

Cleford Essex Associates

Oriel Farm, Shennington, Oxfordshire

NGR SP3716 4272

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

Oxford Archaeological Unit

November 1999

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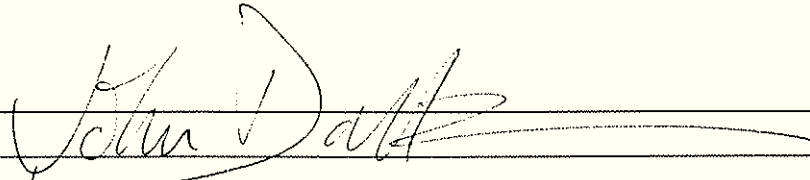
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

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Date: 8/11/99

Checked by: 

Date: 11/11/99

Approved by:  HEAD OF FIELDWORK

Date: 12/11/1999

Oxford Archaeological Unit

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Summary

During 1999 the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) undertook a watching brief at Oriel Farm, Shennington, Oxfordshire. No archaeological features were seen and no finds were retrieved.

1 Introduction

The development proposal comprised geotechnical test pitting and the excavation of foundation trenches and service runs prior to the construction of new housing on the site. An archaeological watching brief was required in line with PPG 16 as the site lies within an area of archaeological potential.

The watching brief was commissioned by Cleford Essex Associates. It was undertaken to a brief set by and a WSI agreed with the Deputy County Archaeologist for Oxfordshire.

2 Background (Fig. 1)

The development site is located within the historic core of the village of Shennington. The Domesday Survey of 1086 gives the first documentary evidence for Shennington; it therefore is probable that the village originated in the late Anglo-Saxon period, and possibly earlier. The development site is located in close proximity to the village green and to the church, and it therefore was thought possible that groundworks might adversely affect medieval features associated with the early settlement.

The OAU has undertaken two previous watching briefs in the immediate vicinity; one during the rerouting of part of the power line between Shennington and Alkerton identified medieval and post-medieval artefacts. The second was undertaken at "Longwalls", a terrace comprising three cottages, one Victorian and two 17th century, located within the historic core of Shennington a short distance to the north-west of Oriel Farm; this identified stray Victorian finds probably deriving from the construction of the Victorian cottage and the reordering of the 17th century cottages.

The site lies at approximately 174 m OD, and its underlying geology is a loamy ferruginous soil overlying ironstone.

3 Aims

The aims of the watching brief were to identify any archaeological remains exposed on site during the course of the works, and to record these to established OAU standards (Wilkinson 1992), in order to secure their preservation by record.

4 Methodology

The watching brief was undertaken by means of separate inspection visits; all excavation was by JCB mechanical excavator.

Within the constraints imposed by health and safety considerations the deposits exposed were cleaned, inspected and recorded in plan, section and by colour slide and monochrome print photography. Written records were also made on proforma sheets. Soil description utilises standard charts for the approximation of percentage of inclusion types in soil deposits.

5 Results

The similarity of deposits seen allows for a general description across the site, rather than describing areas individually. The geotechnical test pits and the foundation trenches were dug to a mean depth of 1 m.

The earliest deposit seen was a slightly silty friable mid brown clay loam subsoil with 40% small-medium limestone pieces and 10% small-medium ironstone fragments. This deposit was sealed by a thin and patchy skim of topsoil. The sections of all excavations were examined for further deposits and/or cut features but none were seen.

6 Finds

No finds were retrieved during the course of the watching brief.

7 Environmental results

Due to the absence of any significant archaeology, no environmental soil samples were taken.

8 Discussion

The watching brief undertaken on this site produced only negative evidence; it would not appear to have been used as anything other than a farmyard.

References.

Wilkinson, D (ed) 1992 Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual, (First edition, August 1992).

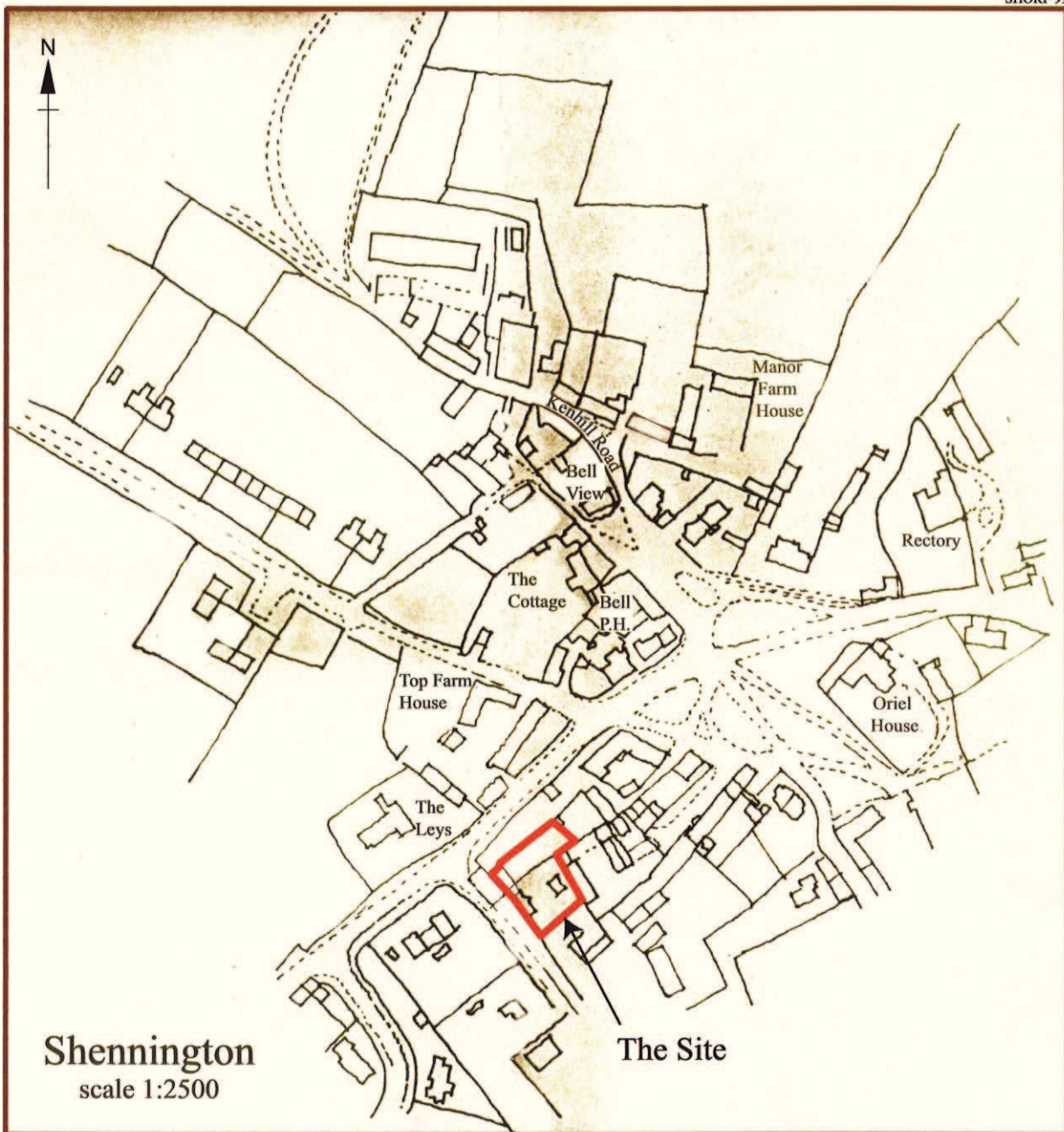


Figure 1: Site location plan.



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