

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION FOR
CHILDRENS RESIDENTIAL PATHWAY,
CHINNOR ROAD, THAME, OXFORDSHIRE**

SU 4855 9572

*On behalf of
Carillion Building*

JUNE 2014

REPORT FOR	Carillion Building
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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological evaluation on land off the western side of Chinnor Road on the south eastern side of Thame. The excavation only recovered two fragments of post-medieval pottery, five fragments of tile, including one fragment of peg tile, two undiagnostic brick fragments and two fragments of land drain. All finds were retrieved from the subsoil and despite the nearby presence of Roman and Prehistoric archaeology, within 400m of the area of the site location, no other finds and features were identified.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development area is located on the south eastern edge of Thame, to the south of Wenman Road on the western side of Chinnor Road (SP71980474). The site is currently in agricultural use and it lies at approximately 76m OD. The geology is Gault clay.

1.2 Planning Background

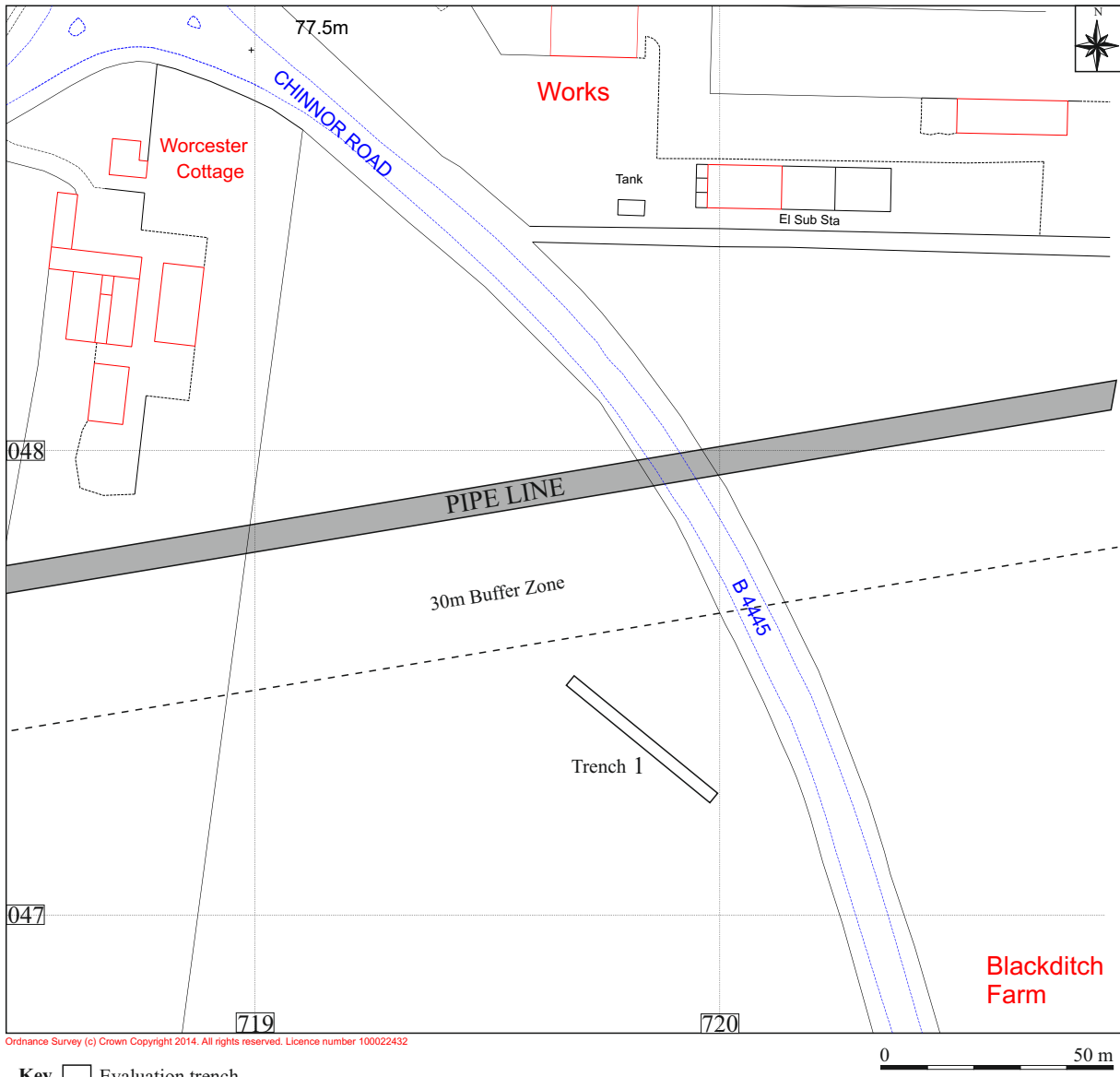
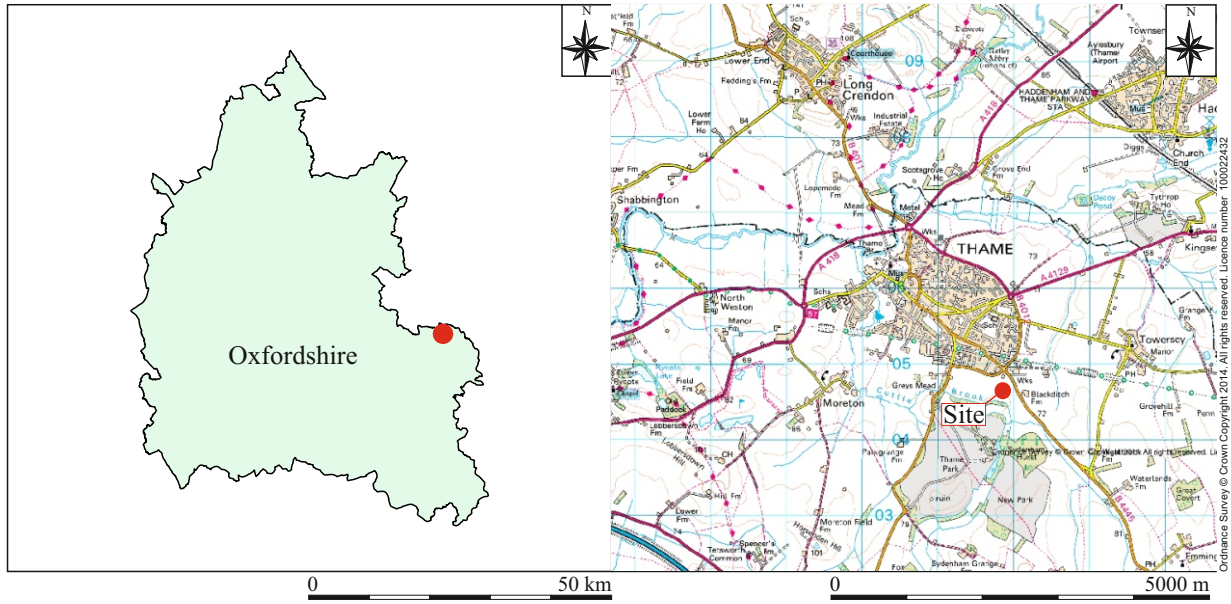
Planning permission is to be sought for the construction of a children's residential centre. Due to the potential disturbance of below ground archaeological features the results of an archaeological field evaluation will need to be submitted along with any planning application for the site.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The site is located in an area of archaeological potential 130m south west of a Roman burial site. Two undated burials were recorded during construction work in the 1970s (County Historic Environment Record PRN 988) 130m south west of this proposal site and two further skulls were recovered, along with a Roman coin in the late 1960s during the excavation of postholes (PRN 987) in the same area. In addition a spread of Roman pottery was recorded to the north of these burials, 300m north east of this proposal during construction work (PRN 985) along with a small spread of prehistoric pottery (PRN 986). Several pits and ditches were encountered by workmen digging a service trench by the railway line 330m to the north east of the development area (PRN 11213). An Iron Age or Roman enclosure has also been identified from aerial photographs approximately to the north of the site (PRN 16085). Therefore it was considered possible that further archaeological features and deposits, including human remains, from the Prehistoric and Roman periods could survive on the proposal site.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

- To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the site.
- To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.



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Key Evaluation trench

Figure 1: Site location

- To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of the archaeological features and deposits.
- In particular to establish if features related to the nearby Prehistoric and Roman activity are present in this area.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

In accordance with the *Design Brief* issued by Oxfordshire Historic and Natural Environment Team (2014) and a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) by JMHS (2014), John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work, which comprised a scheme for the mechanical excavation of one trial trench across the site. Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in the WSI.

3.2 Methodology

The field evaluation was by the mechanical excavation of a single trench, 40m long and 1.5m wide, by a 5 tonne excavator fitted with a ditching bucket. Mechanical excavation was taken down to the geological horizon under direct archaeological supervision. During the trial trenching sufficient features were to be sampled by hand excavation although none were found. All deposits were recorded by written, drawn and photographic record and were assigned individual context numbers. All artefacts were collected and retained, to be analysed by specialists.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Trench 1 (Figure 1)

The area of excavation was within an area of prominent former ridge and furrow agricultural. The conditions were wet and the water table was approximately 0.8m from the ground surface. The lowest layer was a natural light brown clay with flint pebbles (1/03). Along the course of the trench there were several grey clay bands which on examination were found to be natural and were probably created by hydromorphic processes. It is probable that water resting for long periods in the furrows created gleyed bands within the natural subsoil.

Lying above the natural clay was a 0.22m thick light grey brown sandy clay with flint pebbles and a moderate amount of brick and ceramic tile and two fragments of pottery (1/02). This was a former ploughsoil.

Above (1/02) the modern ploughsoil (1/01) was a dark grey brown humic loam with a notable lack of inclusions.

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery (*By David Gilbert*)

The pottery assemblage comprised 2 sherds with a total weight of 55g recovered from context (1/02). This was recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984), as follows:

REW: Red Earthenware, 1550+ 2 sherds, 55g

Both sherds were abraded from deposition within a ploughsoil. This material was not retained after identification.

5.2 Brick and Tile (*By Gavin Davis*)

There were five fragments of tile recovered from the subsoil (1/02) with a combined weight of 272g. There were possibly three fabric types and one fragment had the partial remains of a peg hole on one edge. There were also two undiagnostic brick fragments weighing 215g and two fragments of drainage pipe that weighed 172g, all from (1/02). None of the brick and tile could be positively dated to before the post-medieval period. None of the brick or tile was considered worthy of retention

6 DISCUSSION

Despite the substantial discovery of Roman and Prehistoric archaeology within 400m of site location none of the material recovered from the evaluation could be positively dated to earlier than the post-medieval period. All the material was residual within the former ploughsoil and none of the material was associated with any archaeological features. No other finds or features were present.

7 ARCHIVE

Archive Contents

The archive consists of the following:

Paper record

Written scheme of investigation

The project report

The primary site records

The archive is currently maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to Oxfordshire Museum Service.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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

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