

Old Road Campus Roosevelt Drive Oxford



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



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SUMMARY

In July and August 2006 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Old Road Campus, Roosevelt Drive, Oxford (NGR SP 542 062). The work was commissioned by DPDS Consulting Group Ltd on behalf of Oxford University in advance of the construction of a new hospital building. The watching brief revealed modern service trenches but no archaeological features or deposits.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

1.1.1 Between July 24th and 28th and on the 2nd of August 2006 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Old Road Campus, Roosevelt Drive, Oxford (NGR SP 542 062). The work was commissioned by DPDS Consulting Group Ltd on behalf of Oxford University Estates Directorate.

1.1.2 Brian Durham, the Oxford City Archaeologist, requested that OA monitor all invasive ground works, in this case the site strip and sample, and record any hitherto unknown archaeological remains revealed during the works.

1.2 Location, Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site is situated to the east of the centre of Oxford (Fig. 1). The development area lies on level ground to the north of Roosevelt Drive and to the south of Old Road. The site occupies an area of 0.34 ha. at a height of *c* 70 m above OD. The underlying geology is Beckley Sand Member sand and calcareous limestone (BGS sheet 237).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 There is no evidence of prehistoric activity within the development area, although miscellaneous finds were recovered in antiquity in unspecified areas around Headington. A trackway of possible prehistoric origin lies *c* 200 m to the north of the site, following the line of Old Road, and evidence for Iron Age settlement occurs near the Churchill Hospital *c* 400 m to the south.

1.3.2 Romano-British activity is known from a number of kiln and settlement sites surrounding the study area. Excavations at Churchill Hospital revealed an extensive kiln site and the presence of large-scale pottery industry in the East Oxford area suggests associated settlement is possible within the vicinity.

1.3.3 During the medieval period the development site and most of the study area would have been agricultural land. The most obvious evidence for this is the ridge and furrow preserved in South Park to the south west of the development.

1.3.4 Civil War defences run north-east to south-west *c* 900 m to the west of the site. However, the proposal site lies outside of known Civil War defences.

- 1.3.5 A watching brief carried out at Warnefield Hospital to the west of the site revealed no archaeological features.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence/absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.
- 2.1.2 To preserve by record any deposits or features that may be disturbed or removed during the development work.
- 2.1.3 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The watching brief was conducted as a series of site visits during works likely to disturb archaeological deposits.
- 2.2.2 Ground reduction to the first significant archaeological horizon, or to the natural sand (which ever was encountered first), was undertaken with a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket.
- 2.2.3 All archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:100 and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20. All excavated features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. A general photographic record of the work was made Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 The underlying natural sand (100) was encountered at a depth of 0.6 m below the current ground level. This deposit was cut by a number of defunct service ducts and cable runs related to the structures that previously occupied the site.
- 3.1.2 Modern overburden layer (101) overlay the natural sand (100) and was up to 0.6 m thick. This deposit consisted of tarmac and limestone hardcore, and mixed formation sands.

3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 No finds were recovered during the course of the watching brief.

3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

3.3.1 No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling were encountered during this watching brief.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1.1 No archaeological features or deposits were encountered during the course of the watching brief.

4.1.2 Cutting the natural sand (100) were a number of modern service trenches related to previous structures occupying the site. It is possible that these intrusions may have truncated potential archaeological deposits, yet these activities were neither widespread nor invasive enough to fully remove archaeology from the site. The lack of archaeological features and deposits revealed suggests that none were present initially. This would that prior to the construction of the former hospital buildings, this area had remained in agricultural use.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Date</i>
100	Layer	0.6 m	-	Overburden	Modern
101	Layer	-	-	Natural sand	-

APPENDIX 2 FINDS ASSESSMENTS

4.1.3 No finds were recovered during the course of the watching brief.

APPENDIX 3 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

IFA, 2001 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

OA, 2000 *Environmental Sampling Guidelines*

OAU, 1992 *Field Manual (ed. D Wilkinson)*

APPENDIX 4 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Old Road Campus, Roosevelt Drive, Oxford

Site code: OXCANC 06

Grid reference: NGR: SP 542 062

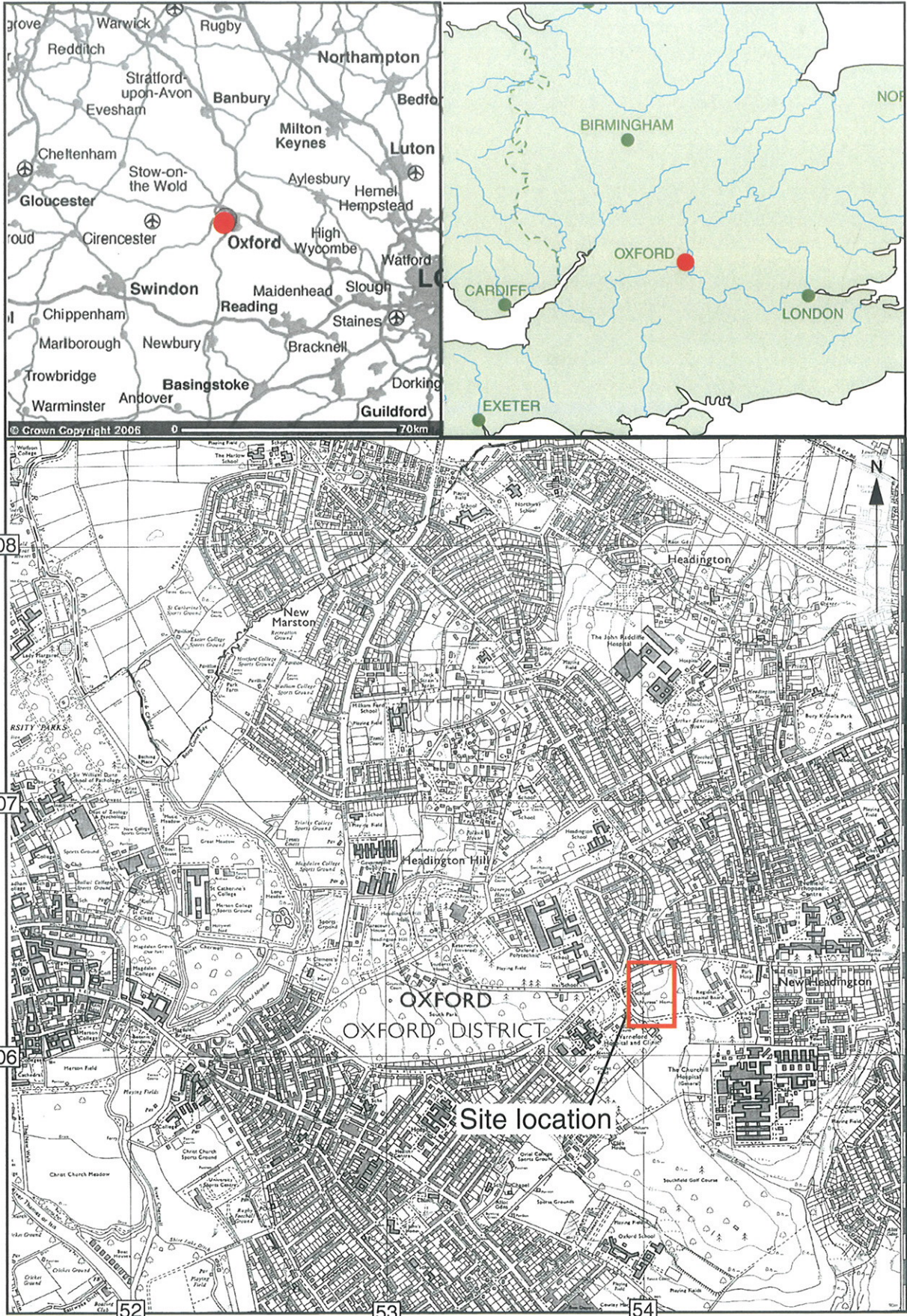
Type of watching brief: Machine ground reduction

Date and duration of project: 24th-28th July and 2nd August 2006

Area of site: 0.34 ha.

Summary of results: No archaeological features or deposits were encountered during the watching brief. A number of modern service trenches, related to previous structures cut the natural sand.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course, under the following accession number: OXCNS:2006.42

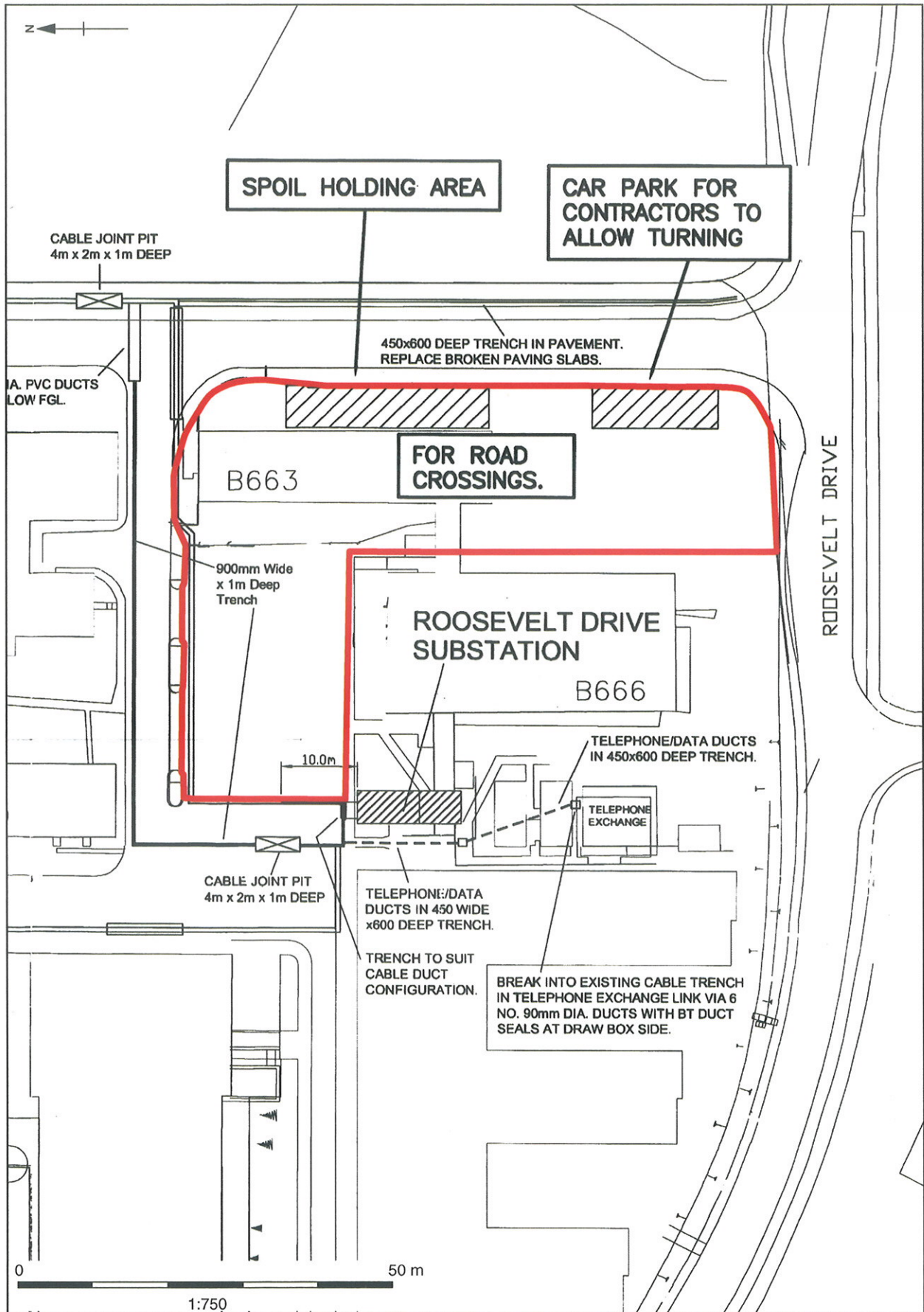


Scale 1:50,000

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Figure 1: Site location





 area of Watching Brief

Figure 2: Site plan showing area of Watching Brief

