

Archaeological evaluation at Peter Scott House Gloucester

Worcestershire Archaeology
for Brodie Planning Associates

February 2020



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PETER SCOTT HOUSE GLOUCESTER GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Archaeological evaluation report



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SITE INFORMATION

Site name: Peter Scott House
Site code: P5776
Local planning authority: Gloucester City Council
Planning reference: 19/01179/FUL
Central NGR: SO 8396 1891
Commissioning client: Brodie Planning Associates
Client project reference: -
WA project number: P5776
WA report number: 2796
HER reference: -
Oasis reference: fieldsec1-385539
Museum accession number: -

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Archaeological evaluation at Peter Scott House, Gloucester, Gloucestershire

By Andrew Walsh

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology in January 2020 at Peter Scott House, Gloucester, Gloucestershire. This comprised of two evaluation trenches. The project was commissioned by Brodie Planning Associates on behalf of Goodwins Funeral Directors, in advance of a proposed redevelopment for which a planning application has been submitted to Gloucester City Council.

The site is located at Peter Scott House (2 Heathville Road; NGR SO 8396 1891), about 850m north-east of the centre of Gloucester. It is located in an area of known Roman activity. Roman deposits were found in the immediate vicinity of the site in the 1970s, and the site is located next to London Road, which is on the alignment of Ermin Street, the Roman Road between Gloucester and Cirencester. The site is also located within the recorded extent of Wotton Roman Cemetery.

Two trenches measuring 8m and 6m in length by 1.5m in width were excavated revealing natural deposits, an undated relict soil, a 19th century cellar wall and modern deposits. No Roman or other archaeological activity of interest was identified.

Report

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the project

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) in January 2020 at Peter Scott House, Gloucester, Gloucestershire. This comprised of two evaluation trenches. The project was commissioned by Brodie Planning Associates on behalf of Goodwins Funeral Directors, in advance of a proposed redevelopment for which a planning application has been submitted to Gloucester City Council (planning reference 19/01179/FUL). Andrew Armstrong, the archaeological advisor to the local planning authority, considered that the proposed development has the potential to impact upon possible heritage assets.

No brief was provided but the project conforms to the generality of briefs issued in the past. A WSI was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2020) and approved by Andrew Armstrong. The evaluation also conforms to the industry guidelines and standards set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists in *Standard and guidance: for archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014).

1.2 Site location, topography and geology

The site is located at Peter Scott House (2 Heathville Road; NGR SO 8396 1891), about 850m north-east of the centre of Gloucester. The site measures 650m² and is situated on the corner of the B4063 London Road and Heathville Road. Residential properties are located on the other two sides of the site.

Peter Scott House is located in the south-western part of the site, and there is a small garden to the south and west of the house. The former gardens to the north and west of the house have been tarmacked to provide carparking.

The site very gently slopes down towards the north, and the underlying geology is mapped as undifferentiated Blue Lias Formation and Charmouth Mudstone Formation (BGS 2020). No superficial deposits are mapped on the site although superficial deposits of Cheltenham Sand and Gravel are mapped in the immediate vicinity.

2 Archaeological and historical background

2.1 Prehistoric

The Gloucestershire County Council Historic Environment Record (HER) does not record any prehistoric activity on or in the immediate vicinity of the site.

2.2 Roman

The site is located in a known area of Roman activity. London Road is on the course of Ermin Street which ran between Gloucester and Cirencester and is understood to have been built in the late AD40s (HER 7542). The metalled surface of this road was thought to have been found at the junction of London Road and Heathville Road in 1976 during sewerage work (HER 1597 and 14466, Trench II). During rescue excavations in 1973 at 69 London Road, located approximately 35m west of the site, a number of large Roman ditches and gullies were identified (HER 42925 and HER 42926).

The site is also located within the recorded extent of Wotton Roman Cemetery (HER 14096), which is known to have extended for at least 500m along London Road from Number 65 to St Catherine's Church. Most of the cremations from the cemetery have been located towards the eastern end of the mapped area, and it is thought that it started as a cremation cemetery during the 1st century AD. Later inhumations have been found along the road to the southwest, indicating later expansion of the cemetery towards the town during the Roman period.

2.3 Medieval and post-medieval

During the medieval period the site was located just outside the boundary of the city, which crossed London Road about 100m to the west. This boundary may have been identified as a large ditch (HER 42927) during the rescue excavations in 1973 at 69 London Road (HER 42925).

Post-medieval maps available online on the *Know Your Place* website indicate two fairly large buildings were located on the site during the late 18th and early 19th centuries (KYP 2020). These buildings are visible on both the '1780 City of Gloucester' layer and the '1840-pre Gloucestershire Enclosures' layer. They also appear to be shown on a plan dated 1843 (BHO 2020a, figure 12).

Peter Scott House was built c.1869 (BHO 2020b) and originally called St Catherine's Vicarage. Historic Ordnance Survey mapping, ranging from the 1884 1:500 scale town plan through to c.1970 1:1250 scale mapping, indicates that the vicarage was originally larger than the surviving building, and that it extended to the east into an area of the garden that is now car parking. Evidence of this significant change to the fabric of the building is visible in the brickwork of the house (Plate 1).

3 Project aims

The aim of the evaluation, as outlined in the WSI (WA 2020), was to undertake sufficient fieldwork to:

- determine the presence or absence of archaeological deposits beyond reasonable doubt;
- identify their location, nature date and preservation; and
- assess their significance.

4 Project methodology

A WSI was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2020) and it was proposed that a single 20m by 1.5m trench would be excavated on the eastern side of the site, across the area of a proposed extension. However due to the depth of the identified below ground deposits and the lack of space for the safe storage of spoil it was agreed with Andrew Armstrong that the trench was split into two short trenches measuring approximately 6m and 8m in length.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed under constant archaeological supervision using a JCB 3CX type wheeled excavator, employing a toothless 1.5m wide bucket. Due to the depth of deposits present, the trenches had to be 'stepped' at c.1.4m below ground level and subsequent machine excavation was undertaken with a toothless 0.3m wide bucket. Due to the depth of the trenches they were not safely accessible, and all observation and recording took place from outside of the trench. Deposits were recorded according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012) and trench and feature locations were surveyed using a GNSS device with an accuracy limit set at <0.04m. On completion of excavation, trenches were reinstated by replacing the excavated material. The fieldwork was undertaken between 30 and 31 January 2020.

All fieldwork records were checked and cross-referenced. Analysis was undertaken through a combination of structural, evidence, allied to the information derived from other sources.

The project archive is currently held at the offices of Worcestershire Archaeology. Subject to the agreement of the landowner it is anticipated that it will be deposited at the Museum of Gloucester.

5 Archaeological results

5.1 Introduction

The deposits and features recorded in the trenches are shown in Figure 2 and Plates 2 to 6. The trench and context inventory are presented in Appendix 1.

5.2 Phasing descriptions

5.2.1 Natural deposits

The earliest deposit identified was located in the base of sondages excavated in the centre of both trenches and was a light yellowish blue clay (104 and 206; Plates 2 and 3). This was overlain by a c.0.2m thick orangey brown sandy gravel. These deposits are consistent with Cheltenham Sand and Gravel overlying undifferentiated Blue Lias Formation and Charmouth Mudstone Formation recorded in the area by the BGS.

5.2.2 Phase 1: Undated relict soil

Above the natural deposit in both trenches was a mid-grey brown sandy silt (103 and 203; Plates 2 and 3). It measured approximately 0.6m in depth. At the southern end of Trench 2 slight variation in this deposit was noted (207), with possible bands of lighter orangey material (possibly redeposited natural sand) and darker material running across it on an approximately east to west alignment (Plate 5). No finds or environmental material was observed during the mechanical excavation of this deposit, and it appears to be a relict soil. The darker material observed may be evidence of a different feature or deposit but it was not clearly visible due to the depth of the material and the constraints of the trench.

5.2.3 Phase 2: Modern

At the southern end of Trench 2 was Wall 204. It was orientated broadly north to south for 1.2m before heading towards the east (Plate 4). This corner correlates with one of the now demolished returns visible on historic OS mapping. Mortar was noted on the southern side of the wall indicating it was a cellar, with unexcavated deposit 205 representing the backfill. To the north of the wall was a possible construction cut for the cellar (208) and a surrounding fill (209). This cut relict soil 203.

Sealing the relict soil in both trenches was a layer of modern overburden (102 and 202). This measured between 0.55m and 0.6m in depth. Above the overburden were layers of hardcore (101 and 201) and the tarmac (100 and 200) for the car park.

6 Artefactual evidence

Recovery of artefacts was undertaken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). In the event no artefacts were identified which were considered to be suitable for analysis.

7 Environmental evidence

Environmental sampling was undertaken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). In the event no deposits were identified which were considered to be suitable for environmental analysis.

8 Discussion

The layers of identified material appeared relatively uniform across the site. Natural deposits were identified c.1.7m below ground level in the two trenches, although due to the constraints of the site and trenches this was limited to a 0.3m wide slot. No clear evidence of features cutting the natural substrate was identified. Above this was an undated relict soil which was typically about 0.6m thick. No clear changes were observed in this deposit, although some variation was noted in the deposit towards the southern end of Trench 2. Above this were modern made ground deposits, hardcore and tarmac.

No evidence of any Roman activity was identified during the evaluation. Additionally, no evidence of the buildings illustrated on the late 18th and early 19th century plans was identified in the trenches. The nature of these buildings is not known, and it is unclear how they relate to the possible relict soil

identified at the site. It is possible that the foundations were shallow, they were not located within the excavated trenches, and/or the structure in this part of the site was incorporated into vicarage built in the mid-19th century.

Wall 204 is the corner of a cellar which correlates with the return of part of St Catherine's Vicarage. This part of the former vicarage has been demolished but is visible on historic Ordnance Survey maps from the 1880s to at least c.1970. Part of this structure also appears to survive as a truncated stub of walling returning from the brick boundary wall located between the site and the neighbouring property to the east (Plate 6). The demolished structure would have measured the full width of the proposed extension, and about 6m in length. It was not possible to establish the depth of the cellar and it is unclear what, if any, impact it is likely to have had on potential buried remains in this part of the site.

9 Significance

Given the lack of any identified finds and environmental material identified in the relict soil this appears likely to be of agricultural origin and therefore of negligible significance. The cellar wall and other modern layers are also of negligible significance due to their late date.

10 Conclusions

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Peter Scott House, Gloucestershire. The site is located in an area of known Roman activity. Two trenches were excavated revealing an undated relict soil, a 19th century cellar wall and modern deposits. No Roman or other archaeological activity was identified.

The methods adopted allow a reasonable degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved. Due to the depth of the trenches it was not possible to access, examine and hand clean the identified deposits and it is also noted that it was only possible to excavated 0.3m wide sondages in the base of the trenches. However, conditions were generally suitable in all of the trenches to identify the presence or absence of archaeological features, larger finds such as bone and pottery and/or burnt material such as cremations. It is considered that the nature, density and distribution of features and deposits identified during the evaluation provide a reasonable characterisation of the development site as a whole.

11 Project personnel

The fieldwork was led by Andrew Walsh ACIfA, assisted by Hazel Whitefoot PCIfA. The project was managed by Tom Vaughan MCIfA. The report was produced and collated by Andrew Walsh. Specialist contributions and individual sections of the report are attributed to the relevant authors throughout the text.

12 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for the successful conclusion of the project: Wendy Hopkins of Brodie Planning Associates for commissioning the project and Rob Tyler (Goodwins Funeral Directors) for his help and support on site. Andrew Armstrong monitored the project on behalf of Gloucester City Council and Worcestershire Archaeology would also like to thank him for his advice.

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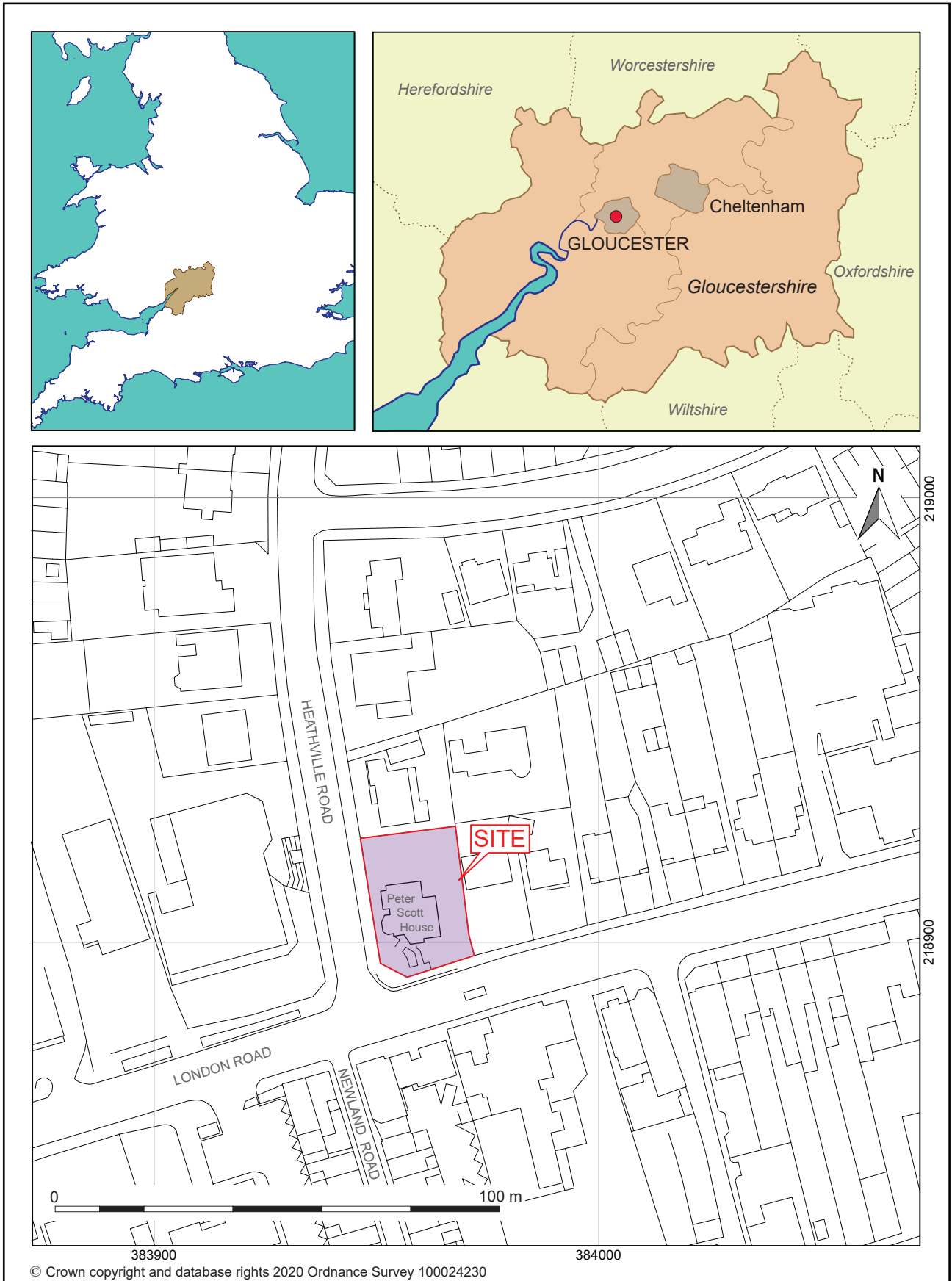
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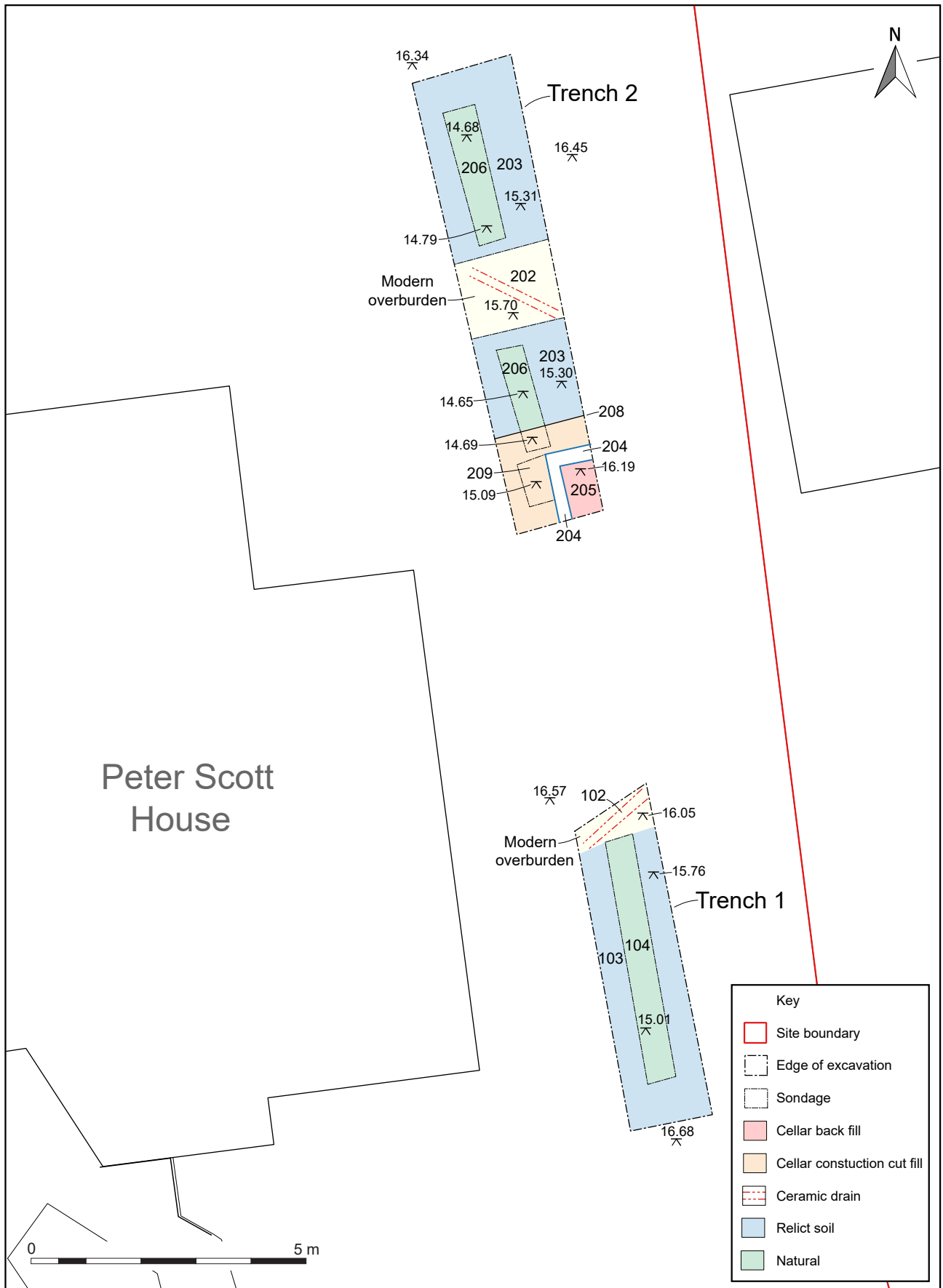
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Figures



Location of the site

Figure 1



Trench location plan

Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1: A modern external wall is clearly visible where part of Peter Scott House has been demolished. Photo looking south-west



Plate 2: Natural deposits (104) and the relict soil (103) are visible are visible below modern deposits in Trench 1. Photo looking north-west. Scale: 1m



Plate 3: Natural deposits (206) and the relict soil (203) are visible in Trench 2. Photo looking south-west



Plate 4: Cellar wall 204 (lower left) was located at the southern end of Trench 2. Note the mortar visible on the inside (left face) of the cellar wall. Photo looking south-west



Plate 5: A possible construction cut 208 for cellar wall 204 (left of shot) was observed cut the relict soil (203) (right of shot). A faint orange band in 203 is also visible. Photo looking west



Plate 6: The truncated remains for the demolished wall for the structure visible on historic maps survives as the property boundary. Photo looking north

Appendix 1: Trench descriptions

Trench 1

Length: 5.9m

Width: 5.9m

Orientation: North to south

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/depth
100	Tarmac	Layer	Tarmac	0.11m
101	Hardcore	Layer	Hardcore	0.12m
102	Overburden	Layer	Modern overburden	0.66m
103	Layer	Layer	Relict soil	0.60m
104	Natural	Layer	Natural	0.20m (exc)

Trench 2

Length: 8.4m

Width: 8.4m

Orientation: North to south

Context summary:

Context	Feature	Context	Description	Height/depth
200	Tarmac	Layer	Tarmac	0.15m
201	Hardcore	Layer	Hardcore	0.15m
202	Overburden	Layer	Modern overburden	0.55m
203	Layer	Layer	Relict soil	0.50m
204	Cellar wall	Structure	Cellar wall	1.0m+
205	Cellar backfill	Fill	Cellar backfill	Not excavated
206	Natural	Layer	Natural	0.25m (exc)
207	Layer	Layer	Relict soil?	0.2m
208	Construction cut	Cut	Cut for cellar wall 204	0.3m (exc)
209	Fill	Fill	Fill of construction cut 208	0.3m (exc)

Appendix 2: Summary of project archive

TYPE	DETAILS*
Artefacts and Environmental	None
Paper	Context sheet
Digital	GIS, Images raster/digital photography, Survey, Text

*OASIS terminology