

Source WB 13737
Event WB 554

Community Hospital, Turnpike Road, Newbury, Berkshire;

Phase 2 Archaeological Mitigation, Strip, Map
and Sample Investigation



Archaeological Interim Report



Oxford Archaeology

23rd July 2002

Client Name: Jarvis Construction (UK) Ltd

Issue N^o: 1

OA Job N^o: 1210

Planning Ref N^o: 145254

NGR: SU 4970 6770

Client Name: Jarvis Construction (UK) Ltd

Client Ref No:

Document Title: Community Hospital, Turnpike Road, Newbury,
Berkshire; Phase 2 Archaeological Mitigation, Strip, Map
and Sample Investigation, Interim Report

Document Type: Archaeological Investigation Report

Issue Number: 1

National Grid Reference: SU 4970 6770

Planning Reference: 145254

OA Job Number: 1210

Site Code: NEHOS 02

Invoice Code: NEHOSEX2

Museum Accession No:

Prepared by: Andrew Simmonds

Position: Project Supervisor

Date: 05th April 2002

Checked by: Nick Shepherd

Position: Senior Project Manager

Date: 10th April 2002

Approved by: R J Williams

Signed 

Position: Asst. Director, Head of Fieldwork

Date: 12th April 2002

Document File Location \\Server 5\NEHOS_01\Reports\Phase 2 interim rep.doc

Graphics File Location \\Server 5\NEHOS_01\CAD & Survey\drawing\final

Illustrated by Survey Dept

Disclaimer:

This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and should not be relied upon or used for any other project without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and prior written authority of Oxford Archaeology being obtained. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for the consequences of this document being used for a purpose other than the purposes for which it was commissioned. Any person/party using or relying on the document for such other purposes agrees, and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Oxford Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the person/party by whom it was commissioned.

Oxford Archaeology

© Oxford Archaeological Unit Ltd 2001

Janus House

Osney Mead

Oxford OX2 0ES

t: (0044) 01865 263800

f: (0044) 01865 793496

e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk

w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk

Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited is a Registered Charity No: 285627

Jarvis Construction (UK) Ltd

**COMMUNITY HOSPITAL
TURNPIKE ROAD,
NEWBURY, BERKSHIRE**

*Phase 2 Archaeological Mitigation
Strip, Map and Sample Investigation
Interim Report*

Planning reference 145254

NGR SU 4970 6770

©OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

April 2002

Contents

1	Introduction.....	1
2	Methodology.....	2
3	Results.....	3
4	Discussion.....	4
5	Forward Programme.....	5
6	Conclusions.....	6

List of Figures

- Fig.1 Site Location Plan
- Fig.2 Plan of Archaeological Features

**Community Hospital
Turnpike Road
Newbury**

***Phase 2 Archaeological Mitigation
Strip, Map and Sample Investigation
Interim Report***

Summary

Oxford Archaeology carried out a second phase of strip, map and sample investigation on the site of a proposed Community Hospital on the western edge of Newbury. This revealed a continuation of the field system and trackway identified in the first phase of excavation. In addition pits and a possible grave were also identified. All of these features date to early in the Roman period, the first and second centuries AD. Further work is planned in the form of a watching brief during construction on the site.

*When?
Feb 02
according
to next OA
report*

1 Introduction

- 1.1 West Berkshire District Council (WBDC) has granted permission for the construction of a Community Hospital on land off Turnpike Road, Newbury (Planning reference 145254) (Fig.1). Work is to be undertaken by Jarvis Construction (UK) Ltd., on behalf of West Berkshire Priority Care Service NHS Trust. A condition of the permission requires the implementation of a programme of archaeological work.
- 1.2 An evaluation of the development area has already been carried out by Oxford Archaeology¹ (OA). The evaluation identified an area of archaeological significance comprising Romano-British activity, within the southern part of the site. This consisted of enclosure ditches, suggesting settlement close by but not within the development boundaries.
- 1.3 The condition to the permission requires an archaeological watching brief to be undertaken across the site during construction to record any additional archaeological features.
- 1.4 In addition Jarvis construction proposed that a Strip, Map and Sample (SMS) investigation be undertaken prior to construction. The purpose of the investigation was to ensure that all archaeological remains were adequately recorded at an early stage, thereby reducing the risk of delay during construction. OA has produced a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for this and Phase 1 of the SMS was undertaken between 13.08.01 and 06.09.01, across approximately 0.44ha. This revealed evidence for a Romano-British field

*Date of
Phase 1*

¹ OAU 1998 Community Hospital, Turnpike Road, Newbury. Archaeological Evaluation Report.

system, together with a trackway, pits and two cremation burials².

- 1.5 Consequent to these discoveries it was decided to carry out a second phase of SMS investigation across the northern part of the footprint of the hospital block, extending the area investigated by a further 0.33ha.
- 1.6 It is this second phase of SMS investigation that forms the subject of this interim report. The report sets out the methodology employed for the SMS, and presents a summary of the archaeological results to date.

2 Methodology

- 2.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with Institute of Field Archaeologists Codes of Conduct and Guidelines and the requirements of the Oxford Archaeological Unit's Field Manual (ed. D Wilkinson 1992).
- 2.2 The work was organised in two stages;
 Stage 1: Strip and map
 Stage 2: Sample excavation

Outline methodology for Stage 2 strip and map

- 2.3 The objective of this phase of work was to produce a phased/dated plan of the site to inform Stage 2 sample excavation.
- 2.4 The work comprised the machine stripping of an area totalling approximately 0.33ha. Excavations were located as indicated on Figure 1 (attached).
- 2.5 Plans were produced at a scale of 1:100, with detailed plans at 1:10 or 1:20 as appropriate.
- 2.6 Artefacts were collected from the surface of features to provide a provisional date.

Outline methodology for Stage 2 sample excavation

- 2.7 The objectives of this phase were to characterise and date any archaeological remains not already recorded adequately recorded during the evaluation and Phase 1 SMS.
- 2.8 An excavation sampling strategy as outlined in Appendix 1 s.9.8 of the WSI was carried out. Hand excavation was undertaken on the basis of the results of the Strip and Map and after consultation with the West Berks Archaeological Officer.
- 2.9 Sample excavation was carried out;

² OAU 2001 Community Hospital, Turnpike Road, Newbury. Archaeological Mitigation - Interim Report.

1. across the intersections of linear features
 2. along the length of linear features, and
 3. across discrete cut features
- 2.10 All features were drawn in plan and section and recorded photographically. Archaeological contexts were each given a unique number and recorded on pro forma sheets. Finds were retrieved and bagged by context and environmental samples taken where appropriate.

3 Results

- 3.1 The second phase of strip, map and sample investigation has revealed a northward continuation of the field system and trackway discovered in the first phase, along with associated features.

Field system - Early Phase

- 3.2 An early phase of Romano-British enclosure ditches were better defined and further investigated. Ditch 101 was shown to define the north-western corner of a large sub-divided enclosure to the west of the trackway. On its eastern side it was shown to be contemporary with the earliest phase of the western trackway ditch.
- 3.3 To the north a large trapezoidal field was also laid out to the west of the trackway and defined by ditch 225. The ditch was V-shaped in profile with an average width of 1 m, and 0.2 m deep, increasing to 1.4 m wide and 0.52 m deep at the southern terminus. Between this terminus and ditch 101 was an entrance 15 m wide at the south-west corner of the field. Access into this field was also provided from the trackway (described below).

Field System - Later Phase

- 3.4 Gully 104, part of the later phase of boundaries identified in the Phase 1 excavation, continued for the full length of the Phase 2 area and beyond the north end of the site. It cut the butt end of field boundary ditch 225, consistent with its relationship to 101 seen in Phase 1 and so confirming the two phase model. The phase of boundaries may be contemporary with the latest phase of trackway to the east.

Trackway

- 3.5 A further 70 m of the trackway was exposed in this second phase of work, bringing the total length uncovered thus far to 100 m. In the Phase 1 strip, the trackway was aligned NW-SE, but in this new area it curved to a more northerly alignment and continued on this orientation to the end of the site. It is likely to continue northward to meet the Roman road from Silchester to Cirencester, which passes the site on the line now taken by Turnpike Road. At the point of its northward realignment, the trackway formed a junction with field boundary ditch 101 on its western side.

- 3.6 Two phases of trackway development were recorded, unsurprisingly related to the two phases of enclosure describes above. In its earliest phase the trackway was laid out together with ditch 101 (and probably 225). Two breaks in the ditches indicate access to enclosures. The first and wider of these was located 13 m north of the junction with field boundary 101. This entrance was on the western side, providing access to the trapezoidal field. The second entrance was on the eastern side, 28 m from the north end of the site. This entrance was 2 m wide, defined by two slightly off-set termini presumably giving access to an enclosure beyond the area investigated here.
- 3.7 The later phase the western trackway ditch was re-cut blocking the old entrance to the trapezoidal enclosure. This later ditch was shallower than its predecessor and has consequently suffered more from truncation, particularly in the northern part of the site, where it has been completely truncated away.

Other Features

- 3.8 Features 123 and 135, which both extended partly into the Phase 1 excavation and at that time were interpreted as ditch termini have now been shown to be pits. Pit 123 was 5 m x 2.3 m while pit 135 was 5 m x 1.75 m, and neither was more than 0.2 m deep. Both features were oval in plan, with their long axes oriented NW-SE. The pottery from these features dated to the mid 1st to early 2nd century.
- 3.9 A feature 186 was uncovered adjacent to the western side of the trackway. It was rectangular and measured 2.05 m x 0.72 m, with its long axis aligned NW-SE. The sides initially dropped vertically, before tapering to a base only 0.15 m wide at a depth of 1.07 m. The fill appeared to be a deliberate back-fill. It contained some residual worked flint and fragments of 1st century AD pottery, which may also be residual. While form of the feature suggested a grave no skeleton was recovered although this absence may be due to the acidic nature of the soil, (there was no bone from elsewhere on the site). Isolated inhumation burials are a common feature on later Roman rural sites although it is doubtful whether this feature can be conclusively identified as such.

4 Discussion

- 4.1 The previous phase of strip, map and sample investigation revealed part of a late Iron Age/ early Romano-British ditched field system and trackway, along with two cremations and a scattering of pits. Phase 2 uncovered a northward continuation of these features and a possible grave. It has also confirmed that the trackway, and probably the field system, had two phases, and that the flanking drainage ditches of the trackway were dug as part of a single integrated system with the field boundaries.
- 4.2 These ditched boundaries were probably laid out around the middle of the first century AD; at about the same time as the two cremation burials were made. The ditches had silted up by the early second century.
- 4.3 Whether this represents the establishment of a farming community here *de novo*

or a new investment of labour in an area previously farmed without ditched boundaries is currently unclear. Equally, the silting up of the boundaries probably does not mark the cessation of activity, merely that banks or hedges now marked the boundaries.

- 4.4 It is likely that the field system uncovered on this site represents part of an extensive agricultural landscape extending along the gravel terraces either side of the Kennet. The pottery suggests settlement and enclosure in the late Iron Age with continuity of use into the early Roman period. The proximity of the Roman road linking the towns of Silchester and Cirencester and the trackway possibly leading from it further indicate that the site was part of a more complex landscape. Roadside settlements appears to be indicated approximately 1km to the east at Thatcham (Harris 1934³ and Ford 1992⁴), at Newbury and further west at Speen with smaller villa and farmstead settlements dispersed among the fields as in the lower Kennet valley at Aldermarston and Ufton Nervet. The cropmarks of the Ufton Nervet site are particularly interesting in that they show a linear trackway with enclosure off it linking into a the main Silchester to Dorchester-on-Thames Road⁵. The evidence at the Newbury Hospital site is very similar and suggests that the settlement site should be very close by. Cremations are typically close to areas of settlement, often occurring at the junction of domestic and agricultural space.

5 Forward Programme

- 5.1 In the original Brief from West Berkshire District Council only the southern part of the site was highlighted as having archaeological potential, and a condition for a watching brief was attached to the planning permission. Jarvis construction chose to implement an enhanced level of archaeological recording across the areas where the ground would be disturbed by the footprint of the building, to ensure that any archaeological deposits present were adequately recorded at an early stage, thereby reducing the risk of delay during construction.
- 5.2 The Strip, Map and Sample investigation thus undertaken has demonstrated that there are significant archaeological remains throughout the development area, largely in the form of agricultural boundaries, but including other features such as cremation burials and pits of the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. These are likely to continue into the areas where groundwork has yet to take place.
- 5.3 On other areas of the site where proposed works are less intrusive, but will nevertheless involve some ground disturbance (e.g. areas of surface construction, e.g. roads and car-parks, and landscaped areas), a watching brief will be undertaken during construction. A Project Design will be produced to cover the works and will also include a method statement and protocols for the watching brief to ensure reasonable time and resources are available for any

³ Harris, W.E., 1934-37, 'Romano-British Settlement at Thatcham-Newtown, Berks.' *Trans. Newbury Dist. Fld. Club*, 8, 219-255

⁴ Ford, S., 1992, *Henwick Lane Thatcham, Berkshire, An Archaeological Evaluation for Newbury District Council*, TVAS 92/1

⁵ Cambridge University Collection of Air Photographs

recording.

- 5.4 Particular note should be made of the location of the cremation burials which are close to the position of a proposed access road. It should be assumed that any works in this area risk disturbing human remains and so time should be built into the programme to reduce the risk of any unplanned delays.
- 5.5 The Project Design will also outline the responsibilities of Jarvis Construction with regard to the post-excavation analysis and publication of the results of the archaeological investigation.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 The archaeological work so far carried out has demonstrated that significant archaeological remains are preserved throughout the area investigated. These are likely to continue across the rest of the development site.
- 6.2 The impact within the footprint of the hospital buildings has been mitigated by the two phases of strip, map and sample excavation. This will be followed by a watching brief during groundwork across other areas of the site. This has been agreed in outline by the Archaeological Officer for West Berkshire District Council.



Sheet reference	su4967nw	Product Spec	LSPS_1 Reproduced from the 1997 Ordnance Survey 1:250 map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright				
Translated by	c.t.f28xf	First databanked	05/04/89	Copyright Date	1997	Last full rev date	N/A
Translation date	12/05/97	Content indicator	A	Contour interval	N/A	Boundary date	12/1991
Translator version	1.9	House unit count	141	Map spec number	N/A	Orig survey date(s)	N/A
Storage scale	1:250	Dig update count	N/A	Edge match status	N I S W	Low water date(s)	N/A
Databank supply	30/08/96	Dig update date	03/10/94	Check values	0MR02R29	High water date(s)	N/A
						S/N marker	N/A

Key
 Excavated Areas



Scale at
A4 not to scale
 Drawing
No. Figure 1

Newbury Community Hospital
 Site Location Plan

Oxford Archaeology
 Janus House,
 Osney Mead,
 Oxford,
 OX2 0ES.



Tel: 01865 206000
 Fax: 01865 708666
 Email: info@oxford-archaeology.co.uk
 Web: www.oxford-archaeology.co.uk



Scale at A4 1:1000
 Drawing No. Figure 2

Newbury Community Hospital
 Detailed Plan of Archaeological Features

Oxford Archaeology
 Janus House,
 Osney Mead,
 Oxford,
 OX2 0ES.
 Tel: 01865 206000
 Fax: 01865 754444
 email: oxford@oxfordarch.co.uk
 www.oxfordarch.co.uk



Oxford Archaeology

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES

t: (0044) 01865 263800
f: (0044) 01865 793496
e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk
w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk



Oxford Archaeology North

Storey Institute
Meeting House Lane
Lancaster LA1 1TF

t: (0044) 01524 848666
f: (0044) 01524 848606
e: lancinfo@oxfordarch.co.uk
w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk

Director: David Jennings, BA MIFA FSA



Oxford Archaeological Unit is a
Private Limited Company, N^o: 1618597
and a Registered Charity, N^o: 285627

Registered Office:

Oxford Archaeological Unit
Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES