

# Numbers 8 and 9 Crick Road Oxford



## Archaeological Watching Brief Report



March 2013

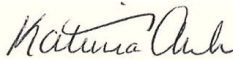
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## Numbers 8 and 9 Crick Road, Oxford

*Archaeological Watching Brief Report*

*Written by Mike Sims*

*and illustrated by Georgina Slater*

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## Summary

*Between May 2012 and February 2013 Oxford Archaeology (OA) undertook an archaeological watching brief at numbers 8 and 9 Crick Road, Oxford (NGR: SP 5144 0766). The watching brief observed evidence for two post-medieval soil horizons overlying natural gravels. No evidence for activity pre-dating the post-medieval period was observed.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Geoffrey de Jager to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the construction of rear extensions and wine cellars at numbers 8 and 9 Crick Road, Oxford (Fig. 1).
- 1.1.2 As part of these works an existing rear extension at Number 8 was demolished and a single storey extension together with an integral garage constructed. In both cases existing sunken terraces were enlarged and a new wine cellar excavated.
- 1.1.3 These works took place within a known area of archaeological potential and accordingly a condition requiring that an archaeological investigation be undertaken was attached to both planning consents (Planning references 12/02168/FUL and 12/00596/FUL respectively).
- 1.1.4 A design brief for an archaeological watching brief was issued by David Radford (Oxford City Archaeologist) outlining the Local Authority's requirements for the work necessary to discharge the planning conditions (Radford, 2012). OA produced Written Schemes of Investigations (WSI) outlining how it would implement these requirements (OA, 2012a and OA 2012b).
- 1.1.5 As both sites were adjacent and were undertaken for the same client it was agreed with David Radford that a combined report could be produced.
- 1.1.6 All work was undertaken in accordance with local and national planning policies (The National Planning Policy Framework).

### 1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 Crick Road lies in north Oxford, approximately 900m north of the town centre (centred on NGR: SP 5144 0766). The site lies within a residential area and is bounded by Crick Road to the south and by residential developments to the east, west and north.
- 1.2.2 The development at Number 8 was situated around the east and north sides of a semi-detached building, while the work at Number 9 was located to the east and north sides of a detached house. The area of both developments consisted of residential gardens.
- 1.2.3 The site lies at approximately 61m AOD on the interface between the 1st (Flood Plain) and 2nd (Summertown – Radley) gravel terraces (Geological Survey of Great Britain, Solid and Drift Edition, Witney Sheet 236, 1982).

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background to the site has been described in the brief issued by David Radford, and is reproduced below.



- 1.3.2 The site is located on a well settled part of the Oxford gravel terrace, close to evidence for Bronze Age, Iron Age and Saxon activity. In the 19th century a number of finds were made in Park Town Crescent including a possible Bronze Age food vessel with associated human remains (HER No 3592) and Roman inhumation burials and pottery (HER No 3591). Furthermore an Iron Age pit (HER3593) and a possible Saxon inhumation (HER No 5775) have been recorded in Crick road.

## 2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The general aims and objectives of the watching brief were to:

- (i) preserve by record any archaeological deposits, structures or features encountered during the course of any ground intrusions;
- (ii) seek to establish the extent, nature and date of any archaeological deposits, structures or features encountered within the scope of the ground intrusion;
- (iii) secure the analysis, conservation and long-term storage of any artefactual/ecofactual material recovered from the site;
- (iv) disseminate results through the production of an unpublished client ('grey literature') report.

2.1.2 The specific aims of the watching brief were to:

- identify and record any significant archaeological remains revealed by the ground works, paying particular regard to the potential for prehistoric and Saxon remains including burials.
- relate any discoveries to known archaeology of the Summertown-Radley Gravel terrace as summarised in the City Resource Assessments: <http://consultation.oxford.gov.uk/consult.ti/OARAAC/consultationHome>

### 2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 The remit of the watching brief was to observe all works that may disturb or destroy below ground archaeological remains. These works included the excavations for the wine cellars, extension of the sunken terraces, foundation and service trenching and landscaping. The watching brief was conducted as a series of site visits during the undertaking of any of the above works. Due to a communication issue, OA was not able to monitor all ground reduction, specifically the cellar at Number 8. However, all sections of these excavations and the exposed bases were inspected.

2.2.2 All spoil generated by the machine excavations was examined for the presence of archaeological artefacts.

2.2.3 All features and deposits were issued with unique context numbers, and context recording was in accordance with established OA practices. Bulk finds were collected by context. Black-and-white negative photographs and a digital photographic record was taken of all excavations, general settings and archaeological sections.

2.2.4 A site plan showing the location of any excavations and any recorded sections was maintained (Fig. 2). Section drawings of features and sample sections of trenches were drawn at a scale of 1:20.



### 3 RESULTS

#### 3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 The majority of the works consisted of the extension of the existing sunken terrace gardens to the north together with reduction to the levels within the existing excavations (Plate 1). Where the terraces were extended this was done by a tracked machine fitted with a toothless bucket.
- 3.1.2 The majority of the excavations were dug to a level of 1.5m below the existing ground level.
- 3.1.3 The similarity of the results of the watching brief from both adjacent sites indicate the two sites can be considered together.
- 3.1.4 During the excavations within Number 8 a layer of fine pale brown silty clay (4) was exposed within the centre of the site at the base of two of the sections (Fig. 3, Sections 5 and 6; Plate 2). Overlying this deposit and exposed at the base of the excavations elsewhere was a thick layer of coarse orange brown gravel (3), measuring in excess of 1m deep in places (Sections 1 to 8). Close examination of the bases and exposed faces of the excavations both during their excavation and afterwards did not produce any evidence of features cutting this deposit except for a natural feature in Section 6, most likely a tree throw.
- 3.1.5 Directly overlying layer 3 throughout Number 8 was a layer of mid brown silty clay loam (2). This measured between 0.18m and 0.35m in depth and contained lenses of gravel and charcoal flecking and produced fragments of abraded brick. In places this deposit had been cut by service trenches.
- 3.1.6 Above layer 2 and exposed throughout the site was a layer of dark brown silty loam (1), between 0.4m and 0.5m in depth. This also contained gravel inclusions and charcoal flecking together with fragments of brick and examples of 19th/20th century pottery.
- 3.1.7 During the excavations within Number 9 a similar stratigraphy was encountered. At the base of all the excavations an orange brown gravel (14) was encountered (Fig. 3, Sections 9 to 11). Overlying this deposit throughout the site was a layer of mid brown silty clay loam measuring between 0.3m and 0.42m in depth (13). This contained charcoal flecking and gravel inclusions together with fragments of abraded brick.
- 3.1.8 On the western side of the house layer 13 could be seen to be cut by a very steep sided feature running parallel to the side of the house (16) (Section 9). This had been filled with a dark brown clayey loam (15) which contained lenses of mid brown material together with gravel and fragments of brick.
- 3.1.9 Sealing the fill and overlying layer 13 elsewhere was a layer of dark brown silty loam (11). This measured between 0.15m and 0.28m in depth and produced charcoal flecking, fragments of brick and fragments of pottery and bottle glass.
- 3.1.10 Adjacent to the western and southern walls of the house layer 12 was overlaid by a 0.15m deep layer of hardcore formed from crushed stone and broken bricks (11). This formed a base for the concrete path (10) which ran around the these sides of the house.

#### 3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 No dating evidence earlier than the 19th century was recovered during the course of the watching brief. This material included earthenware and transfer printed creamware





pottery, brick and tile. The presence of this material was recorded but it was not retained.

### **3.3 Environmental remains**

3.3.1 No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling were encountered during the course of the watching brief.

## **4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1.1 Layer 4 is a large lens or inclusion of natural sand. The underlying natural gravel, 3 and 14, was exposed within all the excavations showing that there was little potential for buried archaeological horizons. Within both of the development sites this deposit was sealed by a homogeneous layer of silty loam (2 and 13) which displayed some evidence of activity such as charcoal flecking and abraded brick fragments suggesting a possible worked or ploughsoil horizon. The few finds recovered from these deposits possibly indicate a 18th or 19th century date.
- 4.1.2 Examination of the earlier maps of the area suggest that the area was originally open fields until it was enclosed in the 1830s and it is probable that these layers relate to this period of use.
- 4.1.3 Cut 16 was interpreted as the construction cut for Number 9's lower ground floor and context 15 was the associated backfill. Number 8 seems to have adopted a different method of construction with its lower ground floor appearing to be trench built.
- 4.1.4 Layers 1 and 12 are both present day garden soils and are the result of both landscaping around the original houses and the subsequent planting and cultivation around the houses and therefore post-dates the houses construction.
- 4.1.5 No evidence for any activity pre-dating the post-medieval period was observed during the course of the watching brief. It is unclear if this was due to no activity having taken place or to later activity such as ploughing having destroyed the evidence. The lack of earlier residual finds within any of the present day deposits or of truncated features within the surface of the terrace gravel would appear to suggest that the area around the two houses has been subject to only minimal archaeological impact in the past.



## APPENDIX A. ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context	Type	Depth	Comments	Finds	Date
1	Layer	0.3m – 0.5m	Present day garden soil	Pottery, brick, glass	C19th/ C20th
2	Layer	0.18m – 0.28m	Earlier soil horizon, possible ploughsoil	Brick	C19th
3	Layer	Up to 1.2m	Natural terrace gravel	-	-
4	Layer	> 0.4m	Natural sand	-	-
10	Surface	0.14m	Concrete pathway	-	C20th
11	Layer	0.15m	Hardcore base for pathway 10	Brick	C20th
12	Layer	0.15m – 0.3m	Present day garden soil	Pottery, brick	C19th/ C20th
13	Layer	0.25m – 0.4m	Earlier soil horizon, possible ploughsoil	Brick	C19th
14	Layer	Up to 1.2m	Natural terrace gravel	-	-
15	Fill	> 1.5m	Backfill of construction cut for Number 9	Brick	C19th
16	Cut	> 1.5m	Construction cut for lower ground floor of Number 9	-	C19th



## APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

- Radford, D. 2012a                      *Internal Memo re- archaeology*
- Radford, D. 2012b                      *8 Crick Road Oxford: Design for an Archaeological Watching Brief*



## APPENDIX C. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name:	Numbers 8 and 9 Crick Road, Oxford
Site code:	OXCRIK 12
Grid reference:	SP 5144 0766
Type of watching brief:	Machine and hand excavation of foundations and ground reduction for extensions to lower ground floors and new cellars
Date and duration of project:	May 2012 to January 2013, 8 months
Area of site:	Approximately 1200m <sup>2</sup>
Summary of results:	The watching brief observed evidence for two post-medieval soil horizons overlying natural gravels. No evidence for activity pre-dating the post-medieval period was observed.
Location of archive:	The archive is currently held at Janus House and will be deposited with the Oxfordshire County Museum Service under the accession number OXCMS:2012.84.





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Figure 1: Site location

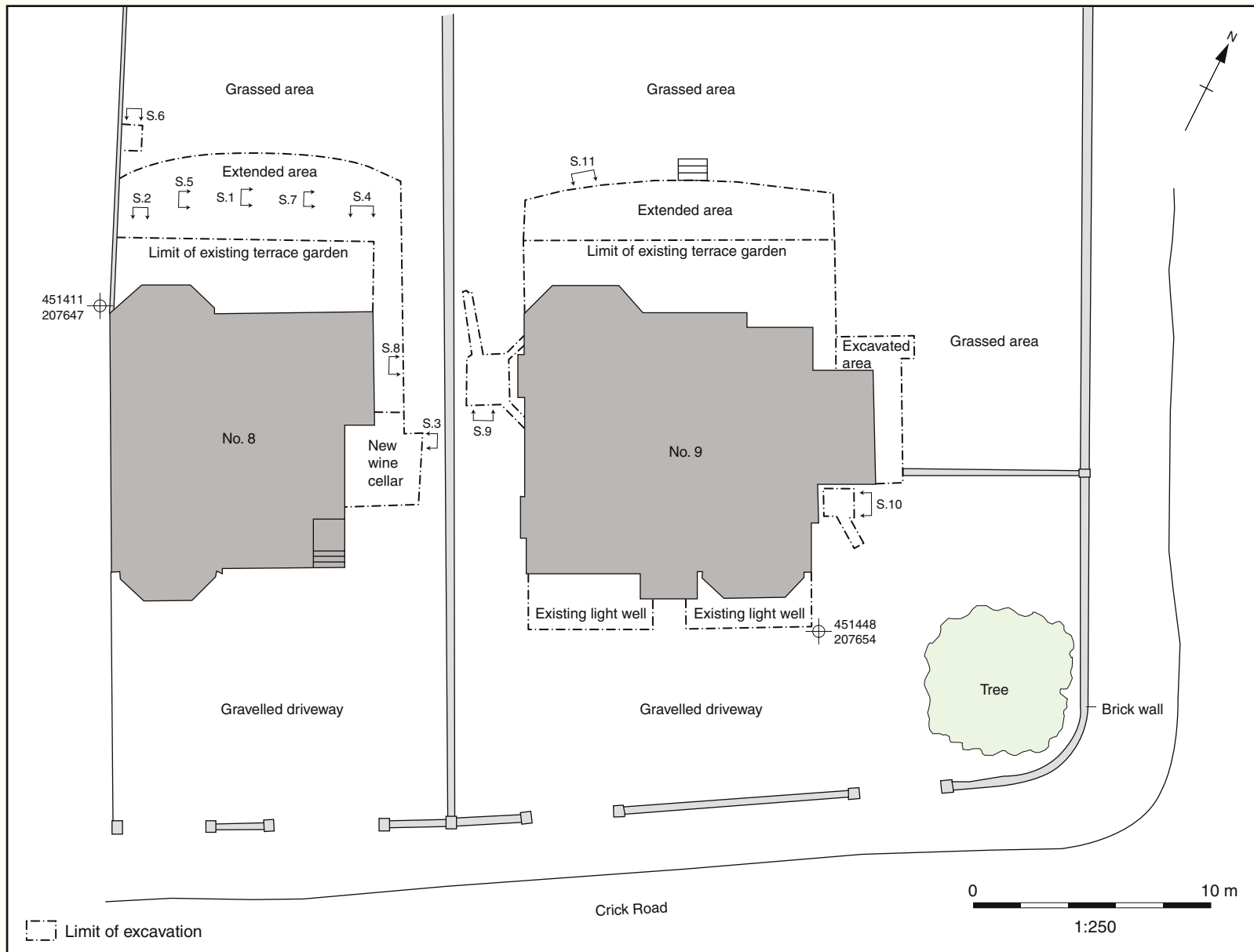


Figure 2: Site plan

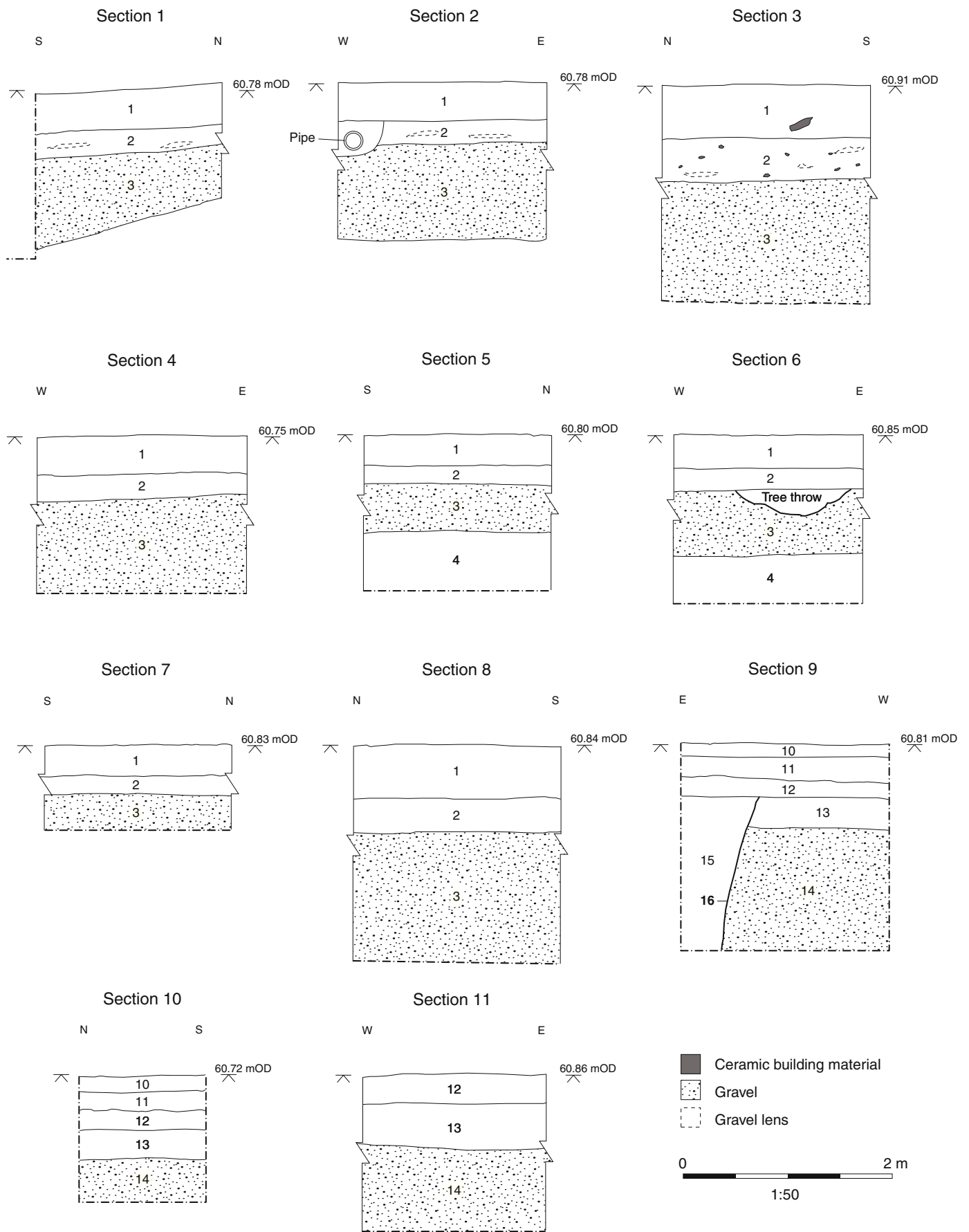


Figure 3: Sections





Plate 1 : Original sunken terrace to the rear of number 8



Plate 2: Section 5







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