Convent of the Incarnation, Fairacres, Oxford

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Convent of the Incarnation, Fairacres, Oxford

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Contents

List of Figures

List of Plates

List of Tables

Summary

Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by MEB Design Ltd to undertake a test pit and trial trench evaluation of the site of a proposed extension to the Covent of the Incarnation, Fairacres, Oxford. This evaluation comprised 10 1x1m test pits and 5 trenches that were between 5m-17m long, depending on services and obstructions.

The evaluation found one undated pit and one post-medieval posthole in Test Pit 3, a post-medieval pit in Test Pit 6 and a possible Roman ditch in Trench 4. The undated pit in Test Pit 3 was overlain by a layer of colluvium. The colluvium appears to cover most of the site, although the thickness of this layer appears to vary from 0.09-0.40m. The colluvial layer contained late Roman pottery and prehistoric worked flints, which suggest that it formed during the late Roman period or later. In Trench 4, a ditch that contained Roman pottery had been dug into a possible colluvial layer and therefore dated to the Roman or post-Roman periods.

The two layers of subsoil on the site both contained post-medieval pottery with some residual earlier material. This material was mixed and abraded and did not represent *in situ* material. It is possible that some of this had become mixed as part of a former ploughsoil. In addition, some activity may relate to the allotment to the west of the site.

Acknowledgements

Oxford Archaeology would like to thank for commissioning this project. Thanks are also extended to David Radford who monitored the work on behalf of Oxford City Council for his advice and guidance.

The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology by Gerry Thacker. The fieldwork was directed by Adam Fellingham, who was supported by Elizabeth Kennard and Simon Batsman. Survey and digitising was carried out by Diana Chard, Conan Parsons and Matt Bradley. Thanks are also extended to the teams of OA staff that cleaned and packaged the finds under the management of Leigh Allen, processed the environmental remains under the management of Rebecca Nicholson and prepared the archive under the management of Nicola Scott.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by MEB Design Ltd to undertake a test pit and trial trench evaluation of the site of a proposed extension to the Convent of the Incarnation, Fairacres, Oxford (centred on NGR SP 52634 04778).

1.1.2 The work was undertaken to inform the planning authority in advance of submission of a Planning Application (ref: 18/02082/PAC). A brief was set by David Radford, the Oxford City Archaeologist (OCC 2018) and a written scheme of investigation was produced by OA (OA 2018b) detailing the local authority's requirements for work necessary to inform the planning process and discharge the planning condition. This document outlines how OA implemented the specified requirements.

1.1.3 All work was undertaken in accordance with local and national planning policies including the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists guidance (CIfA 2014).

1.2 Location, topography and geology

1.2.1 The site is situated 1.8km south of Oxford city centre on the eastern bank of the River Thames close to the confluence with the River Cherwell (Fig. 1). The site is bordered by gardens of residential terraces which front Bedford Street to the north, Parker Street to the east and Fairacres Road to the south. To the west the site is bordered by Meadow Lane and the Kidneys Countryside and Nature Reserve. The site currently comprises the grounds of a nunnery occupied by the Sisters of the Love of God, with the main buildings situated in the eastern part of the site and allotment gardens, lawns and orchard to the west.

1.2.2 The topography of the site slopes gently from the east at a height of 63m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) towards the River Thames to the west at a height of 58m aOD. The natural bedrock geology is mapped across the whole site as Oxford Clay and West Walton Formation, a mudstone bedrock formed approximately 157 to 166 million years ago in the Jurassic Period. A superficial head deposit comprising clay, silt, sand and gravel overlies the bedrock in the southeast corner of the site. Summertown-Radley sand and gravel deposits are present in the northeast corner (British Geological Survey 2018).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background of the site has been described in detail in a desk-based assessment (OA 2018a), the results of which are summarized below. Information was collected for the desk-based assessment within a 750m radius study area centered on the site (hereafter described as the study area and shown on Figure 1). One of the main sources used for the desk based assessment was the City of Oxford Urban Historic Environment Record (COUHER) records.

Prehistoric Period (500,000 BP – AD 43)

1.3.2 A large number of stone tools (600) were collected by Alexander James Montgomerie Bell (1845-1920) from the Iffley area between 1897 and 1910. The collection represents the majority of prehistoric finds from the Iffley area and comprised 185 Palaeolithic stone tools from the Summertown-Radley river terrace gravels deposited 200,000 years ago and 476 artefacts which date to the Neolithic.

1.3.3 The COUHER records 28 handaxes of Palaeolithic date found in a gravel pit thought to be to the south of the site. Recent examination of the material has shown that the assemblage contained 185 artefacts that were associated with Pleistocene fauna. The COUHER also records a handaxe found to the north of the site within the Summertown-Radley gravel terrace in 1896.

1.3.4 The Mesolithic period is poorly represented in the study area and in the wider area in general although this is likely to be due to the lack of recording rather than an absence of human activity during this period. Despite this a scatter of flints was identified in the gravel/mudstone interface in close proximity to the site. The multi-period flint factory and occupation site covers 10 acres, situated between the Convent of the Incarnation and Donnington Bridge Lane. Finds included microlithic flints, flakes core and arrowheads dating between the early Mesolithic and the late Bronze Age. A watching brief undertaken by Oxford Archaeology in 1990 during construction of a new fruit store along the southern boundary of the site found that these remains did not extend into the Convent of the Incarnation grounds.

1.3.5 Two records of Neolithic date within the study area were returned by the COUHER. A geophysical survey and excavation identified the remains of a Neolithic pit circle 480m south of the site. Excavation of two of these pits confirmed that the features were 2m in diameter and 1m deep and contained a large assemblage of worked flint of probable Neolithic date. To the north of the site a Neolithic axe with a semi-circular cutting edge was found during construction of Chester Street.

1.3.6 There is limited evidence for Bronze Age activity within the study area. To the south of the flint factory and occupation site, a Bronze Age cinerary urn was found in an inverted position. A hoard of 11 Bronze Age palstaves were found in Leopold Street, to the northwest of the site in 1881.

1.3.7 No Iron Age features or finds are present within the study area. In the wider area, middle and late Iron Age activity has been identified on higher ground at Rose Hill to the southeast of the site.

Romano-British Period (AD 43 – 410)

1.3.8 The upper stone of a beehive-shaped rotary quern was found to the southwest of the site on the western bank of the River Thames close to Donnington Bridge and is the only record of Roman date within the study area. There is some evidence of Roman activity, in the form of pottery and coins, from the area of the Weirs Mill stream, which lies just to the east of the study area, and it has been suggested that this may be the site of a Roman ford.

1.3.9 In the wider study area, extensive Roman manufacturing sites relating to pottery production have been identified across east Oxford along the Corallian Ridge from

Barton though Cowley to Rose Hill and Blackbird Leys. As yet there is no evidence for significant use of the River Thames during this period in the study area and generally there is a lack of activity of this date within the immediate vicinity of the site.

Early Medieval Period (AD 410 – 1065)

1.3.10 The site is situated 1.3km north of the historic core of Iffley village. It is unknown when the village was first established but it was present by 1004 when it is first documented in St Frideswide's Cartulary. It is also recorded in the Domesday Survey in 1086 as Givetelei and contained six plough lands, 24 acres of meadow, one furlong of pasture, two acres of woodland and a fishery. There was a small settlement to the north of the site on the east bank of the River Cherwell, later the parish of St Clements and was referred to as Bruggeset perhaps referring to a bridge settlement possibly established by a Danish garrison in the early 11th century.

1.3.11 No finds of early medieval date were returned by the COUHER within the site or the study area.

Later Medieval Period (1066 – 1550)

1.3.12 During the later medieval period, Iffley and St Clements were small rural agricultural villages. The site was situated within a large open field known as Cowley Fields as depicted on the Davis Map of 1797. The tithe map for Iffley in 1848 shows large areas of open fields characterised by long narrow slightly curved plots of land, indicating that the rural character of the area was maintained into the later 19th and early 20th century. During the 16th century, there was some private enclosure on the meadows of St Clements.

1.3.13 A single find of medieval date is present within the study area and relates to a small pottery jug of late medieval date from Astons Eyot and has stylistic features of a known kiln group from Exeter.

Post-Medieval Period (1550 – 1900)

1.3.14 During the Civil War, Oxford was the Royalist capital and the city defences were repaired, strengthened and expanded. During one of the fortifying phases a substantial number of properties were demolished to make way for a defensive circuit that comprised a large fortress and a line of subsidiary fortresses, the limit of which is to the north of the site. The most significantly affected area was St Clements. The remains of fortifications were found during excavations of the former municipal restaurant site on St Clements. To the south of the site a fractured skull was identified and is interpreted as a Civil War burial.

1.3.15 The site is situated on the western side of Iffley Road, which was established as a new road to London via Henley following the 1771 Mileways Act. The road is depicted on Davis Map of 1797 bisecting the large open field known as Cowely Fields.

1.3.16 During the 1830s Fairacres House (now the 'Old Convent') was built on the site as a private detached residence at the eastern side of a 30-acre plot created by the inclosure of the open fields of Iffley Parish in 1830. The surrounding area was enclosed by 1865 as indicated on the Cowley Tithe Map, although the site is not depicted.

1.3.17 Magdalen College is thought to have owned the land surrounding Fairacres estate since Inclosure. The first edition Ordnance Survey map published in 1878 shows relatively little development along the western side of the Iffley Road with large villas and runs of terraces on the eastern side. By 1900 and the publication of the second edition Ordnance Survey map there had been considerable development along the western side of Iffley Road.

1.3.18 By 1921 the site was surrounded on three sides by a regular street pattern and terrace housing. The Sisters of the Love of God moved into Fairacres House and grounds in 1911, extending the original 19th century house southwards with the construction of a building known as St Mary's and the chapel in 1923. In 1956 no. 44 Fairacres Road was converted to convent use and was linked to the laundry and St Michael's building by a cloister in the late 1950s. St Joseph's building was added in 1959. The Old Convent was further extended in 1972 when the bungalows to the north were acquired. St Raphael's building and a fruit store were added in 1993 when the site assumed its current form.

2 EVALUATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The aims of the evaluation were to confirm the presence or absence of archaeological remains with specific reference to prehistoric flints and remains of Roman date.

2.1.2 The specific project aims and objectives were as follows:

i. To determine the presence or absence of any archaeological remains which may survive;
ii. To determine or confirm the approximate extent of any surviving remains;
iii. To determine the date range of any surviving remains by artefactual or other means;
iv. To determine the condition and state of preservation of any remains;
v. To determine the degree of complexity of any surviving horizontal or vertical stratigraphy;
vi. To assess the associations and implications of any remains encountered with reference to the historic landscape;
vii. To determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence, and the forms in which such evidence may survive;
viii. To determine the implications of any remains with reference to economy, status utility and social activity;
ix. To determine or confirm the likely range, quality and quantity of the artefactual evidence present.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 The evaluation comprised an initial ten test pits (TP1-10) each measuring 1m x 1m (see Fig. 2). A second phase of evaluation comprised five trial trenches (Trenches 1-5) with a combined length of 50m x 1.5m (see Fig. 2). The site-specific methodology is described below.

Test pits

2.2.3 The ten test pits were laid out as shown in Figure 2 using a GPS, except where adjustments were required due to ground conditions or site obstructions. The test pits were hand excavated and all topsoil and subsoil passed through a sieve fitted with a 10mm mesh. The use of test pits in this case was to check if flints were present, and the methodology followed Historic England guidance (HE 2000). In addition, the buried surfaces and the upper surface of the natural geology were examined to look for *in situ* flints and these deposits were also sieved.

2.2.4 Where flints were uncovered they were located in three dimensions using a GPS of suitable accuracy. As flints were found on the site, an OA flint specialist visited the site to oversee the work. In addition, sieved spoil from the test pits were stored adjacent to the test pits on plastic membrane, and backfilled once the test pits were recorded, with the permission of David Radford.

Trial trenches

2.2.5 The five trenches were laid out as shown in Figure 2 using a GPS, except where adjustments were required due to ground conditions or site obstructions. The trenches were located adjacent to the proposed footprints of the new buildings, to avoid any compromise to soil stability which could affect the raft foundations.

2.2.6 The trenches were excavated using an appropriately powered mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket under the direct supervision of an archaeologist. Machining continued in spits down to the top of the undisturbed natural geology or the first archaeological horizon dependent upon which was encountered first. Once archaeological deposits were exposed, further excavation was undertaken by hand. The spoil was stored adjacent to the trenches on plastic membrane to check for the presence of worked flints.

2.2.7 The exposed surface was sufficiently clean to establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains. A sample of each feature or deposit type, for example ditches, were excavated and recorded.

2.2.8 Once completed, the evaluation was signed off by David Radford, and the trenches were backfilled with the arisings in reverse order of excavation and the soil compacted.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

3.1.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below, and include a stratigraphic description of the trenches that contained archaeological remains. The full details of all trenches with dimensions and depths of all deposits can be found in Appendix A. Finds data are tabulated in Appendix B.

3.1.2 Context numbers reflect the trench numbers unless otherwise stated. For example, pit 102 is a feature within Trench 1, while ditch 304 is a feature within Trench 3.

3.2 General soils and ground conditions

3.2.1 The soil sequence between the test pits and trenches varied in part due to the depth to which each could be excavated. Several of the test pits could not be excavated beyond 0.8m due to the presence of concrete slabs (Test Pit 4) and heavy tree rooting (Test Pit 9). In addition, the superficial deposits on the site varied in depth and type. In several cases, two subsoils were encountered and a colluvial deposit was also observed in the majority of test pits and trenches. The natural bedrock of blue grey clay was not encountered in Test Pit 2, Test Pit 4 and Trench 5. In these three cases the test pits and trench were excavated down to a yellow brown silty clay (203, 403 and 1502) which is likely to be the colluvial deposit.

3.2.2 The natural geology of blue grey silty clay was encountered in Test Pits 1, 3, 5-10 and Trenches 1-4. The depth to which this was encountered varied between 1.23m in Test Pit 5 to 0.46m in Test Pit 8. The natural geology of blue grey clay was overlain by a layer of colluvium, which was encountered within most of the test pits and trenches. This layer was between 0.09-0.40m deep and varied between an orange sandy silty and a yellow brown silty clay. This is likely to be the colluvial deposits of clay, silt sand and gravel mapped by the British Geological Survey within the eastern part of the site. The colluvium is likely to have washed downhill from east to west towards the River Thames. Interestingly the colluvial layer (303) of yellow brown sandy clay within Test Pit 3 contained one sherd of late Roman pottery (AD 250-410). This indicates that the colluvium on the site may have washed downhill during or after the late Roman period.

3.2.3 The colluvial layer was in turn overlain by one or two layers of subsoil. The lower subsoil was a dark yellow brown silty clay and the upper subsoil was a grey brown silty clay. Both of these layers contained post-medieval pottery, glass and clay tobacco pipes of 17th-19th century date. Residual Roman pottery was also found within subsoil 901 and residual medieval pottery was found within subsoil 1002. The subsoil in turn was overlain by a grey brown silty clay topsoil, which contained post-medieval finds along with modern plastic.

3.2.4 Ground conditions throughout the evaluation were generally good although several spells of heavy rain did fill up several of the test-pits. Archaeological features, where present, were easy to identify against the underlying natural geology.

3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits

3.3.1 Archaeological features were present in Test Pits 3 and 6 and a charcoal layer was present in Test Pit 10. Trench 4 also contained a ditch. The other test pits (1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9) and Trenches (1, 2, 3 and 5) contained no archaeological features and will not be discussed further. The representative sections from the Test Pits and Trench 4 can be seen in Figures 6 and 7.

3.4 Test Pit 3

3.4.1 Test Pit 3 contained blue grey natural at the base of the trench (309) then a layer of colluvium (303) which contained one sherd of late Roman pottery (AD 250-410). The colluvium was overlain by a yellow brown silty clay subsoil (302) that was 0.4m thick which contained pottery dating to 1820-1900. The upper subsoil was a grey brown silty clay (301) containing pottery and clay tobacco pipe fragments dating to the 18th and 19th century.

3.4.2 Test Pit 3 contained two features, posthole 304 and pit 307 (Fig. 6: Section 300; Plate 1). Pit 307 was cut into the blue grey clay natural 309 and was capped by the colluvial layer (303) which contained late Roman pottery. This suggests that the feature is late Roman or earlier in date. This pit was greater than 0.44m wide and 0.31m deep with steep sides and a flat base. The north-east corner of this feature was exposed and it was unlikely to have been bottomed. The pit contained one fill (308), a mid-yellow brown sandy clay which contained no finds.

3.4.3 Posthole 304 cut through the lower subsoil (302) and into colluvial layer 303 (Fig. 6: Section 300). It was 0.24m in diameter and 0.38m deep. It contained two fills, basal fill 306 and upper fill 305. Basal fill 306 was a dark grey clayey silt which contained dense burnt wood and charcoal and post-medieval pottery. Upper fill 305 was a yellow brown silty clay containing pottery dating to 1650-1800. As subsoil 302 contained pottery dating to 1820-1900 this indicates that posthole 304 is dated to the 19th century or later.

3.5 Test Pit 6

3.5.1 Test Pit 6 contained blue grey natural (607), which was overlain by a layer of colluvium (606). This was a brown grey silty clay that was 0.34m thick overlain by lower subsoil, a brown orange silty clay (603), which was 0.22m thick. This is similar to the sequence seen in Test Pit 3. Layer 603 was overlain by subsoil 602 a grey brown silty clay containing pottery dating to 1550-1700. Several thin lenses of light yellow brown sandy clay overlay layer 102.

3.5.2 Test Pit 6 contained one pit (605), which was located beneath layer 603, a possible lower subsoil (603) (Fig. 6: Section 600; Plate 2). Pit 605 was 1.14m wide and 0.4m deep and had moderately steep sides. The base was not observed. The feature contained one fill (604), a yellow brown silty clay which contained glass dating to the 19th-20th century. This suggests that this feature is 19th century or modern.

3.6 Test Pit 10

3.6.1 Test Pit 10 contained a colluvial later (1003) overlain by a lower subsoil (1002), which in in turn overlain by an upper subsoil 1001, then topsoil (1000). Although no features were recorded, a later of grey clayey silt with a charcoal lens was observed within layer 1002 (Plate 3). This layer also contained pottery dating to the 17th-19th century, and therefore this charcoal layer is very likely to be post-medieval in date.

3.7 Trench 4

3.7.1 Trench 4 contained a natural of blue grey clay (1405), which was overlain by a thin layer of possible colluvium, a yellow brown silty sand (1402). In turn this was overlain by a grey brown subsoil (1401), followed by topsoil (1400).

3.7.2 Ditch 1404 was aligned east-west and was 1.9m wide and 0.76m deep with moderately steep sides and a concave base (Fig. 7: Section 1400; Plate 4). It contained one fill (1403), a grey brown silty clay which contained two sherds of pottery dated broadly to the Roman period. This ditch cut through a thin layer of possible colluvium (1402). It is likely that the ditch is Roman in date, although, if 1402 is equated to colluvial layer 303 in Test Pit 3, which contained late Roman pottery, the ditch may be of late Roman or later date. The pottery from 1403 would not be out of place in a late Roman context.

3.8 Finds summary

3.8.1 There were six flints found, two of which were dated to the early prehistoric period (503 and 702) and one dated to the later prehistoric period (702). Three of the flints, from contexts 202, 902 and 1001, were undated. It is almost certain that all of this flint is residual, including the flint from the possible colluvial layer 503, as the colluvial layer contained late Roman pottery.

3.8.2 Seven sherds of Roman pottery were found, including one sherd of later Roman pottery in colluvial layer 303 (AD 250-410) and two sherds of Roman pottery in ditch 1404. In addition, two residual sherds of Roman pottery were found, one sherd in topsoil 100 and another, of later Roman date, in subsoil 901.

3.8.3 There were eleven metal finds from the evaluation, most of which were undated with the exception of a late medieval or early post-medieval book clasp from subsoil 901.

3.8.4 There were 28 sherds of post-Roman pottery found and these were mostly of post-medieval date with some residual medieval sherds.

3.8.5 There were 10 fragments of clay tobacco pipe found and these were all of 18th-19th century date.

3.8.6 A few fragments of ceramic building material (CBM) and glass were found, along with one slate pencil.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability of field investigation

4.1.1 The evaluation was undertaken during a period of intermittent heavy rain and some of the test pits partially filled with water. The revealed features were relatively easy to identify against the underlying clay and overlying colluvium and subsoil. Only three of the features investigated contained datable finds (304, 605 and 1404) and one test pit contained a charcoal lens in a post-medieval subsoil (1002).

4.2 Evaluation objectives and results

4.2.1 Test Pit 3 contained an undated pit (307), which was cut into the natural blue grey clay and capped by a colluvial layer which contained late Roman pottery. It is possible that this undated pit is prehistoric or Roman in date. Test Pit 3 also contained a posthole, from which later post-medieval pottery was recovered. Test pit 6 contained a pit (605), the base of which contained 19th-20th century glass. Within Trench 4, a ditch (1404), which cut through a possible layer of colluvium (1402), was found to contain Roman pottery. It is likely that the ditch in Trench 4 is of Roman date although it is also possible that the ditch could be later, given that late Roman pottery was collected from the colluvium in Test Pit 3.

4.2.2 This evaluation has shown that a layer of colluvium overlays the natural blue grey clay on the site. This hill-wash is likely to have originated further to the east of the site before moving downhill westwards towards the River Thames. The colluvium contained late Roman pottery, as seen in Test Pit 3 (303), which gives a *terminus post quem* for its deposition. It is possible that any features cut into the natural and beneath the colluvium, such as pit 307, are of prehistoric or Roman date.

4.2.3 The two layers of subsoil on the site both contained post-medieval pottery with some residual earlier material. This material was mixed and abraded and does not represent *in situ* material. It is possible that some of this had become mixed as part of a former ploughsoil. In addition, some features, such as posthole 304, may relate to activity in the allotment area to the west of the site.

4.3 Interpretation

4.3.1 The results indicate that archaeology of possible prehistoric and Roman date has the potential to survive within the natural and colluvial layers. In addition, post-medieval features survive within the subsoil layers. The subsoil layers themselves may be former post-medieval ploughsoils.

4.4 Significance

4.4.1 The discovery of pit 307 beneath the colluvial layer is potentially significant, as it could represent Roman or earlier activity on the site. The discovery of possible Roman ditch (1404) was also significant as Roman activity is known in the east Oxford area, although not in close proximity to the site. The discovery of post-medieval finds and posthole 307 are less significant. The post-medieval finds in the two subsoils could represent former ploughsoils. The documentary evidence shows that this area was used for

agricultural purposes in the post-medieval period until the construction of Fairacres House in the 1830s.

APPENDIX A TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Test Pit 1						
General description					**Orientation**	NA
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and two layers of subsoil overlying natural geology of blue grey silty clay.					**Length (m)**	1
					Width (m)	1
					Avg. depth (m)	0.96
Context No.	**Type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**Description**	**Finds**	**Date**
100	Layer		0.38	Topsoil – garden soil dark brown grey silty clay	Pottery, CTP	17th and 19th century (residual Roman)
101	Layer		0.17	Subsoil/ploughsoil – mid grey brown silty clay with small stones	Pottery	19th century
102	Layer		0.41	Subsoil - dark yellow brown silty clay		
103	Nat.			Natural		

Test Pit 2						
General description					**Orientation**	NA
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and two layers of subsoil overlying natural geology of yellow brown sandy clay (which on reflection may be colluvium).					**Length (m)**	1
					Width (m)	1
					Avg. depth (m)	0.92
Context No.	**Type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**Description**	**Finds**	**Date**
200	Layer		0.28	Topsoil – garden soil dark brown grey silty clay	Pottery	1820-1900
201	Layer		0.19	Subsoil/ploughsoil – mid grey brown silty clay	Pottery, CTP	17th and 19th century
202	Layer		0.45	Subsoil - dark yellow brown silty clay	Worked flint	Unknown
203	Nat.			Natural - yellow brown sandy clay (colluvium?)		

Test Pit 3						
General description					**Orientation**	NA
Trench contained posthole 304 and pit 307. Consists of topsoil, two layers of subsoil overlying super-natural which overlays natural geology of mid blue grey silty clay.					**Length (m)**	1
					Width (m)	1
					Avg. depth (m)	0.96
Context No.	**Type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**Description**	**Finds**	**Date**
300	Layer		0.25	Topsoil – garden soil dark brown grey silty clay	Pottery, CTP and one plastic frag	19th and plastic is

						20th century
301	Layer		0.21	Subsoil/ploughsoil – mid grey brown silty clay	Pottery, CTP	18th and 19th century
302	Layer		0.4	Subsoil - dark yellow brown silty clay	Pottery	1820-1900
303	Layer		0.32	Light yellow brown sandy clay (colluvium?)	Pottery	Roman AD 250-410
304	Cut	0.24	0.38	Posthole with vertical edges and a concave base. Cuts subsoil 302 and colluvial layer 303. Sealed by topsoil 301.Filled by 305 and 306		
305	Fill		0.26	Top fill of posthole 304. Mid yellow brown silty clay	Pottery	1650-1800
306	Fill		0.14	Basal fill of posthole 304. Dark grey clayey silt. Dense burnt wood and charcoal in the fill	Pottery	Post-medieval
307	Cut	>0.44	0.31	Pit. Steep sides and a flat base. One fill (307). May not have been bottomed. N/E corner exposed.		
308	Fill		0.31	Fill of pit 307. Mid yellow brown sandy clay		
309	Nat.			Natural		

Test Pit 4

General description	**Orientation**	NA
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of mid yellow brown silty clay (which on reflection may be colluvium). Pit was located between concrete slabs and slabs for metal posts so may not have been bottomed to the natural.	**Length (m)**	1
	Width (m)	0.9
	Avg. depth (m)	0.88

Context No.	**Type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**Description**	**Finds**	**Date**
400	Layer		0.18	Gravel path and brick levelling layer	Pottery	1830-1900
401	Layer		0.21	Topsoil – garden soil brown grey silty clay	Pottery	1830-1900
402	Layer		0.31	Subsoil – dark yellow brown silty clay		
403	Layer			Yellow brown silty clay (colluvium?)		

Test Pit 5

General description	**Orientation**	NA

Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying collivium and natural geology of grey blue clay.					Length (m)	1
					Width (m)	1
					Avg. depth (m)	1.23
Context No.	**Type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**Description**	**Finds**	**Date**
500	Layer		<0.4	Topsoil – garden soil dark grey brown clayey silt	Pottery	18th and 19th century
501	Layer		0.21	Limestone crush for current fruit store - light white beige		
502	Layer		0.4	Subsoil – mid grey brown clayey silt containing charcoal, flint pebbles	Pottery, glass	1760-1830
503	Layer		0.32	Mid brown orange sandy silt with flint pebbles (colluvium?)	Worked flint	Early prehistoric
504	Nat.			Grey blue clay		

Test Pit 6						
General description					**Orientation**	NA
Trench contained one pit (605). Consists of topsoil, subsoil and two colluvial deposits overlying natural geology of blue grey silty clay.					**Length (m)**	1
					Width (m)	1
					Avg. depth (m)	1.02
Context No.	**Type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**Description**	**Finds**	**Date**
600	Layer		0.38	Topsoil – garden soil brown silty clay	Pottery, CTP, CBM and stone	18th-20th century
601	Layer		0.04	Light yellow brown sandy clay		
602	Layer		0.24	Subsoil – mid grey brown silty clay	Pottery	1550-1700
603	Layer		0.22	Mid brown orange silty clay (colluvium?)		
604	Fill		0.4	Fill of 605. Dark yellow brown silty clay. Glass at base of deposit.	Glass	19th-20th century
605	Cut	1.14	0.4	Pit – moderately steep sides, base not observed. Cut into 606. Overlain by 603. Filled by 604.		
606	Layer		0.34	Mid brown grey silty clay (colluvium?)		
607	Nat.			Natural		

Test Pit 7		
General description	**Orientation**	NA
	Length (m)	1

Trench devoid of archaeology apart from finds. Consists of topsoil and two layers of subsoil overlying natural geology of blue grey silty clay.					**Width (m)**	1
					Avg. depth (m)	0.92
Context No.	**Type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**Description**	**Finds**	**Date**
700	Layer		0.31	Topsoil – dark brown silty clay	Pottery, CBM, stone, metal	18th-20th century (pottery Roman or Saxon residual)
701	Layer		0.19	Dark yellow grey silty clay (subsoil/ploughsoil)	Pottery, CTP	16th-19th century
702	Layer		0.42	Mid yellow brown silty clay (subsoil)	Pottery, worked flint	1480-1600 (residual worked flint)
703	Nat.		0.22	Natural		

Test Pit 8						
General description					**Orientation**	NA
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil or colluvium overlying natural geology of blue grey silty clay.					**Length (m)**	1
					Width (m)	1
					Avg. depth (m)	0.46
Context No.	**Type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**Description**	**Finds**	**Date**
800	Layer		0.27	Mid brown grey silty clay	Pottery, glass, CBM	19th - 20th century
801	Layer		0.19	Mid orange brown silty clay (subsoil or colluvium?)		
802	Layer			Natural		

Test Pit 9						
General description					**Orientation**	NA
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of blue grey silty clay. Heavy disturbance by tree rooting made this test pit difficult to excavate.					**Length (m)**	1
					Width (m)	1
					Avg. depth (m)	0.77
Context No.	**Type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**Description**	**Finds**	**Date**
900	Layer		0.32	Mid brown grey silty clay (topsoil)	Pottery, metal CTP, glass	(Roman and ?medieval residual) glass and

						CTP 19th century
901	Layer		0.18	Mid grey brown silty clay (subsoil)	Pottery	17th-19th century (residual Roman (AD 240-210)
902	Layer		0.27	Mid orange brown silty clay (colluvium?)	Worked flint	Undated
903				Natural		

Test Pit 10						
General description					**Orientation**	NA
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying worked garden soils and colliuvum and then natural geology of blue grey clay.					**Length (m)**	1
					Width (m)	1
					Avg. depth (m)	0.82
Context No.	**Type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**Description**	**Finds**	**Date**
1000	Layer		0.22	Dark grey brown clayey silt (topsoil)	Pottery	18th-19th century (and residual Roman)
1001	Layer			Mid grey brown clayey silt with pebbles (subsoil)	Pottery, CTP, worked flint	18th-19th century
1002	Layer			Mid brown grey clayey silt with charcoal lense (subsoil)	Pottery	Medieval and 17th-19th century
1003				Mid orange brown clayey silt with flint pebbles (colliuvum)		
1004				Natural		

Trench 1						
General description					**Orientation**	E-W
Trench devoid of archaeology – contained one tree throw and a natural feature. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying colluvium and then natural geology of blue grey silty clay. The colluvium fluctuates in depth from 0.09-0.38. 1105 was originally thought to be a ditch but was a natural feature.					**Length (m)**	13.4
					Width (m)	1.7
					Avg. depth (m)	0.8
Context No.	**Type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**Description**	**Finds**	**Date**
1100	Layer		0.26	Dark grey brown clayey silt (topsoil)		

1101	Layer		0.15	Mid grey brown clayey silt with pebbles (subsoil)		
1102	Layer		0.09	Mid orange brown clayey silt with flint pebbles (colluvium?)		
1103	Cut			Tree throw		
1104	Fill			Fill of natural feature 1105		
1105	Cut			Natural feature originally thought to be a ditch but tested and found to be a fold in the natural geology.		
1106	Nat			Natural		

Trench 2						
General description					**Orientation**	E-W
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying colluvium and then and natural geology of mid blue grey silty clay.					**Length (m)**	17
					Width (m)	1.7
					Avg. depth (m)	0.78
Context No.	**Type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**Description**	**Finds**	**Date**
1200	Layer		0.29	Topsoil – dark brown silty clay		
1201	Layer		0.26	Subsoil – dark yellow brown silty clay		
1202	Layer		0.23	Mid yellow brown silty sand (colluvium?)		
1203				Natural		

Trench 3						
General description					**Orientation**	E-W
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil and then colluvium overlying natural geology of mid blue grey silty clay.					**Length (m)**	7
					Width (m)	1.7
					Avg. depth (m)	0.63
Context No.	**Type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**Description**	**Finds**	**Date**
1300	Layer		0.29	Dark brown grey silty clay		
1301	Layer		0.24	Mid brown grey silty clay (subsoil)		
1302	Layer		0.13	Mid yellow brown silty clay (colluvium?)		
1303	Nat.			Natural		

Trench 4						
General description					**Orientation**	E-W
Trench contained one ditch (1404). Consists of topsoil and two layers of subsoil overlying natural geology of mid blue grey silty sand.					**Length (m)**	8
					Width (m)	1.7
					Avg. depth (m)	0.81
Context No.	**Type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**Description**	**Finds**	**Date**

1400	Layer		0.46	Mid brown grey silty clay (topsoil)		
1401	Layer		0.34	Mid grey brown silty clay (subsoil)		
1402	Layer		0.11	Mid yellow brown silty sand (colluvium?)		
1403	Fill			Fill of ditch 1401. Mid grey brown silty clay	Pottery	Roman
1404	Cut	1.9	0.76	Cut of ditch aligned E-W with moderately steep sides and a concave base. . Overlain by 1401. Overlies 1402 and 1405.		
1405	Nat.			Natural		

Trench 5						
General description					**Orientation**	N-S
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and modern concrete overlying natural geology of yellow brown silty sand head deposits (colluvium)					**Length (m)**	5
					Width (m)	1.7
					Avg. depth (m)	0.73
Context No.	**Type**	**Width (m)**	**Depth (m)**	**Description**	**Finds**	**Date**
1500	Layer		0.3	Topsoil – dark brown grey silty clay		
1501	Layer		0.43	Modern concrete		
1502	Layer			Yellow brown silty sand head deposits (colluvium)		

APPENDIX B FINDS REPORTS

B.1 Roman Pottery

By Kate Brady

Introduction

B.1.1 Seven sherds (41g) of pottery recovered from the evaluation were dated to the Roman period. The assemblage was scanned to identify diagnostic forms and fabrics, provide spot-dates, and make recommendations for the treatment of the material. Roman-period fabrics were assigned codes from OA's standard recording system for later Iron Age and Roman pottery (Booth 2016). Reference was also made to Young's (1977) typology of Oxford pottery industry and the National Roman Fabric Reference Collection (NRFRC; Tomber and Dore 1998). Each context-group was quantified by sherd count and weight (grammes).

B.1.2 The following late Iron Age/Roman fabrics were noted (NRFRC codes in brackets):

- F51 Oxfordshire red/brown colour-coated ware (OXF RS)
- M41 Oxford oxidised colour coated mortaria (OXF RS)
- M22 Oxfordshire white ware mortaria (OXF WH)
- R30 Medium sandy reduced ware
- W22 Oxfordshire sandy white ware

Description

Table 1: Description of the Roman pottery by context

Context	Sherds	Weight (g)	Description	Spot-date
100	2	11	Body sherds R30	AD 43-410
303	1	32	Oxford white ware mortarium rim, flange missing	AD 250-410
901	1	25	Base sherd Oxford colour coated mortarium M41 and body sherd of fine colour-coated (F51) vessel with roulette decoration, possibly a beaker	AD 240-410
1403	2	41	Base and body sherd, Oxfordshire sandy white ware (W22). Blackened exterior surface from firing.	AD 100-410

B.1.3 This very small assemblage was recovered from a ditch in Trench 4, the subsoil in Test Pit 9, a colluvial layer in trench 3 and the topsoil in Test Pit 10.

Discussion

B.1.4 The condition of the pottery is mixed. The pottery has an overall mean sherd weight (weight divided by number of sherds) of 5.8g, indicating a highly fragmented assemblage.

B.1.5 It is reasonable to conclude that the Roman pottery was recovered some distance from areas of use and initial discard. All the material apart from the sherd from the ditch in Trench 4 and perhaps the colluvium in Trench 3 are clearly residual.

B.1.6 Overall, the pottery indicates Roman activity in the area, with the emphasis on the late Roman period.

Recommendations regarding the conservation, discard and retention of material

B.1.7 The pottery reported on here has the potential to inform future research through re-analysis and thus it is recommended that all the pottery is retained. This follows the advice set out in the 'Standard for Pottery Studies in Archaeology' (PCRG, SGRP, MPRG 2016).

B.2 Post-Roman pottery, clay tobacco pipes, glass and stone

By John Cotter and Ruth Shaffrey

B.2.1 The post-Roman pottery, clay tobacco pipes, glass and stone has been spot-dated by specialists John Cotter and Ruth Shaffrey. The majority of these finds come from the topsoil and subsoil.

Table 2: Spot-dated post Roman pottery, clay tobacco pipes, glass and stone

Context	Description	Date (AD)
100	Pottery: 1 yellow ware (YELL) sherd; 1 refined white ware (REFW) sherd. Clay pipe: 2 stems.	1820-1900 1805-1900 17th and 19th century.
101	Pottery: 1 English porcelain (ENPO) sherd.	1800-1900
200	Pottery: 1 yellow ware (YELL) sherd.	1820-1900
201	Pottery: 1 transfer printed ware (TPW) sherd. Clay pipe: 1 complete bowl.	1830-1900 1640-1680
300	Pottery: 1 transfer printed ware (TPW) sherd. Clay pipe: 1 bowl and spur, with uncertain makers mark ?GN, possibly George Norwood of Oxford. 1 plastic fragment.	1830-1900 19th century 20th century
301	Pottery: 1 bisque porcelain doll's face fragment (ENPO); 1 Staffordshire white salt-glazed ware (SWSG). Clay pipe: 1 small stem.	1800-1900 1720-1780 Late 18th-19th century
302	Pottery: 1 yellow ware (YELL) rim sherd.	1820-1900
305	Pottery: 1 Brill post-medieval slip ware (BRSL) sherd.	1650-1800
400	Pottery: 1 transfer printed ware (TPW) rim sherd.	1830-1900
402	Pottery: 1 transfer printed ware (TPW) sherd.	1830-1900
500	Pottery: 1 transfer printed ware (TPW) sherd; 1 cream ware (CREA BAND) sherd banded decoration.	1830-1900 1780-1830
502	Pottery: 1 developed cream ware sherd (CREA DEV).	1760-1830
600	Pottery: 1 transfer printed ware (TPW) sherd; 1 English porcelain (ENPO) sherd; 1 European porcelain (ENPO) sherd, several letters of inscription in German. Clay pipe: 1 stem.	1830-1900 1800-1900 Late 19th-20th century

	CBM – 1 peg tile fragment. Stone: 1 slate pencil	19th century 18th-19th century 19th-20th century
602	Pottery: 1 small body sherd green-glazed border ware (BORDG).	1550-1700
604	Glass: Fragment of clear bottle glass.	19th-20th century
700	CBM: 1 peg tile fragment. Stone: 1 fragment of whetstone in fine-grained sandstone.	18th-19th century 18th-20th century
701	Pottery: 1 transfer printed ware (TPW) sherd; 1 yellow ware (YELL) sherd; 1 post-medieval red ware (PMR). Clay pipe: 2 stems.	1830-1850 1820-1900 1580-1900 19th century
702	Pottery: 1 late Brill Cistercian-type ware (CSTN).	1480-1600
800	Glass: 1 fragment green bottle glass. CBM: 1 peg tile fragment.	Late 19th-20th century 19th-20th century
900	Pottery: 1 transfer printed ware (TPW) sherd. Clay pipe: 1 stem. Glass: 1 very small laminating fragment.	1830-1900 18th century ?medieval
901	Pottery: 1 transfer printed ware (TPW) sherd. Clay pipe: 1 worn stem.	1830-1900 Late 17th-18th century
1000	Pottery: 1 developed cream ware (CREA DEV) sherd; 1 Staffordshire mottled ware (STMO) sherd.	1760-1830 1680-1800
1001	Pottery: 1 transfer printed ware (TPW) sherd; 1 Staffordshire salt-glazed ware (SWSG) sherd. Clay pipe: 1 fresh stem.	1830-1900 1720-1780 19th century
1002	Pottery: 1 transfer printed ware (TPW) sherd; 1 sherd Brill-Boarstall ware (BBW) cooking pot rim; 1 Brill slip ware (BRSL) sherd. Clay pipe: 1 stem	1830-1900 1225-1400 1650-1800 19th century

B.3 Flint

By Geraldine Crann

B.3.1 The six flints that were found on the site were all spot dated.

Table 3: Worked flint spot dates

Context	Description	Date
202	Inner flake, hinge termination, rolled condition, edge damaged.	-
503	Blade with step termination, punctiform butt, edge damaged.	Early prehistoric
702	Flake, roughly worked, no platform preparation, rolled condition.	Later prehistoric
702	Snapped blade, isolated platform, thermal fractures.	Early prehistoric
902	Relatively fresh condition decortical flake on local flint cobble.	-
1001	Plunging flake, possible axe-working debitage.	-

Discussion and recommendations

B.3.2 Although there is clear evidence for early prehistoric blade working and possible axe-working of uncertain age in the vicinity, the size and nature of the assemblage limits interpretation of the material.

B.4 Metal

By Ian R Scott

B.4.1 There are 11 finds from the evaluation. Most are of limited interest, being comparatively modern. There are two finds of interest (from 701 and 901), and one of potential interest (from 101):

- Context 701. Belt mount, lozenge-shaped with beaded border and central flower motif. The mount has a single integral rivet. Cu alloy L: 18mm; W: 14mm
  Mounts such as are generally identified belt or girdle mounts, which most probably were, but they could also they applied to purses, shoes or even garments
- Context 901. Book clasp. Distinctive shaped plate forming one part of a book clasp with decoration of stamped rosettes or flowers. The wider end is broken leaving one of the rivet holes is incomplete. The other end has a single rivet hole and would have been hinged or rolled over to form a catch. L: 46mm; W: 32mm
  Late medieval or early post medieval book clasp.
- Context 101. Droplet, possibly simply from melted glass, but possibly from industrial process. Very light. L: 15mm

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APPENDIX C SITE SUMMARY DETAILS

Site name:	Convent of the Incarnation, Fairacres, Oxford
Site code:	OXCI18
Grid Reference	SP 52634 04778
Type:	Evaluation
Date and duration:	17/12/18-21/12/18 and 02/01/2019-04/01/19 (8 days)
Area of Site	1.90ha but only *c.*0.60ha in the development area
Location of archive:	The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museums in due course, under the following accession number: TBC.
Summary of Results:	Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by MEB Design Ltd to undertake a test pit and trial trench evaluation of the site of a proposed extension to the Covent of the Incarnation, Fairacres, Oxford. This evaluation comprised 10 1x1m test pits and 5 trenches that were between 5m-17m long depending on services and obstructions. This evaluation found one undated pit and one post-medieval posthole in Test Pit 3, a post-medieval pit in Test Pit 6 and a possible Roman ditch in Trench 4. The undated pit in Test Pit 3 was overlain by a layer of colluvium. The colluvium appears to cover most of the site although the thickness of this layer appears to vary from 0.09-0.40m. The colluvial layer contained late Roman pottery and prehistoric worked flints which suggests it was formed during or after the late Roman period. As the ditch in Trench 4 cuts through a possible colluvial layer and contained Roman period pottery this indicates that the ditch was created during or after the late Roman period. Alternatively the ditch may be post-Roman and contain residual Roman pottery from the colluvial layer. The two layers of subsoil on the site both contained post-medieval pottery with some residual earlier material. This material was mixed and abraded and so was not in situ material. It is possible that some of this had become mixed as part of a former ploughsoil. In addition there appears to have been some reorganisation of garden soils in the allotment area to the west of the site.

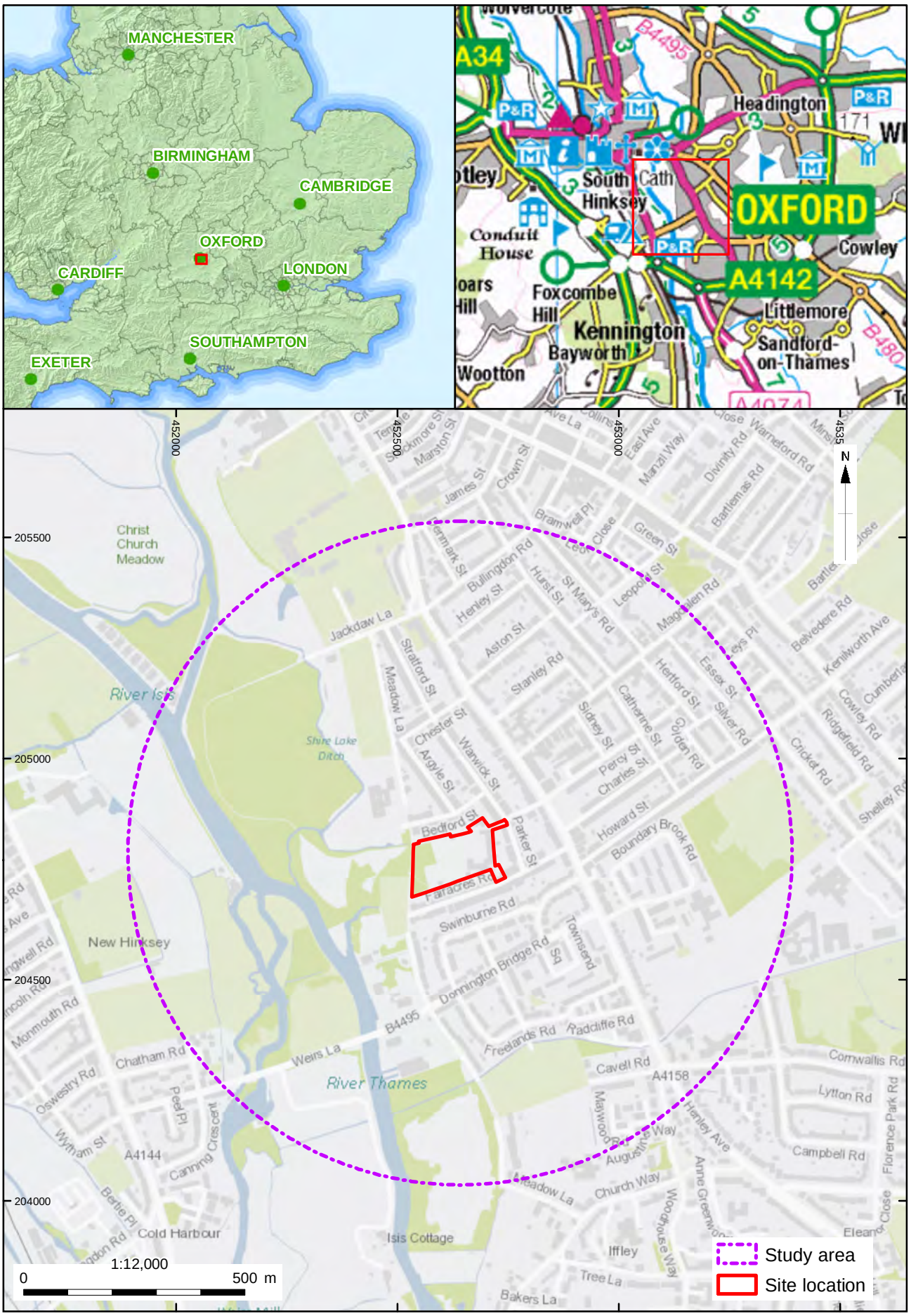

Figure 1: Site location

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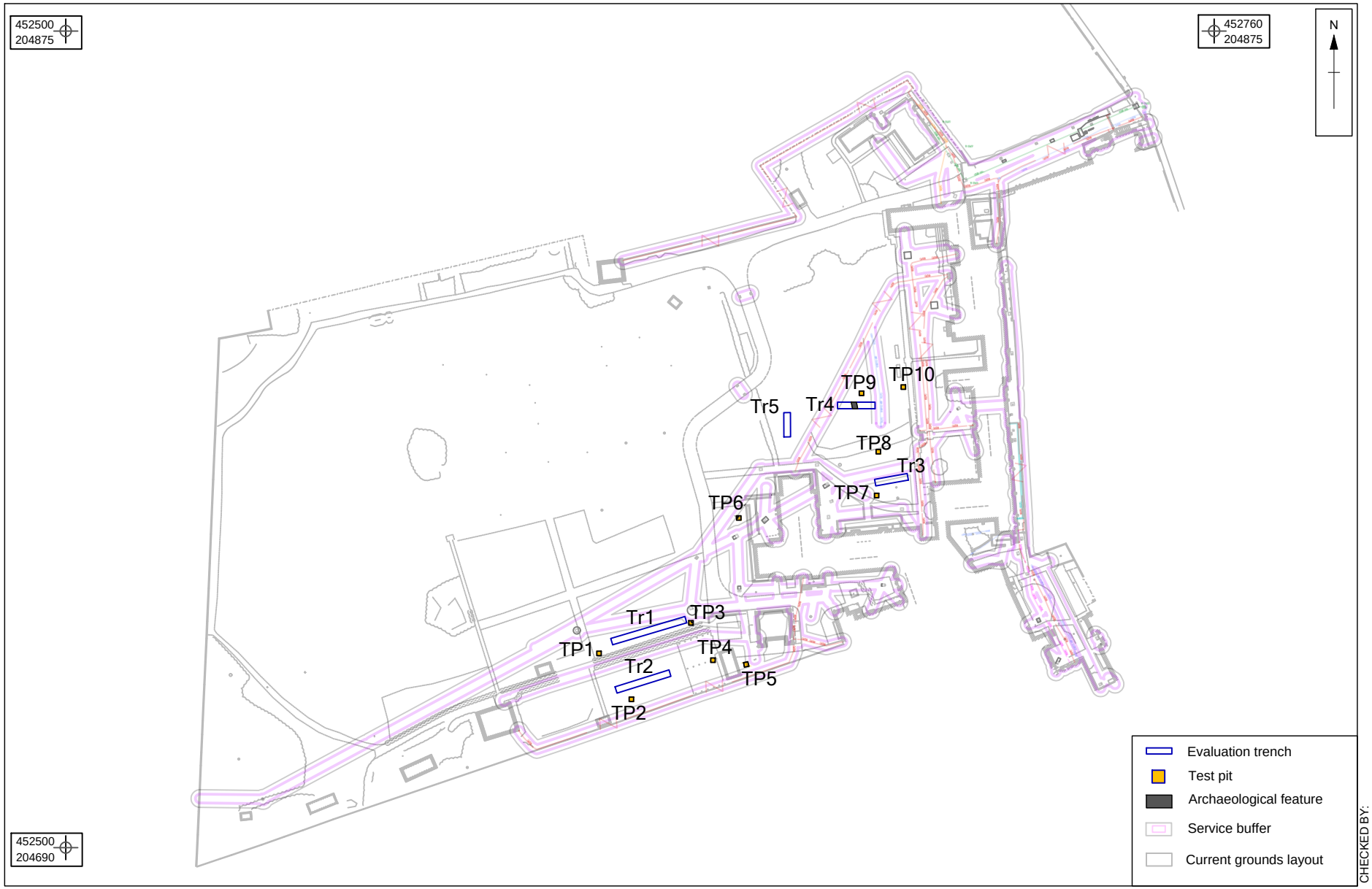

Survey Data supplied by :
Diana Chard

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Scale at A4 1:1250

Figure 2 - Test pit and trial trench locations

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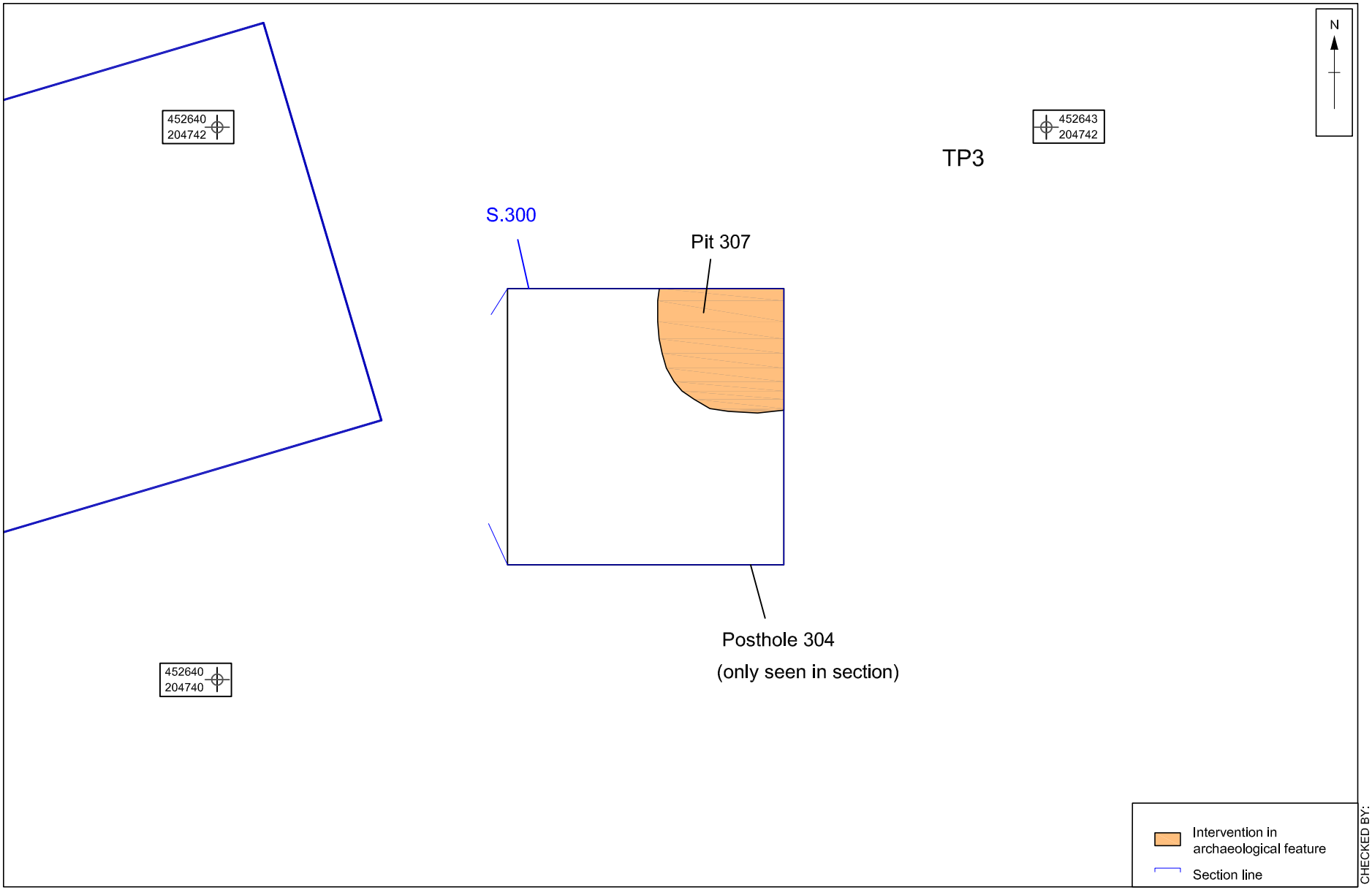

Survey Data supplied by :
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Figure 3 - Test Pit 3

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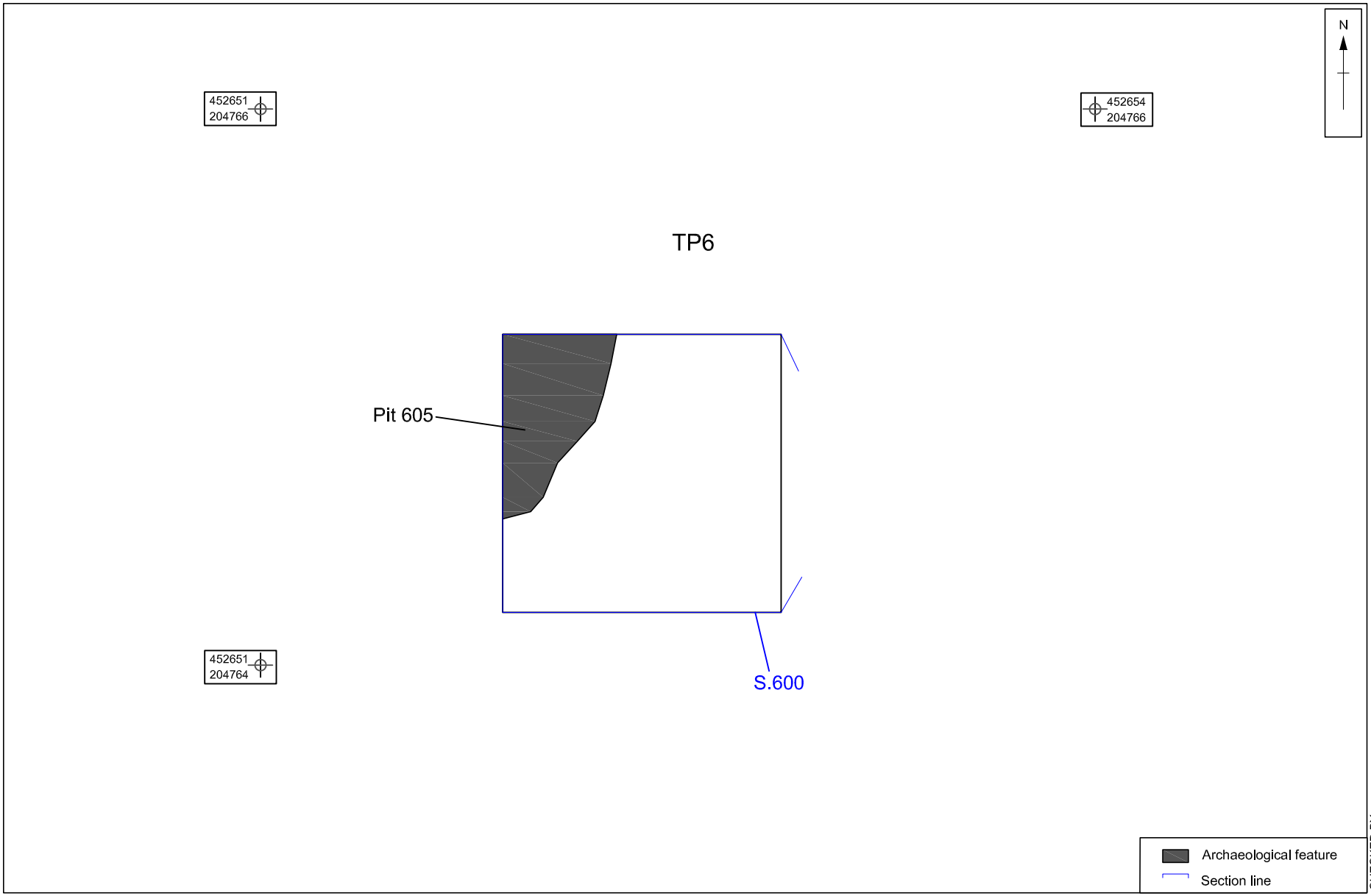

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Figure 4 - Test Pit 6

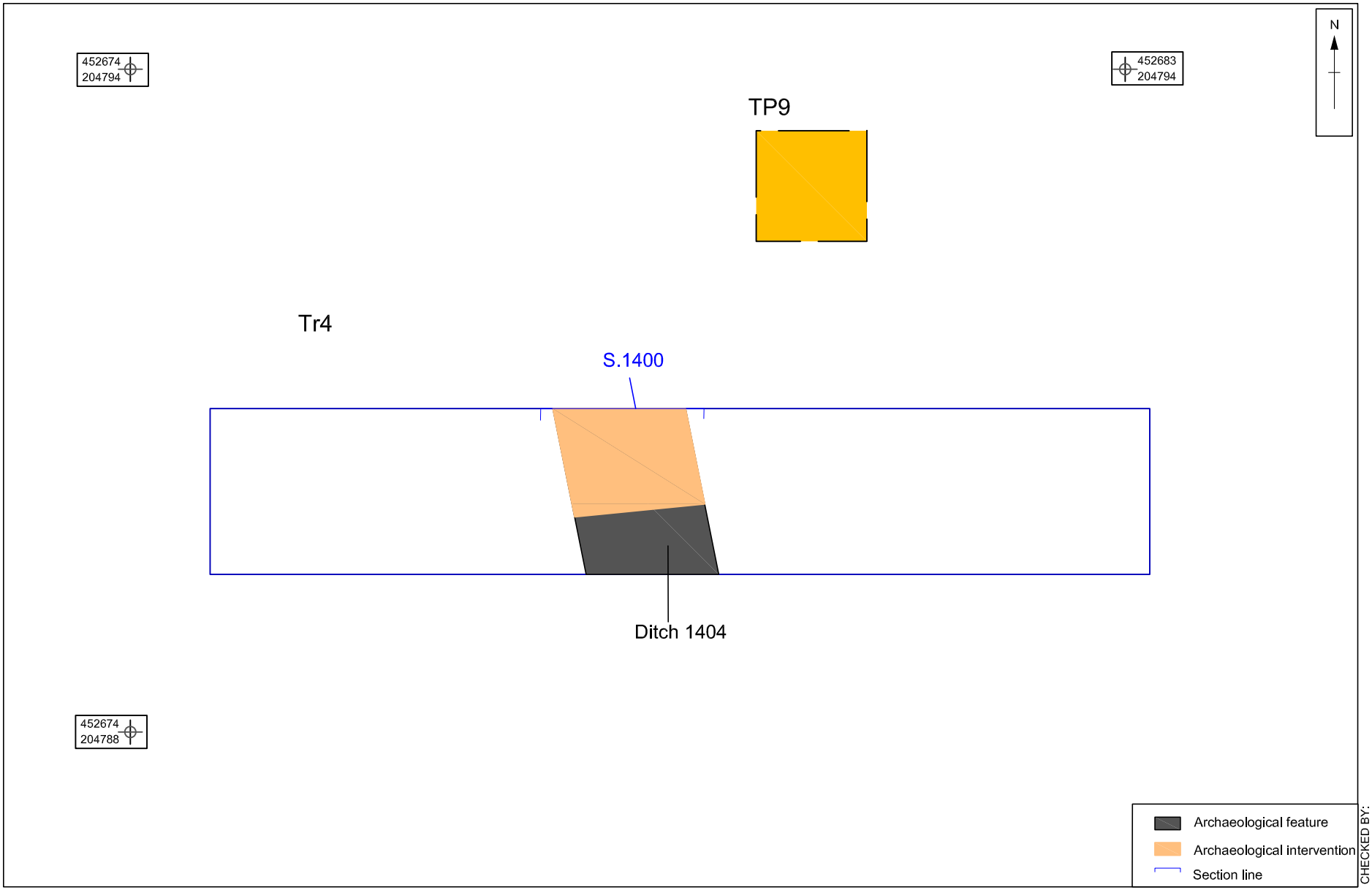

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Figure 5 - Trench 4

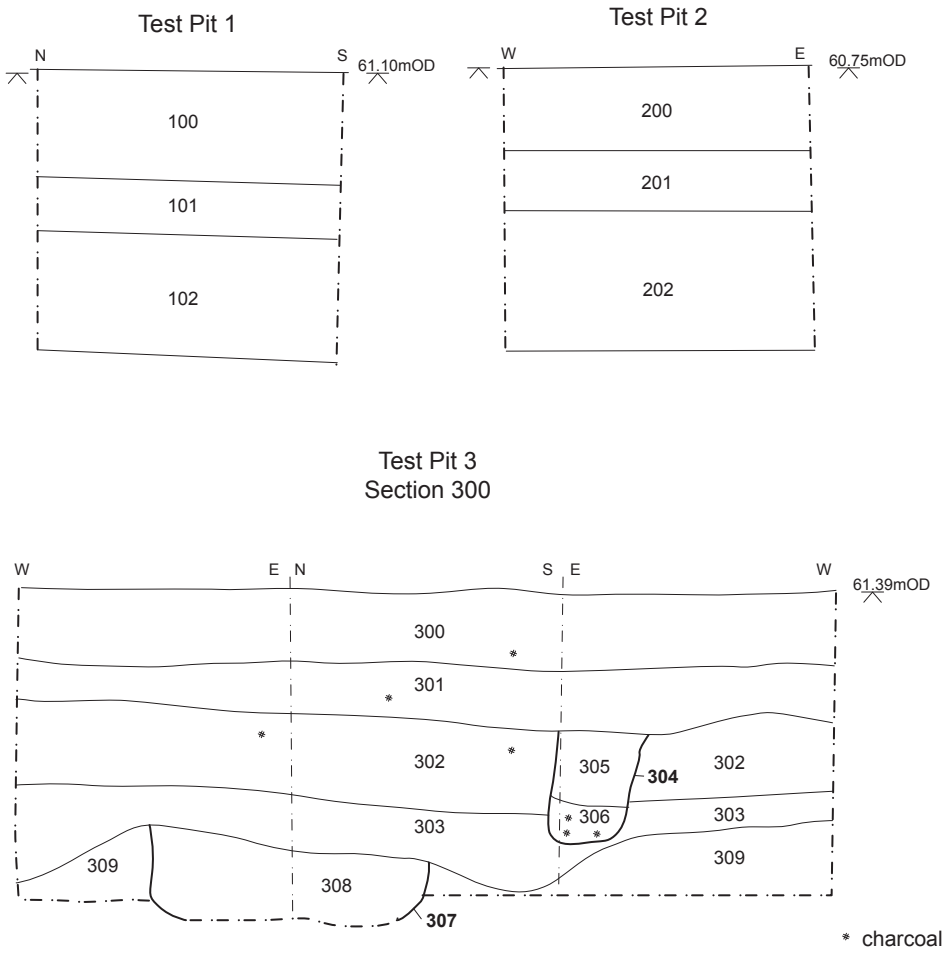

Figure 6: Sections of Test Pits 1-6

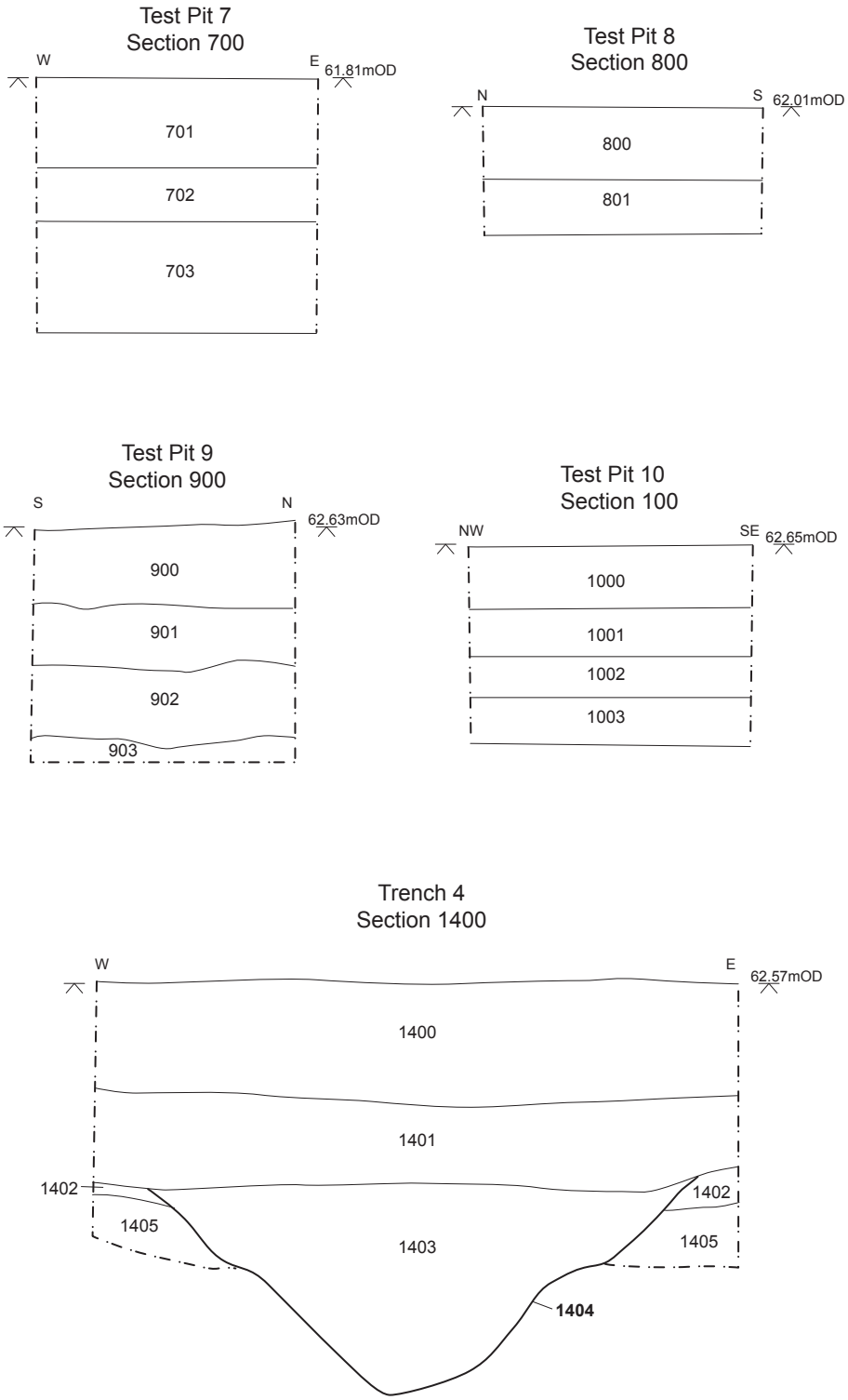

Figure 7: Sections of Test pits 7-10 and Trench 4

Plate 1: Test Pit 3 facing east

Plate 2: Test Pit 6 facing east

Plate 3: Test Pit 10 facing east

Plate 4: Trench 4 facing north

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