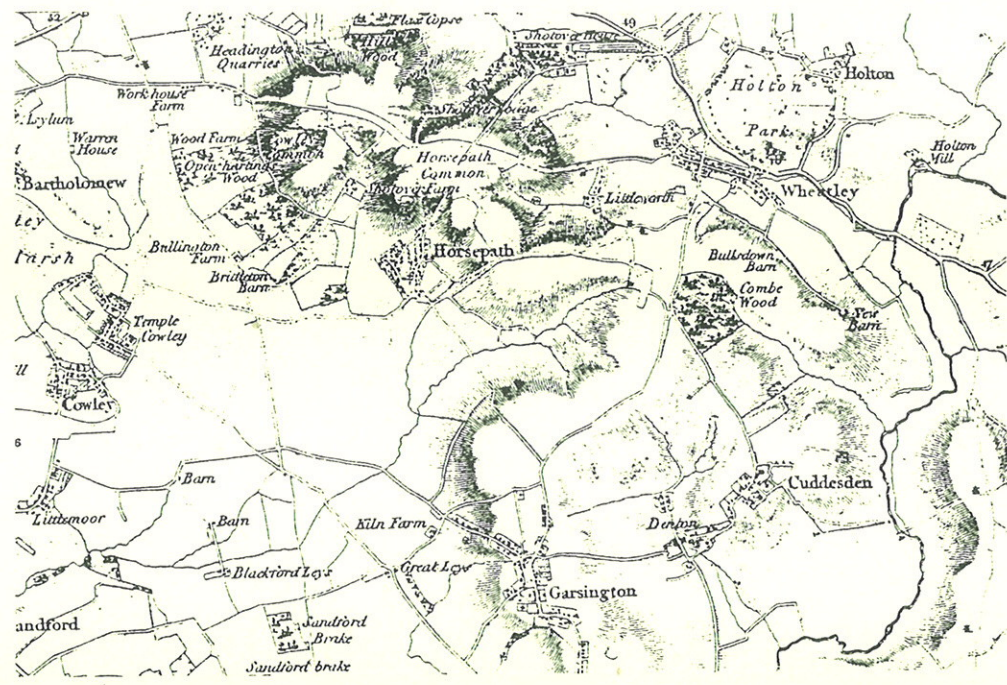


Trencherwood Homes  
Horspath Driftway, Oxford  
*ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT*

SP 553051

Planning Application 97/1093/NF



OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

January 1998

Trencherwood Homes

Horspath Driftway, Oxford

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OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

January 1998

# Horspath Driftway, Oxford

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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## Horspath Driftway, Oxford

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

#### SUMMARY

*The Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out a field evaluation at Horspath Driftway on behalf of Trencherwood Homes. The evaluation revealed no archaeological deposits or artefacts.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Location and scope of work (Fig.1)

In October 1997 the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) carried out a field evaluation at Horspath Driftway on behalf of Trencherwood Homes in respect of a planning application for residential development (Planning Application No. 97/1093/NF. The trench plan was designed by the OAU following consultation with the Oxford Archaeological Advisory Service (OAAS). No formal brief was produced for the project. The development site lay between Horspath Driftway and the former barracks in Hollow Way, at NGR SP554051, and is *c.* 8 hectares in extent.

### 1.2 Geology and topography

The site lies on a band of Corallian Limestone at 90 m above OD. The site is situated on a flat field to the east of the Oxford By-pass. The site is currently unused but was until recently a playing field.

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

Little is known of the archaeology of the development site but several archaeological sites are known in the surrounding area. Artefacts were recovered from a late Bronze Age/early Iron Age ditch at the Rover Vehicle Quality Building *c.*0.7 km to the south-east of the development site (OAU 1995). The line and the remains of the Roman road from Alchester to Dorchester (OSMR 8923, Roman Way) lies the west of the site. Several Roman inhumation burials (OSMR 6158, 1819 and 1852) have been discovered to the south of the site along the line of the road. A late Roman kiln site was excavated in the early 1970s at the Churchill Hospital (Young 1975) *c.*0.7km to the west of the development area, and evidence of Roman settlement was recovered at Northfield Farm, *c.*2 km south-east of the site (OSMR 1822 and 2694).

The development site lies in the north-east corner of Bullingdon Green, a medieval common pasture lying partly in Cowley and partly in Horspath. As a large, conveniently located, open area, bearing the name of the Hundred of Bullingdon, the Green is the most likely site for the Hundredal meeting-place. It was often used during the civil war, by both sides, for military exercises and assemblies (VCH Oxon 5, 1957). The development site occupies *c.*20% of the total area of the green.

## 2 EVALUATION AIMS

- The aims of the evaluation were as follows:
- To assess the archaeological impact of the proposed development.
- To determine the presence/ absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any subsoil features or deposits which may be located within the development area.
- To provide a record of all archaeological deposits discovered.
- To determine the presence and potential of any environmental indicators preserved in any archaeological features or deposits.
- To determine the local, regional, national and international significance of any archaeological deposits discovered, 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 Scope of fieldwork

The strategy of the evaluation was based upon the results of the Archaeogeophysical Survey carried out in September 1997 (Bartlett 1997). The evaluation consisted of 3 trenches measuring 20 x 2 m wide which targeted the area that provided the strongest indications of archaeological features, based on the results of the survey (Fig. 2). The overburden was removed by a JCB mechanical excavator under close archaeological supervision. Areas already stripped by the contractor (the proposed roads) were also inspected and a sample of the features encountered was investigated.

### 3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

The trenches were cleaned by hand and the revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds and environmental samples. All archaeological features were planned and where excavated their sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20. All features were photographed using colour slide and black-and-white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

### 3.3 Finds

No finds were encountered during the evaluation.

### **3.4 Environmental data**

No environmental samples were taken.

## **4 RESULTS: GENERAL**

### **4.1 Soils and ground conditions**

The subsoil consisted of Corallian Limestone with pockets of red-brown clay silt.

### **4.2 Distribution of Archaeological Deposits**

The deposits encountered during the evaluation were of natural origin. All of the subsoil features encountered were filled with a similiar sterile, red-brown clay silt. The irregular margins and archaeologically sterile fills of these features indicate that they are probably of natural origin.

### **4.3 Presentation of Results**

The following describes the deposits and features encountered in each trench during the evaluation. Each deposit was given a unique context number. These are described chronologically, the earliest first.

## **5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS**

### **5.1 Description of deposits**

#### *5.1.1 Trench 1*

Natural Corallian Limestone (2) was encountered 0.25 m below the ground surface. A roughly linear, east-west aligned feature (6) was encountered in the middle of Trench 1. The feature was very shallow (0.1 m deep), 0.3 m wide and was filled with a red-brown clayey silt (5). An irregular oval feature (4), located towards the south end of the trench, was partially obscured beyond the eastern edge of the trench. The feature was 0.15 m deep, with an uneven base and irregular sides, and was filled by a red-brown clay deposit similiar to that filling Feature 6. The trench was sealed by a mid-brown topsoil (1).

#### *5.1.2 Trench 2*

Natural Corallian Limestone (2) was encountered 0.25 m below the ground surface. A roughly linear, north-south aligned irregular feature (8) was encountered toward the middle of Trench 2. The feature was 0.15 m deep, 0.3 m wide and terminated 1 m south of the north-east baulk. The feature was filled by a red-brown clay-silt (7), identical to that encountered in Trench 1. The trench was sealed by a mid-brown topsoil. No finds were recovered.

### 5.1.3 Trench 3

Natural Corallian limestone (2) was encountered 0.25 m below the ground surface. An irregular oval feature (10) cut the limestone c.5 m north of the south end of the trench and continued beyond the western edge of the trench. The feature was 0.1 m deep, at least 1.8 m long and had a width of 0.4 m. A single deposit of red-brown clayey silt (9) filled the feature (same as 5). The trench was sealed by a mid-brown topsoil. No finds were recovered.

### 5.1.4 Areas stripped by contractor

Those areas of the development to be occupied by roads had been excavated by the contractors prior to the evaluation. These were inspected by an archaeologist and features similar to those found in the trenches were sampled. The features were shallow and were filled by a red-brown clayey silt identical to those encountered in Trenches 1, 2, and 3. No finds were recovered.

## 6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

### 6.1 Reliability of field investigation

The three archaeological trenches, supplemented by observation of areas already stripped, was sufficient to allow assessment of the archaeological potential of the site. It seems likely that the anomalies indicated by the geophysical survey can be explained by the natural features encountered during the evaluation.

### 6.2 Overall interpretation

#### 6.2.1 Summary of Results

No archaeological features were encountered during the evaluation. A number of irregular features containing no artefacts were encountered, which are interpreted as shallow natural features created by trees and other vegetation and natural geological processes.

## Bibliography and references

- |                   |      |  |
|-------------------|------|--|
| Bartlett, A,D,H,  | 1997 | <i>Report on Archaeogeophysical Survey of site at Horspath Driftway, Oxford</i>    |
| OAU               | 1995 | <i>Rover VQ Building Garsington Way, Oxford (unpublished OAU client report)</i>    |
| VCH               | 1957 | <i>Oxon 5, Victoria County History, Oxfordshire vol. 5</i>                         |
| Wilkinson,D, (ed) | 1992 | <i>Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual</i> , (First edition, August 1992)      |
| Young, C,J,       | 1975 | 'Excavations at the Churchill Hospital, 1973: Interim Report' <i>Oxoniensia</i> 39 |

## Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory

Trench	Context	Type	Width (m)	Thick. (m)	Comment	Finds	No.	Date
1, 2, 3								
	1	Layer		0.25	turfed topsoil			
	2	Layer		-	natural Corallian limestone			
1								
	3	fill		0.15	red-brown clay silt			
	4	cut	0.5	0.15	natural feature			
	5	fill		0.10	red-brown clay silt			
	6	cut	0.3	0.10	natural feature			
2								
	7	fill		0.15	red-brown clay silt			
	8	cut	0.3	0.15	natural feature			
3								
	9	fill		0.10	red-brown clay silt			
	10	cut	0.4+	0.10	natural feature			



## Illustrations

Fig.1 Site Location

Fig.2 Plan showing trench locations in relation to geophysical survey plot

Fig.3 Plans of Trenches 1, 2 and 3

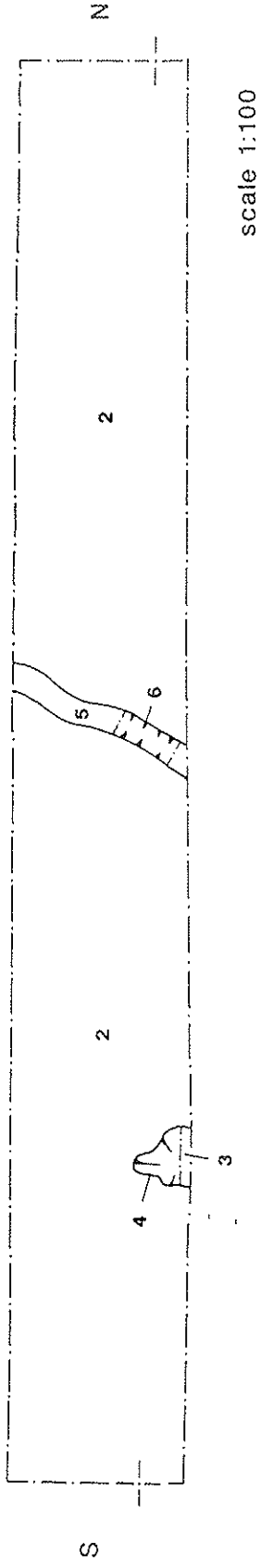




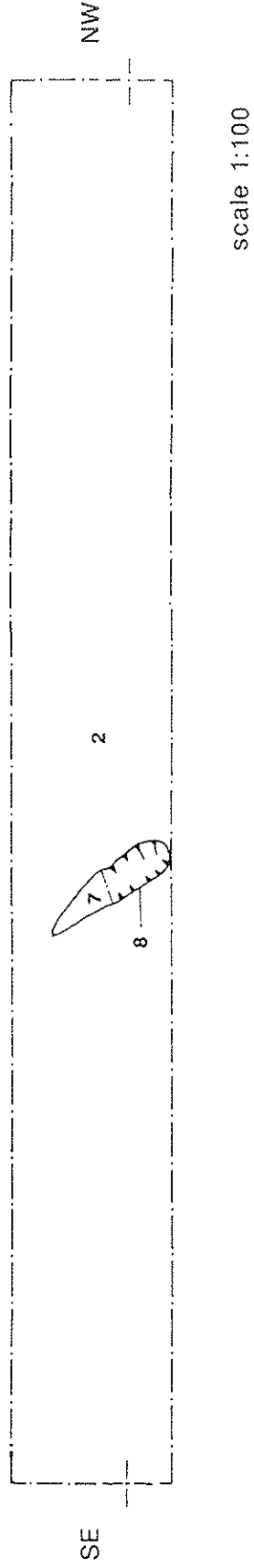
Location of trenches in relation to the geophysical survey plot (Bartlett 1997)

scale 1:1000

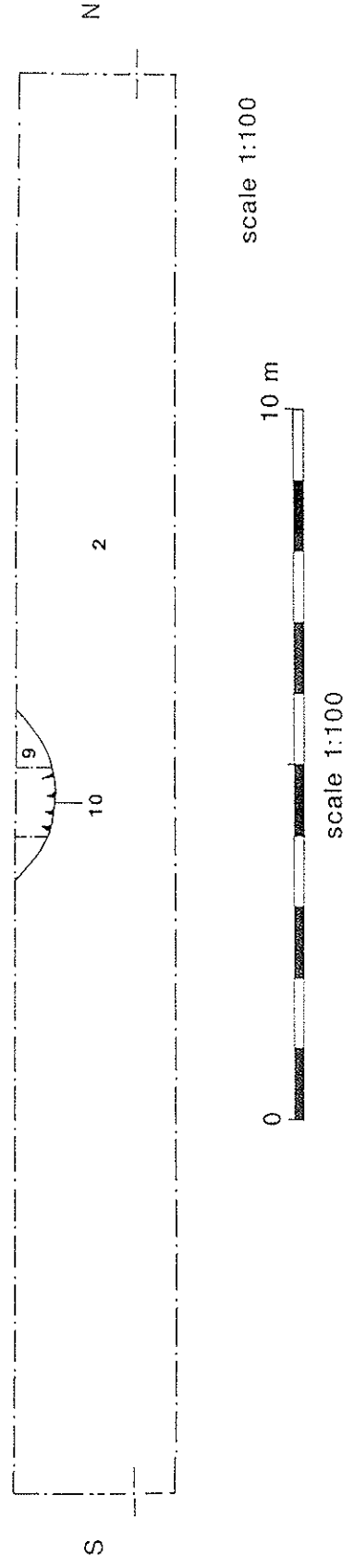
Trench 1 plan



Trench 2 plan



Trench 3 plan



Trenches 1, 2 and 3 plans



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