

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

AT

LAND SOUTH OF THE STREET

CROWMARSH GIFFORD, OXFORDSHIRE

NGR SU 6116 8940

On behalf of

Monson Engineering Ltd

JULY 2015

REPORT FOR Monson Engineering Ltd
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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological field evaluation at land south of The Street in Crowmarsh Gifford, Oxfordshire. Four machine-dug trenches with a total length of approximately 80m were excavated across the proposed access road north of The Street and the floodplain compensation area south of The Street (Fig. 1). The aims of investigation were to establish if features related to the defensive bridgehead of Wallingford Bridge or the Siege Castle were present within the proposed development area. Trench 1 was located in Riverside Park and showed a series of levelling deposits containing rubble formed of 19th/early 20th century building material. Based on available historic maps the levelling of this area took place in 1960s. Pre-1968 Ordnance Survey maps shows a river channel in the area where Trench 1 was located, which is thought to be the remains of the Saxon and Medieval defensive bridgehead for the town. However, no clear profile of a possible defensive ditch or any finds dated to medieval period were recorded during the field evaluation. Trenches 2, 3 and 4 located south of The Street were blank from an archaeological point of view.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site is located both on the north and south side of The Street, immediately east of Wallingford Bridge in Crowmarsh Gifford, Oxfordshire (SU 6116 8940 centred). Topographically the site is reasonably level and lies at an approximate height of 45m above OD. The bedrock geology is shown as Upper Greensand Formation – Siltstone and Sandstone, and superficial deposits are described as Alluvium - clay, silt, sand and gravel (GBV). The site is currently partly recreational and partly floodplian.

1.2 Planning Background

Planning permission has been sought from South Oxfordshire District Council for the construction of a new access road and associated floodplain compensation area (P15/S1272/FUL).

Due to the potential presence of below ground archaeological features, the Oxfordshire Historic and Natural Environment Team (OHaNET), on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, required a pre-determination archaeological field evaluation as part of the determination of the planning application. OHaNET prepared a *Design Brief for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (OHaNET 2015).

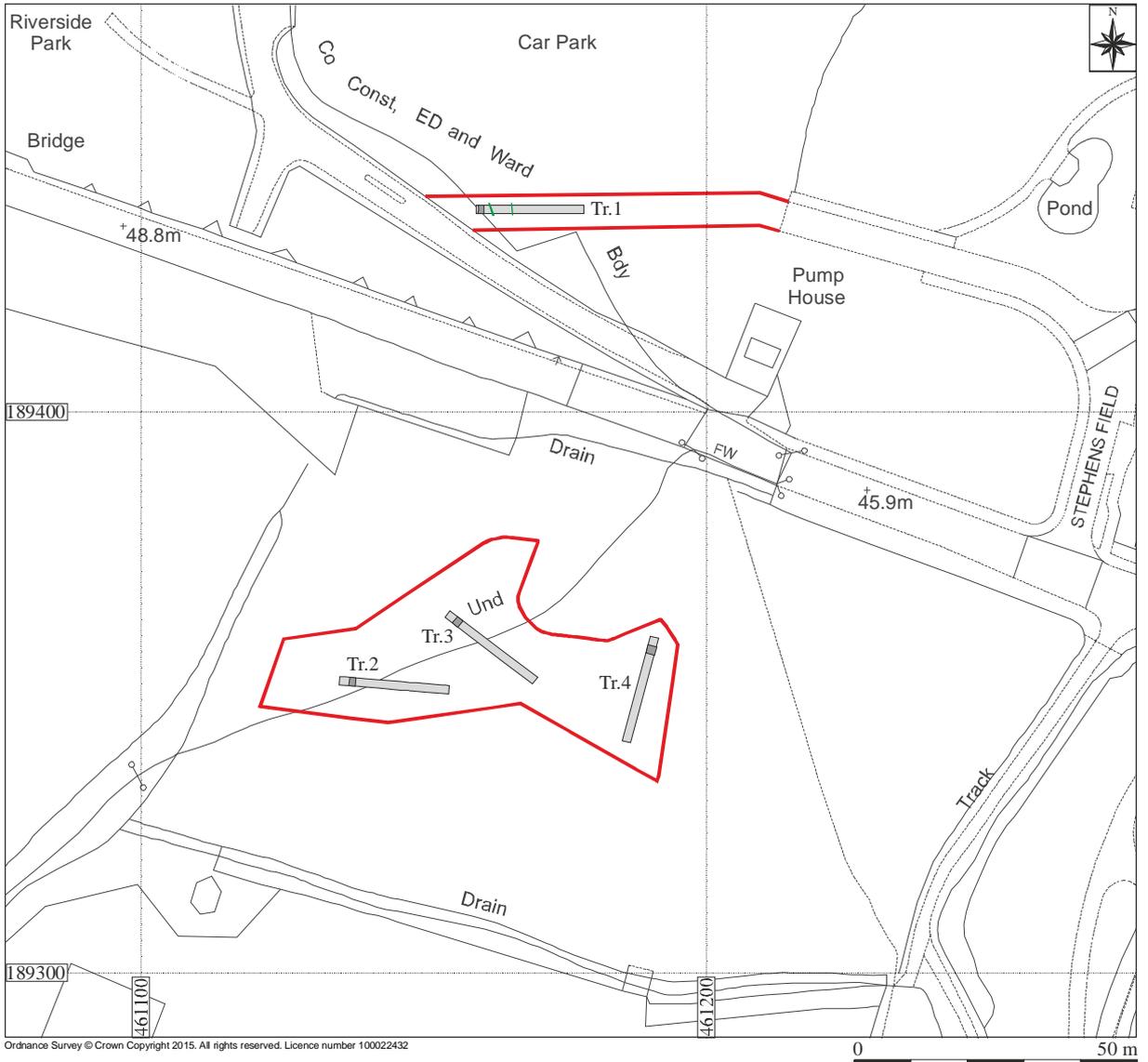
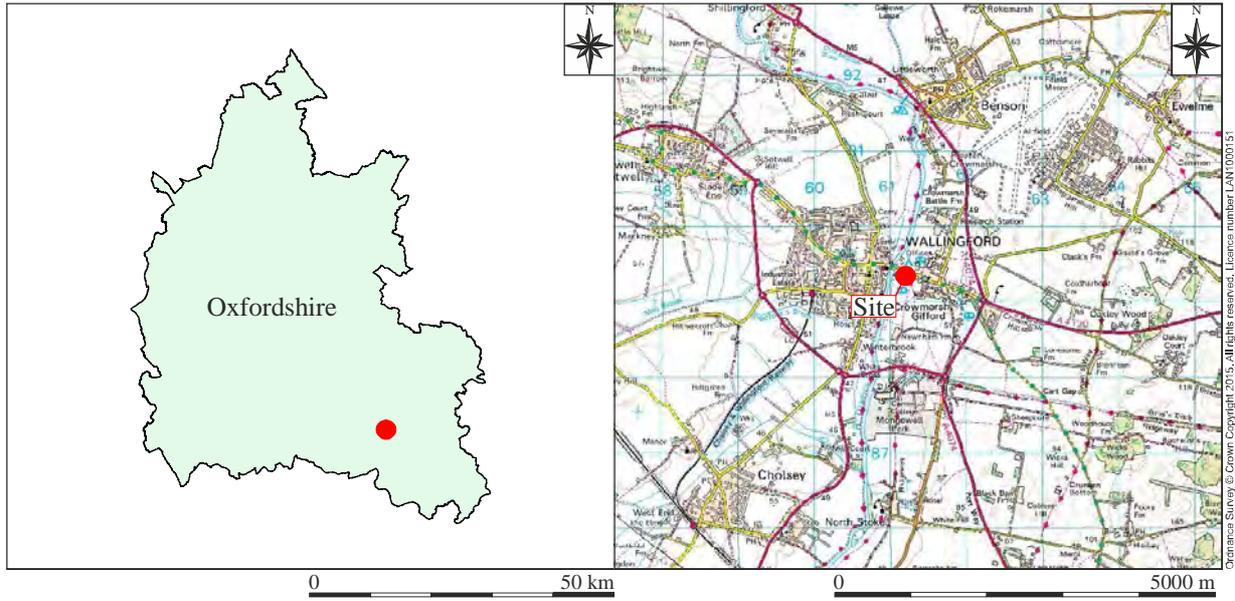
John Moore Heritage Services (JMHS) was commissioned to undertake this work, and a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (JMHS 2015) was prepared to satisfy the requirements of the *Design Brief*. This *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) proposed the methodology by which the archaeological field evaluation was to be carried out.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The site concerned lies within an area of considerable archaeological interest located on the eastern bank of the River Thames opposite the Saxon and Medieval town of Wallingford. Both the proposed floodplain compensation scheme and proposed new access road is located across the line of the Parish boundary between Wallingford and Crowmarsh, which is thought to be the remains of the Saxon and Medieval defensive bridgehead for the town, mentioned in a 10th century document, the 'Burghal Hidage'.

A series of earthworks exist within the area and have been recorded as part of the Burgh to Borough research project which may relate to the Late Saxon and Medieval use of the area or may be associated with the site of a Siege Castle, thought to have been built by Stephen during the anarchy period of the 12th century. Part of the defensive ditch of this siege castle were encountered during a development 100m east of the proposed new road.

The flood compensation site is also located 50m south of the Scheduled Ancient Monument of the 14th century Bridge (SM235) and the proposed new road is located 30m to the north of this bridge. Recent work on this bridge has revealed that sections of it may date from the 12th century. It was considered that this application, although



Key Site boundary Evaluation trench Sondage Modern service

Figure 1: Site location

of a small scale nature, could encounter significant archaeological deposits (JMHS 2015, OHaNET 2015, 1-2).

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the WSI were:

- 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.
- To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of the archaeological features and deposits.

In particular:

- To establish if features related to the defensive bridgehead of Wallingford Bridge or the Siege Castle are present.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

JMHS carried out the archaeological field evaluation in accordance with the WSI (JMHS 2015). Fieldwork comprised a scheme for the mechanical excavation of four trial trenches across the site. Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in the WSI (Sections 3.1 – 3.21).

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014) and the principles of MoRPHE (Historic England 2015).

3.2 Methodology

A five tonne excavator fitted with a toothless 1.5m wide ditching bucket was used to excavate the four trenches each approximately 20m long. One trench targeted the area of the proposed access road and three trenches were placed across the proposed floodplain compensation area. In order to obtain more data, four sondages of average length 1.15m were excavated within each individual trench. Due to health and safety issues, the sondages were recorded and backfilled shortly afterwards. After recording of sondages, the rest of the trenches were reduced of topsoil and upper alluvial deposit, apart of Trench 1, where the majority of the trench was reduced down to natural clay, except for an area of hardcore deposit and modern services.

All deposits were cleaned by hand and recorded at an appropriate level. They had written, drawn and photographic records made of them, and all deposits were assigned

individual context numbers. Representative sample of artefacts were taken, analysed and not retained.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Field Results

All features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers with no brackets indicate feature cuts, numbers in round brackets () show feature fills or deposits of material and numbers in bold indicate any form of masonry.

4.1.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 was 19m long and 1.5m, and aligned east to west. It was placed across the area of proposed access road north of The Street. The sondage was 1.04m long and excavated immediately next to the west end of the trench (Fig. 1; Pl. 1a, b; Appendix 1). The water table level was reached in the sondage at 1.30m (42.35m AOD) below existing ground level.



Plate 1: Trench 1 (looking west) and section 1.2 (looking south)

The lowest deposit encountered in Trench 1 was a light greyish brown sandy gravel (1/04), 1.42m below present ground level (42.19m AOD) partially exposed in the sondage (Fig. 2: S. 1.2, Pl. 1b). Deposit (1/04) was overlaid by mid blue-grey clay with occasional small well-rounded stones (1/03), visible along the entire trench (Fig. 2 Tr. 1; Pl. 1a). The following deposit of mid yellowish brown silty clay (1/02) was recorded in the west end of the trench. The stratigraphic relationship between deposit (1/02) and the rest of the deposits recorded to the east was affected by the gap created by hardcore deposit (1/05) and modern services. In the continuation of the trench deposit (1/03) was overlaid by light yellowish brown-grey sandy clay with occasional small to medium size sub-angular sandstone (1/14) (Fig. 2: Tr. 1, S. 1.1; Pl. 1a & 2). Deposit (1/14) a light yellowish brown-grey sandy clay with occasional small to medium size sub-angular sandstone was overlain by light grey clay with occasional small fragments of chalk (1/09).

The above described deposits represent a series of alluvial deposits. The following deposits recorded within Trench 1 were of anthropogenic origins and were interpreted as levelling layers. (Fig. 2: S. 1.1; Pl. 2; Appendix 1).

The lowest levelling layer (1/08) was a light grey clay with occasional fragments of non-diagnostic ceramic building material (CBM). It was overlaid by homogeneous mid grey clay (1/07) that seems to be contemporary with a deposit of mid orange brown silty sandy gravel containing moderate ironstone and high percentage of small non-diagnostic fragments of CBM (1/13). Deposit (1/07) was overlaid by mid yellowish brown silty sand (1/06). More significant of the levelling layers was layer (1/05) a mid grey sandy silt containing a high percentage of 20th material - bricks, roof tiles, concrete, roughly worked stone and glass (see 5.1). The west end of this deposit was very compact and it was not possible to excavate it. At the east end of the trench layer (1/05) was truncated by three successive deposits (1/12), (1/11) and (1/10) (for more details see Appendix 1). Although in the section these deposits seemingly represent fills of a cut feature, they were interpreted as levelling layer which filled a depression related to the levelling process, rather than a cut feature. No archaeological features or finds of significance were present within Trench 1.



Plate 2: Sections 1.1 (looking northeast)

4.1.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 was 19.40m long and 1.5m wide. It was placed across the parish boundary at southwest part of proposed floodplain compensation area, and aligned approximately east to west. The sondage, 1.12m long, was excavated 1.20m from the west end of the trench (Fig. 1; Pl. 3a; Appendix 1).

The lowest deposit within Trench 2 was mid orange brown sandy gravel (2/04) encountered 1.16m (42.59m AOD) below present ground level. Deposit (2/04) was covered by alluvial deposit (2/03), a mid orange grey silty clay. The following deposit (2/02) represents mid yellowish grey clayey silt with occasional small well-rounded stones also interpreted as an alluvial deposit. The entire trench was sealed with dark brownish grey sandy loam (2/01), topsoil (Fig. 2: S. 2.1; Pl. 3b; Appendix 1). No archaeological features were present within Trench 2.

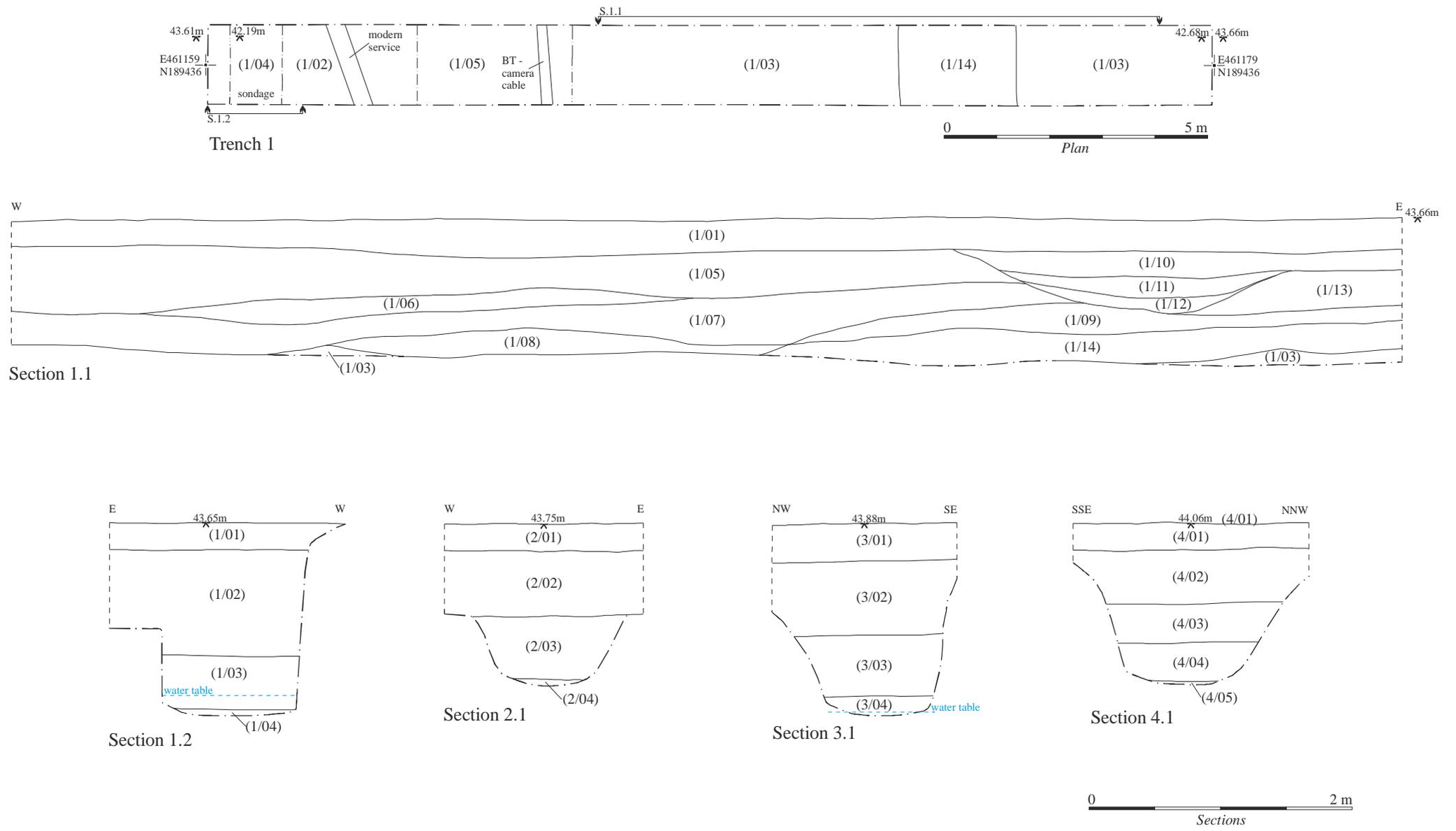


Figure 2: Plan and sections of Trench 1, and representative sections of Trenches 2, 3 and 4



Plate 3: Trench 2 (looking east) and section 2.1 (looking north)

4.1.3 Trench 3

Trench 3 was 19.5m long and 1.5m, placed across the parish boundary, approximately in the middle of the proposed floodplain compensation area. It was oriented northwest to southeast. The sondage was located close to northwest end of the trench. It was 1.12m long and excavated down to the water table (Fig. 1 & 2: S. 3.1; Pl. 4a, b; Appendix 1).

In Trench 3 the same stratigraphic sequence was in Trench 2. The lowest deposit was sandy gravel (3/04), 1.28m (42.60m AOD) below present ground level. It was overlaid by two successive alluvial deposits (3/03) and (3/02). The uppermost deposit (3/01) represents topsoil (Fig. 2: S. 3.1; Pl. 4b; Appendix 1). No archaeological features were present within Trench 3.



Plate 4: Trench 3 (looking southeast) and section 3.1 (looking northeast)

4.1.4 Trench 4

Trench 4 was 19.20m long and 1.5m, aligned north-northeast to south-southwest. It was located at the east end of the proposed floodplain compensation area. The sondage, 1.32m long, was excavated at the north-northeast end of the trench (Fig. 1; Pl. 5a, b; Appendix 1).

In Trench 4 the stratigraphic sequence was slightly different from that in Trenches 2 and 3. The lowest deposit was mid orange sandy gravel (4/05), 1.18m (42.88m AOD) below present ground level. It was overlaid by three successive alluvial deposits; mid orange grey clay (4/04), mid brownish grey silty clay (4/03), and deposit (4/02) a light grey clayey silt. Those deposits were covered by the final deposit representing topsoil (4/01). (Fig. 2: S. 4.1; Pl. 5b; Appendix 1). No archaeological features were present within Trench 4.



Plate 5: Trench 4 (looking south) and section 4.1 (looking west)

4.2 Reliability of Results

The reliability of results is considered to be good. The archaeological field evaluation took place in very good weather conditions with excellent light and visibility.

5 FINDS

5.1 General finds

All finds recovered during the archaeological field evaluation were obtained from levelling layers recorded within Trench 1. The finds were highly likely related to an uncertain 19th/early 20th century building demolished in Wallingford or Crowmarsh Gifford in mid 20th century and had a residual character. Brick and tile (CBM) recovered from deposits (1/08), (1/11) and (1/13) are non-diagnostic fragments. The

rest of the CBM from deposit (1/05) represent common types of bricks and roof tiles generally dated to 19th/20th century. Apart from the CBM, deposit (1/05) contained fragments of concrete and roughly worked stones, as well as fragments of table/window glass and glass bottles. The best preserved fragment represents a codd-neck bottle with description 'The Wallingford Brewery TD, trade mark' dated to the late 19th/early 20th century. None of the finds were retained.

5.2 Palaeo-environmental Remains

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

6 DISCUSSION

The archaeological field evaluation was successful and meets the aims of the investigations, which were laid out in the WSI.

Trench 1 located north of The Street shows a series of levelling deposits containing rubble formed of 19th/early 20th century building material. Based on on-line available historic maps of Wallingford (NLS, OM), it is clear that the levelling of this area took place in 1960s. Ordnance Survey maps dated from 1878 to 1960 show a river channel in the area where Trench 1 was located, and the 1968 Ordnance Survey map 1: 2500 shows the current layout of access road and recreation area. Although it is thought that a medieval defensive bridgehead was present in the area of Trench 1, no clear profile of a possible defensive ditch or any finds dated to the medieval period were recorded during the field evaluation. This bridgehead may lie further east away from the river channel that existed here or lay between the channel and the river.

Trenches 2, 3 and 4 located south of The Street were blank from an archaeological point of view.

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Appendix 1: Trench Context Inventory

ID	Type	Description	Depth	Length	Width	Finds	Interpretation	Date
Trench 1 N end coordinates E460360, N187909, levels top 46.40m AOD, bottom 45.24m AOD S end coordinates E460353, N187882, levels top 46.40m AOD, bottom 45.79m AOD								
1/01	Deposit	Dark brownish grey silty loam with occasional small well-rounded stones	0.20m	19m	1.50m	-	Topsoil	Modern
1/02	Deposit	Mid yellowish brown silty clay	0.80m	4m (as exca)	1.50m	-	Alluvium (superficial deposit)	n/a
1/03	Deposit	Mid blue-grey clay with occasional small well-rounded stones	0.45m	19m	1.50m	-	Alluvium (superficial deposit)	n/a
1/04	Deposit	Light greyish brown sandy gravel	0.04m (as exca)	1.02m	1.50m	-	Alluvium (superficial deposit)	n/a
1/05	Deposit	Mid grey sandy silt with frequent building demolition rubble	0.50m	10.80m	1.50m	Brick, roof tile, concrete, roughly worked stones, glass	Levelling layer	20 th century
1/06	Deposit	Mid yellowish brown silty sand	0.19m	3.95m	1.50m	-	Levelling layer	20 th century (?)
1/07	Deposit	Mid grey clay	0.45m	8m	1.50m	-	Levelling layer	20 th century (?)
1/08	Deposit	Light grey clay with occasional fragments of CBM	0.20m	3.45m	1.50m	CBM	Levelling layer	20 th century (?)
1/09	Deposit	Light grey clay with occasional small fragments of chalk	0.23m	4.70m	1.50m	-	Alluvium (superficial deposit)	n/a
1/10	Deposit	Dark grey sandy silt with occasional small well-rounded stones	0.20m	3.35m	1.50m	-	Levelling layer	20 th century
1/11	Deposit	Light yellowish grey lime sand with occasional fragments of mortar and non-diagnostic CBM	0.15m	2.10m	1.50m	CBM	Levelling layer	20 th century
1/12	Deposit	Mid grey silty clay	0.12m	1.85m	1.50m	-	Levelling layer	20 th century
1/13	Deposit	Mid orange brown silty sandy gravel contains moderate ironstone and high percentage of small fragments of CBM	0.30m	1.70m	1.50m	CBM	Levelling layer	20 th century
1/14	Deposit	Light yellowish brown-grey sandy clay with occasional small to medium size sub-angular sandstone	0.30m (as exca)	4.90m	1.50m	-	Alluvium (superficial deposit)	n/a
Trench 2 E end coordinates E461154, N189350, levels top 43.89m AOD, bottom 43.20m AOD W end coordinates E461134, N189352, levels top 43.71m AOD, bottom 43.09m AOD								
2/01	Deposit	Dark brownish grey silty loam	0.22m	19.40m	1.50m	-	Topsoil	modern
2/02	Deposit	Mid yellowish grey clayey silt with occasional small well-rounded stones	0.60m	19.40m	1.50m	-	Alluvium (superficial deposit)	n/a
2/03	Deposit	Mid orange grey silty clay	0.40m	19.40m	1.50m	-	Alluvium (superficial deposit)	n/a
2/04	Deposit	Mid orange brown sandy gravel	0.08m (as exca)	0.56m (as exca)	1.50m	-	Alluvium (superficial deposit)	n/a

Trench 3 NW end coordinates E461154, N189364, levels top 43.79 m AOD, bottom 43.23m AOD SE end coordinates E461169, N189352, levels top 43.92m AOD, bottom 43.21m AOD								
3/01	Deposit	Dark brownish grey silty loam	0.28m	19.50m	1.50m	-	Topsoil	modern
3/02	Deposit	Mid yellowish grey clayey silt with moderate small well rounded stones	0.55m	19.50m	1.50m	-	Alluvium (superficial deposit)	n/a
3/03	Deposit	Mid orange grey silty clay with occasional well-rounded stones	0.45m	19.50m	1.50m	-	Alluvium (superficial deposit)	n/a
3/04	Deposit	Mid orange brown sandy gravel	0.12m (as exca)	0.84m (as exca)	1.50m	-	Alluvium (superficial deposit)	n/a
Trench 4 NNE end coordinates E461191, N189360, levels top 44.07m AOD, bottom 43.71m AOD SSW end coordinates E461185, N189341, levels top 43.95m AOD, bottom 43.43m AOD								
4/01	Deposit	Dark brownish grey silty loam	0.10- 0.15m	19.20m	1.50m	-	Topsoil	modern
4/02	Deposit	Light grey clayey silt	0.35m	19.20m	1.50m	-	Alluvium (superficial deposit)	n/a
4/03	Deposit	Mid brownish grey silty clay	0.32m	19.20m	1.50m	-	Alluvium (superficial deposit)	n/a
4/04	Deposit	Mid orange grey clay	0.26m	1.34m (as exca)	1.50m	-	Alluvium (superficial deposit)	n/a
4/05	Deposit	Mid orange brown sandy gravel	0.05m (as exca)	0.50m (as exca)	1.50m	-	Alluvium (superficial deposit)	n/a