

Donnington Grove Country Club
Donnington
Berkshire



**Archaeological
Watching Brief Report**



October 2006

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White Horse Contractors Ltd.

**Donnington Grove Country Club, Donnington,
Berkshire**

NGR: SU 460 688

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SUMMARY

Between the 4th and 11th of September 2006 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Donnington Grove Country Club, Donnington, Berkshire (NGR: SU 460 688). The watching brief was commissioned by White Horse Contractors Ltd. on behalf of the Donnington Grove Country Club, to be carried out during the construction of a reservoir. The watching brief revealed evidence of landscaping associated with the construction of the golf course in the early 1990's. No archaeological features were uncovered.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Between the 4th and 11th of September 2006 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Donnington Grove Country Club, Donnington, Berkshire (NGR: SU 460 688) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by White Horse Contractors Ltd. on behalf of Donnington Country Club in respect to the construction of a reservoir.
- 1.1.2 A project brief was agreed with Duncan Coe, the Principal Archaeologist for West Berkshire District Council, and OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation detailing how it would meet these requests (OA, 2006).

1.2 Location and geology

- 1.2.1 The site is located within the estate of Donnington Grove Country Club, Newbury, Berkshire (NGR SU 460 688) (Fig. 2). The Country Club lies on the northern outskirts of Newbury. It is bounded by Snelsmore common to the north and is overlooked by Donnington Castle to the northeast. The site is currently a mixture of parkland, farmland and woodland, with the River Lambourn running through it.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1.1 A Civil War siege battery was located by Walter Money in the late 19th century, to the south of Snelsmore Common. The exact location of this earthwork (named the North Siege Battery) is unclear although it was thought that it may be affected by the proposed works.
- 2.1.2 The present house at Donnington Grove Country Club was built by James Pettit Andrews between 1763 and 1772 to designs by John Chute, in the style of Strawberry Hill Gothic (DG, 2005).
- 2.1.3 The estate was sold to William Brummell in 1783 and it was he who turned Donnington Grove into a proper country seat. By the time of Brummell's death, in 1794, the estate covered some 800 acres; the house and stables had been extended, Grove Farm created and the entrance lodges erected.

- 2.1.4 It was most likely Brummell who was responsible for the majority of the landscaping that can be seen today, although no record of a landscape architect can be found.
- 2.1.5 Brummell's will stated that the estate should be sold after his death and the proceeds divided amongst his children. In 1795 Donnington Grove transferred to John Bebb, an East India Company Official and, after the death of his widow in 1850, the estate again changed hands to Head Pottinger Best. The house remained in the family until 1936, when it was sold to a Mrs Amy Swithinbank.
- 2.1.6 The house was requisitioned in 1940 for Allied Supplies Ltd. After the war the estate was sold to the Hon. Reginald Fellows and remained in the family until the early 1990's.
- 2.1.7 Dave Thomas, one of Britain's foremost golf architects designed the golf course which is currently situated within the grounds. The construction of the course started in November 1991 and on the 12 June 1993 the Donnington Grove Country Club opened.

3 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims

- 3.1.1 To determine the existence or absence of any archaeological remains; and should they be present, to ensure their preservation by record to the highest possible standard. In particular to determine the location and character of the linear earthwork described by Walter Money as a Civil War Siege Battery.
- 3.1.2 To make available the results of the investigation.

3.2 Watching brief methodology

- 3.2.1 The watching brief was conducted as a series of site visits during the construction of the reservoir. These works included the topsoil stripping and the deep excavation of the site.
- 3.2.2 Photographs were taken using colour slide and black and white print film. A general photographic record of the work was also made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OA Field Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

4 RESULTS

4.1 Description of deposits

- 4.1.1 The natural geology (3), a deposit of light brown clay was encountered at approximately 0.9 m below the ground surface towards the southwest of the site and approximately 0.2 m towards the northeast of the site. This was overlain by a 0.1 m (southwest of site) to 0.8 m (northeast of site) thick landscaping layer of light grey stone and flint (2), which was in turn overlain by a maximum 0.15 m layer of dark brown sandy silt (1), the present day ground surface and turf.

4.1.2 A number of field drains, both ceramic and plastic were uncovered throughout the site, cutting the natural and sealed by landscaping layer 2.

4.2 **Finds**

4.2.1 No finds were recovered from site.

4.3 **Palaeo-environmental remains**

4.3.1 No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling were identified during the course of the watching brief.

5 **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

5.1.1 The presence of field drains sealed by layer 2 indicate that this layer is a landscaping layer. Since some of the field drains are plastic it follows that the landscaping was likely to be associated with the construction of the golf course in the early 1990's.

5.1.2 It is likely that this landscaping removed any archaeology that was present, although it is impossible to tell whether the area was previously landscaped in the late 1700's by Brummell.

5.1.3 No evidence was found to suggest that the Civil War siege battery was located within the site area.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Thickness (m)</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Comments</i>
1	Topsoil	0.15	-	-	Brown sandy silt
2	Layer	0.8	-	-	Light grey stone and flint
3	Natural	-	-	-	Light brown clay

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

DG, 2005 *Donnington Grove Country Club History Website: <http://www.donnington-grove.com/history/history.htm>*

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

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

OA, 2006 *Donnington Grove Country Club, Donnington, Berkshire: Written Scheme Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Donnington Grove Country Club, Donnington, Berkshire

Site code: NEDOGR06

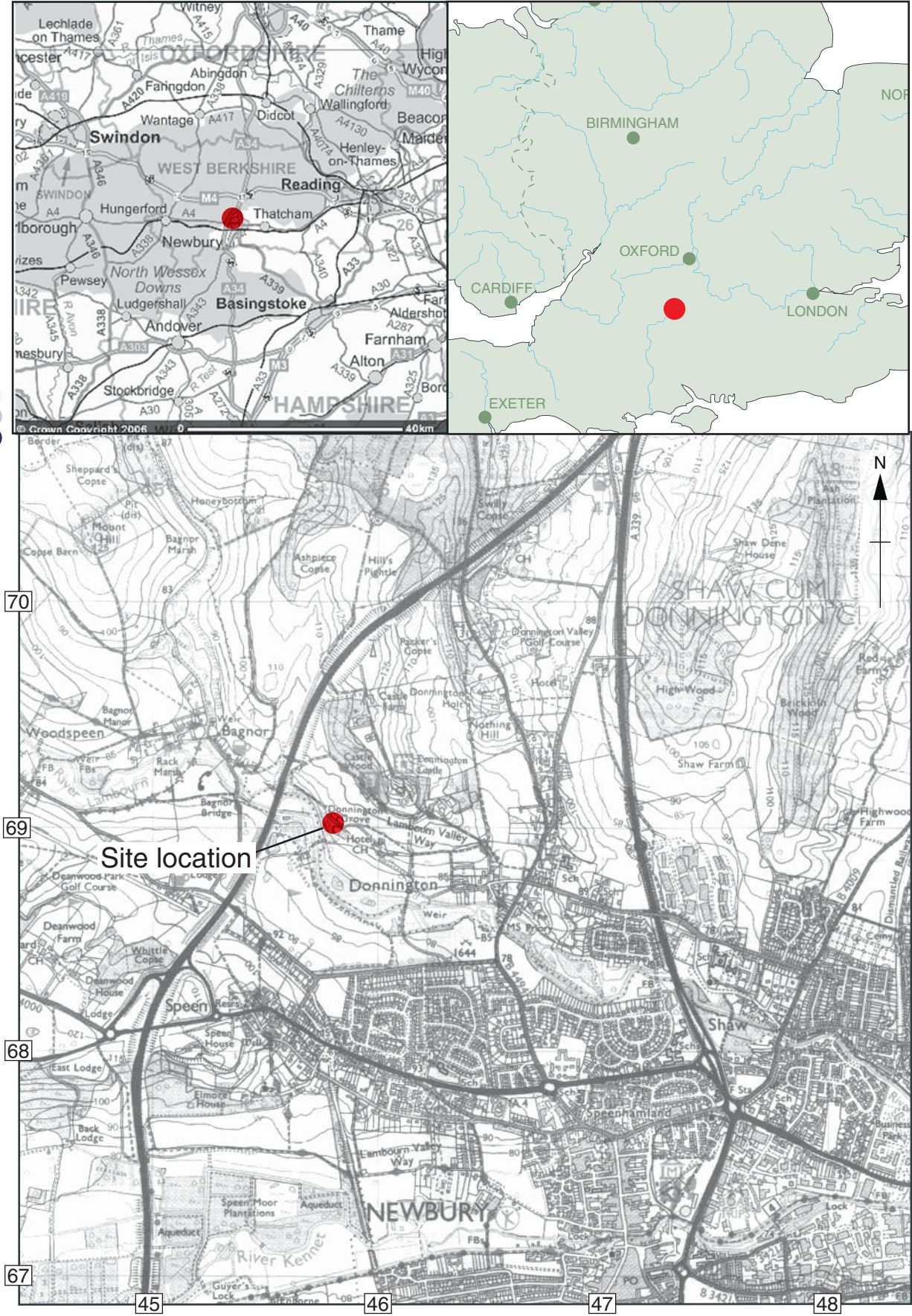
Grid reference: SU 460 688

Type of watching brief: Monitoring all groundworks

Date and duration of project: 4 days between the 4th and 11th of September 2006

Summary of results: Landscaping of area at time of golf course construction. No archaeology was uncovered

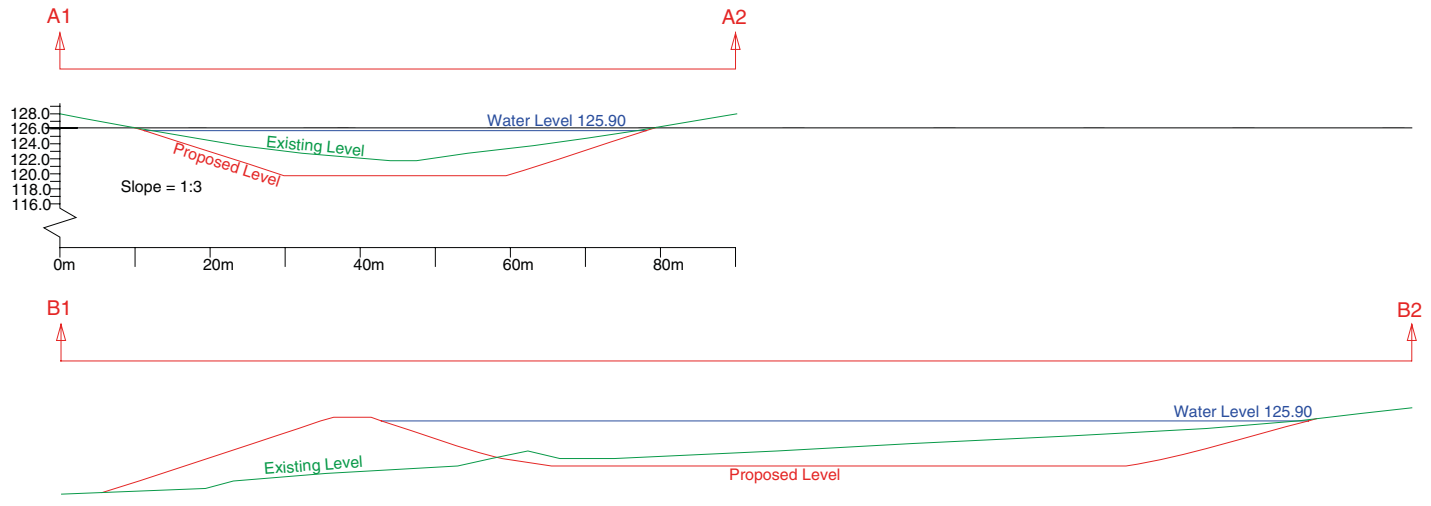
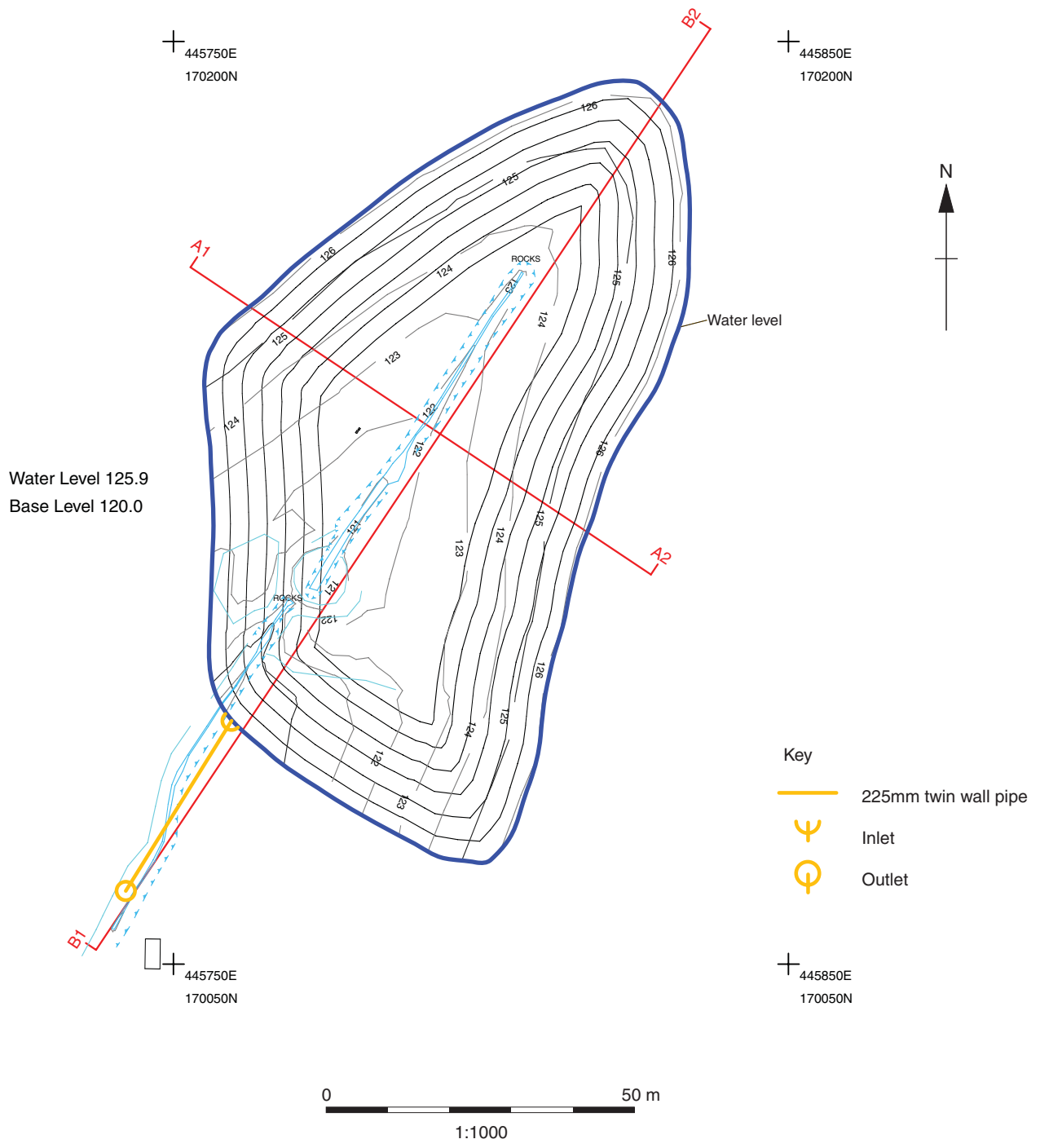
Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with the appropriate museum service in due course



Scale 1:25,000

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Figure 1: Site location



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Figure 2: Watching brief area and sections through lake