

6 Wilsham Road  
Abingdon, Oxon

Archaeological Evaluation

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

January 1995

**6 WILSHAM ROAD, ABINGDON, OXON.**  
(NGR SU 49579653).

Archaeological Evaluation Report

**Summary**

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by the Oxford Archaeological unit (OAU) at the 6 Wilsham Road, Abingdon on the 12th and 13th of January 1995. The only archaeological feature found was a stone-lined pit of probable 18th century date.

**1 Introduction**

A planning application was submitted to the Vale of White Horse District Council for the construction of a mews development, consisting of seven flats landscaping and car parking space. Planning consent was granted subject to a condition, in line with PPG16, requiring archaeological evaluation.

**2 Background**

**2.1 *Site location and description.***

The site is located on the west side of Wilsham Road at approximately 51 metres above sea level, adjacent to the River Thames and North of Ferry Walk (fig.2), Caldecott Park lies to the west. The geology is first gravel terrace overlying Kimmeridge Clay.

**2.2 *Archaeological background***

The site of the proposed development is located within an area of considerable archaeological interest. Aerial photography has located, to the west a possible neolithic cursus and ring ditch. The 'cursus' does not conform to the usual pattern as the side ditches are rather irregular and appear to respect a linear feature at the north-western end which extends beyond the side ditches. The double-ditched feature does, however, align on the same point of the confluence of the Ock and the Thames as both the Drayton B cursus and adjacent long enclosure.

To the south at Corporation Farm aerial photography and excavation revealed a barrow cemetery as well as a middle Bronze Age settlement. The gravel terraces of the Thames in the south Abingdon/Caldecott area contain many archaeological features covering the full spectrum of historical periods from the Neolithic to the Medieval periods.

### **3 The aims of the evaluation**

- 3.1 To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the development area with particular reference to prehistoric activity perhaps associated with the barrow cemetery.
- 3.2 To determine the extent, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present.
- 3.3 To determine the environmental/ecofactual potential of any archaeological features or deposits.

### **4 Methodology**

- 4.1 The evaluation consisted of three machine dug trenches, forming a 3.5% sample of the proposed development area, located so as to minimise the disturbance to the ground where foundations were to be constructed (fig.2).
- 4.2 The trenches were dug using a JCB equipped with a five foot wide ditching bucket, all trenches were excavated to archaeologically significant horizons under direct archaeological supervision.
- 4.3 Once machined, trenches were hand cleaned and investigated, to achieve the aims.
- 4.4 Context recording was by the OAU standard method (OAU Field Manual ed D. Wilkinson 1992).

### **5 Results**

The soil profile in each trench was similar. Topsoil covered the whole site with some dumping overlying it at the rear of the site. Under the topsoil was a dark grey silty clay containing some post-medieval tile, brick and pottery fragments. Below this was an alluvial deposits of mid brown clay overlying natural consisting of a light gray silt. From a test pit excavated by the main contractors the silt was seen to be 0.25 m thick overlying first terrace gravel.

#### *Trench 1*

This trench was dug at the back of the development area aligned N-S, no archaeological features were seen. Undisturbed natural was seen at a depth of 0.85 m below existing ground level.(50.95 m OD).

#### *Trench 2*

Trench 2 was located in the centre of the site aligned E-W, once again no archaeological features were seen. Natural was recorded at a depth of 0.85 m below ground level. (50.80 MOD).

### *Trench 3 (fig.3)*

This trench was aligned E-W and located at the front of the development area adjacent to the road. Due to the footings and foundations of a recent building (now demolished) the trench was dog legged to avoid disturbance. This trench, however, was heavily disturbed by modern services (see plan); a lead water pipe trench [3/5] aligned E-W was seen and investigated. The fill of the trench contained post-medieval pottery and several fragments of undiagnostic clay pipe stem.

A stone-lined square cess pit [3/7] was seen in the centre of the trench, it measured 2.00 m x 2.00 m and was 0.60 m deep. It originally had a brick floor which was mostly robbed, and only survived around the eastern edge. A small quantity of post medieval pottery, tile and glass were recovered from the fill. Natural was seen at 0.60 m below existing ground level, (50.70 m OD).

### **Conclusions**

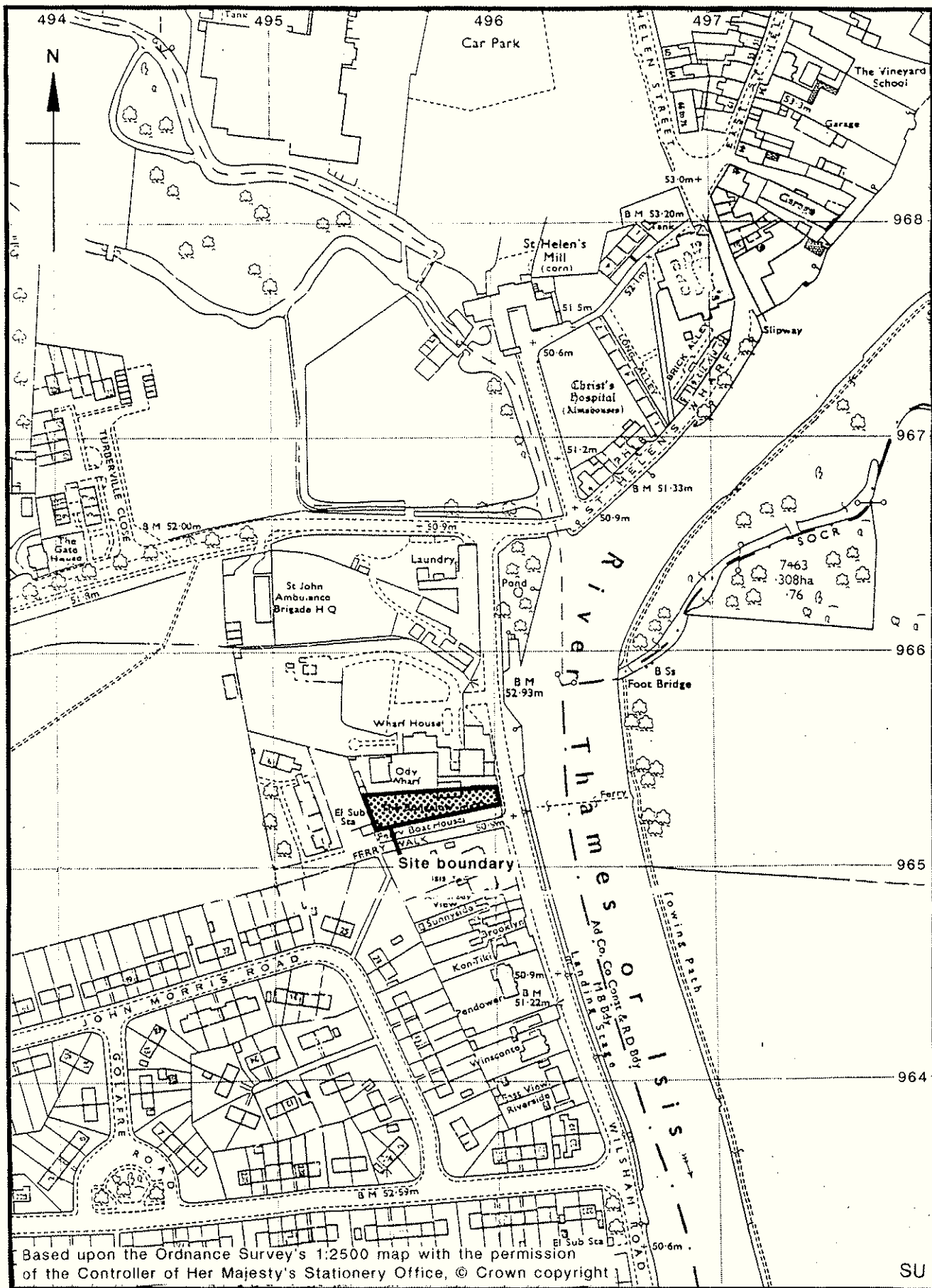
Below the modern garden soils, post medieval and earlier undated alluvion were encountered in all three trenches. The post medieval layer is interpreted as a garden soil as no evidence for ploughing was visible. The lack of features and artefacts suggests that no prehistoric activity took place in the immediate vicinity.

A possible Georgian building associated with the access pit may underlie the footings of the building which used to occupy the site (now demolished).

Mick Parsons  
18/1/95

**6 WILSHAM ROAD ABINGDON OXON.**

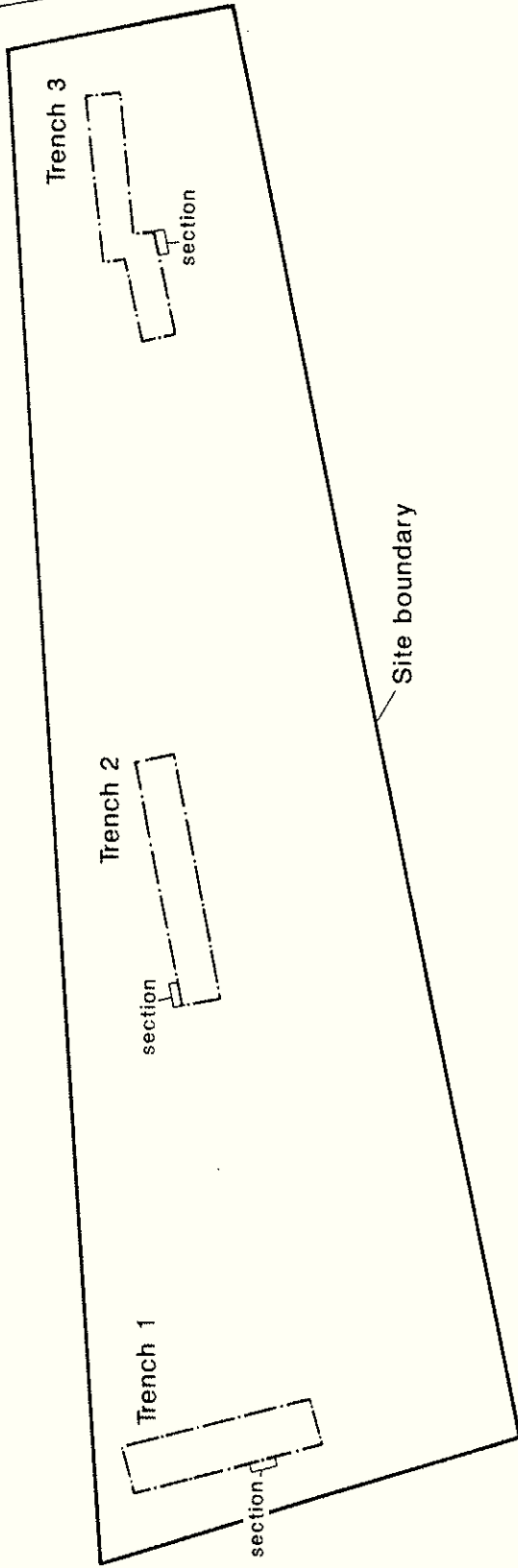
CTX	TYPE	DEPTH	WIDTH	DATE	COMMENTS
1/1	LAYER	0.34		MODERN	DUMP
1/2	LAYER	0.13		MODERN	TOPSOIL
1/3	LAYER	0.20		P-MED	
1/4	LAYER	0.24		????	
1/5	LAYER				NATURAL
2/1	LAYER	0.38		MODERN	
2/2	LAYER	0.27		P-MED	
2/3	LAYER	0.26		????	
2/4	LAYER				NATURAL
3/1	LAYER	0.37		MODERN	
3/2	LAYER	0.27		P-MED	
3/3	LAYER	0.24		????	
3/4	LAYER				NATURAL
3/5	CUT	0.30 +	0.50	MODERN?	PIPE TRENCH
3/6	FILL			MODERN	F.O 3/5
3/7	STRUCTURE	0.60	2.00	P-MED	CESS PIT
3/8	FILL	0.27		P-MED	F.O 3/7
3/9	FILL	0.33		P-MED	F.O 3/7



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figure 1

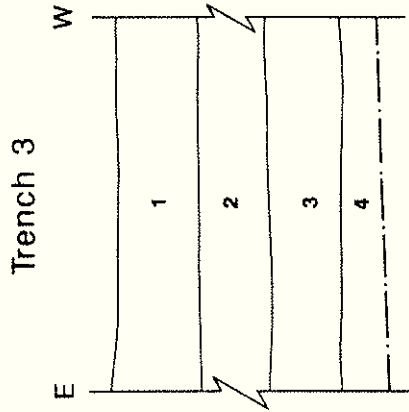
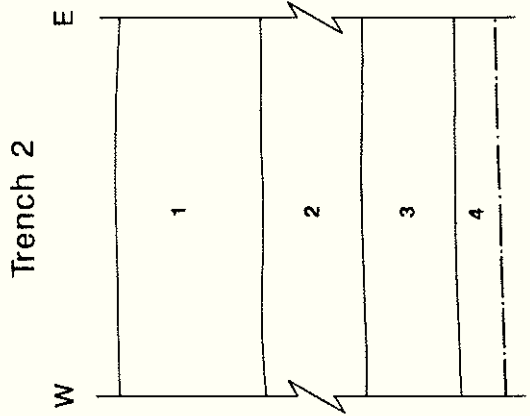
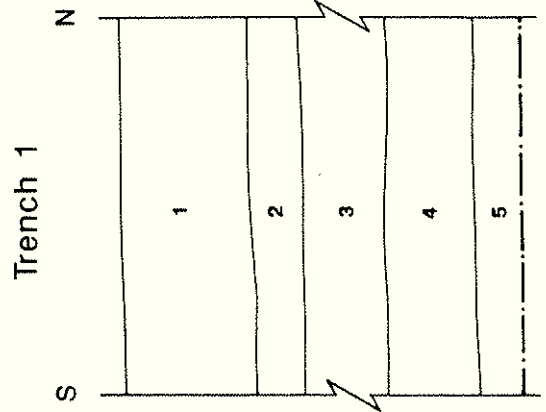
Wilsham Road



Site boundary



scale 1:300



scale 1:20

figure 2

# Trench 3

ABWIR 95

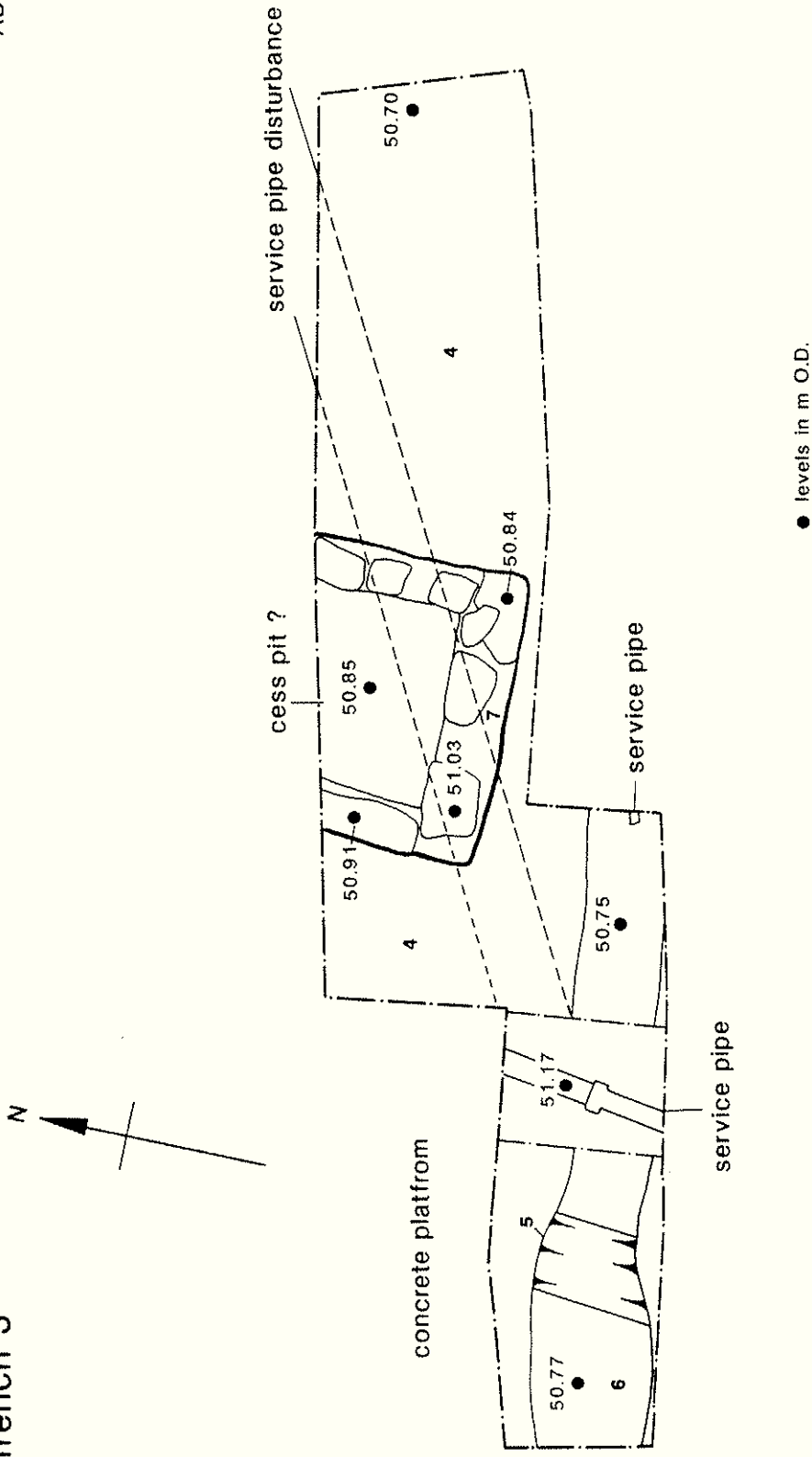


figure 3



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