

# **Rooksbury Mill, Rooksbury Road, Andover, Hampshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**For Petra Developments Ltd**

by Sean Wallis

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code RMA 07/170

**January 2008**

## Summary

**Site name:** Rooksbury Mill, Rooksbury Road, Andover, Hampshire

**Grid reference:** SU 3549 4456

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 7th – 10th January 2008

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Sean Wallis

**Site code:** RMA 07/170

**Summary of results:** No deposits or finds of an archaeological nature were encountered. The various groundworks were not sufficiently deep to expose archaeologically relevant horizons.

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

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 28.01.08
	Steve Preston✓ 28.01.08

# **Rooksbury Mill, Rooksbury Road, Andover, Hampshire An Archaeological Watching Brief**

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**Report 07/170**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Rooksbury Mill, Rooksbury Road, Andover, Hampshire (SU 3549 4456) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Simon Dugdale of Petra Developments Ltd, Charis Holt, Sleepers Hill, Winchester, SO22 4NA.

Planning consent (app no 07/02724/LBWN) has been gained from Test Valley Borough Council for the conversion and extension of the existing mill to residential use. The consented scheme allows for internal and external alterations to the existing building, along with the construction of an extension. The consent is subject to several conditions, including one concerning archaeology. This requires an archaeological 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 Borough Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr David Hopkins, of Hampshire County Council, archaeological adviser to Test Valley Borough Council.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Sean Wallis and Andrew Weale between 7th and 10th January 2008, and the site code is RMA 07/170. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Hampshire Museum Service in due course.

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site is located at the eastern end of Rooksbury Road, immediately east of the former route of the Andover to Winchester railway. The existing mill building straddles the River Anton, just to the north of the mill master's house. Two barns on the western boundary of the site are currently being converted to residential use (Fig. 2). The site lies on the floor of the valley of the river Anton at a height of approximately 55m above Ordnance Datum. According to the British Geological Survey the underlying geology consists of alluvium over Upper Chalk (BGS 1975). However, due to the relative shallowness of groundworks in and around the mill building, no areas of natural geology were observed during the current watching brief.

## **Archaeological background**

The development site lies in the vicinity of the Iron Age hillfort of Barksbury Camp (Ellis and Rawlings 2001) which is located just to the west. As such it is possible that contemporary prehistoric deposits may be encountered during the watching brief. There is also the likelihood of structural remains of earlier mill buildings being present on the site. According to Domesday Book, Andover had ten mills in 1086 (Williams and Martin 2002). The mill buildings were first recorded by the name of Rooksbury in the 17th century and they functioned as a flour mill. This ceased functioning as a working mill in the early 20th century. A building survey of the two barns which are being converted was recently carried out (Ford 2007). In addition, an archaeological watching brief took place during the conversion, as the floor level of the northern barn was to be significantly reduced. These groundworks were monitored, along with an area to the south of the barns, which was stripped prior to the construction of two new cottages. No finds or features of archaeological interest were recorded during the watching brief (Wallis and Milbank 2007).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the current watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by groundworks. This was to involve examination of areas of ground reduction and the digging of trenches for foundations, services and soakaways as necessary.

## **Results**

### *Internal Alterations*

Part of the floor surface within the mill building was to be reduced. This involved breaking up and removing the existing concrete floor slab, which was about 0.2m thick. The removal of the slab revealed an earlier rammed chalk surface, which contained frequent flint nodules and occasional brick and tile fragments. Approximately 0.25m of this surface layer was excavated, to reach the new floor level. A land drain was observed running across the width of the building towards the mill race. Examination of this feature revealed that the rammed chalk surface, through which it was cut, was at least 0.45m thick (Figs 3 and 4).

### *Extension*

An area measuring approximately 8m x 7m was to be stripped immediately north-east of the existing mill building, prior to the construction of an extension. It was proposed to reduce this area to the new floor level,

which required the removal of about 0.75m of material. Part of this work was monitored, which revealed that a topsoil layer, about 0.25m thick, was sealed beneath approximately 0.15m of rubble. A layer of chalk, at least 0.15m thick, was noted immediately beneath the topsoil. A deposit of mid greyish brown clayey silt was recorded where the ground reduction necessitated the removal of this chalk layer. The clayey silt deposit contained moderate brick and tile fragments (not retained), and would appear to be a layer of made ground. No natural geology was observed in the area of the extension, due to the relative shallowness of the groundworks. A similar stratigraphic sequence was observed in a test pit dug against the mill building. No archaeological finds or features were noted (Figs 3 and 4).

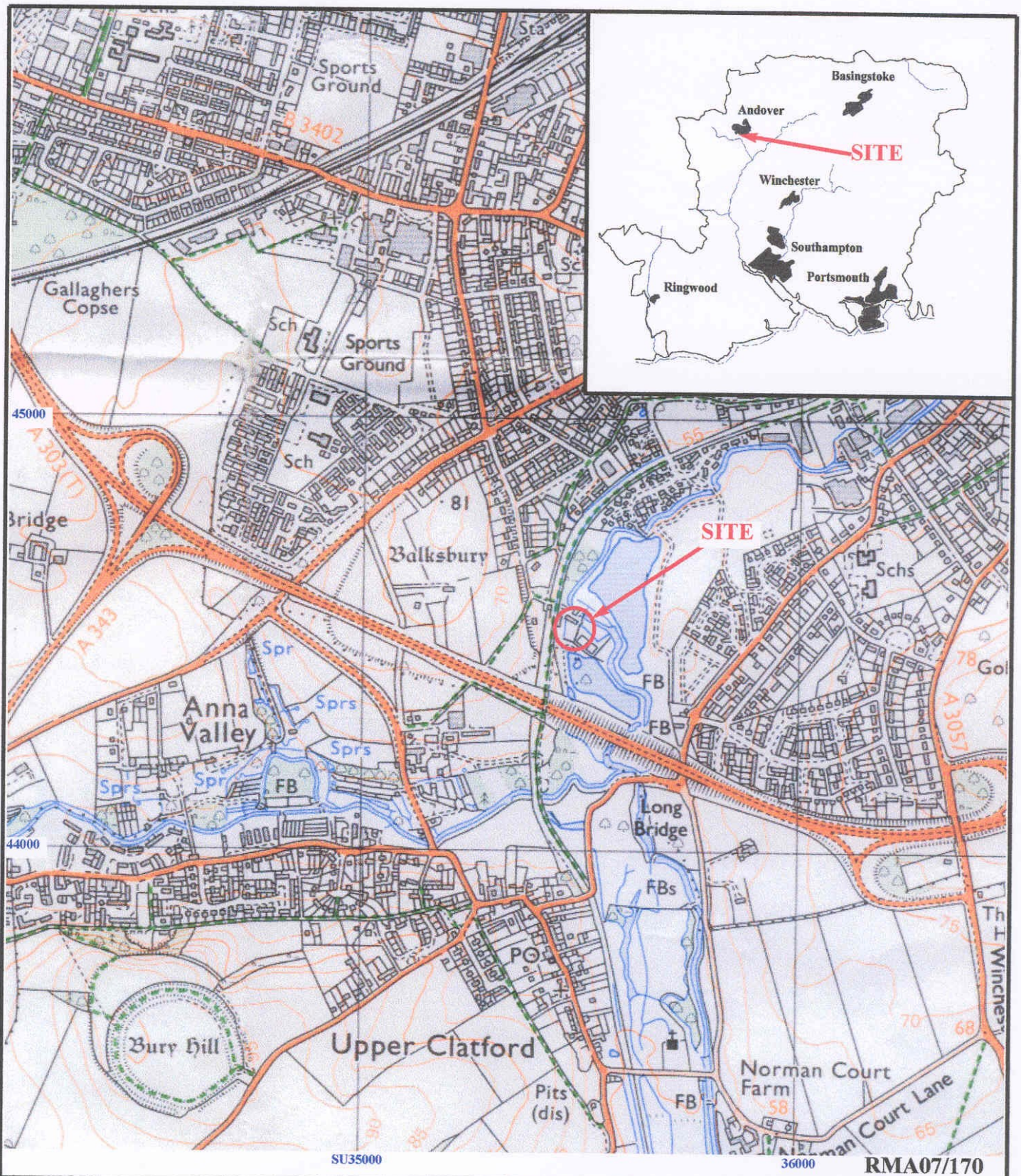
The external walls of the mill suggested that there had been earlier structures in the area of the proposed extension, and this may explain the discrepancy between the current building layout and that shown on the Ordnance Survey maps from 1910 onwards (Ford 2007). These outbuildings were presumably demolished relatively recently, which would explain the presence of a rubble layer in the area.

## **Conclusion**

Despite the potential for evidence of Iron Age or other prehistoric activity to be present on the site, no deposits of this nature were encountered. The only feature of archaeological interest recorded during the watching brief was the rammed chalk surface inside the mill building. The area affected by the new extension appears to have been disturbed in the past by the construction, and subsequent demolition, of at least one mill outbuilding. In any event, the relative shallowness of the groundworks in this area means that any potential archaeological deposits could still be sealed beneath made ground layers.

## **References**

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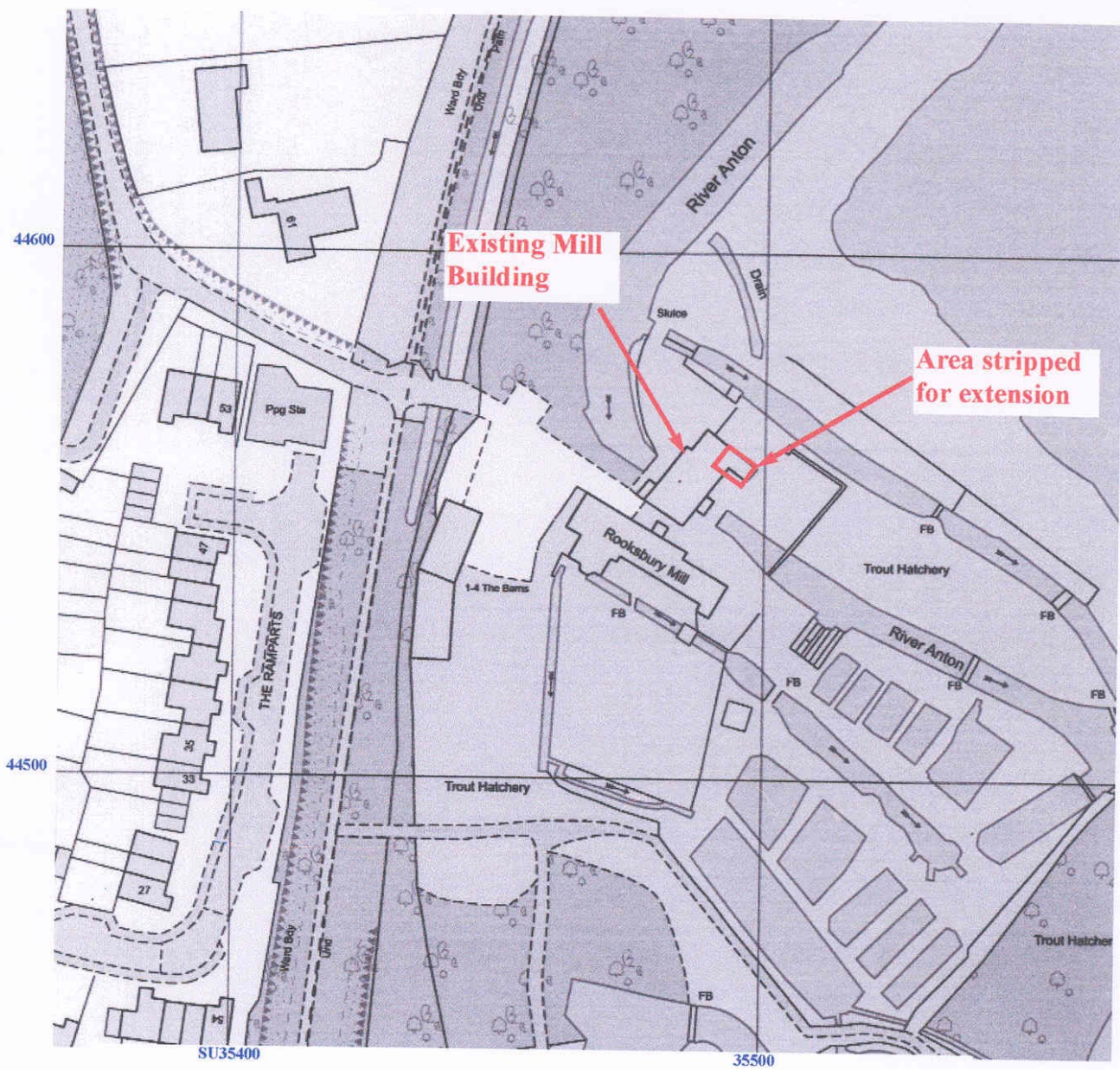


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Figure 1. Location of site within Andover and Hampshire.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site at Rooksbury Mill.

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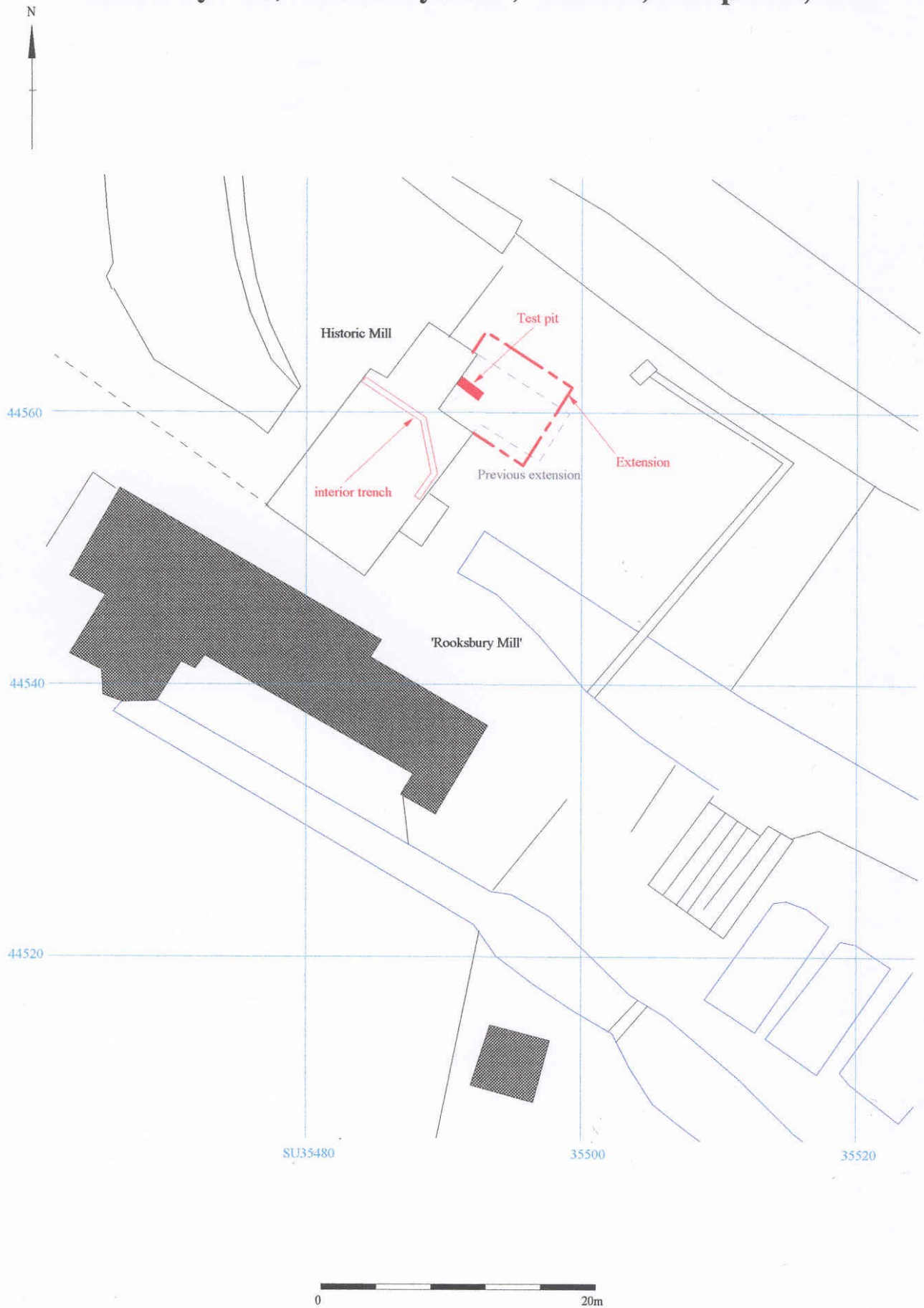


Figure 3. Location of area observed during watching brief.



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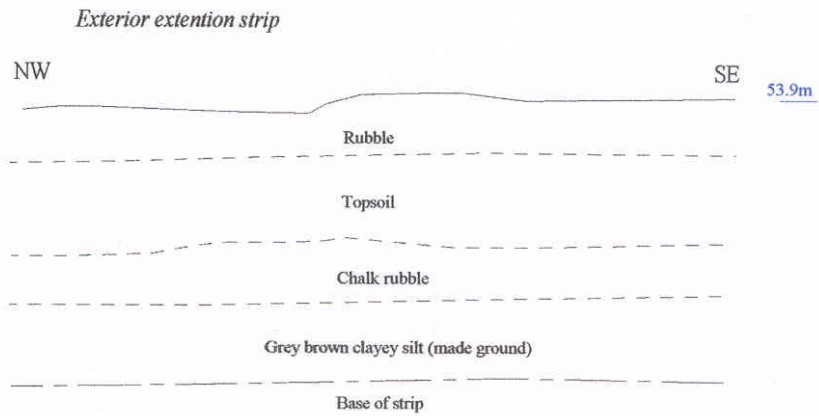
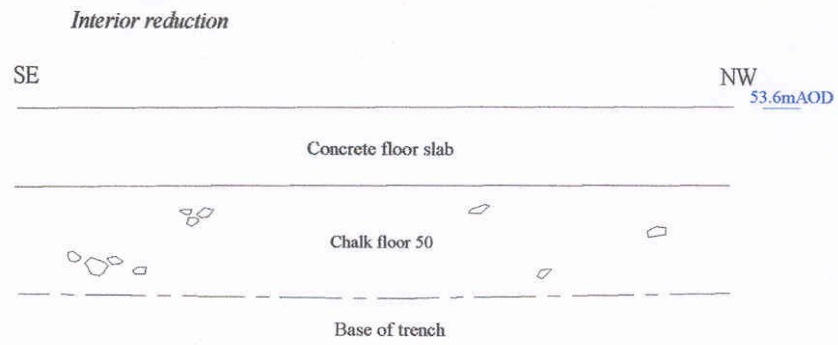


Figure 4. Representative sections.