

Cattle Market and Leisure Centre Cirencester Gloucestershire



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Oxford Archaeology

December 2003

Client: Cotswold District Council

Issue N^o: 1

OA Job N^o: 2106

NGR: SP 0195 0175

Client Name: Cotswold District Council

Client Ref No: N/A

Document Title: Cattle Market and Leisure Centre, Cirencester,
Gloucestershire

Document Type: Watching Brief

Issue Number: 1

National Grid Reference: NGR SP 0195 0175
Planning Reference: N/A

OA Job Number: 2106
Site Code: CICM 03
Invoice Code: CICMWB
Receiving Museum: Corinium Museum, Cirencester
Museum Accession No:

Prepared by: James Mumford
Position: Supervisor
Date: 24th December 2003

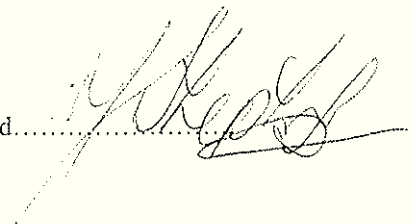
Checked by: Jon Hiller
Position: Senior Project Manager
Date: 24th December 2003

Approved by: Nick Shepherd
Position: Head of Fieldwork
Date: 12th January 2004

Document File Location: U:/OAU/wbREPORTS/Gloucestershire/CICM.doc
Graphics File Location: Server10:?oaupubs 1/ItoQ*ICICMWB*Cattle Market and
Leisure Centre*JM*13.12.03

Illustrated by: Julia Moxham

Signed.....



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 2003

Janus House

Osney Mead

Oxford OX2 0ES

t: (0044) 01865 263800

f: (0044) 01865 793496

e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk

w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk

Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited is a Registered Charity No: 285627

Cattle Market and Leisure Centre, Cirencester, Gloucestershire***ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT*****CONTENTS**

Summary.....	1
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Location and scope of work	1
1.2 Geology and topography	1
1.3 Archaeological and historical background	1
2 Project Aims and Methodology.....	6
2.1 Aims	6
2.2 Methodology.....	6
3 Results	6
3.1 Description of deposits	6
3.2 Finds	7
3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains	7
4 Discussion and Conclusions	7
Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory	8
Appendix 2 Bibliography and References	8
Appendix 3 Summary of Site Details.....	8

LIST OF FIGURES

- Fig. 1 Site location
 Fig. 2 Site plan showing location of new test pits and Boreholes
 Fig. 3 Sections 1 - 6

Cover Plate: View of cattle market office from the north.

SUMMARY

In December 2003 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at the Cattle Market and Leisure Centre, Cirencester, Gloucestershire (NGR SP 0195 0175). The work was commissioned by Cotswold District Council in advance of test pits for ground investigation prior to redevelopment. The watching brief revealed no archaeological features or deposits within the seven test pits.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In December 2003 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at the Cattle Market and Leisure Centre, Cirencester, Gloucestershire (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Cotswold District Council and undertaken during the excavation of test pits for ground investigation prior to redevelopment.
- 1.1.2 OA worked to the brief set for the 2002 evaluation and the requirements detailed in the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the archaeological evaluation.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site is located in the central north-west part of Cirencester. The area lies on slightly sloping ground, falling south and east, at a height of approximately 115 m OD. The underlying solid geology is formed of limestone cornbrash.
- 1.2.2 The site is presently in use as a weekly cattle market, leisure centre and public car park.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the watching brief was prepared from the earlier evaluation report (OA 2002) and is reproduced below. This has also been the subject of a desk-based assessment (CAT 2000).

Prehistoric

- 1.3.2 There have been few finds dating to the prehistoric period from Cirencester and there is no recorded evidence of prehistoric activity within the immediate vicinity of the proposed development site (the Site). A surviving mound to the south of the Site has previously been identified as a Neolithic long barrow, and is included within the Scheduled Area also containing the Roman amphitheatre (SAM GC 39). However, doubts about this identification have recently been expressed, and it is more likely that this feature is related to Roman quarrying in the area rather than prehistoric activity.

Romano-British

- 1.3.3 The Romano-British occupation at Cirencester spans four centuries and can be divided into two broad phases: the early Roman period of military occupation (c. AD

45/50-AD 75), and the Roman town of Corinium (c. AD 75/80-AD 400). The Site lies on the western side of the later town, external to the defensive circuit, and contains one of several areas of burials suggesting a substantial extra-mural cemetery. It is also suggested that the line of the former Tetbury Road was in use in the earlier Roman period.

Early military occupation and the Fosse Way

- 1.3.4 The focus of early activity in Cirencester lay some distance to the east of the Site, between Victoria Road and Watermoor Road, south of Lewis Lane. A fort was established in the Leaholme area in approximately AD 45-50 and was probably occupied until the mid 70s AD. It is thought that the civilian settlement, or vicus associated with this fort lay immediately to the north-west of the fort itself. It is argued that the original course of the Fosse Way Roman road, the line of which is preserved by Old Tetbury Road, was probably laid out at this early period. If so it would have passed to the north of the early fort some distance to the east of the Site. When the later street grid was laid out this road would appear to have been re-directed to the south of the site, entering the town along the line of Querns Lane, through the second-century Bath Gate. No firm excavated evidence has yet been recovered for an early road along the northern alignment, and although several sections of road have been uncovered and attributed to the later southern route, its exact course remains to be established.

The Roman town defences

- 1.3.5 In the last quarter of the first century AD the timber buildings of the vicus were cleared away and the town of *Corinium Dobunnorum* was established. A rectangular street plan was laid out, aligned with the pre-existing course of Ermin Street. Much of the stone used in the construction of the town, and of public buildings in particular was quarried at The Querns, a short distance to the south of the Site, in the vicinity of the later Roman amphitheatre. During the second century AD the town was enclosed within a defensive circuit, initially consisting of an earthen rampart, but later reinforced with a stone wall along the external face of the rampart, as well as defensive towers, and monumental gates such as the 'Bath Gate' uncovered to the south east of the Site. The defences of Roman Corinium in the vicinity of the Site have been subject to a series of well recorded archaeological investigations.
- 1.3.6 Excavations in 1967 took the form of a trench, and a series of smaller test pits in Station Yard, (what is now the Sheep Street car park), and a further trench to the south in the grounds of the Memorial Hall. Remains of the defences were found at a depth of 0.6m below the modern ground surface. These consisted of parts of the clay-built earlier rampart, and a robbed-out trench where the stone-built outer wall had been inserted into the front face of the rampart. The wall itself was estimated to have been 1.75m wide when first constructed, but later widened by further cutting back of the rampart, to 3.5m. Location of the wall-line in both the northern and southern excavation trenches allows the alignment of the defences to be postulated with some certainty in this area. It was also during these works that the absence of any evidence for a gate through the defences on the line of the Old Tetbury Road was first noted and doubts cast upon this as the course of the Fosse Way. Two further

test pits were excavated by CAT to the south of the Memorial Hall in 1989. Both of these produced yellow clay rampart material. In Test Pit 9 (see DBA) to the south, this material was encountered 0.7m below the modern ground surface and survived up to 1.5m thick. In Test Pit 1 (see DBA) possible revetting of the rear face of the rampart was encountered, allowing the overall width of the clay rampart behind the wall to be postulated.

- 1.3.7 CAT excavated a series of trenches to the east and south east of the Site prior to the construction of Waitrose supermarket in 1994 and 1995. Once again the characteristic yellow clay rampart material was identified at a depth of 1.2m, along with a wall 3.1m wide which, although robbed-out to its foundations, lay on an alignment corresponding with the sections found to the north. Two ditches running outside the wall were also uncovered during this work. The outer edge of the inner ditch was identified approximately 13 m from the face of the wall, with a second outer ditch separated from it by approximately 2.5m, with its outer edge somewhere between the two trenches excavated in 1994. It was not possible to establish the depths of these ditches during this work, but the outer ditch was augered to a depth in excess of 2m. It is possible to postulate a continuation of these ditches along the face of the defences to the north. Trenching to the west of the wall line in Station Yard in 1969 failed to locate archaeological deposits due to a thickness of 4-5m of overburden. This was attributed to nineteenth-century consolidation of the ground for the construction of the railway station and it may be that this consolidation was at least partially filling the line of the defensive ditches.

The extra-mural cemetery

- 1.3.8 The area of the probable Roman cemetery to the west of the defences is less well understood. Substantial numbers of burials have been uncovered, starting in the nineteenth century, and continuing during rescue projects from the 1960s onwards. Many of these discoveries have taken place without systematic archaeological recording, or during development. As a result no complete picture of the layout or extent of the cemetery has yet been produced. However, all of the various finds were catalogued by the Cirencester Excavation Committee in a gazetteer produced in 1982 (McWhirr, Viner, & Wells 1982).
- 1.3.9 The earliest discoveries took place during the construction of the cattle market in 1867. When the site was levelled numerous interments were found as well as a number of what were presumably cremation urns. Of these only two stone coffins and three cremation vessels, which were recovered from the site intact, these were retained to form part of the collection now in the Corinium Museum. Despite the loss of much of the evidence for this cemetery, it would seem likely that it occupied a large part of the cattle market area.
- 1.3.10 Subsequently in 1933 a single burial in a stone coffin was uncovered by workmen digging in the garden of Oakley House immediately to the north of the Site. Further work in this area, was carried out in 1960 during the construction of a garage on the site. On this occasion it was only, possible to maintain a watching brief on the mechanical stripping of the site and no plan was produced, but at least 46 cremations,

in pottery vessels and eight inhumations were identified, dating from the first to the third centuries AD.

- 1.3.11 Three further stone coffins were located in 1975 during the construction of the new Tetbury Road. Once again these were only identified during watching briefs, and one burial in particular was found on a spoil heap and is likely to be some distance from its original position. It is probable, however that these originated near the finds from 1960.
- 1.3.12 Further observations were made during the construction of the leisure centre swimming pool in 1971, but no burials were observed, bedrock appearing only a few feet below the modern ground surface.

Anglo-Saxon and medieval

- 1.3.13 No Anglo-Saxon finds or deposits have been identified within the Site area. This reflects a general paucity of material from this period from within Cirencester. It is likely that the activity within the town was reduced in area, and had its focus in the vicinity of the current Market Place and Church.
- 1.3.14 Reference has been made above to the quarrying of stone from the area of The Querns, to the south of the Site, in the Roman period. It would appear that such activity continued in the Anglo-Saxon and early medieval period, although probably on a lesser scale. Sufficient quarrying activity or its remains survived for the area to be known as the 'Crundles' (or 'quarries') in the early medieval period, by which time much of the area was also used as common grazing by the townspeople. The purchase and enclosure of the area by the Abbot of Cirencester is recorded from 1286, and subsequently it was used as a rabbit warren.
- 1.3.15 The extent of the later medieval town is defined by the borough boundary recorded in 1571. This passes along Sheep Street leaving the Site outside the western boundary of the town. The place-name 'Athelmede' survives from 1535 for the area immediately to the west of Sheep Street, suggesting that the area was occupied by meadows and grazing at that period.

Post-medieval

- 1.3.16 The post-medieval history of the Site is principally discernible from historic maps. The earliest map to show the area in detail is that of Richard Hall, produced in 1795. This covers only the portion to the north east of the Site and shows several buildings on the corner of Tetbury Road and Sheep Street, as well as a row of cottages extending down the west side of Sheep Street itself. Also depicted on this map to the south east of the Site, is the open feeder channel for the Cirencester branch of the Thames and Severn Canal, opened in 1789. Not depicted on the map is the northern portion of this feeder channel, which passed underground to the east of the Site via a culvert, and on to its source near Barton Mill. Remains of this culvert were encountered immediately to the south east of the Site during the construction of Hammond Way in 1975.

- 1.3.17 A map published in Lysons' *Reliquiae Britannico-Romanae* of 1817 shows the Site in some detail. Only a single building is depicted, on the corner of Sheep Street and Tetbury Road. The remainder of the area is occupied by gardens, and by Lord Bathurst's kitchen garden, which occupies the plot later forming the garden of Oakley Cottage, although the cottage itself was apparently not yet built. This map also depicts Cirencester Park on the north side of Tetbury Road. The park was developed by the first Earl Bathurst after the construction of Cirencester House in 1714, and preserves much of its original eighteenth-century form. The park is included at Grade I in the *Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England* (English Heritage 1993), however, no part of it falls within the Site.
- 1.3.18 A Map of 1835 provides partial coverage of the Site. Oakley Cottage (now Oakley House) presumably built since 1817, and its garden are depicted. Also shown is the Independent Chapel on Sheep Street. This was constructed as a non-conformist chapel in 1833, and with alterations in 1888 still stands as The Cirencester Memorial Centre, a Grade II Listed Building. The remainder of the Site appears to have been undeveloped at this period.
- 1.3.19 Complete coverage of the Site available on the First Edition Ordnance Survey maps produced in 1875 at both 1:500 and 1:2500 scales. These maps show the two major nineteenth century developments; the railway station to the east of the Site and the cattle market. The former was opened in 1841. This connected Cirencester by branch line with the Great Western Railway main line at Kemble, and remained open until 1964. The station building itself was designed by Brunel and still stands, a Grade II Listed Building.
- 1.3.20 The cattle market was constructed by Lord Bathurst in 1867, on a previously undeveloped field at the western end of the Site. Cattle had already been sold informally on the site for several years, but Bathurst equipped it with brick paving and iron stock pens, levying a fee on all sales taking place there. A link to the railway lines to the east, and stock pens adjacent to the tracks were also constructed. The remainder of the Site was occupied at this period by the gardens of Oakley Cottage, and by open fields. No further significant changes to the layout of the Site are discernible from later maps until the 1970s. The railway was closed in 1964, and from 1971 to 1975 the whole area was redeveloped, with a re-alignment of the A429 Tetbury Road, and the construction of Hammond Way, and the Link Road to the east of the Site. New buildings were constructed including the leisure centre, and Bridge's and T.H. White's garages. The former station, remains undeveloped, with the station yard, as well as the area of tracks to the south of the booking hall vacant and used as car park, while the building itself stands empty. The cattle market at the western end of the Site also remains substantially unchanged from its earlier form.
- 1.3.21 In addition to results of the desk-based assessment summarised above a trial pit evaluation was carried out by CAT on the site of the Cirencester Social & Services Club (to the east end of the site) in January 2001. Four test pits each 1.5 m square were excavated in the car park area. No archaeological deposits or remains were revealed. Natural limestone was revealed between 0.6 and 0.9 m below the modern ground surface. In three of the test pits the car park surface and associated construction deposits had truncated all subsoils. One test-pit revealed the remains of

an undated garden soil beneath the car park construction and overlying the limestone natural.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence/absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.
- 2.1.2 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The seven test pits were excavated using a JCB with a 0.6 m wide bucket. These test pits were located around the site to test the soil in conjunction with a number of bore holes (Fig. 2).
- 2.2.2 All archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:500 and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20. All excavated features were photographed using black and white print film. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

Test Pit 1

- 3.1.1 The test pit measured 3.1 m x 0.6 m x 1.1 m and cut into a natural of silty clay with limestone cornbrash over limestone bedrock (1). Sealing this was a 0.16 m thick layer of disturbed made ground of dark grey brown silty clay (2) with rubble. Overlying this was a 0.06 m thick layer of concrete (5) (Figs 2 and 3, Section 5).

Test Pit 2

- 3.1.2 The test pit measured 3.2 m x 0.6 m x 1.7 m and cut into a natural of silty clay with limestone cornbrash over limestone bedrock (1). This was sealed by a 0.12 m thick layer of disturbed made ground of dark grey brown silty clay (2), which was sealed below the brick surface (4) of the cattle market (Figs 2 and 3, Section 4).

Test Pit 3

- 3.1.3 The test pit measured 2.8 m x 0.6 m x 1.3 m and cut into a natural of silty clay with limestone cornbrash over limestone bedrock (1). This was sealed by a 0.18 m thick layer of disturbed made ground of dark grey brown silty clay (2), which was sealed below the brick surface (4) of the cattle market (Figs 2 and 3, Section 3).

Test Pit 4

- 3.1.4 The test pit measured 3 m x 0.6 m x 1.7 m and cut into a natural of silty clay with limestone cornbrash over limestone bedrock (1). Sealing this was a 0.18 - 0.22 m

thick layer of disturbed made ground of dark grey brown silty clay (2), which was sealed below a 0.2 m thick light brown silty clay loam (3) with a lot of brick and stone rubble hardcore make up. This was sealed below the brick surface (4) of the cattle market (Figs 2 and 3, Section 1).

Test Pit 5

- 3.1.5 The test pit measured 3.2 m x 0.6 m x 1.9 m and cut into a natural of silty clay with limestone cornbrash over limestone bedrock (1). This was sealed by a 0.30 m thick layer of disturbed made ground of dark grey brown silty clay (2), which was sealed below the brick surface (4) of the cattle market (Figs 2 and 3, Section 2).

Test Pit 6

- 3.1.6 The test pit measured 1.7 m x 0.6 m x 1.1 m and cut into a natural of yellow brown clay (1). This was sealed below a 0.3 m thick layer of old topsoil of mid brown silty clay loam (6). This had been cut by the foundation trench for the boundary wall and overlain by a 0.35 m thick layer of compacted stone chippings and gravel (7) hardcore make up for concrete surface (5) (Figs 2 and 3, Section 6).

Test Pit 7

- 3.1.7 The test pit measured 1.8 m x 0.8 m x 1.1 m. This was against the foundations of the footbridge. The natural was not exposed as the area had been truncated by the construction of the footbridge foundations and back filled by construction debris.

3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 No finds were recovered during the watching brief.

3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 3.3.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified during the watching brief.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The watching brief did not reveal any archaeological features within the test pits and corroborates the results from the evaluation that most of the site has been truncated by the construction of the cattle market. There was survival of soil levels associated with a post-medieval leveling up of the site to the southwest at the bottom of the slope. The natural was very high within the area of the cattle market, lying between 0.2 m - 0.5 m below the surface.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Height</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>
1	Natural				Limestone Combrash and clay	
2	Layer	0.30 m			Ground make up	
3	Layer	0.20 m			Surface make up	
4	Layer	0.08 m			Brick surface	
5	Layer	0.08 m			Concrete	
6	Layer	0.30 m			Old topsoil	
7	Make up	0.38 m			Hardcore make up	

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

OAU 1992 Fieldwork Manual (ed. D Wilkinson, first edition August 1992)

CAT 2000 *Land Adjacent to Cirencester Leisure Centre Archaeological Assessment*, Client Report

OA 2002 *Cattle Market/Leisure Centre Site, Cirencester, Gloucestershire Archaeological Evaluation Report*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Cattle Market and Leisure Centre, Cirencester, Gloucestershire

Site code: CICM 03

Grid reference: NGR SP 0195 0175

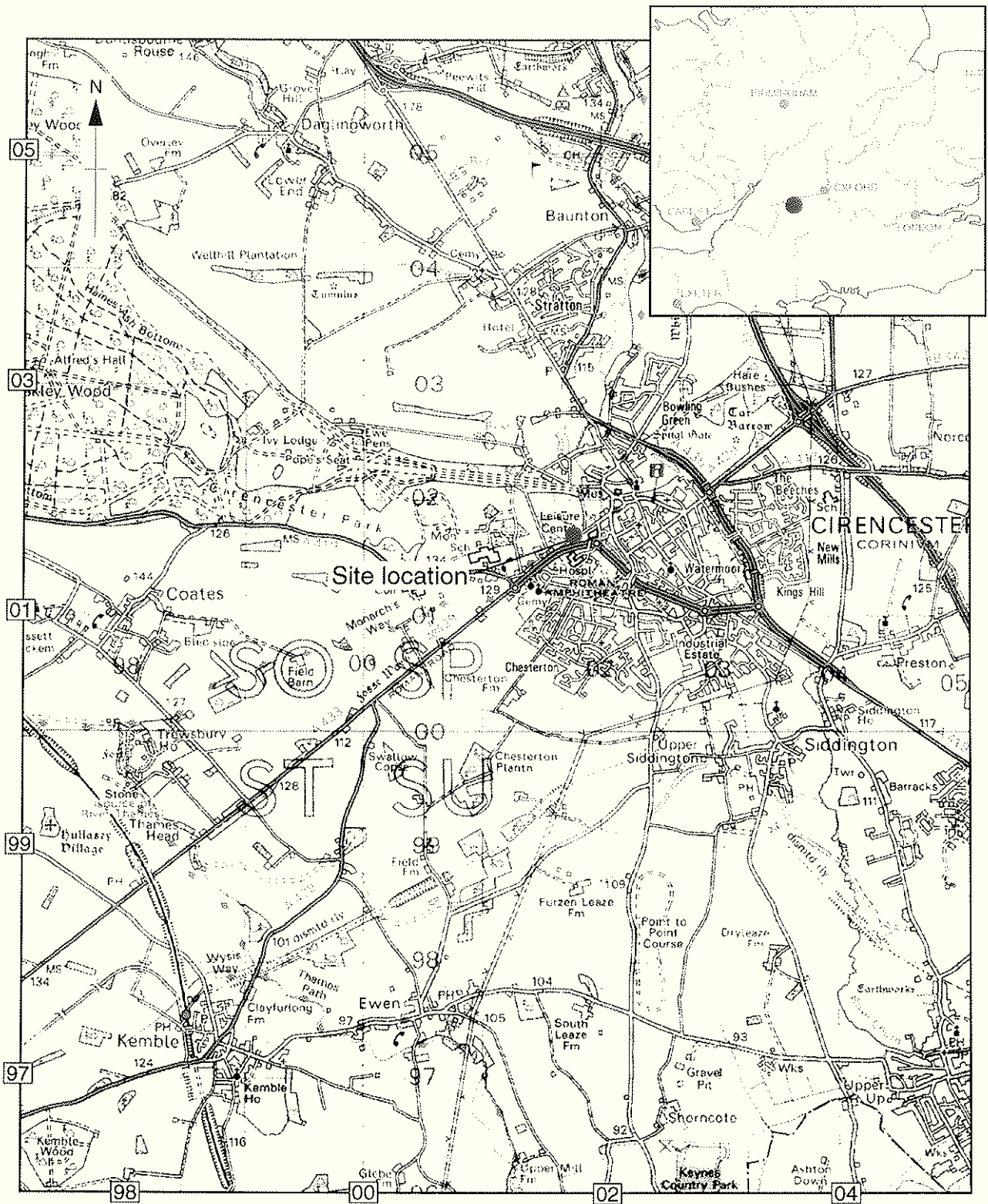
Type of watching brief: Monitoring of seven test pits for ground investigation prior to redevelopment

Date and duration of project: One visit on the 5/12/2003.

Area of site: 100 m x 170 m

Summary of results: The watching brief revealed no archaeological features or deposits within the seven test pits.

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



Reproduced from the Landranger 1:50,000 scale by permission of the Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office
© Crown Copyright 1996. All rights reserved. Licence No. AL 100005569

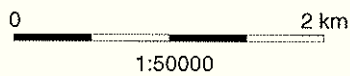
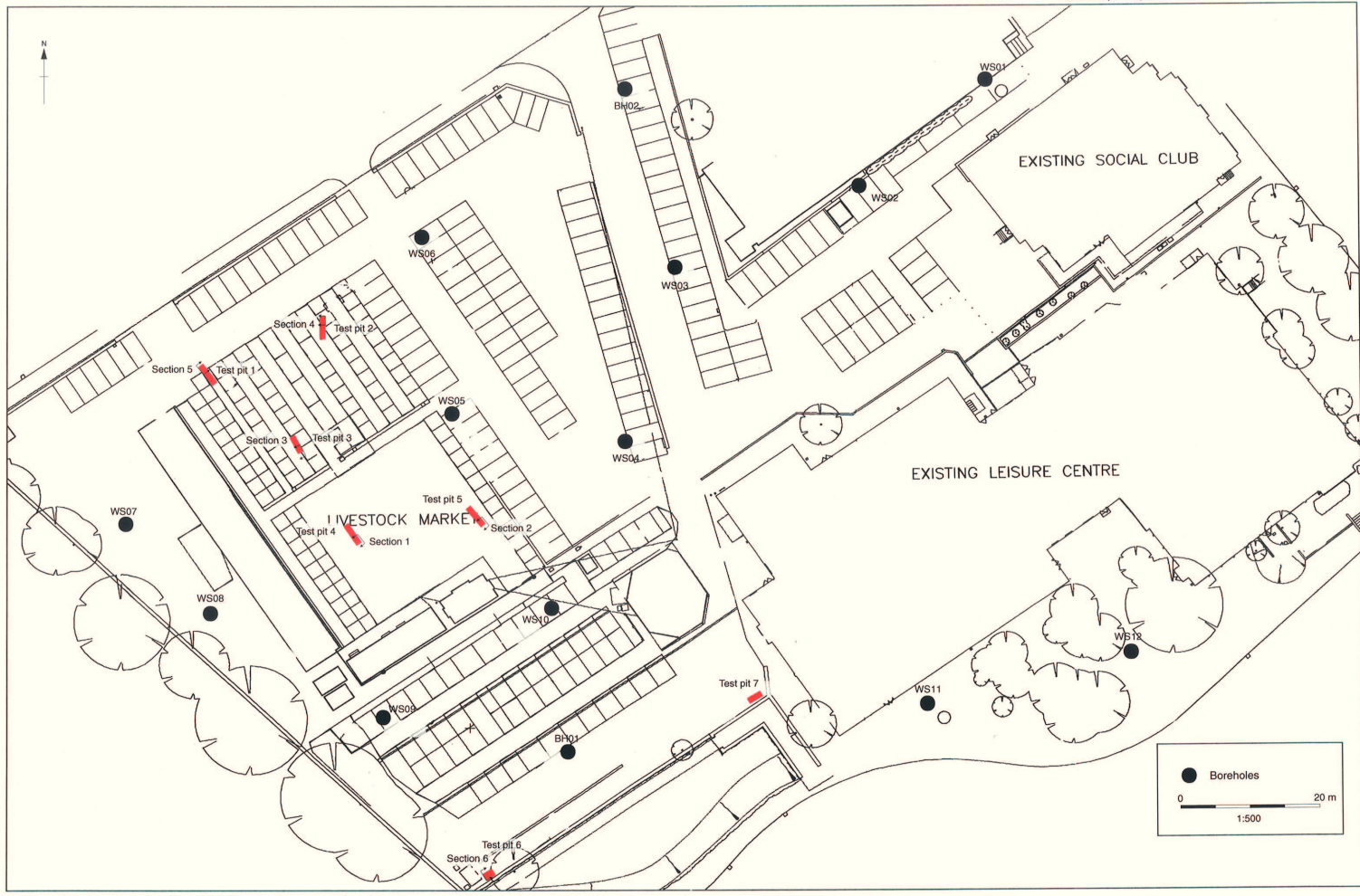
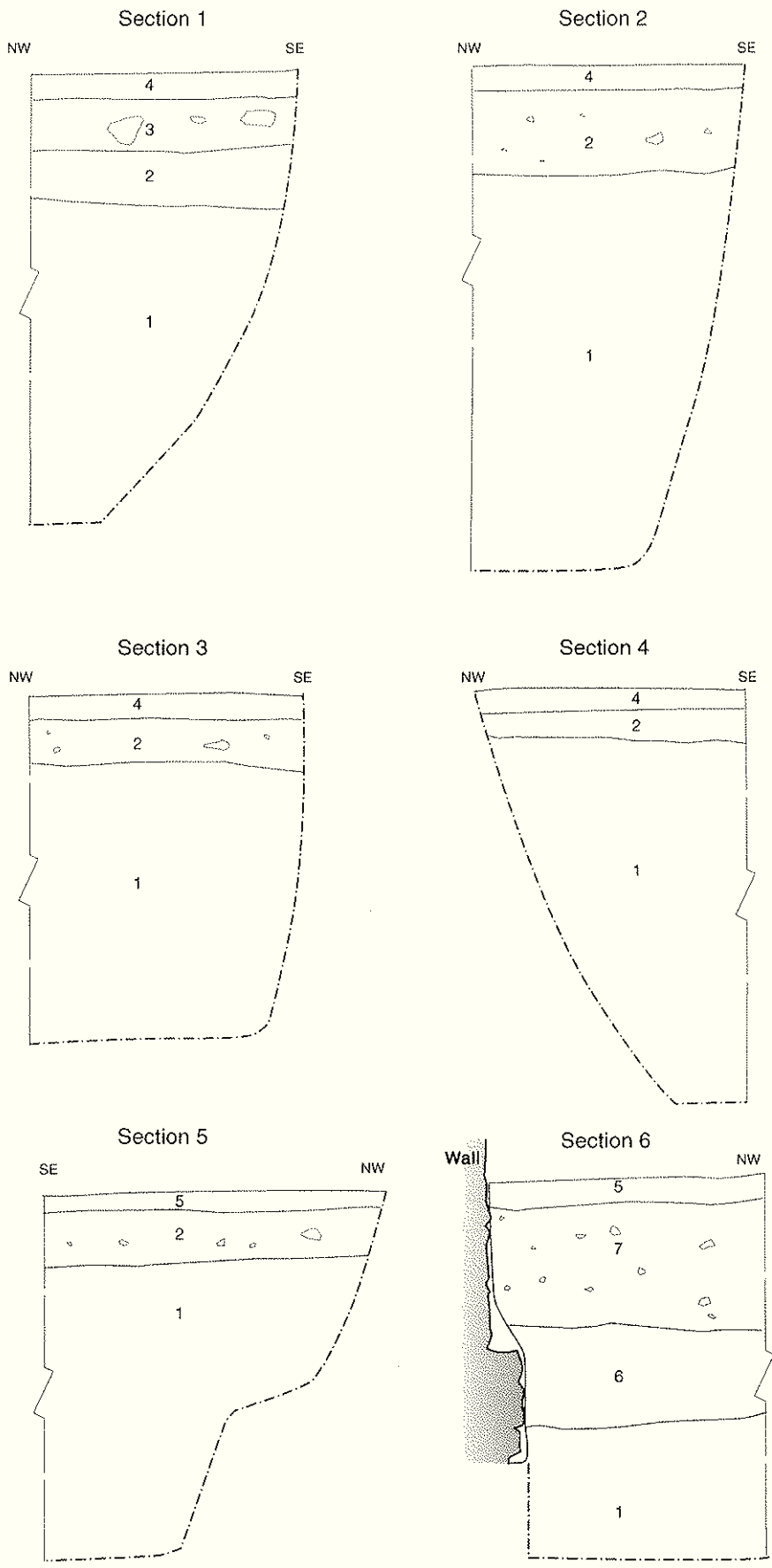


Figure 1: Site location



Reproduced from drawing no DS870/02, Johnson, Poole and Bloomer Land Consultants.

Figure 2: Site plan showing location of new test pits and boreholes



0 1 m
1:25

Figure 3: Section 1-6



Oxford Archaeology

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES

t: (0044) 01865 263800
f: (0044) 01865 793496
e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk
w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk



Oxford Archaeology North

Storey Institute
Meeting House Lane
Lancaster LA1 1TF

t: (0044) 01524 541000
f: (0044) 01524 848606
e: lancinfo@oxfordarch.co.uk
w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk



Director: David Jennings, BA MIFA FSA

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

Registered Office:

Oxford Archaeological Unit
Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES