

**107 ST ALDATES,
OXFORD.**

NGR: SP 5134 0605

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

January 2013

Report No. 859

Quality Assurance

This Document has been compiled and authorised in accordance with AMS's Quality Procedures (BS EN ISO 9001: 2000)

Author: D. King

Date: 8th January 2013

Approved: A. Hood

QA Checked: R. King

This report has been compiled with all reasonable skill care and attention to detail within the terms of the project as specified by the client and within the general terms and conditions of Archaeological Management Services Ltd trading as Foundations Archaeology but no explicit warranty is provided for information and opinions stated. AMS Ltd accepts no responsibility whatsoever to third parties to whom this report or any part thereof is made known. Any such party relies on this report at their own risk. Copyright of this document is retained by AMS Ltd, but unlimited licence to reproduce it in whole or part is granted to the client and/or their agents and/or assignees on payment of invoice.

CONTENTS

Summary

Glossary

- 1 INTRODUCTION
- 2 PROJECT BACKGROUND
- 3 AIMS
- 4 METHODOLOGY
- 5 RESULTS
- 6 CONCLUSIONS
- 7 BIBLIOGRAPHY
- 8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FIGURES

- Figure 1: Site Location
- Figure 2: Trial Pit Locations
- Figure 3: TP1 Section and Photographs
- Figure 4: TP2 Plan and Photographs
- Figure 5: TP3 Plan, Section and Photographs

APPENDIX

- Appendix 1: Stratigraphic Table

SUMMARY

On 20th November 2012 Foundations Archaeology undertook archaeological monitoring during the excavation of trial pits in advance of the re-use of existing buildings at 107 St Aldates, Oxford (NGR: SP 5134 0605), Figures 1 and 2. In accordance with NPPF and Oxford's heritage policies and strategies, the Oxford City Archaeologist (David Radford) requires archaeological monitoring and recording (a 'watching brief') during related building investigation works. This report pertains only to the initial test-pit investigation along the southern elevation of the rear range. The work was commissioned by BSA Heritage.

A total of three hand-dug trial pits were excavated internally and externally at the southern range of the buildings of 107 St Aldates.

No contexts clearly pre-dating the late Post-medieval period were present within the excavated areas, although artefactual material, with the exception of fragments of CBM, slate and clinker, was rare from earlier layers. If Medieval deposits do survive on the site, it is likely they are buried at a greater depth. The greatest depth excavated to was within TP2, at 1m below the existing ground level, and china wares were recovered from contexts at this depth.

Layers that probably pre-dated the buildings were present only within layer (106) in TP1 and no dating evidence was recovered from this layer; this was the only trial pit in which the base of the wall foundations was observed. It was not possible to ascertain the origin of the lower layers due to the limited area of each deposit exposed.

A possible surface comprising brick and limestone fragments was present in TP2; the top of which was present at 0.4m below the current ground level. The origin of this feature was not possible to ascertain.

The trial pits exposed the foundations of the 19th century buildings, which comprised stone footings with yellow sandy mortar. The full depth of the footings was not revealed within TPs 2 and 3, although the footing in TP2 was substantial and measured at least 1m in depth.

GLOSSARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Archaeology

For the purpose of this project archaeology is taken to mean the study of past human societies through their material remains from prehistoric times to the modern era. No rigid upper date limit has been set, but AD 1900 is used as a general cut-off point.

Medieval

The period between the Norman Conquest (AD 1066) and circa AD 1500.

Natural

In archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site.

NGR

National Grid Reference from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

OD

Ordnance datum; used to express a given height above sea-level.

OS

Ordnance Survey

Post-Medieval

The period from circa AD 1500 onwards.

Roman

The period between AD 43 and AD 410.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On 20th November 2012 Foundations Archaeology undertook archaeological monitoring during the excavation of trial holes in advance of the re-use of existing buildings at 107 St Aldates, Oxford (NGR: SP 5134 0605), Figures 1 and 2. The work was commissioned by Oxford City Council in response to an archaeological condition requiring archaeological monitoring during related building investigation works.
- 1.2 The project was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) issued by Foundations Archaeology (2012). The WSI was informed by the *Heritage Statement to Support Re-use* (BSA Heritage, 2012) and was agreed by the Oxford City Archaeologist (David Radford) on behalf of Oxford City Council. The WSI also conformed to the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (rev. 2008). The project was undertaken in accordance with the principles set out in the *National Planning Policy Framework 2012* and Oxford's heritage policies and strategies.
- 1.3 This report presents the archaeological findings present within the trial holes.

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Planning applications 12/01905/FUL and 12/01906/FUL have been submitted to Oxford City Council for the re-use of the existing buildings at 107 St. Aldates, Oxford (NGR: SP 5134 0605). In accordance with NPPF and Oxford's heritage policies and strategies, the Oxford City Archaeologist (David Radford) requires archaeological monitoring and recording (a 'watching brief') during related building investigation works. This report pertains only to the initial test-pit investigation along the southern elevation of the rear range.
- 2.2 The proposed development site lies within Oxford Central Conservation Area and close to Carfax, the historic city centre. The building itself is not listed nor is it a Building of Local Interest, but it is likely to have been part of the original historic area of Oxford, as designated in 1971 (www.oxford.gov.uk).
- 2.3 The site lies in an area settled in the Medieval period. Carfax lies less than 50m north of the site and was the original junction of the principal roads leading into the historic centre from the town gates. Loggan's map of 1675 shows St Aldates' street frontage built up with structures of possibly three storeys' height. It is likely that one of the buildings relates to 107 St Aldates, although it is not clear if it had a rear range at the time. The site lies within a narrow plot of land akin to a Medieval burgage plot.
- 2.4 A detailed discussion of the structures at 107 St Aldates from Post-medieval to 20th century is presented in the Heritage Statement and is briefly summarised

here. No clear evidence of Medieval fabric remaining within the building fronting St Aldates has yet been identified, although the basement and any sub-surface investigation contain the best potential for such features. Visible within this building are earlier features and fittings, at least one suggesting a 17th century date, and more may be hidden beneath later additions and claddings. Some of the visible surviving fabric and fittings are of Victorian date, probably relating to the long-lived occupation of the building by photography business Gillman and Company who were on site until the 1930s. Structures to the rear of that fronting St Aldates are of later date with the exception of the main rear range which may also be of 19th century date.

- 2.5 This project initially focuses on the main rear range. This building is constructed of uncoursed rubble with occasional brick and timber inclusions in the north and south elevations. The roof is a king post truss with slate cladding. The structure is probably 19th century in date and trade directories suggest it may have been used as garaging for omnibuses and cabs belonging to the New Inn in the 1860s. The structure has probable 20th century additions. The range is of local significance as an example of a large utilitarian structure which is aligned at right angles to St Aldates.
- 2.6 The site therefore retains the potential for the recovery of archaeological finds, features and deposits, associated with the Medieval and Post-medieval periods, with particular emphasis on the structures and development of the buildings of these periods. This will not prejudice the works against the recovery of finds or features associated with other periods.

3 AIMS

- 3.1 The aims of the archaeological watching brief were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits in order to provide sufficient information to establish the nature, extent, preservation and potential of any surviving archaeological remains; as well as to make recommendations for management of the resource, including further archaeological works if necessary. This was intended to allow reasonable planning decisions to be taken regarding the archaeological provision for the areas affected by the proposed works.
- 3.2 These aims were achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:
- i) to define and identify the nature of archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible;
 - ii) to attempt to characterise the nature and preservation of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning and extent of features present on the site;

iii) to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence which will attempt to determine the complexity of the horizontal and vertical stratigraphy present, and to recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples;

iv) to determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence and the forms in which such evidence may be present;

v) to add to the understanding of the development of the main rear range structure and, therefore, the complex as a whole.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 The monitored groundworks involved the hand-excavation of three trial pits (1-3, Figure 2), rather than the proposed five; Figure 2 also shows the proposed locations of the trial pits. All excavation was undertaken under the constant supervision of a suitably experienced archaeologist. Excavation ceased at significant archaeological horizons to allow for recording before excavation resumed. The trial pits were excavated to the base of the foundations of the buildings and no further.

4.2 Spoil tips were visually scanned for unstratified finds.

4.3 All excavation and recording was undertaken in accordance with Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual and the WSI.

5 RESULTS

5.1 The stratigraphy within each of the trial pits is presented in detail in Appendix 1 and an overview is set out below.

5.2 TP1 was within the building and TP2 and 3 were external pits to the south of the building.

5.3 TP1 measured 0.7m long by 0.7m wide by 0.6m deep and revealed a three course deep (0.35m) stone footing to the extant brick wall. There was no clear cut associated with the footing, although [103] may represent this.

5.4 The earliest deposit revealed was (106), the top of which lay at 0.37m below current ground level. No artefactual evidence was recovered from this layer. Layer (106) was cut by [103] which comprised the shallow sloping, partial western edge of a feature. This cut was filled with (105), from which no artefactual evidence was recovered, although it contained tile fragments. Feature [103] may also have contained deposit (104), although a void in the stratigraphy rendered the relationship difficult to ascertain. Layer (104) was sealed by (102), a

layer which contained finds of plastic, although only within its upper few centimetres. Layer (102) was sealed by (101), the modern flagstone floor.

- 5.5 TP2 measured 1.05m long by 0.55m wide by 1.0m deep and revealed deep (1.0m+) stone footings to the extant stone walls, the full depth of which was not revealed. The stones were flattened but undressed, between which was a moist-rich yellow sand, which could have represented a degraded mortar; the area was wet due to a downpipe in the corner. There was no visible cut for the walls.
- 5.6 The earliest deposit exposed within TP2 was (208), a wet grey brown silt sand. The top of this deposit only was revealed. It was overlain by (207), a layer of stone rubble with rare CBM fragments and a china tile fragment, which may have been a hardcore layer beneath possible surface (206). This was sealed by (206), a possible surface 0.26m thick, comprising solid bricks and limestone fragments and slabs between which was a yellow sand, which may have represented a degraded mortar. Layer (206) was overlain by thin makeup layer (205), which contained frequent clinker inclusions and a sherd of stoneware pottery of probable 19th century date. Layer (205) was overlain by thin makeup layer (204), which comprised loose stone rubble in a dark sandy matrix with slate inclusions. The upper three layers were of modern origin and comprised (203), a possible buried soil, (202), a bedding layer to the soil and gravel flowerbed (201).
- 5.7 TP3 measured 0.9m long by 0.9m wide by 0.47m deep and revealed stone footings at least 0.36m deep to the extant stone walls, the full depth of which was not revealed. The wall construction was visually identical to that of the stone foundations in TP2, although the bonding material was firmer. There was no visible cut for the walls.
- 5.8 The trial pit was excavated to the top of a concrete surface (307); a small hole, measuring 0.15m² in diameter, was excavated through the surface to reveal (308), a dark brown sand with CBM fragments. The concrete surface (307) was overlain by makeup layer (304), which contained modern fragments of brick masonry, concrete, clinker and slate. Layer (304) was sealed by modern hardcore layer (302), which comprised a bedding layer for the concrete paving slabs (301). The latter abutted a thin layer of soil (303), which formed a narrow flowerbed against the wall.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 No contexts clearly pre-dating the late Post-medieval period were present within the excavated areas, although artefactual material, with the exception of fragments of CBM, slate and clinker, was rare from earlier layers. If Medieval deposits survive on the site, it is likely they are buried at a greater depth. The greatest depth excavated to was within TP2 at 1m below the existing ground level and china wares were recovered from contexts at this depth.

- 6.2 Layers that probably pre-dated the buildings were present only within layer (106) in TP1 and no dating evidence was recovered from this layer; this was the only trial pit in which the base of the wall foundations was observed. It was not possible to ascertain the origin of the lower layers due to the limited area of each deposit exposed.
- 6.3 A possible surface comprising brick and limestone fragments was present in TP2, the top of which was present at 0.4m below the current ground level. The origin of this feature was not possible to ascertain.
- 6.4 The trial pits exposed the foundations of the 19th century buildings, which comprised stone footings with yellow sandy mortar. The full depth of the footings was not revealed within TPs 2 and 3, although the footing in TP2 was substantial and measured at least 1m in depth.
- 6.5 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology, but will be deposited within 12 months with the Oxford County Museum Service under an accession number to be confirmed. A short note will be submitted for publication in the relevant local archaeological journal and an OASIS form will also be submitted to ADAS.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

BSA Heritage, 2012, *107 St Aldates, Oxford: Heritage Statement to Support Re-use*.

Foundations Archaeology, 2012, *107 St Aldates, Oxford: Written Scheme of Investigation*. Unpublished.

IfA, 2008, *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*, Institute for Archaeologists, Reading.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foundations Archaeology would like to thank Ben Stephenson of BSA Heritage, David Radford of Oxford City Council and the on-site ground workers for their help during the course of this project.

Appendix 1: Stratigraphic Table

Context	Length	Width	Depth/H eight (m)	Overlies/C uts/ Later than	Overlain by/Cut By/ Earlier than	Abuts	Description	Summary
TEST PIT 1								
101	Trench	Trench	0.08	102	n/a	Brick wall	Floor, stone flags.	Modern flooring
102	Trench	Trench	0.12	[103], 104, 105, 106	101	Stone footing	Layer, mid yellow brown stony silt sand. Contained plastic.	Modern layer
[103]	0.45?	?	0.23+	106	102, pipe trench	n/a	Possible cut, contained 104 and possibly 105.	Cut
104	0.44	?	0.18	105	102	Stone footing	Second fill of [103], an orange brown gritty sand with dark patches.	Second fill of [103]
105	0.45	?	0.17	106	104	n/a	Possible primary fill of [103], a deposit of rubble and tile in a compact matrix of dark brown silt sand with occasional charcoal flecks.	Possible primary fill of [103]
106	0.10?	?	0.11?	n/a	[103]	n/a	Layer, a loose dark brown clay sand with frequent small stone inclusions.	Layer

TEST PIT 2								
201	Trench	Trench	0.07	202	n/a	n/a	Layer, mid brown garden soil and gravel.	Garden soil
202	Trench	Trench	0.05	203	201	n/a	Yellow sand bedding layer.	Modern make-up
203	Trench	Trench	0.05	204	202	n/a	Buried soil layer, dark brown humic silt sand. Contained plastic.	Buried soil
204	Trench	Trench	0.17	205	203	n/a	Rubble layer, a loose limestone rubble in a dark brown sandy matrix, with slate inclusions.	Layer
205	Trench	Trench	0.10	206	204	n/a	Layer, a dark brown gritty sand with frequent clinker inclusions.	Layer
206	Trench	Trench	0.26	207	205	n/a	Layer, compact layer of brick and limestone slabs and fragments, with possible degraded mortar. Contained a stoneware sherd.	Layer
207	?	?	0.30?	208	206	n/a	Rubble layer, loosely packed rubble layer (some faced), with a loose orange sandy gravel. Contained rare CBM fragments and china tile.	Layer
208	?	?	?	n/a	207	n/a	Mid soft brown silt sand.	?
TEST PIT 3								
301	Trench	0.73	0.05	302	303	n/a	Modern concrete paving stones.	Modern flooring
302	Trench	Trench	0.13	304	301, 303	n/a	Layer, yellow gravel and sand hardcore.	Modern hardcore
303	0.16m	Trench	0.04	302	n/a	n/a	Dark brown soil, with gravel inclusions.	Modern flowerbed soil
304	Trench	Trench	0.28	307, 306	302	n/a	mid grey, loose gravelly sand with rubble, clinker, slate and bits of brick, masonry and a new	Layer

							brick.	
305	Trench	n/a	0.34m	306	Stone wall	306	Stone wall foundation.	Stone wall foundation.
306	0.88m	0.04m	0.20m+	307	304	305	Concrete kerb	Concrete kerb
307	0.43m	0.18m	0.04	308	304, 306	n/a	Concrete surface	Surface
308	0.15m+	0.15m+	n/a	n/a	307	n/a	Loose dark brown gritty sand with CBM.	Layer



© Crown Copyright
Reproduced under licence AL523064A
Site Code: SA012
Accession Code:

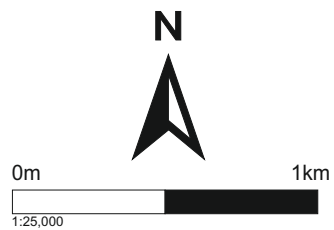
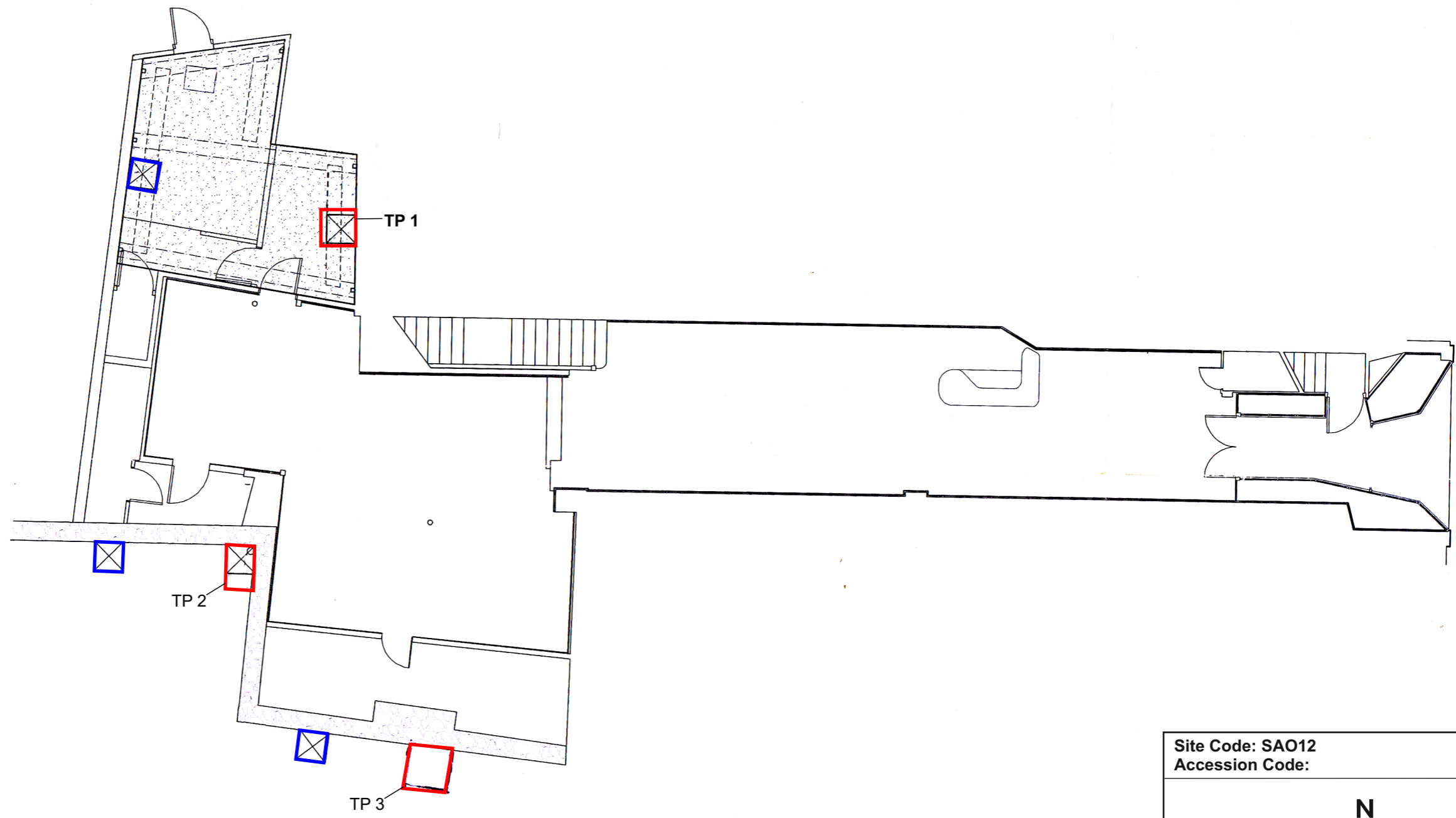


FIGURE 1: Site Location



Site Code: SA012
Accession Code:

N

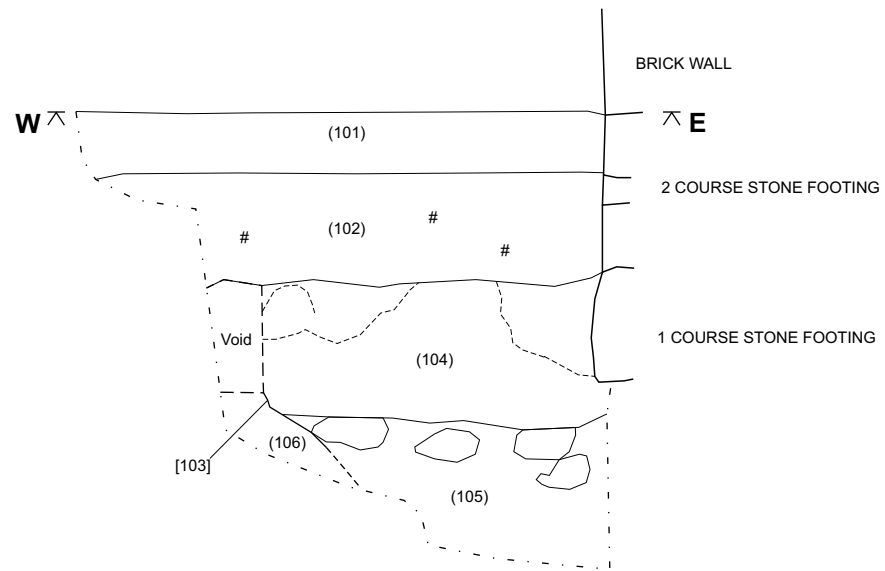
FINAL TRIAL PIT LOCATIONS

PROPOSED TRIAL PIT LOCATIONS

0m 4m
1:100

FIGURE 2: Trial Pit Locations

SOUTH FACING SECTION TRIAL PIT 1



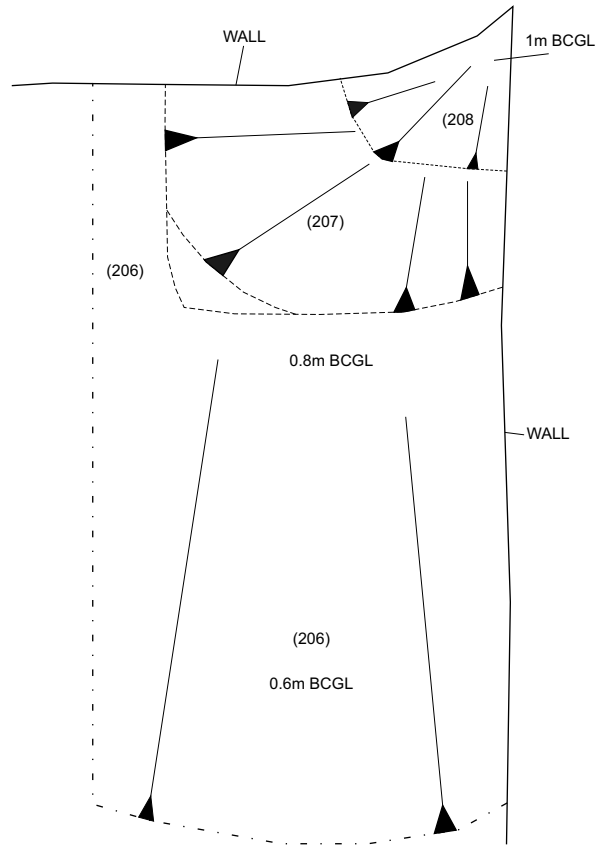
SOUTH FACING SECTION TP1



EAST FACING SHOT TP1

<p>Site Code: SAO12 Accession Code:</p>
<p>0m 0.5m 1:10</p>
<p>FIGURE 3: TP 1, Section and Photographs</p>

PLAN OF TRIAL PIT 2



EAST FACING SHOT OF TP2

Site Code: SAO12

Accession Code:

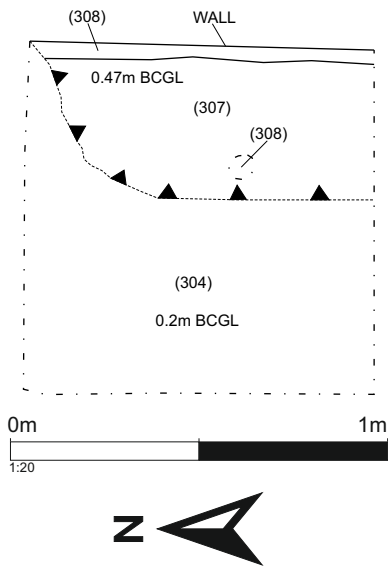
BCGL BELOW CURRENT GROUND LEVEL



0m 0.5m
1:10

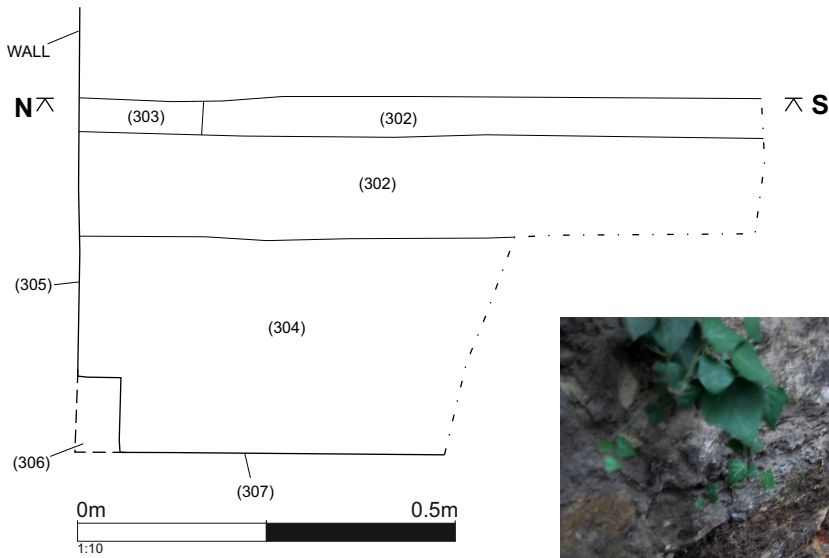
FIGURE 4: TP 2 Plan and Photograph

PLAN OF TRIAL PIT 3



EAST FACING SHOT OF TP3

WEST FACING SECTION TRIAL PIT 3



SOUTHEAST FACING SHOT OF TP3

Site Code: SA012
 Accession Code:

FIGURE 5: TP 3 Plan, Section and Photographs