

BMW, Mini and  
Toyota Dealerships  
A34, Solihull  
Warwickshire



**Archaeological Evaluation Report**



**Oxford Archaeology**

April 2005

**Client: Davis Langdon**

Issue N<sup>o</sup>: 1

OA Job N<sup>o</sup>: 2535

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# BMW, Mini and Toyota Dealerships, Solihull, Warwickshire

## *ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT*

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## SUMMARY

*Between the 22nd and 24th March 2005 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation on the site of the former UCI cinema, Highlands Road, Solihull, Warwickshire (NGR: SP 132 769) on behalf of Davis Langdon. The evaluation revealed extensive ground reduction throughout the development area, which probably occurred during the construction of the cinema and car park. Any potential archaeological deposits or features that have survived within this area have subsequently been truncated by modern development.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Between the 22nd and 24th March 2005 OA carried out a field evaluation at the site of the former UCI cinema, Highlands Road, Solihull (NGR: SP 132 769) on behalf of Davis Langdon. This was in respect of a planning application for the erection of new facilities for BMW, Mini and Toyota dealerships, to include service workshops, car wash, car parking perimeter security fence and access roads (Planning Application No. 2003/2746).
- 1.1.2 The site lies in an area of archaeological potential and an archaeological condition was attached to planning consent by Edward Wilson, Planning Archaeologist for Warwickshire Museum Field Service (WMFS) requiring a field evaluation be undertaken prior to determination. This is in line with PPG 16 and local planning policy.
- 1.1.3 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was produced by OA (OA 2004) in response to Mr Wilson's brief, setting out how it would meet the requirements of this condition.

### 1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site is centred around NGR: SP 132 769, in the parish of Shelley (Fig. 1). The area of the development comprises land formerly occupied by the UCI cinema and associated parking areas between the A34 (Stratford Road) to the south and Highlands Road to the north-east. The site is level but was situated on top of a slightly raised area of ground.
- 1.2.2 The site lies at approximately 120 m OD and the underlying geology is boulder clay matrix overlying Triassic mudstones and Keuper Marl.

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the evaluation has been the subject of a separate study for the WSI (OA 2004), the results of which are presented below.
- 1.3.2 The area of the proposed development lies partially on the site of the former Monk Path Priory. Mapping dating to c1822 also shows a series of buildings associated with the priory.

- 1.3.3 A number of monuments have been identified by the Sites and Monuments Record in the vicinity of the proposed development. Medieval ridge and furrow cultivation has been recorded less than 350 m to the north-east of the site (SMR 8577), and within fields to the north-west (SMR 8576), south (SMR 8579) and south-west (SMR 10978).
- 1.3.4 A post-medieval manor house, Monkspath Hall built in c1775 lies approximately 800 m to the east of the site (SMR 303), while an 18th- to 19th-century brick culvert (SMR 9094) was discovered just 200 m from the proposed development within a hedgerow bordering a former field.

## **2 EVALUATION AIMS**

- 2.1.1 To establish the presence or absence, extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of archaeological remains within the proposal area. In particular, evidence of the former priory and medieval land use known to be present in the area.
- 2.1.2 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features.
- 2.1.3 To make available the results of the investigation.

## **3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Scope of fieldwork**

- 3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of eight trenches each 30 m long by 2 m wide (Fig. 2). The trenches were located to avoid existing service runs with the majority sited to the east of the extant cinema.
- 3.1.2 The overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision by a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. Excavation proceeded in spits down to the first significant archaeological horizon or to undisturbed natural, whichever was encountered first.

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

- 3.2.1 The trenches were cleaned by hand and any revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and where possible, to retrieve finds and environmental samples. The trenches were planned at a scale of 1:100 and the sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20. All features, trenches and sections were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OA Field Manual* (OAU 1992).

### **3.3 Finds**

- 3.3.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and bagged by context.

### 3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence

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

### 3.5 Presentation of results

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

## 4 RESULTS: GENERAL

### 4.1 Soils and ground conditions

- 4.1.1 The site was located on level ground and comprised tarmac and made ground overlying natural deposits. In all the trenches there was intrusion by a number of service trenches and modern concrete foundations.

## 5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

### 5.1 Description of deposits

- 5.1.1 The stratigraphy exposed during the evaluation was sufficiently similar within all the trenches for a general description to apply throughout the site. Deviations from this description within individual trenches are described within the text. Context numbers referring to specific deposits are given in brackets.
- 5.1.2 The natural, a tenacious orange-yellow clay (102, 202, 302, 404, 503, 602, 702 and 802) was reached at a depth of between 0.6 m and 0.9 m below ground level (Fig. 3). Within trenches 2, 3 and 8 this had been cut by modern truncated concrete foundations (203, 303 and 803), within Trench 4 the natural had been cut by modern disturbance (406), then backfilled by a mixture of grey-brown clay and crushed brick (405). This probably represents a modern intrusion during the construction of the cinema car park.
- 5.1.3 A layer of geotextile membrane had been placed over the surface of the natural clay. A layer of crushed brick and hardcore, of between 0.5 m and 0.8 m in depth (101, 201, 301, 601, 701 and 801) overlaid this membrane.
- 5.1.4 Within Trenches 4 and 5 a 0.35 m thick, by 2 m wide haul road composed of orange-brown crushed demolition material (407 and 502) had been laid over the membrane first before being overlaid by deposits of crushed brick hardcore of between 0.1 m and 0.25 m in depth (401, 402, 403 and 501). A layer of modern tarmac measuring 0.12 m and 0.2 m in thickness, formed the car park surface and sealed all the eight trenches.
- ### 5.2 Finds
- 5.2.1 All the finds recovered comprised 19th and 20th century building materials such as brick, tile, glass and pipework, commonly found within demolition deposits used to make up ground levels. These were evaluated on site but were not retained.

## 6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

### 6.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 6.1.1 The percentage sample (3%), distribution of the trenches and the consistent results give a high confidence that the interpretation of the results can be applied throughout the site.

### 6.2 Overall interpretation

- 6.2.1 The results of the evaluation show that a high degree of truncation or ground reduction has previously taken place throughout the development area. This activity has truncated the stratigraphy to such a degree that 20th century deposits were seen to lie directly the natural. This reduction probably occurred during the construction of the UCI cinema and its car park. The total depth of this reduction is likely to have been to approximately 139 m OD, the level of the geotextile membrane. However the natural clay may have been truncated and relaid prior to the laying of this membrane.
- 6.2.2 Evidence for the structural remains of the former priory was not seen surviving in situ, however, the presence of demolition deposits may represent these remains following grubbing out and crushing for reuse on site.
- 6.2.3 Clearly the level of truncation throughout the site removed any possibility of encountering former cultivation systems, medieval or modern.



## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Ctxt No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Thick. (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
1						
	100	Layer	0.12 m	Modern tarmac car park surface	-	C20th
	101	Layer	0.5 m	Compacted hardcore	Brick, concrete	C19th/C20th
	102	Layer	>0.1 m	Natural clay	-	-
2						
	200	Layer	0.1 m	Modern tarmac car park surface	-	C20th
	201	Layer	0.8m	Compacted hardcore	Brick	C19th/C20th
	202	Layer	>0.1 m	Natural clay	-	-
	203	Structure	>0.1 m	Truncated concrete foundation	-	C20th
3						
	300	Layer	0.1 m	Modern tarmac car park surface	-	C20th
	301	Layer	0.6 m	Compacted hardcore	Brick	C19th/C20th
	302	Layer	>0.1 m	Natural clay	-	-
	303	Structure	0.68 m	Truncated concrete foundation	-	C20th
4						
	400	Layer	0.08 m	Modern tarmac car park surface	-	C20th
	401	Layer	0.08 m	Compacted hardcore	Brick	C19th/C20th
	402	Layer	0.12 m	Compacted hardcore	Brick	C19th/C20th
	403	Layer	0.2 m	Compacted hardcore	Brick	C19th/C20th
	404	Layer	>0.1 m	Natural clay	-	-
	405	Fill	>0.1 m	Backfill of 406	Brick	C19th/C20th
	406	Cut	>0.1 m	Modern intrusion	-	C20th
	407	Layer	0.45 m	Haul road composed of crushed demolition debris	Brick, wood, glass	C19th/C20th



<i>Trench</i>	<i>Ctxt No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Thick. (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
5						
	500	Layer	0.12 m	Modern tarmac car park surface	-	C20th
	501	Layer	0.25 m	Compacted hardcore	Brick	C19th/C20th
	502	Layer	0.45 m	Haul road composed of crushed demolition debris	Brick, wood, glass	C19th/C20th
	503	Layer	>0.1 m	Natural clay	-	-
6						
	600	Layer	0.12 m	Modern tarmac car park surface	-	C20th
	601	Layer	0.42 m	Compacted hardcore	Brick	C19th/C20th
	602	Layer	>0.1 m	Natural clay	-	-
7						
	700	Layer	0.2 m	Modern tarmac car park surface	-	C20th
	701	Layer	0.6 m	Compacted hardcore	Brick	C19th/C20th
	702	Layer	>0.1 m	Natural clay	-	-
8						
	800	Layer	0.1 m	Modern tarmac car park surface	-	C20th
	801	Layer	0.55 m	Compacted hardcore	Brick	C19th/C20th
	802	Layer	>0.1 m	Natural clay	-	-
	804	Structure	0.3 m	Truncated concrete foundations	-	C20th

## APPENDIX 2 REFERENCES

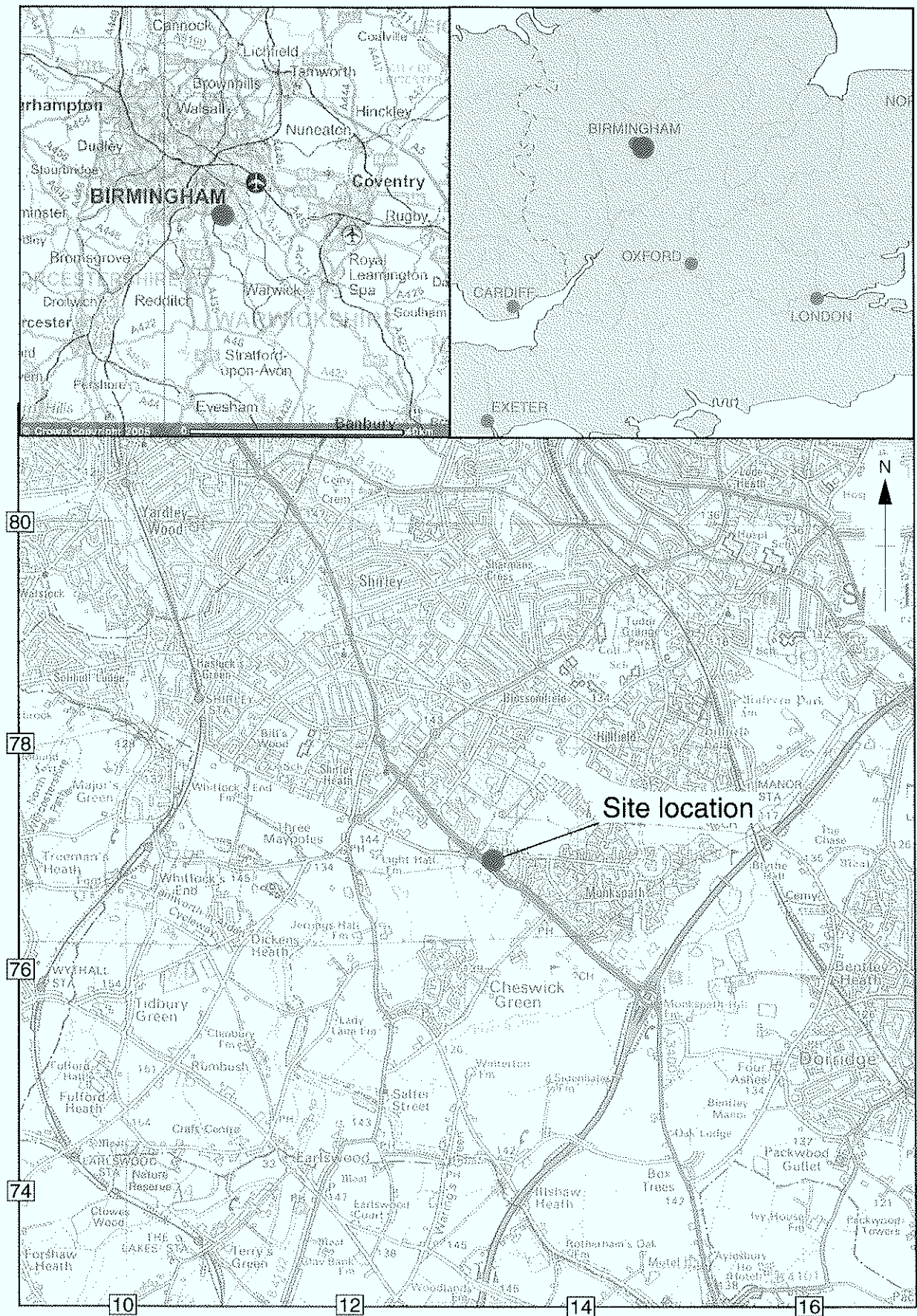
BGS, *Geological Survey of England and Wales sheet 201*

IFA, 1999 *Standard and Guidance for archaeological evaluations*

OA, 2004 *BMW, Mini and Toyota Dealerships, Solihull, Warwickshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*

OAU, 1992 *OA Field Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson)

**APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS****Site name:** BMW, Mini and Toyota Dealerships, A34, Solihull, Warwickshire**Site code:** HHASOL 04**Grid reference:** SP 132 769**Type of evaluation:** 8 machine dug 30 m x 2 m trenches**Date and duration of project:** 22nd to 24th March 2005, 3 days**Area of site:** c1.8 hectares**Summary of results:** Extensive ground reduction throughout the site, truncating any archaeology**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Warwickshire County Museums Service in due course.



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Figure 1: Site location



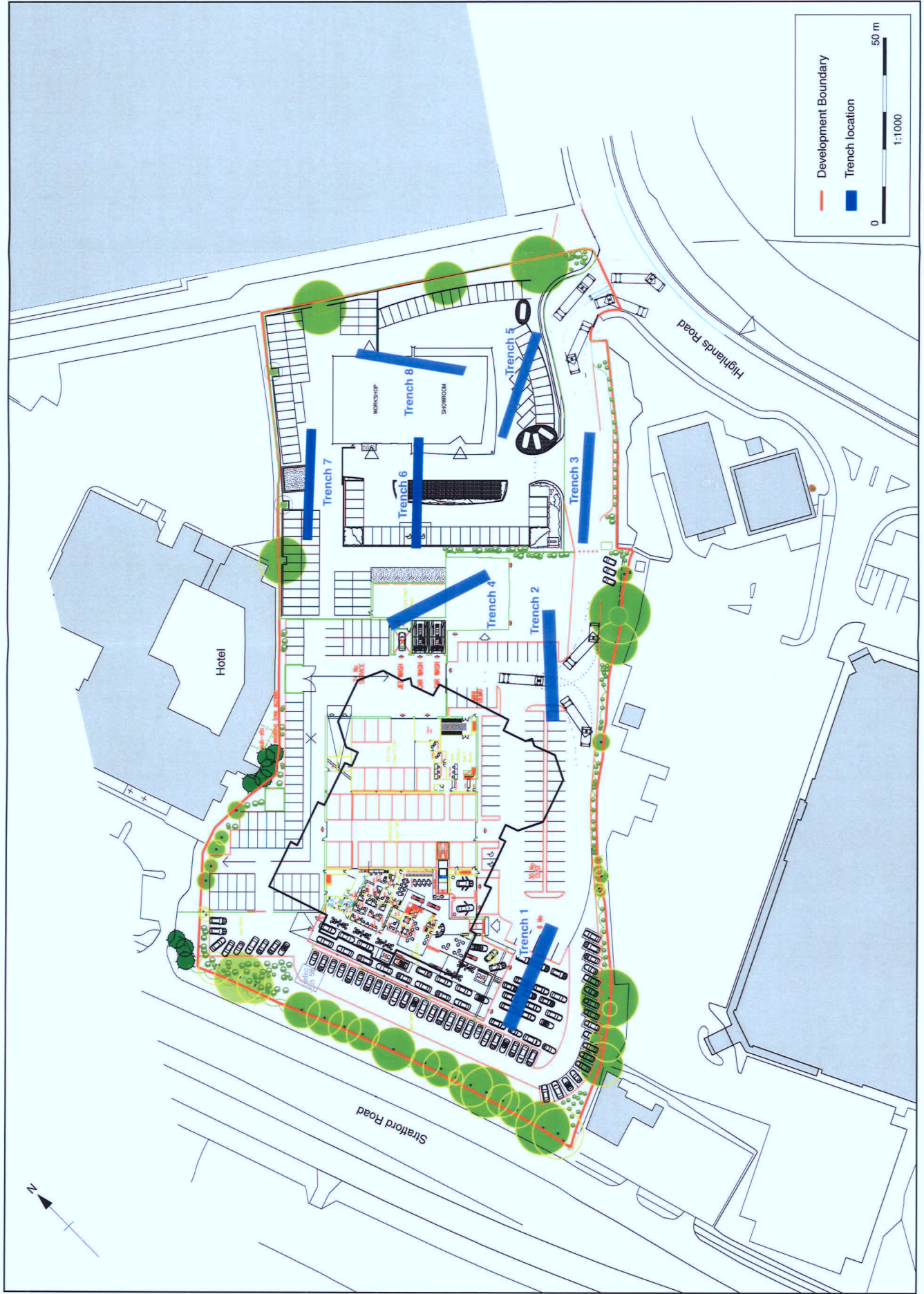


Figure 2: Trench location plan

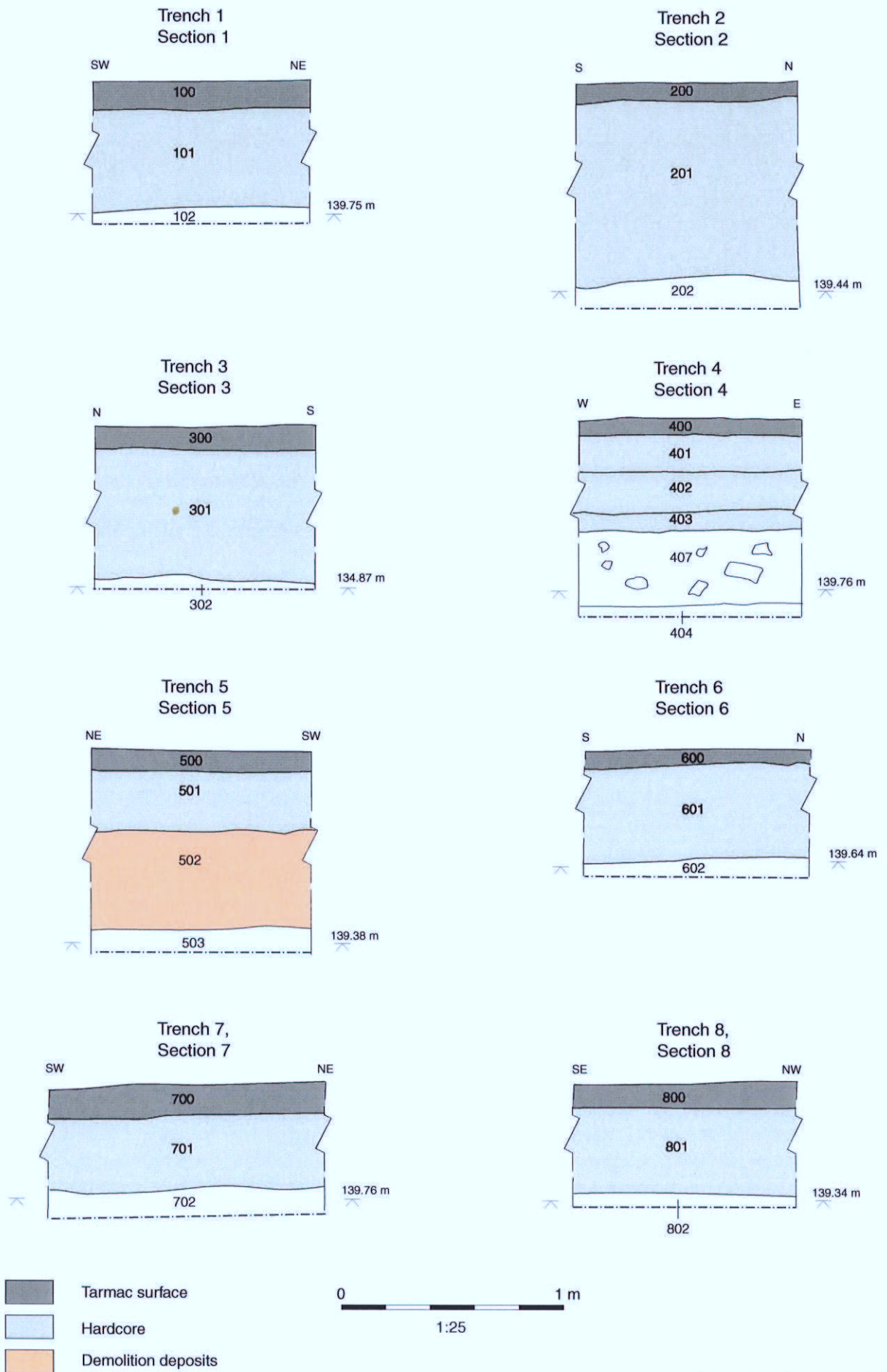


Figure 3: Sections 1-8



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