

**THE OLD SCHOOL,
BAGENDON,
GLOUCESTERSHIRE.**

NGR: SP 011 066

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

September 2011
Report No. 749

Quality Assurance

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SUMMARY

On the 30th August 2011 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological evaluation on land at The Old School, Bagendon, Gloucestershire (NGR: SP 011 066). The work was commissioned by Duncan Cairns.

The evaluation involved the excavation of four test pits within the study area to enable an assessment of archaeological potential prior to a proposed development planning application.

The archaeological evaluation identified the presence of archaeological fills/layers beneath poorly dated make-up deposits. The archaeological deposits were associated with pottery datable to the later Iron Age and early Roman periods, along with bone fragments, burnt flint, CBM, charcoal and limestone fragments.

The occurrence of deposits containing 2nd century pottery provides limited evidence for settlement, within the Bagendon oppidum, in the later part of the early Roman period.

GLOSSARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Archaeology

For the purpose of this project archaeology is taken to mean the study of past human societies through their material remains from prehistoric times to the modern era. No rigid upper date limit has been set, but AD 1900 is used as a general cut-off point.

CBM

Ceramic building material.

Medieval

The period between the Norman Conquest (AD 1066) and *c.* AD 1500.

Natural

In archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site, in this case limestone.

NGR

National Grid Reference from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

OD

Ordnance datum; used to express a given height above sea-level.

OS

Ordnance Survey

Post-medieval

The period from *c.* AD 1500 onwards

Prehistoric

The period prior to the Roman invasion of AD 43. Traditionally sub divided into; Palaeolithic – *c.* 500,000 BC to *c.* 12,000 BC; Mesolithic – *c.* 12,000 BC to *c.* 4,500 BC; Neolithic – *c.* 4,500 BC to *c.* 2,000 BC; Bronze Age – *c.* 2,000 BC to *c.* 800 BC; Iron Age – *c.* 800 BC to AD 43.

Romano-British

Term used to define the fusion of indigenous Iron Age traditions with invasive Roman culture. Traditionally dated AD 43 to *c.* AD 410.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On the 30th August 2011 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological evaluation on land at The Old School, Bagendon, Gloucestershire (NGR: SP 011 066). The work was commissioned by Duncan Cairns, in advance of a potential development planning application.
- 1.2 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2011). The WSI conformed to the standard brief issued by Gloucestershire County Council, the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (2008) and Archaeological Guidance Paper 4: *Archaeological Evaluation: (guidelines)* issued by English Heritage (London Region).
- 1.3 This document presents the findings of the archaeological evaluation and conforms to the specification set out in MoRPHE (English Heritage, 2006).

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Site Location:

- 2.1.1 The underlying geology of the site is the Fuller's Earth Formation, a series of silicate- and lime-mudstones. This, in turn, is part of the Great Oolite Group of Middle Jurassic (Bathonian) limestones.
- 2.1.2 The site lies at approximately 130m AOD, in a small narrow valley, itself lying on the Cotswold plateau. This is an area of undulating limestone, cut by frequent small dry and wet valleys. The area is mainly rural, with the land-use predominantly agricultural. Mixed arable and pasture with frequent dense woodland belts characterises the landscape. Settlement is dispersed, with many small villages and isolated farms.
- 2.1.3 The study area is situated in the village of Bagendon, and has a total area of approximately 0.2 hectares. The site contains a single building of Cotswold stone, originally the Bagendon school house, built in 1872. The rest of the area is laid to gardens, with mature trees around the perimeter. The site is bounded to the south and east by public highways. To the west lies a field used for pasture/grazing, and to the north runs a watercourse, Perrott's Brook. The current village centre lies to the north and east of the site, with St. Margaret's church 50m to the north-east.

2.2 Archaeological and Historical Data:

- 2.2.1 **Prehistoric;** There are no HER assets recorded from the earlier Prehistoric periods, but Neolithic flints, and a possible degraded long-barrow close to the village were mentioned in Rees' History of Bagendon (Rees 1932).

- 2.2.2 **Late Iron Age/early Roman;** There is considerable evidence from the end of the Prehistoric period, with substantial linear earthworks surviving from the first half of the 1st century AD. Bagendon village lies in the centre of an enclosed area of approximately 80 hectares, which has been the subject of a number of excavations and surveys (Clifford 1961; RCHME 1976; Trow 1982; Roberts 1989). Clifford identified 4 phases of activity in her excavations, 750m east-south-east of the site. All of these phases were dated to the first 60 years of the 1st century AD, and the evidence indicated a high status site with imported continental pottery suggesting an increasing level of contact with Gallic tribes. This interchange was interrupted by the Roman invasion, and the occupation, or at least the maintenance of the earthworks, apparently came to an end c. 60 AD, around the time that the military fort at Cirencester was established as the local cantonal urban centre (Corinium Dobunorum). The proximity of Bagendon to the major local Roman town has led to the interpretation of the Bagendon site as a tribal centre or oppidum of the Dobunni tribe (Clifford 1961; Cunliffe 2005). No clear evidence of late Iron Age settlement has been found to date, although there were indications of metal-working and coin minting.
- 2.2.3 Roman period finds have been recovered from two watching briefs in the village. At Manor Cottage, 175m south-east of the site, a series of three north-south ditches was found, dated to the 2nd half of the 1st century (Mayer 2005). A Roman cinerary urn was found in the Rectory garden, 140m north of the site, but no date is given in the HER entry. The implication of these finds is that there was some occupation into the early Roman period, but no settlement focus has been found so far.
- 2.2.4 There is other Roman activity recorded in the area, including a villa site built inside an earlier Iron Age enclosure at the Ditches, 2km north of Bagendon (Trow 1982). The Roman town of Cirencester lies only 5km to the south, the Ermine Street road runs 1.3km to the west, and the countryside around contains some substantial Roman villa sites, such as Chedworth, 8.3 km north-east. Bagendon village lay within the close hinterland of a major Roman town, but as yet has not revealed a great deal of evidence for a settlement.
- 2.2.5 **Medieval/Post-medieval;** The village name is of Saxon origin, meaning “Valley of Baecga’s people” (Mills 2003), but appears as Benwedene in Domesday. Domesday names the pre-conquest owner of the estate, implying that the village was established by at least the mid-11th century. There was some conjecture that an earlier Saxon shrine lay beneath the church (Rees 1932) but there is no evidence for this. The Grade I listed church (St. Margaret’s) dates from the later 11th century, with substantial additions from the 14th and 15th centuries. The manor of Bagendon was owned for several hundred years by the Chandos family. In 1382 the Manor was sold to the Weavers’ Company of Cirencester, to establish a benefice to pay for chantry priests (Barker 1998).
- 2.2.6 There is some evidence that the Medieval village was larger in extent than it is now, with earthworks lying to the north-west of the site interpreted as part of a Medieval or Post-medieval shrunken village and associated field system.

Other linear earthworks to the north of the village may be remnant lynchets from the Medieval (or possibly Post-medieval) fields. Another asset which may be of Medieval date is a trackway noted on aerial photographs to the west of the site. The position of the church and the manorial complex, on the north side of Perrott's Brook, can be taken as firmly established by the late 11th century, and this has remained the core of the village since then.

- 2.2.7 **Modern;** On the earliest map studied, the Bagendon Tithe map of 1838, the site appears as two small enclosures, neither numbered or named. They lay on the south side of the brook, with no sign of any buildings. A pasture belonging to the local vicar (Home Close) lay on the north bank of the brook across from the site; Centry Ground and Home Meadow lay to the west, also to pasture; and an arable field was on the other side of the road to the south. The site apparently formed part of the agricultural land of the village, and the eastern section of the site may have been used as the village pound at this time.
- 2.2.8 The school was built in 1872, as a main building and a separate privy block (GRO D2186/9). On the 1st edition OS map of 1882, the school house was present and the site occupied its current extent. No other building had taken place on the south side of the brook. To the north west of the village, Bagendon House was established with its ornamental landscape. The 2nd edition OS of 1903 shows no change to the 1882 pattern. The OS maps up to the current editions show almost no change to the settlement envelope, the only changes to the site being the demolition of the privy block and its incorporation into the main school building.
- 2.2.9 The most Modern asset recorded in the village is a 20th-century telephone kiosk, which is Grade II listed.
- 2.2.10 Two other watching briefs/evaluations have taken place in recent years at Gardeners Cottage, and near Manor Cottage. Neither of these interventions recorded any significant archaeological remains.
- 2.3 The main archaeological potential for the site was therefore for the preservation of remains dating to the Iron Age, Roman and Medieval periods. This did not prejudice the evaluation against evidence relating to other periods.

3 AIMS

- 3.1 The aims of the evaluation were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits.
- 3.2 These aims were to be achieved by the pursuit of the following specific objectives as stated in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Foundations Archaeology 2011):

i) to define, identify and record any archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible;

ii) to attempt to characterise the nature of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning of features present on the site;

iii) where possible to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence and recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 A total of four 1.5m by 1.5m test pits were excavated within the study area (Figure 2). Non-significant overburden was removed, under constant archaeological direction, to the top of the archaeological deposits or the underlying natural deposits, whichever was encountered first. This was achieved through the use of a 360° tracked mechanical excavator, equipped with a toothless grading bucket. Thereafter, where necessary, deposits were cleaned by hand and any subsequent excavation was conducted manually. Spoil tips were visually scanned for finds.

4.2 All excavation and recording work was undertaken in accordance with the WSI and the Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual.

5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 A full stratigraphic description of all contexts identified in the course of the project is listed in Appendix 1, along with a report on the recovered pottery in Appendix 2. A summary discussion is given below:

5.2 The test pits were excavated to depths ranging between 1.8m to 2m below Modern ground and revealed relatively deeply stratified deposits. Probable natural limestone brash was only encountered in Test Pit 2 (207), whilst the excavations of the other test pits failed to penetrate the base of overlying deposits.

5.3 All of the test pits contained clay soil fills/layers (104), (105), (106), (204), (205), (206), (304), (305), (403), (404), (405), (406) and (407), which were sealed by make-up layers (102), (103), (203), (302), (303) and (402). These were, in turn, overlaid by topsoils and Modern ground (101), (107), (201), (202), (301) and (401).

5.4 No archaeological features were present within the test pits, however; the clay fills/layers beneath the make-up deposits contained relatively unabraded pottery datable to the later Iron Age and early Roman periods, along with frequent charcoal flecks, a small amount of bone, burnt flint, CBM and varying amounts of limestone fragments. It is unlikely that these are colluvial deposits and, as such, they either represent *in-situ* layers or fills, or possibly, dumped deposits.

- 5.5 A small amount of Medieval and Post-medieval pottery, recovered from make-up layers and spoil heaps, is likely to represent residual material.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The evaluation has demonstrated the presence of archaeological fills/layers beneath poorly dated make-up deposits. The archaeological deposits were associated with pottery datable to the later Iron Age and early Roman periods, along with bone fragments, burnt flint, charcoal, CBM and limestone fragments.
- 6.2 The occurrence of deposits containing 2nd century pottery provides limited evidence for settlement, within the oppidum, in the later part of the early Roman period.
- 6.3 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology, but will be deposited within 12 months with the Corinium Museum in Cirencester. A short note will be submitted for publication in the Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucester Archaeological Society and an OASIS form will also be submitted to ADS.

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Ordnance Survey 1981 1:10,000

Bagendon Tithe Map 1838 (GRO ref. PC 1812/14)

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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APPENDIX 1: The Stratigraphic Data

CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	CUTS/LATER THAN	CUT BY/EARLIER THAN
				Test Pit 1; 1.5m by 1.5m (top of test pit = 129.19m AOD)		
101	na	na	0.2	Limestone loosecore.	107	na
102	na	na	0.4	Light brown clay sand; make-up layer.	103	107
103	na	na	0.25	Fragmented limestones; make-up layer.	104	102
104	na	na	0.5	Mid brown, plastic clay, which contained frequent charcoal flecks.	105	103
105	na	na	0.45	Dark grey brown clay, which contained frequent limestone fragments and frequent charcoal flecks, along with one fragment of bone.	106	104
106	na	na	?	Orange brown clay silt. Not excavated.	?	105
107	na	na	0.2	Dark brown clay silt topsoil, which contained occasional limestone fragments.	102	101
				Test Pit 2; 1.5m by 1.5m (top of test pit = 129.21m AOD)		
201	na	na	0.2	Limestone loosecore.	202	na
202	na	na	0.1	Dark brown clay silt topsoil, which contained occasional limestone fragments.	203	201
203	na	na	0.5	Fragmented limestones; make-up layer.	204	202
204	na	na	0.7	Mid brown, plastic clay, which contained frequent charcoal flecks.	205	203
205	na	na	0.3	Dark brown clay, which contained frequent limestone fragments and frequent charcoal flecks, along with ten small fragments of bone and four pieces of burnt flint.	206	204
206	na	na	0.15	Orange brown clay silt, which contained occasional charcoal flecks.	207	205
207	na	na	?	Possible natural limestone brash. Not excavated.	?	206

CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	CUTS/LATER THAN	CUT BY/EARLIER THAN
				Test Pit 3; 1.5m by 1.5m (top of test pit = 129.55m AOD)		
301	na	na	0.35	Dark brown clay silt topsoil, which contained occasional limestone fragments.	302	na
302	na	na	0.35	Orange brown clay silt, which contained occasional charcoal flecks and occasional limestone fragments; make-up layer.	303	301
303	na	na	0.3	Fragmented limestones within a loose soil matrix, which contained frequent charcoal flecks and lumps; make-up layer.	304	302
304	na	na	0.7	Mid brown, plastic clay, which contained frequent charcoal flecks.	305	303
305	na	na	0.2+	Dark grey brown clay, which contained frequent limestone fragments and frequent charcoal flecks. Not fully excavated.	?	304
				Test Pit 4; 1.5m by 1.5m (top of test pit = 129.87m AOD)		
401	na	na	0.1	Dark brown clay silt topsoil, which contained occasional limestone fragments.	402	na
402	na	na	0.4	Mid brown silt clay, which contained rare limestone fragments; make-up layer.	403	401
403	na	na	0.3	Brown clay, which contained frequent limestone fragments and occasional charcoal flecks.	404	402
404	na	na	0.2	Dark brown clay, which contained frequent limestone fragments and frequent charcoal flecks.	405	403
405	na	na	0.4	Orange brown clay, which contained frequent limestone fragments and occasional charcoal flecks.	406	404
406	na	na	0.4	Mid brown clay silt, which contained occasional charcoal flecks.	407	405
407	na	na	?	Orange brown clay silt. Not excavated.	?	406

APPENDIX 2: The Pottery

By Dr. Jane Timby

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The archaeological work resulted in the recovery of 50 sherds of pottery weighing 686.5 g dating to the Iron Age, Roman, Medieval and Post-medieval periods. In addition a single small piece of ceramic building material (CBM) was recovered.
- 1.2 For the purposes of the assessment the pottery was sorted into main fabric types and scanned to assess its likely date range. The sorted assemblage was quantified by sherd count and weight. The resulting data is summarised in Table 1.
- 1.3 Pottery was recovered from nine defined contexts from all four trenches with a small amount of additional unstratified material.
- 1.4 The condition of the sherds was moderately good reflected in an overall average sherd weight of 13.7 g. The pieces had moderately fresh, unabraded edges.

2 Iron Age

- 2.1 Four sherds from handmade vessels and with an oolitic limestone temper are likely to be of later Iron Age date although their association with sherds of early Roman date suggests they may be either residual or late survivals.

3 Roman

- 3.1 Most of the pottery, some 42 sherds, dates to the early Roman period. The assemblage is a mixture of local and more regional imports. There are twelve sherds of Savernake ware from Wiltshire; thirteen sherds of Severn Valley ware including one early variant; three other Wiltshire products and five pieces of Dorset black burnished ware. This latter ware suggests that at least one context (205), is likely to date to the 2nd century. Most of the other pieces are likely to date to the 1st century AD but could continue into the 2nd century.

4 Post-Roman

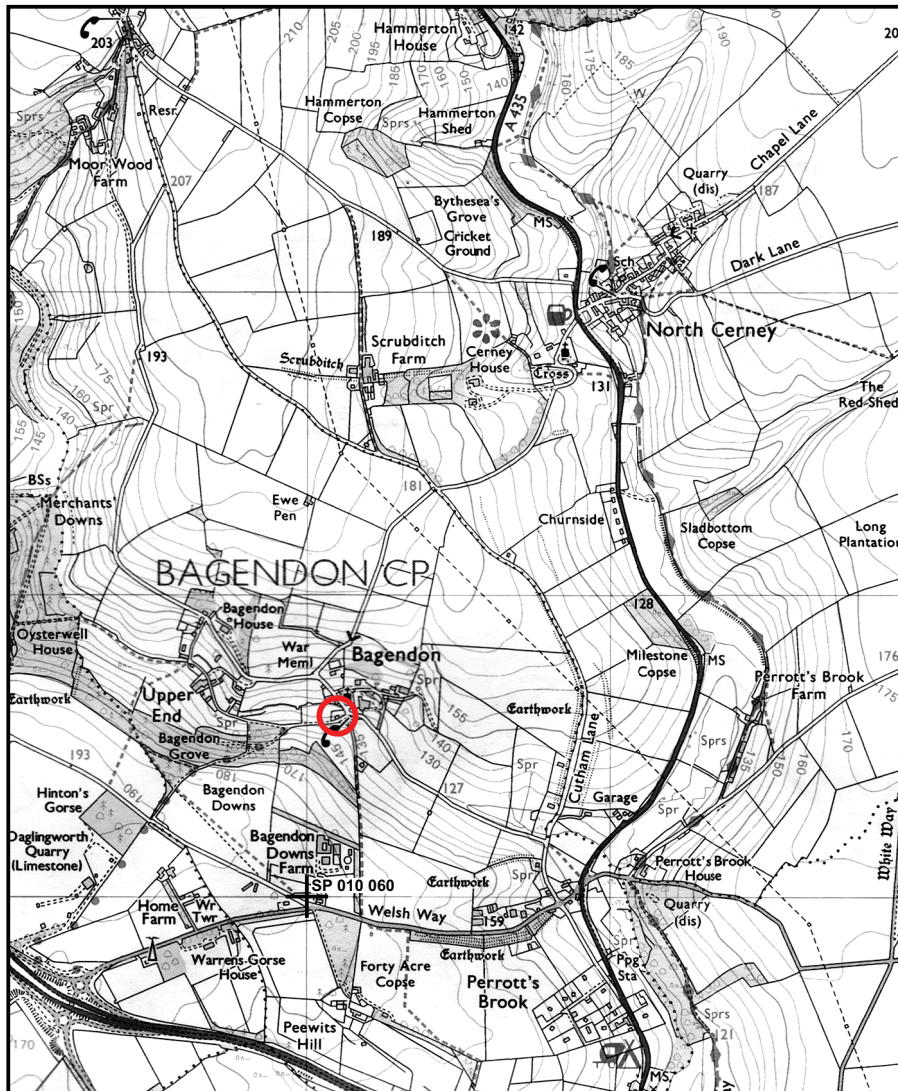
- 4.1 Three sherds of Medieval Minety ware from North Wiltshire and a sherd of glazed red earthenware indicate a low level of post-Roman activity in the investigated area.

5 Potential and further work

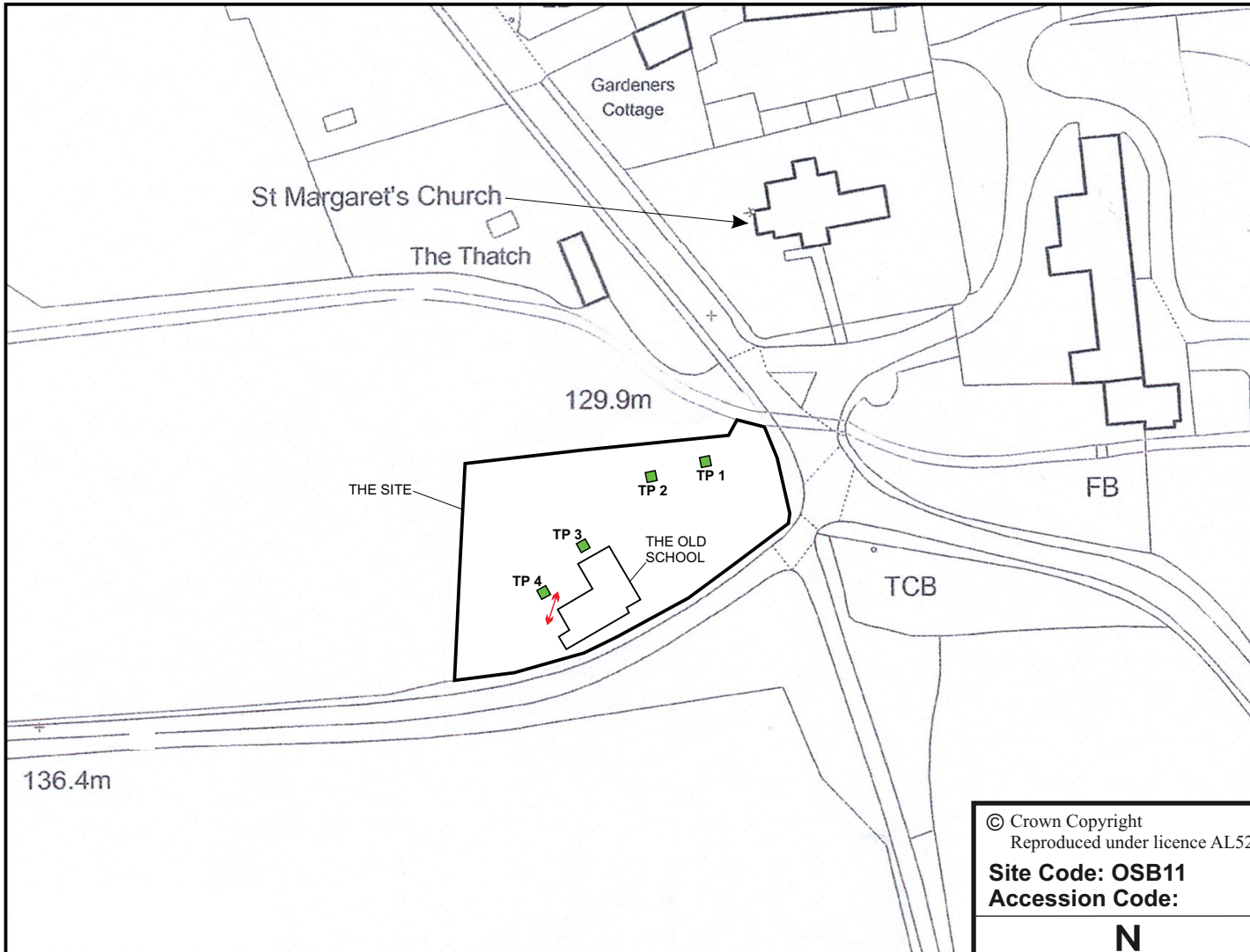
- 5.1 Bagendon is an important pre-Roman and early Roman site which has seen a number of excavations over the years, although still remains enigmatic in a number of respects. The pottery recovered from the recent work is entirely consistent with that which might expected from the locality.
- 5.2 No further work is recommended on this assemblage although if further work is undertaken at the site it should be included in any future reviews.

Table 1: The pottery from The Old School, Bagendon

Context	IA	Ro				Med	Pmed	Tot No	Tot Wt	Date	CBM
		SAVGT	BB1	SVW	Other						
103	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	6	Roman	
104	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	23	C1?	
105	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	4	15	C1-2	1
204	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	12	C1	
205	0	6	4	5	7	0	0	22	285.5	C2	
305	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	4	234	C1 AD	
402	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	24	Pmed	
403	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	21	C1 AD	
405	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	12	C1 AD	
Tr 2 sph	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	6	C2	
Tr 4 sph	1	1	0	2	2	2	0	8	48	IA/Ro/Med	
TOTAL	4	12	5	13	12	3	1	50	686.5		



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Site Code: OSB11
Accession Code:
FIGURE 1: Site Location



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Site Code: OSB11
Accession Code:

N

0m 40m

█ = TEST PIT
 ↔ = APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF SERVICE CABLE

FIGURE 2: Site Plan