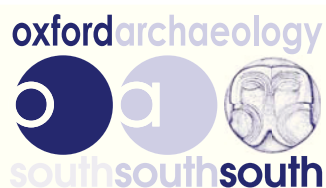


New Swimming Pool
Jasmine House
Holton
Oxfordshire



**Archaeological
Strip, Map and Sample Report**



January 2014

Client: Mr Daniel Stein

Issue No: 1

OA Job No: 5812

NGR: SP 5999 091



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New Swimming Pool, Jasmine House, Holton, Oxfordshire

Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample Report

Written by Mike Sims

and illustrated by Markus Dylewski

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Summary

In January 2014 Oxford Archaeology undertook an archaeological investigation during the excavation of a new swimming pool at Jasmine House, Holton, Oxfordshire (NGR: SP 5999 0691). The excavation observed two layers of late post-medieval garden soils overlying an undated worked soil horizon. No evidence of activity pre-dating the 19th century was observed.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA), were commissioned by Clearwater Swimming Pools Ltd (the contractor) on behalf of Mr Daniel Stein (the client) to undertake a strip, map and sample excavation (SMS) on the site of a proposed new swimming pool and associated service trenches.
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken as a condition of Planning Permission (planning ref: P13/S2471/HH). A brief was set by Richard Oram, the Planning Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Council (OCAS 2013) detailing the Local Authority's requirements for work necessary to discharge the planning condition, and OA produced a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) showing how it would meet these requirements (OA, 2013).
- 1.1.3 All work was undertaken in accordance with local and national planning policies.

1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The village of Holton is located 6.5km east of the City of Oxford. The site itself is located on the north-western edge of Holton, on the western side of Buryhook Corner and is centred on SP 5999 0691.
- 1.2.2 The area of proposed development lies within the grounds of Jasmine House, a grade II listed building (PRN 19882), and lies at around 73m above Ordnance Datum.
- 1.2.3 The underlying geology of the area is a member of the Beckley Sands. (British Geological Survey Sheet no. 237).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

The following information has been taken from "A History of the County Of Oxford, Volume 5" edited 1957.

- 1.3.1 The area of Holton was inhabited in the Romano-British period, but the Anglo-Saxons gave the village its name of the 'hidden nook', or 'the tun in the hollow', and continuous settlement probably dates from the 10th century.
- 1.3.2 The Domesday Book records that in 1086 the Norman nobleman Roger d'Ivry was the manor of Holton's feudal overlord.
- 1.3.3 By 1317 Holton had a manor house with a dovecote. During the English Civil War the Whorwood family that owned the manor and lived in the house were Royalists but in 1643 it was held by a Parliamentary garrison that controlled Wheatley Bridge across the River Thames. A new dovecote was built for the manor house in the 17th century and new stables were added in the 18th century. By 1801 the house was a mostly 17th



century building with traces of 15th century work. It was dilapidated and in 1805 it was demolished, but the stables, dovecote and moat of the old house all survive.

- 1.3.4 A new Georgian neo-Gothic house, Holton Park, was built by Elisha Biscoe in the deer park of the demolished manor house between 1808 and 1815.
- 1.3.5 The boundary of the present parish is well marked. In the north-west it mostly follows Polecat End Lane, probably an old Saxon road, then it follows the course of the Holton Brook as it flows eastwards between Waterperry and Holton woods and next turns south to join the River Thame by Holton Mill. The Thame itself as it flows towards Wheatley Bridge forms the eastern boundary for a short distance. On the south the parish borders the main London road.
- 1.3.6 Holton village lies roughly in the middle of the parish, on either side of the road which runs north from the church and the edge of Holton Park to Pond Farm and the 17th century Old Park Farm. Towards the end of the 18th century, the rector reported that *"Its cottages are mostly of 17th- and 18th-century date, there are 39 houses, 30 of them fine. They are mostly built of rubble, but some of them were of stone and some timber-framed; they are thatched or have old tiles."*
- 1.3.7 Since the Second World War new cottages and houses have been built within the village, in some cases possibly replacing earlier buildings.
- 1.3.8 Jasmine House was constructed in the late 16th to the early 17th century, with 18th century additions and is a grade II listed building.

Potential

- 1.3.9 There was potential for refuse pits related to the different phases of occupation of the house, as well as both related and unrelated cut features.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The aims of the investigation were;

- To determine the presence or absence of any archaeological remains which may survive. Should remains be found to ensure their preservation by record to the highest possible standard.
- To determine or confirm the approximate extent of any surviving remains
- To determine the date range of any surviving remains by artefactual or other means.
- To determine the condition and state of preservation of any remains.
- To determine the degree of complexity of any surviving horizontal or vertical stratigraphy.
- To assess the associations and implications of any remains encountered with reference to the historic landscape.
- To determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence, and the forms in which such evidence may survive.
- To determine the implications of any remains with reference to economy, status, utility and social activity.



- To determine or confirm the likely range, quality and quantity of the artifactual evidence present.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The works involved the excavation of the footprint of a new swimming pool adjacent (c. 5m) from the rear of the property (Fig. 2). The footprint of the new swimming pool measured around 10m long by around 5m wide and was excavated to a maximum depth below current ground level of 1.87m.
- 2.2.2 An associated service trench was excavated through the lawn between the new swimming pool and the house to an average depth of 0.45m.
- 2.2.3 Site specific methodologies were as follows:
- (i) The area of the swimming pool will be stripped by mechanical excavator using a wide blade toothless bucket. The area will be stripped in level spits under constant archaeological supervision until either the natural geology or any higher significant archaeological horizon is reached.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

Excavation of the Swimming Pool

- 3.1.1 The underlying natural, a bright orange brown silty clay (4), was encountered at a depth of 0.8m below the level of the lawn (Fig. 3, Sections 1 and 2 and Plates 1 and 2). The surface of this deposit displayed evidence of having been disturbed by root activity. Above this layer was a 0.18m deep deposit of yellow brown clayey silt containing charcoal flecking and occasional sandstone fragments (3).
- 3.1.2 Overlying this was a 0.35m deep layer of dark brown silty loam (2). This deposit contained quantities of charcoal flecking together with occasional fragments of pottery and bottle glass. This deposit was evenly distributed over the whole of the development site.
- 3.1.3 Above layer 2 was a 0.45m deep layer of very dark grey silty loam (1). This also contained charcoal flecking and produced fragments of modern pottery. As with layer 2 this was evenly distributed across the entire development area.

Excavation of the Service Trench

- 3.1.4 This was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.5m and was wholly contained within the two layers of post-medieval worked soil, contexts 1 and 2.

3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 All the finds recovered appeared to be dated between the 19th and 20th centuries. Artefacts recovered included fragments of pottery, bottle glass, animal bone and oyster shell. These were all recovered from the two layers of garden soil, layers 1 and 2.

3.3 Environmental remains

- 3.3.1 No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling were encountered during the course of the investigation.



4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The majority of the deposits observed all appear to date from the late post-medieval period, specifically the 19th and 20th centuries. No evidence for any earlier activity either in the form of residual finds or truncated features was observed during the course of the watching brief.
- 4.1.2 Layer 4 is indicative of the underlying natural geology of the area, being part of the Beckley sand series. Layer 3 is a layer of worked soil as evidenced by the presence of the charcoal flecking. The absence of dating evidence may indicate that it represents a ploughsoil horizon that has been later incorporated into the garden.
- 4.1.3 Layers 1 and 2 both suggest deep deposits of garden soil. The dating evidence recovered suggests that these were deposited from the 19th century onwards.
- 4.1.4 It is possible that the depth of worked soil could be due to material from the excavations for later extensions being spread over this area.
- 4.1.5 Examination of the layout of Jasmine House and the relative positioning of its outbuildings suggests that the development area is in what was formerly the front of the house. It is probable that this area would have been landscaped with little intrusive activity taking place.
- 4.1.6 The associated outbuildings, which appear to be a combined wash house (brew house ?) and out house, on the north side of the house may indicate that this area was the rear garden. It is probable that any intrusive activity such as rubbish pits would have been located there.
- 4.1.7 It is also possible that the development area was only incorporated into the garden of Jasmine house relatively recently, possibly during the 20th century development of the area.



APPENDIX A. ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context	Type	Depth	Comments	Finds	Date
1	Layer	0.45m	Garden soil	Pottery, bone, shell, glass	C19th-C20th
2	Layer	0.35m	Garden soil	Pottery, bone, shell, glass	C19th-C20th
3	Layer	0.15m	Worked soil horizon, probably an earlier ploughsoil	-	-
4	Layer	> 0.8m	Natural sandy clay	-	-



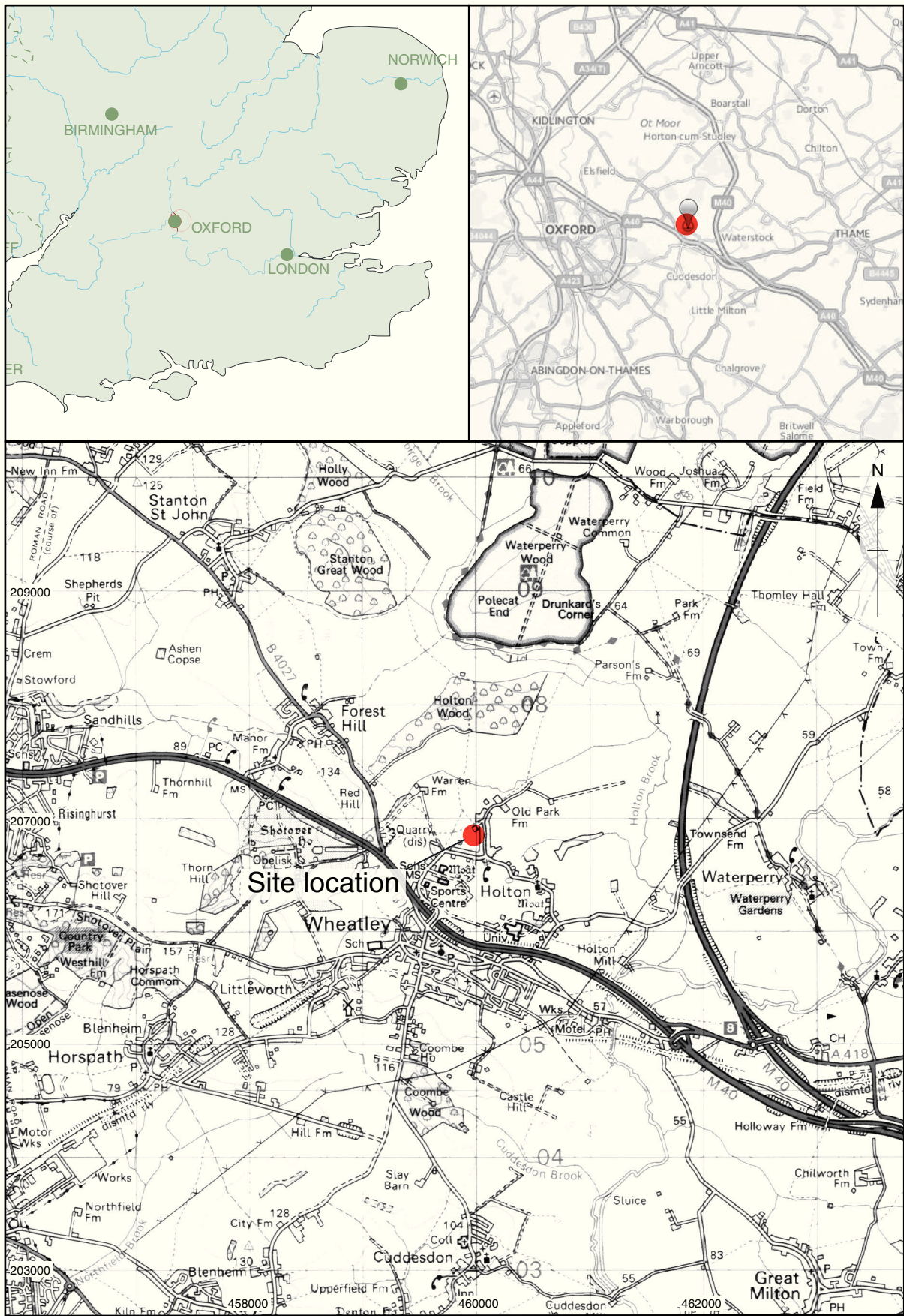
APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

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| OCAS, 2013 | <i>Jasmine House, Holton. Design for Archaeological Watching Brief. Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service.</i> |



APPENDIX C. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name:	New Swimming Pool, Jasmine House, Holton, Oxfordshire
Site code:	HOJH 13
Grid reference:	Centred at NGR SP 5999 0691
Type of investigation:	Strip, map and sample excavation on the machine excavation of a new swimming pool within an existing garden.
Date and duration of project:	Between the 6 th and 18 th of January 2014, 3 site visits
Area of site:	Approximately 400m ²
Summary of results:	In January 2014 Oxford Archaeology undertook an archaeological investigation during the excavation of a new swimming pool at Jasmine House, Holton, Oxfordshire (NGR: SP 5999 0691). The watching brief observed two layers of late post-medieval garden soils overlying an undated worked soil horizon. No evidence of activity pre-dating the 19th century was observed.
Location of archive:	The archive is currently held at Janus House and will be deposited with the Oxfordshire County Museum Service under the accession code; OXCMS:2013.158



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Figure 1: Site location

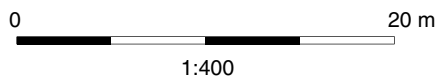
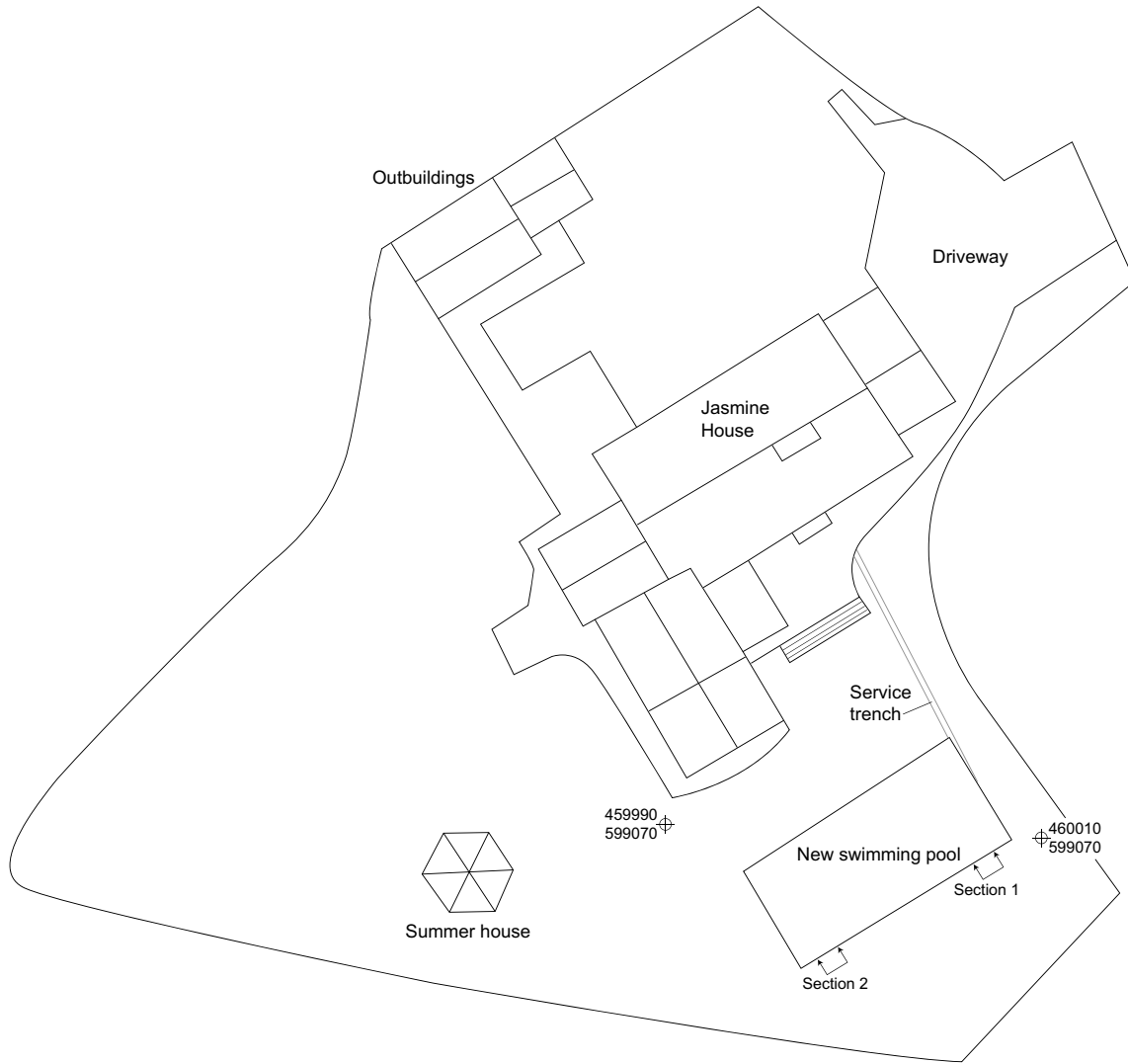
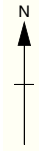
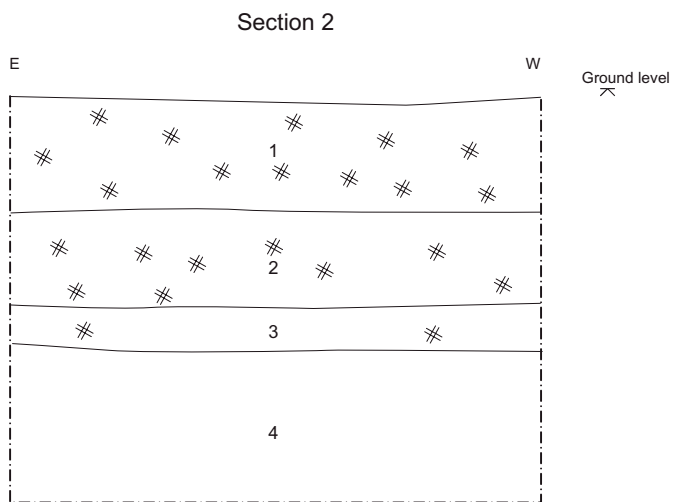
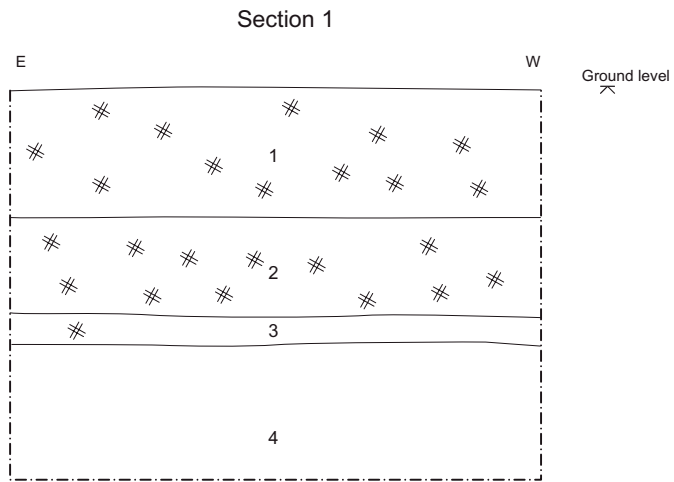


Figure 2: Site plan



Charcoal

Figure 3: Sections



Plate 1: Section 1



Plate 2: Section 2



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