



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
ON LAND ADJACENT TO
43 JERICHO STREET, JERICHO, OXFORD,
OXFORDSHIRE
NGR SP 5060 0700

On behalf of
Vanderbilt Homes

MARCH 2012

REPORT FOR Vanderbilt Homes
30 High Street
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REPORT ISSUED 23rd March 2012

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Site Code OXJS 12
JMHS Project No: 2527
Archive Location The archive is currently held at John Moore Heritage Services and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museum Services with accession code 2012.30.

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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to 43 Jericho Street, Jericho, Oxford. One trench 6.5m long and up to 0.80m wide was machine-excavated. A series of modern and early modern made ground deposits up to 1.10m thick overlay the fills of several cut features including a pit and a posthole. These features contained medieval, post-medieval and early modern pottery, clay pipe and other finds, and were probably 19th century in date.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development area (hereafter referred to as ‘the Site’) is located on the north-western side of Jericho Street, off Walton Street, Jericho, Oxford (NGR SP 5060 0700) (Figure 1). It is bordered to the north-west by the now derelict Grantham House flats, to the north-east by the Jericho Tavern beer garden, to the south-east by the new Jericho Street Apartments and the access to Jericho Street, and to the south-west by Blomfield Place and car parks.

The Site recently consisted of a small car park area with a relatively flat tarmac surface at 59.83-59.88 metres above Ordnance Datum (OD). The underlying geology consists of Summertown-Radley terrace sands and gravels.

1.2 Planning Background

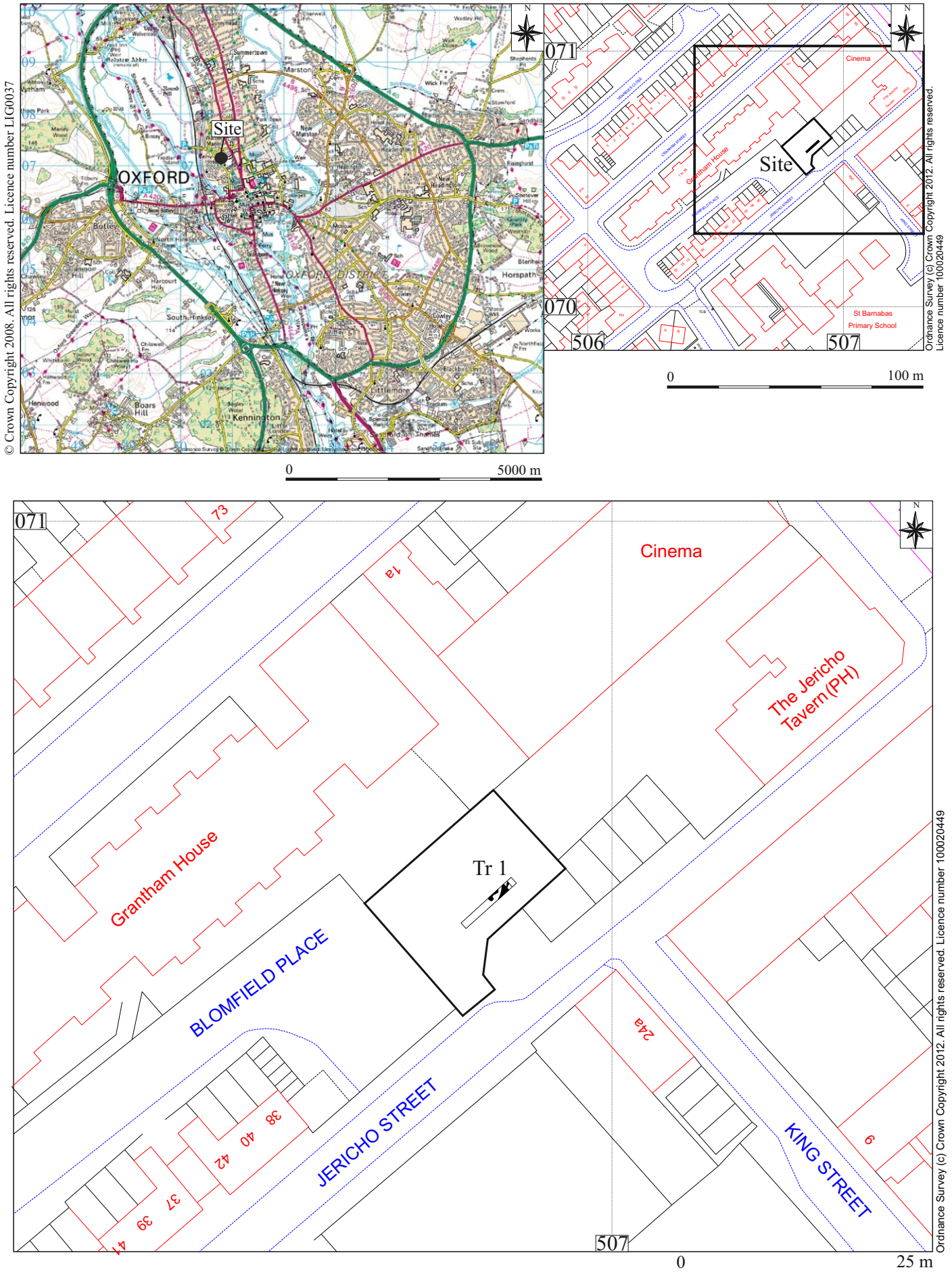
Planning application was sought from Oxford City Council for the construction of two three-bedroom houses on land adjacent to 43 Jericho Street, Jericho, Oxford (11/02056/FUL). Due to the potential for archaeological remains to be present on the Site, the Archaeological Officer of Oxford City Council attached a condition to the permission requiring the implementation of a staged programme of archaeological works. The first stage is an archaeological evaluation.

John Moore Heritage Services were 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 2527/01). 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 Archaeological Officer of Oxford City Council, and the fieldwork for the archaeological evaluation took place on 15th March 2012.

1.3 Archaeological Background

As noted in the Brief by the Archaeological Officer of Oxford City Council (Oxford City Council 2011), this area of Oxford is located on part of a gravel terrace between the Rivers Cherwell and Thames that has produced evidence of Neolithic to early Bronze Age ritual and funerary features, and was subsequently also the setting for dispersed Iron Age and Romano-British rural settlement.



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Figure 1. Site location

The evidence for prehistoric and Romano-British archaeology extending northwards from the historic core of the city of Oxford has been outlined in the Oxford Archaeological Plan Resource Assessment (Beckley and Radford 2011a, 2011b). Approximately 600 metres to the north-west of the Site on Port Meadow, a series of Bronze Age ring ditches were identified and investigated by Atkinson during the 1940s (Atkinson 1942), along with other earthworks.

A rectilinear feature, possibly a Neolithic mortuary enclosure, was recorded 125m to the east of the application site, with a later barrow superimposed onto it (Oxford City Council 2011). The Site lies close to prehistoric and Saxon remains identified at the Radcliffe Infirmary site (Braybrooke 2010; Baybrooke *et al.* 2009). Four large Bronze Age ring ditches or round barrows were identified that may have been part of an extended linear barrow cemetery, as a further three such features have been recorded as parch marks within University Parks.

The Radcliffe Infirmary excavations also identified 6th century AD Saxon occupation approximately 50m east of the Site, and the Urban Archaeological Database notes that in 1884 a 'medieval pitcher' was recovered from King Street (UAD Event No. 1155).

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;
- 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;

And in particular, to:

- Establish whether significant remains are present relating to the prehistoric and Saxon landscape identified to the east.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

In response to the Brief issued by the Oxford City Archaeologist, JMHS carried out the work, which comprised an evaluation within the proposal area (Figure 1). This consisted of one machine excavated trench 6.5m long and 0.80m wide.

3.2 Methodology

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

A mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket was used to excavate the trenches. 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.

All artefacts were collected and retained for analysis, although most modern finds were subsequently discarded. 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). David Radford, the Archaeological Officer of Oxford City Council, visited the Site on the 15th March 2012 in order to monitor the fieldwork.

4 RESULTS

4.1 The Recorded Archaeology

A 1.5 tonne tracked 360-degree mini-digger equipped with a 0.40m wide toothed bucket was used to remove the tarmac and rubble overburden, switching to a 0.40m wide toothless bucket once softer made ground was encountered.

The Site had already had piling columns driven into it prior to JMHS staff gaining access, and these piling columns severely restricted the area available for investigation. Instead of the proposed 10m long and 1.6m wide trench (JMHS 2527/01), it only proved possible to excavate a trench 6.5m long and 0.80m wide.

The natural subsoil (1/104) was a mixture of compact light orange brown sandy gravel, and mottled orange brown and dark brown sandy clayey silt. It was present at a depth of 1.10-1.25m below the modern car park tarmac surface, or at level of 58.58-58.79m OD.

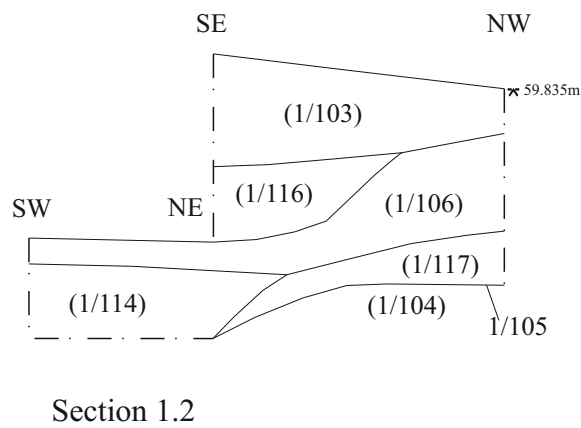
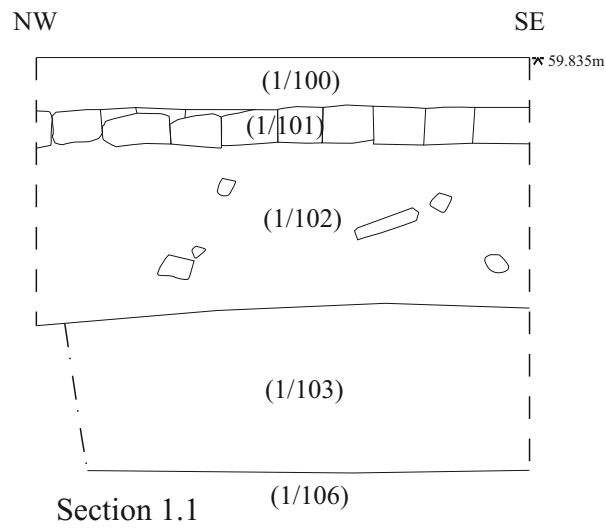
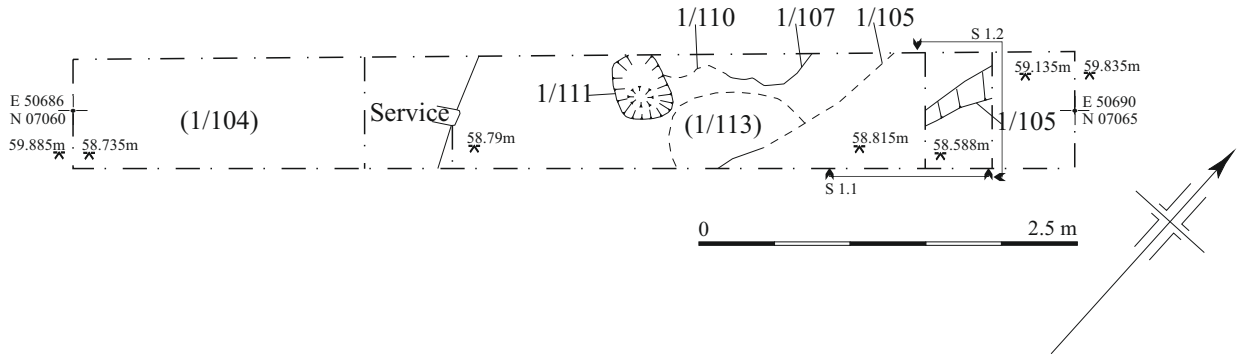


Figure 2. Plan and sections

Underneath the tarmac and chippings (1/100) was a layer of modern bricks (1/101) bedded on sand that had been laid to form an external yard surface, up to 0.12m thick in total. Beneath this was mottled grey-brown sandy clayey silt (1/102) up to 0.50m thick, mixed with large quantities of demolition rubble including subangular limestone blocks and fragments, modern and early modern brick and tile, slate fragments, clinker, iron objects, bottle glass and a range of pottery including 19th and 20th century porcelain. This makeup deposit lay above another earlier makeup deposit (1/103) up to 0.45m thick, consisting of dark grey-brown to dark grey sandy clayey silt with limestone fragments, post-medieval or early modern brick and tile fragments, clay pipe, oyster shell, charcoal and another chronologically broad pottery assemblage including post-medieval wares and 19th century porcelain.

This lower makeup deposit was very similar to a series of fills of cut features that were identified beneath layer (1/103), at a depth of 58.79-58.81m OD, cut into the natural subsoil (1/104). The narrow base of the trench did not permit the nature and full extent of these features to be easily ascertained, but there were a series of possible pit and posthole cuts, features 1/107 and 1/110, along with an area of compact mottled dark brown sandy clay (1/113) that was probably a surface or a trampled layer. These were not investigated further.



Figure 3. Pit cut 1/105, showing sondage and south-west facing Section 2

Two features were excavated. The first was initially thought to be a subrectangular pit. The presumed upper fill (1/106) – mottled dark grey-brown sandy clayey silt with limestone fragments, pebbles and charcoal – on excavation was found to extend underneath layer (1/116), mottled grey-brown clayey silt mixed with orange-brown sandy gravel and pebbles. It became clear that pit cut 1/105 was larger than originally thought, and included layers of redeposited natural subsoil in addition to darker silty fills. Layer (1/116) was up to 0.18m thick, and did not produce any finds. Layer (1/106) was up to 0.25m thick, and contained one sherd of pre-14th century pottery, but also post-medieval and 19th century wares. This was above fill (1/114), mixed and mottled orange sand and gravel at least 0.20m thick; and layer (1/117), compact orange brown sandy gravel with patches of dark grey clayey silt 0.12m thick.

Only the north-eastern edge of the feature was exposed and the fills all sloped down to the north-west (Figure 3), but it seemed likely that cut 1/105 was at least 2m long, 1m wide and 0.48m deep. Only a small sondage could be excavated across it, however, due to the depth and narrowness of the trench, the base of which was already at 1.10m below the modern ground surface before excavation of the pit had begun. If it had been possible to open up a larger trench with stepped sides, then more of pit 1/105 could have been excavated, but the presence of the driven piles made this impossible.



Figure 4. Posthole cut 1/111 fully excavated, looking north-west

Feature 1/111 initially appeared to be a small posthole only 0.12-0.14m in diameter, excavated as it had a sherd of medieval pottery within it. The dark grey brown sandy clayey silt (1/112) with occasional pebbles and charcoal flecks did not produce any further finds, and proved to be the fill of a postpipe at least 0.28m deep, and within postpipe interface 1/118. The actual posthole was 0.48m long and 0.36m wide, and subrectangular in plan with rounded corners. It was filled with (1/115), mottled orange-brown and dark grey brown clayey sandy gravel, and had regular, steep sides that sloped to a break of slope and a flat 'step', although there was then another break of slope below the postpipe, with steep sides dropping to a rounded, concave base. The full depth of 1/111 proved to be 0.44m.

4.2 Reliability of Techniques and Results

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

5 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS

5.1 The Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 18 sherds weighing 328 grammes, consisting of a range of medieval and later wares. It was recorded using the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994), as follows:

| | |
|-------|---|
| OXY: | Medieval Oxford ware , AD 1075-1350. 1 sherd, 6g. |
| OXAM: | Brill/Boarstall ware , AD 1200- 1600. 3 sherds, 122g. |
| OXCL: | Cistercian ware , AD 1475-1700. 1 sherd, 2g. |
| OXST: | Rhenish Stoneware , AD 1480-1700. 1 sherd, 6g. |
| OXCE: | Tin-glazed Earthenware , AD 1613-1800. 1 sherd, 1g. |
| OXDR: | Red Earthenwares , AD 1550+. 2 sherds, 25g. |
| WHEW: | Mass-produced white earthenwares , 19 th -20 th C. 9 sherds, 166g. |

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context and 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 Oxford. Most of the medieval assemblage is 15th century or later and redeposited, apart from the single sherd of OXY from (1/106) and the fragment of OXAM from (1/112), which both pre-date the mid-14th century. The latter is abraded and may be residual, and the sherd of OXCL from (1/106) is very burnt. The post-medieval material comprised a mixture of utilitarian wares and finer tablewares, mainly in the form of drinking vessels, although the small sherd of OXCE is from a polychrome dish of the highest quality.

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

| Cntxt | OXY | | OXAM | | OXCL | | OXST | | OXDR | | OXCE | | WHEW | | Date |
|-------|-----|----|------|-----|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|-----|--------------------|
| | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | No | Wt | |
| 103 | | | | | | | | | | | | | 7 | 162 | 19 th C |
| 106 | 1 | 6 | 1 | 116 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 25 | | | 2 | 4 | 19 th C |
| 112 | | | 1 | 3 | | | | | | | | | | | 13 th C |
| 114 | | | 1 | 3 | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | 17 th C |
| Total | 1 | 6 | 3 | 122 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 25 | 1 | 1 | 9 | 166 | |

5.2 Other Finds by Adrian M. Chadwick

Two broken, plain clay pipe stems were recovered from fill (1/106), weighing a total of 15 grammes; along with one small oyster shell of 4g, and one front animal incisor, probably cattle, weighing 2g. In addition, an iron object weighing 62g and 100mm was also retrieved from (1/106). Though highly corroded, this appeared to have a rectangular cross section, and is likely to have been a fixture of some sort.

One plain pipe stem fragment weighing 4g was also recorded from fill (1/108). None of this material was retained.

5.3 Palaeo-environmental Remains

No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental analysis were identified, and no samples were taken.

6 DISCUSSION

Although medieval pottery was recovered from fill (1/106) in pit 1/105, and from (1/112) in posthole 1/111, one or both of these sherds were probably residual in what were post-medieval or more probably early modern features. The recorded features were probably dug towards the rear of 19th century tenement plots, and regardless of their original purpose were backfilled with material including domestic waste. Posthole 1/111 and the possible surface/trample layer 1/113 may imply some form of structure too, perhaps an ancillary building, which might have pre-date the later disturbance, though this is far from certain. The small size of the excavated trench makes any further interpretation impossible.

Apart from any deposits and features that will have already been disturbed by the driven piles, the footings for the proposed houses are not likely to extend as deep as the top of the surviving archaeology.

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Appendix 1: Archaeological Context Inventory

CBM = Brick and tile

| Land adjacent to 43 Jericho Street, Jericho, Oxford | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------------|-------------|---|------------------|------------------|-------------|--|---|-----------------------|
| | Context | Type | Description | L (m) | B (m) | D(m) | Finds | Date | Interpretation |
| Trench 1 | (1/100) | Layer | Tarmac & chippings | Extent of trench | Extent of trench | 0.15m | - | 20 th -21 st C. | Modern car park |
| | (1/101) | Layer | Bricks & sand | Extent of trench | Extent of trench | 0.12m | - | 20 th C. | Older car park |
| | (1/102) | Layer | Mottled grey-brown sandy clayey silt (1/102) up to 0.50m thick, with subangular limestone frags., mdn/early mdn. CBM, slate frags. & clinker. | Extent of trench | Extent of trench | 0.50m | CBM, Fe obj, bottle glass & pottery | 19 th -early 20 th C. | Made ground |
| | (1/103) | Layer | dark grey-brown to dark grey sandy clayey silt with limestone fragments, post-med/early mdn CBM, & charcoal. | Extent of trench | Extent of trench | 0.45m | CBM, clay pipe, oyster shell & pottery | 19 th -early 20 th C. | Made ground |
| | (1/104) | Layer | Compact orange-brown sandy gravel. | Extent of trench | Extent of trench | - | - | - | Natural subsoil |
| | 1/105 | Cut | Cut of pit. 2m long, 1m wide and 0.48m deep. | >2m | >1m | >0.48 | - | - | Cut of pit |
| | (1/106) | Fill | Mottled dark grey-brown sandy clayey silt with limestone frags, pebbles and charcoal. | >2m | >0.50m | 0.25m | Shell | 19 th C. | Fill of pit |
| | 1/107 | Cut | Cut of pit? Unexcavated. | 0.70m | >0.20m | - | - | - | Cut of pit |
| | (1/108) | Fill | Mottled, dark grey-brown sandy clayey silt with orange mottles & limestone frags. Unexcavated. | 0.70m | >0.20m | - | - | - | Fill of pit |
| | (1/109) | Fill | Friable dark grey brown sandy clayey silt with orange mottles. Unexcavated. | 0.30m | >0.15m | - | - | - | Fill of pit/posthole |
| | 1/110 | Cut | Cut of pit/posthole? Unexcavated. | 0.30m | >0.15m | - | - | - | Cut of pit/posthole |
| | 1/111 | Cut | Cut of posthole. | 0.48m | 0.36m | 0.44m | | Post-med/mdn | Cut of posthole |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------|------------|---|-------|--------|--------|---------|---------------------|------------------|
| | (1/112) | Fill | Dark grey brown sandy clayey silt with occ. pebbles & charcoal flecks. | 0.14m | 0.12m | 0.28m | Pottery | Post-med/mdn | Fill of postpipe |
| | (1/113) | Layer | Compact mottled dark brown sandy clay. | 0.90m | 0.50m | - | - | | Layer/surface |
| | (1/114) | Fill | Mixed and mottled orange sand and gravel. | >2m | 0.42m | >0.20m | Pottery | 19 th C. | Fill of pit |
| | (1/115) | Fill | Mottled dark grey brown clayey silt and orange brown sandy gravel. | 0.48m | 0.36m | 0.44m | - | Post-med/mdn | Fill of posthole |
| | (1/116) | Fill | Mottled grey-brown clayey silt mixed with orange-brown sandy gravel and pebbles | >2m | >1m | 0.18m | - | 19 th C. | Fill of pit |
| | (1/117) | Fill | compact orange brown sandy gravel with patches of dark grey clayey silt | | >0.75m | 0.12m | - | 19 th C. | Fill of pit |
| | 1/118 | Inter face | Postpipe interface. | 0.14m | 0.12m | 0.28m | - | Post-med/mdn | Postpipe |