

Fritwell Goose Farm



Archaeological Evaluation Report



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Table of Contents

1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Scope of work.....	1
1.2 Geology and topography.....	2
1.3 Archaeological and historical background.....	2
1.4 Acknowledgements.....	2
2 Evaluation Aims and Methodology.....	2
2.1 Aims.....	2
2.2 Methodology.....	3
3 Results.....	4
3.1 Introduction and presentation of results.....	4
3.2 General soils and ground conditions.....	4
3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits.....	4
3.4 Trench 1.....	4
3.5 Trench 2.....	4
3.6 Trench 3.....	4
3.7 Trench 4.....	4
3.8 Finds summary.....	4
3.9 Environmental summary.....	5
4 Discussion.....	5
4.1 Reliability of field investigation.....	5
4.2 Evaluation objectives and results.....	5
4.3 Interpretation.....	5
Appendix A. Trench Descriptions and Context Inventory.....	6
Appendix B. Site Summary.....	8



List of Figures

- Fig. 1* *Site location map*
Fig. 2 *Trench location*
Fig. 3 *Trench location and area of proposed works*

List of Plates

- Plate 1* *Machine excavation of trench 2 looking south-east*
Plate 2 *Trench 1 looking north-east*
Plate 3 *Trench 2 looking south-east (1m and 2m scales)*
Plate 4 *Trench 2 south facing section (1m scale)*
Plate 5 *Trench 3 looking north-east (1m and 2m scales)*
Plate 6 *Trench 3 north-west facing section (1m scale)*
Plate 7 *Trench 4 looking south-west (1m and 2m scales)*
Plate 8 *Trench 4 north-east facing section (1m scale)*



Goose Farm, Fritwell, Oxfordshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

Summary

Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Lady Georgina Bowman-Shaw to undertake an archaeological evaluation at Goose Farm, Fritwell, Oxfordshire (centred on NGR SP 52450 29190). The work was undertaken to inform a proposed development for the formation of a pond and woodland planting area to aid in the enhancement of local ecology and biodiversity. The site was considered to have moderate archaeological potential as it is located just to the south of the 12th century St Olaves church and within an area where prehistoric and medieval features have been previously identified. Four trenches were undertaken over one week in early July 2014.

The trenches were excavated to the top of the natural limestone and revealed topsoil, subsoil, and recent demolition rubble containing asbestos in the area of the proposed pond. No archaeological features or deposits were uncovered and no finds were recovered. Therefore based on the results of the evaluation the archaeological potential of the proposed site is considered to be low.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology South (OAS) was commissioned by Lady Georgina Bowman-Shaw to undertake an archaeological evaluation at Goose Farm, within the village of Fritwell, Oxfordshire. The work was undertaken as part of a condition of Planning Permission (planning ref:13/01341) for the formation of a pond and woodland planting area to aid in the enhancement of local ecology and biodiversity. This permission was subject to conditions including a staged programme of archaeological evaluation and mitigation (Condition 6) to be carried out following the submission and approval of a Written Scheme of Investigation (Condition 5). A brief setting out the requirements for the first stage of the investigation (evaluation), which was prepared by Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist, County Archaeological Services, Oxfordshire County Council.
- 1.1.2 A desk-based assessment (Worcester Archaeology 2013) has been previously undertaken for the proposed development (hereafter referred to as the Site) which identified the survival of heritage assets within the vicinity and the potential for the survival of archaeological features within the footprint of the proposed development areas.
- 1.1.3 All work was undertaken in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists' '*Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation*' (revised 2008) and local and national planning policies.



1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The Site is located on the western side of the village of Fritwell to the south of the Church of St Olave (Figure 1). It lies in the Fritwell Conservation Area, to the east of Goose Farm outbuilding which, prior to residential conversion, were the outbuildings for Heath Farm, a Grade II listed 17th century farmhouse.
- 1.2.2 Heath Farm is depicted on the 1808 enclosure map and remains relatively unchanged in plan since then. The Site lies to the south-east of Heath Farm and Goose Farm, midway between the two main roads that dissect the village. The Site is overlooked by the Church of St Olave's to the north and is bounded by pasture fields from the northeast to the south-west. The site is currently under pasture.
- 1.2.3 The geology of the Site is mapped by the British Geological Survey (Sheet 2591:50,000) as Great Oolite Group, comprised of limestone and argillaceous rocks. The sedimentary bedrock was formed approximately 165-168 million years ago in the Jurassic period. The soil is stonebrash with a subsoil of clay and marl.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background to the Site has been previously described in detail in the desk-based assessment (Worcester Archaeology 2014) and is only briefly summarised below:
- 1.3.2 The proposed Site lies within an area of archaeological potential. Immediately to the north of the Site is St Olaves church which dates from the 12th century. Concentrations of medieval pottery have been recovered to the north-east and north-west of the proposal during field walking, and earthworks relating to the medieval settlement at Fritwell are visible to the north of the Site.
- 1.3.3 Two shallow pits and a segment of ditch were also recorded during a watching brief on the Fritwell Sewerage Pipeline (Phoenix Consulting 1997). These features were undated but were only encountered within a small area within the pipeline easement.
- 1.3.4 The line of Aves Ditch, a probable Iron Age tribal boundary, is located approximately 200m to the east of the Site. A series of undated features including a trackway were also recorded on the line of this boundary 200m west of this proposed Site.
- 1.3.5 The Site also contains several possible earthworks, including ridge and furrow (running north-west by south-east) immediately south-east of the churchyard as well as a possible platform close to the south-east corner of the field; within the proposed location of the pond.
- 1.3.6 The shallow pits and ditch excavated in advance of the Fritwell Sewerage Pipeline were located in the same field as that of the proposed development and there is a moderate potential that these features may extend into the proposed development area.

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 The fieldwork was undertaken by Ben Attfield and Ben McAndrew and the project was managed for OA by Carl Champness.

2 EVALUATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The general aims and objectives of the evaluation were:



- To determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any archaeological remains within the development;
- To assess vulnerability/sensitivity of any exposed remains;
- To determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence;
- To provide sufficient information on the archaeological potential of the site to enable the archaeological implications of any proposed developments to be assessed;
- To assess the impact of previous land use on the site;
- To inform a strategy to avoid or mitigate impacts of any proposed development on surviving archaeological remains;
- To disseminate the results through the production of a site archive for deposition with an appropriate museum and to provide information for accession to the Oxfordshire HER.

2.1.2 The specific aims and objectives of the evaluation were:

- To investigate and characterise any features that may relate to any of the prehistoric or medieval features identified within the surrounding area of the site;
- To look for remains associated with the medieval church of St Olave.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 A programme of four trenches were excavated across the site targeted on the proposed development areas (figures 2 and 3). It was initially proposed within the WSI (OA 2014) to excavate 2 trenches, each 20m by 1.8m across the site to investigate the areas of the proposed pond and woodland planting.
- 2.2.2 Trench 1 was initially repositioned by approximately 5m in the field, to avoid suspected services to the south of a number of manhole covers. The trench was later abandoned due to the presence of modern demolition debris and suspected asbestos. Trench 2 was excavated without any problems within it's proposed location.
- 2.2.3 Two additional trenches (Trenches 3 and 4) were dug in the area of the proposed pond due to the abandonment of Trench 1. Trench 3 was located on the same alignment as Trench 1 but approximately 5m to the east The trench was excavated down to natural limestone for 10m but was also abandoned after the discovery of similar modern debris along its length to the south. Trench 4 was located at a right angle to these trenches in order to avoid the area of modern disturbance, it was aligned north-west to south-east. This was excavated down to natural limestone for the full 20m length of the trench.
- 2.2.4 Each trench was excavated using an appropriate mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket under the direct supervision of an archaeologist (plate 1). Spoil was stored adjacent to, but at a safe distance from the trench edges.
- 2.2.5 Machining continued in spits down to the top of the undisturbed natural deposits. The exposed surface was sufficiently cleaned to establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains.



3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

3.1.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below, beginning with a summary of the trench results, followed by a stratigraphic description of the trenches. An index of all trenches and contexts is presented in Appendix A.

3.2 General soils and ground conditions

3.2.1 The evaluation was undertaken in good weather conditions and the trenches were free from flooding.

3.2.2 The soils encountered in the trenches consisted of an organic rich loamy topsoil that varied in thickness from 0.2-0.35m. This sealed a thin subsoil overlain the natural weathered limestone.

3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits

3.3.1 No archaeological features were uncovered during the course of the evaluation.

3.4 Trench 1

3.4.1 The trench measured 1.8m by approximately 5m and orientated north-east to south west. The trench was initially moved approximately 5m to the south from its proposed position to avoid suspected services. The trench was abandoned after 5m following the discovery of modern demolition rubble containing suspected asbestos roof tiles directly underneath the turf (plate 2).

3.5 Trench 2

3.5.1 The trench measured 1.8m by 20m and was orientated in a roughly north-west to south-east direction. It was located in close proximity to the graveyard to the north-west, in an area of proposed woodland planting.

3.5.2 The natural limestone was encountered at the base of the trench at an average at 0.7m. This was overlain by 0.5m of subsoil and 0.2m of topsoil. No finds were recovered and no archaeological features were identified (plates 3 and 4).

3.6 Trench 3

3.6.1 The trench measured 1.8m by 10m and was located along the same alignment as proposed Trench 1. The natural deposits at the base of the trench were overlain by 0.3m of subsoil and 0.2m of topsoil. Similar demolition debris as uncovered in Trench 1 was also found at the north-western limits of this trench and was abandoned (plates 5 and 6).

3.7 Trench 4

3.7.1 The trench measured 1.8m by 20m and was orientated roughly north-west by south-east at a right angle to the northern end of Trench 3.

3.7.2 The trench was excavated to natural limestone at a depth of 0.55m (plate 7). The natural was overlain by 0.25m of subsoil and sealed by 0.30m of loamy topsoil (plate 8).

3.8 Finds summary

3.8.1 No finds were recovered during the evaluations.



3.9 Environmental summary

- 3.9.1 No features or deposits were found during the evaluation that were worthy of environmental sampling.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 4.1.1 The trenches represent a good sample of the proposed impact areas and were located in such a manner as to maximise the potential for exposing archaeological features and deposits. The ground and site conditions were good throughout the fieldwork. The machining was carried out cleanly and with good visibility if any features or deposits were present.
- 4.1.2 The evaluation demonstrated an absence of archaeological remains within any of the trenches. The results of the evaluation are therefore considered to be a true reflection of the archaeological potential of the Site.

4.2 Evaluation objectives and results

- 4.2.1 The evaluation was able to achieve the objectives set out in the WSI (OA 2014) in that it confirmed that no archaeological features or deposits were located in the areas of the proposed development.

4.3 Interpretation

- 4.3.1 Trenches 1 and 3 identified an area of modern demolition rubble within the area of the proposed pond. This represents a quite extensive area of modern disturbance where archaeology may have either be disturbed or completely removed. Trench 4 was able to be successfully excavated to natural limestone and confirm that no archaeological features or deposits were present with this area
- 4.3.2 Trench 2 that was targeted on the woodland plant area also revealed no archaeological features. Undisturbed natural subsoil and topsoil was located in this area overlying the natural limestone.
- 4.3.3 No archaeological features or deposits were identified in any of the trenches. The archaeological potential of the site is therefore considered to be low.



APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
General description				Orientation	NE-SW	
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consisted of turf with modern demolition rubble containing asbestos. Trench abandoned.				Avg. depth (m)	-	
				Width (m)	1.8	
				Length (m)	5	
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
100	Layer	-	-	Topsoil	Modern Rubble	-

Trench 2						
General description				Orientation	NW-SE	
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying natural deposits.				Avg. depth (m)	0.7	
				Width (m)	1.8	
				Length (m)		
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
200	Layer	-	0.2	Topsoil	none	-
201	Layer	-	0.5	Subsoil	none	-
202	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 3						
General description				Orientation	E-W	
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying natural deposits with modern demolition rubble and suspected asbestos at southern end.				Avg. depth (m)	0.5	
				Width (m)	1.8	
				Length (m)		
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
300	Layer	-	0.2	Topsoil	Modern Rubble	-
301	Layer	-	0.3	Subsoil	-	-
302	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	Trench 2



Trench 4						
General description				Orientation		
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of soil and subsoil overlying natural deposits.				Avg. depth (m)	0.55	
				Width (m)	1.8	
				Length (m)		
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
400	Layer	-	0.3	Topsoil	none	-
401	Layer	-	0.25	Subsoil	none	-
402	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-



APPENDIX B. SITE SUMMARY

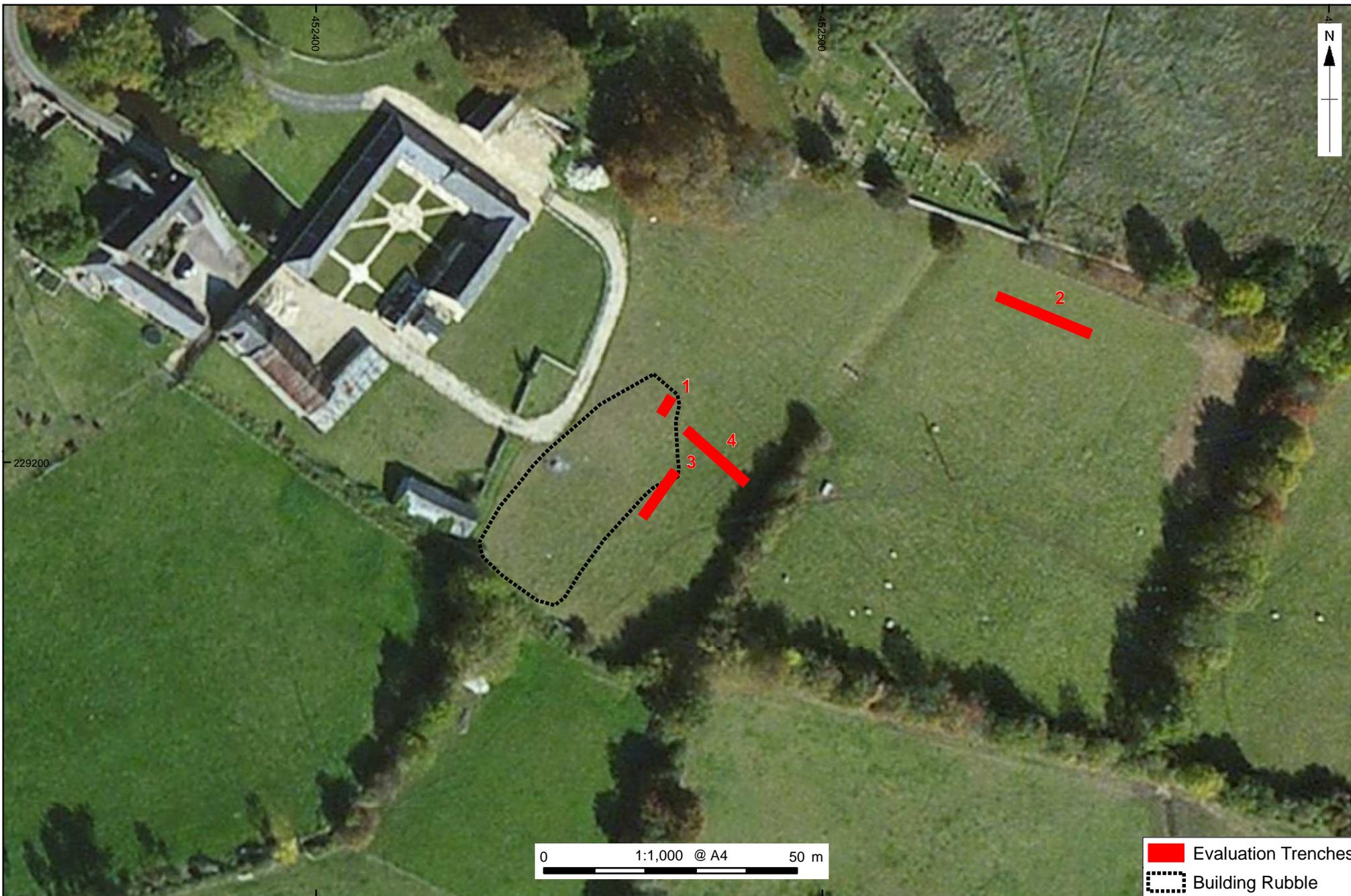
Site name:	Goose Farm, Fritwell, Oxfordshire
Site code:	FRG0014
Grid reference:	SP 5245 2919
Type:	Evaluation
Date and duration:	June-July 2014
Area of site:	-
Summary of results:	An archaeological evaluation was undertaken in early July 2014. Four trenches were excavated to the top of the natural limestone and revealed topsoil, subsoil, and in some instances recent demolition rubble containing asbestos in the area of the proposed development. No archaeological features or deposits were uncovered and no finds were recovered. Therefore based on the results of the evaluation the archaeological potential of the proposed site is considered to be low.
Location of archive:	The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with the Oxford City Museum in due course, under the following accession number: FRG0014.



Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2014

Figure 1: Site location

X:\MF\ritwell_Goose Farm\010\Geomatics\03 GIS Projects\FRGOOE\EV_Figure 2_Trench_Locations.mxd*
matt.bradley*02/07/2014



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, i-cubed, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, and the GIS User Community

Figure 2: Trench locations



Plate 1: Machine excavation of Trench 2 looking south-east



Plate 2: Trench 1 looking north-east



Plate 3: Trench 2 looking south-east (1m and 2m scales)



Plate 4: Trench 2 south facing section (1m scale)



Plate 5: Trench 3 looking north-east (1m and 2m scales)



Plate 6: Trench 3 north-west facing section (1m scale)



Plate 7: Trench 4 looking south-west (1m and 2m scales)



Plate 8: Trench 4 north-east facing section (1m scale)



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