



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

AT

BURFORD PRIORY,

PRIORY LANE, BURFORD,

OXFORDSHIRE

NGR SP 2496 1234

For

Mr M Freud

JULY 2010

REPORT FOR Mr M Freud
Burford Priory
Priory Lane
Burford
Oxfordshire
OX18 4SQ

PREPARED BY David Gilbert

ILLUSTRATION BY Eoin Fitzsimons

FIELDWORK 24th June 2010

REPORT ISSUED 27th July 2010

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

Site Code: BUBP 10
JMHS Project No: 2174
Archive Location: Oxfordshire County Museum Service
Accession No: 2009.112

CONTENTS

	Page	
<i>SUMMARY</i>	1	
1 INTRODUCTION	1	
1.1 Site Location	1	
1.2 Planning Background	1	
1.3 Archaeological Background	1	
2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION	3	
3 STRATEGY	3	
3.1 Research Design	3	
3.2 Methodology	3	
4 RESULTS	3	
4.1 Excavation Results	3	
4.2 Reliability of Results and Techniques	6	
5 FINDS	6	
5.1 Pottery	6	
5.2 Environmental Remains	6	
6 DISCUSSION	6	
7 BIBLIOGRAPHY	7	
 FIGURES		
Figure 1	Site location	2
Figure 2	Plans of Area and sections	5

Summary

An area was investigated parallel to a previously excavated evaluation trench. This trench had produce evidence for 10th – 14th century activity. This activity was noted to extend in the vicinity. Two ditches were located that may represent part of an enclosure or relate to another form of land division. An undated pit and two postholes may also be associated. Unfortunately the majority of the area had recently been reduced in level exposing the bedrock and destroying any archaeological remains.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site is located to the west of Priory Lane and south of the River Windrush in Burford (NGR SP 2496 1234). The underlying geology is Clypeus Grit and Upper Lias Clay (Geological Survey of Great Britain. Witney Sheet 236. Solid and Drift Geology 1:50,000). The site lies at approximately 105m OD and is within the existing garden.

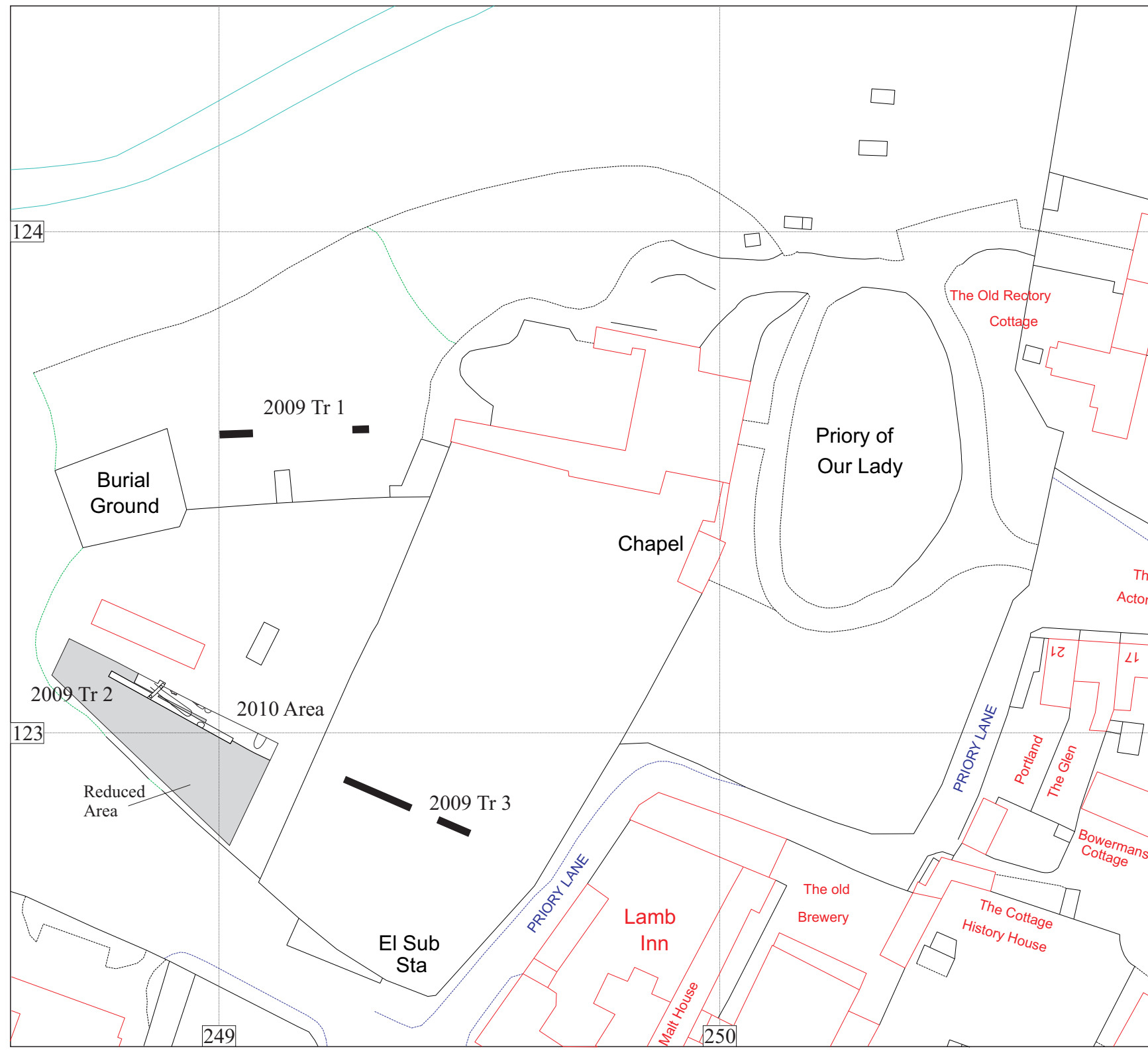
1.2 Planning Background

In 2009 planning permission was sought from West Oxfordshire District Council to construct a tennis court, a new outdoor swimming pool and an indoor swimming pool/gym at Burford Priory (09/0991/P/FP). It was thought impractical to evaluate the site for potential archaeological remains prior to determination of the application. Accordingly it was agreed that a condition requiring a staged programme of archaeological investigation would be attached to the permission.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The areas of proposed development are within an area of considerable archaeological potential. The Priory stands on the site of the former Hospital of St John the Evangelist that was founded by William Earl of Gloucester in the later twelfth century. The hospital probably consisted of a chapel and a hall and porch. These were probably in alignment with the current south wing and may have fronted onto the original road leading from Cirencester. A recent Time Team investigation did find foundations to the front of the house. The buildings were converted into a domestic dwelling by Edward Harman after 1541. In 1628 the property was purchased by Lawrence Tanfield who rebuilt it as a country house. Earlier activity on the site is suggested by the presence of hand-made middle Saxon pottery found to the rear of the present house during the Time Team investigation (P. Blinkhorn pers com). Part of a possible sleeper beam building presumed to date to the Saxon period was found in the kitchen garden. A large wall of 16th -17th century date was also found in the kitchen garden. This may have been part of an unfinished building (ibid).

Romano British pottery and coins have been found west of the proposed pool but no details of these artefacts are available.



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

Figure 1. Site location

An evaluation (JMHS 2010) in the area of the indoor swimming pool/gym located a pit dated to 10th-14th century activity as well as an undated but presumably contemporary ditch.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

- Establishing the earliest date of the medieval activity in the area and its longevity
- Determining the type of activity; settlement or otherwise

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (OCAS). Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, 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 for Archaeologists (1994).

3.2 Methodology

The area of the investigation had been reduced in level by up to 1m across the site prior to the visit of JMHS. This reduction in levels exposed solid bedrock across the majority of the site for the indoor gym and swimming pool, with only a small area left that was available to investigate (Fig. 1). The remaining surface was cleaned by hand.

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.

4 RESULTS (Figures 2 & 3)

All features were assigned individual context numbers. This number covered both the feature cut and the fill for pits, unless the feature was sample excavated by hand. Context numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material.

4.1 Excavation Results

The area to be investigated was located by Trench 2 of the initial excavation (JMHS 2010), which was placed in the proposed development area of the Indoor Gym and

Pool. The numbering sequence for Trench 2 was continued during the recording of this area.

The natural geological deposit in the area was a mottled dark grey-brown clay to orange-yellow sand containing large quantities of small stone fragments (2/03) that was related to the Clypeus Grit formations. Much of the mottling effects seen can be attributed to root penetration. Over much of the area this geological formation was removed exposing the solid bedrock. The following features were cut into the natural (2/03).

A roughly north-east to south-west aligned ditch 2/16 terminus was located to the east of the area. It was 2m wide, 0.5m deep with a shallow U-shaped profile. It was filled with dark grey-brown sandy clay (2/17) flecked with charcoal. The fill contained medieval pottery, animal bone and fragments of daub.

The previously recorded ditch 2/12 was reinvestigated, it was 1.2m wide and over 9m long. It was 0.2m deep with sides at 45° and a flat base. The fill was a dark brown-grey sandy clay (2/13) containing charcoal flecks and small stones. The north-western terminal of the ditch was not evident due to the truncation of the area.

It is possible that this ditch terminated after roughly 10m in length as two post holes were noted on its projected alignment.

Cut	Diameter	Depth	Fill
2/18	0.25m	0.12m	dark brown-grey sandy clay (2/19)
2/20	0.3m	0.24m	dark brown-grey sandy clay (2/21)

Unfortunately no dateable artefacts were recovered from either the ditch or the postholes, although the similarities in the fills of these features may suggest a contemporary date.

To the north of this ditch and roughly near its middle was an area 1m by 0.5m of flat stones (2/22) that had been impressed into the natural (2/03). These stones appeared burnt, with evidence of in situ burning and ash and charcoal between the stones. This is believed to be a hearth but was undated.

Two metres to the north on pit 2/14 was another similarly sized pit 2/24. It was 1.5m in diameter 0.38m deep with a roughly U-shaped profile. The fill was a mid brown-grey sandy clay (2/23) containing charcoal flecks, animal bone and small stones.

Feature 2/04 thought to be related to garden planting was re-recorded. A similar feature 2/25 was recorded 7m to the east, the alignment of this may prove to be at right angles to 2/04. It was over 3m long, 0.5m wide and filled with a friable yellow sand (2/26) with chalk fragments, the occasional stone and a piece of clay tobacco pipe stem. Similar to 2/04 it had at least one small pit 2/27 cut into the surface of the fill, this was roughly 0.4m in diameter.

Four modern pits were also noted these were thought to be planting pits the fills of each were similar to the topsoil and they contained coal and brick fragments.

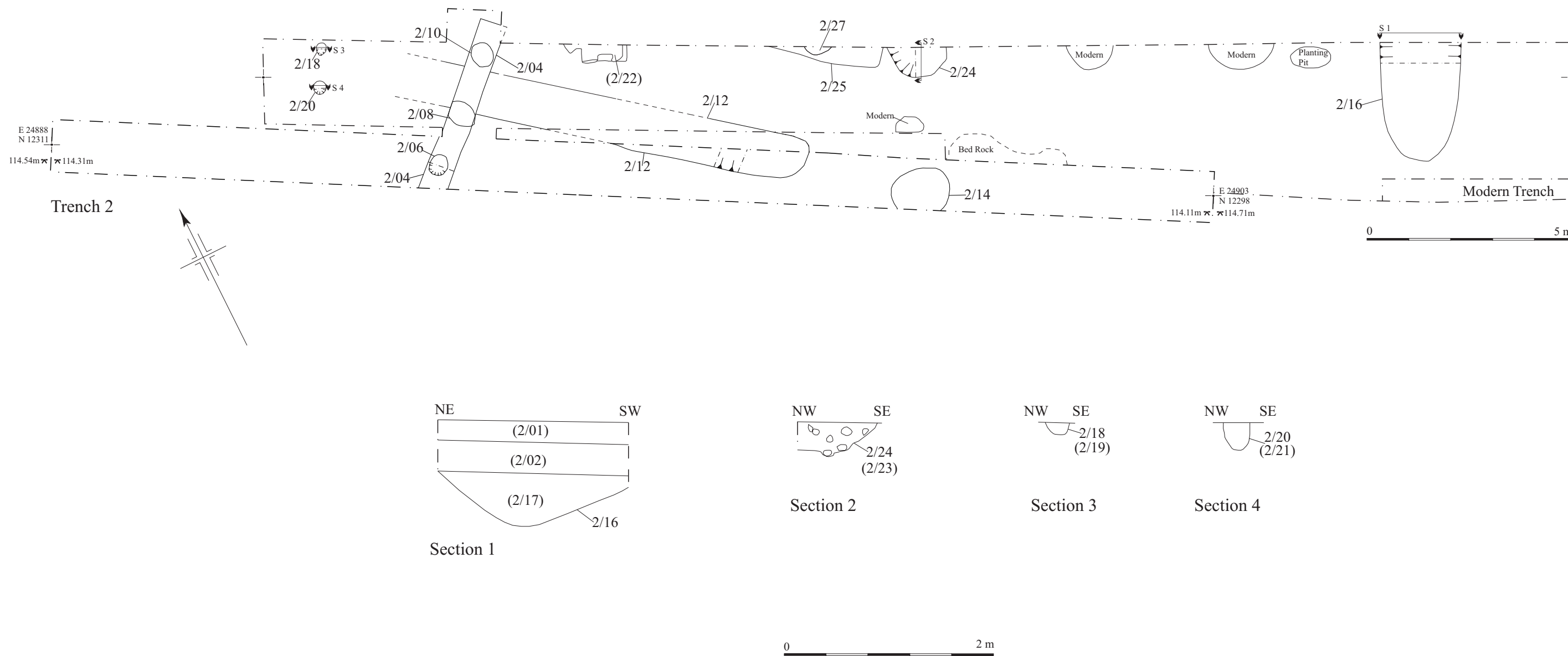


Figure 2. Plan of Area and sections

All features appeared to be sealed by layer of dark brown-grey sandy clay horticultural soil (2/02) fleck with charcoal and containing a small quantity of stones. This layer varied in thickness across the site from 0.08m to up to 0.35m. Above this in places was a topsoil (2/01).

4.2 Reliability of Results and Techniques

Due to the fact that the majority of the area had been reduced to expose the bedrock prior to any archaeological involvement the results must be considered extremely poor. The excavation of the small area left to investigate was conducted in good weather with adequate time and these results are reliable and indicative of what remains may have been recently destroyed.

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery (*By Paul Blinkhorn*)

The pottery assemblage comprised 3 sherds from context (2/17) with a total weight of 35g. It consisted of OXAC: Cotswold-type ware, AD975-1350, which is a well-known fabric type in the region.

It was recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994).

5.2 Environmental Remains

No environmental samples were taken due to the nature of the deposits encountered.

6 DISCUSSION

During the evaluation Trench 2 revealed a medieval pit 2/14 that contained Cotswold-type Ware (975-1350 AD). Ditch 2/16 also contained this type of pottery.

The use of the area as a kitchen garden appears to have caused some truncation to the archaeological deposits. It is possible that pit 2/14 forms part of a segmented ditch-sequence or indeed represents the lower deposits of a ditch with an irregular base.

It is possible that ditches 2/12 and 2/16 form part of an enclosure and that they are associated with pits 2/14 and 2/24 and postholes 2/18 and 2/20. It is possible that the postholes mark a gap in ditch 2/12 and form part of a gate or entranceway. It is not possible to extrapolate if these features mark the boundary or are internal division.

Fragments of daub were recovered from pit 2/14 and ditch 2/16 this suggests the presence of wattle and daub built structures in the area contemporary with the date of the pottery recovered.

All other features appear to be associated with planting during the areas use as a kitchen garden.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

English Heritage 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects*

Institute for Archaeologists. 1994 (revised 2008): *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Excavations*.

JMHS 2010 *An Archaeological Evaluation at Burford Priory, Priory Lane, Burford, Oxfordshire*.

Mellor, M, 1984 A summary of the key assemblages. A study of pottery, clay pipes, glass and other finds from fourteen pits, dating from the 16th to the 19th century in TG Hassall et al, *Excavations at St Ebbe's Oxoniensia* **49**, 181-219.

Mellor, M, 1994 Oxford Pottery: A Synthesis of middle and late Saxon, medieval and early post-medieval pottery in the Oxford Region *Oxoniensia* **59**, 17-217