

Tesco Stores Shepton Mallett Somerset



Archaeological Evaluation Report



April 2006



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TESCO STORES, SHEPTON MALLET, SOMERSET**NGR 361610 143295*****ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT*****CONTENTS**

Summary	1
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Location and scope of work	1
1.2 Geology and topography	1
1.3 Archaeological background.....	2
2 Evaluation Aims	2
3 Evaluation Methodology	2
3.1 Scope of fieldwork	2
3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording	3
3.3 Finds	3
3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence	3
3.5 Presentation of results.....	3
4 Results: Descriptions	3
4.1 Description of deposits	3
5 Discussion and Interpretation	6
5.1 Reliability of field investigation.....	6
5.2 Overall interpretation.....	6
Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory.....	8
Appendix 2 Bibliography and References.....	10
Appendix 3 Summary of Site Details.....	10

LIST OF FIGURES

- Fig. 1 Site location
Fig. 2 Site detail and location of trenches
Fig. 3 Trench 1, plan and section
Fig. 4 Trench 9, plan and section

SUMMARY

In March 2006 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at the proposed Tesco Stores, Shepton Mallet, Somerset on behalf of CgMs Consulting. Seven of the nine evaluation trenches were empty of archaeological features. One trench contained the remains of concrete foundations of a possible nearby 19th industrial building and another revealed the remains of probable 18th or 19th century cellar walls.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In March 2006 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at the proposed Tesco Stores, Shepton Mallet, Somerset (Fig.1), on behalf of CgMs Consulting. This work was required to be undertaken prior to commencement of development in line with condition 53 of the schedule of conditions attached to planning permission 118085/001 granted for development by Mendip District Council. The proposed development area comprises approximately 5.7 hectares.

1.1.2 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was produced by OA outlining the procedures to investigate and identify, within the constraints of the evaluation, the date, character, condition, significance, quality and depth of any surviving remains. The WSI proposed 9 trial trenches measuring between 15 m to 25 m in length by 1.80 m in width.

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The development area comprises approximately 5.7 hectares to the south of Shepton Mallet town centre. The town itself is situated on a level plateau that runs west flanking the southern edge of the Mendip Hills. The site lies at approximately 144 m above Ordnance Datum (OD), however its internal topography has been affected by its separate ownerships that has seen the two halves of the site (Griggs and Huntsman) developed for different purposes. The southern boundary of the Huntsman Site (west) lies approximately 3 m higher than its northern boundary. Whilst the topography surrounding the site indicates it would have originally been gently sloping, ground reduction of approximately 1.5m – 2m has occurred across the area to create a level surface. This was probably undertaken prior to the construction of the factory. The Griggs Site (east) also has a level topography, however this remains contiguous with that of the ground surface surrounding the site suggesting little previous truncation.

1.2.2 The solid geology of the area is dominated by hard grey-white fossiliferous Lower Lias limestone of the Jurassic, which is occasionally interspersed with grey-green clay and mudstone, and that gives rise to free draining alkaline brown earth soils.

1.3 Archaeological background

1.3.1 A full and detailed description is contained in the Wessex Archaeology desktop study (Wessex Archaeology 2004) which is summarised here.

1.3.2 The Somerset Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) holds information relating to all known archaeological and historical sites in the area. There are no known archaeological sites dated to the Prehistoric, Roman or Medieval periods from within the development area, however it does contain part of the former site of the Victorian Summerleaze House and its associated outbuildings and landscaped gardens. These are defined as being an Area of High Archaeological Potential in the Mendip District Council Local Plan.

1.3.3 Beyond the area of the site itself Prehistoric and Romano-British sites are recorded. These comprise a possible Neolithic long barrow, a Bronze Age cist burial, the recovery of Iron Age pottery, two Roman findspots and the site of five Roman pottery kilns. In the wider landscape Iron Age and Roman settlement is also known. A low to moderate potential for these periods has been identified for the development area.

1.3.4 Little evidence of early medieval occupation activity is known in the area and later medieval activity appears to be focused within the core of the historic town which lies to the north of the development area. The area occupied by the site at this time is referred to as 'Townsend' suggesting that it lay on the periphery of the urban settlement. A low potential for these periods is identified, although a moderate potential may exist for features associated with agricultural use.

1.3.5 Cartographic evidence from the 18th century onwards indicates that Summerleaze House, its associated outbuildings and gardens and Summerleaze Park occupied the western extent of the development area (Huntsman Site). The former location of the house and grounds correspond today with the area of grassland and car parking.

2 EVALUATION AIMS

2.1. The aims of the evaluation were:

- To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the proposed area.
- To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present.
- To establish the exigency for a mitigation strategy.
- To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features.
- To make available the results of the investigation.
- To define any relevant research priorities if additional archaeological investigation proves necessary.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork

3.1.1 During the evaluation 9 trenches were excavated (Fig. 2) under close archaeological supervision using a JCB fitted with a 1.50 m toothless bucket. All trenches measured between 15 m and 25 m in length. The only exception to this was Trench 6, which was 5 m in length because recently felled large trees were lying across most of the area to be opened.

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

3.2.1 The evaluation trenches were machined under close archaeological supervision to the top of the first archaeological horizon or the natural geology, whichever was encountered first. Excavation of features and deposits was undertaken by hand.

3.2.2 All features and deposits uncovered in the evaluation were issued with a unique context number. Context recording followed procedures set out in the *OA Fieldwork Manual* (1992). Trenches were drawn at a scale of 1:50, which was appropriate for the level of archaeological remains encountered, and section drawings were drawn at a scale of 1:20. Trenches and features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film.

3.3 Finds

3.3.1 No finds were recovered during the course of the evaluation.

3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence

3.4.1 No deposits suitable for paleo-environmental sampling were identified during the evaluation.

3.5 Presentation of results

3.5.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below with the stratigraphic accounts of each trench described individually, followed by an overall discussion and interpretation.

4 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

4.1 Description of deposits

Trench 1 (Fig. 3)

4.1.1 Trench 1 was located in the Griggs site, it was orientated NE-SW and it measured 15 m x 1.5 m.

4.1.2 The earliest deposit found in this trench was a mid brown yellow silty clay with frequent large size limestone block inclusions, this deposit was interpreted as natural (106), and it was reached at a depth of 0.6 m below the floor level.

4.1.3 At the centre of the trench and cutting through 106 was a modern pit (104), measuring 2.05 m in diameter x 0.90 m which was circular in plan, although only half of it was uncovered. It continued beyond the east edge of the trench, it had a gentle break of slope and gentle sides, ending in a flat base. Pit fill 104 was a mid yellow brown silt

with occasional tarmac fragment inclusions (105). The average thickness of this deposit was 0.2 m.

- 4.1.4 Above 105 was a 0.54 m thick mid to dark clayey silt with very frequent large irregular shaped limestone blocks (103). Above it was a mid orange red crushed brick tarmac bedding layer (102). The average thickness of this deposit was 0.05m. Finally, above 102 and sealing the trench was a layer of tarmac (101) up to 0.1m thick.

Trench 2

- 4.1.5 Trench 2 was located in the Griggs site, Orientated N NW-S SE, it measured 20 m x 1.5 m and it reached a maximum depth of 0.55 m below ground level.
- 4.1.6 The earliest deposit found in this trench was a mid brown yellow clayey silt with very frequent medium size limestone block inclusions (204). This deposit was interpreted as natural and it was reached at 0.55 m below ground level.
- 4.1.7 Above 204 was a mid yellow brown silt with occasional medium size irregular shaped limestone block inclusions (203). This was possibly redeposited natural make up.
- 4.1.8 Above 203 was a mid red orange crushed brick and sand make up layer (202), the average thickness of this deposit was 0.2 m and it was possibly a foundation for the above layer. Above it was a layer of tarmac (201). No archaeological features or deposits were encountered.

Trench 3

- 4.1.9 Trench 3 was located in the Griggs site. Orientated NW-SE, it measured 15 m x 1.5 m and it reached a maximum depth of 0.65 m below ground level.
- 4.1.10 The earliest deposit found in this trench was a mid brown yellow clayey silt with very frequent medium size limestone block inclusions (303). This deposit was interpreted as natural and it was reached at 0.65 m below ground level.
- 4.1.11 Above 303 was a mid yellow brown silt with occasional medium size irregular shaped limestone block inclusions (302). This was possibly redeposited natural within this area.
- 4.1.12 Above 302 and sealing the trench was a mid grey brown clayey silt with frequent small size limestone block inclusions (301). The average thickness of this deposit was 0.2 m. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered.

Trench 4

- 4.1.13 Trench 4 was orientated NE-SW. Located in the Griggs site, it measured 20 m x 1.5 m and it reached a maximum depth of 0.7 m below ground level.
- 4.1.14 Natural (406) was found at 0.7 m below ground level. This was a mid brown yellow silty clay with occasional limestone fragment inclusions.

- 4.1.15 Above 406 was a mid brown grey clayey silt with a moderate amount of medium size limestone block inclusions (405). Sealing 405 was a layer of tarmac (404).
- 4.1.16 Above 404 and sealing it was a thick layer of mid brown grey clayey silt (403). Above it was a layer of crushed bricks (402), possibly a foundation for the above layer. Finally, above 402 and sealing the trench was a layer of tarmac (401). No archaeological features or deposits were encountered.

Trench 5

- 4.1.17 Trench 5 was orientated NE-SW, it was located in the Griggs site, it measured 25 m x 1.5 m and it reached a maximum depth of 0.3 m below ground level.
- 4.1.18 Natural (504) was encountered at 0.3 m below ground level. This was a mid brown yellow clayey silt with very frequent limestone fragment inclusions.
- 4.1.19 Above 504 was a mid brown grey clayey silt (503). This was possibly buried topsoil. Above it was a mid orange red crushed brick deposit (502), a foundation for the above layer. Above it and sealing the trench was a layer of tarmac (501). No archaeological features or deposits were encountered.

Trench 6

- 4.1.20 Trench 6 was located in the Griggs site, it was orientated E-W, it measured 5 m x 1.5 m and it reached a maximum depth of 0.4 m below ground level.
- 4.1.21 The earliest deposit found in this trench was a mid brown-yellow clayey silt with occasional limestone fragment inclusions (605). This represents the natural geology.
- 4.1.22 Above 605 was a mid yellowish brown clayey silt with occasional tarmac fragment inclusions (604), this was possibly buried topsoil.
- 4.1.23 Above 604 was a mid grey brown clayey silt with occasional tarmac fragment inclusions (605), this was possibly another buried topsoil. Above it was a crushed brick tarmac foundation (602). Finally above it and sealing the trench was a layer of tarmac (601). No archaeological features or deposits were encountered.

Trench 7

- 4.1.24 Trench 7 was also located in the Griggs site, it was orientated NE-SW, it measured 25 m x 1.5 m and it reached a maximum depth of 0.4 m below ground level.
- 4.1.25 A layer of buried subsoil (704), sealed by buried topsoil (703) was encountered at 0.3 m below ground level. Overlying 703 was a crushed brick made up ground (702) and above it, and sealing the trench, was a layer of tarmac (701). No archaeological features or deposits were encountered.

Trench 8

- 4.1.26 Trench 8 was orientated E NE-W SW, it was located in the Huntsman site. It measured 25 m x 1.5 m and it reached a maximum depth of 0.65 m below ground level.
- 4.1.27 In this trench a layer of rubble (806) was sealed by a layer of buried topsoil (807). Above it was a layer of crushed brick (805). A thin layer of redeposited natural (804) was laid over this with another rubble layer above (803). A modern crushed brick made up ground (802) and tarmac (801) was laid over this. As with Trench 7, Natural was composed by limestone blocks mixed with clay silt (808) encountered at 0.65 m below ground level. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered.

Trench 9 (Fig. 4)

- 4.1.28 Trench 9 was orientated E SE-W NW, it was also located in the Huntsman site, it measured 25 m x 1.5 m and it reached a maximum depth of 0.45 m below ground level.
- 4.1.29 Natural (906) was a mix of limestone blocks mixed with clay silt, and it was reached at a depth of 0.45 m below ground level. Two walls (907 and 908) and a concrete floor (910) were located in the western end forming a cellar. Wall 908 was made of limestone blocks bonded with hard grey mortar, it was aligned E-W and it measured 1.50 x 0.40 m. Butted to it was Wall 907, also made of limestone blocks with some later brick patches. It was 2.30 m long and was aligned N-S. Grey mortar was used as bonding material. Above floor 910 and to the centre of the cellar was a brick wall (909), it measured 0.70 m x 0.15 m and it was aligned N-S. This wall post-dates the cellar construction and may indicate changes in the use of the building.
- 4.1.30 Above 909, and filling the cellar was a deposit of building rubble (905). Above it was a silty clay redeposited topsoil (904). Sealing this was a layer of greyish red crushed bricks (903). Finally another modern layer of red crushed bricks (902) and tarmac sealed the trench.

5 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 5.1.1 The percentage sample of the site, the location of the trenches and the consistent results, gives high reliability to the interpretation of the part of the site that we had access to. The results may not necessarily reflect the archaeological potential of the areas occupied by existing buildings or where access was unavailable.

5.2 Overall interpretation

- 5.2.1 The evaluation produced no evidence of activity prior to the 18th or 19th century within the footprint of the proposed new developments.
- 5.2.2 The limestone and bricks walls and concrete floor within Trench 9 are the structural remains of a cellar building, probably 18th, 19th or early 20th century. Whilst no dating evidence was found in the trench, it is possible that the cellar could form part

of the 18th century Summerleaze House and associated buildings. The House and a number of outbuildings were located in this area on the northern boundary of the Huntsman site, according to cartographic evidence from the 18th century onwards. There are some upstanding remains of outbuildings in the north-west part of the development site.

- 5.2.3 The remains of concrete foundations in Trench 4 may indicate the location of a former industrial building to the west of this trench. No other archaeological deposits or features were identified during the evaluation.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Ctxt No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Thick. (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i> Finds</i>	<i>No./ wt</i>	<i>Date</i>
1								
	101	Layer		0.1 m	Tarmac			C20th
	102	Layer		0.05 m	Brick rubble			C20th
	103	Layer		0.45 m	Made ground			C20th
	104	Cut	2.05 m	-	Pit			C20th
	105	Layer		0.2 m	Fill of pit 104			C20th
	106	Layer		-	Natural			-
2								
	201	Layer		0.15 m	Tarmac			C20th
	202	Layer		0.2 m	Brick rubble			C20th
	203	Layer		0.2 m	Redeposited natural make up			C20th
	204	Layer		-	Natural			-
3								
	301	Layer		0.2 m	Topsoil			C20th
	302	Layer		0.45 m	Made Ground			-
	303	Layer		-	Natural			-
4								
	401	Layer		0.1 m	Tarmac			C20th
	402	Layer		0.05 m	Brick rubble			C20th
	403	Layer		0.1 m	Made ground			C20th
	404	Layer		0.1 m	Tarmac			C20th
	405	Layer		0.15 m	Buried soil			-
	406	Layer		-	Natural			-
5								
	501	Layer		0.1 m	Tarmac			C20th
	502	Layer		0.1 m	Brick rubble			C20th
	503	Layer		0.1 m	Buried soil			-
	504	Layer		-	Natural			-

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Ctxt No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Thick. (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i> Finds</i>	<i>No./ wt</i>	<i>Date</i>
6								
	601	Layer		0.1 m	Tarmac			C20th
	602	Layer		0.1 m	Brick rubble			C20th
	603	Layer		0.1 m	Buried soil			-
	604	Layer		0.1 m	Buried soil			-
	605	Layer		-	Natural			-
7								
	701	Layer		0.1 m	Tarmac			C20th
	702	Layer		0.1 m	Brick rubble			C20th
	703	Layer		0.1 m	Buried soil			-
	704	Layer		0.1 m	Buried soil			-
	705	Layer		-	Natural			-
8								
	801	Layer		-	Tarmac			C20th
	802	Layer		-	Brick rubble			C20th
	803	Layer		-	Made ground			-
	804	Layer		-	Redeposited natural			-
	805	Layer		-	Brick rubble			-
	806	Layer		-	Made ground			-
	807	Layer		-	Buried soil			-
9								
	901	Layer		-	Tarmac			C20th
	902	Layer		-	Brick rubble			C20th
	903	Layer		-	Brick rubble			C20th
	904	Layer		-	Redeposited topsoil			-
	905	Layer		-	Backfill of cellar			-
	906	Layer		-	Natural			-
	907	Structure		-	Cellar wall			? C19th
	908	Structure		-	Cellar wall			? C19th
	909	Structure		-	Cellar wall			? C19th
	910	Structure		-	Cellar floor			? C19th

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

CgMs Consulting, January 2006, *Specification for Archaeological Evaluation. Tesco Stores, Shepton Mallet, Somerset.*

Oxford Archaeology, 1992, *Archaeological Fieldwork Manual (ed. D. Wilkinson)*

Wessex Archaeology, 2004, *Tesco Stores, Shepton Mallet, Somerset. Desk-based Assessment.*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: TESCO STORES, SHEPTON MALLET, SOMERSET

Site code: TTNCM-4/2006

Grid reference: NGR 361610 143295

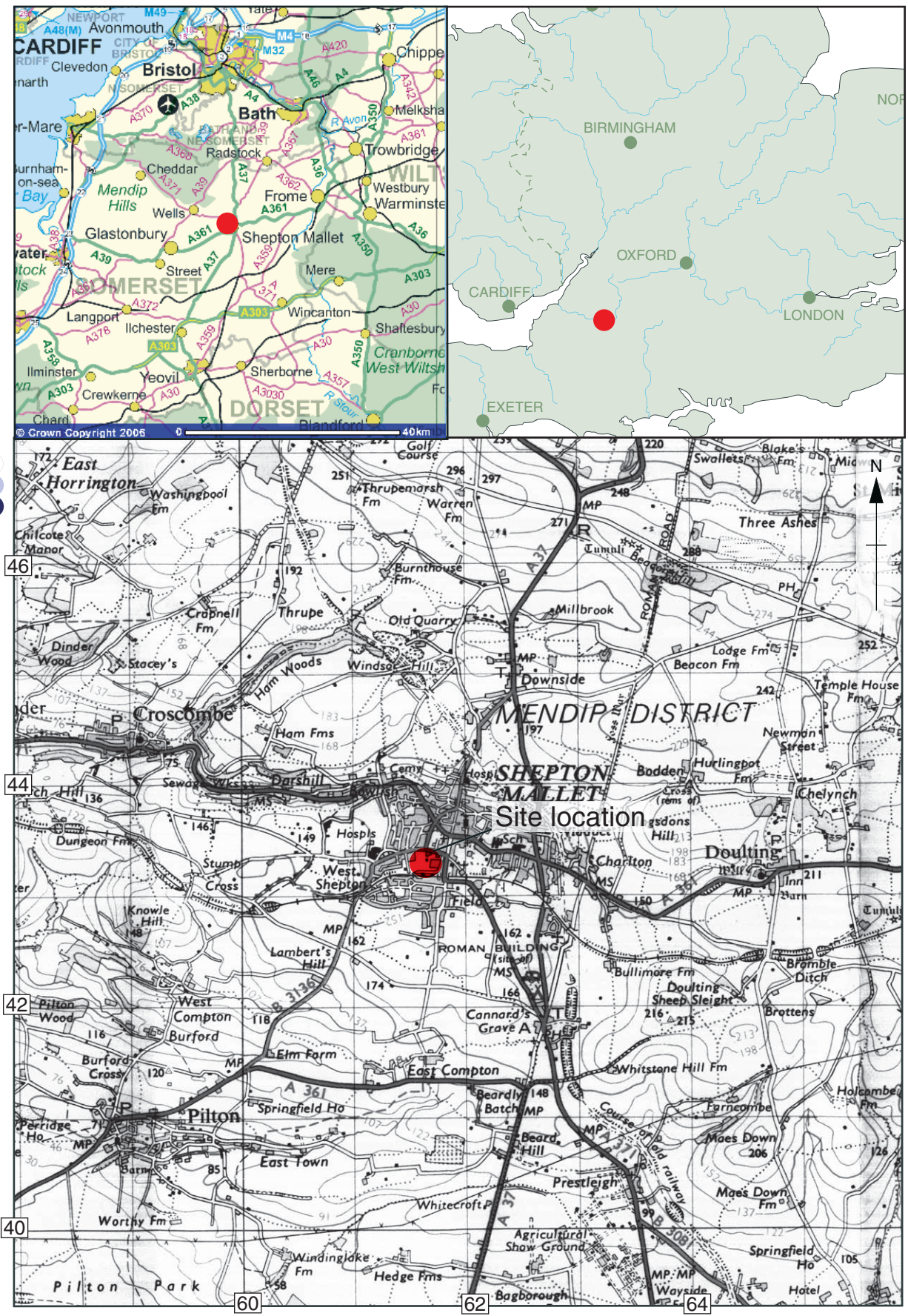
Type of evaluation: Nine 30 m trenches

Date and duration of project: 13-17th March 2006

Area of site: 5.7 hectares

Summary of results: In March 2006 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at the proposed Tesco Stores, Shepton Mallet, Somerset on behalf of CgMs Consulting. Seven of the nine evaluation trenches were empty of archaeological features. One trench contained the remains of concrete foundations of a possible Industrial building and another revealed the remains of 18th or 19th century cellar walls.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course, under the following accession number: TTNCM-4/2006



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Figure 1: Site location

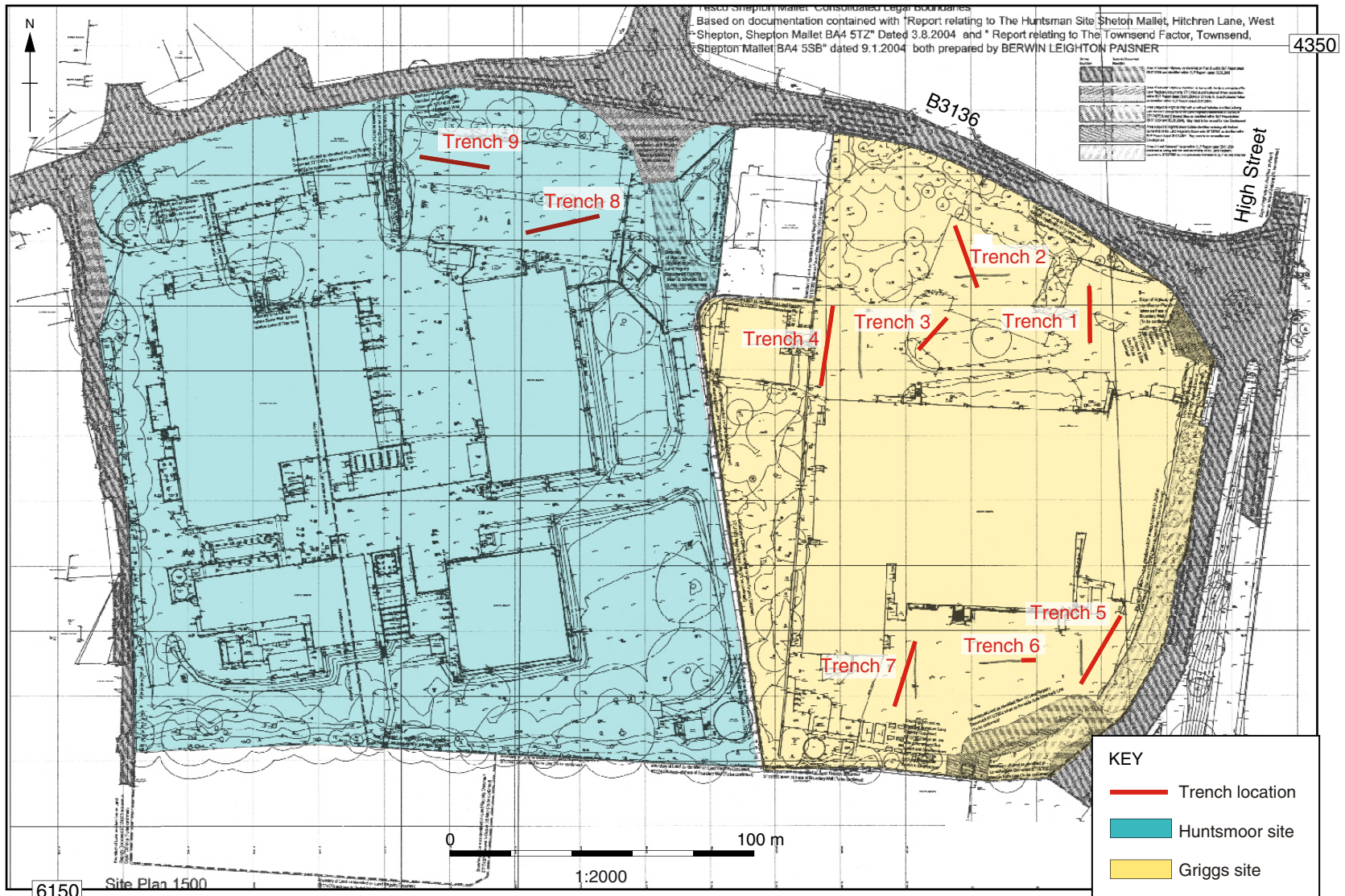
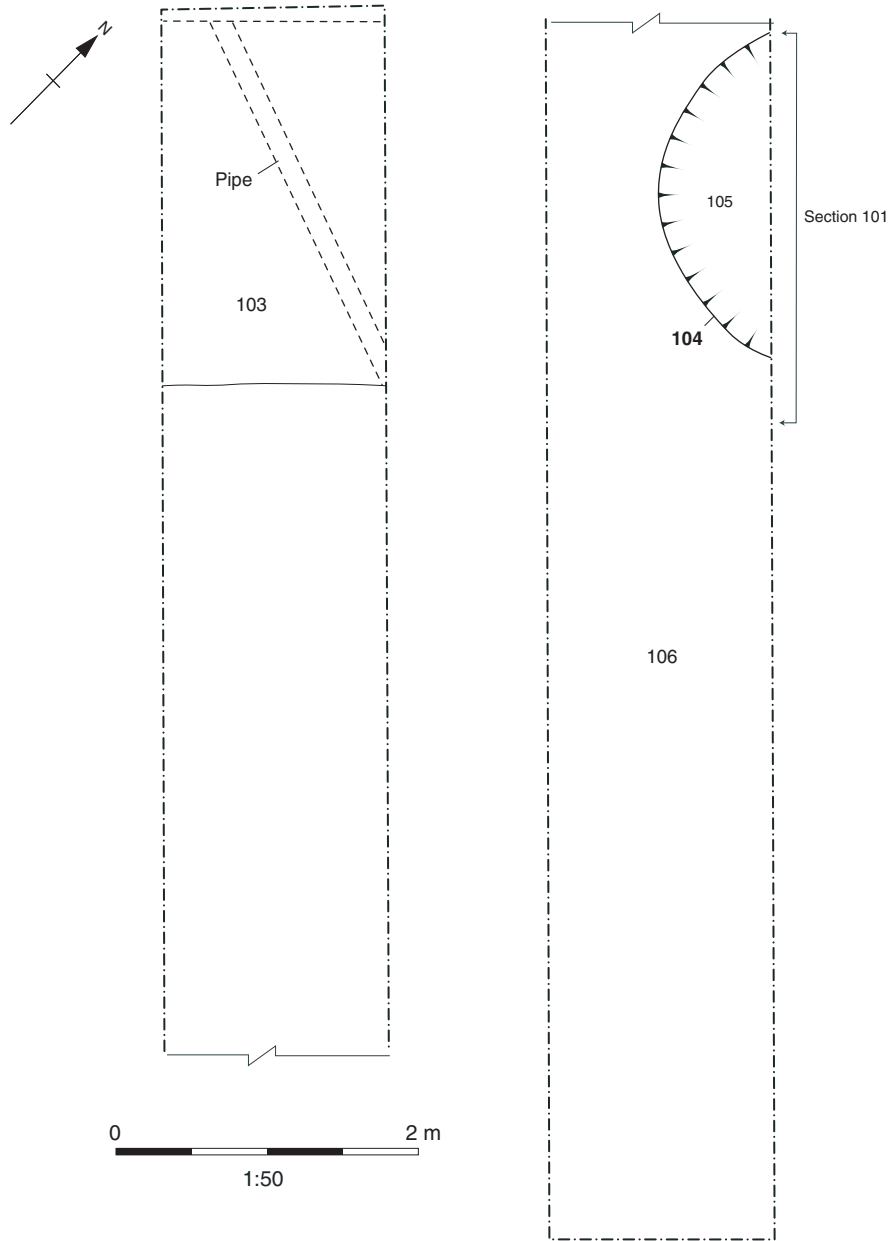


Figure 2: Site detail and location of trenches

Plan



Section 101

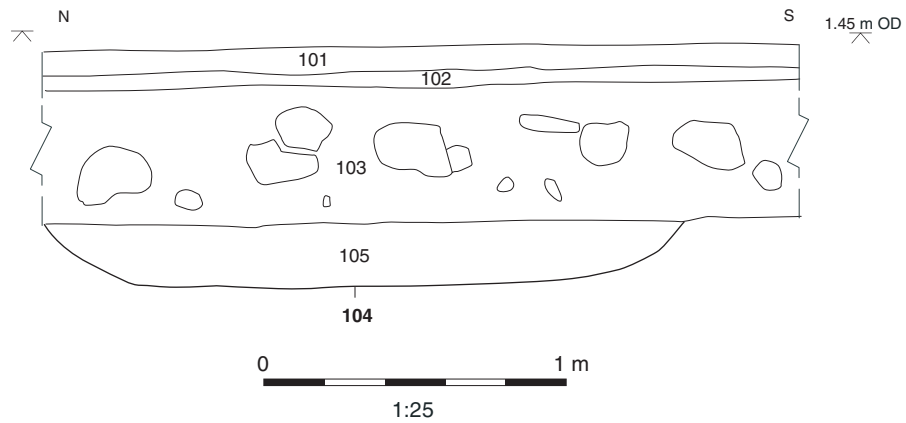


Figure 3: Trench 1, plan and section

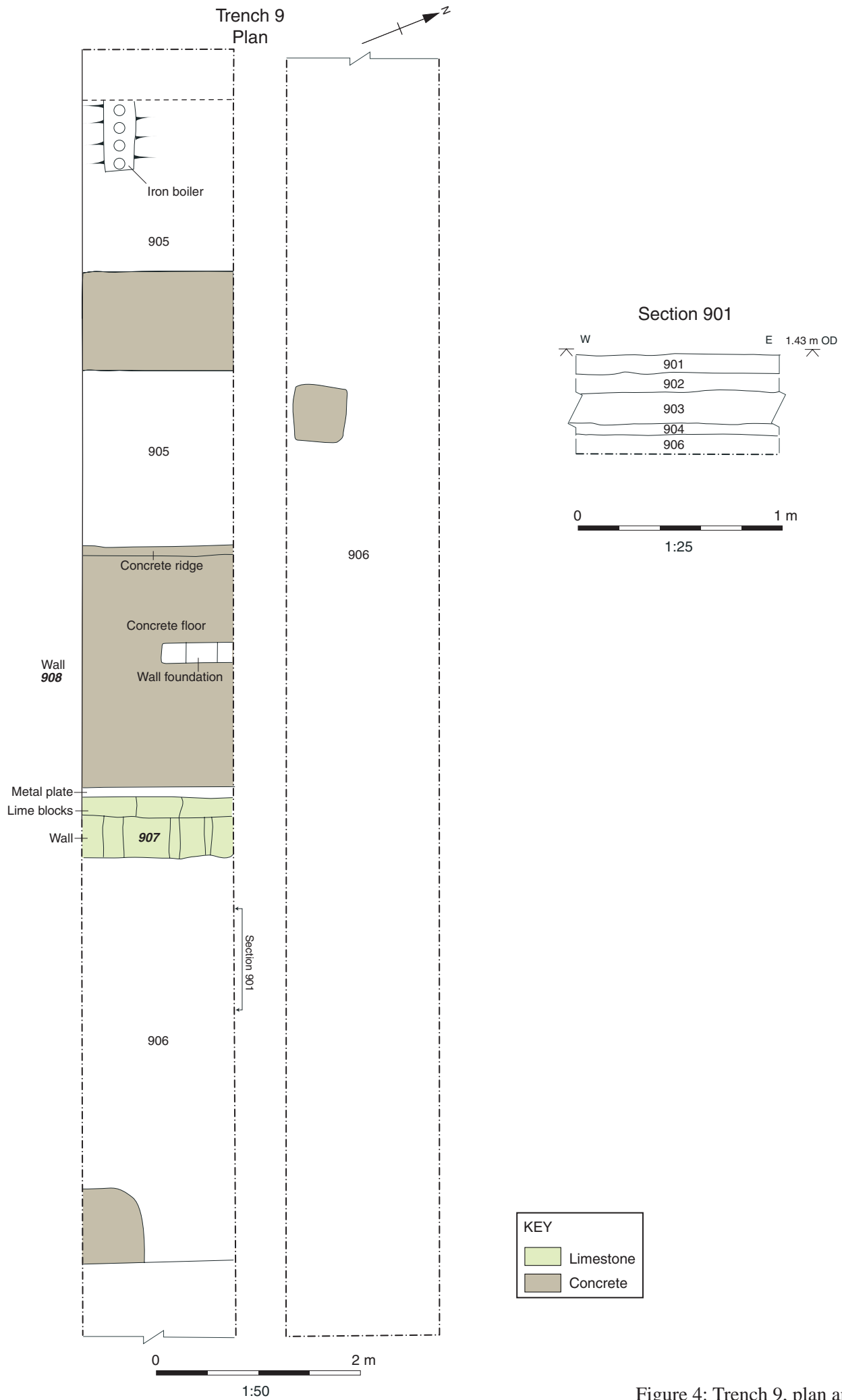


Figure 4: Trench 9, plan and section



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