

The Old Manor High Street Thornborough Buckinghamshire



Archaeological Evaluation Report



July 2008

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Prepared by: Mike Sims
Position: SWD Supervisor
Date: 15th July 2008

Checked by: Dan Dodds
Position: Head of Small Works
Date: 16th July 2008

Approved by: Nick Shepherd
Position: Head of Fieldwork
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Signed.....

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Oxford Archaeology
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Janus House

Osney Mead

Oxford OX2 0ES

t: (0044) 01865 263800

f: (0044) 01865 793496

e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk

w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk

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The Old Manor, Thornborough, Buckinghamshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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SUMMARY

On the 15th July 2008, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at the Old Manor, Thornborough, Buckinghamshire (NGR: SU 741 336) on behalf of Mr and Mrs Hall. The evaluation revealed layers of worked soil overlying natural deposits. No evidence for any other significant archaeology was observed.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

1.1.1 On the 15th July 2008, OA carried out a field evaluation within the rear garden of the Old Manor, Thornborough, Buckinghamshire (NGR: SU 741 336) on behalf of Mr and Mrs Hall. The was undertaken in respect of a planning application to re-shape an existing pond, move a water course and re-level parts of the garden in order to aid flood alleviation (Planning Application No. 07/02381).

1.1.2 A brief was set by the Buckinghamshire County Council Archaeological Officer, David Radford, requiring that trial trenching be undertaken prior to development of the site (BCAS 2008). OA produced a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) showing how it would meet the requirements of the brief (OA, 2008).

1.2 Location, geology and topography

1.2.1 The village of Thornborough is located approximately 3 km east of the town of Buckingham (Fig. 1). The development site consists of a large house and landscaped gardens on the western edge of the village. The site is bounded to the north by a public highway, to the west and south-west by residential properties and by farmland to the south and east. The trial trench was located in the rear garden of the property on a lawn gently sloping to the west at approximately 83 m above OD. The site lies on the convergence of stoney clay till and glaciofluvial deposits overlaid with alluvium (Geological Survey of Great Britain, sheet no. 219).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The site lies within the historic core of Thornborough, directly to the south of the Grade II* listed cruck-built 14th - 15th century hall house (CAS 4904) associated with Magdalen College, Oxford. The site lies within Thornborough Conservation Area.

1.3.2 Thornborough is noted for the survival of two Roman burial mounds and a Roman temple and related settlement located by a junction of Roman roads where they ford the Padbury Brook 1 km west of the village.

1.3.3 Domesday records that Thornborough was held by 'Berner' and had 14 villagers, with 8 smallholders and 3 slaves. The manor was previously held by Thori, a theign of King Edward (Morris, 1978). Reed notes that Thornborough is unusual in that no

woodland is recorded in the parish at Domesday. While he notes that this could be an oversight, a map of 1613 also shows no woodland (Reed, 1979, 95). Traces of village earthworks have been recorded at the west end of the village (CAS 0545). The surviving medieval open fields in Thornborough parish have been identified as nationally important by the English heritage study *Turning the Plough* (EH, 2001).

2 EVALUATION AIMS

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence or absence of archaeological remains in the area affected by the proposed development.
- 2.1.2 To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains (if present), in particular to establish if there is evidence for occupation, property boundaries and for domestic, commercial or industrial activities associated with the Saxon, medieval and post medieval settlement.
- 2.1.3 To make available the results of the investigation.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork

- 3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of a single trench measuring 15 m long and 1.9 m wide located east-west across the area of proposed ground reduction (Fig. 2). The overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision by a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.8 m wide toothless grading bucket. Excavation proceeded in spits down to either the top of the underlying natural geology or to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon, whichever was encountered first.

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

- 3.2.1 The trench was cleaned by hand and any revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds and if possible, environmental samples. A plan showing the extent of the trench and the location of any deposits or features was drawn at a scale of 1:100 (Fig. 3, Plan) and any recorded sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20. The trench, any features and the recorded sections were photographed using digital photography, colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OA Field Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

3.3 Finds

- 3.3.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and bagged by context.

3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence

3.4.1 No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling were encountered during the course of the evaluation.

3.5 Presentation of results

3.5.1 The results of the evaluation are presented by a written description of the features and deposits observed, followed by an overall discussion and interpretation.

4 RESULTS: GENERAL

4.1 Soils and ground conditions

4.1.1 No evidence of modern intrusions such as services or truncation of the ground was encountered during the course of the evaluation. The trench was excavated down to undisturbed natural deposits throughout its length.

4.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits

4.2.1 The majority of the archaeologically significant deposits were roughly uniform along the length of the trench.

5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

5.1 Description of deposits

5.1.1 The underlying natural, a yellow-brown clay till with sub-angular stone inclusions (4) was encountered at a depth of between 0.4 m and 0.5 m below the current garden level (Fig. 3, Trench Plan and Section 2). At both the western end and the centre of the trench this was overlaid by a layer of orange-brown sandy clay (5), which also contained many small pebbles (Fig. 3, Trench Plan and Section 1) suggesting it is a glaciofluvial deposit. Also within the centre of the trench a band of tabular limestone 1.5 m wide (6) was observed overlying Layer 4 a depth of 0.3 m below the current ground level (Fig. 3, Trench Plan).

5.1.2 Overlying these natural deposits was a layer of yellow-brown silt clay (3) measuring between 0.15 m and 0.25 m in depth (Fig. 3, Sections 1 and 2). This layer contained sub-angular fragments of stone and also fragments of clay roofing tile indicating that this was probably a layer of worked soil.

5.1.3 At the western limit of the excavation this was overlaid by a layer of grey-brown silt clay (2) containing angular fragments of stone and many fragments of clay roof tile. This deposit measured 0.25 m deep at the western edge of the trenching tapering off down to the east suggesting that it may represent a levelling layer.

5.2 Finds

5.2.1 Fragments of post-medieval glass and several nails were recovered from Layer 1.

- 5.2.2 Numerous fragments of flat roofing tile were recovered from Layers 1, 2 and 3. These probably originate from the various phases of construction of both the manor house and the construction of the nearby buildings.

6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 6.1.1 The trench represents a trial trenching sample of 6% which is considered to be a good representation of the site as a whole, while the location of the trench provided a sample across the width of the proposed development area. The stratigraphy observed was similar throughout the length of the trench suggesting that it would be similar within the unexcavated area. The underlying natural was exposed throughout the length of the trench, showing that there were no earlier buried archaeological horizons.

6.2 Overall interpretation

Summary of results

- 6.2.1 Layers 1 and 3 represent layers of worked soil. Layer 1 equates with the present day garden soil, while Layer 3 probably represents an earlier ploughsoil. No dating evidence was recovered to suggest its origin, although the presence of the fragments of clay roof tile suggests that it is contemporary with nearby buildings and is probably late medieval or early post-medieval in date.
- 6.2.2 The lens of made ground (2) is a probable modern landscaping deposit laid in order to level the area of the garden which previously sloped down to the west.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	Layer	-	0.2 m - 0.25 m	Present day garden soil	Iron, tile, glass	C19th/ C20th
2	Layer	-	0.25 m	Made ground, modern landscaping deposit	Tile	C19th/ C20th
3	Layer	-	0.2 m - 0.25 m	Earlier ploughsoil	Tile	C14th/ C17th
4	Layer	-	> 0.1 m	Natural clay till	-	-
5	Layer	-	> 0.1 m	Natural glaciofluvial deposit	-	-
6	Layer	-	> 0.1 m	Natural limestone bed	-	-

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

BCAS, 2008 *The Old Manor, High Street, Thornborough: Brief for an Archaeological Excavation*

IFA, 2001 *Standard and Guidance for archaeological evaluations*

Morris, J, 2004 *Domesday Book: Buckinghamshire*

OA, 2000 *Oxford Archaeology Environmental Sampling Guidelines*

OA, 2008 *The Old Manor, Thornborough, Buckinghamshire: Written scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*

OAU, 1992 *Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson)

Reed, M, 1979 *The Buckinghamshire landscape*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: The Old Manor, High Street, Thornborough, Buckinghamshire

Site code: THOTOM 08

Grid reference: SU 741 336

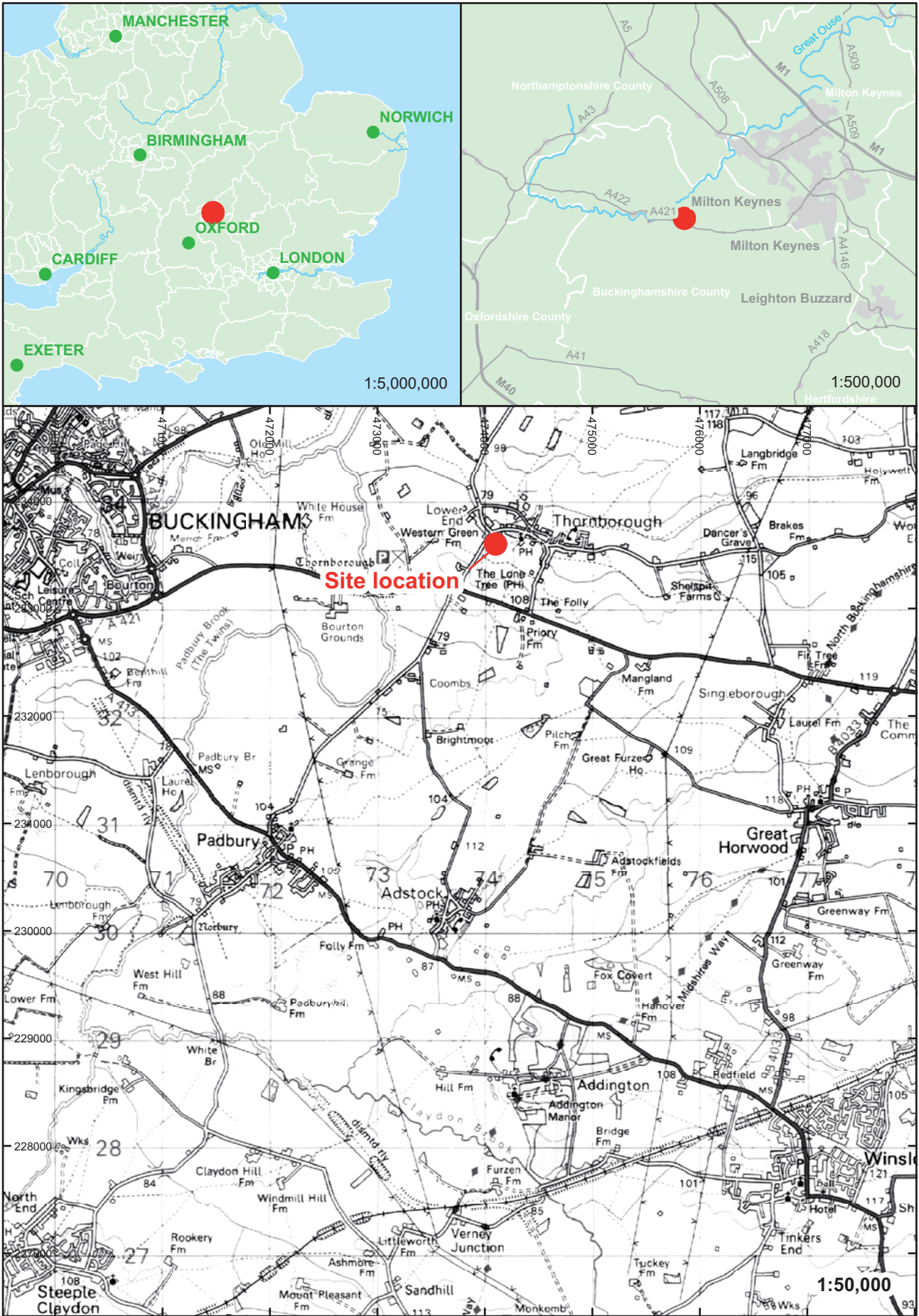
Type of evaluation: Single 15 m by 1.9 m machine dug trench

Date and duration of project: 15th July 2008, 1 day

Area of site: 600 m²

Summary of results: The evaluation exposed two layers of worked soil overlying natural deposits, and evidence of post-medieval garden landscaping. No earlier significant archaeology was encountered.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum in due course, under the following accession number:



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Figure 1: Site location

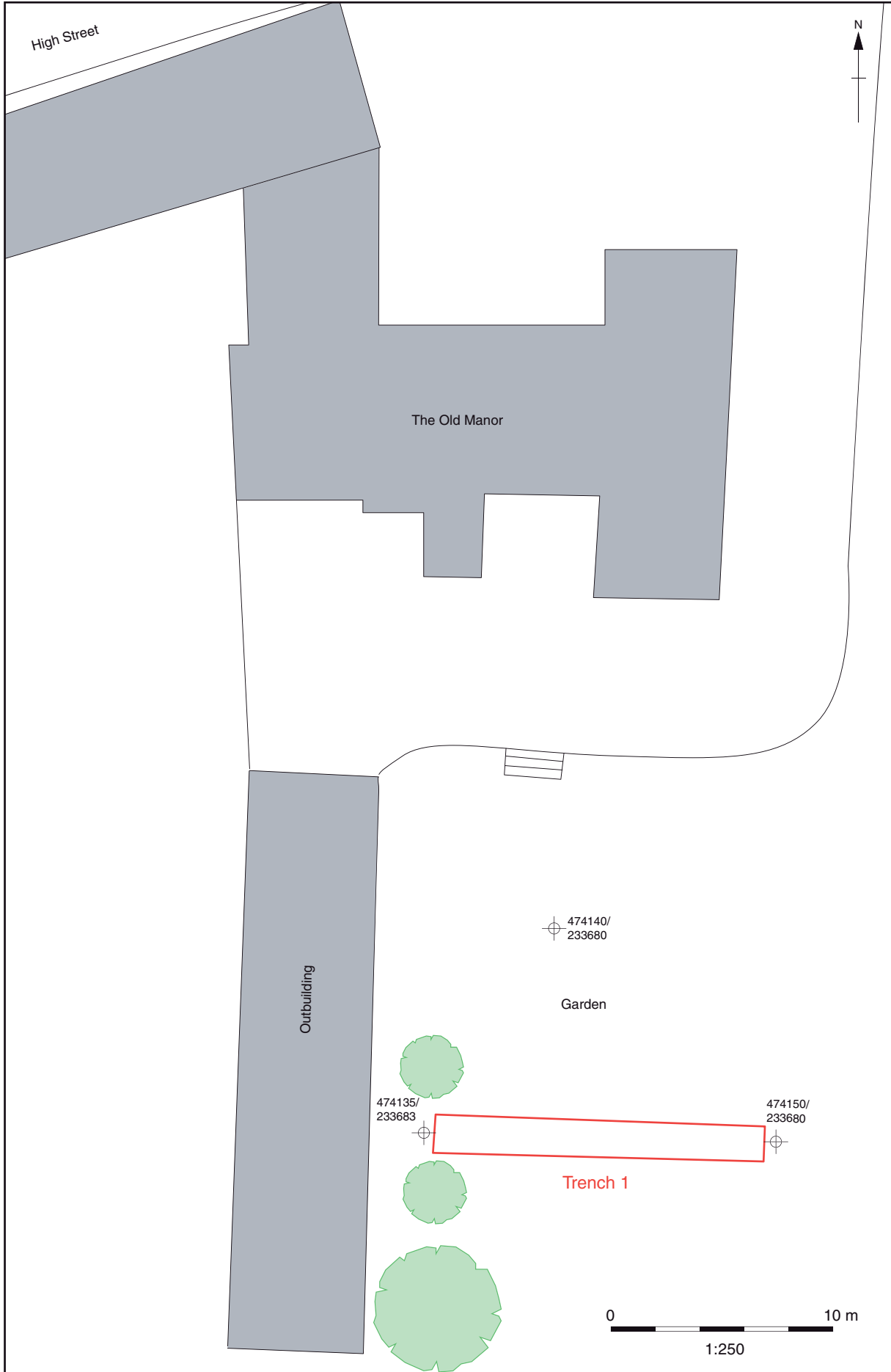


Figure 2: Trench location

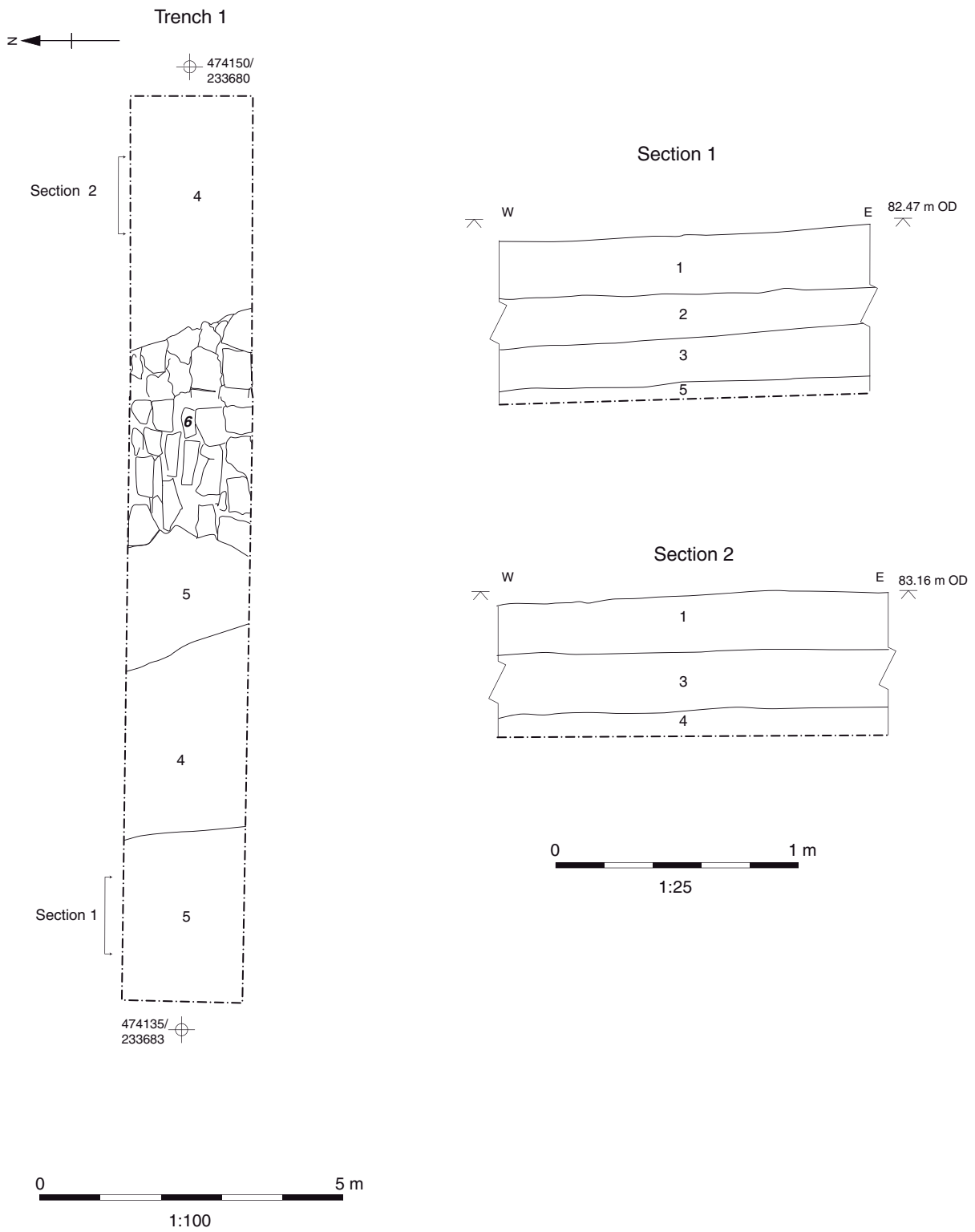















Figure 3: Trench plan and sections

	Section line and number
	Section through feature not illustrated with section drawing
	Limit of excavation
	Sondage / Interior limit of excavation
	Fill line and number
	Cut line and number
	Structure number
	Unclear boundary
	Stones
	Hachures indicate inclination of slope inside excavated feature
	Levels
	Grid point
	Continuation line (trench edge continues)