

Kiln Cottage
Pottery Lane
Inkpen
Hungerford
West Berkshire



**Archaeological
Watching Brief Report**

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Kiln Cottage, Pottery Lane, Inkpen, Hungerford, West Berkshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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Summary

In October 2011 Oxford Archaeology undertook a watching brief during the construction of a new split level dwelling at Kiln Cottage, Pottery Lane, Inkpen, West Berkshire (NGR: SU 369 641). The watching brief observed two phases of post-medieval made ground over the site together with some evidence suggesting 19th century occupation prior to the construction of the demolished 20th century dwelling. No evidence for a kiln or any activity pre-dating the 18th/19th century was observed during the course of the watching brief.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA), was commissioned by Jeremy Smith of Bybrook Developments to undertake a watching brief on the site of a proposed new house, sited on a previous dwelling at Kiln Cottage, Pottery Lane, Inkpen, West Berkshire (Fig. 1).
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken as part of a condition of Planning Permission (planning ref: 07/02531/FUL). Although the West Berkshire Council did not set a brief for the work, discussions with Sarah Orr (Historic Records Officer) established the scope of work required and OA produced a written scheme of investigation (WSI) showing how it would meet these requirements (OA 2011).

1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site of Kiln Cottage is situated on the western side of the village of Inkpen, at SU 369 641. It is immediately south of Pottery Lane. Inkpen is approximately 7.5km south-east of Hungerford, West Berkshire (Fig. 1).
- 1.2.2 The area of proposed development lies on a south-west facing slope running down from the lane and was the site of the demolished previous property, including the grounds and tennis court (Fig. 2).
- 1.2.3 The geology of the area is London Clay which dates to the Eocene Period (55.8 to 33.9 million years BP), (British Geological Survey 1:50 000 scale mapping http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html). The site lies at approximately 54-57m above Ordnance Datum.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 A consultation of the Heritage Gateway website, which incorporates the West Berkshire Historic Environment Record (HER) and the results of the Historic Landscape Characterisation Project, showed that there were 26 records of events and monuments within a 1 km study radius of the site. The most relevant entries have been incorporated into the following background.

Prehistoric Period

- 1.3.2 There are no recorded prehistoric sites within the study area. There is, however, prehistoric activity in the wider area including funerary monuments such as Combe long barrow, 2 km to the south and Walbury hillfort, 3 km to the south.

Roman Period

- 1.3.3 There are no recorded Roman sites within the study area.

Early Medieval Period

- 1.3.4 No early medieval sites have been recorded in the study area. However, documentary evidence demonstrates that a settlement at Inkpen existed by the mid 10th century; the Cotton Charter VIII, dated AD 931-939 includes the will of a Saxon man, Wulfgar, that stated "the land at inche penne" to be divided on his death, with three quarters going to his wife Aeffe, the other quarter going to "the servants of God at his holy place, Kintbury".

Medieval Period

- 1.3.5 Documents record that there was one mill, worth 12 shillings, belonging to the manor of Inkpen at the time of the Domesday Survey.
- 1.3.6 The church of St Michael is of 13th century origin.

Post-Medieval Period

- 1.3.7 There are nine listed buildings within the 1 km study area, all post-medieval in date; seven domestic buildings, ranging in date from the 16th to the 18th century, and two school buildings dating to the 19th century.
- 1.3.8 Throughout most of this period the land and population were engaged in agricultural activity, although a small pottery industry, with possibly as many as eight potteries, existed within the area dating from the 16th century until the early 20th century (HER ref: MWB4174). Two watching briefs in 1987 at Crocus Cottage, Pottery Lane, c 200 m from the site, revealed pottery, wasters and kiln bricks. Much of the pottery was found in the topsoil and was very localised, possibly indicating shallow pits, although no cuts were visible. No evidence for kilns was observed.
- 1.3.9 The 1841 tithe map shows both pottery kilns and drying grounds and yards in the crocus fields areas of Inkpen and behind Crocus Cottage. The name of the site, Kiln Cottage, may imply that pottery kilns once stood within the grounds.

1.4 Potential

- 1.4.1 Although no archaeological features have been located within the site, the history and development of the area suggested the potential for remains associated with the post medieval pottery industry, possibly in the form of pottery kilns, to be present within the site.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The aims of the watching brief were to:
- (i) Preserve by record any archaeological deposits, structures or features encountered during the course of 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) To secure the analysis, conservation and long-term storage of any artefactual/ecofactual material recovered from the site;
- (iv) To disseminate results through the production of a unpublished client ('grey literature') report which will be eventually available online via the OA online library.

2.1.2 The site specific aims of the Watching Brief were to:

- Address the research priorities of West Berkshire for the area, in particular the question: 'can the nature and extent of the post-medieval pottery industry be determined?'
- Contribute to an understanding of the origins of the current settlement at Inkpen by looking for evidence of early medieval settlement, which is suggested by documentary evidence, but which has yet to be found the form of physical remains.
- Look for evidence of prehistoric and Roman activity, which has yet to be discovered in the vicinity of the site, and therefore determine whether the current lack of such evidence represents an accurate picture of the area during these periods.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 An intermittent watching brief was undertaken during the below ground construction activities. The foundation for the lower ground floor was bounded by a piled retaining wall (a total of 79 piles) before the commencement of excavation (Fig. 2). The excess material was removed by machine. As part of the excavation several existing concrete terrace walls together with part of the existing tennis courts and an external staircase were also removed (Fig. 2).
- 2.2.2 All features and deposits were issued with unique context numbers, and context recording was in accordance with established OA practices (Wilkinson, 1992). Bulk finds were collected by context. Black-and-white negative photographs together with digital colour photographs were taken of all recorded sections and features. A general photographic record was also made.
- 2.2.3 Site plans were drawn at an appropriate scale (normally 1:50 or 1:100) with larger scale plans of features as necessary. Section drawings of features as appropriate, and sample sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 At the base of the excavations a layer of grey-blue natural clay (5) was exposed within the north-east corner of the site (Fig. 4, Section 1). This layer tipped down towards the south-west following the general slope of the site. Overlying this, and exposed in section throughout the rest of the site, was a deep layer of naturally occurring yellow-brown clay (4) (Fig. 4, Sections 1, 2 and 3). This deposit measured between 1.1 m in depth (Section 1) to greater than 2 m (Section 3). This layer too appeared to slope down to the south-west. In the southern edge of the development area layer 4 had been cut by 0.3 m deep by 0.15 m wide channels containing machine extruded clay land drains running down slope. Along the western edge of the site the construction of the tennis courts had severely truncated the top of layer 4 with the tennis court surface (6) being laid directly on top (Fig. 4, Section 2).
- 3.1.2 In the base of the excavation two circular brick lined wells were exposed (Figs. 2 and 3) cut into layer 4. The southernmost of these, Well 10, had been built within a circular

0.87 m diameter shaft (11) with the brickwork butting tightly up against the cut with no evidence of backfilling between the brick lining and the shaft (Plate 1). The lining was constructed using plain unfrosted bricks measuring 0.228 m x 0.103 m x 0.067 m laid without mortar tangentially to the shaft. The upper two courses of the lining were tipped towards the centre of the well suggesting that the lining was originally topped with a hemi-spherical brick well cap. Both the brick size and the construction suggest that it dates to the late 18th or 19th century. The well was filled by a fine dark grey clay-silt (12) (possibly silting) with fragments of both brick and pottery in its surface. These fragments were also dated as being 18th to 19th century in origin.

- 3.1.3 Well 13 was located towards the north-western corner of the excavation (Fig. 2). The brick lining (13) had been constructed within a shaft (14) cut into the natural clay (Fig. 3 and Plate 2). It is probable that this was originally circular but ground pressure had deformed it into an eclipse measuring 1 m north-south and 0.82 m east-west. The method of construction of the brick lining was similar to that of well 10 with plain hand moulded unfrosted bricks measuring 0.228 m x 0.116 m x 0.065 m laid tangentially. As with well 10 the brick size suggests a late 18th or 19th century date. In places gaps between the brick lining and the well shaft were filled with a dark grey clay (16). The well had been backfilled by a mixture of whole and broken bricks mixed with a yellow-brown clay (15). This appears to have been the result of a deliberate collapse of the top of the well with many voids being left in the material.
- 3.1.4 Within the region of Section 1 (Figs. 2 and 4), layer 4 and the land drains were overlaid by a 0.5 m deep layer of mixed yellow-brown and grey-brown silt clay (3). This deposit contained quantities of brick and pottery fragments dating between the 18th and 19th centuries. The edges of these fragments were still sharp with no evidence of abrasion associated with worked soil. In the region of Section 3 (Figs. 2 and 4) a similar 0.35 m deep layer of mixed grey-brown and yellow-brown silt clay (9) overlying (4) was recorded. This too contained angular fragments of both brick and pottery dating between the 18th and 19th centuries.
- 3.1.5 Layer 3 was covered by a 0.27 m deep layer of very dark grey silt clay loam (2). Layer 9 was covered by a similar 0.3 m deep dark grey silt clay loam (8) which produced angular fragments of brick and pottery which were identified as being 18th to 19th century in date.
- 3.1.6 Overlying layer 2 was a 0.65 m deep layer of grey-brown silt clay (1) containing lenses of yellow-brown silt clay. This layer produced more angular fragments of brick. Again a similar 0.8 m deep layer of mixed grey-brown and yellow-brown silt clay (7) was observed in the region of section 3. These layers were associated with the demolished building and are deposits of modern made ground.

3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 Fragments of brick were recovered from layers 1, 3, 7, 8 and 9 and also from fills 12 and 15. Sherds of pottery (mostly earthenware but some creamware) were recovered from layers 2, 3, 8 and 9 and some also from fills 12 and 15.
- 3.2.2 There was no evidence for abrasion on the brick fragments, which also displayed similarities in manufacture and size possibly indicating a similar origin. The presence and the condition of the fragments was recorded on the context sheets but they were not retained.
- 3.2.3 The pottery in the main consisted of large sherds of earthenware glazed on the inside using a mid to dark brown glaze. Many of the sherds were lipped and appear to

originate from large diameter bowls. The glaze together with the fabric and form of the rims suggest an 18th or 19th century date. As with the brick there was little evidence for abrasion on the edges of the original breaks. The creamware had been transfer printed and represents imported material, presumably from domestic refuse.

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 It is possible that the location of the site on a steep bank may have facilitated small scale clay extraction (possibly serving nearby kilns) and that it was terraced and built upon when it fell into disuse. The earlier layers of made ground (3 and 9) may represent levelling or landscaping layers. The absence of any other soil horizons between the natural clay 4 and these deposits may also suggest that the site had been subject to clay extraction with the overburden above the clay having been removed. Layers 2 and 8 appear to be a worked or garden soil, possibly associated with later occupation.
- 4.1.2 The presence of the two wells may indicate that the site was occupied in the 18th or 19th century but no direct evidence for dwellings was observed. It is possible that such evidence was either truncated or covered over during the construction of the tennis courts or when the terracing took place for the building platform of the now demolished building on the site.
- 4.1.3 The later deposits of made ground 1 and 7 are associated with the demolished building.
- 4.1.4 No evidence for the operation of a pottery kiln was observed during the course of the watching brief. This evidence may have taken the form of; 1) the truncated remains of a structure (including demolition material); 2) burning associated with the kiln; 3) dumping of ashes from the kiln and; 4) concentrations of wasters or broken pottery from the kiln operation.
- 4.1.5 None of the first three types of evidence were observed. Numbers of broken bricks together with pottery sherds and a fragment of ceramic material which has been tentatively identified as a fragment of kiln furniture (from layer 3) were recorded within the layers of earlier made ground (layers 3 and 9) and also the modern made ground (layers 1 and 7) but the quantities appear to be insufficient to suggest an *in situ* or nearby operating kiln, and they may have been imported with the material during the making up of the ground.
- 4.1.6 No evidence for activity pre-dating the 18th/19th century (such as residual finds or truncated features) was encountered during the course of the watching brief.
- 4.1.7 It is unclear if this was due to the absence of evidence or to later truncation of the site either by possible clay extraction or by the previous building works.

APPENDIX A. ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

| Context | Type | Depth | Width | Comments | Finds | Date |
|---------|-------|--------------|-----------|--|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | Layer | Up to 0.65 m | - | Modern made ground | Brick | C20th |
| 2 | Layer | 0.27 m | - | Buried topsoil horizon | - | C19th/ C20th |
| 3 | Layer | Up to 0.53 m | - | Earlier made ground | Brick, tile, pottery | C18th/ C19th |
| 4 | Layer | Up to 1.12 m | - | Natural clay | - | - |
| 5 | Layer | > 0.25 m | - | Natural clay | - | - |
| 6 | Layer | 0.18 m | > 9 m | Old tennis court surface | - | C20th |
| 7 | Layer | Up to 0.85 m | - | Modern made ground | Brick | C20th |
| 8 | Layer | 0.3 m | - | Buried topsoil horizon | Brick, tile, pottery | C19th/ C20th |
| 9 | Layer | Up to 0.35 m | - | Earlier made ground | Brick, tile, pottery | C18th/ C19th |
| 10 | Well | > 0.2 m | 0.87 m | Brick lined well | Brick | C18th/ C19th |
| 11 | Cut | > 0.2 m | 0.87 m | Construction cut for well | - | C18th/ C19th |
| 12 | Fill | > 0.2 m | 0.63 m | Backfill of well | Brick, pottery | C19th |
| 13 | Well | > 0.3 m | 1 m | Brick lined well | Brick | C18th/ C19th |
| 14 | Cut | > 0.3 m | 1 m | Construction cut for well | - | C18th/ C19th |
| 15 | Fill | > 0.3 m | 1 m | Backfill of well | Brick, pottery | C19th |
| 16 | Fill | > 0.3 m | 0.12 m | Backfill between brick lining 13 and construction cut 14 | - | C18th/ C19th |



APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

Wilinson (Editor), OA Fieldwork Manual
1992

OA, 2011 Kiln Cottage, Pottery Lane, Inkpen, West Berkshire: Written Scheme of
Investigation



APPENDIX C. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Site name: | Kiln Cottage, Pottery Lane, Inkpen, Hungerford, West Berkshire |
| Site code: | INKILN 11 |
| Grid reference: | Centred at NGR SU 369 641 |
| Type of watching brief: | Machine excavation of foundation cut for lower ground floor of a split level building |
| Date of project: | 01/10/11 |
| Area of site: | Approximately 1500 m ² |
| Summary of results: | The watching brief observed deposits of made ground pre-dating the demolished building containing quantities of brick wasters, a buried topsoil horizon and two brick lined wells. |
| Location of archive: | The archive will be deposited with West Berkshire Heritage Services under the accession number NEBYM:2011.138 |

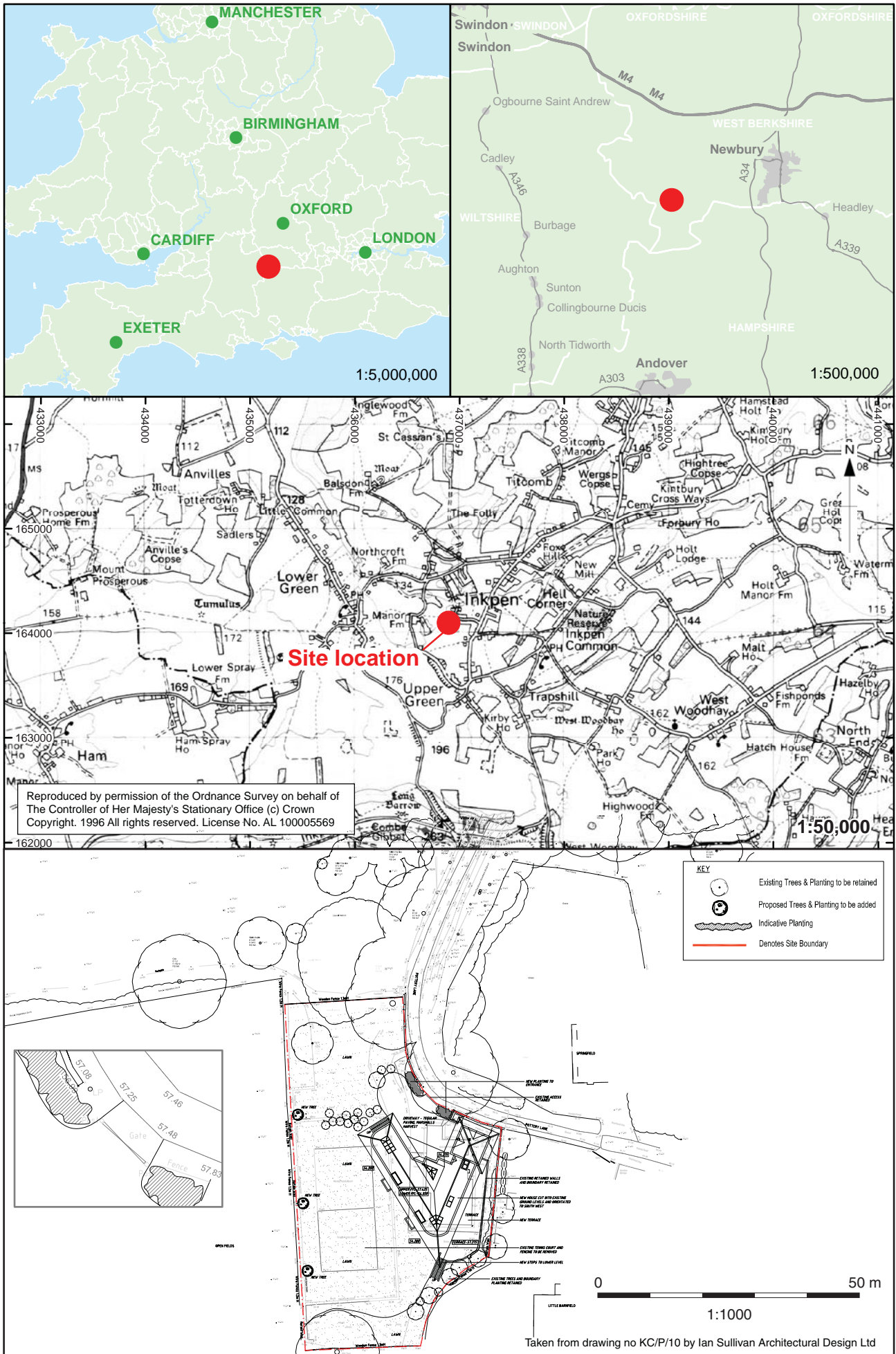


Figure 1: Site location

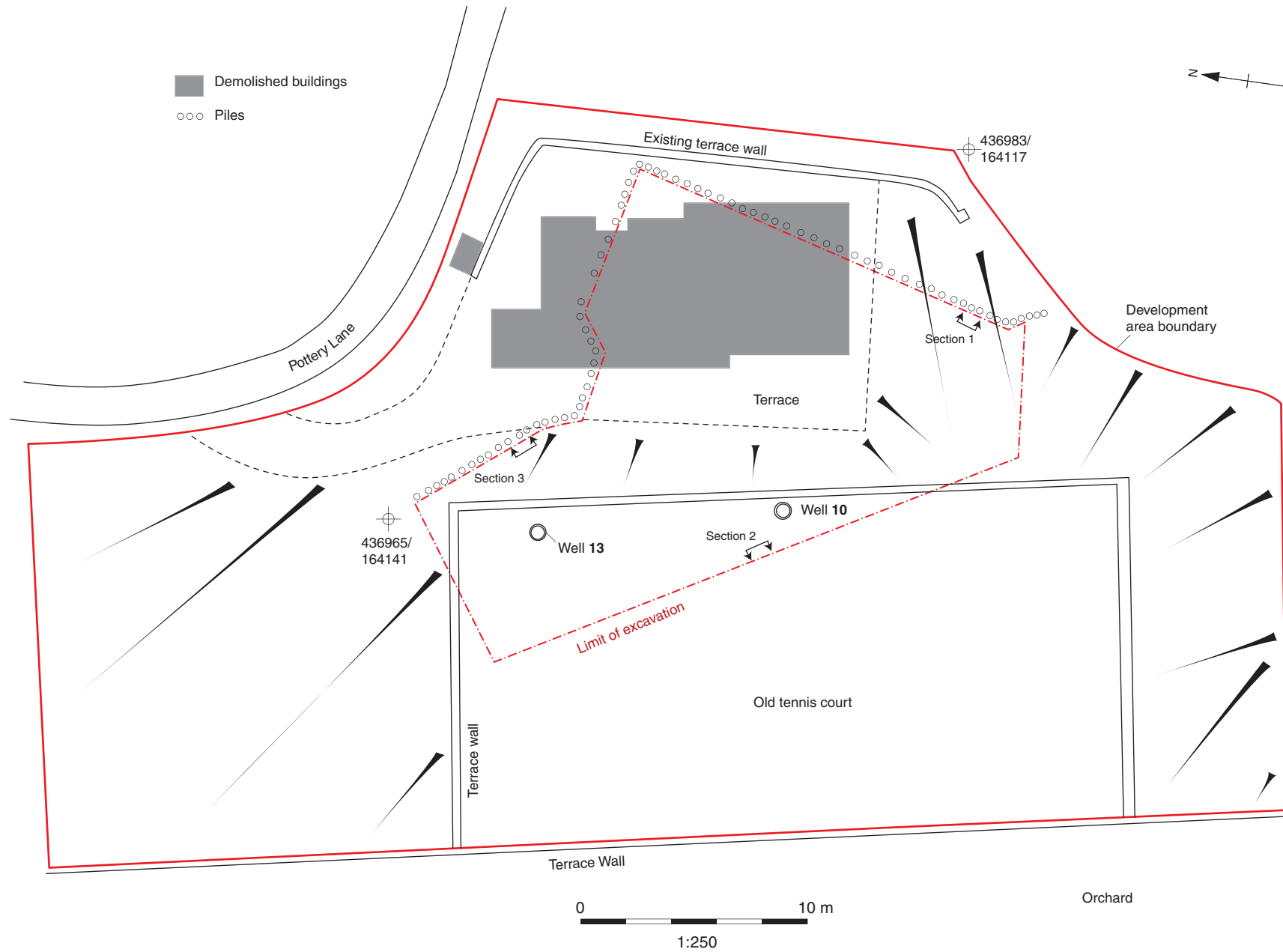
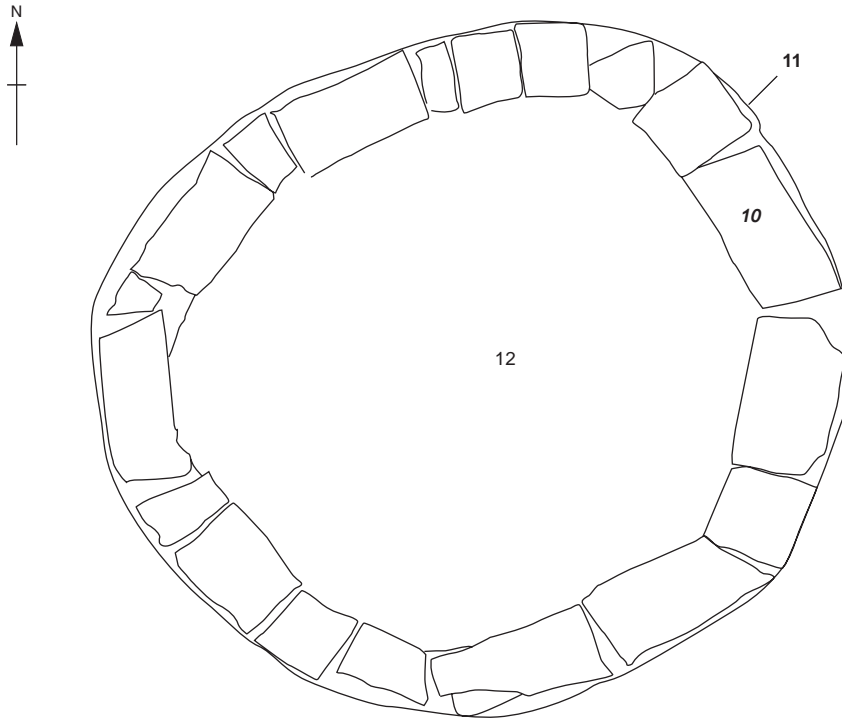
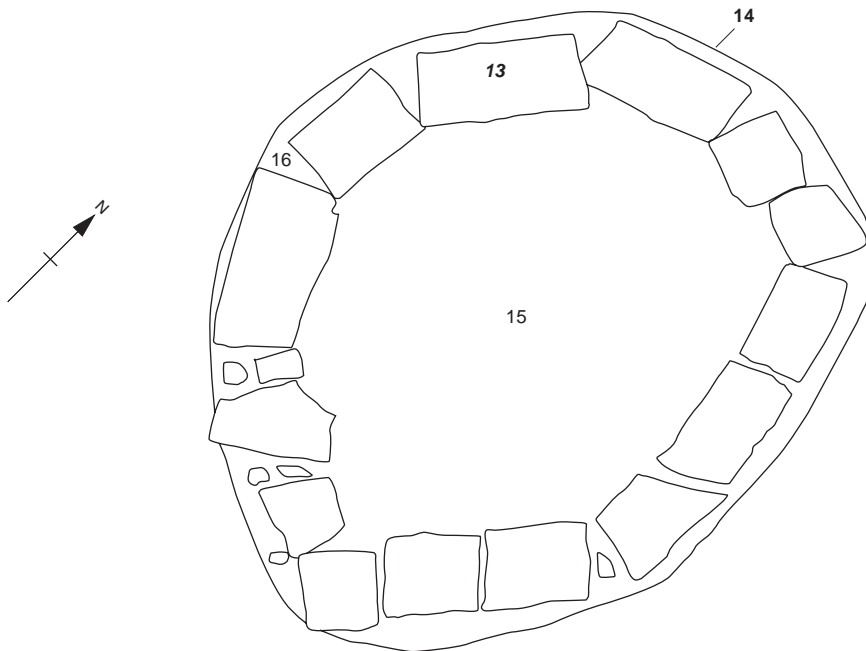


Figure 2: Site plan

Plan 2
Well 10



Plan 3
Well 13



0 500 mm

1:10

Figure 3: Plans of wells 10 and 13

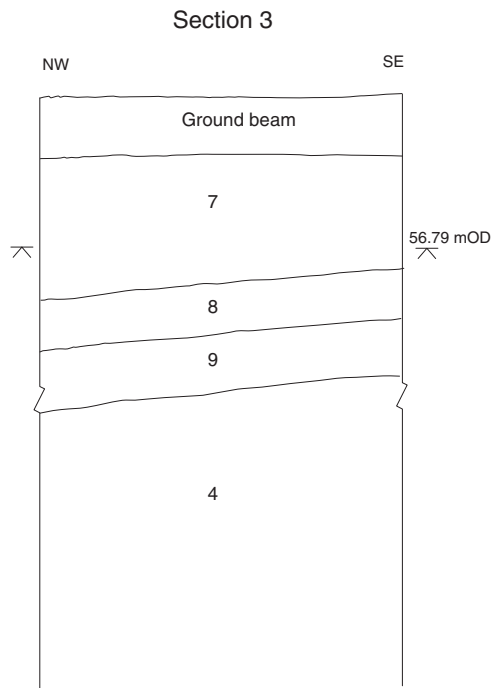
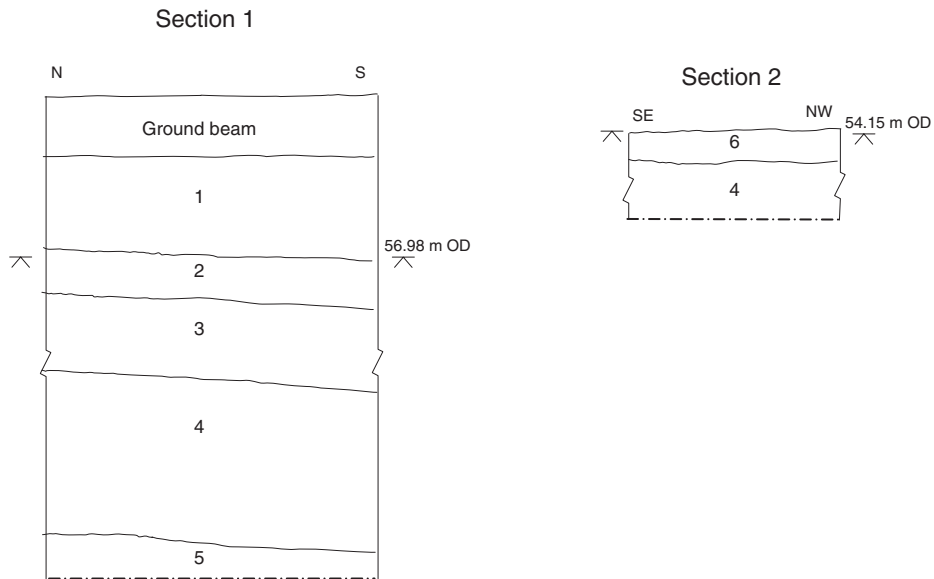


Figure 4: Sections

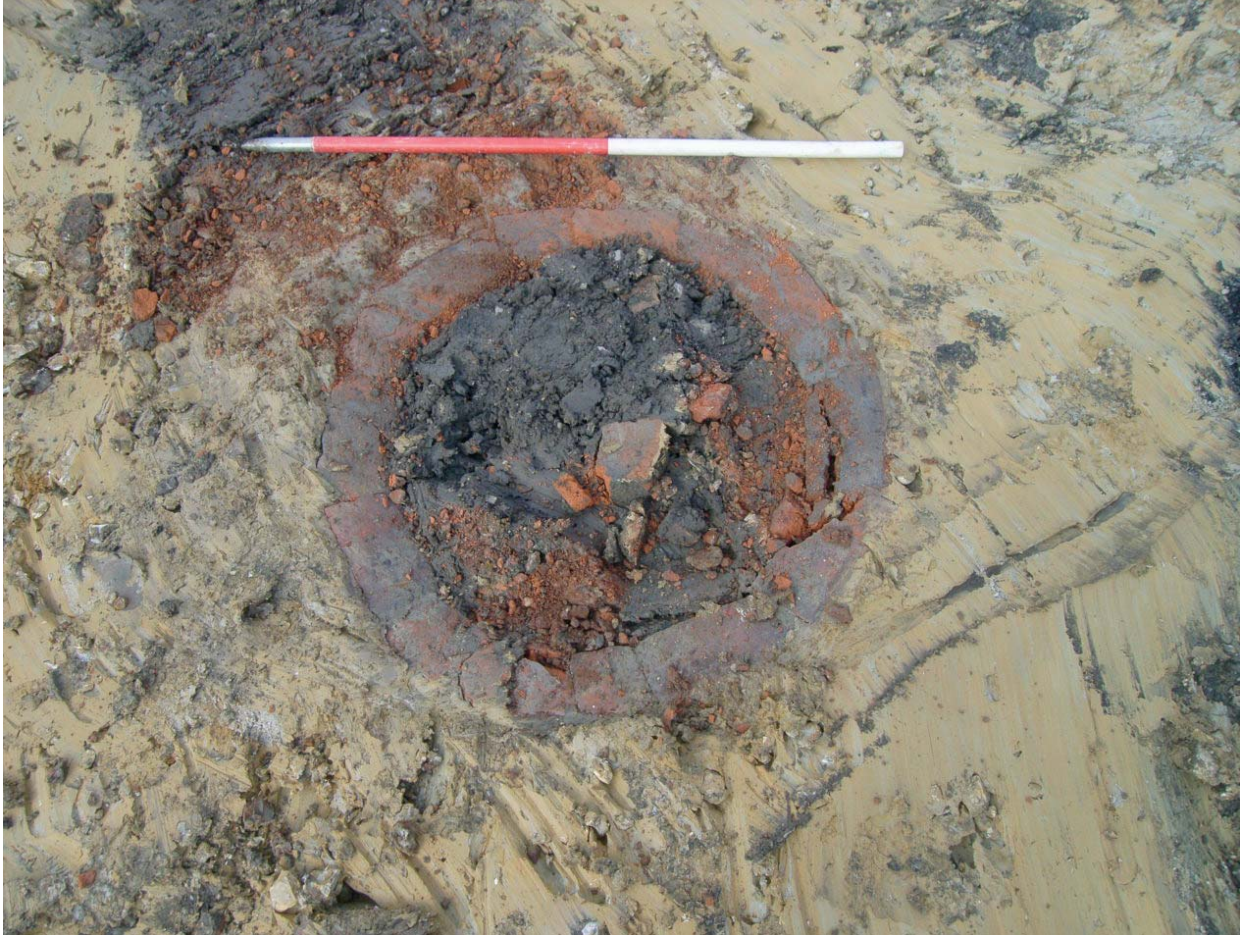


Plate 1: Well 10



Plate 2: Well 13



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