

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION ON LAND 274-276 WOODSTOCK ROAD,
OXFORD**

SP 5043 0912

On behalf of

Riach Architects

October 2010

REPORT FOR Riach Architects
65 Banbury Road
Oxford
OX2 6PE

PREPARED BY Paul Riccoboni AIFA

EDITED BY John Moore MIFA

ILLUSTRATION BY Eoin Fitzsimons

FIELDWORK 15th October 2010

REPORT ISSUED 27th October 2010

ENQUIRES TO John Moore Heritage Services
Hill View
Woodperry Road
Beckley
Oxfordshire OX3 9UZ

Tel/Fax 01865 358300
Email: info@jmheritageservices.co.uk

Site Code OXWR 10
JMHS Project No: 2298
Archive Location The archive is currently held by JMHS and will be deposited with Oxford Museum Services in due course with Accession Number: 2010.77

CONTENTS

	Page	
<i>SUMMARY</i>	1	
1 INTRODUCTION	1	
1.1 Site Location	1	
1.2 Planning Background	1	
1.3 Archaeological Background	3	
2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION	3	
3 STRATEGY	4	
3.1 Research Design	4	
3.2 Methodology	4	
4 RESULTS	4	
4.1 Trench 1	4	
4.2 Trench 2	8	
4.3 Trench 3	9	
4.4 Reliability of Techniques and Results	11	
5 FINDS	11	
5.1 The Pottery	11	
5.2 Other Finds	11	
6 DISCUSSION	12	
7 BIBLIOGRAPHY	12	
HER Data Summary Sheet	14	
 FIGURES		
Figure 1	Trench location	2
Figure 2	Trench 1, 2 & 3: Plans & Sections	5
 PLATES		
Plate 1:	General: Trench 1	15
Plate 2:	General: Trench 2	15
Plate 3:	General: Features within Trench 3	15

Summary

John Moore Heritage Services concluded an archaeological evaluation in advance of the construction of a new development. Three trenches, totalling approximately 25 metres in length were excavated to the underlying natural geology. One posthole was revealed in Trench 2 sealed by the subsoil and topsoil. All the other features were dated to the late post-medieval period or were modern.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location and Geology (Figure 1)

The site is located at 274-276 Woodstock Rd, Oxford (SP 50430912) and is currently occupied by a residential dwelling at the front and car washing space. The site lies at *c.* 62.70m AOD and the underlying geology according to the British Geological Survey is Oxford Gravel Terrace (Upper Thames Second Gravel Terrace). As a result of the trench excavation the geology was seen to be light brown-orange clay silt overlying river terrace gravels.

1.2 Planning Background

Planning application number 10/01556/FUL has been granted by Oxford City Council to develop land to the rear of 274 and 276 Woodstock Rd with the erection of one detached and two semi detached four bedroom town houses plus the provision of 8 parking spaces, cycle parking and bin storage. Due to the site's potential to contain archaeological remains a condition for a programme of archaeological work has been attached. The Archaeological Officer for Oxford City Council prepared for the work. The first stage was for an archaeological evaluation. John Moore Heritage Services prepared a *Written Scheme of Investigation* for Stage 1 which proposed a method to satisfy the requirements of the Brief, and which was agreed with the Archaeological Officer for Oxford City Council.

The Brief prepared by Oxford City Council archaeologist stated the planning policy guidance regarding archaeological assets:

PPS5 Policy HE12.3 states that where the loss of the whole or a material part of a heritage asset's significance is justified, local planning authorities should require the developer to record and advance understanding of the significance of the heritage asset before it is lost, using planning conditions or obligations as appropriate. Developers should publish this evidence and deposit copies of the reports with the relevant historic environment record. Local planning authorities should require any archive generated to be deposited with a local museum or other public depository willing to receive it. Local planning authorities should impose planning conditions or obligations to ensure such work is carried out in a timely manner and that the completion of the exercise is properly secured.

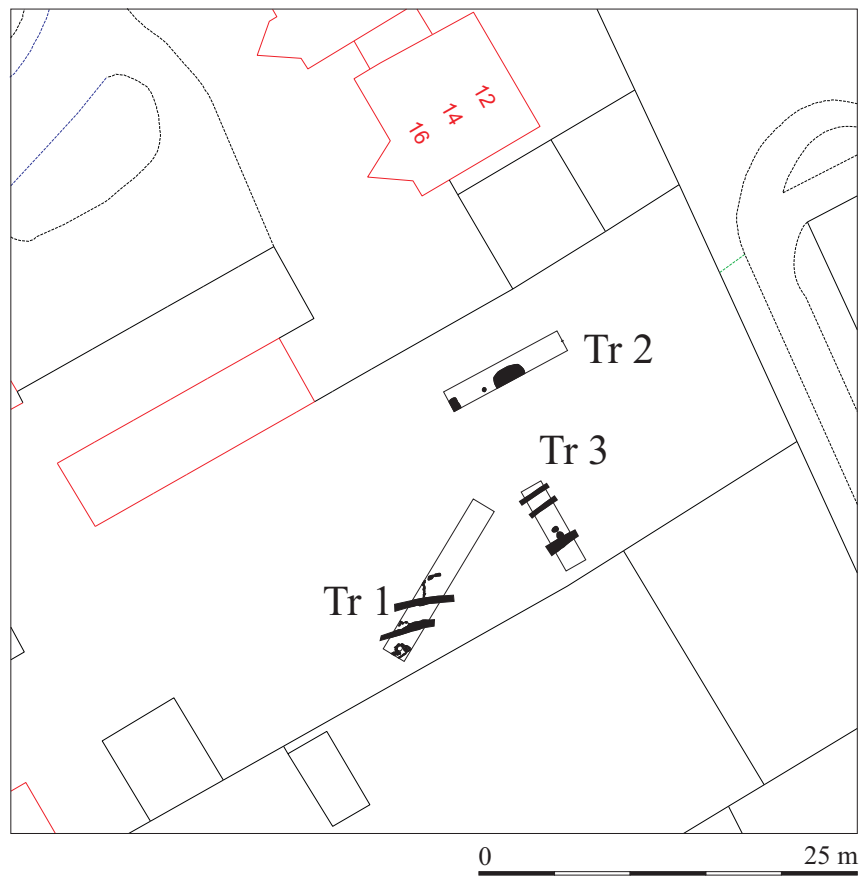
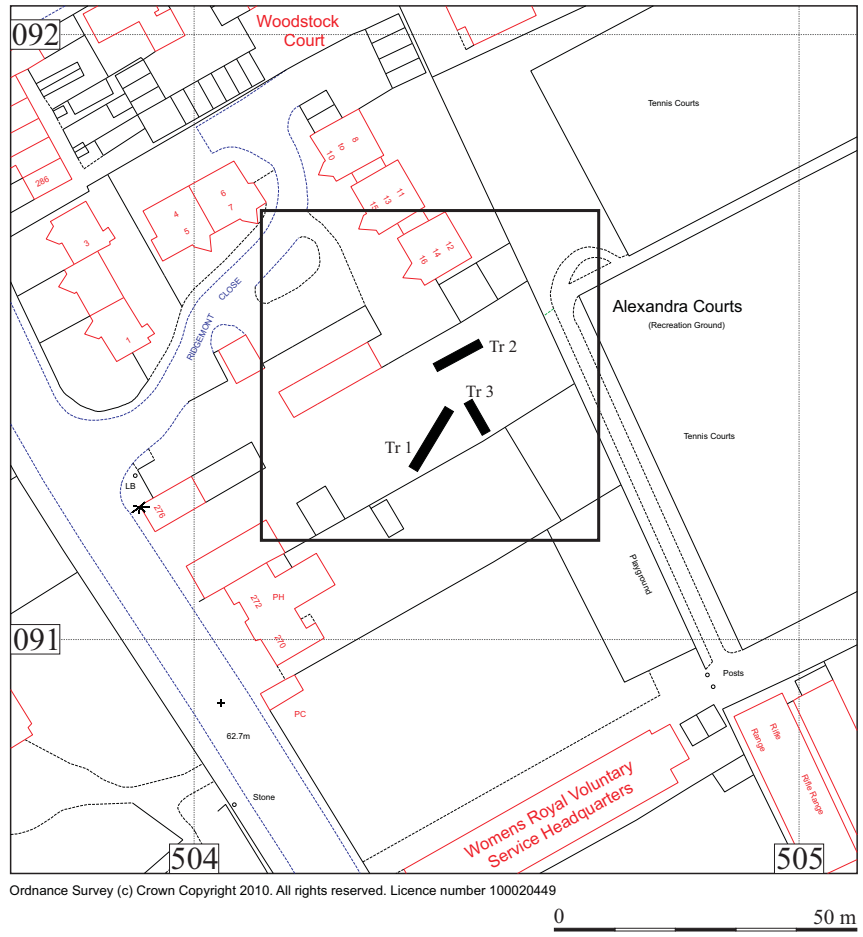


Figure 1. Site location

1.3 Archaeological Background

The site was identified as being of archaeological potential, due to a number of sites noted on the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Records for this area.

The Oxford City Council Brief gave a description of the archaeological background of the area and is repeated here.

Aerial photographs and evidence from archaeological excavations have demonstrated the presence of an extensive prehistoric ritual and agricultural landscape across the terrace, involving Neolithic/Bronze Age ritual and funerary monuments and Iron Age /Roman agricultural field systems and settlement. The site lies within a poorly understood area of the Oxford gravel terrace 270m from a known Roman occupation site (County HER No 26007) and 100m from a parch-mark enclosure of likely prehistoric date (Country HER No 3575).

The site is shown as within open fields on the first edition 1:2500 OS map (1878) of the area. Development in the area of the proposed development was started by 1913 and later with residential houses on the north side of the road by 1936.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

It was stated within the WSI (JMHS 2010) that the aims of the archaeological evaluation were 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*

In particular:

- *Establish the character and extent of any prehistoric or Roman activity*
- *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 (if necessary)*
- *To address some 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

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in the *Written Scheme of Investigation*. The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1999) and the procedures laid down in MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

3.2 Methodology

The trenching sample required was achieved through the excavation of three trenches measuring a cumulative length of 25m.

Each trench was 1.5m in width and was excavated by a JCB type tracked excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The resultant surfaces were cleaned by hand where necessary prior to hand excavation of the potential archaeological deposits and features.

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. The trenches were backfilled after recording.

David Radford, City Archaeologist for Oxford City Council monitored the work.

4 RESULTS

The trenches were positioned in a pattern providing good coverage of the site to the rear of 274-76 Woodstock Rd, Oxford over the area of the proposed development impact. All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers without brackets indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material.

4.1 Trench 1 (Figure 2, Plate 1)

Trench 1 was excavated to a length of 11m and was 1.5m wide. The lowest deposit noted within the trenches consisted of natural clay (1/14), reached between varying heights of 61.47m to 61.72m AOD. Above the natural were subsoil and topsoil deposits. Across much of the trench the topsoil had been removed and gravel and tarmac were laid down.

At the south eastern end of the trench above the natural clay (1/14) were a series of wall foundations and a probable fire place (Figure 2) of post-medieval/Victorian date. These were the earliest features within the trench.

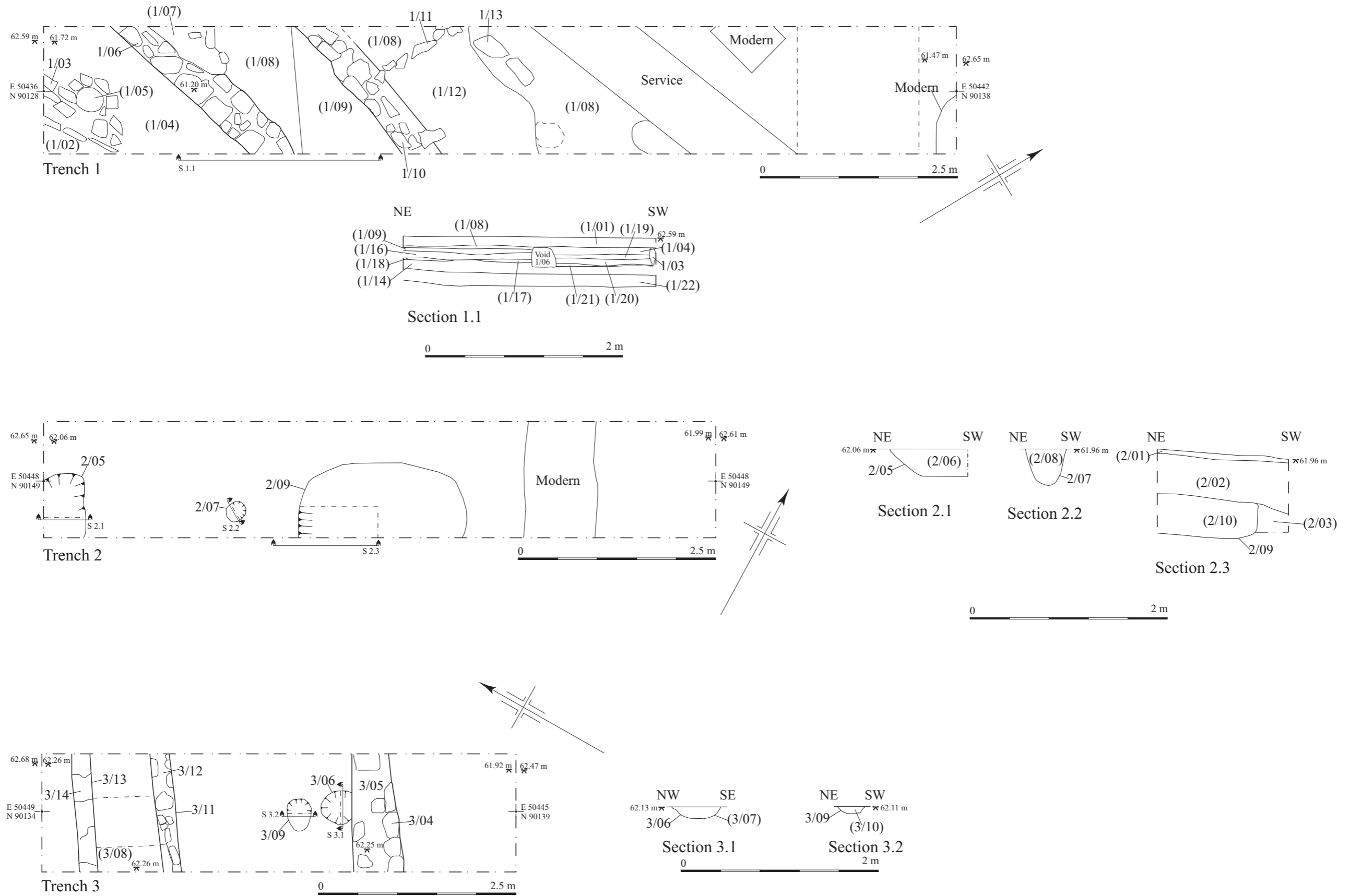


Figure 2. Trenches 1 - 3 Plans and sections

Summary of Context list: Trench 1 (Figure 2)

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Findings	Date
Trench 1							
1/01	Layer	Tarmac/gravel	0.10- 0.20m	Tr.	Tr.	None retained	Modern
1/02	Layer	Topsoil	0.10-0.20m	Tr.	Tr.	None retained	Post med
1/03	Layer	Flat paving slabs	0.10	0.60	0.50	None	
1/04	Deposit	Pink brown mortar rich silty clay	c. 0.10m	Tr.	0.60m	None	
1/05	Fill	Dark brownish grey with rich charcoal	c. 0.20m	0.30m	0.30m	None	
1/06	Masonry	Wall foundation	c. 0.20m	0.50m	Tr.	None	
1/07	Deposit	Sandy and bright yellow mortar	c. 0.10m	0.40m	0.60	None	
1/08	Deposit	Floor surface	c. 0.10m	0.80m	Tr.	None	
1/09	Fill	Dark grey brown silty loam	c. 0.10m	1.30m	Tr.	None	
1/10	Masonry	Wall foundation	0.20m	0.40m	Tr.	None	
1/11	Masonry	Wall foundation/ part of fireplace	0.10	0.10m	1.1m	None	
1/12	Cut	Coal rich gritty clay silt/ part of fireplace	c. 0.10m	1.4m	1.1m	None	
1/13	Fill	Black coal rich patch	c. 0.10m	0.30m	0.20	None	
1/14	Deposit	Natural clay	c. 0.20m	Tr.	Tr.	None	
1/15	Deposit	Natural upper terrace gravels	/	Tr.	Tr.	None	
1/16	Deposit	Redeposited CBM material	0.10m	Tr.	2.6m	None retained	
1/17	Deposit	White yellow gritty mortar clay silt	0.06m	Tr.	1.1m	None	
1/18	Deposit	White yellow gritty mortar clay	0.06m	Tr.	0.90m	None	
1/19	Deposit	Yellow clay	0.12m	Tr.	1.9m	None	
1/20	Deposit	Red brick mottled with clay silt	0.12m	Tr.	1.9m	None retained	
1/21	Deposit	Yellow clay	0.05	Tr.	0.70m	None	
1/22	Deposit	Natural clay	0.25	Tr.	Tr.	None	

Period 1: Late Post medieval (19th/20th Century)*Walls*

Two walls were orientated on an east-west alignment 1/06 & 1/10. Wall 1/06 (62.20m AOD) was 0.50m in width and had two surviving courses. It was constructed of roughly hewn limestone blocks (<0.10-40 x <0.05- 0.25m). The stone blocks were faced on both sides and bonded with a yellow sandy mortar (1/07).

Wall 1/10 was 0.40m wide and was two courses thick constructed of roughly hewn limestone blocks (<0.05-0.25m x 0.05-0.35m) bonded with a yellow sandy mortar. Aligned at a right angle with Wall 1/10 was a narrow partition wall 1/11. This wall was 0.10m in wide and 1.10m in length and it formed part of a probable fireplace/hearth.

Paving

To the south of Wall 1/07 was an area of flat paving slabs: 1/03. The slabs (<0.10-0.20m) were laid in an irregular fashion and one course thick. Cut through the paving slabs was a small circular feature with a dark grey-brown charcoal rich fill 1/05.

Floors

Between Wall 1/06 and paving 1/03 was pink-brown silty clay of a firm consistency with high concentrations of mortar throughout (1/04). This deposit was thought to have been laid down as the base of hard standing that would have existed above it (1/05).

To the north of Wall 1/06 was *c.* 0.10m thick firm and very compact yellow clay floor surface covering an area of 1m x 1.5m (1/08). This same floor was seen again to the north and west of the fireplace/hearth.

Fireplace

The fireplace consisted of two surviving walls: 1/10 & 1/11 (described above). Two other ashy and coal deposits were within this area. Layer (1/09) was a *c.* 0.10m thick soft ashy charcoal rich gritty silt which butted up against wall 1/10.

Between Walls 1/10 & 1/11 was coal rich gritty clay silt with some burnt and broken bricks (1/12). To the north of this deposit was a very rich coal patch on the edge of the hearth area (1/13).

Period 2: Modern features (Late 20th Century AD)

The backfill of a water pipe was seen traversing the trench on an approximate east-west orientation filled by gravels. Adjacent to this service trench was a disused inspection pit.

At the very north of the trench another modern feature was seen truncating the natural but sealed by the existing gravel and tarmac road surface.

When the section was recorded of this trench some more post-medieval deposits were seen once the walls and floors had been removed: (1/16), (1/17), (1/18), (1/19), (1/20), (1/21) & (1/22). These deposits are all of modern date and are summarised in Table 1 (Figure 2; Section 1.1).

4.2 Trench 2 (Figure 2, Plate 2)

Trench 2 was excavated to a length of 9m (x 1.5m) and to varying of depths of between 61.99m AOD at the eastern end and 62.06m AOD at the western end of the trench. The stratigraphy within the trench consisted of the following deposits (earliest to latest). The natural clay 'head' deposit was the earliest deposit (2/04). Overlying this was an interface layer where mixing of the natural clay and the overlying subsoil had taken place (2/03). Above (2/03) was mid-dark brown-grey silty clay subsoil (2/02). The latest deposit was rough stone and gravel modern hardcore currently used as the existing car park surface (2/01).

Table 2: Summary of Context List Trench 2

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Date
Trench 2							
2/01	Layer	Tarmac/gravel	0.10- 0.20m	Tr.	Tr.	None retained	Modern
2/02	Layer	Mid-dark brownish grey Subsoil	0.10-0.20m	Tr.	Tr.	None	
2/03	Layer	Mid brownish orange natural interface layer	0.25m	Tr.	Tr.	None	
2/04	Layer	Light brownish orange clay silt natural	/	Tr.	Tr.	None	
2/05	Cut	Post med/modern pit	0.20m	0.40m	0.50m	/	
2/06	Fill	Fill of 2/05	0.20m	0.40m	0.50m	CBM	Post med
2/07	Cut	Cut of post hole	c. 0.20m	0.30m	0.30	/	
2/08	Fill	Fill of 2/07	c. 0.20m	0.30m	0.30m	None	
2/09	Cut	Post medieval pit	c. 0.40m	1.0m (min)	2m	/	
2/10	Fill	Fill of 2/09	c. 0.40m	1.0m (min)	2m	Pottery	Post med

Period 1: Late Post medieval (19th/20th Century)

Pits

Sealed beneath the overburden described above was pit 2/05 (62.12m AOD). This was a sub rectangular shaped feature with concave sides and a roughly flat base (Figure 2;

Section 2.1). It was filled by loose mid grey-brown silty clay (2/06) with a fragment of post-medieval ceramic building material (CBM) (Section 5).

A large pit 2/09 (61.99m AOD), 2.20m in length and 0.40m deep was seen directly beneath the subsoil (2/02) (Figure 2; Section 2.3). This pit had sharp concave sides and a flattish base and was filled by firm (loose in places) dark grey-brown silty clay with charcoal flecks throughout (2/10) and modern finds including scrap metal fragments.

Posthole

A posthole 2/07 (61.96m AOD) was *c.* 0.30m in diameter and 0.20m deep had concave sides and a rounded base (Figure 2; Section 2.2). It was filled by a homogenous firm light grey clay silt (2/08) which contained no finds.

Period 2: Modern (Late 20th Century AD)

A pit was seen at the eastern end of the trench and was clearly modern and therefore only marked on the plan.

4.3 Trench 3 (Figure 2, Plate 3)

Trench 3 was excavated to a length of 5m (1.5m wide) and to varying depths of between 61.92m AOD at the southern end and 62.26m AOD at the northern end of the trench. The overburden consisted of the following deposits (earliest to latest). The natural mid brown-orange clay silt was seen at the base of the trench (3/03). Overlying the natural was mottled dark brown-grey clay silt with black charcoal flecks interpreted as the subsoil (3/02). The latest deposit was the hardcore and tarmac currently used as the car park surface (3/01).

Table 3: Summary of Context List in Trench 3

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Date
Trench 3							
3/01	Layer	Tarmac/gravel	0.10m	Tr.	Tr.	None retained	Modern
3/02	Layer	Subsoil	0.20m	Tr.	Tr.	None retained	
3/03	Layer	Natural	0.10	0.60	0.50	None	
3/04	Construction cut	Wall trench	<i>c.</i> 0.15m	0.50m	Tr.	/	
3/05	Masonry	Wall consisting of limestone blocks	<i>c.</i> 0.15m	0.50m	Tr.	None	
3/06	Cut	Shallow scoop	0.15m	0.40m	0.50m	/	
3/07	Fill	Dark brownish grey fill of 3/06	0.15m	0.40m	0.50m	None	
3/08	Deposit	Dark mottled black silty clay	<i>c.</i> 0.30m	0.70m	Tr.	Brick and ceramic	Post med

3/09	Cut	Cut of posthole/scoop	0.10m	0.30m	0.35m		
3/10	Fill	Fill of 3/09	0.10m	0.35m	0.35m	None	
3/11	Construction cut	Wall trench	0.20m	0.25m	Tr.		
3/12	Masonry	Limestone blocks	0.20m	0.25m	Tr.	None	
3/13	Construction cut	Wall trench	0.20m	0.25m	Tr.	/	
3/14	Masonry	Red handmade bricks	0.20m	0.25m	Tr.	None	

Period 1: Late Post medieval (19th/20th Century)

Walls

Three walls were surviving within the trench: 3/05, 3/11 & 3/13. These walls were all aligned approximately east west.

Wall (3/05) (62.25m AOD) was set within construction cut 3/04 and was composed of roughly hewn limestone blocks (<0.30 x 0.20 x 0.10m) of poor finishing. The stones were roughly dressed on the south side indicating this was the direction of the wall face. The stones were bonded with a sandy mortar with fragments of red brick within it suggesting a post-medieval date for this wall.

Wall (3/12) (62.26m AOD) set within construction trench 3/11 consisted of limestone blocks (<0.25 x 0.30 x 0.10m) roughly hewn with two surviving courses. The stones were well bonded with a lime? mortar. This wall seemed to form part of a narrow structure with brick wall 3/14.

Wall 3/14 (62.26m AOD) was composed of unfrosted standard sized red handmade bricks set within a silty clay mortar, all placed within a construction cut 3/13.

Between walls 3/12 & 3/14 was a deposit of dark mottled blackish silty clay (3/08). This deposit had 19th/20th Century finds within it (not retained).

Other Features

Cut 3/06 (62.13m AOD) was a sub rounded feature with concave sides and a roughly flat base (Figure 2; Section 3.1). It was filled by dark brown-grey silty clay with charcoal flecks throughout (3/07).

Cut 3/09 (62.11m AOD) was a sub rounded feature interpreted as a possible posthole, which had sharp concave sides forming a rounded base (Figure 2; Section 3.2). It was filled by firm dark grey-black silty clay with charcoal flecks throughout (3/10).

4.5 Reliability of Techniques and Results

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

5 FINDS

5.1 The Pottery

The retained pottery assemblage comprised 5 sherds with a total weight of 68g. This assemblage consists of 18th & 19th Century domestic ceramic food related types. 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*.

Fill (2/10) contained a single body sherd of English yellow ware weighing 29g. This consists of a buff fabric, with a yellow tinted glaze coating the exterior and interior of the vessel. This undecorated sherd is probably from a chamber pot, with a remnant bulbous body and flat rim. Yellow ware dates from the 1820's onwards.

Fill (3/08) contained a single undecorated body sherd of red earthenware pottery weighing 10g which probably dates to the 18th Century AD. This fill also contained three sherds of blue transfer printed porcelain pottery sherds weighing 29g which probably date to the 19th or 20th Century AD.

The pottery sherds post date the fabric types identifiable throughout the region (Mellor 1994, 17).

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

Cntxt	No	Wt	Pottery type number	Date
(2/10)	1		None	19 th C
(3/08)	4		None	19 th C
Total	5			

5.2 Other finds

Fill (2/10) contained many fragments of corroded scrap iron pieces of which only a 5% sample was collected. Two fragments of slate, which probably once formed part of a 19th Century roof, were collected as dating evidence (24g). The final find within this fill was a single clay pipe stem of probable 19th Century AD date.

Fill (2/06) contained one fragment of hand made yellow brick weighing 295g. The fragmentary remains of the brick do not permit any detailed analysis but it is likely to date from the 18th or early 19th Century AD. Fill (3/08) also contained a small fragment of the same type of yellow brick weighing 112g.

Fill (2/06) also contained one small fragment of coloured glass of a probable 19th Century AD date.

6 DISCUSSION

The depth of overburden was as expected and preservation of features was good especially those relating to the 19th and 20th Centuries. The results of the evaluation suggest that post-medieval and modern building disturbance had taken place on the site, with a relatively significant presence of features from this period. The main features relate to buildings, which formerly occupied this location as seen on historic OS maps dating from 1899 until the 1950's. Some of the walls in Trench's 1 & 2 must relate to the building seen on maps during this period. The building was shown to extend to the south, now a different property boundary.

A posthole was recorded in Trench 2 and was the only feature considered to have a possible ancient date. Although no finds were recovered from its fill it had a very different colour and consistency of the sort usually attributed to ancient/prehistoric time period. Given that the site is close to a Roman farmstead at Walled Garden, Middle Way (JMHS 2007) it is not unreasonable to assume that the posthole may have a prehistoric or Roman origin and may be connected to the Roman features uncovered at this site.

The archaeological evaluation was successful in gathering sufficient information to understand the extent, character, date, state of preservation and depth of burial of archaeological remains within the area of study as set out in the site specific Brief (OCC 2010) and Specification (JMHS 2010).

Other research aims set out in the Solent Thames Historic Environment Framework could not be fulfilled in this report, but analysis of relevant historic maps has helped identify the buildings uncovered during fieldwork.

A confidence rating is good that the best possible results were achieved.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

English Heritage 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects 2*

Institute of Field Archaeologists. 1994. *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation. Revised 2008*

JMHS 2010. *274-276 Woodstock Rd, Oxford: Stage 1 Archaeological Evaluation Written Scheme of Investigation* Unpub JMHS Document

JMHS 2007 *Archaeological intervention at Walled Garden, Middle Way, Oxford.* Unpub JMHS Report No. 1576. Author Gwilym Williams MIFA

Mellor M 1994 *A synthesis of Middle and Late Saxon, Medieval and Early Post medieval Pottery in the Oxford region* in *Oxoniensia* LIX (1994)

Solent Thames Historic Environment Research Framework Oxfordshire: *Post-medieval and modern*

Oxford City Council 2010 Planning Control and conservation: *Brief for Archaeological Excavation*. Unpub OCC Document.

HER Data Summary Sheet

Site Name:	
Site Address: 274-276 Woodstock Rd, Oxford, Oxford City	
Summary: <i>John Moore Heritage Services concluded an archaeological evaluation in advance of the construction of a new development. Three trenches, totalling approximately 25 metres in length were excavated to the underlying natural geology. One posthole was revealed in Trench 2 sealed by the subsoil and topsoil. All the other features were dated to the late Post medieval period or were modern.</i>	
District/Unitary: Oxford City	Parish:
Period(s): Post med/ Modern	
NGR (centre of site: 8 figures): SP 5043 0912	
Type of archaeological work (delete) Evaluation	
Date of Recording: 15 th October 2010	
Unit undertaking recording: JMHS	
Geology: Head Deposits over Terrace Gravel	
Title and author of accompanying report: Archaeological Evaluation at 274-276 Woodstock Rd, Oxford (SP 5043 0912) Prepared by Paul Riccoboni BA ARCH AIFA	
Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate) One post hole of possible ancient date, although no dating evidence retrieved. Post med/modern walls and features associated with previous housing at this location <p style="text-align: right;">(cont. on attached sheet)</p>	
Location of archive/finds:	
Contact at Unit: : <i>Paul Riccoboni</i> <i>info@archaeologypro.com</i>	Date: October 2010

PLATE 1: General: Trench 1



PLATE 2: General: Trench 2



PLATE 3: General shot of features within Trench 3

