



Car Park at Cirencester Rugby Club, The Whiteway, Cirencester, Gloucestershire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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Car Park at Cirencester Rugby Club, The Whiteway, Cirencester, Gloucestershire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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Contents

Summary.....	7
Acknowledgements.....	8
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Scope of work	1
1.2 Location, topography and geology	1
1.3 Scope of work	1
1.4 Archaeological and historical background	2
2 WATCHING BRIEF AIMS AND METHODOLOGY	4
2.1 Aims	4
2.2 Methodology	4
3 WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS	5
3.1 Introduction and presentation of results.....	5
3.2 General soils and ground conditions	5
3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits	5
3.4 Archaeological description.....	5
3.5 Finds summary.....	6
4 DISCUSSION.....	7
4.1 Reliability of field investigation	7
4.2 Watching brief objectives and results.....	7
4.3 Interpretation	7
4.4 Significance.....	7
APPENDIX A CONTEXT INVENTORY.....	9
APPENDIX B FINDS REPORTS	12
B.1 Roman pottery.....	12
B.2 Post-Roman pottery.....	12
B.3 Roman ceramic building material (CBM)	13

B.4	Post-Roman ceramic building material (CBM)	14
B.5	Clay tobacco pipe.....	14
B.6	Flint.....	15
B.7	Stone	16
B.8	Metals.....	16
B.9	Animal bone.....	17
B.10	Marine shell	19
APPENDIX C	BIBLIOGRAPHY	20
APPENDIX D	SITE SUMMARY DETAILS.....	22

List of Figures

Figure 1	Site location
Figure 2	Site plan
Figure 3	Sections

List of Plates

Plate 1	Posthole 1007, View to WNW 1 x 1m scale
Plate 2	Ditch 1019 View to SE 1 x 2m scale
Plate 3	Junction of ditches 1020 and 1021 view to SE, 1 x 1m scale
Plate 4	Working shot: stripping topsoil, view to NW

List of Tables

Table 1	Roman pottery
Table 2	Worked flint
Table 3	Description of metalwork by context
Table 4	Total NISP (Number of Identified Specimens) from the site
Table 5	Non-species data recorded for specimens at the site
Table 6	Context data for taxa recorded from the site
Table 7	Element data for taxa recorded from the site

Summary

Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Carter Jonas on behalf of Cotswold District Council to undertake a watching brief in mitigation for a proposed new car park at Cirencester Rugby Club, Cirencester, Gloucestershire.

The Planning Archaeologist for Gloucestershire County Council raised no objections to the proposed scheme, but due to the proximity of Cirencester's Roman and medieval town and the presence of known archaeological remains within the site, recommended a programme of archaeological recording.

The watching brief was undertaken on visits to the site between 12th February 2020 and 9th March 2020.

The watching brief recorded a ditch aligned NW-SE and another shallower ditch at a perpendicular alignment, extending to the SW. The ditch contained pottery of Roman date and a piece of residual prehistoric worked flint. Two substantial postholes were recorded which were probably structural. The finds assemblage included domestic pottery, animal bone, and a ceramic roof tile, which may have derived from a nearby structure.

The results add to previous structural evidence, including a posthole and a ditch containing high-status building material (opus signinum and a stone tesserae) that was recorded during a previous evaluation.

A ditch aligned ENE-WSW extended across the central part of the site. It contained pottery and clay pipe of late 17th to 18th century date. A circular burnt feature contained modern building material and was probably the remains of a small bonfire.

Acknowledgements

Oxford Archaeology would like to thank Carter Jonas for commissioning this project on behalf of Cotswold District Council (CDC).

The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology by Ianto Wain. The fieldwork was carried out by Tamsin Jones. Thanks are also extended to the teams of OA staff that cleaned and packaged the finds and environmental sample under the management of Leigh Allen and Rebecca Nicholson and prepared the archive under the management of Nicola Scott.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Carter Jonas on behalf of Cotswold District Council (CDC) to undertake a watching brief in mitigation for a proposed new car park at Cirencester Rugby Club, henceforth known as 'the site'.
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken as part of a pre-planning application (ref: 18/03409/PAYPRE). The Planning Archaeologist for Gloucester County Council raised no objections to the proposed scheme, but due to the proximity of Cirencester's Roman and medieval town and the presence of known archaeological remains within the site, recommended a programme of archaeological recording appropriate to the extent and depth of the groundworks.
- 1.1.3 The watching brief was undertaken during visits to the site between between 12th February 2020 and 9th March 2020.
- 1.1.4 All work undertaken was as outlined in a written scheme of investigation (WSI) (OA 2019) and agreed with the County Archaeologist. The work was undertaken 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 Cirencester Rugby Club at the north-eastern edge of Cirencester, a market town within the county of Gloucestershire. The site is approximately 650m north of the town centre (Fig. 1) and is located on the eastern side of The Whiteway, to the north of its junction with the A417 (Grove Lane).
- 1.2.2 The site is irregular in shape and measures approximately 0.5ha. Prior to the work it comprised an area of grass and gravel informally used by the rugby club for car parking. It is defined by The Whiteway to the west, sports pitches to the north, a band of mature trees to the east, beyond which are agricultural fields, and a field and the club house to the south. The site is situated on a south-facing slope, falling from a height of 124m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) at the northern boundary down to a height of 118m (aOD) at the southern boundary.
- 1.2.3 The geology of the area is mapped as Forest Marble Formation, a limestone formed between 168.3 million and 166.1 million years ago during the Jurassic period (BGS 2019).

1.3 Scope of work

- 1.3.1 It was proposed to create a temporary car park within the site as part of the Cotswold District Council Parking Strategy and was required in order to provide parking while the Waterloo car parking site is redeveloped. It is anticipated that the car park would only be present for a maximum of 10 years, although this could be extended.
- 1.3.2 The proposed scheme as outlined in the WSI was to involve the installation of a permeable surface to create 164 car parking spaces. The proposal also included

improvements to the existing access onto The Whiteway and the provision of low-level lighting.

- 1.3.3 It was proposed that minimal impact on the existing ground levels within the site would be made, and where possible the ground level would be built up. There were areas where it was proposed that it would be necessary to re-grade slopes but this was in areas of previously raised ground. It was proposed that there would be some excavation of existing levels for the road construction and for new gate posts, although it was expected that this would be of limited impact. New tree planting was proposed for previously built-up areas.
- 1.3.4 It was suggested that the limited groundworks within the site had potential to impact upon the archaeological horizon and known archaeological features and would be mitigated by archaeological monitoring work which would record and preserve by record any archaeological remains impacted by the development.

1.4 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.4.1 The archaeological and historical background of the site has been described in detail in an archaeological desk-based assessment (GCC 1992), an archaeological evaluation (GCC 1999) and more recently in a heritage statement (OA 2019). An overview of the historic and archaeological background is given below along with the known potential for archaeological remains within the site prior to the undertaking of the work.
- 1.4.2 The site is situated at the southern end of the Cotswold Hills which are well known for their well-preserved Neolithic monuments, and is at the edge of the Upper Thames Valley, which was densely occupied during the prehistoric and Romano-British periods (Leech 1977; Darvill and Holbrook 1994). Prehistoric barrows and a Romano-British funerary or ritual site known as Tar Barrows is a scheduled monument situated approximately 420m east of the site.
- 1.4.3 The Roman town of Corinium Dobunorum originated as a fort in the 1st century AD. The fort was situated at the intersection of the Fosse Way (the A429) and Ermine Street (A417) and at the point where The Whiteway, which is thought to have prehistoric origins, comes down from the Cotswolds to a crossing point over the River Churn. It is not known when the present alignment of the Whiteway was established, but the historic route is preserved as a hollow visible to the east of the site in Hare Bushes.
- 1.4.4 The fort became a settlement and an administrative centre (civitas capital) of the Dobunni tribe, and may have become a *municipium*. Later in the Roman period, defenses were put up around the town, creating the second largest fortified area in Roman Britain. Extensive cemeteries have been found outside the Roman town, and burials have been found 100m to the west of the site. Extra-mural settlements are also known, among them a rural settlement c 1km to the south-east at Kingshill South (Simmonds *et al.* 2018).
- 1.4.5 Relatively little is known about early medieval Cirencester although it appears to have become an important royal and ecclesiastical centre and grew into a market town by the 11th century. The site of the later Augustinian Abbey of St Mary overlies the earlier medieval minster dating to the 10th century or earlier. The only surviving structure

associated with the abbey is the Spital Gate (Grade I listed building), 150m south of the site. This gate was approached by the former alignment of The Whiteway and provided access into the monastic precinct.

- 1.4.6 Aerial photographs show extensive areas of ridge-and-furrow to the east and west of the site indicating that it was part of the area of open fields surrounding Cirencester during the medieval period. Later 19th century Ordnance Survey maps show that the site was probably in agricultural use and possibly part of the landholding associated with Whiteway Farm.
- 1.4.7 The site appears to have remained in agricultural use until the rugby pitches to the north of the site were laid out. The rugby pitches have a significantly higher ground surface than the majority of the site, suggesting that they were artificially raised, most likely using soil dumped during the construction of the A417 (GCC 1992).

Potential

- 1.4.8 The historical and archaeological baseline suggested that the site is situated in an area likely to contain remains of prehistoric, Roman, medieval and post-medieval date. This was in part confirmed by the archaeological evaluation carried out within the grounds of the rugby club in 1999 (GCC 1999).
- 1.4.9 A total of 11 trenches were excavated across the rugby club grounds, with Trench 8 situated within the current site boundary. The trench was aligned east-west and was 80m in length. Three features were excavated, comprising a pit or ditch terminal, a substantial ditch and a posthole. In the eastern part of the trench a number of other amorphous features were planned but not excavated.
- 1.4.10 The possible pit or ditch terminal was found at the western end of the trench. It was 1m wide and 0.18m deep and contained Romano-British pottery, a sherd of medieval pottery and 15 sherds of Romano-British ceramic building material (CBM) in the tertiary fill. Burnt pieces of *opus signinum* and stone tesserae were found in the upper fills. The posthole was approximately 1.05m in diameter with vertical sides and a flat base and contained *in situ* limestone packing, probably for a large post. A single sherd of early Bronze Age Beaker pottery in good condition was recovered from the posthole.
- 1.4.11 The evaluation was successful in identifying that archaeological remains survive within the site although it found no evidence of the historic route of the Whiteway. It was concluded that given the presence of prehistoric postholes, further remains of this date could be present within the site. The high-status Romano-British artefacts found in the large ditch were considered unlikely to have come from a structure within the site and the ditch itself was considered part of a larger Romano-British field system, further remains of which may be present within the site.

2 WATCHING BRIEF AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The archaeological watching brief was undertaken to mitigate the impacts of groundworks through the recording of any archaeological features and deposits by means of a written, drawn and photographic record.
- 2.1.2 The project aims and objectives were as follows:
- i. To determine or confirm the general nature of any remains present.
 - ii. To determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of any remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The archaeological work involved the monitoring of groundworks associated with the construction of the new car park. The intention was to make minimal impact on the existing ground levels and where possible to build up. The specific works highlighted for archaeological monitoring comprised:
- Excavation of new gate posts at the entrance to the site;
 - Excavation for the construction of the road; and
 - Any further ground works in areas not previously raised and likely to impact upon the archaeological horizon.
- 2.2.2 The watching brief was maintained during the intrusive groundworks with potential to impact on the archaeological horizon. The programme of the works was clarified in liaison with the construction site manager to ensure that the site archaeologist was in attendance to record the stratigraphic sequence in each location.
- 2.2.3 The watching brief was undertaken using Oxford Archaeology's general approach to excavation and recording as outlined in the WSI.
- 2.2.4 All fieldwork undertaken by Oxford Archaeology (South) is overseen by the head of fieldwork, David Score MCIFA.

3 WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

3.1.1 The results of the watching brief are presented below and include a description of the archaeological remains encountered. Full details of the recorded features and deposits with dimensions and depths 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 natural cornbrash deposit (1006) was cut by all features, except for pit 1002, which cut through the top of ditch 1004.

3.2.2 Ground conditions throughout the watching brief were generally good, and the site remained dry throughout.

3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits

3.3.1 Archaeological deposits of Roman and post-medieval date were identified cutting the natural and were located in the central and western part of the watching brief area. The sequence was clear.

3.3.2 The ground surface overlying all the test pits was a subsoil layer (1001) of mid orange-brown clay silt, overlain by garden topsoil (1002).

3.4 Archaeological description

3.4.1 Archaeological remains were recorded in a single area (Fig. 2).

3.4.2 Ditch 1019/1020 was aligned NW-SE and extended across the south-west part of the area, continuing beyond the southern and western limits of the watching brief. The ditch had a flat base and an almost vertical north-east side and moderately sloping south-west side. It measured 2.4m in width and 0.6m in depth and had three fills (Fig. 3, sections 1008 and 1009). The lower fill (1026/1030) was firm dark silt-clay with iron panning and contained a small amount of Roman pottery of early to middle Roman date, a small amount of animal bone and a large fragment of Roman tegula (ceramic roof tile). The two fills above this (1024 and 1025/ 1029) were also dark silty clays from which a small amount of animal bone was recovered. The uppermost part of the ditch was filled with a thin layer of silty clay (1023/1028) which contained one sherd of pottery of mid to late Roman date and one sherd of possible Roman roof tile. Also recovered from this fill was one piece of prehistoric worked flint (an awl or heavy borer), residual in this context.

3.4.3 Towards the north-western revealed extent, ditch 1019/1020 was cut by a smaller ditch (1021), aligned NE-SW and measuring 1.1m in width and 0.11m in depth with a shallow profile (Fig. 3, section 1009). It had a single fill (1027) that did not contain finds.

3.4.4 Situated c 20m to the north-east of ditch 1019/1020 was a group of small pits and/or postholes. The northernmost feature, posthole 1007, was oval in plan, with steep sides and a flat base (Fig. 3, section 1005). It measured 1.14m in diameter and 0.59m

in depth and was filled with a dark purplish brown silt clay, partially showing the shape of a post that had rotted *in situ*. Pottery recovered from the fill (2 sherds) dates broadly to the Roman period. The sides of the posthole contained clay and stone post packing (1022).

- 3.4.5 Feature 1011 to the south-east of 1007 was similarly sized but shallower, measuring 1.18m in diameter and 0.18m in depth (Fig. 3, section 1006). It was oval in plan, with shallow concave sides and a concave base. Its single dark silty-clay fill contained a small amount of animal bone, charcoal and a worked flint blade of prehistoric date.
- 3.4.6 Feature 1014 was situated a little further to the south-east and was another possible posthole. It was oval in plan and had a flat base and steep sides, measuring 1.3m in diameter and 0.38m in depth (Fig. 3, section 1007). It was filled with silty clay and stone.
- 3.4.7 Feature 1014 was cut on its north-west side by another undated feature (1009). It was sub-circular in shape with a flat base and moderately sloping concave sides and measured 0.88m in diameter and 0.22m in depth. It contained a dark clay silt fill (1010).
- 3.4.8 To the south-west of the group was a smaller, sub-rectangular feature (1018), c 0.5m in diameter, and further south there were another two sub-circular features (1016 and 1017). The larger of the two (1016) measured c1.5m in diameter and the smaller (1017) c0.5m. None of these features was excavated.
- 3.4.9 The central area of the site was traversed by a broadly E-W aligned linear feature (1004) that continued beyond the limits of the watching brief area. It had a wide flat base and irregular steep sides. It measured 1.8m in width, 0.16m in depth and was filled by a dark clay silt which contained post-medieval pottery (dated to the late 17th to mid-18th century) and a clay pipe fragment of the same date.
- 3.4.10 The ditch was cut by a shallow pit (1002) of modern date, possibly the remains of a small bonfire. It was an irregular oval shape with a loose fill (1003) of charcoal and burnt brownish red clay. Industrial brick fragments (26 fragments) recovered from the fill were late 19th or 20th century in date. Two fragments of probable stone roof tile were also recovered from the fill.

3.5 Finds summary

- 3.5.1 Two pieces of prehistoric worked flint were recovered from a Roman ditch and a small pit that was otherwise undated.
- 3.5.2 Finds of Roman date were recovered from the fill of NW-SE aligned ditch 1019/1020 (pottery, animal bone and CBM) and from a group of pits/postholes (pottery and animal bone). An E-W aligned ditch contained pottery, metal, animal bone and clay pipe of post-medieval date. Stone roof tile fragments and CBM fragments were recovered from modern feature 1002. Post-medieval pottery and clay pipe was recovered from the topsoil and subsoil.

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability of field investigation

4.1.1 The features recorded during the watching brief show the presence of surviving features below existing ground levels and are considered to be a good representation of the archaeological remains present within the site.

4.2 Watching brief objectives and results

4.2.1 The archaeological watching brief identified archaeological deposits of Roman and post-medieval date – consisting of three ditches, and a small number of pits and postholes – surviving within the impact range of the proposed development.

4.3 Interpretation

4.3.1 A shallow wide feature (1011) contained a small amount of animal bone and a single piece of worked flint. This feature may be prehistoric in date but its location, close to features of Roman date, and the occurrence of another worked flint on the site in a Roman feature may mean that it is residual here.

4.3.2 Two features (1007 and 1014) were almost certainly structural postholes, situated c4m apart, with remnant limestone post packing in both and the clear outline of a timber post in one. Only one was dated (Roman) but it is likely that, due to their similar size and form, they are broadly contemporary. They may have supported timbers for a structure of Roman date. The small ceramic building material assemblage supports this, with the recovery of at least one fragment of tegula (roof tile) from a nearby ditch suggesting a roofed structure in the vicinity.

4.3.3 The other finds support the presence of settlement nearby, with a small pottery assemblage of middle Roman date, an animal bone assemblage attesting to the deposition of food and butchery waste, including a cattle skull, pelvis and horn core, a sheep/ goat mandible and a horse tooth.

4.3.4 The NW-SE aligned ditch (1019/1020) may represent a field or enclosure boundary and ditch 1021 a less substantial division to the south-west, the site forming part of an area of open fields to the north-east of Roman Cirencester (*Corinium*). The evidence is not sufficient to conclusively determine the function of the building represented by the postholes, but a farmhouse or other agricultural building are possibilities. Rectilinear enclosures that defined fields and contained structures were recorded at Kingshill South to the south-east (Simmonds et al. 2018), and potentially a similar pattern existed at the current site.

4.4 Significance

4.4.1 The site lies close to *Corinium* Roman Town (scheduled monument no. 1003426), but it is not considered that the work impacts on the scheduled area.

4.4.2 The location of the site, outside the north-eastern limits of Cirencester, contributes to the dataset for rural settlement in the hinterland of this important Roman centre. The town appears to have lacked extra-mural development, the rural landscape instead extending up to the town walls (Holbrook 2008, 138; Simmonds *et al.* 2018, 212-3).

Few rural settlements, though, have been identified in the area immediately surrounding Cirencester (Allen *et al.* 2018). There is, as mentioned above, Kingshill South just over 1km to the south-east (Simmonds *et al.* 2018) and, north of that site, an enclosed early Roman settlement at Kingshill North (Biddulph and Welsh 2011). Despite the limited results, the archaeological work at the Rugby Club, both the evaluation and the watching brief, is significant, providing important information about activity north of the town.

- 4.4.3 It is not possible on the current evidence to tie the site to the development of Cirencester from a fort to a town and the impact this would have had on the surrounding landscape, as the site could only be broadly dated to the 'Roman' period from the small finds assemblage. However, it is certainly possible that the postholes recorded on the current site may form part of a building of some status or perhaps a farmstead of more modest status. The location on higher land overlooking Cirencester in the hinterland of the fort and then town is significant as it is a likely location for a villa or farmhouse, particularly with its proximity to the junction of the Fosse Way and Ermine Street.
- 4.4.4 The evidence adds to the compendium of evidence recovered from the site, suggesting a settlement here. The previous evaluation (GCC 1999) included one trench within the current watching brief area and this recovered 'high status' building material of opus signinum and stone tesserae which suggest a building of some status nearby. Although the evidence from the site is not extensive, it is sufficient to indicate the presence of a structure with a tiled roof tile and mortared flooring. However, it cannot be concluded from current evidence that the postholes recorded within the site represent the structure from which these finds originated. Indeed, it is possible that the tile may have been reused in other structures, such as hearths or ovens.
- 4.4.5 The post-medieval ditch extending across the site on an ENE-WSW alignment does not correspond with field boundaries shown on 19th century historic mapping and this, along with the finds recovered from its fill, suggests that it represents a boundary or drainage ditch of earlier post-medieval date (late 17th to 18th century).

APPENDIX A CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
1000	Layer		0.24	Topsoil	Fe Nail Fe obj	Modern
1001	Layer		0.15	Subsoil – mid orange brown clay silt		-
1002	Cut	1.24	0.18	Pit, irregular oval, irregular concave sides, irregular base		
1003	Fill		0.18	Fill of 1002. Loose dark brown-black mixed deposit with brownish red lenses	Bone Fe Nail CBM Sample 20L <1000>	Modern
1004	Cut			Ditch, aligned E-W, irregular steep sides, wide flat base		
1005	Fill		0.16	Soft, friable dark brown-grey clay-silt	Pot Fe Nails Fe obj Bone Clay Pipe	Late 18 th to mid 19 th century
1006	Layer			Natural		
1007	Cut	1.14	0.59	Posthole, Oval, steep concave sides, flat base		
1008	Fill		0.59	Fill of 1007 - Post-pipe. Dark purple-brown silt-clay, occasional charcoal and small stones	Pot Bone	Roman
1009	Cut	0.88	0.22	Pit, Sub-circular, flat base, moderately sloping concave sides		
1010	Fill		0.22	Fill of 1009. Dark grey-brown silt-clay		
1011	Cut	1.18	0.18	Pit, sloped base, shallow concave sides		
1012	Fill		0.18	Fill of 1011. Dark grey-brown silt-clay, moderate charcoal and sub-angular stones	Bone Worked flint (blade)	
1013	Void					
1014	Cut	1.3	0.38	Pit or posthole. Oval, flat base, steep concave sides		

Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
1015	Fill		0.38	Fill of 1014. Firm brown-orange silt-clay and stone, occasional charcoal		
1016	Cut			Unexcavated, possible circular feature		
1017	Cut			Unexcavated sub-circular feature		
1018	Cut			Unexcavated sub-circular feature		
1019	Cut	2.4	0.6	Ditch, NW-SE, flat base, steep straight NE side, moderate straight SW side		
1020	Cut	3.36	0.35	Ditch, NW-SE, flat base, moderate straight sides		
1021	Cut	1.1	0.11	Ditch, NE-SW, irregular base, shallow irregular sides		
1022	Fill		0.58	Fill of posthole 1007. Post-packing, Firm mid brown-orange silt-clay and stone		
1023	Fill		0.16	Fill of ditch 1019. Firm mid grey-brown silt-clay	CBM Pot Flint Bone	Mid to late Roman
1024	Fill		0.38	Fill of ditch 1019. Firm dark brown-grey silt-clay		
1025	Fill		0.28	Fill of ditch 1019. Dark orange-grey silt-clay, occasional charcoal		
1026	Fill		0.6	Fill of ditch 1019. Firm dark brown-red silt-clay, occasional charcoal and iron panning	Pot Bone	Roman
1027	Fill		0.11	Ditch fill, firm very dark grey clay with silt lenses, moderate limestone fragments		
1028	Fill		0.12	Ditch fill, firm mid grey-brown clay with silt lenses		
1029	Fill		0.1	Fill of ditch 1020, Light orange-grey sand-clay	Bone	

Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
				with moderate limestone frags		
1030	Fill		0.14	Fill of ditch 1020, firm mid grey-brown silt-clay with moderate limestone frags	Pot CBM (Tegula)	Early to Mid Roman

APPENDIX B FINDS REPORTS

B.1 Roman pottery

By Kate Brady

Description

B.1.1 Eight sherds (32g) of pottery were recovered from the watching brief. The assemblage was recorded following guidelines set out in *A Standard for Pottery Studies in Archaeology* (PCRG, SGRP, MPRG 2016). Each context group was quantified by count and weight and sorted into wares, which were assigned codes taken from Oxford Archaeology's guidelines for recording Roman pottery (Booth 2016) and a spot-date assigned.

Context	Count	Weight	Description	Spot-date
1026	3	26	R20, O20 body sherds	Roman
1008	1	2	R20	Roman
1030	3	2	O10, S (two very small frags, source unclear)	AD 40-240
1023	1	2	B11 small sherd with burnished lattice dec	AD 120-410

Table 1. Roman pottery

B.1.2 A total of eight sherds weighing 32g were recovered from the watching brief. The sherds were small and fairly abraded. Five sherds could only be assigned a broad Roman date, being fairly undiagnostic coarseware body sherds (general unsourced coarseware fabrics O10, R20). Three further small body sherds could be dated slightly more closely by fabric. There are two tiny sherds of samian ware (S), dating to the broad period of samian importation (AD 40-240); with reference to fabric samples it may be possible to narrow this date to the early or middle Roman period. The remaining sherd is a small sherd of black-burnished ware from South Dorset (B11) which was imported from the area of manufacture from AD 120 onwards.

B.2 Post-Roman pottery

By John Cotter

Introduction and methodology

B.2.1 Six sherds of pottery weighing 191g were recovered from three contexts. Given the small quantity present, this has not been separately catalogued but is fully described below. Fabric codes referred to are those of the Museum of London (MOLA 2014).

Description

B.2.2 **Context (1000) Spot-date: c 1550-1900.** Description: 1 sherd (weight 14g). Flat sherd from the basal area of a vessel (bowl or jar?). Post-medieval red earthenware (PMR, c 1550-1900). Probably of fairly local origin. Red-brown fabric with a glossy brown

internal glaze. Sherd fairly abraded. Not closely datable but very similar in character to the sherds/vessels below in (1001) and (1005) and probably the same date.

B.2.3 Context (1001) Spot-date: c 1650-1800? Description: 1 sherd (weight 114g). Near-profile from a wide dish or shallow bowl in post-medieval red earthenware (PMR). Very damaged flanged rim (no actual rim tip present); short flaring wall and a flat base. Smooth orange-buff to reddish fabric with a glossy brown internal glaze. Random scratch-marks in the glaze were probably caused by cutlery during use as a dish or 'dinner plate' for serving food. Sherd fairly fresh - apart from the damaged/missing rim. Possibly dates from the mid-17th or the 18th century (and perhaps within c 1650-1750?).

B.2.4 Context (1005) Spot-date: c 1680-1800? Description: 4 sherds (weight 63g). All in post-medieval red earthenware (PMR). Fabric mostly very similar to (1001). Includes 3 sherds from 3 separate vessels with internal brown glaze of various tones from fairly dark to light brown. One of these is from the pad base or a globular jug or jar with a smooth external finish. Two others are probably from dishes or bowls. The fourth sherd is a small body sherd from a fourth, unglazed, vessel (just possibly a flowerpot).

Recommendations regarding the conservation, discard and retention of material

B.2.5 The pottery has some potential for further analysis and should be retained.

B.3 Roman ceramic building material (CBM)

By Kate Brady

B.3.1 Three pieces (787g) of Roman ceramic building material (CBM) were recovered. Given the small quantity present, this has not been separately catalogued but is fully described below.

Description

B.3.2 Context (1023) Spot-date: Roman Description: 1 fragment weighing 58g. From a single object of unidentified form (possibly roof tile). It has one flat side and two other sides sloping to an apex and a slightly curving protruding ridge. The fabric is red/orange with fine sand and occasional quartz grains, ferrous inclusions, and moderate small limestone inclusions.

B.3.3 Context (1030) Spot-date: Roman Description: 2 fragments weighing 728g. One large fragment of tegula and smaller possible additional tegula fragment in a different fabric. The tegula measures 140mm (L) X 125mm (W) X 24mm (D) (length and width incomplete) with one flat side and the partially remaining ridge on one side. The fabric is reddish orange with frequent ferrous inclusions, silicate and occasional to moderate small silver mica flakes.

B.3.4 The presence of a fairly large fragment of tegula suggests the presence of a Roman building in the vicinity.

Recommendations regarding the conservation, discard and retention of material

B.3.5 The objects here have some potential for further identification and analysis and a should be retained.

B.4 Post-Roman ceramic building material (CBM)

By John Cotter

Introduction and methodology

B.4.1 A total of 26 pieces (weight 1275g) from a single brick-like object were recovered. Given the small quantity present, this has not been separately catalogued but is fully described below.

Description

B.4.2 **Context (1003) Spot-date: Late 19th or 20th century** Description: 26 fragments (plus smaller scraps) weighing 1275g. These appear to be from a single industrial brick-like object. The larger hand-retrieved piece (350g) retains enough features to show it is a press-moulded slab or shallow brick, probably rectangular or square in plan, with a thickness of 50mm. The upper(?) surface shows traces of a recess or frog c 10mm deep and probably with a flat base to the recess. The fabric is very unusual – mainly black – with bluish or purplish tones here and there, and coarsely granular in texture but with smooth machine-pressed surfaces. The item is remarkably heavy for its size and appears to be made of something like compacted iron slag. Coarse shiny lumps of slag-like material, some with crystalline structures within, appear to be the main inclusion. The smaller scraps are strongly magnetic. There are also a few inclusions of white quartz and a glassy white or clear silicate.

B.4.3 The item appears to be some kind of brick/slab made from recycled iron slag. It may have served a standard structural function (eg part of a wall or a paved surface), or it may have been a purpose-made refractory element (lining) in an industrial furnace of some kind. It does not resemble the more usual yellow fireclay firebricks used for boiler furnaces. Most of the item (25 pieces, 925g) was recovered from sample 1000 from the same context (1003).

Recommendations regarding the conservation, discard and retention of material

B.4.4 The object here has some potential for further analysis and a sample of pieces should be retained.

B.5 Clay tobacco pipe

By John Cotter

Introduction and methodology

B.5.1 A total of 3 pieces of clay pipe weighing 12g were recovered from two contexts. Only stem fragments are present. Given the small quantity present, this has not been separately catalogued but is fully described below.

Description

B.5.2 **Context (1001) Spot-date: 17th century** Description: 1 piece (weight 6g). Slightly weathered stem fragment from a typically ‘chunky’ 17th-century clay pipe with a large stem bore diameter (c 4mm).

B.5.3 **Context (1005) Spot-date: Late-17th to mid-18th century?** Description: 2 pieces (weight 6g). Slightly weathered stem fragments from 2 separate pipes. One is from a ‘chunky’ 17th-century pipe with a large stem bore diameter (c 4mm). The other piece is narrower and tapering towards the mouthpiece (traces of which possibly survive?). The latter has a narrower stem bore diameter of c 2.25mm, suggesting a date in the late 17th century or the first half of the 18th century.

Recommendations regarding the conservation, discard and retention of material

B.5.4 The pipes here have little potential for further analysis and could be discarded, if so desired.

B.6 Flint

By Michael Donnelly

Introduction

B.6.1 Only two lithics were recovered from this watching brief but both were of interest. The first was a blade of Portland chert found in context 1012 while the second was a flint awl or heavy borer formed on an inner flake from context 1023. Portland chert originates from the Portland area but can be found throughout much of southwest and southcentral England (often as a minimal component in flint-dominated assemblages) and its presence here is not entirely unusual. The piece has multi-directional flaking scars suggesting the blade form may be accidental and not early in date, but it could equally have come from the shaping of a core tool such as an axe and still be early prehistoric. The awl or borer has a thick retouched projection to its distal end with heavy retouch along its lower dorsal right and ventral left to form the projection. Both pieces are unfortunately undiagnostic but do appear to indicate that prehistoric activity was perhaps common in the area subjected to a watching brief.

Methodology

B.6.2 The artefacts were catalogued according to OA South's standard system of broad artefact/debitage type (Anderson-Whymark 2013; Bradley 1999), general condition noted and dating was attempted where possible.

Context	type	sub-type	notes
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1012	Blade	Misc trimming	Portland chert and lightly burnt, has multi-directional flaking pattern so perhaps accidental blade form
1023	Awl/borer	Inner flake	Thick awl or borer on cherty flint

Table 2: Worked flint

B.7 Stone

By Geraldine Crann

Description

B.7.1 Two fragments fossiliferous limestone. The larger fragment circa 1.5-2cm thick, 10x9cm, unbroken end has been shaped and rounded, 420g; one small fragment, 0.5cm thick, 16g. (436g).

B.7.2 The two fragments collected are probably fragments of stone roof tiles.

Recommendations regarding the conservation, discard and retention of material

B.7.3 The assemblage has been fully recorded and no further information can be gained from such a small sample.

B.8 Metals

By Anni Byard

Introduction

B.8.1 The metalwork was scanned and where possible century or broad period dates were assigned. Objects were quantified by type and weight by context and recorded on a spreadsheet.

B.8.2 A total of eight iron objects weighing 544.2g were recovered from four contexts. All objects are of post medieval or modern date.

Description

Context	Material	Count	Weight	Object	Date	Description
1000	Fe	1	8.4	Nail	PM	Hand forged nail with square shank and rounded L-shaped head, probably PM
1000	Fe	1	502	Horseshoe	19th C	Complete horseshoe with 3 or 4 surviving nails. Toeclip, no calkins.
1001	Fe	1	2	Bar	Query	Thin bar with possible tapering edge. Incomplete. Uncertain date or function
1003	Fe	1	6	Nail	Modern	Modern 80mm / 3.25 inch nail with round shank and round head

1005	Fe	3	10.1	Nail	PM	3x hand forged nails including one possible horseshoe nail, probably PM
1005	Fe	1	15.7	Bar	Query	Square sectioned bar with tapering and curved end and possibly a wedge-shaped terminal. Uncertain function

Table 3. Description of metalwork by context

- B.8.3 Context 1000 yielded two iron objects, a hand-forged nail and a complete horseshoe. The horseshoe has a toeclip and is of a type introduced during the 19th century. It has several extant nails.
- B.8.4 Five further nails were recovered during site works. The nail from context 1003 is of modern (mid – late 20th century) date while three hand-forged nails from context 1005 are of post medieval to 19th century date.
- B.8.5 Two incomplete iron bars were each recovered from context 1001 and 1005. These are of uncertain function but are likely to date from the post medieval to modern periods.

Discussion

- B.8.6 The material recovered is unexceptional and typical of post medieval and modern background activity. The horseshoe points to possible agricultural cultivation.
- B.8.7 No further work is suggested for this small assemblage.

B.9 Animal bone

By Phil Terry

Introduction

- B.9.1 A total of 45 animal bone specimens weighing 405g in total were recovered from 8 contexts during the watching brief (Table 1). The bone was mostly collected by hand with a small component (NISP=1, 3g) being recovered from environmental samples sieved to 2mm. These bones were identified using a comparative reference collection, as well as osteological books and articles (including Schmid 1972 and Hillson 1992). The condition of the bone was graded on a 6-point system, with grade 0 equating to excellent preservation and grade 5 indicating the bone was unrecognisable. Tooth wear and aging follows Grant (1982). Full records are available in the site archive.
- B.9.2 Preservation on the site was mostly fair condition (grade 2), with some contexts producing poorer bone surface preservation, especially (2008). The site was predominantly dated to the Roman period (identified using pottery recovered from site), comprising a series of ditches and pits on agricultural land.

Description

- B.9.3 Sheep/goat and domestic cattle were the most common taxon identified from this assemblage, with two teeth of horse also recovered. Much of the assemblage was fragmentary, with 67% not being assigned to a particular taxon. Traces of butchery and burning were found on two and one bones respectively (Table 2).
- B.9.4 The sheep/goat remains were the only ones to show the presence of butchery, with cut marks on a proximal rib end suggesting filleting of meat. There is also another medium mammal long bone fragment with cutmarks that is likely to be from sheep/goat, although the element was not identified. The presence of a partial mandible from a sheep aged 6-12 months could suggest the exploitation of these animals for meat, as lamb is obtained from animals slaughtered between 4 months to a year old.
- B.9.5 Of the domestic cattle remains identified, the most impressive is the right horncore and attached skull bones of an adult male aged at least seven years and showing an advanced level of suture closing, so that the sutures were barely visible (Grigson, 1982). An animal of this age was most likely kept for husbandry purposes, possibly for stud or working the plough.

Conclusions

- B.9.6 Given the fragmentary nature of the assemblage it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions about animal husbandry at this site. Evidence of both butchery and burning are present suggesting that both sheep and cattle are likely to have been exploited in some fashion.

Recommendations regarding the conservation, discard and retention of material

- B.9.7 The assemblage has been fully recorded and no further information can be gained from such a small sample.

Taxon	Number	% of Assemblage
domestic cattle	6	13.33
horse	2	4.44
sheep/goat	7	15.56
medium mammal	19	42.22
large mammal	11	24.44
Total NISP	45	

Table 4. Total NISP (Number of Identified Specimens) from the site

	Butchery marks	Burning	Ageing data
domestic cattle			1
sheep / goat	1		2
medium mammal	1	1	
Total	2	1	3

Table 5. Non-species data recorded for specimens at the site

Context	NISP	Taxon				
		Cattle	Horse	Sheep/Goat	Medium Mammal	Large Mammal
1001	7				3	4
1003	2			1		1
1005	13			1	9	3
1008	3				3	
1012	2					2
1023	9	2	2		5	
1026	4	4				
1029	5			5		

Table 6. Context data for taxa recorded from the site

Context	NISP	Element							
		Horncore	Phalange	Skull	Rib	Teeth	Mandible	Pelvis	Indet.
1001	7			2					5
1003	2		1		1				
1005	13				3	1			9
1008	3								3
1012	2								2
1023	9					2		2	5
1026	4	1		3					
1029	5						5		

Table 7. Element data for taxa recorded from the site

B.10 Marine shell

By Rebecca Nicholson

Description

B.10.1 Context 1005. One left valve of oyster (*Ostrea edulis*) weighing 12g, in fairly good condition but exhibiting evidence of tunnelling by the marine polychaete worm *Polydora hoplura* Claparède, 1868.

Recommendations regarding the conservation, discard and retention of material

B.10.2 The shell has been recorded and offers no further research potential. Consequently, retention in the archive is not required.

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APPENDIX D SITE SUMMARY DETAILS

Site name:	Cirencester Rugby Club
Site code:	OACIRC20
Grid Reference	SP 02431 02680
Type:	Watching Brief
Date and duration:	February to March 2020
Area of Site	0.5ha
Location of archive:	The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES and will be deposited with Gloucestershire Museum Services in due course

Summary of Results: Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Carter Jonas on behalf of Cotswold District Council to undertake a watching brief in mitigation for a proposed new car park at Cirencester Rugby Club, Cirencester, Gloucestershire.

The County Archaeologist raised no objections to the proposed scheme, but due to the proximity of Cirencester's Roman and medieval town and the presence of known archaeological remains within the site, recommended a programme of archaeological recording.

The watching brief was undertaken on visits to the site between 12th February 2020 and 9th March 2020.

The watching brief recorded a ditch aligned NW-SE and another shallower ditch at a perpendicular alignment, extending to the SW. The ditch contained pottery of Roman date and a piece of residual prehistoric worked flint. Two substantial postholes were recorded which were probably structural. The finds assemblage included domestic pottery, animal bone, and a ceramic roof tile, which may have derived from a nearby structure suggesting that this may have been a settlement structure.

The results add to evidence of a similar structural evidence, including a posthole and a ditch containing 'high high-status building material' (opus signinum and a stone tesserae) that was recorded during a previous evaluation.

A ditch aligned ENE-WSW extended across the central part of the site. It contained pottery and clay pipe of late 17thth to 18thth century date. A circular burnt feature contained modern building material and was probably the remains of a small bonfire.



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Figure 1: Site location

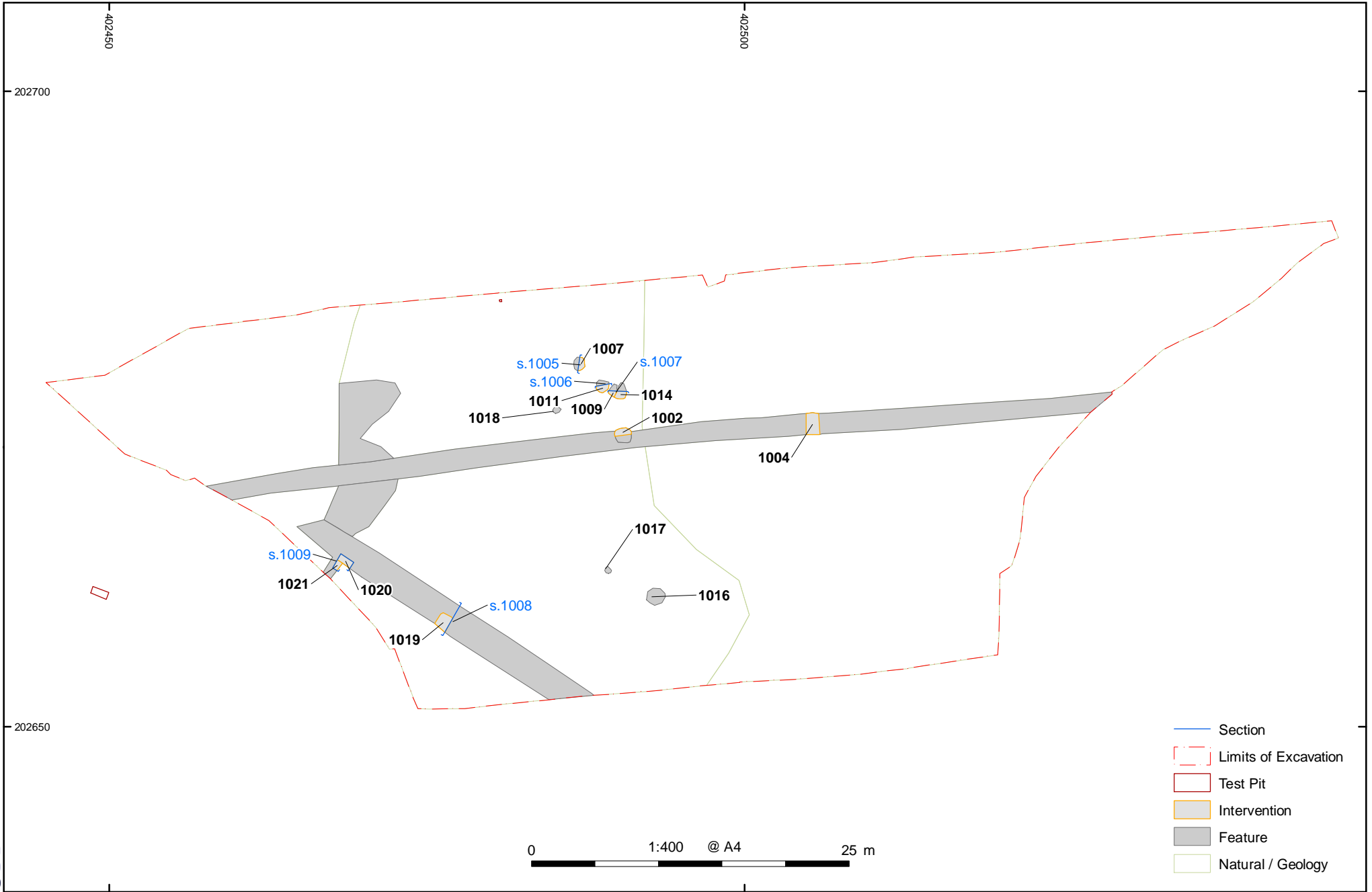


Figure 2: Site plan

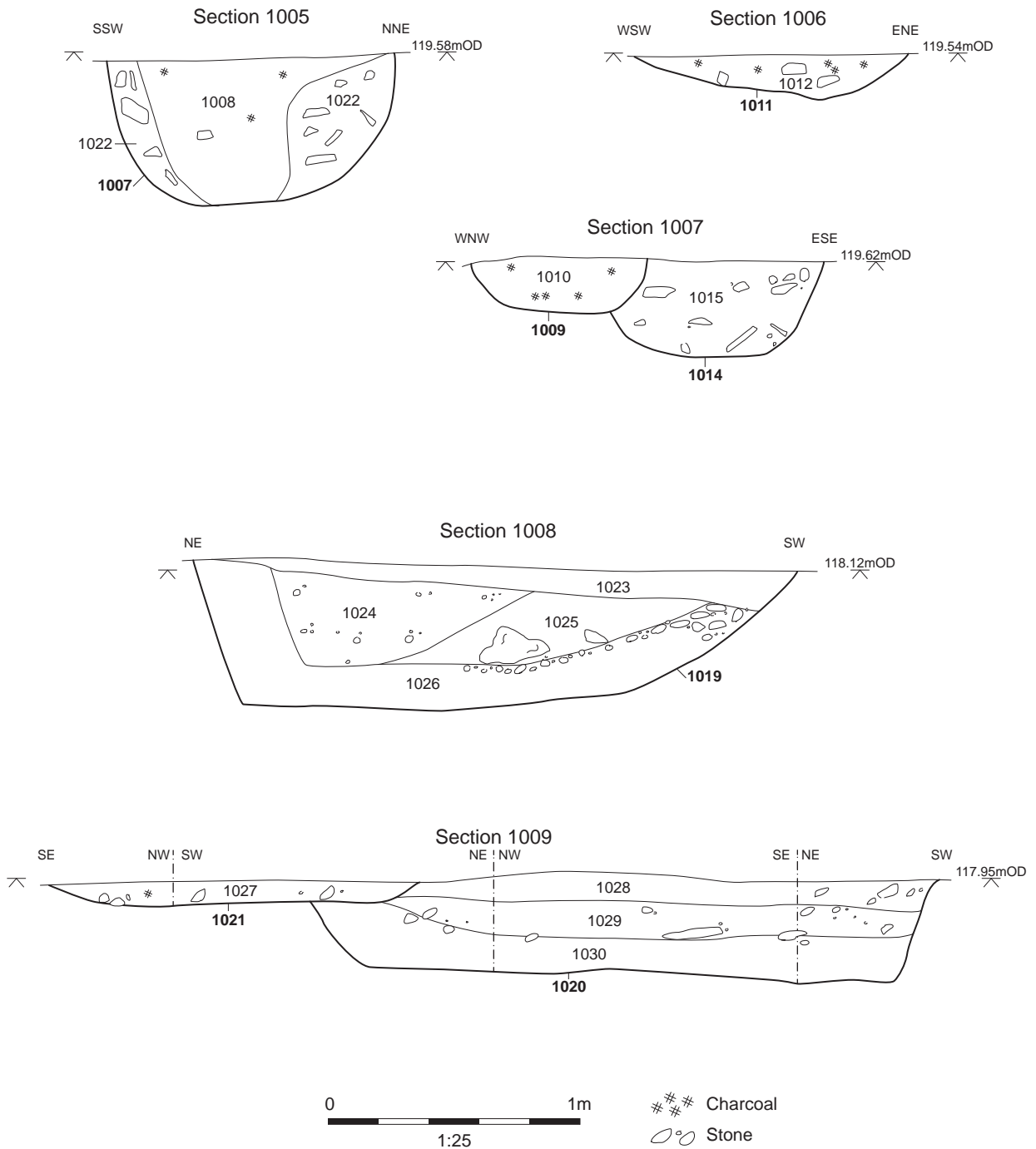


Figure 3: Sections



Plate 1: Posthole 1007 View to WNW 1 x 1m scale



Plate 2: Ditch 1019 View to SE 1 x 2m scale



Plate 3: Junction of ditches 1020 and 1021 view to SE,
1 x 1m scale



Plate 4: Working shot: stripping topsoil, view to NW



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