St George the Martyr London Borough of Southwark

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Oxford Archaeology

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St George the Martyr, London Borough of Southwark

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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SUMMARY

In October 2003, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at St George the Martyr, Southwark on behalf of the Parochial Church Council. The evaluation revealed evidence of the construction of the existing structure in 1734-5. Deposits associated with the earlier church were also revealed, including three earth cut, in-situ burials and a brick barrel vault. The deposits truncated by these burials were probably medieval in origin and deposits of potentially earlier date were also revealed. Evidence of the palaeochannel over which the church is constructed was also revealed.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In October 2003 OA carried out a field evaluation at St George the Martyr, Southwark on behalf of the Parochial Church Council in respect of a planning application for the formation of a new crypt and alterations to the east end of the church (Planning Application No. TP/1140-H, LBS Reg. 0200529). A brief was set by the Archaeology Officer of the London Borough of Southwark and a specification drawn up by the Project Archaeologist (John Schofield) on behalf of the client. A Project Design agreed with the Project Archaeologist and the Archaeology Officer for LB Southwark was produced by OA.

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The church is located in the London Borough of Southwark at NGR TQ 325 798 (Figure 1). It is located on a triangle of land on the east side of Borough High Street.

1.2.2 The solid geology of the area is Woolwich and Reading Beds with First River Terrace drift geology overlying it (BGS 270). The church appears to be located on alluvium between two gravel islands.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological background to the evaluation has been the subject of a separate desk study (Jones 1997), which was reproduced in outline in the Specification and Project Design. This summary appears below, with additional information relevant to the interpretation of the results of the evaluation.

- **Prehistoric (450,000 BC-AD 43)**

1.3.2 The prehistoric landscape of Southwark is being refined using data from many recent excavations. From the Bronze Age (*c* 2000 BC) there are traces of ditches, enclosures and possible occupation sites. Iron Age sites (from *c* 600 BC) are similarly scattered through the borough, with occupation at Park Street, Southwark Street and St Thomas Street (MoL 2000). A recent synthesis of work on prehistoric Southwark and Lambeth, based on many sites from the 1980s onwards, was published in 2002 (Sidell

et al 2002); but it did not record any significant prehistoric sites close to the church, and its maps of the pre-Roman topography are overtaken by a more detailed and recent map used here as Figure 3.

1.3.3 Two versions of the suggested prehistoric and Roman topography, ie the islands and the Roman roads on them, are given here. The first is a discussion of 1988 (Figure 2) which summarised excavations up to that time. It established the outline of the islands of Southwark and shows some of the relevant sites which have located the Roman roads, two of which joined just south of the church site. The second is the more up to date version of the same plan, from a forthcoming MoLAS publication (Figure 3; Cowan in prep). It represents the current thinking on the ancient topography, and will in due course be modified, perhaps only slightly, by even more recent excavations to the east at 5–27 Long Lane by PCA (Douglas in prep). The main fact to consider is that St George's church lies over the line of a prehistoric stream or channel between two islands; perhaps, from recent work, the north wall of the church is roughly on the north side of the channel, several metres below.

1.3.4 Two external boreholes were undertaken as part of the 1997 evaluation work; one (BH1) to the east of the church and the other (BH2) in the north churchyard. Clean alluvial sands were found in both, at a depth of 4–4.5 m below ground surface, which would put them at +1.1 m OD. In one of the external test pits (TP3) against the north wall, near the east end, 'possibly naturally lain river gravels' were recorded at 3.6 m below ground level or +1.75 m OD, which is high. This might be the north bank of the stream which roughly coincides with the north wall of the church in the most recent interpretation (Figure 3). However, the trial pit evidence must be treated with caution as the holes were very small.

1.3.5 At 201–211 Borough High Street, natural sands were found at about 0 m OD, i.e. at Ordnance Datum. These were cut into by ditches, so the bottom of human-made strata could be slightly lower; and St George's apparently lies mainly over the depression between two islands, so the lower limit of such strata may well be below OD. The latest map (Figure 3) suggests that the broad edge of the channel, in the 1st century AD, was at about -0.5 m OD in the region of the north side of the church. Deposits in the channel itself will be even deeper. The PCA excavation, on the site of the north bank of the channel about 80 m directly east of the church, found a Bronze Age wooden platform and hints that the islands or eyots of Southwark were sites of cultivation in the Bronze Age.

- **Roman (AD 43-410)**

1.3.6 Southwark begins as a place in the Roman period, that is the 1st century AD, with the linking of several low gravel islands on the south side of the estuarine Thames by causeways or roads, on foundations often of timbers. The main road led to the south end of the Roman bridge across the Thames.

1.3.7 St George's lies about 800 m south of the bridgehead. The nature of the Roman strata hereabouts can be ascertained from work particularly of the 1970s at 201–211

Borough High Street immediately north of the church (SLAEC 1978, 53–176), together with suggestions from other sites (Figures 2-3).

1.3.8 Two Roman roads conventionally called Stane Street and Watling Street seem to have joined, approximately 80 m south of the church site, and thereafter a single road struck north. This road had to cross a depression between two of Southwark's sand and gravel islands, and St George's lies partly over and west of the road as it crosses that depression. The road itself has been found to the north at two sites (201–211 Borough High Street and 213 Borough High Street) and to the south at Arcadia Buildings in Great Dover Street (Figure 2, sites I, J and N). The information from the two sites to the north, which are close to the church, is referred to here. Note that of the two Roman figures, the site outline added to Fig 2 is the church and existing churchyard site, whereas the church building itself is shown on Fig 3. This shows that the projected line of the Roman road just underlies the north-east corner of the church.

1.3.9 On sites to the north of the church, the Roman road and its foundations were between 1.5 m and 2 m thick, surviving to +2 m OD. There were two layers of corduroy timbers in its base to provide stability as it approached the channel on the south. Remains of stone buildings, possibly of 4th-century date, were found on the east side of the road; they were robbed in the medieval period, but this does not necessarily mean they were then visible above ground. The two boreholes of 1977, one immediately east of the church and one on the north side, found about 1 m of silt and gravel layers with Roman material in them. It may therefore be suggested that Roman occupation strata, where not cut into by later intrusions, will be about 1 m deep.

1.3.10 At 5–27 Long Lane, the PCA excavation found evidence in the form of a grid of posts of a Roman (1st century) platform extending into the stream. Their remains reached 0.7 m OD, but the lost original floor of the structure must have been higher. After a period of reclamation from the marsh, buildings were constructed, which lasted into the 3rd century. These levels were generally at about +1 m OD. The existence of a platform does not necessarily mean that the whole of the north bank of the stream had waterfront structures along it, but shows that the bank may have been modified in various ways by the Romans.

- **Saxon and medieval (AD 410-1500)**

1.3.11 Where strata survive, dark earth of the Saxon period and medieval pits are to be expected; from the 13th century the frontage to what would become Borough High Street was built up. At 201–11 Borough High Street medieval levels survived to 3.0 m OD.

1.3.12 The parish church of St George the Martyr was granted to the monks of Bermondsey Abbey in 1122 by Thomas de Arden and his son Thomas. The church, which was rebuilt at the end of the 14th century, is shown in Wyngaerde's panorama (1540), with its large west tower. It was restored in 1629, after which it measured 69 ft (21.04 m) in length 'to the altar rails' and 60 ft (18.3 m) in width – to within 0.3 m, exactly

the same width as the present building. The tower was 98 ft high (Carlin 1990, 46); it is possible, though not yet ascertained, that the tower of 1735 incorporates its predecessor. The pre-1735 church is shown crudely in map-views of Southwark of the late 17th century.

- **Post-medieval (AD 1500+)**

1.3.13 The present church dates from 1735. Its form and decorative details have been recorded by the Survey of London (*St George's Fields* volume, 1955, 26–38). The present internal church floor level is at 5.8 m OD, and the single crypt below the nave has its floor at about 2.55 m OD.

1.3.14 Since the consecration of the present church in 1736, a number of remedial works have been undertaken. These include the alteration of the steps at the front of the church in 1791 and 'substantial repairs' to the exterior in 1806. In 1899 the Crypt was cleared and 1,484 coffins removed and re-interred at Brookwood Cemetery (where the site is marked by an obelisk).

1.3.15 In 1930 some repairs were made to the tower, spire and crypt. Evidence for subsidence led to the strengthening of the foundations of the south wall in 1938 which may have saved the building from collapse during the Second World War. The considerable damage caused during the War led to a thorough restoration in 1951/2.

- **The 1997 evaluation**

1.3.16 Five test pits and two boreholes were archaeologically monitored. The location of the test pits is shown in Figure 4b. The conclusions in the evaluation report are reproduced below.

1.3.17 Evidence from TP1 and TP2 suggests that there may be a considerable number of lead coffins present along the inside wall of the main crypt and beneath the floors of the side chambers. Although the seams of all the lead coffins encountered had failed in antiquity, a quantity of coffin liquor was present in at least one coffin. It is reasonably certain that these burials represent re-interments made during re-flooring work in 1899-1900. In addition it seems likely that significant numbers of poorly preserved *in situ* wooden coffin burials lie below areas of surviving brick pavement in the main crypt. All burials encountered during the excavation of TP1 and TP2 seem to relate to the existing church building.

1.3.18 A short section of wall and associated footings exposed in TP2 was apparently unrelated to the existing building. The broadly medieval character of the construction of this feature suggests that it is part of an earlier building, perhaps an earlier phase of the church. Although part of this old wall had been removed by the foundation trench of the crypt wall and by the lead coffin reburial trench, further standing masonry remains predating the existing church may survive immediately below the buried brick pavement.

1.3.19 A possible Roman occupation layer identified in BH1 and perhaps in BH2 may be associated with settlement alongside the line of Roman Watling Street (Jones 1997, fig. 7). Although it could not be confirmed stratigraphically, residual Roman pottery from TP3 and TP4 may indicate that the foundation trench of the north wall of the church has cut this probable Roman level. A layer of compacted charcoal and burnt clay associated with Roman pottery at the base of context 34 in BH1 is present at a similar depth in BH2 (approximately 4 m below ground level), perhaps suggesting that a significant area of well preserved stratigraphy survives.

1.3.20 The test pits along the north wall of the church (TP3, 4 and 5) show evidence of considerable disturbance to approximately 3.8 m below ground level. The uppermost 800 mm of the ground beside the northern wall possibly represents loose material removed from the crypt during the clearance works of 1899. The pre-1899 surface level of this area containing a possible grave cut may be represented in this section.

2 EVALUATION AIMS

2.1.1 The Project Design set out the site-specific objectives and questions to be addressed by the evaluation as follows:

- 1. To understand further the history of the site, from its beginnings (which might be further illuminated by this project) to the 20th century; and as a significant part, the history of the successive churches on the site.
- 2. By means of the evaluation work, to complete the assessment of the extent in three dimensions, quality and significance of the strata which might be affected by the PCC's development proposals.
- 3. What is the basic topography beneath the site, and can future investigations furnish useful environmental material?
- 4. Do Roman buildings or occupation levels survive? [It is likely that only the west side of the road will be recorded within the church footprint]
- 5. What happened here in the late Roman period and Saxon centuries?
- 6. What was the form and date of the earliest church? Where was the general medieval ground level?
- 7. Do any internal features of the pre-1735 church survive? [The medieval tower may be incorporated into the present church].
- 8. What is the character and extent of any medieval burials, either inside or outside the medieval church?
- 9. What is the extent of post-1735 burials beneath the floors of the side aisles? These could be individual burials or in vaults. A radar survey was conducted in September 2001, but concluded only that while there was 'no evidence to suggest that...large vaults, similar to that beneath the central aisle, exist beneath the two side aisles and pews. However, there is evidence of what may be smaller vaults beneath the floor in the vicinity of some of the gravestones which form part of the floor.' The pews are of the early 19th century, and cover most of the church floor area; so it may be presumed that no burials after approximately 1807 were made beneath the footprint of the pews.[It is likely that brick- built single-shaft graves of 18th-century and early 19th-century date survive beneath the floor of the church. Such burials would not necessarily be marked by ledgers.]

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork

3.1.1 Two alternative methods of evaluation were defined and discussed, both of which were allowed as permissible by the Archaeology Officer of LB Southwark (who is also the DAC Archaeological Advisor) and were outlined in the Project Design produced by OA in advance of the evaluation.

3.1.2 In effect, circumstances encountered during the evaluation necessitated the implementation of a combination of the two methods as follows:

3.1.3 In the crypt, a trench (Trench A - Figure 4a) measuring 4.2 m by 1m was broken out towards the east end of the crypt and excavated to a depth of 2.8 m below the level of the crypt floor (2.5 m OD). Although this trench was initially intended to be 2 m by 1 m and 1.5 m in depth, the presence of a brick barrel vault within the main body of the initial excavation - and the depth of the strata encountered - necessitated the western and downward extension of the trench in order to properly characterise the stratigraphic sequence beneath the crypt floor.

3.1.4 In the north aisle of the church, a trench (Trench B - Figure 4b) measuring 2 m by 1 m was broken out adjacent to the third bay window from the west. This was initially intended to be 1.5 m deep and the strata below this depth were to be observed by the removal of brickwork in the south-east chamber of the crypt. However, as the assisting contractor was able to shore to a considerable depth, and unforeseen structural implications negated the possibility of removing the brickwork in the crypt, an alternative method was employed. This involved the downward extension of Trench B to a depth of 4.4 m below the floor of the north aisle (1.46 m OD) and the drilling of two cores through the brickwork in the south-east chamber of the crypt, to establish the thickness of the wall and the nature of the deposits behind it.

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

3.2.1 The trenches were cleaned by hand and the revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds. All archaeological features were planned and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20. All features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

3.3 Finds

3.3.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and generally bagged by context.

3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence

3.4.1 No environmental samples were taken during the evaluation although a number of potential palaeochannel deposits were identified for which a sampling strategy may be required if they are to be impacted during the main phase of works.

3.5 Presentation of results

3.5.1 A description of the deposits and features observed during the evaluation is presented in section 4 below with a more generalised interpretive discussion in section 6.

4 RESULTS: GENERAL

4.1 Soils and ground conditions

4.1.1 With the exception of the barrel vault and 18th-century construction deposits, the majority of the deposits within Trench A comprised medieval and post-medieval soil horizons overlying probable palaeochannel deposits. Although the trench was excavated to -0.3 m OD, the ground conditions remained relatively dry.

4.1.2 Many of the deposits within Trench B comprised 18th-century made ground and were comparitively loose (particularly 211). Ground conditions were dry.

5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

5.1 Description of deposits

- ***Trench A*** *- Figures 5 and 6*

5.1.1 Trench A was excavated at the eastern end of the crypt. The initial 2 m long trench was extended to 4.2 m due to the presence of a brick barrel vault within the original excavation (see below). A *c* 1 m x 1 m sondage was excavated towards the western end of the trench to a maximum depth of 2.8 m below ground level (bgl) or -0.3 m OD.

5.1.2 A sterile mid orange brown gravel (120) was encountered at -0.3 m OD (2.8 m bgl) which was interpreted as natural gravel. However, it was overlain by a 0.8 m thick series of deposits (113-117 and 119) which almost certainly represent fills of a palaeochannel, and it is feasible that 120 is a lower fill of the same channel (refer to context inventory in appendix 1 for soil descriptions).

5.1.3 These deposits were overlain by a 0.4 m thick layer of tenacious, mid-dark grey silty clay (112) which was in turn overlain by a pale brown sandy gravel deposit (118). Overlying 118 was a layer of dark grey clay silt (111) which was overlain by a deposit similar in composition to 118 (110). The origin and date of these deposits is uncertain but it is possible that they represent occupation horizons.

5.1.4 Deposit 110 was overlain by a mid grey clay silt with *c*10% gravel pebbles (100) which may equate to the ?medieval soil (214) observed in Trench B (see below).

5.1.5 Truncating these deposits to a depth of *c*0.55 m OD (2 m bgl) was the construction cut (101) for a brick barrel vault (104). The vault appears to have been constructed of very roughly coursed brick rubble (107) apart from the upper 5 courses which are well constructed. The upper courses of the vault appear to have been truncated during ground reduction prior to the deposition of a layer of made ground (108). This formed the foundation for a brick surface (109) forming the floor of the 1735 crypt. This would suggest a pre-1734 date for the vault.

5.1.6 The brick floor had subsequently been overlain by a 0.3 m thick layer of rough concrete (105) as bedding for the existing concrete floor (106) of the crypt.

- ***Trench B*** - *Figures 7 and 8*

5.1.7 Trench B was excavated against the north wall of the church to a maximum depth of 1.46 m OD (4.4 m bgl). A sterile and compacted orange brown sand (220) was encountered at 1.66 m OD (4.2 m bgl) and interpreted as natural drift geology. This was overlain by two layers of mid orange brown gravel in a sandy clay matrix (222 and 218), interspersed with bands of mid grey sandy silt (221) and mid grey clay silt (223), all of which were loosely interpreted as deposits associated with the palaeochannel (Figure 8). Overlying the uppermost of these deposits was a mid grey clayey silt soil (214) through which three burials (217, 212 and 209) had been cut.

5.1.8 All three of these burials had been truncated by the construction cut (213) for the stepped footing (205) for the north wall of the church (206). For the upper 3 m of the cut (between 5.11 m and 2.86 m OD), the southern edge appears to roughly coincide with the southern edge of Trench B. Whilst the majority of the trench was excavated through 18th-century construction cut backfill, there also appeared to be 'undistubed' stratigraphy immediately to the south of the trench. This was evidenced by the presence of an apparently in-situ skull and mandible (209) with associated coffin stains visible in the southernmost section at approximately 5.06 m OD (0.8 m bgl).

5.1.9 At the western end of the trench the cut steps north 0.4 m at 2.36 m OD. However 0.6 m from the eastern end of the trench it continues to a depth of 2.86 m OD before stepping north. Within this deeper section of the wider cut was a square cut void (215) with vertical sides which was at least 0.5 m deep. It is possible that this represents a scaffold hole associated with the construction of the stepped footing (205). Below this point the construction cut was visible in plan approximately 0.42 m south of the lowest step of footing 205 and sloped at approximately 80° to the base of the rubble foundation.

5.1.10 The construction cut appears to have been excavated through the soft ground of deposit 214 and underlying channel deposits (218, 221-223) to the solid base of the compacted sand (220). A foundation of stone, flint and brick rubble (224) had then been deposited in the base of the cut prior to the construction of the stepped footing (205). The lower steps are of alternating stone and brick construction, whereas the upper steps are exclusively of brick. The primary backfill (219) of the construction cut comprised a mid grey clayey silt with brick rubble and charnel throughout, this

was overlain by a *c* 1 m thick deposit of charnel (211) which was deposited in distinct concentrations of long bones, skulls etc. Overlying the charnel was a *c* 0.35 m thick layer of building rubble (210). The main fill of the construction cut consisted of re-deposited soil with lenses of mortar and *c* 10% charnel, with brick and tile throughout (200).

5.1.11 The upper fill of 213 was overlain by *c* 0.7 m of 18th-century made ground over which was a rough concrete bedding (204) for the existing paved surface.

- ***Cores through the west wall of the south-east chamber of the crypt***

5.1.12 Two 0.2 m diameter cores were drilled through the west wall of the south-east chamber of the crypt. These revealed the wall to be approximately 1.12 m thick and the deposits behind comprised ?18th-century brick rubble and charnel (300 and 301). This is likely to be backfill of the construction cut for the wall, similar to that observed within Trench B.

5.2 **Finds**

5.3 *Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn*

5.3.1 The pottery assemblage comprised 12 sherds with a total weight of 1017g. The group was all medieval or later, with the exception of 5 sherds (732g) of Romano-British material.

5.3.2 The fabric codes utilized are those of the Museum of London post-Roman type-series (Vince 1985; Blackmore 1988), as follows:

SHER: S. Herts./Limpsfield grey wares, 1140-1300. 1 sherd, 32g.
CBW: Coarse border ware, 1270-1500. 2 sherds, 42g.
BORDY: Yellow-glazed Border ware, 1550-1700. 1 sherd, 60g.
PMR, Post-medieval redware, 1580-1900. 2 sherds, 146g.
SWSG: Staffordshire white salt-glazed stoneware, 1720-1780. 1 sherd, 5g.

5.3.3 The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*.

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

	RB		SHER		CBW		BORDY		PMR		SWSG		
Context	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	Date
100	1	74	1	32									M12thC
111	1	6			2	42							14thC
202							1	60	2	146	1	5	E18thC
211	2	613											RB
219	1	39											RB
Total	5	732	1	32	2	42	1	60	2	146	1	5	

5.4 *Human Remains by Ceri Boston*

Introduction

5.4.1 The human remains discovered within Trench B consisted of a *c* 1 m deep layer of charnel (211) and the incomplete skeletal remains of two individuals (209 and 212) buried within the earlier church. Osteological analysis was undertaken on the two articulated skeletons but not on the disarticulated remains, the information obtainable from the latter deemed to be less valuable. Bone preservation of all bone was found to be good, and full osteological analysis of the two skeletons was possible.

Charnel

5.4.2 The charnel (211) represents human remains from earlier intramural or extramural burials which probably were disturbed during the rebuilding of the later church, and re-deposited within the backfill of the foundation trench. The re-deposited bone had

been sorted into elements, with skulls and long bones arranged in discrete piles. It is clear that the individuals were already skeletonised before being disturbed. The exact age of this material is unknown but could date from any time between the thirteenth and early eighteenth centuries. The charnel principally consisted of the largest bones of the skeleton. Long bones (particularly femurs and tibiae) and skulls predominated, but pelvii and vertebrae were also present. The minimum and maximum number of individuals were not quantified in this evaluation. Bone preservation was good.

Burial 209

5.4.3 The skull of an adult male individual was revealed protruding from the northern section of Trench B, during trimming for shoring. No associated grave cut could be discerned in section but darker staining of the adjacent soil suggests the presence of a coffin. The skull was found face-down, with the mandible closely associated. These were removed for osteological analysis. The presence of the mandible with the skull suggests that, unlike the charnel 211, this skeleton was not re-deposited but within its origin burial context. This interpretation is reinforced by the potential presence of a coffin.

5.4.4 It seems feasible that the head of the coffin was just clipped by the 1736 construction cut, the rest extending further westwards into the undisturbed intramural space on a west-east orientation.

Osteological analysis

5.4.5 The adult skull of 209 was aged by ectocranial suture closure (Meindl and Lovejoy 1985). Miles' (1962) dental attrition model was applied but was not successful, profoundly under-ageing the individual. The coronal and lambdoid sutures remained completely unfused, whilst the sagittal suture was less than 25% fused. This indicates an age at death between 31-41 years.

5.4.6 Sexing of the adult was determined from cranial morphology (Buikstra and Ubelaker 1991). The skull showed predominantly male characteristics.

5.4.7 No skeletal pathology was observed. Dental pathology was present, however. Dental enamel hypoplasia (DEH) was present on 15 of the 22 teeth (68.1%). DEH is the thinning of enamel of the tooth crown, which presents as a horizontal line or pit on the buccal surface of tooth crowns. DEH is indicative of prolonged episodes of malnutrition or infection, lasting several weeks, in early childhood when tooth enamel of the permanent dentition is forming (Goodman and Rose 1990). Between one and three lines per tooth were observed on the dentition of skeleton 209, indicating at least three episodes of prolonged ill health in childhood.

5.4.8 Slight to moderate calculus was observed on 24 of the 26 teeth (99.2%) present. Calculus is mineralised plaque which accumulates at the base of a living plaque deposit and deposits on the crowns of the teeth. Calculus is thought to reflect poor oral hygiene (Roberts and Manchester 1997). Cleaning of teeth using either cloths or brushes and tooth powder was virtually unknown in England before the 18th century

(Hillam 1990), and hence the presence of calculus on the teeth of skeleton 209 is not surprising. Poor dental hygiene and a diet high in carbohydrates also predisposes to the development of dental caries. One large carious lesion (3.8%) was observed on the buccal surface of the lower right second molar.

Burial 212

5.4.9 Burial 212, a child, is the more complete of the two burials found associated with Trench B, but had been severely truncated by construction cut 213. Thus, the burial predates 1736. In common with prevailing Christian burial practices of this period, the skeleton was orientated west-east in a supine extended position. Remnants of simple coffin fittings were also discovered, and are discussed below. Due to truncation, only the skull, upper torso, vertebrae and right pelvis and arm were extant, and could be analysed osteologically.

Coffin fittings

5.4.10 The child appears to have been buried within a simply decorated wooden coffin. Remnants of wood and dark staining of the surrounding deposit 216 attests to the presence of the coffin, as do wood fragments adhering to the reverse of the iron grip plate. Twelve iron coffin nails were also recovered. The wooden coffin appears to have been decorated with iron studs. Two lozenges, each composed of nine iron studs, and a row of three studs were recovered. The grip plate was corroded, but appeared to have been of plain design. Two iron coffin grips were likewise corroded.

5.4.11 When comparing this coffin furniture with those recorded from the mid 18th to early 19th century burials at Christ Church, Spitalfields (Reeve and Adams 1993), no stylistic matches could be made. This is probably because this burial predates the Spitalfields burials by at least 30 years, possibly much more. Coffin furniture of this earlier period is not well understood. Litten (1991) reports that the decoration of coffins with upholstery, stud-work and grip-plates does not predate 1660-1675. Deposition plates are seldom found on coffins of this period. Instead, the studs on the coffin lid were used to spell out the initials, age and date of death of the deceased. Thus, the coffin furniture associated with burial 212 suggests a burial date no earlier than the late 17th century.

Osteological analysis

5.4.12 Skeleton 212 was aged by dental development (Moorrees *et al* 1963). Due to the incompleteness of the long bones, ageing by diaphyseal long bone length (Maresh in Hoppa 1992) was not possible. Ageing by the sequence of epiphyseal fusion (Bass 1987; Schwarz 2000) was also limited by the low number of diaphyses present. Age was estimated between 10.25- 13.5 years (mean age of 12 years).

5.4.13 No attempt was made to sex the subadult, in accordance with accepted practice.

5.4.14 Skeleton 212 displayed a number of dental and skeletal pathologies indicative of chronic or repeated prolonged episodes of ill health. Dental enamel hypoplasia was observed on the buccal surface of the crowns of many teeth. Skeleton 212 displayed a

prevalence of 53.8% (14/26). Up to three lines were observed on a single tooth, indicating at least three episodes of ill health in early childhood.

5.4.15 Bilaterally the eye orbits displayed active Stage 4 *Cribra orbitalia.* This condition is thought to indicate the presence of iron deficiency anaemia in childhood, usually associated with inadequate dietary intake of iron and/or infestation by intestinal parasites (Stuart-Macadam and Kent 1992). In skeleton 212, this condition was pronounced and ongoing at the time of death.

5.4.16 The causation of prolonged illness in this child may in part or in totality be related to the tuberculosis from which the child was suffering at the time of death. Whilst no bony changes were observed on the visceral surfaces of the ribs, the bodies of the lower thoracic vertebrae (T5-T12) displayed lesions typical of this disease. The lesions were purely lytic, presenting as numerous smooth-walled cavities (2 x 5 mm in diameter and penetrating to a depth of 4 mm) in the trabecular bone. In places where lesions were multiple, the cortical surface of the vertebral bodies had become thinned and of honey-comb appearance. Tuberculosis is caused by the transmission of the bacterium *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* by droplet infection and via contaminated meat and dairy products. The incidence of tuberculosis rose steadily from the Middle Ages onwards. The overcrowded, poorly ventilated habitation and malnutrition of many of the poor of urban industrial centres created an ideal environment for the spread of the disease from the 17th century onwards (Roberts and Manchester 1997). The London Bills of Mortality for the years 1660-1740 attributed between 12-20% of deaths in London to this disease (ibid). It would appear that skeleton 212 was one of this number.

5.4.17 In addition to tuberculosis, skeleton 212 suffered another form of chronic infection. Bilaterally, the normal bone of the maxillary sinuses was overlaid by a layer of woven bone which extended over the inferior, lateral and superior surfaces. These inflammatory changes are usually indicative of chronic sinusitis, secondary to allergy and/or prolonged exposure to poor ventilation and polluted sooty air (Aufderheide and Rodriguez-Martin 1998). Air pollution in urban areas became severe during the Industrial Revolution, such that the Borough of Southwark in the 18th century was described as being " cover'd by a cloud of smoke, most people being employed in lighting fires" (Werner in Roberts and Cox 2003). Chronic sinusitis in this individual probably was related to this air pollution.

5.4.18 Skeleton 212 displayed an unusual non-metric trait of an open metopic suture.

Catalogue

5.4.19 The dental notation employed in the catalogue is as follows:

/ post mortem loss	X ante mortem loss
C caries	A abscess
NP not present	U unerupted
E erupting	PE pulp exposed
k calculus	- alveolus and tooth absent

- *Skeleton 209*

Burial not excavated in its entirety- only skull observed. Body position unknown. Staining in fill around body suggestive of a coffin.

Skull and mandible only
Preservation very good
Male, aged 31-41 years
Pathology: dental enamel hypoplasia; caries x 1 ; calculus

8 7 6 5 4 3 / /	/ / 3 / 5 6 7 8
8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	1 2 / 4 5 6 7 8 C

- *Skeleton 212*

Supine, extended skeleton orientated west-east. Laid out within wooden coffin (coffin fittings and nails present); green staining on left zygoma and maxilla suggests copper alloy shroud pin overlying face.

Lower limbs, left pelvis and left arm truncated by cut 213.
Older child (10.25-13.13.5 years); sex unknown
Pathology: spinal tuberculosis; C*ribra orbitalia* Stage 4; chronic sinusitis; dental enamel hypoplasia;
Non-metric trait: open metopic suture

U 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	U 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

5.5 *Palaeo-environmental remains*

5.5.1 No environmental samples were taken.

6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Reliability of field investigation

6.1.1 Given the limited nature of the trenches, interpretation of the deposits observed is by necessity somewhat tenuous. However, a number of conclusions can be drawn.

6.2 Overall interpretation

6.2.1 It would appear from the nature of the deposits observed within Trench B that the existing church floor overlies *c* 0.7 m of 18th-century made ground (201-204 and 207-208), which in turn overlies in-situ pre-1734 soils (214) and associated burials (217, 212 and 209), except where truncated by the construction cut (ie 213) for the walls of the standing building, and presumably a large construction trench for the crypt.

6.2.2 Similarly, the concrete floor of the crypt overlies the original brick floor (109), which in turn overlies *c* 0.50 m of 18th-century made ground (108), which overlies the lower

part of deposit 214 (100). The deposits underlying this soil, whilst not fully characterised, may relate to earlier phases of activity on the site.

6.2.3 The identification of drift geology at 1.66 m OD in Trench B and potentially at -0.3 m OD in Trench A would suggest that the north wall of the church is constructed on the north bank of the palaeochannel with the south wall towards the centre of the same. This correlates with the projected course of the channel shown in Figure 3.

6.2.4 Although significant truncation has occurred during the construction of the 18th-century building, the evidence from Trench A, where pottery from deposit 111 yielded a 14th-century *terminus post quem*, would suggest that significantly earlier deposits survive beneath the existing crypt.

6.2.5 No medieval structural remains were found within the two trenches. However, a small quantity of roughly hewn stone within the construction cut for the barrel vault possibly suggests the truncation of a nearby wall during its construction. Additionally, the lower courses of the stepped footing for the north wall of the church contain several courses of well faced stone which may represent re-used masonry from the preceding building.

6.2.6 The composition and comparative depth of soils 100 and 214 would suggest that they form part of the same deposit and may represent soils which predate the construction of the earlier church, although they appear to have been extensively truncated and disturbed by activity associated with it. Alternatively they could represent layers which have been built up subsequent to the first churches construction. Although no burials were encountered within the crypt deposit (100), the three recorded within Trench B would suggest a reasonably high concentration of pre-1734 burials surviving to the south of the construction cut for the north wall. No burials were encountered truncating the backfill of this cut, which would suggest that the north aisle is relatively free of burials relating to the existing building.

6.2.7 The large quantity of charnel which formed a part of the construction cut backfill (211) could be similar to that recorded by Frederick Etchells during the repair of the south wall and its foundations in 1938. He described this deposit as 'masses of skulls and bones thrown together at the time of the rebuilding' (Survey of London, 1955, 29) which correlates with the concentrations of skulls and long bones removed during the excavation of Trench B. Given the grouping of particular bones in distinct concentrations, it is possible that the charnel originated from an ossary/charnel house, cleared out prior to the demolition of the pre-1734 building, the contents of which have been re-deposited as backfill.

6.2.8 It is likely that the barrel vault (104) is associated with the earlier church and its location beneath the altar would suggest a burial of some status. Only two pre-18th century memorials now remain within the church. These are on brass plates (presumably the reason for their survival) and commemorate '….ETHELDRED REYNELL DAUGHTER AND SOLE HEYRE TO Sr EDWARD PECOKE OF FINCHLEY Kt…' who died in 1618, and '…IOH IS IONES QUI MIGRAVIT…' ?... Jones who died in 1600.

6.2.9 In addition to these memorials, an extract from a document in the British Library (MS 6409) entitled 'Promiscuous Collections of Surry' and dated to the late 17th or early 18th century, records monuments to the following people in the vicinity of the Altar rail: James Savage (d. 1588), William Smith (d. 1678), Capt Robert Morris (d. ?) and most interestingly a 'large monument on the south side of the Altar erected at the charge of Mt. Tho. Lenthall second son of Sr John Lenthall in memory of his Brothers Sisters and other kindred it is adorned with the Names and respective coats of arms of such of his relations viz' (the author, John Aubrey, has apparently 'thought it too numerous to relate').

6.2.10 It is possible that one of these memorials may refer to burials within the barrel vault, although this can be no more than conjecture.

7 EVALUATION RESULTS IN RELATION TO PROJECT DESIGN OBJECTIVES

7.1.1 A number of the objectives identified in the Project Design (ref. Evaluation Aims - 2.1) can be addressed by the evaluation results.

7.1.2 Topographical evidence relating to the location of the palaeochannel appears to confirm the findings of Cowan (in prep.), and a number of the deposits interpreted as palaeochannel fills may be suitable for environmental sampling should the proposed development impact on them.

7.1.3 Pre-1735 burials certainly survive within the church footprint, although significant truncation has occurred during the construction of the current building and the coffin fittings examined would suggest that at least some of them relate to the later phase of the earlier church.

7.1.4 No post-1735 burials were encountered within the trenches.

7.1.5 No structural evidence for the earlier church was observed, with the exception of the potentially re-used masonry and the concentrations of charnel within the construction cut for the stepped wall footing of the standing wall.

7.1.6 No evidence for Roman or Saxon occupation was revealed with the exception of some residual pot sherds.

7.1.7 APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench	*Ctxt No*	*Type*	*Comment*	*Soil Description*	*Date*
A					
	100	Dep	Early church soil?	mid grey clay silt	Mid 12th C?
	101	Cut	Construction cut		p-med
	102	Fill	Fill of construction cut	mid greenish grey sandy silt	p-med
	103	Dep	Intrusive made ground	Tile	p-med
	104	Struct	Brick barrel vault	Brick	p-med
	105	Struct	C/crete bedding for 106	Concrete	Mod
	106	Struct	Concrete floor	Concrete	Mod
	107	Struct	Rubble base of 104	Brick	p-med
	108	Dep	18th C made ground	Construction debris	18th C
	109	Struct	18th C Brick floor	Brick	18th C
	110	Dep	Construction horizon?	Pale brown sand and gravel	?med
	111	Dep	Construction horizon?	mid-dark grey clay silt	14th C?
	112	Dep	Pre-12th C soil??	mid-dark grey clay silt	Pre-12th C?
	113	Dep	Channel deposit	mid brown peat	Pre-hist
	114	Dep	Channel deposit	Gravel	Pre-hist
	115	Dep	Channel deposit	Pale grey sand and clay	Pre-hist
	116	Dep	Channel deposit	mid-dark grey clay silt	Pre-hist
	117	Dep	Channel deposit	Sand	Pre-hist
	118	Dep	construction horizon?	Pale brown sand and gravel	?med
	119	Dep	Channel deposit	Gravel pebbles in blue grey clay matrix	Pre-hist
	120	Dep	Natural gravel??	mid orange brown gravel	
B					

	200	Fill	Construction cut backfill	Loose mid grey clayey silt with mortar lenses	18th C
	201	Dep	18th C Made ground	Crushed brick	18th C
	202	Dep	18th C Made ground	'hardcore' of chalk and stone pebbles, CBM, Slate & stone	18th C
	203	Dep	18th C Made ground	mid grey clay silt	18th C
	204	Dep	Bedding for paved floor	Rudimentary concrete	18th C
	205	Struct	Stepped wall footing	Brick and stone	18th C
	206	Struct	North wall of church	Brick	18th C
	207	Dep	18th C made ground	Mortar	18th C
	208	Dep	18th C made ground	Greenish grey clay silt	18th C
	209	Skel	In-situ burial	Skull only	?17th C
	210	Fill	Construction cut backfill	Construction debris	18th C
	211	Fill	Construction cut backfill	Charnel	18th C
	212	Skel	In-situ burial	Truncated by 213	?17th C
	213	Cut	Construction cut for 205		18th C
	214	Dep	Early church soil?	mid grey clay silt	?med
	215	Cut	Scaffold hole??		18th C
	216	Cut	Grave cut for 212		?17th C
	217	Skel	In-situ burial	Truncated by 213	?17th C
	218	Dep	Channel deposit?	Gravel in sandy clay	Pre-hist?
	219	Fill	Construction cut backfill	mid grey silty clay	18th C
	220	Dep	Natural sand	Compacted sand	
	221	Dep	Channel deposit?	mid grey sandy silt	Pre-hist?
	222	Dep	Channel deposit	Gravel in sandy clay	Pre-hist?
	223	Dep	Channel deposit	mid grey clay silt	Pre-hist?

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APPENDIX 3 GLSMR/RCHME NMR ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT FORM

1) TYPE OF RECORDING

Evaluation

2) LOCATION

Borough: **Southwark**

Site address: **St George the Martyr, Borough High Street, Southwark**

Site Name: **St George the Martyr** Site Code: **GMY 03**

Nat. grid Refs: **TQ 325 798**

3) ORGANISATION

Name of archaeological unit: **Oxford Archaeology**

Address: **Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 OES**

Site supervisor: **R.Bashford** Project manager: **D.Score**

Funded by: **The Parochial Church Council of St George the Martyr**

4) DURATION

Date fieldwork started **14.10.03** Date finished: **24.10.03**

Fieldwork previously notified? **YES**

Fieldwork will continue? **NOT KNOWN**

5) PERIODS REPRESENTED

Medieval (AD 1066-1485), Post-medieval, Unknown (Prehistoric ?)

6) PERIOD SUMMARIES

Prehistoric: Possible prehistoric channel. **Medieval:** Medieval made ground and possible occupation horizons. Elements associated with medieval church. **Post-medieval:** Construction of post medieval church and post medieval burials associated with later phases of earlier church.

7) NATURAL

Type: **Sand/gravel**

Height above Ordnance datum: **1.66 to -0.3 m OD**

8) LOCATION OF ARCHIVES

a) Please provide an estimate of the quantity of material in your possession for the following categories:

NOtes various PLans 4 PHotos Ngtives 3 films

SLides 3 films Correspondence: various MScripts (unpub reports, etc)

BUlk finds: 10 sherds pot SMall finds n/a SOil samples n/a

Sections: 4 Matrices: 2 Context sheets 38 +various indexes

b) The archive has been prepared and stored in accordance with MGC standards and will be deposited in the following location: **MoL**

c) Has a security copy of the archive been made?: **Not at present**

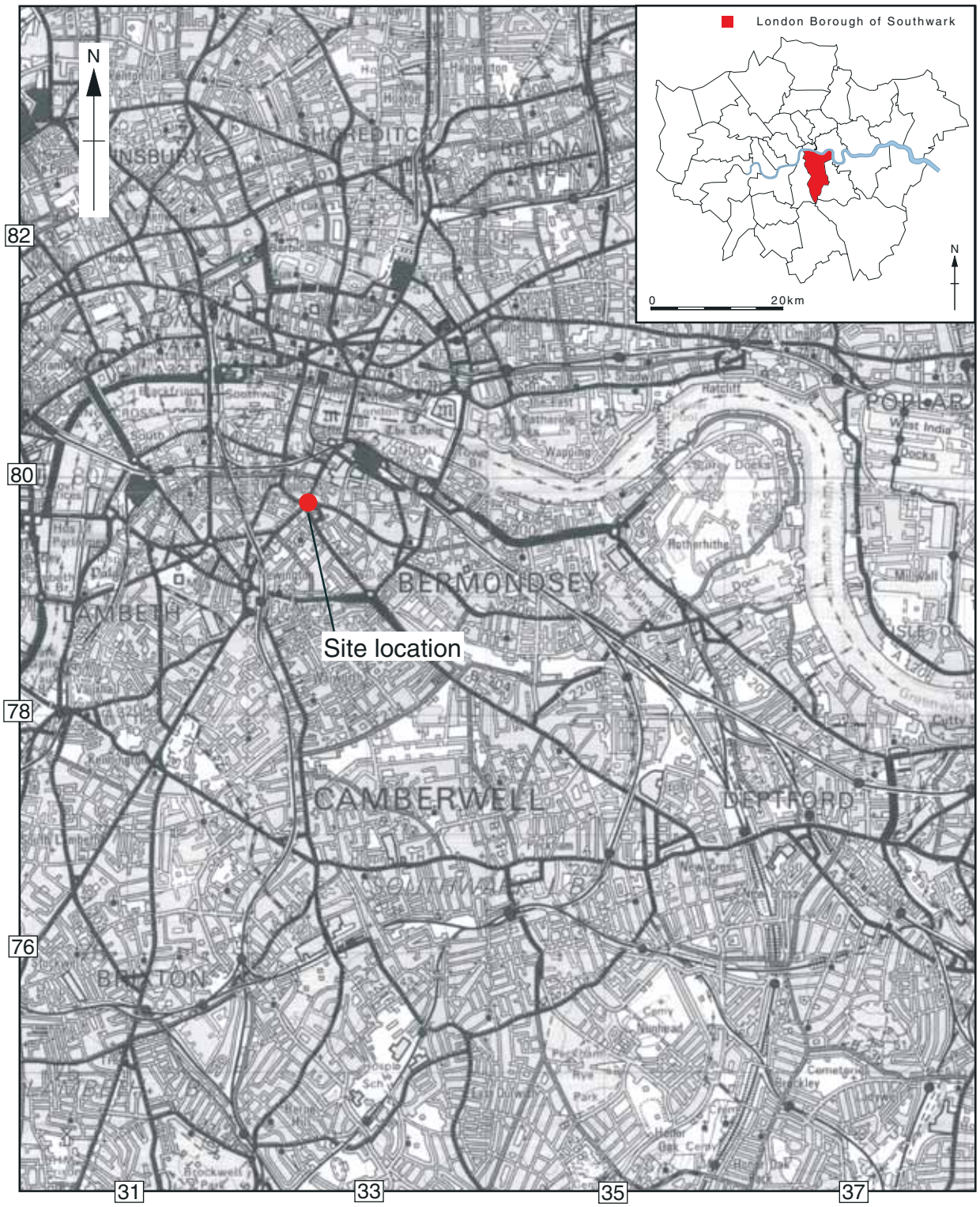


Figure 1: Site location

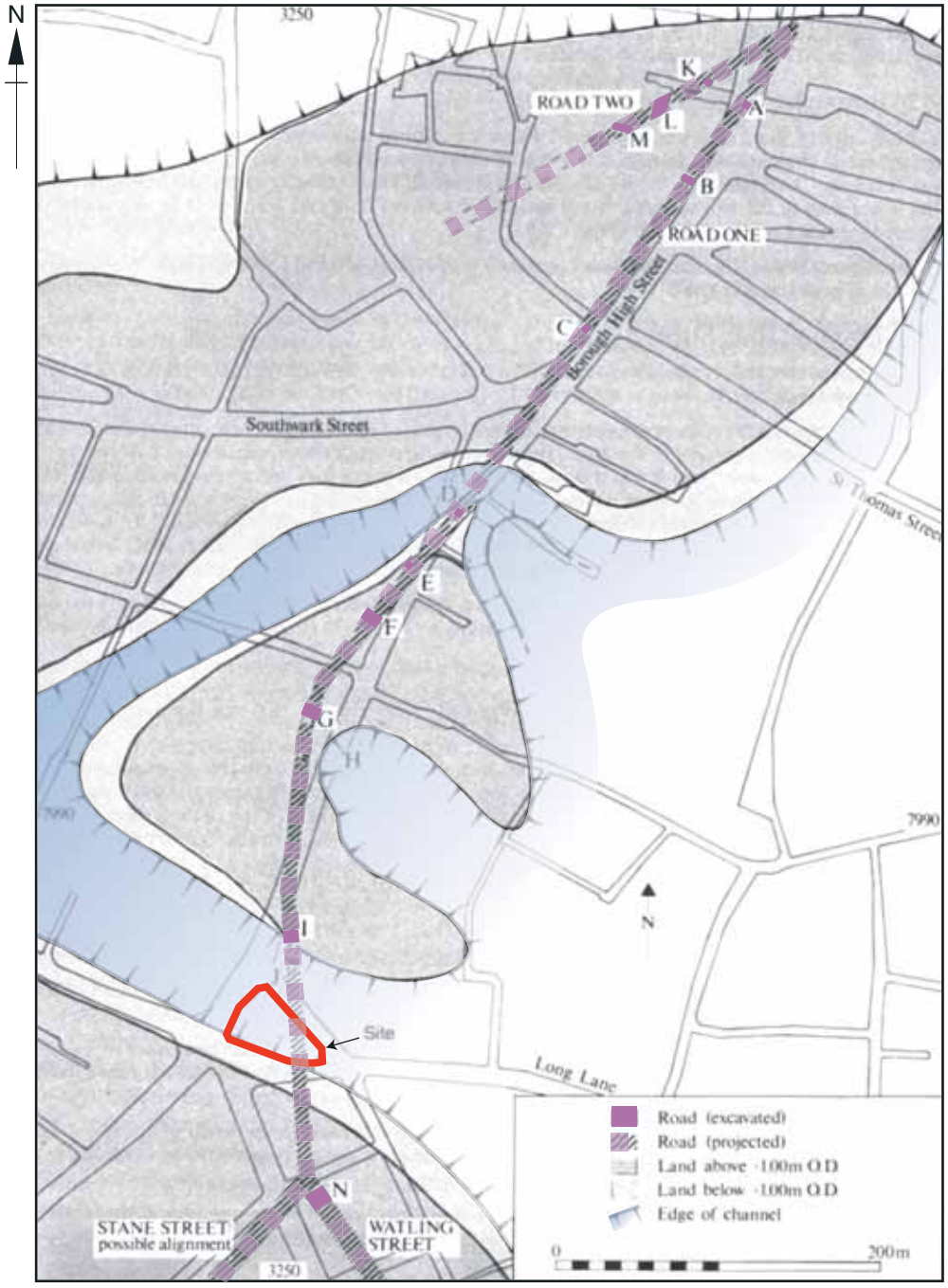


Figure 2: The Roman roads and streams in the vicinity of the church, from Graham and Hinton 1988. The site is marked in outline. Comparison with Fig 3 shows that work since 1988 has brought the lower contour (+0.5m OD) much nearer the church site.

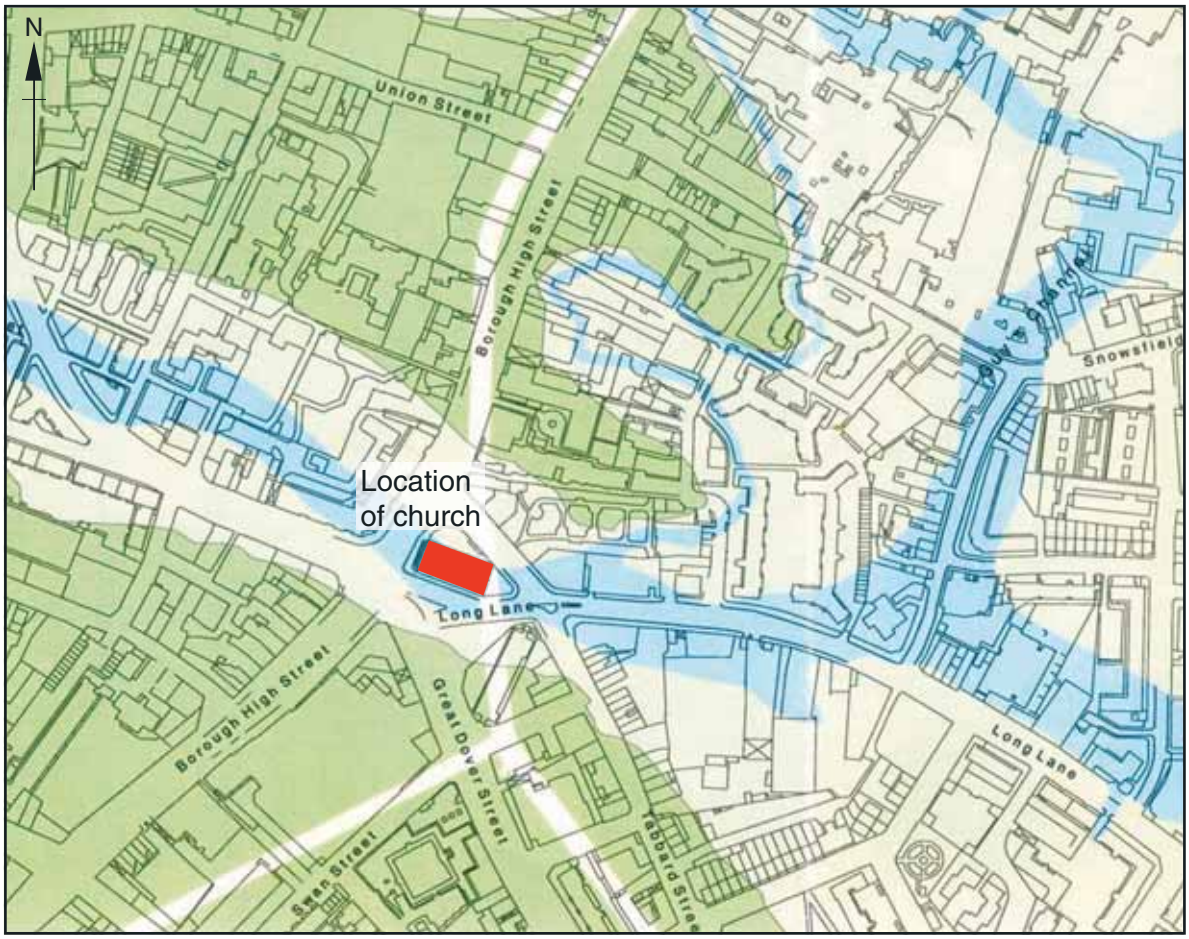


Figure 3: The Roman roads and streams in the vicinity of the church c 50 AD, from Cowan in prep. St George's church is shown as the rectangle within the triangle of the churchyard at the junction of Borough High Street and Long Lane. The darker green represents land at +1.m OD, the lighter green the surface at -0.5m OD. Current work by PCA may modify this.

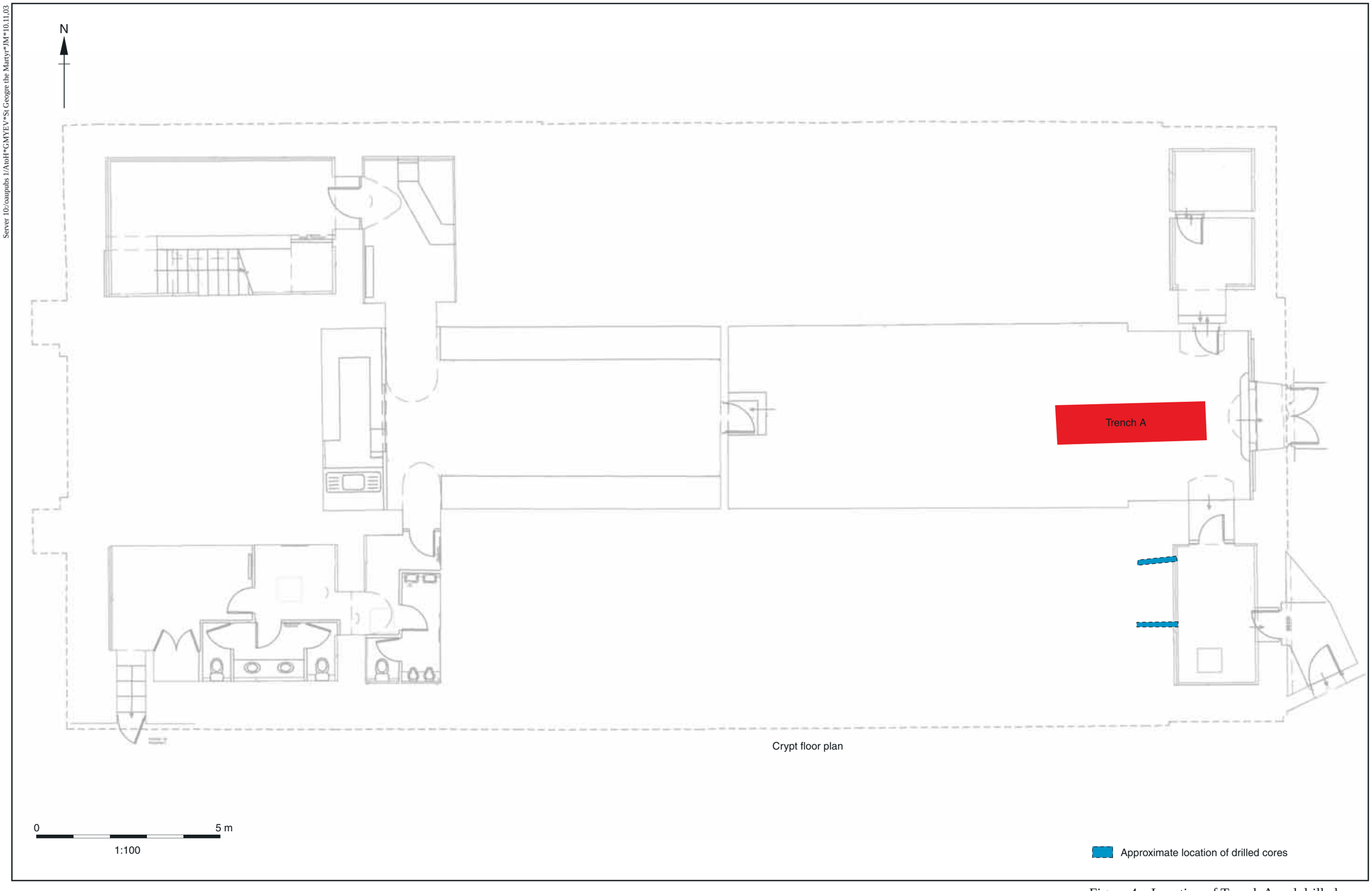
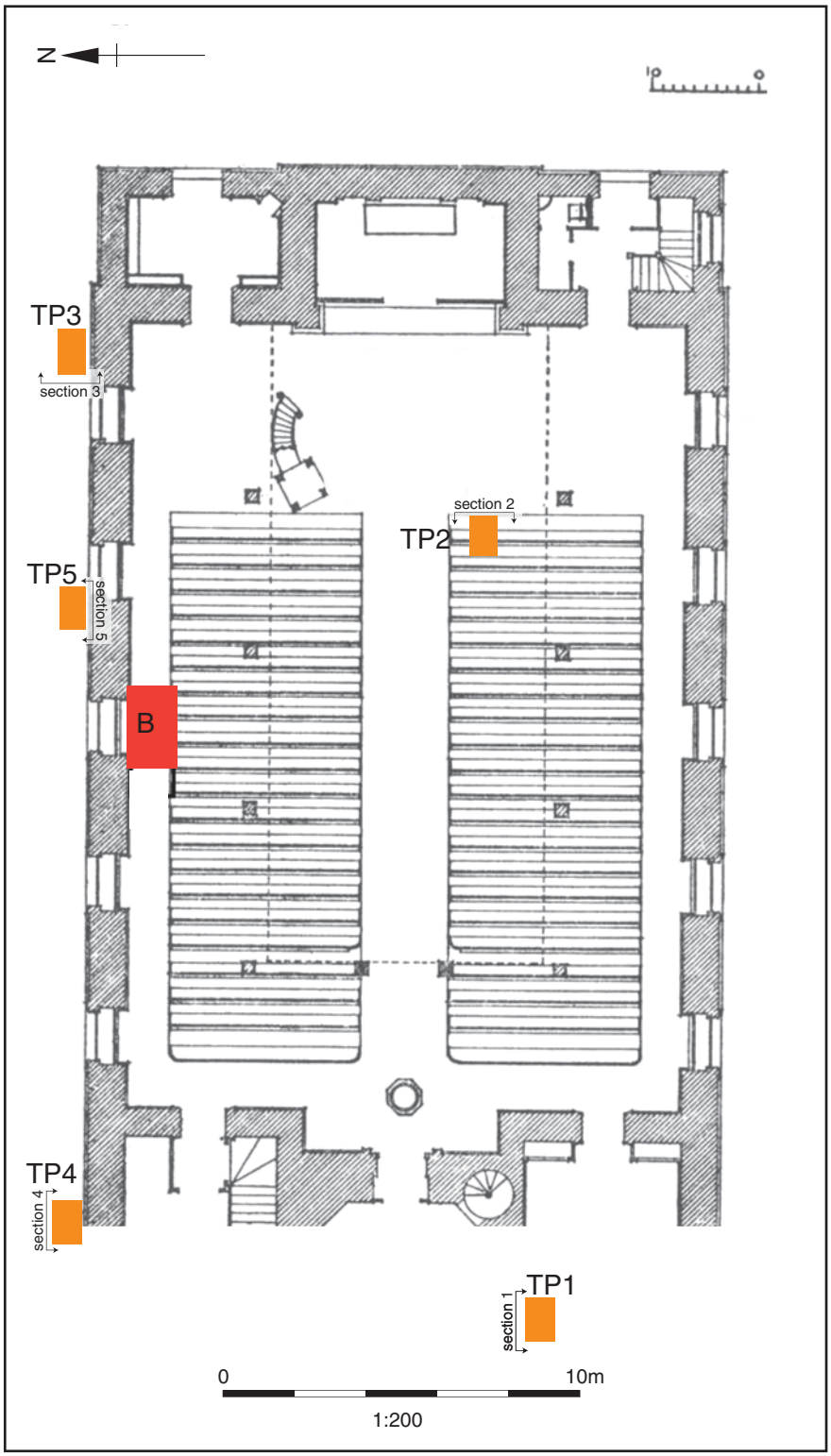


Figure 4a: Location of Trench A and drilled cores



KEY

Trench B

Test Pits excavated by Archaeology South-East

Figure 4b: Plan of the nave of the church, showing the positions of Trench B in the north aisle and the location of the 1997 Test pits

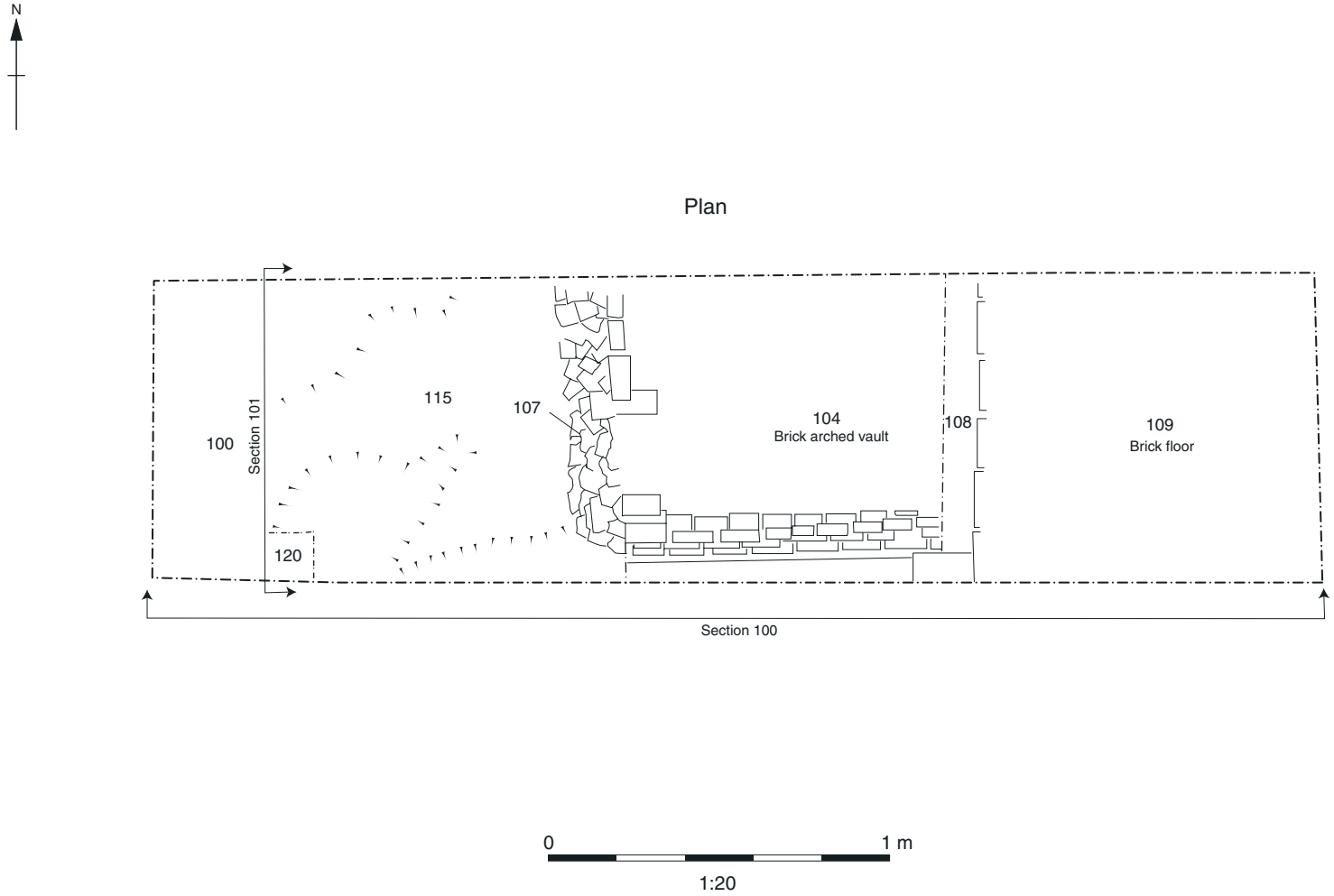
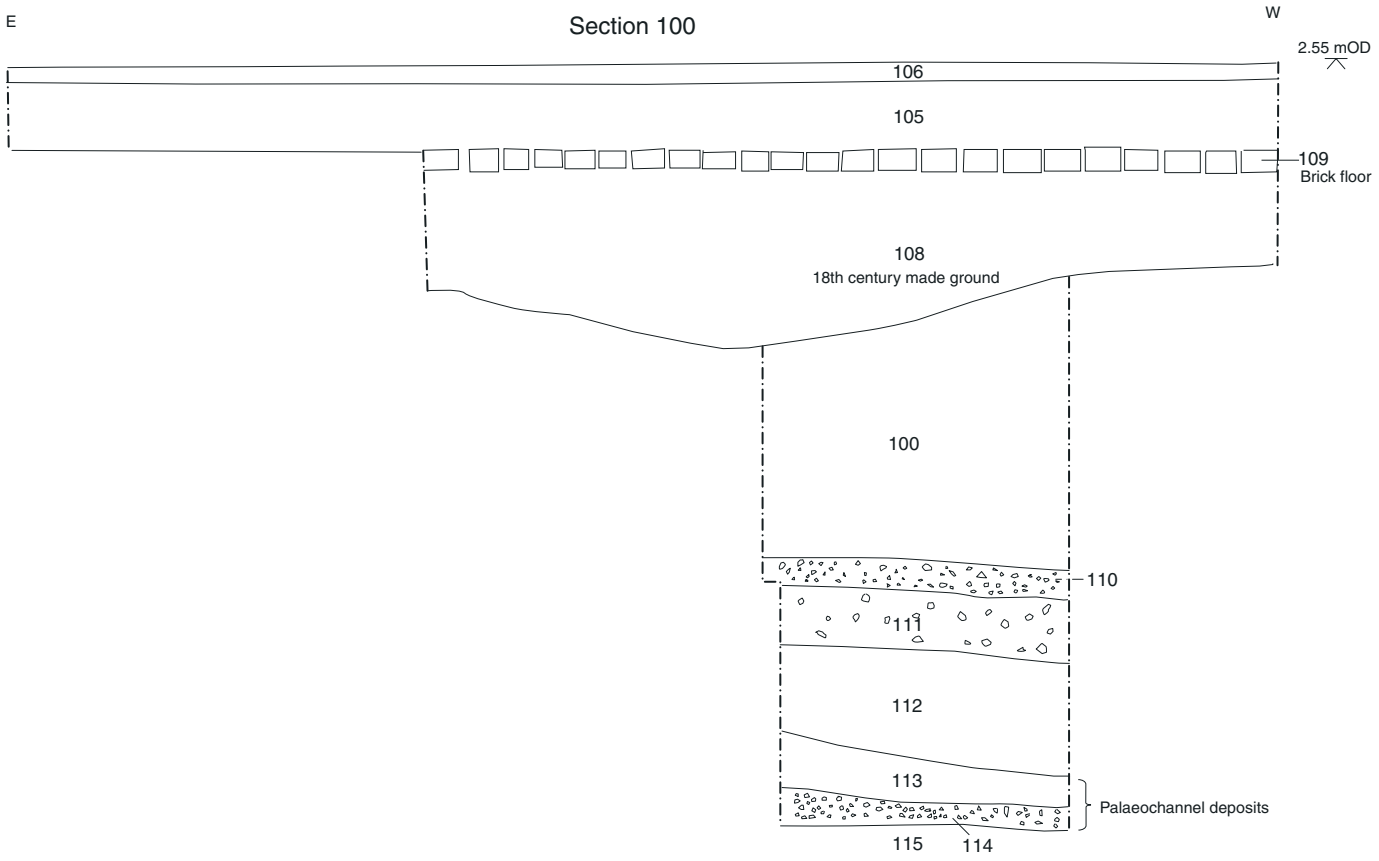


Figure 5: Trench A, plan



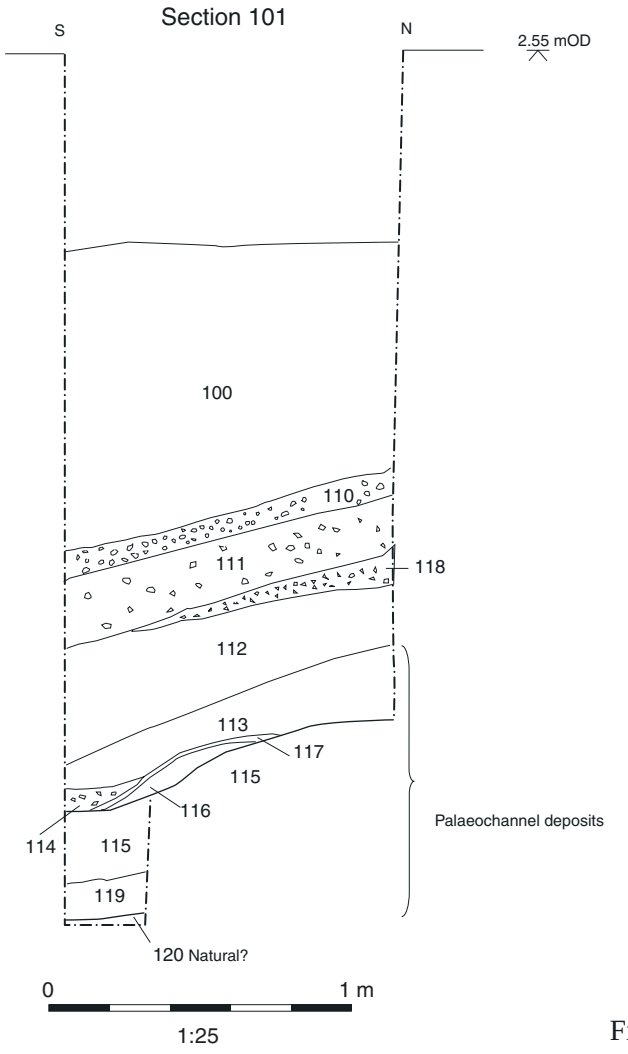
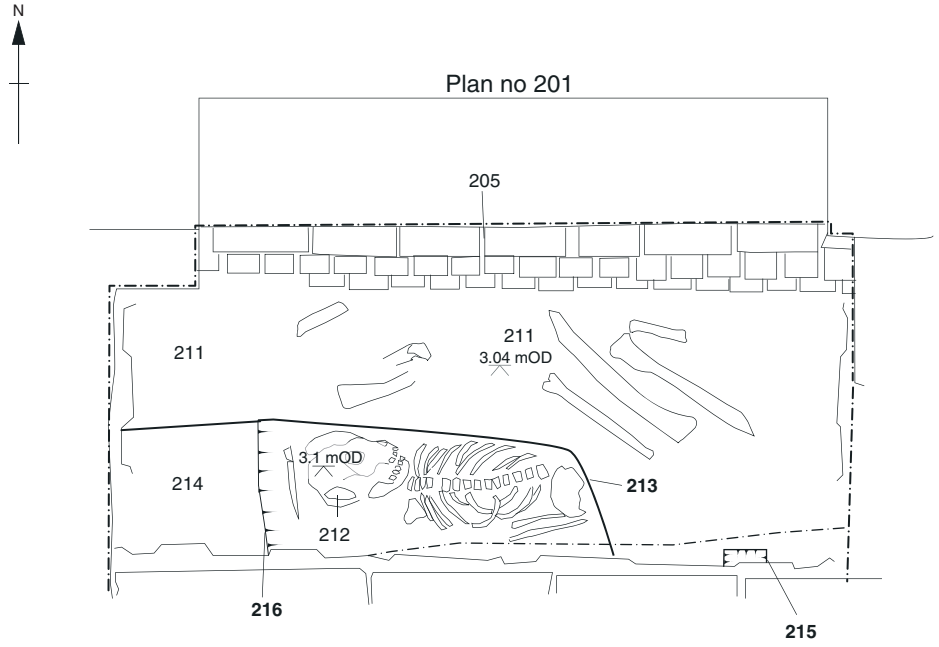
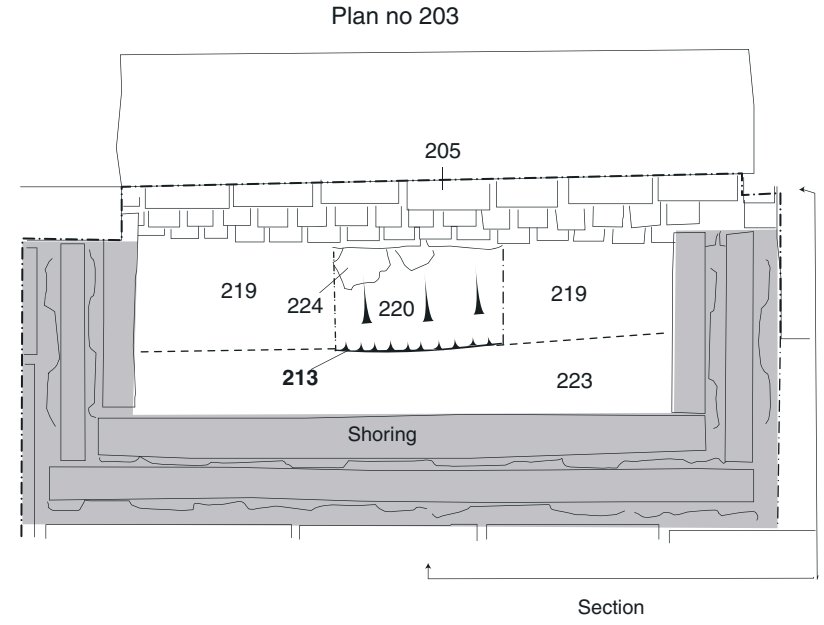


Figure 6: Trench A, sections



Trench B under excavation



Trench B fully excavated

Figure 7: Trench B plans

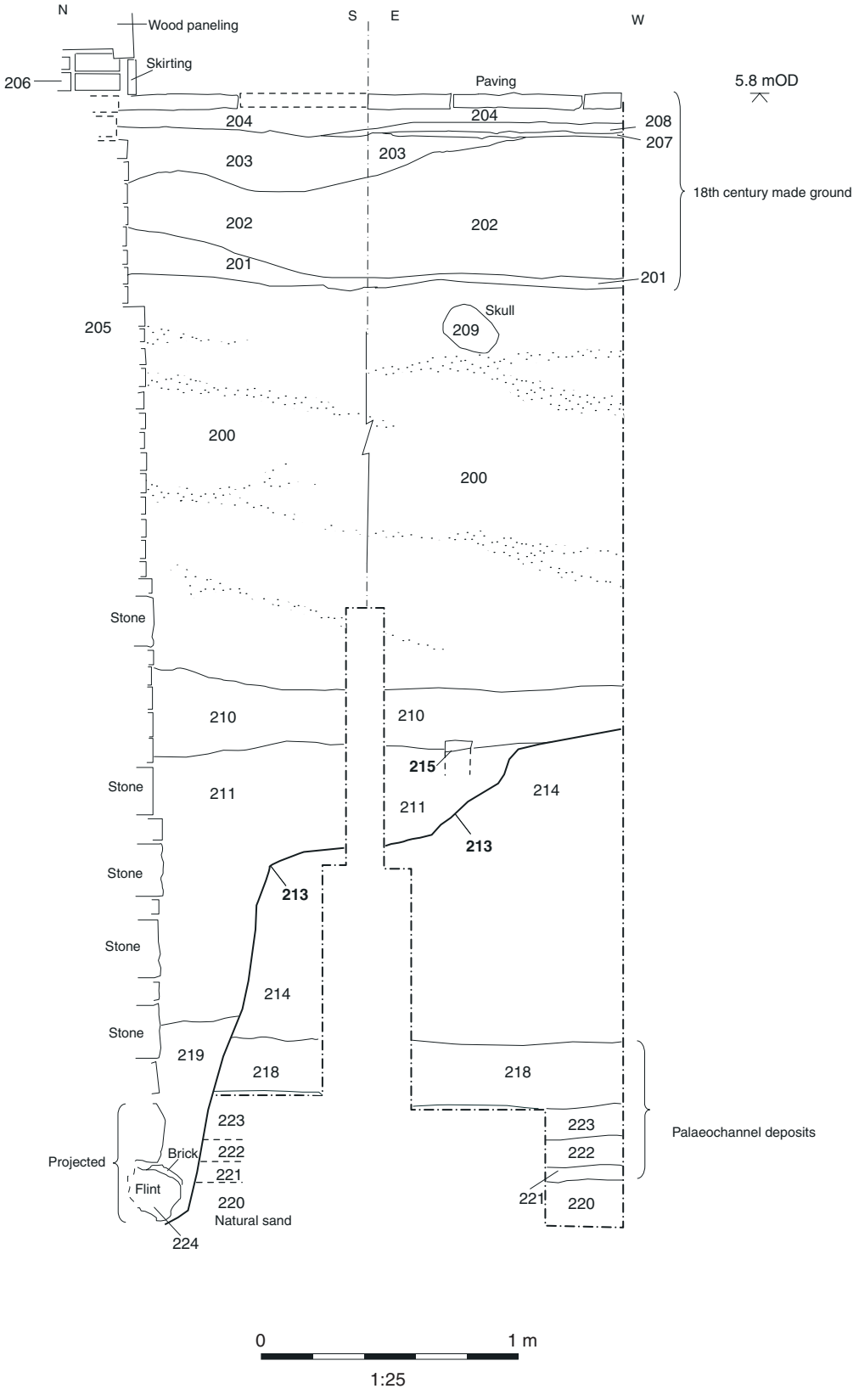


Figure 8: Trench B section

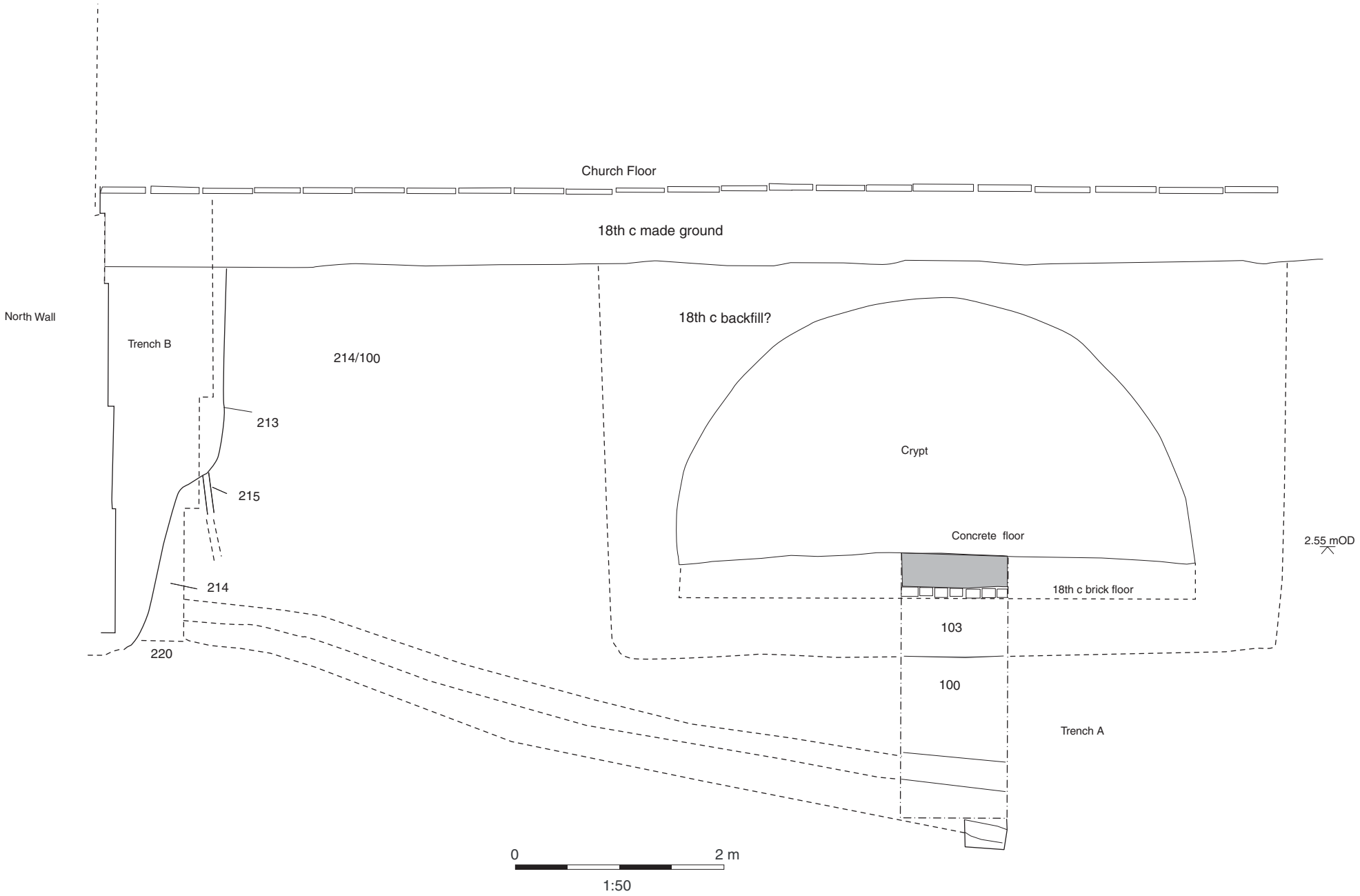


Figure 9: Interpretive profile of deposits beneath existing church

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