

Kennington Service Station The Avenue Kennington Oxfordshire



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Oxford Archaeology

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Partnership**

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

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SUMMARY

In February 2003 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Kennington Service Station, The Avenue, Kennington, Oxfordshire (NGR SP 52290211). The work was commissioned by Coleman Hicks Partnership in advance of the construction of fifteen self-contained flats. The watching brief revealed a shallow, post-medieval WNW – ESE aligned drainage ditch, but no indication of any earlier activity.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In February 2003 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Kennington Service Station, The Avenue, Kennington, Oxfordshire (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Coleman Hicks Partnership in respect of a planning application for the construction of fifteen self contained flats (Planning Application No. KEN/8159/9).
- 1.1.2 A project brief, outlining the archaeological requirements of the development, was set by Hugh Coddington, Oxfordshire's Deputy County Archaeologist in line with PPG 16 and Policy HE 19 of the District Local Plan.
- 1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief, which was approved by Hugh Coddington.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies on Kimmeridge Clay overlying limestone (Coral Rag) (British Geological Survey sheet 236) at a height of *c* 68 m OD. The site is located at the junction of The Avenue and Popular Grove in Kennington and was previously a service station and garage. It measured *c* 0.12 hectares in area.

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 2003) and is reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 The site is situated within an area of considerable archaeological potential. A large spread of Romano British pottery was identified to the east of the site in 1946. A number of wasters were contained in this spread suggesting the presence of a nearby kiln. To the north of the site, under the present church hall, was the site of a chapel of ease. Its date of construction is unknown, but it was first documented in 1538 and dedicated to Saint Swithin. By 1802 the chapel was a ruin (OCAS 2003).

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence/absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.
- 2.1.2 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 Where relevant exposed sections were drawn at scales of 1:20. All deposits were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. A general photographic record of the work was made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OA Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson 1992).
- 2.2.2 The site was visited on three occasions to observe the excavated foundation trenches and the subsequent removal of any overburden. The first visit was made after concrete had been poured into the foundation trenches and as a result natural clay was only visible to the west of the site. After the removal of the overburden, across the site, natural clay was visible in plan. Features were cleaned and recorded in plan and available sections were drawn as appropriate.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 The underlying natural (4) consisted of a pale yellow-brown, silty clay containing occasional broken limestone. Two features were seen at this level: shallow linear ditch, 6, and a large shallow sub-oval shaped cut (8), which adjoined the southern side of the ditch (Fig. 2).
- 3.1.2 Ditch 6 was aligned WNW –ESE across the centre of the site, and was overlain by remaining made-ground deposits to the north-west and south-east. An available section across the ditch was cleaned and drawn (Fig. 3). The cut measured a minimum of 8 m in width and had a maximum depth of 0.5 m, with shallow sloping sides and a flat base. A very similar pale brown, silty-loam filled ditch 6 and adjacent cut 8. This fill contained small quantities of gravel and charcoal flecking, but otherwise only produced 19th and 20th C. glass and brick from its upper levels. A concrete cased drainage pipe also ran along the line of the ditch. It is possible that the ditch was cut to accommodate the pipe, although it is more likely that the pipe was inserted into the fill of an already existing drainage ditch.
- 3.1.3 Cut 8 appeared to be a shallow sub-oval shaped scoop measuring only 0.2 m in depth. This was possibly the result of variations in the level of the underlying natural

together with small differences in the machined level. As mentioned above the fill produced only modern finds from its upper interface.

- 3.1.4 The fills of ditch 6 and cut 8 were overlain by approximately 0.4 m of mixed modern made-ground deposits, which were in turn overlain by former concrete footings and topsoil.

3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 Across the whole of the site only modern finds associated with the encountered made-ground deposits were found. These were noted but not retained.

3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 3.3.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were present.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The whole of the site was machined down to the top of the foundation level and as such reached to just below the level of made-ground deposits within the middle of the site. A single shallow WNW-ESE linear feature was excavated and recorded. This feature ran down the slope of the site and was probably a shallow drainage ditch. Its fill, a pale brown silty loam, appeared to be formerly cultivated soil. The colour and condition of this fill suggests that it was relatively recent, possibly no earlier than the 18th century. A shallow feature to the south of the ditch was filled by a similar fill and was thought to be a variation in the level of the underlying natural rather than a deliberately created cut. Throughout the site there was no direct evidence of any activity earlier than the post-medieval period.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

| CONTEXT | TYPE | DEPTH M | COMMENTS |
|---------|-------|---------|--------------------------------|
| 1 | Layer | 0.30 | Demolition |
| 2 | Layer | 0.20 | Concrete |
| 3 | Layer | 0.40 | Garden soil |
| 4 | Layer | | Natural |
| 5 | Fill | 0.4 | Fill of Linear feature 6 |
| 6 | Cut | 0.4 | WNW-ESE ditch |
| 7 | Fill | 0.2 | Fill of 8 |
| 8 | Cut | 0.2 | Shallow pit/ natural variation |

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

Oxford Archaeology 2003 Kennington Service Station, The Avenue, Kennington, Oxfordshire: Written Scheme of Investigation. (Oxford Archaeology February 2003)

Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (OCAS) 2003 Kennington Service Station, The Avenue, Kennington, Oxfordshire: Design Brief for Archaeological services (Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services February 2003)

Wilkinson, D (ed) 1992 *Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual*, (First edition, August 1992)

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Kennington, former Skoda Garage

Site code: KESKO 03

Grid reference: SP 5229 0211

Type of watching brief: On machining around foundations and services.

Date and duration of project: Site visited on three occasions between 27th February- 3rd March 2003

Area of site: 0.12 Hectares

Summary of results: An undated, shallow WNW-ESE ditch

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: Currently awaiting confirmation

Illustrations

Figure 1 Site Location

Figure 2 Site Plan showing location of observation areas

Figure 3 Section through ditch 6



Scale 1:25,000

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Figure 1: Site location

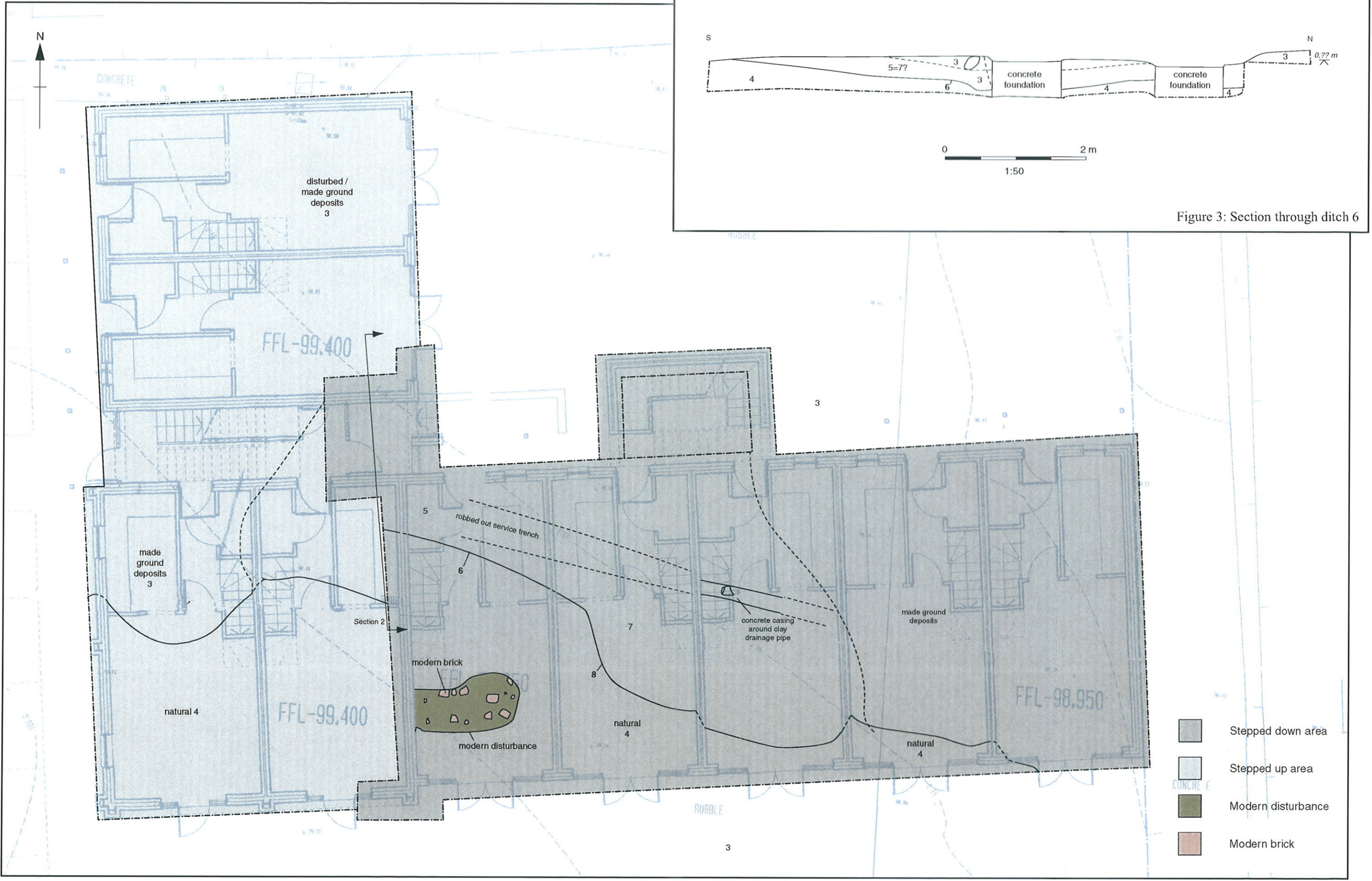


Figure 3: Section through ditch 6

Figure 2: Site Plan and Construction Plan



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