

Tudor Hall School
Wykeham Lane
Banbury
Oxfordshire



**Archaeological
Evaluation Report**

March 2008

Client: Mr I Catchpole

Issue No: 1
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Planning Ref No: 07/02493/F
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Prepared by: James Mumford
Position: Project Officer
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Checked by: Dan Dodds
Position: Head of Small Works
Date: 10th March 2008

Approved by: Alan Hardy Signed.....
Position: Senior Project Manager
Date: 10th March 2008

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Oxford Archaeology
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Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES
t: (0044) 01865 263800
f: (0044) 01865 793496

e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk
w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk

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SUMMARY

In February 2008 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at Tudor Hall School, Banbury, Oxfordshire (NGR SP 4408 3804) on behalf of Mr I Catchpole. The evaluation revealed no archaeological features or deposits and the evidence suggests that the site had been extensively landscaped in the mid 20th century.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In February 2008 OA carried out a field evaluation at Tudor Hall School, Banbury, Oxfordshire (Fig. 1) on behalf of Mr I Catchpole in respect of a planning application for the construction of a 17 bedroom study accommodation, a two storey housekeepers accommodation, an extension to form a new reception centre and associated roadways and parking (Planning Application No. 07/02493/F). Due to the potential presence of below-ground archaeological features (see below), a condition was set by Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist representing Cherwell District Council (OCAS 2008) and a WSI was prepared by Oxford Archaeology (OA 2008) and accepted.

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site of the proposed development is located on the east side of Bloxham Road (A361) and south of Wykham Lane, approximately 2 km south of Banbury. The development area is situated in landscaped gardens forming part of the school. The new accommodation block is located within a gravel parking area and garden, while the proposed access roadway is located within a wooded area.

1.2.2 The site lies at c. 123 m above OD and the underlying geology is on the edge of the Marlstone Rock and Middle Lias clays, silts and siltstones (Geological Survey of Great Britain, sheet no 218).

1.3 Archaeological background

1.3.1 The proposed development is located in an area of considerable archaeological potential located 136 m north of the site of Sir Robert de Arden's medieval manor House (NGR: SP 4412 3786). This is known to have been in existence by 1331 when a licence was obtained from Edward III to fortify the manor with an embattled wall. A later country house is located 90 m to the south of the development site, dating to the 17th-century with some earlier sections (NGR: SP 4409 3789). This building is currently in use as part of the school. The site of a medieval Chapel associated with the manor house is also located immediately south-east of the proposed site (NGR: SP 4411 3795).

- 1.3.2 In 1851 Roman remains, including tesserae, walls, a possible stone-vaulted kiln or oven, skeletons and a well were found 170 m to the west of the site along with coins, pottery and animal bone (NGR: SP 4388 3795). A Roman villa and further aspects of the site will be covered by the current school buildings. A deserted medieval village is known to exist 230 m to the south-west of the proposed development site (NGR: SP 4390 3779).

2 EVALUATION AIMS

- 2.1.1 To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the proposed development area.
- 2.1.2 To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains affected by the proposed works.
- 2.1.3 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features within the site and to take samples where appropriate.
- 2.1.4 To provide information to allow a mitigation strategy to be formulated prior to development of the site.
- 2.1.5 To define any research priorities that may be relevant should further field investigation be required.
- 2.1.6 To make available the results of the investigation.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork

- 3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of two trenches both within the footprint of the proposed new building (Fig. 2). Trench 1 (north-south) measured 10 m long x 1.6 m wide. Trench 2 (east-west) measured 20 m long x 1.6 m wide.

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

- 3.2.1 The overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision by a JCB mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket.
- 3.2.2 The trenches were cleaned by hand and the revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds and environmental samples. All archaeological features were planned and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20. All features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

4 RESULTS:

4.1 Description of deposits

Trench 1 (Fig. 2)

- 4.1.1 The trench was aligned north to south and measured 10 m long x 1.6 m wide and excavated to a depth of 0.5 m on to the natural of light reddish brown sand (1) with sandstone fragments. This was overlain by a 0.15 m - 0.25 m thick layer of compacted dark grey brown silty sand (3) with CBM, stone fragments and ash. This formed the base of a earlier road surface, possibly relating to the US army occupation of the house and grounds during WW2. This layer was sealed below the 0.25 m thick layer of reddish brown crushed stone (2) of the present car park.

Trench 2 (Fig. 2)

- 4.1.2 The trench was aligned east to west and measured 20 m long x 1.6 m wide and was excavated on to the natural of light reddish brown sand (1) with sandstone fragments this varied in depth of 0.35 m to 0.85 m along the slope from west to east. At the eastern end of trench a 0.2 m thick reddish brown silty sand loam (6) subsoil was exposed. This was overlain by a 0.16 m thick grey brown silty sand (4) old topsoil horizon. A 0.26 m thick compacted dark grey brown silty sand (3) with CBM, stone fragments and ash sealed layer 4, and possibly represents a levelling or surface layer relating to the US army occupation of the house and grounds during WW2.
- 4.1.3 Layer 3 was sealed below the 0.25 m thick layer of reddish brown crushed stone (2) of the present car park. All but the last 1.5 m of the west end of trench 2 was covered by the present car park surface. This remaining 1.5 m of trench was covered by a 0.35 m thick grey brown silty sand loam (5) landscaping topsoil.

4.2 Finds

- 4.2.1 No finds were recovered during the evaluation.

4.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 4.3.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified during the evaluation.

5 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

- 5.1.1 The evaluation did not reveal any archaeological features or deposits pre-dating the medieval hall or any landscaping from the gardens from later phases of the hall. The archaeological evidence supports the historical evidence that the grounds was extensively landscaped during the occupation of grounds by the US army in WW2. In the investigated area this was seen in the form of the construction of a road way, which linked a number of hut platforms built into the slope of the grounds. The present car park is terraced in to the slope against the newer school buildings. It had

cut into the natural slope at the west end and was also levelled up, sealing the earlier WW2 road to form a level surface.

APPENDICES**APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY**

<i>Ctxt No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Thick. (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	Natural		Natural
2	Layer	0.25 m	Car park surface
3	Layer	0.15m - 0.20 m	Old car park surface
4	Layer	0.16 m	Old topsoil
5	Layer	0.35 m	Topsoil landscaping
6	Layer	0.20 m	Sub soil

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

OA 2008 *Tudor Hall School, Wykham Lane, Banbury, Oxfordshire Written Scheme of Investigation for and Archaeological Evaluation and Archaeological Watching Brief*

OAU, 1992 *Field Manual* (ed. Wilkinson D)

OCAS, 2008 *Tudor Hall School, Wykham Lane, Banbury : Design Brief for an Archaeological Field Evaluation*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Tudor Hall School, Wykham Lane, Banbury, Oxfordshire

Site code: BATHAS 08

Grid reference: NGR SP 4408 3804

Type of evaluation: To evaluate archaeological remains in foot print of proposed new building.

Date and duration of project: One day one site on the 25/2/2008.

Area of site: Two trenches 20 m and 10 m long and 1.6 m wide.

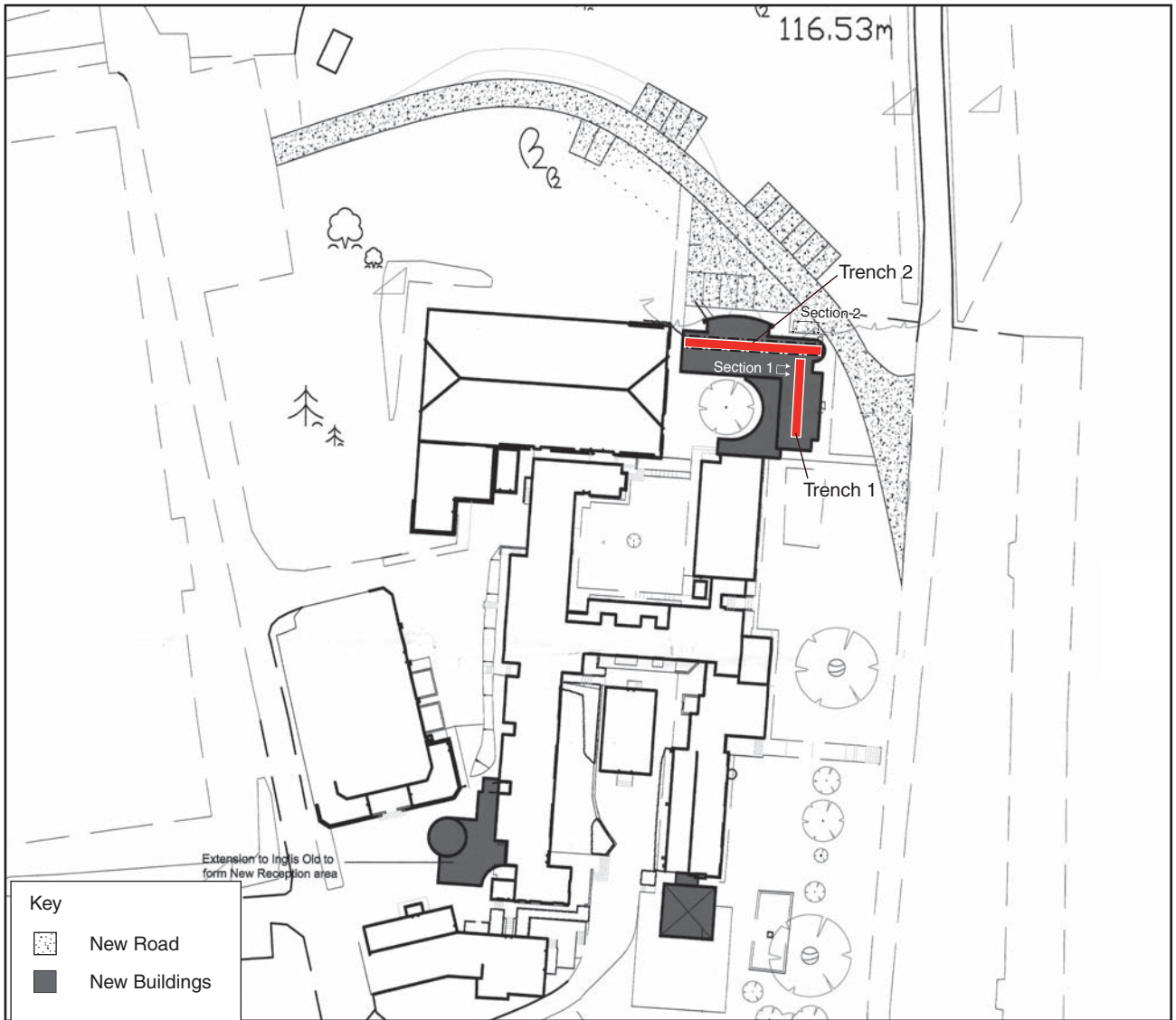
Summary of results: No archaeological features or deposits were exposed and the site had been truncated in the mid 20th century.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course, under the following accession number:



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Figure 1: Site location



0 50 m
1:1000

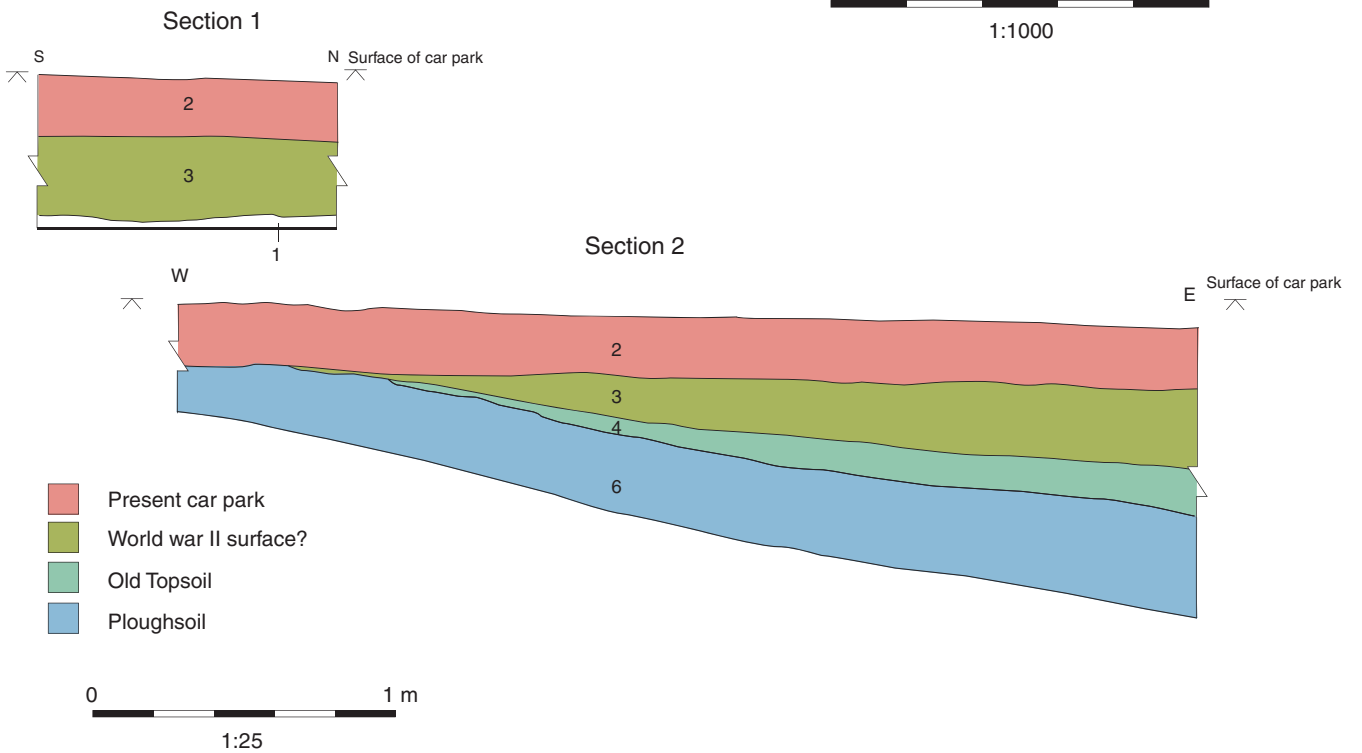


Figure 2: Trench location and sections