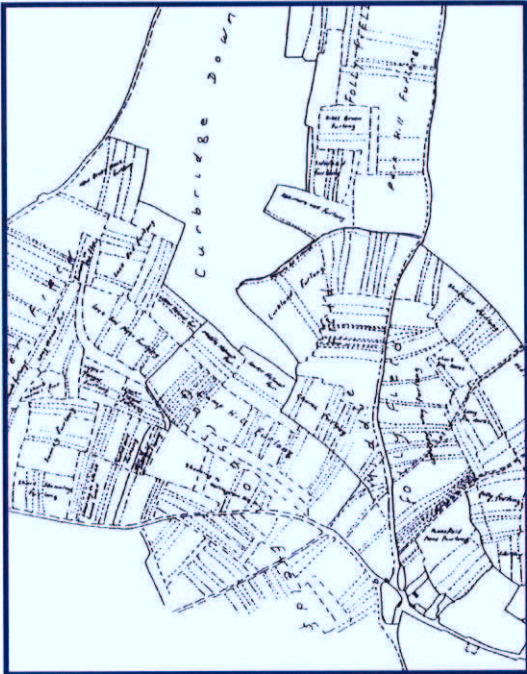


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WITNCCO



# Land West of Witney Oxfordshire

## Archaeological Desk-based Assessment: Addendum 2

### Updated Assessment and Site Walkover Survey



**Oxford Archaeology**

12th June 2002

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**Barton Willmore Planning**

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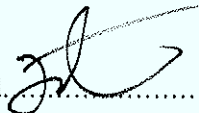
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Summary

1	INTRODUCTION .....	1
2	THE UPDATE OF THE DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT .....	2
3	SITE WALKOVER .....	2
4	CONCLUSION.....	4

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Updated Archaeological Features Map



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**LAND WEST OF WITNEY**  
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT:**  
**ADDENDUM 2 (12<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2002)**

UPDATED ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT AND SITE WALKOVER SURVEY

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**Summary**

*Barton Willmore Planning (BWP) has commissioned Oxford Archaeology to carry out an updated archaeological assessment and site walkover survey of land west of Witney. The assessment forms an addendum to the archaeological desk-based assessment carried out in March 1998.*

*The updated assessment entailed re-examination of archaeological and air photographic sources added to county and national archives since 1998. Three new sites and finds were identified, consisting of a Bronze Age pit and Neolithic and Roman finds discovered by chance and during fieldwalking. None of the new sites lie within the area of proposed development. The report also involved consulting English Heritage in order to determine whether any Scheduled Monuments had been added to the County List for the area since 1998. There are no Scheduled Monuments within the area of proposed development.*

*The addendum included a site visit, which identified eight hitherto unrecorded sites within the area of proposed development. These comprise probable post-medieval watermeadows, remains of former field boundaries and/or trackways, the remains of a possible fishpond, and remnants of medieval/post-medieval ridge and furrow. The features are likely to be of either local or limited archaeological interest.*

**1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Oxford Archaeology (previously the Oxford Archaeological Unit or OAU) have been commissioned by Barton Willmore Planning to undertake an updated desk-based archaeological assessment and site walkover survey of an area of land to the west of Witney in Oxfordshire (NGR SP3310 0945).
- 1.2 The initial desk-based assessment was undertaken in 1998 by Oxford Archaeological Unit. The assessment examined the archaeological and documentary sources relating to the area of proposed development and a 1 km study area around the site in order to ascertain the likely nature, extent and preservation and importance of any archaeology within the proposed development site.
- 1.3 In May 2002, Oxford Archaeology undertook further work within the area of proposed development (Addendum 1 to the main report). This took the form of an assessment of hedgerows and historic field boundaries, in particular identifying potentially historic hedgerows as defined by the Hedgerow Regulations 1997.

- 1.4 Four years have elapsed since the initial assessment was undertaken, and the extent of the proposed development subsequently been altered to include a road junction on the southern edge of the site. The purpose of the present report (Addendum 2 to the main report) is to provide an update to the 1998 study, through the re-examination of the primary repositories of information on known archaeology within the area, including air photographs of the site taken after 1998, in order to determine whether any new sites had been added since 1998. English Heritage scheduling department was consulted to determine whether any Scheduled Monuments had been added to the County List since 1998.
- 1.5 As the initial study did not include a site visit (in anticipation of a programme of fieldwalking which was never undertaken), this updated assessment included a site walkover survey, undertaken on the 29th of May 2002. This took the form of a rapid walkover survey of the area of proposed development, with the aim of identifying any hitherto unrecorded archaeology visible on the ground, such as upstanding earthworks, to provide information on the topography and land use, to identify past impacts and to provide further information on the general archaeological potential of the site.
- 1.6 New features identified by re-examination of archaeological sources and from the site walkover survey have been given an Oxford Archaeology (OA) number, used in the text, listed in the updated archaeological gazetteer (Appendix One) and shown on the updated archaeological features map (Figure 1). The OA numbering follows consecutively from the numbering used in the initial assessment.

## **2 THE UPDATE OF THE DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT**

- 2.1 The Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) as held by the Oxfordshire County Council was visited to ascertain whether any new sites had been added since 1998. Two new sites have been added to the database within the 1 km study area around the proposed development site since 1998, although neither lie within the proposed development site. The first new site comprise a Late Neolithic flint scatter probably associated with the Colwell Brook, identified during fieldwalking *c* 200 m north of the site (**OA 40**). The area was subsequently evaluated in 1998 by the Cotswold Archaeological Trust and a post-medieval field boundary and a limited number of undated archaeological features were recorded. The second newly recorded finds is Romano-British pottery, a 1<sup>st</sup> century Bronze brooch, flints and a scraper, found by chance *c* 700 m to the west of the site (**OA 41**).
- 2.2 The National Monuments Record (NMR) held by English Heritage, Swindon, was consulted in order to determine whether any new sites had been added to since 1998. One new site was identified within the study area. This was a Bronze Age pit recorded during a watching brief in 2001, *c* 400 m to the north of the area of proposed development (**OA 39**).
- 2.3 OA contacted the scheduling section of English Heritage in London to enquire whether any new Scheduled Monuments have been added to the study area since 1998. No new monuments have been added.
- 2.4 OA requested a cover search of all air photographs taken of the study area since 1998 from the air photographic library as held by English Heritage in Swindon. No new air photographs have been taken of the area since 1998.

## **3 SITE WALKOVER**

- 3.1 OA carried out a rapid site walkover survey of the area of proposed development on the 29th May 2002. The weather was fine and good light. The survey took the form of a rapid walkover conducted to further analyse archaeological potential, and to provide information on topography, current land use and past impacts. A site visit was not initially undertaken during the original desk-based assessment for the reasons stated above and it was felt that it was important that it was undertaken in order to complete the desk-based archaeological study.



- 3.2 The site was systematically walked in a 20m grid where practicable and where not practicable the area was examined from all field edges and accessible tramlines. The survey was partly limited by the nature of the cultivation of the land. The majority of the fields were under a grass crop which, at the time of the survey had not yet been cut for hay. The height of the grass may have concealed earthworks below. Some of the fields were under arable cultivation, which limited close inspection, and although the crop was not high, may have concealed features below.
- 3.3 The site lies on comparatively flat land sloping gently to the south and east. To the north of the site the ground drops relatively steeply to the Colwell Brook. The site visit noted a belt of new trees *c* 10m wide planted against the western boundary of the site.
- 3.4 The site visit identified seven previously unrecorded sites within the area of proposed development (**OA 32-38**). These comprise:
- Possible post-medieval watermeadows within an area which is currently woodland in the northern part of the site (**OA 32**). The watermeadows comprise parallel banks, *c* 6 m long x 1.75 m wide, broken by channels running back towards the main ditch along the southern edge of the wood. No trace of a sluice was apparent within the ditch or this section of the Colwell Brook. Although the area is currently wooded, it does appear suitable topographically for watermeadows. The feature is likely to be of possible local archaeological significance.
  - A *c* 0.4 m high bank in the western part of the site (**OA 33**). The bank is probably the remains of a lynchet (field boundary on a slope). The feature is potentially of local archaeological interest.
  - A denuded linear ridge *c* 100 m by *c* 4 m lying within a field of arable (**OA 34**), and a shallow linear depression *c* 6 m wide x *c* 13 m long within a field of arable (**OA 35**). The nature of the ridge and ditch is uncertain. They may represent a former field boundary not shown on maps. It is however possible that the features represent the remains of the medieval park pale (boundary) identified in the initial assessment from a map of 1662 (**OA 31** and OAU 1998 Figure 2). The exact location of the park pale within the site is difficult to place due to the lack of detail on the 1662 map, although the park clearly extends across the Colwell Brook and into the proposed development site. It is perhaps more likely that an existing field boundary to the south-west represents the line of the park pale (see para 3.7 below). The ridge (**OA 34**) and ditch (**OA 35**) are therefore of uncertain significance.
  - Probable former ridge and furrow earthworks beneath tall grass, indicated by linear runs of a different grass (**OA 36**). The feature is of limited archaeological interest, lying within an area of known open field cultivation indicated on a map of 1822.
  - Possible former ridge and furrow earthworks beneath tall grass, indicated by linear runs of a different grass (**OA 37**). The feature is of limited archaeological interest, lying within an area of known open field cultivation indicated on a map of 1822.
  - A large depression, *c* 100 m long by *c* 50 m wide along the line of the Colwell Brook, on the boundary of the proposed development site (**OA 38**). The feature is possibly the remains of a fishpond. A dogleg in the stream would appear to form the upper end of the pond, with a possible dam to the south. Modern drainage activity associated with the industrial estate to the



north appears to have damaged the feature. The feature is of uncertain (probably local) significance.

- An earthwork bank comprising a short section of denuded linear bank, c 10 m long by c 3.0 m wide, within arable (OA 42). The bank may represent a former field boundary (possibly a furlong boundary shown in 1822) or the line of a former road, possibly an approximate north-south road shown on Davis' map of 1793-4 (see Figure 4 of the 1998 report). The feature is of uncertain (probably local) significance.
- 3.5 A grass mark c 30 m long by 0.5 m wide was noted c 50 m to the south of the woodland, parallel to the woodland boundary. This feature is probably a modern service trench.
- 3.6 The site visit found no above ground remains of the cropmark of a ring ditch noted from air photographs in the northern part of the site (OA 1). This feature was not visible within a half-grown wheat crop.
- 3.7 The location of the medieval park pale identified in the 1998 report (OA 31) is uncertain. Addendum 1 report (OA May 2002) identified a mature hedgerow (hedgerow H3) and existing field boundary (H11a) as the possible line of the medieval park pale, and this would seem the most likely location of the pale. This is supported by the presence of a field boundary shown on an estate map of 1822 (this interpretation revises the location of the medieval park as marked on Figure 1 of the 1998 report). It is not inconceivable however that this is not the case and that the ridge (OA 35) and ditch (OA 36) identified on the site visit (see above) represent the remains of the park pale and that the hedgerow is simply the remains of a field boundary shown in 1822.

#### 4 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Re-examination of archaeological and air photographic sources added to county and national archives since the initial desk-based assessment of the proposed development site undertaken in 1998 identified three new sites and finds. None of the new sites and finds lie within the area of proposed development. The sites do however provide further evidence of prehistoric (Neolithic and Bronze Age) and Roman activity in the surrounding study area.
- 4.2 This addendum included a site visit, which identified eight hitherto unrecorded sites within the area of proposed development. These comprise probable post-medieval watermeadows, remains of former field boundaries and/or trackways and remnants of medieval/post-medieval ridge and furrow. The features are likely to be of either local or limited archaeological interest.

**Oxford Archaeology**  
**June 2002**

## Appendix One

### UPDATED ARCHAEOLOGICAL GAZETTEER

OA = Oxford Archaeology

SMR = Oxfordshire Sites and Monuments Record

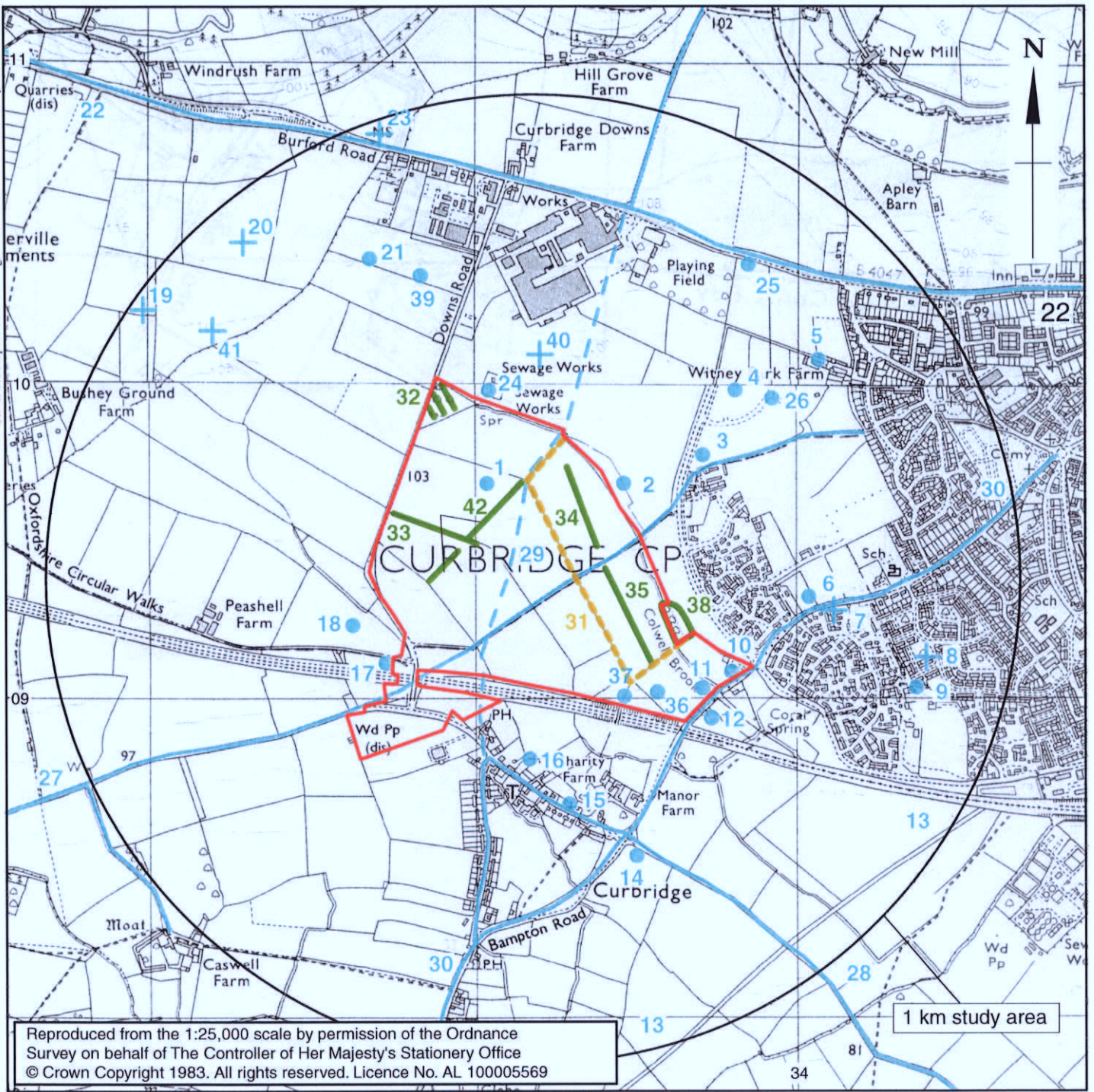
NMR = National Monuments Record

UID = Unique Identifier

OA No.	Description	SMR No. / NMR UID
32	Within the woodland, between a deep water-filled ditch to the south and a bank to the north is an area of short, parallel banks broken by channels running back towards the main ditch. These earthworks, measuring c 6m x 1.75 possibly represent watermeadow earthworks, although, no trace of a sluice was apparent within the ditch or this section of the Colwell Brook.	---
33	Lynchet bank c 0.4m high. Higher on its northern side.	---
34	A probable former field boundary represented by a denuded linear ridge within a field of arable.	---
35	A probable former field boundary or former trackway represented by a denuded linear ridge within a field of arable.	---
36	Probable former ridge and furrow earthworks beneath tall grass, indicated by linear runs of a different grass.	---
37	Probable former ridge and furrow earthworks beneath tall grass, indicated by linear runs of a different grass.	---
38	Probable remains of a former fishpond identified on site visit.	---
39	A Bronze Age pit was recorded during a watching brief in 2001	NMR UID 1356584
40	Late Neolithic flint scatter probably associated with the Colwell Brook, identified when an area of 20.01 Ha was fieldwalked. The area was evaluated in 1998 by Cotswold Archaeological Trust which identified a post medieval field boundary and a limited number of undated archaeological features.	SMR 16109
41	Romano-British pottery, a 1 <sup>st</sup> century Bronze brooch, flints and a scraper.	SMR 5322 5320/3/4
42	An earthwork bank comprising a short section of denuded linear bank, c 10 m long by c 3.0 m wide, within arable. The bank may represent a former field boundary (possibly a furlong boundary shown in 1822) or the line of a former road, possibly an approximate north-south road shown on Davis' map of 1793-4 (see Figure 4 of the 1998 report). The feature is of uncertain (probably local) significance.	---







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1 km study area

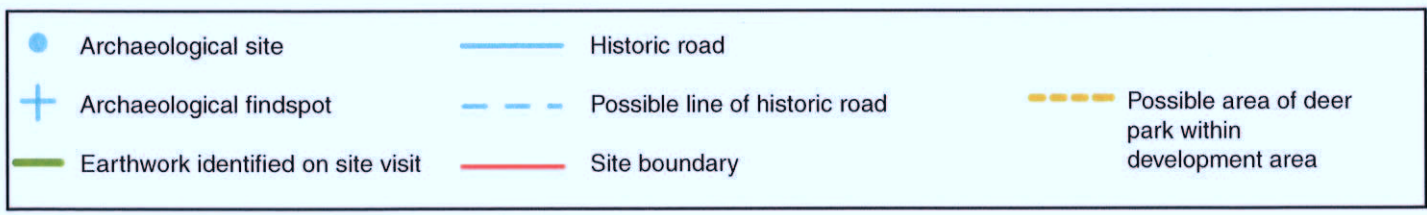


Figure 1 Updated Archaeological Features Map.





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