

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
AT THE RECTORY, 37 LONSDALE ROAD,
SUMMERTOWN,
OXFORD
NGR SP 5088 0926**

*On behalf of
Oxford Diocesan Board of Finance*

MARCH 2012

REPORT FOR Oxford Diocesan Board of Finance
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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out a two-trench evaluation in the garden of the Rectory of St Michael and All Angels Church, Lonsdale Road, Oxford. No archaeological features were present. A single unstratified sherd of flowerpot was recovered from Trench 1.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site location (Figure 1)

The site is the garden of the rectory of St Michael and All Angels CoE church located at 37 Lonsdale Road, Oxford (NGR SP50880926). The site lies at 62.7m OD. The underlying geology is 2nd (Summertown-Radley) Terrace Deposits. The site is currently in domestic use.

1.2 Planning Background

Oxford City Council granted planning permission for the demolition of existing Rectory House and the subsequent erection of a replacement detached rectory and garage with two adjacent 5-bed semi-detached dwellings (11/02945/FUL). A condition (15) required the implementation of a staged programme of archaeological works due to the site's potential to contain archaeological remains, the first stage of which was an evaluation. The Archaeological Officer of Oxford City Council provided a Brief for the programme of archaeological work. A *Written Scheme of Investigation* proposed a method to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains on the site as Stage 1, which was agreed with the client and the Archaeological Officer.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The site is situated on the Summertown-Radley gravel terrace in an area that has produced evidence for an extensive Middle Neolithic-Early Bronze Age ritual and funerary complex and subsequent Iron Age, Roman and Saxon rural settlement. Aerial photographic survey has provided evidence for a possible Bronze Age barrow (County Historic Environment Record No 15407) and undated enclosure (HER No 15408) within the playing fields of Summer Fields School to the south-east of the site. Furthermore evidence suggesting the presence of an early Saxon cemetery was recorded during the construction of the school in the 19th century (HER No 6218). These sites are located within a 250m radius of the proposal site. Two further Palaeolithic find spots are recorded nearby in Lonsdale Road comprising rolled flint axes (HER Nos. 8080 and 3577).

The above information has been obtained from the City Archaeological Officer's *Brief*.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

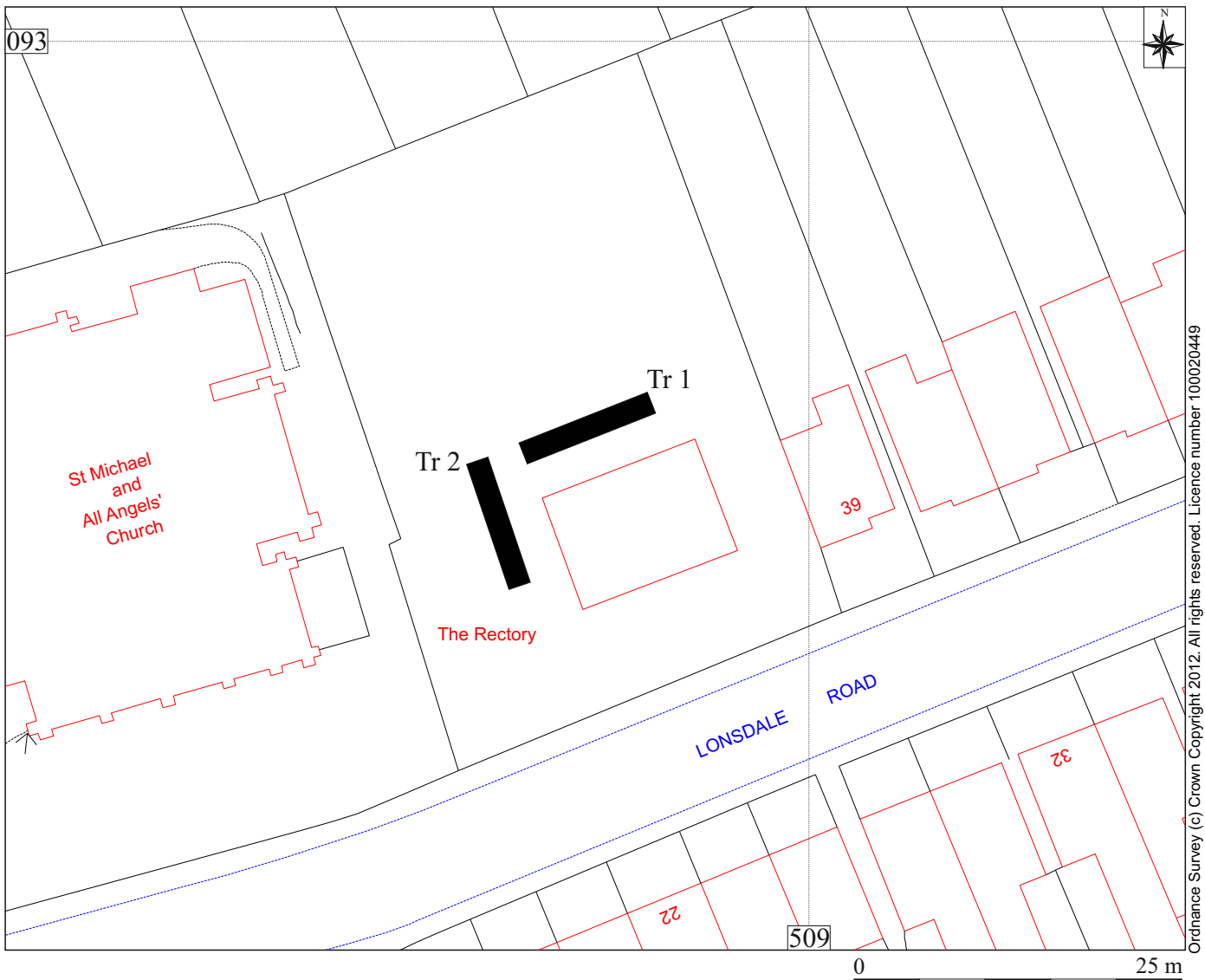
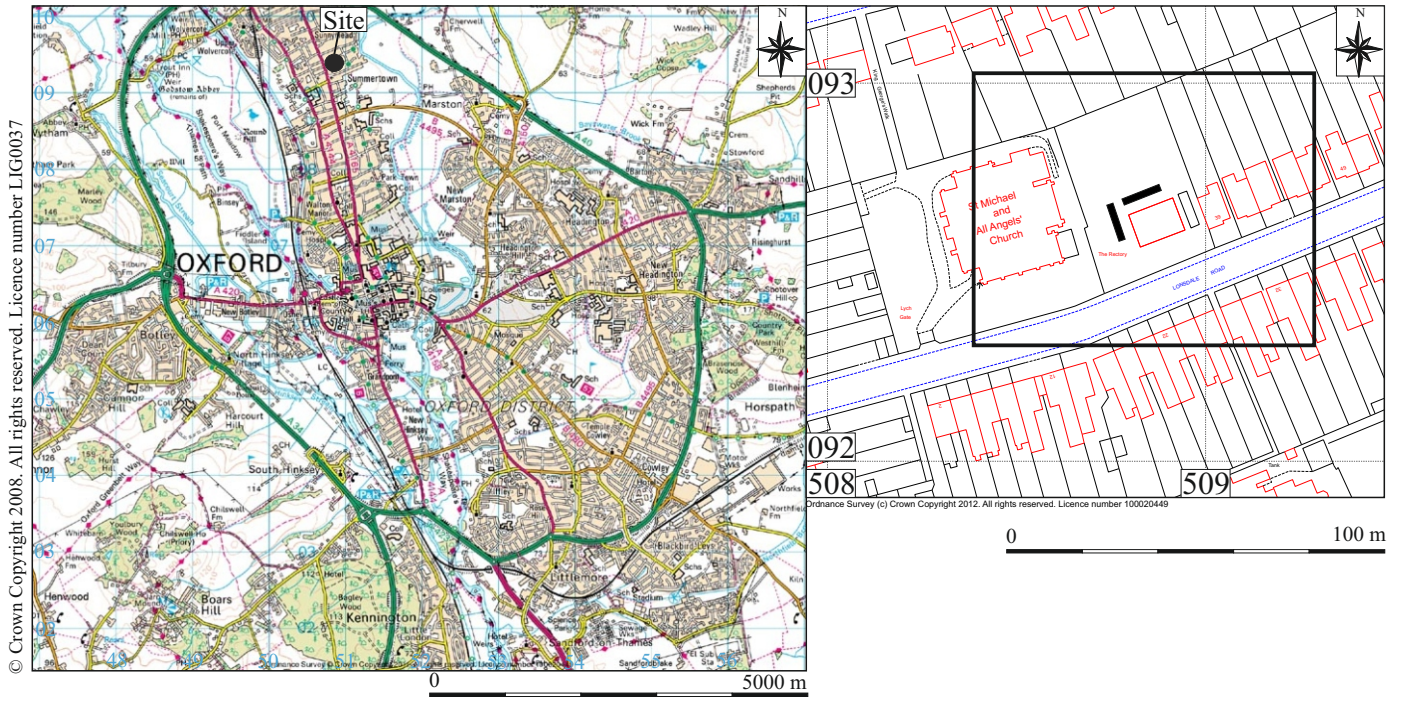


Figure 1. Site location

- 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 prehistoric or Saxon activity.
- 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. This will depend on the type and date of remains encountered.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

In response to a Brief issued by Oxford City Council, JMHS carried out the work, which comprised the excavation of two trenches each of 10m length within the proposal area (Fig. 1).

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in JMHS's *WSI* agreed with the City Archaeological Officer.

3.2 Methodology

The investigation involved the mechanical excavation of two trenches measuring 10 × 1.6m by a 3.5-tonne excavator equipped with a ditching bucket, supplemented by hand investigation of the revealed deposits.

Site procedures carried out followed IfA guidelines. The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994) and the principles of MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

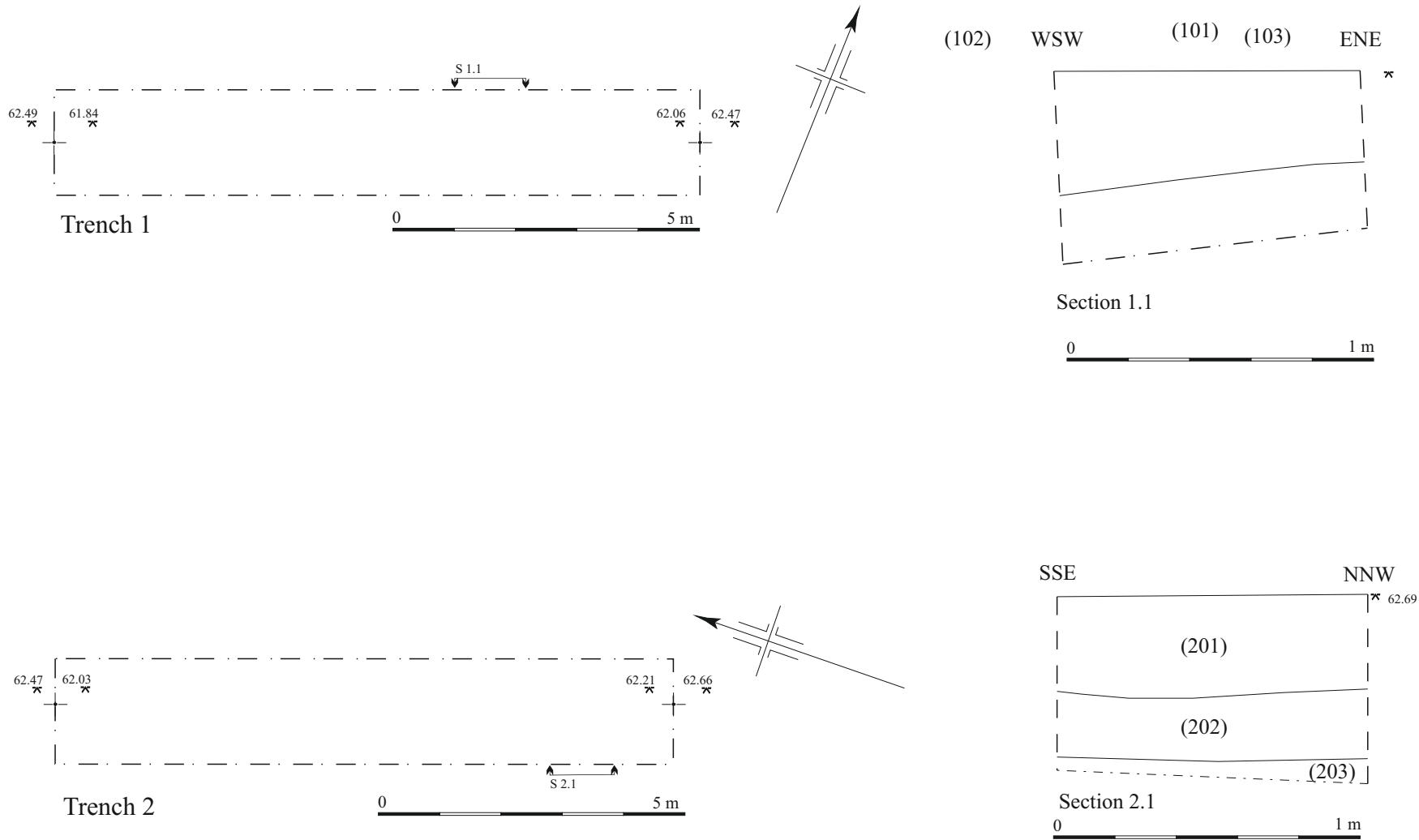


Figure 2. Trenches 1 and 2, plans and sections

4 RESULTS

4.1 Field Results (Figs. 1 & 2)

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. All contexts numbers are preceded by trench number and /. Details of individual trenches are in Appendix 1 – the context inventory – at the rear of report.

Trench 1 was oriented east by northeast/west by southwest and measured 10m long and 1.6m wide. Its depth was between 0.6m at the west end and 0.4m at the east end. The trench was excavated to yellow to orange brown sandy clay and gravel (1/3), the top of the natural. This was sealed by a more mixed deposit of orange brown sandy clay and gravel containing fragments of comminuted brick and roof slate (1/2) overlain by firm mid brown grey clay silt humus with moderate quantities of comminuted brick fragments and roof slate (1/1), the topsoil. The sequence in Trench 2 located 2.5m west of the west end of Trench 1 was exactly the same. Trench 2 only differed from Trench 1 in being oriented north by northwest/south by southeast.

4.2 Reliability of Techniques and Results

The reliability of results is considered to be good. The archaeological evaluation took place in clement conditions. David Radford, Oxford City Archaeological Officer, monitored the work.

5 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS

5.1 Pottery by Jane Timby

The archaeological evaluation resulted in the recovery of a single, unstratified base-herd of unglazed red earthenware weighing 12g. This is probably a piece of modern flowerpot and is of no archaeological significance.

No further work is recommended and it is recommended that the sherd is discarded.

5.2 Environmental Remains

No environmental samples were taken as the potential of the deposits was not felt to be sufficient to warrant sampling.

6 DISCUSSION

The evaluation at the Rectory revealed no archaeological remains despite the proximity of archaeological remains previously recovered. A single sherd of what was tentatively identified as Roman on site proved to be modern flower pot.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

English Heritage 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects*

English Heritage 2006 *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment*

Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1994 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations*

Appendix 1: Archaeological Context Inventory

	Context	Type	Description	L (m)	B (m)	D(m)	Finds	Date	Interpretation
Trench 1									
	(1/01)	Layer	Firm mid brown grey clay silt humus; moderate CBM fragments	>10	>1.6	0.35	No	Modern	Topsoil
	(1/02)	Layer	Firm orange brown sandy clay and gravel; CBM fragments	>10	>1.6	0..3	No	Subsoil	Former cultivation soil
	(1/03)	Layer	Compact yellow to orange brown sandy clay and gravel	>10	>1.6	Unk.	No	Natural	Natural
Trench 2									
	(2/01)	Layer	Firm mid brown grey clay silt humus; moderate CBM fragments	>10	>1.6	0.35	No	Modern	Topsoil
	(2/02)	Layer	Firm orange brown sandy clay and gravel; CBM fragments	>10	>1.6	0..3	No	Subsoil	Former cultivation soil
	(2/03)	Layer	Compact yellow to orange brown sandy clay and gravel	>10	>1.6	Unk.	No	Natural	Natural