



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

AT

LAND TO REAR OF 115 BANBURY ROAD AND

STAVERTON ROAD, OXFORD

NGR SP (450870, 208220)

On behalf of

CgMs Consulting

JANUARY 2016

REPORT FOR CgMs Consulting
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SUMMARY

This document represents an investigation of the potential for archaeological remains at land to the rear of Staverton Road and at 115 Banbury Road (SP 450870, 208220). The evaluation consisted of the excavation of four trenches, three of which were devoid of any archaeological features with one trench containing two possible pits / natural features and one east – west linear ditch, all un-dated.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development site is located on land to the rear of Staverton Road and 115 Banbury Road, Oxford (SP 450870, 208220). The site at *c.*65m OD. The underlying geology consists of the Summertown-Radley Second Terrace Gravels.

1.2 Planning Background

Consideration is being given to the development of student accommodation and residential care home at this site. Due to the archaeological and historical importance of the surrounding area an archaeological evaluation was required as part of this consideration.

1.3 Archaeological Background

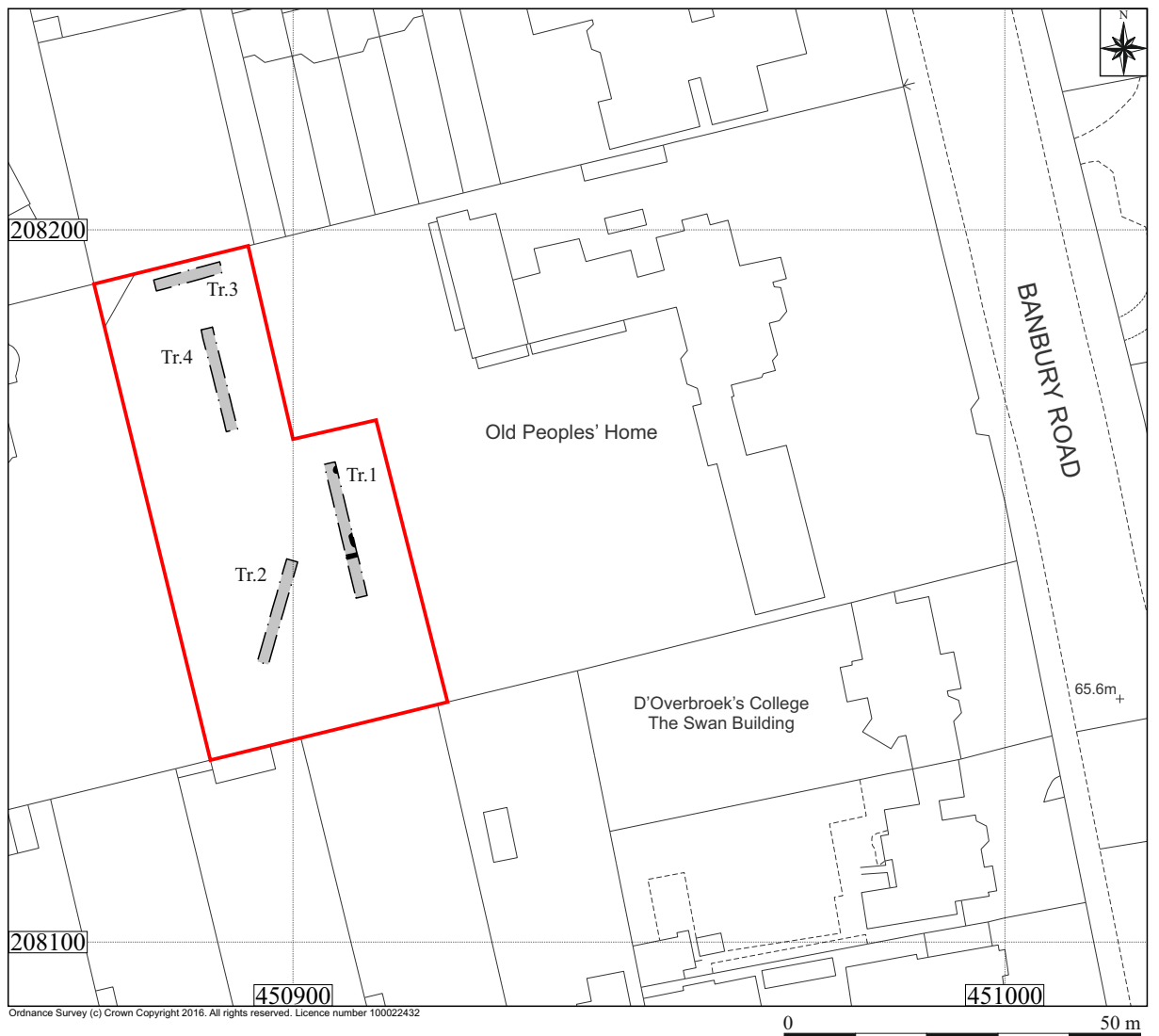
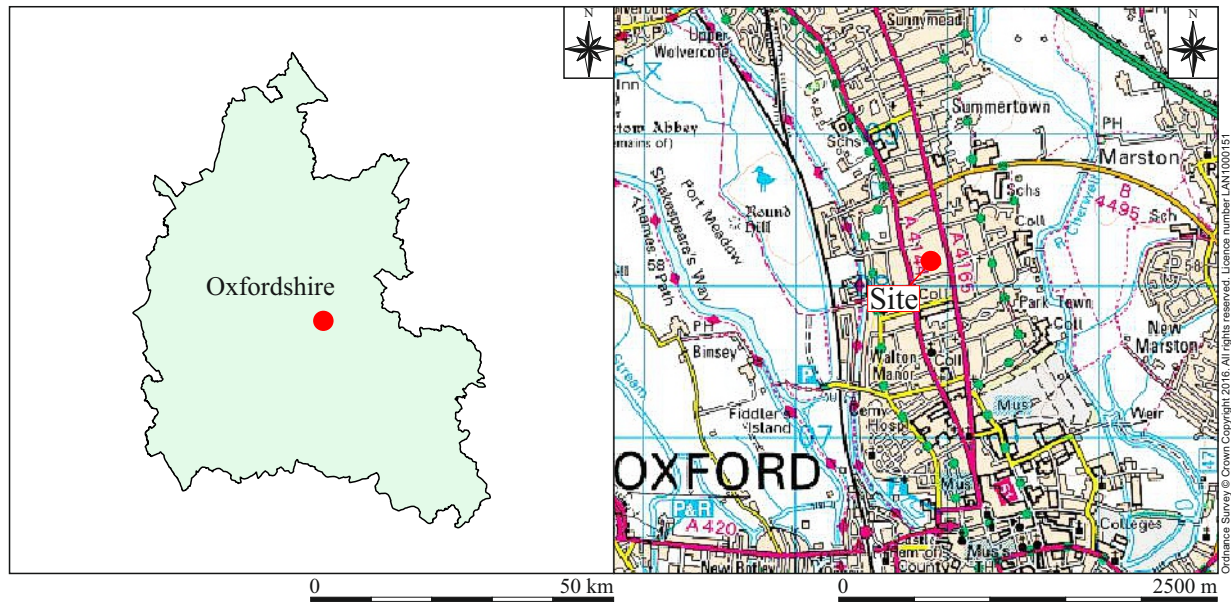
The full known archaeological background is laid out in a desk-based assessment undertaken by CgMs Consulting (2015) and will only be summarised here. No previous archaeological investigations have been undertaken within the study site.

A number of field investigations have been undertaken within the search area. Three evaluations to the north all confirmed the absence of archaeology on their respective sites. One evaluation of a site some 400m to the northeast of the study site, produced residual sherds of Medieval pottery but no *in situ* deposits. The only evaluation that did identify archaeological activity was undertaken 450m to the south of the study site and confirmed the presence of medieval agricultural soils.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

- To undertake an archaeological evaluation of the site.
- To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the site and the depth of soil deposits that overlie these remains.
- To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.
- To determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present.
- To assess the associations and implications of any remains encountered with reference to earlier landscapes.
- To determine the implications of the remains with reference to economy, status, utility and social activity.



Key Site boundary Evaluation trenches Archaeological features

Figure 1: Site location

- To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of the archaeological features and deposits. The forms in which such evidence may be present will be determined in accordance with the guidelines set out in English Heritage's *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation and Geoarchaeology: Using earth sciences to understand the archaeological record*.
- To determine the impact of the proposed development on any remains present.
- To inform the need for, and scope of, further phases of work to mitigate the impact on potential archaeological remains of the development under consideration.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with CgMs Consulting.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014).

3.2 Methodology

The evaluation involved the mechanical excavation of four trial trenches: 1 x 10m, 2 x 15m and 1 x 20m long (Fig. 1) within the proposed development footprint. The trenches all were 1.6m wide. Mechanical trenching was supplemented by limited hand investigation of any archaeological deposits. The integrity of any archaeological features or deposits was not compromised.

A 3 tonne excavator using a ditching bucket was used to excavate the trenches. Mechanical excavation was taken down to the top of "natural" deposits.

During the trial trenching sufficient features were sampled by hand excavation to achieve the objectives.

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was also produced.

4 RESULTS (Figure 2)

The four trenches were excavated through a grey brown silty clay topsoil (1/01), (2/01), (3/01) and (4/01) that ranged in thickness from 0.25m to 0.5m. Underlying this was a layer of brown grey silty clay subsoil (1/02), (2/02), (3/02) and (4/02) that was 0.25m to 0.4m in thickness. Contexts (2/02) contained one medieval iron spur and (4/02) contained one sherd of late medieval pottery.

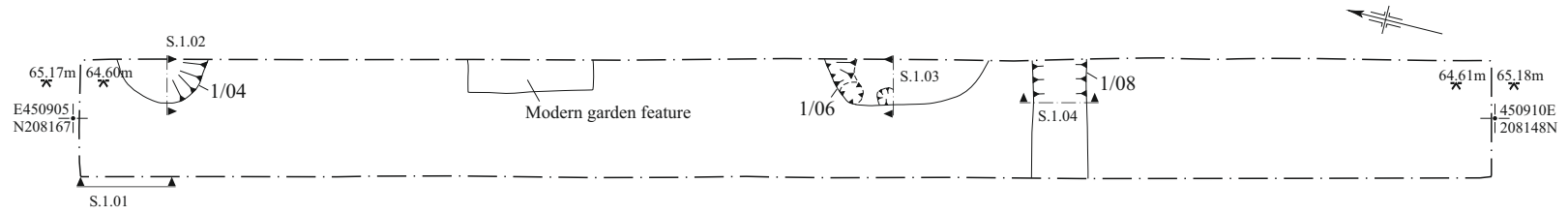
Trench 1 (Fig. 2 and Plate 1) was orientated north – south, 20m long and 1.6m wide and 0.5m deep. It contained two discrete features and one linear feature. Pit / natural feature 1/04 was sub-circular in shape, 0.6m wide, 1.2m long and 0.1m deep with shallow sloping sides and a flat base (Section 1.02). It was filled by a light grey / brown clay (1/05). Pit / natural feature 1/06 was oval in shape, 0.7m wide, 2.2m long and 0.2m deep with moderately sloping sides and an irregular undulating base (Section 1.03 and Plate 2). It was filled by a mid-brown clay (1/07) and contained no finds. Linear ditch 1/08 was orientated east – west, 0.7m wide, 1.6m long and 0.15m deep with steep sloping sides and a flat base (Section 1.04). It was filled by a mid-brown clay (1/09) that contained no finds.

Trench 2 was orientated northeast – southwest, 15m long, 1.6m wide and 0.6m deep. It was devoid of any archaeological features and some natural rooting disturbance was noted in the base of the trench.

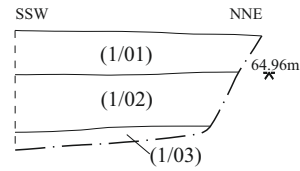
Trench 3 was orientated east – west, 10m long, 1.6m wide and 0.9m deep. It was devoid of any archaeological features while a modern field drain was noted cutting the natural in the southwestern extent of the trench.

Trench 4 was orientated north – south, 15m long, 1.6m wide and 1m deep. Underlying the subsoil (4/02) was a 0.2m thick layer of an orange / brown silty clay (4/03); a buried ploughsoil that contained no finds. The trench was devoid of any archaeological features; however two east – west linear depressions located at the northern and southern extent of the trench possibly represent furrows.

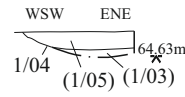
The evaluation was conducted in fine clear conditions, with good light and the reliability of the results is considered good.



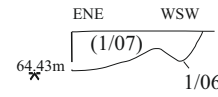
Trench 1



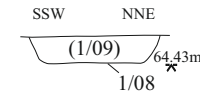
Section 1.01



Section 1.02



Section 1.03



Section 1.04



Figure 2: Trench 1 - plan and sections



Plate 1. Trench 1 looking south



Plate 2. Features 1/06 and 1/08 in trench 1

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery by *Simona Denis*

A single sherd of pottery weighing 45 gr was collected from context (4/02). The sherd is part of the foot or base of a vessel of diameter of ca. 150 mm, made of a fine, sandy pale pink fabric with light grey core and patchy light green glaze on the outer surface. It was positively identified as a fragment Brill/Boarstall Ware and dated to the late medieval period.

5.2 Prick spur by *Simona Denis*

A single cast iron prick spur weighing 49 gr was recovered from context (2/02). Although largely oxidised, the object is in good state of preservation and almost complete.

The object has curved sides with triangular cross-section measuring 90 mm in length and tapering from the back; the terminals are formed by a circular element, possibly complete with its rivet, and a single circular eye. The L-shaped neck is preserved to a maximum length of 45 mm and has a square cross-section; the goad is missing.

The general aspect of the object suggests a medieval dating.

6 DISCUSSION

Three of the trenches were devoid of any archaeological features although Trench 4 contained a possible buried medieval ploughsoil and two furrows. Trench 1 contained two un-dated possible pits / natural features and one un-dated east – west linear ditch. The discrete features are more likely to be natural in origin. The ditch is probably a field boundary from the medieval or post – medieval periods or a later plot boundary.

7 ARCHIVE

Archive Contents

The archive consists of the following:

Paper record

The project brief
Written scheme of investigation
The project report
The primary site record

Physical record

Finds

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the Oxfordshire Resource Centre under accession number OXCMS: 2016.4

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

CgMs, 2015 *Archaeological Desked Based Assessment of Land to Rear of Staverton Road and Banbury Road, Oxford*. Unpublished client report

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(<http://static1.squarespace.com/static/534be0cbe4b04a5110f67497/t/541043a9e4b0b9bdbd0b5623/1410352041786/FRG30-datasheet.pdf>)

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Context	Type	Description	Depth	Width	Length	Findings	Interpretation	Date
Trench 1								
1/01	Deposit	Grey / brown silty clay	0.25m	-	-		Topsoil	
1/02	Deposit	Brown / grey silty clay	0.25m	-	-		Subsoil	
1/03	Deposit	Orange gravels with orange clay	-	-	-		Natural	
1/04	Cut	Sub-circular feature	0.1m	0.6m	1.2m		Pit / natural feature	
1/05	Fill	Light grey / brown clay	0.1m	0.6m	1.2m		Pit / natural feature fill	
1/06	Cut	Oval feature	0.2m	0.7m	2.2m		Pit / natural feature	
1/07	Fill	Mid brown clay	0.2m	0.7m	2.2m		Pit / natural feature fill	
1/08	Cut	E – W linear	0.15m	0.7m	1.6m		Ditch	
1/09	Fill	Mid brown clay	0.15m	0.7m	1.6m		Ditch fill	
Trench 2								
2/01	Deposit	Grey / brown silty clay	0.3m	-	-	-	Topsoil	
2/02	Deposit	Brown / grey silty clay	0.3m	-	-	Fe object	Subsoil	Medieval
2/03	Deposit	Orange gravels and sand	-	-	-	-	Natural	
Trench 3								
3/01	Deposit	Grey / brown silty clay	0.5m	-	-	-	Topsoil	
3/02	Deposit	Brown / grey silty clay	0.4m	-	-	-	Subsoil	
3/03	Deposit	Yellowish brown clay mixed with bands of orange gravels	-	-	-	-	Natural	
Trench 4								
4/01	Deposit	Grey / brown silty clay	0.4m	-	-		Topsoil	
4/02	Deposit	Brown / grey silty clay	0.2m	-	-	Pottery	Subsoil	Late Medieval
4/03	Deposit	Orange / grey silty clay	0.2m	-	-		Buried ploughsoil	
4/04	Deposit	Orange / brown clay	-	-	-		Natural	
4/05	Deposit	Orange gravels and sand	-	-	-		Natural	