

# The Arcade redevelopment High Street Walthamstow London E17



## Archaeological Evaluation Report



**Oxford Archaeology**

October 2003

**Client Name:**  
**Henry Boot Developments Ltd and  
London Borough of Waltham Forest**

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**Client Ref No:**

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London E17

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Signed.....



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## SUMMARY

*Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at The Arcade, Walthamstow on behalf of Henry Boot Developments Ltd. The evaluation revealed the truncated remains of walls that are likely to be the remains of Elm House, a 17th century terrace. Elsewhere the site was heavily truncated by modern development.*

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In October 2003 OA carried out a field evaluation at The Arcade, High Street, Walthamstow, London, E17, (Fig. 1) on behalf of Henry Boot Developments Ltd in respect of a planning application for redevelopment of the site (Planning Application No. 2001/0683). A brief was set by and a WSI agreed with Nick Truckle of English Heritage. The development site is situated at NGR TQ 3727 8921 and is c.0.75 hectares in area.

#### 1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The underlying geology of the redevelopment area is London Clay.

1.2.2 A geo-technical survey of the site was carried out by Knapp Hicks and Partners Ltd (August 2002). This indicated the presence of 0.5-1.5 metres of made ground (which could include archaeological deposits) overlying the natural deposits.

1.2.3 The site is located on ground at c.31.56m OD to the north, sloping down to 29.1m to the south and 27.84m to the west. It is currently occupied by shop units, a bank and a post office.

#### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological background to the evaluation has been the subject of a separate desk study (MoLAS April 2001), the results of which are summarized below. The site itself has produced no previous archaeological evidence. There are no known sites/locations with archaeological remains adjacent to the development site.

##### *Prehistoric*

1.3.2 The River Lea lies over 2km west of the site. It was the focus of activity in the prehistoric period although Palaeolithic hand axes probably deriving from a nearby gravel terrace have been found in the vicinity of the site. However, it has conventionally been assumed that prehistoric settlement favoured the lighter well drained soils of the valley and terraces over the wetter land such as London clay at the Walthamstow site.

##### *Roman*

1.3.3 The Romans established a town on the north bank of the Thames where the City of London now stands. The Roman road from London to Colchester crossed the River

Lea at Old Ford. A Roman axe was apparently found close to the site but Walthamstow's status in the Roman period is unclear.

### ***Saxon***

- 1.3.4 The River Lea formed the boundary between the Danelaw and the Anglo-Saxons. The area around the site in the Saxon period is not well known and it is likely that any Saxon settlement was situated around the church of St Mary.

### ***Medieval***

- 1.3.5 In the medieval period the site would probably have been within open fields near the medieval village of Walthamstow that was developing around the church of St Mary at Church End to the east. By 1513 the northbound Hoe Street which forms the eastern boundary of the site was in existence. To the south of the site 14/15th century pottery has been recorded.

### ***Post-medieval***

- 1.3.6 The first map of the Walthamstow area was produced in 1699 by Forbes. It shows a narrow terrace of buildings on the site set back off Marsh Street (now the High Street which borders the site to the south). A similar situation can be seen on John Rocque's map of 1746. The layout appears to change little over subsequent years although a photograph of 1860 shows the grand nature of the houses on the site at this time, the gardens of which were also extensive containing features such as glasshouses and fishponds. The house on the plot which now forms the corner of High Street and Cleveland Park Avenue was known as Langsdale House (Fig. 2).
- 1.3.7 By 1895 Cleveland Park Avenue to the west of the site has been built and houses are shown on Hoe Street to the east. From 1870 many of the large older houses along the High Street were demolished or altered to make way for shops. By 1914 a terrace of houses was also in existence along Cleveland Park Avenue.
- 1.3.8 The site suffered bomb damage in World War II, in particular the relatively new building at the corner of High Street and Hoe Street was destroyed. The current Arcade was built in the 1960s. The only surviving building with its origins in the 17th century is Langsdale House.

## **1.4 Evaluation aims**

### ***General***

- 1.4.1 To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present.
- 1.4.2 To clarify the nature and extent of existing disturbance and intrusions.
- 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.

### *Specific*

- 1.4.5 To determine whether there is any evidence of development of the site predating the 17th century.
- 1.4.6 To determine the construction date of the terrace which includes Langsdale House.

## 2 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Scope of fieldwork

- 2.1.1 The evaluation consisted of five trenches (Fig. 2). Trenches 1-3 located within car-parking areas. Trenches 4 and 5 were located within the building referred to as The Arcade.
- 2.1.2 Trench 1, 10m long and 2m wide, was orientated east-west to the west of site.
- 2.1.3 Trench 2, 10m long and 2m wide, was orientated north-south and to the north of the site.
- 2.1.4 Trench 3, 10m long and 2m wide, was orientated east-west and slightly south-east of the centre of site.
- 2.1.5 Trench 4, originally of 25m length and 2m width, was reduced to 16m long and 1.6m wide, due to the presence of service access points and the constraints of The Arcade. Trench 4 was orientated north-south and located to the south of site.
- 2.1.6 Trench 5 was 25m long and 2m wide, orientated east-west and to the east of site.

### 2.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

- 2.2.1 Trenches 1-3 and 5 were excavated by JCB with toothless ditching bucket. Due to the constraints of the building, Trench 4 was excavated by a small 360 degree excavator with a toothless ditching bucket.
- 2.2.2 The trenches were cleaned by hand and the revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds and environmental samples. All archaeological features were planned and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20. All features 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).

### 2.3 Finds

- 2.3.1 No finds were recovered during the evaluation.

### 2.4 Environmental

- 2.4.1 No environmental samples were taken during the evaluation.

### 3 RESULTS: GENERAL

#### 3.1 Soils and ground conditions

- 3.1.1 The site is located on a reddish-brown London clay. In Trenches 1 and 2 the clay was overlain by deposits of building rubble (hardcore) which was in turn overlain by steel reinforced concrete.
- 3.1.2 In Trench 3 the clay natural was overlain again by building rubble but this time overlain by tarmac.
- 3.1.3 In Trench 4 the natural clay was overlain by building rubble which was overlain by pedestrian paving.
- 3.1.4 Due to the density of services within Trench 5 the natural London clay could not be observed.
- 3.1.5 Due to the presence of service pipes drains and conduits within Trenches 1, 4 and 5, these trenches could not be fully excavated.
- 3.1.6 During the time on site the weather remained clear and dry.

#### 3.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits

- 3.2.1 The archaeology observed during the evaluation consisted of a short length of east-west orientated truncated brick wall in Trench 3 and the truncated remains of a substantial, east-west orientated brick wall, a tile and brick floor surface and possibly associated demolition deposits in Trench 4.

### 4 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

#### 4.1 Description of deposits

- 4.1.1 Excavation of Trenches 1, 2 and 5 produced no archaeological remains.

##### *Trench 3 (Fig.3)*

- 4.1.2 To the east end of Trench 3 a truncated wall (309), at least 0.3 m wide, extended for 1.8 m, appearing to be truncated at its western end. At the east end of the wall it extended at right angles into the trench section towards the north.
- 4.1.3 This wall appears to have been built into the underlying natural clay (305), no construction cut was observed. The wall was overlain by a sequence of demolition layers of varying thickness, (301-304 and 306-308). The topmost of these contexts 301 and 307 were then overlain by a layer of tarmac (300) of 0.2 m maximum thickness.

##### *Trench 4 (Fig.4)*

- 4.1.4 Towards the southern end of Trench 4. A substantial brick wall (414) was orientated north-south across the southern end of the trench. This wall existed to a height of 0.93 m and was 0.63 m wide. The wall extended into the trench section to the east

and extended 1m to the west where it was truncated by the construction cut (411) for a modern drain (410).

- 4.1.5 Wall 414 was constructed of dark red bricks 0.2x 0.105x 0.08 m bedded in a mid reddish-brown lime mortar laid in English bond. The south face of this wall had been painted several times with a lime-wash. The north face of the wall could not be observed due to the presence of electrical cables.
- 4.1.6 At the same depth as and to the south of the base of wall 414 a surface of mortared red tiles and bricks (413) was observed for 1.12 m in the trench and extended into the section to the east. It was truncated by the drain construction cut (411) and extended for 0.64m north-south.
- 4.1.7 Both 413 and 414 were overlain by a series of demolition deposits (406-409).
- 4.1.8 At the north end of Trench 4, a layer of red clay tiles (419) was laid onto a mix of re-deposited natural and building rubble (407). The clay tiles were observed to cover an area of 0.25x 0.2 m and extended into the trench section to the east. To the west the layer of tiles was truncated by the construction cut 411 for drain 410.
- 4.1.9 Also at the north end of the trench, restricted to the west side, a brick structure (420) extended into the trench section. The structure, which measured 1.14m north-south was 0.25 m wide and 0.5 m high. The top three courses of the structure were stepped. The structure was constructed from dark reddish-brown bricks 0.215x 0.1 x 0.65 m bedded in a hard mid reddish brown mortar. The bricks were laid using a stretcher bond.
- 4.1.10 All features in Trench 4 were overlain by building rubble which was in turn overlain by bedding sand for paving 400 and 401.

## 4.2 Finds

- 4.2.1 No finds were recovered from any of the deposits observed.

## 4.3 Environmental

- 4.3.1 No deposits of environmental significance were encountered and no samples were taken.

## 4.4 Reliability of field investigation

- 4.4.1 Although the excavation of the proscribed trenches was hindered by the presence of service pipes and cables (particularly within The Arcade) the trenches as excavated were able to establish the presence or absence of archaeological features.
- 4.4.2 Trench 4 which was intended to establish the nature and preservation of remains relating to earlier post-medieval buildings was able to confirm their existence and the extent to which they have survived later redevelopment.



## 5 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

- 5.1.1 The remnant of wall (309) recorded in Trench 3 bears no relationship to any structures referred to in the desk top study and may therefore relate to a modern structure removed prior to the construction of The Arcade in the 1960s.
- 5.1.2 The wall 414 recorded in Trench 4 was noted to be on the same alignment as a rear wall of Langsdale House which still stands on the site and therefore the wall and the accompanying floor surface (413) may relate to the basement of the 17th century terrace known as Elm House (Fig.2).
- 5.1.3 The structures 419 and 420 to the north of 414 may relate to outbuildings or garden structures of Elm House.
- 5.1.4 The absence of archaeological features elsewhere in the evaluation and the presence of thick deposits of building rubble suggest that prior to the development of The Arcade in the 1960s the development area had been substantially truncated by demolition and subsequent site clearance.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Ctxt No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Thick (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>No./wt</i>	<i>Date</i>
001								
	100	Layer	>2.0	0.22	Rein-forced concrete			Modern
	101	Layer	>2.0	0.3	Roadstone			Modern
	102	Fill	1.2	0.46	Building rubble			Modern
	103	Cut	0.7	1.1	Drain cut			Modern
	104	Fill	0.7	1.1	Fill of drain cut			Modern
	105				Natural clay			
002								
	200	Layer	2.0	0.3	Rein-forced concrete			Modern
	201	Layer	2.0	0.2	Building rubble			Modern
	202	Layer	2.0	0.15	Building rubble			Modern
	203	Layer	2.0	0.6	Re-deposited clay			Modern
	204	Cut	>1.0	1.11	Drain cut			Modern
	205	Fill	>1.0	1.11	Drain cut backfill			Modern
	206	Layer	>1.0		Natural clay			
003								
	300	Layer	2.0	0.2	Tarmac			Modern
	301	Layer	2.0	0.14	Building rubble			Modern
	302	Layer	2.0	0.08	Building rubble			Modern
	303	Layer	2.0	0.14	Building rubble			Modern
	304	Layer	2.0	0.2	Re-deposited clay			Modern
	305	Layer	>2.0		Natural clay			
	306	Layer	2.0	0.38	Building rubble			Modern
	307	Layer	2.0	0.32	Building rubble			Modern
	308	Layer	2.0	0.1	Building rubble			Modern
	309	Struc.	1.8	0.23	Wall			Modern
004								
	400	Layer	1.6	0.05	Paving slabs			Modern
	401	Layer	1.6	0.05	Paving blocks			Modern
	402	Layer	1.6	0.06	Leveling sand			Modern
	403	Layer	1.6	0.06	Leveling sand			Modern

	404	Layer	1.6	0.15	Leveling stone			Modern
	405	Layer	1.6	0.1	Leveling sand			Modern
	406	Layer	1.6	0.4	Building rubble			Modern
	407	Layer	1.6	0.64	Building Rubble			Modern
	408	Layer	1.6	0.7	Building rubble			Modern
	409	Layer	1.6	0.77	Demolition rubble			Modern
	410	Struc.	0.7		Pipe construction			Modern
	411	Cut	0.7	>0.7	Drain cut			Modern
	412	Fill	0.7	>0.7	Drain cut backfill			Modern
	413	Struc	1.12		Basement floor			17C?
	414	Struc.	0.63	0.93	Basement wall			17C?
	415	Layer	0.82		Charcoal layer			
	416	Cut	0.63	0.93	Construction cut			17C?
	417	Fill		0.93	Foundation backfill			17C?
	418	Layer			Natural clay			
	419	Struc.	0.25	0.02	Floor/Wall			17C?
	420	Struc.	>0.25	0.5	Wall foundation			17C?
005								
	500	Layer	2.0	0.05	Paving slabs			Modern
	501	Layer	2.0	0.08	Leveling sand			Modern
	502	Layer	2.0	0.3	Building rubble			Modern
	503	Layer	2.0	>0.36	Re deposited clay			Modern

## APPENDIX 2 REFERENCES

Knapp Hicks and Partners Ltd 2002 *Proposed Redevelopment. The Arcade, High Street, Walthamstow, London E17. Executive summary on Geotechnical and Contamination Investigation.* Client Report.

OA 2003 *The Arcade Redevelopment, High Street, Walthamstow E17 (Written Scheme of Investigation for Evaluation and Building Recording).* Client Report.

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

MoLAS 2001 *The Arcade Walthamstow E17. An Archaeological Impact Assessment.* Client Report

**APPENDIX 3 GLSMR/ ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT FORM**

## 1) TYPE OF RECORDING

Evaluation

## 2) LOCATION

Borough: Waltham Forest

Site address: The Arcade, High Street, Walthamstow, London E17

Site Name: The Arcade redevelopment Site Code: WAARC 03

Nat. grid Refs: centre of site TQ 3727 8921

## 3) ORGANISATION

Name of archaeological company: Oxford Archaeology

Address: Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 OES

Site supervisor: Tim Haines Project manager: David Score

Funded by: Henry Boot Developments Ltd

## 4) DURATION

Date fieldwork started 13th October 2003 Date finished: 17th October 2003

Fieldwork previously notified? YES

Fieldwork will continue? Building Recording Pending

## 5) PERIODS REPRESENTED

Post-Medieval

## 6) PERIOD SUMMARIES

## POST-MEDIEVAL

The remains of truncated brick walls, of post-medieval date and probably relating to Elm House were observed.

## 7) NATURAL

Type: London clay

Height above Ordnance datum: 27.81m-28.73m

## 8) LOCATION OF ARCHIVES

The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 OES. The archive will be deposited at Vestry House Museum

- a) Please provide an estimate of the quantity of material in your possession for the following categories:

NOtes 1 A4 folder                      PLans 5                                      Ngtives 2 films  
SLides 2 films                      COrrispondence

- b) The archive has been prepared and stored in accordance with MGC standards and will be deposited in the following location: Vestry House Museum
- c) Has a security copy of the archive been made?:                      NOT AT PRESENT

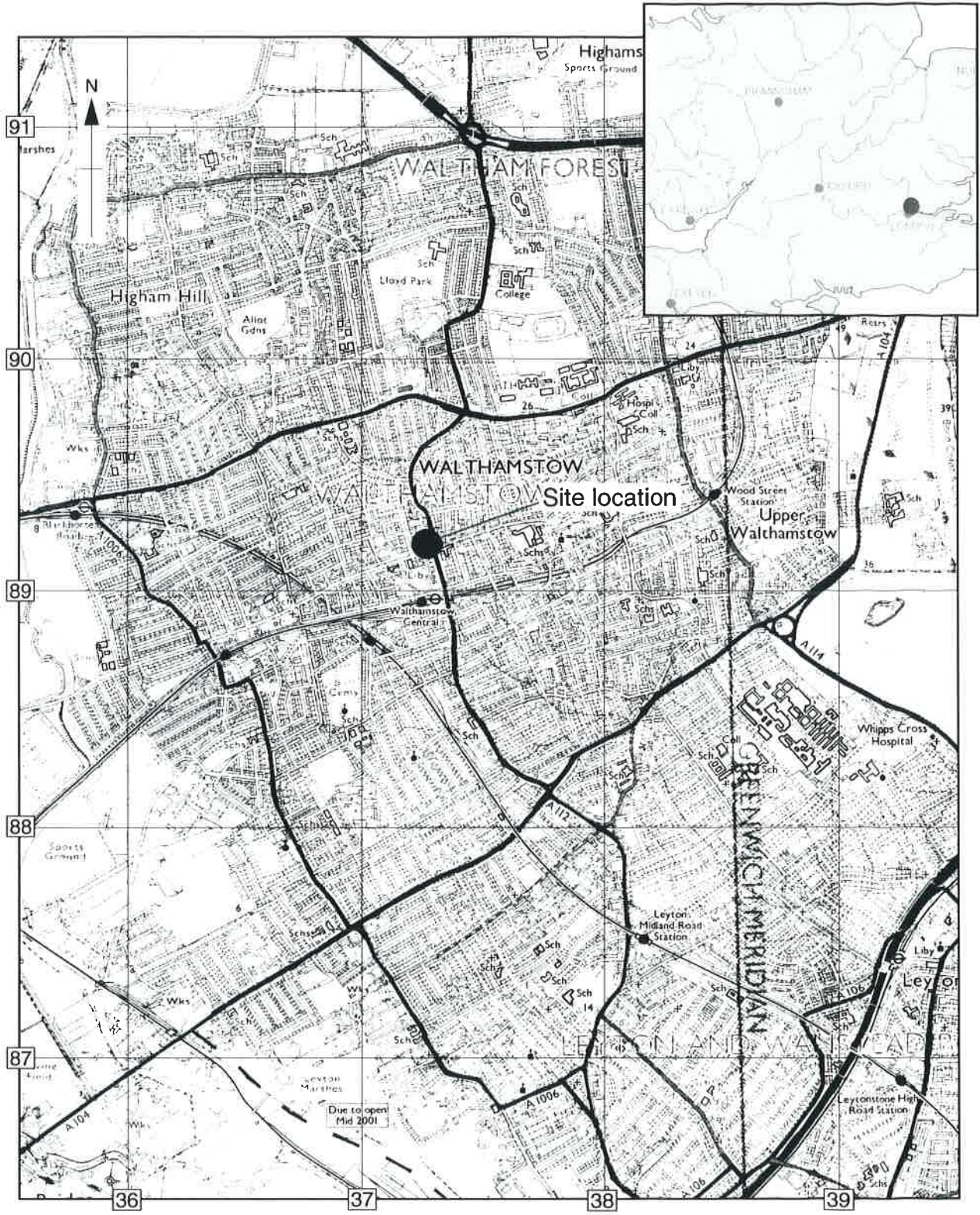
10) BIBLIOGRAPHY

See Appendix 2 References

SIGNED:

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NAME :



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Figure 1: Site location

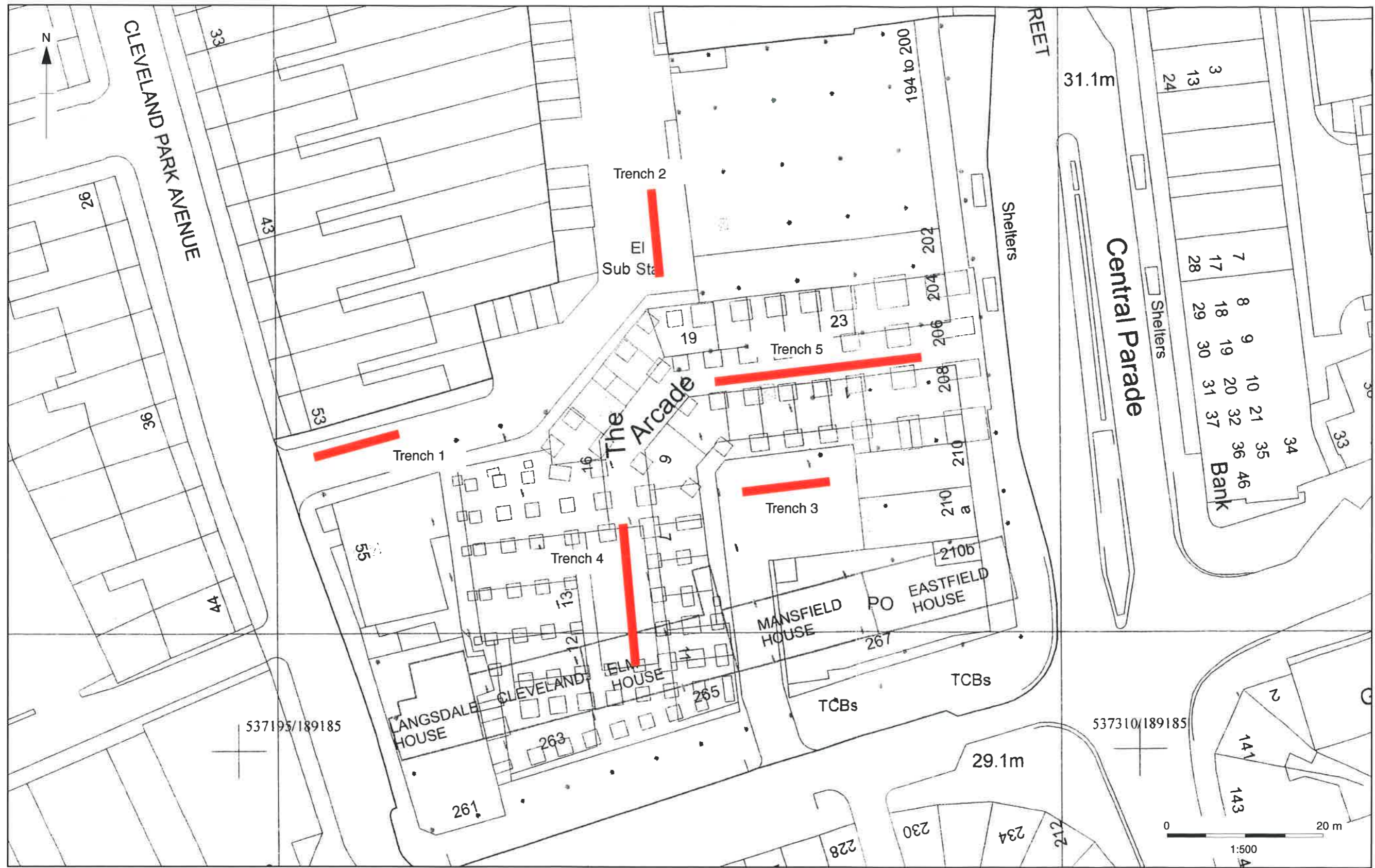


Figure 2: Trench location plan

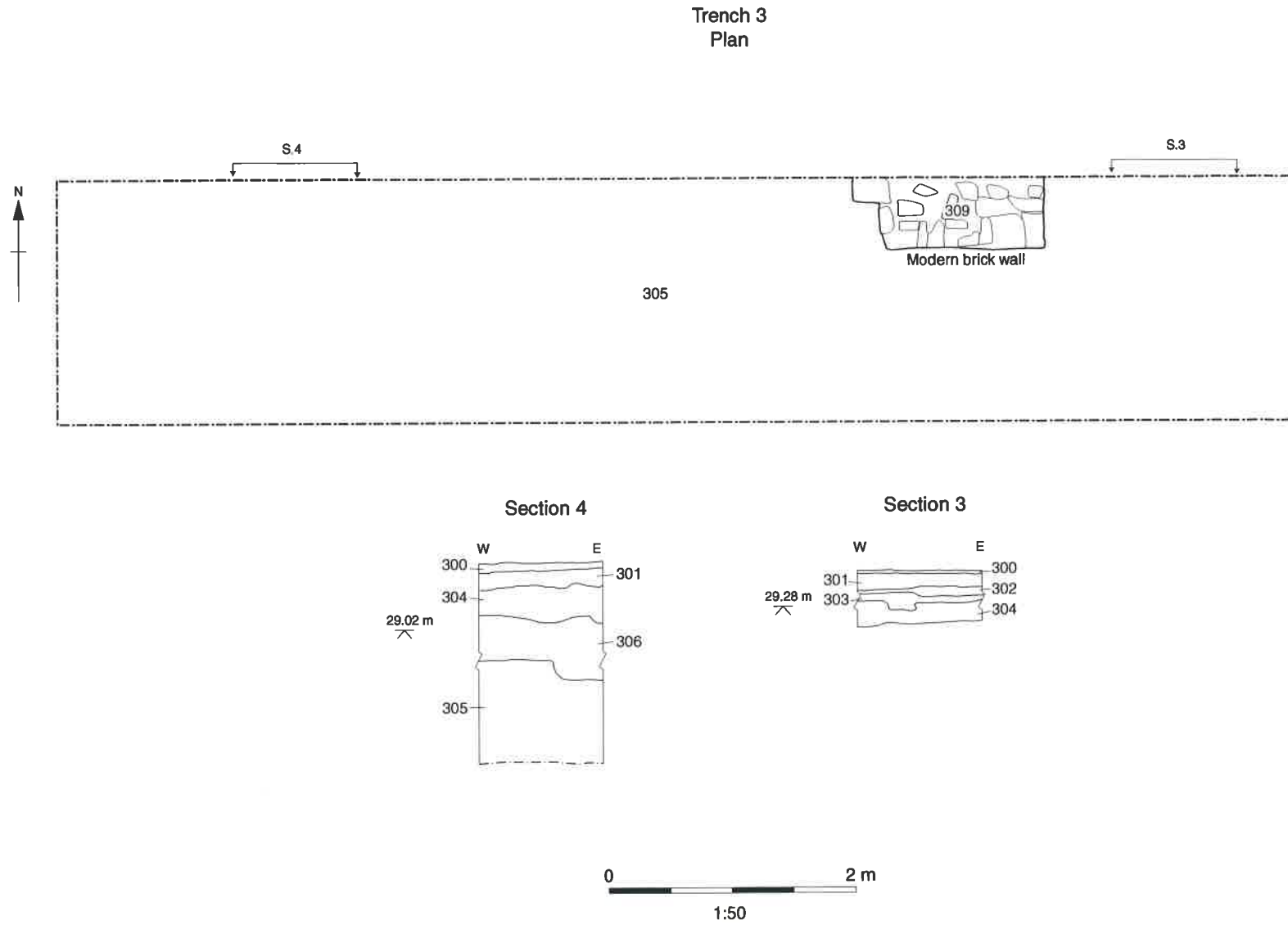


Figure 3: Trench 3, plan and sections



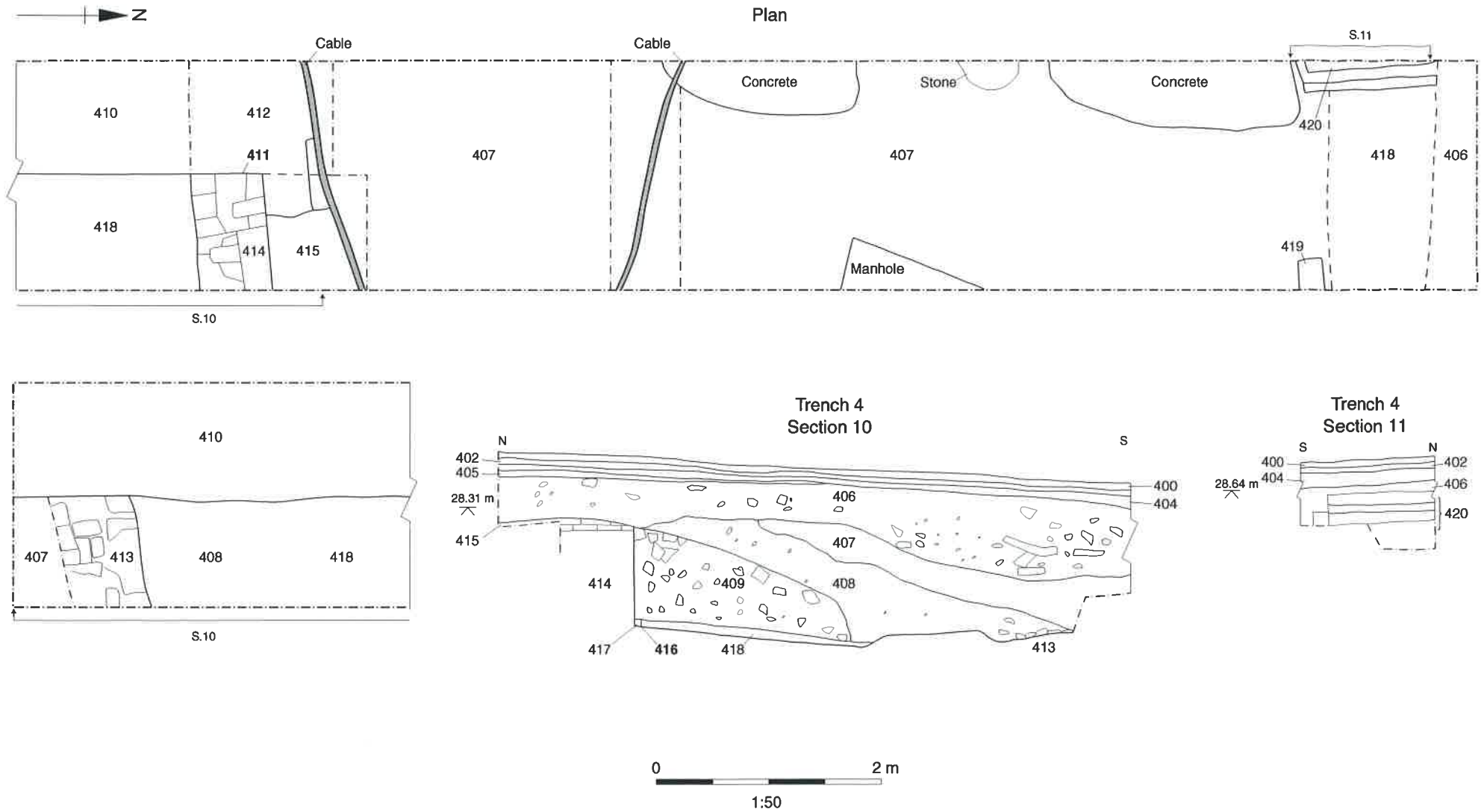


Figure 4: Trench 4, plan and sections



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