

East Court, Officers Quarters, Netheravon, Wiltshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mark and Aiden Day Ltd

by Andrew Mundin

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code OSN 07/67

November 2007

Summary

Site name: East Court Officers Quarters, Netheravon, Wiltshire

Grid reference: SU 1473 4820

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 18th May–10th September 2007

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Natasha Bennett and Andy Taylor

Site code: OSN 07/67

Summary of results: No features or finds were recovered from this watching brief, despite the previous evidence that suggested a possible Roman villa on the site.

Monuments identified: None

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Devizes Museum in due course.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 08.11.07 Steve Preston ✓ 07.11.07
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Report 07/67

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at the East Court Officers' Quarters, School of Infantry, Netheravon, Wiltshire (SU 1473 4820) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Marc Powell, of Mark and Aiden Day Ltd, The Mill House, Conygre Farm, Easton Royal, Pewsey, Wiltshire, SN9 5LU.

Planning permission (K/04352/L) has been granted by Kennet District Council to construct an extension to the eastern Officers' Quarters building at the School of Infantry. The consent is subject to a condition relating to archaeology which requires a watching brief to be carried out during groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Sue Farr, Assistant Archaeologist for Wiltshire County Council, advising the District. The fieldwork was undertaken by Natasha Bennett and Andy Taylor between 18th May and 10th September 2007. The site code is OSN 07/67.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Devizes Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

Netheravon is situated within Salisbury Plain which covers large parts of Hampshire and Wiltshire. The village itself lies on the River Avon as it flows north to south towards Amesbury. The underlying geology is Upper Chalk (BGS 1959), positioned on a hillside on the western side of the River Avon valley at 100m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The site lies within an area of rich archaeological heritage, generally, and more particularly, this site is within the immediate proximity of a supposed site of a Roman villa (Fig. 2). Evidence of a tessellated pavement was first discovered in 1907 with vague location 'to the south of Netheravon House' and further evidence of a tessellated

pavement was uncovered in 1936, found to the east of the Officers Quarters. These pieces of evidence led to an investigation by Wessex Archaeology and Time Team in 1996, which dug test pits to locate more of the villa complex and the initial earlier investigations (Taylor 1996). These test pits concentrated on the coal yard and the sergeants' mess. Though this was unsuccessful in locating structural evidence, Roman roof tile and pottery was found. Even though sparse evidence and only vague locations exist for this villa the plot of the complex encompasses the land around Netheravon House to the north and the ground to the immediate east, including this site on its western extent.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to record the presence/absence of any Roman archaeology relating to a villa or any precursor. The extent, condition, character and date of any archaeological deposit found within the area of intrusive groundworking would need to be ascertained. All archaeological features and deposits would be hand-cleaned, excavated and fully recorded. All spoilheaps were monitored for finds.

Results

All footings for the extension to the East Court Officer's Quarters were to be located to the east of the original building. Footings were observed for all of the Plot 1 extension to the south-east and the central core of Plot 2 (Fig. 3). The general stratigraphy was undisturbed dark reddish brown clayey silt topsoil over light brown-red clayey silt subsoil (Fig. 4). No finds were present in the soil and no cut features or structural remains were present. All open trenches were excavated well into the natural geology, with a base ranging from 0.72m to 0.8m. The only area where no natural was uncovered in the footing trenching was at the east extent of the plots. Here, disturbed ground was uncovered to the limit of excavation. No finds of interest were uncovered and all material seen in the made ground was of modern date.

Other than the footings, a repair to a section of drainage pipe was also part of the groundworks. This was not viewed due to already disturbed ground being uncovered, and was not dug into clean geology.

Finds

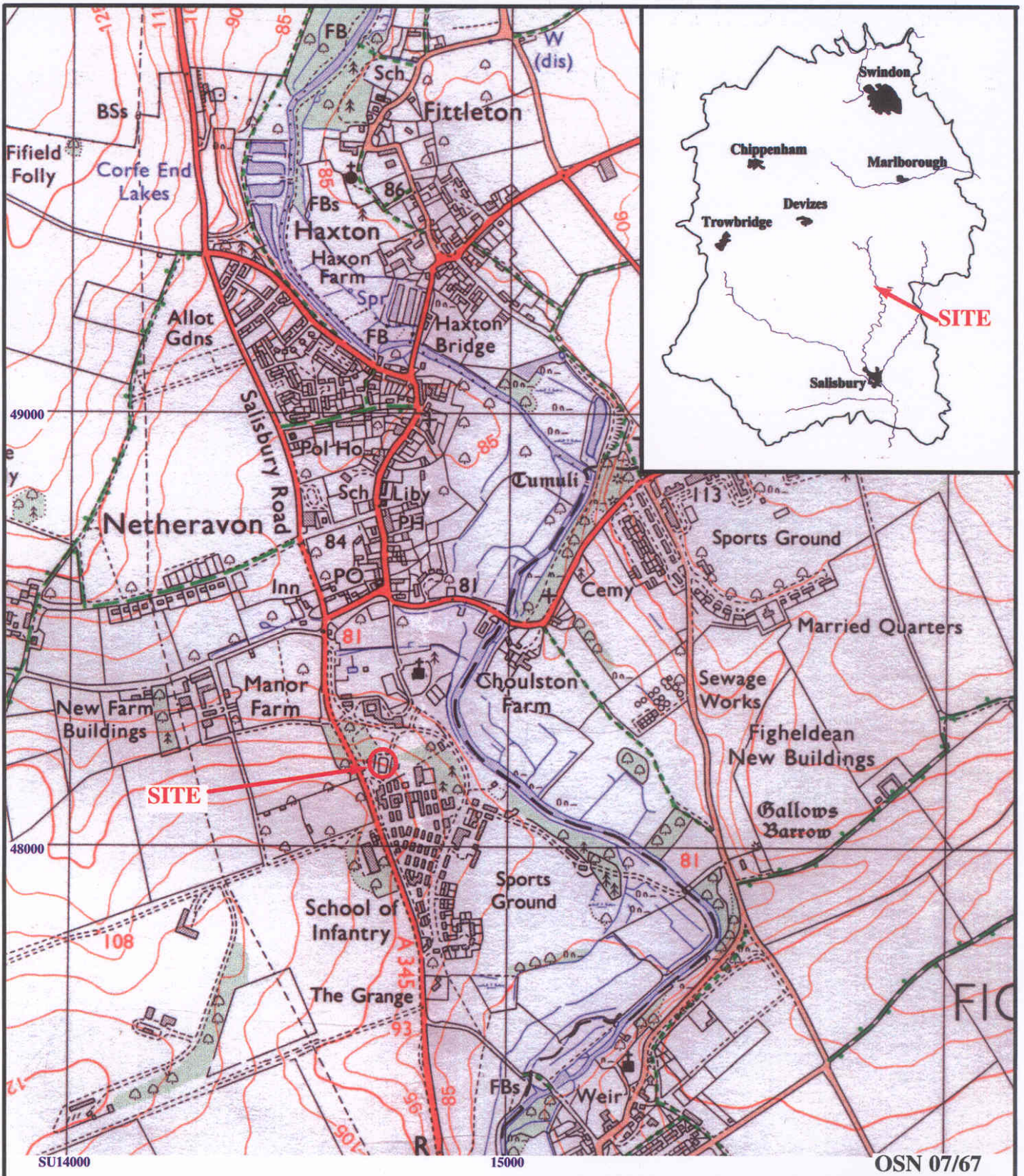
No finds were uncovered during the groundworks

Conclusion

No archaeology, and specifically nothing of Roman date relating to the possible Roman villa was uncovered during this watching brief. No finds of archaeological interest were noted during groundworks.

References

BGS, 1959, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 282, Drift Edition, Keyworth
PPG 16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO
Taylor, T, 1996, *Time Team 97: The Site Reports*, Broadcasting Support Services and Channel 4 Television, 35-40

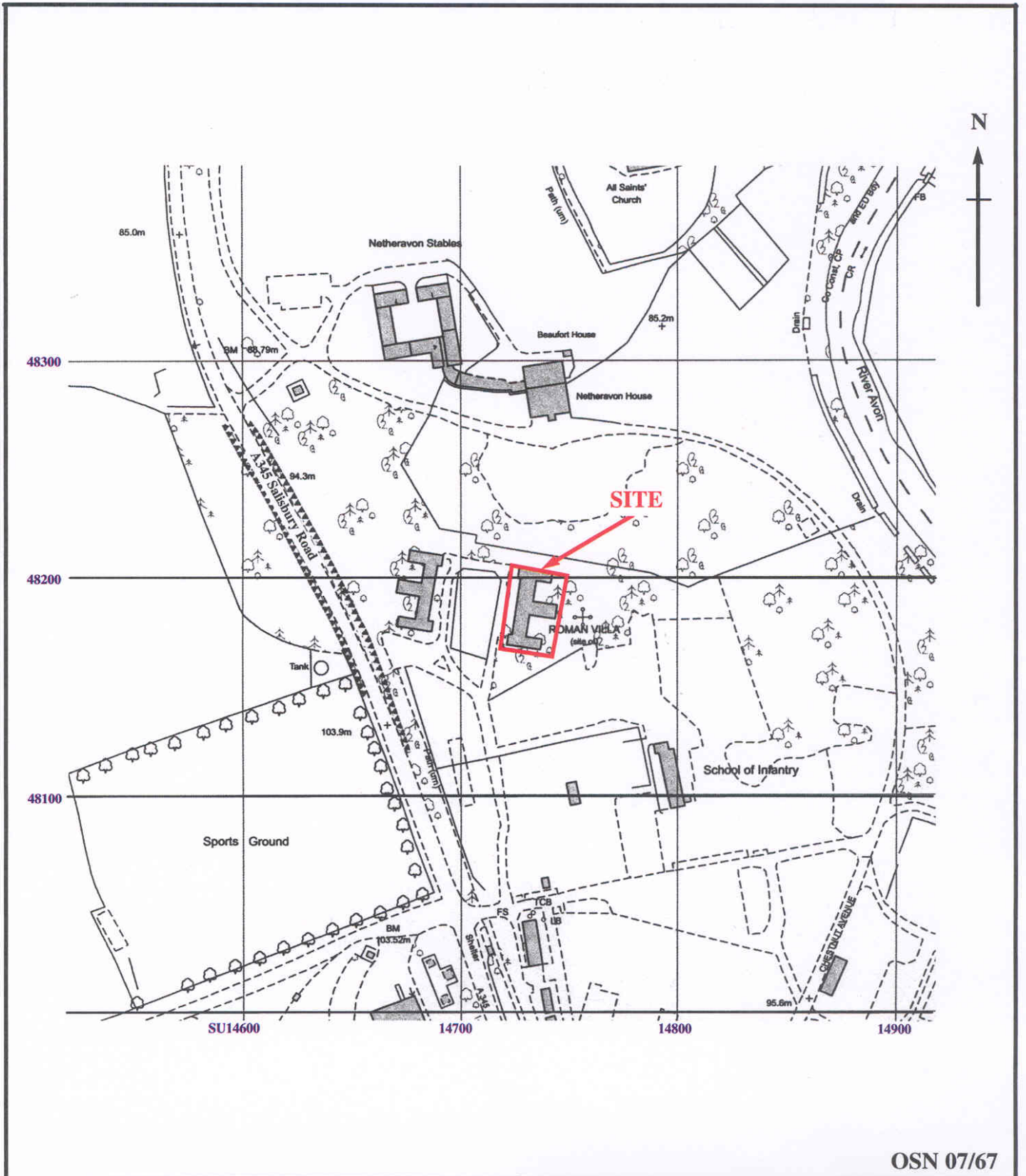


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Figure 1. Location of site within Netheravon and Wiltshire.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off A345 Salisbury Road.

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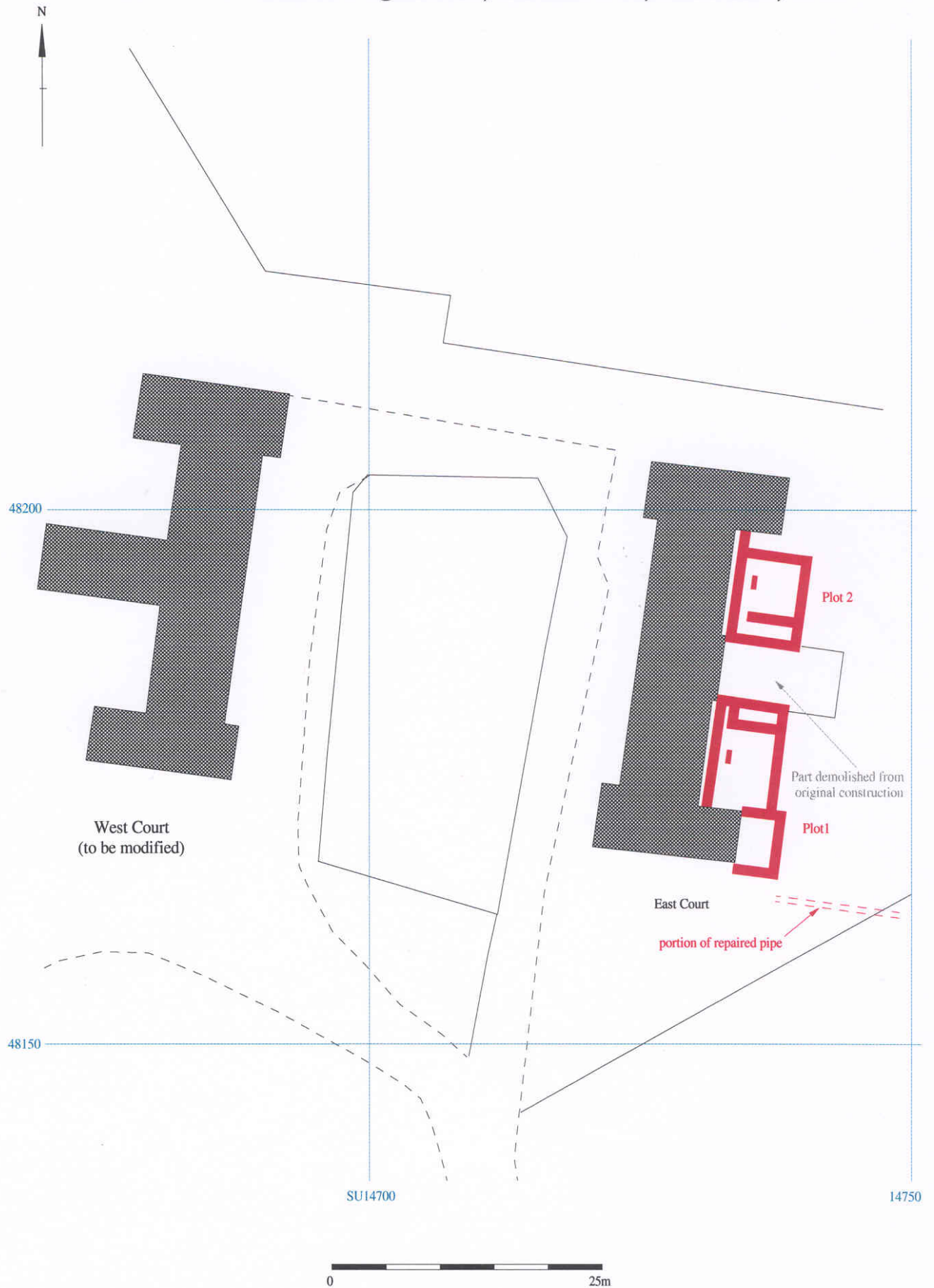


Figure 3. Location of areas observed.

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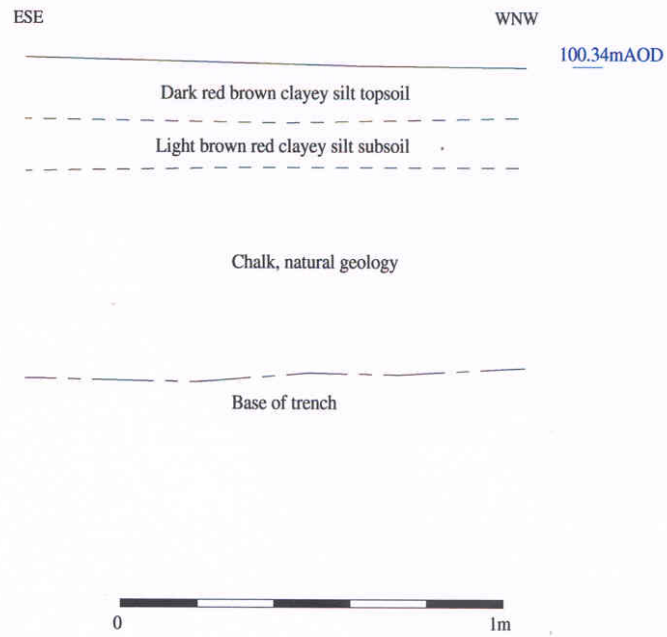


Figure 4. Representative section from Plot 1