

Bourne Ditch Flood Alleviation Scheme Windsor, Berkshire

NGR SU 9568 7533

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

September 1995

Report on the Archaeological watching brief on
the Bourne Ditch Flood Alleviation Scheme, Windsor

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1. Introduction

The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) carried out an archaeological recording exercise on part of the Bourne Ditch Flood Alleviation Scheme, Windsor on behalf of H R Wallingford, acting for the Royal Borough of Windsor. The contractors were Alfred MacAlpine and the design engineers Mott MacDonald Group.

1.1 Geological and topography

The site lay in the valley of the Bourne on a SE facing slope. The underlying geology consisted of London Clays.

1.2 Archaeological background

The line of the flood alleviation scheme ran close by a medieval moated site (Scheduled Ancient Monument 12051) known as Stag Moat. The technical brief prepared for Berkshire County Council required the observation of the topsoil stripping and other disturbances within a designated section of the easement. The section concerned lies near to the scheduled monument (Fig 1). The archaeological recording action was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by the OUA.

1.3 Methodology

The work was undertaken in two stages. The first stage was the stripping of the easement for the main embankment; this was followed at a subsequent date by the strip for the outfall culvert. The stripping of the topsoil for both the easement for the main embankment and for the outfall were undertaken using a 360 degree excavator with a toothless ditching bucket and under archaeological supervision.

2 Description of results

2.1 Soils and ground conditions

The ground conditions at the time of the watching brief were dry and weather was hot and dry. Throughout the stripped areas the soil was a thin clay loam with a clay subsoil overlying alluvial clays.

2.2 Archaeological features

All recorded contexts are listed in Appendix 1.

2.2.1 Main embankment easement

The only features observed were a shallow cut filled with brick rubble (cut 102/fill 103), gravel pathway (context 104), three parallel plough furrows or field drains (contexts 105/106, 107/108 & 109/110), and a small linear feature (context 111). All features were recorded. Contexts 102, 105, 107 and 109 were all sealed beneath the topsoil and cut the clay subsoil. Only context 111

was investigated further and it proved to be a shallow irregular ditch or gully. The finds recovered were all of nineteenth-century or later date. From its shallow and irregular form it seems most likely that this feature was a relict hedge line.

2.2.2 Outfall

Only one feature was located within the area of the topsoil for the outfall culvert. This was a linear feature (context 203) marked by ruts, and consisting of compressed sandy clay with modern brick and tile. The surface of the natural clay (context 203) was marked with patches of gravel, which may have been traces of the continuation of the gravel path (?) (context 104) observed in the main easement. No finds were observed or recovered during this second stage of the watching brief.

2.3 Finds

The finds were all comparatively late in date and for this reason have not be listed in detail. They have been quantified and identified and are listed in Appendix 2

2.4 Environmental data

No deposits potentially suitable for environmental sampling were uncovered. No samples were taken.

3 Discussion and interpretation

3.1 Reliability of field investigation

The dry ground conditions and the use of the appropriate bucket ensured a clean trip which facilitated the observation of any archaeological features or deposits.

3.2 Overall interpretation

It is reasonable to interpret the shallow feature (context 111) uncovered as recent relict hedge line. The other features of any note were the two possible paths, one composed of gravel (104) and the other of brick and tile (204). All the observed features were of 19th-century, or later, date. No medieval features were observed, nor were any finds of medieval date observed or recovered.

Appendix 1

List of Contexts

| Site: Bourne Ditch Flood Alleviation, Windsor | | | Site Code: WIBDF 95 | |
|---|---------|----------------------------|--|---|
| Context No | Type | Relationships | Brief description | Finds (presence/absence) |
| 100 | deposit | above 101 | sandy clay topsoil | (finds) |
| 101 | deposit | below 100 | clay subsoil | (finds) |
| 102 | cut | cuts 101, filled by 103 | irregular oval cut | -- |
| 103 | fill | fill of 102 | brick rubble (80%) with sandy clay soil | (finds) |
| 104 | deposit | below 101 | gravel (80%) | none |
| 105 | cut | cuts 101, filled by 106 | plough furrow, parallel to 107 & 109 | -- |
| 106 | fill | fill of 105, sealed by 100 | dark grey brown clay and modern material | finds observed (modern) but not retrieved |
| 107 | cut | cuts 101, filled by 108 | plough furrow, parallel to 105 & 109 | -- |
| 108 | fill | fill of 107, sealed by 100 | dark grey brown clay and modern material | none |
| 109 | cut | cuts 101, filled by 110 | plough furrow, parallel to 105 & 107 | -- |
| 110 | fill | fill of 109, sealed by 100 | dark grey brown clay and modern material | finds observed (modern) but not retrieved |
| 111 | cut | filled by 112, cuts 101 | irregular shallow ditch, probable hedge line | -- |
| 112 | fill | fill of 111, sealed by 100 | mid brown | (finds) |
| 113 | natural | below 101 | clay | none |
| 201 | deposit | above 204 | sandy clay topsoil | none |
| 202 | deposit | below 204 | clay subsoil | none |
| 203 | deposit | below 202 | clay with patches of gravel - disturbed surface of natural | none |
| 204 | deposit | below 201 | Sandy clay with modern brick and tile, and evidence for wheel ruts - ?path | none |

Appendix 2

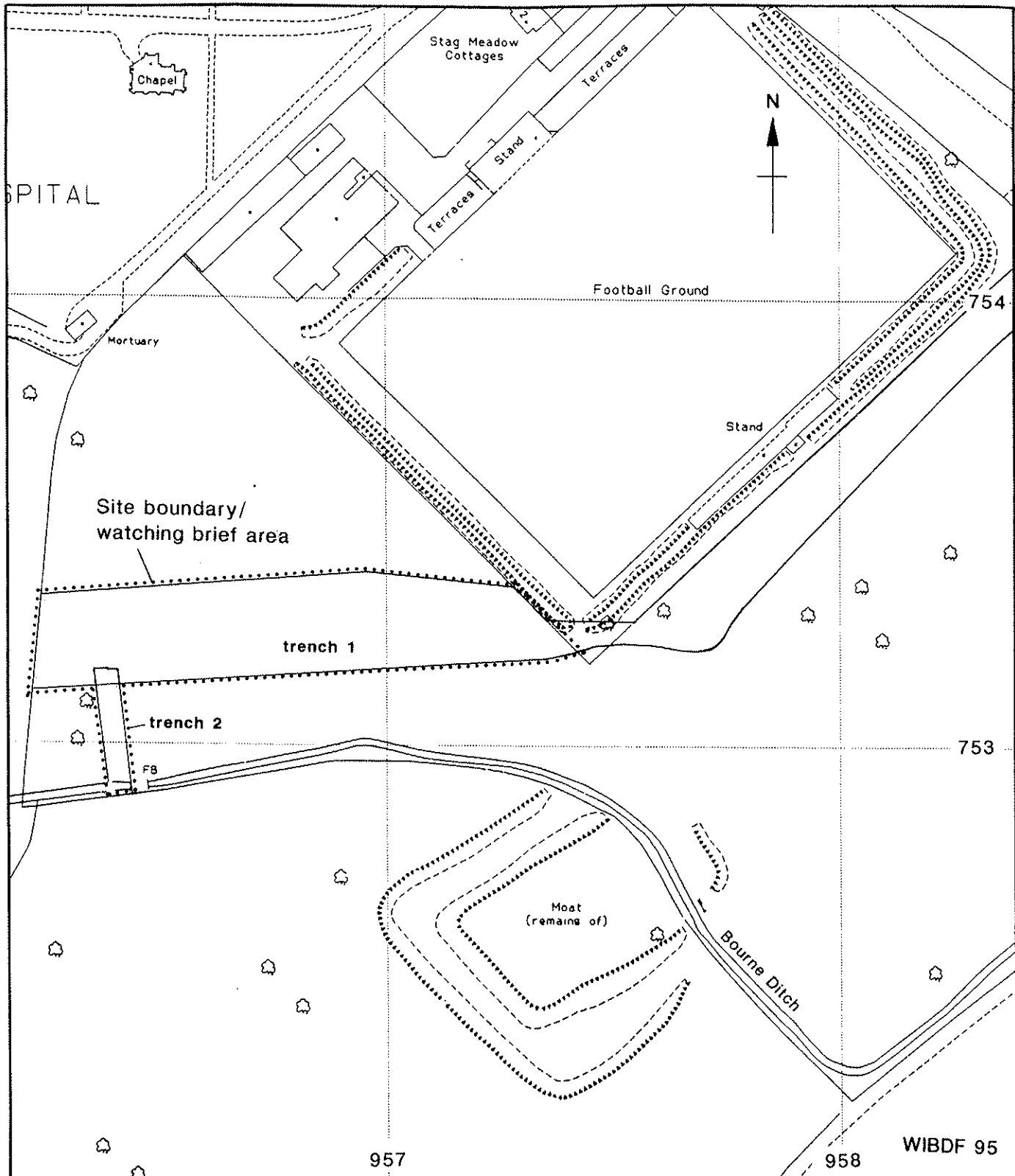
Finds by context

| Context | Finds | | |
|---------|---|--|--|
| | Ceramics | Building materials | Miscellaneous |
| 100 | stoneware jar, fragment (x 1); china (x 2 sherds); china, transfer printed (x 7 sherds). | brick frags (x 3); roof tile frags (x 3); pantile fragt (x 1). | vessel glass (x 2 sherds) - 19th-20th C; |
| 101 | china (x 1 sherd); stoneware (x 1 sherd); earthenware, glazed (x 2 sherds) - late post-medieval; flower pot (x 1 sherd). | brick fragt (x 1); pantile fragt (x 1). | slag, small frags (x 3); clay pipe stem frags (x 7); burnt flint (x 1). |
| 103 | china (x 2 sherds). | brick fragt (x 1); roof tile fragt (x 1) | -- |
| 112 | china (x 3) | ceramic pipe sherds (x 8); tile or brick frags (x 5) - very abraded; slate (x 2); engineering brick fragt (x 1); | brass cartridge case (x 1) - rifle cartridge; clay pipe stem fragt (x 1); iron fragt (x 1) - nail point. |

Illustrations

Fig 1 Site location.

Fig 2 Features observed and recorded.



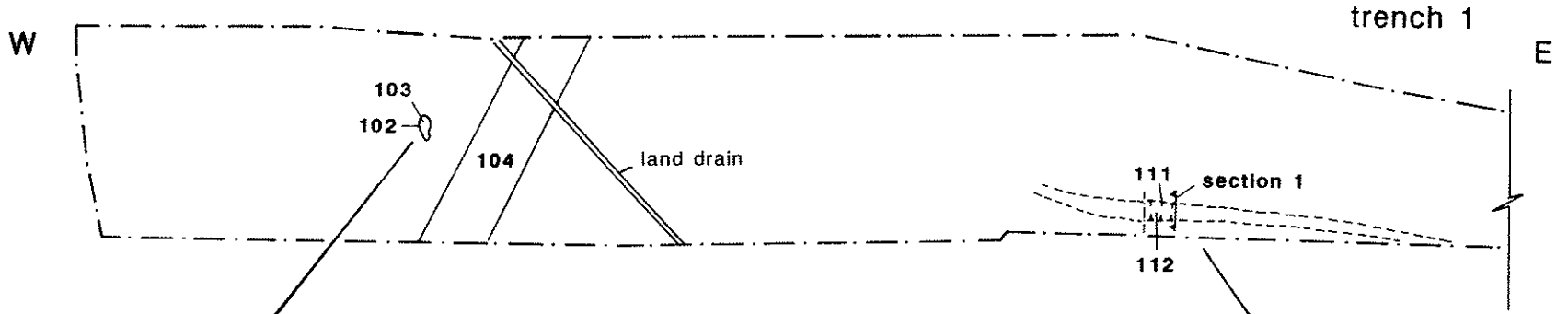
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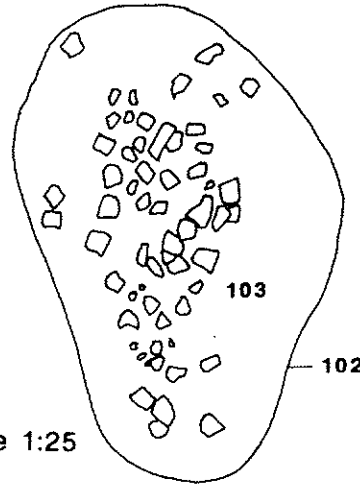
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Site location

figure 1

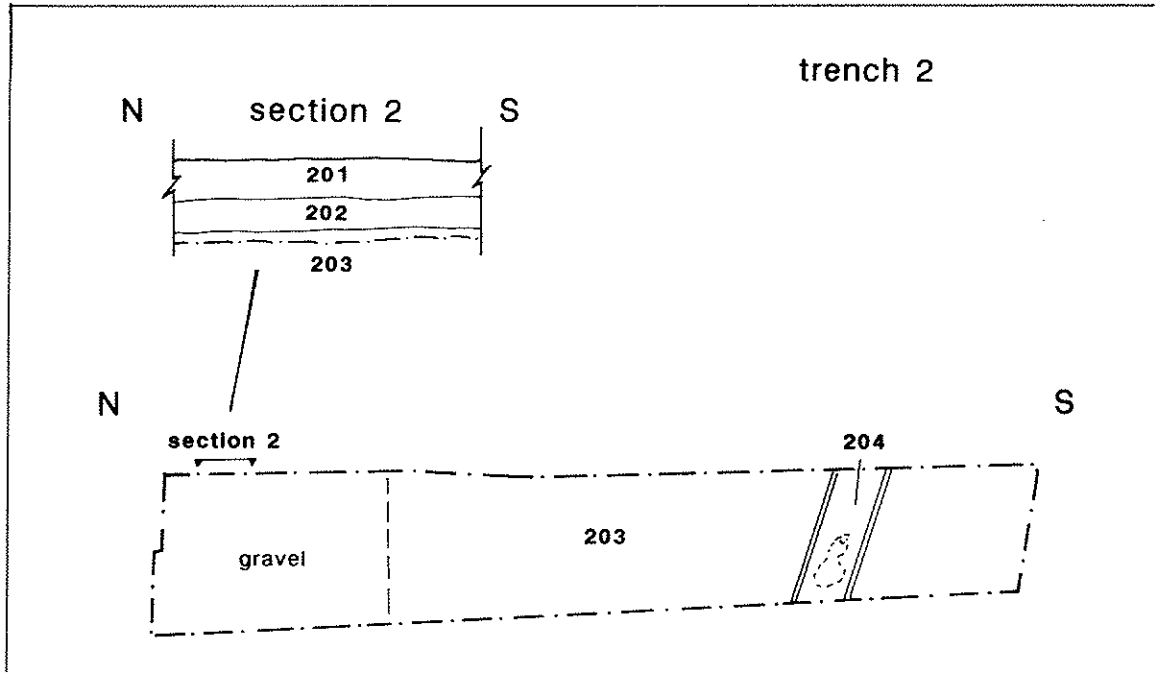
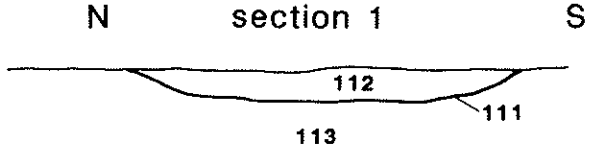


feature 102



scale 1:25

scale for plans 1:250
 scale for sections 1:25



Site plans and sections

figure 2



OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

46 Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford, OX1 2EP
Head Office Tel: 01865 243888 Fax: 01865 793496
Post-Excavation Tel: 01865 204642 Fax: 01865 204637



Director: David Miles B.A., F.S.A., M.I.F.A.

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