

Summary

John Moore Heritage Services conducted an evaluation on land adjacent to 6 King Street, Oxford (NGR SP 5072 0704) prior to the construction of flats. The site lies on one of the Thames gravel terraces, which have in the past produced abundant archaeological features and finds from the prehistoric and early medieval periods. The suburb of Jericho was developed during the 19th century after the canal had been built and the establishment of the printing press site of Oxford University Press. The evaluation trench identified the remains of a pit (undated) and the remains of a building presumably 19th century but with later alterations.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development site is located on land adjacent to 6 King Street, Oxford (NGR SP 5072 0704). The site lies between 58-62m OD. The underlying geology is the Upper Thames first gravel terrace

1.2 Planning Background

Oxford City Council granted planning permission for the erection of 4 storey building to provide 5 self-contained flats with bin and cycle storage and private amenity space (ref. 10/00741/FUL) on land adjacent to 6 King Street. Due to the archaeological and historical importance of the gravel terraces of the Thames attached to the permission was the requirement of an evaluation prior to construction work commencing on the site. This was in line with PPS 5 and other Local Planning policies.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The major excavations in the area of Jericho have occurred at the site of the Radcliffe Infirmary; where the earliest features identified were the remains of a Neolithic mortuary enclosure under one of the later Bronze-Age barrows (<http://www.museumoflondonarchaeology.org.uk/English/News/Archive/News09/oxfordradcliffe.intrim>). The barrow cemetery left its mark in the place-names of the area with Barrowcroft recorded in the 12th century AD. The cemetery is now recognised as having a group of barrows aligned across the terrace east to west of which the largest ring ditch has a diameter of 50m. There are a further group of barrows detected running along the edge of the gravel terrace towards the wall at Oxford, of which one has been recognised as lying below the rampart of the wall. These barrows have a Bronze Age origin dating to c. 1800 BC, but in the general area of the Radcliffe Infirmary burials believed to be of a Saxon date have also been claimed (HER 3686 SP 509 071, HER 9452 SP 508 071, HER 5774 SP 509 070, HER 16284 SP 5062 0718). No evidence of Saxon burials was recovered in the Radcliffe Infirmary excavations, but it is still suspected from the earlier finds that the barrows may have been reused. The early medieval date for some of this activity was assessed from the recovery of an Anglo-Saxon gold bracteate and also a midden with Anglo-Saxon

Figure 1. Site Location

deposits. There were also the remains of early medieval structures of a similar date, of which one a grubenhaus, fronted onto and aligned with Walton Street thus suggesting that the road has some antiquity.

The manor of Walton is accounted in 1086 when Roger of Ivry held 4 hides from the King (Morris 1978, 29.22). The manor had 1 slave and 13 smallholders and a fishery valued at 60s. This entry is suggestive that a 10th-11th settlement may exist in the area. The name is considered to have an etymology of Old English *wælle-tūn*, the farmstead by the wall (Gelling 1953, 23).

The manors of Walton were in ecclesiastical hands until the dissolution of the monastery, c. 1540, when George Owen acquired them (VCH 1979, 74-180). Roger Taylor (who died 1578) held Walton Farm besides five houses in the city, a brew house, and grey friars. Aga's Map of Oxford, dated 1578, shows the area of Walton called Jericho as a series of fields (VCH 1979, 74-180). Loggan's Map of 1675 shows encroachment towards Walton over certain parts of the suburb that later became Jericho. In the 17th century Walton Street was in a prime location for new investment.

The construction of the Oxford Canal in 1790 (VCH 1979, 181-259) enabled industrial besides residential development at the end of the 18th century and start of the 19th century. The Eagle Iron Works moved to Walton Well Road in 1825. The Radcliffe Infirmary was erected between 1759 and 1770. Walton House was constructed c. 1826 by Alderman Thomas Ensworth and later became Somerville College. The University Press moved to Walton Street in 1830, the presence of which led to the rapid development of the Jericho district through the latter part of that century. Working class houses were constructed along Walton Street and Jericho mainly in the decade 1821-31, but this continued into the 1860s and 1880s. The majority of HER sites listed in the Walton and Jericho areas are listed buildings of which there are eight, some of them accounted above.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

- To gather sufficient information to generate a reliable predictive model of the extent, character, date, state of preservation and depth of burial of important archaeological remains.

In particular:

- To determine the extent and character of any prehistoric or early medieval archaeology.
- To determine the potential for ephemeral Neolithic structures associated with the pre-barrow landscape and nearby enclosures.
- To assess the potential for a barrow belonging to the linear barrow cemetery existing in this location.
- To determine the potential for early Saxon settlement activity associated with nearby sunken buildings.

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 Council Archaeologist* the archaeological advisor to Oxford City Council. 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

A single evaluation trench 9m long by 1.6m wide was excavated across the proposed site of the new flats.

4 RESULTS (Figure 2)

4.1 Palaeolithic

The natural (1/20) was a friable yellow gravel with blue tinges of discolouration from oil contamination.

4.2 Phase 1: Undated Features (probably Early Medieval)

Cut into the gravel was a pit or post-pit (1/22) that was circular or oval in shape (not fully uncovered) with a probable diameter of approximately 1.25m (Plate 1). The fill (1/21) was a compact black silt clay, which was too contaminated to excavate so no material was recovered. Neolithic mortuary enclosures, ring-ditches of round barrows have been noted in the immediate vicinity, while evidence of early medieval settlement has also been located in the vicinity of Walton Street. A pit associated with an early medieval settlement is more probable, but a post-pit of an earlier period cannot necessarily be ruled out.

4.3 Phase 2: High Medieval-Post Medieval (12th-18th centuries)

Deposit (1/19) was a compact brown silt clay that must represent the layers of accumulated agricultural soil of the high medieval and post-medieval periods. This deposit has become extremely contaminated by oil.

4.4 Phase 3: 19th century (1810-40?)

Cut into deposit (1/19) were the foundation trenches for a post-medieval building 1/31, a linear cut probably some 0.6m wide running north to south, and 1/32 and 1/33

Figure 2.

Plates 1-4

of similar dimensions but running east to west. The former cut must represent the rear of the building, while the other two are internal walls. The foundations were constructed of limestone blocks that were roughly squared 1/02, 1/03, and 1/34. A further limestone foundation of a similar type was identifiable at the south end of the trench in a sondage, as the surviving wall of the neighbouring property (Figs. 1 and 2, highest level SW end). Part of a back fill (1/27) could be detected around wall 1/34. Two of these limestone foundations 1/03 and 1/34 had surviving brick walls 1/06 and 1/35. The building line of this structure could be recognised on the neighbouring property (see plate 4). A further sondage at the northeast side of the property identified limestone footings for the garden wall.

Internally to the building it was possible to recognise the remains of mortar surfaces, (see plate 2), which could be seen butting up to the limestone foundations (1/15, 1/18 & 1/37). Mortar surface (1/15) was a highly compact light grey mortar apparent in the south end of the trench. In the north end of the trench the layer (1/18) was a compact blue-grey mortar layer with some charcoal inclusions. The slightly richer blue colour may have been a result of the extensive oil contamination. In the centre of the trench the mortar layer (1/37) was only evident against the foundations as a compact white mortar sand butting up to 1/02. Elsewhere it appeared to have been truncated.

In the north and south rooms of the building the deposits continued to accumulate. Sealing deposit (1/18) in the north room was a layer (1/17) a compact grey-brown silt clay deposit 0.33m deep. This was in turn sealed by a hard pink-white mortar surface some 0.05m deep (016). Sealing this was deposit (1/10) a moderately compact yellow-brown gravel deposit in a silt matrix.

A similar deposit (1/14) to (1/17) was apparent over mortar surface (1/15) in the southern room, a moderately compact light grey brown silt clay 0.15m deep. It was apparent that deposit (1/14) was sealed by deposit (1/13) a moderately compact yellow brown mixed layer of gravel and sand, corresponding to (1/10).

The cut of a service trench 1/07 was evident cutting wall 1/03 and the later internal deposit 1/10; this contained a lead water pipe and is presumably of a 19th century date.

A number of the clay pipes have been dated from the site, of which two periods of activity on the site were identified as 1810-40 and 1857-75, a further clay pipe from 1/28 gave a possible date of 1683-4, which lies outside the general date range. Though none of the dated pipes came from these contexts it is highly likely that they point to a general construction for the earliest phase of the building to between 1810-40. This date range contains the decade 1821-31 that saw the most intensive phase of development in the Jericho and Walton areas.

4.5 Phase 4: Late 19th-20th centuries (1857-75?)

The mortar layer (1/37), in the central room, had been truncated by cut 1/38 (Section 1.1). This was a rectangular cut only evident in the room. The reason for this cut was not ascertained. The fill of this cut contained numerous deposits that were difficult to reconcile in any way with the deposits to the north and south of the internal walls, thus confirming the existence of the cut. The base of the cut was obscured by dark discolouration by oil. The lowest recognisable fill (1/28) was a highly compact mid-

yellow brown silt clay with gravel inclusions some 0.3m deep. This was sealed by fill (1/23) a compact dark brown clay with a black-brown lens of material on its upper surface, which was full of clay pipe debris. The whole deposit was approximately 0.2m deep. Covering this was fill (1/29) a highly compact yellow-brown sand clay with gravel inclusions and a maximum depth of 0.1m deep. Sealing this was fill (1/39) a compact grey-brown clay with gravel and sand inclusions 0.07m deep. The cut for the service trench, probably the earliest sewer pipe and fill 1/40, was cut through this deposit, but the cut could not be identified higher up.

Deposit (1/23) from the pit fill contained a datable clay pipe bowl of Samuel Carter of Banbury dated 1857-75, thus indicating the probability that the central room in the building was reworked in the last half of the 19th century.

The made ground (1/26) appears to lie above the earlier cuts 1/38 and 1/40 (Section 1.1 and plate 3), it thus seals the top of the service pipe fill and also the edge of the truncated mortar surface. Covering this was deposit (1/25) a compact black-grey clay layer containing occasional brick and flagstone fragments. The infilling of this larger cut must have been accompanied by the removal of the internal wall 1/34, which survived as one course of bricks over the limestone foundation.

The deposit (1/24) was a compact mid-yellow brown mortar layer 0.1m deep, which was the bedding layer for 1/05 a brick and flagstone floor surface with a hard grey cement over its surface in some places. The bricks were 210m x 110m, and were placed to cover the brick wall 1/34 as well as the bedding layer. Butting either side of this brick and flagstone surface were two layers of compact blue-grey clay (1/04) and (1/08). These were approximately 0.1m thick. These deposits were similar in their make-up to deposit 1/11, while the bricks and mortar 1/09 was probably also contemporary.

A brick wall or layer of bricks 1/09 could be recognised in the north room of the trench covering 1/10. There was no apparent foundation underneath the bricks; it thus sat on the gravel surface. A hard compact mortar deposit lay alongside it. Deposit (1/08) was a compact blue-grey clay layer that remained in certain places covering deposit (1/10) but appeared to butt up to 1/09.

In the south room the cut of a later sewer pipe was apparent through layer (1/13) on the south side, but must originally have been cut through deposit (1/11) a compact blue-grey clay with charcoal inclusions 0.1m deep, that overlay (1/13) on the north side. Context (1/11) was probably one of the blue clay layers designed to lie around brick settings. A later modern make-up layer sealed the back fill of the sewer pipe trench.

Sewage and drainage systems were built in Oxford from 1771 (VCH 1979). However, the sewerage systems as we know them did not come into existence until plumbers, for example Thomas Crapper established his sanitary businesses in 1861 (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Crapper). London had its sewerage system upgraded in 1858 by the civil engineer Bazalgette (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Sewerage_System). Sludge technology was introduced in 1914 (<http://www.waterengineering.co.uk/fbda-history.wp>) with

Manchester and Worcester being the first to adapt the technology at that time. The insertion of the original sewers in the Walton area could date to 1860 or after.

The main finds from all of these layered deposits in the rooms of the structure were clay tobacco pipe, and only one sherd of domestic pottery, this combined with the quantities of oil on the site are suggestive that the probable Victorian and or later Edwardian buildings served an industrial purpose.

4.6 Phase 5: Modern (Late 20th century)

The final layers can be attributed to the late 20th century and represent distinct make-up layers across the site. Layer (1/12) was a moderately compact black-brown mixed deposit of sand, gravel, mortar and clay, with charcoal deposits. This layer was 0.25m deep and 1.87m long. The mixed nature of the deposit suggests that it could have either been dumped from another site or that levelling could have taken place on site with material being deposited in disturbed hollows. This contained a clay pipe of 1810-40, but also much later material. Deposit (1/01) was a further make-up layer of a highly compact mid-red brown sand with rubble throughout, which covered (1/12). This material (1/01) was probably brought into the site to level up prior to the laying of the reinforced concrete.

5 FINDS

5.1 Clay Tobacco Pipes (By John Moore)

During the evaluation 70 fragments of clay tobacco pipe were found and retained. Only two fragments suggest a date. The types of decoration on the bowl fragments are of the same general date range.

Context	No.	Part	Comments
1/12	1	Bowl with moulded leaf motif	Oswald G24 1810-40
1/13	20	Stem fragments	
1/13	5	Bowl fragment	
1/13	2	Bowl fragment	Moulded leaf and vertical lines
1/13	1	Bowl fragment	T?
1/13	1	Bowl	TM, moulded leaf and vertical lines
1/13	1	Bowl fragment	Illegible mark, moulded decoration - ?horse
1/13	1	Bowl fragment	TH
1/14	7	Stem	
1/23	14	Stem	
1/23	4	Bowl fragment	
1/23	1	Pedestal base	SC
1/23	1	Bowl fragment	N?
1/27	7	Stem	
1/28	1	Bowl fragment	Oswald ?G24 1810-40, symbol either side of spur
1/28	1	Bowl fragment	IH
1/29	1	Bowl fragment	TH, moulded leaf and vertical lines
1/30	1	Stem	
Total	70		

5.2 Pottery

Three fragments of pottery were recovered from two contexts weighing 46g. The pottery from context (1/13) was a mass-produced willow pattern of the 19th-20th

century. The sherds from context (1/12) were modern mass-produced pieces of white glazed fabric of the 20th century.

Context	Sherd no.	Weight (g)
1/12	2	42
1/13	1	4

5.3 Tile

Context (1/05) produced one sherd of 20th century white glazed ceramic tile, weighing 12g.

5.4 Bone

Context (1/29) produced 6 fragments of animal bone, undoubtedly originally from one bone, weighing 25g. The end would have been cut flat and there was another sign of butchery marks on the bone.

5.5 Shell

Context (1/13) produced the remains of a water mollusc, an oyster, weighing 27g.

6 DISCUSSION

The earliest phases on the site are not well dated, and the contamination of the deposits means that although artefacts could be recovered any environmental material is likely to have been compromised. Though pits are recognised from various time periods it is likely that the feature is early medieval in date and relates to the features identified as aligned on Walton Street some 50m to the east. This has been interpreted as phase 1.

The site was abandoned by settlement and an agricultural soil horizon developed with a thick loam, which is now also contaminated with oil. This has been interpreted as phase 2.

The recovery of the pipe possibly dated 1683-4 is an artefact that dates to the latter part of the 17th century, a time when the VCH claims, that Walton (including Jericho) was ripe for investment and development. There may have been activity along Walton Street at this time, but the site was too far from the road for any features to be present of that date.

Structures or other features were not built on the site until the 19th century when Jericho and Walton are known to have expanded rapidly. The site had evidence of a brick building with stone foundations. The back line of the building was evident in the adjacent wall line indicating that this was a two story structure (Plate 4), while the plans show it was originally divided into three rooms and then later two (thus having two phases). There are probably two phases of floors also with the second phase probably built after the insertion of the earliest probable sewer system. These phases are 3 and 4.

Phase 5 is represented by the modern destruction layers and levelling of the 20th century.

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.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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