JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

THE SITE OF THE FORMER KING OF PRUSSIA,

76 ROSE HILL, OXFORD

(NGR SP 5358 0365)

On behalf of

Midcounties Co-Operative Society Ltd

November 2011

REPORT FOR	Midcounties Co-operative Society Ltd C/o Gould Singleton Architects Earls Way Halesowen West Midlands B63 3HR
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Summary

A sequence of Iron Age ditches was located during the evaluation and apparent continuations of these ditches were recorded during the watching brief although no new finds were associated with them.

At least one, possibly two Roman pottery kilns were located. Several of the associated pottery forms identified do not feature in Young's summary and therefore extend the repertoire of types thought to be made at the Rose Hill kilns.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site lies on the west side of Rose Hill, Oxford approximately 40m north of the junction with Courtland Road and south of Villiers Lane (NGR SP 5358 0365). The site was formerly that of the King of Prussia public house, which has been demolished following a fire. The site lies on Corallian Formation Littlemore Member, marl and limestone.

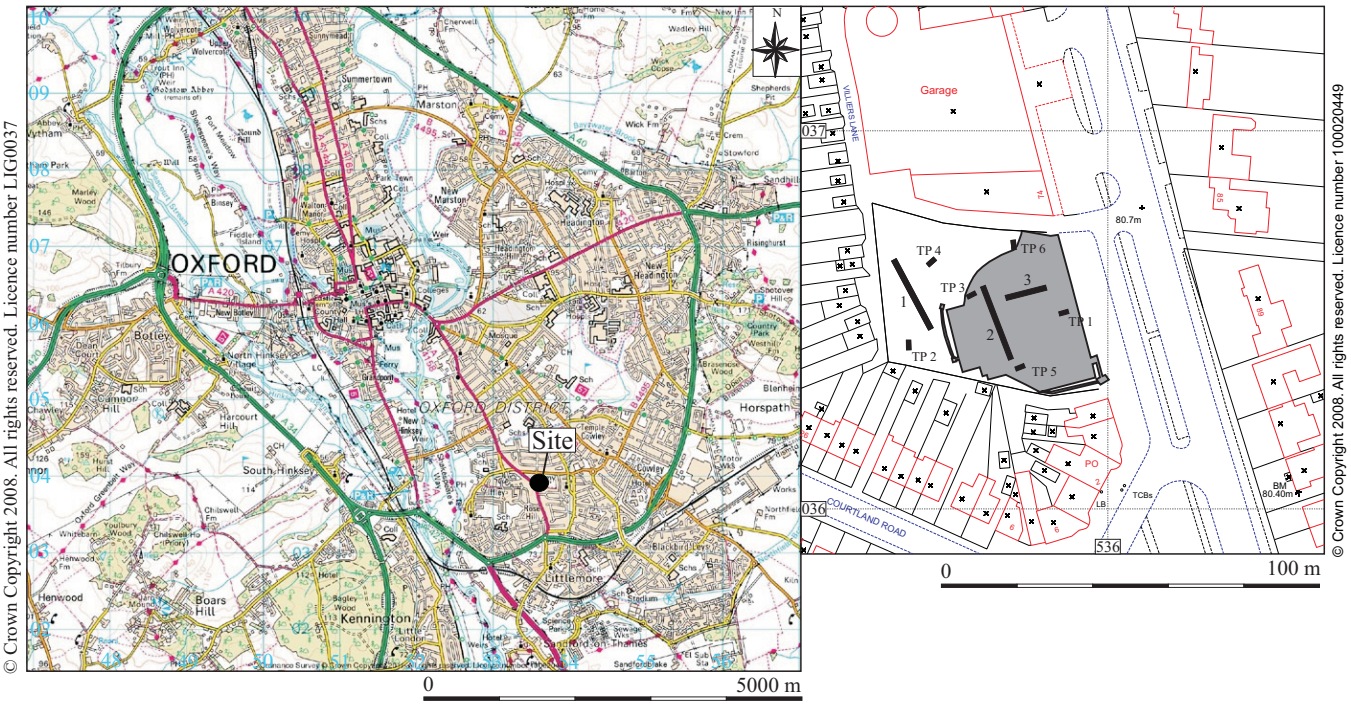
1.2 Planning Background

Planning permission was granted for the erection of a two storey building to accommodate a retail unit at ground floor and ancillary offices/storage at first floor, and the provision of 23 car parking places to the rear and eight spaces to the front. Due to the presence of known archaeological remains a condition for the implementation of archaeological mitigation on the full impact of the engineering impact of the development was attached. This was in line with PPS5.

1.3 Archaeological Background

Palaeolithic implements have been found *c.* 500m to the west (PRN 3655; SP 53150370), while two Palaeolithic hand axes were recovered 400m to the southwest (PRN 12905; SP 533033). A Palaeolithic lithic scatter, including 25 hand axes and 5 flakes is known *c*. 850m to the west-southwest (PRN 15451; SP 528033). A prehistoric arrowhead has been recovered 550m to the south (PRN 3658; SP 53500306), a Neolithic flint flake from 120m northwest (PRN 16627; SP 53450371), and a sherd of early Iron Age pottery has been found *c.* 200m north-west of the site (PRN 3648; SP 53430381).

From the same location as the early Iron Age pottery, a Romano British settlement site is known. The finds included pits, huts, inhumations, a pottery kiln and coins (PRN 3646, 3647 & 3649; SP 53430381, SP 53470373, SP 53580384). Approximately 140m to the north of this application site a 2nd century Romano British beaker was found (PRN 6159; SP 53600380), while an undated burial was reported to the police 450m to the northwest (PRN 6633; SP 53230393). Further Roman pottery kilns are known from 650m to the south (PRN 3656; SP 53490298 – 53430305 - 53560308). Possible human bones, flint flakes and a scraper were also recovered. Further Roman pottery has been located 750m to the south (PRN 6191; SP 534029) although this must be associated with the previous site.



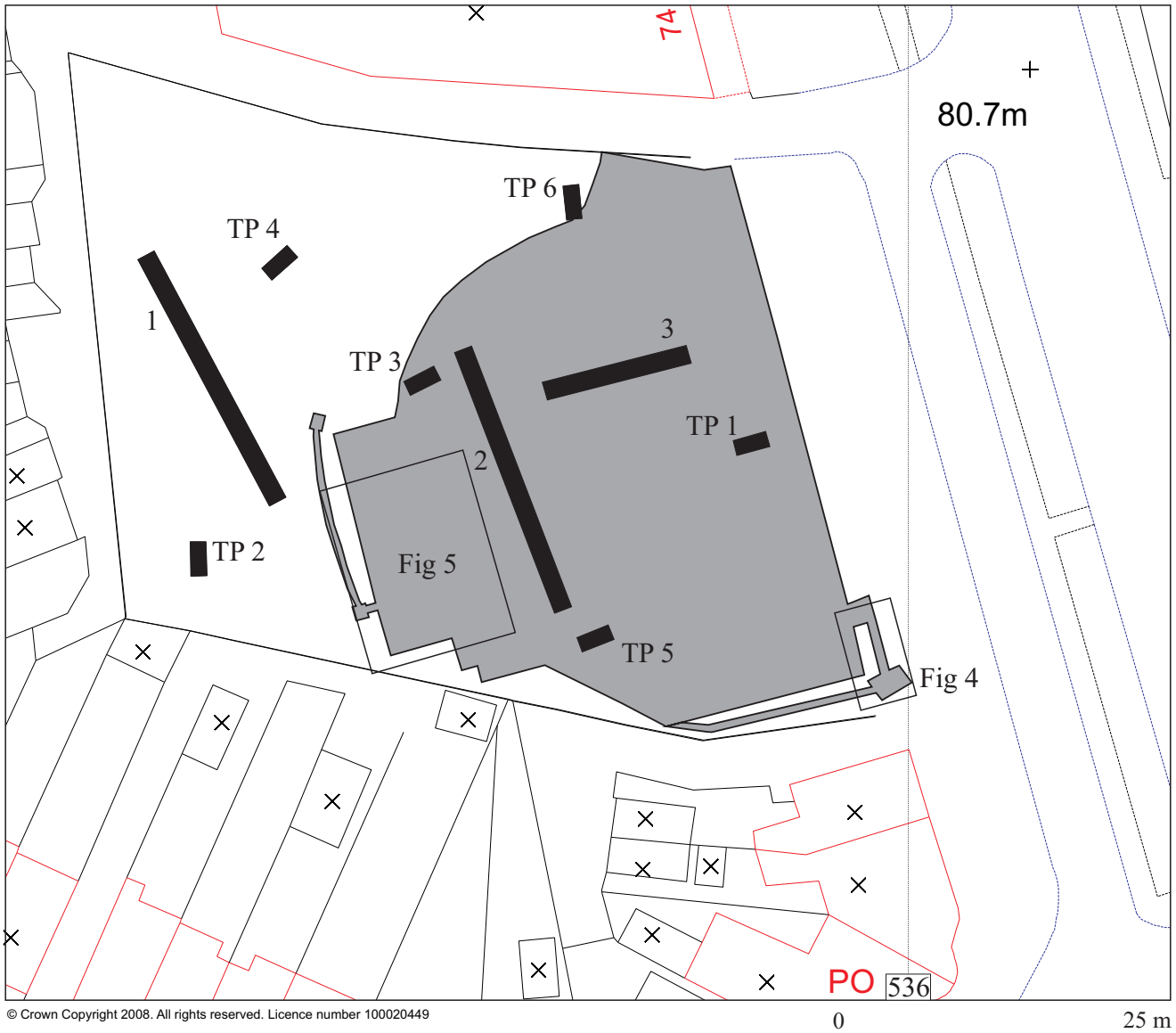


Figure 1. Site location

The evaluation (JMHS 2008) located a sequence of at least five ditches re-cut on roughly the same alignment where located. All appeared to date from the Early to Middle Iron Age, with perhaps the last ditch of a Late Iron Age date. There was also limited later Roman activity in the 2nd – 4th centuries AD on the site, which is thought to be associated with the local pottery production centre.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation was to make a record of the surviving significant remains that will be impacted on by the proposed development.

In particular:

- Establishing the settlement's chronology with particular reference to its earliest occupation and whether occupation was continuous or episodic. Is there evidence for continuity of use from EIA-LIA into the Roman Period?

- Establishing the layout of the settlement, especially in terms of enclosed and unenclosed elements and specific activity areas. Is there evidence to confirm the presence and orientation of a defensive enclosure? Are there associated structures e.g. revetment or gate?

- Establishing the extent, date and character of any ritual or burial remains and investigate the nature of such activities conducted on the site and their relationship to settlement and fields (bearing in mind the burial tradition at Bernwood First School).

- Interpreting the results of the investigations within the context of current knowledge and research of Iron Age settlement in the Upper Thames Valley.

- Identifying and recording any previously unknown archaeological remains which are revealed by the construction works.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

In response to the Oxford City Council's (OCC) condition a scheme of investigation was designed by JMHS and agreed with OCC and the applicant.

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in the *Written Scheme of Investigation*. The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (2008) and the procedures laid down in MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

3.2 Methodology

An archaeologist was present on site during all ground reduction and excavation. All resultant features were cleaned by hand prior to limited excavation of the identified archaeological 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 trenches were backfilled after recording.

Mr David Radford of OCC monitored the work.

4 RESULTS

Individual context numbers were assigned on site to deposits encountered during the ground reduction. Context numbers in () indicate deposits of material.

4.1 Excavation Results

The lowest deposit recorded was the natural light greyish-yellow to orange-brown clay with small limestone fragments with an underlying layer of compressed orange-yellow sand (104).

The soil strip of the area often was not deep enough to expose the natural (104) or the level reached was in fact part of deeper modern disturbance; the almost identical soils of the two deposits made it almost impossible to distinguish a difference.

Trench 1 of the initial evaluation (JMHS 2008) noted a sharp rise in the level of the natural from north to south, which was possibly man-made. This change in level could be similar across the entire site and would effectively mask any deposits to the north of the site.

Some areas such as those in the vicinity of the former public house building showed thick layers with associated brick fragments overlying the natural or very deep localised area of loose sand and clay possibly indicating the area where cellars had been removed. No structure of any cellars or foundations for the public house or earlier buildings was seen expect for the foundation of a smaller building in the north-east corner of the site. However the area was criss-crossed with service trenches and associated manholes. In some cases the observed cut for the services was considerably larger than one would imagine necessary for the pipes and may indicate that originals in the area had been replaced at some point.

<u>Ditches</u>

A series of possibly five inter-cutting ditches was seen to the south of the site, these were not visible during the soil strip of the area but were recorded in section during the machining of service trenches. All of these ditches were roughly aligned north to south (Fig. 3, Section 2).

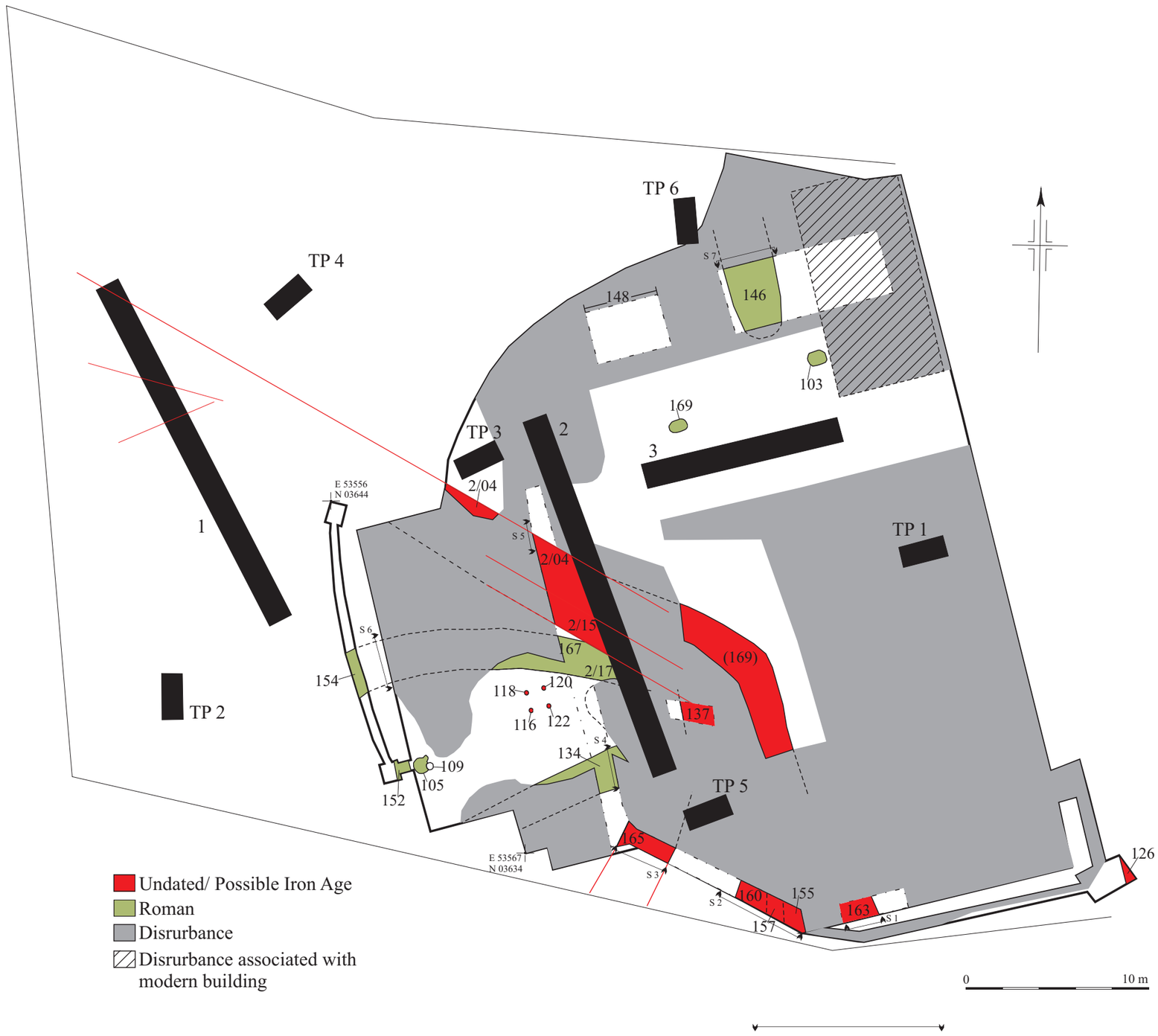


Figure 2. Site Plan

The earliest probably ditch is represented by a mottled yellow-brown-grey silt-clay deposit (159) 0.15m thick lying directly on top of the natural (104). This deposit could be a ditch fill, however, no cut could be identified as it had been truncated by three later ditches 155, 157 and 160.

Ditch 160 was over 2.4m wide; the full extant was not seen but was at least 0.5m deep with a flattened U-shaped profile. The lowest fill recorded was a brown-grey silt-clay (162) with limestone fragments that was at least 0.3m thick. Overlying this was a grey-brown silt-clay (161) that was over 0.4m thick. A single flint blade was recovered from this fill.

This ditch was truncated to the east another ditch 157, which was over 1m wide, 0.25m deep and filled with a grey-brown silt-clay (158). It appeared to be quite shallow, but was truncated itself to the east by another ditch 155 (Fig. 3, Section 2).

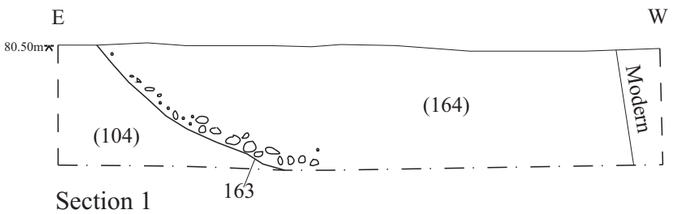
Ditch 155 was over 1.2m wide and 0.4m deep with sides at roughly 45^{o}. It was filled with a brown-grey silt-clay (156) that contained a lens of stone fragments sloping up towards the west. This ditch was itself truncated to the east by modern disturbance. Beyond this disturbance a fifth ditch 163 was recorded in section (Fig. 3, Section 1). This was at least 1m wide and 0.35m deep with a eastern side at 45^{o}. It was filled with a brown-grey silt-clay (164). This is unlikely to represent a continuation of ditch 155 as the resultant ditch would be in excess of 6m wide.

To the west of these inter-cutting ditches was another aligned roughly north-east to south-west. This ditch 165 was 3m wide, over 0.5m deep and filled with a brown-grey silt-clay (166). The upper sequence of the ditch had been disturbed by tree root activity, and it was only identified in section (Fig. 3, Section 3). Close by on the western side was another ditch 134 that was 2m wide and at least 0.25m deep gently sloping sides. This was filled with an orange-brown slit-clay (133) containing a single sherd of Roman pottery. It was aligned roughly east to west (Fig. 3, Section 4).

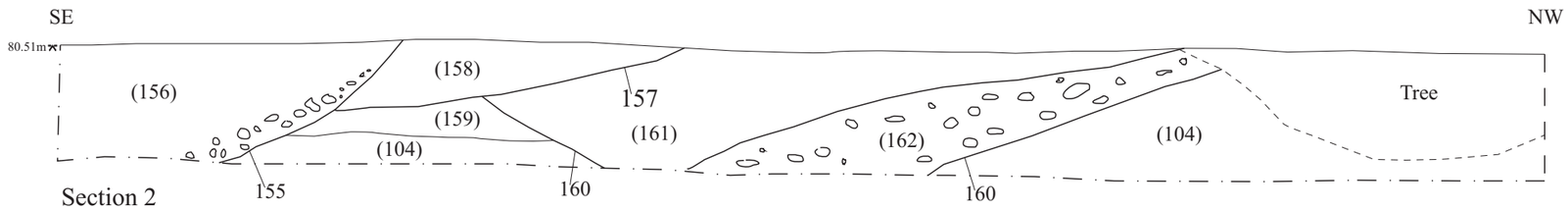
A service trench through an area of apparent disturbance to the north of these ditches revealed the continuation of a ditch in section. Recorded as ditch 137 it was at least 1.2m wide, but had been truncated on the eastern side so the full width is unknown. The intact western edge displayed concave sides 0.25m deep and a flattish base. It was filled with an orange brown silt-clay (136). The similarities in fill to that of ditch 134 may suggest a contemporary date, perhaps the two are close to a corner and represent a square or rectangular enclosure. It is also possible that the truncation noted to the east could have derived from a later ditch cutting through the area.

To the north-east lies the apparent corner of the ditch sequences (169), unfortunately this was only recognised during the post-excavation process and was originally thought to be an extension to the disturbed area. The curve on this ditch section would appear to line up with ditch 163 and with ditch 2/04 (Fig. 3, Section 5) identified in the initial evaluation (JMHS 2008). A modern drain running north to south had also truncated this feature. This would seem to indicate that ditches 155, 157 and 160 are also continuations of those ditches seen within evaluation Trench 2.

To the west ditches 2/04, 2/15 and 2/17 were seen to continue beyond the area of the initial evaluation. Ditch 2/17 appears to be the same as ditch 167 that was aligned roughly east to west and ditch 154 that was recorded further west again. This ditch



Section 1



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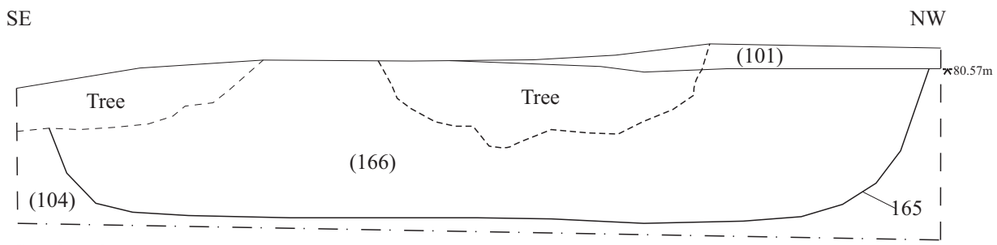

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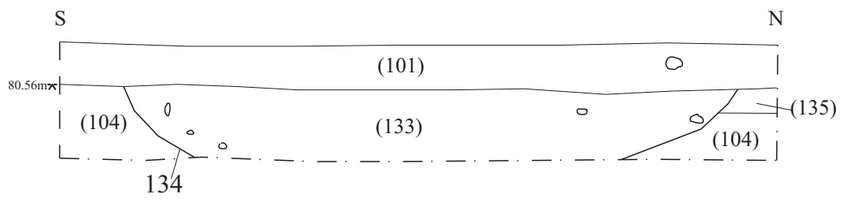

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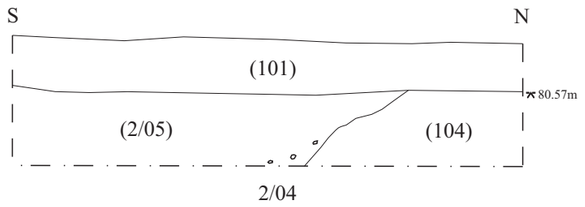

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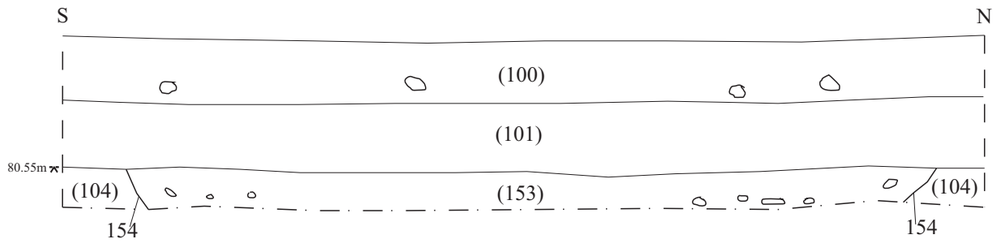

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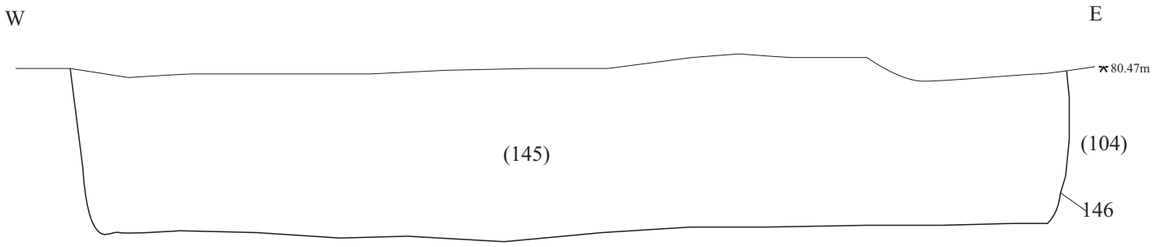

Section 7

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Figure 3. Sections of the ditches

154/167 was roughly 2.5m wide and filled with a brown-grey silt-clay (153)/(168). It contained Roman pottery (Fig. 3, Section 6)

In the north-east of the site was a further ditch 146 aligned roughly north to south. It was 3.3m wide, 0.5m deep with near vertical sides and a flat base. The fill was an orange-brown sandy clay (145) that contained Roman pottery. It narrowed to the south and would appear to have terminated not far to the south.

On the very eastern limit of the site another ditch 126 was recorded (Fig 4). Only a very short section was seen in an area of very heavy modern disturbance from drains and other services. It was over 0.6m wide and more than 0.2m deep. The full extant was not seen. It was filled with a pale brown sandy-clay (127) flecked with charcoal. This appeared to derive from eroded material (128) to the west of a similar nature, and could represent an eroded bank. Although the ditch was not seen further north the possible bank was. Overlying both ditch and bank deposits was a mid grey silt-clay (129) up to 0.6m thick flecked with charcoal and containing post-medieval pottery. Above this layer was hardcore and tarmac (130).

The Kiln

The kiln was situated within a cut 105 into the natural (104) that was a teardrop shape in plan 0.94m wide, 1.15m long and 0.35m deep (Fig. 5). Within this was built the circular brick structure (106) of the kiln, with a brick base (114). It was 0.8m in diameter and survived 0.3m in height. The wall thickness was 0.05m. The structure had an internal wall (111), dividing it into two halves or separate chambers. This wall was 0.1m thick and 0.4m long. It appeared to have been deliberately built only half way across the diameter of the kiln and had a curved profile to the central terminal (Plate 1).

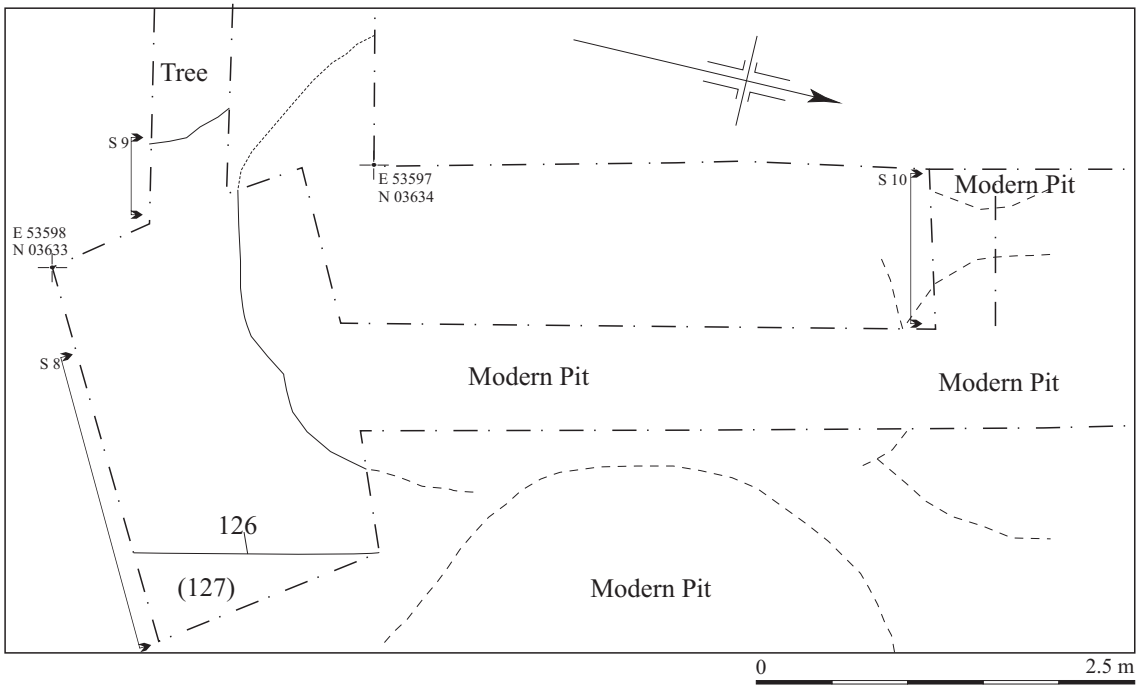
The space between the construction cut 105 and the kiln wall (106) was filled with a mottled grey-brown sand-clay (115) with sparse brick fragments. This deposit shows signs of heat scorching and this scorching extended into the surrounding natural.

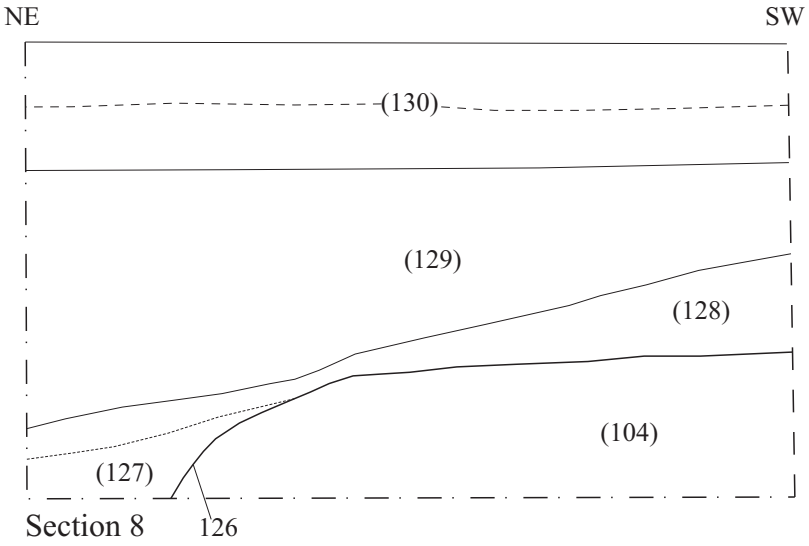
The easterly of the two internal chambers was filled at its lowest level with dark grey sandy clay (113) 0.2m thick containing charcoal, brick fragments and Roman pottery sherds. Above this was a dark grey clay (107) that was 0.1m thick with charcoal flecks, brick fragments and Roman pottery. The westerly chamber had a similar fill (108) to that in the east (107) visible on the exposed surface, but was not excavated.

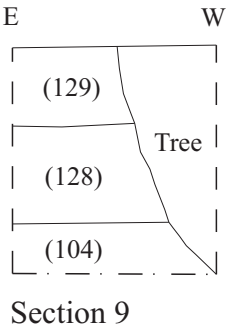
The narrow end of the teardrop cut 105 formed the stoke-hole for the kiln. This was filled with a mottled orange-grey sandy clay (112) up to 0.25m thick that sloped down in to the structure (106) as if it had slowly encroached on a standing structure filling the stoke-hole and building up inside.

Within the structure (106) the deposit (112) was overlain by deposits (107) and (108), indicating these deposits were probably formed during the collapse of the kiln.

The kiln had been partially truncated on the eastern edge by a later oval pit 109. This measured 0.32m by 0.42m in plan and was 0.2m deep with a flat base. It was filled with a loose dark grey-brown silt-clay (110) with sparse brick fragments and a single sherd of 19^{th}-20^{th} pottery.







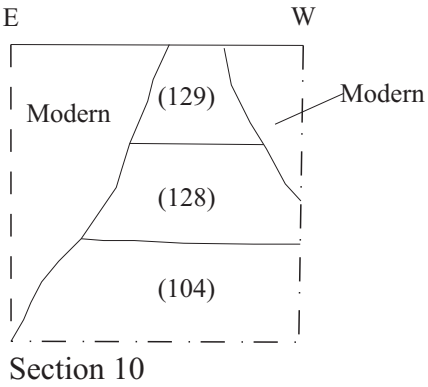


Figure 4. Plan and sections of ditch 126

Plate 1. Kiln

Just to the west of the kiln was a pit 152. This was 1.2m wide with vertical sides and over 0.3m deep. It was filled with orange-brown silt-clay (151) that appeared to have been exposed to heat or burning. This also contained Roman pottery and brick fragments.

The full extant of the pit was not seen. It is possible that this is associated with the kiln, perhaps as a dump for waste material or perhaps could be the remains of an earlier kiln.

Pits

Two probable Roman pits were recorded (Fig. 2). The first 103 was sub-circular measuring 0.7m by 0.7m in plan, 0.22m deep with a rounded profile. It was filled with a grey-brown silt-clay (102) flecked with charcoal and containing Roman pottery.

The second pit 169 was oval in plan measuring 0.7m by 0.55m and 0.2m deep. The fill (170) was very similar to that of pit 103, but it did not contain pottery.

Both pits lie in an area between the identified Roman ditches, it is possible that this area could be an entrance-way or crossing point and the pits could represent truncated postholes for a structure to restrict access.

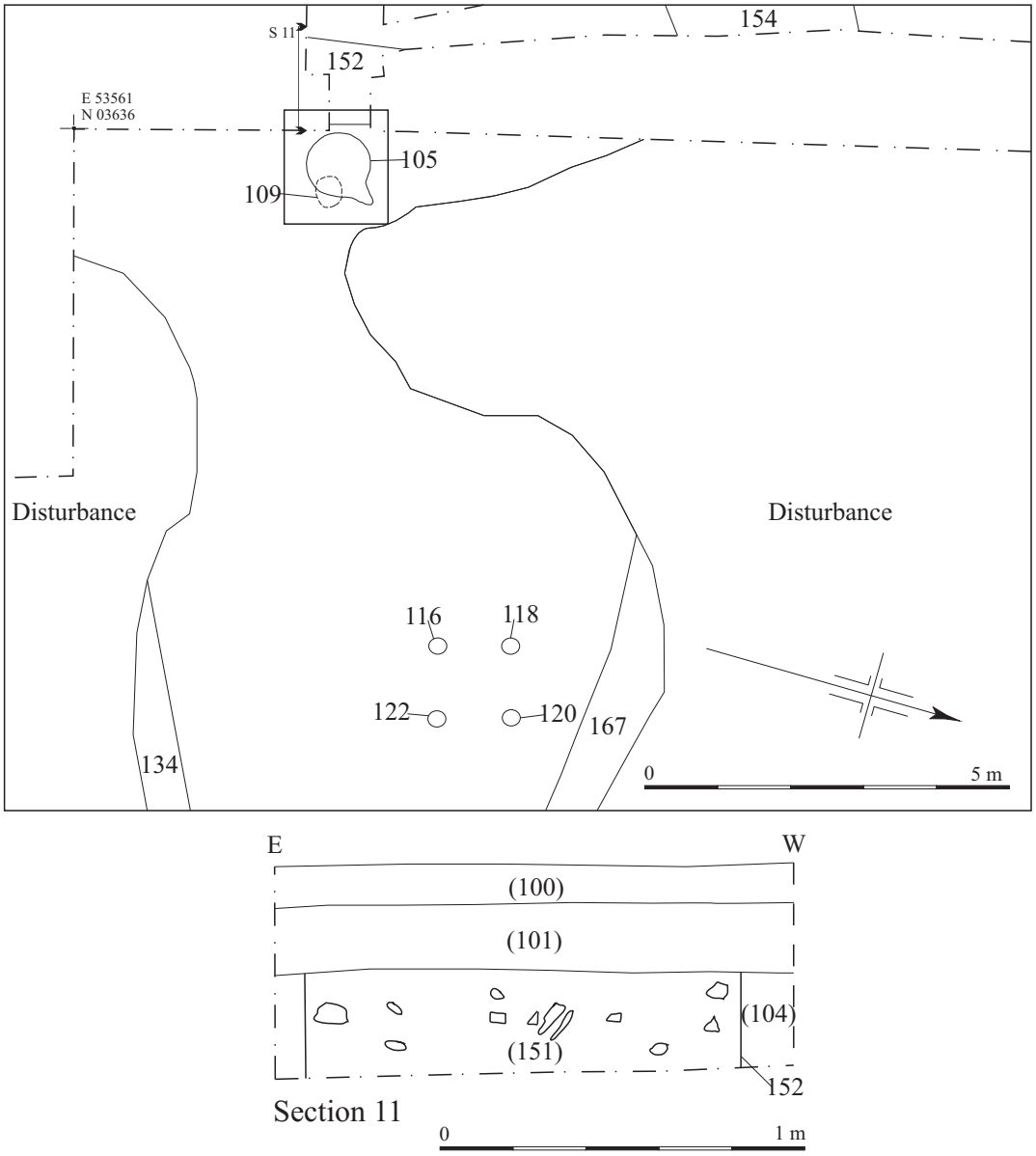


Figure 5. Four Post Structure & Kiln

Four-post Structure

Four postholes were recorded evenly spaced at 1m distance from each other forming the corners of a square (Fig. 5). This has been interpreted as a four-post structure.

Cut	Dimensions	Fill
116	0.25 x 0.3m	Dark brown sandy clay (117)
118	0.25 x 0.3m	Dark brown sandy clay (119)
120	0.25 x 0.3m	Dark brown sandy clay (121)
122	0.25m dia	Dark brown sandy clay (123)

Table 1. Postholes

Upper Soil Sequence

In very localised and isolated islands the natural was overlain by a mid-brown clay layer (135) and (148) up to 0.2m thick. This is likely to represent a buried soil horizon, deposit (148) was not associated with any of the identified features. One area (135) did contain Roman pottery and was cut by the Roman ditch 134.

Overlying this and the natural across the site was a grey-brown silt-clay rich loam (101) that varied in depth from 0.16m to over 0.6m towards the north and east. This layer is equivalent to the layers (2/02) and (3/02) recorded in the evaluation (JMHS 2008). Above layer (101) was a grey-brown silt-clay (100) that was on average 0.1m thick and contained material of a modern date.

4.2 Reliability of Techniques and Results

Several features could only be identified in section. This is mainly due to the similarities in the nature of the deposits, but also to the large amount of recent disturbance on the site and the depth of the soil strip in the area.

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery

5.1.1 Prehistoric & Roman Pottery *(By Jane Timby)*

Introduction

The archaeological work resulted in the recovery of 155 sherds of pottery weighing 1163 g. All the pottery with the exception of two later sherds dates to the Roman period. The two sherds of post-medieval date present were a sherd of unglazed red earthenware flowerpot from (100) and a glazed sherd from (147).

In general terms the Roman sherds are quite fragmentary with an average sherd size of 7.5 g. The condition was, however, variable with some larger well-preserved pieces from some contexts offset by slightly less well-preserved more fragmented material from elsewhere. Several pieces have abraded edges and many colour-coated sherds have lost their surface finishes.

Pottery was recovered from 11 defined contexts with the quantities ranging from single sherds up to a maximum of 57 from flot <1> context (113).

For the purposes of this assessment the material was scanned macroscopically and sorted into fabrics based on firing colour and inclusions (type, size and frequency) in the clay. The sorted fabrics were quantified by sherd count and weight. Freshly broken sherds were counted as one. A note was made of the forms present, mainly from the rim sherds, using, where appropriate, Young (1977) codes for the Oxfordshire products. Known named traded Roman wares were coded using the National Roman fabric reference collection codes (codes in brackets) (Tomber and Dore 1998). Table 2 summarises the data for each context.

The work has been undertaken without knowing the exact stratigraphic relationship of the contexts but the site is thought to include a kiln-type structure.

Roman

Most of the pottery, some 153 sherds, date to the Roman period with the emphasis very much on the later Roman period (mid 3rd-4th century). At least 89% of the sherds and probably more, with the only clear exception being four sherds of shelly ware from context (153), are typical of the range of fabrics and forms produced by the Oxfordshire pottery industry.

Whilst there were no very clear examples of kiln wasters in terms of over-fired, warped or blistered sherds, one white-ware mortarium spout was burnt to a pale grey.

Oxfordshire white wares (OXF WH) account for 16.4% of the assemblage. Within this are sherds of mortaria with examples of Young (1977) types M10, M14 (x2), a jar type W33 and a bowl type W54. Although some of these forms, particularly the latter two, have quite a long period of production the mortaria are dated more specifically by Young to the period AD 180-240.

Colour-coated wares (OXF RS) account for a minimum of 63.4% by count. This may be higher as some sherds no longer display a colour-coated surface and may have been coded as oxidised (OXF OX). Although the count is quite high a significant number of sherds come from a well-fragmented rouletted beaker from flot <001> context (113). Most of the beakers are probably from Young form C23 with at least one sherd with a heavy applied ?scroll probably a form C30. A small sherd from a bowl, possibly a C71 dating to the 4th century and a sherd of a mortarium (C97) came from flot <001> context (113).

Oxfordshire colour-coated ware was made from the mid 3rd century through to the end of the industry and was associated with six of the eleven contexts recorded.

Sherds of oxidised (OXF OX) and reduced (OXF RE) wares are also present. The former does not include any featured pieces whilst the latter includes jars (R17) and a fragmentary bowl, possibly an R43 neither of which is closely datable.

The only other ware present is a locally shelly ware jar (Oxfordshire fabric code C22) from (153).

Context	Roman				Pmed	Tot No	Tot Wt	Young forms	Date
	OXFWH	OXFRS	OXFRE	Other					
100	2	1	0	0	1	4	32	W54	late Roman/Pmed
102	3	0	0	0	0	3	24		C2-C4
107	1	7	1	1	0	10	29	R43	mid C3-C4
113	2	30	1	0	0	33	144	C23; C30	mid C3-C4
133	0	0	0	1	0	1	9		Roman
135	0	0	0	1	0	1	2		?late Roman
145	0	0	0	2	0	2	9		?late Roman
147	0	2	2	2	1	7	42		mid C3-C4/Pmed
151	1	0	1	0	0	2	18		C2+
153	15	5	9	6	0	35	765	M10; M14; R17; W33	mid C3-C4
<001>	1	52	2	2	0	57	89	?C71; C97	C4
TOTAL	**25**	**97**	**16**	**15**	**2**	**155**	**1163**		

Table 2. Roman Pottery

Potential and further work

An extensive pottery production site was found at Rose Hill in the 1930's but not excavated or recorded on great detail. A brief summary of the forms retained by the Ashmolean Museum was made by Young (1977, 254). The preponderance of almost exclusively locally made Oxfordshire wares in this assemblage and a complete absence of any traded or other non-local wares suggests that group here represents further production waste.

Several of the small number of forms identified do not feature in Young's summary and therefore extend the repertoire of types thought to be made at the Rose Hill kilns.

Chronologically the group is compatible with other material recovered from the site and thus does not change out understanding of the duration of production here.

The assemblage from 76, Rose Hill whilst interesting in terms of adding a couple of mortaria types and a beaker to the repertoire of types made at the Rose Hill kilns is probably too small to add any further meaningful interpretation to the site and no further pottery work is recommended at this stage.

5.1.2 Post-medieval Pottery *(By David Gilbert and Paul Blinkhorn)*

The post-medieval and early modern pottery was noted within the topsoil (100) and in areas of modern disturbance. The pottery was classified using the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994). The following fabrics were identified, but not retained:

OXDR: Red Earthenwares, 1550+.
OXEST: London stoneware. c. 1680 plus.
OXWHEW: Mass-produced white earthenwares, 19th - 20th C.

Sherds of Red Earthenware OXDR were also noted within deposits (129) and (147).
A single sherd of OXWHEW was noted within fill (110).

5.2 Lithics

A single broken tertiary flake was recovered from the fill (161) of Ditch 160. It appeared to be hard hammer struck and was from dark brown-grey flint.

5.3 Environmental Evidence *(by Hayley McParland)*

5.3.1 Introduction

Environmental samples taken

One bulk environmental sample of 40 litres was taken from a Romano-British Kiln (106), context (113). The sample was processed for the recovery and assessment of charred plant remains, charcoal, mollusca and material representative of metalworking.

Methodology

The samples were taken and processed by Juan Moreno using standard methodology. Samples were processed outside using a 'Siraf' style flotation tank, using meshes of 0.5mm aperture for both retention of the flot and the residue. Following air-drying the residue was sorted, weighed and discarded, though it was not fractionated prior to sorting. Little environmental evidence was present in the residue, though finds from these samples – Roman pottery and daub - were retained. The floated material was fractionated to 5mm, 2mm and 0.5mm, then sorted and assessed by eye with the aid of a hand lens.

Table 3: Sample Information

Phase	No. of sample	Context and Sample no.	Sample Vol (litres)	Flot Vol (ml)	Residue weight (g)	Residue discard weight (g)	Comments
Romano-British	1	<001>	40	150	2472	1814	Fragments of daub, pottery and magnetic material retained.

5.3.2 Charred Plant Remains

The flot <001> was small and relatively unproductive in terms of diagnostic charred plant remains (CPR), containing large quantities of modern unidentifiable roots, and modern uncharred seeds, including *Chenopodium* sp. (Goosefoot) and *Rubus* sp. (Bramble) (Stace 2010). These species are both indicators of disturbed ground and were likely present in the vicinity of the excavations. The presence of modern material within the sample is suggestive of stratigraphic profile migration and the intrusion of modern material.

It is unlikely that further analysis of the charred plant remains will reveal information regarding the processing or production of crops or subsistence or the local environment, due to the lack of preservation of charred plant remains.

5.3.3 Wood charcoal

Wood charcoal is present within sample <001> though it is limited to small fragments of unidentifiable round wood charcoal. Given the intrusion of roots and modern seeds, it is unlikely that the charcoal present within the sample will accurately reflect activities contemporary with the structure (106).

5.3.4 Mollusca

Table 4: Mollusca present in sample <001>

Mollusca		**Sample <001>**	
Family	**Species**	**Condition**	**Comments**
Ferussaciidae	**Cecilioides acicula *(Müller)***	Excellent	Subterranean species, burrowing among roots.
Zonitidae	*Vitrea crystallina*cf. *(Müller)*	Excellent	Catholic, common in damp places, including wet grassland.
Valloniidae	*Vallonia* sp.	Excellent	Open grassland.

A tentative assessment of the molluscan assemblage reflects the potential bioturbation of the area, with the presence of *Cecilioides acicula*, a burrowing species common among roots. As the sample contained a both modern roots and modern seeds, it is likely that *Cecilioides* sp. are intrusive.

The presence of both *Vitrea* sp. and *Vallonia* sp. reflect grassland habitats, though *Vitrea crystallina* are catholic and thus not restricted to a single habitat, they occur more commonly in damp places, including wet grassland (Kerney and Cameron 1979). Preservation of the shells was excellent, and in some cases, these were fresh. This is suggestive of inclusion due to either burrowing in the case of *Cecilioides acicula* or bioturbation - it is especially likely that the 'fresh' modern specimens were included in this way. Though a variety of species were present, several were unidentifiable and there were insufficient quantities present for analysis.

5.3.5 Metallurgical Evidence

Sample <001> was tested for magnetic material and hammer scale in order to assess the potential use of the structure for metal manufacture (106). Despite large quantities of magnetic matter being present, the majority is natural, though this demonstrates that the area was subject to enough heat to change the magnetic properties of the natural clay.

One fragment of hammer scale was detected, though this is in isolation. As hammer scale is generally contained *in situ*, it is perhaps unlikely that this single fragment is representative of metalworking. It is possible that the hammer scale has been subject to the bioturbation demonstrated by the environmental material, which may suggest that metal manufacture has been carried out in the vicinity of the structure (106), for which there is no further evidence.

5.3.6 Potential and Further Work

Bioturbation is suggested by the presence of modern roots and seeds including Chenopodium sp. (Goosefoots) and Rubus sp. (Bramble). Although wood charcoal is

present, the fragments are small and of insufficient diagnostic quality. It is unlikely that further analysis would reveal information regarding the local environment or wood use in antiquity. Due to the lack of preservation of charred plant remains, it is unlikely that further sampling or analysis of the deposits will reveal information regarding diet, past agricultural practices or environments contemporary with the archaeology. Though there is excellent preservation of land snails, there are insufficient quantities present for analysis and are most likely affected by bioturbation as described above. Further analysis of the environmental material is likely to be of limited value, due to the effects of bioturbation and a lack of adequate preservation.

6 DISCUSSION

Considerable disturbance of a comparatively recent date was encountered across the site. This is likely to be attributed to the development of the site since the late Victorian period with the construction of a series of relatively short-lived buildings.

The Rose Hill Community website notes that an isolated inn called *The King of Prussia* was established at the top of Rose Hill where post-horses used to be rested and changed, in the eighteenth century. It was named after The King of Prussia, a popular ally of Britain during the Seven Years War. A Victorian replacement was built in 1879 on the site presently occupied by the Co-op and Humphris garage. In 1935 a new pub was built on the present site to the south of the Victorian one. The pub went through further (unspecified) transformations during the 1970s to 1990s until it closed in the spring of 2005.

The 1:2,500 OS map of 1878 shows two building occupying the middle of the northern boundary and the north-east corner of the site. Another building abuts the north-easterly one and front the road to the south. The majority of the site is depicted as wooded, perhaps as an orchard. The boundary of the parcel of land runs approximately north to south across the site, the land to the west is part of a larger field. The 1:2,500 OS map of 1900 shows two buildings that would have encroached into the south-eastern corner and southern edge of the site. The building in the north-east corner is also depicted, but the one on the northern boundary and the one fronting the road are no longer there.

A long rectangular building is depicted along the western edge of the site on the 1:2,500 OS map of 1921. The two building to the south are gone and some internal land divisions are also noted. The 1:2,500 OS map of 1937 shows the area similar to present day, the new pub is set back from the road and all other building on the site have been removed. Three new out-buildings are seen on the 1:2,500 OS map of 1955, two along the southern boundary of the site and one just to the north of the other two. A new structure, apparently divided into four is present in the north-east corner of the site on the 1:2,500 OS map of 1971.

Iron Age

A sequence of ditches containing middle Iron Age pottery was recorded in Trench 1 of the evaluation (JMHS 2008) and these ditches appear to continue into the area of Trench 2 and just to the east curve towards the south. This curve would suggest that it formed part of an enclosure. The number of similarly aligned ditches would indicate a

long-lived settlement. The fact that individual ditches could be seen cut into the fills of earlier ones would indicate that these had completely or very nearly filled up before new ditches were excavated.

This sporadic digging of the ditches could be due to the underlying sand deposits causing the ditches to erode quickly or the banks to become unstable. It could also be due to the need to increase the defences certain times or perhaps it shows that the enclosure was slowly contracting or moving south. The ditches are relatively shallow and therefore it is probably prudent not to view these as defensive, but more to demarcate the settlement area and prevent animal intrusion. Indeed the relatively near by settlement at Barton (JMHS 2005) displays no indication of fortification until the Late Iron Age.

A possibility also exists that the enclosure was used periodically. No evidence was seen for the formation of a turf line sealing any of the ditches, although later truncation could have removed this.

It should be noted that the new ditch would have been cut at least partially were the bank of the previous one would have been. Therefore it is possible that the earlier bank was intentionally slighted and its material used to fill the earlier ditches prior to any new excavation.

The section of the ditches seen displays a fairly tight curve to the south, while this does not conform to the "classic" circular or oval enclosure examples of more angular one are known such as at Winnall Down and Farley Mount, both in Hants and Groundwell Farm, Wilts (Cunliffe 2005)

The four-post structure is likely to be related to the Iron Age settlement of the area, although there were no associated finds. This would have been situated in the lee of the bank. Its proximity to ditch 2/15 may indicate that it was associated with an earlier ditch when presumably the ban was further to the north.

Iron Age pottery was also recovered during the excavations at Annesley Road and Ellesmere Road (Harden 1936) suggesting that contemporary activity in the area was quite widespread.

Settlement in the area associated with the limestone hills could well have been self-contained units exploiting the range of rich soils in their hinterlands during the Middle Iron Age (Cunliffe 2005). During this period the landscape appears to develop and become more organised with trackways and rectangular paddocks laid out, sometime impinging upon earlier settlements. As part of this change a new type of settlement appears, such as that seen at Barton Court Farm, were the farmstead is enclosed in a rectangular ditched enclosure (*ibid*.). This would appear to be the likely situation at Rose Hill.

Roman

Roman pits were noted cut into the upper fills of the Iron Age ditch during the evaluation. Both were oval almost 1m across and appeared to have been heavily truncated by later landscaping (JMHS 2008). This would indicate that the earlier earthworks had ceased to exist by the 2nd century AD. Most of the later Roman

ditches, except 154/167, do not appear to respect the lines of the earlier Iron Age ones and certainly do not appear to have been constructed to enhance or repair any previous ones.

The rectangular ditched enclosure of the type seen at Barton Court Farm is seen as a precursor to the development of later Roman period enclosures (Cunliffe 2005). Again this is possibly what is occurring at Rose Hill.

Two of the three ditches recorded by Harden (1936) at Annesley Road and Ellesmere Road were aligned east to west and this corresponds roughly to two of the Roman ditches located during the watching brief. While unlikely to be contemporary do to their proximity to each other these two ditches do indicate at least two phases of Roman activity on the site.

The kiln was of a similar design and construction to that excavated at Annesley Road (Harden 1936) although was slightly smaller in overall dimensions. The kiln found on Annesley Road had the stoke-hole to the west, while the kiln (106) located during the watching brief had its stoke hole aligned to the east, although this had been partially truncated by modern activity.

The kiln is situated close to two ditches of contemporary date. Henig and Booth (2000) note that kiln in the Oxford region often as situated within enclosures, together with a range of buildings and other structures, and placed in a semi-industrial landscape. These kiln also seem to cluster closely together in small groups, therefore it is likely that a second kiln is represented by structure 152.

The proximity of ditch 154 was at first considered an issue for a contemporary date, however the lay out of kilns and ditches at Lower Farm, Nuneham Courtney shows that kilns are often placed close to such ditches *(ibid.*).

Harden (1936) speculates that the Annesley Road kiln was abandoned during the late fourth to early fifth century, based on the pottery fragments dumped into the fill of the stoke-hole. The pottery recovered from the fill of kiln (106) was slightly earlier, dating to the late 3rd to 4th century. It could be suggested that the local centre of industry and habitation was moving slowly north and west during the late Roman period. Indeed kiln remains to the south (PRN 3656) appear to be associated with 2nd century Roman pottery styles.

7 ARCHIVE

Archive Contents
The archive consists of the following:

Paper record
The project brief
Written scheme of investigation
The primary site records
The project report

Physical record
The Finds

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services. The archive will be transferred to:

Oxfordshire Museums Resource Centre, Cotswold Dene, Standlake, Witney OX29 7QG under accession number OXCMS: 2008.84

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