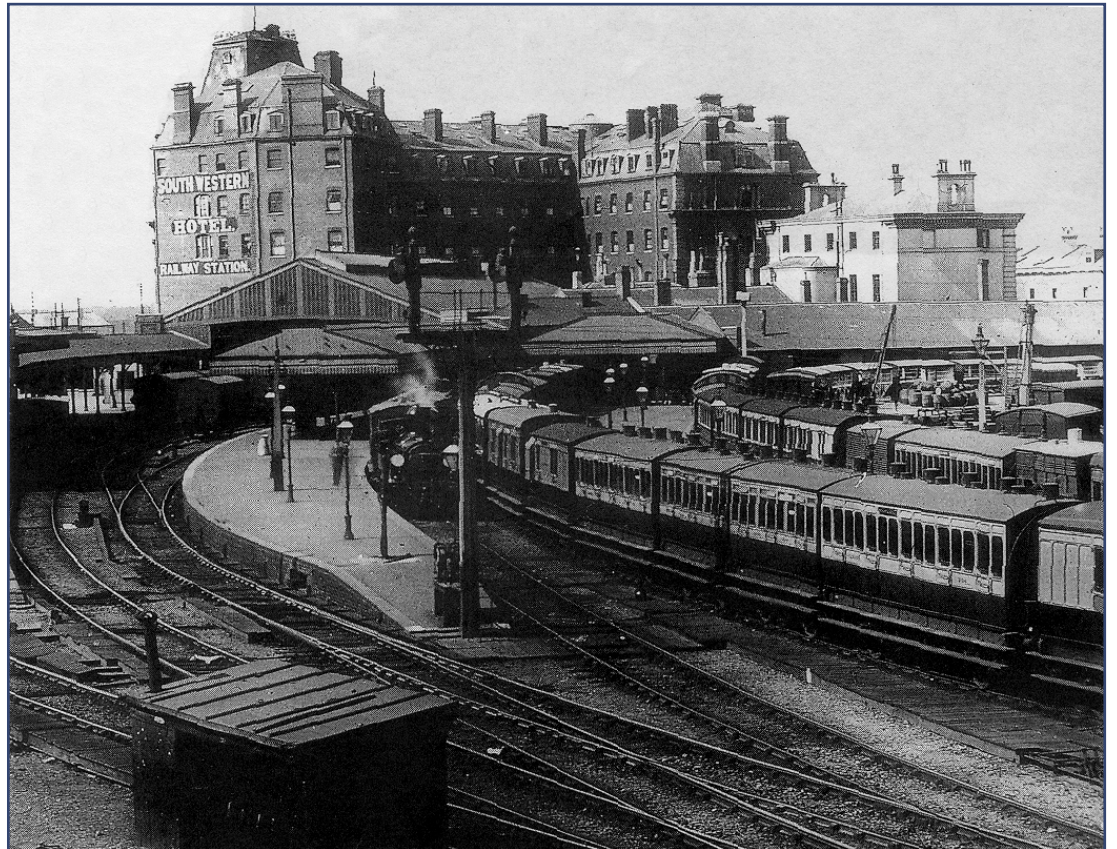


# South Western House, Southampton

Archaeological Evaluation



Report ref.47999a

*May 2000*

# **South Western House, Southampton**

## **Archaeological Evaluation**

**Site code SOU 1035**

Report ref. 47999a

### **Prepared on behalf of:**

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**May 2000**

## Contents

1.	INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1.	Project background.....	1
1.2.	The Site: Location, geology, topography .....	1
1.3.	Archaeological and historical background .....	1
2.	METHODOLOGY .....	2
2.1.	Aims and objectives .....	2
2.2.	Trench location.....	2
2.3.	Methodology .....	3
3.	RESULTS .....	3
3.1.	Introduction.....	3
3.2.	Trench descriptions.....	4
3.3.	Groundworks trenches .....	6
4.	FINDS .....	7
5.	DISCUSSION.....	7
5.1.	Summary .....	7
6.	REFERENCES .....	8

### Figures

- Figure 1: Site and trench location  
Figure 2: Trenches superimposed on Ordnance Survey maps of 1868 and 1950  
Figure 3: Trenches A and B, sections  
Figure 4: Results of watching brief on foundation trenches, with approximate rail platform alignments superimposed

### Plates

- Plate 1: Trench A looking north  
Plate 2: Trench B looking south

*Cover photograph shows Southampton Terminus Station in 1870*

## Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Berkeley Homes (Hampshire) Ltd to carry out an archaeological evaluation of land to the rear of South Western House, Canute Road, Southampton. The site is situated on land formerly occupied by Southampton Terminus Railway Station and includes elements of three platforms, track and associated features. The evaluation, Southampton City Council site code **SOU 1035**, consisted of the excavation and recording of two evaluation trenches, followed by the archaeological monitoring of trenches excavated to locate obstructions prior to piling.

All the features encountered appeared to relate to the construction, use and alteration of Southampton Terminus Station. These features, a series of brick and concrete walls, drains, levelling deposits and surfaces, were constructed directly onto the natural ground; the absence of any topsoil or subsoil suggested that the site had been levelled prior to construction.

No pre-19<sup>th</sup> century features or finds were identified within the evaluation trenches.

## **Acknowledgements**

This investigation was commissioned by Berkeley Homes (Hampshire) Ltd. Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Stuart Forrester (Project Manager) Tim Mason (Site Agent) and Robin Proctor (Site Safety Advisor) for their help and assistance during the fieldwork stage of the project.

Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Alan Morton (Southampton City Archaeologist) for his helpful guidance during the course of the project.

Fieldwork was carried out by Steve Webster and Gary Wickenden. This report was compiled by Steve Webster and the illustrations were prepared by Rob Goller. The project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Chris Moore.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Project background**

- 1.1.1. Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Berkeley Homes (Hampshire) Ltd to carry out an archaeological evaluation of land to the rear of South Western House, Canute Road, Southampton, formerly occupied by Southampton Terminus Railway Station (hereafter 'the Site'). The Site, centred on SU 442614 111120, is the subject of a mixed residential development involving the refurbishment of the station hotel (South Western House) and the construction of two blocks of flats in the area formerly occupied by the station platforms (**Figure 1**).
- 1.1.2. The Site lies within Area 5c of the Local Areas of Archaeological Importance as defined in Policy ENV4 5.13 of the City of Southampton Local Plan (1995). A condition attached to planning consent required an archaeological evaluation of the site prior to the commencement of development. A project design for the evaluation was drawn up by Wessex Archaeology (Wessex Archaeology 2000), and approved by Alan Morton (Conservation Archaeologist, Southampton City Council). The evaluation was allocated a Southampton City Council site code of **SOU 1035**, and consisted of the excavation and recording of two evaluation trenches, followed by the archaeological monitoring of trenches excavated to locate obstructions prior to piling.

### **1.2. The Site: Location, geology, topography**

- 1.2.1. The Site is situated on land formerly occupied by tracks and platforms of Southampton Terminus Station. Following the closure of the station the area was levelled and surfaced for use as a car park. At the time of the evaluation, the area was in use as the site compound for the ongoing hotel refurbishment work and was partially occupied by site huts and material stockpiles.
- 1.2.2. The underlying geology of the Site consists of brickearth and alluvial deposits associated with the Test and Itchen river valleys. The topography of the site and its immediate environs is flat and low-lying. The surface of the modern car park was approximately 4m above Ordnance Datum.

### **1.3. Archaeological and historical background**

- 1.3.1. The site lies to the south of the Saxon town of Hamwic and to the west of the Medieval town of Southampton, in an area that was historically salt marsh. From the middle Palaeolithic (40,000 BP) to the early Mesolithic (c. 7,000 BP), however, the area was dry land and subject to the normal range of hunting and gathering activities undertaken by human populations of the time. Progressive inundation due to rising sea levels during the later Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age resulted in the development of salt marshes. These survived into the Post-medieval period, when population pressure resulted in the land being reclaimed.

- 1.3.2. Although not used as occupation sites, salt marshes provide a rich economic resource. Salt production is known in Hampshire from at least as far back as the Iron Age and was widespread during the Medieval and Post-medieval periods. During all periods the industry relied on evaporation and as such was concentrated in the areas of coastal salt marsh.
- 1.3.3. Other potential activity in the area includes the exploitation, through hunting and gathering, of the rich natural resources within the marshland. Documentary evidence indicates that during the Medieval period the area was used for grazing, and archaeological excavations have identified possible farm buildings that may indicate a similar use as far back as the Saxon period.
- 1.3.4. Features relating to the encroachment of the town include a cemetery (SOU 389), possibly of Medieval origin, known to have been disturbed during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Further coffin burials have been found in the vicinity of Terminus Terrace, to the west of the Site.
- 1.3.5. During the 1830s Southampton Terminus railway station was constructed. This was the main station for Southampton docks from its opening in 1840 to its closure in 1966 and as such was an important feature in the life of the town. The Site includes elements of three platforms, track and associated features (**Figure 2**). The centre platform is the earliest, dating from at least 1870. The flanking platforms were built as the station expanded in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century, replacing a turntable and other railway structures.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1. Aims and objectives**

- 2.1.1. The aims of the evaluation (within the limits of the specified techniques and trench layout) were to gather sufficient information to establish the extent, nature, date, state of preservation and significance of any archaeological features present within the confines of the development area.
- 2.1.2. Particular emphasis was placed on the identification of the location and state of preservation of the features relating to Southampton Terminus Station, and the extent to which the construction of the station had disturbed earlier deposits. Of the earlier features that may be encountered, greatest emphasis was placed on the potential for Medieval and later burials.

### **2.2. Trench location**

- 2.2.1. A Written Scheme of Investigation for the evaluation (Wessex Archaeology 2000) was formulated for the approval of Alan Morton (Southampton City Council Conservation Archaeologist) prior to the commencement of the fieldwork. The project design specified two evaluation trenches (measuring 30m by 1.6m – trench A and 20m by 1.6m – trench B) to be positioned within the footprints of the two proposed buildings (**Figure 1**).

- 2.2.2. Following consultation with Tim Mason (Berkeley Homes Site Agent), the position of trench A was altered and the length reduced to 20m owing to the limited working area due to the presence of site cabins and boundary features.
- 2.2.3. Following completion of the two evaluation trenches, a series of trenches 1.2m wide and up to 2m deep was excavated on the lines of piles and associated ground beams for the two proposed buildings, in order to locate obstructions prior to piling.

### **2.3. Methodology**

- 2.3.1. Both evaluation trenches were set out on the ground prior to excavation following consultation with the Site Agent. The trenches were excavated under continuous archaeological supervision using a 360° tracked excavator fitted with a 1.8m wide toothless ditching bucket.
- 2.3.2. Both trenches were excavated to their full depth by machine. All modern levelling deposits were removed down to the level of the undisturbed natural soil. Poorly consolidated structural remains relating to the railway station, such as certain platform walls, were removed for safety reasons. A one metre deep step was cut along one side of each trench to allow safe access for recording.
- 2.3.3. Following excavation, a written, drawn and photographic record was made of each trench, in accordance with the approved scheme of investigation.
- 2.3.4. The trenches to locate obstructions prior to piling were excavated by the groundwork contractor under intermittent archaeological monitoring. The locations of all archaeological features and deposits encountered were recorded on a base plan of the building footprints provided by the developer and related where applicable to those located in the evaluation trenches. The field records were incorporated into the archive from the evaluation trenches.

## **3. RESULTS**

### **3.1. Introduction**

- 3.1.1. The results obtained from the two trenches are presented in **Figures 2-4** and summarised below.
- 3.1.2. All the features and deposits encountered appeared to relate to the construction, use, alteration and disuse of Southampton Terminus Station. These features, a series of brick and concrete walls, drains, levelling deposits and surfaces, were constructed directly onto the natural ground; the absence of any topsoil or subsoil suggested that the site had been levelled prior to construction.
- 3.1.3. No archaeological features that pre-dated the station were found, and no artefacts were recovered.



## 3.2. Trench descriptions

### Trench A

- 3.2.1. Trench A was 19.85m long and up to 1.6m deep (**Plate 1**). It was orientated approximately east – west and targeted on a platform and turn-table from the early station and two platforms from the later station, plus the associated tracks (**Figure 2**).
- 3.2.2. All features encountered appeared to relate to Southampton Terminus Station. The station features could be split into three broad phases of activity (**Figure 3**). The earliest phase consisted of three brick walls and two levelling/infill deposits.
- 3.2.3. At the western end of the trench, wall **121** ran at an angle of approximately 45° to the line of the trench. It was 0.47m wide and stood to a height of 1.35m and was constructed of brick laid in an *English* bond. The eastern face of the wall was slightly concave along its length suggesting that the line of the wall was curved. It was pointed from 0.65m above the surface of the natural. This unpointed element of the wall was covered by deposit **120**, a mixture of sand and gravel layers that was cut away to the east by later structure **103**. The western face of the wall was not seen.
- 3.2.4. At the eastern end of the trench two brick walls **115** and **117** had been partially robbed by cut **114**. Wall **115** was perpendicular to the trench line, 0.47m wide with a 0.10m offset foundation and had been robbed down to the level of its foundations. Wall **117** ran parallel to this, 0.40m to the east. It was 0.47m wide and was visible to a height of 0.50m. Both walls appeared to have been constructed with an *English* bond.
- 3.2.5. The area between wall **115** and **117** was filled with yellow clay – possibly up-cast from the excavation of the foundation trenches. There were no other deposits that could be confidently associated with this phase. The second phase of activity was represented by two retaining walls, both with associated dumps and surfaces, and a drain.
- 3.2.6. At the western end of the trench wall **121** was superseded by concrete structure **103** and a series of associated dumping layers and a surface. Structure **103** was a prefabricated concrete retaining wall consisting of a series of D – shaped frames between vertical concrete shutters. The whole structure survived intact to a height of 1.35m and was founded on a raft of rammed chalk **108**.
- 3.2.7. To the west of **103**, and retained by it, were a series of rubble dumps and levelling layers **119** serving to raise the ground level for the laying of tarmac surface **123**, which sealed wall **121**. Two ceramic drains were set within dump **119**.
- 3.2.8. To the east walls **115** and **117** were superseded by wall **102** and a series of dumping layers and a surface associated with it. Wall **102**, which ran parallel with structure **103**, was constructed of brick laid in an *English* bond. It was

0.35m wide and survived to its full height of 1.25m above the level of the natural. It was only pointed on its external (western) face where it was stepped out slightly at the top to accommodate a stone cap. The wall was set in a construction cut (not excavated).

- 3.2.9. To the east, wall **102** retained a series of dumping layers apparently related to a sequence of surfaces, of which only the latest **101** survived. The lower dumps **113**, **112** and **118** were deposited while walls **115** and **117** were still standing and may indicate that the latter were still in use at this time. These early dumps were cut by robber cut **114** and drain cut **111** and sealed by tarmac surface **101** and its associated make-up layers.
- 3.2.10. The gap between wall **102** and concrete structure **103** was 6.40m wide. A brick lined culvert ran down the centre of the gap parallel with **102** and **103**. The only other deposits in this area that might be associated with this phase were ballast **107** and its make-up layer **109**. Both were only visible adjacent to **103**.
- 3.2.11. The last phase of activity relates to the demolition of the station platforms and the construction of a car park in their place. The tracks and associated ballast, sleepers and fittings were removed and the ground level was raised up to the height of the platforms by the dumping of rubble **106** and **104**. The whole area was then levelled with hard-core and covered with tarmac.

### **Trench B**

- 3.2.12. Trench B was 20.35m long and up to 1.75m deep (**Plate 2**). It was orientated approximately south-east to north-west and targeted on a platform from the early station and two platforms from the later station plus the associated tracks (**Figure 2**).
- 3.2.13. All the features appeared to relate to Southampton Terminus Station, there were no earlier features or finds. The station features could be split into three broad phases of activity (**Figure 3**). The earliest phase consisted of two brick walls and two levelling/infill deposits.
- 3.2.14. At the western end of the trench, walls **139** and **146** ran perpendicular to the line of the trench, some 2.80m apart. The walls were constructed of brick laid in an *English* bond and were 0.35m wide and stood to a height of 0.90m above the level of the natural. Wall **139** was pointed on its eastern face and wall **146** on its western face. The top surfaces had both been partially robbed.
- 3.2.15. The area between the walls was largely filled with rubble and gravel dump **145**. This was capped with a tarmac surface and associated make-up **144**. There were no other deposits that could confidently be ascribed to this phase.
- 3.2.16. The next phase of activity included three walls, and associated dumps and surfaces, and two drains. At the western end of the trench walls **139** and **146** were superseded by wall **138** and its associated dumps and surfaces. Wall **138** was constructed of brick laid in an *English* bond, it was 0.35m wide with a 0.10m wide offset foundation to the east. It stood to its full height of 1.40m

above the level of the natural. It was pointed on its eastern face only. To the west of **138** two tarmac surfaces (142 and 143) and associated dumps and make up layers respected the wall.

- 3.2.17. At the eastern end of the trench there was a small remnant of a brick wall **131** that survived as a single course of brick standing 0.50m high. This retained a series of dumps and make-up layers (**127, 128, 129** and **130**) to the east
- 3.2.18. This wall was replaced by concrete structure **132**, which ran perpendicular to the line of the trench. Structure **132** was a prefabricated concrete retaining wall consisting of a series of 'D' shaped frames between vertical concrete shutters. The whole structure survived intact to a height of 1.35m and was founded on a layer of gravel **137**. To the east of **132** dump **126** was sealed by tarmac surface **125** and its associated make-up layer.
- 3.2.19. The gap between concrete structure **132** and wall **138** was 10.60m wide. Two drains ran through this area parallel to the line of the walls dividing the area into three tracks of equal width. These were overlain by track-ballast layer **134**, above a gravel make-up **136**.
- 3.2.20. The last phase of activity relates to the demolition of the station platforms and the construction of a car park in their place. The tracks and associated sleepers and fittings were removed and the ground level was raised up to the height of the platforms by the dumping of rubble **133**. The whole area was then levelled with hard-core and covered with tarmac **124**.

### **3.3. Groundworks trenches**

- 3.3.1. During the monitoring of the groundwork trenches five wall alignments, relating to three station platforms, two railway track alignments and several platform features were recorded (**Figure 4**).
- 3.3.2. The main north – south edges of the eastern platform were seen in two of the groundwork trenches for Block A. They were constructed of prefabricated, reinforced concrete frames with concrete shuttering on the external face, the eastern edge corresponding with feature **132** in trial trench B. The platform was 10 metres wide and stood approximately one metre above the level of the track ballast.
- 3.3.3. Features associated with this platform, including the bases of four roof supports, a transverse passageway and a water hydrant, were also recorded. The roof supports consisted of a riveted cast-iron shoe that was bolted onto a four metre deep concrete base and occurred in pairs, with a spacing of 12.5 metres between each pair.
- 3.3.4. Approximately half way along the visible section of the platform a brick wall was recorded running perpendicular to the line of the platform. This supported the northern side of a roof consisting of a mixture of 3.6 metre long iron rails and iron shuttering that in turn supported the tarmac surface of the platform. Although the southern side of the feature was not seen and the

area under the roof had been infilled, it appeared that the structure represented a tunnel under the platform.

- 3.3.5. At the southern end of the Block A footings a water main was recorded running up the centre of the platform. This terminated in an upright pipe that suggested some form of tap on the platform.
- 3.3.6. The five sections of brick wall all related to features running along the line of the platform. The discontinuous nature of these walls and their association in several cases with drains suggests that they relate to services within the platform.
- 3.3.7. The central platform fell partially within the footprints of both Block A and Block B. Within the groundwork trenches for Block A the eastern edge of the platform survived as a brick wall, recorded in trench B as 138. The western edge was represented by two brick wall alignments, the westernmost corresponding with wall **102** in trench A and representing a widening of the platform from an original edge corresponding with walls 115 and 117 in trench A. Suggested platform widths on the basis of this evidence are 5.5 metres and 8 metres.
- 3.3.8. Within the line of this platform a number of drains were noted but not accurately recorded. Two concrete blocks assumed to be roof supports similar to those recorded within the eastern platform were also recorded.
- 3.3.9. The western platform was represented only by one section of prefabricated concrete wall, corresponding with wall **103** in trench A and was part of the eastern edge of the platform. No other features were recorded in this area.

## **4. FINDS**

- 4.1.1. No finds of any date associated with any of the excavated deposits or features were recovered.

## **5. DISCUSSION**

### **5.1. Summary**

- 5.1.1. Both evaluation trenches and monitoring of the groundwork trenches produced evidence for three phases of activity. The earliest phase of activity was cut directly into the natural yellow sand. The absence of any topsoil or subsoil deposits suggests that the area was levelled prior to the construction of the station.
- 5.1.2. Phase one consisted of a series of brick walls and dumped make-up deposits that appeared to correspond with elements of Southampton Terminus Station as laid out in the mid 1800's. This includes the remains of one of the early platforms and part of a turntable.

- 5.1.3. Phase two consisted of a series of brick walls, concrete structures, dumped deposits, drains and surfaces associated with the modifications made to the station during the course of its lifetime. Both trenches contained evidence for the addition of new platforms (in the case of trench A this replaced the turn-table) and the alteration of the existing ones. The stratigraphy suggests that this phase may be subdivided into several sub-phases, particularly in the case of the earliest platforms which were apparently altered, or rebuilt, several times.
- 5.1.4. The latest phase of activity relates to the conversion of the tracks and platforms of the station into a car park during the 1970's. The tracks, sleepers and all fixtures and fittings were removed, and the ground was then raised up to the height of the top of the platforms. This was then levelled with a layer of hard-core and capped with tarmac. There was no evidence in either trench for the demolition of the platforms as part of this process.
- 5.1.5. There was no evidence for any pre-19<sup>th</sup> century activity within the evaluation trenches, either in the form of features or artefact scatters. Given that the area seems to have been levelled, involving the removal of the topsoil and subsoil, and that approximately 50% of the surface area of the site has been further cut away by the construction trenches of the various station features, the survival of earlier archaeological features would seem doubtful.
- 5.1.6. Of the three platforms within the area of the site, the central one was confirmed as the earliest with the other two being later, probably late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century, additions. The form of the roof supports appears to match those visible on early 20<sup>th</sup> century photographs of the station. The same photographs also indicated the presence of brick lined tunnels running under the platforms in some areas.

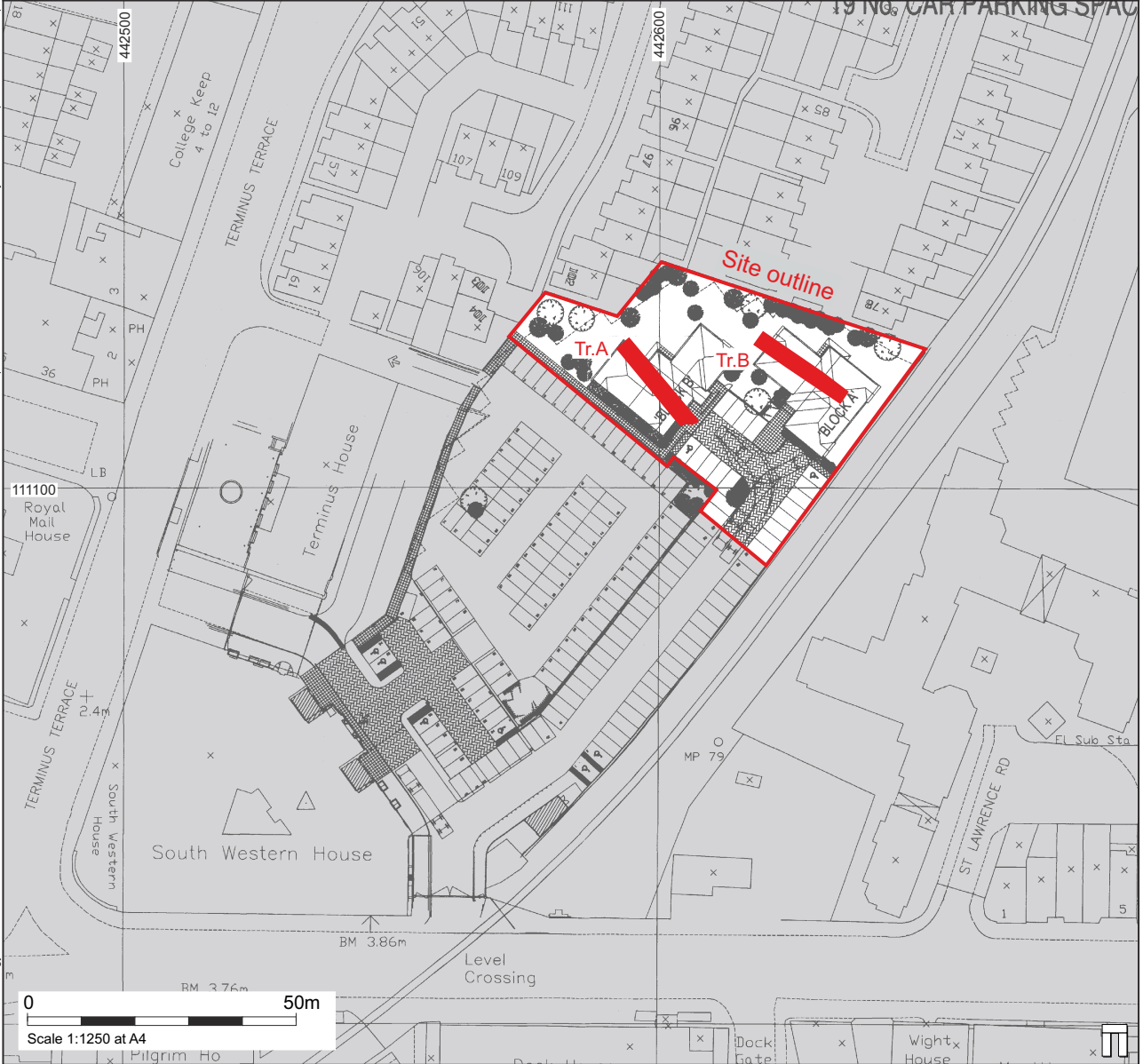
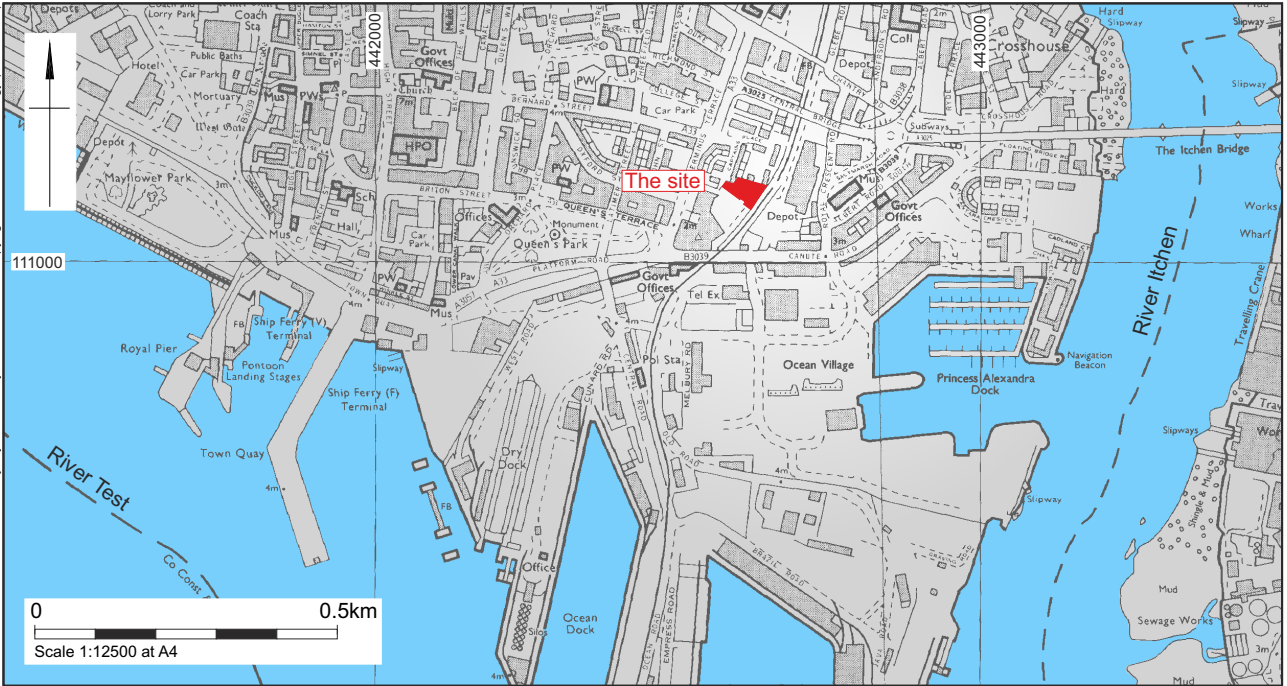
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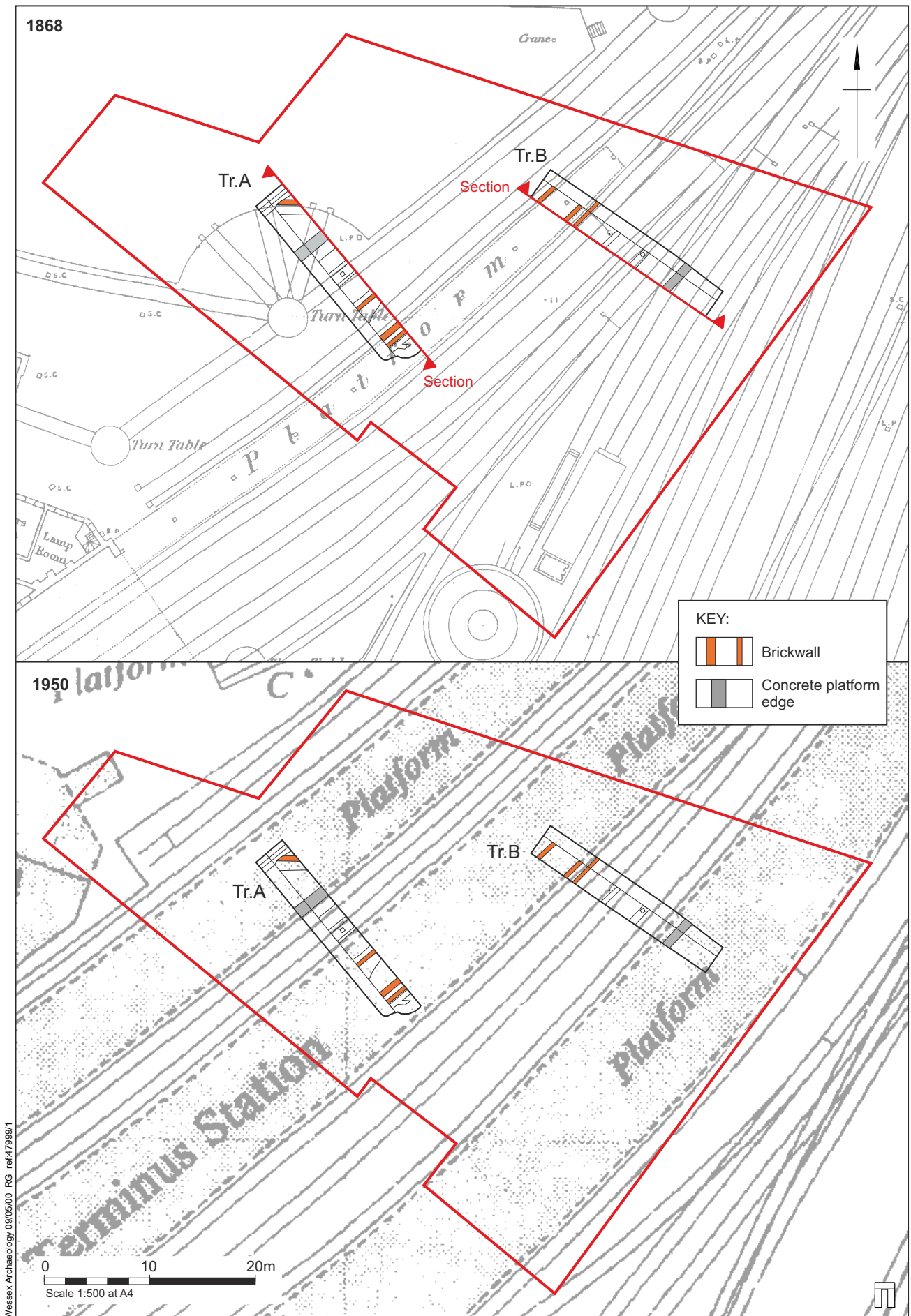
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Site and trench location

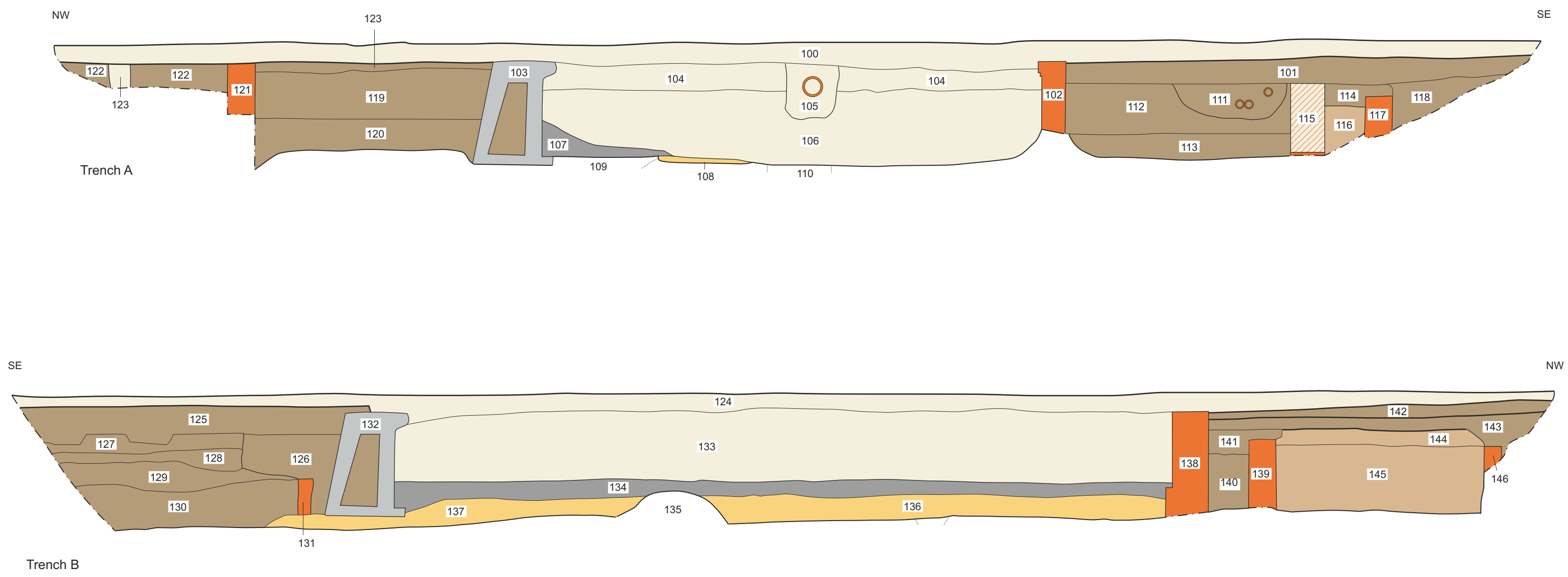
Figure 1



Trenches superimposed on Ordnance Survey maps of 1868 and 1950

Figure 2



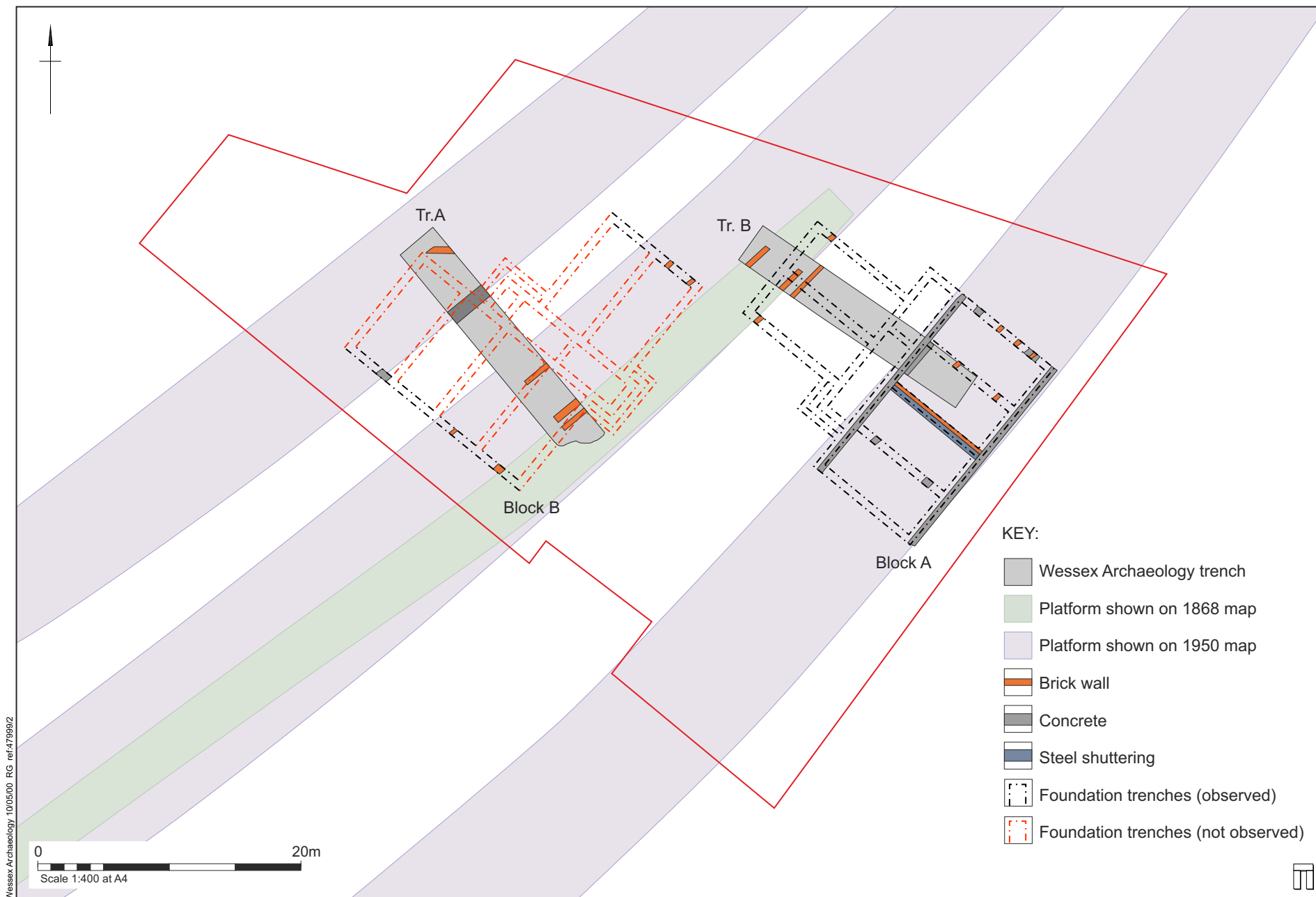


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- KEY:
- Brickwall
  - Robbed brickwall
  - Concrete
  - Rail ballast
  - Gravel ballast
  - 19th Century platform
  - 20th Century platform
  - Other
  - Layer of tarmac

Trench A and B, sections





Results of monitoring of groundwork trenches, with approximate rail platform alignments superimposed

Figure 4



Trench A, looking North



Trench B, looking South