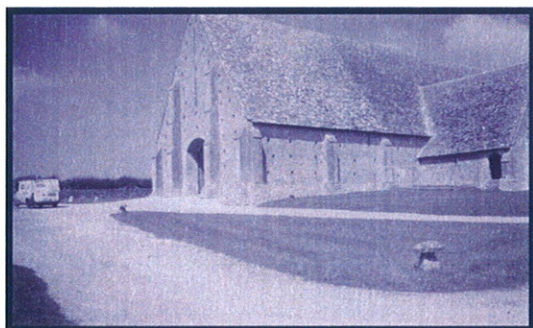


Great Coxwell Barn
Great Coxwell
Faringdon
Oxon



Archaeological Watching Brief



Oxford Archaeology

8th October 2002



THE NATIONAL TRUST

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**Great Coxwell Barn, Great Coxwell,
Faringdon, Oxon.****Lightning Conductor Excavations*****ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT*****CONTENTS**

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SUMMARY

In August 2002, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Great Coxwell Barn near Faringdon, Oxon (NGR SU 2690 9400). The work was commissioned by the National Trust in advance of the installation of a new system for lightning conduction at the Barn site. The watching brief in the first instance involved the excavation by OA of shallow 'earthing' pits, some of which were excavated to greater width and depth by the site contractors under archaeological supervision. Connecting trenches to the pits were excavated and these were also monitored. The work revealed areas of an undated, stone surfacing on both the north-west and the east sides of the barn, with that on the east side apparently part of an area of an extant pitched stone surface.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In August 2002 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Great Coxwell Barn (Fig. 1) near Faringdon, Oxon (NGR SU 2690 9400). The work was commissioned by the National Trust in advance of the installation of a new system of lightning conductors at the Barn site.

1.1.2 No formal brief was prepared, though discussions took place between OA and the National Trust's Regional Archaeologist as to the required level of archaeological input.

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 installation of the lightning conductors.

2.1.2 To make a drawn and written record of the excavation work and to make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 An archaeological supervisor attended the site in the first instance to excavate and record six pits measuring 0.3 m by 0.3 m deep that were excavated adjacent to the walls of the building for the insertion of lightning conductor rods. Due to the fact that the correct resistivity reading could not be obtained with those lightning rods inserted in pits 4, 5 and 6, larger pits measuring 1 m x 1 m square were excavated to the required depths under archaeological supervision.

2.2.2 Narrow trenches measuring 0.1 m wide by 0.3 m deep were excavated by the contractors under archaeological supervision from the side of each pit to walls of the barn for the insertion of earthing cables (Fig. 2).

- 2.2.3 All archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:20 and sample sections were drawn at scales of 1:20. The pits were located on an architect's plan of the barn. A general photographic record of the work was made and recording followed procedures detailed in the *OA Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

Pit 1 and trench

- 3.1.1 This pit (Fig. 3) revealed a redeposited topsoil (100) extending up to a possible paved area consisting of limestones (101) of varying thickness lying horizontally and abutting the adjacent wall footings. The material was not convincing as a surface and the area observed was too restricted to provide positive evidence. It is possible that 101 represents fallen roof slates lying flat on the ground.

Pit 2 and trench

- 3.1.2 This pit (Fig. 3) revealed a clean topsoil (200), which abutted and partially overlay a layer of limestone rubble (201). The stones were rounded on their upper surfaces and pitched a various angles, they also abutted the adjacent wall foundation (203). The stones directly overlay the natural limestone (202). It is possible that the stones formed part of a pitched stone surface, similar to that which exists to the east of the barn.

Pit 3 and trench

- 3.1.3 This pit (not illustrated) and trench revealed a clean topsoil (300) abutting the adjacent wall foundation. The potential stone surface observed to the east (pit and trench 2) was not seen within this trench.

Pit 4 and trench

- 3.1.4 This pit (Fig. 4) and trench revealed a clean topsoil (400) overlying a soil layer (401) containing 20th century artifacts (not retained). To the west of the trench, this deposit overlay a coarse sand bedding (402) for a water pipe which runs diagonally across the trench on a roughly north-south alignment, elsewhere 401 overlay naturally bedded limestone (403). Again, no evidence of the stone surfacing seen elsewhere was apparent (although this may have been truncated by the water pipe and the presence of 20th century material within 401 suggests this area has been disturbed).

Pit 5 and trench

- 3.1.5 The same sequence of deposits as that in Pit 4 was recorded (Fig. 4). A single abraded sherd of medieval pottery was recovered from layer 501 below the topsoil. Secure dating is not possible from the quality of the sherd.

Pit 6 and trench

- 3.1.6 This pit (Fig. 5) revealed a clean topsoil (600) overlying a pebbly clay (601), which is interpreted as a possible yard surface that in turn overlay natural limestone bedrock.
- 3.1.7 To the south-east of 601, the topsoil abutted a layer of limestone rubble with rounded edges (602). The stones were pitched and arranged in east-west lines. To the south-west of 602 was an area of rounded limestone rubble pitched at various angles and of varying size. It is probable that these are the remains of a stone surface, and part of the visible linear arrangement of pitched stone that it abuts. This paving has a slight camber away from the wall to the north-east, where there is a limestone drain still *in-situ*. A layer of gravel in and around the probable surface (602), suggests an episode of repair of uncertain date.

3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 A single sherd of abraded medieval pottery was recovered from layer 501. No other finds were recovered in the course of the excavations.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 Convincing areas of stone surfacing were identified in Pits 2, 5 and 6 with the suggestion of a surface, or disturbed surface in Pit 1. Establishing the extent and date of these areas of surfacing was problematic, given the limited confines of the pits and linking trenches excavated by the contractors.

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	0.3 m			Topsoil	
101	Structure	0.12 m			Possible stone surface	
200	Layer	0.3 m			Topsoil	
201	Structure	0.2 m			Stone surface	
202	Layer				Natural limestone	
203	Structure				Barn wall foundation	
300	Layer	0.3 m			Topsoil	
400	Layer	0.3 m			Topsoil	
401	Layer	0.18 m			Soil and stone layer with modern iron pieces	
402	Layer	0.25 m			Sand bedding for water pipe	
403	Layer				Natural limestone and clay	
500	Layer	0.3 m			Topsoil	
501	Layer	0.22 m			Soil layer, C20 including sherd of residual medieval pottery	
502	Layer				Natural limestone	
600	Layer	0.3 m			Topsoil deposit	
601	Layer	0.14 m			Soil and stone layer	
602	Layer	0.12 m			stone surface	
603	Layer	0.1 m			stone surface	

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

OA 1992 *Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992)

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Great Coxwell Barn, Great Coxwell, Faringdon, Oxon.

Site code: FAGCOX02

Grid reference: SU 2690 9400

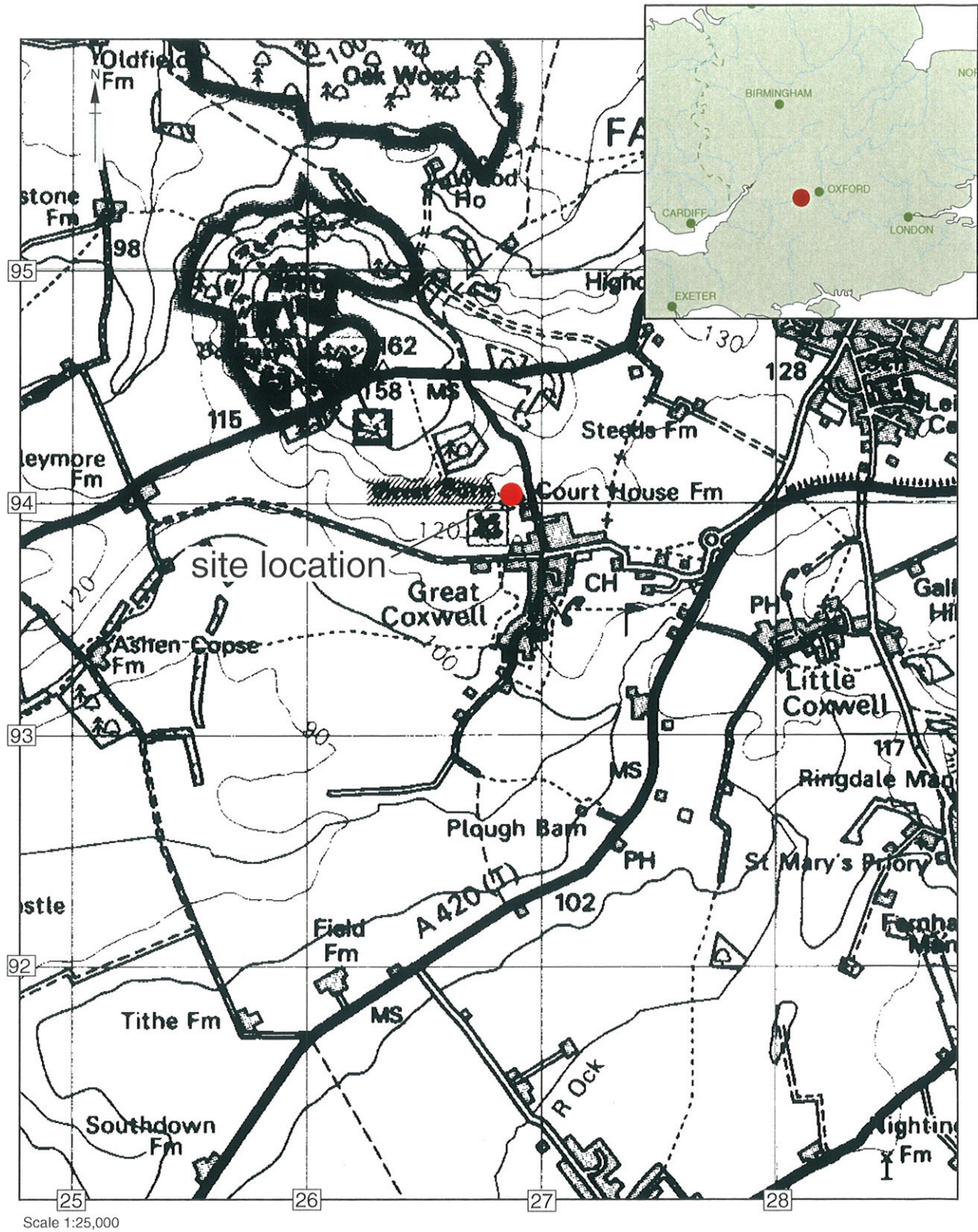
Type of watching brief: Excavation and recording for insertion of essential services

Date and duration of project: 2 days, August 2002

Area of site: 0.2 ha.

Summary of results: Areas of undated cobbling identified beneath topsoil deposits

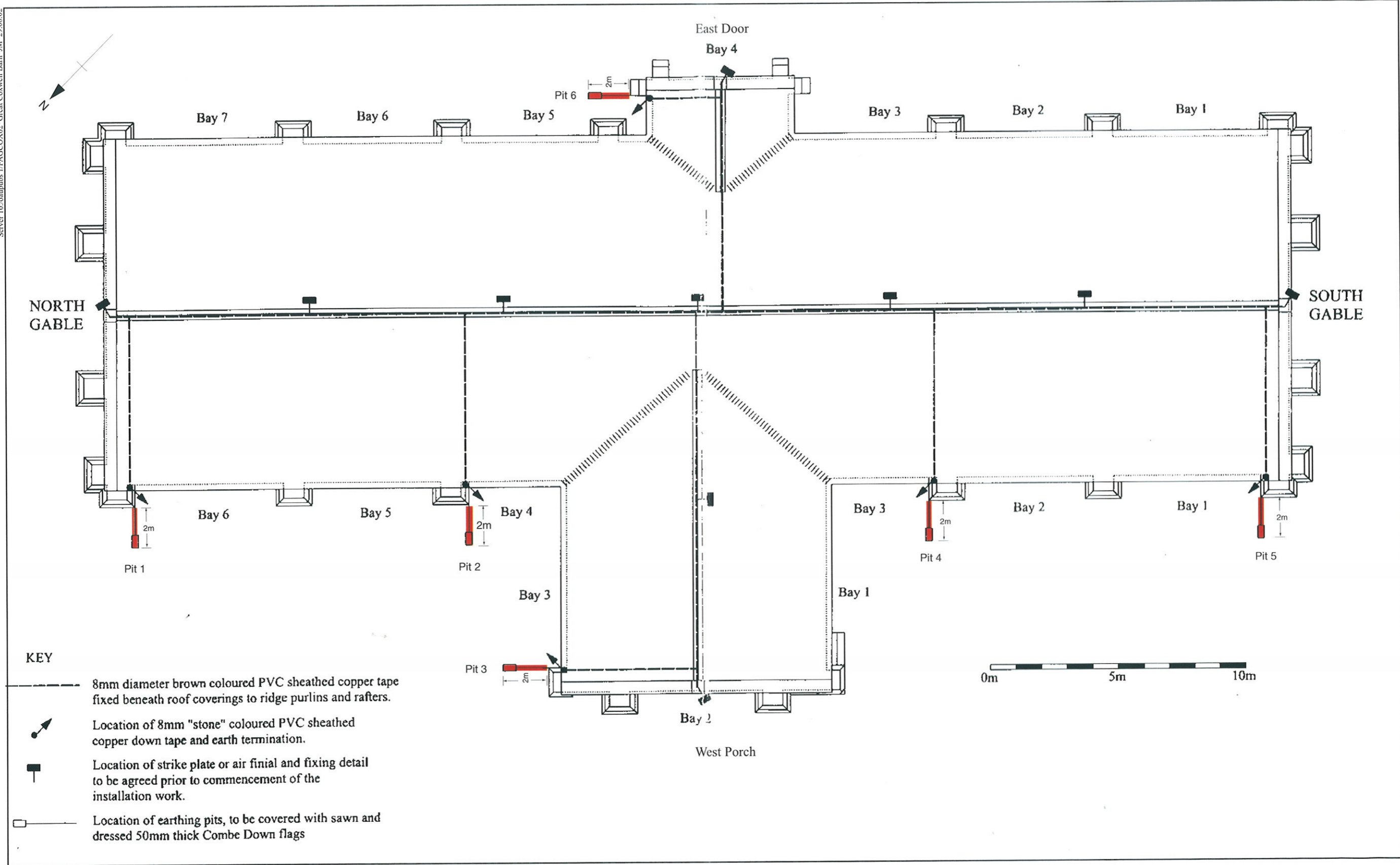
Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with the National Trust in due course, under the following accession number: FAGCOX02



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Figure 1: Site location.

Server 10:\pubs\1\FAGCOX02*Great Coxwell Barn*JM*29.08.02



Taken from Plan 3695 09 A. Copyright of Rodney Melville and Partners, Leamington Spa.

Figure 2 : Plan of Great Coxwell Barn, Location of Pits and Trenches.

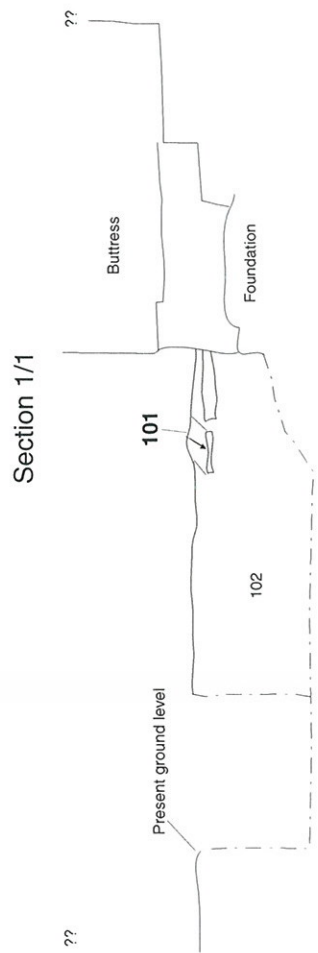
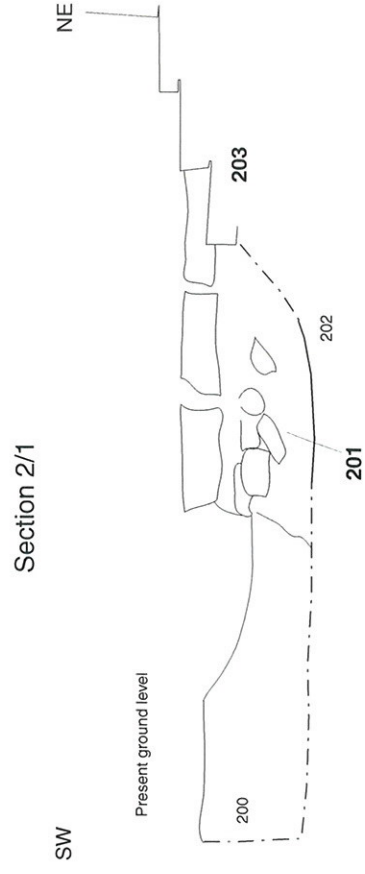
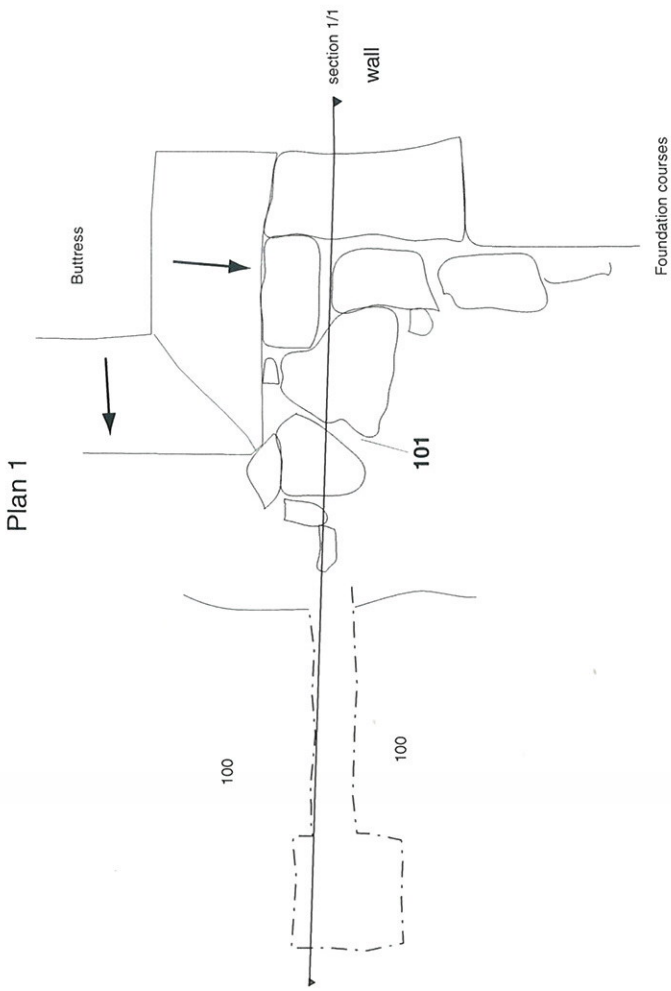
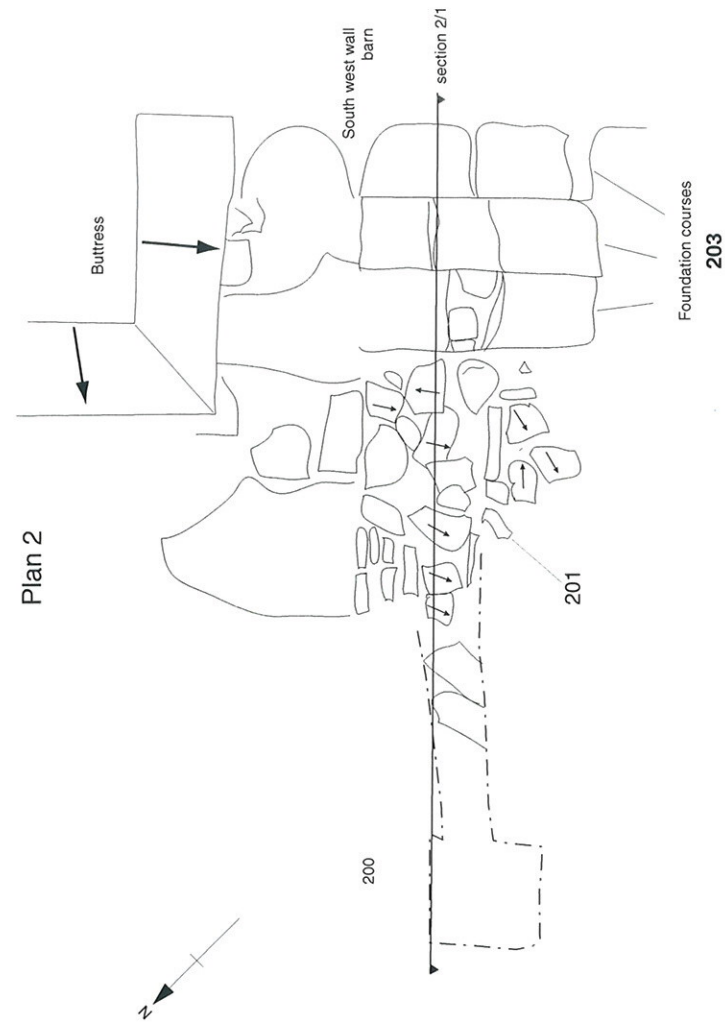


Figure 3: Pit 1 and 2. Plans and Sections.

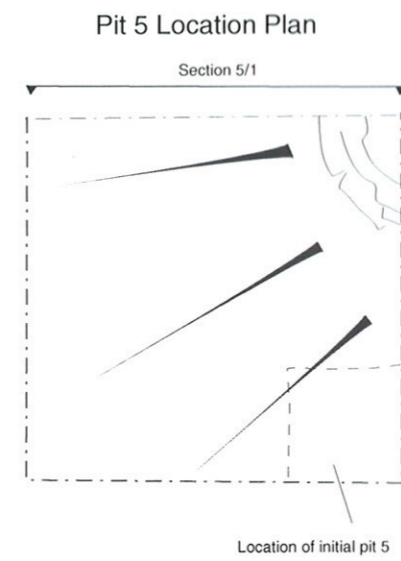
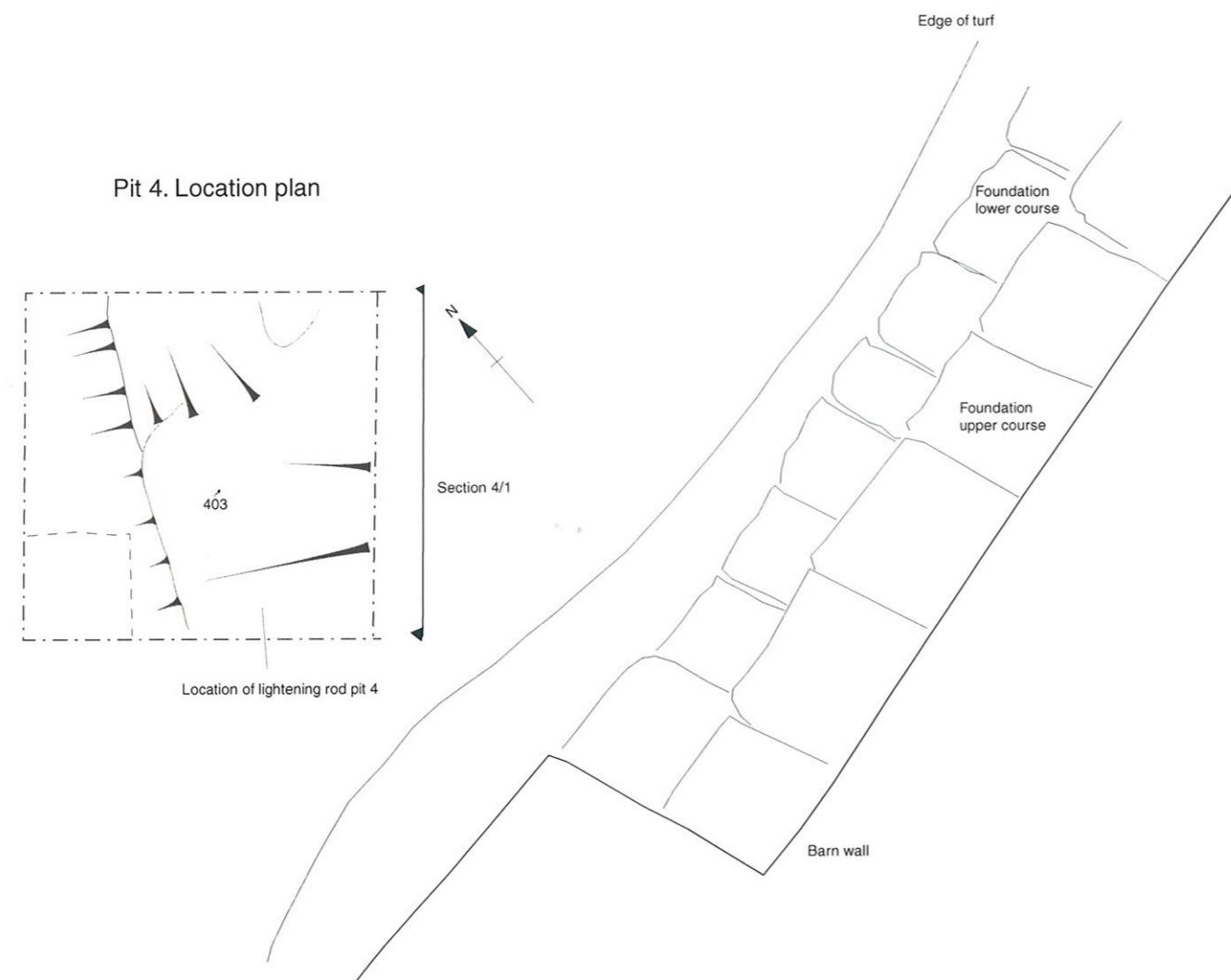
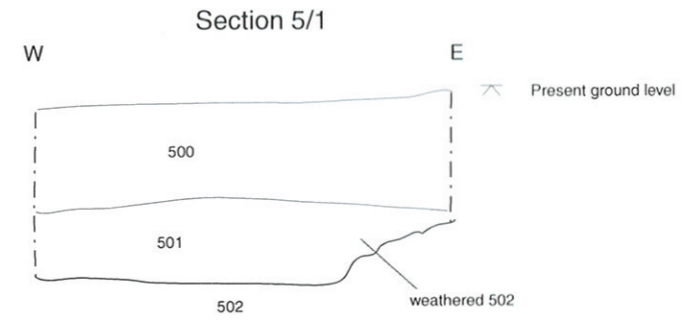
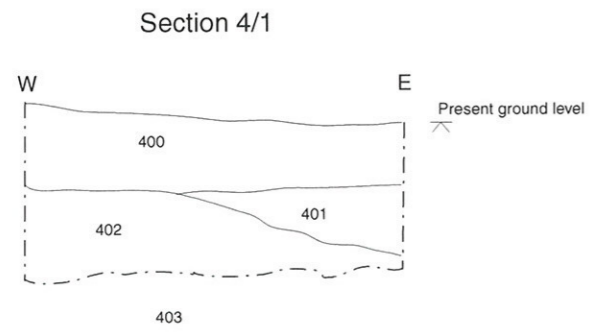


Figure 4. Plans and Section of Pits 4 and 5

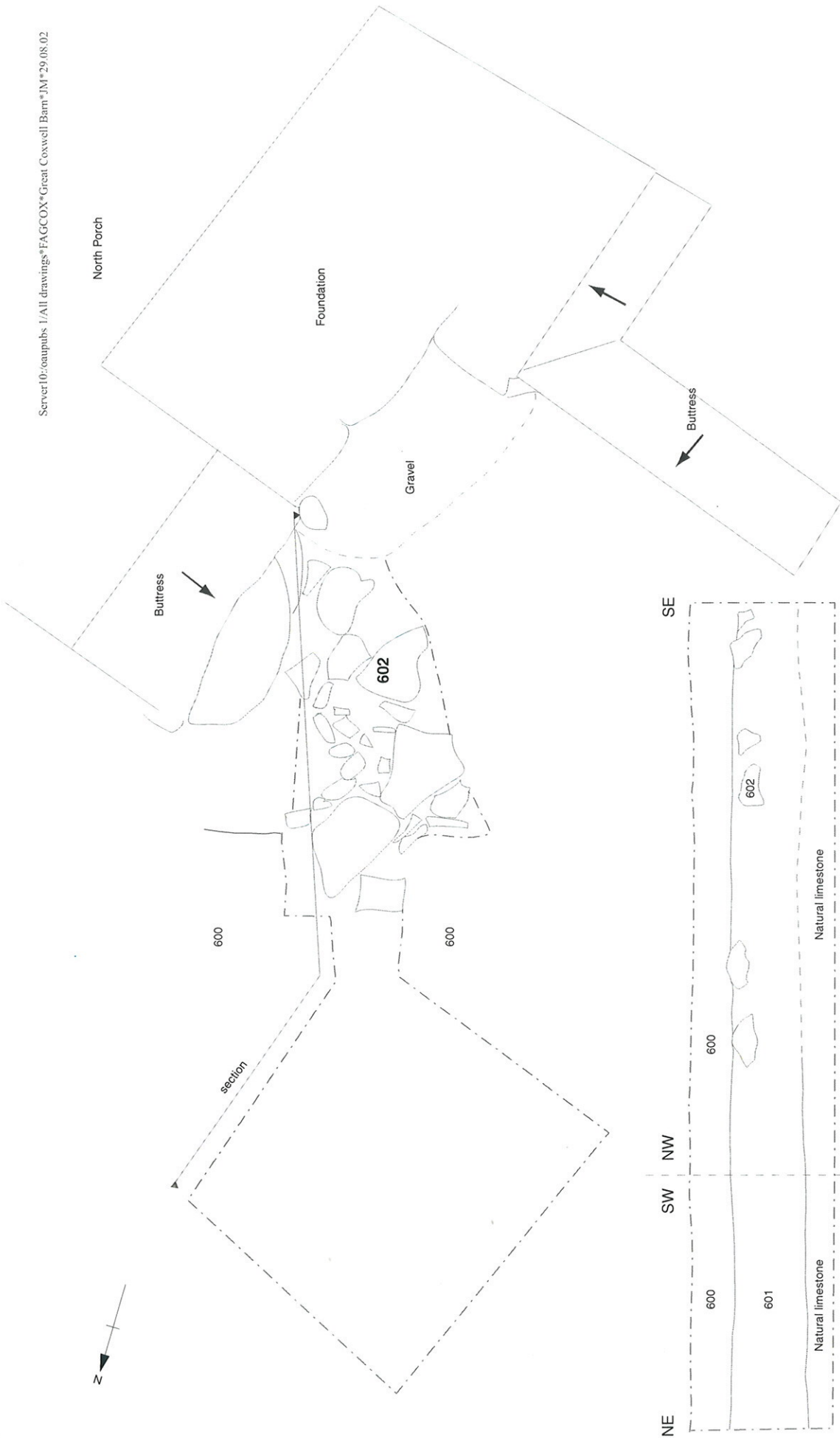


Figure 5: Pit 6. Plan and Section



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