

The Norman Hall  
9 Church Street  
Sutton Courtenay  
Oxfordshire



**Archaeological  
Watching Brief Report**



**Oxford Archaeology**

August 2004

**Client: Quentin Hoodless**

Issue N<sup>o</sup>: 1

OA Job N<sup>o</sup>: 1631

Planning Ref N<sup>o</sup>: SUT 8721/14

NGR: SU 5041 9431

**Client Name:** Quentin Hoodless

**Client Ref No:**

**Document Title:** The Norman Hall, 9 Church Street, Sutton Courtenay,  
Oxon

**Document Type:** Watching Brief

**Issue Number:** 1

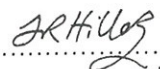
National Grid Reference: NGR SU 5041 9431  
Planning Reference: SUT 8721/14

OA Job Number: 1631  
Site Code: SUTHAL 02  
Invoice Code: SUTHALWB  
Receiving Museum: Oxfordshire County Museums Service  
Museum Accession No: OXCMS 2003.1

Prepared by: James Mumford  
Position: Supervisor  
Date: 11th August 2004

Checked by: Jon Hiller  
Position: Senior Project Manager  
Date: 11th August 2004

Approved by: Nick Shepherd  
Position: Head of Fieldwork  
Date: 11th August 2004

Signed.....  pp. N. SHEPHERD.

Document File Location U:/OAU/wbREPORT/Oxfordshire/SUTHAL.doc  
Graphics File Location Server10:/oaupubs1 RtoZ\*SUTHAL03\*SUTHALWB\*  
Norman Hall Sutton Courtenay \*MD\*10.08.04  
Illustrated by Margarita de Guzman

**Disclaimer:**

*This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and should not be relied upon or used for any other project without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and prior written authority of Oxford Archaeology being obtained. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for the consequences of this document being used for a purpose other than the purposes for which it was commissioned. Any person/party using or relying on the document for such other purposes agrees, and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Oxford Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the person/party by whom it was commissioned.*

**Oxford Archaeology**  
© Oxford Archaeological Unit Ltd 2004

Janus House  
Osney Mead  
Oxford OX2 0ES  
t: (0044) 01865 263800  
f: (0044) 01865 793496

e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk  
w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk

Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited is a Registered Charity No: 285627

**The Norman Hall, 9 Church Street,  
Sutton Courtenay, Oxfordshire**

***ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT***

**CONTENTS**

Summary.....	1
1 Introduction .....	1
1.1 Location and scope of work .....	1
1.2 Geology and topography .....	1
1.3 Archaeological and historical background.....	1
2 Project Aims and Methodology.....	2
2.1 Aims .....	2
2.2 Methodology.....	2
3 Results .....	2
3.1 Description of deposits.....	2
3.2 Finds .....	3
3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains .....	4
4 Discussion And Conclusions.....	4
Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory .....	5
Appendix 2 Bibliography and references.....	5
Appendix 3 Summary of Site Details.....	5

**LIST OF FIGURES**

- Fig. 1 Site location  
 Fig. 2 Site plan  
 Fig. 3 Site plan  
 Fig. 4 Sections 1 to 5

Cover Plate: View of the Norman Hall from the east.

## SUMMARY

*From April 2003 to August 2004 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at The Norman Hall, 9 Church Street, Sutton Courtenay, Oxfordshire (NGR SU 5041 9431). The work was commissioned by Quentin Hoodless in advance of the construction of new garages and swimming pool. The watching brief revealed a number of rubbish pits relating to the occupation of Norman Hall and its associated farm buildings. A few probably residual prehistoric flints were recovered from these features.*

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 From April 2003 to August 2004 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at The Norman Hall, 9 Church Street, Sutton Courtenay, Oxfordshire (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Quentin Hoodless in respect of a planning application for new garages and swimming pool (Planning Application No. SUT/8721/14).
- 1.1.2 A project brief was set by Hugh Coddington, Deputy County Archaeologist (OCAS 2002).
- 1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief.

#### 1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies on first terrace gravel at 50 m above OD. The site is situated on the south side of the River Thames on Church Street, Sutton Courtenay opposite the George and Dragon public house.

#### 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 2002) and is reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 The Manor House dates to the late 12th century and is a Grade I Listed Building. It is thought to date to around 1191 and is attributed to the work of Robert de Courtenay when he inherited the Manor.
- 1.3.3 The building may originally have been a chapel that was converted soon thereafter. A survey of 1458 indicates that the site included an old house, a dovecote and a sheep house. Later documents suggest that the site also included an eleven bay thatched barn, two stables, an ox-house, a stone hay-house and a chapel.
- 1.3.4 A building survey undertaken by OAU in 1999 confirmed the location of the late 12th century hall, identified a further part of the building of considerable age and confirmed the early 20th century date of the remainder of the house. Several primary features partially survive within the original building and the Phase II part of the

house but primary internal features of interest also survive within the early 20th century building (OAU 1999).

## 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 The site investigated was to the north-west of the present buildings (Fig. 2). The area of the new garages and swimming pool were cleared prior to deep intrusive groundworks. These groundworks were carried out in a number of phases: the first of these were the foundation pads either side of the swimming pool, followed by the excavation of the swimming pool. After the pool base was in place, the foundations and service trenches for the garages and associated building were excavated. The final phase was the excavation of drainage trenches leading away from the building.
- 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 (Fig 3 and 4)

- 3.1.1 The groundworks started with a 0.2 m reduction of the ground level to remove debris from the site clearance and old tree stumps. All the excavations cut into the natural (3), which consisted of a light reddish brown clay overlying river terrace gravel. The clay had been sealed by a 0.4 m to 0.5 m thick old topsoil layer of dark brown silty sand (2). This had been cut by a number of pit features, which all appeared to be at the west corner of the site and along the edge of the natural terrace, which dropped down to the river.
- 3.1.2 Three of the pits (10, 12 and 18) were all similar in shape and had similar fills. Pits 10 and 18 were observed in section. These had sloping sides rounding to a flat base. Pit 12 was observed in plan during the excavation of the swimming pool and was sub-rectangular in shape. The pits (10, 12 and 18) measured 1.65 m wide x 0.75 m depth, 4.3 m long x 2 m wide x 1.45 m in depth and 1.25 m wide x 0.56 m in depth respectively. These were all filled by dark grey brown silty clay (11, 13 and 19) (Fig.4, sections 2 and 5).
- 3.1.3 To the south-west of these features was a large feature (16) seen only in the section of the foundation trench. It had very steep uneven sides and a narrow concave base

and measured 0.7 m long x 1.3 m wide and 1.1 m in depth. This had been filled by a dark reddish brown silty sand (17). This was a pit of unknown purpose or date (Fig. 4, section 3).

3.1.4 To the south of this was a large feature (4) possibly a large 19th century rubbish pit infilling a natural hollow in the slope towards the river. It was oval in shape with steep sloping sides and a shallow concave base, measuring 9 m x 4.6 m x 1.75 m and containing a number of fills.

3.1.5 The primary fill was a very dark grey silty clay (5), which had silted up in the base of the feature. This had been overlain by a spread of reddish brown silty sand (6), which was sealed below a number of deposits of material infilling the feature. These were a dark brown silty sand (7) with a large number of limestone fragments and another deposit of dark brown silty sand (8). Both of these were sealed below a dark brown silty sand with reddish brown patches (9) (Fig. 4, section 1). It was observed that fill 7 spread across the top of a smaller pit (14) just to the south of feature 4. This had steep sloping sides rounding to a concave base measuring 2.3 m x 2 m x 1.15 m and contained a fill of dark brown silty sand (15) (Fig. 4, section 4). Sealing all these features was a 0.5m - 0.6 m thick layer of very dark grey brown silty sand cultivated topsoil (1). This had demolition and construction debris pressed into the top of this layer.

## 3.2 Finds

3.2.1 A number of finds were recovered from some of the features and consisted mainly of bone and flint. Also two fragments of oyster shell were recovered from contexts 8 and 11. The bone was recovered from the two pits 10, 12 and feature 4, and the flint from pits 10 and 12. No pottery was recovered from the site.

### *Bone by Emma Evans*

3.2.2 Eleven fragments of bone (113 g) in good condition were recovered from the site, five of which were identified to species. A cattle tibia, pig mandible, sheep skull fragment and two sheep/goat teeth indicate that the main domestic species were present at this site. The sheep skull fragment had had the horn core removed, which is often noted at areas of horn working or skinning dating from the early BC to the early medieval period.

### *Flint by Kate Cramp*

3.2.3 A small assemblage of three struck flints and one piece of burnt unworked flint (42 g) was recovered from the site (Table 1). A single piece of natural flint was also recorded (context 11).

3.2.4 The bladelets are in fresh condition and, while difficult to date in isolation, are probably no later than Neolithic. The piece of irregular waste has been heavily calcined and is chronologically undiagnostic.

Table 1: The flint assemblage by context.

Category:	Context 11	Context 13	Total:
Bladelet	2	-	2
Unclassifiable debitage	1	-	1
Burnt unworked flint	-	1	1
Total:	3	1	4

### 3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

3.3.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified during the watching brief.

## 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The watching brief revealed a number of features, which consisted of a series of pits. These pits appear to be in two groups on the edge of the natural terrace edge sloping down to the river Thames and were situated to the rear of the farm outbuildings and barns.
- 4.1.2 The rubbish pits contained butchered bone remains of domestic species from the occupation of Norman Hall and the later associated farm buildings. No pottery was recovered to improve the dating evidence from the site, and the confines of the trench and excavation methodology precluded detailed examination of the features.
- 4.1.3 Nonetheless, given that the pits cut through a fairly deep accumulated soil layer, itself likely to be the result of terracing in the medieval period or later, it seems reasonable to conclude that the flints can only be taken to suggest the presence of prehistoric activity in the vicinity.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Ctx</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Length</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>
1	Layer	0.5-6 m			Topsoil	
2	Layer	0.4-5 m			Subsoil	
3	Natural				Clay over gravel	
4	Cut	1.75 m	4.5 m	9 m	Large rubbish pit	
5	Fill				Fill of pit	Bone
6	Fill				Fill of pit	
7	Fill				Fill of pit	
8	Fill				Fill of pit	Bone, Shell
9	Fill				Fill of pit	Bone
10	Cut	0.75 m	1.65 m		Rubbish pit	
11	Fill				Fill of pit	Bone, Flint and Shell
12	Cut	1.45 m	2 m	4.3 m	Rubbish pit	
13	Fill				Fill of pit	Bone, Flint
14	Cut	1.15 m	2 m	2.3 m	Rubbish pit	
15	Fill				Fill of pit	
16	Cut	1.1 m	1.3 m	0.7 m	Rubbish pit	
17	Fill				Fill of pit	
18	Cut	0.56 m	1.25 m		Rubbish pit	
19	Fill				Fill of pit	

## APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

OA 1992 *Fieldwork Manual (1st edition ed. Wilkinson D)*

OAU 1999 *Norman Hall, Sutton Courtenay. Building Investigation and Recording*

OCAS 2002 *Design Brief for Archaeological Watching Brief.*

## APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

**Site name:** The Norman Hall, 9 Church Street, Sutton Courtenay, Oxfordshire

**Site code:** SUTHAL 02

**Grid reference:** NGR SU 5041 9431

**Type of watching brief:** Ground works for the construction of new garages and swimming pool.

**Date and duration of project:** A total of seven visits from the 29/4/2003 to 5/8/2004.

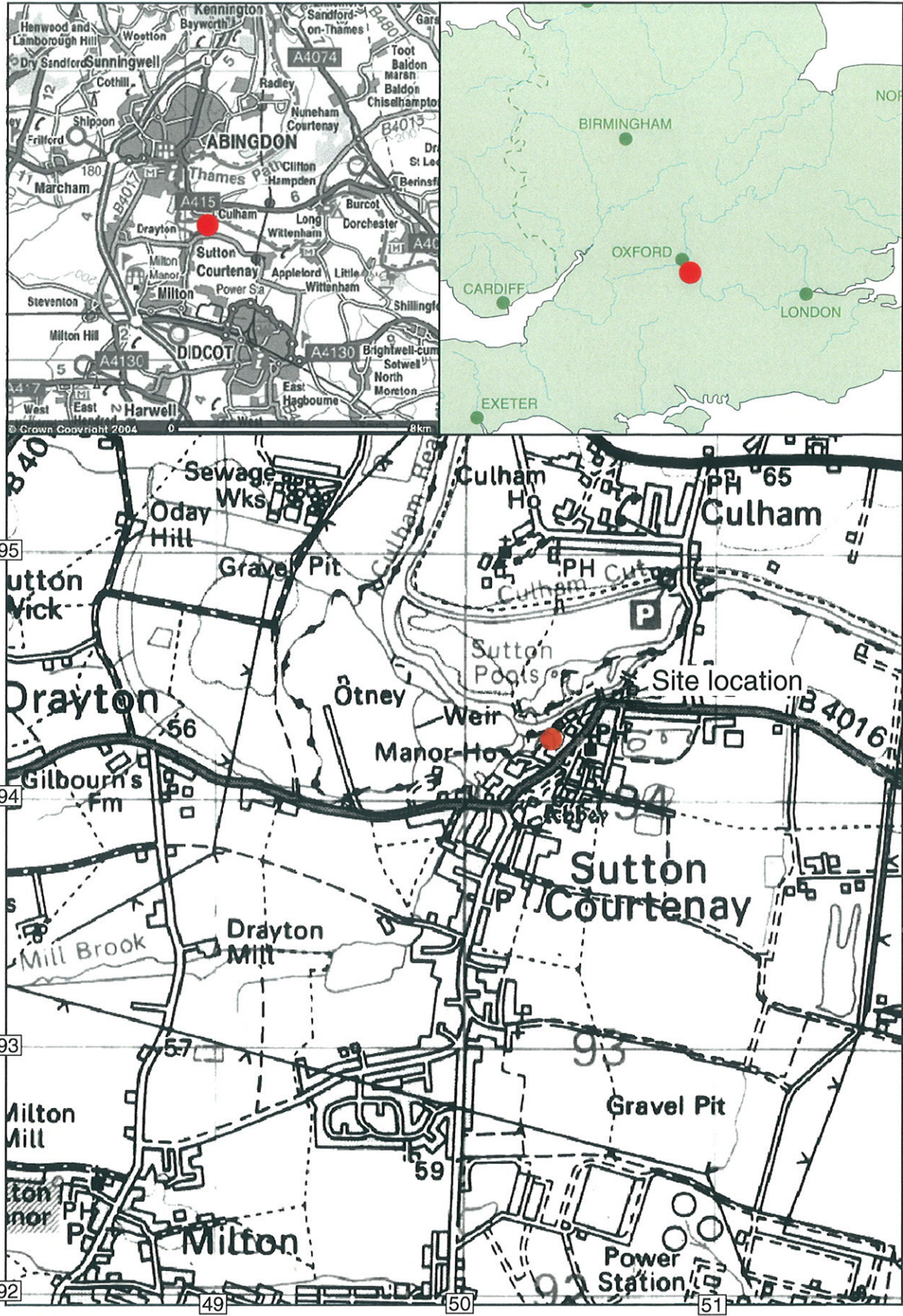
**Area of site:** 20 m x 35 m

**Summary of results:** The watching brief revealed a number of pits probably relating to the Norman Hall and associated farm buildings. A number of residual prehistoric flints were recovered within the features.



**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: OXCMS 2003.1





Scale 1:50,000

Reproduced from the Landranger 1:50,000 scale by permission of the Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office  
 © Crown Copyright 1994. All rights reserved. Licence No. AL 100005569

Figure 1: Site location

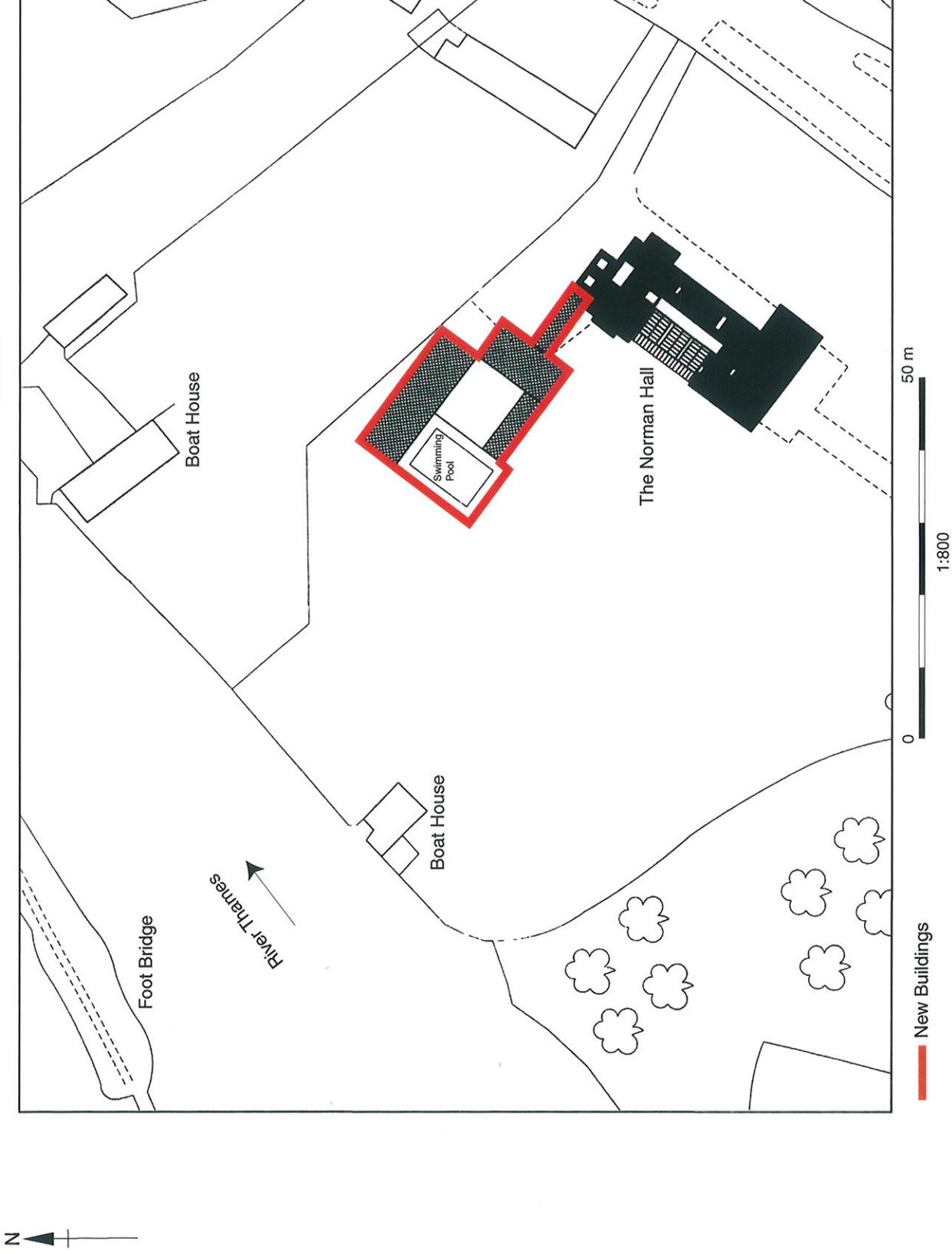


Figure 2: Site plan

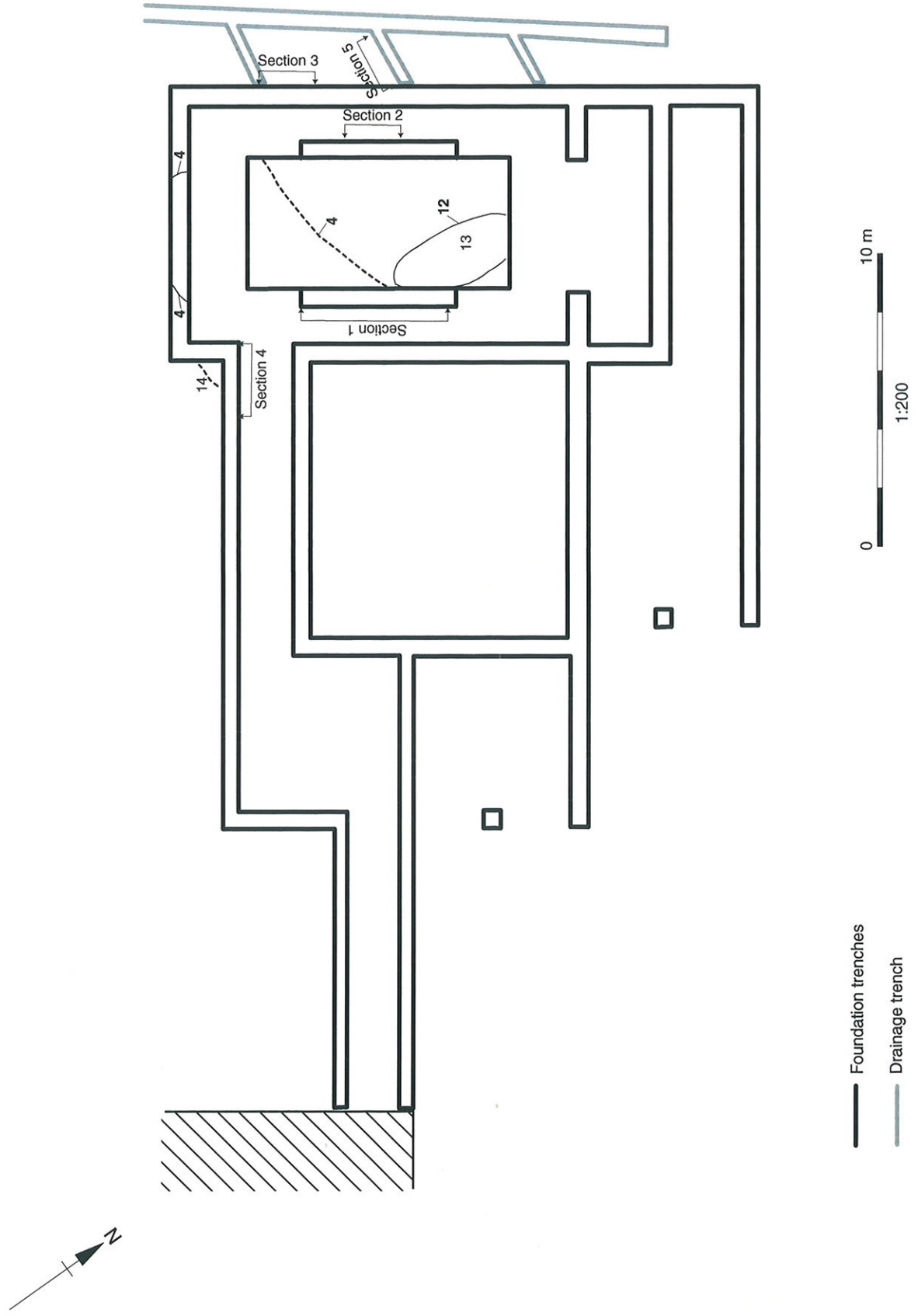


Figure 3: Site plan

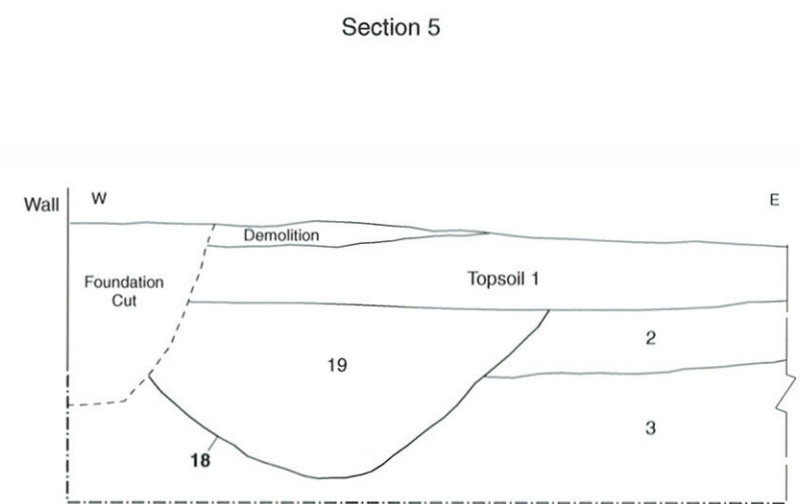
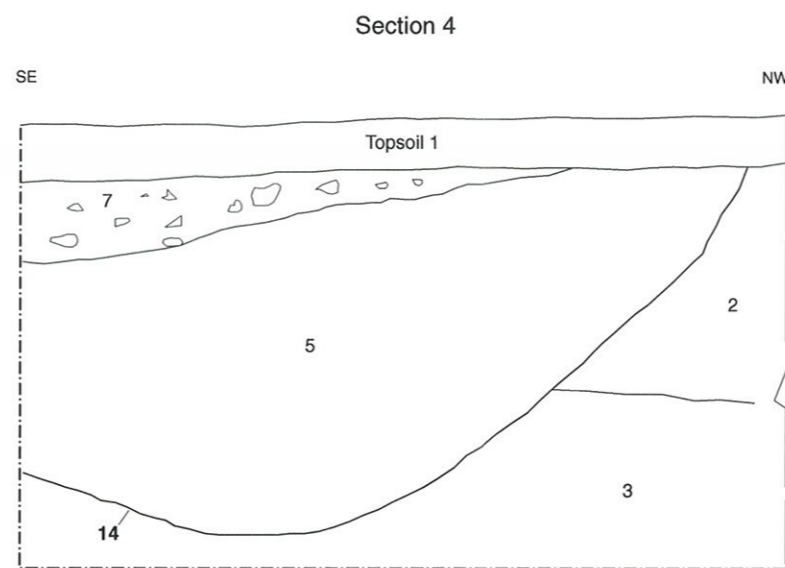
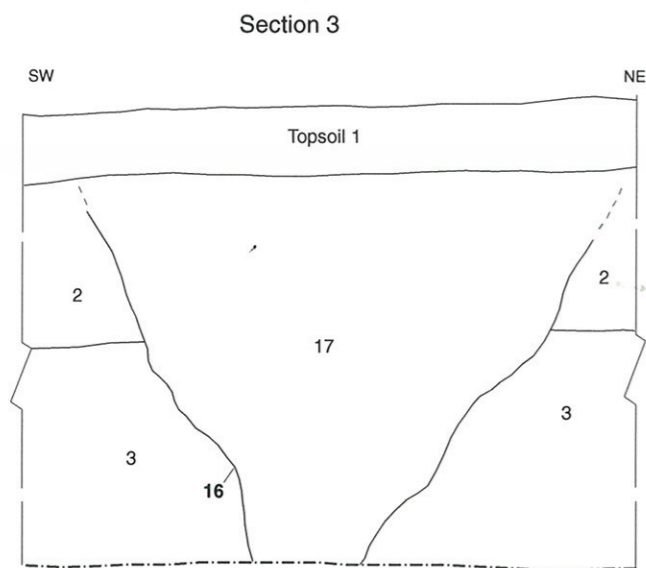
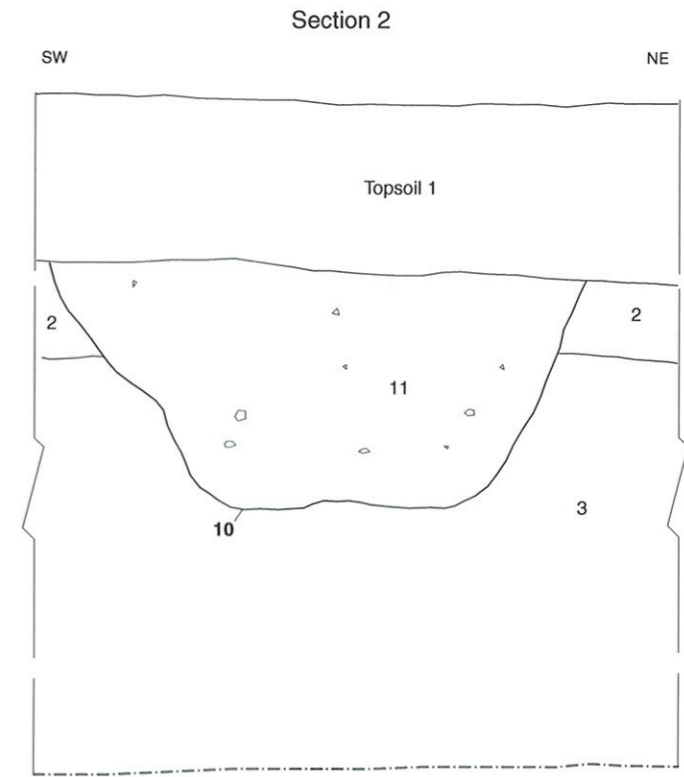
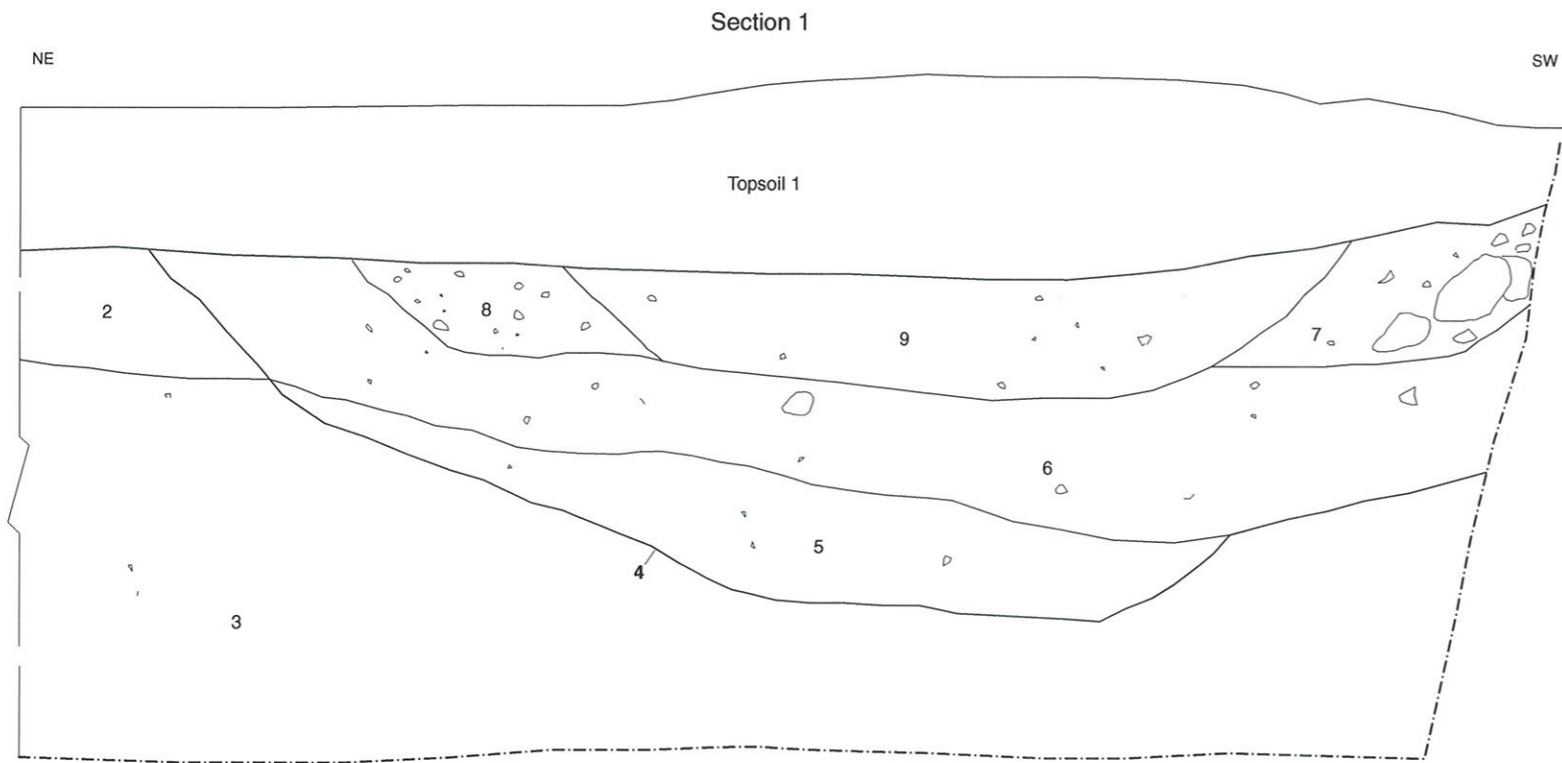


Figure 4: Sections 1 to 5



### Oxford Archaeology

Janus House  
Osney Mead  
Oxford OX2 0ES

t: (0044) 01865 263800  
f: (0044) 01865 793496  
e: [info@oxfordarch.co.uk](mailto:info@oxfordarch.co.uk)  
w: [www.oxfordarch.co.uk](http://www.oxfordarch.co.uk)



### Oxford Archaeology North

Storey Institute  
Meeting House Lane  
Lancaster LA1 1TF

t: (0044) 01524 541000  
f: (0044) 01524 848606  
e: [lancinfo@oxfordarch.co.uk](mailto:lancinfo@oxfordarch.co.uk)  
w: [www.oxfordarch.co.uk](http://www.oxfordarch.co.uk)



**Director:** David Jennings, BA MIFA FSA

Oxford Archaeological Unit is a  
Private Limited Company, N<sup>o</sup>: 1618597  
and a Registered Charity, N<sup>o</sup>: 285627

**Registered Office:**

Oxford Archaeological Unit  
Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES