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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

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SUMMARY

In March and April 2005 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Thames View Industrial Estate, Abingdon, Oxfordshire (NGR: SU 5010 9720). The work was commissioned by Barratt-Maidenhead in advance of redevelopment of the site. The site had previously been occupied by industrial units constructed between the 1950s and the 1980s, which had seriously damaged underlying archaeological deposits without any record being made.

This extensive watching brief revealed a number of large ditches extending broadly west-east across the site. There were few finds, so the ditches were difficult to date with accuracy, though one appears to have been medieval and another Roman in date. Further ditches on a similar alignment were undated or so truncated by modern construction disturbance that phasing and interpretation was not possible.

A number of other Roman, medieval and post-medieval features were recorded in the 53 trenches opened, but the restrictions on access to some of these trenches on safety grounds often precluded detailed investigations of these features. Nonetheless, finds and environmental samples were recovered to illuminate the archaeological character of this site.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 During March and April 2005, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a watching brief on behalf of Barratt-Maidenhead at Thames View, Abingdon, Oxfordshire (NGR: SU 5010 9720) to observe the removal of concrete piles and other foundations from the site by Wooldridge Demolition, prior to new construction.

1.1.2 The site is located close to the confluence of the River Thames and the River Ock in Abingdon (Fig. 1) and is bounded to the north by the Waitrose supermarket and to the west by a recent housing development. The south of the site adjoins the municipal Abbey Gardens and is demarcated by the Abbey Mill Stream. The east is bounded by the residential area of Audlett Drive and a range of light industrial units (OA 2003).

1.1.3 The site was divided by an access road entering on the north-east, and running south-west, dividing a group of large industrial units to the north from a line of single-storey industrial buildings to the south. One of the large industrial units north of the road, which occupies the south-west corner of the site, will remain unaffected by redevelopment.

1.1.4 Barratt-Maidenhead has been granted planning permission for the remainder of the site for redevelopment as mixed-use residential and light industrial buildings (ABG/319/19-D). North of the road, the central part of the site was occupied by a large industrial unit with offices at the east end, the Bezier Building, built in the

1970s. A 1950s industrial unit occupied the north-west part of the site (north of the retained industrial unit). The east end of the site was used for car parking.

1.1.5 Previous work had shown that the area for development was in an archaeologically sensitive area and therefore a programme of archaeological investigation was required by the Local Authority, the Vale of the White Horse District Council. Oxford Archaeology (hereafter OA) was commissioned by Barratt-Maidenhead to satisfy the need for archaeological mitigation set out in the Environmental Statement, Sections 7.3 - 7.5: Assessment of Predicted Impacts (Kimberley Securities 2003) and in the Archaeological Design Brief for Recording Action (2004) provided by Hugh Coddington of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (OCAS).

1.1.6 An evaluation trench (Trench 1) was excavated by OA in January 2005 in the open area at the eastern end of the site, running north-south, approximately 10 m north-east of the Bezier Building. The excavation detected a number of ditches and other archaeological features which were detailed in *'Thames View, Abingdon: Archaeological Evaluation Report'* (OA 2005c).

1.1.7 This report details archaeological monitoring carried out during the removal of pile caps, ground beams and other foundations in that part of the site north of the access road. Plans of the Bezier Building showed that it was constructed on a raft of reinforced concrete piles at 4 m intervals, while the offices at the eastern end of the building were constructed on a rectangular grid of small piles at a 5 m x 6 m spacing. No plans were available for the 1950s building at the north-west end of the site, but following demolition to ground level it was found that it had been built upon a grid of concrete foundations of considerable depth.

1.1.8 Following the demolition of the standing structures, an archaeological Watching Brief was carried out according to a method statement agreed between Barratt-Maidenhead and the Deputy County Archaeologist Hugh Coddington, the *'Method Statement for removal of pile caps and Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Watching Brief and Recording exercise'* (OA 2005d). The procedure was to remove the concrete pile caps by opening a series of trenches parallel to the pile grids, so that the caps could be broken up and pulled into the trench.

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site occupies *c* 5 hectares, which slopes gently southwards towards the Abbey Mill stream. It is at 54.3 m above OD at the north-western part, dropping to 53.45 m at the south and 53.2 m by the Abbey Mill stream at the south east of the site (OA 2003).

1.2.2 The site lies on a south-facing slope above the River Thames, with the western part occupying first terrace gravel deposits, whilst the eastern and southern parts occupy low lying terrace deposits shelving onto the alluvial floodplain (OA 2003). Adjacent

to the site on the south is the Abbey Mill Stream, a man-made watercourse some 12-15 m wide (OA 2005c).

1.3 Site conditions

1.3.1 As detailed in 1.1.7 above, the site consisted of a number of buildings built upon concrete pads set on vertical concrete piles. These buildings and their floors had been removed leaving only rows of reinforced steel rods protruding from the surface. This made the site hazardous to work on and difficult to manoeuvre through. Additionally, large blocks of concrete rubble and spoil heaps dotted the site, making visibility across the site very limited, and adding to the difficulty of moving safely around the trenches.

1.3.2 Below the levels of the horizontal concrete beams was a layer, between 1 m and 2 m thick, of 'made' ground consisting of hardcore, glass, corroded batteries, etc. This made the sides of some of the trenches unstable and these were therefore unsuitable for either close inspection or for the cleaning up of sections for photographic purposes. Furthermore, the lower levels of the site (beyond 2 m deep) were often stained with diesel (amongst other substances). This had the result of staining and discolouring both the archaeology and natural geology as well as producing a noxious odour.

1.4 Archaeological and historical background

1.4.1 The archaeological background to the watching brief was prepared during the Desktop Assessment stage of the project and is detailed fully in Sections 7.2.14 - 7.2.48 of *Thames View, Abingdon: Desktop Assessment of Archaeological Potential and Impact of Proposed Development* (OA 2003).

1.5 Acknowledgements

1.5.1 Oxford Archaeology would like to thank KingsOak Thames Valley and CgMs Consulting for permission to reproduce archaeological plans from their Post Excavation Assessment and Updated Project Design for the Penlon Site, Radley Road, and to quote from the report.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 To establish the presence or absence of buried archaeological remains which may have existed between the grid lines of the pile caps and other foundations, and, if significant archaeological remains were present and likely to suffer impacts from development, to mitigate this as far as practicable by excavation and recording.

2.1.2 Excavations in the Waitrose Car Park and the Sheltered Housing sites to the north-west had shown that the prehistoric defensive ditches of Abingdon are likely to have entered

the site on the west. Recovery of the plan of the line of these features was therefore of prime importance, as was the recovery of additional dating evidence (OA 2005c).

2.1.3 Further aims included the discovery of any further evidence of late Saxon/medieval activity relating to Abbey Barton Farm and the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Abingdon Abbey (OA 2005c).

2.1.4 One of the Civil war defences, the Abbey Guard, is believed to lie within the site. Recovery of evidence to confirm would be of significant interest to the town (OA 2005c).

2.1.5 Lastly, it was thought possible that the Stert Stream would run through the south-west corner of the site. This man-made channel may have been revetted with stone, and is considered to be of considerable importance due to its possible Late Saxon origins and its function as a boundary within Abingdon Abbey (OA 2005c).

2.1.6 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 Following demolition of the standing buildings and removal of their concrete floors, no further ground reduction was proposed for the purposes of demolition or construction, though the individual piles were to be removed by excavating down to a depth of 1.5 - 2 m. It was not therefore deemed appropriate to reduce areas of the site to the top of any archaeological horizon.

2.2.2 Instead, it was agreed that a series of trenches would be excavated to locate and isolate the piles. These trenches would be the width of a machine bucket (2 m wide), and would run alongside the lines of piles to a depth of c. 2 m. The use of a toothless bucket was requested, but due to the large number of concrete and other obstructions, this was not practical, and a toothed bucket was used. The excavation of the trenches was subject to a continuous archaeological Watching Brief (OA 2005c).

2.2.3 In areas where the trenches could be stepped or battered and where the ground was considered to be stable, archaeologists were empowered to enter the trenches for closer inspection and recording. This was necessary to remove machine bucket 'smearing' of the trench sides and to retrieve artefactual evidence to date the features. In a few instances, where the archaeological deposits were suitable and had not been contaminated, bulk samples were taken for environmental remains.

2.2.4 Where local ground conditions prevented this, recording was carried out from the top of the trench. The distribution of trenches that were entered is indicated on Figure 2.

2.2.5 In general the method used for removing the piles or foundations was to dig a north-south trench, and following archaeological inspection and recording, to pull out the piles or other concrete foundations, and then to backfill the trench before the next trench was dug. At the very west end of the site, where extremely wide and deep

foundations for the walls of the 1950s building had been dug, a series of 3 contiguous strips was dug totalling more than 6 m in width. At the east end of the site the trenches were dug east-west following the rows of piles. Occasionally two trenches were opened one after another, but at no time were more than two trenches available for comparison. This meant that comparing results was rarely possible, and it was not possible to obtain an overview of any area at one time.

2.2.6 The pace of work and the order of trenching were dictated by the demolition contractor, and was largely determined by available space between the piles of concrete across the site, and the progress of the concrete crushing. This resulted in work being carried out sporadically in different areas of the site. As a result, adjacent trenches were not always observed sequentially. The order in which the trenches were opened up and the days on which this occurred are detailed as an appendix in *Table A1: Order of Archaeological Investigations* at the end of this report.

2.2.7 Initially, one archaeologist from OA attended but as the pace of work increased, sometimes with two machines opening trenches simultaneously in different parts of the site, two archaeologists were required. Work was carried out six days a week, which sometimes resulted in a change of staff on Saturdays.

2.2.8 Site conditions were difficult. A number of machines, including two 360° tracked excavators and two concrete breakers, were operating in the relatively small area of the north side of the site, an area which also contained the concrete spoil produced by the removal of the concrete slabs and piles. It was not possible to establish a permanent site grid due to the lack of fixed points within the site, the lack of visibility across the site (due to the concrete heaps) and the absence of any areas free from machinery. The construction drawings of the Bezier Building were used to locate the trenches relative to the concrete piles. At the west end, where a plan of the building foundations was lacking, measurements were made from the trenches to the industrial unit retained at the west end of the site, and to the perimeter kerb along the north of the site.

2.2.9 Heras fencing had been erected within the site boundaries, so that the measurements of trench ends were initially taken to the perimeter Heras fencing, which was then measured in to the kerb and the industrial unit. As the Heras was not entirely straight, some small degree of error (perhaps of the order of 0.1-0.2 m) in the location of the trenches in a north-south direction may have occurred. This may partly explain the slight offsets evident in the plan of some linear features crossing successive trenches (see Figure 3).

2.2.10 All archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:100 and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:50 or 1:20. All excavated features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. A general photographic record of the work was made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

2.2.11 The length and the orientation of the trenches were determined by the nature of the demolition work and the direction of the pile/foundation lines. Trenches 61 and 9, for instance, were shorter than those either side due to the shape of the building, and Trench 7 was staggered for the same reason, while Trenches 4 and 5 began further south to avoid a concrete spoil heap (see Fig. 2).

2.2.12 There was however some discretion available to the archaeologists as to the depth of each trench. It soon became apparent that the impact of modern intervention in the south of the site could be as deep as 3 metres, as discovered during the geo-technical trenching operation and described in *'Thames View, Abingdon: Geo-technical Monitoring Report' (OA 2005a).* This depth was significantly greater than the likely maximum depth of impact from construction, so no archaeological deposits were observed along the southern half of the site, and following consultation with the Deputy County Archaeologist it was agreed not to monitor the easternmost trenches dug in the south part of the Bezier building.

2.2.13 At the east end of the building monitoring of the east-west trenches was interrupted both by the need to remove spoil heaps, and by unexploded ordnance found during excavation of the trenches. During OA's absence, a group of trenches in this area was dug by the demolition contractor without any archaeologist being present (see Fig. 2).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

3.1.1 In total 53 trenches were opened, covering almost the entirety of the west and central part of the site. Archaeological features were observed in 29 of these, while 24 appeared either to be devoid of archaeology or to have had any archaeological deposits destroyed by the impact of previous development and ground levelling. Of the 29 trenches containing archaeology, only 20 were entered for recording purposes and thus examined in detail. The remainder had to be observed from the trench side and were therefore more difficult to record and interpret (Fig. 2: see also *Appendix, Table A1: Order of Archaeological Investigations*). Four trenches (62, 61, 48 and 49) were also partly or wholly obscured by staining from diesel, making identification of archaeological features almost impossible.

3.1.2 Other than along the western boundary, the west area of the site, which had been previously occupied by a 1950s industrial unit, was least damaged by recent interventions. Trenches 3-9 and 60-62 revealed a number of small pits and ditches as well as a possible wall robber trench in Trench 4, putatively interpreted as containing fragmentary foundations. A large ditch (Ditch A) was seen crossing Trenches 6 and 4 on a roughly west-east alignment, with another (Ditch D) south of this crossing Trench 3 and possibly terminating beyond Trench 6. A further ditch (Ditch E), also running west-east, was seen further north crossing trenches 5, 60 and 62, and another pit or ditch (Ditch B) was observed in Trenches 8 and 9) (see below for full description).

3.1.3 The central area of the site, formerly occupied by the Bezier Building, was affected both by the piling of this building and by other recent disturbances. The northern half of the Bezier footprint was crossed by trenches 10 - 29, 37, 48, and 49, and archaeological observation revealed a number of smaller pits and ditches as well as further lengths of substantial ditches (Ditches F and C) orientated west-east and north-east respectively (see below).

3.1.4 The southern half of the Bezier Building area sloped southwards towards the river, and levelling up had increased the depth of 'made ground' by nearly a metre at the south end. Accordingly, trenches 2 and 30 - 40 had deposits of made ground 2.5-3 m deep, which overlay alluvial deposits that were not removed. The area immediately to the north-east and containing trenches 41-46 had a similar depth of made ground deposits over alluvium, bearing out the general interpretation made in the report assessing the results of the geotechnical investigations, the *'Thames View, Abingdon: Archaeological Investigation Report' (OA 2005a).*

3.1.5 The main concentration of pits, ditches and gullies was confined to the west area of the site between trenches 3 and 12 which confirmed the conclusions reached in the *Abingdon Thames View Environmental Statement Vol.2 (Kimberley Securities 2003).* As stated in that report, this area was closest to the known areas of prehistoric, Roman and medieval settlement.

3.1.6 The most significant archaeological features were the large ditches found in many of the trenches across the north half of the site (Fig. 3 Archaeological features plan). Initially it was thought that these might represent a single feature running east-north-east, possibly a ditch surrounding the Abbey complex to the south. Analysis of the orientation of the features in the trenches, however, and the dating evidence recovered, strongly suggests that several different features of varying dates were present. As the features in each trench were numbered uniquely, letters have been used to link the various observations for ease of description (eg ditches A, B & C).

3.2 The main ditches

Ditches A and D

3.2.1 A large ditch (A) was picked up some 10 m from the west boundary of the site and was traced across trenches 6 and 4. Due to changes in personnel the ditch numbers in section do not correspond to the trench numbers (see Figures 3, 4 and 5). No continuation on this line was observed in Trenches 5, 60, 62 or 61, although a similar feature was observed in Trench 8, and the edge of a ditch in line in Trench 9.

3.2.2 In Trench 6 (Fig. 4, section 40) the ditch was 5.3 m wide at the top with sloping sides, but only the uppermost 0.85 m was revealed (at 2.5 m below ground). Two fills were observed, the lower (428) an dark grey-brown clay silt with charcoal, the upper (427) a dark brown clay silt with charcoal flecks: neither deposit was dated. The

lower fill was predominantly on the south side, sealing the ditch side to its full surviving height; the upper fill was thickest towards the north side.

3.2.3 In Trench 4 the ditch (326) was 5.6 m wide at its widest point, had sloping sides and survived more than 1.7 m deep; the base was not reached at 3.65 m below ground (Fig. 5, section 30). Two fills were observed in section, both mid-brown clay silts (325 overlain by 324).. The plan suggests that the ditch may have been turning slightly to the north-west (see Fig. 5).

3.2.4 Some 4 m south of ditch A was another ditch, Ditch D. First observed in the third strip from the west, ditch 605 was 5.7 m wide at the top and survived to a depth of 1.5 m, bottoming 3.55 m below ground. Here the ditch had sloping sides and a flattish base, slightly more concave to the south (Fig. 4, section 60). The basal fill (604) was a clay silt, filling the ditch on the south side to its full surviving height. It was overlain by a light brown clay silt (603), again filling largely from the south, with another light brown clay silt (602) filling a hollow at the north edge of the cut.

3.2.5 The ditch was observed again in the next strip to the east. Feature 330 was approximately 5 m wide and survived 1.5 m deep. This appeared from the section to underlie a much greater depth of Made Ground than ditch 605 (Fig. 5, section 31), but this was probably due to a localised raised area of Made Ground, and feature 330 probably bottomed at around 3.5 m down just above the base of the trench. The south edge of the profile was indistinct, and it had been cut or possibly re-cut on the north side by a shallower pit or ditch (328) only 2.6 m wide and 1.1 m deep. Neither cut produced any finds.

3.2.6 Ditch A did not appear in Trench 5. In Trench 4 the ditch appeared to be shallowing, and this may indicate the approach to a terminus. No finds were recovered from any of the cuts across Ditch A.

Ditch E

3.2.7 At the north end of Trench 5 a shelving cut (504) at least 0.7 m deep into the natural gravel was observed, continuing below the base of the trench 2.45 m down. This may represent the side of a ditch. Two fills were recorded: the lower fill was a dark-brown clay silt (503) that contained clay daub and a pottery sherd of a vessel type current from the late 12th to early 15th centuries. This fill also continued south of the ditch overlying the natural gravel. Fill 503 was overlain by a similar coloured clay silt (502) that was undated.

3.2.8 In the next trench to the east, Trench 60, a possible continuation of Ditch E was feature (6008). This feature had a 45° sloping south edge descending to a flat base; the north edge of the feature was near-vertical (Fig 7.). The ditch survived 0.9 m deep and bottomed at 2.5 m below ground. A series of fills were observed, tipping down to the north from the south edge of the feature. The lowest of these (6007) was a blue-grey silty clay, overlain by alternate deposits of brown clay silt and yellow sandy clay (6006, 6005, 6004, 6003). Fill 6004 contained a pottery sherd of 12th-15th century

date. Fill 6003 was cut by a later modern feature. Feature 6008 is in line with the cut in trench 5, and both features contain finds of medieval date, so these are probably parts of one ditch.

3.2.9 Almost all of the next two trenches to the east, Trenches 62 and 61, were contaminated and stained, so that observation was not possible except at the very north end of 62. Here two possible ditches were observed in section (Fig. 7: cut 6207), one the southern edge of a cut at the very end of the trench, appearing 1.75 m down and bottoming 2.35 m below ground, the other (6203) further south and in line with the feature in Trenches 5 and 60, but bottoming only 2.1 m down. The fill of feature 6207 was sterile, but the fill of 6203 (6202) contained two sherds of 18th-19th century Creamware plate and bone fragments belonging to either a sheep or goat.

3.2.10 Trenches 61 and 9 did not extend as far north, but no continuation on this line was found in either Trench 8 or Trench 7, so presumably this ditch either ended, or turned north (as the section of Trench 62 might suggest).

Ditch B

3.2.11 The edge of a cut (9008) was seen at the very north end of Trench 9 (Fig. 3). The fill (9007) contained post-medieval brick and pottery. A probable continuation of this cut in Trench 8 belonged to a broad 'U'-shaped feature (806) cut into natural sand (805). This features was at least 5.2 m wide and survived 1.35 m deep, being truncated by a modern concrete pile on its south edge (Fig. 8, plan and section). It bottomed 3.1 m below ground. The upper profile of the feature was removed by modern building activity. The lower fill (803) was a green/grey sandy silt overlain by 802, a grey brown silt; neither fill was dated.

3.2.12 West of Trench 9 this feature may have continued, but may not have been recognisable in either Trench 61 or Trench 62 due to staining. To the east of Trench 8, this ditch was not observed in the two parts of Trench 7, possibly owing to the close spacing of concrete ground beams, nor in Trench 10. Neither of these trenches was judged safe to enter for close inspection, and so the absence of this feature cannot be taken as certain. It is possible that this ditch continued eastwards, as a possible continuation (1104) was seen on this line in Trench 11. If so, feature 806 was part of modern ditch F (see below), but the post-medieval finds from Trench 9 did not come from the base of the feature and the fills in Trench 8 are not of the same character. Alternatively Ditch B may have been either a very large pit or a short length of ditch of earlier date.

Ditch F

3.2.13 In Trench 11 a large pit or ditch (1104) running obliquely across the trench in a west-east direction was found. It had steep sides, was some 2.6 m wide and survived at least 1 m deep to the trench bottom 2.5 m down. This ditch contained a single dark greenish-grey friable silty clay, containing modern brick, wood and other debris, and

the fill had stained the surrounding natural. A probable continuation was found in Trench 12, where a steep curving cut, at least 1.3 m deep and extending below the trench bottom at 2.5 m down, was seen marking the south edge of a cut c. 4.5 m wide, although the northern edge was indistinct. A fragment of post-medieval brick was recovered from fill 122.

3.2.14 Trench 13 was also judged unsafe to enter. A possible cut, this time 3.75 m wide and at least 1.35 m deep and extending below the trench bottom 2.5 m down, was seen, though recorded somewhat south of that in Trench 12. Trench 14 contained a similarly indistinct feature surviving 3.2 m wide and at least 1 m deep to the trench bottom at 2.5 m down. In both Trenches 13 and 14 the fill of these features was the same as that in Trench 11, and staining was also observed in Trench 13.

3.2.15 In Trench 15 two superimposed ditches were observed. Only the south edge of the lower ditch (155), surviving some 0.75 m deep and bottoming at 2.9 m down, was observed (not illustrated), filled by dark organic-rich loamy clay (154). The excavated width was 3 m, and the profile suggested that the feature was at least 5 m wide. Above was a thick layer of dark brown clayey silt, cut by a later feature (153) overlying 155) containing modern finds, and bottoming only 2.1 m down.

3.2.16 From Trench 16 to Trench 21 the line of a single ditch was clear. In Trench 16 the ditch (163) survived 0.9 m deep and was 3.2 m wide, bottoming at a depth of 3.35 m; its main fill (162) contained a possible Roman brick fragment alongside 4 sherds of 19th-20th century pottery. In Trench 17 the ditch 172 was 1.1 m deep and again 3.2 m wide, bottoming at 3.15 m down. In trenches 18-21 the ditch was planned but was not further recorded. It turned south-eastwards in Trench 20.

3.2.17 Trench 22. The modern ditch was not recorded as present in this trench, but modern disturbance was recorded in the southernmost 7 m of this trench, its northern limit corresponding to the line of the ditch. It is therefore likely that the ditch ran into and continued southwards along this trench. No continuation was seen in Trench 23.

3.2.18 A continuous ditch was observed from Trench 16 to Trench 22. Given their recorded depths, both of the cuts in Trench 15 may have belonged to this ditch. The planned evidence would suggest that there was a gap in Trenches 13 and 14, with a possible continuation of Ditch F in Trenches 11 and 12. The cut observed in Trenches 13 and 14 was probably another modern feature, probably a large pit.

Ditch C

3.2.19 Another large ditch was continuously observed between Trenches 19 and 50, either in plan or in one or both of each of the trench sides. This ditch was numbered by trench as 192, 205, 213, 2205, 236, 2404, 257, 2602, 2709 and 5005 in Trench 50.

3.2.20 The profile of this ditch varied considerably from trench to trench, having a narrow and relatively steep-sided cut in the bottom in Trenches 19-20, 23 (Fig. 9), wider but possibly V-profiled in 27 (Fig. 12), but a wide U-shaped profile in Trenches 21, 22,

24, 26 and probably 25 (Fig. 10). The variation may in part be due to the presence of two phases of ditch running along this line, which are visible as separate cuts in Trench 21 (Fig. 3). In addition the ditch was cut by a broad shallow cut of 19th or 20th century date in Trench 23 (Fig. 9 pit 232).

3.2.21 At the east end the northern edge of the ditch was evident running along Trench 50 (Fig. 13), but was not recognised in plan in Trench 29. It is however likely that a layer visible along much of the north section of this trench (2903) was an upper fill of this ditch.

3.2.22 The ditch appeared to have been infilled with a single silting episode in Trenches 21, 22 and 23 (fills 212, 2204, 235) and in Trench 26 (2601). Fill 235 contained small limestone slabs, possibly building materials but of uncertain date. Trench 29 lay within the ditch limits and its fill contained four fragments of clay daub.

3.2.23 In Trench 19 the ditch (192) ran north of the modern Ditch F, and was *c* 2.4 m wide and survived 1.1 m deep to a base 2.4 m down. No finds were recovered.

3.2.24 Towards the north end of trench 20 ditch (205) was observed although the edges were indistinct. It was c. 2 m wide, survived c. 0.7 m deep and bottomed at 2.5 m down. There were no finds.

3.2.25 In Trench 21 ditch 213 survived at least 1.3 m deep to the trench bottom 3 m down, and was c. 5.5 m wide with sloping sides. The fill was a dark brownish-grey silty clay. It cut a parallel gully or ditch 217 on the south side, which was filled with black silty clay (216). There were no finds from either ditch.

3.2.26 In Trench 22 the ditch (225) is shown as 6.5 m wide and surviving 1.4 m deep to the base at 2.4 m down. In Trench 23 the ditch (236) was steep-sided, survived 3.1 m wide and continued below the trench bottom at 3.2 m down.

3.2.27 In Trench 24 the ditch was again wide (5.75 m or more) and shallow (2.5 m to the bottom), and had two fills (2402, 2403). In Trench 25, there were 3 fills - 256, below 255 and lastly 253 within cut 254. The ditch at this point was 4.9 m wide and at least 1.4 m deep to the base of the trench 3.2 m down (Fig. 10). Fill 253 contained a fragment of Roman imbrex as well as bone fragments from a sheep/goat and domestic fowl. This deposit was also sampled for environmental remains, and produced snails introduced in the Roman period and charred bread wheat (see section 5.2 below).

3.2.28 In Trench 26 the ditch was again broad (at least 6.2 m) and survived at least 1.2 m deep, continuing below the trench bottom at 2.5 m down. In Trench 27 (Figs. 11 and 12) the ditch had a broad 'U' shape with tapered south edge and was at least 5.3 m wide and at least 1.5m deep, continuing below the bottom of the trench at 2.5 m down. Three fills were recorded, clay silt 2725 below 2724 sealed by 2708. Fill 2724 contained imbrex and tegula fragments.

3.2.29 In Trench 50 the ditch had a sloping side and a flat base 2.5 m down. It contained at least three fills (Fig. 13, fills 5002, 5003, 5004). Fill 5001 above this may have overlain rather than filled the ditch, but contained a fragment of tegula; fill 5003 contained hypocaust flue pieces as well as daub fragments. A bulk sample was taken from context 5003 for environmental remains, and produced charred bread wheat (see section 5.2 below). The finds within the ditch recorded as length C were all Roman, giving a *terminus post quem* for the feature, though its function and purpose are unclear.

3.2.30 Trench 29. The northern half of the trench lay within the projected line of Ditch C. Although the ditch was not recognised in plan, a layer was identified in the north section cutting the buried soil above the gravel for much of the length of the trench. This layer (2908) contained 4 fragments of daub, possibly of Roman date.

3.2.31 The alignment of Ditch C passes north of the end of Evaluation Trench 1, so it is not surprising that no continuation was observed in the evaluation.

Ditch G

3.2.32 At the very south end of Trench 4 a probable ditch 426 was observed running across the trench. This had a sloping north side and a flat bottom, and survived 0.32 m deep into natural gravel at a depth of 2.4 m. There was one fill (408), a mid-bluish grey silty clay of waterlain origin. There were no finds. The south end of the trench collapsed before it could be recorded, but the other side of this probable ditch was not seen, and it must therefore have been at least 3.5 m wide.

3.2.33 A continuation of this feature was seen in the adjacent Trench 5 to the east. At the very south end of the trench was ditch (518), again with a sloping north side and a flat bottom, cut 0.5 m into gravel at a depth of 2.55 m. Again the south edge of the feature was not seen, so it must have been at least 3.75 m wide. The fill was again a clayey waterlain silt (517), but this time a yellowish-brown. There were no finds.

3.2.34 Alluvium was recorded much further north in Trench 60, and both Trenches 61 and 62 were heavily contaminated, so nothing showed. The edge of an `alluvial' fill was recorded in Trench 9 some 4 m from the south end of the trench, and alluvium was specifically noted as absent in Trench 8 adjacent, nor was it seen in Trenches 7 and 10. The edge of a steep-sided and flat-bottomed feature was seen further north in Trench 11 (section 3.3.7, feature 118). This last feature is clearly separate from than seen in Trench 9 or Trenches 4 and 5, and may be a large pit.

3.2.35 Following the recording of trenches 3-6 and 7-11, this feature was reinterpreted first as the edge of a general covering alluvial layer extending to the south, and then as the result of staining by diesel contamination. Although staining was clearly present in Trenches 61 and 62, this did not prevent the recognition and recording of a number of smaller features in Trenches 4 and 5, and given the clear edge of the deposits, and their waterlain character, it seems more likely that this was a genuine feature, if obscured in some trenches by later staining. The edge in Trench 9 is tentatively

interpreted as a continuation of the same linear feature, while the more extensive alluvial layer in Trench 60 must relate to a later covering layer of clay whose origin is uncertain.

3.3 Other Archaeology

Trench 4

3.3.1 There was a concentration of archaeological features in the south part of the trench. A series of small inter-cutting pits was observed (pits 430, 423 and 425) truncating an earlier feature (416) and layer 404. This earlier feature (416), which was at least 5 m wide and survived to be just over 1 m deep, had three fills (415, 417 and 418), two of which contained finds. Fill 415 produced a fragment of roof tile of 18th-19th century date, a clay pipe stem and a residual sherd of medieval pottery, whilst fill 417 produced a sherd of a 17th-18th jug handle stub. All of the pits are therefore of recent date.

3.3.2 The archaeology at the south end of the trench was more complex (Fig. 12 - section of stratigraphy). Of significant interest was a possible robber trench (411) containing rough mortared blocks (412) and a horizontal alignment of limestone slabs and degraded mortar (441). Fill 410, the matrix or backfill of the original construction trench, was a distinctive dark yellow sandy-clay with flecks of terracotta and building rubble, which contained a sherd of Roman black burnished ware and a sherd of Saxon or early medieval sandy ware with coarse flint inclusions. This feature, possibly representing a building of some kind, was truncated by a small pit or ditch (409), whose fill (408) did not contain any dating evidence. A larger feature (406), either a ditch or a large pit, which cut possible Ditch G (426), was also undated. However layer 402, which effectively sealed all the features below, contained a sherd of red earthenware dating to the 18th and 19th centuries.

Trench 5

3.3.3 The cut of Ditch E (504) truncated a small pit (506) that had also been cut by pit (510). Neither of these smaller features contained any dating evidence. To the south end of the trench were a number of intercutting pits that had been severely truncated by modern disturbance. Pits 514 and 516 had been cut by a third pit (520), and pit 516 by possible Ditch G (518). These pits were difficult to examine first hand because of the instability of the trench, and only fill 515, a dark grey, greenish silty-clay within pit 516, produced any artefactual evidence in the form of a horse mandible.

3.3.4 Features or deposits other than the large ditches that were traceable across the site are described below, from west to east across the site. No archaeology was observed in the trenches covering the southern half of the footprint of the Bezier Building (Trenches 30-40). Where a trench did not contain any archaeology other than large ditch features, as for instance Trench 6, it is not reported.

Trench 9

3.3.5 Beneath the concrete ground beams a recent scoop or hollow (906) cut Ditch B (9008). Fill 909 contained a fragment of 18th-19th century roof tile and fill 905 below it a residual fragment of Roman tegula.

3.3.6 To the south of the trench, two parallel gullies, orientated roughly east-west, were planned and excavated. The northern gully 9012 contained two fills (910) and (911), both similar mid-grey blue-ish gravelly-clays without finds, probably of alluvial origin. The southern gully (9018) also had two fills (9016 overlying 9017). Fill 9016 contained sherds of 18th-19th century Staffordshire stoneware and terracotta flowerpot along with a fragment of animal bone. Both gullies are likely to be post-medieval.

Trench 11

3.3.7 Two sections were recorded from the trench edge. Section 1100 revealed a modern ditch (1104) running east across the site containing modern brick, wood and steel. At the south end of the trench a possible feature (118) with steep sides and a flat bottom was recorded. No finds were recovered. This appeared to be some 0.5 m deep into the natural, but the sides were somewhat indistinct, and this was subsequently considered to be the result of staining and contamination.

Trenches 12-23

3.3.8 Trench 13. One side of a possible pit or ditch (1302) with a single fill was observed at the north end but contained no finds. Further south a small pit or tree-throw hole (1304) was observed before being machined away but its fill (1305) was sterile.

3.3.9 Trench 14. A 19th - 20th century stoneware flagon handle was recovered from the fill of a small pit 1404 that cut feature 1401 (see Ditch F above).

3.3.10 Trench 22. The fill of large ditch (2205) was cut by a smaller pit, 2203. The ditch had in turn cut the fill of a smaller pit (2207) although the fills of both pits (2202) and (2206) were without finds.

3.3.11 Trench 23. A large pit, 232, 6.5 m across, contained fragments 18th-19th century Staffordshire white ware and 19th-20th century roof tile. The feature truncated both the large Ditch C (236) and a shallower pit (234) on its south side. No finds were recovered from the fill of the pit.

Trenches 26-29

3.3.12 The large ditch (2602) cut a smaller pit/ditch (2604) on the north side. This feature was at least 2.1 m wide and survived 0.85 m deep, with a single fill (2603) of mid-grey clayey silt. No finds were recovered from the fill.

3.3.13 Trench 27 (Fig. 11). The east-facing section of this trench was recorded in its entirety. The features are described from north to south. A deep pit (2704) occupied

the north-western corner of the trench, and was at least 3 m long by 1.4 m wide. There were two fills: a brownish-orange sandy silt (2703), probably eroded topsoil, overlain by a brownish-grey clayey silt (2702). There were no finds.

3.3.14 Ditch C (2709) was cut on its south edge by an undated shallow V-profiled gully 2711, with a single light grey clayey silt fill. Further south were a number of intercutting pits (2727 and 2713), the last in this sequence (2715) containing a fragment of Roman box-flue hypocaust tile in fill (2714). These pits were truncated on the south side by a modern pit (2719). This pit and a levelling layer 2720 overlay a small undated pit (2722) with a single brownish-grey clayey silt fill.

3.3.15 Trench 28. A possible pit with an indistinct profile (2805) was recorded midway along the trench in the north section. This had two fills: a light greenish-grey sandy clay overlain by a deeper dark brown to black silty clay. There were no finds. A small pit 2808, at least 1.6 m by 1.1 m across, was recorded at the very west end of the trench. This had vertical sides and a flat bottom, and two fills: a tenacious brown silty clay overlain by a greenish grey more friable silt, but no finds were recovered.

Trench 48

3.3.16 An indistinct line was recorded as feature 4804. There were no finds, and this has now been reinterpreted as due to staining from diesel contamination.

4 FINDS

4.1 Roman pottery

by Edward Biddulph, OA

4.1.1 The pottery was assessed to determine its chronological and typological range. Sherds were examined macroscopically and assigned fabric codes from Oxford Archaeology's standard recording system for Iron Age and Roman pottery (Booth, nd). Context groups were weighed and counted. The results are given in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Roman pottery

Ctx	No.	Weight (g)	Comments	Date
4902	1	3	Oxfordshire colour-coated ware (F51) body sherd	AD 240-410
2724	1	36	F51 flanged bowl	AD 240-410
410	1	10	Black-burnished ware (B10) straight-sided bowl with groove below rim	AD 250-410

4.1.2 The three sherds of Roman-period pottery recovered from the watching brief are consistent with a late Roman date. The sherd from 410, found alongside a late Saxon or early medieval fragment, was certainly residual.

4.2 Post-Roman pottery

By John Cotter, Carole Wheeler and Edward Biddulph, OA

4.2.1 The pottery was examined to determine the date and range of fabrics and types present. Fabrics were identified macroscopically and, where necessary, under x20 magnification.

4.2.2 Well-known wares that achieved wide distribution throughout England were assigned fabric codes devised by Canterbury Archaeological Trust (CAT, nd). Others, more local to Oxfordshire, were described and ascribed to regional traditions following Mellor 1994. The material is catalogued in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Post-Roman pottery

Ctx	Spot-date	Sherds	Wt	Comments
143	c1850-1940	1	126	LPM10 mod stoneware flagon handle, poss early 20C?
162	c1850-1940	4	375	LPM10 mod stoneware flagon base. Also 2x 18/19C flowerpot. 1x large bodysherd WT sand & sparse calc-tempered ware - prob 12-14C?
231	c1825-1900	1	42	LPM14 Staffs whiteware sub-rectangular dish base, worn
402	c1775-1900+	1	6	Bs LPM1 type red earthenware
404	c1500-1650?	1	12	Bs late med/early post med sandy redware
410	c900-1200?	1	14	Base cpot/jar reduc sandy w v coarse flint & calc incls
415	c900-1200?	1	10	Base cpot/jar reduc w v coarse flint & calc incls, slightly sandy. E Wilts/Savernake forest tradition?
415	c17/18C\	1	8	Clay pipe stem. Wide bore
417	c1650-1750	1	8	PM1 jug/cup bs w handle stub, brown iron-mottled glz. Worn
503	c1175-1425	1	4	Bs oxid sandy w v coarse flint & calc incls. E Wilts type
6002	c1775-1850/75	2	6	LPM5 Yelloware rim from thin-walled conical 'measure', 1x 16/17C worn redware bs
6004	c900-1200	1	4	Small bs sand-free shell-tempered, Late Saxon Oxford shelly (OXAC).
6202	c1770-1830	1	1	LPM11 late Creamware plate rim scrap
9007	c1775-1900+	1	4	Bs flowerpot, prob 19C, red w traces white slip int below (missing) rim
9016	c1750-1850	2	36	1x bs PM26A Staffs white salt-glazed stoneware ?dish (c1720-80). 1x red terracotta ?flowerpot w moulded base & ext white slip, glz speck int. Both worn
Totals		20	656	

4.2.3 The remaining material dated largely from the 18th century onwards and included earthenwares, stonewares, and flowerpot fabrics. Overall, sherds were large though worn. The material, recovered as isolated pieces, is consistent with an assemblage formed through agricultural activity, such as manuring.

4.2.4 A total of 20 sherds weighing 656 g was recovered from the site. Four sherds of late Saxon or medieval pottery were recovered from contexts 410, 415, 503 and 6004 (the sherd from 415 was accompanied by a 17th or 18th century clay pipe stem and may be residual). A single sherd of 16th or 17th century red ware was retrieved from context 404.

4.3 Ceramic building material

by John Cotter and Edward Biddulph, OA

4.3.1 A total of 25 fragments of tile were recovered. These were counted and weighed, and were scanned to provide an indication of the date and range of types and fabrics present. The results are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Ceramic building material by type and date

Ctx	Spot-date	Sherds	Weight	Comments
122	16-19C?	1	4	Shapeless scrap prob post-med brick?
162	Roman?	1	76	Worn brick-like lump, poss Roman??
231	18/19C	1	325	Roof tile corner w circular nail hole
235	Roman/PR?	2	634	Thick rough shelly limestone slabs, possibly squared, possibly BM?
253	Roman/PR?	1	1720	Rough sub-rectangular building stone, shelly limestone
253	Roman	1	24	Worn scrap of ?imbrex in dense oxid fabric with chalk incls (poss same in (2724))
415	18/19C	1	24	Scrap roof tile
2714	Roman	1	104	Box flue (hypocaust) tile. Flat side w ext combing & mortar traces
2724	Roman	5	691	Tegula frag with flange (& poss another detached flange?), imbrex frags (as in (253)), other scraps
5001	Roman	3	1033	2x separate tegula with flanges
5003	Roman	3	54	1x frag box flue tile w cross-combing, 2x tile scraps
6202	18/19C	2	22	1x roof tile frag, 1x scrap ?brick
9005	Roman?	1	10	Poss tegula frag?
9007	16-19C?	1	16	Brick frag
9009	18/19C	1	116	Roof tile corner w circular nail hole
Total		25	4853	

4.3.2 At least fourteen fragments date to the Roman period. These included both the curved *imbrex* and flanged *tegula* types that typically formed the roof on Roman buildings. Box-flue tile fragments from contexts 2714 and 5003 would have formed

part of the hypocaust heating system. This material adds to the small group of similar tiles recovered from the evaluation (Booth and Allen in OA 2005b, Appendix 2).

4.3.3 Although redeposited, the material as a whole indicates the existence of at least one Roman building with a hypocaust and tiled roof in the vicinity of the site. The tile cannot be closely dated, but is nevertheless consistent with a late Roman date provided by the pottery; indeed tile and pottery were recovered together in context 2724. The remaining material comprised brick and roof tile fragments of 16th century or later date.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL MATERIAL

5.1 Animal Bone

by Emma-Jane Evans, OA

5.1.1 A total of six bones were recovered, all surviving in good condition. These were examined macroscopically and were identified to species and where possible to skeletal element. The bones were also examined for evidence of butchery, scavenging and burning. The results are listed in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Number of bones identified to species

Ctx	Sheep/goat	Domestic fowl	Horse	Large	Total
253	2	1			3
515			1		1
6202	1				1
9016				1	1
Total	3	1	1	1	6

5.1.2 The bones recovered comprise a juvenile domestic fowl tarso-metatarsus, a juvenile sheep/goat tibia and ulna, a fully fused sheep/goat 1st phalanx, a horse mandible and a large unidentifiable fragment.

5.1.3 The horse mandible comes from an individual aged between 6 and 9 years, the juvenile sheep/goat tibia and ulna suggest that at least one individual died before reaching 1½ years, and the phalanx suggests that another died after the age of 1½ years. There were no cut marks, gnawing marks or evidence of burning on any of the bones.

5.2 Macroscopic Plant Remains and Molluscs

by Mark Robinson, Oxford University

5.2.1 The investigations discovered large ditches of uncertain date and other deposits. Three samples were processed by water flotation onto a 0.25mm mesh to recover biological remains with the primary intention of providing dating evidence.

5.2.2 Results from the scanning of these samples are given in Table 5 below for seeds and Table 2 for mollusc shells. In addition, fragments of coal are present in Context 33. Sample 250 from Context 253 and Sample 500 from Context 5003 come from Ditch C. Both contain charred grain including free-threshing *Triticum* sp. (rivet or bread wheat).

5.2.3 While such wheat was cultivated in Britain as a minor crop since the Neolithic, it did not become common until the Saxon period. The snails in Sample 250 include *Helix aspera*, which is a Roman introduction to Britain. It is therefore thought unlikely that these ditch fills are pre-Saxon and certain that context 253 is no earlier than Roman. Sample 31 from Context 33 is probably post-medieval. The molluscs suggest mixed open and shaded habitats. All but *Valvata cristata* are terrestrial although the occurrence of this species suggests an episode when water flowed along the ditch.

5.2.4 The waterlogged seeds of *Chelidonium majus* (greater celandine) and *Sambucus nigra* (elder) are characteristic of vegetation around settlements while the charred cereal grains suggest crop processing.

Table 5: Seeds

Sample		250	500	31
Context		253	5003	33
WATERLOGGED				
Chelidonium majus	greater celandine	-	+	-
Sambucus nigra	elder	-	+	-
CARBONISED				
Triticum sp. - free threshing	rivet or bread wheat	+	+	-
Hordeum sp. - hulled	hulled barley	-	+	-

+ present

Table 6: Molluscs

Sample	250	500	31
Context	253	5003	33
Valvata cristata	-	+	-
Carychium sp.	+	-	-
Cochlicopa sp.	-	+	-
Pupilla muscorum	+	-	-
Vallonia excentrica	+	-	-
Discus rotundatus	+	-	-
Vitrea sp.	+	-	-
Aegopinella nitidula	+	+	-
Cochlodina laminata	+	-	-
Trichia hispida gp.	++	++	-
Arianta arbustorum	-	+	-
Cepaea nemoralis	-	+	-
Helix aspera	+	-	-

+ present, ++ many

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Reliability of field investigation

6.1.1 Conditions for the fieldwork were not ideal. The depth and character of Made Ground in many trenches made detailed investigation impossible, and recovery of artefactual evidence was limited as a result. The piles and other foundations obscured much of the archaeology, as did diesel contamination in some trenches, and the use of a toothed bucket made the recognition of buried features more difficult.

6.1.2 The size of machine and bucket used, and the speed at which excavation proceeded, meant that a considerable depth of soil was removed at a time. The depth to which the trenches were dug meant that many features were not observed in plan, making it difficult to judge whether large pits or ditches were being observed.

6.1.3 Most limiting was the unsystematic way in which trenches were opened across the site, and the fact that they were dug and backfilled one at a time. This made it impossible to compare exposures in adjacent trenches, and much more difficult to trace features accurately from trench to trench and across the site.

6.1.4 As a result, there remains a degree of uncertainty as to the date and character of some even of the large features observed, and whether the absence of features in some trenches, or the link suggested between others, was genuine. Apart from the very large features, smaller pits and other features were seen, and in some cases recorded, during the Watching Brief, but the information recovered from these was necessarily very limited, and it is likely that others were destroyed without record.

6.1.5 It is clear from the sections that in places an early Holocene soil survived over the terrace gravel deposits, suggesting that truncation of the deposits was limited. This appears to be the case in Trench 8, and possibly in Trenches 6 and 29. In many other trenches, however, the construction of the recent buildings had clearly truncated any archaeological features onto, or into, the gravel.

6.2 Overall interpretation

Summary of results

6.2.1 The principal discoveries were the stretches of large ditches crossing the northern part of the development. These were clearly observed at the west end (Ditches A, D and G?), in trenches 11-22 (Ditch F) and at the east end (Ditch C) in trenches 19-27 and Trench 50. Figure 14 illustrates the main course of these features in relation to surrounding archaeology and boundaries or streams on historic maps.

Ditches A and D and the prehistoric town defences (Aim 2.1.2)

6.2.2 One of the main aims of the Watching Brief was to look for continuations of the late prehistoric defensive ditches. Two large ditches (Ditches A and D) were traced through trenches at the west end of the site, but no dating evidence was recovered. Although they were not observed on the very west edge of the site, these ditches are in line with the projected course of the more northerly two late prehistoric defensive ditches found running 5 m apart in excavations on the Waitrose site to the north-west (see Figure 14).Where excavated on the Waitrose site these ditches the northernmost ditch survived 2.3 m deep, was 6.8 m wide, and the depth of overburden was approximately 1.3 m (Allen 1993, 65; OAU 1993). The second defensive ditch was not fully excavated in the Waitrose site, but survived at least 1.9 m deep and 5 m wide.

6.2.3 Failure to observe these ditches along the very west edge of the site in the first strips exposed was probably because of the depth of the foundations along the edge of the 1950s building, and (in the case of Ditch D) because the trench was not excavated to natural in the middle, only to the base of the foundation, so that the ditch may not have been clearly visible. It is alternatively possible that there was a gap or entrance through the ditches at this point.

6.2.4 The waterlogged fills in the bottom 0.5 m of the more northerly defensive ditch in the Waitrose site were not recorded in Ditch A. As the bottom of Ditch A was not reached in the Thames View site, however, this may not be significant. There is also a possible change of alignment, as the defensive ditches were running slightly south of west-east, not slightly north of east as appears to be the case with Ditch A. Nevertheless, as these ditches were terminating at this point, this slight change of alignment need not be an overwhelming objection to linking these features.

6.2.5 What happened to the prehistoric defensive ditches east of this is not clear. No continuation was observed running in a southerly or south-easterly direction; the only large ditches being those running east (Ditch F) or east-north-east (Ditches B and C).

Ditch B

6.2.6 This ditch lay some 22 m from Ditch A and was roughly in line, but was only recorded over a very short distance, and finds from the upper part of the fill were post-medieval. It is possible that a short length of defensive ditch was recorded in Trench 8, and that the finds from Trench 9, where only the edge of the ditch was seen, resulted from later intrusion, but Ditch B may alternatively have been much later, possibly linked to Ditch F, if it was a ditch at all.

Ditch F - a former stream or a Civil War defence ? (Aim 2.1.4)

6.2.7 This central ditch ran west-east and then turned south-east, but was not followed beyond Trench 22. In trenches 19 and 20 two ditches appeared side-by-side on different alignments, clear evidence that Ditches C and F were separate.

6.2.8 Ditch F consistently produced modern finds. It is uncertain what happened to this ditch on the west; features recorded in trenches 11 and 12 were in line, but had indistinct edges and may have been large pits instead. The large features exposed in Trenches 13 and 14 were described on site as continuations of that in Trench 11, and at that stage excavation and recording was proceeding consistently from west to east. The misalignment may therefore be the result of mistakes in planning, though as the features are in a similar location in both Trench 13 and Trench 14, this seems less likely. This uncertainty illustrates the problems of recording outlined in section 6.1 above.

6.2.9 Figure 14 shows the line of Ditch F in relation to a former boundary shown on the 1841 Tithe Map of the parish of St. Nicolas, Abingdon, and on a 1920s sale map of Abbey Gardens (OA 2003, Figs 7.10 and 7.12). Although the features do not overlie one another exactly, the parallel curve of both is clear, and it is likely that Ditch F is in fact this historic boundary.

6.2.10 The irregular course of this boundary, which the historic maps show still contained water in the 19th century, suggests that this may originally have been a stream course. It is however also noticeable that the mapped extent of this boundary begins on the north immediately adjacent to a recently discovered post-medieval rectangular enclosure within the Penlon site (Figure 14) provisionally interpreted as a Civil War redoubt (Brinkley 2002, 23; OA 2005c, iii and Figures 3 and 8). On the south this boundary runs into the Abbey Mill Stream just east of the Stert Stream, thus providing a continuous barrier between them. The course of this boundary is not however a straight line, but kinks to the east, forming an angled projection to the east midway along. This is the characteristic form of defensive works of this period, and it is therefore possible that this boundary began as part of the Civil War defences of Abingdon. Both finds and historic maps however show that it survived, at least in part, into the early 20th century.

Ditch C - a Roman or medieval boundary (Aim 2.1.3)

6.2.11 Ditch C, which was traced east-north-east for c. 55 m, was separated from Ditch A by 75 m. It contained a few Roman finds, snails that were only introduced in the Roman period, and charred cereals of types more common from the Saxon period onwards. This provides a *terminus post quem* of the Roman, or possibly the Saxon period, for the deposits containing the finds. These deposits were not primary, that is, they were not the earliest fills of the ditch, and it is therefore possible that the ditch was earlier in origin. In Trench 50, however, the Roman finds came from only the second fill exposed, and the limited depth of earlier fills makes it unlikely that the ditch could have been much earlier.

6.2.12 Roman finds of 1st century AD date were found low in the fills of the defensive ditches west of the site, and radiocarbon dates from the ditches suggest that they could date from as late as the early 1st century AD, only just before the Roman conquest (Allen 1994, 33). It is therefore still possible that Ditch C represents a

continuation of the circuit of these ditches. Evaluation in Trench 1 however demonstrated that ditches of medieval or even post-medieval date contained predominantly Roman finds, and specifically ceramic building material, much as Ditch C does. A Saxon or medieval date for this ditch should not therefore be ruled out.

6.2.13 The evaluation of the former Abingdon Gasworks and Penlon sites just to the north has now been supplemented by limited area excavations. The principal discoveries in the areas closest to Thames View are a rectangular enclosure of post-medieval date, probably part of the 17th century Civil War defences of Abingdon, overlying a rectilinear system of medieval ditches on an east-north-east/north-north-west axis (see Fig. 14). No direct links between the features excavated there and the archaeology of the Thames View site can be established.

6.2.14 The orientation of Ditch C is however broadly in line with the alignment of the medieval ditches on the Penlon site, which were presumably part of the precinct of Abingdon Abbey, and is also the alignment of the abbey church (Fig. 14) This alignment is also very like that of medieval ditch 151 found in the evaluation further south-east, and indeed to that of early post-medieval ditch 130 (Fig. 3). A medieval date for Ditch C would therefore be plausible, although it is also possible that this was the feature upon which the later abbey boundaries were aligned. No certain evidence of Late Saxon or medieval activity like that found at the Penlon site was established from the Watching Brief (aim 2.1.3), although the charred plant remains from Ditch C in trenches 25 and 50 could relate to activity of these periods.

Ditch G and the Stert Stream (Aim 2.1.5)

6.2.15 At the south end of trenches 4 and 5 a broad linear feature, Ditch G, was found (Fig. 13). This was not visible in Trench 60 adjacent, but something similar was seen in Trench 62, and an `alluvial' layer was also seen at the south end of Trenches 3 and 6, but was not investigated further. There were no finds.

6.2.16 This feature is illustrated in Figure 14 together with the approximate course of the former Stert Stream taken from the 1841 Tithe Map of St. Nicolas, Abingdon, supplemented by data from excavations further west (Allen 1990,78; Allen 1991, 98 and Fig. 11; OA 2003). Again this lies some way north of the historic map line of the Stert Stream, but the broad flat-bottomed profile of Ditch G, and its waterlain or `alluvial' fill, suggests that this may have been the former course of the Stert.

6.2.17 The excavated sections show no trace of any revetting such as was found in the Abbey Pond during dredging (OA Watching Brief observation). No trace of such revetting was found on the edge of the Stert where it was sectioned by excavation in the Vineyard to the west, and it may be concluded that in general the Stert was excavated as a broad flat-bottomed channel.

6.2.18 The remainder of the trenches contained a number of archaeological features varying in date from probable Roman to post-medieval. Structural elements in terms of

building rubble and possible robbed walls were seen, as well as pits and gully/ditch features. Overall it is clear that the current investigation was not detailed enough to establish the function of these.

Significance

6.2.19 A group of substantial linear features has been discovered, some of which can be related to regionally important phases of Abingdon's history, particularly the late prehistoric defences, Abingdon Abbey and the Civil War defences of the town. Previous construction works, which extensively damaged the archaeological remains, and the conditions under which the Watching Brief was conducted, have however limited the quality of the information recovered from the Thames View site.

7 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT

7.1.1 The previous report upon the archaeological evaluation (OA 2005a) demonstrated that any archaeology surviving south of the access road across the site is likely to be at a depth greater than 2 m, and recommended that no further mitigation would be required unless service trenches were to penetrate below that depth (OA 2005a, 9.1).

7.1.2 The extraction of the piles and other foundations, combined with previous disturbances, will have removed virtually all archaeology to a depth of 2.5 m (the usual depth of the trenches monitored by the Watching Brief) across the area covered by the trenches.

7.1.3 The only parts of the site not so affected are the narrow strip north of the previous buildings and the area east of the Bezier Building north of the access road west and east of evaluation Trench 1 (see Figs 1 and 2). Buildings will be constructed right up to the northern site boundary at various points along its length, and in the north-east corner of the site.

7.1.4 Information upon the depth of Made Ground over natural along the north edge of the site is provided by the report upon the monitoring of the Geotechnical Investigation (OA 2005b) and by the Watching Brief. The sections drawn during the Watching Brief show that the depth of Made Ground was only 1.0 m in Trenches 22-24 and 27-29, was between 1.1 and 1.3 m in Trenches 62, 8 and 12-14, and between 1.3 m and 1.45 m in Trenches 25-26. Elsewhere it was upwards of 1.5 m.

7.1.5 This is in agreement with the Geotechnical information, which shows the least depth of overburden towards the north-east end of the site, particularly just north of the end of the Bezier Building, but also only 1.3 m or so deep towards the west end. WS 102 now looks likely to have been dug through Ditch E, explaining its greater depth.

7.1.6 With regards to the strip along the north edge of the site, none of the proposed service trenches or manholes in the central part of the site (see Fig. 15) will penetrate more than 1 m below the existing ground level, and there should therefore be no impact upon archaeology. The buildings themselves will be piled, and the impact will

therefore be limited to less than 8 % of the area. Detailed information upon services for the western end of the site is not yet available.

7.1.7 Additional information upon the depth of Made Ground overlying any potential archaeology at the north-east end of the site is provided by the report upon the archaeological evaluation (OA 2005a), which established that undisturbed geological deposits lay at a depth of 1 m at the north end of Trench 1.

7.1.8 In the area at the north-east end of the site, there is as yet no detailed information as to the depth of services to be constructed. A supplementary statement regarding this area, and regarding the north-western corner of the development, will be provided when further information becomes available.

APPENDIX 1 ORDER OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

Table A.1:

Date - 2005	Trench No.	Archaeology Y/N	Access to trench
7th March	2	No	No
12th March	3	Yes	No
	6	Yes	No
14th March	4	Yes	Yes
15th March	5	Yes	Yes
	10	No	No
	11	Yes	No
16th March	30	No	No
	31	No	No
	32	No	No
	12	Yes	Yes
	13	Yes	No
	14	Yes	Yes
	33	No	No
	34	No	No
	35	No	No
17th March	36	No	No
	18	Yes	No
	19	Yes	No
	15	Yes	No
	16	Yes	Yes
	17	Yes	Yes
18th March	20	Yes	No
	21	Yes	No
	23	Yes	No
	38	No	Yes
	22	Yes	Yes
	40	No	No
19th March	39	No	No
21st March	24	Yes	No
	25	Yes	Yes
	26	Yes	Yes
	37	No	No
	27	Yes	Yes
22nd March	41	No	No
	42	No	No
4th April	28	Yes	Yes
	29	Yes	Yes
	50	Yes	Yes
	51	No	No
5th April	48	Yes	Yes
	43	No	No
	44	No	No
	46	No	No
	47	Not investigated	Not investigated
	49	No	Yes
	45	No	No
11th April	7	No	No
	8	Yes	No
12th April	9	Yes	Yes
	60	Yes	Yes
	61	No	Yes
	62	Yes	Yes
22nd April	29 (extension)	No	No
	28 (extension)	No	No
	52	No	No
	53	No	No
	54	No	No
23rd April	47 (extension)	No	No
	46 (extension)	No	No

APPENDIX 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Principal contexts are mentioned in the report with dating where applicable and are illustrated as appropriate. Full context lists per trench are contained in the site archive.

APPENDIX 3 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

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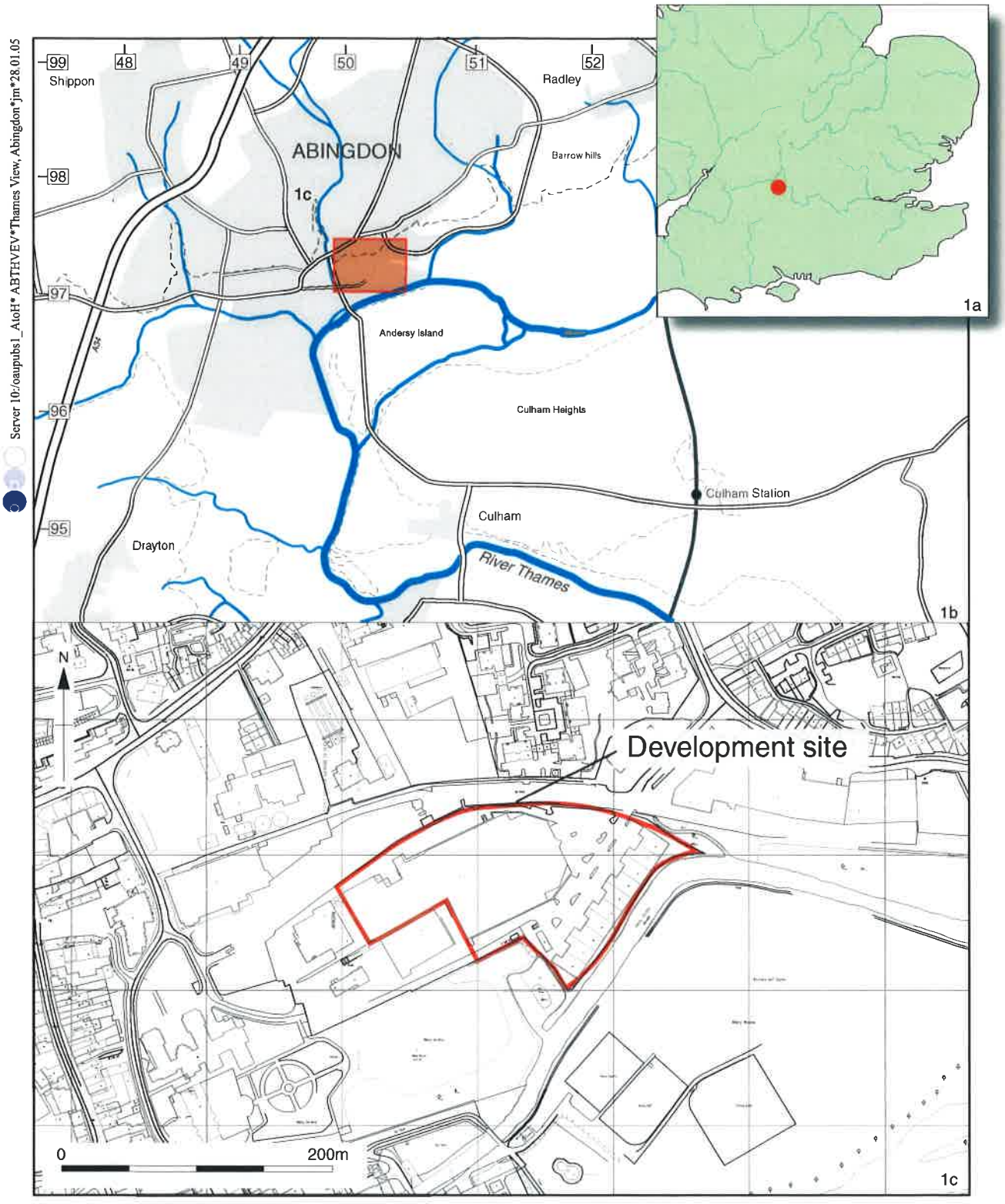
APPENDIX 4 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Thames View Industrial Estate, Abingdon, Oxfordshire
Site code: ABTHV05
Grid reference: SU 5010 9720
Type of watching brief: Watching Brief & Mitigation Recording Action
Date and duration of project: 7th March - 23rd April 2005
Area of site: 5 hectares
Summary of results: The watching brief revealed a number of large ditches running east-north-east and west-east across the site. The ditches were difficult to date with accuracy, though it is likely that some of these represent continuations of the prehistoric defences of Abingdon, the former course of the Stert Stream and post-medieval boundaries on historic maps, the last possibly part of the Civil War defences of the town. A variety of other features, including large and small pits and ditches and one possible foundation, were also encountered. Some were post-medieval, though a few Roman, Late Saxon, medieval and post-medieval finds were recovered from others, though not in sufficient quantity to date these features.
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, under the following accession number: OXCMS 2005.1



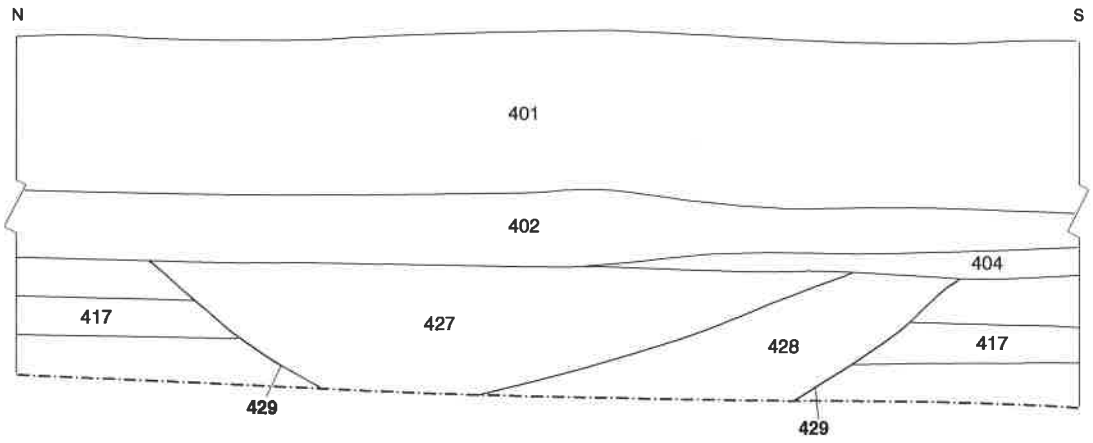
Not to scale

Figure 1: Site location

Figure 2: Site plan of watching brief area (showing the location of the trenches indicating which trenches were recorded and in what manner)

Figure 3: Archaeological features plan (main features by trench; length of principal ditches identified)

Trench 6
Section 40



Trench 6
Section 60

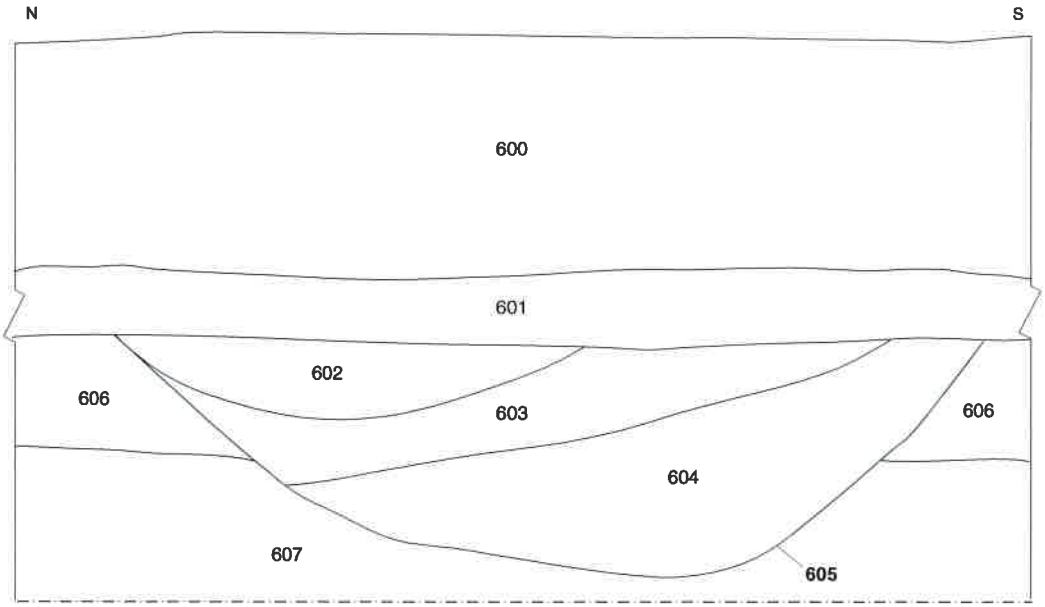


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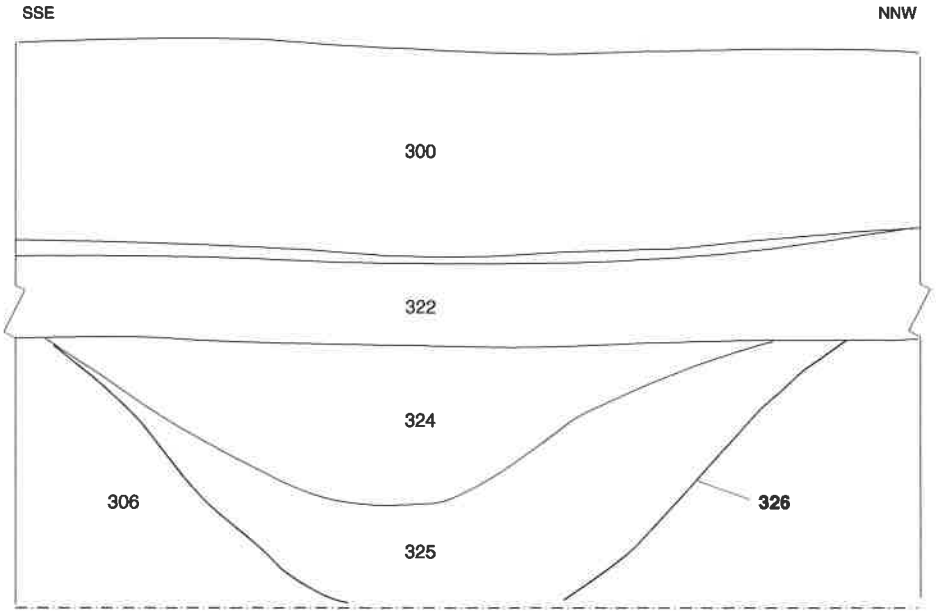
Figure 4: Trench 6, sections

Section 30



Section 31

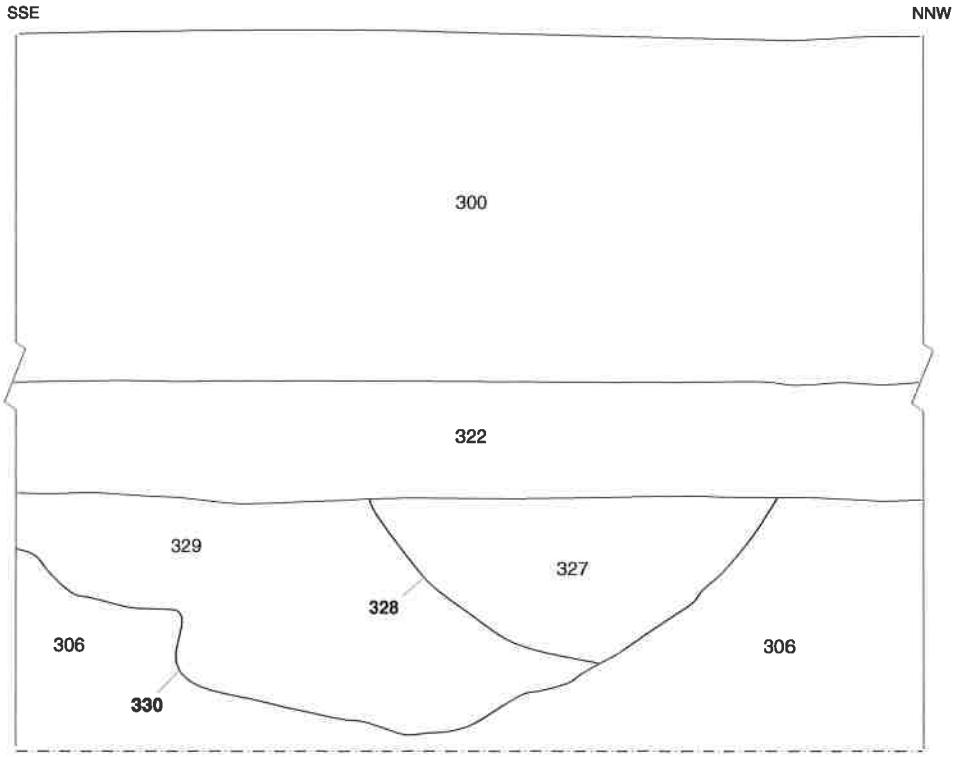


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Figure 5: Sections 30 and 31

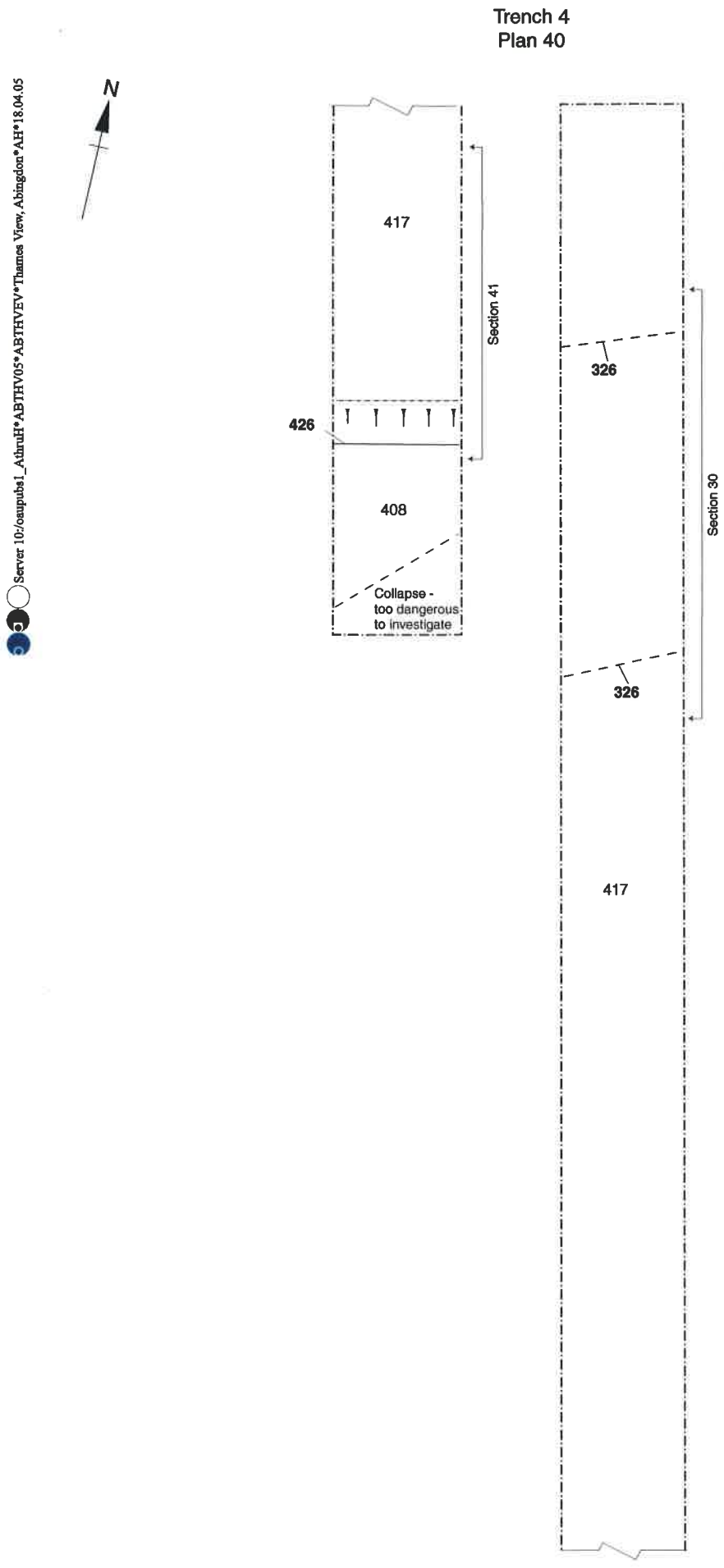


Figure 6: Trench 4, plan

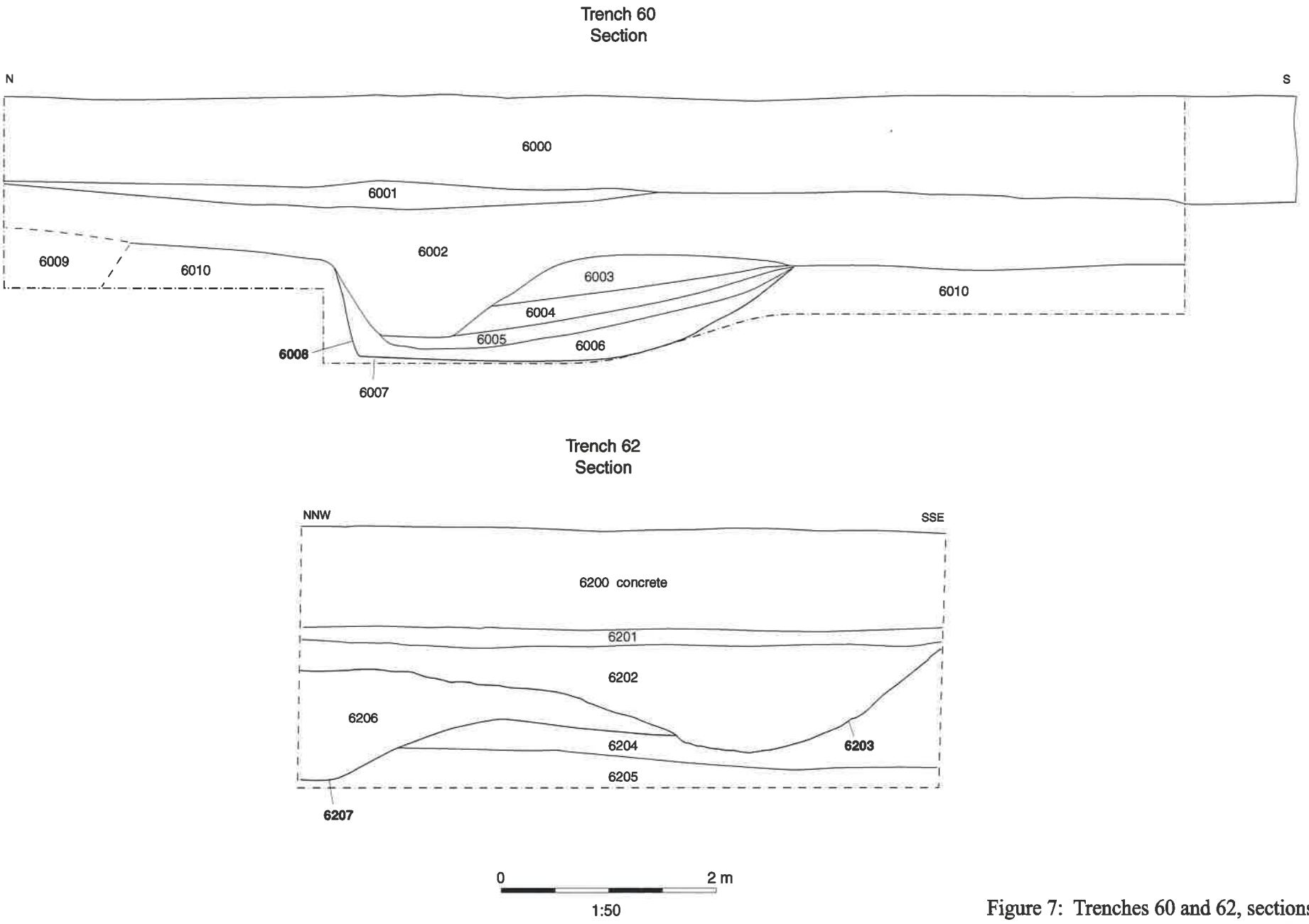
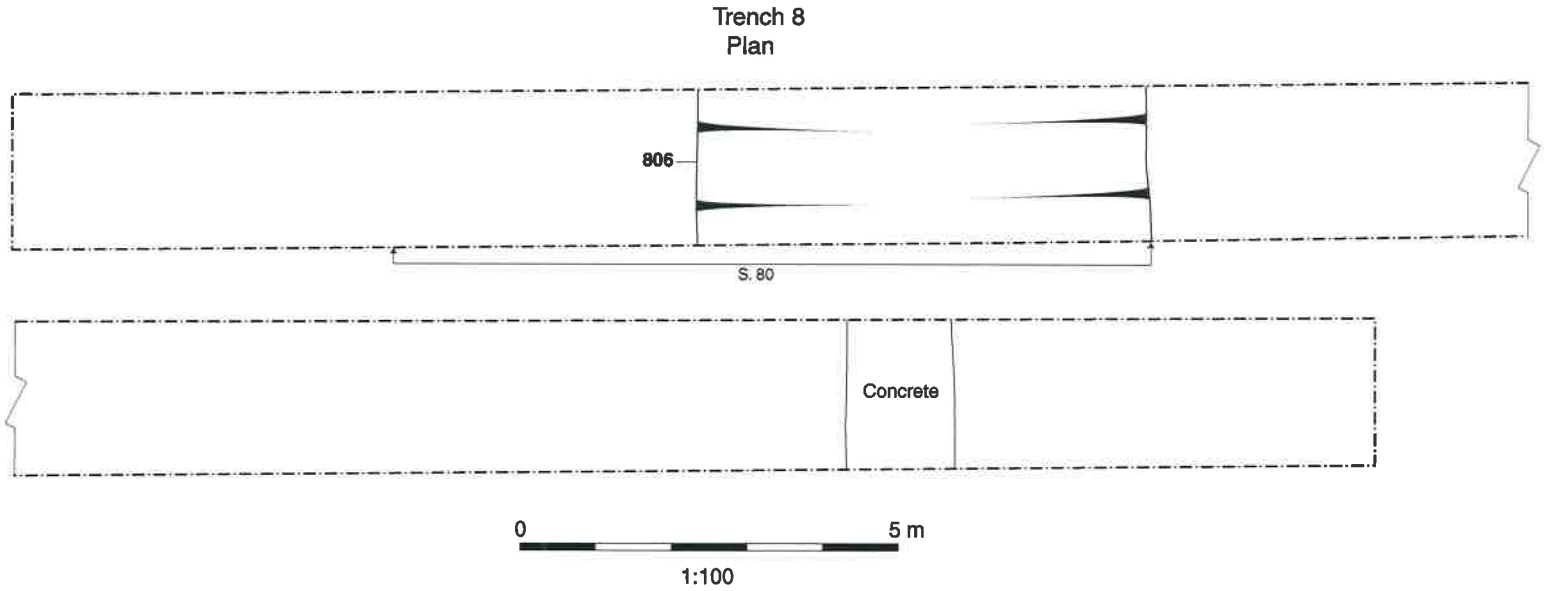


Figure 7: Trenches 60 and 62, sections



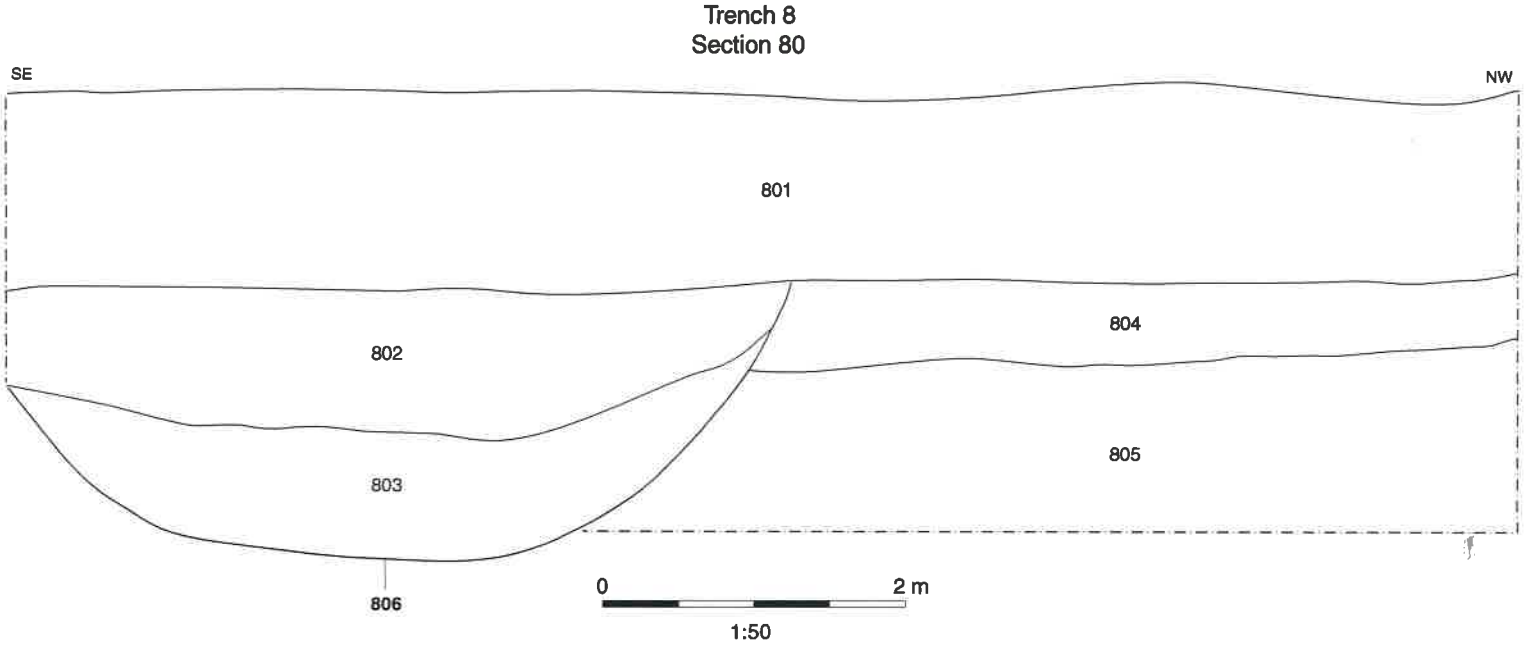


Figure 8: Trench 8, plan and sections

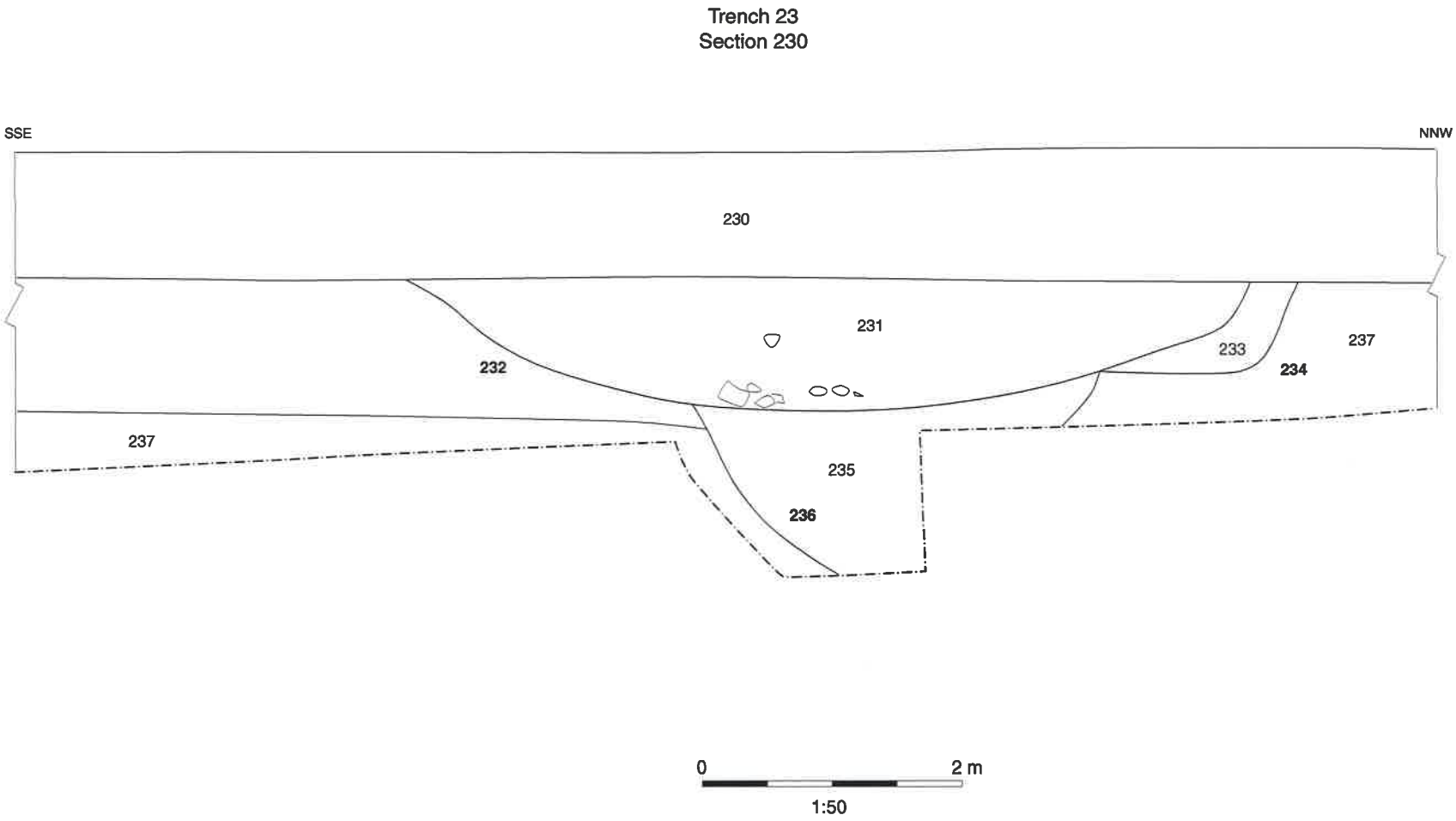
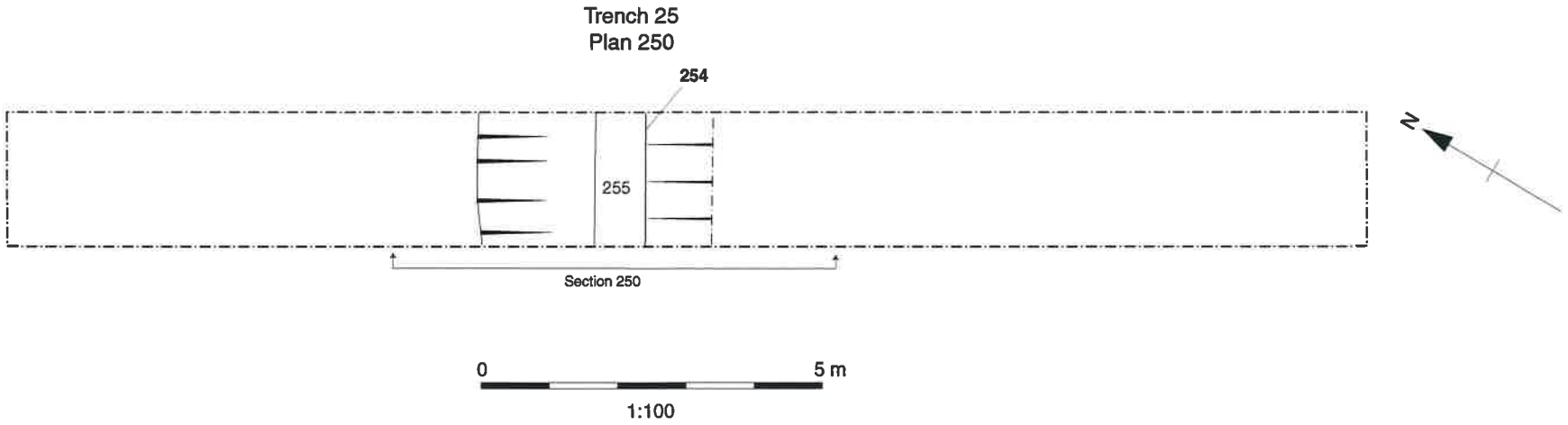


Figure 9: Trench 23 section 230



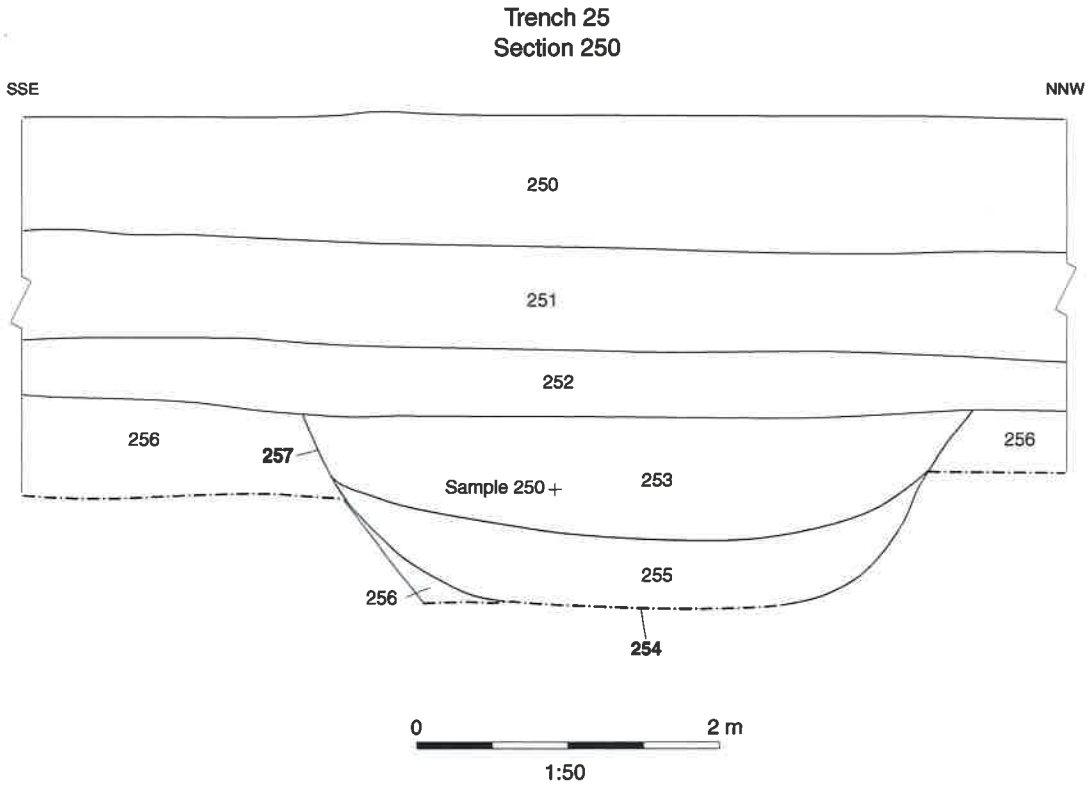


Figure 10: Trench 25, plan and section

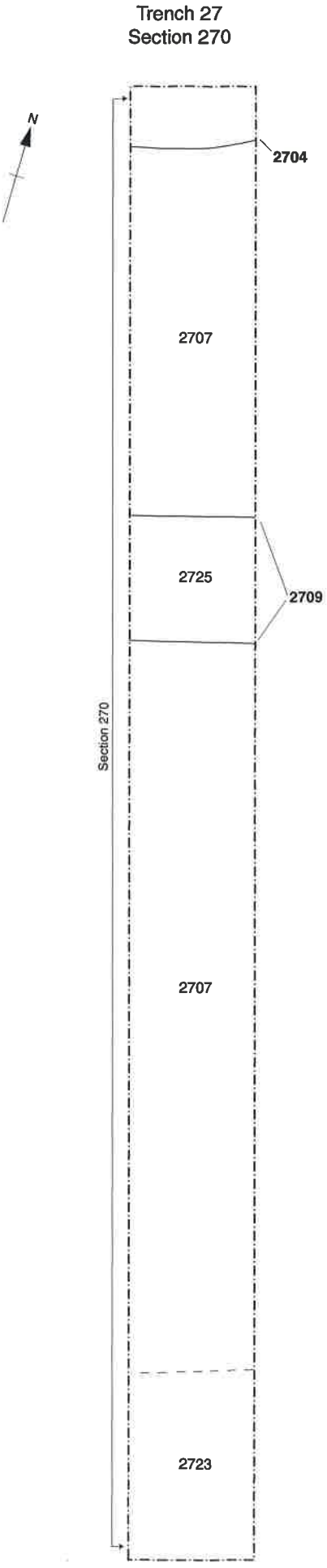


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Figure 11: Trench 27, plan

Trench 27
Section 270

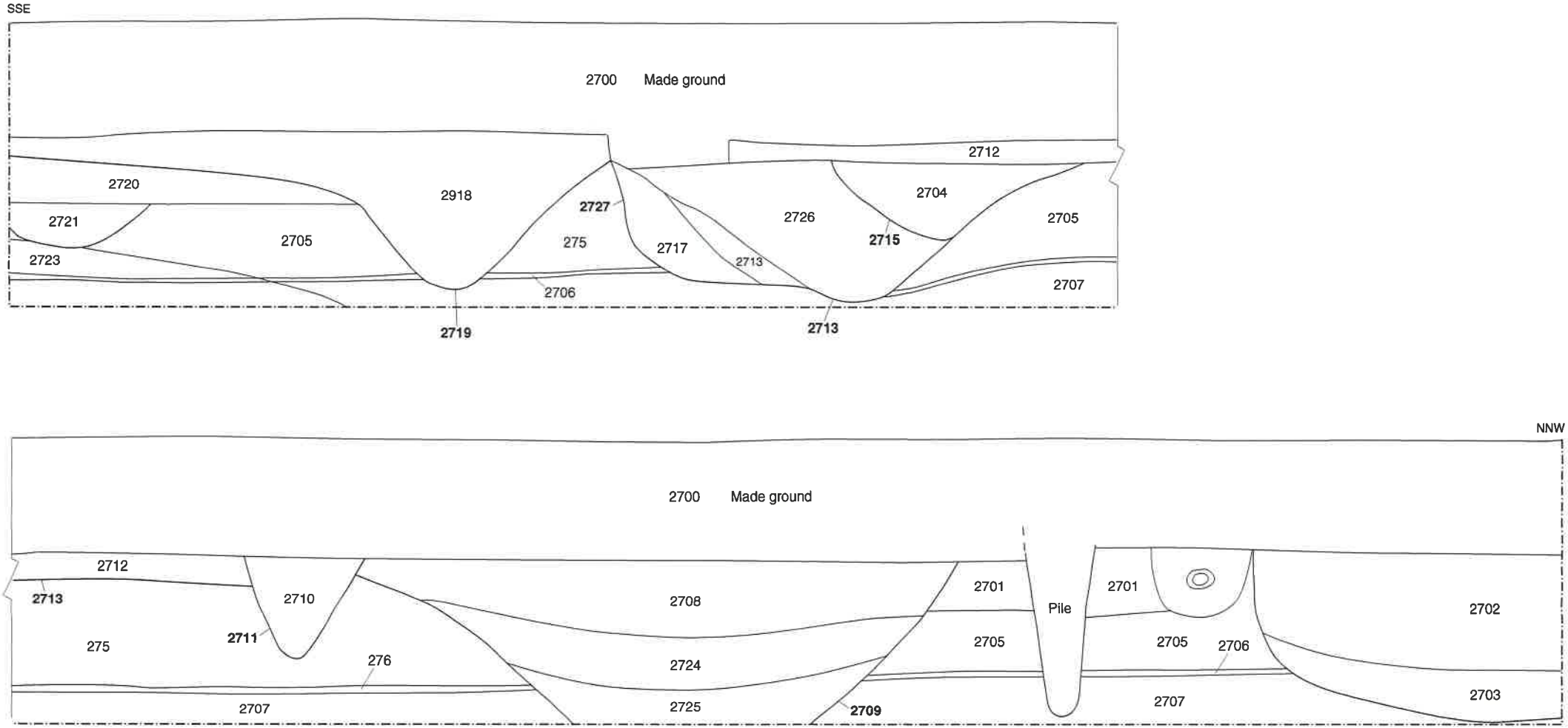
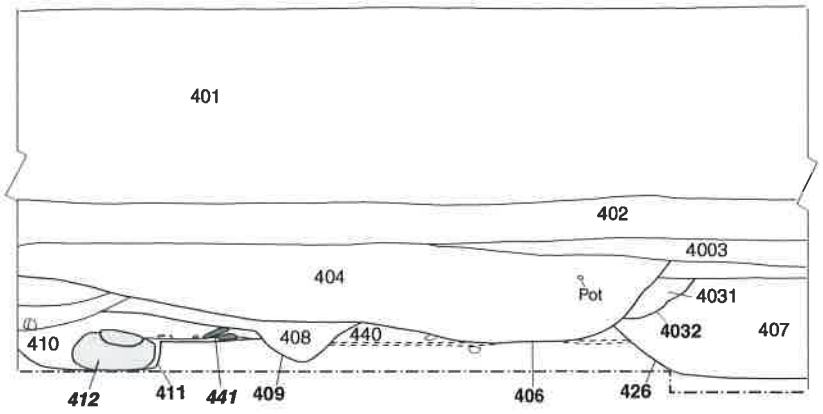


Figure 12: Trench 27, section

Trench 4
Section 41



Limestone slab
Stone block

Trench 50
Section 500

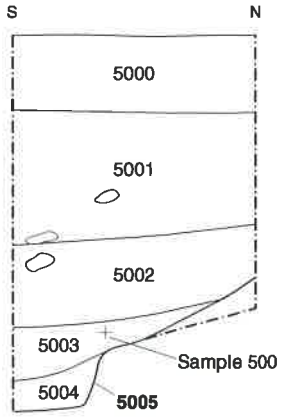


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Figure 13: Trench 4 section 41 and trench 51 section 500

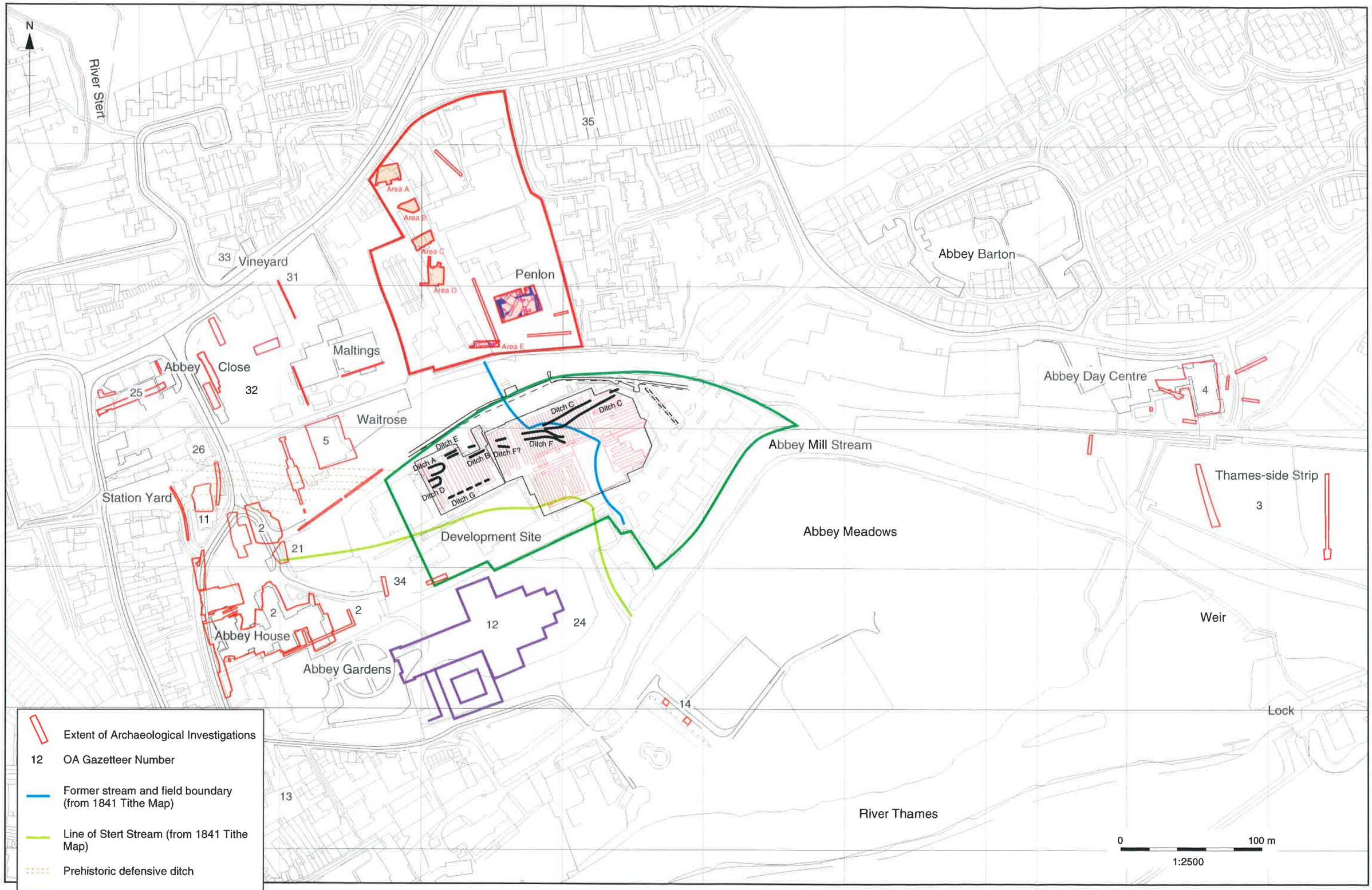

Figure 14: Major ditches at Thames View in relation to surrounding archaeology

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Figure 15: Engineering layout

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