

Pantiles
Portway
Wantage
Oxfordshire



Archaeological Evaluation Report



Oxford Archaeology

August 2004



Client: CgMs Consulting

Issue N^o: 1

NGR: SU 39720 87674

Client Name: CgMs Consulting

Client Ref No:

Document Title: Pantiles, Portway, Wantage, Oxfordshire

Document Type: Evaluation

Issue Number: 1

National Grid Reference: SU 39720 87674

Planning Reference:

OA Job Number: 2380

Site Code: WAPS 04

Invoice Code: WAPS EV

Receiving Museum: Oxfordshire Museums Service

Museum Accession No: TBC

Prepared by: Granville Laws
Position: Project Officer
Date: 10th August 2004

Checked by: Andrew Holmes
Position: SWD Project Manager
Date: 20th August 2004

Approved by: Jon Hiller
Position: Senior Project Manager
Date: 24th August 2004

Signed 

PP. NICK SHEPHERD
HEAD OF
FIELDWORK.

Document File Location H:\PROJECTS\Oxfordshire OX\Vale of White Horse
VWH\5368 Pantiles, Portway, Wantage EV\evREP.doc

Graphics File Location:
Illustrated by Julia Moxham

Disclaimer:

This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and should not be relied upon or used for any other project without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and prior written authority of Oxford Archaeology being obtained. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for the consequences of this document being used for a purpose other than the purposes for which it was commissioned. Any person/party using or relying on the document for such other purposes agrees, and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Oxford Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the person/party by whom it was commissioned.

Oxford Archaeology

© Oxford Archaeological Unit Ltd 2004

Janus House

Osney Mead

Oxford OX2 0ES

t: (0044) 01865 263800

f: (0044) 01865 793496

e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk

w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk

Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited is a Registered Charity No: 285627

CgMs Consulting

**Pantiles, Portway
Wantage, Oxfordshire**

NGR: SU 39720 87674

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

CONTENTS

Summary.....	1
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Location and scope of work	1
1.2 Geology and topography	1
1.3 Archaeological and historical background	1
1.4 Acknowledgements	2
2 Evaluation Aims	2
3 Evaluation Methodology	2
3.1 Scope of fieldwork	2
3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording	2
3.3 Finds	3
3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence.....	3
3.5 Presentation of results	3
4 Results: General.....	3
4.1 Soils and ground conditions	3
4.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits.....	3
5 Results: Descriptions	3
5.1 Description of deposits.....	3
5.2 Finds	4
6 Discussion and Interpretation.....	5
6.1 Reliability of field investigation.....	5
6.2 Overall interpretation	5
Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory	6
Appendix 2 References	6
Appendix 3 Summary of Site Details.....	6

LIST OF FIGURES

- Fig. 1 Site location
- Fig. 2 Trench location plan
- Fig. 3 Trench 1, plan and sections
- Fig. 4 Trench 2, plan and sections

SUMMARY

In July 2004, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at land at Pantiles, Portway, Wantage, Oxfordshire (centred on NGR SU 39720 87674) for CgMs Consulting on behalf of McCarthy and Stone (Developments) Limited. The evaluation revealed a 19th or 20th century stone soak-away, 19th/20th century pottery and tile from former topsoil soil layers, and evidence of modern disturbance. No significant archaeological remains were located during the evaluation.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 Between the 28th and 29th July 2004, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at land at Pantiles, Portway, Wantage, Oxfordshire (NGR: SU 39720 87674) for CgMs Consulting on behalf of McCarthy and Stone Developments Limited. The evaluation was in respect of a planning application for the construction of 28-30 retirement apartments and associated access and services (Fig. 1).
- 1.1.2 A brief was set by and a Specification (CgMs 2004) agreed with Hugh Coddington, Deputy County Archaeologist representing the Vale of White Horse District Council, for an archaeological evaluation of the proposed development site. OA operated in accordance with the Specification.
- 1.1.3 The site is situated towards the southern end of the town centre, to the west and east of King Alfred's School and Council Offices respectively, and fronts onto Portway Road.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies on level ground at 95 m OD and comprises an area of approximately 0.2 hectares (Fig.2). The natural geology underlying the site is Upper Greensand and Gault of the Cretaceous period.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The development site has been the subject of a desk-based study (CgMs 2004) and this information is summarised below. However, the desk-based assessment should be read in conjunction with this specification in order to gain a full understanding of the archaeological potential of the site.
- 1.3.2 No Scheduled Ancient Monuments or Conservation Areas lie within or close to the site. There are no Listed Buildings within the site, but several Grade II Listed Buildings lie within 150 m of the proposed development.
- 1.3.3 There are no known sites or finds spots representing the prehistoric period within or in the immediate vicinity of the site. A low to nil potential was therefore concluded.

- 1.3.4 The site lies away from the focus of Roman activity in Wantage. No records from this period on the site or in its immediate vicinity are logged in the SMR. A low potential had therefore been identified.
- 1.3.5 No finds from the Saxon or medieval periods have been recorded from within the site, though a Norman door survives as part of King Alfred's Grammar School immediately to the west of the site. A former open hall house of late 15th or 16th century date lies some 100 m to the east of the site. A moderate potential was therefore identified for this period due to the proximity of these medieval structures to the site.
- 1.3.6 Cartographic evidence from the 19th century onwards suggests that the site was used as an orchard. A Victorian gazebo and probable ornamental garden feature (pond) are shown on the 1912 and 1937 OS maps: a Victorian style gazebo survives in the same location on the site today. "Pantiles" is first shown on the 1937 OS map. No further changes are recorded on the maps after this date.

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 Oxford Archaeology would like to thank Greg Pugh of CgMs Consulting and Hugh Coddington, Deputy County Archaeologist for Oxford County Archaeological Services for their support and advice.

2 EVALUATION AIMS

- 2.1.1 To clarify the presence or absence, extent, character, quality, condition and date of any surviving archaeological remains within the site.
- 2.1.2 To assess the degree of existing impacts to sub-surface horizons and to document the extent of archaeological survival of buried deposits.
- 2.1.3 To make available the results of the evaluation.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork

- 3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of two trenches, each measuring 20 m long by 1.6 m wide (Fig. 2). This represented a 4% sample of the area and provided a good representation of the archaeological potential of the site.

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

- 3.2.1 The overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision by a JCB mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The evaluation trenches were excavated to the top of the geological or archaeological horizon, whichever came first and then hand cleaned.
- 3.2.2 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 detailed in the OA *Fieldwork Manual* (OAU 1992).

3.3 Finds

3.3.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and bagged by context. Finds of special interest were given a unique small find number.

3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence

3.4.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified during the course of the evaluation.

3.5 Presentation of results

3.5.1 Section 5 describes the sequence of deposits and archaeological remains in each trench. The plans of all trenches and accompanying sections from each trench are illustrated. Context details are given in the Context Inventory (Appendix 1).

4 RESULTS: GENERAL

4.1 Soils and ground conditions

4.1.1 The general soil type was a friable dark greyish brown silty loam topsoil, which overlaid a friable pale greyish brown clayey silt with inclusions of greensand stone fragments subsoil in both trenches 1 and 2. The underlying natural silty clay Gault geology was reached in both trenches. Conditions were dry and visibility good.

4.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits

4.2.1 No archaeological features or deposits were revealed in either trench, although tree disturbance and a modern service trench was identified in Trench 2 and a soak-away in Trench 1. The subsoil located in both trenches was most likely a well worked earlier garden soil.

5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

5.1 Description of deposits

Trench 1 (Fig. 2 and 3)

5.1.1 This trench was positioned at a right angle to Portway road (Fig.2), to the south-west of the site and was aligned north-south. The underlying geology was a slightly tenacious pale greenish grey silty clay Gault (103), located at a depth of 0.58 m to the north below the present surface at (95.27 m OD) and at a depth of 0.65 m to the south below the present surface at (95.24 m OD). This was overlain by a layer of friable pale greyish brown clayey silt with inclusions of greensand stone fragments (102) and was interpreted as an earlier garden soil (Fig. 3, section 1).

5.1.2 To the middle of the trench a soak-away feature (107) (Fig. 3, section 2), measuring 5 m wide and 0.80 m deep, although this was not bottomed. Contained within the

soak-away was a loose light grey greenish brown silty clay fill with inclusions of sandstone, flint and modern building debris (106), suggesting made ground / levelling for the present ground surface.

- 5.1.3 Sealing the soak-away and the subsoil was a friable dark greyish brown silty loam topsoil (101).
- 5.1.4 To the north end of the trench and overlying the subsoil was a layer of yellowish mid-brown orange gravel, sand and crushed brick hard core (104) that was capped by a layer of tarmac (105), representing the present car parking surface (Fig. 3, section 3).
- 5.1.5 Finds of 19th/20th century pottery and ceramic building material were recovered from the topsoil (101) and from the infilling deposit (106) of the soak-away.
- 5.1.6 *Trench 2 (Fig. 2 and 4)*
- 5.1.7 This trench was located to the north of the site at the rear of the existing property, cutting across a garden flower bed and foot path and was aligned east-west. The underlying geology was a slightly tenacious pale greenish grey silt clay Gault (203), located at a depth of 0.80 m to the east below the present surface at (95.20 m OD) and at a depth of 0.62 m to the west below the present surface at (95.16 m OD). The natural was overlain by a subsoil consisting of friable pale greyish brown clayey silt with inclusions of Greensand stone fragments (202) and was interpreted as an earlier garden soil (Fig. 4, section 4).
- 5.1.8 Towards the east end of the trench, a linear service trench (205), aligned north-west to south-east that contained a dirty greenish grey silty clay deposit (204) truncated the subsoil (Fig. 4, section 5). Also seen within this section was evidence for a north-south concrete garden foot path that truncated the topsoil.
- 5.1.9 At the west end of the trench, a thin lens of very dark greyish brown silty loam with inclusions of lime mortar, brick and tile fragments (206) was recorded, representing a layer of demolition material (Fig. 4, section 6). Finds from this lens included ceramic building material and pottery of 19th century date.
- 5.1.10 Located towards the east end of the trench an oval feature (208) that contained a light greyish brown silty clay fill (207) was related to a 19th century garden feature probably associated with tree planting. Other tree disturbance was also recorded in plan within this trench (Fig. 4, trench plan).
- 5.1.11 Sealing the service trench, the lens of demolition material and the subsoil was a layer of dark greyish brown silty loam topsoil (201).

5.2 Finds

- 5.2.1 The finds are listed by context in Appendix 1. All of the pottery is late post-medieval, being 19th/20th century in date.

- 5.2.2 Other finds retrieved included a single sherd of clay tobacco pipe, bone and shell and a quantity of ceramic building material, roofing tile and a piece of possibly Victorian decorated floor tile from context (201).

6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 6.1.1 The trenches were evenly positioned to give a good overall coverage of the proposed development area.
- 6.1.2 Within the site the results from the two trenches clearly demonstrated the presence of the late post-medieval 19th/20th century activity, although no significant archaeological features or deposits of any earlier period were encountered.

6.2 Overall interpretation

Summary of results

- 6.2.1 No significant archaeological remains were revealed in the two evaluation trenches. However, evidence of recent 19th and 20th century activity relating to tree planting and made ground / levelling for the present surface were identified.
- 6.2.2 A soil layer, possibly of an earlier garden formation suggested ornamental garden activity. Clearly little activity has occurred within the bounds of the proposed development site prior to the 19th and the result suggest this area was likely open, uncultivated land up until this period.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench	Ctxt No	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Comment	Finds	Date
001							
	101	Layer		0.38	Topsoil	Pottery	C20th
	102	Layer		0.40	subsoil	-	
	103	Layer			Natural Gault	-	
	104	Layer		0.15	Hard core	-	
	105	Layer		0.05	Tarmac	-	
	106	Fill		0.80	Made ground	Pottery, CBM	C19th
	107	Cut	5				
002							
	201	Layer		0.30	Topsoil	Pottery, CBM, clay pipe	C19th-C20th
	202	Layer		0.28	Subsoil	Pottery, bone, shell	C19th
	203	Layer			Natural Gault	-	
	204	Fill		0.80	Fill of 205	-	
	205	Cut	0.5	0.80	Service trench	-	
	206	Layer	2.6	0.10	Lenses	Pottery, CBM	C19th
	207	Fill		0.15	Fill of TTH	-	
	208	Cut	0.45 x 0.55	0.15	Tree-throw hole	-	

APPENDIX 2 REFERENCES

CgMs, 2004 *Pantiles, Portway, Oxfordshire. Archaeological Desk Based Assessment.*

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

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Pantiles, Portway, Wantage Oxfordshire

Site code: WAPS 04

Grid reference: SU 39720 87674

Type of evaluation: two 20 m trenches

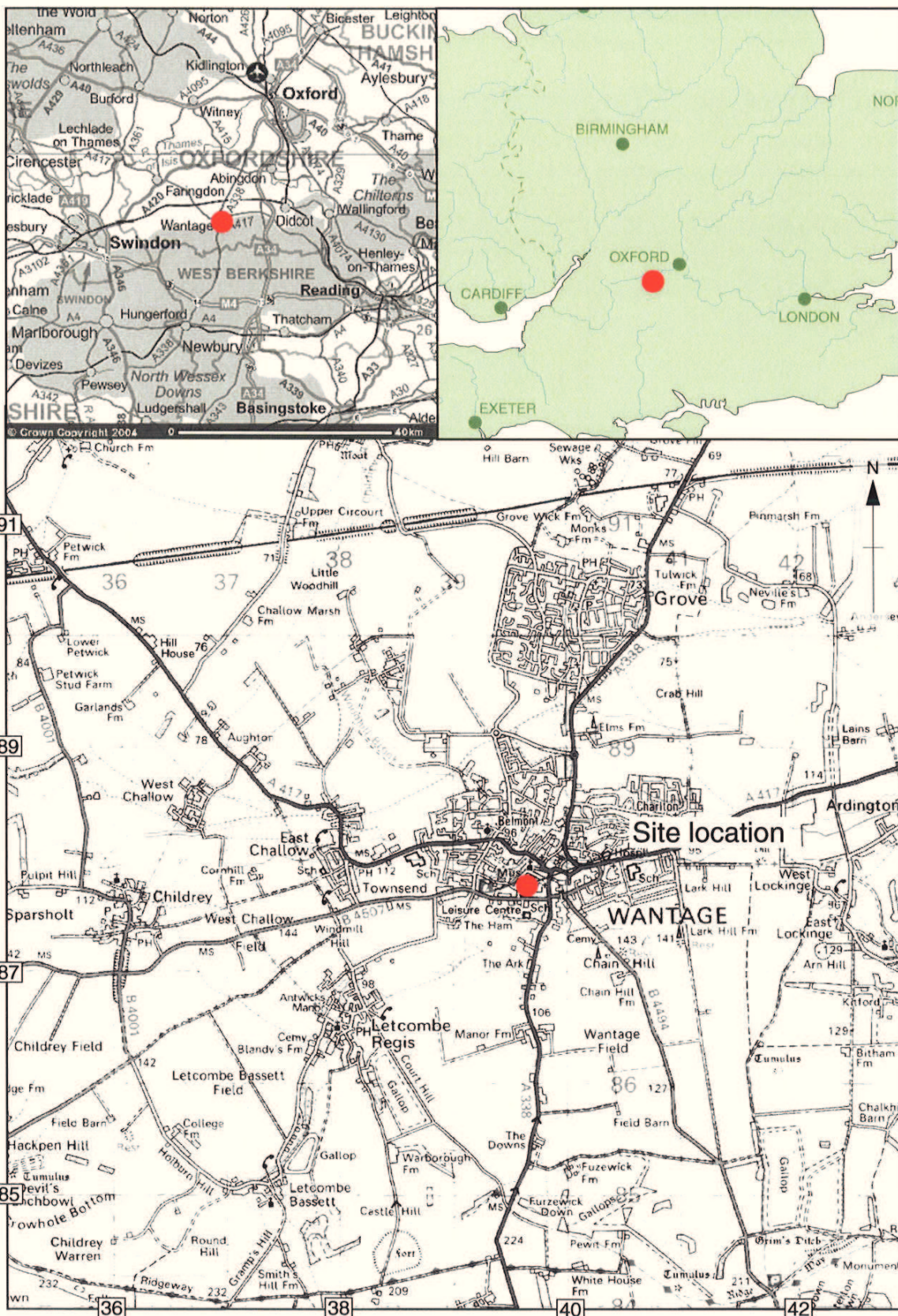
Date and duration of project: 2 days, 28th-29th July 2004

Area of site: 0.2 hectares

Summary of results: No significant archaeological remains were encountered. Only an earlier garden soil, a soak-away feature and a service trench of 19th-20th century date were identified.

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.

Server: 10/coupubs1_AtoH/WAP504/WAPSEV/Panicles, Portway, Wantage Jim*11.08.04



Reproduced from the Landranger 1:50,000 scale by permission of the Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office
© Crown Copyright 1998. All rights reserved. Licence No. AL 10000569

Figure 1: Site location

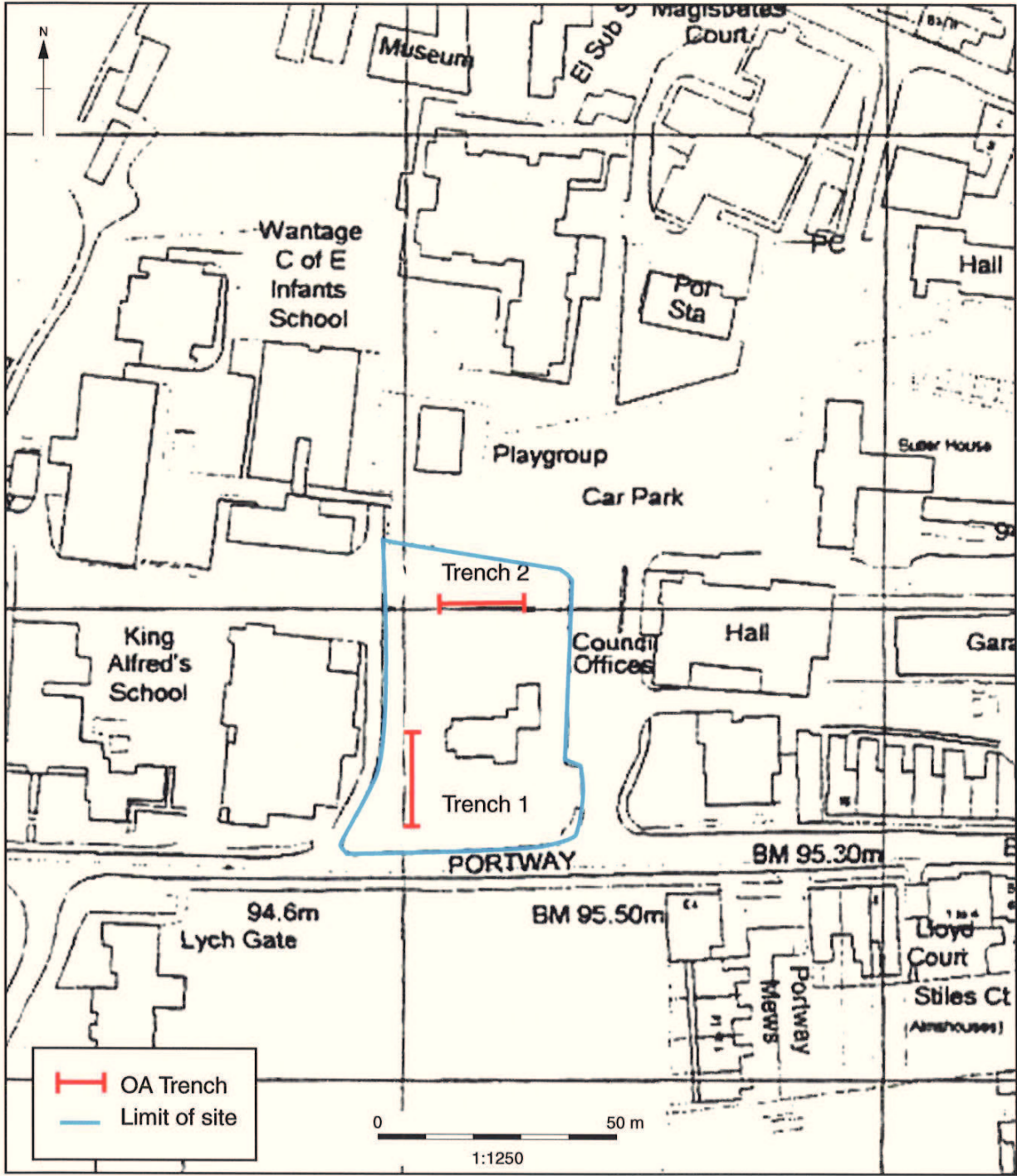


Figure 2: Trench location plan

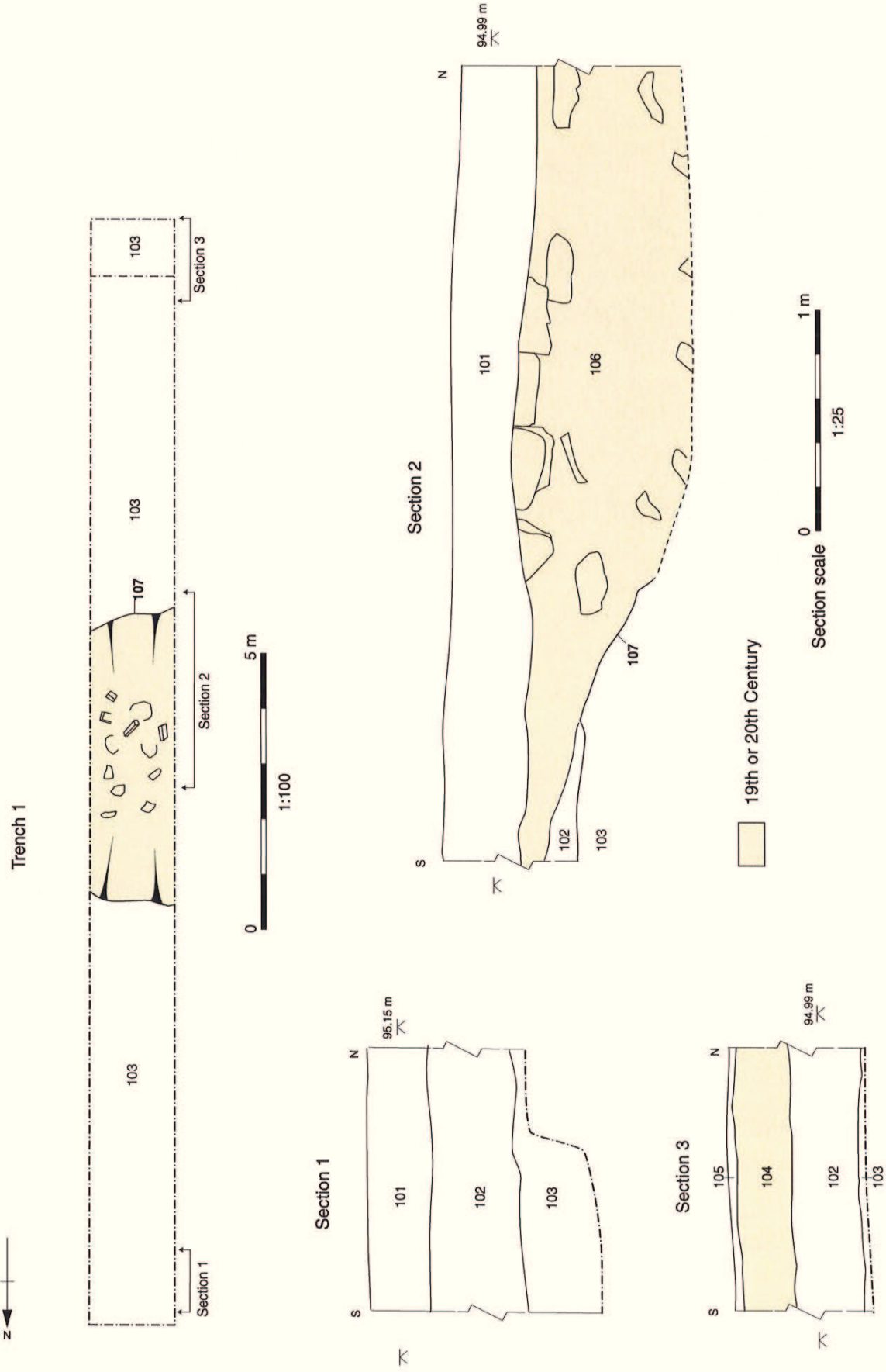


Figure 3: Trench 1, plan and sections

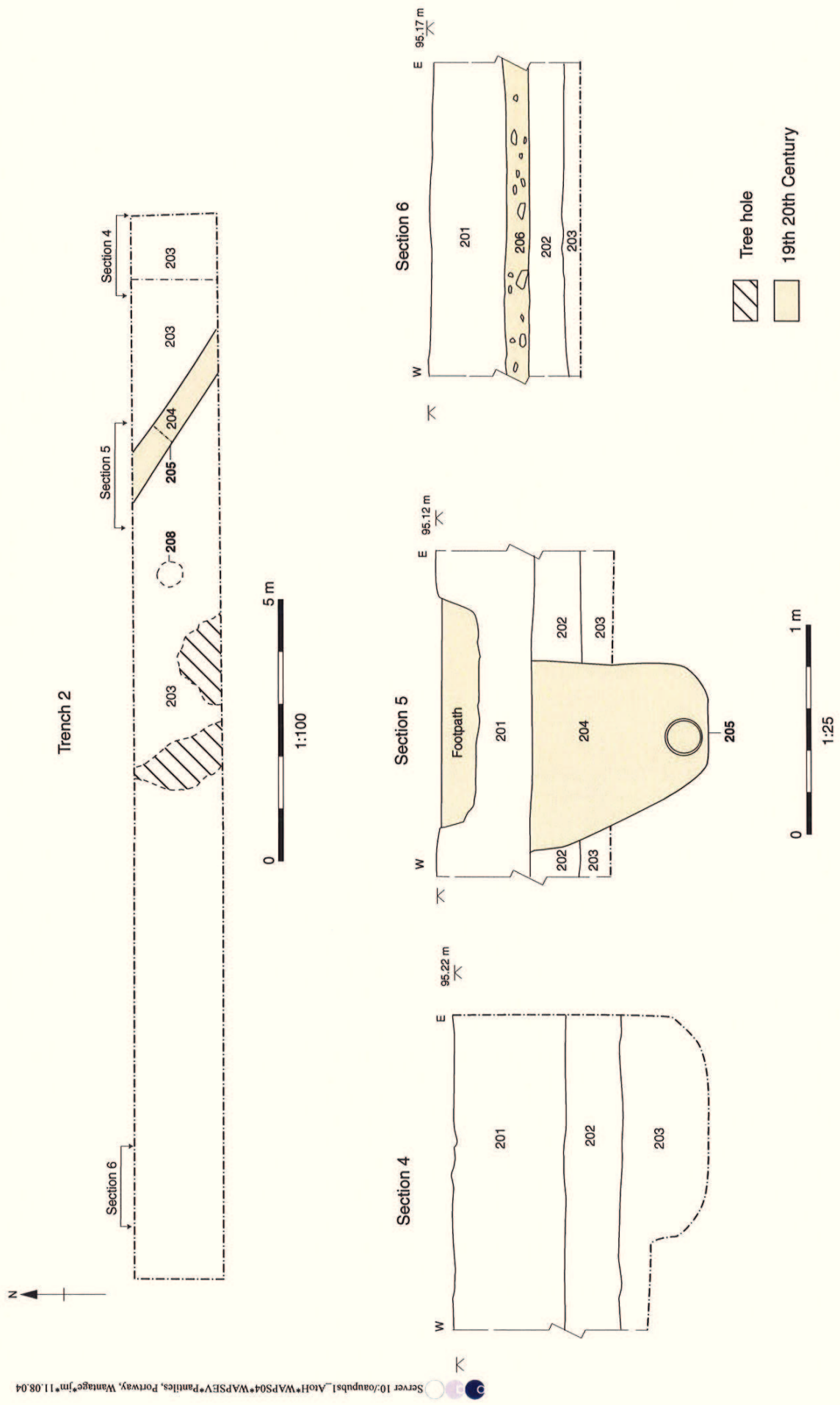
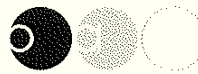


Figure 4: Trench 2, plan and sections



Oxford Archaeology

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES

t: (0044) 01865 263800
f: (0044) 01865 793496
e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk
w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk



Oxford Archaeology North

Storey Institute
Meeting House Lane
Lancaster LA1 1TF

t: (0044) 01524 541000
f: (0044) 01524 848606
e: lancinfo@oxfordarch.co.uk
w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk



Director: David Jennings, BA MIFA FSA

Oxford Archaeological Unit is a
Private Limited Company, N^o: 1618597
and a Registered Charity, N^o: 285627

Registered Office:

Oxford Archaeological Unit
Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES