

10 Amwell Place and land rear of Paternoster Lane Cholsey Oxfordshire



Archaeological Watching Brief



Oxford Archaeology

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**10 Amwell Place and land at rear of
Paternoster Lane, Cholsey, Oxfordshire**

NGR SU 589 685

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

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SUMMARY

In April and October 2001 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at 10 Amwell Place and Paternoster Lane, Cholsey (NGR SU 589 685). The work was commissioned by St Helens Homes Limited in advance of the construction of residential properties fronting Amwell Place. The watching brief revealed one east-west aligned ditch and one north-south aligned ditch in the foundation trenches to the rear of 2 and 4 Paternoster Lane, which together may have formed part of a potential medieval enclosure. A single undated pit was observed in service trenches excavated adjacent to 10 Amwell Place.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In April and October 2001 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at 10 Amwell Place and land to the rear of Paternoster Lane, Cholsey, Oxon (NGR SU 589 685) - (see Figs 1 & 2). The work was commissioned by St Helens Homes Limited in respect of a planning application for residential development (P99/WO638).
- 1.1.2 A project brief was set by Paul Smith of Oxfordshire County Council Archaeological Services. The watching brief was required in line with PPG 16 and Local Plan Policy.
- 1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief (OA 2001).

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The solid geology in this part of Cholsey is lower Chalk and the site lies at 50 m above OD. Both sites were utilized as the gardens of 10 Amwell Place and 2 & 4 Paternoster Lane respectively.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the watching brief was prepared for the WSI for the project (OA, 2001) and is summarised below.
- 1.3.2 The Dorchester to Silchester Roman Road runs less than 50 m to the west of the application area and Roman occupation remains have been found nearby. A coin of Constantine 1st (PRN 7638) was found less than 100 m north-west of the development site, whilst a number of Roman coins of 3rd-4th century date have been found to the west of Honey Lane (PRN 2686, 7953).
- 1.3.3 A Saxon glass bead was found in 1965 on the western side of Cholsey (PRN 7637). Medieval occupation evidence has been identified less than 50 m from the

application area (PRN 879) and further medieval remains were recorded at Cholsey Vicarage in 1992 (PRN 5941).

- 1.3.4 In November 1999 the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) carried out a field evaluation in advance of proposed construction of dwellings at Amwell Place, Cholsey. Two trenches were excavated (see Fig. 2). Trench 1 (located to the south end of the site) contained a large pit, probably of post-medieval date, and Trench 2 (located at the south-east corner of the site) contained a medieval or post-medieval ditch. This limited evidence of medieval/post-medieval activity added more information to the known medieval activity in Chosley.

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 development.
- 2.1.2 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 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

- 3.1.1 The watching brief monitored the general reduction and subsequent excavation of strip foundation trenches for the new development to the rear of Paternoster Lane. The foundations for the house and garage development at 10 Amwell Place comprised driven piles and the subsequent excavation of beam slots. Service trenches linking to 10 Amwell Place were also monitored. The results for each of these developments are presented below.
- 3.1.2 **10 Amwell Place**
- 3.1.3 Following the installation of the piles, the beam slots were excavated to a maximum depth of 0.76 m below ground level (bgl) and revealed a stratigraphic sequence comprising 0.3 - 0.5 m of topsoil (3) directly overlying the natural chalk (1). No archaeological features or deposits were observed within these trenches.
- 3.1.4 After the houses were built a trench for the connection of services was excavated along the front of the property, with spurs leading into the houses (see Fig. 5). These

were excavated by a mini-digger and were 0.7 m wide and 0.9 m in depth. They cut through the topsoil (3) and c. 0.15 m down into the solid chalk (1). In the southerly east-west trench, a pit or ditch feature (8) was observed. The feature was 1.7 m long by 2 m wide and was 0.9 m deep. It was not well defined in the confines of the trench, but had steep sloping sides that cut into the chalk (1). It contained a fill of very dark grey-brown silty clay loam (9) with chalk fragments, charcoal and chalk flecks; no finds were recovered. The feature fill was sealed below topsoil (1).

3.1.5 Land to the Rear of 2 & 4 Paternoster Lane

3.1.6 The general reduction of the site at the rear of Paternoster Lane did not impact below the interface between the topsoil and the underlying deposit (see below). The strip foundations were then excavated (Fig. 3) and revealed a stratigraphic sequence comprising 0.35 m of topsoil (3) overlying 0.2 m of mid-brown silt ?alluvium with c 30% rounded chalk pebbles (2) which directly overlay the Lower Chalk (1). The trenches revealed two ditches, which cut the chalk and were sealed by the overlying deposit (2).

3.1.7 Ditch 4 (Fig. 4, section 1) was aligned east-west and was 0.8 m in width and 0.30 m in depth. It was filled by a mid-dark grey clay silt with 20-25% chalk pebbles (5) that did not produce any artefactual evidence. The full extent of the ditch was not established due to the limited impact of the strip foundations.

3.1.8 Ditch 6 (Fig. 4, section 2) was of similar depth but slightly wider (1.2 m in width x 0.32 m in depth) and was aligned north-south. The ditch was at a right angle to ditch 4. The fill of ditch 6 was similar in composition to Ditch 4 and produced a single sherd of ?medieval pottery.

3.2 Finds

3.2.1 The pottery sherd from deposit 7 was poorly fired but showed evidence of having been glazed on the interior surface. The poor condition and abraded nature of the sherd made positive identification difficult, although a medieval date is likely.

3.2.2 No other finds were recovered during the watching brief.

3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

3.3.1 Although due consideration was given to various sampling strategies, none of the deposits observed during the watching brief were considered suitable for environmental sampling.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1.1 The foundations for the development at 10 Amwell Place did not reveal any archaeological features or deposits. However, the impact of the development was limited and it is possible that archaeological remains survive but were not disturbed

by the present development. The single pit revealed in the service trenches was undated, but may be part of the general activity suggested by the 1999 evaluation.

- 4.1.2 Despite the limited impact of the strip foundations for the development to the rear of Paternoster Lane, it is feasible that the ditches observed form part of an enclosure, possibly medieval in date. As the extent of the ditches could not be established and the dating evidence was limited, these may also relate to the features found in the previous nearby evaluation (OAU 1999).

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				Lower Chalk	
2	Layer				?Alluvium	
3	Layer				Topsoil	
4	Cut	0.3 m	0.8 m		E-W Ditch Cut	
5	Fill	0.3 m	0.8 m		Ditch Fill	
6	Cut	0.32 m	1.2 m		N-S Ditch Cut	
7	Fill	0.32 m	1.2 m		Ditch Fill	Medieval pot sherd
8	Cut	0.9 m	1.7 m	2 m	Pit/Ditch Feature	
9	Fill	0.7 m	1.7 m	2 m	Fill	

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

OAU 1999, *Amwell Place, Cholsey, Oxfordshire, Archaeological Evaluation Report*

Wilkinson D (ed.), 1992 *Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: 10 Amwell Place and Land at rear of Paternoster Lane, Cholsey

Site code: CHAMC 01

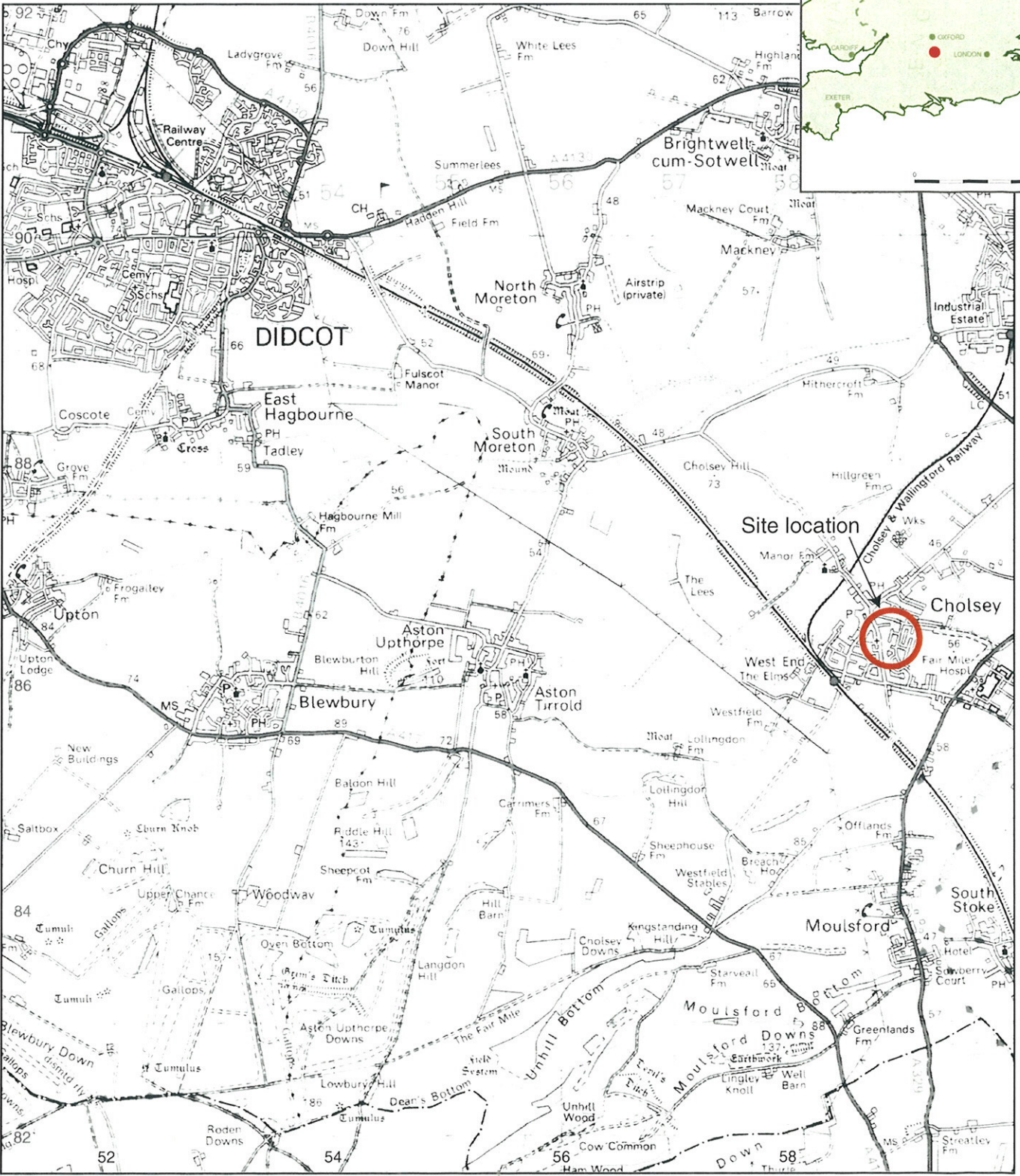
Grid reference: NGR SU 589 685

Type of watching brief: Excavation of footings and service trenches

Date and duration of project: Four site visits

Summary of results: A possible medieval enclosure ditch was identified to the rear of Nos. 2-4 Paternoster Lane, together with an undated pit or ditch in the service trenches to the front of 10 Amwell Place.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course, under the following accession number: 2001.46/1999.193



CHAMCWB * 10 Annwell Pl and 2&4 Paternoster La * L. Adams * 23.10.01

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Figure 1: Site location plan

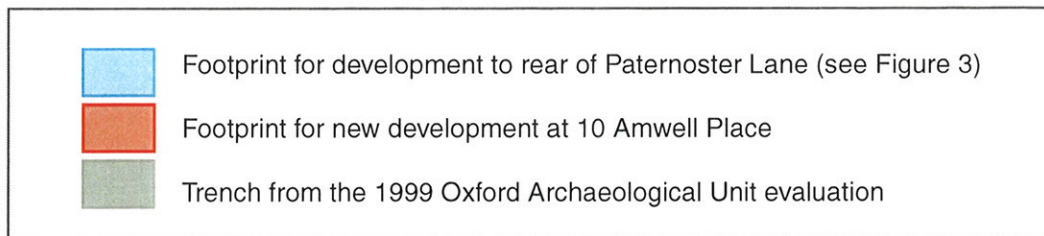
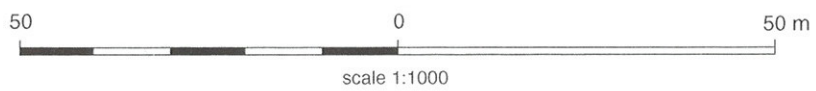
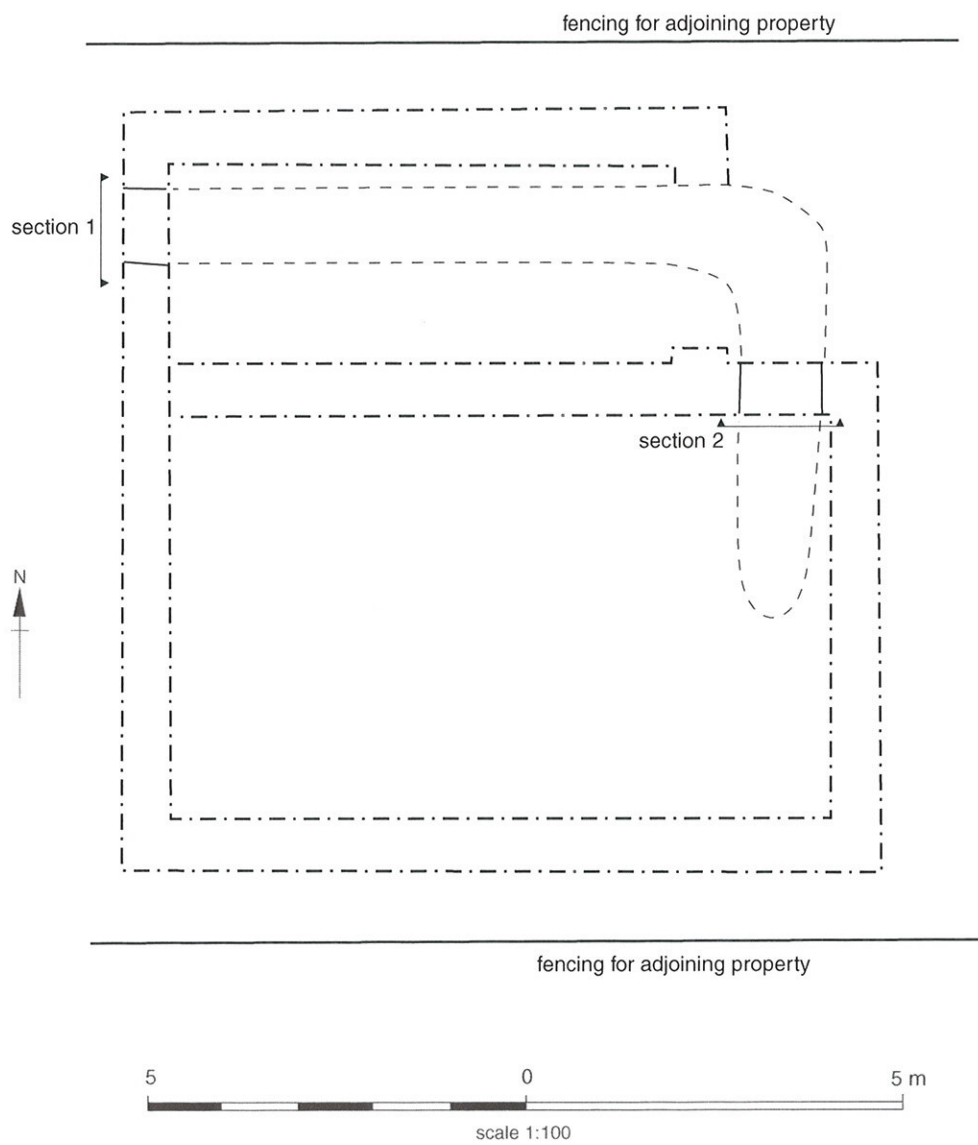


Figure 2: Location of developments



CHAM/CWB *10 Armwell Pl and 2&4 Paternoster La * L.Adams * 23.10.01

Figure 3: Site plan, rear of Paternoster Lane

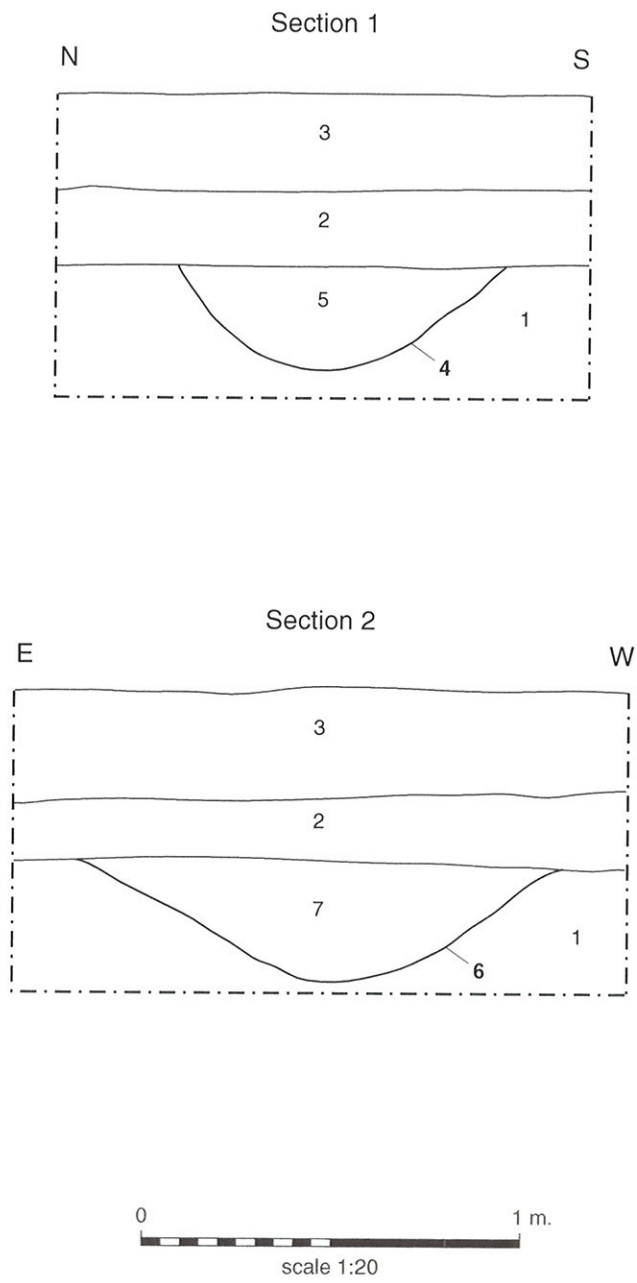


Figure 4: Sections

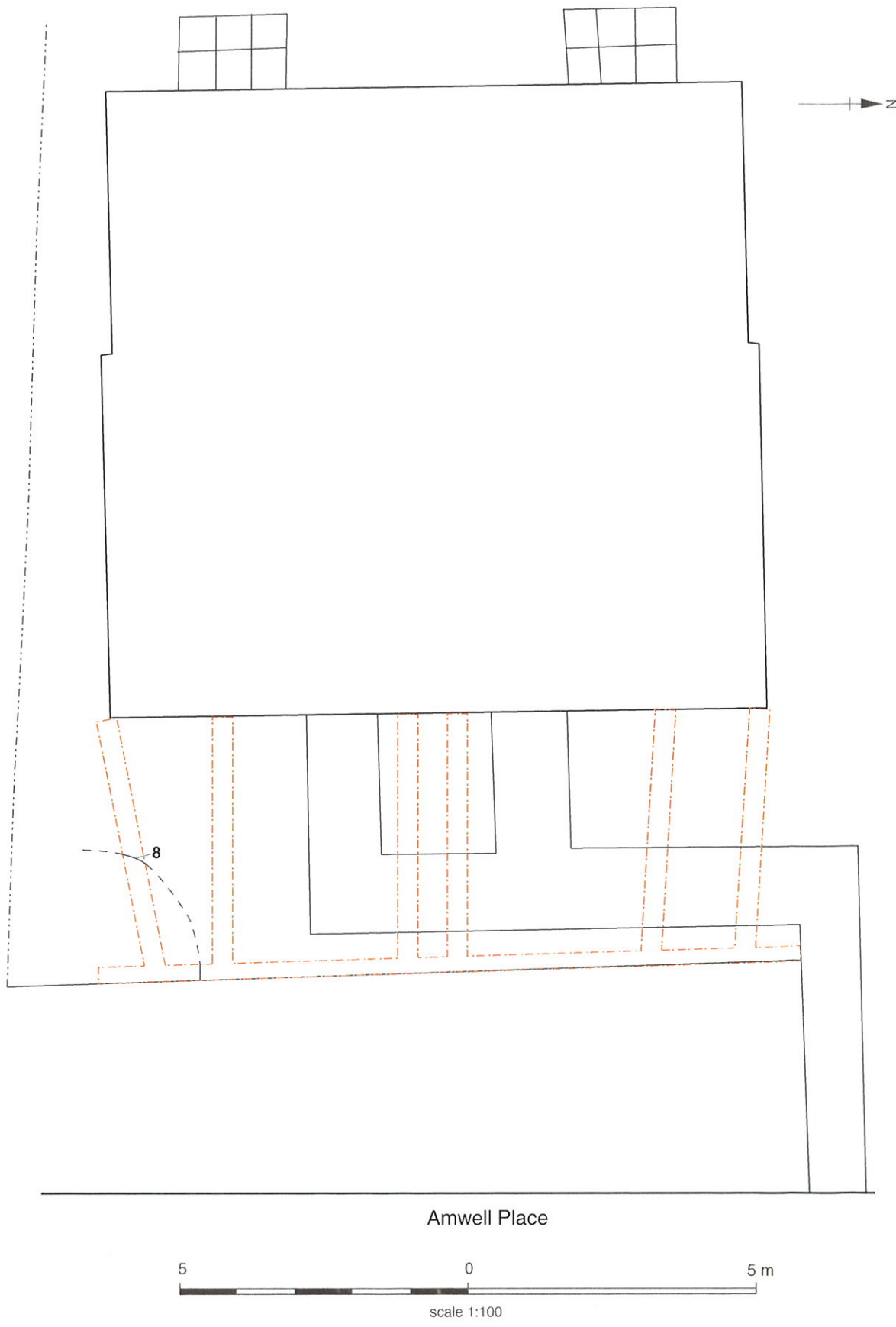


Figure 5: Location of service trenches in front of 10 Amwell Place



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