

Land off Swan Lane
Faringdon
Oxfordshire



**Archaeological
Watching Brief Report**



Oxford Archaeology

May 2005



Client: CgMs

Issue N^o: 1
OA Job N^o: 2251
Planning Ref N^o: GFA/6605/2
NGR: SU 2904 9562

Client Name: Cgms Consulting

Client Ref No:

Document Title: Land off Swan Lane, Faringdon, Oxfordshire

Document Type: Watching Brief

Issue Number: 1

National Grid Reference: NGR SU 2904 9562

Planning Reference: GFA/6605/2

OA Job Number: 2251

Site Code: FASWAN 04

Invoice Code: FASWANWB

Receiving Museum: Oxfordshire County Museum Service

Museum Accession No: OXCMS 2004.

Prepared by: James Mumford

Position: SWD Supervisor

Date: 28th April 2005

Checked by: Danial Dodds

Position: Project Officer

Date: 28th April 2005

Approved by: Nick Shepherd

Position: Head of Fieldwork

Date: 20th May 2005

Signed.....

Document File Location H:/PROJECTS/Oxfordshire/Vale of White Horse VWH
/4204 Land of Swan Lane, Faringdon/WBRep.doc

Graphics File Location Server 10:/oapubs1 AtoH*FASWAN04*FASWANWB*
Swan Lane, Faringdon*JM*25.4.05

Illustrated by Julia Moxham

Disclaimer:

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

Oxford Archaeology

© Oxford Archaeological Unit Ltd 2005

Janus House

Osney Mead

Oxford OX2 0ES

t: (0044) 01865 263800

f: (0044) 01865 793496

e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk

w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk

Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited is a Registered Charity No: 285627

Land of Swan Lane, Faringdon, Oxfordshire***ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT*****CONTENTS**

Summary	1
1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Location and scope of work.....	1
1.2 Geology and topography.....	1
1.3 Archaeological and historical background	1
2 Project Aims and Methodology	2
2.1 Aims.....	2
2.2 Methodology	2
3 Results.....	2
3.1 Description of deposits	2
3.2 Finds.....	2
3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains.....	2
4 Discussion and Conclusions	2
Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory	3
Appendix 2 Bibliography and References.....	3
Appendix 3 Summary of Site Details	3

LIST OF FIGURES

- Fig. 1 Site location
 Fig. 2 New Development and Areas of Archaeological Features
 Fig. 3 Northern Area of site, showing features 6 and 4
 Fig. 4 Location of features and sections on the foundations of terrace house
 Fig. 5 Sections 1 - 8

Cover Plate: View of site from south-west during excavation of foundations and ground reduction.

SUMMARY

From May 2004 to April 2005 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Land off Swan Lane, Faringdon, Oxfordshire (NGR SU 2904 9562). The work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of McCarthy and Stone in advance of sheltered housing and affordable housing. The watching brief revealed a number of rubbish pits from the medieval period, an undated quarry pit and boundary ditch were also exposed.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 From May 2004 to April 2005 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Land off Swan Lane, Faringdon, Oxfordshire (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of McCarthy and Stone in respect of a planning application to construct fifty three sheltered apartments for the elderly with management accommodation, communal facilities and twelve affordable housing units (Planning Application No. GFA/6605/2).
- 1.1.2 A project brief was set by Hugh Coddington, Deputy County Archaeologist for Oxfordshire (OCAS 2004).
- 1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief (OA 2004).

1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies on limestone of the Corallian Beds at 109 m above OD. The development site is located to the east side of Swan Lane in Faringdon which runs on a north/south access between Church Street (A4095) and London Road and is 0.7 hectares in size.
- 1.2.2 The northern half of the site is currently laid to grass and is a former orchard and rear residential plots fronting on to Church Street, the southern area contains buildings associated with a former joinery yard.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the watching brief was prepared for the project WSI (OA 2004) and is reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 An archaeological field evaluation, undertaken by Oxford Archaeology in 2002 (OA 2003) located a large feature, possibly either a ditch or a pit in the eastern part of the site. Pottery within this feature was dated to the mid sixteenth century. It also contained a substantial quantity of animal bone. A single pit, dating to the twelfth century was found in the south part of the site.

- 1.3.3 During the construction of Eastfield Court to the north, medieval deposits dating to between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries were identified. This included a stone lined well and two areas of paving. To the west, during construction works undertaken at 4 Market Place, a beam slot containing twelfth and thirteenth century pottery was identified along with several medieval cesspits.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence/absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.
- 2.1.2 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The site was first cleared and then stripped of topsoil and overburden to a finished level. Once this was carried out a trench was excavated to re-run services across the site (Fig. 3). The foundations were then marked out and excavated in a series of stages with the block of flats being excavated from south to north, followed by the cottages along Swan lane. These works were monitored by an archaeologist on site throughout the duration of ground works.
- 2.2.2 All archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:100 and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 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* (OAU 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

Area on the north of the site (Fig.3)

- 3.1.1 The ground works cut into a light brown clay (3) with limestone cornbrash, which had been overlain by a 0.20 m thick reddish brown silty clay loam subsoil (2). This had been cut by two features (4 and 6). Number 4, was a boundary ditch running east to west along the north side of the old boundary at the southern side of the orchard. The ditch had very steep sloping sides rounding to a narrow concave base. It measured 60 m long, 1.10 m wide and 1 m in depth and was filled by a light grey brown silty clay (5), which had slowly silted up in the ditch. No finds were recovered from the fill.
- 3.1.2 Along the east side of the site a large pit (6), possibly a quarry pit was exposed. This was the large ditch feature located in trench 1 of the OA evaluation in 2003 (OA 2003). It was sub rectangular in shape with near vertical sides rounding sharply to a

flat base. It measured 3.2 m x 2.8 m x 1.8 m and contained three fills. The primary fill was a very dark grey brown silty clay loam (7), which was overlain by a dump of material consisting of dark yellowish brown silty clay (8). Sealing this and filling in top of feature was a dark grey brown silty clay loam (9). Both these features were sealed below a 0.25 m thick very dark grey brown silty clay loam (1) topsoil.

Area on the south of the site

- 3.1.3 This area had been badly truncated to the east and north-east and where the site sloped sharply away to the south-west corner and this had been in-filled and made up. This landscaping work was for the construction of the former works yard.
- 3.1.4 In the area of the southern half of the flats, no archaeological features were exposed. In the area for the row of new houses a number of features were exposed in the foundations (Fig. 4). The foundations, were cut into a light brown clay (3) with limestone cornbrash, which had been overlain by a 0.20 m thick deposit of reddish brown silty clay loam subsoil (2). A number of pit features were exposed in the trenches and consisted of the following.
- 3.1.5 Pit 10 was observed only in section and had steep sloping sides rounding to a flat base. It measured 1.8 m wide and 0.7 m in depth and was filled by a dark reddish brown silty clay loam (11). Just to the west was a small pit (12) with steep sloping sides rounding to a concave base. It measured 1.1 m in diameter and 0.6 m in depth and was filled by a dark reddish brown silty clay loam (13). To the east of these was a larger sub-circular pit (14) with steep sloping sides rounding to a flat base. It measured 1.4 m x 1 m x 0.7 m and was filled by a dark grey brown silty clay loam (15) with a few fragments of 14th and 15th century pottery and bone (Fig. 5).
- 3.1.6 A second large pit (19) was located to the north-east of pit 14 and had steep sloping sides, but its base was below impact level. It measured 1.9 m x 0.8 m x 0.9 m and was filled by a dark brown silty clay loam (20), from which a 13th century pottery sherd was recovered. All these features were covered by 0.15 m - 0.30 m of very dark grey brown silty clay loam topsoil (1). This had been overlain by a 0.2 - .9 m thick layer of very dark grey brown silty clay (16) with building debris and a 19th century ground make up layer. This had been cut by foundation trench (17) with vertical sides and flat base, which was 0.5 m wide and 0.3 m in depth. It was filled by a trench built brick wall 18 and was part of the range of 19th century outbuildings on the site. In the north-east part of the site was rough limestone lined well with a brick lining at base. It was 0.95 m in diameter and 3 m in depth and the top was capped with a large stone slab with a 2" lead pipe in the base for a pump. It had been covered during the 20th century.

3.2 Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

- 3.2.1 The pottery assemblage comprised 2 sherds with a total weight of 23 g. The first, from context 15, is a sherd of Brill Boarstall ware, Oxfordshire fabric OXAM (Mellor 1994), weighing 5 g. It is unglazed, and most likely from the neck of a jar. It is of 14th – 15th century date. The second, from context 20, is a rim-sherd from a jar (original diameter = 180 mm) in East Wiltshire ware (Oxfordshire fabric OXBF), and weighs 18 g. This type had a currency from c AD1050 – 13th century.

Other Finds

- 3.2.2 Only one bone was recovered from pit 14 in context 15, a rib from a large animal, probably cattle or horse. The bone has survived in good condition, but no butchery marks, gnawing or burning was observed.

3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 3.3.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified during the watching brief.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The watching brief did reveal a number of pits in the south-west corner of the site, from which two fragments of pottery dating from the 13th to 15th century were recovered. These could be interpreted as cess or rubbish pits located at the rear of burghage plots at right angles to London Street. The boundary for the rear of these plots could be the line of boundary ditch 4, which bisected from west to east.
- 4.1.2 Most the southern half of the site had been filled in and terraced for the construction of the workshops and outbuildings on the site in the 19th century. The north of the site was barren of archaeological features and the site had always been used as gardens and later orchards. The one feature was a large possible quarry pit, which was thought to be a ditch or rubbish pit, which was found in the 2002 evaluation Trench 1 (OA 2003).

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Length</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>
1	Layer	0.20 - 0.45 m			Topsoil	
2	Layer	0.08 - 0.20 m			Sub-soil	
3	Natural				Limestone cornbrash	
4	Cut	1 m	1.1 m	60 m	Boundary Ditch	
5	Full				Fill of ditch	
6	Cut	1.8 m	2.8 m	3.2 m	Post medieval rubbish pit	
7	Fill				Fill of pit	
8	Fill				Fill of pit	
9	Fill				Fill of pit	
10	Cut	0.70 m	1.8 m			
11	Fill	0.6 m	1.1 m		Fill of pit	
12	Cut					
13	Fill				Fill of pit	
14	Cut	0.70 m	1 m	1.40 m		
15	Fill				Fill of pit	Pottery
16	Layer				Ground Make up	
17	Structure	0.31 m	0.49 m	1.50 m		
18	Cut	0.31 m	0.50 m	1.5 m	Foundation trench	
19	Cut	0.90 m	0.80 m	1.90 m	Cess pit poss Med	
20	Fill				Fill of pit	Pottery

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

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

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

IFA, 2001 *Standard Guidance for Archaeological Excavations*

CgMs, 2002 *Land off Swan Lane, Faringdon, Oxfordshire, Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment*

OCAS, 2002 *Land off Swan Lane, Faringdon, Design Brief for Archaeological Field Evaluation*

- OA, 2002 *Land off Swan Lane, Faringdon, Oxfordshire, Written Scheme of Investigation*
- OA, 2003 *Land off Swan Lane, Faringdon, Oxfordshire Archaeological Evaluation Report*
- OA, 2004 *Land off Swan Lane, Faringdon, Oxfordshire Written Scheme of Investigation*
- OCAS, 2002 *Land off Swan Lane, Faringdon, Design Brief for Archaeological Watching Brief*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Swan Lane, Faringdon, Oxfordshire

Site code: FASWAN 04

Grid reference: NGR SU2904 9562

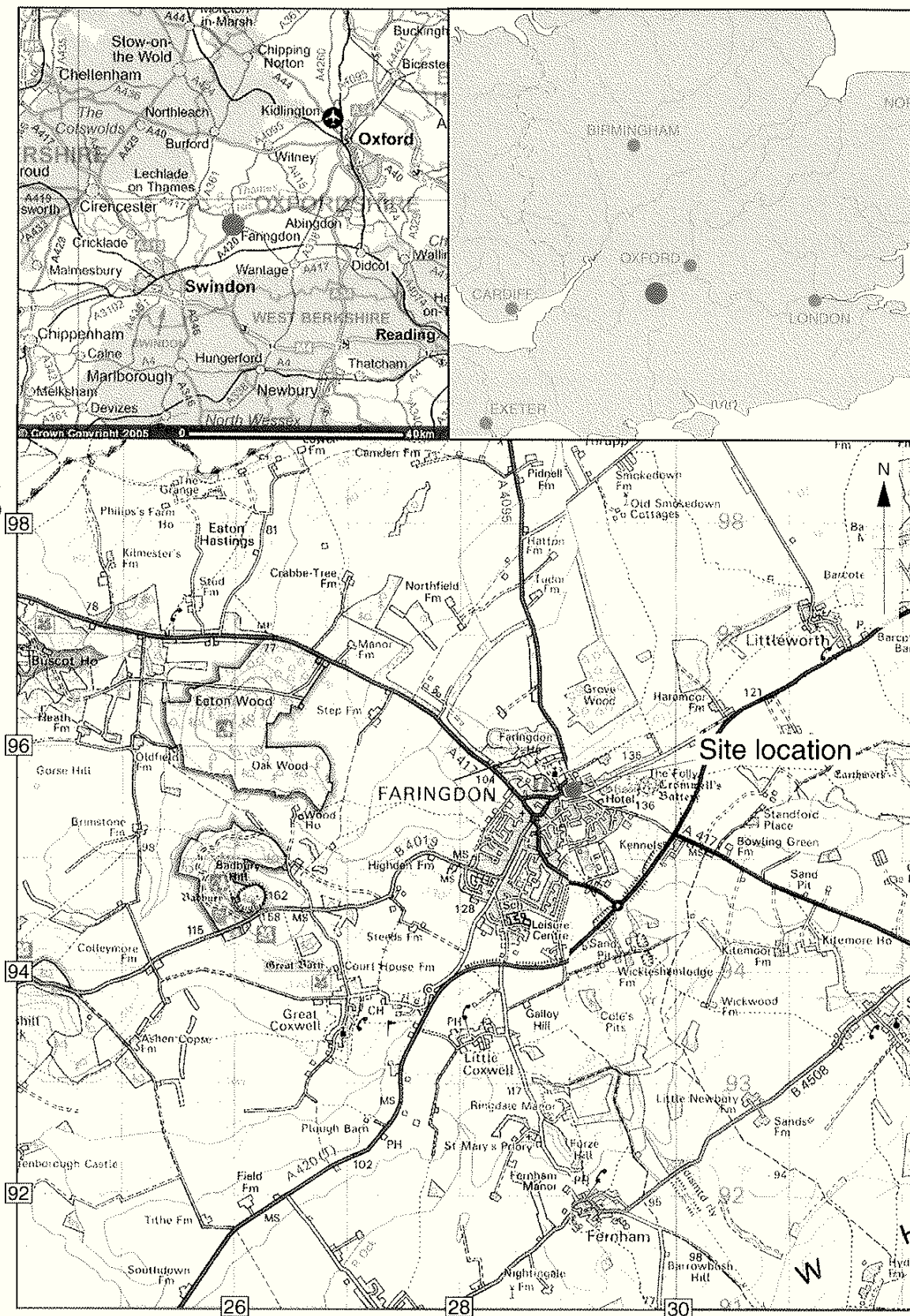
Type of watching brief: Monitoring of ground works during the construction of fifty three sheltered apartments and twelve affordable housing units.

Date and duration of project: A total of fifteen site visits from the 7th May 2004 to the 8th April 2005.

Area of site: 110 m x 85 m

Summary of results: A number of rubbish pits, three dating from the 11th to 15th century, a undated quarry pit and boundary ditch marking the rear of the medieval burghage plots fronting London Rd were exposed.

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:2004.39



Scale 1:50,000

Reproduced from the Landranger 1:50,000 scale by permission of the Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office
© Crown Copyright 2000. All rights reserved. Licence No. AL 100005569

Figure 1: Site location

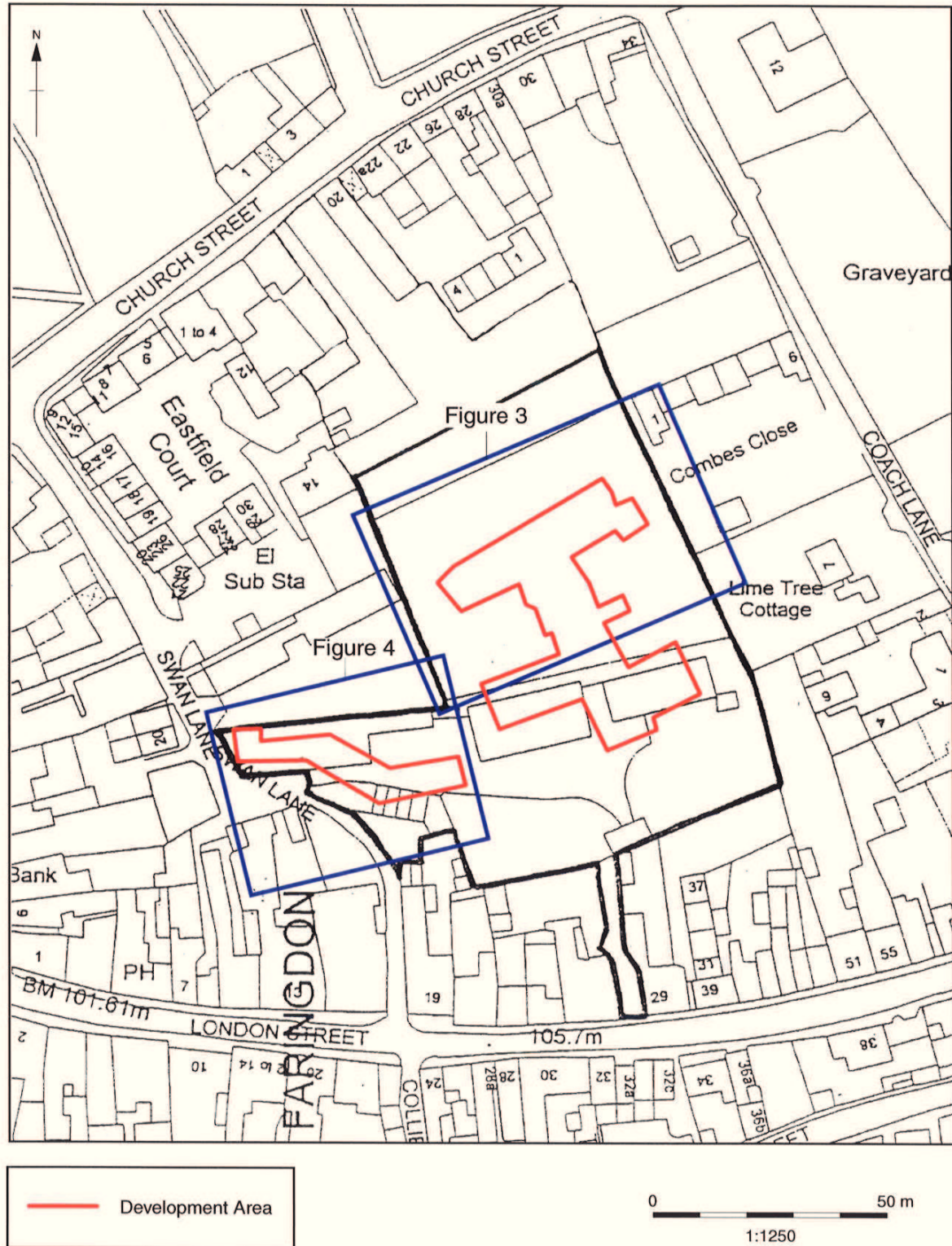


Figure 2: New Development and Areas of Archaeological Features

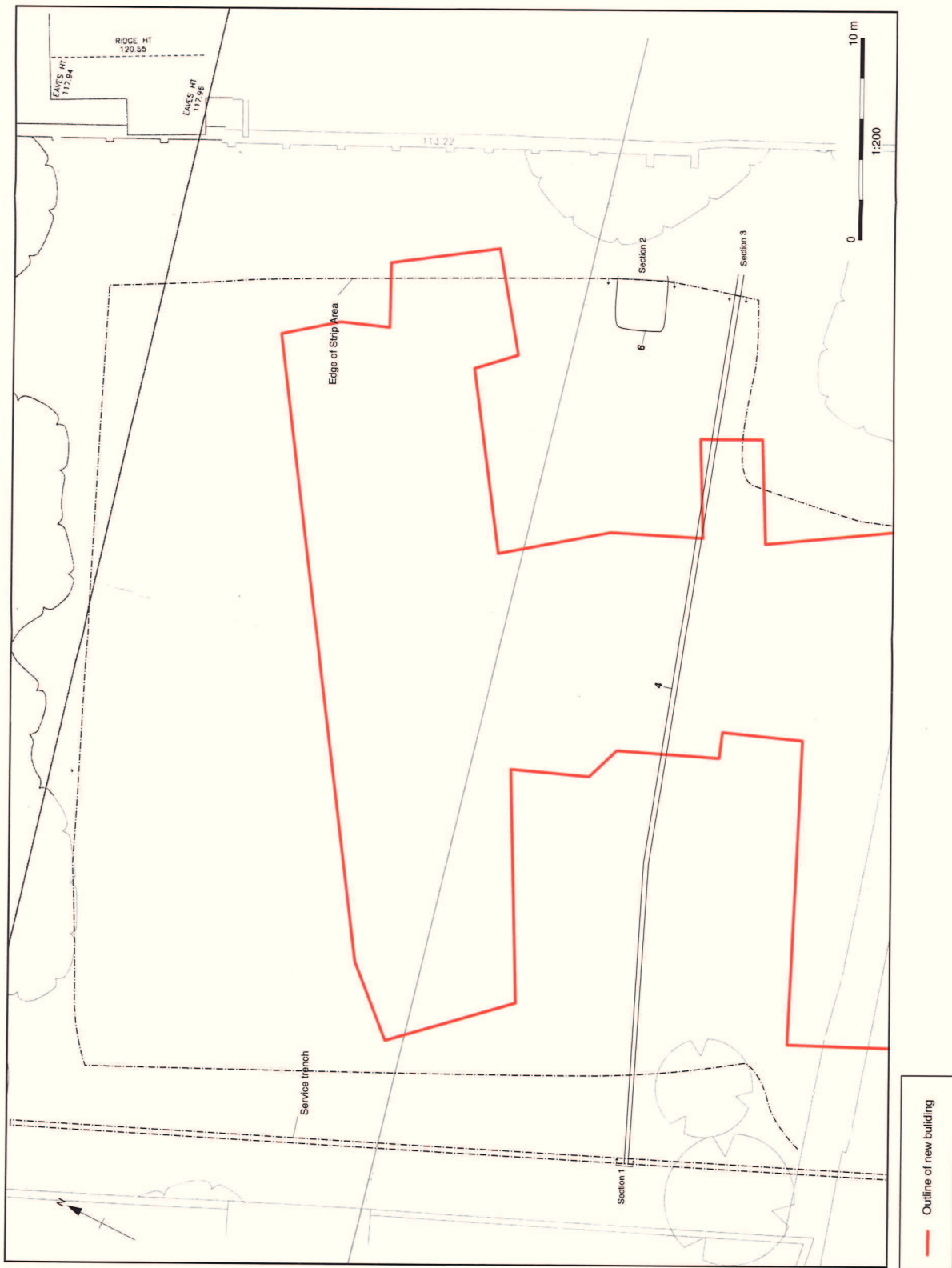


Figure 3: Northern Area of site, showing features 6 and 4.

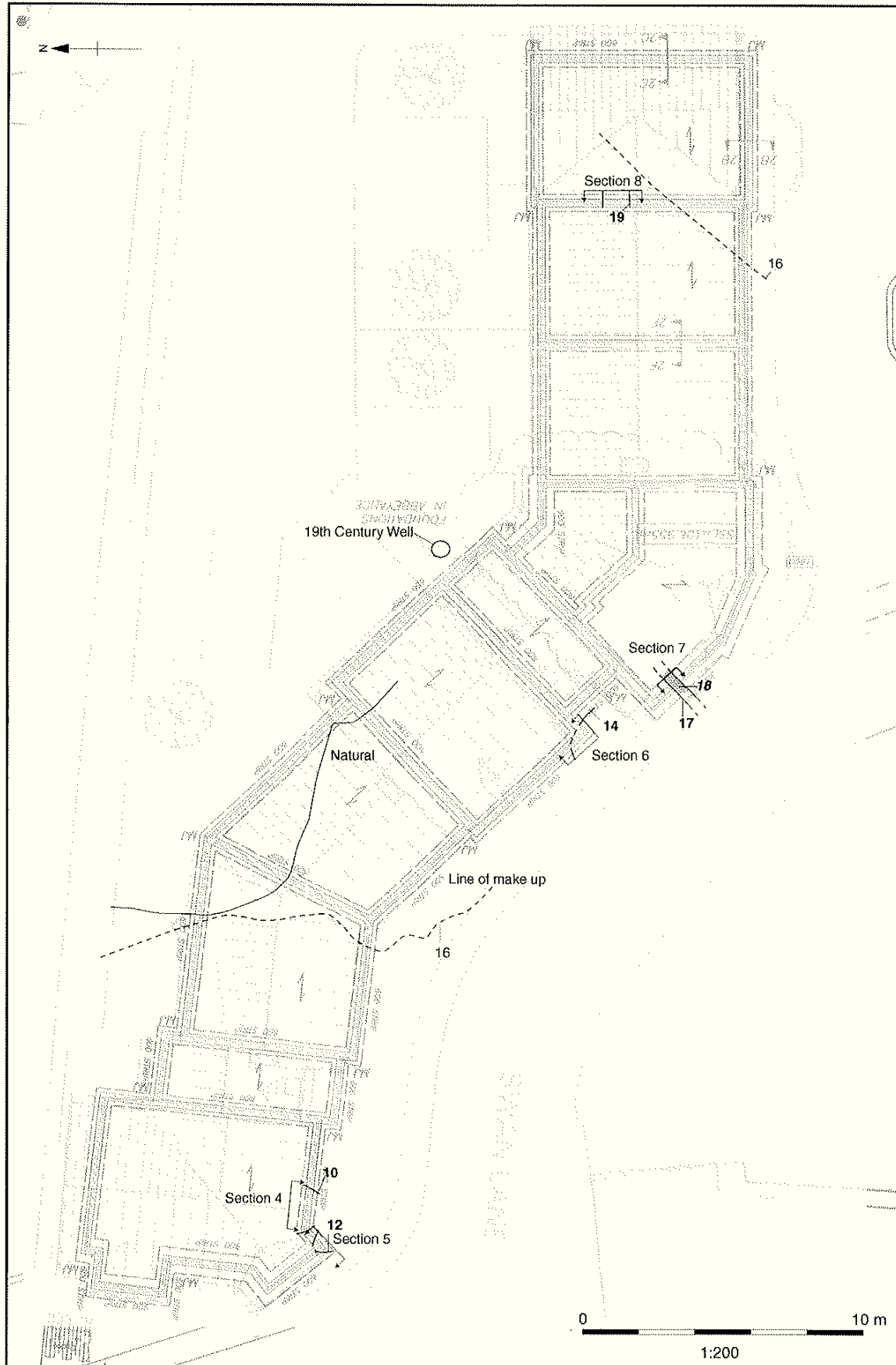


Figure 4: Location of features and sections on the foundations of terrace house

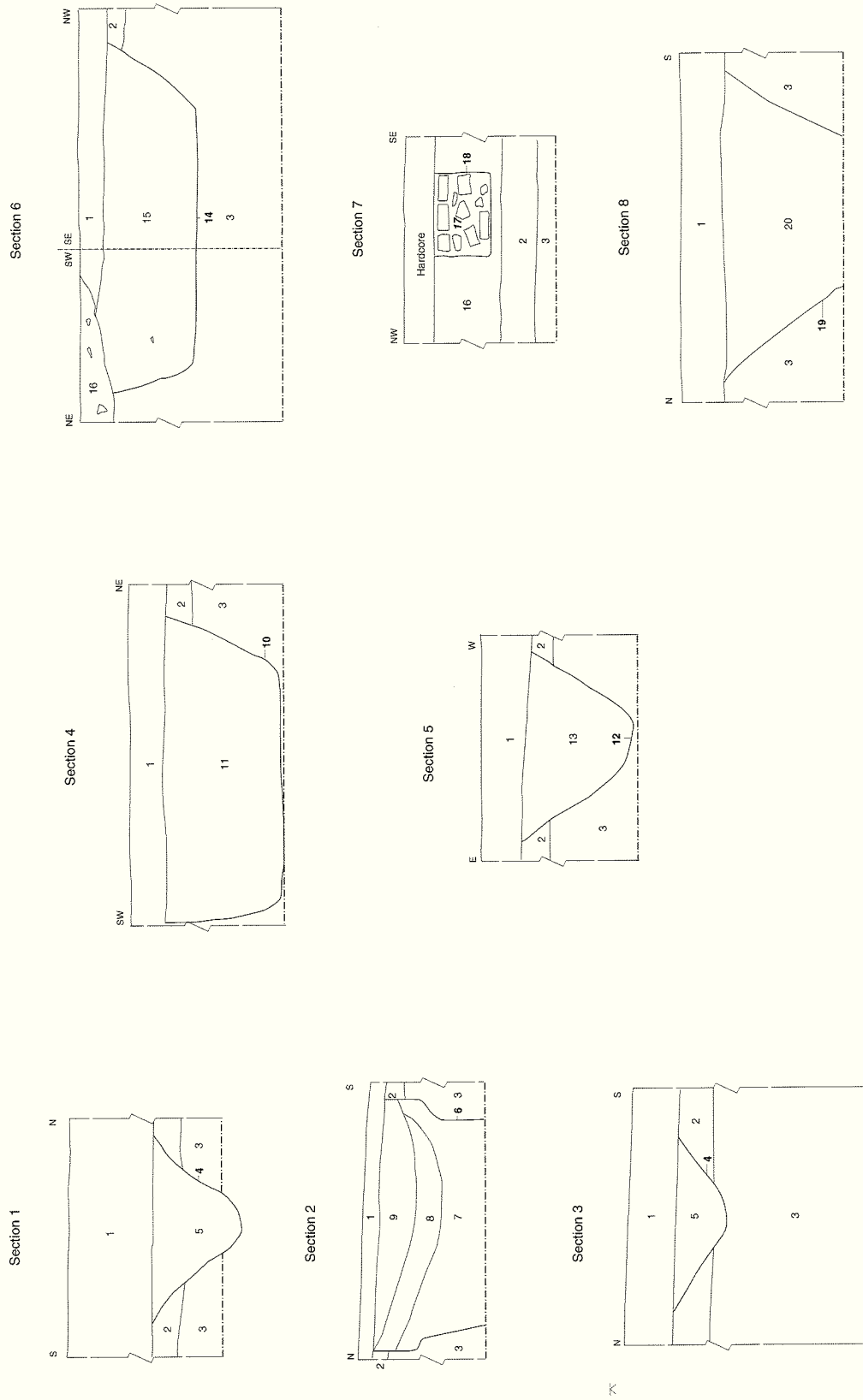


Figure 5: Sections 1- 8



Oxford Archaeology

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES

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



Oxford Archaeology North

Storey Institute
Meeting House Lane
Lancaster LA1 1TF

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



Director: David Jennings, BA MIFA FSA

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

Registered Office:

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