

## Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION:  
LAND SOUTH OF BAYSWATER BROOK  
BAYSWATER ROAD, BARTON  
OXFORD**

NGR: SP 5570 0803

*on behalf of Groundworks Thames Valley Ltd*



David Fell BA MA MIFA

August 2010

ASC: 1337/OBB/2



Letchworth House  
Chesney Wold, Bleak Hall  
Milton Keynes MK6 1NE  
Tel: 01908 608989 Fax: 01908 605700  
Email: [office@archaeological-services.co.uk](mailto:office@archaeological-services.co.uk)  
Website: [www.archaeological-services.co.uk](http://www.archaeological-services.co.uk)



## Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	1337	<i>ASC project no:</i>	OBB
<i>OASIS ref:</i>	79605	<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	
<i>County:</i>	Oxfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Barton		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Risinghurst and Sandhills		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SP 5570 0803		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	c.1.5ha		
<i>Present use:</i>	Recreation ground		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Landscaping and creation of new recreation ground		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	10/01265/FUL		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Oxford City Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	August 2010		
<i>Client:</i>	Groundworks Thames Valley Ltd Colne Valley Park Centre Denham Court Drive Denham Uxbridge Middlesex UB9 5PG		
<i>Contact name:</i>	Kathleen Healy (01895 832662)		

## Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	David Fell	<i>Date:</i>	20th August 2010
<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	

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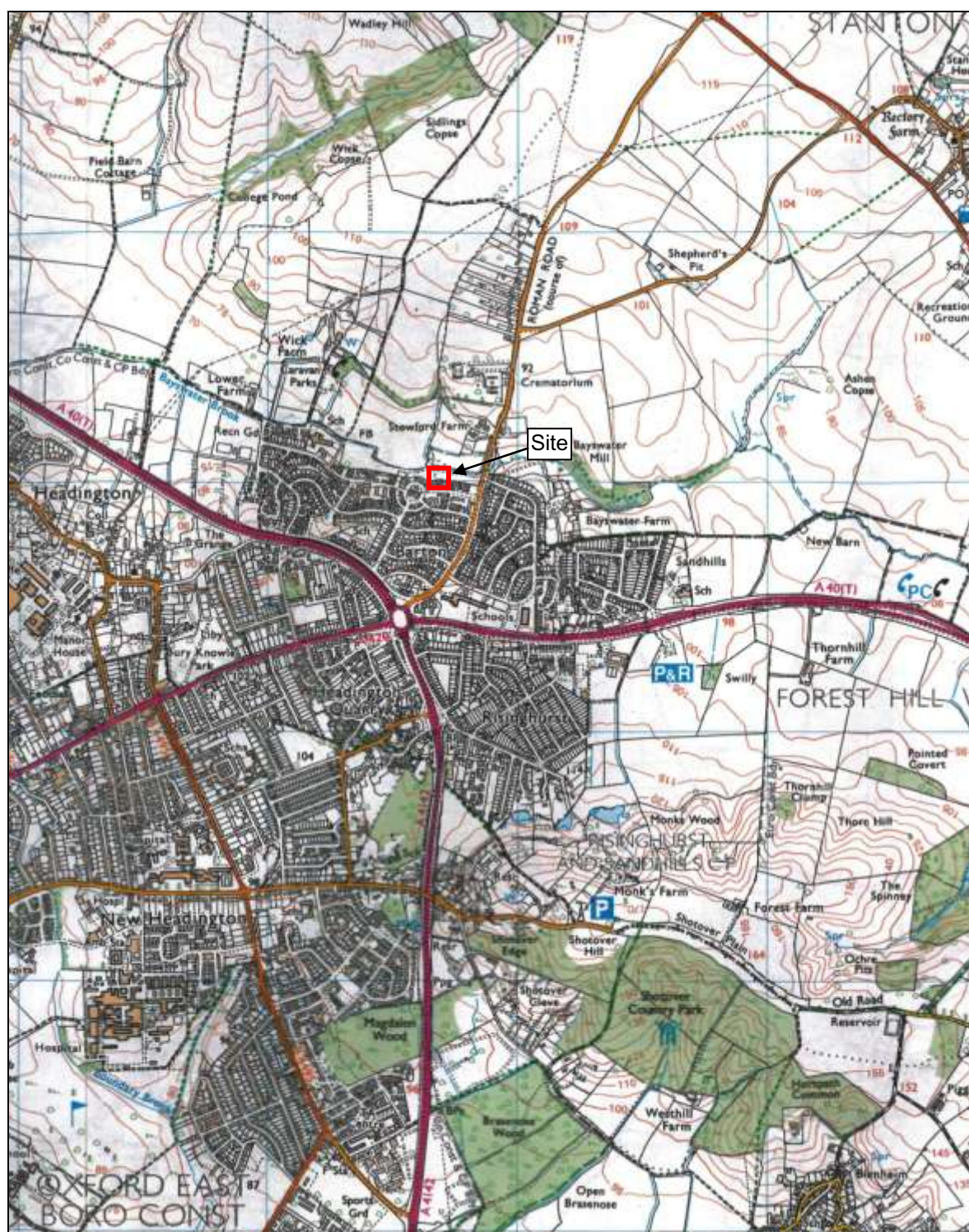
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**Figure 1:** General location (*scale 1:25,000*)



## Summary

*In August 2010 an evaluation was undertaken on the south side of Bayswater Brook, Barton, Oxford in advance of the constriction of a new play pool. One trial trench was excavated but no significant archaeological features were present. The development is unlikely to have an impact on significant archaeological remains and the archaeological impact of the development is considered to be low.*

## 1. Introduction

1.1 In August 2010 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out an evaluation at Bayswater Brook, Barton, Oxford. The project was commissioned by *Groundworks Thames Valley Ltd* and was carried out according to a *brief* (Radford 2010) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), Oxford City Council, by their archaeological advisor (AA), the *Oxford City Council Archaeologist*, and a project design prepared by ASC (Fell 2010). The relevant planning application reference is 10/01265/FUL.

### 1.2 *Planning Background*

This evaluation was required under the terms of *Planning Policy Statement 5* (PPS5), as a condition of planning permission for the development of the site.

### 1.3 *Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd*

ASC is an independent archaeological practice providing a full range of archaeological services including consultancy, field evaluation, mitigation and post-excavation studies, historic building recording and analysis. ASC is recognised as a *Registered Organisation* by the Institute for Archaeologists and is also accredited ISO 9001, in recognition of its high standards and working practices.

### 1.4 *The Site*

#### 1.4.1 *Location and Description*

The site is situated in Barton in the east part of the city of Oxford (Fig. 1). It lies on the south side of Bayswater Brook, on the west side of Bayswater Road and to the north of houses fronting onto Stowford Road (Fig. 2).

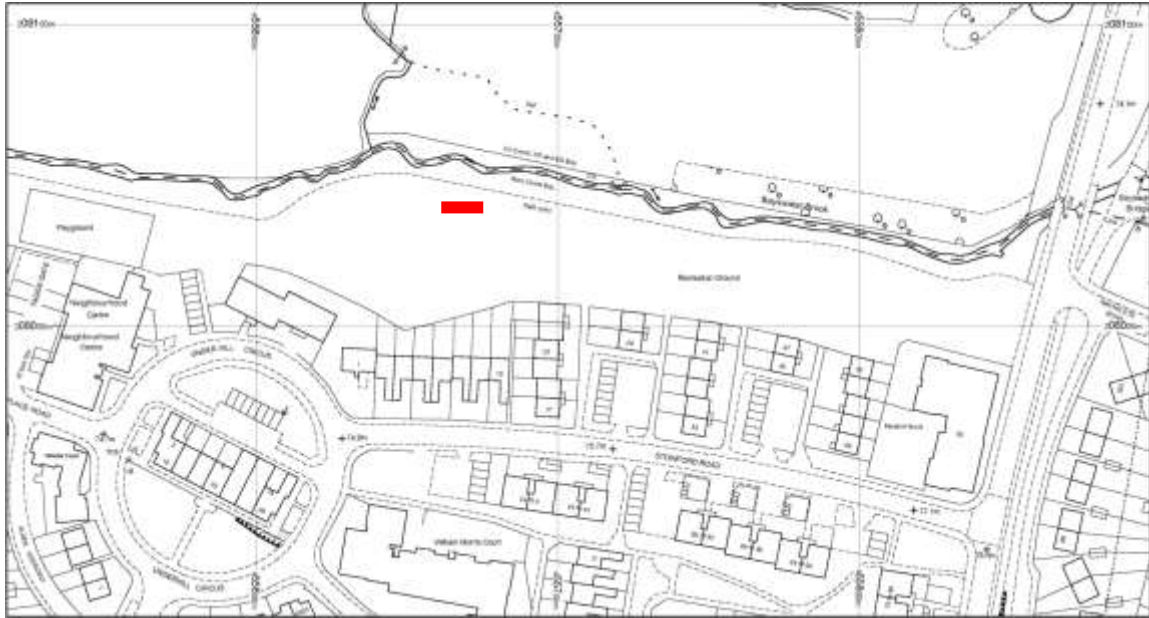
It comprises a linear plot of *c.*1.5ha and is currently in use as a grassed recreation ground. The principal access will be from the west, via Stowford Road and pedestrian access is available from Bayswater Road to the east.

#### 1.4.2 *Geology and Topography*

The natural soils of the area comprise the *Wickham 2 Association*, namely slowly permeable fine loamy over clayey soils (Soil Survey 1983, 711f). The underlying geology comprises alluvium over river terrace gravel (BGS, Sheet 237). The land slopes gently from south to north towards Bayswater Brook and has an average elevation of *c.*73m OD.

#### 1.4.3 *Proposed Development*

The development proposal is for the landscaping works and improvements to the recreation ground, notably with the excavation of a new play pool, beach area and watercourse (Fig. 3).



**Figure 2:** Site plan with the trench shown in red (*Scale 1:2,500*)



**Figure 3: Proposed development (*not to scale*)**

## **2. Aims and Methods**

### **2.1 Aims**

As described in the project design (Section 3.1), the aims of the evaluation were:

- to obtain sufficient information to establish the extent, character, quality, date and condition of any archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts and ecofacts within the area affected by the proposed development.
- To allow a scheme to be prepared containing provisions for the mitigation of any significant archaeological remains revealed, by a process of excavation, analysis and publication.

### **2.2 Standards**

The work conformed to the project design, to the relevant sections of the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000) and *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

### **2.3 Methods**

The work was carried out according to the project design (Section 3.3), which required:

- The excavation of 15 linear metres of trial trenches of c.1.6m width targeting the new play pool, beach area and watercourse (Fig. 3)
- Particular attention was to be paid to the environmental potential of the site, specifically the possible presence of 'dark earth' masked by alluvium

### **2.4 Constraints**

No constraints were encountered during the fieldwork and the excavation took place as specified in the project design.



### 3. Archaeological and Historical Background

- 3.1 The following section provides a summary of the readily available archaeological and historical background to the development site and its environs. East Oxford is an area of considerable archaeological and historical interest, and the focus of interest was considered to lie in the Roman period.

HER = Historic Environment Record number

- 3.2 Little is known of the Barton area of Oxford during the prehistoric periods but the results of archaeological excavations elsewhere in Oxford and the surrounding area suggests that this part of the Thames Valley was of considerable importance (Dodd 2003; Lambrick & Robinson, 2009).
- 3.3 The archaeological sensitivity of the site lies in its proximity to an area of known Roman activity. A major Roman road, which linked the small Roman town at Dorchester-on-Thames with Alchester (Bicester) passed immediately east of the site and followed the approximate line of modern Bayswater Road (Henig & Booth 2000, fig. 2.1).
- 3.4 During the Roman period an extensive pottery industry developed in the Oxford area (Young 1977). Kilns have been recorded to the south of the site in the Cowley and Rose Hill areas (Henig & Booth fig. 6.7) but the full extent of the industry is not understood in detail.
- 3.5 The nature and extent of Roman settlement in the Barton area is not fully understood. Settlements developed along the Roman road at a variety of locations to the north and south of Barton and a significant settlement, containing stone buildings has been identified immediately south of the site (Pine 2003). Excavation revealed 3<sup>rd</sup> century occupation deposits overlain by a later cobbled road. The full extent of the settlement was not established during the excavation and the line of the road can be projected northwards, into the recreation ground. The Thames Solent Archaeological Regional Research Framework states that *'roadside settlements in the vicinity of the Oxfordshire pottery industry are of uncertain scale and importance'*, highlighting the research potential offered by sites of this type.
- 3.6 A number of human burials have been recorded in the area and it is likely that the site may lie within a Roman cemetery. Roman coins, pottery and skeletons have been recorded south of the site (HER 3664-6, 3668) and further examples have been recorded adjacent to the site, on either side of Bayswater Brook (HER 3667 and 16206). Human remains were also recorded close to the east boundary of the site, at 102 Bayswater Road (Roberts 1991).
- 3.7 Little is known of the area during the Saxon and medieval periods. It is likely that the site was away from the main areas of medieval settlement, which were centred on Headington and Marston (Crossley 1979).

- 3.8 The first edition one inch to the mile Ordnance Survey map of the area was published in 1830 and shows the site as open land. Bayswater Road is shown on the map and two farms and a mill are shown in the vicinity.
- 3.9 The development of the Barton estate commenced in 1946 (Crossley 1979, 208) and many of the original buildings were of prefabricated construction. Development continued during the 1950s and 1960s and the estate comprised 1,600 houses by 1977.

## 4 Results

### 4.1 *Introduction:*

4.1.1 This section provides a summary of the results of the evaluation. Full descriptions, in tabulated form, are provided in Appendix 1.

4.1.2 A single trench was excavated (Fig. 2) using a mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.5m wide toothless bucket operating under continuous archaeological supervision. Following excavation the trench was cleaned sufficiently to determine if archaeological remains were present. Basic trench information was recorded on pro-forma sheets and a photographic record was made. The spoil heaps were scanned with a metal detector.

### 4.2 *Results*

4.2.1 The trench was situated in the north central part of the site and aimed to test the footprint of the proposed new play pool and beach area (Plates 1 and 2). It was 16.6m long and was excavated to an average depth of c.400mm. Sondages were excavated at each end in order to test the underlying natural strata (Plate 3).

4.2.2 The modern surface comprised turf and topsoil (100) which was c.0.1m thick. This overlay a deposit of grey clay mixed with fragments of gravel and occasional modern building debris (101). It was c.0.15m thick at the west end of the trench but was discontinuous and was largely absent from the central part of the trench. This material is interpreted as modern debris deposited during the construction of the Stowford Road development during the 1960s. It is not of archaeological significance.

4.2.3 The modern material (101) overlay a 0.2m thick layer of light orangy brown clayey subsoil (102). It was present across the entire area of the trench but was sealed by the modern clay (102) at the west end of the trench. This in turn sealed a deposit of dark orangy brown clayey silt (103), which is interpreted as alluvium. The latter was c.0.2m thick and sealed the natural strata which comprised homogenous grey clay (104) at a depth of c.0.7m

4.2.4 No significant archaeological features or artefacts were present in the trench.



**Plate 1:** General view looking east across the site



**Plate 2:** General view of the excavation



**Plate 3:** View of the natural profile at the west end of the trench

## 5. Conclusions

- 5.1 A single trial trench was excavated targeting the footprint of the proposed play pool and beach area but no significant archaeological features were present in the trench.
- 5.2 The sequence of deposits comprised topsoil (100) and subsoil (102) with an intervening layer of modern clay (101). The subsoil developed over a deposit of alluvial material (103) which overlay the natural Oxford Clay (104).
- 5.3 The site is situated in an area of known archaeological significance (section 3.3) but no archaeological remains were present in the trench. The trench was situated c.100m west of a group of Roman cremation burials (Historic Environment Record no. 3667) and c.0.25km northwest of an area of Roman settlement (Pine 2003). The absence of archaeological remains from the trench suggests that the site of the play pool is beyond the western limit of the area of Roman settlement, which may have been centred on the Roman road following the approximate route of the modern Bayswater Road.
- 5.4 Significant archaeological features were not revealed during the evaluation. While the occasional existence of individual isolated archaeological features away from the trench cannot be specifically excluded, it is unlikely that large numbers of archaeological features are present in this part of the site. It is unlikely that the excavation of the play pool will have a significant impact on archaeological remains and the archaeological impact of the development is likely to be low.

### 5.5 *Confidence rating*

The work was undertaken in damp overcast conditions and full co-operation was received from the client and machining contractor. Visibility was good and a high confidence rating is attached to the results of the evaluation.



## 6. Acknowledgements

The writer is grateful to Kathleen Healy for commissioning the evaluation on behalf of *Groundworks Thames Valley Ltd*. David Radford BA MA MifA of *Oxford City Council* acted as curatorial monitor on behalf of the local planning authority. Thanks are also due to Phil Berridge and Graham Simmons for their assistance on site of the .

The project was managed for *ASC Ltd* by David Fell BA MA MifA. Fieldwork was led by Jonathan Hunn BA PhD MifA assisted by David Fell. The report was prepared by David Fell and edited by Bob Zeepvat BA MifA.

## 7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Clients site plans
5. Site records
6. List of photographs
7. B/W prints & negatives
8. Original specialist reports and supporting information
9. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with *Oxfordshire Museums Service*.

## 8. References


### *Standards & Specifications*

- EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. English Heritage (London).
- Fell D, 2010 *Land south of Bayswater Brook, Barton, Oxford. Project Design for Archaeological Evaluation*. Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd document no. **1337/OBB/1**
- IFA 2000a Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct*.
- IFA 2001 Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance documents (Desk-Based Assessments, Watching Briefs, Evaluations, Excavations, Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings, Finds)*.
- Radford D, 2010 *Brief for an Archaeological Excavation. Land to the South Of Bayswater Brook, Barton, Oxford*. Oxford City Council

### *Secondary Sources*

- BGS *British Geological Survey 1:50,000 Series, Solid & Drift Geology*.
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- Pine J., 2003 'Excavation of Part of a 3<sup>rd</sup>-century Roman Settlement and Later Roman Road at Stowford Road, Barton, Oxford' in *Oxoniensia* **68**, 263-277
- OA 2010 *Solent Thames Research Framework. A Framework for Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Roman Oxfordshire*. [http://thehumanjourney.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=category&sectionid=8&id=66&Itemid=225](http://thehumanjourney.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=category&sectionid=8&id=66&Itemid=225)
- Roberts M, 1991 *102 Bayswater Road, Barton, archaeological watching brief*. Oxford Archaeological Unit
- Soil Survey 1983 *1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales, and accompanying legend* (Harpenden).
- Young C, 1977 *Oxfordshire Roman Pottery* British Archaeological Reports (British Series) **43**

## Appendix 1: Trench Summary Table

Trench 1							
	Max Dimensions (m)						
	Length	16.6m		Width	1.5m	Depth	0.4m
	Levels						
	Trench top east			72.69m OD			
	Trench base east			72.32m OD			
	Trench top west			72.69m OD			
	Trench base west			72.32m OD			
	NGR Co-ordinates						
	W	SP 55658 08038			E	SP 55674 08038	
	Orientation			E - W			
Reason for Trench			Evaluation of new play pool				
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation			Width (max: mm)	Thickness (max: mm)	Depth (BGL: mm)
100	Layer	Mid greyish brown silty clay. Topsoil and turf			1.5m+	100	-
101	Layer	Lumps of homogenous grey clay mixed with gravel fragments. Modern redeposited material			1.5m+	c.200	100
102	Layer	Light orangy brown silt. Buried subsoil			1.5m+	c.200	c.300
103	Layer	Dark orangy brown clayey silt. Alluvium			1.5m+	c.200	c.500
103	Layer	Homogenous mid grey clay. Natural strata			1.5m+	-	c.700

## Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: land south of Bayswater Brook, Barton, Oxford			SITE NO/CODE: 1337/OBB
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1		✓	General view of the site looking west
2	✓	✓	General view of the site looking east
3	✓	✓	General view of the trench looking east
4		✓	General view of the trench looking west
5		✓	Sondage at west end of the trench
6		✓	General view of the site from north side of Bayswater Brook

## Appendix 3: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	Land south of Bayswater Brook, Barton, Oxford	OASIS reference:	Archaeol2-79605
Short Description:	In August 2010 an evaluation was undertaken on the south side of Bayswater Brook, Barton, Oxford in advance of the construction of a new play pool. One trial trench was excavated but no significant archaeological features were present. The development is unlikely to have an impact on significant archaeological remains and the archaeological impact of the development is considered to be low.		
Project Type:	Evaluation		
Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	none	Site status: (eg. none, SAM, listed)	none
Current land use:	Recreation ground	Future work: (yes/no/unknown)	no
Monument type:	n/a	Monument period:	n/a
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	n/a		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Oxfordshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	SP 5570 0803
Site address: (+ postcode if known)	Stowford Road, Oxford		
Study area: (sq. m. / ha)	c.1.5ha	Height OD: (metres)	72m OD
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	Oxford City Council	Project design originator:	ASC Ltd
Project Manager:	David Fell BA MA MifA	Director/Supervisor:	Jonathan Hunn BA PhD MifA
Sponsor / funding body:	Groundworks Thames Valley Ltd		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	17 August 2010	End date:	20 August 2010
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	Oxfordshire Museums Service	none	
Paper:	Oxfordshire Museums Service	Site records	
Digital:	Oxfordshire Museums Service	CD with digital files	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Land south of Bayswater Brook, Barton, Oxford		
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1337/OBB/2		
Author(s):	David Fell BA MA MifA		
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