

Rutland House 41 Davenant Road Oxford



Archaeological Watching Brief



Oxford Archaeology

16th July 2002

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Aubrey P King

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Rutland House, 41 Davenant Road, Oxford***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	2
2.1 Aims	2
2.2 Methodology	2
3 Results	2
3.1 Description of deposits	2
3.2 Finds	2
3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains	2
4 Discussion And Conclusions	2
Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory	3
Appendix 2 Bibliography and references	3
Appendix 3 Summary of Site Details	3

LIST OF FIGURES

- Fig. 1 OS Site location map
Fig. 2 Site plan of watching brief showing Ridge and Furrow

SUMMARY

In July 2002 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at 41 Davenant Road, Oxford (NGR SP 501 099). The work was commissioned by Aubrey P King Chartered Architect in advance of the construction of four new houses and a study house. The watching brief revealed medieval ridge and furrow across the site suggesting that the site had been in agricultural use until the construction of Rutland House.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In July 2002 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at 41 Davenant Road, Oxford (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Aubrey P King Chartered Architect in respect of a planning application for four new houses and a study house (Planning Application No. 02/00598/FUL).
- 1.1.2 An advice note regarding the development was set by Brian Durham, the City's Archaeologist on behalf of Oxford City Council.
- 1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies on underlying gravel and clay at 70 m above OD. The site is situated on Davenant Road and is 45 x 50 m in area.

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,2002) and is reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 North Oxford is an area of archaeological potential, with find spots of prehistoric, Roman, Saxon and medieval material recorded, though no archaeological sites or finds have been recorded from within the proposed development area.
- 1.3.3 Davenant Road runs between Banbury Road and Woodstock Road and findspots have been recorded on both of these roads. Neolithic artefacts were recovered from close to the junction of Banbury Road and Marston Ferry Road (approximately 1.4 km to the SSE) and the Banbury Road itself is thought to lie on the route of a Roman road (OAU 2000).
- 1.3.4 Roman pottery has been found under Woodstock Road at the St Edwards School playing fields (1 km to the south) and the gravel terrace west of Woodstock Road has been a focal point for prehistoric, Roman and early Saxon settlement in the Oxford area (OAU 1999).

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 house was demolished and the site cleared and levelled. The area of the new basement was stripped with a 360° machine under archaeological supervision to a depth on 0.4 m onto the natural (Fig. 2).
- 2.2.2 All archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:100. All features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. A general photographic record of the work was made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 A 0.4 m thick layer of dark greyish brown silty clay loam (4) topsoil with patches of demolition material mixed into the surface was removed. This exposed three 3 – 4 m wide furrows (1) cutting north east to south west across the site. They were 0.15 m in depth with a shallow concave profile and were filled by a dark reddish brown silty clay (2). These cut into the natural clay (5). The north corner of the area had been badly truncated by the construction of Rutland House and its associated services, and a lot of disturbance from root action from trees and shrubs around the house was noted (Fig. 2).

3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 No finds were recovered from the watching brief.

3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 3.3.1 No environmental samples were taken during the watching brief.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The results from the watching brief revealed the remains of medieval ploughing across the site. No other archaeological deposits or features were observed. This suggests that prior to the construction of Rutland House that the area had been cleared and cultivated for agricultural purposes from the medieval period onwards.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Length</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>
1	Cut	0.15 m	3 – 4 m	13 m	Medieval furrow	
2	Fill				Fill of Furrow	None
3	Cut				Root disturbance	
4	Layer	0.40 m			Topsoil/demolition layer	None
5	Natural				Natural clay and gravel	

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

- OA, 2002 *Rutland House, 41 Davenant Road, Oxford* Written Scheme of Investigation
- OA 1992 Fieldwork Manual (ed. D Wilkinson, first edition August 1992)
- OAU 1999 *St. Edwards School, Woodstock Road, Oxford*, Archaeological evaluation report.
- OAU 2000 *Marston Ferry Road/Banbury Road, Oxford*. Archaeological Desk-based Assessment.

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Rutland House, 41 Davenant Road, Oxford

Site code: OXDAVR 02

Grid reference: NGR SP 501 099

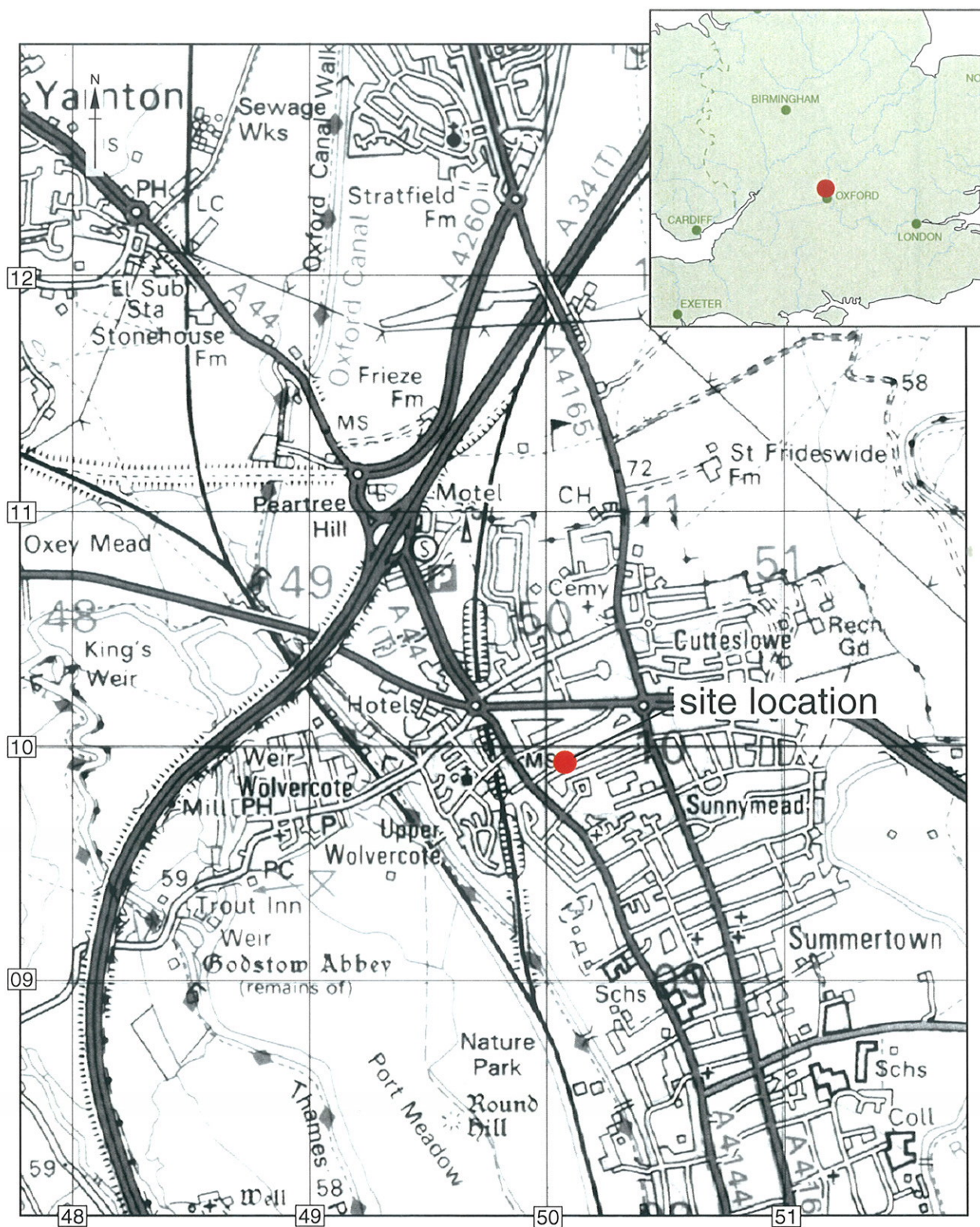
Type of watching brief: Area strip for new basement for new house on the site.

Date and duration of project: One visit on the 10th July 2002.

Area of site: 45 m x 50 m

Summary of results: Medieval ridge and furrow across the site suggesting that the site had been in agricultural use until the construction of Rutland House on the site.

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, under the following accession number: 2002.162



Scale 1:25,000

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Figure 1 Site location.

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Figure 2 Location of Watching Brief.



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