JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

OF

10 – 12 STEPHEN ROAD, HEADINGTON,

OXFORD

SP 5446 0718
(CENTERED)

On behalf of

Mrs. S. F. Blackett

January 2007

CONTENTS   PAGE

LIST OF FIGURES

1   INTRODUCTION

1.1   Origins of the Report

This archaeological desk-based assessment was commissioned by Riach Architects on behalf of Mrs S F Blackett in response to a proposal to develop the area of land at 10-12 Stephen Road, Headington, Oxford.

1.2   Aims and Objectives

Archaeology and Planning (PPG 16 1990) provides guidance related to archaeology within the planning process. It points out that where a desk-based assessment has shown that there is a strong possibility of significant archaeological deposits in a development area it is reasonable to provide more detailed information from a field evaluation so that an appropriate strategy to mitigate the effects of development on archaeology can be devised:

Paragraph 21 states:

'Where early discussions with local planning authorities or the developers own research indicate that important archaeological remains may exist, it is reasonable for the planning authority to request the prospective developer to arrange for an archaeological field evaluation to be carried out...'

Should the presence of archaeological deposits be confirmed, further guidance is provided. Archaeology and planning stresses preservation in situ of archaeological deposits as a first consideration as in paragraphs 8 and 18.

Paragraph 8 states:

'Where nationally important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not, and their settings, are affected by proposed development there should be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation...'

Paragraph 18 states:

'The desirability of preserving an ancient monument and its setting is a material consideration in determining planning applications whether that monument is scheduled or unscheduled...'

However, for archaeological deposits that are not of such significance it is appropriate for them to be preserved, they should be 'preserved by record' (i.e., fully excavated and recorded by a competent archaeological contractor) prior to their destruction or damage.

Paragraph 25 states:

'Where planning authorities decide that the physical preservation in situ of archaeological remains is not justified in the circumstances of the development

1

and that development resulting in the destruction of the archaeological remains should proceed, it would be entirely reasonable for the planning authority to satisfy itself... that the developer has made appropriate and satisfactory provision for the excavation and recording of remains.'

This is also in line with Local Planning Policy HE2.

Government Planning Policy Guidance, PPG 16, emphasises that early consultation regarding the results of an archaeological assessment, and a consideration of the implications of a development proposal, are the key to informed and reasonable planning decisions. An aim of this report is therefore to facilitate that process, and enable informed discussion to take place in order, if appropriate, to develop a strategy by which the impact of the development on the archaeological resource of the site can be mitigated.

In accordance with the Institute for Field Archaeologists (IFA) *Standard* definition of a Desk-based Assessment (IFA, 1994), this report seeks to identify and assess the known and potential archaeological source 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 regional and national context as appropriate.

A further objective is to define and comment on the likely impact of works (e.g. site clearance/reduction, construction, infrastructure etc.) resulting from the proposed redevelopment scheme on the surviving archaeological resource.

The IFA *Standard* states that the purpose of a desk-based assessment is so that appropriate responses can be made, 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 PPG 16, the desk-based assessment forms the first stage in the planning process as regards archaeology as a material consideration and, if the archaeological potential warrants, may lead to evaluation by fieldwork within the defined development area.

1.3   Methodology

The format of the report is adapted from an Institute of Field Archaeologist *Standard Guidance* paper (IFA, 1994).

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 Sites and Monuments Records for Oxfordshire, the Oxfordshire Records Offices and the Oxfordshire County Museums Resource Centre. The first holds details of known archaeological sites. The Records Offices contained copies of relevant early editions of Ordnance Survey maps, other cartographic sources and documentary sources. The Resource Centre holds the complete archive for archaeological work undertaken in the county. Archaeological sites within 0.5 km of the proposal site have been noted, as specified by the City Archaeologist Brian Durham.

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.

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)*

2.1   Location

The site lies about 2km to the east north east of the city centre, off the northern side of the A420 on Stephen Road, Headington (SP 5446 0718 centred). The proposal area fronts onto Stephen Road (Figure 1).

2.2   Description

At present the proposed development site is occupied by a house (no. 10) that is split into flats. It has a small garden to the rear that is paved with planted boarders. To the south of the house are two lines of garages with a tarmac area between. To the north is a small outbuilding, access way and car parking for a commercial business to the rear of number 10. The site lies between 100m and 105m OD.

2.3   Geology

The underlying geology is Beckley Sand Member characterised by sand and calcareous sandstone.

1744

Figure 1. Location Map

3   PROPOSED SCHEME OF DEVELOPMENT

The site is under consideration for residential redevelopment.

4   ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1   Cartographic Evidence

Old Headington, is thought to have origins as a Saxon royal manor. The boundaries of this large manor are unknown but they almost certainly included the proposal area. In the medieval period arable land seems to have been farmed on a three field system. The three main fields were South Field, which ran down to St. Bartholomew's and Cowley; Brockholes, west of the village, which sloped down to the Cherwell; and Quarry Field, which lay to the east and south-east of the village, towards the boundary with the forest of Shotover (figure 2, Cook & Taylor 1987, based on an earlier map).

The area is not depicted on Agas' map of 1578, Loggan's map of 1675, Taylor's map of 1750 or Hoggard's map of 1850.

During the 17th century quarries in Headington were at the height of their prosperity, with several Oxford colleges owning quarries. During the civil war Headington's topographic location made it strategically important. It commanded the eastern approaches to Oxford and was occupied by the royalists in 1643 and in 1645 became a look-out for the parliamentary party (VCH 1957). De Gomme's map of 1644 shows that Sir Thomas Fairfax's camp straddled each side of the top of Cheney Lane, then the only route to London.

The medieval three field system continued until the Enclosure Award in the early nineteenth century. This Act of Parliament (1802) enclosed the open fields of Headington parish and therefore details the major landowners in the village at the time. The enclosure map is one of the earliest of the area, shows the area as field 62 and 63 (figure 3).

There is no Tithe map available for Headington. The first edition OS map of 1876 shows the area to be open ground between Manor Road and High Street (figure 4). The only building close is a lodge to the south south-west on London Road. It marks a *Site of Palace* very close to the Manor Farm, which is north-west of the site. There is little change shown on the second edition OS map of 1899.

The OS map of 1921 shows Stephen Road and the surrounding fields divided into plots. No buildings are marked on the road, however development has taken place on the parallel High Street encroaching into the area (figure 5).

By the revised edition of the 1939 OS map the area is shown almost as it is at present. Number 10 is clearly visible (figure 6).
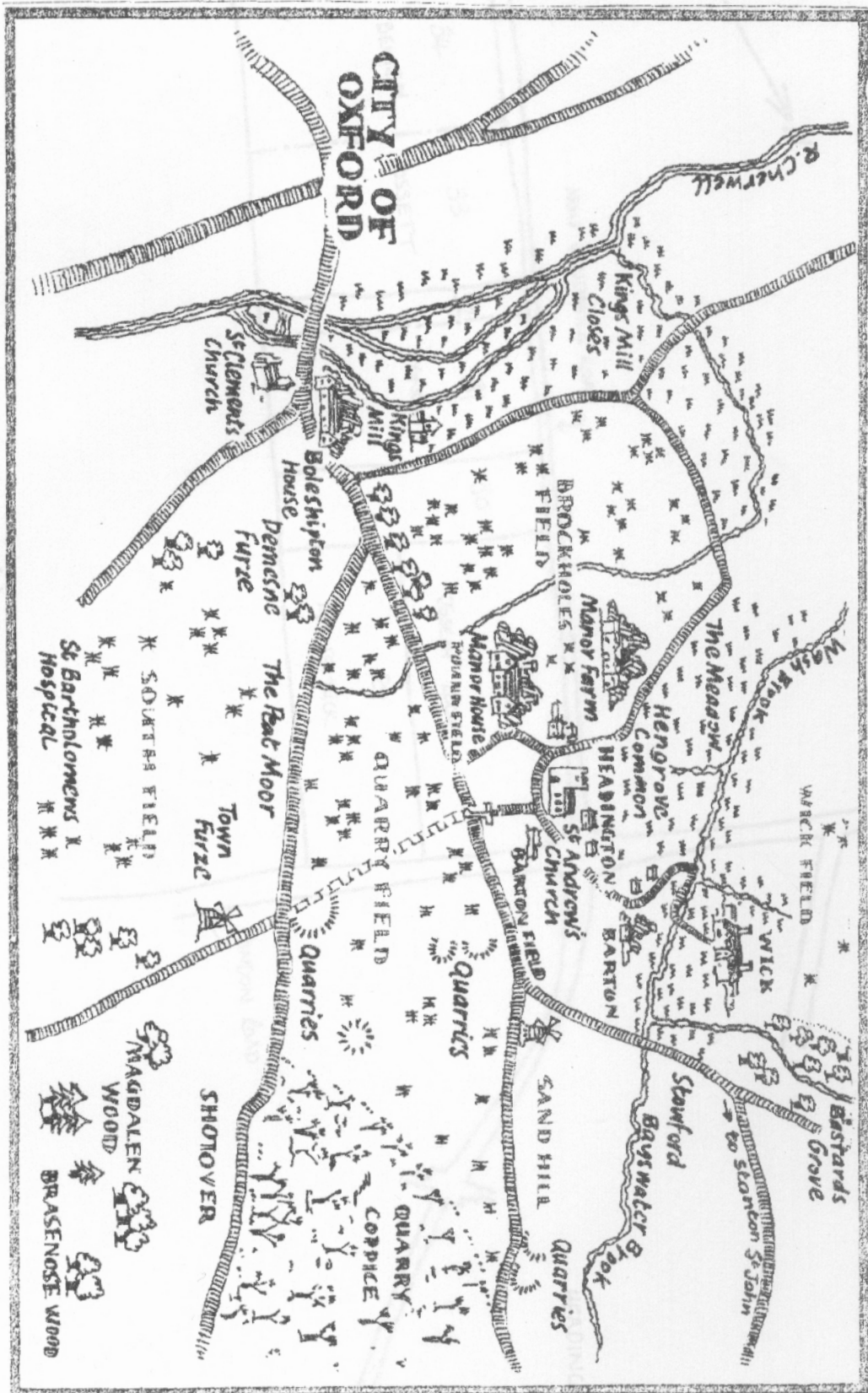
Figure 2. Fields around Headington (Cook & Taylor 1987 based on an earlier illustration). Not to Scale
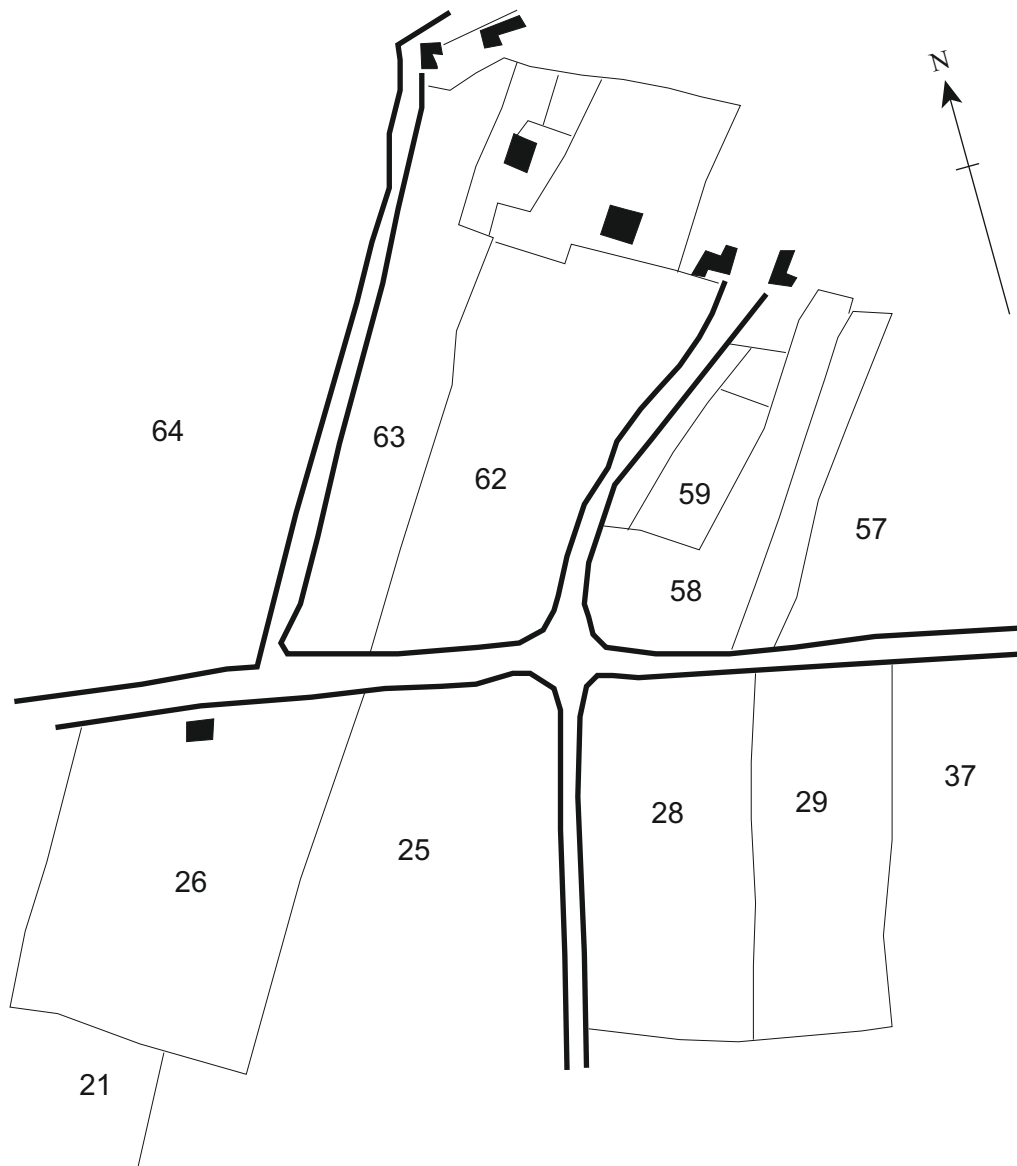
Figure 3. Traced copy of the Inclosure Map of 1802. Not to Scale.

Figure 4. The first edition OS map of 1876

Figure 5. The OS map of 1921.

Figure 6. The OS map of 1939 (2nd edition revised)

4.2   Documentary Evidence

Headington is derived from a Saxon personal name *Hedena*. One theory states the original name is *Hedena's Dun* or Hedena's Hill. Its is suggested that a village grew up with a nucleus of a Great Royal Manor, and may have perhaps been more important in Saxon and Norman times than at any later period (VCH 1957)

The first mention of Headington is in a royal charter of 1004 by Ethelred II, this states "*in villa regia quae volatur Hedindina*" that translates as "*in the royal residence which is called Headington*". The Domesday Book of 1086 records that "*Rex tenet Hedintone*" or "*the King holds Headington*". A Church Tax is also referred to in the book (Morris 1978).

The parish church of Headington, St. Andrews was first mentioned in a royal charter of Henry I in 1122. The earliest datable part of the present church is the chancel arch of 1160 (Sherwood and Pevsner 1974).

The Manor remained in royal hands until the reign of Henry I. It was granted to Hugh de Pluggenait by 1142 (VCH 1957). It remained a single Manor throughout the medieval period. The present Manor House is 17th century, and the nearby Manor Farm (PRN 3624) dates from the same period. They were sold separately in the 1840's but reunited by Colonel Hoole in 1906. In 1917 they were purchased by the trustees of the Radcliffe Infirmary.

Quarrying in the area was underway by 1396 and in 1474 William Orchard leased a quarry in Headington to build at Magdalen College.

Headington was seen to be rapidly expanding in the nineteenth century. The census return of 1801 gives the number of residence at 669. By 1841 this had increased to 1668 and by 1891 it stood at 3005.

4.3   Known Archaeological Sites

Information on known archaeological sites has been collected for an area of 500m around the proposed development site. However some known sites, just outside the limit of the search area, have been included as they are thought to bear a possible relation to the site area**.** Numbers in **bold** refer to the numbers on figure 7. Each entry has a national grid reference (*NGR*) and a County Sites and Monuments Record or a National Monuments Record number (PRN) (e.g. **1**, *NGR* SP **** ****, *PRN* ******).

4.3.1   Prehistoric

There is a relatively small amount of scattered evidence for prehistoric activity in the Headington area. A Neolithic polished axe was found in the area east of the site (**1**, locality of SP 54 07, PRN 338417) and a flint scraper was also found in the same locality (**2**, locality of SP 54 07, PRN 338418).
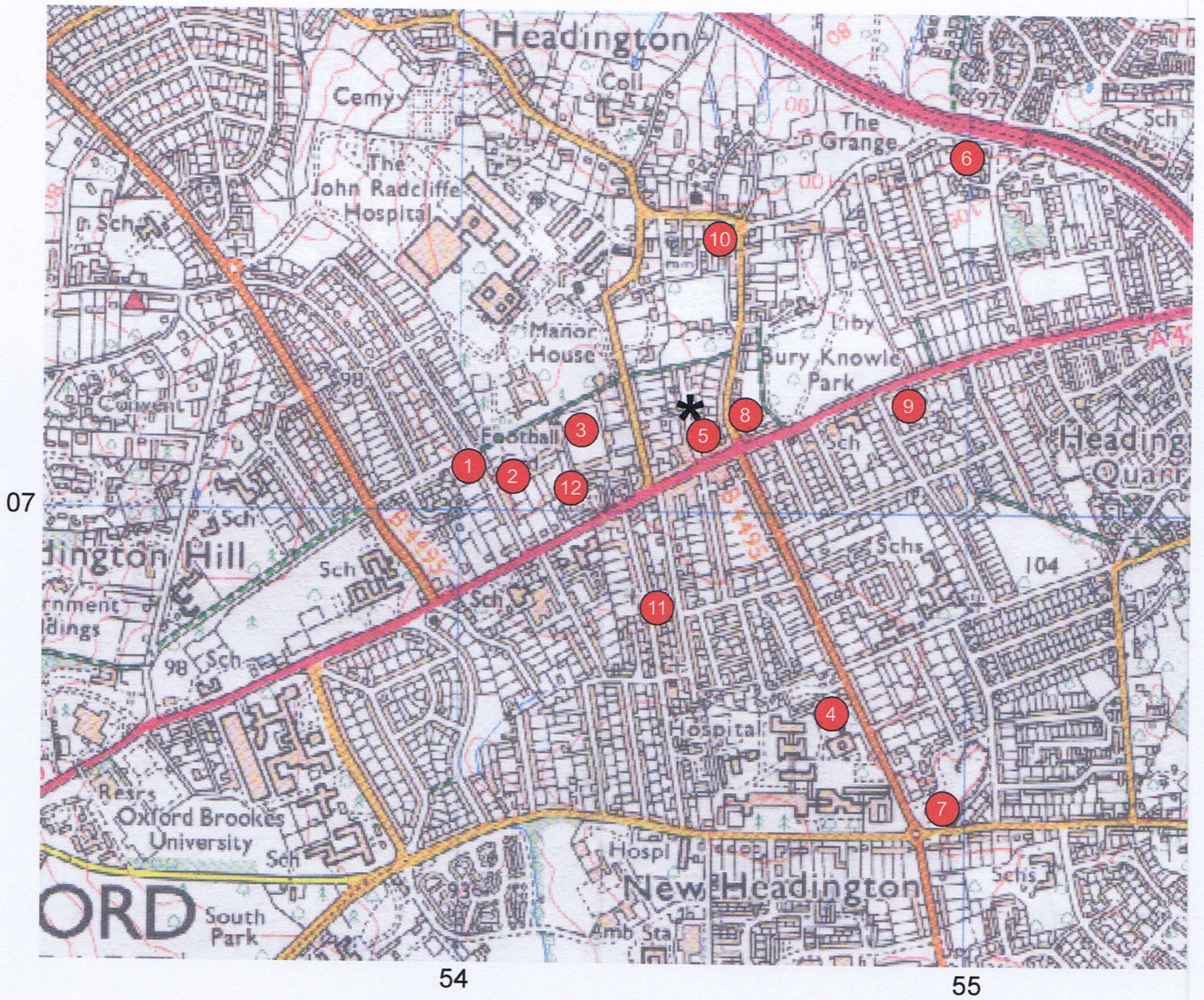
Figure 7. Known Archaeological Sites (not to scale)

Excavation in 2003 at the site of the Manor Ground recovered an assemblage of 33 flint objects, the majority dating to the late Neolithic or Bronze Age, with a few pieces dated to the Mesolithic and early Neolithic. Also recovered were 4 sherds of Bronze Age pottery and 477 sherds of Iron Age pottery. It is speculated that an Iron Age settlement is in the vicinity possibly to the north west of the site (**3**, SP 5424 0716, PRN 16974).

4.3.2 Romano-British

The excavation in 2003 at the Manor Ground also retrieved 176 sherds of Romano-British pottery, with a predominance of local Oxfordshire wares. With the absence of any archaeological features and the even spatial distribution it was concluded that the area had been used for agriculture during this period, the sherds derived from manuring episodes (**3**, SP 5424 0716, PRN 16974).

Just outside the search radius sherds of late Romano-British pottery, indicating a possible kiln site producing Sandford ware, have been found approximately 600m south of the site at the Nuffield Orthopedic Hospital (**4**, SP 5480 0660, PRN 3670, 4015, 338432).

4.3.3 Anglo-Saxon

An inhumation of a middle aged female was recorded in 2003 during a watching brief at 2 Stephen Road. The burial was accompanied with two Saxon copper alloy broaches, an amber bead necklace and an iron knife. The burial was dated to the mid to late 6th century. This was 30m to the south of the site (**5**, SP 544 071, PRN 16973).

A single sherd of late Saxon – early medieval pottery was recovered from the excavation at the Manor Ground (**3**, SP 5424 0716, PRN 16974).

Further evidence for Anglo-Saxon activity in the area is an inhumation found at the bottom of a sunken featured building (Grubenhaus) which contained Anglo-Saxon pottery, found during road construction in 1931 c. 800m north east of the site (**6**, SP 5500 0780, PRN 3802).

A prehistoric drove road 900m to the south was also used as a highway in the Saxon period, referred to as the 'straet' in the 956AD Cuddesdon Charter (**7,** SP 5500 0640, PRN 8865).

4.3.4 Medieval

The excavation at the Manor Ground, c. 200m to the west, recovered 31 sherds of medieval pottery, largely of a sandy oxidised ware often with a green external glaze thought to be Brill/Borstall ware dating to the 13th – 17th century (**3**, SP 5424 0716, PRN 16974). Again this is thought to have derived form manuring of fields.

The apparent lack of medieval remains in the area is surprising this is in part due to the limited radius of the search, but also to the lack of archaeological investigations in this area.

4.3.5 Post-medieval

About 100m to the east north east of the site is the site of the Headington tollhouse side gate (**8**, SP 5450 0720, PRN 10226) and 400m east is a post-medieval milestone (**9**, SP 5490 0728, PRN 10007).

Approximately 400m to the north of the site is one of four post-medieval churches within the research area. This Baptist Chapel is a single storey, four bay hall, stone building that is listed Grade II (1**0**, SP 5453 0754, PRN 1013). To the south of the site, c.350m, is Lime Walk Methodist Church which was built as a chapel in 1888 and is now a church (**11**, SP 5440 0680, PRN 6309).

Holy Trinity Church, Trinity Road, was designed by Sir Gilbert Scott, dates to 1850 and is a Grade II* listed building. This is located approximately 250m to the west (**12**, locality SP 5400 0700, PRN 538660).

To the west of the site, c. 200m, stood the Manor Ground football ground, which originated in 1898 and was until 2003 the home of Oxford United Football Club when the stadium was demolished (**3**, SP 5424 0716, PRN 1301611).

5 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

In assessing the archaeological potential of the site, a number of factors must be taken into account: the survival of archaeological monuments within the development area and its environs, previously recorded archaeological sites, previous land use and disturbance and future land use, including the impact of the proposed development.

5.1 Potential of the site

In view of the information presented above the site is considered to have a high potential for containing archaeological remains of local/regional significance.

For the prehistoric period, find-spots of artefacts show a relatively low amount of general activity in the area. There is evidence for marginal activity in the area between the Mesolithic and the Bronze Age. By the Iron Age there would appear to be a significant settlement in the vicinity, although the evidence would suggest that it is located to the west of the proposed site. The potential for prehistoric remains is therefore considered to be low to medium due to the character and level of known sites of this period in the area.

Extensive Romano-British pottery production and occupation sites are known to the south of the proposal area. Up to 15 kiln sites are distributed over an area from as close as 600m from the site. The surrounding area appears to have been under agricultural use during this period with associated pottery sherds marking episodes of manuring (JMHS 2003). The potential for Romano-British remains is therefore considered to be low to medium due to the character and level of known sites of this period in the area.

Old Headington has Saxon origins. The cartographic evidence places the Palace to the north west of the site and a possible settlement site has also been identified 800m north east of the site.

The recording action of the inhumation of the Saxon female failed to record levels related to Ordnance Datum of any feature. The grave cut is described as 0.18m deep and filled with a friable dark reddish silty sand with charcoal flecks and patches of light yellowish sand and sandstone. Above this a "topsoil" of friable dark greyish brown silt sand loam with gravel charcoal and brick was recorded as 0.4m thick (OA 2003). The accompanying colour slides of the excavation appear to show that the ground had already been the subject of a "topsoil-strip". The amount removed is unknown, but on other sites this strip could remove between 0.1m and 0.2m of deposits or greater. It is therefore possible that any potential graves could be between 0.4m to 0.6m below present ground surface.

The brooches recovered date to the 5th - 7th centuries, but the amber necklace is far more diagnostic dating to the mid – late 6th century (Meaney 1981). It was the conclusion of the excavator that the burial was probably part of a far wider cemetery (OA 2003). Excavated Anglo-Saxon cemeteries such as Chessell Downs (Arnold 1982) demonstrate that graves can be densely clustered but also well ordered. These types of cemeteries occur in Oxfordshire and have been noted on occasion to use prehistoric monuments as a focus (Blair 1994).

Given the proximity of a known burial site of this date in the area and a burial only 30m away from the proposal site the potential for remains dating from this period is considered to be high.

The Saxon manor of Headington remained in the King's hands after the Norman conquest, although it was not always the chief royal residence of the county the manor remained an important administrative unit. The proposal area almost certainly fell within the medieval three field system of arable farming.

The proposal area was open farmland during the medieval period and there are no known medieval archaeological sites other than quarry sites further to the east which were continuously used into the post-medieval period.   The potential for remains dating from this period is therefore considered to be low.

Evidence for the post-medieval period is present in the form of buildings, some listed, dating mainly from the 19th century. Cartographic evidence from

1876 to 1939 has shown that no earlier buildings have occupied the site. The potential for any significant buried remains of this period must therefore be low.

5.2   Conclusion

The depth of overburden above potential archaeological deposits appears to be shallow and the depth of construction for the buildings on the site is unknown and no view can be expressed as to the degree of survival of potential remains beneath the standing buildings. However the open areas around the buildings may not have been significantly disturbed and this may mean that should any remains be present then they may survive in good condition relatively close to the surface.

The depth of made ground in these areas is expected to be about 0.5m thick. Should the housing be constructed on cut and fill foundations then any remains will be affected. The excavation for associated services would also have an impact.

The existing garage footings are presumed to be insubstantial and possible employing the raft technique. Any graves in this area are likely to have a high level of preservation. The out-buildings may have similar footings, but may be slightly deeper. These may have damaged any graves present. However no reports of burials have been recorded which would be likely if this had occurred. The foundations of number 10 could have caused more damage, although the foundations of a 1930's house are not necessarily deep.

The commercial business building to the north is a later construction again no mention of burials was reported during its construction. The ground it stands on is noticeably lower, but this appears to be due to the natural slope of the hill rather than any reduction in ground level. It is possible that this lower area would have been outside any potential cemetery. Also there was no report of burials during the excavation for the services of this building to the west, although it is possible in a narrow machine cut trench that these could have gone unnoticed and unreported.

A geophysical investigation has been proposed as an attempt to locate any graves prior to excavation. This is due to the site being deemed to restrictive for trenching and access. The nature of the site also precludes all geophysics techniques except Ground Penetrating Radar. This could be used in the areas of tarmac and the garden, although numerous services are indicated in the area. The area that could be investigated by this technique is approximately 25% of the site.

A small hand excavated test pit in the garden of number 10 would establish the depth of deposits and the natural in the area. This could be undertaken after the results of the geophysics are known to avoid partial excavation of any grave before other work is considered.

Due to the high potential for the site to contain remains of Anglo-Saxon date and the low potential for remains from other periods consideration may be given by the local authority to require further work in conjunction with the geophysical survey prior to development.

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