



Land at Manor Place, Oxford

Archaeological Evaluation Report





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Archaeological Evaluation Report

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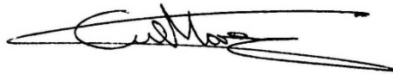
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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by RPS Planning and Development to carry out an archaeological evaluation on land proposed for development at Manor Place (centred on NGR 452108 206600), located to the east side of Oxford in the Holywell area of the city. Documentary sources (including Loggan's 1675 birds-eye view of Oxford), indicate the archaeological potential of the Site is dominated by the likely line of the outer defences of Oxford passing through the Site, constructed in 1644-5 during the English Civil War.

The evaluation comprised the excavation of three linear evaluation trenches, two of which due to the presence of protected trees (the Site is within a Conservation Area) were divided into two separate lengths. Although the trenches were arrayed evenly across the Site, Trench 1 was located to specifically target the potential line of the Civil War defences. A contingency was also included for up to three boreholes to allow retrieval of samples at depth should substantial features (such as the defensive ditch) be revealed.

The evaluation succeeded in locating an apparent western terminal of the Civil War ditch, aligned east to west and heading towards the nearby Holywell Mill Stream. The ditch was approximately 10m wide, and borehole investigations determined the base at this location to be approximately 3.3m below modern ground surface. Whilst relatively shallow, these dimensions are broadly comparable with similar sections through these defences elsewhere, such as at the nearby Chemistry Research Laboratory on South Parks Road. The apparent ditch terminal exposed appears to corroborate Loggan's portrayal of a gap in the defensive circuit at this point, possibly representing some form of sally port, defended by an adjacent bastion enclosing '*Hollywell*'.

The ditch was located directly to the north of a raised natural gravel ridge, immediately to the south of which was the truncated remains of a substantial earthwork rampart measuring over 8m wide at the base. Evidence was recorded to suggest the rampart had some form of external revetment, with the main body of the earthwork comprised of successive bands of alternating redeposited fluvial gravel and clay banked against this revetment. An old ground surface was recorded both beneath the rampart, and elsewhere within the Site, with artefact evidence from Trench 2 in particular producing both medieval and 16th/17th pottery.

The date for the slighting of the defences is uncertain, and no artefact evidence was recovered to add to this debate, but documentary sources suggest the defences remained as a visible earthwork at the Site until at least the second half of the 19th century, but by the early 20th century simply known as '*site of entrenchment*'. A made ground deposit sealing both the rear of the rampart and the old ground surface exposed in all trenches, and the main homogenous upper ditch fill are likely to correspond to the slighting of the defences. Thereafter, a second old ground surface developed, most probably associated with the establishment of allotments across the Site at the turn of the century.

In the context of the history and development of Oxford, the identification of not only part of the Civil War defensive ditch, but particularly a section of the truncated (and hitherto unrecorded) rampart, should be considered a significant discovery.

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The fieldwork was directed by Phil Harding. Environmental analysis of the borehole samples was undertaken for Wessex Archaeology by David Norcott, the artefacts assessed by Lorraine Mephram and the graphics prepared by Liz James. Phil Harding and Andy Crockett compiled this report, which has been reviewed by Chris Moore, and the project was managed for Wessex Archaeology by Andy Crockett.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by RPS Planning and Development (RPS) to carry out an archaeological evaluation on land proposed for development at Manor Place, Oxford (NGR 452108 206600; hereafter the Site). The Site is within the Central (University and City) Conservation Area.
- 1.1.2 The project was carried out under the auspices of a Project Design prepared by Wessex Archaeology (WA 2012), based on a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) prepared by RPS on behalf of the applicants (RPS 2012b), the latter responding to a Brief prepared by the Oxford City Council Archaeologist (OCC 31st August 2012).
- 1.1.3 The Project Design, WSI and this report comply with the guidelines set out in the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (October 1994, as amended).

1.2 Site Location, Topography and Geology

- 1.2.1 The Site is approximately L-shaped and is bounded to the east by the Holywell Mill Stream (feeding into a branch of the River Cherwell), to the south by Holywell Mill Lane, to the west by St Cross / Brasenose College and by Holy Cross Cemetery and to the north by residential properties fronting onto Manor Place (**Figure 1**).
- 1.2.2 Much of the land within the Site is grassland with some scrub and trees and also an abandoned hard tennis court. Drift geology in this area comprises valley gravels and alluvium associated with the River Cherwell and the ground within the Site is fairly level. Recent site investigations found that the water was encountered at a range of depths between 0.55m and 3.20m of the current ground level (GIS 2012). Groundwater inflows were generally fast and two installed wells identified a level of repose at 0.72m and 1.40m below ground.

1.3 Historical Background

- 1.3.1 The Site lies just outside the walled medieval city of Oxford and within the former manor of Holywell. The manor house and church of Holywell are to the north-west of the Site, adjacent to Manor Road. The manor of Holywell was acquired in 1294 by Merton College and a watermill was certainly established at the site now known as Holywell Ford (just to the south-east of the Site) before this date, probably around 1200.
- 1.3.2 The earliest detailed maps of the area (such as the Speed map of 1605) indicate that the Site was used as open pasture, although there may have been some arable use that is not recorded. This map indicates the presence of the Holywell manor house and church as well as the watermill at Holywell Ford.

- 1.3.3 In 1644-5, during the English Civil War, an earthen defensive barrier was constructed around the northern part of Oxford. One section of the defences crossed the northern part of the Site on a north-east/south west alignment. A birds-eye plan produced in 1675 by David Loggan (see **Figure 3** for an extract focussed on the Site) clearly shows a linear earthen rampart with external water-filled ditch extending from the Holywell Mill Stream. Towards the northern edge of the Site the rampart appears to have been removed, but after a short gap there is a mounded area indicated that almost certainly represents the remains of a square bastion. The bastion encloses a small building marked on the Loggan plan as '*Hollywell*'. This is likely to be the well-house for the Holy Well that has given its name to the manor; the actual location of the well is not known with any degree of certainty and the possibility that it was within the north-western part of the Site cannot be discounted.
- 1.3.4 On a map of 1797 produced by Richard Davis, the Site is shown as part of Holywell Mill Meadow with no other features indicated. In 1848 land to the rear of St Cross (Holywell) Church was acquired for the joint parishes cemetery, this extends eastwards from the small triangular cemetery of the medieval church to form the boundary of the current Site. A parish school was built to the south of the cemetery – this is now the Grade II listed St Cross College building - and a vicarage was added to the south of the school in 1864.
- 1.3.5 The 1st edition of the detailed Ordnance Survey 25" to the mile mapping was published in 1876. It shows the remnants of the Civil War defences as '*Intrenchments*' and clearly indicates an upstanding linear earthwork curving around within the northern part of the Site with a more mounded area adjacent to the northern boundary. The location of the Holy Well is marked as being outside the boundary of the Site. A fence separates the two parts of the Site and a small building is shown in the south-western corner of the northern part, adjacent to the junction of the fence and the cemetery wall. The southern part of the Site is shown as empty with no features other than a footpath and a few trees around the boundaries.
- 1.3.6 A detailed town map of 1878-1880 shows very much the same layout but indicates the presence of two further small structures within the northern part of the Site. These are immediately adjacent to the cemetery wall and may be temporary buttresses constructed to prevent the wall from falling into the Site – ground levels in the cemetery are considerably higher than within the Site.
- 1.3.7 By 1900 the Ordnance Survey 6" to the mile map shows that the northern part of the Site is being used for 'allotment gardens'. The map is not detailed enough to show internal features, but it does indicate the presence of Manor Place and the residential development along either side of this road. It shows the fenceline that now forms the northern boundary of the Site in this area.
- 1.3.8 The next edition of this map was published in 1914-22 and this has the text '*Site of Intrenchment*' across the northern part of the Site – presumably the earthworks shown on the 1876 map had been levelled when this area was established as allotment gardens. The structures previously indicated in this part of the Site are no longer present but another structure is now shown directly adjacent to the cemetery wall, again possibly some form of buttress. This structure is not shown on the more detailed 25" to the mile map of 1921.
- 1.3.9 The 1939 25" to the mile map again indicates that the northern part of the Site is being used as allotment gardens, and that there are no structures present within this part of the Site. The southern part of the Site is shown to be tennis courts, although no individual courts are marked. By 1958 a pavilion has been constructed to the west of the tennis

courts, although the location of this building may lie just outside the current Site due to some boundary amendments in this area. The northern part of the Site is still being used for allotment gardens, as is the land between the tennis courts and Holywell Mill Lane.

1.4 Recent investigations

- 1.4.1 Stray finds previously recovered include a flint scraper from the Site, found within the allotments. In addition, just to the south-west of the Site, within what is now Magdalen Grove, gravel digging in the early part of the 20th century revealed the fossilised remains of Pleistocene megafauna including elephants, mammoths and bears. The fossil-bearing sediments may represent an inter-glacial episode within the British Late Middle Pleistocene, equated with Oxygen Isotope Stage 7 (c. 245,000-186,000 BP). This location has been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
- 1.4.2 An archaeological evaluation was carried out within the southern part of the Site in 1996, in connection with a proposed planning application for a Centre for Islamic Studies (OAU 1996). Three trial trenches measuring 20m long and approximately 1.8m wide were excavated to the surface of the underlying gravel. These trenches identified a shallow cultivation soil and former turfline overlying the gravel, sealed in each case by c. 200-250mm of modern dumped material and topped by the current developed soil.
- 1.4.3 In one trench the excavators recorded a shallow ditch measuring 1.4m wide and 0.14m deep. This ditch was aligned north-south and contained a single sherd of medieval pottery (13th-15th century). A second trench also contained a possible ditch, this one aligned east-west, but this was not further recorded due to flooding. Two sherds from the upper fill of this feature were dated to the medieval period (mid-13th and late 12th-early 13th centuries respectively).
- 1.4.4 The excavators concluded that the ditches may have marked the boundaries of medieval cultivation plots but that the shallow nature of the excavated ditch and also of the overlying cultivation soils indicated that the Site had been truncated (i.e. ground reduction had taken place), possibly when the tennis courts were established.
- 1.4.5 An archaeological evaluation undertaken to the west of the Site ahead of development (student accommodation) found evidence of localised gravel extraction during the medieval and post-medieval periods. Some sherds of Saxon pottery were recovered and were considered to be residual.
- 1.4.6 An archaeological watching brief undertaken during the construction of the squash courts immediately to the south-east of the Site did not find any significant archaeological finds or features.
- 1.4.7 During recent ground investigation at the Site (GIS 2012), a borehole revealed a deposit sequence indicating 1.15m of made ground over 0.55m of sandy clay, sealing a partly humidified peat extending to c. 3.30m below ground level (*ibid* figure 1, WS1). No similar peat deposits were identified in any other part of the Site and it is suggested that this could represent the infilled ditch of the Civil War defences, lying immediately outside the bank.

2 PROJECT DETAILS

2.1 Scope

- 2.1.1 The original proposal required three trenches to be excavated, two measuring 35m in length and 2m in width and one measuring 20m in length and 2m in width. However, due

to access constraints on site resulting in part from the Site's location within a Conservation Area (and therefore all trees with a stem diameter greater than 75mm deemed to be protected), it was necessary to slightly vary the proposal and excavate both Trenches 1 and 2 in two separate lengths.

2.2 Aims and Objectives

2.2.1 The overall aim of the programme of archaeological trial trenching was to provide further information regarding the potential presence of archaeological remains within the Site, and where present establish the date, nature, character, state and significance of such remains so that informed decisions can be made regarding the need and scope of any further mitigation that may be required before or during the development of the Site.

2.2.2 The following specific objectives were identified in the WSI:

- *Establish whether significant remains are present bearing in mind the potential for:*
 - *Peat deposits preserving environmental evidence and preserved organic remains relating to prehistoric and later human activity adjacent to the River Cherwell; and*
 - *Saxon, medieval and post-medieval activity associated with the settlement at Holywell, the Holywell Mill, and the well-house, also the potential for Late Saxon and medieval gravel quarrying in this area and for the remains of medieval plots.*
- *Establish the character and extent of the Civil War defensive line in this location, bearing in mind the potential for remains relating to a bank, ditch, bastion and well-house;*
- *Consider that important fossilised elephant and bear remains have been found within the gravels in the general vicinity.*

2.2.3 With regard to the current draft city research agendas identified for the Oxford Archaeological Plan¹, a considerable number of the research questions in those agendas may have applied. Perhaps the most specific would be:

- *8.7: Post-medieval Settlement, no. 12 – Despite dating from Domesday Book and known to have been protected by earthworks during the Civil War, Holywell has not been subject to significant archaeological or documentary investigation so far. What would this contribute to our understanding of the settlement immediately to the north of the city? How far was the liberty of Holywell independent of the city?*
- *8.12: Post-medieval Warfare and Defence, no. 1 – Can the line, phasing and character of the Royalist defences and the Parliamentary siege works be further established? Earthwork surveys of the extant defences would be of great value. Can geophysics tell us more about the Parliamentary siege works?*

2.3 Methodology

2.3.1 All works were carried out in accordance with the methodology as set out in the Project Design (WA 2012), which will not be repeated in detail here.

2.3.2 In summary, all machine excavation was carried out under the direct supervision of an archaeologist, with fieldwork directed by an experienced field archaeologist, monitored by the nominated RPS Archaeology Project Manager. The work conformed to the

¹ <http://consultation.oxford.gov.uk/consult.ti/OARAAC/consultationHome>

requirements and guidelines set out in the Institute for Archaeologists' Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (1999, as amended).

- 2.3.3 A context-based recording system acceptable to the Oxford City Council Archaeologist Service was used to record each trench and archaeological deposits, features *etc.* Trench/feature plans and sections were drawn at appropriate scales; all site drawings include relevant information including site name, number and/or code, scale, drawing number, orientation, date and name of compiler and absolute heights derived from Ordnance Datum (Newlyn).
- 2.3.4 Three boreholes were drilled by Ground Technology Ltd through the fill of the Civil War defence ditch, retrieving open tube sampling (U100/U4 sampling) for detailed geoarchaeological description and interpretation.
- 2.3.5 All artefacts and animal bones were recorded, collected and labelled according to their individual stratigraphical context. Artefacts of clearly modern date were recorded but not retained for off-site assessment. Finds from each archaeological context were allocated an individual finds tray/bag and waterproof labels used for each tray/bag to identify unique individual contexts.
- 2.3.6 In the absence of stratigraphically secure dated archaeological remains, with the exception of the borehole cores noted above, no environmental samples were taken.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 Context descriptions, by trench, are provided below (**Appendix 1**). Note that context descriptions per trench are presented in numerical not stratigraphic order. The following narrative will summarise the stratigraphic sequence and archaeological remains encountered at the Site.

3.2 Stratigraphic sequence

Evaluation trenches

- 3.2.1 Natural geology, in the form of mid orange brown limestone fluvial gravel, was exposed at the base of all trenches. Topographically the surface of this gravel undulated across the evaluation area, with the Civil War rampart (below) apparently exploiting a raised sand and gravel bar.
- 3.2.2 Two phases of old ground surface were recorded at the Site. The earlier of the two was present in all three trenches, and comprised a brown silty clay loam with occasional to common subangular to subrounded gravel inclusions, sealing fluvial gravel and in turn sealed by the earlier of the two made ground deposit. In Trench 1 (Layer 104/109) this old ground surface also extended beneath Rampart 118 (below; **Figure 2**).
- 3.2.3 Made ground was encountered in all trenches, comprising a variable thickness mixed deposit of redeposited Oxford Clay and fluvial gravel, and including occasional relatively modern brick and other construction debris fragments. Made ground was thickest in TR1 (Layer 116), where it overlay the rear of the truncated rampart (see below) and old ground surface 104/109 to a depth of *c.* 0.7m. A second thinner deposit of made ground (Layer 103) then extended to cover the entire truncated rampart width (**Figure 2**).
- 3.2.4 Two separate phases of made ground deposition were also recorded in Trench 2, sealing and this time also interleaved by development of old ground surfaces. The earlier mid

yellowish brown silty clay loam deposit (Layer 206, probably equivalent to Layer 213) produced both 11th/13th and 16th/17th century pottery. In Trench 3 only a single made ground deposit (Layer 304) was recorded; stratigraphic relationships, soil matrix and relative absence of modern building rubble would suggest this deposit is contemporaneous with the earlier phases of made ground in Trenches 1 and 2.

- 3.2.5 Subsequent to the first phase of made ground deposition, a second old ground surface appears to have developed (Layer 204, Layer 211 and Layer 303), again in a mid brown silty clay loam matrix, though in this instance only recorded in Trenches 2 and 3 (the latter also containing fragments of relatively modern clinker and brick rubble). This was sealed by the more recent mixed fluvial gravel made ground deposit (Layer 203, probably equivalent to 210) which contained much modern brick rubble.
- 3.2.6 Topsoil in all trenches comprised thin dark brown silty clay loam topsoil overlying in some areas a slightly paler subsoil of similar matrix. The topsoil/ subsoil horizon measured between 0.26m and 0.43m thickness.

Boreholes

- 3.2.7 Three boreholes (BH1, BH2 and BH3; **Figure 1**) were drilled to investigate deep ditch deposits at Manor Place, Oxford, considered to be a defensive ditch of probable Civil War date. Full sediment descriptions can be found in **Appendix 2**.
- 3.2.8 All three boreholes penetrated to the underlying geology (Oxford Clay). At its deepest point (in BH1) the ditch was found to be c. 3.27m in depth, shallowing to c. 2m nearer to the sides of the ditch, in BH2 and BH3 respectively.
- 3.2.9 The nature of the lower fills (i.e. below 1.49m in BH1, 1.12m in BH2 and 1.22m in BH3) indicates the presence of standing/slow moving water with abundant vegetation. The freshwater snail taxa noted during sediment description of BH1 (*Planorbis planorbis*, *Radix balthica* and *Pisidium* sp) indicate that the ditch held water on a permanent basis, possibly with very occasional drying, and also supporting the presence of swampy vegetation. No peat formation is indicated within the ditch, and no obvious stasis horizons were present.
- 3.2.10 There is reasonable potential for pollen preservation in the lower fills, particularly within BH3. However, apart from documentary evidence to confirm the initial construction date of 1642-3 for the ditch itself; the difficulties in obtaining reliable radiocarbon dates to place the lower fill sequence in a secure chronological framework could somewhat reduce the value of such work.

3.3 Archaeological remains

- 3.3.1 The archaeological evaluation has identified two principal features, both associated with the documented 17th century English Civil War defences of the city of Oxford, and both located in Trench 1 (**Figure 2**).
- 3.3.2 Ditch 105 (**Plate 1**) was part of the enclosing city defensive ditch, exposed in both TR1a and TR1b. It measured at least 10m in width, but due to anticipated health & safety constraints could not be excavated during the course of the evaluation. Of particular interest, the results of this evaluation suggest the feature appeared to be a terminal for a length of ditch extending westwards from the bank of the Holywell Mill Stream.
- 3.3.3 Purposive borehole drilling of the ditch indicated a minimum depth of c. 3.27m below ground surface (BH1), with the ditch filled by primary humic black silty clay to a depth of

approximately 0.25m. Sealing this primary deposit were a succession of very wet silty clays and silty clay loams to a combined thickness of approximately 1.2m, interpreted as gradual settling out of material (potentially over a considerable period of time) whilst the open ditch held standing water. The upper ditch fills comprise generally better drained lighter dark yellowish brown sandy clay loams, and including obvious modern brick *etc.* fragments within the upper deposits sampled. This latter deposit is probably equivalent to Layer 107 in Trench 1a, and interpreted as indicative of deliberate infilling with former rampart material when the defences were slighted.

- 3.3.4 To the south of the ditch and separated by an approximate 3.5m wide berm was Rampart 118. This comprised a sequence of redeposited layers of river gravel and clay (presumably at least in part upcast from the excavation of the adjacent ditch), the north (outer) edge of which appeared to be cut into the gravel ridge with a near vertical face, suggesting the former presence of some form of revetment² against which the rampart material was originally banked. The construction technique, using discrete bands of alternating redeposited fluvial gravel and clay (**Plate 2**), was presumably an intentional design to allow the various bands of relatively loose unconsolidated gravel to be ‘bound’ by the clay into a more stable viable structure.
- 3.3.5 The rampart was 8.2m wide at its base. If the surviving slope of the south-facing rear edge of the rampart can be relied on as a reasonably accurate indication of the pitch of the earthwork inner face when originally constructed, and allowing for a parapet walk of approximately 2m width, the earthwork itself would have stood c. 3m high (excluding any breastwork).
- 3.3.6 The remainder of the evaluation appears to confirm the results of previous investigations at the Site, revealing a series of made ground deposits artificially elevating the ground surface, at the base of which (in TR2a) was exposed the confluence of (presumably) east-flowing bifurcated palaeochannels.

3.4 Finds

- 3.4.1 Finds were recovered from one context within TR1b (layer 119), and one context within TR2a (buried soil 206). **Table 1** presents quantities of finds by context. The very small assemblage comprises animal bone (*cattle calcaneus*); ironworking slag (unknown date); and four body sherds of pottery. The two sherds from context 119 are both medieval, and are in the same coarse sandy fabric (Abingdon ware (OXAG); mid 11th to 14th century). One of the four sherds from context 206 is also medieval, in this case flint-tempered (South-West Oxfordshire ware (OXBF); mid 11th to early 13th century), while the other three sherds from the same context are in post-medieval black-glazed redware (late 16th to 17th century). The latter sherds are of interest, given the former presence of the 17th century Civil War defensive barrier, whose course crossed the northern part of the Site.

Table 1: All finds by context

Context	Animal Bone	Pottery	Slag
119		2/23	1/7
206	1/54	4/27	
Totals	1/54	6/50	1/7

² Most probably timber, as masonry revetments would have been (a) too costly, and (b) reduced to lethal shrapnel under bombardment – the earthwork itself was intended to absorb cannon shot, not the outer-facing revetment, which was, in effect, designed to fail.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 The Civil War Defences

- 4.1.1 The evaluation at Manor Place was undertaken to ascertain the archaeological potential of the Site, with a specific brief to locate and confirm the position of a backfilled ditch, thought to be part of an outer line of defences erected in 1644-45 during the English Civil War (Munby and Simons 2005).
- 4.1.2 This line of defences comprised a series of systematic bastions connected by earthwork ramparts, of which the defences at Manor Place formed part of the eastern limits, defending the defence line with the River Cherwell. Munby and Simons (2005) noted that the line of the defences at the east end of the line were ‘puzzling’, showing a bastion at Manor Road with an intermediate bastion to the south, outside the east end of Holywell churchyard; the closest location to the archaeological evaluation at Manor Place.
- 4.1.3 Excavation of the first section of Trench 1 identified the southern limit of the back-filled ditch. To the south a series of clearly defined tip lines were present sufficient to demonstrate that in this part of the Site the lower part of the bank is preserved in situ, together with the underlying old ground surface. This aspect of the defences was unexpected and provided an opportunity to record the construction of the defensive bank. The stratigraphy was interrupted at the front edge of the bank. This feature of the bank’s construction was only observed in section, making it unclear the extent of this characteristic. Though it is thought most likely this indicates the outer face of a retaining timber revetment for the rampart (since removed or simply decayed away), it is equally possible that this might also represent some form of palisade, gun platform or defensive gabion such as might reasonably be expected to cap the defensive bank. Such a feature was thought likely by Munby and Simons (2005) in their reconstruction of the nature of the defences.
- 4.1.4 Only the lower part of the bank survived and it is likely that the upper parts were slighted into the ditch. It is unclear exactly when this happened; the early mapping of the area in 1876 indicates the bank as an upstanding earthwork while the 1914-22 survey marks it as ‘*Site of entrenchment*’. This has led to the suggestion that the bank was levelled sometime between these dates. However the fact that the archaeological evaluation has demonstrated that the lower parts of the bank do survive make it possible that the contour of the bank was softened by the surrounding land being made-up at this time, possibly in line with the idea that this happened when the land was converted to allotments, as recorded on the 1900 OS survey.
- 4.1.5 The second part of the trench, relocated to the west revealed not only the width of the ditch but the extent of an apparent butt end. This interpretation is corroborated by Loggan’s 1675 birds-eye view of Oxford, which indicates a water-filled channel or ditch at this location, flowing into the River Cherwell, and indeed terminating at this point in front of an apparent earthwork enclosing ‘*Hollywell*’ (**Figure 3**).
- 4.1.6 Furthermore, Loggan’s plan also clearly shows that the linear earthen rampart also stops near the northern edge of the Site, and after a short gap the defences resume as the spur of earthwork protruding towards the Holywell Mill Stream around *Hollywell* (and therefore presumably the remnants of a former bastion). It has previously been assumed that the rampart had been removed at this gap, but the discovery of a possible butt end to the ditch during this evaluation perhaps suggests that Loggan’s plan reflects the defences in this area more or less as originally constructed, and hence indicating a small sally-port through the defences, protected by the adjacent *Hollywell* bastion.

4.1.7 No finds were made from the old ground surface, which supports the idea that the defences in this part of Oxford were constructed on open pasture as suggested by mapping of Speed in 1605. In addition, data is contained within the archive sufficient to reconstruct the original topography of the land to the south of the Civil War bank and ditch.

4.1.8 This reconstruction will help to place the form of the defences and the selection of the defensive line in a more military context. It seems possible that the bank and ditch in this part of Oxford were positioned on an elevated gravel bar or ridge, which would have been more well drained to dig through and provide a strategically enhanced elevated position for the resulting bank.

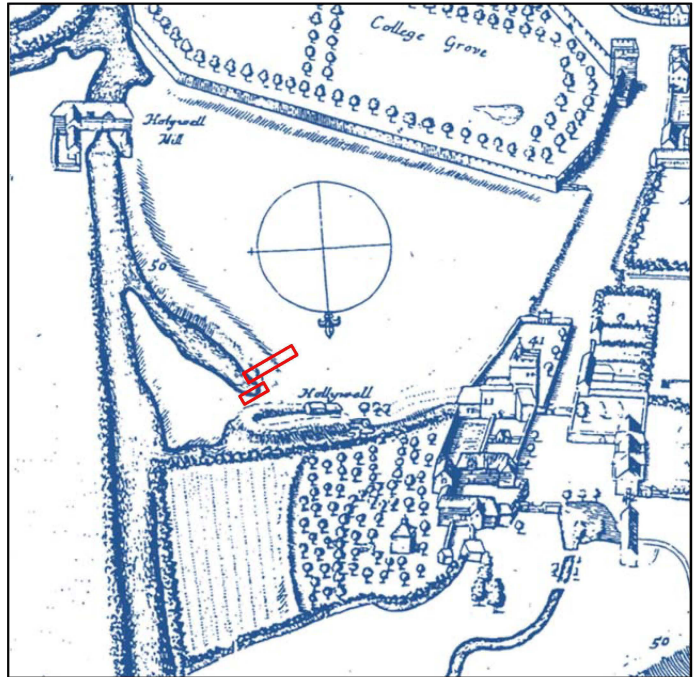


Figure 3: Approx. location of Trenches 1a and 1b in relation to Logan 1675

4.2 Post-Civil War

4.2.1 Trenches 2 and 3 to the south of the Civil War defences confirmed that much of the land has been made up, through at least two phases of work. This is largely in accord with the results of the previous archaeological evaluation, although that trench array did not allow a reconstruction of the north-south transect of the Site, as is partially possible as a result of the work reported here. These new results confirm that the land level fell sharply to the south, providing an area that may have been waterlogged for large parts of the time.

4.2.2 Artefacts were relatively scarce; nevertheless a sherd of 16th/17th century pottery from the base of Trench 2 may indicate that land build-up did not take place until after the date of the Civil War. This evidence apart, the stratigraphic sequence largely mirrored that of the previous evaluation. No traces of the shallow ditches identified by that work were identified, although both phases of archaeological fieldwork have been restricted by the high level of the water table.

4.3 Conclusion

4.3.1 In conclusion, in the context of the history and development of Oxford, the identification of not only part of the Civil War defensive ditch, but particularly a section of the truncated (and hitherto unrecorded) rampart, should be considered a significant discovery.

5 ARCHIVE

5.1 Preparation and deposition

5.1.1 The archive has been prepared in accordance with procedures outlined in Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections (Museums and Galleries Commission

1992) and all procedures adopted by the recipient museum (the County Museum). The archive will be deposited with the recipient museum in due course.

- 5.1.2 The retained artefacts remain the property of the landowner, and there were no human remains or any artefacts that fall within the remit of the Treasure Act 1996 encountered. Subject to obtaining written consent from the landowner, the artefacts will be deposited along with the rest of the archive. Arrangements for the finds to be viewed by the landowner will be made on request.
- 5.1.3 Wessex Archaeology will ensure that the archive is copied on microfiche to the standard required by the English Heritage Archive and one copy will be deposited with the English Heritage Archive.

5.2 OASIS

- 5.2.1 The information regarding the trial trenching will be entered onto the relevant Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) form and submitted to the OASIS database by Wessex Archaeology. Electronic copies of any reports generated will be attached to the form.

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7 APPENDICES
7.1 Appendix 1: Trench Summaries

Trench 1a	Dimensions:	17.5m x 2m x 1.1m	
	Land use:	Scrub and grassland	
	Coordinates:	(S) 452130 206591 (N) 452134 206609	
Context	Category	Description	Depth (m)
101	Layer	Topsoil. Very dark brown silty clay loam with rare sub angular stones <c. 0.03 m. Probably recently established. Associated with ground levelling which is more evident to the S, where deeper made ground is preserved.	0-0.20
102	Layer	Subsoil. Brown silty clay loam with fairly common subangular/ subrounded stones, mainly <0.05 m. Only present at the N end of the trench. Further S topsoil sits directly on made ground	0.20-0.43
103	Layer	Made ground. Redeposited natural Oxford Clay and fluvial gravel, including occasional modern brick fragments. Present in the S part of the trench, overlies old ground surface (104).	0.20-0.87
104	Layer	Old ground surface. Brown silty clay loam with fairly common subangular/ subrounded stones <0.05 m. Similar to subsoil 102. Present at the S. Overlain by made ground, slopes down N-S.	0.82-1.00
105	Cut	Ditch. Large well defined cut at the N end of the trench. >3.10 m wide and >0.75 m deep. Straight sided and sloping c40°. Cut into N side of fluvial gravel bar.	0.40-1.10+
106	Layer	Lower fill of Dark brown silty clay loam with common subangular/ subrounded stones. Similar to subsoil 102	0.40-1.10+
107	Layer	Upper main fill of ditch. Mixed poorly sorted fluvial limestone gravel and Oxford Clay. Deliberate sleighting of bank.	0.40-1.10+
108	Layer	Fluvial terrace. Orange brown limestone gravel. Sa/sr clasts <0.05 m in coarse sandy clay matrix. Fills scour hollows in Oxford Clay natural.	0.40+
109	Layer	Mid brown-grey silty clay loam. As 104. Present across S part of trench and underlies bank 118.	0.30-0.75+
110	Layer	Bank material. Gravel and mid brown silty clay loam. Contains isolated clasts of Oxford Clay. Overlies 109, Overlain by 111	0.30-0.65+
111	Layer	Bank material. Grey clay with occasional subrounded stone inclusions < 0.08 m. Overlain by 112, overlies 110.	0.28-0.82+
112	Layer	Bank material. Mixed green/grey clay and orange brown limestone fluvial gravel. Overlies 111, overlain by 113.	0.25-0.78+
113	Layer	Bank material. Redeposited mid orange-brown, fluvial. Limestone, terrace gravel. Overlies 112, overlain by 114.	0.28-0.85+
114	Layer	Bank material. Grey-green redeposited Oxford Clay with occasional subrounded limestone inclusions <0.06 m. Overlies 113, overlain by 115	0.22-0.92+
115	Layer	Bank material. Reeposited mid orange-brown, fluvial, terrace, limestone gravel. Overlies 114, overlain by 116.	0.20-0.88

Trench 1a	Dimensions:	17.5m x 2m x 1.1m	
	Land use:	Scrub and grassland	
	Coordinates:	(S) 452130 206591 (N) 452134 206609	
Context	Category	Description	Depth (m)
116	Layer	Grey green redeposited Oxford Clay with fluvial, limestone gravel clasts. All poorly sorted. Made ground, probably from sleighting of bank. As 103.	0.10-0.83+
117	Layer	Mid orange limestone fluvial terrace gravel with light grey, veins of vertical clay. Possibly periglacial features. Apparent vertical contact between 117 and topsoil 109. Poss revetment, defence structure near the terminus of the bank. Overlies 108.	0.20-0.62
118	Group	Contexts 110-115. Main bank of Civil War construction. Composed of series of overlying layers of Oxford Clay and limestone fluvial terrace gravel, all mixed but generally in alternating bands. All overlie original ground surface 104/109. Top heavily truncated as is also the natural gravel bar on which the bank was constructed.	0.20-0.88

Trench 1b	Dimensions:	14m x 2m x 0.5m	
	Land use:	Scrub and grassland	
	Coordinates:	(S) 452130 206606 (N) 452132 206620	
Context	Category	Description	Depth (m)
119	Layer	Mixed gravel and clay sub soil overburden at N end of trench. Heavily root disturbed. Stripped to expose butt end of ditch 105	0-0.40

Trench 2a	Dimensions:	21.5m x 2m x 1.2m	
	Land use:	Scrub and grassland	
	Coordinates:	(S) 452098 206571 (N) 452106 206592	
Context	Category	Description	Depth (m)
201	Layer	Topsoil. Dark brown sity clay loam with very occasional stone inclusions < 0.04 m. Possibly remnants of allotments soil	0-0.15
202	Layer	Subsoil. Mid-dark brown silty clay loam with moderate sa/sr limestone inclusions <0.06 m. Much thinner towards S. Varies in depth due to made ground below.	0.15-0.30
203	Layer	Made ground. Mixed redeposited natural fluvial limestone gravel and modern building rubble. Much less predominant in N end of trench, thickening to S. Possibly same as 210	0.30-0.40
204	Layer	Buried soil. Mid brown silty clay loam with very occasional subangular/ rubrounded limestone inclusions and very occasional charcoal flecks. Most prominent in area overlying palaeochannel. Possibly same as 211.	0.40-0.66

Trench 2a	Dimensions:	21.5m x 2m x 1.2m	
	Land use:	Scrub and grassland	
	Coordinates:	(S) 452098 206571 (N) 452106 206592	
Context	Category	Description	Depth (m)
205	Layer	Made ground. Mid-yellow/brown silty clay loam with frequent gravel inclusions throughout. Most prominent in area overlying palaeochannel. Possibly same as 212	0.66-0.88
206	Layer	Buried soil. Mid brown silty clay loam with very occasional sa/sr limestone inclusions <0.02 m Similar to 204. Most prominent in area of palaeochannel. Contained pottery. Possibly same as 213.	0.88-1.20
207	Layer	Natural. Gravel bar. Mid orange brown limestone fluvial gravel in sand matrix. Present at N end of trench. Upper surface apparently truncated.	-

Trench 2b	Dimensions:	7.4m x 2m x 0.93m	
	Land use:	Scrub and grassland	
	Coordinates:	(S) 452094 206559 (N) 452096 206566	
Context	Category	Description	Depth
208	Layer	Topsoil. Mid-dark brown silty clay loam. Root disturbance and occasional stone inclusions <0.02 m	0-0.11
209	Layer	Subsoil. As 208 above. Reduced root disturbance and more compact	0.11-0.26
210	Layer	Made ground. Mid yellow-brown silty clay loam with moderate stone inclusions. Contains modern debris, charcoal and brick. Possibly same as 203	0.26-0.42
211	Layer	Buried soil. Mid brown silty clay loam, with some sand. Similar to 208. Possibly same as 204	0.42-0.51
212	Layer	Made ground. Similar to 210, contains gravel and post medieval brick fragments. Possibly same as 205.	0.51-0.63
213	Layer	Buried soil. Silty clay loam, otherwise similar to 211. Possibly same as 206	0.63-0.73
214	Layer	Alluvium. Mid-light grey/brown silty clay with patches of pure clay. Probably alluvium reworked Oxford Clay. Extends and forms base of palaeochannel at S end of trench 2a	0.73-0.93+

Trench 3	Dimensions:	19.4m x 2m x 1.10m	
	Land use:	Scrub and grassland	
	Coordinates:	(W) 452089 206520 (E) 452107 206515	
Context	Category	Description	Depth
301	Layer	Topsoil. Dark brown silty clay loam. Very occasional subangular/subrounded flint inclusions <0.03 m	0-0.10

Trench 3	Dimensions:	19.4m x 2m x 1.10m	
	Land use:	Scrub and grassland	
	Coordinates:	(W) 452089 206520 (E) 452107 206515	
Context	Category	Description	Depth
302	Layer	Subsoil. As 301 but with less root disturbance.	0.10-0.26
303	Layer	Old ground surface. Dark mid brown material with clinker and brick inclusions.	0.26-0.41
304	Layer	Made ground. Light brown/yellow sandy gravel with moderate subangular/ subrounded stone inclusions <0.05 m. Levelling layer, forming base for 303.	0.41-0.64
305	Layer	Buried soil? Mid brown silty clay loam. Located directly below made ground.	0.64-0.92
306	Layer	Gravel. Mid orange/brown matrix supported fluvial gravel, with areas of clay/alluvium	0.92+

7.2 Appendix 2: Borehole descriptions

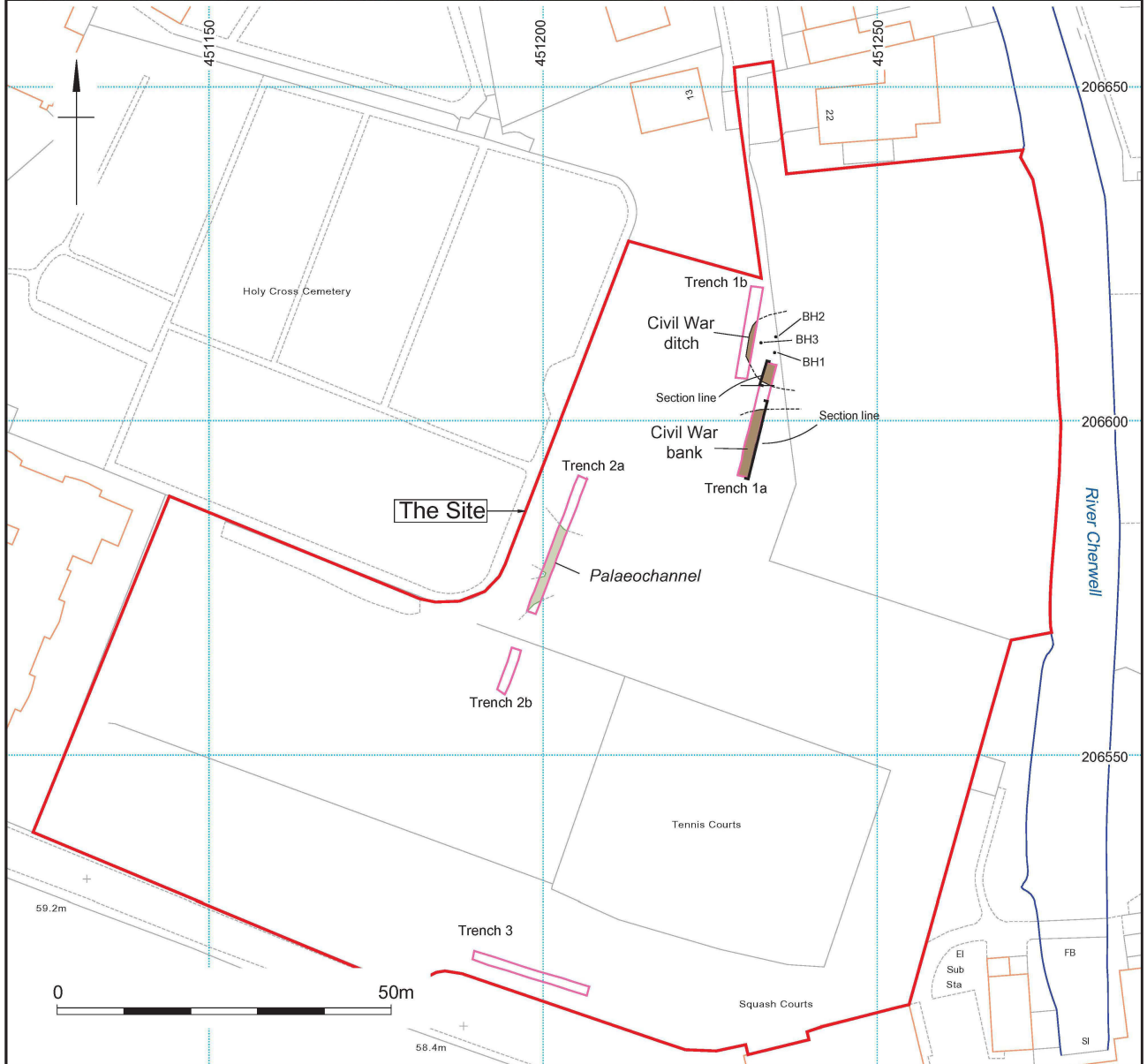
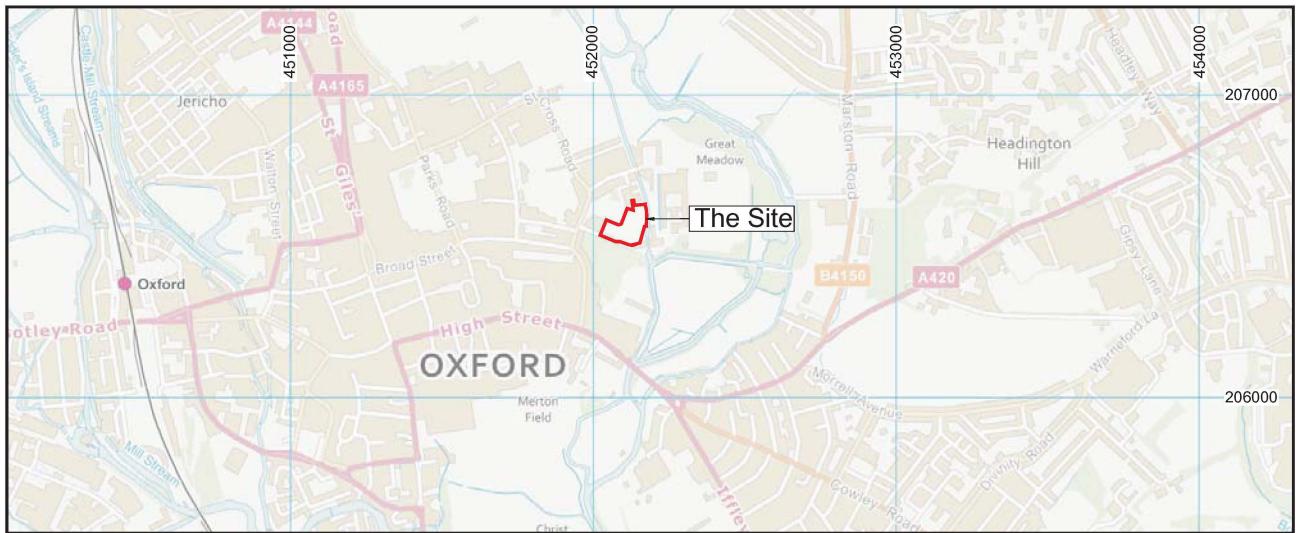
Borehole 1			
Depth (m)	Sediment description	Interpretation	
0.00-0.09	10YR 2/2 very dark brown sandy clay loam topsoil. Frequent roots and plant material as well as brick, pebbles and gravel inclusions. Abrupt boundary.	Topsoil	Upper ditch fills
0.09-0.84	10YR 3/3 dark brown sandy clay loam changing to 10YR 3/4 dark yellowish brown down profile. Poorly sorted rounded/subrounded pebbles <3cm throughout. Rare small roots, 1% pores. Patch of crumbly calcareous material at 0.49-0.55m.	Base of modern soil profile/ B horizon	
	GAP		
1.00-1.29	10YR 3/4 dark yellowish brown sandy clay loam as above. Sharp boundary.	Ditch fill	
1.29-1.49	10YR 4/1 dark grey silty clay with 25% greyish mottling. Quite solid and compact. Sparse small stones <1.5cm, rare rootlets, 0.5% pores. Clear boundary.	Ditch fill	
1.49-1.82	10YR 3/3 dark brown silty clay loam with very common sandy/gritty inclusions throughout. Soft, slightly wet and malleable. Some Fe staining and freshwater molluscs present. Abrupt diagonal boundary.	Wet ditch fills, standing water	Secondary fills with standing water in ditch

Borehole 1			
Depth (m)	Sediment description	Interpretation	
1.82-2.00	10YR 3/1 very dark grey silty clay with patches of 10YR 2/1 black organic silty clay. Some roots and stems visible but not noticeably laminated. Soft, malleable and slightly sticky with a metallic smell. Very rare Fe staining and small gravel inclusions. Moderate mollusc shells, all freshwater apart from one visible land snail ?intrusive. Piece of roundwood, 2.5cm diameter at 0.94m.	Wet ditch fills, standing water	
2.00-2.30	Very wet silty clay loam, ?intrusive	Gap	
2.30-2.49	Gley 2 3/1 very dark greenish grey silty clay, very soft and silky. Stone free, no inclusions. Sharp boundary.	Settled out in standing water	
2.49-2.70	10YR 3/3 dark brown silty clay. Very soft and slightly wet with Fe staining down profile. Moderate small stones <3cm and grit throughout. Abrupt boundary.	Probably eroded fairly rapidly from sides	
2.70-3.00	2.5Y 2.5/1 black silty clay with slightly darker coloured patches throughout. Rare small stones <3cm and occasional very pale calcareous patches.	Humic primary fill.	Detrital primary fill (?leaves, turves, trample)
	GAP		Geology
3.27-5.00	2.5Y 4/1 dark grey clay. Very compact.	Oxford clay, natural geology.	

Borehole 2			
Depth (m)	Sediment description	Interpretation	
0.15-0.22	10YR 2/2 very dark brown silty clay loam. Frequent roots, vegetation and small stones. Abrupt boundary.	Topsoil	Upper ditch fills.
0.22-1.12	10YR 3/3 dark brown sandy clay loam changing to 10YR 3/4 dark yellowish brown down profile. Poorly sorted rounded - subrounded pebbles <2cm throughout. Rare small roots, 1% pores. Sharp boundary.	Base of modern soil profile/ B horizon	

Borehole 2			
Depth (m)	Sediment description	Interpretation	
1.12-1.56	10YR 3/2 very dark greyish brown clay/silty clay. Compact, 1% pores with some small rounded stones <1cm. There is a patch of material as described above at 1.32-1.39m. Clear boundary.	Wet ditch fill	Secondary fill with some standing water in ditch
1.56-2.00	10YR 3/3 dark brown sandy clay loam, predominantly sandy. Fe staining throughout, decreasing down profile with a distinct layer at 1.73-1.76m. Moderate poorly sorted rounded – subrounded stones <2.5cm throughout. Patches of 10YR 2/1 black organics at 1.75-1.86m.	Ditch fill, slightly humic.	
2.00-3.00	2.5Y 4/1 dark grey clay. Firm and compact.	Oxford Clay, natural geology	Geology

Borehole 3			
Depth (m)	Sediment description	Interpretation	
0.13-0.26	10YR 2/2 very dark brown silty clay loam. Frequent roots, vegetation and small stones. Abrupt boundary.	Topsoil.	Upper ditch fills.
0.26-1.22	10YR 3/3 dark brown sandy clay loam changing to 10YR 3/4 dark yellowish brown down profile. Poorly sorted rounded - subrounded pebbles <2cm throughout. Rare small roots, 1% pores. Sharp boundary.	Base of modern soil profile/ B horizon	
1.22-1.68	10YR 3/2 very dark greyish brown clay/silty clay. Compact, 1% pores with some small rounded stones <1cm. There is a patch of slightly sandier silty clay at 1.48-1.55 with Fe staining, mollusc shells and sparse small stones <4cm.	Wet ditch fill	Secondary fill with some standing water in ditch
1.68-2.00	10YR 3/2 very dark greyish brown silty clay. Soft and malleable. Sparse small stones <2.5cm.	? Humic ditch fill.	
	GAP		Geology
2.19-3.00	2.5Y 4/1 very dark grey clay. Firm and compact, slightly silty at bottom of profile.	Oxford Clay, natural geology	



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Site, trench and borehole location

Figure 1

Trench 1a section:

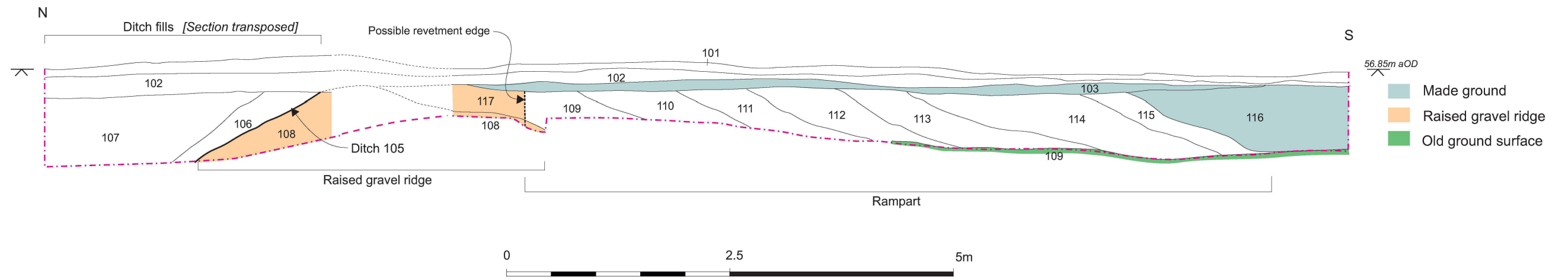


Plate 1: South edge of Civil War ditch cutting natural gravel ridge



Plate 2: Oblique view of rampart section, showing successive banked layers



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