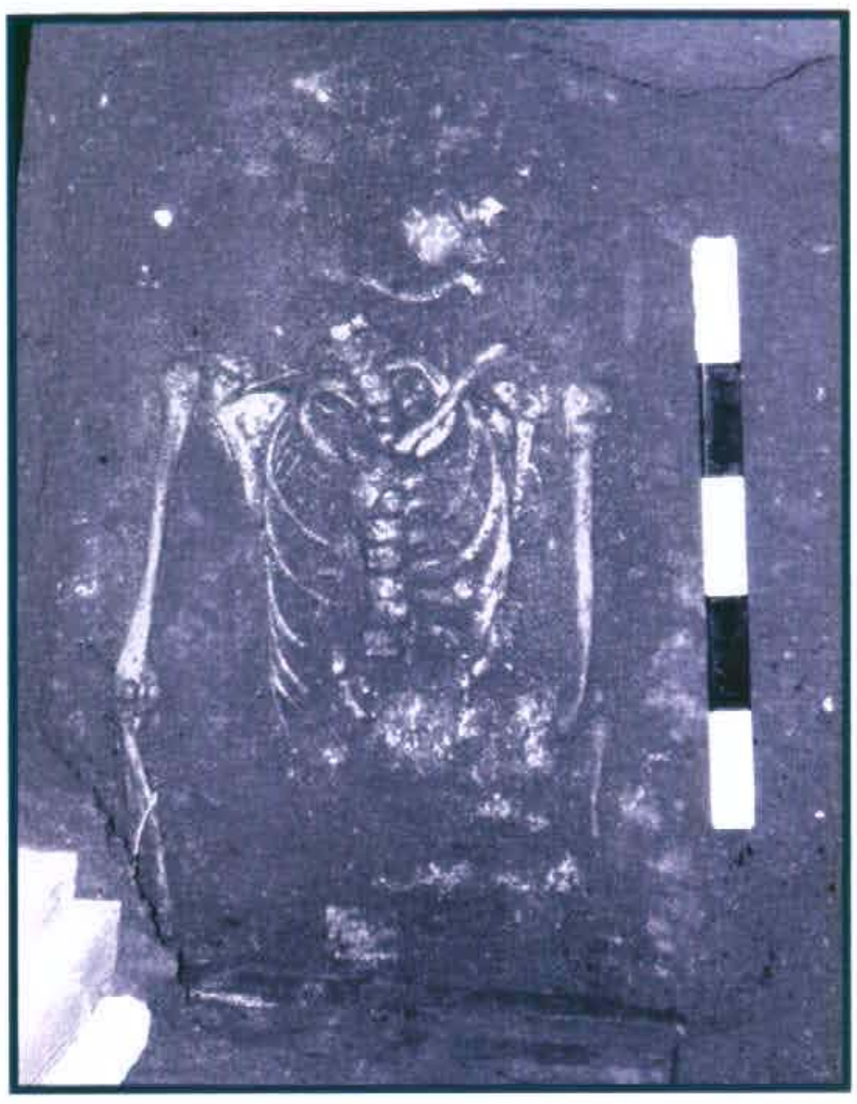
UAD 1682



16 Kingston Road Jericho Oxford

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

oxfordarchaeology

May 2006

Client Name:
Mr Tim Strange (on behalf of Paul Du-Gay & Jessica Evans)

Issue N^{O}: 1
OA Job N^{O}: TN 3021
NGR: SP 505073

Client Name: Mr Tim Strange on behalf of Paul Du-Gay & Jessica Evans

Client Ref No:

Document Title: 16 Kingston Road, Jericho, Oxford

Document Type: Watching Brief

Issue Number: 1

National Grid Reference: SP 505073
Planning Reference:

OA Job Number: TN6553
Site Code: OXJERI 05
Invoice Code: OXJERIEX
Receiving Museum: Oxfordshire County Museums Service
Museum Accession No: OXJERI: 2005.136

Prepared by: Sharon Clough
Position: Osteoarchaeologist
Date: 4th August 2006

Checked by: Ceri Boston
Position: Assistant Head of Heritage Burial Services
Date: 4th August 2006

Approved by: Louise Loe Signed
Position: Head of Heritage Burial Services
Date: 4th August 2006

Document File Location: X:\OXJERI05 - Kingston rd, Jericho, Oxford\WB report OXJERI05 edited.doc
Graphics File Location: \\Servergo\invoice codes i thru q\O_codes\OXJERIEX\Figures
Illustrated by: Georgina Slater

Oxford Archaeology

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES
t: (0044) 01865 263800
f: (0044) 01865 793496
e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk
w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk

16 Kingston Road, Jericho, Oxford

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Contents

List of Figures

SUMMARY

In December 2005 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief and excavation at 16 Kingston Road, Oxford (SP 505073). The work was commissioned by Mr Tim Strange following the unexpected discovery of a human skull during works to build an extension to the cellar at the above address. An archaeological watching brief revealed a single grave containing the coffined remains of a young female, aged 25-30 years. The disarticulated remains of one subadult were also found within the grave. A small pit lay to the south of the excavated area. Pottery from the two features suggests a Roman date

INTRODUCTION

Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In December 2005 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at 16 Kingston Road, Jericho, Oxford (SP 505072). Mr Tim Strange commissioned the work after the unexpected discovery of a human skull during works to build an extension to the cellar at the above property.

1.1.2 A project brief was set out by Brian Durham, Oxford City Archaeologist, after determining that the human skull and related bone was archaeological in nature. Prior to the continuation of building works, the skeleton was recorded and removed. Other archaeological features were also excavated and recorded in accordance with the recommendations of PPG 16 (Planning Policy Guideline), preservation by record.

Geology and topography

1.1.3 The site lies on sand and gravels at 62 m above OD. The study area was situated in the cellar in front of the 1880s terrace house and measured 4 m^2 in area.

Archaeological and historical background

1.1.4 There is evidence for Neolithic activity in the form of contracted burials discovered in 1882, along Southmoor Road (SMR 678). The area occupies the higher gravels bordering the floodplain of Port Meadow and is therefore well sited for prehistoric activity.

1.1.5 The Site and Monuments Record of the City of Oxford records the discovery of a human skeleton nearby in 1865, and a small iron dagger in 1883. These were revealed during gravel extraction just prior to the area being developed for residential housing. The skeleton was discovered near Walton Well Spring in 1865 and was accompanied by three ceramic vessels and a spoon (SMR 1276). The artefacts are stored in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, but are inaccessible at present. There is no record of the date of these artefacts in the museum catalogue (Ashmolean ref 1836.68 p4). However, the deposition of spoons as grave goods is most common in the Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods. The site lies about 50 m away from Kingston Road, along Walton Well Road. It is possible that the burials from this site and the site described

in this report originally lay within the same burial ground. No other such burials are recorded from the area. The area around Kingston Road was developed for housing in the late 1880s. An Ordnance Survey map of 1887 shows that houses to the north of the site were standing by this time.

Acknowledgements

1.1.6 Thanks go to Mr Tim Strange for discovering the skeleton and co-ordinating access to the site. We are also very grateful to the owners Paul Du-Gay and Jessica Evans for their support in the investigation.

PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

Aims

1.1.7 To identify and record the presence/absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.

1.1.8 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

Methodology

1.1.9 The skeleton was excavated to reveal the position of the bones and associated artefacts. It was planned at a scale of 1:10, photographed and removed. All other archaeological features were planned and sections drawn at a scale of 1:20. All excavated features including the burial 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).

RESULTS

Description of deposits

1.1.10 The natural geology (sand and gravels) was observed a level of 2 m below the current ground surface. It was a light, orangy-yellow sand with chalk and gravel inclusions (Figs 3 and 4). Overlying this were layers 9 and 13, that comprised a plough soil composed of loose dark greyish brown sandy silt with occasional charcoal inclusions. This was 0.8 m deep and was cut by grave 6 (which contained the remains of one adult individual, skeleton 4). Layer 9 contained pottery dating to the Roman and post-medieval periods. It is possible that the post-medieval pottery in this layer was introduced during disturbance caused by the foundation of the brick wall (Fig. 3). Layer 13 contained 3rd - 4th century Roman pottery.

1.1.11 The grave (6) was filled by deposit 5, a mid greyish brown sandy silt containing occasional charcoal inclusions and flecks of chalk and very occasional pebbles. It was approximately 0.8 m deep and 0.7 m wide. The grave had been truncated by the house cellar wall to the west and north, and disturbed by the current builders to the south. The base of the grave was flat and the sides vertical. Within the fill (5) there were

pottery sherds (dating to the 4th century AD) and two iron nails. The nails were located at the elbow of the skeleton (4) at the edge of the grave on the north side and have been interpreted as coffin nails (Fig. 2). The grave fill also contained the disarticulated lower leg bones of a single subadult.

1.1.12 Skeleton 4, an adult female individual, had been placed within the grave in a supine extended position with her head to the east. The arm bones were extended at the elbows and lay straight by the sides. The cellar wall of the house to the west had truncated the lower half of the skeleton. This had removed the pelvis, hands and the legs. The skeleton is discussed in detail in appendix 4.

1.1.13 To the south of the skeleton was a vertical sided feature (8), possibly a pit. Only part of the feature was located within the study area, the remainder continuing under the baulk to the south and east. The feature appeared to be oval in shape and had an undulating base. It comprised fill 7, a firm mid greyish brown silt, with very occasional inclusions of charcoal. It was 0.35 m deep and measured 0.8 x 0.4 m to the limit of excavation. This pit contained pottery dated to the second half of the 4th century AD and a single worked flint that was considered to be residual. This feature was overlain by the ploughsoil layers 9 and 13.

1.1.14 Layer 2 was loose dark greyish brown sandy silt, with frequent charcoal and rare small pebbles and overlay the grave (6) and layers 9 and 13. It was 0.2 m deep and was interpreted as a plough soil. It contained a small quantity of animal bone.

1.1.15 Layer 1, a loose reddish orange-yellow sand and gravel, overlay the graveyard soil (2). It was 0.7 m deep. It appears to be a modern build up layer for the road. It was cut by a modern pipe (12). It was overlaid by the concrete and gravel for the existing path and wall.

Finds

1.1.16 *Flint* - two flint flakes were recovered from the grave and pit, contexts 5 and 7 respectively. They had both suffered post-depositional damage and were undateable. They are considered to be residual. Their presence does indicate prehistoric activity in the area.

1.1.17 *Pottery* - Eleven sherds of pottery (135 g) were recovered from four contexts (5, 7, 9 and 13). All but one (17 g) of these were Roman. Context 7 dated to the second half of the 4th century. A late Roman, (probably 4th century) date for the grave fill (5) seems most probable. All the fabrics (bar one) are local or regional in origin. The anomalous sherd, from context 9, was the rim of post-medieval/modern flowerpot.

1.1.18 *Animal bone* - 14 fragments of animal bone (281g) were recovered from three contexts (2, 7 and 9). Context 2 contained skull fragments of at least two horses and a sheep pelvis. Context 7 held bone from cow, horse and other mammal bone. Context 9 contained a cow femur that had post-mortem modification: it had been sawn through in two places. This was most likely in order to gain access the marrow cavity (see appendix 5).

1.1.19 *Metalwork* - Two nails were recovered from within the grave fill 5 at the level of the elbow of the skeleton. They were both iron and had a square cross-section shape to the shaft, now broken. One nail retained the flange, although corrosion obscured its shape. As hand-forged nails have been produced over a long period of time, it is not possible to date these nails precisely. From the position in the grave, they are assumed to be coffin nails. Interment within a wooden coffin fixed with iron nails was a common burial practice in the Roman period (Taylor 2001).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

1.1.20 From the results, it appears that a late Roman period grave (6) had been cut into the ploughsoil (9) and the underlying natural geology (3). This lay alongside pit (8). The graveyard soil (2) overlay the grave and contained charnel material. The presence of charnel material in the grave and overlying soil indicates the presence of more than one burial in the area, and disturbance by later interments.

1.1.21 The burial itself was typical of the late Roman burial rite of coffined, unfurnished inhumation.

1.1.22 The presence of animal bone, Roman pottery sherds and prehistoric flint suggests that pit 8 was used for the disposal of rubbish. This implies domestic activity nearby. The prehistoric flint was very abraded, suggesting it had lain in disturbed soil for a long time before being deposited in the pit.

1.1.23 Although undated, the ploughsoil layer (2), is stratigraphically later than the burial and the pit. Its composition suggests that the area was used for agriculture following its use as a burial place in the Roman period.

1.1.24 The construction of the house and cellar in the 1880s truncated skeleton (4) and may well have disturbed other burials beyond the study area.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context	*Type*	*Comments*	*Finds*
1	Layer	Road build up layer	
2	Layer	Ploughsoil	Horse and sheep bone
3	Natural	Natural sands and gravel	
4	Skeleton	Articulated upper half of a female skeleton	Human bone
5	Fill	Grave fill	4th-century pottery and residual worked flint. 2 iron nails.
6	Cut	Grave cut	
7	Fill	Pit Fill	4th-century pottery, cow and horse bone, residual worked flint
8	Cut	Pit Cut	
9	Layer	Plough soil	Cow bone, Roman and post-medieval pot
10	Layer	Made ground for path	
11	Fill	Fill of pipe trench	
12	Cut	Cut for pipe trench	
13	Layer	Earlier ground surface similar to if not same as (2)	Roman pottery

FINDS ASSESSMENTS

APPENDIX 2 POTTERY

By Paul Booth

1.1.25 Eleven sherds of pottery (135 g) were recovered from four contexts (5, 7, 9 and 13). All but one (17 g) of these were Roman. The anomalous sherd, from context 9, was the rim of post-medieval/modern flower pot.

1.1.26 The Roman sherds were recorded using standard OA codes. The following fabrics were present:

F51. Oxford red-brown colour-coated ware. 2 sherds, 32 g.
M41. Oxford red-brown colour-coated mortarium fabric. 1 sherd, 14 g.
R10. Fine reduced 'coarse' wares, mostly Oxford products. 1 sherd, 1 g.
R21. Sandy reduced coarse ware, local. 1 sherds, 21 g.
R30. Moderately sandy reduced coarse wares, mostly Oxford products. 3 sherds, 39 g.
C11. Late Roman (?Harrold) shell-tempered ware (Brown 1994). 2 sherds, 17 g.

1.1.27 With the exception of fabric C11 all the fabrics are of local or regional origin and all could be products of the Oxford industry. Fabric R21 is usually of early Roman date (late 1st-2nd century), whereas the remaining sherds are all consistent with a later 3rd-4th century date range. Rim sherds in fabrics M41 and F51 are of vessels with date ranges of 240-400 and 350-400 (Young (1977) types C97 and C52 respectively. A jar rim in fabric R30 is not closely dated, but the C11 sherds are likely to have been of 4th century date. On this basis a late 3rd century or later date can be suggested for contexts 5, 7, and perhaps 13 (which only contained a single small sherd fabric R30). Of these contexts, 7 can be dated to the second half of the 4th century on the basis of the presence of type C52. A late Roman (probably 4th century) date for the grave containing fill 5 seems almost certain.

APPENDIX 3 THE FLINT

By Rebecca Devaney

1.1.28 Two flint flakes were recovered from contexts 5 and 7 during the archaeological investigation at Jericho. Both flakes have suffered post-depositional damage and both have breaks at their proximal and distal ends. The flake from context 7 is also heavily corticated. The flakes are not technologically or chronologically diagnostic.

APPENDIX 4 HUMAN REMAINS

By Sharon Clough

Introduction

1.1.29 A single adult inhumation was found during the building of an extension to a cellar in Kingston Road, Jericho, Oxford. After an initial investigation by Thames Valley Police and the City Archaeologist, Brian Durham, it was established that the remains were archaeological in nature. The disarticulated remains of a child aged between 2 and 5 years were also discovered within the grave fill. Both sets of human remains underwent full osteological analysis at OA.

Preservation and completeness

1.1.30 Skeleton 4 had been truncated at the waist by a Victorian wall foundation and the upper torso was all that remained. The bone was in a state of good preservation, robust and unblemished cortical surface and with the exception of the skull, the bones were unfragmented and complete. The disarticulated remains were of a similar state of preservation.

Osteological methodology

1.1.31 Skeleton 4, was aged using a combination of methods. However, in the absence of the pelvis it was not possible to use the most accurate methods that are avilable for ageing adult skeletons: the degeneration of the pubic symphysis (Brooks and Suchey 1990; Todd 1921) or iliac auricular surface (Lovejoy *et al* 1985). However, age estimation based on the sternal rib ends (Iscan and Loth 1984; Iscan *et al* 1985), cranial suture closure (Meindl and Lovejoy 1985) and dental attrition method of Miles' (1962) was possible.

The subadult was aged by measuring diaphyseal long bone length and using modern growth standards (Hoppa 1992).

1.1.32 Sexing of adult skeletons is usually determined from the skull and pelvic morphology (Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994), and from metrical data (Ferembach *et al.* 1980). As there was no pelvis, nor femur, sexing was determined based on the morphology of the skull alone. No attempt was made to estimate the sex of the subadult remains in accordance with current accepted practice.

1.1.33 The stature of skeleton 4 was estimated from long bone length measurements, using the regression formulae developed by Trotter (1970). Usually the combined femoral and tibial measurements are used, however in the absence of either bone, stature was calculated from the length of the humerus.

Results

1.1.34 This individual was a female of 25-30 years of age when she died. She stood approximately 1.63 m (5 ft 3 inches) tall.

Pathology

1.1.35 No skeletal nor dental pathology was observed. This is in part due to the young age of the skeleton.

Non-metric traits

1.1.36 Several anomalies were present on the skeleton (4) that are within normal human variation. One of these was a partial retention of the metopic suture (found on the frontal bone or forehead). Retention of the metopic suture in adulthood is a hypostotic feature resulting from incomplete or arrested ossification union of the suture (Schwartz 1995). This suture is present in infants and young children, but usually fuses around four years. The retention of the metopic suture is strongly hereditary, and can be used to suggest familial relationships between skeletons in an assemblage. A large ossicle (or wormian bone) was observed at lambda on the cranial vault . Ossicles are supernumerary or extra structures of small islands of bone often found along the sutural lines of the skull. Their aetiology is still poorly understood.

In human dentition it is quite common for teeth not to develop at all (agenesis). The third molars (wisdom teeth) are the most commonly involved. In this individual, the third molars were absent in the mandible and the maxilla. Third molar agenesis is associated with anomalies and eruption of other teeth in the same dentition (Hillson 1996). In addition, this individual had a rotated lower left canine that was rotated 90 degrees within the socket.

The disarticulated remains

1.1.37 In addition to the single inhumation skeleton, disarticulated bones of a second individual were excavated. These were located in the grave fill (5) at the head area of the grave. They appear to be disarticulated bones from a disturbed burial nearby that may have been truncated by grave 6 beyond the limit of the study area.

The disarticulated remains comprised a tibia and a fibula of a subadult skeleton, aged between 2 and 5 years.

1.1.38 Further disarticulated human bone was found near the wall to the south in the plough soil (2). These bones, which comprised a right femur, tibia and fibula, were also of a subadult. It is possible, given the close proximity and the apparently similar age to the disarticulated bones found within grave 6, that these form part of the same skeleton.

Skeleton Catalogue

By Sharon Clough

Skeleton 4

Completeness	50%
Preservation	Good
Age	25-30 years
Sex	Female
Dentition	

L R

NP X X / / / / / - - - - - - - - -
NP 7 X 5 4 3 / / / / / - - - - -

Pathology None. Non-metric traits: ossicle at lambda, metopic suture, left lower canine rotated 90°

Disarticulated remains

Context 5
Tibia - subadult 2-5 years
Fibula - subadult 2-5 years

Context 2
Right femur - subadult 2-5 years
Tibia - subadult 2-5 years
Fibula - subadult 2-5 years

APPENDIX 5 ANIMAL BONE

By Kris Poole

1.1.39 Fourteen refitted fragments of animal bone (weighing 281g) were recovered from Kingston Road, Jericho, Oxford, from three contexts (Table 1). Context 2 contained three horse skull fragments, two of which were right zygomatic bones, meaning at least two horses are represented, as well as three large-sized mammal long bone fragments, and part of a sheep pelvis. Context 7 held a cattle maxillary molar, a horse left lateral metatarsal, one medium-sized mammal long bone and one rib. Two large-sized mammal ribs and a left cattle femur were recovered from Context 9. The latter had been sawn through just below the lesser trochanter, and again around 3cm below.

Table 1: Number of identified specimens (NISP)

	Context			
Species	**2**	**7**	**9**	**Total**
Horse	3	1	-	4
Cattle	-	1	1	2
Sheep	1	-	-	1
Large mammal	2	-	2	4
Medium mammal	-	2	-	2
Total	**6**	**4**	**3**	**13**

APPENDIX 6 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

Bass, WM 1987 *Human osteology- A laboratory and field manual*, 3rd edition, Columbia

Brickley M and McKinley, M 2004 *Guidelines to the standards for recording of human remains*; IFA Paper No 7

Brown, A (E), 1994 A Romano-British shell-gritted pottery and tile manufacturing site at Harrold, Beds, *Bedfordshire Archaeology* **21**, 19-107.

Buikstra, J E and Ubelaker, D H 1994. *Standards for data collection from human skeletal remains*, Arkansas

Ferembach, D, Schwidetzky, I & Stloukal, M 1980 Recommendations for age and sex diagnoses of skeletons, *Journal of Human Evolution* **9**: 517-549

Hillson, S. 1996. *Dental anthropology*, Cambridge University Press.

Hoppa, R D 1992 Evaluating human skeletal growth: an Anglo-Saxon example, *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology* 2 275- 288

Mays, S 1998. *The archaeology of human bones*, Routledge

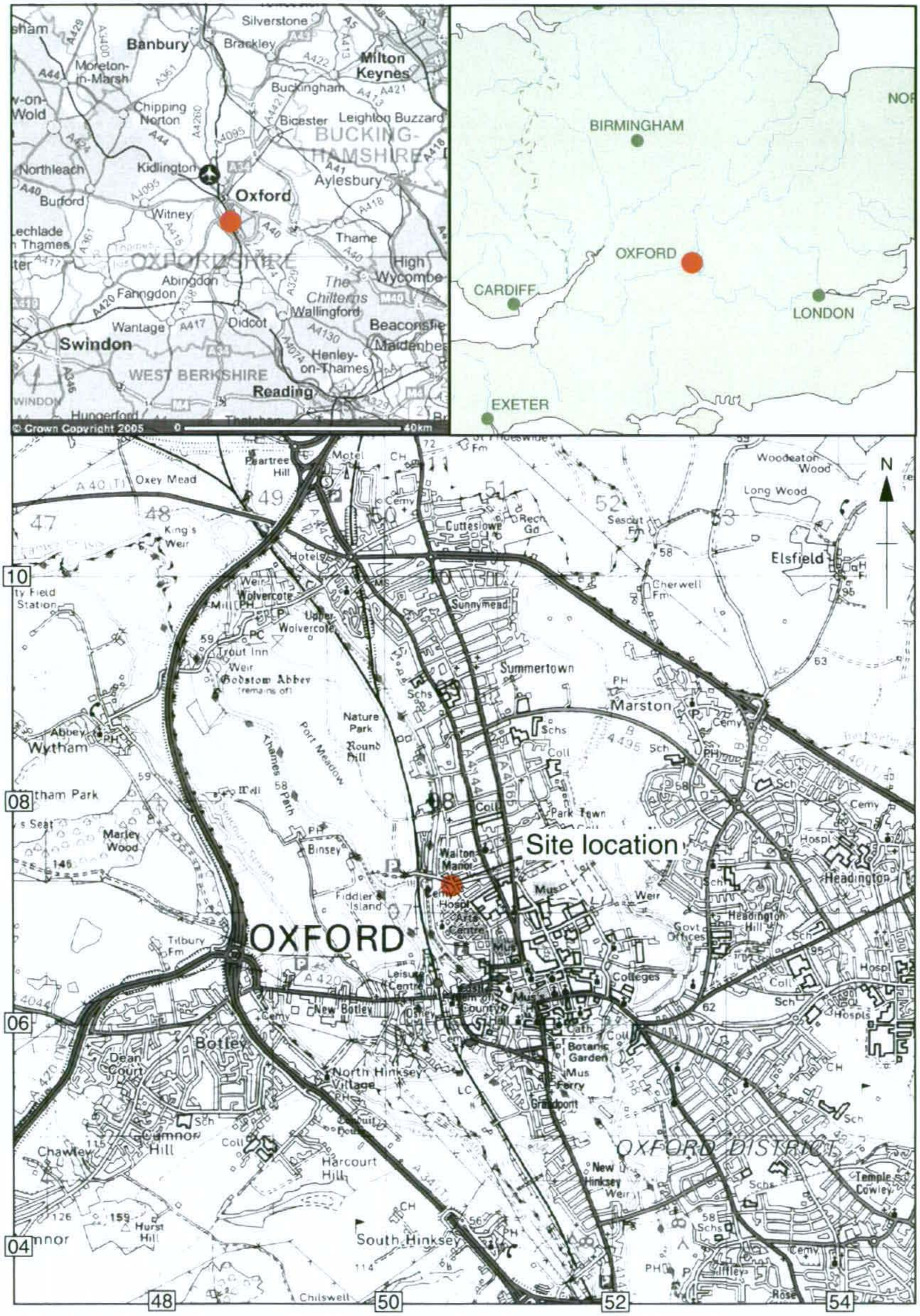
Ortner D, J. 2003. *Identification of pathological conditions in human skeletal remains.* Academic Press

Schwartz, J. H. 2000: *Skeleton keys*; Routledge, U.S.A

Young, C J, 1977 *The Roman pottery industry of the Oxford region*, Brit Archaeol Rep (Brit Ser) **43**, Oxford.

APPENDIX 7 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: 16 Kingston Road, Jericho, Oxford
Site code: OXJERI 05
Grid reference: SP 505073
Type of watching brief: Small area extension to a cellar for underpinning a wall.
Date and duration of project: 1st and 5th December 2005
Area of site: 4 m^2
Summary of results: Single coffined inhumation burial and pit both dated to the 4th century AD and charnel of a subadult individual.
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: OXJERI: 2005.136



Scale 1:50,000

Figure 1: Site location

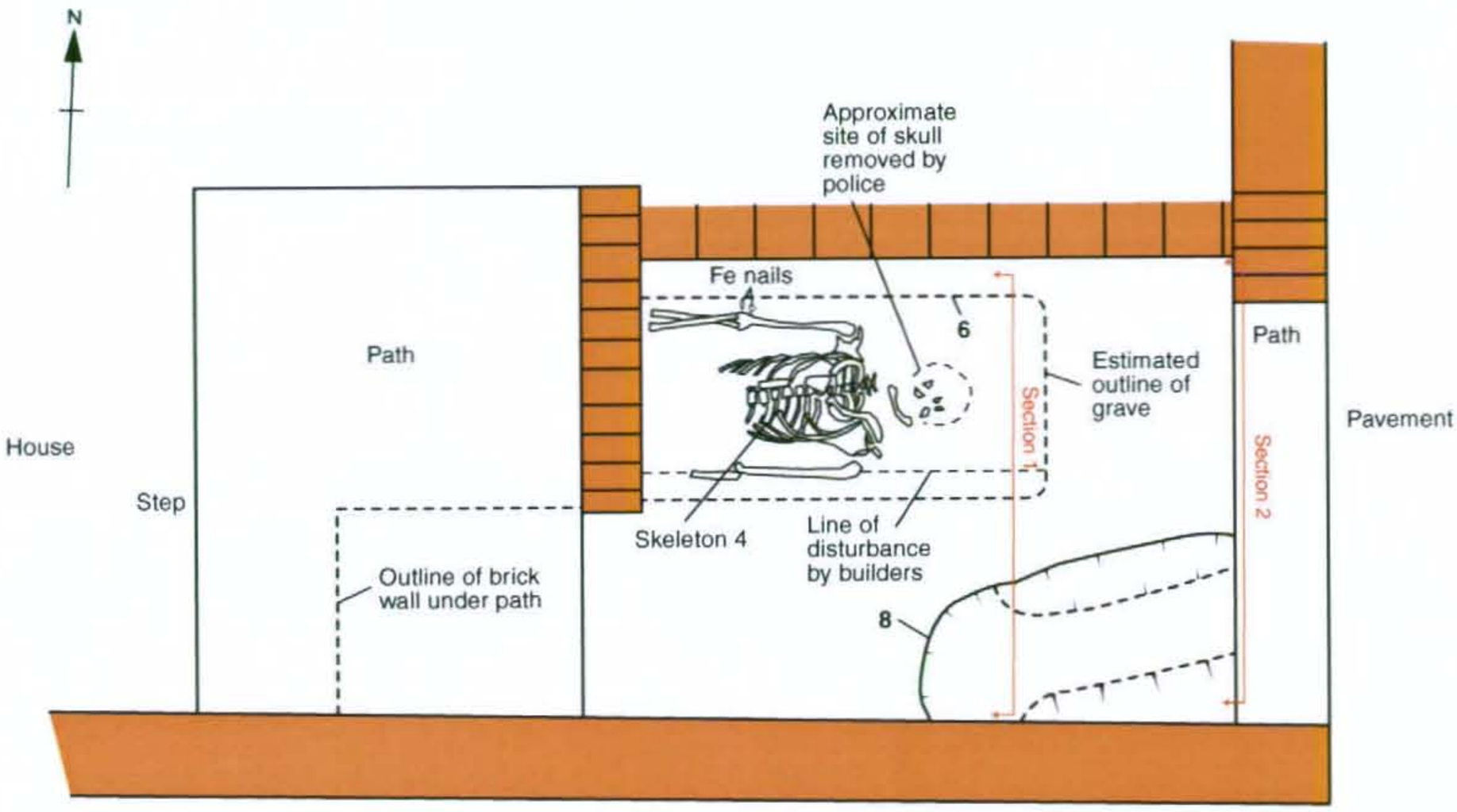


Figure 2: Site plan

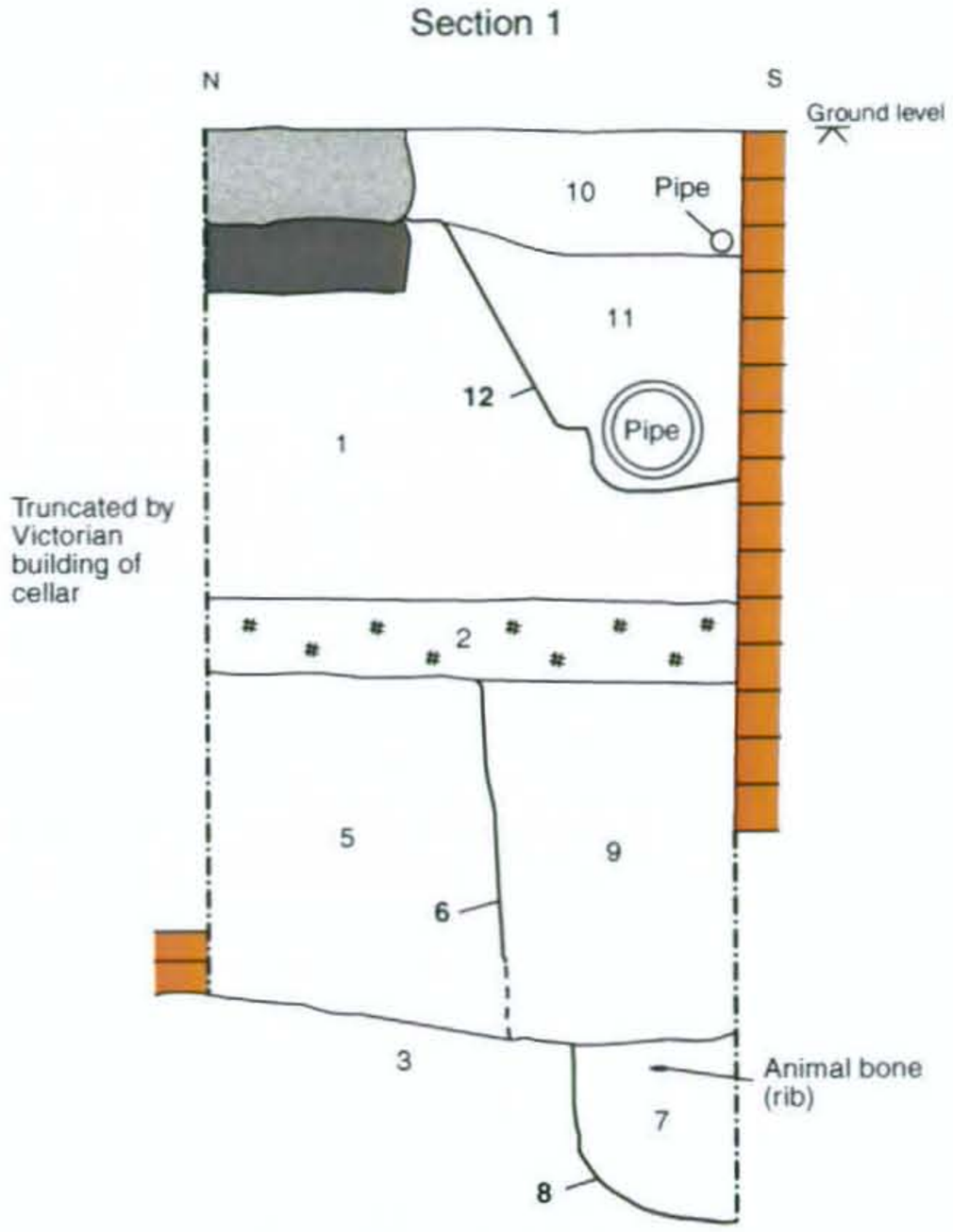


Figure 3: Section 1

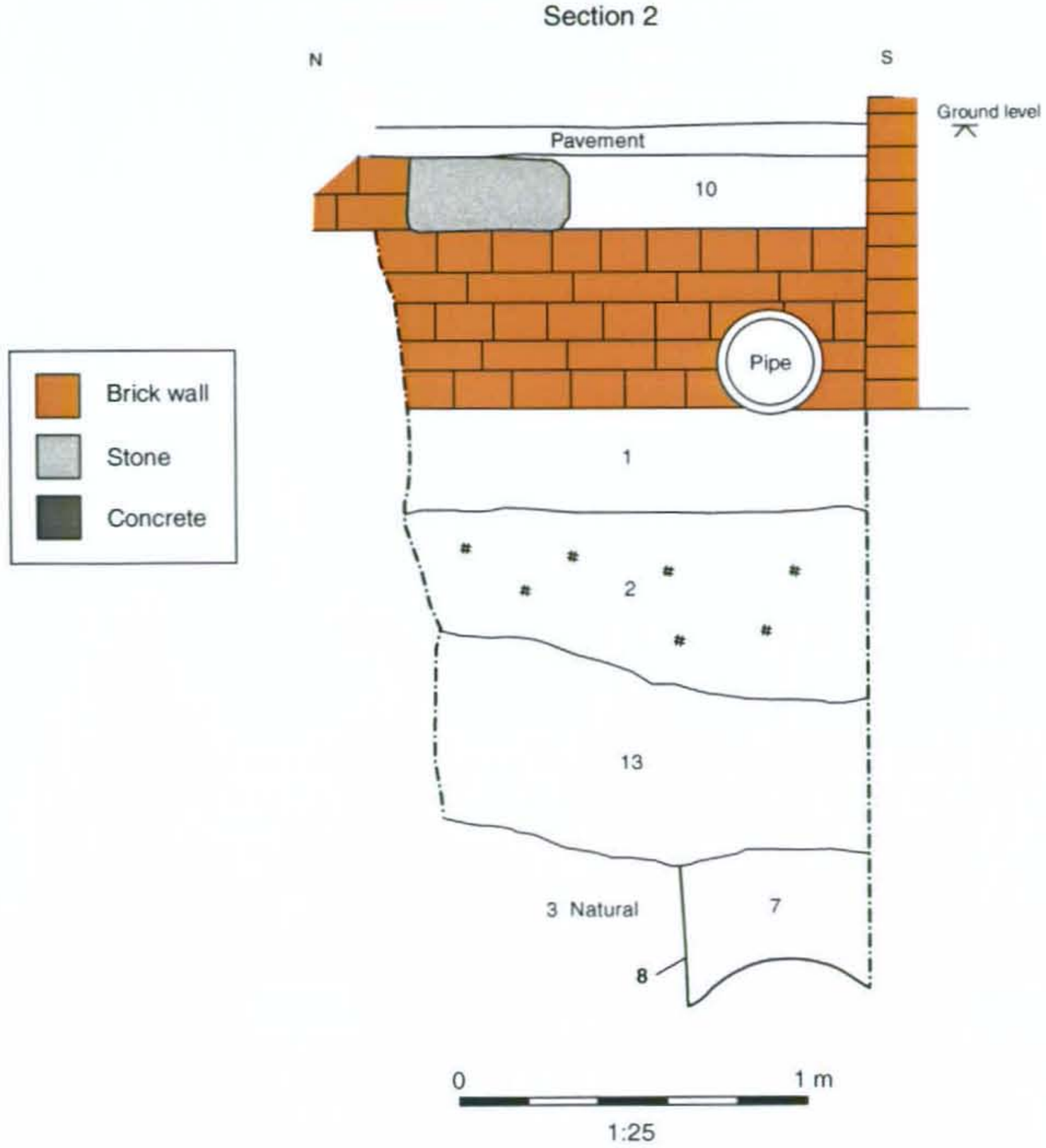


Figure 4: Section 2

Oxford Archaeology

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES

t: (0044) 01865 263800
f: (0044) 01865 793496
e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk
w:www.oxfordarch.co.uk

Oxford Archaeology North

Storey Institute
Meeting House Lane
Lancaster LA1 1TF

t: (0044) 01524 541000
f: (0044) 01524 848606
e: lancinfo@oxfordarch.co.uk
w:www.oxfordarch.co.uk

Director: David Jennings, BA MIFA FSA

Oxford Archaeological Unit is a
Private Limited Company, N°: 1618597
and a Registered Charity, N°: 285627

Registered Office:
Oxford Archaeological Unit
Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES