

New Tennis Court Coberley Court Barn Coberley Gloucestershire

Archaeological Strip, Map and Record Excavation

> for Verity and Beverley on behalf of Sir Gareth and Lady Harriet Rhys-Williams

> > CA Project: 4198 CA Report: 13499

September 2013

New Tennis Court Coberley Court Barn Coberley Gloucestershire

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CA Project: 4198 CA Report: 13499

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SUMMARY

Project Name:	New Tennis Court
Location:	Coberley Court Barn, Coberley, Gloucestershire
NGR:	SO 9650 1586
Туре:	Strip, Map and Record Excavation
Date:	29–31 July 2013
Planning Reference:	12/05382/FUL
Location of Archive:	To be deposited with Corinium Museum
Site Code:	TEN 13

An archaeological strip, map and record excavation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology prior to the development of a new tennis court at Coberley Court Barn, Coberley, Gloucestershire.

The excavation revealed two large medieval gravel extraction pits. Ditches belonging to part of a later medieval enclosure and an undated posthole were also recorded. The footings for a modern cow-shed and an area of modern disturbance were identified.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In July 2013 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological strip, map and record excavation for Verity and Beverley on behalf of Sir Gareth and Lady Harriet Rhys-Williams at Coberley Court Barns, Coberley, Gloucestershire (centred on NGR: SO 9650 1586; Fig. 1). The strip, map and record excavation was undertaken to fulfil a condition attached to a planning consent granted by Cotswold district Council (CDC) for the construction of a new tennis court (Planning ref: 12/05382/FUL). Condition 3 stated that:

No development shall take place within the application site until the applicant... has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: to make provision for a programme of archaeological mitigation, so as to record and advance understanding of any heritage assets which will be lost, in accordance with paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

1.2 The excavation was carried out in accordance with a detailed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by CA (2013) and approved by CDC acting on the advice of Charles Parry, Senior Archaeological Officer, Gloucestershire County Council (GCC). The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and guidance for an archaeological excavation* (IfA 2009), the *Statement of Standards and Practices Appropriate for Archaeological Fieldwork in Gloucestershire,* the *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (English Heritage 1991) and the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide* (English Heritage 2006).

The site

1.3 The proposed development area comprises an area of approximately 0.2ha of gardens enclosed by high dry stone walls, immediately to the west of the current Coberley Court Barn residence (Fig. 2). The site is bordered to the west by trees and open grassland on the floodplain of the river Churn. The site lies at approximately 187m AOD.

1.4 The underlying solid geology of the area is mapped as mudstone of the Whitby Mudstone Formation of the Jurassic Period, overlain by superficial deposits of alluvial gravels and clays of the Quaternary Period (BGS 2012). Alluvial gravels were encountered at a depth of 0.15-0.38m below present ground level (bpgl).

Archaeological background

- 1.5 The site of the new tennis court lies immediately to the west of Coberley Court Barn and to the north-west of St Giles Church. Coberley Court Barn is a Grade II listed building with parts that may date to the 17th century or earlier (English Heritage List Entry Summary, List Entry Number 1152691). An engraving by Kip shows a barn on the same alignment *c*. 1712 (Verey and Brooks 1999, 288). The engraving also recorded that another barn or outbuilding and formal gardens stood close to the site of the new tennis court. St Giles Church is Norman in origin and was rebuilt in *c*. 1347 (op. cit, 287). Immediately to the south-east of the church stood the medieval manor of Coberley Court (also shown in the Kip engraving), which was demolished in 1790.
- 1.6 A trial trench evaluation of the site carried out by Cotswold Archaeology in 2012 identified ditches that potentially related to the garden layout of the 18th century manorial complex, though no evidence was uncovered of structural elements of the manor within the development site.

Archaeological objectives

- 1.7 The objectives of the archaeological mitigation were to:
 - record the nature of the main stratigraphic units encountered
 - assess the overall presence, survival and potential of structural and industrial remains
 - assess the overall presence, survival, condition, and potential of artefactual and ecofactual remains
- 1.8 The specific aims of the work were to:
 - record any evidence of elements of Coberley Court and its grounds
 - recover artefactual evidence to date any evidence of past settlement that may be identified
 - sample and analyse environmental remains to create a better understanding of past land use and economy

Methodology

- 1.9 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2013). The area was excavated by mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. Where archaeological deposits were encountered they were excavated by hand in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual* (2007).
- 1.10 Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential in accordance with CA Technical Manual 2: *The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites* (2003) but no deposits were identified that required sampling. All artefacts recovered were processed in accordance with Technical Manual 3 *Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation* (1995).
- 1.11 The archive and artefacts from the excavation are currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the artefacts will be deposited with Corinium Museum along with the site archive. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix D, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

2. RESULTS (FIGS 2-4)

- 2.1 This section provides an overview of the excavation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts and finds are to be found in Appendices A and B respectively.
- 2.2 The natural geological substrate, 1010, consisting of light orange-yellow alluvial gravel was encountered across the site at a maximum depth of 0.38m bpgl. The natural was cut by two gravel extraction quarry pits, two ditches and a posthole.
- 2.3 Quarry pit 1006 was irregular in plan, 13m long, 8m wide and 0.94m deep with steep sides and a flat base. On its eastern side the pit contained an initial fill, 1012, of loose, redeposited natural gravel 0.1m thick that is likely to have been deposited due to erosion of the pit sides immediately after the gravel was extracted. This was sealed by a 0.3m thick layer of mid brown-grey silty sand containing frequent

inclusions of limestone brash, 1013. This was in turn sealed by the uppermost fill, 1014, comprising 0.54m of slightly lighter brown-grey silt containing higher proportions of brash. Fill 1014 was cut by quarry pit 1008, which was also irregular in plan, 9m long, 5m wide and 0.47m deep with steep sides and a flat base (Fig. 4, section DD). It contained a single mid grey brown sandy silt disuse backfill, 1009, containing frequent limestone brash inclusions. No dating evidence was recovered during the excavation, however 11th to13th-century pottery was recovered during the evaluation from fill layers likely to correspond to fill 1014.

- 2.4 Fill 1009 of quarry pit 1008 was seen in plan to be cut by Ditch A (1005, 1019 and 1026), which was north-east/south-west aligned and turned through 90 degrees near the south-western corner of the excavation area to run north-west/south-east. The ditch was a maximum of 2.2m wide and 0.71m deep and had a steep u-shaped profile (Figs 3 and 4, sections AA, BB and CC). In the north-west/south-east aligned section of the ditch it contained primary silting layer 1025 containing frequent gravel inclusions. The secondary fill of the ditch, (1004, 1017 and 1024) was a mid yellow-brown silty sand containing frequent limestone brash from which 13th to 14th-century and 15th to 17th-century pottery, medieval iron, stone roof tile and fragments of ceramic building material (CBM) were recovered. Ditch A was recut by Ditch B (1016, 1020 and 1023), which was 0.82 to 1.6m wide and 0.39 to 0.69m deep. It was filled by mid brown grey silt containing frequent limestone brash and 14th-century CBM.
- 2.5 Posthole 1003 was located immediately to the north of Ditch A. It was sub-circular in plan, 0.35m in diameter and 0.38m deep (Fig. 4, section EE). It contained a single fill, 1002, comprising mid brown-grey silty sand with frequent inclusions of small stones and gravel. No dating evidence was recovered from the feature.
- 2.6 Several modern features including a shallow pit containing animal bones, the footings of a cow shed and a foul-water service pipe were identified and recorded in plan. Modern material including plastic objects were noted in the fills of all of these features and were not retained. The north-western corner of the development area was truncated by modern landscaping.
- 2.7 In the south-western part of the excavation area the fills of the features were sealed by a thin layer of subsoil, 1001, in the rest of the site they were directly overlain by topsoil layer 1000.

The finds

2.8 Finds recovered from the excavation included pottery, ceramic building material, and iron and stone objects.

Pottery: Medieval

2.9 Three sherds of medieval pottery in a coarse, sand-tempered fabric were recovered from ditch fill 1004 (Ditch 1005). All were unfeatured bodysherds and are tentatively identified as Worcester type unglazed sandy coarsewares, dateable to the 12th to 14th centuries.

Pottery: Medieval/Post-medieval

2.10 Ditch fill 1017 (Ditch 1019) produced two joining basesherds from a Midlands Purple vessel. This 'proto-stoneware', wheel-thrown fabric dates from the 15th to mid-17th centuries (Soden and Ratkai 1998, 194).

Ceramic Building Material

- 2.11 A total of five fragments of medieval ceramic building material were recovered from ditch fills 1004 (Ditch 1005) and 1015 (Ditch 1016). This included two pieces in North Wiltshire oolitic limestone tempered fabric (Minety) from fill 1015 and one from 1004. One of the fragments from fill 1015 was a piece of the crest from a ridge (roof) tile.
- 2.12 Three joining fragments of late medieval/early post-medieval ceramic building material were recovered from ditch fill 1024 (Ditch 1026).

Stone objects

2.13 A total of three fragments of medieval stone roof tile were recovered from ditch fills 1004 (Ditch 1005) and 1017 (Ditch 1019).

Iron objects

2.14 One fragment of a curving, rod-like iron object was recovered from ditch fill 1004. This was probably a piece of a bucket handle. A total of four iron nails were recovered from ditch fills 1015 (Ditch 1016) and 1017 (Ditch 1019).

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 The results of the archaeological strip, map and sample excavation serve to refine and augment the evidence of medieval activity on the site identified during the evaluation, which can now be distinguished into two broad phases.
- 3.2 The earliest phase of medieval activity is represented by quarry pits 1006 and 1008. These pits appear to have been dug in order to extract alluvial sand and gravel. It may be that this material was needed in the construction and layout of the early church and manorial complex. The size of the pit, allied with its irregular shape in plan, suggests that it may represent several successive episodes of gravel extraction, which were all backfilled with the same grey-brown material containing large amounts of limestone brash.
- 3.3 A second phase of medieval activity was attested by the two ditches, Ditch A and the recut Ditch B, which were seen in plan to cut the backfills of the quarry pits. Ditch A appeared to correlate with ditch 206 from the evaluation. The ditches turned to the north-west near the south-western corner of the excavation area, forming the southeastern and north-western sides of a rectilinear enclosure. Fragments of pottery recovered from fill 1004 of Ditch A suggest a 13th to 14th-century date for the ditch fill. Fragments of CBM and iron recovered from fill 1015 of Ditch B dated to the 14th century and correlate well with the 13th-century pottery, iron and CBM recovered from the corresponding ditch fill during the evaluation. The finds evidence indicates that the ditches date to the 13th to 14th centuries and that the two sherds of 15th to 17th-century pottery recovered from fill 1017 of Ditch A were likely to have been intrusive. The enclosure respects the alignment of Coberley Court and St Giles Church (Fig. 2), suggesting that may be associated with these buildings. It also remains possible that the ditches were part of the formal gardens depicted on Kip's engravings (Verey and Brooks 1999, 288.
- 3.4 No structural remains belonging to the medieval manor were present within the development area.

4. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Charlotte Haines, Christopher Leonard and Rebecca Riley. The report was written by Christopher Leonard. The finds report was written

by Jacky Sommerville. The illustrations were prepared by Daniel Bashford. The archive has been compiled by Christopher Leonard, and prepared for deposition by James Johnson. The project was managed for CA by Richard Young.

5. **REFERENCES**

- BGS (British Geological Survey) 2013 *Geology of Britain Viewer* http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html Accessed 07 August 2013
- CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2013 New Tennis Court, Coberley Court Barn, Coberley, Gloucestershire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation
- CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2012 Coberley Court Barn, Coberley, Gloucestershire: Archaeological Evaluation. CA Report No. **12326**
- Soden, I. and Ratkai, S. 1998. *Warwickshire Medieval and Post Medieval Pottery Type Series*. Warwick. Warwickshire Museum Field Services.
- Verey, D. and Brooks, A. 1999 The Buildings of England: Gloucestershire 1: The Cotswolds.

APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Context No.	Туре	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth (m)	Spot- date
1000	Layer		Topsoil	Mid grey brown sandy silt	/		0.28	Modern
1001	Layer		Subsoil	Light yellow brown sandy silt with frequent small stones and gravel			0.10	Modern
1002	Fill	1003	Posthole fill	Mid brown grey silty sand	0.35	0.3	0.38	
1003	Cut		Posthole	Sub-circular in plan with vertical sides and flat base	0.35	0.3	0.38	
1004	Fill	1005	Ditch fill	Mid yellow brown silty sand with frequent small–large limestones	1.0 exc.	1.32	0.41	C13–14
1005	Cut		Ditch	NE/SW aligned. Linear in plan with moderately steep sides and flat base	1.0 exc.	1.32	0.41	
1006	Cut		Quarry pit	Sub-circular in plan with steep sides and flat base. Same as 1011	1.5 Exc.	0.82 Exc.	0.69	
1007	Fill	1006	Quarry pit fill	Limestone brash in mid grey brown sandy silt matrix. Same as 1014	1.5 Exc.	0.82 Exc.	0.69	
1008	Cut		Quarry pit	Amorphous shape with steep sides and flat base	0.7 Exc.	0.45 Exc.	0.47	
1009	Fill	1008	Quarry pit fill	Mid grey brown sandy silt with frequent limestone brash	0.7 Exc.	0.45 Exc.	0.47	
1010	Layer		Natural	Light orange yellow alluvial gravel				
1011	Cut		Quarry pit	Sub-circular in plan with vertical sides and flat base. Same as 1006	1.0 Exc.	1.0 Exc.	0.94	
1012	Fill	1011	Quarry pit fill	Lower fill: light brown yellow sand and gravel	1.0 Exc.	1.0 Exc.	0.1	
1013	Fill	1011	Quarry pit fill	Mid brown grey silty sand with frequent limestone brash	1.0 Exc.	1.0 Exc.	0.3	
1014	Fill	1011	Quarry pit fill	Light brown grey silty sand with frequent limestone brash. Same as 1007	1.0 Exc	1.0 Exc.	0.54	
1015	Fill	1016	Ditch fill	Mid brown grey clay silt with frequent limestone brash	2.0 Exc.	1.6	0.69	C14
1016	Cut		Ditch	NE/SW aligned. Linear in plan with steep sides and a flat base	2.0 Exc.	1.6	0.69	
1017	Fill	1019	Ditch fill	Mid yellow-brown sandy clay with frequent limestone brash	2.0 Exc.	>0.7	0.71	C15–17
1018				Void				
1019	Cut		Ditch	NE/SW aligned. Linear in plan with steep sides and flat base	2.0 Exc.	>0.7	0.71	
1020	Cut		Ditch	NE/SW aligned. Linear in plan with moderately steep sides and concave base	1.0 Exc.	0.82	0.39	
1021	Fill	1020	Ditch fill	Dark brown-grey silty sand with frequent limestone brash	1.0 Exc.	0.82	0.39	
1022	Fill	1023	Ditch fill	Mid brown-grey sandy silt with frequent limestone brash	1.0 Exc.	1.24	0.46	
1023	Cut		Ditch	NE/SW aligned. Linear in plan with steep sides and concave base	1.0 Exc.	1.24	0.46	
1024	Fill	1026	Ditch fill	Mid yellow-grey sandy silt with frequent limestone brash and gravel	1.0 Exc.	>1.2	0.48	Late Med/ Post-med
1025	Fill	1026	Ditch fill	Light yellow-grey clay silt with frequent gravel	1.0 Exc.	0.71	0.16	
1026	Cut		Ditch	NE/SW aligned. Linear in plan with steep sides and flat base	1.0 Exc.	>1.2	0.64	

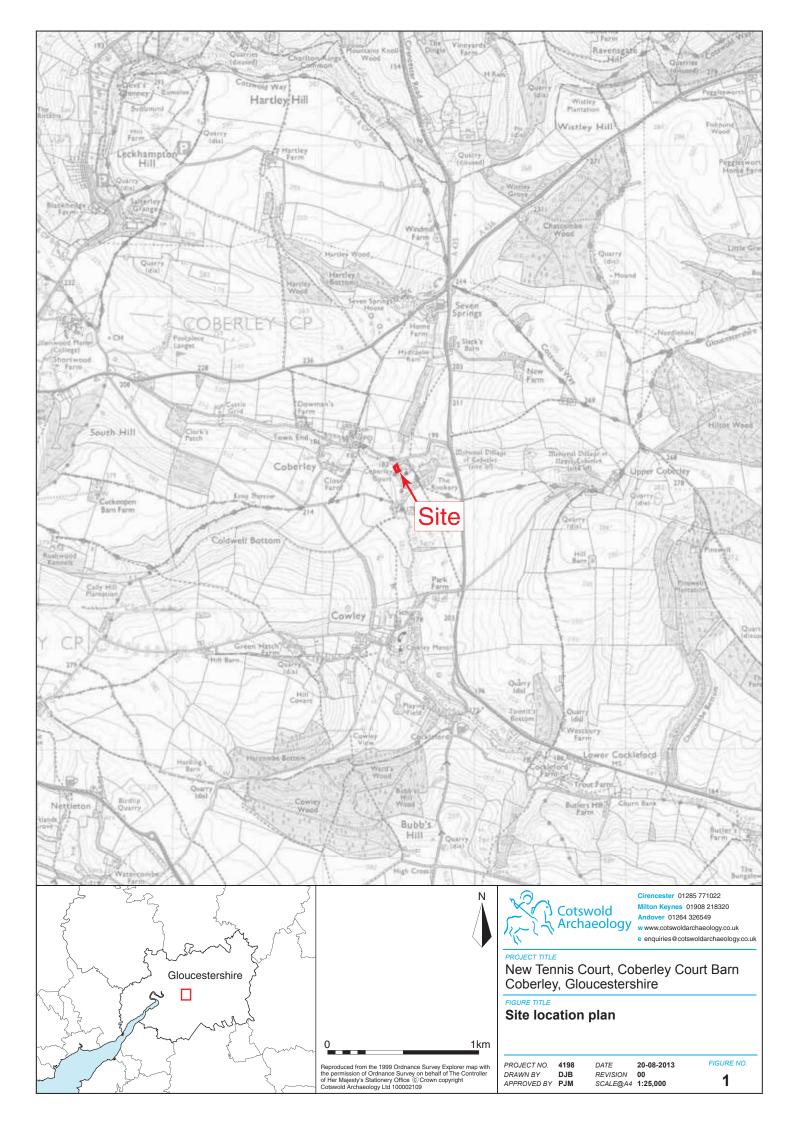
APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

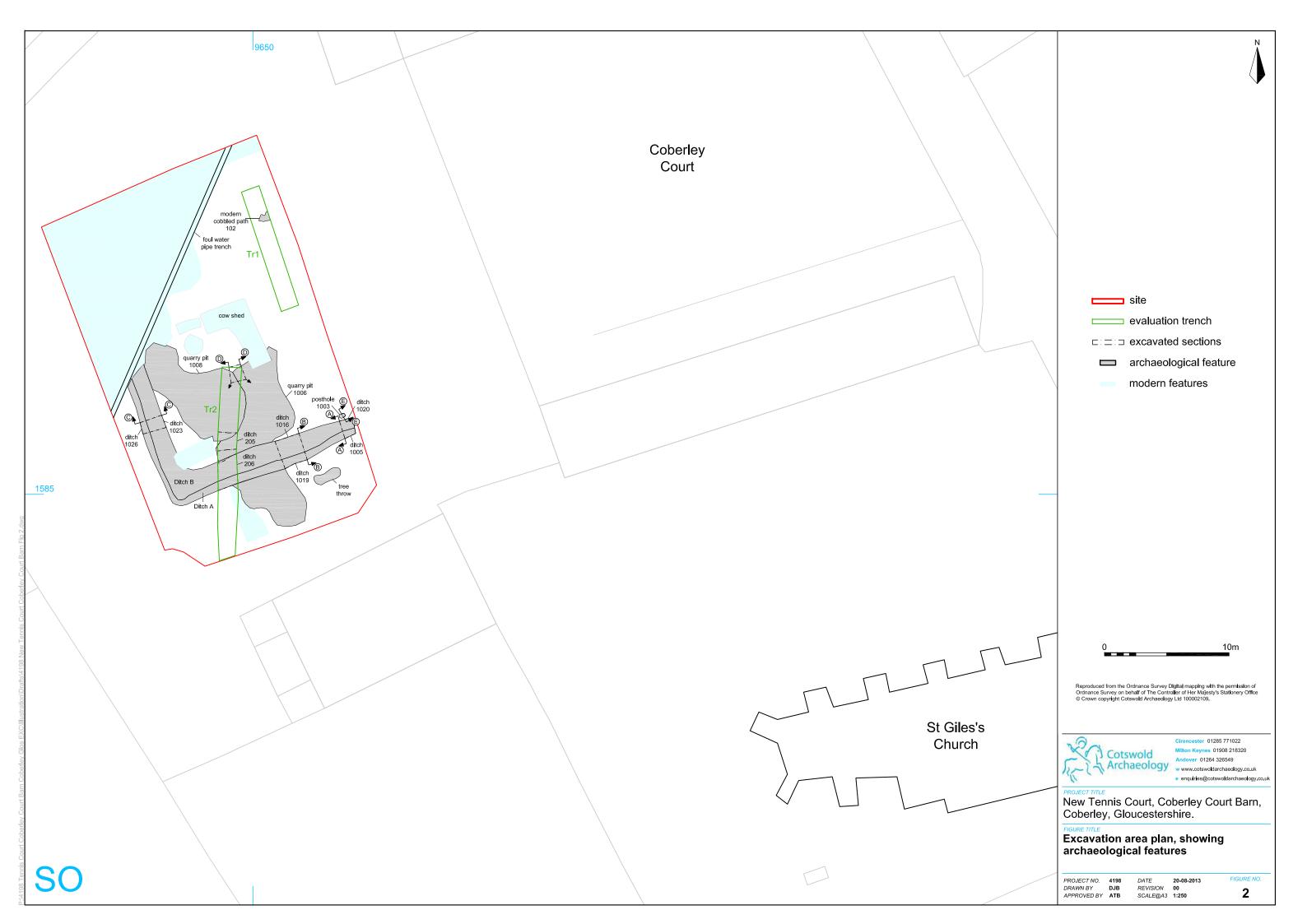
Context	Description	Count	Weight(g)	Spot-date
1004	Medieval pottery: sandy coarseware	3	12	C13-C14
	Medieval CBM: tile	2	20	
	Iron	1	16	
	Stone: roof tile	1	348	
1015	Medieval CBM	3	75	C14
	Iron	1	5	
1017	Medieval/Post-medieval pottery: Midlands purple	2	27	C15-C17
	Iron	3	22	
	Stone: roof tile	2	283	
1024	Medieval/Post-medieval CBM	3	44	Late Medieval/
				Early Post-
				medieval

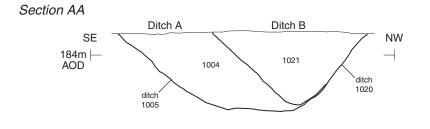
APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS

Project Name	New Tennis Court, Coberley Court B	New Tennis Court, Coberley Court Barn, Coberley, Gloucestershire			
hort description An archaeological strip, map and record excava undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology prior to the develop new tennis court at Coberley Court Barn, Gloucestershire.					
	The excavation revealed two large n Ditches belonging to pat of a later undated posthole were also recorder cow-shed and an area of modern dis	r medieval enclosure and an ed. The footings for a modern			
Project dates	29–31 July 2013	turbance were identified.			
Project type	Excavation				
Previous work	Archaeological evaluation (Cotswold	Archaeology 2012)			
Future work	Unknown	Archaeology 2012)			
PROJECT LOCATION	Unknown				
Site Location	Coberley Court Barn, Coberley, Glou	Coberley Court Barn, Coberley, Gloucestershire			
Study area	0.2 ha				
Site co-ordinates	SO 9650 1586				
PROJECT CREATORS					
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	Cotswold Archaeology			
Project Brief originator	N/A				
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology				
Project Manager	Richard Young				
Project Supervisor	Christopher Leonard				
MONUMENT TYPE	None				
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	None				
PROJECT ARCHIVES	Intended final location of archive	Content			
Physical	Corinium Museum	For example ceramics, animal bone, metal objects			
Paper	Corinium Museum	Context sheets, registers			
Digital	Corinium Museum	Database, digital photos			
BIBLIOGRAPHY					
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2013	New Tennis Court, Coberley Court Ban	n, Coberley, Gloucestershre			







Section BB

