

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

AT

LAND ADJACENT TO 43 BURCHESTER AVENUE

BARTON, OXFORD,

OXFORDSHIRE

NGR SP 5072 0704

On behalf of

The Anderson Orr Partnership Ltd

NOVEMBER 2010

REPORT FOR Anderson Orr Partnership
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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services conducted an evaluation on land at the junction of Burchester Avenue and Bernwood Road in Barton on the outskirts of Oxford (NGR SP 5072 0704). Buried soil horizons were identified but no significant archaeology existed.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development site is located at the junction of Burchester Road and Bernwood Road in the Oxford suburb of Barton (NGR 5072 0704). The underlying geology was the Beckley Sands.

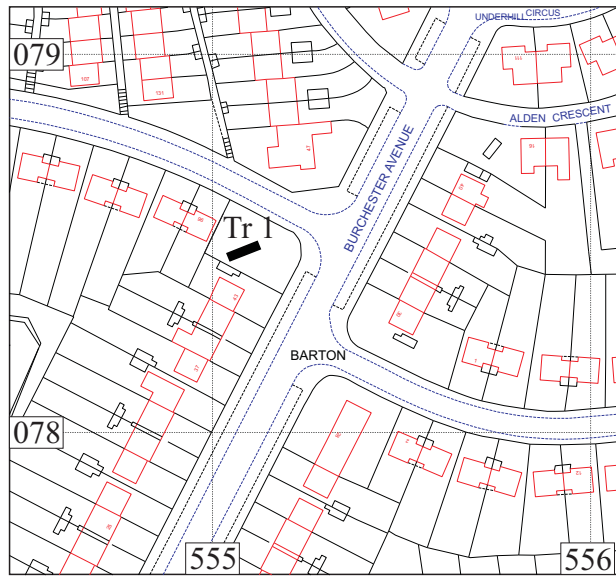
1.2 Planning Background

Planning permission (Ref. 10/01921/FUL) was granted by Oxford City Council for the erection of two storey building with accommodation in the roof space to provide 1 x 3-bedroom, 1 x 2-bedroom and 1 x 1-bedroom residential units, provision of bin and cycle stores, 3 parking spaces and private amenity space with bin and cycle storage and private amenity space. Due to the archaeological potential a condition was attached requiring that a programme of archaeological investigation was carried out. The first stage was an evaluation.

1.3 Archaeological Background

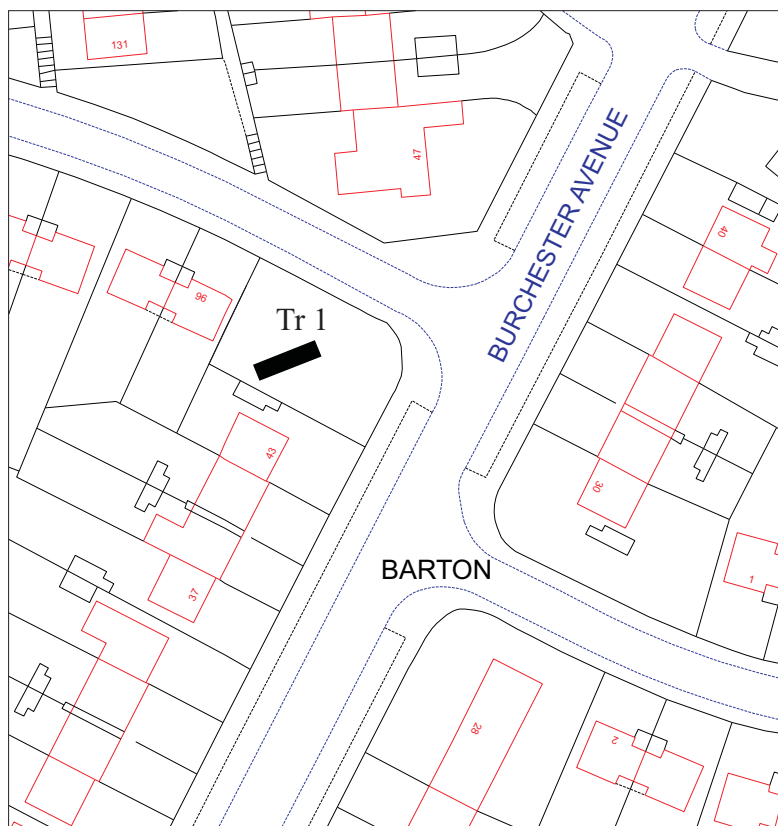
Excavations around the site have identified the remains of prehistoric and Roman settlement. Some 60m to the southwest were the remains of an Iron Age settlement with banks and ditches of hill-fort proportions (JMHS 2002, 2005; Gilbert 2009; HER 16972). The remains of a substantial gateway and internal storage pits have been excavated. Early Roman flexed burials have been identified in the hill-fort. Various names in the area may refer to this hill-fort though many of them seem to have no verified antiquity at present. Modern Ordnance Survey maps record the name Bury Knowle Park, the name Bury Knowle, referring to a rounded hill with a fortification is a common name associated with hill-forts. The name of Burchester Avenue is also of interest as an initial tentative interpretation is that it contains the forms burh, fortification, and ceaster, a fortification. No early forms of this name have yet been recognised. The forms of Barton are also of interest, initially *Berton* in 1246 it has been associated with *beretūn*, barley farmstead (Gelling 1953, 31). This interpretation does not explain the reason the names *Aldebarton* also in 1246 or *Oldebarton* in 1278-9 developed. Here Gelling suggests that the use of the term *(e)ald*, old, is perhaps referring to something disused, of which the hill-fort would be the logical site. It is possible that Barton is a corruption and that the original form was burh-tūn, farmstead by the fortification. In this context the prefix old would make perfect sense.

The main Alchester to Dorchester Roman road has been identified as running through Barton most notably in excavations at Bayards School (Pine 2004; TVAS 2009). Roman activity has been identified 200m to the northeast (HER 3665). The area



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0 100 m



0 25 m

Figure 1. Site location

around the Bayswater Brook has been noted generally as a location where scattered Roman settlement occurs associated with the nationally important Oxford potteries.

No reference is made of Barton in the Domesday Book of 1086 and one has to assume that any activity recorded at this time is either under Headington or Stowford (Morris 1978, 1.2, 10). The manor of Headington was held by the king and accounted for 10 hides. This manor had 20 villagers, 24 smallholders along with 2 mills, and 5 fisheries. The number of fisheries is perhaps indicative of a larger Headington territory extending to the River Cherwell, Peasemore Brook and the Bayswater Brook and thus incorporating Barton. Later textual data suggests that Barton formed part of the manor of Headington (Gilbert 2009, 8). The manor of Stowford, which presumably lay north of the Bayswater Brook, formed part of a dispersed manor with Shotover, Woodstock, Cornbury, and Wychwood, that had a combined hidage of 4 ½ hides, but more significantly they contained woodland 9 leagues in length.

The name Headington refers to the hill on which both Headington and Barton are located. The name *Hedenandun* is first recorded in the cartulary of Saint Frideswide in 1004 (Gelling 1953, 30). The later part of the name is *dūn*, a hill, while the first part of the name is associated with the unattested name **Hedena*, considered to related to the name *Heoden*. The manor of Headington operated as the caput or head of a royal manor, which in the early 11th century was bestowed on the minster of Saint Frideswide.

Tradition has it that a manor belonging to Ethelred existed at Court Close adjoining Manor Farm in Headington (VCH 1957, 157-68), to the south of the site. The royal residence at Headington is considered to have fallen out of favour as a royal residence in the reign of Henry I who preferred the royal hunting lodge at Woodstock.

The canons of Saint Frideswide were granted confirmation of the chapel of Saint Andrew at Headington in 1122 (VCH 1957, 116-22, 157-68, 214-21). The church at Headington is known to have formed part of a peculiar jurisdiction in 1222, to which the chapels of Elsfield, Marston and Binsey were also attached. It is possible that this peculiar developed from the traditions of an Anglo-Saxon royal church and that Headington originated as a royal church within the wider *parochiae* of Saint Frideswide. Saint Frideswide's part of this early *parochiae* probably included the churches of Church Cowley, Iffley and Horspath, where the minster held land and tithes from the 12th century, although the abbey at Oseney ended up holding the advowson of the churches (VCH 1957, 76-96, 177-206). There is increasing evidence that many if not all early parochial systems contained a minster church (Saint Frideswide, Oxford) and a lay lord's church (the King's church at Headington).

Barton is first referred to in this larger estate as a settlement in 1246; while in the *Rotuli Hundredorum* for 1279 the number of peasant households is referred to as 11 (VCH 1957, 157-68).

The settlement of Barton is not included on Agas' map of 1578, Loggan's map of 1675, Taylor's map of 1750, or Hoggard's map of 1850 (Gilbert 2009, 8-12), though it has to have existed due to the medieval references. Later maps show the village of Barton located on land some 300-400m to the west of the proposal site. Harrison's map of 1787, Cary's map of 1805, and the Enclosure map of 1802 all contain representations of the village.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

- To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the site.
- 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.
- To determine the impact of the proposed development on any remains present.
- To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation.
- To inform a decision regarding the need for a further stage of archaeological work.

In particular:

- To establish the character and extent of any Iron Age and/or Roman activity.
- To address some of the key issues highlighted in the Solent Thames Research Framework. This will depend on the type and date of remains encountered.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with the Oxford City Archaeologist the archaeological advisor to Oxford City Council (OCC). 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 of Field Archaeologists (1994).

3.2 Methodology

A 10m x 1.6m trench was opened up across the area of development for the new build (Figure 1).

4 RESULTS (Figure 2)

An evaluation trench 10m long was cut across the location of the footings for the new build. The natural geology (007) was a highly compact grey sand with some yellow mottling.

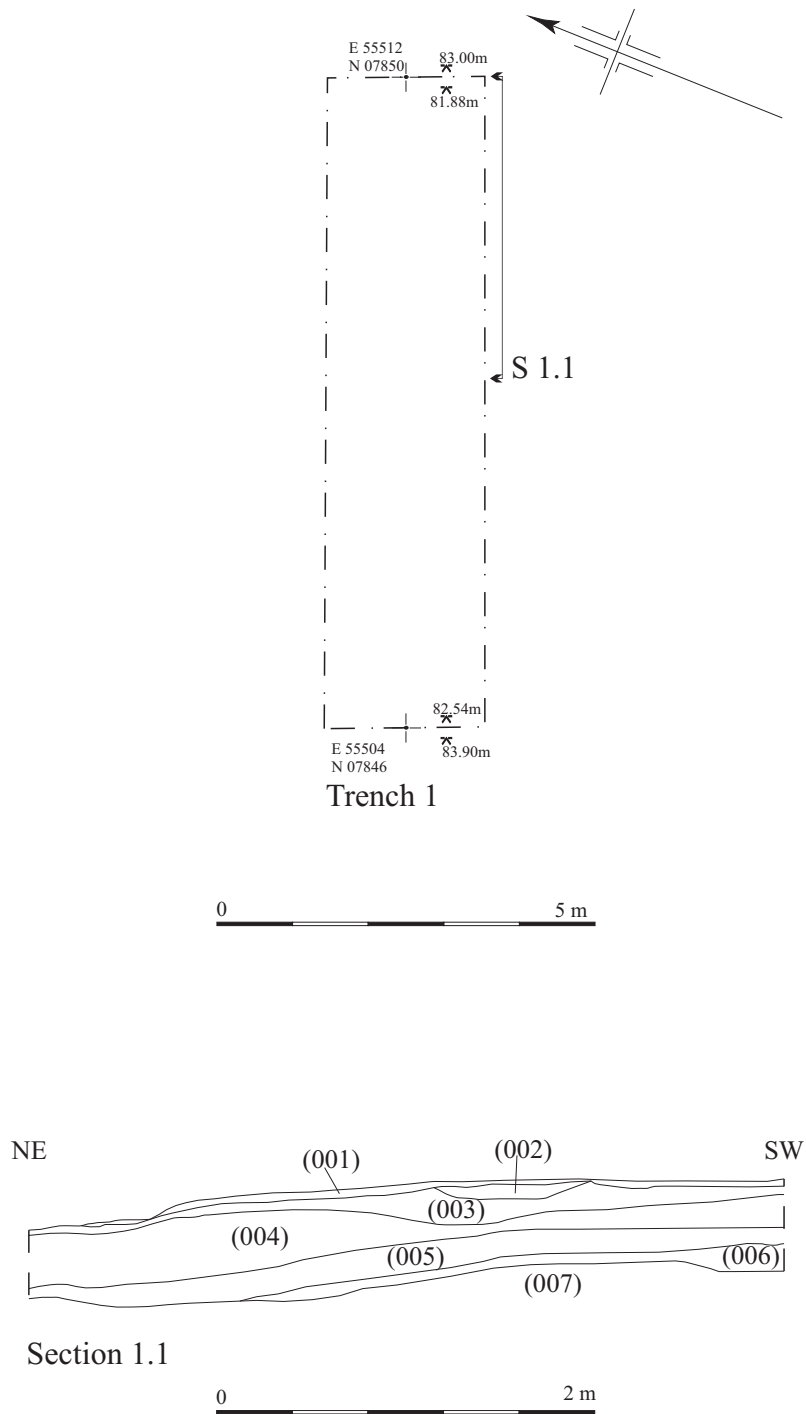


Figure 2. Trench 1 plan and section

4.1 Medieval to Post-Medieval

The natural (007) was covered by a deposit (006) a soft orange-brown sand with charcoal flecks and fragments of ceramic building material that was evident in the southwest end of the trench. This was interpreted as a subsoil. Covering deposit (006) was layer (005) a soft dark grey-brown sand, with pottery and ceramic building material fragments. This was interpreted as a buried topsoil of a recent date. The material from these deposits looked recent.

4.2 Modern

Covering the topsoil were a series of dump layers of which the lowest deposit (004) was a firm mid brown sandy silt with frequent charcoal flecks with occasional rounded stones. Covering deposit (004) was layer (003) a loose mid orange-brown silty sand with occasional small rounded stones. Layer (002) was a loose and very dark brown-black silt with frequent frogged bricks, and paving slabs. The deposit was 0.2m deep and 2m wide. These dump layers contained much building material and it is assumed that the garden plot saw considerable dumping when neighbouring parts of the estate were under development.

Over the layers of modern dumping, of which the latest was (002), a further deposit (001) developed. This was a loose dark brown silt with frequent modern brick, tree roots, and stones. The deposit was 0.15m deep.

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery (*By David Gilbert*)

The post-medieval pottery was recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994), as follows:

One sherd of Red Earthenware (OXDR), dated 1550+ weighing 33g was recovered from context (005). The sherd had a brown exterior glaze and was considerably abraded.

5.2 Ceramic Building Material

The evaluation recovered five fragments of ceramic building material from layers (005) and (006) that had a combined weight of 94g.

Context No.	Sherds	Weight (g)
(005)	1	27
(006)	4	67

The ceramic fabric types are of a later medieval or post-medieval type, but some are badly abraded suggesting that they have been in ploughsoil for some time.

5.3 Slag

A fragment of slag weighing 2g was recovered from deposit (006), the subsoil. It has the appearance of coke slag and is probably a product of the post-medieval, industrial period (19th century) or later.

6 DISCUSSION

The fieldwork by John Moore Heritage Services determined that though significant Iron Age archaeology had been found in the area in the past, and that the hamlet of Barton was located only a short distance from the early medieval royal caput of Headington, that this particular site had no significant archaeological remains. The pottery and ceramic building material are badly abraded and it is highly likely that the original subsoil is a product of a heavily ploughed late medieval to post-medieval ploughsoil. The layers above this are make-up layers from the development of the housing estate.

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 County Museums' Store.

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ID	Type	Description	Depth	Width	Length	Finds	Interpretation	Date
Trench 1								
001	Deposit	Loose, dark brown, silt, frequent inclusions of modern brick, and small stones	0.15				Recent topsoil	Modern
002	Deposit	Loose, dark brown black, silt, frequent brick and pavia	0.2	2			Make-up layer	Modern
003	Deposit	Loose, mid orange brown, silt sand, occasional small rounded stone	0.45				Make-up layer	Modern
004	Deposit	Firm, mid brown, sandy silt, with frequent charcoal flecks and occasional rounded stones	0.75				Make-up layer	Modern
005	Deposit	Soft, mid to dark grey brown, silt sand	0.35			Pottery, CBM	Buried topsoil	Medieval to Post-Medieval
006	Deposit	Soft, mid orange brown, sand with charcoal flecks	0.15			CBM, slag	Subsoil	Medieval to Post-Medieval
007	Deposit	Hard, grey with yellow mottling, sand					Natural: Beckley Sand deposits	