

Flick Quarry Rollright Hertfordshire



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



August 2008



Client: Hanson

Issue No:1
OA Job No: 4174
NGR: SP 281 306

Client Name: Hanson

Client Ref No:

Document Title: Flick Quarry, Rollright, Oxfordshire

Document Type: Watching Brief

Issue Number: 1

National Grid Reference: SP 281 306

Planning Reference:

OA Job Number: 4174

Site Code: RRFQ 08

Invoice Code: RRFQWB

Receiving Museum: Oxfordshire County Museum Service

Museum Accession No: tbc

Prepared by: Mike Sims

Position: SWD Supervisor

Date: 26th August 2008

Checked by: Dan Dodds

Position: Head of Small Works

Date: 26th August 2008

Approved by: Nick Shepherd

Signed.....

Position: Head of Fieldwork

Date: 26th August 2008

Document File Location W:PROJECTS\Oxfordshire OX\West Oxfordshire
WO\8001 Flick Quarry \wbREP.doc

Graphics File Location Servergo*RRFQ08*RRFQWB*Flick
Quarry*jm*29.08.08

Illustrated by Julia Moxham

Disclaimer:

This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and should not be relied upon or used for any other project without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and prior written authority of Oxford Archaeology being obtained. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for the consequences of this document being used for a purpose other than the purposes for which it was commissioned. Any person/party using or relying on the document for such other purposes agrees, and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Oxford Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the person/party by whom it was commissioned.

Oxford Archaeology

© Oxford Archaeological Unit Ltd 2008

Janus House

Osney Mead

Oxford OX2 0ES

t: (0044) 01865 263800

e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk

f: (0044) 01865 793496

w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk

Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited is a Registered Charity No: 285627

Flick Quarry, Rollright, Oxfordshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

CONTENTS

Summary.....	1
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Scope of work.....	1
1.2 Location, geology and topography	1
1.3 Archaeological and historical background.....	1
2 Project Aims and Methodology.....	2
2.1 Aims	2
2.2 Methodology	2
3 Results	2
3.1 Description of deposits.....	3
3.2 Finds	3
3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains	3
4 Discussion and Conclusions.....	3
Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory	5
Appendix 2 Bibliography and references.....	5
Appendix 3 Summary of site details.....	5

LIST OF FIGURES

- Fig. 1 Site location
- Fig. 2 Site plan showing area of watching brief
- Fig. 3 Sections

SUMMARY

On the 13th and 14th of August 2008, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Flick Quarry, Rollright, Oxfordshire (NGR: SP 281 306). The work was commissioned by Hanson Quarry Products, Europe in advance of mineral extraction. The watching brief revealed evidence of post-medieval agricultural practices, but no significant archaeology was observed.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 On the 13th and 14th of June 2005 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Flick Quarry (also known as Rollright Quarry), Rollright, Oxfordshire (NGR: SP 281 306). The work was commissioned by Hanson Quarry Products, Europe Ltd in respect of a planning application for mineral extraction (Planning Application No. 03/2004/P/TCN)
- 1.1.2 The County Archaeological Service had prepared a project brief for previous work on the site conducted by OA in 1999 and this brief was used for this round of investigation.
- 1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation (OA 2005) detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief.

1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site is situated approximately 1.4 km north-west of the village of Little Rollright, Oxfordshire (Fig. 1) and is located on a high limestone spur overlooking the Glyme Valley and Chipping Norton to the south, and the Stour Valley (Warwickshire) to the north. The area comprises arable farmland, now currently lying fallow with the site gently rising towards the centre.
- 1.2.2 The site lies at approximately 240 m OD and occupies an area of roughly 0.7 hectares (Fig. 2). The underlying geology is loam overlying Great Oolitic Limestone (British Geological Survey, Sheet no. 218).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the watching brief was prepared for the WSI for the project (OA, 2005) and is reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 The site is situated just off the Saltway to Great Rollright Road (the Cotswold Ridgeway or Jurassic Way) which is the ancient road linking the East Midlands to the south-west. There is an early megalithic complex and barrow cemetery to the east of the site at the Rollright Stones (Oxfordshire County Monument No. 1). There are also Iron Age and Roman settlements and a Saxon cemetery near to the stones.

- 1.3.3 The site itself produced a Beaker vessel found in the 1940s and a Iron Age pit or ditch was exposed in the quarry face also at this date.
- 1.3.4 Previous work immediately to the north-east of the site in 1999 (OAU 1999), produced some evidence (pottery sherds and a pit) to suggest limited Middle Iron Age activity within the vicinity of the site and also evidence of small scale 18th - to 19th-century quarrying. Linear natural features caused by frost fractures were also observed.
- 1.3.5 A watching brief conducted by OA in 2005 on land immediately to the north-east of the present development observed continuations of the natural features but no evidence of activity of any period was observed (OA,2005).

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To identify the presence or absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.
- 2.1.2 To preserve by record any archaeological remains (if present) that the development may remove or damage within the impact area.
- 2.1.3 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 A continuous archaeological presence was maintained during the period of the topsoil stripping. This consisted of a strip 30 m wide immediately to the south-west of the area stripped in 2005 and a 8 m wide by 90 m long haul road leading to the topsoil storage area in the south-eastern corner of the field.
- 2.2.2 The excavation was undertaken by a 21 ton mechanical excavator fitted with a 2 m wide toothless grading bucket. Machining proceeded in spits down to the required level.
- 2.2.3 After the removal of the topsoil and subsoil the exposed layers were identified as undisturbed deposits and recording proceeded at that level.
- 2.2.4 A plan of the machined areas was kept at a scale of 1:500 (Fig. 2) and sample sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20. A photographic record of the work was made using digital photography, colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OA Field Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 The underlying natural, a pale yellow-brown silt clay (3), which contained many fragments of weathered limestone with tilting bands of thinly bedded oolitic limestone erupting to the surface aligned roughly north to south was exposed throughout the whole of the stripped area (Fig. 3, Sections 1, 2 and 3). These beds are probably the result of frost heaving, lifting the edges of the beds to the surface. This deposit was encountered at approximately 0.4m below the current ground level at the western and eastern edges of the site, rising to 0.25 m below ground level within the centre.
- 3.1.2 Along the eastern edge of the stripped area a 0.08 m deep layer of reddish brown silt clay (4), was observed, overlying layer 3 (Fig. 3, Section 3). This deposit contained many small angular fragments of oolitic limestone and probably represents a layer of colluvium.
- 3.1.3 Overlying layers 3 and 4 was a 0.1 m deep layer of dark yellow-brown silt clay (2) containing many small sub-angular limestone fragments.
- 3.1.4 The entire excavated area was sealed by a layer of dark brown loamy clay (1) of between 0.18 m and 0.3 m in depth. This context contained many small abraded oolitic limestone fragments, a small percentage of which displayed signs of burning.

3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 The deposits were closely examined during excavation and the spoil heaps checked afterwards but very little dating evidence was recovered. All the finds recovered during the course of the watching brief were of a late post-medieval date, probably the 19th and 20th centuries. These finds included fragments of brick, nails and slate, all of which were recovered from layer 1. These finds were evaluated on site but were not retained.

3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 3.3.1 No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling were encountered during the course of the watching brief.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 Layer 3 is the upper surface of a weathered oolitic limestone deposit overlying beds of limestone. Layer 4 appears to be a colluvium. The limited extent of this deposit appears to be the result of deep ploughing truncating it in other areas of the site. Layer 2 probably represents an earlier layer of worked soil.

- 4.1.2 Layer 1 represents a layer of plough soil associated with the last known use of the land. The burnt limestone noted during the 2005 watching brief was also observed within this layer and is probably the result of the earlier agricultural practise of burning the cereal straw after harvest.
- 4.1.3 The absence of features cutting into the surface of the natural deposits suggest that this area was outside the focus of any settlements including the Iron Age activity observed during the 1999 excavations. There is the possibility that subsequent agricultural activity may have truncated or destroyed any shallow features although the absence of residual finds recovered from the topsoil or truncated deeper features would mitigate against this.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	Layer	0.18 m - 0.3 m	Modern ploughsoil	Brick, nails and slate	19th - 20th centuries
2	Layer	0.08 m	Earlier worked soil	-	-
3	Layer	> 0.1 m	Weathered limestone	-	-
4	Layer	0.08 m	Colluvial clay	-	-

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

IFA, 2001 *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

OA 1992 *Field Manual*, (Ed. D Wilkinson)

OA 2000 OA Environmental Guidelines for sampling (first edition, July 2000)

OA 2005 Flick Quarry, Rollright, Oxfordshire: Archaeological Watching Brief Report

OAU 1999 Rollright Quarry Archaeological Watching Brief Written Scheme of Investigation

OAU 1999 Rollright Quarry Archaeological Watching Brief Report

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Flick Quarry, Rollright, Oxfordshire

Site code: RRFQ 08

Grid reference: SP 281 306

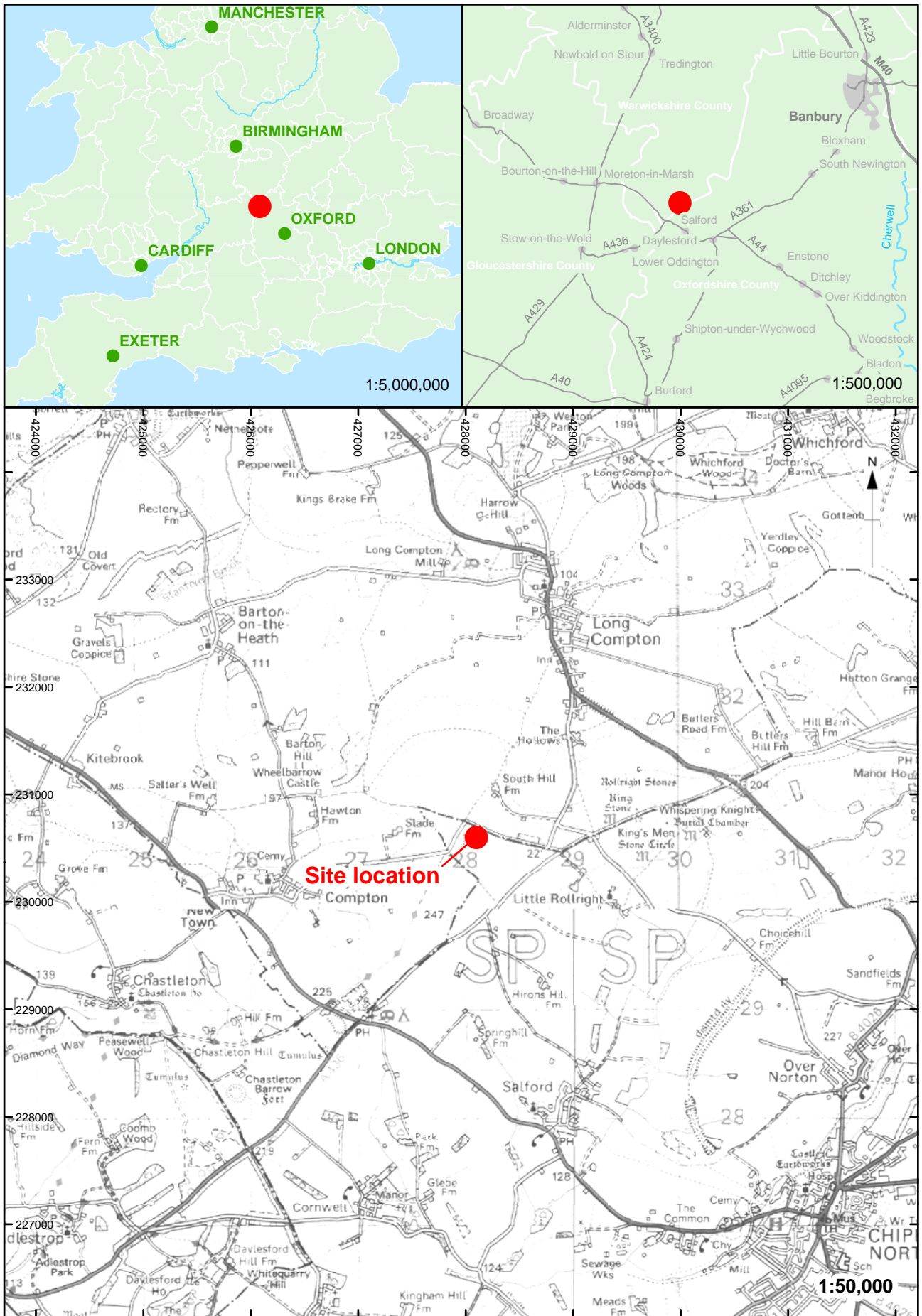
Type of watching brief: Machine stripping of topsoil prior to mineral extraction

Date and duration of project: 2 days, 13th and 14th August 2008

Area of site: c7,000 m²

Summary of results: Post-medieval agricultural soils sealing natural deposits

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course.



Reproduced by permission of the Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office (c) Crown Copyright. 1996 All rights reserved. License No. AL 100005569

Figure 1: Site location

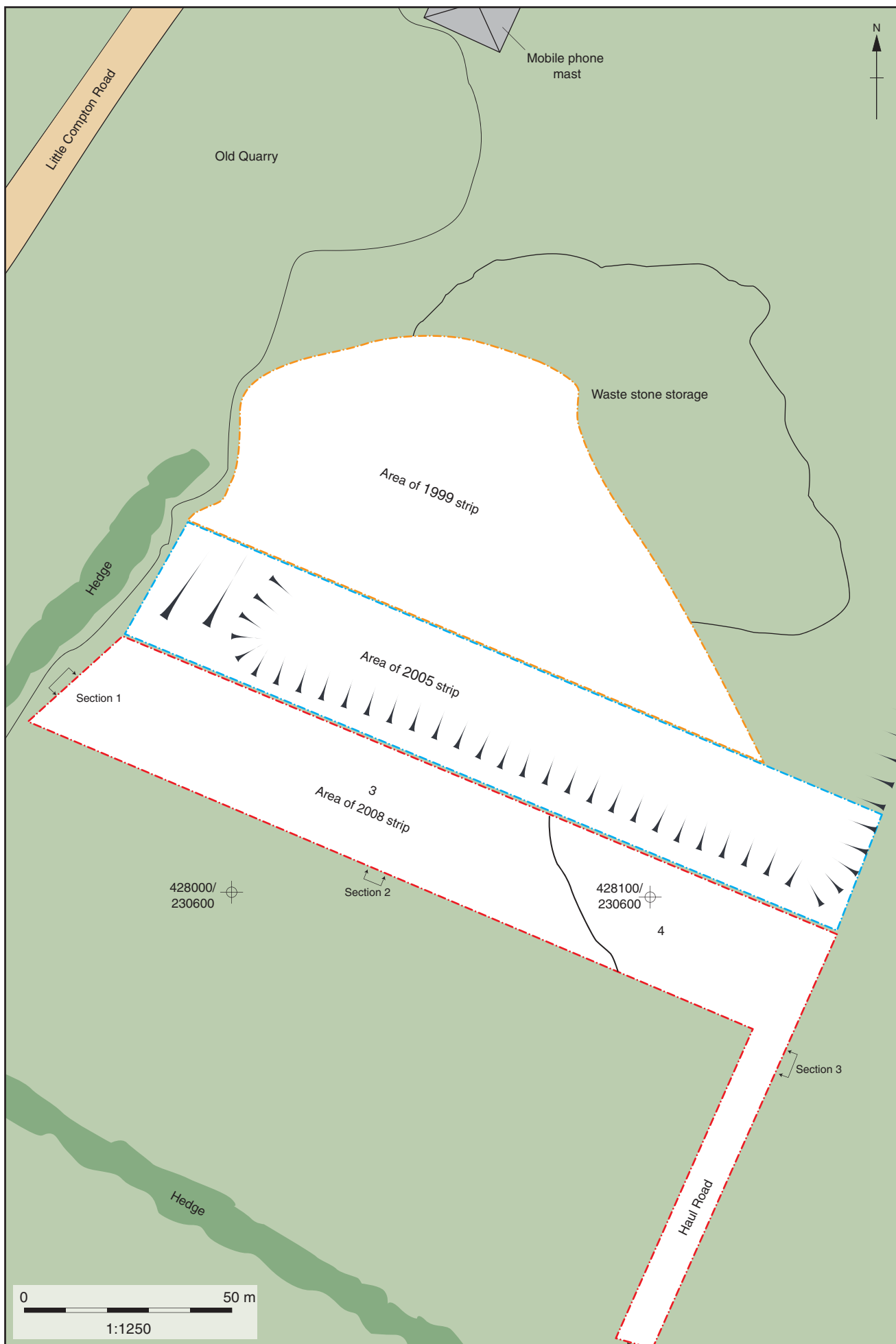


Figure 2: Site plan

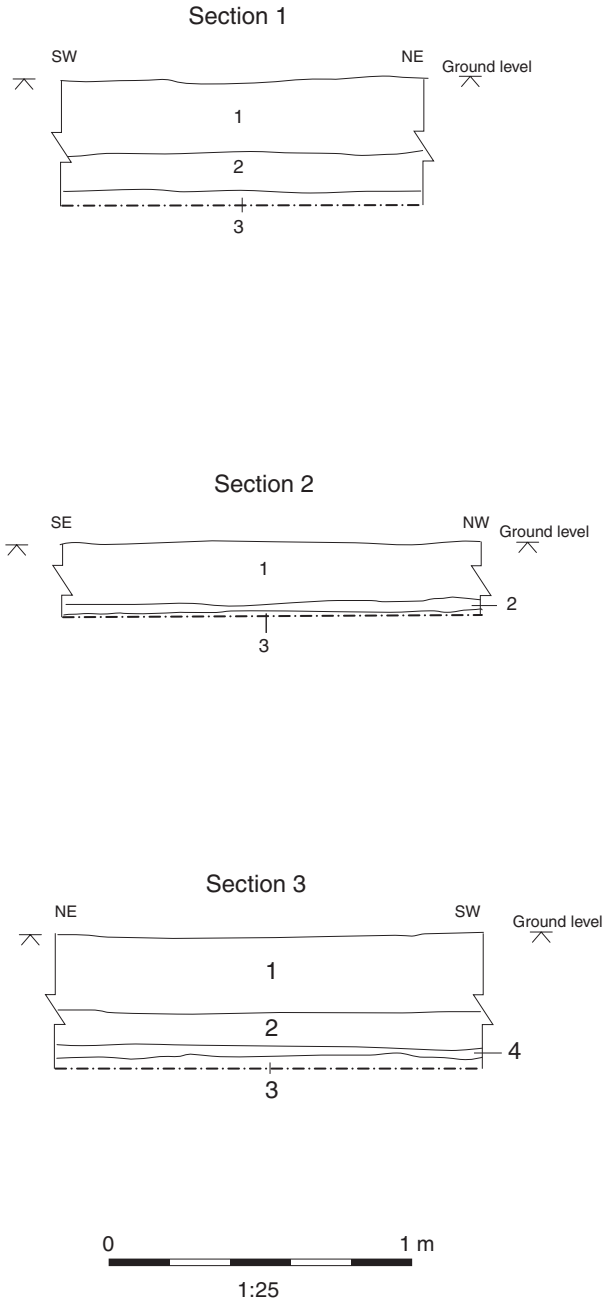


Figure 3: Sections



Head Office/Registered Office

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES

t: +44 (0) 1865 263 800
f: +44 (0) 1865 793 496
e: info@thehumanjourney.net
w: <http://thehumanjourney.net>

OA North

Mill 3
Moor Lane
Lancaster LA1 1GF

t: +44 (0) 1524 541 000
f: +44 (0) 1524 848 606
e: [oanorth@thehumanjourney.net](mailto: oanorth@thehumanjourney.net)
w: <http://thehumanjourney.net>

OA East

15 Trafalgar Way
Bar Hill
Cambridgeshire
CB23 8SQ

t: +44 (0) 1223 850500
f: +44 (0) 1223 850599
e: [oaeast@thehumanjourney.net](mailto: oaeast@thehumanjourney.net)
w: <http://thehumanjourney.net/oaeast>

OA Méditerranée

115 Rue Merlot
ZAC La Louvade
34 130 Manguio
France

t: +33 (0) 4.67.57.86.92
f: +33 (0) 4.67.42.65.93
e: [oamed@oamed.fr](mailto: oamed@oamed.fr)
w: <http://oamed.fr/>



Director: David Jennings, BA MIFA FSA

*Oxford Archaeological Unit is a
Private Limited Company, N^o: 1618597
and a Registered Charity, N^o: 285627*