

**Village Hall Extension
Church Lane, Islip, Oxon**

[NGR SP 526 141]

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT



**Village Hall Extension
Church Lane, Islip, Oxon**

[NGR SP 526 141]

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

**Village Hall Extension
Church Lane, Islip, Oxon**

[NGR SP 526 141]

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

Prepared by: G Laws/J Hiller

Date: July 2000

Checked by: J Hiller

Date: July 2000

Approved by: *PAZ BOOTH*

Date: *28TH JULY 2000*

©Oxford Archaeological Unit
July 2000

Summary

In February and April 2000 the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) undertook a watching brief at the Village Hall, Islip (NGR SP 526 141), during the excavation of foundation and service trenches for an extension to the extant village hall building. No archaeological features were discovered in the trenches that were excavated by the contractors. Layers of relatively modern build-up were noted in several places, these appear to have derived from the construction of the hall itself, and some landscaping to the south and west of the hall was noted. The only finds were clearly of modern date and these were not retained

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The development proposal comprised extensions and alterations to the village hall. The site of the hall lies in an area of archaeological potential and in line with PPG16, permission for the development was granted by Cherwell District Council subject to a programme of archaeological monitoring.
- 1.2 The County Archaeological Services on behalf of the Local Planning Authority prepared a brief for the project. OAU were commissioned by the Islip Village Hall Committee to undertake the watching brief, and site visits were made during all stages of the groundwork. The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with the brief set by and a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) agreed with the Oxfordshire County Council Archaeological Service. The groundwork was undertaken by Gordon Jones, Builder, Oxon.

2 Background

- 2.1 The village hall is located on the west side of Islip (Fig. 1) and is bounded to the west by Church Lane, to the north by properties fronting Church Close and to the south and west by playing fields. The railway line lies just to the north-west and St Nicholas' Church lies immediately to the south-east. The site lies at c 70 m OD and the underlying geology is limestone.
- 2.2 The development site is located in an area of archaeological potential. The Village Hall lies close to the site of the chapel of Edward the Confessor, who was born in Islip. The Chapel is known to have been used during the 13th century. The date of its' foundation is unknown but is not thought to earlier than the 12th century. It was damaged during the Civil War and demolished in c 1780 The chapel is described as being to the north of St Nicholas' Church, though its precise location remains unknown. St Nicholas' Church is of 11th century date, although the earliest existing part of the church dates to c 1200. The site of a Roman Villa is recorded as lying c 1 km to the south east of the Village Hall.

3 Aims

- 3.1 The aims of the watching brief were to identify any archaeological remains exposed on site during the course of the works, and to record these to established OAU standards (OAU 1992), in order to secure their preservation by record.

4 Methodology

- 4.1 The Watching Brief consisted of monitoring of all ground works, including surface stripping, and excavation for foundations and service trenches by an archaeological supervisor working in accordance with the contractors' programme.
- 4.2 Within the constraints imposed by health and safety considerations the trenches were cleaned, inspected and recorded. Written records were made on pro-forma sheets and colour and black and white photographs were taken.

5 Results (Fig. 2)

The foundation and service trenches were excavated by the contractor and were monitored for the presence of features and finds. Spoil from the trenches was monitored for finds. The foundation trenches were usually 1 m wide and up to 1 m deep.

5.1 Trench east of the village hall (Fig. 3, section 1)

The earliest deposit seen along the length of the trenches was the natural combrash limestone (4) which lay *c.* 0.7 m below ground level. The natural rose slightly to the north end of the trench. This was overlain by a mixed layer of mid-brown silty clay with stone inclusions (3), including building debris which was 0.24 m thick. Above lay a 0.46 m thick deposit of mixed building debris comprising sand, mortar, concrete, bricks and tile (2). This material most likely derives from the construction of the hall building, and acted as a make-up level for the modern tarmac surface (1) at the top of the trench.

5.2 Trenches south of the village hall (Fig. 3, section 2)

The outline of a new building was excavated by the contractor. The trenches were generally *c.* 0.85 m deep. Natural combrash limestone and clay (4) was reached 0.6 m below the ground surface, and was exposed to a depth of 0.25 m. It was overlain by a mixed silty clay soil horizon (5) containing brick fragments, coal and cinders, suggesting an imported/dumped deposit. The layer was 0.3 m thick and was sealed beneath a 0.05 m thick layer of mortar (6), presumably derived from previous building work. In places at this level were more mixed and thicker patches of bricks, tile and gravel likewise suggestive of previous building work. The modern topsoil (7) and turf (8) sealed all the underlying deposits.

5.3 *Trenches south-west of the village hall* (Fig. 3, section 3)

Here the trenches were 1 m wide and 0.95 m deep. Natural cornbrash limestone lay 0.9 m below the ground surface, overlain by a 0.2 m thick mixed layer of silty clay and stones (9). Above lay a 0.65 m thick layer of building debris including sand, mortar, concrete, brick and tile fragments (10). This material acted as a bedding material for the present paved slab surface here (11).

5.4 *Service trenches*

A number of service trenches and soakaway holes were incorporated in the scheme for the extension. These service trenches were generally 0.3 m wide and 0.5-0.6 m deep, and were cut down through the build-up/make up layers seen in the main trench sections. As a result these intrusive works were inspected but not recorded.

6 **Finds**

- 6.1 No finds were recovered from the excavated trenches/service runs. Modern materials such as brick and tile were not retained for further analysis.

7 **Discussion**

- 7.1 No archaeological features or finds were observed within the trench sections or cut into the natural stone at the base of the trenches. The trenches were deepest at the south-west part of the site that suggests that there was some degree of land raising/landscaping; the reason for this is unclear.
- 7.2 The sequence above the natural suggests that a soil horizon (possibly a ploughsoil), represented by layers 5, 9 and perhaps also 3, had been disturbed during previous construction on the site, probably at the time that the village hall was constructed. The possible ploughsoil is undated. The site would appear therefore to be archaeologically sterile.

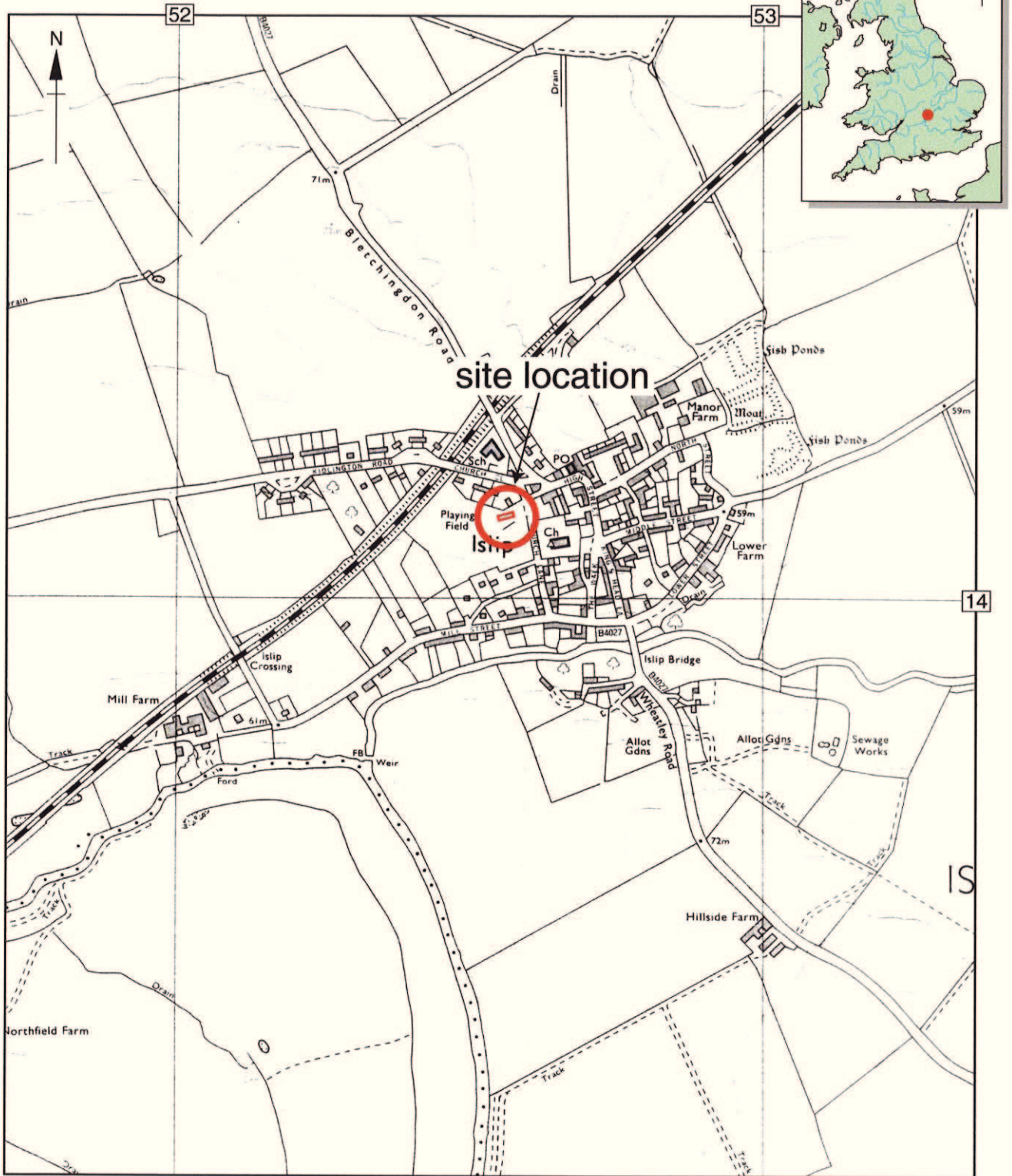
OAU
July 2000

Table of context information

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Comments</i>
1	Layer	0.1 m	Tarmac surface east of hall
2	Layer	0.46 m	Make-up layer
3	Layer	0.24 m	Soil and stone layer
4	Layer	0.2 m+	Natural cornbrash limestone and clay
5	Layer	0.3 m	Soil layer
6	Layer	0.05 m	Mortar skim, building material
7	Layer	0.35 m	Topsoil
8	Layer	0.07 m	Turf/grass
9	Layer	0.2 m	Clay soil layer
10	Layer	0.65 m	Building debris
11	Layer	0.12 m	Paving stones

Reference

OAU 1992 Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual (Wilkinson, D, ed)



Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey's 1:10,000 map of 1981 with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright. Licence No. 854166

Figure 1: Site location

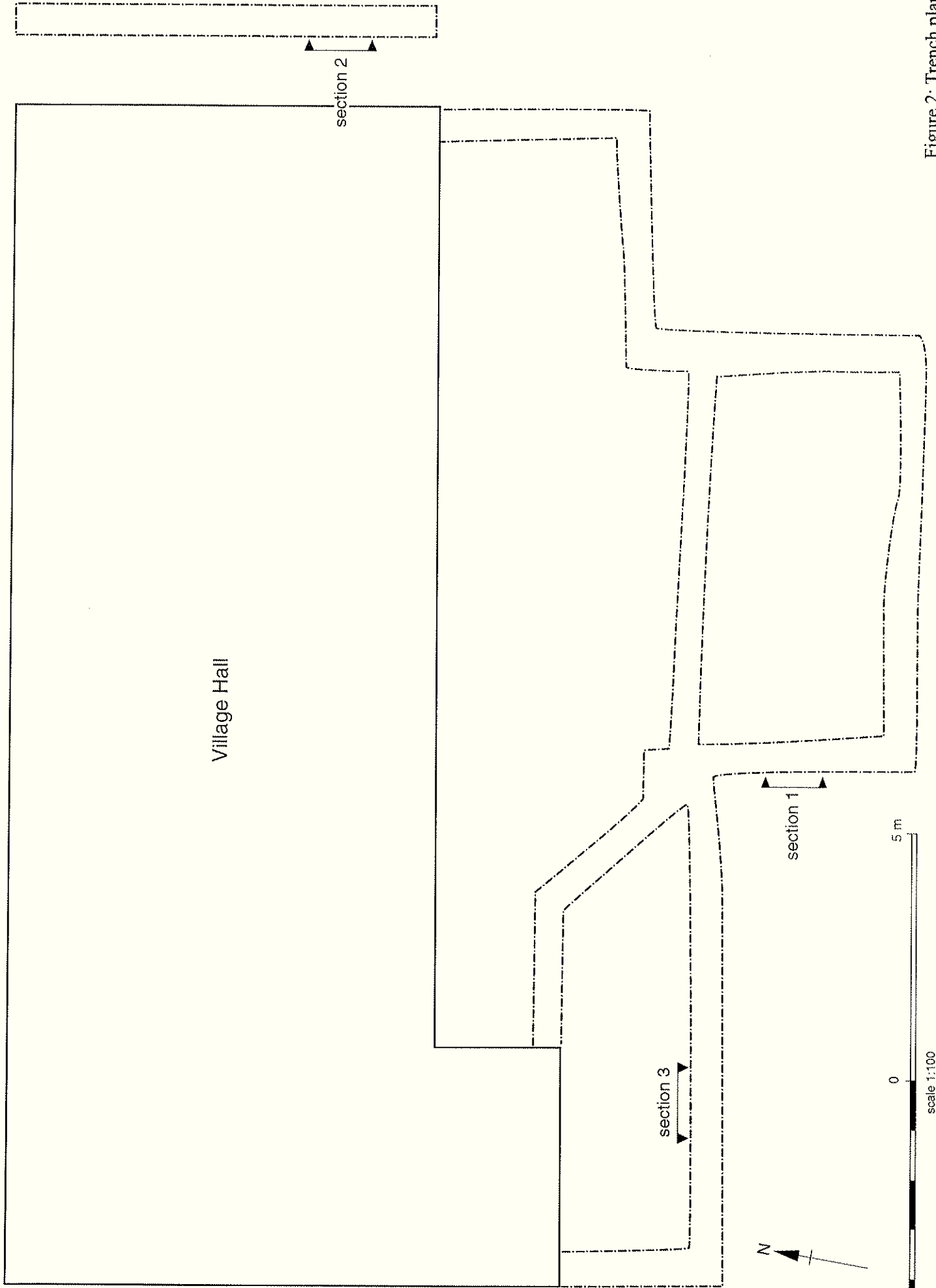


Figure 2: Trench plan

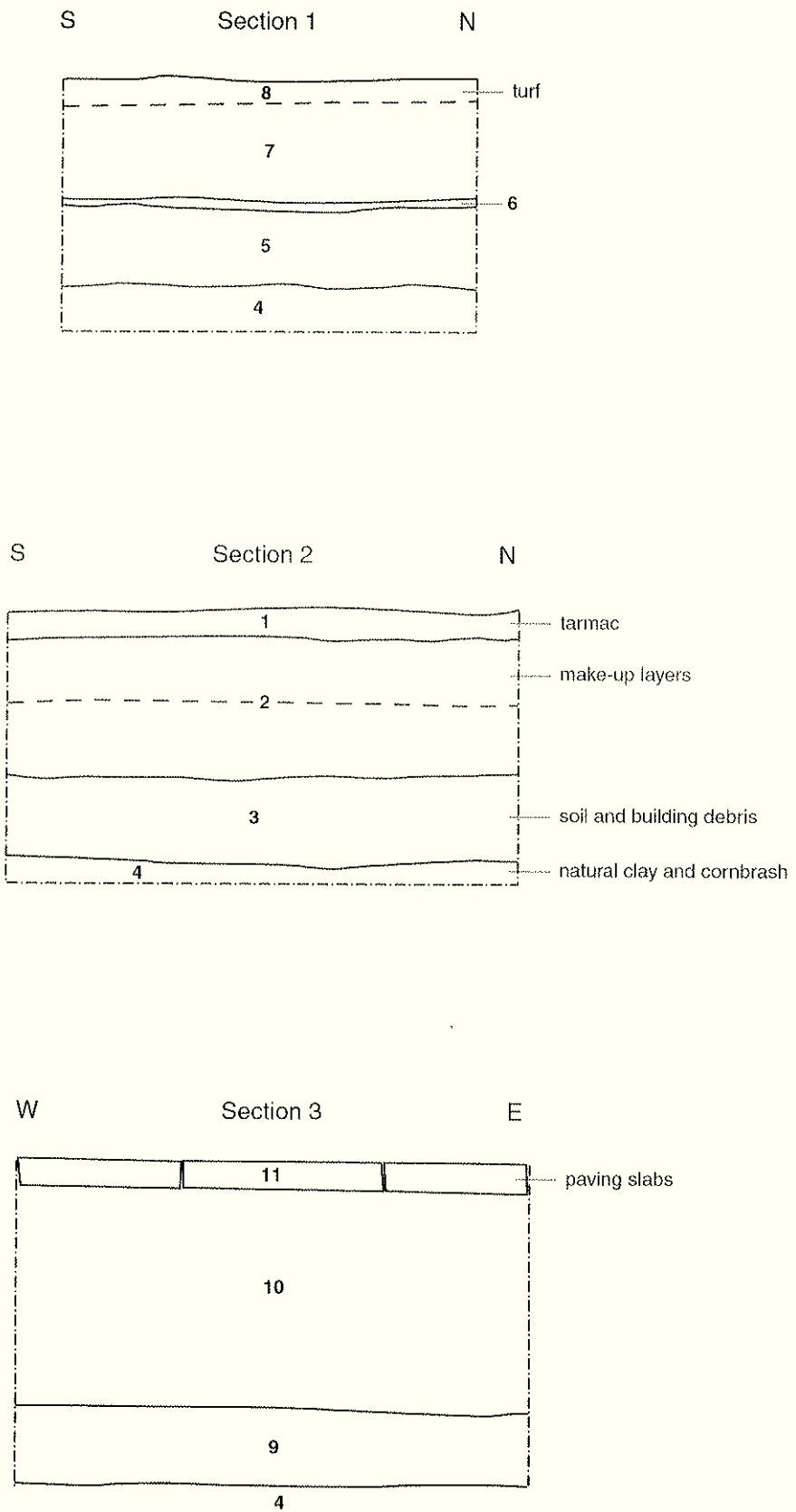


Figure 3: Sections



OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES

Tel: 01865 263800 Fax: 01865 793496

email: postmaster@oau-oxford.com www.oau-oxford.com



Director and Chief Executive: David Jennings B.A., M.I.F.A. Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited.
Private Limited Company Number: 1618597 Registered Charity Number: 285627.
Registered Office: Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES