

Horcott Quarry
Western Extension
Churchberry Manor
Fairford
Gloucestershire



Archaeological Evaluation Report



Oxford Archaeology

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Horcott Pit, Fairford, Gloucestershire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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SUMMARY

Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at Horcott Pit, Fairford, Gloucestershire on behalf of Hanson Aggregates. The evaluation did not reveal any evidence of archaeological remains. Natural features were identified which corresponded with anomalies recorded during geophysical survey of the site.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In April 2005 OA carried out a field evaluation at Horcott Pit, Fairford, Gloucestershire on behalf of Hanson Aggregates.

1.1.2 Due to the potential for disturbance of below ground archaeological deposits an archaeological evaluation has been required to assess the presence, location and preservation of any archaeological deposits.

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site is located approximately 1 km to the south-west of Fairford, centred at NGR: SP 145 000). The site lies on the second gravel terrace west of the River Coln at approximately 85 m. OD and is currently under arable production..

1.3 Archaeological background

1.3.1 Several areas of archaeological interest were noted from aerial photographs and fieldwalking within the immediate area of the site. These include a prehistoric barrow and associated ring ditch to the north-west of the site, now a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM).

1.3.2 An archaeological evaluation carried out by Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU, now Oxford Archaeology, OA) in August 1989 in the same field revealed a possible Iron Age settlement approximately 150 m to the south-east of the current study area, and an extensive Roman settlement including a masonry building and a number ditches, pits and postholes, 150 m to the south of the current study area (OAU 1989).

1.3.3 A geophysical survey (Bartlett 2005) carried out in February 2005 located a number of anomalies in the area that the present trenches are targeted to investigate.

1.3.4 The trenches were located close to the boundary of the SAM.

2 EVALUATION AIMS

2.1.1 To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the study area.

- 2.1.2 To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present.
- 2.1.3 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features. Particular attention shall be given to the possibility of waterlogged deposits.
- 2.1.4 To make available the results of the investigation.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork

- 3.1.1 Two trenches 30 m long by 1.5 m wide were excavated. The trenches were aimed at two areas where magnetic anomalies were indicated in the geophysical survey undertaken in February 2005 (Bartlett 2005).

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

- 3.2.1 The trenches were excavated to the top of the natural geology. The exposed archaeological horizon was cleaned by hand to clarify the remains and archaeological features were sampled to sufficiently characterise and date them.
- 3.2.2 All features and deposits were issued with unique context numbers, and context recording will be in accordance with the established OA Field Manual, (OAU 1992). Colour transparency and black-and-white negative photographs were taken of all archaeological features.
- 3.2.3 The stratigraphy of the trenches was recorded even where no archaeological deposits were identified.
- 3.2.4 Spoil heaps were monitored to allow analysis of the spatial distribution of artefacts.
- 3.2.5 A project supervisor and an archaeologist, under the supervision of a project manager undertook the fieldwork.
- 3.2.6 Monitoring of the evaluation was undertaken by the Charles Parry of Gloucestershire County Council.

3.3 Finds

- 3.3.1 No archaeological finds were recovered during the course of the evaluation.

4 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

4.1 Description of deposits

Trench 1

- 4.1.1 Trench 1 was excavated to natural gravel at a depth of 0.4 m below present ground surface. Overlying this, at the western end of the trench, was a thin layer of possible colluvium (102), a friable mid reddish brown silty clay with frequent gravel inclusions. Overlying this was a friable light yellow brown silt subsoil (101) which was 0.22 m thick. The subsoil was overlain by 0.2 m of modern ploughsoil. At the eastern end of the trench a subcircular feature (104), with irregular sides and base was investigated and interpreted as a tree throw hole. Its fill (103) was a mix of natural gravel and dark silt. It was 1 m wide and 0.4 m deep (Fig. 3).

Trench 2

- 4.1.2 Trench 2 was slightly shallower, with the natural gravel being reached at 0.3 m below present ground surface. Cutting into this at the north-east end was a treethrow hole (203), a subcircular feature with irregular sides and root holes in its base. To the south-west was a linear feature (205) with a steep western side and a 45 degree eastern side. Another slot was dug in this feature against the southern side of the trench where it showed a much flatter profile with an irregular base, it was therefore interpreted as either a furrow or a variation in the natural. Its fill (204) was a friable reddish brown silt with frequent gravel inclusions.
- 4.1.3 Both these features were overlain by a thin light yellow brown silty subsoil (201), which in turn was overlain by the modern ploughsoil (200), which was 0.2 m thick.

5 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 Overall interpretation

- 5.1.1 The evaluation revealed no evidence of archaeological features, it therefore appears that this area of the site is at some distance from the Iron Age and Roman settlements described in 1.3.2. There was also no evidence of features associated with the barrows that comprise the SAM.
- 5.1.2 The geophysical anomalies picked up in the geophysical survey may be accounted for by the tree throws and variations in the natural geology and there is a correlation between the location of the geophysical anomalies and some of the natural features revealed in the trenches.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Ctxt No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Thick. (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i> Finds</i>	<i>No./ wt</i>	<i>Date</i>
001								
	100	Layer		0.3	Modern ploughsoil	-		
	101	Layer		0.25	Subsoil	-		
	102	Layer		0.1	Colluvium	-		
	103	Fill		0.4	fill of 105	-		
	105	Cut	1.0	0.4	Treethrow	-		
	105	Layer		-	Natural gravel	-		
002								
	200	Layer		0.2	Modern ploughsoil	-		
	201	Layer		0.22	Subsoil	-		
	202	Fill		0.32	fill of 203	-		
	203	Cut	0.8	0.32	Treethrow	-		
	204	Fill		0.28	fill of 205	-		
	205	Cut	0.58	0.28	Possible furrow	-		
	206	Layer		-	Natural gravel	-		

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

A.D.H. Bartlett, 2005 *Horcott Quarry, Fairford, Gloucestershire Report on Archaeogeophysical Survey*

BGS *Geological Survey of England and Wales* sheet 201

OAU, 1992 *Fieldwork Manual (1st edition, August 1992 ed. D Wilkinson)*

OA, 2004, *Horcott Quarry Western Extension Churchberry Manor Fairford Gloucestershire. An Archaeological Review.*

IFA, 1999 *Standard and Guidance for archaeological evaluations*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Horcott Pit, Fairford, Gloucestershire

Site code: FAHO 05

Grid reference: SP 145 000

Type of evaluation: Two 30 m. trenches

Date and duration of project: 22-23 April, 2 days

Area of site: 0.1 ha

Summary of results: No archaeological features were present in the trenches. Natural features were present and their positions correlated with anomalies identified in an earlier geophysical survey.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Cirencester Museum in due course, under the following accession number:



Scale 1:4,000

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Figure 1: Site location, showing trenches and geophysical anomalies

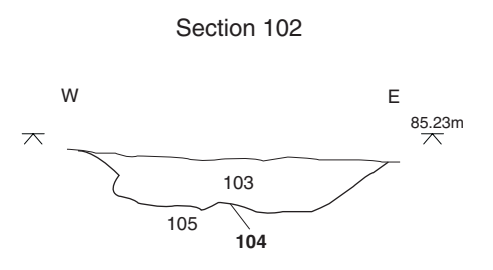
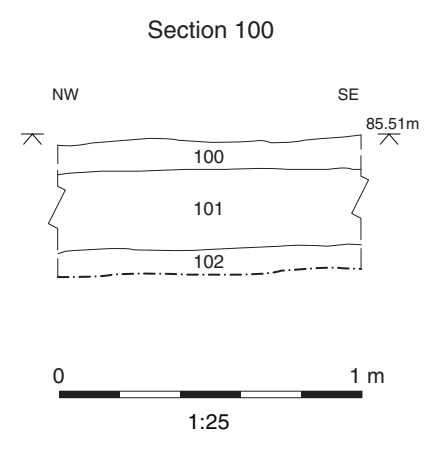
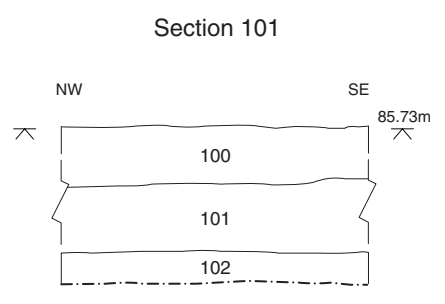
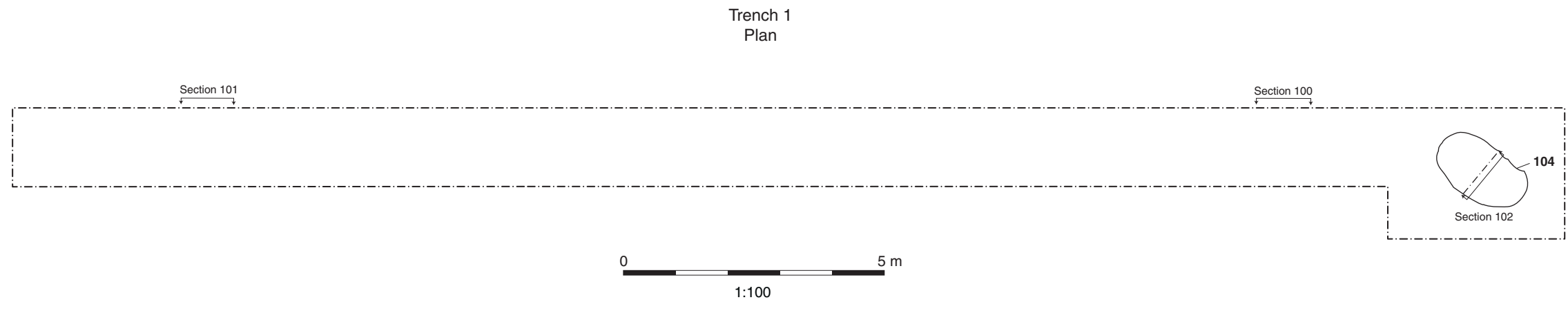
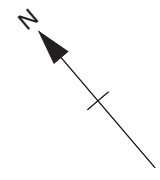


Figure 2: Trench 1, plan and sections

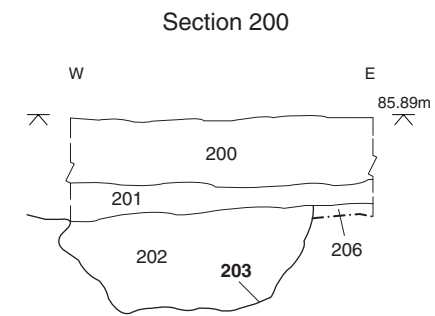
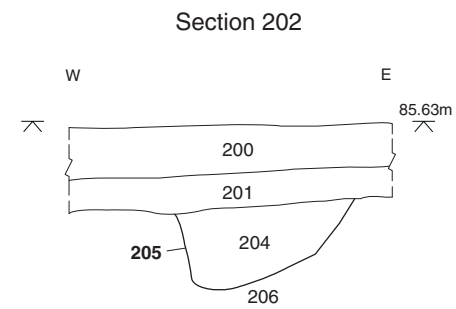
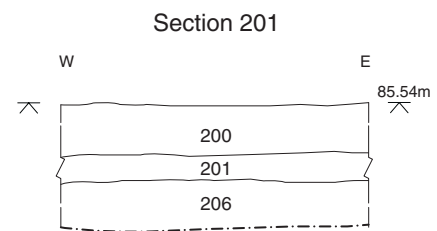
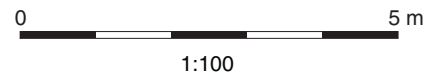
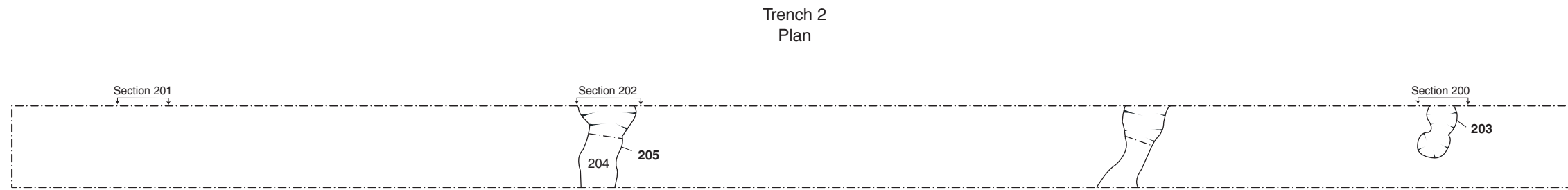


Figure 3: Trench 2, plan and sections