President's Garden St John's College Oxford

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President's Garden, St John's College, Oxford

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Summary

Between January and early February 2014, Oxford Archaeology carried out a field evaluation at the President's Garden, St John's College, St Giles, Oxford (the Site). The work was commissioned by St John's College in advance of the proposed expansion of the Colleges library facilities and construction of new buildings within the eastern side of the President's Garden.

The evaluation consisted of three trenches of various sizes which represents c 7% sample (54m2) of the development footprint (c. 800m2).

The evaluation revealed that the Site's natural horizon, and original ground level, had been heavily truncated by later activity.

There was a lack of pre-medieval fills and finds, although a complete absence of pre-medieval activity can not be ruled out.

There was evidence for medieval activity from as early as late 12th century, with the majority of medieval finds dated to the later centuries of the medieval period (c. 1250 - 1500). Evidence of such activity was represented by pits of varying sizes, the smaller ones possibly of a domestic nature, and the larger almost certainly indicating quarrying for sands and gravels from potentially as early as the 13th – 14th century. If the activity is domestic this suggests that the later tenement boundaries shown on late 16th-century maps may have been further to the east (perhaps represented by a ditch precursor to the early 17th-century Sprott Wall) and therefore included the area of the Site.

The formalisation of the ditched boundary by the construction of a stone wall called 'Sprott Wall' perhaps post-dates earlier late 16th-century quarrying, possibly by St John's College, and definitely pre-dates quarrying in the first half of the 17th century by the College before the area was laid out to formal gardens in the later half of that century.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 As part of a wider scheme to improve their library facilities St John's College are proposing to construct a new building in the eastern part of the Presidents Garden at their campus on St Giles, Oxford (NGR SP 5132 0669), henceforth to be refered to as the Site (Fig. 1).

1.1.2 Following on from the production of a Desk Based Assessment (OA, 2013), which highlighted the potential for archaeological remains to survive at the Site, Oxford Archaeology (OA) were commissioned by Mr A.J. Parker, Principal Bursar of St John's College, Oxford to carry out an archaeological evaluation; this was targetted on the footprint of the proposed new building.

1.1.3 The evaluation covered a little under 7% of the development area, comprised three trenches and was carried out prior to submission of a Planning Application from 27th January - 3rd February 2014. No formal brief was issued by the Local Planning Authority, although David Radford, Oxford City Archaeologist, was fully consulted in the preparation of the Written Scheme of Investigation (OA, 2013) and approved that the scope and approach contained therein would satisfy the need for evaluative work at the Site. David Radford was also satisfied with the level of archaeological evaluation when he visited the Site during the works.

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The Site sits centrally on a relatively narrow spur of higher ground that runs north-south between the floodplains of the River Thames, c.700m to the west, and River Cherwell, c.900m to the east. The underlying geology consists of well-draining 2nd Terrace Summertown-Radley Sand and Gravel deposits that were formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period (Geological Survey of England and Wales, Sheet 236). Many previous excavations have revealed that these sands and gravels are overlain with a layer of loess or 'supra-natural', a post-glacial wind blown silt which usually measures between 0.2 – 0.3m thick.

1.2.2 The Site is currently relatively level; the tree covered edges to the south are at c. 63.2-63.4m OD, to the east and north at c. 63m OD, and the central grassed area is slightly lower and gently undulates between c 62.50 – 62.95m OD.

1.2.3 St John's College is located centrally within the modern city of Oxford, to the north of the medieval extents of the walled medieval town, on the eastern side of St Giles, a wide N-S street which runs along the top of the gravel spur through the northern suburbs to the town's former medieval North Gate.

1.2.4 The President’s Garden is a well kept central grassed area with trees, shrubs and borders to the north, south and east, a post-medieval wall, known as Sprott Wall, forms the eastern boundary. Canterbury Quad is located immediately to the south-west of the Site with North Quad c. 65 metres to the west and Front Quad c. 60 metres to the south-west. Thomas White Quad is located c. 25 metres to the north.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The following background has been reproduced from the Desk Based Assessment (DBA) produced for the client (OA, 2013), which defined the archaeological resource within the Study Area around the Site (the Study Area was defined as the area within a 250m radius of the Site). Full references can be found in that document.

Prehistoric (up to AD 43)

1.3.2 Evidence for the Palaeolithic period in Oxfordshire has mainly been recovered from gravel extraction sites, and the distribution of artefacts found within the gravels as opposed to elsewhere is likely to therefore be biased (OCC, 2011, 3). However, this does not detract from the potential that the gravel terraces have to contain isolated finds of rolled artefacts of the Palaeolithic period. Later prehistoric periods are also represented on gravel terraces throughout Oxfordshire, in particular, the Bronze Age. The concentration of archaeology on the gravel terraces has been studied in detail and does suggest limited but significant clusters of archaeology, in particular Bronze Age barrow cemeteries (Dodd, 2003, 4). The Site is therefore believed to be located on a geological layer which possibly has a higher potential to contain significant early archaeological artefacts and features then other geological formations.

1.3.3 In the vicinity of the Site, just outside the Study Area, excavations have shown that the gravel spur upon which the Site is located has been used extensively in the later prehistoric period for ritual and burial purposes. Three ring ditches dating from the Bronze Age (2500BC – 700BC) were recorded by an evaluation at the former site of Radcliffe Hospital 500 metres to the north east of the Study Area. Further ring ditches were recorded from the air and by geophysical surveys at University Parks c 400 metres north east of the Study Area (ibid). Works undertaken prior to the construction of the Sackler Library c. 270 metres to the south west of the Site identified two large Bronze Age ring ditches, interpreted as burial mound ditches.

1.3.4 Within the Study Area itself, a Neolithic Henge monument (OA 90) was uncovered during excavations at Kendrew Quadrangle, St. John's College in 2008 (TVAS, 2008) c 150 metres to the north of the Site (*ibid,* Figure 2). A 200 metre-long section of the enclosure ditch was exposed prior to redevelopment work within the college. This ditch was 8 metres wide and between 2.5 and 2.9 metres in depth and was estimated to enclose an area c. 150 metres in diameter (OA, 2013 Figure 2). The ditch was dated to c. 2200BC. A bank was assumed to have accompanied the ditch as was the case with other Henge monuments. A buried turf layer and antler picks were identified within the ditch fill. The ditch also appears to have been encountered during the excavation of a service trench along Keble Road (*ibid,* OA 55) in 2011 c. 130 metres to the north of the Study Area. The site also had evidence of some limited Iron Age activity, but no other material from this period has been found within the Study Area.

Romano-British Period (AD 43-410)

1.3.5 It appears that occupation of the gravel spur continued into the Roman period with Roman settlement evidence identified during the excavations at The Parks c. 500 metres to the north east of the Study Area.

1.3.6 Within the Study Area itself Roman pottery sherds were recovered during excavations at Keble College in 1971 (*ibid,* OA 56). No other evidence has been found within the Study Area to this date, suggesting that levels of occupation during the Roman period were low.

Early Medieval Period (AD 410-1066)

1.3.7 The site is located on the eastern side of St. Giles, the main road leading into the Saxon burh of Oxford. The Site lay outside the Saxon town of Oxford, c 100m to the north of what is regarded as the 11th century extension of the town. However, there is sufficient evidence available to suggest a Saxon presence to the north east of the medieval town (Dodd, 2003, 12).

1.3.8 It is known that there was some activity at this time around the site of the Neolithic Henge (OA, 2013 OA 90) to the north of the site, perhaps attracted by the presence of

the former prehistoric field monuments, which were often re-visited in the early medieval period. Evidence from this date in and around the Study Area is however, very limited.

1.3.9 The excavations at Kendrew Quadrangle in St. John's College which found the section of Henge monument ditch (OA 90) also uncovered a mass grave of some 34 individuals (TVAS, 2008). This grave, which lay just to the north of the Study Area, was interpreted as a hurried burial of victims following a pogrom of Danes ordered by King Aethelred on St. Brice's day in 1002. Many of the bodies showed signs of having sustained wounds, while some appeared to have been partially burnt. The early 11th century date for the burials was backed up by radiocarbon analysis. It seems likely that the henge ditch and possibly the bank that would have accompanied it would still have been visible as surface features at this time. As a result of this it seems likely that such a site, outside the existing town, would have made a good location for such a mass burial site.

1.3.10 The only other early medieval evidence discovered within the Study Area were deposits dating from the early 10th century which were recorded during work within St. John's college in the mid- 1970s (OA 73) c. 50 metres to the south west of the Site. The small size of the excavated area meant that these deposits could not be interpreted further. These finds may be associated with the 'Saxon presence' noted in 5.5.1 (Dodd, 2003, 12).

Later Medieval Period (AD1066-1550)

1.3.11 The Site is located c 240 metres to the north of the former medieval walled City of Oxford and c 600 metres to the north east of the site of Oxford Castle (first built 1071). The Site itself is located to the rear of St. Giles where suburban occupation developed along this broad approach to Oxford (Dodd, 2003). St. Giles was fully built-up by the time of the Hundred Rolls survey of 1279 (ibid) but there is little archaeological evidence to suggest how and when the northern suburb developed. Excavations on the site of the Ashmolean Museum to the south west of the Site recorded evidence for rubbish disposal, apparently to the rear of tenements facing onto the west side of St. Giles (Andrews and Mepham 1997). Although no direct evidence has been found for similar tenements on the eastern side of St. Giles, it seems likely that this area too began to be developed in the 12th century. Whether such tenements extended as far back from the road as the Site is discussed below.

1.3.12 A series of excavations carried out within the college precincts have suggested that the area may have been occupied in the medieval period prior to the mid-15th century. A number of medieval finds have been made to the west and south west of the Site. A large rectangular pit dating from the 12th century was found along with five further pits dating from the 13th or 14th century during excavations in 1959 (OA 65) c. 50 metres to the west of the Site. Further pits and a 12th century well along with wooden and ceramic vessels were recorded during work in 1947 (OA 78) during the construction of Dolphin Quadrangle pit c. 120 metres to the south west of the Site. A medieval jug was found during work at the College in 1954 (OA 69) 50 metres to the west of the Site, while a second jug was found in 1964 (OA 77) c. 100 metres to the south west. A green-glazed lamp dating from the 13-14th centuries was found during work in the front quad in 1910 (OA 75) c. 60 metres to the south west of the Site.

1.3.13 All of these sites may represent activity associated with medieval tenements along the east side of St. Giles. The absence of structural evidence and the general paucity of structures suggest that this activity was associated with activity to the rear of the tenement plots, possibly representing the remains and use of yards, gardens and small-holdings. The earliest map of the Site (Agas 1578) shows the layout of this area as it may have looked in the medieval period. It shows the Site lying on undeveloped

land to the rear of the back gardens of plots fronting St. Giles. The Site may always therefore have been to the rear of the medieval tenement plots.

1.3.14 The site of St. John's was originally occupied by the College of St. Bernard, which was established in 1437 'for the reception of Cistercian monks and novices in England, Wales and Ireland, who were sent by their monasteries to study in Oxford' (Stevenson and Salter, 1939). The first college buildings were completed by 1438. These now form the Front Quadrangle of St. John's College to the south west of the Site. Building work at the college appears to have continued into 1439 with works mentioned in 1483 and c. 1502. Agas map of 1578 shows the college buildings with gardens to the rear with open ground to the north in the area of the Site. It is assumed that this area had also been open ground in previous eras. St. Bernard's survived for just over a century until the reformation of 1539 brought the activities of the Cistercian's in England to an abrupt conclusion. The college buildings, which consisted at this time of a single quadrangle, initially came under crown ownership c. 1540 and appear to have been occupied by laity following the Dissolution of the monasteries. In November 1546 the buildings of the now defunct St. Bernard's, along with the half the grove of neighbouring Durham College, was granted by Henry VIII to the dean and chapter of Christ Church, who in turn rented the buildings out.

Post-Medieval Period (AD1550+)

1.3.15 In December 1554 the dean and chapter of Christ Church drew up an agreement with Sir Thomas White, the former Lord Mayor of London, to found a new college within the buildings of the former St. Bernard College (now the Front Quadrangle) and part of the former Durham College which they also owned. The college was called St. John the Baptist after the patron saint of tailors and of the Merchant Taylors company to which Sir Thomas belonged (ibid).

1.3.16 The Front Quadrangle was refurbished and partially re-built during 1556. The four ranges of this quad still stand and are now Grade I Listed Buildings (OA, 2013, OA 20, 22, 23 and 24). The college was officially founded on St. John the Baptists's day (24th June) in 1557 with six fellows and some 30 students.

1.3.17 The college acquired land to the north of the former St. Bernard's College from Richard Owen of Gostow in 1573, which included the area of the Site. This purchase included Walton Manor to the north east of the college which Owen's father George had acquired from Osney Abbey during the Reformation (Stevenson and Salter, 1939). Gardens were initially constructed on this land in 1613 and a boundary wall was constructed around these gardens (*ibid.,* OA 46), first shown on Loggan's map of 1675 (*ibid.,* Figure 5). The north and south walls of the first President's Gardens pass through the north and south ends of the Site.

1.3.18 Sprott Wall (*ibid.,* OA 26), the eastern wall of the President's Garden, was constructed in 1613 between the President's Garden immediately to the north east of the North Quadrangle and the Fellow's Garden. The cost of its construction was met by money donated to St. John's by a former fellow, Edward Sprott, who died the year before. This wall still stands and forms the eastern boundary of the Site. It is a Grade II listed Building and is described more fully below.

1.3.19 It is known from the historic record that St. John's College was granted the right to extract gravel for building purposes (Stevenson and Salter, 1939) and that the gravel terrace in general was exploited for building materials as the City of Oxford began to expand northwards. A series of 17th century gravel pits were recorded during excavations in the 'President's Close' c. 95 metres to the north east of the Site in the early 1990s (*ibid.,* OA 63). These pits were thought to be associated with obtaining building material for the construction of Canterbury Quadrangle in the 1630s. A

watching brief conducted during the basement excavation for the science centre to the rear of Museum Road in 2004 (*ibid.,* OA 59) 65 metres to the north east of the Site, also recorded a number of gravel pits dating from the 18th and 19th centuries. Excavations carried out in advance of a new Senior Common Room (*ibid.,* OA 67 and 68) discovered pits which appeared to date from the 16th or 17th centuries, and which were interpreted as relating to the original construction of the college.

1.3.20 Excavations in North Quadrangle in 1943-4 (*ibid.,* OA 66) exposed a ditch c. 70 metres to the west of the Site which was dated to the 17th century. This ditch does not appear on Loggan's map of 1675 (*ibid.,* Figure 4) and was considered to be part of the city's Civil War defences when first found. However, it is well away from the currently projected line of these earthworks (*ibid.,* OA 91) and therefore its function remains in doubt. Excavations in 1959 (*ibid.,* OA 65) 50 metres to the west of the Site exposed the foundations of 16th century buildings which were once located to the north of St. Bernard's College. These buildings, as a row of three, are set back from St. Giles, and can be seen on on Agas map of 1578 (*ibid.,* Figure 3) c. 50 metres to the north west of the Site. A wall found during excavations in advance of a new Senior Common Room (*ibid.,* OA 67 and 68) in the early 21st century was interpreted as the north wall of the kitchen building shown by Loggan (*ibid.,* Figure 4) c. 50 metres to the west of the Site. A former cess pit that once served the college was found during archaeological recording at St. Giles (*ibid.,* OA 71) c. 110 metres to the west of the Site in 2004. A number of rubbish pits dating from the 17th century were found during extensions to the college at Dolphin Quad in 1947 (*ibid.,* OA 77). These may be associated with a number of properties that fronted onto St. Giles at this time and which are shown on Loggan (*ibid.,* Figure 4).

1.3.21 Together these finds appear to confirm much of what is depicted on Agas map (*ibid.,* Figure 3), suggesting that it is largely accurate and that the potential for structures dating to the mid- 16th century and not shown on the map to have existed close to, or within the Site, is therefore low.

1.3.22 Agas map of 1578 (*ibid.,* Figure 3) is the earliest available which includes the Site. This was complied 20 years after the founding of St. John's College and shows the Front quadrangle, the former St. Bernard's College (now labelled 'St. john's College'), fronting onto St. Giles. A garden is shown to the rear of the college. The north enclosing wall of this garden crosses the southern end of the Site. The Fellow's Garden is yet to be developed to the north of this garden and is shown as open ground (presumably pasture) to the north east. The Site is located largely within this blank area. Agas' lack of detail here provides little evidence of what the nature of the lands were that had been acquired in the purchase from Owen five years before, in 1573.

1.3.23 Hollar's map of 1643 (*ibid.,* Figure 4) is the first to show the recently completed Canterbury Quadrangle immediately to the east of the Front Quad. The map however, does not show any detail within the gardens to the north east in the area of the Site, which are shown blank as on Agas map. This means that Sprott Wall (*ibid.,* OA 26) which was constructed in 1613 is not shown, nor is the larger wall enclosing the gardens as a whole. The new quad has been constructed upon the western end of the gardens to the south of the Site. Hollar's map shows far more buildings fronting St. Giles with buildings now occupying the street front immediately to the south of the Front Quad. The Site itself is still located in featureless open land immediately to the north east of the new Canterbury Quad.

1.3.24 By the time of Loggan's map of 1675 (*ibid.,* Figure 5) the previously open land to the north east in the area of the Site has been enclosed within an expanded Fellow's Garden and surrounded by a wall (*ibid.,* OA 46). Sprott Wall (*ibid.,* OA 26) is shown for the first time as are the formal garden layouts. The line of the north wall of this garden

(no longer extant) follows what is now the northern boundary of the Site, while the south wall, which also no longer survives, crosses the southern end of the Site on a north east – south west alignment. Sprott Wall is still in existence.

1.3.25 Taylor's map of 1750 (*ibid.,* Figure 6) is the first vertical view map of the area. This shows a very similar layout to the area as was depicted by Loggan 75 years earlier, the main exception being the first two buildings of North Quadrangle (*ibid.,* OA 18 and 19) which had been constructed through the first half of the 18th century. The President's Garden, immediately to the west of the Site is still divided into four rectangular plots depicting a formal garden, although the north wall has now been demolished and a new wall has been constructed c. 8 metres to the north of the Site. The larger Fellows Garden immediately to the east of the Site is still divided into two plots of formal gardens, again as depicted by Loggan. Sprott Wall is depicted by a single line between the President's and the Fellow's Garden.

1.3.26 Beaumont's map of St. Giles from 1769 (*ibid.,* Figure 7) shows Fellows Garden to the east of the Site as a series or rectangular plots subdivided by what are assumed to be paths with a circular central feature. The President's Close appears to be larger at this time than it is now, reaching up to the rear of properties on St. Giles and occupying what is now the northern end of the President's Garden. The southern wall of the President's Garden, that crosses the southern end of the Site, is shown to be still standing.

1.3.27 Fadens' map of 1789 (*ibid.,* Figure 8) shows the area in the greatest amount of detail to date. The President's Garden is once again shown to contain four rectangular areas divided by what are assumed to be paths while Sprott Wall is now shown as a thick line with the Fellow's Garden to the east laid out in the same way as shown by Beaumont

1.3.28 The Ordnance Survey (OS) First Edition map of 1871 (*ibid.,* Figure 9) shows the college buildings much as they were in the late 18th century. The college gardens are now less formal with both the President's Garden, to the west of the Site and the President's Close to the north of the Site shown as open spaces (presumably lawn) and College Garden (previously the Fellow's Garden) to the east of the Site, now open space in the south and lawn with rounded areas of trees and bushes in the northern half. The southern wall of the President's Garden, which once crossed the southern end of the Site, has now been removed

1.4 Acknowledgements

1.4.1 OA would like to acknowledge the kind help from the staff at St John's, especially Phil Shefford, Head Gardener. Also thank you to Clare Wright and James Taylor of Wright and Wright Architects for introducing us to the project, and help setting up. David Radford, Archaeologist and Kevin Caldicott, Tree Officer of OCC provided good advice as to trench size and positioning. The evaluation was managed for OA by Dan Poore and Ben Ford, and the archaeological fieldwork was directed by Steve Leech with the assistance of Lee Grana and Chris Richardson.

2 Evaluation Aims and Methodology

2.1 Aims

General

2.1.1 The aims of the evaluation as stated in the WSI (OA 2013) were:

- to determine the presence or absence of significant archaeological remains;
- to determine or confirm the approximate extent of any surviving remains;
- to determine the date range, and phasing, of any surviving remains by artefactual dating;
- to determine the condition and state of preservation of any remains;
- to determine the degree of complexity of any surviving horizontal or vertical stratigraphy;
- to assess the associations and implications of any remains encountered with reference to the historic landscape;
- to determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence, and the forms in which such evidence may survive;
- to determine or confirm the likely range, quality and quantity of the artefactual evidence present.

Specific aims and objectives

2.1.2 The specific aims and objectives were:

- to gain a clear understanding of the nature of truncation at the site from previous activity;
- to gain a clear understanding of the nature of the geological natural and the nature and complexity of the full archaeological sequence;
- to determine pre-tenement and post tenement activity and the dates for these;
- to examine the below ground elements of the existing Grade II listed Sprott Wall that defines the eastern boundary to the Site;
- to use the results of the trenching to provide two cross-sections (E-W and N-S) through the development area illustrating the existing site levels, heights of natural geology, significant archaeological deposits, by phase, and the development impact levels (where known) to help inform further mitigation as necessary.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 The evaluation consisted of three trenches of various sizes which offered a little under a 7% sample (54m^2) of the development footprint (c. 800m^2) (Fig. 2).

2.2.2 The trenches were opened under close archaeological supervision using a rubber tracked excavator fitted with a 1.2m wide toothless ditching bucket.

2.2.3 The trenches were positioned to sit within the footprint of the proposed development.

2.2.4 Trench 3 was specifically targeted to examine the below ground elements of the existing N-S eastern boundary wall to the Presidents Garden (Sprott Wall), also paying particular attention to any boundary precursors.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

3.1.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below, beginning with a general description of soils, and a stratigraphic account of the trenches. This is followed by an overall discussion and interpretation. An index of trenches giving the extent and depths of all deposits is presented in tabular form in Appendix A.

3.2 General soils and ground conditions

3.2.1 The underlying geology was reached in all trenches and consisted of a compact yellow/white or yellow/brown sandy gravel. No overlying loess 'supra-natural' deposits were observed in any of the trenches.

3.2.2 All features were filled with similar soil types, and many contained lenses of redeposited natural gravel and loess. Greyish brown former garden soils were present in all trenches and varied in depth between 0.40m and 1m deep; these were overlain in all trenches by the current topsoil, which measured between 0.3-0.4m thick.

3.2.3 Soil samples were taken from three pits (2018, 2020, 2037) for charred plant remains and bone/artefacts.

3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits

3.3.1 Archaeological features were present within all trenches. All features extended beyond the extent of the excavation trenches.

3.4 Trench 1 *(Fig. 3-4; Plate 1)*

3.4.1 Trench 1 was located in the northern part of the Site. It measured 5 x 2m on a NNE-SSW orientation. A central sondage, measuring 1 x 3.2m, was excavated to investigate the archaeological features. The NW corner of the trench contained a modern water pipe and prevented deeper excavation.

3.4.2 The highest recorded level of the natural gravel geology was 61.83m OD (on a spur between two large features), but no supra-natural loess was present, suggesting that the original uppermost horizon of the natural had been truncated to an unknown depth by later activity.

3.4.3 Three intercutting archaeological features were investigated. The earliest feature, 1007, had been heavily truncated by the later features so that only its western edge and a small section of fill (1008) survived. It had been cut by the western edge of feature 1004, whose northern, southern and eastern limits lay beyond the trench. This feature had steep sides and a flattish base, and measured 0.9m deep. It was filled by 1005, a greyish brown silty clay loam containing lenses of redeposited gravel, and pottery dating from 1600-1700. This was cut by feature 1002, whose eastern and northern edges were contained within the trench (its southern and western limits lay beyond the trench). It had very steep sides, and measured over 1.1m deep (its base was not revealed). It was filled with 1003 which was similar in composition to 1005 and contained a coin of Charles I (1625-1649), pottery dating from 1630-1700, and clay pipe dated to c 1630-1650. Features 1004 and 1002 probably represent elements of two large pits.

3.4.4 All features were overlain by 1001, a 0.60m thick layer of grey-brown silty clay deposit, interpreted as a former garden soil which contained pottery dating from 1700-1825, and a piece of redeposited 17th century brick. This was in turn overlain by a 0.40m thick layer of dark grey silty-clay topsoil (1009).

3.5 Trench 2 *(Fig. 5-8; Plate 2)*

3.5.1 Trench 2 was located in the central part of the site. It was L-shaped, with a NNE-SSW arm measuring 12 x 2m, and at its southern end it had an eastern arm that measured 5 x 2m.

3.5.2 Natural geology was encountered at 62.31m OD at the northern end of the trench. This was 0.5m below ground level (bgl) and represented the highest observable level for the natural gravel at the Site. No supra-natural loess was present, suggesting that the original uppermost horizon of the natural had been truncated to an unknown depth by later activity.

3.5.3 Fourteen archaeological features were investigated, of which three were linear features, and the remainder were pits of differing sizes, with a single tree-throw hole and a post hole.

3.5.4 In the northern end of the trench were a series of six intercutting pits. The earliest of which were sub-circular pits 2011 and 2015, which had been truncated by a later tree throw hole (2008). Pits 2011 and 2015 had steep sides, and concave bases; the former was 1m deep and the later 0.5m deep. Pit 2011 contained pottery dated to c1075-1300. Truncating the southern limit of 2015 was a large pit (2018=2035), which measured over 5m N-S and 2m+ wide (extending beyond the trench both to the east and west). It had steep sides, and was filled by gravelly greyish-brown silty clay fills with lenses of redeposited loess, gravel, and darker grey silty-clays. Fill 2017 contained a significant amount of pottery dated to c1250-1400, with other fills of the pit containing pottery dated to 1400-1550. The southern extent of this feature was cut by sub-circular pit 2033, which had near vertical sides and a rounded base, and contained ceramic building material (CBM) dated to the 15-17th century.

3.5.5 Adjacent to, but apart from, 2035 and 2033 was the eastern part of what appeared to be another large pit (2020), which extended westwards beyond the trench. This was steep sided with a flat but sloping base. It was filled with a dark greyish-brown sily clay with redeposited natural gravel lenses. It contained pottery dating to c1225-1400. A similar partially exposed pit (2037) lay immediately south of 2020, its fill contained 14th century CBM.

3.5.6 Pit 2020 was cut by two intercutting sub-circular pits and a narrow short linear feature; these were 2029, 2027 and 2031 respectively. Both pits were filled with deposits similar to those of the pits to their north. Pit 2027 contained pottery dated to 1600-1650.

3.5.7 The south-eastern part of the trench contained one narrow linear feature (2024) which was cut by pit (2022); both contained pottery dated to 1600-1650. To the east of these features was a very large feature (2006/2004), which extended eastwards beyond the trench and measured over 2m wide by 3.5m+ long. Its western edge was visible in the trench running on a NE-SW orientation. It had steep sides with a flattish base and similar fills to the previously described pits in this trench, which yielded pottery dated to 1600-1750.

3.5.8 All features in the south-eastern part of Trench 2 were overlain by a 0.45m thick layer of mid-brownish grey sandy silt (2025), a possible former garden soil which contained pottery dated to 1580-1640.

3.5.9 Overlying 2025, and all the features in the northern part of the trench was a former garden soil (2001), dated to 1600-1640; this soil was 0.4m deep in the northern half of the trench but thickened in the southern half to depths of 0.5-0.6m. It was entirely overlain by the modern topsoil.

3.6 Trench 3 *(Figure 9-10; Plates 3-5)*

3.6.1 Trench 3 measured 5 x 2m and was aligned WSW–ENE in the eastern part of the President's Garden, extending from the western face of Sprott Wall, the boundary wall, which has an historic construction date of 1613.

3.6.2 The uppermost horizon of the natural gravel geology was encountered at 61.20m OD. No supra-natural was observed overlying these gravels which suggests that it had been entirely truncated by subsequent activity associated with the archaeological features encountered within the trench.

3.6.3 Two large flat bottomed features (3002 and 3004) cut the natural gravel. Feature 3002 measured 1.8m wide and 0.53m deep, with sloping sides and a flat base. It appeared to be linear, probably a ditch running NNW-SSE beyond the southern and northern limits of the trench. A small fragment of medieval peg tile was retrieved from its fill (3003).

3.6.4 Located 1m to the east of 3002 was the parallel western edge of feature 3004. The southern and northern extents of this feature lay beyond the trench limits; the eastern limits extended under Sprott Wall. 3004 also had sloping sides and a flat base, which possibly indicates that it was a similar linear feature on the same alignment as 3002, however it is also possible that it is the eastern edge of a large discrete pit-type feature.

3.6.5 The fills to both 3004 and 3002 consisted of dark greyish brown sandy silts with lenses of redeposited brick-earth (supra-natural) and natural gravel.

3.6.6 Both of these features were overlain by a c. 1m thick deposit of mid-grey brown sandy silt (3001), that contained one fragment of redeposited later medieval floor tile and three fragments of potentially contemporary early post-medieval pottery, offering a 16th-early 17th century date range.

3.6.7 3001 appeared to be cut by the construction cut (3009) for the off-set foundation (3008) to Sprott Wall (3007). The foundation consisted of a single course of stone off-set from the wall face by 0.4m. The backfill to the construction trench was overlain by a 0.40m thick layer of dark grey sandy silt – the current topsoil (3010).

3.7 Finds summary

Pottery by John Cotter

Introduction and methodology

3.7.1 A total of 56 sherds of pottery weighing 3552g was recovered from nine contexts. This is mainly of post-medieval date with some medieval sherds also present. All the pottery was examined and spot-dated during the present assessment stage. For each context the total pottery sherd count and weight were recorded on an Excel spreadsheet, followed by the context spot-date which is the date-bracket during which the latest pottery types in the context are estimated to have been produced or were in general circulation. Comments on the presence of datable types were also recorded, usually with mention of vessel form (jugs, bowls etc.) and any other attributes worthy of note (eg. decoration etc.). Medieval pottery fabrics codes used in the spreadsheet are those of the Oxfordshire County type series (Mellor,1994). Post-medieval codes used are those of the Museum of London (LAARC 2007) which can be applied to most post-medieval types in south-east England. The pottery types present are summarised below and detailed in the spreadsheet.

Date and nature of the assemblage

3.7.2 Most of the post-medieval pottery occurs as large fresh sherds while the smaller quantity of medieval pottery occurs as small worn sherds - some of which are residual in later contexts. Pottery types are entirely domestic in character and comprise a range of fabric types commonly found on excavations in Oxford. The earliest sherds present probably date from the late 12th or 13th century but are probably residual (Fabric OXY, OXAQ). A few contexts contain only pottery dating to the 13th or 14th century in which sherds of Brill/Boarstall ware (OXAM) glazed jugs are present (ctxs 2017, 2019). Two contexts contain only late medieval wares (2007, 2034). The largest and freshest context assemblages contain pottery of 17th-century date with an emphasis perhaps on pottery of the mid 17th century (1003, 2001, 2025, 3001). These contain domestic forms such as jars, tripod pipkins or cauldrons and bowls in late Brill/Boarstall orange-pink ware (OXBX, up to c 1640), and in local post-medieval red earthenwares (PMR) although an unusual large bowl from 1003 with allover internal white slip under green glaze might be a London product (PMRE?). Sherds from a small number of 17th-century German Frechen stoneware ‘Bellarmine’ jugs also occur in these contexts. Two have applied decorative medallions typical of the period and one good quality jug bears a fragment of an armorial medallion datable to c 1590-1620 (2001). Another 17th-century context (2025) produced a sherd from a green-glazed border ware (BORDG) ‘fuming pot’ or pomander with several large perforations through the vessel wall. The latest pottery in the assemblage comprises a profile of a large post-medieval Brill-type flowerpot (PMR) dating from c 1700-1825 (1001). No common Staffordshire-type refined white tablewares of the 19th century were recovered suggesting perhaps that the pottery sequence ends in the 18th century. No further work on the pottery assemblage is recommended.

Clay tobacco pipes by John Cotter

3.7.3 Seven pieces of clay pipe weighing 32g were recovered. A separate catalogue has not been constructed but the material is described below. No further work is recommended.

Context (1003) Spot-date: c 1630-1650

3.7.4 Description: Two complete fresh bowls of the local St Ebbe's Type A, c 1630-1650, one with a circular heel and one with a heart-shaped heel (Oswald 1984, fig.51A). Plain apart from milling around the rim. Also five fresh pieces of stem with stem bore diameters of 3mm and therefore compatible with a 17th-century date.

Ceramic building material (CBM) by John Cotter

3.7.5 A total of 15 pieces of CBM weighing 1707g were recovered. These came from 11 contexts. This was examined and spot-dated during the present assessment stage in a similar way to the pottery (see elsewhere) and the data recorded on an Excel spreadsheet. As usual, the dating of broken fragments of ceramic or other building materials is an imprecise art and spot-dates derived from them are necessarily broad and should therefore be regarded with caution. The assemblage, which is mostly very fragmentary and worn, is described in some detail in the spreadsheet and summarised only briefly here as there is little of much note. A few scraps of early peg tile probably date to the 13th-14th century but are probably all residual. A few fresher pieces of late medieval (15th-17th century) peg tile were also noted. Context (2025) produced a small fragment from a crested ridge in a fine orange-pink fabric which may be of 14th-century date. Fragments of several late medieval floor tiles were noted - mostly quite worn. These include fragments from two decorated floor tiles from the Penn factory in Buckinghamshire (c 1330-1380; ctxs 2025, 2036). The other floor tile fragments are from plain 'quarry' tiles which could be as late as the 15th or 16th century. One of these, which is thicker and also scorched, may have been used as a hearth tile (2025). A single brick fragment of late 16th to 17th century date appears to be the latest piece of CBM in the assemblage (1001). The range of CBM types present is fairly typical of sites in the centre of Oxford. No further work is recommended.

Glass by Ian R Scott

3.7.6 The evaluation produced just two pieces of glass, a piece of probable post-medieval window glass and a fragment of the foot of an early post-medieval goblet.

Context (1003): Window glass

3.7.7 Small fragment of uniform thickness with quite smooth regular surfaces. One possible short original edge. Weathered, its original colour is uncertain. Probably post-medieval. 27mm x 16mm; Th: 1.4mm.

Context (2021): Goblet or stemmed glass footings

3.7.8 Part of a foot with merese and stub of its slim stem and a folded foot ring. Probably of mid 16th- to 17th-century date. Base D: c 90mm

Metals by Ian R Scott

3.7.9 There are 9 metal finds, comprising 5 iron and 4 copper alloy objects. The iron objects include 4 nails or nail stems. The copper alloy comprises a pin, two lace tangs and a farthing. The nails are handmade, but not closely datable. The pin (context 2036) with wire wound head is late medieval or post medieval in date, the lace chapes (context 2025) probably date to the 16th or 17th century and the Rose farthing dates to the reign of Charles 1 (1625-49).

3.7.10 Context (1003): 'Rose' farthing, Charles 1.
Obv: Crown and long sceptres. Inscription: '[C]AROLUS D.G. M[A BRI]'. mint mark obscured or worn. *Rev*: Rose with crown. Inscription: 'FRAN ET.HIB.REX' mint mark after: Crescent. Cu alloy D: 13mm.(SF 1000)

3.7.11 Context (2001): Buckle tongue
Tapering to a point, with rolled over loop at broad end. Possibly from a harness buckle. Fe. L: 40mm.

3.7.12 Context (2002): Nail
Handmade with tapering square section stem and eroded head. Fe. L: 62mm.

3.7.13 Context (2017), sample 1000: Nail
Handmade, incomplete and handmade nail stem fragment.

3.7.14 Context (2025): Lace chapes
Two lace chapes with edges folded in to grip the lace. Possibly 16th- or 17th-century date. Cu alloy. L: 38.5mm and 39mm.

3.7.15 Context (2026): Nails
One complete nail with tapering stem and small flat head (L: c 60mm),and one incomplete nail with in rectangular section stem. (not measured). Fe.

3.7.16 Context (2034): Nail
Nail with small flat head and incomplete stem, Handmade. Fe. (not measured)

3.7.17 Context (2036): Pin
Pin with a crimped wire wound head, complete. Cu alloy. L: 27mm (SF 1001)

3.7.18 *Context (2036), sample 1001: Nail, nail/tack, wire*
1 cut nail 43mm long; 1 nail/tack L-shaped head 30mm long; 1 wire fragment.

Animal bone by Lena Strid

3.7.19 A total of 109 hand-collected animal bone fragments were recovered from this site. The majority of the assemblage came from features including pits, linear features and garden soils preliminarily dated to the medieval and post-medieval periods.

3.7.20 The bone were identified to species using a comparative reference collection, as well as osteological books and articles. Ribs and vertebrae, with the exception for atlas and axis, were classified by size: 'large mammal' representing cattle, horse and deer, 'medium mammal' representing sheep/goat, pig and large/medium-sized dog, and 'small mammal' representing small dog, cat and hare.

3.7.21 The condition of the bone was graded on a 6-point system (0-5), grade 0 equating to very well preserved bone and grade 5 indicating that the bone had suffered such structural and attritional damage as to make it unrecognisable. Generally the bones were in good to fair condition, regardless of phase. Bones with gnaw marks from carnivores were only present in the medieval/early post-medieval and post-medieval phases, where they comprised 7% and 16.7% of all bones. The majority of the gnawed bones came from contexts interpreted as garden soils. There were no bones in any phase with gnaw marks from rodents. Only one bone, a rib fragment from the medieval/early post-medieval assemblage, was burnt (see Appendix C, Table 1).

3.7.22 The assemblage contains bones from cattle, sheep/goat, pig, horse, rabbit and a galliform bird, probably chicken (see Appendix C, Table 2). These taxa are typical for medieval and post-medieval urban and college assemblages, although due to the small sample size it is not possible to extrapolate the frequency of the different species and their over-all dietary contribution. Judging by species and element representation, most bones, with the notable exception of a horse metacarpal, represent butchery and kitchen waste.

3.7.23 A small number of bones could be assigned a minimum age at death (see Appendix C, Tables 3 and 4), and these indicate that most of the cattle and sheep/goat were killed as sub-adults or adults. Bones from juvenile animals only occurred in the post-medieval assemblage, comprising 3 cattle bones, 1 pig bone and 3 bones from large mammal/s.

3.7.24 Butchery marks were noted on several bones, mostly from the post-medieval assemblage. The only butchery marks in the medieval/early post-medieval assemblage include two sheep horn cores that had been chopped off the skulls at the base, one sheep femur shaft, and one pig mandible with cut marks from filleting. Butchery marks in the post-medieval assemblage include sagittal splitting of large and medium mammal vertebrae, portioning of ribs from large and medium mammals, disarticulation of two sheep/goat pelves at the ilium, cut marks from disarticulation at the trochlea of two sheep/goat humeri and at the neck of three sheep/goat scapulae. One of the sheep/goat scapulae had also been portioned across the blade and had filleting cut marks along the spina. One rabbit pelvis had also been split in two along the sagittal plane. Three cattle humeri had similar butchery marks, suggesting standardisation of butchery. They were all disarticulated from the elbow joint by chopping off the anterior/medial tip of the trochlea and portioned at mid-shaft. Two of the humeri also had cut marks at the trochlea probably from disarticulation or from filleting. Other filleting marks include cut marks on a fragment of a large mammal hyoid, probably cattle. A horse metacarpal had cut marks at the distal metaphysis and joint surfaces, probably from removal of the foot bones.

3.7.25 Pathologies were only found in the medieval/early post-medieval assemblage where two sheep horn cores had so called thumbprint depressions. The aetiology is unclear but may be associated with malnutrition (Albarella 1995).

3.7.26 The assemblage has been fully recorded and no further information can be gained from such a small sample of bones. However, if further excavations take place on the site, the bones should be considered alongside any additional material.

Environmental samples by Sharon Cook

Aims and methodology

3.7.27 This report describes samples taken from the evaluation at St John's College, Oxford, in January 2014. Samples <1000> (2017), and <1002> (2019), were taken from quarry pit fills of Medieval origin. Sample <1001> (2036), was from a 16th-17th century pit fill.

3.7.28 Sampling was undertaken to:

- Determine whether environmental evidence (such as plant remains, animal bone, human bone and molluscs) are present.
- Determine the quality, range, state and method of preservation of any environmental evidence.
- Recover and identify any small artefacts.
- Make further recommendations about sampling for future excavations at the site.

3.7.29 The samples were processed for charred plant remains (CPR) by water flotation using a modified Siraf style flotation machine. The flots were collected on a 250µm mesh and the heavy residues sieved to 500µm; both were dried in a heated room, after which the

residues were sorted by eye for artefacts. The dried flot was scanned for charred plant remains using a binocular microscope at approximately x10 magnification.

3.7.30 Seed identifications were made with reference to Oxford Archaeology's reference collection. Nomenclature for the plant remains follows Stace (2010). All finds will be added to the site compendium.

Results

3.7.31 Sample <1000> (2017) was a brown sandy silt loam with gravel (7.5YR 5/4) and was 40l in volume. Pottery, iron nails, oyster shell and mammal bone were recovered from the residue. The sample yielded approximately 100ml of flot material of which 100% was scanned. The flot contains frequent modern roots and snails. Charcoal is present; although fragments are <4mm, which are unlikely to be identifiable to species. A number of fragments of cereal grain were noted although the condition was too poor to identify further, two fragments have been identified as possibly rye (Secale cereale) although the condition meant that it was impossible to be certain. Eight grains were positively identified as wheat (Triticum sp.). Three other charred seeds were observed although they could not be identified to species.

3.7.32 Sample <1001> (2036) was a brown sandy silt loam with gravel (7.5YR 5/4) and was 40l in volume. Mammal bone, iron nails and a glazed tile were recovered from the residue. The sample yielded approximately 75ml of flot material of which 100% was scanned. The flot contains frequent modern roots and snails. Charcoal is present; although rare, including fragments of >4mm, which may be identifiable to species. Two fragments of wheat (Triticum sp.) were noted although the condition was too poor to identify further. Three charred seeds were observed, one of which was unidentifiable; the other two were elder (Sambucus sp.) and dock (Rumex sp).

3.7.33 Sample <1002> (2019) was a brown sandy silt loam with gravel (7.5YR 5/4) and was 20l in volume. No finds were recovered from the residue. The sample yielded approximately 50ml of flot material of which 100% was scanned. The flot contains frequent modern roots and snails. Charcoal is present, including fragments of >4mm, which may be identifiable to species. Five fragments of cereal grain were noted although the condition was too poor to identify further. No other charred seeds were observed.

Discussion

3.7.34 The flots for all samples examined contained well preserved charcoal. Charred seeds were only present within samples <1000> and <1001> and the majority were insufficiently preserved to facilitate identification although those that were identifiable are of common and robust species. Snails are very common in all three flots although they would appear to be modern in origin.

Conclusions and recommendations

3.7.35 The samples taken during this evaluation produced potentially identifiable charcoal but few other charred remains. The bone, marine shell and artefacts in samples <1000> and <1001> indicate that these are dumped deposits, probably of domestic origin. Although it is clear that charred remains are preserved at the site, especially the charcoal, the interpretative value of material from these samples is low. Nevertheless, since organic materials evidently survive it is recommended that any future excavations should incorporate a sampling policy in accordance with the most recent sampling guidelines (e.g. Oxford Archaeology, 2005 and English Heritage, 2011), focussing on potentially datable deposits.

Shell by Geraldine Crann

3.7.36 The assemblage is of low potential and no further work is required.

Table: Shell

Context	Description
1003	2 oyster shells, 1 left valve 1 right valve, 20g.
1005	1 oyster shell right valve, 10g.
2002	1 oyster shell left valve, 10g.
2017	<1000> 4 fragments oyster shell, 11g.
2034	1 oyster shell left valve, 16g.

Worked stone by Ruth Shaffrey

3.7.37 Three fragments of stone were retained. None of these are worked but two are fragments of burnt shale. The stone has no potential and no further work is required.

4 Discussion

4.1 Reliability of field investigation

4.1.1 The trenches were opened during a period of relatively good weather conditions and the revealed features were easy to identify against the underlying geology. There was some difficulty differentiating between the similar fills of intercutting features, which made establishing the sequence of features difficult.

4.1.2 Trench 3 was constrained to both north and south by adjacent trees; this restricted the ability to widen the trench to enable a more detailed examination and record of the archaeological deposits and features encountered.

4.1.3 Many of the features revealed extended beyond the limits of the trenches, and although many features can be confidently interpreted as discrete pits, some could be ditches.

4.1.4 The evaluation covered c 7% of the development area. Positioning of trenches was constrained by the tree cover at the Site, however it was possible to locate the trenches to provide a reliable indication of archaeological activity over the entire development area.

4.1.5 Overall, given the constraints above, the results can be considered to offer a reliable evaluation of the nature, date, preservation and distribution of the archaeology at the Site.

4.2 Discussion and interpretation (Figs. 11 and 12)

Natural

4.2.1 Natural gravel, which was present in every trench, was seen to be heavily truncated by later activity in each of the trenches. The usual over-lying 0.2-0.3m thick deposit of loess, the reddish-brown silty 'supra-natural', whose in-situ upper horizon would have indicated the original ground surface at the Site was also absent (although this material was present as redeposited lenses within the fills of archaeological features, and therefore can be assumed to have been present in-situ at the Site).

4.2.2 The uppermost height of the natural gravel from N – S across the site was; Trench 1 - 61.83mOD (1m bgl); Trench 2 – north end 62.31mOD (0.5m bgl) to south end 61.90mOD (0.8m bgl); Trench 3 – c 61.80m OD (1.2 bgl).

4.2.3 The gravel promontory is relatively level in this area, and would suggest that the original ground surface was also relatively level. This ground surface would have been at least 0.2m above the upper horizon of the natural gravel, and therefore a minimum height for this horizon could be assumed to be at a minimum height of 62.31m OD plus 0.2m i.e. c. 62.50m OD+, extending relatively consistently across the Site. Therefore the evaluation revealed that later activity at the Site had truncated the original ground surface to a minimum depth of between 0.2 – 1.2m, with the least truncation in the centre of the Site (in the northern part of Trench 2) deepening to both the south and north.

Pre-medieval

4.2.4 The evaluation revealed no datable pre-medieval features. There was also a notable absence of any pre-medieval finds, even residually in later features. In addition, undated stratigraphically early features contained fills which are unlike the reddish brown silty clays associated with pre-medieval features seen elsewhere in Oxford, and more akin to the darker, more greyish brown fills usually present in medieval and later features - it must be assumed that they are therefore likely to be of later (?medieval) date. This apparent lack of any evidence for earlier archaeology, given the presence of

prehistoric funerary and ritual monuments and Roman field systems nearby, is notable. The lack of residual earlier finds might, however, be explained by the fact that this type of non-domestic / non-settlement land use does not usually generate significant quantities of material culture.

Medieval

4.2.5 A number of features yielded exclusively medieval finds which consisted of pottery and CBM that ranged in date from 1075-1550, but predominantly from the later half of that range - these were entirely domestic in nature and are common within Oxford. The pits in the northern part of Trench 2 provided a concentrated focus of these features, and this corresponded with the least truncated part of the Site. These pits ranged in size and depth, the smaller ones were similar in size to domestic rubbish pits, but none had the characteristic sequence of multiple fills that is usually associated with such features. The larger one was of a size expected of a quarry pit, excavated to extract the sand and gravel aggregate.

4.2.6 Notably, all the medieval pottery from these features was recorded as relatively small and 'worn', this suggests that these sherds have been redeposited from their original in-situ contexts within features belonging to later periods of activity. However, there are plenty of post-medieval finds at the Site and it is difficult to explain why if these features are post-medieval they only contain medieval finds. The possibility that these features are of genuine medieval date should be considered, and perhaps indicate that quarrying in this area commenced in the 13th-14th centuries.

4.2.7 The possible NNE-SSW orientated ditch (3002) in Trench 3 also fell into this category, and may indicate an earlier earthwork form of the boundary later reinforced by Sprott Wall. The undated feature below Sprott Wall is certainly of very early 17th century or earlier date. This may represent a further incarnation of this boundary (and when considered together with the ditch to the west suggests local movement of a long standing boundary). However, it may also represent a larger discrete feature such as a quarry hole, similar to that attributed to this phase in Trench 2.

4.2.8 Agas's map of 1578 shows the area of the Site as open ground in the early post-medieval period, and at some distance from the rear, eastern, boundary to the tenements (of probable medieval origin) on the eastern side of St Giles. Unless the original boundary to these properties had moved westwards this situation throws into doubt the possible domestic interpretation of the smaller sized pits. However, such open land would have provided an ideal source of gravel, and evidence of quarry activity could be expected. Equally, quarrying to the rear of medieval tenements has been observed on the Ashmolean site (OA, forthcoming), and perhaps the ditch[es] in Trench 3 represent earlier boundaries to former larger medieval tenements.

Post-medieval

4.2.9 Post-medieval features and soils were revealed in all three trenches. Trench 1 partially revealed two large post-medieval features, probably quarry pits, and similar features were noted from the southern part of Trench 2. The most comprehensive dating evidence came from fill 1003 of feature 1002 with pottery, clay pipe and coins confirming a mid-seventeenth century date.

4.2.10 Historic records note that St. John's College acquired land including the area of the Site in 1573; they also show that the College was granted the right to extract gravel for building purposes (see 1.3.19). Nearby excavations have revealed several 16th and 17th century quarry pits in other parts of the College, possibly relating to the original construction of the college and subsequent additional building construction.

4.2.11 All the post-medieval features were sealed below former garden soils, which could have been imported into the Site, or have been formed by the reworking of the upper fills of the pre-existing features. Dating evidence suggests these soils vary in date from the late 16th – early 17th century (in Trench 1) through the 17th century in Trench 2 to the 18th century in Trench 3.

Structural remains

4.2.12 The only structural remains encountered were the foundations to the extant Sprott Wall at the eastern end of Trench 3. The western face of the wall continued for 1.1m below existing ground level to a single course of large off-set stone foundations. The construction cut appeared to be discernible through deposit 3001 which contained pottery dating to 1575-1650, which does not contradict the historic date of 1613 for the wall's construction (OA No. 26, OA, 2013). The wall was possibly a replacement and formalisation of a pre-existing ditched boundary, represented by cut 3002 and possibly cut 3004. Agas's late 16th, and Hollar's mid 17th century maps do not show Sprott Wall or indeed a ditched boundary at this location. Sprott Wall first appears on Loggan's map of 1675.

4.2.13 The 1613 date for the construction of Sprott Wall would suggest that the underlying feature could represent an early phase of quarrying by the college. The later date for other potential quarry holes indicate that although Sprott Wall divided the Presidents' and Fellows' Gardens, these locations were legitimate sources of building aggregate, at least in the mid-part of the 17th century when the College underwent significant expansion, and before the formalised gardens were established as first shown on Loggans Map of 1675.

5 Conclusions

5.1.1 The evaluation revealed that the Site's natural horizon had been heavily truncated by later activity.

5.1.2 There was a lack of pre-medieval type fills and finds, although a complete absence of pre-medieval activity cannot be ruled out.

5.1.3 There was evidence for medieval activity from as early as the late 12th century, with the majority of medieval finds dated to the later part of the medieval period. Activity was evidenced by pits of varying sizes, possibly of a domestic nature, and certainly indicating quarrying for sands and gravels from potentially as early as the 13th – 14th century. If domestic activity can be assumed this suggests that the later tenement boundaries shown on late 16th century maps may have been further to the east (perhaps represented by a ditch precursor to the early 17th century Sprott Wall) and therefore included the area of the Site.

5.1.4 The formalisation of the boundary by the construction of Sprott Wall perhaps post-dates late-16th century quarrying, possibly by St John's College, and definitely pre-dates quarrying in the first half of the 17th century by the College before the area was laid out to formal gardens in the later half of the 17th century.

Appendix A. Trench Descriptions and Context Inventory

Trench 1						
General description					**Orientation**	NW-SE
Trench contained one pit (1004) that cuts pit (1007) and is cut by pit/ditch terminus (1002).					**Avg. depth (m)**	1.00
					Width (m)	2.00
					Length (m)	5.00
Contexts						
context no	**type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**comment**	**finds**	**Date of finds**
1000	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
1001	Layer	-	0.60	Garden soil	Bone, CBM, Pottery	L16-17th C, c.1700-1825
1002	Cut	0.90	1.00	Pit/Ditch?	-	-
1003	Fill	0.90	1.00	Fill of 1002	Bone, Pottery, Coin, Glass Clay pipe	c. 1630-1700?, Charles I, 1630-1650
1004	Cut	0.20	0.90	Pit	-	-
1005	Fill	0.20	0.70	Fill of 1004	Bone, Pottery	c. 1600-1700?
1006	Fill	0.20	0.20	Fill of 1004	-	-
1007	Cut	0.20	0.60	Pit	-	-
1008	Fill	0.20	0.60	Fill of 1007	-	-
1009	Layer	-	0.40	Topsoil	-	-

Trench 2						
General description					**Orientation**	NNE-SSW, with a perpendicular ENE-WSW arm to the south
Trench contained a series of inter-cutting pits, linear features, a tree throw hole and a post hole.					**Avg. depth (m)**	0.65m
					Width (m)	2.00
					Length (m)	12m plus 5m
Contexts						
context no	**type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**comment**	**finds**	**Date of finds**
2000	Layer	-	0.23	Topsoil	-	-
2001	Layer	-	0.75	Garden soil	Bone, CBM, Pottery	13-16th C, c.1600-1640?

2002	Fill	1.30	0.35+	Fill of 2004	Bone, CBM, Pottery	13-14th C, c.1600-1750?
context no	**type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**comment**	**finds**	**Date of finds**
2003	Fill	1.20	0.10	Fill of 2004	-	-
2004	Cut	1.30	0.40	Linear	-	-
2005	Fill	2.00+	0.40	Fill of 2006	-	-
2006	Cut	2.00+	0.40	Pit	-	-
2007	Fill	2.00	0.45	Fill of 2008	Bone, CBM, Pottery	13-14th C, c.1400-1550?
2008	Cut	2.00	0.45	Tree throw	-	-
2009	Fill	1.00	0.75	Fill of 2011	Bone, Pottery	c.1075-1300?
2010	Fill	1.00	0.30	Fill of 2011	-	-
2011	Cut	1.60	1.00	Pit	-	-
2012	Fill	0.40	0.20	Fill of 2013	-	-
2013	Cut	0.55	0.20	Natural Feature?	-	-
2014	Fill	0.75	0.33	Fill of 2015	-	-
2015	Cut	1.45	0.33	Pit/Tree throw	-	-
2016	Fill	0.40	0.10	Fill of 2018	-	-
2017	Fill	1.00	0.60	Fill of 2018	Bone, Pottery	c. 1250-1400
2018	Cut	3.60	0.60	Pit	-	-
2019	Fill	2.00	0.50	Fill of 2020	Bone	-
2020	Cut	2.00	0.50	Pit	-	-
2021	Fill	1.30	0.20	Fill of 2022	Bone, Glass	M16-17th C
2022	Cut	1.30	0.20	Pit	-	-
2023	Fill	0.20	0.15	Fill of 2023	-	-
2024	Cut	0.20	0.15	Linear	-	-
2025	Layer	-	0.45	Garden soil	Bone, CBM	15-17th C?
2026	Fill	1.88	0.38	Fill of 2027	Bone, CBM	13-14th C?
2027	Cut	1.88	0.38	Pit	-	-
2028	Fill	2.00	0.15	Fill of 2029	-	-
2029	Cut	2.00	0.15	Pit	-	-
2030	Fill	0.35	0.35	Fill of 2031	-	-
2031	Cut	0.35	0.35	Linear	-	-
2032	Fill	1.00	0.50	Fill of 2033	Bone,	15-17th C?

					CBM	
2033	Cut	1.15	0.50	Pit	-	-
2034	Fill	1.20	0.80	Fill of 2035	Bone, CBM	13-14th C?
2035	Cut	3.60	0.80	Pit	-	-
2036	Fill	1.00	0.55	Fill of 2037	Bone, CBM	14th C
2037	Cut	1.00	0.55	Pit	-	-
2038	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 3

General description	**Orientation**	E-W
Trench contained two undated features (3002, 3004) cutting natural. (3004) a possible boundary ditch was replaced by a N-S wall (3007) on the same alignment.	**Avg. depth (m)**	1.20
	Width (m)	2.00
	Length (m)	5.00

Contexts

context no	**type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**comment**	**finds**	**Date of finds**
3000	Layer	-	-	Natural gravel	-	-
3001	Layer	-	1.05	Loamy soil – former garden soil	Pottery, CBM	14-15th C?, 1575-1650
3002	Cut	1.80	0.50	Ditch?	-	-
3003	Fill	1.80	0.50	Fill of 3002	CBM, Bone	13-14th C?
3004	Cut	2.00	1.00	Ditch/Pit	-	-
3005	Fill	2.00	1.00	Fill of 3004	-	-
3006	Fill	2.00	0.80	Fill of 3009	-	-
3007	Structure	-	-	Wall (“Sprott Wall”)	-	1613
3008	Structure	-	-	Offset foundation wall for 3007	-	1613
3009	Cut	0.80	1.00	Construction cut for 3007	-	-
3010	Layer	-	0.40	Topsoil	-	-

Appendix B. Pottery and Ceramic Building Material Tables

Pottery

Context	Spot-date	No.	Weight	Comments
1001	c1700-1825	3	632	2 sherds incl complete flat base & rim from same vessel - Brill-type post-med red earthenware (PMR) flowerpot - large fresh example with white slip band on rim. 1x bodysherd (bo) from 17C Frechen (FREC) bellarmine with rosette medallion frag
1003	c1630-1700?	3	875	2x joining sherds FREC bellarmine with near-complete oval medallion with rosette-based decoration inside - prob M17C. 1x large fresh rim from v large/wide conical/flaring PMR bowl/pancheon with sub-collared rim & series of regular dents/notches on lower rim projection, allover internal copper-green glaze over white int slip, trace horiz handle scar, flawed crack in wall with glaze over - poss an early post-med Brill slipware product or poss an import from London (PMRE-type?) [See clay pipes = 1630-50]
1005	c1600-1700?	1	30	Early PMR bowl with flattened bead rim - broken and sooted from use. Worn brownish glaze int
2001	c1600-1640?	9	715	Incl large fresh sherds. 1x smallish bo black-glazed PMR (PMBL) prob from conical cup/tyg. 2x FREC jugs incl complete moulded base & body of good-quality jug with part of armorial medallion poss showing quartered shield (Tudor style) c1590-1620; other sherd from a bellarmine-type jug. 1x yellow Border ware (BORDY). 5x late Brill/Boarstal (OXBX) or early Brill PMR incl bowl rim with horiz grooves on int of rim flange (JOINS 2021 & 2023), handled jug/pitcher rim, jar rim & base of tripod-footed jar/pipkin
2002	c1600-1750?	1	10	Fairly fresh bo PMR from jar with int glaze & limescale deposit
2007	c1400-1550?	5	34	Fairly worn/scrappy. Includes bowl rim in green-glazed Coarse Border ware (CBW). 3x late Brill (OXBX) jugs sherds incl flat base. 1x worn OXY (c1075-1300)
2009	c1075-1300?	1	5	1x v worn bo glazed medieval Oxford ware (OXY) jug/pitcher - or poss early Brill fabric (OXAW)?
2017	c1250-1400	10	34	Small worn bos. Incl 5x E.Wilts flinty (OXAQ), 5x Brill jug bos - plain (OXAM)
2019	c1225-1400	1	6	Worn bo probably pale cream Brill (OXAM) or less likely fine Surrey Kingston-type ware (KING), jug sherd with roulette-dec strip under green glaze
2021	c1600-1650?	1	190	Late Brill/Boarstal (OXBX) or early Brill PMR bowl rim with horiz grooves on int of rim flange (JOINS 2001 & 2023)
2023	c1600-1650?	2	306	Fresh joining sherds late Brill/Boarstal (OXBX) or early Brill PMR bowl rim with horiz grooves on int of rim flange. Reduc olive green glaze int, (JOINS 2001 & 2021)
2025	c1580-1640?	12	605	Large fresh sherds. 7x late Brill OXBX/PMR from 2 vess incl cauldron-like handled jar with continuously thumbed band on ext of rim/neck, horiz groove dec on shoulder & ext sooting. Bo from a 2nd jar. 4x FREC jug sherds incl moulded bases (pre-1630) from 2 small drinking jugs or bellarmines. 1x bo green-glazed Border ware (BORDG) - poss from a delicately potted 'fuming pot' or pomander with carinated shoulder & several large perforations

Context	Spot-date	No.	Weight	Comments
2026	c1600-1650?	2	47	1x late Brill (OXBX) or early Brill-type PMR bowl with upright thickened rim with ext groove & int olive-green glaze. 1x worn bo E Wilts flinty (OXAQ) cooking pot shoulder c1150-1350
2034	c1400-1550?	1	17	Worn bo cream late med Brill (OXBX) jug shoulder, brownish wash or thin glaze ext
2036	c1600-1700?	1	3	Fresh bo from base of black-glazed PMR (PMBL) cup/tyg
3001	c1575-1650?	3	43	1x fresh bo early PMR jar/jug with glossy ext clear glaze. 1x rim late Brill (OXBX) chafing dish with small hooked rim & Dutch-style folded prong attached to rim, trace of perforation through wall, clear orange-brown glaze int (prob c 1550-1640). 1x small rim black-glazed Cistercian-type cup (CSTN) - poss a Brill product (probably 16C)
TOTAL		**56**	**3552**	

Ceramic Building Materials

Context	Spot-date	No.	Weight	Comments
1001	L16-17C	1	461	Broken/worn brick end in light orange-brown sandy fabric with coarse red iron-rich clay pellets. Fairly sharp angles. Thickness 48mm
2001	13-16C	1	137	Frag unglazed pink-buff medieval peg tile or ?ridge tile, 14mm thick. Fairly worn
2002	13-14C	1	10	Worn scrap fine pinkish med roof tile
2007	13-14C	1	19	Worn scrap fine orange-pink med roof tile
2025	15-17C?	4	590	Fresh edge frag orange sandy St Giles-type pegtile (15-17C). 1x worn frag fine pale pink-buff crested ridge tile with thin clear glaze ext (14C?). 1x worn corner frag late med quarry-style floor tile in fine sandy orange-pink fabric, upper surface v worn, slightly bevelled sides, 38mm thick, scorched on top - poss used as hearth tile? 1x fairly fresh corner frag (156g) Penn-type decorated medieval floor tile (c1330-1380) white slip decoration possibly with stylized human face in corner and part of an arc further in
2026	13-14C?	1	21	Worn frag gritty orange Abingdon-style pegtile or ridge tile with coarse rounded quartz gritting on underside. Patch of dark greenish glaze on upper surface
2032	15-17C?	2	88	Fresh edge frag orange sandy St Giles-type pegtile with recessed/chamfered edge (15-17C). Worn frag early fine orange-pink pegtile (13-14C)
2034	13-14C?	1	37	Worn frag early fine orange-pink pegtile (13-14C)
2036	14C	1	49	Edge frag sandy orange-pink Penn/Chiltern-type floor tile with traces of white slip decoration on top. Glaze worn-off from upper surface but clear brown glaze on sides, underside surface spalled off
3001	14-15C?	1	291	Worn edge frag fine sandy orange-pink Penn/Chiltern-type floor tile. 30mm thick. Upper surface fairly worn and showing no traces of glaze.

				Sides fresh. Underside rough/sanded
3003	13-14C?	1	4	Scrap from sanded underside of early fine orange-pink pegtile
TOTAL		**15**	**707**	

Appendix C. Animal Bone Tables

	N	0	1	2	3	4	5	Burnt	Gnawed
Medieval	10		50.0%	10.0%	20.0%		20.0%		
Medieval/ early post-medieval	27		33.3%	81.5%	3.7%			1	2
Post-medieval	72		68.1%	29.2%	2.8%				12

Table 1. Bone preservation and number of bones with traces of burning and gnawing.

	Medieval	Medieval/early post-medieval	Post-medieval
Cattle		2	12
Sheep/goat		5	18
Sheep	1	4	
Pig		1	1
Horse			1
Rabbit		1	2
Galliform			1
Indet.bird			1
Medium mammal	2	4	10
Large mammal	4	2	21
Indeterminate	3	7	5
TOTAL	10	27	72
Weight (g)	55	274	1535

Table 2. Bone assemblage from the St John's College garden (OXJG14) evaluation.

Species	Phase	dp4	M1	M2	M3	MWS	Estimated age
Pig	Medieval/early post-medieval				a	25-35	Sub-adult

Table 3. Tooth wear and estimated age of pig in the St John's College garden assemblage, following Grant (1982) and O'Connor (1988).

Medieval/early post-medieval		Unfused	Fusing	Fused
Sheep/goat	Early fusion			
	Mid fusion			
	Late fusion			1
Post-medieval		Unfused	Fusing	Fused

Cattle	Early fusion			3
	Mid fusion			
	Late fusion	1		
Sheep/goat	Early fusion			8
	Mid fusion			
	Late fusion		1	2
Horse	Early fusion			1
	Mid fusion			
	Late fusion			

Table 4. Epiphyseal fusion of cattle, sheep/goat and horse in the medieval/early post-medieval and the post-medieval phases from the St John's College garden assemblage, following Habermehl (1975). Fusion stages follows Serjeantson (1996).

Appendix D. Bibliography and References

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Appendix E. Summary of Site Details

Site name: President's Garden, St Johns College, Oxford

Site code: OXJG14

Grid reference: NGR SP 5132 0669

Type: Evaluation

Date and duration: 27/01/14 – 03/02/2014

Summary of results:

Between January and early February 2014, Oxford Archaeology carried out a field evaluation at the President's Garden, St John's College, St Giles, Oxford (the Site). The work was commissioned by St John's College in advance of the proposed expansion of the Colleges library facilities and construction of new buildings within the eastern side of the President's Garden.

The evaluation consisted of three trenches of various sizes which represents c 7% sample (54m2) of the development footprint (c. 800m2).

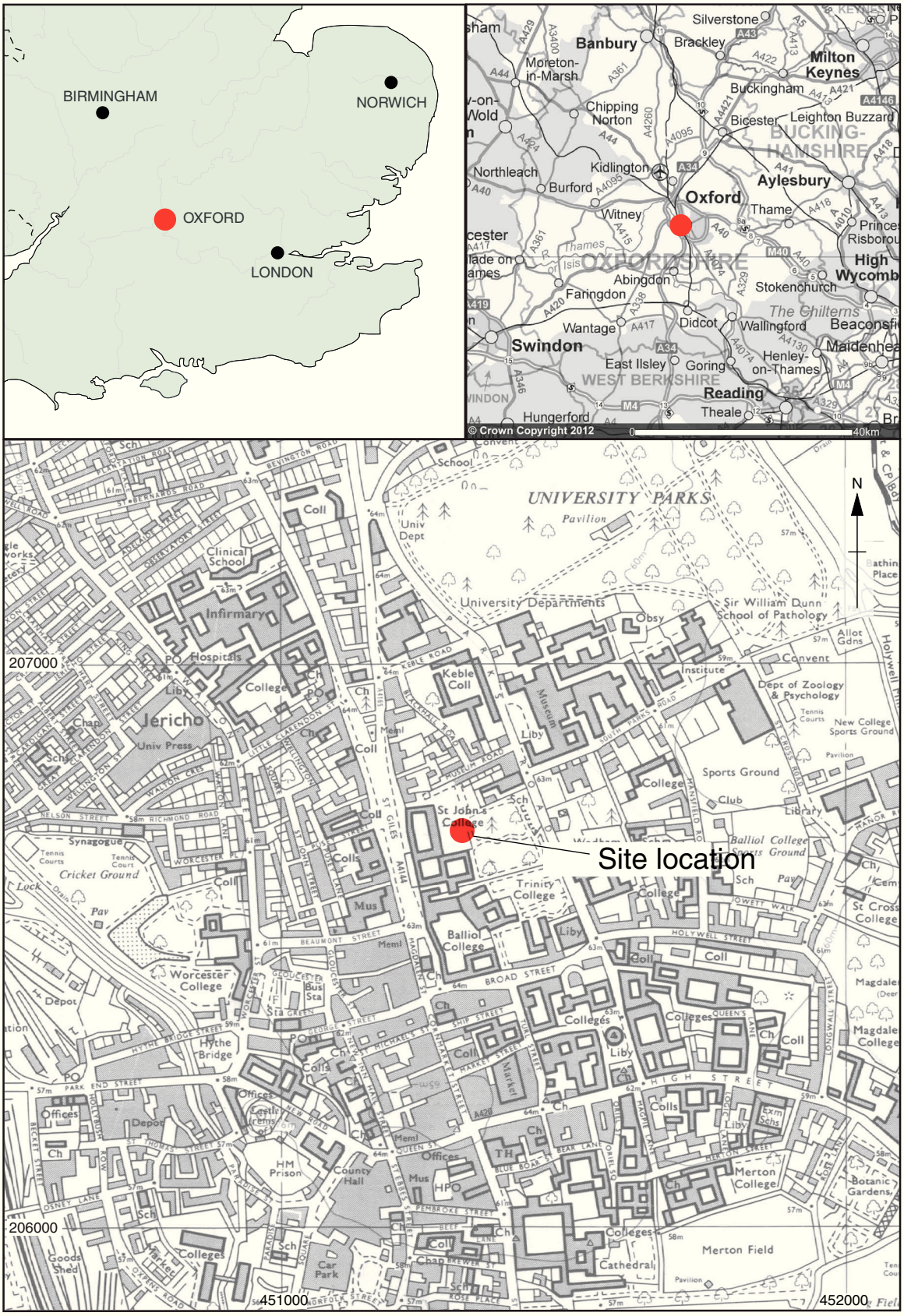
The evaluation revealed that the Site's natural horizon, and original ground level, had been heavily truncated by later activity.

There was a lack of pre-medieval fills and finds, although a complete absence of pre-medieval activity can not be ruled out.

There was evidence for medieval activity from as early as late 12th century, with the majority of medieval finds dated to the later centuries of the medieval period (c. 1250 - 1500). Evidence of such activity was represented by pits of varying sizes, the smaller ones possibly of a domestic nature, and the larger almost certainly indicating quarrying for sands and gravels from potentially as early as the 13th – 14th century. If the activity is domestic this suggests that the later tenement boundaries shown on late 16th-century maps may have been further to the east (perhaps represented by a ditch precursor to the early 17th-century Sprott Wall) and therefore included the area of the Site.

The formalisation of the ditched boundary by the construction of a stone wall called 'Sprott Wall' perhaps post-dates earlier late 16th-century quarrying, possibly by St John's College, and definitely pre-dates quarrying in the first half of the 17th century by the College before the area was laid out to formal gardens in the later half of that century.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with the Oxfordshire County Museum in due course, under the following accession number: OXCMS : 2014:12



Scale 1:15,000

Figure 1: Site location

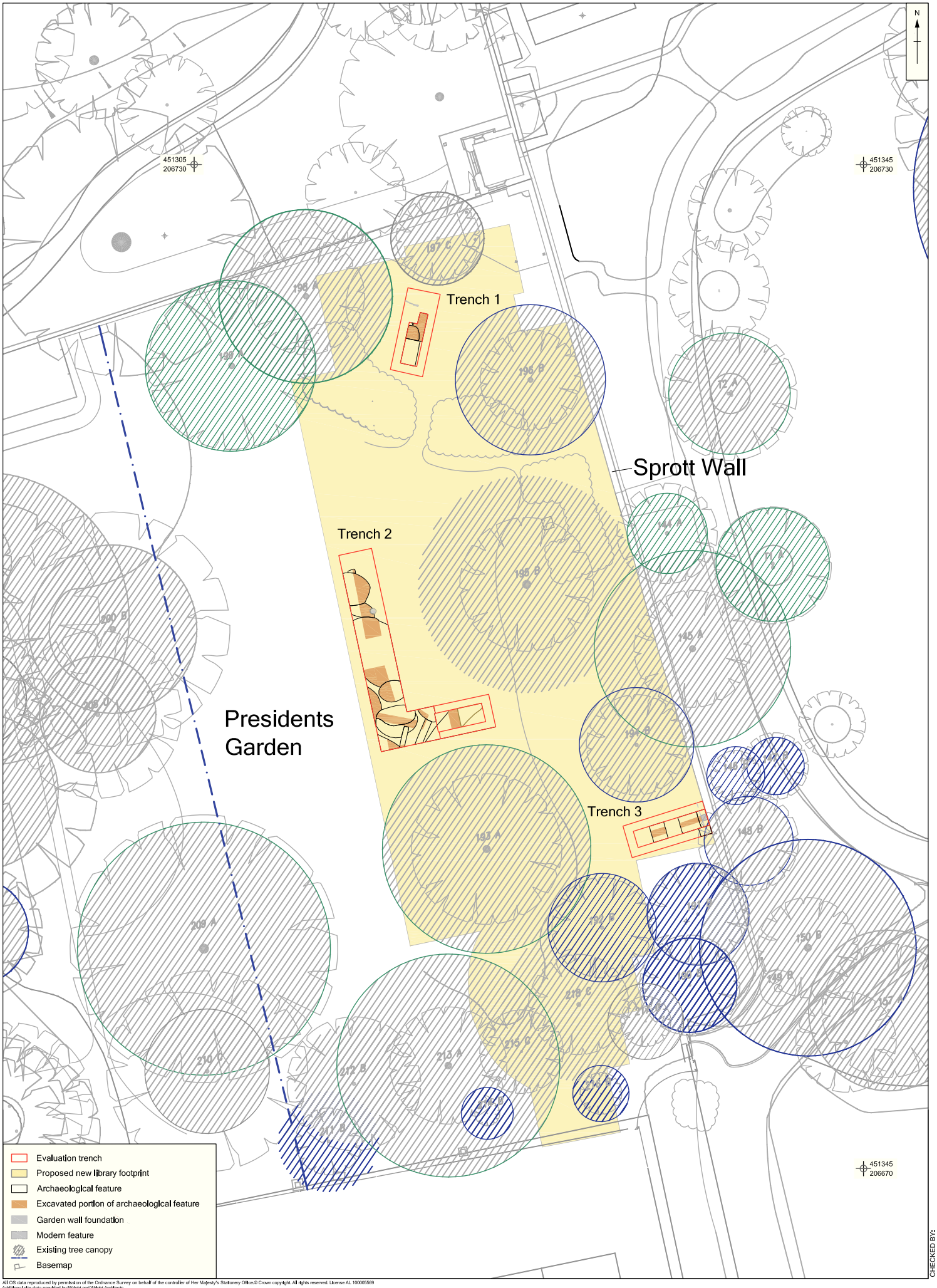


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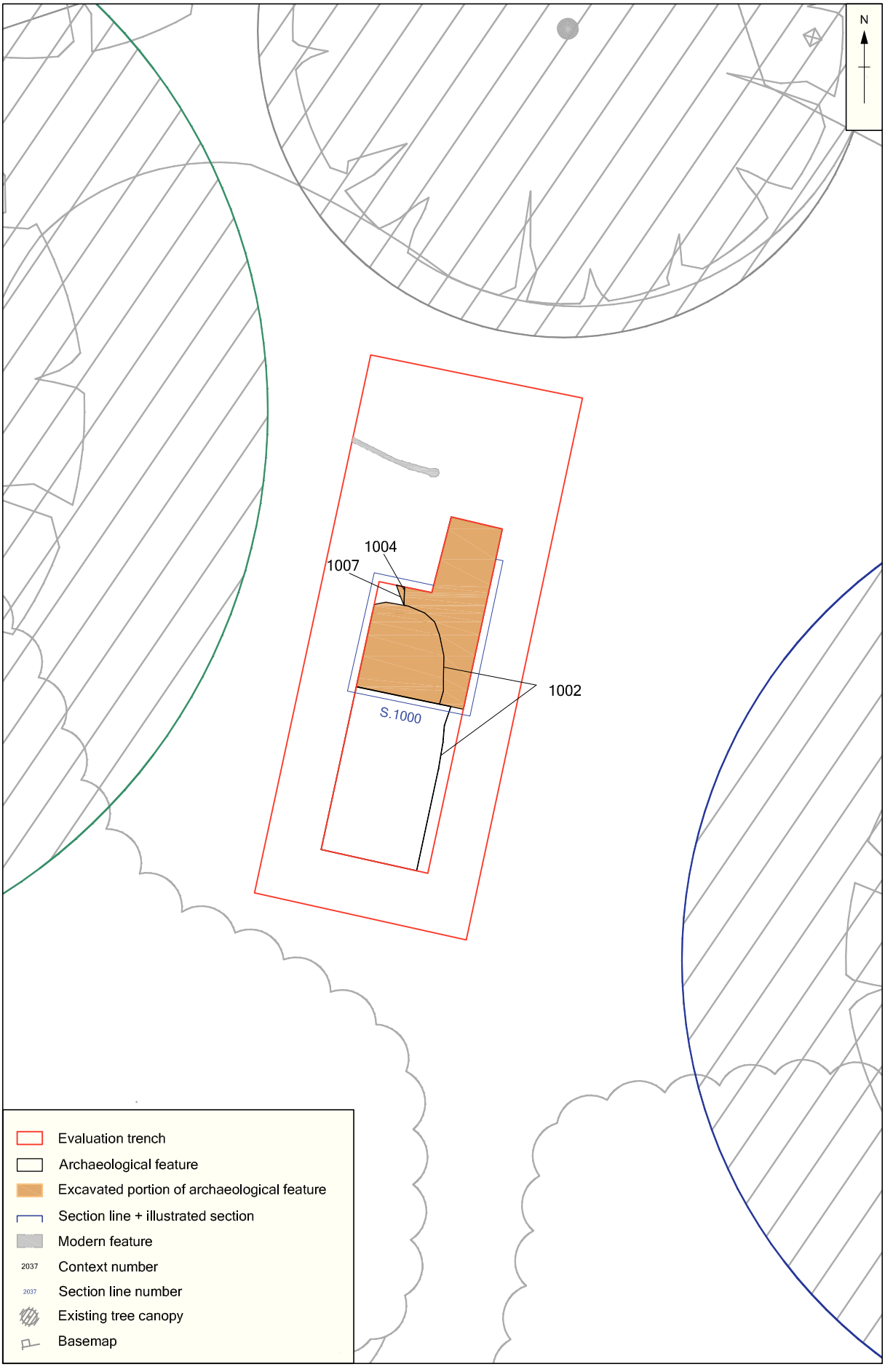
Figure 2: Plan showing trench locations with all archaeological features and interventions



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CHECKED BY:

Figure 3: Plan of Trench 1

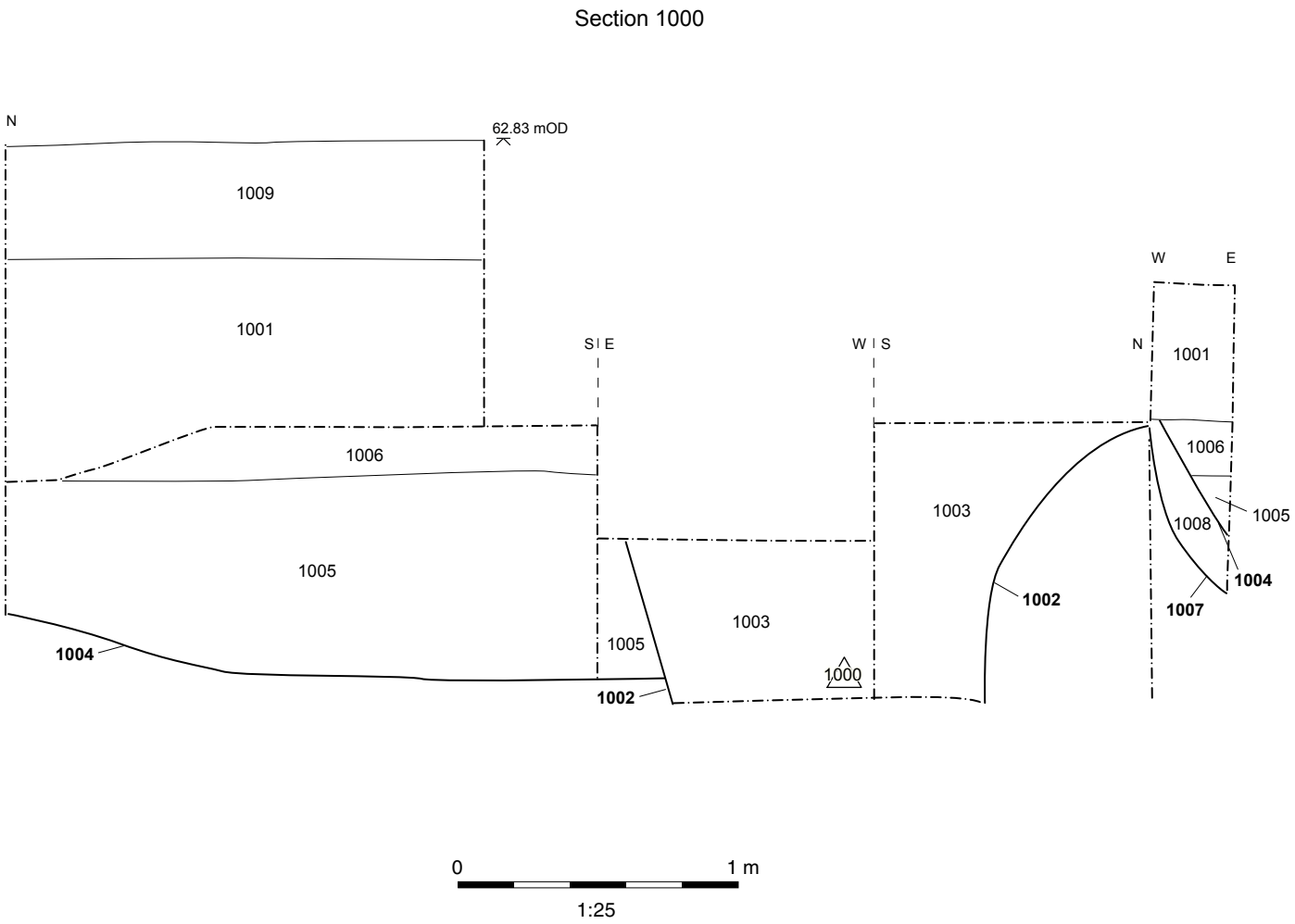

Figure 4: Trench 1: Section 1000

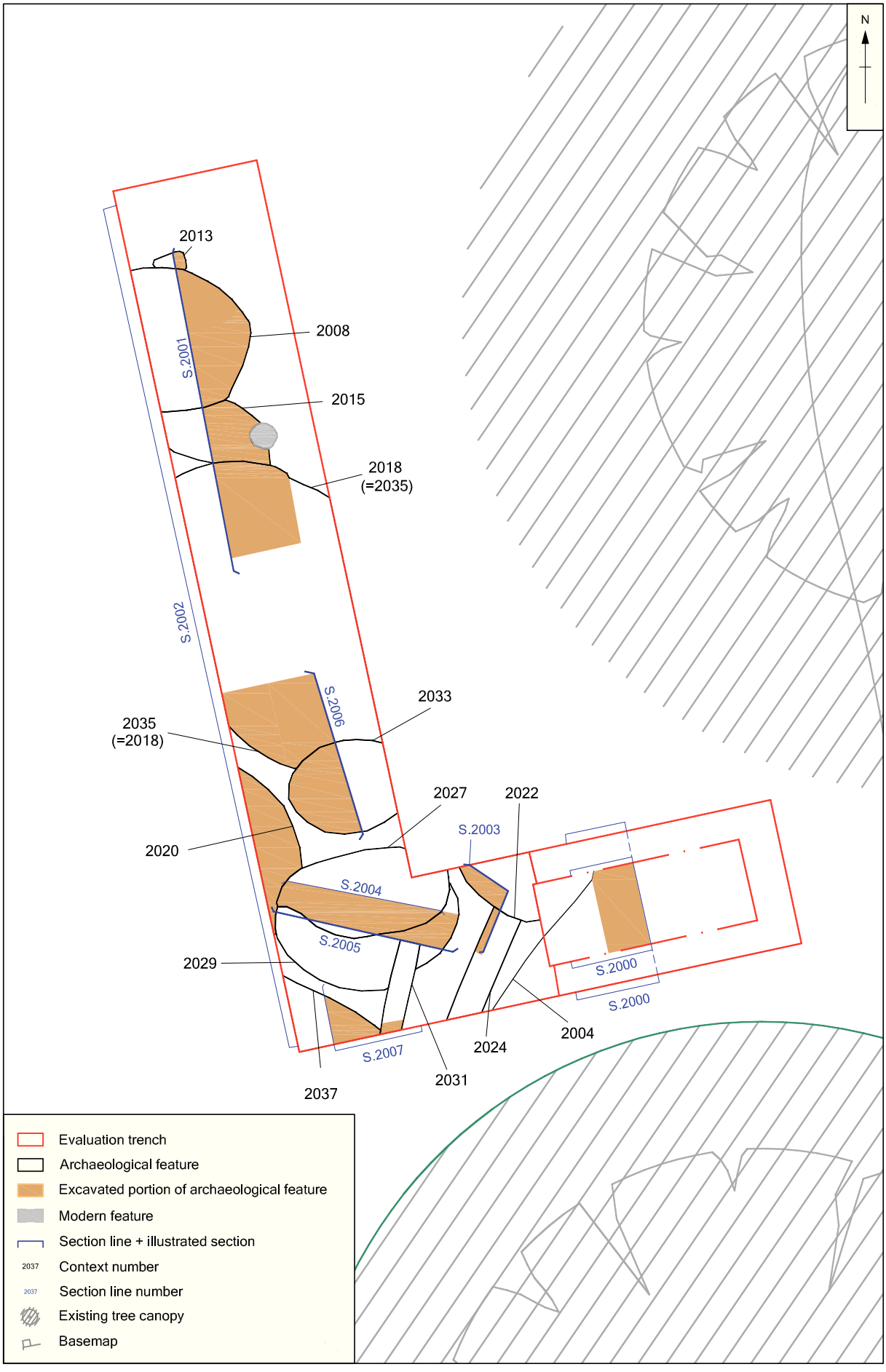

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Figure 5: Plan of Trench 2

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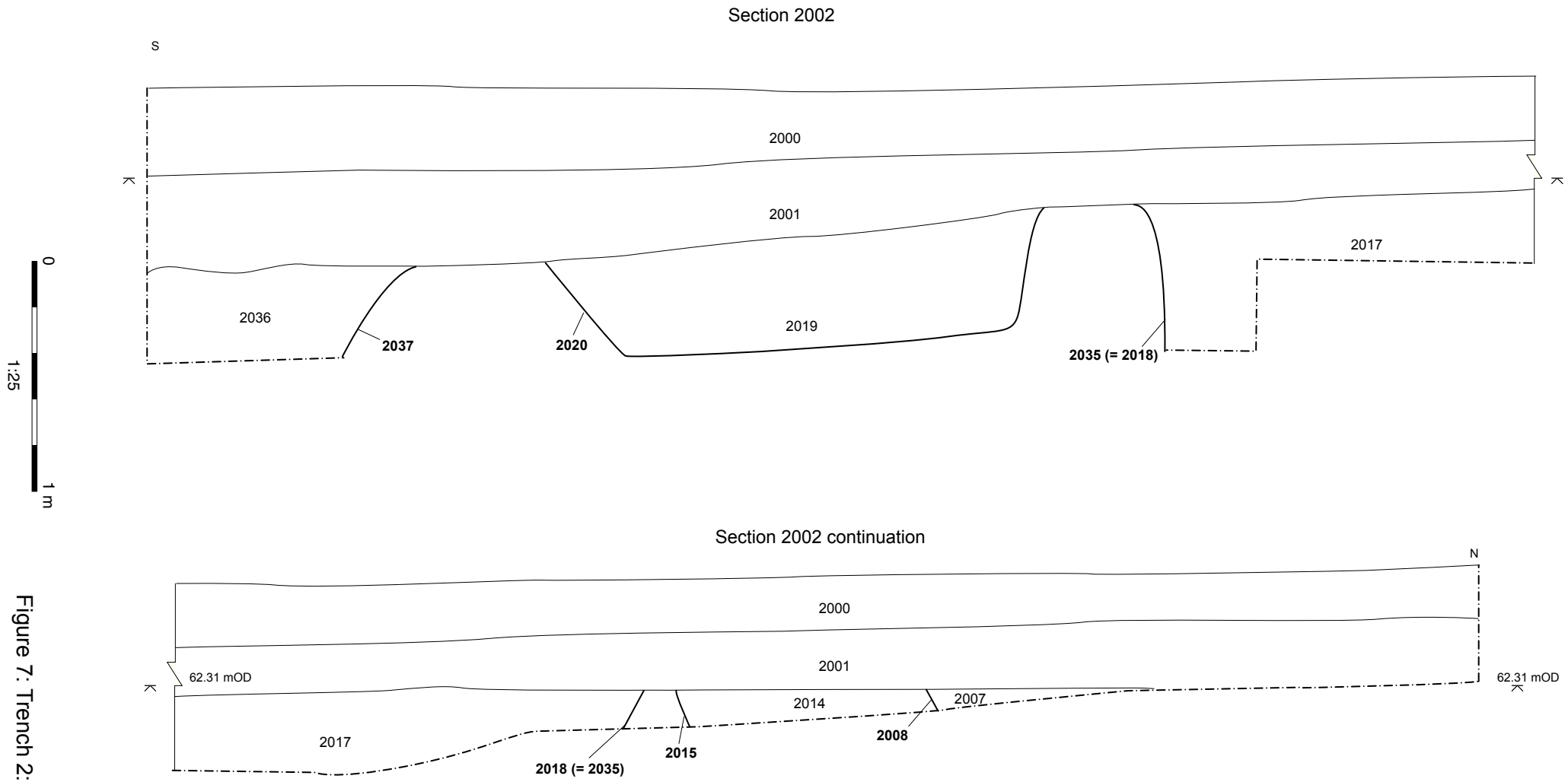

Figure 7: Trench 2: Section 2002

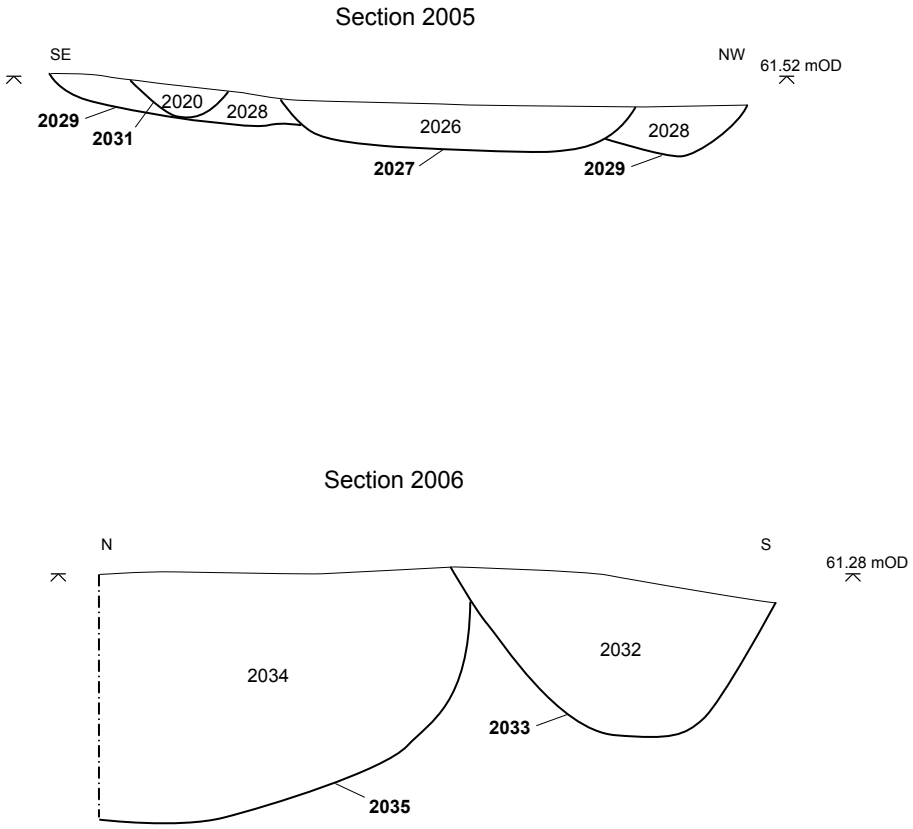

Figure 8: Trench 2: Sections 2005 - 2007

X:\o\Oxford St. John's College - New Library \010Geomatics\02 CAD\001current\StJohnsCollege_Library_2014-02-05.dwg(Figure 9)***OXJG14*Emily.Plunkett* 03 Mar 2014

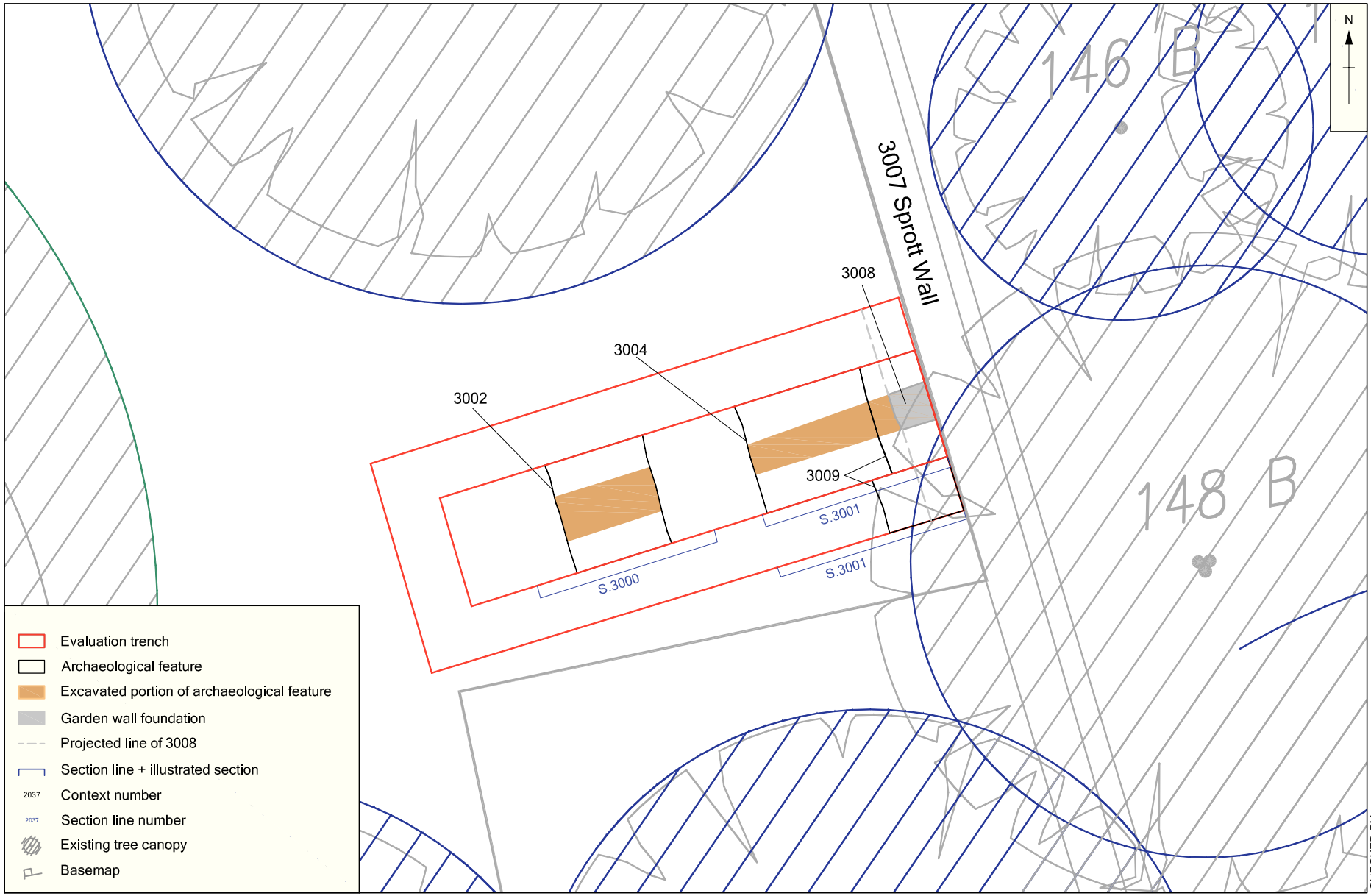

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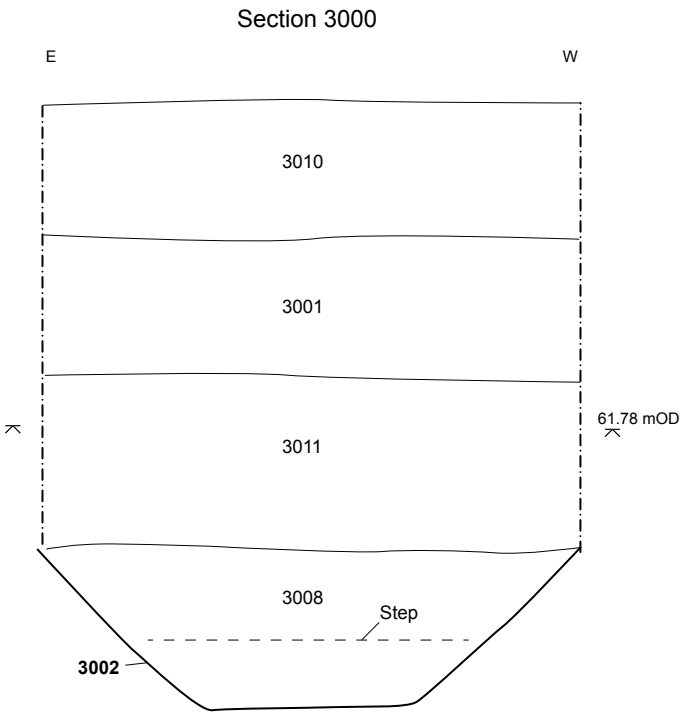
Figure 9: Plan of Trench 3



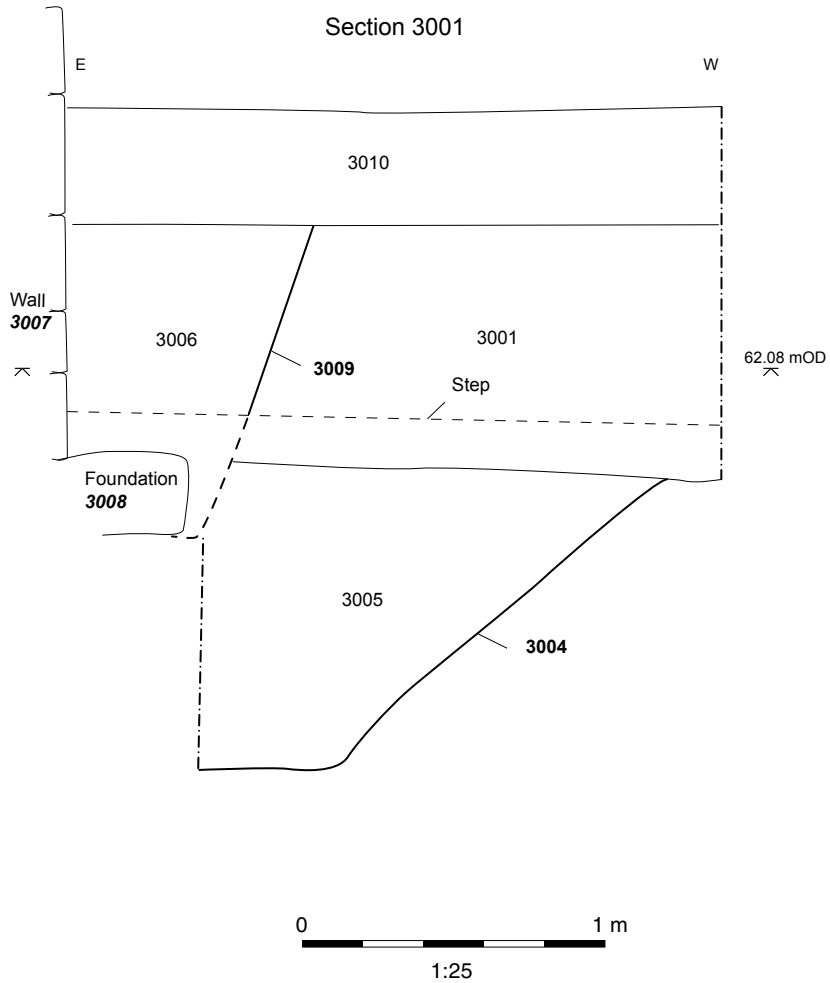


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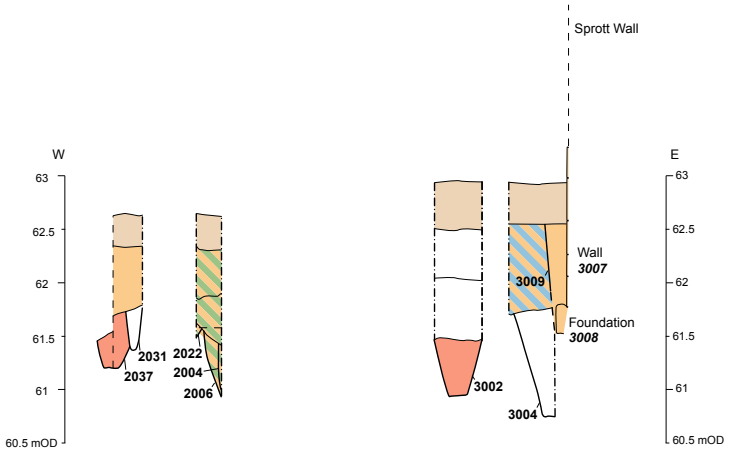
Figure 10: Trench 3: Sections 3000 - 3001



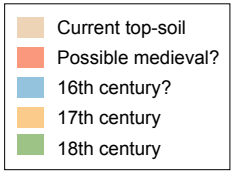


Figure 11: E-W profile showing levels of archaeology through evaluation trenches 1-3

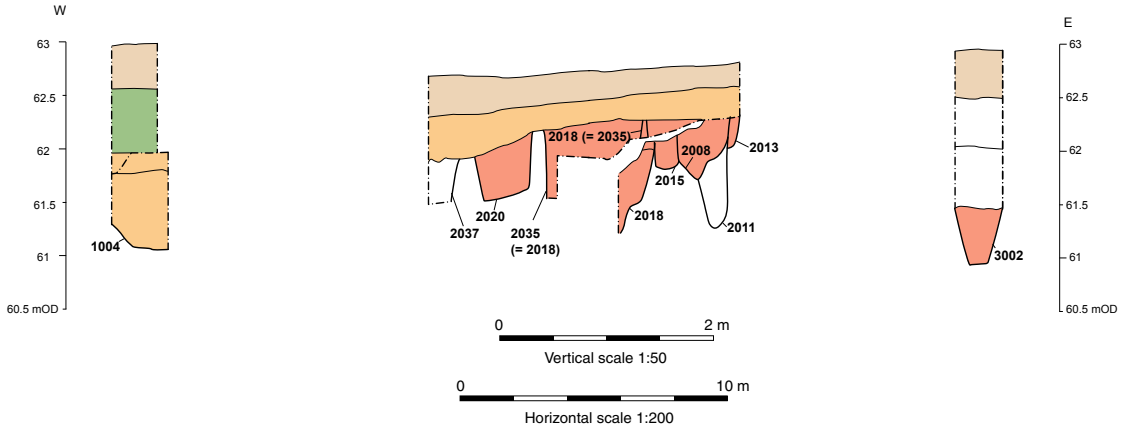


Figure 12: NS profile showing levels of archaeology through evaluation trenches 1-3

Plate 1: General view looking NE of excavated features in Trench 1

Plate 2: General view looking S of excavated features in Trench 2 (N-S arm)

Plate 3: General view looking S of excavated features in Trench 3

Plate 4: Sprotts Wall foundation and earlier ditch looking S in Trench 3

Plate 5: Sprotts Wall foundation looking E in Trench 3

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