Cotswold Archaeology

Northfield Hostel
Littlemore
Oxford

Archaeological Evaluation

for:
WSP

on behalf of:
Oxford City Housing Limited

CA Project: MK0597

CA Report: MK0597_3

January 2022

Andover Cirencester Milton Keynes Suffolk

Northfield Hostel
Littlemore
Oxford

Archaeological Evaluation

CA Project: MK0597
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Cirencester	**Milton Keynes**	**Andover**	**Suffolk**
Building 11 Kemble Enterprise Park Cirencester Gloucestershire GL7 6BQ	Unit 8, The IO Centre Fingle Drive, Stonebridge Milton Keynes Buckinghamshire MK13 0AT	Stanley House Walworth Road Andover Hampshire SP10 5LH	Unit 5, Plot 11 Maitland Road Lion Barn Industrial Estate Needham Market Suffolk IP6 8NZ
t. 01285 771 022	**t.** 01908 564 660	**t.** 01264 347 630	**t.** 01449 900 120
e. enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk			

CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

SUMMARY

Project name:	Northfield Hostel
Location:	Littlemore, Oxford
NGR:	454468 203094
Type:	Evaluation
Date:	17–19 November 2021
Location of Archive:	To be deposited with Oxfordshire Museums Service and the Archaeology Data Service
Site Code:	NHL21

In November 2021, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation (of land) at Northfield Hostel, Littlemore, Oxford, a total of 7 trenches were excavated across the 0.61ha site, which is located approximately 100m to the east of a Roman pottery production site identified during the construction of the Oxford Eastern Bypass.

Archaeological remains were identified in trenches 3, 4 and 5. No evidence for any activity pre-dating the Roman period was identified, with the earliest dated feature being ditch 403, in trench 4, which produced pottery of mid-Roman date. The fill of this ditch was cut by a small pit or posthole, 405, that produced pottery of late Roman date, as did ditch / gully 503, to the southwest, indicating a C3 – C4 phase of activity and collectively suggesting use of the site from as early as the mid-2nd to the 4th century. No evidence for industrial activity on the site was seen in the form of either pottery wasters or kiln furniture, or industrial residue dumps, although the quantity of pottery recovered from the features investigated suggests a proximity to settlement or a working area. Consequently, it is possible that the activity identified on the site is related, albeit perhaps being on the periphery, to the kilns/ pottery production site noted during construction of the Eastern Bypass.

No evidence for Early Medieval (Saxon) or Medieval activity was identified during the evaluation, while a single sherd of post–medieval pottery recovered from the subsoil in trench 3 was most likely introduced onto the site via agricultural manuring practices.

Modern disturbance/ truncation to the natural substrate/ archaeological horizon was only seen in trench 7, where part of a large modern pit was seen, while in trench 6 the original subsoil and topsoil appear to have been left in-situ, buried beneath a thin layer of imported/

redeposited silt-clay and topsoil seemingly laid as part of the landscaping works associated with the construction of the Hostel complex.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. In November 2021, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation of land at Northfield Hostel, Littlemore, Oxford (centred at NGR: 454468 203094; Fig. 1). This evaluation was undertaken for WSP, acting on behalf of Oxford City Housing Limited, and will inform a future planning application for the residential development of the site

1.2. The scope of this evaluation was defined by David Radford the archaeological advisor to Oxford City Council and carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by WSP (2021) and approved by the archaeological advisor.

1.3. The evaluation was also undertaken in line with the *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (CIfA 2014; updated October 2020), *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) PPN 3: Archaeological Excavation* (Historic England 2015) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide* (Historic England 2015).

The site

1.4. The proposed development site is approximately 0.61ha in extent and situated immediately south of the A4142 Oxford Eastern Bypass. The site contains the now-redundant Northfield Hostel buildings in the west part of the plot and a former playing field in the east. To the east, south and west, the land has been developed as a mix of residential and commercial properties.

1.5. Situated at approximately 69m AOD, on relatively flat ground, the underlying bedrock geology of the site is mapped as sandstone of the Beckley Sand Member, formed in the Jurassic Period. No superficial deposits were recorded within the Site (BGS, 2021).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. An archaeological desk-based assessment (ADBA) was conducted by Oxford Archaeology in 2017, based upon a 1km search area (the study area) centred on the site and the following information is taken from that source.

Prehistoric (500,000 BC-AD43)

2.2. No Early Prehistoric finds or features have been recorded within the Site or the surrounding study area used for the ADBA. Material dating between the Late Neolithic and Late Bronze Age periods has been recovered from three sites within the 1km study area examined in the ADBA. These suggest the presence of intermittent or seasonal occupation of land along the Littlemore Valley (OA, 2017).

2.3. No Iron Age remains are recovered within the Site and there is sparse evidence for activity within the study area. Ditches belonging to an Iron Age field system have been recorded at Minchery Farm, and a scatter of Iron Age pottery and individual coins were recovered during excavations at Oxford Football Stadium, 890 and 900m, south of the Site respectively.

Roman (AD43-410)

2.4. Pottery production was established during the Roman period along the Dorchester to Alchester Roman road, located 1.5km east of the Site. Several production sites comprising of kilns and associated structures have been recorded within the study area. The closest was uncovered during construction of the Eastern Bypass Road 100m east of the Site. These features were not recorded under archaeological conditions and no archive records exist showing their extent, form or dating.

2.5. Other production sites are known from archaeological investigations within the study area. South of Northfield Brook at Minchery Farm, four kilns were excavated, recorded and found to contain assemblages of early to mid-2nd Century AD pottery. This suggested the structures had been abandoned and production ceased by that time. A settlement and associated industrial area were recorded at immediately east of Minchery Farm. These investigations provided evidence for pottery production into the 3rd century AD.

2.6. North of Northfield Brook a single Roman period kiln was excavated and recorded along with a large mound of pottery, possibly production waste. A further spread of Romano British pottery was recorded during the development of the adjacent property. A production site spanning the late 1st to mid 4th centuries AD, situated between Towns Road and St Lukes Road 900m north of the Site, was discovered and recorded in 1934.

Medieval (AD410-1541)

2.7. Early medieval (Saxon) period activity was recorded prior to development work at Oxford Academy some 230m south west of the Site. This comprised a small flat based pit excavated into natural substrate, containing an assemblage of 6th century pottery and metal objects. This was interpreted as the remains of a sunken feature building. The village of church Cowley, 730m north west of the Site is understood from documentary evidence to have been established by the late 10th century AD and is mentioned in the Doomsday Survey. The settlement at Littlemore 600m south east of the Site, is known to have been established in the late 12th to early 13th centuries AD. The site and study area are likely to have been part of an agricultural landscape separating the two villages, characterised by ridge and furrow ploughing with boundaries formed by raised headlands and drainage ditches.

2.8. Minchery Farm, 840m south east of the Site, was the location of a former Benedictine Priory founded in 1111, lasting until its dissolution in 1525. Archaeological investigations at the farm suggest that the medieval refectory survives, having been repurposed as part of the post medieval farmhouse. Intrusive investigations have also located the remains of the 13th century priory church, along with 92 associated inhumations.

Post medieval (AD 1541 - 1900)

2.9. Post medieval activity within the site boundary and the wider study area was documented in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, as land around Oxford was surveyed and mapped. The Davies map (1797) shows the Site as unclosed agricultural land, suggesting a continuity of use between the 16th and 18th centuries. Sixteen years later the land was enclosed, a process which saw former areas of common parcelled, delineated with new ditches and hedges and held as private property by new owners.

2.10. The first edition Ordnance Survey map (1878) shows no change in land use within the Site, with only small altercations to the surrounding field systems. The Wycombe Railway, running to the south and east of the Site was constructed in 1854, becoming part of the Great Western Railway in 1867.

Modern (AD 1901- present)

2.11. The landscape surrounding Littlemore and Cowley continued to be largely rural until the mid 20th century, as both villages were developed as suburbs of Oxford. The

Northfields Hostel constructed in the late 20th century, formed part of this suburban landscape characterised by residential commercial and light industrial development either side of the Eastern Bypass Road.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1. The general objective of the evaluation was to provide further information on the likely archaeological resource within the site, including its presence/absence, character, extent, date and state of preservation. This information will enable Oxford City Council to identify and assess the particular significance of any archaeological heritage assets within the site, consider the impact of the proposed development upon that significance and, if appropriate, develop strategies to avoid or minimise any conflict between the conservation of those heritage assets and the development proposals. This process is in line with policies contained in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (MHCLG 2021).

3.2. Archaeological research objectives specific to the site were identified in the WSI, based on the suggested archaeological potential of the site as identified in the archaeological desk based assessment (OA, 2017). These were as follows:

- What evidence is there for Roman period pottery production such as kilns, associated buildings or settlement? If present what are their nature, extent and significance?
- What evidence is there for a continuation of the early medieval settlement recoded at Oxford Academy? If present what was the nature, extent and significance?
- What are the nature and levels (OD) of natural deposit, and has there been any modern disturbance?

3.3. Suggested regional research objectives specific to the site identified in the WSI, as set out in the *Solent-Thames, Research Framework* (OWA 2014), were as follows:

- The relationship between [Roman Period] kilns, workshops and settlements should be explored;
- More information on [Early Medieval] settlement change and village formation is required to test possible models.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. The evaluation was originally intended to comprise the excavation of six 15m long by 1.6m wide trenches. However, with the agreement of WSP and the archaeological advisor then due to localised site constraints seven trenches were excavated in total, as shown on figure 2 and comprising:

- 5no 15m x 1.6m trenches (trenches 1 - 4 & 6);
- 2no 7.5m x 1.6m trenches (trenches 5 & 7).

4.2. The trenches were located to test anomalies identified by the geophysical survey and to provide a representative sample of the remainder of the site.

4.3. Trenches were set out on OS National Grid co-ordinates using Leica GPS. Overburden was stripped from the trenches by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket. All machining was conducted under archaeological supervision to the top of the natural substrate, which was the level at which archaeological features were first encountered.

4.4. Archaeological features/deposits were investigated, planned and recorded in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual*. And, if there was no archaeology; Records were maintained in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual*.

4.5. Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential and samples were taken in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 2: The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites*. Two deposits were identified that required sampling.

4.6. Artefacts were processed in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 3: Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation*.

4.7. CA will make arrangements with Oxfordshire Museums Service for the deposition of the project archive and, subject to agreement with the legal landowner(s), the artefact collection. A digital archive will also be prepared and deposited with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS). The archives (museum and digital) will be prepared and deposited in accordance with *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (CIfA 2014; updated October 2020).

4.8. A summary of information from this project, as set out in Appendix D, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

5. RESULTS

5.1. This section provides an overview of the evaluation results. Detailed summaries of the recorded contexts are given in Appendix A. Details of the artefactual material recovered from the site are given in Section 6 and Appendix B. Details of the environmental samples (palaeoenvironmental evidence) are given in Section 7 and Appendix C.

5.2. The natural substrate was encountered on average at 0.6m below present ground level (bpgl) and was identified as a silt-sand composition with outcropping degraded sandstone. Trenches 1, 2, 6 and 7 contained no archaeological remains while features were identified in trenches 3, 4 and 5. A modern deposit identified in trench 7.

Trench 1 (Figs 2 & 3)

5.3. Trench 1 contained no archaeological features, the natural geology being encountered at 0.6m bpgl. This was covered by a mid-orange brown silt sand subsoil that measured 0.2m thick, which was overlain by a 0.4m thick mid-grey brown silt sand topsoil.

Trench 2 (Figs 2 & 3)

5.4. Trench 2 contained no archaeological features. The natural substrate was encountered at 0.75m bpgl and was covered by a dark grey brown silty sand, 0.15m thick. This was sealed by a 0.2m thick mid grey brown subsoil, overlain by a 0.4m thick mid grey brown silty sand topsoil.

Trench 3 (Figs 2 & 4)

5.5. In trench 3 the natural substrate was encountered at a depth of 0.45m bpgl, overlain by a 0.15m thick mid grey brown, silt sand subsoil, in turn sealed by a 0.4m thick mid grey brown, silt sand topsoil.

5.6. A single archaeological feature was identified; posthole, 304 measured 0.34m wide, 0.11m deep and contained a single fill of dark grey brown silt (305). No finds or samples were taken from this feature.

Trench 4 (Figs 2 & 5)

5.7. Trench 4 contained two archaeological features, ditch 403 and posthole 405. The natural substrate was encountered at 0.4m bpgl and again comprised a mid orange brown silty sand. This was overlain by a 0.1m thick subsoil layer and a 0.4m thick mid grey brown silt sand topsoil.

5.8. East-west orientated ditch 403 measured in excess of 2m long by 1.73m wide and 0.34m deep. It had a steep concave side to the south east, an irregular side to the north west, and a slightly irregular, concave base, and contained a single fill of mid orange brown silt sand (404), that produced pottery of mid 2nd – mid 3rd century date and animal bone. A bulk environmental soil sample (sample 1) taken from this fill contained a very small number of cereal grain fragments, including those tentatively identified as free-threshing wheat, a single charred hazelnut fragment, a small amount of charcoal and a few mollusc shells of the open country species Vallonia sp (see section 7 below).

5.9. Posthole 405 cut ditch fill 404 and measured 0.35m wide by 0.14m deep. It had gently sloping concave sides, a concave base, and contained a single undated fill of grey brown silt sand (406) that produced pottery of mid 3rd – mid 4th century date.

Trench 5 (Figs 2 & 6)

5.10. The natural substrate was encountered in trench 5 at 0.45m bpgl, and consisted of light brown orange silt sand. This was covered by subsoil, measuring 0.15m thick and topsoil, measuring 0.3m thick.

5.11. Trench 5 contained a single archaeological feature, northwest-southeast orientated ditch, 503, which appeared slightly curvilinear in plan. It measured in excess of 2m long, 0.77m wide and 0.27m deep, with gentle concave sides and base. The single fill, 504, consisted of a dark orange brown, silt sand that produced a quantity of pottery of late Roman date and animal bone. An environmental sample (sample 2) taken from this feature contained a very small number of indeterminate cereal grains alongside single black-bindweed (Fallopia convolvulus) and oraches/goosefoot (Atriplex/Chenopodium sp.) seeds. A small amount of charcoal was observed in the assemblage alongside a few mollusc shells belonging to the open country species Vallonia sp.

Trench 6 (Figs 2 & 3)

5.12. A series of levelling deposits were encountered in trench 6, which did not contain any archaeological features. The natural geology was encountered at 0.96m bpgl, covered by a 0.35m thick layer of subsoil that was in turn sealed by what appeared to be the original topsoil, which was 0.2m deep. This was overlain by a 0.05m deep layer of light yellow orange silt clay, covered by 0.4m of topsoil and turf. It is conjectured that this part of the site was raised in level/ landscaped following the construction of the Hostel buildings.

Trench 7 (Figs 2 & 3)

5.13. Trench 7 was moved from the originally intended location on the west side of the Hostel buildings due to access constraints and root protection zones. With the agreement of WSP and the archaeological advisor it was relocated to the north end of trench 5, orientated running east-west.

5.14. The natural geology consisted of silty sand and was uncovered at 0.49m bpgl, this in turn was overlain by subsoil measuring 0.12m thick and topsoil measuring 0.37m thick.

5.15. The trench contained one modern feature, extending into the trench from the north edge. As seen, it measured 1.5m long by 1m wide and contained a dark grey black silty clay with modern glass, plastic and ceramic building material. The feature was not excavated further.

6. THE FINDS

6.1. The artefactual material was recorded from four deposits: the fills of ditches and postholes and from the subsoil (Appendix B). The material was recovered by hand and recorded in accordance with the CIfA finds Toolkit (CIfA 2021).

Pottery

6.2. The pottery from the evaluation has been recorded direct to an Excel spreadsheet from which Appendix B (Table 1) is derived. This forms part of the project archive. The assemblage was examined by context, using a x10 binocular microscope and quantified according to sherd count and weight per fabric type. The fabrics are described in summary in Appendix B (Table 2) in accordance with the Historic England guidelines (Barclay *et al*. 2016) and where appropriate the National Roman Fabrics Reference Collection (Tomber and Dore 1998). A concordance with the

Oxfordshire fabric series has been provided where possible (Booth *unpublished*) and the post-medieval fabric codes are derived from Sue Anderson's (unpublished) post-medieval fabric series.

6.3. The assemblage comprises 58 sherds, weighing 1028g. The group is in moderately poor condition with most surfaces and fractures exhibiting signs of wear. The mean sherd weight for the assemblage is moderately high for a largely Roman group at 17.7g.

Roman

6.4. The Roman assemblage totals 57 sherds, weighing 881g. The majority are locally produced products of the Oxford region. Late Roman (*c.* 3rd to 4th centuries AD) Oxfordshire red-slipped wares (**OXF RS**) are the most frequently recorded fabric type. Forms included a Young (2000) form C52 hemispherical bowl with white painted decoration and a C16 narrow necked jar from posthole 405. Young (2000, 160, fig.59, no.C52) dates the former to the mid to late 4th century AD although Booth (1993, 163) argues that production of the painted forms (C52) most likely began as early as the beginning of the 4th century AD. This would place them slightly more in line with the narrow-necked jars (C16), which date to between the mid-3rd and 4th centuries AD (Young 2000, 150-1, fig.54, no.C16 and 160, fig.59, no.C51). A base stamped '[III..X.D]' was recorded from the same deposit as these vessels. Although similar stamps are recorded by Young a precise match could not be found for this stamp. A ring-necked flagon (ditch 403) and an M17 mortarium (Ditch 504) were recorded in Oxfordshire white ware fabrics (**OXF WH**). The former is dated by Young to the mid-2nd to mid-3rd centuries AD (*ibid.* 100-1, fig.30, no.W6); the latter to the mid to late 3rd century AD (*ibid.* 72 & 74, fig.21, no.M17). Oxfordshire reduced (OXF RE3) and oxidised (OXF OX) coarsewares were also recorded although in small quantities chronologically diagnostic sherds were not recorded in either fabric. Two body sherds of a colour coated ware made in a reduced coarseware fabric (OXF RCC) were also present. The origin of this fabric was not certain but it is most likely a local product of the Oxford industries. Single sherds of Lower Nene Valley colour coated ware (**LNV CC**) and pink grog-tempered ware (**PNK GT**) can be dated to between the 2nd to 4th centuries AD (Tyers 2014). Ditch 503 produced a dropped flange bowl (Seager Smith and Davies 1993, Type 25) made in South East Dorset Black-burnished ware (**DOR BB1**). This vessel type is a Late Roman form and can be dated to the mid-3rd to 4th

centuries AD (Davies and Seager Smith 1993, 234, fig.124, no. TYPE25/Holbrook and Bidwell 1990).

Post-medieval

6.5. One sherd of glazed red earthenware (GRE) dating to between the 16th and 18h centuries was recovered from the subsoil of trench 3.

Summary

6.6. The pottery provides evidence for activity in the vicinity of the site during the Late Roman and post-medieval periods. The assemblage is derived from just three interventions and due to its small size its it is not possible to provide further meaningful comment.

Ceramic building material

6.7. Posthole 405 produced one fragment (6g) of ceramic building material (CBM) made in a fine sandy oxidised fabric with calcareous inclusions. The fragment did not exhibit any diagnostic features and could not be closely dated.

7. THE BIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Animal bone by Andy Clarke

7.1. Twelve fragments of animal bone (30g) were recovered from four deposits in association with artefacts dating to the Romano-British period (See Table 1, Appendix C). The material was poorly preserved and highly fragmented however, a limited amount of cattle bone (Bos taurus) was identified in subsoil layer 301 and posthole fill 406.

7.2. The low recovery of animal remains severely limits what can be said in terms of site economy and animal husbandry. However, this species was a commonly exploited domestic animal so its inclusion in an assemblage of this period is to be expected.

Plant macrofossils by Emma Aitken

7.3. Two environmental samples (32 litres of soil) were processed from ditches in trenches 4 and 5. This was done to evaluate the preservation of palaeoenvironmental remains in the area and with the intention of recovering environmental evidence of industrial or domestic activity on the site. It was also hoped that the environmental remains may aid in the dating of undated ditch 403. The samples were processed by standard flotation procedures (CA Technical Manual No. 2).

7.4. Preliminary identifications of plant macrofossils are noted in Table 2, Appendix C, following nomenclature of Stace (1997) for wild plants, and traditional nomenclature, as provided by Zohary *et al* (2012) for cereals. The presence of mollusc shells has also been noted, following nomenclature is according to Anderson (2005) and habitat preferences according to Kerney (1999) and Davies (2008).

7.5. The flots were moderately small in size with high numbers of rooty material and uncharred seeds. The charred material comprised varying levels of preservation. Due to the poor to moderate preservation levels, it was difficult to identify many of the charred cereal grains to species, but where possible this was achieved. Much of the charcoal was comminuted and encrusted in iron residue which inhibited further wood species identification of the charcoal observed in the samples.

7.6. Any dates discussed within this report have been obtained through the spot dating of finds (see Banks, this report).

Trench 4

7.7. Fill 404 (sample 1) of Roman ditch 403 contained a very small number of cereal grain fragments, including those tentatively identified as free-threshing wheat (*Triticum turgidum/aestivum* type) alongside a single charred hazelnut (*Corylus avellana*) fragment. A small amount of charcoal was noted with a few shells of the open country species *Vallonia* sp. This assemblage is likely to be indicative of wind-blown/dispersed waste material.

Trench 5

7.8. Sample 2 of Roman ditch/gully 503 contained a very small number of indeterminate cereal grains alongside single black-bindweed (*Fallopia convolvulus*) and oraches/goosefoot (*Atriplex/Chenopodium* sp.) seeds. A small amount of charcoal was observed in the assemblage alongside a few shells belonging to the open country species *Vallonia* sp. This assemblage is also likely to be indicative of wind-blown/dispersed waste material.

Summary

7.9. Sufficiently large quantities of pottery were recovered from the investigated features to indicate activity in the immediate vicinity on which basis the lack of environmental remains is either a reflection of the deposition environment not being conducive to the preservation of such remains or that domestic hearth/ processing waste or

industrial residues were being disposed of elsewhere. The molluscan evidence suggests an open landscape in the immediate vicinity of the ditches.

8. DISCUSSION

8.1. Archaeological remains were identified in trenches 3, 4 and 5, in the east part of the site. No evidence for any activity pre-dating the Roman period was identified, with the earliest dated feature being ditch 403, in trench 4, which produced pottery of mid-Roman date. The fill of this ditch was cut by a small pit or posthole, 405, that produced pottery of late Roman date, as did ditch / gully 503, to the southwest, indicating a C3 – C4 phase of activity and collectively suggesting use of the site from as early as the mid 2nd to the 4th century. No evidence for industrial activity on the site was seen in the form of either pottery wasters or kiln furniture, or industrial residue dumps, although the quantity of pottery recovered from the features investigated suggests a proximity to settlement or a working area. Consequently, it is possible that the activity identified on the site is related, albeit perhaps being on the periphery, to the kilns/ pottery production site noted during construction of the Eastern Bypass, 100m to the east of the Site.

8.2. No evidence for Early Medieval (Saxon) or Medieval activity was identified during the evaluation, while a single sherd of post–medieval pottery recovered from the subsoil in trench 3 was most likely introduced onto the site via agricultural manuring practices.

8.3. Modern disturbance/ truncation to the natural substrate/ archaeological horizon was only seen in trench 7, where part of a large modern pit was seen, while in trench 6 the original subsoil and topsoil appear to have been left in-situ, buried beneath a thin layer of imported/ redeposited silt-clay and topsoil seemingly laid as part of the landscaping works associated with the construction of the Hostel complex.

8.4. The limited number of features exposed means that the results of the evaluation will not contribute to any research agenda themes, although the results do suggest that any further work at the site may expose remains associated with the pottery production site to the east and therefore collectively have the potential to contribute to exploring the relationship between [Roman Period] kilns, workshops and settlements (OWA 2014).

9. CA PROJECT TEAM

9.1. Fieldwork was undertaken by Eilidh Barr, assisted by John Hardisty and Sian Bramble. This report was written by Eilidh Barr. The finds and biological evidence reports were written by Peter Banks, Andy Clarke and Emma Aitken, respectively. The report illustrations were prepared by Helena Munoz-Mojado. The project archive has been compiled and prepared for deposition by Molly Agnew-Henshaw. The project was managed for CA by Adrian Scruby.

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APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench	Context No.	Type	Fill of	Interpretation	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth/ thickness (m)	Spot-date
1	100	Layer		topsoil	mid grey brown silty sand, friable with grass rooting inclusions	15	2	0.4	
1	101	Layer		subsoil	Mid orangey brown, silty sand, friable	15	2	0.2	
1	102	Layer		natural	Mid brownish orange with patches of sub angular stones throughout, silty sand	15	2	>0.6	
2	200	Layer		topsoil	Mid grey brown, silty sand	15	2	0.4	
2	201	Layer		subsoil	Mid grey brown fine, silty sand	15	2	0.1	
2	202	Layer		natural	Mid reddish orange silty sand, mottled with brown patches of rooting, occasional sandstone pebbles	15	2	0.1	
2	203	Layer		Buried topsoil	Dark grey silty sand, with charcoal flecks and ceramic building material pieces	15	2	0.65	
3	300	Layer		topsoil	Mid grey brown, silty sand, friable with rooting inclusions	15	2	0.4	
3	301	Layer		subsoil	mid grey brown silty sand, friable with grass rooting inclusions	15	2	0.15	
3	302	Layer		natural	Mid orangey brown, silty sand, friable	14	2	>0.6	
3	303	Fill	304	Deliberate backfill	Dark grey brown silty sand. Friable with small sub rounded stone inclusions	0.64	0.34	0.11	
3	304	Cut		posthole	Sub circular with concave sides and base	0.64	0.34	0.11	
4	400	Layer		topsoil	Mid grey brown, silty sand	15	2	0.3	
4	401	Layer		subsoil	Mid greyish brown, silty sand,	15	2	0.1	
4	402	Layer		natural	Mid orange brown, silty sand, compact	15	2	>0.4	
4	403	Cut		ditch	NE-SW running linear, concave to the SE, irregular to the NW	>2	1.73	0.34	
4	404	Fill		natural infilling	Mid orangey brown, silty sand, roman pot found	>2	1.73	0.34	
4	405	Cut		posthole	Sub circular, gentle sloping concave sides and concave base	0.7	0.35	0.14	
4	406	Fill		deliberate backfill	Dark grey brownish black, silty sand	0.7	0.35	0.14	
5	500	Layer		topsoil	Mid grey brown, silty sand.	7.5	2	0.3	
5	501	Layer		subsoil	Mid grey brown, silty sand	7.5	2	0.15	
5	502	Layer		natural	Light brownish orange, silty sand	7.5	2	>0.45	
5	503	Cut		ditch	Curvilinear, steep, concave sides and concave base	>2	0.77	0.27	
5	504	Fill		fill	Dark orange brown, silty sand	>2	0.77	0.27	
6	600	Layer		topsoil	Dark grey brown, sandy silt	15	2	0.35	
6	601	Layer		Levelling layer	mid orange brown, silty sand	15	2	0.15	
6	602	Layer		Remnant topsoil	Dark orange brown, sandy silt	15	2	0.45	
6	603	Layer		subsoil	Mid orange brown, sandy silt	15	2	0.45	
6	604	Layer		natural	Light orange brown, silty sand	15	2	>0.75	

7	700	Layer		topsoil	Dark grey brown, silty sand	7.5	2	0.37	
7	701	Layer		subsoil	Mid orange brown, silty sand	7.5	2	0.12	
7	702	Layer		natural	square posthole, flat based	7.5	2	-	
7	703	Cut		Unexcavated modern pit	Sub rectangular pit filled with mid grey brown silty sand and contains fragments of plastic, glass and fragmented ceramic building material	1.5	1	-	

APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

Table 1: Finds Concordance

Context	Class	Sample No.	Description	Fabric Code*	Count	Weight (g)	Spot-date
301	Post-medieval pottery		Glazed red earthenware	GRE	1	147	
	Roman pottery		Oxfordshire red-slipped ware	**OXF RS**	3	113	
	Roman pottery		Oxfordshire oxidised ware	OXF OX	2	46	
404	Roman pottery		Oxfordshire white ware	**OXF WH**	6	38	MC2-MC3
406	Roman pottery		Oxfordshire red-slipped ware	**OXF RS**	3	9	C3-C4
	Roman pottery		Pink grog ware	**PNK GT**	1	40	
	Roman pottery		Oxfordshire white ware	**OXF WH**	1	10	
	CBM			fsc	1	6	
504	Roman pottery		Oxfordshire white ware	**OXF WH**	1	72	C4
504	Roman pottery		Oxfordshire red-slipped ware	**OXF RS**	21	326	
504	Roman pottery		Lower Nene Valley colour coated ware	**LNV CC**	1	50	
504	Roman pottery		Oxfordshire oxidised ware	OXF OX	2	25	
504	Roman pottery		Oxfordshire reduced ware	OXF RE3	4	47	
504	Roman pottery		Oxfordshire reduced colour coated ware	OXF RCC	2	6	
504	Roman pottery		South East Dorset black burnished ware	**DOR BB1**	5	87	
504	Roman pottery	2	Oxfordshire red-slipped ware	**OXF RS**	5	12	

*National Roman Fabric Reference Collection in bold (Tomber and Dore 1998)

Table 2: Summary of Pottery

Period	Fabric Description	Fabric Codes*	Oxford Fabric Series**	Count	Weight (g)
Roman pottery	Oxfordshire oxidised ware	OXF OX	O21	4	71
	Oxfordshire reduced colour coated ware	OXF RCC	F80	2	6
	Oxfordshire reduced ware	OXF RE3	R30	4	47
	Oxfordshire red-slipped ware	**OXF RS**	F51	32	460
	Oxfordshire white ware	**OXF WH**	M22/W12	8	120
	South East Dorset Black-burnished ware	**DOR BB1**	B11	5	87
	Lower Nene Valley colour coated ware	**LNV CC**	F52	1	50
	Pink grog-tempered ware	**PNK GT**	O81	1	40
Post-medieval pottery	Glazed red earthenware	GRE		1	147
Grand Total				**58**	**1028**

* National Roman Fabric Reference Collection in bold (Tomber and Dore 1998)
**Oxford Archaeology fabric series (Booth *unpublished*)

APPENDIX C: THE PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

Table 1: Identified animal species by fragment count (NISP) and weight and context

Cut	Fill	BOS	Ind	BB SS	Total	Weight (g)
	301	1	2		3	26
403	404			4	4	0.1
405	406	1			1	29
503	504			4	4	0.1
Total		**2**	**2**	**8**	**12**	
Weight		**53**	**2**	**0.2**	**55.2**	

BOS = cattle; Ind = indeterminate; BB SS = burnt, unidentifiable fragments from bulk soil samples

Table 2: Assessment of the palaeoenvironmental remains

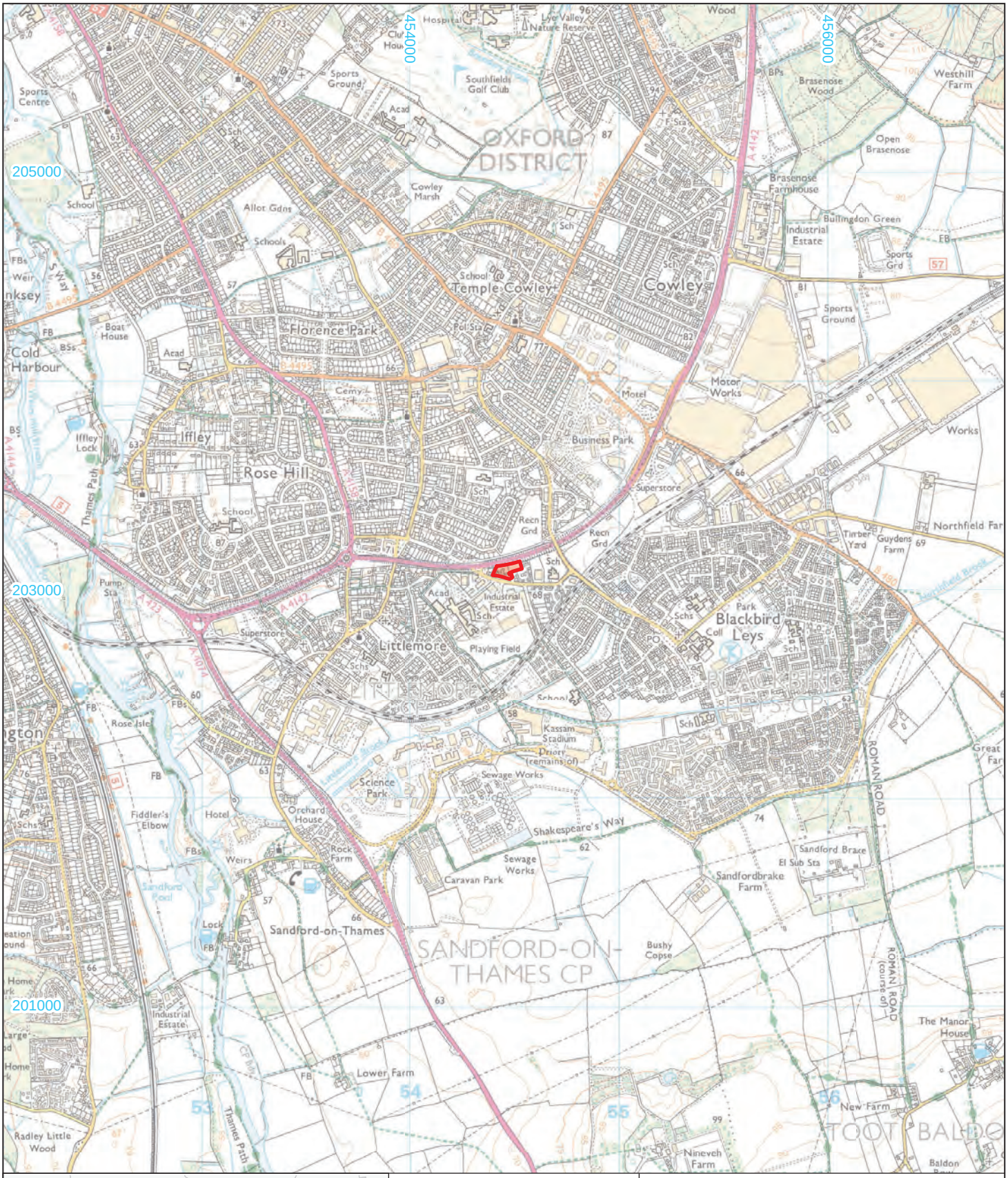
Feature	Context	Sample	Vol (L)	Flot size (ml)	Roots %	Grain	Chaff	Cereal Notes	Charred Other	Charred Other Notes	Charcoal > 4/2mm	Other
Trench 4												
Ditch 403	404	1	17	22	98	*	-	cf. f-t wheat grain	*	*Corylus avellana*	*/**	moll-t**
Trench 5												
Ditch/Gully 503	504	2	15	35	98	*	-	indet grain	*	*Fallopia; Atriplex/Chenopodium*	**/**	moll-t*

Key: * = 1–4 items; ** = 4–20 items; *** = 21–49 items; **** = 50–99 items; ***** = >100 items
moll-t = terrestrial mollusc

APPENDIX D: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	Northfield Hostel, Littlemore, Oxford	
Short description	In November 2021, Cotswold Archaeology carried out an archaeological evaluation (of land) at Northfield Hostel, Littlemore, Oxford, a total of 7 trenches were excavated across the 0.61ha site, which is located approximately 100m to the east of a Roman pottery production site identified during the construction of the Oxford Eastern Bypass. Archaeological remains were identified in trenches 3, 4 and 5. No evidence for any activity pre-dating the Roman period was identified, with the earliest dated feature being ditch 403, in trench 4, which produced pottery of mid-Roman date. The fill of this ditch was cut by a small pit or posthole, 405, that produced pottery of late Roman date, as did ditch / gully 503, to the southwest, indicating a C3 – C4 phase of activity and collectively suggesting use of the site from as early as the mid-2nd to the 4th century. No evidence for industrial activity on the site was seen in the form of either pottery wasters or kiln furniture, or industrial residue dumps, although the quantity of pottery recovered from the features investigated suggests a proximity to settlement or a working area. Consequently, it is possible that the activity identified on the site is related, albeit perhaps being on the periphery, to the kilns/ pottery production site noted during construction of the Eastern Bypass. No evidence for Early Medieval (Saxon) or Medieval activity was identified during the evaluation, while a single sherd of post–medieval pottery recovered from the subsoil in trench 3 was most likely introduced onto the site via agricultural manuring practices. Modern disturbance/ truncation to the natural substrate/ archaeological horizon was only seen in trench 7, where part of a large modern pit was seen, while in trench 6 the original subsoil and topsoil appear to have been left in-situ, buried beneath a thin layer of imported/ redeposited silt-clay and topsoil seemingly laid as part of the landscaping works associated with the construction of the Hostel complex.	
Project dates	17–19 November 2021	
Project type	Field evaluation	
Previous work	Archaeological Desk-based Assessment (OA 2017)	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site location	Northfield Hostel, Littlemore, Oxford	
Study area (m^2/ha)	0.61ha	
Site co-ordinates	454468 203094	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Oxford City Council	
Project design (WSI) originator	WSP	
Project Manager	Adrian Scruby	
Project Supervisor	Eilidh Barr	
MONUMENT TYPE	Ditch, pit, posthole	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	Pottery, animal bone	
PROJECT ARCHIVES	**Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.)**	**Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)**
Physical	Oxfordshire Museum Service	ceramics, animal bone
Paper	Oxfordshire Museum Service	Context sheets, registers, matrices, drawings, report
Digital	Archaeology Data Service	Survey, digital photos, report

BIBLIOGRAPHY
Add reference this report only, for example: Cotswold Archaeology 2021. *Northfield Hostel, Littlemore, Oxford: Archaeological Evaluation* CA typescript report MK0597_3



Cotswold Archaeology

Andover 01264 347630
Cirencester 01285 771022
Milton Keynes 01908 564660
Suffolk 01449 900120
w www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
e enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE

Northfield Hostel, Littlemore, Oxford

FIGURE TITLE

Site location plan

DRAWN BY	**HMM**	*PROJECT NO.*	**MK0597**	*FIGURE NO.*
CHECKED BY	**DJB**	*DATE*	**02/12/2021**	**1**
APPROVED BY	**EB**	*SCALE@A4*	**1:25,000**	

N

- Site boundary
- Evaluation trench
- Archaeological feature (unexcavated/excavated)
- Modern
- Natural
- A A Section location
- Service buffer
- Building
- Tree canopy/ Vegetation

0 1:1000 50m

Cotswold Archaeology

Andover 01264 347630
Cirencester 01285 771022
Milton Keynes 01908 564660
Suffolk 01449 900120
w www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
e enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE

Northfield Hostel, Littlemore, Oxford

FIGURE TITLE

Trench location plan

DRAWN BY	**HMM**	*PROJECT NO.*	**MK0597**	*FIGURE NO.*
CHECKED BY	**DJB**	*DATE*	**02/12/2021**	**2**
APPROVED BY	**EB**	*SCALE@A3*	**1:1000**	

Trench 1, looking north-east (1m scales)

Trench 2, looking north-east (1m scales)

Trench 3, looking south-west (1m scales)

Trench 6, looking north-west (1m scales)

Cotswold Archaeology

Andover 01264 347630
Cirencester 01285 771022
Milton Keynes 01908 564660
Suffolk 01449 900120
w www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
e enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE

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FIGURE TITLE

Blank trenches: photographs

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CHECKED BY	**DJB**	*DATE*	**02/12/2021**	**3**
APPROVED BY	**EB**	*SCALE@A3*	**NA**	

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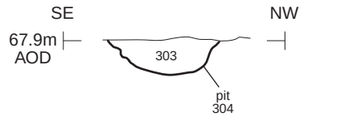

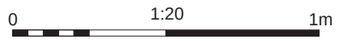

Trench 3, looking west (1m scales)

Posthole 304, looking north-east (0.3m scale)

Cotswold Archaeology

Andover 01264 347630
Cirencester 01285 771022
Milton Keynes 01908 564660
Suffolk 01449 900120
w www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
e enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

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Trench 3: section and photographs

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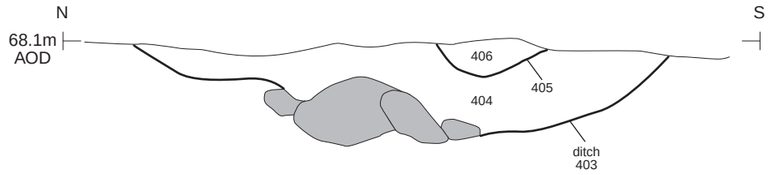
Section BB



Trench 4, looking south (1m scales)

Ditch 403, looking east (1m scale)

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Andover 01264 347630
Cirencester 01285 771022
Milton Keynes 01908 564660
Suffolk 01449 900120
w www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
e enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

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FIGURE TITLE

Trench 4: section and photographs

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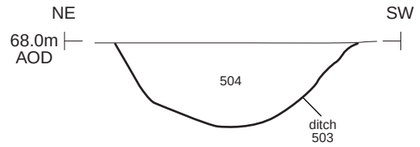
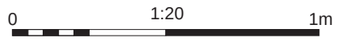
APPROVED BY	**EB**	*SCALE@A3*	**1:20**	

Section CC





Trench 5, looking south (1m scales)

Ditch 503, looking west (0.5m scale)

Cotswold Archaeology

Andover 01264 347630
Cirencester 01285 771022
Milton Keynes 01908 564660
Suffolk 01449 900120
w www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
e enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE

Northfield Hostel, Littlemore, Oxford

FIGURE TITLE

Trench 5: section and photographs

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APPROVED BY	**EB**	*SCALE@A3*	**1:20**	

Cotswold Archaeology

Andover Office

Stanley House
Walworth Road
Andover
Hampshire
SP10 5LH

t: 01264 347630

Cirencester Office

Building 11
Cotswold Business Park
Cirencester
Gloucestershire
GL7 6BQ

t: 01285 771022

Milton Keynes Office

Unit 8 - The IO Centre
Fingle Drive, Stonebridge
Milton Keynes
Buckinghamshire
MK13 0AT

t: 01908 564660

Suffolk Office

Unit 5, Plot 11, Maitland Road
Lion Barn Industrial Estate
Needham Market
Suffolk
IP6 8NZ

t: 01449 900120

e: enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk