



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**ON**

**THAMES WATER PIPELINE AND NEW STW,**

**BECKLEY, OXFORDSHIRE**

**NGR SP 56201150 – 56411167 &  
SP 56601150 - 56561190**

*On behalf of*

*Thames Water Utilities Ltd.*

**MARCH 2009**

**REPORT FOR**

Thames Water Utilities Ltd.  
Clearwater Court (RBH2)  
Vastern Road  
Reading  
RG1 8DB

**PREPARED BY**

Daniel Heale

**ILLUSTRATIONS BY**

Eoin Fitzsimons

**FIELDWORK**

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**ENQUIRES TO**

John Moore Heritage Services  
Hill View  
Woodperry Road  
Beckley  
Oxford  
OX3 9UZ

*Telephone/Fax 01865 358300*

*Email: [info@jmheritageservices.co.uk](mailto:info@jmheritageservices.co.uk)*

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## **Summary**

*John Moore Heritage Services conducted a watching brief during the work for a new sewerage system in the village of Beckley, Oxfordshire. A number of archaeological features were uncovered including parts of a Roman road, a quarry site and ridge and furrow cultivation.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Location**

The works were located in the village of Beckley, Oxfordshire. The archaeologically monitored lengths of the route were across farmland from the north end of Church Street (NGR SP 5621 1148) northwards along the bridleway for 100m before heading north-eastwards to SP 5642 1171 where it joined the easterly route (Fig. 1). The easterly route commenced immediately west of Otmoor Lane at SP 5661 1140 running north for c. 80m before heading north-westwards and then west to join the western route before running northwards to SP 5642 1183 and then turning north-eastwards to the new treatment works at SP 5656 1193 (Fig. 1). Additional areas included the new road from Otmoor Lane SP 5668 1194 westwards to the STW, and along the west end of Woodperry Road (SP 5657 1108), along Roman Way and into High Street (SP 5654 1121 centred) (Fig. 4).

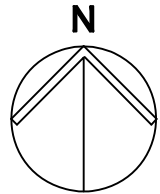
The geology of the Woodperry Road, Roman Way, High Street was Beckley Sand Member, while the rest of the area was mainly Upper Oxford Clay (Weymouth Member) with areas of Landslip and Amgrove Spiculite Member at the extreme southern end of the eastern route.

### **1.2 Planning Background**

Thames Water Utilities Ltd constructed approximately 1200m of new sewer, on farmland north of Beckley, Oxfordshire and through the village. This was part of a scheme that would involve a new sewerage system throughout the majority of the village. Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services recommended to Thames Water Utilities Ltd that archaeological monitoring of the initial topsoil clearance, and any trenching deemed to have archaeological potential on the farmland to the north of Beckley should be monitored. Lang Hall Archaeology prepared a Brief for monitoring of the work through the farmland north of the village. John Moore Heritage Services was appointed by Thames Water Utilities to undertake the work. A *Written Scheme of Investigation* outlining the methodology of the archaeological work was submitted to Oxford County Archaeological Services (OCAS) which approved the document. The work was varied with the agreement of Lang Hall Archaeology and Thames Water Utilities Ltd to include monitoring of the west end of the Woodperry Road/Roman Way/High Street length.

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

A Roman road crosses Otmoor from Alchester to the small Roman settlement at Barton and on to the Roman town of Dorchester. The road was thought to lie immediately to the west of Otmoor Lane. Immediately north of the proposed sewage



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treatment works (STW), the road was found during the construction of a field access to be c. 300-400mm below ground level and to be surfaced with stone (A Walwyn *pers com*). The road continues further south through the Abingdon Arms public house car park, crossing the High Street and then following the line of Roman Way and Sandy Lane. Locally it is thought that the road may run slightly to the west of the junction of the two thoroughfares.

A Roman villa lies towards Upper Park Farm at SP 5695 1135. This was found in 1862 when the corner of the house and four rooms were excavated. Tessellated pavements and painted plaster were found along with stone slates, ceramic roof tiles, coins and pottery of 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> century date (VCH, 320; Parker 1860-64, 186). It would seem likely that a trackway ran south-westwards from the villa to the Roman road for access to the south, negating the steep drop to the road for access northwards towards Alchester. A southerly track was considered likely to cross Woodperry Road close to its junction with Sandy Lane/Roman Way

The site of Beckley Palace lies to the north of High Street. Richard, Earl of Cornwall acquired the land in 1227 and built a moated mansion, which was destroyed in 1233. In 1992 an archaeological watching brief at the Walled Garden on the north side of High Street produced pottery ranging in date from the Saxo-Norman period to the Post-Medieval period.

A watching brief at Pound Cottage, opposite the Walled Garden, found a series of medieval pits indicating that the site was occupied between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries with a break in activity until the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Norman church of St Mary was rebuilt in 14-15<sup>th</sup> century but 12-13<sup>th</sup> century masonry remains in the north wall of the chancel. The 14<sup>th</sup> century central tower is in an unusual position for its date; it must stand on the foundations and probably incorporates parts of its Norman predecessor (Sherwood & Pevsner 1974).

The above has been gathered from Lang Hall Archaeology's Brief, previous Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services' Briefs, material held by JMHS and local information.

## 2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

- To identify and record any archaeological remains exposed during the groundworks

In particular

- To record the position and structure of the Roman road west of Otmoor Lane.

Furthermore, subject to approval of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (OCAS)

- To record the route of the Roman road where it crosses High Street and any evidence of it further southwards as well as any evidence for the postulated track from the villa to the Roman road.

### **3 STRATEGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with OCAS. Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record throughout, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate and possible.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994) and the procedures laid down in MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

#### **3.2 Methodology**

The topsoil strip in the fields to the north of the village was monitored for artefact content and for any evidence of buried archaeological remains. The ridge and furrow earthworks were recorded in the area of the easement. One area of archaeology in Field 1 was further investigated. Where the new access to the STW was constructed beside Otmoor Lane an archaeological excavation was carried out.

Monitoring of the excavation for the pipeline was carried out along the west end of Woodperry Road, along Roman Way and into High Street in front of the Abingdon Arms car park.

### **4 RESULTS**

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

#### **4.1 Field Results**

##### **4.1.1 Field 1 (Figures 2 & 3)**

During topsoil stripping an area of stone was exposed. At first, consideration was given to the possibility that it was part of the Roman road. An area was cleaned and investigated.

This turned out to be a backfilled quarry pit. A spread of compacted angular stone rubble was present across a large proportion of the site, predominantly the northern end, with it becoming more diffuse towards the south and west. Four sections were excavated to understand the activity, determine relationships between the various deposits and to gather dating evidence.

The lowest deposit observed was the natural (103) at c 0.48m; it was loose sand, light grey in colour with some orange mottling. This may be an outcrop of Amgrove Spiculite Member. Above the backfilled quarry was subsoil (102), a friable mid greyish brown sandy clay, which, in turn was overlain by topsoil (101), friable dark brownish black sandy silt.



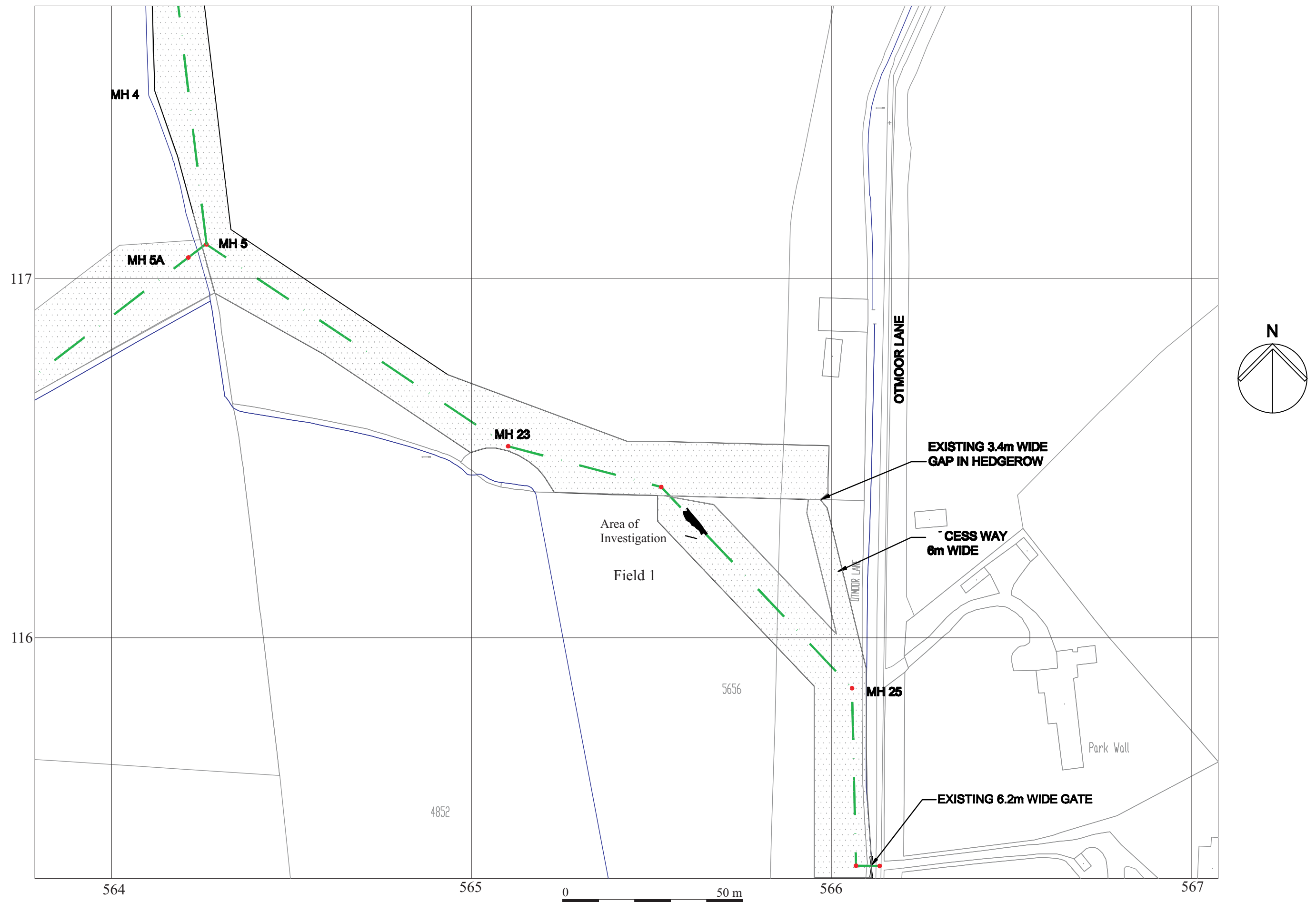


Figure 2. Location of area of investigation in Field 1

Section 1 was dug at the northern end of the activity on a north-south axis at 67.23m OD to define the extent of quarrying. Natural (103) was observed at c. 0.48m and was overlain by surface (104). The natural was cut by the north end of quarry pit [109]. It was only partially excavated (Fig. 3, S 1). The edge had a sharp break of slope and a steep sloping side at c. 70° angle and the feature contained fill (105), a loose dark blackish brown sandy silt. The upper part of the fill contained a high concentration of angular stone (90%), similar to, and probably the same as 104.

Section 2 at 67.61m OD was dug towards the southern end of the feature on a northwest-southeast axis. It was excavated to c. 0.83m at the north-western end to attempt to ascertain its depth. The bottom layer (115) was not fully excavated, and was firm, mid greyish blue clay (Fig. 3, S 3). Overlying this was a deposit of loose gravely sand; light orange with lenses of white and grey in composition and colour (110). This layer was adjacent to deposit (111) towards the southern end of the area, which was a firm, mid brownish red clay. A relationship between these two deposits could not be determined appearing to abut each other. Cutting both layers (115) and (110) was what was thought to be a later pit [113]. This was c. 0.60m deep with a medium sloping sides and sharp break of slopes (Fig. 3, Section 2). It was filled with firm mid greyish brown clay (114). However this is now interpreted as successive dumping within the quarry starting from the east side with fill (114) against (110), with later fill (116) against (114). On top of fill (116) was a layer of stone (105). A number of other deposits were dumped on top of (110). (107) was mid greyish brown in colour, loose in compaction and composed of sand and containing 15% angular stone. Contemporary with this dumping was a thin banding of stone and loose mid brownish grey clayey sand (108), and a loose mid orangey red gravel containing 10% small angular stone (112). These stone layers are probably slightly later levelling as the fills settled.

Section 3 was dug to the west of the stone capping, on an east-west alignment at 67.50m OD. The lowest deposit was loose, light greyish brown silty sand (117) which was thought to be cut by probable pit [118]. This is probably a difference in two fills although it had an apparently vertical face (Fig. 3, S 4). The other fill (106) was loose, light whitish grey sand with 30% angular stone present.

Section 4 was excavated to the southwest of the area on a west-east axis at 67.46m OD. It displayed a cut into the natural [119], and its dimensions were c. 3.m wide and 0.62m deep. The south-eastern side was at a c. 130-degree angle and came down onto an irregular base that stepped down a further 0.15m at approximately 1.8m (Fig. 3, S 5). It was filled by loose, light greyish brown silty sand with a small dump of angular stone present at c. 0.40m deep (120).

Field 1 is indicative of a quarry site with various dumps of fill. These were levelled on the east side with layers of stone (104), (105), (106), (107), (108), (112) as the fills settled and perhaps to act as a firmer platform to tip other material from as the infilling continued westwards. The dating material from deposits (105 - 106), (108 - 110), (114) and (120) indicate an early 18<sup>th</sup> century date for the infilling of the quarry.

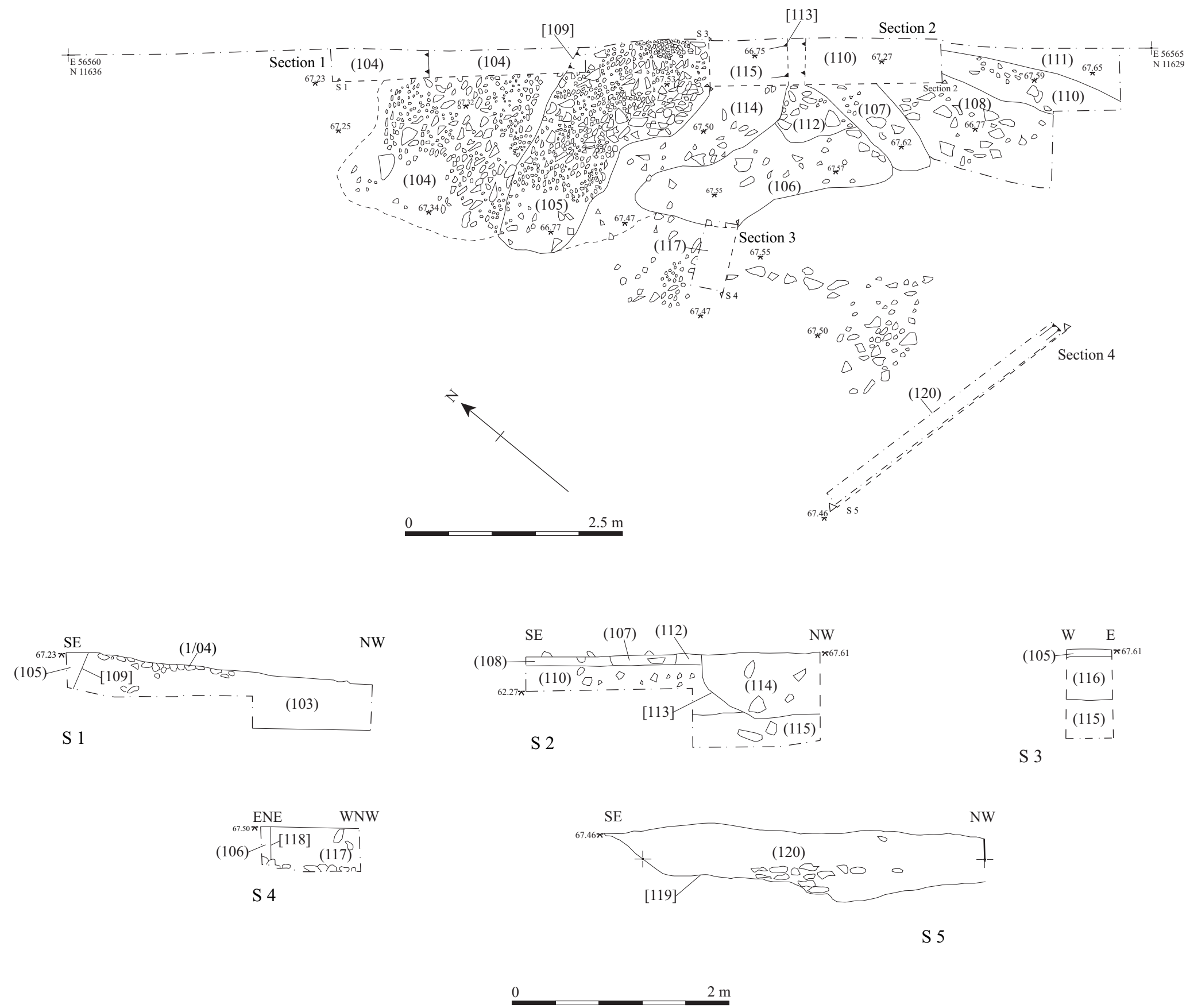


Figure 3. Plan and sections of investigation area in Field 1

#### **4.1.2 Ridge and Furrow (Figure 1)**

Fields 2 and 3 contained visible ridge and furrow on two different alignments. In Field 2 the axis for these in the south part was east/west with the average height of ridge to furrow of c. 0.70m and width between the centres of the ridges of c. 11m. The alignment did alter onto a north/south axis in the north part of Field 2. This alignment was more uniform with more regularly spaced ridge and furrow. The average height between ridges to furrow was c 0.60m and average width was 10m. A headland was observed between two alignments at the south end of the north/south part. On top of this was a track of compacted greyish white angular stone (204). This track is shown on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition 1:2500 Ordnance survey map of 1876 running from Otmoor Lane to the stream immediately west of the point where it was seen.

Within the area of the treatment works in Constable's Piece, a north/south ditch (318) was exposed. This was 1.3m wide and 560mm deep with 45° sides and a rounded base. This field division does not appear on Ordnance Survey maps until 1922 (1:2500). A stone-lined drain (317) on the same orientation was seen on the north side of the field.

#### **4.1.3 Roman Way and High Street**

Three trenches were monitored at the junction of Roman way to lay the new sewerage pipes (Figs. 4 and 5).

Trench 1 originally was 3.70m long and 0.65m wide at 111.20m OD and was dug to investigate the position of a service. The lowest deposit encountered was (1/08), which was firm greyish blue silty clay, c. 0.16m thick with occasional inclusions of pebbles (Fig 6). This may have been West Walton Formation. Overlying this deposit was Beckley Sand Member (1/07), a hard mid brownish yellow sandy clay, 0.24m thick. It lay directly beneath (1/06), which was the Roman road surface.

The road surface was at a depth of 111.12m OD and was hard and compacted. It comprised 90% of small stone c 0.09m by 0.06m in size, bonded together by mid brownish yellow sandy clay. In the southern side of the original Trench 1 two layers of stone were present with a combined thickness of 0.08m. The lower layer was made up of stones of average size 90x70x40mm, while the upper was of stones 50x30x25mm average.

Covering the Roman road layer on the southeastern side was (1/05); this was loose light golden brown sand in appearance and composition. (1/09) a loose mid greyish blue sand was directly laying above (1/05), and the Roman road (1/06) at the northwest end of the trench. In turn this was overlain by a loose mid brownish red sand (1/04) that is described as looking 'degraded' in nature. (1/03) was mid orangey yellow in colour and loose sand in composition and compaction. This last was a bedding layer for the overlying hardcore (1/02) for the modern tarmac road surface (1/01).

An extension of Trench 1 was excavated to the west. The Roman road was observed in this trench and was described as the same as (1/06). A service trench truncated the western edge of the Roman road at c. 1m from the western end of the trench. The road was level with the top at 111.12m OD at this point. Further sections were seen in Trench 3 and further south along Roman Way (see below).

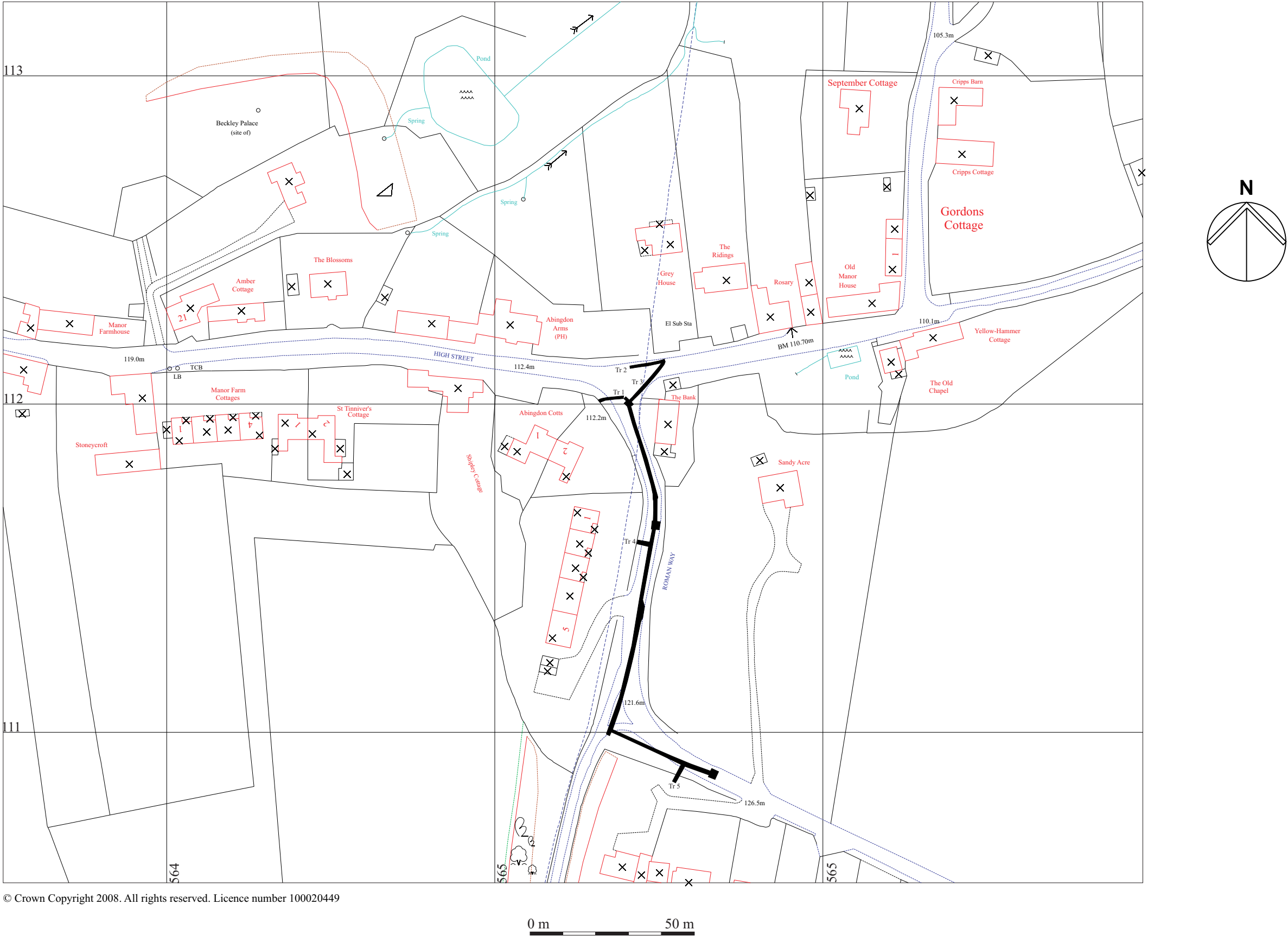


Figure 4. Location of Trenches 1-5.



Figure 5. Plan of Trenches 1, 2 and 3

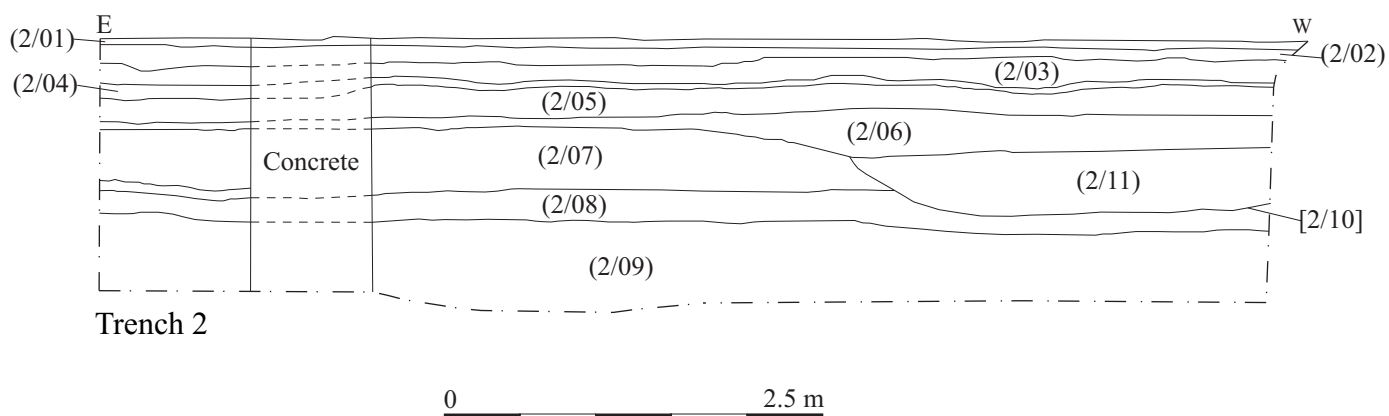
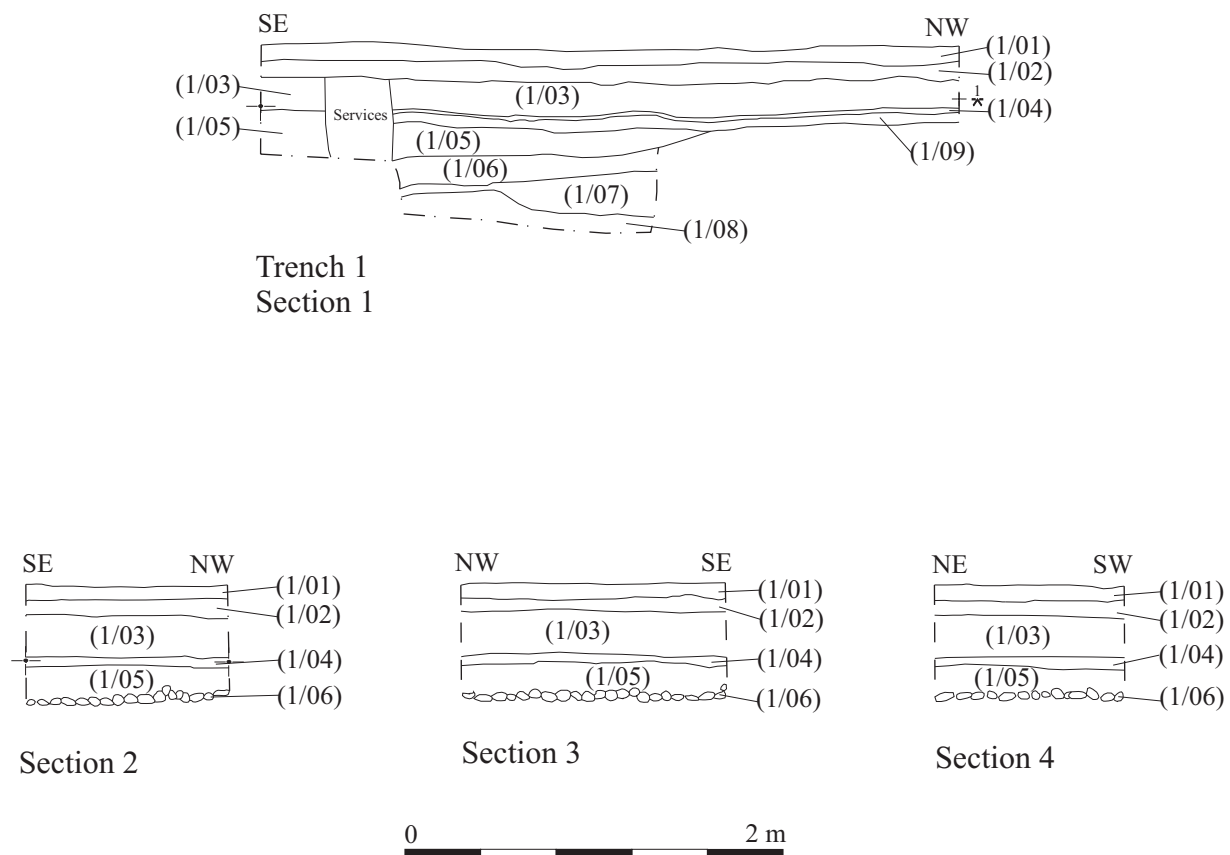


Figure 6. Trenches 1 and 2 sections



Trench 2 was part of the section dug along High Street for the sewerage pipe. An 8m long section, 0.85m wide, was monitored and recorded. The top was at 111.27m OD at the western end and rose to 111.49m OD at the eastern end. The lowest layer encountered was friable, mid bluish grey sand (2/09), at least 0.50m deep (Fig. 6). This layer was overlain by (2/08), firm dark bluish grey sand in colour and consistency; it was 0.20m deep. Overlaying this deposit was friable mid bluish grey sand that was c 0.40m deep by 8m (2/07). Cutting (2/07) was u-shaped feature [2/10]; its dimensions were at least c 2.74m wide and 0.40m deep. Only the western side was visible in section; it had a sharp break on its eastern side and followed into a medium slope with a gradual break at the bottom and a flat base. It was filled by (2/11), friable light whitish blue sand. Sealing ditch [2/10] and overlaying (2/07) was firm mid reddish brown sand (2/06) which appeared to look 'degraded' in nature. Two sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from this layer. (2/05) was above this, and was a sandy, friable, mid orangey yellow deposit, 0.24m deep by 8m. Directly above was (2/04), friable mid reddish orange sand, this was 0.12m deep by 8m.

Sealing this were modern layers of build up. (2/03) was a 0.22m by 8m layer of crushed brick used to as bedding for the hardcore layer above (2/02), which was 0.14m deep and visible throughout the trench. The final layer was the tarmac road surface; it was 0.06m deep and is the same as (1/01)

A similar sequence of deposits was observed in the northern section of Trench 3 with the equivalent trench 2 context numbers being given. Trench 3 was 14.20m long and 1.10m wide and at a level of 111.38m OD at the SW corner, which rose to 111.40 at the NE corner. A modern storm drain was present at c 7m along the trench from trench 1. The Roman road was present to the south west of this division and due to the high level of truncation by services, was not visible in the northeastern section of the trench. All other deposits were visible for the length of the trench where not disturbed by services. The lowest layer (3/09) (2/09) was friable bluish grey sand that was c 0.50m deep. Towards the northern end of the trench deep disturbance had occurred with pieces of wood and animal bone within the material. Overlying it, deposit (3/08) (2/08) was firm in consistency and dark bluish grey sand in colour and composition and was c 0.20m deep. Overlying (3/08) was deposit (3/07) (2/07), mid bluish grey friable sand and c 0.40m in depth. Directly overlying was (3/06) (2/06), described as mid reddish brown firm sand that was c 0.34m deep. Finds from this layer where it was above the Roman road were labelled (3/11) and comprised post-medieval pottery,, animal bone, clay tobacco pipe stem and an piece of iron fitting. It was covered by (3/05) (2/05), a mid orangey yellow friable sand. It was approximately 0.24m deep. (3/05) was overlain by (3/04) (2/04), friable mid reddish orange sand, 0.12m in depth. It was covered by three modern layers (3/03) a 0.22m deep layer of crushed brick, (3/02), a 0.14m thick layer of mid reddish brown friable sand and a final layer of 0.06m thick black tarmac (3/01) (2/01). The Roman road surface (3/10) was observed beneath layer (3/04), southwest of the storm drain at a depth of 110.76m OD. It was similar in appearance to the road visible in trench 1. It comprised mainly of small pebble c. 0.09 by 0.06m in dimension and bonded by a firm mid brownish orange clay.

A patch of the Roman road was seen c. 5m south of manhole 1 with a large stone (1.4m x 0.30 – 0.64m x 0.34 – 0.38m) to the west of this. This may have been a kerb stone. A further part was seen in manhole 2 but not between the two (Fig. 5). Further south of manhole 2 no traces were found although this was expected due to the





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Figure 7. Location of Otmoor Lane investigation

projected line of the road with Sand Path being to the west of the pipe trench. It was not seen in the lateral trench: Trench 4 (see Discussion).

The pipe trench was monitored along the west end of Woodperry Road. There was no sign of the postulated track from the Roman Villa. This may have been due to landscaping to achieve the gradient when Woodperry Road was constructed to join Roman Way.

#### **4.1.4 Otmoor Lane**

A section of the Roman road was uncovered during the stripping of an area west of Otmoor Lane at the entrance to the sewerage treatment works. The area of the site was c. 15m in length and tapered in width from c. 2.5m at the southern end of site to c. 9m at the centre of the site (Figs. 7 & 8). Two sections were excavated through the Roman road. The road was recorded on the southern end at 69.35m OD with it gradually sloping down to 68.93m OD 6m to the north. The road does rise slightly to a level of 68.80m OD at 8m to the east, but then descends to 68.53m OD indicating a displacement of the stones due to continual tracking over of them. The northern end of the Roman road as seen was at 68.09m OD, 1.26m lower than the southern end of the road. This reflects the present gradient of Otmoor Lane.

Section 1 was dug c. 2.5m from the southern edge of excavation. The lowest observed deposit was the Upper Oxford Clay (303), firm, light blue-grey clay with yellow mottling and occasional limestone pieces. Above the natural was a Roman road formed by a layer of loose un-coursed stone (304) bonded by firm, mid greyish yellow gritty clay (310) c. 0.15m deep. The stone was on average c. 0.10m by 0.10m in size, although the largest was c. 0.20m by 0.20m. A small amount of loose yellow mortar (311), c. 0.08m thick, was pressed into the top of layer (310). This was an intrusive layer of modern mortar and sand used as bedding for the modern road adjacent to, and overlying, the Roman road.

Cutting (310) to the western side of the Roman road was small ditch [315], which had a vertical slope and sharp break of slope at the bottom with a flat base. It was filled by (316), light bluish grey clay with yellow mottling and 30% small limestone pieces. This was 0.22m deep fractionally deeper than the road surface. It was at least 0.33m wide before being cut by modern service trench [305] on its western side. The service trench was c. 0.5m wide and was visible for 15m on a north-south axis. It was excavated to 0.3m although it was not fully bottomed. It was filled with firm, mid reddish brown sandy clay (306).

Section 2 displayed natural (303) as the lowest deposit with the overlying road surface of un-coursed stone (304) bonded within natural clay. The service trench [305] cut the road on the western edge and was filled with (306). Small ditch [315] was not visible as such within this section; although it is possible that the deeper part of (304) is the lower level of [315] and that the stone to the west was remnants of later resurfacing.

Immediately north and south of section 2 there was c. 0.28m difference in height between the westernmost 0.22-0.26m before a drop in level to the east. This also occurred 1.1m north of section 2 where there was a similar drop of 0.16-0.22m. The higher part had 2-3 layers of stone. Here the capping extends west of trench [315].

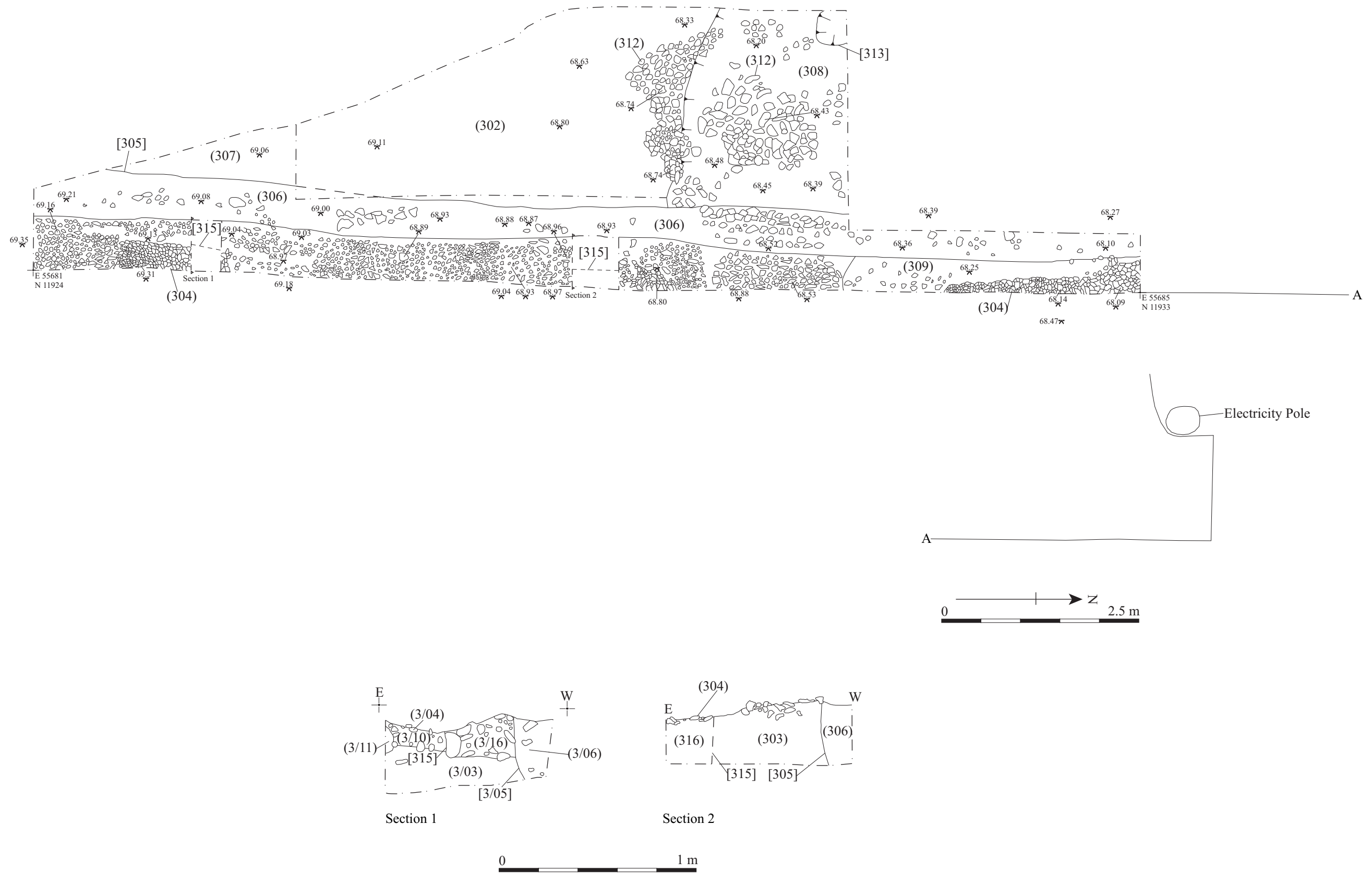


Figure 8. Plan and sections of Otmoor Lane investigation

Towards the northern end of the site the road surface had been disturbed through the use of the gateway and patched with stone in a loose light yellowish brown sandy gravel (309). This material contained a piece of iron and fragments of tile.

Adjacent to service trench [305], and cut by it, was subsoil deposit (307), recorded as loose, mid brownish grey, gritty sand. It was visible for c. 2m by c. 0.6m at the southern end of the site, and was unexcavated although a 19<sup>th</sup> century sherd was recovered from its surface.

Towards the north-western end of area was deposit (308); firm, dark greyish brown clay. Pressed into this layer was un-coursed stone (312), c. 0.20m by 0.20m. The stones to the south formed a crescent shape and were substantially higher and more compact than the stones to the north, which formed a sub circular shape and were looser and diffuse. The sporadic placement of the stones was probably caused by erosion to the field gate due to continuous tracking over them. This would also explain the displacement of the stones to the south. A sherd of 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century pottery was recovered from this surface along with glass fragments.

Small modern pit [313] had been cut into (308). It was circular in plan and was c. 0.40 by 0.40 although it was not fully exposed and 0.40m deep. The sides had sharp breaks of slopes, mid sloping sides and mid breaks at the bottom of the slope. The base was concave. It was filled by (314), firm, mid greyish brown clay and contained an abundance of modern glass.

Lying above layers (304), (306), (307), (308) and (309) was subsoil (302), described as a loose mid greyish brown sandy silt with occasional small stone inclusions, c. 0.1m thick. This in turn was overlain by topsoil (301) a loose, mid brownish grey silt c. 0.1m thick.

## **4.2 Reliability of results and methodologies**

All results were gathered in good conditions and using previously stated approved methodologies. All sections were hand dug where appropriate and recorded in accordance with John Moore Heritage Services' techniques.

## **5 FINDS**

### **5.1 Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn**

The pottery assemblage comprised 43 sherds with a total weight of 932g. It was nearly all post-medieval, apart from three small sherds of medieval material, two of which were stratified. It was recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994), as follows:

OXAM: Brill/Boarstall ware, AD1200 – 1600. 3 sherds, 6g.

OXCL: Cistercian ware, 1475-1700. 1 sherd, 12g.

OXDR: Red Earthenwares, 1550+. 22 sherds, 538g.

OXRESWL: Polychrome Slipware, 17<sup>th</sup>C. 6 sherds, 101g.

OXBEW: Manganese-glazed earthenwares. c. 1680-1800. 4 sherds, 111 g.

OXEST: London stoneware. c. 1680 plus. 2 sherds, 125g.

OXFM: Staffordshire White-glazed English Stoneware, 1730 – 1800. 3 sherds, 31g.  
WHEW: Mass-produced white earthenwares, 19th - 20th C. 2 sherds, 8g.

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 fabrics are well-known types in the region.

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

Context	OXAM		OXCL		OXDR		OXRESWL		OXBEW		OXEST		OXFM		WHEW		Date
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
105					6	42	1	12									17thC
106					4	27			1	13							L17thC
108					3	306			2	75							L17thC
109					1	6											M16thC
110	1	3	1	12	1	43	1	16	1	23	1	28	3	31			E18thC
114					2	51	4	73									17thC
120					1	3											M16thC
2/06	2	3															13thC
3/11					4	60									1	2	19thC
307											1	97					19thC
312															1	6	19thC
Total	3	6	1	12	22	538	6	101	4	111	2	125	3	31	2	8	

## 5.2 Metalwork

A small iron nail was recovered from fill (104) of the quarry in Field 1.

A small piece of copper alloy came from colluvial deposit (2/06) in High Street along with a piece of iron fitting from (3/11).

A piece of iron (possibly part of a large buckle) was found in deposit 309 adjacent to Otmoor Lane. Part of an iron fitting was recovered from the metalling (312) by the gate entrance at the same spot.

## 5.3 Ceramic Building Material

Abraded fragments of tile were recovered from quarry fills (104-107) and (110).

In the Otmoor Lane investigation area a fragment of tile was found in the top of subsoil (307), while a small fragment came from (308) under metalling (312) by the gate with seven fragments from metalling (309) and fourteen from (312).

## 5.4 Animal Bone

Quantities of animal bone came from quarry fills (104-108), (110), and (114).

Other small assemblages came from disturbance (3/09) in High Street and colluvial layer 3/11 in the same area.

Further animal bone was recovered from post-medieval metallurgy (312) in Otmoor Lane.

## 5.5 Glass

Bottle glass was found in quarry fills 104, 106, and 108, and post medieval metallurgy 312.

## 5.6 Clay Tobacco Pipe

Pipe stem fragments were found in quarry fills 106-108 and colluvial layer 3/11 in High Street.

# 6 DISCUSSION

Within Field 1 the archaeological remains indicate that a small area had been used for quarrying purposes. The infilling is dated to the late 17<sup>th</sup> to early 18<sup>th</sup> century.

To the north of this area, the fields exhibit relatively well preserved ridge and furrow earthworks. A track laid on a headland and shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1876 was found. Its reason is unknown as it only leads down to the stream from Otmoor Lane. Constable's Piece, the plot that the treatment works was built in, was originally subdivided. A further local instance where small plots were amalgamated is within The Closes to the north of Lower Farm. There the small plots appeared to be based on a multiple of 11m units which corresponds to the spacing of the extant ridge and furrow seen in the fields through which this scheme passed. Between the buried field boundary ditch found in Constable's Piece and the extant field boundary to the west is 22m.

Given the evidence of the parts of the Roman road found in High Street and Roman Way, and if it is on a presumed NNE/SSW alignment here, then the road was 9.5-11m wide. This is wide for such a road although roads could vary in width from 5-15m (Bagshawe 1979). Aligning the part found with Sandy Lane, the edge of the road would have passed immediately west of lateral Trench 4. Sandy Lane survives as a hollow way approximately 10m wide. Given that the road was surfaced in stone then it seems unusual for a hollow way to have formed. It is possible, but unlikely, that this was a well-used prehistoric path. As there is no evidence for any banks it does not appear that the Romans created a cutting for the road. It is therefore possible that the course of a small valley was utilised for the route. Slight subsidence under Nos. 1-5 Roman Way is thought to be from an underground stream. Evidence for possible kerbing to the road was found south of manhole 1 in Roman Way.

A similar road metallurgy was found in Otmoor Lane. Here it was more disturbed and is probably just the base layer surviving. The small gully found on the west side here may have been a scoop-ditch for material for a small embankment (*agger*), although no such evidence was seen within the investigation area. However, only the edge of the road was found. There was no *agger* in Roman Way. An alternative suggestion is that it was a foundation trench to key in the kerbing into the natural in order to prevent lateral movement of the road sides. This has been suggested for elsewhere (JMHS 2008).



In the High Street the natural deposits (2/07 – 2/09) and (3/07 – 3-09) are not fully understood. This is probably landslip material of Beckley Sand Member with the blue-grey colour partly being due to oil contamination which was noticeable in the area and a broken storm drain. The wide u-shaped feature {2/10} may well be associated with the landslip event. It cannot be a road side ditch associated with the Roman road due to the angle of the side.

The post-Roman layer 1/04, 1/05, 1/09 2/06 and 3/06 may in part be colluvial with material washing down the hill. Today during heavy rainfall silts are deposited at the bottom of Roman Way and on High Street. The excavated material contained artefacts dating from the medieval period to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## 7 ARCHIVE

### Archive contents

The Archive consists of the following:

#### Paper record

The project brief

Written Scheme of Investigation

Photographic record

The project report

The primary site records

#### Artefacts

Pottery

Glass

Clay tobacco pipe

Ceramic building material

Metalwork

Animal bone

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the County Museums' Store under accession number OCAS: 2008.8

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