

AUGUST 1998

ROBERT HITCHINS GROUP

ELMBRIDGE ROAD, GLOUCESTER: AREA A
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

PLANNING APPLICATION 98/000283/FUL

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OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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Fig. 2 Site plan showing trench location

SUMMARY

In August 1998 the Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out a field evaluation at Elmbridge Road, Gloucester (Area A), on behalf of Robert Hitchins Group. Six trenches were excavated. No significant archaeological finds or features were recovered. All trenches showed evidence for previous arable cultivation, in the form of traces of ridge and furrow, and there were a number of more modern disturbances, associated with use of the site as allotments.

ELMBRIDGE ROAD, GLOUCESTER: AREA A

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) carried out a field evaluation at Elmbridge Road, Gloucester (NGR SO 853 986, Fig. 1), on behalf of Robert Hitchins Group, between 3/8/98 and 6/8/98. The evaluation was commissioned in support of a planning application to construct residential housing on the site. The evaluation was conducted in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by the OAU (OAU 1998), and a brief issued by the Gloucester City Archaeologist (GCC 1998).

The proposed development includes two adjacent areas (A and B). At the time of writing outline planning application has been submitted for Area A. Area B will be the subject of a separate application at a later date. The archaeological evaluation was carried out consecutively on both areas; However, the evaluation of Area B is still ongoing at the time of writing and will be the subject of a separate report.

1.2 Geology and topography

The site is located immediately to the north of Ermin Way (Barnwood Road), the Roman road from Gloucester to Cirencester and London. It is bounded to the east by the Midland and Great Western Railway and to the west by Elmbridge Road. This report considers Area A, a level area of former orchards and allotments (currently overgrown), located to the rear of properties fronting onto Elmbridge Road. This area is c. 1.6 ha in extent.

The site lies on alluvial sand and gravels, over the Lower Lias, at c. 22 m OD.

2 Archaeological and historical background

A desk-top assessment of the site has been carried out, covering Areas A and B. The results are presented below. The study comprised consultation of primary and secondary sources relating to the development area including tithe maps, Ordnance Survey maps and the Victoria County History for Gloucestershire (VCH, 1974). A search of Gloucester City and County Sites and Monuments Record, covering a 1 km radius from the site, was also carried out.

'Lying outside the borough were the hamlets of Twigworth, Longford, Kingsholm, Wotton, Barton Street and Tuffley, and a number of extraparochial places, all of them having boundaries of great complexity' (VCH, 1974, iv, 1). The complex Parish and municipal boundaries to the east of Gloucester were rationalised during the 19th- and 20th- centuries, and it is difficult to be sure in which historic parish or estate the development site lay before this period. It seems most likely that the site originally fell within the estate of Barnwood, which was held by Gloucester Abbey at the time of Domesday as part of the manor of Barton (Abbots Barton), but later in the medieval period became a separate manor. According to the VCH, the northern boundary of Barnwood was Elmbridge Road. However, on the tithe map of 1796, the majority of the site is shown in that part of the hamlet of Wotton St Mary included within the parish of St. Mary de Lode.

In the area to the east of Gloucester, many parishes had shared rights in common fields. These developed into small enclosed fields which remained detached parts of the parishes. The pattern of small enclosed fields shown in the development area on the 1796 tithe map, suggests that it is likely to be one such area. At this time the development area was agricultural land.

The Midland and Great Western Railway was built across the area in the 1840s, dividing some of the fields in the development area in two. In the 19th and 20th century most of the area was used as orchards, allotments and small fields. Gravel was also quarried from pits on the site. These are marked as ponds on the 1st edition OS map.

The placename 'Barnwood', and other names in the vicinity, such as Wotton and Twigworth indicate that the area was once heavily wooded. By the mid- 17th century however, the soil was cultivated as open-field land or grassland. Inclosure was completed in 1799 and market gardening became important in the 19th century.

The site lies on the north side of Ermin Way, the Roman road from Gloucester to Cirencester and London. The road remained an important thoroughfare through the medieval and post-medieval periods. In the mid- 13th century Barnwood and Wotton shared responsibility for the upkeep of a bridge over the Wotton Brook, located c. 600 m west of the development area (VCH, 1974).

OAU numbers quoted below refer to Figure 1 and the Gazetteer of Sites and Monuments (Appendix 1).

No archaeological sites are known to exist within the development area. However, significant remains are recorded in the immediate vicinity.

Pleistocene: Pleistocene faunal remains have been recovered from the Barnwood terrace, 200 m to the south-east of the site (OAU 10) and 1 km to the north (OAU 12).

Early prehistoric: Palaeolithic and mesolithic artefacts have been recovered during gravel quarrying in the area (OAU 9, 12).

Later prehistoric: The few prehistoric sites recorded in the vicinity include a beaker burial, located c. 1.1 km to the south-east of the site (OAU 34), and a bronze spearhead, found c. 1.1 km to the south (OAU 24).

Romano-British: Evidence for Roman settlement includes a site c. 1 km to the north-east of the development area. The evidence includes two boundary ditches associated with 1st-4th century Samian, 3 coins, bone pins, roof, floor and hypocaust tiles, coarse tesserae and wall plaster (OAU 31). This is probably the site of a substantial building. Evidence from a second probable settlement, c. 800 m to the south-east of the site (OAU 25), comprised a 20 yard long sleeper trench, containing a bronze 'spilla', a skull, a quantity of 'ordinary' pottery and a late Roman bronze coin. Romano-British burials are recorded at two locations close to Ermin Way (OAU 5, 19). A number of stray finds of Roman coins are recorded within a 1 km radius of the site (OAU 1, 2, 4, 5, 14-18, 20, 26, 32). The closest finds are from beside Ermin Way, less than 100 m from the south end of the site (OAU 1, 39).

Medieval and post-medieval: The historic core of Barnwood village, centred around the Norman church of St Lawrence (OAU 35), lies c. 1 km to the south of the site. A possible medieval moated site has been identified nearby (OAU 36) and a medieval lead weight has also been recorded in the vicinity (OAU 37). The Old Rectory, which dates from the 17th century or earlier, lies c. 200 m south-west of

the site (OAU 11). An arrowhead and associated medieval finds have also been found nearby (OAU 8). Occasional medieval pottery and metal finds have been recorded from a field to the east of the railway (OAU 7), but excavations have produced no further evidence for medieval activity.

Geophysical Survey

A geophysical (magnetometer) survey was carried out by Bartlett-Clark Consultancy immediately prior to the field evaluation, covering a 40% sample of the total development area (Areas A and B). The overgrown and disturbed nature of the ground in Area A was unfavourable for survey, and the sample was therefore reduced in this area. Preliminary results indicate the presence of much modern disturbance and debris in the topsoil, consistent with use of the site as orchards and allotment gardens. No archaeological features were detected. A report on the geophysical survey will be submitted with the Area B evaluation report.

2 EVALUATION AIMS

The aims of the evaluation are as follows:

- To determine, as far as is reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed redevelopment. An adequate representative sample of all areas where archaeological remains are potentially threatened should be studied, and attention should be given to sites and remains of all periods (inclusive of evidence of past environments).
- To clarify the nature and extent of existing disturbance and intrusions and hence assess the degree of archaeological survival of buried deposits and surviving structures of archaeological significance.
- To identify any evidence for surviving Pleistocene faunal remains or palaeolithic artefacts surviving in the Barnwood terrace deposits, within the development area.
- To establish the presence/ absence of Romano-British settlement or burial activity along the line of Ermin Way.
- To determine the local, regional, national and international significance of such archaeological deposits as are revealed, and the potential for further archaeological fieldwork to fulfil local, regional and national research objectives.
- To make the results of the investigation available.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Sample size

Area A is c. 1.6 ha in extent. The evaluation comprised seven trenches, all but 6a and 6b measuring 30 m x 1.8 m. Trenches 6a and 6b were originally intended to be a single trench, but were repositioned to avoid mature trees. They were 20 m and 10 m long respectively. A number of other minor changes were made to the trench plan proposed in the WSI, to take account of conditions on the ground, in particular the presence of mature trees and bushes (Fig. 2) (OAU 1998, fig. 4). The trenches represent a 2% sample of the proposed development area (c 320 m²).

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

The trenches were cleaned by hand and suspected features were sampled to determine their extent and nature. A single test pit was excavated by machine into the natural deposits to a maximum depth of 1.2 m (supplementing four test pits in Area B). A 100 litre sample of gravel was sieved by hand to test for the presence of Pleistocene faunal remains. All trenches were planned and sample sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20. All trenches were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording was conducted in accordance with the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

3.3 Finds

All deposits were monitored for finds in the course of machine and hand excavation.

3.4 Environmental data

No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified.

4 RESULTS: GENERAL

4.1 Soils and ground conditions

The general soil type was silty clay and sandy gravel over Lower Lias. In some trenches the Lower Lias was visible in bands, directly beneath the topsoil. Ground conditions were dry.

4.2 Distribution of Archaeological Deposits

No significant archaeological features were identified in Area A.

5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTION

5.1 Description of deposits

The topsoil consisted of a friable dark brown silty loam cultivation soil, c 0.35 m thick, associated with use of the site as allotments. All trenches contained an earlier ploughsoil horizon c 0.32 m thick, with some probable indications of ridge and furrow. Natural clay or sandy gravel was encountered at a depth of c 0.6 m - 0.7 m below modern ground level.

Modern features, containing 20th century rubbish, were present in trenches 1 (104, 105) and 5 (504).

5.2 The Finds

No significant finds were recovered. Modern finds were not collected.

6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Reliability of field investigation

There is likely to have been some disturbance of the subsoil beneath the present topsoil, caused by gardening activity and root disturbance. However, there was no evidence for excessive truncation of the natural substrate, other than by normal agricultural/ horticultural processes.

6.2 Overall interpretation

6.2.1 Summary of Results

The evaluation of Area A has produced no significant archaeological finds or deposits. There was evidence for medieval post-medieval arable cultivation of the site in the form of ridge and furrow traces, and there was limited modern disturbance associated with use of the site as an orchard and allotments.

6.2.2 Significance

The degree of post-medieval/ modern disturbance is not exceptional. This suggests that the absence of archaeological remains reflects of a real absence of early settlement on the site.

Bibliography and references

OAU 1998 *Elmbridge Road, Gloucester. Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological evaluation*

GCC 1998, *Gloucester City Council, City planning and Technical Services Department. Brief for an archaeological field evaluation. Land off Elmbridge Road, Gloucester* (Planning reference 98/00283/FUL).

Wilkinson, D (ed) 1992, *Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual*, (First edition, August 1992)

VCH, 1974, *Victoria County History, Gloucestershire. Volume iv*

Maps consulted:

Old Series Ordnance Survey

1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1889

Ordnance Survey Map, surveyed 1901, revised to 1921

Tithe apportionment map of Wotton St Mary's Without, 1796-9

Tithe apportionment map of Barnwood, 1838

Map of Gloucester and environs, 1624

Appendix 1: Context Inventory

| Trench 1 | | | | | | |
|----------|-------|---------------------|-----------|------------|--------------|---------------|
| Context | Type | Description | Depth (m) | Length (m) | Finds | Date |
| 100 | Layer | Natural clayey silt | | | | |
| 101 | Layer | Natural clay | | | | |
| 102 | Layer | Natural gravel | | | | |
| 103 | Layer | Natural silt | | | | |
| 104 | Cut | Modern rubbish pit | 0.18 | 0.25 | Not retained | Modern |
| 105 | Cut | Modern rubbish pit | 0.18 | 3.75 | Not retained | Modern |
| 106 | Layer | Former ploughsoil | 0.40 | | | Med/Post-med? |

| Trench 2 | | | | | | |
|----------|-------|-------------------|-----------|------------|-------|------|
| Context | Type | Description | Depth (m) | Length (m) | Finds | Date |
| 200 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.21 | | | |
| 201 | Layer | Former ploughsoil | 0.25 | | | |
| 202 | Layer | Natural clay | | | | |
| 203 | Layer | Natural gravel | | | | |

| Trench 3 | | | | | | |
|----------|-------|-------------------|-----------|------------|-------|------|
| Context | Type | Description | Depth (m) | Length (m) | Finds | Date |
| 300 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.44 | | | |
| 301 | Layer | Former ploughsoil | 0.35 | | | |
| 302 | Layer | Natural clay | | | | |
| 303 | Layer | Natural gravel | | | | |

| Trench 4 | | | | | | |
|----------|-------|-------------------|-----------|------------|-------|------|
| Context | Type | Description | Depth (m) | Length (m) | Finds | Date |
| 400 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.30 | | | |
| 401 | Layer | Former ploughsoil | 0.30 | | | |
| 402 | Layer | Natural clay | | | | |
| 403 | Layer | Natural gravel | | | | |

| Trench 5 | | | | | | |
|----------|-------|--------------------|-----------|------------|-------|------|
| Context | Type | Description | Depth (m) | Length (m) | Finds | Date |
| 500 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.35 | | | |
| 501 | Layer | Former ploughsoil | 0.30 | | | |
| 502 | Layer | Natural clay | | | | |
| 503 | Layer | Natural gravel | | | | |
| 504 | Cut | Modern rubbish pit | 0.73 | 1.74 | | |
| 505 | Fill | Fill of 504 | 0.20 | | | |
| 506 | Fill | Fill of 505 | 0.53 | | | |

| Trenches 6a and 6b | | | | | | |
|--------------------|-------|-------------------|-----------|------------|-------|------|
| Context | Type | Description | Depth (m) | Length (m) | Finds | Date |
| 600 | Layer | Topsoil | 0.28 | | | |
| 601 | Layer | Former ploughsoil | 0.32 | | | |
| 602 | Layer | Natural clay | | | | |
| 603 | Layer | Natural gravel | | | | |

Appendix 1: Gazetteer Of Sites And Monuments (Fig. 1)

| <i>OAU no.</i> | <i>SMR no.</i> | <i>Description.</i> |
|----------------|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | 9 | Antonianus of Tetricus I AD 270-273 and Antonianus of Tetricus II AD 270-273. |
| 2 | 10 | Sestertius of Vespasian 69-79 AD. Also R-B |
| 3 | 11 | R-B cordoned Jar (rim missing) red clay. Collingwood type 71, ?Claudian. Also an R-B rim sherd from a large cordoned jar of soft buff clay. |
| 4 | 103 | Dupondius of Nero AD 54-67 |
| 5 | 13 | Skeleton facing east and wearing an iron bangle. Found under 3ft of soil aged 25-30. Also found was a sestertius of Domitian. |
| 6 | 3631 | Metalled surface, section extending 2m. Sherds of medieval pottery - site number 26/1976 |
| 7 | 3615 | Negative evidence from field which has produced occasional 12th + 13th century pottery., a rough bronze heraldic badge (horse trapping), a belt buckle and WWII AA shrapnel. |
| 8 | 7 | Medieval arrowhead made of Iron, socketed and barbed. Length 0.076m. Found in association with other medieval material. |
| 9 | 12 | Mesolithic tranche axe found in a load of gravel probably brought from a pit behind the old fire station. |
| 10 | 107 | Palaeontology. Pleistocene Fauna from the Barnwood Terrace. |
| 11 | 6 | Old rectory. Early 17th century and earlier. Remodelled in 1890. It had been the home of at least two mayors. Appears on a map of 1624. |
| 12 | 305 + 306 | 305 - Palaeontology. Palaeolithic material. 306 - Hand axe, Acheulian. |
| 13 | 218 | Palaeontology. Fauna from the Ipswichian interglacial period. |
| 14 | 301 | Roman coin. Ceriarus of Vespasian. AD 78-79 |
| 15 | 300 | Roman coin. AC3 OF Constantine I AD 330-335 |
| 16 | 298 | Roman coin. Dupondius of Antoninus Pius AD 138-161 |
| 17 | 302 | Roman coin. Follis of Constantine I AD 308-24 |
| 18 | 303 | Roman coin. AC3 of Constantine I AD 306-24 |
| 19 | 198 | Roman burial(s). Miniature flanged bowl of red ware 4th century. Found with a skeleton in 1929-32 when a new road was put through. "many" other 3rd/4th century inhumations were also said to have been uncovered on the Cheltenham road end of the Estcourt road. |
| 20 | 149 | Roman coin. Dupondius of Domitian cos xiii AD 87. |
| 21 | 3630 | Roman pottery at Fleece Hotel site. Site no. 82/1976. |
| 22 | 299 | Medieval? bridge. Stone mortared single arch bridge and associated old road surface, possibly 14th century. |
| 23 | 391 | Harness pendant made of copper. Bearing the heraldic device of the Bishop of Hereford in 1344-60. |
| 24 | 99 | Burial with Beaker. Bronze Age. "Undoubtedly had a mound originally." |
| 25 | 105 | R-B site. A sleeper trench 20 yds long, containing a bronze 'spilla', a skull, a quantity of ordinary pottery and a late bronze coin. |
| 26 | 16 | Roman coins. Dep. & AC. Nero 54-59 AD. |
| 27 | 3 | Negative result. No finds prior to the post medieval. |
| 28 | 3576 | Section of fluted column 18th or 19th century. |
| 29 | 3579 | Rotary quernstone. Post medieval. |
| 30 | 106 | Cropmark. Circular enclosure. Area walked when stripped for building. Nothing noted. Unknown date. |
| 31 | 140 | Roman site. Line of two ditches established. Probably boundary ditches of a substantial building. 1st - 4th century Samian pottery, 3 coins, bone pins, Forest of Dean roof and floor tiles. Coarse tesserae. Brick tegulas and imbrices, Hypercaust tiles, wall plaster, including a 1/4 moulding. Intense scatter of above debris where culvert for brook was dug out. |
| 32 | 141 | Roman coin. Antonianus of Claudius II AD 268-70. |
| 33 | 304 | Tewkesbury farthing. Token bearing the legend Nicholas Mearson / of Tewkesbury 1659. |
| 34 | 21 | Bronze spearhead. Looped socket and ogee leaf shaped blade. Greenwell and Brewis's type iv |
| 35 | 20 | Norman church. St. Lawrences church. Early tombstones used as pathway. |
| 36 | 1508 | ?Medieval moated site. |
| 37 | 1 | Lead weight. Medieval. Shield shaped with perforation for suspension. Features a lion rampant in relief. |
| 38 | 1473 | Windmill. Possibly medieval. Evidence from field name. |
| 39 | 8 | AS Demetian cos.xiii AD 87. |

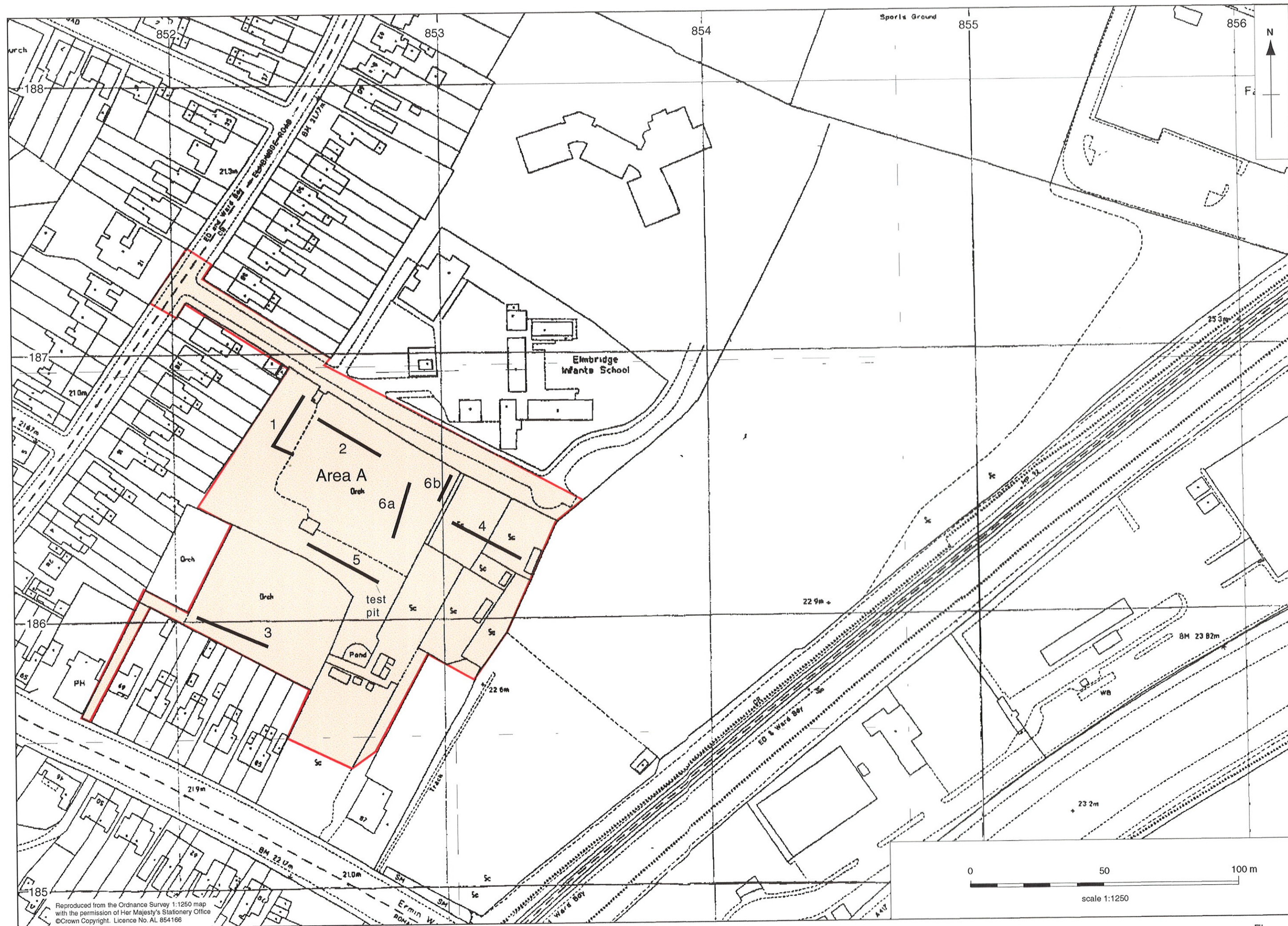
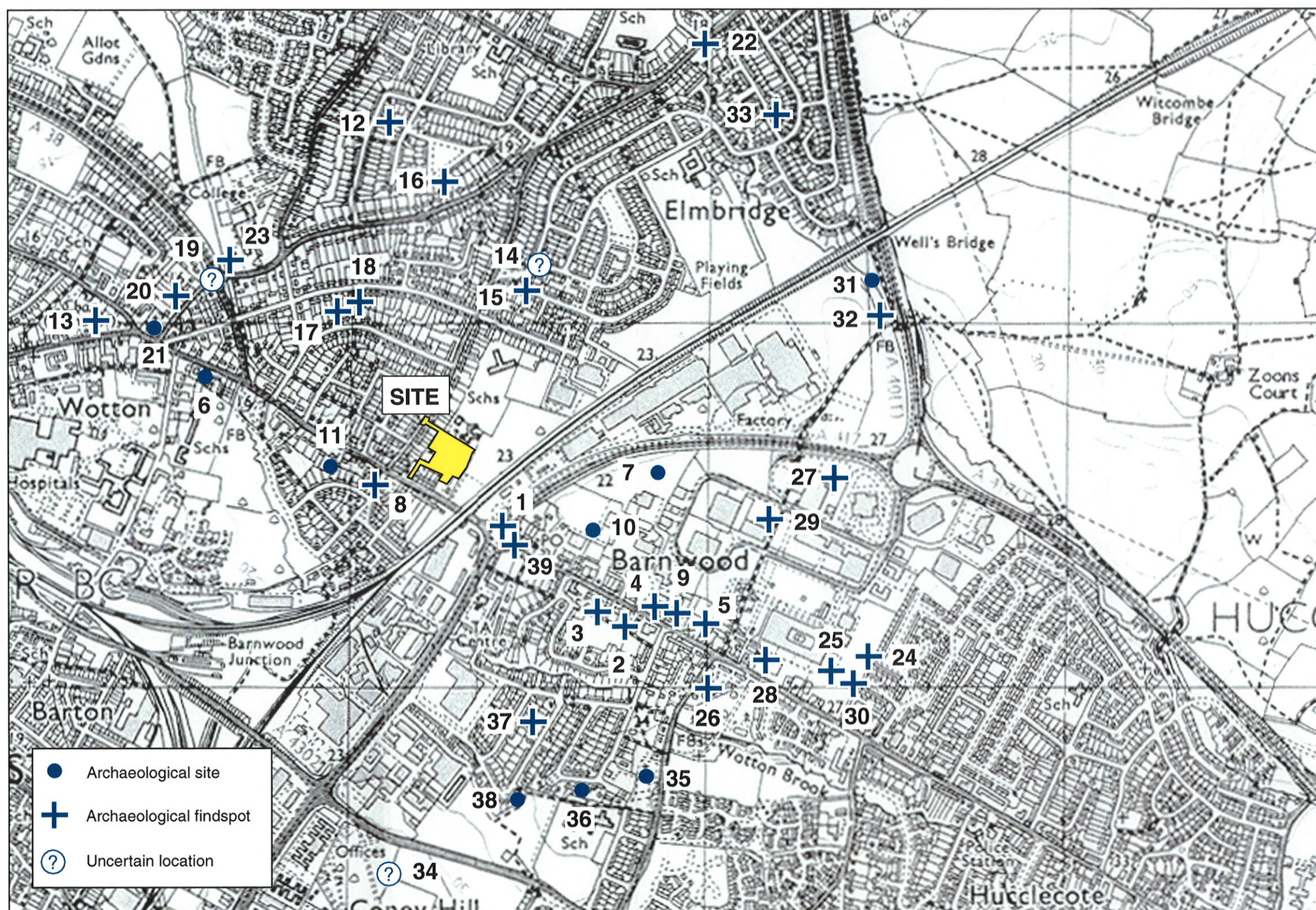


Figure 2



Location of sites and findspots recorded in the Gloucester SMR



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