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**ST ANTONY'S COLLEGE, WOODSTOCK ROAD, OXFORD**

**Planning Application No NFH/858/93**

NGR SP51020739

**Archaeological Evaluation**

Oxford Archaeological Unit

July 1994

**St Antony's College, Woodstock Road, Oxford**  
**Planning Application No NFH/858/93**

NGR SP 51020759

Report on Archaeological Evaluation

*An archaeological evaluation proved that the proposed development area has previously been subject to quarrying and archaeological deposits destroyed. Further evidence was found for a Romano-British settlement in this area.*

**1 Introduction**

- 1.1 It is proposed to erect new student accommodation in the grounds of St Antony's College on an area presently covered by a tennis court and car park.
- 1.2 Due to number of prehistoric and Romano-British finds from North Oxford, primarily from the University Science Area, University Parks, and westwards into North Parade Avenue, Winchester Road, Banbury Road and Leckford Road, the Oxford Archaeological Advisory Service (OAAS) recommended to the City Planning Authority that an archaeological evaluation should be undertaken to assess the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains present. Accordingly a Written Scheme of Investigation for a field evaluation was prepared by the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) and approved by the OAAS. The evaluation was undertaken over three days in July 1994 by the OAU.

**2 Topography**

- 2.1 The site lies on river gravel deposits at the corner of Winchester Road and Bevington Road (fig 1). There is a noticeable drop in ground level in the area which starts just N of evaluation trench 2 in the college grounds. It was expected that this difference in level could have been caused by extensive gravel quarrying in the Victorian period seen elsewhere in North Oxford.

**3 Methodology**

- 3.1 The original proposal was to excavate a trench 5 m long to the NW of the tennis court (trench 2) and a trench 8 m long in the SE corner of the car park (trench 1). These were supplemented by the excavation of a third trench 5 m long in the NW corner of the car park (fig 2). Each trench was 1.55 m wide.

**4 Results**

- 4.1 Trenches 1 and 3 in the car park proved that the drop in ground level had indeed been caused by extensive quarrying. The quarried area had been backfilled by

material consisted of mixed red brown sandy loam and gravel. This material contained quantities of post-medieval and Romano-British finds. The quarry fill was c. 1.4 m thick.

- 4.2 Overlying the backfilled quarry was a loam representing a ploughsoil as ploughmarks orientated NW-SE were seen in the top of the underlying material.
- 4.3 Trench 2 while showing no positive evidence of quarrying suggested truncation of the gravel and from the present topography was on or near the N limit of extraction. At the extreme western edge of the trench the edge of a brick built soakaway was exposed. Overlying the natural gravel were layers interpreted as old ploughsoils.
- 4.4 No other archaeological features were found. The undisturbed gravel was found at 60.26 m OD in trench 1 and 61.00 OD in trench 2, 1.44 m and 0.74 m below present ground level respectively.

## **5 Finds**

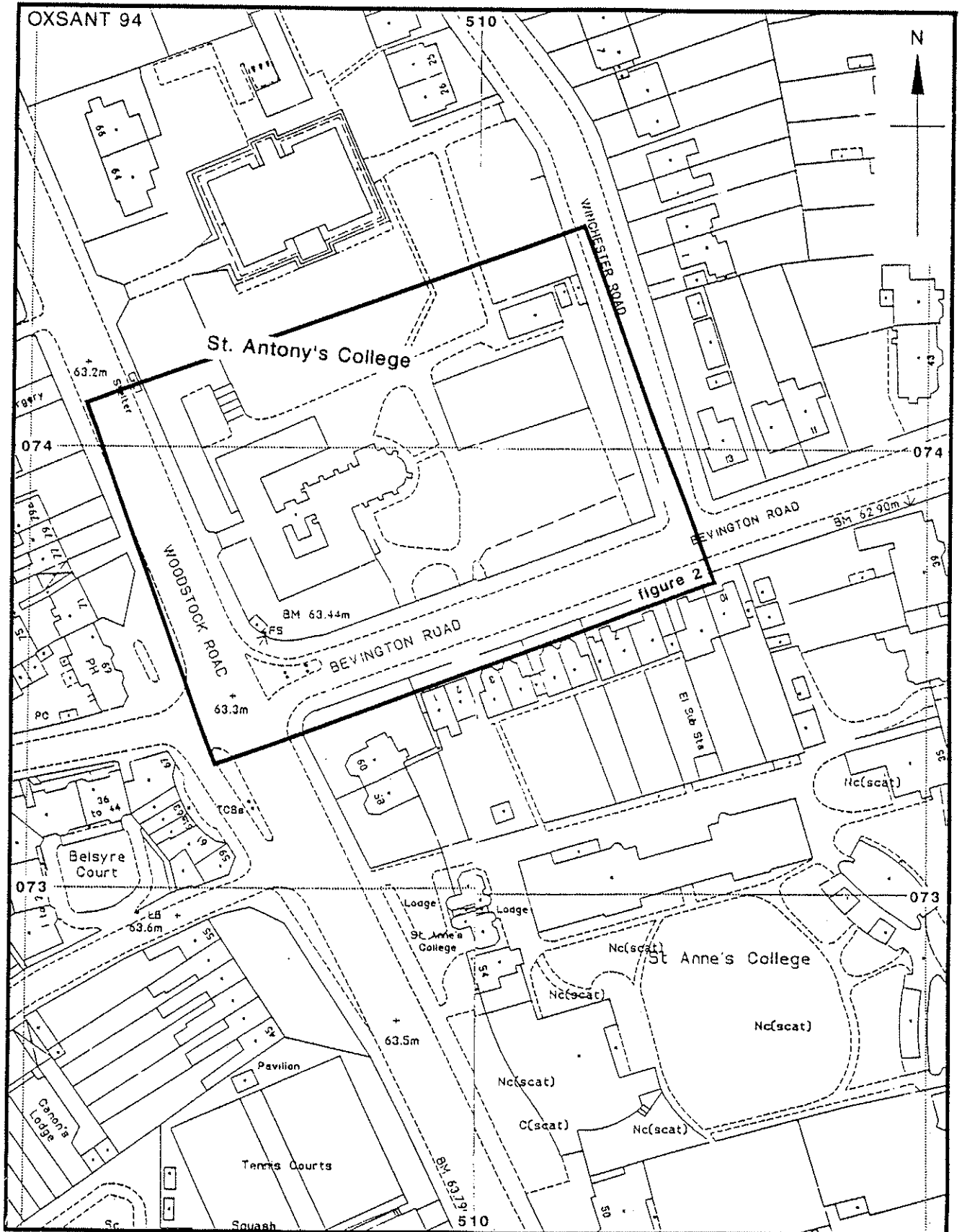
- 5.1 The post-medieval finds found in the quarry backfill consisted of small quantities of post medieval pottery (18th century transfer printed wares) and a large deposit of 18th century unsmoked clay pipes and pipe kiln furniture in the form of packing material placed between the pipes when fired in a muffler.
- 5.2 Stamps on the clay pipes (7 x TH, 8 x PH and 1 x TW) indicated that the nearby kiln may be connected with the Huggins family. A Mr B Huggins, pipemaker, is recorded as living at 76 Observatory Street 1841.1876 (Hassall et al Oxoniensia 1984, XLIX, 261).
- 5.3 The Romano-British finds included large quantities of late third/fourth century pottery along with two coins of contemporary date. In addition four coins of first century date were recovered.

## **6 Discussion**

- 6.1 The evaluation has proved that proposed development area has indeed been totally quarried away or terraced away by the extreme NE corner of the tennis court. The finds suggest an eighteenth century date for this although they could be residual.
- 6.2 The large quantity of late Romano-British material suggests that the quarrying destroyed evidence of occupation remains of that period. This is reinforced by the entry on the County Sites and Monument Record of several Roman coins and a skeleton found in a gravel pit on St Gile's Field. This was on the site of the Nunnery (the present St Antony's College) where coins and other relics were found in a 'probable basement of a Roman building'. In addition a member of the College staff reported that he had found remains of buildings when digging drainage within the grounds. It is of note that while occasional pieces of limestone were recovered no tile was located.

- 6.3 The evidence does suggest an important late Romano-British settlement in the area with presumably buildings with at least stone foundations existing on the College site. The Romano-British pottery from 56 Banbury Road and the burials at Leckford Road and Winchester Road presumably relate to this settlement.
- 6.4 Due to the lack of early pottery and general rarity of first century coins it is probable that they originate from a disturbed hoard. Their presence however does suggest some early Romano-British activity in the area.

John Moore  
Mick Parsons  
Oxford Archaeological Unit  
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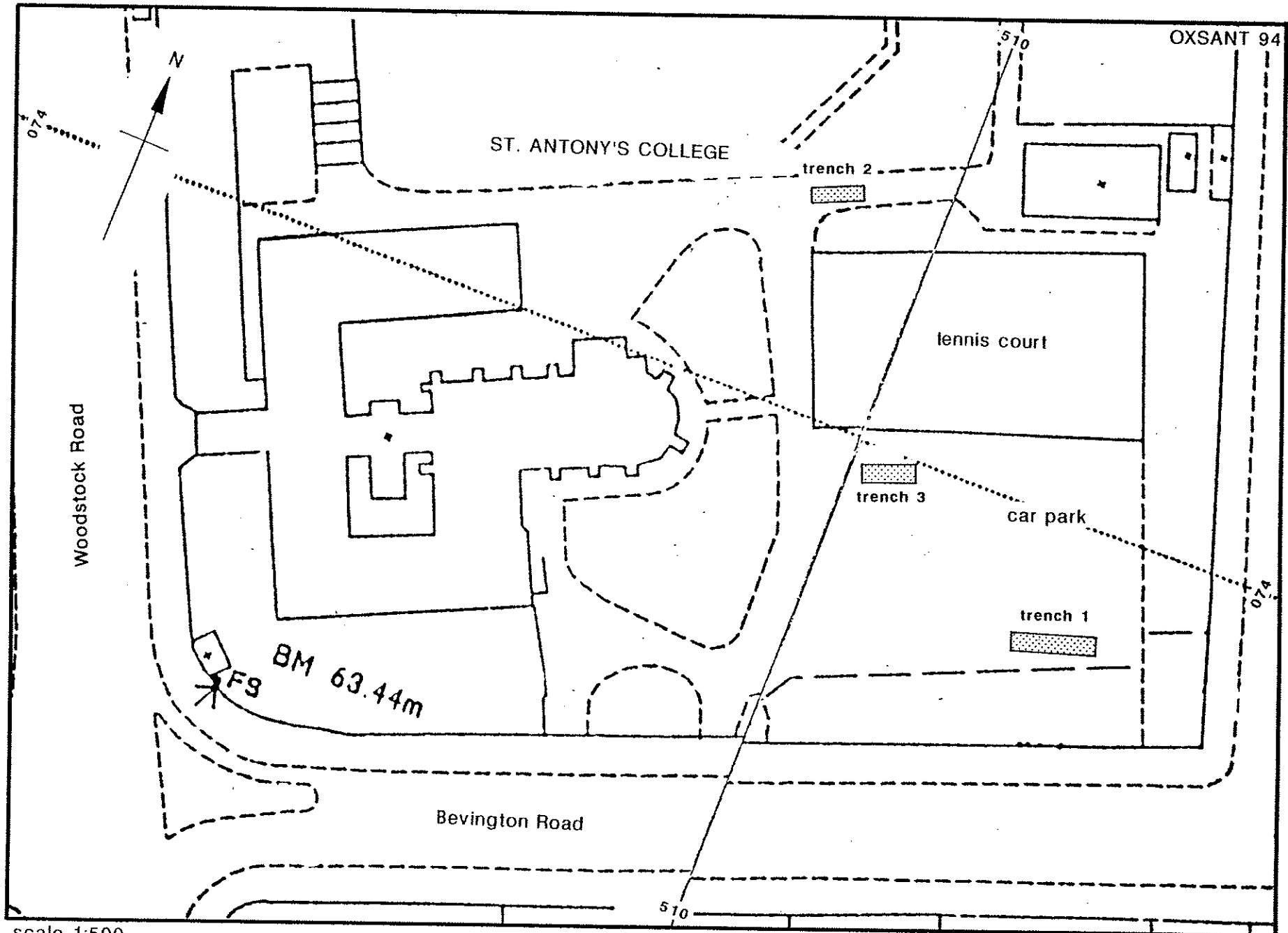


Based on the Ordnance Survey's 1:1250 map of 1994  
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site location

scale 1:1250

figure 1



scale 1:500

trench location

figure 2