

## Somerset County Council Historic Environment Record

<b>Civil Parish &amp; District:</b> Glastonbury, Mendip	<b>National Grid Reference:</b> ST 5005 8387	<b>Number:</b>
<b>Subject:</b> Archaeological recording at Glastonbury Abbey, Somerset.		<b>Photo attached:</b> Y
<b>Planning Application no:</b> n/a	<b>Recipient museum:</b> Glastonbury Abbey	
<b>OASIS ID:</b> oakforda1-155016	<b>Museum Accession no:</b> GLSGA 2013/1	
<b>Contractor's reference number/code:</b> OA1077	<b>Dates fieldwork undertaken:</b> 22/04 – 26/04/13	
<p><b>Description of works:</b></p> <p>An archaeological test-pit evaluation was undertaken by Oakford Archaeology in April 2013 at Glastonbury Abbey, Somerset (ST 5005 8387). The site (Fig. 1) lies in an area of high archaeological potential and the work was therefore required by English Heritage (EH), advised by the Consultant Archaeologist to Glastonbury Abbey (CAGA).</p> <p>The Benedictine abbey at Glastonbury Abbey is a Saxon foundation, although an earlier Christian site is attested on Glastonbury Tor to the east of the Abbey. By the time of Domesday Book of 1086, Glastonbury Abbey was the wealthiest monastic house recorded in England. Following the Conquest rebuilding of the abbey church was begun by Abbot Turstin in about 1100. This was however demolished by Abbot Herlewin in about 1140 and a new Romanesque church started, destroying much of the pre-Conquest complex. The church was completely destroyed in a great fire of 1184, the new buildings of the late 12th century providing the bulk of buildings and remains which now form the visible part of the monument. The Abbey was dissolved by Henry VIII in 1539, and the complex seems to have been demolished shortly after.</p> <p>The work comprised the hand excavation of five trenches (TR 1-5; Fig. 2) in order to locate the route of an existing electrical service trench. This extended from the shop immediately to the south-west of the museum, heading south towards the junction box on the south side of the abbey café, then south to skirt the west side of the Abbot's Kitchen, entering at the south-east corner – a distance of c. 145m.</p> <p><b>Results:</b></p> <p>The 5 trenches (Fig. 2-4) exposed landscaped ground to an average depth of between 4-500mm below current ground level. Trenches 2-4 exposed the top of dissolution demolition material, while Trench 5 exposed stratified archaeological deposits. The sequence in the trenches were:</p> <p>Trench 1 (Fig. 2, Pl. 1):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100 0-0.6m+ mid to dark brown silty clay (modern garden soil)</li> <li>101 0-0.6m+ Foundation trench</li> <li>102 0-0.6m+ Shop foundation</li> <li>103 0-0.55m service trench</li> <li>104 0-0.55m mid to dark brown silty clay (service trench fill)</li> </ul> <p>Trench 2 (Fig. 2, Pl. 2):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>200 0-0.07m Turf</li> <li>201 0.07-0.45m service trench</li> <li>202 0.07-0.45m mid to dark brown silty clay (service trench fill)</li> <li>203 0.07-0.2m dark brown silty clay (topsoil)</li> <li>204 0.2-0.4m mid grey silty clay (post-dissolution landscaping)</li> <li>205 0.4m+ mid yellow silty clay (dissolution demolition deposit)</li> </ul>		

Trench 3 (Fig. 2, Pl. 3):

- 300 0-0.07m Turf
- 301 0.07-0.5m service trench
- 302 0.07-0.5m mid to dark brown silty clay (service trench fill)
- 303 0.07-0.2m dark brown silty clay (topsoil)
- 304 0.2-0.4m mid grey silty clay (post-dissolution landscaping)
- 305 0.4m+ mid yellow silty clay (dissolution demolition deposit)

Trench 4 (Fig. 2, Pl. 4):

- 400 0-0.05m Turf
- 401 0.05-0.4m service trench
- 402 0.05-0.4m mid to dark brown silty clay (service trench fill)
- 403 0.05-0.4m service trench
- 404 0.05-0.4m mid to dark brown silty clay (service trench fill)
- 405 0.05-0.35m mid to dark brown silty clay (topsoil)
- 406 0.35m+ mid grey silty clay (post-dissolution landscaping)
- 407 0.35m+ mid orange yellow silty clay (dissolution demolition deposit)

Trench 5 (Figs. 2-4, Pl. 5-12):

- 500 0-0.07m Turf
- 501 0.07-0.5m service trench
- 502 0.07-0.5m mid to dark brown silty clay (service trench fill)
- 503 0.07-0.42m mid brown silty clay (topsoil)
- 504 0.42-0.5m mid grey silty clay (post-dissolution landscaping)
- 505 0.57m+ small, waterworn pebbles
- 506 0.41m+ stone chipping
- 507 0.41m+ stone chipping
- 508 0.57m+ Drain foundation trench
- 509 0.57m+ blue lias drain wall
- 510 0.57m+ blue lias drain capping stones
- 511 0.57m+ Drain foundation trench
- 512 0.38m+ drain capping stones
- 513 0.42m+ blue lias facework
- 514 0.44m+ light to mid yellow lime mortar
- 515 0.42m+ mid yellowish brown silty clay (post-dissolution landscaping)
- 516 0.57m+ roughly square pit
- 517 0.57m+ mid brown silty clay (fill of pit)

The earliest feature identified in Trench 5 was a cobbled surface (505), located at a depth of 0.57m below present ground level (16.07m AOD). This consisted of small waterworn pebbles and was exposed at the eastern end of the trench. This was cut to the east by wall 513 and pit 516. Located at a depth of 0.42m below present ground level (16.22m AOD) this was a substantial north/south aligned wall foundation. This was at least 1.2m wide and consisted of a blue lias rubble facework (513) bonded with light to mid yellow lime mortar (514). This was partly overlain by mid yellowish brown silty clay (515) which has been interpreted as a post-dissolution deposit. Pit 516 was located against wall foundation 513 and it is probably a contemporary feature associated with the construction of the wall.

To the west surface 505 was truncated by a large, NEN-SWS aligned, drain (510), located at a depth of 0.57m below present ground level (16.07m AOD). The drain walls (508-9) consisted of large blue lias blocks and were covered by large rectangular blue lias slabs (510). The drain in turn cut through a 'rough' surface (506) to the west. This consisted of small, sub-angular blue lias fragments set in mid brown silty clay and located at a depth of 0.41m below present ground level (16.03m AOD). This was in turn truncated by a possible further drain (512). Aligned NWN-SES this structure was covered by small, irregular slabs of blue lias. A continuation of the 'rough' surface (507) was exposed at the western end of the trench at a depth of 0.41m below present ground level (15.99m AOD).

**Finds:**

by John Allan

A very modest collection of archaeological material was recovered from the trenches. All the material was unstratified, with the majority of the post-medieval pottery, consisting of 12 sherds consisting of Wanstrow, Donyatt and South and East Somerset coarsewares, dating to the 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century. Two fragments of 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century South Somerset ridgetile were also present as well as a single undated roof tile; a single flat peg tile fragment (16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century) and one pan tile (18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century) were also recovered. In addition a single sherd of Staffordshire white ware (post-1800) was also found.

The earliest find consisted of a large fossilised marine reptile vertebra recovered from Trench 4 and possibly dating to the Jurassic.

**Conclusion:**

The results of the archaeological excavations in Trench 5 demonstrated that the remains of a cobbled surface, preceeding the construction of the Abbots Kitchen, survived in this area. The surface was cut by a previously exposed wall foundation. This was on the line of an existing boundary, indicated by the wall stub at the western end of the south facade of the kitchen block. It is probable that the wall foundation therefore represents the remains of a building associated with the 14<sup>th</sup> century kitchen.

Located in the southwest corner of the Abbot's Kitchen was a long, open drain. Aligned NE-SW the remains of this well-built drain were uncovered in the centre of Trench 5. The works also exposed a 'rough' surface at the western end of the trench. The presence of sub-angular stone in the make-up of the surface, rather than waterworn pebbles, may be linked to the construction of the Abbots Kitchen in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

Elsewhere the trenches exposed the deposits consistent with post-dissolution (Trenches 2-4) and modern activity (Trench 1).

**Project archive and OASIS entry**

The site records have been compiled into a fully integrated site archive which is currently held at Oakford Archaeology's offices under project number 1077, pending deposition with Glastonbury Abbey. A summary of the investigations has been submitted to the on-line archaeological database OASIS (Online AccesS to the Index of archaeological InterventionS).

**Recorder:**

MFR Steinmetzer (Oakford Archaeology)

**Date sent to HER:**



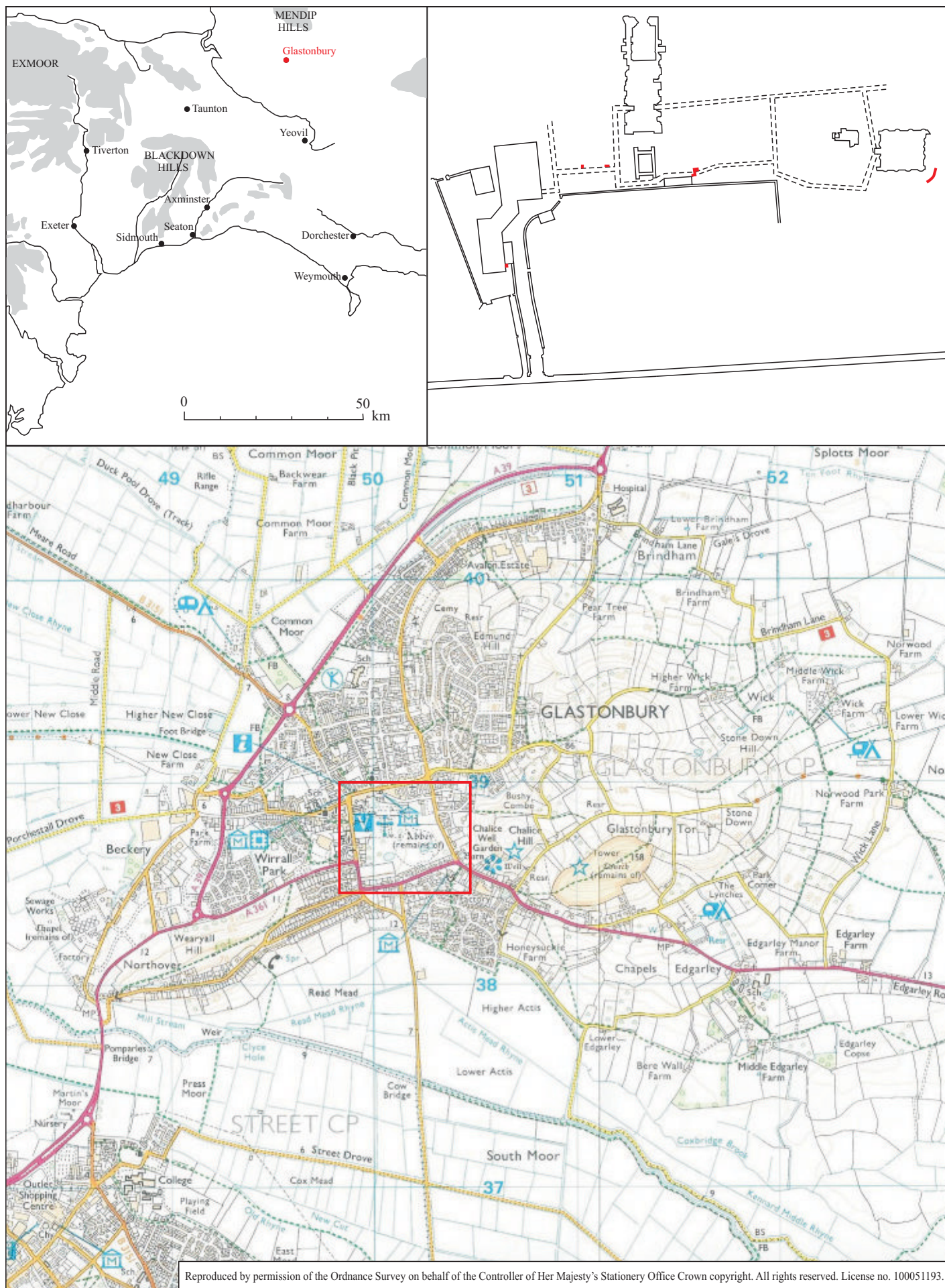


Fig. 1 Location of site.

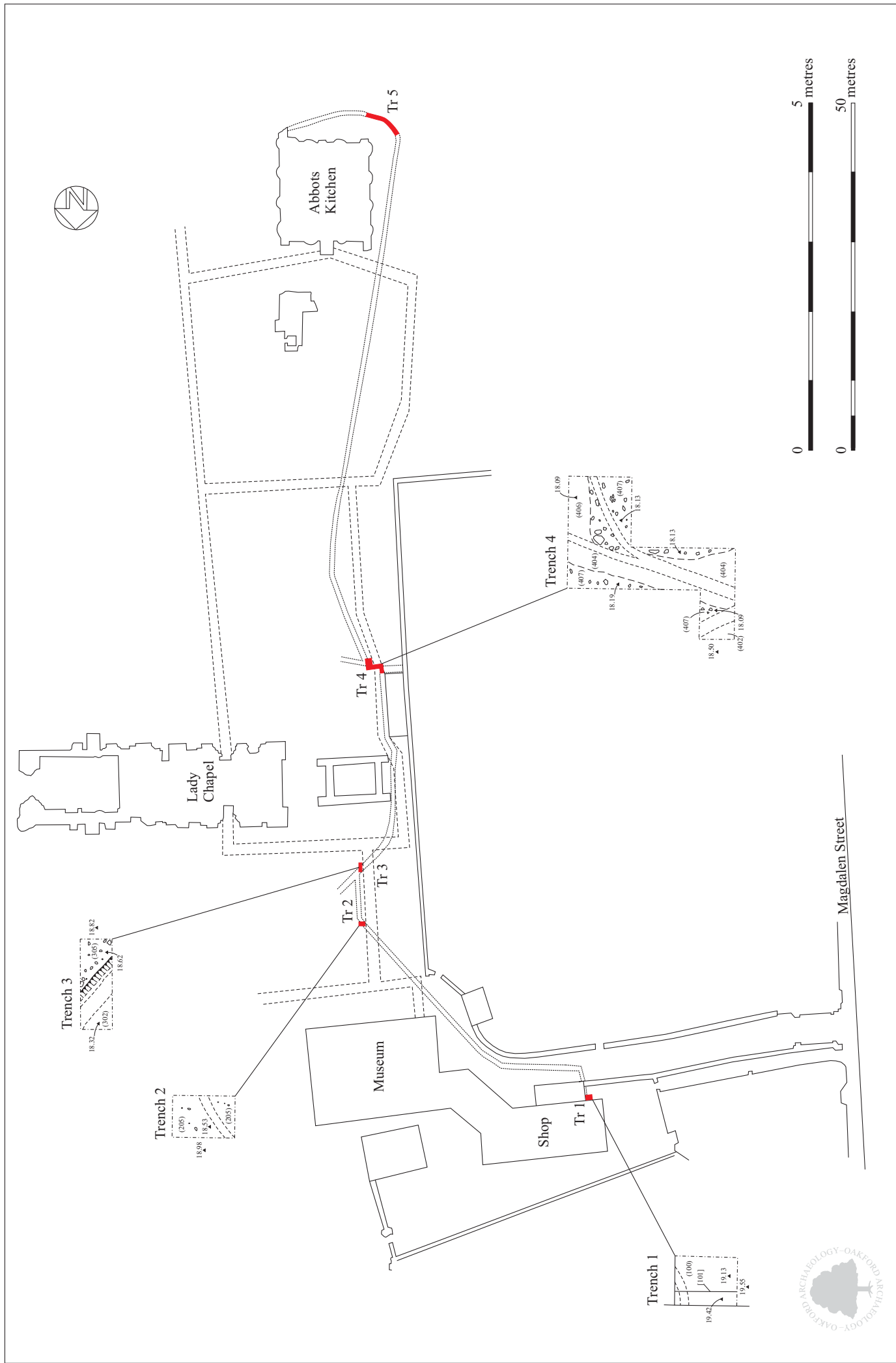


Fig. 2 Location of observations within abbey complex (1:500) and plans of trenches 1-4 (1:50).

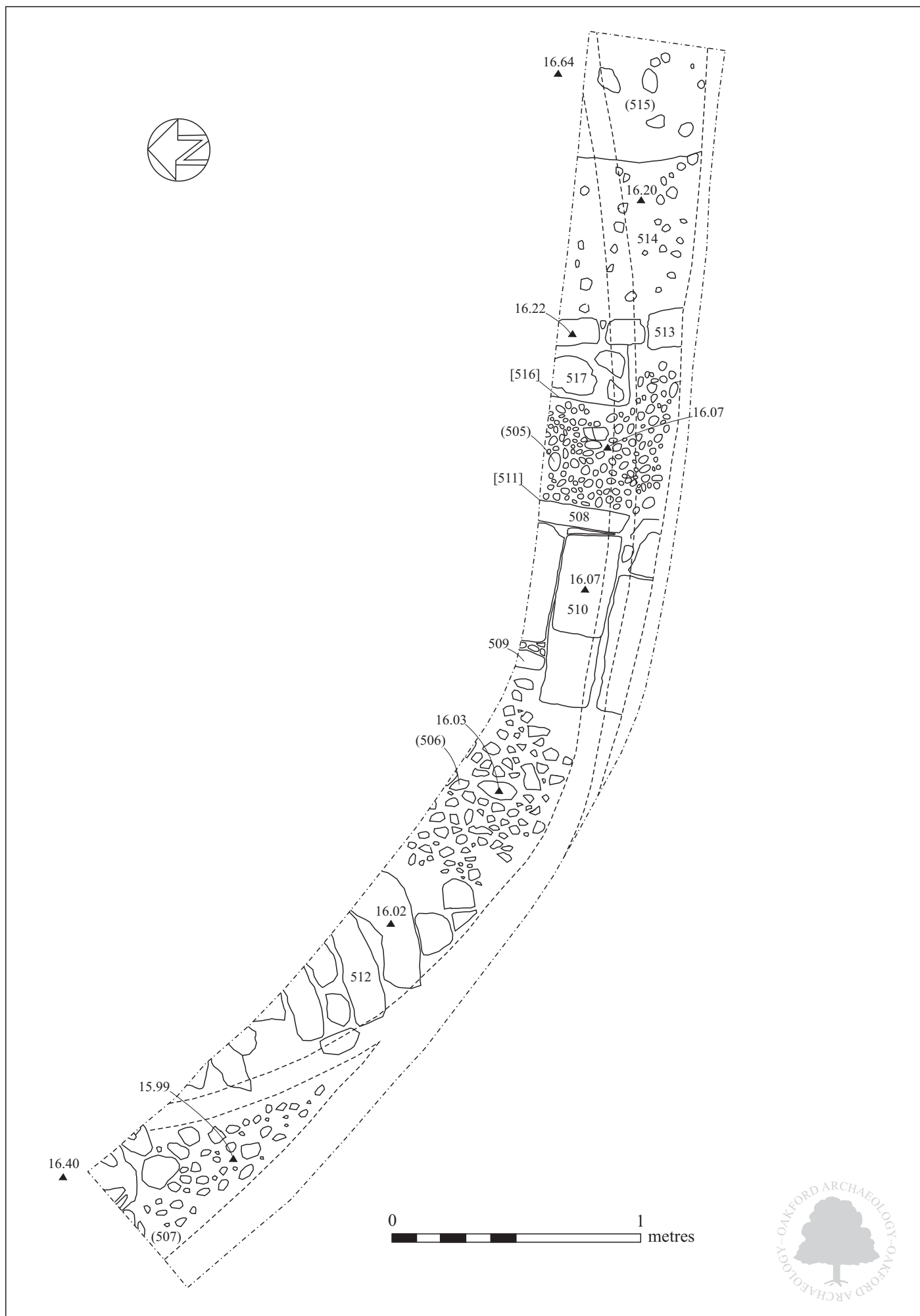


Fig. 3 Plan of trench 5.

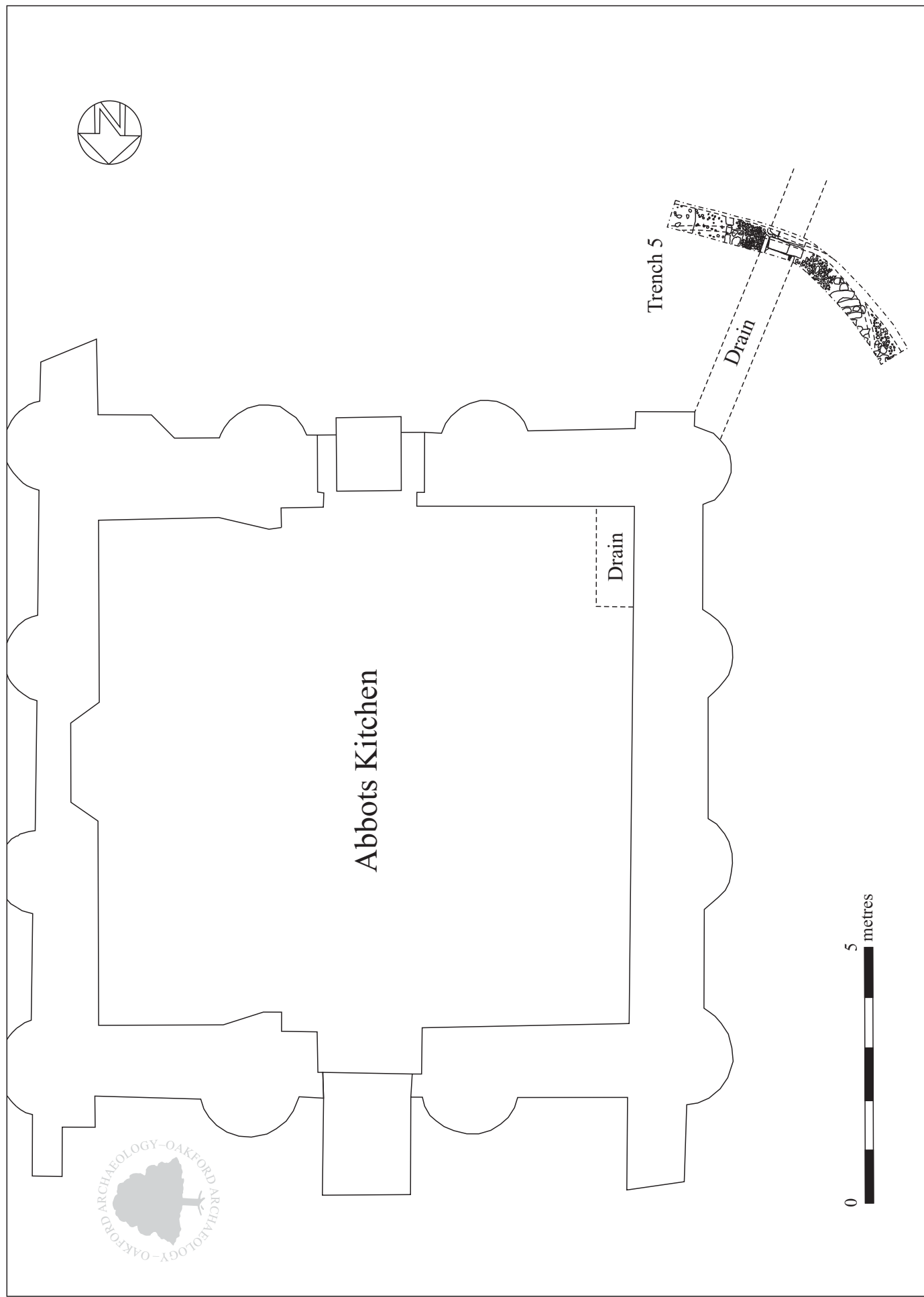


Fig. 4 Location of Trench 5 showing alignment of Abbot's Kitchen drain.





Pl. 1 General view of Trench 1. 0.5m scale.



Pl. 2 General view of Trench 2. 0.5m scale.





Pl. 3 General view of Trench 3. 1m scale. Looking south.



Pl. 4 General view of Trench 4. 0.5m and 1m scales. Looking west.





Pl. 5 General view of Trench 5. 0.5m and 2m scales.  
Looking northwest.



Pl. 6 General view of Trench 5. 0.5m and 2m scales.  
Looking southeast.





Pl. 7 Close-up of wall 513. 0.5m scale. Looking north.



Pl. 8 Close-up of cobbled surface 505 and drain 510. 0.5m scale. Looking northeast.





Pl. 9 Close-up of drain 510. 0.5m scale. Looking northeast.



Pl. 10 Close-up of surface 506 and drain 512. 0.5m scale. Looking southwest.





Pl. 11 General view of drain 512. 0.5m scale. Looking south.



Pl. 12 Close-up of surface 507 and drain 512. 0.5m scale. Looking southeast.