

Horton Road
Poyle
Slough
Berkshire



Archaeological Evaluation Report



August 2006

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SUMMARY

Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation in the grounds of the Fulcrum Building, Horton Road, Poyle on behalf of John Sisk and Sons Ltd. No archaeological features were found.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In August 2006 OA carried out a field evaluation within the grounds of the Fulcrum Building, Horton Road, Poyle. The development site is situated at NGR TQ 0335 7556 and is approximately 0.633 hectares in area.
- 1.1.2 The area was evaluated in order to meet a planning condition in relation to a planning application to Slough Borough Council P/13062/001. The planning application relates to the proposals to demolish the existing three-storey warehouse building (Fulcrum Building) and replace it with a six-storey Travel Lodge Hotel.
- 1.1.3 The work was undertaken in accordance with an agreed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), detailing how OA would undertake all aspects of the required evaluation. This WSI is based on a brief produced by David Thomason of Berkshire Archaeology in May 2006. David Thomason monitored the evaluation on behalf of Slough Borough Council.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies on at 19 m above OD and is situated over alluvial silts and clays sealing valley and terrace gravels.
- 1.2.2 The site is situated in the south-east corner of Poyle, Slough, and immediately west of the M25 motorway, around 1.2 km west of Heathrow Airport and the new Terminal 5 development. Almost the whole of the western part of the site is occupied by the Fulcrum Building and the present archaeological evaluation focuses on former car-parking or loading areas to the east and north of the buildings (Figs 1 & 2).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The site is identified as having archaeological potential as a number of sites in the vicinity are noted on the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) for East Berkshire. This summary has been extracted from the brief for the evaluation issued by Berkshire Archaeology and written by David Thomason (Berkshire Archaeology, May 2006).
- 1.3.2 The site's close proximity to the Wryasbury River and its location within the Colne Valley indicates the potential for archaeological remains to be present, dating from the Palaeolithic to the Medieval period. Archaeological investigations in the vicinity of Heathrow Airport (Framework Archaeology, ongoing work) have uncovered a

number of archaeological sites including (within a kilometre of Horton Road) a multi-period archaeological landscape.

1.3.3 The Stanwell Cursus (a Neolithic linear monument) follows the approximate course of the Rover Colne and the Devil's Highway Roman Road passes through Staines, to the east of the site. Several medieval manorial complexes are known in the area.

1.3.4 Evaluations carried out by Wessex Archaeology to the west of the site at Berkyn Manor Farm and at the Poyle Sand and Gravel pit recovered significant archaeological remains from the prehistoric and Roman periods.

1.4 Aims of the Evaluation

1.4.1 The aims of the evaluation were: to determine the extent, date, character, quality, significance and state of preservation of the archaeological remains surviving on the site.

1.4.2 To assess the impact of the development on any significant archaeological remains and assess the need for further mitigation before and/or during construction.

1.4.3 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features.

1.4.4 To make available the results of the investigation.

2 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

2.1 Scope of fieldwork

2.1.1 The evaluation consisted of two trenches arranged in a 'T' shaped pattern (Fig. 2). The trenches were 1.8 m wide with a total length of 92.5 m, giving a 2% sample of the overall site.

2.1.2 The eastern side of the car-parking area was not evaluated due to the presence of a gas pipeline, which runs running north-south approximately 10 m from the eastern site boundary.

2.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

2.2.1 After the initial breaking out of the car-park surfaces and compacted made-ground, the overburden was removed under archaeological supervision by a JCB mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket.

2.2.2 The trenches were cleaned by hand as appropriate for recording purposes and planned at a scale of 1:50. Sample sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20. The trenches and sections were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures outlined in the WSI (OA, August 2006).

2.3 Finds

2.3.1 No finds were recovered.

2.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence

2.4.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified.

2.5 Presentation of results

2.5.1 The soils and ground conditions are described. This is followed by a description of the stratigraphic sequence within each trench and by a brief discussion and summary.

2.5.2 A Table of Contexts is given in Appendix 1.

3 RESULTS: GENERAL

3.1 Soils and ground conditions

3.1.1 The revealed underlying natural subsoil was coarse river gravel.

3.1.2 The present car-park surfaces, roadways and underlying compacted made-ground deposits required breaking out before the commencement of excavations of the underlying deposits.

3.1.3 The weather was dry during the evaluation and ground conditions were generally good, although there was some localised flooding at depth.

4 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

4.1 Description of deposits

Trench 1

4.1.1 Trench 1 measured 37.5 m long by 1.8 m wide and was aligned east-west to the north of the Fulcrum building.

4.1.2 Underlying coarse gravels (105) were found approximately 1 m beneath the present ground level at between 18.71 m and 18.89 m OD. (Section 1)

4.1.3 Within the eastern end of the trench a probable shallow channel was seen (Fig 2.). The western side of the channel was concave in shape and its base was flat. The channel was at least 1.7 m wide but its eastern extent was not seen within Trench 1. (Section 3).

4.1.4 The channel was filled and adjacent gravels overlain by a thick layer of brownish black silty clay (107) and patchy brownish black gravelly clay (109), which measured up to 0.5 m thick in places. These deposits were overlain by concrete and hardcore made ground deposits (102/103/106) which were up to 0.62 m in thickness. (Section 3).

4.1.5 Within the last 8.5 m of the western end of the trench, the sequence was somewhat different in that the brownish black silty clay deposits were absent and the underlying

gravel was instead overlain by 0.24 m of grey sandy silt and thicker made-ground deposits that were up to 0.86 m thick.

- 4.1.6 The made-ground deposits were sealed by a thin orange sand bedding for the overlying brick-setts surface or tarmac driveways.

Trench 2

- 4.1.7 Trench 2 measured 55 m long by 1.8 m wide and was aligned north-south within the car-parking area to the east of the Fulcrum building.
- 4.1.8 Underlying coarse gravels (205) were found at 1 m to 1.2 m beneath the present ground level at between 18.71 m and 18.89 m OD.
- 4.1.9 The gravel was deepest within the north of the trench and gradually rose in the vicinity of Trench 1. It was overlain by a layer of blackish brown silty clay (204/208) throughout the trench. This deposit varied in depth from 0.42 m in the north of the trench to only 0.1 m to the south. It filled several rather ephemeral shallow undulations within the gravel, most noticeably in the north of the trench where a possible NNE-SSW aligned continuation of the channel within the eastern end of Trench 1 was seen. Some modern disturbance was noted at this depth and occasional pieces of modern metalwork were seen within layer (204/208), but no other finds were seen.
- 4.1.10 The blackish brown silty clay (204/208) was overlain by a patchy band of orange brown sandy clay loam (203) or brown silty clay (207). These deposits varied in thickness from 0.4 m in the south of the trench to 0.2 m thick elsewhere. Occasional modern brick fragments were seen within these contexts.(Section 4)
- 4.1.11 Contexts (203) and (207) were overlain by up to 0.5 m of made-ground deposits (201/202/206) consisting mostly of broken concrete and brick hardcore, and the present car-parking area brick surface (201). (Section 5).
- 4.1.12 The last 5 m of the southern end of the trench was extensively disturbed by NNE-SSW aligned pipework and defunct cabling as well as what appeared to be a reinforced concrete base.

5 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 5.1.1 The underlying natural appeared as a consistent gravel horizon. No archaeological finds or features were seen. Conditions at the time of the evaluation were good.

5.2 Summary of results

- 5.2.1 No archaeological features or deposits were found. A possible shallow channel was identified in the eastern end of Trench 1 and in the north of Trench 2. Extensive dark silty clay deposits overlying the gravel indicate that this area was probably part of a broad area of wetland adjacent to the main watercourse.

Significance

- 5.2.2 The absence of archaeological features or deposits indicates that the site is of little archaeological significance. Furthermore, it would seem likely that the main body of the Fulcrum Building probably overlies an area of former shallow waterways or channels and that the overall archaeological potential for this area is therefore low.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context	Type	Description	Date
101	Layer	Brick setts (car park surface) with orange sand bedding	Modern
102	Layer	Compact made-up ground/rubble	Modern
103	Layer	Lower made-ground/demolition layer	Modern
104	Layer	Grey silty-sand	
105	Layer	Course sandy gravels (natural)	
106	Layer	Orange-brown clay	
107	Layer	Black clay overlying natural gravels	
108	Layer	Brown clay loam	
109	Fill?	Possible channel fill/dark brown stony soil	
201	Layer	Brick setts (car park surface)	Modern
202	Layer	Made ground/concrete surrounding drainage	Modern
203	Layer	Orange-brown clay	Modern
204	Layer	Black clay overlying natural gravels	
205	Layer	Course sandy gravels (natural)	
206	Layer	Made ground deposits	
207	Layer	Orange-brown clay	
208	Layer	Black clay overlying natural gravels	

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

Berkshire Archaeology, May 2006.

Former Fulcrum Building Site, Horton Road off Calder Way Poyle, Colnbrook, Slough: Brief for an archaeological evaluation

Oxford Archaeology, August 2006.

Horton Road Poyle, Slough, Berkshire. Written Scheme of Investigation

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Horton Road, Poyle, Slough, Berkshire

Site code: SLOTLP 06

Grid reference: TQ 0335 7556

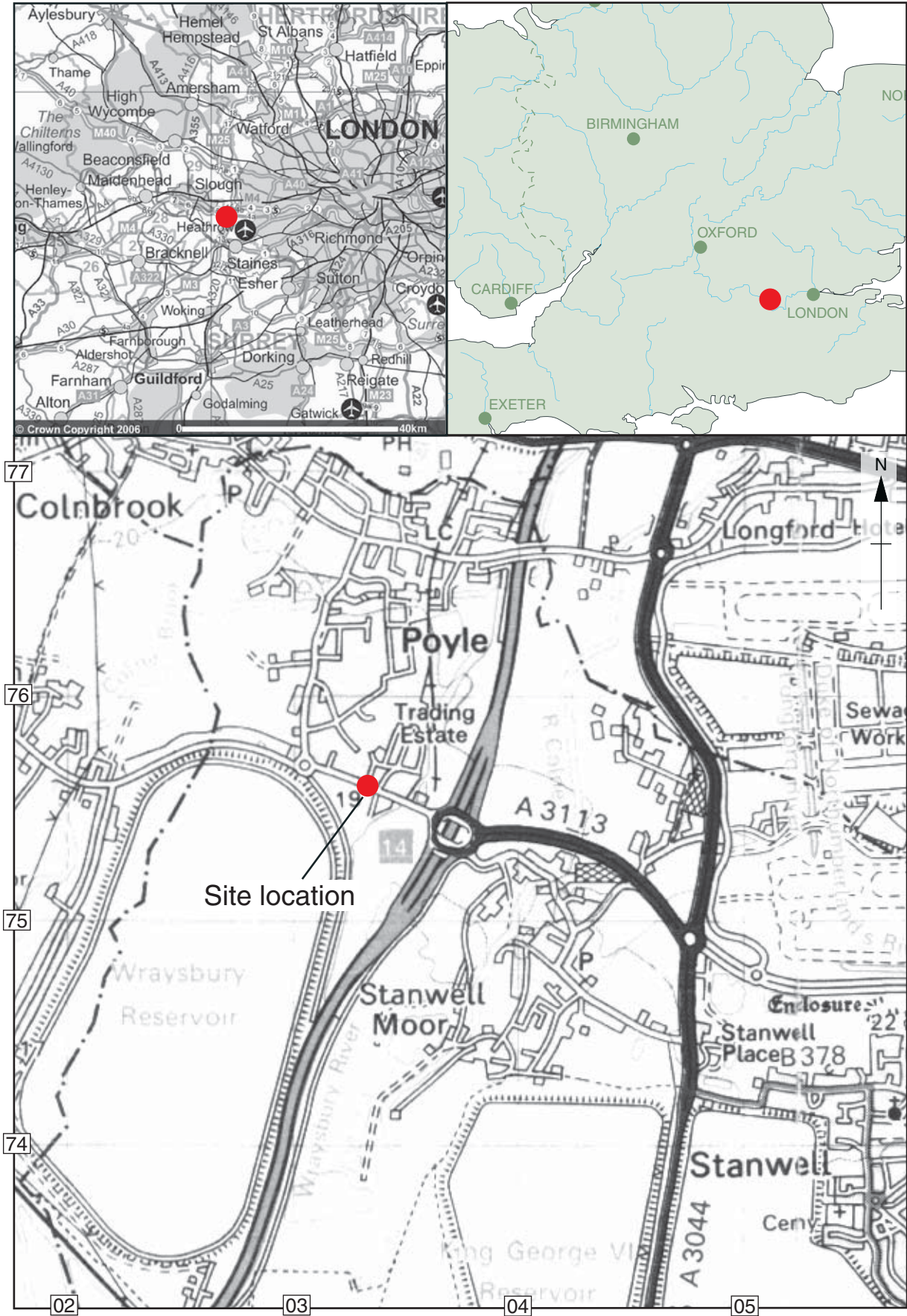
Type of evaluation: 1 x 37.5 m trench and 1 x 55 m trench.

Date and duration of project: Three days ; August 7th-8th-9th, 2006

Area of site: Approximately 0.633 hectares

Summary of results: No archaeological deposits found

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with the appropriate Museums Service in due course.



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Figure 1: Site location

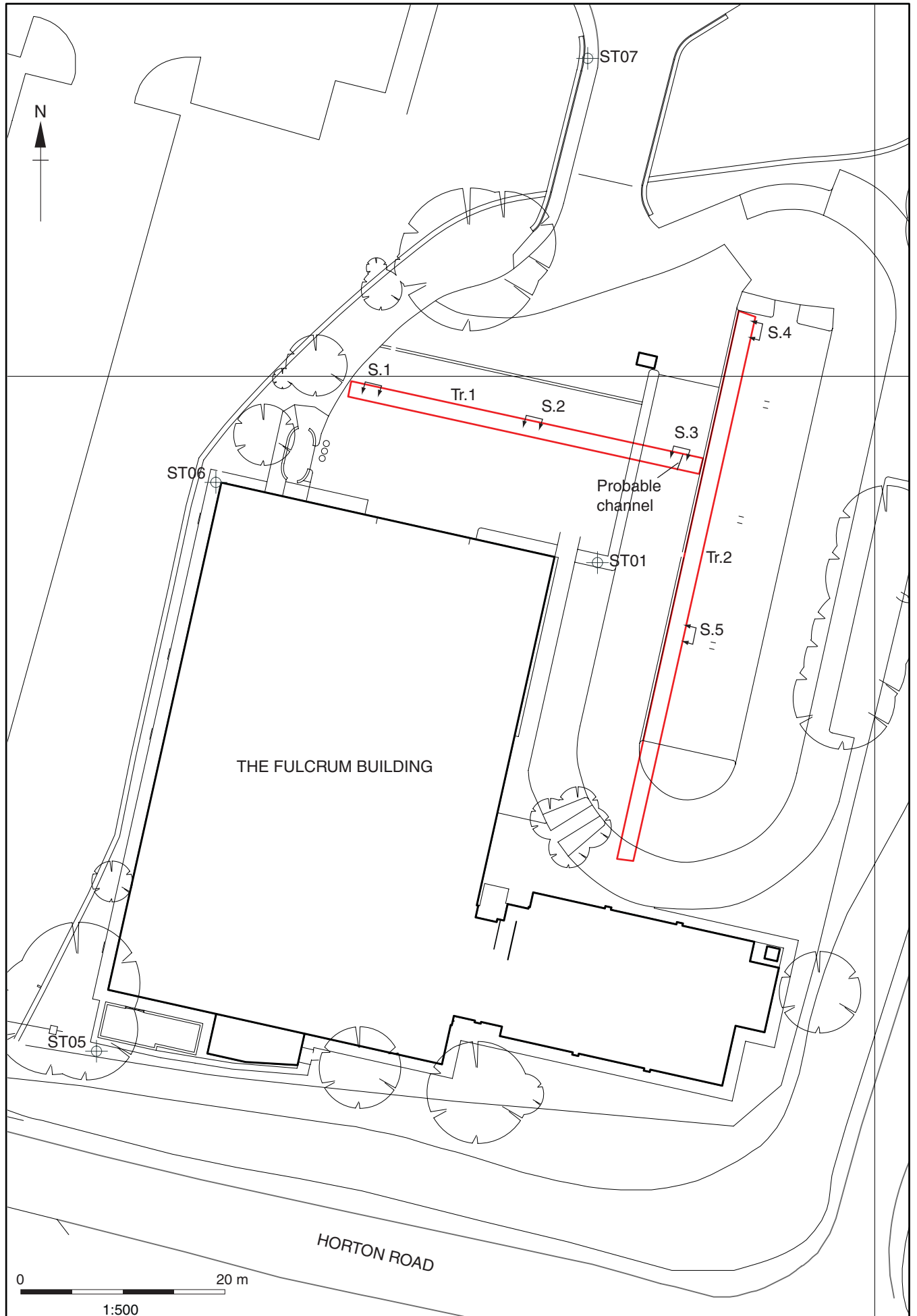
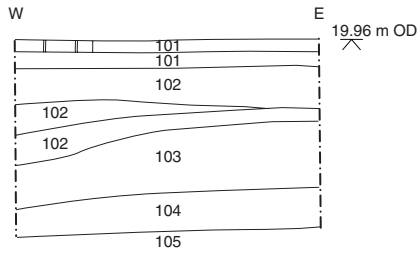


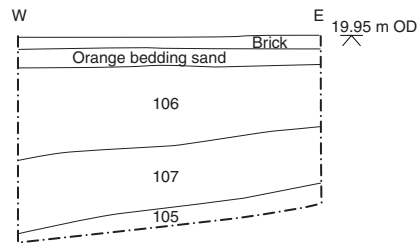
Figure 2 : Trench layout plan



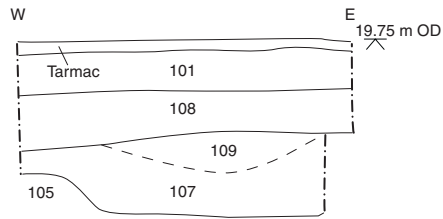
Trench 1 Section 1



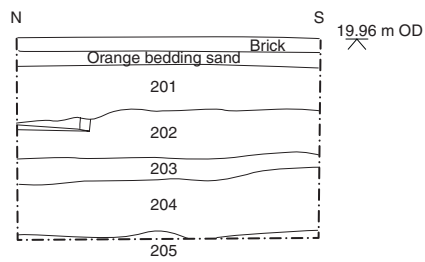
Trench 1 Section 2



Trench 1 Section 3



Trench 2 Section 4



Trench 2 Section 5

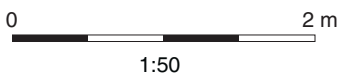
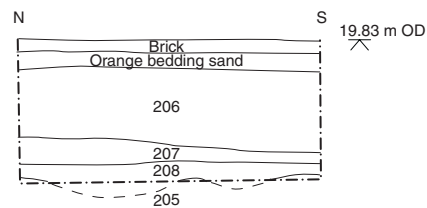





















Figure 3 : Trenches 1 and 2, sections

	Section line and number
	Section through feature not illustrated with section drawing
	Limit of excavation
	Sondage / Interior limit of excavation
	Fill line and number
	Cut line and number
	Structure number
	Unclear boundary
	Hachures indicate inclination of slope inside excavated feature
	Levels
	Grid point
	Continuation line (trench edge continues)
	Charcoal
	Clay
	Clay nodule
	Stones
	Ceramic building material
	Bone
	Pot



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