



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

AT

**IFFLEY HOUSE, ANNE GREENWOOD CLOSE, IFFLEY,
OXFORD**

NGR SP 5327 0398

On behalf of

Seddon Construction Ltd

DECEMBER 2011

REPORT FOR	Seddon Construction Ltd Well House The Chipping Wotton under Edge Gloucestershire GL12 7JH
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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological evaluation on land at Iffley House, Anne Greenwood Close, Iffley, Oxford. A total of three machine-dug trenches were excavated, two of these 10m in length and one 4.80m long. No archaeological remains were identified anywhere within the development area.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development area (hereafter referred to as ‘the Site’) is located in the grounds of Iffley House, a former old people’s nursing home at Anne Greenwood Close, Iffley, Oxford (NGR SP 5327 0398) (Figure 1). It is bordered to the west by Anne Greenwood Close and to the east, north and south by existing residential buildings and properties. The underlying geology is Beckley Sand Member.

The overall ground level slopes from the south at approximately 105.50 metres above Ordnance Datum downwards to the south at *circa.* 99m OD, though there are many terraces, embankments and other elements of artificial landscaping on the Site. There is also a large stand of mature trees with Tree Protection Orders along the western margin of the Site.

1.2 Planning Background

Planning application number 1008/02254/FUL that was submitted to Oxford City Council proposed the demolition of Iffley House and its replacement by a more modern residential care scheme. The Archaeological Officer of Oxford City Council issued a *Brief* recommending an archaeological evaluation as the first stage in a potentially wider programme of archaeological investigation.

John Moore Heritage Services (JMHS) was commissioned to undertake this work, and a *Written Scheme of Investigation* was prepared by John Moore Heritage Services to satisfy the requirements of the Brief (JMHS 2468/01). This *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) proposed the methodology by which the archaeological evaluation was to be carried out.

The WSI was accepted by the Oxford City Archaeologist, and the archaeological evaluation took place in two phases – on 14th September 2011, and 22nd November 2011. The first phase consisting of two evaluation trenches (Trenches 1 and 4) was undertaken whilst active demolition work was underway on Site. Subsequent to this demolition work finishing, the second phase of archaeological evaluation work was meant to take place, but in the event construction work on the footings of the new building had unfortunately begun before JMHS staff were notified that they could return to the Site. When archaeologists returned to the Site, the groundwork for the new footings had totally removed the area where Trench 2 was meant to be placed, though it was possible to partially excavate Trench 3.

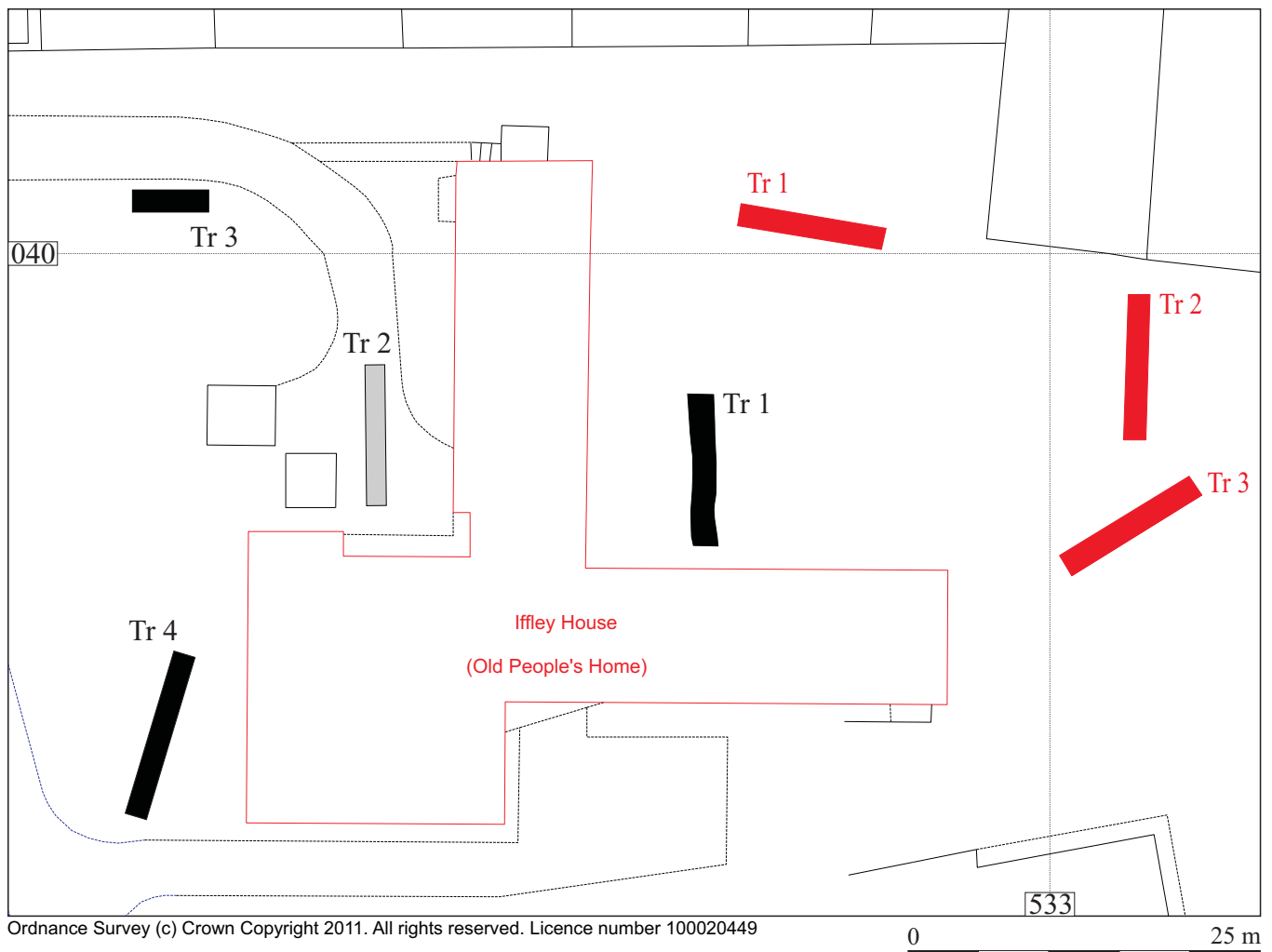
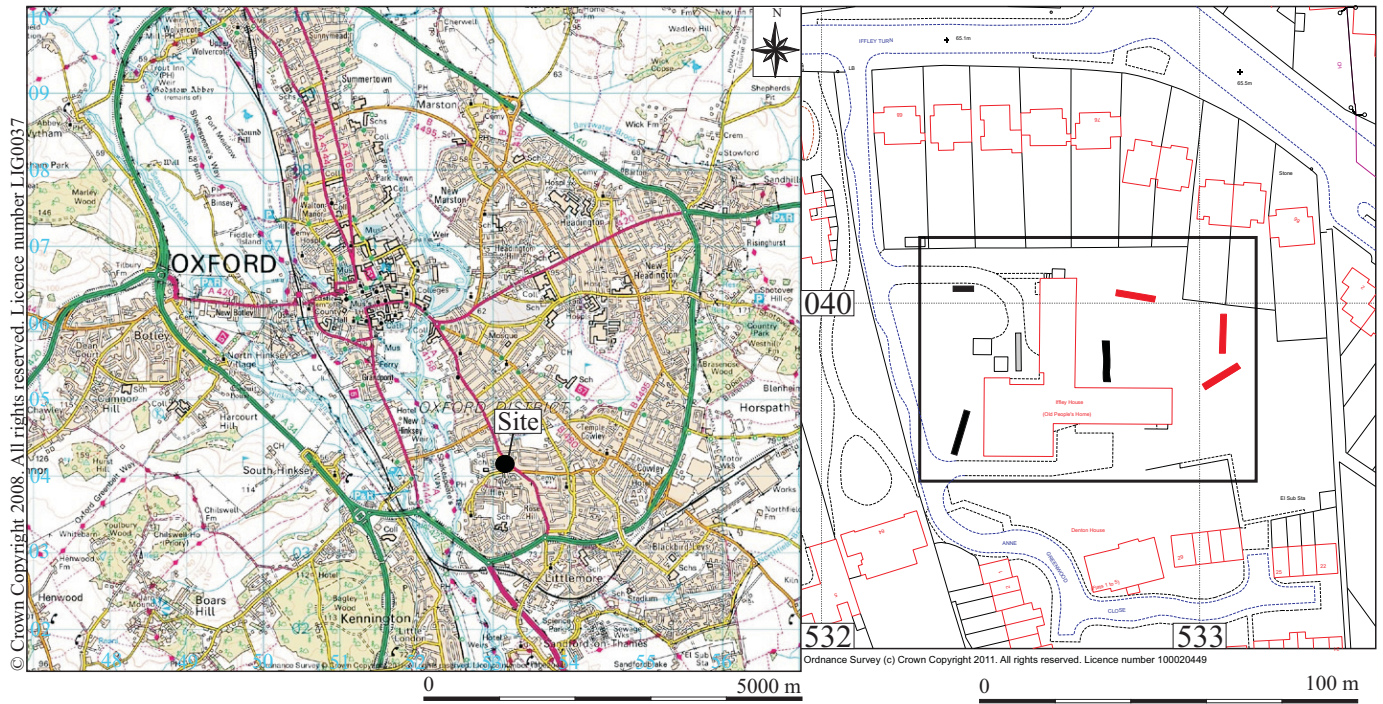


Figure 1. Site and trench location

- TVAS Trenches
- Excavated Trenches
- Unexcavated Trench

1.3 Archaeological Background

The Site was identified as being of archaeological potential by the Archaeological Officer of Oxford City Council as Roman burials were found to the west and south of the Site at Beechwood Close (Oxford Archaeology 2002) and in the grounds of Denton House (Oxfordshire County HER 6633). Between 175m and 400m to the south-east of Iffley House at Rose Hill, Iron Age and Romano-British occupation remains, kilns and human burials have also been recorded (HER 3646 and 6158; JMHS 2008).

A previous evaluation took place on the Site to the north-east of the former Iffley House building, but the results of this proved negative (Thames Valley Archaeological Services 2007).

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were:

- To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the Site;
- To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered;
- To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of the archaeological features and deposits;
- To determine the impact of the proposed development on any remains present;
- In particular to establish the character and extent of any Iron Age or Roman activity, noting the potential for Roman burials in this location;
- To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation;
- To inform a decision regarding the need for a further stage of archaeological work;
- To address some of the key issues highlighted in the Solent Thames Research Framework, depending on the type and date of remains encountered;
- To inform the need for, and scope of, further phases of work to mitigate the impact of the proposed development.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

In response to the Brief issued by the Archaeological Officer of Oxford City Council, JMHS carried out the work, which comprised a scheme for the mechanical excavation of four trial trenches 10m in length.

3.2 Methodology

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in the WSI and agreed with Oxford City Council.

A JCB excavator fitted with a toothless 1.6m wide ditching bucket was used to excavate Trenches 1 and 4, whilst a 10 tonne 360-degree excavator was used to excavate Trench 3. Any archaeological deposits and features revealed were then cleaned by hand and recorded in plan before being excavated and recorded at an appropriate level. Archaeological features had written, drawn and photographic records made of them, and all deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers without brackets indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in brackets () show feature fills or deposits of material. All context numbers are preceded by trench number and /. Details of individual trenches are presented in Appendix 1 – the context inventory – at the rear of this report.

Context numbers without brackets indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material. All artefacts were collected and retained. The trenches without archaeology had record photographs taken of their stripped areas, whilst photographs and drawings recorded representative sections of the deposits above the undisturbed natural subsoil. The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (2008) and the principles of MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

4 RESULTS

4.1 The Archaeological Results

Due to physical constraints such as the presence of existing walls, stockpiled demolition material and the need to avoid tree roots delineated under Tree Protection Orders, the position of Trenches 1 and 4 had to be altered slightly. Unfortunately, groundwork undertaken in advance of the construction of new footings had completely removed the proposed location of Trench 2, but it was possible to excavate part of the proposed Trench 3.

4.2 Trench 1 (Figs 2, 3)

Trench 1 was located on the north-eastern side of Iffley House, and was 10m long and 1.6m wide, and orientated north-south. It had to be repositioned in order to avoid a standing wall and a terrace. No archaeological features were noted.

The topsoil (1/1) was dark brown silty sandy loam up to 0.52m thick that became progressively deeper towards the north. It was heavily disturbed by the roots of small trees and shrubs, and contained some crushed chalk that appeared to be the result of a levelling episode or similar made ground. The natural undisturbed subsoil (1/2) consisted of mottled mid to dark orange brown sand with occasional gravel, and this too had been greatly disturbed by root action.

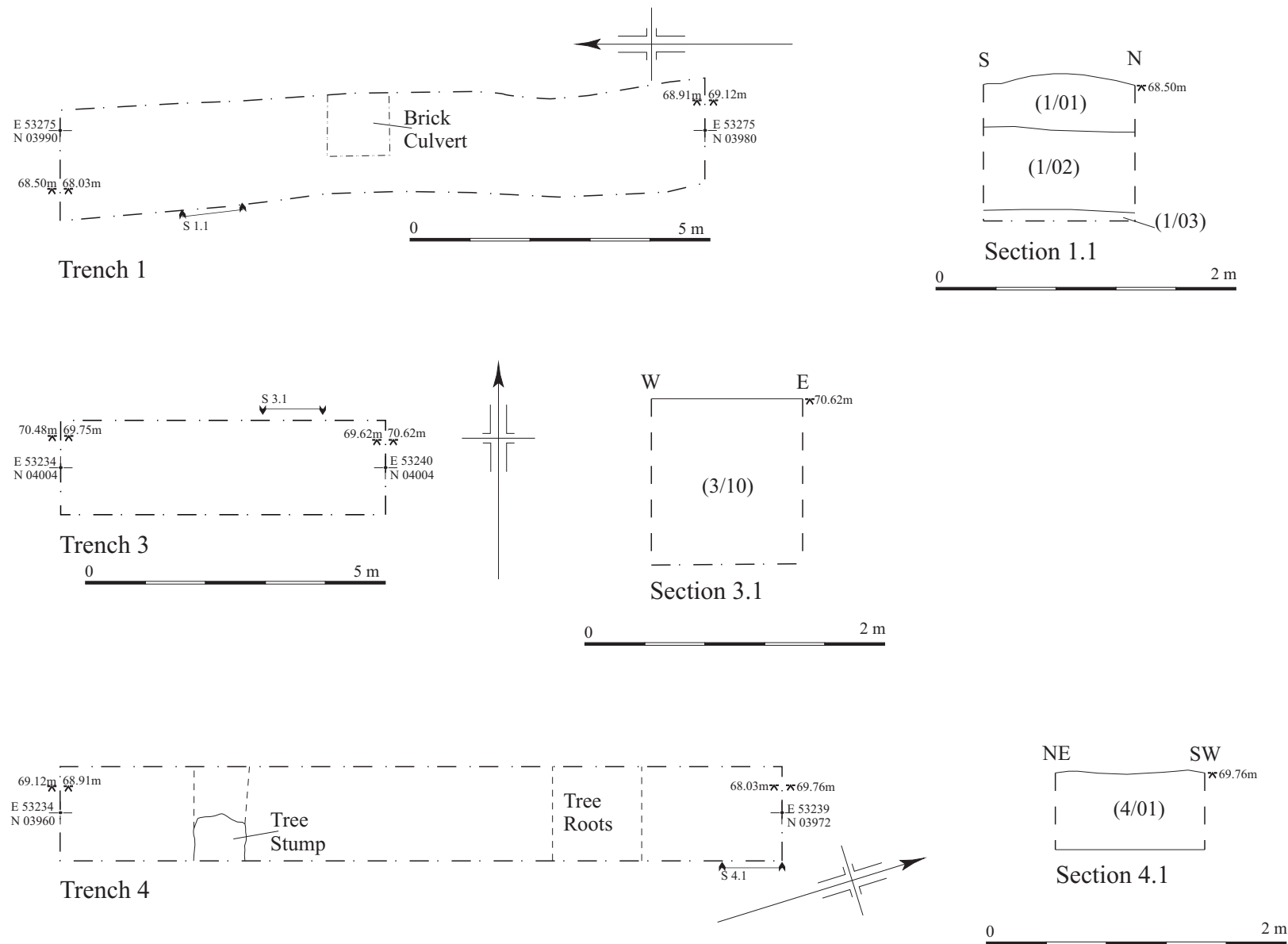


Figure 2. Plans and Sections of Trenches



Figure 3. Trench 1 looking south

4.3 Trench 3 Fig 4

Trench 3 was situated on the western side of the development, on the southern edge of the access road into the Site. Due to the presence of protected trees to the south, stockpiled materials to the east, Heras fencing to the west and the need to keep the access road open, it was only possible to machine a trench 4.80m long and 1.5m wide.

Trench 3 was orientated east-west. There was a 1.00-1.10m thick deposit (3/1) of modern overburden across the trench, consisting of concrete blocks, breezeblocks, fragments of stone slab and other building debris, in a matrix of redeposited gravel, sand and topsoil. An electricity cable (non-live) also extended east-west through the trench, connected to a disused street lamp by the gates to the property at the west by Anne Greenwood Close. Together with some root activity, this layer clearly represented thoroughly disturbed and redeposited material. Beneath deposit (3/1) was a layer of mottled mid to dark reddish-brown and orange brown sand (3/2), representing the natural subsoil. No archaeological features were noted.



Figure 4. Trench 3 looking east

4.4 Trench 4 Figs 2, 5

Trench 4 was located on the western side of Iffley House, and had to be repositioned slightly as there was only a small gap between a walled slab with stockpiled demolition rubble on top of it, and the fenced-off edge of a Tree Preservation Order zone. No archaeological features were noted.

The topsoil (4/1) was dark brown sandy loam that was heavily disturbed by tree and shrub roots, and it also contained concrete and modern brick fragments. It was up to 0.45m thick. Below it was a modified subsoil layer (4/2), consisting of mottled mid-grey brown and orange brown compact sand, again disturbed by some root action. Up to 0.20m thick, it was above the undisturbed natural subsoil (4/3), mottled light reddish brown and orange brown sand.

4.5 Reliability of Techniques and Results

The reliability of results is considered to be good. The archaeological evaluation took place in clement, dry conditions with good light and visibility.

5 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS

No finds or environmental remains were recovered.



Figure 5. Trench 4 south-east facing section

6 DISCUSSION

The results of the evaluation were negative. No archaeological features or deposits were identified, and no archaeological artefacts were observed.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

English Heritage. 1991. *Management of Archaeological Projects 2*. London: English Heritage.

Institute for Archaeologists. 2008. *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations*. Reading: IfA.

Appendix 1: Trench and Archaeological Context Inventory

Context	Type	Description and finds	L (m)	B (m)	D(m)	Levels	Date	Interpretation	
Trench 1									
	(1/1)	Layer	Friable dark brown silty sandy loam with some crushed chalk.	Across trench	Across trench	0.52m		Modern	Topsoil
	(1/2)	Layer	Mottled mid to dark orange brown sand with occasional gravel.	Across trench	Across trench	-		-	Natural subsoil
Trench 3									
	(3/1)	Layer	Concrete blocks, breezeblocks, fragments of stone slab and other building debris, in a matrix of redeposited gravel, sand and topsoil.	Across trench	Across trench	1.00-1.10m		Modern	Made ground/overburden
	(3/2)	Layer	Mottled mid to dark reddish-brown and orange brown sand.	Across trench	Across trench	-		-	Natural subsoil
Trench 4									
	(4/1)	Layer	Friable dark brown sandy loam & concrete and modern brick fragments.	Across trench	Across trench	0.45m		Modern	Topsoil
	(4/2)	Layer	Compact mottled mid-grey brown and orange brown sand.	Across trench	Across trench	0.20m		-	Subsoil
	(4/3)	Layer	Compact mottled light reddish brown and orange brown sand.	Across trench	Across trench			-	Natural subsoil