



**Archaeological trial trench evaluation
on land at Arccott Hill Farm
Upper Arccott, Oxfordshire
May 2015**

Report No. 15/90

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		OASIS molanort1-211766	
Project title	Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Arncott Hill Farm, Upper Arncott, Oxfordshire, May 2015		
Short description	In May 2015 an archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by MOLA Northampton for Manor Oak Homes. The work identified modern ditches and demolition debris from structures that stood within the field when it was part of Central Ordnance Depot Bicester during the Second World War. No earlier archaeological remains or finds were identified.		
Project type	Trial trench evaluation		
Previous work	None		
Current land use	Pasture		
Future work	Unknown		
Monument type and period	None		
Significant finds	Modern concrete, brick, glass, steel		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Oxfordshire		
Site address	Arncott Hill Farm, Upper Arncott		
Easting Northing	SP 61044 16845		
Area (sq m/ha)	4.3 ha		
Height aOD	c 68m AOD		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	MOLA Northampton		
Project brief originator			
Project Design originator	MOLA Northampton		
Director/Supervisor	Paul Clements		
Project Managers	Mo Muldowney (MOLA Northampton)		
Sponsor or funding body	Manor Oak Homes		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	05/05/2015		
End date	08/05/2015		
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Contents	
Physical	Oxford Museums (OXCMS.2015.96)	None	
Paper		Site records (1 archive box)	
Digital		Client report PDF. Survey Data, Photographs	
BIBLIOGRAPHY			
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Archaeological trial trench evaluation on land at Arncott Hill Farm Upper Arncott, Oxfordshire May 2015

Abstract

During May 2015 an archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out by MOLA Northampton for Manor Oak Homes. The work identified modern ditches and demolition debris from structures that stood within the field when it was part of Central Ordnance Depot Bicester during the Second World War. No earlier archaeological remains or finds were identified.

1 INTRODUCTION

An archaeological trial trench evaluation was carried out in May 2015 by MOLA Northampton on land at Arncott Hill Farm, Upper Arncott, Oxfordshire (NGR: SP 61044 16845; Fig 1). The work was commissioned by Manor Oak Homes.

The scope of works was outlined and detailed in the Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by MOLA Northampton (Muldowney 2015) following advice from Richard Oram, Oxfordshire County Council Archaeological Advisor (OCCAA). The works were carried out in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF; DCLG 2012).

The evaluation conformed to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2014a). All stages of the project were undertaken in accordance with *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (Historic England 2015).

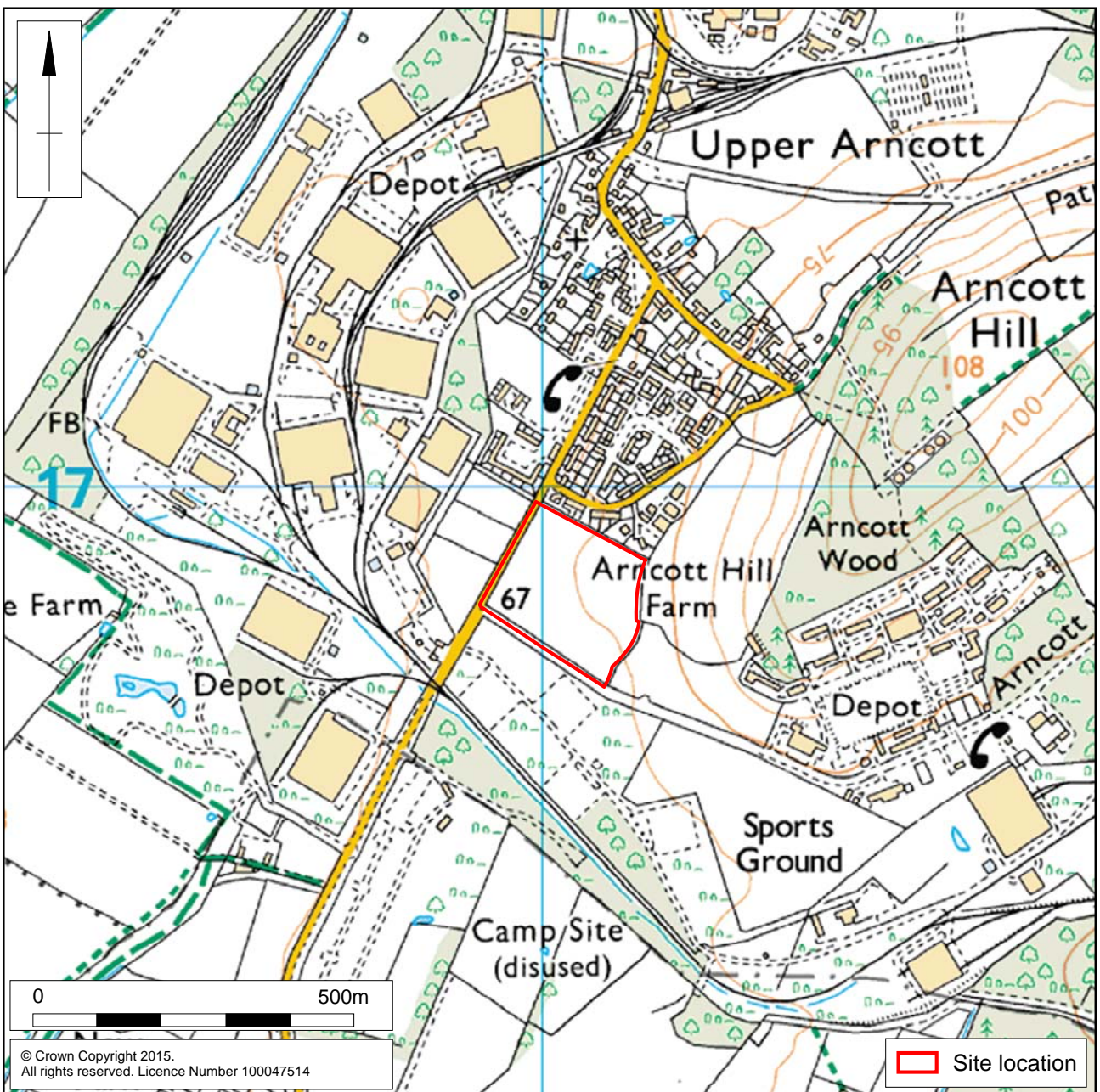
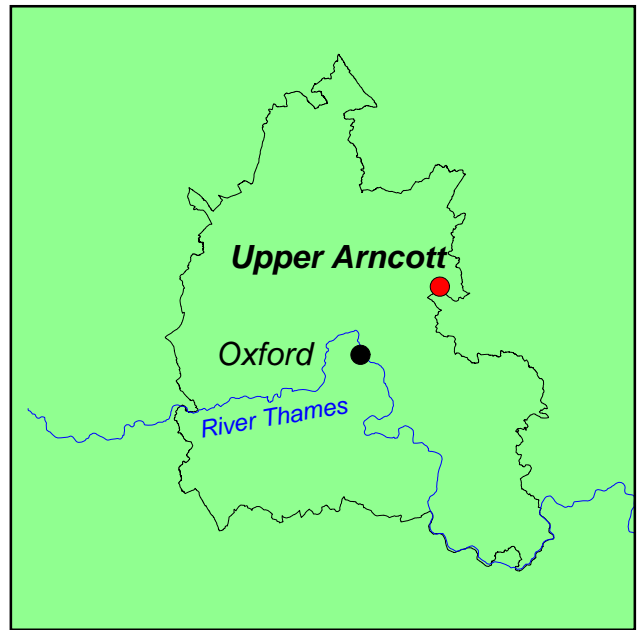
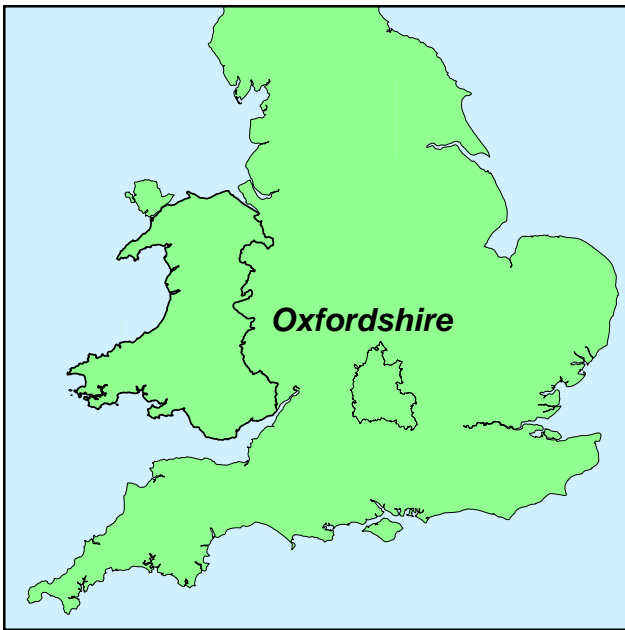
2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The main aim of the investigation was to determine if archaeological remains were present within the application area.

The specific objectives of the project were designed to provide further information on the following:

- The location, extent, nature, and date of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present at the proposed development site,
- The integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present at the proposed development site.

Specific research objectives will be drawn from national and regional research frameworks documents (English Heritage 1991, Hey and Hind 2014) as relevant depending upon the results of the evaluation.



Scale 1:10,000

Site Location Fig 1

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Location and geology

Upper Arncott is located to the west of Piddington and south of Bicester. The development site is located on the south side of the village, on land at the corner of Murcott Road and Arncott Wood Road and comprises a square parcel of land covering 4.3ha. The aforementioned roads form respectively, the west and south boundary of the site, whilst hedgelines form the remaining boundaries.

The bedrock geology is recorded as Stewartby Member Mudstone (<http://www.bgs.ac.uk> accessed 01/04/15). Superficial deposits are not yet recorded. The site straddles the 70m Ordnance Datum contour.

3.2 Historical and archaeological background

Very little is known regarding the archaeology and history of Upper Arncott. There are only four entries in the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) in close proximity to the site and all relate to post-medieval or modern buildings, less than 0.5km from the development site (Table 1).

Table 1: Oxfordshire HER entries within 500m of the development site

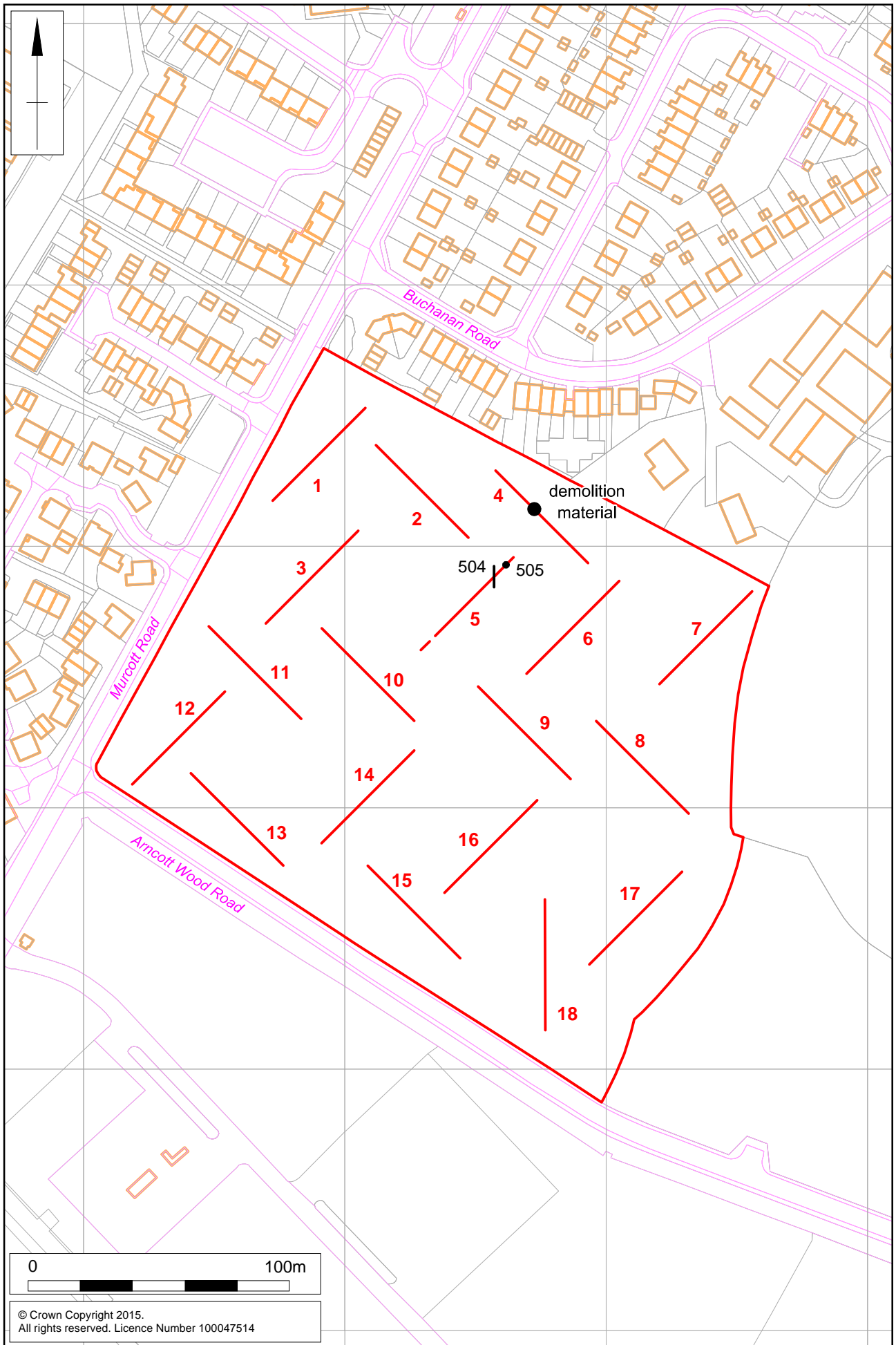
HER No	Type	Description	Grid Ref.	Date
743	Building	Site of windmill from map evidence	SP 614 173	Post-med
11652	Building	Listed Grade II Methodist Chapel on Green Lane, Arncott	SP 610 173	19th C
18102	Building	Thatched house, Listed Grade II	SP 610 173	Late 17th/early 18th C
27972	Building	Two groups of WWII military storage huts relating to Central Ordnance Depot Bicester	SP 607 169	Modern

4 METHODOLOGY

Eighteen trenches were located across the site in order to ensure an even distribution and fully sample the area (Fig 2). They were excavated using a 360 tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The topsoil and subsoil were removed under archaeological direction to reveal natural substrate and were stacked separately at the side of the trench. All procedures complied with MOLA Health and Safety provisions and MOLA Health and Safety at Work Guidelines.

All archaeological deposits encountered during the course of the excavation were fully recorded, following standard MOLA procedures (MOLA 2014). All deposits were given a separate context number in a sequence assigned to each trench. They were described on *pro-forma* context sheets to include details of the context, its relationships and interpretation.

All trench locations were set-out using Leica Viva Global Positioning System (GPS) survey equipment using SMARTNET real-time corrections, operating to a 3D tolerance of $\pm 0.05\text{m}$. A full digital photographic record was maintained. The field data from the evaluation has been compiled into a site archive with appropriate cross-referencing.



Scale 1:2000

Excavated trenches Fig 2

All trenches were backfilled with their up-cast material and compacted by the mechanical excavator.

All works were conducted in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (ClfA 2014b) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (ClfA 2014a).

5 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

5.1 General stratigraphy

The natural horizon across the site was variable light yellowish grey-orange clay. It was overlain in trenches 1 to 5, 8 and 9 by mid grey-brown silty clay subsoil; in trenches 12 and 13 by a deposit of modern building debris, and in all other trenches directly by 0.20m thick dark grey-brown silty clay topsoil.

The natural horizon was truncated by a small number of naturally derived features and intrusions containing modern brick and tile.

A detailed context description is included in the Appendix.

5.2 The trial trenches

No pre-modern archaeological remains were identified in the trenches. They contained either undisturbed natural clays or contained land drains/modern services.

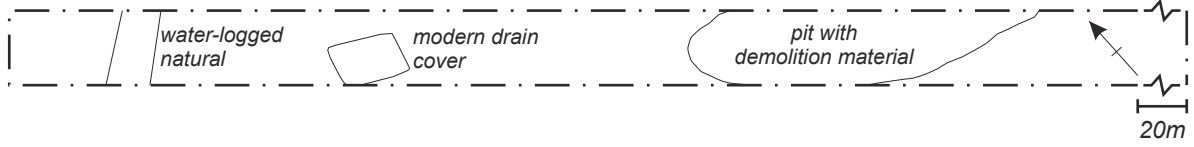
Trench 4

This trench contained a modern manhole and a pit containing modern demolition material (Fig 3).

Trench 5

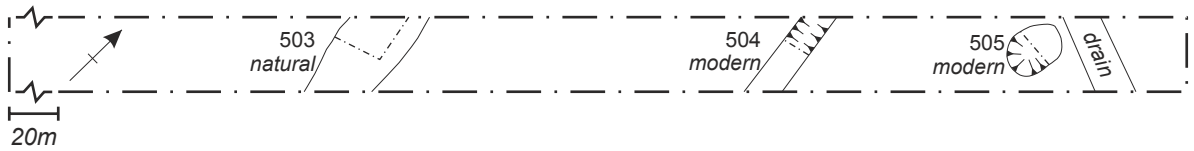
Three possible features were investigated in Trench 5. Two were found to contain modern building material, and the third was natural in origin (Fig 3).

Trench 4



Trench 4, looking north-west

Trench 5



Modern ditch 504, looking north-west

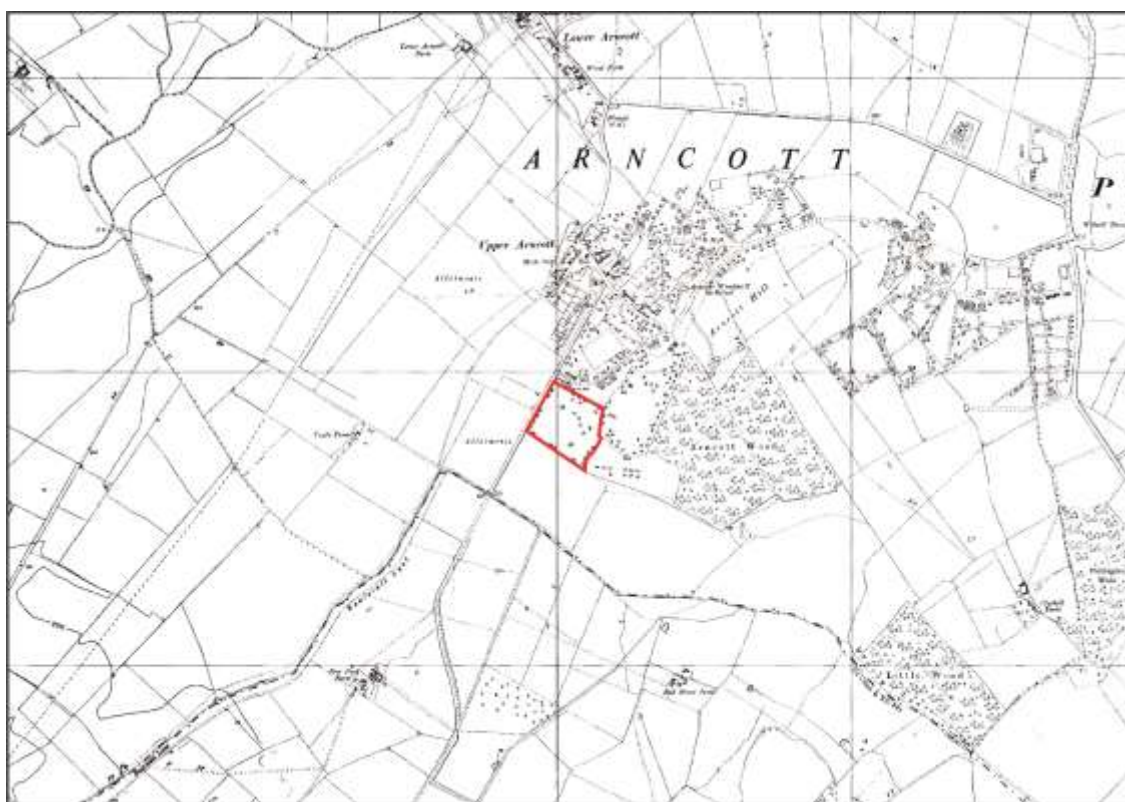
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6 DISCUSSION

The evaluation has shown that the site contained evidence for modern activity only, and that no earlier archaeological remains or finds were present.

The extremely limited distribution of subsoil across the trenches and the sharp horizon between the overburden and the natural clays indicates that modern, deep ploughing is unlikely to have taken place.

The modern deposits encountered in trenches 4, 5, 12 and 13 contained objects made from concrete, glass, steel, etc., indicating they had derived from modern structures. It is most likely that these structures were buildings associated with the former Central Ordnance Depot Bicester, and may relate to some of the structures depicted on the 1950s Ordnance Survey historic map (Fig 4).



Ordnance Survey historic map extract (1955-58) Fig 4

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APPENDIX: SUMMARY OF CONTEXTS

Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, NE end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
1	50m x 1.8m NE-SW		69.03m	0.45m 68.58m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
101	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown silty clay Occasional stone and patches of demolition debris, bricks concrete slabs etc and ashy cinder	0.20m thick	-
102	Subsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay	0.20 - 0.25m thick	-
103	Natural	Mottled light orange and grey clay, infrequent stone	-	-

Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, NW end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
2	50m x 1.8m NW-SE		68.64m	0.45m 68.19m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
201	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown silty clay	0.20m thick	-
202	Subsoil	Mid grey-brown silty clay	0.20 - 0.23m thick	-
203	Natural	Mottled light grey/light orange clay, occasional angular stone	-	-

Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, NE end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
3	50m x 1.8m NE-SW		68.38m	0.30m 68.08m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
301	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown silty clay. Occasional stone and patches of demolition debris, bricks concrete slabs etc and ashy cinder	0.20m thick	-
302	Subsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay	0.20 - 0.25m thick	-
303	Natural	Mottled light orange and grey clay, infrequent stone	-	-

Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, NW end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
4	50m x 1.8m NW-SE		69.18m	0.43m 68.75m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
401	Topsoil	Dark grey-brown silty clay	0.20m thick	-
402	Subsoil	Mid grey-brown silty clay	0.20 - 0.23m thick	-
403	Natural	Mottled light grey/light orange clay, occasional angular stone	-	-

Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, NE end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
5	50m x 1.8m NE-SW		69.49m	0.60m 68.80m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
501	Topsoil	Dark brown-grey silty clay	0.20m thick	-
502	Deposit	Ash layer, dark grey, loose silt with abundant small stones	0.20m thick	
503	Cut	Natural feature	0.97m deep	
504	Cut	Modern linear feature containing brick fragments	-	
505	Cut	Shallow pit-like feature with rounded end similar to a terminal. Contained no dateable material	0.15m deep	
506	Fill of 503	Compact reddish-blue grey clay	0.97m thick	
507	Fill of 505	Compact light yellowish-grey clay	0.15m thick	
508	Subsoil	Dark yellowish-brown clay	0.20 - 0.23m thick	-
509	Natural	Yellow-brown clay, occasional angular stone	-	-

Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, NE end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
6	50m x 1.8m NE-SW		70.29m	0.40m 69.89m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
601	Topsoil	Dark brown-grey silty clay	0.20m thick	-
602	Natural	Yellow-brown clay, occasional angular stone	-	-

Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, NE end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
7	50m x 1.8m NE-SW		72.22m	0.40m 71.82m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
701	Topsoil	Dark brown-grey silty clay	0.15 - 0.20m thick	-
702	Natural	Yellow-brown clay, occasional angular stone	-	-

Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, NW end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
8	50m x 1.8m NW-SE		69.99m	0.45m 69.54m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
801	Topsoil	Dark brown-grey silty clay	0.20m – 0.25m thick	-
802	Subsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay	0.25m thick	-
803	Natural	Mottled light orange and grey clay, infrequent stone	-	-

Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, NW end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
9	50m x 1.8m NW-SE		69.03m	0.45m 68.58m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
901	Topsoil	Dark brown-grey silty clay	0.20m – 0.25m thick	-
902	Subsoil	Mid grey-brown sandy clay	0.25m thick	-
903	Natural	Mottled light orange and grey clay, infrequent stone	-	-

Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, NW end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
10	50m x 1.8m NW-SE		68.09m	0.25m 67.84m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
1001	Topsoil	Dark brown-grey silty clay	0.25m thick	-
1002	Natural	Mottled light orange and grey clay, infrequent stone	-	-

Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, NW end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
11	50m x 1.8m NW-SE		67.34m	0.35m 66.99m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
1101	Topsoil	Dark brown-grey silty clay	0.25 - 0.30m thick	-
1102	Natural	Mottled light orange and grey clay, infrequent stone	-	-

Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, NE end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
12	50m x 1.8m NE-SW		67.27m	0.44m 66.83m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
1201	Topsoil	Turf with very dark grey silty matrix	0.04m – 0.19m thick	-
1202	Deposit	Very dark blue/black silt matrix containing abundant modern building material and rubbish	0.15m – 0.40m thick	
1203	Natural	Mottled light orange and grey clay, infrequent stone	-	-

Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, NE end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
13	50m x 1.8m NW-SE		67.06m	0.31m 66.75m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
1301	Topsoil	Turf with very dark grey silty matrix	0.04m thick	-
1302	Deposit	Very dark blue/black silt matrix containing abundant modern building material and rubbish	0.28m – 0.31m thick	
1303	Natural	Mottled light orange and grey clay, infrequent stone	-	-

Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, NE end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
14	50m x 1.8m NE-SW		68.54m	0.28m 68.26m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
1401	Topsoil	Dark brown-grey silty clay	0.20 - 0.28m thick	-
1402	Natural	Yellow brown clay, occasional angular stone	-	-

Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, NW end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
15	50m x 1.8m NW-SE		67.95m	0.33m 67.62m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
1501	Topsoil	Dark brown grey silty clay	0.30 - 0.33m thick	-
1502	Natural	Yellow-brown clay, occasional angular stone	-	-

Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, NE end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
16	50m x 1.8m NE-SW		69.29m	0.58m 68.71m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
1601	Topsoil	Dark brown silty clay	0.15 - 0.25m thick	-
1602	Natural	Yellow-brown clay, occasional angular stone	-	-

Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, NE end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
17	50m x 1.8m NE-SW		70.34m	0.30m 70.04m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/Samples
1701	Topsoil	Dark brown-grey silty clay	0.30m thick	-
1702	Natural	Yellow-brown clay, occasional angular stone	-	-

Trench No.	Length, width & alignment		Surface height, N end (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
18	50m x 1.8m N-S		69.01m	0.48m 68.53m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
1801	Topsoil	Dark brown-grey silty clay	0.20 - 0.25m thick	-
1802	Natural	Yellow-brown clay, occasional angular stone	-	-



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