



Badbury Hill Access Path, Great Coxwell, Oxfordshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

April 2022

Client: National Trust

Issue No: 1

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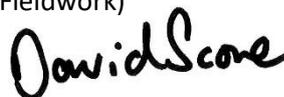


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Badbury Hill Access Path, Great Coxwell, Oxfordshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Written by John Boothroyd

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Summary

In November 2021, Oxford Archaeology undertook a watching brief during the construction of a new access path at Badbury Hill, Great Coxwell, Oxfordshire.

The works comprised the removal of topsoil and exposed the underlying subsoil. No archaeological features or deposits were noted. Two fragments of post-medieval ceramic building material were recovered from the topsoil but these were not retained.

Acknowledgements

Oxford Archaeology would like to thank the National Trust for commissioning this project. Thanks are also extended to Steven Weaver who monitored the work on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council.

The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology by John Boothroyd. The fieldwork was undertaken by Sarah Peacop. Thanks are also extended to the team of OA staff who 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 the National Trust to undertake a watching brief at the site of new access path at Badbury Hill, Great Coxwell, Oxfordshire.

1.1.2 The work was undertaken as a condition of Planning Permission (planning ref. P21/V1429/FUL). The scope of archaeological works required was defined by conditions three and four of the decision notice, which state:

“Condition 3:

The applicant, or their agents or successors in title, shall be responsible for organising and implementing an archaeological watching brief, this to be maintained during the period of construction/during any groundworks taking place on the site. The watching brief shall be carried out by a professional archaeological organisation in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation that has first been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the recording and inspection of matters of archaeological importance on the site (Policy CP39 of the adopted Local Plan 2031 Part 1 and Policy DP39 of the adopted Local Plan 2031 Part 2)

Condition 4:

Following the approval of the Written Scheme of Investigation referred to in condition 3, no development shall commence on site without the appointed archaeologist being present. Once the watching brief has been completed its findings shall be reported to the Local Planning Authority, as agreed in the Written Scheme of Investigation, including all processing, research and analysis necessary to produce an accessible and useable archive and a full report for publication which shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority within two years of the completion of the archaeological fieldwork.

Reason: To safeguard the recording and inspection of matters of archaeological importance on the site (Policy CP39 of the adopted Local Plan 2031 Part 1 and Policy DP39 of the adopted Local Plan 2031 Part 2)”

1.1.3 This document outlines how OA implemented the specified requirements.

1.2 Location, topography and geology

1.2.1 The site lies to the north of the B4019 Highworth Road in the parish of Great Coxwell, Oxfordshire (Fig. 1; NGR: SU26453 94572).

1.2.2 The route of the proposed access path runs parallel to the Highworth Road, running along the southern edge of a single arable field. The access track links an unnamed road at its eastern limit to the car park for Badbury Hill, the site of an Iron Age hill fort and ancient woodland, to the west.

1.2.3 The geology of the area is mapped as Lower Greensand Group – Sandstone, Ferruginous. A Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 101 to 126 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period (BGS Online).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1.1 The archaeological and historical background of the site has been described in detail in a desk-based assessment produced in advance of improvement works for Badbury Hill car park (OA 2015), and will not be reproduced here.
- 2.1.2 The Desk-based Assessment demonstrated that the site has the potential to contain archaeological remains of prehistoric, Saxon, post-medieval and early modern (particularly the Second World War) date. The Iron Age Badbury Camp Hillfort, a Scheduled Ancient Monument (list no. 1004857) lies at the western limit of the access path but will not be impacted by these works.
- 2.1.3 No archaeological deposits or features were identified during the improvement works undertaken within the car park (OA 2019).

3 WATCHING BRIEF AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims

3.1.1 The archaeological watching brief was undertaken to mitigate the impacts of the proposed construction work through the recording of any archaeological features and deposits by written, drawn and photographic record.

3.2 Specific aims and objectives

3.2.1 The specific aims and objectives of the watching brief were:

- i. To determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any archaeological remains within the development;
- ii. To determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of any remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence;
- iii. To determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence;
- iv. To disseminate the results through the production of a site archive for deposition with an appropriate museum and to provide information for accession to the Oxfordshire HER.

3.3 Methodology

3.3.1 The fieldwork was undertaken in accordance with the methodology outlined in the written scheme of investigation (OA 2021).

3.3.2 The works comprised the removal of topsoil along the route of the new access path which ran for approximately 425m and measured 1.5m wide (Fig. 2). The watching brief was maintained during the removal of all deposits until impact depth was reached. Deposits were removed using a c. 3 tonne tracked excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. A photographic and written record was made of the all deposits observed and the works in general.

3.3.3 All works were undertaken in accordance with current ClfA standards and guidance for archaeological watching briefs (ClfA 2020).

4 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction and presentation of results

4.1.1 The results of the watching brief are presented below and include a stratigraphic description of the exposed deposits. The full details of deposits with dimensions and depths can be found in Appendix A.

4.2 General soils and ground conditions

4.2.1 The soil sequence was uniform throughout the excavation area. Topsoil comprised a dark brown silty loam and was observed to overlay a mid-reddish brown sandy silt subsoil (Plates 1 and 2). The underlying natural geology was not uncovered during the works.

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

4.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits

4.3.1 No archaeological features or deposits were noted during the work. Two fragments of post-medieval ceramic building material (CBM) were recovered from the topsoil but these were not retained.

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 5.1.1 All excavation work was subject to archaeological monitoring and only plough disturbed deposits were removed. Both the ground and weather conditions were good throughout the fieldwork.
- 5.1.2 The fieldwork should be considered to provide a reliable reflection of the impact of the construction works on underlying archaeological deposits and features.

5.2 Watching Brief objectives and results

- 5.2.1 The watching aimed to mitigate the impact of the works on any below ground around archaeological deposits through the hand excavation and recording of any identified archaeological remains. No remains were identified during these works.

5.3 Interpretation

- 5.3.1 No archaeological features or deposits were identified during these works.
- 5.3.2 Badbury Hill is the site of an Iron Age hill fort (Scheduled Ancient Monument list no. 1004857) and is an important archaeological landscape. The absence of archaeological features or deposits during the watching brief is a reflection of the limited impact of the construction works, both in depth and width, and should not be considered to provide an accurate reflection of the archaeological potential within the landscape around Badbury Camp Hillfort.

APPENDIX A DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
1	Layer	-	0.2	Topsoil – friable dark brown silty loam.	Ceramic building material	Post-medieval
2	Layer	-	-	Subsoil – friable mid reddish brown silty loam	-	-

APPENDIX B BIBLIOGRAPHY

BGS Online, British Geological Survey, Geology of Britain viewer,
<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> accessed July 2021

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OA 2021, *Badbury Access Path, Great Coxwell*, Oxfordshire, Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief, unpublished client report.

APPENDIX C

SITE SUMMARY DETAILS

Site name:	Badbury Hill Access Path, Great Coxwell, Oxfordshire
Site code:	GTCBAD21
Grid Reference	SU 26453 94572
Type:	Watching Brief
Date and duration:	1 Day, October 2021
Area of Site	637.5m ²
Location of archive:	The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, and will be deposited with The Oxfordshire County Museum Service in due course, under the following accession number: OXCMS:2021.61.
Summary of Results:	The works comprised the removal of topsoil along the route of a new path and exposed the underlying subsoil. No archaeological features or deposits were noted. Two fragments of post-medieval ceramic building material were recovered from the topsoil but these were not retained.



X:\b\Badbury Hill Footpaths\010\Geomatics\03 GIS Projects\Figures\TCBADWB_Fig1.mxd\aidan.farman*20/07/2021

Source: Esri, Maxar, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

Figure 1: Site location



Badbury access path site location

ordnance survey | 10.0.10.86 | invoice codes a thru h | GTCBADWB*nmw*19.07.21



Legend

- NT Ownership (GB)
- NT Leasehold (GB)
- Proposed access track

1: 2,500



British_National_Grid

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This map is a user generated static output from an Intranet mapping site and is for reference only. Data layers that appear on this map may or may not be accurate, current, or otherwise reliable.

THIS MAP IS NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION

Notes

This map was automatically generated using the National Trust GIS Browser

Figure 2: Route of access path



Plate 1: Stripped area, view to east



Plate 2: Stripped area, view to west



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