



Austin House, Abingdon School, Abingdon, Oxfordshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

November 2019

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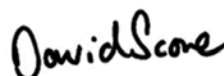
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Austin House, Abingdon School, Abingdon, Oxfordshire

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Summary

In October 2019 Oxford Archaeology was commissioned by Ridge and Partners on behalf of Abingdon School to undertake an archaeological evaluation for a proposed new boarding house at Austin House, Abingdon School, Abingdon, Oxfordshire. The main purpose of the evaluation was to investigate any archaeological remains that would be impacted by the development. Roman burials and settlement activity have been previously discovered in the surrounding area.

The evaluation exposed a dense concentration of medieval features and post-medieval quarrying pits. No evidence of earlier activity was identified and there was no sign that the nearby Roman burial activity continued into the development area. The site has high potential to contain further remains relating to medieval and post-medieval activity. It is possible that as-yet undiscovered Roman remains are present within the development area.

Acknowledgements

Oxford Archaeology would like to thank Ridge and Partners LLP acting on behalf of the Abingdon School for commissioning this project. Thanks are also extended to Hugh Coddington who monitored the work for Oxfordshire County Council.

The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology by Carl Champness. The fieldwork was directed by Robert McIntosh, who was supported by Mike Sims and Adam Moffat. Survey and digitising were carried out by Simon Batsman. Thanks are also extended to the teams of OA staff that cleaned and packaged the finds under the supervision of Leigh Allen, processed the environmental remains under the supervision of Sharon Cook, and prepared the archive under the supervision of Nicola Scott.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Ridge and Partners LLP acting on behalf of Abingdon School to undertake a trial-trench evaluation (Fig. 1). Two new boarding houses are being proposed at the school, one in Area 1 close to the main school building at Crescent house and one in Area 2 adjacent to Austin House (Fig. 2). The two areas are subject to separate archaeological reporting for each proposed building.
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken to inform the local planning authority in advance of the submission of a planning application. Although no brief was set prior to the work, discussions between James Kidd, Project Manager at Ridge and Partners, and Hugh Coddington, Principle Archaeologist at Oxfordshire County Council, established the scope of archaeological excavation required. This document outlines the results of the evaluation for Area 2.
- 1.1.3 All work was carried out in accordance with local and national planning policies and Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Guidance (CIfA 2014).

1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The site is situated within the grounds of Abingdon School to the north-west of the centre of Abingdon in Oxfordshire (Berkshire prior to the 1974 boundary changes). It is located within the historic parish of Abingdon St Helens, and within the administrative area of the Vale of White Horse District Council.
- 1.2.2 The site covers approximately 0.39ha and is located in the eastern part of the school grounds, bounded by Bath Street (the B4017) to the east. The site currently comprises Austin House and grounds.
- 1.2.3 The underlying bedrock geology is recorded as Amptill Clay Formation which is overlain by Summertown-Radley sand and gravel deposits (BGS nd). This geology was confirmed during previous archaeological investigations at the site (Evans and Excell 1997; 1999). The site lies approximately 59m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

1.3 Previous Investigations

- 1.3.1 Five archaeological investigations, comprising four excavations and a geophysical survey have taken place at the school. An excavation in 1997 towards the southern end of the school revealed Romano-British burial activity (Evans and Excell 1997). This included a cist that had been disturbed by landscaping in the 18th-century and an infant inhumation. A double row of stake holes and a possibly associated gully/ditch were also excavated.
- 1.3.2 Two small excavations were conducted at the site in 1998 (Evans *et al.* 1999). A small trench excavated within the cellar of Waste Court did not reveal any clear archaeological features though a number of finds, including late medieval pottery, tile and bone, were recovered. The excavation of an old tree-throw hole on the upper lawn also produced medieval pottery sherds.

- 1.3.3 A geophysical survey was conducted across parts of the school grounds in 1998 (Simpson 1998). A NW/SE-aligned linear anomaly was identified in the northern part of the grounds and two further linear anomalies were identified in the southern area. Six possible circular features, thought to form part of a structure or boundary, and a possible rectilinear feature were also identified within the southern area. Evidence of disturbance from trees and ferrous debris were identified to the north. The features identified suggest the presence of a considerable amount of settlement activity across the areas surveyed and at least two separate phases of archaeology.
- 1.3.4 Six small trenches were excavated within the school grounds in 1999 (Evans and Excell 1999). In Area 1, layers of re-deposited material associated with the landscaping of the terraces were recorded. The deposits contained post-medieval and modern material, though Romano-British and medieval finds were also recovered. An inhumation burial thought likely to be Romano-British or Saxon in date was excavated in Area 2. Discoveries in other areas of the school grounds included two 18th-century gullies with several contemporary finds, a rubble spread containing Romano-British finds, and a Bronze Age barbed-and-tanged arrowhead. Residual post-medieval finds were recovered in most areas, while an 18th-century working area associated with the construction of Waste Court was also identified.
- 1.3.5 A watching brief prior to the construction of the school swimming pool directly to the north of the site revealed extensive areas of quarrying and a single post-medieval pit. Two watching briefs at Beech Court directly south of the site also recorded evidence of post-medieval activity. Post-medieval features included a late 18th–19th-century stone wall and piers, a possible arcaded structure, pits, a quarry pit and a brick surface. Evidence of a known Second-World-War bunker was also identified. Earlier finds included a medieval tile, several residual sherds of Roman pottery and a residual flint flake of Neolithic or Early Bronze Age date.
- 1.3.6 An evaluation took place prior to the construction of the Yang Centre c 190m to the north-west of the site (OA 2013). The evaluation identified two pits of post-medieval date, a small number of undated features and areas of quarrying not previously identified from historic mapping. A residual sherd of Iron Age pottery was also recovered.
- 1.3.7 Investigations to the west of Bath Street, c 110m to the south of the site, recorded features indicative of intensive settlement activity dating from the 2nd-century onwards. Numerous Romano-British, medieval and post-medieval features were excavated. Residual sherds of Iron Age pottery and a Mesolithic flint core were also recovered. An excavation at 64 Bath Street, c 140m south of the site, revealed features and finds ranging in date from the Mesolithic to the post-medieval period; Romano-British ditches and cremations, Saxon ditches and medieval pits were among the features excavated. A watching brief further west of Bath Street at Amey Hall, c 100m south of the site, did not record any archaeological finds or features.
- 1.3.8 Abingdon town centre has been subject to multiple archaeological investigations which have identified evidence of activity dating from the Iron Age through to the post-medieval period. Other investigations considered relevant to the archaeological potential of the site are discussed, where appropriate, by period below.

1.4 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.4.1 The archaeological and historical background presented below derives from previous desk-based assessments (OA 2007; 2012; 2016a) and archaeological fieldwork reports (OA 2016b; 2017).

Prehistoric (8000 BC–AD 43)

- 1.4.2 Struck flints of Mesolithic date were recovered from the Spring Road cemetery, east of the Larkhill Stream (Allen and Kamash 2008). This site also produced a Beaker burial radiocarbon dated to between 2450 and 2200 cal. BC, pottery and struck flints of Early and Middle Neolithic date and a Late Neolithic pit.
- 1.4.3 A group of four cropmark ring ditches were identified from aerial photographs of the field on the north side of the Faringdon Road, immediately opposite to the school. These perhaps represent Early Bronze Age barrows. The largest would have extended into the school grounds, though this area has been since completely quarried away. A fifth, smaller cropmark ring ditch was identified within the north-eastern half of the school. Excavations at the barrow cemetery at Barrow Hills, Radley, to the north-east of Abingdon have shown that the ditches of such barrows often contain burials, and that additional burials or pits containing offerings tend to be present in a peripheral zone outside the ditches (Barclay and Halpin 1999).
- 1.4.4 Later Bronze Age and Iron Age settlement is known at Spring Road and at Thornhill Walk to the north of the site, while cropmark enclosures some 200m north of the site may also represent a settlement of this period. To the south, Abingdon town centre was the site of a thriving settlement throughout the Iron Age (Allen 1990; 1993; 1994).

Roman (AD 43–AD 410)

- 1.4.5 Settlement activity in Abingdon town centre continued to thrive the Roman period (ibid.). There appears to have been Roman settlement extending along what is now Bath Street to the north. Cemeteries were often placed at the periphery of such settlements, and both cremation and inhumation burials have been found to the west of Bath Street. Further Roman activity is also known at Spring Road to the west (Allen and Kamash 2008). Cropmark enclosures to the north of the site may also be Roman.

Early medieval (AD 410–AD 1066)

- 1.4.6 Anglo-Saxon settlements are known from Spring Road to the west and Abingdon town centre to the south, and inhumation burials from the Horse and Jockey pub 300m to the south-east of the site. Inhumation burials are also recorded immediately east of Spring Road. Activity dating between AD 650 and the Norman Conquest is much sparser, being concentrated in the town centre.

Later medieval (AD 1066–AD 1500)

- 1.4.7 later medieval settlement was focused near the town centre to the south, and on the manor of Fitzharris. Medieval buildings still survive along Bath Street south of Abingdon School, and Bath Street is likely to have been a medieval routeway, but there is no evidence of medieval occupation close to the site. A medieval cemetery at the

junction of Spring Road and Farringdon Road to the west may have been the site of a chapel at a crossroads.

Post-medieval (AD 1500–AD 1900)

- 1.4.8 Rocque's map of Berkshire in 1761 illustrates that the site lay on the north-west periphery of Abingdon. Buildings face onto Bath Street (previously Bore Street (VCH 1907)) to the east with garden plots and outbuildings to the rear. What appears to be cultivated land lay to the west.
- 1.4.9 Waste Court, renamed in 2015 as Austin House, was constructed within the site in 1779 and is first shown on the 1843 tithe map of the parish of Abingdon St Helen's. The tithe map also illustrates a trackway/road running directly to the south of the building, along the southern boundary of the site. The northern edge of the trackway is consistent with the parish boundary between Abingdon St Helen's and St Nicolas', more clearly illustrated on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map, which passes through the site. Two further buildings, situated within the north-eastern corner of the site, are also illustrated on the tithe map.
- 1.4.10 The 1st edition OS map of 1874 shows an alteration to the footprint of Waste Court, which is thought to have been modified during the 19th century. The trackway/road to the south of the site also had narrowed by this time and the remainder of the site appears to have comprised a garden area of lawn, paths and trees.

2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The project aims and objectives were as follows:

- i. To determine the presence or absence of any archaeological remains which may survive;
- ii. To determine or confirm the approximate extent of any surviving remains;
- iii. To determine the date range of any surviving remains by artefactual or other means;
- iv. To determine the condition and state of preservation of any remains;
- v. To determine the degree of complexity of any surviving horizontal or vertical stratigraphy;
- vi. To assess the associations and implications of any remains encountered with reference to the historic landscape;
- vii. To determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence, and the forms in which such evidence may survive;
- viii. To determine the implications of any remains with reference to economy, status, utility and social activity; and
- ix. To determine or confirm the likely range, quality and quantity of the artefactual evidence present.

2.1.2 Specific research questions:

- x. To determine whether the burials found at Waste Court to the north represent part of a larger cemetery extending into the site, or whether these burials are restricted to the north of the site;
- xi. To investigate whether Roman settlement extended this far north from central Abingdon, and if so, to characterise and date of this within the Roman period;
- xii. To attempt to determine whether features of early or later prehistoric date are present within the areas to be excavated, as the residual finds from adjacent sites might suggest;
- xiii. To identify evidence of early medieval (Saxon) activity;

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 A single trench measuring 30m by 1.8m was undertaken within the footprint of the proposed development within Area 2 (Figs 2 and 3). The trench was located to provide a representative sample of the archaeological potential of the site in order to help inform any future mitigation strategy. The trench had to be shortened to 20m due to the presence of a footpath at the northern end and a tree at the southern end. The area was fenced-off prior to excavation and plastic sheeting was laid down onto which the spoil was placed.

2.2.2 The trench was excavated using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket under the direct supervision of an archaeologist. Spoil was stored adjacent to, but at a safe distance from trench edges. Machining continued in spits down to the top of the undisturbed natural geology or the first archaeological horizon depending upon

which is encountered first. Once archaeological deposits were exposed, further excavation proceeded by hand and the appropriate use of a machine excavator.

- 2.2.3 The exposed surfaces were sufficiently cleaned to establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains. A sample of each feature or deposit type were excavated and recorded in line with the approved WSI (OA 2019). Excavation was sufficient to resolve the principal aims of the evaluation.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

3.1.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below and include a stratigraphic description of the trenches that contained archaeological remains. The full details of the trench with dimensions and depths of all deposits can be found in Appendix A. Finds data and spot dates are tabulated in Appendix B.

3.2 General soils and ground conditions

3.2.1 The soil sequence in the trench was fairly uniform. The natural geology of light-yellow sand with patches of grey gravel was overlain by a reddish-brown silty sand and gravel subsoil, which in turn was overlain by topsoil.

3.2.2 Ground conditions throughout the evaluation were generally good and the site remained dry throughout. Archaeological features, where present, were easy to identify against the underlying natural geology.

3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits

3.3.1 A dense concentration of archaeological features was present throughout trench 2. This consisted of pits, ditches and quarry pits, of which only a few features produced dating evidence.

3.4 Trench 2

3.4.1 Trench 2 contained two visibly different phases of features, one with dark brownish-grey fills and the other with greyish-brown and reddish-brown fills (Plate 1).

3.4.2 The earliest features were numbered 203, 206, 208, 209, 216, 219, 220 and 222, largely characterised by their reddish-brown and greyish-brown fills, both much lighter than the fills of 211, 213 and 215 (Fig. 3).

3.4.3 Feature 203 was a sub-circular pit, with steeply sloping sides and a concave base located at the northeast end of the trench (Plate 2). Its single fill was a loose, dark yellowish-brown sandy silt with gravelly inclusions. The feature was 0.52m in width, 0.19m deep and contained no finds (Fig. 4, section 200).

3.4.4 Pits 206 and 208 were both roughly ovoid in plan, with steep sides. Pit 206 had a concave base and 208 a flat base (Plate 3). Both features were located in north-eastern end of the trench with 206 truncating 208 (Fig. 4, section 201). Both contained fills that were friable, reddish brown sandy silts with visible tip lines and lenses of gravel within them. Pit 206 was 2m wide, 0.6m deep and contained no finds. Pit 208 was 2.1m wide, 0.5m deep and also contained no finds.

3.4.5 Ditch 209 was orientated NE/SW and was located in the south-western half of the trench where it was truncated by feature 215 (Plate 4). It had sloping sides with a concave base and measured 0.66m wide and 0.25m deep (Fig. 4, section 202). Its single fill was a loose, greyish-brown sandy silt with gravelly pebble inclusions and no finds.

- 3.4.6 Pit 216 was circular in plan with sloping sides a concave base and truncated by ditch 209. It was 0.24m wide and 0.18m deep and its single fill was a loose, brownish red sandy silt which contained no finds.
- 3.4.7 Feature 219 was 1m wide, extended 0.8m from the bulk and was roughly oval in plan (Plate 5). It had shallow sides, a concave base and was located in the centre of the trench (Fig. 4, section 204). Its single fill was a friable, reddish brown sandy silt with frequent gravel inclusions and no finds.
- 3.4.8 Pit 222 was sub-circular with steep sloping sides and a concave base (Fig. 4, section 205). The pit was 0.63m in width, 0.24m deep and contained a single loose, medium to dark yellowish-brown sandy silt with occasional gravel inclusions, fill with no finds. It was truncated by pit 220, which was a similar sub-circular pit with steep sloping sides and a concave base (Plate 6). Pit 220 measured 0.69m wide and 0.3m deep and contained a loose, dark greyish brown sandy silt with occasional gravels and containing animal bone and a medieval pottery sherd.

Post-medieval features

- 3.4.9 Features 211, 213 and 215 and all contained a single loose, dark brownish grey sandy silt fill. Linear feature 211 was located at the south-west end of the trench (Plate 7). It was orientated north to south and had sloping sides and a flat base (Fig. 4, section 203). Its single fill contained a post-medieval pot sherd.
- 3.4.10 Feature 213 was only partially revealed in the southern corner of the trench. Its exposed area was shown to have near vertical sides and its fill contained a clay pipe. Its base was not reached.
- 3.4.11 Feature 215 remained unexcavated as a number of clay pipes were recovered from the upper surface of its fill. It was 3.9m wide, though its full extent was not revealed within the limits of the trench (Plate 8).

3.5 Finds summary

Pottery by John Cotter

- 3.5.1 A total of seven sherds of pottery weighing 56g were recovered from two contexts (212 and 221). The pottery comprises domestic medieval and post-medieval wares typical of the Abingdon area. The sherds are reasonably fresh but quite small.
- 3.5.2 Pit fill (221) produced six medieval pottery sherds. This included four sherds of Kennet Valley B ware (c AD 1150–1350), including an earlyish cooking pot rim with a plain flaring neck and a flat-topped rim with traces of finger-tip decoration widely spaced along the top. One body sherd in a coarse sandy ware with cream surfaces and light grey core was probably early Ashampstead-type ware (c AD 1050–1400) and a second smallish body sherd in Kennet Valley A ware (c AD 1050–1250).
- 3.5.3 Pit fill (212) produced a slightly abraded body sherd, probably from a cylindrical tankard in Staffordshire white salt-glazed stoneware (c AD 1720–1780).

Clay pipes by John Cotter

- 3.5.4 Three pieces of clay pipe weighing 8g were recovered from two contexts. Context 214 produce a late 17th–mid-18th-century pipe stem and context 215 contained two 19th-century pipe stems.

CBM by John Cotter

- 3.5.5 A 19th-century peg tile weighing 21g was recovered from context 214, typical of late post-medieval roof tiles.

Slag by Geraldine Crann

- 3.5.6 Two very small fragments of slag weighing 2g were recovered from context 221.

3.6 Environmental summary

Charred plant remains by Richard Palmer

- 3.6.1 Two bulk samples were taken from pits 220 and 206. Fill 221 of medieval pit 220 contained charred cereal grain, mostly identifiable as wheat (*Triticum* sp.) but a significant number of the grains were damaged or fragmented. A quantity of bone and pottery was also recovered from the residue.
- 3.6.2 Fill 205 of pit 206 contained a limited quantity of charred grain in poor condition. One was identifiable as wheat, but the other examples were damaged. A small quantity of animal bones was also recovered from the residue.

Animal Bones by Rebecca Nicholson

- 3.6.3 A small assemblage of animal bone was recovered from context 221, weighing 90g in total. The bones were in a fair/good condition and included a number from small mammals, including mole, which may be intrusive.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 4.1.1 A fair spatial coverage of the development area was achieved with the trench, and the results should be considered to be a reliable reflection of the archaeological potential of the site. However, some areas of the development were inaccessible at the time of the evaluation due to trees and footpaths.
- 4.1.2 In all areas of the evaluation, the natural geology encountered was very distinct from the overlying soils and features, which were well defined. Weather conditions were very good throughout the project and did not impact visibility.

4.2 Evaluation objectives and results

- 4.2.1 The evaluation trench successfully identified archaeological features, which contained dateable finds from the medieval and late post-medieval periods. The finds and environmental samples indicate an area of medieval rubbish pits and post-medieval quarry activity.

4.3 Interpretation

- 4.3.1 No features pre-dating the medieval period was identified within the trench and no suggestion was found to indicate that the Roman burials previously recorded to the north and south of the site, extended into this area. However, the trench was limited in area and it is possible that further Roman burials are present nearby.
- 4.3.2 The majority of features present were undated, although in one case visibly truncated by post-medieval feature 215. The mixture of ditches and pits would seem to indicate a fair amount of archaeological activity in close proximity. Pit 220 contained animal bones, a sherd of medieval pottery and charred cereal remains, suggestive of domestic activity.
- 4.3.3 The darker-filled features (211, 213 and 215) appear to represent a phase of post-medieval quarrying, consistent with other excavations in the area. These features contained a single pottery sherd, clay-pipes and CBM.

4.4 Conclusion

- 4.4.1 The results of the evaluation trench indicate a high potential for medieval and post-medieval activity to be found within the proposed development. There remains some possibility that Roman burial activity could extend into the development area, beyond the evaluation trench. Should the foundation impacts of the scheme extend below the archaeological horizon (58.75m OD) then full excavation will likely be required within the footprint of the proposed building and any associated drainage features.

APPENDIX A TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 2						
General description					Orientation	NE-SW
Trench contained a number of post medieval features, likely gravel quarrying, these visibly truncate an earlier phase of features, one of which contained a sherd of pot. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of silty sand. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of sand and gravel.					Length (m)	21.8
					Width (m)	1.6
					Avg. depth (m)	0.50
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
200	Layer	-	0.16	Topsoil, dark brownish grey sandy silt	-	-
201	Layer	-	0.20	Subsoil, reddish brown silty gravel and sand	-	-
202	Layer	-	-	Natural, patchy light yellowish sand and grey gravel	-	-
203	Pit	0.52	0.19	Sub-circular in plan with sloping sides and a concave base	-	-
204	Fill	0.52	0.19	Loose, dark yellowish brown, sandy silt. Fill of 203	-	-
205	Fill	2	0.6	Friable, reddish brown sandy silt, with visible tip lines and gravel. Fill of 206	-	-
206	Pit	2	0.6	Ovoid in plan, with steep sides and a concave base	-	-
207	Fill	2.1	0.5	Friable, reddish brown sandy silt, many tip lines and gravel. Fill of 208	-	-
208	Pit	2.1	0.5	Ovoid in plan, with steep sides and a flat base	-	-
209	Ditch	0.66	0.25	Linear orientated NE/SW, with sloping sides and a concave base	-	-
210	Fill	0.66	0.25	Loose, greyish brown sandy silt, with gravelly inclusions. Fill of 209	-	-
211	Ditch	0.82	0.06	Linear orientated N/S, with sloping sides and a flat base	-	-
212	Fill	0.82	0.06	Loose, dark brownish grey sandy silt, with some pebble inclusions. Fill of 211	Pot sherds	medieval

213	Pit	0.24	0.28	Only partially visible, near vertical sides with an unseen base	-	-
214	Fill	0.24	0.28	Loose, dark brownish grey sandy silt, with some pebble inclusions. Fill of 213	Clay pipe	Post-medieval
215	Un-ex Pit	3.9	-	Unexcavated feature, shape largely obscured. Fill, loose dark brownish grey sandy silt, with some pebble inclusions	Clay pipe	Post-Medieval
216	Posthole	0.24	0.18	Circular in shape, with sloping sides and a concave base	-	-
217	Fill	0.24	0.18	Loose, brownish red sandy silt. Fill of 216	-	-
218	Fill	1	0.25	Friable, reddish brown sandy silt, frequent small gravel. Fill of 219	-	-
219	Pit	1	0.25	Sub-oval in plan, with shallow sides and a concave base	-	-
220	Pit	0.69	0.3	Sub-circular in plan with steep sloping sides and a concave base	-	-
221	Fill	0.69	0.3	Loose, dark greyish brown sandy silt. Fill of 220	Pottery, bones	Post-medieval
222	Pit	0.63	0.24	Sub-circular, with steep sloping sides and a concave base	-	-
223	Fill	0.63	0.24	Loose, medium to dark yellowish-brown sandy silt, occasional pebbles	-	-

APPENDIX B FINDS REPORTS

B.1 Pottery

By John Cotter

Introduction

B.1.1 A total of 7 sherds of pottery weighing 56g were recovered from two contexts, both from Trench 2. Given the small quantity present, this has not been separately catalogued but is fully described below. Medieval fabric codes referred to are those of the Oxfordshire type series (Mellor 1994), whereas post-medieval fabric codes are those of the Museum of London (MoLA 2014).

Description

B.1.2 **Context (212) Spot-date: c 1720-1780.** Description: 1 sherd (weight 2g). Body sherd, probably from a cylindrical tankard in Staffordshire white salt-glazed stoneware (Fabric SWSG). Slightly abraded.

B.1.3 **Context (221) Spot-date: c 1150-1250?** Description: 6 sherds (weight 54g). 4x sherds of Kennet Valley B ware (East Wiltshire ware; Fabric OXAQ, c 1150-1350) including an early-looking cooking pot rim with a plain flaring neck and a flat-topped rim with traces of widely-spaced finger-tip decoration along the top (probably c 1150-1250?). Fairly fresh. 1x body sherd in a coarse sandy ware with cream surfaces and light grey core: probably early Ashampstead-type ware (OXAG, c 1050-1400; formerly known as Abingdon-type ware). 1x smallish body sherd in Kennet Valley A ware (OXBF, c 1050-1250). The totals here include 4 body sherds (18g) from the sieved environmental sample (OXAQ and OXBF).

Discussion

B.1.4 The pottery comprises ordinary domestic medieval and post-medieval wares typical of the Abingdon area. The sherds are reasonably fresh but quite small.

B.2 Ceramic Building Material (CBM)

By John Cotter

Description

B.2.1 A single piece of CBM weighing 21g was recovered from Trench 2. Given the small amount this has not been separately catalogued but is fully described below.

B.2.2 Medieval tile fabrics and CBM types from Oxford have been described in some detail in previous reports (Cotter 2006; 2008).

B.2.3 **Context (214) Spot-date: 18th to 19th century?** Description: 1 piece (21g). Fairly fresh edge fragment from a flat roof tile (probably a peg tile). Fairly smooth, hard, orange-red fabric typical of late post-medieval roof tiles.

B.3 Slag

By Geraldine Crann

Context	Sample number	Description
221	1	2 very small fragments of magnetic material, possibly slag, 2g

B.4 Clay Pipe

By John Cotter

Introduction

- B.4.1 Three pieces of clay pipe weighing 8g were recovered from two contexts, both from Trench 2. Given the small amount these have not been separately catalogued but are fully described below.
- B.4.2 **Context (214) Spot-date: Late 17th to mid-18th century?** Description: 1 piece of pipe stem (weight 3g). Length 35mm. Lightly burnished surfaces with a stem bore diameter of 2.5mm. Fairly fresh condition but shows signs of burning at one end.
- B.4.3 **Context (215) Spot-date: 19th century. Description:** 2 pieces of stem (weight 5g), from 2 separate pipes. Both slender, late-looking stems with narrow stem bore diameters of 1.9mm. Lengths 55mm and 35mm. Both in fresh condition.

Recommendations regarding the conservation, discard and retention of material

- B.4.4 The pipes here are really only of use for dating and have little potential for further analysis. As they have been adequately recorded, they could be discarded if so desired.

APPENDIX C ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

C.1 Environmental Samples

By Richard Palmer

Introduction

C.1.1 Two bulk samples were taken from the evaluation at Abingdon School Boarding House, Oxfordshire, primarily for the retrieval and assessment of charred plant remains (CPR) and the recovery of bones and artefacts.

Method

C.1.2 The samples were processed in their entirety at Oxford Archaeology using a modified Siraf-type water flotation machine. The flots were collected in a 250µm mesh and heavy residues in a 500µm mesh and dried. The residue fractions were sorted by eye and with the aid of a magnet while the flot material was sorted using a low power (x10) binocular microscope to extract cereal grains and chaff, smaller seeds and other quantifiable remains.

Results

C.1.3 The details of the flots are presented in the table below.

C.1.4 Sample 1 is from fill 221 of pit 220 which has a medieval spot date. A small flot was recovered consisting of charcoal in fair to good condition and grain of variable condition. Identifiable grain is wheat (*Triticum* sp.) but a significant number of the grains are damaged or fragmented. A quantity of bone and pottery was recovered from the residue.

C.1.5 Sample 2 is from fill 205 of pit 206. The recovered flot was small with a limited quantity of material. All material is less than 4mm in size and grain is in poor condition, one is identifiable as wheat (*Triticum* sp.) but the other examples were damaged. A small quantity of animal bone was recovered from the residue.

C.1.6 The molluscs from both samples are land species and the burrowing *Cecilioides* are also present but not quantified.

Sample no.	Context no.	Area/Trench	Feature/Deposit	Date	Sample vol. (L)	Flot vol. (ml)	Charcoal >2mm	Grain	Chaff	Weeds	Molluscs	Other	Notes
1	221	2	220	Med	35	25	+++	+++		+	++		10YR 4/3 loamy sand. Frequent modern roots.
2	205	2	206		35	12	++	+		+	++		10YR 4/4 loamy sand. Some modern roots.

Key: +=present (up to 5 items), ++=frequent (5-25), +++=common (25-100), ++++=abundant (100+).

Assessment of Bulk Sample Flots

Discussion

C.1.7 The recovered material has limited interpretive value but does indicate potential for the recovery of charred material on site. Preservation of recovered material tends to be poor, particularly for seeds which hinders identification and could have implications for further work.

C.2 Animal bones

By Rebecca Nicholson

Introduction

C.2.1 A small assemblage of animal bone from context 221, weighing 90g in total, was collected on site and from the residue of a sieved soil sample.

C.2.2 The bone is in fair-good condition and the identifications are provided in the table below. The sieved sample included a number of bones from small mammals, including mole, which are in good condition and may be intrusive.

Context	No frags	Weight (g)	Taxa/element
221 (hand collected)	8	52	1 sheep/goat distal humerus (epiphysis missing) 1 medium mammal pelvis frag, 2 ribs, 1 cranial frag, 1 long bone shaft frag 1 large mammal long bone shaft frag.
221 (sieved sample 1)	33	38	1 sheep/goat mandible frag (M1 and M2 present, in wear) 1 Pig phalange (unfused proximal epiphysis) 12 frags medium mammal (4 calcined) 1 mole mandible and 1 mole maxilla 1 bank/field vole mandible frag. and 1 pelvis frag. 11 small mammal bones (tibiofibular, ribs, metapodial) 1 herring vertebra

Bone identifications (No of specimens indicated).

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APPENDIX E SITE SUMMARY DETAILS

Site name:	Abingdon School, Boarding Houses, Bath Road, Oxfordshire
Site code:	ABSBH19
Grid Reference	SU 49444 97443
Type:	Evaluation
Date and duration:	2 days: 21st–22nd October
Area of Site	0.39ha
Location of archive:	The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, and will be deposited with Oxford Museum Service in due course, under the following accession number: OXCMS: 2019.131
Summary of Results:	<p>In October 2019, OA was commissioned by Ridge and Partners on behalf of Abingdon School to undertake an archaeological evaluation for a proposed new boarding house at Abingdon School, Abingdon, Oxfordshire. The main purpose of the evaluation was to investigate any archaeological remains that would be impacted by the development following the discovery of Roman burials and activity from the surrounding area.</p> <p>The evaluation identified a dense concentration of both medieval features and later post-medieval quarrying pits. No evidence of earlier activity was identified and no signs that the burial activity continued into the development area. The site therefore has high potential to contain further remains related to medieval and post-medieval activity at the site. However, the trench was confined to areas currently accessible and there remains the potential for Roman burial remains to be encountered nearby.</p>

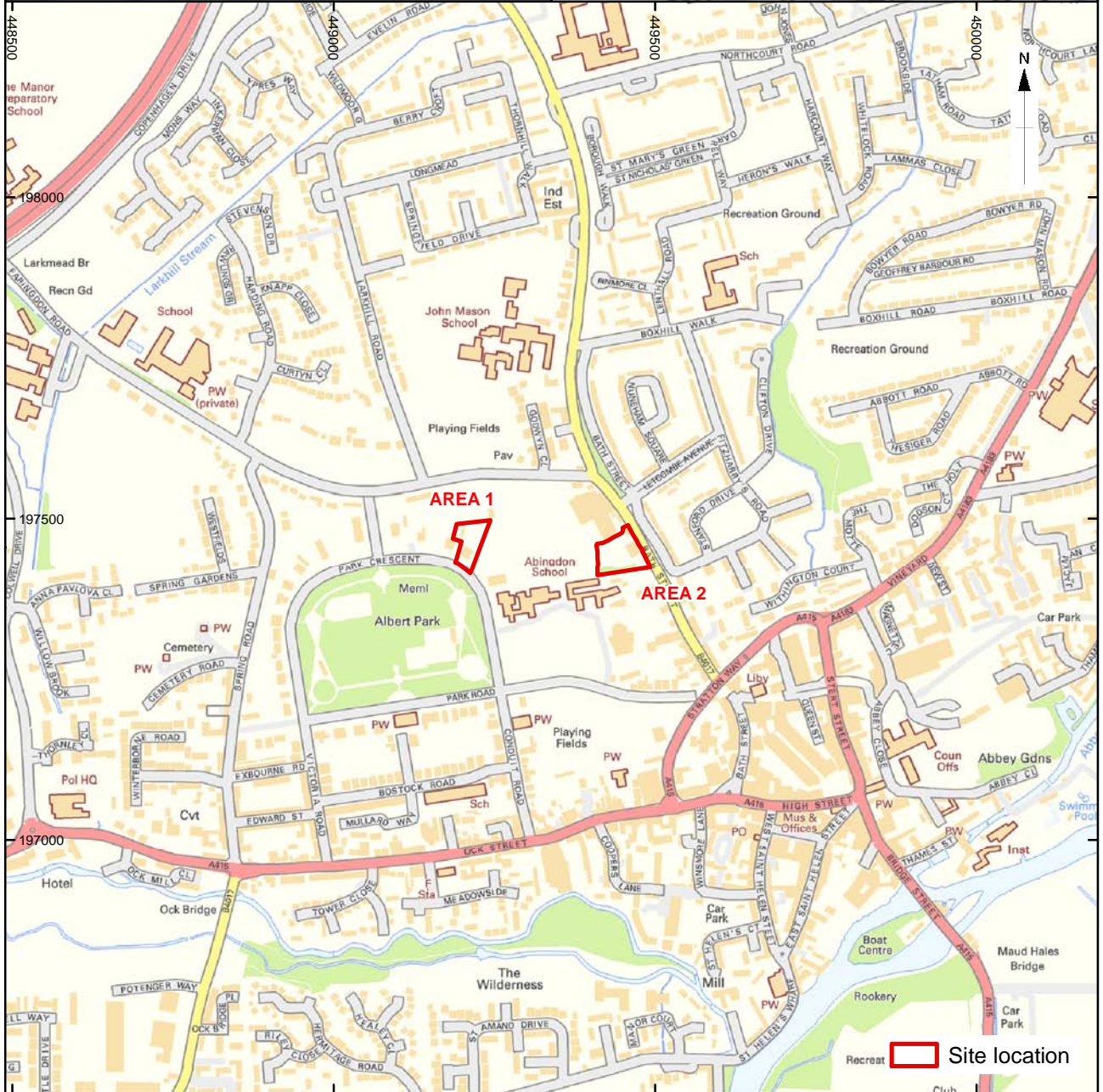
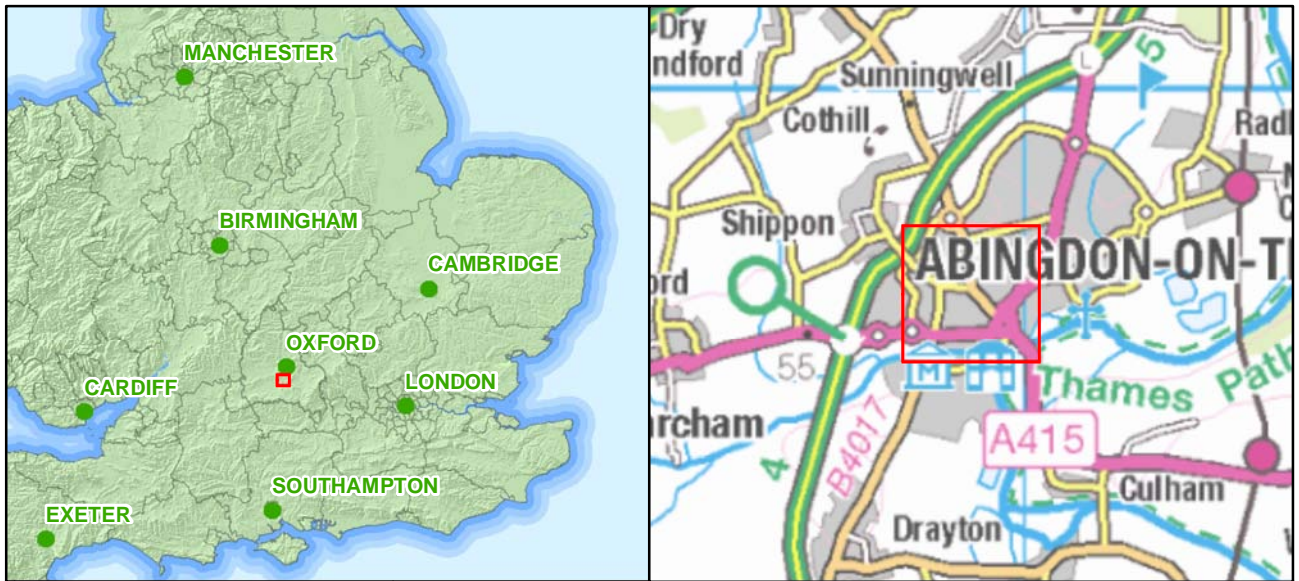


Figure 1: Site location

X:\a\Abingdon School Boarding Houses\010\Geomatics\03 GIS Projects\ABSBH19_figure2.mxd
"matt.bradley" 15/11/2019

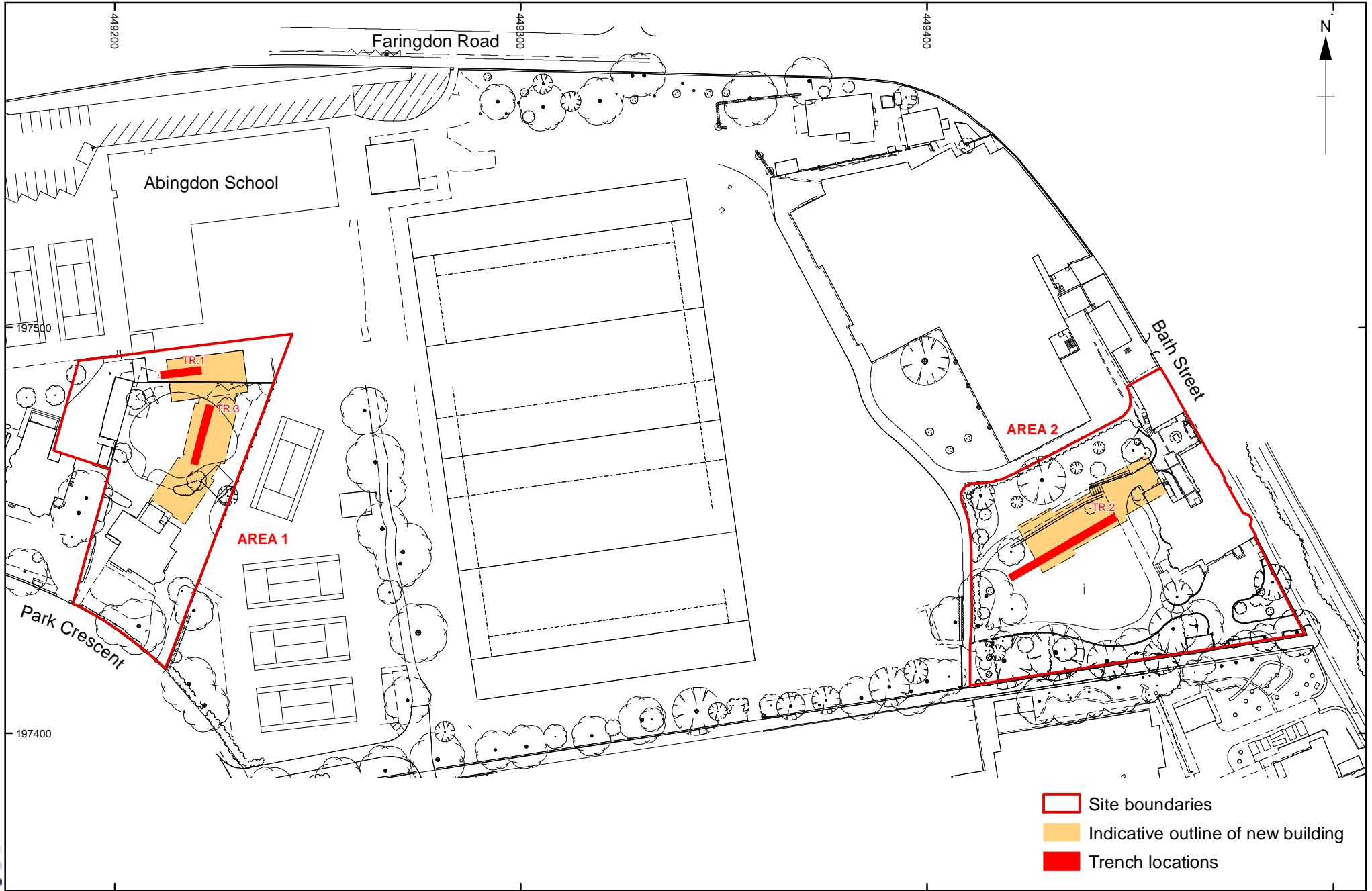
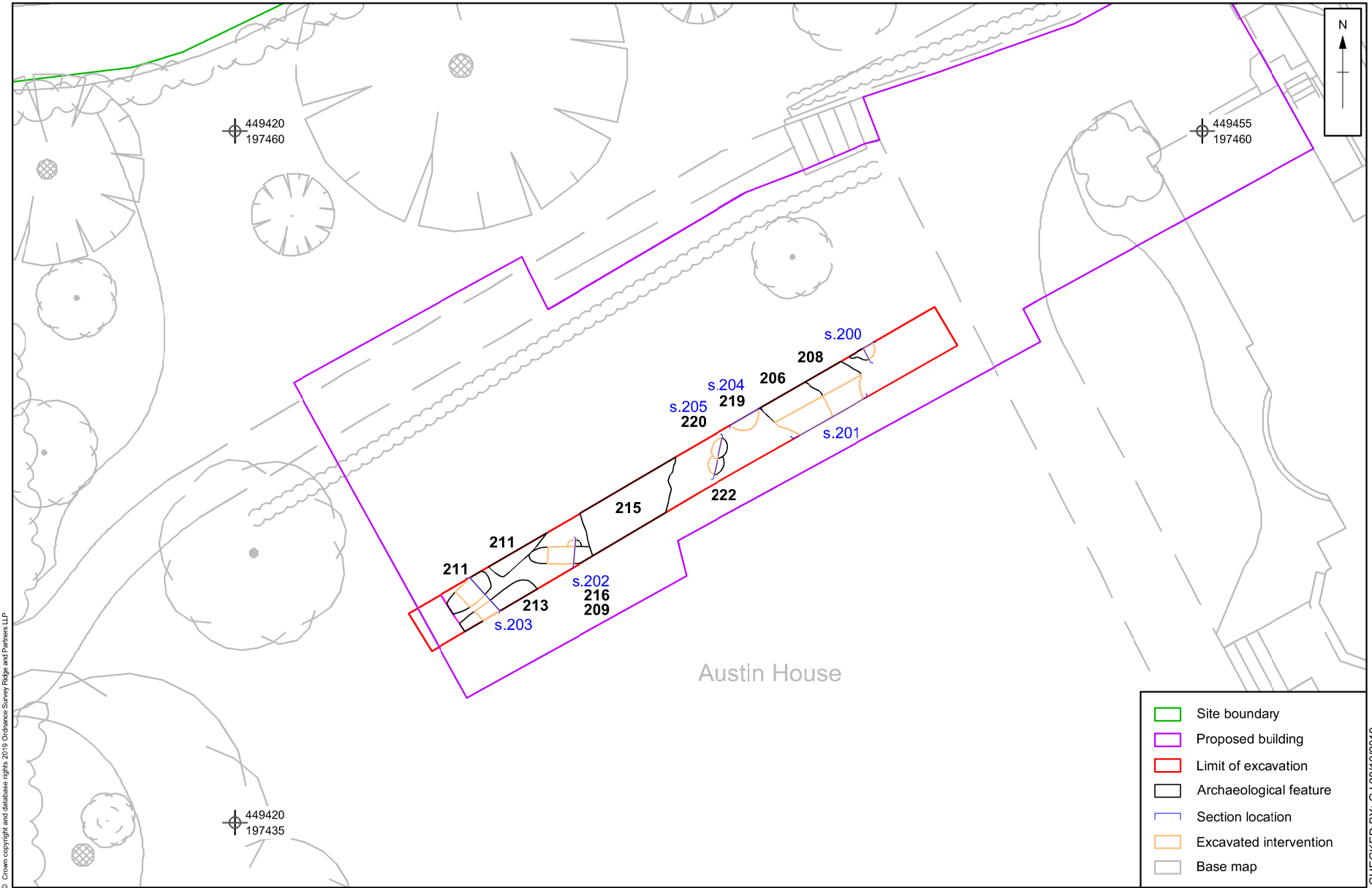


Figure 2: Trenches with proposed development

0 1:1,250 @ A4 50 m



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0 10m
Scale at A4 1:200

Figure 3: Plan of trench 2 with proposed development

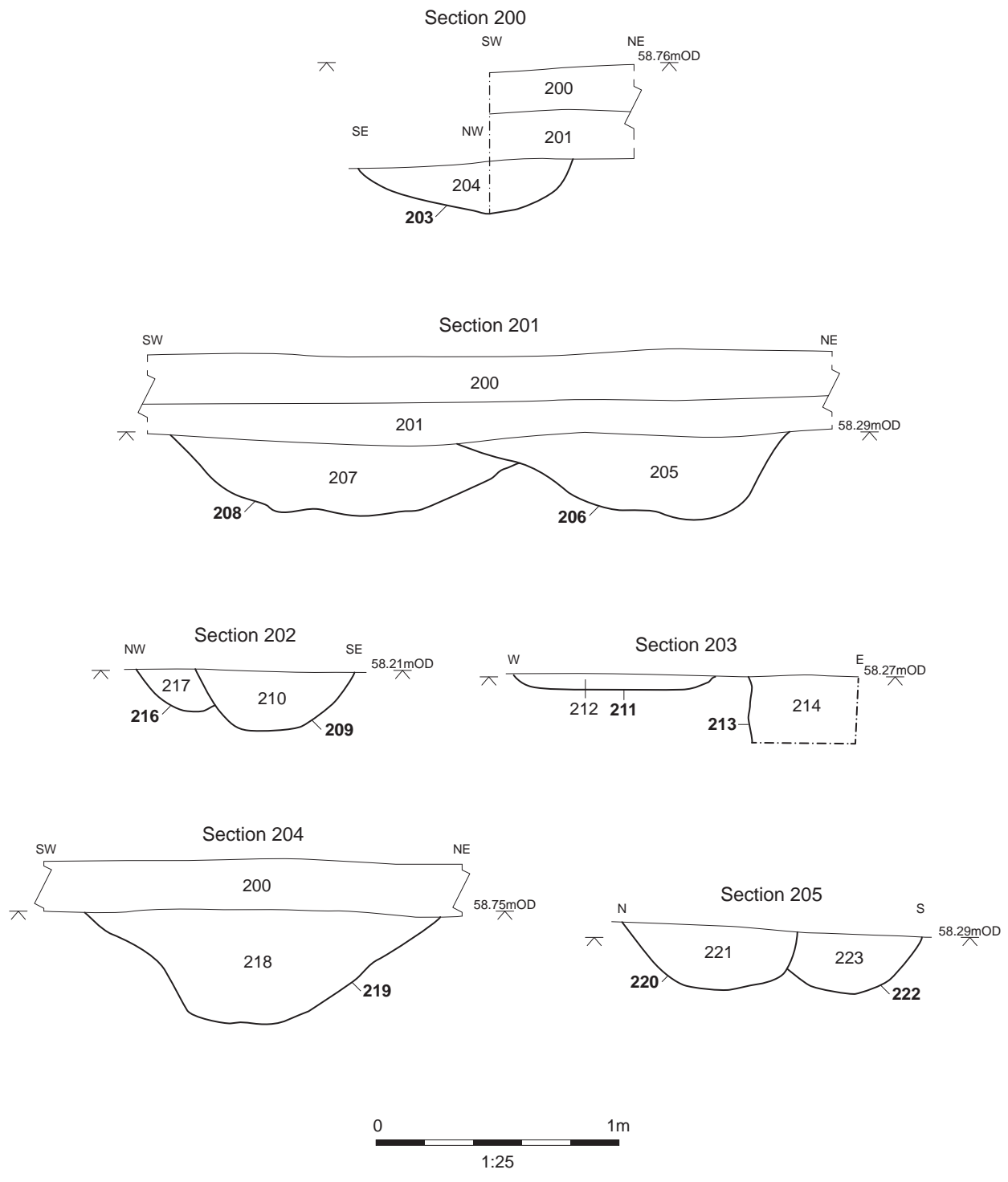
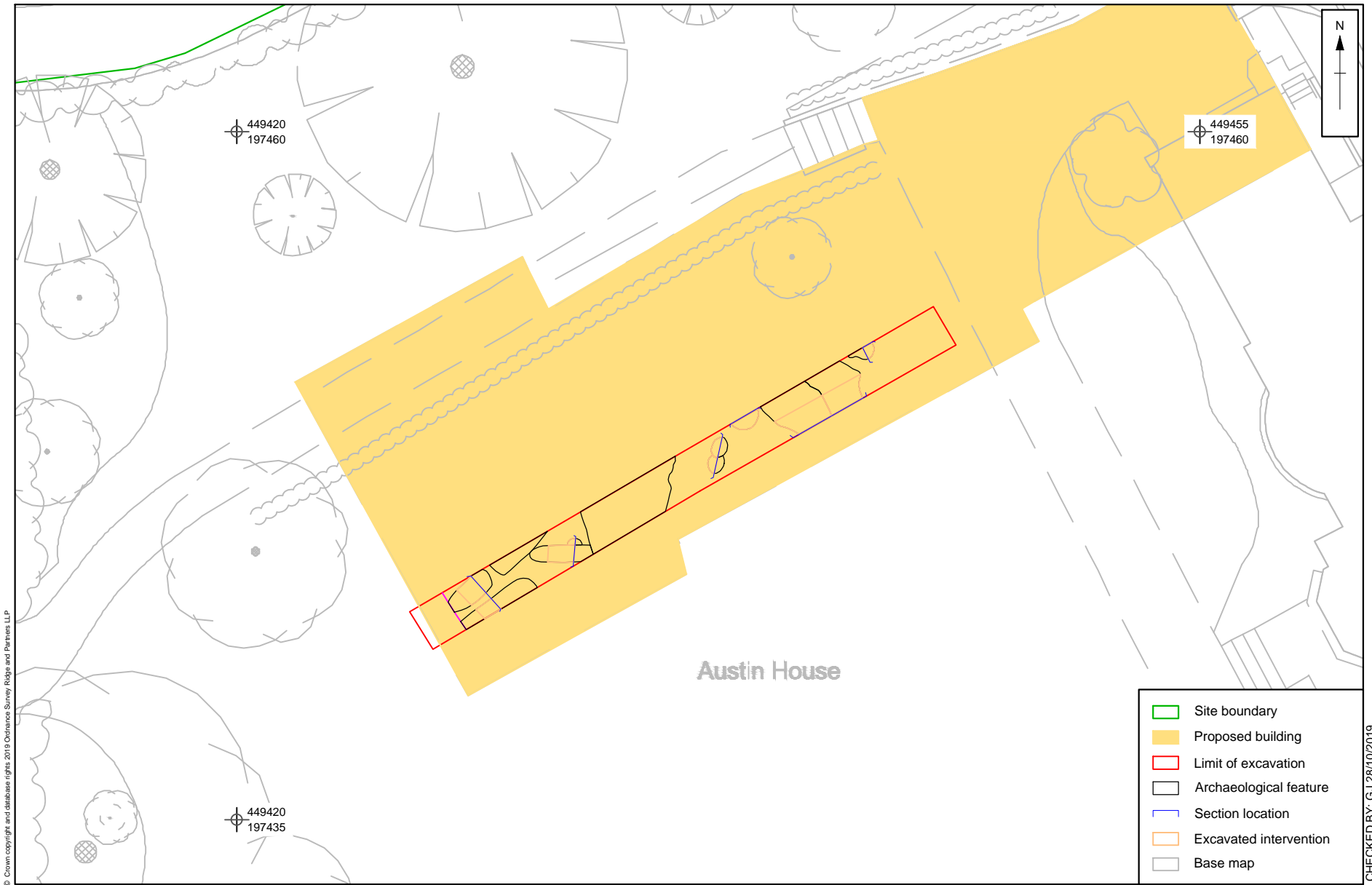


Figure 4: Section 200 – 205



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0 10m
Scale at A4 1:200

Figure 5: Proposed mitigation area



Plate 1: Trench 2 looking north-east (2x1m scales)



Plate 2: Pit 203 looking west (0.5m scale)



Plate 3: Features 206 and 208 looking south (1m scale)



Plate 4: Ditch 209 and pit 206 looking north-east (0.5m scale)



Plate 5: Feature 219 looking north-west (1m scale)



Plate 6: Pits 220 and 222 looking east (1m scale)



Plate 7: Feature 2011 and 2013 looking north (1m scale)



Plate 8: Feature 2015 looking north-east (2x 1m scale)



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