

Land South-East of Glebe Court Fringford Oxfordshire



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



April 2007

Client: Mr R. Herring

Issue N^o: 1
OA Job N^o: 3596
Planning Ref N^o: 06/1392/F
NGR: SP 592 272

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Fringford, Oxfordshire*****ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT*****CONTENTS**

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SUMMARY

In April 2007, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief on land south-east of Glebe Court, Fringford, Oxfordshire (NGR: SP 592 272). The work was commissioned by Mr R. Herring in advance of the extension of 20 new touring van pitches and the construction of a new toilet block. The watching brief revealed stratigraphy consistent with agricultural use of the land and no significant archaeology was observed.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 In April 2007, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief on land south-east of Glebe Court, Fringford, Oxfordshire (NGR: SP 592 272). The work was commissioned by Mr R. Herring in respect of a planning application for the extension of the existing caravan park to provide 20 new pitches and for the construction of a new toilet block (Planning Application No. 06/1392/F).
- 1.1.2 A project brief was set by Paul Smith of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (OCAS) requiring that a watching brief be maintained during the period of groundworks associated with this construction.
- 1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief (OA, 2007).

1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site is located in open farmland 3.5 km north of Bicester (Fig. 1). The site itself is situated on level ground immediately north of the road leading to Stoke Lyne at approximately 101 m above OD. The site is currently in use as managed grassland adjacent to the existing caravan park and is c900 m² in area. The underlying geology is Jurassic Cornbrash and Great Oolite beds (British Geological Survey sheet no 219).

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, 2007) and is reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 A cropmark of an irregular enclosure of unknown date has been recorded some 50 m to the north-west of the proposed new building (SMR 9408). Other cropmarks have been identified in fields to the south-west of the site, while a further cropmark recorded to the west (SMR 12225) has been identified as an Iron Age 'Banjo Enclosure'. This evidence suggests that there is potential for prehistoric and later below ground archaeological remains in the general environs of this development

area. There is a known quarry (now backfilled) dating to the 1940s approximately 100 m north of the site.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence or absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.
- 2.1.2 To preserve by record any archaeological features or deposits that may be disturbed or destroyed during the course of the groundworks.
- 2.1.3 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The watching brief was conducted as a number of site visits during both the topsoil stripping and the excavation of foundation trenches. All groundworks were accomplished using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket or 0.6 m wide trenching bucket as appropriate.
- 2.2.2 A plan showing the extent and location of any excavations was maintained at a scale of 1:100 (Fig. 2) and any recorded sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20. All excavations and recorded sections were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. A general photographic record of the work was also made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OA Field Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 The underlying solid natural, a tabular bedded oolitic limestone (4), was encountered at a depth of between 0.9 m and 1.0 m below the current ground level (Fig. 3, sections 1 and 2). This was overlain by a 0.35 m deep layer of sub-angular limestone fragments within a yellow-brown silt clay matrix (3). Overlying this was a 0.25 m deep layer of orange brown silt clay (2) (Section 1), which increased in depth to be 0.4 m deep at the southern extent of the excavations (Section 2).
- 3.1.2 The area was sealed by a 0.4 m deep layer of dark brown clay loam (1), of which 0.2 m depth was removed during the topsoil strip leaving 0.2 m depth appearing in the sections. This material contained charcoal and fragments of post-medieval pottery and clay pipe indicative of a ploughed soil.

3.2 **Finds**

3.2.1 The only dating evidence observed was within layer 1 and comprised post-medieval fragments of pottery (cream and earthen ware), clay pipe stem fragments and abraded fragments of red brick. The pottery and clay pipe were retained, however the brick fragments were recorded but not retained.

3.3 **Palaeo-environmental remains**

3.3.1 No samples suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling were encountered during the course of the watching brief.

4 **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

4.1.1 The watching brief showed that the site had been subject to arable agricultural use with layer 1 showing evidence of being a ploughsoil. Layer 2 is a subsoil that may form a layer of earlier worked soil, however the absence of dating evidence or evidence of activity such as charcoal or burnt stone would mitigate against this, suggesting that is more likely a layer of weathered and decomposed cornbrash.

4.1.2 Layer 3 is a layer of cornbrash formed from frost damaged and fractured limestone from the underlying bedded limestone 4.

4.1.3 No significant archaeological evidence was encountered during the course of the watching brief. The finds recovered are indicative of post-medieval manuring practises rather than occupation of the site.

4.1.4 No evidence was observed for the known quarrying activity to have extended to within the boundaries of the development area.

APPENDICES**APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY**

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	Layer	0.4 m	-	Modern plough soil	Pottery, clay pipe stem, brick	C19th/ 20th
2	Layer	0.25 m - 0.4 m	-	Subsoil	-	-
3	Layer	0.35 m	-	Cornbrash	-	-
4	Layer	> 0.1 m	-	Limestone bedrock	-	-

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

IFA, 2001 *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

OA, 1992 *Field Manual* (ed. D. Wilkinson)

OA, 2007 *Land South East of Glebe Court, Fringford, Oxfordshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

OCAS, 2007 *Land South East of Glebe Court, Fringford - Design Brief for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Land South-East of Glebe Court, Fringford, Oxfordshire

Site code: FRINCP 07

Grid reference: SP 592 272

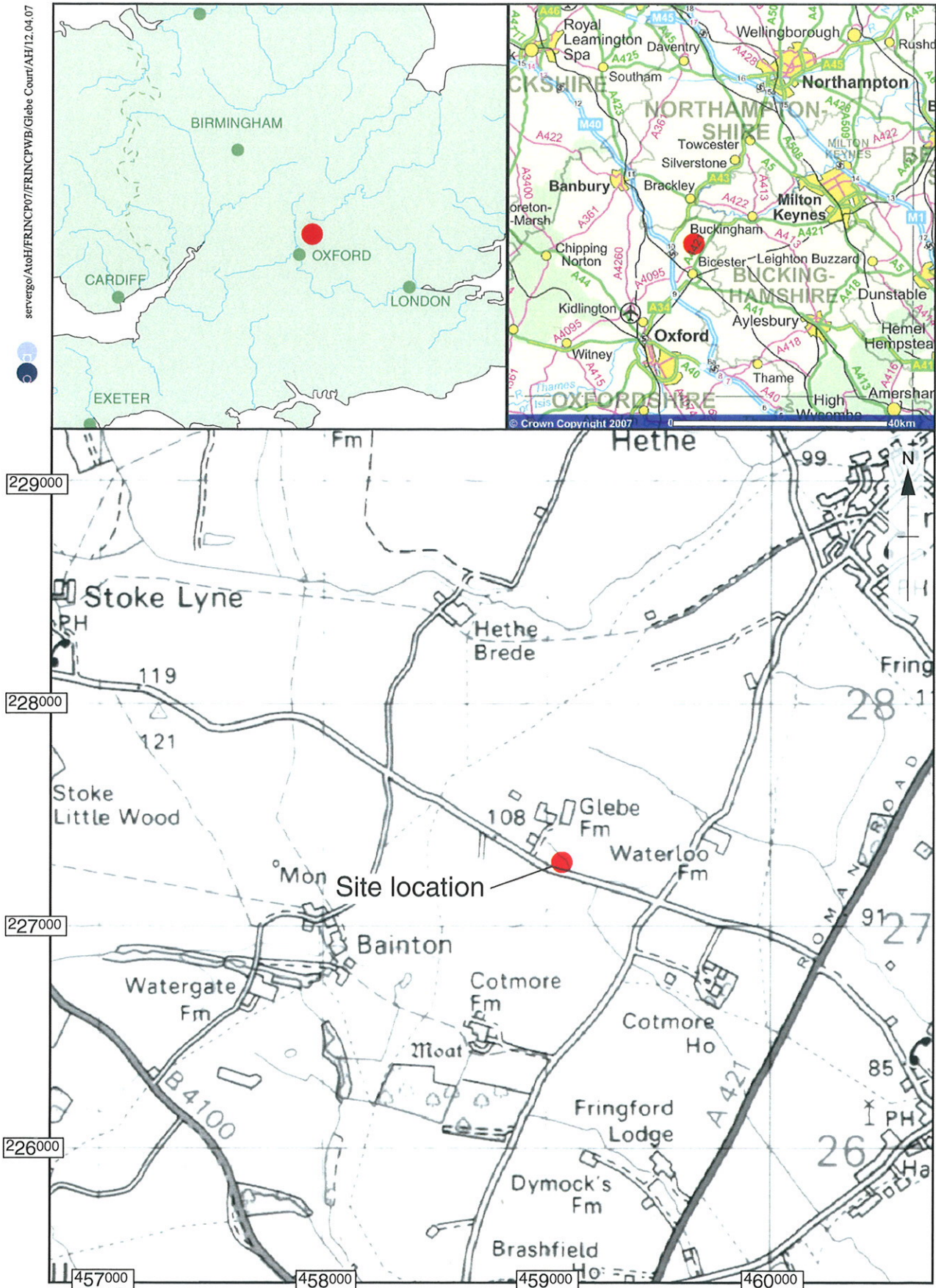
Type of watching brief: Machine excavation of new building foundations and topsoil stripping.

Date and duration of project: 3rd and 5th April, 2007, 2 site visits

Area of site: c900m²

Summary of results: The watching brief revealed stratigraphy consistent with agricultural use of the land. No significant archaeology was encountered.

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: OXCMS:2007.16



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Figure 1: Site location

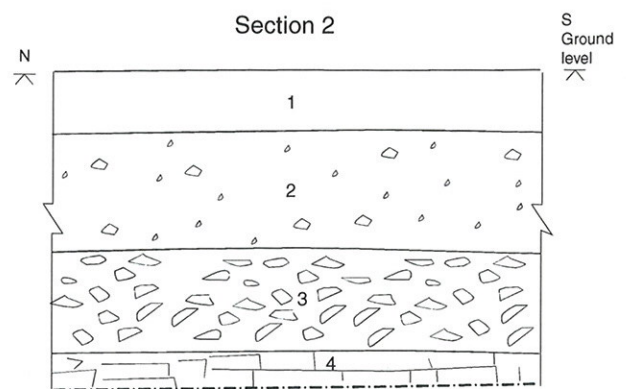
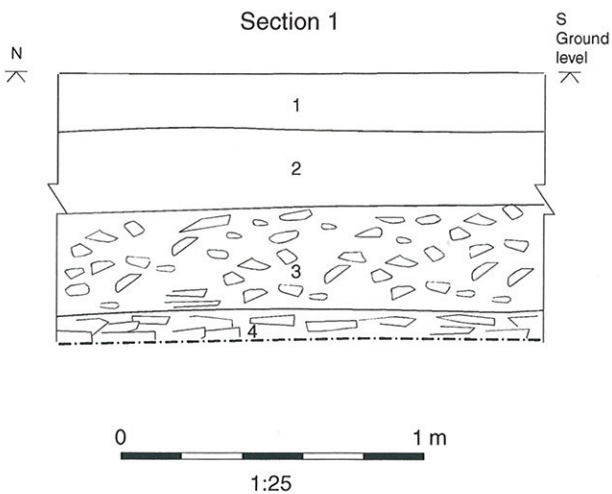
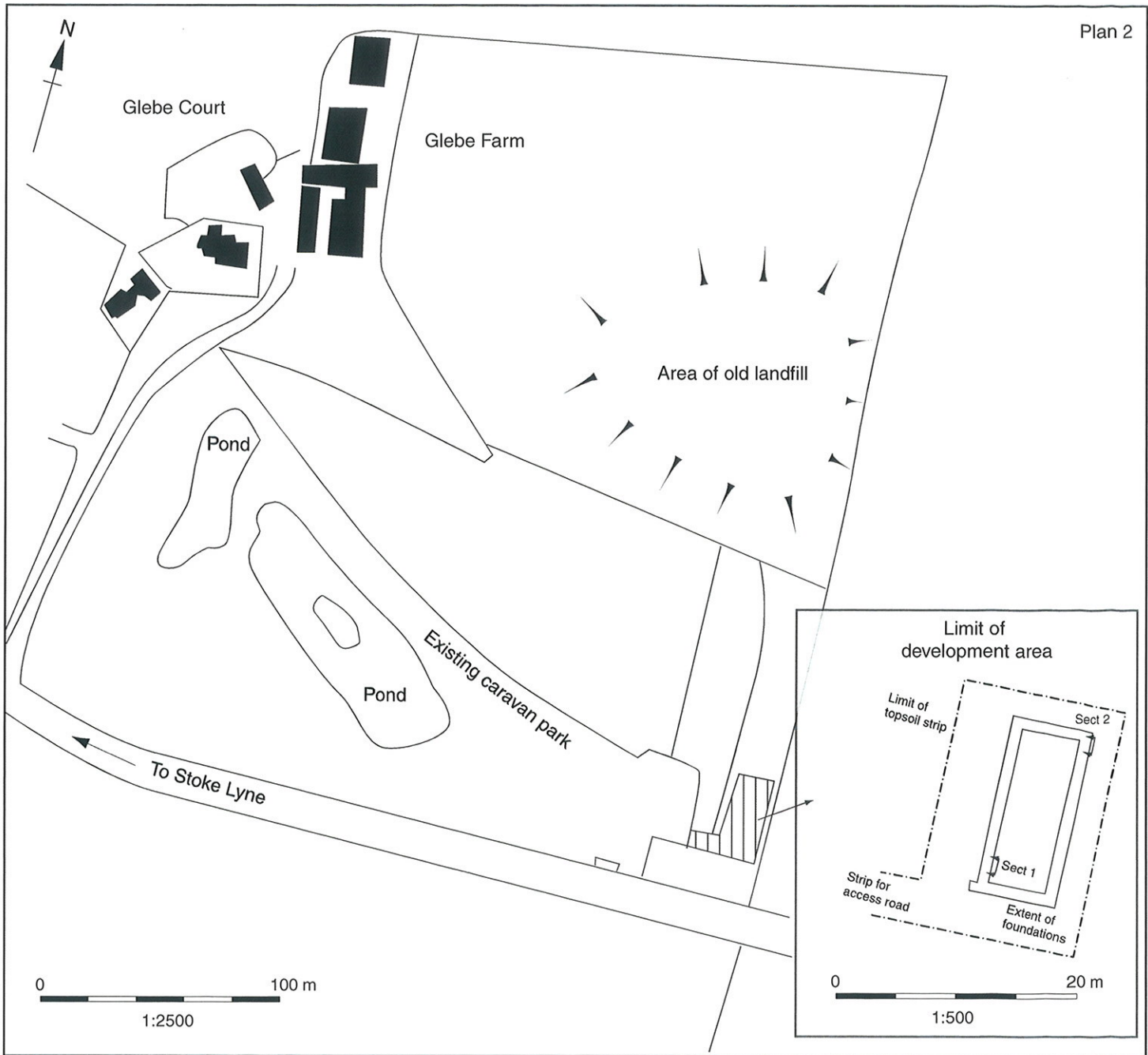






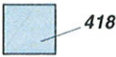








Figure 2 : Site plan and sections

	Section line and number
	Section through feature not illustrated with section drawing
	Limit of excavation
	Sondage / Interior limit of excavation
	Fill line and number
	Cut line and number
	Structure number
	Unclear boundary
	Stones
	Hachures indicate inclination of slope inside excavated feature
	Levels
	Grid point
	Continuation line (trench edge continues)



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