

Thomas & Co.

Cedar Court, Brookfield Close, Wallingford

*NGR SP 6037 8825*

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

Planning Ref. No. P98/W0303

Oxford Archaeological Unit

July 1999

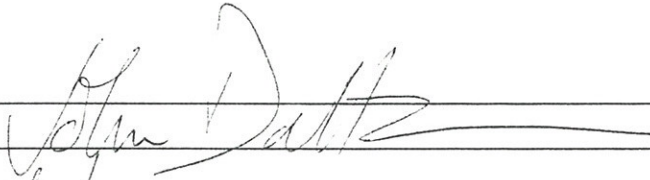
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Prepared by: 

Date: 30/7/99

Checked by: R. Williams

Date: 6/8/1999

Approved by: R. Williams HEAD OF FIELDWORK

Date: 6/8/1999

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## *Summary*

*In late 1998/ early 1999 the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) undertook a watching brief at Cedar Court, Brookfield Close, Wallingford, Oxfordshire (NGR SP 6037 8825). Neither archaeological deposits nor features were seen and no finds were retrieved.*

### **1 Introduction**

The development proposal (planning application no. P98/W0303) comprised the demolition of an existing bungalow on the site, and the construction of two new bungalows with garages and new access drives. The archaeological watching brief was required under a condition attached to the planning consent in accordance both with PPG 16 and Local Plan Policy.

The watching brief was commissioned by Thomas & Co., the main contractor. It was undertaken to a brief set by and a WSI agreed with the County Archaeological Officer.

### **2 Background**

The site lies on the west side of the River Thames, a little under 1 km to the south of Wallingford, at a height of approximately 47 m OD on terrace gravels of the River Thames. It is located in an area of fairly high archaeological potential; an extensive complex of probable Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age ritual, funerary and settlement sites lies immediately to the west of the proposed development site. To the south-east, across the river, lies the prehistoric earthwork of Grimm's Ditch. Mesolithic flints were recovered from the relic ploughsoils preserved by the Grimm's Ditch bank, c. 600 m away; several Neolithic flint scatters have also been recorded in the immediate vicinity. Three Mortlake Ware bowls have been recovered from the river just to the north of the site.

To the south-east lies a late Bronze Age riverside settlement which was located on a long eyot, bounded to the east by the present course of the Thames and to the west by a silted-up channel spanning the area of land towards Winterbrook. As a part of the Wallingford Bypass Project the OAU excavated several trenches in an effort to determine the size and nature of this occupation; the trenches revealed the presence of a large contemporary palaeochannel to the west. Sixteen wooden piles were found here, driven into the channel bed, together with a quantity of preserved timber, charcoal and a pottery vessel of Bronze Age date. The timbers were thought to represent one or more bridges, or jetties, and the piles were thought to extend beyond the limited area investigated. Finds of a similar date were also uncovered at the OAU excavations at Grimm's Ditch.

### **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; subsequent to demolition, site clearance was achieved by 360° tracked excavator with both the location of the former bungalow and its surrounding garden being reduced prior to the excavation of foundations.

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 site was inspected both during and immediately after the removal of topsoil; the surface of the underlying subsoil, which may possibly represent an earlier ploughsoil, was exposed across the affected area. No archaeological features were exposed and, despite careful cleaning, none were seen in any part of the site.

The strip foundations were also inspected due to the possibility of features being obscured in plan, however none were seen.

#### **6 Finds**

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

#### **7 Environmental results**

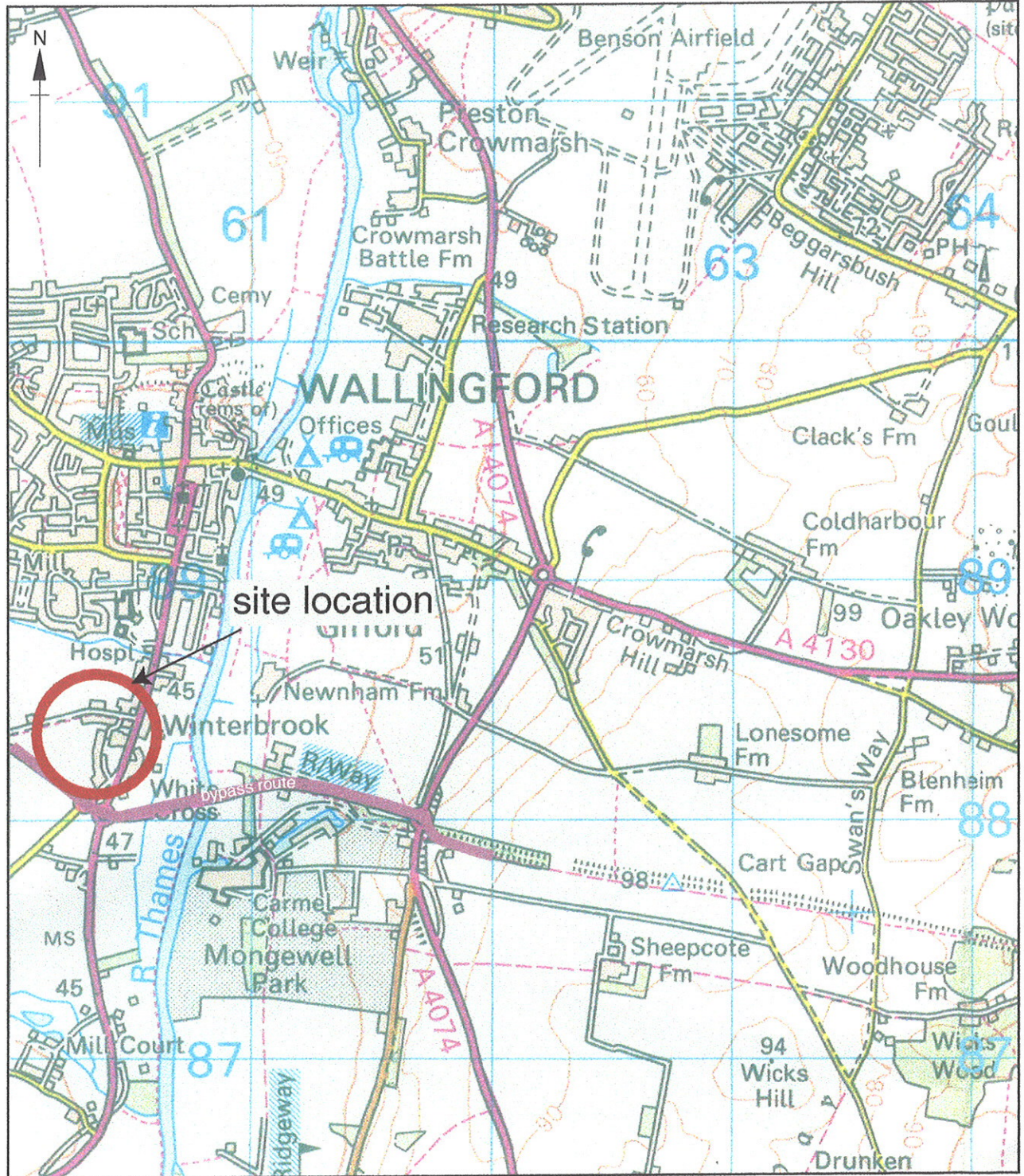
Due to the absence of any significant archaeology, no environmental soil samples were taken.

#### **8 Discussion**

The watching brief did not reveal archaeology of any significance; it is possible that the subsoil seen may represent an earlier ploughsoil, however no finds were retrieved from within it and it was a fairly tenuous deposit. This may have been the result of truncation during the construction of the previous bungalow on the site.

#### **References.**

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



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scale 1 : 25 000

figure 1 : site location



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