

# Old College Gateway Maidstone



## Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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## Old College Southern Gateway, Maidstone

*Archaeological Watching Brief Report*

*Written by Rebecca Griffin*

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## **Summary**

*Between October 2010 and March 2011, Oxford Archaeology South (OAS) undertook rectified photography and archaeological monitoring at the Old College Southern Gateway, Maidstone on behalf of Maidstone Borough Council, following Scheduled Monument Consent (S00004928) on 27th January 2010.*

*The watching brief revealed a partially worked Kentish ragstone block which had been incorporated into the gateway and road bedding within the footprint of the gatehouse. The road bedding may represent a pre-20th-century road surface prior to further successive layers of surfacing.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 1.1.1 Following Scheduled Monument Consent (S00004928), Maidstone Borough Council commissioned OA to undertake rectified photography and archaeological monitoring at the Old College Southern Gateway, Maidstone, Kent (Fig. 1) The rectified photography was to be conducted prior to the cleaning and repair of the ruined gateway. While an archaeological watching brief was to monitor all below groundworks associated with the repair and landscaping works.

### 1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 1.2.1 The site is located c. 20m west of College Avenue's junction with College Road. It is located on Hythe Beds, comprising of closely-spaced alternations of blue-grey limestones and poorly cemented, glauconitic, argillaceous sands.

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 1.3.1 The southern gateway originally served as the southern entrance to the early medieval and medieval College of All Saints, Maidstone which is closely associated with the 14th century Bishops Palace. The gatehouse has been a ruin since the 17th century.
- 1.3.2 1.3.2 The southern gateway was acquired by Maidstone Borough Council in 1915. The gateway was then Listed Grade II on 30th July 1951.
- 1.3.3 1.3.3 Further information is provided in the scheduling description as set out in Appendix B and at the County Historic Environment Record held by the Heritage Conservation Group, Strategic Planning Directorate, Kent County Council, Invicta House, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XX.

## 2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 2.1.1 The principle aims of the investigation were to:
- (i) To provide a rectified photographic record of the structure for future management and interpretation of the site.
  - (ii) To identify and record the presence/absence, extent, condition, quality and date of any archaeological remains by targeting the least disturbed areas of the site.
  - (iii) To signal, before the destruction of the material in question, the discovery of a significant archaeological find, for which the resources allocated are not sufficient to support a treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.
  - (iv) To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of any archaeological deposits and features, and to make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

### 2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 2.2.1 The rectified photography of the gatehouse was undertaken as specified the brief. The survey was conducted by experienced personnel. The photographs were taken using a 10 megapixel digital SLR camera and a Leica TCRP 1205 total station theodolite was used during the survey. Before commencement of the recording a network of control

stations was set up. Each photo was rectified with an appropriate number of control points identified by target tags. The data processing and photo-rectification was carried out in Leica Geo-Office, Autostitch, Autodesk AutoCAD 2004 and other relevant software.

- 2.2.2 The removal of the water feeder pillar and associated groundworks were carried out by hand under close archaeological supervision. The excavation proceeded to a maximum depth of 0.3 m or to the top of the first archaeological horizon, whichever was encountered first.
- 2.2.3 The groundworks relating to the road reduction were carried out by machine excavation, using a flat bladed bucket under archaeological supervision. The excavation proceeded to a maximum depth of 0.25 m or to the top of the first archaeological horizon, whichever was encountered first.
- 2.2.4 All features and deposits were issued with unique context numbers, and context recording was carried out in accordance with the established OA practice as detailed in the OA Field Manual (OA, 1992). All contexts, and any small finds and samples from the features were allocated unique numbers. Bulk finds were collected by context.
- 2.2.5 All archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:100 where appropriate and where excavated to a scale of 1:20. Excavated sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20. All excavated features were photographed using digital photography and black-and-white print negatives. A general photographic record of the work was made. Recording followed procedures details in the OAU Fieldwork Manual (Wilkinson 1992).

### 3 RESULTS

#### 3.1 Description of deposits

##### ***Cable Trench***

- 3.1.1 The cable trench was 8 m long and 0.3 m wide, aligned approximately N-S along the western side of the ruined gateway (Fig. 4). Modern hardcore deposit (101) was revealed 0.1 m below ground level (BGL), composed of compacted dark grey gravel. This was overlain and sealed by tarmac (100), which formed the current ground surface. No archaeological remains were observed.

##### ***Road reduction***

- 3.1.2 The area of works for the road reduction was 14 m long and 5.5 m at its widest point, on a N-S alignment across site. It ran from the edge of College Avenue in the south to the northern limit of the site on the edge of the existing car park (Fig. 6). The work also involved the levelling of the existing park area immediately attached to the gateway for re-turfing.
- 3.1.3 At 0.01 m BGL stone step 103 was uncovered (Plates 7 and 8), measuring 1.55 m by 0.46 m at it's widest point. A further investigation slots were excavated at either end of the stone, revealing it to be 0.26 m deep at it's northern end and 0.24 m deep at its southern (Fig. 7). The southern investigation slot further revealed that it was partially worked. The face had been square cut and included a 0.09 m square slot in the centre, measuring 0.04 m deep (plate 9).
- 3.1.4 Still within the footprint of the gatehouse, north of the arch, surface 104 (Fig. 8) was revealed at a depth of 0.18 m BGL. Consisting of placed limestone blocks measuring at maximum 370x280x70 mm to a minimum of 40x50x40 mm in size (Plate 10). Some of

the stones appeared to have been previously worked for structural use (Plate 11) before being reused in the surface.

- 3.1.5 Both archaeological features were overlain by the mixed road make-up (102) which had previously been laid down for levelling beneath road hardcore 101. All deposits were then sealed by the existing tarmac road surface 100 as seen in section 102 (Fig. 9). With garden soil 105 overlying surface 104 where it extended to the east beyond the edge of excavation.

### **3.2 Finds**

- 3.2.1 No deposits suitable for finds recovery were observed during the course of the watching brief.

### **3.3 Environmental remains**

- 3.3.1 No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling were identified during the course of the watching brief.

## **4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1.1 At the time OA was asked to undertake the rectified photography of the gatehouse all the vegetation had not yet been cleared. As the structure was to be enclosed by scaffolding it was decided to proceed as the scaffolding would have been more of an obstruction. This meant that several parts of the structure were obscured from clear view and as such may not be completely clear in the photographic results.
- 4.1.2 The carriageway running beneath the high pointed arch had been moderately impacted upon by successive layers of modern tarmac surfaces and patching in the road. The depth of excavation was intended to cause minimal impact on any existing archaeological remains beneath. The stone surface uncovered to the north of the gateway appears to form part of a stone bedding layer which continued across the width of the carriageway for a pre-20th-century road surface.
- 4.1.3 The excavation also revealed a partially worked stone block which had been placed at the threshold of the eastern cell of the gatehouse structure to be used as a step. The southern end of the stone had been square cut and included a shallow slot which may have been used by the sawyers to move the stone.
- 4.1.4 All archaeological deposits were left in situ. They were covered with terram and a sealing layer of sand prior to the laying of the new road surface. In order to provide adequate protection from deterioration, the gradient of the road surface was also altered to provide an increased depth of covering over the stone step beneath the pointed arch.



## APPENDIX A. ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context	Type	Depth	Width	Length	Comments	Finds	Date
100	Layer	0.1m	-	-	Tarmac	-	20th century
101	Layer	>0.2m	-	-	Hard core	-	20th century
102	Layer	>0.1m	5m	14m	Crush	-	20th century
103	Structure	0.24m	1.15m	0.46m	Stone step	-	
104	Surface	>0.07m	>1.3m	>0.8m	Road surface	-	
105	Layer	>0.26m	3m	3m	Garden soil	-	20th century

## APPENDIX B. THE COLLEGE OF ALL SAINTS – SCHEDULING REPORT

### Inspector's Report

MONUMENT: The College of All Saints

PARISH: MAIDSTONE

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 24348

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): TQ76025529

### DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

COUNTY: KENT

The site includes the upstanding and buried remains of the College of All Saints, Maidstone. The standing structures date mainly from the late 14th century, with some evidence for 16th century alterations. The monument lies on the eastern bank of the River Medway, to the south of the parish and collegiate church, which is also dedicated to All Saints, and the medieval archbishop's palace. The standing structures include the college gate tower and associated western range, a return wing running from the west end of this refectory range which joins a two-storeyed building known as the Master's House. To the south east of these buildings is a free-standing structure known as the Master's Tower, while at the south of the complex of medieval buildings is the ruined gateway. Of the standing buildings, only the ruined gateway is included in the scheduling.

On 25th June 1395, Archbishop William Courtenay received authorisation from Pop Boniface IX to make the parish church of Maidstone into a college of a master and 24 chaplains and clerks. On the 2nd August of that year, licence was granted by Richard II for the incorporation of the Hospital of St Peter, St Paul and St Thomas of Canterbury and all its possessions into the new college. The church was pulled down and rebuilt, while the college buildings were erected to the south of it. The construction of the college buildings was completed by Archbishop Arundel after Courtenay's death, and by the close of 1397, the work was probably finished. Patronage of the college and church continued to be part of the possessions of the Archbishops of Canterbury until Cranmer exchanged them with Henry VIII.

In the Valor of 1535 the income of the college was given as one hundred and fifty nine pounds nseven shillings and ten pence, while around 1545 this had increased to over two hundred and eight pounds. The college was dissolved by the act of Parliament passed for the suppression of all colleges, free chapels and chantries, anno 1 Edward VI (1546). Upon its suppression, the college was granted to George Brooke, Lord Cobham in fee on 10th May 1549. Nothing more is known of the fate of the college buildings. Some of them have survived, others associated with the complex are shown on maps of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, but are no longer visible as upstanding remains. They were probably outbuildings connected with the college, one to the south of the Master's Tower, and another directly to the south east of the southern gateway; both had been filled in by 1848 and are not included in the scheduling. The first edition OS map of Maidstone made in the mid-late 19th century shows 'College Farm' on the south of the site, incorporating the buildings of the southern gateway, while the college gateway, Master's House and tower all survived much as they stand today. All the buildings associated with the farm have now disappeared, and have been replaced by the 19th century Cutbush Almshouses, and some 20th century houses.



The college gatehouse complex is Listed Grade I, the Master's House Grade II\* and the Master's Tower and ruined gateway are both Listed Grade II.

The college gatehouse complex, the Master's House, the Master's Tower, all modern houses and walls, the surfaces of modern roads, paths and car parks, and all modern fittings such as gate posts, walls, lamp posts, benches and bins are excluded from the scheduling, although the ground beneath all these features is included. The ruined gateway is included in the scheduling as is the ground beneath it.

## ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE

The term college is used to describe a variety of different types of establishment whose communities of secular clergy shared a degree of common life less strictly controlled than that within a monastic order. Although some may date to as early as the tenth century, the majority of English colleges were founded in the 14th or 15th centuries. Most were subsequently closed down under the Chantries Act of 1547.

Colleges of the prebendal or portional type were set up as secular chapters, both as an alternative to the structure of contemporary monastic houses and to provide positions for clerics whose services the monastic establishment wished to reward. Some barons followed suit by setting up colleges within their castles, while others were founded by the Crown for the canons who served royal free chapels. Foundations of this type were generally staffed by prebends or portioners (priests taking their income from the tithes, or other income deriving from a village or manor). After 1300, chantry colleges became more common. These were establishments of priests, financed from a common fund, whose prime concern was to offer masses for the souls of the patron and the patron's family. They may also have housed bedesmen (deserving poor and elderly) and provided an educational facility which in some cases eventually came to dominate their other activities.

From historical sources it is known that approximately 300 separate colleges existed during the early medieval and medieval period; of these, 167 were in existence in 1509, made up of 71 prebendal or portional colleges, 64 chantry colleges and 32 whose function was primarily academic.

In view of the importance of colleges in contributing to our understanding of ecclesiastical history, and given the rarity of known surviving examples, all identified colleges which retain surviving archaeological remains are considered to be nationally important.

The construction of the college at Maidstone caused a number of important changes to the town – primarily through the elevation of the parish church to a collegiate church. The college itself is also closely associated with the bishop's palace complex in the south of the town. The history of the foundation and construction of the college is well documented, and illustrates the close links between the college and the Archbishops of Canterbury.



The college buildings which stand today are in an exceptionally good state of repair, except for the southern gateway which is not in use, and has been allowed to decay. All the other structures of the college complex which survive have remained in public and private use from the medieval period onwards. Buried archaeological remains will also survive, providing additional information about the structure and layout of the college, and the lives of its inhabitants.



## APPENDIX C. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

Wilkinson, D (ed.), 1992 Fieldwork Manual, Oxford Archaeology Unit (unpublished)



## APPENDIX D. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Old College Southern Gateway, Maidstone

Site code: MAOCG

Grid reference: Centred at NGR TQ 7607 5525

Type of watching brief: General watching brief and building survey

Date and duration of project: October 2010 – March 2011

Area of site:

Summary of results:

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



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Figure 1: Site location









X:\MAOCGBS\_Old College Southern Gateway Maidstone \010Geomatics\02 CAD\001current\MAOCGBS\_figure 3 northern elevation\_230611.dwg(Figure 3)\*\*\*\*matt.bradley\* 01 Jul 2011



Figure 3: Rectified northern elevation

Survey Data supplied by :  
R. Griffin and A. Kilgour

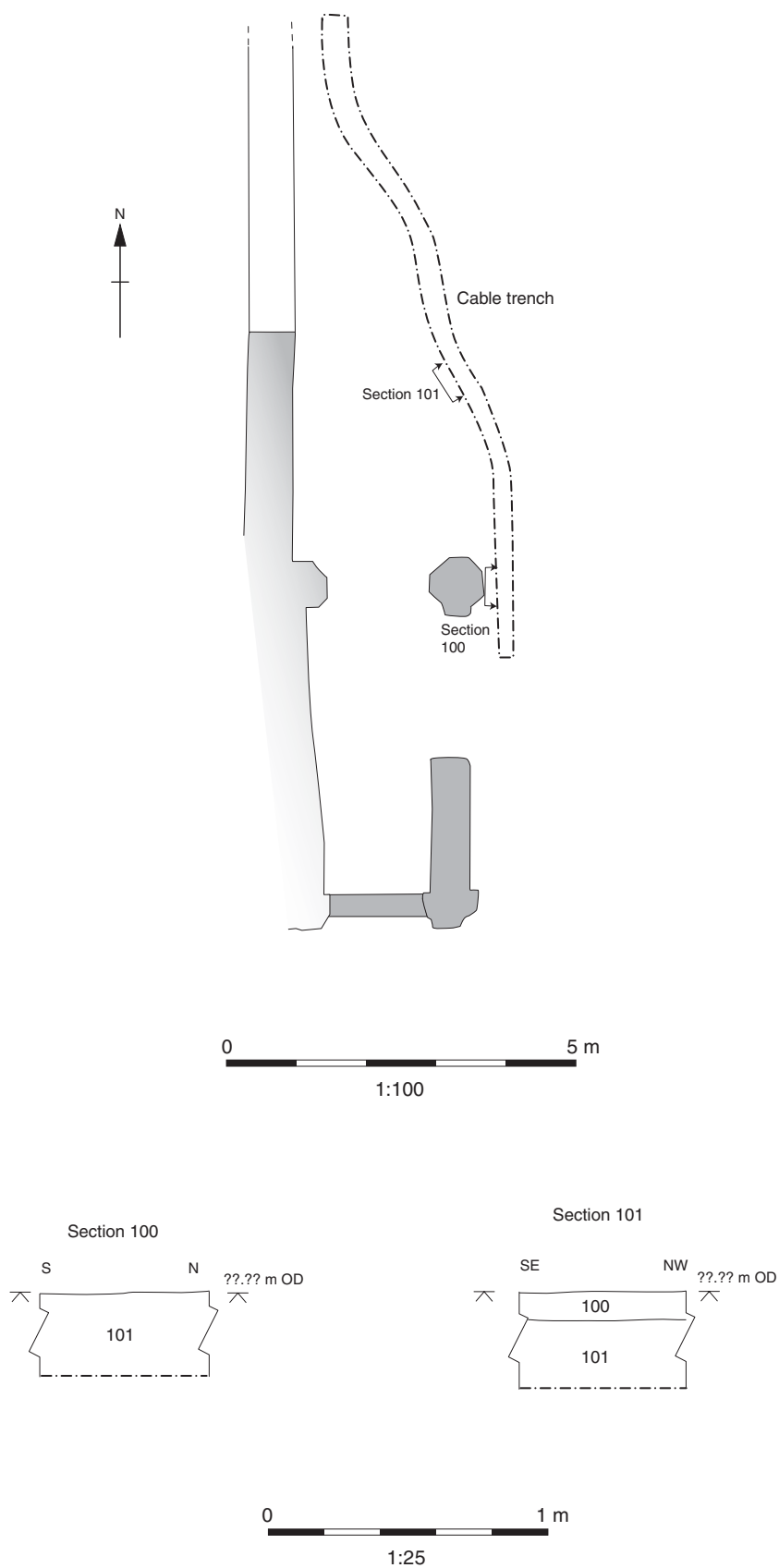


Figure 4: Location of cable trench, and sections 100 and 101



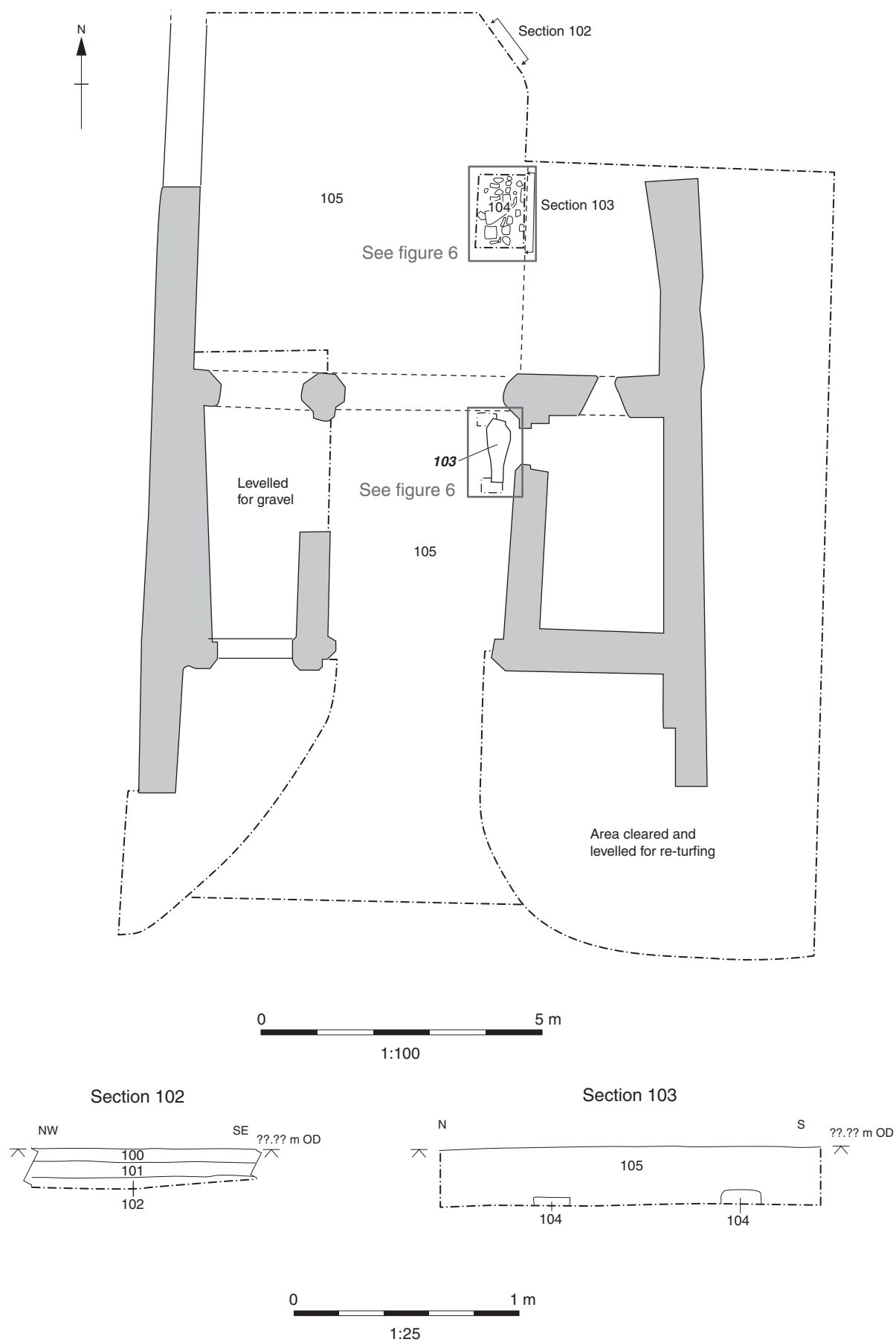


Figure 5: Plan 101, and sections 102 and 103



Plate 1: South facing elevation on arrival



Plate 2: South-west facing elevation on arrival



Plate 3: North-east facing elevation on arrival



Plate 4: South-west facing elevation with scaffolding





Plate 5: North facing elevation with scaffolding



Plate 6: Pipe trench section 100



Plate 7: Structure 103 in relation to the gateway



Plate 8: Structure 103





Plate 9: Detail of structure 103



Plate 10: Surface 104



Plate 11: Detail of 104





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