

# Brasenose Farm Steeple Aston Oxfordshire



## Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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## **Brasenose Farm, Steeple Aston, Oxfordshire**

### **Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

*Written by Mike Sims*

*and illustrated by Markus Dylewski*

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Fig. 1 Site location

Fig. 2 Location of the trench and sections



## Summary

*On the 7th November 2013 Oxford Archaeology undertook a controlled watching brief during the construction of a new dwelling at Brasenose Farm, Steeple Aston, Oxfordshire (NGR: SP 46380 26456).*

*Two phases of cultivated soil were recorded overlying the natural clay. The earliest was undated, while the latest could be dated to the 19th/20th centuries. No significant archaeology was observed.*

## 1 LOCATION AND SCOPE OF WORK

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Tim Taylor to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Brasenose Farm, Steeple Aston, Oxfordshire, where a new building is being erected.
- 1.1.2 Brasenose Farm is situated to the WNW of Steeple Aston, Oxfordshire. The site lies on the west side of the Oxford Road (A4260) immediately north of the junction between the A4260 and Fenway, centred on NGR: SP 46380 26456. The site is bounded by the existing farm buildings to the south, to the west and north by ploughed fields and to the east by the A4260.
- 1.1.3 The site is situated at an elevation of just over 137m above O.D. The underlying geology is recorded as a Clypeus Grit Member, Ooidal limestone (BSG, Geology of Britain viewer; <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk>). The landscape slopes gently from west to east towards the river Cherwell.
- 1.1.4 The work was undertaken as a condition of Planning Permission (planning ref: 09/00528/F). Although the Local Planning Authority did not set a brief for the work, discussions with Richard Oram of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (OCAS) established the scope of work required.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1.1 The foundations for the new building had already been excavated and filled without archaeological attendance. To compensate for this, a trench 18.4m long was excavated alongside the longest of the foundations under direct archaeological supervision. This was done using a small tracked excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. The excavation proceeded in 0.1m spits until undisturbed natural deposits were encountered.

## 3 DESCRIPTION OF DEPOSITS

- 3.1.1 The underlying natural, a light yellow-brown sandy silt clay (3) was exposed throughout the length of the trench at an average depth of 0.45m below ground level. Directly overlying the natural was a 0.22m deep layer of orange-brown silty sandy clay, (2), containing charcoal flecking and small sub-angular limestone fragments.
- 3.1.2 Above this deposit was a 0.25m deep layer of dark grey-brown clayey loam (1), the present day topsoil and turf. This also contained charcoal flecking and produced a single piece of glazed earthenware of probable 19th or early 20th century date. This was not retained.
- 3.1.3 The stratigraphy observed was similar throughout the length of the trench.



## 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

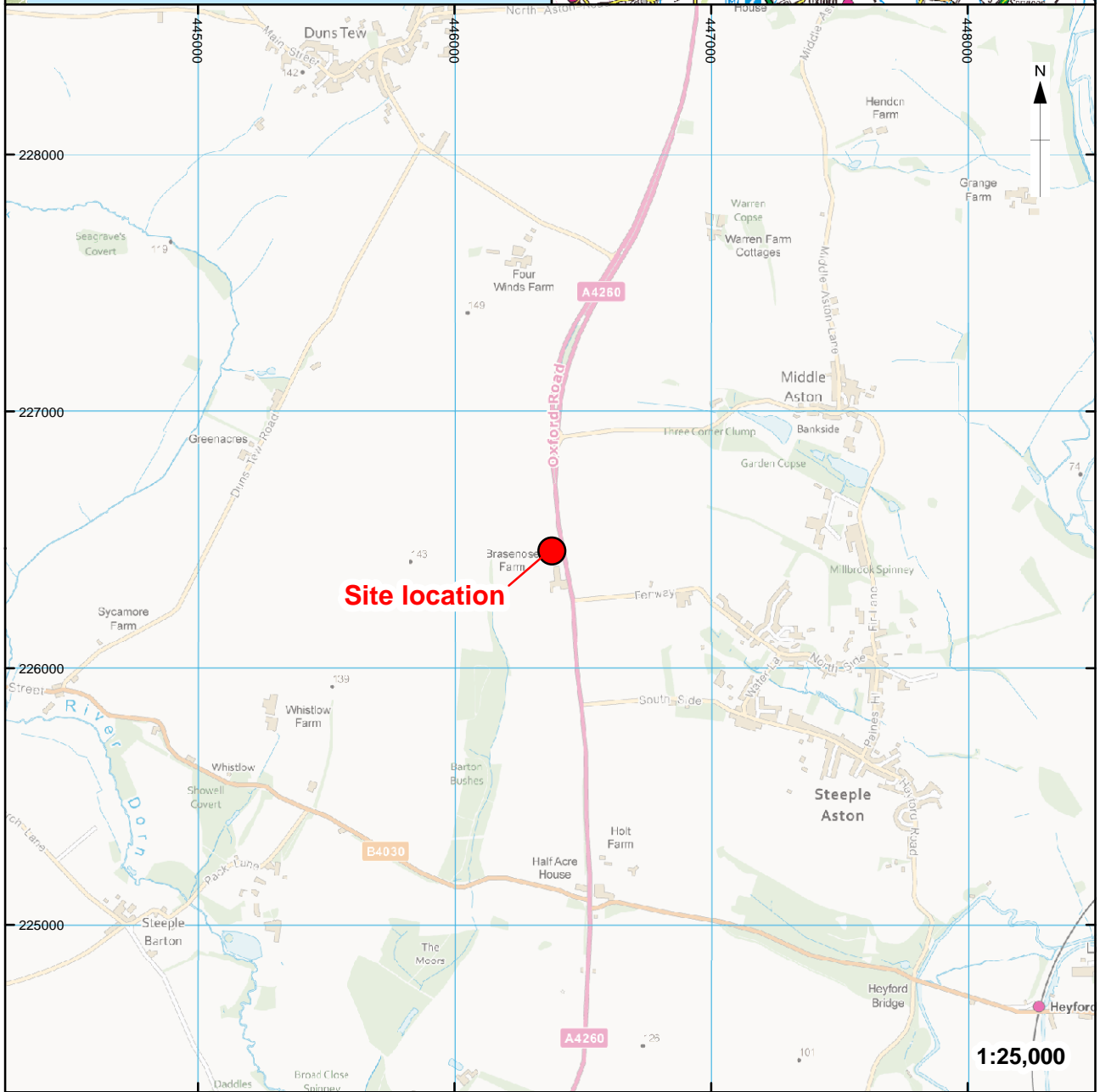
- 4.1.1 The stratigraphy observed is characteristic of arable cultivation. Layer 3 represents weathering of the top of the underlying limestone. Layer 2 is a probable earlier ploughsoil horizon, possibly medieval in origin, however no dating evidence was recovered to confirm this.
- 4.1.2 Layer 1 is the most recent ploughsoil horizon, post-medieval in date.
- 4.1.3 No evidence for any earlier activity, either in the form of truncated features or residual finds, was observed during the course of the excavation.

## 5 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

British Geological Society website geology viewer:

<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html>

OA, 2013 Brasenose Farm, west of Oxford Road, Steeple Aston: Written Scheme of Investigation for a Watching Brief



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Figure 1: Site location

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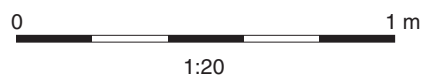
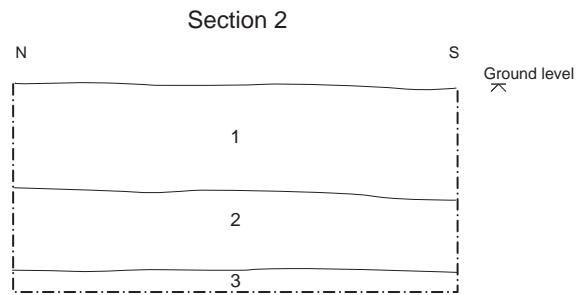
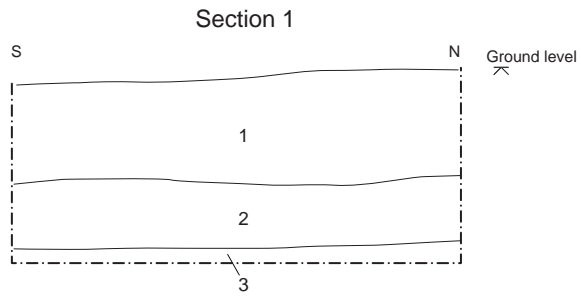
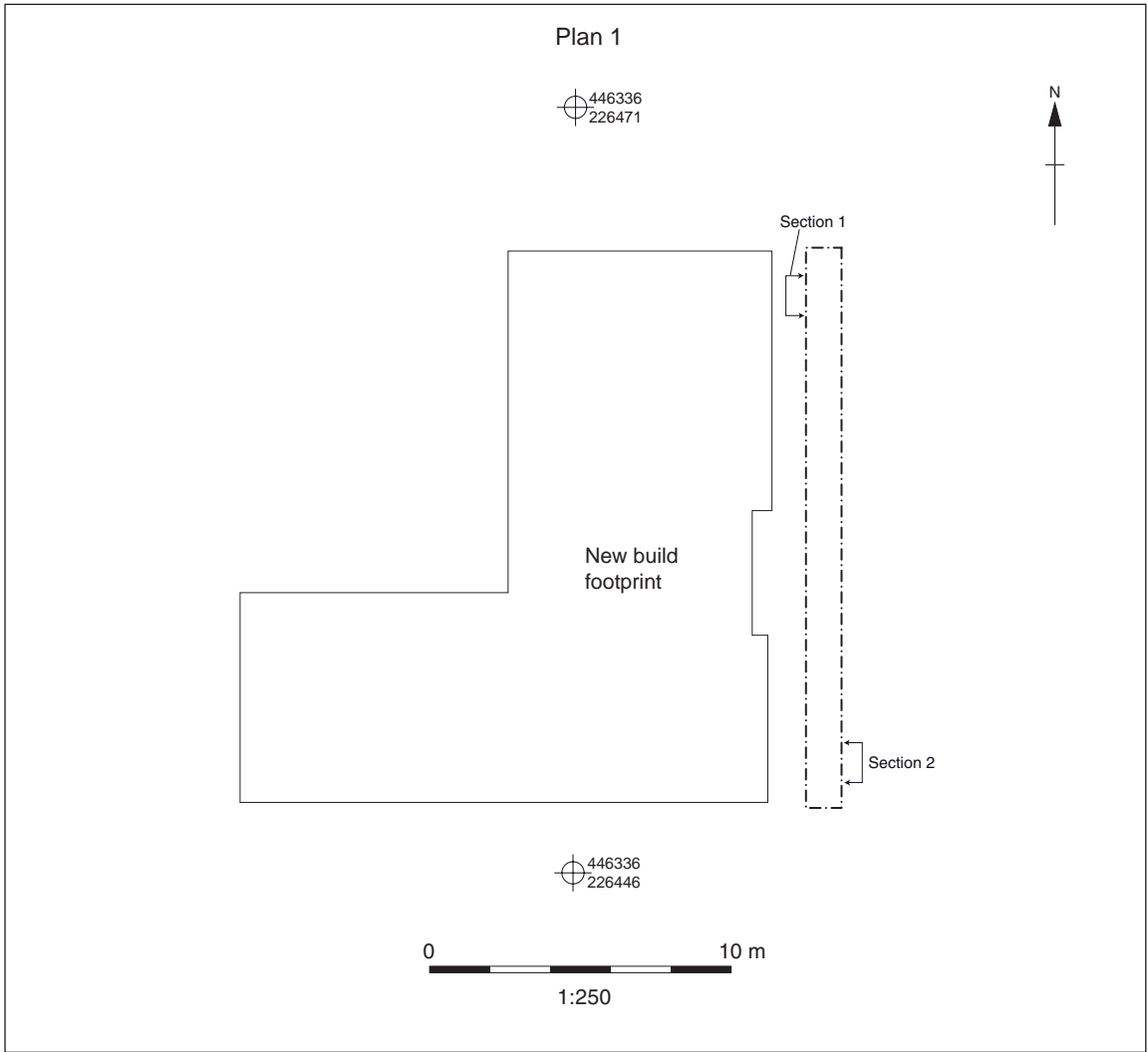


Figure 2: Trench location and sections





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