

The Corner Garage Ardley Oxfordshire



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Oxford Archaeology

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The Corner Garage, Main Road, Ardley, Oxfordshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

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SUMMARY

In June 2004 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at The Corner Garage, Ardley, Oxfordshire (NGR SP5427 2751). The work was commissioned by Thomas & Co in advance of the construction of thirteen new dwellings. The watching brief revealed a possible sunken roadway and two boundary ditches relating to the medieval shrunken village west of the development.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In June 2004 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at The Corner Garage, Ardley, Oxfordshire (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Thomas & Co in respect of a planning application for the demolition of the existing garage buildings and the erection of thirteen new dwellings (Planning Application No. 03/00760/F). A watching brief was carried out following a two trench evaluation by OA on the site prior to the start of the development (Fig. 2).
- 1.1.2 A project brief was set by Hannah Fluck, Planning Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Council.
- 1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The development site is located off Station Road on the west side, south of the junction with Ardley Road (NGR SP 5427 2751). The site lies at approximately 120 m OD and is roughly 0.2 of a hectare in area. The geology is Great Oolite, which is overlain by Oxford Clays (BGS Map 219).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the watching brief was prepared for the WSI for the project (OA 2003) and from the evaluation results and is reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 The development site lies within the historic core of Ardley. Immediately to the west of the proposed development site are the remains of a shrunken medieval village, visible as earthworks (SMR 9015). Associated with this settlement are medieval holloways (SMR 1159), one of which was investigated by Oxford Archaeology in 1988 (OAU 1988).
- 1.3.3 Evidence of Roman activity has been recovered east of the development site in the form of several coins and pottery sherds (SMR 2525). Several hundred metres to the north-east is an Iron Age banjo enclosure (SMR 15964), while further evidence of prehistoric settlement and activity is apparent to the north-west where a Bronze Age ring ditch was identified by aerial photography.

- 1.3.4 The evaluation carried out in 2003 by OA revealed a medieval boundary or field ditch in Trench 1 (Fig. 2), which was associated with the earthworks of the shrunken medieval village. Also a number of features sealed by the disturbed natural and produced no dating evidence. It is therefore likely that these features are tree throws, though they could be earlier features of prehistoric date.
- 1.3.5 In light of the proximity of the medieval earthworks to the south-west of the site and the good state of preservation seen in Trench 1, there is good potential to find further features and deposits associated with the shrunken medieval village, though these may be limited to the southern half of the site as indicated by the lack of features from Trench 2.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence/absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.
- 2.1.2 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 After the old garage was demolished and the fuel tanks removed, the site was levelled and the foundations excavated, starting with plots 1-3 and then working from south to north around the site. The work was carried out by a 360° machine fitted with 0.6 m and 1 m wide toothed buckets under archaeological supervision.
- 2.2.2 All archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:100 and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20. All excavated features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. A general photographic record of the work was made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 The foundation trenches and the services cut through to the natural (305) of yellowish brown clay with limestone fragments. Overlying this was a 0.40 m thick layer of light grey disturbed clay and limestone natural (304 and 310). Cutting into this was a number of features. The first of these was a large ditch (303) which ran north to south and turned sharply to the east and tapered out (Fig. 3). It had sloping sides and a flat base, measuring 4 m wide and 0.75 m in depth. It was filled by a mid brown clay (302) with fragments of 16th century pottery (Fig. 4, Sections 300 and 301). To the east of this large ditch a pit/ditch (311) was observed in section (Figs 3 and 4, Section 304). It had steep sloping sides and round base measuring 0.75 m wide and 0.36 m in depth with a fill of mid brown silty clay (312).

- 3.1.2 In the north-east corner of the site in plot 10 another ditch was observed in section running east to west across the site. Ditch (315) had a sloping sides and rounded base measuring 1.4 m wide and 0.5 m in depth. It was filled a dark brown sand clay (314) (Figs 3 and 4, Section 306). These features were all overlain by a series of old topsoil layers across the site and consisted of dark grey brown silty clay (306, 313, 301 and 316). These had been overlain by demolition layers (307 and 300) of dark grey brown silty clay with a large amount of crushed rubble and limestone (Figs 3 and 4).

3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 The pottery assemblage comprised 4 sherds with a total weight of 56 g. All the pottery came from a single context (302). The group is most likely of 16th century date. It was recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994), as follows:

OXCX: Shelly Coarseware, AD1100-1400. 2 sherds, 35g.

OXDR: Red Earthenwares, 1550+. 1 sherd, 12g.

In addition, a single sherd (9g) of Romano-British shelly ware was also present.

- 3.2.2 Two fragments of bone, one piece of horse tibia and a horse femur, both from the left side of the animal were recovered from the fill (302).

3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

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

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The watching brief did reveal a number of features which probably relate to the medieval earthworks to the west of the site. A large feature, which could be a sunken roadway, was observed running along the east side of the medieval earthworks and then turning west towards it. A number of pottery sherds from the 16th century were recovered from it, suggesting that the roadway was used up to the early post-medieval period. Two smaller ditches running from the west into the site from the medieval earthworks were identified. These could be boundary ditches running up to the edge of the roadway marking plots of land around the village core.
- 4.1.2 The watching brief results corroborate the findings from the evaluation Trench 1 and indicate that the DMV extended to the line of the present day station road, possibly with an access to the site in the form of a hollow way.
- 4.1.3 Garage buildings and associated structures had clearly truncated or removed archaeological deposits across the site.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Length</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i> Finds</i>
300	Layer	0.30 m			Demolition layer	
301	Layer	0.20 m			Old topsoil	
302	Fill				Ditch fill	Pot and Bone
303	Cut	0.75 m	4 m		Large ditch	
304	Layer	0.4 m			Disturbed natural	
305	Natural				Natural	
306	Layer	0.14 m			Made ground	
307	Layer	0.12 m			Made ground	
308	Layer	0.18 m			Made ground	
309	Layer	0.25 m			Old topsoil	
310	Layer	0.4 m			Disturbed natural	
311	Cut	0.36 m	0.75 m		Ditch/pit	
312	Fill				Fill of above	
313	Layer	0.25 m			Old topsoil	
314	Fill				Fill of ditch	
315	Cut	0.5 m	1.4 m		Ditch	
316	Layer	0.4 m			Old topsoil	

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

OA 2003 *The Corner Garage, Main Road, Ardley, Oxfordshire Archaeological Evaluation Report*

OA 2003 *The Corner Garage, Main road, Ardley, Oxfordshire Written Scheme of Investigation*

OCAS 2003 *Corner Garage, Main Road, Ardley Design Brief for Archaeological Field Evaluation*

OA 1992 *Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D.Wilkinson, first edition, 1992)

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS**Site name:** The Corner Garage, Ardley, Oxfordshire**Site code:** ARGAR 04**Grid reference:** NGR SP 5427 2751**Type of watching brief:** Ground works prior to the construction of new houses.**Date and duration of project:** A total of twelve visits from the 7/4/2004 to the 17/6/2004.**Area of site:** 0.2 hectares**Summary of results:** A sunken roadway and two boundary ditches relating to the medieval shrunken village.**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course, under the following accession number: OXCMS:2003.105

Server 10:/oupubs/_AioH*ARGARWB*ARGERWB*The Corner Garage, Ardley*jin*01.07.04



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Figure 1: Site Location

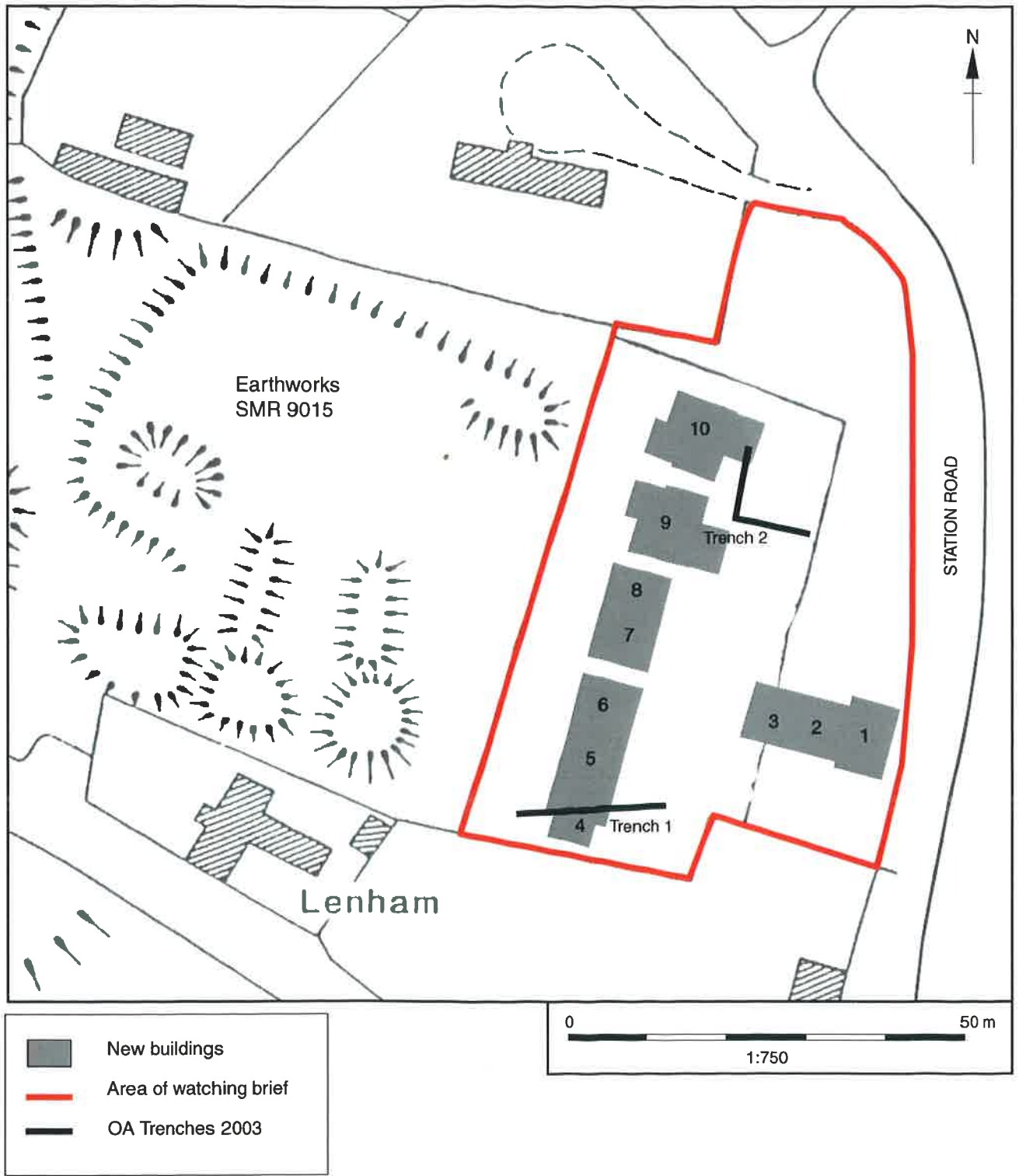


Figure 2: Area of watching brief and new development

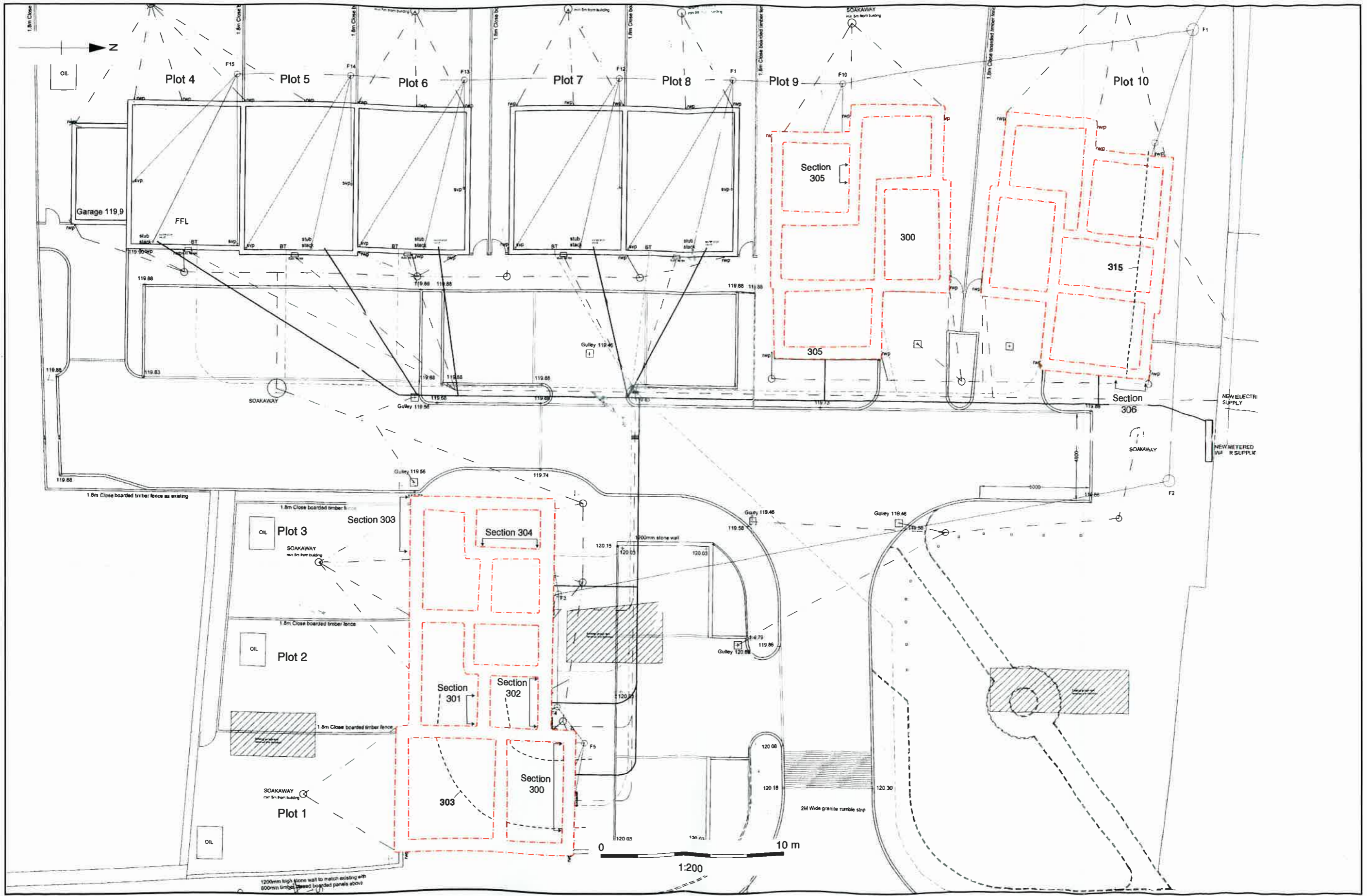


Figure 3: Site plan showing features and sections

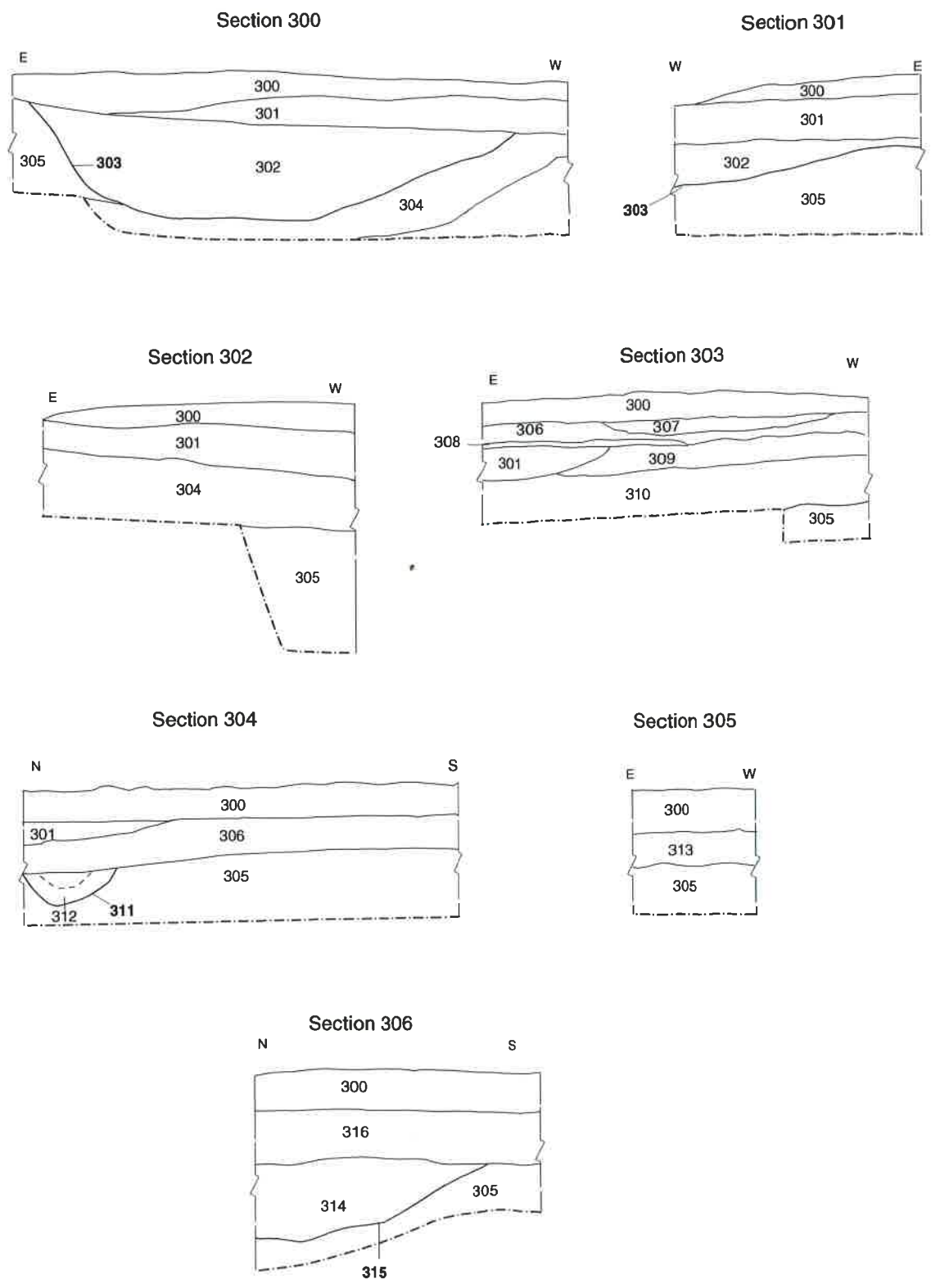


Figure 4: Sections



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