

Haslams

Church Lane, Shinfield, Berkshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

Planning Application No. 45251

SU 731 682

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

November 1997

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SUMMARY

The Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out a field evaluation at Shinfield, Church Lane on behalf of Haslams Chartered Surveyors. The evaluation revealed no archaeological features and no evidence for the presence of medieval habitation along the route of Church Lane. A late 18th-early 19th-century boundary ditch associated with the original manor house to the west of the site crossed four of the trenches. Two trenches revealed late 18th-early 19th-century pits and a third contained a dump of modern brick.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

In October, 1997, the Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out a field evaluation at Church Lane, Shinfield, on behalf of Haslams Chartered Surveyors in respect of a planning application for Reading University (Planning Application No. 45251 to a brief set by and a WSI agreed with Babcote Public Services (Berkshire County Council). The development site lies to the north of Church Lane, on the periphery of Shinfield Village (SU731682) and is 3 hectares in area.

1.2 Geology and topography

The site lies on a mixture of London Clay and gravel at 55m above OD. The site is situated to the east of the manor house and slopes gently downhill from west to east. The site has until recently been used as a cricket pitch by Reading University. Any use prior to this was not known.

1.3 Archaeological [and historical] background

The archaeological background to the evaluation has been the subject of a separate desk study (OAU, March 1997), the results of which are summarised below.

The site lies in an area of archaeological interest. Several artefacts have been recovered from around the site; a Palaeolithic handaxe to the south of the site, and medieval pottery from north of the site. Shinfield dates back to the 11th century; the church was originally constructed in the 12th century. A handful of buildings in Shinfield date to the early post-medieval period. As the site lies in the historic core of Shinfield it was considered possible that archaeological deposits might be present.

The site itself has produced limited archaeological evidence. There is one known site adjacent to the development site:

- (i) 350 m west of the site is an archaeological earthwork (NGR727681, SMR 00720), possibly a moat or clay pits. Consisting of three straight sided pits, it is marked on a map of 1680. Interpretation has suggested either a moat or clay pits associated with the rebuilding of the church tower in the 17th century.

2 EVALUATION AIMS

The evaluation was carried out to establish the presence or absence of archaeological deposits, their extent, their depth below the ground surface and their date, character, nature and quality. A further requirement was to establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of any archaeological deposits and features and to make available the results of the investigation.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Sample size and scope of fieldwork

The evaluation was based upon a 4% sample of the development area, and consisted of 20 trenches measuring 30 m long and 2 m wide (Fig 2).

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

The overburden was removed by a mechanical excavator [360°] under close archaeological supervision and the trenches were cleaned by hand. The revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds and environmental samples. All archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:50 and where excavated their sections 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

The finds encountered were late 18th-early 19th-century and modern in date and a sample was collected.

3.4 Environmental data

No features suitable for environmental sampling were encountered.

4 RESULTS: GENERAL

4.1 Soils and ground conditions

Beneath the topsoil the site was covered by compact sandy silt sub-soil, overlying mixed London Clay and gravel natural geology. Ground conditions were wet.

4.2 Distribution of Archaeological Deposits

The archaeological deposits revealed were limited to late 18th/early 19th century ditch and pit excavation in the west of the site.

5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

5.1 Description of deposits

5.1.1 Ditches

A ditch, orientated north-west / south-east, crossed trenches 2 (22), 3 (46), 5 (84) and 6 (106). The ditch measured 3m in width and a minimum of 80m in length. Though not fully excavated a minimum depth of 1.4m was observed in trench 5.

A smaller ditch (108) which ran at a right-angle to the main ditch was partly excavated in trench 6. It appears to meet ditch (106) to the south-east of trench 6. This second ditch was 2m wide and 0.2m deep. Both ditches contained late 18th/early 19th century pottery and ceramic building materials.

5.1.2 Pit (104).

Trench 6 also revealed a small pit (104) between the two ditches, with dimensions of 1.2m diameter, 0.2m depth.

5.1.3 Brick deposit (47)

A small dump of modern brick (47) in trench 3 appears to be associated with the modern drainage services observed in trenches 4,7,8,11,15 (main sewer),18 and 20.

5.1.4 Pit (4)

A large pit (4) was partially excavated in trench 1. Machining revealed this feature to be a minimum of 2.5m deep. A photographic record was made before backfilling was required to make the trench safe for access. This pit was filled with numerous tip layers (3) of redeposited sand, clay and topsoil, containing demolition deposits such as late 18th-early 19th-century ceramic building material and mortar.

5.1.5 Trenches 4, 7-20

These trenches contained no archaeological features of any description. Disturbance was restricted to the modern services.

5.2 Finds

5.2.1 *Post-medieval pottery*

All the pottery recovered was late 18th- early 19th-century or later in date.

6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Reliability of field investigation

The sample size (4%) was sufficient to determine the extent and type of deposits on the site. The trenches were large enough to determine the nature and character of the deposits. Natural was reached in all of the trenches.

6.2 Overall interpretation

6.2.1 *Summary of Results*

No archaeological features were encountered during the evaluation other than modern deposits, nor were any finds (other than modern artefacts) recovered. The two ditches appear to be related to the former manor house on the western boundary of the site and may represent boundaries of the property and/or of a garden. Neither the small pit in trench 6, nor the brick dump in trench 3 represent any activity of significance or antiquity. The large pit in trench 2 is probably the result of the disposal of demolition rubble from any structures associated with the manor house which would have been removed during construction of the university buildings.

6.2.2 *Significance*

The evaluation revealed no archaeological features or deposits.

6.2.3 *Impact of development*

Development of this site would have no detrimental effect on the archaeological integrity of this site.

6.3 Recommendations

No recommendations are required due to the lack of archaeological activity in this specific area.

Bibliography and references

- OAU (1997) *Shinfield Reading University Development Desk-top Cultural Heritage Assessment*
March 1997 (unpubl)
- Wilkinson, D (ed) 1992 *Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual*, (First edition, August 1992)

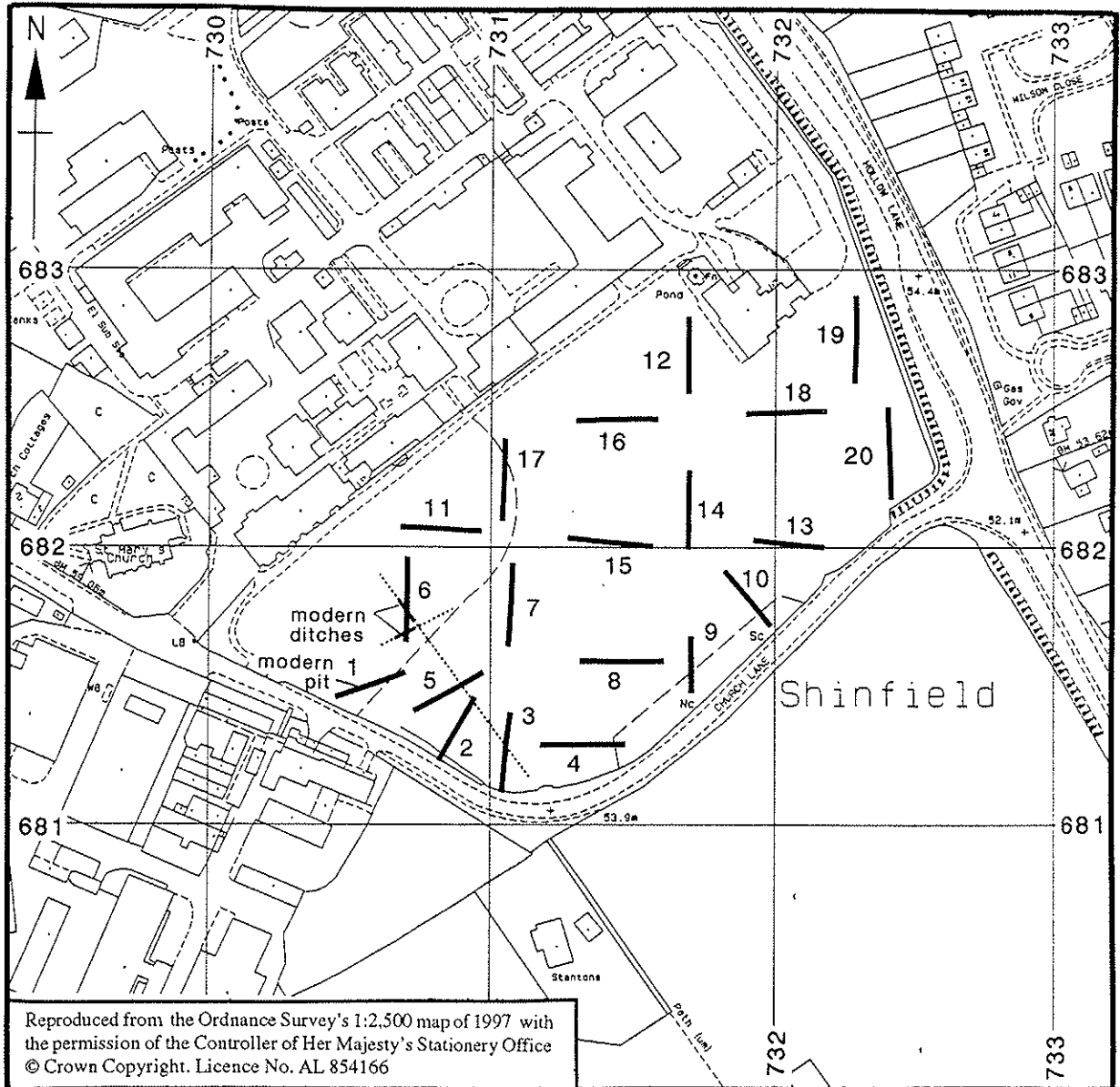
Appendices

Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory

Trench	Ctxt	Type	width (m)	thick . (m)	Comment	Finds	No.	Date
001								
	0001	layer		0.7	turfed topsoil			
	0002	layer			natural sandy gravel			
	0003	fill		min 2	fill of 0004	tile	1	18/19th
						brick	2	18/19th
	0004	cut	16.5	min 2	pit			
002								
	0121	layer		0.4	turfed topsoil			
	0122	layer		0.2	sandy silt subsoil			
	0123	layer			natural clay/gravel			
	0021	fill		min 0.4	fill of 0022			
	0022	cut	3	min 0.4	linear ditch			
	0023	layer		0.05	natural gravel			
	0024	layer		0.04	natural gravel			
003								
	0041	layer		0.3	turfed topsoil			
	0042	layer		0.4	ploughsoil			
	0043	layer		0.2	sandy silt subsoil			
	0044	layer			natural clay			
	0045	fill		min 0.44	fill of 46	tile	31	18/19th
						clay pipe	2	
						pottery	1	18/19th
	0046	cut	4	min 0.44	linear ditch			
	0047	dep	0.6	0.27	brick dump			modern
004								
	0121	layer		0.30	turfed topsoil			
	0122	layer		0.20	sandy silt subsoil			

	0123	layer			natural clay/gravel			
005								
	0081	layer		0.30	turfed topsoil			
	0082	layer		0.40	sandy silt subsoil			
	0083	layer			natural clay/gravel			
	0084	cut	3	min 2	linear ditch			
	0085	fill		0.8	fill of 0084			
	0086	fill		min 1	fill of 0084			
	0087	fill		0.4	fill of 0084			
006								
	0101	layer		0.30	turfed topsoil			
	0102	layer		0.8	silty clay subsoil			
	0103	fill		0.1	fill of 104			
	0104	cut	1.2 diam	0.1	pit			
	0105	fill		0.6	fill of 106	pottery	3	18/19th
						brick	1	18/19th
						tile	19	18/19th
	0106	cut	3	0.6	linear ditch			
	0107	fill		0.2	fill of 108			
	0108	cut	2	0.2	linear gully			
	0109	layer			natural clay/gravel			
007								
	0121	layer		0.30	topsoil			
	0122	layer		0.20	sandy silt subsoil			
	0123	layer			natural clay/gravel			
	0124	layer		0.10	modern turf			
	0125	cut	0.6	1.2	drainage pipe trench			
008								
	0141	layer			natural clay			
	0142	layer		0.30	sandy silt subsoil			
	0143	layer		0.21	topsoil			
	0144	layer		0.10	modern turf			

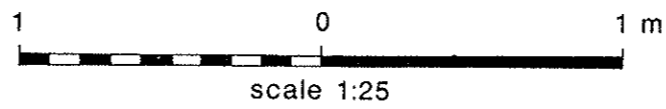
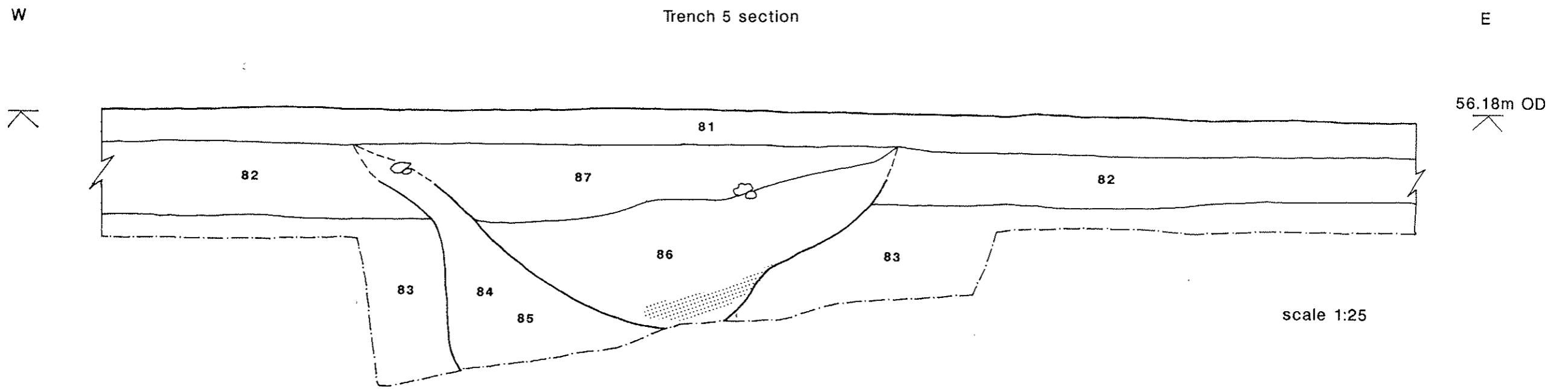
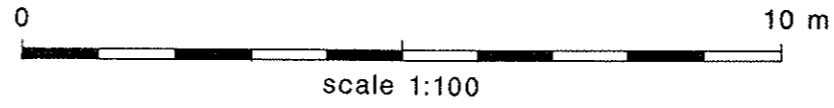
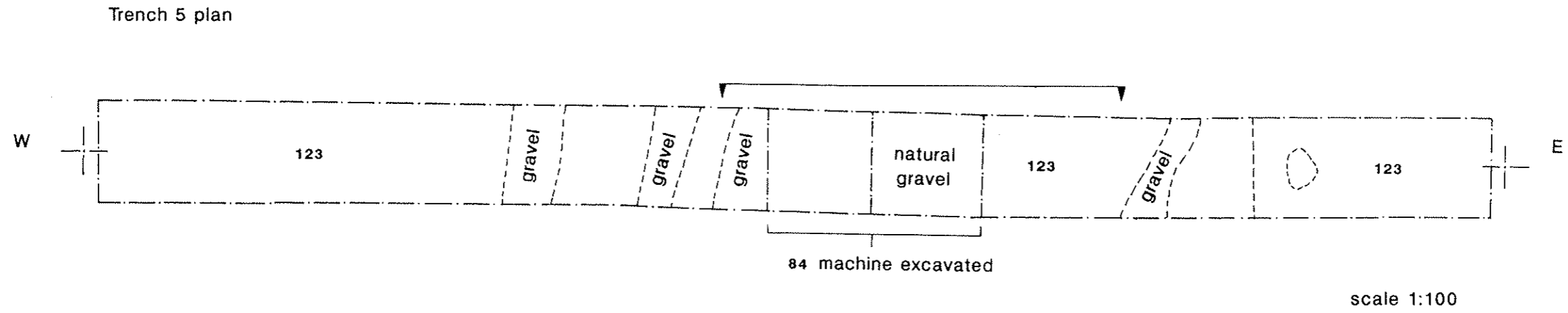
009-014								
	0121	layer		0.30	turfed topsoil			
	0122	layer		0.20	sandy silt subsoil			
	0123	layer			natural clay/gravel			
015								
	0281	layer		0.10	modern turf			
	0282	layer		0.2	topsoil			
	0283	layer		0.25	silty clay subsoil			
	0284	layer			clay natural			
	0285	cut	0.85	unex	water pipe trench			
	0286	fill		unex	fill of 0285			
016-020								
	0121	layer		0.30	turfed topsoil			
	0122	layer		0.20	sandy silt subsoil			
	0123	layer			natural clay/gravel			



scale 1:2500

Trench location map

Figure 2



Trench 5 plan and section

Figure 3



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