



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

AT

LAND R/O 18 HAWKSWELL GARDENS,

**OXFORD, OXFORDSHIRE
OX2 7EX**

NGR SP 5117 0949

On behalf of

*RIACH Architects
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MARCH 2018

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REPORT ISSUED March 2018

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JMHS Project No: 3751
Site Code: OXHG 17
Archive Location: The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to Oxfordshire County Museums Service with the accession number OXCMS: 2017.114.



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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an evaluation at Land R/O 18 Hawkswell Gardens, Oxford, OX2 7EX, Oxfordshire (NGR SP 5117 0949). The evaluation revealed a linear ditch that has been interpreted as a field boundary as it runs parallel to the northern and southern land boundaries of the site.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development site is located on land to the rear of 18 Hawkswell Gardens, Oxford, (NGR SP 5117 0949). The site lies partly on the 2nd Terrace (Summertown-Radley) Deposits which in part are overlaid by Alluvium, and partly over Oxford Clay. The area is currently partially wooded and overgrown and there is a garage on the site. The height of the site is 60m aOD, sloping down to the east towards the river Cherwell.

1.2 Planning Background

A planning application has been made to Oxford City Council for erection of 3 x 6 bedroom dwelling houses (Use Class C3), including provision of car parking spaces, private amenity space, bins and cycle stores (15/02352/FUL). This was refused but is being appealed. The City Archaeological Officer issued a brief that indicated that as part of this appeal an archaeological evaluation should be carried out followed by further mitigation if required. The work was to be carried out to a project design outlined in a written scheme of investigation (WSI) which was to be agreed in writing by Oxford City Council prior to commencing fieldwork. The requirements were in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

1.3 Archaeological Background

The site is located in the vicinity of an extensive landscape of Neolithic-Early Bronze Age ritual and funerary monuments and subsequent dispersed rural Iron Age settlement and field systems, located on the Summertown-Radley gravel terrace between the rivers Thames and Cherwell. The nearest known monuments of this landscape are recorded 250m to the south of the application site where ground conditions have allowed the identification of parch marks in the past. The application site is located in a poorly understood area of the gravel terrace, close to the River Cherwell, which has not previously been subject to detailed investigation.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

- 2.1 To undertake an archaeological evaluation of the site.
- 2.2 To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the site and the depth of soil deposits that overlie these remains.

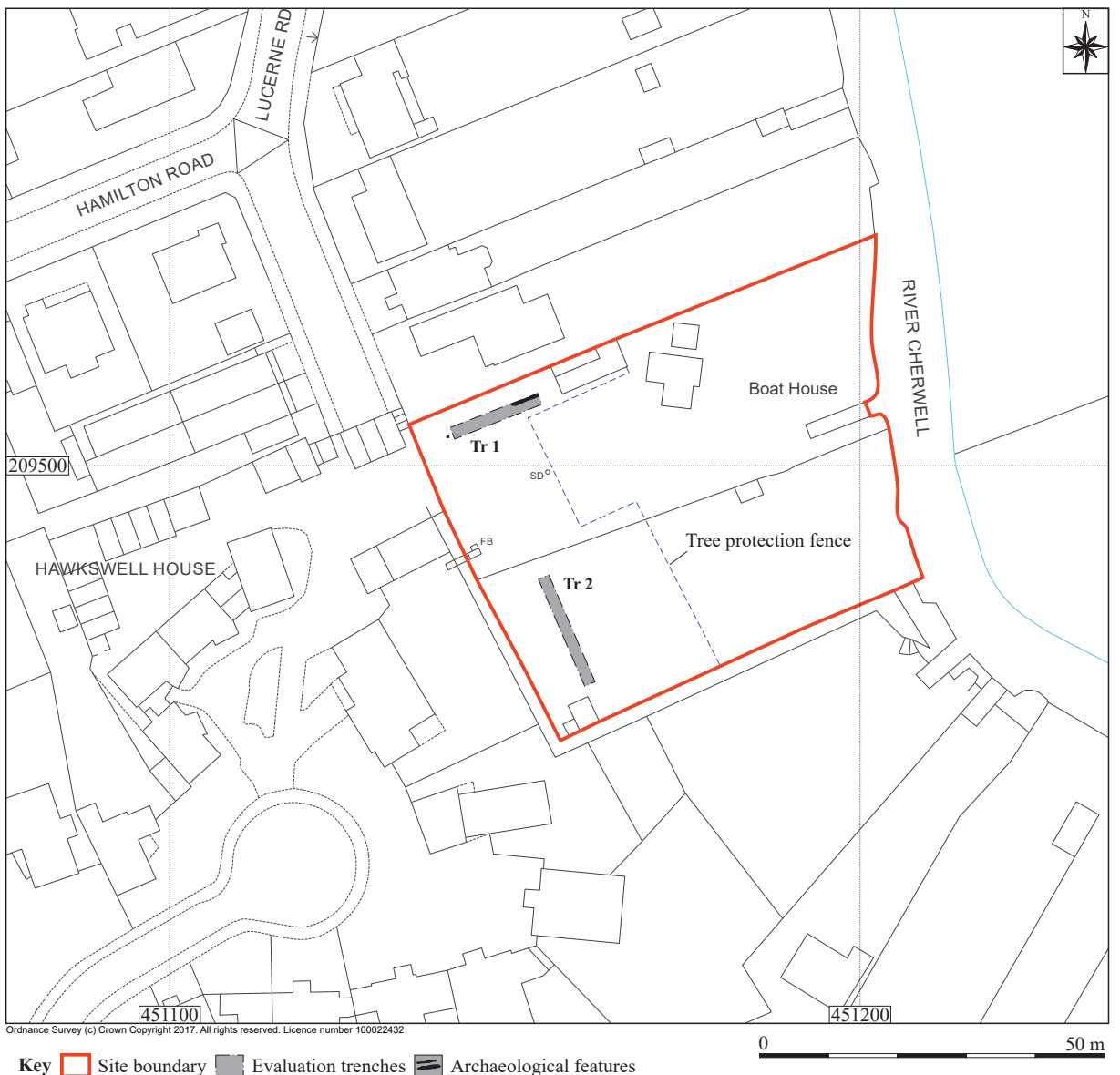
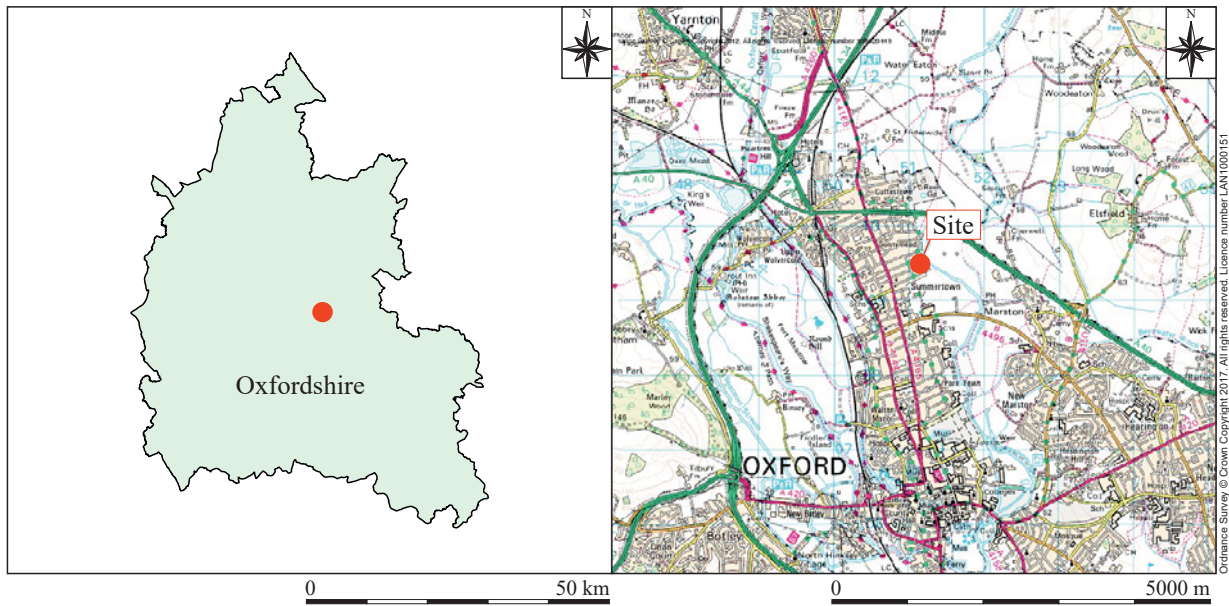


Figure 1: Site location

- 2.3 To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.
- 2.4 To determine the degree of complexity of any horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present.
- 2.5 To determine the impact of the proposed development on any remains present.
- 2.6 In particular:
 - To determine whether the prehistoric ritual and funerary monuments extend onto the site and whether it was used during the Iron Age.
 - To inform the need for, and scope of, further phases of work to mitigate the impact 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 (JMHS 2017) agreed with the Oxford City Council Design, Heritage and Specialist Services Team.

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

3.2 Methodology

Two evaluation trenches were excavated across the proposed site of 0.3 ha. The intended dimensions for both trenches were 15m x 1.65m but due to the presence of services in the area next to Trench 1, it was decided to extend Trench 2 by 2m and shorten trench 1 by 1.5m. Both trenches were excavated until the geological or archaeological horizon, whichever was encountered first.

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)

4.1 Trench 1 (Figure 2, Trench 1 Plan and Sections; Plate 1)

Trench 1 was orientated SW-NE and measured 13.5m long and 1.65 wide. The natural geology (1/05) consisted of a yellow brownish clayey gravel horizon which was encountered at a depth of approximately 0.7-0.75m. Dug into the geological horizon was a linear ditch 1/06 with an orientation of SW-NE, exposed to a length of 4.5m

and extending outside the limit of excavation. Ditch 1/06 was 0.25m deep, had concave sides and a flat base and was located in the east side of the trench 1 (Fig. 2, Trench 1 Plan & Section 1.02; Plate 1). Its westerly end could represent either the ditch's *terminus* or represent a turn. The ditch ran parallel to the northern hedge of the site so it could be interpreted as a field boundary. The ditch was filled by a 0.25m thick mid-black silty clay deposit (1/07), with inclusions of medium-course pebbles and very rich organic material, including pieces of decayed wood, measuring up to 50 mm in length. No finds were recovered despite excavation of 50% of this feature. Overlying the geological horizon (1/05) was an alluvial layer (1/04), similar in characteristics to fill (1/07). This was a 0.15m thick, blackish grey silty clay deposit, possibly originated during a flooding episode. Deposit (1/04) was recorded in the SW side of the trench and it was overlain by subsoil (1/03), a 0.26m-0.4m thick layer of mid brown silty clay. Overlying this was topsoil (1/02), a greyish brown silty clay deposit that was 0.1m-0.25m thick. The uppermost deposit was a 0.2 m thick, modern made ground of yellowish brown sandy gravels (1/01). This upper deposit was only found towards the SW end of the trench (Fig.2, Section 1.01).



Plate 1. Possible boundary ditch 1/06 in Trench 1

4.2 Trench 2 (Figure 2, Trench 2 Plan and Sections; Plate 2)

Trench 2 had an orientation ESE-WNW and was devoid of any archaeological features. It consisted in the geological horizon (2/03) overlain by subsoil (2/02), a mid-brown silty clay layer that was 0.2 m thick. The topsoil was 0.1m thick and consisted of a greyish brown silty clay layer (2/01) (Fig.2 Section 2.01).

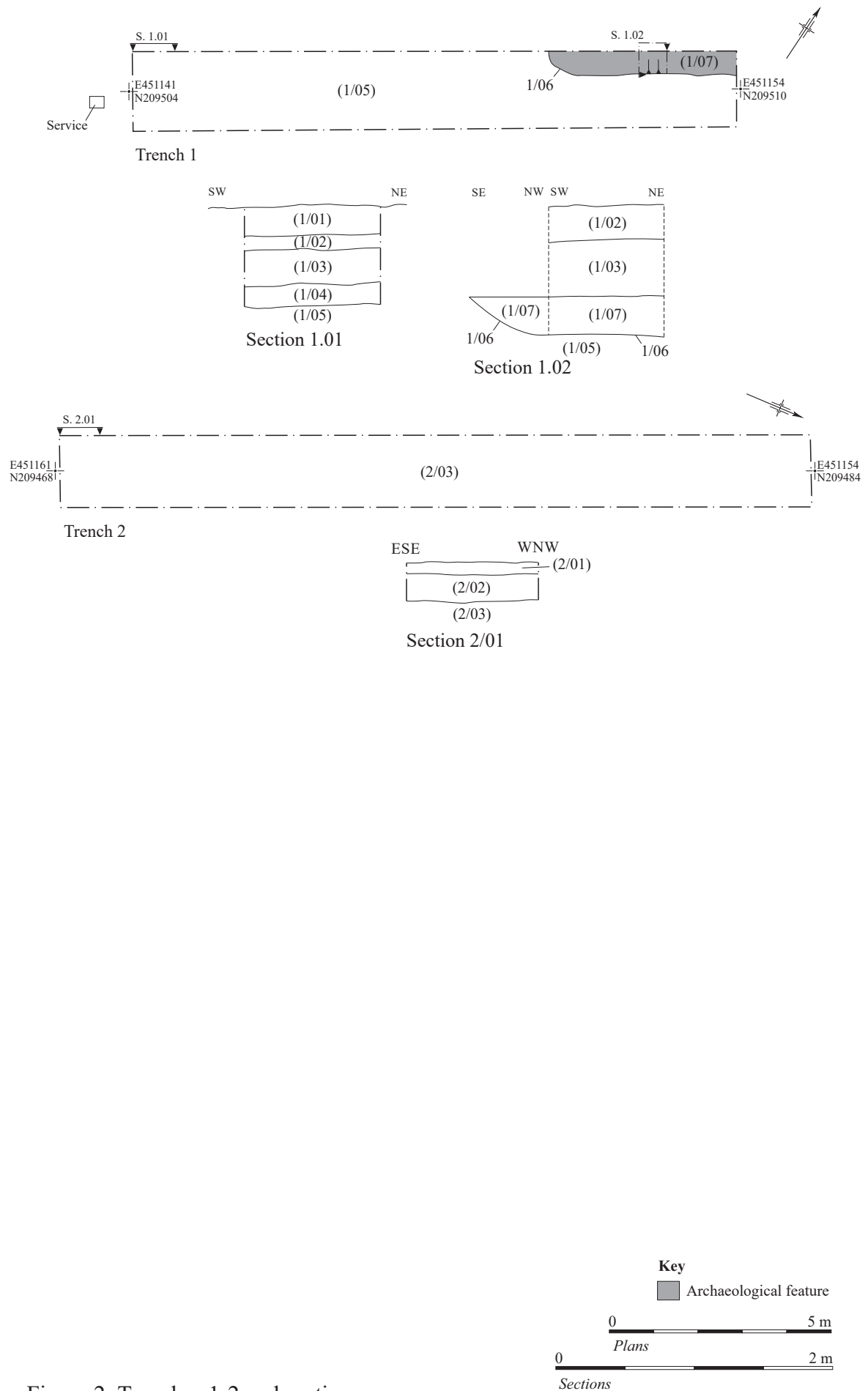


Figure 2: Trenches 1-2 and sections



Plate 2. Trench 2

4.3 Reliability of Results

The evaluation was undertaken in good weather conditions and the deposits were clearly defined, despite encountering the phreatic level at 0.9m from the surface. The reliability of the results is considered to be good.

5 FINDS

No finds were recovered from either of the two trenches.

6 DISCUSSION

The archaeological evaluation revealed a linear archaeological feature. As it has a SW-NE orientation and runs parallel to the northern and southern land boundaries of the site, it could be interpreted as a field boundary. No finds were recovered.

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

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the Oxfordshire County Museum Service with the accession number OXCMS: 2017.114.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 2014 *Standards and Guidance for an archaeological field evaluation*

John Moore Heritage Services 2017 *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation at Land R/O 18 Hawkswell Gardens, Oxford.*
Unpublished document