

SIMONS CONSTRUCTION/THORNFIELD REDDITCH LIMITED PARTNERSHIPS

**DEVELOPMENT AREA 4,  
KINGFISHER CENTRE  
REDDITCH, WORCESTERSHIRE**

***ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT***

**NGR SP 0410 6740**

**Planning Application No 2000/484**

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April 2001**

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# DEVELOPMENT AREA 4, KINGFISHER CENTRE REDDITCH, WORCESTERSHIRE

## *ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION*

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## SUMMARY

*In March 2001, The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) carried out a field evaluation within the proposed Development Area 4, at The Kingfisher Centre, Redditch, on behalf of Thornfield Redditch Limited Partnerships. The evaluation consisted of a single trench and revealed two modern brick structures, one of which was probably a well. No earlier finds or features were found, and the natural sand was reached at the base of the trench.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In March 2001 OAU carried out a field evaluation in Royal Square, which is part of the Kingfisher Centre, located in the western part of Redditch, Worcestershire (Fig. 1). The work was carried out on behalf of Simons Construction, in respect of planning application no.2000/484. A brief for the work was produced by Mike Glyde of the Worcestershire Archaeological Service (WAS) on behalf of Redditch Borough Council. OAU subsequently produced a Method Statement which was approved by Mr Glyde.

1.1.2 Development Area 4 (DA4) is located at the north-eastern limit of the Kingfisher Centre (Fig. 2). It is located partly within, and immediately south-west of, the historic town of Redditch.

1.1.3 The Kingfisher Centre is located on a small plateau on the side of the valley at the base of which flows the River Arrow, which is situated c. 1.5 km to the north and east of the site.

### 1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The evaluation took place within a brick surfaced square (Royal Square) within the Kingfisher Shopping Centre. The square slopes down gently towards both the east and west, probably reflecting the natural underlying topography.

1.2.2 The site is situated on an 'island' of localised Quaternary Glacial Sand and Gravel above Jurassic Mercia Mudstone (BGS Sheet 183).

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 In July 2000 OAU were commissioned by Tweeds Project Management, on behalf of Thornfield Redditch Limited Partnerships, to undertake a desk-based assessment of the archaeological potential of the six areas (Fig. 2) proposed for re-development at the Kingfisher Centre. Below is a summary of the results of that assessment, for DA 4.

- 1.3.2 Little is known of the distribution of early settlement in the Redditch area. Redditch is located on a small plateau on the side of the River Arrow valley and topographically would have been suitable for early settlement. DA 4 is located on a gravel 'island' that would have been a more suitable location for early settlement than the surrounding Mudstone geology.
- 1.3.3 The northern and eastern parts of the site, comprising approximately one-third of the total area of the site, lie within the historic centre of Redditch as defined by Hereford and Worcester County Council in their Central Marches Historic Towns Survey (CMHTS) (Dalwood 1996). The remaining two-thirds (the central, southern and western areas) lie immediately south of the historic town as defined by CMHTS.
- 1.3.4 Those parts that fall within the historic town have the potential to contain medieval tenement plots on the south side of the green of the medieval town. Although the tenement plots are no longer extant and were probably removed prior to the construction of the Kingfisher Centre in the 1970s, there is some potential for the presence of remains of the footings of buildings of medieval and post-medieval date along with features such as rubbish pits, remains of small-scale industrial activities and garden features, situated in the backyards of the plots. The extent to which such features have been truncated is not known: it is possible that they have been completely removed by modern foundations or survive beneath Modern Made Ground.
- 1.3.5 The earliest detailed map of DA 4 dated to c. 1870 shows several buildings in the north-eastern and eastern parts of the site. The OS 1:500 map of 1884 names these as 'Saw Mill' and 'Needle and Pin Factory'. The years between 1870 and 1884 saw a growth in the number of buildings in the area of the Mill and the Factory.
- 1.3.6 The needle-making industry was of some historical significance in Redditch and any remains of the Needle and Pin Factory that might survive would be of high local significance (Malcolm Atkin, Hereford and Worcester County Archaeologist, *pers. comm.*). Any remains of the saw mill that may survive on the site might be of local interest.
- 1.3.7 The c. 1870 map shows a terrace of houses with back gardens and outhouses fronting a Walford Street (no longer extant) along the western side of the site. The exact date of these buildings is uncertain. Walford Street lies immediately south of the medieval town centre, off the main road leading into the town from the south (Evesham Street - no longer extant). Any remains of these buildings would potentially be of local historic interest.
- 1.3.8 The 1870 map shows the central and southern areas of DA 4, comprising c. 70% of the total area, as open ground. This open area appears to have remained free of development up to the present day, lying outside the 1970s Kingfisher Development in an area currently occupied by Royal Square. The site visit noted that the original ground level across the Square appears to have been retained, suggesting that it may not have been terraced prior to its laying out. The lack of previous development in

the central and southern areas would suggest a potential for the survival of archaeological deposits.

## 2 EVALUATION AIMS

- 2.1.1 To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the proposal areas.
- 2.1.2 To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present
- 2.1.3 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features.
- 2.1.4 To make available the results of the investigation.

## 3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Scope of fieldwork

- 3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of a single trench measuring 5 m long x 2 m wide (Fig. 3).

### 3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

- 3.2.1 The overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision by a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket.
- 3.2.2 The trench was cleaned by hand and revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds. All archaeological features were planned and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20. All features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

### 3.3 Finds

- 3.3.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and bagged by context. Spoil-tips were monitored for finds at all times.

### 3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence

- 3.4.1 The earliest contexts found were modern and the underlying natural appears to have been truncated before leveling up. No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were found.

### 3.5 Presentation of results

- 3.5.1 The deposits found in the trench are described stratigraphically, from the earliest to the latest. This description is followed by a brief description of the finds and a interpretation and discussion of the site.

## 4 RESULTS: GENERAL

### 4.1 Soils and ground conditions

4.1.1 The site is situated on sand and gravel, and was well drained.

## 5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

### 5.1 Trench 1 (Figs 4 and 5)

5.1.1 The trench was aligned north-south within the western half of the square (Fig. 3). It measured 5 m long by 2 m wide and was machined to a maximum depth of 1.7 m beneath the present surface of the square (127.13 m above Ordnance Datum).

5.1.2 The trench was initially machined to the level of the top of two surviving brick structures within the north of the trench, and to the underlying natural sand within the rest of the trench. The southern end of the trench was later deepened to further test the natural sands and make sure these were not re-deposited.

5.1.3 The underlying natural consisted of orange sand with irregular reddish brown gravelly sand banding (108), and a overlying reddish brown sand (107).

5.1.4 Two brick structures (104 and 109), were partially revealed within the northern end of the trench, but not excavated. The construction cut (106 and 111) for both features had been cut from the top of the natural sands, 107, and was sealed by made-ground (103).

5.1.5 Structure 104 consisted of a red-brick wall which formed a circle 1.3 m in diameter. The wall, exposed to a height of two courses, was bonded with a brown sandy mortar and was faced on its interior. It was constructed of apparently modern (Victorian or post-Victorian), unfrogged bricks, which measured 0.23 by 0.11 by 0.065 m. The interior of this structure was filled with a brown sandy clay and mixed brick and stone rubble, similar to a sealing made ground deposit, 103, above. This structure was thought likely to be a well.

5.1.6 Structure 109 consisted of a small area of brickwork within the north western corner of the trench. This brickwork was only one course high and was bonded by a white sandy mortar. The bricks were identical to those used in Structure 104. It lay just to the north of a broken ceramic drainage pipe. The exposed brick work measured only 0.4 m x 0.3 m in area, but may have formed part of a wall foundation.

5.1.7 Both structures and the natural sands to the south were overlain by a 0.3 m thick layer of reddish brown sandy clay, 103, containing much stone and brick rubble. Modern finds were recovered from this layer.

5.1.8 Layer 103 was overlain by a broken sandstone leveling deposit, 102, beneath a thick concrete base, 101, and the brick surface of the square (100).

## 5.2 Finds

- 5.2.1 Finds recovery was limited to samples of modern pottery from layer 103 and brick from structure 104. The whole trench was cleaned and the underlying sands closely examined for finds or other indications of archaeological activity; they were found to be entirely sterile.
- 5.2.2 The recovered pottery consisted of three sherds of cream-ware and dates from the Victorian period onwards. The brickwork of the revealed structures and associated adjacent ceramic drainage pipe also date from this period. No earlier finds were recovered.

## 6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

### 6.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 6.1.1 The trench was fully cleaned and examined. The only features found appeared to be of 19th century or later date, and there was no indication of earlier activity.
- 6.1.2 The underlying sands were fully examined and are thought to be undisturbed natural deposits.
- 6.1.3 The reliability of the evaluation was therefore thought to be good.

### 6.2 Overall interpretation

#### *Summary of results*

- 6.2.1 The only features of note were the two brick structures within the northern end of the trench. One of these was associated with an adjacent ceramic drainage pipe and the other is the remains of a possible well. Both structures appeared to date from the Victorian period onwards. There was no indication of any earlier activity.

#### *Significance*

- 6.2.2 It is possible that the brickwork found is associated with 19th-20th century industrial buildings known from the desk-based assessment to have formerly occupied the eastern end of the site. However, this is by no means certain and there was certainly no indication of associated industrial activity. Both structures were of 19th century or later brick construction and no indications of earlier activity were found. It is thought likely that any earlier deposits that might have existed on the site would have been truncated during the construction of the brick structures or the Kingfisher Shopping Centre itself. The site is therefore thought to be of limited archaeological significance.



**APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY**

<b>Trench 1</b>						
<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
100	Surface	Brick surface	0.12			Modern
101	Layer	Concrete	0.2			Modern
102	Layer	Sandstone levelling	0.2			Modern
103	Layer	Made ground	0.3		Pottery	19th/20th C.
104	Structure	Well?	0.25	1.3		19th/20th C.
105	Fill	Fill of 106	0.25		None	19th/20th C.
106	Cut	Construction cut	0.25	1.3		
107	Layer	Natural	0.3		None	
108	Layer	Natural	0.70 m+		None	
109	Structure	Brick structure	0.12			19th/20th C.
110	Fill	Fill of 111	Unknown		None	19th/20th C.
111	Cut	Construction cut	Unknown			

**APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES**

- Dalwood H 1996                      *Archaeological Assessment of Redditch, Hereford and Worcester. The Central Marshes Historic Towns Survey.* Hereford and Worcester County Council Archaeology Section.
- OAU July 2000                      *Proposed Development, Kingfisher Centre, Redditch, Worcestershire. Archaeological Desk-based Assessment.* Oxford Archaeological Unit. Report for Thornfield Properties Plc.
- Wilkinson, D (ed.) 1992              *Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual*, (First edition, August 1992)

**APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS**

**Site name:** Development Area 4, The Kingfisher Shopping Centre, Redditch, Worcestershire.

**Site code:** WSM 30363

**National Grid reference:** SP 0410 6740

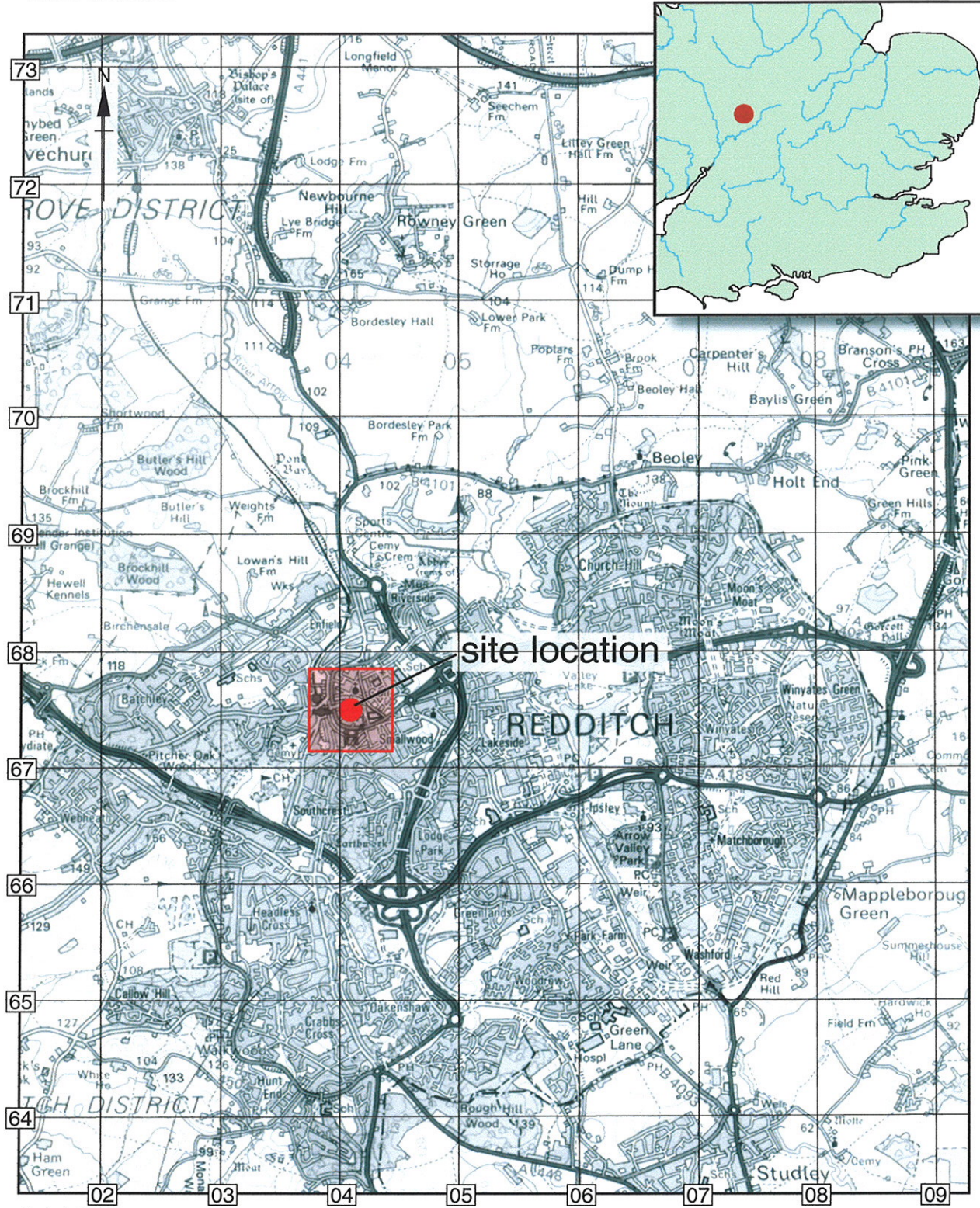
**Type of evaluation:** Single 5 m trench

**Date and duration of project:** 26<sup>th</sup> -27<sup>th</sup> March 2001

**Area of site:** 5 m x 2 m.

**Summary of results:** Two modern brick structures found, one a probable well and the other associated with an adjacent drainage pipe. No other archaeological activity was present.

**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OAU, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course.

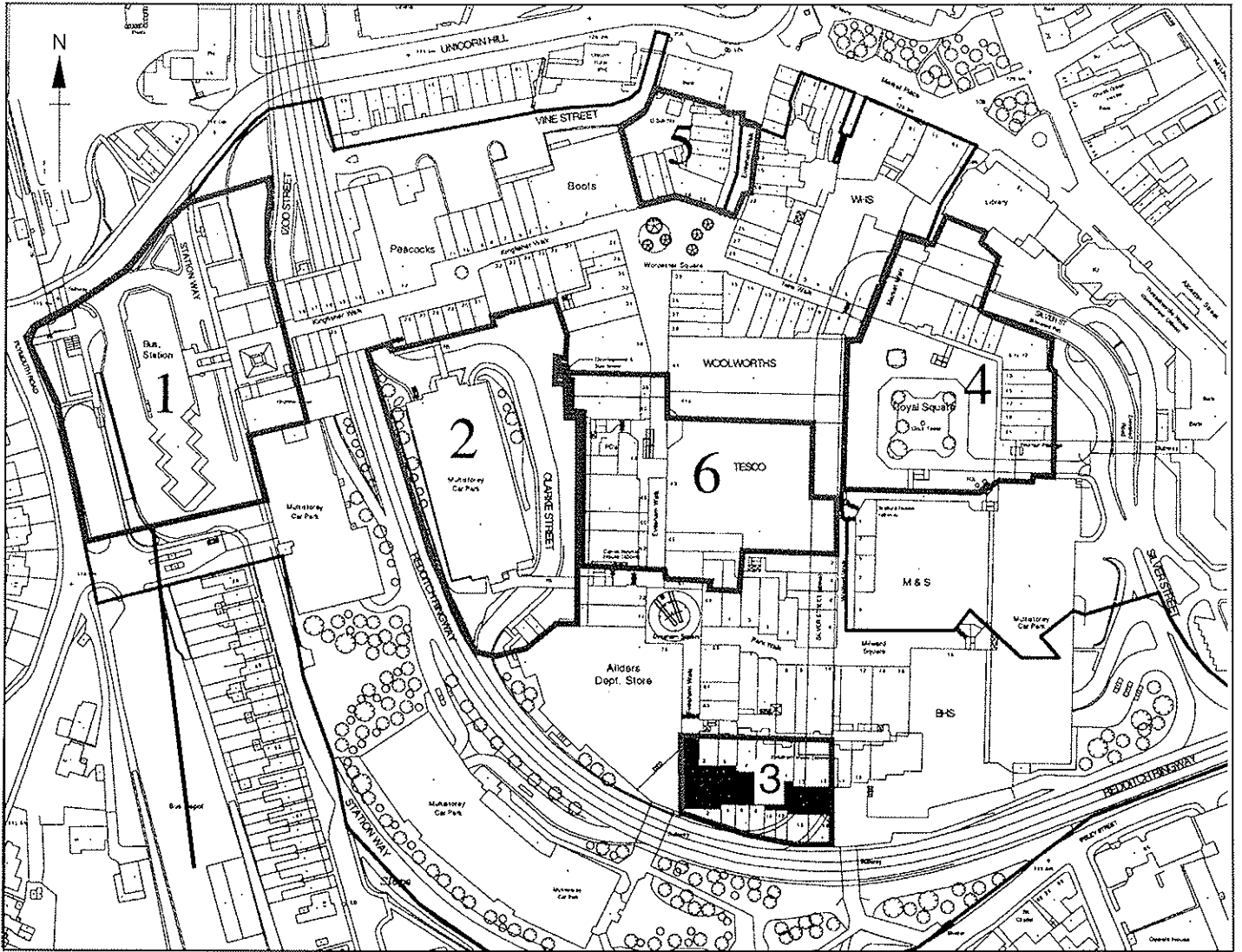


Scale 1:50,000

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Figure 1: Site location.





Scale 1:2500

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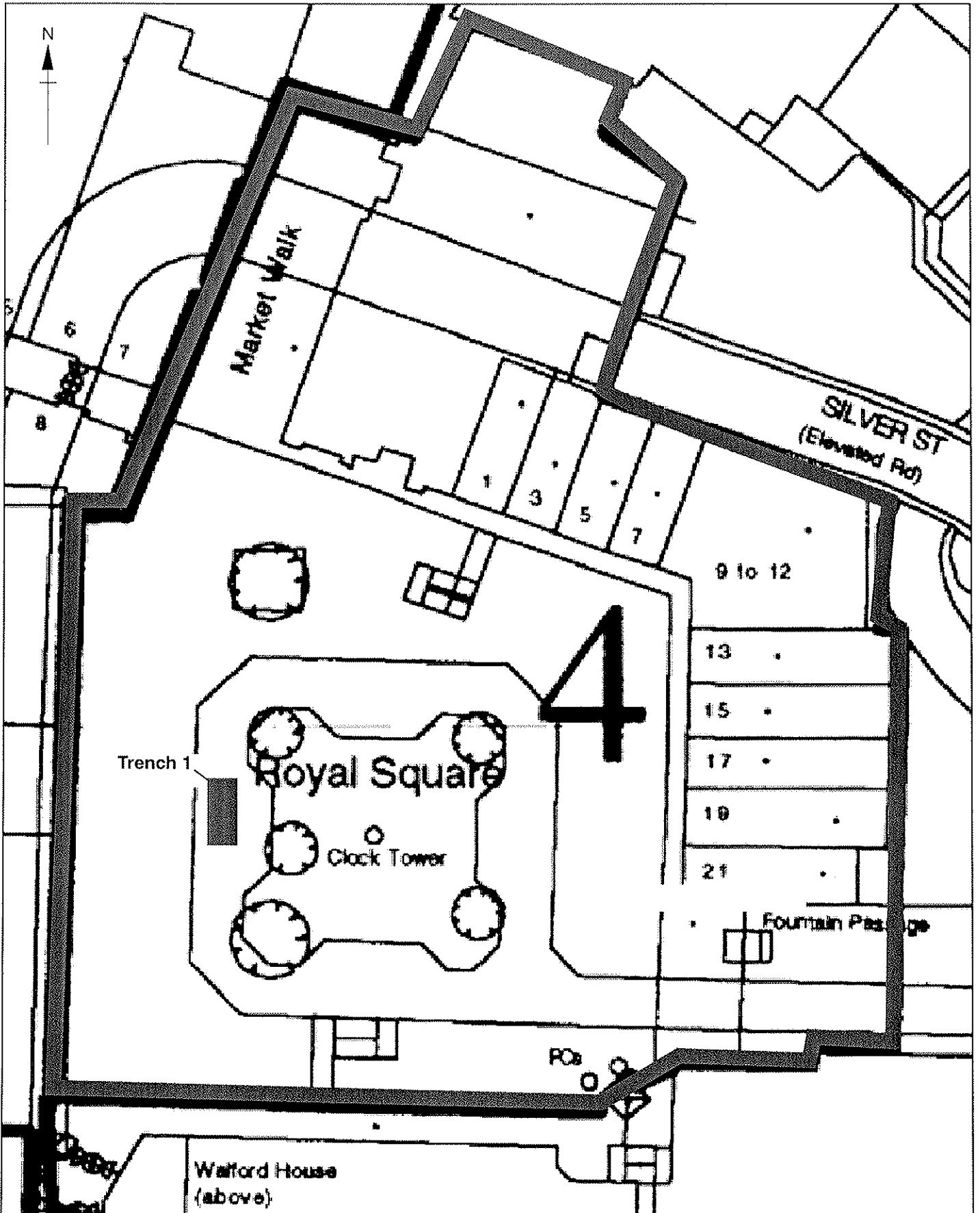
 Development areas (DA) 1-6

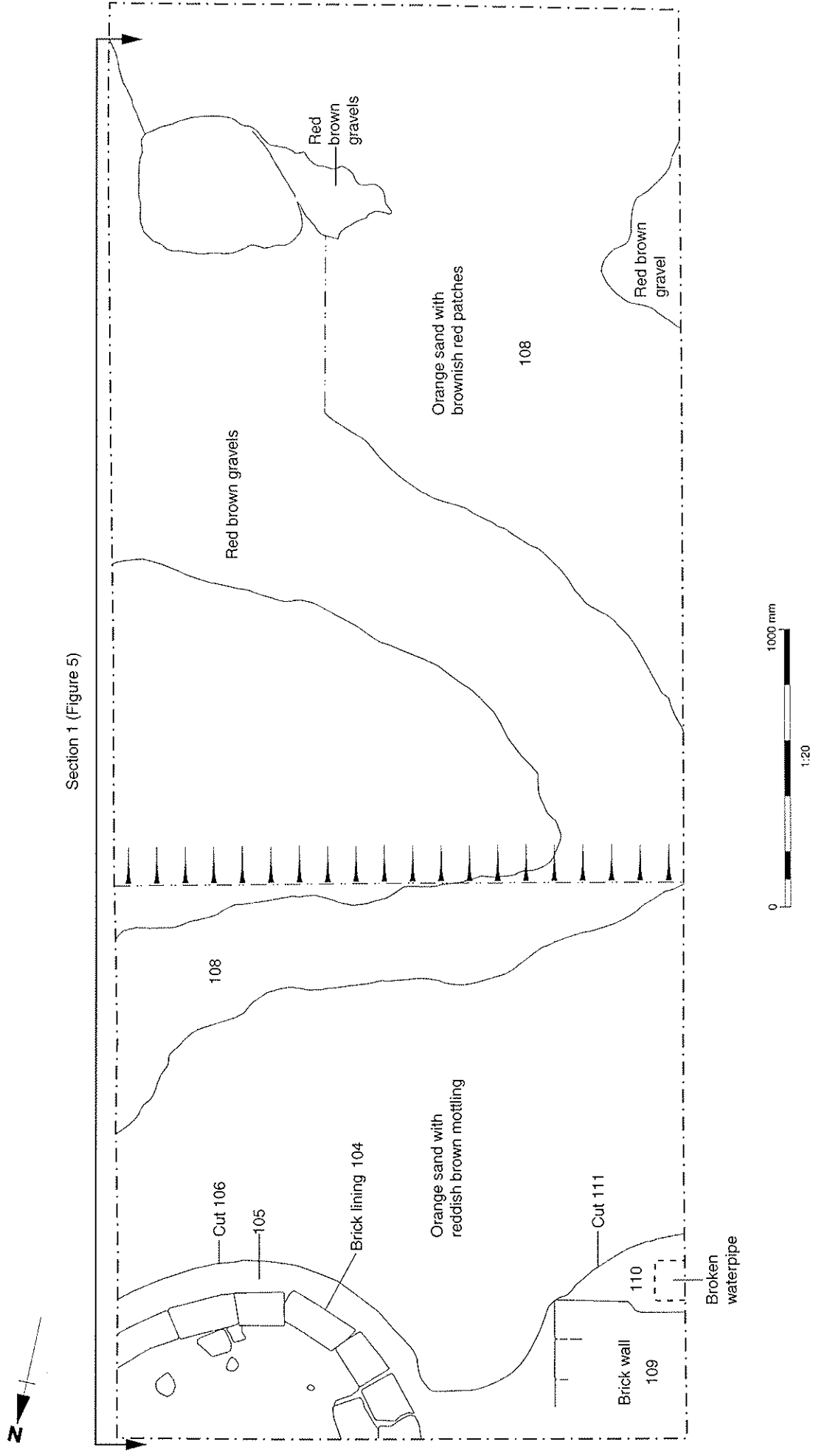
Figure 2 : Development areas.



Scale 1:500

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Figure 3 : Trench location.



Section 1 (Figure 5)

Figure 4 : Plan of trench 1

### Section 1

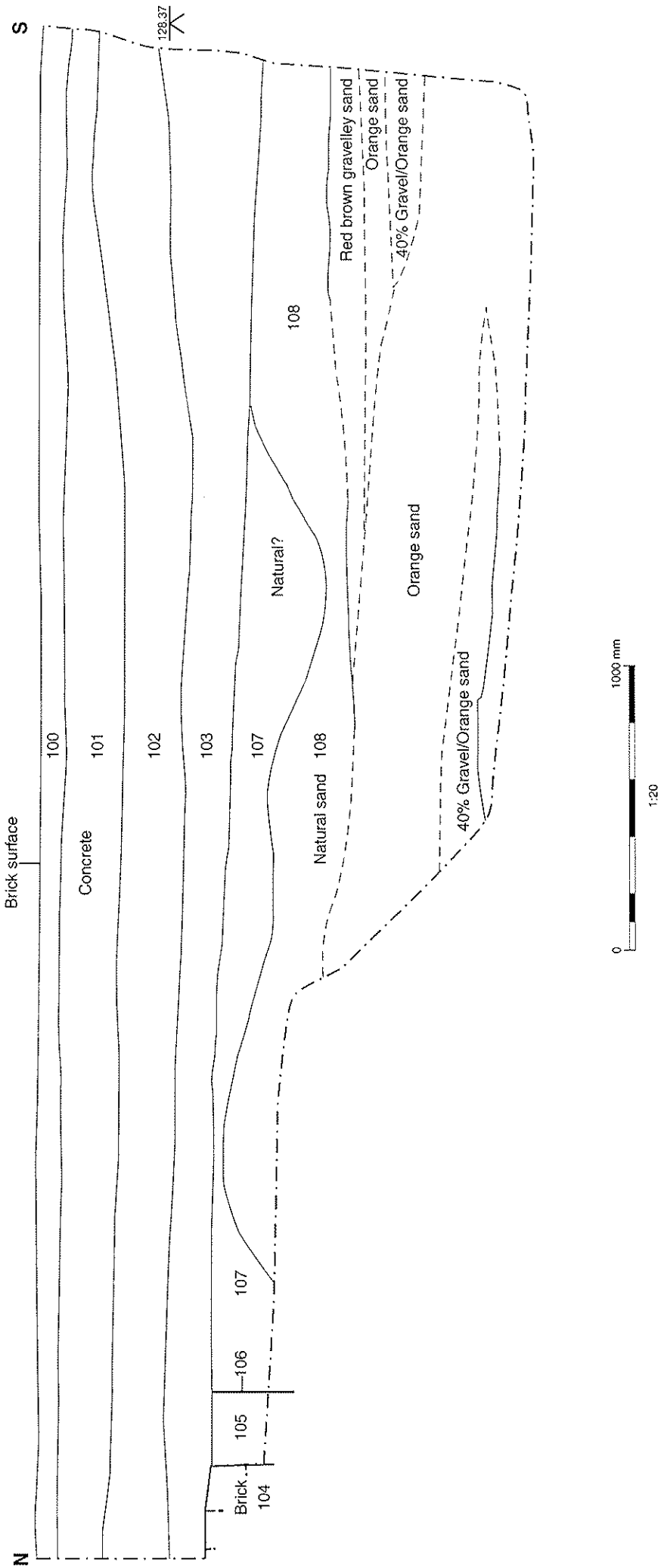


Figure 5 : Section of trench 1.



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