

HERITAGE NETWORK



OLD PALACE LODGE HOTEL Church Street, Dunstable, Beds.

HN644

Archaeological Evaluation Report



THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

OLD PALACE LODGE HOTEL Church Street, Dunstable, Bedfordshire

HN644

Archaeological Evaluation

Prepared on behalf of MGM Hotels Ltd.

by

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Report no. 389

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The cover illustration shows the Old Palace Lodge Hotel, looking northwest.

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by David Kaye and Alison Hudson. Illustrations were prepared by David Kaye, and the report was edited by David Hillelson.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to Martyn Murphy of MGM Hotels Ltd; Peter Wilson, Plant Hire; Lesley-Ann Mather and the staff of the Historic Environment Section, Bedfordshire County Council, for their help and co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

Summary

Site name and address:	Old Palace Lodge Hotel, Church Street, Dunstable, Bedfordshire		
County:	Bedfordshire	District:	South Bedfordshire
Village/town:	Dunstable	Parish:	Dunstable
Planning reference:	N/a	NGR:	TL 0212 2198
Client name and address:	MGM Hotels Ltd., Old Palace Lodge Hotel, Church Street, Dunstable, Beds.		
Nature of work:	Extension	Former land use:	Car Park
Site status:	None	Reason for investigation:	Direction of local planning authority (PPG 16)
Position in planning process:	Predetermination	Project brief originator:	Local authority
Size of affected area:	c.289m ²	Size of area investigated:	c.27m ²
Site Code:	HN644	Other reference:	n/a
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc.:	Evaluation	Archive recipient:	Luton Museum
Start of work	30/01/2007	Finish of work	1/02/2007
Related SMR Nos:	n/a	Periods represented:	Medieval
Oasis UID	heritage1-23554	Significant finds:	Worked stone, pottery sherds
Monument types:	n/a		
Physical archive:	Pottery sherds , worked stone		
Previous summaries/reports:	n/a		

Synopsis: As a result of a condition on the planning permission for the construction of two extensions to the rear of the Old Palace Lodge Hotel, Church Street, Dunstable, Bedfordshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the owners to undertake a programme of archaeological evaluation.

Three 3m x 3m trenches were excavated in the rear car park of the hotel. Trench 1 contained an undated linear feature. Trench 2 was severely disturbed by modern services. Trench 3 contained three features: a ditch, a pit and a post-hole. Medieval artefacts were recovered from the pit. On this basis it is considered that there is a high risk that archaeological remains of significance will be encountered in the course of the development of the site.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared on the instruction of *MGM Hotels Ltd*, as part of the archaeological evaluation of a proposed development site located at Old Palace Lodge Hotel, Church Street, Dunstable, Bedfordshire.

1.2 Clarification of the archaeological impact of the development was required before the planning application could be submitted, in accordance with the provisions set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note No.16 (PPG16) on Archaeology and Planning (DoE 1990). The work has been defined in an *Brief for Archaeological Field Evaluation of land to the rear of the Old Palace Lodge Hotel, Church Street, Dunstable, Bedfordshire* prepared by the County Archaeological Officer (CAO) from the Heritage and Environment Section of Bedfordshire County Council (ref. LAM 04/10/2006), acting as archaeological advisers to the local planning authority, South Bedfordshire District Council (SBDC).

1.3 The study area is in the historic core of Dunstable, centred at NGR TL 0212 2198 (Figure 1). The site is located on the north side of Church Street, approximately 200m to the east of the Roman road of Watling Street (A5). Currently the site is part of the hotel car park and covered with hard standing and garden. The development proposes the construction of two extensions at the rear of the existing hotel complex.

1.4 The aim of the evaluation has been to consider the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any such remains which are liable to be threatened by the development, and to provide a local and regional archaeological and historical context for them, in accordance with the current published regional research agenda (Glazebrook 1997, Brown and Glazebrook 2000), if they were discovered.

1.5 The present report is intended to provide the planning authority with sufficient data to allow it to consider the archaeological implications of the proposed development, and to determine what further, if any, mitigation measures may be required to allow the development to proceed.

2. Fieldwork

SITE TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

2.1 The study area consists of land to the rear of the Old Palace Lodge Hotel, principally used as a car park but with a small garden area. The site slopes gently from the hotel frontage to the rear of the car park in a north-easterly direction

2.2 The stratigraphy of the site had been heavily affected by the construction of a previous extension. It appeared to be undisturbed only in the garden area located at the west of the site. The natural geology across the site was chalk.

METHODOLOGY

2.3 All work was carried out in accordance with the approved *Project Design*, current health and safety legislation, and both IFA and ALGAO standards.

2.4 The trenches were triangulated from known points using fibreglass tape measures.

2.5 Three trenches were opened using a wheeled JCB excavator fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless bucket, under close archaeological supervision (Figure 2).

2.6 Trenches were machined to the first significant archaeological horizon. Spoil from the machining was inspected for archaeological artefacts.

2.7 All potential archaeological features and deposits were sampled to ascertain their nature, depth, date, and quality of preservation.

2.8 All identified contexts were photographed and recorded using the appropriate proforma. Scaled plans and sections were drawn on drafting film at scales of 1:20 and 1:50.

RESULTS

Stratigraphy

2.9 The stratigraphy observed within Trench 1 consisted of the car park surface overlying its construction layers and made ground. Beneath this was a layer of residual subsoil overlying the natural chalk. Trench 2 was similar except that the subsoil layer was less evident, only appearing in a small section below a concrete pipe encasement. Trench 3 appeared to have undisturbed stratigraphy and consisted of a very dark grey (10YR 3/1) silty clay topsoil, 0.4m in depth, overlying a dark greyish brown (10YR 4/2) silty clay subsoil with chalk flecks.

Trench 1

Length (m):	3.0	Width (m):	3.0	Maximum Depth (m):	0.77	Orientation	NW-SE
Level at North-West End of Trench (mOD)		Top	147.79	Level at South-East End of Trench (mOD)		Top	147.89
		Base	147.16			Base	147.37
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)				
			Length	Width	Depth		
101	Cut	Ditch.	2.5+	1.8+	0.48		
102	Fill	Fill of [101]. Dark greyish brown (10YR 4/2) firm, silty clay with chalk flecks.	2.5+	1.8+	0.34		
103	Layer	Dark greyish brown (10YR 4/2) firm, silty clay with chalk flecks. Subsoil.	1.5+	3.0+	0.15		
104	Layer	White (10YR 8/1) firm chalk. Natural.	3.3+	3.0+	-		

2.10 Trench 1 was located in the southeast corner of the proposed bedroom block (Figure 2), and contained a single linear feature [101] which was at least 2.5m in length running approximately SW-NE and butt-ending within the trench. It was greater than 1.7m wide, with its southeastern edge located beyond the baulk of the trench. (Figure 3).

2.11 The single fill (102) consisted of a dark greyish brown (10YR 4/2), silty clay with chalk fleck inclusions. Two abraded sherds of late Roman pottery were recovered from this fill. There were also 18 fragments of post-medieval CBM which included peg tile and brick. Two pieces of animal bone, probably cattle, were also recovered. A modern service pipe trench cut through the upper part of the feature (Figure 4).

Trench 2

Length (m):	3.0	Width (m):	3.0	Maximum Depth (m):	0.77	Orientation	NW-SE
Level at North-West End of Trench (mOD)		Top	147.67	Level at South-East End of Trench (mOD)		Top	147.71
		Base	146.76			Base	146.79
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)				
			Length	Width	Depth		
201	Layer	Made ground.	3.0+	3.0+	0.42		
202	Layer	Dark greyish brown (10YR 4/2) firm, silty clay with chalk flecks. Subsoil.	3.0+	3.0+	0-0.3		
203	Layer	White (10YR 8/1) firm chalk. Natural.	3.0+	3.0+	-		

2.12 Trench 2 was located in the northwest corner of the proposed bedroom block (Figure 2). No archaeological cut features or deposits were identified in this trench due to heavy disturbance caused by the laying of services for the existing extension (Figure 3).

Trench 3

Length (m):	3.0	Width (m):	2.9	Maximum Depth (m):	0.9	Orientation	NW-SE	
Level at North-West End of Trench (mOD)			Top	147.80	Level at South-East End of Trench (mOD)		Top	147.77
			Base	146.92			Base	146.98
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)					
			Length	Width	Depth			
301	Cut	Ditch	2.2+	0.8	0.42			
302	Fill	Fill of [301]. Dark greyish brown (10YR 4/2) firm, silty clay with chalk flecks.	2.2+	0.8	0.42			
303	Cut	Possible ditch or pit.	2.0+	0.64+	0.11			
304	Fill	Fill of [303]. Dark greyish brown (10YR 4/2) firm, silty clay with chalk flecks.	2.0+	0.64+	0.11			
305	Cut	Post hole.	0.34	0.33	0.31			
306	Fill	Fill of [305]. Dark greyish brown (10YR 4/2) firm, silty clay with chalk flecks.	0.34	0.33	0.31			
307	Layer	Very dark grey (10YR 3/1) loose, silty clay with occasional flints <20mm. Topsoil.	3.0+	2.9+	0.4			
308	Layer	Dark greyish brown (10YR 4/2) firm, silty clay with chalk flecks. Subsoil.	3.0+	2.9+	0.4			
309	Layer	White (10YR 8/1) firm chalk. Natural.	3.0+	2.9+	-			

2.13 Trench 3 was located in the northern end of the proposed staff facilities block (Figure 2), and contained a linear feature [301], a shallow pit [303] and a post hole [305] (Figure 3). The fills of all three features were identical in colour and composition, being a dark, greyish brown (10YR 4/2) silty clay with chalk flecks, which is similar to the subsoil.

2.14 The butt-end of linear feature [301] is cut by the post hole [305], and both are cut by the later pit [303] (Figure 5). Only the southern edge and base of the post hole cut into the bottom of the ditch was observed, suggesting that the post was installed before the ditch had been backfilled and abandoned. The fill of the pit contained several pieces of unworked clunch which overlay the cut of the post hole.

2.15 One pottery sherd was recovered from the linear, dating to the late Roman period. The pit fill (304) yielded 9 sherds of pottery, 5 of which were from the same, hand-made vessel. Four pieces of worked Tottenhoe clunch were recovered from pit fill (304). Several pieces of unworked clunch were also recovered from the same fill. No dating evidence was recovered from the post hole.

CONCORDANCE OF FINDS

Context	Animal Bone		CBM		Pottery		Stone	
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
102	2	130	19	260	2	25		
302			1	25	1	20		
304					9	630	4	665
Total	2	130	20	285	12	685	4	665

Animal Bone

2.16 Two fragments of animal bone weighing 130g were recovered from the fill of linear [101], probably deriving from cattle. Butchery evidence was recorded on both bones in the form of cut and saw marks.

2.17 This assemblage is typical of domestic refuse.

Recommendation

2.18 Due to the size and nature of this assemblage, no further work is proposed.

CBM

2.19 Eighteen pieces of Post-medieval CBM were recovered from the fill of linear [101], including fragments of peg tile and brick.

Recommendation

2.20 Due to the nature of this assemblage no further work is proposed.

Pottery

2.21 A total of 12 sherds of pottery from 3 contexts were recovered during the course of the fieldwork. Two sherds of pottery weighing 25g were recovered from linear fill (102). They are of types RO5A and probably R11D, and date to the late Roman period. A single sherd was recovered from linear fill (302) which was also probably of type R11D. Both these contexts also contained post-medieval CBM.

2.22 The fill of pit [303] yielded 9 sherds of pottery. Five of these were from a large, hand-made vessel of type C59A. Four further, undiagnostic body sherds were also recovered, 2 of type C59A, 1 of C59B and 1 of type RO5A.

2.23 The foot ring of a vessel from which the 5 common sherds were derived appears to be approximately 440mm in diameter and is of a “saggy bottom” form (Plates 1 & 2). The overall size, weight and presence of a foot ring would suggest the vessel was used for storage.

2.24 Pottery type C59A is a coarse sandyware fabric. C59B has a similar matrix though slightly finer. Both types date to the 12th or 13th century. RO5A is late Roman in date.

Recommendation

2.25 No further work is proposed on this assemblage.

Stone

2.26 A total of 4 pieces of worked stone were recovered from pit fill (304), weighing 665g. All of them are Totternhoe Clunch.

2.27 The three larger fragments are all from the same piece (Plates 3 & 4). It is trapezoid in shape, with its parallel sides measuring 105mm and 50mm, and its mitred, converging sides measuring a maximum of 130mm. It appears to have been reworked as there are designs on both sides. On the obverse side of the stone there is a ring of six foils forming a concave apex around a 15mm hole. The sides of each foil is delimited with a decorative stringline groove. The design on the reverse side is an incomplete, shallow floral motif. It is possible that the piece represents a mason's test piece.

2.28 The carving appears incomplete and the stone may have fractured while being worked. This may have led to it being discarded.

2.29 The fourth piece of stone appears to be the corner of a dressed block, however there is no decoration on any of its facets.

Recommendation

2.30 The carved stone should be submitted to a specialist for further identification and dating.

3. Discussion

3.1 An examination of the Bedfordshire County Council Historic Environment Record has shown that there is little evidence of prehistoric activity in Dunstable's core, however, flint implements (NMR 359947) found on the edge of the town, 1.5 km to the south west, may be

Roman or prehistoric in origin. Archaeological investigation at the Quadrant shopping, 150m to the west of the site, centre revealed evidence for Roman occupation (HER 11270). Further Roman remains have been identified on the residential estate to the north of the site during archaeological evaluation work by Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust in 2000. A royal residence (HER 4355) founded in the 12th century by Henry I is thought to be located on the north side of Church Street, opposite Dunstable Priory, possibly situated on the present site. Excavations at Kingsbury Court to the west of the site encountered medieval remains, but these are thought not to be part of the royal residence. Human remains were discovered during the groundworks in Kingsway (HER 16165) which lies to the north and east of the site. Dunstable Priory (HER 131 & 132), also founded in 12th century, lies approximately 60m to the south.

3.2 The recorded archaeology within Trench 1 consisted of a flat bottomed ditch [101] 0.48m in depth (Figure 7) (Plate 5). The ditch fill (102) contained 1 sherd of abraded late Roman pottery, 19 fragments of post-medieval CBM and 2 fragments of animal bone. Its colour (10YR 4/2) and composition is the same as that of the subsoil found in Trench 3.

3.3 The precise date of this feature is unclear, however, the nature, colour and inclusions in the fill would seem to suggest that it was back-filled in the post-medieval period.

3.4 Trench 2 was severely disturbed by modern services. Four drainage pipes ran through this trench leaving no significant areas of undisturbed ground. No archaeological cut features or deposits were identified in this trench.

3.5 The recorded archaeology in Trench 3 consisted of a U-shaped ditch at least 2.1m in length and 0.76m wide (Figure 5) (Plate 6). It was 0.42m in depth and contained a single dark, greyish brown (10YR 4/2) silty clay with chalk flecks (Figure 7). Within the fill were a single abraded pottery sherd dating to the late Roman period and a fragment of post-medieval tile.

3.6 Post hole [303] cut the southeastern end, and base of ditch [301]. It measured 0.24m in diameter and at least 0.42m in depth (Figure 5). It has a U-shaped base and an indistinguishable fill from ditch [301]. No dating evidence was recovered from this feature.

3.7 Pit [305] cut both post hole [303] and upper part of the ditch [301] (Figure 5). It was 0.11m deep with sheer sides, flat base and measured at least 2m in diameter (Figure 7). Nine sherds of pottery were recovered from its fill (305), 5 of which were derived from the same vessel. These were dated to the 12th or 13th centuries.

3.8 Four pieces of worked stone were also recovered which may be a mason's test piece. Fragments of worked stone have also been recovered from limited excavations on the adjacent site of Kingsbury Court (Warren, 1988) suggesting that a stone structure or structures may have been located in the vicinity.

3.9 All the artefacts recovered from the pit are medieval in date and it would seem likely that it was filled during this period. However, the ditch contained both Roman and post-medieval artefacts. The small number makes secure dating problematic. However, as the post-medieval tile fragment was high in the fill and the Roman pottery sherd close to the base of the feature, it is possible that the post-medieval material is intrusive and the ditch was back-filled during the Roman period.

Conclusion

3.10 The evaluation of the site has demonstrated the presence of medieval and possibly Roman features. No evidence of pre-Roman activity was encountered.

3.11 There was no structural evidence for the supposed royal residence in any of the evaluation trenches, although, the pottery and worked stone recovered from the pit in Trench 3 does date to the period during which the palace is believed to have been extant.

3.12 On this basis, the risk that the proposed development would disturb archaeological remains of any significance should be considered to be High.

Confidence Rating

3.13 In the course of the fieldwork, weather and ground conditions were acceptable for the identification of potential features and deposits, and for their investigation. There were no circumstances which would lead to a confidence rating for the work which was less than High.

4. Bibliography

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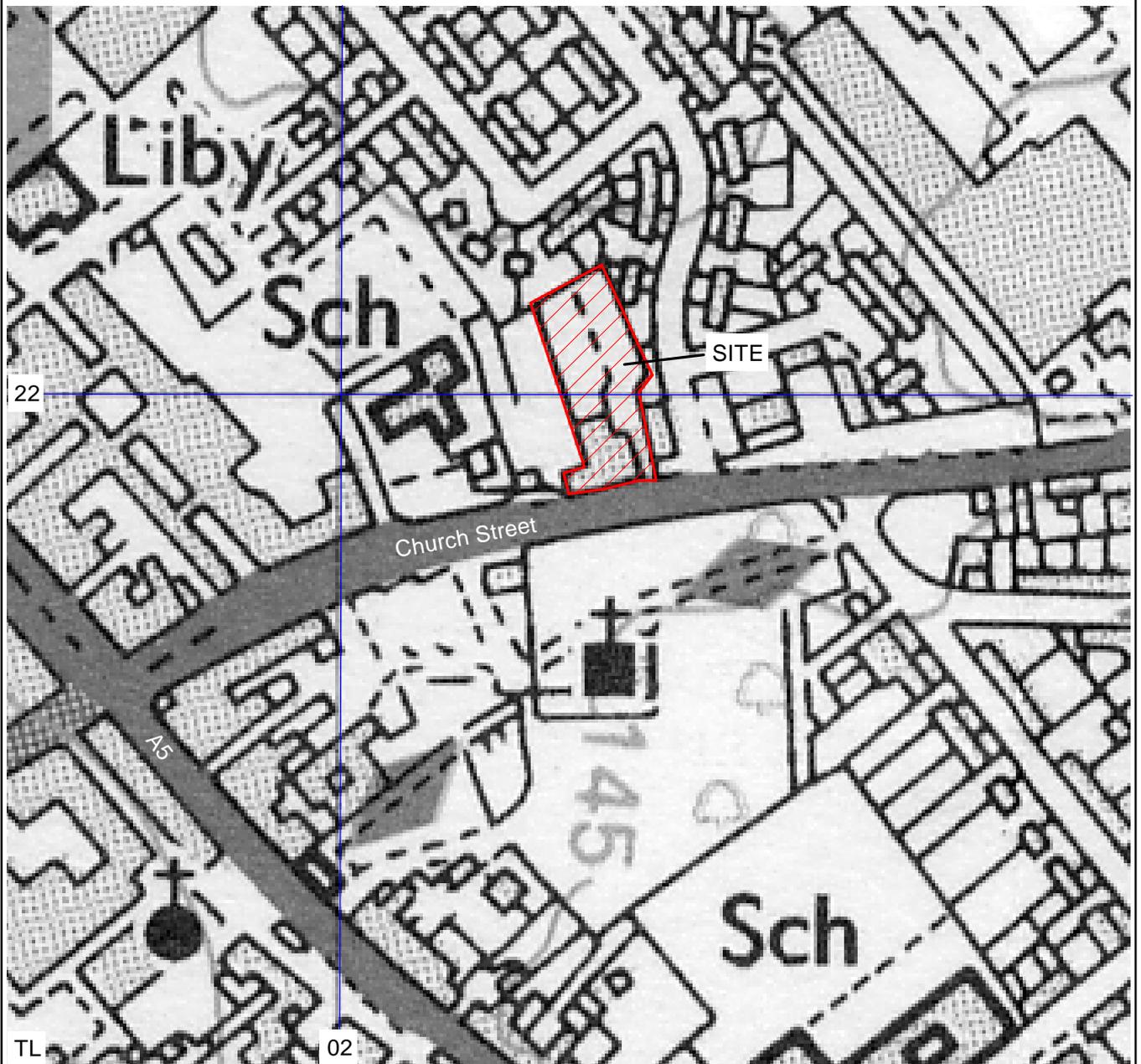
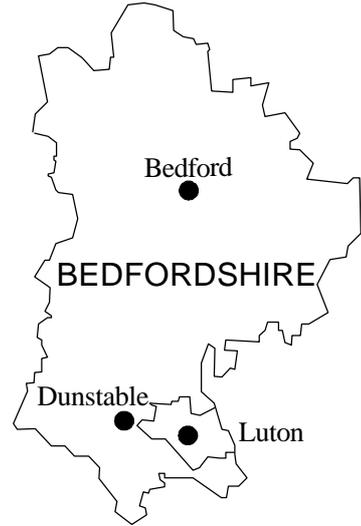
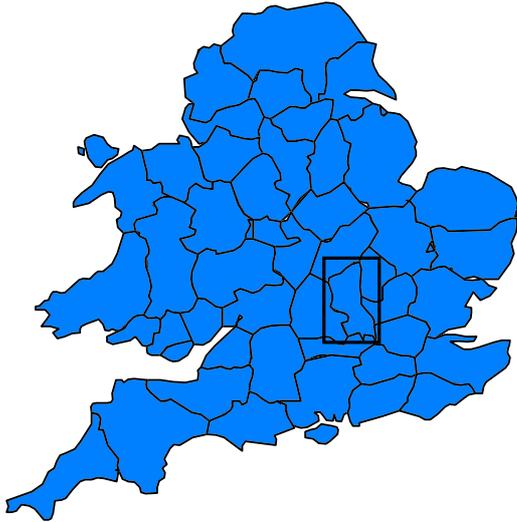
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5. Illustrations

Figure 1.....	Site Location
Figure 2.....	Site Layout
Figure 3.....	Feature Location
Figure 4.....	Trench 1 Features
Figure 5.....	Trench 3 Features
Figure 6.....	Trench Sections

Figure 7..... Feature Sections
Plate 1..... Section of Medieval pot base
Plate 2..... Inside face of Medieval pot base
Plate 3..... Obverse side of worked stone
Plate 4..... Reverse side of worked stone
Plate 5..... Trench 1 looking northwest
Plate 6..... Trench 3 looking northwest

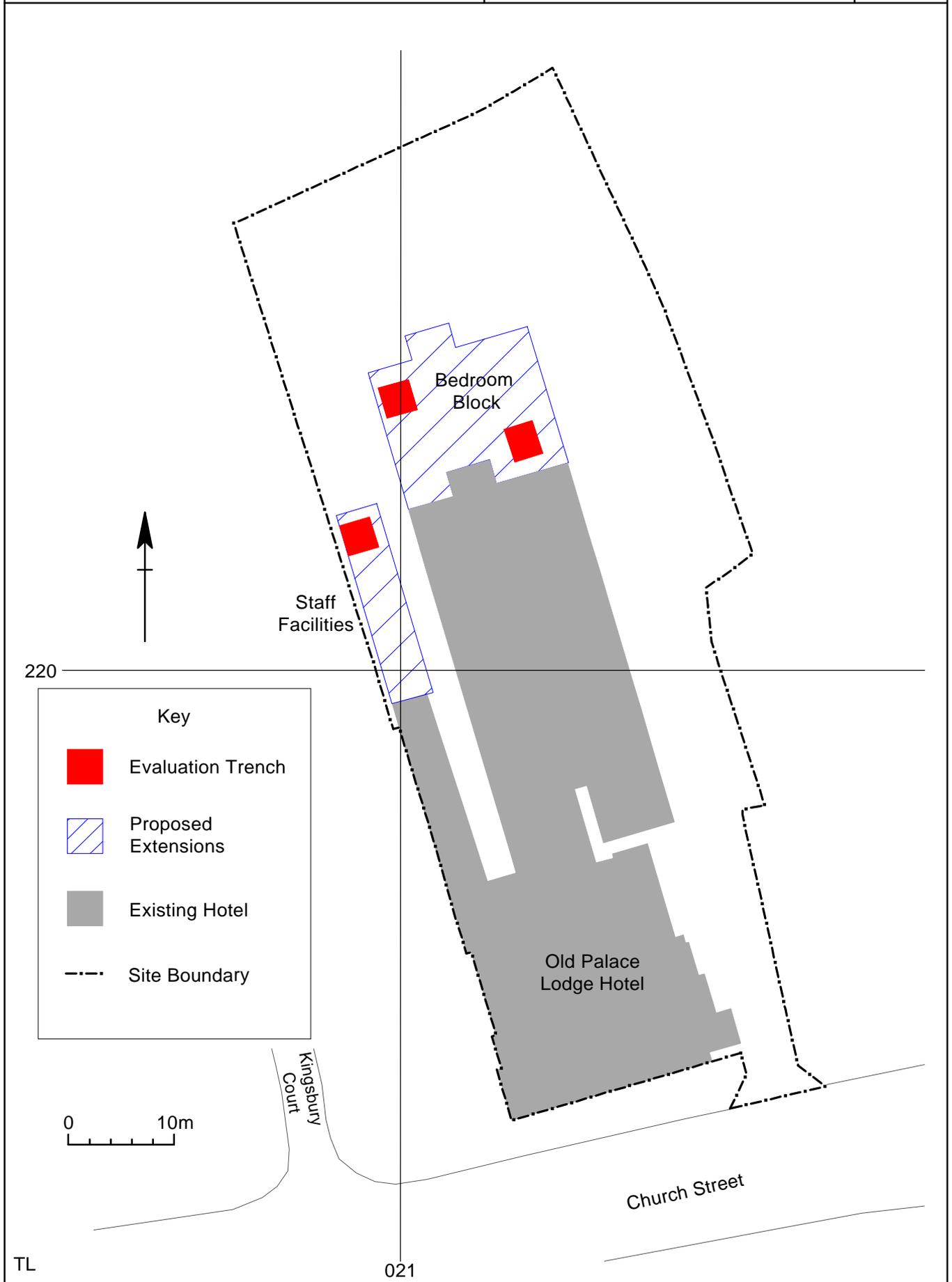


Site Location

Scale 1:3000

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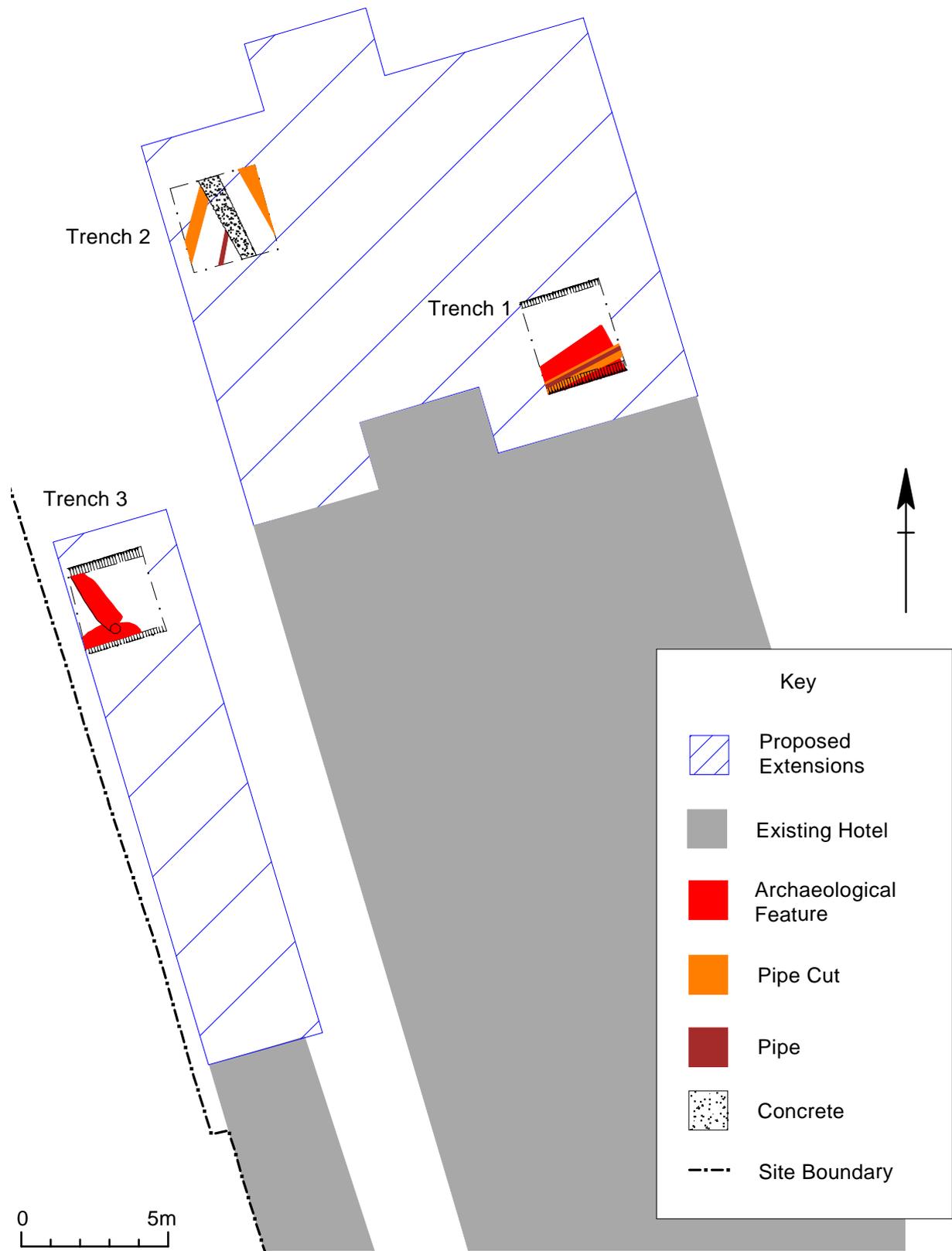
Figure 1



Site Layout

Scale 1:500

Figure 2

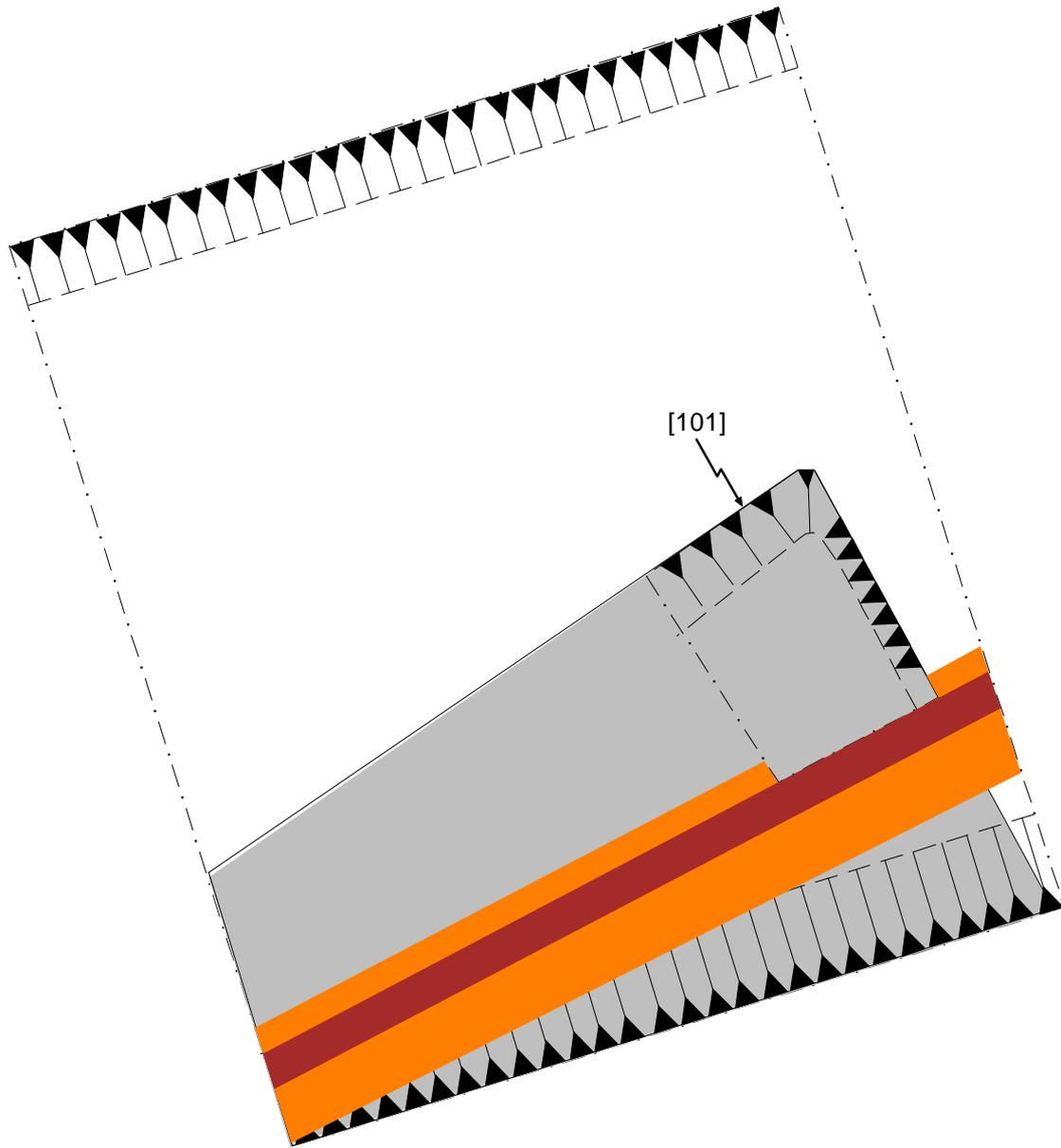


0 5m

Features Location

Scale 1:200

Figure 3



0 1m

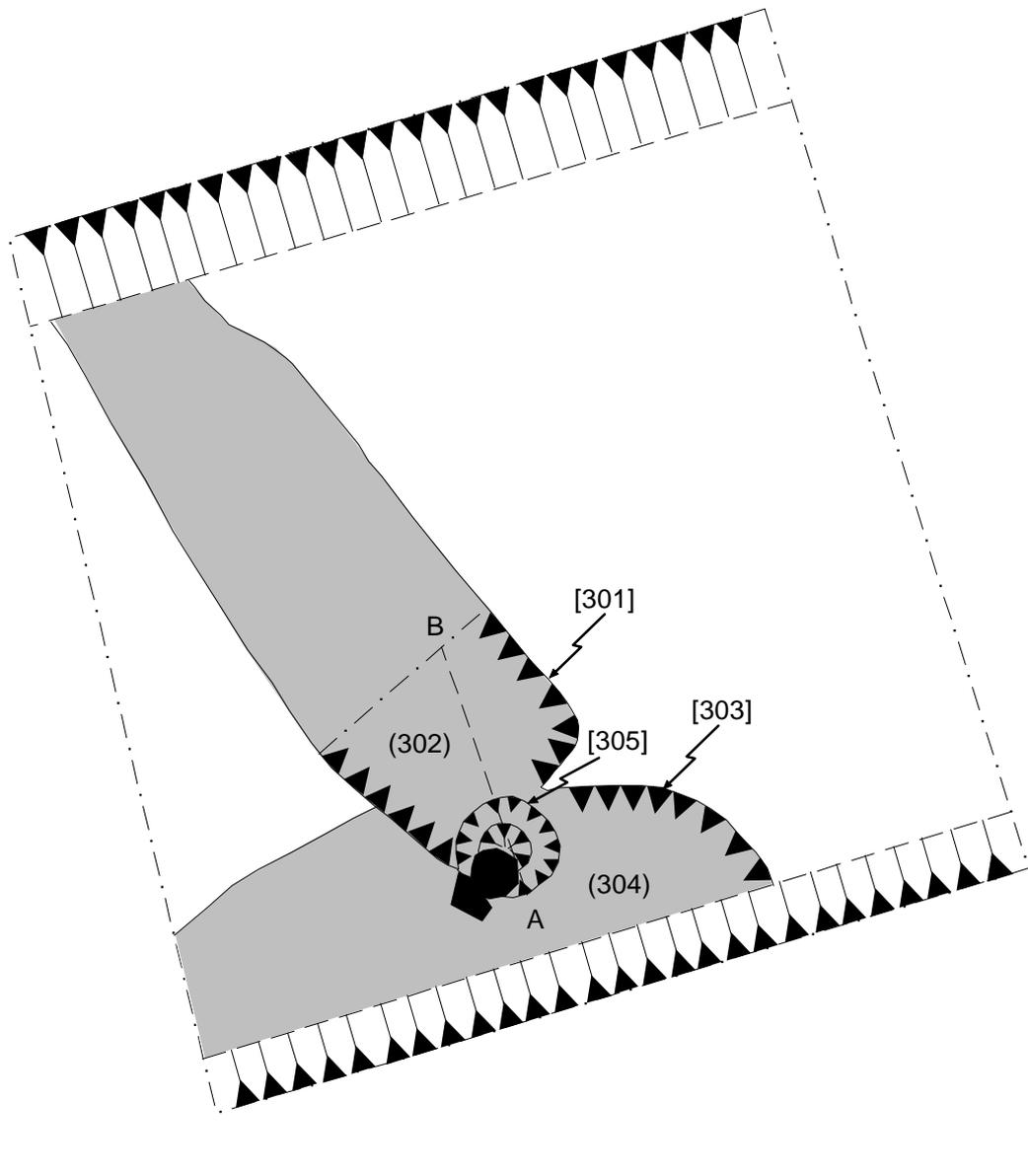
Key

- Feature Cut
- Pipe Cut
- Pipe

Trench 1 Features

Scale 1:25

Figure 4



Key

- Feature Cut
- Clunch

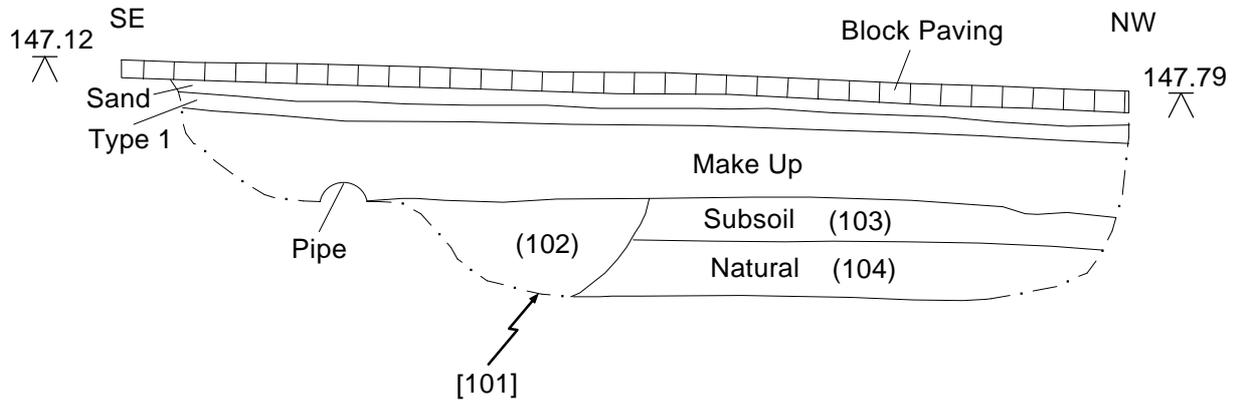


Trench 3 Features

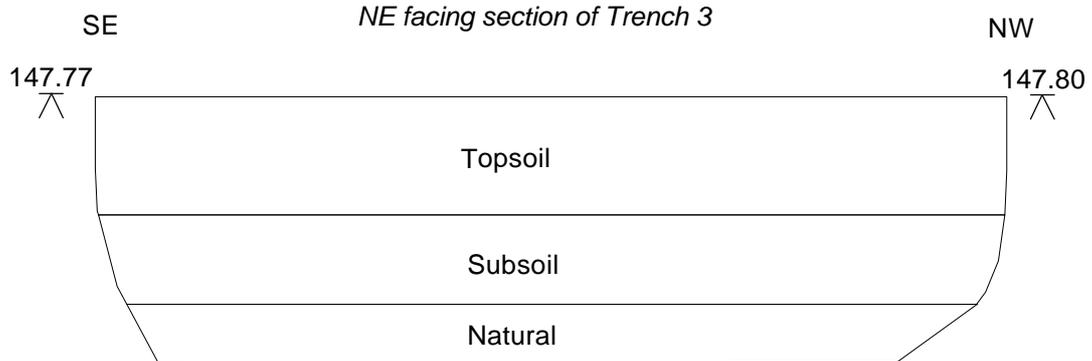
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Figure 5

NE facing section of Trench 1



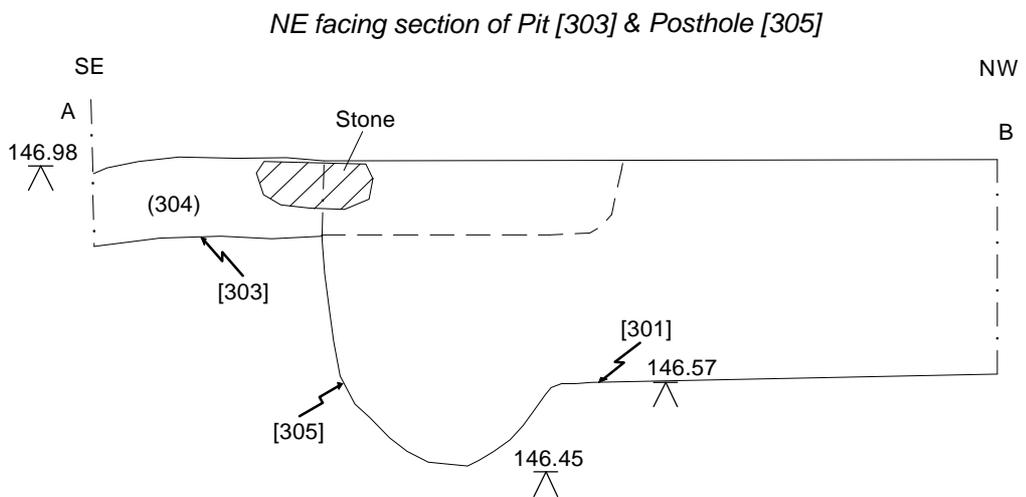
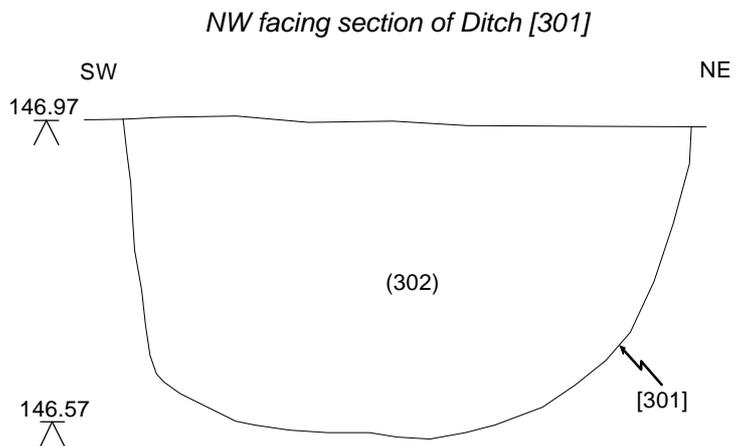
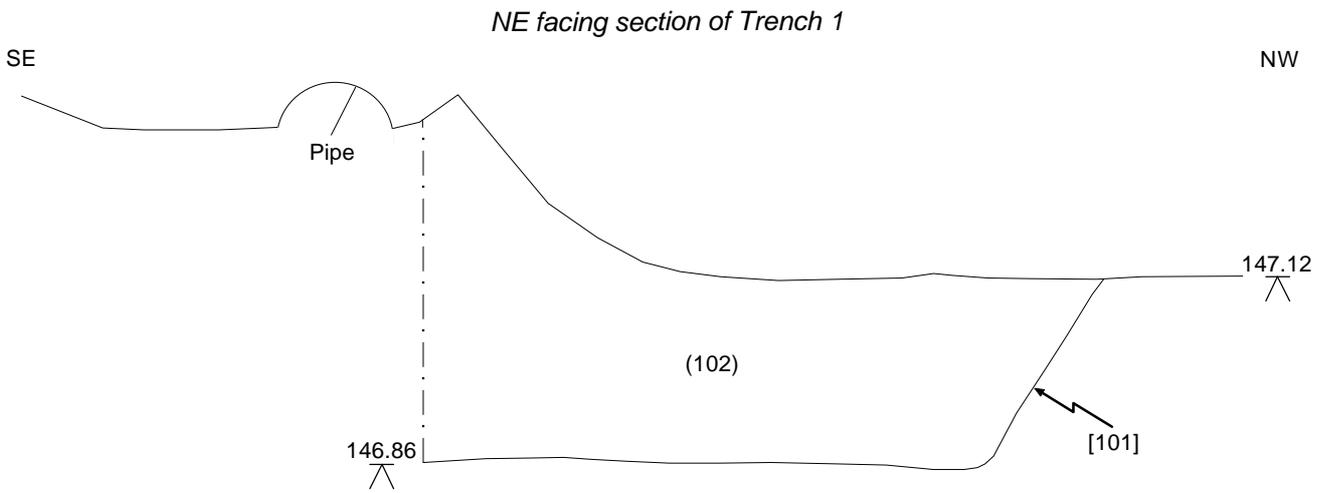
NE facing section of Trench 3



Trench Sections

Scale 1:25

Figure 6



Feature Sections

Scale 1:10

Figure 7



Plate 1: Section of medieval pot base from pit [303]. Fabric type C59A



Plate 2: Inside face of medieval pot base from pit [303]. Fabric type C59A



Plate 3: Obverse face of worked stone from pit [303]

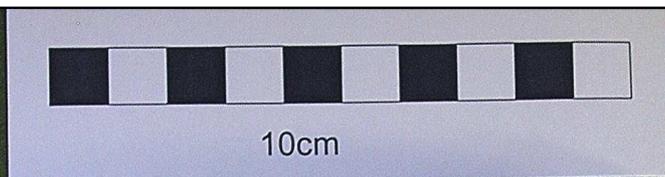


Plate 4: Reverse face of worked stone from pit [303]



Plate 5: Trench 1 looking northwest



Plate 6: Trench 3 looking northwest