

Land at No.46c Oxford Street
Wellingborough, NN8 4JH

(NGR 488857, 267760)

Archaeological Monitoring &
Inspection of Environmental
Risk Assessment Trenches

Planning App. Ref. WP/2014/0022
HER Event No. ENN108893

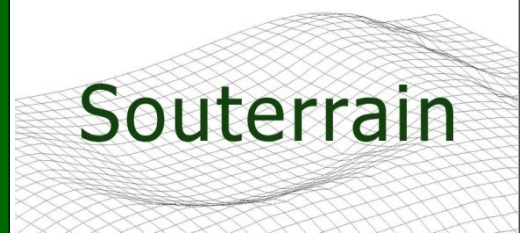


March 2018

Souterrain Archaeological Services Ltd

for

Amanda Wilkins (Wellingborough)



Archaeological Services Ltd



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(NGR 488857, 267760)**

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of Environmental Risk Assessment Trenches**

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Project: SOU17-563

March 2017

(cover map: reproduced from the 1888 Ordnance Survey map of Northamptonshire
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Produced for:

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Preface

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Summary

On the 30th of January 2018, archaeological monitoring and inspection was carried out by Souterrain during the excavation of four Environmental Risk Assessment trenches at 46C Oxford Street, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire.

The site is located in the historic core of the town, in a postulated zone of medieval tenements.

The area of ground investigation was surveyed, photographed and the nature and depth of deposits recorded.

The sequence of deposits revealed 19th / 20th century deposits directly overlaying an upper geological stratum. Historic buried soils of archaeological interest were absent and no significant artefacts were present.

Based on the results of the inspection, it is reasonably concluded that there is little likelihood of any remains of archaeological significance at the Application Site.

1. SCOPE OF THE DOCUMENT

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by Souterrain Archaeological Services Ltd (hereafter 'Souterrain') on behalf of Amanda Wilkins of 14 Rock Street, Wellingborough, NN8 4LW (the Planning Applicant and Developer).
- 1.2 It details the results of archaeological monitoring and inspection carried out during the excavation of four Environmental Risk Assessment (ERA) trial trenches, at a plot of land known as 46c Oxford Street, Wellingborough, NN8 4JH. The trenches were excavated on Tuesday 30th January 2018 by Storefield Ltd on behalf of the Planning Applicant and Developer.

2. PLANNING BACKGROUND & ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.1 Borough of Wellingborough Council (BWC) Planning Permission WP/2014/0022 has been granted, subject to Conditions, on the 6th of March 2014, for the demolition of an existing former dance studio and the construction of a new four storey residential building at 46C Oxford Street Wellingborough Northamptonshire NN8 4JH (the Application Site).
- 2.2 In view of the archaeological sensitivity of the locality, planning consent has been granted with a Condition (No. 4) attached for a programme of archaeological mitigation work.
- 2.3 The reason for the Condition is to ensure that any buried features of archaeological interest at the Application Site are properly examined and recorded; in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 2.4 A *Brief*¹ outlining the expectations of the archaeological work was issued to the Planning Applicant by Liz Mordue, Assistant Archaeological Advisor (AAA) for Northamptonshire County Council (statutory consultant for BWC).
- 2.5 In line with requirements of the *Brief*, the Planning Applicant gained approval of a written *Scheme of Investigation (WSI)* prepared on the Planning Applicant's behalf by Souterrain.
- 2.6 Subsequent to the submission of the *WSI*, discussions took place between the Planning Applicant and the AAA concerning the proposed pile construction techniques for the new building and the effects it would have on buried any archaeology. Correspondence also proceeded between Souterrain and Planning Applicant concerning Condition 3, the requirement for a Phase II ERA investigation (intrusive ground works to test for potential site contamination). The significance of the ERA with regard to archaeological work has been covered in section 6.1 of the *WSI*.
- 2.7 Souterrain and the AAA liaised concerning the matters of piling and Phase II environmental works². Since four ERA trenches, each 2 m in length, were to be excavated at the Application Site, the AAA had informed the Planning Applicant that archaeological monitoring of the

¹ Mordue, L 2017. *Brief For A Programme Of Archaeological Observation, Investigation, Recording, Analysis and Publication of Works at 46C Oxford Street, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire*, V.1. 29th Sept

² Email: From: Liz Mordue, Sent: 17 January 2018 09:27, To: 'Souterrain Archaeological Services', Subject: RE: WP/2014/0022_Oxford Street Wellingborough; Email From: Souterrain Archaeological Services, Sent: 17 January 2018 09:19, To: Liz Mordue, Subject: WP/2014/0022_Oxford Street Wellingborough

trenches should take place in order to get an understanding of ground conditions. In the event of good archaeological preservation, further discussions would be needed to decide the best approach to dealing with the archaeology in the area of proposed ground piling works.

3. LOCATION & ASPECT OF THE APPLICATION SITE

- 3.1 The Application Site is situated on the north side of Oxford Street, in the centre of Wellingborough at NGR 488857, 267760 (Fig. 1). It is a long and narrow, broadly rectangular parcel of land (c. 55 m x c. 7 m; 385 sq. m), which is bounded to the west, north and east by residential properties.
- 3.2 The site is located in the Wellingborough Conservation Area and within the pre-industrial settlement core of the town.
- 3.3 The land was vacant at the time of the ERA trenching (see Figs. 5 & 6). A 1950s/ 60s brick-built building (a dance studio) had recently been demolished. The building had a footprint of c. 86 sq. m and was set back from the road by about 15 m.
- 3.4 The topography of the site slopes from 66.40 m OD at the north end to around 64 m OD at the south end. The underlying solid geology is mapped as Northampton Sand and Ironstone: “sandy, berthierine-oidal and sideritic ironstone, greenish grey where fresh, weathering to brown limonitic sandstone, typically displaying a box-stone structure’. The upper boundary is typically marked by “a sharp erosional contact with essentially non-ferruginous interpreted non-marine sandstone, siltstone or mudstone of the Stamford Member of the Rutland Formation”³.
- 3.5 The area and layout of the proposed development is defined on the drawings (latest versions) of MLR Architectural Design Services submitted with the planning application⁴. The footprint of the proposed new building is to be 13.5 m x 6.3 (85.03 sq. m). Approximately 50 sq. m of the new building is to occupy the site of the demolished building. Car parking areas are to be constructed at the front of the new building.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

- 4.1 This section of the report is précised from the written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), in which the archaeological potential of the proposed development site has been prudently considered.. Information from a 500 m radius Study Area has been derived from three prime sources: the *Northamptonshire Historic Environment Record* (HER); Northamptonshire County Council’s ⁵ *Extensive Urban Survey of Wellingborough (EUS)*, and the *Victoria History of the Counties (VCH)*.

The Medieval Settlement

- 4.2 Knowledge of the early medieval (Anglo-Saxon) settlement at Wellingborough is based largely on historic documents. The place name of Wellingborough indicates an early Anglo-Saxon foundation⁶. In the mid-10th century the Benedictine Abbey Church of Crowland,

³ British Geological Survey, <http://www.bgs.ac.uk>

⁴ MLR Design Services (Wellingborough) 193/13/1 Nov. 2013

⁵ 2000 Foard G & Ballinger J *Northamptonshire Extensive Urban Survey Wellingborough* Northamptonshire County Council; a project funded English Heritage

⁶ E.g. Mills, A.D, 2003. *Oxford Dictionary of British Place Names*

Lincolnshire, was bestowed land a mile west of the River Ise at Wellingborough, on the north-south London to Oakham road,⁷ and near to the east-west route between Coventry and Cambridge. The land, which became known as Crowland Manor, comprised about three-quarters of the parish of Wellingborough; the rest made up of five or six minor estates. Henceforth, medieval settlement at Wellingborough was dominated by Crowland Manor. But finds of the period have been few. Six human skeletons, thought to have been Anglo-Saxon, were dug up by workmen in 1972 near All Hallows Church⁸.

- 4.3 The Domesday survey (1086) recorded 40 households and a priest for Crowland Manor, whilst the other estates together only comprised 7 tenants between them. The overall population of the parish was probably around 200, an exceptionally large settlement in comparison to other county towns. After the Abbott established a tightly administered market in 1201 the town saw economic expansion in the 13th and 14th centuries, the woollen cloth industry playing a major role. But the town was never elevated to borough status and therefore had no burgage tenements. In the early 14th century there were 144 customary tenancies and 4 free tenants with messuages.
- 4.4 The settlement had several distinct *foci*, which probably reflected the layout of the ancient manors. The monastic grange itself, was located in the core area of the settlement⁹, on the west side of Silver Street/ Sheep Street and south of Oxford Street (250 m to 350 m ESE of the Application Site). It comprised a number of buildings ranged around a courtyard, the main one being a hall.

Medieval Landuse at the Application Site

- 4.5 Medieval tenements are understood to have lined the arterial north-south route (Sheep Street - Silver Street - High Street) and both sides of Oxford Street, including the location of the Application Site. But without adequate archaeological data the development of the tenement zones can only be conjectured. Notably in 1973, a number of pits and ditches were seen during groundwork for an office development 70 m - 90 m to the west of the Application Site¹⁰.

Post-medieval Landuse at the Application Site

- 4.6 A map of 1771 map shows that the Application Site was part of an *enfoeffed* land holding¹¹. The approximate extent of the *fief* is shown on Figure 2. It was one of seven of such tracts scattered throughout the town, known as 'town lands'¹². They consisted of either tenements and / or yardlands. The EUS identified these land holdings with Guild lands, tentatively assigning them to Crowland Manor, based on a charter of 1392 wherein the Abbot permitted four tenants to 'draw revenue from certain dwellings and lands in Wendlyingburgh, appertaining to the (monastery)'.

Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Landuse at the Application Site

- 4.7 On the 1884 Ordnance Survey 25" map, the location of the Application Site corresponds to part of a large garden attached to a substantial town house, or villa, called Westlands. The end of a glasshouse was situated in the southeast corner of the site, though other than trees and probable lawn the area is featureless. The revised surveys of 1888 and 1924, shows no

⁷ HER 6283/1 - MNN17510

⁸ HER 3884/0/5 - MNN27905, ENN10369, Centred SP 891 679

⁹ HER3884/2 - MNN10199, Centred SP 8916 6771

¹⁰ HER ENN10153. Note: the HER NGR locates the development on the south side of Oxford Street

¹¹ i.e. a territory held of a superior in exchange for services. By the later medieval period such services had been commuted to an annual payment

¹² See EUS Fig. 4

apparent change¹³. Subsequent map revisions show that the aforementioned Dance Studio (*ante*. 2.1) was built at sometime between 1958 and 1968.

5. OBJECTIVES

- 5.1 The objective of the groundwork monitoring was to gain an understanding of ground conditions and the potential for the survival of archaeological remains in the footprint of the proposed building.

6. RESULTS

- 6.1 Archaeological monitoring of the ERA trenches was carried out by an appropriately qualified and experienced archaeologist and in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct and *Standard Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (Rev. 2014).
- 6.2 Machine excavation of the trenches was carried out with mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket observed throughout by the archaeologist. Excavation was undertaken with a view to avoiding damage to any archaeological features or deposits that appear to be worthy of *in situ* preservation.
- 6.3 Four trenches were excavated. Trenches were fairly evenly distributed at the Application Site, providing a representative sample of deposits from the north end of the site to the southern end of the proposed building footprint; over a distance of c. 32 m.
- 6.4 **Trench 1 (T 1)** was the northernmost investigation (Fig. 3). The trench size was c. 2.4 m x c. 0.7 m. The sequence of deposits is shown on Figures 4 and 7. The existing ground height was around 66.37 m. The first material encountered comprised c. 0.5 m of dark brown to black topsoil with ash, cinders and large pieces of slag (101). Next exposed was a layer of firm, light brown to greyish brown clay (102), c. 0.25 m thick. This layer is understood to comprise upper geological stratum with a disturbed upper horizon. A 19th century land drain had been cut through the layer (aligned NNE/SSW) and sectional clay pipes inserted. A geological stratum of stiff bluish brown clay (103) was encountered at c. 0.75 m below ground level (i.e. at c. 65.62 m). Historic buried soils appear to have been removed. There were no finds or deposits of archaeological interest.
- 6.5 The next trench southwards from Trench 1 was **Trench 4 (T 4)** at c.3 m distance (Fig. 3). The trench size was c. 2.9 m x c. 0.65 m. The sequence of deposits is shown on Figures 4 and 8. The existing ground height was c. 66.28 m. Topsoil (401) was c. 0.25 m thick, below which was a thin layer (c. 0.14 m) of light brown clay (402) of modern origin. The layer sealed a deposit of light grey-brown silty clayey soil (403), c. 0.48 m thick, which contained 19th century bricks and broken bottle glass. This deposit directly overlay geological stratum of greyish brown to bluish grey clay (404) at c. 65.41 m OD (c. 87 m below ground level). There were no historic buried soils of archaeological significance. Neither were there any finds or deposits of archaeological interest.
- 6.6 **Trench 2 (T 2)** straddled the northern end of the proposed building footprint (Fig. 3). The trench size was c. 2.44 m x c. 0.67 m. The sequence of deposits is shown on Figures 4 and 9.

¹³ Refer to WSI for map illustrations

The existing ground height was c. 65.37 m. Topsoil (201) was c. 0.3 m thick. It directly overlay an upper geological stratum of light grey-brown clay (202), c. 0.3 m thick, which, in turn overlay a solid geological deposit of blue-grey clay (203) around 64.77 m OD. There were no buried soils, finds or deposits of archaeological interest.

- 6.7 **Trench 3 (T 3)** was placed toward the south end of the proposed building footprint, within the footprint of the demolished 20th century building (Fig. 3). The trench size was c. 2.54 m x c. 0.6 m. The sequence of deposits is shown on Figures 4 and 10. Topsoil (301) was 0.3 m - 0.4 m thick (301). This directly overlay light brown to greyish brown clay (302), 0.15 m to 0.2 m in thickness, which was interpreted as an upper geological stratum. A firm geological stratum of bluish grey clay (303) was reached around 63.9 m. There were no historic buried soils and no finds or deposits of archaeological interest.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The sequence of deposits observed in Trenches 1 to 4 is comparable: modern (*i.e.* 19th / 20th century) deposits directly overlaying an upper geological horizon. Historic buried soils of archaeological interest were absent.
- 7.2 The northern end of the site appears to have been used to tip industrial waste – large nodules of slag (<0.25 m), cinders and ash. A sectional clay land drain was located c. 0.2 m inside the upper geological stratum which may have been inserted in the 19th century when the site was part of a garden. At the southern end of the investigation, construction of the the 1950s/60s building appears to have truncated ground deposits.
- 7.3 The four trenches gave reasonably good coverage of the site. Conditions and visibility was good throughout. Deposits within the trenches were inspected using a hand trowel. Spoil was scanned for artefacts, but none were present.
- 7.4 Based on the results of the inspection, it is reasonably concluded that there is little likelihood of any remains of archaeological significance at the Application Site, and doubtful if anything of archaeological interest survives in the proposed building footprint.

8. COPYRIGHT AND CONFIDENTIALITY

- 8.1 Souterrain Archaeological Services Ltd retains full copyright of any commissioned reports, tender documents or other project documents under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved; excepting that it will provide a licence to the Developer in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the WSI.
- 8.2 Souterrain Archaeological Services Ltd retains the right to be identified as the author of all project documentation and reports as defined in the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.
- 8.3 Northampton County Council's Historic Environment Record is permitted to use reports arising from projects for planning purposes.
- 8.4 Souterrain will advise its client of any such materials supplied in the course of projects which are not Souterrain's copyright.

8.5 Souterrain will respect requirements for confidentiality about the Developer's proposals provided that these are clearly stated. In any case, in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), archaeological and historical information (and archive generated) through the development process is to be publically accessible¹⁴.

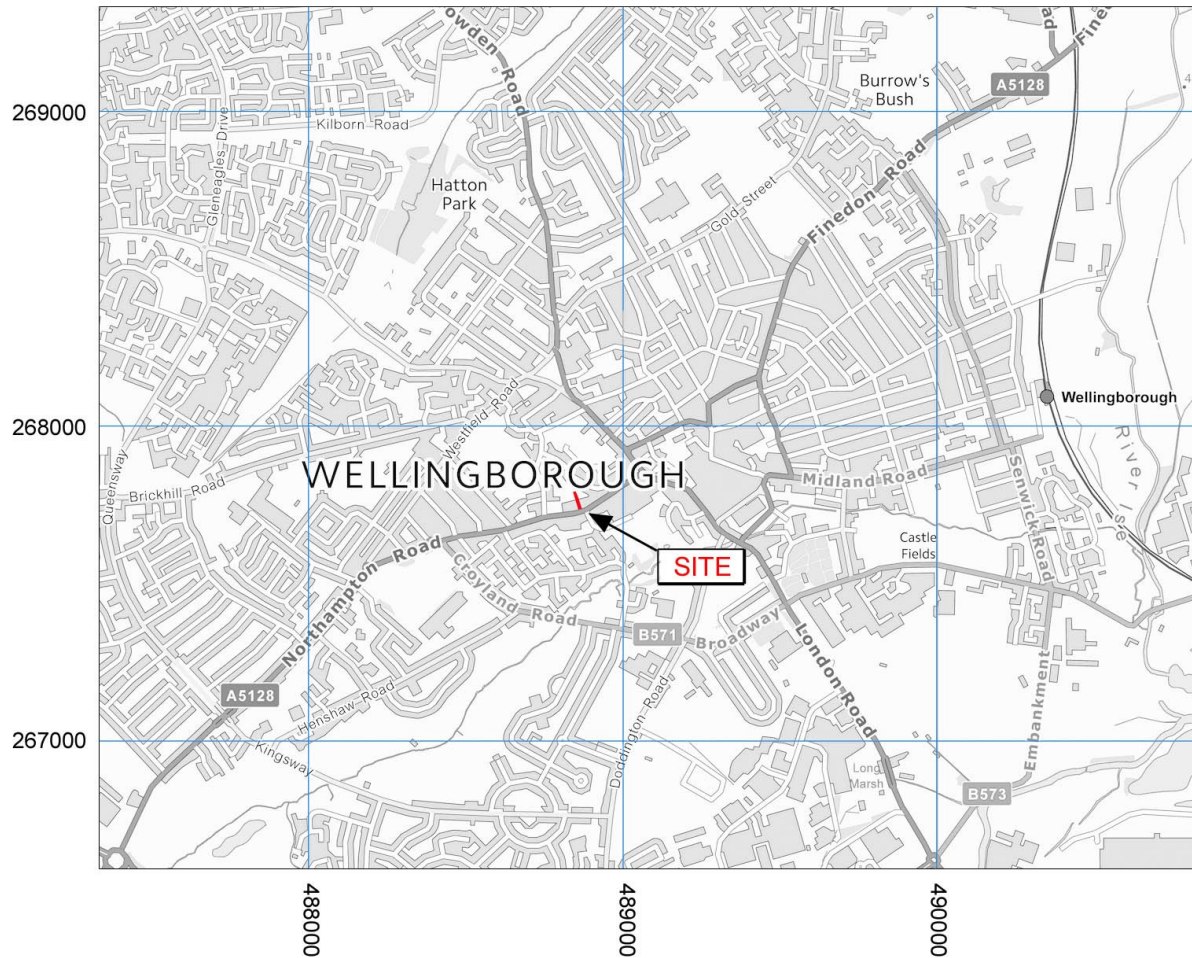


Figure 1. Location of Site

(based on Ordnance Survey Open Data mapping. © Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 100015565)

¹⁴ NPPF paragraph 141, page 32



Figure 2. Approximate extent of medieval to post-medieval enfeoffed land (green) and Application Area (red)

(Contains Ordnance Survey data, © Crown copyright and database right 2018. All rights reserved. Licence number AL 100015565; *Fief estate based on EUS 2000*)

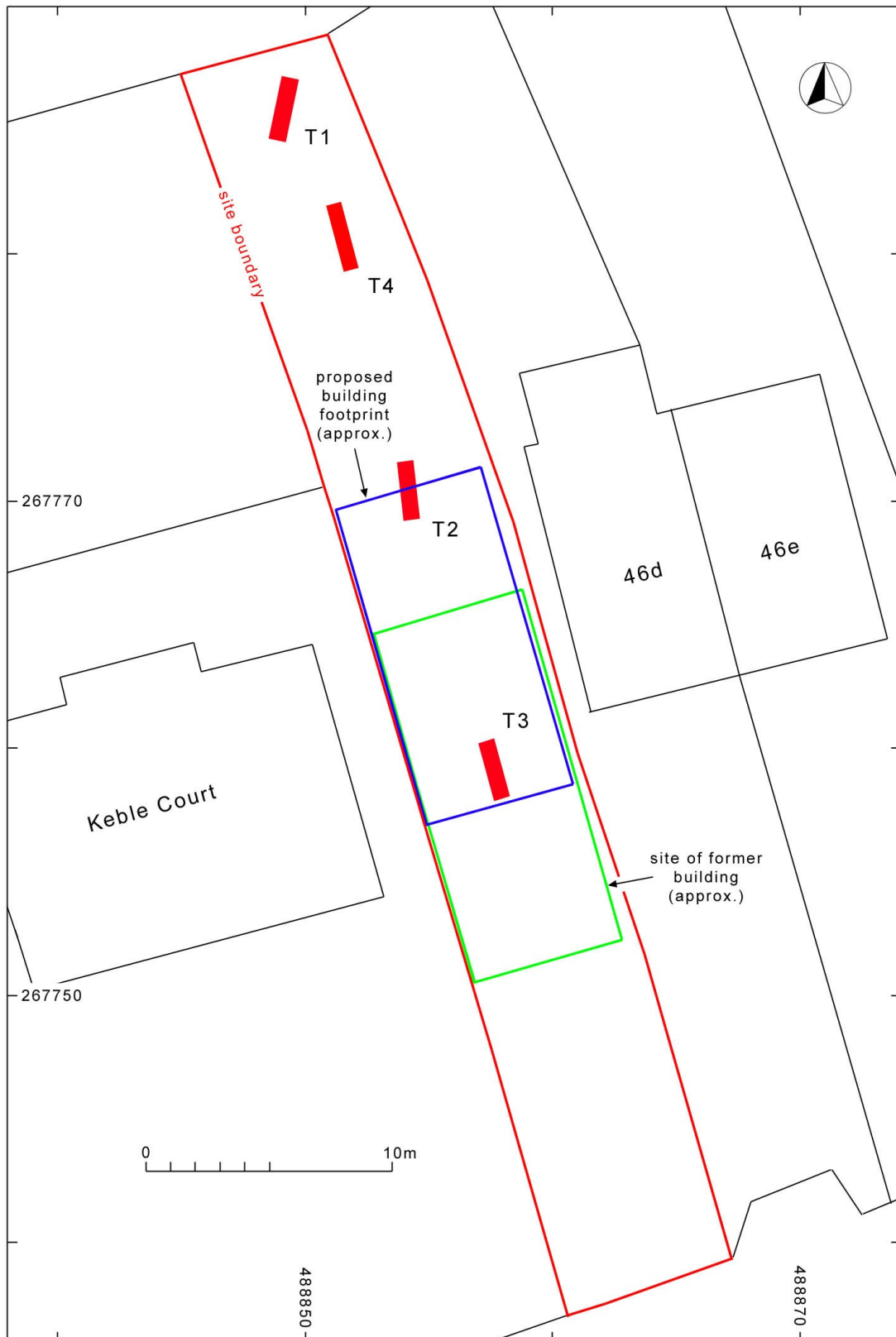


Figure 3. Plan of ERA Trenches 1 to 4

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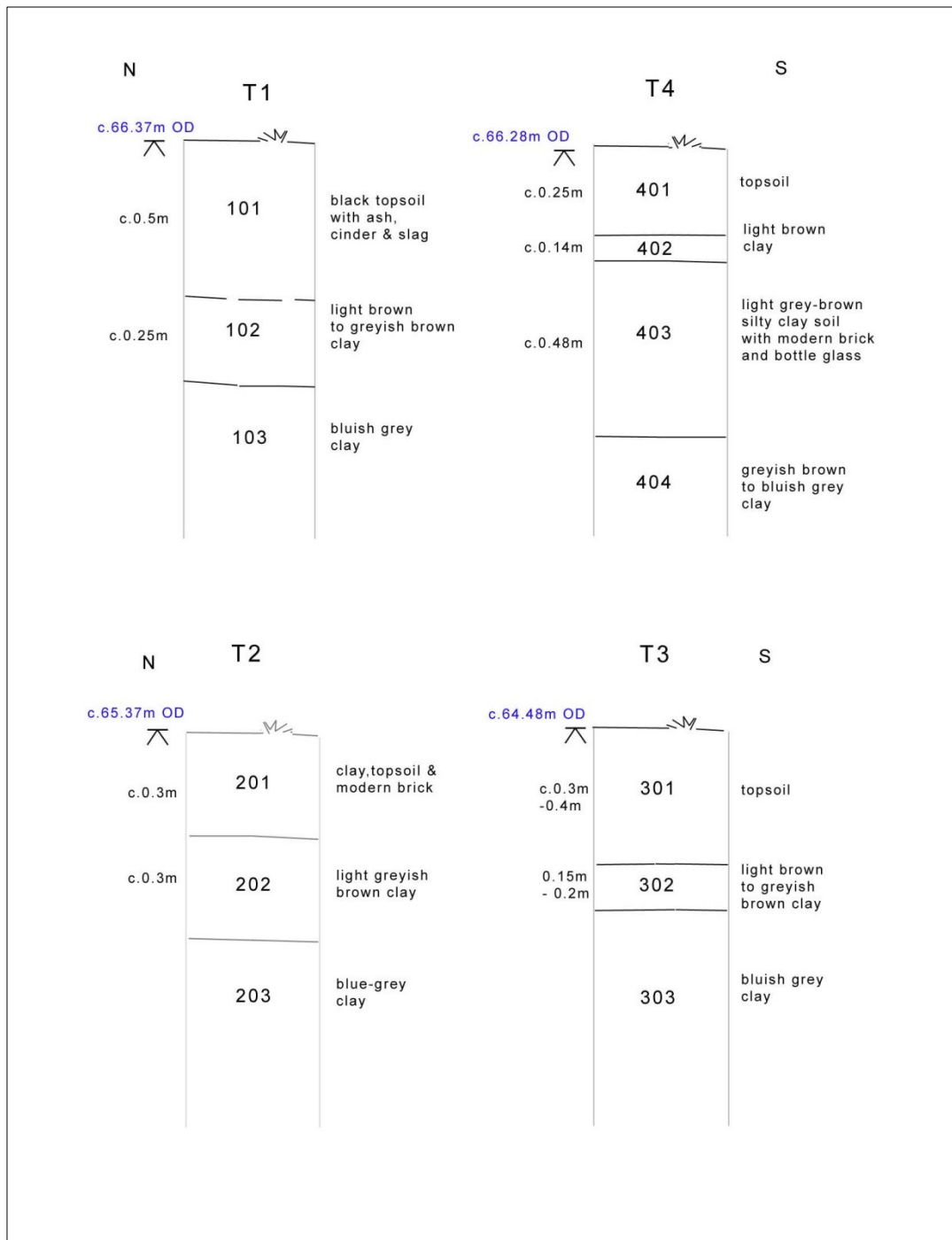


Figure 4. Trenches 1 to 4: diagrammatic soil profiles



Figure 5. Pre-excitation overview of site. Facing S



Figure 6. Pre-excitation overview of site. Facing NW



Figure 7. Trench 1, facing NNW. Land drain within upper geological stratum. Note slag above trench side (R)



Figure 8. Trench 4, facing NNE



Figure 9. Trench 2, facing SW



Figure 10. Trench 3, facing SW