

NATHANIEL LITCHFIELD & PARTNERS

BURYPEAD HOUSE
GUILDFORD
SURREY

NGR SU 9937 4928

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT



OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

NOVEMBER 1999

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BURYPEAD HOUSE, GUILDFORD SURREY

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Summary

An archaeological evaluation in the grounds of Burymead House, Guildford, revealed slight evidence of medieval occupation in the vicinity, although truncation of the medieval ground surface was evident. Remains of the post-medieval/modern brewery buildings that occupied the site until recently were also identified.

1 INTRODUCTION (Fig. 1)

1.1 *The Project*

1.1.1 The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) was commissioned by Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners, on behalf of National Grid Properties, to undertake a field evaluation in the grounds of Burymead House, Guildford, Surrey (NGR SU 9937 4928), in advance of re-development.

1.1.2 The proposed development consists of the demolition of the existing 1960s office block and construction of a new office of three levels (including basement). A desk based assessment was carried out by the OAU (see below), the conclusions of which informed the request by D. Bird, Principal Archaeologist of Surrey County Council (SCC) for an evaluation of the site, in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG16). The Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) supplied by the OAU was agreed by Tony Howe, Archaeological Officer of SCC, and the fieldwork took place between 20th and 22nd of October 1999.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 *Topography and Geology*

2.1.1 Guildford is situated in a cutting formed by the River Wey through the ridge of the chalk North Downs. The development site is situated on rising ground west of the river, the geology being chalk underlying alluvial material deposited by the River Wey.

2.2 *Historical and archaeological background*

2.2.1 The following is a summary of the findings of the desk-top study undertaken by the OAU (OAU July 1999).

2.2.2 No prehistoric sites or Roman sites have been identified in the Guildford vicinity to suggest substantial settlements, although chance finds indicate at least dispersed occupation, particularly in the vicinity of the medieval castle on the east bank of the

river, and two Roman villa sites have been identified a few kilometres to the west of the present town.

- 2.2.3 Although the earliest Saxon settlement, indicated by two burial sites, may well have existed on the west bank, the first organised town was established on the east bank, around the existing church of St Mary. Guildford Castle was constructed after the Norman invasion and survived intact until partial demolition in the 17th century.
- 2.2.4 By the 13th century Guildford was thriving, largely due to the wool and cloth trade and it is accepted that by this time an unplanned suburb was evolving on the west bank, around and to the south of the 12th century church of St Nicholas (Bird & Bird 1987). Pottery and other finds of the 13th and 14th centuries have been found on sites nearby to the south of the development area. Excavations at Westbury House, immediately south-east of the development area, identified a 12th century lime kiln, suggesting that the west bank may have been the site of industrial activity even before the growth of the suburb.
- 2.2.5 Post- medieval activity in the development area can be traced with reasonable clarity through successive maps. The earliest – Norden's of 1607 – shows a scatter of buildings to the south-west of St Nicholas' church. Successive maps show the slow encroachment of buildings into the area, accelerated by the laying out of Portsmouth Road, and the establishment of the brewery and its development in the 19th century.
- 2.2.6 The brewery buildings, including some surviving late 16th-century buildings incorporated into the complex, were demolished in the 1950's, to be replaced by Burymead House itself.

3 THE FIELDWORK

3.1 Aims

- 3.1.1 The aim of the evaluation was as detailed in the WSI, to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition quality and date of features and/or deposits of archaeological significance within the proposed development area, and to assess the impact on the development of surviving archaeological deposits.

3.2 Methodology (Fig 2)

- 3.2.1 Two trenches were excavated using a JCB equipped with a toothless bucket. As it was anticipated that the overburden would be of considerable depth, and to avoid the necessity of shoring, the trenches were stepped in from a surface width of c.5 m. The trenches were mechanically excavated to the depth of the highest significant archaeological horizon, or the natural subsoil, whichever was encountered first. Further cleaning and partial excavation of archaeological features was undertaken by hand.
- 3.2.2 Sondages were machine-excavated into the natural subsoil in both trenches to confirm the composition and sequence of the natural stratigraphy. This was considered necessary as intact archaeological deposits have been found beneath deep made ground at several locations in Guildford (D Bird *pers. comm.*)
- 3.2.3 Archaeological recording of the excavated trenches was in line with standard OAU practice (Wilkinson 1992).

3.3 *Finds*

- 3.3.1 The machined overburden was examined for finds during the excavation process. Obviously modern finds were noted but not retained

3.4 *Environmental Data*

- 3.4.1 Provision was made to recover samples from archaeologically significant deposits. In the event, one sample was recovered from the fill of pit 205. This is discussed below.

4 RESULTS

4.1 *Trench 1* (Fig. 3)

- 4.1.1 The natural chalk (111) was revealed at a height of 33.65 m OD (approximately 2.2 m below current ground level), sloping down to the north-east. This was overlain by a banded layer of chalk and sand (110), the surface of which also sloped down to the north-east. The maximum recorded depth of this deposit was 1.30 m. It was sealed by a levelling layer (109) of silty sand and gravel, surviving to a maximum depth of 0.65 m.
- 4.1.2 Layer 109 was overlain by, and in places truncated by, elements of brick structure 104. From the south-west these consisted of structure 112, a brick-lined shaft measuring 1.30 m deep x 1.20 m wide, brick wall footings over a concrete/brick rubble base (113) and an area of brick flooring (114 – not shown in section). Between 113 and 114 was an apparently contemporary pipe trench [108], aligned NW-SE. The trench was not bottomed, but was observed to be at least 1.45 m deep, and backfilled with a mix of dark brown loam (107) containing a large quantity of brick fragments, lumps of concrete and other building rubbish.
- 4.1.3 The various elements of structure 104 were abutted by dumped demolition/levelling layers 106 and 105, sealed at the east end of the trench by a thin gravel layer (103) and a layer of concrete (102), which was overlain by a rubble make up layer (101) for the modern tarmac (100).

4.2 *Trench 2* (Fig. 4)

- 4.2.1 The natural chalk (209) was revealed at a height of 30.06 m OD in a sondage. It was sealed by two layers of banded mixed sand and chalk, totalling a maximum of 1.35 m in depth (207, 206). Layer 206 was cut by a pit (205), which measured 1.30 m in diameter x 0.63 m deep, with near vertical sides and a flat base. The primary fill (204), was a silty sand, overlaid by dark grey brown sandy silt (203) which produced a significant assemblage of 12th century pottery, and some animal and fish bones (see below).
- 4.2.2 The upper fill (203) of pit 205, and the surface of layer 206 were exposed at a minimum depth below ground level of 1.30 m (c. 32.1 m OD), and were sealed by layer 202, a mid-brown silty sand, noted to be very similar in character to layer 109 in Trench 1. Layer 202 was up to 0.80 m deep, and was cut by a pipe trench and sealed by a 0.20 - 0.30 m mix of sand, gravel and brick fragments (208). This in turn was overlain by a brick/rubble hardcore layer (201) forming a base for the modern tarmac surface (200).

5 FINDS

5.1 *Summary*

- 5.1.1 Samples of the bricks incorporated into the elements (112,113,114) of structure 104 were recovered, and from the pipe-trench backfill (107). All were clearly of 19th or 20th century date, and will not be commented on further. All of the archaeologically significant finds came from pit 205 in Trench 2. These are discussed below.

5.2 *Metal Objects*

- 5.2.1 A small undiagnostic scrap of Cu Alloy was recovered from the fill (203) of pit 205.

5.3 *Pottery - by Paul Blinkhorn*

- 5.3.1 The pottery assemblage comprised 47 sherds with a total weight of 320 g. All of the sherds occurred in one feature, pit 203. All fabrics were types well-known in the region, and the equivalent Museum of London Archaeological Service pottery fabric codes and chronologies have been used where appropriate (Vince, 1985), as follows:

Early Surrey Coarseware (ESUR). Mid 11th – late 12th century. 12 sherds, 97 g.

Early Medieval Shelly Ware (EMSH). 11th-12th century. 12 sherds, 78 g.

Coarse London-type Ware (LCOAR). Late 12th-13th century. One sherd had fragments of white slip stripe decoration under an orange glaze, the other an all-over white slip beneath a green glaze. These styles of decoration are most common during the early part of the industry, i.e. later 12th – early 13th century (Pearce et al 1985, 27-8). 2 sherds, 8 g.

Kingston-type Ware (KING). 1250-1450. Single sherd from a green glazed jug. 1 sherd, 10 g.

Sandy Coarseware (-). Possibly 12th/13th century. Unglazed wares, probably of local manufacture, and similar to the products of many industries in the region (McCarthy and Brooks 1988, 309-14). Moderate to dense sub-rounded white, orange and grey quartz up to 1 mm. Petrologically very similar to Kingston Ware, indicating a local manufacturing source. Less coarse than the Early Surrey Coarseware. 20 sherds, 127 g.

Comments

- 5.3.2 This assemblage, which can be dated to around the second half of the 13th century, appears to be typical of those found in Surrey. Generally, the early medieval period is dominated by shelly wares, which were then supplanted by sandy wares in the late 12th or early 13th century (McCarthy and Brooks 1988, 317).
- 5.3.3 The Early Medieval Shelly Ware and Early Surrey Coarseware in this assemblage is almost certainly residual, and indicates that there was earlier activity in the vicinity of this site, probably dating to the later 12th century. A similar chronology can be given to the two sherds of Coarse London –type Ware.

5.4 *Animal Bone – by Beth Charles*

- 5.4.1 A modest quantity of sheep bone fragments were recovered by hand from pit 205, and further small pieces were retained from the sieving of the environmental sample. In addition some undiagnostic fish vertebrae were recovered.

5.5 *Environmental Data – by Dana Challinor*

- 5.5.1 A single sample of 30 litres was processed for charred plant remains. (context 203). The sample was processed by mechanical flotation in a modified Siraf machine, with the sample held on a 500 µm mesh and the flot collected on a 250 µm mesh. The resulting flot was scanned under a microscope at x10 and x20 magnification.
- 5.5.2 The flot was rich in charcoal with over 200 identifiable fragments. The assemblage appeared to be dominated by *Quercus* sp. (oak) although other taxa such as *Fraxinus excelsior* (ash) and Maloidae (hawthorn, pear type) were also present. Other charred plant remains were sparse, including two poorly preserved wheat grains (cf. *Triticum* sp.) and a single fragment of nutshell. The deposit is likely to represent the remains of the fuelwood used in a domestic fire.

6 DISCUSSION

6.1 *Interpretation*

- 6.1.1 The evaluation trenches confirmed the geological character of the area, revealing the natural chalk sloping down to the north-east, covered by a sequence of alluvial chalk/sand deposits. The silty sand character of the layer 206, into which the single medieval feature (205) was cut, differs from the evidently natural deposits seen in Trench 1, and the possibility that it is made ground cannot be ruled out. However, the layer produced no finds and it is intrinsically unlikely that thick made ground deposits would have been laid at this location prior to the later medieval period. The historical and archaeological evidence seems to indicate that the medieval development in the area was essentially unplanned expansion from the main settlement east of the river, which would not be consistent with a major programme of 12th century or earlier landscaping.
- 6.1.2 The most likely scenario is that the pit 205 in Trench 2 was cut into a 12/13th century ground surface that has subsequently been heavily truncated, resulting in the absence of any surviving topsoil or evidence of contemporary activity. The location of the pit, and the finds recovered from it, suggest that it is most likely to be a domestic rubbish pit behind a property fronting onto the road recorded as Field Lane on Richardson's 1739 map (more recently the northern part of Bury Street). Such evidence (albeit slight) would be consistent with the inference drawn from the earliest known map of the area (Norden, 1607), that the area was a suburb of the main settlement of Guildford, which lay across the River Wey to the east.
- 6.1.3 The considerable truncation of the ground surface is most likely to be associated with the expansion of the brewery in the 19th century, some structural elements of which were revealed in Trench 1. Their character suggests that they belong to the period between 1871 and 1897, when the site was substantially redeveloped. This episode may also have involved levelling of different parts of the site.

6.2 *Conclusion*

6.2.1 From the evaluation evidence there appears to be little prospect of the survival of any significant archaeological deposits pre-dating the brewery development in the 19th century in the southern part of the site. The survival of the 12th/13th century pit, and its location, suggest that truncated remains of deeper medieval features, such as pits or ditches may survive along the north-eastern edge of the development area.

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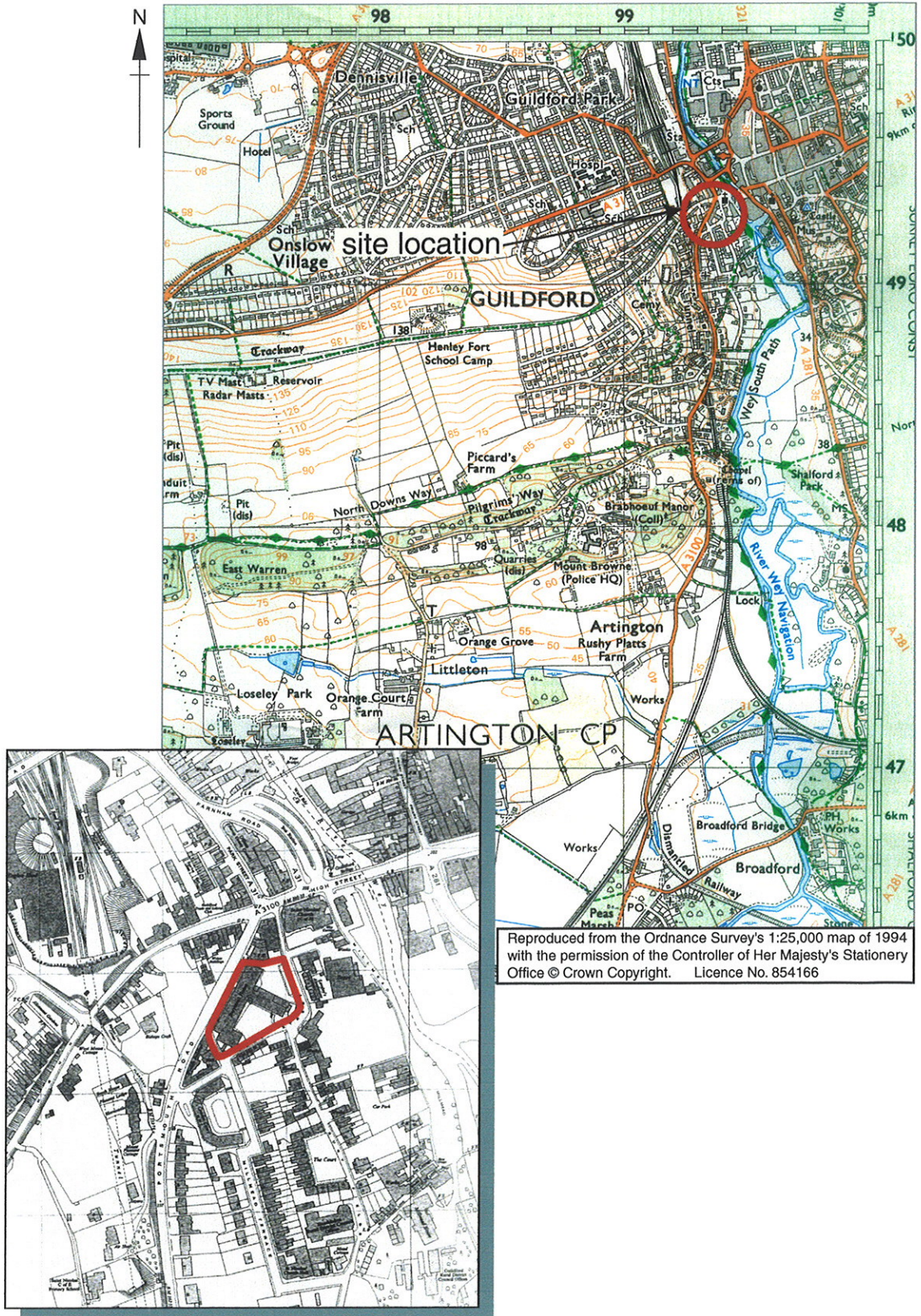
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Appendix 1

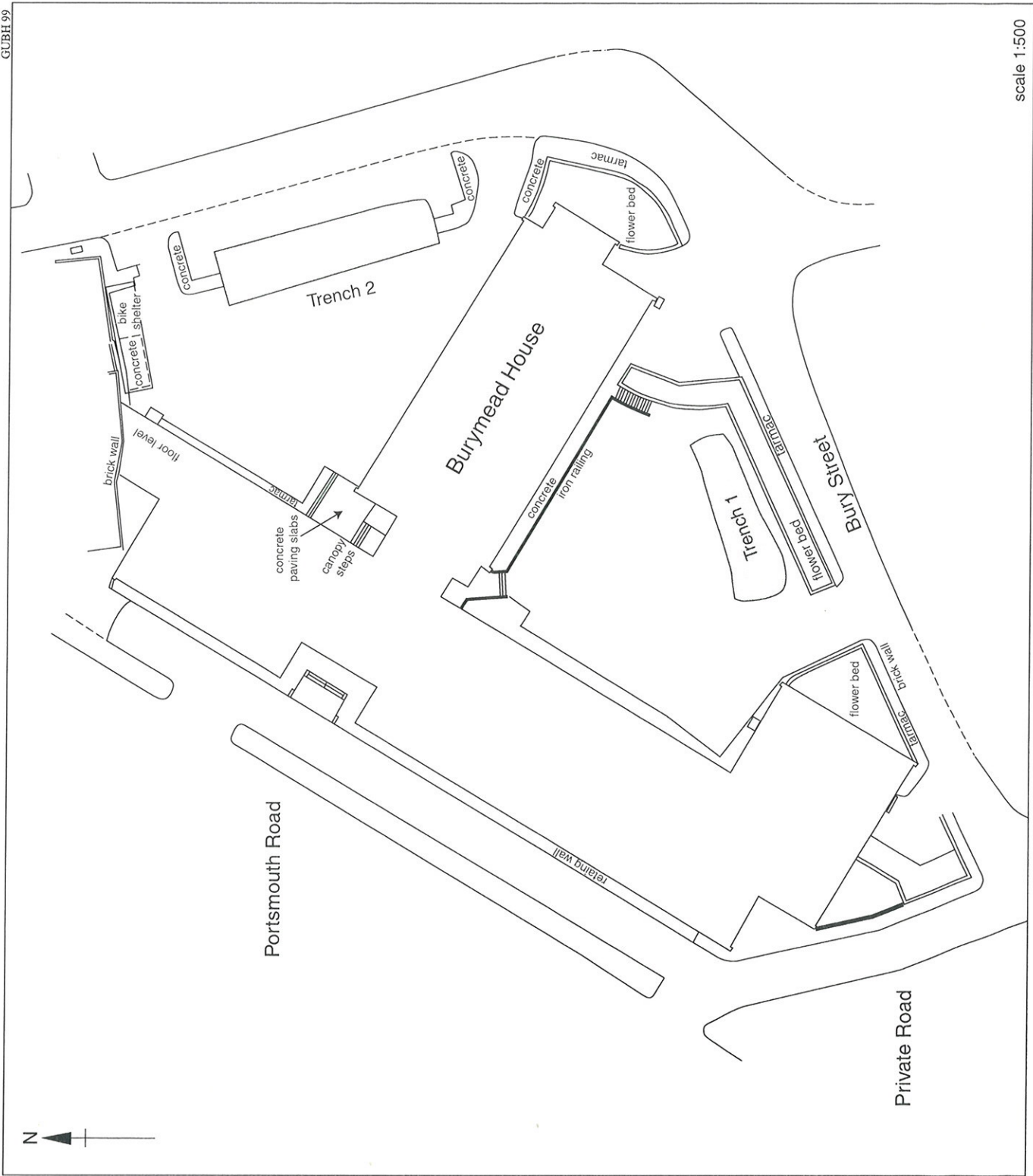
Table of Contexts

TRENCH	CONTEXT	TYPE	WIDTH (m)	DEPTH (m)	FINDS	COMMENTS
1	100	Layer	-	<0.15	-	Modern Tarmac surface
1	101	Layer	-	<0.50	-	Rubble make up for 100
1	102	Layer	-	<0.75	-	Concrete layer
1	103	Layer	c.7.0 E-W	<0.35	-	Gravel levelling
1	104	Structure	-	-	-	Brewery structures (112,113,114)
1	105	Fill	-	0.50	CBM	Mixed demolition /topsoil layer within/around 104
1	106	Fill	-	<0.95	-	Levelling
1	107	Fill	-	1.45	CBM	Pipe trench backfill of cut 108
1	108	Cut	1.40	>1.45	-	Pipe trench (19 th century)
1	109	Layer	-	<0.65	-	Ballast/levelling
1	110	Layer	-	<1.30	-	Natural silty sand/chalk
1	111	Layer	-	-	-	Natural chalk
1	112	Structure	-	-	CBM	Brick built shaft + mortar floor
1	113	Structure	-	-	CBM	Brick wall footings
1	114	Structure	-	-	CBM	Brick flooring
2	200	Layer	-	<0.16	-	Modern Tarmac surface
2	201	Layer	-	<0.50	-	Rubble make up for 200
2	202	Layer	-	<0.80	-	Silty sand make up
2	203	Fill	-	<0.55	Pot/bone/ flint/ CA	Upper fill of 205
2	204	Fill	-	<0.08	-	Primary fill of 205
2	205	Cut	1.30	<0.63	-	Pit
2	206	Layer	-	<1.20	-	Natural? - silty sand
2	207	Layer	-	<0.30	-	Natural (weathered chalk)
2	208	Layer	-	<0.75	-	Make up layer
2	209	Layer	-	-	-	Natural chalk



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Figure 1: site location



scale 1:500

Figure 2: trench location

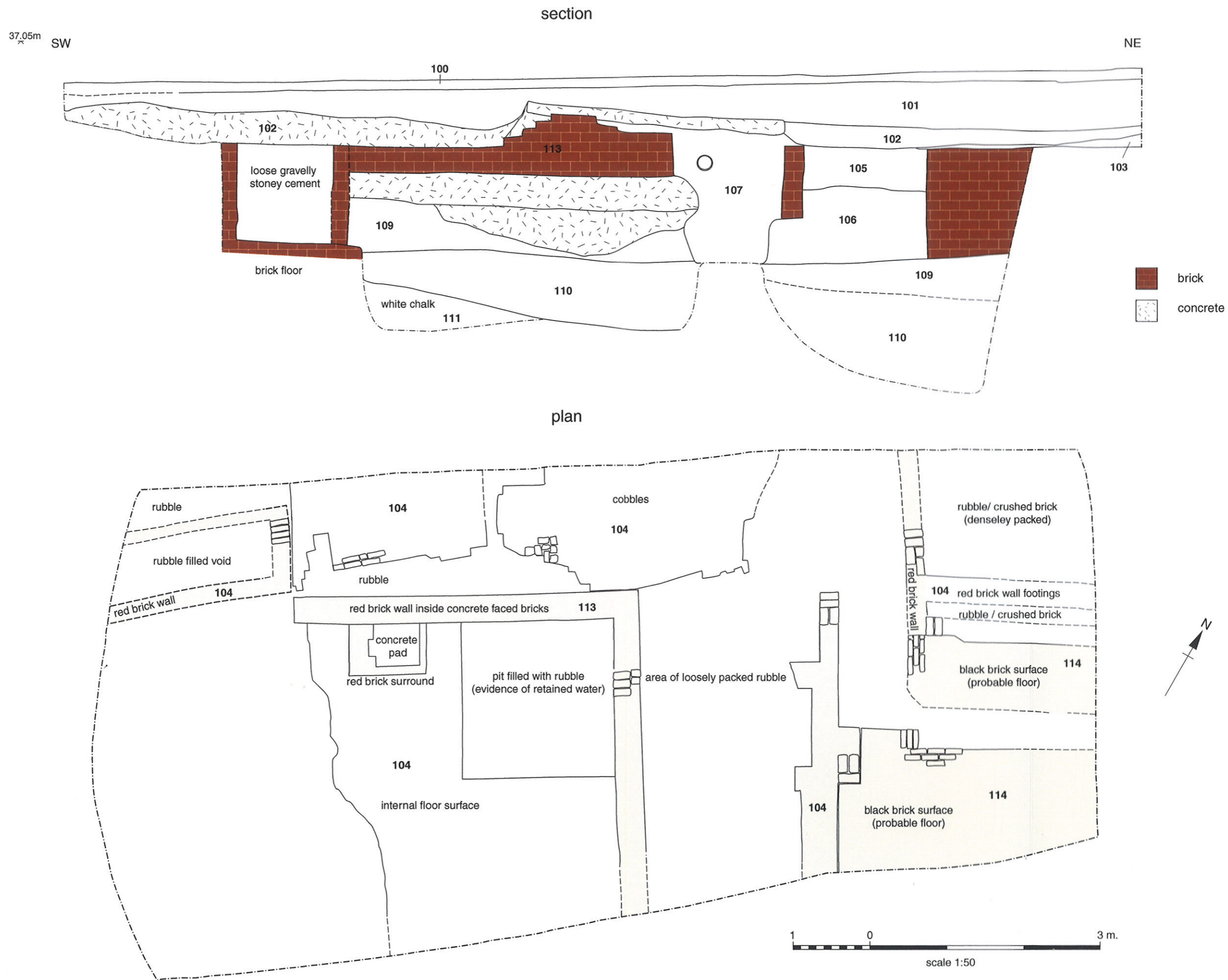


Figure 3: Trench 1, plan and section

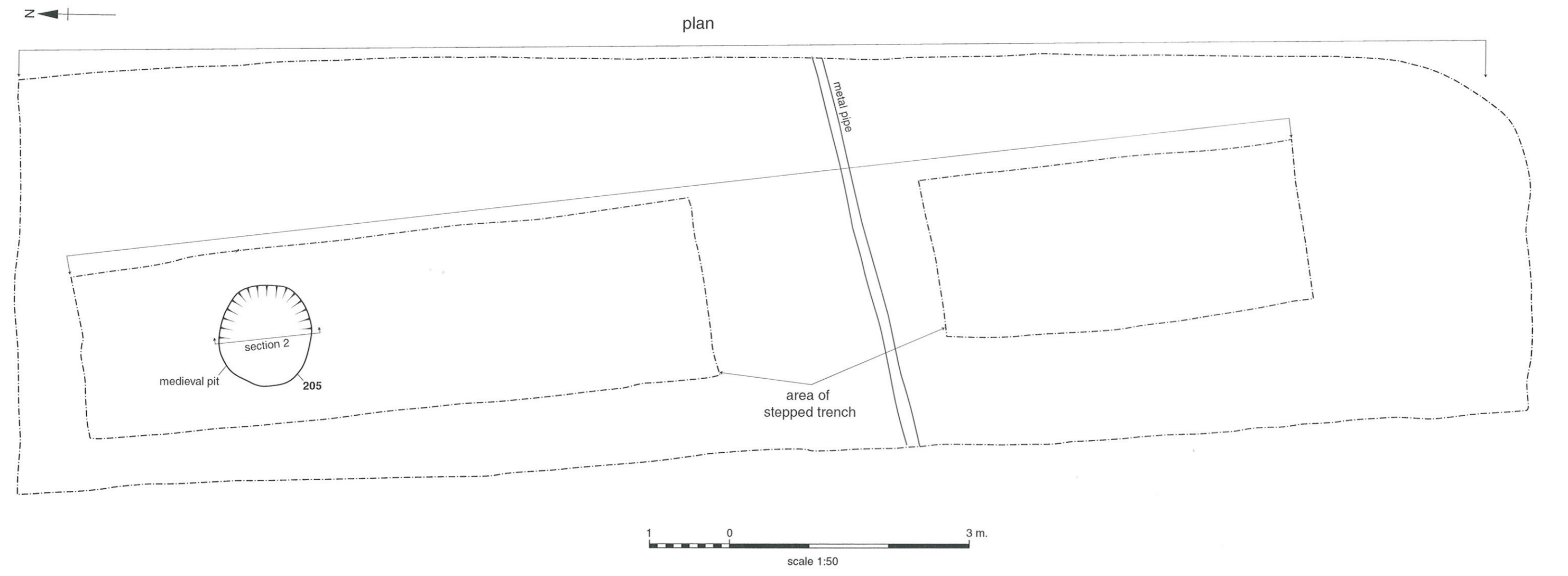
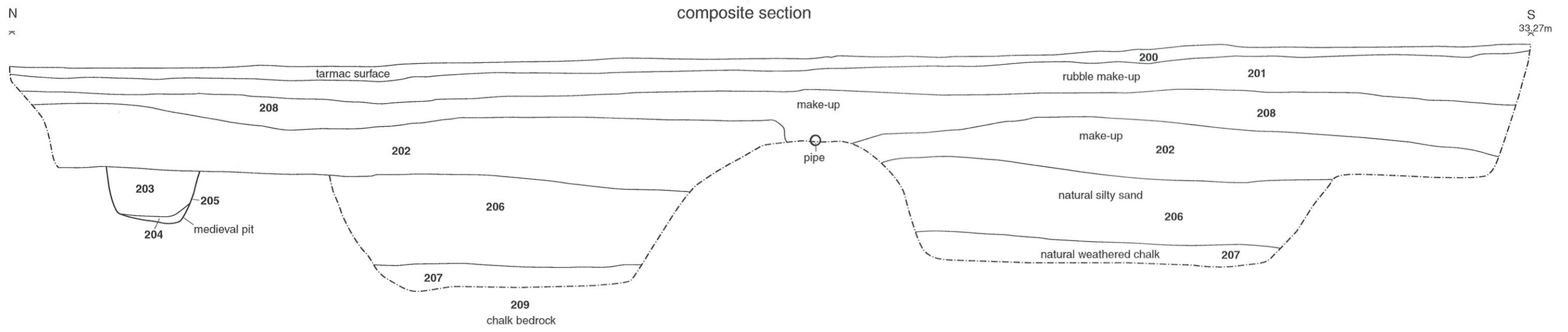


Figure 4: Trench 2, plan and section.



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