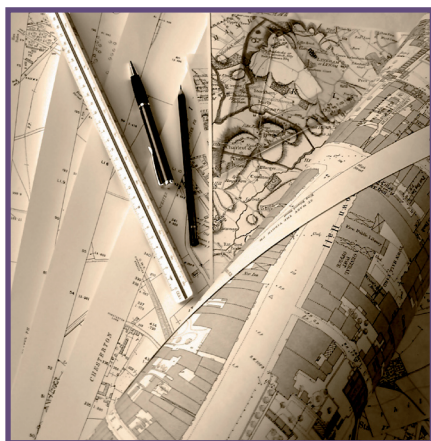


Tudor Hall School  
Wykham Lane  
**Banbury**



**Archaeological  
Watching Brief Report**



April 2009

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Tudor Hall School

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## SUMMARY

*Between the 28th October and the 8th of November 2005 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Tudor Hall School, Bloxham, Oxfordshire (NGR: SP 439 379). The work was commissioned by the Governors of Tudor Hall School in advance of the construction of new dining hall and kitchen facilities, a new maintenance building, removal of trees and a car parking extension. The watching brief revealed extensive truncation throughout the site and the presence of 20th century improvements associated with the school.*

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Between October 28th and November 8th, 2005, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Tudor Hall School, Bloxham, Oxfordshire (NGR: SP 439 379). The work was commissioned by the Governors of the School in respect of a planning application for a new dining hall and kitchen facilities, new maintenance building, reordering of the existing main house to form a new library and ancillary accommodation, change of use of tennis courts to maintenance yard, extension of mezzanine floor in library, removal of trees and a car parking extension (Planning Application: 05/00218/F).
- 1.1.2 A project brief was set by Hannah Fluck, the planning archaeologist representing Oxfordshire County Council (OCAS, 2005)
- 1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief (OA, 2005).

#### 1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site of the proposed development is located on the east side of Bloxham Road (A361) and south of Wykham Lane, approximately 2 km south of Banbury (Fig. 1). The development area is situated in landscaped gardens forming part of the school.
- 1.2.2 The site lies at *c.* 123 m above OD and the underlying geology is on the edge of the Marlstone Rock and Middle Lias clays, silts and siltstones (Geological Survey of Great Britain, sheet no 218).

#### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the watching brief was prepared for the WSI for the project (OA, 2005) and is reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 The proposed development is located in an area of considerable archaeological potential located 136 m north of the site of Sir Robert de Arden's medieval manor House (NGR: SP 4412 3786). This is known to have been in existence by 1331 when

a license was obtained from Edward III to fortify the manor with an embattled wall. A later country house is located 90 m to the south of the development site, dating to the 17th-century with some earlier sections (NGR: SP 4409 3789). This building is currently in use as part of the school. The site of a medieval Chapel associated with the manor house is also located immediately south-east of the proposed site (NGR: SP 4411 3795).

- 1.3.3 In 1851 Roman remains, including tesserae, walls, a possible stone-vaulted kiln or oven, skeletons and a well were found 170 m to the west of the site along with coins, pottery and animal bone (NGR: SP 4388 3795). A Roman villa and further aspects of the site will be covered by the current school buildings. A deserted medieval village is known to exist 230 m to the south-west of the proposed development site (NGR: SP 4390 3779).

## 2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence or absence, extent, condition, quality, character and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development, particular attention will be paid to the extent of the churches burial ground.
- 2.1.2 To preserve by record any archaeological remains which the groundworks will remove or damage within the development area.
- 2.1.3 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

### 2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The watching brief consisted of a series of visits to the site to monitor the progress and extent of the excavations and to record any remains exposed during the works.
- 2.2.2 These works consisted of topsoil stripping, ground reduction and the excavation of service trenches.
- 2.2.3 A plan showing the extent and location of the excavations was maintained at a scale of 1:100 (Fig. 2) and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20 (Fig.3). All excavations and sections were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. A general photographic record of the work was also made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OA Field Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

### 3 RESULTS

#### 3.1 Description of deposits

##### *Soakaway Pit*

- 3.1.1 This was located between two buildings on the eastern side of the hockey field (Fig. 2). The area was topsoil stripped prior to the excavation of the soakaway pit. The pit measured 3 m by 2.5 m and was excavated to a depth of 1.9 m (Fig. 3, Section 1).
- 3.1.2 The underlying natural, weathered and shattered Marlstone rock (4) was encountered at a depth of 0.5 m below the current ground level, and could be seen to be in excess of 1.4 m in depth within the section. This was overlaid by a 0.32 m deep layer of mid brown silty clay (3), a probable colluvium. Overlying this was a 0.08 m deep layer of black ash and clinker (2), a probable earlier layer of hard standing.
- 3.1.3 This had been sealed below a 0.15 m deep layer of orange brown silty clay (1), a layer of made ground composed of imported material. A landscaping layer of dark brown silt loam, 0.2 m deep (8), had earlier been removed during the topsoil strip.

##### *Car Park Extension*

- 3.1.4 This was located due south of an existing carpark alongside the road running along the eastern edge of the playing field.
- 3.1.5 As within the area of the soakaway, the area was topsoil stripped, removing between 0.1 m and 0.15 m of the topsoil (8), exposing an underlying layer of made ground composed of orange-brown clay silt and stone fragments (5).
- 3.1.6 At the southern edge of the extension a 10 m long, 2 m wide trench was dug alongside a standing drystone wall running alongside the road. This trench was 0.4 m–0.45 m deep and only exposed the made ground (5) within its sides (Fig. 3, Section 2). The drystone wall was subsequently demolished and used to backfill the trench.

##### *Strip for New Access Road*

- 3.1.7 This was located along the southern, western and northern edges of the playing field (Fig. 2). This consisted of the excavation of approximately 230 m of 3 m wide roadway around three sides of the playing field .
- 3.1.8 The stratigraphy exposed within the excavation for the access road was broadly similar along its length and a sample section can be applied throughout.
- 3.1.9 The route of the new access road was excavated to a total depth of 0.3 m (Fig. 3, Section 3), encountering a layer of orange-brown silty clay (7), a probable colluvial deposit, at a depth of 0.2 m below the current ground level. This was overlaid by a 0.2 m deep layer of mid orange-brown silty loam (6), the present day topsoil and turf.



### 3.2 **Finds**

- 3.2.1 Finds recovered from layer 8 consisted of late post-medieval tile, ceramic drain and pieces of broken brick. These were recorded and evaluated on site, but not retained. No other dating evidence was encountered.

### 3.3 **Palaeo-environmental remains**

- 3.3.1 No deposits suitable for paleo-environmental sampling were encountered during the watching brief

## 4 **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1.1 The watching brief showed that all areas within the proposed developments had been subject to a degree of disturbance in the past.
- 4.1.2 Within the area of the soakaway pit the presence of the layer of hardstanding (2) immediately above the colluvium would suggest that the area had been previously reduced in level. The presence of the made ground (5) observed within the area of the carpark extension suggests that the ground level had been built up in that area.
- 4.1.3 The consistent stratigraphy exposed within the strip for the access road, together with the absence of any earlier worked soil horizons under the present day topsoil and turf suggests that this area had been stripped and levelled, possibly during the construction of the playing fields.
- 4.1.4 No evidence for any earlier archaeology was observed.

**APPENDICES****APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY**

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	Layer	0.15 m	-	Topsoil and turf	-	C20th
2	Layer	0.08 m	-	Clinker and ash surface	-	C20th
3	Layer	0.32 m	-	Probable colluvium	-	-
4	Layer	> 1.4 m	-	Weathered and shattered Marlstone rock	-	-
5	Layer	> 0.4 m	-	Made ground	-	C20th
6	Layer	0.2 m	-	Topsoil and turf	-	C20th
7	Layer	> 0.1 m	-	Probable colluvium	-	-
8	Layer	0.15 m	-	Landscaping layer, topsoil and turf	Brick and tile	C19th

**APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES**

- IFA, 2001 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*
- OA, 1992 *Field Manual (ed. Wilkinson D)*
- OA, 2005 *Tudor Hall School, Bloxham, Oxfordshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*
- OCAS, 2005 *Tudor Hall School, Bloxham, Oxfordshire : Design Brief for Archaeological Watching Brief*

**APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS**

**Site name:** Tudor Hall School, Bloxham, Oxfordshire

**Site code:** BANTHS 05

**Grid reference:** SP 439 379

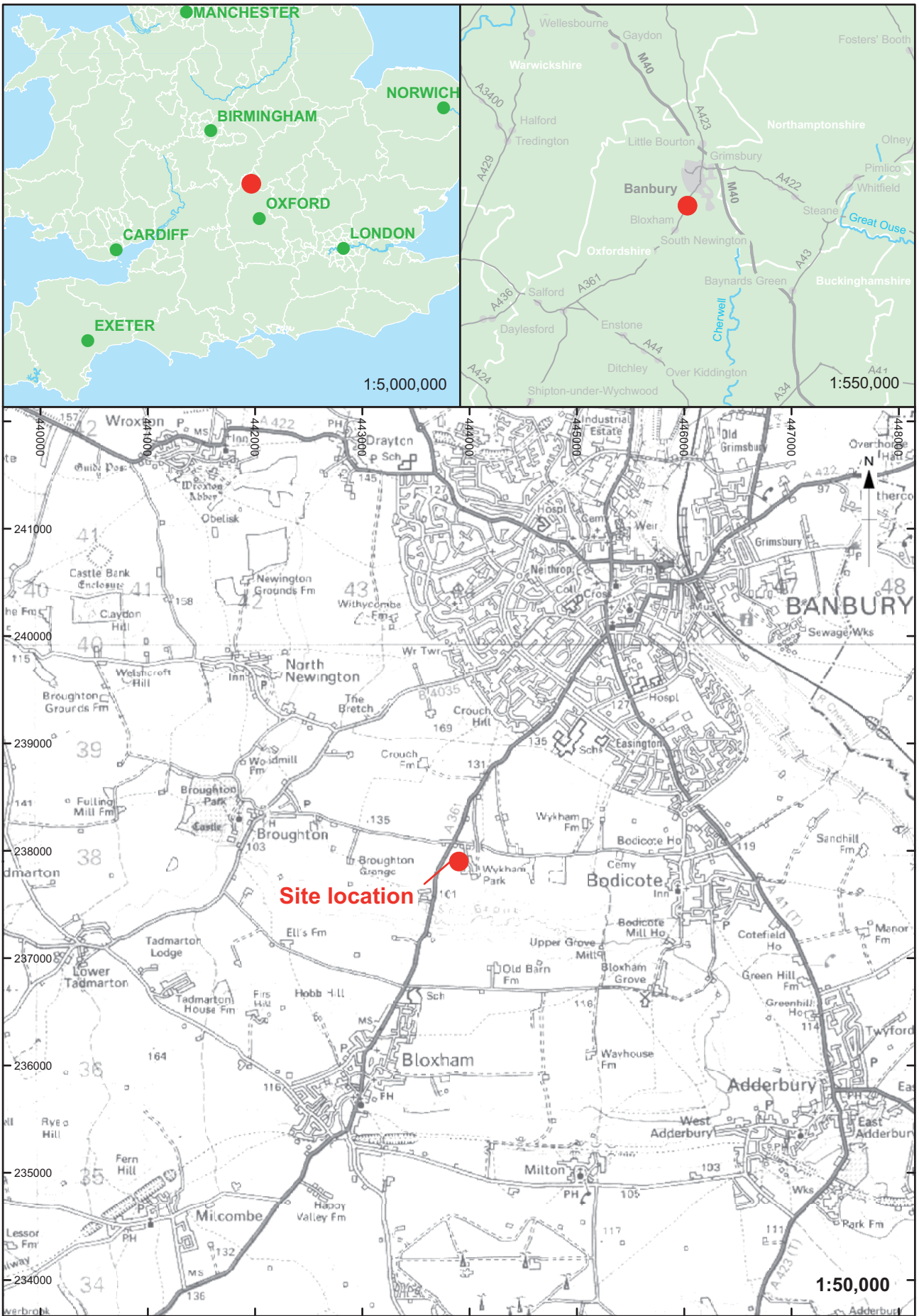
**Type of watching brief:** Monitoring of topsoil stripping, service trenching and ground reduction.

**Date and duration of project:** 28th October to 8th November 2005, 2 weeks

**Area of site:** 1 hectare

**Summary of results:** Extensive modern landscaping, no evidence for earlier archaeology was observed.

**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: OXCMS2005.127



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Figure 1: Site location

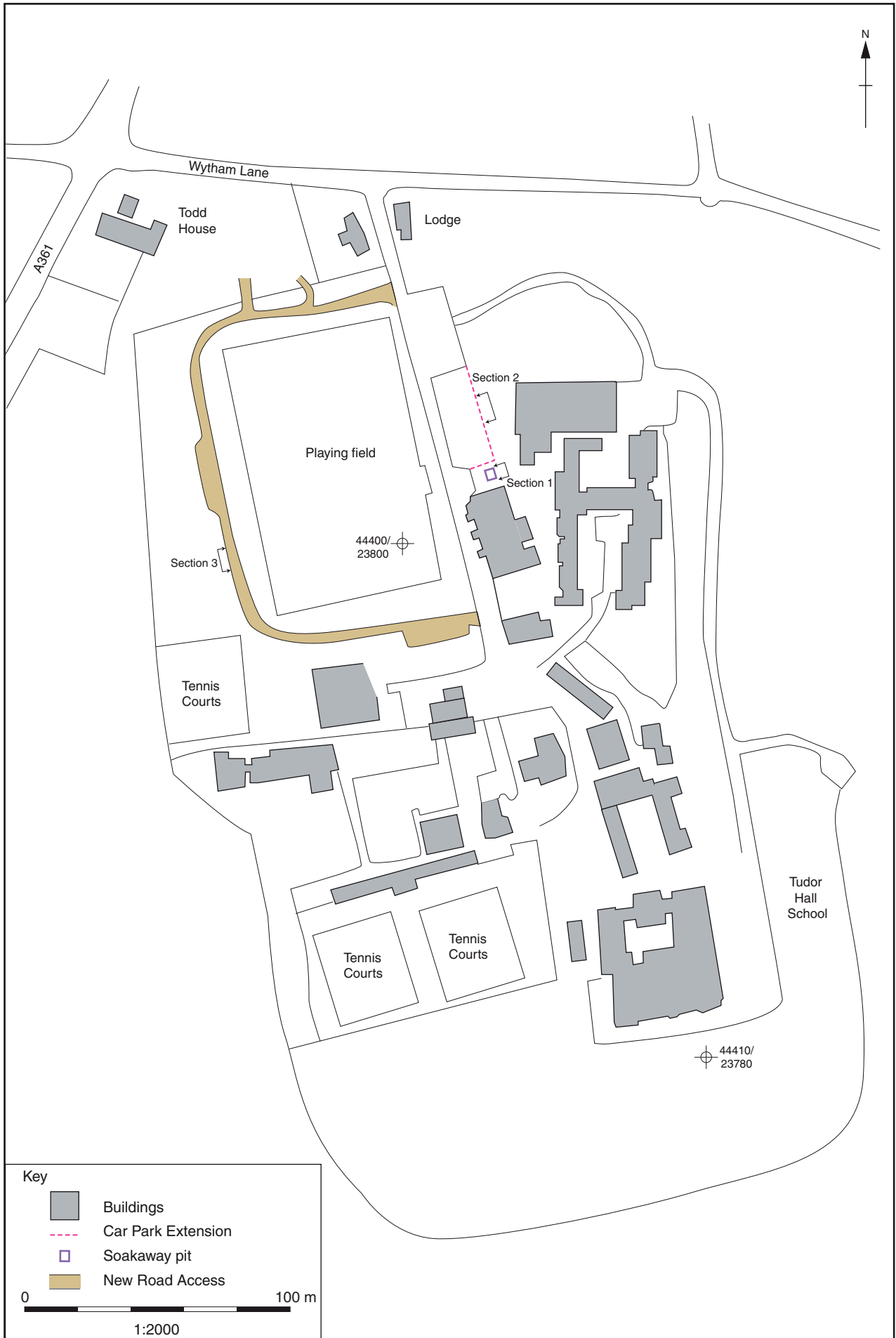


Figure 2: Site plan

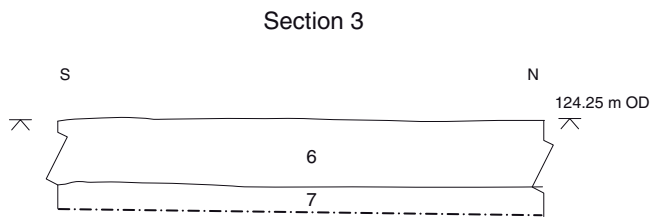
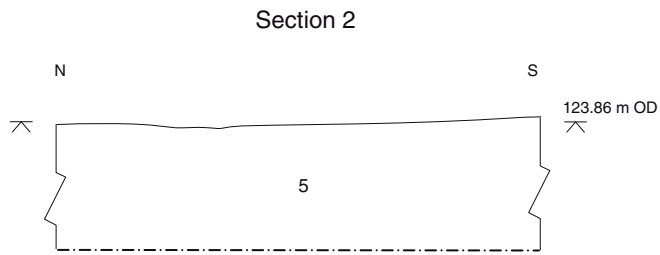
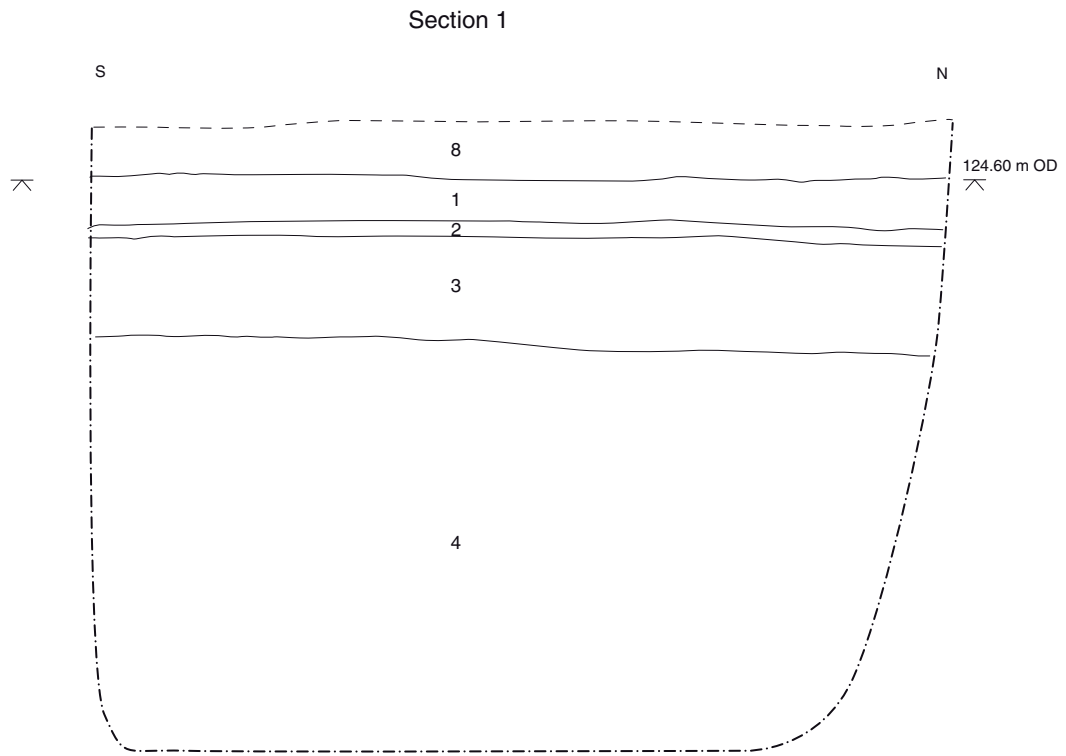


Figure 3: Sections





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