

BANNER HOMES PLC

2-4, DEERHURST ROAD, CRICKLEWOOD, NW2

*NGR TQ 2395 8451*

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

Oxford Archaeological Unit

July 2001

BANNER HOMES PLC

DEERHURST ROAD, CRICKLEWOOD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

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*17.7.01*

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Date:

*20/7/2001*

Oxford Archaeological Unit

June 2001

## *Summary*

*Between October and November 2000, Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) undertook a watching brief at 2-4 Deerhurst Road, Cricklewood NW2. The site had already been the subject of an archaeological evaluation carried out by OAU in May 2000. The evaluation revealed a substantial north-south aligned cut for what was thought to be a moat associated with Mapesbury House, a medieval manor house known to have existed on, or near to, the development site. Stratigraphic evidence was found to support the documentary sources, which state that the moat was backfilled in the early 17th-century and the manor house rebuilt twice. The demolished remains of late 17th- and 18th-century buildings were also revealed. During the watching brief, further evidence for 17th- and 18th-century structures was revealed within the strip foundation trenches for the new buildings.*

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Planning permission was granted to demolish two existing dwellings and construct five pairs of semi-detached houses and associated an access road at N<sup>o</sup>s 2 and 4 Deerhurst Road, Cricklewood NW2 (Fig. 1). Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS) on behalf of the Brent Borough Council require an archaeological watching brief during the groundwork in accordance with PPG16.
- 1.2 The site covers an area of *c.* 2400 m<sup>2</sup> on the east side of Deerhurst Road. Until recently it was occupied by two detached dwellings with front and back gardens. The site is bounded to the north by No 6 Deerhurst Road, to the east by properties fronting Coverdale Road (Nos 5,7,9,11 and 13) and to the south properties fronting Willesden Lane (Nos 202, 204, 206, 208 and 210). The site lies at *c.* 59 m AOD at NGR TQ 2395 8451, and the geology is typically London Clay.

### **2 Background**

- 2.1 The site lies in an area of archaeological potential. The existing buildings occupy the site of the medieval manor of Mapesbury House, which belonged to the Dean and Chapter of St Paul's and may have Saxon origins, as the area of Willesden is thought to have been given to St Paul's by King Athelstan in 938.
- 2.2 Walter Map owned the manor in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century, but by the late 16<sup>th</sup> century the moated house had fallen into neglect (VCH Middlesex Vol. VII). In 1603 the house was rebuilt and three sides of the moat were filled in. A new moat was constructed but this is recorded as being 'more distant' from the house. The house was rebuilt in brick in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and it is this building which is illustrated on Roque's map of 1746. This shows four buildings and a formal garden on the junction of Deerhurst Road and Willesden Lane (then Maws Lane). The house lies adjacent to the junction, with the garden and

other buildings to the east.

- 2.3 The house again became dilapidated, but was redeveloped as a horse-training centre in 1826. The OS map of 1894-96 shows the house located further from Willesden Lane surrounded by a complex of buildings, a lodge, a formal garden and paddocks. A Presbyterian Church lies on the west side of Deerhurst Road (now the site of the Shree Swaminarayan Temple) and the Metropolitan Railway extension line has been constructed just to the north. The 1915 edition of the OS shows the horse-training centre to be relatively unchanged, however there is a marked increase in the development of the surrounding area. Indeed between 1811 and 1901 the population of Willesden had grown from 751 to 100,000. The centre was closed in 1916 and was demolished in 1925.

### **3 Aims**

- 3.1 The aims of the watching brief were to identify any archaeological remains exposed on site during the course of the works, and to record these to established OAU standards (Wilkinson 1992), in order to secure their preservation by record.

### **4 Methodology**

- 4.1 The watching brief was undertaken by means of separate inspection visits.
- 4.2 Within the constraints imposed by health and safety considerations the deposits exposed were cleaned, inspected and recorded in plan, section and by colour slide and monochrome print photography. Written records were also made on proforma sheets. Soil description utilised standard charts for the approximation of percentage of inclusion types in soil deposits.

### **5 Results (Fig. 2)**

- 5.1 The watching brief monitored the excavation of the strip foundations for the new buildings. The results are presented below on a plot-by-plot basis and the evidence discussed in its entirety in the Discussion section:

#### *5.2 Plots 1 and 2*

- 5.1 The excavation of the foundation trenches for plots 1 and 2 revealed a stratigraphic sequence comprising a 0.28m thick deposit of tenacious mid-grey brown clay silt (15) with *c* 20% ceramic building material (CBM) inclusions. This was overlain by a 0.16 m thick layer of brownish grey sandy silt (14) with 50% rounded gravel and 15% CBM. Overlying deposit 14 was a 0.35 m thick layer of modern topsoil (13).

#### *5.3 Plots 3 and 4 (Fig. 3)*

- 5.3.1 The foundation trenches for plots 3 and 4 revealed a similar stratigraphic sequence comprising a 0.30m thick, tenacious mid-brown clayey silt deposit (15)

which included *c* 15% ceramic building material (CBM) and was overlain by a 0.18 m thick layer of brownish grey sandy silt (14) with 50% rounded gravel and 10% CBM. This was in turn overlain by 0.40 m of modern topsoil (13).

5.3.2 Deposit 14 sealed a number of brick wall footings and some localised deposits of mortar and brick rubble which cut the natural geology (16):

5.3.3 Structures 2, 3, 4, 8, 9 and 10 consisted of between 3 to 8 courses of brick and mortar typical of the early 17th century, although in no discernable bond.

5.3.4 Deposits 1, 5 and 6 consisted of mortar and brick rubble within clearly defined 'cuts' which were aligned with the brick wall footings.

#### 5.4 Plot 5 (Fig. 4)

5.4.1 The same sequence of deposits was observed in plot 5. Two brick wall footings (11 and 12) were recorded beneath deposit 14 and cutting 16

#### 5.5 Plots 6 and 7 (Fig. 5)

5.5.1 A similar stratigraphic sequence was recorded in plots 6 and 7, although no evidence for structural remains was observed.

## 6 Finds

6.1 Two brick samples were taken from structures 3 and 9 in plot 4. Both are typical of the early 17th century. No other finds were retained although large quantities of CBM were observed within deposits 14 and 15

## 7 Environmental results

7.1 Although full consideration was given to various sampling strategies, due to the absence of any suitable deposits and the tight constraints of the excavation, no environmental soil samples were taken.

## 8 Discussion

8.1 The deposits observed during the watching brief appeared to represent a deposit of early 17th-century demolition rubble (15) overlain by a possible garden soil (14), perhaps reflecting the demolition and rebuilding of the house in the late 17th century.

8.2 Whilst the impact of the strip foundations was limited, the concentrations of brick rubble and structural remains in the north east corner of the site (plots 3, 4 and 5) would suggest that this is the most likely site for the building illustrated on Roque's map of 1746, possibly part of the formal garden.

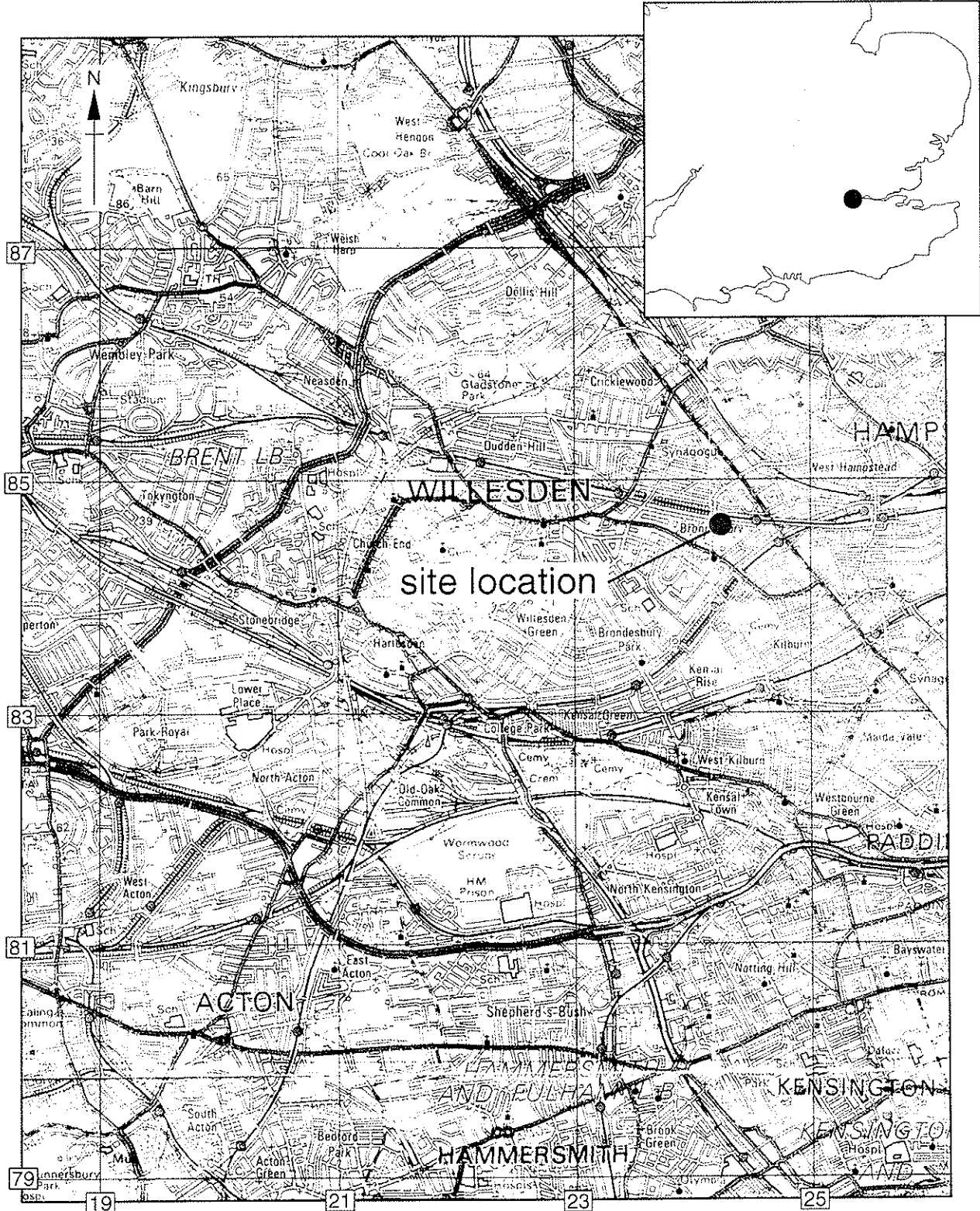
8.3 The moat cut recorded in Trench 1 during the evaluation was not observed, although the foundations did not generally impact below the level of the 17th-century demolition deposit.

8.4 No other observations were made during the watching brief that could enhance the conclusions drawn in the evaluation report (OAU, 2000)

**References.**

Wilkinson, D (ed) 1992 Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual, (First edition, August 1992).

2-4 Deerhurst Road, Cricklewood, London Borough of Brent  
Archaeological Evaluation Report OAU 2000



Scale 1:50,000

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Figure 1: Site location.

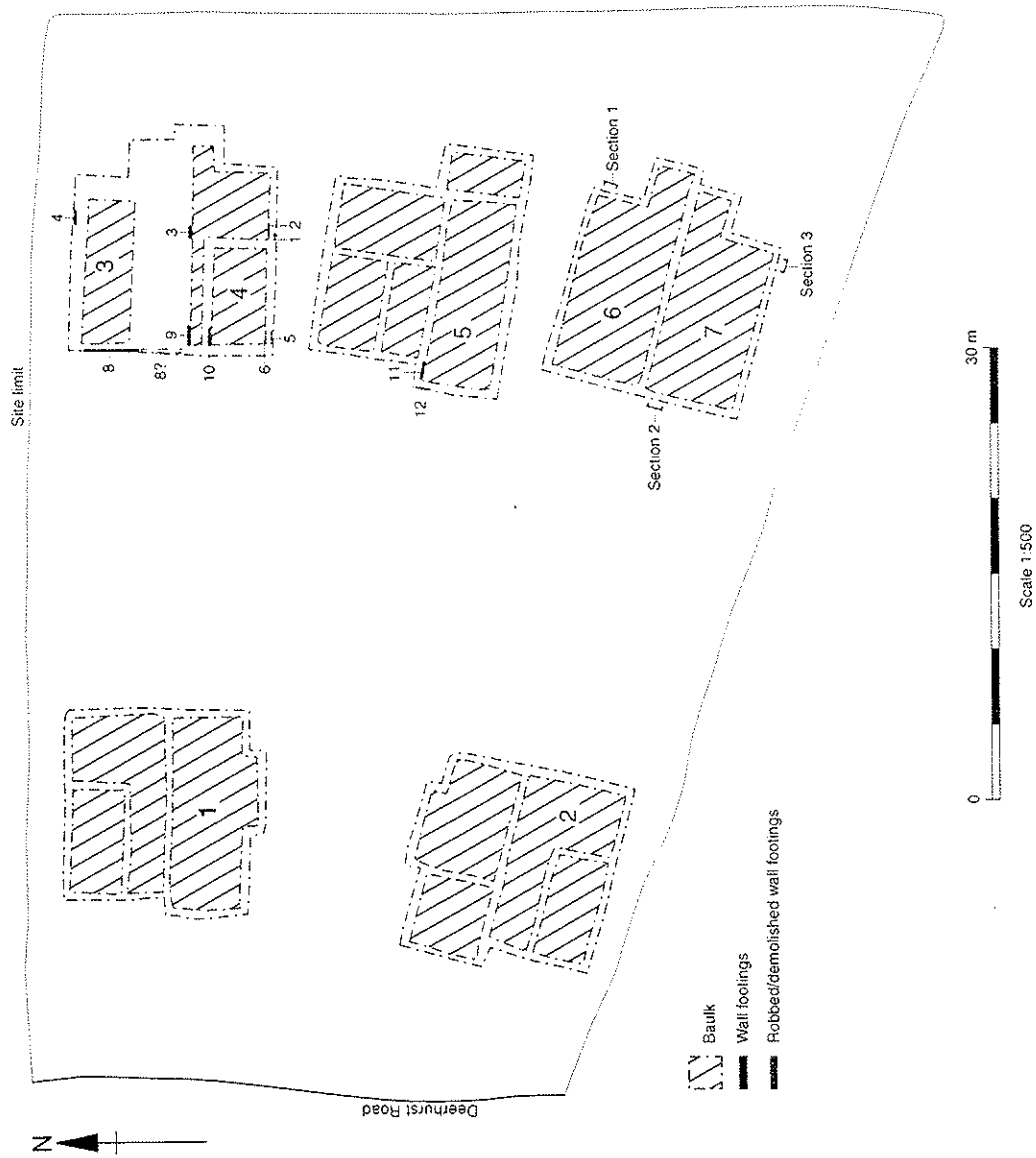


Figure 2 : Site plan.



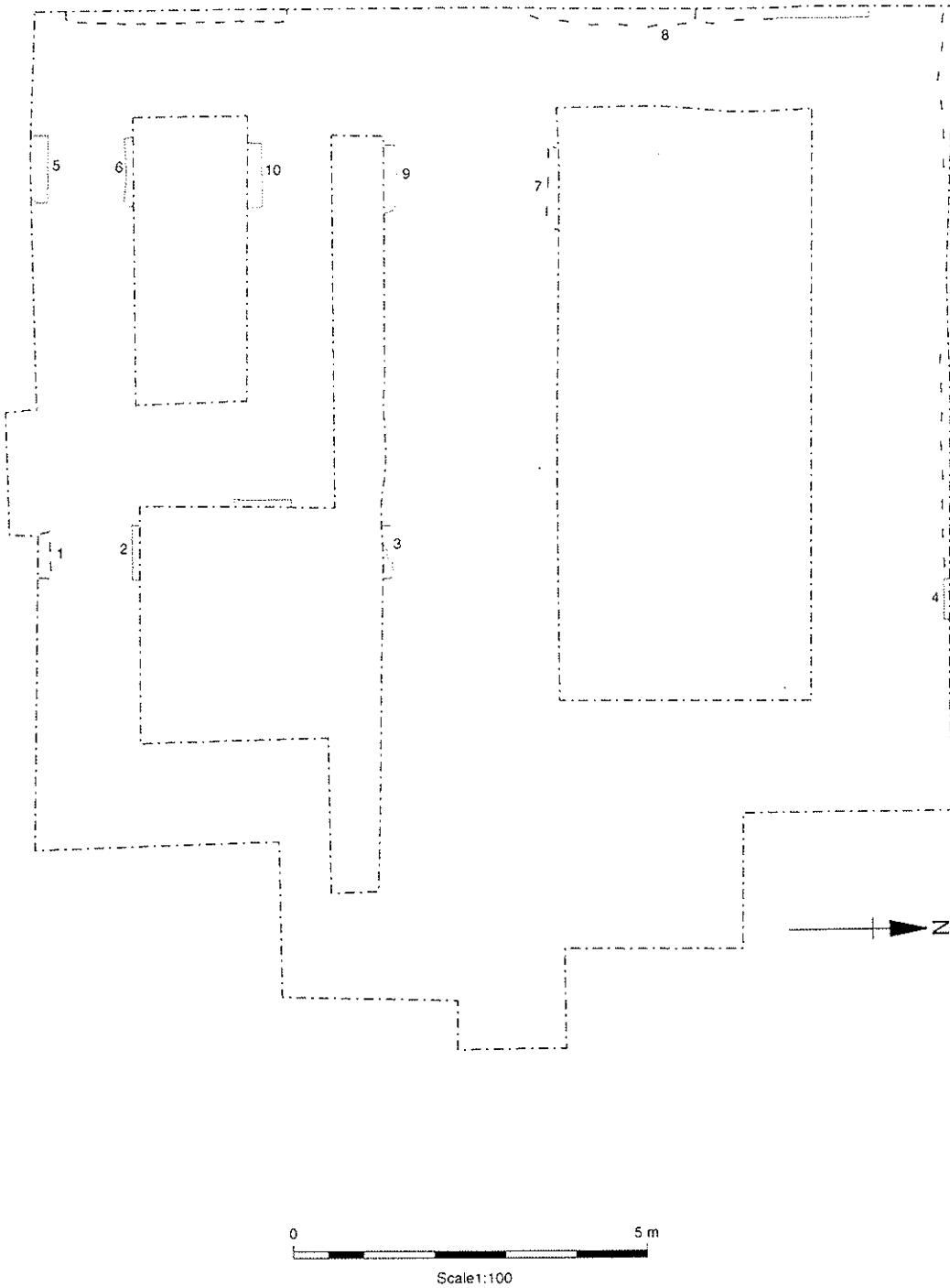


Figure 3 : Wall footings within Plots 3 and 4.

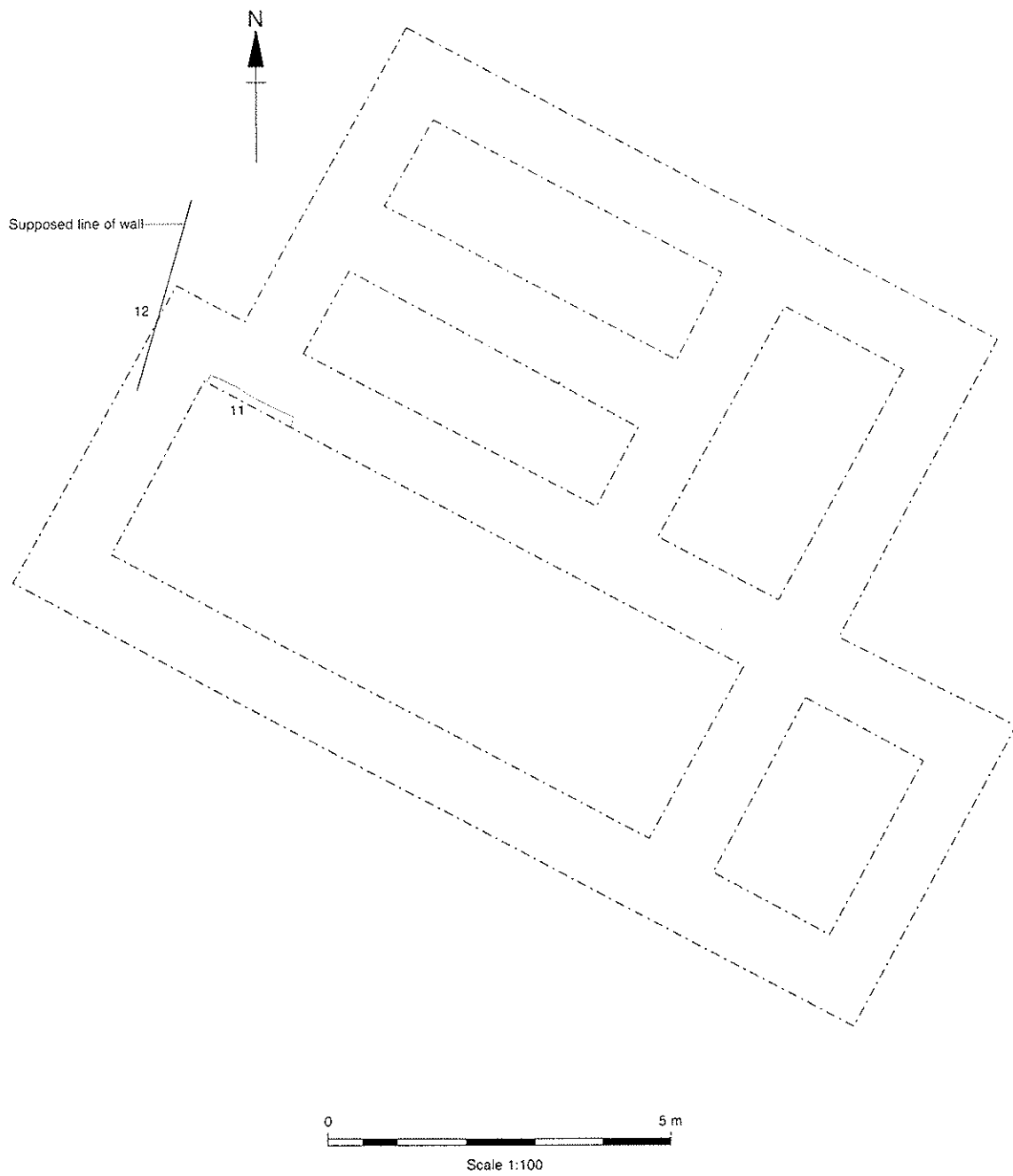
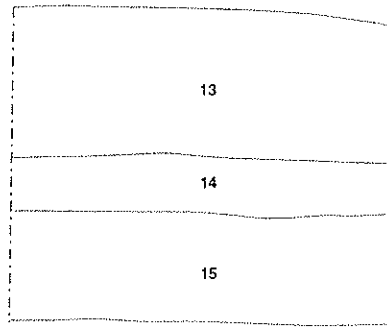
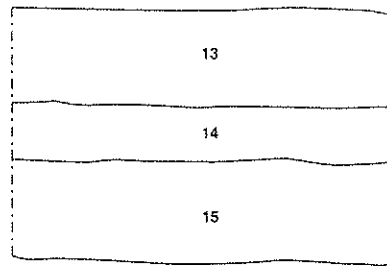


Figure 4 : Wall footings within Plot 5.

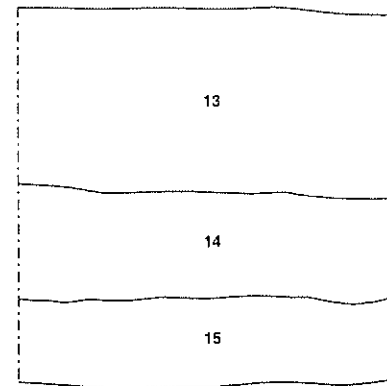
Section 1



Section 2



Section 3



Scale 1:20

Figure 5 : Sections within Plots 6 and 7.



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