

Phase 1 Test Pit Report Bishop's Waltham Project Bishop's Waltham Palace Hampshire



Archaeological Watching Brief



Oxford Archaeology

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Kirkpatrick and Co Ltd
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Little Pond, Bishop's Waltham, Hampshire Environment Agency Pipeline

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT PHASE 1: TEST PITS

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SUMMARY

In May 2002, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at the site of Little Pond Bishops Waltham Palace, Hampshire (NGR SU 5517 1729). The work was commissioned by Scott Wilson Kirkpatrick & Co Ltd on behalf of the Environment Agency. In the first instance, the work comprised the archaeological monitoring of geo-technical test pits on the line of a proposed overflow pipeline on the site of this in-filled medieval fish pond. A second monitoring phase will be undertaken during the excavation of the pipeline trench.

The watching brief revealed undated pond silt deposits overlying natural gravels at the base of each test pit. Part of the Mill Race channel to the 19th century mill was observed together with late structural remains, probably those of demolished buildings on the site. The silts and structures were sealed beneath thick layers of dumped material deposited when the site was levelled in the 1970s.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC reference: HSD9/2/4649 - pt2) has been granted by English Heritage for the excavation of a new overflow pipeline at the site of 'Little Pond' that is situated to the south-west of the medieval palace at Bishop's Waltham in Hampshire (Fig. 1).
- 1.1.2 In May 2002, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief during the excavation by the Environment Agency of geo-technical test pits on the line of the proposed pipeline at the site.
- 1.1.3 The work was commissioned by Scott Wilson Kirkpatrick & Co Ltd of Basingstoke on behalf of the Environment Agency. A second phase of watching brief will follow at a later date during the installation of the new pipeline, the final route of which is currently under review.
- 1.1.4 Discussions took place between OA and Rob Perrin, the Inspector of Ancient Monuments (South-East Region), as to the required level of mitigation for the project.
- 1.1.5 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation for English Heritage detailing how it would undertake a watching brief during the intrusive investigations at the site (OA 2001).

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies at about 31 m above OD. The site is situated on gravel and is 0.5 hectares in area.
- 1.2.2 The area of the test pits was level and situated in the base of the former medieval pond, which has been covered with tarmac. The sides of the former pond are banked and trees surround the whole area.

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 2001) and is reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 The site of 'Little Pond' is the remains of one of the fishponds that once formed part of the estate surrounding the medieval Bishop's Waltham Palace (NGR SU 5517 1729). It lies due south-west of the main palace complex. An extant bank that once acted as a dam for the pond survives at its south end and is up to 20 m wide and 150 m long.
- 1.3.3 The pond was originally larger: in the 19th century the drained interior was bisected by the Abbey Mill Race and its western extent was truncated by construction of the railway line. The pond has been cut across by the present A333.
- 1.3.4 The first evidence of activity on the site of the palace comes from archaeological excavations that revealed a small stone building beneath the later Hall and Great Chamber of the Palace. This may be the remains of the castle constructed by Bishop Henry of Blois (1129-71) and slighted in c.1155 after Henry II came to the throne. The earliest buildings of the Palace likewise date to Bishop Blois' episcopate, and the whole complex was rebuilt in later 14th century.
- 1.3.5 Dating of the fishponds is slight, though an intriguing reference to foxes eating 5 swans at Bishop's Waltham pond in 1251-2 (HRO Eccl 159291A) suggests that they could date to this period or earlier.

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 OA extends its thanks to Scott Wilson's for providing plans of the site and the new scheme, and to Rob Perrin of English Heritage for background information relating to the history of the pond site.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the four test pits excavated by the Environment Agency.
- 2.1.2 To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present in the test pits and to establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features.
- 2.1.3 To make available the results of the investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 An OA supervisor was in attendance during the excavation of the test pits by the Environment Agency (Fig. 2).

- 2.2.2 The Test Pit sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20 and the pits located on a site plan. A full photographic record of the work was made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OA Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

Test Pit 1 (Fig. 3)

- 3.1.1 The Test Pit measured 2.5 m by 2 m and it was 2.85 m deep. The earliest deposit revealed was a layer of natural flint gravel (8) at least 0.5 m in thickness. This was sealed below a 0.3 m thick layer of very dark brown loam (7) with a humic content and decayed vegetation, presumably the primary silting of the pond. Above lay a deposit of light grey silty sand (6) up to 0.3 m in thickness beneath a 0.1 m thick compacted layer of flint and gravel (5) that appeared to seal the silts below. The flint/gravel layer lay beneath a 0.7 m thick layer of red-brown clay silt (4) including lenses of chalk and some gravel. A few pieces of apparently non-local stone were present in the layer, suggesting it was a dumped deposit. Above 4 was a 0.3 m thick layer of dark brown silt loam (3) with occasional brick and tile fragments, probably a former topsoil horizon. It was sealed by a layer of clay and flints with brick fragments (2) acting as make-up for the extant tarmac surface (1).

Test Pit 2 (Fig. 3)

- 3.1.2 The Test Pit was 2.94 m deep and measured 2.5 m by 2 m. At the base of the excavation was a layer of grey silty sand and gravel (18), interpreted as stained natural. This was sealed by a 0.1 m thick layer of flint gravel (17) beneath a 0.6 m thick layer of natural flint gravel (16) that appeared to have been stained a blue-ish colour. Above 16 was a 0.1 m thick layer of grey-brown silty clay with some gravel (15). At the level of 15 and cutting it was a linear feature with a flat base and vertical sides (14). As exposed the feature was 1.6 m deep and over 0.5 m wide within the confines of the trench and it was aligned north-east/south-west. At the base of the feature was a 0.5 m thick compact reddish-white fill of chalk and gravel (13) sealed below a near black humic loam (12) that was 0.1 m thick. Above lay a blue-grey clay (11) with chalk and gravel inclusions to a depth of 0.5 m, in turn sealed by a thick deposit of brown silty clay (10). The clay fill (10) lay directly beneath the present tarmac surface (9).

Test Pit 3 (Fig. 3)

- 3.1.3 The Test Pit was 3 m deep and measured 2.4 m by 2 m. At the base was a layer of yellow natural gravel (26) beneath a 0.2 m thick layer of dark grey, possibly stained, natural gravel (25). Above lay a loose grey silty sand (24) that was 0.2 m thick, in turn overlain by a 0.4 m thick layer of blue-grey silty clay (23). This was sealed by a layer of dark reddish-brown silty clay (22) that was 0.2 m in thickness. A dumped layer of clay, brick and tile fragments (21) sealed 22, covered by tarmac (20) and a thin layer of modern topsoil (19).

Test Pit 4 (Fig. 3)

- 3.1.4 This Test Pit was 2.84 m deep and measured 2.4 m by 2 m. At the base was a layer of natural blue-stained gravel (35) beneath a 0.2 m thick layer of grey-brown silty sand with some organic material (34). This lay beneath a 0.15 m thick layer of dark grey silty clay (33) containing a small amount of brick fragments. At the level of 33 and set within it was a brick and concrete structure (36). The ?wall extended beneath the north baulk of the Test Pit. It comprised a concrete base with a red-brick superstructure, with the bricks measuring 0.22 m x 0.11 m x 0.07 m bonded with a hard grey concrete. In the south-west corner of the test pit was the remains of a further brick wall (37) on an approximate east-west alignment. The walls could represent part of the same structure though it is equally likely that they had been pushed in to the defunct pond sometime in the ?20th century and had settled towards the base of the pond fills.
- 3.1.5 Wall portion 35 was abutted by layer of chalk fragments (32) up to 0.2 m in thickness, which was overlain by a layer of dark grey silty clay (31) to a depth of 0.8 m. This lay below a 0.3 m thick layer of grey clay (30) with chalk and brick fragments beneath a further layer of grey clay (29). Above was a 0.2 m thick layer of reddish-brown clay (28) covered by the present tarmac surface (27).

3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 No datable artefacts were recovered from any of the excavated deposits. A piece of fired stone (?limestone) and a fragment of well-preserved wood were recovered from layer 4 in Test Pit 1, possibly a dumped layer over the pond fills. Part of a cow leg bone was retained from layer 34 in Test Pit 4, an organic-rich deposit in the fills of the medieval pond.

3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 3.3.1 No environmental sampling was undertaken at this stage of the project. Full consideration will be made as to sampling strategy during the full excavation of the pipeline.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 Natural flint gravel and sand was identified at the base of each of the test pits at a depth of c 2.6-2.7 m. The natural was overlain by organic-rich silts and loam deposits that appear to represent the earliest silting deposits within the pond. None of these were dated and while a medieval date is possible for these, it is unclear whether there has been any cleaning or scouring of the pond had taken place, as might be expected if a regime of water management took place at the palace.
- 4.1.2 Of note was the cut feature in Test Pit 2, whose north-south alignment and position corresponds with the line of the 19th century Mill Race leading to the mill. The feature appears to have been cut from just below the level of the later 20th century surface of the site suggesting that it is indeed a late feature.

- 4.1.3 The structural elements in Test Pit 4 are unlikely to be *in situ*, buried at the depth that they were seen, unless they represent the heavily truncated remains of a sluice associated with the Mill Race. It seems more likely that they once formed part of a building that was demolished and then dumped into the silts in the pond, sinking down to the base of the feature.
- 4.1.4 At the time of this report, negotiations are underway between the Environment Agency and English Heritage regarding two different routes for the new pipeline. OA will maintain a second watching brief during excavations for the structure in the future.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Height</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Find</i>
1	Layer	0.1 m			Tarmac, upper layer Test Pit 1	
2	Layer	0.3 m			Make-up layer	
3	Layer	0.3 m			Buried topsoil	
4	Layer	0.7 m			Dumped soil or late pond silt	Burnt stone, wood fragment
5	Layer	0.1 m			Layer of flints in pond	
6	Layer	0.3 m			Pond silt	
7	Layer	0.3 m			Primary organic pond silt	
8	Layer				Natural flint gravel at base of Test Pit 1	
9	Layer	0.3 m			Tarmac and thin topsoil, upper layer Test Pit 2	
10	Fill	0.6 m			Upper fill of 14	
11	Fill	0.5 m			Fill of 14	
12	Fill	0.1 m			Humic fill of 14	
13	Fill	0.5 m			Primary fill of 14	
14	Cut	1.6 m	0.5 m+		Probable channel of 19th century Mill Race	
15	Layer	0.1 m			Pond silt	
16	Layer	0.6 m			Natural flint gravel at base of Test Pit 2	
17	Layer	0.1 m			Natural flint gravel at base of Test Pit 2	
18	Layer				Natural sand at base of Test Pit 2	
19	Layer	0.3 m			Topsoil at top of Test Pit 3	
20	Layer	0.3 m			C20 tarmac	
21	Layer	1.2 m			Dumped soil layer	
22	Layer	0.2 m			Upper pond silt	
23	Layer	0.4 m			Pond silt	
24	Layer	0.2 m			Primary pond silt	

25	Layer	0.2 m			Natural gravel	
26	Layer				Natural gravel at base of Test Pit 3	
27	Layer	0.3 m			Tarmac and make-up at the top of Test Pit 4	
28	Layer	0.2 m			Clay layer	
29	Layer	0.7 m			Dumped soil/clay layer	
30	Layer	0.3 m			Dumped soil/clay layer	
31	Layer	0.8 m			Clay and organic soil with wood and CBM ?Dumped layer	
32	Layer	0.2 m			Chalk layer	
33	Layer	0.15 m			Clay layer	
34	Layer	0.2 m			Primary pond fill	1 animal bone
35	Layer				Natural gravel at base of Test Pit 4	
36	Structure		0.6 m	0.6 m	Brick and concrete structure	
37	Structure		0.6 m	0.6 m	Brick structure - ?wall portion	
38	deleted on site	-	-	-	-	-

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

OA 1992 *Fieldwork Manual* (1st edition, ed. D Wilkinson)

OA 2001 *Little Pond, Bishop's Waltham Palace, Hampshire. Written Scheme of Investigation*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Little Pond, Bishop's Waltham Palace, Hampshire

Site code: BIWAL 02

Grid Reference: NGR SU 5517 1729

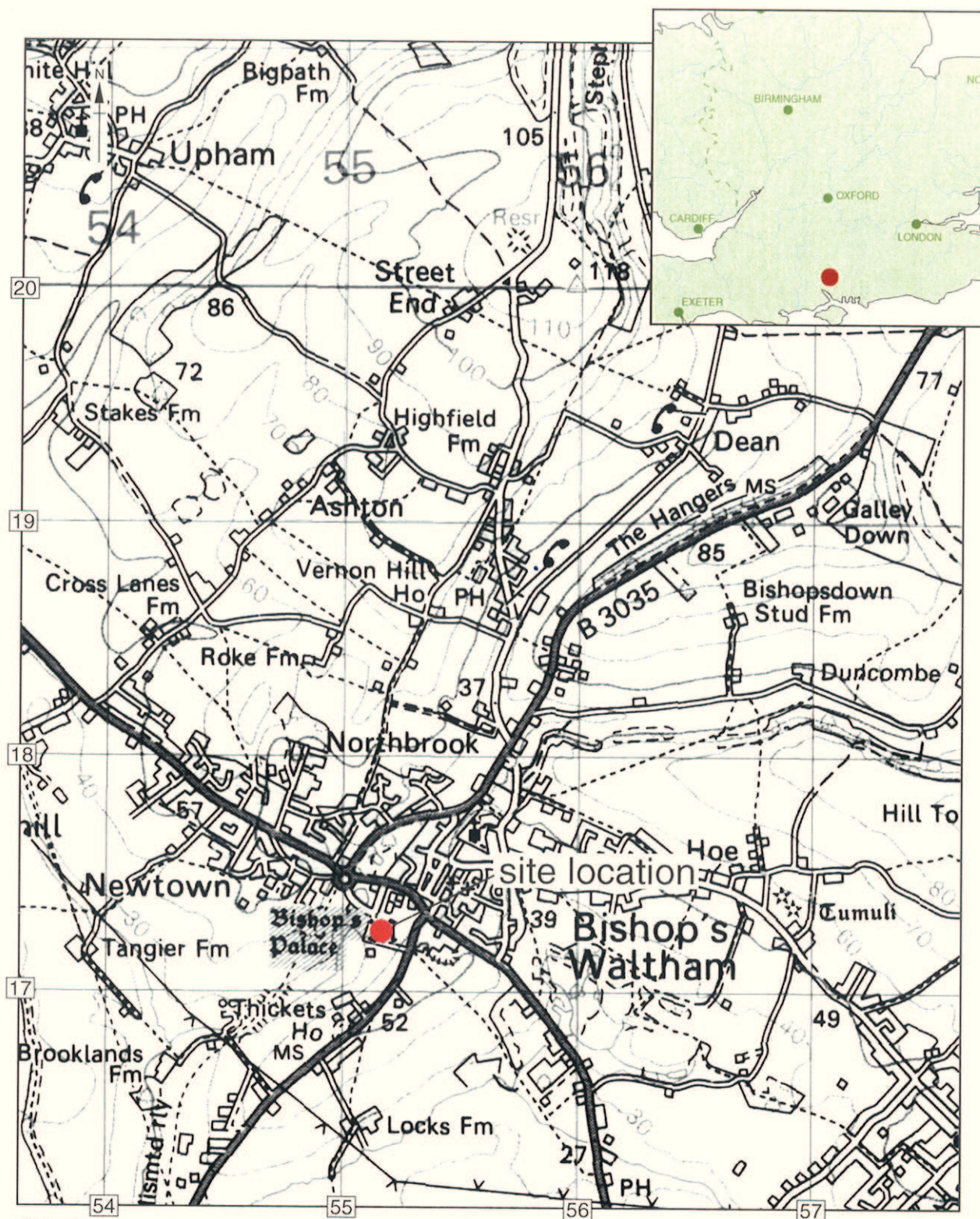
Type of watching brief: Monitoring of geo-technical test pits

Date and duration of project: One day, May 2002

Area of site: 0.5 ha.

Summary of results: Undated silt deposits overlying natural gravels at the base of each test pit. Part of the Mill Race channel to the 19th century mill was observed together with late structural remains, probably those of demolished buildings on the site. The silts and structures were sealed beneath thick layers of dumped material formed when the site was levelled in the 1970s.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with English Heritage in due course.



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Figure 1: Site location.

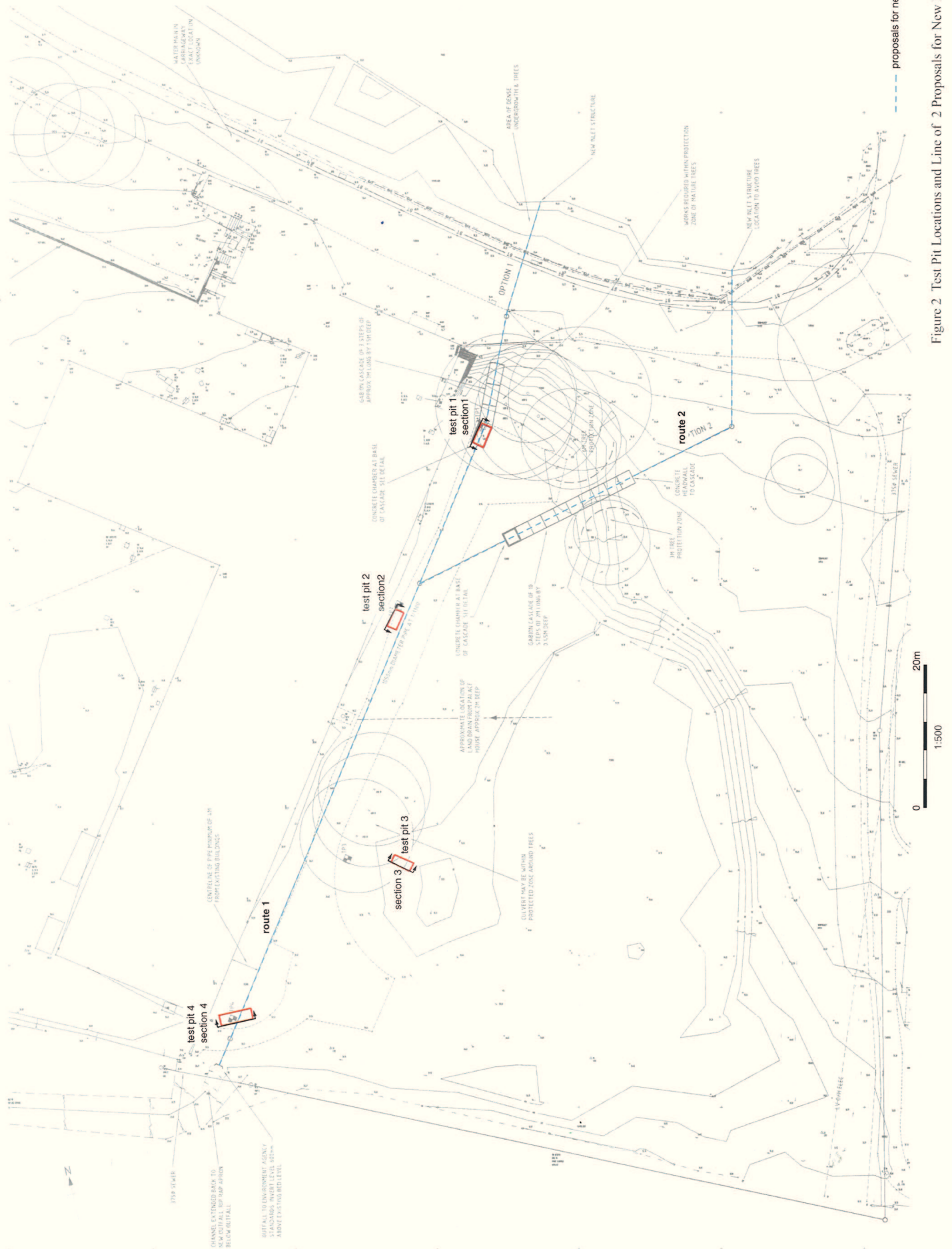
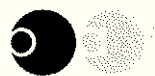


Figure 2 Test Pit Locations and Line of 2 Proposals for New Pipeline.



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