



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

AT

ST EDWARD'S SCHOOL,

WOODSTOCK ROAD, OXFORD

NGR: SP 50604 08956

NOVEMBER 2018

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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an evaluation on land at St Edward's School, Oxford. The evaluation identified modern pits and building disturbance along with disturbance from tree planting. A tree throw hole was identified and one small undated pit towards the north of the site. Possibly the earliest finds on site were two fragments of London Stoneware. Other finds included modern brick and tile and white earthenware. Concrete block foundations that had been part of a recent structure were identified in the centre of the site. No other archaeological finds or features were identified.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

St Edward's School, Summertown (NGR SP 50604 08956) is within the northern part of Oxford City. The proposal site is set within the eastern part of the grounds of St Edward's School. Topographically the site is located on the plateau between the Thames and Cherwell with a height of approximately 63 metres above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology of the proposal site consists of Oxford Clay Formation and West Walton Formation (undifferentiated); a sedimentary mudstone bedrock formed approximately 156 to 165 million years ago in the Jurassic Period. The overlying superficial deposits consist of Summertown-Radley Sand and Gravel Member formed some 3 million years ago in the Quaternary

1.2 Planning Background

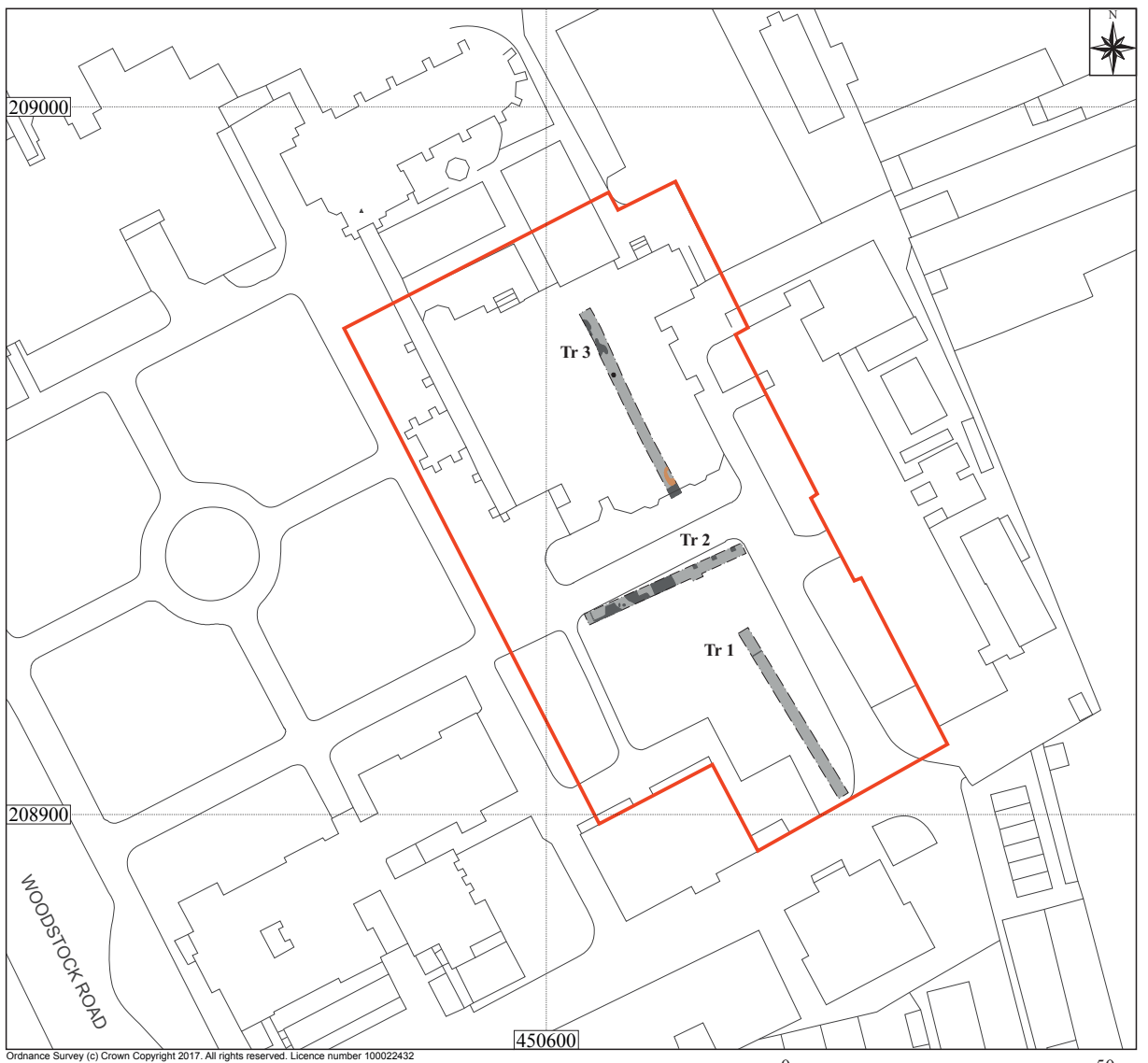
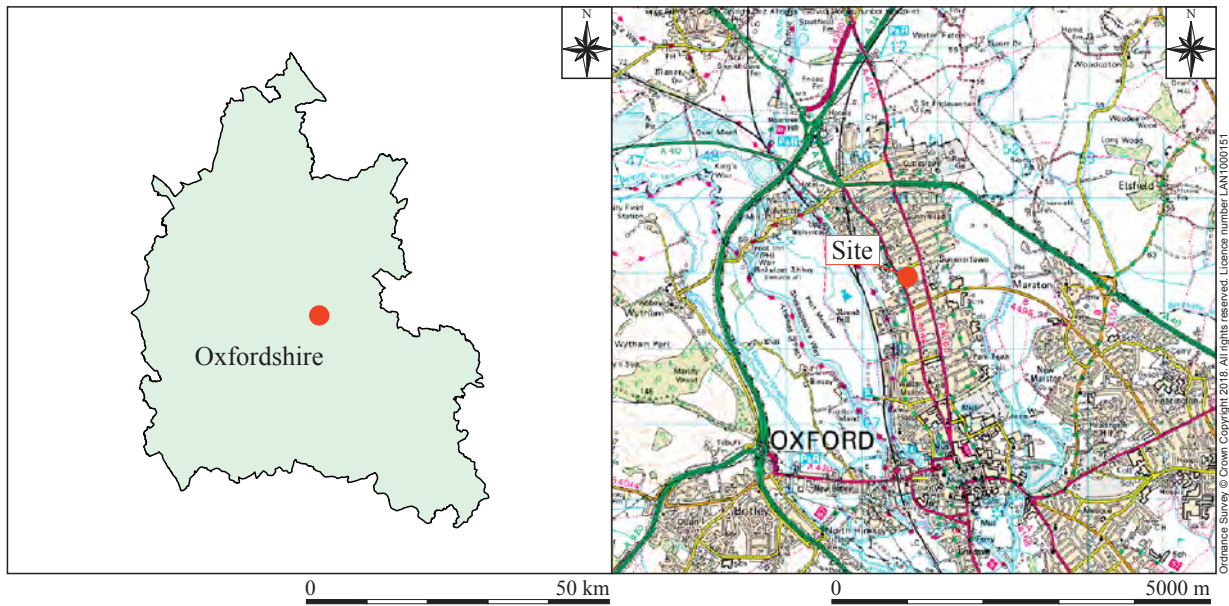
Oxford City Council has granted planning permission for the demolition of an existing school hall and the construction of a new hall, library, teaching accommodation and associated landscape works and alterations to a listed building at St Edward's School, Woodstock Road Oxford (16/01725/FUL). A condition relating to archaeology was attached. Condition 10 stated that:

Prior the commencement of the approved development a written scheme of investigation relating to the archaeological trenching of the site of the existing hall and a scheme of mitigation of any significant archaeological impact, which may be achieved by redesign, or by archaeological recording action in accordance with a supplementary written scheme of investigation shall be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All works shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the approved written scheme of investigations, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: Because the development may have a damaging effect on known or suspected elements of the historic environment of the people of Oxford and their visitors, including prehistoric and Roman remains (Local Plan Policy HE2).

1.3 Archaeological Background

This site was of interest because of the potential for prehistoric and Roman remains. During the construction of the school subway under the Banbury Road in 1923-24



- Key
- Site boundary
 - Evaluation trench
 - Archaeological features
 - Modern features
 - Tree Throw

Figure 1: Site location

prehistoric and Roman finds were recovered (County HER PRN 3814). This work was located approx. 100m from the new basement and produced 2nd - 4th century pottery and 'evidence for a possible occupation site' sufficient in character to warrant a note in the Journal of Roman Studies. The work also recovered a number of prehistoric finds including Bronze Age pottery, a flint borer, small flint scraper and flint flakes, of sufficient interest to warrant deposition in the Ashmolean Museum. The later finds suggests a continuation eastwards of the ritual and funerary landscape located on the 2nd gravel terrace suggested by the parchmarks in St Edward's School playing field. These include large and small ring ditches and large linear features, one of which appears to be running into the south-west corner of the school.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (JMHS 2018) 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 that overlie these remains
- To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered and to determine the degree of complexity of any horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy
- To determine the impact of the proposed development on any remains present.

In particular:

- To establish the character and extent of any prehistoric or Roman activity.
- 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

The City Archaeological Officer had prepared a Brief for an Archaeological Trial Trenching. John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation (JMHS 2018) that was in line with the brief and had been agreed with the City Archaeological Officer, the archaeological advisor to Oxford City Council.

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

3.2 Methodology

The evaluation was to be carried by way of three trenches equal to a combined length of 90m of trenching with each trench being 1.65m wide. Due to the constraints of the

site and the avoidance of active services the evaluation resulted in 81m of trenching. The evaluation was carried out in two stages. The first stage was carried out prior to the demolition of the school hall and included the excavation of Trench 1 (27.5m x 1.65m) and Trench 2 (24.5m x 1.65m). Following the demolition of the School Hall a further trench, Trench 3 was excavated (29m x 1.65m). The trenches were excavated down to the top of the natural geology using a 360° fitted with a toothless bucket.

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 (Figures 1 and 2; Plates 1 and 2)

Trench 1 (Figures 1 and 2, Section 1.01)

Trench 1 was excavated towards the south-east of the school hall in the area north-east of a former building and in an area previously occupied by trees and car park spaces.

The lowest layer identified in Trench 1 was a firm mid-orange brown sand (1/04) which was identified as the natural geology (Fig. 2, section 1.01). Above this was a 0.29m thick deposit of mid-orange brown and mid-grey brown mix of sandy loam subsoil (1/03). Deposited above this was a 0.35m to 0.4m thick deposit of mid-brown loamy sand topsoil (1/02). At the south end of the trench the topsoil had been buried by a gravel surface (1/01). The deposits in the trench were heavily disturbed by rooting from trees which had previously been located in the area.

Trench 2 (Figs. 1 and 2, Sections 2.01 to 2.03; Plate 1)

Trench 2 was orientated ENE-WSW and was excavated on a grassed area located to the NNW of the position of Trench 1 and SSE of the School Hall (Fig. 1)

The lowest layer identified in Trench 2 was the natural sand geology (2/03). Towards the centre of the trench was a deposit of firm mid yellow and brown sand and gravel (2/09) which was also identified as the natural geology (Fig. 2, Trench 2 plan). The natural geology was overlain by a mixed yellow and reddish brown deposit of slightly loamy sand (2/17) which was interpreted as a subsoil deposit. The deposit was between 0.15m and 0.2m thick towards the east of the trench but was less discernible towards the west half of the trench (Fig. 2, Sections 2.01 and 2.02).

Towards the west of the trench there were a number of irregular pits which cut the subsoil (2/17) (Fig. 2, Trench 2 plan). Pit 2/07 was an irregular pit which contained a mid-grey and light orange brown sand with frequent charcoal and ash deposits and fragments of white earthenware pottery (2/12) (Fig. 2, Section 2.03). To the east of this were two small pits, 2/06 and 2/08 (Fig. 2, Trench 2 plan). Pit 2/06 was 0.45m long by 0.18m wide and Pit 2/08 was 0.35m by 0.31m wide. Both pits contained similar greyish sandy fills and frequent ash and charcoal. The fill of Pit 2/06, (2/11) contained a fragment of modern brick. Further to the east was cut 2/05 which was probably two or more large intercutting pits. The fill (2/10) was a mid-yellow and grey sand with occasional patches of ash which contained modern brick and tile and two fragments of London Stoneware pottery. Overlying these features

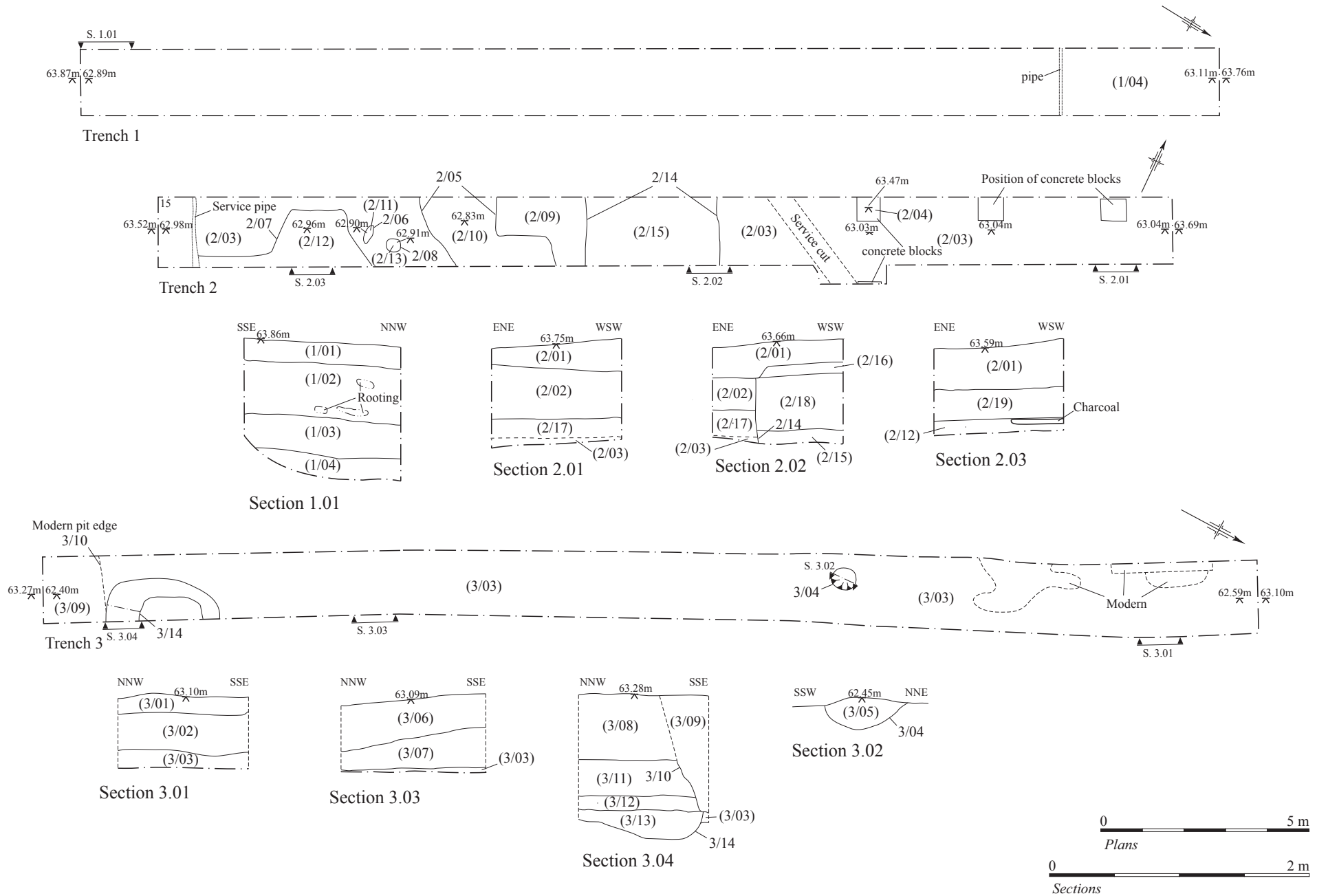


Figure 2: Trenches 1-3 and sections

was a 0.23m thick made ground deposit of mid-grey brown, slightly loamy sand, with frequent inclusions of white limestone gravel; this deposit was noted in the western third of the trench (2/19) (Fig. 2, Section 2.03).

Overlying the subsoil towards the eastern half of the trench was deposit (2/02). This was a mid-reddish brown sandy loam which was between 0.4m thick in the east of the trench and 0.24m towards the centre of the trench (Fig. 2, Section 2.01 and 2.02). Two visible fragments of undiagnostic ceramic brick or tile were identified in this deposit in the south section of the trench but none were recovered from the excavation, the deposit was identified as a buried topsoil deposit.

Dug into deposit (2/02) were the cuts for four concrete foundations. Each contained a concrete block and the dimensions of concrete block **2/04** were recorded as 0.69m by 0.69m wide with a height of greater than 0.45m. The foundations were orientated in an ENE to WSW alignment returning towards the SSE perpendicular to block **2/04** (Fig. 2 Trench 2 plan, Plate 1). The concrete blocks were related to a modern structure which had previously stood on the site.

Further towards the centre of the trench, deposit (2/02) was cut by cut 2/14 (Fig. 2, Section 2.02, Trench 2 plan). The cut was 3.23m wide by greater than 1.65m. The lowest deposit identified in the fill was (2/15) which was a mid-grey sand which was greater than 0.1m thick and contained fragments of modern brick and mortar. Deposited above this was (2/18) which was identified as the upper fill of 2/14. Fill (2/18) was 0.42m thick deposit of mid-brown sand with a very high percentage of limestone gravel inclusions. It contained ceramic tile in the section but none was recovered from the excavated deposit. The western edge of deposit (2/18) was not clear and it was also difficult to identify the western edge of cut 2/14 that high up in the profile. It is possible that (2/18) was a made ground deposit in an area subject to wider area excavations which had cut deeper in the area cut 2/14.

Deposited above (2/18) was (2/16) a 0.08m thick made ground deposit of mid-grey slightly loamy sand with concentrated patches of limestone gravel (Fig. 2, Section 2.02). The deposit continued for approximately 2m towards the west before becoming diffuse and indistinguishable from other deposits.

The uppermost deposit (2/01) was a 0.16m to 0.31m thick mid-grey brown sand topsoil with frequent patches of fine gravel and moderate rooting (Fig. 2, Sections 2/01 to 2/03).

Trench 3 (Fig. 1 and 2, Sections 3.01 to 3.04; Plate 2)

Trench 3 was excavated inside the footprint of the former school hall following the demolition of this building.

The lowest deposit identified in Trench 3 was the natural sand and gravel (3/03). Deposited above this was (3/02) a 0.3m thick mid-red brown sandy loam (Fig. 2 Section 3.01). This deposit was identified as a buried soil deposit which was buried under the former building. Cut into the buried soil (3/02) at the northerly end of the trench were a number of modern features with inclusions of brick mortar and rubble which were not further investigated (Fig. 2, Trench 3 Plan). The uppermost layer in this part of the site was (3/01) a mid-grey brown loamy sand disturbed deposit with inclusions of recent demolitions.



Plate 1. Trench 2. WSW view.



Plate 2. Trench 3. NNW view.

Beyond these features was a small pit 3/04 (Fig. 2, Section 3.02). The pit was recorded as being cut into the natural geology. The pit was located in an area of the site where any remnant topsoil or subsoil horizons had been removed and replaced by made ground so it is possible that the feature had been truncated in recent times. Pit 3/04 was subcircular in plan and measured 0.6m in diameter and 0.22m deep. The pit contained a mid to light grey and brown sandy clay loam fill which contained no finds (3/05).

Further made ground deposits were observed approximately 6m to the south of pit 3/04. These consisted of a 0.18m to 0.3m thick deposit of solid light yellow clay and dominant inclusions of limestone (3/07) (Fig.2, Section 3.04). The deposit overlay the natural geology and extended approximately 3.5m to the south. Above this was a further deposit of made/disturbed ground, (3/06). This deposit was 0.22m to 0.32m thick and loose mid to light brown loamy sand with frequent inclusions of concrete, mortar, stone and brick and tile fragments. The deposit continued north and south and was considered the same as the general disturbed demolition deposits across the area and the same as (3/01) and (3/08).

A possible ring cut 3/14 was identified at the far south of Trench 3 (Fig. 2 Section 3.04, Trench 3 Plan; Plate 2). The possible cut was noted as being narrower at its northern extent compared to the south and it was considered that it was probably a tree throw hole. Excavation of the fill 3/13 identified it continuing beyond the edges of the apparent cut into the slightly lighter deposit in the centre of the ring. The excavation suggested that the feature was a tree throw hole rather than a cut feature.

Deposited above the tree throw hole was a 0.11m thick, firm mid-reddish brown sandy loam with rare gravel inclusions (3/12). This was identified as a remnant subsoil deposit and deposited above this was a mid-orange brown sandy loam (3/11). This deposit was 0.29m thick and was identified as a buried topsoil or subsoil. Overlying (3/11) was a 0.51m thick disturbed deposit of mid-grey sand and clay with dominant gravel and demolition rubble (3/08). At the north end of Trench 3 was the edge of a cut 3/10 which extended beyond the limits of excavation. The cut of 3/10 possibly cut through deposit (3/08) but the level of disturbance in the area of the site made the relationship unclear. The recorded depth of the cut was at least 0.4m deep and possibly 0.9m (3/08). The cut was greater than 1.5m south to north and 1.65m east to west and extended beyond the limit of exaction. It was filled by (3/09) a loose deposit of coarse light grey sand and clay with a high proportion of concrete, mortar, brick, stone and gravel (Fig. 2, Section 3.04).

5 FINDS *by Simona Denis*

5.1 Pottery

A limited assemblage of eight pottery fragments, of a combined weight of 166g, was recovered from Trench 2. The assemblage was recorded using the conventions of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994), as follows:

OXEST: London stoneware, c.1680+

WHEW: Mass-produced White Earthenwares, 19th-20th century

Context	OXEST		WHEW		Date
	No	Weight (g)	No	Weight (g)	
2/10			2	52	Post-medieval
2/12	2	47	4	67	Modern

Table 1. Pottery occurrence by context and fabric

The sherds were in good condition although fragmentary, and appear to have been subject to very little disturbance or transportation.

It is not recommended to retain the pottery assemblage due to its very limited potential for further analysis.

5.2 Ceramic Building Material

A small collection of 12 fragments of ceramic building material, weighing 1563g in total, was recovered from three different deposits in Trench 2.

Context	Type	No. of Items	Weight (g)	Fabric	Date Range
2/10	Brick	3	420	Light orange, gritty with occasional small inclusions	Modern
	Roof tile	2	50		
	Roof tile	1	8	Dark red, sandy with occasional small inclusions	
2/11	Brick	1	800	Yellow, sandy with occasional small inclusions	Modern
2/15	Brick	2	81	Dark orange, gritty with occasional small inclusions	Modern
	Brick with mortar	1	198	Dark orange-red, gritty with frequent medium inclusions	

Table 2. Ceramic building material occurrence by context and type

Seven of the items were positively identified as bricks, although only a single example (from context 2/11) completely preserved its original thickness of 72mm. Of the remaining items, three were identified as roof tiles. The extremely limited size of two of the fragments recovered from deposit (2/15) prevented from any attempt of function identification.

The ceramic building material fragments are not recommended for retention, due to their modern provenience and low potential for further analysis.

5.3 Faunal Remains

Animal Bone

A single fragment of animal bone, positively identified as a rib, was recovered from context (2/12). No butchering marks were observed on the item, attributed to a small mammal (usually comprising sheep/goat, pig, roe deer) exclusively on the basis of its size.

It is not recommended to retain the bone fragment due to its very limited potential for further analysis.

5.4 Glass

Two fragments of modern glass, weighing 29g in total, were collected from deposit (2/11). The items were positively identified as one clear bottle body fragment, and one aqua applied blob finish.

The glass fragments are not recommended for retention due to their very limited potential for further analysis.

6 DISCUSSION

The evaluations on the site identified modern ground disturbance in the form of rubbish pits, made ground and demolition deposits. One undated pit was identified in Trench 3 and a further small pit in Trench 2. In the case of pit in Trench 2, 2/08, the fill of this feature was almost identical to the nearby features which were identified as modern and it appeared to be part of the same activity. Trench 1 showed rooting disturbance related to the tree planting in this area of the site prior to the evaluation and a tree throw hole of unknown date was identified in Trench 3. The foundations to a modern structure were identified in the east of Trench 2 and the made ground and disturbed deposits appeared to lie to the west of the footprint of this building. No pre-modern features were identified and the earliest possible finds recovered from the site were two fragments of London Stoneware pottery which were deposited with modern brick and tile.

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

None retained

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the Oxfordshire County Museums Service with accession number OXCMS: 2018.6.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Appendix 1: Context Inventory

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Findings	Interpretation	Date
Trench 1								
1/01	Deposit	Mid-yellowish grey sand and gravel	0.17	>1.65	>1.7	none	Pathway gravels	Modern
1/02	Deposit	Mid to dark brown slightly loamy sand	0.35-0.4	>1.65	>27.5	none	Topsoil buried at south end of the site by pathway gravels	Modern
1/03	Deposit	Mid-orange brown and mid-grey brown mix of loamy sand	0.21-0.3	>1.65	>27.5	none	Subsoil – B horizon	Undated
1/04	Deposit	Mid-orange brown sand and gravel	>0.16	>1.65	>27.5	none	Summertown-radley Sand And Gravel member superficial deposits	formed up to 3 million years ago in the Quaternary Period. Local
Trench 2								
2/01	Deposit	Mid-grey brown sand	0.16-0.31	>1.65	>24.5	none	Topsoil	Modern
2/02	Deposit	Mid-reddish brown sandy loam	>0.06	>1.65	>11	Ceramic Brick or tile-not retained	Buried topsoil	Modern
2/03	Deposit	Reddish brown sand	0.24-0.4	>1.65	>24.5	-	Summertown-radley Sand And Gravel member superficial deposits	formed up to 3 million years ago in the Quaternary Period. Local
2/04	Masonry	Concrete block	>0.45	0.69	0.69	-	Concrete block one of four concrete foundation blocks	Modern
2/05	Cut	Irregular pit cuts	-	>1.65	2.5	-	Intercutting pits filled by 2/10	Modern
2/06	Cut	Small narrow sub-oval pit	-	0.18	0.45	-	Small pit filled by 2/11	Modern
2/07	Cut	Irregular pit cuts	>0.11	>1.45	>4	-	Intercutting pits filled by 2/12	Modern
2/08	Cut	Small sub-circular pit	-	0.31	0.35	-		?Modern
2/09	Deposit	Yellow brown sand and gravel	-	>1.65	2.2	-	Summertown-radley Sand And Gravel member superficial deposits	formed up to 3 million years ago in the Quaternary Period. Local
2/10	Fill	Mid-yellow and grey sand with occasional patches of ash	-	>1.65	2.5	Pottery, brick and tile	Fill of pit 2/05	Modern
2/11	Fill	Greyish sandy fill and frequent ash and	-	0.18	0.45	Brick, glass	Fill of pit 2/06	Modern

		charcoal						
2/12	Fill	Mid-grey and light orange brown sand with frequent charcoal and ash	>0.11	>1.45	>4	Pottery, bone	Fill of pit 2/17	Modern
2/13	Fill	Greyish sandy fill and frequent ash and charcoal	-	0.31	0.35	None	Fill of pit 2/08	?Modern
2/14	Cut	Large straight edged cut	>0.52	>1.65	3.23	-	Cut of pit or ditch filled by 2/15 and 2/18	Modern
2/15	Fill	Mid-grey sand	>0.1	>1.65	3.23	Brick	Lower fill of cut 2/14	Modern
2/16	Deposit	Mid-grey slightly loamy sand with concentrated patches of limestone gravel	0.08	>1.65	c. 2	None	Made ground deposit	Modern
2/17	Deposit	Mixed yellow and reddish brown slightly loamy sand	0.14-0.2	>1.65	>24.5	None	Subsoil-B/C horizon	Undated
2/18	Fill	Mid-brown sand with a very high percentage of limestone gravel inclusions	0.42m	>1.65	3.23	Ceramic tile- not retained	Upper fill of cut 2/14	Modern
2/19	Deposit	Mid-grey brown, slightly loamy sand, with frequent inclusions of white limestone gravel	0.23	>1.65	>8m	none	Made ground deposit in the west third of the trench	Modern
Trench 3								
3/01	Deposit	Mid grey brown loamy sand	0.1 - 0.4	>1.65	>16m	Brick and rubble-not retained	Recent demolition deposits	Modern
3/02	Deposit	Mid-red brown sandy loam	0.3m	>1.65	>4	None	Buried soil horizon underlying former school hall	Undated
3/03	Deposit	Mid-yellow brown and orange sand and gravel		>1.65	>29	-	Summertown-radley Sand And Gravel member superficial deposits	formed up to 3 million years ago in the Quaternary Period. Local
3/04	Cut	Sub circular cut	0.22	0.6	0.6	-	Small sub circular pit filled by 3/05	Undated
3/05	Fill	Light grey and brown sandy clay loam	0.22	0.6	0.6	None	Fill of pit 3/04	Undated
3/06	Deposit	Loose mid to light brown loamy sand with frequent inclusions of concrete, mortar, stone and brick and tile fragments	0.22 - 0.32	>1.65	c.6m	Concrete, mortar, brick and tile- not retained	Recent demolition deposits	Modern
3/07	Deposit	Solid light yellow clay and dominant inclusions of limestone	0.18-0.3	>1.65	c. 3.5	None	Dumped deposit/made ground	Modern
3/08	Deposit	Mid-grey sand and clay with dominant gravel and demolition rubble	0.29	>1.65	>5m	Brick and rubble-not	Recent demolition deposits	Modern

						retained		
3/09	Fill	Coarse light grey sand and clay with a high proportion of concrete, mortar, brick, stone and gravel	0.4-0.9	>1.65	>1.5	Brick and rubble-not retained	Rubble backfill of pit/excavation 3/10	Modern
3/10	Cut	Steep sided cut	0.4-0.9	>1.65	>1.5	-	Pit or excavation cut filled by 2/09	Modern
3/11	Deposit	Mid-orange brown sandy loam	0.29	>1.65	c.5	None	Subsoil-B horizon	Undated
3/12	Deposit	Mid brown-reddish brown sandy clay loam	0.11	>1.65	c.5	None	Lower subsoil	Undated
3/13	Deposit	Mid-reddish brown sand	0.22m	>1	>2.7	None	Deposits related tree throw	Undated
3/14	Feature	Curvilinear	0.22m	>1	>2.7	-	Tree throw	Undated

APPENDIX 2: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	St Edward's School, Woodstock Road, Oxford	
Short description	John Moore Heritage Services carried out an evaluation on land at St Edward's School, Oxford. The evaluation identified modern pits and disturbance and disturbance from tree planting. A tree throw was identified and one small undated pit towards the north of the site. Possibly the earliest finds on site were two fragments of London Stoneware. Other finds included modern brick and tile and white earthenware. Concrete block foundations that had been part of a modern structure were identified in the centre of the site. No other archaeological finds or features were identified.	
Project dates	4 th September 2018 & 20 th November 2018	
Project type	Archaeological Evaluation	
Previous work	Unknown	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location		
Study area	4249.258m ²	
Site co-ordinates	SP 50604 08956	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	John Moore Heritage Services	
Project Brief originator	Oxford City Council	
Project Design (WSI)	John Moore Heritage Services	
Project Manager	John Moore	
Project Supervisor	Gavin Davis	
MONUMENT TYPE	Pit	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	Modern Pottery, Brick and Tile	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical	Not retained	Not retained
Paper	Oxfordshire County Museums Service	The project brief Written scheme of investigation The project report The primary site record
Digital	Oxfordshire County Museums Service	The project brief Written scheme of investigation The project report Synthesised site record Digital Photographs

BIBLIOGRAPHY