

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

OF

THE FORMER WATERWORKS SITE,

UNION STREET, STOWMARKET

TM 0494 5874 (centred)

On behalf of

Boden Properties Ltd

APRIL 2004

REPORT FOR

Boden Properties Ltd
The Corn Exchange
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Summary

An archaeological field evaluation took place as part of a condition attached to planning permission for the redevelopment of the former Waterworks Site. Significant archaeological remains were found in the central part of the proposed development area. Mainly these took the form of domestic rubbish pits of the 12th - ?14th centuries and 16th+ century, presumably lying in the 'backlands' of plots fronting onto what is now Station Road West. The area appears not to have been inhabited during the 14th to early 16th centuries.

The eastern part of the site was found to have been heavily truncated probably during the construction of the Waterworks. No medieval or early post-medieval remains were present. Evaluation of the western part of the proposal area was not possible at this stage.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site of the proposed development is located behind premises fronting onto Station Road West. It is bounded on the eastern side by the Gipping Way Relief Road (A1308) and by Union Street to the north and Bury Street to the west. The site is currently occupied by the derelict Filter building of the Waterworks set within an open area of made ground and overgrown vegetation incorporating a number of well-established trees parallel to Gipping Way. The southwestern area of the site is occupied by a Co-op supermarket car park in current use.

The underlying geology is glaciofluvial sand and flint gravel of the Lowestoft Till formation which uncomfortably overlies the Crag Group and the Upper Chalk (British Geological Survey 1:50 000 Provisional Series Sheet 190). The site lies at c. 33.5 m O.D adjacent to Gipping way, rising by between 1.5 and 2.0 m towards the southwestern area of the site (the Co-op car-park area), where the ground surface levels out.

1.2 Planning Background

Planning permission has been granted after appeal (APP/W3520/A/03/1107349) for the redevelopment of the site of the former Waterworks, Union Street, Stowmarket. Due to the potential for archaeological remains to be present on the site, a condition requires for the implementation of a programme of archaeological work to be carried out. Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service – Conservation Team prepared a brief for an archaeological evaluation as a first stage of this programme of works.

John Moore Heritage Services (JMHS), in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (JMHS, 2003) approved by County Council Archaeological Service – Conservation Team, carried out the works.

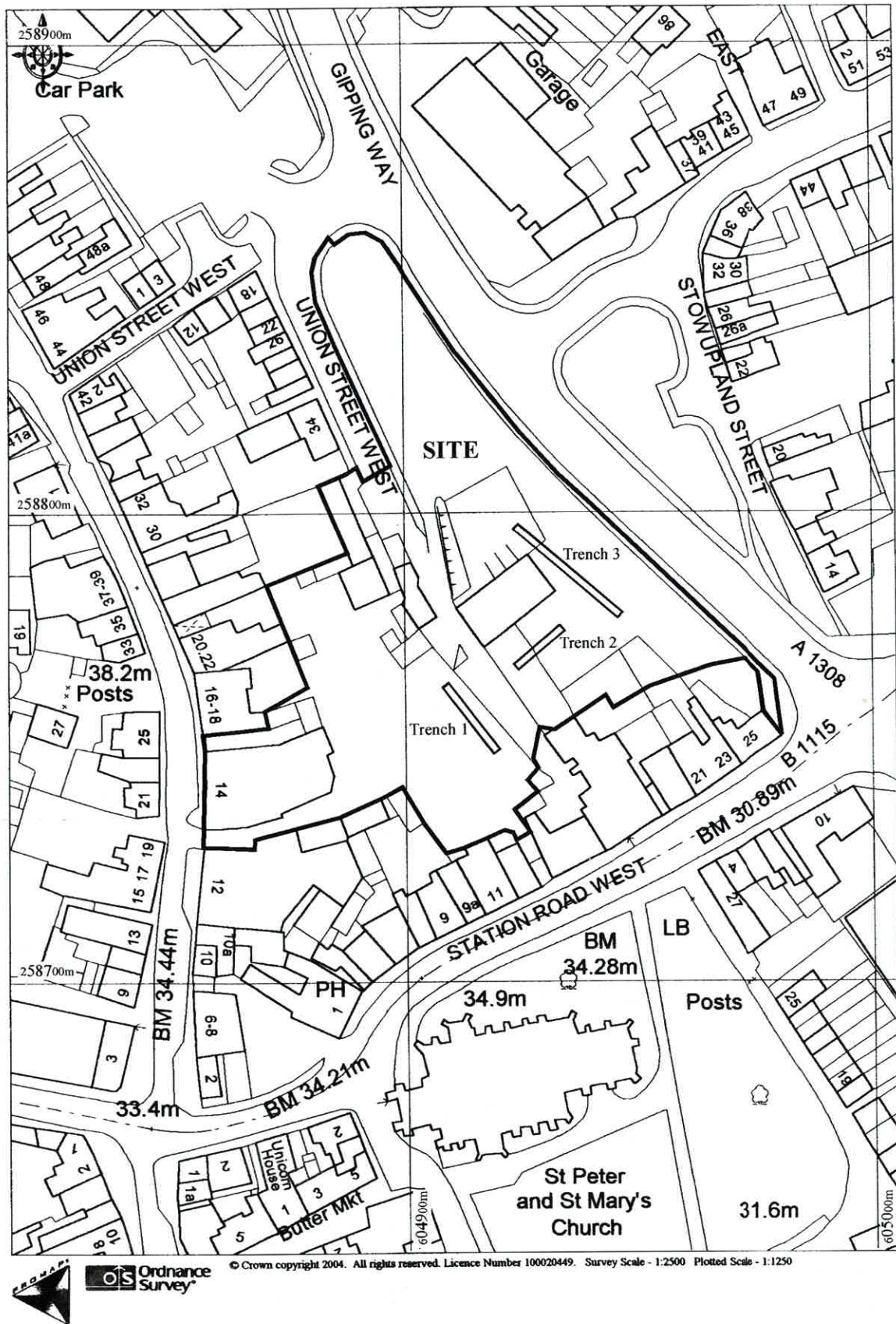


Figure 1. Site and Trench Location

1.3 Archaeological Background

A desk-based assessment was undertaken by JMHS and the results were presented as part of the Written Scheme of Investigation (*ibid*). Little is known archaeologically about Stowmarket. Documentary evidence indicates that both the church of St Peter and Paul and the market to the immediate south of the site were in existence in 1086. A second church of St Mary (demolished in 1546) is also recorded in 1086 as close to the cemetery of St Peter and Paul.

Limited archaeological excavations, during the construction of the Relief Road in 1991, uncovered pits dating from the 12th century along the eastern border of the site (SKT 014). These deposits lay under a very shallow topsoil overburden (300mm).

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the site with particular regard to any remains of sufficient importance to merit preservation *in situ*.
- To identify the date, approximate form and purpose of any archaeological deposit within the application area, together with its likely extent, localised depth and quality of preservation.
- In particular to establish whether remains associated with the medieval core of Stowmarket survive within the confines of the proposed development site.
- To evaluate the likely impact of past land uses, and the possible presence of masking colluvial/alluvial deposits.
- To provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological conservation strategy, dealing with preservation, the recording of archaeological deposits, working practices, timetables and orders of costs.
- To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

In response to a *Brief* issued by Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service – Conservation Team, a scheme of investigation was designed by JMHS and subsequently agreed with Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service –

Conservation Team and the applicant. The work was carried out by JMHS and involved the excavation of three trenches. One proposed trench could not be excavated due partly to a still-standing building and the current use of the car park pedestrian access and extant services.

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in the *Written Scheme of Investigation*. The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994).

3.2 Methodology

The field evaluation comprised the excavation of three trenches with the following lengths: Trench 1 - 17.5m, Trench 2 – 15m, Trench 3 – 27.5m. Each trench was 1.60m wide. Trench 1 was located on the eastern edge of the car park and was orientated NNW-SSE. Due to the fact that the car park is still in use, and that an access to the rear of a property on Station Road West had to be maintained, this trench was shortened from the original proposed length of 30m. Trench 2 was located further to the NE at right angles to Trench 1 and to the south of the standing Filter building. Trench 3 was located near Gipping Way and orientated NW-SE (Figure 1).

The trenches were excavated using a JCB equipped with a toothless ditching bucket. Trenches were excavated under direct archaeological control down to either significant archaeological horizons or the natural geology. Features present were sampled by hand excavation.

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and sections drawings compiled where appropriate.

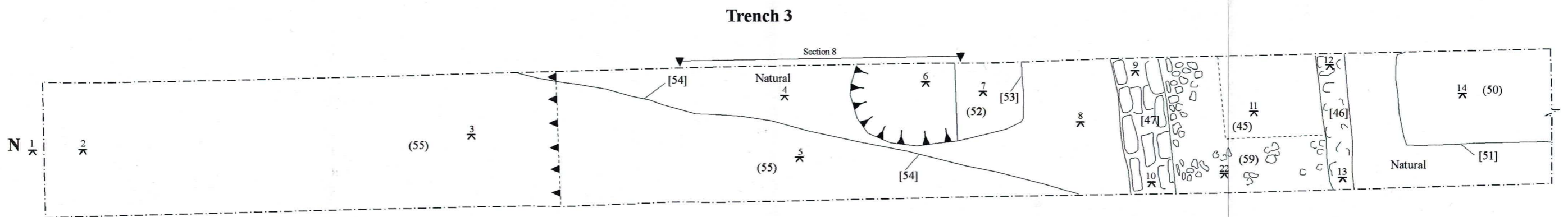
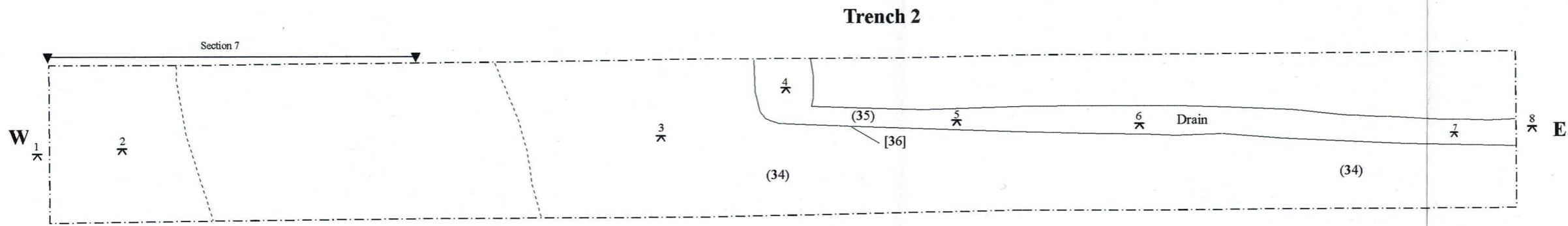
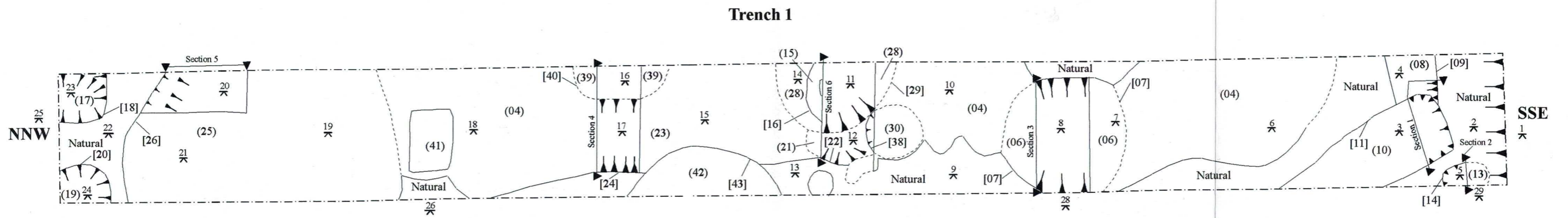
4 RESULTS

Deposits and fills are referred to in the text and figures in brackets: (02), cut features and walls are numbered in square brackets: [04].

4.1 Trench 1

The natural orange gravel and sands [05] were seen at 35.73m OD, some 0.40 – 0.80m below the existing car park level. This deposit was cut into by numerous features, mostly inter-cutting pits and post holes, a sample of which were investigated. (Figure 2)

Nearly all the features within the trench were obscured by a mid grey/brown sandy silt (04). This deposit also filled the tops of some of the features, making the interpretation of the trench difficult (see Figure 2). Pottery recovered from this layer has been dated to the 12th century, but given the amount of re-cutting pits in the area it is possible that this layer could be later and the pottery collected only represents the earlier phase of activity.



Levels (meters OD)

Trench 1					
1.	36.12	11.	35.48	21.	35.88
2.	35.72	12.	35.72	22.	35.86
3.	35.78	13.	35.89	23.	35.60
4.	35.75	14.	35.86	24.	35.75
5.	35.15	15.	35.87	25.	36.66
6.	35.79	16.	35.56	26.	36.54
7.	35.85	17.	35.47	27.	36.42
8.	35.66	18.	35.93	28.	36.32
9.	35.88	19.	35.84	29.	36.15
10.	35.87	20.	35.39		

Trench 2	
1.	34.31
2.	33.87
3.	33.89
4.	33.86
5.	33.79
6.	33.73
7.	33.61
8.	33.94

Trench 3			
1.	33.55	12.	32.82
2.	32.43	13.	32.81
3.	32.45	14.	32.91
4.	32.85	15.	32.91
5.	32.85	16.	32.98
6.	32.79	17.	32.68
7.	32.54	18.	32.92
8.	32.95	19.	32.88
9.	33.23	20.	32.74
10.	33.22	21.	33.53
11.	32.56	22.	32.43

Figure 2. Trench plans



At the far SSW end of the trench was a feature [09], which has been interpreted as a small gully, 0.60m wide by 0.14m deep aligned NE/SW. The gully had been truncated by a rectangular pit [11]. As [09] does not appear any further west it must have terminated within the trench. The gully fill (08) did not produce any dateable finds, only pieces of tile. The pit [11] was filled with two deposits (10 & 12); both were of a similar sandy silt matrix, one being slightly darker than the other (12). Deposit (10) contained 24 fragments of ceramic building material (cbm), whilst (12), the lower fill contained a sherd of 16th+ century pottery. The cut for feature [11] measured at least 2.10m NE/SW and was 0.80m wide and 0.50m deep. The pit had near vertical sides and a flat base (Figure 3, Section 1)

Several sections were excavated through the deposit (04) in the central area of the trench and revealed cut features which were excavated. These were interpreted as pits along with a possible linear feature [24]. This linear feature [24] was 0.90m at its widest, and 0.50m deep. It had near vertical sides with a concave bottom and was aligned NW/SE (Figure 3, Section 4). No relationship with a probable pit to the east was determinable. It is possible that the linear feature is a rectangular pit and not a linear feature, as it was not present further to the north. The feature to the east is a probable pit [40] of c. 1.10m in diameter and 0.30m depth.

A large circular pit [26] was recorded towards the NNW end of the trench. It was approx 3.20m in diameter, and was partially excavated to reveal that it had a slightly rounded base and near vertical sides, and it was mostly filled with (25) a loose mid brown sandy silt, with a lower fill (27), an orange/brown sandy silt gravel (Figure 3, Section 5). No dating was recovered from this last deposit, but a single pottery sherd recovered from (25) has been dated to around the late 13th century.

Two other features were investigated at the NNW end of the trench. They were a shallow scoop [20] and a pit [18]. The shallow scoop may be all that remains of a truncated pit and finds from its fill (19) have been dated to the 12th - ?14th centuries. Pit [18] was seen in the north corner of the trench and continued beyond the trench limits. It measured as seen 0.60m x 0.60m and was 0.50m deep. Its fill was mid brown/grey sandy silt (17). Along with several sherds of earlier pottery, were 2 sherds of 16th+ century Glazed Red Earthenware recovered from this fill.

Fill (41) was the fill of a modern feature that was not excavated.

Cutting the possible linear feature [24] was a sub-circular pit [43] of c. 2.1m diameter. The upper part was filled by mid brown sandy silt with 10% (by volume) mixed gravel. This feature was not excavated.

Near the centre of the trench were three intercutting pits, cut by a modern intrusion (Figure 3, Section 6). The earliest pit [29] was c. 1.4m in diameter and 0.43m deep and was filled by mid yellow sand and gravel. The fill (28) produced 5 sherds dating to the 12th - ?14th centuries. Truncating this pit on its west side was a further pit [22] at least 0.80m wide/in diameter and 0.18m deep. This had sides at c. 45^o and a slightly rounded base. Its fill (21) of mid brown-orange silty sand with 30 % of mixed gravel contained a sherd of 13th - 14th century pottery. This pit in turn was cut by a near circular pit [16] of 0.6m+ diameter and 0.35m depth. The fill (15) of dark grey

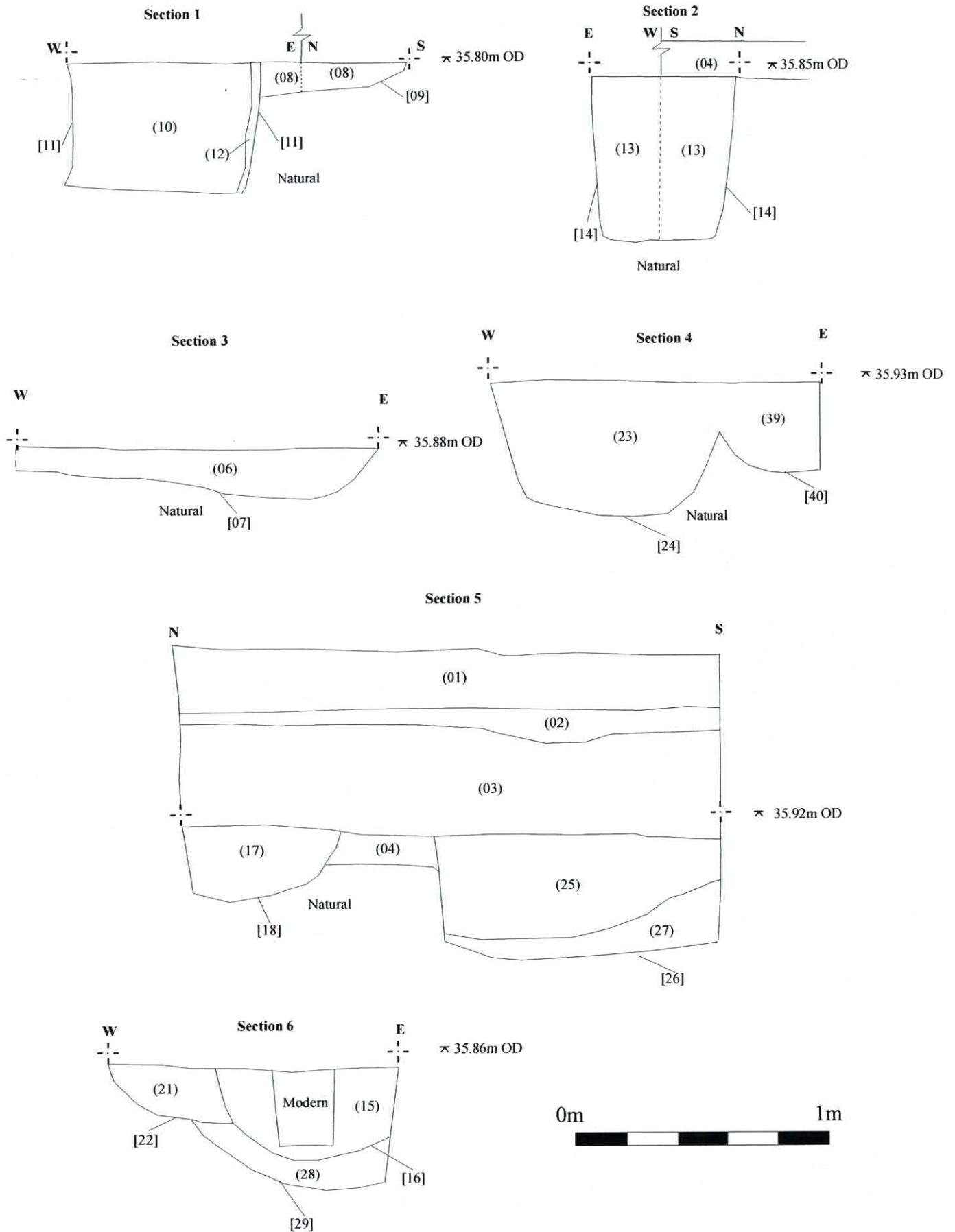


Figure 3. Sections 1- 6

sandy loam contained sherds dating to the 12th - ?14th centuries. A further pit [38] cut the middle pit [22] in the above sequence. This pit [38] was circular with a diameter of 0.7m and a depth of 0.25m. It had concave sides and a rounded base, and was filled by a mid orange-brown sandy silt with 5% fine gravel (30). The pit fill produced a single sherd of late 12th to late 13th century pottery.

Further SSW was a further large circular pit (07). This was 1.5m in diameter and survived 0.45m deep with sides at 45⁰ and an irregular base. It was filled with mid grey-brown silt with frequent irregular flint nodules (06) and contained a pottery sherd of 12th - ?14th century date and fragments of tile (Figure 3, Section 3). A post hole [14] was found at the extreme SSW end of the trench. This was 0.3m in diameter and 0.63m deep with vertical sides and a rounded base (Figure 3, Section 2). The fill (13) contained fragments of animal bone and cbm.

In total eleven pits were investigated and recorded. From this total seven have been dated to the 12th – late 13th or 14th century and two from the 16th+ century. The other two did not produce any datable evidence.

Lying over deposit 04 was a deposit of dark brown-grey sandy silt loam with 20% mixed gravel (03). This had a maximum depth of 0.4m and was found along the whole length of the trench. Above this was a compact deposit of chalk up to 0.12m thick (02) over the majority of the trench. This may be a make-up layer for the car park. The uppermost deposit was the car park surface formed from gravel (01). It varied in thickness from 0.08m at the SSE end of the trench to 0.26m at the NNW end.

4.2 Trench 2

The natural subsoil (34) was seen at 34.21m OD just below the existing grassy turf and topsoil (31). The subsoil consisted of a yellow-orange silt some 0.25m thick overlying firm orange-brown silty clay (37).

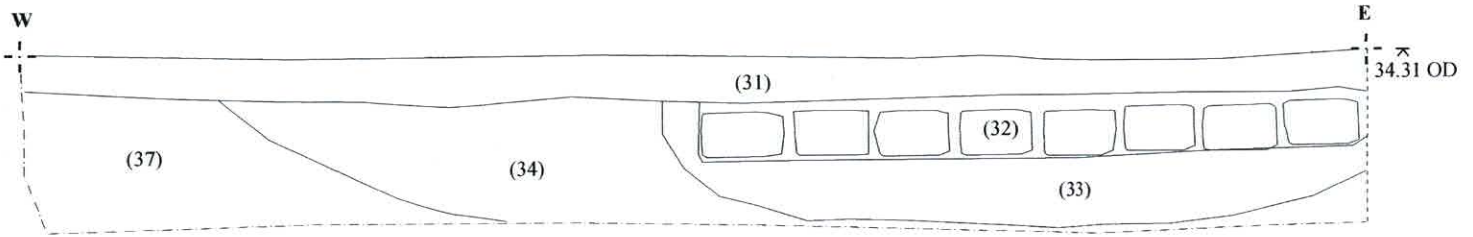
Two features were seen cutting into this subsoil. One was a service /drain trench [36] associated with the Filter building. The other was a shallow scoop measuring 1.60m wide and 0.32m deep, which was filled with (33) a deposit of clinker and gravels, to make a solid founding for a yellow brick surface [32] (Figure 4, Section 7). The floor was exposed in places at the existing ground level. The north / south limits of this brick floor were not fully exposed.

4.3 Trench 3

The same natural subsoil (57) as in Trench 2 was seen at a level of 32.15m OD. This overlay mid orange-brown sandy clay (58).

Several large features were exposed and investigated, along with what may be a truncated and back-filled cellar.

Section 7



Section 8

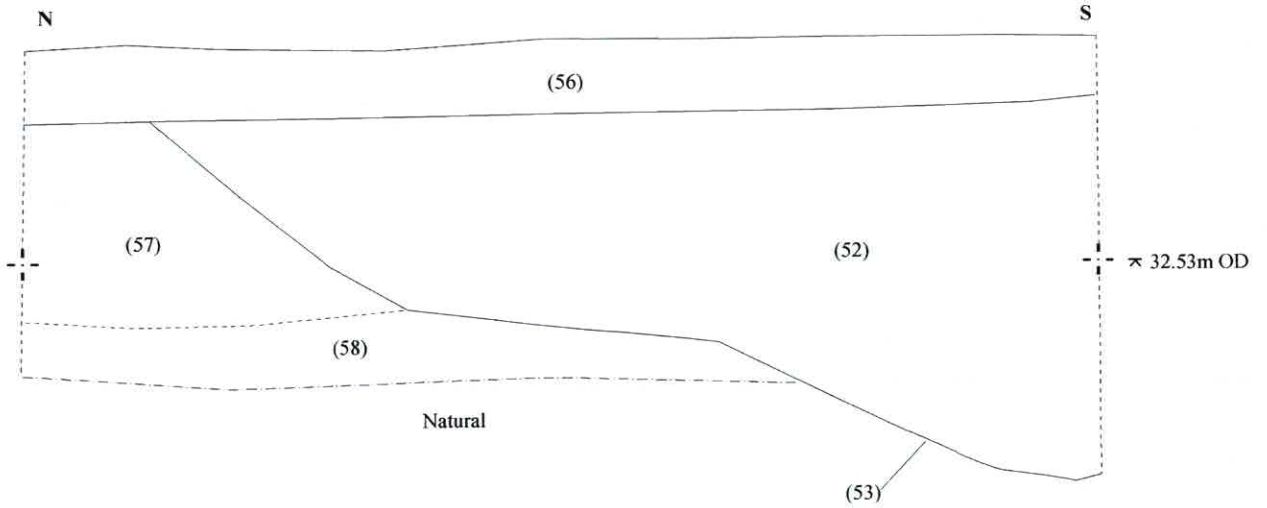


Figure 4. Sections 7 and 8

The southern end of the trench had been recently disturbed; a large section of re-enforced concrete was exposed at a depth of 32.74m OD. This appeared to have a void below it, and was not investigated any further.

A linear feature [49] was investigated. It was 1.30m wide and had vertical sides. It was partially hand dug to a depth of 0.45m before concluding it was a recent feature. A drain is shown on an unknown plan leading to the south-west corner of the filter building in this position. The feature contained 2 sherds of 18th – 19th century material along with quantities of cbm. This feature has been interpreted as a possible drain or sewer, serving the waterworks building.

Two near rectangular features were present [53] & [51]. [53] was investigated to reveal that it had an irregular base with sides of 45°. It measured 2.30m N/S and 0.90m E/W and was 1.00m deep (Figure 4, Section 8). From its fill (52) two fragments of 16th+ century pottery and quantities of broken clay pipe stems were recovered. A fragment of clay tobacco pipe bowl is highly decorated and is of late 19th century date.

Two parallel walls [46 & 47] were present in the central area of the trench 1.80m apart. The northern wall [47] was constructed from yellow brick set in a very hard cement. It measured 0.50m wide and stood 0.65m high. Wall [46] was constructed from a single course of yellow bricks overlain with several layers of flint nodules, set in a cream mortar. It was smaller than [47] being 0.35m wide and only survived 0.25m above the flint cobble floor [59], which was laid between the two walls.

These walls could have formed a cellar. The in-filling of the feature (45) produced large quantities of pottery, glass and ceramic building material (in particular several fragments of malting bricks). Several sherds of 16th century material, but predominantly later 20th century material, was recovered.

At the northern side of the possible cellar was a very large cut feature [54]; the limits of which could not be determined. If the east edge is projected northwards in a straight line, then the feature is at least 3m wide. It was vertical sided and aligned N/S. A single sherd of 20th century pottery along with several broken clay pipe stems was recovered from its fill (55).

The large rectangular pit [51] was not investigated.

5 FINDS

5.1 The Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 97 sherds with a total weight of 2551g. The bulk of the assemblage comprised modern material (61 sherds, 1663g) but a range of medieval wares was also present, suggesting that there was activity at the site from the 12th – 14th centuries.

The following fabrics were noted:

MEDS: Medieval sandy ware, 11th – 14th C? 4 sherds, 13g.

MEDG: Medieval fine sandy grey ware, 12th -14thC? 11 sherds, 73g.

HED: Hedingham ware, late 12th – late 13th century (McCarthy and Brooks 1988, 300-2). 1 sherd, 5g.

IGW: Ipswich Glazed ware, 13th – 14th century (ibid. 271). 4 sherds, 28g.

GRE: Glazed Red Earthenware, 16th century+. 14 sherds, 757g.

LES: Late English Stoneware, 18th –19th century. 2 sherds, 12g.

19th/20th C: Mass-produced White Earthenwares, 19th – 20th century. 61 sherds, 1663g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*

Generally, the medieval assemblage comprised small fragments of plain bodysherds, some of which were glazed. The only feature sherd was a rim from an IGW jug with green glaze and traces of slip decoration. A body sherd in this fabric had an incised wavy line.

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

Context	MEDS		MEDG		HED		IGW		GRE		LES		19th/20th C		Date
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
4	3	10	2	15											12thC?
6			1	6											12thC?
12									1	16					16thC?
15	1	3	1	2											12thC?
17			1	18			2	19	2	24					16thC
19			1	6											12thC?
21							1	6							L13thC?
25							1	3							L13thC?
28			5	26											12thC?
30					1	5									L12thC
45									9	707			60	1645	20thC
48											2	12			18thC
52									2	10					16thC?
55													1	18	20thC
Total	4	13	11	73	1	5	4	28	14	757	2	12	61	1663	

5.2 Flint

Six flint flakes were recovered from the following contexts, all in Trench 1: (04) deposit, (15) fill of pit [16], (17) fill of pit [18], (23) fill of linear feature [24], (25) fill of pit [26].

None of the flakes have been retouched and only exhibits use-wear. The flints are of the later prehistoric period - Bronze Age to ?earlier Iron Age (identification by Roy

Entwistle). All the flints are residual, being found in medieval or later features and deposits.

6 DISCUSSION

No prehistoric features were recognised in any of the trenches, although the number of flint flakes from the period suggests that there has been activity of this period in the near vicinity of the evaluation.

The earliest activity represented on the site is in the form of 12th – 13th, or earlier 14th, century domestic rubbish pits. In addition 16th+ century features are present. These only survive on the higher ground of the car park (see below). These features present activity presumably in the backlands of plots that fronted what is now Station Road West. The activity in the 12th - ?14th centuries appears to have relatively intense with at least seven pits of this date present within Trench 1, of which four were intercutting. Habitation in the area appears to have declined in the later 13th or 14th century and it was not resumed until the 16th century.

The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map shows a large Malthouse building in the area of Trench 1. Whether the building lay just outside the trench or it was shallow-footed and therefore did not disturb the archaeology is unknown.

Some of the archaeology found in Trenches 2 & 3 can be seen and interpreted from an unknown plan showing the plots prior to the construction of the relief road and the First Edition Ordnance survey map (1881).

The brick surface [32] seen in Trench 2, could be all that remains of the small building that abutted the south side of the Filter building as shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map (1881). The same map shows a Malthouse to the east of the position of Trench 3 from which the malting bricks found in fill (45) of the possible cellar could have derived from. There was insufficient evidence to prove that the brick walls in Trench 3 were part of a cellar. This feature may be an integral part of the waterworks e.g. a sluice.

The archaeological evidence would suggest that the eastern part of the evaluation area has at some time been landscaped/terraced, probably during the construction of the Waterworks and therefore removing any earlier deposits from this area of the site. The land falls quickly to the east from the edge of the car park. Rescue excavations in advance of the new Gipping Way carried out in August 1991, revealed a small cluster of pits, one of which has been dated to the 12th century. This site is some 60 meters to the east of Trench 1 and helps support the theory that the area between the car park and the new road (Gipping Way) has been totally truncated prior to the construction of the waterworks.

7 CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation has established that there are no significant archaeological remains in the eastern part of the site where the new superstore is to be built. The significant remains that are present are confined to the area that is to become Car Park B, to the west of the proposed superstore.

It is the view of John Moore Heritage Services that no further archaeological work is required in the area of the proposed superstore. The area to the north is to become Car Park C. Some deep drainage will be constructed across this area. It is suggested that a watching brief be maintained during the excavation for this in order to record any archaeological remains.

In the area proposed for Car Park B significant remains were found to be present 0.4 – 0.8m below present ground level within Trench 1. The shallower end of the trench was to the SSE and it increased towards the NNW. The impact of the car park will be at a depth of 0.45 to 0.50m below existing. It is recommended that the stripping of the area for the car park be under archaeological supervision and that, where archaeological deposits are exposed, these should be hand cleaned and recorded. The laying of the sub-base for the car park surface should be carried out in such a manner that machinery does not track directly across archaeological deposits. This would ensure the preservation *in situ* of the remains. It is further recommended that a watching brief be carried out during the excavation for deeper drainage across the area.

The area of the proposed Car Park A could not be evaluated at this stage due partly to a standing building and partly due to pedestrian access having to be maintained and the presence of active services. It is suggested that the evaluation trench proposed for this area be excavated immediately after demolition of the building and an appropriate mitigation strategy for this area be agreed at this stage.

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