

Towle•Spurring•Hardy

New Sports Pavilion, Bampton Recreation Field,  
Oxfordshire

*NGR SP 3200 0266*

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT**

Oxford Archaeological Unit

February 1999

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New Sports Pavilion, Bampton Recreation Field,  
Oxfordshire

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Prepared by: *John Dalt*

Date: *8/2/99*

Checked by: *JRSwt*

Date: *19/2/99*

Approved by: *R. Hulham* HEAD OF FIELDWORK

Date: *26/2/1999*

Oxford Archaeological Unit

February 1999

## *Summary*

*In August 1998 the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) undertook a watching brief at Bampton Recreation Ground. No archaeological features were seen and no finds were retrieved.*

### **1 Introduction (Fig. 1)**

The development proposal comprised improvements to the recreation ground, including the construction of a new sports pavilion. West Oxfordshire District Council, acting on the advice of Oxfordshire County Council Archaeological Service, required that an archaeological watching brief be undertaken during groundworks as a condition on the planning consent, in accordance with PPG 16, due to the presence of known archaeological features in the vicinity.

The watching brief was commissioned by Towle, Spurring, Hardy on behalf of the Trustees of Bampton Recreation Ground. It was undertaken to a brief set by and a WSI agreed with the Deputy County Archaeological Officer.

### **2 Background**

Bampton was the site of a battle in 614, but there is no further reference to it until Domesday Book in 1086 at which time it was one of the richest places in the country, valued at £ 80. The village today has a very simple plan; three main streets converging in a triangular market place fronting a network of lanes to the rear. There is no trace of medieval planning. This pattern may possibly indicate the settlement's early growth and importance, but there is not enough evidence to estimate the size of the early medieval town. Similarly, very little is known of the origins, nature or extent of the town in the Saxon period, and the same is true of the Roman period. The OAU has dug at Calais Farm, in the village, and the Oxford University Archaeological Society has excavated in the churchyard. The church, which was once a Minster, is one of the largest in West Oxfordshire and now is largely a cruciform late Norman structure, remodelled in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. The tower has some Saxon herringbone masonry as part of its fabric and may possibly have been the western tower of an earlier church.

The development site lies adjacent to a series of cropmarks; these include an irregular enclosure, which would appear to be double ditched on its east side, and a series of linear features. None of these features have previously been examined, but would appear from the air to be prehistoric in origin.

The site is located approximately one kilometre to the south-east of Bampton itself, on the west side of the Buckland Road at NGR SP 3200 0266. The site was under grass and in use as a recreation ground. It lies at approximately 66 m OD (centred) and the geology is a fine loam overlying first terrace gravel.

### **3 Aims**

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 (Wilkinson 1992), in order to secure the preservation by record of any archaeological remains or deposits.

#### **4 Methodology**

The watching brief comprised a series of separate inspection visits at the start and during the course of groundworks. All excavation was undertaken by a JCB fitted with a toothless bucket. Excavated spoil was hand sorted for stray finds before being removed from site.

Within the constraints imposed by health and safety considerations the deposits features exposed were cleaned, inspected and recorded in plan, section and by colour slide and monochrome print photography. Written records were also made on proforma sheets. Soil description utilises standard charts for the approximation of percentage of inclusion types in soil deposits.

#### **5 Results (Figs. 2 & 3)**

Foundation trenches were excavated to a depth of c. 1 m. Generally the soil type was a sequence of loams overlying gravel, the sequence being identical across the area monitored. The similarity of deposits allows for a general description across the site rather than describing areas individually.

The earliest deposit seen was (3), the natural gravel; approximately 0.45 m of this material was removed in order to reach the base of dig. Overlying this was (2), a mid brown sandy loam with 5-10% fine subrounded sand and 5% fine-coarse subrounded gravel, on average 0.30 m thick. This was sealed by (1), a dark gray silty clay loam with 5% fine subrounded gravel, approximately 0.25 m thick. None of the deposits seen produced any finds.

#### **6 Environmental results**

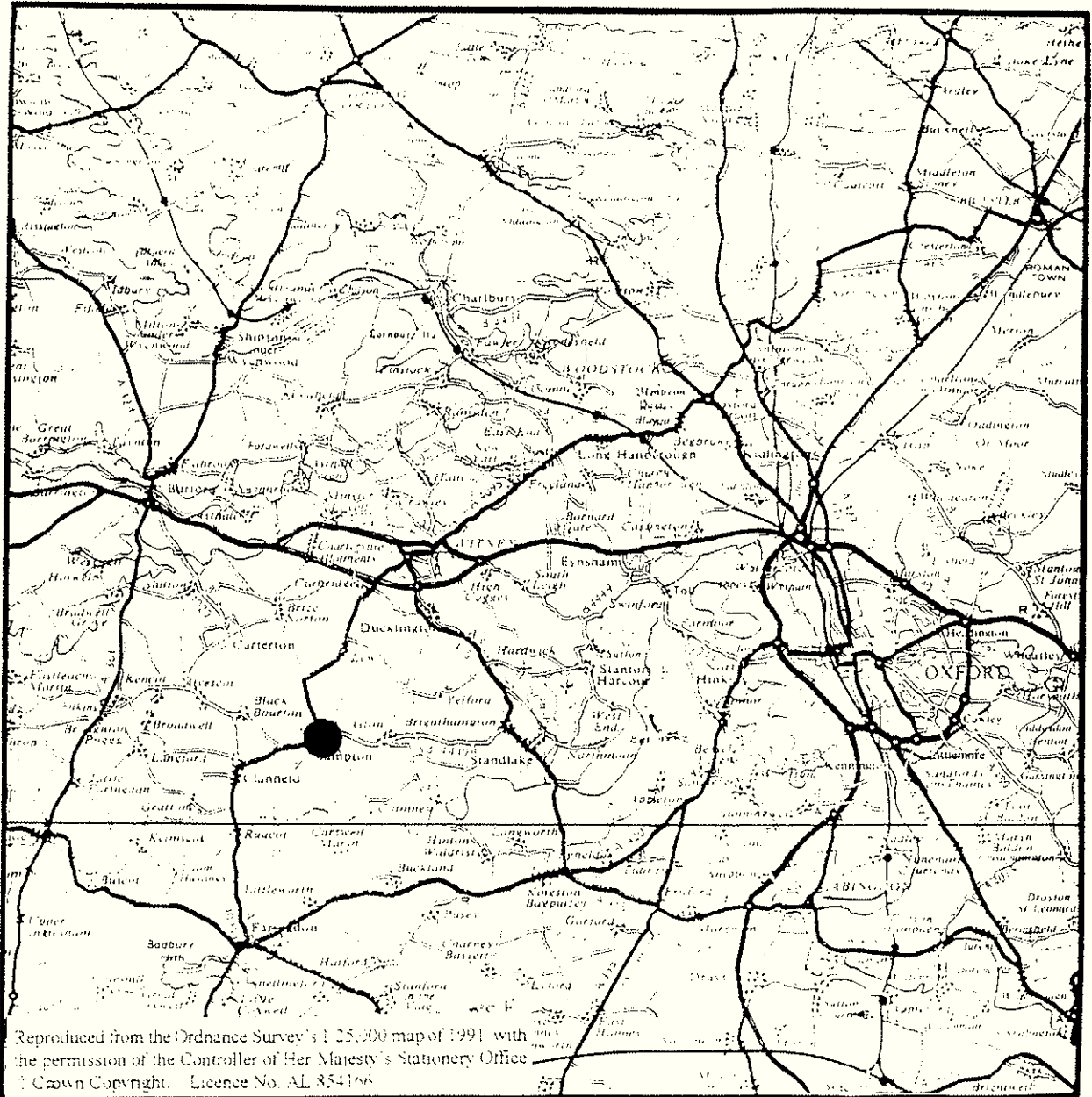
Due to the absence of significant archaeological deposits, no environmental soil samples were taken.

#### **7 Discussion**

Despite careful cleaning and examination of the foundation trenches, no archaeological features were seen.

#### **References.**

Wilkinson, D (ed) 1992 Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual, (First edition, August 1992).



Location of site

Scale 1:250,000

Figure 1

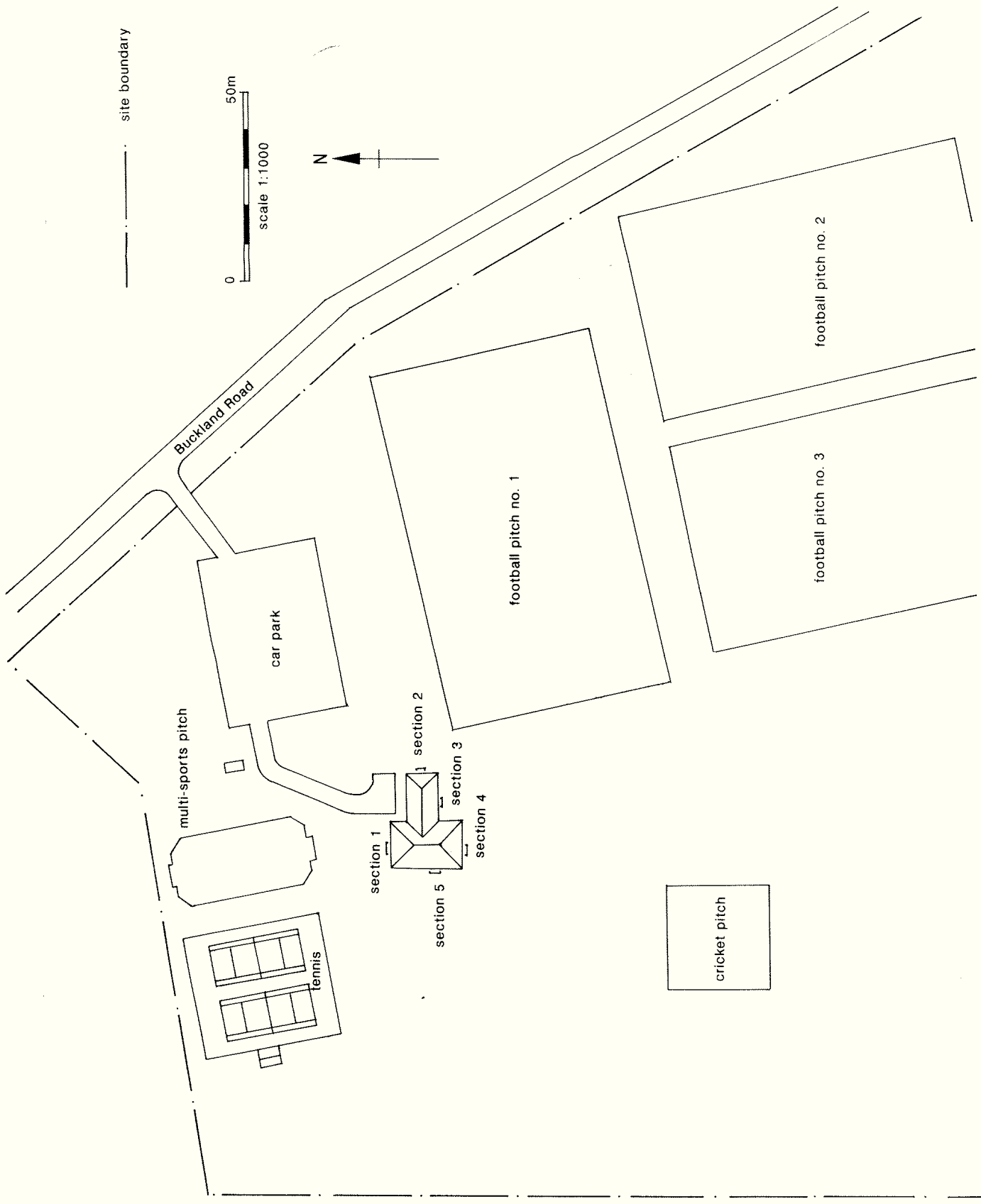


Figure 2: section locations

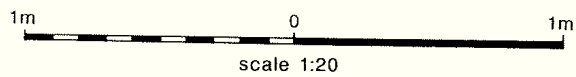
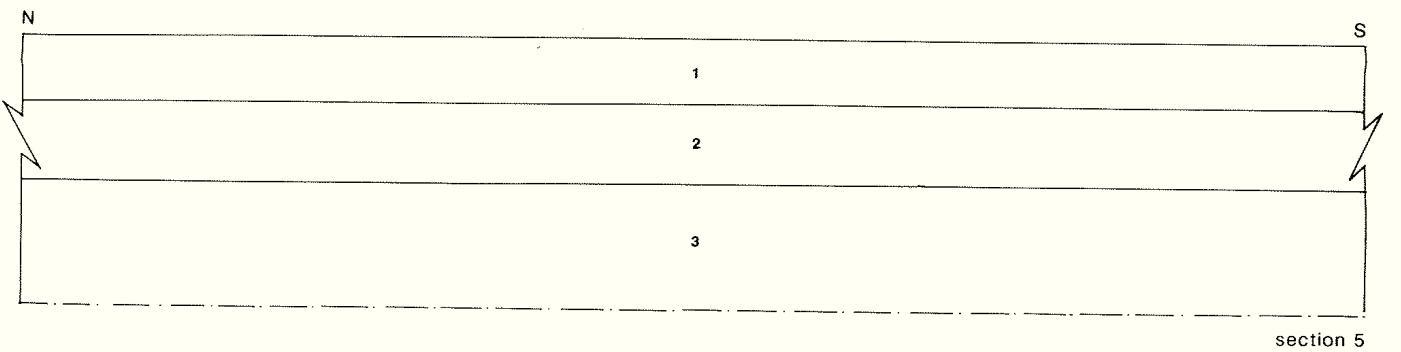
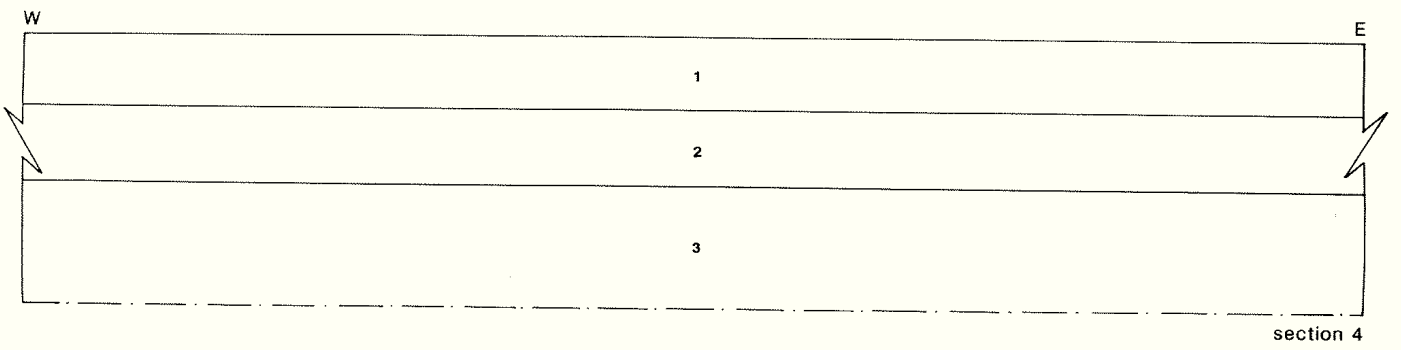
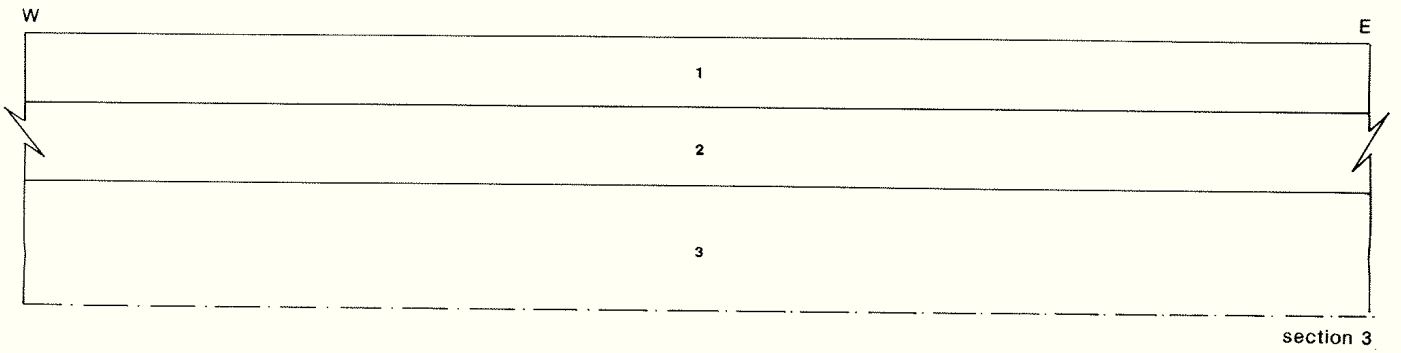
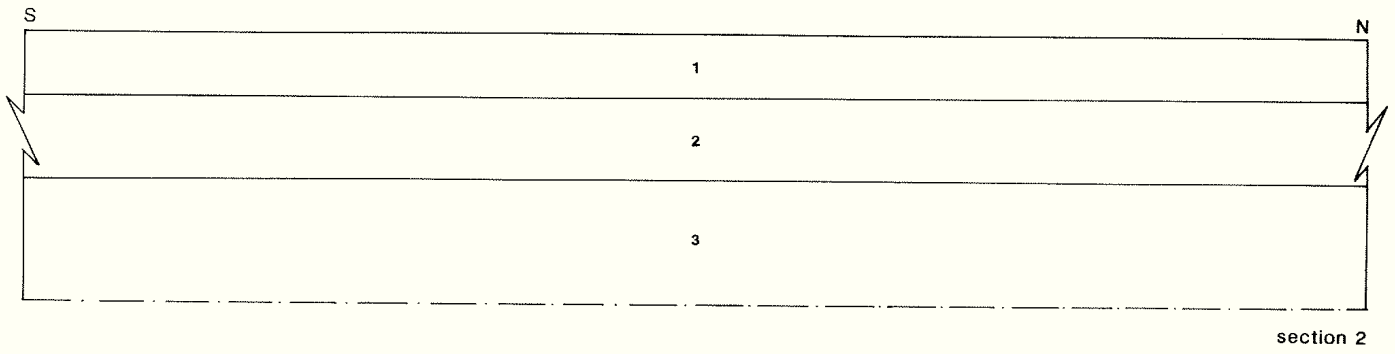
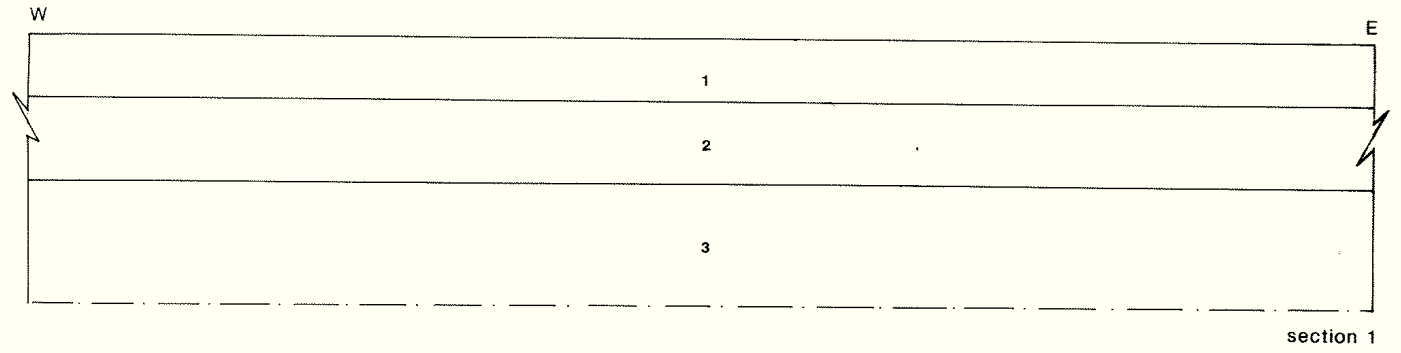


Figure 3: sections



## OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES

Telephone: 01865 263800 Fax: 01865 793496

email: [oau-oxford.demon.co.uk](mailto:oau-oxford.demon.co.uk)



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Director: David Miles B.A., F.S.A., M.I.F.A. Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited.  
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Registered Office: Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES