

**LAND ADJACENT TO KING'S
BRIDGE, YARNTON
OXFORDSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

For

MHJ LTD

CA PROJECT: 2751
CA REPORT: 08245

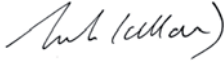
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CA PROJECT: 2751
CA REPORT: 08245

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CONTENTS

SUMMARY	4
1. INTRODUCTION	5
2. RESULTS (FIG 2)	7
3. DISCUSSION	8
4. CA PROJECT TEAM	8
5. REFERENCES	8
APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS	9
APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM	12

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1 Site location plan (1:25,000)

Fig. 2 Trench Location Plan (1:1250)

SUMMARY

Project Name: Land adjacent to Kings Bridge
Location: Yarnton, Oxfordshire
NGR: SP 4896 1176
Type: Evaluation
Date: 28 November – 2 December 2008
Location of Archive: To be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Services
Site Code: PTM 08

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in November and December 2008 at the request of MHJ Ltd on land adjacent to King's Bridge, Yarnton, Oxfordshire. Nine trenches were excavated.

The evaluation established that the site was covered with alluvial clays that sealed a natural sandy clay substrate. While the potential remained for pre-Roman archaeological features and deposits to be sealed by this alluvium, further excavation of the deposit beyond three trial holes was not possible due to the ingress of ground water.

A series of earthworks that were previously interpreted as the remnants of ridge and furrow were found by the evaluation to be a series of post-medieval/modern open drains running east/west and north/south across the site.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In December 2008 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for MHJ Ltd on land adjacent to King's Bridge, Yarnton, Oxfordshire (centred on NGR: SP 4896 1176; Fig. 1). The evaluation was undertaken prior to the submission of a planning application to Cherwell District Council (CDC) for the redevelopment of the site.
- 1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a brief for archaeological evaluation supplied by Mr Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist, Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (OCAS 2008), the archaeological advisor to the Local Planning Authority, CDC, and with a subsequent detailed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by CA (2008) and approved by Mr Richard Oram. The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (2001) and the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991). It was monitored by Richard Oram, including a site visit on 1 December 2008.

The site

- 1.3 The site comprises a single field located immediately to the north of King's Canal Bridge where the route of the A44 road crosses the Oxford Canal (Fig. 2). The site is bounded to the north and west by pasture fields, to the south by a boatyard and to the east by the Oxford Canal itself. The site is flat and lies at approximately 60m AOD.
- 1.4 The site is approximately 2.7 hectares in size and is currently under rough pasture. It is also covered with weeds and undergrowth growing near to 2m in height.
- 1.5 The underlying drift geology, mapped as Alluvium of the Quaternary era (BGS, 1982, Sheets 236), was encountered in all nine trenches. Trial pits in Trenches 7, 8 and 9 revealed the alluvium to be approximately 0.75m in depth overlying sandy post-glacial clays.

Archaeological background

- 1.6 The site is located in an area of archaeological potential. In particular it lies approximately 150m south of cropmarks previously identified on aerial photographs that indicate the presence of a system of trackways aligned north/south and east/west as well as associated enclosures (Oxon HER 15098). This site is thought to be covered by alluvium and the visible cropmarks, of probable late prehistoric/Roman origin, are assumed to be cut through this deposit (OCAS 2008).
- 1.7 Within the greater hinterland of the application area, Late Mesolithic to Early Neolithic flint, along with associated contemporary features and a late Iron Age to early Roman penannular ditched enclosure with associated ditches and other features have previously been recorded 600m to the north-east (Oxon HER 15811) (ibid.).
- 1.8 Traces of what appeared to be ridge and furrow, which had the potential to mask any earlier features showing as cropmarks, were noted across the proposed development area from the same aerial photographs

Archaeological objectives

- 1.9 The objectives of the evaluation were to provide data on the date, character, quality, survival and extent of the archaeological deposits within the application area in order that an informed decision on their importance in a local, regional or national context could be made. This information would clarify whether any remains were of sufficient importance to warrant consideration for preservation *in situ*, or alternatively form the basis of mitigation measures that could seek to limit damage to significant remains.

Methodology

- 1.10 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of nine trenches each measuring 50m by 1.8m, in the locations shown on the attached plan (Fig. 2). Trenches 8 and 9 were moved slightly from their original locations to avoid the large north/south aligned open drain that crosses the western third of the site. This re-positioning was carried out with the approval of Mr Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist, OCAS.

- 1.11 All trenches were 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).
- 1.12 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) and no deposits were identified that required sampling.
- 1.13 The archive from the evaluation is currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the archive will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Services. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix B, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

2. RESULTS (FIG. 2)

- 2.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results; detailed summaries of the recorded contexts are to be found in Appendix A.
- 2.2 The evaluation exposed no pre-modern archaeological features, deposits or artefacts. All nine trenches exposed alluvial clay below the current topsoil. The top of this clay was used as the limit of excavation in most trenches, although trial holes were mechanically excavated through it in Trenches 7, 8 and 9. These trial holes revealed the alluvial clay to be approximately 0.75m in depth sealing a light yellowish brown sandy clay. No further excavation of the alluvial clay was possible due to the ingress of both surface and below-ground water that flooded all nine trenches immediately upon excavation.
- 2.3 Much of this water flowed from a series of east/west aligned open drains and two north/south aligned drains that cross the site (Fig. 2). Some of these east/west drains were exposed in Trenches 3, 4 and 9 while the two north/south features were found in Trench 1 and at the eastern end of Trench 5.

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 Although the evaluation identified no pre-modern archaeological features, deposits and artefacts, the potential remains for Iron Age and earlier features to be sealed below the alluvial clay.
- 3.2 It is clear from the results of the evaluation that the open drains are not associated with ridge and furrow agriculture as previously interpreted, rather they form part of a post-medieval/modern field drainage system that leads into a main north-south aligned drain on the eastern side of the site. This form of drainage is very similar to the 'ridge and vurrow' and the 'grip' systems common in the Severn Levels (see Rippon 1997, 20-21).

4. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Neil J. Adam, assisted by Darran Muddiman and Ashley Strutt. The report was written by Neil J. Adam. The illustrations were prepared by Rachael Kershaw. The archive has been compiled and prepared for deposition by Kathryn Price. The project was managed for CA by Clifford Bateman.

5. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 1982, *sheet 256*

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2008 *Land Adjacent to Kings Bridge, Yarnton, Oxfordshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

OCAS (Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service) 2008 *OS Parcel 9875 Adjoining Oxford Canal and North of the Gables, Woodstock Road, Yarnton. Design Brief for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment/Non-Intrusive Field Survey*

Rippon, S 1997 *The Severn Estuary: landscape evolution and wetland reclamation*

APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench 1

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
100	Layer	Mid dark greyish brown clay silt. Topsoil	50+	1.8+	0.12	
101	Layer	Mid grey yellowish brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of fluvial gravel. Subsoil.	50+	1.8+	0.20	
102	Natural	Mid to light greyish brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of reddish brown iron oxide. Alluvium.	50+	1.8+	0.05+	
103	Layer	Mid greyish brown silty clay with frequent angular stone fragments and plastic sheeting. Fill of modern pit 104.	-	2	0.60+	
104	Cut	Modern pit. Square in plan with vertical sides. Not bottomed. Located at mid point of trench.	-	2	0.60+	
105	Fill	Mid greyish brown clay silt with occasional angular stone fragments. Fill of modern drain 106.	1.8+	5	0.62	
106	Cut	Modern open field drain.	1.8+	5	0.62	

Trench 2

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
200	Layer	Mid dark greyish brown clay silt. Topsoil	50+	1.8+	0.12	
201	Layer	Mid grey yellowish brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of fluvial gravel. Subsoil.	50+	1.8+	0.22	
202	Natural	Mid to light greyish brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of reddish brown iron oxide. Alluvium.	50+	1.8+	0.05+	

Trench 3

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
300	Layer	Mid dark greyish brown clay silt. Topsoil	50+	1.8+	0.15	
301	Layer	Mid grey yellowish brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of fluvial gravel. Subsoil.	50+	1.8+	0.25	
302	Natural	Mid to light greyish brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of reddish brown iron oxide. Alluvium.	50+	1.8+	0.05+	

Trench 4

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
400	Layer	Mid dark greyish brown clay silt. Topsoil	50+	1.8+	0.12	
401	Layer	Mid grey yellowish brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of fluvial gravel. Subsoil.	50+	1.8+	0.28	
402	Natural	Mid to light greyish brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of reddish brown iron oxide. Alluvium.	50+	1.8+	0.05+	
403	Fill	Mid greyish brown clay silt with occasional angular stone fragments. Fill of modern drain 106.	1.8+	2	0.35	
404	Cut	Modern open field drain.	1.8+	2	0.35	
405	Fill	Mid greyish brown clay silt with occasional angular stone fragments. Fill of modern drain 106.	1.8+	2	0.40	
406	Cut	Modern open field drain.	1.8+	2	0.40	
407	Fill	Mid greyish brown clay silt with occasional angular stone fragments. Fill of modern drain 106.	1.8+	2	0.42	
408	Cut	Modern open field drain.	1.8+	2	0.42	

Trench 5

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
500	Layer	Mid dark greyish brown clay silt. Topsoil	50+	1.8+	0.10	
501	Layer	Mid grey yellowish brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of fluvial gravel. Subsoil.	50+	1.8+	0.20	
502	Natural	Mid to light greyish brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of reddish brown iron oxide. Alluvium.	50+	1.8+	0.05+	

Trench 6

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
600	Layer	Mid dark greyish brown clay silt. Topsoil	50+	1.8+	0.15	
601	Layer	Mid grey yellowish brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of fluvial gravel. Subsoil.	50+	1.8+	0.15	
602	Natural	Mid to light greyish brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of reddish brown iron oxide. Alluvium.	50+	1.8+	0.05+	

Trench 7

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
700	Layer	Mid dark greyish brown clay silt. Topsoil	50+	1.8+	0.28	
701	Layer	Mid grey yellowish brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of fluvial gravel. Subsoil.	50+	1.8+	0.25	
702	Natural	Mid to light greyish brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of reddish brown iron oxide. Alluvium.	50+	1.8+	0.75	
703	Natural	Mid to light yellowish brown sandy clay with occasional angular stones. Glacial deposit.	50+	1.8+	0.10+	
704	Fill	Mid greyish brown clay silt with occasional angular stone fragments. Fill of modern drain 106.	1.8+	5	0.60	
705	Cut	Modern open field drain.	1.8+	5	0.60	

Trench 8

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
700	Layer	Mid dark greyish brown clay silt. Topsoil	50+	1.8+	0.16	
701	Layer	Mid grey yellowish brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of fluvial gravel. Subsoil.	50+	1.8+	0.20	
702	Natural	Mid to light greyish brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of reddish brown iron oxide. Alluvium.	50+	1.8+	0.75	
703	Natural	Mid to light yellowish brown sandy clay with occasional angular stones.	50+	1.8+	0.10+	

Trench 9

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
900	Layer	Mid dark greyish brown clay silt. Topsoil	50+	1.8+	0.12	
901	Layer	Mid grey yellowish brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of fluvial gravel. Subsoil.	50+	1.8+	0.18	
902	Natural	Mid to light greyish brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of reddish brown iron oxide. Alluvium.	50+	1.8+	0.05+	
903	Fill	Mid greyish brown clay silt with occasional angular stone fragments. Fill of modern drain 106.	1.8+	2	0.40	

904	Cut	Modern open field drain.	1.8+	2	0.40	
905	Fill	Mid greyish brown clay silt with occasional angular stone fragments. Fill of modern drain 106.	1.8+	2	0.38	
906	Cut	Modern open field drain.	1.8+	2	0.38	
907	Fill	Mid greyish brown clay silt with occasional angular stone fragments. Fill of modern drain 106.	1.8+	2	0.40	
908	Cut	Modern open field drain.	1.8+	2	0.40	
909	Fill	Mid greyish brown clay silt with occasional angular stone fragments. Fill of modern drain 106.	1.8+	2	0.40	
910	Cut	Modern open field drain.	1.8+	2	0.40	

APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Land Adjacent to King's Bridge, Yarnton, Oxfordshire	
Short description (250 words maximum)	<p>An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in November and December 2008 at the request of MHJ Ltd on land adjacent to King's Bridge, Yarnton, Oxfordshire. Nine trenches were excavated.</p> <p>The evaluation established that the site was covered with alluvial clays that sealed a natural sandy clay substrate. While the potential remained for pre-Roman archaeological features and deposits to be sealed by this alluvium, further excavation of the deposit beyond three trial holes was not possible due to the ingress of ground water.</p> <p>A series of earthworks that were previously interpreted as the remnants of ridge and furrow were found by the evaluation to be a series of post-medieval/modern open drains running east/west and north/south across the site.</p>	
Project dates	28 November – 2 December 2008	
Project type (e.g. desk-based, field evaluation etc)	Field Evaluation	
Previous work (reference to organisation or SMR numbers etc)	None	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Land adjacent to King's Bridge, Yarnton, Oxfordshire	
Study area (M ² /ha)	2.7 ha	
Site co-ordinates (8 Fig Grid Reference)	SP 4896 1176	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Brief originator	Oxfordshire County Council Archaeology Service	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Clifford Bateman	
Project Supervisor	Neil J. Adam	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	Oxfordshire Museum Services	None
Paper	Oxfordshire Museum Services	Trench record sheets, Digital Photographic Sheets, site location plan
Digital	Oxfordshire Museum Services	Digital photos
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2008 <i>Land Adjacent to Kings Bridge, Yarnton, Oxfordshire: Archaeological Evaluation</i> . CA typescript report 08245		



COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

PROJECT TITLE

**Land adjacent to Kings Bridge
Yarnton, Oxfordshire**

FIGURE TITLE

Site location plan

DRAWN BY

RK

SCALE

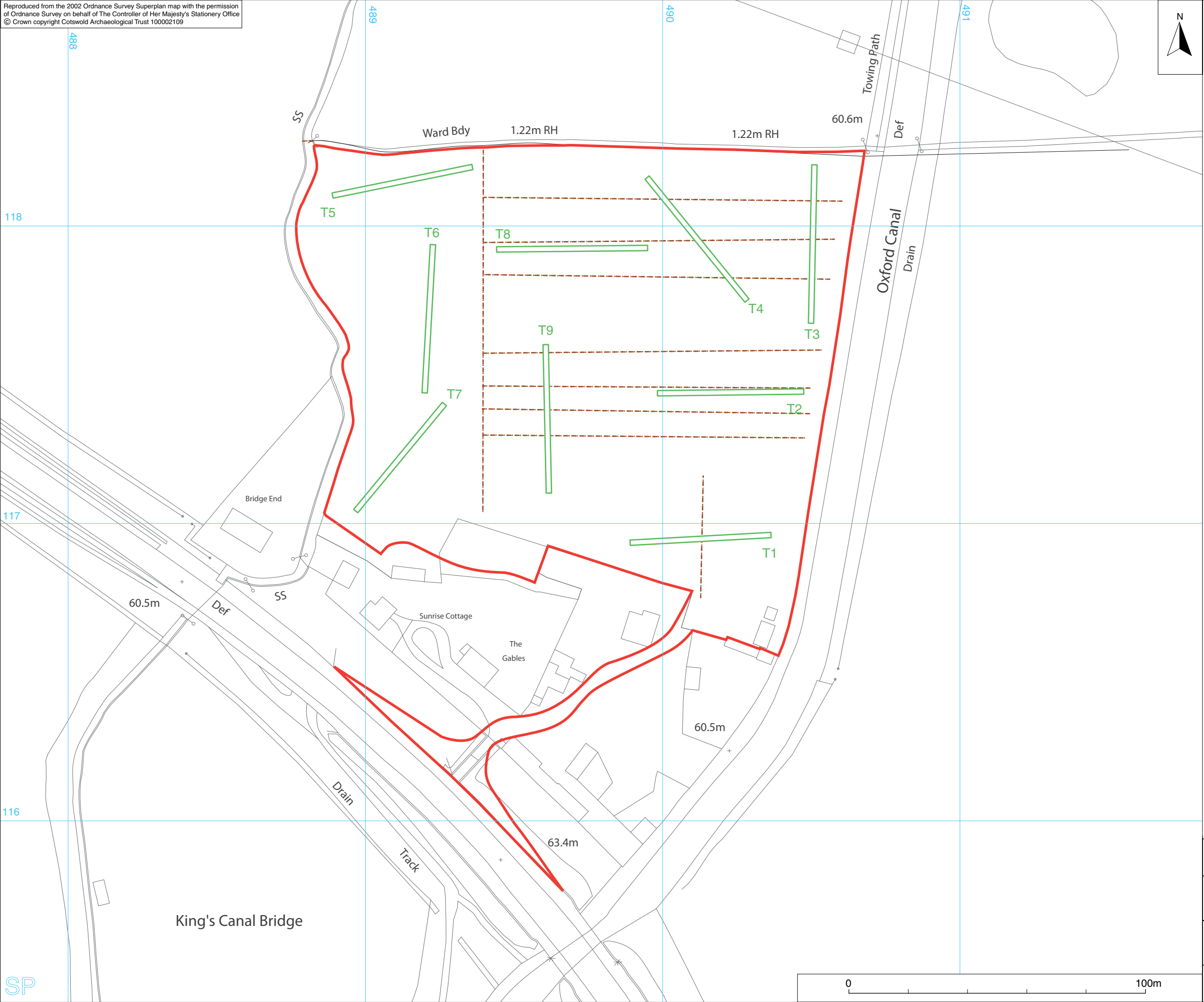
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PROJECT NO.

2751

FIGURE NO.

1



site



evaluation trench



modern open drains



COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

PROJECT TITLE

Land adjacent to Kings Bridge
Yarnton, Oxfordshire

FIGURE TITLE

Trench location plan

DRAWN BY

RK

SCALE

1:1250@A3

PROJECT NO.

2751

FIGURE NO.

2