

Warneford Hospital Sports Field Oxford



Watching Brief Report
09/02309/FUL

oxfordarchaeology

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Warneford Hospital, Sports Field Oxford

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Written by Christopher Richardson

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Summary

Between July and August 2011, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Warneford Hospital Sports Field, Oxford. The work was commissioned by Kier Moss and involved the monitoring of ground-works during the construction of a single storey and a two storey structure along with a new car park. No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were observed.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Between July and August 2011, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Warneford Hospital Sports Field, Oxford. The work was commissioned by Kier Moss and comprised the monitoring of ground reduction and excavations for foundations for the construction of 2 new buildings, associated car parking and road widening.
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken as a condition of the Planning Permission (planning ref: 09/02309/FUL). A brief was set by David Radford, the Oxford City Archaeologist, detailing the Local Authority's requirements for work necessary to discharge the planning condition.
- 1.1.3 OA produced a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI - OA 2010b) detailing how it would meet the Local Authority's requirements for work. This was approved by David Radford.
- 1.1.4 This report documents the results of the watching brief.

1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies on a Corallian formation of Beckley Sand Member [sand and calcareous sandstone]. The ground level is approximately 90m OD.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background has already been discussed in a Desk Based Assessment (DBA) of the site produced by OA (OA 2009). Only a very brief summary of the relevant results from this report is presented below.
- 1.3.2 The DBA identified two slight undated linear earthworks aligned north-east to south-west. These lay in the north-eastern part of the site and did not clearly extend into the evaluated area. They may have been related to a possible trackway identified further to the east by a magnetometer survey.
- 1.3.3 In general the site lies close to elements of the major Roman pottery industry centred in east Oxford and amongst the most important of such industries in Britain in the late Roman period. The nearest known production site is centred at the Churchill Hospital c 750 m to the east. Recent work in the area of the Churchill Hospital and in Warneford Meadow, immediately east and south-east of the present site, has produced evidence for low-level Roman activity including probable field boundary ditches, but no further indications of pottery production.



- 1.3.4 A geophysical (magnetometer) survey of the present site was undertaken by Alistair Bartlett of the Bartlett-Clark Consultancy. The results of this were inconclusive. Several features considered to be of possible archaeological significance were identified, but the most convincing of these, a possible NE-SW aligned ditch, did not appear to extend into the area of proposed development. The interpretation of other discrete magnetic anomalies was considered very uncertain in terms of both function and date. Anomalies of a type characteristic of Roman pottery productions sites were clearly absent.
- 1.3.5 A subsequent archaeological evaluation produced evidence for a single Roman ditch containing a sherd of locally produced white ware pottery and single grog and shell tempered fragment. An undated post hole was recorded adjacent to the ditch (OA 2010a).
- 1.3.6 An archaeological evaluation immediately to the south of the application site carried out in 2006 has identified several Roman ditches (Berkshire archaeological Service, 2006, see DBA OA 2009).

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Specific aims and objectives

- 2.1.1 The specific aims and objectives of the project were
- (i) To identify and record any significant archaeological remains revealed by the groundworks, paying particular regard to the potential for Roman activity.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 Watching brief was maintain on foundation strips, road strips and some drainage works. The extent of observed works is shown in Fig.2.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 Approximately 0.2m of a dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil overlay a pale yellow brown fine sandy silt geological layer. No archaeological deposits or features were observed.

3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 No finds were noted or retrieved during the watching brief.

3.3 Environmental remains

- 3.3.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were noted during the watching brief.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 No archaeological deposits or remains were observed. It should be noted that map regressions show a change from a contoured field (OS maps 1900-1975) to a cricket pitch and bowling green (OS 1975-78) giving a clear implication of landscaping and the probability for truncation of any archaeological deposits present. This would not have effected the eastern adjacent field where Roman ditches were revealed in 2006. In addition the 'ditch' revealed in evaluation (OA 2010a) was seen in this exercise to be only a discrete anomaly visible by the cut section (see plate 1). This may be therefore be a very small stretch ditch that had survived truncation due to greater depth.



Bibliography and references

- | | | |
|---------------------|-------|---|
| IFA | 2008 | Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs |
| OAU | 1992 | Field Manual (ed. D. Wilkinson) |
| OA | 2009 | Warneford Hospital Headington, Desk based assessment, unpublished client report |
| OA | 2010a | Warneford Hospital Archaeological Evaluation Report |
| OA | 2010b | Warneford Hospital Sports Field. Written Scheme of Investigation for a Watching Brief |
| Oxford City Council | 2010 | Brief for an Archaeological Watching Brief, Warneford Lane, Oxford |



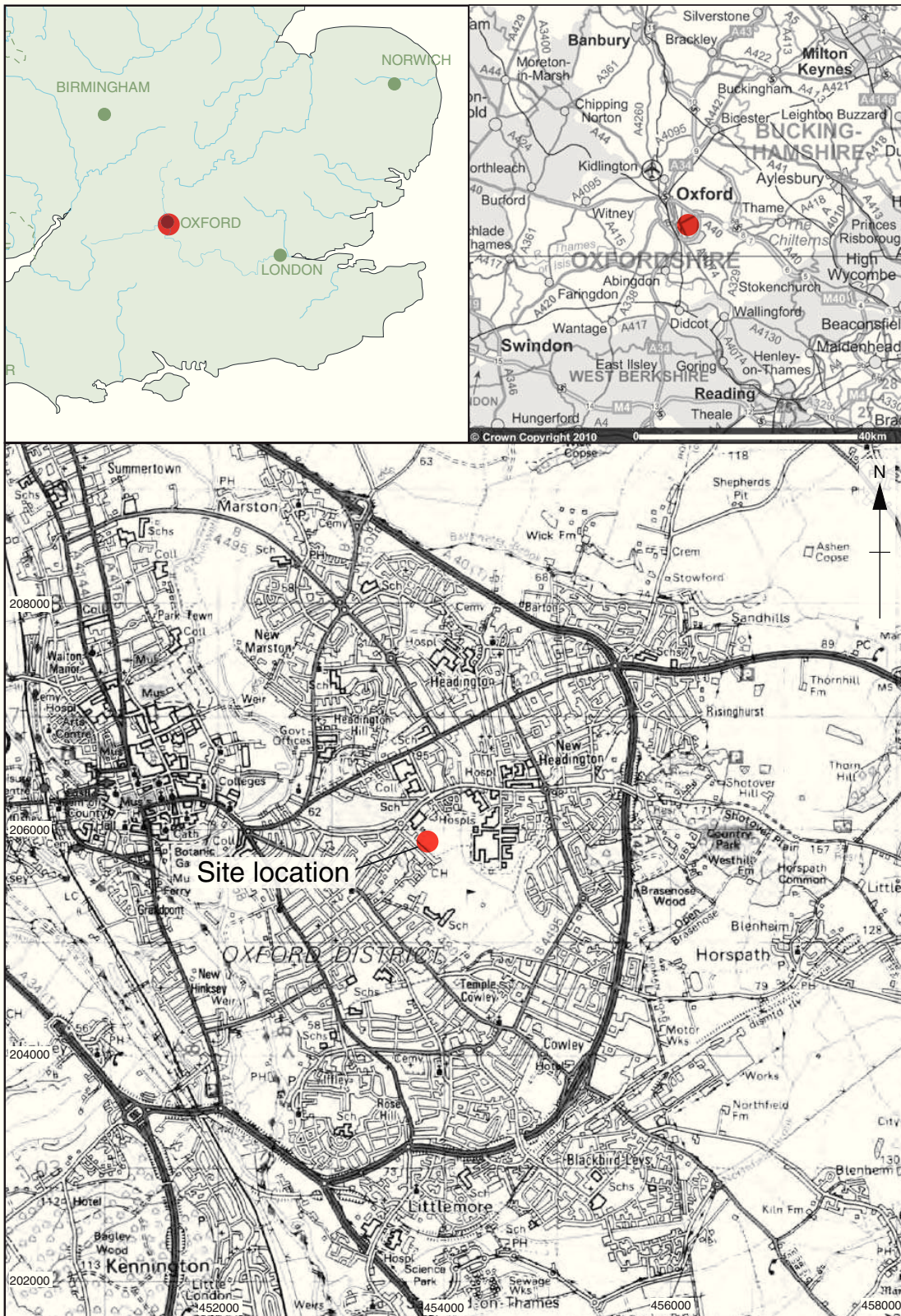
APPENDIX A. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name:	Warneford Hospital, Sports Field, Oxford
Site code:	OXWARN10
Grid reference:	Centred at NGR SP 538 059
Type of watching brief:	Foundation trenches and various construction impact.
Date and duration of project:	July to August 2011
Area of site:	N/A
Summary of results:	No archaeology
Location of archive:	Oxfordshire County Museum Service

Plates

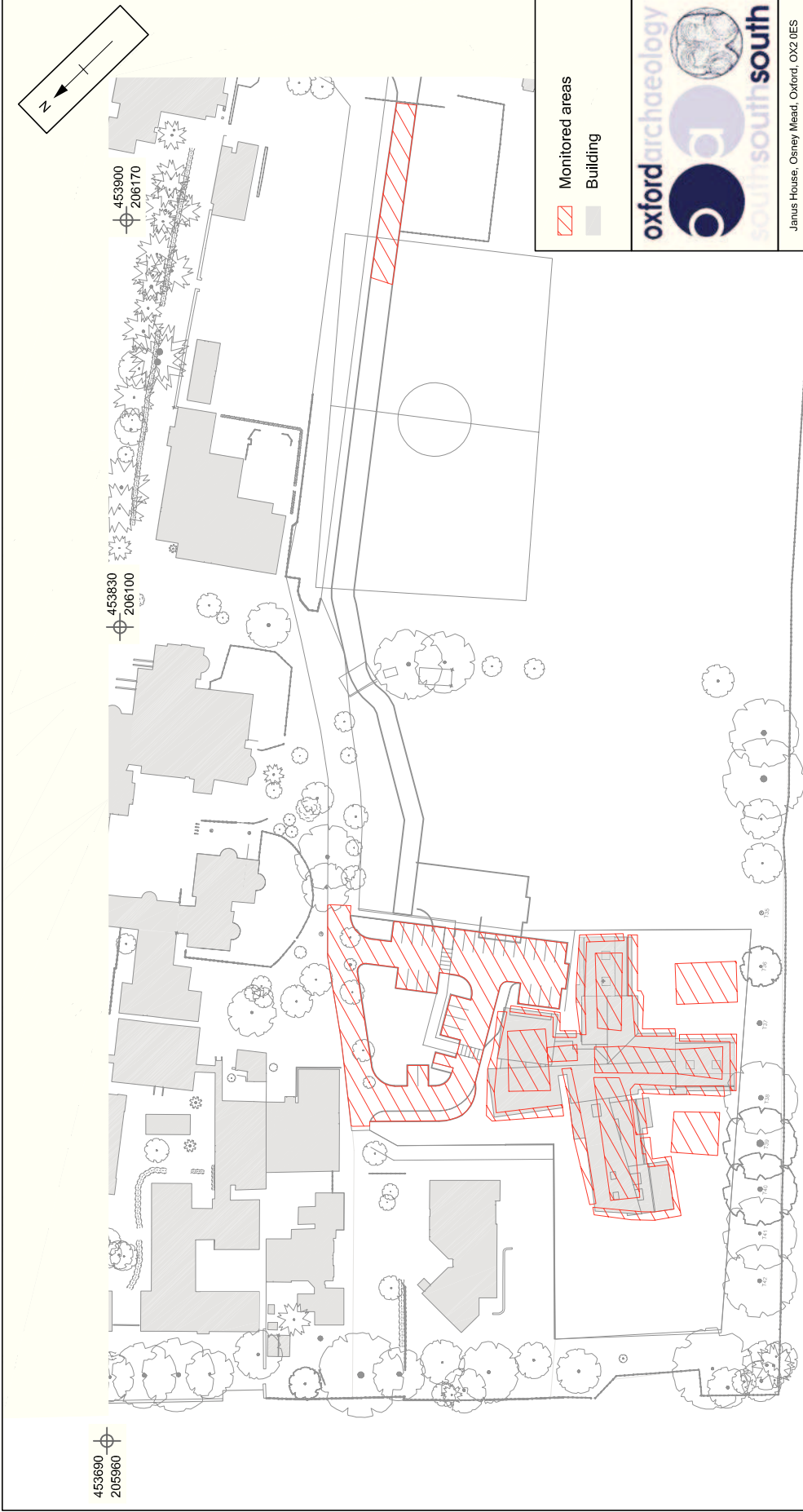


Plate 1. Looking North: The area to the bottom right of the photograph is the infilled excavated section in Trench 2 of the evaluation, interpreted as a ditch (material to the left is the infill of the trench). No continuation of the feature was seen.



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Figure 1: Site location



Monitored areas
Building



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