

Diocese of Oxford

**Iver, Buckinghamshire
Thorney Lane, Delaford Close, New Vicarage**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

NGR TQ 0405 8115

Planning Reference 01/00690/FUL

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October 2001

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Prepared by: Andrew Norton

Date: 16th October 2001

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Date: 17/10/01

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Date: ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
19/10/2001

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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SUMMARY

The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) carried out a field evaluation at Delaford Close, Iver, Buckinghamshire, NGR TQ 0405 8115 on behalf of the Diocese of Oxford. The evaluation revealed a modern garden soil over a possible ancient soil, which contained a fragment of Roman roof tile. No features of archaeological interest were encountered.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In October 2001 the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) carried out a field evaluation at Delaford Close, Iver, Buckinghamshire, NGR TQ 0405 8115 on behalf of the Diocese of Oxford in respect of a planning application for a new vicarage (Planning Application No. 01/00690/FUL). A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), giving details of the project brief, was prepared by Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service. The development site is situated within the garden of Delaford House and is c 0.1 hectares in area (Fig. 1).

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site lies on a glacial sand and gravel terrace above the Colne Brook, in a sheltered, well-drained location amidst fertile soils. The site is situated within a garden and is grassed with trees and lies at c 37 m above OD.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological background to the evaluation was researched at Bucks SMR by Andy Buckley of OAU on 11/10/2001. The background was detailed in the project WSI and is summarised below. The site itself has produced no archaeological evidence. There are several known sites and locations with archaeological remains adjacent to the development site.

1.3.2 Trenches dug between Iver Churchyard and the M25 to re-route electricity services in 1983 uncovered a Saxon grass-tempered sherd, ten medieval sherds and undated burnt daub. In addition 4 test pits dug as part of the Iver-Arkley water pipe by RPS Clouston in 1994 recovered a retouched flake in one pit and charcoal in another.

1.3.3 Little is known of this area during the prehistoric period. The Buckinghamshire SMR does identify a number of finds from this period in the study area. These are two Palaeolithic handaxes (SMR 2397 and 5982) and a Mesolithic tranchet axe (SMR 5319). The geology of the site would have also favoured settlement of the area from the prehistoric period onwards.

1.3.4 There are no records held by the SMR, which indicate a Roman presence in the study area. However, the presence of some Roman brick being used in the eastern angles of the nave of St. Peter's church (SMR 0846) does indicate a Roman settlement nearby.

- 1.3.5 The first known reference to Iver appears in the *Chronicle of Aethelweard* under the year AD 893. The discovery of a Saxon grass-tempered sherd during the building of the M25 near the churchyard of St. Peters also indicates a Saxon presence in the area at this time. However, it is the church of St. Peters itself which is of considerable interest and the strongest link to this period (SMR 0846). The church has a visible 'Anglo-Saxon character' (Taylor). This remaining Saxon fabric is 'one of the few churches in the County of this period' (Farley).
- 1.3.6 The history and topography of Buckinghamshire (Sheahan, 1971) records that: *Iver is a place of some antiquity...Evre, or Eureham* [as Iver is called in Domesday, with the first part of the name being derived from "eofor", a boar; or from "yfre" a slope, with the suffix "ham" did continuing in use beyond the 11th century] *became part of the possessions of Robert D'Oyley after the Conquest.*
- 1.3.7 During the early medieval period, Buckinghamshire SMR records the presence of three mills (SMR 2829) and four fisheries (SMR 1680) within the parish; both are recorded in the Domesday book.
- 1.3.8 The site of development lies close to the church of St. Peters that stood close to the medieval settlement and the medieval manor, not on the periphery of the parish. This would indicate that the focus of settlement would always have been close to the site of development.
- 1.3.9 The other place of interest close to the site of development is Delaford Park (SMR 4385). This comes from de la ford, meaning "place or person of the ford", referring to the crossing of the Colne brook. Records show that the earliest recorded residents of the manor of Delaford were known by the name Ford and it is likely that they took their family name from the place name. The earliest documentary reference to Delaford was in about 1250-1260. The house at Delaford is not on the site of the original medieval manor. This was burnt down in 1845 and the present house built on top of its foundations.
- 1.3.10 While rapid expansion of Iver is evident from the 1801 Enclosure map when compared with the modern map of the area, this has not been as prominent around the church and is more noticeable to the west and south-west of St. Peters church.

2 EVALUATION AIMS

- 2.1.1 To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the proposed development area.
- 2.1.2 To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present. Specific aims were to establish whether any late Saxon or medieval remains associated with documented village extend into the development site, and to identify and characterise any post-medieval settlement evidence and its relationship to the later village.

2.1.3 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features.

2.1.4 To make available the results of the investigation.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork

3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of one trench measuring 20 m x 1.8 m (Fig. 2). The overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision by a JCB mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket.

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

3.2.1 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 drawn at scales 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

3.3.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and generally bagged by context. Finds of special interest were given a unique small find number.

3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence

3.4.1 Because of the absence of archaeological features no environmental samples were taken.

3.5 Presentation of results

3.5.1 Section 5 includes individual context descriptions, with archaeological deposits and features described from earliest to latest. Context information is summarised in the context inventory (Appendix 1).

4 RESULTS: GENERAL

4.1 Soils and ground conditions

4.1.1 The site is located on a glacial sand and gravel terrace, overlain by a probable imported soil, which lies beneath a garden soil. The ground was well drained and no problems were encountered.

4.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits

- 4.2.1 The soils throughout the trench had been disturbed by tree roots, and some garden landscaping had occurred to the south of the trench.

5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

5.1 Description of deposits

5.1.1 *Trench 1*

The trench was aligned north-east to south-west with natural sand and gravel (4) encountered at 0.80 m below ground level (bgl), or 34.40 m OD, in the south of the trench and at 34.14 m OD (0.40 m bgl) to the north. A sandy silt with gravel (3) overlay the natural and may represent the remains of a plough soil or an imported levelling deposit. A fragment of Roman roofing tile was recovered from this layer. A dark clay silt (2) overlay 3 and was interpreted as modern garden landscaping. The deposits were sealed by a garden soil (1).

5.2 Finds

- 5.2.1 A single fragment of Roman roof tile, the flange of a tegula, was recovered from context 3.

6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 6.1.1 The results obtained from the evaluation would appear reliable and not influenced by intrusive factors. There does not appear to be any large scale truncation within the area. There is a large amount of root disturbance and limited garden landscaping, but there is no evidence that these activities have destroyed any archaeological remains.

6.2 Overall interpretation

- 6.2.1 It can be assumed that there are no significant archaeological remains within the development area. The site probably represents an area of gardens associated with the original medieval Delaford manor. The only find of significance is a fragment of Roman roofing tile within a disturbed soil. This could suggest activity of a Roman date in the vicinity of the development area.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Ctxt No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Thick. (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i> Finds</i>	<i>No./ wt</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	1	Layer		0.20	Garden soil			
	2	Layer		0.30	Imported soil			
	3	Layer		0.20	Imported soil	Tile	1	Roman
	4	Layer			Natural			

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

OAU 2001 *Iver, Buckinghamshire, Thorney Lane, Delaford Close, new vicarage*
Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Investigation

OAU 1992 *Fieldwork Manual* (1st edition, ed. D Wilkinson)

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Iver, Buckinghamshire, Thorney Lane, Delaford Close, new vicarage

Site code: IVDH01

Grid reference: NGR TQ 0405 8115

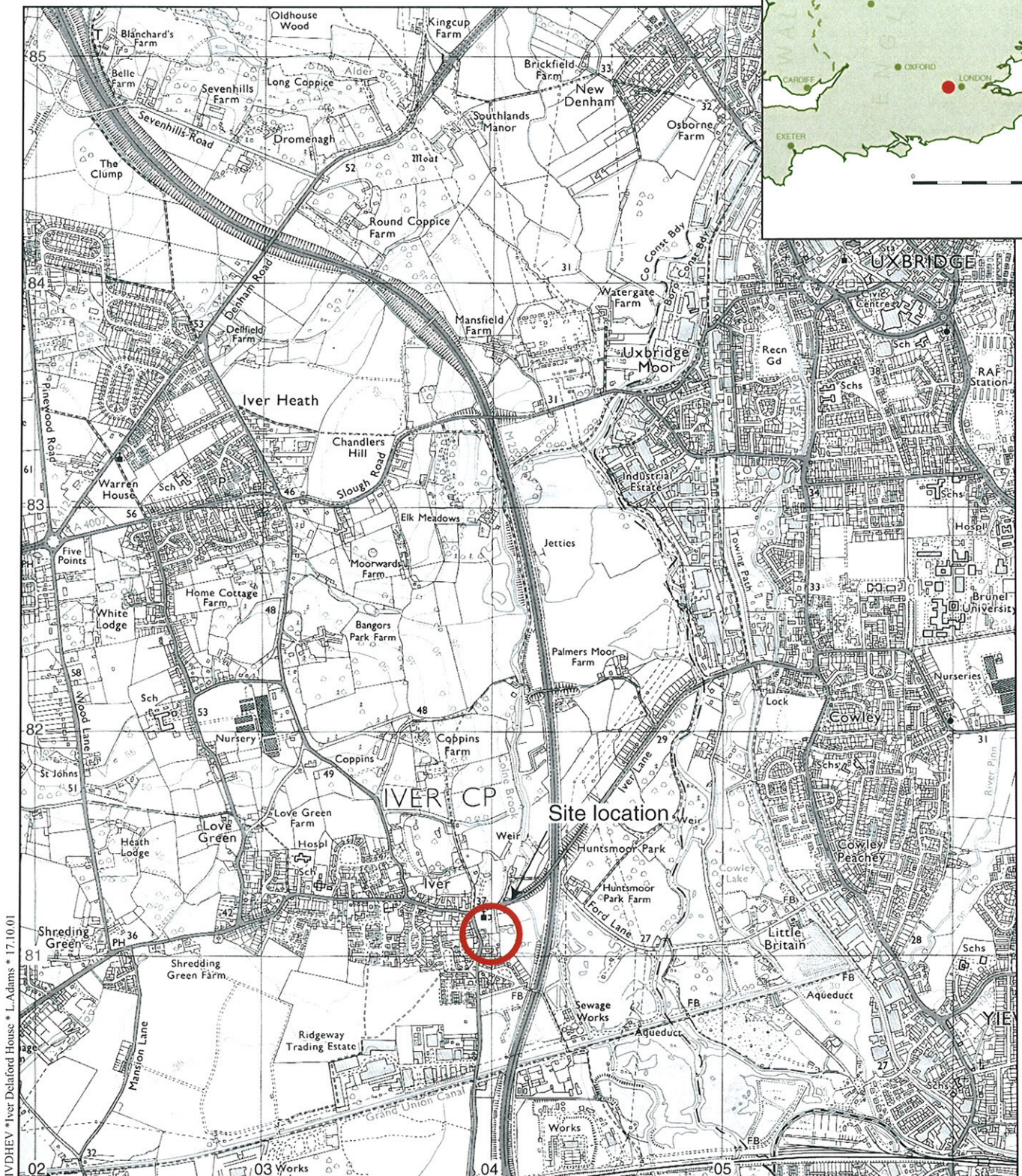
Type of evaluation: Single trench

Date and duration of project: 15/10/01 to 16/10/01

Area of site: c 0.1 ha

Summary of results: The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) carried out a field evaluation at Delaford Close, Iver, Buckinghamshire on behalf of the Diocese of Oxford. The evaluation revealed a modern garden soil over a possible ancient soil. No features of archaeological interest were encountered.

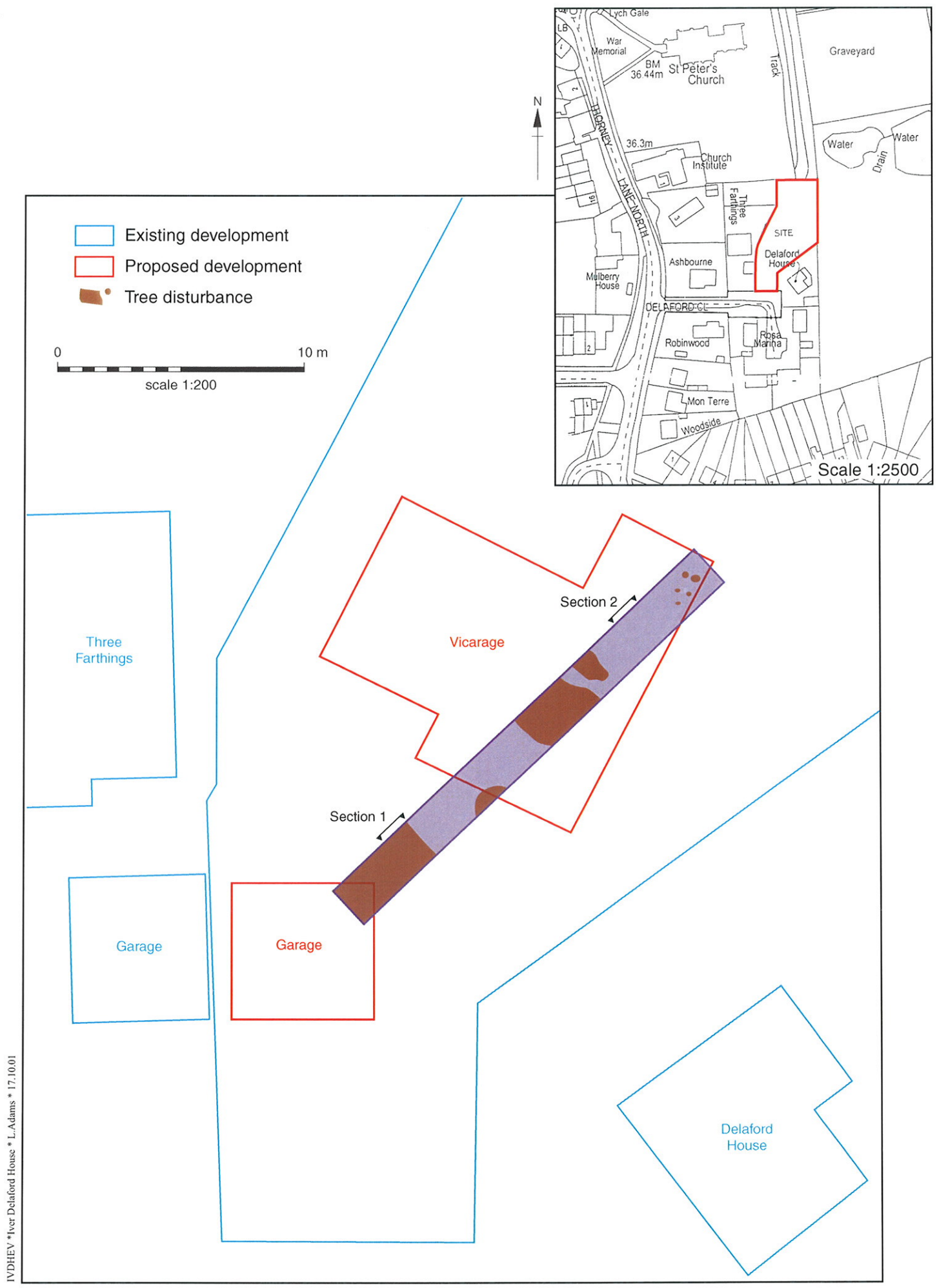
Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OAU, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museums Service.



IVDHEV * Iver DeLaFord House * L Adams * 17.10.01

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Figure 1: Site location plan



IVDHEV *Iver Delaford House * L.Adams * 17.10.01

Figure 2: Trench location plan

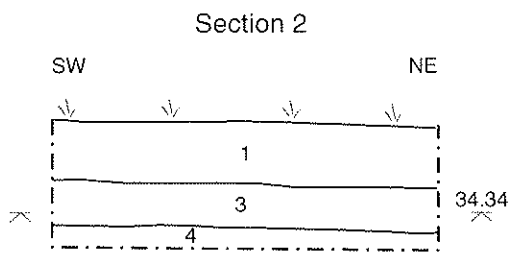
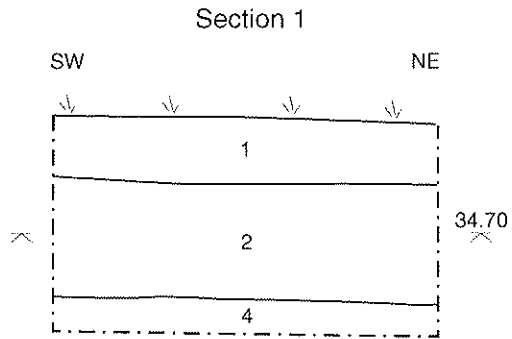


Figure 3: Sections



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