Savile House
Music Practice Rooms
New College
Oxford

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Savile House, Music Practise Room, New College, Oxford

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Plates

Summary

In September 2014, Oxford Archaeology (OA) undertook an archaeological evaluation and topographical survey of the 17th century civil war defences at Savile House Music Practise Rooms, New College, Oxford (SP 5172 0671). The evaluation revealed the sand gravel of the second (Summertown-Radley) gravel terrace, which appeared to slope gradually from south to north and had been truncated by a single undated post hole. The fill of the post hole and the natural gravel were directly overlain by a possible trample deposit associated with the construction of an earth bank which formed part of the inner civil war defences constructed around Oxford in the 17th century. No evidence for the loessic subsoil which overlies the gravel terrace was recovered in-situ, although the composition of the deposits which created the bank was predominantly re-deposited loess overlain by a very compacted layer of re-deposited sand and gravel. This differed from the composition of the rampart of the more substantial outer defensive circuit recorded at Manor Place to the east of the site, although it was very similar to evidence recovered for the composition of another section of the inner bank during groundworks for the construction of The New Oxford University Clubhouse on the east side of Mansfield Road. It is entirely possible that the marked difference in the composition of the inner and outer defences reflects a better organised construction programme for the latter, although the topographical and stratigraphical evidence from the evaluation may indicate that an earlier feature in the landscape has influenced the location of the inner defences, and possibly been incorporated into them.

Following on from the results of the evaluation, an additional topographical and auger survey of the defensive bank was requested by the Oxford City Council (OCC) Archaeologist. The results of this survey confirmed that the composition of the bank was predominantly a re-deposition of the loessic subsoil which overlies the second (Summertown-Radley) gravel terrace upon which Oxford sits.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 Following consultation with the archaeologist at Oxford City Council (David Radford), Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Austin Newport Ltd to undertake the excavation of two trial trenches and a topographical survey at New College music practise rooms, Savile House, Mansfield Road (SP 5172 0671 - Fig. 1). OSL (optically stimulated luminescence) samples were also taken but will be the subject of an addendum to this report once processed.

1.1.2 The work was undertaken in advance of a planning application for a proposed extension to the existing building. An assessment of the heritage resource at the site was produced by Dr Roland Harris (Harris 2014), and this also outlined the design of the proposed development and proposed a mitigation strategy which was designed to minimise the impact of the latter upon the former.

1.1.3 The site lies on the line of the inner bank of the northern section of the defensive circuit constructed around Oxford during the English civil war, and the archaeological investigations were designed to further inform any potential mitigation strategy. The trenches were located on the line of the bank to assess the level of survival, and the elevation of any pre-existing archaeological horizons which may be impacted on by the proposed development.

1.1.4 A written scheme of investigation (WSI) was produced, which outlined how OA would implement the works within the requirements of local and national planning policies. Two policies in the Oxford Local Plan 2001-16 (adopted November 2005) were of particular relevance to below ground archaeology: Policies HE2 and HE3 (Harris, 2014). Furthermore all work was carried out in full accordance with the appropriate sections of the Institute for Archaeologists (IFA) Code of Conduct, the IFA Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology, the IFA Standards and Guidance for excavation, the IFA Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief, and the British Archaeologists and Developers Liaison Group Code of Practice.

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The proposed development site lies between the Cherwell and the Thames (Isis), near the edge of the second (Summertown-Radley) gravel terrace, and a short distance west of the first (flood plain type) terrace, overlying Oxford clay and Kellaway beds (BGS map sheet 236).

1.2.2 The site is situated on the north edge of the historic centre of Oxford, and lies at approximately 62m OD.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 An Archaeological Assessment and Mitigation Strategy has been prepared by Dr Roland B Harris for this project (Harris, 2014), which details the archaeological and documentary background of the site. It summarizes the history of the site as evidenced by documentary and cartographic sources and by previous archaeological investigations on the site and in the vicinity. The archaeological and historical background from this document are reproduced below, full references and illustrations can be found in the source document (Harris, 2014). Paragraph 2.2.11 is an addition.

2.2 Previous archaeological investigations

Savile Road, 1907

2.2.1 Excavations in Savile Road during drainage works led to the discovery of ceramic (presumably pipe-clay) wig curlers. Such wig curlers are post-medieval in date, and especially common in the 18th century.

Manchester College 1913

2.2.2 Excavations at Manchester College during construction of Percy Worthington's new dining hall (i.e. the Arlosh Hall) produced post-medieval pottery and clay pipe.

New College School 1959

2.2.3 During addition of a hall and classroom block to New College School, which had moved to its present location in Savile Road in 1903, works apparently revealed sections of the Civil War ditch on the north side of the site. The fact that the ditch was sectioned is, perhaps, a little surprising given that the boundary between New College School and Mansfield College appears to run along the top of the 17th-century bank, with the ditch to the north in the grounds of Mansfield College.

Wadham College 1972 and 1974

2.2.4 During building works, evidence was uncovered of the Austin (i.e. Augustinian) Friary that, between 1268 and the Dissolution, occupied the site later used for the 17th-century college. Two burials were discovered just south-east of the 17th-century kitchen wing and, east of this against the eastern boundary of the friary site, remains of a late medieval wall with windows were identified, which had been incorporated into a post-1613 college service building.

Savile Road 1975-6

2.2.5 During unspecified works John Blair found a 1761 bottle seal in a builder's trench. A bottle neck was recovered from a trench outside the entrance to New College School. It is assumed that this record, derived from the Oxford Urban Archaeological Database, refers to two separate trenches and finds.

Wadham College 1989

2.2.6 The remains of the Austin Friary building identified in 1972-4 were demolished, and a watching brief recorded details of the foundations and a 19th-century stone-lined and brick-vaulted cess pit.

Manchester College 1991

2.2.7 Archaeological excavation prior to construction of a new accommodation block revealed evidence of staggered boundaries depicted on early maps. The boundaries were cut about by later pits and quarries.

Mansfield College, Hands Building 1992

2.2.8 An archaeological evaluation was carried out in 1992 to inform the planning of a new accommodation block (the Hands Building, constructed 1993). The trenches were located in the southern part of Mansfield College, north of – and cutting into – the Civil War defences that mark the boundary between Savile House and Mansfield College. Two trenches were dug: Trench 1 was 3.4m long and 1.3m wide, located at right-angles to the bank and cutting into it by 2.8m; Trench 2 was 15.5m long and 1.5m wide, and was located slightly to the north, parallel to and slightly west of the (subsequent) Hands Building. The investigations revealed that, north of the upstanding bank, there was a

ditch at least 7m wide and 2m deep, with sides angled about 45° and a flat bottom. The bottom of the ditch was at c.58.7m OD, with the 17th-century ground level to the north at c.60.6m OD.

Mansfield College, Rothermere American Institute 1998-9

2.2.9 Excavation in advance of building the new institute along the Love Lane (i.e. western) side of the college site identified three main periods of activity. Prehistoric evidence was limited to a single pit, identified as Neolithic on the basis of the 13 worked flints within the fill. Romano-British features were more numerous, comprising gullies, boundary ditches, pits, post-holes, with two main phases of activity dating to the late 1st to early 2nd centuries AD, and the late 3rd to 4th centuries AD. The features and finds are consistent with a low status rural settlement, such as a group of farmsteads or a village.

Chemistry Research Laboratory, South Parks Road 2001

2.2.10 Excavation in advance of building the new laboratory revealed evidence of three main phases of activity. Prehistoric features were limited to two mid-late Neolithic to early Bronze Age pits and a ditch, with the assemblage of 303 worked flints mostly coming from one of the pits. Evidence for a Romano-British settlement comprised pits, post holes, gullies, small boundary ditches, and a decapitated inhumation, all dating from the 2nd to 4th centuries AD. Although the Romano-British settlement was divided into two main phases of activity, with different organization of the land, the northern part of the site was consistently less used and this suggests that the core of the settlement lay to the south or south-east: the features and finds are consistent with a low status rural settlement, such as a group of farmsteads or a village. Finally, the site produced evidence for the outer Civil War defences, with the ditch here measuring around 11m wide and 2.4m deep, begun outside the earlier defences (of 1642) in 1644-5. There was some evidence for the expected bank south (i.e. inwards) of the ditch, together with evidence for removal of a primary structure at the bottom of the ditch: this is likely to have been a palisade or sharpened storm poles (both hindering attackers and exposing them to fire).

New Oxford University Clubhouse 2001 and 2003

2.2.11 An evaluation on the site of The King's Mound revealed a roughly east-west aligned ditch cut, which the subsequent watching brief on the site of the new clubhouse revealed to be the ditch and associated bank of the inner defensive circuit (OA 2001 and OA 2003). The King's Mound itself is almost certainly the remnant of a bastion or gun platform shown by Bernard de Gomme on his contemporary map of the defences (Lattey et al. 1936), and also by all subsequent cartographic sources.

Mansfield College, Garden Building 2005-6

2.2.12 An archaeological watching brief was carried out during construction of the Garden Building in 2006. The site was located in the southern part of Mansfield College, north of the Civil War defences that mark the boundary between New College School and Mansfield College.

Mansfield College 2008

2.2.13 A watching brief was carried out on geotechnical test pits and bore holes for two proposed development sites: an accommodation block in the Fellows' Garden at the south-west corner of the college, and an extension to the dining hall at the north-east corner of the college. All the archaeologically significant deposits and structures observed related to the 19th-century construction of the college.

Harris-Manchester College 2013

2.2.14 Four evaluation trenches were excavated in advance of the construction of an accommodation block, a clock tower and gate on the Mansfield Road frontage of the college. The remains of a probable medieval oven or kiln and a number of gravel extraction borrow pits or quarries recorded. The adjacent boundary wall was seen to be constructed upon 18th-century landscaping deposits. Also cutting the landscaping deposits was a narrow stone built and brick vaulted cellar of probable 18th-century date.

Mansfield College 2013

2.2.15 A watching brief was carried out during construction of an extension to the dining hall at the north-east corner of the site in 2013. Other than a couple of very truncated, undated gullies cut in to the underlying gravels and overlain by approximately 600mm of made ground, nothing was found.

2.3 The site before the present buildings

Prehistoric period

2.3.1 The most substantial prehistoric archaeological evidence in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development site is the mid-late Neolithic to early Bronze Age pits and ditch on the Chemistry Research Laboratory site at 2-4 South Parks Road. It is unclear how this relates to significant evidence for prehistoric occupation elsewhere in Oxford, including a Middle Neolithic enclosure at the Radcliffe Infirmary site, and Bronze Age barrow ring-ditches identified by aerial photography and excavation at the University Parks and Science Area, Port Meadow, the Sackler Library (Beaumont Street), and the Radcliffe Infirmary.

Roman period

2.3.2 The Roman-British findings at the sites at Mansfield College (Rothermere American Institute, 1998-9) and the Chemistry research Laboratory in South Parks Road (2001) are consistent in suggesting modest rural settlement, perhaps a village or group of farmsteads in this general area, although no settlement core has been established. The excavators suggest that this may have lain south or south-east of the sites: this area includes the proposed development site. The Romano-British rural settlement may well represent evolution from a Middle-Late Iron Age farming landscape.

Saxon period

2.3.3 The excavations in the vicinity of the proposed development site have produced no significant Saxon evidence. This is consistent with the fact that the site lies c.250m north of the Anglo-Saxon burh of Oxford that was founded as part of the system of 31 fortresses, which the most recent analysis suggests were built between May 878 and August 879 as a crucial part of Alfred's successful military strategy to drive the Vikings from Mercia and London.

2.3.4 The location of a burh at Oxford was doubtless stimulated by the important Mid Saxon crossing of the Thames in St Aldate's. The extent of the burh is not entirely certain, although it has long been accepted that the area between the later medieval Eastgate and Schools Street/Oriel Street (north of which the proposed development lies) represents an extension, perhaps of the early 11th century or, even the 10th century. The importance of determining the extent of the Saxon burh can be over emphasized, however, since it is probable that it had suburbs from the outset.

Norman and later medieval period

2.3.5 The most significant medieval archaeology in the vicinity relates to the Austin Friary, founded in 1268 and located c.150m south-west of the proposed development site, and now occupied by Wadham College: investigations there in 1972, 1974 and 1989 confirmed the eastern edge of the friary precinct. To the east of this, the development of properties along the north side of Holywell Street appears to have occurred between the late 12th and the early 13th centuries, prior to the rebuilding of the city walls (along the line of the Saxon ramparts) in the first half of the 13th century. This suburban expansion reflected prosperity in Oxford that was followed by decline in the second half of the 13th century and, especially, the 14th century. The extent of the medieval tenements is not entirely clear. Agas's map of 1578 shows shallow plots only in one case extending as far north as the southern boundary of the Austin Friary. There are dangers in assuming that, even if an accurate depiction of the late 16th-century plots, this applied to the plots in the early 13th century and later in the medieval period. That said, relatively shallow plots with agricultural land to the north are consistent with the documentary sources, which show intensive barley production by Merton College on its demesne lands in Holywell Manor; the cartographic evidence (from Loggan's 1675 bird's-eye view to the 1876 Ordnance Survey 1:500 town plan), which suggests that the properties along the north side of Holywell Street were formed at the end of ridge and furrow fields, with the tenements themselves only expanding as far as Savile Road and to the north in the post-medieval period); and the limited medieval archaeological evidence, such as that for boundaries discovered at Manchester College in 1991.

16th and 17th centuries

2.3.6 The Dissolution saw the demise of the Austin Friary, south-west of the proposed development, followed by the establishment of Wadham College on the same site in 1610. To the east, Loggan's 1675 bird's-eye view suggests that the properties along the northern side of Holywell Street had expanded northwards from their late medieval extents. To the north of the walled gardens and yards of the tenements, cultivated plots on Loggan's map are shown as continuing most of the tenement boundaries northwards first to a slightly sinuous east-west path located along the south side of modern Savile Road, and then – with fewer property boundaries – to the Civil War defences created by the Royalists in 1642: these defences were supposedly destroyed by the Parliamentarians during their brief occupation from September to mid-October 1643, and then immediately rebuilt. These works are now known as the inner defences due to the addition of outer defences in 1644-5, which had a more obvious military design with their alternating salients and re-entrants. It appears that the less sophisticated inner Civil War defences here followed a pre-existing east-west boundary. This coincidence with a boundary could explain why the inner defence line survives intermittently as a visible bank east and west of Mansfield Road: reuse of another earlier boundary – along what is now Love Lane (along the west side of Mansfield College) – appears to explain the survival of the continuation of this section of the defensive bank along a north-north-west alignment. By contrast, the more substantial outer defences, which were evidently not related to boundaries, were more completely obliterated and are only known from maps and recent excavations such as those at the Chemistry Research Laboratory, South Parks Road, in 2001.

2.3.7 In the vicinity of the proposed development the northern slope only of the bank of the inner defences is visible today, rising from the lawn at the southern edge of the Mansfield College grounds by up to c.2.4m. Near the top of the rampart, an iron railing marks the western length of the boundary between the college and Savile House, with the line to the east marked by the brick north wall of the scouts' room, former coal

stores and bike store of Savile House. These brick single-storey outbuildings of 1935 seem to have had little impact on the 17th-century defences, which rise up against them on the north side. Only at the east end are they cut within the Mansfield College grounds by the 1960s electricity substation and the John Marsh building: prior to this Ordnance Survey maps show the ramparts continuing east to Mansfield Road and, before this was built in the late 19th century, across the road and to the east (the bank partly survives in the playing fields).

2.3.8 The top of the rampart next to the proposed development appears to lie just inside the grounds of Savile House, but has been formalized by a low brick retaining wall, as if to a raised flower bed, c.650mm high. To the south of this retaining wall, the path at the side of Savile House is around 62.1m OD (i.e. c.2.0m above the ground level at the south end of the garden in Mansfield College), and this level is typical of that for the area southwards towards Savile Road. In other words, this part of the inner Civil War defences marks a significant change in the modern general ground level.

2.3.9 The 1992 evaluation in Mansfield College was located north of the rear wing of Savile House, but, given its location, was only able to define the profile of part of the northern slope of the rampart and the ditch to the north. It appears – as would be expected – that the bank was previously higher, but it is unclear whether its south face had a similar profile: the possibility that the defences followed a pre-existing boundary and the scale of the difference in modern ground levels north and south of the bank here suggest that there may well have been a difference in the ground levels in the mid-17th century.

18th century to present

2.3.10 William Faden's map of Oxford in 1789 records a very similar situation in the vicinity of the proposed development site to that shown on Loggan's view of 1675, but by the time of the 1876 Ordnance Survey 1:500 town plan, the finer subdivisions seen nearer Holywell Street had been applied to the plots at their northern ends. There is no evidence of agricultural activity south of the Civil War defences by this date, with the 1876 map showing gardens, a few outbuildings and greenhouses. This was all to change within a few years, with the construction of Mansfield Road in 1887-93. The new road was closely associated with the building of Mansfield College (1887-9) to the north of the inner Civil War defences, and Manchester College (1891-3) to the south of the east-west footpath.

2.3.11 To the south of the inner Civil War defences, the c.1890 developments saw the east-west path expanded to form Savile Road. Initially Savile Road (the southern pavement of which lies along the route of the earlier path) extended only as far west as the western extent of Manchester College (marked by the gate, dated 1891, west of the library), but was subsequently continued westwards to its present extent to allow the building of 1 Savile Road in 1902 and New College School in 1903 (both by Charles Nicholson, of Nicholson & Corlette). Savile House was built on the Mansfield Road frontage in 1897, followed in 1922 by Warham House on the corner with Savile Road. The new properties marked the beginning of New College's interest in the area north of Holywell Street, following purchase of land here from Merton College in the 1890s. The successive developments removed all earlier features, including the historic north-south boundaries, on the site, apart from the bank of the Civil War inner defences, which remained marking the property boundary shared with Mansfield College.

2.3.12 To the north of the inner Civil War defences, Basil Champneys's original buildings at Mansfield College (1887-9) were concentrated on the northern part of the college site,

with gardens extending southwards towards the defences. A modest intrusion followed in 1961, with building of the electrical substation at the south-east corner of the site, cutting into the eastern end of the Civil War bank. Much more substantially, a neo-vernacular student accommodation block (later named the John Marsh Building) was built in 1962 (designed by Thomas Rayson), creating a range extending along the Mansfield Road frontage of the college north of Savile House, and an east-west range effectively creating the south side of a quad. Subsequent construction of the Hands Building (1993: designed by Brewer Smith and Brewer) and the Garden Building (2006: designed by Oxford Architects) saw the college buildings extended southwards from Rayson's east-west range towards the inner Civil War defences.

2.3.13 To the east of the proposed development site, the east side of Mansfield Road saw protracted development. Opposite the proposed development site, a substantial villa, The King's Mound, 9 Mansfield Road, was built by Thomas Jackson in 1892-3: This was followed by the still larger 3 Mansfield Road, which was built in 1897-8, as a private house for the Rev. John Henry Mee, by builders Symm and Co., to the designs of C. J. Phipps and A. Blomefield Jackson. It became the university's School of Geography in 1922, which led to substantial extensions being built in 1936-7, 1965-8 and 2007-9 (the latter replacing the 1930s extension): since 2006 the building has been occupied by the Department of International Development. The northern part of the garden of 3 Mansfield Road was appropriated for a pair of rather smaller houses (i.e. 5 and 7 Mansfield Road) built by E. P. Warren in 1925. The most recent development has been the Oxford University Club, built opposite the John Marsh building of Mansfield College in 2003-4 (designed by Maguire and Co./JBKS Architects): the substantial building, faced in Forticrete blocks and with a zinc roof, is of curved form.

2.4 Savile House

2.4.1 Savile House (unlisted) was built in 1897 by Dr Gilbert Bourne, the well-known oarsman and professor of physiology, on land leased to him by New College in 1896. There is no record of the architect, and – on stylistic grounds – it does not appear to have been designed by Basil Champneys (it lacks his Arts and Crafts details), who was responsible for other New College work at this date and was the architect of adjacent Mansfield College: it is possible, given their work on New College's Robinson Tower and the range to the east in 1896-7, that it was constructed – and perhaps designed – by the builders Benfield & Loxley. On surrender of the lease, Savile House was sold by Bourne to New College in 1921, and then extended by the Oxford architect N. W. Harrison, with Sir Charles Peers acting as advisory architect: this probably took place in 1935, as the apparently final proposals are dated November 1934.

2.4.2 As built in 1897, Savile House comprised a north-south block of three storeys, with a small cellar below the scullery at the northern end. The main access was through a central eastern door, and the principal rooms were located at the southern end. The building is in an undistinguished subdued Gothic style, with gables and Tudor-arched mullioned windows, and more obviously 19th-century features, such as the canted bay windows of the south elevation. It is faced with rubble with ashlar dressings, apart from the rear (west) elevation, which is of yellow stock brick with ashlar dressings.

2.4.3 The extension of c.1935 added a fourth gabled bay to the northern end of the earlier building, closely matching the form, detail and materials of the 1897 work: the main means of differentiating the work – other than the surviving design drawings – is the difference in the pointing. Running westwards from this new bay, a substantial accommodation block was added, having six sets of two rooms (sitting room and bedroom) to each of its three floors, with staircase and (shared) bathroom towers

articulating the north elevation. Between these towers the bedrooms of the second floor are lit by dormers above a deep and intermittent cornice. On the south elevation, the absence of stair and bathroom projections allows the cornice and dormers to continue uninterrupted. The use of red brick with stone dressings further differentiates the north wing from the (extended) original east block.

2.4.4 The single-storey outbuildings to the north of Savile House, comprising two garages, a scouts' room, a pair of former coal stores, and an open-sided bike store, mostly date from the c.1935 works, although the 1934 design drawings show that the northern garage was already in existence at that date. This earlier garage is not shown on the 1921 Ordnance Survey map. The incorporation of an existing garage explains the difference in the brick types of the outbuildings: both garages are in yellow stock brick (the c.1935 garage very carefully built to match the earlier work), while the buildings to the rear are of red brick, as used in the main wing of c.1935 (albeit without the stone dressings). The design drawings show a 6" (150mm) concrete floor, and strip foundations for the walls up to 4' (1.22m) deep.

2.4.5 The 1934 ground-floor plan (Plan 2) shows a foul water sewer and rain water drain, with manholes, between the 1935 extension and the outbuildings. Modern survey shows invert levels rising east to west across the proposed development from 60.13m OD to 60.71m OD, representing depths of up to c.1.6m below ground level. Additional services have been added in this area, comprising electricity, gas and telecommunications.

3 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 General

3.1.1 The general aims of the work were to:

- determine the character of any remains present;
- ensure that deposits were removed (where appropriate and practicable) by proper controlled archaeological methods;
- determine or estimate the date range of any remains from artefacts or otherwise;
- determine the potential of the deposits for significant palaeo-ecological information;

3.2 Specific aims and objectives

3.2.1 The specific aims and objectives of the trial trenches and topographical survey are listed below and assessed:

- evidence for the degree of survival and method of construction of the civil war defensive bank. A cross-section through the bank was produced from the evidence recovered from the topographical survey of the surface and the trial trench results, together with the results from a hand-augered borehole through the top of the bank to the west of the bike shed (Figure 5);
- evidence for archaeological horizons pre-dating the construction of the bank (ostensibly in the 17th century);
- evidence for pre-historic and Roman occupation of the area as indicated by earlier excavations in the immediate vicinity;
- evidence for the elevation of the top of the gravel.

3.3 Methodology

3.3.1 The investigation comprised two trial trenches located over the surviving civil war defensive bank (see Figure 2). Trench 1 was located within the existing bike shed, and Trench 2 immediately to the south. Heras fencing was required in order to maintain access along the northern edge of Savile House. Austin Newport Ltd (the principal contractor) was responsible for arranging access to the site and ensuring that the bike shed was cleared prior to the works. Austin Newport Ltd was also responsible for breaking out the existing concrete floor and tarmac surface and supplying the required fencing.

3.3.2 Trench 1 measured 1.5m² in plan and the full archaeological sequence was excavated to the top of the underlying terrace gravel. Shoring was installed at *c* 1.4m below ground level.

3.3.3 Trench 2 also measured 1.5m² in plan, and was excavated to the top of the underlying terrace gravel. Shoring was installed at *c* 1.4m below ground level.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Presentation of Results

4.1.1 Detailed context descriptions are presented in the context inventory (Appendix B), and within the descriptive text in Section 4.2 below where they are integral to the interpretation of the deposit in question.

4.1.2 Finds reports are presented in Appendix C. A discussion and interpretation of the results can be found in Section 5.

4.2 Trench 1 (Fig. 3)

4.2.1 Natural gravel (100) was encountered at 1.56m below ground level (60.55m OD). A sondage was excavated through this deposit to verify that it was terrace gravel, and this revealed a slightly "cleaner", sandier deposit (107) *c* 0.3m below the top of Deposit 100. Nevertheless, upon excavation it was considered that Deposit 100 was almost certainly natural gravel. Red staining on the top of Deposit 100 probably originated from the original reddish brown silty loam which would have originally overlain it (see below).

4.2.2 Deposits 100 and 107 had been truncated by a single post hole (101) which measured 0.3m in diameter x 0.45m deep. This was filled by a predominantly mid reddish brown clay silt deposit (102) which produced no finds. The fill of this feature and the natural gravel were directly overlain by a 0.08m thick layer of fairly well compacted gravel in a mid-dark grey clayey silt matrix with concentrations of reddish brown silty loam (103). This was overlain by up to 1m of firm mid reddish brown fine silty loam (104) which is likely to be a re-deposition of the post-glacial loessic subsoil which overlies the terrace gravel. This was relatively sterile, but did have occasional lenses and concentrations of re-deposited sand and gravel. Deposit 104 was overlain by a very compacted layer of re-deposited sand and gravel (105) up to 0.3m thick. In the east facing section, the interface between this deposit and Deposit 104 did show some evidence of sloping from north-south - possibly indicating a tip line (Figs 3 and 5). However, the interface between these deposits was not consistent across the whole of the trench, and it was barely present in the western half.

4.2.3 Deposits 104 and 105 were overlain by a *c* 0.2m thick deposit of mid grey brown clay silt (106), which was in turn overlain by the concrete floor of the bike shed.

4.3 Trench 2 (Fig. 4)

4.3.1 Natural gravel (209) was encountered at 1.44m below ground level (60.58m OD). Similarly to Trench 1, the top (in this case 0.18m) of the terrace gravel appeared "dirtier" and more compacted than the underlying sand and gravel deposit (210).

4.3.2 Deposit 209 was overlain by a *c* 0.2m thick layer of mixed greyish brown silty clay with re-deposited sand and gravel throughout and concentrations of reddish brown silty loam (206). This was in turn overlain by a 0.4m thick layer of firm reddish brown fine silty loam (re-deposited loess) with very occasional rounded gravel pebbles (206). Overlying deposit 206 was a very compacted 0.3m thick layer of re-deposited sand and gravel (205) which was in turn overlain by 0.2m of firm mid brown clay silt (204).

4.3.3 All of these deposits had been truncated by the construction trench (203) for a 19th century brick-lined soakaway (202 - filled by 208 and 201), probably contemporary with the construction of Savile House in 1897.

4.3.4 The remaining deposits in the trench were a layer of Type I hardcore overlain by at least two phases of tarmac surface (200).

4.4 Hand-augered borehole

4.4.1 A hand-augered borehole was undertaken to the west of the bike shed to establish the composition of the top of the upstanding bank where it had not been truncated by the early 20th century additions to Savile House. The top of the auger hole was at 62.70m OD. At 1.15m below ground level (61.55m OD) the auger encountered an obstruction which was at approximately the same elevation as the very compacted sand and gravel deposit encountered within both the trenches (105 and 205) and is likely to be part of the same deposit. Overlying this deposit within the borehole was a *c* 0.10m thick layer of fine reddish brown sand which was in turn overlain by 0.85m of mid grey brown clay silt. The latter was similar in composition to the deposit at the top of the horizontal stratigraphic sequence in both trenches (106 and 204) and is likely to represent the top of this deposit where it has not been truncated by structures associated with Savile House.

4.4.2 The top *c* 0.1m of the auger was through a dark brown organic layer which almost certainly represents leaf mould.

4.5 Topographical Survey

4.5.1 A series of levels were taken across the lawn of Mansfield College Fellows garden and up the northern scarp of the upstanding bank. The results of this survey, together with those from the trenches and the auger can be seen on Figure 5.

5 Discussion

5.1 Reliability of field investigation

5.1.1 All deposits were hand excavated and although there was a paucity of datable artefactual material the stratigraphic sequence is reasonably well understood. However, only a relatively small area was subject to excavation and consequently the following interpretation is necessarily circumspect.

5.2 Discussion

The gravel terrace

5.2.1 During the 1992 works at the Hand's Building site, the natural gravel was encountered at 60.30m OD (approximately 0.7m below ground level) and was overlain by an "earlier subsoil", which may well have represented surviving *in-situ* loess. The level of the lawn within the Fellows garden of Mansfield College to the north of the bank was at 60.9m - 60.98m OD (Fig. 5). Consequently, allowing for *c* 0.7m of topsoil and potentially surviving loess within the Fellows garden, the anticipated top of the gravel at 60.2m OD to 60.28m OD would be broadly consistent with that from the Hands Building site. As the gravel in the trenches *c* 4m to the south of the lawn was encountered at 60.58m OD, this perhaps indicates a slight topographical incline from north to south.

5.2.2 The fact that the top 0.2 - 0.3m of the natural gravel (100/209) appeared to be "dirtier" than the underlying deposits (107/210) is likely to be a result of material permeating through the upper element of the gravel from the overlying deposit (103/206). The lack of *in-situ* loess directly overlying the gravel (which was seen to the east (OA, 2003) and possibly the west (OAU 1992)) is likely to be the result of the original subsoil having been disturbed (see below), which is probably the origin of this process.

Features pre-dating the bank

5.2.3 A single undated post-hole was recorded in Trench 1. In isolation this is of limited significance, although results from earlier excavations in the vicinity (OA 2008) do suggest that the site lies in an area that has a high potential to contain evidence for Prehistoric (Neolithic to Bronze Age) ritual and funerary activity, and also lies adjacent to the known Romano-British settlement site excavated in advance of the construction of the Institute of American Studies (Booth and Hayden 2001) and at the new Chemistry Research Building (Bradley et al 2005)

5.2.4 In the immediate environs of the site, the 1992 trenching in advance of the construction of the Hand's building revealed two pits beneath the "earlier subsoil" to the north of the 17th century ditch. These were undated, but may indicate settlement activity pre-dating the agricultural use of this land indicated by the majority of the cartographic sources.

Composition of the rampart deposits

5.2.5 The composition of the bank itself comprised a mixed deposit immediately overlying the gravel (103/209), overlain by a layer of almost exclusively re-deposited loess (104/206) which was in turn overlain by a very compacted layer of re-deposited sand and gravel (105/205).

5.2.6 Additionally, following on from the evaluation on the site of the New University Clubhouse in 2001 (OA 2001), OA carried out a watching brief during the groundworks. This included excavations for a staircase in the southern part of the site which involved excavating a *c* 3.5m wide trench across the line of the defensive ditch, and also revealed the northern scarp of the bank (Plate 3). This clearly shows that the bank is

predominantly composed of re-deposited loess, and the report also records that the top of the bank appeared to have been capped with gravel. This is consistent with the composition of the bank recorded during the recent works.

5.2.7 Although the groundworks for the late 19th - early 20th century construction of Savile House had truncated the top of the bank, it survived to a greater height to the west of the bike shed. Although the deposit at the top of the sequence in Trenches 1 and 2 (106/204) produced some 19th century artefactual material, this may have been as a result of disturbance during the truncation. Consequently, it is possible that this deposit may have originally have formed part of the bank - particularly given the similarity between the composition of this deposit and that recorded within the augered borehole. However, this deposit was not recorded during the 2003 works (OA 2003), although a "topsoil" layer was seen to overlie the upper fills of the ditch along the southern edge of the feature.

5.2.8 Excavations across the rampart and ditch of the more substantial outer defences at Manor Place to the east of the site (Wessex Archaeology, 2012) revealed a sequence of interleaving layers of re-deposited gravel and clay. This was interpreted as *".....an intentional design to allow the various bands of relatively loose unconsolidated gravel to be 'bound' by the clay into a more stable viable structure."* (Wessex Archaeology, 2012, p.7). This is of a clearly different construction to the stretch of the inner defences investigated at Savile House and further to the east beyond The King's Mound (OA, 2003).

5.2.9 The bank itself produced very few finds, but the datable material which was recovered included a sherd of residual Roman greyware and a rim sherd from a medieval Oxford ware thumbed cooking pot dating between 1075 and 1300 from Deposit 206. A sherd of Brill Boarstall ware from the same deposit in Trench 1 (104) is likely to date from 1300-1625.

5.2.10 Although neither of the medieval sherds was particularly abraded, and both seemed relatively well stratified within the re-deposited loess deposit, it is feasible that these two sherds could potentially have been intrusive due to the presence of fairly large roots in Trench 1 and the 19th century soakaway in Trench 2, and the relatively small size of the sherds (both weighing around 10g).

Interpretation of rampart deposits

5.2.11 The lack of in-situ loess overlying the natural gravel perhaps suggested that the topsoil had been stripped prior to the creation of the bank, and it is possible that the mixed deposit (103/209) represented a layer of trample created during the construction process.

5.2.12 If this is the case, then the likely interpretation of the re-deposited loess (104/206) and overlying compacted gravel (103/209) is that they represent upcast from the fronting ditch to the north which has been used to construct the bank. This is consistent with the interpretation of the composition of the bank at the New University Clubhouse (OA, 2003).

5.2.13 However, a number of factors may suggest that this stretch of the civil war defences is utilising a pre-existing feature in the landscape:

- the elevation of the gravel recorded in 1992 (60.30m OD) and during the recent trenching (60.58m OD) - together with the results of topographical survey - may indicate a north-south incline in the natural topography. This incline appeared to be even more pronounced in the elevation of the gravel at the New University

Clubhouse, which was at *c*59.27m OD to the north of the ditch and *c*59.92m at the base of the bank. (6m to the south).

- the location and orientation of the bank broadly corresponds with a field boundary shown on a 1578 plan of the city by Ralph Agas (Fig. 6). To the west of the site, Agas' plan also shows an intersection with a north-south aligned field boundary which corresponds with a change in alignment of the later defences shown by David Loggan in 1675 (Fig. 7) and the later alignment of Love Lane (Fig. 8), which follows the line of this section of the defences. The presence of pre-existing field boundaries may explain the survival of the defensive bank in these locations, as opposed to the almost complete destruction of the more substantial outer defences (Harris, 2014).
- the composition of the majority of the bank is not consistent with material being upcast from a ditch dug primarily through gravel to the north, as it is predominantly composed of re-deposited loess.

5.2.14 Consequently, an alternative interpretation is that the field boundary shown by Agas may actually correspond with a lynchet which has subsequently been incorporated into the civil war defences, and that the mixed deposit directly overlying the gravel is potentially an agricultural re-working of the loess.

5.2.15 Lynchet is a term used generally to describe a stepped break in slope that is / has been used in arable cultivation. Lynchets are variously formed, and some are deliberately constructed to form a bank on a slope to prevent soil run-off, against which soil then accumulates forming a stepped effect. Others form naturally at defined field edges (for example at a hedgeline) where run-off / creep, and the plough in the field above deposits soil, and the plough in the field below denudes the soil from beneath the bank. (Dan Bashford, pers. comm.)

5.2.16 This would account for the fact that the main body of the bank excavated in Trenches 1 and 2 was primarily comprised of re-deposited loess, which may represent soil from further up the natural slope to the north accumulating against a defined field boundary.

5.2.17 The very compacted gravel overlying this deposit may represent upcast from the ditch seen during the 1992 trenching, which has been used to consolidate and raise the existing lycnhet - with the overlying deposit which was encountered in the auger possibly representing a further layer of 17th century (or later) landscaping of the top of the rampart.

5.2.18 Although sparse and possibly residual, the dating evidence recovered from the re-deposited loess may also support the suggestion of an earlier - perhaps 14th century - feature. Further indication of an earlier date for the field system implied by Agas' map could possibly be indicated by the sinuous nature of the east-west path through the cultivated plots to the rear (north) of the tenements shown on the later plan by Loggan (Fig. 7 and Harris, 2014, Fig. 2). Sinuous alignments of ridges and headland boundaries between different orientations of ridge and furrow are characteristic of some open field cultivation, and reflect the direction of the plough-team as they prepared to turn at the end of a strip. Although very tenuous, it is possible that this is the origin of the alignment of this path.

5.2.19 Other indications for an earlier feature on the alignment of the inner defences is referenced in the report on the 1992 trenching (OAU, 1992), which refers to observations made during the construction of Keble College squash courts where the eastern end of the bank meets what is now St Cross Road. These found that *"no ditch was seen"* and that *"[t]his was surprising because the fronting ditch was normally the*

source of material to construct the bank and was an integral part of the defences.....[i]t may transpire that this particular bank was formed by heaping up material from a plough headland or some other existing feature."

5.2.20 Although a ditch clearly exists in the location of Mansfield College Fellows garden, this is further evidence that the inner defences may have followed the orientation of existing features in the landscape.

APPENDIX A. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

Booth, P and Hayden, C	2001	*A Roman Settlement at Mansfield College, Oxford* Oxoniensia **LXV**
Bradley, P et al	2005	*Prehistoric and Roman Activity and a Civil War Ditch at the Chemistry Research Laboratory, 2-4 South Parks Road, Oxford* Oxoniensia **LXX**
Harris, R	2014	*New College, Oxford. Music Practice Rooms* Archaeological Assessment and Mitigation Strategy
Lattey et al	1936	*A Contemporary Map of the Defences of Oxford in 1644* Oxoniensia Vol.**I**
Oxford Archaeological Unit	1992	*Mansfield College Oxford* Evaluation Report
OA	1992	Fieldwork Manual, (Ed. D Wilkinson, first edition, August 1992)
OA	2001	*New Oxford University Clubhouse, Mansfield Road, Oxfor*d Archaeological Evaluation Report
OA	2003	*New Oxford University Clubhouse, Mansfield Road, Oxford* Archaeological Watching Brief Report
OA	2008	*Mansfield College, Love Lane* Archaeological Desk Based Assessment
OA	2014	*Savile House, Music Practice Rooms, New College, Oxford* Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation
Wessex Archaeology	2012	*Land at Manor Place, Oxford* Archaeological Evaluation Report

Appendix B. Trench Descriptions and Context Inventory

Trench 1					
General description				**Orientation**	n/a
Natural gravel overlain by a mixed "trample" or buried soil horizon overlain by c1m of re-deposited loess overlain by very compacted re-deposited gravel, both of which form part of the inner civil war defensive rampart, but the former of which may represent an earlier feature incorporated into the defences. The gravel was overlain by a fairly humic deposit which may have represented part of the 17th century feature or a later phase of landscaping.				**Avg. depth (m)**	1.9
				Width (m)	1.5
				Length (m)	1.5
Contexts					
Context no	**Type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**Comment**	**Soil Description**
100	Layer		0.3	Natural gravel	Mid yellowish brown fairly compacted gravel and sand, some reddish brown staining of the top of the deposit, probably from the original loessic subsoil? "dirtier" (? some silty inclusiuons) than the underlying natural sandy gravel (107)
101	Cut	0.3	0.44	Post hole	
102	Fill	0.3	0.44	Fill of Post hole 101	Predominantly mid reddish brown silty loam with c10% gravel fragments
103	Deposit		0.1-0.15	Trample/re-worked loess	Compacted sand and gravel in a mid-dark grey silt matrix with concentrations of mid reddish brown silty loam
104	Deposit		1	Re-deposited loess forming bank - either part of civil war defences or an earlier feature incorporated into them	Mid reddish brown silty loam with occasional lenses and concentrations of re-deposited sand and gravel
105	Deposit	c1	0.3 max	Very compacted re-deposited sand and gravel probably capping civil war rampart and originating from excavation of fronting ditch	Very compacted re-deposited sand and gravel
106	Deposit		0.2	Possibly part of 17th century bank disturbed during construction of Savile House, or post-civil war landscaping	Mid-dark grey brown caly silt with 5% gravel fragments
107	Layer		0.1+	Natural gravel	Yellow brown sandy gravel

Trench 2					
General description				**Orientation**	n/a
Natural gravel overlain by a mixed "trample" or buried soil horizon overlain by c1m of re-deposited loess overlain by very compacted re-deposited gravel, both of which form part of the inner civil war defensive rampart, but the former of which may represent an earlier feature incorporated into the defences. The gravel was overlain by a fairly humic deposit which may have represented part of the 17th century feature or a later phase of landscaping. All deposits were truncated dby the cut for a 19th century brick-lined soakaway.				**Avg. depth (m)**	1.5
				Width (m)	1.5
				Length (m)	1.5
Contexts					
Context no	**Type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**Comment**	**Soil Description**
200	Deposit		0.4	Modern surfacing	Type I overlain by two phases of tarmac (top wearing course)
201	Fill	0.70	0.08	Backfill of soakaway 202	Soft, very dark grey brown silty sand
202	Structure	0.6+	1.1+	Brick lined soakaway	
203	Cut	0.7+	1.1+	Cut for Structure 202	
204	Deposit		0.2	Possibly part of 17th century bank disturbed during construction of Savile House, or post-civil war landscaping	Mid-dark grey brown caly silt with 5% gravel fragments
205	Deposit		0.3	Very compacted re-deposited sand and gravel probably capping civil war rampart and originating from excavation of fronting ditch	Very compacted re-deposited sand and gravel
206	Deposit		0.42	Re-deposited loess forming bank - either part of civil war defences or an earlier feature incorporated into them	Mid reddish brown silty loam with occasional lenses and concentrations of re-deposited sand and gravel
207	Fill		0.16	Backfill of Structure 202	Mixed loose mortar/gravel/silt etc
208	Fill		0.5+	Accumulation of organic material (silt) in Structure 202	Loose, very dark brownish grey, highly organic silt
209	Layer		0.18	Natural gravel	Mid yellowish brown fairly compacted gravel and sand, some reddish brown staining of the top of the deposit, probably from the original loessic subsoil? "dirtier" (? some silty inclusiuons) than the underlying natural sandy gravel (107)
210	Layer		0.06+	Natural gravel	Yellow brown sand and gravel

APPENDIX C. FINDS REPORTS

C.1 Pottery

Identified by John Cotter

compiled by Geraldine Crann

Context	Description	Date
104	1 sherd Brill Boarstall ware (OXAM) Residual scrap Roman grey sandy ware, 12g	1300 – 1625 Roman
106	2 refitting dish rim sherds refined white ware (REFW) Residual sherd Border ware (BORD) Residual sherds late medieval Brill Boarstall ware (OXBX), 28g	19th century 17th century 15-16th century
201	Refined white ware (REFW) preserve jar, plate rim and potlid sherds 1 pearl ware (PEAR) sherd, 43g	Mid 19th century Late 18-19th century
206	1 rim sherd medieval Oxford ware (OXY) from thumbed cooking pot, 10g	1075 – 1300

Discussion and recommendations

C.1.1 The assemblage is of low potential and requires no further work. The pottery from the evaluation should be fully integrated into any future analysis arising from further investigation on the site.

C.2 CBM

Identified by John Cotter

compiled by Geraldine Crann

Context	Description	Date
201	2 pieces modern CBM, 38g	Late 19th century

Discussion and recommendations

C.2.1 The assemblage is of low potential and requires no further work.

C.3 Animal bone

Identified by Lena Strid

all bones are fragments unless stated otherwise.

Context	Description
104	1 medium mammal long bone, 2 large mammal long bone, 1 large mammal vertebra, 4 indeterminate fragments, 25g
106	3 indeterminate fragments, 4g

Discussion and recommendations

C.3.1 The assemblage is of low potential and requires no further work.

C.4 Stone

Identified by Ruth Shaffrey

Context	Description
104	2 fragments bath stone one with slight moulding to one side, probably architectural, 25g

Discussion and recommendations

C.4.1 The assemblage is of low potential and requires no further work.

C.5 Shell

Identified by Geraldine Crann

Context	Description
106	Single oyster shell valve, 10g

Discussion and recommendations

C.5.1 The assemblage is of low potential and requires no further work.

APPENDIX D. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

D.1 Environmental samples

By Sharon Cook

Charred Plant Remains

D.1.1 A single sample was taken from the evaluation at Oxford New College, Saville House Music Practice Rooms, from the potential Civil War Rampart, for the retrieval of artefacts and charred plant remains.

D.1.2 Sample <1> (104) was a strong brown (7.5YR 5/8) fine silty sand with gravel and 40 litres in volume of which 100% was processed using a modified Siraf style water flotation machine. The flot was collected on a 250µm mesh and the heavy residues sieved to 500µm and dried in a heated room. The dried residues were scanned but no bones or artefacts were present.

D.1.3 The sample produced 5ml of flot material of which 100% was scanned using a binocular microscope at approximately x10 magnification. The presence of charcoal in good condition was noted although the fragments were too small to identify to species. A small quantity of charred grain was also noted although this was in fairly poor condition which may indicate that it was residual within the deposit. Two grains were positively identified as oat (Avena sativa) while the other grains could only be identified as wheat (*Triticum* sp.). Two fragments of charred grass seed (Poaceae) were also noted.

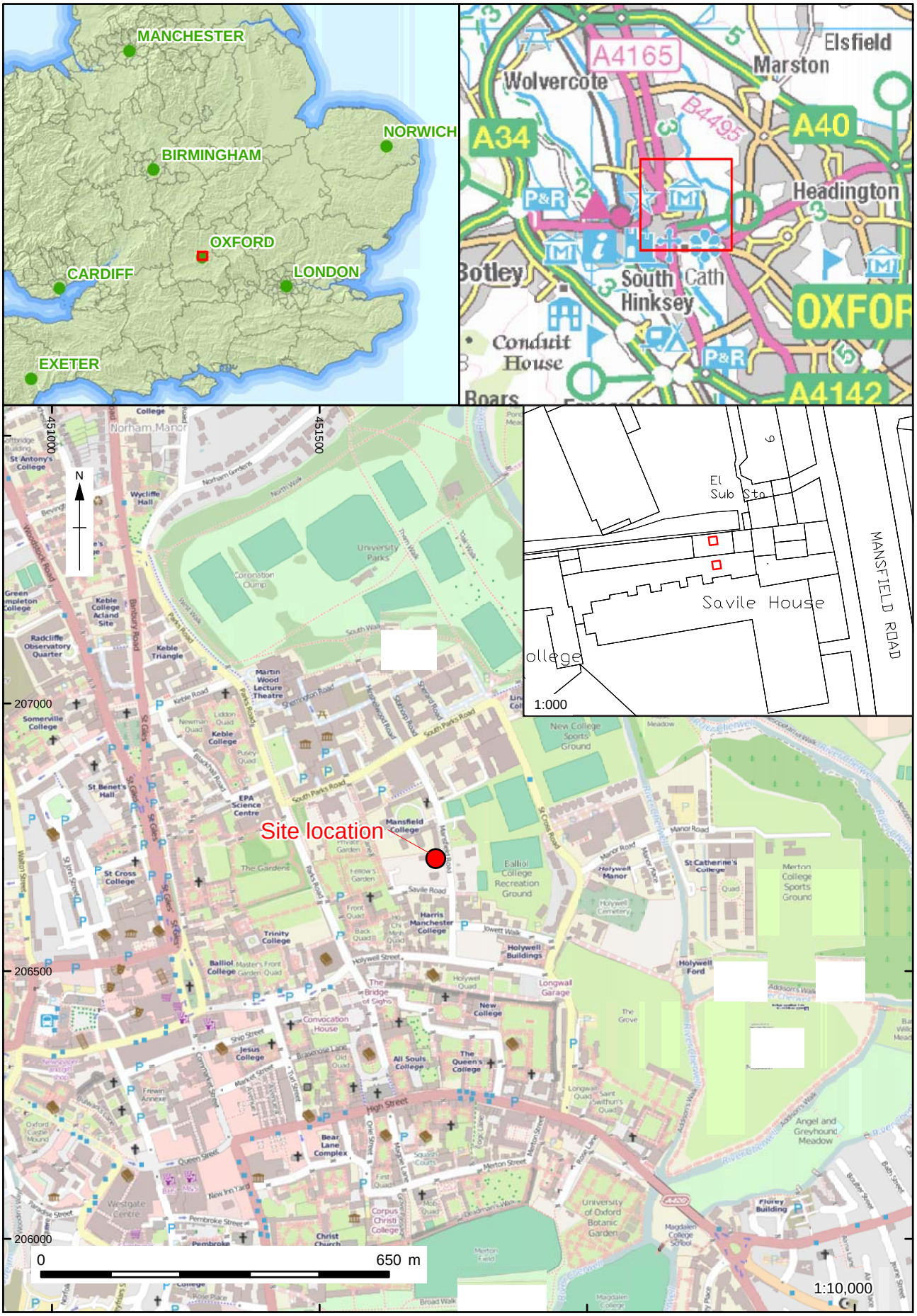

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Figure 1: Site location

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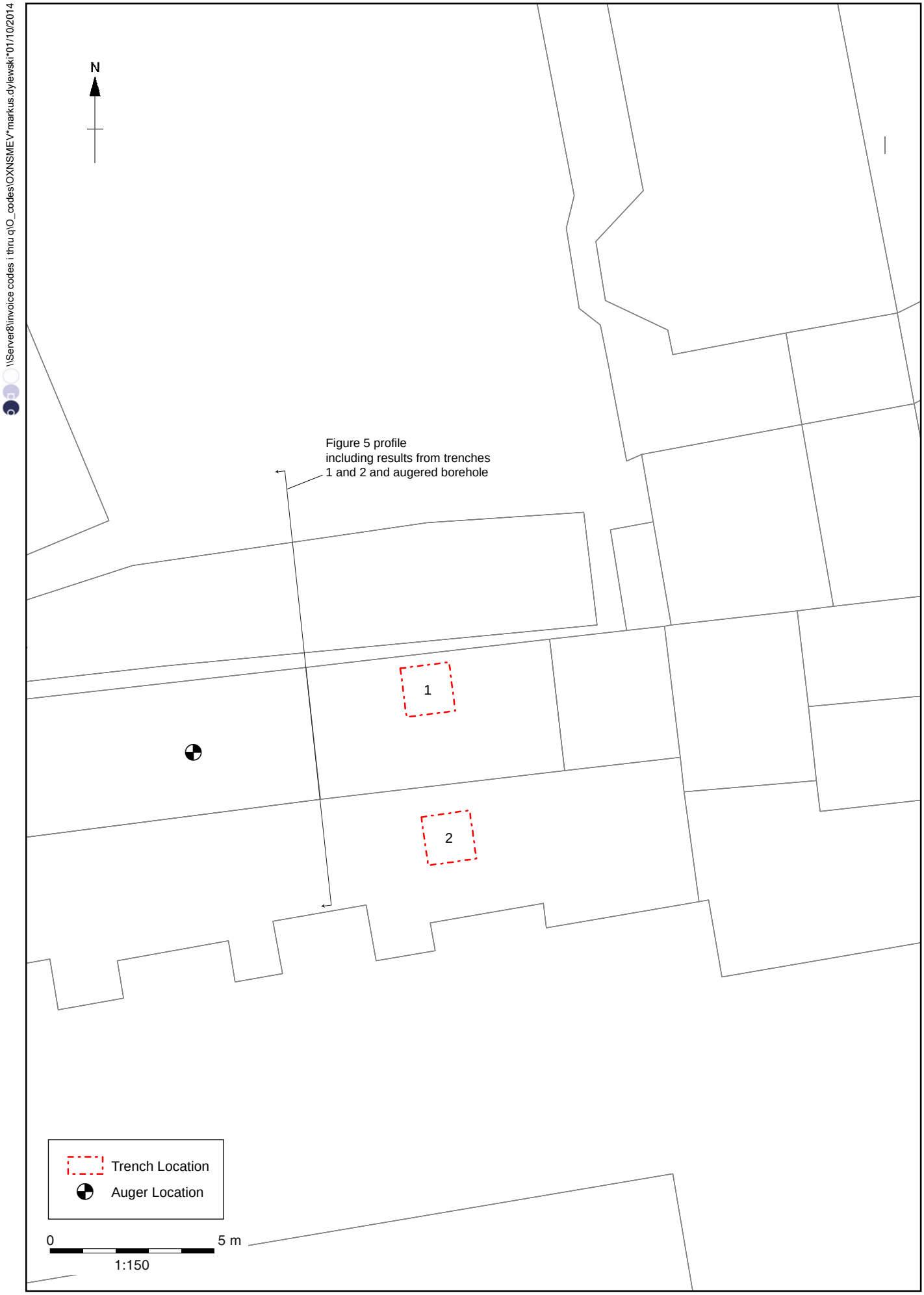


Figure 2: Trench location plan

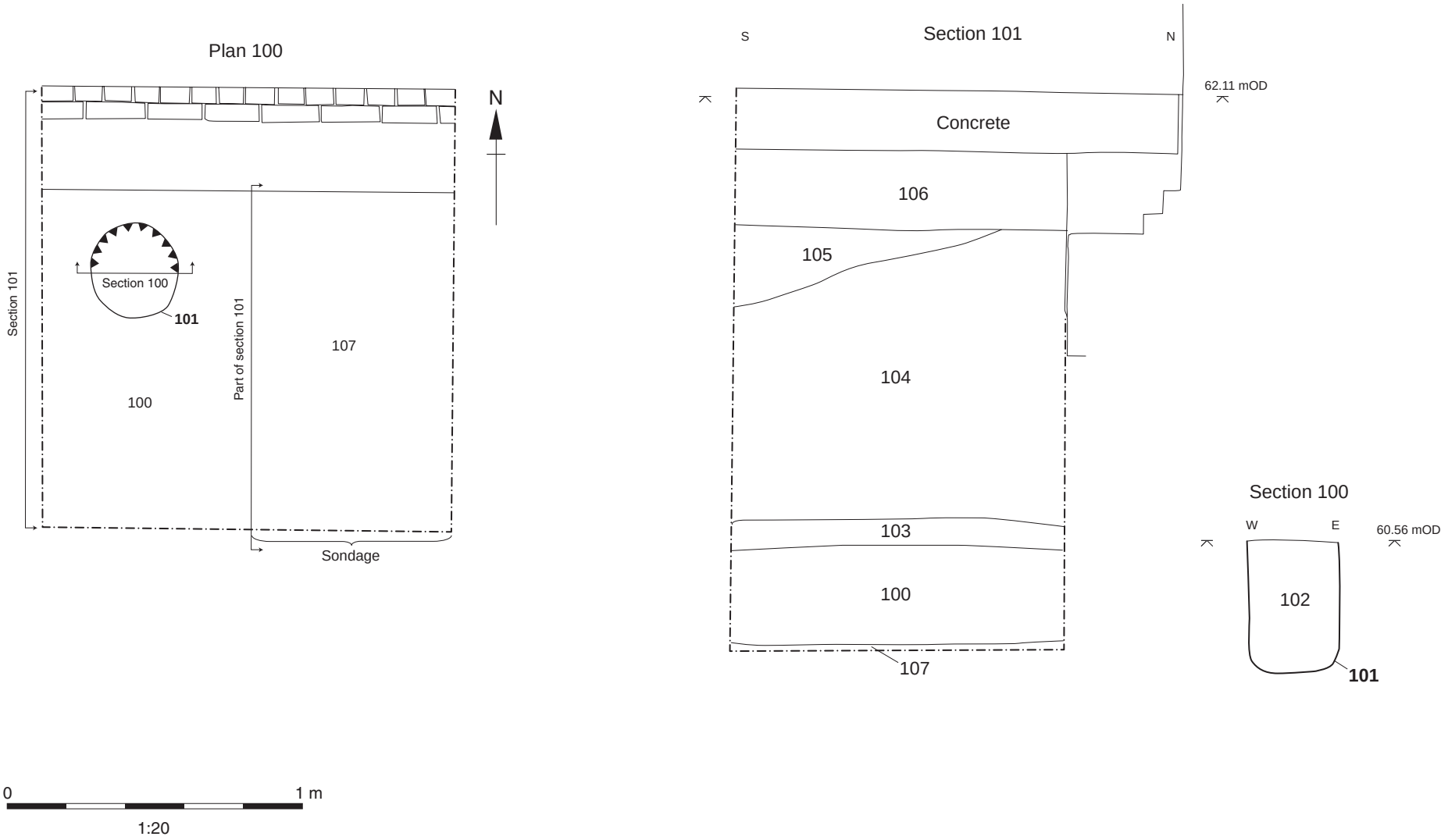
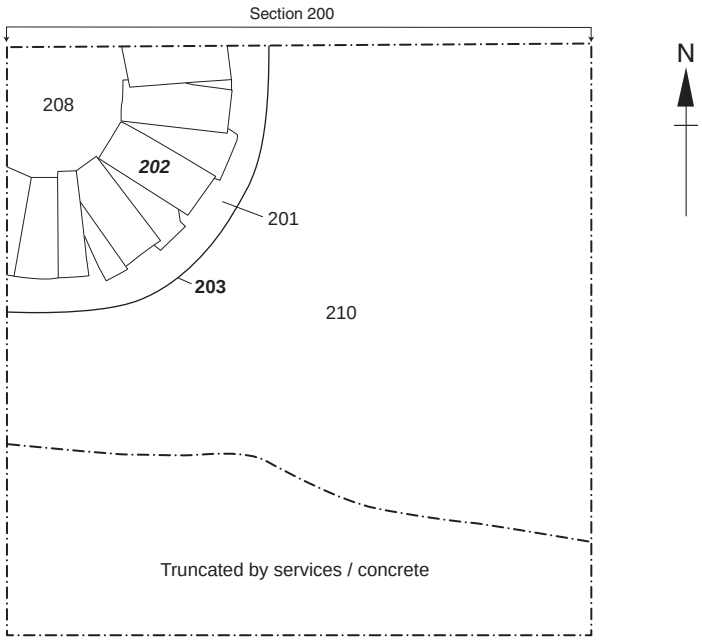


Figure 3: Trench 1, plan and sections

Plan 100



Section 200

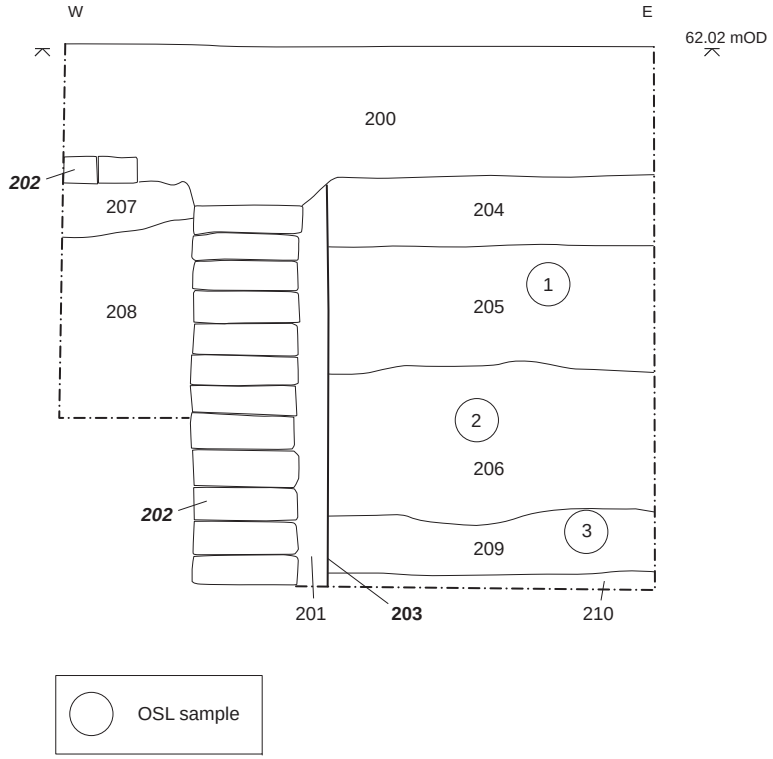


Figure 4: Trench 2, plan and section

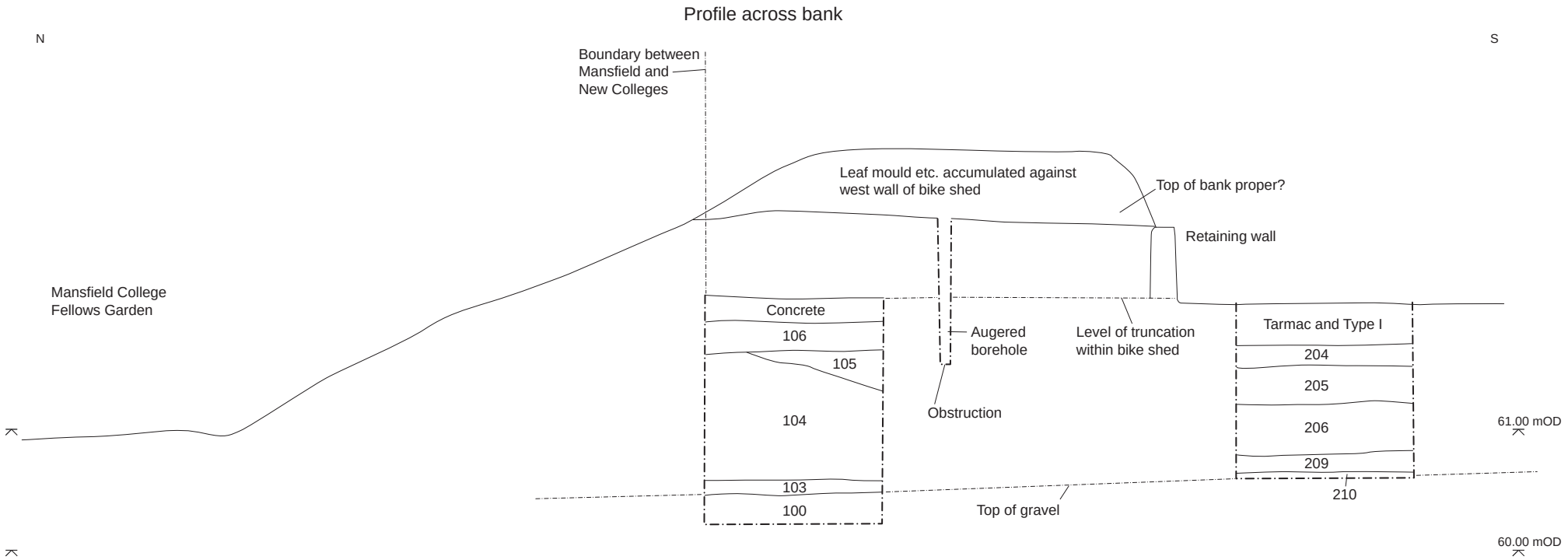
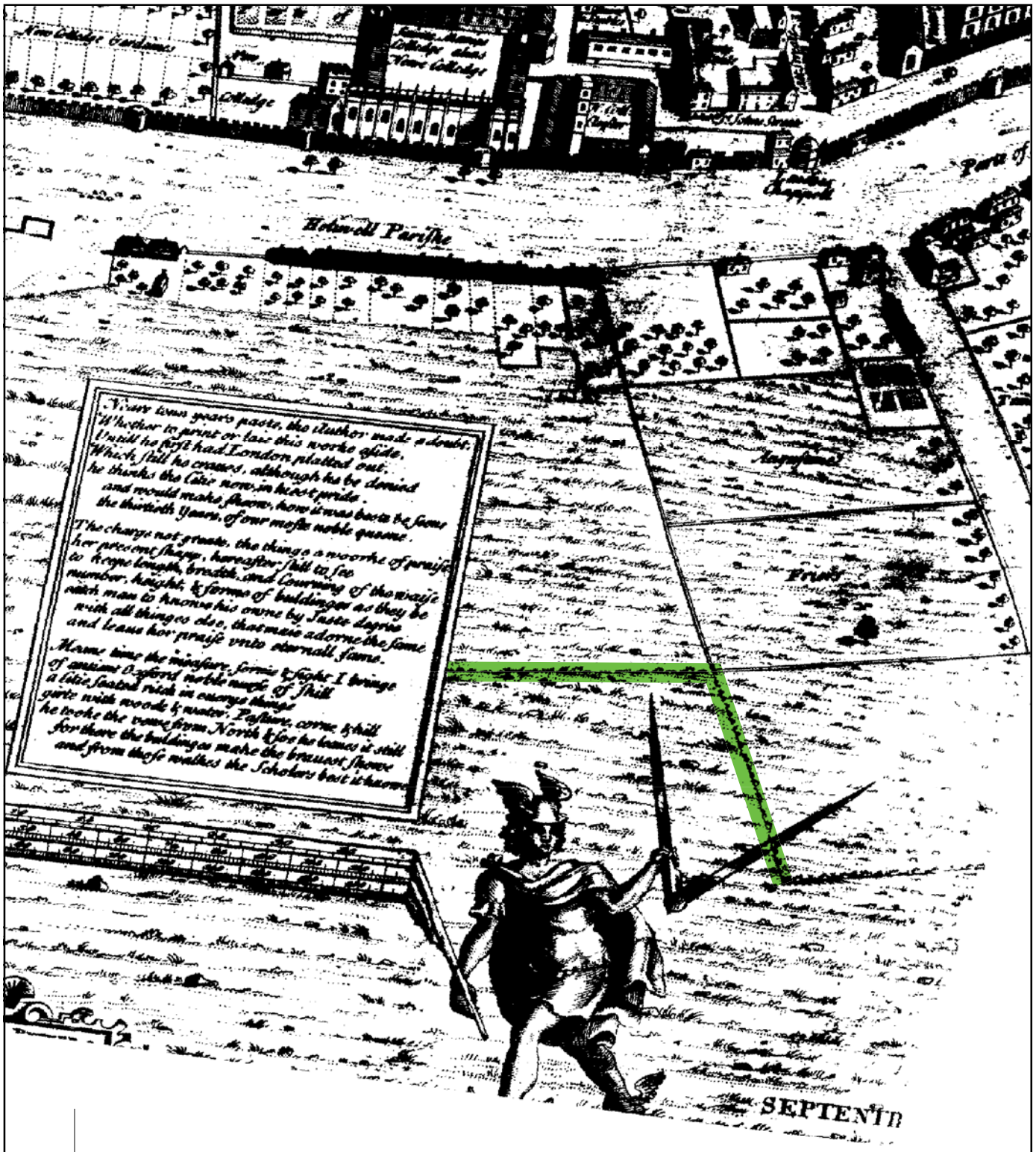


Figure 5: Profile across bank



N

Field boundaries
in approximate location
of later rampart

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Figure 6: The site on Ralph Agas Plan of 1578

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Figure 7: The site on David Loggan Plan of 1675

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Figure 8: The site on the OS 1st Edition Map of 1876

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Plate 1: Trench 1 prior to installation of shoring

Plate 2: Trench 2 post-ex

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Plate 3: Section across the ditch and northern scarp of bank to the east of The King's Mound (OA, 2003)

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