

The Potteries

High Street

Barford St Michael

Oxfordshire



Watching Brief



November 2006

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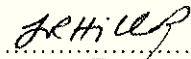
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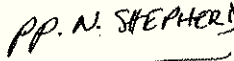
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**The Potteries,
High Street, Barford St Michael, Oxfordshire**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

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SUMMARY

Between June 2005 and November 2006 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at The Potteries, The High Street, Barford St Michael, Oxfordshire (NGR: SP 436 325). The work was commissioned by Catling and Catling Ltd. in advance of the construction of four new dwellings. The watching brief revealed evidence of extensive post-medieval truncation caused by the construction of the workshops which previously occupied the site, but no evidence of earlier archaeology.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Between June 2005 and November 2006 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at The Potteries, The High Street, Barford St Michael, Oxfordshire (NGR: SP 436 325). The work was commissioned by Catling and Catling Ltd. in respect of a planning application for the construction of four new dwellings and associated car parking (Planning Application No.04/01151/F).
- 1.1.2 A project brief was set by Hannah Fluck, the Planning Archaeologist representing Oxfordshire County Council (OCAS, 2005).
- 1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief (OA, 2005).

1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The village of Barford St. Michael is located approximately 7.5 km south of the town of Banbury. The development site is located on the south-east side edge of the village, on the west side of the High Street opposite the junction with Horn Hill (Fig. 1). The site is situated on level ground at approximately 100 m OD and is currently used as general industrial workshops. The underlying geology is alluvium over Lower Lias deposits (Geological Survey of Great Britain sheet no 218).

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, 2005) and is reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 The site lies within the historic core of Barford St Michael. The village is probably Saxon in origin although very little is known archaeologically about the village. It is likely that archaeological deposits relating to the Saxon or medieval origins and development of the settlement may be disturbed during groundworks.

- 1.3.3 Immediately to the north of the proposed site lies the Old Turnstile, a listed building dated to the mid 17th century but remodelled and extended in the 18th century. The site itself may have been a site of potteries from the early 19th century.
- 1.3.4 In the west of the village is an area traditionally recorded (c.1823) as the site of a castle where there have been reports of substantial foundation walls being discovered in the village churchyard. Evaluation trenches excavated by OA in 1993 prior to the extension of the churchyard did indeed reveal large wall footings running north to south, which may substantiate this claim, particularly as the church itself stands on a man-made mound and is dated to the 12th century (OAU 1993).
- 1.3.5 A find of a Roman coin was made in the area of the church in the west of the village, while even further west the site of a medieval moated manor house and the remains of a water mill from the later medieval period have also been found.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To identify 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 deposits or features that may be disturbed or destroyed during the development.
- 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 series of site visits during work likely to disturb archaeological deposits. This work was conducted in 2 phases, Phase 1 in June 2005 and Phase 2 in October and November 2006.
- 2.2.2 A plan of these works was maintained at a scale of 1:100 (Fig. 2) and any sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20. All excavated features and 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

Phase 1

- 3.1.1 This work consisted of the demolition of the existing structure and the excavation of the foundation trenches for plots 3 and 4.

- 3.1.2 The underlying natural, a tenacious yellow-brown clay (3), was encountered 0.5 m below the current ground level. This was overlaid by a 0.2 m thick deposit of a friable light yellow brown silt clay (2), a probable alluvial deposit.
- 3.1.3 Cutting this layer along the northern edge of the site was a steeply sloping rectangular cut (9), measuring 10 m long by 5.5 m wide by 0.7 m deep. This was filled by a blue grey clay (8) which contained many fragments of ironstone but no dating evidence.
- 3.1.4 Also cutting Layer 2 along the eastern and central area of the site was a steeply sloping "L" shaped cut (5), 0.2 m deep (Fig. 3, Section 1). This was filled by a loose brown silt (4) which contained many fragments of ironstone but again produced no dating evidence. Cut into the fill of this feature was a 3 m long by 0.7 m wide trench (7) which was filled with a brown silt loam (6) and which contained a wooden plank.
- 3.1.5 All the features and Layer 2 were sealed below a 0.3 m thick layer of brown silt loam (1), a modern landscaping deposit.
- 3.1.6 **Phase 2**
- 3.1.7 These works consisted of the grubbing out of the concrete flooring of the demolished buildings, the excavation of the foundation trenches, and landscaping of plots 1 and 2. This area had been previously terraced during the construction of the earlier workshops and no evidence for any earlier occupation layers or topsoil was observed upon removal of the concrete floors.
- 3.1.8 Excavations for the foundation trenches were up to 1.5 m in depth, encountered the underlying natural, a blue-grey clay (11) at a depth of 0.9 m below ground level (Fig. 3, Section 2). This was overlaid by a 0.5 m deep layer of yellow-brown clay, a continuation of Layer 3. Overlying this was a 0.4 m deep layer of red-brown silt clay (10). This contained numerous fragments of iron panning and ironstone and probably represents a layer of colluvium.

3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 No dating evidence was recovered during the course of the watching brief.

3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

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

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 Features 5 and 9 can be related to the footprints of the modern workshops previously recorded on the site. The deposits which fill them appear to be imported material used to level the site after demolition and removal of the floors. Feature 7 appears to be a recent intrusion post-dating the demolition of the workshops. The original

construction of the workshops have truncated the earlier occupation layers on the site, particularly within the western area of the site.

- 4.1.2 No deposits or features earlier than those relating to the post-medieval workshops previously noted was encountered during the watching brief.

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	0.3 m	-	Modern topsoil	-	C20th
2	Layer	0.2 m	-	Subsoil, alluvial deposit	-	-
3	Layer	> 0.7 m	-	Natural clay	-	-
4	Fill	0.2 m	> 1.2 m	Imported material	-	C20th
5	Cut	0.2 m	> 1.2 m	Footprint of demolished workshop	-	C19th/20th
6	Fill	0.7 m	0.7 m	Modern backfill	Wood	C20th
7	Cut	0.7 m	0.7 m	Modern intrusive feature	-	C20th
8	Fill	0.7 m	5.5 m	Imported material	-	C20th
9	Cut	0.7 m	5.5 m	Footprint of demolished workshop	-	C19th/20th
10	Layer	0.4 m	-	Probable colluvium	-	-
11	Layer	> 0.6 m	-	Natural clay	-	-

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

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

OA, 2005 *The Potteries, High Street, Barford St Michael, Oxfordshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

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

OAU, 1993 *Extension to Churchyard at Barford St Michael and St John. Archaeological Evaluation*

OCAS, 2005 *The Potteries, High Street, Barford St. Michael, Oxfordshire : Design Brief for Archaeological Watching Brief*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: The Potteries, High Street, Barford St Michael, Oxfordshire

Site code: BARSM 05

Grid reference: SP 436 325

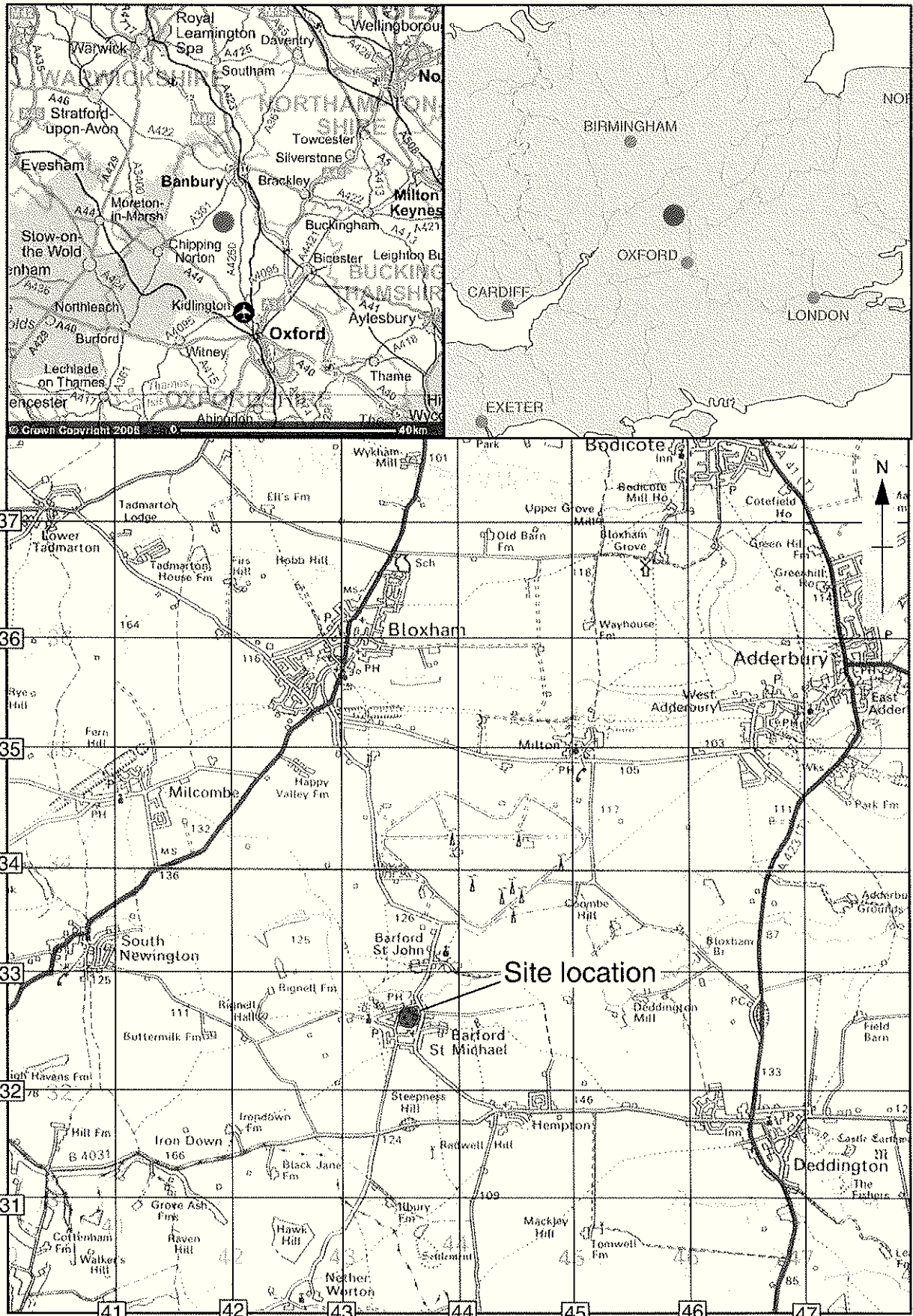
Type of watching brief: Machine reduction of ground level and foundation excavation

Date and duration of project: June 2005 to November 2006, 4 site visits

Area of site: 220 m²

Summary of results: Exposure of extensive ground disturbance caused by the construction of post-medieval workshops which previously occupied the site, no earlier deposits or features observed.

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: 2005.39



Scale 1:25,000

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Figure 1: Site location

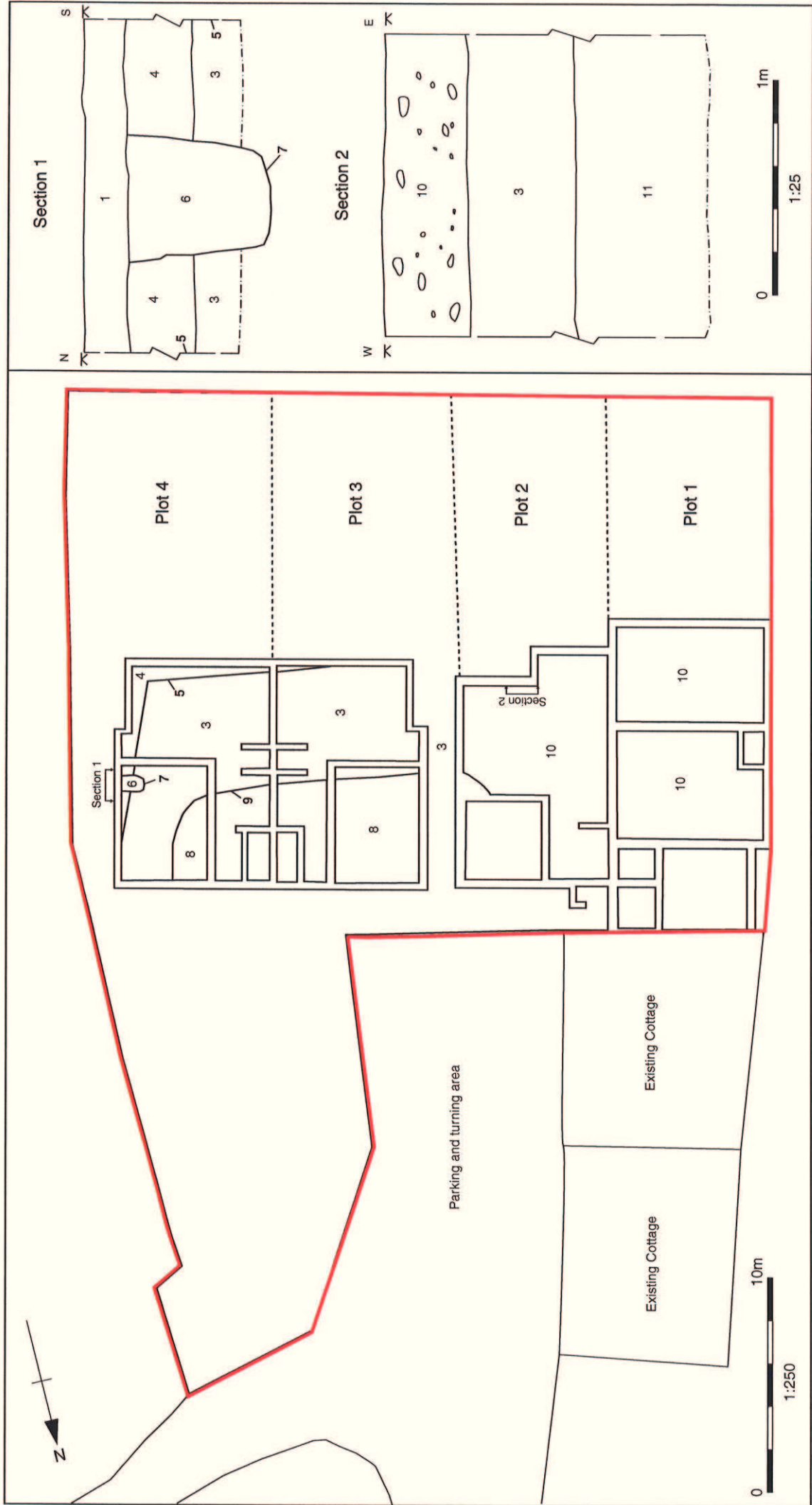


Figure 2: Site Plan

Figure 3: Sections 1 and 2



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