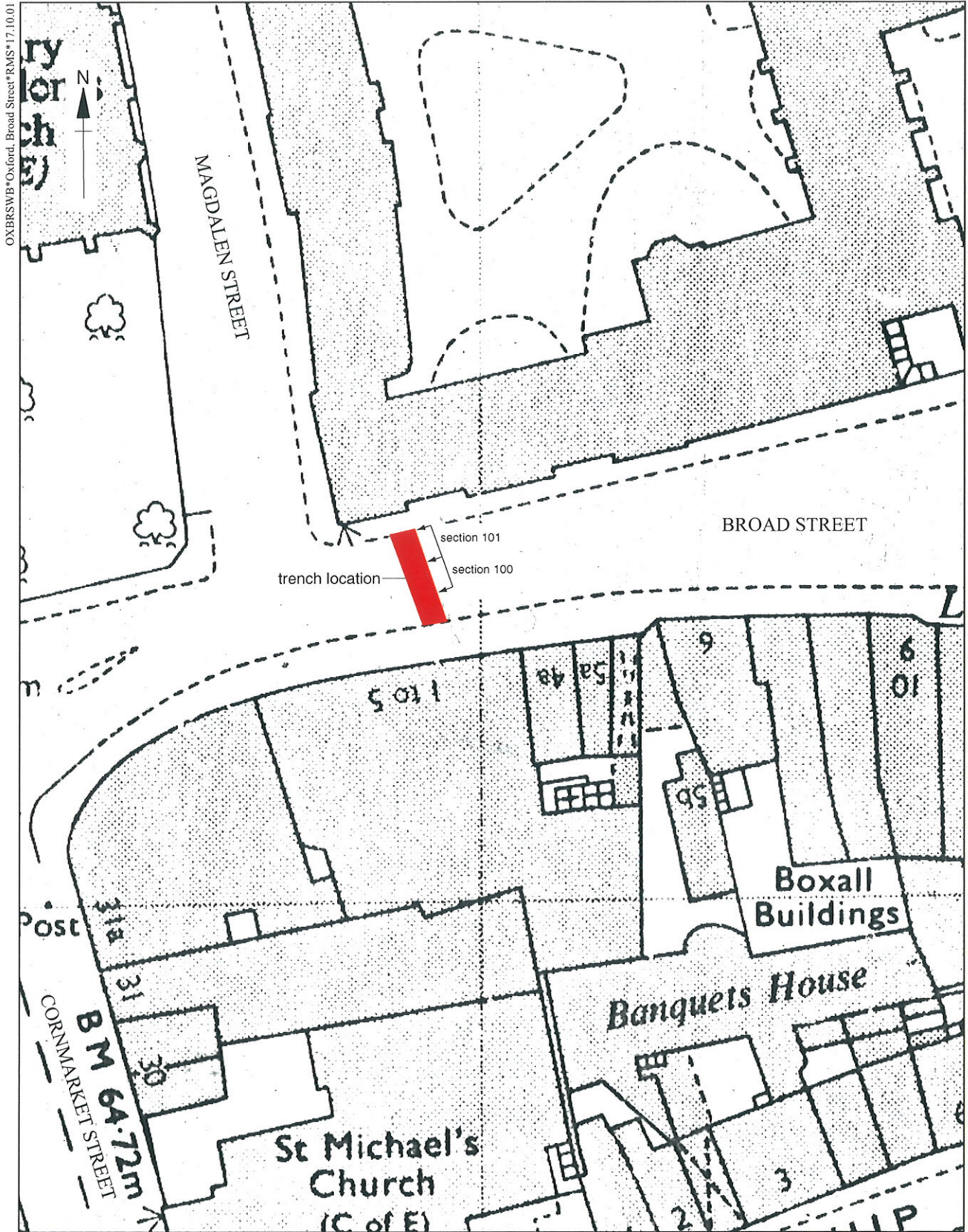
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Figure 1: Site location.

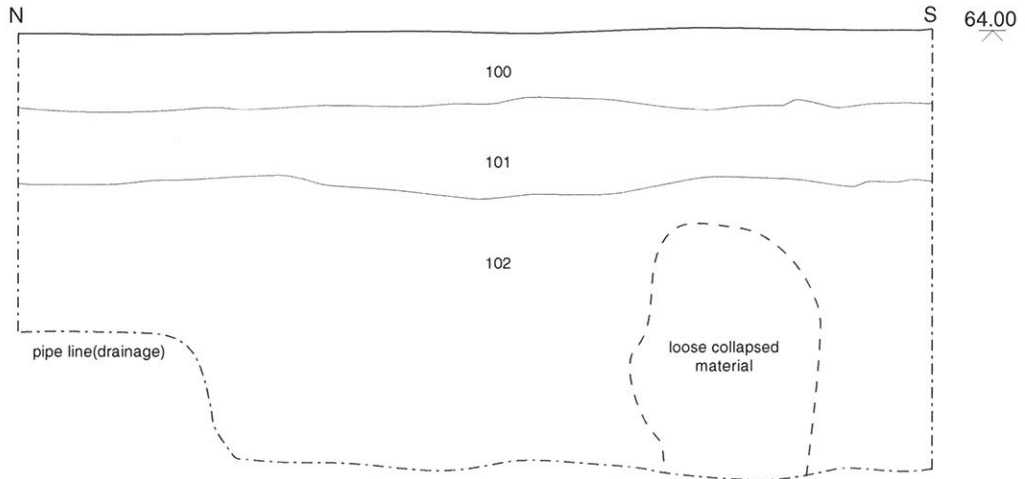


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Fig 2 : Trench Location Plan

Section 100



Section 101

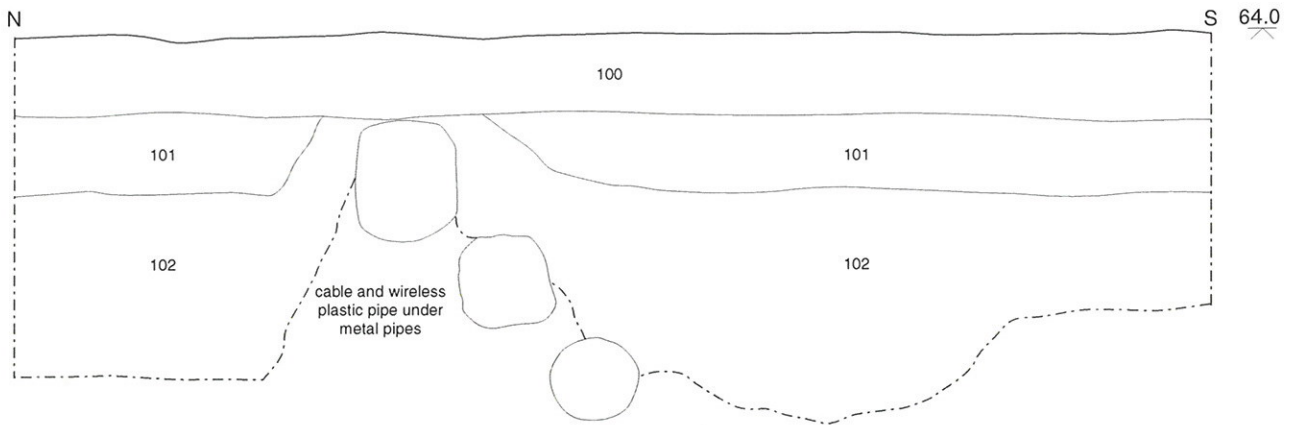


Figure 3 : Sections.



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