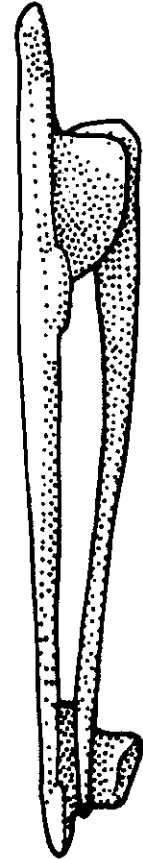
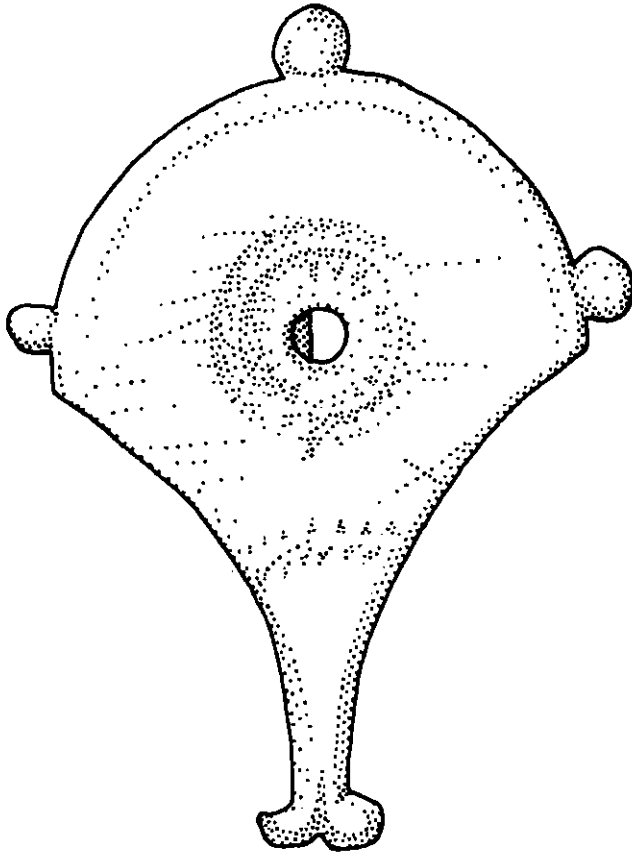


HERITAGE NETWORK



SMALL SITES 1994-1996
Baldock, Herts

(HN013, HN017, HN025, HN044)

Archaeological Fieldwork Reports



THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

SMALL SITES, 1994 - 1996 BALDOCK, HERTS.

HN013, HN017, HN025, HN044

Archaeological Fieldwork

Prepared on behalf of North Hertfordshire District Council

by

Helen Ashworth, BA

Report no.237

September 2004

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The front cover shows Romano-British copper alloy and silver brooch from a ditch, 26A Orchard Road.

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for these projects was carried out by Penny Fenton, Alec Russell, Catherine Holgate, Jonathan Clarke, Chris Turner, Andy Richmond and Paul Palmer, under the direction of David Hillelson. The report was compiled by Helen Ashworth. The illustrations were prepared by Faith Vardy and Karin Semmelmann. The report was edited by David Hillelson.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to the individual property owners and developers and to Gil Burleigh and Mark Stevenson of North Hertfordshire District Council for their cooperation and assistance in the execution of these projects.

Summary

Site name and address:	7-9 Sun Street, Baldock		
Type of work:	Watching brief	NGR (to 8 figures):	TL 2445 3393
Client name and address:	Housing and Environmental Health, NHDC, Gernon Road, Letchworth		
Nature of work:	Extension	Previous land use:	Yard
Size of affected area:	77m ²	Size of area investigated:	77m ²
Site Code:	(BAL-59 '94)	Other reference:	HN013
Start of work	9th May, 1994	Finish of work	10th May, 1994
Site name and address:	Stationmaster's House, 6 Station Road, Baldock		
Type of work:	Watching brief	NGR (to 8 figures):	TL 2458 3420
Client name and address:	North Herts District Council, Gernon Road, Letchworth		
Nature of work:	Housing development	Previous land use:	Garden
Size of affected area:	1,224m ²	Size of area investigated:	1,224m ²
Site Code:	BAL-46 '94	Other reference:	HN017
Start of work	26th September, 1994	Finish of work	2nd October, 1994
Site name and address:	25 Clothall Road, Baldock		
Type of work:	Watching brief	NGR (to 8 figures):	TL 2485 3380
Client name and address:	Mrs P. Martin, as above		
Nature of work:	Extension	Previous land use:	Garden
Size of affected area:	24.80m ²	Size of area investigated:	24.80m ²
Site Code:	BAL-61 '94	Other reference:	HN025
Start of work	29th October, 1994	Finish of work	3rd November, 1994
Site name and address:	4 Drapers Court, r/o 39b High Street, Baldock		
Type of work:	Watching brief	NGR (to 8 figures):	TL246 337
Client name and address:	North Herts District Council, Gernon Road, Letchworth		
Nature of work:	Housing	Previous land use:	Garden
Size of affected area:	c.330m ²	Size of area investigated:	330m ²
Site Code:	BAL-53 '96	Other reference:	HN044
Start of work	8th January, 1996	Finish of work	2nd April, 1996
Site name and address:	26A Orchard Road, Baldock		
Type of work:	Watching brief	NGR (to 8 figures):	TL 2450 3404
Client name and address:	Householder		
Nature of work:	Barn conversion	Previous land use:	Barn
Size of affected area:	27m ²	Size of area investigated:	9m ²
Site Code:	BAL-63 '95	Other reference:	n/a
Start of work	19th May, 1995	Finish of work	19 th May, 1995
Organisation:	The Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Related SMR Nos:	8	Periods represented:	Roman; post-medieval
Previous summaries/reports:	see report bibliography		

Summary of fieldwork results:

As the result of planning conditions imposed on a number of new developments in Baldock by the North Hertfordshire District Council, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the individual property owners, to undertake archaeological watching briefs on five separate sites in Baldock between 1994 and 1996.

The fieldwork revealed evidence for the survival of underlying archaeological features and deposits dating from the Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods.

The present report is designed to pull together the results of this work. It is intended that the paper and material archives from these sites will be deposited with the North Hertfordshire Museums Service.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared on behalf of *North Hertfordshire District Council*, the report is designed to pull together the results of five small-scale archaeological fieldwork projects, undertaken by The Heritage Network in Baldock between 1994 and 1996 (see Fig. 1).

1.2 The planning permission for the developments controlled by the North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC), has been granted subject to a standard condition requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological work, in accordance with the provisions set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note No.16 (PPG16) on Archaeology and Planning and the NHDC guideline, *Archaeology and Planning* 7. The work followed the provisions set out in the Heritage Network's approved Project Designs.

1.3 A watching brief on the footings for a new extension to the rear of 7 Sun Street, in May 1994, revealed evidence of post-Medieval domestic activity. This appears to have truncated remains dating from the Late Pre-Roman Iron Age, Romano-British and Medieval periods.

1.4 A watching brief on the footings trenches for a new housing development on the site of the former Stationmaster's House, off Station Road, in September and October 1994, revealed further evidence of Late Pre-Roman Iron Age and Romano-British activity in the form of pits and ditches. Some of the features had been identified during the NHDC Field Archaeology Section evaluation of the site in 1992 (Atkinson, Burleigh and Went, 1992) others were first identified during the present project.

1.5 The footings trench for an extension to the rear of 25 Clothall Road was excavated under archaeological supervision in October 1994. The groundworks revealed a buried soil layer dating to the Roman period that sealed the chalk natural, indicating that archaeological remains in this area of Baldock may have escaped serious plough damage.

1.6 A watching brief on the excavation of the footings for a new house at 4 Draper's Court revealed no new archaeological information. An open area excavation carried out previously by the NHDC Field Archaeology Section had uncovered evidence for Romano-British activity, including small pits and a possible well, but the unconsolidated ground conditions made the recording of any new information virtually impossible.

1.7 A watching brief on the footings trench during the conversion of an existing barn to domestic accommodation, at 26A Orchard Road in May 1995, revealed a layer of buried soil of possible Medieval date, sealed by the modern overburden. This, in turn, sealed a ditch or pit of Romano-British date.

1.8 The aim of the archaeological work has been to consider the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any such remains that are liable to be threatened by the development, and to provide a local and regional, archaeological and historical context for them.

2. Archaeological Background

BALDOCK

2.1 The present day small town of Baldock is known to have started its life as a 'New Town' in the Middle Ages. Founded by the Knights Templar, a crusading religious order, during the mid twelfth century, it was granted the rights to a market and fair by King Richard I in 1189 (Beresford, 1967). Baldock prospered during the Medieval period, as it lay on the junction of two major routes, the Icknield Way and the Great North Road. Two market places, along High Street and Whitehorse Street, were established.

2.2 Although the modern town was not founded until the twelfth century, it has far more ancient origins. Excavations in Baldock, and its immediate vicinity, have produced evidence of the Neolithic (3,500bc-2,000bc) and Bronze Age (2,000bc-700bc) periods, including a pit alignment, flint implements and pottery. Cropmarks of prehistoric ring ditches, enclosures and linear features have been revealed by aerial photography to the north and east of the modern town.

2.3 Settlement in Baldock began to develop from the Middle Iron Age (c 400bc) with associated enclosures and fields. Immediately to the east of the modern town is the site of an extensive Late Pre-Roman Iron Age and Romano-British settlement. This may have originated along the site of a spring-line in the vicinity of the railway.

2.4 The town appears to have grown steadily around the junction of several major roads, including the Icknield Way and Roman Road 220, later the Great North Road. The Icknield Way had been an important east - west route along the Chiltern escarpment, between East Anglia and Wessex, since the Mesolithic period (10,000bc-3,500bc).

2.5 Baldock thrived during the Late Pre-Roman Iron Age and Roman periods, the important roads brought trade into the town, which acted as a local market centre for the surrounding agricultural communities. The emerging street pattern, the density of the buildings and the evidence, from archaeological fieldwork, of imported goods from other parts of the Roman Empire, are indications of the town's increasing prosperity.

2.6 The Roman settlement seems to have been demarcated by a series of substantial cemeteries, located to the north, east, south and south-west of the present day Clothall Road. Only to the north-west have no cemeteries been identified by archaeological fieldwork.

2.7 Excavations in Baldock were first carried out by W.P. Westell, curator of Letchworth Museum, during the 1920s and 30s. Since then further work has been conducted by Dr I.M. Stead, during the 1960s and 70s, for the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works; by G.R. Burleigh, during the late 1970s, 80s and early 90s, for the North Hertfordshire District Council Field Archaeology Section, and more recently by The Heritage Network.

2.8 From the later third century, Baldock began to decline in size and population, until, by the late fifth century, the settlement was probably reduced to a few scattered farmsteads.

2.9 At the time of the Domesday Survey, the site of the present day town was part of the manor of Weston. The Knights Templar's 'New Town', called Baudoc, was founded on the northern boundary of the manor. The Medieval town appears to have deliberately avoided the site of the earlier settlement, suggesting that remains of Roman Baldock were still visible in the twelfth century.

2.10 During the post-Medieval period, Baldock became the first principal staging post on the Great North Road, between London and York. This is reflected in the number of hostleries built for the comfort and convenience of travellers.

2.11 The chief industry in Baldock was malting for the brewing industry, and several maltings and breweries were established in the town by the end of the eighteenth century.

3. Methodology

3.1 Five trenches were excavated in order to investigate whether archaeological features identified on the adjacent site to the north, extended into the present site. The two trenches at the eastern end of the study area revealed archaeological remains but the remaining three were blank.

3.2 The following methodology applies to all the sites described in this report.

3.3 All work was undertaken in accordance with Heritage Network's approved project designs.

3.4 All groundworks were carried out under close archaeological monitoring.

3.5 Any surviving archaeological features were recorded by means of scale plans, section drawings and detailed written descriptions on appropriate *pro forma*. A full photographic archive was maintained.

3.6 Following the fieldwork, all finds were cleaned, quantified and recorded according to their function and date.

4.7 Sun Street

INTRODUCTION

4.1 The following report covers an archaeological watching brief on the footings to a new extension to the rear of an existing building at 7-9 Sun Street, Baldock, Hertfordshire.

4.2 The work was commissioned by the Housing and Environmental Health Department of the North Hertfordshire District Council, in fulfilment of an archaeological condition placed on the development of the site by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) the North Hertfordshire District Council.

4.3 The site lies within Baldock Archaeological Area 96 on the District Local Plan No. 2 (July 1993). It covers an area of approximately 77m² and is bounded on the south by Sun Street, on the west by properties fronting on to Church Street, on the north by properties fronting on to Orchard Road and on the east by the Victoria Public House.

4.4 Excavations in Baldock since the 1920s have revealed the remains of an extensive Late Pre-Roman Iron Age and Romano-British settlement to the north and east of the present site, which is believed to lie close to the western boundary of the Romano-British settlement. The site lies within the core of the Medieval town, founded in the mid-twelfth century by the Knights Templar.

4.5 It was the aim of the watching brief to investigate the possibility of determining the western extent of the Romano-British settlement, and of locating any features associated with the Medieval town.

4.6 The fieldwork was directed by David Hillelson and undertaken by Penny Fenton and Alec Russell.

RESULTS

4.7 The extension to the rear of 7 Sun Street comprised two areas of foundation trenches (Fig 4). One lay to the north of Unit 1 in the existing L-shaped property, the other lay at the northern end of the long arm of the existing building, adjoining Unit 3.

4.8 The footings were cut through an existing concrete yard, penetrating several layers of modern overburden, before reaching the natural chalk, which lay at a depth of approximately 1.20m below the present surface. Much of the yard area appears to have been occupied by a series of barns, possibly part of the derelict, post-Medieval, brewery complex to the immediate north-east of the property.

4.9 The first identifiable feature of archaeological interest, was a compact, level, cobbled surface, which lay to the west and north of the footings adjoining Unit 1 (Fig. 4). The cobbling was sealed by the modern overburden, and appears to have been laid with care and attention. The surface was largely made up of rounded cobbles, no more than 0.10m in size, within a dark grey-brown clay silt matrix. The cobbled surface lay on a bed of redeposited chalk, no more than 0.20m in depth, beneath which were occasional depressions, filled with crushed tile, brick fragments and cobble stones. It is probable that these features relate to a build up of surfaces during the post-Medieval period.

4.10 Immediately to the north of the footings for Unit 1, an area of modern overburden was removed, enabling a larger area of the cobbled surface to be observed. A depression within in this area was investigated and revealed partially waterlogged timbers, lying immediately below the cobbled surface. Further investigation of this feature was not possible, but the evidence suggests that this was the remains of a well that pre-dated the cobbled surface (Fig. 4).

4.11 Approximately 3.00m to the south-east of the possible well, another well was identified in the northern footings of Unit 1 (Fig. 4). The capping of this feature had been disturbed, and it was possible to observe a substantial shaft, 1.20m wide and at least 5m deep, cut into the chalk natural. Its capping consisted of several rows of unfrosted recessed bricks (0.23 x 0.10 x 0.60m). The relationship between this well and the cobbled surface could not be ascertained and no evidence to date its period of use was recovered.

4.12 No evidence for the cobbled surface was encountered in the footings to the north of Unit 3, but a build up, varying in depth between 0.25m and 0.55m, of post-medieval and modern concrete and hard-core surfaces was observed in the sections.

4.13 A feature, consisting of small, glazed, peg tiles, together with several larger, unglazed, tiles, was observed, in the east facing section, at 2.10m from the southern end of the western wall footings of Unit 3 (Fig. 5, section 1). The tiles appear to have been deliberately laid in a square cut feature, approximately 1m wide by 0.50m deep, cut into the natural chalk. The matrix surrounding the tiles was a mid creamy-brown clay silt, with frequent chalk flecks. This feature may have been intended as a hearth, though no visible signs of burning were observed during fieldwork.

4.14 Possible brick wall footings, of post-Medieval date, were observed in the north facing section (Fig. 5, section 2) at 2.64m from the eastern end, of the southern wall footings to the extension north of Unit 3. The footings were 0.23m below the present ground surface, cut into the natural chalk, and measured 0.56m wide by 0.53m deep. The matrix surrounding the bricks comprised a light creamy brown clay silt, with moderate chalk flecks.

DISCUSSION

4.15 The watching brief undertaken by The Heritage Network at 7 Sun Street, Baldock, afforded a limited opportunity for archaeological investigation on a site thought to be on the western edge of the Late Pre-Roman and Romano-British settlement, and close to the centre of the Medieval town.

4.16 Although the site at lies within a designated Archaeological Area, the footings trenches to the new extensions behind the existing building did not encounter any features which could be demonstrated to be earlier than the post-Medieval period, indicating that any buried remains of earlier periods may have been truncated by later activity.

4.17 The cobbled surface, the two wells and the possible hearth indicate possible domestic activity on the present site, dating to the post-Medieval period.

5. Stationmaster's House

INTRODUCTION

5.1 The following report covers an archaeological watching brief on the site of the former Stationmaster's House, on Station Approach, at the junction of Station Road and Icknield Way East, Baldock.

5.2 The work was commissioned by North Hertfordshire District Council, in fulfilment of an archaeological condition placed on the development of the site by the LPA, the North Hertfordshire District Council.

5.3 The site lies within Baldock Archaeological Area No. 96 on the District Local Plan No. 2 (July 1993) and covers an area of approximately 1,224m². The site was previously occupied by the former Stationmaster's House, now demolished, and is bounded by Station Approach to the east, by Station Road to the south, the Railway Station to the north and by properties along Icknield Way East to the west.

5.4 The current watching brief follows an archaeological evaluation of the site, undertaken in 1991, by the North Hertfordshire District Council Field Archaeology Section, which found evidence of Romano-British occupation on the site, dating between the 2nd and 4th centuries AD, including pits, ditches and a chalk quarry (Atkinson, Burleigh and Went, 1992).

5.5 The aim of the watching brief was to further identify and record the archaeological features observed during the archaeological evaluation of the site in 1991.

5.6 The fieldwork was directed by David Hillelson and supervised by Andy Richmond. The field team was: Catherine Holgate, Jonathan Clarke, Chris Turner and Alec Russell.

RESULTS

5.7 Several features were exposed across the footings area, some clearly relating to those features identified during the earlier evaluation (Fig. 6). In addition, several previously unseen archaeological features were observed during this phase of the fieldwork.

5.8 In the southern footings trench to Plot 7 the sections revealed the presence of a large ditch, [26] which ran on a north east - south west alignment (Fig 7, section 1). This was over 2m wide and 0.50m deep, and appeared to have uneven sides. The cut contained two fills; the primary fill, (25), comprised a friable mid dark brown sandy silt. Finds recovered from this fill included one small, unidentified, pottery sherd, along with animal bone fragments and oyster shell. Above this was another fill, (24), which comprised a mid dark brown sandy silt, with moderate amounts of chalk flecks and lumps. Finds recovered from this fill include a sherd from a shell-tempered jar, dating to the 2nd or 3rd century AD. It is certain that this feature is the same as ditch [25], identified in Trench A, in the south-western corner of the site, during the evaluation on the site in 1991.

5.9 This same ditch was observed in further footings trenches for Plot 7, approximately 3m to the north-east, but modern disturbance meant that its dimensions and shape were unclear. The fill at this point comprised dark mid brown sandy silt. Finds recovered from the fill included Romano-British pottery sherds, animal bone fragments, oyster shell, brick and burnt clay fragments and an unidentified ferrous object.

5.10 Another ditch, [22], was identified in the south-western footings of Plot 7, running on an approximate north west - south east alignment (Fig. 7, section 1). The exact shape and dimensions were unclear, but appeared to measure approximately 1.60m wide and 0.30m deep, with gently sloping sides and a concave base. The primary fill, (21), comprised a dark brown silty loam. Above this was fill (20), which comprised a friable dark mid brown silty loam, with moderate chalk inclusions. No finds were recovered from this feature. This ditch may well be the same as ditch [20], identified in Trench A during the evaluation in 1991. It is possible that this ditch joins ditch [26] to the south of Plot 7.

5.11 Approximately 4m south of ditch [26], a shallow scoop or pit, [30], was observed in the south-eastern corner of Plot 7 (Fig. 7, section 2) measuring 2.5m wide and 0.50m deep. The primary fill of this feature, (29), comprised brown silt with a very high chalk content. Above this was another possible fill, (28), which comprised light, mid brown, silty clay. No finds were recovered from this feature, which has been interpreted as possibly being associated with chalk extraction.

5.12 Approximately 5.50m north of ditch [26] a large pit [17] was identified in the footings trench between Plots 5 and 6 (Fig. 7, section 3). The pit measured approximately 7m long and between 0.60m and 0.85m deep, but the exact dimensions remained unclear as it was truncated by the footings. The primary fill, (16), comprised a compact, yellow-brown, silty clay. One sherd of Late Grog- and shell-tempered pottery, dating to the 3rd/4th century AD, was recovered from this fill. The upper fill, (15), comprised a compact, mid-brown, silty clay, with lenses of, possibly, redeposited chalk. Finds recovered from this fill include an unidentified ferrous object, oyster shells and Romano-British pottery, dating to between the 1st to 4th centuries AD. The feature was possibly a domestic rubbish pit, perhaps belonging to the structure located during archaeological fieldwork by the NHDC Field Archaeology Section at 'The Engine' Public House in 1992, approximately 60m to the south-east (Richmond, Burleigh and Went, 1992).

5.13 Approximately 9m north-east of pit [17], the butt end of a ditch, [09], was identified at the western end of the footings trench between Plots 3 and 4 (Fig. 7, section 4). The ditch appeared to be running on a WNW-ESE alignment and measured just over 1m wide and 0.70m deep, with steep sides and a concave base. The primary fill, (08), comprised a loose clay silt, with moderate amounts of small stones that became more frequent towards to the bottom of the fill, and frequent chalk flecks and lumps. Several fragments of animal bone were recovered from this fill. The upper fill, (07), comprised a loose grey-brown clay silt, with moderate chalk flecks and patches of pea grit. No finds were recovered from this fill, which may relate to the overlying layer of modern overburden. This feature has been interpreted as a Romano-British ditch, truncated by later activity on the site.

5.14 Approximately 8m north-east of ditch [09], another large pit, [06], was identified at the eastern end of the footings between Plots 2 and 3 (Fig. 7, section 6). The pit had been severely truncated by the

construction of a timber building associated with the Stationmaster's house and by the new footings trenches, but appeared to be at least 5m wide and approximately 1m deep. The single fill, context (05) comprised a friable grey-brown sandy silt, with frequent chalk flecks. Finds recovered from the fill included a large amount of animal bone, possible Romano-British tile fragments and a sherd of pottery, dating to the 4th century AD. The evidence would suggest that it was probably a late Roman domestic rubbish pit.

5.15 Pit [06] appeared to truncate two parallel ditches, or gullies, [11] and [02] Both ran on a north west - south east alignment, and were identified in Trench E during the evaluation on the site in 1991 (Atkinson, Burleigh and Went, 1992).

5.16 The western gully, [11], was observed in the footings trench between Plots 1 and 2. It measured 1.20m wide and 0.60m deep, with gently sloping sides and a concave base. The single fill, (10), comprised a loose light-grey loam, with moderate chalk flecks. Several Romano-British pottery sherds were recovered from the fill, ranging in date between the 2nd and 4th centuries AD.

5.17 The eastern gully, [02], was observed in the eastern footings trench to Plot 1 (Fig. 7, section 7). It measured 1.30m wide and 0.60m deep, with uneven sides and base. The single fill, (01), comprised a friable grey-brown sandy silt, with frequent chalk inclusions. Finds recovered from the fill included one abraded Romano-British pottery sherd and a fragment of animal bone.

5.18 Approximately 14.50m east of gullies [11] and [02], a substantial linear feature, [33], was observed in the north-eastern corner of the footings trenches for the garages (Fig. 7, section 8). It ran on a north west - south east alignment and measured 1.90m wide, with irregular sides. The base was not observed in the footings trench. The single fill, (32), comprised a friable light grey-brown silty loam, with frequent chalk inclusions. Finds recovered from the fill include oyster shells and abraded pottery sherds of Romano-British date. The feature has been interpreted as a boundary ditch of Romano-British date, possibly forming the eastern side of an enclosure, with ditch [26] forming its southern boundary.

FINDS ASSESSMENT

5.19 The following table shows the weight and number of artefacts collected from the site during the present project.

Context	Pottery		Tile		Brick		Daub		An.bone		Shell		Fe objs		Comments
	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	
1	35	2					35	1	5	2					
5			20	2*					375	15			70	1	*Post-med peg tile
8									15	1					
10	65	2													
12	30	1													
15	220	6							60	2			35	1	
16	40	1													
24	10	1													
25	1	1			10	1*			10	4	15	1			* post-med
31	155	16					30	4	50	4					

Context	Pottery		Tile		Brick		Daub		An.bone		Shell		Fe objs		Comments
	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	
u/s	65	4							260	4			20	1	Pottery spindle whorl
Totals	621	34	20	2	10	1	65	5	775	32	15	1	125	3	

Pottery

5.20 A total of 34 sherds, weighing 621g was recovered from one unstratified and eight stratified contexts. The bulk of the assemblage consisted of abraded, undiagnostic, bodysherds.

5.21 The pottery ranged from residual sherds of early Roman grog-tempered wares to intrusive post-medieval wares. Most of the material dated between the late 2nd century AD and the 4th century AD. No prehistoric or medieval sherds were recovered during the present project.

5.22 Unsurprisingly the bulk of the pottery came from the kiln site at Much Hadham, approximately 12km to the east, representing 35% of the assemblage by sherd count. Other sources included shelly wares from the kiln sites at Harrold in Bedfordshire, 12% by sherd count, and one sherd each from the kiln sites in the Lower Nene Valley and *Verulamium* region. Imported fine wares were represented by one sherd of samian. Dishes and jars appeared to be the predominant forms recovered.

5.23 This assemblage, although small, appears to indicate domestic activity on the site. The presence of grog-tempered wares and Romanising grey wares suggests there may have been small-scale activity in the late 1st / early 2nd century AD, but the main phase of occupation appears to have been between the late 2nd and 4th / 5th centuries AD.

DISCUSSION

5.24 The watching brief at the former Stationmaster's House, undertaken by The Heritage Network in the Autumn of 1994, followed an archaeological evaluation of the site by the NHDC Field Archaeology Section in 1991.

5.25 Several of the features observed during the watching brief, had been recorded during the evaluation (ditches [26], [22], [11] and [02]). Additional features were also revealed in the footings trenches during the development of the site, including two large rubbish pits, [06] and [17].

5.26 The new development on the present site lies to the west of the large late Roman chalk quarry, identified in the 1991 evaluation. The pottery evidence from the present project indicates domestic activity on the site, starting in the late 1st/early 2nd century AD and continuing to the 4th/5th century AD. This was possibly a small property established within an enclosure bounded by ditches [26] and [33]. Archaeological investigations in other parts of Baldock have revealed evidence of similar small domestic enclosures.

6. 25 Clothall Road

INTRODUCTION

6.1 The following report covers an archaeological watching brief on the footings trenches of a two storey extension, adjoining the southern wall of 25 Clothall Road.

6.2 The work was commissioned by the owner of the property, in fulfilment of an archaeological condition placed on the development of the site by the LPA, the North Hertfordshire District Council.

6.3 The site lies within Baldock Archaeological Area No. 96 on the District Local Plan No. 2 (July 1993) and is close to the centre of the Late Pre-Roman Iron Age and Romano-British settlement on Walls Field and Clothall Common.

6.4 The archaeological fieldwork was directed by David Hillelson and supervised by Andy Richmond. The field team were Jonathan Clarke and Catherine Holgate.

RESULTS

6.5 The footings trench extended 4m from the existing wall, turning at right angles for a further 6.20m, before returning to abut the building. The trench was approximately 0.50m wide, by 1m deep and was excavated by hand under archaeological supervision (fig. 8).

6.6 The dark loamy topsoil (01) was found across the whole area under investigation. It was 0.20m deep and sealed a substantial sub-soil horizon (02), which was up to 0.50m deep in places (Fig. 9, section 1). Fragments of animal bone and abraded, residual, pottery sherds, dating from the Romano-British to the post-Medieval period, were recovered from this layer.

6.7 The sub-soil sealed a layer of buried soil (03). This was 0.25m deep and lay across the whole trench, sealing the chalk natural (Fig. 9, section 2). The buried soil comprised a light brown silty loam, with frequent chalk inclusions. Finds recovered from this layer include oyster shells, fragments of animal bone and pottery sherds of Romano-British date, including Hadham greyware and *Verulamium* quartz-gritted sherds.

6.8 No archaeological features were recorded during the watching brief on the present site, probably due to the limited nature of the investigation.

DISCUSSION

6.9 The discovery of the buried soil was of considerable interest, as successive phases of building and ploughing, in many areas of Baldock, have severely truncated surviving archaeological deposits.

6.10 Although no actual features were located during the fieldwork, the discovery of the buried soil indicates the possible survival of archaeological deposits in this area of the town.

6.11 The finds assemblage recovered from layer (03) indicates domestic activity, dating to the Roman period, in an area close to the centre of the Romano-British settlement.

7.4 Draper's Court

INTRODUCTION

7.1 The following report covers an archaeological watching brief on the footings trenches of a new house at 4 Draper's Court, on the eastern side of the High Street, in January and April, 1996.

7.2 The work was commissioned by North Hertfordshire District Council, in fulfilment of an archaeological condition placed on the development of the site by the LPA, the North Hertfordshire District Council.

7.3 The watching brief reported here follows an archaeological excavation on the site by the NHDC Field Archaeology Section (Richmond and Burleigh, 1992).

7.4 The site lies within Baldock Archaeological Area No. 96 on the District Local Plan No. 2 (July 1993) and is close to the centre of the Late Pre-Roman Iron Age and Romano-British settlement on Walls Field and Clothall Common. The site adjoins Baker's Close, a public recreation ground, known from aerial photographs and geophysical surveys as the site of important and well preserved archaeological remains.

7.5 The archaeological fieldwork was directed by David Hillelson. The field team were David Hillelson, Penny Fenton and Paul Palmer.

RESULTS

7.6 A previous archaeological investigation on the site, in the winter of 1991/2, by the NHDC Field Archaeology Section, had located several small pits and a possible well, all of Romano-British date. Further work, in 1993, had found further evidence of Romano-British activity.

7.7 Following the backfilling of the site after the earlier open area excavations, the ground had not been consolidated by the then owner, on the ground conditions were consequently very friable. Access for recording during the watching brief, was therefore restricted on grounds of safety.

7.8 Disturbed areas of stratigraphy observed in the eastern footings trench of the new house may equate to a linear feature [134] running NW-SE and pit [15] which were observed during the NHDC investigations on the site (Richmond & Burleigh, 1992). No other archaeological features were observed during the watching brief and no finds were recovered.

DISCUSSION

7.9 The previous fieldwork, by the NHDC Field Archaeology Section, had recorded evidence of Romano-British activity on the site, including a series of small pits and a possible well. These features are indicative of Romano-British settlement extending beyond the limits of the site.

7.10 The treacherous ground conditions during the watching brief in 1996, precluded the observation of archaeological features in the footings trenches.

8. 26A Orchard Road

INTRODUCTION

8.1 The following report covers an archaeological watching brief on a footings trench excavated during the conversion of an existing barn, at 26A Orchard Road, to domestic accommodation.

8.2 The work was commissioned by the owner of the property, in fulfilment of an archaeological condition placed on the development of the site by the LPA, the North Hertfordshire District Council.

8.3 The site lies within Baldock Archaeological Area 96 on the District Local Plan No.2 (July 1993) and is close to both the centre of the Medieval town and the Late Pre-Roman Iron Age and Romano-British settlement.

8.4 The archaeological fieldwork was directed by David Hillelson and undertaken by Andy Richmond.

RESULTS

8.5 Only the excavation of the northern footings trench was observed (Fig. 10). The trench was cut through a layer of modern concrete, approximately 0.14m deep, which sealed a layer of hardcore, 0.34m deep. At 0.30m from the south-eastern end of the trench a layer of chalk rubble was observed, 1.70m wide with a maximum depth of 0.12m. This layer cut into a subsoil horizon, possibly of Medieval date, which was observed across the whole trench. Tile fragments were observed in this layer, but not collected.

8.6 The buried soil layer sealed a possible pit or ditch, approximately 2.40m wide (Fig. 11). Three fills were recorded in this feature. The upper fill (01) comprised a grey silt with frequent chalk flecks, approximately 1.80m wide and 0.08m deep, no finds were recovered from this fill. Fill (01) sealed (02), a grey brown silt with few chalk flecks, approximately 2.40m wide and 0.10m deep. A Romano-British copper alloy and silver brooch was recovered from this layer (Fig.12). Limited excavation revealed fill (03), a compact chalky rubble within a silt matrix cut into the natural chalk, to be 2.40m wide and 0.15m deep. No finds were recovered from this layer, which sealed a further fill, comprising a brown silty loam. The full length and depth of the feature could not be ascertained due to the limited nature of the investigation.

DISCUSSION

8.7 The watching brief on the present site afforded a limited opportunity to examine the surviving archaeological features on a site on the western edge of the Romano-British settlement and close to the centre of the Medieval town.

8.8 Evidence of the survival of a possible Medieval buried soil layer was recorded during the fieldwork on the present site. This sealed a Romano-British pit or ditch, indicating that buried archaeological remains have survived in this part of Baldock.

9. Conclusions

9.1 The five archaeological watching briefs detailed in this report, give a picture of the nature of the surviving archaeological remains in different areas of Baldock, despite the limitations of this type of investigation.

9.2 Evidence for the Romano-British settlement was recovered from three of the sites investigated, the former Stationmaster's House, 25 Clothall Road and 26A Orchard Road. Previous archaeological fieldwork at the Stationmaster's House had shown surviving features of Romano-British date, this was backed up by the findings of the watching brief. More interestingly, the very limited investigation at 25 Clothall Road found a buried soil layer, suggesting that the archaeology in that area of the town had not been subject to the destructive ploughing that other parts of the Late Pre-Roman Iron Age and Romano-British settlement had suffered.

9.3 It would appear from the observations at 26A Orchard Road that evidence of the Roman and Medieval settlement has survived in places between Whitehorse Street, to the south, and Orchard Road, to the north. However, the evidence from 7 Sun Street, suggests that the closer to the centre of the modern town, the higher the likelihood of post-Medieval activity obliterating evidence of the earlier settlements.

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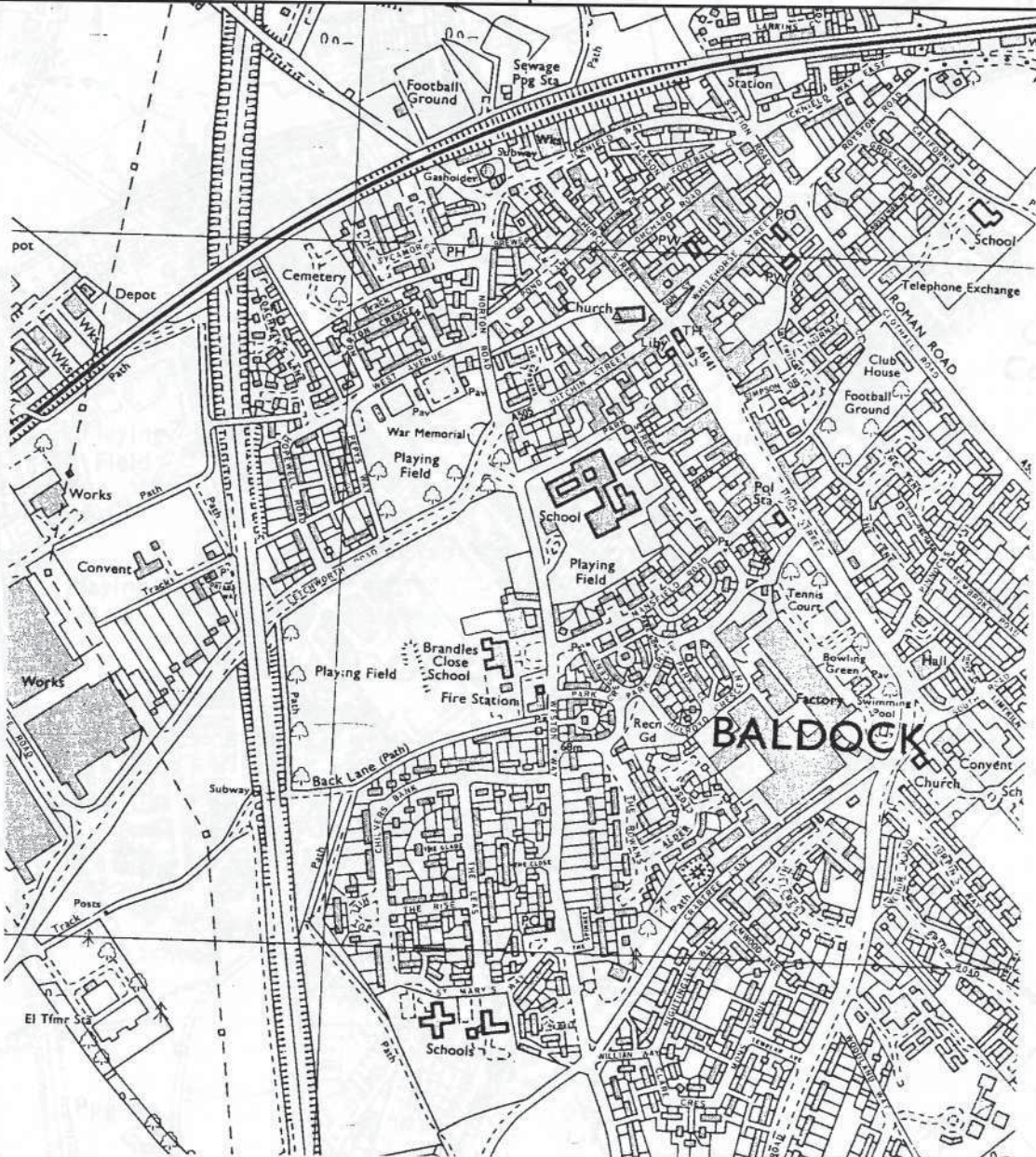
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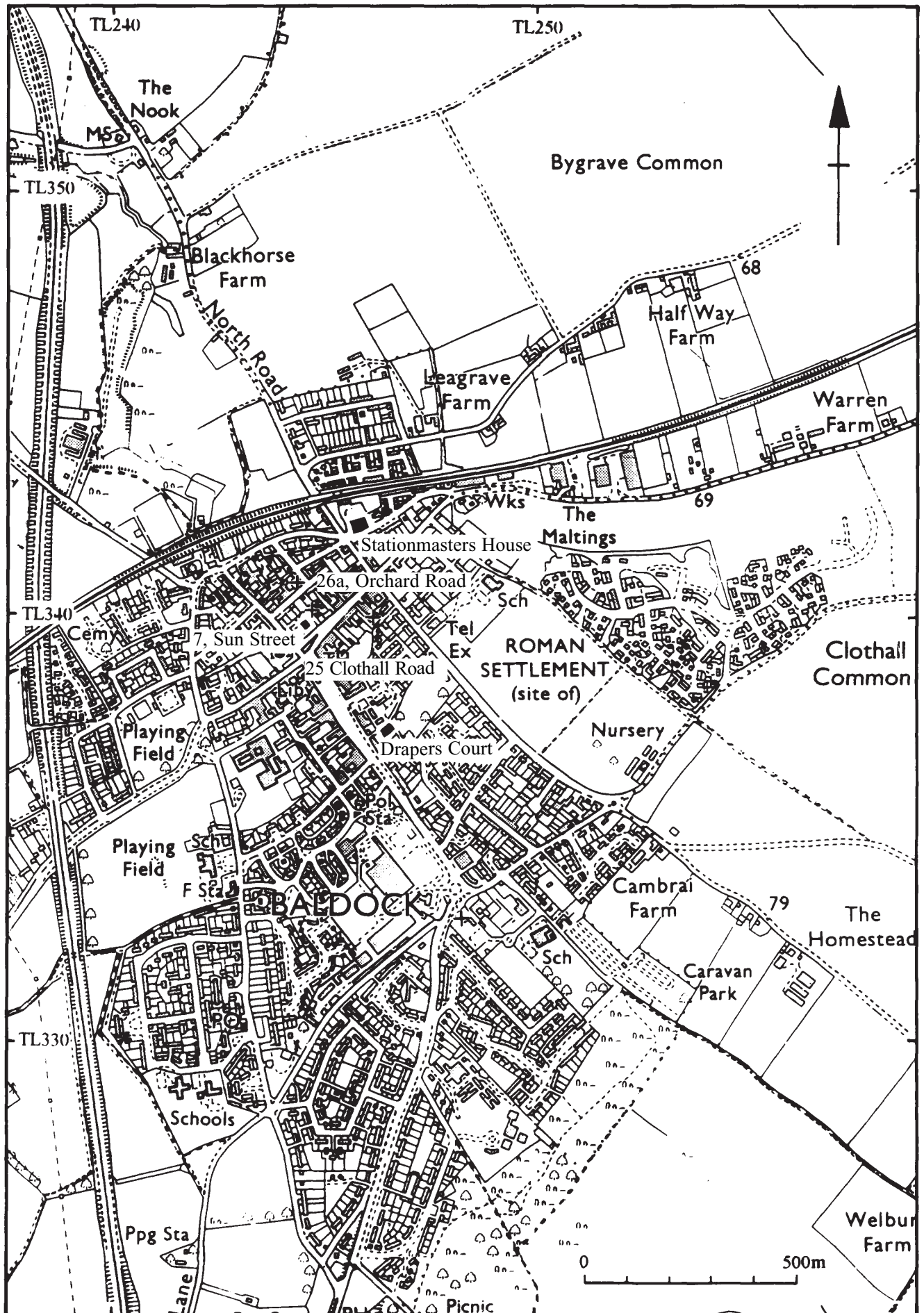
11. Illustrations

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Site Location

Scale 1:1000



Location showing all sites mentioned in the text

Scale 1:12500



Topsoil



Silt



Sand



Clay



Loam



Gravel



Flint



Chalk Rubble



Chalk



Rubble



Concrete



Cobbles



Oyster Shell



Glazed Tile



Brick



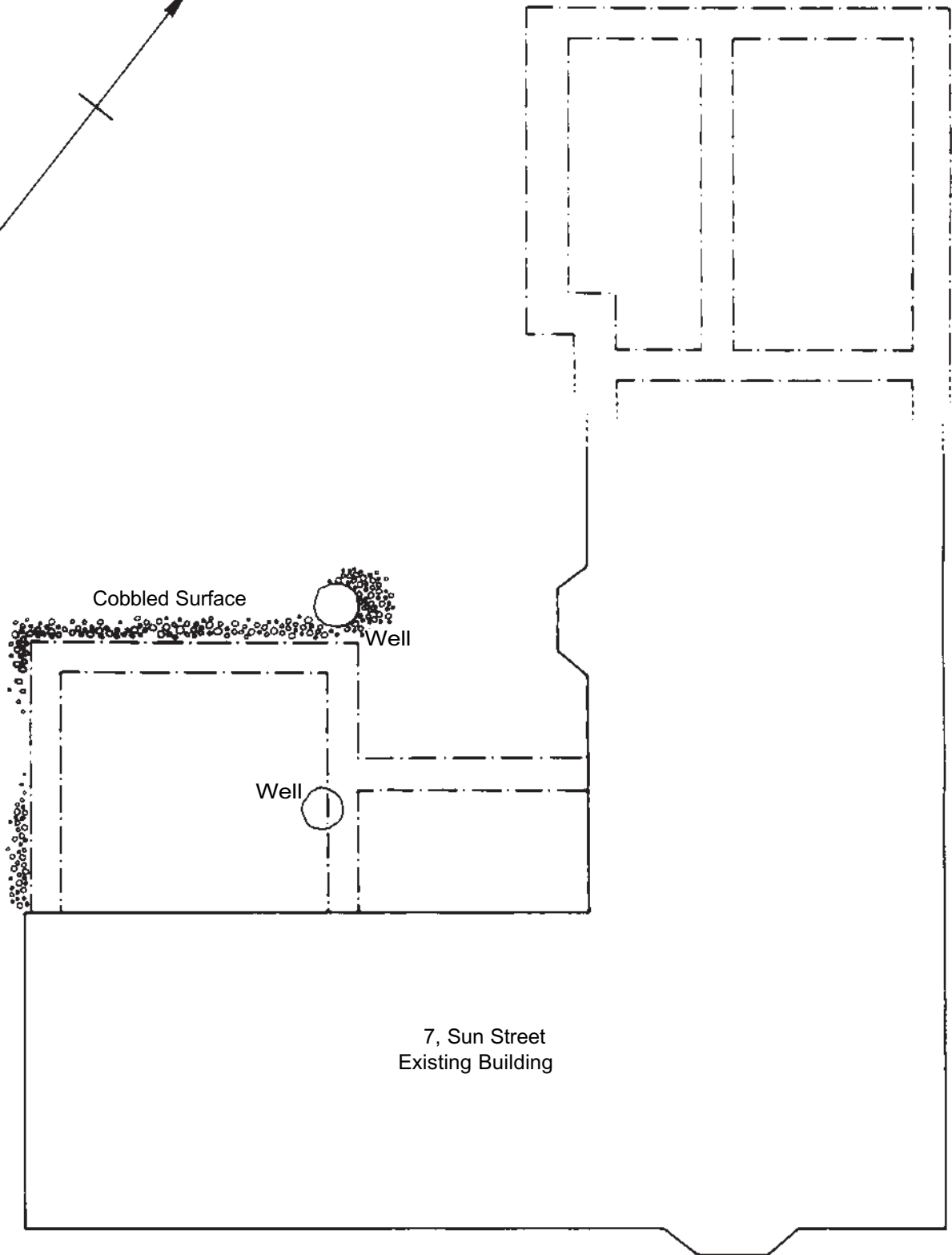
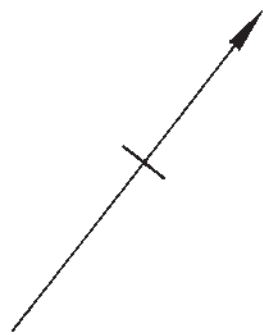
Boundary of Archaeological Features



Recut



Artificial Truncation



Cobbled Surface

Well

Well

7, Sun Street
Existing Building

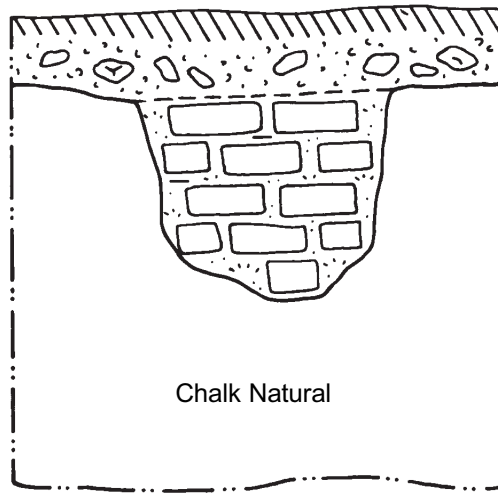
3 0 3 6m

Cobbled areas and wells

Scale 1:100

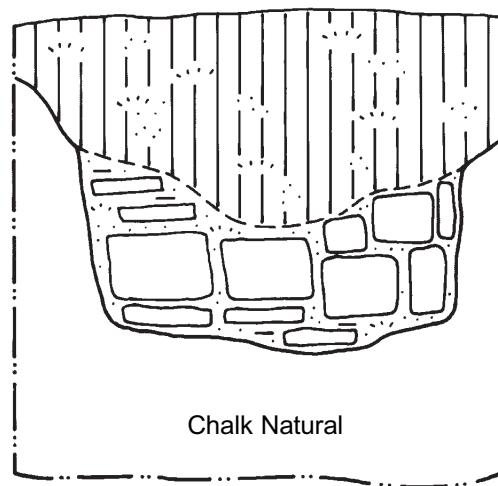
Figure 4

Northwest facing Section



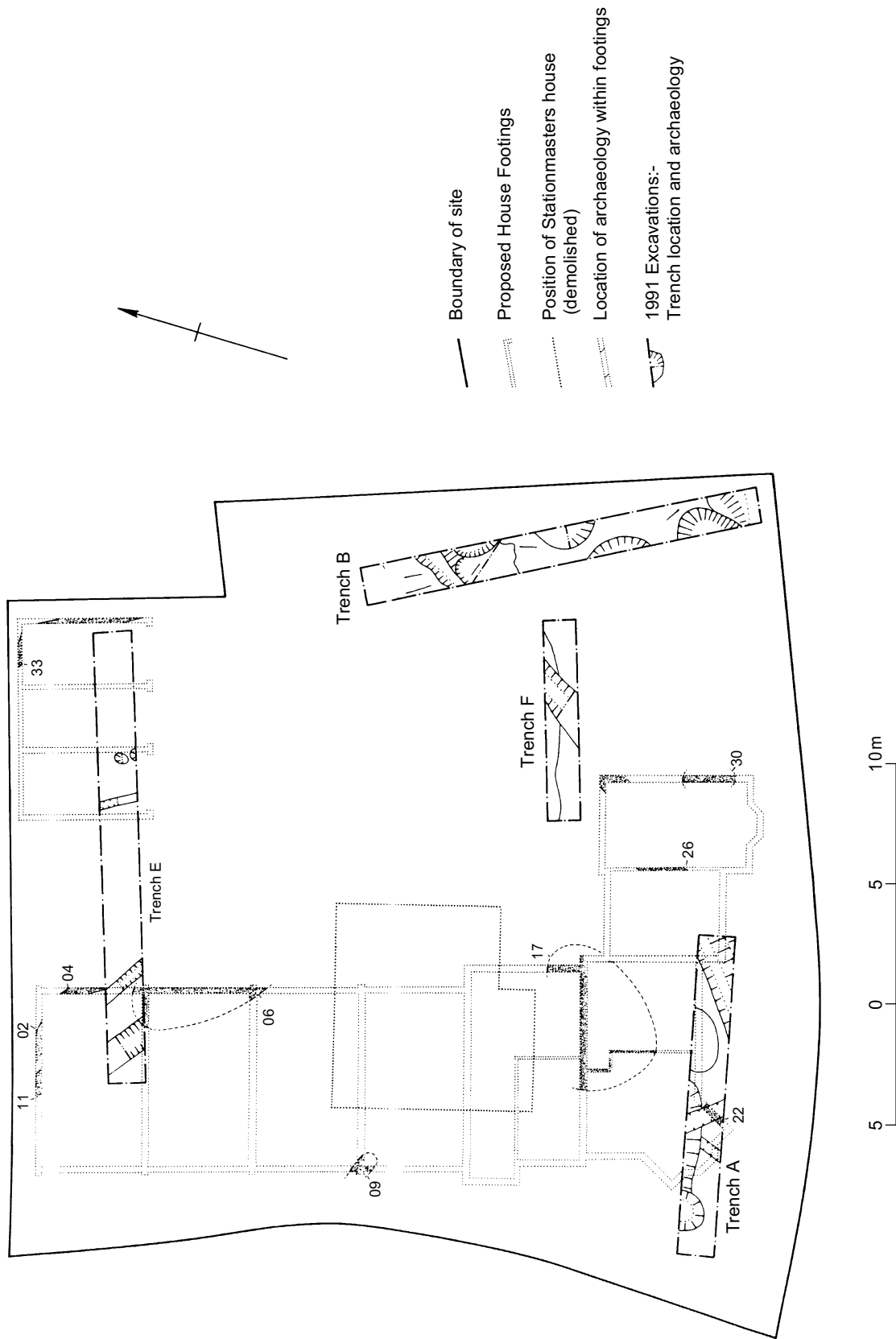
Section 1

Northeast facing Section



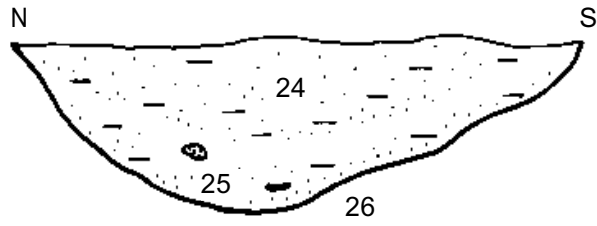
Section 2



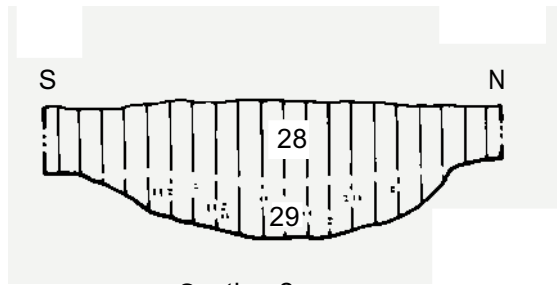


Archaeological Features

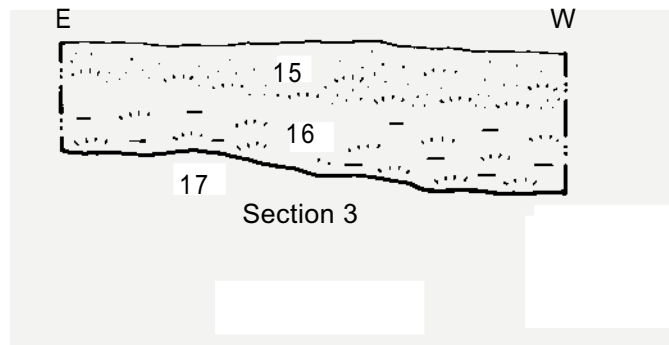
Scale as marked
Figure 6



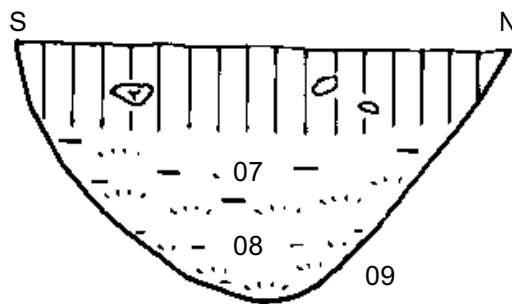
Section 1



Section 2



Section 3



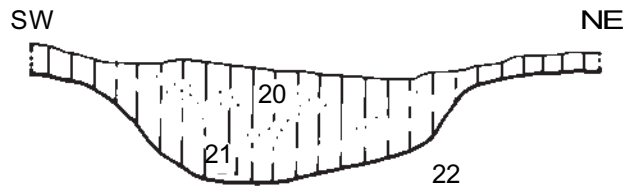
Section 4

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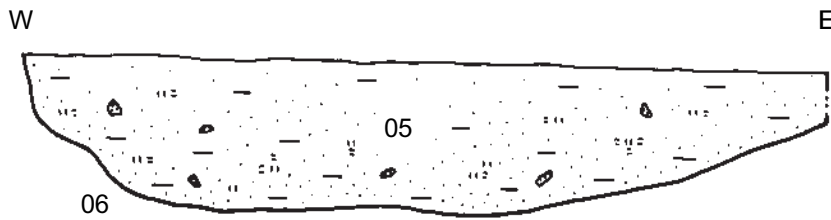
Sections

Scale 1:50

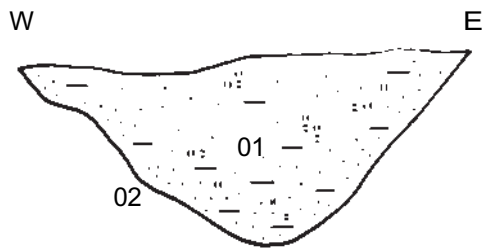
Figure 7



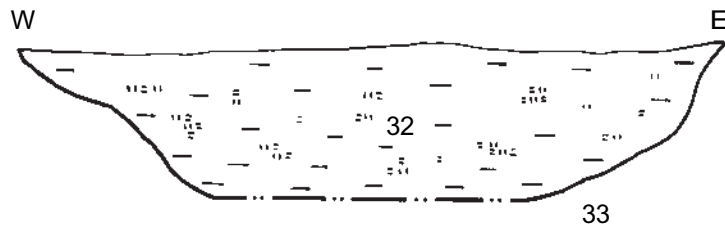
Section 1



Section 2



Section 3



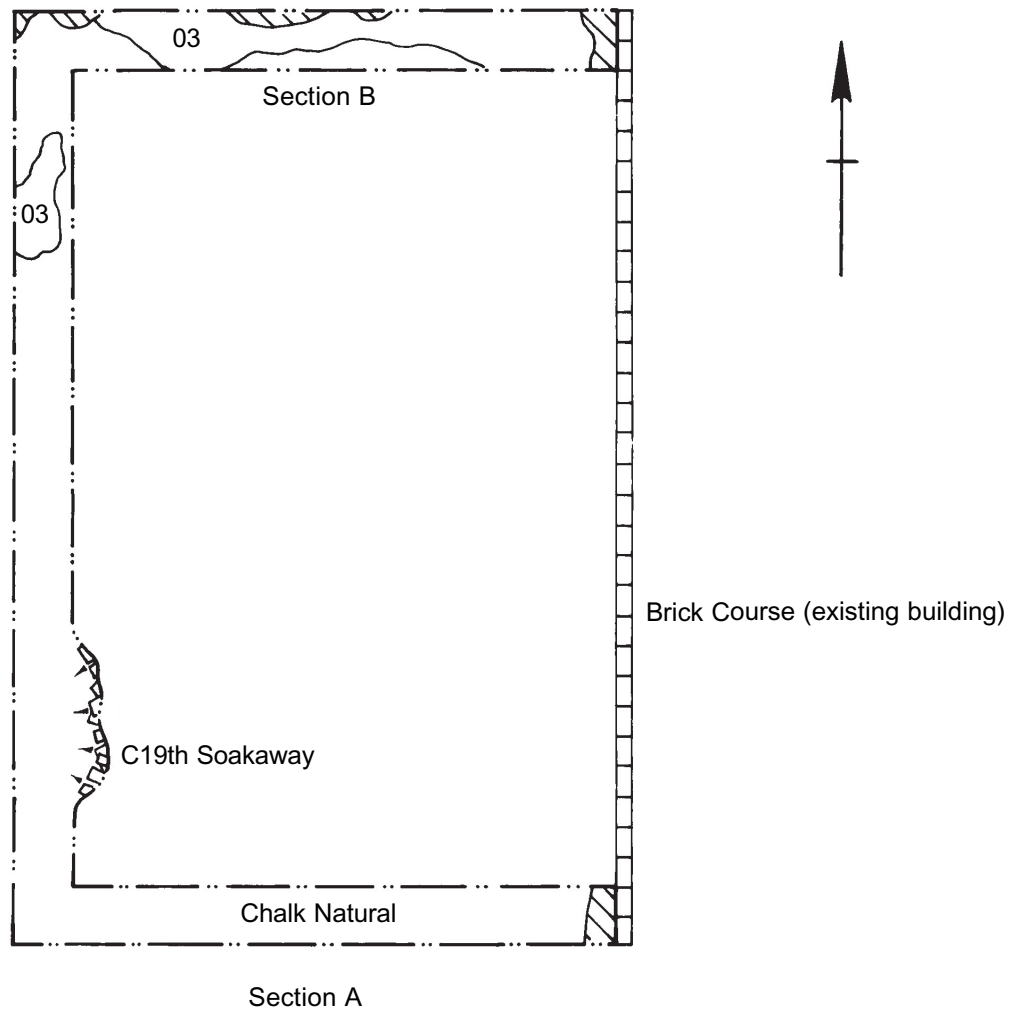
Section 4



Sections

Scale 1:20

Figure 7a

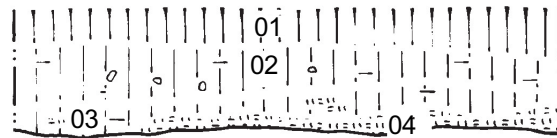


Trench plan

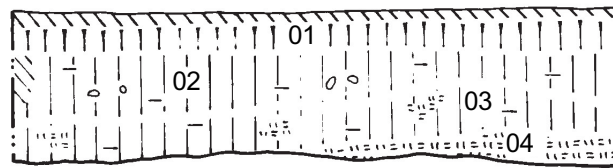
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Figure 8

Section 1



Section 2

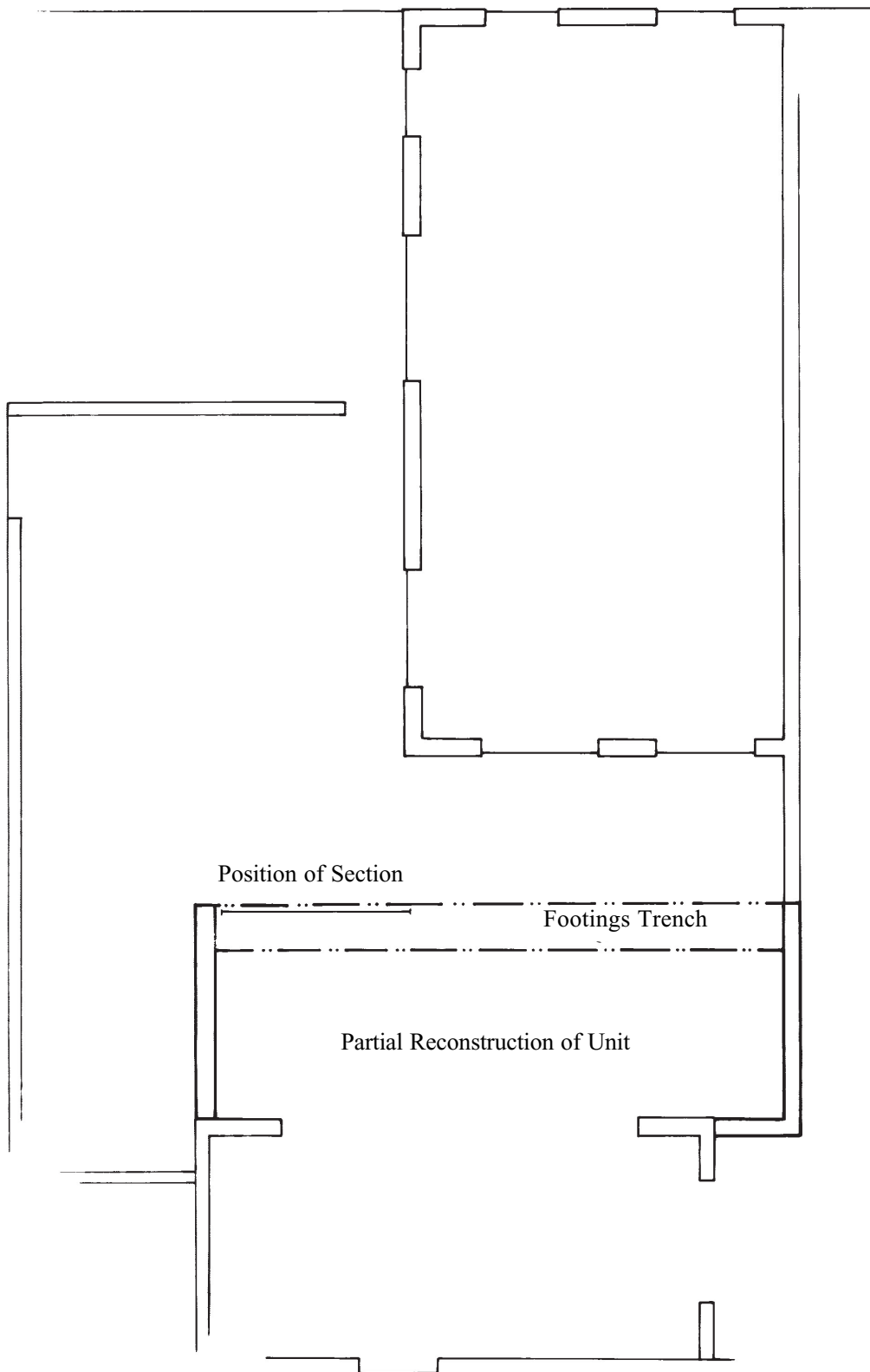


Trench sections

Scale 1:50

Figure 9

Orchard Road



Position of Section

Footings Trench

Partial Reconstruction of Unit

0 5m

Trench location

Scale 1:100

Figure 11

