



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
AT
TURNFORD TRIANGLE, BROXBOURNE,
HERTFORDSHIRE
TL 3630 0460

On behalf of
Charles Church North London

MARCH 2008

REPORT FOR Charles Church North London
c/o CgMs Consulting
Morley House
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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services conducted an archaeological evaluation of the proposed development site, from 13th –14th March 2008. Four trenches, totalling approximately 140 metres in length, were excavated to reveal the underlying natural geology.

No archaeology was found in Trench 1 with Trench 2 revealing only modern features consisting of four ditches in the south and centre of the trench and an expensive area of modern disturbance in the north end of the trench. These were largely dated by the presence of modern refuse. Trench 4 had four separate areas of brick-built wall foundations all relating to the same building; presumably the 19th century Nunbury House. These were complimented in Trench 3 by two further walls and a cobbled area. These are assumed to be the remains of the garden layout and associated ancillary buildings. Large amounts of 19th century pottery were associated with these features.

1 INTRODUCTION

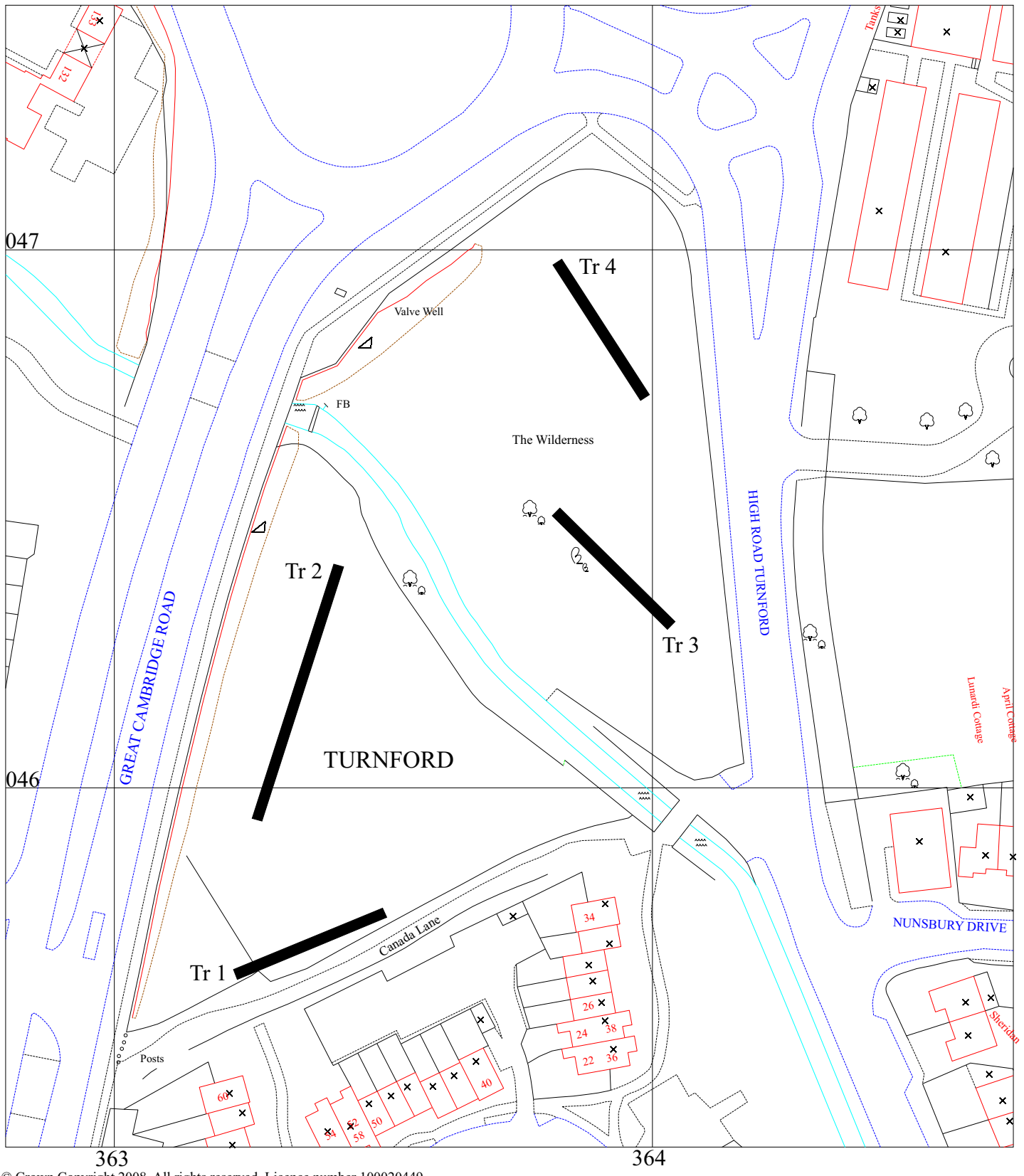
1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site is located on the southern side of the junction between Great Cambridge Road and High Road, Turnford, Broxbourne, Hertfordshire (NGR TL 3630 0460). The site is currently semi-derelict. The site slopes from north to south and is cut approximately in half by the Turnford Brook. North of the Brook the study site is covered by woodland with an area known as the ‘The Wilderness’ towards the extreme north. Immediately north beyond this, the land rises up to meet the level of the roundabout and road junction. The southeast corner of the study area is roughly level and is c. 24m above Ordnance Datum.

1.2 Planning Background

A planning application for the construction of four blocks of apartments, car parking, access road and landscaping has been submitted (7/07/0733). Hertfordshire County Council have stated that they will require planning permission being granted with an archaeological condition attached as had been on a previous planning g permission (7/1091/060/HD). The suggested condition states:

“No development shall take place until the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the planning authority. This condition will not be discharged until the planning authority has received and approved an archaeological report of the archaeological investigations.”



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0 50 m

Figure 1. Site location

1.3 Archaeological Background (By A. Dyne)

A desk-based assessment of the site has been undertaken by CgMs Consulting (2007) and has been used for the information provided below.

Palaeolithic evidence is sparse in the immediate area of investigation despite being prevalent just to the south of Cheshunt. Pleistocene occupation of the Lee Valley is represented by a Levallois core found at a brickyard approximately 400m southwest of the site. It is clear from finds that the Lee Valley was exploited during this period but this was intermittent and sparse. The Mesolithic and Neolithic periods are better represented with a small collection of artefacts being unearthed from the Turnford Brickyard 400m to the southwest of the study site. These include several flint arrowheads and a number of flakes and cores.

Flint and pottery dated to the Bronze and Iron Ages has been identified at the Turnford Brickyard and a Bronze Age settlement identified at Canada Field c.400m to the South West of the site. A further occupation site at Halfhide Lane 220m southwest of the study area has revealed Bronze and Iron age pottery, loom weights, flint and sling shots. Further Iron Age pottery has been discovered at the north side of Nunnery Farm Field, Lea Valley Sand and Gravel Pit, to the southeast of the study site. A quarter gold slater has been recovered from the Wormley area to the northwest of the site.

It is likely that the Roman landscape in the area consisted of scattered farmsteads. The nearby A10 follows the line of Ermine Street, the road from London to York. There is no evidence for roadside settlement within the area. Roman pottery has been identified at Nunnery Farm Field and Canada Field about 400m to the southwest.

There was a Benedictine Nunnery at Cheshunt, first recorded in 1183, in the area now known as Nunnery Farm Field. After the Dissolution it became a farm and the final remains were removed as a result of gravel extraction in the area during the 1950's. A priory cell for Augustinian Canons was known to exist in the Wormley area between c.1260 and c.1510. Hamlets and villages developed along the Cambridge road during this period and a medieval bridge, the Nuns Bridge, is known to have existed just to the west of the study site. Medieval pottery has been found at Nunnery Farm Field.

Early modern maps show a house labelled Nunsbury, situated towards the northern part of the site. The 1842 Cheshunt Tithe Map shows open meadow to the southwest, the Turnford Brook and Nunsbury House including ancillary buildings and a garden. Two cottages are also present fronting on to the High Street in the southeast.

By 1873 – 1880 Nunsbury House has been demolished, illustrated on the first edition Ordnance Survey. The site is now vacant of buildings. During the earlier half of the 20th century the southwest of the site was being used as allotments. The only other major change near the site has been the construction of the Great Cambridge Road to the west of the site during the 1930's.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

- To determine or confirm the general nature of any remains present
- To determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of any remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence.
- To determine or confirm the approximate extent of any remains.
- To determine the condition and state of preservation of any remains.
- To determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present
- To determine or confirm the likely range, quality and quantity or any artefactual evidence present.
- To determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence and the forms in which such evidence may be present.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

A programme of work was designed by CgMs Consulting and agreed with Hertfordshire County Council. In order to assess the full archaeological implications of the proposed development, a programme of evaluation trenching with a sample size of 280m sq. was agreed.

3.2 Methodology

The trenching sample required was achieved through the excavation of one 50m x 2m long trench and three 30m x 2m trenches (Fig. 1). All of the trenches were located as close as possible to the positions indicated in the agreed specification (CgMs 2007a).

The trenches were excavated using a mechanical digger fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The resultant surfaces were cleaned by hand where necessary prior to limited hand excavation of archaeological deposits.

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. A photographic record was produced. The trenches were backfilled after recording. All resulting spoil heaps were checked for finds.

The work would be carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1999) and the procedures laid down in MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

4 RESULTS

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers in [] indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material.

4.1 Excavation Results (By S. Hammond & A. Dyne)

The trenches were located as close as possible to the positions indicated on the plan. Each trench was issued with its own unique set of numbers with the trench number preceding each context number issued. The topsoil observed as deposit (01) in Trench 3 for example was recorded as (3/01). Trenches 1, 3 and 4 were 30m in length whilst Trench 2 was 50m long.

Trench 1

A large, wide modern trench cut aligned approximately NE-SW was noted cutting through the natural yellow/brown gravelly clay natural (1/02). This was at least 2.2m wide and is likely to be part of a pipe cut that was thought to run to the north of the trench according to the Desk Based Assessment (CgMs 2007). This was sealed by a clearly disturbed mid grey silty clay topsoil (1/01) approximately 0.35m thick. No archaeological finds or deposits were revealed.

Trench 2

Observations made from this trench revealed a mid yellow/brown gravelly clay natural (2/03) cut by various features. Towards the middle of the trench a gully [2/04] aligned SW-NE was investigated. This was found to be 0.60m wide and 0.11m deep with a mid grey/brown silty clay fill (2/05) containing pottery, metal, CBM and coal dating the feature to the late post-medieval period. The natural was also cut by three modern linear ditches to the south whilst an area of modern disturbance was also uncovered at the northern end.

Sealing the modern linear features to the south was a dark orange-brown silty clay (2/06) c. 0.25m thick. This layer was only seen in the southern end of the trench starting approximately 25m from the northern end. Overlaying this was a dark brown/grey silty clay subsoil (2/02) measured to be 0.55m thick which in turn was covered by 0.25m of very dark grey/black silty loam topsoil (2/01).

Trench 3 (Figure 2)

The natural revealed in this trench consisted of mid orange/brown gravel (3/02). Into this various features were investigated. Towards the NW end of the trench a brick built structure was identified with walls (3/10) (part of a corner) and (3/11) forming part of a building. A construction cut [3/08] for the walls was identified and investigated for finds. A brick feature was built into the angle of the wall [3/10] and

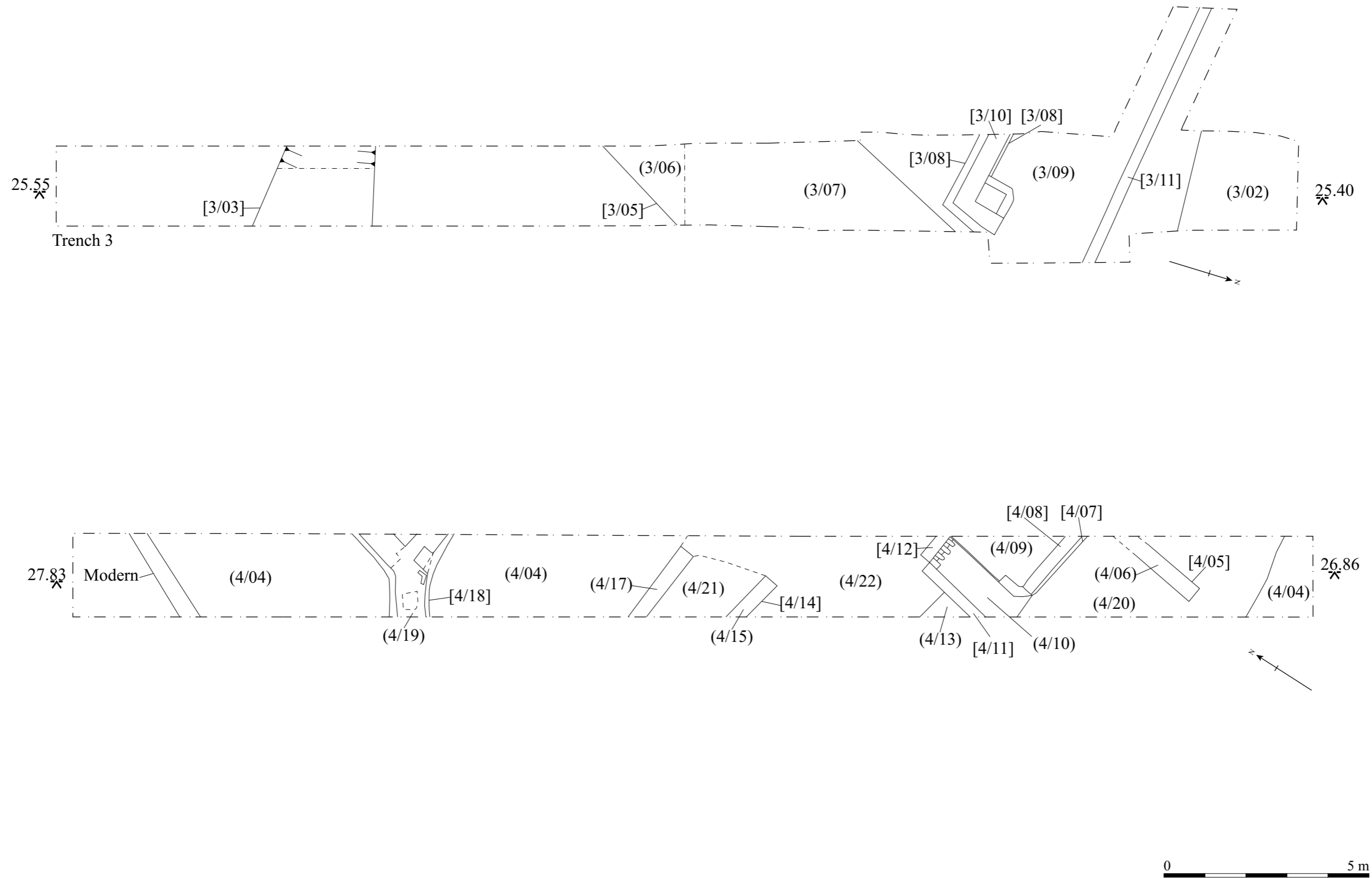


Figure 2. Trenches 3 and 4

there appeared to be a 2m wide entrance between [3/10] and [3/11]. Between these walls a diffuse bark brown/grey clay/loam (3/09) was noted, a back fill associated with the walls. This was not fully excavated but patches of natural gravel were coming through in places suggesting that there was no made floor layer. Probable 19th century finds were discovered within the wall area of (3/10) and within (3/09) in the form of ceramics, glass and a large iron object, tentatively identified as a “carpenters bracket”.

Towards the SE of the building a cut [3/05] was seen containing a loose mid orange gravel bedding layer (3/06) for a compact cobbled surface (3/07) approximately 0.07m thick. This is thought to have been a yard surface or track-way serving the building (Plate 1).

Feature [3/03] approximately 5m from the SE end of the trench was a shallow ditch 2.3m wide and 0.1m deep. Its fill, a mid brown clay/loam (3/04), contained examples of 18-19th century brick.

Trench 4 (Figure 2)

The natural in this trench was exactly the same as that in Trench 3. [4/05] was unexcavated, identified as a robbed out foundation trench. This would appear to be a projection from the northern range with (4/08), (4/11) and (4/12) appearing as part of the southeast corner of the north range (see Discussion). (4/10) were the remains of a slightly sloping brick floor leading into the building (Plate 2). Up to 3 courses of wall survived. There were a variety of fills just behind this area and butting up to the walls. (4/09) was an orange sandy layer which could possibly be a make up layer for flooring. (4/13) on the opposite side of the entrance formed by (4/10) is very similar to (4/09). Presumably walls [4/08] and [4/12] were contemporary. Whether there was an entrance through [4/08] into a room or whether the wall had been demolished was not determinable. The junction between [4/11] and [4/12] was destroyed.

To the north of these features are two further wall bases (4/15) and (4/17) within the trench, parallel to one another and on the same alignment as the earlier features mentioned above (Plate 3). It would seem reasonable to suggest that these represent the remains of internal walling. There is a gravel layer between the walls similar to (4/09) and probably representing packing for a floor layer.

To the north of these features was a Y shaped cut (4/18) containing a brick built structure (4/19) with a cut suggesting a drainage function (Plate 4). It seems possible that this was an external back wall to the property with a drain cut into the base.

The only other feature was an unexcavated modern ditch at the extreme north end of the trench.

4.2 Reliability of Techniques and Results

The excavation took place during a period of relatively dry weather, with only a light shower on one day. The previous week had seen heavy rain and there was standing ground water in places, and the ground conditions were very soft. The site had been

stripped of vegetation prior to the evaluation, this had been shredded on site and left. The upper deposits had been heavily disturbed by this process.

It should be noted that the decaying vegetable matter and standing water made the northern portion of the site rather insalubrious, this was compounded by the local rat population. All site workers were ill within 3 days of finishing work. If further work is required a soil contamination report should be compiled.

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery

The pottery present on site included the following types:

Red earthenware. c 1550+.

Nottingham Stoneware, 1750-1900

Late English Stoneware. 1750 +

Refined white earthenware. c 1800+

Examples were only retained from context (4/03), either because material was not present in other contexts or it was considered residual.

5.2 Other

Examples of bricks were retained from the walls. A piece of roof slate and post-medieval glass was also recovered from (4/03).

6 DISCUSSION

All remains recorded within Trenches 3 and 4 would appear to correspond to features marked on the Cheshunt Tithing Map of 1842 (Fig. 3) although it is difficult to relate the location of Trench 4 (Fig. 1) with that of the house (Fig. 3). The cobble surface (3/07) would appear to be the same as the access way leading from the main road. This surface appears on the map to widen in front of a series of outbuildings.

Wall (3/11) is likely to be associated with these outbuildings and wall (3/10) with its proximity to the cobble surface may form part of an entrance way to the complex .

The ditch [3/03] does not show on any of the old maps.

Nunsbury House presumably was located by Trench 4. The walls located were either aligned E-W or N-S; this would follow the same alignment as depicted by the 1842 map for the house. Wall [4/17] may be the external (north) wall with a corridor along this side of the building. Walls [4/07], [4/12] and [4/13] may be part of the western end of the small structure in the southeast part of the northern range of the house indicated on Fig. 3. The brick floor may be an entrance into this building with a doorway through [4/12]. If this identification is correct, foundation [4/05] would be an additional wall perhaps following the line of the east side of this northern range.

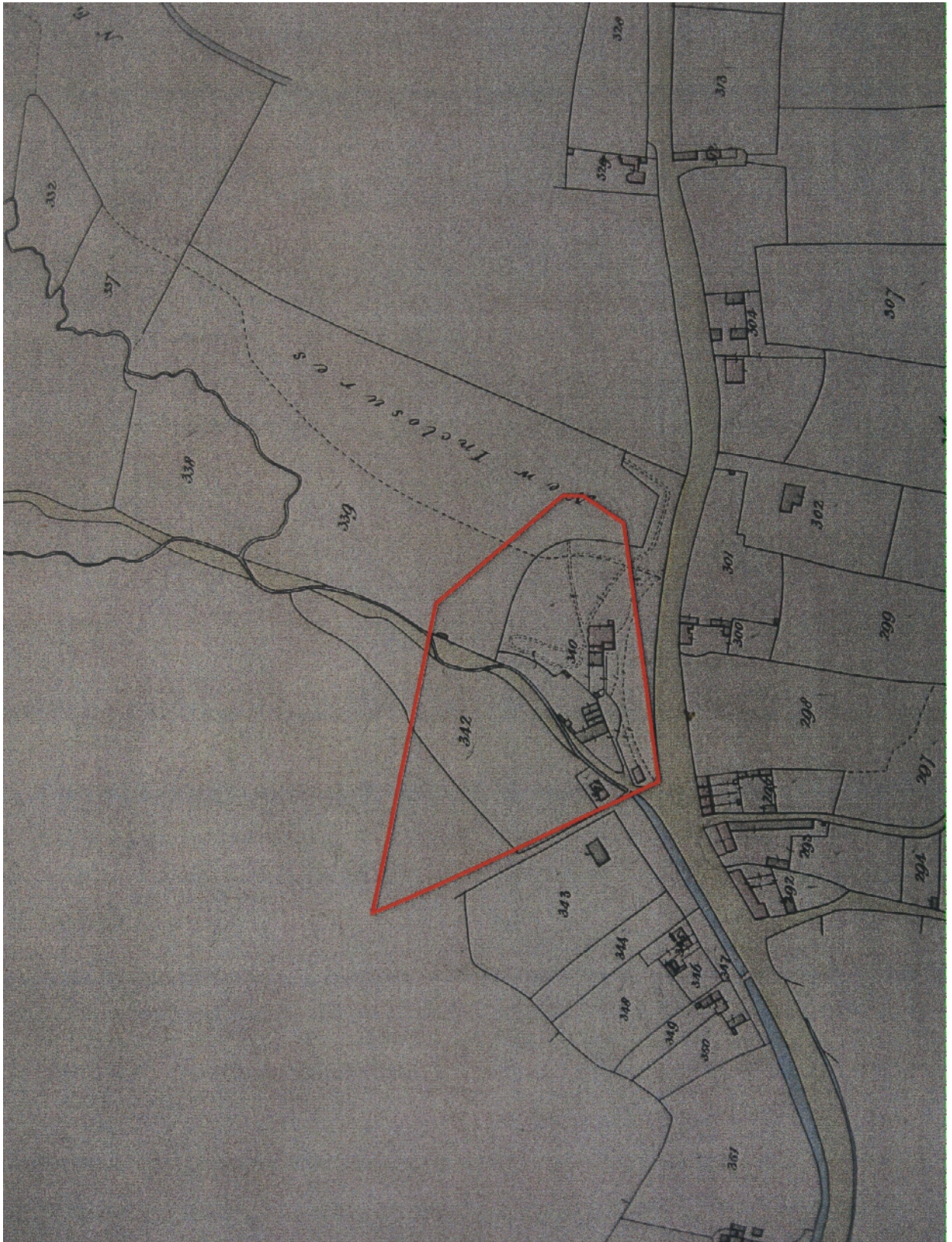


Figure 3. Cheshunt Tithe Map 1842

The natural was noticeable higher towards the west of the site in the northern area. It is possible that a significant portion of the site was levelled to accommodate the building of Nunsbury House.

7 CONCLUSIONS

The southern portion of the site was heavily disturbed by very recent activity, perhaps occurring when the nearby road was constructed or when the housing adjacent was built.

Remains of Nunsbury House and its associated structures were located to the north of the site. These are in reasonable condition with surfaces intact in some areas.



Plate 2. Trench 4; wall (4/08) and surface (4/10)



Plate 4. Trench 4, drain (4/19)



Plate 1. Trench 3



Plate 3. Trench 4; walls (4/15) and (4/17)

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CgMs. 2007. Archaeological Desk Base Assessment: Turnford Triangle, Broxbourne, Hertfordshire.

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APPENDIX – ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Date
Trench 1				2	30		
1/01	Layer	Topsoil	0.35	Tr.	Tr.		Modern
1/02	Natural	Gravel	-	Tr.	Tr.		
Trench 2				2	50		
2/01	Layer	Topsoil	0.25	Tr.	Tr.		Modern
2/02	Layer	Dark brown grey silty clay - subsoil	0.55	Tr.	Tr.		Modern
2/03	Natural	gravel	-	Tr.	Tr.		
2/04	Cut	Drainage gully	0.11	0.6	3.2+		Modern
2/05	Fill of 2/04	Grey brown silty clay	0.11	0.6	3.2+	Metal, brick	Modern
2/06	Layer	Grey Brown silty clay	0/25	Tr	5	Brick	Modern
Trench 3				2	29		
3/01	Layer	Topsoil	0.70	Tr.	Tr.		Modern
3/02	natural	Gravel	-	Tr.	Tr.		
3/03	Cut	Ditch	0.10	2.3.	2+		C18-19 th
3/04	Fill of 3/03	Mid brown clay loam + 10% gravel	0.10	2.3.	2+.		
3/05	Cut	For cobbled surface	0.10	6	2+		P-med
3/06	Make-up for 3/07	Orange gravel	0.03	6	2+		P-med
3/07	Layer	Cobble surface	0.07	6.	2+.		P-med
3/08	Cut	For wall 3/10	0.15	.0.7	.		P-med
3/09	Layer	Dark brown-grey clay loam + 205 gravel	0.20	2.7	6+		P-med
3/10	Wall	L-shaped brick wall	0.20	0.45	2.8		P-med
3.11	Wall	Brick	0.10	0.30	6.5+		P-med
Trench 4				2	29		
4/01	Layer	Topsoil	0.30	Tr.	Tr.	-	Modern
4/02	Layer	Dark orange black sandy clay subsoil	0.20	Tr.	Tr.		

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Date
4/03	Layer	Grey brown sandy clay	0.10	Tr.	Tr.		
4/04	Natural	Gravel	-	Tr.	Tr.		
4/05	Cut	Robbed foundation trench	?	0.40	1.7+		P-med
4/06	Fill of 4/05	Mortar, bricks and brick fragments	?	0.40	1.7+		P-med
4/07	Cut	Foundation cut for 4/08		0.5	3+		P-med
4/08	Wall	Brick	0.25	0.4	1.8+		P-med
4/09	Deposit	Orange sand and gravel	?	2+	1.5+		P-med
4/10	Surface	Brick	0.06	0.9	1.8		P-med
4/11	Wall	Brick	0.21	0.23	1.7+		P-med
4/12	Wall	Brick		0.33	0.9+		P-med
4/13	Deposit	Orange sand and gravel	?	0.80+	0.80+		P-med
4/14	Cut	Foundation cut for 4/15		0.60	1.3+		P-med
4/15	Wall	Brick		0.34	1.3+		P-med
4/16	Cut	Foundation cut for 4/17		0.60	1.9+		P-med
4/17	Wall	Brick		0.34	1.9+		P-med
4/18	Cut	For 4/19	0.5	1	2+		P-med
4/19	Structure	Brick ?Drain		1	2+		P-med
4/20	Deposit	Brick fragments and mortar in grey brown sandy clay + 10% gravel. Demolition material		2.5+	2.5+		P-med
4/21	Deposit	Orange sand and gravel + mortar. Make up layer for floor		1.4	1.9+		P-med
4/22	Deposit	Brick fragments and mortar in grey brown sandy clay + 10% gravel. Demolition material		5.5+	2=		P-med