



Land East of Oxford Road Frilford, Oxfordshire

Archaeological Watching Brief



Planning Ref: P16/V1477/FUL, P17/V0376/FUL & P18/V0104/FUL
Accession Code: OXCMS: 2017.65
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Document subtitle Archaeological Watching Brief Report
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Oxford Road
Frilford Heath
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Frilford
OX13 5NS

County Oxfordshire
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Contents

Summary.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
1 INTRODUCTION	4
1.1 Project and planning background.....	4
1.2 Scope of the report.....	4
1.3 Location, topography and geology	4
2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	5
2.1 Introduction.....	5
2.2 Archaeological and historical context	5
3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	6
3.1 Aims	6
3.2 Objectives.....	6
4 METHODS.....	6
4.1 Introduction.....	6
4.2 Fieldwork methods	7
4.3 Artefactual and environmental strategies	7
4.4 Monitoring.....	7
5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS.....	8
5.1 Introduction.....	8
5.2 Soil sequence and natural deposits.....	8
5.3 Results	8
6 ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE.....	9
7 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE	10
8 CONCLUSIONS	10
8.1 Discussion	10
9 ARCHIVE STORAGE AND CURATION	10
9.1 Museum.....	10
9.2 Preparation of the archive	10
9.3 Selection policy	10
9.4 Security copy	11
9.5 OASIS	11
10 COPYRIGHT	11
10.1 Archive and report copyright	11
10.2 Third party data copyright.....	11
REFERENCES	12
APPENDICES.....	13
Appendix 1: OASIS form.....	13



List of Figures

Figure 1 Site Location Plan with proposed development.

List of Plates

Cover Completed footings for Plot 1, view from south.

Plate 1 Access road excavation, view from the west.

Plate 2 Representative section of southern end of Plot 1, view from north, 1.0 m scale & 0.5 m scale.

Plate 3 Representative section of northern end of Plot 1, view from the south, 1.0 m scale.

Plate 4 Representative section of southern edge of Plot 2, view from north, 1.0 m scale.

Plate 5 South facing section of hedgerow **505**, view from the south, 0.5 m scale.

Plate 6 Excavated footing for Plot 3, view from the north.



Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by J & J Roofing & Building Co Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during works at Land East of Oxford Road, Frilford, OX13 5NS, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) SU 444329 197336.

The watching brief was undertaken intermittently between August 2017 and August 2018.

The watching brief monitored the excavation of foundation and service trenches, surface stripping and other significant invasive works associated with the construction of five new properties, associated garages and access for a housing development. The only feature identified during the works was the remains of a north to south aligned hedgerow along the driveway for Plot 2. No other archaeological features, deposits or remains were identified during the watching brief and no artefacts of archaeological significance were recovered.

Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Lynda King of J & J Roofing & Building Co. Ltd, and Sarah Waugh for commissioning the archaeological watching brief. Wessex Archaeology is also grateful for the advice of Hugh Coddington, who monitored the project for Oxford County Council on behalf of Vale of the White Horse District Council, the local planning authority.

The fieldwork was directed by Jamie McCarthy, Tom Dawkins, Benjamin Cullen and Stephen Legg. This report was written by Jamie McCarthy and edited by Damian De Rosa. The project was managed by Damian De Rosa on behalf of Wessex Archaeology.



LAND EAST OF OXFORD ROAD, FRILFORD

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project and planning background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by J & J Roofing & Building Co Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during works at Land East of Oxford Road, Frilford, OX13 5NS, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) SU 444329 197336 (**Figure 1**).

1.1.2 The watching brief was carried out as a condition (12) of planning permission, granted by the Vale of White Horse District Council (VWHDC) to demolish the existing glasshouses and to erect four dwellings (P16/V1477/FUL). The planning application has since been superseded by P17/V0376/FUL - Erect five dwellings (revision of approved scheme for four dwellings) and P18/V0104/FUL - Revised design of three bedroom single dwelling on Plot 3 with condition 11 in both instances relating to archaeology. The redesign of the development involved the splitting of Plot 3 into two residential units to create five dwellings in total. Plots 1, 2 and 4 remained unaffected by the change in design across all three applications.

1.1.3 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) submitted with reference to P16/V1477/FUL, which detailed the aims, methodologies and standards to be employed (Wessex Archaeology 2017). Hugh Coddington, the Archaeology Team Leader for Oxfordshire County Council acting on behalf of VWHDC approved the WSI prior to fieldwork commencing. The Written Scheme of Investigation was approved by VWHDC under reference P17/V0915/DIS.

1.1.4 Following completion of monitoring on Plots 1 to 4 (Plots 3 and 4 being formerly single Plot 3), a very low archaeological potential had been identified for the presence of any archaeological remains. After consultation by WA on behalf of the client with the Archaeology Team Leader for Oxfordshire County Council acting on behalf of VWHDC, it was agreed that monitoring of Plot 5 (formerly Plot 4), in the location of a still to be demolished greenhouse, would not be required.

1.1.5 The watching brief was undertaken intermittently between August 2017 and August 2018.

1.2 Scope of the report

1.2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the results of the watching brief, to interpret the results within their local or regional context (or otherwise), and to assess their potential to address the aims outlined in the WSI, thereby making available information about the archaeological resource (a preservation by record).

1.3 Location, topography and geology

1.3.1 The watching brief was located to the east of Oxford Road (A338) in Frilford. Residential buildings lie to the south and pasture and woodland to the north and east. The Site consisted of former horticultural land with greenhouses in the south-east corner which were demolished as part of the proposed development.



- 1.3.2 The Site lies at a height of c. 62 m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) and slope downwards from south-east to north-west.
- 1.3.3 The underlying geology across the Site is mapped as Kingston Formation - Sandstone. Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 156 to 161 million years ago in the Jurassic Period. No superficial deposits are recorded within the Site although alluvium of Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel is recorded along its northern boundary associated with a water course (British Geological Survey online viewer).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The Site is within an area of archaeological potential, and the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) has been consulted via Heritage Gateway (<http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>) to give a brief summary of the archaeological background to the Site.

2.2 Archaeological and historical context

- 2.2.1 Prehistoric activity within the vicinity of the Site is shown by a lithic scatter (HER 12256) to the south-east comprising flint tools and waste dating to the Late Neolithic to Early Bronze Age which was identified during fieldwork. A further lithic findspot lies to the south (HER 9073) consisting of unretouched flakes, a scrapper, knife and bladelets dating to the Early Mesolithic to Late Bronze Age periods. A further findspot (HER 12314) was identified to the south west of the Site consisting of a Late Bronze Age or Early Iron Age scraper which was dug up by hens in the garden of Frilford Grange.
- 2.2.2 There are numerous findspots attesting to Roman activity within the immediate vicinity of the Site. To the south-west a ditch section and pottery indicating a small Roman site just west of Frilford crossroads has been recorded (HER 9629). A spread of Romano British pottery and tile was found to the south of the Site near to Fords Lane (HER 7604). A further spread of Romano British pottery has been found to the south which appears to correspond with a series of cropmarks that appear to form part of a farmstead of that period (HER 12272). Roman pottery has also been recorded at a Site c.500m to the north of the Site (HER 7926) during the excavation of a well on the east side of the Oxford Road. Other Roman findspots in the vicinity of Kingston Road to the south west of the Site have included a Roman radiate coin (HER 12315) again dug up by hens and a Roman silver spoon bowl (HER 16473). In 1998 south of Joscas School during fieldwalking and by use of a metal detector twenty-five Roman coins and an intaglio were recovered (HER 16817)
- 2.2.3 However, of most significance, is the Roman settlement/religious centre c.1km to the south of the Site located at a point where the Roman road from Bicester to Wantage crosses the River Ock, the centre of a network of smaller Roman roads and settlement sites within the wider area. The settlement appears to have had its origins in the Middle Bronze Age, although evidence of substantial occupation only appears in the Iron Age period. The site may have been abandoned during the Iron Age before being re-established in the early Roman period, although it is postulated that an Iron Age religious building may have continued in use into the Roman period, which led to the establishment of the settlement and its continuation of use as a religious centre. A circular Roman temple was established at the site sometime around 80-90AD, and appears to have remained in use until the late 4th century AD. A second square Romano-British temple was established in the late first century AD and annexes were added during the late-3rd or



early-4th century. The temples appear to show some evidence of usage into the post Roman period. A possible amphitheatre or sacred pool and a mansio have also been recorded at the settlement as well as a late Roman cemetery, which continued in use into the early Saxon period.

2.2.4 The projected line of the Roman road could conceivably run through or lie very close to the Site itself.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Aims

3.1.1 The aims of the watching brief, as stated in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2017) and as defined in the ClfA's *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014a), were:

- To allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of the development or other works;
- To provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard; and
- To guide, not replace, any requirement for contingent excavation or preservation of possible deposits.

3.2 Objectives

3.2.1 In order to achieve the above aims, the objectives of the watching brief, also defined in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2017), were:

- To determine the presence or absence of archaeological features, deposits, structures, artefacts or ecofacts within the specified works area;
- To record and establish, within the constraints of the works, the extent, character, date, condition and quality of any surviving archaeological remains (a preservation by record);
- To place any identified archaeological remains within a wider historical and archaeological context in order to assess their significance; and
- To make available information about the archaeological resource on the site by preparing a report on the results of the watching brief.

4 METHODS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with the detailed methodology set out within the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2017) and in general compliance with the standards outlined in ClfA guidance (ClfA 2014a). The methods employed are summarised below.



4.2 Fieldwork methods

General

- 4.2.1 The watching archaeologist monitored all mechanical excavations within the specified area. These include the excavation of foundation and service trenches, surface stripping and other significant invasive works involved with the erection of the new structures and creation of the new access. Where necessary, the surfaces of uncovered archaeological deposits were cleaned by hand. A sample of archaeological features and deposits identified was hand-excavated, sufficient to address the aims of the watching brief.
- 4.2.2 Spoil derived from both machine stripping and hand-excavated archaeological deposits was visually scanned for the purposes of finds retrieval. Where found, artefacts were collected and bagged by context. All artefacts from excavated contexts were retained, although those from features of modern date (19th century or later) were recorded on site and not retained.
- 4.2.3 The site has been separated in to five plots, as per the site plans provided by the client (**Figure 1**).
- 4.2.4 Following completion of monitoring on Plots 1 to 4 (Plots 3 and 4 being formerly single Plot 3), and after consultation with the Archaeology Team Leader for Oxfordshire County Council, it was recommended that monitoring of Plot 5 (formerly Plot 4), in the location of a still to be demolished greenhouse, would not be required.

Recording

- 4.2.5 All exposed archaeological deposits and features were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's pro forma recording system. A complete drawn record of excavated features and deposits was made including both plans and sections drawn to appropriate scales (generally 1:20 or 1:50 for plans and 1:10 for sections).
- 4.2.6 A full photographic record was made using digital cameras equipped with an image sensor of not less than 10 megapixels. Digital images have been subject to managed quality control and curation processes, which has embedded appropriate metadata within the image and will ensure long term accessibility of the image set.

4.3 Artefactual and environmental strategies

- 4.3.1 Appropriate strategies for the recovery, processing and assessment of artefacts and environmental samples were in line with those detailed in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2017). The treatment of artefacts and environmental remains was in general accordance with: *Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014b) and *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation* (English Heritage 2011).

4.4 Monitoring

- 4.4.1 Hugh Coddington, the Archaeology Team Leader for Oxfordshire County Council, monitored the watching brief on behalf of VWHDC.



5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Monitoring of all of the excavation works associated with the construction of the new properties revealed no archaeological features, deposits or remains. Post 19th century finds were identified but were all residual and unstratified.

5.1.2 For the location of the all of the plots described below, see **Figure 1**.

5.2 Soil sequence and natural deposits

5.2.1 The natural stratigraphic sequence for site was fairly uniform across the monitored areas with some variation resulting from the slope of the site. Whilst the thickness of the layers varied the material was largely consistent. The topsoil consisted of dark greyish-brown sandy loam with rare gravel inclusions and moderate root disturbance from the overlying grass and numerous trees. The subsoil consisted of mid greyish-brown sand with rare gravel inclusions. This overlay the natural geology which consisted of mid yellowish-brown sand with moderate sandstone inclusions. The natural showed minor variations with some areas being a pale greyish-brown colour and others mid orange-brown colour. Downslope at the northern end of site natural Cornbrash was identified among the natural sand.

5.3 Results

Access Road

5.3.1 The west to east access road off of Oxford Road demonstrated some minor variation due to the natural sloping of the land down towards the road to the west and down towards the northern end of site. The southern edge of the access road consisted of 0.1 m of topsoil over 0.14 m of subsoil. The northern edge was the same except the subsoil was 0.24 m thick. At the eastern end of the road, at the top of the slope, natural geology was identified at a depth of 0.24 m for the southern edge, 0.34 m for the northern edge. Towards the western end of the road, downslope, a layer of colluvium was identified beneath the subsoil. This consisted of 0.22 m of dark greyish-brown sand with rare gravel inclusions. Natural geology here was reached at a depth of 0.46 m (**Plate 1**).

5.3.2 No archaeological features or deposits were identified along the road. Only a modern foul drain trench was uncovered running north-west to south-east across the road.

Plot 1

5.3.3 Plot 1 is located in the north-west corner of site, downslope from the access road. To the south-west of the house plot is a plot for a garage. Excavations for the driveway connecting the house to the access road were only to a depth of 0.36 m, natural geology was not exposed. The stratigraphy for the garage plot consisted of 0.15 m of topsoil over 0.16 m of subsoils. This sealed a layer of colluvium consisting of mid greyish-brown sand with rare gravel inclusions. This deposit was 0.1 m thick at the southern end of the garage plot, the full thickness of the deposit was not revealed at the northern end. Natural geology was uncovered at a depth of 0.46 m at the southern end; in the north-west corner of the plot natural was not exposed.

5.3.4 The house plot area consisted of 0.2 m of topsoil over 0.1 m of subsoil. At the southern end of the plot this sealed 0.35 m of colluvium consisting of mid yellowish-brown sand with sparse gravel inclusions. Natural geology was uncovered at a depth of 0.65 m (**Plate 2**). In the north-west corner of the house plot the stratigraphy consisted of 0.4 m of topsoil directly on top of natural geology, no subsoil or colluvium deposits were present (**Plate 3**).



5.3.5 No archaeological features or deposits were identified within Plot 1.

Plot 2

5.3.6 Plot 2 is located immediately to the east of Plot 1 and consists of a house plot at the northern end with a garage plot to the south-east. This is all connected to the access road via a north to south aligned driveway. Excavations for the driveway were to a depth of 0.4 m, and the natural geology was not exposed. The stratigraphy for the garage plot varied quite considerably from the southern to the northern edge. The southern edge consisted of 0.18 m of topsoil over 0.14 m of subsoil. This sealed 0.18 m of colluvium with natural geology being exposed at a depth of 0.5 m (**Plate 4**). The northern edge consisted of 0.12 m of topsoil over 0.2 m of subsoil. No colluvium was present here and natural geology was exposed at a depth of 0.32 m.

5.3.7 The house plot area consisted of 0.3 m of topsoil immediately over natural geology. In the south-east corner of the plot a geological anomaly was identified consisting of topsoil deposits in filling a void within the Cornbrash natural. This appeared to be a result of natural process on the edge of the Cornbrash, as this area marked a horizon between the Cornbrash and the sandy natural geology.

5.3.8 A single discrete feature **505** of minor archaeological interest was identified within the driveway for Plot 2. It consisted of a very diffuse linear feature running at a north to south alignment. Investigation revealed it to be the remains of a hedgerow. It had shallow, concave edges that were heavily root disturbed with a concave base (**Plate 5**). No finds were recovered from the feature. No archaeological features or deposits were identified within Plot 2.

Plot 3

5.3.9 Plot 3 is located in the north-east corner of site, immediately east of Plot 2. It marks the eastern most extent of the development. It comprises a large cross shaped property in the northern end with a garage to the south-west. This is all connected to the end of the access road by a north to south running driveway. The area of Plot 3 is largely level in comparison with Plots 1 and 2, and as such the stratigraphy is largely uniform across the area. This consists of 0.15 m of topsoil overlaying an average of 0.3 m of subsoil with natural geology being exposed at a depth of 0.45m (**Plate 6**).

5.3.10 Only the footings for the house and garage were deep enough to impact natural geology, everything else was still within the level of the subsoil. No archaeological remains were identified within the excavated footings.

Plot 4

5.3.11 Following the negative results identified within Plots 1 to 3, and after consultation with the Archaeology Team Leader for Oxfordshire County Council acting on behalf of VWHDC, it was agreed that further monitoring would not be required for Plot 4.

6 ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE

6.1.1 No archaeologically significant artefactual material was recovered during the works. Post 19th century material including animal bone, pottery and glass, was identified, noted and discarded on site.



7 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

- 7.1.1 No archaeological deposits suitable for environmental sampling were encountered during the works.

8 CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Discussion

- 8.1.1 The watching brief was successful in its general stated aims and objectives of identifying an absence of archaeological remains within the areas impacted upon by the housing development.
- 8.1.2 All excavation work was monitored, and the only feature identified was the former line of a hedgerow within the driveway for Plot 2. Beyond this no archaeological features, deposits or remains were shown to be present or impacted upon by the excavation works. Recording of the excavations revealed a reasonably substantial variation in the underlying stratigraphy, largely due to the slope of the hill that the access road and Plots 1 and 2 occupy.
- 8.1.3 No archaeological evidence associated with line of the Roman road bordering the western side of the site or the significant Roman activity to the south of the site could be identified or be shown to be present within the site
- 8.1.4 The results of the watching brief have determined that any further excavation work relating to the development is very unlikely to impact upon any archaeology and that the excavation of Plot 4 will not require archaeological mitigation.

9 ARCHIVE STORAGE AND CURATION

9.1 Museum

- 9.1.1 The archive resulting from the watching brief is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Salisbury. The County Museums Service (Oxfordshire Museums) has agreed in principle to accept the archive on completion of the project, under the accession code **OXCMS: 2017.65**. Deposition of any finds with the museum will only be carried out with the full written agreement of the landowner to transfer title of all finds to the museum.

9.2 Preparation of the archive

- 9.2.1 The archive, which includes paper records, graphics, artefacts, ecofacts and digital data, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by The County Museums Service (Oxfordshire Museums), and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014c; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).
- 9.2.2 All archive elements are marked with the **116450/ OXCMS: 2017.65**, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive currently comprises the following:

- 01 file/document case of paper records and A3/A4 graphics.

9.3 Selection policy

- 9.3.1 Wessex Archaeology follows national guidelines on selection and retention (SMA 1993; Brown 2011, section 4). In accordance with these, and any specific guidance prepared by the museum, a process of selection and retention will be followed so that only those



artefacts or ecofacts that are considered to have potential for future study will be retained. The selection policy will be agreed with the museum, and is fully documented in the project archive.

9.4 Security copy

- 9.4.1 In line with current best practice (eg, Brown 2011), on completion of the project a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file. PDF/A is an ISO-standardised version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for the digital preservation of electronic documents through omission of features ill-suited to long-term archiving.

9.5 OASIS

- 9.5.1 An OASIS online record (<http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main>) has been initiated, with key fields and a .pdf version of the final report submitted. Subject to any contractual requirements on confidentiality, copies of the OASIS record will be integrated into the relevant local and national records and published through the Archaeology Data Service ArchSearch catalogue.

10 COPYRIGHT

10.1 Archive and report copyright

- 10.1.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative/digital archive relating to the project will be retained by Wessex Archaeology under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved. The client will be licenced to use each report for the purposes that it was produced in relation to the project as described in the specification. The museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use conforms to the *Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003*. In some instances, certain regional museums may require absolute transfer of copyright, rather than a licence; this should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.
- 10.1.2 Information relating to the project will be deposited with the Historic Environment Record (HER) where it can be freely copied without reference to Wessex Archaeology for the purposes of archaeological research or development control within the planning process.

10.2 Third party data copyright

- 10.2.1 This document and the project archive may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (eg, Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which Wessex Archaeology are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferable by Wessex Archaeology. Users remain bound by the conditions of the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of such material.



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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: OASIS form

11 OASIS ID: wessexar1-335101

Project details

Project name	Land East of Oxford Road, Frilford - Archaeological Watching Brief
Short description of the project	Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by J and J Roofing and Building Co Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during works at Land East of Oxford Road, Frilford, OX13 5NS, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) SU 444329 197336. The watching brief was undertaken intermittently between August 2017 and September 2018. The watching brief monitored the excavation of foundation and service trenches, surface stripping and other significant invasive works associated with the construction of five new properties, associated garages and access for a housing development. The only feature identified during the works was the remains of a north to south aligned hedgerow along the driveway for Plot 2. No other archaeological features, deposits or remains were identified during the watching brief and no artefacts of archaeological significance were recovered.
Project dates	Start: 01-08-2018 End: 25-08-2018
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	116450 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	OXCMS: 2017.65 - Museum accession ID
Any associated project reference codes	P16/V1477/FUL - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	P17/V0376/FUL - Planning Application No.
Any associated project reference codes	P18/V0104/FUL - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Recording project
Current Land use	Other 15 - Other
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	OXFORDSHIRE VALE OF WHITE HORSE FRILFORD Land East of Oxford Road, Frilford
Study area	1 Hectares
Site coordinates	SU 44329 97336 51.672580758096 -1.358882072928 51 40 21 N 001 21 31 W



Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Wessex Archaeology
Project brief originator	Oxfordshire County Council
Project design originator	Wessex archaeology
Project director/manager	Damian de Rosa
Project supervisor	Jamie McCarthy
Project supervisor	Ben Cullen
Project supervisor	Tom Dawkins
Project supervisor	Stephen Legg
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	J & J Roofing & Building Co. Ltd.

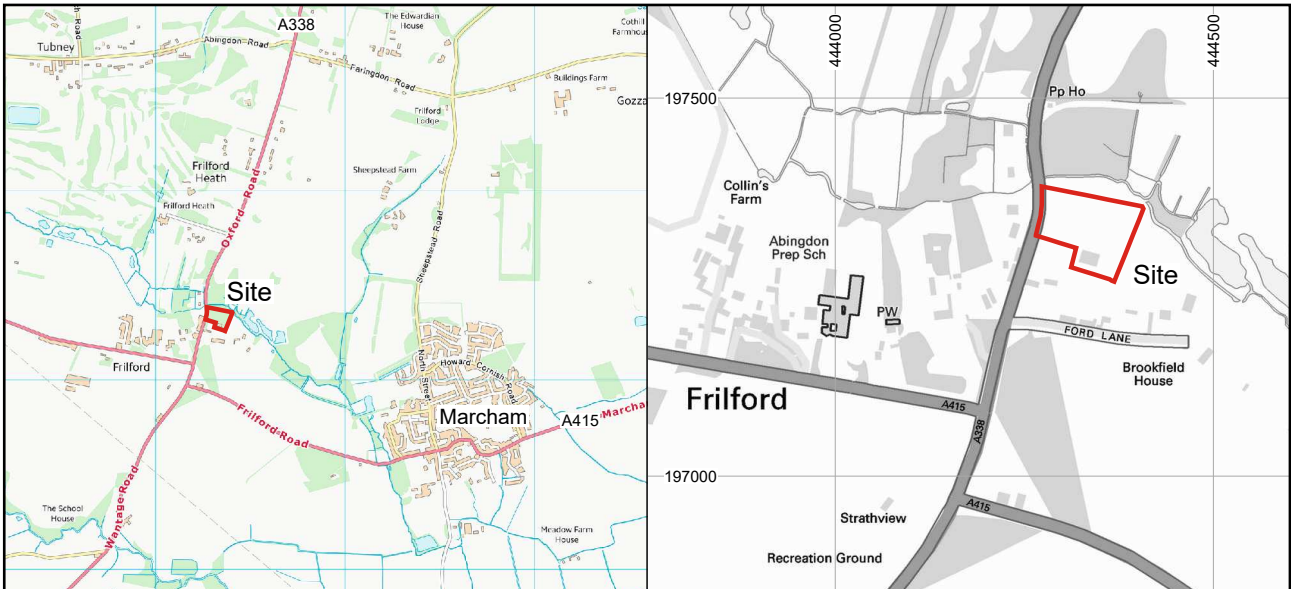
Project archives


Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Oxfordshire Museums Service
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Oxfordshire Museums Service
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Plan", "Report"

Project bibliography

1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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Site location plan with proposed development

Figure 1



Plate 1: Access road excavation, view from the west



Plate 2: Representative section of southern end of Plot 1, view from the north, 1.0 m scale & 0.5 m scale


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Plate 3: Representative section of northern end of Plot 1, view from the south, 1.0 m scale



Plate 4: Representative section of southern edge of Plot 2, view from the north, 1.0 m scale



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Plate 5: South facing section of hedgerow 505, view from the south, 0.5 m scale



Plate 6: Excavated footing for Plot 3, view from the north

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