

Baker Bros.

Trabb's Farm, Seven Barrows, Lambourn, Berkshire.

(NGR: SU 3287 8164)

Notes on Archaeological Watching Brief
during Construction Work, September 1994.



Oxford Archaeological Unit
September 1994

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Trabb's Farm, Seven Barrows, Lambourn, Berkshire.

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Trabb's Farm, Seven Barrows, Lambourn, Berkshire (NGR SU 3287 8164) on 1st and 2nd September 1994 during ground levelling and digging of foundation trenches for the construction of an extension to the extant farmhouse. No archaeological features were exposed during the excavations.

1 Introduction

The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) was commissioned by Baker Bros. (Building Contractors) on behalf of the landowner to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Trabb's Farm, Seven Barrows, Lambourn, Berkshire (NGR: SU 3287 8164). The watching brief was required by Berkshire County Council as a condition of a planning application (Application no. 144805) for the erection of an extension to the present house and was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation approved by the planning authority. Removal of an existing patio, surface soil stripping and the excavation of foundation trenches were carried out by Baker Bros. of Lambourn, Berkshire and were monitored by OAU throughout.

2 Background

2.1 *Topography and Geology*

The application area is located c.2.5km N of the village of Lambourn on the S Berkshire Downs to the W side of the Lambourn to Uffington Road (B 4001). It lies at an elevation of 137m OD and the solid geology is chalk.

2.2 *Historical and Archaeological Background*

The Lambourn Downs are an area rich in prehistoric archaeological activity. The group of c.20 barrows at 'Seven Barrows' 1km N of the application site is indicative of the Bronze Age ritual activity in the area. Further afield lie the renowned Neolithic and Iron Age sites of Wayland's Smithy and Uffington Castle. Additional evidence of prehistoric occupation activity was noted when the remains of a late Bronze Age (c.800 BC) settlement extending over an area of at least 2 ha were investigated by OAU at Tower Hill, Ashbury in 1993 following the chance discovery of a remarkable hoard of Bronze Age metalwork including 22 socketed axe heads, four copper alloy rings and accompanying industrial waste material. The Tower Hill evaluation also revealed an extensive Romano-British field system. Roman activity

is indicated by the discovery of a 4th century coin close to the application area.

3 Observations

- 3.1 A total area of *c.*63.25m² was stripped to natural chalk using a JCB 801 mini-excavator (see fig. 2). The deposits encountered are summarised below.
- 3.2 An existing brick patio (max. dimensions: 7.3m E/W x 2.5m N/S) abutting the S wall of the existing house was removed by machine. The brick patio was bedded in 0.07m of mortar with a substantial (0.10-0.16m) concrete make-up layer beneath. A ceramic drain encased in concrete ran E/W near flush to the S wall of the house at a depth of *c.*0.26m from the upper surface of the patio. This drain serviced the existing western downpipe on the S wall of the house, the E downpipe being non-functional.
- 3.3 To the S of the patio, turf and topsoil (a compacted brown silt loam with occasional flecks of chalk) was removed to a depth of 0.20-0.25m. Beneath patio and topsoil, a subsoil layer 0.22-0.30m deep of compacted mid grey-brown silty clay was removed. To the S, this layer was highly compacted and included frequent inclusions of modern building materials (brick, tile, slate etc.) representing the make-up for a former trackway shown on the OS 1:25,000 survey of 1959, sheet SU 38. Finds of 20th century date were noted but not retained.
- 3.4 Subsoil was removed down to natural chalk which was of a dirty gravelly nature in its upper levels. Solid chalk was encountered at a depth of 1.10m from the turf line. Foundation trenches were dug to a depth of 0.70m from the level of natural. A metal waterpipe was noted running E/W at a distance of 2.00m from the S wall of the house.
- 3.5 No archaeological features or pre-modern finds were encountered within the stripped area or excavated foundation trenches.

Ric Tyler
 Oxford Archaeological Unit
 30th September 1994

Appendix A

List of Sources

Cartographic Sources

Ordnance Survey 1:25000 1959 edition, Sheet SU 38.

Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales) Sheet 253, 1971.

Published Sources

Peake H 1931. *The Archaeology of Berkshire*. London

Unpublished Sources

Campbell GE (OAU) 1993. *Tower Hill, Ashbury, Oxon: Excavation at the site of the axe hoard, Interim Report.*

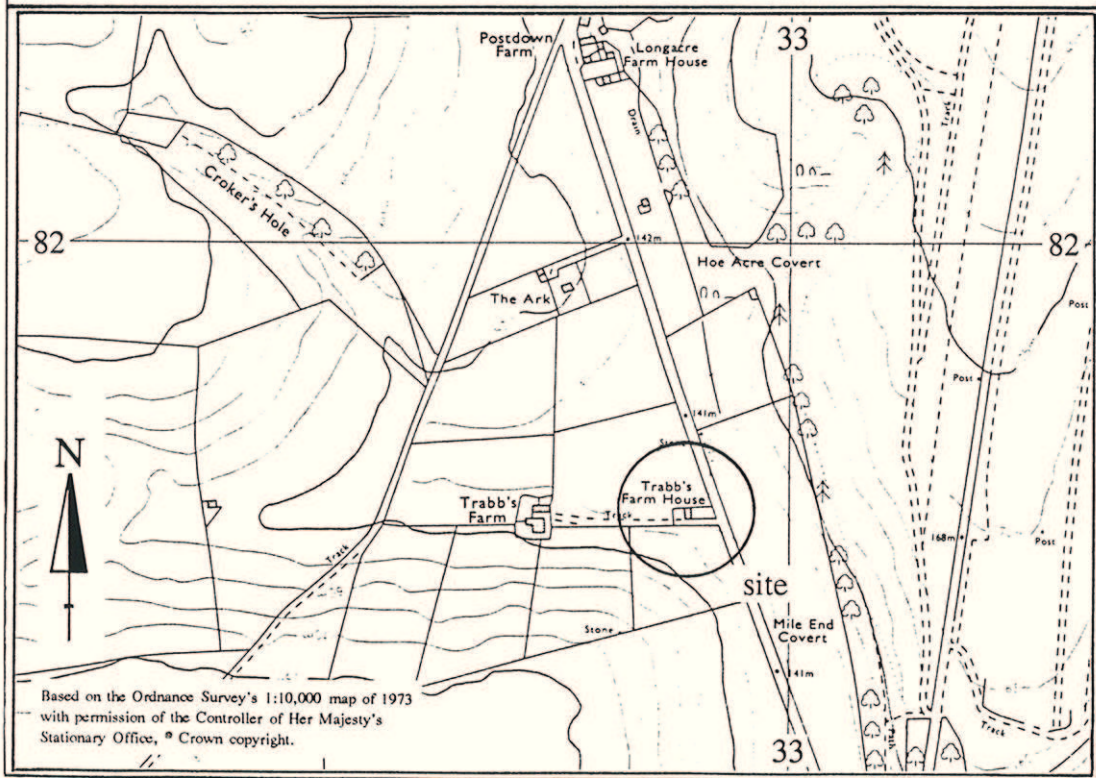
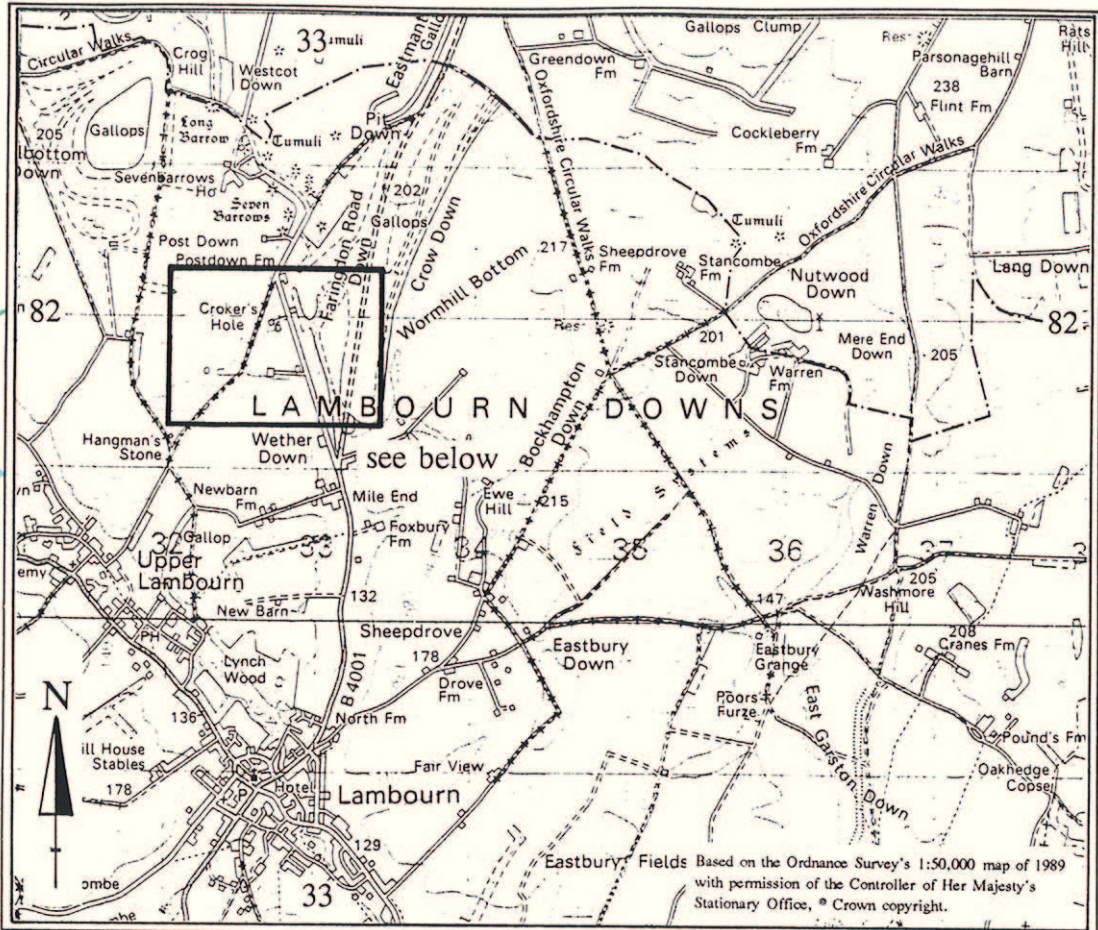


Fig. 1: Site location plan.

Trabb's Farm, Seven Barrows, Lambourn, Berkshire.

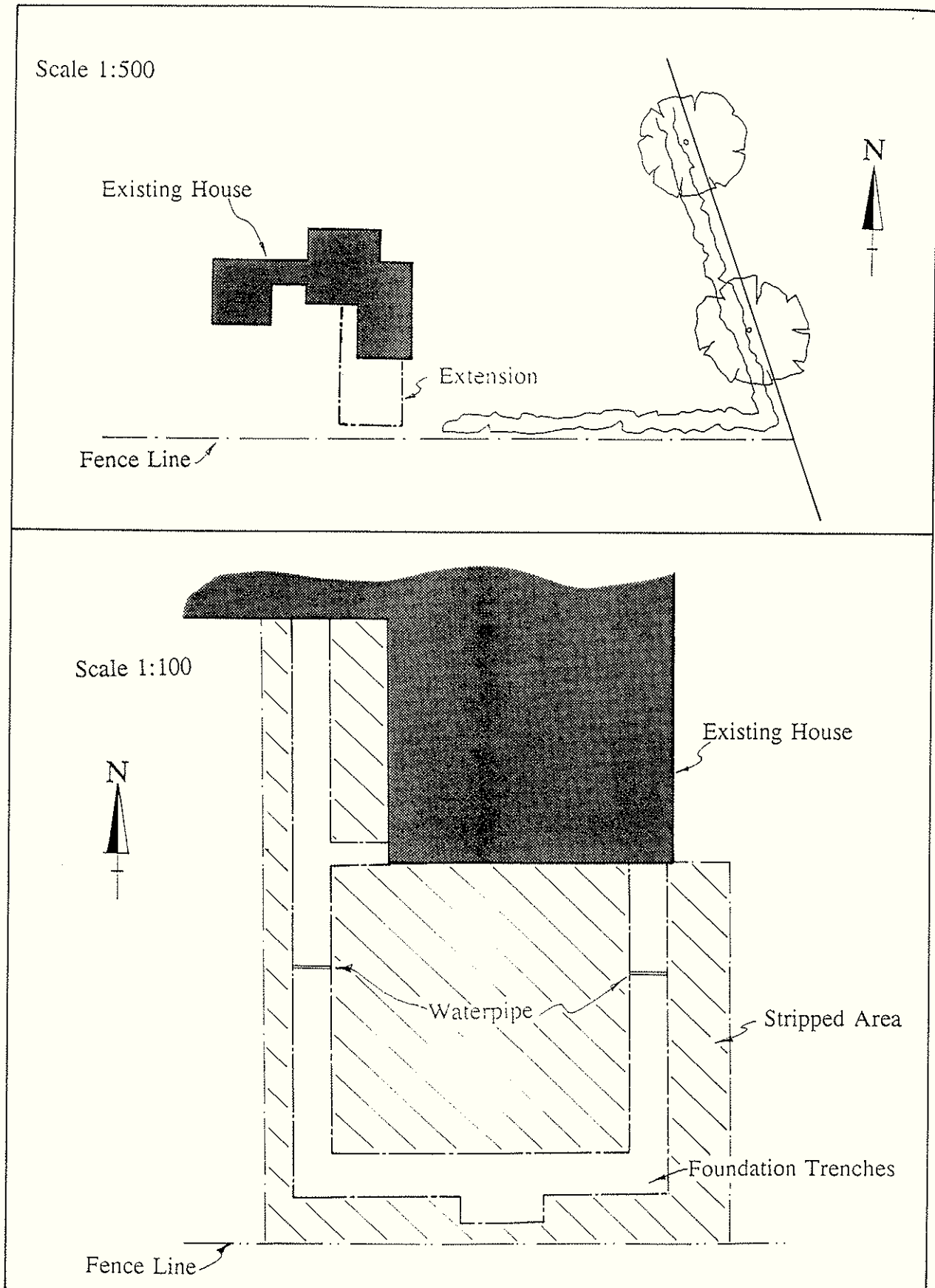


Fig. 2: Extent of external groundwork.