

**THAME, BUTTERMARKEt, NO 17A****(THBM92)**

The Oxford Archaeological Unit was commissioned to conduct a watching brief at No 17A, Buttermarket, Thame, Oxon (SP 471206), during the digging of foundation trenches for a storeroom adjacent to No 17.

The area lies between the High Street and the Buttermarket and, therefore, may shed light on the development and infilling of the market.

The site was visited on 30 and 31 July, and 3 August, during which time the three trenches were machine dug around the north, west and east sides of an existing concrete platform, 24.

Trench 1 revealed, 0.12 m below ground surface, a cobbled pathway, 23, consisting of limestone cobbles (average size 0.15 m x 0.1 m x 0.15 m) orientated north-south, set in a sandy silt bed.

The path had been cut, away to the west by a brick built cellar, 26, to the east by cellars under the property adjacent to No 17, and to the north by a large pit, 30, and a brick built cellar, 28.

Beneath the bedding layer of the path was a layer of silty clay approximately 0.1 m deep, similar to layer 14 in Trench 3, which lay above natural subsoil.

Trench 2 revealed no archaeological activity apart from the cut of pit 30 and modern backfilling/make up.

Trench 3 revealed, in the west section, beneath modern layers 1, 2 and 3, and post-medieval floor/yard surfaces 4 and 5, a number of rubbish pits 10, 15, 17, 18 and 6, a posthole, 16, and a medieval layer, at the north end of the section, 14.

Finds were recovered from the excavated parts of pits 15 and 17.

**Interpretation**

There is documentary evidence that the 'infilling' of the lozenge shaped market had begun by the middle of the 13th-century. None of the buildings which currently occupy this area are earlier than the 17th-century, so it is likely that the revealed stretch of cobbled pathway, 23, is contemporary with these buildings, although it may well have been laid out on an existing boundary or pathway. However, no evidence was seen to confirm that possibility.

A fragment of late medieval pottery recovered from between the cobbles suggests that 23 was in use until the enlargement of No 17 Buttermarket in the 18th-century effectively blocked the path.

The pit 30 which cut the path must also date from that time, although close examination for dating evidence was impossible due to the unsafe section.

The pits revealed in Trench 3 would appear to be of late medieval origin relating to the properties facing the High Street.

It is notable that there is no evidence of a metalled surface, predating the infilling of the market place; although it would be unsafe, on the basis of one section in a very disturbed area, to conclude that there never was a metalled surface in this area.

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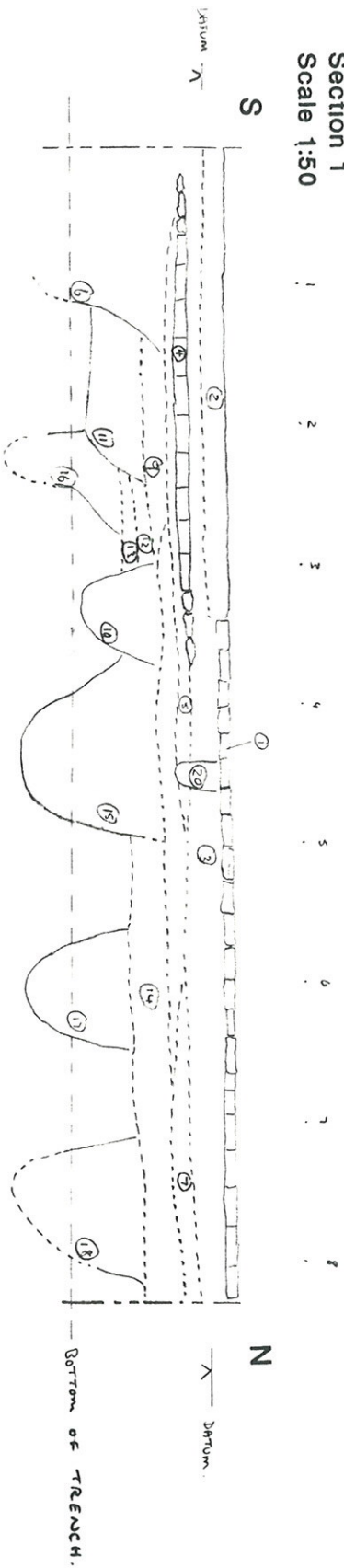
# Thame Buttermarket N°17a.

THBM 92

TR 3

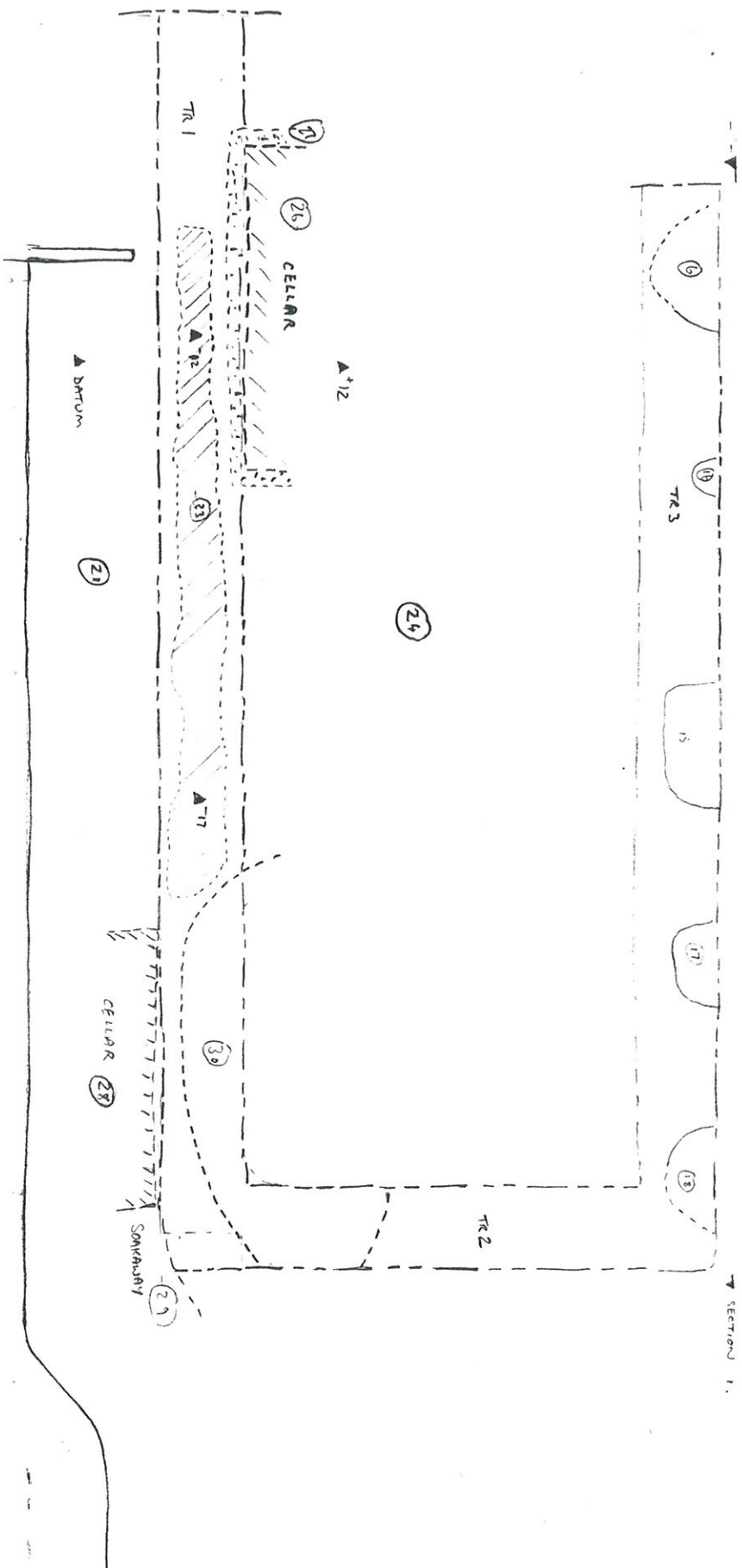
Section 1

Scale 1:50



# Thame Buttermarket N°17a.

THBM 92  
Plan N°1  
Scale 1:50





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