

# 28/28A Cricklade Street Cirencester Gloucestershire



## Archaeological Evaluation Report



**Oxford Archaeology**

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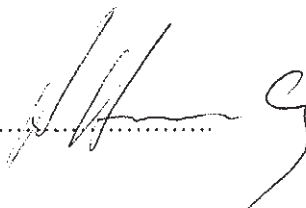
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Gloucestershire*****ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT*****CONTENTS**

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## SUMMARY

*In July 2004 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation on land to the rear of 28/28A Cricklade Street, Cirencester, Gloucestershire on behalf of CgMs Consulting. The evaluation revealed extensive post-medieval made ground and a dry stone wall overlying evidence of medieval occupation layers. Both of which were probably associated with the robbing of earlier Roman-British structural remains.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Between the 21st and 23rd of July 2004 OA carried out a field evaluation at 28/28A Cricklade Street, Cirencester, Gloucestershire (NGR: SP 02317 01900) (Fig.1) on behalf of CgMs Limited. This was in respect of a planning application for an extension to the existing building. A brief was set by, and a WSI agreed with Charles Parry, the Senior Archaeological Planning Officer for Gloucestershire County Council.

### 1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The development site is situated in the centre of Cirencester. It is bounded to the east by Cricklade Street and to the west, north and south by buildings which front onto Cricklade Street and Bishops Walk. The site occupies an area of 0.02 hectares at a height of approximately 108 m OD. The underlying geology is alluvium over cornbrash (Sheet 234, Institute of Geological Sciences, 1979).

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the evaluation has been the subject of a separate desk study (CgMs, 2004), the results of which are presented below.

#### *Extract from CgMs, 2004:-*

- 1.3.2 The County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) records a number of features and sites within 100 m of The Site, although none of these lie within the Site itself. The Site lies approximately 40m to the east of part of the Scheduled Ancient Monument of the Roman town of Corinium (SAM 361). Various episodes of archaeological work have been undertaken in this area. An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in 1989 (Cotswold Archaeological Trust) within the area of the proposed Corinium Development (SMR 14075). Test pits were excavated, some within the area of SAM 361. Part of the western rampart of the Roman Town was found, consisting of massive limestone blocks and clay on an earlier earthen bank. Medieval and post-medieval black earth layers overlay the intact Roman layers. Quantities of tesserae, 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century pottery and painted wall plaster indicated the presence of fine Roman buildings close by.
- 1.3.3 Just to the west of this, in the Brewery car park, an excavation was carried out in 1990 (SMR 14076) and revealed a series of Roman occupation layers and evidence

for Street XXI/XXII; these were recorded at depths between 109.96m and 109.75m AOD. The deposits were sealed below black earth deposits containing 12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century pottery. A further stage of excavation confirmed that the area was rich in Roman deposits at a depth of 1 m.

- 1.3.4 An archaeological watching brief was carried out in 1995 (Cotswold Archaeological Trust 1995; SMR 16203) at Cirencester bowling club, about 40m to the west of the Site – this revealed Roman street metalling and black earth deposits.
- 1.3.5 To the south of the Site, at Nos. 32-38 Cricklade Street, an architectural survey and archaeological watching brief during demolition in 1989 (Rawes 1990) revealed intact Roman levels and substantial walls dating to the Roman period.
- 1.3.6 To the north-west of the Site, in the plot of land to the rear of 20 Cricklade Street (SMR 11257, 11258, 11259, 11260, 11262), an evaluation in 1989 (Cotswold Archaeological Trust), consisting of two hand-dug test pits, revealed a sequence of superimposed floor levels and remnants of walls underlying post-medieval and medieval material. The evidence confirmed the existence of substantial Roman domestic dwellings in this part of Insula XXII through the entire period of Roman occupation. Evidence for Roman yards and gardens was uncovered.
- 1.3.7 Groundworks associated with sewer repairs at 22 Cricklade Street (SMR 15691), to the north of the Site, revealed a 1.3m section of well-preserved and substantial Roman mortared limestone wall, surviving to a height of 0.35m.
- 1.3.8 An archaeological watching brief at Brewery Court (SMR 19988), to the north-west of the Site (Cotswold Archaeological Trust, 1997), carried out as a condition of SAM consent recorded a remnant of heavily truncated opus signinum surface and Roman street metalling deposits.
- 1.3.9 Roman remains have also been found to the east of the Site. Here, the nearest recorded evidence to the Site consists of significant and well-preserved remains at 51/53 Cricklade Street, discovered during evaluation work (SMR 16211). Demolition debris from Roman buildings and the presence of an inter-insulae street were found. Subsequent excavation (Cotswold Archaeological Trust 1996-7) found an impressive sequence through an inter-insulae street and excavated part of its frontage -this revealed the remains of two successive masonry buildings dating to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries respectively. To the south of here, a Roman mosaic was found off Cricklade Street in 1875-80 (SMR 8947).
- 1.3.10 In Summary, the Site lies in an area rich in Roman deposits relating to the Roman town of Corinium. The archaeological remains described above represent those closest to the Site, although there are many more sites and finds dated to this period throughout the wider area. There is a high potential for the Site to contain remains dating to the Roman period. It is also possible that medieval and post-medieval deposits may exist within the Site.
- 1.3.11 The site itself has produced limited archaeological evidence.

## **2 EVALUATION AIMS**

- 2.1.1 To establish the presence or absence of archaeological deposits within the area of the development site.
- 2.1.2 To identify, within the constraints of the evaluation, the date, character, condition, significance, quality and depth of any surviving remains within the site.
- 2.1.3 To assess the degree of existing impacts to sub-surface horizons and to document the extent of archaeological survival of buried deposits.
- 2.1.4 To make available the results of the evaluation.

## **3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Scope of fieldwork**

- 3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of a hand dug trench measuring 1.5 m by 1.5 m sited to the rear of number 28A (Fig .2).

### **3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording**

- 3.2.1 The trench was excavated using hand tools and the revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds and environmental samples. All archaeological features were planned and the sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20. All the features and sections were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OA Fieldwork Manual* (OAU 1992).

### **3.3 Finds**

- 3.3.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and generally bagged by context. Finds of special interest were given a unique small find number.

### **3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence**

- 3.4.1 No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling were identified during the course of the evaluation.

### **3.5 Presentation of results**

- 3.5.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below, starting with the stratigraphic account followed by an overall discussion and interpretation.

## **4 RESULTS: GENERAL**

### **4.1 Soils and ground conditions**

- 4.1.1 The site is located in a courtyard to the rear of standing buildings. There was no evidence for intrusion by modern features such as services. The boundaries of the

layers and the edges of features were well defined. Soil conditions were moist with no ground water encountered.

## 5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

### 5.1 Description of deposits

- 5.1.1 At the base of the excavation a layer of tenacious grey silty clay containing many fragments of limestone rubble and charcoal flecking (006) was revealed (Fig.3, Section 1). This context contained a high proportion of Romano-British finds dating to the 3rd and 4th centuries AD including tegulae, box flue tile, floor tile, Oxford colour coated ware and imitation black burnished ware. This context also contained fragments of medieval pottery such as green glaze ware, calcareous tempered ware and a sagging cooking pot base dated to between the 11th and 13th century. While the Roman finds were numerous they appear to have been residual. This layer therefore represented a disturbed medieval horizon, which included remains of the earlier Romano-British settlement at Cirencester. This horizon was sealed by a 0.25 m thick deposit of compacted dark greyish brown clay silt (005), which also contained residual Romano-British pottery, as well as fragments of worn stone and construction debris, suggesting a layer of made ground, possibly a yard surface, associated with the original construction of the property.
- 5.1.2 Lying directly on the surface of 005, and sinking into it was a dry stone constructed limestone wall 003, of which only 0.6 m height remains. Running approximately south west to north east, this was probably part of the original property boundary wall between 28 and 28A, and was truncated when the existing standing sheds to the rear of number 28 were constructed.
- 5.1.3 Overlying layer 005 and butting up to wall 003 was a 0.28 m deep layer of a tenacious, very dark greyish brown clay silt (004). Containing limestone rubble, 18th century clay pipe stems, transfer printed ware and glazed earthen ware this is probably an occupation layer associated with the early life of the buildings.
- 5.1.4 Sealing 004 and the top of wall 003 was a 0.5 m thick layer of friable greyish brown clay silt (002). This was a very mixed context containing 18th century clay pipe stems and a pipe bowl c.1760, transfer printed ware and glazed cream ware, many fragments of limestone pegtiles and limestone rubble probably associated with the reduction of wall 003. A layer of rough limestone slabs suggesting a surface was apparent in places in the top of this deposit. This has been interpreted as a layer of made ground supporting a yard surface, probably 19th century in origin. This was overlaid by a 0.3 m deep deposit of a friable greyish brown silty loam (001), the present day topsoil.

## **6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION**

### **6.1 Reliability of field investigation**

- 6.1.1 One of the aims of the evaluation was to determine the presence or absence and depth of Romano-British deposits within the evaluation area. At the time of excavation the quantity of Romano-British finds recovered from context 006 suggested that occupation deposits of this period had indeed been reached, however following post-excavation analysis of the pottery this deposit was subsequently proved to have been an early medieval horizon of 11th to 13th century date.

### **6.2 Overall interpretation**

- 6.2.1 The evaluation showed that there were substantial post-medieval deposits relating to building construction and occupation within the site but that there had been little intrusion by modern foundation or service trenching. These deposits were seen to overlie medieval deposits containing evidence associated with the possible robbing out of Roman-British structures; common in this period, particularly in Cirencester, indicated by the high frequency of Romano-British finds.
- 6.2.2 Unfortunately the depth of any initial Romano-British horizon was not identified during the excavation of the test pit, however, the quantity and variety of finds from this period within the earliest medieval deposit (006) does suggest its presence. Furthermore, the depth of the Romano-British horizon in this area is known to be approximately 2 m below the present ground surface and therefore likely to have been immediately below this layer given the quantity of finds retrieved from 006.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Ctxt No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
001	Layer	0.0 m - 0.3 m	Modern topsoil	Clay pipe, pottery, brick	C19th - C20th
002	Layer	0.3 m - 0.9 m	Made ground	Clay pipe, pottery, brick	C18th - C19th
003	Wall	0.6 m - 1.2 m	Property boundary	-	C18th
004	Layer	0.9 m - 1.15 m	Occupation layer	Clay pipe, pottery	C18th
005	Layer	1.15 m - 1.4 m	Made ground, yard surface	Pottery Tile, pottery	C18th Romano-British
006	Layer	1.4 m - >1.8 m	Demolition layer	Pottery Tile, pottery	C11th - C13th Romano-British

## APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

CgMs, 2004 *Specification for Archaeological Evaluation, 28/28A Cricklade Street, Cirencester, Gloucestershire*

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

## APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

**Site name:** 28/28A Cricklade Street, Cirencester, Gloucestershire

**Site code:** CICS 04

**Grid reference:** NGR: SP 402317 201900

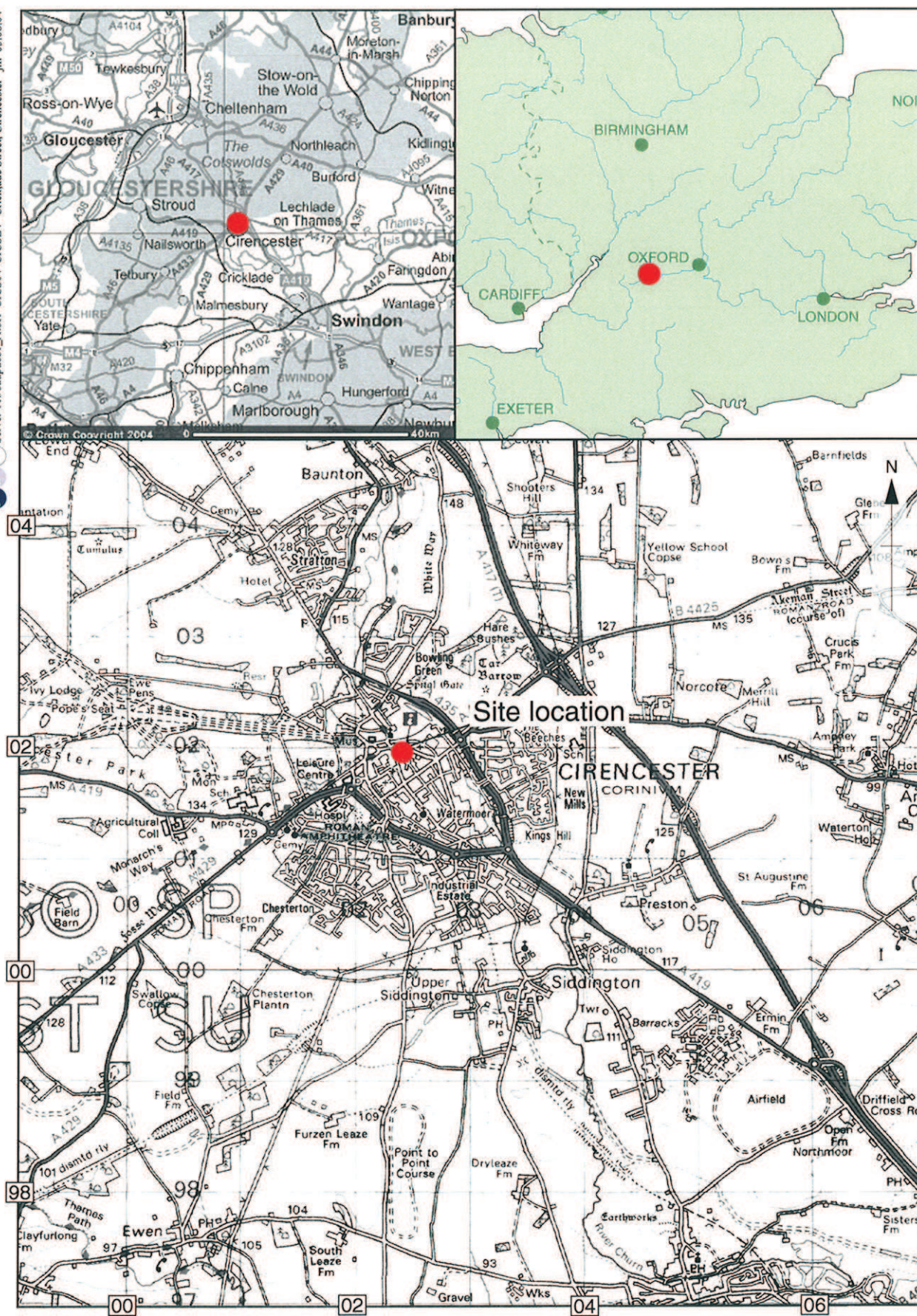
**Type of evaluation:** Test pit, 1.5 m<sup>2</sup>

**Date and duration of project:** 3 days, 21st-23rd July 2004

**Area of site:** 0.02 hectares

**Summary of results:** Extensive layers of post-medieval made ground and a dry stone wall, with evidence of possible medieval and post-medieval robbing of Roman-British remains.

**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with the Corinium Museum, Cirencester in due course.



Scale 1:25,000

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Figure 1: Site location

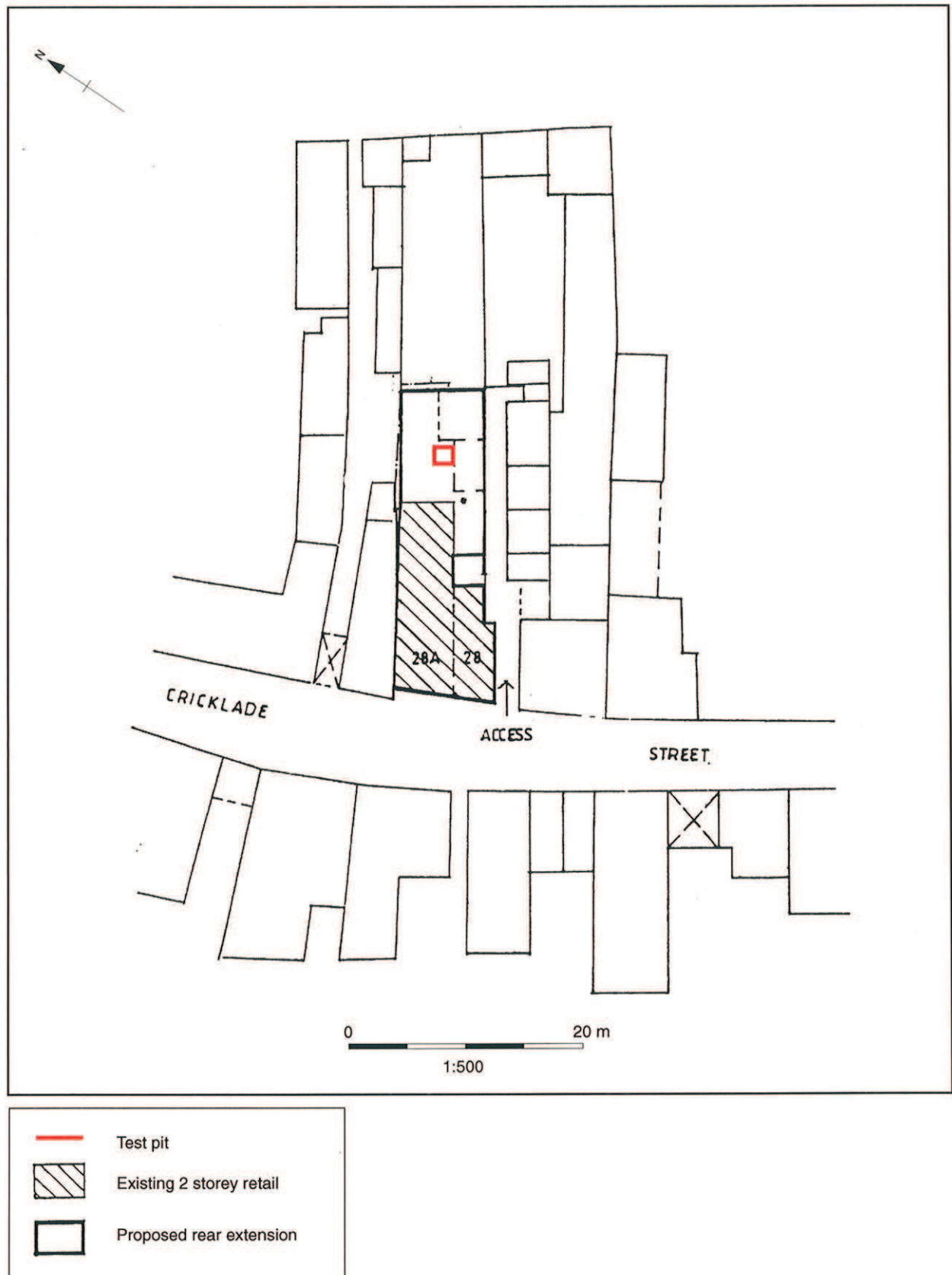


Figure 2: Location of Test pit

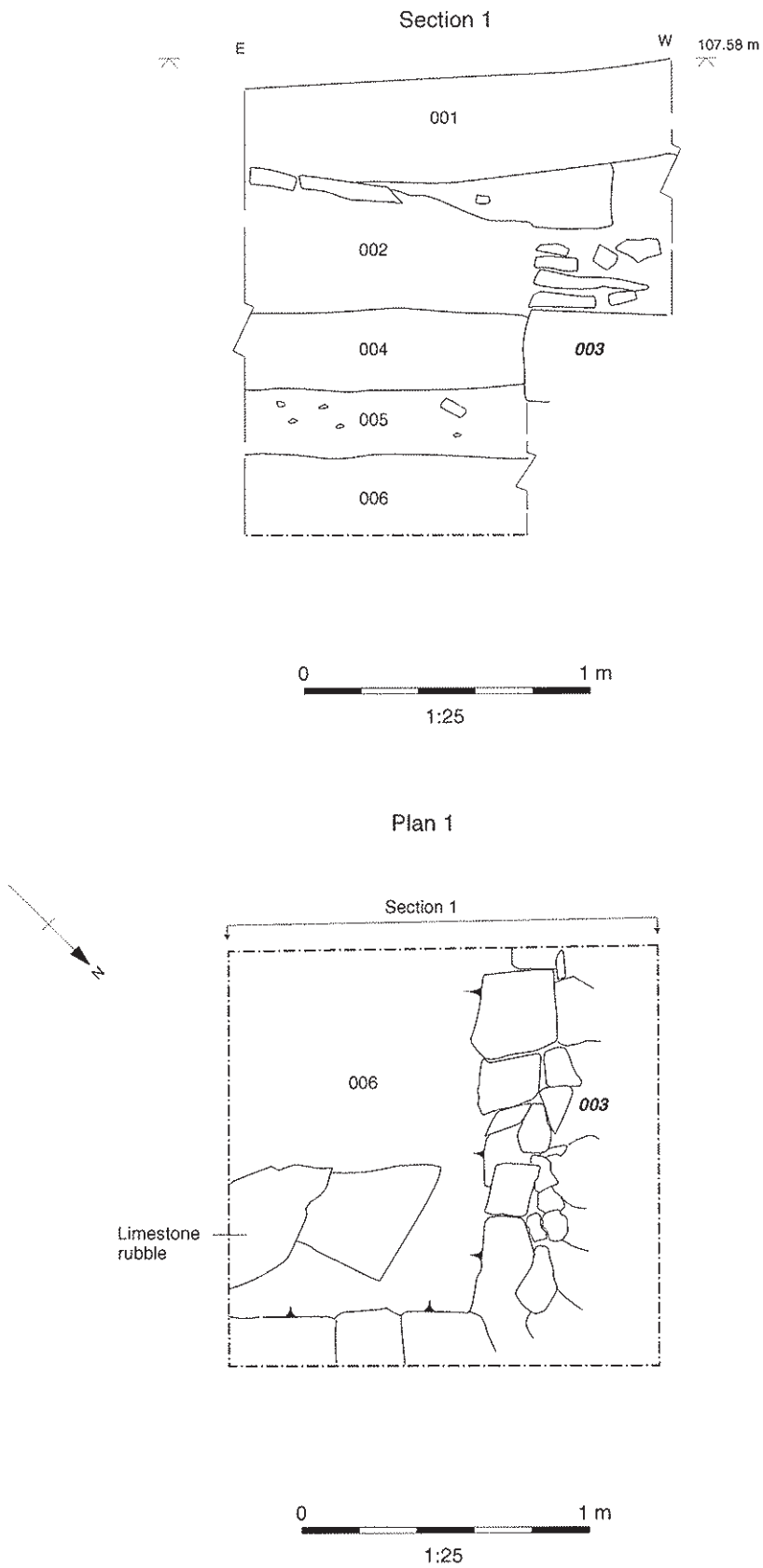


Figure 3: Test pit, plan and section



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