



Kitchen Extension at Pope's Farm, Aston Tirrold, Oxfordshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

April 2019

Client: Toby and Juliana Phelps

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southsouthsouth

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Kitchen Extension at Pope's Farm, Aston Tirrold, Oxfordshire

Watching Brief Report

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with illustrations by Lucy Gane

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Summary

Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by the Toby and Juliana Phelps to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the construction of a kitchen extension to Pope's Farm, Aston Tirrold. The watching brief was carried out on the 6th and 7th March 2019.

The works comprised archaeological monitoring during the excavation of foundation trenches. No archaeological features or deposits were noted.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Toby and Juliana Phelps to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the construction of a kitchen extension at Pope's Farm, Aston Tirrold, Oxfordshire.
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken as a condition of Planning Permission (planning ref: P18/S3662/HH). Although the Local Planning Authority did not set a brief for the work, discussions between Oxford Archaeology and Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Council, established the scope of work required. OA produced a written scheme of investigation detailing these requirements (OA 2019). The results of these works are presented below.
- 1.1.3 The work was undertaken in accordance with the national and local planning policies.
- 1.1.4 All fieldwork undertaken by Oxford Archaeology (South) is overseen by the Head of Fieldwork, David Score MCIfA.

1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The site is located within the village and parish of Aston Tirrold, Oxfordshire some 3 miles south-east of Didcot (Fig. 1; NGR: SU 55497 68239).
- 1.2.2 The area of proposed development consists of single dwelling known as Pope's Farm, the site is bounded to the west by Fullers Road, to the south by Chequers Garage, to the east by private gardens and to the north by residential properties.
- 1.2.3 The geology of the area is mapped as West Melbury Chalk Formation, a sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 94 to 101 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period (BGS Online).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The following historic and archaeological background has been reproduced from the written scheme of investigation (OA 2019).
- 1.3.2 Excavations along the Cleeve to Didcot Pipeline c 450m to the north-east of the site exposed Roman features dated to the 1st/2nd Century. The remains included gullies and a ditch (Ford 1990). Features of a Roman date were also recorded at Frimley Stables 250m to the north-west and a Roman coin, a Solidus of Honorius, was found when a garden path was being laid in Thorpe Street.
- 1.3.3 Prior to the Conquest, Aston Tirrold was assessed at 15 hides and was held by the wife of Lanc. By 1086 AD the settlement was under control of the King passing to the overlordship of the Earls of Warwick until the middle of the 12th century when control lapsed to the Crown. The name Tirrold is derived from Nicholas son of Torold who held the manor in 1166 (British History Online).
- 1.3.4 Located 200m south-east of the site, St Michael's Church is recorded in a grant of 1080 AD. Though heavily altered the present church still comprises a suspected 11th Century doorway and the 12th Century nave and chancel.

- 1.3.5 Excavations undertaken in the 1990s c 150m north-west of the site revealed two fairly substantial drainage ditches which had been backfilled in the late 12th/13th century, along with several postholes indicative of a structure. An assemblage of medieval pottery and bone, including seven fragments of a 13th Century Jug and 17 fragments of a 12th Century cooking pot, were recovered during the excavations of foundations at Jervis Cottage 300m east of the site.
- 1.3.6 Pope's Farm is a grade II listed building believed to date to the mid 17th century. It has been subject to numerous extension and alterations over the years, most notably in the 20th century. Early edition OS maps identify a number of other buildings within the area included a southern wing of the main building which was removed prior to 1912. The proposed extension lies within the footprint of this southern wing (OCC 2018).

2 EVALUATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The archaeological watching brief was undertaken to mitigate the impacts of the proposed construction work through the recording of any archaeological features and deposits by written, drawn and photographic record.

2.2 Specific Aims and Objectives

2.2.1 The specific aims and objectives of the watching brief were:

- i. To determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any archaeological remains within the development;
- ii. To identify any remains confirming the layout or location of the former southern wing of the building;
- iii. To determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of any remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence;
- iv. To determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence;
- v. To assess the level of truncation associated with the creation of the school;
- vi. To disseminate the results through the production of a site archive for deposition with an appropriate museum and to provide information for accession to the Oxfordshire HER.

2.3 Methodology

2.3.1 All work was undertaken in accordance with the methodology outlined in the written scheme of investigation (WSI).

2.3.2 Foundation trenches measuring approximately 0.6m wide and running for approximately 36m in length were excavated under constant archaeological supervision up to a depth of approximately 1m (Plate 1; Fig. 3). The trenches were excavated using a tracked excavator fitted with a toothless bucket.

2.3.3 All work was carried out in accordance with CIfA Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (CIFA 2014) and in line with OA's standard fieldwork recording system, as outlined in the WSI.

RESULTS

2.4 Introduction and presentation of results

2.4.1 The results of the watching brief are presented below. The full details of all deposits with dimensions and depths can be found in Appendix A.

2.5 General soils and ground conditions

2.5.1 The soil sequence varied between the north-west half and the south-east half of foundation trench; however, the deposit sequence was consistent within each half.

2.5.2 Closer to house, and extending 6.5m to the south-west, the deposit sequence consisted of the natural geology, a fine light grey gravelly silt (006), overlain by a dark brown, grey sandy silt (005), which was interpreted as a former garden soil. A layer of white chalk rubble (004) overlay the garden soil which in turn was overlain by a fine yellow gravel (003). Both these deposits were determined to be a leveling layer and were underling a tarmac surface (002). The tarmac surface was masked by a layer of yellow pee gravel (001) (Plate 2).

2.5.3 The south-eastern half of the foundation trench was excavated through the lawn. Here the natural geology (006) was overlain by the garden soil (005), but this was overlain by topsoil and grass (007) (Plate 3).

2.5.4 Ground conditions throughout the watching brief were generally good, and the site remained dry throughout.

2.6 General distribution of archaeological deposits

2.6.1 No features or deposits of archaeological interest were noted during the works. A number of services were noted truncating deposits 006 and 005 (Fig. 3).

2.7 Finds summary

2.7.1 A small assemblage of post-medieval and modern finds, including glass and ceramic building material, was recovered but these were not retained.

3 DISCUSSION

3.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 3.1.1 The foundation trench was excavated cleanly and in good conditions. As such, visibility within the excavated trenches was good despite their narrowness. The deposits sequence was well defined and suitable time was provided by the groundworks contractor to enable an appropriate level of recording.
- 3.1.2 Therefore, the results of the watching brief can be considered to present a reliable assessment on the impacts the new foundation trenches had on the underlying deposits and, should they have been present, any archaeological remains.

3.2 Results

- 3.2.1 No evidence of any earlier structures or other archaeological deposits were noted during the watching brief. While uncertain, the chalk and rubble levelling deposit may relate to the removal of the former south-wing.
- 3.2.2 The absence of artefactual evidence suggests limited potential for significant archaeological remains to present within the immediate vicinity.

3.3 Significance

- 3.3.1 No significant archaeological features or deposits were recorded during the watching brief.

APPENDIX A ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Comments	Finds	Date
001	Layer	>0.6	0.10	Yellow grave – current yard surface		
002	Layer	>0.6	0.06	Tarmac – buried yard surface		
003	Layer	>0.6	0.10	Sand and gravel bedding layer		
004	Layer	>0.6	0.30	Chalk and brick rubble, leveling deposit		
005	Layer	>0.6	0.25	Dark brownish grey sandy silt, remnant garden soil		
006	Layer	>0.6	>0.19	Natural geology – pale grey gravely silt		
007	Layer	>0.6	0.3	Topsoil		

APPENDIX B BIBLIOGRAPHY

BGS Online, <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>, accessed December 2017, British Geological Survey

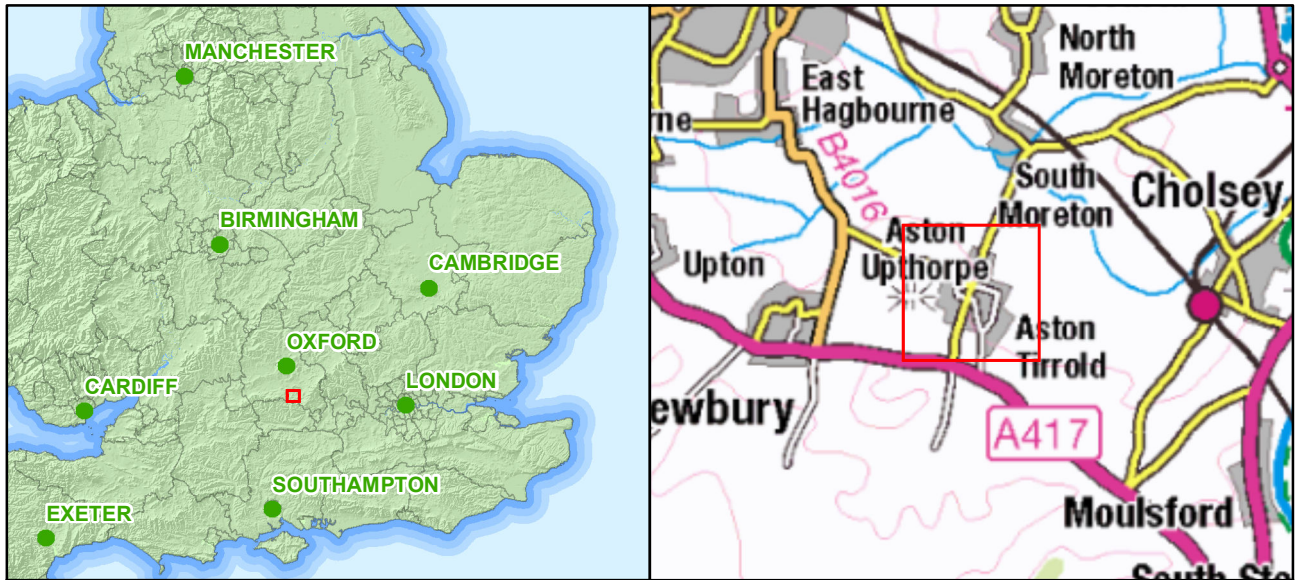
CIfA, 2014, *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologist

OA, 2019, Kitchen Extension, Pope's Farm, Aston Tirrold, Oxfordshire, Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Watching Brief.

APPENDIX C**SITE SUMMARY DETAILS**

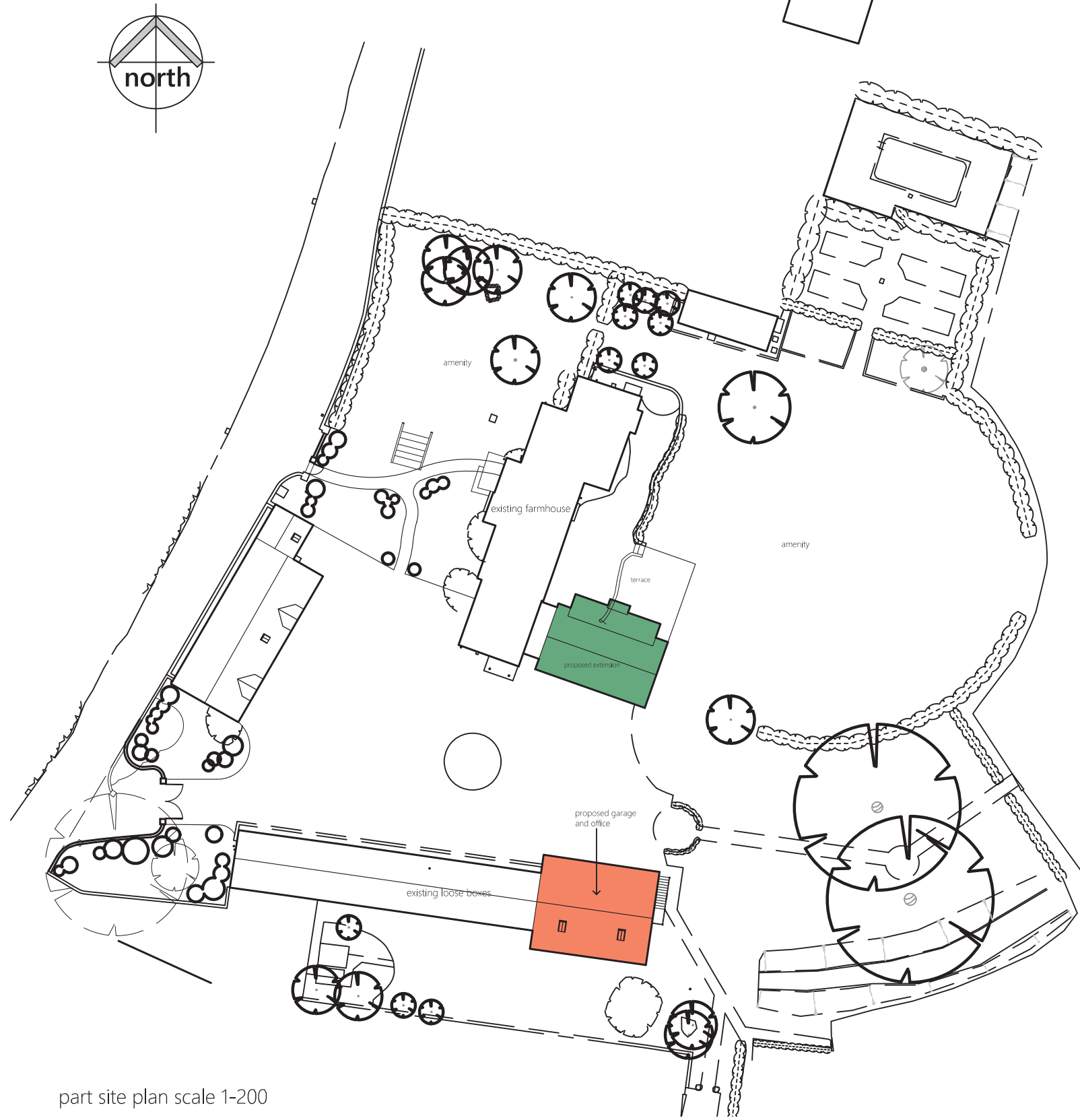
Site name:	Watching Brief Report
Site code:	ASTIPO19
Grid Reference	SU 55497 68239
Type:	Evaluation
Date and duration:	March 2019 – three days
Area of Site	c. 100m ²
Location of archive:	The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museum Service in due course, under the following accession number: OXCMS:2019.36
Summary of Results:	Oxford Archaeology was commissioned by the Toby and Juliana Phelps to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the construction of a kitchen extension to Pope's Farm, Aston Tirrold. The watching brief was carried out on the 6th and 7th March 2019.

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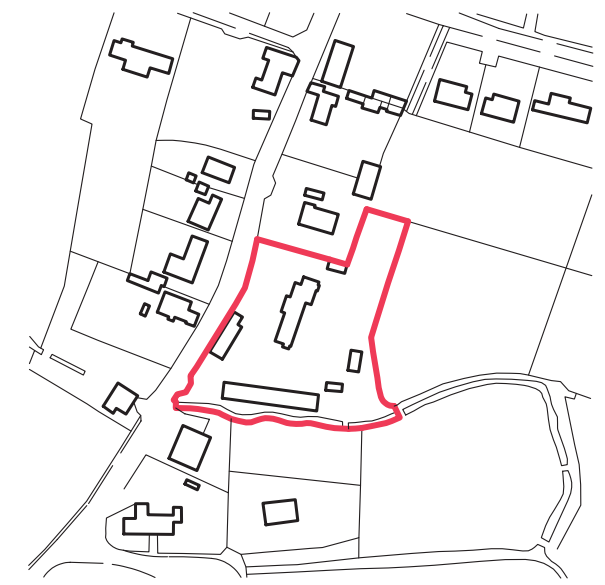


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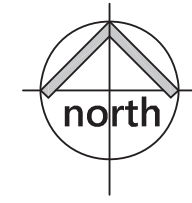
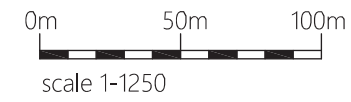
Figure 1: Site location



part site plan scale 1-200



location plan scale 1-1250



- Proposed kitchen extension
- Proposed garage and office - not progressed during these works.

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notes

title
proposed garage and link extension to popes farm, aston tirrold, oxfordshire

project number 057	date oct 2018
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scale 1-200 & 1-1250 @ A1	drawing no 10
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revision	description	date

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Figure 2: Proposed work

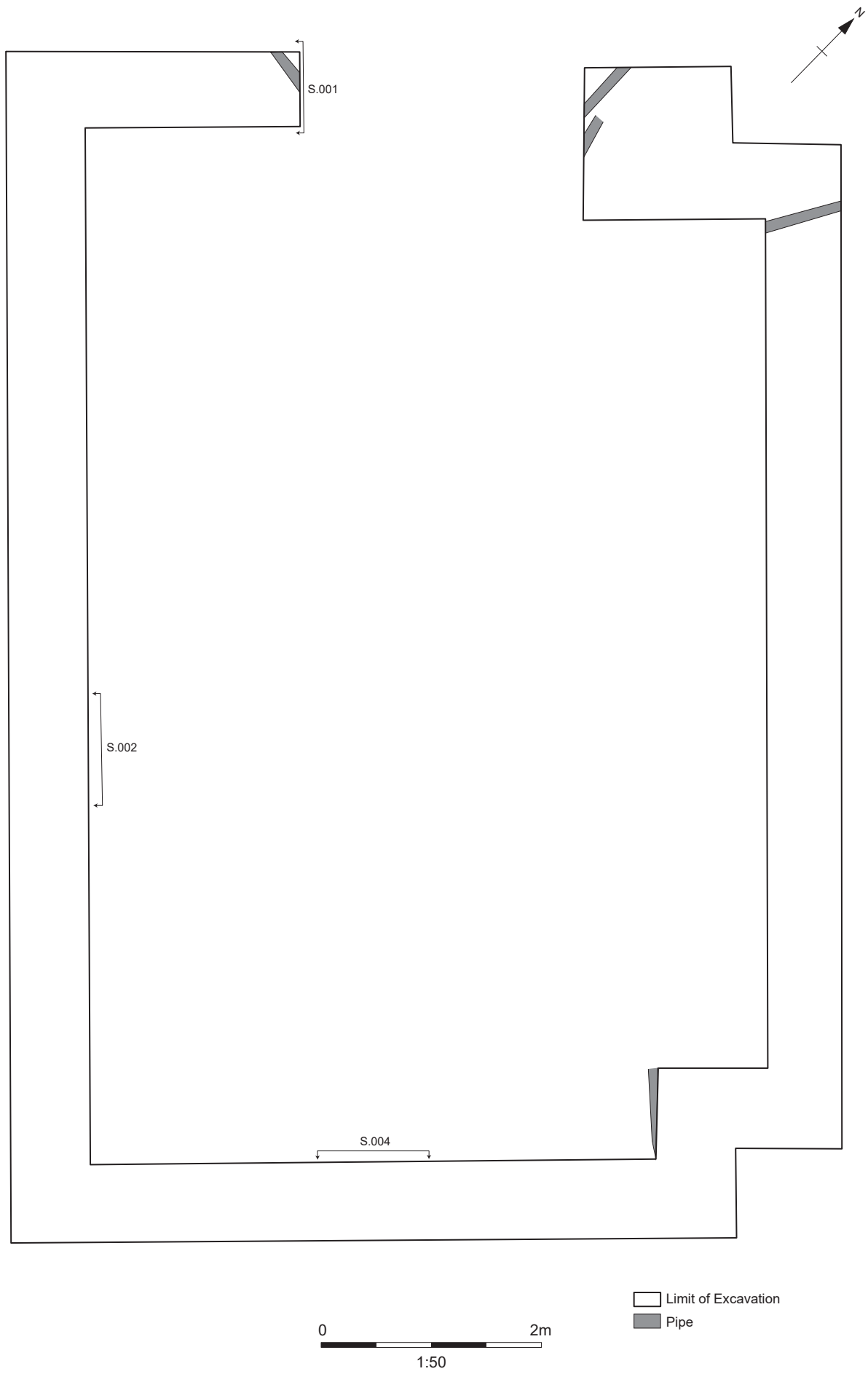


Figure 3: Plan of excavated foundation trench



Plate 1: General shot works, view to west



Plate 2: Section 2, view to north-east

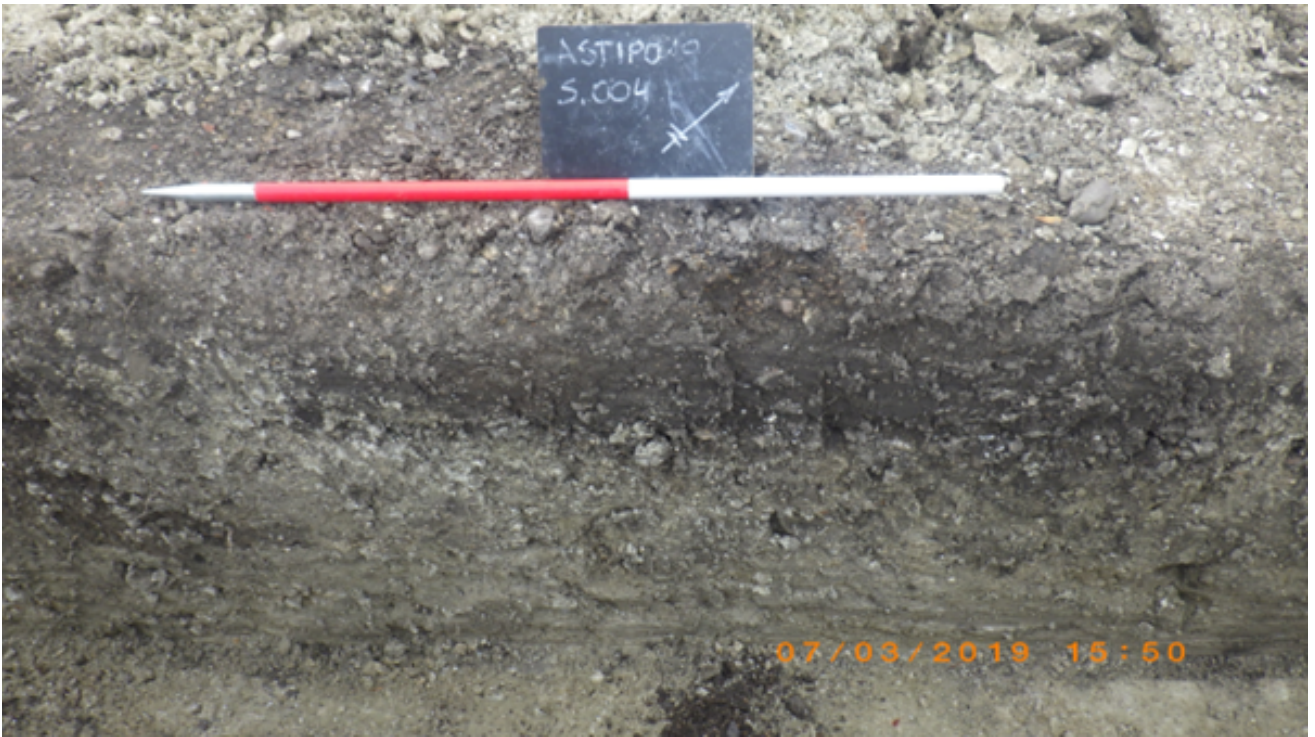


Plate 3: Section 4, view to north-west



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