

Winters Garage Church Road Penn Buckinghamshire



Archaeological Evaluation Report



April 2008

Client: Mr Tim Winter

Issue No: 1

OA Job No: 3944

NGR: SU 9084 9341

Client Name: Mr Tim Winter
Client Ref No:
Document Title: Winters Garage, Church Road, Penn, Buckinghamshire

Document Type: Evaluation

Issue Number: 1

National Grid Reference: NGR SU 9084 9341
Planning Reference:

OA Job Number: 3944
Site Code: PENWIG 08
Invoice Code: PENWIGEV
Receiving Museum: Buckinghamshire County Museum Service
Museum Accession No: TBC

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Date: 9th April 2008

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Date: 14th April 2008

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Date: 14th April 2008

Document File Location W:\PROJECTS|Buckinghamshire BU\Wycome WY\8352
Winters Garage EV\evREP.doc
Graphics File Location Servergo:/oaupubs
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Church Road, Penn, Buckinghamshire*GS*11.03.08
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Winters Garage, Church Road, Penn, Buckinghamshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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SUMMARY

In March 2008 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at Winters Garage, Church Road, Penn, Buckinghamshire (NGR SU 9084 9341) on behalf of Mr Tim Winter. The evaluation revealed a quarry pit from the late medieval/early post-medieval period sealed below a thick cultivated garden soil.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

1.1.1 In March 2008 OA carried out a field evaluation at Winters Garage, Church Road, Penn, Buckinghamshire (NGR: SU 9084 9341) on behalf of Mr Tim Winter in respect of a pre-planning application for redevelopment on the site. An archaeological brief was set by David Radford of Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (BCAS 2008) and Oxford Archaeology produced a WSI on how it would meet the brief (OA 2008).

1.2 Location, geology and topography

1.2.1 The village of Penn is located approximately 5 km east of the town of High Wycombe (Fig. 1). The application site is on the north side of Church Road, and is a former garage with a workshop at rear and fuel pumps in forecourt fronting onto Church Road at approximately 169 m OD. The underlying geology is pebbly clay and sand over chalk including red chalk (BGS, 1979).

1.3 Archaeological background

1.3.1 The archaeological background to the evaluation was prepared for the WSI for the project (OA 2008) and is reproduced below. The site itself has produced limited archaeological evidence. There are several known sites with archaeological remains adjacent to the development site.

1.3.2 Penn forms an elongated 'ribbon-like' tail to High Wycombe and merges at its north end with Tyler's Green. Penn's origins lie in the medieval period and it is first recorded in the 13th century.

1.3.3 By the 14th century Penn had become famous for its production of floor tiles (Pevsner, Sherwood and Williamson, 1994, 594). The industry supplied high status sites such as Windsor Castle and the Palace of Westminster (Hohler, 1941).

1.3.4 Artefactual evidence recovered in the vicinity of this development site suggests that the main focus of the industry was situated near the junction of Beacon Hill, Stumpwell Lane and Church Road. Finds from here include roof tiles and decorated floor tiles (CAS reference numbers 4244-6 incl; 4761; 5156). A probable tile kiln is known near to this development site (CAS 4244).

- 1.3.5 A summary of finds relating to the tile industry in Penn has previously been compiled (Green, 2003). The compiler also noted tile fragments in the garden of Beam End Cottage.
- 1.3.6 The nearby Church of the Holy Trinity has a west tower of early 14th century date with additions to the roof and porch in the 15th century. Church Road is flanked by several fine gabled buildings dating after the turn of the 18th century (Pevsner, Sherwood and Williamson, 1994, 594-6).

2 EVALUATION AIMS

- 2.1.1 To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the proposed development area, in particular, deposits and structures relating to medieval or post-medieval kilns.
- 2.1.2 To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present, specifically evidence directly associated with the area of tile manufacture.
- 2.1.3 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features.
- 2.1.4 To signal, before the destruction of the material in question, the discovery of a significant archaeological find, for which the resources allocated were not sufficient to support a treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.
- 2.1.5 To make available the results of the investigation

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork

- 3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of two trenches. The first was north-west to south-east in front of the garage and measured 6 m long x 1.8 m wide x 0.6 m deep. The second was an L shape along the south-east and south-west boundaries of the site. This was sited to avoid the fuel tanks in front of the garage. The trench measured 21 m long x 1.8 m wide x 1.2 m in depth (Fig. 2). The overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision by a JCB mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket.

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

- 3.2.1 The trenches were cleaned by hand and the revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds and environmental samples. All the trenches and any archaeological features revealed were planned at a scale of 1:100 and where excavated their sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20. All trenches, features and recorded sections were photographed using colour slide and black and

white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OA Field Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

4 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

4.1 Description of deposits

Trench 1

- 4.1.1 This trench was situated in front of the garage workshop and measured 6 m x 1.8 m x 0.6 m and was excavated to the top of the natural of light reddish brown clay with patches of flinty gravel (4) (Fig. 4, Section 1). Sealing this was a 0.4 m thick light reddish-brown silty clay loam (3), a probable subsoil. This had been cut by a root hole (5) of irregular shape, measuring 1 m x 0.54 m x 0.14 m and filled with a reddish brown silty clay loam (6). Sealing this was 0.2 m thick very dark grey-brown silty clay loam (2) topsoil below a 0.10 m thick concrete surface (1) of the garage.

Trench 2

- 4.1.2 This trench was “L” shaped along the SE boundary and SW front boundary and measured 21 m x 1.8 m x 1.2 m. It was excavated onto the natural of light yellowish brown clay (21) with patches of flinty gravel and was sealed below a 0.1 m thick light reddish brown silty clay loam (3) subsoil. The subsoil had been cut by a number of features. In the NE to SW leg of the trench a sub-circular root hole (27) with irregular sides and base was partly exposed (Fig. 4, Section 3). It measured 2 m x 0.4 m x 0.35 m and was filled by a dark reddish brown silty clay loam (28). In the SW leg of the trench part of a large feature (20) was exposed, teardrop in shape and aligned NW to SE (Fig. 3, Trench 2). The narrow neck was observed in the SE arm of the trench and broadening out into the SW arm of the trench with a shallow sloping side, the base was not exposed in the trench as it went beyond the safe depth of the trench. The feature was identified as a probable quarry pit.
- 4.1.3 This feature was filled by a series of deposits. Sealing part of the base of the feature was a compact dark yellowish brown clay (32) with chalk fragments, 0.25 m in depth (Fig. 4, Section 2), elsewhere the base was filled with a 0.5 m deep layer of dark yellowish brown clay with chalk fragments (Fig. 4, Section 4). Both these deposits produced tile fragments dating to the late medieval to early post-medieval periods. They were overlaid by a 0.28 m thick light grey brown silty clay (31) which produced tile, glass and pottery fragments dating to the 15th and 16th centuries. Layer 31 also contained a thin lens of a very dark grey brown silty clay (34) containing tile and pottery fragments which were also dated to the 15th and 16th centuries. Sealing all these deposits was a 0.35 m thick cultivated garden soil of a very dark grey-brown silty clay loam (22). This probably originates from when the site was a kitchen garden prior to the garage being built in the 1950s.

- 4.1.4 Sealing Layer 22 was a 0.25 m thick compact layer of brick, tile and rubble material (29) making up the base for the garage forecourt area. This was sealed below a 0.10 m thick concrete surface (30) with a 0.05 m tarmac topping.

4.2 Finds

- 4.2.1 Fragments of roofing tile, pottery, glazed floor tile and glass were recovered during the course of the watching brief. All the finds were collected during the excavation of Trench 2. These finds have been reported on separately in Appendix 2, and any relevant dates have been inserted into the report text.

4.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 4.3.1 No environmental samples were taken during the course of evaluation.

5 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

- 5.1.1 The two evaluation trenches only revealed three features, all sealed below thick cultivated garden topsoil from when the site was the kitchen garden for 'Hampdens', the house next door. The garden was divided up and sold off during the 1930s. The features in the trenches included two root holes (one in each trench), probably from small trees or shrubs in the garden or the field pre-dating the house. A large feature was partly exposed in Trench 2 and this is thought to be a quarry pit. The date of the recovered finds suggest that it may have been dug between the 14th and 15th-centuries. This feature, along with a further group of quarry pits along the north side of Church Road, and a clay pit opposite the present site, would be consistent with activity related to the tile making industry, and this is supported by the quantities of tile fragments in the backfill.
- 5.1.2 While this may imply a production site nearby, it may be nothing more than the dumping of industrial waste material into an existing quarry hole. Similar evidence has been found elsewhere in the village.
- 5.1.3 Sealing the quarry pit was a thick layer of material dating to the 19th-century, which formed a levelling deposit filling the quarry pit when the 'Hampdens' house was built in 1906. This suggests that the pit was open for a period of time and had been partially filled with rubbish material until the area was developed with new buildings along Church Road in the early 20th century.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Ctxt No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Thick. (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
Trench 1						
1	Layer	-	0.10 m	Concrete surface	-	C20th
2	Layer	-	0.20 m	Garden topsoil	-	C19th/ C20th
3	Layer	-	0.40 m	Sub soil	-	-
4	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
5	Cut	0.60 m	0.26 m	Root hole	-	-
6	Fill	-	-	Fill of root hole	-	-
Trench 2						
20	Cut	-	-	Quarry pit	-	Post-medieval, C15th ?
21	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	C19th/ C20th
22	Layer	-	0.30	Garden topsoil	-	-
23	Layer	-	0.10 m	Sub soil	-	-
26	Cut	-	1 m	Modern cut for fuel tanks	-	C20th
27	Cut	0.40 m	0.36 m	Root hole	-	-
28	Fill	-	-	Fill of root hole	-	-
29	Layer	-	0.25 m	Make up	-	C20th
30	Layer	-	0.15 m	Concrete and tarmac surface	-	C20th
31	Fill	-	0.30 m	Fill of 20	Roof tile, glazed floor tile and pottery	C15th/ C16th
32	Fill	-	0.28 m	Fill of 20	Glass and stoneware pottery	C19th
33	Fill	-	0.50 m	Fill of 20	Roof tile	C13th/ C16th
34	Fill	-	0.18 m	Fill of 20	Pottery and bone	C15th/ C16th

APPENDIX 2 FINDS ASSESSMENTS**Assessment of the ceramic building material from Winter's Garage, Penn, Bucks.***by John Cotter**Introduction and methodology*

A total of 27 pieces of ceramic building material (CBM) weighing 3.922 kg. was recovered from 2 contexts (31 and 33). A full Excel catalogue of this has been compiled. This records per context quantification details (fragment count and weight) by broad type categories with measurements of all complete and substantially complete dimensions together with descriptive comments. Full details remain with the site archive. Fabric analysis has only been attempted for significant items and not for the assemblage as a whole. All the CBM appears to be medieval in date.

Date and nature of the assemblage

Although fragmentary most of the pieces are large and fresh. One or two pieces, including the glazed floor tiles, show moderate post-deposition wear or abrasion. Several tiles (roof and floor) are clearly wasters while some roof tiles bear traces of white mortar indicating use. It may therefore be a mixture of domestic and industrial refuse. Individual pieces are described in detail in the catalogue and are summarised below.

Floor tile

Seven pieces (1690 g.) have been identified as types of medieval floor tile. These, however, include two joining pieces of tile from context (31) which are quite different from the others in being much thicker (37 mm.), larger, cruder and unglazed. This is possibly some sort of 'quarry' tile - a much plainer, larger type of paving tile popular in the late medieval and post-medieval periods - or it may be a specialised brick/tile derived from a kiln structure. The other five pieces are typical glazed medieval floor tiles. Four of these (context 31) are decorated while the fifth piece (context 33) is a lump formed from three plain tile wasters fused together.

The four decorated floor tile fragments from context (31) are mostly in a sandy light orange fabric with shallow 'printed' designs in white slip under a clear glaze. Some are corner fragments but no full dimensions survive except on two pieces which have measurable thicknesses of 18 mm. and 21 mm. The sides of the square tiles are characteristically bevelled. Although fragmentary, the character of the tiles and their slip designs are recognisable as products of the important local Penn decorated floor tile industry which flourished between c 1330 and 1380 and which supplied royal palaces such as Windsor Castle and the Tower of London (Green 2003). One of the tiles has a 'gyronny' design (a sort of chequerboard design derived from heraldry) while two others are just about recognisable as having central roundels and either corner roundels or quatrefoils typical of the Penn series of repeating pattern tiles. The largest piece has a broad stacking mark along one side of its upper surface caused by another tile stacked upon it edge-on in the kiln. This piece is somewhat overfired and may well be a waster. The split or spalled-off undersides of two other pieces suggests that these might be wasters too, although this is much less certain. None of the four pieces exhibits significant use-wear.

The fused lump of three waster floor tiles from context (33) is the most convincing evidence of medieval floor tile production in the vicinity - if any were needed. This represents a stack of three tiles in a corbelled or overlapping stacking arrangement with each tile projecting out a little further than the tile below. None is complete but complete widths of 100 mm. and 104

mm. are measurable on two and complete thicknesses on three in the 18-24 mm. range - although there is some slight distortion evident here. These are undecorated in the usual sense but the upper two tiles appear to be covered with plain white slip under a clear glaze (chipped and decayed in places) while the lowest tile is covered with an overfired dark brown glaze which has run over a broken edge. The whole lump is slightly abraded or battered and almost certainly redeposited. Plain slipped tiles were also a feature of the 14th-century Penn tile industry although a slightly later date cannot be ruled out.

Roof tile

These comprises 20 pieces weighing 2232 g. which came from both contexts (31 and 33). Although no complete dimensions, save for thickness, are complete it seems highly probable that these are all typically medieval rectangular handmade flat roof tiles (peg tiles) with a pair of circular nailholes near the upper end. These are only broadly datable to the 13th to 16th centuries, on the basis of fabric, thickness and their fairly crude manufacture. The majority have a hard unglazed orange sandy fabric with sanded undersides. Thicknesses are between 12 and 17 mm. One upper corner fragment (31) has splashes of green glaze on its upper edge suggesting it was fired in the same kiln as green-glazed medieval tiles or pottery. As the piece shows traces of white mortar, however, it was evidently used. Several pieces of roof tile, including curved distorted pieces, are overfired almost to a near-stoneware fabric - bluish-grey or purplish brown in colour and this overfiring occurs over broken edges indicating that these are roof tile wasters. This accords with the presence of floor tile and even pottery wasters from this site. Whether the majority of roof tiles are of 14th-century date - like the floor tiles - or of 15th/16th-century date - like the pottery, remains uncertain. The green glaze drip on one of the tiles however suggests that some at least are probably contemporary with the floor tiles.

Summary and recommendations

The assemblage provides useful additional evidence for the production of decorated medieval floor tiles and plain roof tiles in the vicinity although the sample is too small to determine whether or not these were made in a kiln (or kilns) on this site, or simply dumped here to backfill the quarry found on the site. Given that similar scattered assemblages of tile waste occur all over the village (as here - unassociated with kiln structures) the case for a kiln on this site remains unproven. A full catalogue of the CBM has been compiled and record photographs of the decorated floor tile fragments have been taken. As the assemblage is fairly small it may all be worth keeping, although a few of the plainer roof tile fragments could be discarded if desired. Apart from this no further work is recommended.

Bibliography

Green, M 2003

Assessment of the pottery from Winter's Garage, Penn, Bucks. (PENWIG 08)

by John Cotter

Introduction and methodology

A total of 14 sherds of pottery weighing 883 g. was recovered from 3 contexts. This comprises pottery of late medieval and modern date. All the pottery was examined and spot-dated during the present assessment stage. For each context the total pottery sherd count and weight were recorded on an Excel spreadsheet, followed by the context spot-date which is the date-bracket during which the latest pottery types in the context are estimated to have been

produced or were in general circulation. Comments on the presence of datable types were also recorded, usually with mention of vessel form (jugs, bowls etc.) and any other attributes worthy of note (eg. decoration etc.).

Date and nature of the assemblage

Overall the pottery assemblage is in a fresh though fragmentary condition. One of the late medieval pieces, a pot base from (31), is however extremely worn on one side and may have been used as path or yard metalling. One of the Victorian vessels, a robust stoneware ink bottle, is complete although the rim is very badly chipped as though from plough damage or some other type of extreme wear. Ordinary domestic pottery types are represented although at least one of the late medieval pieces appears to be a waster. The assemblage is described in more detail in the spreadsheet and summarised below.

The three modern or Victorian sherds (context 32) represent two vessels including a Staffordshire-type whiteware dinner plate with blue transfer-printed decoration and a complete very robust cream stoneware ink bottle with the mark of the Doulton factory, Lambeth. Together with two glass vessels in the same context, these suggest a date of around c 1875-1900/10.

The remaining 11 sherds of pottery, from contexts 31 and 34, are so similar in character that they may represent a single deposit. This is predominantly a hard-fired sandy earthenware in the late medieval transitional tradition (LMT), mostly oxidised orange or red but some vessels have dark grey reduced surfaces and one or two overfired sherds are completely reduced. A few pieces bear a clear glaze either allover internally or occurring as internal patches and splashes. The assemblage includes typically medieval sagging bases from large storage jars or cisterns (for ale brewing), body sherds from one or two thinner-walled drinking jugs or smaller jars, and a fragment of a cistern bunghole. The latter is of particular interest as it is overfired and dark grey and appears to be a pottery waster suggesting that pottery (as well as tiles) was made on or near the site. This assemblage, which is certainly late medieval, probably dates to c 1450-1550. Very similar pottery has been found at a probable production site at Tylers Green, Penn, and is dated there from the late 15th century well into the 16th century (Hutchings and Farley 1989).

Summary and recommendations

Although small, the late medieval pottery assemblage here is of considerable interest in that it is all of one type and includes a waster testifying to local production. Whether it was produced in a kiln on or near this site or represents material dumped here from nearby Tylers Green, or another local pottery kiln, one cannot say for certain but together with the roof and floor tile wasters from this site it provides further evidence for local pottery and tile production. The material should certainly be kept. However, in view of the small size and fragmentary condition of the pottery assemblage no further work is recommended.

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OA 1992 *Fieldwork Manual* (1st edition, ed. D Wilkinson)

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Pevsner, N, Sherwood, J with Williamson, E 1994 *The Buildings of England, Buckinghamshire. Penguin.*

APPENDIX 4 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Winters Garage, Church Rd, Penn, Buckinghamshire

Site code: PENWIG 08

Grid reference: NGR SU 9084 9341

Type of evaluation: Two trench evaluation on site prior to development on the site.

Date and duration of project: Two days from the 4th to 5th March 2008.

Area of site: Two trenches 21 m x 1.8 m and 6 m x 1.8 m.

Summary of results: The evaluation revealed a quarry pit from the post-medieval period sealed below a thick cultivated garden soil.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museums Service in due course.



Scale 1:25,000

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Figure 1: Site location

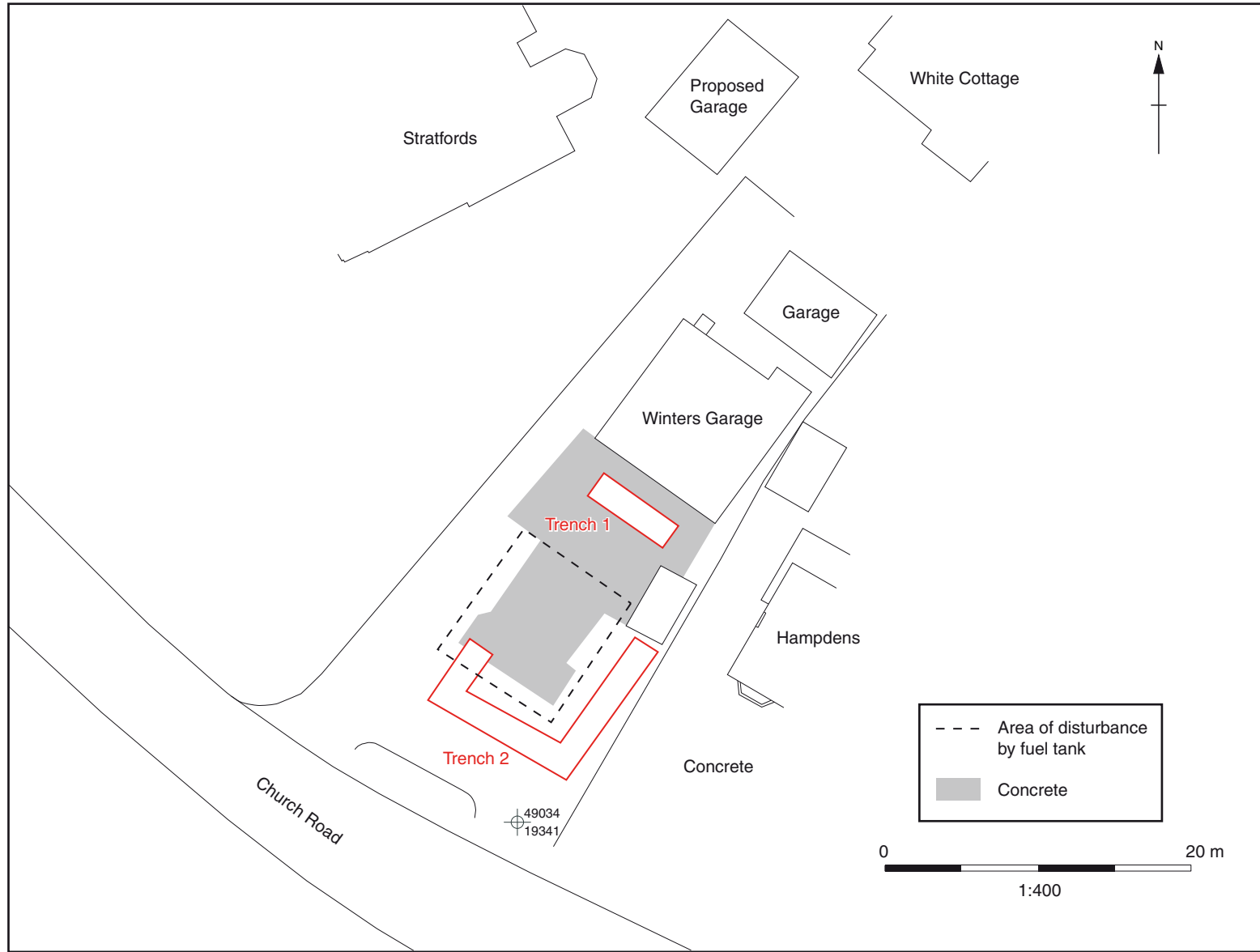


Figure 2: Location of trenches

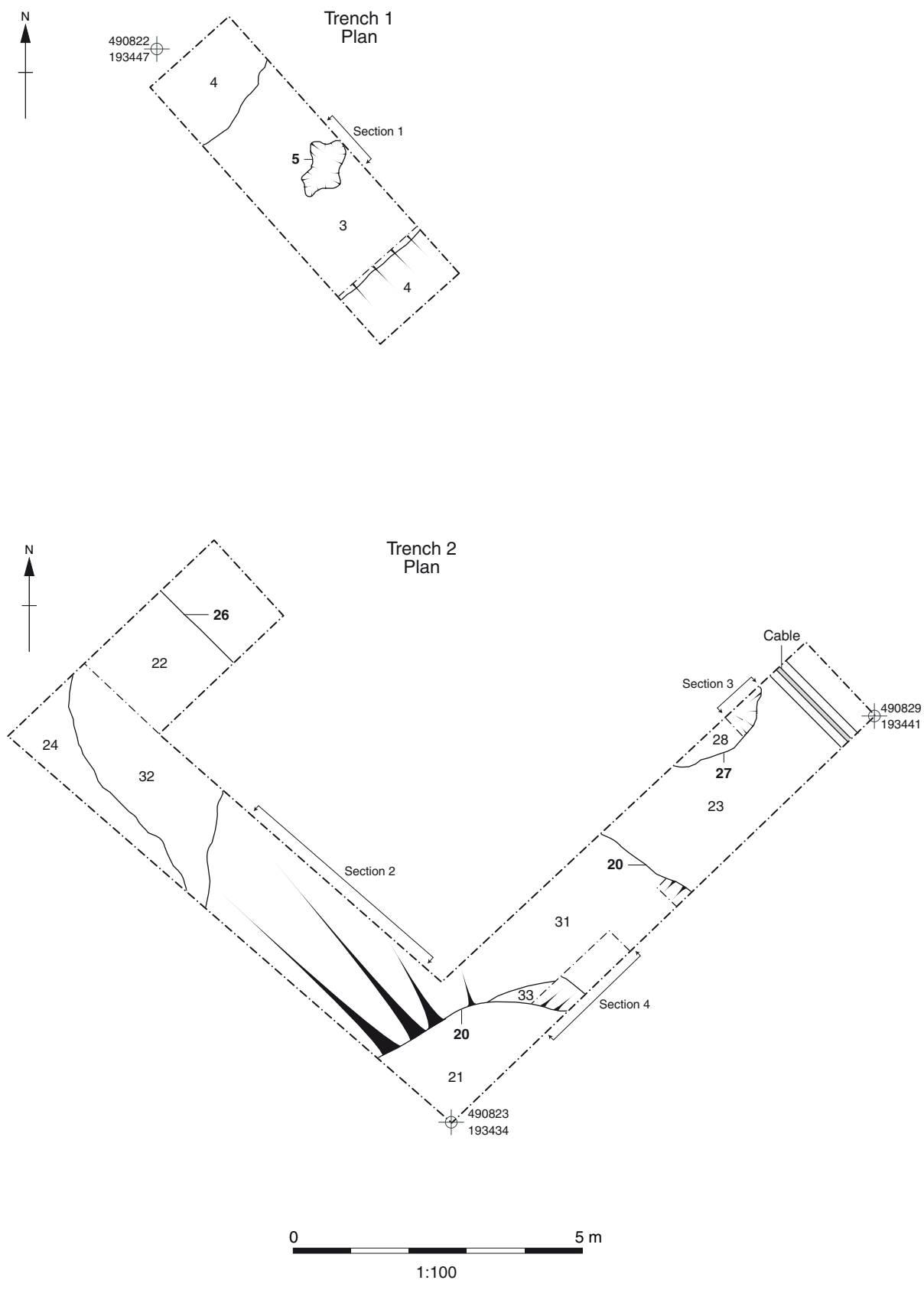


Figure 3: Trench 1 and 2, plans

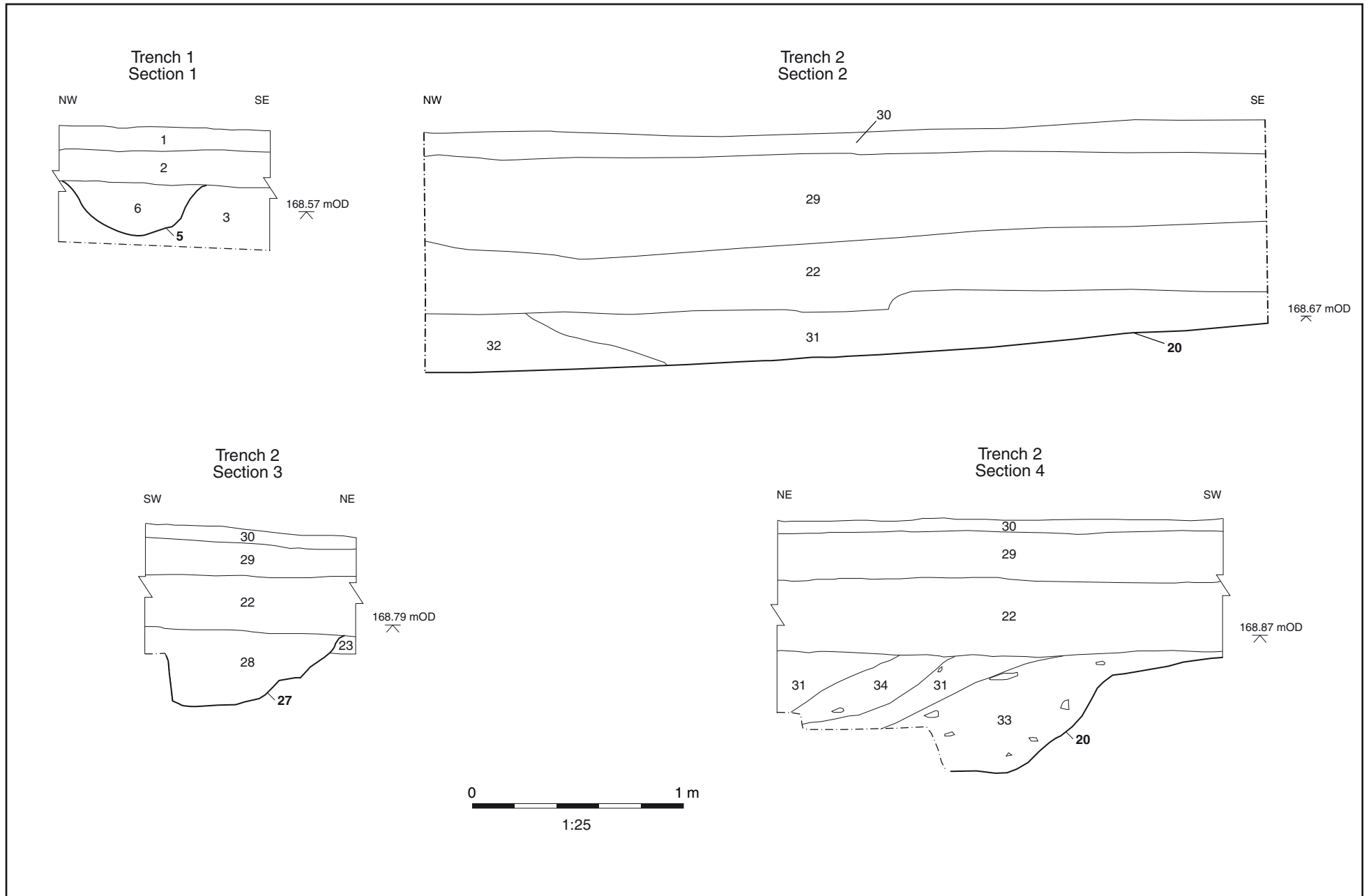


Figure 4: Trench 1 and 2, sections



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