

Temple Cottage Temple Lane Bisham Berkshire



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



June 2006

Client: Lief Design

Issue N^o: 1

OA Job N^o: 2062

Planning Ref N^o: 03/38619

NGR: SU 838 842

Client Name:

Client Ref No:

Document Title: Temple Cottage, Temple Lane, Bisham, Berkshire

Document Type: Watching Brief

Issue Number: 1

National Grid Reference: SU 838 842

Planning Reference: 03/38619

OA Job Number: 2062

Site Code: BITE 03

Invoice Code: BITEWB

Receiving Museum: Reading Museum

Museum Accession No: REDMG:2003.279

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Date: 15th June 2006

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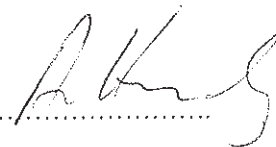
Date: 17th June 2006

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Date: 20th June 2006

Signed...



Document File Location H:\PROJECTS\Berkshire BR\Windsor & Maidenhead

W&M\Temple Cottage\client.doc,

Graphics File Location Severgo/AtoH/BITEWB/BITE03/Temple
Cottage*jm*20.06.06

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Temple Cottage Bisham, Berkshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

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SUMMARY

Between January and May 2004 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Temple Cottage, Bisham, Berkshire (NGR:SU 838 842). The work was commissioned by Leif Designs in advance of removal of the foundations of Temple Cottage and construction of a new dwelling. The watching brief revealed foundations and structures associated with the demolished building, 19th century made ground and evidence for a possible palaeo-channel. No further evidence for Neolithic activity, observed during an earlier evaluation, was encountered.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

1.1.1 Between January and May 2004 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Temple Cottage, Bisham, Berkshire (NGR: SU 838 842) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Lief Design in respect of a planning application for the demolition of the existing cottage and the construction of a new dwelling (Planning Application No. 03/38619).

1.1.2 Following the results of significant archaeological remains identified during an evaluation carried out by Oxford Archaeology (OA) in July 2003, mitigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief and Excavation was requested by Babbie, representing the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. A brief was produced by Kev Beachus, Senior Archaeologist for Babbie specifying the archaeological condition, that Temple Cottage was to be the subject of a continuous watching brief.

1.2 Location, geology and topography

1.2.1 The development site consists of a disused property, now demolished. The site is located approximately 75 m south of the River Thames. The area lies at approximately 29 m OD and is 0.25 hectares in area. The geology is alluvium and Flood Plain Gravel overlying Upper Chalk and Middle Chalk.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological background to the watching brief was prepared for an earlier evaluation on the site (OA,2003) and is reproduced below.

1.3.2 The site is in an area of archaeological potential. Trial trenching by TVAS in the early 1990s, approximately 500 m north-east of the site at Bradenham Lane, Temple, revealed a series of Roman features dating from the 2nd to 4th centuries (Archaeology in Berkshire, 1991, 10) while to the north at Stubbings House in Bisham, Bronze Age flints, Iron Age pottery and part of a burnt flint mound were revealed during trial trenching (ibid.).

- 1.3.3 To the north of Temple, the Church of All Saints at Bisham dates to the 12th century and it is likely that a small medieval hamlet grew up around the church. Bisham Abbey is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM, no. 148) that includes the remains of a monastic and manorial complex located on the south bank of the River Thames. It was founded as a preceptory of the Knights Templar during the reign of King Stephen (1135-64) and was occupied by that order until their dissolution in 1307.
- 1.3.4 In 1337 an Augustinian Priory, dedicated to Jesus Christ and St Mary, was founded on the site and the monastery remained Augustinian until its dissolution in 1536. It was briefly re-founded in 1537 as a Benedictine Abbey, but again surrendered in 1538, subsequently becoming the private residence of the Hoby family. Earthwork remains consist of the surviving part of a surrounding rectangular moat, enclosing an area some 400 m sq. Although most of the moat has been infilled, it can be seen to be steep sided with an earthen inner bank.
- 1.3.5 To the south west of the Abbey is Temple Mills dating to the 1790s and attributed to Samuel Wyatt. A large manor house which formerly stood to the south of Temple Cottage facing the river that was lost to fire in the 1950s (Pevsner, 1966, 89-90).
- 1.3.6 The evaluation conducted by OA in 2003 revealed probable Neolithic activity at Temple Cottage in the form of a pit and a tree throw hole back-filled with burnt flint. At Manor Cottage approximately 200 m away, a range of features were found indicative of a middle to late Iron Age settlement, comprising pits, a ring-gully and a ditch. A sherd of Italian amphora retrieved from a pit may suggest that the settlement was of higher status than a simple farmstead.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence or absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.
- 2.1.2 To preserve by record any archaeological deposits or features that may be disturbed or destroyed during construction work.
- 2.1.3 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The watching brief was conducted as a series of site visits during ground works likely to disturb or intrude onto potential archaeological deposits.
- 2.2.2 A plan showing the location of these works was maintained at a scale of 1:100 (Fig. 2) and any sections recorded were drawn at a scale of 1:20. All excavations and any features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. A

general photographic record of the work was also made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OA Field Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 A layer of natural flint gravel (605) was encountered at a depth of 1.3 m below the current ground level (Fig. 3).
- 3.1.2 The gravel appeared to be cut by three discrete features - all natural in origin.
- 3.1.3 Two irregularly shaped pit-like features were identified at the northern end of the site. Feature 601 was oval in plan with a flat base and steep sides and measured 1.3 m in length and 0.5 m wide with a recorded depth of 0.14 m (Fig. 4, Section 601). The feature was filled by a single friable silty sand with gravel 0.14 m thick (602), slightly blue in colour indicating an anaerobic deposition. No finds were recovered from this deposit. A similar feature, 603, was located nearby and measured 0.7 m long and 0.5 m wide and was up to 0.1 m deep (Fig. 4, Section 602). It was filled by 604, a friable, bluish, yellow-grey silty sand with gravel. No finds were recovered from this deposit. Overlying these features was a layer of yellow-brown silty sand (606), up to 1 m deep, a probable alluvial deposit.
- 3.1.4 Towards the southern edge of the monitored area a south-west to north-east aligned palaeo-channel (607) measuring 2 m wide by 0.3 m wide (Fig. 4, Section 603) was observed cutting layer 605. This was filled by dark brown clay with flint gravel inclusions (608). Sealing this feature and overlying the northern edge of layer 606, was a 0.3 m deep layer of olive-brown clay (609), a second alluvial deposit. This was overlain by a layer of dark blue-grey clay (610), measuring between 0.3 m and 0.5 m in depth, also an alluvial deposit. The southern extent of this layer was sealed by a 0.4 m deep deposit of olive-brown clay (611). This layer contained manganese flecking and gravel inclusions and probably represents an alluvial deposit.
- 3.1.5 Cutting Layer (611) and the surface of Layer (610), was a 4.5 m wide by 0.4 m deep channel (615). This is probably a later palaeo-channel, possibly caused by flood water running off down to the river. This was filled by a orange-brown silt clay (612), a silting deposit. Sealing the channel was a 0.3 m deep layer of dark grey-brown clay silt (613) the original topsoil. This was overlain by a 0.2 m thick layer of mixed demolition debris and soil (614), originating from the demolition of the old Temple Cottage.

3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 No dating evidence other than building material observed within Layer 614 was encountered during the course of the watching brief.

3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 3.3.1 Because of the nature of the machining operations it was considered impractical to collect deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling during the course of the watching brief.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The stratigraphy observed during the watching brief was consistent with naturally occurring river and flood deposits. No indication of the date of deposition of the strata was observed and it is probable that these deposits are prehistoric in origin.
- 4.1.2 No further evidence of the Neolithic activity encountered in the 2003 evaluation trenches was observed, likewise no evidence for the continuation of the middle to late Iron Age settlement found at Manor Cottage approximately 200 m away, was encountered.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
601	Cut	0.18 m	0.5 m	Probable tree throw hole	-	-
602	Fill	0.18 m	0.5 m	Fill of tree throw hole	-	-
603	Cut	0.1 m	0.7 m	Probable tree throw hole	-	-
604	Fill	0.1 m	0.7 m	Fill of tree throw hole	-	-
605	Layer	> 0.2 m	-	Natural gravel	-	-
606	Layer	1.0 m	-	Alluvial deposit	-	-
607	Cut	0.25 m	2.6 m	Palaeo-channel	-	-
608	Fill	0.25 m	2.6 m	Silting deposit	-	-
609	Layer	0.3 m	-	Alluvial deposit	-	-
610	Layer	0.4 m	-	Alluvial deposit	-	-
611	Layer	0.3 m	-	Alluvial deposit	-	-
612	Fill	0.4 m	4.5 m	Silting deposit	-	-
613	Layer	0.3 m	-	Buried topsoil	-	C19th/ C20th
614	Layer	0.2 m	-	Spread of debris from the demolition of the old Temple Cottage	Brick, concrete	C20th
615	Cut	0.4 m	4.5 m	Palaeo-channel	-	-

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

IFA, 2001 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

OA, 2003 *Hurley Lock Island, Hurley, Berkshire : Archaeological Evaluation Report*

OA 1992 *Field manual* (1st edition, ed. D Wilkinson)

OA 2003 *Manor Cottage and Temple Cottage, Temple Lane, Bisham, Berkshire.
Archaeological Evaluation Report*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Temple Cottage, Temple Lane, Bisham, Berkshire

Site code: BITE 03

Grid reference: SU 838 842

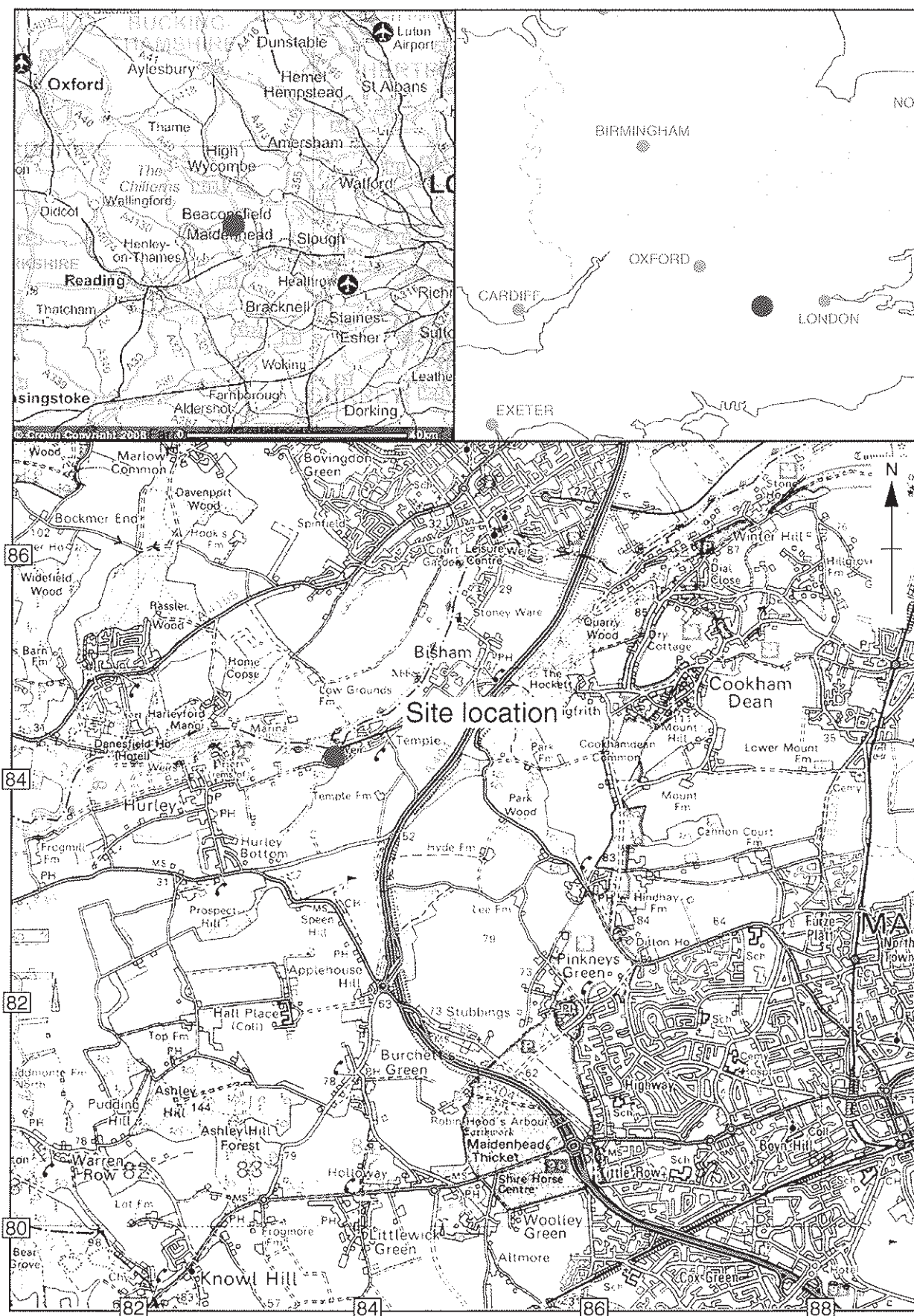
Type of watching brief: Machine excavation of old building foundations

Date and duration of project: Between 15th January and 5th May 2004, 8 site visits

Area of site: 560 m²

Summary of results: The watching brief revealed foundations and structures associated with the demolished building, 19th century made ground and evidence for a possible palaeo-channel. No further evidence for Neolithic activity, as observed during an earlier evaluation, was encountered.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Reading Museum in due course, under the following accession number: REDMG:2003.279



Scale 1:25,000

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Figure 1: Site location



Approximate location of evaluation Trench 2

Approximate location of evaluation Trench 1

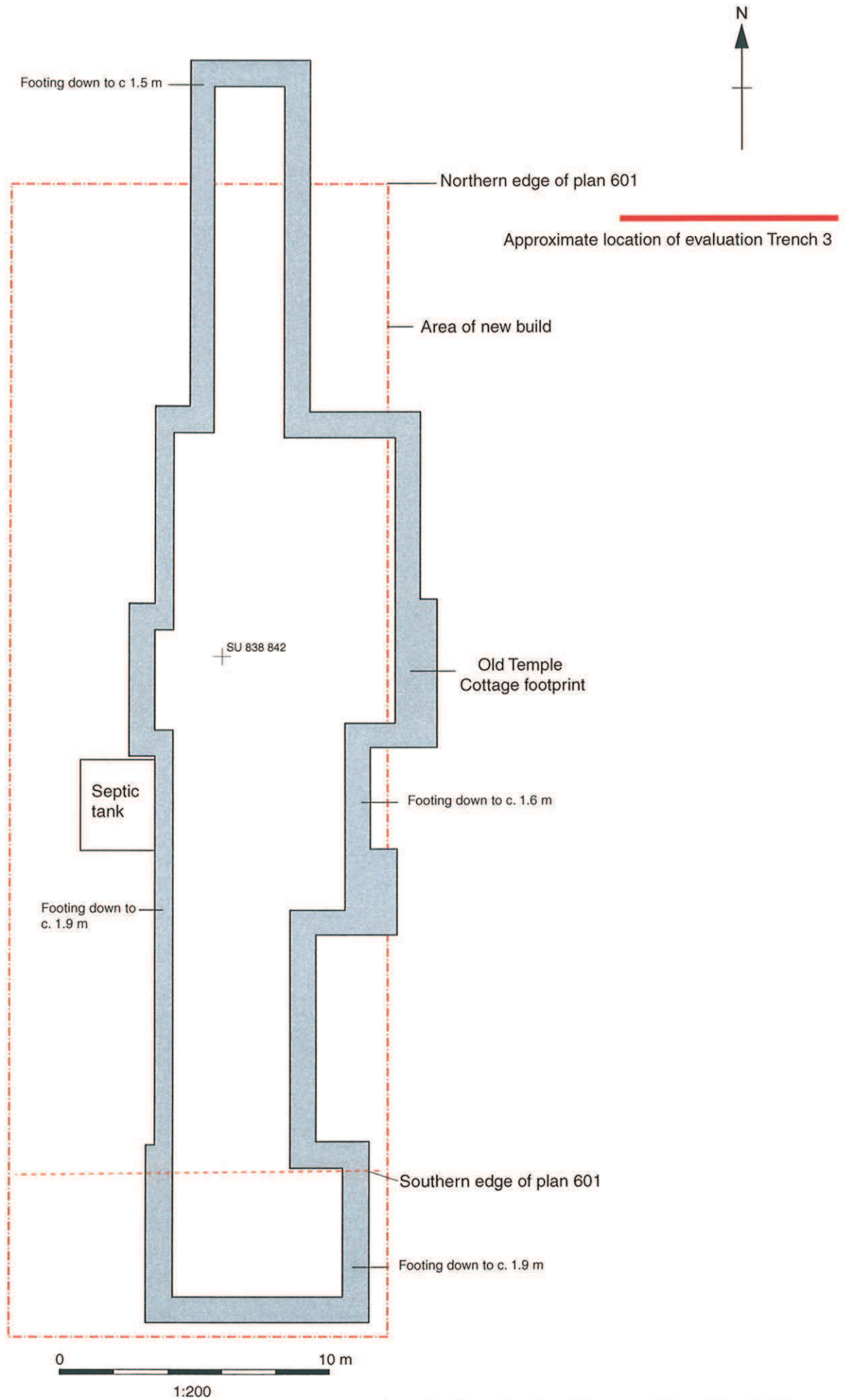
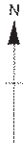


Figure 2: Site plan showing area of watching brief



Plan 601

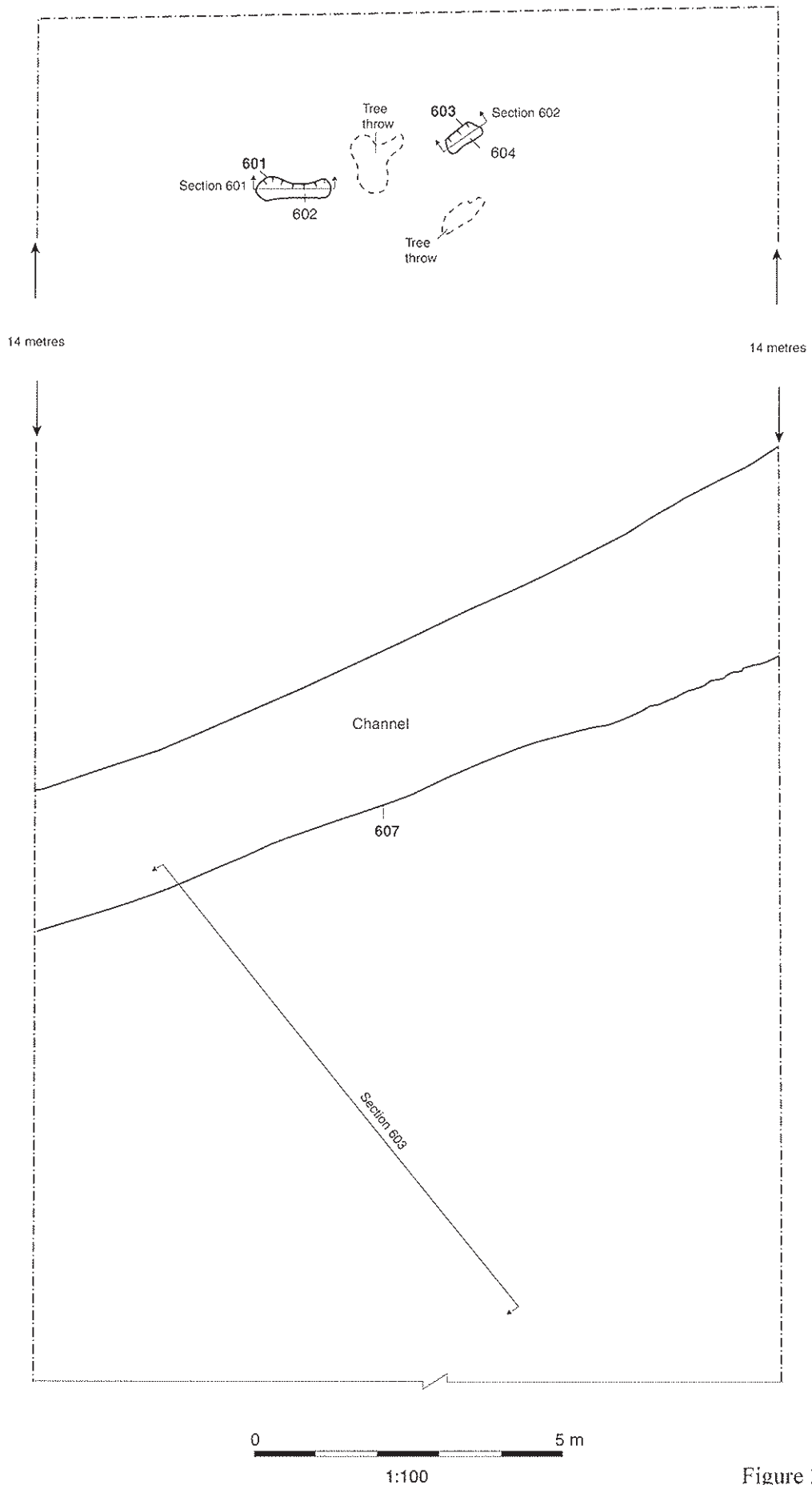


Figure 3: Plan 601

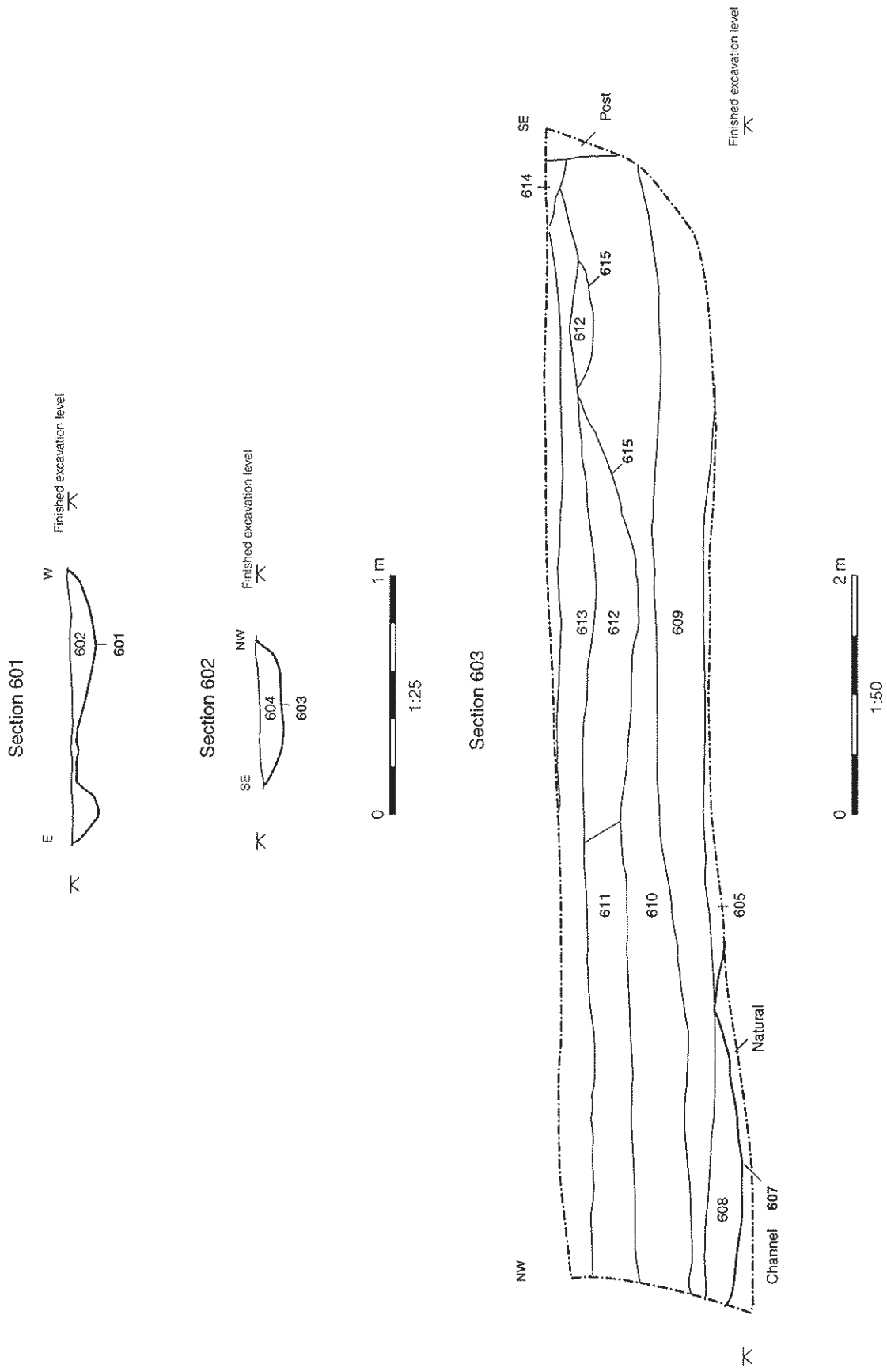


Figure 4: Sections



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