JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

AT

LAND AT BLACKDITCH, STANTON HARCOURT,

OXFORDSHIRE

SP 4081 0561

MARCH 2010

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FIGURES

Summary

The archaeological evaluation established that the majority of the site had been quarried for gravel deposits.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location *(Figure 1)*

The site lies at the western end of Blackditch in Stanton Harcourt, Oxfordshire (Site B centred on NGR SP 4081 0561). The underlying geology is Second Terrace Gravel Deposits (Geological Survey of Great Britain. Witney Sheet 236. Solid and Drift Geology 1:50,000). The site lies at approximately 69m OD. The geological mapping indicates that much of this site has been subject to mineral extraction.

1.2 Planning Background

Cottsway Homes are to develop Sites A and B for affordable housing. As part of the consideration for this an archaeological field evaluation was carried out. At this stage only Site B was evaluated. Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (OCAS) prepared a *Brief* for the field evaluation. The evaluation was designed and carried out by John Moore Heritage Services (JMHS) to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with OCAS.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The area of proposed development is within an area of considerable archaeological potential with a series of cropmarks in the vicinity of the two sites under consideration for development. These include ring ditches, pits, enclosures and linear features, which are considered to be of prehistoric origin from their character. A large feature crossing part of the site indicated on the plan attached to the OCAS Brief is thought to be later quarrying.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

- 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.

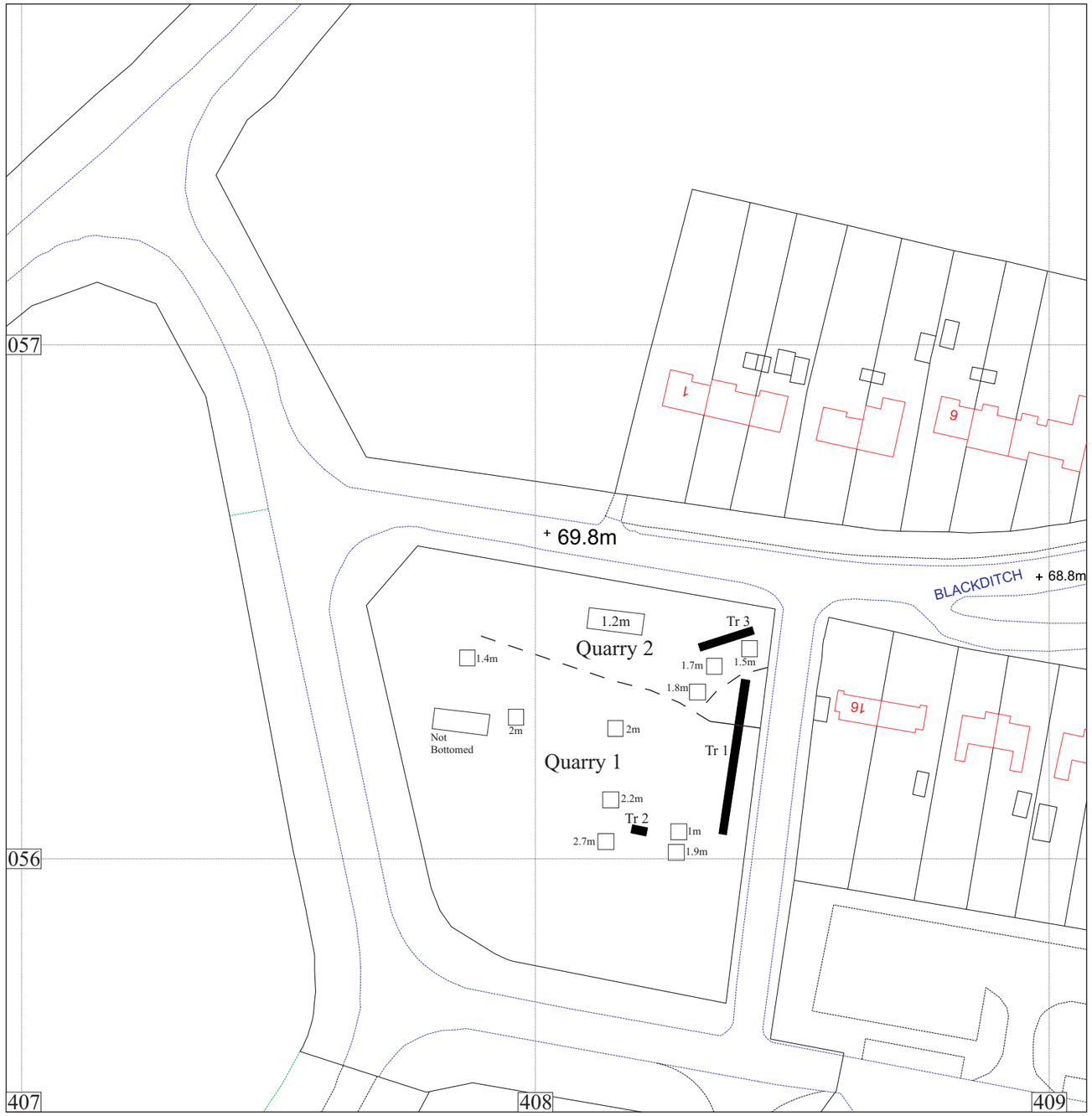


Figure 1. Site and trench location

In particular:

- To establish whether there are any remains associated with the known cropmarks in the area
- To determine the extent of the quarrying

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (OCAS). 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 and possible.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (1994).

3.2 Methodology

Three trenches were excavated, Trench 1 being 30m long, Trench 2 being 4m long and Trench 3 being 11m long (Fig. 1). This trench was 1.6m wide and was excavated by a 5 tonne excavator fitted with a toothless ditching 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 sections drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was produced.

Hugh Coddington of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (OCAS) monitored the work.

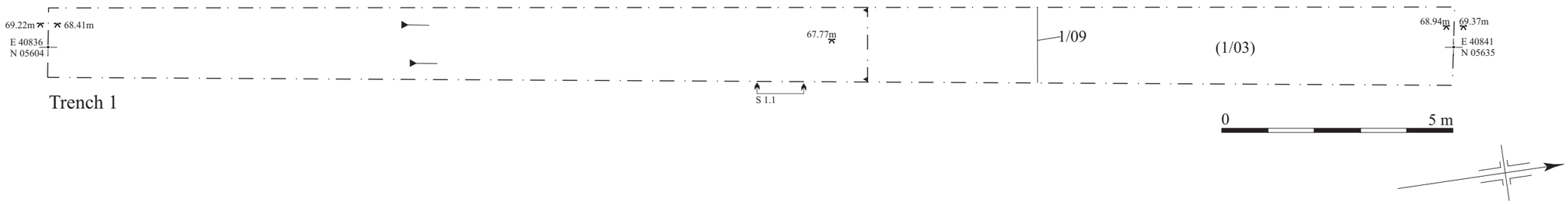
At the same time that the archaeological evaluation was carried out test pits were dug to identify the extent of the quarrying in order inform the type of foundations to be used for the new build. Depths of quarrying are shown on Figure 1.

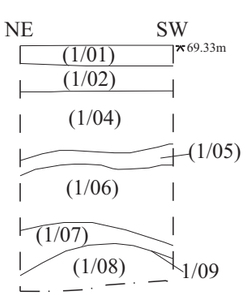
4 RESULTS *(Figure 2)*

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers in ( ) indicate fills or deposits of material whilst numbers referring to features themselves are shown without brackets.

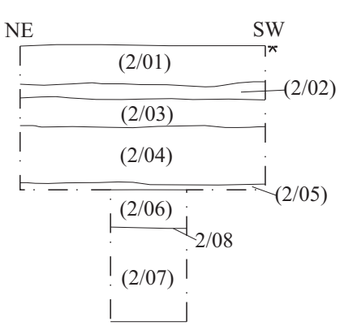
4.1 Excavation Results

Quarry 1 was observed in Trench 1 and Trench 2. In Trench 1 it was cut into the natural (1/08), also recorded as (1/03), a white-yellow sandy gravel. Cut into (1/08) was quarry cut 1/09, which was filled with (1/07), (1/06), (1/05), and (1/04) layers of silty or sandy clay loam with some deposits containing stone rubble. It was overlain

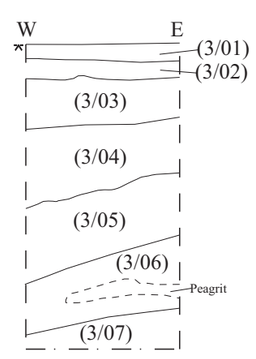




Section 1.1



Trench 2
Section



Trench 3
Section

Figure 2. Trench 1 and section, Trenches 2 & 3 sections

by a subsoil, of dark grey-brown silty clay with gravel (1/02) that extended across the whole trench, which in turn was overlain by topsoil (1/01).

In Trench 2, Quarry 1 was recorded cutting into the natural (2/07). The base of cut, 2/08 was difficult to observe due to the nature of the conditions on site. It was back filled with silty and clay loams (2/06), (2/05), (2/04) and (2/03). Overlying fill (2/03) was subsoil (2/02) that was the same as subsoil (1/02), which was again overlain by the topsoil (2/01).

Quarry 2 was observed in Trench 3. The base of the quarry pit sloped to the south west end of the trench with the natural gravel being (3/07). The primary fill of the quarry pit was a mid grey-brown clay silt (3/06). This in turn was overlain by sandy clay deposit (3/05), a charcoal rich deposit (3/04) containing white earthenwares, and sandy gravel (3/03). Overlying (3/03) was subsoil (3/02) the same as subsoil (1/02), which was again overlain by (3/01), the topsoil.

4.2 Reliability of Results and Techniques

The reliability of results is considered to be good. The excavation of the trenches took place during good weather.

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery *by John Moore*

The assemblage consisted of 11 sherds weighing a total of 125g. The pottery was recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994), as follows:

OXDR: Red Earthenwares, 1550+. 1sherd, 10g
WHEW: Mass-produced white earthenwares, mid 19th - 20th C. 6sherds, 30g

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*.

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

	OXDR		WHEW		
Cntxt	No	Wt	No	Wt	Date
1/01	1	14	7	33	M19thC
3/04			4	78	M19thC
Total	1	14	11	111	

5.2 Other Finds

19th or 20th century bottle and sheet glass along with two fragments of clay tobacco pipe stem were recovered from topsoil (1/01).

5.3 Environmental Remains

No environmental samples were taken due to the nature of the deposits encountered.

6 DISCUSSION

The archaeological investigation on this site located two modern quarry pits. Quarry 1 was visible in the trail holes carried out during the course of the investigation, and would appear to extend across the entire south and western parts of the site, while Quarry 2 appeared to extend across the top of the site. The two quarries had been backfilled differently suggesting that they were used at different times.

Local sources thought that the site had previously been used as a dumping ground for parts of WWII aircraft.

The lack of finds and features indicates that there is no significant archaeology on the site and that any potential archaeology would have been destroyed by quarrying.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX – ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

ID	Type	Description	Depth	Width	Length	Finds	Interpretation	Date
Trench 1								
1/01	Topsoil	Loose, dark brown grey, clay loam	0.20m	1.60m	30m	Pot, Glass	Topsoil, finds not retained	Modern
1/02	Subsoil	Compact dark grey brown silty clay	0.20m	1.60m	1.60m	None	Subsoil	
1/03	Natural	Loose Light yellow brown gravel	0.15m	1.60m	30m	None	Natural	
1/04	Deposit	Moderately compact, mid grey brown clay loam, 5-7% small stone	0.44m	1.60m	17.70m	None	Backfill of Quarry	Modern
1/05	Deposit	Friable, Mid brown sandy clay loam. Small stone inclusions <0.02m 50%	0.12m	1.60m	17.70m	None	Backfill of Quarry	Modern
1/06	Deposit	Loose light grey brown silty sand with small gravel <0.02m 20%	0.50m	1.60m	17.70m	None	Backfill of Quarry	Modern
1/07	Deposit	Compact dark grey brown clay loam, with 2% charcoal flecks and 20% small gravel <0.02m	0.30m	1.60m	17.70m	None	Backfill of Quarry	Modern
1/08	Natural	Loose light yellow brown, 50% sand 50% gravel.	0.24m	1.60m	17.70m	None	Natural	
1/09	Cut	Irregular cut, concave sides, sloping base.	1.20m	1.60m	17.70m	Pot, Glass	Cut of Quarry 1, finds not retained	Modern
Trench 2								
ID	**Type**	**Description**	**Depth**	**Width**	**Length**	**Finds**	**Interpretation**	**Date**
2/01	Topsoil	Loose, dark brown grey, clay loam	0.24m	1.60m	4m	None	Topsoil	Modern
2/02	Subsoil	Compact dark grey brown silty clay	0.08m	1.60m	4m	None	Subsoil	
2/03	Natural	Compact dark grey black clay.	0.18m	1.60m	4m	None	Natural	
2/04	Deposit	Moderately compact, mid grey brown clay loam, 5-7% small stone	0.38m	1.60m	4m	None	Backfill of Quarry	
2/05	Deposit	Friable, Mid brown sandy clay loam. Small stone inclusions <0.02m 50%	0.04m	1.60m	4m	None	Backfill of Quarry	

2/06	Deposit	Loose mid grey brown clay loam with small gravel <0.02m 20%	0.25m	1.60m	4m	None	Backfill of Quarry	
2/07	Deposit	Compact dark grey brown clay loam, with 2% charcoal flecks and 20% small gravel <0.02m	0.60m	1.60m	4m	None	Backfill of Quarry	
2/08	Cut	Sloping base	0.84m	1.60m	4m	None	Cut of Quarry 1	
Trench 2								
ID	**Type**	**Description**	**Depth**	**Width**	**Length**	**Finds**	**Interpretation**	**Date**
3/01	Topsoil	Loose, dark brown grey, clay loam	0.10m	1.60m	11m	None	Topsoil	Modern
3/02	Subsoil	Compact dark grey brown silty clay	0.12m	1.60m	11m	None	Subsoil	Modern
3/03	Deposit	Moderate compaction, mid red brown sandy gravel, < 0.05m 70-75%	0.34m	1.60m	11m	None	Backfill of Quarry	Modern
3/04	Deposit	Loose dark grey black sandy clay. Charcoal flecking 90%, small gravel 50% <0.06m	0.40m	1.60m	11m	None	Backfill of Quarry	Modern
3/05	Deposit	Moderate mid grey brown sandy clay, small gravel < 0.03m 40-50%	0.48m	1.60m	11m	Pot	Backfill of Quarry, finds not retained	
3/06	Deposit	Moderate mid grey brown clay silt. Small gravel 20% <0.02m	0.42m	1.60m	11m			
3/07	Natural	Loose light yellow brown, 50% sand 50% gravel.	0.24m	1.60m	11m		Natural	