

Toure International

West View Farm, Charlton-on-Otmoor

NGR SP 5615 1587

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

Oxford Archaeological Unit

February 1999

Toure International

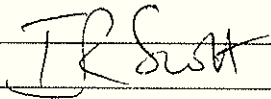
West View Farm, Charlton-on-Otmoor

NGR SP 5615 1587

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

Prepared by: 

Date: 25/2/99

Checked by: 

Date: 1/3/99

Approved by: R. Williams HEAD OF FIELDWORK

Date: 5/3/1999

Oxford Archaeological Unit

February 1999

Summary

In November 1998 the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) undertook a watching brief at West View Farm, Charlton-on-Otmoor. No archaeological features were seen and no finds were retrieved.

1 Introduction

The development proposal comprised the construction of two 2-storey terraced dwellings, with associated services, adjacent to West View Farm, Church Lane, Charlton-on-Otmoor.

The watching brief was commissioned by Toure International. It was undertaken to a brief set by and a WSI agreed with the Deputy County Archaeological Officer.

2 Background

The development site is located within the historic core of the medieval settlement, which is first documented in the Domesday Survey of 1087; suggesting an origin in the late Anglo-Saxon period, and possibly earlier. The place-name Charlton-on-Otmoor derives from "tun of the ceorls" meaning the place where the peasants lived, suggesting the presence of an early medieval settlement. The 13th-century Church of St Mary lies a short distance to the east and probably was located at or near the centre of the early medieval settlement.

The Scheduled Ancient Monument of Otley Monastery (SAM 170), home to a Cistercian order, lies a short distance to the west and consists of a moat and a series of associated earthworks. This site has never been investigated, and as such its nature and extent remain unclear at this time. To the east, across the Fencott Bridge, lies a Roman road running north-south between Bridge House Farm and Manor Farm.

The development site is located at the west end of Church Lane at NGR SP 5615 1587 and the geology is a loam overlying limestone. Previous land use on the site was as a garden and a vacant plot.

3 Aims

The aims of the watching brief were to identify any archaeological remains exposed on site during the course of the works, and to record these to established OAU standards (Wilkinson 1992), in order to secure their preservation by record.

4 Methodology

Archaeological monitoring took the form of inspection visits after site clearance and during the excavation of foundation and service trenches. All excavation was by JCB fitted with a narrow toothed bucket in order to reach the base of dig within the natural limestone geology.

Within the constraints imposed by health and safety considerations the deposits and features exposed were cleaned, inspected and recorded in plan, section and by colour

slide and monochrome print photography. Written records were also made on proforma sheets. Soil description utilises standard charts for the approximation of percentage of inclusion types in soil deposits.

5 Results

Prior to the first inspection visit the site had been cleared of temporary structures and vegetation, and had been levelled.

Generally the soil type was a sequence of silty clay loams overlying the natural limestone geology, with one or two localised variations. The similarity of deposits seen allows for a general description across the site, rather than describing areas individually.

The foundation trenches measured 0.55 m in width and were dug to an average depth of 0.66 m, being deepened to 1.10 m in several isolated soft spots. The earliest deposit seen was the natural limestone, (3); the upper horizon of this deposit was loose and appeared to be slightly decayed. Overlying this was a mid gray/brown clay loam subsoil (2), averaging 0.15 m in thickness. This was sealed by the topsoil which was a mid gray silty clay loam (1), on average 0.17 m thick. This deposit contained very occasional highly abraded fragments of white china, which comprised the only finds recovered during the watching brief.

Exceptions to the above sequence occurred in the central and south-western portions of the site, both of which contained several tree holes; the fills of all of these features comprised a mixture of topsoil (1) and gray loam subsoil (2) together with a quantity of root-disturbed natural (3). None of the tree-root holes contained any finds.

6 Environmental results

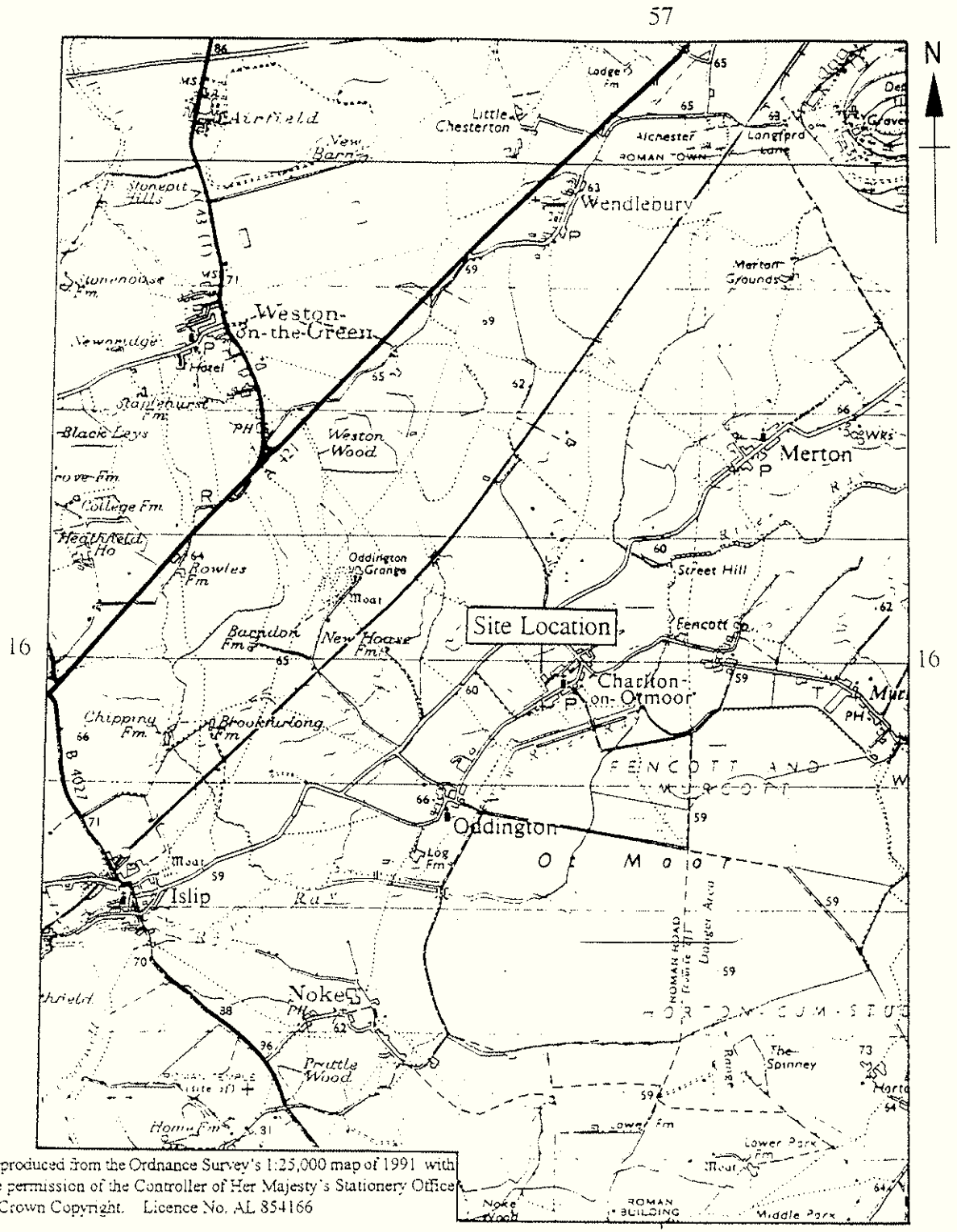
Due to the absence of any significant archaeological features, no environmental soil samples were taken.

7 Discussion

Nothing was found during the watching brief to suggest use of the site as anything other than a garden and/or vacant land attached to West View Farm. Particular attention was paid to the possibilities of locating evidence of ridge and furrow and/or buried ploughsoils, however, neither were seen. All of the artefactual evidence retrieved was 20th-century in date.

References.

Wilkinson, D (ed) 1992 Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual. (First edition, August 1992).

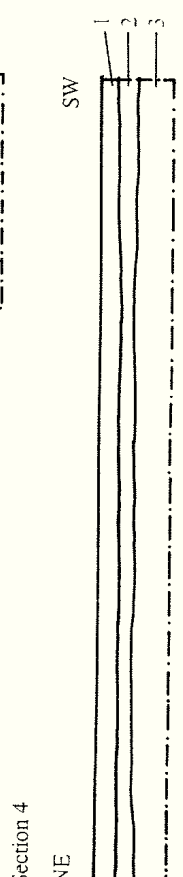
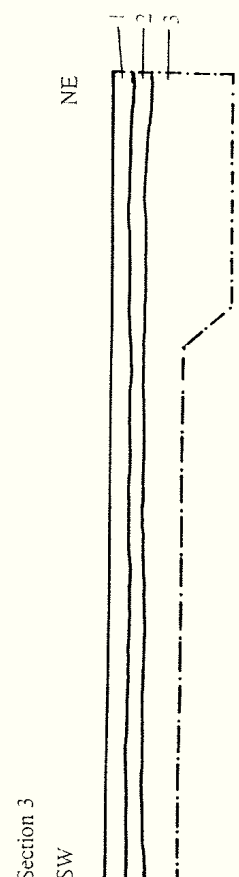
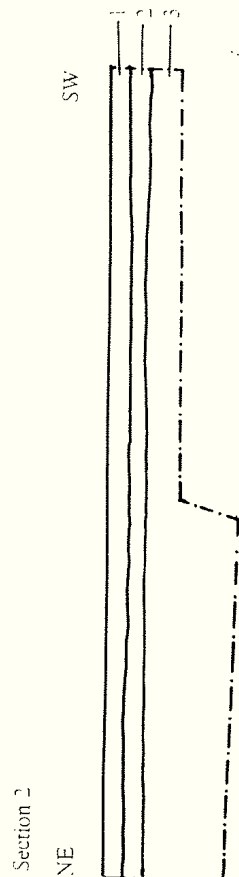
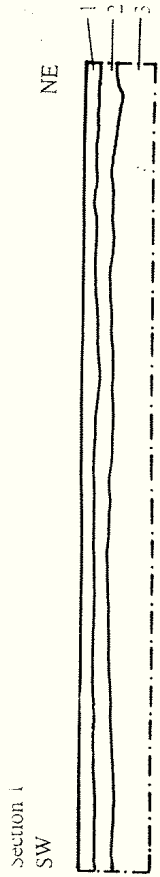


Location of site

57

Scale 1:250,000

Figure 1



Sections at 1:50

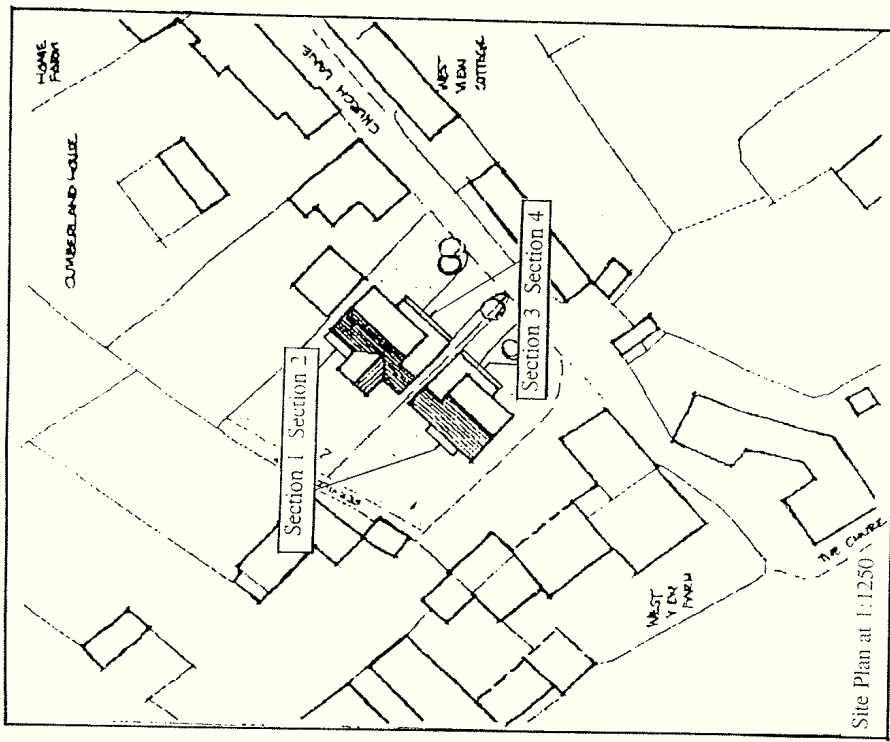


Figure 2 Section Locations and Sample Sections



OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES

Tel: 01865 263800 Fax: 01865 793496

email: oau-oxford.demon.co.uk



Director: David Miles B.A., F.S.A., M.I.F.A. Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited.
Private Limited Company Number: 1618597 Registered Charity Number: 285627.
Registered Office: Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES