

16-18 Church Street
Brill
Buckinghamshire



Archaeological Evaluation Report



February 2008

Client: Stephen Moss Developments

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Prepared by: James Mumford
Position: Project Officer
Date: 11th February 2008

Checked by: Dan Dodds
Position: Head of Small Works
Date: 11th February 2008

Approved by: Alan Hardy Signed.....
Position: Senior Project Manager
Date: 11th February 2008

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Oxford Archaeology
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Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES
t: (0044) 01865 263800 e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk
f: (0044) 01865 793496 w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk

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Cover Plate: View of 16 Church Street, Brill from the north.

SUMMARY

In December 2007 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at 16-18 Church Street, Brill, Buckinghamshire (NGR SP 6553 1377) on behalf of Stephen Moss Developments. The evaluation revealed quarrying from the excavation of material for the manufacture of brick and tile in Brill, with later garden in-filling and landscaping.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In December 2007 OA carried out a field evaluation at 16-18 Church Street, Brill, Buckinghamshire (Fig. 1) on behalf of Stephen Moss Developments in respect of a planning application for the erection of a new shop and detached house with associated parking (Planning Application No. 06/01304/APP) and a brief (BCAS 2007) set by David Radford, Buckinghamshire County Council's Archaeological Officer.
- 1.1.2 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief (OA 2007).

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The application site consists of a former hairdressing salon, workshop and rear yard/car parking area which has been truncated in places. The site lies at approximately 184 m above OD.
- 1.2.2 The underlying geology is Whitchurch Sand Formation (with Shotover Ironsands) (BGS, 1994, sheet 237).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the evaluation has been the subject of a separate desk study (OA 2007), the results of which are presented below. The site itself has produced limited archaeological evidence. There are several known sites with archaeological remains adjacent to the development site.
- 1.3.2 The site lies within the historic core of Brill, close to the site of possible medieval kilns indicated by scatter of 13th - 15th century pottery wasters recovered from the allotments to the south of this plot (CAS2478).
- 1.3.3 Brill is of considerable archaeological interest. There is evidence for Iron Age occupation adjacent to the church associated with an earthwork which may be the remains of a hillfort rampart (Farley, 1979). In the Late Saxon period, Brill was a royal manor and later became the most important settlement within the medieval forest of Bernwood which was legally established following the Norman conquest and based upon the pre-existing woodland and a hunting lodge constructed by Edward the Confessor. Brill was the administrative centre for the forest and hundred

with a royal house, fishponds, mills, church, prison-house, market and fair, claypits and kilns. In the 13th and early 14th centuries Brill was described as a borough but thereafter it went into decline and lost its status as a town. Brill was the centre of an important regional pottery and tile industry which is believed to have originated in the 12th century and continued to be active into the post-medieval period when it also produced bricks. Extensive remains of this industry have been recovered from the village.

- 1.3.4 A draft paper prepared for *The Solent Thames Regional Research Framework* notes that the fact that there are perhaps twelve excavated kilns of the medieval and post-medieval period, together with tile kilns and brickworks, in a village that is barely a kilometre long, provides an opportunity to understand the development of an industrial community which sits in virtual isolation from any other, and might serve to model the development of similar early industrial settlements in the areas where subsequent nineteenth century development has eliminated earlier traces (Welch, Green & Giggins, 2006).

2 EVALUATION AIMS

- 2.1.1 To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the proposed development area.
- 2.1.2 To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains (if present), in particular to establish;
- To determine the presence or absence of Iron Age deposits bearing in mind that the site may lie inside the projected extent of the Iron Age hillfort.
 - To determine the presence or absence of Saxon or medieval deposits bearing in mind the possibility of deposits related to medieval pottery manufacturing particularly in this location fronting the green.
- 2.1.3 To signal, before the destruction of the material in question, the discovery of a significant archaeological find, for which the resources allocated are not sufficient to support a treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard. In this case additional technicians may be required to aid the excavation of the archaeological material.
- 2.1.4 To make available the results of the investigation.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork

- 3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of three trenches aligned NW - SW across the site; two measuring 5 m and 1.6 m wide and one 10 m long and 1.6 m wide (Fig. 2). The overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision by a 5 tonne 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. The trenches were excavated under archaeological supervision.

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

- 3.2.1 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 1:50 and 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).

4 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

4.1 Description of trenches

Trench 1 (Fig. 3)

- 4.1.1 The trench was situated along the north-east side of the site. It measured 6 m long x 1.6 m wide and was excavated to a depth of 0.7 m on to the top of the natural of a light reddish sand with patches of yellowish brown sand (9). This had been cut by a linear ditch (5) aligned WNW - ESE across the site. It had near vertical sides rounding sharply to a flat base, which sloped towards the south-west. It measured 1.7 m wide and 0.4 m in depth and contained three fills. The primary fill was a grey brown silty sand (6) with a pottery sherd dating from the 15th - 17th century. This was sealed below a 0.10 m thin deposit of yellowish brown silty sand (7) with grey brown patches and stone fragments. Sealing this and filling in the top of ditch 5 was a grey brown silty sand (8) with CBM and pottery dating from the 16th - 18th century.
- 4.1.2 The ditch was sealed below a 0.3 m thick cultivated soil (2) of reddish brown silty sand loam. This had been cut by a sub-rectangular pit (3) with vertical sides and flat base. It measured 0.57 m x 0.45 m x 0.60 m and was filled by a black silty sand with patches of grey brown (4) with pottery and glass from the 16th - 19th century. This was sealed below the 0.20 m very dark grey brown silty sand loam (1) old topsoil sealed below the floor of the garage, which stood on the site prior to development. This had been cut by the construction trench (10) for the garage inspection pit.

Trench 2 (Fig. 3)

- 4.1.3 The trench was situated in the middle of the site and was against the south-east edge of the site to maintain a distance from No 12 Church Street for safety reasons. The trench was 9.7 m long x 1.6 m wide x 0.9 m. At the north-west end of the trench the natural of light reddish sand with patches of yellowish brown sand (20) was exposed. This had been cut by feature (22) partly exposed in the trench and aligned east to west. It had a steep sloping side with vertical sided hollows along it and rounded sharply to a flat base, which sloped gentle to the south. The feature 22 is the edge of a quarry extending to the south and formed the later upper most terrace of terracing observed in the allotments to the south of the site.

4.1.4 The primary fill was a 0.3 m thick dark reddish brown silty sand (21) with two pieces of pottery dating from the 17th - 19th century. This was sealed below a yellowish brown sand with reddish brown sand (23), which was sealed by a dark reddish brown silty sand loam (24). Sealing this was a light yellowish brown sand (25), overlain by a dark reddish brown silty sand loam (26). This had been cut by two small pits (27 and 29). Pit 27 was a sub-circular feature with vertical sides and flat base. It measured 0.55 m x 0.57 m x 0.62 m and was filled by a compact very dark reddish brown silty sand (28) with patches of ironstone. The second pit (29) was sub-circular feature with vertical sides and concave base, measuring 0.45 m x 0.35 m x 0.30 m and filled by a dark reddish brown silty sand loam (40). Sealing these features was a 0.45 m thick reddish brown silty sand loam (41) cultivated soil. This was sealed below the 0.20 m very dark grey brown silty sand loam (42) old topsoil sealed below the floor of the garage, which stood on the site prior to development.

Trench 3 (Fig. 3)

4.1.5 The trench was situated along the south-west side of the site. It measured 5 m long x 1.6 m wide and was excavated to a depth of 1.7 m on to the top of the natural of a light reddish sand with patches of yellowish brown sand (36). The natural was the base of the quarry and later terrace exposed in trench 2. A series of deposits in-filled the quarry to level up the garden. These consisted of a dark reddish brown silty sand loam (35), overlain by a 0.24 m thick dark yellowish brown silty sand (34) with patches of reddish brown sand with some pottery and glass from 14th - 15th century. This was overlain by a dark reddish brown silty sand (33) with CBM and pottery from the 13th - 16th century. Overlain by a 0.10 m to 0.30 m thick dark yellowish brown sand (32). Sealing this was a 0.80 m thick layer of reddish brown silty sand loam (31) cultivated soil with CBM and pottery from the 19th -20th century. A 0.20 m to 0.25 m thick, very dark grey brown silty sand loam (30) old topsoil sealed below the floor of the garage, which stood on the site prior to development.

4.2 Finds

Pottery by John Cotter

4.2.1 A total of 13 sherds of pottery weighing 139 g. were recovered from 7 contexts. These are mostly of post-medieval date but include a few medieval sherds. All the pottery was examined and spot-dated during the present assessment stage. For each context the total pottery sherd count and weight were recorded on a spreadsheet (see Appendix 2), followed by the context spot-date which is the date-bracket during which the latest pottery types in the context are estimated to have been produced or were in general circulation. Comments on the presence of datable types were also recorded, usually with mention of vessel form (jugs, bowls etc.) and any other attributes worthy of note (eg. decoration etc.).

4.2.2 Overall the pottery assemblage is in a very fragmentary condition, although individual sherds range in condition from fresh to fairly abraded, although none is very large. Ordinary domestic pottery types are represented although the medieval

sherd from Context 6 may be a kiln waster. For the most part this probably represents casual loss and perhaps gardens soils or manuring. The pottery is detailed in the spreadsheet and only summarised here.

- 4.2.3 The assemblage is fairly heterogenous in date. The three fairly definite medieval sherds (Contexts 6, 33 and 34) are almost certainly products of the well-known local Brill/Boarstall medieval pottery industry (Fabrics OXAM and OXAP; Mellor 1994). The finding of a possible kiln waster (Context 6) is therefore not so surprising. There are a small number of sherds, all in fairly poor condition, in post-medieval glazed red wares and yellow wares. These may be products of the post-medieval Brill pottery industry which lasted from the 17th to the 19th century. A few sherds of late 18th- and 19th-century mass-produced Staffordshire-type tablewares complete the list.

Clay tobacco pipe

- 4.2.4 As only a single piece was recovered the details are given here. The single piece (Context 4) is a small slightly abraded pipe stem weighing 2 g. This has a stem bore of c. 2 mm. and probably dates to the 18th or 19th century, similar to pottery with which it was associated. No further work is recommended.

Ceramic building material

- 4.2.5 A total of 7 pieces of ceramic building material (CBM) weighing 410 g. were recovered from 4 contexts. This was examined and spot-dated during the present assessment stage in a similar way to the pottery (see elsewhere) and the data recorded on a spreadsheet (see Appendix 2). As usual, the dating of broken fragments of ceramic or other building materials is an imprecise art and spot-dates derived from them are necessarily broad and should therefore be regarded with caution. The assemblage is detailed in the spreadsheet and only summarised here.
- 4.2.6 Most of the assemblage comprises types of roofing tile although one definite modern floor tile and one possible fragment of post-medieval floor (quarry) tile was identified. The assemblage is fragmentary and the condition of the pieces ranges from fresh to abraded. One definite medieval roof tile (13th-16th century) with evidence of circular nail holes was identified. This was associated with a single sherd of medieval pottery in Context 33. Modern, probably 19th to early 20th-century, roof tiles and a floor tile were identified from Context 31. A possible ridge tile fragment of late medieval or early post-medieval date was identified from Context 8 while a possible quarry tile fragment in a similar fabric was identified from Context 4. All these pieces occur in red-firing sandy fabrics and could well be local products.
- 4.2.7 In general the CBM from this site adds little to the dating evidence provided by other types of material and should be regarded as of secondary importance to these. In view of the small size and poor condition of the assemblage, no further work is recommended.

4.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 4.3.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified during the evaluation.

5 **DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION**

- 5.1.1 The archaeological evaluation did not reveal any evidence of the Iron Age hillfort. The evaluation did reveal that the southern half of the site had been quarried away and formed the uppermost of a series of landscaped terraces down the slope to south of the site and now is the site of allotments. Pottery was recovered from a feature dated from the 15th to 19th century and may have been related to the excavation of sand for the manufacture of bricks and tiles in Brill. The absence of any significant quantities of medieval Brill ware suggest that the immediate area, while used for quarries, was not close to any pottery production site. In Trench 1 a ditch was located dating from the 16th to 19th century possibly marking the boundary between the excavation works and the village. The area behind 16 and 18 was a garden with a thick cultivated soil making up the ground level until the garage was built on the site in the late 20th century.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Ctxt No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Depth. (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i>Findings</i>
1						
	1	Layer		0.20 m	Topsoil	
	2	Layer		0.30 m	Cultivated soil	
	3	Cut	0.45 m	0.60 m	19th century pit	
	4	Fill			Fill of pit	Pottery and Glass
	5	Cut	1.70 m	0.40 m	Ditch	
	6	Fill		0.15 m	Fill of ditch	Pottery
	7	Fill		0.10 m	Fill of ditch	
	8	Fill		0.15 m	Fill of ditch	Pottery and CBM
	9	Natural			Sand natural	
	10	Cut			Modern cut for inspection pit	
2						
	20	Natural			Sand natural	
	21	Layer		0.30 m	In-fill	Pottery
	22	Cut	1.50 m	1.50 m	Quarry cut	
	23	Layer		0.35 m	In-fill	
	24	Layer		0.20 m	In-fill	
	25	Layer		0.10 m	In-fill	
	26	Layer		0.25 m	In-fill	
	27	Cut	0.57 m	0.62 m	Small pit	
	28	Fill			Fill of pit	
	29	Cut	0.45 m	0.30 m	Small pit	
	40	Fill			Fill of pit	
	41	Layer		0.44 m	Cultivated soil	
	42	Layer		0.20 m	Topsoil	
3						
	30	Layer		0.25 m	Topsoil	
	31	Layer		0.80 m	Cultivated soil	
	32	Layer		0.30 m	In-fill	
	33	Layer		0.35 m	In-fill	Pottery and CBM

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Ctxt No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Thick. (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i> Finds</i>
	34	Layer		0.24 m	In-fill	Pottery and Glass
	35	Layer		0.30 m	In-fill	
	36	Natural			Sand natural	

APPENDIX 2 FINDS SPREADSHEETS

Ceramic Building Material

Context	Spot-date	Sherds	Weight	Comments
4	16-19C?	1	21	Abraded scrap. Probably a post-med quarry (floor) tile in red sandy brick-like fabric. Part of flat upper surface surviving, but worn. Apparently unglazed
8	16-18C?	1	75	Abraded frag poss from the apex of a plain ?ridge tile with a v obtuse apex angle. Unusually thick - range 21-24mm. Red sandy fabric similar to object in context 4. Sparse coarse inclusions of yellow clay pellets and flint. Other identifications possible eg. wall coping tile or gutter/drainage tile. Not impossibly late medieval?
31	19-E20C	3	192	3 separate objects. Latest is a 19-20C prob machine-made red terracotta floor tile frag including edge. Max thickness 14mm, v regular, flat, unworn. Underside has series of broad shallow rectangular keying recesses. No evidence of use. Other 2 frags are parts of 19-E20C roof tiles in red sandy fabrics. One is a peg tile corner with trace of round nail hole. Both fairly fresh
33	13-16C?	2	122	Joining frags from upper edge of a medieval roof tile (peg tile) with complete crudely-made circular nail hole - imperfectly punched through leaving only a 3mm hole through which an iron nail might have fitted. Diam of nail hole 16mm with raised circular aureole 30mm diam on reverse/underside - the latter bears a splash of clear glaze. Thickness of tile 15mm. Orange-red sandy fabric with broad grey core. Slightly abraded
TOTAL		7	410	

Pottery

Context	Spot-date	Sherds	Weight	Comments
4	19C	5	36	Small ?jug rim sherd mass-produced Staffs white earthenware with blue transfer printing (WHEW). 1x small bs Creamware (CREA) c1770-1830. 3x post-med red earthenware (REW) - prob L17C or 18C incl jar rim, all fairly abraded
6	c1225-1600	1	16	Brill proto-stoneware (OXAP), poss more likely 15-E17C? Possibly a kiln waster? Hard grey near-stoneware. Detached floor area probably from base of a wheel-thrown jug. Shrinkage cracks present. Knife-shaved underside with traces of ?accidental brown ash glaze or vaporised lead glaze. Fresh

8	17-18C	1	31	Flanged dish/bowl rim in glazed post-med orange-buff red earthenware (REW), possibly post-med Brill red earthenware (OXDR) in the Surrey Border ware style? Abraded
21	17-19C?	2	21	2 vess. Not v diagnostic. REW simple small beaded ?bowl rim (diam c140mm) with int clear orange-brown glaze - poss more likely 18-19C? Fairly fresh. 1x ?Brill 17-19C yellow ware abraded thick-walled bowl or jar base with trace of pad or footring base and rich internal & part external yellow glaze
31	19C	2	17	2x English bone china vess incl saucer rim and ?cup base. Both plain. Fairly fresh though saucer slightly abraded
33	13-15C?	1	7	Body sherd prob from a cooking pot in Brill/Boarstall ware (OXAW or OXAM). Wheel-thrown grey sandy ware with external sooting. Fresh. Date could be 13-14C but within 13-15C most likely
34	c1225-1600	1	11	Body sherd prob from a jug in Brill/Boarstall ware (OXAM). Fresh. Buff fabric with rich copper-green mottled glaze int and ext, slightly bubbled int. All over int glaze poss copying high med Saintonge ware jugs c1280-1350 or poss Tudor Green ware c1375-1550. Suggest 14-15C most likely date
TOTAL		13	139	

APPENDIX 3 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

BCAS 2007 Brief for an Archaeological Excavation

Farley, M 1979 'An Iron Age Hillfort at Brill' in Records of Bucks, 31

Mellor, M., 1994 'Oxfordshire Pottery: A Synthesis of middle and late Saxon, medieval and early post-medieval pottery in the Oxford Region' *Oxoniensia* 59, 17-217.

OA 2007 16-18 Church Street, Brill, Buckinghamshire Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Investigation.

Welch, C, Green, D and Giggins, B 2006 'Buckinghamshire; Post-Medieval' Draft Solent Thames Historic Environment Research Framework

APPENDIX 4 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: 16-18 Church Street, Brill, Buckinghamshire

Site code: BRCHS 07

Grid reference: NGR SP 6553 1377

Type of evaluation: Three trench evaluation to investigate site prior to development.

Date and duration of project: Three days from the 10th December to 12th December 2007.

Area of site: 18 m x 12 m

Summary of results: The evaluation revealed quarrying from the excavation of material for the manufacture of brick and tile in Brill, with later garden in-filling and landscaping.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museums Service in due course, under the following accession number: AYBCM:2007.206



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Figure 1: Site location

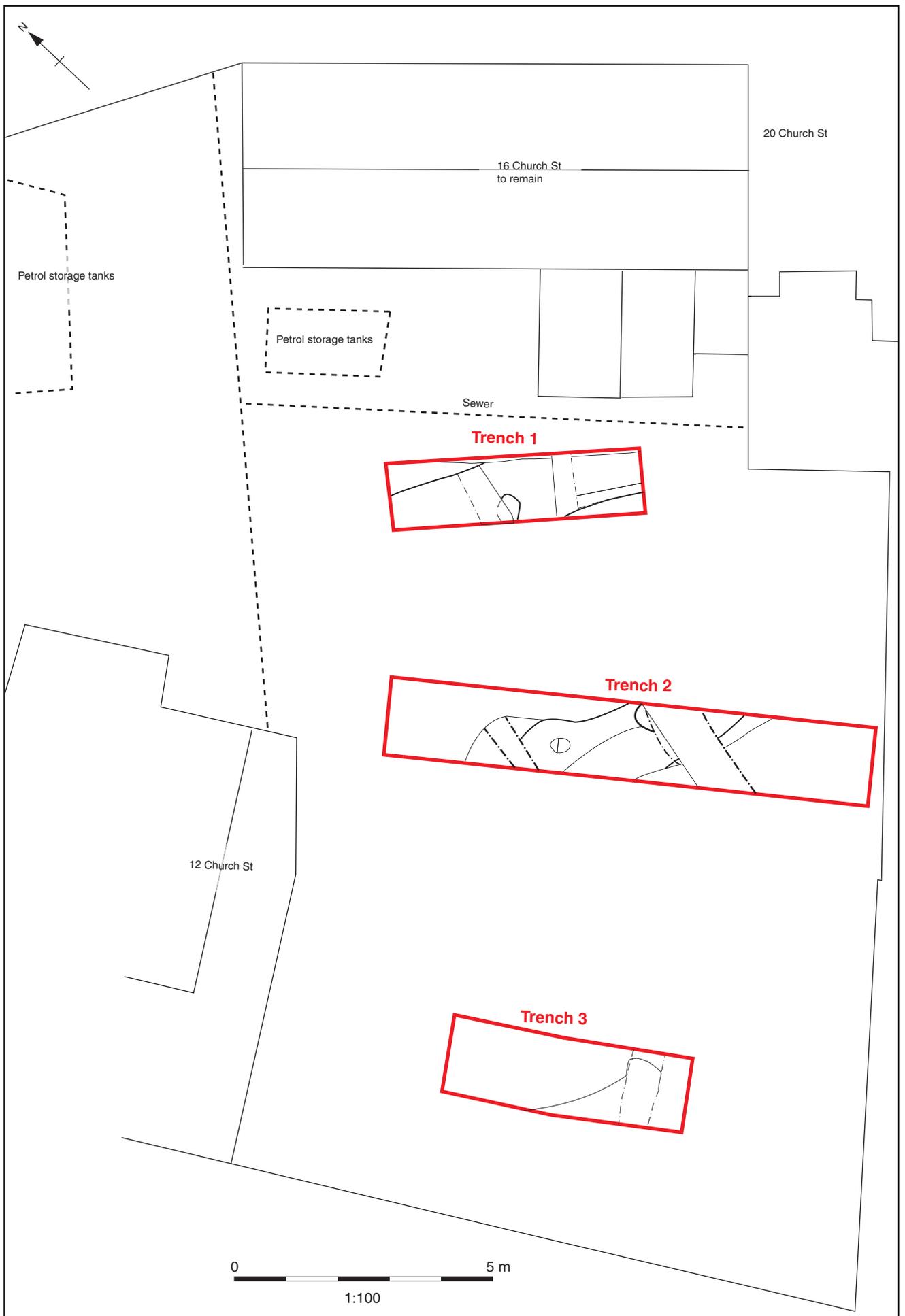


Figure 2: Trench location plan

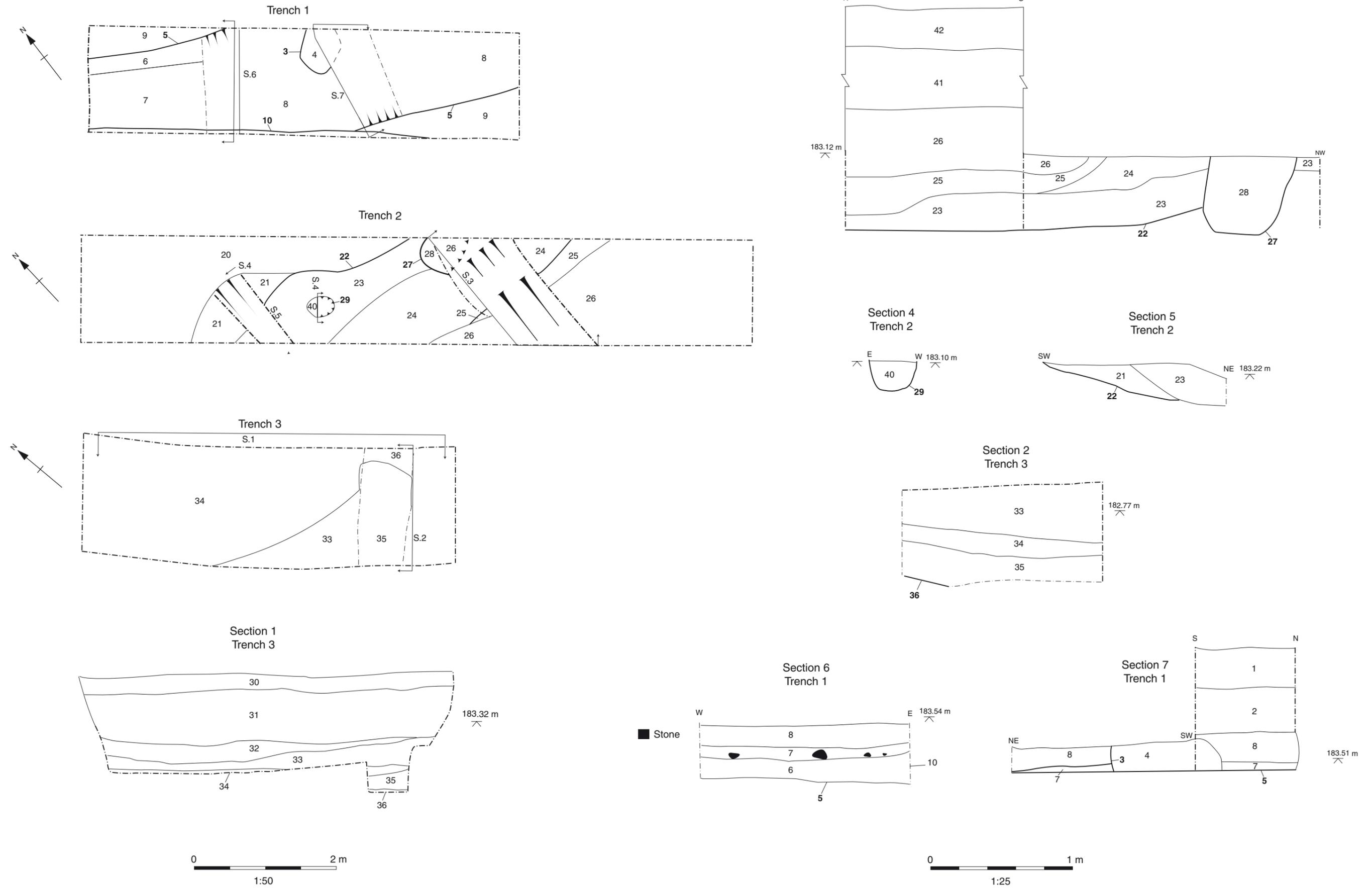


Figure 3: Trench, plans and sections 1-7



Oxford Archaeology

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES

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



Oxford Archaeology North

Mill 3
Moor Lane
Lancaster LA1 1GF

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



Director: David Jennings, BA MIFA FSA

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