

43 OAKLEY STREET

CHELSEA

LONDON SW3

RB of KENSINGTON & CHELSEA

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING

BRIEF

OKY 04

JUNE 2005

DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

43 OAKLEY STREET
CHELSEA
ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON & CHELSEA
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Quality Control

Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited			K737
	Name & Title	Signature	Date
Text Prepared by:	Denise Mulligan		June 2005
Graphics Prepared by:	Hayley Baxter		June 2005
Graphics Checked by:	Josephine Brown		June 2005
Project Manager Sign-off:	Jon Butler		June 2005

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Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Unit 54
Brockley Cross Business Centre
96 Endwell Road
London
SE4 2PD

An Archaeological Watching Brief At 43 Oakley Street, Chelsea, London SW3, Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea

Site Code: OKY 04

Central National Grid Reference: TQ 2560 7760

**Written and Researched by Denise Mulligan
Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, June 2005**

Project Manager: Peter Moore

Commissioning Client: Peter Wood and Partners

**Contractor: Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
Unit 54 Brockley Cross Business Centre
96 Endwell Road
Brockley
London
SE4 2PD
Tel: 020 7732 3925
Fax: 020 7732 7896**

Email: @pre-construct.com

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June 2005**

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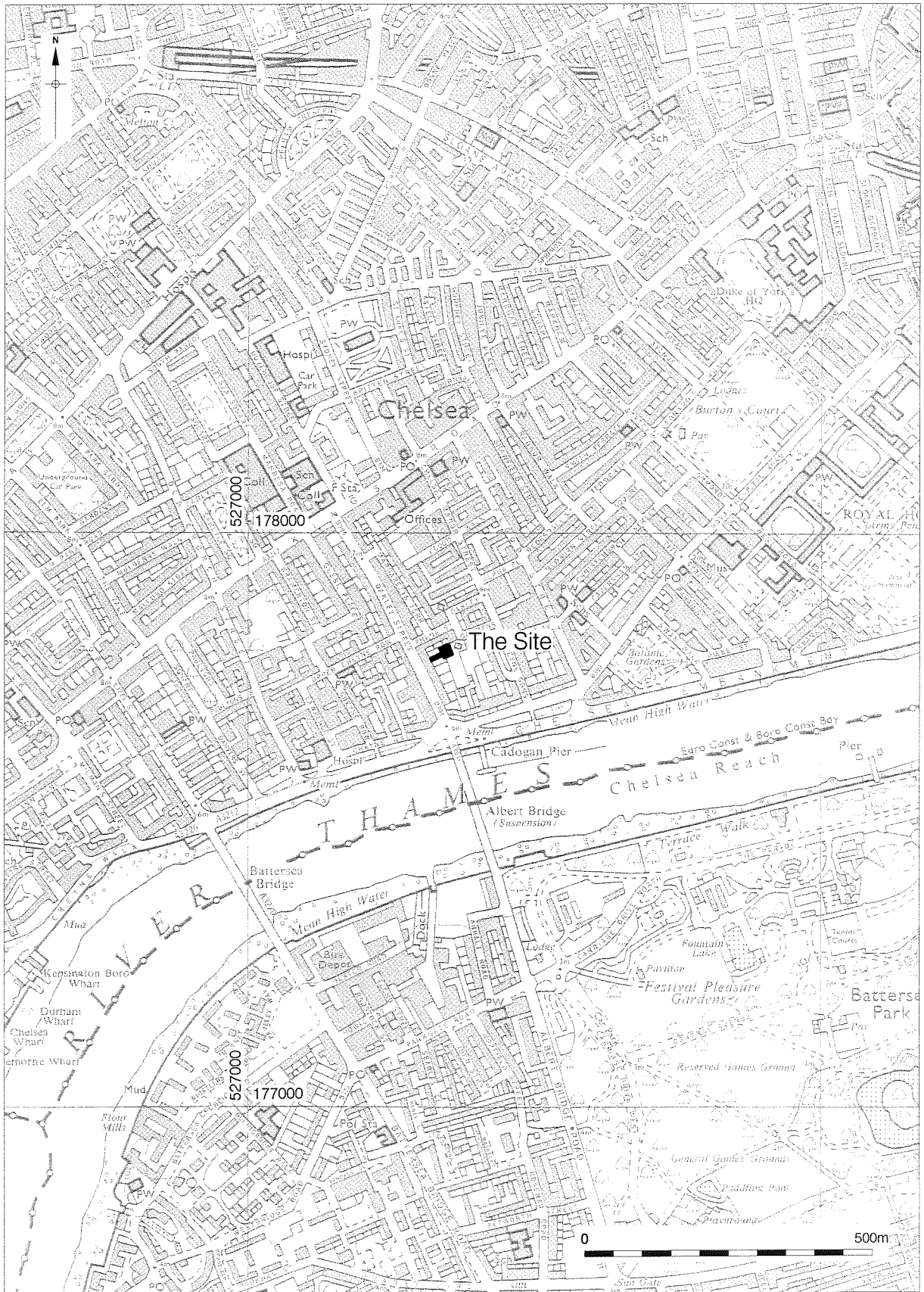
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1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 An archaeological watching brief was undertaken for Peter Wood of Peter Wood and Partners on behalf of Duncan Barclay on land at 43 Oakley Street, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, London, SW3 (fig 1). The site is centred on National Grid Reference TQ 2560 7760. The watching brief took place between the 12th and the 14th July 2004 and from the 11th November 2004 to the 27th January 2005 and was conducted by the author.
- 1.2 The watching brief comprised the observation and recording of ground reduction at the rear of the property in advance of the construction of an extension at basement level and the building of a swimming pool.
- 1.3 The watching brief identified the presence of natural sand and gravel at a height of between 5.46 and 5.26m OD.
- 1.4 Cut into these deposits were an early 18th century pit, a possible ice house dating to the late 18th century, an early-mid 19th century gravel pit and a late 19th century soakaway.

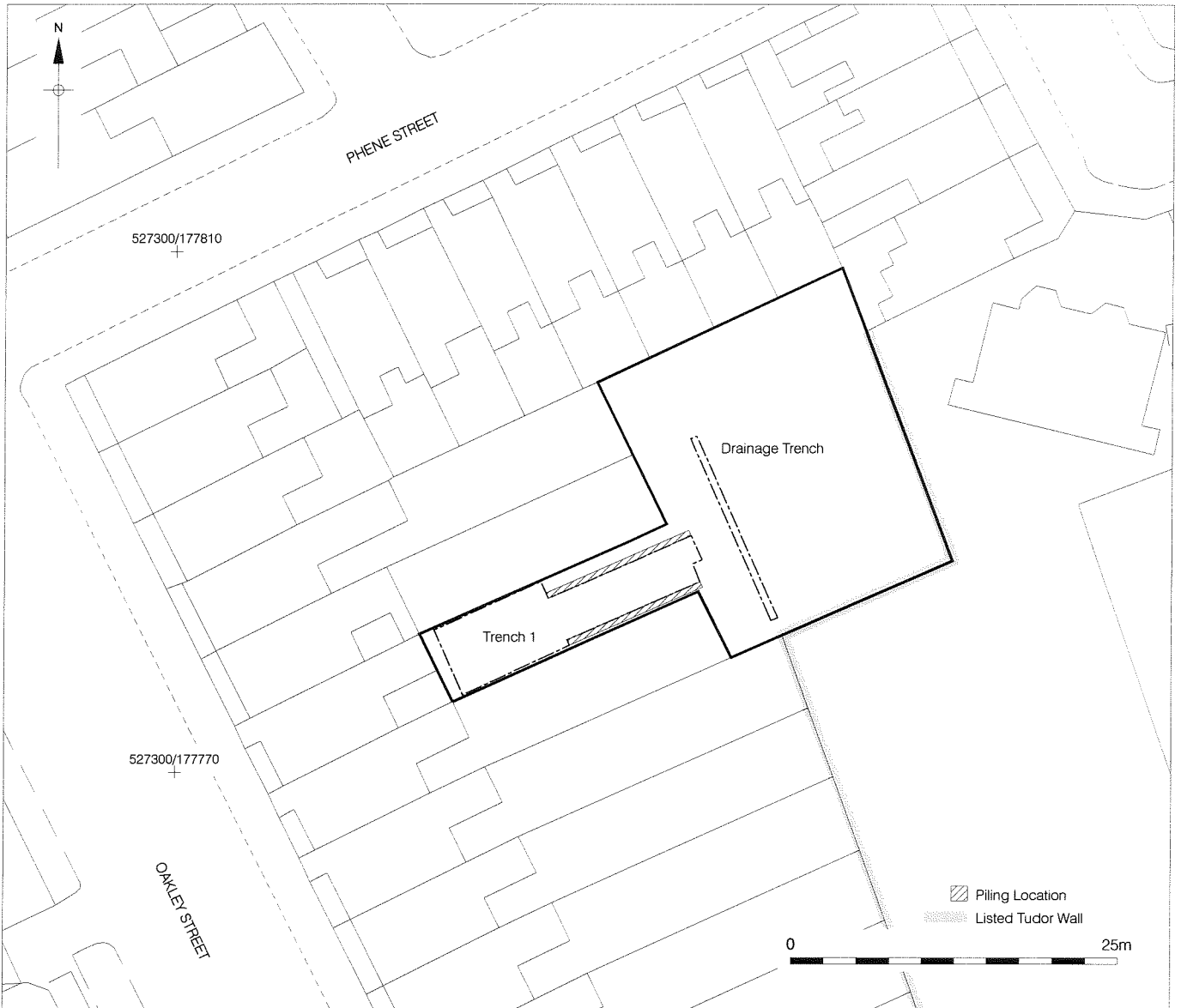
2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd., between the 12th and the 14th July 2004 and from the 11th November 2004 to the 27th January 2005 on land at 43 Oakley Street, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, London, SW3 (fig 1). The site is centred on National Grid Reference TQ 2560 7760. The study site was bordered to the east by the gardens of properties fronting onto Oakley Gardens, to the south by the gardens of properties fronting onto Oakley Street, to the west by 43 Oakley Street itself and to the north by the gardens of properties fronting onto Phene Street
- 2.2 In accordance with PPG 16 and local policies, an archaeological watching brief was undertaken to assess the nature, extent and date of any surviving archaeological remains.
- 2.3 The evaluation was commissioned by Peter Wood of Peter Wood and Partners on behalf of Duncan Barclay and monitored by Diane Walls, English Heritage, GLAAS. The project was managed by Peter Moore and supervised by the author.
- 2.4 The site was allocated the site code OKY 04.



Reproduced from Ordnance Survey 1:25,000. Crown Copyright 1993.

Figure 1
Site Location
1:10,000



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Figure 2
Trench Location
1:500

3 GEOLOGICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The site is located about 100m north of the River Thames, at c.6.26m OD, on land which gently slopes down from north to south.
- 3.2 According to the British Geological Survey of England and Wales (sheet 270), the natural geology of the site consists of Thames river terrace deposits, comprising Kempton Park Gravel, overlying London Clay.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment for a nearby site on Cheyne Walk was prepared by Pete Boyer of Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd¹. The following discussion draws heavily from this document.

4.2 Prehistoric

4.2.1 A small number of Palaeolithic hand axes have been found in the area, including one discovered north of the river, possibly next to Albert Bridge.

4.2.2 Numerous Mesolithic implements have been recovered from the river including Tranchet axes, other flint objects and antler tools, including a harpoon head. An assemblage of Mesolithic flint implements was found some 500m north of the site in the area of Sydney Street. A quantity of burnt and struck flint dating to this period was recovered during excavations by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. at 6-12 Old Church Street, approximately 150m to the west of the study site, and a pit excavated at 2-4 Old Church Street also appears to have been Mesolithic in date.

4.2.3 A large amount of Neolithic material has been recovered from the river, including polished stone axes, flint tools and small pottery assemblages. Three Neolithic flint flakes were found in the vicinity of Sydney Street and a single, unstratified, flint of this date was recovered at 2-4 Old Church Street.

4.2.4 The Bronze Age is also well represented by finds from the river, metalwork in particular being present. The excavations at 6-12 Old Church Street also recovered two sherds of pottery dating to this period.

4.2.5 Iron Age coins and especially weaponry have been recovered from the river although no finds have been recovered terrestrially in the area of the site.

4.3 Roman

4.3.1 A small amount of Roman pottery has been recovered from the river. A single coin of

¹ Peter Boyer, An Archaeological Desk Based Assessment of Land at 6 Cheyne Walk, London SW3, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. *Unpublished Report, Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd, April 2004.*

Tetricus (AD 259-274) was found in the grounds of the Royal Hospital, approximately 800m to the east of the site, while residual shards of Roman pottery were discovered during excavations at 61-62 Cheyne Walk. Furthermore, the excavations at 2-4 and 6-12 Old Church Street recorded features belonging to this period, suggesting the presence of a small settlement.

4.4 Saxon

4.4.1 The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle of AD 758 refers to a Synod, which created a temporary Archdiocese of Lichfield, held at *Cealcythe*, the residence of King Offa. The settlement is believed to be in the area of Old Church Street, an argument supported by the discovery of a number of structural features dating to this period at 6-12 Old Church Street.

4.4.2 The Domesday Book refers to the manor of *Chelscheed* in the Ossulton Hundred of Middlesex, held by Edward de Sarisbri.

4.4.3 Other finds dating to this period have been recovered from the river including a large iron stirrup, a silver ring and a Viking axe.

4.5 Medieval

4.5.1 The medieval manor house is believed to have been located in the area of Lawrence Street, to the west of the study site, though this has been disputed and may in fact lie to the east of the site. St Luke's Church, now rebuilt, is believed to be of medieval origin.

4.6 Post-Medieval

4.6.1 A large number of features dating from the 15th to 18th centuries were recorded during excavations at 61-62 Cheyne Walk and 2-4 and 6-12 Old Church Street suggesting a continuity of occupation.

4.6.2 Charles Cheyne acquired the Manor of Chelsea in 1657 and it was he who gave his name to Cheyne Walk and Cheyne Row. The manor house was still standing at this

time but had been demolished by 1704. Cheyne Walk was established as a residential street in the early 18th century.

- 4.6.3 The area around Cheyne Walk developed into one of the most fashionable parts of London, occupied by characters such as Dante Gabriel Rossetti and George Eliot, who died at 4 Cheyne Walk in 1880. More recently it has become home to luminaries of the contemporary music establishment, amongst others. Oakley Street was developed around 1856.

5 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

- 5.1 The lowest deposit identified on site was natural, firmly compacted, mid brown sand [34] which was encountered at between 3.56 and 3.26m OD. This was overlain by [33], moderately firm, orange brown, natural sandy gravel which had a top height of between 4.76 and 3.56m OD. Above this was [32], a deposit of loosely compacted, light brown, natural sand which was encountered at between 5.06 and 4.26m OD. Well sorted, orange brown, natural gravel [29] was recorded across the site at a height of between 5.46 and 5.26m OD.
- 5.2 Cutting the natural gravel in the east of the site was a large pit [48] (Fig. 3) which was not fully excavated due to its proximity to the site boundary. Its fill [52] contained sherds of pottery dating from 1710 to 1760 and it was probably used for rubbish disposal.
- 5.3 Pit [48] was partially truncated by a large circular cut [45] (Fig. 4) which had a light brown clay fill which lined the base and sides [46]. This appeared to be a waterproofing deposit. Laid upon the clay lining was a red brick base [47], upon which was a course of tiles [49]. A circular step [50], made up of Flemish tiles, ran around tile course [49]. Around the circular step a brick structure [44] stepped up for four courses before continuing to expand in diameter in a more gradual fashion for five courses. Brick structure [44] was built using re-used Tudor bricks which were bonded with a light grey mortar with ash and charcoal inclusions. This mortar was also used as a plaster covering the inside of the structure. This structure seems most likely to be an ice house, possibly a derivative of the “cup and dome” or “egg-shaped” type which became common during the 18th century².
- 5.4 A large pit [31], up to 15m in diameter and probably used for gravel extraction, was recorded truncating much of the site. Its fills [30], [35], [36], [37], [38], [39], [40], [41], [42], [43] and [51] contained early-mid 19th century material, although the lowest fill [51] contained similar bricks to those used in possible ice-house [44]. This would suggest that the pit was backfilled at the same time as the ice-house was demolished.
- 5.5 Two small localised layers of redeposited sand and gravel [24] and [25] overlay natural gravel [29] at the western end of the site. No dating material was recovered

² Oxford Archaeological Unit, Ice-Houses. English Heritage Monuments Protection Programme Step 1 Report. August 1995.

from these layers although they may well have represented levelling deposits laid down prior to garden soil [21] (see below).

- 5.6 Sealing pit [31] and redeposited natural layers [24] and [25] was a layer of garden soil [21].
- 5.7 The latest features recorded on the site, cutting garden soil [21], were associated with the current building and date to the 19th century. These were the construction cut [23] for its building and a small brick soakaway [27].

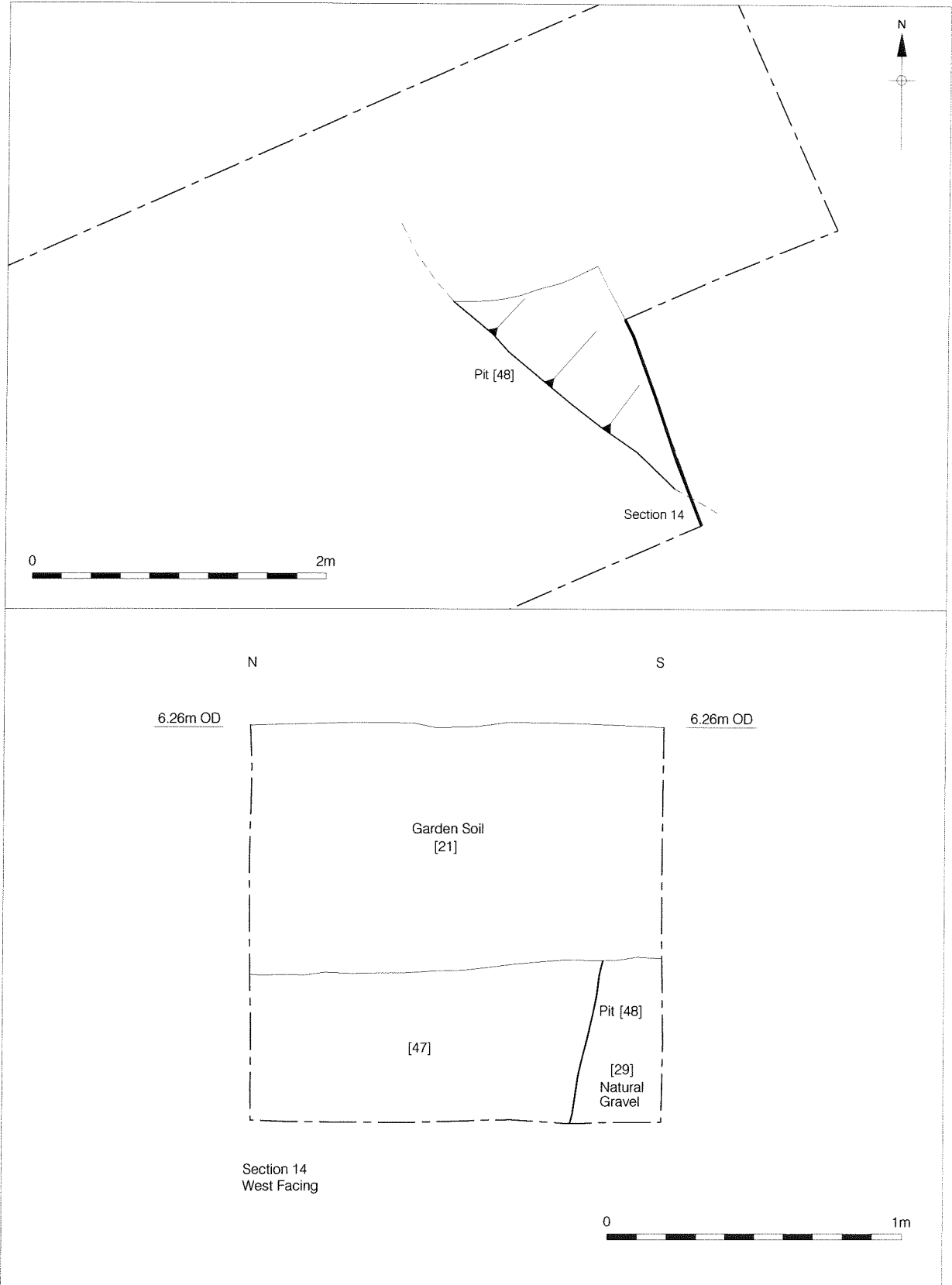


Figure 3
 Early 18th Century
 Plan of Pit [48]; 1:40
 Section 14; 1:20

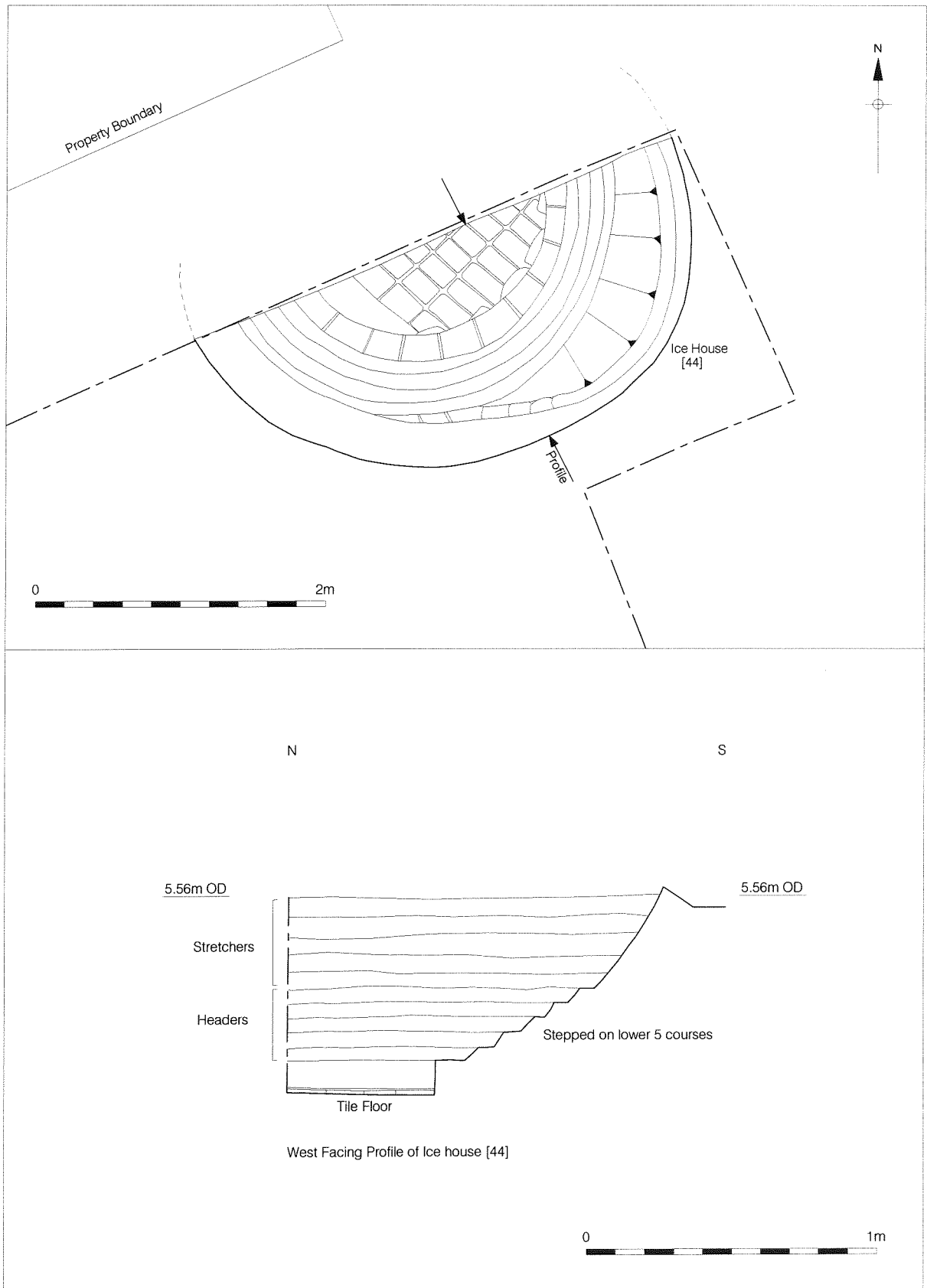


Figure 4
 Late 18th Century
 Plan of Ice House; 1:40
 Profile of Ice house; 1:20



Plate 1: Possible Icehouse

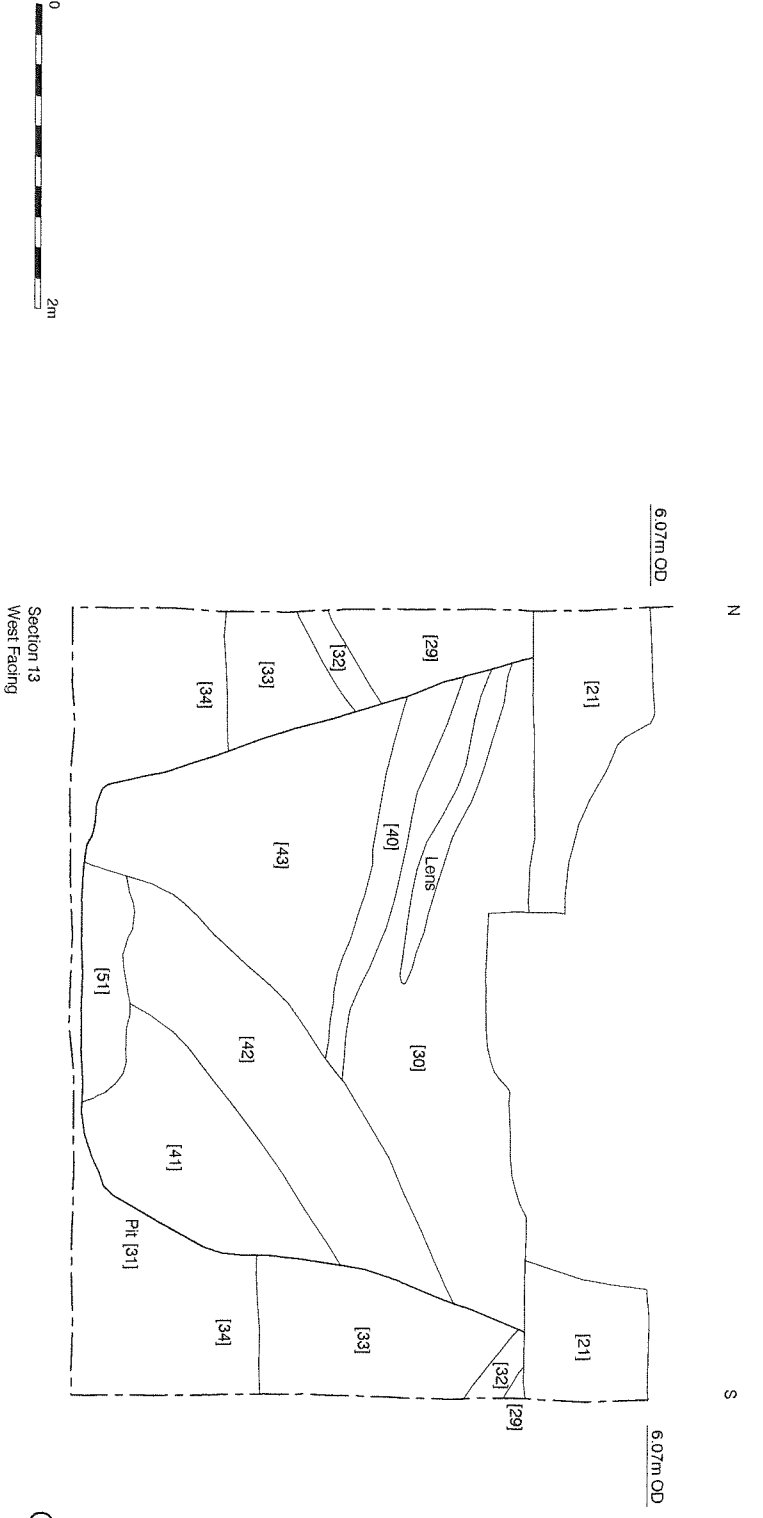
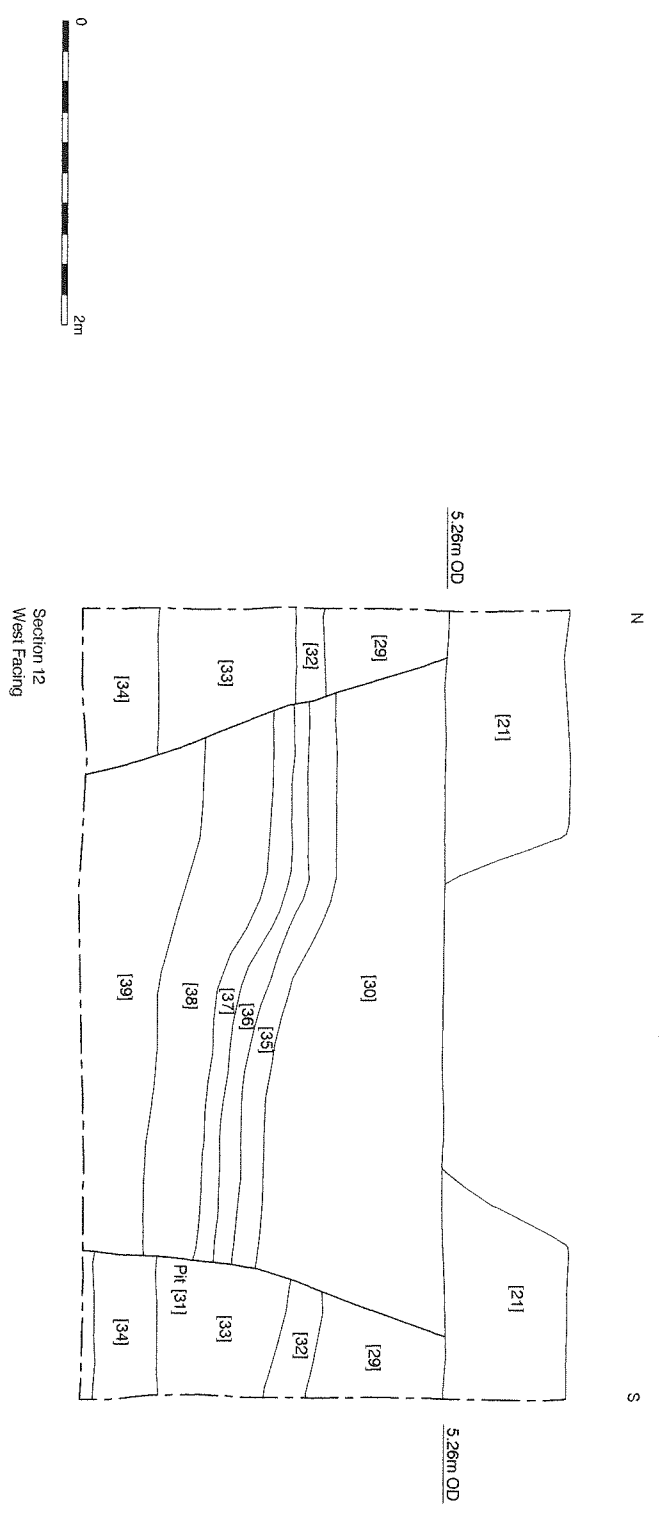
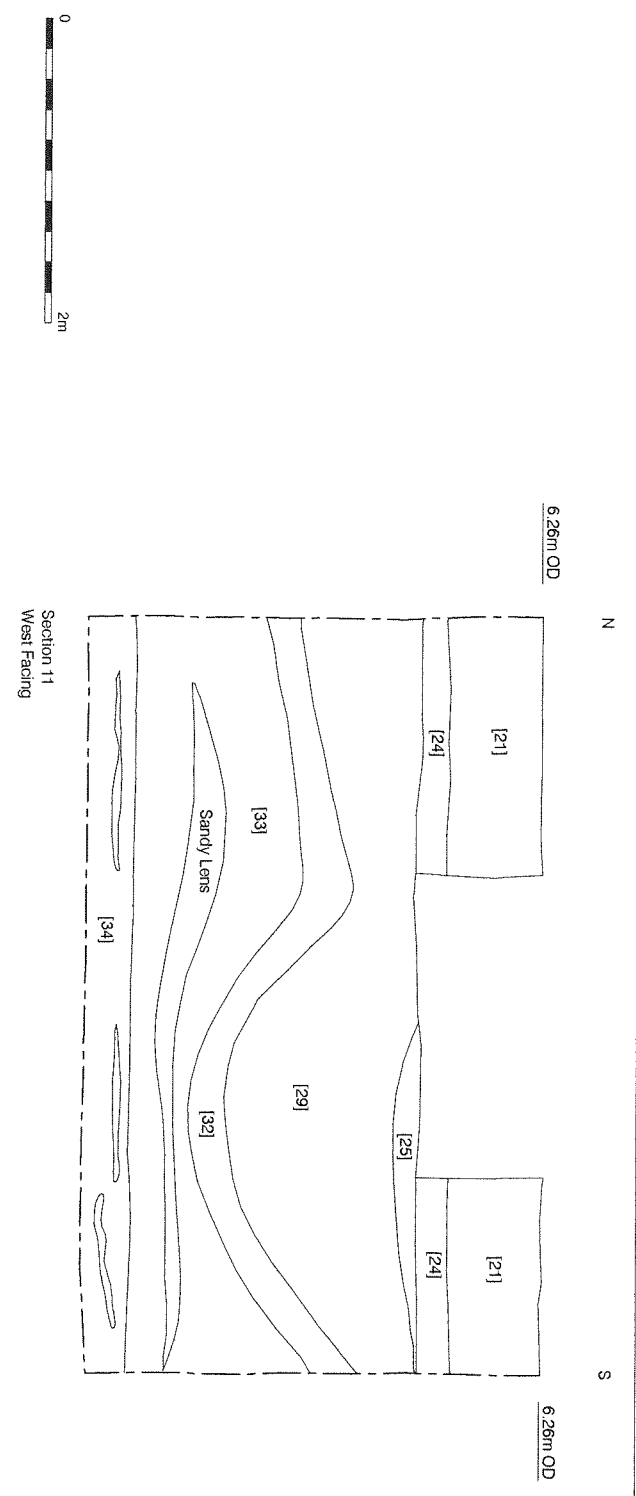
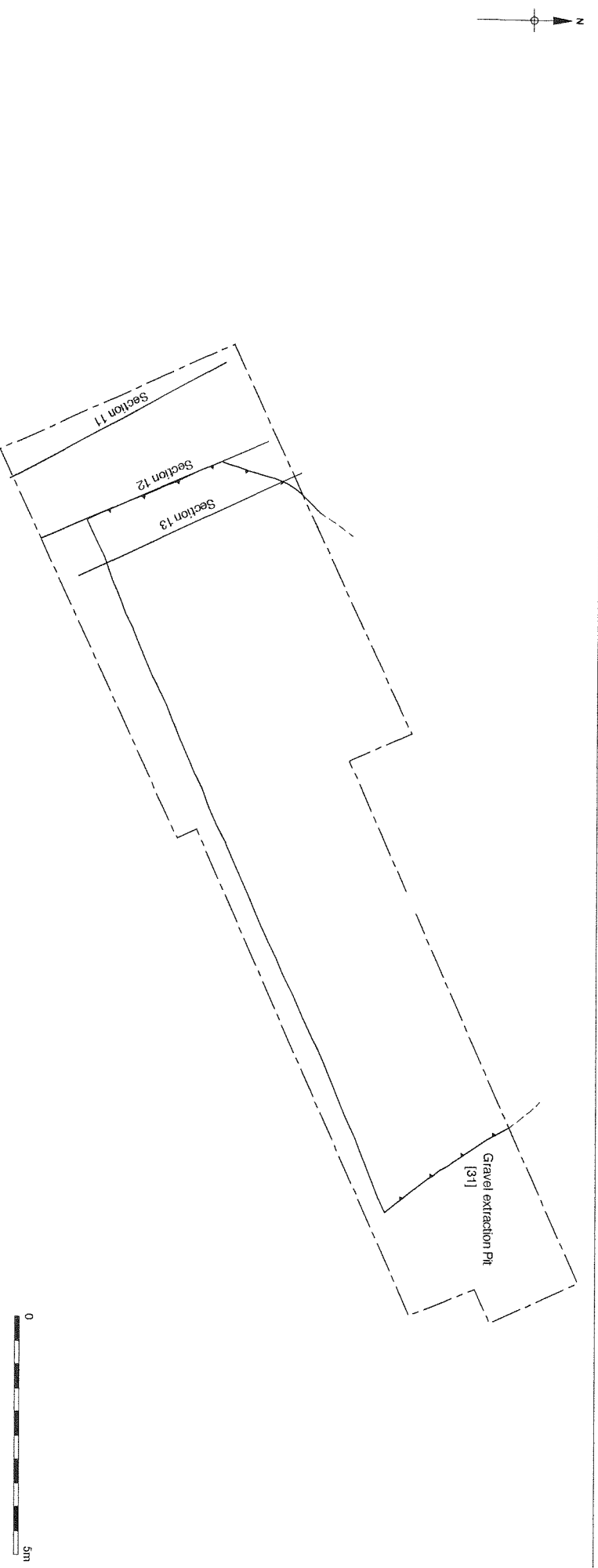


Figure 5
19th century
Gravel Extraction Pit [31]. 1:125
Sections 11, 12 & 13; 1:50

6 INTERPRETATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 Natural gravel was recorded across the site at a height of between 5.46 and 5.26m OD.
- 6.2 A large pit, possibly for refuse disposal, was recorded in the east of the site which dated to the early-mid 18th century.
- 6.3 Cutting this pit was a circular feature which was probably an ice-house, possibly of the “cup and dome” or “egg-shaped” type which are typical of the 18th century.
- 6.4 Much of the site to the west of these features was truncated by a very large gravel extraction pit dating to the early-mid 19th century. It seems likely that this pit was dug at the time of, or shortly after, the demolition of the ice-house.
- 6.5 This gravel extraction pit was sealed by a layer of garden soil, which was cut by the construction cut for the presently standing building and a brick soakaway of the same date.

7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 7.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. would like to thank Peter Wood of Peter Wood and Partners on behalf of Duncan Barclay for funding the work. Thanks also to Diane Walls, GLAAS, for her monitoring work.

- 7.2 The author would like to thank Helen Clough for her work on site, Hayley Baxter for the illustrations and Peter Moore for his project management and report editing.

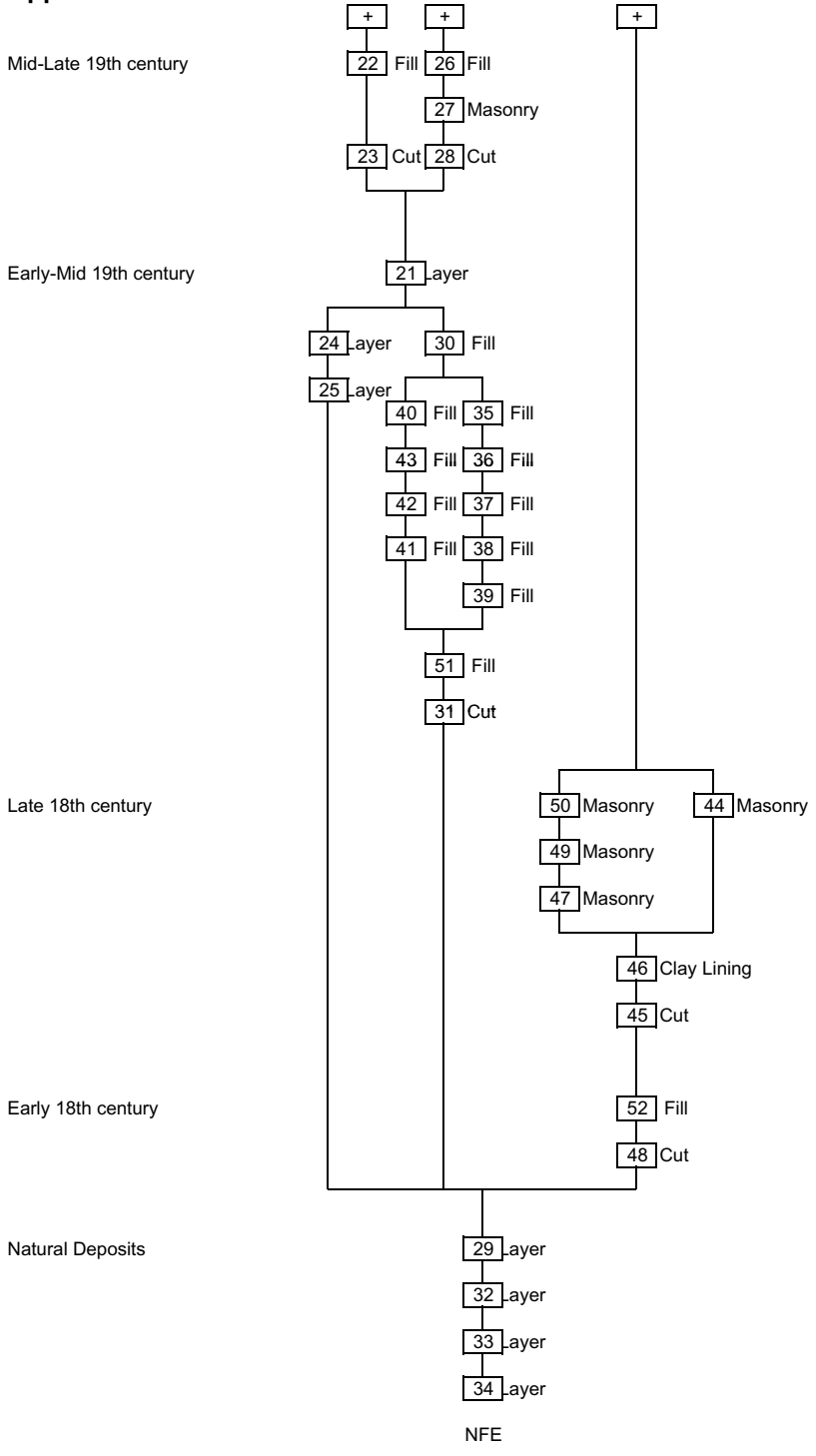
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Peter Boyer, An Archaeological Desk Based Assessment of Land at 6 Cheyne Walk, London SW3, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. Unpublished Report, Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd, April 2004.

Oxford Archaeological Unit, Ice-Houses. English Heritage Monuments Protection Programme Step 1 Report. August 1995.

Appendix 1: Site Matrix

Appendix 1: Site Matrix



Appendix 2: Context Index

Context Number	Type	Description	Date
21	Layer	Garden soil	Mid-Late 19th century
22	Fill	Fill of [23]	Mid-Late 19th century
23	Cut	Construction cut for standing house	Mid-Late 19th century
24	Layer	Re-deposited gravel	Unknown/18th century+
25	Layer	Re-deposited sand	Unknown/18th century+
26	Fill	Fill of [27]	Mid-Late 19th century
27	Masonry	Brick soakaway	Mid-Late 19th century
28	Cut	Cut for soakaway	Mid-Late 19th century
29	Layer	Natural gravel	
30	Fill	Fill of [31]	Mid-Late 19th century
31	Cut	Gravel Extraction Pit	Mid-Late 19th century
32	Layer	Natural sand	
33	Layer	Natural gravel	
34	Layer	Natural sand	
35	Fill	Fill of [31]	Mid-Late 19th century
36	Fill	Fill of [31]	Mid-Late 19th century
37	Fill	Fill of [31]	Mid-Late 19th century
38	Fill	Fill of [31]	Mid-Late 19th century
39	Fill	Fill of [31]	Mid-Late 19th century
40	Fill	Fill of [31]	Mid-Late 19th century
41	Fill	Fill of [31]	Mid-Late 19th century
42	Fill	Fill of [31]	Mid-Late 19th century
43	Fill	Fill of [31]	Mid-Late 19th century
44	Masonry	Brick sides of ice-house	Late 18th century
45	Cut	Construction cut for ice-house	Late 18th century
46	Fill	Clay waterproofing of ice-house	Late 18th century
47	Masonry	Brick course at base of ice-house	Late 18th century
48	Cut	Pit	Early 18th century
49	Masonry	Tile course in base of ice house	Late 18th century
50	Masonry	Flemish floor tile in ice-house	Late 18th century
51	Fill	Fill of [31]	Mid-Late 19th century
52	Fill	Fill of [48]	Early 18th century

Appendix 3: Oasis Form

1 ASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM

[of Projects](#) | [project](#) | [your details](#) | [coverage](#) | [out](#)

1.1.1 Printable version

1.2 OASIS ID: preconst1-8437

Project details

Project name	AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT 43 OAKLEY STREET CHELSEA.
Short description of the project	<p>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken for Peter Wood of Peter Wood and Partners on behalf of Duncan Barclay on land at 43 Oakley Street, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, SW3 (fig 1). The site is centred on National Grid Reference TQ 2560 7760. The watching brief ran took place between the 12th and the 14th July 2004.and from the 11th November 2004 to the 27th January 2005 and was conducted by the author. The watching brief comprised the observation and recording of ground reduction at the rear of the property in advance of the construction of an extension at basement level and the building of a swimming pool. The watching brief identified the presence of natural sand and gravel at a height of 5.44m OD. Cut into these deposits were an early 18th century pit, a possible ice house dating to the late 18th century, an early-mid 19th century gravel pit and a late 19th century soakaway.</p>
Project dates	Start: 12-07-2004 End: 27-01-2005
Previous/future work	Not known / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	OKY 04 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 5 - Garden
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA CHELSEA

43 Oakley Street, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

Study area 130.00 Square metres

National grid reference TQ 2560 7760 Point

Height OD Min: 5.44m Max: 5.44m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project brief originator	Self (i.e. landowner, developer, etc.)
Project design originator	Peter Moore
Project director/manager	Peter Moore
Project supervisor	Denise Mulligan
Sponsor or funding body	Developer

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Local museum
Physical Contents	'Ceramics'
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Local museum
Digital Contents	'Stratigraphic','Survey','other'
Digital Archive Exists?	No
Paper Archive recipient	Local Museum
Paper Contents	'Stratigraphic','other'

Paper Media available 'Context sheet','Drawing','Matrices','Section','Unpublished Text'

Paper Archive Exists? No

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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Author(s)/Editor(s) Mulligan, D.
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2 OASIS:

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