



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**  
**AT**  
**WINDMILL HOUSE, WINDMILL ROAD,**  
**HEADINGTON, OXFORD**

**SP 5487 0652**

*On behalf of*

*J & S Seddon (Building) Ltd*

**May 2009**

**REPORT FOR** J & S Seddon (Builders) Ltd  
PO Box 13  
55 Duke Street  
Fenton  
Stoke-on-Trent  
ST4 3NN

**PREPARED BY** Stephen Hammond

**ILLUSTRATION BY** Eoin Fitzsimons

**FIELDWORK** 11<sup>th</sup> March and 15<sup>th</sup> May 2009

**REPORT ISSUED** 27<sup>th</sup> May 2009

**ENQUIRES TO** John Moore Heritage Services  
Hill View  
Woodperry Road  
Beckley  
Oxfordshire OX3 9UZ  
Tel/Fax 01865 358300  
Email: [info@jmheritageservices.co.uk](mailto:info@jmheritageservices.co.uk)

**Site Code** HEWR 09  
**JMHS Project No:** 2061  
**Archive Location** The archive is currently held by JMHS and will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Service under accession number OXCMS: 2009.27

**CONTENTS**

	<b>Page</b>
<b><i>SUMMARY</i></b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Site Location	1
1.2 Planning Background	1
1.3 Archaeological Background	1
<b>2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3 STRATEGY</b>	<b>4</b>
3.1 Research Design	4
3.2 Methodology	4
<b>4 RESULTS</b>	<b>4</b>
4.1 Excavation Results	6
4.2 Reliability of Techniques and Results	9
<b>5 FINDS</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>6 DISCUSSION</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>7 CONCLUSION</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>8 BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>APPENDIX</b> Archaeological Context Inventory	<b>11</b>
 <b>FIGURES</b>	
<b>Figure 1</b> Site and Trench Location	2
<b>Figure 2</b> Trenches 1 & 2 plans and sections	5
<b>Figure 3</b> Trenches 3 & 4 plans and sections	8

## **Summary**

*John Moore Heritage Services conducted an archaeological evaluation by four mechanically excavated trenches at Windmill House, Windmill Road, Headington, Oxford in two phases. The first phase involved the excavation of two trenches and took place on the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2009 prior to the demolition of Windmill House whilst the second phase took place on the 15<sup>th</sup> May 2009 after demolition was complete and access could be gained to excavate the remaining two trenches. The remains of a 19<sup>th</sup> century barn seen on the 1876 Ordnance Survey map in the southeasterly corner of the site were revealed, as too was an undated posthole close to the southwest. No other archaeological finds or features were revealed.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)**

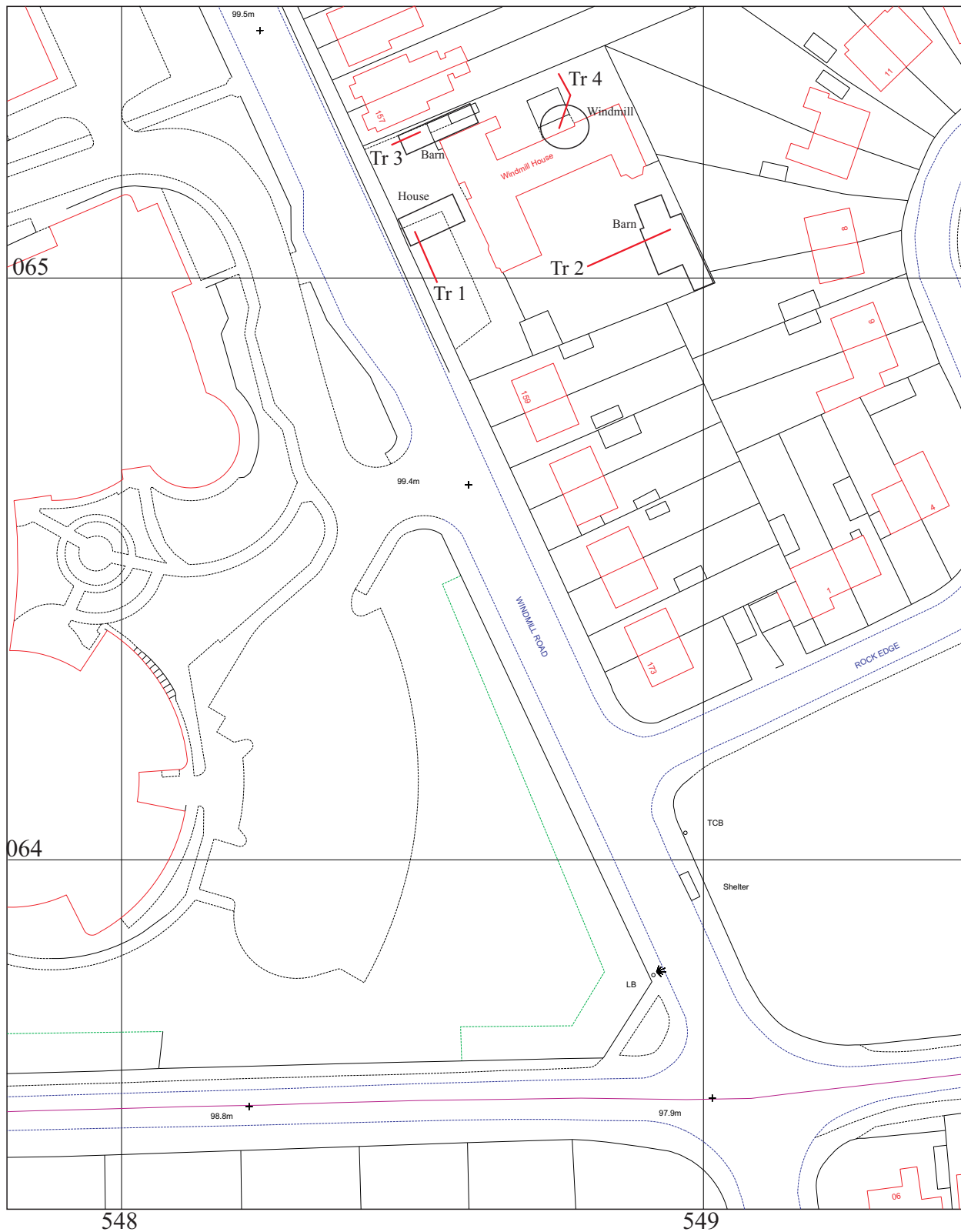
The site lies on the east side of Windmill Road, Oxford approximately 130m north of the junction with Old Road (NGR SP 5487 0652) at an approximate height of 100m Above Ordnance Datum. The site was occupied by a building with parking and gardens during the first phase of evaluation. This building was demolished before the second phase commenced. Geologically the site is situated on Wheatley Limestone. This was confirmed in the evaluation.

### **1.2 Planning Background**

Oxford City Council has granted planning permission (08/02670/FUL) for redevelopment of the Windmill House site including for the demolition of the existing building and construction of new two-to-three storey accommodation to provide more suitable supervised facilities for Home Group's existing client group. Due to the site's potential to contain archaeological remains a condition requiring a programme of archaeological work was attached to the permission. The Archaeological Officer for Oxford City Council prepared a Brief for the work. This work was to take the form of an Archaeological Evaluation designed to establish the presence/absence and condition of any archaeological deposits thought to present within the site in order to help formulate any future mitigation strategies, if necessary. This is in line with PPG 16 and Local Plan Policies.

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

The site is on the location of a 19<sup>th</sup> windmill (County HER 1007). A painting of a view of Oxford from Shotover Hill shows the windmill as it was in 1820 along with the miller's house. Two windmills are referred to in the parish of Headington; one near the Isolation Hospital and one on this site. One may probably be identified with the medieval mill described as standing in a forest clearing in 1303. Both were reported to be ruinous in the 18th century, but the Windmill Road mill, recently rebuilt 'on the most modern lines', was evidently working when it was offered for sale in 1823 (VCH 1957, 157-168). Details in the sale advertisement are 'consisting of a fan-tail, two pair of capital French stones, 4 feet 2 inches high, one pair of Peak ditto,



© Crown Copyright 2009. All rights reserved. Licence number 100020449



Figure 1. Site and trench location

and 1 spare ditto, 2 dressing mills, and flour bins; also bins that will contain 20 loads of corn, and the Mill is capable of grinding from 18 to 20 loads per week. The Dwelling House, &c. is newly-erected, and consists of a parlour, kitchen, 3 bed rooms, cellar, wood hovel, piggeries, stabling for 3 horses, with large granary over the same; also a very excellent garden'

(<http://www.headington.org.uk/history/misc/winmill.htm>).

Two years later it was up for let again. Thomas Sharp is listed as both occupier and owner of the house and Mill in Windmill Lane in the Headington Rate Book of 1850. Richard Lamburn became miller in the mid-1840s but died at the age of 49 in 1854. John Hunt married his widow a year later and took over the mill. Hunt is still listed as the miller in the 1871 census, but operations must have ceased soon afterwards as the 1876 OS map labels the mill 'Old Windmill' (ibid). Not only had it gone out of operation but it must have been pulled down as an OS survey point had been established on the mound.

By the 1881 census four new cottages were built on the site at right angles to the road and extending away from the miller's house. They were apparently built from the stone of the old mill. These along with the old mill house and two adjoining buildings were known as Windmill Cottages (ibid). The new cottages are shown on the 1899 OS map (plotted on present OS mapping - Fig. 1) along with privies (gone by 1921), and a modified outbuilding associated with the old house. A bay of the old house was demolished for the new cottages. The large barn had also been modified. By 1939 (OS map) the large barn had been replaced by, or more likely converted into, three cottages. The footprint is the same as in 1899.

Windmill Cottages survived until the 1950s, when they were deliberately destroyed by the Fire Brigade during a training exercise, and Windmill House was built on the site in 1957 (ibid).

The site lies 146m from a likely Roman pottery kiln site (HER No 3670), and is located within an extensive landscape of dispersed manufacturing industry associated with the nationally important local Roman pottery industry. A magnetic anomaly located during geophysical survey carried out prior to the relocation of the ACE on the Nuffield Orthopaedic Hospital site, suggested the presence of a buried kiln but trenching revealed only Roman sherds in a pit. A subsequent watching brief revealed kiln wasters, dense pottery collection and fired clay suggestive of a nearby kiln producing Sandford ware (County HER No 3670; Oxford Archaeology 2001; Oxford Archaeology 1997; TVAS 2002).

## **2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

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

- To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the site.
- 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.
- To determine the impact of the proposed development on any remains present.

In particular:

- To establish the character and extent of any Roman activity.
- To establish the character and extent of any medieval and/or post-medieval activity especially in relation to the known 19<sup>th</sup> century windmill and associated structures.
- To make public the results of the investigation.

### **3 STRATEGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

In response to Oxford City Council's Brief a scheme of investigation was designed by JMHS and agreed by the City Council and the applicant. The work was carried out by JMHS and involved the excavation of trial trenches across the two phases (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 (1999) and the procedures laid down in MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

#### **3.2 Methodology**

In order to achieve the aims of the investigation it was decided to excavate four trenches 1.6m wide and ranging in length from 5m to 15m across the subject area.

The excavation of the trenches was by JCB fitted with a ditching bucket. Mechanical excavation was taken down to the top of "natural" deposits or any higher archaeological horizon. Trenches 1 and 2 were excavated prior to demolition of the buildings, with Trenches 3 and 4 afterwards.

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.

Mr David Radford, the City Council Archaeologist for Oxford City Council monitored the work.

### **4 RESULTS**

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers in ( ) indicate fills or deposits of material whilst numbers referring to features themselves are shown without brackets.

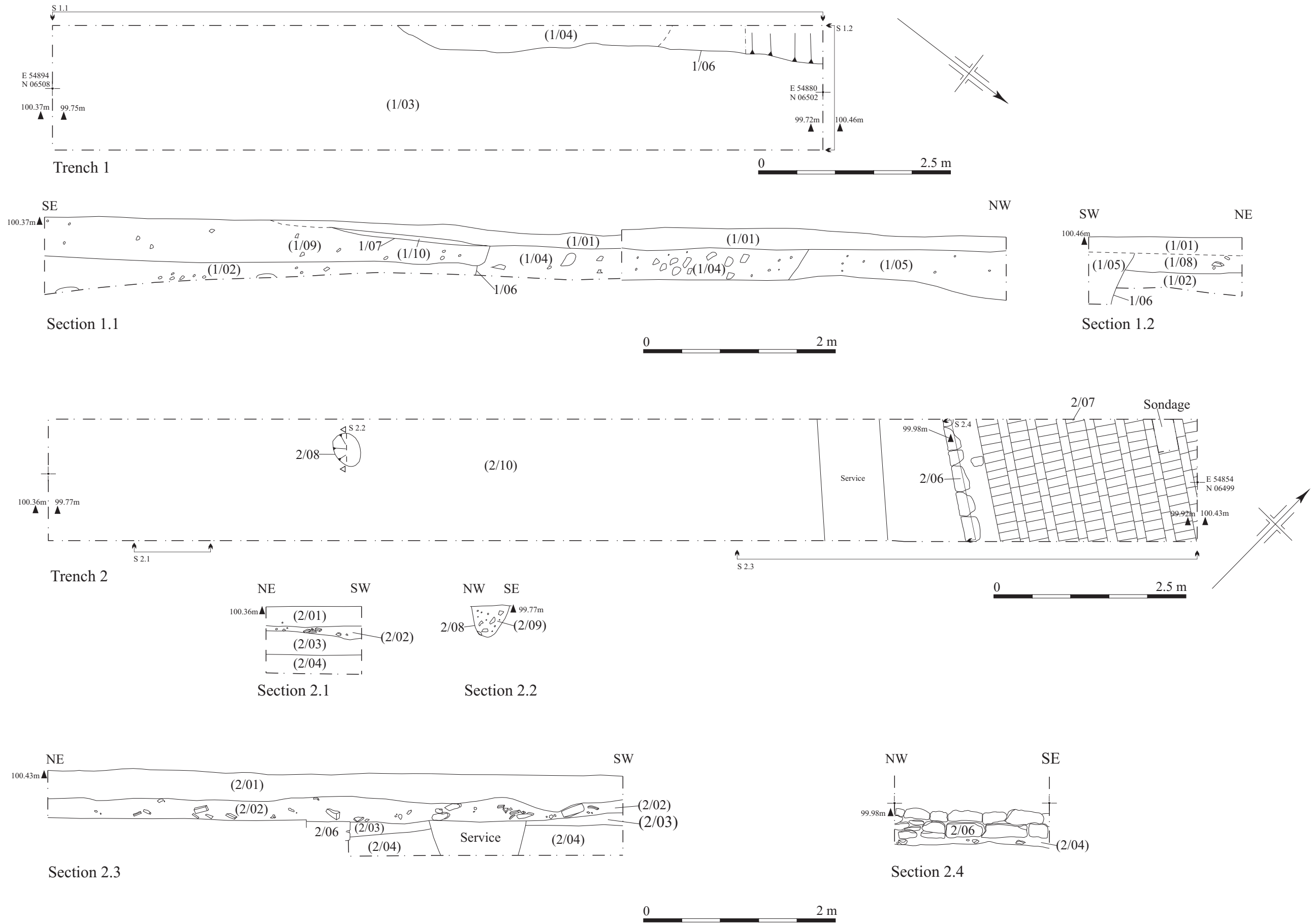


Figure 2. Trenches 1 and 2 plans and sections



#### **4.1 Excavation Results (Figure 2)**

The trenches were located within the positions indicated in the Written Scheme of Investigation. The trenches were issued with a set of context numbers which, as per normal JMHS recording procedures, had the trench number preceding each context number issued. The topsoil observed as deposit (01) in the trench for example was recorded as (1/01).

##### **Trench 1 (Figure 2)**

Trench 1 was located adjacent to and parallel with Windmill Road, aligned NW-SE. This trench was 10m long. Towards the SE end natural limestone (1/03) was overlain by a mid orange/brown silty loam subsoil (1/02) with a maximum thickness of 0.40m which in turn was covered by a dark blackish brown clayey/silty loam topsoil (1/09) also with a maximum thickness of 0.40m.

The north west of the trench however was different. Following demolition of the pre-existing buildings in the 1950's beyond the northwest end of the trench, a layer of demolition rubble (1/08) measuring 0.20m thick was added on top of the newly exposed subsoil (1/02) either to build up the ground or perhaps to help get rid of some of the material. It is also possible that some of the topsoil in this area could have been stripped away to prevent contamination with the demolition debris. Topsoil was then added to overlay the demolition layer and to create the grassed 'D' shaped border. At a later stage some of this topsoil was stripped away (represented by cut 1/07) and removed to help facilitate the digging of the pit or possible modern service trench 1/06. Trample and general work from the excavation of 1/06 next to the partially re-exposed demolition layer (1/08) helped form the demolition lens (1/10) seen to the SE of the newly dug pit. Feature 1/06 was backfilled with mixed dump deposits (1/05) and (1/04), (1/05) being the earlier. An investigative slot was excavated within (1/05) but the feature was not bottomed. (1/05) contained modern frogged bricks, a modern cylindrical metal container and part of a rectangular manhole cover. These were not retained. Following the backfilling of 1/06, the topsoil was reinstated as deposit (1/01). (1/01) appeared identical to (1/09) and was measured to be 0.18m thick at the extreme NW end of the trench.

No archaeological features were seen. Natural Wheatley Limestone in this trench was reached at a height between 99.75m and 99.87m above Ordnance Datum.

##### **Trench 2 (Figure 2)**

This trench was located towards the SE corner of the site being 15m long and on a NE-SW alignment. Natural limestone (2/10) was cut by posthole 2/08 measuring 0.40m wide and 0.30m deep. This contained a singular mid orange/brown silty sandy fill (2/09) (similar to the subsoil) but no dating evidence. Above this was darkish orange/brown silty sandy loam subsoil (2/04) 0.20m thick which in turn was covered by buried topsoil (2/03) also 0.20m thick.

Towards the NE end of the trench (2/03) was cut by 2/05, a foundation cut for wall (2/06) consisting of roughly hewn random coursed limestone blocks with a pale yellow sandy mortar. This wall only consisted of two courses and sat on the remains

of the partially removed subsoil (2/04) at the base of the cut. Little evidence of the actual construction cut was seen. Within the inside of the wall was a brick floor (2/07) consisting of a row of soldier bricks followed by a row of stretchers, all very tightly packed together. A small slot placed in the northern corner of the trench through these bricks revealed them to be sat a thin layer (c.0.02m) of pale yellow bedding sand which also lay above the remains of subsoil (2/04) 0.20m thick which in turn sealed the natural. The subsoil below the bricks was thicker than that below the wall. Here only 0.08m remained. The brick themselves were un-frogged. Sealing this construction was a layer of demolition rubble (2/02) of varying depth but with a maximum thickness of c. 0.26m which in turn was covered by 0.20m of modern topsoil (2/01). The construction is thought to be the remains of the Barn noted on the 1876 Ordnance Survey map built in the SE corner of the site. No evidence of any modification to the barn was apparent despite the fact it was known to have been converted (albeit on the same footprint) to three cottages by 1939. The wall of the barn and the flooring were reached at a height of 99.98m above Ordnance Datum (approximately 0.45m below the current ground level) and the natural limestone geology was revealed at a height of 99.77m A.O.D.

### **Trench 3** (Figure 3)

Trench 3 was located towards the NW corner of the site. This trench was aligned NE-SW and was 5m in length. A gas main associated with the former building was found running parallel along the NW facing section preventing a proper inspection of its length. The other sections were however available for investigation. These sections revealed a stratigraphy consisting of natural limestone (3/03) sealed by a maximum of 0.20m of mid orange/brown subsoil (3/02) which in turn was covered by c. 0.30m of demolition rubble disturbance (3/01). A modern service cut associated with the former building was observed at the NE end of the trench aligned approximately N-S and a small area of modern disturbance was also seen close to the SW end.

No archaeological finds or features were revealed within this trench. The natural geology was revealed at a height of between 99.71m and 99.76m A.O.D.

### **Trench 4** (Figure 3)

This trench was approximately 10m long and was positioned to investigate the site of the former windmill. Unlike the other trenches, this trench was aligned approximately N-S for 6m (excavated through the known location of the former windmill) before being bent to a more NW-SE alignment for 4m to avoid retained trees, as per the agreed scheme. At the north-westerly end the stratigraphy typically observed consisted of natural limestone (4/05) overlaid by 0.22m of mid orange/brown silty/sandy loam (4/03) identical to the subsoil seen elsewhere which in turn was covered by 0.15m of light yellow sand similar to the bedding layer found below the brick flooring seen in Trench 2. Overlaying this and completing the sequence was 0.20m of dark grey/brown sandy/silty loam topsoil. Several modern services associated with the former building were seen cutting through this area, none of which were deep enough to cut through the natural.

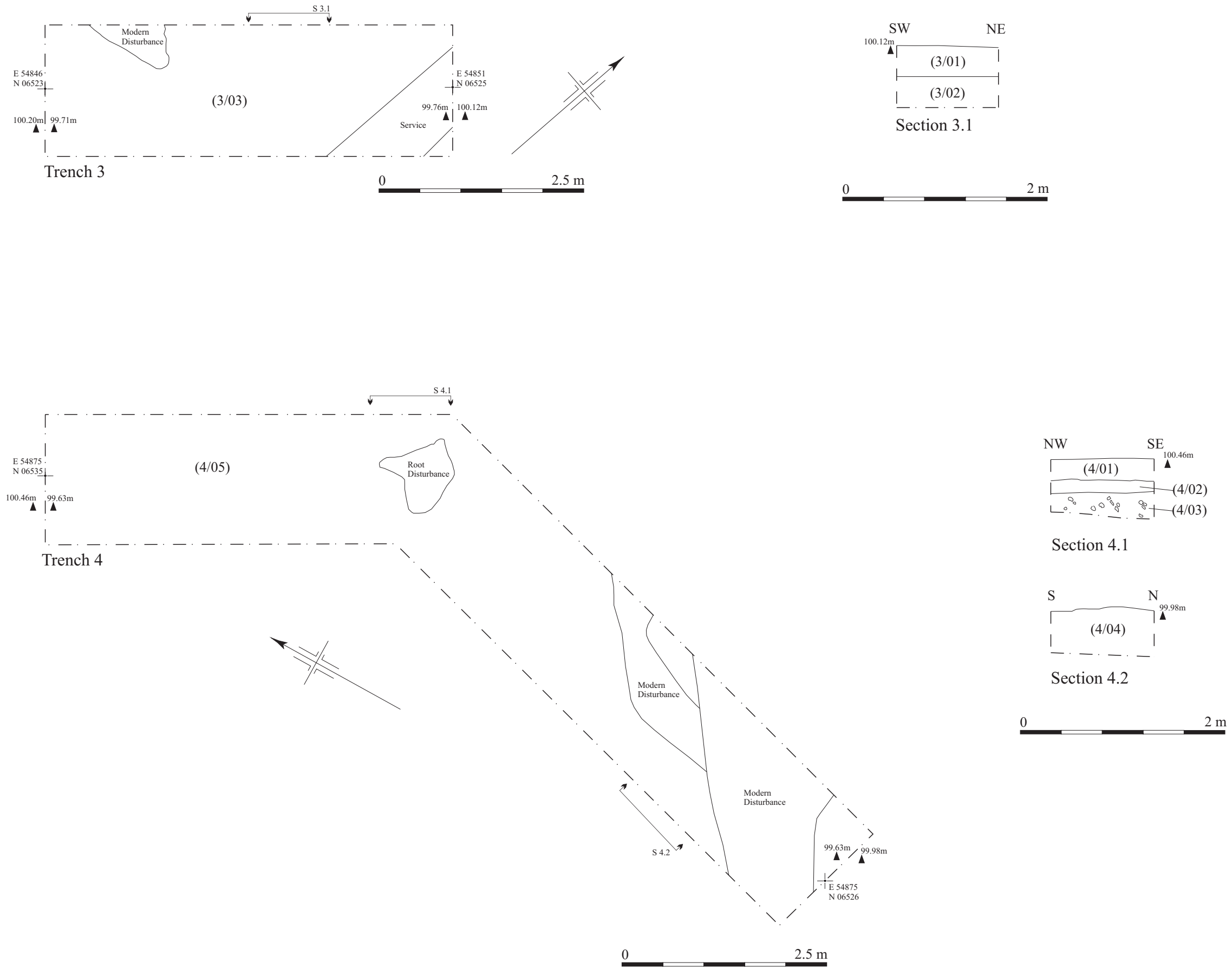


Figure 3. Trenches 3 and 4 plans and sections

The stratigraphy noted just beyond the bend where the trench changed to a more N-S alignment was significantly different. Here the natural geology (4/05) was overlain by 0.42m of modern demolition rubble (4/04). This area had been significantly disturbed during the demolition of the former Windmill House building and the grubbing out of its foundations. The disturbance in plan seen towards the southerly end of the trench is a direct result of this. No evidence of the windmill or its related mound was evident.

No archaeological finds or features were revealed in this trench. The natural geology was reached between 99.63m and 99.91m A.O.D.

## **4.2 Reliability of Techniques and Results**

The reliability of results is considered to be good. The excavation of the trenches took place during periods of sunshine and cloud and occasional heavy showers.

## **5 FINDS**

No archaeological finds were recovered from the evaluation except from within modern service trenches.

## **6 DISCUSSION**

No archaeological features other than those observed in Trench 2 were revealed. The evidence uncovered from the other trenches suggest that any post-medieval remains of the Windmill or any earlier example could well have been completely destroyed either during their actual demolition or from later building work such as the construction of Windmill House itself and its associated services or from its subsequent demolition.

## **7 CONCLUSIONS**

The evaluation was successful in locating the remains of the former barn in the SE corner of the site. However, no evidence of the post-medieval windmill or other buildings was seen including the possible earlier medieval windmill. No information was uncovered either to suggest the presence of a Roman pottery kiln on the site. The evaluation suggests that new construction work over the vast majority of the site is unlikely to damage any potential archaeology and the new building design incorporates a large area of car parking over the area where the remains of the barn were found. It is possible that this car parking area could preserve the majority of the barn in-situ but this is dependant on build levels and on any services needed through the area.

## **8 Bibliography**

English Heritage 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects*

Institute of Field Archaeologists. 1994. *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*. Revised 1999

Oxford Archaeology 1997, *Relocation of Ace Centre, Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre Evaluation*. Unpublished client report.

Oxford Archaeology 2001 *Watching Brief, Integrated Disability Centre, Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre*. Unpublished client report.

TVAS 2002, *Watching Brief at Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre*. Unpublished client report.

Victoria County History 1957 *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 5*

**APPENDIX – ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY**

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Date
<b>Trench 1</b>			0.8	1.6	10		
1/01	Deposit	Dark black/brown clayey/silty loam topsoil.	0.4	Tr.	c.10		Modern
1/02	Deposit	Mid orange/brown silty loam subsoil.	0.4	Tr.	c.4.5		
1/03	Deposit	Natural sandy limestone.	-	Tr.	Tr.		
1/04	Fill of 1/06	Light orange mixed with reddish brown sandy silt.	-	0.3+	c.3		Modern
1/05	Fill of 1/06	Light orange sand with lenses of mid brown sand.	0.4+	0.3+	2+	Modern brick, metal	Modern
1/06	Service cut or large pit	Edge of service trench or pit.	0.4+	0.3+	5.5+		Modern
1/07	Cut	Evidence of stripping/ground reduction.	-	Tr.	1.5		
1/08	Deposit	Mid white/grey sand demolition horizon.	0.3	Tr.	1.5		
1/09	Deposit	Original topsoil identical to (1/01).	0.4	Tr.	c.7.6		
1/10	Deposit	Trample similar to (1/08).	0.06	-	1.6		
<b>Trench 2</b>			0.86 (max)	1.6	15		
2/01	Deposit	Topsoil.	0.2	Tr.	Tr.		Modern
2/02	Deposit	Light white/grey sandy demolition horizon.	0.2	Tr.	Tr.		
2/03	Deposit	Buried topsoil.	0.1	Tr.	c.11.80		
2/04	Deposit	Buried subsoil.	0.3	Tr.	Tr.		
2/05	Cut	Wall cut.	0.4	0.45	1.6		
2/06	Wall	Limestone wall. Two courses. Roughly hewn.	0.26	0.46	1.6		
2/07	Floor	Brick flooring.	0.08	1.6+	2.8+		
2/08	Cut	Posthole.	0.3	0.4	-		
2/09	Fill	Fill of 2/08.	0.3	0.4	-		
2/10	Deposit	Natural sandy limestone.	-	Tr.	Tr.		
2/11	Deposit	Light yellow/orange sand. Bedding layer for brick flooring.	0.02	1.6+	2.8+		
<b>Trench 3</b>			0.50 (max)	1.6	5		
3/01	Deposit	Demolition layer	0.3	Tr.	Tr.		Modern
3/02	Deposit	Subsoil	c.0.20	Tr.	Tr.		

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Date
3/03	Deposit	Natural	-	Tr.	Tr.		
<b>Trench 4</b>			0.5	1.6	10		
4/01	Deposit	Topsoil	0.2	Tr.	c.5	-	Modern
4/02	Deposit	Light yellow sand.	0.15	Tr.	c.5		
4/03	Deposit	Subsoil	c.0.20	Tr.	c.5		
4/04	Deposit	Demolition rubble layer.	0.5	Tr.	c.7		Modern
4/05	Deposit	Natural	-	Tr.	Tr.		