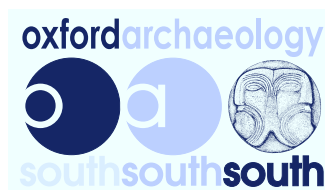


# Old Vicarage Moulsford Oxfordshire



**Archaeological Watching Brief Report**



**February 2010**

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# The Old Vicarage, Moulsoford, Oxfordshire

## *Archaeological Watching Brief Report*

*Written by Ian Cook*

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## **Summary**

*Between November 4th 2009 and December 3rd 2009 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at the Old Vicarage, Moulsoford, Oxfordshire (NGR SU 589 839). The work was commissioned by Baqus Boxall Sayer on behalf of Friends of the Elderly in response to a planning condition (application No. PO9/W0028) imposed by South Oxfordshire District Council.*

*The watching brief revealed topsoil overlying modern demolition deposits. The demolition deposits were probably laid down to level off and landscape the gardens surrounding the care home on completion of the construction of the existing extensions. No archaeological deposits or features were encountered during the course of the watching brief.*



## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 Between 4<sup>th</sup> November 2009 and 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2009 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at the Old Vicarage, Moulsoford, Oxfordshire (NGR SU 589 839). The work was commissioned by Baqus Boxall Sayer on behalf of Friends of the Elderly in response to a planning condition imposed by South Oxfordshire District Council (P09/W0028; Letter SODC to Friends of the Elderly, 11-3-09). A design brief for the watching brief was prepared by the Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (Richard Oram) and a Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared by OA and approved by Richard Oram.

### 1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site is located in the centre of the village of Moulsoford, on the western side of the River Thames (Fig. 1) and is currently in use as a care home. The site lies at 50 m OD and the underlying geology is Lower Chalk (Geological Survey of England and Wales, Sheet no. 254).

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 Unless otherwise stated, the archaeological and historical background has been reproduced here from the Written Scheme of Investigation (OA October 2009) for the report unless otherwise stated.

1.3.2 During the 1930s Roman coins were recovered from the grounds of the Old Vicarage and Roman pottery was recovered from the playing fields immediately south of the site.

1.3.3 The site is known to lie to the west of the Roman road from Dorchester to Silchester and Roman pottery has been found along the line of the road to the south of the site.

1.3.4 Crop marks seen in fields 90 m to the west of the site show linear features and possible enclosures, and these may continue into the built-up area of the village, including the application area. A number of coffin burials, coins and pottery, all dating to the Roman period, as well as a Bronze Age gold torc were found near to the crop marks,. A second gold torc was recovered 600 m south-west of the site.

1.3.5 A Bronze Age spear-head, now in Reading Museum, was found within Moulsoford Parish (VCH, 1923, pg. 504).

1.3.6 Excavations 300 m south-west of the site have revealed a ring ditch, pits, post holes and a linear ditch which probably relate to a Late Iron Age to Roman settlement.

1.3.7 The site lay within the old medieval manor of Moulsoford. The manor house was situated between the main road through the village and the River Thames, immediately to the east of the Old Vicarage (VCH, 1923, pg. 504). A ferry across the River Thames, which appears to have been present during the 13th Century (VCH, 1923, pg. 506), existed to the south of the site and would have contributed to the strategic importance of the village.



## 2 WATCHING BRIEF AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence (if any), extent, condition, quality and date of any archaeological remains in the impacted area.
- 2.1.2 To preserve by record any archaeological remains (if present) that the works may remove or damage within the impacted area.
- 2.1.3 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

### 2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 An archaeological supervisor was in attendance to monitor all ground reductions for the proposed extensions. This included the excavation of foundation and service trenches and a generalised reduction of the surface level within the footprints of the new extensions.
- 2.2.2 Two areas, Areas 1 and 2 (Fig. 2) , were excavated to an average depth of 0.40 m below ground surface level within the proposed footprints of the new extensions as well as foundation and service trenches. Area 1 was at the western end/rear of the Old Vicarage and covered an area of 19 m x 10 m. Area 2 was at the northern end/side of the Old Vicarage and covered an area of 6m x 6 m. A JCB Site Master 3CX and a small dumper/ tipper were used by the contractors in the ground reductions.
- 2.2.3 Plans showing the extent and location of the excavations were prepared (Figs. 2 and 3). A digital photographic record was made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D. Wilkinson, 1992).



### 3 RESULTS

#### 3.1 Presentation of results

- 3.1.1 Area 1 (Figs 2 and 3) was situated at the western end and to the rear of the care home. It was a 19 m x 10 m trench excavated to a depth of 0.40 m below the ground surface level and was reduced to accommodate footings for a new extension to the existing building.
- 3.1.2 A service trench measuring 19.5 m x 1 m was excavated parallel to and 1 m from the southern edge of Area 1.
- 3.1.3 The trench was dug through 0.15 m of topsoil (100) and into a layer of demolition rubble (101) which consisted of modern brick, tile and the remains of concrete footings (probably related to buildings/outhouses that once occupied the site). A concrete footing measuring roughly 3 m x 4 m and around 0.30 m thick was observed at the eastern end of the trench. The presence of frogged bricks adjacent to the concrete suggests that this was the footings to a now demolished modern building. A natural pale yellow/brown sandy silt deposit (103) was seen when the concrete was removed and subsequent service trenches excavated. This was a natural alluvial deposit overlying the natural chalk.
- 3.1.4 Deposit (101) was most likely laid down after the existing extensions to the care home were built in an attempt to landscape the gardens. No archaeological features or deposits were observed in this area.
- 3.1.5 Area 2 (Figs. 2 and 3) was situated against the northern end side of the care home. It measured 6 m x 6 m and was excavated to a depth of approximately 0.40 m below the ground surface level. A 0.60 m wide and 0.60 m deep trench was dug around the entire footprint of the area to accommodate the foundations of the new building.
- 3.1.6 Area 2 was reduced through 0.15 m of topsoil (100) and into a layer of what appeared to be a landscaping/levelling deposit (102). This deposit was a friable, brown silt at a depth of 0.26 m with <1% sub angular stone and brick fragment inclusions (Fig 3 and Plate 1) and was probably part of the landscaping of the gardens after the existing extensions to the care home were constructed. Deposit 102 lay over a pale yellow/brown silty sand deposit (103), as in Area 1. It was only seen in the section of the foundation trench.
- 3.1.7 A possible pit-like feature (104; Fig. 3, Plate 2) was seen in the north-east facing section of the foundation trench; it contained modern brick fragments and was therefore modern in date. It was 0.60 m wide and 0.26 m deep and contained a hard brown silty deposit (105) with stone and brick fragment inclusions. It may have been associated with the construction of the extensions to the vicarage.
- 3.1.8 No other archaeological features or deposits were encountered during the ground reduction in this area

#### 3.2 Finds Summary

- 3.2.1 No finds were retained from the watching brief.
- 3.2.2 No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling were observed.





## 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

### 4.1 General

- 4.1.1 Layers (101) and (102) were exposed which seemed to relate to landscaping the surrounding ground surface after the construction of the existing extensions.
- 4.1.2 Where alluvial deposits were observed in either new footings and service trenches, and where old concrete footings were removed, no archaeological features or deposits were observed.
- 4.1.3 The absence of archaeological features observed during the course of the ground works is probably attributable to previous building works that were carried out at the Old Vicarage. The the construction of extensions to accommodate the care home would have severely truncated if not destroyed any archaeology that may have once been present in the area.



## APPENDIX A. CONTEXT INVENTORY

<b>Contexts</b>						
<b>context no</b>	<b>type</b>	<b>Width (m)</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>	<b>comment</b>	<b>finds</b>	<b>date</b>
100	Layer	-	0.15	Topsoil/Turf Line	-	Modern
101	Layer	-	-	Demolition Rubble	Brick & Tile	Modern
102	Layer	-	0.25	Levelling Deposit	-	Modern
103	Layer	-	-	Pale yellow/brown Sand/Silt (Alluvial?)	-	-
104	Cut	0.6	0.26	Modern Ditch/Pit	-	Modern
105	Fill	0.6	0.26	Modern Ditch/Pit Fill	-	Modern



## APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

Ditchfield, P.H & Page, W, 1923 *Victoria History of the County of Berkshire*, 4, 504-507, London

IFA, 2008 *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

OA, October 2009 *Old Vicarage, Moulsoford, Oxfordshire - Written Scheme of Investigation*

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

OCAS, 2009 *P09/W0028 - Old Vicarage, Moulsoford, Oxfordshire – Design Brief for an Archaeological Watching Brief*



## APPENDIX C. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

**Site name:** The Old Vicarage, Moulsoford, Oxfordshire

**Site code:** MOUOV09

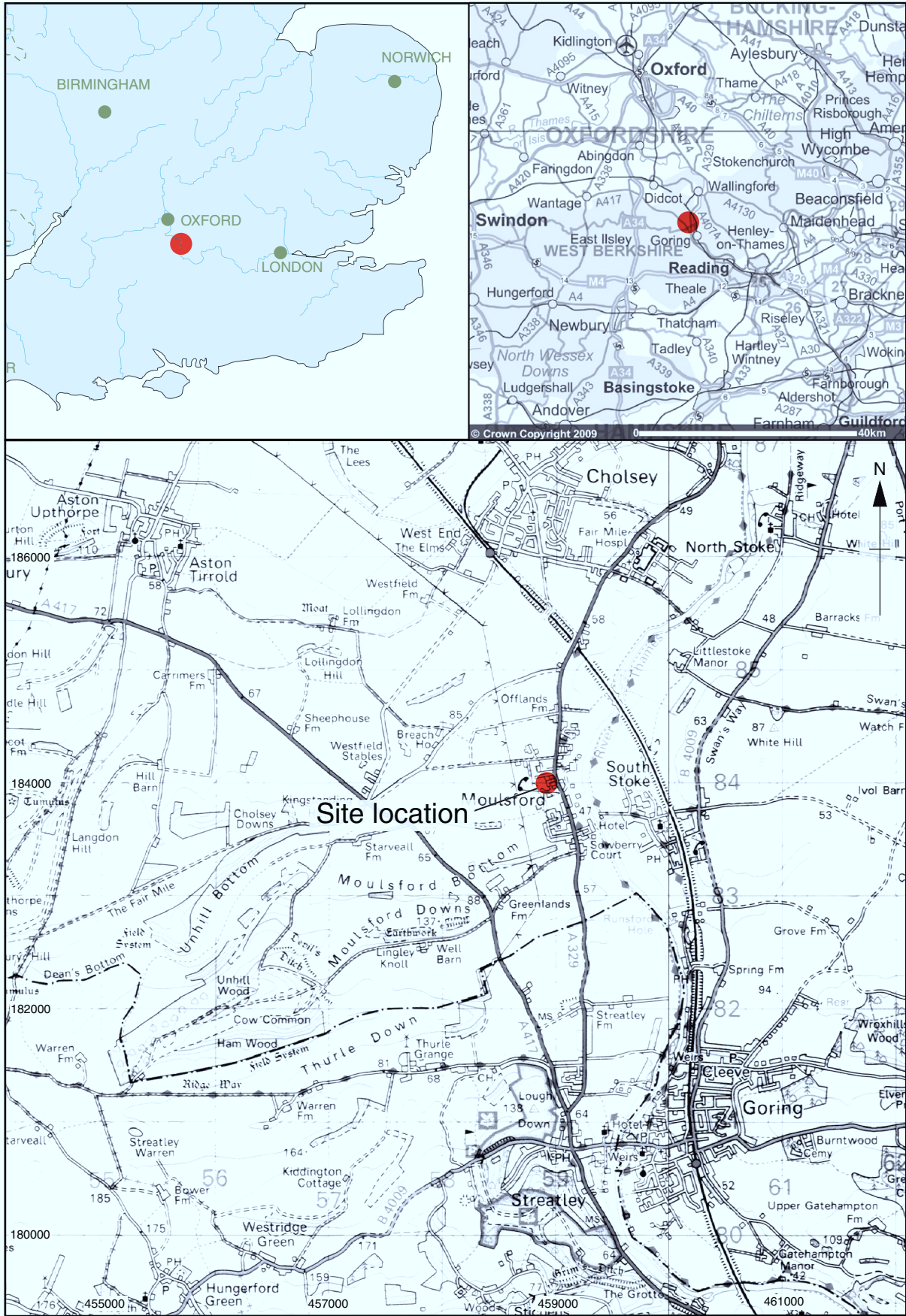
**Grid reference:** NGR SU 589 839

**Type:** Archaeological Watching Brief

**Date and duration:** 4<sup>th</sup> November to 10<sup>th</sup> November 2009, 23<sup>rd</sup> November to 24<sup>th</sup> November 2009 and 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2009

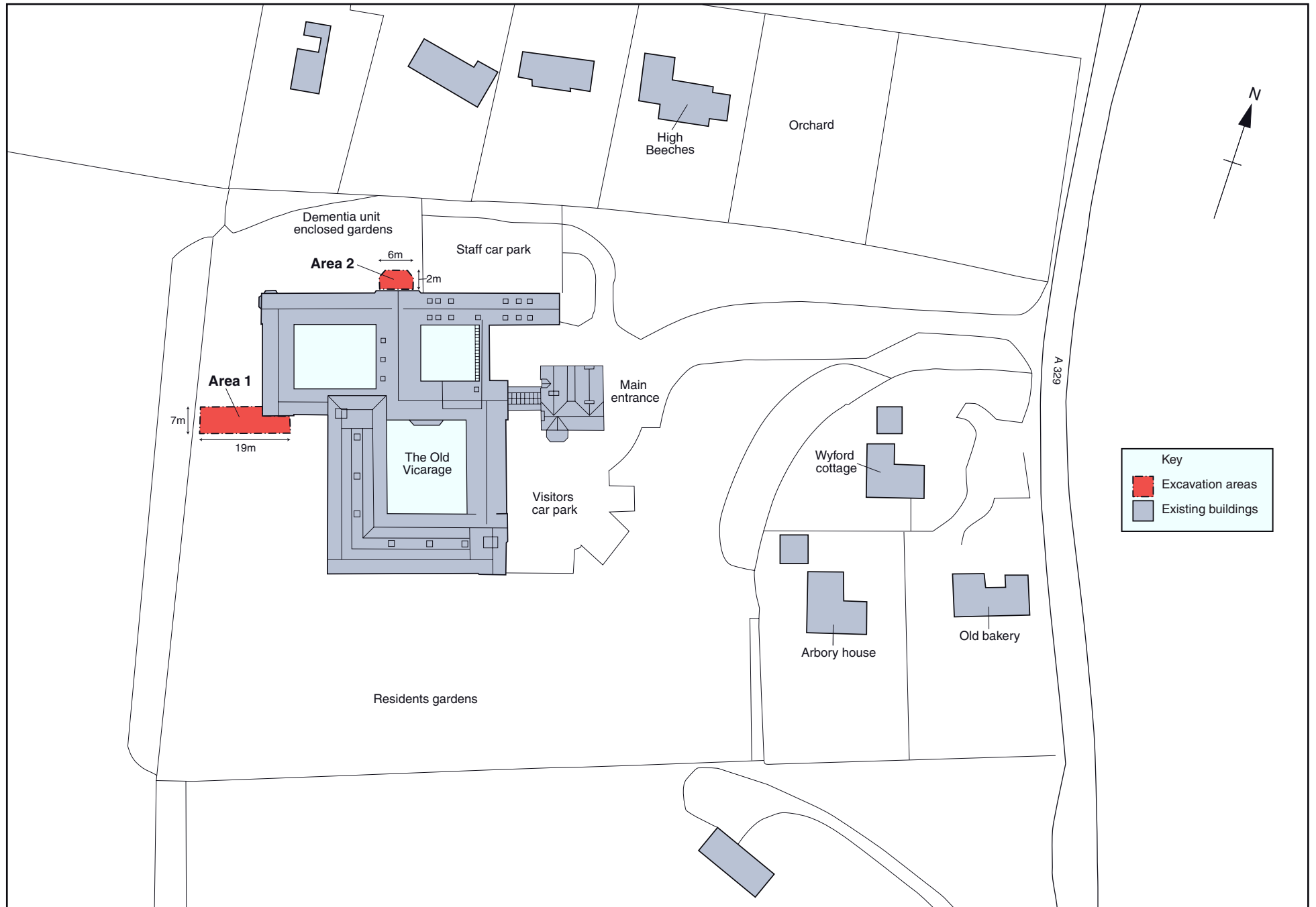
**Summary of results:** The watching brief revealed topsoil overlying demolition deposits used as levelling off/landscaping for gardens surrounding care home most likely laid down upon construction of existing extensions to the care home.

**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with the Oxfordshire County Museum Services in due course, under the following accession number: tbc



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Figure 1: Site location



Not to scale

Figure 2: Location of areas 1 and 2

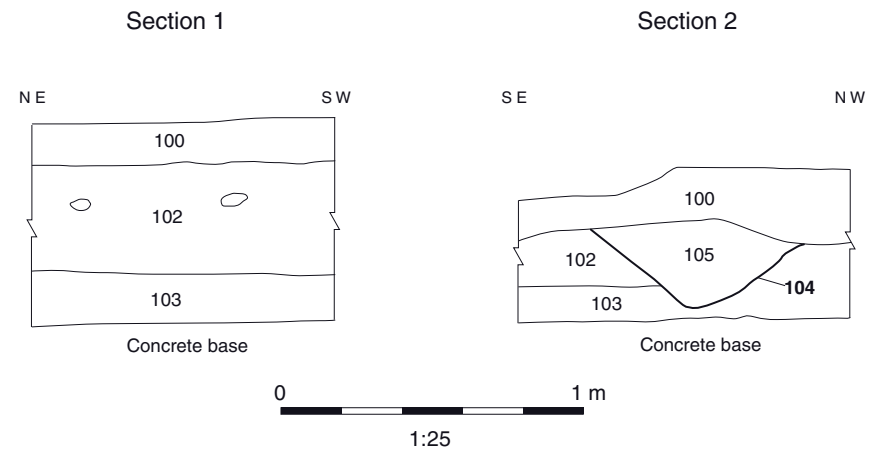
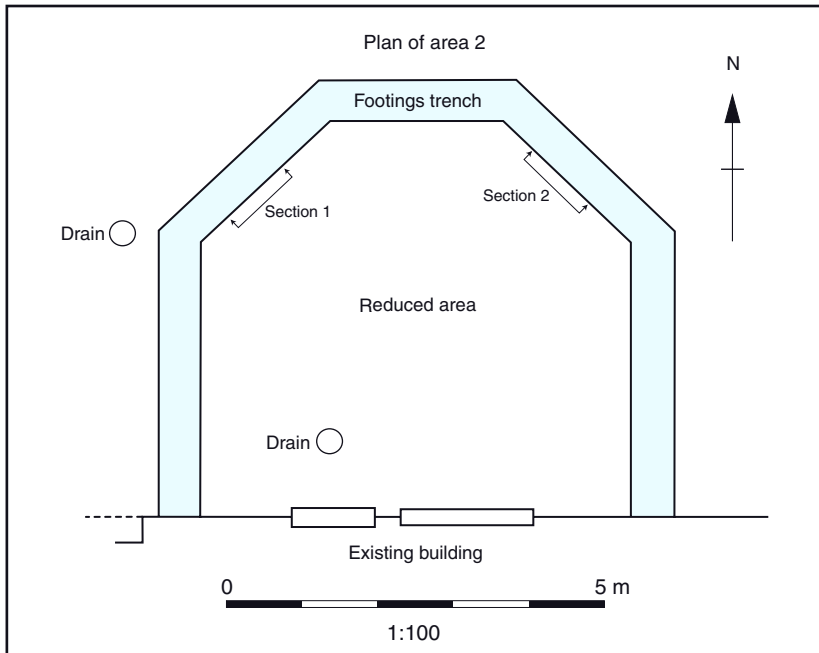
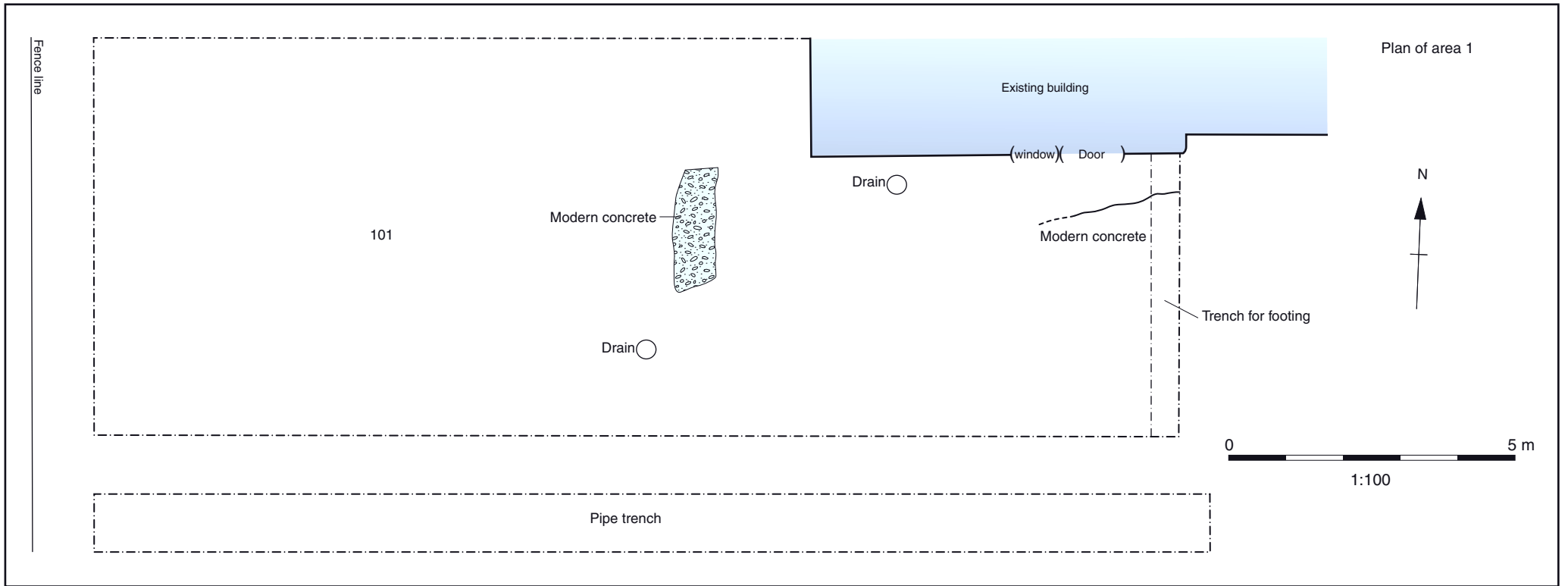


Figure 3: Plans of area 1 and 2 and sections





Plate 1 : Section 1



Plate 2 : Section 2





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