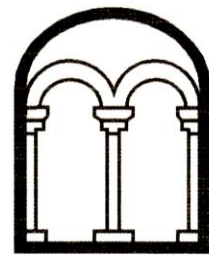


LAND ADJACENT TO HAWTHORNE HOUSE
HILL TOP ROAD
OXFORD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION

Albion
archaeology



**LAND ADJACENT TO HAWTHORNE HOUSE
HILL TOP ROAD
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION

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Compiled by	Edited by	Approved by
Allan King	Iain Leslie	Drew Shotliff

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Prepared for:
Rectory Homes



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Preface

All statements and opinions in this document are offered in good faith. This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and was prepared solely for the benefit of the client. This document should not be relied upon or used for any other project without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and the prior written authority of Albion Archaeology (a trading unit of Central Bedfordshire Council).

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Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by Rectory Homes and monitored on behalf of the Local Planning Authority by David Radford of the Oxford City Council Urban Design and Heritage Team..

The fieldwork was undertaken by Allan King (Project Supervisor) and Sebastian Moya Garcia (Archaeological Technician). The report has been prepared by Allan King with contributions from Joan Lightning (CAD Technician). The project was managed by Iain Leslie (Project Manager). All Albion projects are under the overall management of Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).

Albion Archaeology
 St Mary's Church
 St Mary's Street
 Bedford, MK42 0AS
 ☎: 0300 300 8141
 Fax: 0300 300 8209
 e-mail: office@albion-arch.com

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1.0	16/09/2019	n/a



Key Terms

The following terms and abbreviations are used throughout this report:

CIfA	Chartered Institute <i>for</i> Archaeologists
EOC	Event Oxford City
EOX	Event Oxfordshire
HER	Historic Environment Record (Oxford City Council)
NHLE	National Heritage List for England
OCC	Oxford City Council
OCCA	Oxford City Council Archaeologist
PDA	Proposed development area



Non-Technical Summary

Rectory Homes submitted a planning application (18/01694/FUL) to Oxford City Council for a residential development on land adjacent to Hawthorne House, Hill Top Road, Oxford. The proposed development comprised the erection of three 4-bed dwelling houses along with the provision for amenity space and car parking spaces.

A desk-based heritage statement (Albion Archaeology 2018) was submitted in support of the application. The Oxford City Council Archaeologist (OCCA) advised that field evaluation was necessary to provide additional information on potential heritage assets that might be affected by the proposals. Accordingly, Rectory Homes commissioned a geophysical survey (SUMO 2019) that identified several anomalies, some of which were interpreted as potential kilns. The OCCA requested trial trenching to test the geophysical anomalies and issued a brief, outlining the extent of the required works (OCC 2019).

This report represents the results of the trial trenching of the proposed development area (PDA), which took place on 28th August 2019. No archaeological remains or unstratified artefacts were present within the trenches.

Modern deposits, including brick and concrete, were found to overlie and be mixed in with the topsoil of the trenches, suggesting material had been dumped in this area and the existing topsoil disturbed during the process. The thicker areas of these deposits broadly correlated with the anomalies identified in the geophysical survey as possible kilns. It is thought that the presence of this modern material and the associated disturbance may be responsible for the geophysical anomalies.

The absence of remains here suggests that the known prehistoric and Roman activity to the south-west and east does not continue into the PDA. The trial trenching has shown there is negligible potential for surviving archaeological remains within the PDA and, therefore, the impact of the proposed development is also likely to be negligible.

The project archive will be deposited at Oxfordshire Museums Resource Centre (accession no.: OXCMS: 2019.94). Details of the project and its findings will be submitted to the OASIS database (reference no.: albionar1-359480) in accordance with the guidelines issued by Historic England and the Archaeology Data Service.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Planning Background*

Rectory Homes submitted a planning application (18/01694/FUL) to Oxford City Council for a residential development on land adjacent to Hawthorne House, Hill Top Road, Oxford. The proposed development comprised the erection of three 4-bed dwelling houses along with the provision for amenity space and car parking spaces.

A desk-based heritage statement (Albion Archaeology 2018) was submitted in support of the application. The Oxford City Council Archaeologist (OCCA) advised that field evaluation was necessary to provide additional information on potential heritage assets that might be affected by the proposals. Accordingly, Rectory Homes commissioned a geophysical survey (SUMO 2019) that identified several anomalies, some of which were interpreted as potential kilns.

The OCCA requested trial trenching to test the geophysical anomalies and issued a brief, outlining the extent of the required works (OCC 2019). Albion Archaeology was commissioned by Rectory Homes to prepare a written scheme of investigation (WSI) in response to the brief and to undertake the archaeological trial trenching; the WSI was approved by the OCCA.

This report represents the results of the trial-trench evaluation.

1.2 *Site Location and Geology*

The proposed development area (PDA) is situated 2.3km south-east of Oxford city centre, between Cowley Road (B480) and Headington Road (A420) (Figure 1). It comprises a c.0.16ha plot of land at the south-eastern end of Hill Top Road, centred on SP 53908 05756.

The PDA lies to the rear of the curtilages of numbers 71a and 71b Hill Top Road and abuts the rear garden of 69 Hill Top Road. A modern apartment block is situated immediately south-east of the PDA. Land to north-east comprises Warneford Meadow, a large area of greenspace owned by the Oxford Health NHS Foundation. At the time of the fieldwork, the PDA was overgrown grassland with the well-maintained, shared access track with the adjacent apartment blocks along its southern edge.

The PDA is generally flat, although a gentle rise of c.0.6m is noticeable from east to west. The underlying geology comprises Beckley Sand Member Sandstone¹.

¹ <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html?location=oxford&gobBtn=go>



1.3 Archaeological Background

1.3.1 Introduction

The archaeological and historical background of the site was discussed in detail in the heritage statement (Albion Archaeology 2018) submitted with the application. Data from a 500m-radius ‘study area’ around the PDA was obtained from the Oxford City Council Historic Environment Record (HER). A brief summary, including the results of the geophysical survey (SUMO 2019), are presented below.

1.3.2 Previous archaeological investigations

The 2019 geophysical survey (SUMO) within the PDA identified several anomalies that were interpreted as probably relating to kilns, wasters and a possible ditch.

A number of archaeological investigations have been undertaken in the study area, comprising desk-based heritage assessments, watching briefs, trial-trench evaluations and geophysical surveys. Most relevant to the PDA is the watching brief undertaken at Oxford Golf Club, Hill Top Road, c.130m to the south-west of the PDA (EOX5760) and an evaluation at Warneford Meadow 40m to the east (EOC6200). The watching brief identified a number of discrete features considered to be prehistoric or early Roman in date. They are likely to be associated with a nearby settlement and included evidence for iron-working. Ditches at Warneford Meadow were dated to the Roman period, although late Iron Age pottery was also recovered. Fragments of Roman kiln were also present in the topsoil.

1.3.3 Prehistoric (before 100 BC)

No prehistoric heritage assets have so far been recorded in the study area.

Earthworks of middle Neolithic and early Bronze Age date, as well as other early prehistoric activity is known from the gravel terraces between the Thames and Cherwell rivers in Oxford and along the floodplains.

1.3.4 Late Iron Age/Roman (100 BC–c.AD 400)

East Oxford contains extensive evidence of pottery production aligned on the Roman Dorchester-Alchester road. Between 1971 and 1974 evidence of pottery production spanning the 1st to 4th centuries AD was discovered c.770m to the east of the PDA, in the south-east corner of Churchill Hospital (Young 1974). The evidence included kilns, a circular structure, pottery-drying area and ancillary buildings. Prior to this, large quantities of Roman pottery had been recovered during building work at the Regional Blood Transfusion Unit and several possible kilns were identified in the 19th century during quarrying.

Within the study area a possible Romano-British pottery kiln site was identified c.440m to the south of the PDA on the playing field of Southfield School, now Oxford Spires Academy (HER 3630). During levelling operations at the school, large quantities of Romano-British pottery were encountered. Just 100m to the south-east of Southfield School a late Roman



ditch and late 3rd-century pottery was recovered at Barracks Lane (HER 26196).

Closer to the PDA several Roman ditches and Roman and late Iron Age pottery were found on the western side of Warneford Meadow (HER 26305; EOC6200), c.100m to the north-east of the PDA. A potential of late Iron Age/early Roman iron-working or smithing site was also identified c.100m to the south of the PDA at Oxford Golf Club (HER 26778; EOX5760).

Further Roman pottery was also recovered during an evaluation at Southfield Road (HER 16969; EOX1703), c.500m to the south-west of the PDA.

1.3.5 Anglo-Saxon (c.400–1066)

A manor of Headington was already in existence at the time of the Domesday Survey of 1086² and formed the nucleus of a Saxon royal demesne. In 1004 it was mentioned in Ethelred's charter to St Frideswide's and is known to have remained in royal hands after the conquest.

Anglo-Saxon heritage assets recorded in the study area comprise a former drove road referred to in the Cuddesdon Charter of 956 as 'Straet' (HER 8865). Modern-day St Clements Street and Headington Road follow the line of the drove road, which was later turnpiked in 1719 (HER 8865). In the 12th century the chapel of St Clement stood on this routeway and marked the place where roads from the east merged and continued as one into Oxford.

1.3.6 Medieval (1066–1550)

The royal manor of Headington fell into disuse after Henry I made Woodstock his favourite royal residence (Lobel 1957). It was later granted to Hugh de Pluggenait sometime before 1142.

The arable land of Headington manor was farmed as a three-field system from the 13th century and the PDA corresponds to 'South field' running down to St Bartholomew's and Crowley (Lobel 1957).

Medieval heritage assets recorded in the study area refer to extant buildings situated in the Bartlemas Conservation Area. St Bartholomew's Chapel (NHLE 1299349) was founded as part of a leper hospital by Henry I in the early 12th century and first mentioned in the Pipe Roll dated 1129. It was rebuilt c.1336 by Oriel College, after an earlier chapel was damaged during the English Civil War. To the north lies Bartlemas House that was rebuilt in 1649 and, therefore, presumably replaced an earlier structure (NHLE 1047331). The core of St Bartholomew's Farmhouse is also considered to be 14th- or 15th-century in origin (NHLE 1299369). A wall foundation of possible medieval date was found c.60m to the north of the Bartlemas complex and could be a related outlying structure.

² <http://opendomesday.org/place/SP5407/headington/>



1.3.7 Post-medieval (1550–1900)

The majority of post-medieval heritage assets recorded in the study area relate to various Grade II listed buildings associated with Warneford Hospital, c.350m north of the PDA.

In 1813 ten acres of ‘South field’ (farm) was sold to build the private Radcliffe Lunatic Asylum, a sister institution to Radcliffe Infirmary. It was opened in 1826 and renamed ‘Warneford Lunatic Asylum’ after Reverend Samuel Warneford, the Rector of Bourton-on-the-hill Gloucester, who donated a large sum to the building fund. The Grade II listed hospital building is situated c.330m north of the PDA (NHLE 1245464). Between 1841 and 1851 a chapel was built (NHLE 1245465); the asylum mortuary was built in 1891 (NHLE 1245348) and the nurses home in 1913–14 (NHLE 1245349). The original grounds of the asylum were extensive and in 1820 further land was bought during the sale of Southfield Farm to the north-east of the PDA.

The other Grade II listed building in the study area is an 18th-century barn at Cheney Farm (NHLE 1369356), situated 520m to the north-west of the PDA. The site of an undesignated post-medieval barn (HER 4511) has also been recorded c.200m south-west of the PDA and most likely belongs to Southfield Farm. It was demolished in 1973.

An inscribed stone is situated on Warneford Lane in front of Warneford Hospital. It is Grade II listed (NHLE 1369693) and carries the inscription ‘here endeth Oxford milehy way 1667’. It was set up in 1667 at the eastern end of Cheney Lane, the route to London before it was replaced by Headington Road. It marks the limit of where the borough’s corporation was required to repair the road.

1.3.8 Modern (1900–present)

The only modern heritage asset recorded in the study area is a WWII heavy anti-aircraft gun site on the Southfield Golf course, c.100m south-east of the PDA.

A lodge, front wall and gate piers associated with Warneford Hospital are Grade II listed and dated 1910 (NHLE 1245350).

Although not recorded as a heritage asset by the HER, Warneford Meadow, lying directly to the north-east of the PDA, is bound-up in the history of Warneford Hospital (NHLE 1245464). In 1918 the hospital purchased the meadow from Southfield Farm. The purchase was funded by public subscription and the land was intended as a natural space for the psychological benefit of the local community and patients and to protect it from development. For many years the hospital ran a farm for the rehabilitation of the patients and the meadow was managed as part of this, along with an orchard on the northern boundary. Warneford Meadow was designated a town green on 6th April 2009 and several public rights of way cross it.

1.4 Project Objectives

The specific research objectives of the trial trenching were:



- To determine the accuracy of the geophysical survey; particularly whether kilns or other structures are present, as suggested in the survey report (SUMO 2019).
- If kilns were present, to determine their integrity and state of preservation.
- To determine if other evidence for late Iron Age/Roman activity was present within the PDA.
- To assess if any heritage assets relating to other periods were present within the PDA.

The general purpose of the evaluation was to recover information on the:

- location, extent, nature, and date of any archaeological features or deposits that might be present within the PDA;
- integrity and state of preservation of any archaeological features or deposits that might be present within the PDA;
- nature of palaeo-environmental remains to determine local environmental conditions.

This information will be used by the OCCA and the Local Planning Authority to evaluate the significance of the potential impact of the proposed development on any archaeological remains that might survive within the site.



2. METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach to the project is summarised below; a full methodology is provided in the WSI (Albion Archaeology 2019).

The standards and requirements set out in the following documents were adhered to throughout the project:

• Albion Archaeology	<i>Procedures Manual: Volume 1 Fieldwork</i> (3rd ed., 2017).
• ClfA	<i>Charter and by-law; Code of conduct</i> (2014)
	<i>Standard and guidance for archaeological evaluation</i> (2014)
	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i> (2014)
• EAA	<i>Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment PPN3: Archaeological Excavation</i> (2015)
• Historic England	Archaeology Guidelines and Standards ³ ;
	<i>The MoRPHE Project Managers Guide</i> (2015)
	<i>Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation</i> , (2nd edn, 2011)
	<i>Archaeological and Historic Pottery Production Sites: Guidelines for Best Practice</i> (2015)
• Oxfordshire Museums Service	<i>Oxfordshire Museums Documentation manual</i> (Everitt 2002)
	<i>Requirements for Transferring Archaeological Archives</i> (2016)

Trial trenching took place within the PDA on 28th August 2019. One 15m-long trench and one 10m-long trench were excavated, both measuring 1.6m wide.

The trenches were opened by a mechanical excavator fitted with a flat-edged bucket, operated by an experienced driver under close archaeological supervision. Overburden was removed down to the top of the archaeological deposits or undisturbed geological deposits, whichever were encountered first. All excavation and recording was carried out by experienced Albion staff. The bases and sides of the trenches were cleaned by hand. Any potential archaeological features were cleaned, excavated by hand and recorded using Albion Archaeology's *pro forma* sheets. All features and deposits were assigned a unique context number commencing at 100 for Trench 1, 200 for Trench 2. Each trench was subsequently drawn and photographed as appropriate.

³ Historic England guidelines on a number of specialist fields and materials, including environmental archaeology, are available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/advice-and-guidance/>.



The project archive will be deposited at Oxfordshire Museums Resource Centre (accession no.: OXCMS: 2019.94). Details of the project and its findings will be submitted to the OASIS database (reference no.: albionar1-359480) in accordance with the guidelines issued by Historic England and the Archaeology Data Service.



3. RESULTS

3.1 *Introduction*

All deposits and features found within the trial trenches are summarised below. Context numbers in square brackets refer to cuts [***] and round brackets to fills or layers (***). Details of all observed deposits and archaeological features are provided in Appendix 1.

No archaeological features or finds were present within the trenches.

3.2 *Overburden and Geological Deposits*

The overburden in Trench 1 consisted of a spread of mixed modern material (100) overlying topsoil (101) and subsoil (102). The mixed modern material (100) was c.0.1m thick at the SW end, increasing to 0.5m at the NE end. It comprised friable mid-brown-grey sandy silt with frequent modern brick, concrete and lenses of sand and gravel. The thicker depth of modern material at the NE end of the trench broadly correlates with the location the identified geophysical anomalies. The topsoil (101) was c.0.15–0.25m thick and comprised a dark grey-brown sandy silt with occasional inclusions of modern brick and concrete. The subsoil (102) was c.0.3–0.4m thick and comprised a friable mid-red-brown sandy silt.

The overburden in Trench 2 consisted of a topsoil (200) overlying subsoil (201). The topsoil (200) was c.0.25m–0.35m thick and comprised dark grey brown sandy silt with frequent modern brick, concrete and lenses of sand and gravel. The subsoil was similar to that found in Trench 1 and was c.0.2m thick.

The undisturbed geological deposits in both trenches comprised a light yellow-brown sand.



4. CONCLUSIONS

The archaeological trial-trench evaluation of the PDA identified no archaeological remains or unstratified artefacts.

Modern deposits, including brick and concrete, were found to overlie and be mixed in with the topsoil of the trenches, suggesting material had been dumped in this area and the existing topsoil disturbed during the process. The thicker areas of these deposits broadly correlated with the anomalies identified in the geophysical survey as possible kilns. It is thought that the presence of this modern material and the associated disturbance may be responsible for the geophysical anomalies.

The absence of remains here suggests that the known prehistoric and Roman activity to the south-west and east does not continue into the PDA. The trial trenching has shown there is negligible potential for surviving archaeological remains within the PDA and, therefore, the impact of the proposed development is also likely to be negligible.



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6. APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARIES



Trench: 1

Max Dimensions: Length: 15.00 m. Width: 1.60 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.69 m. Max: 0.75 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: SP (Easting: 53900: Northing: 5750)

OS Grid Ref.: SP (Easting: 53909: Northing: 5761)

Reason: To investigate geophysical anomaly

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
100	Dump material	Friable mid brown grey sandy silt with frequent fragments of brick, concrete and plastic and patches of gravel. 0.49m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
101	Topsoil	Friable dark grey brown sandy silt with occasional fragments of brick, concrete, and plastic and patches of gravel. 0.25m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
102	Subsoil	Friable mid red brown sandy silt occasional small-medium stones . 0.41m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
103	Natural	Loose light yellow brown sand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Trench: 2

Max Dimensions: Length: 10.00 m. Width: 1.60 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: 0.49 m. Max: 0.6 m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: SP (Easting: 53907; Northing: 5754)

OS Grid Ref.: SP (Easting: 53917; Northing: 5754)

Reason: To investigate geophysical anomaly

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
200	Dump material	Friable dark grey brown sandy silt with frequent fragments of brick and concrete and patches of sand and gravel. 0.36m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
201	Subsoil	Friable mid red brown sandy silt occasional small-medium stones . 0.24m thick.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
202	Natural	Loose light yellow brown sand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

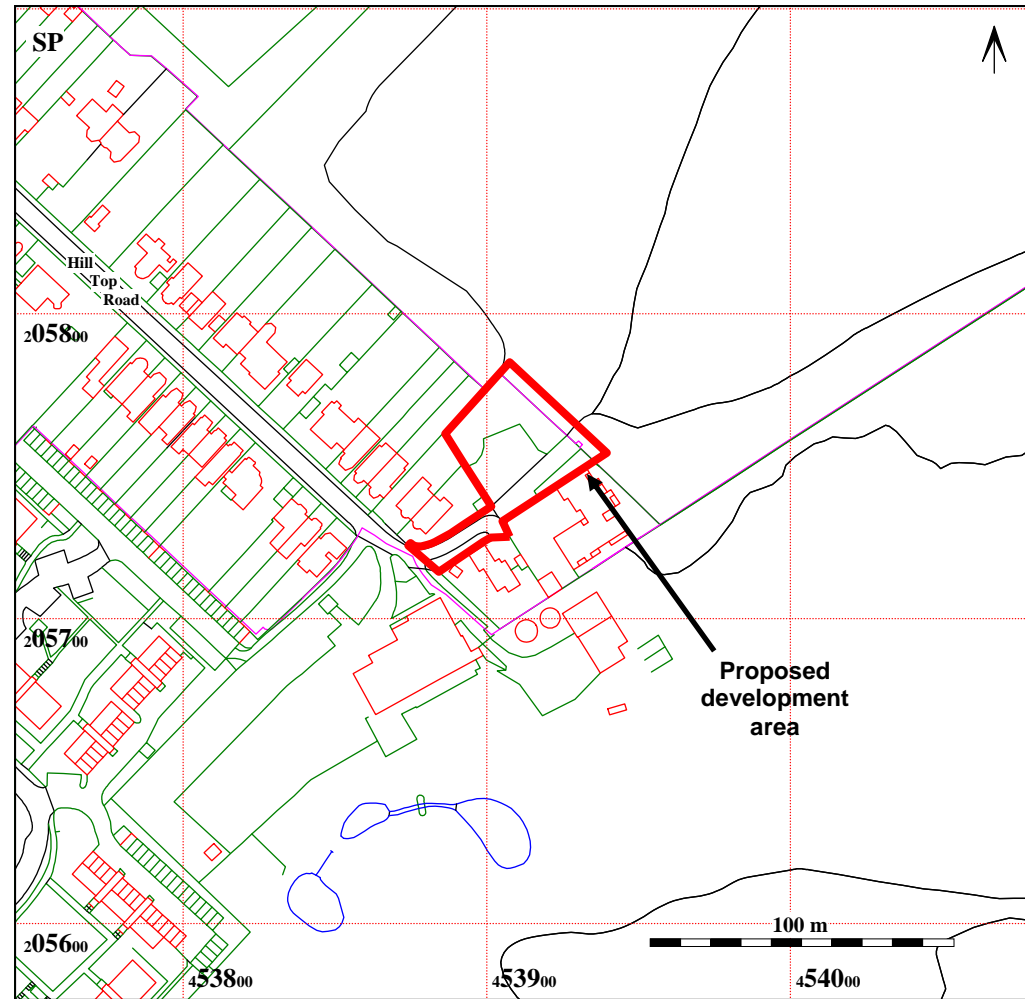
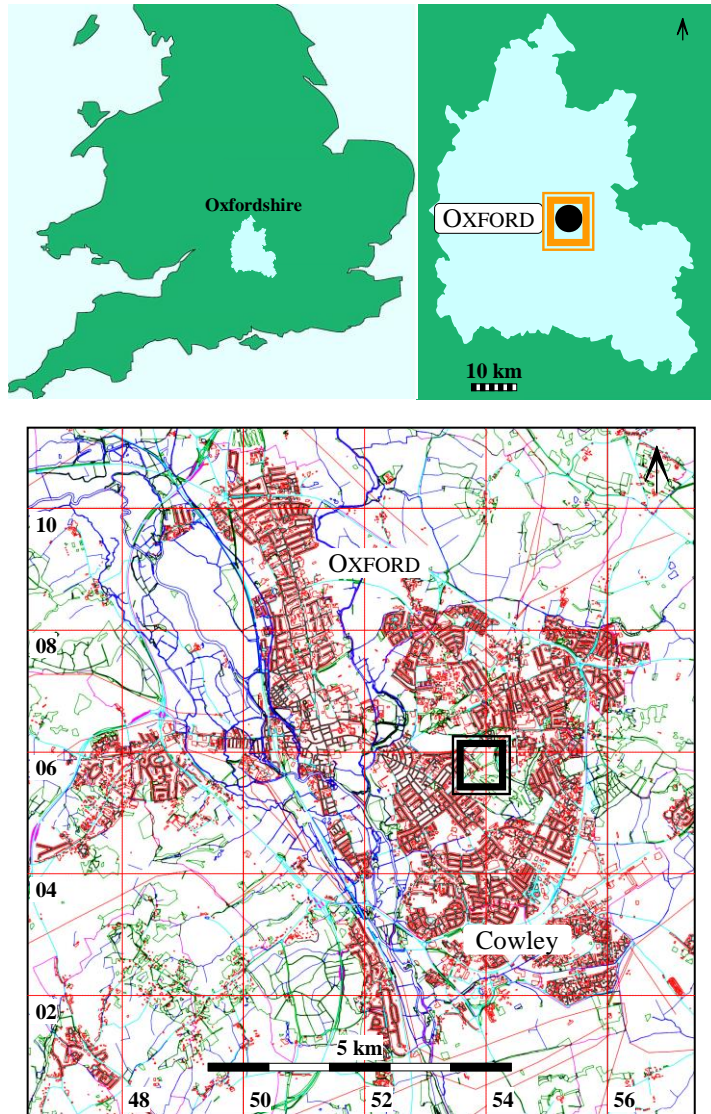


Figure 1: Site location plan

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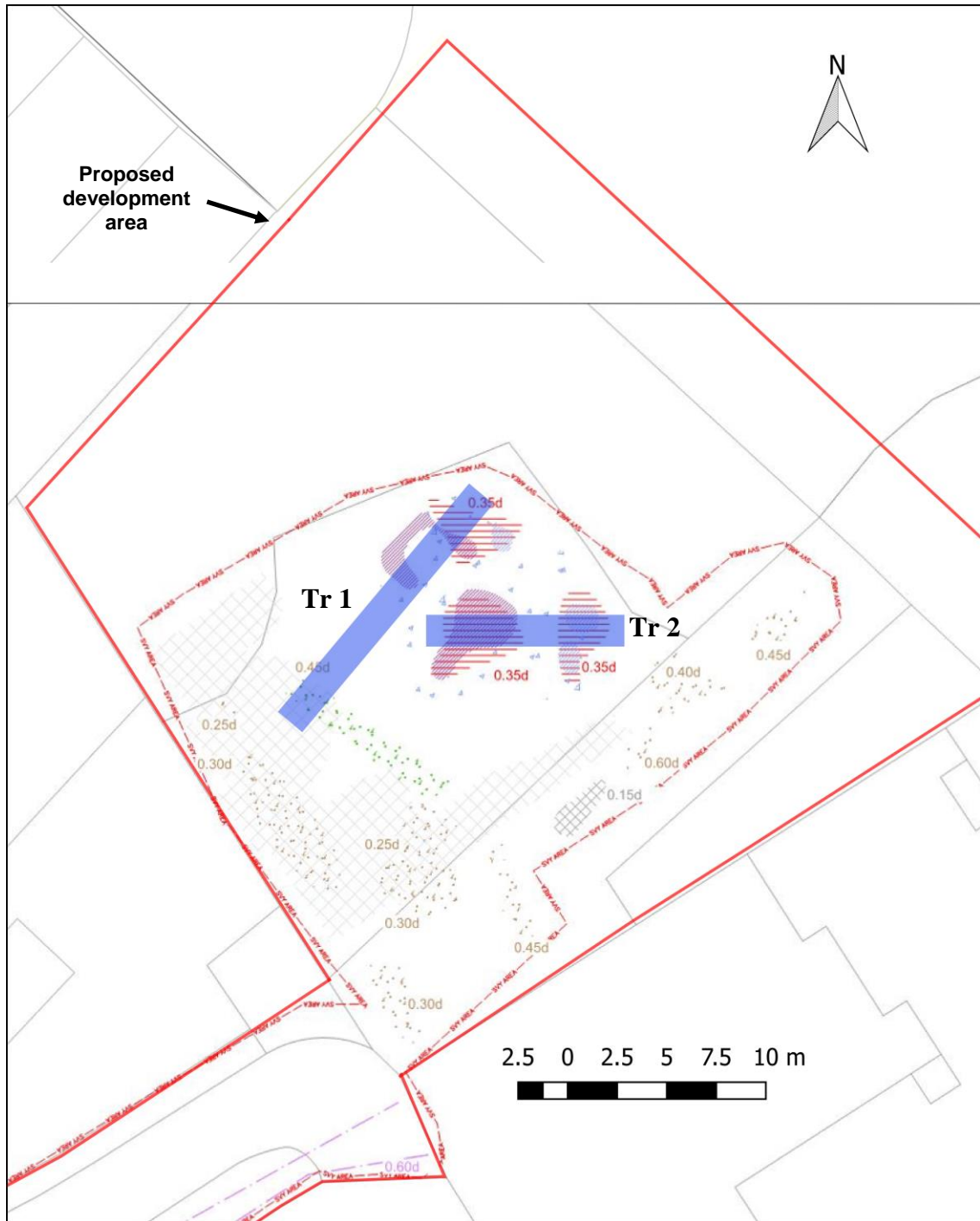


Figure 2: Trench layout over geophysical interpretation



Trench 1 - looking NE



Trench 2 - looking W



Trench 2 - N-facing baulk section

Figure 3: Selected photographs



Albion
archaeology



Albion Archaeology
St Mary's Church
St Mary's Street
Bedford
MK42 0AS

Telephone 01234 294000
Email office@albion-arch.com
www.albion-arch.com

