

**PREBEND HOUSE LODGE, HUNTER STREET,  
BUCKINGHAM**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

Document: 2002/23  
Project: PLB697

April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2002

Produced for:  
Peter Dann Ltd

On behalf of:  
University of Buckingham



## ***Contents***

---

<b>List of Figures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Preface</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Structure of Report</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Non-Technical Summary</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>6</b>
1.1 Planning Background	6
1.2 Site Location	6
1.3 Archaeological Background	6
1.4 Objectives	7
1.5 Method Statement	7
<b>2 SUMMARY OF RESULTS</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1 Archaeological Features	8
2.2 Undated Geological Deposits	8
2.3 18 <sup>th</sup> Century: Construction of the Istra Cottages	8
2.4 18 <sup>th</sup> /19 <sup>th</sup> Century: Construction of Prebend Lodge	9
2.5 Modern Features	9
<b>3 CONCLUSION</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>4 APPENDIX: TRENCH SUMMARY</b>	<b>12</b>



## ***List of Figures***

Figure 1: Site location

Figure 2: Plan and section



## **Preface**

*Every effort has been made in the preparation and submission of this document and all statements are offered in good faith. Albion Archaeology cannot accept responsibility for errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by a third party, or for any loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in this document.*

*This report has been prepared by James Pixley (Archaeological Supervisor). Artefacts were examined by Jackie Wells (Artefacts Officer). All Albion projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Project Manager). Illustrations were prepared by Joan Lightning. On-site investigations were undertaken by James Pixley.*

*Albion Archaeology  
St. Mary's Church  
St. Mary's Street  
Bedford, MK42 0AS  
☎: 01234 270002/6/9  
Fax: 01234 359287  
e-mail: [office@albion-arch.com](mailto:office@albion-arch.com)*

*April 8th, 2002*

## **Structure of Report**

Following the introduction in Section 1, Section 2 presents the results of the investigation. Section 3 summarises the significance of the results. A trench summary is given in Appendix 1. Figures are bound at the rear of the report.



## **Non-Technical Summary**

*Work on consolidation of building foundations at Prebend House Lodge on Hunter Street, Buckingham, was accompanied by an archaeological watching brief, carried out by Albion Archaeology. The main aims of the brief were to observe and record any archaeological deposits or features encountered, to obtain a section through deposits, and to establish the depth of modern disturbance.*

*A single trench measuring 2.80m by 1.50m (rather than the two/three separate but smaller trenches originally intended) was excavated by machine on the south-west corner of the Lodge building.*

*No significant archaeological deposits were encountered, with only one residual sherd of early medieval pottery found in the Lodge foundation backfill. Substantial 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century foundations and cellarage have destroyed any archaeological stratigraphy which might otherwise have survived.*

*Palaeo-environmental deposits were located at the bottom of the trench. These were interpreted as waterborne clays deposited within an ancient river channel.*



## 1 INTRODUCTION

---

### 1.1 Planning Background

Subsidence of part of Prebend House Lodge necessitated a programme of works to secure the foundations. These included groundworks (holes for pads) which could potentially have cut through significant archaeological deposits.

The County Archaeological Service of Buckinghamshire County Council made the requirement for a watching brief to be undertaken alongside the works<sup>1</sup>.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Peter Dann Ltd, on behalf of the University of Buckingham, to prepare a project design<sup>2</sup> and carry out the watching brief.

### 1.2 Site Location

Prebend House Lodge fronts onto the western side of Hunter Street, opposite the former site of the church of St Peter's and St Paul's. It is within the area inside the river loop which forms the historic core of Buckingham. The approximate height above sea level is 83m AOD. The lodge building has a carriage arch and is part of the complex of buildings known as Prebend House. The grounds of Prebend House, now largely derelict, slope gently down to the banks of the River Great Ouse about 70m to the west.

### 1.3 Archaeological Background

Prebend House and its Lodge are Grade II listed buildings, having been reputedly built by a prosperous tanning family called Bartlett. The building is 18<sup>th</sup> century with additions having been made in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Prebend House probably derives its name from the prebendal farms which were situated around the church in medieval times.

The site is located opposite the former site of St Peter's and St Paul's church (SMR 1925) which is likely to have Saxon origins. This suggests that this area could have been within the interior of the Anglo Saxon *burh*. Further reference is made to Buckingham in the *Anglo Saxon Chronicle* and in the *Burghal Hideage*.

Previous archaeological work is sparse with two archaeological investigations having been undertaken. Work in the 1970s 50m to the south-east of the study area (SMR 2013) produced settlement evidence from the 13<sup>th</sup> century with no evidence of early Medieval or Saxon features<sup>3</sup>. There has also been a small excavation in the castle mound area. The absence of information from

---

<sup>1</sup> Kidd, S (2000). *Brief for an Archaeological Watching Brief: Prebend Lodge, Hunter Street, Buckingham* Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service 29/8/2000

<sup>2</sup> Albion Archaeology (2001). *Prebend House Lodge, Hunter Street, Buckingham: Project Design*. Report 2001/50.

<sup>3</sup> Hall, RA (1975). 'An Excavation at Hunter Street, Buckingham 1974' in *Records of Buckinghamshire* 20 (1), 100-33



excavation highlights the importance of documenting any further groundworks in the area.

#### **1.4 Objectives**

The objectives of the proposed archaeological investigation were set out in the CAO's Brief. In summary, the aims of the work were to:

- Record the stratigraphic sequence revealed by the excavation for the new foundations, including the depth and extent of any modern groundworks;
- To identify and record any archaeological features or finds revealed by the groundworks.

#### **1.5 Method Statement**

Although the project design anticipated the excavation of three pits (two at 1.00m x 1.50m and 2.80m in depth, and one at 1.00m x 1.00m and 1.50m in depth), these were combined into a single trench for technical and practical reasons. The trench was approximately 2.80m x 1.50m and about 2m in depth (see Figure 1 for location). It was excavated by a mini-digger fitted with a toothed bucket, under archaeological supervision.

Upstanding structural features and sections were drawn and photographed. Plans and sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10. All layers observed were allocated context numbers. These layers primarily consisted of make up layers and structural features connected with 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century foundations and cellarage. No deposits from earlier periods were encountered.

All deposits and spoil heaps were scanned visually and metal detected for possible metallic small finds.

Standards of recording set out in the Albion Archaeology *Procedures Manual*<sup>4</sup> were adhered to.

---

<sup>4</sup> Albion Archaeology (2001). *Procedures Manual, Volume 1: Fieldwork. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*



## 2 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

---

### 2.1 Archaeological Features

No archaeological features from the Saxon or Medieval periods were uncovered. Features and layers observed were primarily concerned with the foundations of the upstanding Prebend Lodge and Istra Cottages with some modern intrusion.

Evidence of palaeo-channel or old river channel deposits was recorded at a depth of 1.8m from the modern ground surface.

### 2.2 Undated Geological Deposits

#### 2.2.1 Palaeo-channel

Palaeo-environmental deposits were observed below existing building foundations/cellarge and modern disturbance at a depth of approximately 1.8m below current ground surface. It is thought likely that these were the result of palaeo-channel deposition. No sides to such a channel were observed, though a cut number [129] was allocated for technical reasons.

Two layers or fills, (119) and (120), were observed. Fill (119) was a firm dark brown black clay approximately 0.15m thick with organic and shell inclusions. Underlying (119) was fill (120) which consisted of a firm dark brown grey clay with shell inclusions and was 0.21m thick to the limit of excavation (see Figure 2).

### 2.3 18<sup>th</sup> Century: Construction of the Istra Cottages

#### 2.3.1 Foundations

The foundation cut for the Istra Cottages [118] was near vertical in profile. Within the cut, a total of five large limestone foundation pads - (109), (110), (115), (121) and (122) - were observed.

The foundation pads were set in two clay make up layers - (113) and (116). Make up layer (116) lined the bottom of the foundation trench [118] and consisted of a firm mid grey orange clay approximately 0.30m thick. The foundation pads (115), (121) and (122) were placed on this layer. Another make up layer (113) was deposited on these foundation pads and consisted of a firm mid grey orange clay approximately 0.23m thick. A further layer (114) between the underlying foundation pads and (113) consisted of a firm light orange clay approximately 0.01m thick (probably the result of water action). The further placement of larger foundation pads (109) and (110) supported the current wall (108) and possible wall or buttress (127).

#### 2.3.2 Existing Walls

The wall is built in uneven courses with squared regular limestone blocks and random coursed rough limestone lumps.





### **2.3.3 Cellar Wall**

An arc of bricks (111) was observed to the south of the trench. It consisted of unbonded bricks approximately 0.12m in width, 0.25m in length and 0.10m in depth, forming a lining to the cellar [128]. The backfill (123) of the cellar consisted of a friable dark grey brown silty clay with occasional small and medium stones and inclusions of tile and brick fragments and post-medieval pottery. The bricks were built against wall (108) suggesting a they represent a later addition to the cellar, which has seen subsequent backfilling.

## **2.4 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> Century: Construction of Prebend Lodge**

### **2.4.1 Foundations**

The foundation cut for the Lodge building [107] was almost vertical in profile, but limited to a depth of 0.41m by the foundation pad (109) associated with the adjacent Istra Cottages. It cut through the external surface (124) and was sealed by make up layer (101) and concrete (100).

A primary backfill of the foundation trench (125) consisted of a firm dark grey brown sandy clay approximately 0.1m thick. Finds from the fill included a single sherd of early medieval pottery (1150 - 1250AD) – an indication, perhaps, of archaeological stratigraphy that once existed prior to the Post Medieval and modern disturbance. Limestone fragments (106) had been placed on top of this primary backfill (125) to act as a foundation for wall (112). They ranged from packed lumps of limestone approximately 0.22m x 0.40m in size to degraded fragments approximately 0.10m x 0.10m. Later backfill (105) around the limestone fragments consisted of a firm dark grey brown sandy clay with inclusions of roof tile, clay tobacco pipe stem fragments and animal bone, approximately 0.31m thick.

### **2.4.2 Existing Wall**

The existing wall of the Lodge building (112) consisted of a mortared brick wall approximately 0.36m in width. It was constructed directly on to the foundation (106). This wall showed clear indications of the subsidence which the ground works were intended to rectify. Lack of depth of foundations may have been a major contributory factor in causing the subsidence.

## **2.5 Modern Features**

### **2.5.1 Concrete pathway**

Modern features recorded included a concrete pathway (100) and an associated underlying makeup layer (101), sealing the foundation cut [107] and the pipe trench [104].

### **2.5.2 Pipe Trench/Land Drain**

A linear pipe trench [104] was observed aligned approximately north west to south east, perpendicular to Hunter Street. It was 0.47m in width and 0.2m in



depth and cut through the wall (127) and the external surface (124).

### **2.5.3 Other Modern Disturbance**

An area of modern disturbance was observed to the western side of the trench and can be attributed to an existing manhole.



### 3 CONCLUSION

---

The watching brief was largely concerned with 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century building foundations and cellarage, with no surviving Saxon or Medieval stratigraphy. The hoped-for evidence of occupation from these periods was not encountered, and the single sherd of early medieval pottery recovered from within foundation material is probably a testament to what has been lost through later disturbance. However, this high degree of disturbance was site-specific and should not be taken as representative of this area of Buckingham as a whole.

The watching brief also revealed an undated palaeo-environmental feature, probably a former course of the river, at about 1.8m down from the present ground surface. This is likely to be a fairly typical feature of Buckingham geology. A glance at the map shows that the river has almost certainly followed numerous courses, some of which (in addition to the main river course) partially survive today. The palaeo-channel found on the Prebend House Lodge site is likely to be much too ancient to shed light on the archaeology of the historical period. Even so, any discussion of the boundaries of the Saxon burh may have to take into account the shifting course of the river, the course of which should not be assumed to have stayed entirely constant over the last two thousand years.

The possibility that the Lodge building was collapsing due to the presence of a hypothetical large feature such as a boundary ditch was discounted. In fact the subsidence was mainly caused by the shallowness of Lodge foundations, which were restricted by foundation pads of the adjacent Istra Cottages.



## 4 APPENDIX: TRENCH SUMMARY

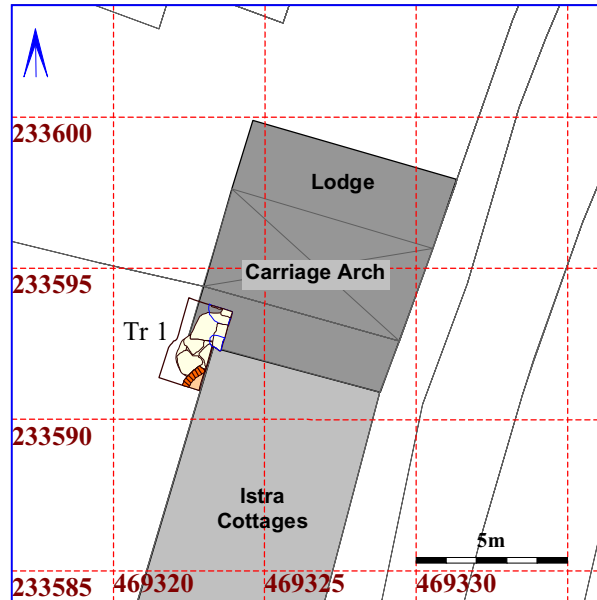
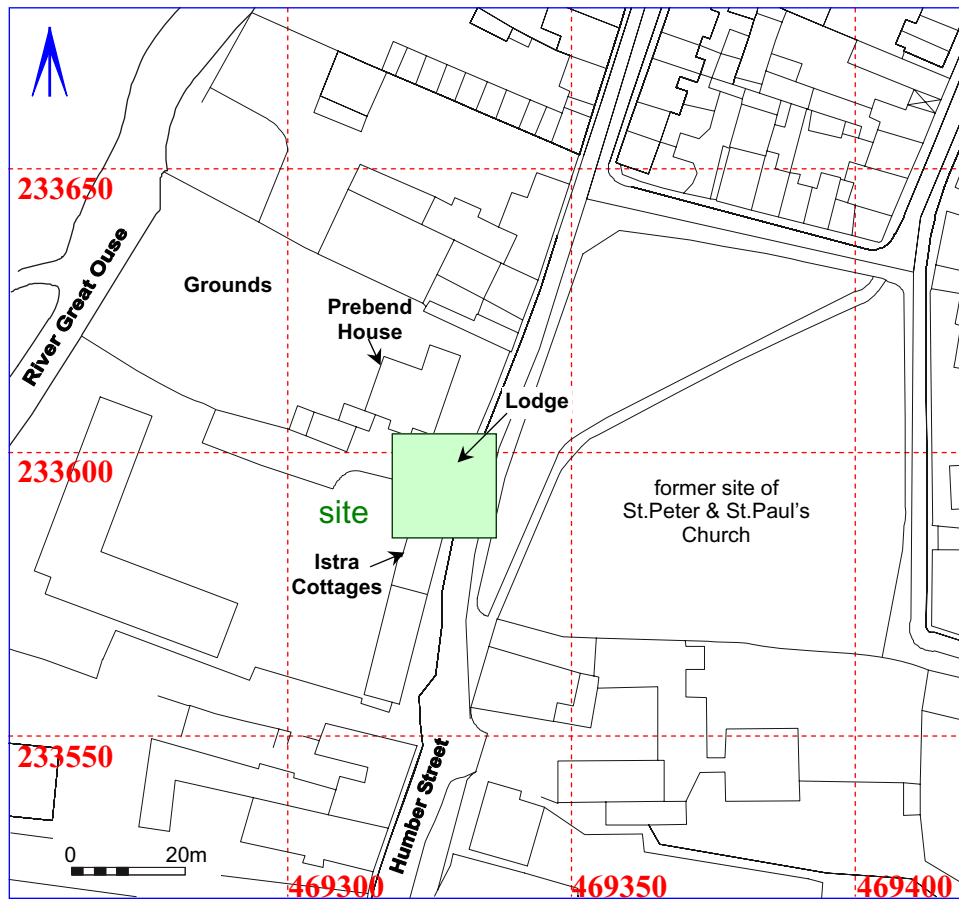
---


**Trench: 1**
**Max Dimensions:** Length: 2.80 m. Width: 1.50 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 1.8 m. Max: 1.8 m.

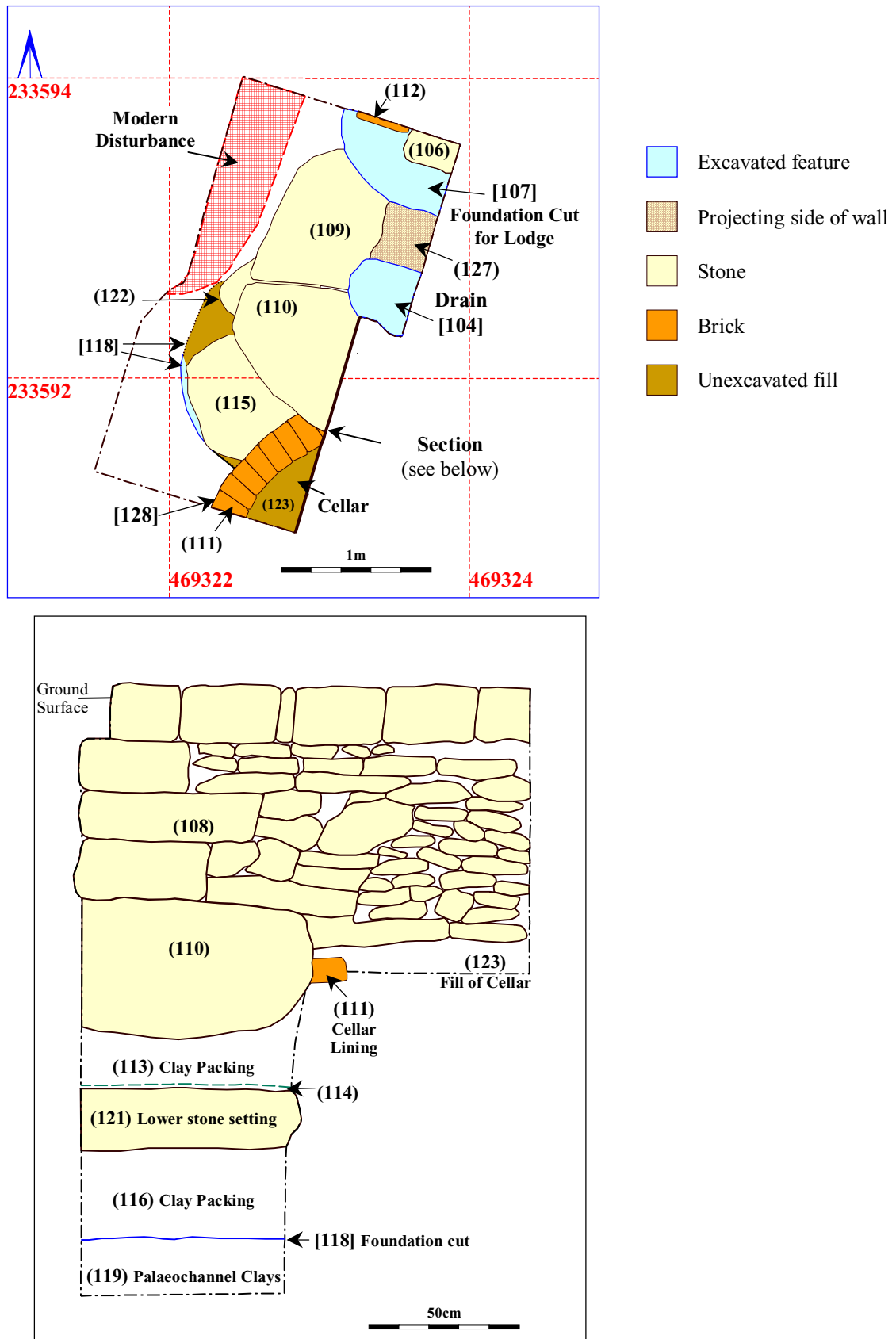
**OS Co-ordinates:** Ref. 1: SP3224959400 Ref. 2: SP3228259097

**Reason for trench:** Watching brief of foundation trench

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
100	External surface	Light grey . Concrete	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
101	Layer	Firm mid brown yellow sandy silt .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
104	Land drain	Linear base: flat dimensions: max breadth 0.47m, max depth 0.2m.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
102	Secondary fill	Firm mid grey silty clay .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
103	Pipe	Mid red brown .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
126	Primary fill	Firm mid grey silty clay .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
107	Foundation trench	Linear profile: vertical base: flat dimensions: max breadth 0.49m, max depth 0.41m. Foundation cut of Prebend Lodge	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
105	Backfill	Firm dark grey brown sandy clay . Foundation trench backfill contained inclusions of roof tile fragments, clay pipe and bone.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
106	Wall	Cemented light yellow grey . Limestone foundation for Lodges south west wall	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
125	Fill	Firm dark grey brown sandy clay . Lower foundation trench fill.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
108	Wall	Cemented light yellow grey . Upstanding south western wall of existing Istra Cottages	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
112	Wall	Cemented light brown red . Prebend Lodge north western brick wall	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
117	Buried topsoil	Firm dark grey brown silty clay . Buried topsoil with inclusions of bone and tile fragments.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
118	Foundation trench	Linear base: flat dimensions: min depth 1.15m. Foundation cut of Istra Cottages	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
109	Stone Setting	Cemented light yellow grey .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
110	Stone Setting	Cemented light yellow grey .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
113	Layer	Firm mid grey orange clay .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
114	Layer	Firm light orange clay . Part of (113) altered due to water action.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
115	Stone Setting	Cemented light yellow grey . Foundation stone setting for wall corner (108).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
116	Layer	Firm mid grey orange clay .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
121	Stone Setting	Cemented light yellow grey . Foundation stone setting for wall corner (108).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
122	Stone Setting	Cemented light yellow grey . Foundation stone setting for wall corner (108).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
124	External surface	Firm light grey white silty clay .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
127	Wall	Cemented light yellow grey . Istra Cottages south west wall or buttress.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
128	Foundation trench	Sub-circular . Cut of cellar.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
111	Wall	Cemented light red . Brick cellar lining	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
123	Fill	Friable dark brown grey silty clay occasional small-medium stones. Inclusions of tile and brick fragments.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
129	Palaeochannel	Linear .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
119	Fill	Firm dark brown black clay . Upper palaeochannel fill with organic deposits, manganese patches with crystalline structure and shell fragments.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
120	Fill	Firm dark brown grey clay . Lower palaeochannel fill with inclusions of shell fragments.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



**Figure 1:** Location map.



**Figure 2: Plan and Section.**