

The Anchor Brewery Site, Gigant Street, Salisbury, Wiltshire

Archaeological Evaluation Stage 3 (Trench 5)



March 2000

**THE ANCHOR BREWERY SITE,
GIGANT STREET, SALISBURY,
WILTSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
Stage 3 (Trench 5)**

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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Gleeson Homes to undertake an archaeological evaluation of a *c.* 0.47 hectare area of land at the site of the former Anchor Brewery in Gigant Street, Salisbury. The work was required in connection with the residential redevelopment of the site. Stage 3 of this evaluation comprised a single machine-excavated trench located within the north-eastern part of the site.

The machine trench identified the presence of a complex sequence of urban deposits and features, including wall lines, floor surfaces, mortar deposits and a well. The build up of urban deposits could be seen to be at least 0.5m in depth. The layers and features represent medieval and post-medieval urban development within burgage plots, including the likely presence of structures fronting onto Gigant Street.

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STAGE 3 (TRENCH 5)**

Acknowledgements

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The project was managed on behalf of Wessex Archaeology by Mick Rawlings. The fieldwork was supervised by Jan Grove, assisted by John Taylor. This report was compiled by Jan Grove. The finds were assessed by Lorraine Mepham and the illustrations were prepared by Rob Goller.

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION STAGE 3 (TRENCH 5)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Gleeson Homes (the Client) to undertake an archaeological evaluation of c. 0.47 hectares of land at the site of the former Anchor Brewery in Gigant Street, Salisbury. The work was required as part of a proposed residential development of the site.
- 1.1.2 The archaeological evaluation was requested by the Wiltshire County Archaeology Service (CAS), acting as archaeological advisors to Salisbury District Council. This request is in line with national planning guidance for archaeology and development (*Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning* – DoE 1990) and with County and District structure plan policies.
- 1.1.3 A Project Design for the archaeological evaluation was prepared by Wessex Archaeology (June 1999, Ref. 45700.3) and approved by the CAS. This required the machine excavation of a total of six trial trenches within the proposal area. The location of the trial trenches was based on the results of a prior desk-based assessment of archaeological potential (Wessex Archaeology January 1999, Ref. 45700.1) combined with the perceived impact of the proposed development.
- 1.1.4 Previous reports have been submitted by Wessex Archaeology on the results of the first two stages of evaluation (February/March 2000, Refs. 45701.1 and 45701.2). These detailed the results of Trenches 1-4 along with a short watching brief carried out during the removal of contaminated land from part of the site.
- 1.1.5 This present report sets out the results of the third stage of evaluation comprising a single machine-excavated trial trench (Trench 5).

1.2 Site Location, Topography and Geology

- 1.2.1 The site, centred on NGR SU 14690 29850, covers an area of land approximately 0.47 hectares in extent. It is located in the eastern part of the city of Salisbury and fronts onto Gigant Street to the east and Milford Street to the north (Fig. 1). The site is generally flat and the underlying drift geology is the Higher Terrace Gravel of the Avon Valley, lying above Upper Chalk of the Cretaceous Period.

1.3 Archaeological Background

- 1.3.1 A more detailed archaeological background is provided in the desk-based assessment of archaeological potential; the following is a summary of that information.
- 1.3.2 The city of New Sarum (Salisbury) was established in the early years of the 13th century, with the decision to transfer the cathedral from Old Sarum being taken before 1200. Whilst initially the intention may have been to restrict development to the area close to the cathedral (New Street/St. Ann's Street), this changed rapidly to the extensive development of a regularly planned rectilinear street grid. The roads isolated areas for housing within them, which were called 'chequers'.
- 1.3.3 The proposed Anchor Brewery development site lies within Trinity Chequer. The desk-based assessment identified three areas of higher archaeological potential within the site:
- The Gigant Street frontage – it is likely that this frontage was built up during the early part of the development of the city, probably in the 14th or even the 13th century.
 - The western boundary of the site – this lies along or very close to the line of a former ditch called the Town Drain. It was a major feature of the medieval town, bringing in fresh water drawn from the River Avon and no doubt used for the removal of refuse from the settlement.
 - The site of a former large building adjacent to the western boundary of the site. This is recorded on early maps of the city and is unusually situated in the backlands of the chequer, whereas these areas are normally devoid of buildings.
- 1.3.4 The Stage 3 evaluation addressed the first of these areas of potential.

2. AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The principal aim of the evaluation was to provide further information concerning the presence/absence, date, nature and extent of any buried archaeological remains within the identified areas of higher archaeological potential. This information will then be available for use in the formulation of a detailed and guided archaeological mitigation policy in respect of the proposed development.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The Stage 5 evaluation fieldwork comprised a single machine-excavated trench (Trench 5) located within the north-eastern part of the site (Fig. 1). It was targeted at the street frontage immediately to the south of the Anchor Inn and to the north of the contaminated area which had previously been subject to a watching brief.

- 2.2.2 The 14m long trench was opened to the south of the Anchor Inn; a perpendicular 3.8m length adjoined the central part of this trench to the east. The main trench was located parallel to the street frontage.
- 2.2.3 The overburden was removed under constant archaeological supervision by a 180° wheeled excavator equipped with a toothless bucket. The southern end of the main trench was truncated by recent cellaring. Part of the concrete floor slab to the cellar was broken out with a toothed ditching bucket to establish the depth of the concrete and the impact on the archaeological deposits.
- 2.2.4 Features and deposits were hand-cleaned and the trench was planned at a scale of 1:20. Archaeological features and deposits were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's standard *pro forma* system. All features and deposits were photographed using 35mm monochrome and colour slide format. No detailed excavation of deposits occurred.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 A range of archaeological features were uncovered and recorded within the northern part of the evaluation trench, c. 0.4-0.6m below the current ground level.
- 3.1.2 The southern-most five metres of the trench were heavily impacted by recent activity associated with the former brewery; no features of archaeological note were present. A layer of yellow/brown clay gravel was exposed, cut by a modern construction trench.
- 3.1.3 The northern wall of a cellar was removed by machine, exposing a section through the archaeological layers to the north. This indicated that there is a depth of 0.4-0.5m of stratified archaeological urban deposits. These lay over a layer of grey/green clay, which appeared to be sterile; however, intrusive elements from cellar construction have been pressed into it e.g. brick fragments.

3.2 Trench 5 (Fig. 2)

- 3.2.1 A number of layers indicative of surfaces or floors were exposed in plan over the northern 9m of the main trench and the 3.5m eastern extension. No natural basal gravels or clays were visible within this part of the trench. As the exposed deposits represent complex urban stratigraphy, no excavation was attempted and a summary description of their appearance in plan provides an assessment of the archaeological content of the trench.
- 3.2.2 A series of mortar spreads (517; 519; 523; 527), with differing inclusions of chalk and brick, overlay a dark grey to black deposit (515; 520). The black spread 520 overlay a possible wall of chalk blocks (521). The alignment of this feature, either north-south or east-west, would need to be defined through excavation.

- 3.2.2 A possible floor surface (or wall?) (516) was stratified below both the mortar and the black spreads. Carbonised wood was present adjacent to this feature.
- 3.2.3 A brick wall with a rubble and mortar foundation (513) aligned east-west, lay 7.5m to the south of the wall of the Anchor Inn. The 0.5m wide wall was extant to three courses.
- 3.2.4 The brick wall (513) appeared to post-date a larger east-west aligned linear feature (512) 0.9m wide; this is possibly a ditch or a robbed wall foundation. This in turn post-dated a possible pit or spread (511). The earliest feature in the sequence was a mortar and sand surface/spread (507).
- 3.2.5 A north-south aligned linear feature (504; 509), comprising a line of chalk blocks, 2.6m in length, was truncated to the south by feature 512 and to the north by the insertion of a brick-lined well (501). This wall line was possibly cut by a feature on the same alignment, represented by deposits of dark grey silty loam with frequent tile fragments (506; 508).
- 3.2.6 The brick-lined well was 1.2m in diameter and was located at the northern end of the trench. The upper fill contained material of post-medieval to recent date, mainly glass, brick and tile.
- 3.2.7 Three features may be of recent origin. A rectangular feature of sterile gravel and mortar (505) was seen during machining to originate from above the level of the other surfaces, post-dating all the adjacent deposits. A 0.45m wide north-south aligned linear feature (524), 0.8m west of the street frontage, is thought to be a service trench. An irregular spread of material (518), including two criss-crossed floor tiles, is also thought to be of recent origin.
- 3.2.8 The alignment of all linear features appeared to be either parallel to or perpendicular to the street frontage brick wall (526). A construction cut (525) for the wall cut through the black spread 520.
- 3.2.9 Spreads and cuts adjacent to the trench edges indicate the presence of further features and layers beyond the evaluated area.

4. FINDS

4.1 Summary

- 4.1.1 Few artefacts were collected, most being left *in situ* for possible future work. The unstratified artefacts that were recovered comprised a ring, an unidentified copper alloy fragment and a struck flint, with two sherds of post-medieval pottery from layer 530.

5. DISCUSSION

- 5.1 The potential maximum depth of the stratified archaeological layers is *c.* 0.5m, with occasional cut features, e.g. the well, of much greater depth.

- 5.2 There are limited recent intrusive features within the northern area, the majority of the archaeological deposits appear to be relatively undisturbed. The southern area of the trench, some 5m in length, has been subject to the insertion of recent cellar structures, truncating the archaeological layers.
- 5.3 The layers and features represent medieval and post-medieval urban build up within back-plots and structures fronting onto Gigant Street.

6. CONCLUSIONS

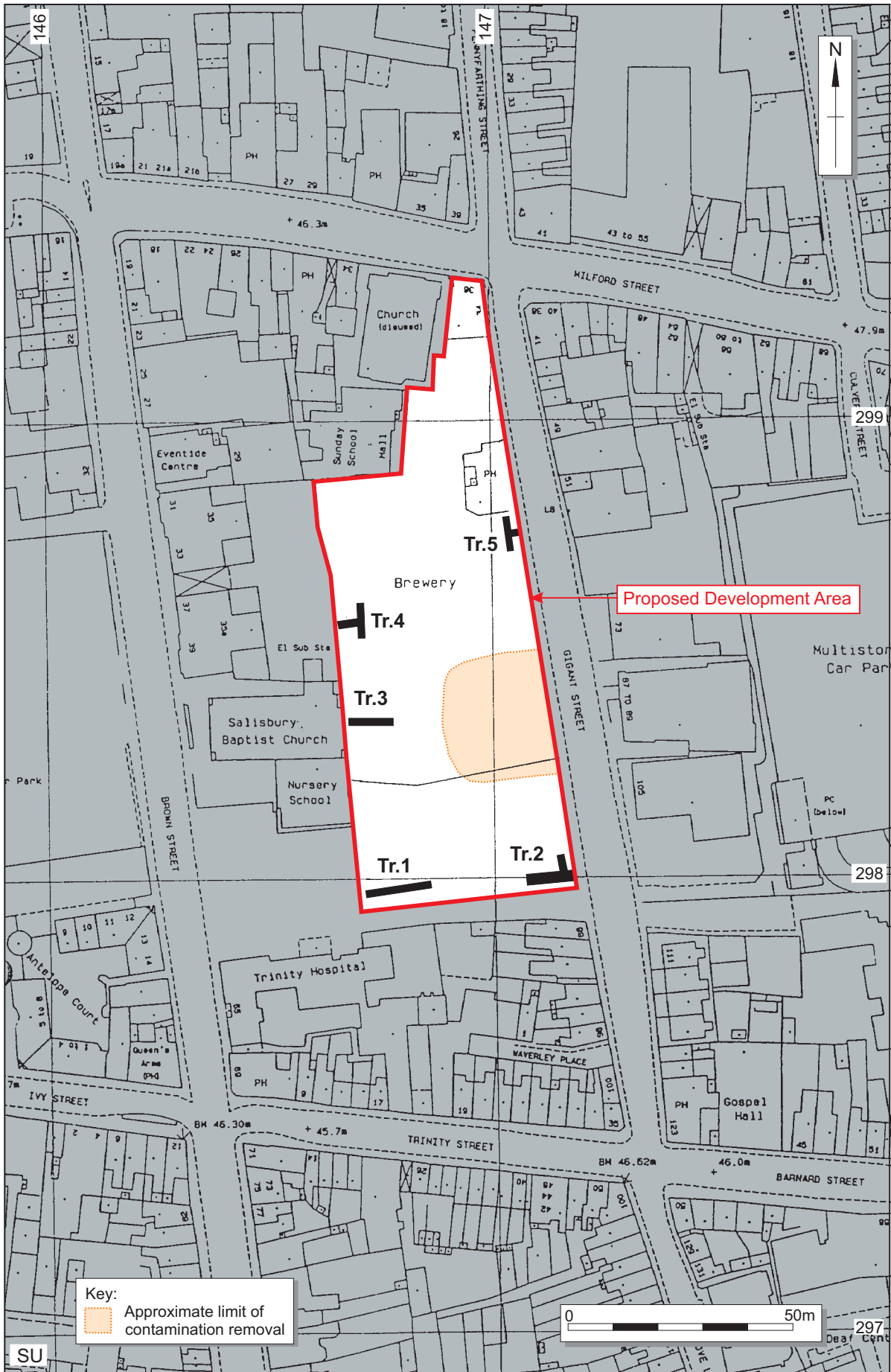
- 6.1 The archaeological deposits represent urban stratigraphy within the medieval city of Salisbury.
- 6.2 The nature of the remains are such that they merit preservation by record, i.e. detailed archaeological excavation.
- 6.3 Excavation would provide the opportunity for investigation into the medieval origin of Trinity Chequer, particularly the Gigant Street frontage and its subsequent development into the post-medieval period.
- 6.4 It is thought that much of the southern part of the evaluation area is truncated. The minimum area of intact archaeological deposition is 11.5m north/south, extending up to the Anchor Inn, and over 5m to the west of the present street frontage.

7. PROJECT ARCHIVE

- 7.1 The project archive is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Salisbury under the site code reference 45701. It is hoped that the archive will be deposited in due course at the Museum of Salisbury and South Wiltshire, Salisbury.

Appendix 1: Trial Trench 5

Context	Description	Height m. aOD
501	Brick lined well, 1.2m diameter	45.47
502	Yellow/brown gritty sand	45.47
503	Layer of grey silty clay, cut by well 501	45.47
504	Chalk block wall/foundation, cut by well 501	45.54
505	Rectangular deposit of gravel and mortar – modern	45.53
506	Black/grey silty/loam, below 504, tile, charcoal	45.54
507	Yellow/brown mortar and surface, tile	45.59
508	Dark grey/brown silty loam, over 509	45.59
509	North/south line of chalk block, continuation of 504	45.59
510	Curvilinear animal burrow, bone in grey/brown loam	45.65
511	Gritty yellow/brown clay sand – pit?; oyster, tile, charcoal	45.65
512	East/west linear, grey brown compact silty clay, tile on north edge	45.70
513	Mortar and rubble foundation for brick wall, east/west, cuts 512 and 514	45.75
514	Mixed deposit of silty grey clay, with chalk, tile, brick, sand and charcoal	45.75
515	Surface of dark grey to black firm silty clay, = 520	45.77
516	Complex area – possibly mortar floor with wall line of chalk fragments, under/over adjoining surfaces	45.80
517	Surface of yellow/brown mortar, chalk flecking	45.80
518	Gritty loam, modern tiles, intrusive feature	45.80
519	Widespread deposit/surface of mortar, distinct by common chalk fragments, tiles, rotten brick and occasional cobbles.	45.80
520	Compact black silty surface, below mortar patches 523 and over chalk blocks of 521; = 515	45.87
521	Chalk blocks, possible wall line	45.87
522	Light grey silty clay; brick, tile, charcoal	45.87
523	Yellow/brown mortar spread and patches.	45.87
524	North/south rubble filled service pipe trench	45.91
525	Foundation trench for street front wall 526	45.87
526	North/south street front brick wall	46.32
527	Yellow brown mortar spread/surface, cut by 529	45.87
528	Light grey gritty silty loam; tile, chalk, pottery	45.87
529	Light grey brown silty clay, occasional brick, seen in section to have vertical sided cut through 527	45.87
530	Dark grey brown clay loam	45.87
531	Foundation cut for modern cellar structure	45.44
532	Natural yellow/brown silty clay gravel	45.44
533	Natural greenish grey clay	45.41
534	Dark grey clay, east/west linear, chalk, brick, tile (modern)	45.41
535	Light to dark yellow clay	45.41



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Figure 1: Site and trench location

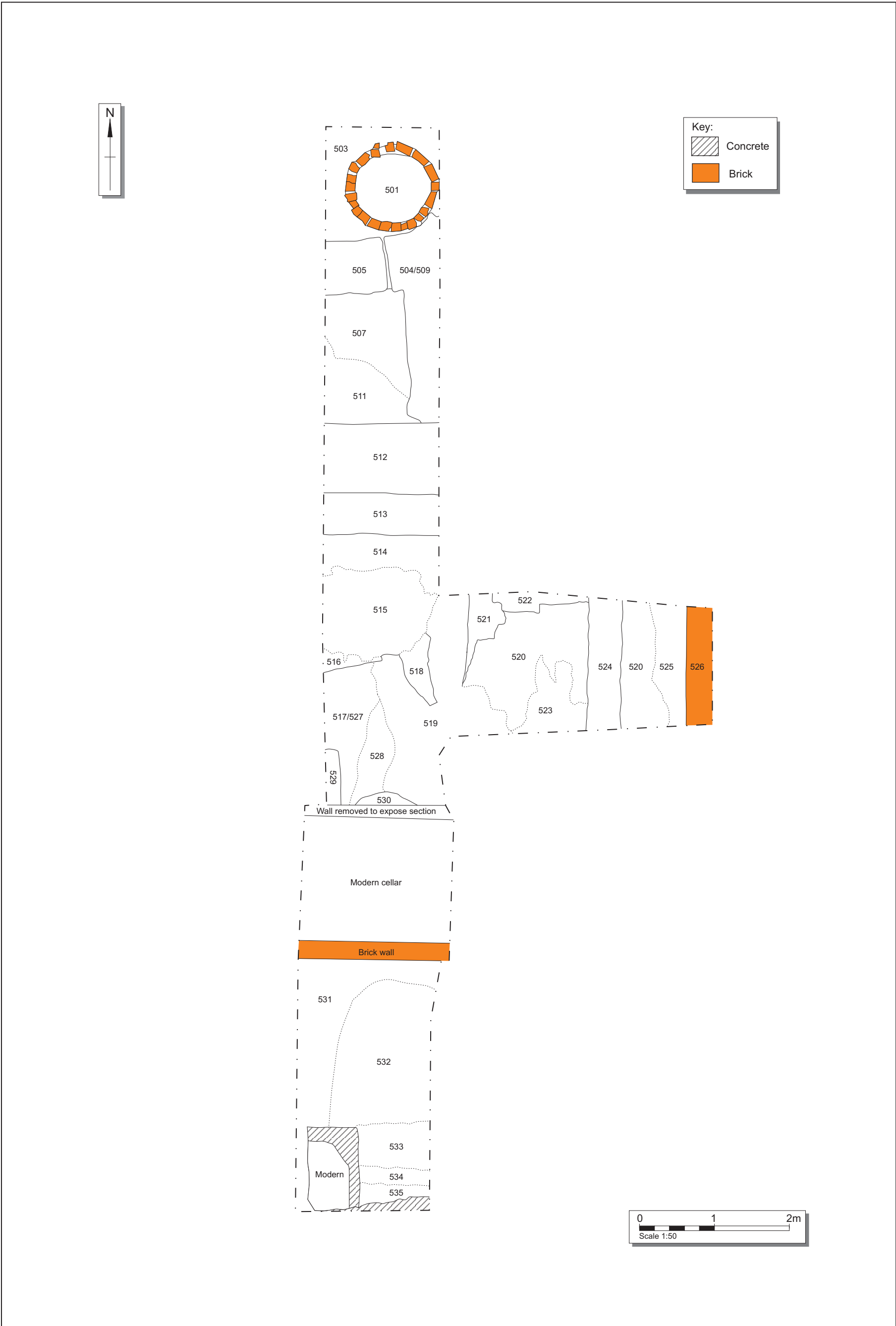


Figure 2: Trench 5 plan