

Scott and Tollady Chartered Architects

4 MEADOW VIEW, COGGES, WITNEY, OXFORDSHIRE

NGR SP 3628 0980

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

Oxford Archaeological Unit

July 2001

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Date:

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Summary

In May 2001, Oxford Archaeological Unit undertook a watching brief at 4 Meadow View, Cogges, Witney. The development lies within Scheduled Ancient Monument 28177 at NGR SP 3628 0980. No archaeological features or deposits were observed during the watching brief. Modern deposits were observed which may relate to work carried out in the 1980's.

1. Introduction

Planning permission has been granted by West Oxfordshire District Council for the construction of an extension to the existing house at 4 Meadow View, Cogges, Witney, Oxfordshire (Planning Ref: W98/0940). The site of the proposed development lies within a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 28177) and Scheduled Monument Consent has also been granted by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Although the foundations have been designed to have the minimum impact on any archaeological deposits which may be disturbed by the development, a condition for an archaeological watching brief was attached to the permission in accordance with PPG16 because of the presence of known sites of archaeological interest within the immediate vicinity of the development.

The development site lies approximately 100 m north-east of Cogges Manor Farm (NGR SP 36280980). The site is located on an outcrop of forest marble and lies within the confines of a medieval fishpond. It lies at approximately 81 m OD and is currently used as a domestic garden (Figs 1 and 2).

2 Background

(No desktop study has been carried out by the OAU. The following section is taken directly from Oxfordshire County Council's *Brief for an Archaeological Watching Brief at 4 Meadow View, Cogges, Witney*).

The site of the proposed development lies within a medieval fishpond (SAM 28177) which is part of a larger Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 183). The scheduled area contains several elements of archaeological interest. The main settlement of Cogges was a closely grouped cluster of Church, Priory and two Manor Houses. The first known owner of the estate was Wadard, who is named on the Bayeux Tapestry. Cogges estate was recorded in the Domesday survey of 1086. The ownership passed on to the Arsic family in the early 12th century. Their 11th century Manor House, which was given to Fécamp Abbey in c. 1100 to provide a site for a Priory, was located immediately to the north of the Church. This was apparently superseded by a house or 'castle' which lies to the south. This 12th century structure survives only as moated earthworks to the south of the Church, though references exist to stone foundations consistent with a substantial house or 'castle' being exposed during the 17th century. A second Manor House, which later became Cogges Manor Farm, probably originated with the purchase of half of the manor by Archbishop Walter de Grey in 1241-42. The manor was reunited in the hands of the de Greys in 1338 and this may have heralded the abandonment of the 'castle'. The earthworks in the southern half of the Scheduled Area would appear to indicate the presence of a medieval village together with part of an associated field system.

Both Witney and Cogges lie on an east-west trackway forming a dry crossing of the Windrush Valley at one of its narrowest points. The historic nature of this track is attested to by the inclusion in the Witney charter bounds of 969AD of 'Tidreding Ford' near to the present river crossing. Settlements had become established on both sides of the river by the late Saxon period and finds of pottery suggest that the cornbrash island was settled for much of the Anglo-Saxon period. Mid-late Saxon activity has been noted in the immediate vicinity of the site in the form of timber structures and pottery at the site of Cogges Priory, *c.* 100 m to the west, and by pottery sherds found in the orchard of Manor Farm.

The fishpond itself lies in the northern part of the scheduled area and consists of an earthen bank encompassing an enclosed area, originally the pond. It is mentioned in a document of 1232/1233 AD when a pond was described as belonging to the Lords of Cogges. In 1241 the manorial fishpond was acquired by Walter de Grey, Archbishop of York. In 1984 the fishpond was sectioned across its width and was found to be trapezoidal in plan. It was created by constructing two dams across the floodplain of the Madley Brook. A bank was constructed along the south eastern edge of the floodplain to match that of the north western edge. Madley Brook was then diverted along a leat that although broadened and deepened still survives as the watercourse. The positions of the entry and exit sluices are no longer visible. The section showed that the base of the pond was level and that earth and early 20th century building material had been dumped over the pond area, to a depth of several feet in places. This rubble sealed 0.3 - 0.5 m of buff, silty clay which covered the bottom of the pond. The mollusc assemblage suggested that the pond had become derelict and overgrown over a period of time. It appears that in later centuries the pond silted over and therefore that its main period of use was confined to the medieval period.

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.

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 utilised standard charts for the approximation of percentage of inclusion types in soil deposits.

5 Results (Fig. 3)

The watching brief monitored the removal of the existing patio and the excavation of strip foundations for the extension to the existing building. These foundations had been designed to have a minimum impact on the archaeological deposits recorded

during the excavation of the fishpond in 1984, and as such did not impact below the early 20th century deposits (see *Background* above).

The trenches were excavated to an average depth of 0.90 m and measured 6.30 m x 1 m from east to west and 3.30 m x 1 m from north to south. The deposit underlying the existing patio and associated hardcore consisted of a mixed deposit of mid-blue grey silty clay (3) and mid-brown silty clay (2). As deposit 3 was too soft to support the planned foundation, it was necessary to excavate to a depth of 1.20 m to the east of the new foundations in order to establish the footings on firmer ground (see Fig. 3, Section 1).

6 Finds

Some 20th-century building material was recovered from deposits 2 and 3, and geotextile membrane was observed within deposit 3. No finds were retained.

7 Environmental results

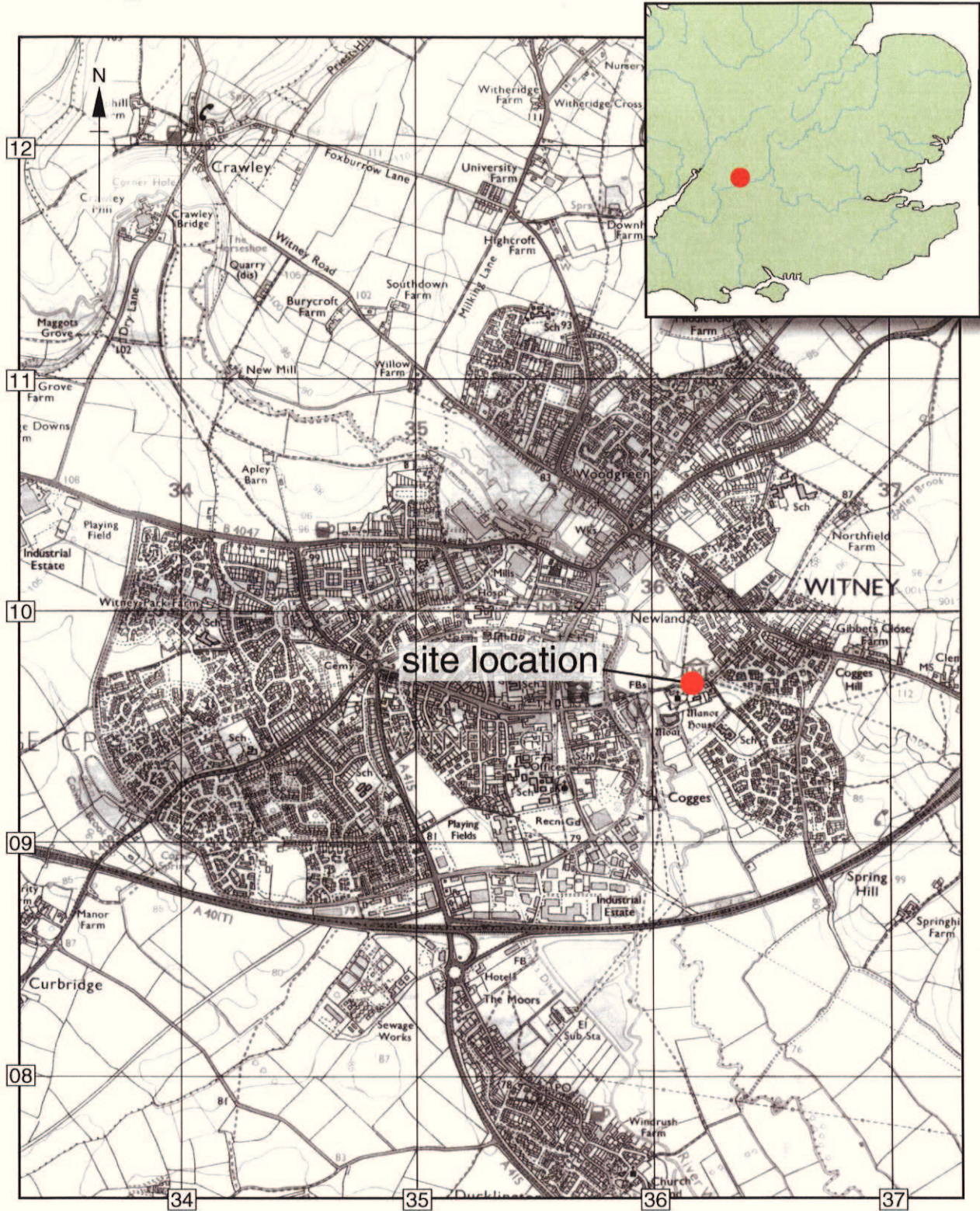
Although full consideration was given to various sampling strategies, due to the absence of any suitable deposits and the tight constraints of the excavation, no environmental soil samples were taken.

8 Discussion

The limited impact of the development ensured that no archaeological deposits were disturbed during the development. The presence of geotextile membrane within the deposits 3 suggests that the deposit originates from the construction of the existing house in the 1980's.

References.

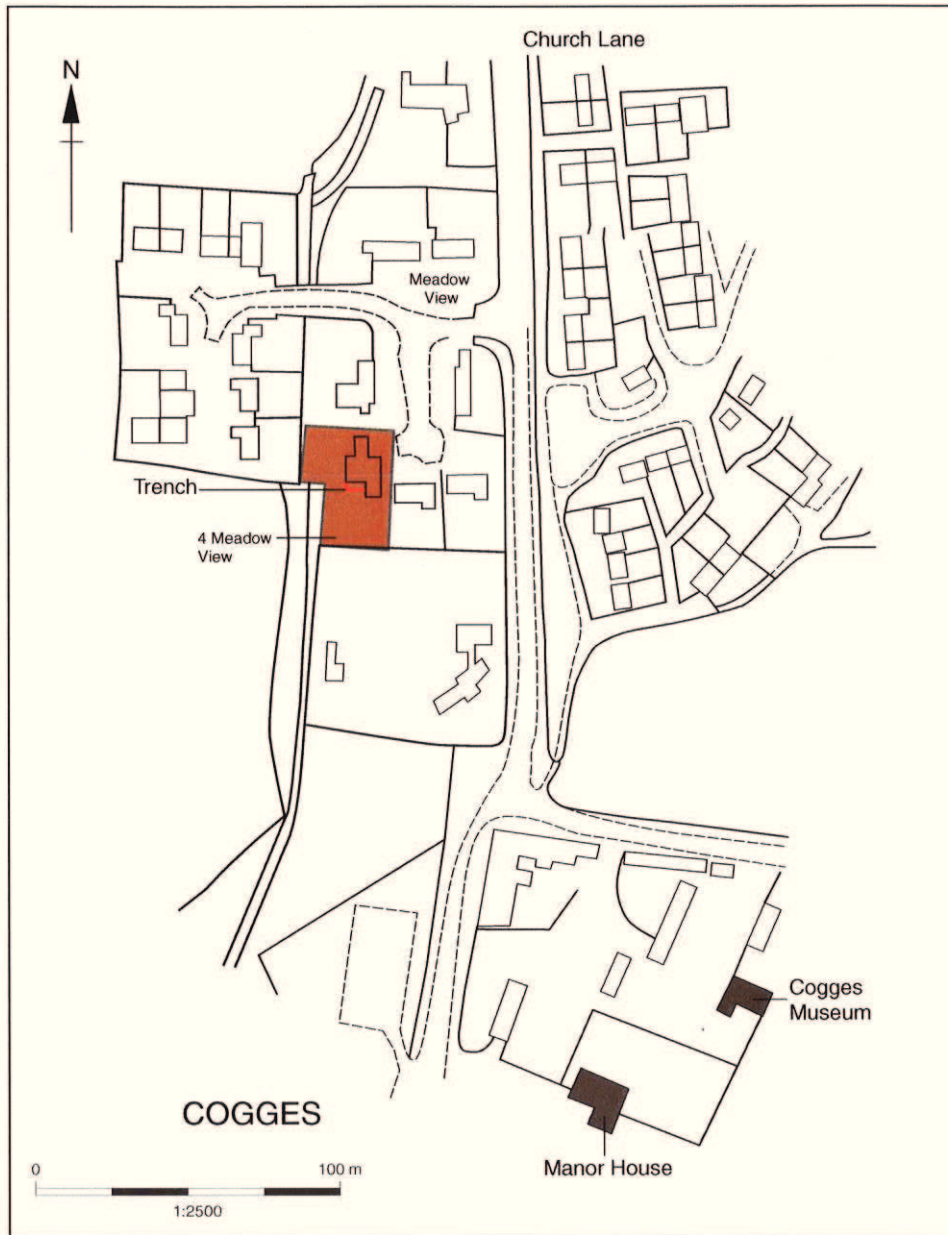
Wilkinson, D (ed) 1992 Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual, (First edition, August 1992).



Scale 1:25,000

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Figure 1: Site location.



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Figure 2 : Location of site / trenches.

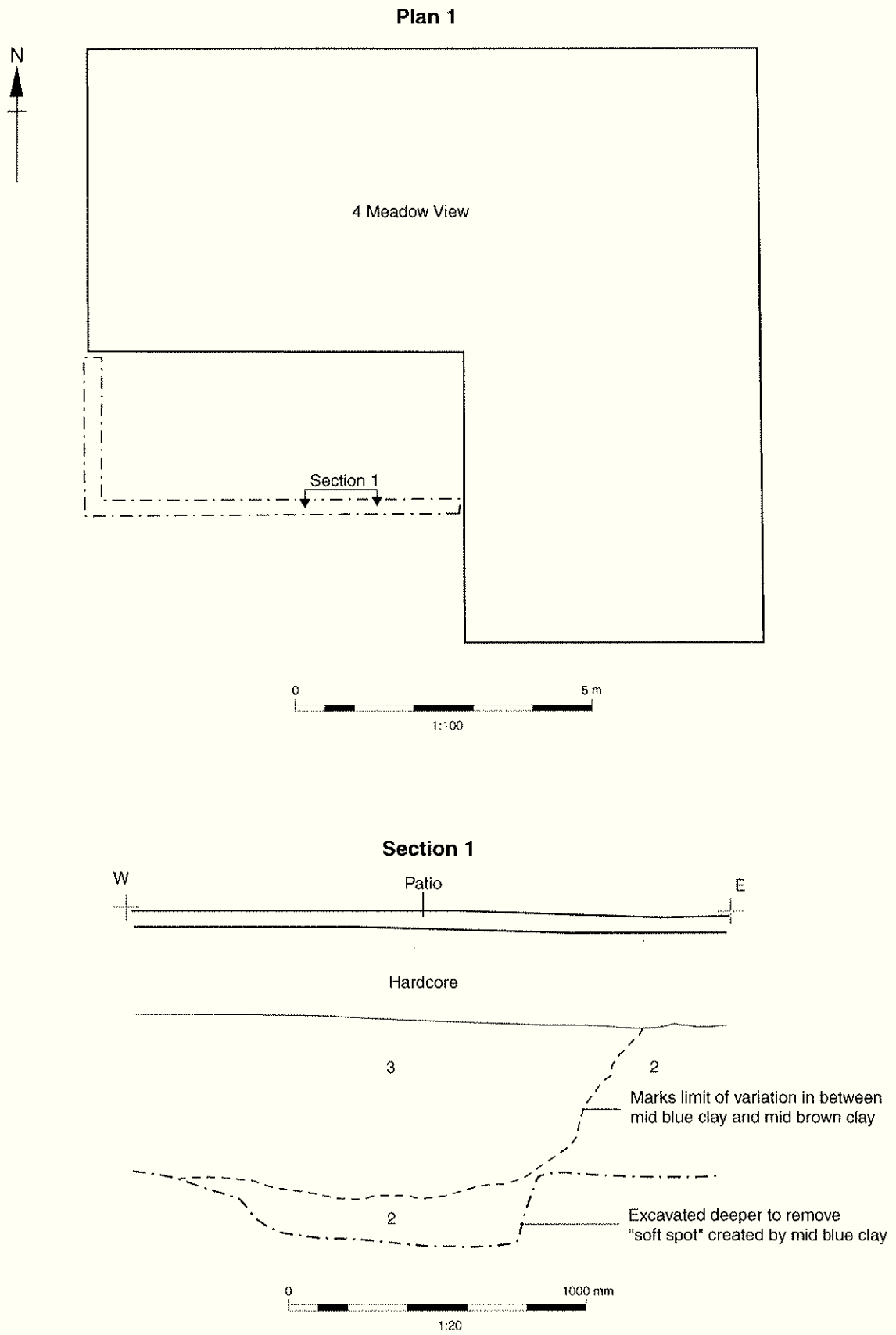


Figure 4 : Plan 1, Section 1.



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