

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
EVALUATION ON LAND AT 31 COWLEY ROAD,  
LITTLEMORE, OXFORDSHIRE**

**SP 583876 02970**

*On behalf of*

*CgMs Consulting Ltd*

**November 2011**

**REPORT FOR** CgMs Consulting Ltd  
Burlington House  
Lypiatt Road  
Cheltenham  
GL50 2SY

**PREPARED BY** Paul Riccoboni AIFA

**EDITED BY** John Moore MIFA

**ILLUSTRATION BY** Eoin Fitzsimons PIFA

**FIELDWORK** 15<sup>th</sup> November 2011

**REPORT ISSUED** 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2011

**ENQUIRES TO** John Moore Heritage Services  
Hill View  
Woodperry Road  
Beckley  
Oxfordshire OX3 9UZ

Tel/Fax 01865 358300  
Email: [info@jmheritageservices.co.uk](mailto:info@jmheritageservices.co.uk)

**Site Code** LECR 11  
**JMHS Project No:** 2540  
**Archive Location** The archive is currently held by JMHS and will be deposited with Oxford Museum Services in due course with Accession Number: awaited

**CONTENTS**

	<b>Page</b>	
<b><i>SUMMARY</i></b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>	
1.1 Site Location	1	
1.2 Planning Background	1	
1.3 Archaeological Background	3	
<b>2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION</b>	<b>3</b>	
<b>3 STRATEGY</b>	<b>4</b>	
3.1 Research Design	4	
3.2 Methodology	4	
<b>4 RESULTS</b>	<b>4</b>	
4.1 Trench 1	4	
4.4 Reliability of Techniques and Results	7	
<b>5 FINDS</b>	<b>7</b>	
5.1 The Pottery <i>by Paul Blinkhorn</i>	7	
5.2 The Tile <i>by Paul Riccoboni</i>	8	
5.3 Other Finds <i>by Paul Riccoboni</i>	8	
<b>6 DISCUSSION</b>	<b>8</b>	
<b>7 BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>9</b>	
<b>APPENDIX 1: Context List</b>	<b>11</b>	
<b>HER Data Summary Sheet</b>	<b>14</b>	
 <b>FIGURES</b>		
<b>Figure 1</b>	Trench location	2
<b>Figure 2</b>	Trench 1: Plans & Sections	6
 <b>PLATES</b>		
<b>Plate 1:</b>	General: Trench 1 -SE	13
<b>Plate 2:</b>	Well 1/21	13
<b>Plate 3:</b>	Over floor surfaces (1/17), (1/18) & kerb line (1/19)	13

## **Summary**

*John Moore Heritage Services conducted an archaeological evaluation as part of works to inform a planning application for a new development at 31 Cowley Rd, Littlemore (SP 583876 02970). The archaeological works followed a Desk Based Assessment produced by CgMs Consulting Ltd (CgMs 2011a), which highlighted the sites potential to find the remains of a known malthouse and coach house seen on an enclosure map of 1819 within the grounds of the still occupied St Georges. The fieldwork involved the excavation of one 10m trench to varying depths of between 71.81m AOD and 72.43m AOD. Structural remains were discovered believed to be the surviving floors of the coach house with a robber trench marking the line of the removed coach house wall. An open well was also discovered at the south east end of the trench associated with a curving kerb line and stone floor, perhaps functioning as the hardstanding on which a wooden structure over the well may have stood.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Location and Geology (Figure 1)**

The study site located in the grounds of 31 Cowley Rd, Littlemore, Oxford City, comprises an area of approximately 0.05 hectares that occupies a gentle slope that descends from its western boundary towards Cowley Road. Considerable made ground exists across the site, which was likely created from the recent renovation works at number 31, adjacent during the car park extension (Tim Gardiner, *pers com*).

The underlying solid geology of the study site is identified as Sandstone of the Beckley Sand Member (British Geological Survey, Sheet 237), drift geology is listed as unknown.

### **1.2 Planning Background**

The proposed development design is still being finalised but is known to comprise the construction of a new single dwelling. The evidence currently available indicates that the archaeological potential of the study site is not sufficient to preclude development.

CgMs Consulting Ltd was instructed on behalf of their client to undertake assessment of the archaeological potential. This involved the production of a Desk Based Assessment by William Bedford MIFA (CgMs Ltd 2011a), and following discussions with David Radford of Oxford City Council it was agreed that an archaeological evaluation using a trial trench would better inform the planning submission.

A *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) was prepared by CgMs Consulting Ltd (CgMs Ltd 2011b) for Stage 1 which proposed a method to satisfy the requirements of the Oxford City Archaeologist (David Radford), and which was agreed prior to commencement of on-site works.

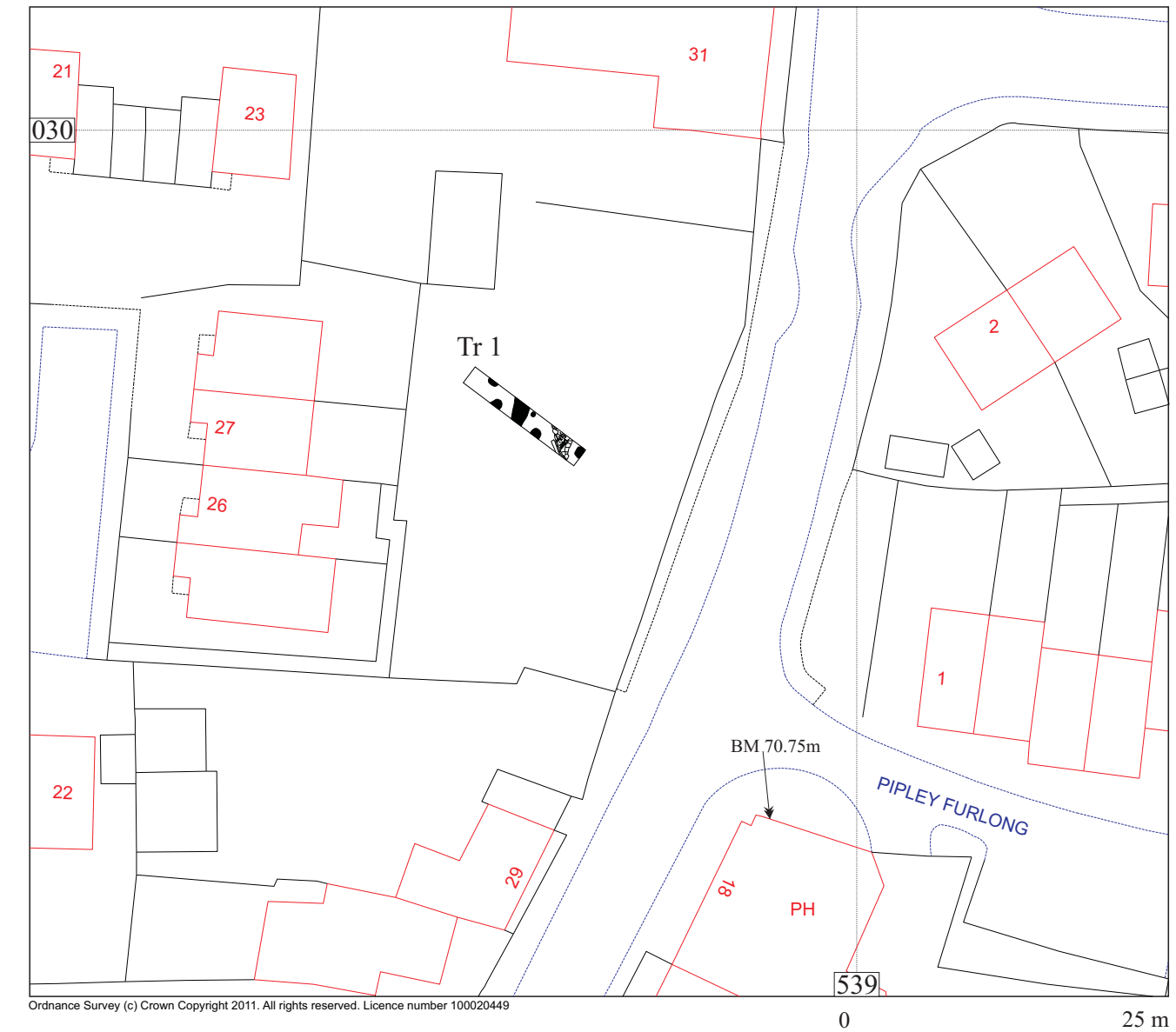
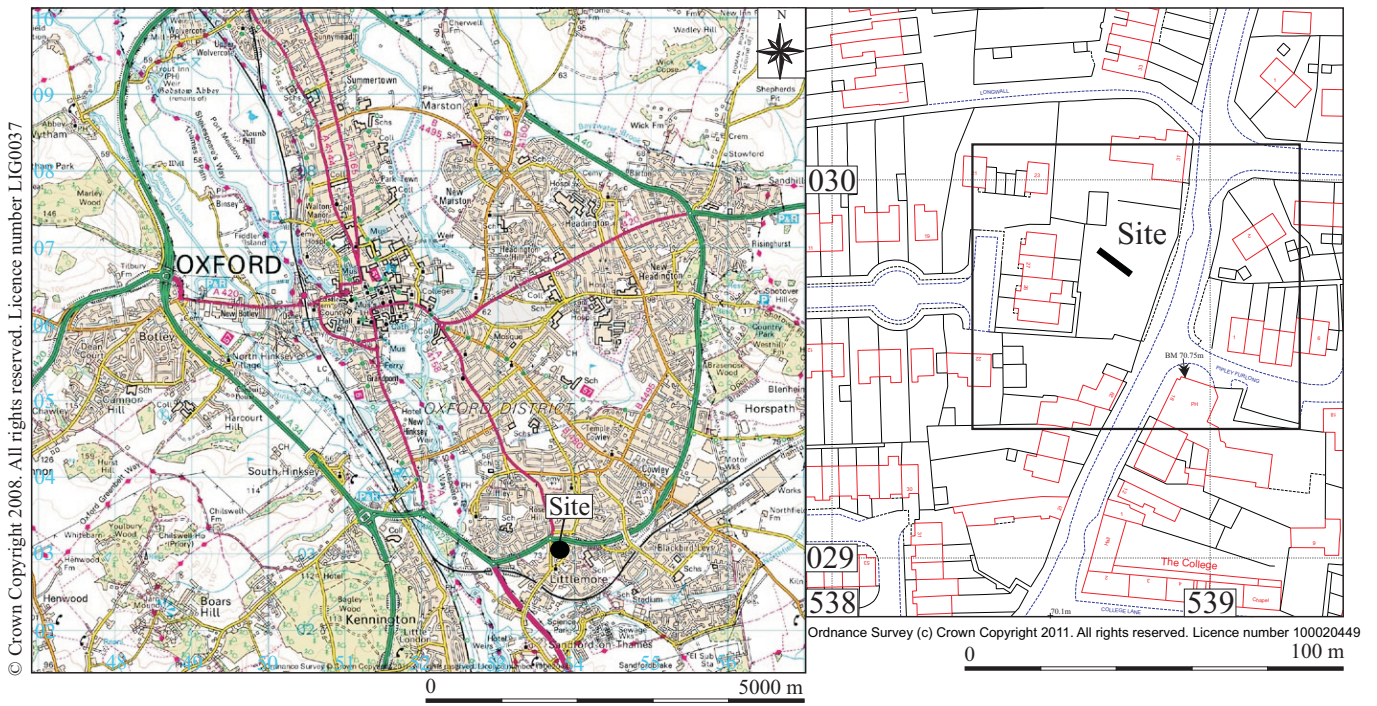


Figure 1. Site location

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

The archaeological background was neatly summarized in the Desk Based Assessment (CgMs 2011a), which should be consulted for a full background study. The following archaeological background summary has been taken from the Desk Based Assessment. In brief, the HER/NMR holds no records of any heritage assets from the prehistoric period, although residual flints and metalwork has been found within a wider study area. The HER/NMR holds no records from the Iron Age or Roman periods but again the wider study area has produced evidence of settlement and occupation. In the Roman period, the area to the south-east of Oxford, within which the study site is located, is known as a major and significant centre for pottery production throughout the 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> Centuries AD. This industry is thought to have extended as far north as Noke and as far south as Dorchester with major centres noted at Rose Hill, Cowley, Littlemore and at Lower Farm in Nuneham Courtenay (Booth and Edgeley-Long 2003).

Excavations conducted at the Oxford Academy, 350m east of the study site, revealed a Saxon sunken feature building containing pottery, glass and bone (HER12767). An evaluation at Littlemore Hospital, 500m southwest of the study site found residual St. Neots ware pottery, indicating some form of Saxon presence in the vicinity. Further afield, within the Oxford Science Park (HER 16299), situated c.1.5km to the southwest of the study site, excavation recorded the remains of an Anglo-Saxon settlement, dating to the 6th-7th century AD, represented by approximately ten sunken featured buildings with associated pits (Moore 2001). In the wider area, documentary and place-name evidence would suggest a late Saxon origin (c.9th to 11th century AD) for settlements at Sandford, Iffley and Cowley.

It is known from the Post medieval period that St George's, the Grade II listed structure located immediately to the north of the study site was constructed, possibly in 1611. It is clear from the Enclosure map of 1819 that the study site is contained within this property's estate. It is shown to contain two other structures, a larger one to the southeast, along the Cowley Road, and smaller one a little further to the west, both which would be at least partially contained within the study area.

The larger structure may have been a malthouse and the smaller a coach house (CgMs 2011a). The potential malthouse is shown as surviving until the 1937 OS map, by which point it was presumably demolished. The potential coach house is shown as a larger structure in the 1819 Enclosure Map than in subsequent maps. By the 1955 OS map, this is shown as a 'ruin'.

This desk-based assessment confirmed that two undesignated assets, remnants of a potential former coach house and a malthouse, still survive within the study site and as these are associated with the Grade II listed building situated adjacent, they have the potential to shed light on a nationally important heritage asset.

## **2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

It was stated in the WSI (CgMs Ltd 2011b) that the aims of the project can be summarised as follows:

- To confirm the location of the two structures identified in the desk based assessment, and ascertain their level of preservation.
- To determine if remains of earlier archaeological remains survive on the site, and to assess their significance.
- To inform the need for further archaeological works on the site in the event of further construction works.

### **3 STRATEGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (CgMs Ltd 2011b). The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1999) and the procedures laid down in MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

#### **3.2 Methodology**

The trenching sample required was achieved through the excavation of one trench measuring 10m.

The trench was 1.5m in width and was excavated by a JCB type tracked excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The resultant surfaces were cleaned by hand prior to hand excavation of the archaeological deposits and features.

Once the latest features had been fully recorded the machine was used again to reduce down to the natural ground near the centre of the trench, to establish the true depth of archaeology and enable a complete stratigraphic profile of the surviving deposits.

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and sections drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was produced. The trench was backfilled after recording.

A site meeting took place between William Bedford of CgMs Consulting Ltd and David Radford, City Archaeologist for Oxford City Council who monitored the work.

### **4 RESULTS**

The trench was positioned in a pattern providing good coverage of the proposed development and aligned to assess the survival of the potential malthouse and coach house to the rear. All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers without brackets indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in ( ) show feature fills or deposits of material.

#### **4.1 Trench 1 (Figure 2, Plate 1)**

*General*

Trench 1 was excavated to a length of 10.5m and was 1.5m wide. The lowest deposit noted within the trench consisted of natural sand (1/29) (71.51m AOD) seen near the centre of the trench. The trench reached between varying heights of 71.67m at the north west end and 72.43m AOD at the south eastern end at which point structural remains were encountered and machine excavation ceased.

*Deposits (SE End of trench)*

The earliest deposit recorded within the trench was the natural Sandy silt (1/29). This was bright yellow colour and very silty. Overlying the natural were a series of made ground deposits. Directly overlying the natural was 0.20m thick layered limestone (1/28). This was covered by the remains of a stone floor (1/25) and redeposited topsoil (1/03) (Figure 2; Section 3).

*Floor surface (SE end of trench)*

At the south eastern end of the trench a floor surface was constructed of various styles which suggest patching up and replacements over a long time period. Cut 1/26 was considered to be the construction cut for the floor surface. It was filled with two deposits (1/16) & (1/27) (Figure 2; Section 2) before a distinct curved kerb line was instated (1/19) constructed of some large and smaller sub rectangular blocks. The floor itself was constructed in various styles with some stones laid on edge (1/18), but others mostly flat stones (<0.25m – 0.35m) (1/17).

*Features (SW end of trench)*

An uncapped well was discovered at the south-eastern corner of the trench 1/20 constructed of rectangular blocks of various sizes with no visible bonding agent (1/21). The well had a total depth of 5.2m (1m of standing water) and is considered to perhaps date from the Post medieval period, but may be earlier based on stylistic observations (Plate 2). A relationship between the floor surface (1/17) and the well could not be established to commensurate with Health and Safety regulations. However, it is assumed that the two are contemporary with each other.

*Floor Surface (NW end of the trench)*

At the north western end of the trench the earliest layers consisted of a stone floor (1/04) constructed of various sized flat limestone slabs, which had been weathered (1/07), worn (1/06) and degraded (1/09) (Figure 2; Section 1).

*Deposits (NW end of trench)*

Directly overlying the uppermost structural deposits at the north western end of the trench was buried topsoil (1/03) with brick fragments throughout. This was overlain by mottled yellow builders' sand with brick inclusions (1/02). The latest deposit was mid brown redeposited topsoil (1/01) with modern finds (Figure 2; Section 1).

A firm light cream silty mortar (1/22) was on the surface of the floor (1/04) of unknown function with 19<sup>th</sup> Century AD pottery sherds.

*Pits; cut into (1/04)*



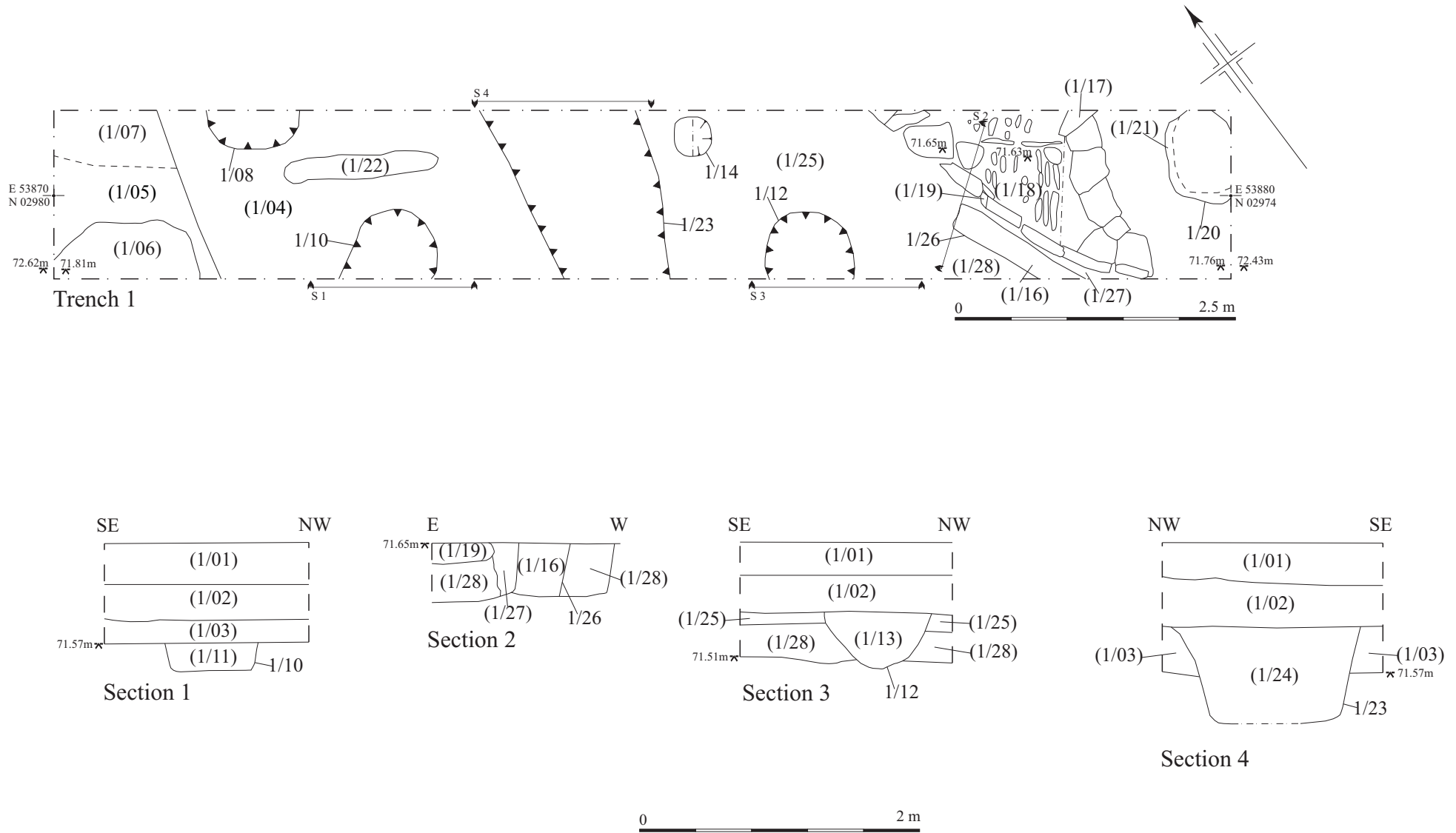


Figure 2. Trench 1 plan and sections

The floor surface (1/04) had later features cut into the top of it. Pit 1/10 was sub circular in shape 0.60m wide and 0.20m deep with sharp concave side and a flat base. It was filled by organic dark brown grey silty clay with 19<sup>th</sup> Century Ad pottery sherds (1/11) (Figure 2; Section 1).

Pit 1/08 was sub circular in shape and 0.80m wide x 0.35m with vertical sides and a flat base. It was filled by friable mid brown grey silty topsoil (1/09) with 19<sup>th</sup> Century AD pottery sherds (Figure 2).

#### *Pits cut into (1/25)*

Pit 1/12 was sub circular in shape with sharp concave sides and a rounded base. It was filled by 0.30m thick dark grey brown silty clay topsoil with limestone fragments throughout (1/13).

Pit 1/14 was 0.57m wide and 0.30m deep with sharp concave sides and a gently rounded base. It was filled by friable dark grey brown silty clay with limestone flecks (1/15) with 19<sup>th</sup> Century AD pottery sherds.

#### *Robber Trenches*

A trench 1/23 was orientated approximately north-east south-west c. 1.30m wide and a minimum depth of 0.80m (Figure 2; Section 4). It was filled by a mottled dark brown grey silty clay (1/24) with late 19<sup>th</sup> Century AD pottery sherds. This trench was considered to have been a robber trench removing the coach house eastern wall, and can be seen to cut a stratigraphically later topsoil deposit (1/03).

## **4.2 Reliability of Techniques and Results**

The reliability of results is considered to be good. The excavation of the trench took place in favourable weather conditions.

## **5. THE FINDS**

### **5.1 The Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn**

The pottery assemblage comprised 25 sherds with a total weight of 725g. It was all post-medieval, with all but one sherd dating to the 19<sup>th</sup> century or later. It was recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994), as follows:

OXDR: Red Earthenwares, 1550+. 1 sherd, 8g.  
OXNOTTS: Nottingham/Derby stoneware. c. 1700 - 1900. 1 sherd, 424g.  
WHEW: Mass-produced white earthenwares, 19<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> C. 23 sherds, 293g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. The range of fabric types is typical of sites in the region. It consisted entirely of domestic wares. The stoneware bottle stamped 'Lovatt and Lovatt' is a product of the Langley Mill Pottery in Derbyshire, with the mark dating it to 1895 – 1930.

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

F	Cntxt	OXDR		OXEST		WHEW		Date
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
1	9	1	8			1	5	19thC
1	11					3	25	19thC
1	15					1	10	19thC
1	22					5	22	19thC
1	24			1	424	13	231	L19thC
	Total	1	8	1	424	23	293	

## 5.2 The Tile by Paul Riccoboni

The tile occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context is shown in Table 2. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. At least three different fabric types could be ascertained and most of the fragments were abraded and some reduced. The tile was all peg tile and Post medieval in date (early 17<sup>th</sup> Century AD onwards). Only a small representative sample was taken from context (1/16) for dating purposes.

Table 2: Quantification of recovered tile

Cntxt	No	Wt	Date
1/16	10	317g	Early 16th Century AD onwards
1/22	4	171g	Early 16th Century AD onwards
1/24	2	32g	Early 16th Century AD onwards

## 5.3 Other Finds by Paul Riccoboni

Other finds were all Post medieval (18<sup>th</sup> Century onwards) and consisted of a glass bottle top (1/15) an iron bar and copper ring (1/24), and a fragment of animal bone (1/11). All of the tile and other finds were not retained for the archive.

## 6. DISCUSSION

The depth of overburden was as expected and preservation of features was good especially those relating to the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. The results of the evaluation suggest that post-medieval and modern building disturbance had taken place on the site, with a relatively significant presence of features from this period. The main features relate to buildings, which formerly occupied this location as seen on historic OS maps dating from before 1819, thought to have been a malthouse and coachhouse.

A robber trench seen near the centre of the trench was considered to have belonged to the coach house on the western side of the site. To the north-west of the robber trench were surviving *in situ* floor surfaces thought to have been the floor of the coach house. This floor was degraded and damaged by later Victorian pitting. These pits

were all of a similar shape and depth and are of unknown function, but may have been simple garden waste features.

To the south east of the robber trench was another stone floor (1/25) and potential stone floor (1/28). The curving kerb line (1/19) cut into (1/28) and contained flat paving slabs and other patchy areas of on edge stone slabs. The original function of this surface is unknown but may be associated with the well, perhaps acting as standing area, which supported a structural wooden cover. Alternatively it may have been associated with malthouse and served as a yard surface to the rear of the property.

The archaeological evaluation was successful in gathering sufficient information to understand the extent, character, date, state of preservation and depth of burial of archaeological remains within the area of study as set out in the site specific WSI (CgMs Ltd 2011b).

Other research aims set out in the Solent Thames Historic Environment Framework could not be fulfilled in this report, but analysis of relevant historic maps has helped identify the buildings uncovered during fieldwork. Further archaeological work would be necessary to fully understand the buildings and achieve a possible ground plan.

A confidence rating is good that the best possible results were achieved.

## **7 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Booth, P. & Edgeley-Long, G. 2003 'Prehistoric Settlement and Roman Pottery Production at Blackbird Leys, Oxford' in *Oxoniensia* Vol LXVIII

CgMs Consulting Ltd 2011a *Archaeological Desk Based Assessment; 31 Cowley Rd, Littlemore, Oxford* Unpub CgMs Consulting Document. Author: William Bedford BA MIFA.

CgMs Consulting Ltd 2011b *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Works in respect of 31 Cowley Rd, Littlemore, Oxfordshire*. Unpub CgMs Ltd Doc. Author: William Bedford BA MIFA.

English Heritage 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects 2*

Institute of Field Archaeologists. 1994. *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation. Revised 2008*

JMHS 2001 An Archaeological Evaluation at Saunders Dairy, Cowley Road, Littlemore, Oxford

Mellor, M, 1984 A summary of the key assemblages. A study of pottery, clay pipes, glass and other finds from fourteen pits, dating from the 16th to the 19th century in TG Hassall et al, Excavations at St Ebbe's *Oxoniensia* **49**, 181-219.

Mellor, M, 1994 Oxford Pottery: A Synthesis of middle and late Saxon, medieval and early post-medieval pottery in the Oxford Region *Oxoniensia* **59**, 17-217

Moore, J 2001 Excavations at Oxford Science Park, Littlemore. Oxford *Oxoniensia* Volume LXVI, 163-219

Oxford City Council 2010 Planning Control and conservation: *Brief for Archaeological Excavation*. Unpub OCC Document.

Solent Thames Historic Environment Research Framework Oxfordshire: *Post-medieval and modern*

**APPENDIX 1: Summary of Context list: Trench 1 (Figure 2)**

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Findings	Date
<b>Trench 1</b>							
1/01	Deposit	Redeposited topsoil	0.30	Tr.	Tr.	None retained	Modern
1/02	Deposit	Sand with bricks	0.25	Tr.	Tr.	None retained	Modern
1/03	Deposit	Topsoil	0.10-0.20	Tr.	Tr.	None retained	Modern
1/04	Masonry	Stone floor surface	0.20	Tr.	4.5 (min)	None	/
1/05	Deposit	Dark brown orange clay	N/a	1.0	1.3	None	/
1/06	Deposit	Degraded stone	N/a	0.5	1.2	None	/
1/07	Deposit	Degraded stone	N/a	0.5	1.0	None	/
1/08	Cut	Pit	0.60	0.80	/	/	/
1/09	Deposit	Fill of 1/08	0.60	0.80	/	Pot	19 <sup>th</sup> C
1/10	Cut	Pit	0.18	0.80	/	/	/
1/11	Deposit	Fill of 1/10	0.18	0.80	/	Pot	19 <sup>th</sup> c
1/12	Cut	Pit	0.30	0.50	/	/	/
1/13	Deposit	Fill of 1/12	0.30	0.50	/	None	/
1/14	Cut	Pit	0.57	0.30	/	/	/
1/15	Deposit	Fill of 1/14	0.57	0.30	/	Pot	19 <sup>th</sup> C
1/16	Deposit	Fill of 1/26	0.40	0.38	1.0	Tile	L16th onwards
1/17	Masonry	Flat paving stones	0.40	0.38	1.0	None	/
1/18	Masonry	On edge Stones	N/a	0.20	0.30	None	/
1/19	Masonry	Kerb Stones	N/a	0.20	0.30	None	/
1/20	Cut	Well	5.2	0.80	0.50	/	/
1/21	Masonry	Stone Lining to Well	5.2	0.80	0.50	None	/
1/22	Deposit	On floor (1/04)	N/a	0.20	1.4	Pot Tile	19 <sup>th</sup> C
1/23	Cut	Robber Trench	N/a	1.30	0.70	/	/
1/24	Deposit	Fill of 1/23	N/a	1.30	0.70	Pot Tile	L19th C
1/25	Masonry	Stone floor	0.10	Tr.	c. 1.0	None	/

---

1/26	Cut	Construction cut	0.40	0.52	c.2.0	/	/
1/27	Deposit	Fill of 1/26	0.40	0.52	c.2.0	None	/
1/28	Deposit	Layer of stone	0.20	Tr.	c.2.5	None	/
129	Deposit	Natural sand	N/a	Tr.	Tr.	/	/



Plate 1: General Trench 1 – SE



Plate 2: Well 1/21



Plate 3: Over floor surfaces (1/17), (1/18) & kerb line (1/19)



**HER Data Summary Sheet**

<b>Site Name:</b> Land at 31 Cowley Rd, Littlemore, Oxford	
<b>Site Address:</b> 31 Cowley Rd, Littlemore, Oxford	
<b>Summary:</b> <i>John Moore Heritage Services concluded an archaeological evaluation as part of works to inform a planning application for a new development at 31 Cowley Rd, Littlemore (SP 583876 02970). The archaeological works followed a Desk Based Assessment produced by CgMs Consulting Ltd (CgMs 2011a), which highlighted the sites potential to find the remains of a known malthouse and coach house seen on an enclosure map of 1819 within the grounds of the still occupied St Georges. The fieldwork involved the excavation of one 10m trench to varying depths of between 71.81m AOD and 72.43m AOD. Structural remains were discovered believed to be the surviving floors of the coach house with a robber trench marking the line of the removed coach house wall. An open Well was also discovered at the south east end of the trench associated with a curving kerb line and stone floor, perhaps functioning as the hardstanding on which a wooden structure over the Well may have stood.</i>	
<b>District/Unitary:</b> Oxford City	<b>Parish:</b>
<b>Period(s):</b> Post med/ Modern	
<b>NGR (centre of site: 8 figures):</b> (SP 583876 02970)	
<b>Type of archaeological work:</b> Evaluation (pre-determination)	
<b>Date of Recording:</b> 15 <sup>th</sup> November 2011	
<b>Unit undertaking recording:</b> JMHS	
<b>Geology:</b> Sandstone of the Beckley Sand Member (BGS 237)	
<b>Title and author of accompanying report:</b> An Archaeological Evaluation on Land at 31 Cowley Rd, Littlemore, Oxford Prepared by Paul Riccoboni BA Arch AIFA	
<b>Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate)</b>  Post medieval Modern  <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(cont. on attached sheet)</b></p>	
<b>Location of archive/finds:</b>	
<b>Contact at Unit: :</b> <i>Paul Riccoboni</i> <i>info@jmheritageservices.co.uk</i>	<b>Date:</b> 23 <sup>rd</sup> November 2011