Wabag Water Engineering Ltd
Aynho Road
Adderbury
Oxfordshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Oxford Archaeology

September 2003

Client: Charles Church, South Midlands Ltd

Issue N^{O}: 1
Planning Ref N^{O}: 02/02052/F
NGR: SP 4790 3572

Client Name:	Charles Church, South Midlands Ltd
Client Ref No:	
Document Title:	Wabag Water Engineering Ltd, Aynho Road, Adderbury, Oxfordshire
Document Type:	Evaluation
Issue Number:	1
National Grid Reference:	SP 4790 3572
Planning Reference:	02/02052/F
OA Job Number:	1949
Site Code:	AWABAG 03
Invoice Code:	AWABAGEV
Receiving Museum:	Oxfordshire Museum Services
Museum Accession No:	2003.114
Prepared by:	Mike Sims
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Date:	10th September 2003
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Date:	10th September 2003
Document File Location	H:\PROJECTS\Oxfordshire OX\Cherwell CH\4713 WABAG, Aynho Rd, Adderbury\evalReport.doc
Graphics File Location	Server 10:/oaupubs 1/AtoH*AWABAGEV*Aynho Road, Adderbury*AH*26.08.03
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Wabag Water Engineering Ltd.
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

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SUMMARY

On the 18th of August 2003 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at the former Wabag Water Engineering Ltd. site, Aynho road, Adderbury, Oxfordshire (NGR: SP 4790 3572) on behalf of Charles Church, South Midlands Ltd. The evaluation revealed a large area of the site had been truncated by landscaping, whilst lower lying, marshy areas had been sealed below a substantial depth of made ground. The paddock to the west of the site showed evidence of being permanent pasture with no other activity. No archaeological remains were encountered during this evaluation.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 On the 18th of August 2003, OA carried out a field evaluation at the former Wabag Water Engineering Ltd. site on the Aynho road, Adderbury in Oxfordshire (NGR: SP 4790 3572) on behalf of Charles Church, South Midlands Ltd. in respect of a planning application for the demolition of the existing structures and for the construction of 25 houses (Planning Application No.02/02052/F). This was in accordance with a brief set by and a WSI agreed with the County Planning Archaeologist, Hannah Fluck representing Cherwell District Council.

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site lies south of and approximately 3 m below the level of the B1400 Aynho road in the south-east corner of Adderbury. Sited at approximately 97 m above OD, it lies in the Lias geological region. The site occupies an area of just over 1 hectare.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 Archaeological investigation was carried out to the west of the development site near Adderbury House by Thames Valley Archaeological Services in 1996. Evidence of medieval and early Post-medieval settlement (SMR 15937) was found, though the embankment and subsequent landscaping by Capability Brown resulted in the removal of much of the settlement. The full extent of the earlier settlement is not known though it was thought that it may extend into the current development site.

2 EVALUATION AIMS

2.1.1 To determine the location, extent, date, character and state of preservation of any archaeological remains surviving on the site. Attention was given to remains of all periods. This included evidence for past environments with provisions for environmental sampling.

2.1.2 To clarify the nature and extent of any modern disturbance or intrusion onto the site.

2.1.3 To make available the results of the investigation.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork

3.1.1 The evaluation comprised of four machine dug trenches, three measuring 30 m in length (Trenches 1, 3 and 4) and one of 20 m (Trench 4). Trenches 2 and 3 were excavated within the paddock to the west of the site, with Trenches 1 and 4 being excavated within the area of the former water works. These were sited to achieve a balance between archaeological potential and the constraints of working within an industrial site.

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

3.2.1 The trenches were excavated under archaeological supervision by a mechanical excavator (JCB) using a 1.5 m wide toothless ditching bucket. Excavation proceeded to the top of the natural geology or to the top of the first archaeological horizon, whichever was encountered first.

3.2.2 The trenches were cleaned by hand and any revealed features were hand sampled to determine their extent and nature, and where possible to retrieve dating evidence. All features and deposits were issued with unique context numbers. All the trenches and features were planned at a scale of 1:50 and section drawings of features and sample sections were drawn at scales of 1:20. All features, sections and trenches were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

3.3 Finds

3.3.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation. Finds were collected by context. No finds of archaeological significance were collected during the fieldwork.

3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence

3.4.1 No deposits of Palaeo-environmental significance were encountered during the fieldwork.

3.5 Presentation of results

3.5.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below trench by trench followed by an overall discussion.

4 RESULTS: GENERAL

4.1 Soils and ground conditions

4.1.1 The site is located on a gentle slope, running from the south of Aynho road and contains a small dry stream gully. Trenches 2, 3 and 4 came down onto a mixture of friable sandy clays containing limestone. Trench 1 due to its position close to the

stream produced a series of alluvial deposits. The water table in this trench was just below the surface of the initial alluvium causing the deposits to be tenacious in nature. All the soil divisions were sharply defined with little mixing between the contexts.

4.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits

4.2.1 No significant archaeological deposits were encountered within the trenches.

5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

5.1 Description of deposits

Trench 1

5.1.1 Trench 1 was excavated to a depth of 1.2 m below ground level with the exception of a machine dug sondage down to 2.5 m depth at it's eastern end (Fig.4, Section 101). This sondage cut approximately 0.9 m into the surface of a dark yellowish brown silty clay (103). This was a very clean alluvial deposit with no evidence of activity. Sealing this layer was a 0.3 m thick band of tenacious orange brown silty clay (102), again a very clean alluvial deposit. Above this, and forming the base of the remainder of the trench was a 0.25 m thick layer of a tenacious greenish grey clayey silt (101). This context was organic and may represent the final phase of alluvial silting on site. This was overlaid by a 0.8 m to 1.0 m thick deposit of modern demolition debris, which also contained tip lines of mixed casting sand and iron slag (100). This layer probably immediately predates the construction of the water works and is a layer of made ground. Sealing this trench was a 0.22m thick layer of reinforced concrete.

Trench 2

5.1.2 This trench was excavated down to a depth of between 0.2 m at the western end and 0.4m at the eastern end (Fig.4, Section 202). The base of the trench came down onto a friable orange brown silty clay natural (202), containing many sub-angular limestone fragments and some iron panning. Resting on this layer was a spread of loose limestone rubble (203) approximately 0.15 m thick. This formed a roughly triangular area measuring 2 m x 2 m running in from the south bulk, and may possibly be a farmyard surface associated with the farm buildings abutting the paddock. The presence of fragmented 19th century brick within it suggests it is no later than this period. Sealing both (203) and natural (202) was a 0.2 m deep layer of friable reddish brown silts (201), representing subsoil. This was sealed by a friable dark brown silt topsoil and turf (200) measuring 0.22 m thick.

Trench 3

5.1.3 In Trench 3 natural was reached at a depth of 0.5 m at its northern end and at 0.35 m at it's southern end. (Fig.4, Section 301) At the base of the southern end of the trench a layer of frost disturbed natural represented by a compacted orange brown sandy clay (303) containing fragments of limestone. Cutting into the surface of this deposit were two roughly circular features measuring of 3.5 m diameter (304) and 5.5 m diameter (305).These two features were filled by a friable yellow brown clay silt,

which contained multiple small to medium sized angular limestone fragments and measured up to 0.35 m deep, produced no finds. The shape and the make up of both these features were consistent with natural tree throw holes. Overlying the natural (303) at the northern end of the trench was a layer of semi-compacted orange yellow silty clay containing small limestone fragments and some iron panning (302). Sealing the natural deposits and the tree throws was a friable dark yellowish brown clayey silt (301) measuring 0.18 m thick at the higher, northern end of the trench tapering down and practically disappearing at the lower southern end. Deposit (301)was then sealed by a friable greyish brown silty loam (300), measuring 0.12 m to 0.2 m representing the present day topsoil and turf.

Trench 4

5.1.4 Trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.6 m revealing a compacted orange yellow sandy clay natural (401). Immediately overlying this was a 0.3 m deep layer of mixed gravels and hardcore (400), forming the base for a 0.15 m thick layer of tarmac carpark surface which sealed the trench.

6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Reliability of field investigation

6.1.1 The conditions in the field were dry and clear with little intrusion by modern features such as services. Whilst the trenches were concentrated in the north and eastern part of the site, this area was less likely to have been heavily truncated by the original building of the site, as reflected in Trench 4. Therefore the distribution and percentage sample of the site is believed to have given a good reflection of the overall archaeological potential of the site.

6.2 Overall interpretation

6.2.1 The site can be broadly divided into two separate areas. The area around Trench 1 can be seen to be lower lying than the remainder of the site, which is reflected in the alluvial nature of its lower deposits. The waterlogged and marshy nature of this location would most likely have precluded any significant activity. Trenches 2 and 3 both show deposits of late agricultural soils with no earlier residual finds or features. The deposition of these soils is consistent with permanent pasture with no evidence of plough marks in the top of the natural or ridge and furrow to suggest otherwise. The level of truncation within Trench 4 has destroyed any archaeological remains, however an examination of the height of the surviving ground levels immediately to the west and north of the truncated area of the carpark suggests that it would have been a continuation of the permanent pasture to the west of the site.

6.2.2 The ground conditions exposed and the lack of evidence for earlier archaeological activity on this site suggests that this area was outside the main centres of occupation and has always been considered to be of marginal or pastoral agricultural use.

6.2.3 Overall it appears that the medieval/post-medieval Settlement identified west of the site did not extend into the development site. The nature of the landscape in this area seems to have been predominately pastoral on the edge of marshland and therefore did not encourage further use during these periods.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench	*Ctxt No*	*Type*	*Width (m)*	*Thick. (m)*	*Comment*	*Finds*	*Date*
1							
	100	Layer	-	1.20 m	Modern made ground	Modern rubble	C20th
	101	Layer	-	0.25 m	Organic rich alluvium	-	
	102	Layer	-	0.3 m	Alluvium	-	
	103	Layer	-	>1.1 m	Alluvium	-	-
2							
	200	Layer	-	0.22 m	Topsoil	Brick, tile, land drain, glass	C20th
	201	Layer	-	0.2 m	Subsoil	Brick	C19th
	202	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
	203	Layer	-	0.25 m	Rubble spread	Brick	C19th
3	300	Layer	-	0.12 m-0.2 m	Topsoil	Brick, Tile, Glass, Iron	C20th
3	301	Layer	-	Up to 0.15 m	Subsoil	Brick	C19th
3	302	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
3	303	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
3	304	Lens	3.5m	0.4 m	Tree throw hole	-	-
3	305	Lens	5.5m	0.3m	Tree throw hole	-	-
4	400	Layer	-	0.3m	Tarmac surface and base	Brick	C20th
4	401	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

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

OCAS 2003 *Wabag Water Engineering Ltd, Aynho Road, Adderbury, Design Brief for Archaeological Field Evaluation*

OA 2003 *Wabag Water Engineering Ltd, Aynho Road, Adderbury. Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Wabag Water Engineering Ltd, Aynho road, Adderbury, Oxfordshire
Site code: AWABAG 03
Grid reference: NGR SP 4790 3572
Type of evaluation: 4 machine dug 30m trenches
Date and duration of project: 2 days, 18th and 19th of August 2003
Area of site: Approximately 1.04 hectares
Summary of results: Heavy truncation within the industrialised area of the site. Evidence of permanent pastoral land to the west. No archaeological remains excavated.
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.

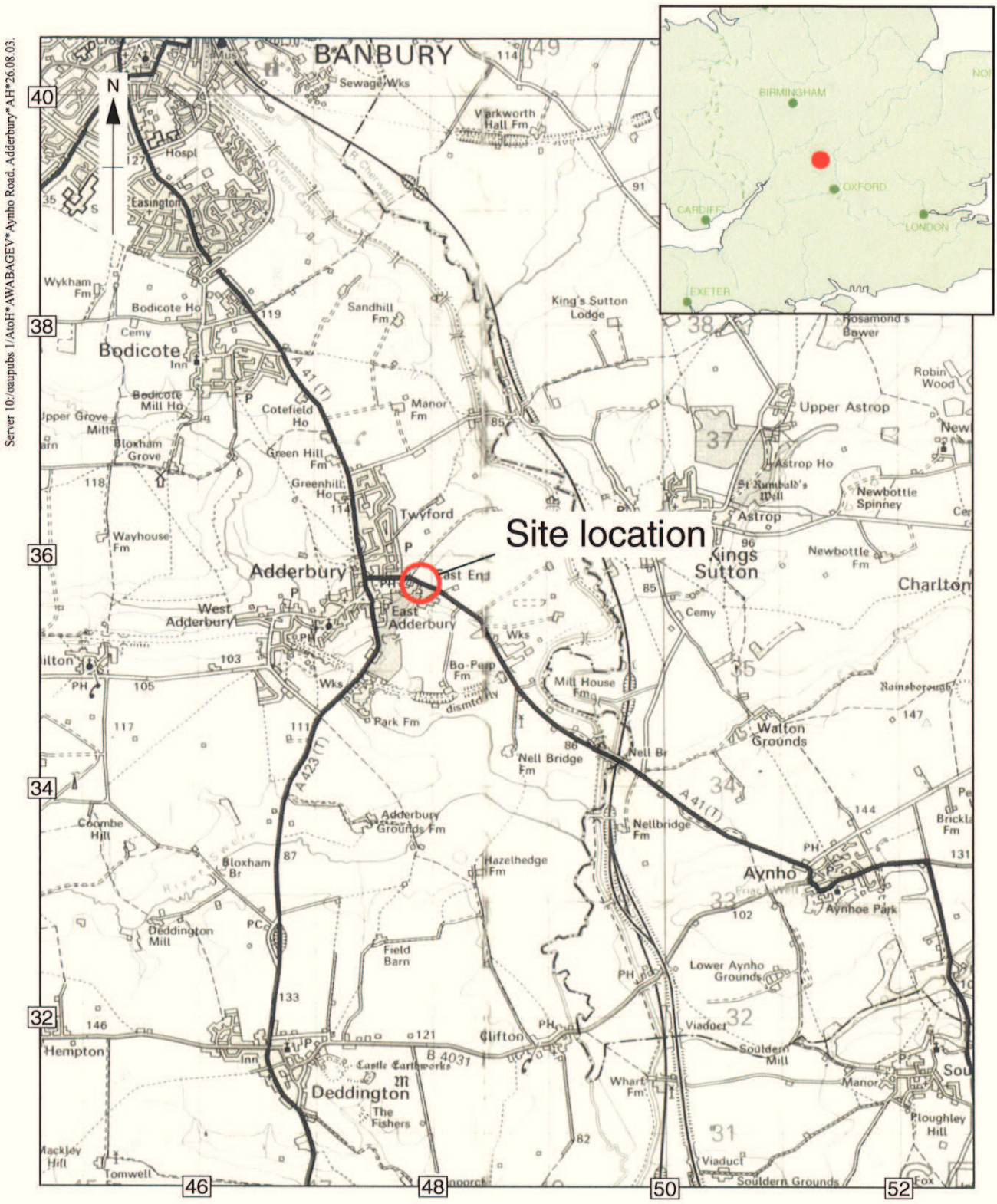


Figure 1: Site location

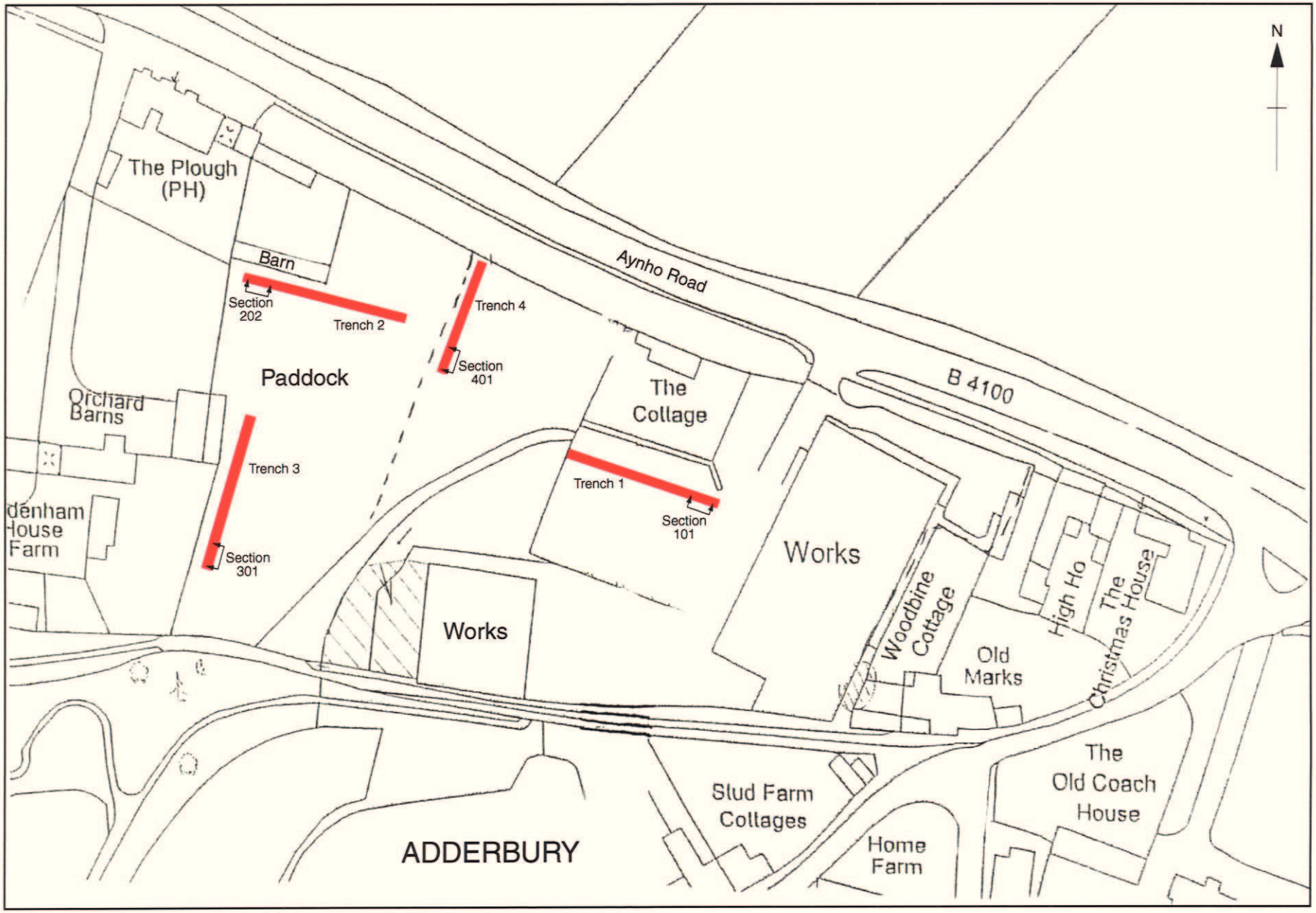
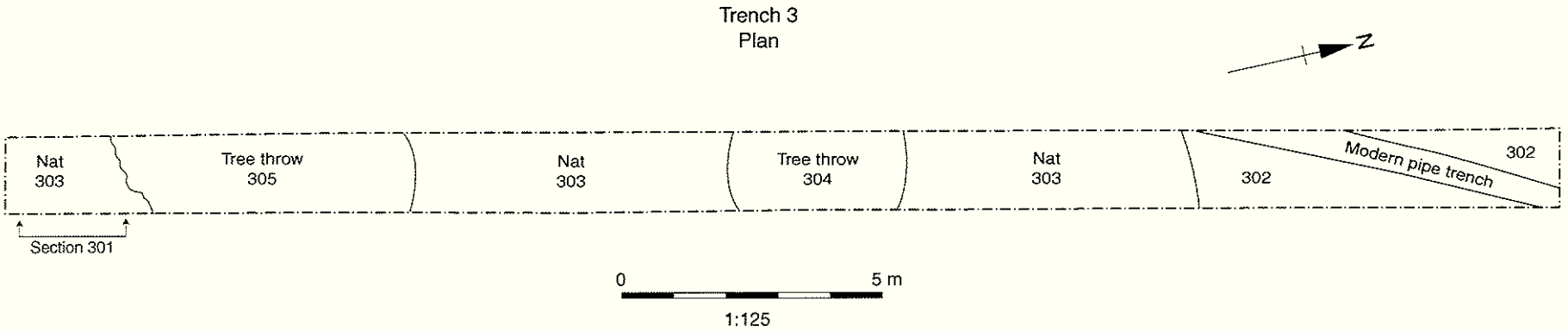


Figure 2: Trench location plan



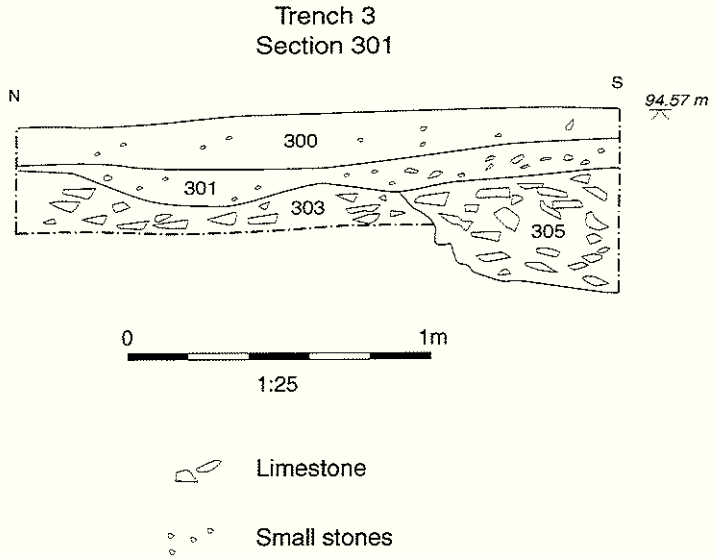
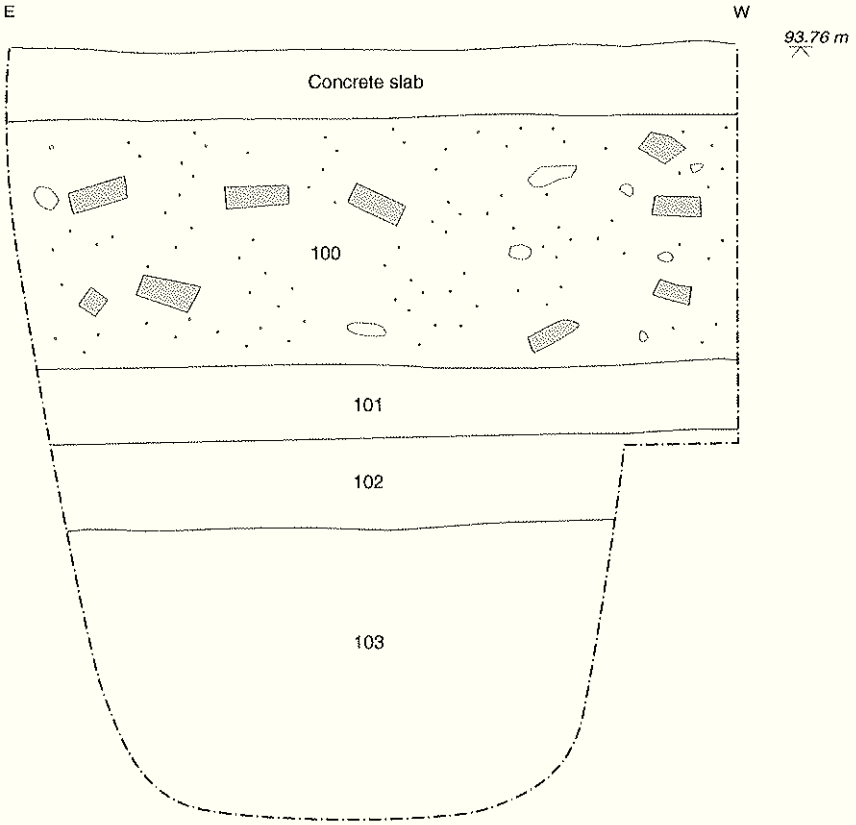
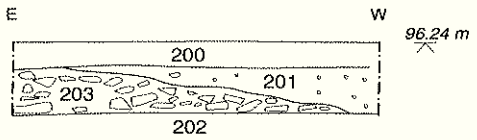


Figure 3: Trench 3 - plan and section

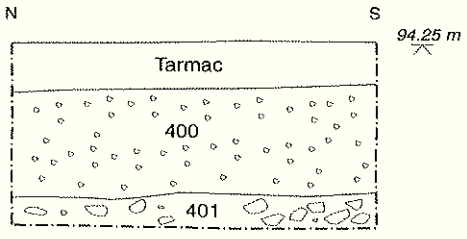
Sondage within Trench 1
Section 101

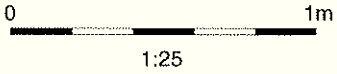


Trench 2
Section 202



Trench 4
Section 401



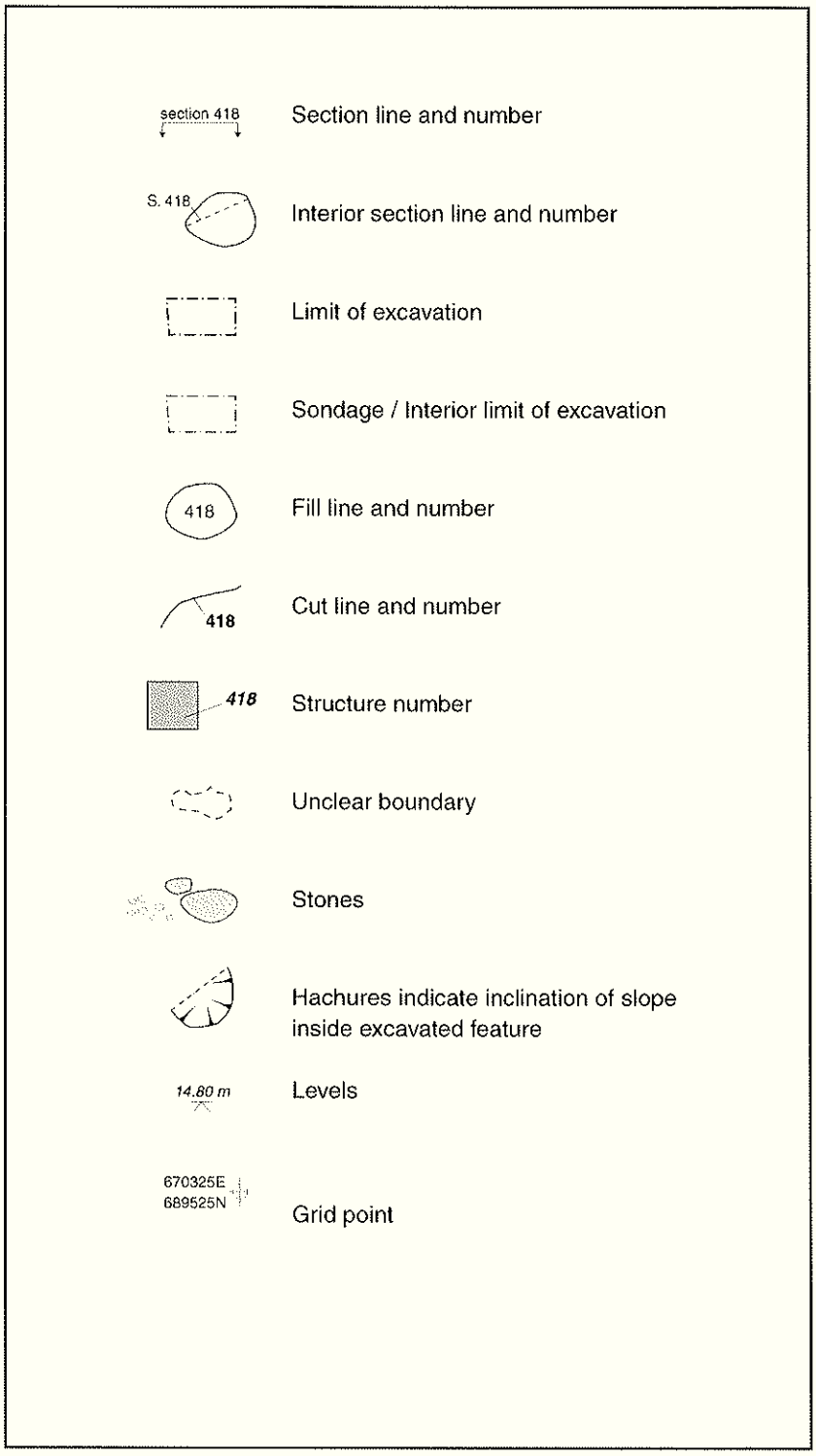



Brick


Limestone


Small stones

Figure 4: Trenches 1, 2 and 4 - sections



Key to Oxford Archaeology plans and sections

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