

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT
(INCLUDING EARTHWORK SURVEY)**

OF

OXFORD SPIRES FOUR PILLARS HOTEL,

ABINGDON ROAD,

OXFORD

On behalf of

Henry Riley LLP

NOVEMBER 2015

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SUMMARY

This archaeological desk-based assessment was commissioned as part of the consideration to develop Oxford Spires Four Pillars Hotel, Abingdon Road, Oxford.

It is highly likely that the site was a medieval farm possibly originating in the late Saxon period and that it was surrounded by ditches.

It was these ditches that were re-used during the Civil War to defend the Grandpont Causeway as it crossed the Eastwyke Ditch.

Grandpont Causeway (Abingdon Road) is a scheduled monument and therefore of national significance. The defences of Oxford, the King's capital during the wars, are also considered to be of national significance. In this context any archaeological remains present on the site have the potential to also be of national significance.

The placement of the proposed extensions would likely be away from potential Civil War defences.

There would be a limited impact on the existing earthworks within the southwest corner of the proposal site as one of the proposed extensions will overlay a part of the ridge and furrow earthworks. However, the level of impact would be limited due to the existing ridge and furrows within the adjacent fields. There is also the possibility of disturbing deeper cut features during the alteration to the northeast.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Origins of the Report

This archaeological desk-based assessment was commissioned by Henry Riley LLP as part of the consideration of a proposal for a development at Oxford Spires Four Pillars Hotel, Abingdon Road, Oxford.

1.2 Planning Guidelines and Policies

This report has been prepared in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government (2012); and with the policies relevant to archaeology in the *Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016*. In format and contents this report conforms to the standards outlined in the Institute for Archaeologists' guidance paper for desk-based assessments (IfA 2010).

1.2.1 Government Planning Policy Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (2012) provides guidance related to archaeology within the planning process. The following Policy points are key to this development:

128. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

129. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

1.2.2 The Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016

POLICY HE.1 - NATIONALLY IMPORTANT MOMUMENTS

Planning permission will not be granted for any development that would have an unacceptable effect on a nationally important monument (whether or not it is scheduled) or its setting

POLICY HE.2 – ARCHAEOLOGY

Where archaeological deposits that are potentially significant to the historic environment of Oxford are known or suspected to exist anywhere in Oxford but in particular the City centre Archaeological Area, planning applications should incorporate sufficient information to define the character and extent of such deposits as far as reasonably practicable, including, where appropriate:

- a. the results of an evaluation by fieldwork; and
- b. an assessment of the effect of the proposals on the deposits or their setting.

If the existence and significance of deposits is confirmed, planning permission will only be granted where the proposal includes:

- c. provision to preserve the archaeological remains in situ, so far as reasonably practicable, by sensitive layout and design (particularly foundations, drainage and hard landscaping); and
- d. provision for the investigation and recording of any archaeological remains that cannot be preserved, including the publication of results, in accordance with a detailed scheme approved before the start of the development.

POLICY HE.3 - LISTED BUILDINGS AND THEIR SETTING

Planning permission will only be granted for development which is appropriate in terms of its scale and location and which uses materials and colours that respect the character of the surroundings, and have due regard to the setting of any listed building.

POLICY HE.6 - BUILDINGS OF LOCAL INTEREST

Planning permission will only be granted for development that involves the demolition of a Building of Local Interest, or that would have an adverse impact on the building or its setting, if:

- a. the applicant can justify why the existing building cannot be retained or altered to form part of the redevelopment; and
- b. the development will make a more positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area.

1.3 Aims and Objectives

The primary aim of the desk-based assessment is to provide a professional appraisal of the archaeological potential of the site. This follows the Government guidance in NPPF by presenting a synthetic account of the available archaeological and historic data and its significance at an early stage in the planning process. The report will provide the evidence necessary for informed and reasonable planning decisions concerning the need for further archaeological work. The information will allow for the development of an appropriate strategy to mitigate the effects of development on the archaeology, if this is warranted.

In accordance with NPPF, the report presents a desk-based evaluation of existing information. It additionally follows the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) *Standard* definition of a desk-based assessment (CIfA 2014). In brief, it seeks to identify and assess the known and potential archaeological resource within a specified area ('the site'), collating existing written and graphic information and taking full account of the likely character, extent, quantity and worth of that resource in a local, regional and national context. It also aims to define and comment on the likely impact of the proposed development scheme on the surviving archaeological resource.

The CIfA *Standard* states that the purpose of a desk-based assessment is to inform appropriate responses, which may consist of one or more of the following:

- The formulation of a strategy for further investigation, whether or not intrusive, where the character and value of the resource is not sufficiently defined to permit a mitigation strategy or other response to be devised.
- The formulation of a strategy to ensure the recording, preservation or management of the resource

- The formulation of a project design for further archaeological investigation within a programme of research

In accordance with NPPF, the desk-based assessment forms the first stage in the planning process as regards archaeology as a material consideration. It is intended to contribute to the formulation of an informed and appropriate mitigation strategy.

1.4 Methodology

The format of the report is adapted from an Institute for Archaeologist *Standard Guidance* paper (CifA, 2014).

In summary, the work has involved:

- Identifying the client's objectives
- Identifying the cartographic and documentary sources available for consultation
- Assembling, consulting and examining those sources

The principal sources consulted in assessing this site were the Historic Environment Records (HER) for Oxfordshire and the Oxfordshire Records Office. The first holds details of known archaeological sites. The Records Office contained copies of relevant early editions of Ordnance Survey maps, other cartographic sources and documentary sources. Archaeological sites in Oxfordshire within 500 m of the proposal site have been noted. These were cross-referenced with the site information held at the National Monuments Record in Swindon. Due to the urban nature of the site aerial photographs of the area held at the National Monuments Record were not consulted.

The extent to which archaeological remains are likely to survive on the site will depend on the previous land use. The destructive effect of the previous and existing buildings/infrastructure/activity on the site has therefore been assessed from a study of available map information and other documentary sources.

In order that the appropriate archaeological response/s can be identified, consideration has been given to the need for further assessment and evaluation by fieldwork, in order to identify and locate surviving archaeological deposits on the site.

2 THE SITE (Figure 1)

The location of the proposed development site is Oxford Spires Four Pillars Hotel, Abingdon Road, Oxford. The site is centred at grid reference SP 5168 0492. The underlying geology of the area is mapped as alluvium of the River Thames or Isis (BGS 236). The alluvium post-dates the last Ice Age and episodes of alluviation are thought to have occurred during the Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods (Stoten 2006).

3 PROPOSED SCHEME OF DEVELOPMENT

It is proposed to expand the capacity of the hotel with bedroom extensions and a small additional car park, with the rear car park altered into a garden area.

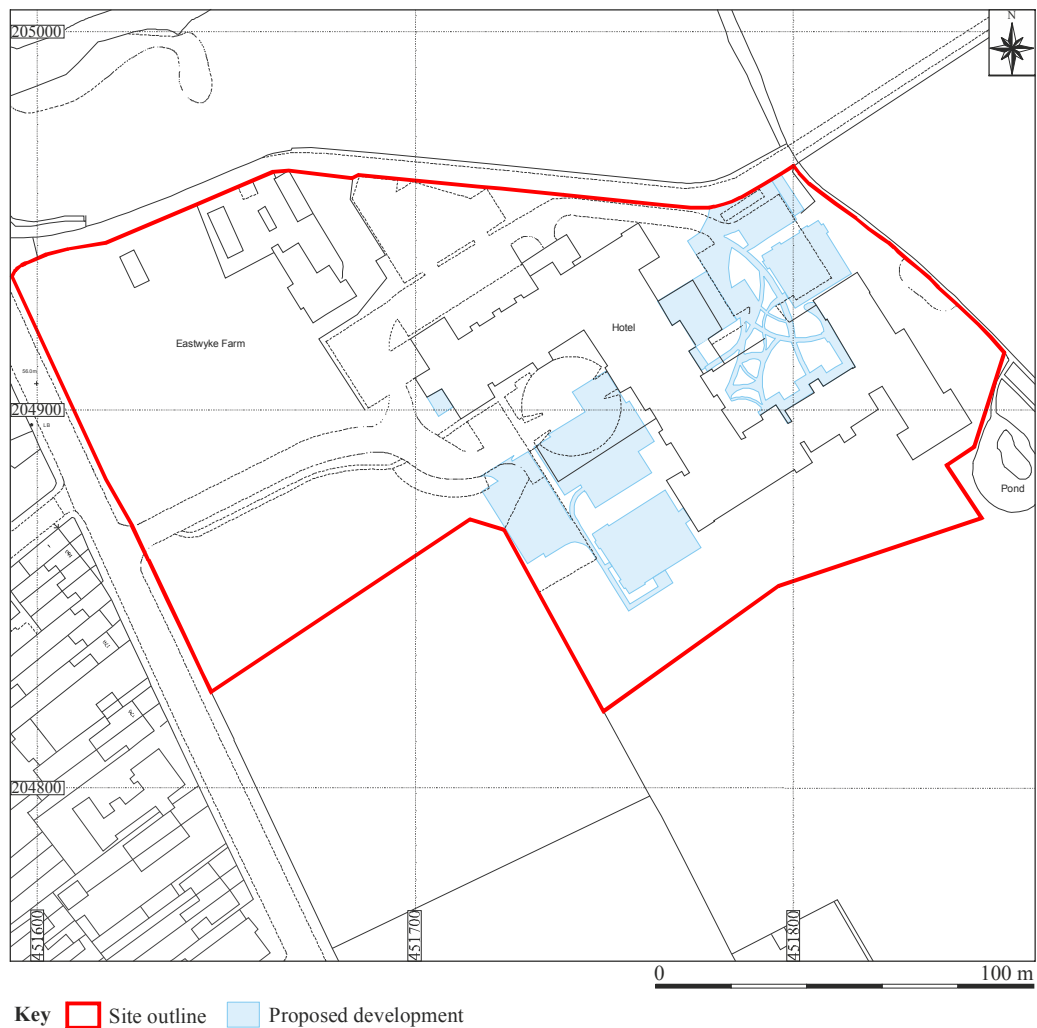
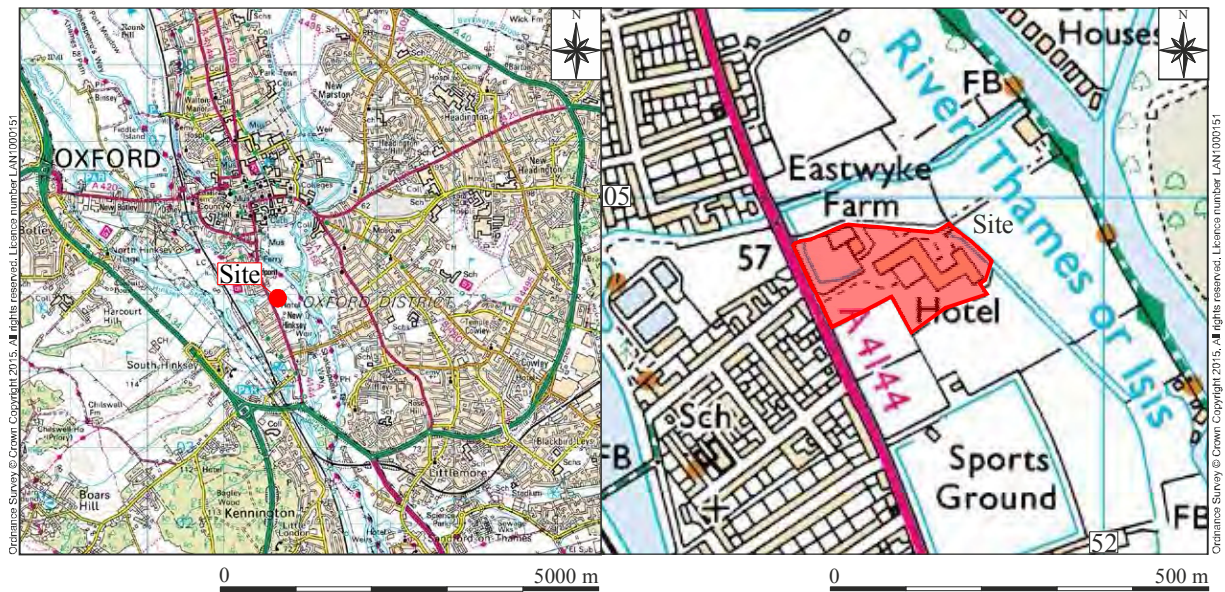


Figure 1: Site location

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A recent desk-based assessment of the area was undertaken in 2006 (Stoten) with further work in 2010 (Gadsby). It would seem fruitless to replicate that study, so with the consent of the City Archaeologist, David Radford, it was agreed to integrate any more recent work and provide only a summary of its findings with a concentration more on the evidence for Civil War period defences that may be present within the development area.

This is an updated version of the report that was written in 2012, taking into consideration the alterations to the proposed project.

4.1 Summary of the Known Archaeological Sites

Stoten (2006) concluded that the site had a low potential for remains of prehistoric or Roman date, although she noted that Iron Age settlement activity was recorded c. 400m to the northwest of the site and that the area had been covered with alluvium during the Roman period. The only other potential for archaeological remains noted is that of a post-medieval toll-booth adjacent to the road.

Oxford's origins were probably in the 9th century and excavations at St Aldate's have demonstrated a clay causeway running south to a river crossing and a late Saxon ford (Durham 1984). The area around Eastwyke may have been inhabited at this time. The land was owned by Abingdon Abbey during the medieval period and later sold to University College. Although not actually stated, Stoten (2006) implies that remains of this period may be present.

The site was generally considered to have low archaeological potential; this appears to be in part based on the limited knowledge of the area. Only 14 sites are listed in a 500m radius of the site on the County HER.

A single sherd of 15th century pottery was recovered from a pit during excavations at Eastwyke Farm in 1999 (Pugh). This not only indicates contemporary activity on or near the site but a potential for medieval remains to exist in the area.

4.2 Summary of the Building Assessment

Morriss (2005) conducted an outline architectural analysis of Eastwyke Farm. He concluded in agreement with the RCHME (1939) that it is an early 17th century stone-built structure, with a "T-shaped" plan, two storeys and a spacious attic. Externally it had suffered relatively little alteration. Several primary windows remained *in situ* and much of the original plan could be identified.

The building is mainly built of well-coursed oolitic limestone rubble, with varying courses and heights, larger blocks as quoins and ashlar detailing to the original windows and doorways. Morriss (2005) postulated that given it had high status, well-lit and heated rooms on all levels it had not been constructed as a simple farmhouse.

The west elevation shows the dormer's gable is jettied and the bressumer is richly

decorated timber that includes a degree of dentilation. In its soffit are the redundant mortises and sockets for a projecting canted oriel window with glazing bars between the mullions. Such an oriel may well have been a primary element and such oriels can be seen in the attics of the east range of Trinity College's Durham Quad dated to 1602 (Morris 2005).

The Attic room associated with this oriel was a simple storage space or servant's quarters but had a fairly high status. It retains its original fireplace at the gable end, which probably dates to the early 17th century (Morris 2005).

The east elevation shows a thin slither of ashlar masonry about 1.6m above the present ground level. It is suggestive of the top right hand corner of the surround of a window or doorway. This is repeated high up, roughly half way up the first floor stair window. Also present is a bonding stone at an odd angle between this section and the return wall of the cross-wing. Morris (2005) considered these to pre-date the rest of the elevation, although they are isolated and appear to have no relationship to the hall or cross-wing. The present layout of the building also precludes a doorway or window in this position.

The building had been modernised and altered internally in the mid 19th century, losing much of its original features.

4.3 Documentary Evidence for Eastwyke Farm

The place-name is probably derived from the Old English term *wic* meaning a dwelling, building or dairy farm. Morris (2005) points out that it could alternatively be related to a trading centre and the causeway adjacent is known to have existed in the 11th century. Either meaning would indicate that some form of building was present on the site from a relatively early period, although this is completely ignored by Phillpotts (2005). Before 1508 the manor had been divided into two moieties.

Phillpotts (ibid.) notes that descriptions of the holding did not include buildings on documents dated 1511 and 1524. This is not definite proof that buildings were not present, as they could simply have been overlooked, as the document's main concern was the area of land alone. Phillpotts (ibid.) speculates that medieval manorial buildings may have lain in the western half; for which, unfortunately, there is no tenurial history available.

In 1528 the moiety was described as worth £5 per annum besides the perquisites of courts, the rights to waifs and strays, and other manorial rights. Since it came into College ownership it had always been rented as a farm to one tenant (Cox and Darwall-Smith 2001). The presence of a large farm here may have been the reason to split the manor prior to 1508.

The first mention of a building in the area is when the College leased the property to Thomas Mundy in 1541 for twenty years for an annual rent of £6 13s 4d, it was described as "a moiety and half part of their farm called the Wycke lying nigh Oxford, without the south bridge of the town, and all manner of houses, buildings, land, meadows, pastures, commons and feedings" (Phillpotts 2005). This certainly states

that buildings were in the area and might imply a building on the site of Eastwyke Farm.

The College then let Eastwyke Farm on leases for 21 years to a series of tenants by “beneficial leases”, which meant that the responsibility for the construction, repair and maintenance of buildings and other elements lay with the tenants rather than the College. The terms of the lease were repeated from one to the next throughout the 16th and 17th centuries (Phillpotts 2005).

Morriss (2005) suggests that the college using benefactor’s money may have paid for the construction of Eastwyke House in the 1630’s. Phillpotts (2005) argues that the lease documents indicate that this was highly unlikely.

In December 1631 a new lease was made to Percival Robinson of the University of Oxford, he assigned this lease to Oliver Smith in 1632. His son also called Oliver received a lease in 1634, presumably on the death of his father as he and his widowed mother Christian were leased Eastwyke Farm in March 1638.

In June 1649 a lease was granted to Gles Spicer and Amos Avery for “all which premises were heretofore in the occupation of Roger Huett and late in the occupation of Christian Smith, widow, and Oliver Smith, gentleman” paying an entry fine of £50 (Phillpotts 2005). Spicer received further leases in 1654 and 1659. In 1652 he negotiated a nominal fine of £2, Phillpotts (2005) suggests this is for compensation for an investment he had made in the improvement of the property, speculating that this is the context for the construction of the present house. However there is no documentary evidence to support this claim.

It is possible that this compensation was in order to make Eastwyke Farm habitable after its use as a garrison. Unfortunately troops did not look after their billets during this period. A good example of this is Fawley Court in Buckinghamshire, when in 1642 a large party of the King’s troops, under Sir John Byron, occupied it. The soldiers, in spite of their Commander’s repeated orders to restrain such outrage, destroyed the “valuable collection of manuscripts and books collected by Sir Bulstrode and his father, and so spoiled the furniture, that it was unfit for future residence” (*Anon.* 1826).

4.4 The Defensive Works of Oxford

Richard Rallingson of Queen’s College apparently designed the defences put up in 1643; in June 1643 Charles Lloyd was engineer in charge of the work. In March 1644 the king’s engineer in ordinary Dietrich Boekman seems to have been in charge at Oxford, but the final plans for the defences were made by another of the king’s engineers, Bernard de Gomme in November 1645 (VCH 1979).

Strong works around New College were finished by March 1643, and in April and May work was in progress at the entrances to the city, in St. Clement’s parish, and around Magdalen College. By early June the outwork at St. Clement’s was finished. In June and July Charles I ordered all men between the ages of 16 and 60 to work one day a week on the defences or pay 1s. In June work began at Holywell, and in August

new bulwarks were being made to the north of the city. In December parliamentary sympathizers, who at night pulled down the defences that had been built during the day, hindered work outside the west gate.

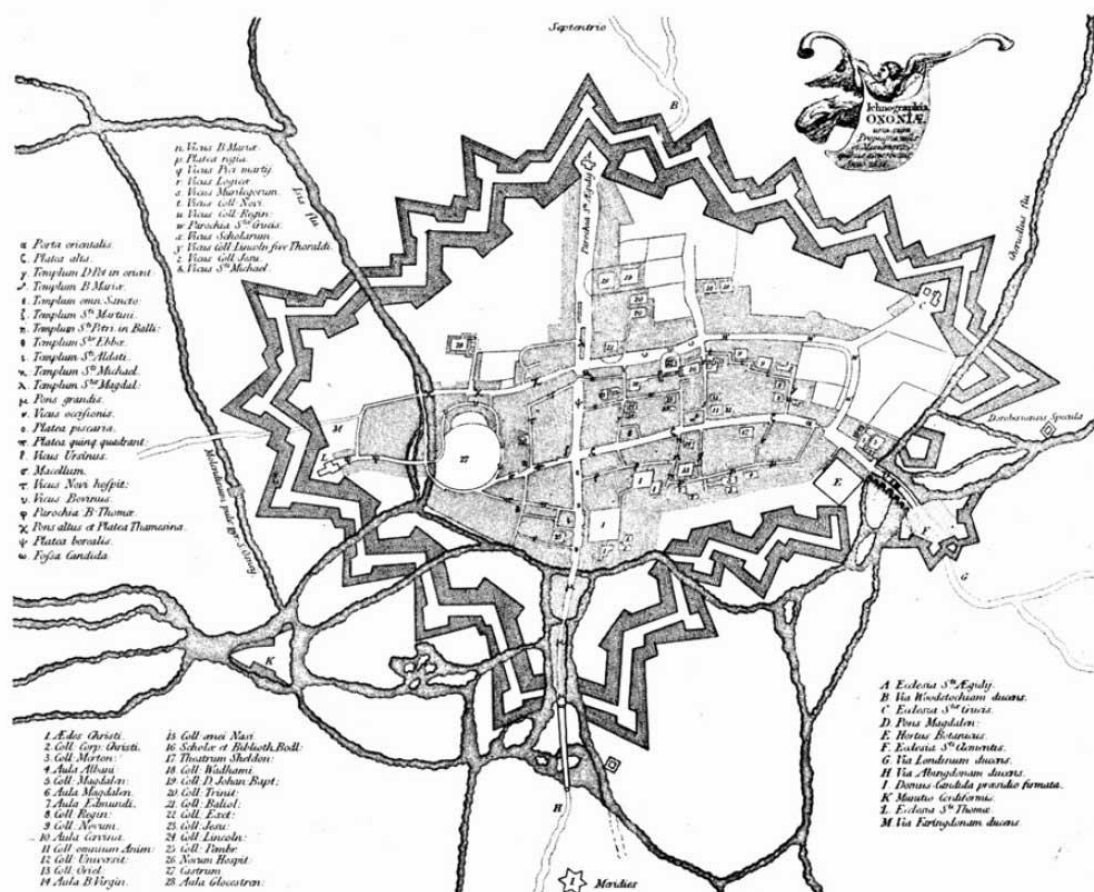


Figure 2. Plan of the Defences attributed to Rallington (1648)

In January 1644 the city at first refused to pay £200 a week towards making a quarter of the fortifications but some money was paid at the end of the month. Labour was not given willingly: in April the governor of the town ordered recalcitrant citizens to be restrained by officers with musketeers, and in May the king ordered those who would not pay to be expelled from the city. In March 1644 bulwarks 14 ft. wide were being built outside the north gate, and by that summer the whole north side of the city was palisaded. In July batteries were being made in Magdalen College walks. Some guards were apparently being manned by the autumn of 1644, but work was still in progress, at the city's expense, in October and November that year.

As late as August 1645 the order for all men to work on the defences was repeated. In May 1646 work on de Gomme's defences, probably the outer line on the north, was 'newly finished'. Some defences were slighted in 1647 after the city's capture by the parliamentary forces, and others north of the city, in 1651 (VCH 1979).

The trace was typical of the Dutch system, and was used with modifications by de Gomme after the Restoration, both at Tilbury and Portsmouth. Kemp (1977) argues that such a complex scheme could never have been built with the slender resources

that were available, and within the time and that there would never have been enough troops to garrison it or artillery to arm it.

Indeed at the surrender in June 1646, only 39 cannon were found in the city (Young & Emberton 1974); although, it should be noted that the King had removed some ordnance for his recent campaign that included the siege of Leicester and the disaster at Naseby. A letter by Fairfax after the battle states he captured three cannon of larger size, a mortar and several lesser pieces.

Barriers that were placed in the Thames just below the town provided additional defence. Both the Thames and the Cherwell were made to flood the meadows around the town (VCH 1979).

4.5 The Defensive Works of Eastwyke

“Rallingson’s map” of 1648 (Fig. 2), first published by Woods in 1674, shows Eastwyke Farm set within a 6 pointed star shaped earthwork (Lattey *et al.* 1936, fig 25), while De Gommès’s plan of 1644 of the defences of Oxford shows Eastwyke Farm set within an 8 pointed star shaped earthwork (Lattey *et al.* 1936, fig 26). It was the site of a skirmish during the Civil War (Beckley & Radford 2011), however no physical evidence for any earthwork defences has been recorded from aerial photographs of the site (Gadsby 2010).

Surveys (Morris 2005, Phillpotts 2005, Gadsby 2010) of the site have been fixated on this star-shaped plan when attempting to assess the site or locate the defensive lines.

It is likely that the star drawn around Eastwyke Farm was simply figurative, indicating it was fortified without going into detail on the exact nature of the earthworks. Kemp (1977) describes the map associated to Rallingson as a “pure flight of fantasy”. Rectangular fortification with bastions at each corner, such as the Queen’s Sconce at Newark-on-Trent, Nottinghamshire, were more likely to be constructed (Fig. 3)

In military terms an isolated fortification would ideally be this shape, however Eastwyke Farm was far from isolated lying only 500m from Folly Bridge and a relief force. This proximity in itself would not warrant elaborate defensive works facing Oxford.

Any presumed weakness for not placing bastions to the north would be offset by other tactical concerns. An enemy assault force attacking from the Oxford side would risk exposing their rear to canon fire from the main defences and could be quickly countered by cavalry issuing from the city

Such works would become a liability should the Farm fall into enemy hands and a counter assault ordered. Any bastion facing north would become an ideal artillery position to bring fire against the city. Experimental research with Sakers has shown that their range could be up to 1000m, while that of Demi-Cannon and Culverins about 500m (Hall 1952), although other sources generally report longer ranges (Henry 2005). It must be considered highly unlikely that any such bastions existed on the northern side.

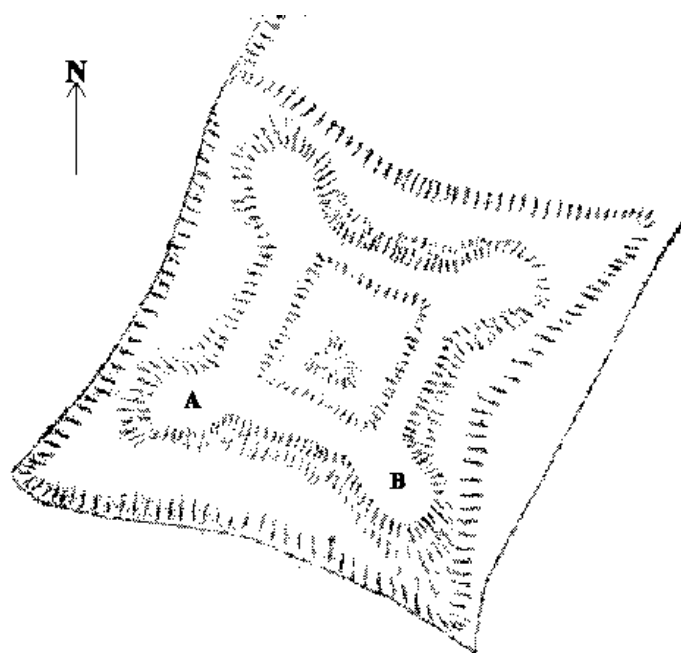


Figure 3. Plan of the Queen's Sconce, is probably the most complete Civil War fortification remaining in the country. A and B mark two of the four corner bastions. The structure is 92m wide and the ditch up to 23m wide and 4.5m deep.

5 SURVEY (Figure 4)

Gadsby's survey (2010) located the high visible ditch (1) running roughly parallel to Abingdon Road and speculated that it might turn at its northern end to the east and join a hollow feature at the northern site boundary. This ditch is clearly marked on the maps of 1815 (Fig. 5) and 1847 (Fig. 7); speculation existed if it was a moat feature. Gadsby (ibid.) noted that this ditch had been subject to some backfilling. Almost all other features recorded were relatively ephemeral garden features or dismissed as modern disturbance.

The curve of this ditch and the fact that it continues to the east in front of the northern wall is clearly visible, although it has suffered some, possibly deliberate, backfilling in this area (Plates 1 and 2).

Anecdotal evidence suggests that work was carried out in the area of this ditch in late 2010 and it is possible that its profile may have been altered at this time.

Roughly parallel to the modern access road from Abingdon Road was a shallow depression (2), more noticeable along its southern edge, written off as a modern disturbance by Gadsby (2010) it would appear to conform to the ditch seen on the 1815 and 1847 maps (Fig. 5) in this position returning at right angles to ditch (1).

The raised area (3) in the northwest of the site could be associated with the construction of the post-medieval tollbooth or the modern construction of the path marking the northern boundary of the development site.



Plate 1. Corner detail of ditch 1, sloping ground clearly visible



Plate 2. View along ditch 1, looking north

Outside the development area to the north the land appears to slope sharply down towards the city (4). This was briefly investigated, but the area is heavily overgrown. This may represent part of the original causeway entrance to the farm.

To the northeast, also beyond the site boundary, was a noticeable bank approximately 30m long (5). It lies roughly 50m from the farmhouse, a similar distance to the ditch (1) on the western side. While it is probably a modern feature it could represent part of the defensive circuit of the building.

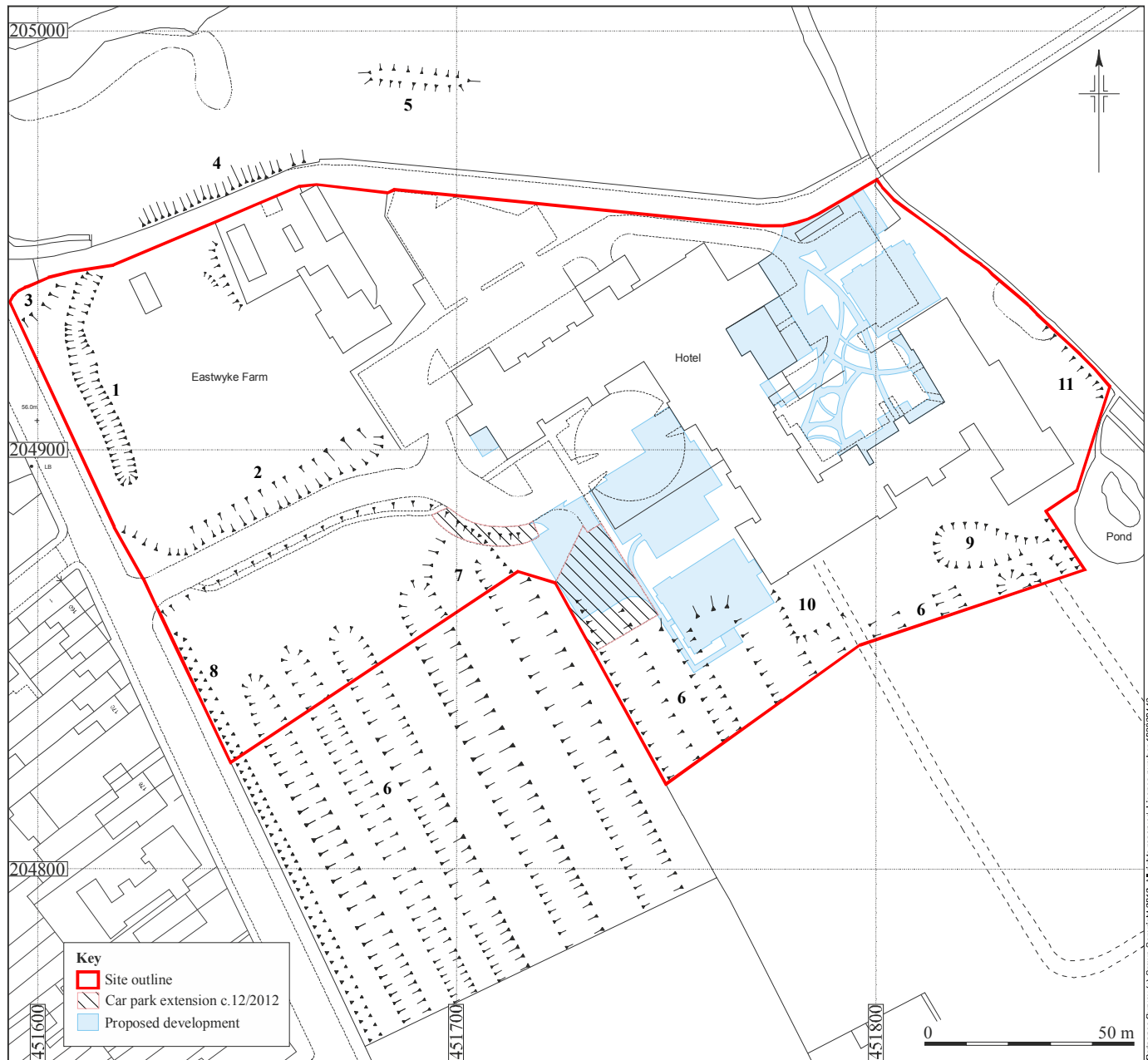


Figure 4: Earthwork survey

The remnant of ridge and furrow (6) can clearly be seen to the south of the site, with ridges roughly parallel to Abingdon Road and continuing up until roadside ditch (8). These appear to end before reaching the modern driveway in. No evidence for a headland was noticed; however the area appears to have been levelled as part of landscape works associated with the hotel. Other landscaping work is noticeable close to the car park (7).

A roadside ditch (8) is seen parallel to Abingdon Road to the south of the modern driveway, this does not continue to the north.

To the southeast of the site is a depression, interpreted as a pond (9). A shallow feature of a remnant channel appears to lead to an existent pond just beyond the site boundary. A pond is marked in this location on the 1815 map (Fig. 5).

Between this pond and the ridge and furrow was a large low level rectangular area (10). While it is possible that this marks a building platform, it is more likely to be a modern formation associated with the construction of the hotel.

To the east of the site is a stream. The remnant of a bank (11) was seen to border this internally for a short stretch.



Figure 5. Partial Map of the Moiety of East Wyke 1815

6 DISCUSSION

6.1 Origins of the Defences

It is clear that the construction of the defences for Oxford was a drawn out affair and that men were in short supply to conduct the work (see section 4.4). With such a drain on manpower the construction of outlying works would not have been a priority.

Given the scarce resources available one must pose the question why was the farm defended? Indeed why go to the effort when building the cities defences was difficult and time consuming?

Suggestions that it formed a forward look out can be dismissed. It is situated only 500m from Folly Bridge on relatively flat ground. Its use as a forward cannon battery position also lacks credence. This seems tactically odd; as the ground is flat in front of the city, also why expose such valuable assets to easy capture? However most dismissive of this suggestion is the lack of cannon available to the garrison (Young & Emberton 1974).

The position to control the road cannot be ignored, because it effectively did this, but that alone is not enough reason to fortify it. The rest of the area is relatively flat agricultural land and there is still the Isis to cross closer to the city forming a natural defence.

The only real answer can be that the site must have been easily defensible already and it was to deny an attacking army the use of such an asset where they could position heavy guns in relative safety within range of the city's defences.

The farm building on its own it not such a strong point, if burnt out the shell is even less attractive as a defensive point at this time. It could be fortified but this would be difficult for an attacker as they would be under fire from the city

The only reason to defend it comes down to the ditches; these must have been there in some fashion and of a scale that made them useable. Such reuse of defensive positions was common during the period. The medieval manor house of Hayes Barton was used defensively during the siege of Exeter. Although apparently un-fortified its earlier ditches were still evident (Harrington 2004) and no doubt used.

Given the scarce resources available it is feasible that any ditches already on the site would be used, perhaps slightly reworked and widened. The nature of these ditches is questionable, they could be simple agricultural boundaries or flood-prevention dykes.

There is a probability that the ditches represent the site of the older moated manor or the holding of a moiety. Before 1508 the manor had been divided into two moieties. That of Eastwyke lay on the east side of the Grandpont Causeway (Abingdon Road) around the site, with a smaller piece of land to the west.

It is possible that other ditches in the area were more important than the ones surrounding the farm. On the 1815 map there is clearly a branch of the river

“Eastwyke Ditch” running at right angles to the Grandpont Causeway towards the main channel of the river (Fig. 5). De Gomme’s map shows this was present in 1644. It would have provided a useful terrain feature to hamper assault.

The position of the farmhouse commands the point where the road crosses this stream. If the Oxford garrison holds the house the stream remains a defensive feature hampering troop movement against the city. If however the attackers seize the farm the stream is reversed now helping to bottle defenders inside.

6.2 The Scale of the Defences

It is unlikely that the scale of defences at Eastwyke Farm were comparable to the Queen’s Sconce in terms of size. Even so, these defences were clearly strong enough to repel an attack.

Riguard (1845) quoting Wood’s publication of 1792 notes that on “27th May [1645], two regiments (the white and red), with two pieces of ordnance, marched over Isis at Godstow Bridge, and so by Botley to South Hinxsey; which party were continually playing on that in Sir Oliver Smyth’s house (held by him of University College), standing without the south port, and continually guarded and relieved with soldiers out of Oxford garrison; but for the most part repelled with the loss of men and members”.

At conception the New Model Army consisted of twelve regiments of infantry each of 1,200 men for a total of 14,400, however it was still 4,000 men short of its paper infantry establishment in May 1645 (Rodgers 1968). It is therefore possible that approximately 1600 parliamentarians took part in this action. Two regiments to take and hold a small farmhouse seems rather excessive, unless the area is heavily fortified and strongly garrisoned.

The shape of field 17 on the 1815 map is of interest (Fig. 5). It is unlike the other in that it is not bounded by ditch but what would appear to be a hedge or wall. The outline is also reminiscent of the angular fortifications employed during the Civil War, with what appears to be a bastion in the southwest corner. This of course is most likely to be a complete coincidence as nothing is depicted in this area on de Gomme’s map of 1644. However if a hedge feature or the like were present it would likely be employed.

The area surrounding the farmhouse is reported to be flooded in 1645 (VCH 1979). This flooding is unlikely to have been very deep otherwise the farmhouse itself would likely to have been underwater. Modern flood prediction mapping would suggest this was probably localised to prevent water flowing back into the city. Interestingly it shows the area of the southwest “bastion” corner of field 17 to be on slightly higher ground (Fig. 6).

The Tithe map of 1847 (Fig. 7) shows no additional ditches of field boundaries to the west of the Abingdon Road, although there is a ditch-like feature on the 1st edition OS map of 1879 in that area (Fig. 8).

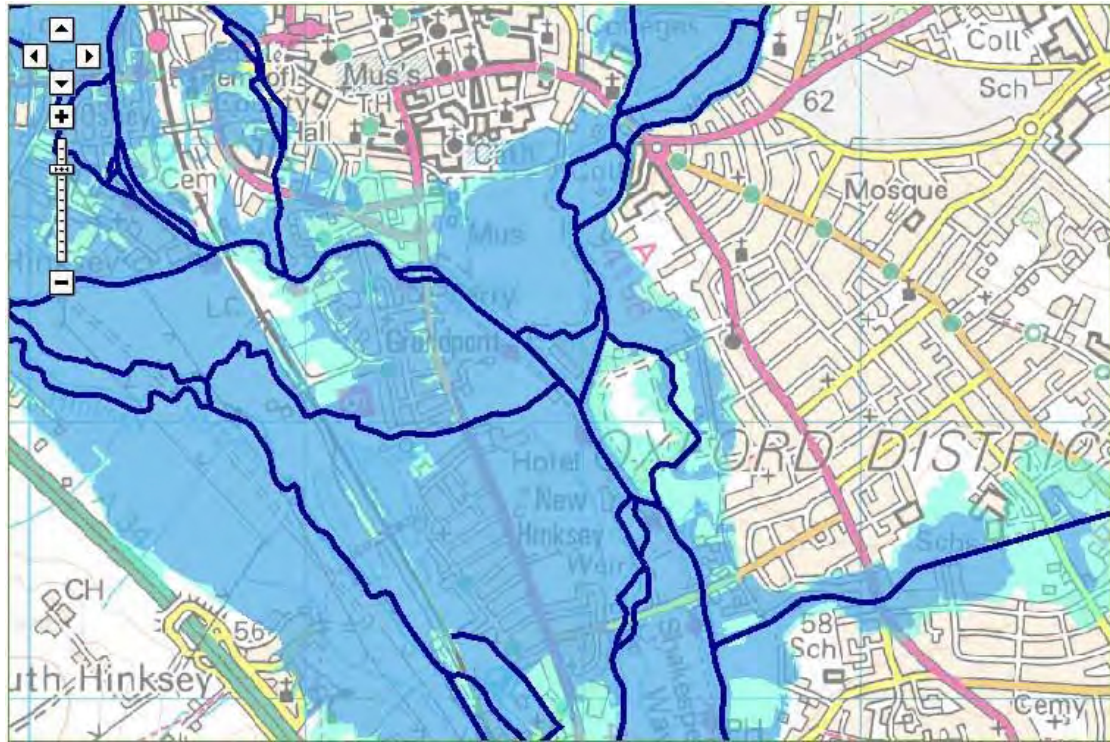


Figure 6. Environment Agency Flood Map 2012

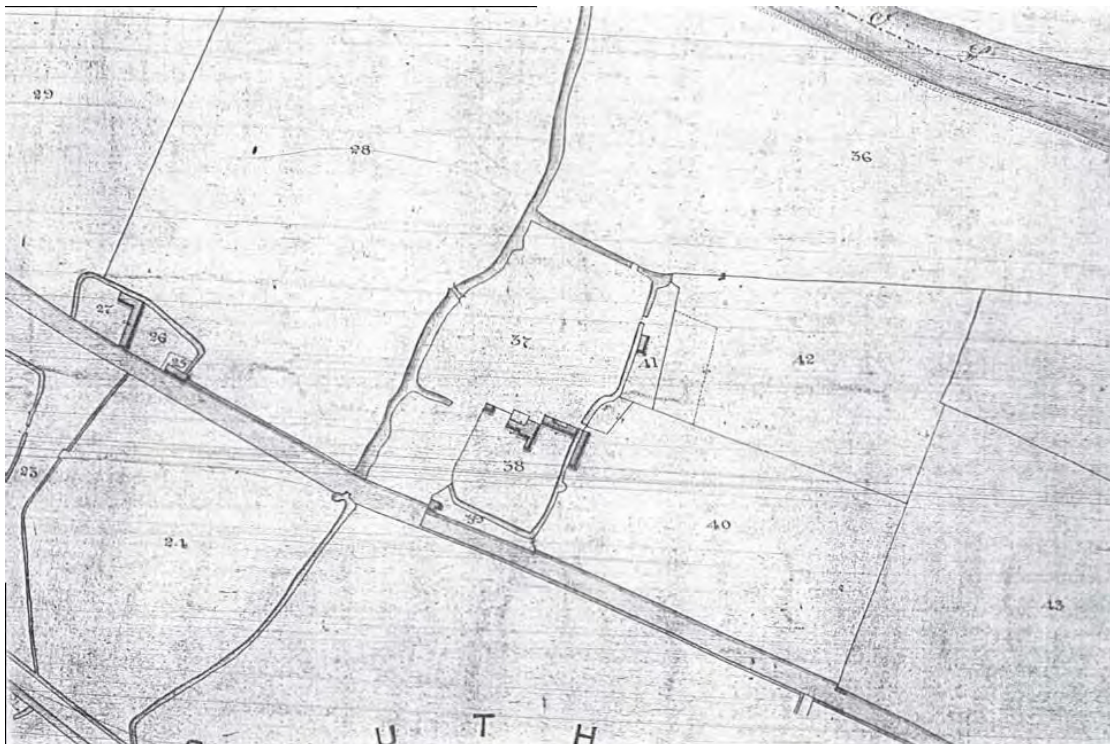


Figure 7. Extract from St Aldates Tithe Map 1847

The size of field 17 may prove too large for inclusion as a defensible position, being roughly 200m in length. Although without a doubt holding a defensive line on both sides of the road would prove a stronger position to prevent capture by enemy forces.

The potential size of the parliamentary attacking force would indicate a sizable garrison here, possibly larger than would have been accommodated by the farmhouse and out buildings alone. It is therefore possible that the defences were more extensive.

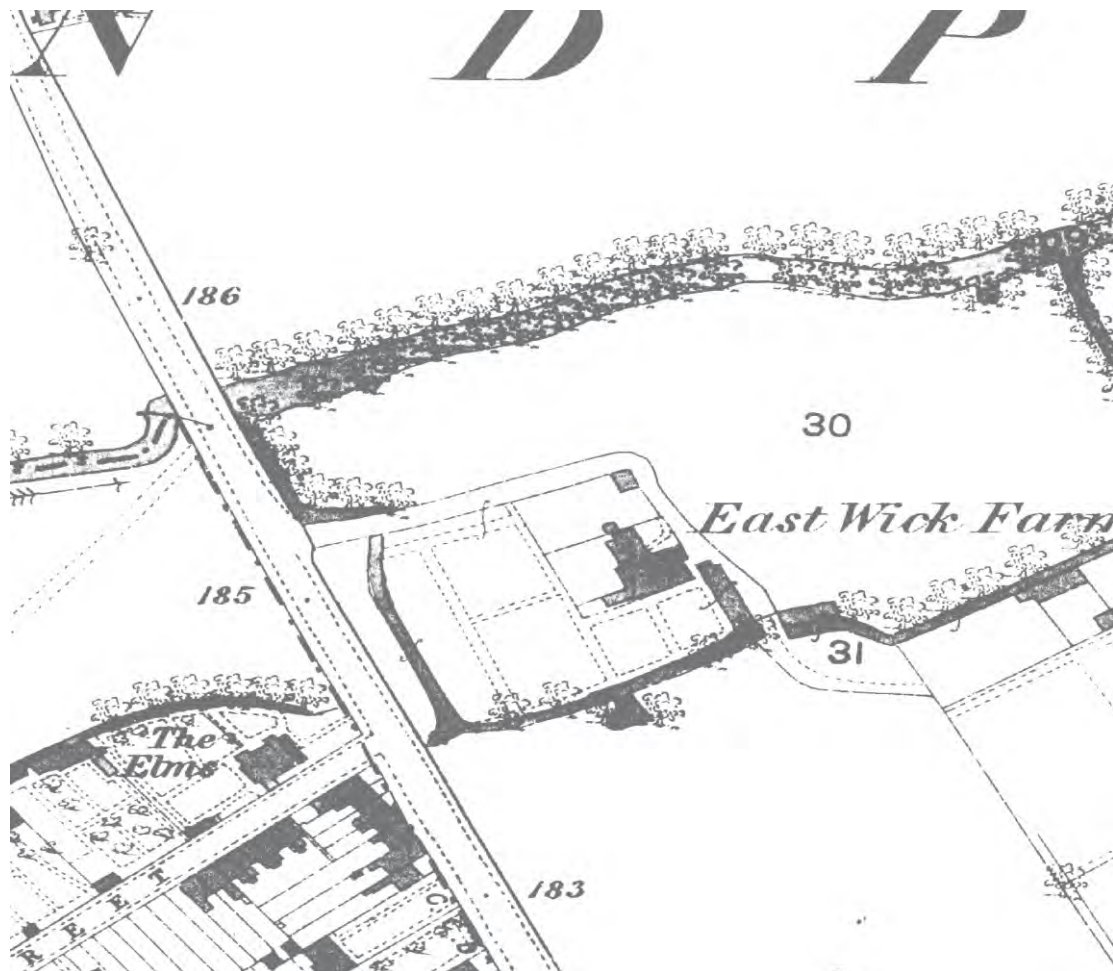


Figure 8. First Edition OS map 1879

6.3 The Nature of the Defences

The historic map evidence does not support de Gomme's star shaped redoubt surrounding the farm and this is corroborated by the field survey. Historic evidence would suggest that the site was a medieval farm and possibly moated or surrounded by drainage ditches. Harrington (2004) points to examples of medieval defensive structures being employed unaltered.

Star shaped structures are the classic image of defensive structure of this period and numerous examples survive to this day, however this style was not always employed

and variations occurred due to many circumstances; terrain, purpose or individual engineer's whim.

While the Queen's Sconce at Newark-on-Trent, Nottinghamshire (Fig. 3) is a classic example of such defensive earthworks, those constructed at Stoke Lodge also at Newark were relatively simple. It was roughly square in plan was 50m across with only two corner bastions (Harrington 2003). The battery at Conbury Park, Oxfordshire (Fig. 9) was a simple rectangular bank and ditch c. 45m across with no bastion positions (ibid.).

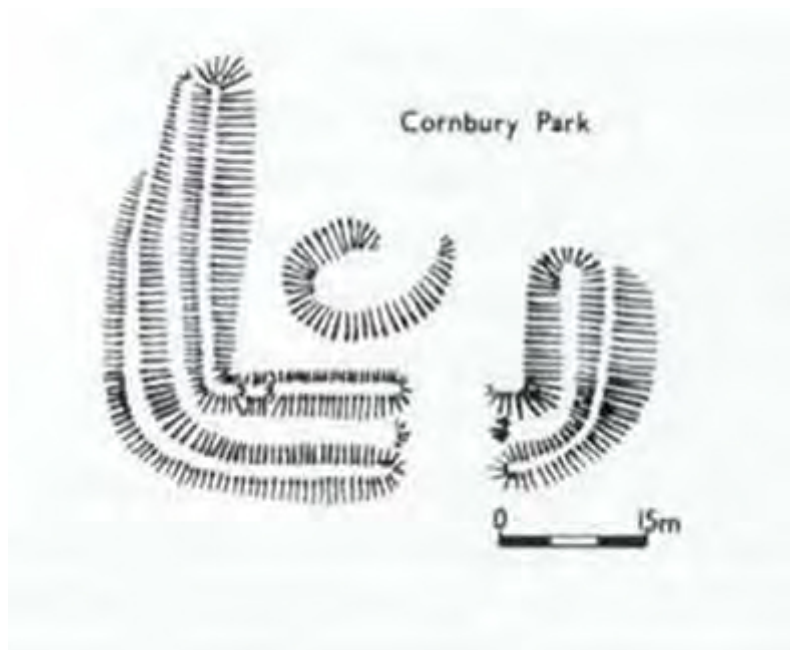


Figure 9. The Battery, Conbury Park

The evidence is compelling enough to consider de Gomme's stylised representation of the Eastwyke outworks as more indicative of defences than actual reality.

The farm itself was situated in front of the main "Eastwyke Ditch" and defended the causewayed crossing point. The ditches surrounding the farmhouse would likely have been rectangular with few if any bastions or demi-bastions.

If banks were present they would likely have been low, but could have been strengthened by palisades, "saucigdes", turnpikes, storm-poles or gabions.

Hedges would also have provided excellent defensive positions and it is possible that the westside of the road was guarded by troops taking position along the borders of field 17 seen on the map of 1815 (Fig. 5). These hedges may also have benefited from temporary or moveable structures such as turnpikes. Perhaps the higher ground in the south-western corner even accommodated an ordnance piece.

Preventing access to Oxford along the causeway was likely to be the primary concern. The maps of 1815, 1847 (Fig. 7) and especially the OS map of 1879 (Fig. 8) indicate a

spur in the ditch at the corner, closest to Abingdon Road. This would prevent access along the side of the road, which at the time of the Civil War was a causeway, so it would aid as a blocking feature, certainly it appears to have no agricultural or drainage function.

Roadblocks were common defence structures in the Civil War (Harrington 2003), the spur would certainly have decreased the width of any roadblock required across the road.

The position at the corner of two ditches is unlikely to be a coincidence and is reminiscent of a ditch for a bastion. Clearly alteration to the work would have taken place and the firing platform removed if this was the case. An ordnance piece in this position would tactically make sense to command the road, and a single gun would not be too demanding on the limited supply within Oxford.

Apart from the roadway the southern ditches presented an unbroken defensive line to attackers, the entrance to the farm was to the north facing the city. Morriss (2005) notes, that apart from the building itself, the only feature of importance is the northern stone boundary wall. Unfortunately he gives no other details about this wall. It is built of well-coursed oolitic limestone rubble, similar to the farmhouse, although obviously repaired at times with the upper courses perhaps replaced. At present it stands above head height c. 1.9m. The outbuildings are all noticeably later butting against this wall.

The construction of the wall would appear to post-date the ditch as its western end turns slightly to the south to accommodate the curve of the ditch. The land to the north of the wall, beyond the modern pathway, noticeably slopes down away from the farm, although at present is overgrown and difficult to assess.

The eastern end of the wall turns at right angles to the south back towards the farmhouse, however at this point it is very close to the building, perhaps too close to form an effective defensive obstacle. The farmhouse itself would be within hand-grenade range at this point.

In 1815 the entrance off of Abingdon Road was to the north of the farmhouse. This track followed the line of the boundary wall through field 10 and turned to the south at the entrance to field 11, this entrance was constricted by a north-south aligned ditch separating the two fields (Fig. 5). If fortified the line of this ditch would provide excellent defence to protect the entrance.

With the fields flooded in front of the farmhouse and possible pitfalls concealed by this it would have provided quite a formidable position.

6.4 Impact of the Proposal on existing features

The proposal consists of several different extensions in various positions. The proposed extensions within the northeast area of the proposal site are likely to have a minimal impact, due to the northeast area having been developed. Also, the addition to the main entrance and the northwest corner of the building would have a limited impact as those areas have also already been developed.

As the car park within the northeast area is currently covered in tarmac, this would have to be removed in order to allow for the proposed pathways. This is likely to have an impact, as the groundworks would include digging to a specific depth, during which there is a possibility that deeper cut features could be revealed.

The proposed extension on the southwest corner of the building would have a more significant impact as the southeast part of the proposed building overlays earthworks. The earthworks within this area consist of a series of ridge and furrows that date from at least the medieval period. The ridge and furrows that are within the proposal site are a continuation of more defined ridge and furrows that are within the fields to the east of the proposal site. The plans also show an additional parking area on the northwest side of the proposed building, within an area that does not show any earthworks, therefore having a negligible impact.

In order for the proposed plans to be carried out the area containing the ridge and furrows would have to be levelled, resulting in an impact on the archaeology. However, the extent of the impact would be limited due to the ridge and furrows within the adjacent fields.

6.5 Visual Impact of the Proposal on existing features

As previously stated, the proposal site is within the vicinity of Oxford City Centre and could therefore, have an impact on the visual aspect of several designated structures. There are additional designated areas within the vicinity of the proposal site that could also be impacted upon by any development. However, the proposed extensions to the building will have a negligible impact as their locations means that they will not be visible from outside of the proposal site. Also, there are trees and additional building surrounding the proposal site which would greatly limit any visual impact.

7 CONCLUSION

The evidence does not support de Gomme's star shaped redoubt surrounding the farm. It is highly likely that the site was a medieval farm possibly originating in the late Saxon period and that it was surrounded by ditches. It was these ditches that were re-used during the Civil War to defend the Grandpont Causeway as it crossed the Eastwyke Ditch.

Grandpont causeway is a scheduled monument and therefore of national significance. The defences of Oxford, the King's capital during the wars, are also considered to be of national significance. In this context any archaeological remains present on the site have the potential to also be of national significance.

However the placement of the proposed extensions would likely be away from potential Civil War defences.

Although the proposed extension will have a limited or no impact on the civil war defences, there would be an impact on the earthworks within the south west area of the proposal site. The impact would consist of the levelling of a small part of the ridge and furrows. However, the extent of the impact is reduced due to the existing ridge

and furrows within the adjacent fields. Also there is a possibility of disturbing deeper features within the northeast car park.

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8.2 Historic Maps

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