

# Eynsham Polar Technology: Inundation Test Pits Watching Brief

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

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1	Gerry Thacker (SeniorProject Manager)	Gerry Thacker (SeniorProject Manager)	David Score, Head of Fieldwork	David Score, Head of Fieldwork	

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Illustrated by: Magdalena Wachnik and Ben Brown

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Janus House  
Osney Mead  
Oxford OX2 0ES

t: +44 (0) 1865 263800  
f: +44 (0) 1865 793496

e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk  
w: oxfordarchaeology.com

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# Eynsham Polar Technology: Inundation Test Pits Watching Brief

*Archaeological Watching Brief Report*

*Written by Gerry Thacker*

*and illustrated by Magdalena Wachnik and Ben Brown*

## Table of Contents

<b>Summary</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>1 Introduction</b> .....	<b>2</b>
1.1 Scope of work.....	2
1.2 Location, geology and topography.....	2
1.3 Archaeological and historical background.....	2
<b>2 Project Aims and Methodology</b> .....	<b>2</b>
2.1 Aims.....	2
2.2 Methodology.....	3
<b>3 Results</b> .....	<b>3</b>
3.1 Description of deposits.....	3
<b>4 Discussion and Conclusions</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Appendix A. Archaeological Context Inventory</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Appendix B. Bibliography and references</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Appendix C. Summary of Site Details</b> .....	<b>6</b>

## List of Figures

Figure 1	Site location
Figure 2	Test Pit locations
Figure 3	Plan and section Pit 603, Test Pit 2

## Plates

Plate 1	Record shot of pit 603 in Test Pit 2
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## Summary

*On the 19<sup>th</sup> July 2017 Oxford Archaeology monitored the excavation of three test pits ahead of water infiltration testing. A fourth proposed test pit could not be opened due to access issues. A single undated pit was recorded within Test Pit 2. The remaining test pits were devoid of archaeological features or remains.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Scope of work

1.1.1 The project involved the monitoring of the excavation of four test pits (Test Pits 1-4; Fig. 2) ahead of water infiltration testing. Test Pit 4 located at the northern end of the site could not be accessed, and remained unexcavated. The project was undertaken to a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI, OA 2017) approved by Hugh Coddington, the Oxfordshire County Council Archaeologist.

### 1.2 Location, geology and topography

1.2.1 The site is centred on NGR 442762 208827. The site lies to the south of the core of Eynsham, on relatively flat agricultural land. The site is bounded by the Chil Brook to the north, the B4449 to the south-east, and by agricultural land to the west (Fig. 1). A Scheduled Ancient Monument lies to the west of the proposed trial pit area.

1.2.2 The area of proposed development currently consists of agricultural land which is bisected by a former railway line.

1.2.3 The Site is located on deposits forming part of the Oxford Clay Formation and West Walton Formation which are sedimentary mudstone formed approximately 156 to 165 million years ago in the Jurassic Period. These deposits are overlain by the Summertown-Radley sand and gravel member which formed up to 3 million years ago during the Quaternary Period (BGS website).

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background to the site has been described in detail in a desk based assessment (DBA, OA 2015), and will not be reproduced here. This document should however be read in conjunction with the DBA.

1.3.2 An evaluation comprising 20 trenches was carried out between March and April 2016 (OA 2016) and covered areas both inside the Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) and to the north of the SAM. Within the northern and central part of the site several undated ditches were identified, as well as a flat based pit which contained pottery of 5th-7th century date, which could represent an Anglo-Saxon sunken featured building.

1.3.3 A previous geo-technical watching brief on the site revealed no archaeological deposits (OA 2017).

## 2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The aims of the watching brief as outlined in the WSI were:

- (i) To determine the presence or absence of any archaeological remains which may survive. Should remains be found to ensure their preservation by record to the highest possible standard.



- (ii) To determine the date range of any surviving remains by artefactual or other means.
- (iii) To make available the findings of the watching brief.
- (iv) To identify and record any archaeological remains or artefacts within the trial pits.

## **2.2 Methodology**

- 2.2.1 All accessible trial pits were machine excavated in their proposed location to the top of the natural geology under close archaeological supervision (Fig. 2).
- 2.2.2 Where archaeological remains were identified machine excavation ceased, and revealed features were hand cleaned and sample excavated and recorded.
- 2.2.3 Where no archaeological remains were identified excavation of the test pits continued to full depth.

## **3 RESULTS**

### **3.1 Description of deposits**

- 3.1.1 All test pits contained similar soil profiles, comprising topsoil of between 0.25m and 0.3m in depth, overlying a subsoil (buried former ploughsoil) of between 0.15m and 0.2m in depth. The subsoil sealed the natural yellow sandy gravel natural geology.
- 3.1.2 The only archaeological feature identified was a pit, 603, within the northern part of Test Pit 2 (Figs 2 and 3; Plate 1). The pit was oval in plan, and measured 1.1m by 0.8m with a gently sloping sides, slightly stepped on the northern edge, and a flat base. The pit contained a single mid reddish-brown silty sand fill, 604, up to 0.18m in depth and from which no finds were recovered.

## **4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1.1 Although undated, the pit uncovered with Test Pit 2 is in the vicinity of a pit of post-medieval date uncovered a few metres to the west during the previous evaluation (OA 2016; pit 1503, Trench 15). A pit of early Neolithic date was also uncovered during the evaluation (pit 1407, Trench 14), slightly further from Test Pit 2. Both features were within the area covered by the Scheduled Monument, beyond the limits of the current proposal.



## APPENDIX A. ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context	Type	Depth	Width	Length	Comments	Finds	Date
600	Topsoil	0.3m	-	-	Test Pit 2	-	-
601	Subsoil	0.2m	-	-	Test Pit 2	-	-
602	Natural	-	-	-	Test Pit 2	-	-
603	Pit cut	0.18m	0.8m	1.1m	Test Pit 2	-	-
604	Pit fill	0.18m	0.8m	1.1m	Test Pit 2	-	-
605	Topsoil	0.25m	-	-	Test Pit 1	-	-
606	Subsoil	0.15m	-	-	Test Pit 1	-	-
607	Natural	-	-	-	Test Pit 1	-	-
608	Topsoil	0.3m	-	-	Test Pit 3	-	-
609	Subsoil	0.2m	-	-	Test Pit 3	-	-
610	Natural	-	-	-	Test Pit 3	-	-



## APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

OA 2016 Polar technology Eynsham, Oxfordshire. Archaeological Evaluation report. Oxford Archaeology unpublished client reported

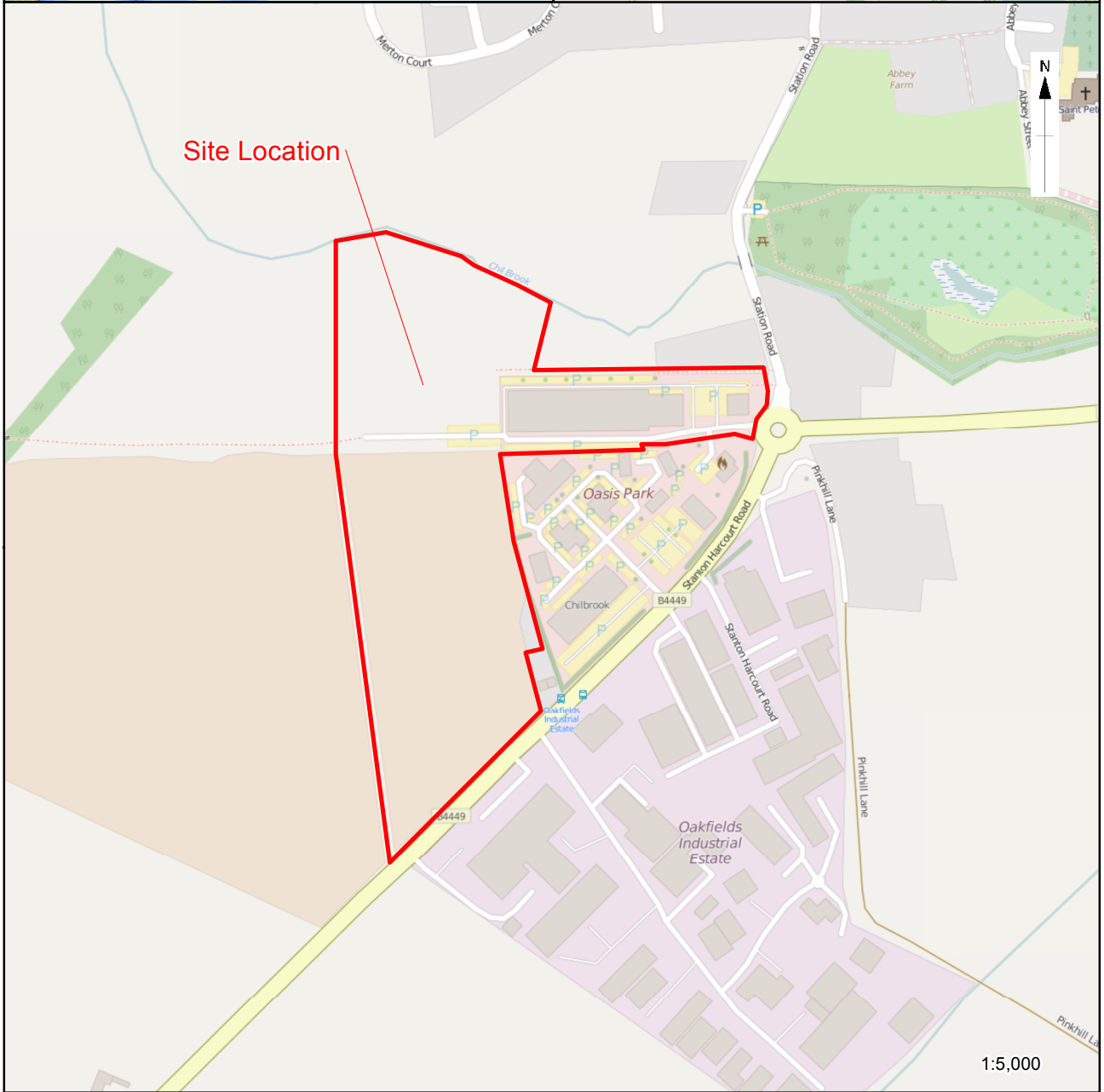
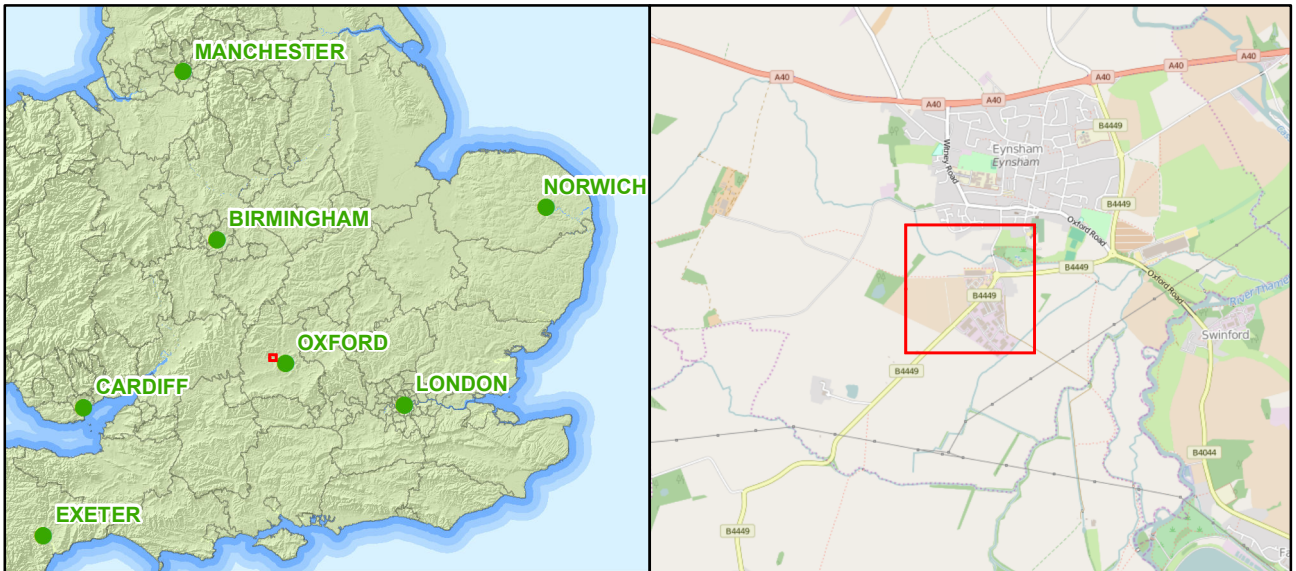
OA 2017 Soakage Test Pits, Polar Technology, Eynsham. Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief.





## APPENDIX C. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name:	Eynsham Polar Technology: Inundation Test Pits Watching Brief
Site code:	EYPOTE17
Grid reference:	Centred at NGR SP 42761 08768
Type of watching brief:	Geotechnical Test Pits
Date and duration of project:	19 <sup>th</sup> July 2017
Area of site:	3.4ha
Summary of results:	On the 19 <sup>th</sup> July 2017 Oxford Archaeology monitored the excavation of three test pits ahead of water infiltration testing. A fourth proposed test pit could not be opened due to access issues. A single undated pit was recorded within Test Pit 2. The remaining test pits were devoid of archaeological features or remains.
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Figure 1: Site Location



X:\Eynsham\_Polar Technology\_EV1010Geomatics\02 CADIE\YPOTEWB Eynsham Polar Technology 2017-09-04.dwg(WB Fig2)\*19107\*EYPOEV\*Polar Technology, Eynsham\*aidan.farman\* 04 Sep 2017

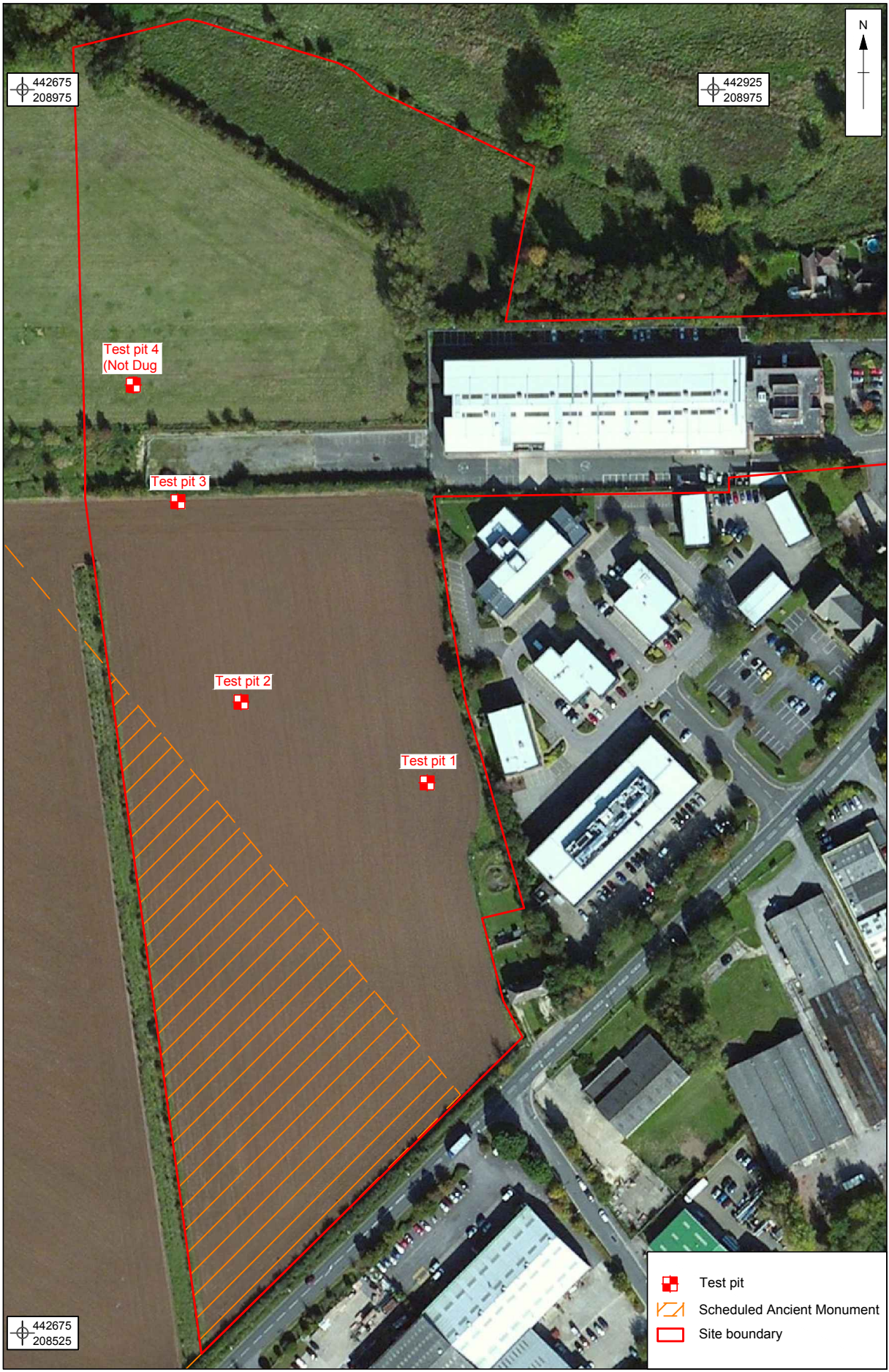


Figure 2: Test Pit Locations

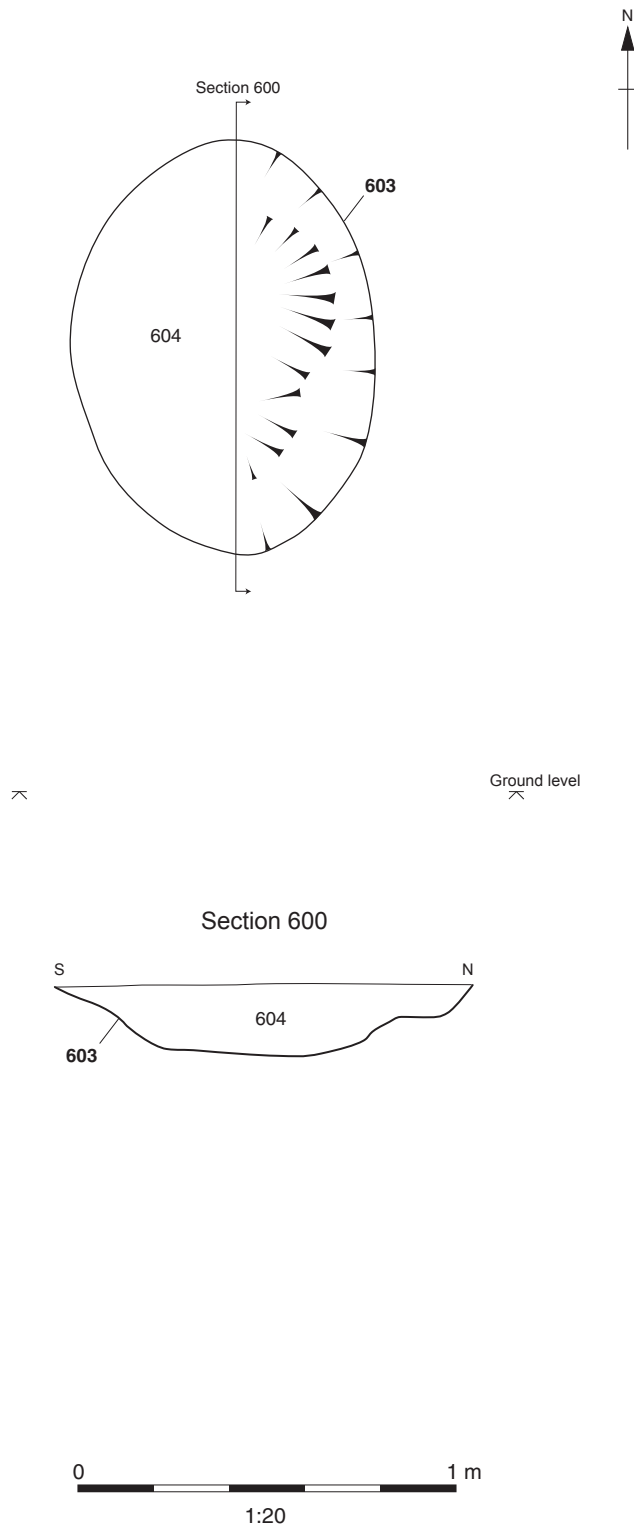


Figure 3: Plan and sections of pit 603, Test pit 2





Plate 1: Record shot of pit 603 in Test pit 2





**Head Office/Registered Office/  
OA South**

Janus House  
Osney Mead  
Oxford OX2 0ES

t: +44 (0) 1865 263 800  
f: +44 (0) 1865 793 496  
e: [info@oxfordarchaeology.com](mailto:info@oxfordarchaeology.com)  
w: <http://oxfordarchaeology.com>

**OA North**

Mill 3  
Moor Lane  
Lancaster LA1 1QD

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

**OA East**

15 Trafalgar Way  
Bar Hill  
Cambridgeshire  
CB23 8SQ

t: +44 (0) 1223 850500  
e: [oaeast@oxfordarchaeology.com](mailto: oaeast@oxfordarchaeology.com)  
w: <http://oxfordarchaeology.com>



**Director:** Gill Hey, BA PhD FSA MCifA  
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