



Alterations and Additions
to the Rhodes Building,
Oriel College, Oxford

Archaeological Evaluation Report





**ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS TO THE
RHODES BUILDING,
ORIEL COLLEGE, OXFORD**

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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* I= INTERNAL DRAFT E= EXTERNAL DRAFT F= FINAL

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Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Oriel College, Oxford, through their agents Marcus Beale Associates, to undertake an archaeological evaluation at the Rhodes Building, Oriel College, Oxford, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 451614 206232. Archaeological investigations were undertaken in advance of a scheme of additions and alteration to the Grade II Listed Rhodes Building (built 1911) which lies within the College grounds. The evaluation was undertaken over 3 weeks, between 15th August and 1st September 2011 and involved the hand-excavation of three test pits (TPs 1, 3, 5), two within the basement of the east wing of the Rhodes Building (south) and one against the external, south wall of the same wing.

The evaluation recorded masonry and brickwork structural remains of medieval/early post-medieval and 18th-20th century date, associated not only with the 'Doll's House' (built 1743) and Rhodes Building (built 1911), but also with earlier structures, probably cellars. No artefactual, structural or stratigraphic evidence of pre-medieval date (i.e. prior to the 11th-13th centuries) was recorded.

In the north of the proposed basement development 19th century brick cellar walls were recorded, with a light-well facing Magpie Lane. A well-preserved flagstone floor was partially exposed, lying directly on the natural gravel geology (at 59.15m aOD). Although undated, the artefactual evidence from the cellar infilling, undertaken prior to the Rhodes Building construction, included 11th-13th and 16th-20th century pottery and many large masonry rubble blocks, suggesting the demolition of a medieval (11th-15th century) or early post-medieval (16th-17th century) cellared structure at this location, probably associated with shops fronting the High Street to the north.

In the south of the proposed basement area a substantial masonry wall lying on the west side of Magpie Lane, along with a poorly-built masonry wall perpendicular to it, both on a slightly different alignment to 19th century brick walls built over them, indicate possible medieval structural remains (cellars?), though the excavations were discontinued before exposing the natural geology.

The north-east corner of this block of land has been subject to a complex structural development over c. 500 years, which is borne out in the cartographic evidence and also the structural remains recorded during the evaluation. Medieval or early post-medieval structural elements, with later (19th century) brick walls, are present in the northern and southern extents of the proposed basement development, which probably represent cellars of domestic and retail buildings fronting onto the High Street and Magpie Lane. Further archaeological observations and recording, during the excavation of the proposed basement development, would undoubtedly clarify the dating, phasing and stratigraphic relationships of the various structural remains recorded and tentatively characterised during the evaluation.

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Acknowledgements

This programme of evaluation work was commissioned and funded by Oriel College, and Wessex Archaeology would like to thank the staff at Oriel College, in particular Gerald Inns and Wilfred Stevens for their considerable help during the fieldwork. David Richardson and his colleagues were also of great help during the evaluation. Wessex Archaeology would also like to acknowledge the assistance and helpful advice from David Radford (Oxford City Council Archaeologist).

The fieldwork was directed by Chris Ellis (Senior Archaeologist) and Matthew Kendall (Supervisor) with the assistance of Tom Burt and Ben Cullen. This report was compiled by Chris Ellis, with contributions from Lorraine Mephram (Finds). The figures were prepared by Linda Coleman. The fieldwork and post-excavation were managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Rob Armour Chelu.

**ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS TO THE
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Archaeological Evaluation Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) were commissioned by Oriel College, Oxford (the Client), through their agents Marcus Beale Associates, to undertake an archaeological evaluation at the Rhodes Building, Oriel College (**Figure 1**), centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 451614 206232, (hereafter 'the Site').

1.1.2 Archaeological investigations were undertaken in advance of a scheme of additions and alteration to the Grade II Listed Rhodes Building (built 1911) which lies within the College grounds.

1.1.3 The evaluation was undertaken over 2 weeks, between 15th August and 1st September 2011. This report documents the results of the archaeological evaluation and presents an assessment of the results of these works.

1.1.4 The proposed development scheme comprises:

- Demolition of the existing upper ground floor;
- Construction of a third floor, providing 10 additional units of accommodation;
- Construction of a new roof;
- Installation of a lift from basement to third floors, in order to allow improved accessibility;
- External landscaping of St. Mary's Quad to improve accessibility – this will involve no below ground excavation;
- Internal alterations to provide en-suite bathrooms and other facility modernisations;
- Extension of the existing basement beneath the east wing of the Rhodes building;
- Widening of existing basement staircase access;
- The excavation of a rainwater collection tank.

1.2 The Site, location and geology

1.2.1 The Site is situated within the city of Oxford, close to the modern urban centre and within the extent of the medieval town. It lies entirely within lands owned by Oriel College, founded in 1324, and forms the northern range of St. Mary's Quad.

1.2.2 The Rhodes Building fronts onto the High Street. It is bounded to the east by Magpie Lane and to the west by Oriel Street. The Rhodes Building faces south onto St. Mary's Quad (**Figures 1 & 2**), a rectangular enclosed area of campus which follows the traditional Oxford University college style of four sides of building enclosing an open space.

1.2.3 The geology of the Site is mapped as River Gravels. The gravels underlying the Site have been identified as Summertown-Radley gravels, relating to the Second Terrace of the River Thames (Geological Survey of Great Britain Sheet 236). For a specific description see *Results* section below.

1.3 Archaeological Background

1.4 Introduction

1.4.1 A previous archaeological desk-based assessment (Wessex Archaeology 2010) was prepared which established that, due to the Site's location in the urban core of the historic settlement, there was an enhanced potential for deeply stratified archaeological deposits to survive. A particular risk of identifying archaeological remains dating from the late Saxon period onwards was identified, although it was assessed that these remains were likely to have been truncated by later medieval and post-medieval construction.

1.5 Summary of archaeological and historical context

Prehistoric

1.5.1 The Site is situated on the Summertown-Radley gravel terrace of the Thames. These deposits have yielded Palaeolithic artefacts in the past. To the north, the Oxford Wolvercote gravel deposits have yielded numerous Acheulian handaxes that pre-date the Summertown-Radley gravels, although archaeological evidence for later prehistoric activity in the area is limited.

Romano-British

1.5.2 During the Romano-British period Oxford was the centre of a major pottery industry that began in the 1st century AD and continued into the early 5th century. Roman coins have been found adjacent to the Site whilst other finds have been recorded at Brasenose College.

Saxon

1.5.3 No early Saxon occupation is recorded within the area defined by the medieval walled town. However, there is some evidence for an early Saxon presence around the areas of known Romano-British activity, to the north and north-east, and a nunnery founded by St. Frideswide during the 7th or 8th century may have existed on the site of Christ Church Cathedral.

1.5.4 The projected route of the eastern side of the primary Saxon *burh* defensive ditch extends in a north-south direction beneath the centre of the present Oriel College and the Rhodes Building, across the High Street and under St. Mary's Church and the Radcliffe Camera. The original *burh* defences included a rampart c. 8-13m wide and c. 1.6m high with an external defensive ditch c. 4m in front of the rampart.

- 1.5.5 A possible section of the *burh* ditch was recorded in the front quadrangle of Corpus Christi College in 1972, the base of which was found to be in excess of 4m deep.
- 1.5.6 Within the immediate environs of the Site several Saxon features and find-spots are recorded. Sites include the Church of St. Mary which is believed to have later Saxon origins, though the fabric in the present structure dates to the 13th century AD, St. Mary's Entry of Brasenose College and a number of sites along the High Street.

Medieval

- 1.5.7 Oriel College was founded in 1324 by Adam de Brome, Rector of St. Mary's Church and was first located in the building now known as Tackley's Inn. In 1326 the college was re-founded and endowed by Edward II.
- 1.5.8 St. Mary's Hall was appropriated by Oriel College in 1326, whilst Bedel Hall, to the south of St. Mary's Hall, became part of Oriel in 1455 when it merged with St. Mary's. By the 16th century St. Mary's Hall had developed a separate identity as St. Mary's Society and did not return to Oriel College until 1902. St. Mary's Hall was not situated immediately facing the High Street, and a row of shops with medieval origins existed between Oriel Street and Magpie Lane until they were demolished to make way for the Rhodes Building in 1908.
- 1.5.9 Within the immediate environs of the Site numerous medieval features and find-spots have been identified, including a number of 11th to 13th century pits within the immediate environs of Oriel.

Post-medieval and modern

- 1.5.10 Ralph Aga's 1578 map of Oxford shows a row of two storey buildings facing the High Street, presumably a mix of shop fronts and tenements. St. Mary's Hall and presumably Bedel Hall are clearly depicted off Oriel Street. A row of tenement buildings situated on the west side of Magpie Lane is also well defined. Aga's map depicts an area within St. Mary's Quad, as open ground partially enclosed by the building listed above.
- 1.5.11 St. Mary's Hall appears to have been largely rebuilt over the centuries; parts of the 15th century Hall survive within the present building which was rebuilt.
- 1.5.12 Loggan's map of 1675 illustrates tenements and shops fronting the High Street, with further tenements on the west side of Magpie Lane. Loggan's map also clearly depicts the St. Mary's Hall Buttery, Hall and Chapel (built 1639-40), and the south-west angle of the Quad appears to have been constructed by the time Loggan's map was completed.
- 1.5.13 Williams' map of 1743 was produced in the same year that the east range of St. Mary's Quad was rebuilt. The 1743 rebuild retained a medieval wall situated on the west side of Magpie Lane. Williams' map depicts St. Mary's Quad essentially in the same form it was to remain until the construction of the Rhodes Building in 1908-1911. The major addition to the northern portion of the Quad being the addition of the Principles Lodgings attached to the north-east of St. Mary's Hall.

- 1.5.14 Two enclosed areas of apparently undeveloped land appear to survive in the north-east corner of the Quad, north of the St. Mary's Hall buildings within the area occupied by shops fronting the High Street.
- 1.5.15 Ordnance Survey mapping produced in 1876 suggests an amalgamation of two of the High Street fronting shop buildings in the north-west corner of the Quad and the central High Street fronting shop would appear to be in the use of St. Mary's Hall as access onto the High Street.
- 1.5.16 The construction of the Rhodes Building, completed in 1911, included the demolition of all the medieval High Street fronting shops and the buildings on the west side of Magpie Lane, north of the East Range. The demolition also included the Principle's Lodgings to the north-east of St. Mary's Hall; this was done to make way for the southern extent of the Rhodes Building itself, and to clear ground for the northern portion of the newly laid central grounds of St. Mary's Quad.

2 AIMS

2.1 General

- 2.1.1 The aims of the archaeological field evaluation were to:
- clarify the presence/absence and extent of any buried archaeological remains within the Site that may be threatened by development;
 - identify, within the constraints of the evaluation, the date, character, condition and depth of any surviving remains within the Site;
 - assess the degree of existing impacts to sub-surface horizons and to document the extent of archaeological survival of buried deposits; and
 - produce a report which will present the results of the evaluation in sufficient detail to allow an informed decision to be made concerning the Site's archaeological potential.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 Full details of the evaluation methodology are contained within the Written Scheme of Investigation document (Wessex Archaeology 2011) and will not be rehearsed at length here, except to highlight variations made in the field which were agreed by David Radford (OCC) and Oriol College.
- 3.1.2 Up to four test pits were proposed within two areas of the Site. Initially, three test pits (**TPs 1, 3 and 4**) were proposed within the proposed cellar area with the fourth (**TP2**) located in St. Mary's Quad where a rainwater collection tank was to be constructed (Wessex Archaeology 2011). Only two of the 'original' test pits were completed (**TPs 1 and 3**) with an additional test pit (**TP5, Figure 1**) representing a geotechnical test pit hand-excavated by Oriol College staff prior to WA attendance on Site, and subsequently subject to full archaeological recording by WA staff.

- 3.1.3 Discussions with Oriel College indicated that it may not be necessary to excavate **TP2** at this stage, as changes to development plans may preclude the need for the rainwater tank. **TP1** was located slightly to the north of its intended location. By agreement with David Radford (OCC) and Oriel College at a Site meeting on 18th August 2011, it was agreed that **TP3** could be moved slightly and **TP4** would not be required if **TP3** was undertaken and showed that a 19th century brick cellar already exposed in **TP1** extended this far southwards. The location of **TP3** was moved slightly south-eastwards into the south-east corner of the Rhodes Building basement, to investigate the nature and extent of both south and east structural elevation foundations of this part of the building.
- 3.1.4 The test pits were initially broken out by college appointed contractors or employees. Archaeological excavation proceeded by hand to a depth at which the top of archaeological levels, or the top of natural deposits, were exposed. Further investigations in **TP1** were agreed by David Radford (OCC) and Oriel College. This was to ascertain the depth of any natural geology or archaeology to at least a depth of 3.0m (the formation level of the proposed lift pit at this location). In agreement with Oriel College, **TP3** was discontinued at 2.40m depth due to Health and Safety concerns.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 This section includes all information on the natural deposits and the archaeological features, deposits and structural remains recorded during the evaluation. A detailed summary of the stratigraphic sequence, deposits and structural remains recorded in each evaluation test pit are listed in **Appendix 1**.

4.2 Natural deposits

- 4.2.1 The gravels underlying the Site have been identified as Summertown-Radley gravels, relating to the Second Terrace of the River Thames.
- 4.2.2 Natural geology was only encountered in the base of **TPs 1** and **5**, at depths of respectively 2.76m (59.15m aOD) and 1.30m (60.72m aOD). It was characterised by a dark reddish-brown, coarse sandy (**120**, **TP1**) or silty sandy clay (**505**, **TP5**) matrix containing very common sub-angular and sub-rounded gravel (<10mm). In **TP1** clear evidence of the upward fining of this deposit is recorded with the presence of finer, less gravelly silt of the upper zone of the natural geology (**117**), which, like **505**, contained charcoal flecks, probably indicative of post-medieval disturbance during earlier construction phases on the Site.

4.3 Evaluation Test Pits

Test Pit 1 (Figure 2)

- 4.3.1 This test pit (3.75m long by 1m wide and 3.30m deep) was the deepest of the three test pits excavated, achieving the depth of the proposed lift pit (3.0m) to be located at the west end of the test pit.

4.3.2 The middle 0.50m of the test pit was only excavated to 1.90m depth due to Health and Safety concerns regarding the removal of large masonry rubble blocks (**111**) from its base.

4.3.3 The natural geology (**117/120**) was recorded only in the base of the west end of the test pit and was directly overlaid by a flagstone floor (**113**) and possibly cut by the foundation construction cut [**118**] for wall [**106**].

Cellar flagstone floor

4.3.4 The flagstone floor (**113**, **Plate 1**), of a possible late medieval/early post-medieval cellar was recorded at the western end of the test pit (0.80m–0.60m in extent). It comprised a small number of unmortared, dressed, 0.10m thick, fine limestone flags (the largest 0.54m by 0.44m) set directly on natural silt (**117**). A 19th century brick (stretcher on edge) within the floor (removed to allow further excavation) may represent the result of a later repair.

4.3.5 A roughly dressed sub-square limestone block (0.30m square and 0.33m high) sat within a regular gap in the flagstone floor suggesting it was *in situ* and an integral part of the floor rather than part of the large masonry rubble layer (**111**) that overlay it. The block probably represents a padstone for a timber upright post supporting a cellar roof.

4.3.6 There is no direct stratigraphic evidence between the flagstone floor (**113**) and the concrete foundation [**112**] to brick cellar walls [**106**] and [**109**], which lie to the west and north respectively. However, the screed of the concrete foundations of these walls [**112**] physically overlies (**113**) proving the flagstone floor is earlier. This is further supported by the orientation of walls [**106**] and [**109**], which although perpendicular to one another, are not parallel or perpendicular to the joints of the flagstone floor (**113**).

Concrete foundations

4.3.7 Concrete foundations were recorded at a depth of 2.52m–2.60m below floor level (c. 53.40m aOD). Those at the west end of the test pit [**112**] are equivalent to [**115/116**] at the east end of the test pit, supporting brick cellar walls [**107**] and [**109**]. These concrete foundations, at the west end at least, were recorded laid within a construction cut [**118**] cutting the natural geology (**117**). The foundations projected 0.20m–0.30m from the brick elevations [**106**], [**107**] and [**109**] were 0.45m–0.70m(+) deep, extending below 58.67m aOD.

4.3.8 The concrete foundations were characterised by a hard, light grey, brick rubble-rich (<50mm) Portland Cement which (as mentioned earlier) physically overlies the flagstone floor (**113**). All three recorded brick elevations ([**106**], [**107**] and [**109**]) are supported by these foundations.

Cellar walls (brickwork)

4.3.9 The west, north and east sides of the test pit were delineated by brick walls [**106**], [**109**] and [**107**] respectively. All were in a regular English Bond with medium (10mm–15mm) flush jointing set with a hard, light grey, Portland Cement. Walls [**107**] and [**109**] were bonded and broadly contemporary, but the different stepped, header, foundation courses (three for [**109**] and six for

[107]) and the restriction of the 'light well' opening (in [107] see below) would suggest wall [109] is later than [107].

- 4.3.10 Although wall [106] abutted [109], no discernible butt joint was identified for the concrete foundation [112] of either wall, although access was very restricted and only a small exposure was visible.
- 4.3.11 Although [106] was added later, the coursing, bonding, bonding agent and brick fabric, size, colouring were all consistent, suggesting a degree of relative contemporaneity. Stepped foundations (header courses) were noted for all elevations, resting directly on [112] and [115/116] at c. 53.40m aOD. Wall [106] had only two header courses of stepped foundation at its base.
- 4.3.12 At a depth of 0.76m (61.21m aOD) a slate levelling course was evident in the brickwork of all three elevations, the brickwork above [119] clearly being of a later phase of construction. In wall [107] a stepped and slate mortared joint between it and [119] clearly showed the blocking of a 'light well' or access chute into the cellar from Magpie Lane (to the immediate east) during the construction of the Rhodes Building.

Cellar infilling

- 4.3.13 A number of building rubble (103,105 and 111) and building rubble-rich soil layers (102, 104 and 110) were utilised to infill the cellar prior to the construction of the Rhodes Building. Many of the fills were of a dark greyish-brown, gritty, sandy texture, most probably derived from elements of the natural geology in the area. Both soil and predominantly rubble layers included 18th to 19th century bricks, common roughly dressed and well-dressed limestone building blocks, flags and roof slates and lumps of cementitious mortar as well as fragments of each. Archaeological finds included medieval and post-medieval pottery, copper alloy and iron building materials (straps, nails and 'fireback'), bottle and vessel glass, clay pipe fragments (18th–19th century date), oyster shell and animal bone.
- 4.3.14 A north-south aligned cut [108], 1.38m deep and 1.40m wide, which cut (104) and was filled with (103), was recorded at the west end of the test pit. It was initially thought to be a construction cut for wall [106] but is probably a geotechnical inspection pit, probably excavated in the early 20th century through the cellar backfills. It was likely to have been excavated prior to the construction of the Rhodes Building, possibly to examine the nature and extent of the underlying structural remains which would need to support the Rhodes Building superstructure.

Rhodes Building

- 4.3.15 The 19th century cellar walls were utilised to support the early 20th century Rhodes Building brick walls [119], and when infilled, the rubble bedding layer (101) and concrete basement floor (100) of the present building. The latest brickwork comprised regular English Bond brickwork of different size, texture and colouring than the earlier cellar brickwork walls.

Test Pit 3 (Figure 3)

- 4.3.16 The natural geology was not encountered in this test pit, which was 1.80m square, and was discontinued at 2.40m depth (59.55m aOD) due to constraints of space from concrete, masonry and brick structural remains encountered.

Masonry walls

- 4.3.17 The earliest structural remains recorded represented a 0.55m(+) wide, north-south aligned, masonry wall [306] along the east side of the test pit (fronting onto Magpie Lane to the east). The top of the wall lay at 0.66m depth (61.27m aOD) and extended below 2.36m depth (59.59m aOD). It comprised a moderately regularly coursed limestone wall of roughly dressed (0.20m–0.30m) and tabular (<0.10m) limestone blocks set in a lime mortar. It was abutted by masonry wall [309] in the north and concrete foundations [307/308] and brick wall [303] to the south (**Plate 2**).
- 4.3.18 Wall [306] was not perpendicular to [303]/[307/308], but was parallel with the alignment of Magpie Lane (which it fronted). The wall construction, material, bonding agent and alignment would suggest a medieval or early post-medieval date, subsequently reused as a foundation for the eastern elevation of the Rhodes Building which had an alignment slightly west of north from wall [306].
- 4.3.19 Wall [309] abutted wall [306] to which it lay perpendicular, and had been partially truncated by the installation of possible post-medieval services (305) to the west. Wall [309] was poorly constructed of irregularly coursed, roughly dressed and irregular sub-rectangular limestone blocks, lacking any bonding agent apart from a brown sandy clay soil derived from the natural geology. The wall was 0.47m(+) wide, 1.32m(+) long and 1.26m(+) high, though ground testing indicated that this might extend for an additional 1.0m(+).
- 4.3.20 In the south of the test pit (**Plate 3**), east-west aligned concrete foundations [307/308] were recorded lying within a vertical construction cut [302], which was also backfilled with rubble-rich soils (310 and 311). The foundations abutted masonry wall [306] to the east, though did not lie perpendicular to it. Its upper extent laid at 1.28m depth (60.67m aOD) which extended 0.24m beyond the brick elevation [303] which it supported. It extended for 1.14m(+) and was comprised of a hard brick rubble-rich (<50mm) Portland Cement, with clear indications of the mortar laid within shuttering ([307] instead of poured into a construction cut [308]).

Brick walls

- 4.3.21 Overlying masonry wall [306] and concrete foundation [307/308] were brick walls to the east [304] and south [303] respectively. The brick walls were bonded together, with [303] and 'keyed' into the masonry of wall [306]. Walls [303] and [304] were both laid in English Bond with medium flush jointing set in Portland Cement. The brick size, texture and colouring is identical to that used for the cellar walls recorded in TP1 ([106], [107] and [109]) and indicative of a similar 19th century date for construction. Wall [304] was bonded to additional brickwork [312] of a chimney still *in situ* and probably an original fixture of the Rhodes Building.

Modern features

- 4.3.22 A large block of brick rubble-rich Portland Cement (**305**) was recorded in the west section of the test pit, which is probably the mortared protective covering to a modern drain service, which was seen to have truncated walls [**306**] and [**309**] to the east.
- 4.3.23 The infilling between the structural remains (**301**, **313** and **314**) comprised predominantly soils (silty clay loams) with less building rubble inclusions in comparison to those from **TP1**. Overlying these were a rubble bedding layer (**315**) for the 0.55m deep concrete floor (**300**) of the Rhodes Building.

Test Pit 5 (Figure 4)

- 4.3.24 This test pit was 1.30m by 0.70m in extent and was excavated to only 1.58m depth due to space constraints between the Rhodes Building and the Doll's House. Natural geology (505) was recorded at 1.30m depth (60.72m aOD), directly overlaid by the foundations [**504**] to the north elevation of the 'Doll's House' building (built in 1743) to the south.

'Doll's House' Foundations

- 4.3.25 The east-west aligned, limestone block and unfrogged brick foundations [**504**] were characterised by a mixed and irregularly coursed, roughly-dressed blocks (c. 0.20m–0.30m, 0.10m thick) and irregular brickwork, laid with a cementitious pale yellowish-brown sandy mortar. The foundations had been physically truncated, to the full depth of the test pit, by the construction of the brick foundations [**502**].

19th Century and Rhodes Building

- 4.3.26 Wall [**502**] comprised a 1.30m high brick foundation, laid in a regular stretcher bond, with three header courses of the stepped foundation to the south, laid physically on masonry of [**504**], which had been truncated by the construction cut [**503**] of wall [**502**]. The brickwork lies at c. 60.60m (aOD), very similar to that of [**303**, **TP3**] of which it is part.
- 4.3.27 The brickwork of [**502**] was overlaid by the masonry of the south elevation (East Wing) of the Rhodes Building. Between the two foundations a building rubble-rich backfill (**501**) had been dumped and overlaid with flagstone paving (**500**).

5 FINDS

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 A quantity of finds was recovered from the Site (c. 100kg), predominantly comprising stone samples and masonry pieces, deriving mostly from the building rubble-rich and soil backfills of the 19th century cellar recorded in **TP1**. Preliminary examination of this assemblage identified it to be of mixed date, ranging from medieval to modern, and representing redeposited material. All finds are of commonly occurring types, and there are no objects of more than very local significance. Accordingly, the finds have not been treated in any detail, and their retention for long-term curation is not recommended.

5.2 Pottery

5.2.1 Amongst the pottery are sherds of medieval wares (early medieval Oxford ware [OXAC]; Abingdon ware [OXAG]; Minety-type ware [OXBB]; and Brill/Boarstall type wares [OXAM; OXAP]); early post-medieval coarsewares (redwares and slipwares); German and English stonewares; tinglazed earthenware; porcelain; and later factory-made finewares (white salt glaze, creamware, whiteware, fine redware). The overall date range suggested by this range of wares runs from the 11th century through to the 19th or 20th century.

5.3 Other Finds

5.3.1 Other finds include animal bone (kitchen waste comprising standard domestic species); vessel glass (bottles and small phials, 18th century or later); clay tobacco pipes (stems, and one incomplete bowl of 18th or 19th century date with the maker's initials *CP* in relief on the spur); ironworking slag; and ceramic roof tile (including one medieval ridge tile).

5.3.2 Of interest (from the modern backfill of **TP3**, context **301**) was a small ceramic ball (c. 30mm in diameter), fired (or perhaps painted) to a white colour, with a red painted line around the girth. This is clearly a gaming ball of some kind, perhaps used, for example, as the *cochonnet* or jack in a game of boules (although these are normally made of wood) and is probably of 19th–20th century date.

6 DISCUSSION

6.1.1 The evaluation has recorded structural masonry and brickwork remains of medieval/early post-medieval and 18th–20th century date, associated not only with the 'Doll's House' (built 1743) and Rhodes Building (built 1911), but also with earlier structures. No artefactual, structural or stratigraphic evidence of pre-medieval date (11th–13th centuries) was recorded.

6.1.2 In **TP1** concrete foundations supporting brickwork elevations of a 19th century cellar, one of which had a 'light well' or access chute opening onto Magpie Lane, subsequently disused in the 19th century before being finally blocked during the construction of the Rhodes Building. The cellar was one of many still used under the north wing of the Rhodes Building, which were integral parts of shops fronting onto the High Street in post-medieval and probably medieval times.

6.1.3 A well-preserved flagstone floor pre-dated the 19th century cellar walls' construction and possibly included regularly spaced masonry 'padstones' to support timber uprights holding the floor joists above. Although undated, the artefactual evidence from the 20th century cellar infilling (including 11th–13th, 16th–17th century pottery), and the large masonry rubble blocks directly lying on the flagstone floor, would suggest the demolition of a medieval or early post-medieval cellared structure at this location.

- 6.1.4 In **TPs 3 and 5** brickwork elevations of the south side of the eastern wing of the Rhodes Building were recorded, the eastern elevation of which fronted onto Magpie Lane, and laid directly onto a well-built masonry wall. The substantial masonry wall is laid parallel with (and fronting onto) Magpie Lane and at a slightly different angle to the 19th century concrete foundations to the south wall, and brick walls to the south and east. This structure, which was built over and keyed into by later brickwork of likely 19th century date, probably represents the frontage of a medieval or early post-medieval structure, possibly those shown on 16th and 17th century bird's eye view engravings of Oxford (Wessex Archaeology 2010, **Plates 1 & 2**).
- 6.1.5 The reuse of earlier structural elements in later rebuilds was common and it is known that, during its rebuilding in 1743, the eastern wall of the 'Doll's House', which is medieval in date, was retained (Wessex Archaeology 2010,11).
- 6.1.6 The height differential (1.28m) between the base of the cellar brickwork in **TP1** (59.32m aOD) and the brickwork of the south wall of the Rhodes Building in **TPs 3 and 5** (c. 60.60m aOD) suggests that the probable 19th century cellar does not extend southwards as far as the location of **TP3**. The presence of a masonry wall parallel to an earlier (pre-Rhodes Building) alignment of Magpie Lane would suggest **TP3** has recorded another, separate structure. The earliest phase of structural remains could well be of medieval date, possibly another cellar for a building fronting onto Magpie Lane.
- 6.1.7 The proposed development would presently require a formation level of the lift pit (**TP1** location) of 3.0m depth (c. 58.97m aOD), 0.35m below the level of the flagstone floor. Further excavation may expose associated structural elements (walls, padstones etc.) that would help to further characterise the nature and extent of these remains. The removal of the flagstone floor has the potential to expose archaeologically significant deposits or features below, though the construction of cellars may have removed all or significant evidence for any earlier activity.
- 6.1.8 The north-east corner of this block of land has been subject to a complex structural development over the last 500 years, which is borne out not only in the cartographic evidence but also in the structural remains recorded during the evaluation. Medieval or early post-medieval structural remains are present in the northern and southern extents of the proposed basement development, which probably represent cellars of domestic and retail buildings fronting onto the High Street and Magpie Lane.
- 6.1.9 Further archaeological observations and recording, during the excavation of the proposed basement, would undoubtedly clarify the dating, phasing and stratigraphic relationships of the various structural remains recorded and tentatively characterised during the evaluation.

7 ARCHIVE

- 7.1.1 The project archive was prepared in accordance with the guidelines outlined in Appendix 3 of *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991) and in accordance with the *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage* (UKIC 1990). The excavated material and archive, including plans, photographs and written records, are currently held at the Wessex Archaeology (Salisbury) offices under the project code **73971**, the contents of which are listed in **Appendix 2**. It is intended that the archive should ultimately be deposited with the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

8 COPYRIGHT

- 8.1.1 This report may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (e.g. Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which we are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferrable by Wessex Archaeology. You are reminded that you remain bound by the conditions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of the report.

9 REFERENCES

Wessex Archaeology, 2010, '*Alterations and Additions to the Rhodes Building, Oriel College, Oxford: Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment*. Unpublished client report ref: 73970.02 (March).

Wessex Archaeology, 2011, '*Alterations and Additions to the Rhodes Building, Oriel College, Oxford: Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment*. Unpublished client report ref: 73971.01 (August).

APPENDIX 1 – TEST PIT SUMMARY TABLES

All archaeological deposits/features shown in **bold**.

All (+) indicate deposits/features not fully excavated.

'Depth' equals depth from present ground surface.

(Numbers) = Layers; [Numbers] = Structural remains or cut features

Test Pit No. 1	Co-ordinates: (SW) 451627.31E, 206232.76N; (SE) 451630.88E, 206233.67N Ground Level (m AOD): 61.97	Dimensions: 3.75 x 1.0m Max. depth: 3.30m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
(100)	Modern concrete slab – floor to modern basement.	0 – 0.30
(101)	Modern concrete rubble layer – bedding for (100).	0.30 – 0.50
(102)	Soil backfill to 19 th cent. cellar – a mid to dark greyish-brown, gritty sandy silt with a dark reddish hue. Contains very common roof slates (<0.15m), limestone block and unfrogged 19 th cent. brick fragments (<0.15m) as well as mortar lumps and pieces of very well-dressed limestone block frags. Finds included post-medieval pottery of 16 th – 17 th and 19 th – 20 th centuries, clay pipe, oyster shell and animal bone, iron and bronze objects including large structural nails and pins, polished marble frags and decorative cast iron plate from fire surround.	0.50 – 1.20
(103)	Building rubble backfill to 19 th cent. cellar – below 102, fill of [108]. A very pale grey coarse sand matrix containing abundant concrete lumps (<40mm), dust and grit as well as very common roof slates (<0.30m) hence heavily voided and loose. Probably backfill to inspection pit for checking foundations (106) prior to Rhodes Building construction (1911).	0.90 – 2.56
(104)	Soil backfill to 19 th cent. cellar – cut by early 20 th cent. inspection pit (108). A dark brown silty clay (reddish hue) containing limestone block frags (<0.20m) as well as cbm, post-medieval (16 th – 17 th and 19 th – 20 th centuries) pottery, clay pipe, bone and glass.	1.12 – 1.60
(105)	Building rubble backfill to 19 th cent. cellar – below 102. A very pale grey coarse sand matrix containing abundant concrete lumps (<40mm), dust and grit as well as very common roof slates (<0.20m) hence heavily voided and loose.	1.48 – 1.94
[106]	19 th Cent. brick cellar wall & 2 courses stepped foundation, abuts cellar wall [109]. Laid onto concrete foundation [112]. Overlaid by brickwork [119]. Laid within construction cut (118). Uncertain strat. relationship to flagstone floor [113]. A N/S aligned brick elevation at west end of TP set in English Bond with Portland Cement, having moderate (10 – 15mm) flush jointing. Identical bricks to [107] and [109].	0.88 – 2.60

Test Pit No. 1 Cont...	Co-ordinates: (SW) 451627.31E, 206232.76N; (SE) 451630.88E, 206233.67N Ground Level (m AOD): 61.97	Dimensions: 3.75 x 1.0m Max.depth: 3.30m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
[107]	19 th Cent. brick cellar wall & 6 courses stepped foundation, bonded to cellar wall [109]. Laid on concrete foundation [115]. Overlaid by brickwork [119]. Laid within construction cut [118]. A N/S aligned brick elevation at east end of TP set in English Bond with Portland Cement, having moderate (10 – 15mm) flush jointing. Stepped elevation with [119] shows blocked cellar access or light well from Magpie Lane.	0 – 2.54
[108]	Inspection pit – cuts (104), filled with (103). A 1.40m wide and 1.38m deep, N/S aligned cut clearly visible in the south section of TP, at west end. Probably early 20 th cent. Associated with construction of Rhodes Building walls (1911) onto earlier cellar walls.	1.18 – 2.56
[109]	19 th Cent. brick cellar wall & 3 courses stepped foundation, bonded with [107] and abutted by [106]. Laid onto concrete foundation [112]=[115]. Overlaid by brickwork [119]. Laid within construction cut [118]. Uncertain strat. relationship to flagstone floor (113). A N/S aligned brick elevation at west end of TP set in English Bond with Portland Cement, having moderate (10 – 15mm) flush jointing. Identical bricks to [106] and [107].	0.85 – 2.60
(110)	Soil backfill to 19 th cent. cellar – a dark greyish-brown, ‘gritty’ sandy silty clay with a dark reddish hue. Contains limestone block and unfrogged 19 th cent(?) brick fragments (<0.15m) as well as mortar lumps (<80mm). Finds include Medieval (11 th – 13 th centuries) and post-medieval pottery and (18 th – 19 th cent.) bricks and brick frags	1.60 – 2.30
(111)	Soil backfill to 19 th cent. cellar – a dark brown, ‘gritty’, silty clay with a dark reddish hue. Contains very common, large, roughly dressed limestone blocks (<0.30m) and sparse unfrogged 19 th cent(?) brick fragments (<0.15m).	2.30 – 2.62
[112]	Concrete foundations to 19 th cent. cellar (brick) walls [106] and [109], equivalent to [115]=[116] at east end of TP. Laid within construction cut [118]. A brick rubble-rich (<50mm) Portland Cement, extending c.0.20 – 0.30m beyond the brick elevations.	2.60 – 3.30(+)
(113)	Cellar flagstone floor – a 0.80m x 0.60m area of tabular, pale yellow limestone flags (0.10m thick). Recorded at the west end of TP only. Flags of various sizes (largest 0.54m x 0.44m). Laid directly onto natural geology (117). Physically overlaid (in plan) by [112] concrete foundations in places suggesting pre-date 19 th cent. brick cellar walls though no direct strat. relationship. Jointing of flags not in alignment with walls [106] and [109] indicating of a different phase. Sub-square hole for large limestone block (padstone?). Single brick in floor of 19 th cent. date.	2.65 – 2.75
(114)	Concrete screed surface – a pale yellowish-grey Portland Cement mortar with brick rubble inclusions. Overlies the stepped foundations of brickwork foundations [107] and [109] in the east end of TP. Possible repair or raising of cellar floor surface in 19 th cent. before infilling.	2.45 – 2.50

Test Pit No. 1 Cont.	Co-ordinates: (SW) 451627.31E, 206232.76N; (SE) 451630.88E, 206233.67N Ground Level (m AOD): 61.97	Dimensions: 3.75 x 1.0m Max. depth: 3.30m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
[115]	Concrete foundations to 19 th cent. cellar (brick) walls [107] and [109], equivalent to [112] at west end of TP. Overlies [116]. No construction cut discernible. A brick rubble-rich (<50mm) Portland Cement, extending c.0.25 - 0.30m beyond the brick elevations.	2.55 – 3.0(+)
[116]	Concrete foundations to 19 th cent. cellar (brick) wall [107] equivalent to [112] at west end of TP. Overlaid by [116]. No construction cut discernible. A brick rubble-rich (<50mm) Portland Cement, extending c.0.25 - 0.30m beyond the brick elevations.	2.52 – 3.0(+)
(117)	Natural geology – below (113), cut by [118]. A dark reddish-brown slightly clayey silt. Contains rare, sun-rounded and rounded chert(?) gravel (<10mm). Also very rare charcoal flecks. Uppermost zone of natural geology (120).	2.76 - 3.25
[118]	19 th Cent. construction cut remnant – filled with concrete foundation [112], cuts (117). A 0.60m long near-vertical interface seen to immediate east of foundations [112] which were poured into it.	2.60 – 3.25(+)
[119]	Early 20 th Cent. brickwork – laid upon 19 th cent. cellar walls [106], [107], [109]. Irregular English Bond west, north and east elevations to TP, set in Portland Cement with moderate (10 – 15mm) flush joints. Basement walls to Rhodes Building of 1911.	0 – 0.60
(120)	Natural gravel geology – below (117). Only recorded in small excavation area (0.60 by 0.34m) at west end of TP. A dark reddish-brown coarse sandy clay matrix with very common, sub-rounded and rounded chert(?) gravel (<10mm).	3.25 – 3.30(+)

Test Pit No. 3	Co-ordinates: (SW) 451631.77E, 206222.75N; (SE) 451633.50E, 206223.21N Ground Level (m AOD): 61.95m	Dimensions: 1.8 x 1.8m Max. depth: 2.4m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
(300)	Modern concrete basement floor. Overlies (315).	0 – 0.22
(301)	Modern backfill – a mid greyish brown silty clay loam with occasional limestone frags (<70mm) and limestone blocks. Also contains medieval (12 th – 13 th centuries) and post-medieval (17 th – 20 th centuries) pottery, bone and a small fired clay ball (c. 30mm diam.). A gaming ball of some kind, probably of 19 th – 20 th cent. date.	0.51 – 1.56
[302]	Construction cut for wall [303]. Filled with foundations [307]=[308], and backfills (310) & (311). A 1.80m(+) long and 0.13m wide vertical, straight-sided cut, cutting (307) seen in plan and east facing section of TP at south side.	0.56 – 2.36(+)
[303]	19 th cent? Cellar? brick wall – lies within construction cut [302]. East west aligned, 1.24m(+) long with 3 courses of stepped brickwork at the base. Bonded to wall [304] to the east. Set in English Bond with medium flush jointing. Disturbed by incorporation of later lead service pipe. Southern wall of east wing of Rhodes Building (built 1911).	0.07 – 1.28

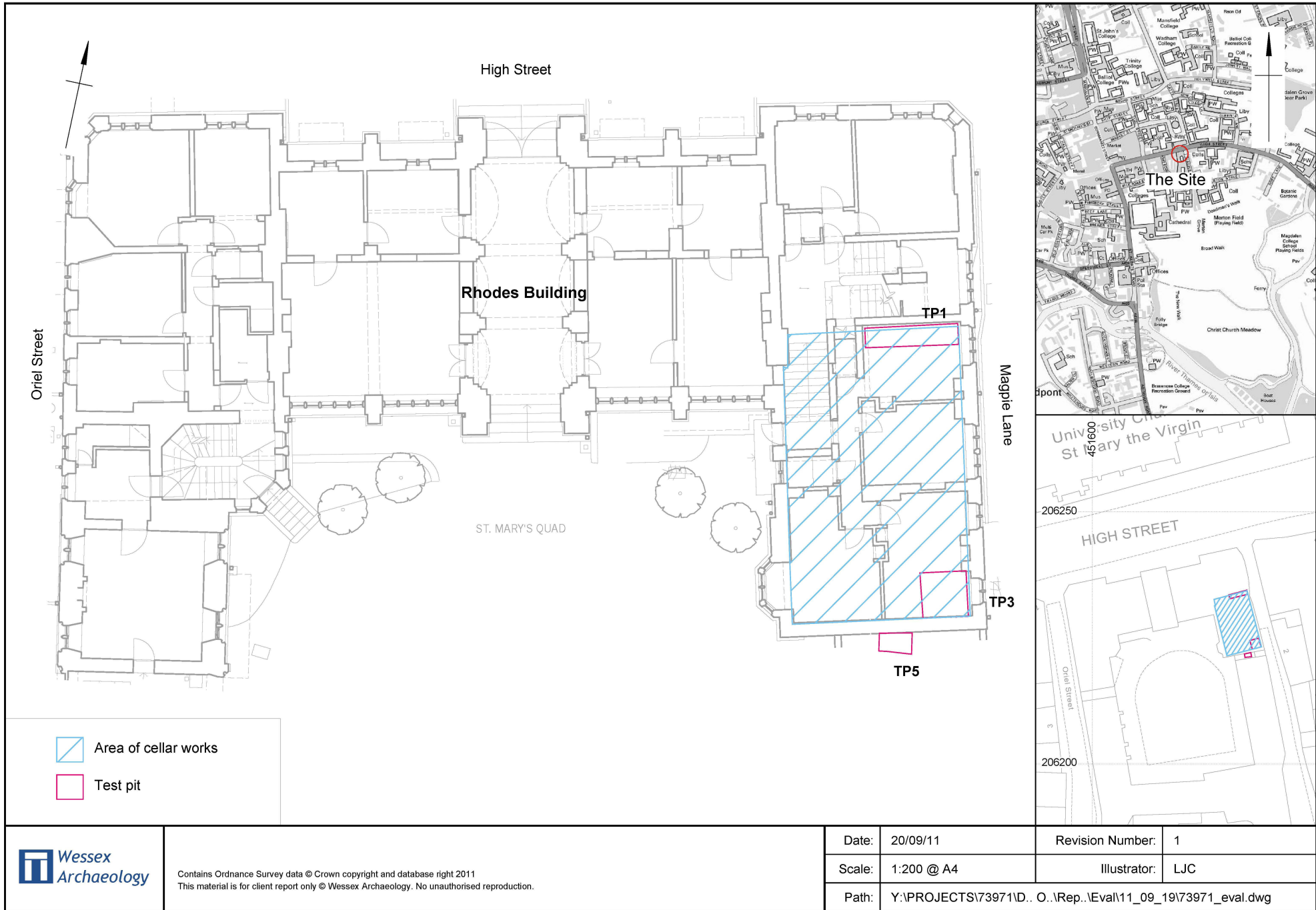
Test Pit No. 3 Cont.	Co-ordinates: (SW) 451631.77E, 206222.75N; (SE) 451633.50E, 206223.21N Ground Level (m AOD): 61.95m	Dimensions: 1.8 x 1.8m Max.depth: 2.4m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
[304]	Early 20 th cent. brick wall – built onto earlier masonry wall [306]. North-south aligned, 1.80m(+) long with 3 courses of stepped brickwork at the base. Bonded to wall [303] to the south and [312] to the north. Set in English Bond with medium flush jointing. Disturbed by incorporation of later lead service pipe at east end. Eastern wall (south end) of east wing of Rhodes Building (built 1911).	0.08 – 0.66
(305)	Possible modern drain and backfill – below [302] and (301). Possibly truncates walls [306] and [311]. A large block of brick rubble-rich Portland Cement mortared material seen in the west section of TP, 1.0m(+) by 0.35m(+) in extent and 0.96m thick. Concrete capping to modern service pipe.	0.58 – 1.54
[306]	Masonry wall – built on by early 20 th cent. brick wall [303]. Wall is 1.80m(+) long, 0.55m(+) wide and 1.70m(+) high. Wall [306] on different alignment to [303] but in alignment with Magpie Lane (to the immediate east). Probably medieval or early post-medieval date.	0.66 – 2.36
[307]	Concrete foundations for brick wall [303] within construction cut [302], identical to [308] below though with a regular vertical elevation. A Portland Cement with brick inclusions (<50mm) throughout with vertical. Abuts masonry wall [306] to the east.	1.28 – 1.48
[308]	Concrete foundations for brick wall [303] within construction cut [302], identical to [307] above though has no vertical elevation, indicating pouring into construction cut [302]. A Portland Cement with brick inclusions (<50mm) throughout with vertical. Abuts masonry wall [306] to the east.	1.48 – 2.42(+)
[309]	Masonry wall - abuts masonry wall [306], probably truncated by [305] to the west. East-west aligned though not perpendicular to [306]. Poorly constructed of roughly dressed and irregular sub-rectangular limestone blocks. Irregularly coursed (10 courses visible at limit of excavation) and lacking any mortar apart from a brown sandy clay (natural geology).	1.02 – 2.28(+)
(310)	Rubble/soil backfill of construction cut for foundations [307]=[308] and brick wall [303] of south wall of Rhodes Building. A light greyish-brown silty sandy loam with moderate limestone and brick inclusions (<50mm) and rare, roof slate frags.	0.62 – 1.44
(311)	Rubble/soil backfill of construction cut for foundations [307]=[308] and brick wall [303] - south wall of Rhodes Building. A dark greyish-brown silty loam with sparse mortar flecks (<20mm) and sub-rounded stone (<40mm). Includes sparse charcoal flecks.	0.42 – 0.62
[312]	Chimney - built onto masonry wall [306], bonded to [304]. Only a 0.20m length exposed in north-east corner of TP. A short section of regular English Bonded brickwork set in Portland Cement with moderate flush jointing. Probably early 20 th cent. and associated with Rhodes Building phase.	0.08 – 0.66

Test Pit No. 3 Cont.	Co-ordinates: (SW) 451631.77E, 206222.75N; (SE) 451633.50E, 206223.21N Ground Level (m AOD): 61.95m	Dimensions: 1.8 x 1.8m Max. depth: 2.4m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
(313)	Rubble/soil backfill – recorded between wall [308] and [309] and below (305) on westernmost 0.50m of TP. Not fully excavated. A charcoal-rich, mid grey silty clay loam with occasional mortar and limestone frags (<20mm) and post-medieval (18 th – 19 th centuries) pottery.	1.20 – 2.36(+)
(314)	Rubble/soil backfill – recorded between wall [308] and [309] and below (305) on westernmost 0.50m of TP . A charcoal-rich, mid grey silty clay loam with occasional mortar and limestone frags (<20mm) and post-medieval pottery.	1.56 – 2.36(+)
(315)	Rubble bedding layer for (300).	0.22 – 0.55

Test Pit No. 5	Co-ordinates: (SW) 451630.32E, 206221.11N; (SE) 451631.62E, 206221.25N Ground Level (m AOD): 62.02	Dimensions: 1.3 x 0.7m Max. depth: 1.58m
Context	Description	Depth (m)
500	Flagstone paving to the immediate south of Rhodes Building.	0 – 0.05
501	Backfill – a mid yellowish brown mortar-rich backfill, contains brick and stone frags and mortar lumps. Also contains post-medieval pottery and glass.	0.05 – 1.30
502	Masonry wall (Rhodes Building) laid on brickwork with 3 courses of header stepped foundation at base – overlies loose masonry of uncertain character at base. Brickwork regular stretcher bond set in Portland Cement with moderate flush jointing. Similar brickwork to 19 th cent. cellar walls in TP1. (?) 19 th cent. wall re-used for Rhodes Building.	0 – 1.30
503	Construction cut for [502] – filled with (501), truncates masonry foundations of 'Doll's House' (504) to the south.	0 – 1.30
504	Masonry and brick foundations – a mixed and irregularly coursed foundation of roughly-dressed limestone blocks (c.0.20 – 0.30m, 0.10m thick). Laid with a cementitious pale yellowish-brown sandy mortar. Recorded in the south and west sides of test pit and below brick foundations [502].	0 – 1.44
505	Natural gravel geology – dark reddish-brown silty sandy gravel containing small to medium sub-angular gravel and flecks of charcoal.	1.30 – 1.58(+)

APPENDIX 2 – ARCHIVE INDEX

File No.	NAR Cat.	Details	Format	No. Sheets
1	-	Index to Archive	A4	1
1	A	Client Report	A4	19
1	B	Written Scheme of Investigation	A4	17
1	B	Day Book (photocopy)	A4	17
1	B	Test Pit/Trial Trench Records	A4	4
1	B	Context Records	A4	41
1	B	Survey Data Index	A4	2
1	B	Graphics Register	A4	11
1	E	Environmental Sample Register	A4	1
1	E	Environmental Sample Records	A4	1
1	D	Photographic Register	A4	5
1	-	Landowner Form	A4	1
2	B	Site Graphics	A4	12
2	B	Site Graphics	A3	1
3	-	Digital photographs	-	110



Site and test pit locations

Figure 1

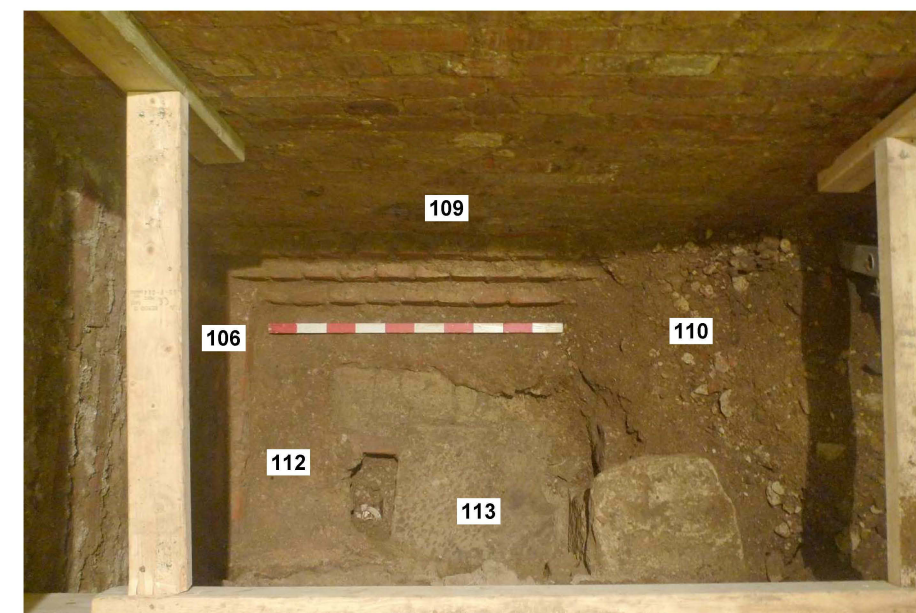
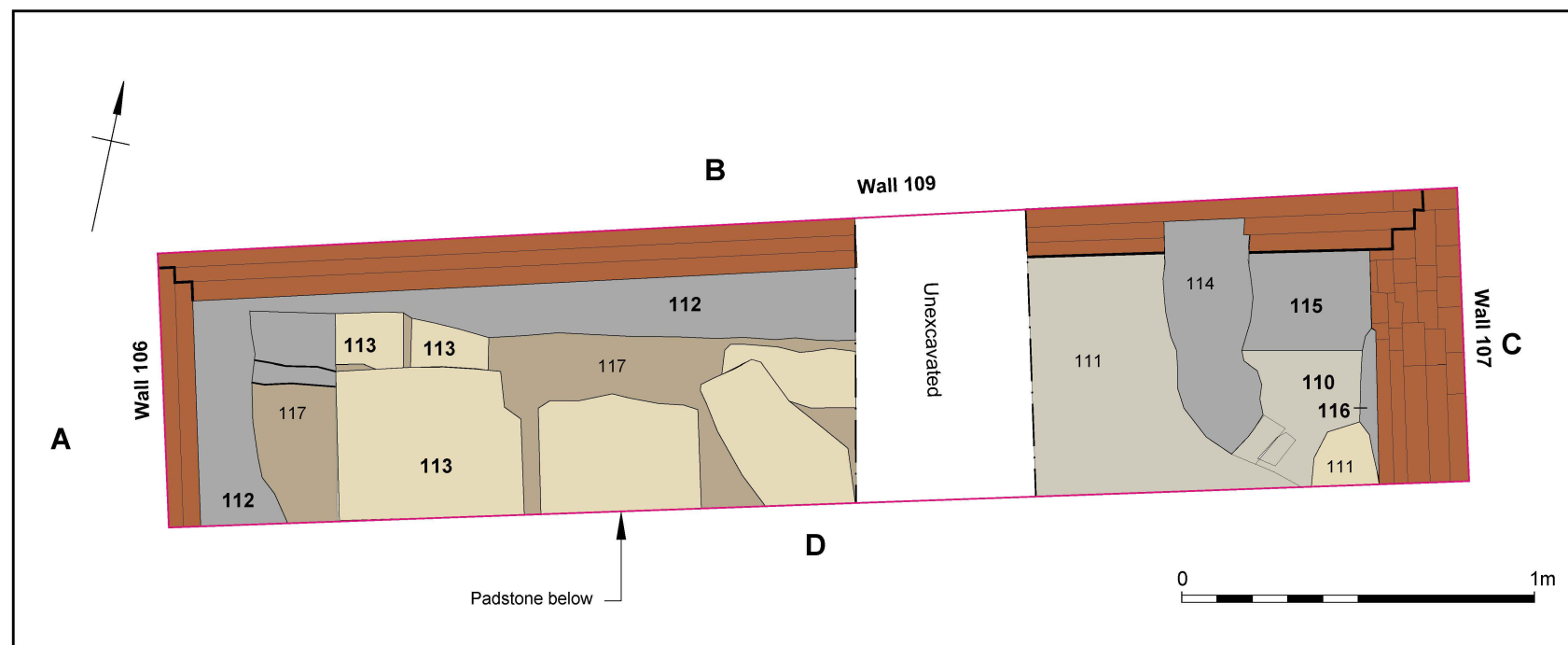
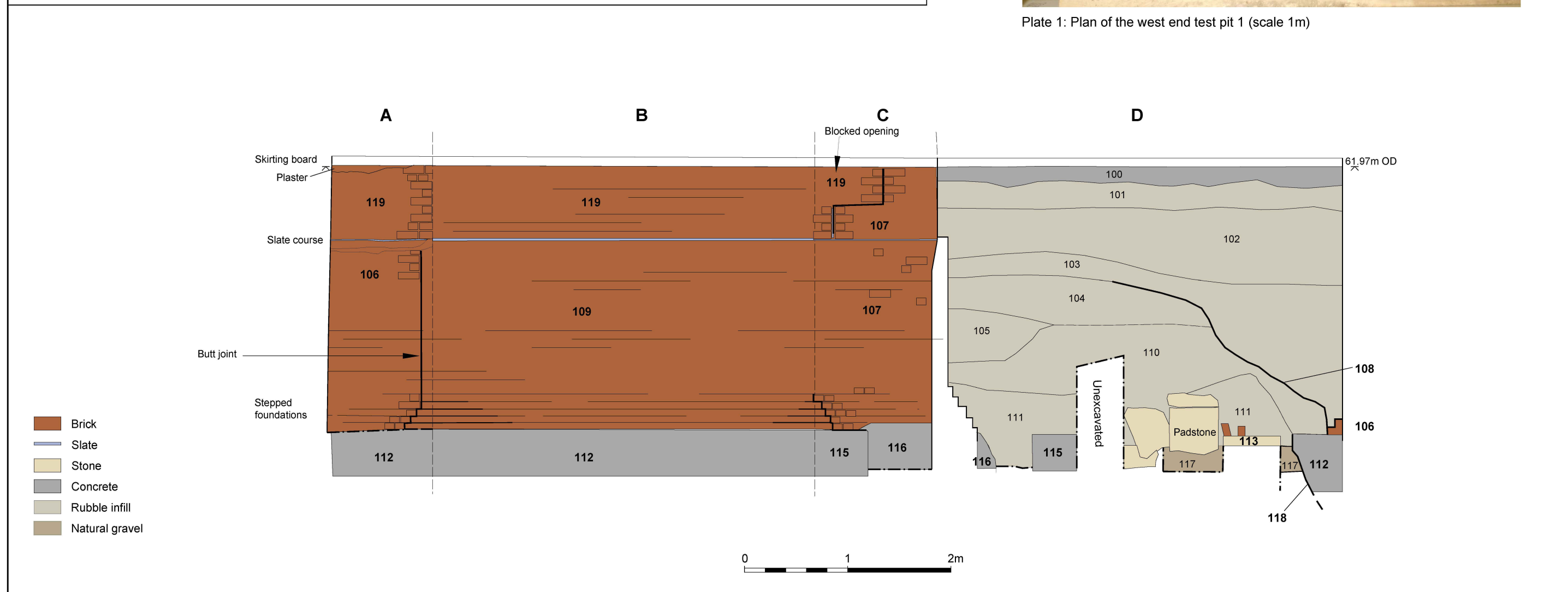


Plate 1: Plan of the west end test pit 1 (scale 1m)



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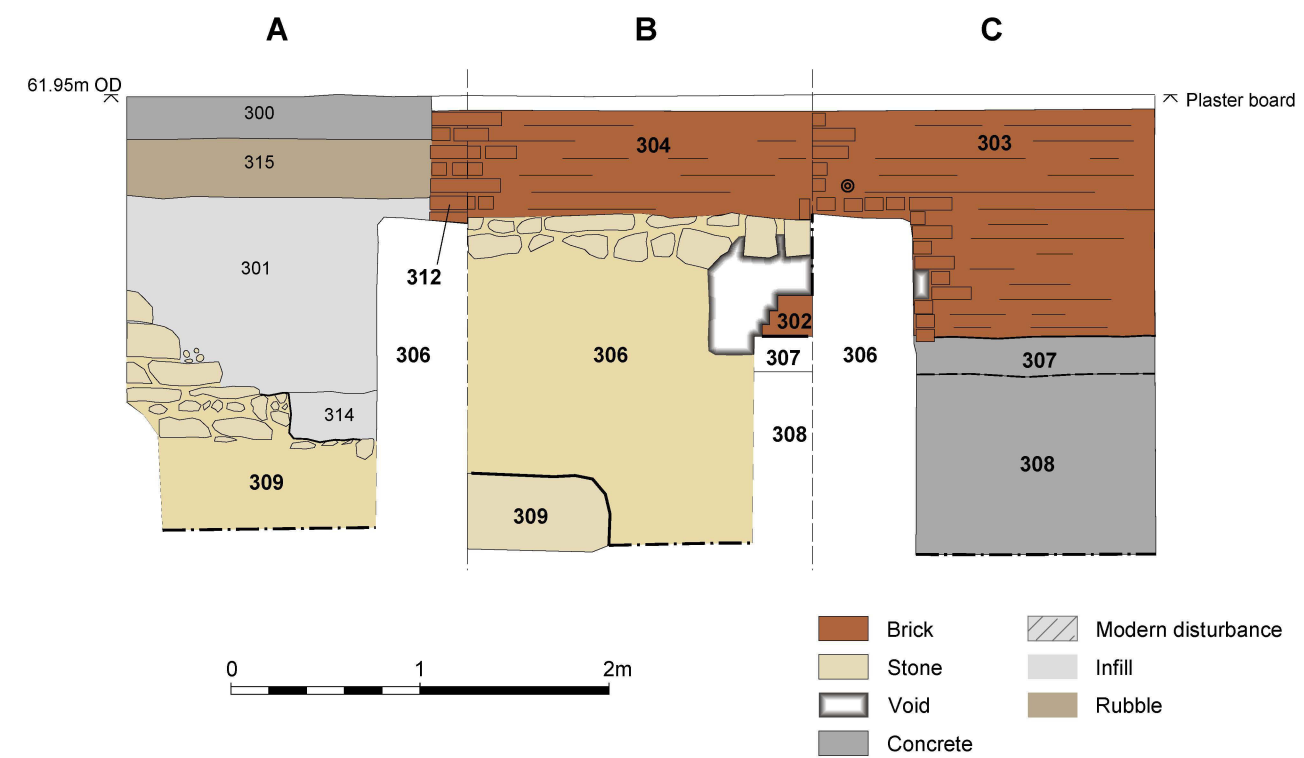
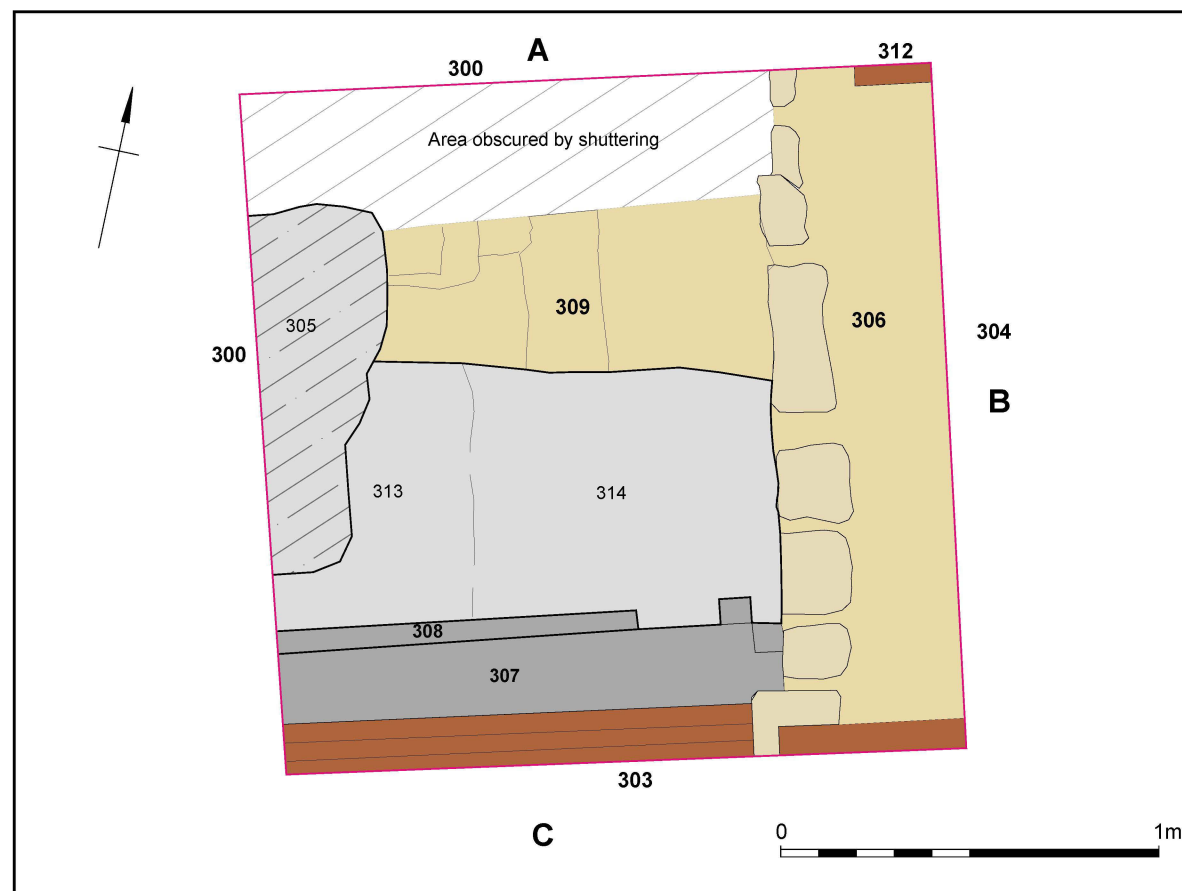


Plate 2: North facing section of test pit 3 (scale 0.5m)

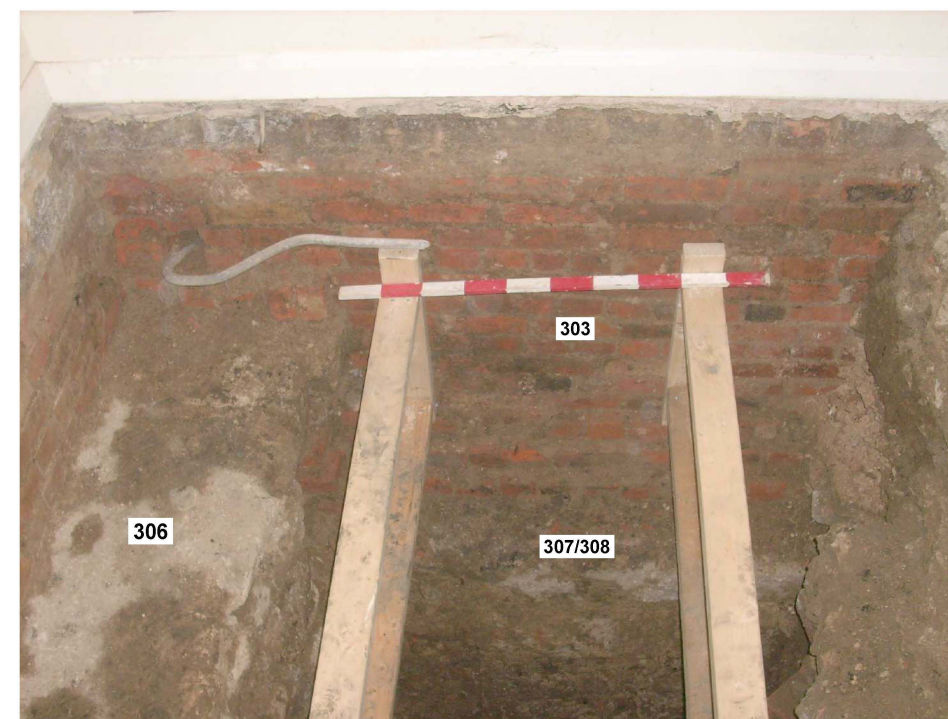


Plate 3: North facing elevation of test pit 3 (scale 1m)

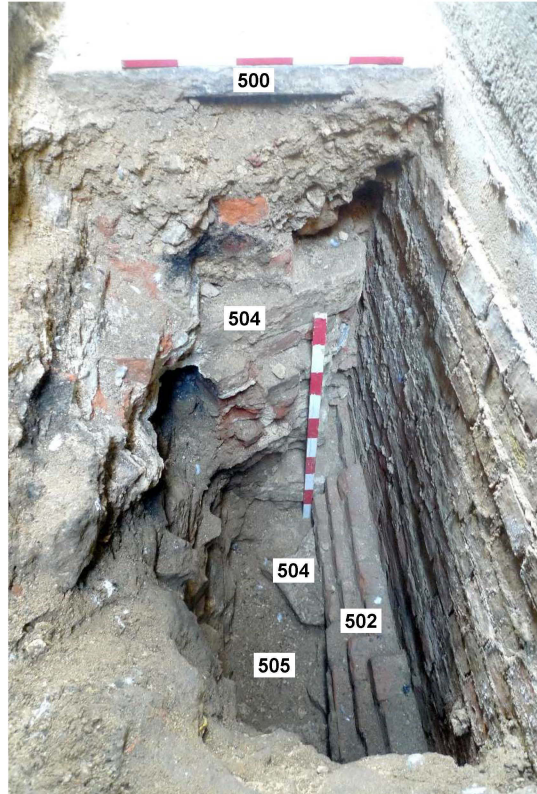
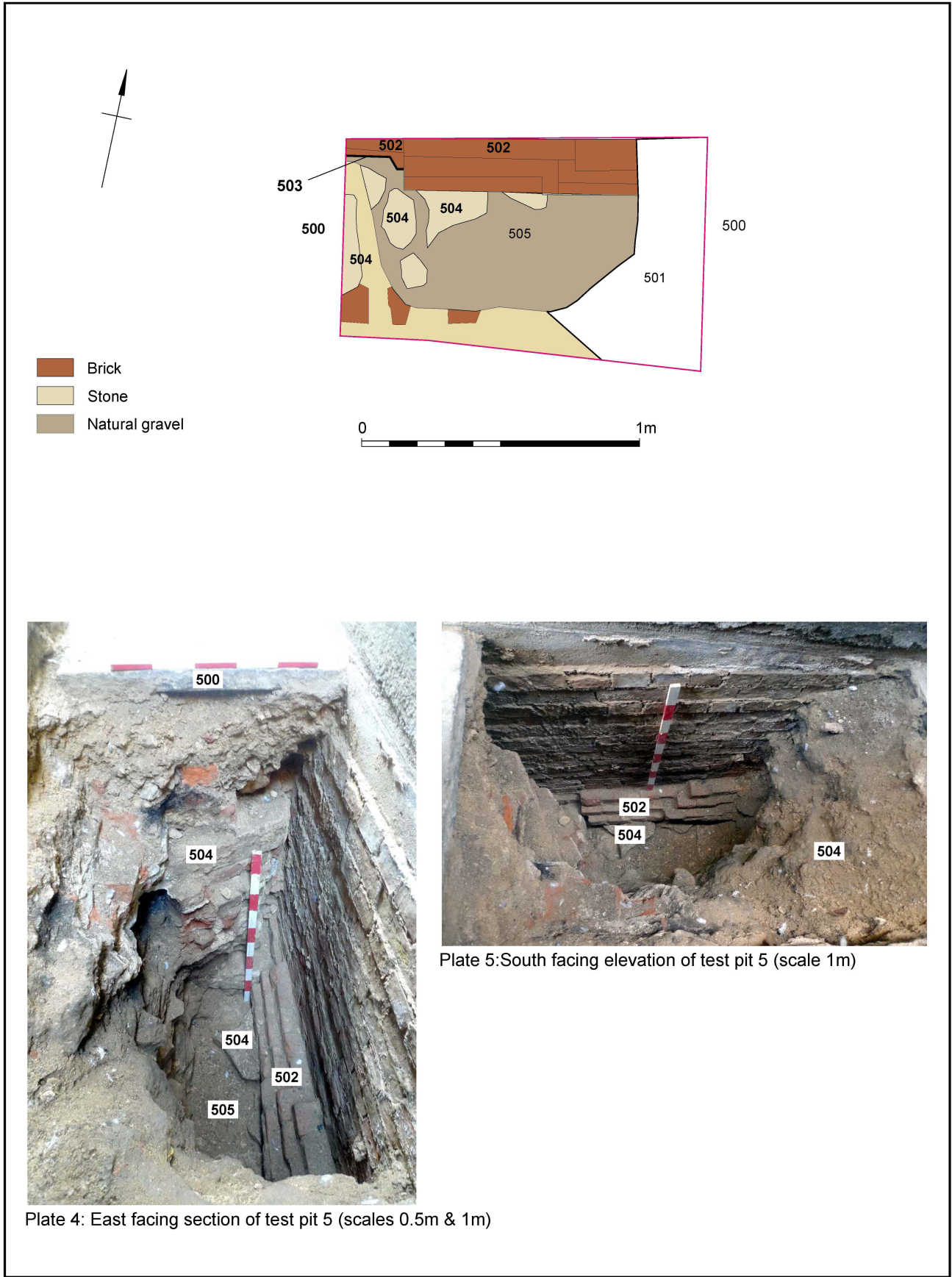



Plate 4: East facing section of test pit 5 (scales 0.5m & 1m)



Plate 5: South facing elevation of test pit 5 (scale 1m)

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