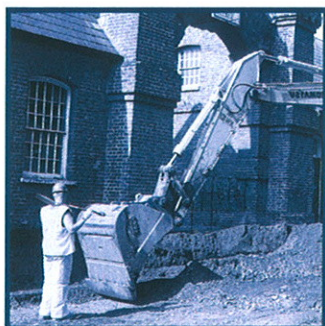


Land at Pear Tree Farm  
Great Coxwell  
Faringdon  
Oxfordshire



**Archaeological  
Watching Brief Report**



March 2007

**Client: John Webb**

Issue N<sup>o</sup>: 1  
OA Job N<sup>o</sup>: 3541  
Planning Ref N<sup>o</sup>: GCO/8308/13  
NGR: SU 2677 9344

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# Land at Pear Tree Farm, Great Coxwell, Faringdon, Oxfordshire

## *ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT*

### CONTENTS

Summary .....	1
1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Scope of work .....	1
1.2 Location, geology and topography .....	1
1.3 Archaeological and historical background .....	1
2 Project Aims and Methodology .....	2
2.1 Aims.....	2
2.2 Methodology.....	2
3 Results .....	2
3.1 Description of deposits .....	2
3.2 Finds .....	3
3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains.....	3
4 Discussion and Conclusions .....	3
Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory .....	4
Appendix 2 Bibliography and References.....	4
Appendix 3 Summary of Site Details.....	4

### LIST OF FIGURES

- Fig. 1 Site location  
Fig. 2 Site plan and sections



## SUMMARY

*On the 22nd and 23rd of February 2007 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief on land to the rear of Pear Tree Farm, Great Coxwell, Oxfordshire (NGR: SU 2677 9344). The work was commissioned by Mr John Webb in advance of the demolition of existing farm buildings and the construction of two new domestic dwellings. The watching brief revealed that the development area had been severely truncated, probably during the construction of the farm buildings and the associated hardstanding/yard and no significant archaeology was observed during the course of the watching brief.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 On the 22nd and 23rd of February 2007, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief on land to the rear of Pear Tree Farm, Great Coxwell, Oxfordshire (NGR: SU 2677 9344). The work was commissioned by Mr John Webb in respect of a planning application for the demolition of existing farm buildings and the construction of 2 new dwellings (Planning Application No. GCO/8308/13).
- 1.1.2 A project brief was set by Hugh Coddington, of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services, setting the requirements for an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks phase of the construction (OCAS, 2006).
- 1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief (OA, 2006).

### 1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The village of Great Coxwell is situated approximately 26 km south-west of Oxford (Fig. 1). The site is on the southern edge of the village at the base of an escarpment below the church. The development site is roughly level, with the surrounding fields gently rising to the north and west and was originally in use as an area of hardstanding/stableyard and associated buildings.
- 1.2.2 The site lies at approximately 110 m above OD and occupies an area of 0.25 hectares. The underlying geology is limestone sand and grits of the Corallion beds (Geological Survey of Great Britain, sheet no. 253).

### 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, 2006) and is reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 Archaeological fieldwork in the immediate vicinity of the application area has revealed artefactual evidence of historic settlement. Large quantities of Iron Age

pottery have been identified. Also Roman coins and first century Romano-British pottery have also been recovered along with medieval pottery. Just to the west of the site a crop mark has been identified through aerial photography, which appears to be a large double-ditched enclosure.

## 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 work was undertaken using mechanical excavators fitted with a toothless grading bucket for site clearance and a 0.6 m wide bucket for the foundation trenching. The watching brief was conducted as two site visits after the demolition of the farm buildings and during the excavation of the two areas of foundation trenching.
- 2.2.2 A plan showing the areas of groundworks 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 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 Within the deeper foundation trenches a layer of grey-green clay silt (4) was encountered at a depth of 1.15 m below the old yard surface (Fig. 2, Section 1). This was overlain by a layer of orange-brown clay silt (3) which measured 0.6 m deep. This was an undisturbed deposit, probable alluvial in origin (Fig. 2, Sections 1 and 2).
- 3.1.2 This was sealed by a 0.3 m deep layer of grey-brown fine clay silt (2). This deposit was very clean and appears to be alluvial in nature and whose colour may be due to the leaching of organic debris down from the farmyard surface.
- 3.1.3 Overlying the whole of the development area was a 0.25 m deep layer of hardcore composed of crushed demolition debris (1). This was the old farm yard's hardstanding.

### 3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 All dating evidence observed was modern in date and its presence was noted, but the finds were not retained.

### 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 The watching brief showed that the area of the development had been severely truncated with no evidence for the original topsoil or ploughsoil layers surviving. The depth of this truncation is unknown but extends down to the top of the underlying alluvium, which has become organically tainted from material passing through the farm yard surface.
- 4.1.2 This truncation is probably associated with the sites use as a farm and stable yard and was part of the construction during the laying of the hard standing.
- 4.1.3 There was no archaeology earlier than late post-medieval observed during the course of the watching brief. It is uncertain if the absence of earlier archaeology was due to the lack of activity within the development area, but was more likely due to the modern truncation of the site.



## 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	0.25 m	-	Modern hardcore hard standing	Brick, Iron	C20th
2	Layer	0.3 m	-	Organically tainted alluvium	-	-
3	Layer	0.6 m	-	Natural Clay	-	-
4	Layer	> 0.4 m	-	Natural clay	-	-

## APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

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

OA, 2006 *Land at Pear Tree Farm, Great Coxwell, Faringdon, Oxfordshire: Written scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

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

OCC, 2006 *Design Brief for Archaeological Watching Brief: Land at Pear Tree Farm, Great Coxwell*

## APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

**Site name:** Land at Pear Tree Farm, Great Coxwell, Oxfordshire

**Site code:** GRCOPT 07

**Grid reference:** SU 2677 9344

**Type of watching brief:** demolition of farm buildings and machine excavation of foundation trenches

**Date and duration of project:** 21st and 22nd February 2007, 2 days

**Area of site:** 0.25 hectare

**Summary of results:** The watching brief showed that the area had suffered severe truncation and that no significant archaeology was 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: OXCMS:2007.23







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Figure 1: Site location



Site plan

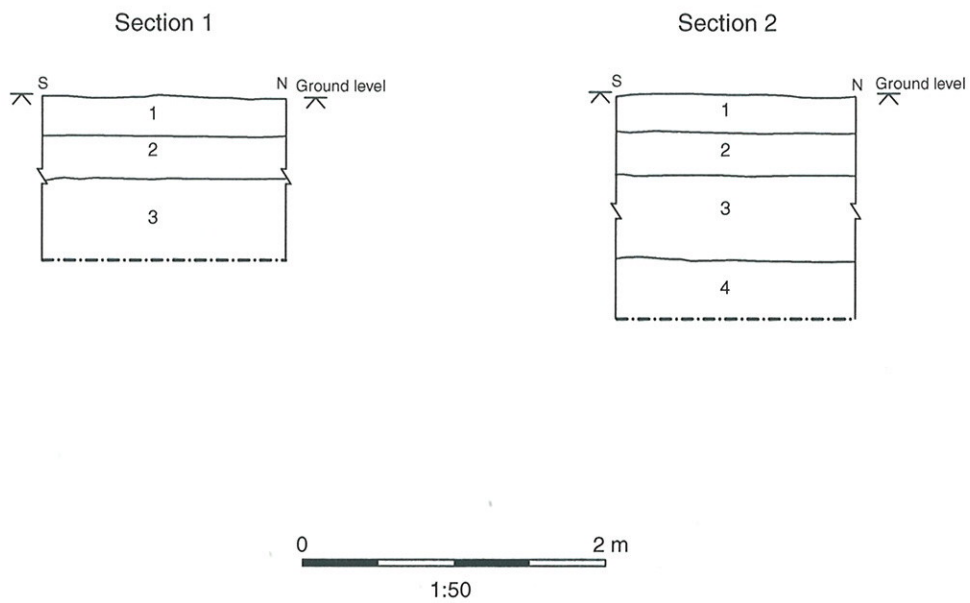


Figure 2: Site plan and sections





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