

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

AT

LAND WEST OF ALBION STREET,

CHIPPING NORTON, OXFORDSHIRE

SP 3142 2708

On behalf of

CgMs Consulting

June 2008

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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an evaluation on land at Albion Street, Chipping Norton. The evaluation investigated the rear of three burgage plots. The wall that formed the line of the medieval boundary of one of the burgage plots was investigated; it could not be dated, but cut through a dump of rubble which was cut elsewhere by pits with a date-range between the 11th to 13th centuries. The wall of a possibly medieval building was also observed here. A further, undated wall was observed to the north. Two trenches yielded evidence of part of a pre-nineteenth century terrace or group of outbuildings. In the northernmost trench the remains of two nineteenth century buildings and a cobbled surface were observed.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site location (Figure 1)

The site comprises four properties located between High Street and Albion Street, Chipping Norton. These are to the rear of Nos. 8 – 14 High Street. Three of the properties were evaluated. The site is centred on NGR SP 3142 2708. The geology is Chipping Norton Limestone. The land slopes down from the east in a westerly direction from 210m OD to approximately 200m OD. The site currently contains some buildings but most of it comprises vacant plots/garden areas, service access and car parking.

1.2 Planning Background

A planning application has been submitted to West Oxfordshire District Council for the erection of 41 apartments with undercroft parking and 4 houses. The existing building will be partially demolished and extended to create a new library along with new access and extensions to the rear of shops at 8 and 9 High Street. Due to the potential presence of archaeological remains a predetermination field evaluation has been required. This is in line with PPG16 and Policy BE13 of the Local Plan. Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (OCAS) prepared a Design Brief For Archaeological Field Evaluation. A *Written Scheme of Investigation*, which proposed a suitable methodology to satisfy the requirements of the Brief, was submitted to and accepted by OCAS.

1.3 Archaeological Background

Cartographic evidence for the site suggests the presence of burgage plots that extend eastwards from the High Street. Previous archaeological investigations east of Albion Street suggest that it formed the easterly extent of the medieval town. Archaeological excavations by Oxford Archaeology in the area immediately to the north of the former White Hart Hotel revealed a series of medieval features (Simons 2005). These investigations found that earlier timber framed structures were preserved behind the eighteenth century frontage of the hotel. These included a substantial fifteenth century structure with an almost intact timber gallery at the rear of it.

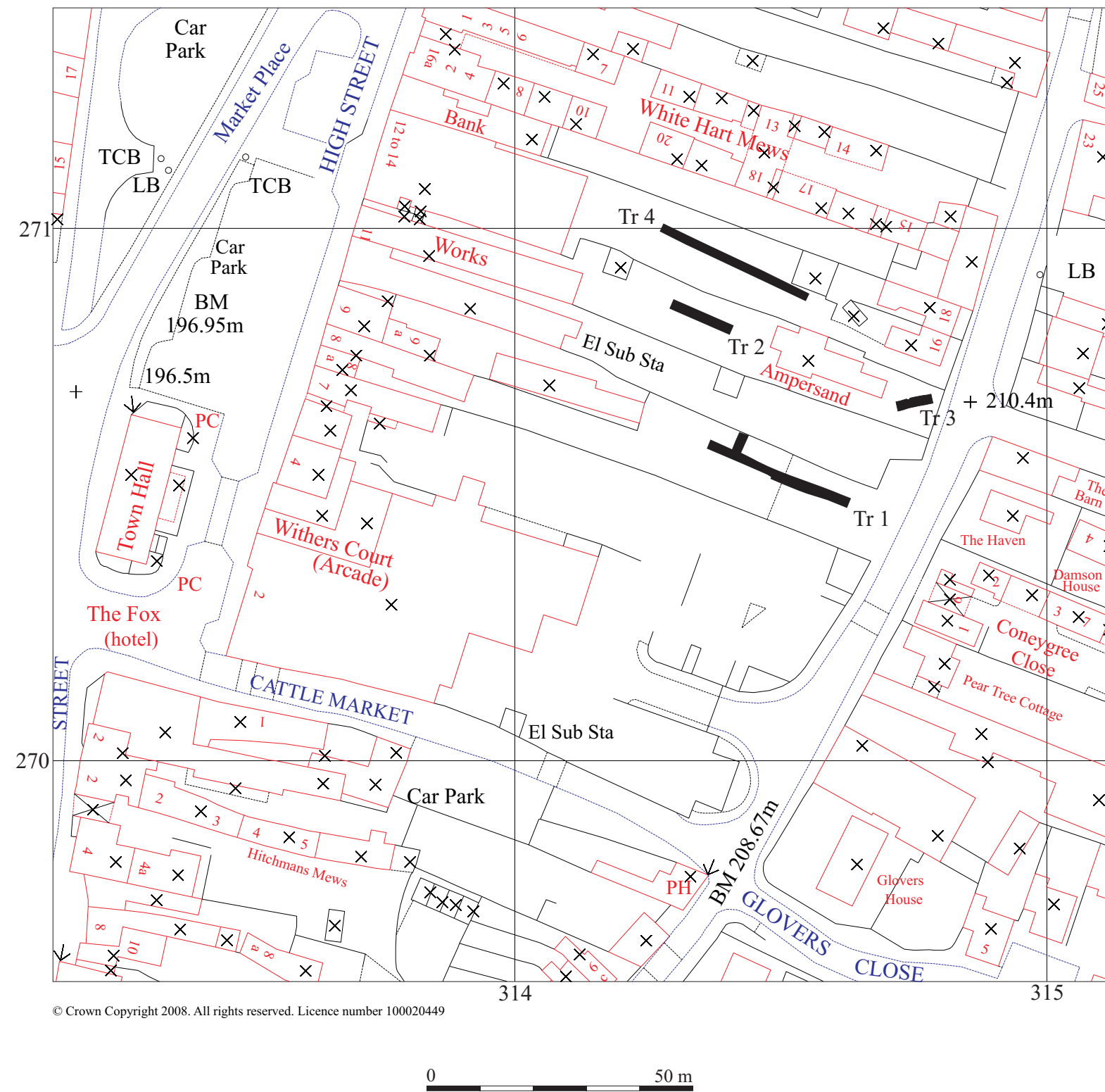


Figure 1. Site and trench location

Archaeological work to the rear of these structures revealed medieval pits and quarries dating to the eleventh and twelfth centuries along with a buried soil that was thirteenth century in date. These deposits were truncated by eighteenth and nineteenth century outbuildings that formed part of the hotel.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

- To determine the presence or absence of any archaeological remains.
- To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.
- To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of the archaeological features and deposits.

In particular

- to obtain evidence for the use of the burgage plots during the medieval period.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

In response to a *Design Brief* from OCAS and a trench layout designed and issued by CgMs Consulting, a Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared by John Moore Heritage Services and agreed with Oxfordshire County Council's Deputy County Archaeologist. JMHS carried out the work, which comprised the excavation of four trenches across the site (Fig. 1).

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) and the principles of MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

3.2 Methodology

The proposal site was subject to evaluation through the machine excavation of four trenches supplemented by limited hand investigation of archaeological deposits. The trench locations were supplied by CgMs Consulting. Trench 1 was 28m long with a 5m long offshoot. Trench 2 was 12m long as the presence of a tree and a recent animal burial necessitated a reduction in length. Trench 3 was 7m long and Trench 4 was 30m in length. All trenches were 1.6m wide. All trench positions were slightly adjusted from the CgMs Consulting's location due to the presence of services or other obstacles.

Excavation was by 3 tonne excavator equipped with a ditching bucket. Mechanical excavation was taken down to the top of “natural” deposits or any higher archaeological horizon, whichever was the more appropriate.

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 Fieldwork

Trench 1 (Figure 2)

Trench 1 was located to the rear of Nos. 8 and 9 High Street, measured 30m long and 1.6m wide, with a c 3.5m by 1.6m wide, north-south extension at the western end. The lowest lying deposit observed was the natural (1/03), firm red-orange clay and limestone observed only in the extension of the trench c 4m from the west end (Fig. 2, Section 1). It was not possible to carry out machining to any great depth as a live pipe ran down the centre of the trench and it was not possible to move the trench to the south as a live 11kV was located there.

Overlying the natural was an interface deposit (1/06), a compact red-brown clay, with less limestone pieces through it than the natural (1/03), and some charcoal present. In the main body of the trench this was observed as (1/26). This was overlain by (1/02), a friable mid brown clay silt, which varied in thickness between 0.14m and 0.35m; this was recorded as (1/25) at the west end, and as (1/19) at the east end of the main body of the trench. Although no pottery to date the deposit was recovered, animal bone was present. These deposits may well represent a buried soil horizon. It was overlain by the layer of dumping (1/16), which in the main body of the trench was recorded as (1/18); this was a compact yellow sandy layer with limestone pieces through it.

In the northern extension, (1/16) was overlain by a sequence of deposits which it seems reasonable to associate with one another: overlying the sandy dump (1/16) was (1/15) a dark grey-brown clay sand which contained stone and charcoal spread through it. A band of charcoal (1/14), a sandy layer (1/13), grey clay (1/12) and a further charcoal layer (1/11) all overlay this, measuring c. 0.2m in total and appearing to be a dump of demolition material. None of these deposits were present to the south in the main body of the trench, and were cut to the north by the construction of the wall [1/17] of the burgage plot.

The wall [1/17] was investigated to ascertain a possible date for the burgage plot. The cut for the wall was very poorly defined, as the wall was a drystone wall, with no bonding material. The deposits, (1/02), (1/16), (1/15), (1/13) that it more than likely truncated – rather than was abutted by – had infiltrated into the wall matrix on the southern side. No dating material was recovered from the wall.

In the main body of the trench, the yellow sandy rubble (1/18), which was the same as (1/16), was cut by several pits [1/07], [1/24] and [1/28] – all three of which were partially truncated by the later water pipe trench [1/04]. The large pit [1/07], (Section 2), was sub-oval and had steep sides with sharp breaks of slope and a concave base.

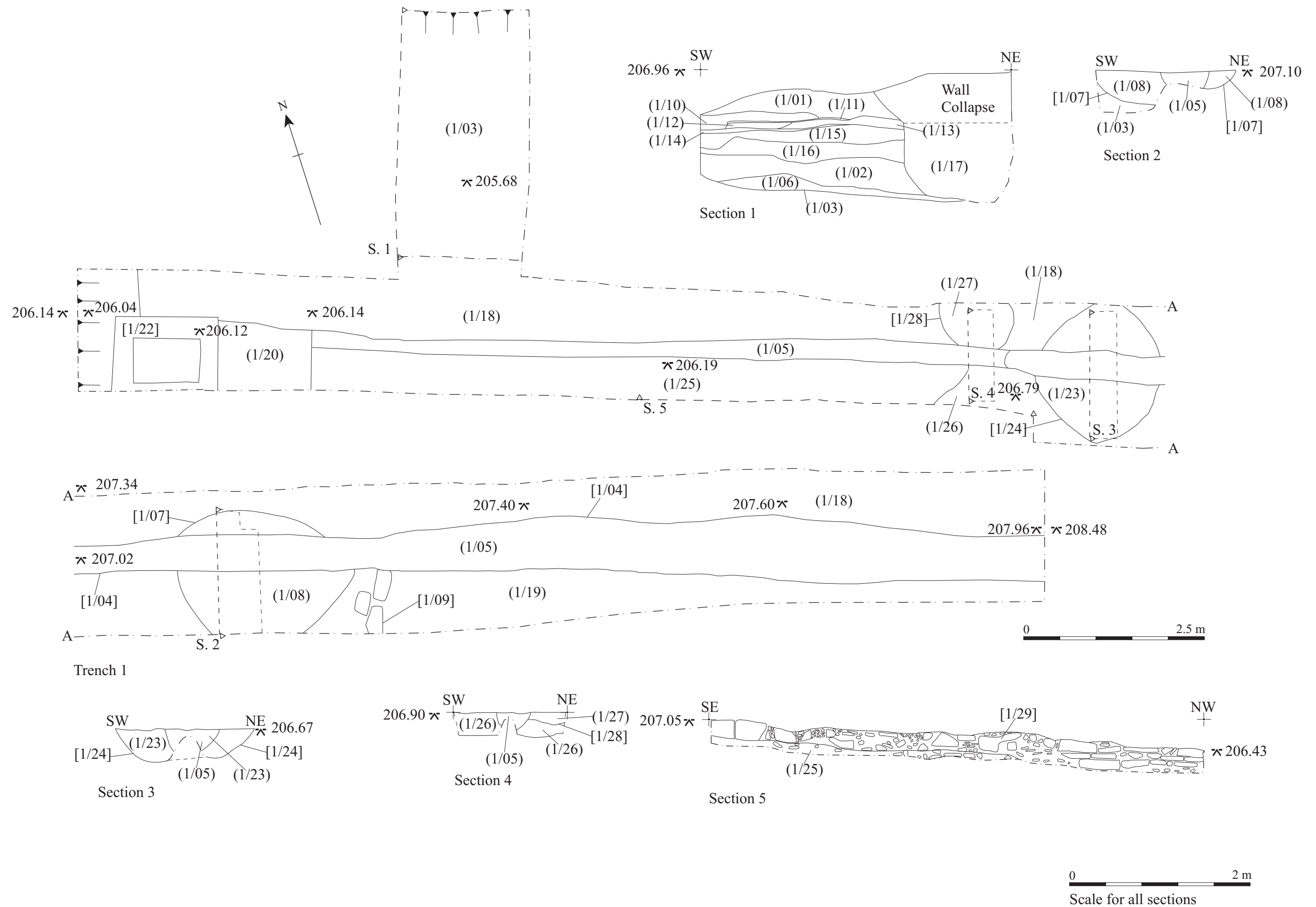


Figure 2. Trench 1 plan and sections

The pit [1/07] was filled by (1/08) firm grey-brown silty clay c 0.2m deep. The single pot-sherd from the fill gives a late 11th to mid-14th century date range although activity on the site appears to cease in the 13th century; bone and shell were also recovered from the fill. The feature is probably a rubbish pit, but whether it was only ever a shallow scoop or has been heavily truncated was not ascertained.

The second pit [1/24], (Section 3), was sub-rounded in shape with medium sloping sides, medium break of slope and an irregular base. It was filled by (1/23) friable yellow-brown clay, and was also c 0.2m deep. Pottery from this feature has a date range between the 12th and 14th centuries, in addition to a sherd of Romano-British pot; shell, tile and an iron object were recovered from the fill. The third pit [1/28], (Section 4), was smaller in size, 0.20m wide by 0.40m and was truncated on the south side and beyond the edges of excavation on the north side. It was filled with (1/21), firm grey-brown clay, which was also recorded as (1/21), which yielded pottery dating from the late 11th to mid-14th century.

The extent of truncation which might have occurred within this burgage plot is not clear; the trench was only 0.3m deep in the main body of the trench due to the presence of services, but it is clear that the natural, at 205.68m OD, is higher than observed in Trenches 2 (204.59m OD) and 4 (205.12m OD) to the north – although lower than in Trench 3 (208.02m OD). The modern ground levels show a similar drop to the northwest. However, the deposits, overlying (1/16) – the same as (1/18) in the main body of the trench – which the burgage plot wall [1/17] cuts measure c. 0.35m thick. We might, therefore, infer that at least 0.3m has probably been removed from the central part of the burgage plot.

A wall [1/29], (Section 5), was present and visible at modern ground level along the south edge of the western end of Trench 1, which was constructed onto deposit (1/25). The wall was east-west oriented, measuring 5.2m long, composed of limestone slabs bonded with red clay; the limestone pieces measured 0.6m wide by 0.45m long, although several were larger at 0.8m wide by 0.55m long. They appeared to present a rough, but nonetheless external face.

A small section of wall [1/09] comprised again of limestone c 1m long by 0.45m wide was visible c 9m from the eastern end of the trench and ran on a north-south alignment. On average the sizes of the stones were c 0.45m long and 0.10m wide. A similarity in coursing and material was observed during cleaning and recording; it is not possible to say, however, whether this wall is part of the same building as [1/29] as insufficient was revealed during trenching. It was not possible to chase [1/09] to the south due to the presence of high voltage cables. As [1/09] was sealed by (1/01), unlike [1/29], it was not possible to trace its path. It is probable that it is also truncated by the 11kV cable that runs the length of the site.

A modern pipe cut [1/04] ran the full length of the trench and was filled by (1/05), firm dark grey silt. It was excavated to a depth of 0.20m where a modern pipe was discovered; the pipe was left *in situ*. The pipe truncated the three pits [1/24], [1/07] and [1/30] as well removing the stratigraphical relationship between (1/18) and (1/19).

A sub rectangular, modern brick lined service hatch [1/22] was present at the western end of the trench. Its dimensions were c 1.15m by 0.95m, although only part of it was uncovered. It was made from modern brick with a whitish yellow mortar; the bricks

were typically c 0.22m long by 0.08m wide by 0.06m thick and lain in Flemish bond. Abutting this brick lined service hatch on its eastern side was deposit (1/20), it was unexcavated and friable mid brown silt.

The car park surface, (1/01), sealed all the deposits.

Trench 2 (Figure 3)

Trench 2 was located to the rear of No 11 High Street, north of Trench 1, west of Ampersand and Trench 3, and south of Trench 4; it measured c 12m in length and 1.6m wide. The lowest observed layer was the natural (2/11), a firm, red-orange clay with limestone. This was visible only at the western end of the trench (Section 1).

A north/south cut [2/15], c. 0.75m wide was observed in the middle of Trench 2 (Section 2); only the west side of the cut was observed (see below). The cut contained the remains of a north/south oriented wall [2/06] composed of limestone slabs c 0.15m by 0.15m by 0.10m, with rough coursing and no apparent bonding pattern. The cut was backfilled with a firm red-brown silty clay matrix (2/14). A floor layer (2/12) comprised of limestone pieces abutted this wall – overlying any possible east edge of the cut [2/15] – indicating it was contemporary (Section 2). This floor was sealed by layer (2/05), friable grey-brown silty clay that was c 0.2m thick and visible throughout the trench. The pottery from the layer comprised three sherds of 18th and early 19th century wares and a single sherd of later 19th century pot (which may well be intrusive), although a sherd of residual medieval pot was also present; bone, shell and glass were also recovered from the context. This albeit small assemblage of pot indicates that the building is earlier than the 19th century, although it probably fell into disuse, or was abandoned and razed over the course of the nineteenth century.

Layer (2/05) was cut by the linear ditch [2/09], which was 0.80m wide and visible for 1.5m on a north-south alignment; it lay directly over [2/15]. It was filled with firm light grey clay (2/08). It may well be a robber trench for the upper part of the wall [2/06]. The robber trench was sealed by (2/04) which was also described as a friable grey-brown silty clay. It may have been terraced to the west, as it drops reasonably sharply away from the cut [2/07], which cuts (2/04) and the underlying deposit (2/05). The deposit (2/04) was a similar deposit to (2/05) and both probably represent garden soils. It is not clear whether these are deposits which have been taken from elsewhere within the burgage plot, or find their provenance elsewhere. They may have been spread to raise ground-level within the plot, following the razing of the building, represented by [2/06] and (2/12).

Cutting the deposit (2/04) was pit [2/07]; its sides were irregular with a flat plateau on its northwestern side, which breaks sharply with a steep slope. The southeastern edge and the base were not recorded due to their extending beyond the limits of the evaluation trench. The pit was filled with (2/03), friable dark brown-black silt and was more than 0.44m deep and 1.5m wide. The pottery comprised 19th century wares, with bone, shell and glass also present. Similarly to the west, beyond wall [2/06], pit [2/13], which was sub circular in shape and was not excavated cut deposits (2/05) and (2/04). It extended beyond the limits of the evaluation trench, but its observed dimensions were c. 1.4m wide and at least 1.8m long. It was filled by (2/10), friable dark brownish black silt; no dating was recovered from the feature.



Overlying (2/03) and (2/04) was a garden soil (2/02), friable grey-brown c 0.4m deep, which, in turn was overlain by topsoil (2/01), recorded as friable black-brown silt and c 0.4m deep. It was present throughout the trench.

Trench 3 (Figure 2)

Trench 3, which was also to the rear of 11 High Street, lay to the north of Trench 1, to the east of Trench 2 and to the southeast of Trench 4 and was located in the garden of “Ampersand” immediately behind the garden wall fronting onto Albion Street. The trench was adjacent to the driveway, which lay immediately to the south. The height of the top of the trench at the east by northeast end was 210.18 OD and in the west by southwest was 209.35m OD.

The trench measured 6.75m long, 1.8m wide (due to collapse) and after re-machining in the southern half of the trench excavated to a maximum depth of 1.1m; the excavated depth of the trench in the north was between 0.2m and 0.5m. An 11 Kv armour sheathed electricity cable was known to exist in the north of the trench, after location of the cable the area was not subject to further excavation. A second armour sheathed 11Kv electricity cable was located during the machining of a sondage to ascertain the depth of foundations for wall [3/05] and to check the Ordnance Datum height for natural in the trench (Section 1), in the extreme southwest corner of the trench; the area around the cable was hand excavated.

The Chipping Norton Limestone (3/09), firm reddish orange clay with frequent small to large angular pieces of limestone, was 1.33 m below present ground level at a height of c. 208m OD in the sondage. Deposit (3/08) overlay the natural and was a firm orange-brown silty clay with frequent small angular laminated limestone fragments. The layer was only seen in the southern part of the trench but it was probably present throughout the trench. It was recorded to a maximum height of c. 208.8m OD. No dating evidence was recovered from the deposit which is considered to represent an accretionary soil that had developed from at least the medieval period onwards and was still in use until the post-medieval.

Layer (3/08) was cut by the construction trench [3/06] for wall [3/05] (Section 1). The cut was linear, 0.9m wide 0.8m deep and more than 2.7m long – extending beyond the limits of the evaluation trench – and aligned east-west; the sides were vertical and the base was flat. The wall [3/05] was constructed from rough hewn limestone pieces crudely faced to north and south and had a solid rubble core. The facing was much less apparent towards the base of the wall where it may have been a trench built rubble foundation rather than a faced wall. The wall was founded onto the natural (3/09). The wall was 0.7m wide, 0.7m deep and was observed for 2.7m within the trench. The stone varied in size from 450x200x100mm to 150x150x100mm. The coursing of the wall was irregular and no discernible bonding pattern was apparent; the wall was bonded with a clean orange-red clay mortar. The backfill (3/07) of the foundation cut was friable grey-brown silty clay with occasional charcoal inclusions. The deposit was only observed south of the wall, and was 0.2m wide and 0.8m deep. The height for the wall, cut and backfill was 208.69m OD. The wall is at a right angle to Albion Street, and is also at a right angle to the wall [2/06] seen to the west in Trench 2; the construction and size of both walls is similar, although [2/06] was not examined to the same depth as [3/05].

The wall was sealed by (3/04) a 0.4m thick layer of friable greyish brown silty clay with frequent charcoal inclusions. The layer was seen across the full width of the trench and in the southwest end, the height of the deposit was 209.07m OD. Nineteenth century white ware and blue and white transfer printed wares were noted from the layer, recorded on the relevant context sheet and then discarded. The deposit may represent a late post-medieval soil horizon, probably 19th/20th century in date, and may well be associated with (2/04) in Trench 2. A deposit (3/03), measuring 0.4m thick, of partially crushed limestone demolition material sealed the post-medieval soil horizon.

The demolition material extended through the length and width of the trench and lay at a height of 209.79m OD. The deposit appeared to have been laid down as a sub-base for 20th century landscaping. The sub-base was topped by a 0.10 m thick friable blackish brown humic silt (03/02), deliberately introduced as a topsoil as part of 20th century landscaping. The deposit extended throughout the length and width of the trench and contained pottery comprised of white wares and blue and white transfer printed wares (the pottery was recorded on the relevant context sheet and then discarded). The raised patio area to the north of the trench was topped by 40mm thick pre-cast concrete paving slabs (3/01) of various dimensions, laid in an irregular pattern, unmortared and with no bedding material.

The majority of the contexts within the trench can be dated to the late post-medieval period. 20th century landscaping is evidenced by the patio slabs (3/01), the thin, introduced topsoil (3/02) and the partially crushed sandstone demolition material sub-base (3/03). The landscaping created a terrace, the upper, northern lying, part of which was held in position by a red brick retaining wall (unrecorded). The 20th century landscaping sealed a late post-medieval (19th/20th century) soil horizon (3/04), this in turn sealed the foundations of an east-west aligned stone built wall [3/05], which may well have extended as far east as the wall [2/06] observed in Trench 2, which is at a right angle to [3/05]. The wall was undated as was the material (3/07) from its foundation cut [3/06]. If, however, the wall is indeed the same as that seen to the west in Trench 2, then a pre-19th century date is more than likely. The wall was 0.7m wide, probably load bearing and within the boundaries of the plot and probably represents a post-medieval structure within one of the medieval burgrave plots of land at right angles to the Albion Street and High Street frontages. The wall's foundation cut truncated a soil horizon (3/08) which overlay the natural (3/09).

Trench 4 (Figure 4)

Trench 4 was located to the rear of Nos 12-14 High Street, and was the northernmost trench, oriented east/west and located between 204.79m OD, at the west end, and 207.42m OD at the east end. The trench was excavated to the natural (4/03), which all trenches evidenced; in the east end of the trench a change in the natural was observed: red clay with limestone pieces (4/10), pot was recovered from the surface.

Set directly onto the natural were the base of a wall [4/06] (Section 1) and associated cobbling [4/04]. Both features were at the western end of the trench. The wall [4/06] was made from Chipping Norton Limestone pieces, measuring c. 380x260x200mm, some might have been roughly shaped, in a creamy white sandy lime mortar. The coursing was irregular; the dimensions of the wall were c. 11 m long and up to 0.2m high. Nineteenth century pottery and a piece of bone were recovered from the wall matrix.

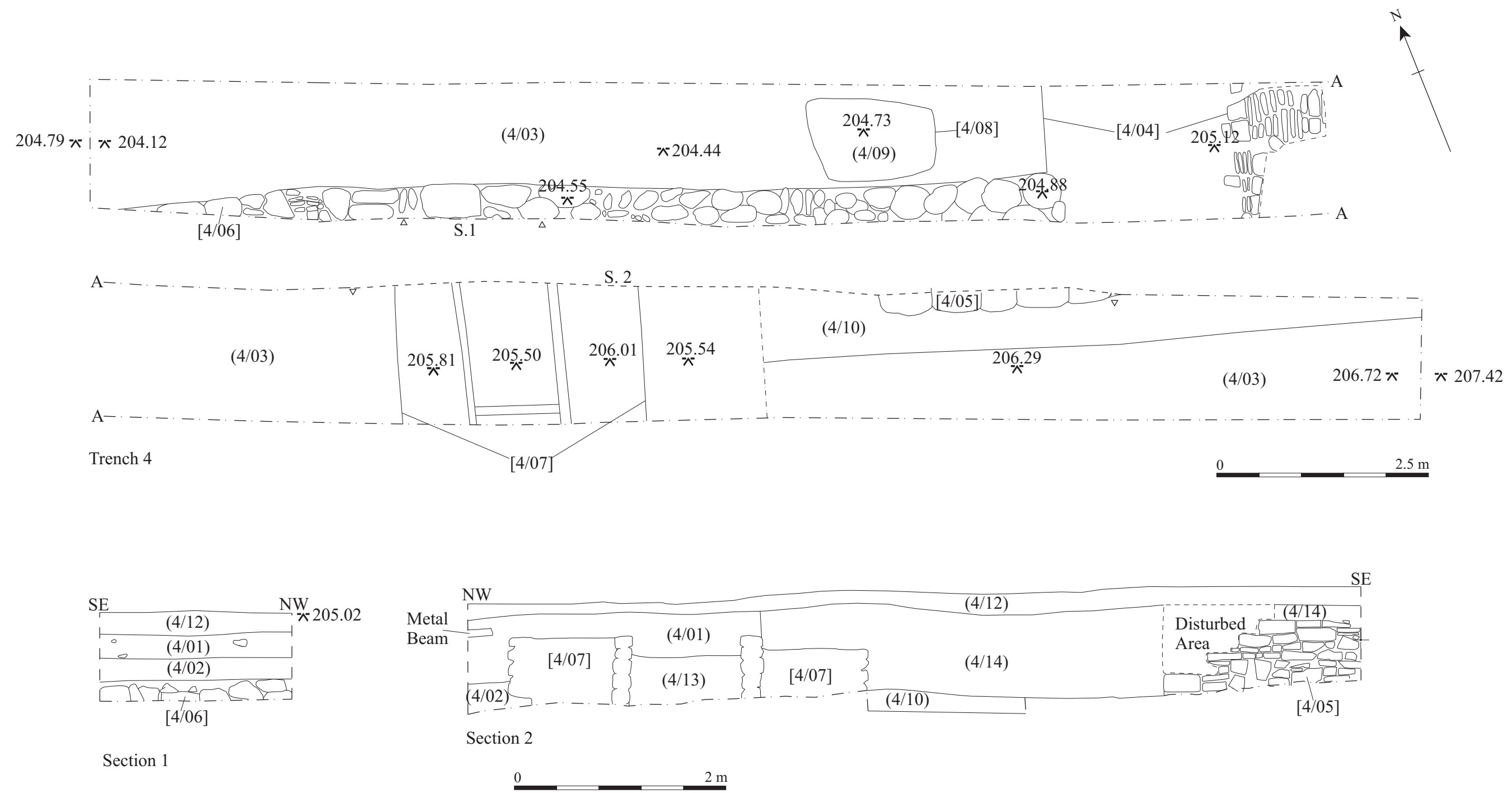


Figure 4. Trench 4 plan and sections

The width of the wall was not observed, as it extended beyond the edge of the evaluation trench. Abutting the wall to the east, was a cobbled area [4/04], which was investigated on the eastern side; to the west where it abutted the wall it was only roughly exposed to ascertain that it was present as far west as this.

The cobbled surface comprised pieces of Chipping Norton Limestone, of a reasonably regular size, up to 400x 60x260mm set upright on their narrowest plane; these were held in place by squared setts measuring c. 250x200x260mm and a loose sandy clay matrix. The cobbles sat directly onto the natural (4/03). Nineteenth century pottery was recovered from the cobbled surface construction. The surface was observed for c. 3m between the east end of the wall [4/06] and the truncation to the west, which is associated with the late brick-lined canalisation [4/07], which must be a drain or similar (see below).

A sub-rectangular Victorian pit [4/08] was observed to the north of the wall, and west of the cobbling. The fill (4/09) was loose, dark brown-black sandy loam with charcoal and grit. The pit and the cobbles were sealed by the layer (4/02) a friable, pale grey brown silty clay, with peagrit and charcoal spread through it, measuring c. 0.3m thick. This deposit may represent a cultivation – or occupation – soil north of and outside the building that has [4/06] as its external north wall. The deposit (4/02) sealed both the natural and the cobbling, without any apparent differentiation, from which we can infer that the deposit had been spread over the cobbled surface and reworked into the similar soil where it overlies the natural, but that there was a chronological gap between (4/02) over the natural and (4/02) over the cobbles.

To the east beyond the later truncation caused by the sewer or drainage canalisation [4/07] was a further wall [4/05], comprising roughly worked uncoursed Chipping Norton Limestone (Section 2). The south face of the wall was oriented east by southeast/west by northwest comprising roughly worked stone of various sizes, with no standardized coursing. It was bonded with a creamy white to light brown lime mortar. The wall was a load-bearing wall, although only the external south face was observed.

Between the cobbling [4/04] and the wall [4/05], was the area of truncation c. 3.5m wide, associated with the lay of a sewer pipe or similar structure, which was defined by two parallel north/south stone walls [4/07] between 0.8m and 0.9m wide, and measuring a total width of c. 2.9m. The stone walls had brick-lining internally, the gap between which was filled with a creamy white mortar-like deposit mixed with sandy rubble (4/13).

All the features at the west end of the trench – up to the eastern part of the canalisation [4/07] – were sealed by (4/01) a deposit of dark brown-black silty clay with demolition rubble, charcoal, limestone pieces and mixed tile and brick; the east side of the canalisation was characterised by a poorly defined cut evidenced by the deposit (4/14), which may be related to the construction of [4/07]. The deposit (4/14) was a compacted clay silt and rubble deposit comprising mixed limestone pieces, brick fragments and charcoal, sealing [4/05] and (4/10). Although no dating was recovered the air-bricks which were part of the structure are more than likely to date from the inter-war period.

The trench was sealed by (4/12), the car park surface, a stoney layer of crushed materials, medium gravels in a clay sand matrix.

4.3 Reliability of Techniques and Results

The reliability of results is considered to be good. The archaeological evaluation took place during largely dry and frequently overcast weather. However, particularly bad weather was experienced on 28th May 2008, which limited the day's excavation time as rain flooded the trenches.

5 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS

5.1 Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 137 sherds with a total weight of 4,734g. The bulk of the assemblage was of early modern date, although a small stratified assemblage of medieval pottery was also present, indicating that there was activity at the site between the late 11th – 13th century.

The pottery was recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994), as follows:

OXAC: Cotswold-type ware, AD975-1350. 3 sherds, 24g.
OXY: Medieval Oxford ware, AD1075 – 1350. 3 sherds, 17g.
OXBK: Medieval Shelly Coarseware, AD1100-1350. 2 sherds, 8g.
OXAM: Brill/Boarstall ware, AD1200 – 1600. 2 sherds, 35g.
OXDR: Red Earthenwares, AD1550+. 3 sherds, 72g.
OXBW: Staffordshire manganese wares. c. AD1700-1800. 1 sherd, 37g.
CRM: Creamware, mid 18th - early 19th C. 2 sherds, 15g.
WHEW: Mass-produced white earthenwares, 19th - 20th C. 120 sherds, 4524g.

A single sherd (2g) of residual Romano-British pottery was also noted.

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*. All the fabric types are well-known in the region. The range of medieval pottery types perhaps illustrates Chipping Norton's importance as a market centre in the medieval period, as the wares present originate from the Cotswolds region (OXAC), Buckinghamshire (OXAM) and Northants/Bedfordshire (OXBK). Medieval activity was only evidenced in Trench 1, the southernmost of the trenches, and this activity appears to have ceased in the 13th century; the other trenches to the north, failed to yield any medieval pottery, with the single exception of a residual sherd of Brill Boarstall ware. These trenches appear to indicate very little disturbance at the site until the 19th or early 20th century, or very effective truncation of medieval deposits.

		RB		OXAC		OXY		OXBK		OXAM		OXDR		OXBEW		CRM		WHEW		
Tr	Ctx	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	Date
1	5											1	14					1	6	19thC
1	8					1	5													L11thC
1	23	1	2	3	24	1	4	2	8											12thC
1	25									1	30									13thC
1	27					1	8													L11thC
2	3																	96	3655	19thC
2	5									1	5			1	37	2	15	1	35	19thC
4	4																	1	156	19thC
4	6											2	58					6	101	19thC
4	9																	14	565	19thC
4	10																	1	6	19thC
	Total	1	2	3	24	3	17	2	8	2	35	3	72	1	37	2	15	120	4524	

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

5.2 Other Finds

A catalogue of other finds is presented below; none of these finds have undergone any further analysis.

Material	Context	No. Items	Weight (g)
Bone	01/08	3	140
	01/26	24	100
	02/03	2	5
	02/05	11	100
	04/06	1	20
Shell	01/08	1	1
	01/23	1	5
	02/03	1	2
	02/05	2	10
Glass	01/05	2	20
	01/27	2	10
	02/03	18	145
	02/05	1	2
	04/06	2	30
Tile	01/23	5	30
	01/05	2	200
Metal	01/23	1	5
	04/09	1	10

5.3 Environmental Remains

No palaeoenvironmental samples were taken as no suitable deposits were present.

6 DISCUSSION

The evaluation indicated that the site comprised two groups of material remains: medieval and post-medieval. The trenching carried out to the south – Trench 1 – yielded medieval pitting as well as at least one wall which may well be medieval in origin. This evidence was located between ground level to c. 0.2m below the current ground surface. The Ordnance Survey maps seem to indicate an open area, of an undetermined character – the cross-hatching is not immediately explicable – which will be addressed below. It is not clear what the depth of remains or the state of preservation of such are in the adjacent plot to the north; no evaluation was undertaken here, but the garden of Ampersand provided a different body of data.

Two trenches were excavated in the garden of Ampersand; Trench 2 was located parallel with the burgage plot, Trench 3 was located at approximately 45° to the boundary at the Albion Street frontage. These two trenches evidenced a significant depth of overlying material, which sealed the archaeological remains. Trench 2 had 0.35m of topsoil which sealed a second humic layer of 0.4m. These layers sealed two late Victorian pits, which cut two earlier deposits of a possibly garden-derived soil. The provenance of these layers is unsure, but the earlier one sealed the floor and wall of a building, the wall of which was at a right angle to the burgage plot, and at a right angle to a wall observed in Trench 3. A date in the late 18th or early 19th centuries was obtained from the deposit sealing the wall and floor. No medieval activity was observed and any medieval deposits seem to have been incorporated into the 19th century cultivation layers (2/04) and (2/05).

Trench 3 to the east of Trench 2 revealed a wall, parallel to the line of burgage plot and at a right angle to the wall observed in Trench 2. The wall was cut through a deposit which dates from at least the medieval period. The wall and possibly medieval soil was sealed by a number of later layers, dating from the 19th century or later. Although there was no evidence of medieval activity in Trench 3, any ground level from that period has been incorporated into garden or cultivation soils (3/04) of the 19th century; moreover, too little was observed within the area of the trench available for investigation due to later truncation, that it is not possible to assert unequivocally that no medieval activity is present in the vicinity of Trench 3. It is moreover at some considerable distance from High Street.

Trench 4 to the north revealed two buildings and a cobbled surface; any relationship between the two buildings and the cobbled surface had been removed by the laying of a brick-lined drain, probably in the first half of the 20th century. The building to the east was well built and stood to c. 0.7m high; no pottery was recovered, though a sherd of 19th century whiteware was recovered from the surface of (4/10) on to which the wall was set.

The building to the west, with the associated cobbled floor was heavily truncated, only between 0.15m and 0.2m was extant. The cobbled surface was sealed by a layer of cultivation soil which was apparently largely the same as that which was seen to overlie the natural. Both cobbled surface and wall yielded 19th century whitewares.

The 1885, 1900, 1922 and 1938 Ordnance Survey maps show the immediate area of Albion Street – Back Lane on the first, unnamed on the second, and Albion Street on

the final two. The land at the rear of the burgage plots is clearly occupied with some buildings visible and in other cases unidentifiable activities indicated. The build-up to the front, toward High Street is apparently more dense than it is today. The plots where the trenches were located are not immediately identifiable, due to the dense build up within the burgage plots. Nonetheless just to the opposite and slightly north of the junction of the current Wards Road and Albion Street, the 1885 map shows an extended building. It is impossible to identify its function, be it domestic or commercial. It may, however be the building corresponding to the north/south and east/west oriented walls seen in Trenches 2 and 3.

Further buildings to the north are also visible on the early cartographic sources, which appear to show individual, discreet structures and associated courts within the burgage plots. These are also impossible to identify functionally, but probably correspond to the 19th century walls and cobbled surface revealed by Trench 4. The evaluation revealed a quantity of deeply-footed 19th century archaeology, focussed on either small buildings and courtyards or larger structures, which dominated the Albion Street frontage. It appears that the late nineteenth century archaeology may have truncated any earlier remains at the north of the proposed development site.

The ground levels between the trenches show a consistent fall of slope from east to west. The build-up in the more northerly trenches is responsible for this consistency. The levels of the natural suggest an undulating, or irregular slope from south to north, although how much this might be due to later, post-medieval truncation is unclear. The level of the west end of Trench 1 is approximately 205.8m OD, the centre of Trench 2, almost due north of that, is at 204.9m OD, and the east end of Trench 4 is at 206.72m OD. The ground levels at the east end of Trench 1 (208.48m OD) and of Trench 3 (210.18m OD), show a drop of 1.7m from north to south. The ground level at the west end of Trench 1 (206.14m OD) and at the west end of Trench 2 (205.48m OD) show a drop to the north of some 0.6m or so. It is clear that there is some significant build-up at the Albion Street frontage at Ampersand; nonetheless it would seem to indicate that there is truncation between 0.2m and 1m in the area of Trench 1.

South of Ampersand, Trench 1 revealed medieval archaeology, in the form of pits, and possibly at least one wall – although dating for the latter was not secured – at a depth of c. 0.2m below current ground level. The truncation of the site, evidenced by the difference in levels between Trenches 1 and 3, and contrasted with Trenches 1 and 2, may well be responsible for the limited quantity of medieval remains observed here. It is not possible to suggest how far to the north this activity continues, although the trench examining the line of the burgage plot suggests that the wall is broadly contemporary with the pitting, as both cut the yellow sandy rubble layer, which overlies a garden soil type deposit. This rubble layer may well indicate the presence of earlier structures in the vicinity, although equally, it may be merely a dump to build up the ground.

No medieval remains were observed in the vicinity of Trench 2, although a single residual sherd of Brill/Boarstall ware was recovered. Whether medieval remains are present in the vicinity of Trench 3 is impossible to say, as too small an area was opened up. Medieval remains would seem to be absent in the vicinity of Trench 4, as the cobbled surface and associated wall were laid onto the natural and no medieval remains or residual material was recovered from here. It is more than likely that the rear of many of the burgage plots were used for cultivation or orchards; there would

be no negative archaeology in such a case. Pitting associated with industrial activities or waste management is more likely to have occurred nearer the High Street rather than Back Lane frontage.

Chipping Norton was granted fairs between 1205 and 1330 (Munby, Rodwell & Turner, 1974:85) stimulating trade and growth. The beginning of the period of fair grants overlaps slightly with the date-range for the pottery found in Trench 1, but overall would not seem to bear any significant relationship to the archaeology observed. It was not possible to date the laying out of the burgage plot, although it is not unreasonable to suggest that it was broadly contemporary with the pitting sampled. Certainly it appears that the burgage plots were laid out by the beginning of the 16th century (Munby, Rodwell & Turner, 1974:85); previously, the extent of the pre-13th century town was believed to only encompass Horse Fair and the north end of Market Street (Munby, Rodwell & Turner, 1974), extending as far east as the White Hart Hotel (Simons, 2005), north of the current site. The White Hart Hotel site evidenced 11th and 12th century pitting, with a 13th century buried soil horizon. The 11th-13th century activity – pits and the wall that cuts a layer of rubble – indicates that there are early medieval deposits in the immediate vicinity. The undated buried soil horizon in Trench 3 may well be the same as seen at the White Hart Hotel to the north.

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APPENDIX I**CONTEXT TABLE****APPENDIX – ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY**

Context	Type	Description	Interpretation
(1/01)	Layer	Make up; gravel, tarmac, sandy clay	Carpark surface
(1/02)	Layer	Friable Mid Brown Silt	Subsoil
(1/03)	Layer	Firm Reddish Orange Clay	Natural
[1/04]	Cut	Filled by (1/05)	Modern Pipe
(1/05)	Fill	Firm Dark Grey Silt	Fill of pipe cut [1/04]
(1/06)	Deposit	Firm Grey Clay	Interface between subsoil and natural
[1/07]	Cut	Filled by (1/08)	Medieval Rubbish Pit
(1/08)	Fill	Firm Greyish Brown Silty Clay	Fill of Medieval Rubbish Pit [1/07]
[1/09]	Masonry	Sandstone Slabs	Possible Wall
(1/10)	Deposit	Light Yellowish Sandy Silt	
(1/11)	Deposit	Friable Black Silty Charcoal	Charcoal Band
(1/12)	Deposit	Firm Greyish Brown Clay	Layer Between Charcoal Bands
(1/13)	Deposit	Firm Whitish Yellow Sand	Layer Beneath Charcoal Band
(1/14)	Deposit	Friable Black Silty Charcoal	Charcoal band
(1/15)	Deposit	Firm Dark Greyish Brown Clayey Sand	
(1/16)	Deposit	Firm Yellow Sand	
(1/17)	Deposit	Loose Dark Brown Silt	Wall
(1/18)	Deposit	Firm Light Yellowish Sand	Dumping layer
(1/19)	Deposit	Friable Mid Brown Silt	

(1/20)	Feature	Unexcavated	Inspection pit
(1/22)	Deposit	Friable Mid Brown Silt	
(1/23)	Fill	Friable Yellowish Brown Clayey Silt	Fill of Pit [1/24]
[1/24]	Cut	Filled by (1/23)	Pit
(1/25)	Deposit	Friable Mid Brown Silty Clay	Layer Next To Wall
(1/26)	Deposit	Firm Mid Reddish Brown Silty Clay	
(1/27)	Deposit	Firm Mid Greyish Brown Silt	Subsoil Interface
(2/01)	Layer	Friable Blackish Brown Silt	Topsoil
(2/02)	Layer	Friable Greyish Brown Silty Clay	Subsoil
(2/03)	Fill	Friable Dark Brownish Black Silt	Fill of Pit [2/07]
(2/04)	Deposit	Friable Greyish Brown Silty Clay	Same as (2/02)
(2/05)	Deposit	Friable Greyish Brown Silty Clay	Same as (2/02)
(2/06)	Masonry	Limestone Slabs	Wall
[2/07]	Cut	Filled By (2/03)	Pit
(2/08)	Fill	Firm Light Grey Clay	Fill of Linear [2/09]
[2/09]	Cut	Filled By (2/08)	Robber trench for wall (2/06)
(2/10)	Fill	Friable Dark Brownish Black Silt	Fill Of Pit [2/13]
(2/11)	Layer	Firm Reddish Orange Clay	Natural
(2/12)	Masonry	Limestone Pieces	Floor
[2/13]	Cut	Filled By (2/10)	Pit
(2/14)	Fill	Reddish Orange Clay	Backfill of wall trench
[2/15]	Cut	Linear N/S wall cut	Construction trench for wall
(3/01)	Layer	Concrete	Patio Paving Slabs
(3/02)	Layer	Friable Blackish Brown Silt	Topsoil
(3/03)	Layer	Firm Brownish Yellow Limestone	Demolition Rubble
(3/04)	Deposit	Friable Greyish Brown Silty Clay	Post Med Soil Horizon
(3/05)	Masonry	Limestone Slabs	Load Bearing Wall

[3/06]	Cut	Filled with (3/05)	Cut for Wall
(3/07)	Deposit	Friable Greyish Brown Silty Clay	Backfill of Construction Cut [3/06]
(3/08)	Deposit	Firm Orangey Brown Silty Clay	Medieval Soil Horizon
(3/09)	Layer	Firm Reddish Orange Clay	Natural
(4/01)	Layer	Dark Brownish Black Friable Silty Clay	Demolition Layer
(4/02)	Deposit	Friable Light Greyish Brown Silty Clay	
(4/03)	Layer	Firm Reddish Orange Clay	Natural
(4/04)	Masonry	Limestone with Mid Yellowish Brown Clay	Cobbled Surface
(4/05)	Masonry	Sandstone Blacks With Light Brownish Yellow Mortar	Wall
(4/06)	Masonry	Limestone With White Sandy Limestone Mortar	Wall
(4/07)	Masonry	Red Bricks with Cement Bonding	Drain
[4/08]	Cut	Not Excavated	Modern Pit
(4/09)	Fill	Loose Dark Brownish Black Sandy Loam	Fill of Pit [4/08]
(4/10)	Fill	Friable mid Reddish Brown Sandy Silt	Fill of Foundation Trench for Wall/Cellar [4/05]
(4/11)	Deposit	Friable Mid Brownish Yellow Sand	Deposit Above Natural
(4/12)	Deposit	Hard Tarmac	Modern Road Surface
(4/13)	Deposit	Friable Sandy Rubble With White Mortar	Mortar Dump Inside Disused Drain
(4/14)	Deposit	Firm Mid Greyish Brown Silty Rubble	Demolition Rubble