

Abbey Centre Abingdon



Archaeological Evaluation Report




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Abbey Centre, Abingdon, Oxfordshire

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Written by Robin Bashford

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Summary

In December 2011, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at the Abbey Centre, Abingdon (NGR SU 497 971). The work was commissioned by Hunter Evans Ltd on behalf of Scottish Widows Investment Partnership, and was part of a programme of predetermination investigative works relating to a planning application submitted to Vale of the White Horse District Council (11/02239/FUL).

The evaluation revealed a loessic soil horizon overlying the natural terrace gravel, which was cut by pits dating to the 1st - 2nd century AD. The fills of the pits were overlain by a homogeneous silty deposit which may have represented the re-worked upper fills of the earlier features. A second phase of pit digging was dated to the 11th - 12th century, although the relationship between these later pits and the homogeneous silts was uncertain due to truncation from later features.

An east-west aligned limestone wall footing was also revealed. This is likely to date to the post medieval period.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology were instructed by Hunter Evans on behalf of Scottish Widows Investment Partnership to carry out an archaeological evaluation at Abbey Centre, Abingdon, Oxfordshire (SU 497 971).
- 1.1.2 A planning application (11/02239/FUL) has been submitted to the Vale of White Horse District Council to demolish two existing retail units and to redevelop units 29 - 33 as two new two storey units. Due to the potential presence of archaeological remain, a programme of predetermination investigative works were proposed in a brief issued by Hugh Coddington; Acting County Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Council (OCC, 2011). A Written Scheme of Investigation was produced by OA, detailing how the would the requirements of the brief would be fulfilled (OA 2011b) this was approved the County Archaeologist.
- 1.1.3 The works were intended to provide information that will assist the determination of the planning application. This is in line with PPS5, the draft National Planning Policy framework and PolicyHE9 of the Local Plan.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies at approximately 55.50 m OD and is situated on second terrace river gravels overlying kimmeridge clay.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The following section is reproduced from a desk-based assessment (DBA) of the site and the surrounding 0.5km area (the Study Area), carried out by OA. Full references can be found in the bibliography of that document (OA, 2011a).
- 1.3.2 The 'Site' as referred to below incorporates the entirety of the Abbey Centre, also known locally as 'The Bury'.

Prehistoric Period (500,000 BP - 43 AD)

The Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods (c 500,000 BC to 4000 BC)

- 1.3.3 Isolated artefact finds in this area indicate a human presence during the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods. The earliest finds from within the Abingdon area are Lower Palaeolithic tools from the terrace gravels, one of which, a Lower Palaeolithic flake, was found in 1985 on Stert Street within Abingdon Abbey (c 80m to the east of the Site). Two Palaeolithic handaxes are also recorded as having been found in Abingdon, but they do not have a clear provenance. A Late Mesolithic flint scatter was recorded during work at the Morlands Brewery site within the Tanneries area (c 230m to the south west of the Site). Mesolithic flints were also recovered in the Vineyard excavations.

The Neolithic and Bronze Age periods (c 4000-700 BC)

- 1.3.4 The Neolithic and Bronze Age periods are well represented in the wider Abingdon area, with a Neolithic Causewayed enclosure and a series of Bronze Age barrows having been identified c 1.5km to the north east of the Site. However, within the Study Area, there is less recorded archaeological evidence of these periods.



- 1.3.5 Neolithic flints have been found out of context within medieval layers during excavation to the north of Broad Street (c 40m to the north of the Site), and during work in the Merchants Quarter (c 65m to the south of the Site), while a small flint assemblage at Abbey House (c 100m to the east of the Site) suggested low level Neolithic activity in this area. This evidence suggests that although there has been Neolithic activity within the Abingdon area, it is not certain where exactly the focus of this activity was.
- 1.3.6 A possible Bronze Age barrow cemetery has been identified on aerial photographs just outside the Study Area (350m to the north west of the Site). Within the Study Area itself the finds of this period are limited to pottery found within an area south of the Site and sherds of a Bronze Age beaker were recovered in a buried prehistoric soil during archaeological work at Twickenham House (c 125m to the south of the Site), whilst pottery has also been recovered from excavations at East St Helen's Street, and from work at the Old Gaol.

The Iron Age (c 700BC- AD 43)

- 1.3.7 There is extensive archaeological evidence for Iron Age settlement within Abingdon. Early and Middle Iron Age settlement was found throughout the excavations under the Abbey House and car park to the east of the Site. To the south, an early-middle Iron Age inhumation and ditch were found at the Regal Cinema site, pits at West St Helen St and Lombard St and a buried soil at Twickenham House in East St Helen St. Pottery was also found at the west end of the Vineyard, and archaeology of this period is also likely within the Site.
- 1.3.8 Excavations under the Abbey Centre and at the former Regal Cinema have demonstrated the presence of a major defended late Iron Age settlement that includes the south-eastern half of the Site. Towards the end of the Iron Age a defensive circuit was constructed in a semicircle between the rivers Ock and Thames, consisting of two (or in places three) concentric ditches, each up to 12 m across. The ditches have been traced both to the south and to the east, and the alignments strongly suggest that the ditches run through the centre of the Site, and possibly through the main proposed area of development. Within the area enclosed by the ditch, excavations suggest a densely populated settlement, with Iron Age roundhouses, storage pits and post-hole structures. These appear to have been later replaced by rectilinear enclosures. The south eastern section of the Site is thought to be located within this area of settlement.

Romano-British Period (AD 43-410)

- 1.3.9 Archaeological evidence suggests that Abingdon retained its importance in the Early Roman period, with a continued presence within the limits of the Iron Age Oppidum. Roman buildings are known adjacent to Abbey House, under the former Railway Inn and under Twickenham House and East St Helens Street, and other finds and features in every site that had Iron Age occupation.
- 1.3.10 In the 2nd century AD lengths of the defensive ditches were backfilled as the Roman occupation spread northwards. Between 50 and 100 m north of the Site between Broad Street and Stratton Way Roman occupation of the 2nd –4th centuries was found including 2 neonate burials, and from the tile, painted wall plaster and tesserae it is clear that another Roman building was very close by. Late Roman activity also continued within the line of the defences, both to the east and to the south in West St Helen Street.



The Medieval Period (AD 410-1550)

The Anglo Saxon Period (AD410-1066)

- 1.3.11 Two buildings of early Saxon date have been found within the town, under the Abbey House car park east of Stert Street some 100 m east of the Site. A number of early Saxon artefacts have also been found closer to the Site: baked clay loomweights and a spiral-headed bronze pin on the corner of Bath Street and Broad Street, a spearhead found during the demolition of 17 High Street (c. 25 m south of the site) and a bronze brooch also from the High Street.
- 1.3.12 Physical evidence for middle and late Saxon settlement is more limited, but both Abingdon Abbey and St Helens Church were founded within this period. The 'ten traders outside the abbey gates' recorded in Domesday Book presumably lived around the Market Place; Late Saxon pottery has been found at the north end of East St Helen Street on the edge of Market Square (OA unpublished archive). Late Saxon pottery has also come from West St Helen Street. Late Saxon brooches and belt-fittings have come from Abbey House and car park, and both an 11th century coin and a belt-fitting (this now in the Ashmolean Museum) from the area between Broad Street and Stratton Way. Saxon activity is therefore likely within the Site, particularly towards the southern end.

The Later Medieval Period (AD1066-1550)

- 1.3.13 Archaeological work within Abingdon has helped to map the extent of settlement by 1200AD. The current street layout of central Abingdon is still largely that of the medieval period, and the medieval layout was constrained by the line of the prehistoric defences, which survived in part as the medieval town ditch. The line of this ditch is preserved in property boundaries still visible on the Christ's Hospital map of 1844, and crosses the Site. The Bury was formerly known as Little Bury Street and Little Bridge St, presumably referring to a crossing of the town ditch. The layout of the Bury thus originated in the medieval period, and was presumably flanked by medieval properties, like those already excavated in Stert Street and in Broad Street to the east.
- 1.3.14 It has also been suggested that a possible medieval trackway ran through the Site in a north-south alignment, linking West St Helens Street with the northern half of Bath Street. This routeway is no longer recognised in the street layout of Abingdon.
- 1.3.15 Abingdon appears to have seen a peak of expansion and prosperity in the 12th and 13th centuries, by which time the town had grown considerably. However, the expansion seems to have stopped by the late 14th/early 15th centuries, with evidence of the abandonment of a number of properties in the town.

Post-Medieval Period (AD1550+)

- 1.3.16 Abingdon was initially an important garrison town for the Royalists during the Civil War, but it was lost to the Parliamentarian forces in 1644. The effects of the war on the town have been identified during work at the West Central Redevelopment Area, and earthworks of Civil War defensive ditches remain to the south of the town. Archaeological evidence suggests that areas of the town were abandoned during the fighting, with evidence for the demolition of some buildings.
- 1.3.17 Rocque's map of 1761 shows the Site to be located within the centre of Abingdon, but the earliest detailed map of the Site to have been viewed for this project is the 1:500 scale Ordnance Survey map of 1874. It shows the Site to be centred around Bury Street with its terraced properties, which may have origins in the medieval period (see



above). In addition, behind the terraced properties are a number of terraced settlements and isolated buildings, labelled as a school, a brewery and an iron works. The majority of the buildings within the Site are not shown to have backgardens, although the terrace leading away from Bury Street, 'Badcock's Row', does seem to be located next to some small plots of land, and further plots are seen to the north of the school. There is also some undeveloped land to the south of the Phoenix Iron Works, which may be a yard associated with the works, and between the Anchor Brewery and the Queens Hotel.

- 1.3.18 Although first seen on this 19th century map, the buildings on the 1:500 map may have been built much earlier than the late 19th century. A number of buildings shown on this map but outside of the Site, are still extant today and most have been designated Listed Buildings. The classifications for these buildings date them as mainly having been constructed in the 17th and 18th centuries, with only two recorded as having been built in the 19th century.
- 1.3.19 Subsequent Ordnance Survey maps of the Site show limited change within the Site to continue throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. The 2nd Edition OS map of 1900 shows a terrace of buildings to the south of Bury Street to have gone. Further buildings in the same area have been removed by the 1912 edition, and appear to have been replaced by a series of enclosures, perhaps a cattle market. The 1st Edition OS map shows a cattle market in The Square, at the southern end of Bath Street, to the west of the Site, but this has gone by the 1912 map, and it is therefore possible it has been relocated within the Site.
- 1.3.20 The 1933 Ordnance Survey map shows further small scale change within the Site. A building shown on the 1912 map to the north of Bury Street, and south of the Abingdon Church/Bury Street School has been removed by the 1933 map. The 1936 map shows the terraced properties lining the south side of Bury Street to have been removed, and replaced by public lavatories. Early 20th century public lavatories were often built beneath ground level, although it is not clear from these maps or the Site whether this is the case here.
- 1.3.21 The 1967 OS map is the first to show parts of the current development within the Site, with the appearance of those on the southern half of the current Bury Street shown. The southern carpark is also shown with the electricity substation. To the north remains the school, and older units, these are not seen to have been replaced until the 1973 OS map when the remainder of the current shopping arcade was constructed. The current shopping mall is therefore still aligned on the medieval route of Bury Street, although all the current buildings date to the 1960s and 1970s.

2 EVALUATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The aim of the evaluation was to gather sufficient information to generate a reliable predictive model of the extent, character, date, state of preservation and depth of archaeological remains within the proposed development area in order to inform the advice of the Acting County Archaeologist to the LPA in respect to the planning application for development.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 Site procedures followed standard OA practice as defined in Appendix 2 of the WSI.



- 2.2.2 A single 3 x 3 m trench was excavated in the available area of the Queens Street car park which forms the northern part of the proposed development.
- 2.2.3 Initial excavation was carried out by a 3.5 tonne mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. All machine work was carried out under archaeological control.
- 2.2.4 A service plan was supplied by Hunter Evans Ltd and the trench was located in reference to this plan. In addition the trench was scanned with a CAT scanner, immediately before excavation began, and during excavation, to check for uncharted services. Despite these precautions, a previously capped power cable was encountered and the cap broken, which necessitated attendance by Scottish and Southern Electric. Although the cable itself was within a bitumen duct encased in concrete, the cap was approximately 0.30 m above the level of the duct and had been encased in a section of ceramic pipe filled with bitumen, with no warning tape and within a layer of rubble hardcore.
- 2.2.5 Once the cable had been re-capped, mechanical excavation continued to the top of the first archaeological horizon,
- 2.2.6 Spoil excavated by hand was stored in areas adjacent to the trench. Sufficient hand-excavation was carried out in order to characterise the depth, date and type of archaeological remains present.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

- 3.1.1 The following section summarises the results from the earliest to the latest archaeological deposits encountered during the archaeological works. Detailed context descriptions are presented in the context inventory (Appendix A), and within the descriptive text where they are integral to the interpretation of the context in question.

3.2 Trench 1

- 3.2.1 Natural gravel (148) was encountered at 52.72m OD and was overlain by a layer of mid reddish brown clayey silt (126). This was similar in composition to the subsoil which was recorded overlying the gravel at Abingdon Museum (OA 2009) and to the post-glacial loessic soil known to overlie the second terrace gravel elsewhere in the Thames Valley (notably at Oxford).
- 3.2.2 The soil horizon and the underlying gravel were truncated by a series of inter-cutting pits (Cuts 120, 124/139, 132) which produced exclusively 1st-2nd century pottery. Residual Roman pottery was also found in most later features as well as a possible piece of tessera from medieval pit 144.
- 3.2.3 A deposit (112) in Pit 120 was sampled and an examination of the flotation residue revealed charcoal which suggested suitable soil conditions for the survival of charred plant remains (although none were retrieved from this sample).
- 3.2.4 In the southern half of the trench, the upper fills of these features were overlain by a fairly homogeneous deposit which was excavated in four spits of 0.10m (115-118). This may represent the upper fills of the underlying pits re-worked as a garden soil or within features with edges outside the area of excavation. The finds recovered from each spit graded upwards in date from AD150-180 (115), through AD100-410 (116) with the topmost two spits producing early medieval pottery (117 and 118).



- 3.2.5 A second sequence of pits (130, 136, 144) produced medieval pottery, predominantly dating to the 11th-12th century. The relationship between the fills of these pits and the homogeneous deposit was uncertain, as the interface between the two had been truncated by a north-east / south-west aligned linear feature (113).
- 3.2.6 The linear feature 113 produced 17th-18th century clay pipe and some fragments of laminated glass probably dating to the first half of the 20th century.
- 3.2.7 In the northern corner of the trench was an east-west aligned limestone wall footing, the construction cut for which contained only early medieval pottery. However the walls mortar bonding was a lime and sand aggregate mix with a poured foundation which is more characteristic of a post-medieval origin.
- 3.2.8 A rectangular pit (106) had been excavated up against the wall footing, and contained numerous fragments of tarmac and other modern debris.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Interpretation

- 4.1.1 The test pit revealed Roman, medieval and post-medieval phases of activity. The nature of the remains for all periods is that of domestic dumping pits associated with nearby occupation. Residual Roman material was found in most the later features.
- 4.1.2 The remains can be presumed to relate to tenement back yard activity for the post Roman features, although for all periods up to the 18th century, the arrangement and density of occupation as well as the line of historic thoroughfares through the area is not well informed by documentary records or previous investigations.
- 4.1.3 The lack of prehistoric (Iron Age) occupation could feasibly be due to the area being under the berm of the town oppidum, with this being removed during the Roman period allowing subsequent occupation of the area. The lack of Saxon and late medieval occupation is reasonably concordant with the local and national urban population fluctuations associated with major historical events (post-Roman ruralisation and the reduction of populations by plague, respectively) .
- 4.1.4 Rocque's map of 1761 shows the area to be developed by this period and the limestone wall footing revealed in the northern part of the trench may well be slightly earlier than this, as while it does not exhibit a fine lime-rich mortar bonding that one may expect from substantial medieval buildings, a rapid survey of all the listed buildings in the area indicates the dominance of brick by the late 18th century.
- 4.1.5 It should also be noted that the wall closely follows the line of a wall on an extension to the Abingdon Church/Bury Street School constructed in the the early 20th century. However photos from the time confirm the construction to be brick built and it would be unusual (though perhaps not entirely impossible) for the construction to have utilised a coursed limestone footing.

4.2 Impact of the development

- 4.2.1 The foundation design for the development is shown in Figures 5 and 6. The foundation groundworks are likely to comprise ground reduction for the construction of a piling mat followed by pile probing, obstruction removal and continuous flight-auger piles with shallow pile cap construction, joined with trench cut ground beams.
- 4.2.2 The ground beams and pile caps will impact to c 800-950 mm below existing ground level. Two lift shaft pits are also proposed although their depth is yet to be clarified.



APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1					
General description				Orientation	n/a
Natural gravel overlain by possible glacial subsoil. 1 st -2 nd century pits overlain by series of homogeneous silts. Later sequence of 11 th -12 th century pits with uncertain relationship with homogeneous silts. Post-med features including east-west aligned wall footing.				Avg. depth (m)	1m
				Width (m)	3m
				Length (m)	3m
Contexts					
context no.	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	Soil Description
100	Layer	-	0.1	Tarmac	
101	Layer	-	0.2	Hardcore	
102	Cut	1.35	0.3	?Post med pit	
103	Fill		0.25	Fill of post med pit 102	Mid brown silty clay with c10% gravel
104	Fill		0.3	Fill of post med pit 102	Mid blueish grey silty clay
105	Fill		0.15	Fill of post-med ditch 113	Dark greenish grey clayey silt
106	Cut	0.7	c1	Modern pit	
107	Fill	0.7	c1	Fill of modern pit 106	Predominantly dark greyish brown clayey silt
108	Fill		0.15	Fill of post-med ditch 113	Mid greenish brown clayey silt with 2% charcoal and 5% gravel fragments
109	Cut	0.75	1	Construction cut for post-med wall	
110	Fill	0.75	1	Fill of construction cut for wall	Mixed but predominantly mid grey silty clay
111	Structure	0.5	1	East-west aligned wall footing	
112	Fill		0.05	Fill of post-med ditch 113	Very dark silt with 40-60% charcoal
113	Cut	1	0.51	Post-med ditch	
114	Fill		0.12	Fill of post-med ditch 113	Dark greyish brown clayey silt
115	Deposit		0.1	Lowest of 4 0.1m deep spits of homogeneous deposit in southern half of trench	Dark greyish brown clayey silt with c2% gravel fragments and 1% charcoal
116	Deposit		0.1	Second lowest of 4 0.1m deep spits of homogeneous deposit in southern half of trench	Dark greyish brown clayey silt with c2% gravel fragments and 1% charcoal
117	Deposit		0.1	Third lowest of 4 0.1m deep spits of homogeneous deposit in southern half of trench	Dark greyish brown clayey silt with c2% gravel fragments and 1% charcoal



context no.	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	Soil Description
118	Deposit		0.1	Uppermost of 4 0.1m deep spits of homogeneous deposit in southern half of trench	Dark greyish brown clayey silt with c2% gravel fragments and 1% charcoal
119	Fill		0.08	Fill of ?1 st -2 nd century pit 120	Mid orangey yellow sand and gravel
120	Cut	1.16	0.6	1 st -2 nd century pit	
121	Fill	0.62	0.15	Fill of 1 st - 2 nd century pit 120	Very dark grey clayey silt with c50% charcoal
122	Fill	1.16	0.38	Fill of 1 st - 2 nd century pit 120	Mid greyish brown clayey silt
123	Fill	1.16	0.13	Fill of 1 st - 2 nd century pit 120	Mid brownish green clayey silt with c5% gravel
124	Cut			?1 st - 2 nd century pit (same as 139)	
125	Fill			Fill of 1 st - 2 nd century pit 124	Mid brownish grey clay silt
126	Deposit		0.48	?Glacial subsoil	Mid reddish brown clayey silt
127	Cut	0.8	0.45	Roman/early med pit	
128	Fill		0.34	Fill of Roman/early med pit 127	Mid brownish grey clay silt with 2-3% gravel fragments
129	Fill		0.1	Fill of Roman/early med pit 127	Mid-dark grey silty clay
130	Cut	1.2	0.6	Roman/early med square cut pit	
131	Fill		0.6	Fill of Roman/early med pit 130	Mid-dark grey clay silt with occasional patches of mid reddish brown silty clay (?re-deposited 126?)
132	Cut	0.6	0.6	1 st - 2 nd century pit	
133	Fill		0.1	Fill of 1 st - 2 nd century pit 132	Sand and gravel with lenses and concentrations of sandy silt
134	Fill		0.25	Fill of 1 st - 2 nd century pit 132	Mixed but predominantly mid brown sand silt with lenses of sandy gravel
135	Fill		0.28	Fill of 1 st - 2 nd century pit 132	Mixed but predominantly re-deposited sand and gravel with mid grey and mid reddish brown silty inclusions throughout
136	Cut	1.2	0.6	11 th - 12 th C pit	
137	Fill		0.4	Fill of 11 th - 12 th C pit 136	Mid-dark grey clay silt with 2-3% gravel fragments
138	Fill		0.6	Fill of 11 th - 12 th C pit 136	Mid brownish grey clay silt with 5% gravel fragments



context no.	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	Soil Description
139	Cut	1.8	0.4	?1 st - 2 nd century pit (same as 124)	
140	Fill		0.4	Fill of 1 st - 2 nd century pit 139	Predominantly mid-dark brownish grey clay silt with c20% gravel inclusions
141	Fill			Unexcavated fill of 1 st - 2 nd century pit 139/124	Mid greenish grey clay silt
142	Fill			Unexcavated fill of ?pit 132	Mid greenish grey clay silt with c15% gravel fragments
143	Finds Ref			Probably from fill 131	
144	Cut	0.8	0.4	Med pit	
145	Fill		0.15	Fill of med pit 144	Mid greenish grey silty clay
146	Fill		0.2	Fill of med pit 144	Mid grey clay silt
147	Fill		0.4	Fill of med pit 144	Mid blueish grey silty clay
148	Layer			Natural gravel	Natural gravel
149	Fill		0.12	Fill of 1 st - 2 nd century pit 120	Dark greyish brown clayey silt with c2% small gravel fragments



APPENDIX B. FINDS REPORTS

B.1 Pottery by Edward Biddulph

Introduction

B.1.1 A total of 226 sherds of pottery, weighing 3204 g, was recovered from the evaluation at the Abingdon Abbey shopping centre site. Roman, medieval and post-medieval material was encountered. The pottery was rapidly scanned to identify diagnostic forms and fabrics, allowing a spot-date for each context-group to be determined. Descriptions of the pottery and spot-dates by context are presented in Table 1.

Context	Count	Weight (g)	Comments	Group date
103	1	7	Sandy coarseware	Medieval
104	1	6	Brown-glazed sandy coarseware	Medieval
105	3	21	Glazed red earthenware, sandy coarseware	17th/18thC
107	8	48	Stoneware, blue-and-white pattern	18th/19thC
108	22	485	Stoneware, red earthenwares, green-glazed white ware, brown-glazed white ware jug handle, residual Oxford white ware mortarium (Young type M3)., samian	17th-18thC
110	5	196	Green-glazed red ware jugs, shelly ware jar, sandy coarsewares	Early medieval
112	4	266	Earthenware bowl, brown-glazed white ware jug handle, residual shelly ware storage jar	17th-18thC
115	39	679	Oxford fine grey ware: jar, base from pedestal jar, carinated bowl Young type R58; storage jar; fine white ware; sandy white ware; flanged bowl with painted decoration on rim (Young type O39); beaker base in Oxfordshire colour-coated ware with roughcast decoration, and with hint of post-fired x-graffito; black-burnished type ware body sherds; decorated sherd in Central Gaulish samian ware, ?South Gaulish samian ware	AD150-180
116	20	178	Oxford fine grey ware, body sherds with lattice decoration, Oxfordshire colour-coated ware	AD100-410
117	15	158	Bowl or dish (Oxford fine grey ware), Oxford red colour-coated ware, medieval sandy coarseware jar, sandy bowl with internal green glaze	Early medieval
118	21	176	Sandy oxidised ware; shelly ware; residual ? Central Gaulish samian ware dish (burnt); Oxford fine grey ware, jar in sandy grey ware	Early medieval
123	11	174	Savernake ware, Oxford fine grey ware, coarse grog-tempered ware	AD43-100



128	23	140	Glazed sandy coarseware; Roman Oxford reduced ware, decorated samian; cornice-rimmed Oxfordshire colour-coated ware butt-beaker with roughcast decoration	Early medieval
131	2	9	Sandy coarseware; ?Roman grey ware	Medieval
134	1	33	Fine grey ware necked jar with cordon below neck and slightly incised chevron decoration on shoulder (Young type R26)	AD50-200
137	1	2	Sandy coarseware	?Medieval
138	2	15	Shelly ware	12th/13thC
140	7	228	Grog-tempered storage jar base, sandy grey ware necked jar	AD50-200
143	2	16	Fine oxidised ware, grog-tempered ware	AD50-100
145	13	146	Sandy coarsewares; residual Roman grey ware	12th/13thC
146	20	128	Shelly ware, green-glazed sandy oxidised ware, sandy coarsewares; residual grog-tempered ware	12th/13thC
147	5	93	Sandy coarsewares; residual Roman grey wares	Early medieval
TOTAL	226	3204		

Table 1: The pottery

The pottery

- B.1.2 No context-group was assigned a prehistoric date, although pottery of late Iron Age tradition (grog-tempered wares) was encountered in Roman-period and later groups. Contexts 123 and 143 contained pottery that dated to, or was consistent with, the early Roman period. The groups were so dated on the basis of grog-tempered pottery found in association with Roman-period wares, and the presence of other early-Roman indicators, such as Savernake ware – a coarse fabric often used for storage vessels – found in context 123.
- B.1.3 Context 115 contained pottery dated to the mid-late 2nd century AD. Oxford reduced ware bowls and jars were recorded, among them a carinated bowl (Young 1977, type R58). These were found alongside a fine oxidised ware bowl (Young 1977, type O39), and a roughcast beaker in a colour-coated fabric identified as fabric F59 (Booth nd), which was manufactured at Nuneham Courtenay (Booth 1993, 140). Decorated Central Gaulish samian, probably from a Drag. 37 bowl, was also recorded.
- B.1.4 Pottery from contexts 134 and 140 cannot be closely dated but is consistent with a later 1st or 2nd century date. A white ware mortarium, found as a residual occurrence in post-medieval group 108, is also 2nd century in date. Late Roman Oxford red colour-coated ware was recovered from medieval context 117.
- B.1.5 Three context groups – 138, 145 and 146 – were dated to the 12th or 13th century. This was on the basis of shelly wares and sandy oxidised or reduced coarse wares recovered from them. A number of the sandy wares can be identified as fabric OXY, a late Saxon-medieval Oxford ware, and OXAG, a late Saxon-medieval sandy ware from Abingdon (cf.



Mellor 1994). A date spanning the late 11th to the end of the 13th century is likely for these. Pottery from contexts 110, 117, 118 and 147 is consistent with this date.

- B.1.6 Post-medieval pottery was recovered from contexts 105, 107, 108 and 112. The groups included red earthenwares (often glazed), stonewares, and fine glazed white wares. The pottery mainly spans the 17th to 18th century, with the latest material extending into the 19th century.

Discussion

- B.1.7 The pottery from the evaluation points to later 1st and 2nd century AD activity in the vicinity of the site. In general, the pottery was well preserved; sherds were relatively large and surfaces fresh, and this is reflected in the mean sherd weight for Roman-period groups of 16g. These factors suggest that the pottery was deposited close to the area of pottery use. The medieval period is also well represented; the pottery dates activity in and around the site to the 12th or 13th century. There is a long break in the ceramic sequence until the 17th century or later, when a range of post-medieval wares were deposited.
- B.1.8 It is recommended that, should further excavation of the site be required, the pottery from the evaluation be incorporated into the resulting ceramics study.

B.2 Ceramic Building Material by John Cotter

Introduction

- B.2.1 Sixty-four fragments of ceramic building material (CBM), weighing 3201g, were recovered from the site. Quantification and a summary of the material are given in Table 2.

Context	Count	Weight (g)	Comments
103	1	15	Roof tile in sandy fabric
104	6	453	Brick fragment; roof tile and ?ridge tile in sandy fabric
105	6	184	Flat roof tile with peg hole, other roof tile in sandy fabric in sandy fabric
108	34	1503	Flat roof tile with peg hole, other roof tile in sandy fabric
112	9	703	Ridge tile and flat roof tile with peg hole in sandy fabric
115	2	151	Fragment in sand and organic fabric; corner of ridge tile in sandy fabric
117	2	55	Roof tile in sandy fabric
143	1	85	Flat tile with one edge surviving in sand and limestone fabric
146	3	52	Roof rile in sandy fabric, one fragment with splash of glaze
TOTAL	64	3201	

Table 2: The ceramic building material

Discussion

- B.2.2 Roman-period tile included a fragment in a sand and limestone fragment recovered from context 143, dated by pottery to later 1st or 2nd century, and a fragment in a sand and organic fabric from context 115, dated by pottery to the mid-late 2nd century.



B.2.3 The remainder of the assemblage is medieval in date. All pieces were in the same very sandy, orange-red fabric. Most of the fragments are part of roof tiles. Flat tiles with holes for nails or pegs were recorded in contexts 105, 108 and 112. Angled ridge tiles, designed to sit on the apex or ridge of a roof, were seen in contexts 104 and 112 and as an intrusive occurrence in context 115. Context 104 contained a brick fragment. A glazed tile fragment from context 146 may be a floor tile, although glazed roof tiles are known (Cotter 2008, 188).

B.3 Mortar by Edward Biddulph

B.3.1 Twenty fragments of mortar, weighing 801g, were recovered from context 111. The fragments are generally amorphous in terms of shape. All were of the same lime fabric, which contains frequent small rounded limestone pieces and occasional sand and black grains and larger pebbles.

B.4 Animal Bone by Lena Strid

B.4.1 A total of 156 hand-collected animal bones were recovered from Roman, Medieval, Post-medieval and undated features at this site. Most bones are in a good condition (Table 1). Eleven bones display gnaw marks from carnivores, probably dogs and three bones are burnt.

B.4.2 While small, the species distribution in the assemblage from each period is typical for Roman and later sites. Most of the bones are from cattle, sheep/goat and pig, while bones from other mammals, birds and fish are occasionally present. Carnivore presence (probably dog and possibly also cat) is evidenced by gnaw marks. The skeletal distribution suggests that the assemblage contains both butchery waste and kitchen waste.

B.4.3 Due to the small assemblage size, an analysis of slaughter age pattern cannot be made for the three periods. However, judging by tooth wear, epiphyseal fusion and surface structure of the bones, most of the cattle, sheep/goat and pig bones derive from sub-adult or adult animals. A radius from an unidentified bird is the only juvenile bone present.

B.4.4 Butchery marks are almost exclusively found in the post-medieval assemblage, where they occur on 31 bones from cattle, sheep/goat, pig, domestic fowl as well as bones from medium and large mammals. A single medium mammal vertebra from a medieval pit has been split axially. The butchery marks in the post-medieval assemblage mainly derive from portioning of the carcass. Horizontal cut marks at the proximal joint surface of a cattle metacarpal are the only butchery marks which possibly originated during the initial slaughter and skinning process. Cut marks on a pig radius shaft are indicative of filleting.

B.4.5 One medieval cattle first phalanx has minor lipping of the proximal and distal joint surfaces.

	N	Bone surface preservation stage					Unidentifiable
		very good	good	fair	poor	very poor	
Roman	11		6	5			
Medieval	18	1	11	5	1		
Post-medieval	101	9	82	9	1		
Undated	25		22	3			

Table 1. Preservation level for bones from the ABESH11 assemblage.



Species	Roman	Medieval	Post-medieval	Undated
Cattle	1	5	7	7
Sheep/goat	3		16	6
Pig	1	1	10	2
Rabbit			1	
Domestic fowl		1	2	
Duck				1
Indet. bird				1
Indet. fish				1
Medium mammal	1	3	18	2
Large mammal	2	6	33	3
Indeterminate	3	2	14	1
TOTAL	11	18	101	25
Weight (g)	110	232	1519	488

Table 2. Number of fragments/taxon in the ABESH11 assemblage.

Context	Preliminary date	No. fragments	Weight
103	Post-medieval	8	165
104	Post-medieval	3	21
105	Post-medieval	5	32
108	Post-medieval	71	1033
112	Post-medieval	14	268
115	Undated	8	182
116	Undated	4	213
117	Undated	3	31
118	Undated	7	49
123	Roman	9	98
134	Roman	1	1
137	Undated	2	13
140	Roman	1	11
145	Medieval	5	147
146	Medieval	6	85

Table 3 - Number of fragments and weight per context.

B.5 Stone by Ruth Shaffrey

B.5.1 Eleven pieces of stone were retained. One of these is a rectangular piece of shelly limestone that may be a tessera (146). The other fragments of stone are unworked, although 7 small pieces from context 108 are heavily blackened through burning.

B.6 Clay Pipe by John Cotter

Introduction

B.6.1 The excavation produced a total of 16 fragments of clay pipe weighing 64g. These have been catalogued and recorded on an Excel spreadsheet. The catalogue records, per context, the spot-date, the quantity of stem, bowl and mouth fragments, the overall sherd count, weight, and comments on condition and any makers' marks or decoration present.

**Date and nature of the assemblage**

- B.6.2 The assemblage is generally in a fresh condition although none of the stems fragments is longer than 65mm. Three pipe bowls are present including two complete examples and one fragment with a trace of a circular heel. All the bowls are of early 17th-century type. These can be paralleled closely enough in Oswald's simplified national typology (Oswald 1975). Apart from milling around the rim, all bowls and stems are plain and unmarked. The two complete bowls, which are well burnished, include a small circular heeled example datable c 1600-1640 (unstratified) and a small stubby spurred example datable c 1610-1640 (ctx 112).
- B.6.3 Most of the 13 stem fragments present have a large bore size (around 3mm) which is also consistent with a 17th-century date. However one burnished stem is of narrower bore and probably dates to the late 17th or early 18th century (ctx 105) and one very narrow bored stem (c 1.75mm) is most probably of 19th-century date.

Summary and recommendations

- B.6.4 The mainly 17th-century date for most of the pieces here is of some note as is their fresh condition. However the pipes are otherwise plain and mostly easily paralleled in existing local publications. Also, the assemblage is quite small and provides no new information on local pipemakers. In view of these facts no further work is recommended.

B.7 Glass by Ian Scott

- B.7.1 The glass comprises 14 sherds including 2 sherds of window glass and 12 sherds of vessel glass representing 7 vessels. The glass comes from 3 contexts (Table).

Table: Summary quantification of glass

Context		Identification					Totals
		case bottle	beaker	stemmed glass	vessel	window	
105	Sherd Count					1	1
	Count					1	1
108	Sherd Count	3	1	4	2	1	11
	Count	1	1	2	1	1	6
112	Sherd Count			1	1		2
	Count			1	1		2
Total	Sherd Count	3	1	5	3	2	14
Total	Count	1	1	3	2	2	9

- B.7.2 Context 105 produced a single small sherd of window glass with regular smooth surfaces and not closely datable.
- B.7.3 Context 108 produced 11 sherds of glass, including 1 sherd of window glass similar to the glass from context 105, and not closely datable. The vessel glass (10 sherds) represents 5 vessels. Two small colourless vessel sherds cannot be identified to vessel form. Three sherds formed most of the base of an 18th-century spirit or case bottle in olive green metal. There was a rim sherd in colourless glass possibly from a small conical beaker, and 4 sherd from stemmed glasses. The latter comprise 4 sherds from the feet of two stemmed vessels. One large sherd with folded edge formed almost half



of one foot (D: 95mm), the other three sherds formed a small section of a slightly smaller foot with folded edge (D: 90mm). Vessel feet with folded edges date from the 17th to the 18th century.

- B.7.4 Context 112 produced 2 sherds of vessel glass, one sherd in colourless metal is from a thin walled vessel or uncertain form, the second sherd is a colourless moulded fragment from a lion-mask baluster from a stemmed glass and dates to the 16th or 17th century.

B.8 Metal by Ian Scott

- B.8.1 There is a small assemblage comprising 7 objects (8 fragments) from 3 contexts (Table), and made up of 4 lengths of thick drawn iron wire, 2 hand made nails and 2 fragments of thin tapered copper alloy strip. None of the metal finds are closely datable.

Table: Summary quantification of metals

Context		Function			Total
		Nail	Wire	Strip	
107	Count		4		4
	Fragt Count		4		4
108	Count	1			1
	Fragt Count	1			1
110	Count	1			1
	Fragt Count	1			1
118	Count			1	1
	Fragt Count			2	2
Total	Count	2		5	7
Total	Fragt Count	2		6	8

B.9 Environmental Evidence by Julia Meen

Introduction

- B.9.1 A single environmental sample was taken during the evaluation at Abbey Shopping Centre, Abingdon, in December 2011. Sample <100> was taken from (121), a charcoal rich deposit in a 1st-2nd century pit, for the recovery of charred plant remains (CPR) as well as for bones and artefacts. The sediment was a very dark greyish brown (2.5Y 3/2) sandy silt loam, with abundant rounded to sub-rounded pebbles comprising approximately 20% of its volume. The sediment was fairly friable and showed no structure.

Methodology

- B.9.2 5L was processed for the recovery of CPR by hand flotation. The flot was collected on a 250µm mesh and the heavy residues sieved to 500µm and dried in a heated room, after which the residues were sorted by eye for artefacts and ecofactual remains. The CPR flot was scanned for plant remains using a binocular microscope at approximately x15 magnification.



Results

Finds

- B.9.3 Two pieces of small mammal bone, including a rodent tooth, were recovered from the heavy residue of sample <100>. A possibly worked cobble-sized subangular stone has been retained.

Charred Plant Remains

- B.9.4 Sample <100> produced a flot of 450ml, of which approximately 10% was scanned. The flot contained charcoal only, frequently in a poor, powdery, condition but including abundant potentially identifiable pieces greater than 2mm in size.

Discussion and Recommendations

- B.9.5 The presence of charcoal in this sample demonstrates that conditions are suitable for charred plant remains to survive at this site, although no cereal remains or weed seeds were recovered from this evaluation. The recent excavations at the nearby Abingdon Town Hall recovered cereal grains, chaff and a reasonably diverse range of weed seeds, including those indicative of arable cultivation, from probable Iron Age contexts (OA 2009).
- B.9.6 If further excavation were to go ahead at the site, standard 40L bulk samples should be taken from a range of potentially datable features across the site and should be in accordance with the most recent sampling guidelines (eg. Oxford Archaeology, 2005 and English Heritage, 2011).



APPENDIX C. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

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APPENDIX D. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Abingdon, Abbey Centre
Site code: ABESH11
Grid reference: SP SU 497 971
Type: Evaluation
Date and duration: 7th-14th December 2011
Area of site: 3m²

Summary of results: In December 2011, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at the Abbey Centre, Abingdon (NGR SU 497 971). The work was commissioned by Hunter Evans on behalf of Scottish Widows Investment Partnership, and was part of a programme of predetermination investigative works relating to a planning application submitted to Vale of the White Horse District Council (11/02239/FUL).

The evaluation revealed pits dating to the 1st - 2nd century AD. The fills of the pits were overlain by a homogeneous silty deposit which may have represented the re-worked upper fills of the earlier features. A second phase of pit digging was dated to the 11th - 12th century, although the relationship between these later pits and the homogeneous silts was uncertain due to truncation from later features.

An east-west aligned limestone wall footing was also revealed, and is likely to date to the late 17th-early 18th century.

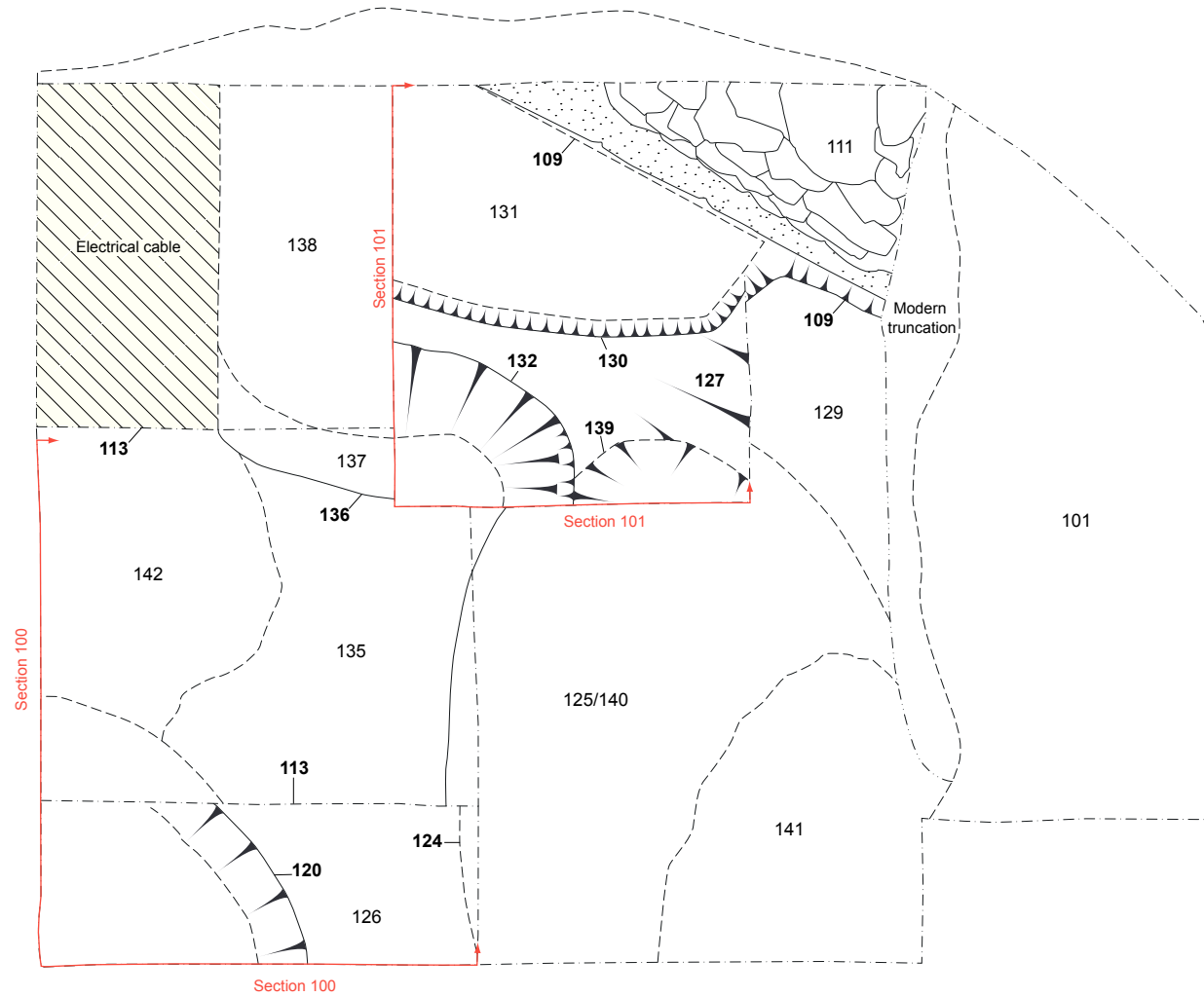
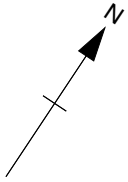
Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Service in due course, under the following accession number: OXCMS: 2011.212.

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Figure 1: Site location



- Key
- - - Intervention
 - - - Modern truncation
 - - - Poorly visible
 - █ Mortar

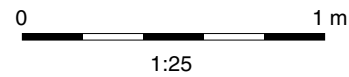
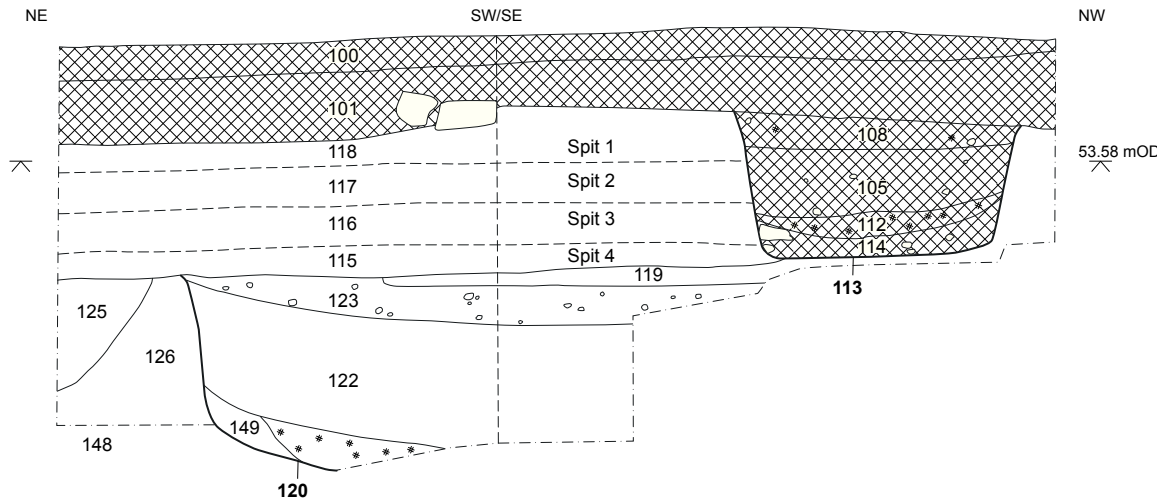


Figure 3 : Trench plan 106

Section 100



Key

- Stones
- * Charcoal
- ⊠ Modern Deposits

Section 101

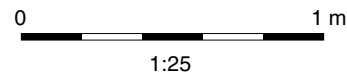
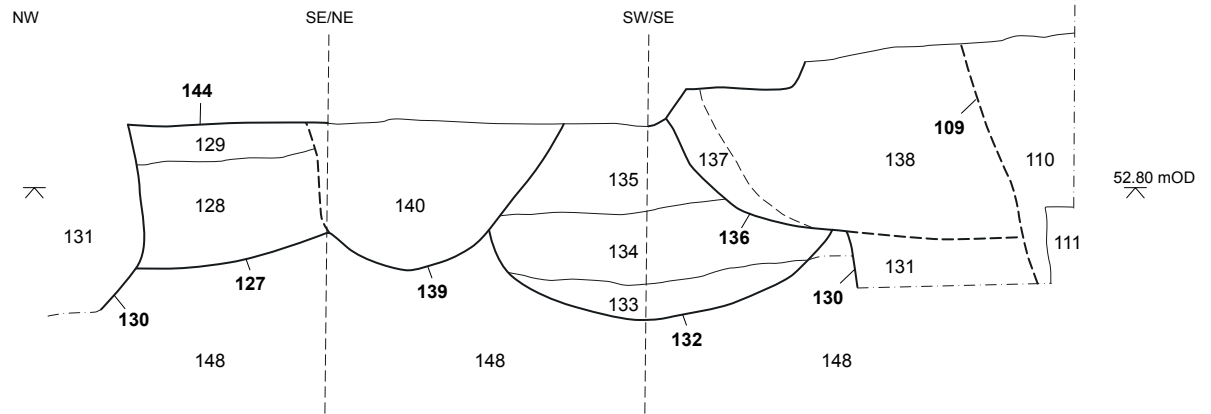


Figure 4 : Section drawings

PILING & FOUNDATION WORKS DESCRIPTION/METHOD

ALL UNDERGROUND SERVICES TO BE LOCATED AND SURFACED MARKED PRIOR TO UNDERTAKING PILING / EXCAVATIONS.

PILING INSTALLATION TO BE CONTINUOUS FLIGHT AUGER (CFA) WITH INSITU CONCRETE INFILL.

PILING TO COMMENCE AT APPROXIMATELY 200mm BELOW EXISTING GROUND LEVEL.

GROUND BEAMS TO BE EXCAVATED IN SECTIONS AND CONCRETED WITH CARE BEING TAKEN TO AVOID UNDERMINING/DISTURBING EXISTING SUBSTATION ENCLOSURE FOUNDATIONS.

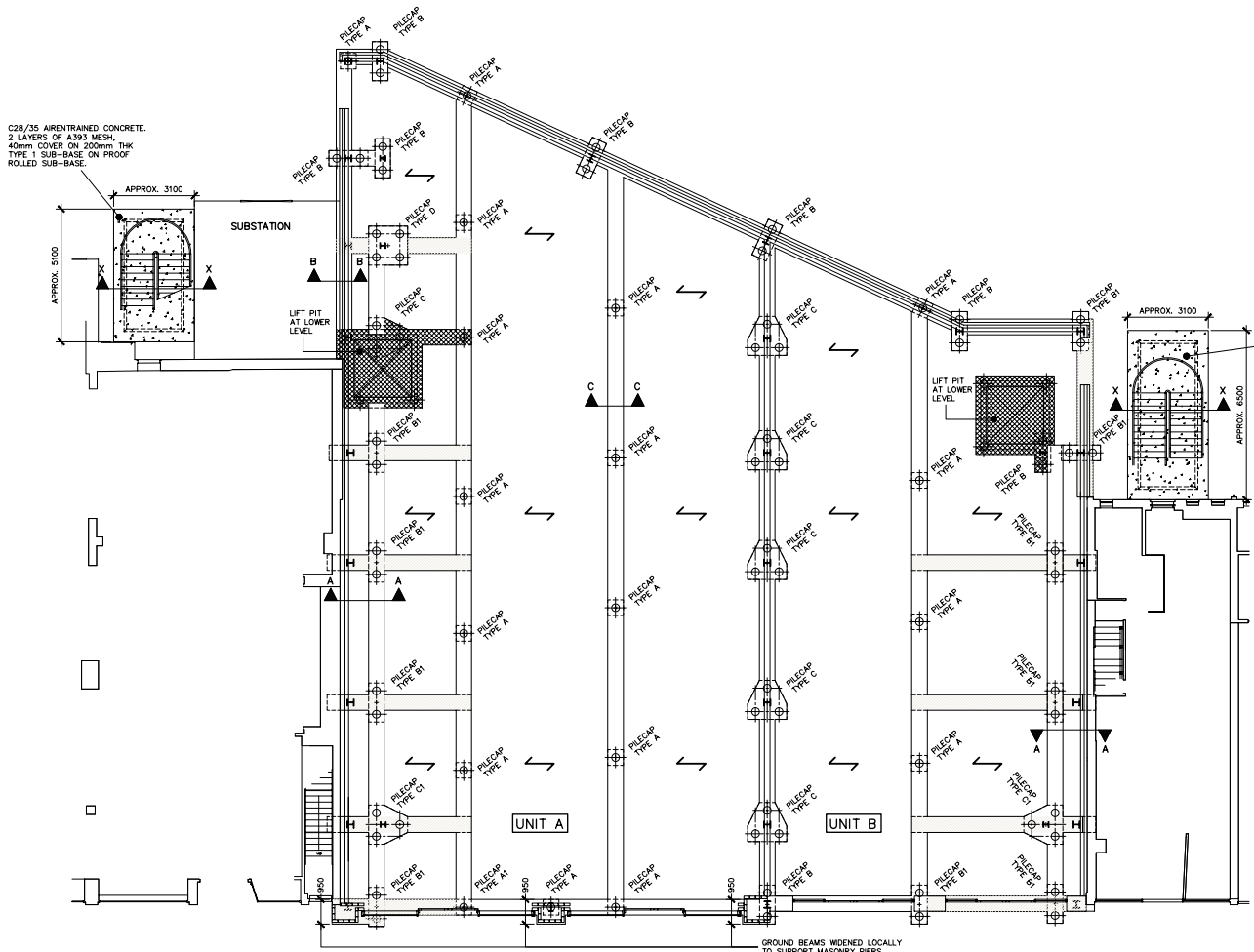
ALL ARISINGS TO BE REMOVED FROM SITE.

THIS DRAWING IS THE PROPERTY OF BJB CONSULTING LLP, AND MUST NOT BE COPIED OR OTHERWISE REPRODUCED WITHOUT THE EXPRESS WRITTEN PERMISSION OF THE COMPANY.

DRAWING TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH BJB DRAWING 1978/SK102

TOTAL NUMBER OF PILES = 87
ALL PILES TO BE CFA 300mm Ø WITH A WORKING LOAD OF 350 kN S.W.L.

- 1.0 FOUNDATIONAL NOTES**
- 1.1 ALL CONCRETE WORK IS TO BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH BJB CONSULTING LLP SPECIFICATION FOR STRUCTURAL CONCRETE.
 - 1.2 CONCRETE TO ALL FOUNDATIONS TO HAVE A MINIMUM WORKS CURE CRISING STRENGTH OF 35N/mm² AT 28 DAYS.
 - 1.3 ALL BIERED CONCRETE TO HAVE CLASS 2 SULPHATE RESISTANCE IN ACCORDANCE WITH BUILDING RESEARCH DIGEST NO.231.
 - 1.4 COVER TO ALL REINFORCEMENT IS TO BE MINIMUM 40mm UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE. COVER TO UNDERSIDE OF PILECAPS TO BE 75mm.
 - 1.5 ALL FOUNDATION CONCRETE IS TO BE COMPACTED BY MEANS OF SUITABLE MECHANICAL PLANT.
 - 1.6 LEVELS TO TOPS OF FOUNDATIONS TO BE AS NOTED ON PLAN.
 - 1.7 ALL FRESHLY CAST CONCRETE MUST BE PROTECTED FROM RAINFALL.
 - 1.8 ANY SERVICES PASSING THROUGH OR UNDER THE FOUNDATIONS TO BE SLEAVED AS PER DETAIL, NO SERVICES PERMITTED THROUGH REINFORCED FOUNDATIONS WITHOUT BJB ADVICE.
 - 1.9 ENSURE EXCAVATIONS ARE STABLE AND TAKE MEASURES IF REQUIRED TO SUPPORT SIDES DURING CONSTRUCTION.
 - 1.10 ALL GROUND BEAMS TO HAVE 50mm CONCRETE BLINDING TO UNDERSIDE.
 - 1.11 ALL PILES TO HAVE 75mm PROJECTION INTO THE PILECAPS/GROUND BEAMS & PILE HEADS TO EXTEND BY A MINIMUM ANCHORAGE LENGTH INTO THE FOUNDATIONS.
 - 1.12 PILES TO BE DESIGNED BY A SPECIALIST SUB-CONTRACTOR.



FOUNDATION & GROUND SLAB G.A.

NOTE
 ALL PILECAPS TO BE SET OUT CONCENTRIC TO THE COLUMNS UNLESS SHOWN OTHERWISE.

NOTE
 ALL PERIMETER GROUND BEAMS TO BE SET OUT CONCENTRIC TO THE WALLS UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE.

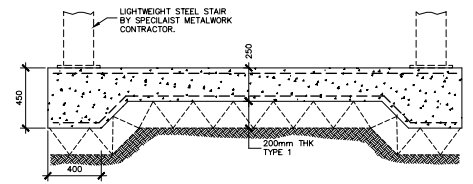
NOTE
 ALL R.C. PILECAPS SHALL BE 600mm DEEP U.N.O.

NOTE
 ALL PILES WITHIN PILECAPS SHALL PROJECT 75mm INTO THE PILECAP.

NOTE
 ALL GROUND BEAMS TO BE 600mm WIDE x 600mm DEEP IN C28/35 CONCRETE WITH 55Kg/m RUN OF REINFORCEMENT U.N.O.

LEGEND

- DENOTES 600mm WIDE x 750mm DEEP GROUND BEAM WITH 75Kg/m RUN OF REINFORCEMENT.
- ← DENOTES SPAN OF 200mm THICK C28/35 CONCRETE SLAB WITH 23Kg/m² OF REINFORCEMENT.



SECTION X-X

TENDER

REV	DATE	AMENDMENT	BY
G	18.09.11	REAR OF UNITS REALIGNED.	RF
F	07.09.11	200mm THK SUB-BASE ADDED TO FIRE ESCAPE STAIR BASES. EXISTING SUB-STATION ADDED. FIRE ESCAPE STAIR LOCATION AMENDED TO SUIT.	RF
E	05.09.11	PILING & FOUNDATION WORKS DESCRIPTION/METHOD ADDED.	CN
D	26.08.11	FIRE ESCAPE STAIR FOUNDATION BASE DIMENSIONS ADDED.	RF
C	09.08.11	FIRE ESCAPE STAIR FOUNDATION BASE AND SECTION ADDED.	RF
B	08.08.11	STEELWORK SCHEDULE ADDED. TYPICAL SECTION ADDED.	RF
A	17.06.11	3 PILECAP PROVIDED UNDER ADDITIONAL MCI TO ACCOMMODATE VOID AT UNIT B.	CN

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ABBEY SHOPPING CENTRE ABINGDON

Client:
NEW RIVER CAPITAL

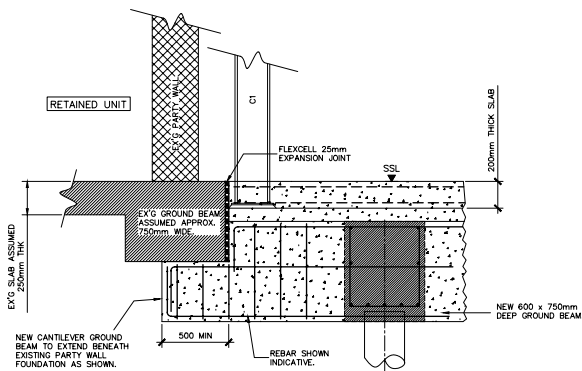
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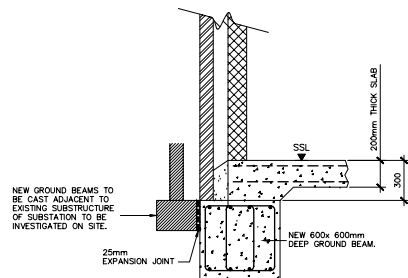
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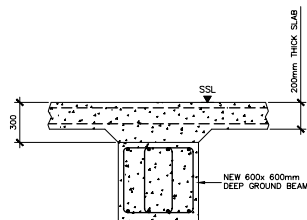
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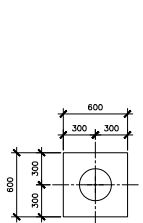
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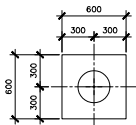
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PERIMETER FOUNDATION SECTION**



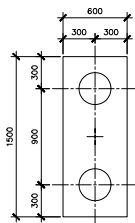
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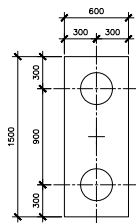
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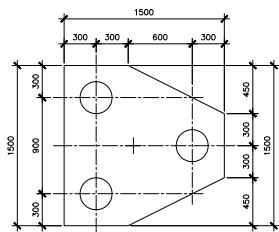
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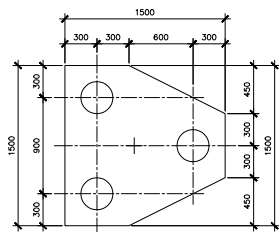
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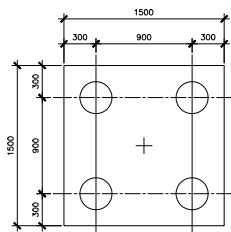
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750mm DEEP PILECAP
(250kg REBAR)
TOTAL No. = 10



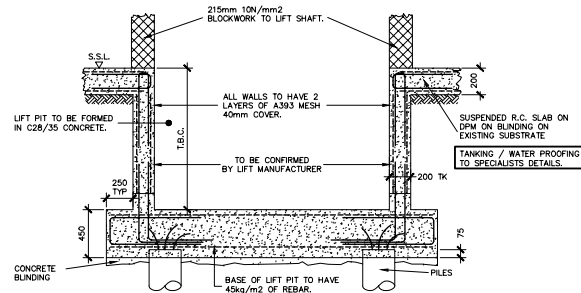
PILECAP TYPE C
600mm DEEP PILECAP
(300kg REBAR)
TOTAL No. = 6



PILECAP TYPE C1
750mm DEEP PILECAP
(350kg REBAR)
TOTAL No. = 2



PILECAP TYPE D
600mm DEEP PILECAP
(350kg REBAR)
TOTAL No. = 1



TYPICAL SECTION THROUGH LIFT PIT

REV	DATE	AMENDMENT	BY
B	07.08.11	PILE CAP TYPE A1 ADDED, INDICATIVE RE-BAR ADDED TO SECTION A-A. LIFT PIT SECTION AMENDED TO SHOW BASE EXTENDED 250mm BEYOND WALL LINE.	RF
A	26.08.11	PROPOSED FOUNDATION SHOWN TO RUN UNDER EXISTING RETAINED UNIT AS SHOWN ON SECTION A-A.	RF

TENDER

Client:
NEW RIVER CAPITAL

Title:
FOUNDATION & GROUND SLAB DETAILS & SECTIONS.

Date: JULY 2011	Scale: 1:25 @ A1	Drawn: MKJW
Project No. 1978	Drg. No. SK102	Checked: BJB
		Revision: B

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