

St Mary's Church  
Broad Street  
Uffington  
Oxfordshire



Archaeological  
Watching Brief Report



March 2007

**Client: Peter Cousins**

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OA Job N<sup>o</sup>: 3490  
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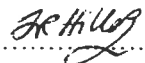
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**St Mary's Church  
Broad Street, Uffington, Oxfordshire**

***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

*In February 2007, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at St Mary's Church, Broad Street, Uffington, Oxfordshire (NGR: SU 3022 8932). The work was commissioned by Peter Cousins in advance of the installation of a new septic tank and irrigation area. The watching brief revealed evidence of a buried soil horizon overlying large deposits of colluvium, but no evidence for earlier church structures or of inhumations.*

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 In February 2007, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at St Mary's Church, Broad Street, Uffington (NGR: SU 3022 8932). The work was commissioned by Peter Cousins in respect of a planning application for the installation of a new septic tank and irrigation (Planning Application No. UFF/19648).
- 1.1.2 A project brief was set by Hugh Coddington of the Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (OCAS) requiring that a watching brief be conducted during the course of this work (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 Uffington is located approximately 9 km west of Wantage (Fig. 1). The Church of St Mary lies on the western edge of the village and is bounded to the west by Broad Street, to the north by a school playing field and to the south and east by domestic residences. The site is within the northern edge of the churchyard and there are grave markers to the immediate west of the area of excavations. The site lies at 87 m above OD and the underlying geology is Ferruginous sands (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 The Church of Saint Mary dates to approximately 1250 AD. It is a Grade 1 Listed Building. There are possible fragments of an earlier building. Minor alterations to the church were made during the 14th century. There are grave markers on the northern side of the church

## 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 destroyed or disturbed 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 excavations consisted of two pits and a 10 m length of trenching dug by a mechanical excavator fitted with a 0.5 m wide bucket. The watching brief was conducted as a series of site visits during activities likely to impinge upon archaeological deposits.
- 2.2.2 A plan showing the extent and location of the excavations was maintained at a scale of 1:100 (Fig. 2, site plan) and any recorded sections were drawn at scales 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 The stratigraphy exposed was broadly similar within all the excavations and a general description can be applied to all the sections.
- 3.1.2 The underlying natural, a yellow-brown sandy silt clay (5), was encountered at a depth of 1.3 m below the current ground level (Fig. 2, sections 1 and 3). This deposit was in excess of 1.1 m in depth, changing to a green grey silt clay as the depth increased. This was overlaid by a layer of yellow-brown silt clay (4) between 0.3 m and 0.4 m deep, which contained gravel inclusions and sub-angular fragments of limestone.
- 3.1.3 Overlying this was a layer of dark yellow-brown clay silt (3) measuring between 0.3 m and 0.4 m deep. This was a very clean deposit with no inclusions. Sealing this was a layer of grey-brown silt loam (2) (Fig. 2, sections 1, 2 and 3). This produced a fragment of limestone tempered coil made pottery dating to the late Anglo-Saxon period (c10th-century) and is a probable layer of an earlier graveyard soil or possibly ploughsoil predating the church.

3.1.4 All the sections were sealed by a 0.3 m deep layer of dark grey-brown silt loam (1) the present day topsoil and turf.

### 3.2 **Finds**

3.2.1 Modern finds were observed within layer 1, these were recorded, but not retained and a single piece of 10th-century pottery was recovered from layer 2. No other dating evidence was observed.

### 3.3 **Palaeo-environmental remains**

3.3.1 No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling were identified during the course of the watching brief.

## 4 **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

4.1.1 Layer 5 is the underlying natural clay, while layers 3 and 4 are probable layers of colluvium and are prehistoric in origin.

4.1.2 Layer 2 is an earlier layer of worked soil and is a probable earlier graveyard soil. The presence of a fragment of 10th-century pottery within this layer does suggest that this area may have seen earlier activity on this site prior to the founding of the church. Layer 1 relates to the current use of the churchyard.

4.1.3 No evidence was observed to show that the area of the two large pits had been used for inhumations as there was no evidence for grave cuts within the sections nor was any charnel recovered from the spoil. This may be accounted for by this area being on the north side of the church and hence unfavoured. No evidence for earlier phases of the church structure were observed.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	Layer	0.3 m	Present day topsoil and turf	Plastic, bottle glass	C20th
2	Layer	0.2 m - 0.3 m	Buried horizon of an earlier worked soil	Pottery	C10th
3	Layer	0.3 m - 0.4 m	Colluvium	-	-
4	Layer	0.3 m - 0.4 m	Colluvium	-	-
5	Layer	> 0.7m	Natural clay	-	-

## APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

IFA, 2001 *Standard and Guidance for archaeological watching briefs*

OA, 2006 *St Mary's Church, Broad Street, Uffington, Oxfordshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological watching Brief*

OCC, 2006 *Design Brief for Archaeological Watching Brief: St Marys Church, Broad Street, Uffington*

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

## APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

**Site name:** St Mary's Church, Broad Street, Uffington, Oxfordshire

**Site code:** UFFSM 06

**Grid reference:** SU 3022 8932

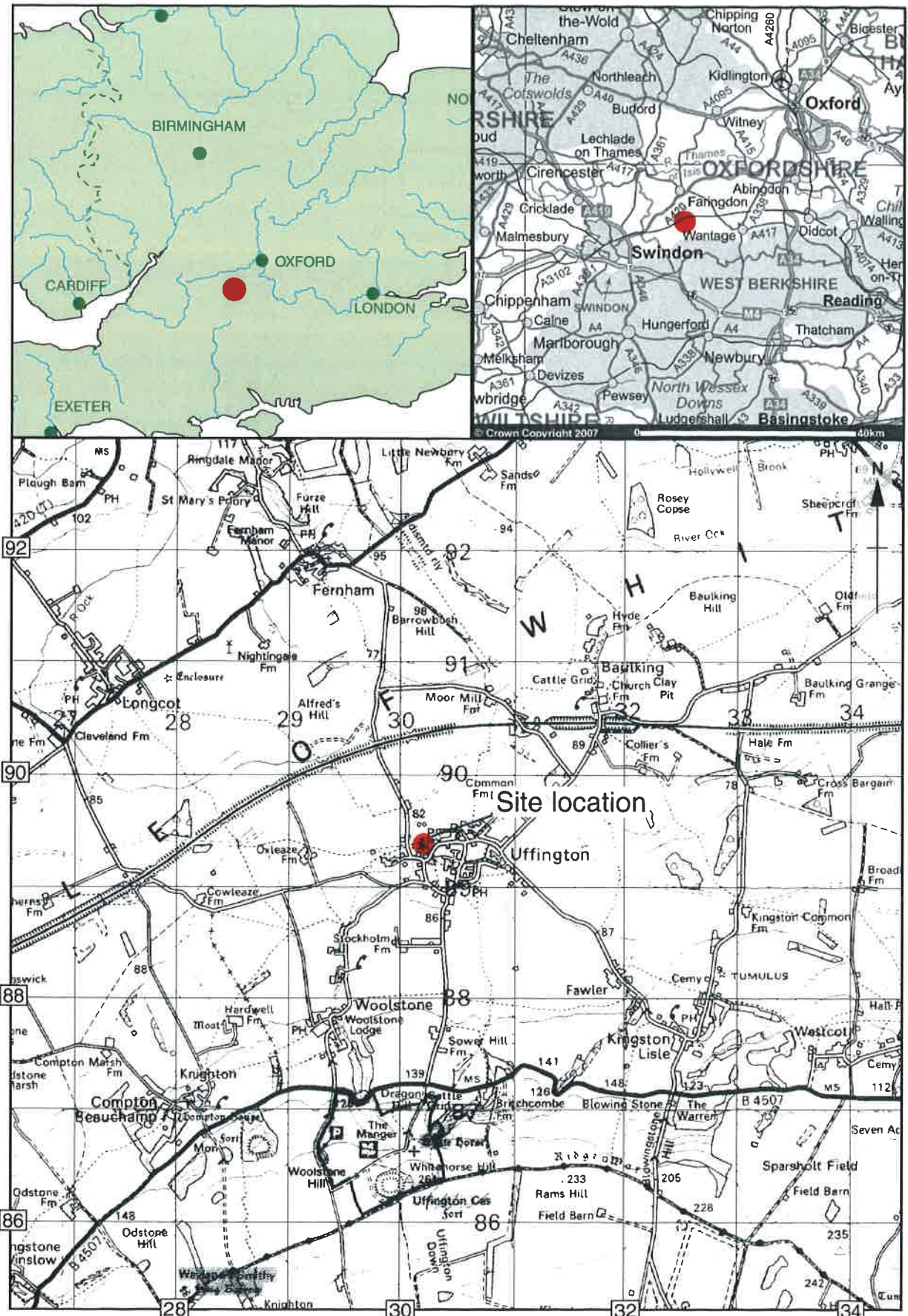
**Type of watching brief:** Machine excavation of a new septic tank, irrigation area and associated service trenching.

**Date and duration of project:** 9th and 14th February 2007, 2 site visits

**Area of site:** 500m<sup>2</sup>

**Summary of results:** The watching brief revealed a buried soil horizon overlying large deposits of colluvium. No evidence for earlier church structures or of inhumations 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:2007.12



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Figure 1: Site location



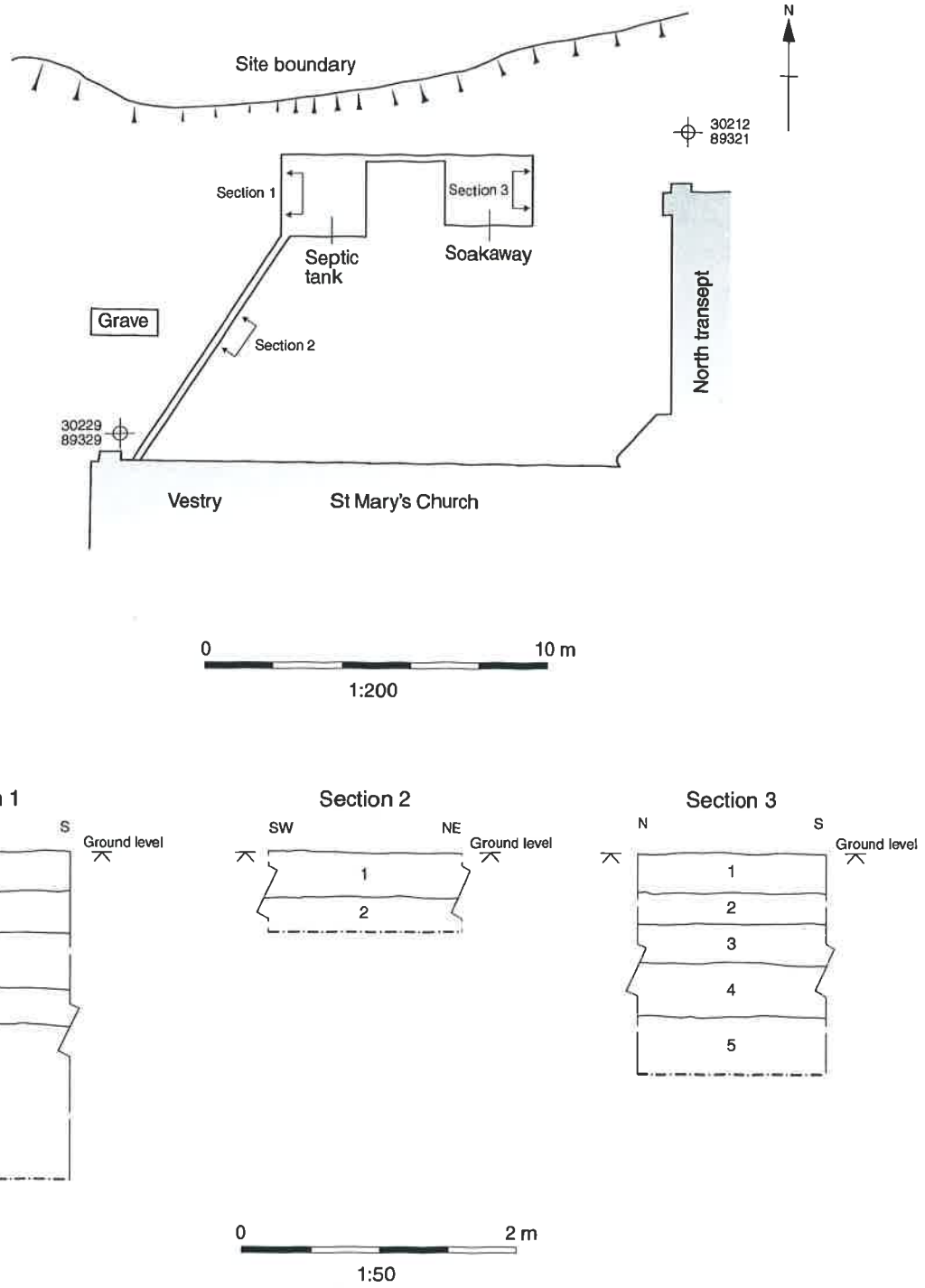






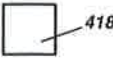



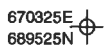










Figure 2: Site plan and sections

	Section line and number
	Section through feature not illustrated with section drawing
	Limit of excavation
	Sondage / Interior limit of excavation
	Fill line and number
	Cut line and number
	Structure number
	Unclear boundary
	Hachures indicate inclination of slope inside excavated feature
	Levels
	Grid point
	Continuation line (trench edge continues)
	Charcoal
	Clay
	Clay nodule
	Stones
	Ceramic building material
	Bone
	Pot



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