

Units 1-6
Malthouse Walk
Banbury
Oxfordshire



**Archaeological
Watching Brief Report**



Oxford Archaeology

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Units 1 - 6, Malthouse Walk, Banbury, Oxfordshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

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SUMMARY

From February to March 2004 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Units 1 - 6, Malthouse Walk, Banbury, Oxfordshire (NGR SP 4578 4054). The work was commissioned by Stockdale Cala Limited in advance of a rear extension and new shop front windows for 1-6 Malthouse Walk. The watching brief revealed archaeological remains pre-dating the 19th and 20th century development of the site.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 From February to March 2004 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Units 1 - 6, Malthouse Walk, Banbury, Oxfordshire (Figs 1 and 2). The work was commissioned by Stockdale Cala Limited in respect of a planning application for a rear extension and new shop front windows for 1-6 Malthouse Walk.
- 1.1.2 A project brief was set by Hannah Fluck, Planning Archaeologist for Oxfordshire Country Archaeological Service (OCAS 2003).
- 1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies on Lias at 94 m above OD. The site is situated at 1-6 Malthouse Walk in the centre of Banbury (SP 4578 4054).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the watching brief was prepared for the WSI for the project (OA 2003) and is reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 The site of the proposed development lies in an area of archaeological potential. It is within the historic core of Banbury c. 100 m south of the site of the castle which was constructed by Alexander, Bishop of Lincoln in the early 12th century and destroyed in the 17th century after the Civil War.
- 1.3.3 Immediately to the south of the proposed site an archaeological evaluation by Oxford Archaeology (OA) in 1998 at the corner of George Street and Cherwell Street revealed medieval deposits and features (OAU 1998).
- 1.3.4 Other archaeological evaluations in the area have revealed medieval deposits and features, suggesting that this area of Banbury was a centre of settlement during the medieval period.

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 After parts of the existing building were demolished for the new redevelopment, the foundations for the new extension at the rear of the building were excavated with a mini excavator. When the foundation had been laid and the new build started the service trench was started to connect the services. This was all carried out under archaeological supervision.
- 2.2.2 All archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:200 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* (Ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

Foundation Trenches (Fig. 3)

- 3.1.1 The foundation trenches cut into a natural blue Lias clay (4), which sloped from 0.6 m to 1 m towards the north-west of the site. This was sealed below a loose reddish brown sand and gravel (3) made ground for the car park at the rear of the building. Sealing this was a 0.2 m thick concrete surface (2) with a later 0.1 m thick tarmac surface (1).

Service Trench (Figs 3 and 4)

- 3.1.2 The service trench was 0.7 m wide and 2 m in depth and cut into the natural blue Lias clay (4). This was overlain by a 0.14 m thick layer of light reddish brown silty clay (5), which included building debris. This had been cut by broad shallow foundation cut (6). This measured 3.6 m x 0.7 m x 0.3 m and was filled by layer of light grey mortar (7) in which the remains of a three course high brick wall (9) was built. It measured 1.2 m x 0.35 m x 0.32 m and had a brick floor (8) laid against it. This was also bedded into the mortar base (7). Overlying this structure and layer 5 was a 0.2 m thick layer of modern ground make up (10) of orange brown sand and gravel similar to layer (3) observed in the foundation trenches. Sealing this was a 0.15 m thick layer of hardcore (11) under the tarmac surface (12).

3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 No finds were recovered during the watching brief.

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 not reveal any significant archaeological deposits or features. The remains of a 19th century brick outbuilding and its brick laid floor were uncovered in the service trench. The results showed that the site had been cleared and levelled in the 19th century, and was developed with terraced houses and a brewery (OAU 1998). The site had then been cleared and levelled again in the 20th century for the construction of the present shop and retail buildings.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Height</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>
1	Layer				Tarmac	
2	Layer				Concrete surface	
3	Layer				Ground make up	
4	Natural				Blue Lias Clay	
5	Layer				Disturbed ground make up	
6	Cut				Foundation cut	
7	Layer				Mortar base	
8	Floor				Brick floor	
9	Wall				Wall foundation	
10	Layer				Ground make up	
11	Layer				Hardcore	
12	Layer				Tarmac	

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

OA 2003 *1-6 Malthouse Walk, Banbury, Oxfordshire Written Scheme of Investigation*

OCAS 2003 *Design brief for an archaeological watching brief.*

OA 1992 *Fieldwork Manual*, (Ed. D Wilkinson, first edition, August 1992)

OAU 1998 *Land at Cherwell Street/George Street, Banbury Archaeological Evaluation Report*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Units 1 - 6, Malthouse Walk, Banbury, Oxfordshire

Site code: BAMAUI 04

Grid reference: NGR SP 4578 4054

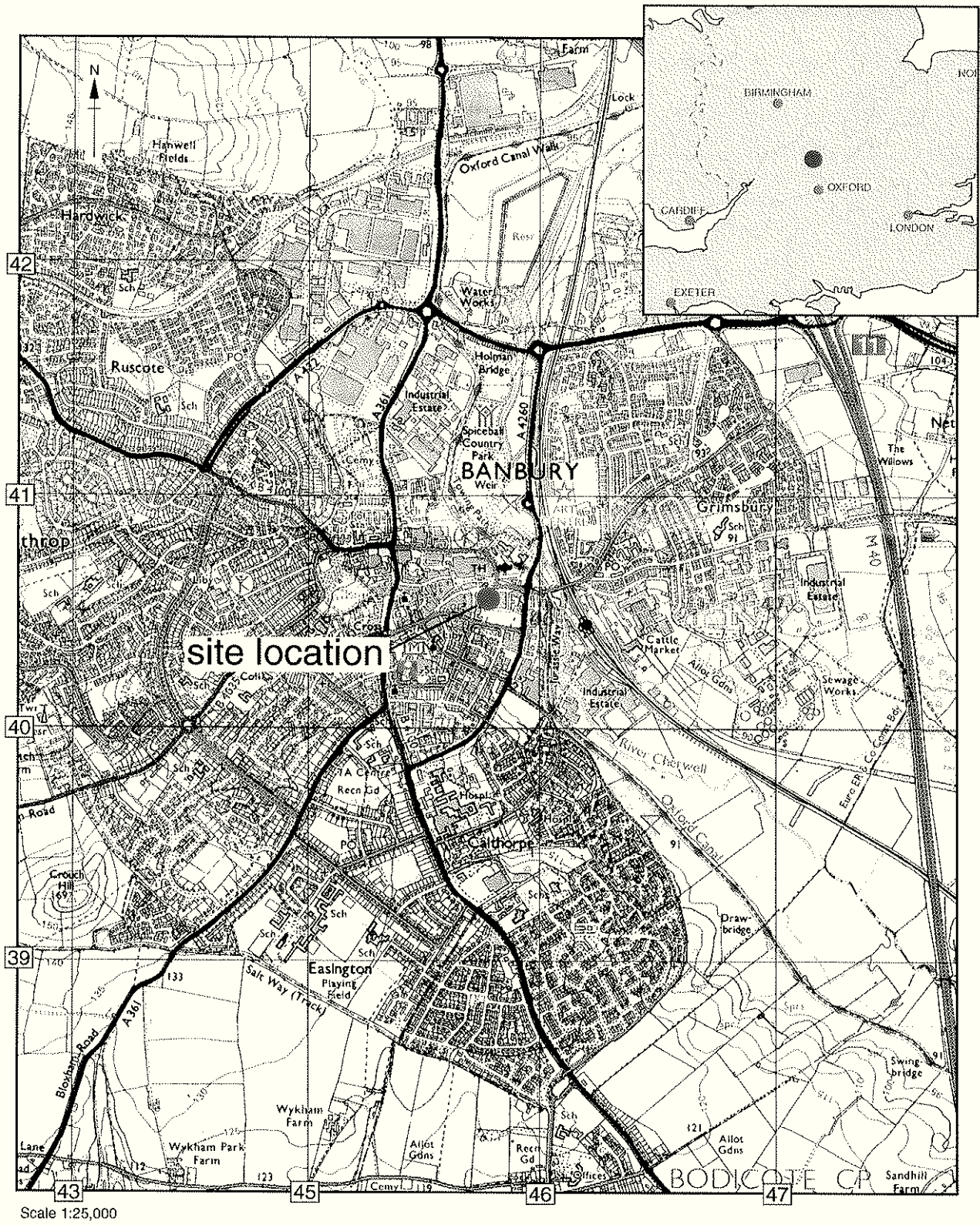
Type of watching brief: Ground work for the construction of new rear extension and services.

Date and duration of project: A total of nine visits from the 9/2/04 to the 26/3/04.

Area of site: 35 m x 13 m

Summary of results: The watching brief revealed archaeological remains pre-dating the 19th and 20th century development of the site.

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:2004.1



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Figure 1: Site location.

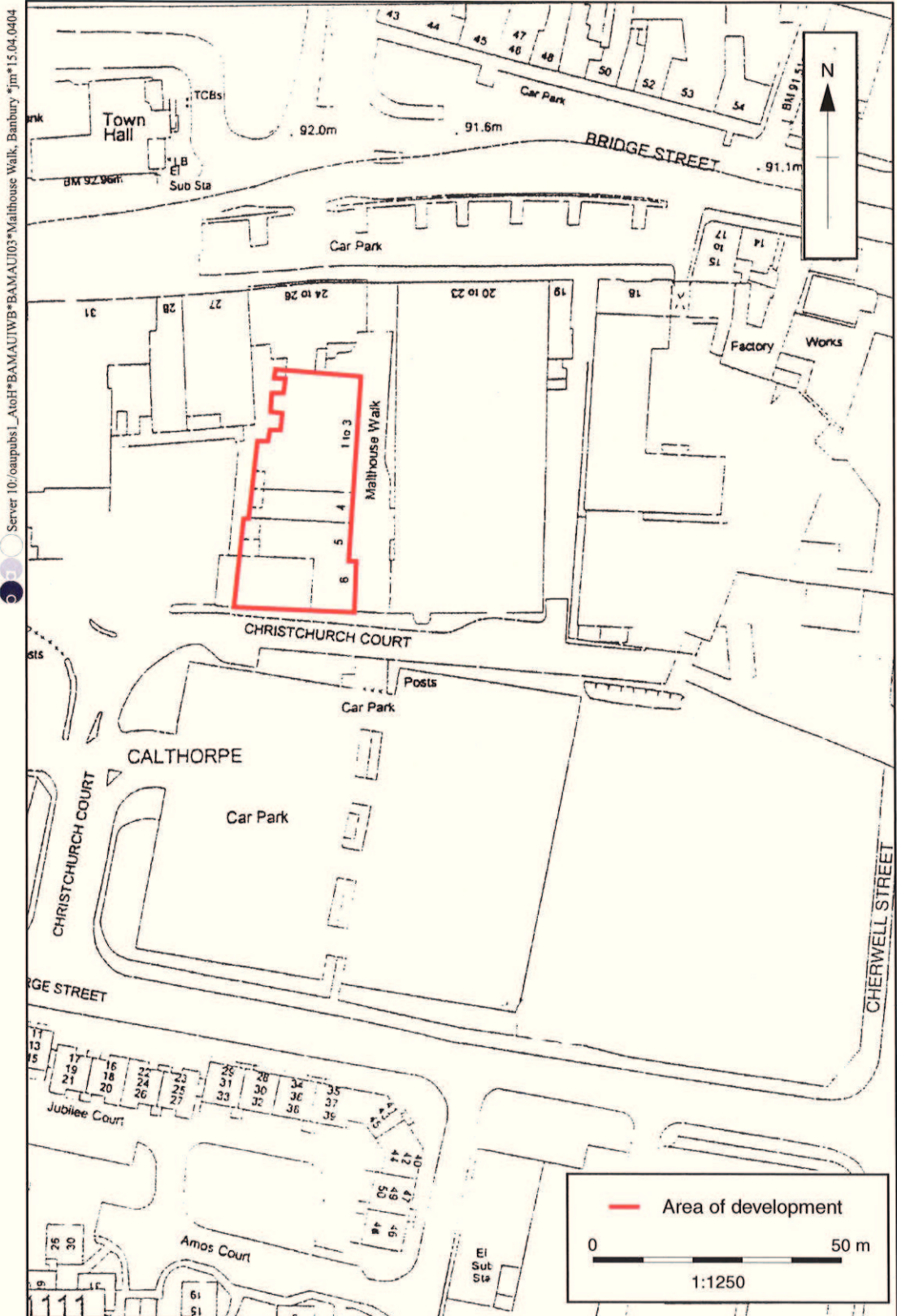


Figure 2: Area of development

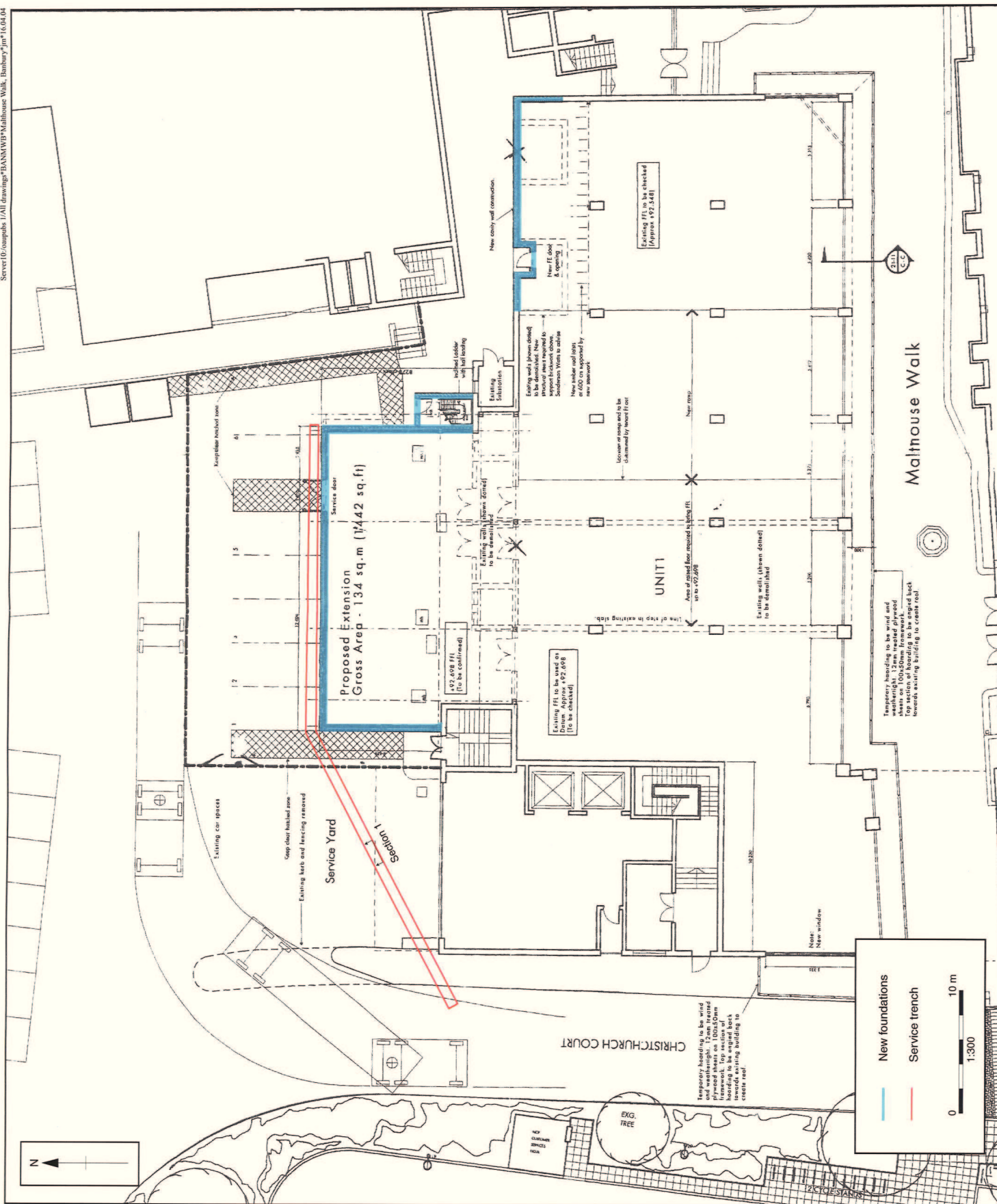


Figure 3: Site plan showing location of new foundations, new service trench and Section 1

Section 1

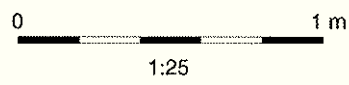
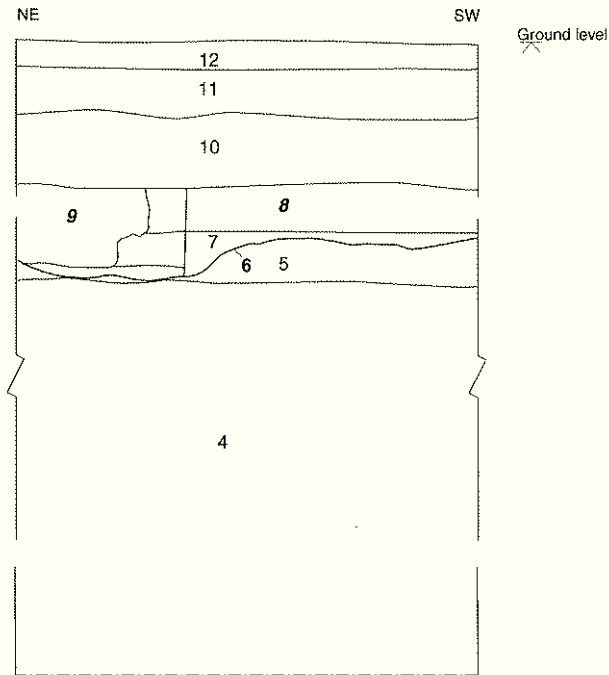


Figure 4: Section 1



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