

# Abingdon Weir Site Compound Abingdon Oxfordshire



## Archaeological Evaluation



**Oxford Archaeology**

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**Prepared by:** Rosemary Wheeler

**Position:** Supervisor  
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**Checked by:** Greg Pugh  
**Position:** Project Manager  
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**Approved by:** R. J. Williams  
**Position:** Director of Operations and Business  
**Date:** 8th March 2002

Signed.....*R. Williams*

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**Illustrated by** Peter Lorimer

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**Oxford Archaeology**  
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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

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# Abingdon Weir Site Compound

## *ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION*

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## SUMMARY

*Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at Abingdon Weir on behalf of the Environment Agency. Two 1m<sup>2</sup> test pits were excavated by hand to investigate the results of a magnetometer survey of the site compound. It was thought that two pottery kilns may have been located by the survey. However, the evaluation revealed no evidence for this.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 On 7th March, 2002, Oxford Archaeology carried out a field evaluation at Abingdon Weir on behalf of the Environment Agency in respect of the development of a site compound. The development site is situated at Abingdon Weir and is 2700 square metres in area. (Figs 1 and 2) A team of two from Oxford Archaeology went out to investigate the results of a magnetometer survey carried out over the area by the Environment Agency.

### 1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The geology of the site is a deposit of Pleistocene and recent alluvium, surrounding the island formed from the Corallian limestone beds of the Jurassic period. The subsoil is described as a slow subsoil, liable to waterlogging. The site is situated on flat ground, on the south side of the river Cherwell, bordered by a public footpath.

### 1.3 Archaeological Background

1.3.1 The site is located approximately 0.5km to the east of Abingdon, a historic town, and as a result of this a magnetometer survey was carried out to check for the presence of any archaeological features. (Fig. 3) It was thought that the site might be the production site of pottery, possibly of an early Roman fineware that was being produced in the area between Abingdon and Dorchester-on-Thames, which has yet to be found.

## 2 EVALUATION AIMS

2.1 The aim of the evaluation was to investigate if the results of the magnetometer survey revealed any archaeological features.

## 3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Fieldwork Methods and Recordings

3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of 2 test pits, each measuring 1 metre square. (Fig. 3)

3.1.2 The trenches were excavated by hand and were planned and sections drawn at scales of 1:20. Photographs were taken using colour slide and black and white print film.

Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

### 3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 From the subsoil layer of Test Pit 1, finds included small fragments of bone, white and blue decorated pottery, tile fragments, clay pipe and two iron nails. From the subsoil layer of Test Pit 2, a sherd of Late Medieval pottery, a glass bottle neck, bone, tile and an iron door hinge were found.
- 3.2.2 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and generally bagged by context.

## 4 RESULTS: GENERAL

### 4.1 Description of deposits

- 4.1.1 Both test pits consisted of a topsoil deposit, numbered 10 and 20; a subsoil, numbered 11 and 21; and a natural deposit, numbered 12 and 22. The topsoil was formed of grassed turf and underlying soil. The subsoil was a silty clay of yellow - brown colour, liable to waterlogging and dating from recent times. The natural deposit was an alluvial clay of blue-yellow colour, dating from Pleistocene and recent times.

### 4.2 Finds

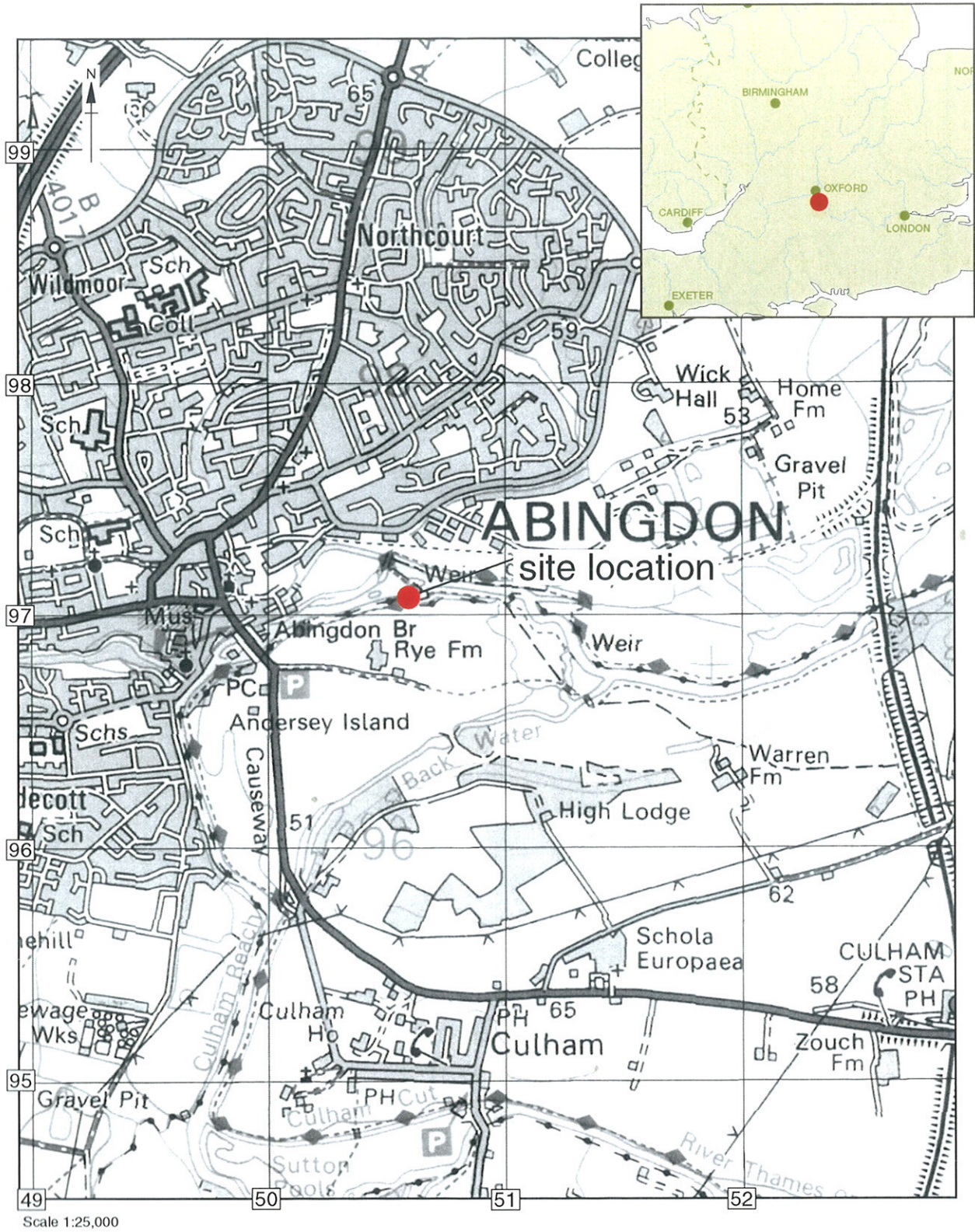
- 4.2.1 **Pottery** The sherds from the first pit were of a fine, white fabric, glazed with a white and bright blue pattern, typical of Twentieth Century china. The sherd from the second pit was a shoulder sherd, of a rust-brown fabric with inclusions of 2 mm diameter, with a red outer surface and a dark brown inner surface, possibly late medieval in date.
- 4.2.2 **Bone** The animal bone found was from a residual deposit accumulated from hillwash or river flooding in the past.

## 5 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

- 5.1 The magnetometer survey revealed two concentrations of magnetic signal that were thought to indicate the presence of burnt material, possibly from a pottery production site. It was suggested that the two concentrations might be from two kilns. However, no kilns or any evidence for pottery production were found in either of the pits. The finds found formed typical residual debris collected in the subsoil from hillwash, river flooding and ploughing over time.

**APPENDIX 1 Context Table**

Context	Type	Relationship	Thickness	Description
10	Deposit	Above 11	15cm	Topsoil
11	Deposit	Below 10	20cm	Subsoil
12	Deposit	Below 11	5cm	Natural deposit
20	Deposit	Above 21	17cm	Topsoil
21	Deposit	Below 20	16cm	Subsoil
22	Deposit	Below 21	10cm	Natural deposit



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Figure 1: Site location

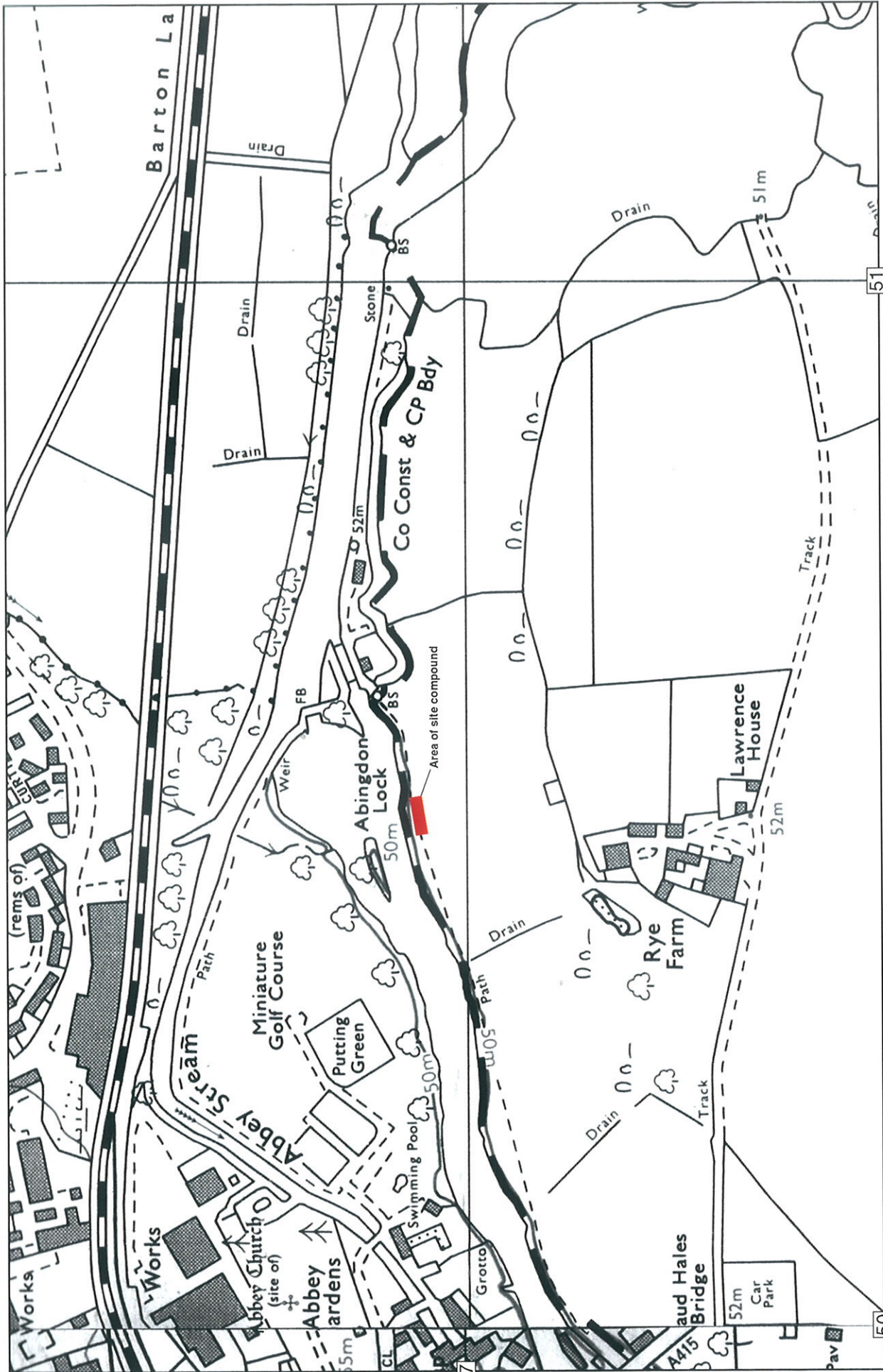


Figure 2: Area of archaeological investigation

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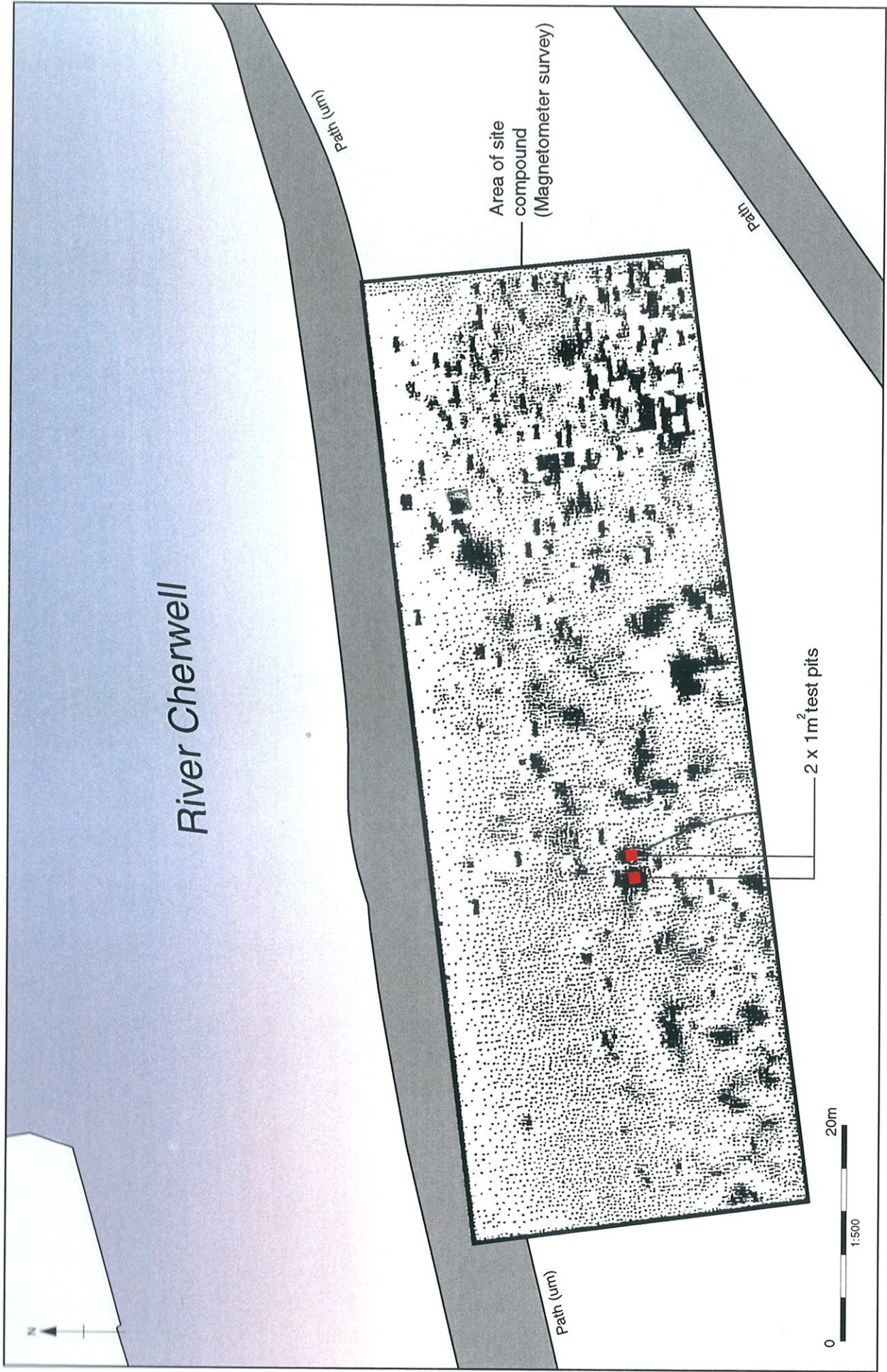


Figure 3: Location of test pits

Scale 1:500



### **Oxford Archaeology**

Janus House  
Osney Mead  
Oxford OX2 0ES

t: (0044) 01865 263800  
f: (0044) 01865 793496  
e: [info@oxfordarch.co.uk](mailto:info@oxfordarch.co.uk)  
w: [www.oxfordarch.co.uk](http://www.oxfordarch.co.uk)



### **Oxford Archaeology North**

Storey Institute  
Meeting House Lane  
Lancaster LA1 1TF

t: (0044) 01524 848666  
f: (0044) 01524 848606  
e: [lancinfo@oxfordarch.co.uk](mailto:lancinfo@oxfordarch.co.uk)  
w: [www.oxfordarch.co.uk](http://www.oxfordarch.co.uk)

**Director:** David Jennings, BA MIFA FSA



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