

Primsdown Industrial Estate
Chipping Norton
Oxfordshire



Archaeological Evaluation Report



Oxford Archaeology

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**Primsdown Industrial Estate
Chipping Norton
Oxfordshire**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

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SUMMARY

On 13th January 2005 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at land to the rear of Primsdown Industrial Estate, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire (NGR: SU 3038 2704) on behalf of SURTEC. The evaluation revealed possible 18th-19th century plough soils overlying a probable prehistory field boundary aligned north-west by south-east, which produced animal bone fragments and a single sherd of mid to late Iron Age pottery.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

1.1.1 On 13th January 2005 OA carried out a field evaluation on land to the rear of the Primsdown Industrial Estate, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire (NGR: SP 3038 2704) on behalf of SURTEC in respect of a planning application for construction of an additional industrial building and car parking. This was undertaken as a pre-determination exercise prior to the planning decision (Planning Application No.04/1433/P/OP).

1.1.2 A brief (OCAS 2004) was set by, and a WSI (OA 2004) was agreed with Hugh Coddington, the Deputy County Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (OCAS).

1.2 Location, geology and topography

1.2.1 The development area is located immediately to the north-east of existing buildings on the Primsdown Industrial Estate (Fig. 1). The site is situated on a south-east facing slope at approximately 175 m OD and is bounded to the north-east, north-west and south-west by agricultural land and to the south-east by an access road.

1.2.2 The site is currently under arable use and measures approximately 1 hectare. The underlying geology is limestone cornbrash overlying Lias Clays (British Geological Survey, Sheet 218).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological background to the evaluation was prepared for the WSI, the results of which are reproduced below.

1.3.2 The proposed development site is located within an area of archaeological potential. To the south lies the medieval road between Chipping Norton and Moreton-in-the-Marsh. This route is recognisable as an upstanding remnant earthwork as it crosses the common to the south of the site. There have been a reasonable amount of Iron Age pottery sherds recovered and noted from the site, giving rise to the assumption that a small settlement or farmstead may be located with the vicinity.

2 EVALUATION AIMS

- 2.1.1 To establish the presence or absence, extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present within the proposal area.
- 2.1.2 To establish the exigency for a mitigation strategy.
- 2.1.3 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features.
- 2.1.4 To define any relevant research priorities if additional archaeological investigation proves necessary.
- 2.1.5 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 totalling 60 m in length forming a 1% sample of the development area (Fig. 2). Trench 1 was aligned south-west by north-east, running across the slope and Trench 2 was situated south-east by north-west running up the slope. Both trenches measured 30 m long by 1.5 m wide.

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

- 3.2.1 The trenches were excavated under close archaeological supervision by a mechanical excavator (JCB) fitted with a 1.5 m wide toothless grading bucket. Excavation proceeded to the top of the first significant archaeological horizon or to the top of the underlying natural geology, whichever was encountered first.
- 3.2.2 The trenches were cleaned by hand and any revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve dating evidence and environmental samples if possible. All features and deposits were issued with unique context numbers. Both the trenches and features were planned a scale of 1:50 with sections of features and sample sections drawn at a scale of 1:20. All features, trenches and sections were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OA Field Manual* (OAU 1992).

4 RESULTS: GENERAL

4.1 Soils and ground conditions

- 4.1.1 Both trenches came down onto natural deposits represented by a layer of cornbrash. All the soil divisions were clearly defined with little or no mixing between the contexts. No ground water was encountered in either trench.

5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

5.1 Description of deposits

- 5.1.1 The stratigraphy recorded in both trenches was identical and has therefore been considered together.
- 5.1.2 A compact yellow-brown clay natural containing numerous sub-angular limestone fragments (3 and 22) was reached at a depth of between 0.3 m and 0.4 m below ground level (Fig. 3, sections). A sondage (Fig. 3, section 10) within Trench 1 showed that this was over 0.4 m in depth with the limestone fragments increasing in size as depth progressed.
- 5.1.3 Within Trench 1 layer 3 was cut by a 1.4 m wide by 0.4 m deep flat bottomed ditch (6) running north-west by south-east across the trench (Fig. 3, section 11). The base of this feature was filled by a 0.25 m thick deposit of a tenacious pale yellow-brown silty clay (5) containing many small to medium sized angular limestone fragments, which may represent the possible migration of bank material into the ditch. The remainder of the ditch was filled by a tenacious yellow-brown silty clay (4), a probable silting deposit. This contained flecks of burnt stone and produced fragments of animal bone and a single sherd of mid to late Iron Age pottery.
- 5.1.4 Overlying these fills and the cornbrash within both trenches was a 0.05 m to 0.12 m thick layer of yellow-brown clay silt (2 and 21). This contained a high proportion of abraded limestone fragments representing a subsoil or more likely the base of an earlier ploughsoil. A modern dark brown clay loam ploughsoil (1 and 20), measuring 0.25 m to 0.3 m in depth then sealed the earlier ploughsoil 2.

5.2 Finds

- 5.2.1 A quantity of modern bottle fragments were noted within the modern ploughsoil, deposit 1 and 20. These were evaluated on site but not retained. Finds were also recovered from within ditch fill 4 and consisted of fragments of animal teeth and a single sherd of limestone tempered mid to late Iron Age pottery.

5.3 Palaeo-environmental evidence

- 5.3.1 No deposits suitable for paleo-environmental sampling were encountered during the course of the evaluation.

6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 6.1.1 The conditions during the evaluation were dry and clear with no intrusion by modern features such as services and land drains.
- 6.1.2 The location of the trenches and the percentage sample of the development area is believed to have given a good reflection of the overall archaeological potential of the site.

6.2 Overall interpretation

- 6.2.1 The results suggest that the area of the development site has been consistently used for agriculture, with little evidence to suggest occupation. The ditch observed being part of a probable prehistoric field boundary.
- 6.2.2 While ploughing (indicated by ploughsoil 1/20 and subsoils 2/21) may have accounted for the partial truncation of earlier features, the paucity of deeper features cut into the natural cornbrash appears to confirm the agricultural nature of the site.
- 6.2.3 Finds recovered from both the ditch fill and from earlier fieldwalking suggest there may have been a degree of occupation in the vicinity, however there was no evidence recovered during the course of the evaluation to pinpoint its location.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench	Ctxt No	Type	Width (m)	Thick. (m)	Comment	Finds	Date
1							
	1	Layer	-	0.3 m	Modern ploughsoil	Bottle glass, plastic	C20th
	2	Layer	-	0.05 m	Subsoil/early poughsoil	-	C18th - C19th?
	3	Layer	-	> 0.4 m	Natural cornbrash	-	-
	4	Fill	1.1 m	0.12 m	Upper fill of ditch 6, silting deposit	Pottery, animal bone	Mid to late Iron Age
	5	Fill	1.1 m	0.25 m	Primary fill of ditch 6	-	-
	6	Cut	1.1 m	0.4 m	Probable field boundary	-	Mid to late Iron Age
2							
	20	Layer	-	0.3 m	Modern ploughsoil	Bottle glass, plastic	C20th
	21	Layer	-	0.05 m	Subsoil/early poughsoil	-	C18th - C19th?
	22	Layer	-	> 0.2 m	Natural cornbrash	-	-

APPENDIX 2 REFERENCES

- IFA, 1999 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations*
- OA, 2004 *Primsdown Industrial Estate, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*
- OAU, 1992 *Field Manual* (ed. D. Wilkinson)
- OCAS, 2004 *Primsdown Industrial Estate, Worcester Road, Chipping Norton: Design Brief for Archaeological Field Evaluation*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Primsdown Industrial Estate, Worcester Road, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire

Site code: CHIPIS 04

Grid reference: SP 3038 2704

Type of evaluation: 2 machine dug trenches, 30m x 1.5 m each

Date and duration of project: 1 day, 17th January 2005

Area of site: 1 hectare

Summary of results: Ploughsoils overlying natural, probable Iron age field boundary ditch.

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.



Scale 1:25,000

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Figure 1: Site location

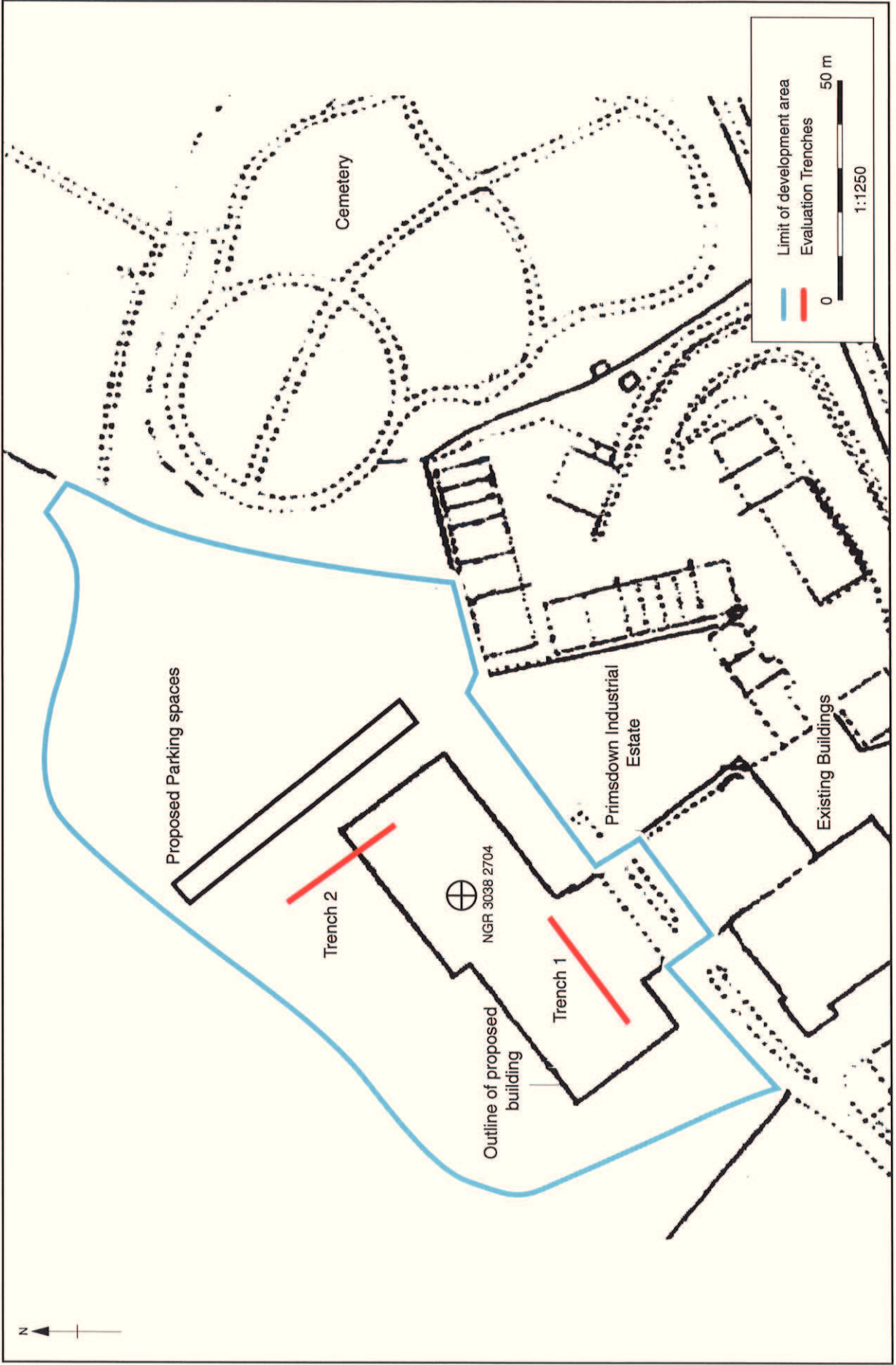
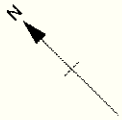
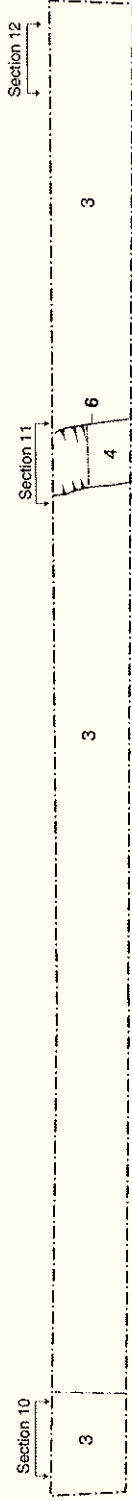


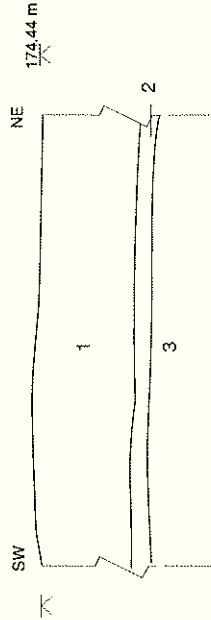
Figure 2: Trench location plan



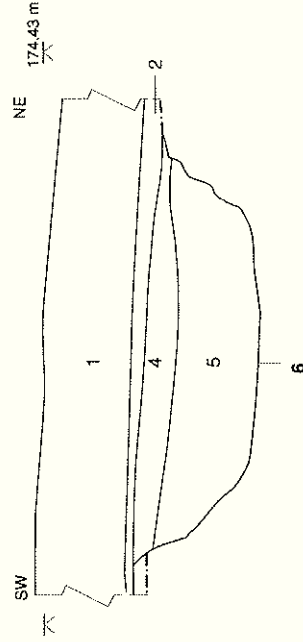
Trench 1



Section 10



Section 11



Section 12

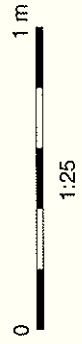
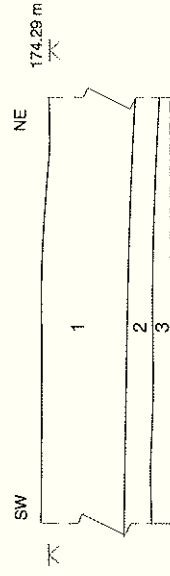


Figure 3: Trench 1, plan and sections 10-12



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