

DEELEY PROPERTIES LTD

THORPE PARK (PHASE 3)  
THORPE WAY  
BANBURY

*NGR SP 4680 4040*

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT**

*Planning Ref: 01/00924/F*

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September 2001

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*Planning Application No. 01/00924/F*

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Date: September 2001
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SUMMARY

*In July and August 2001, Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) undertook a watching brief at Thorpe Park, Thorpe Way, Banbury. No significant archaeological features or deposits were observed during the watching brief.*

**1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Planning permission for a new development on land north west of Spital Farm and along the south side of Thorpe Way, Banbury (Fig. 1) has been granted by Cherwell District Council. The development comprises the construction of two new buildings (Fig. 2) with associated new vehicular and pedestrian access (Planning application 01/00924/F).
- 1.2 The proposed development is situated within an area of archaeological potential (see below). The site has geology of fine loamy soils overlying Jurassic and Cretaceous clay or mudstone. The site lies at c. 92.5 m OD at NGR SP 4680 4040. Current land use is as a vacant plot in Thorpe Park Industrial Estate.

**2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The development area is located immediately adjacent to Spital Farm, a medieval holding belonging to St Leonards Hospital (for Lepers) PRN 1794. The exact origins of the Hospital are unknown but the earliest reference dates to a grant of protection by Henry III to the infirm brethren of the Hospital in 1265. The last documented reference to the Hospital was in 1391 and it is thought to have ceased to exist before the dissolution of the religious houses in the 16th century. It is unclear as to whether Spital Farm was the site of the former Hospital (thought to have been located near Banbury Bridge) or its farm which was given to the Hospital in AD 1375.

- 2.2 An archaeological evaluation undertaken to the north east of the site did not produce any archaeological evidence. The development area is, however, situated much closer to Spital Farm and there is a possibility that archaeological deposits could be affected.

### **3 WATCHING BRIEF AIMS**

- 3.1 To record the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of archaeological remains within the entire area affected by development.
- 3.2 If exceptional archaeological remains were discovered, for which the resources allocated were insufficient to support a treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard, the OAU would signal to all parties that such an archaeological find had been made.
- 3.3 To make available the results of the investigation.

### **4 METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 Scope of fieldwork**

- 4.1.1 The watching brief was undertaken on all areas of ground disturbance.

#### **4.2 Recording**

- 4.2.1 Archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:100, sections were drawn at 1:20. All excavated features were photographed using colour slide and black-and-white print film. Recording followed procedures lay down in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (Wilkinson, 1992).

#### **4.3 Finds**

- 4.3.1 A number of 20th-Century pottery sherds were observed across the site but were not retained.

#### **4.4 Environmental results**

- 4.4.1 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.

### **5 RESULTS**

The topography of the development site displayed a considerable east-west slope (*c* 99.20 m OD to the west and *c* 101.80 m OD to the east). This necessitated a the levelling of the entire site prior to the excavation of the footings for the new units.

## 5.1 The Site reduction

5.1.1 Following the overall reduction, geotextile and c 0.25 m of hardcore were deposited across the site leaving a finished level of approximately 99.70 m OD, from which the foundations were excavated. Due to the topography of the site, the levelling to the west of the site only involved the removal of topsoil while to the east of the site, a significant incursion into the underlying colluvium and clay was necessary. Although this process was closely monitored, no significant archaeological deposits or features were observed. The general stratigraphy comprised 0.2 m of topsoil (1) overlying c 0.4 m of a sterile mid-brown clay silt deposit (2) which in turn overlay the clay natural (3). Deposit 2 was interpreted as a colluvial deposit and was not present to the west of the site (see Interpretation and Discussion).

## 5.2 The footings

5.2.1 The footings were excavated through the recently deposited hardcore and the underlying clay. No archaeological features were observed within the foundation trenches.

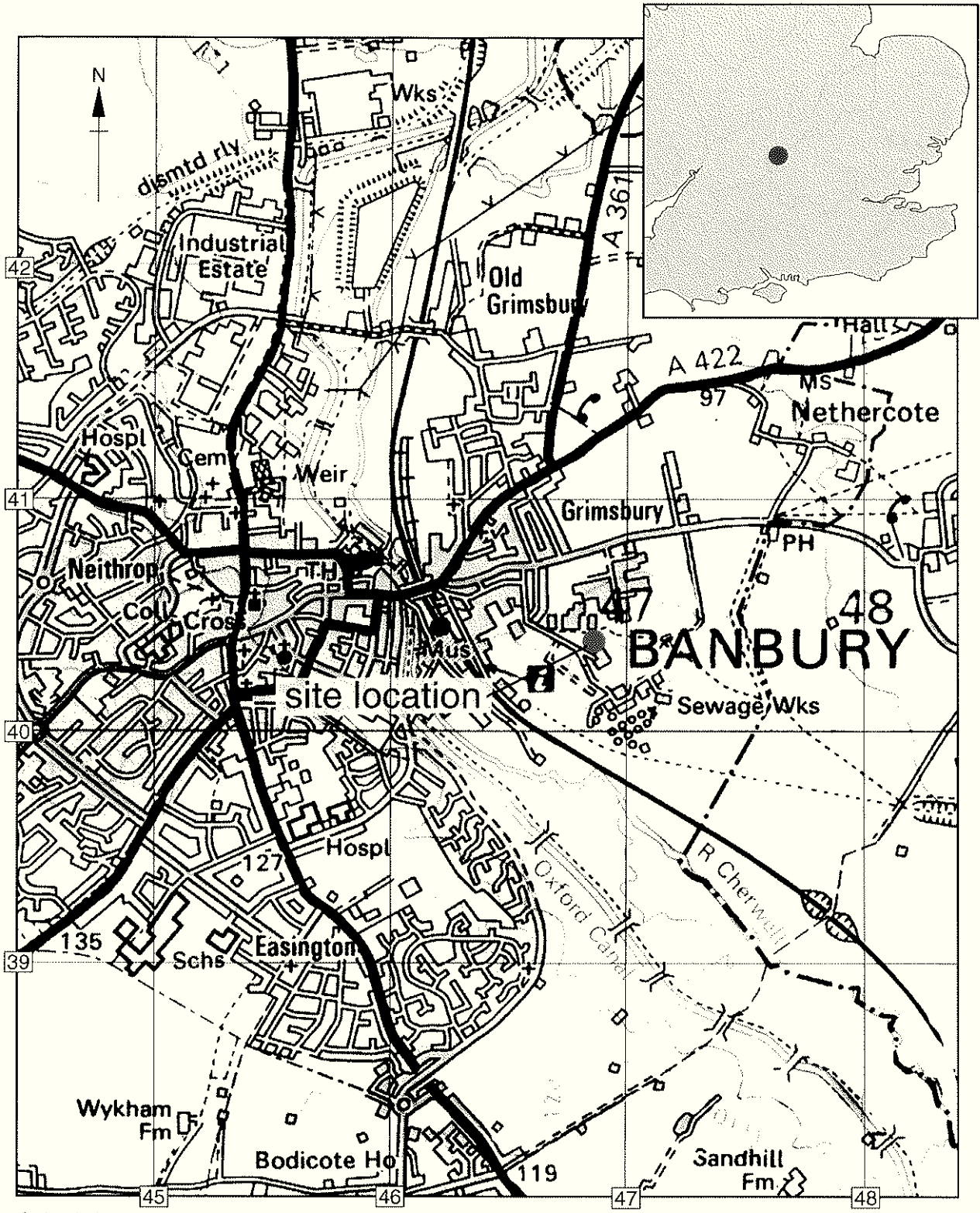
## 6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Although no archaeological features or deposits were observed during the watching brief, it is possible that the western half of the site has been truncated during the construction of the adjacent units (Edmundson Electrical to the north and CTG to the south) creating the topography present prior to the current development. The fact that the base of the slope coincides with the eastern end of Edmundson Electrical - and that the colluvium is not present to the west - may also suggest that this is the origin of the east-west slope.

6.2 No structural evidence relating to St Leonards Hospital was observed.

### 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.

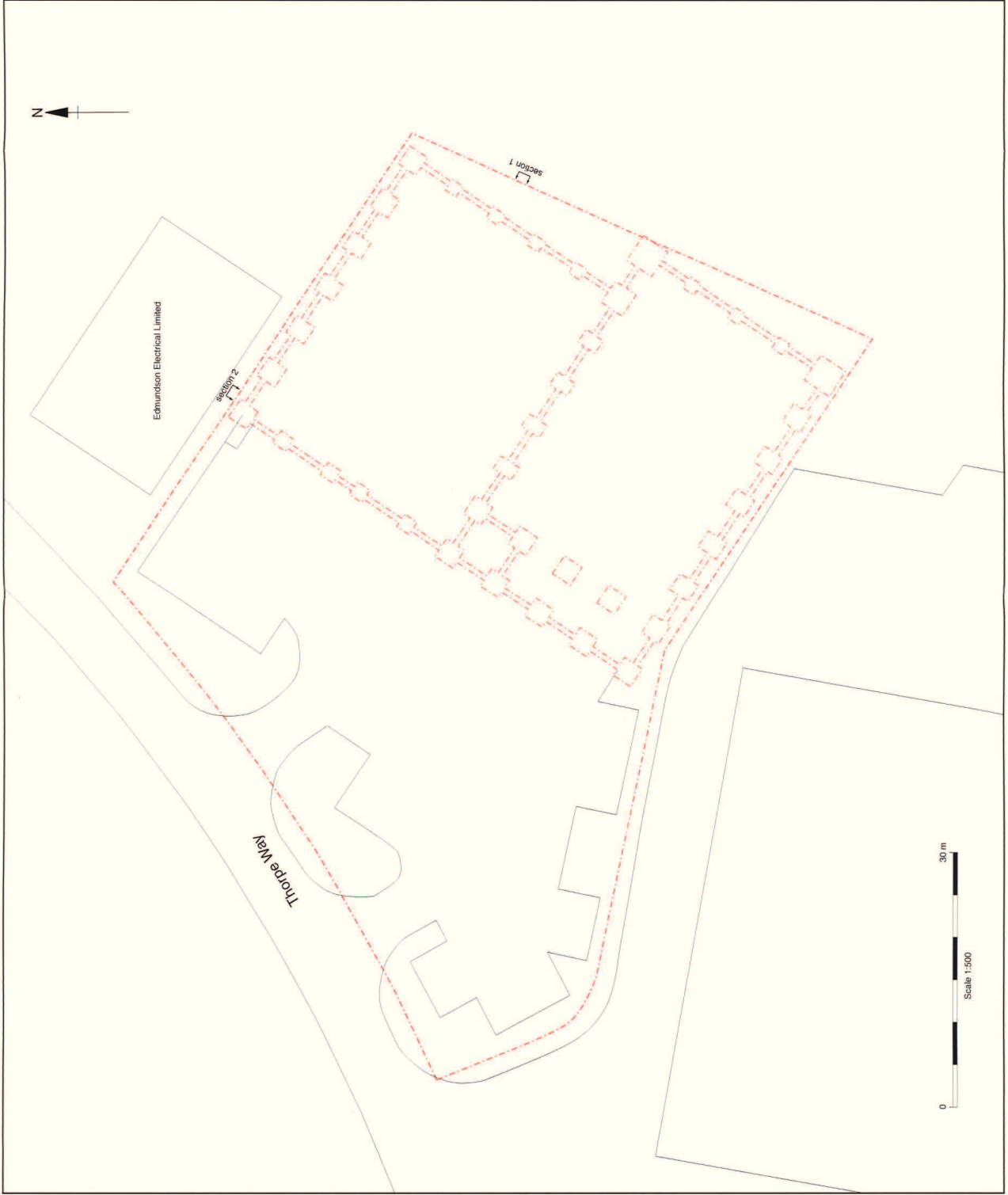
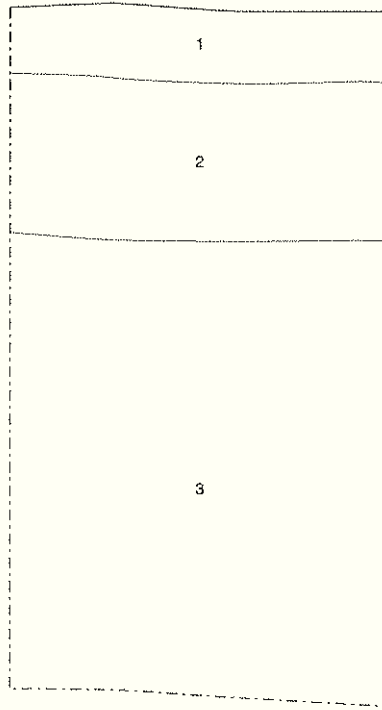


Figure 2 : Site plan.



Section 1



Section 2

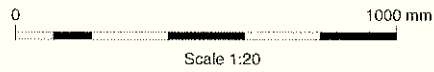


Figure 3 : Sections.



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