

17 Eastway, Drayton, Oxfordshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

NGR SP 4767 9384

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

July 1995

**17 EASTWAY, DRAYTON, OXFORDSHIRE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT
NGR SP 4767 9384**

1. SUMMARY

The intrusive work of this development revealed no archaeological remains or deposits.

2. INTRODUCTION

The Oxford Archaeological Unit undertook a watching brief during June 1995 at Eastway, Drayton (Fig.1). A request to the Vale of White Horse District Council was made in 1994 for permission to demolish extant buildings on the site and construct two new houses. A watching brief during the development was deemed necessary in accordance with PPG16, owing to the presence of known archaeological sites and monuments in the area.

The brief involved the monitoring of topsoil stripping in advance of construction of two new buildings. The development area covered an area of approximately 600 square metres, and consisted of an 'L' shaped plot of land set back c. 120 m from the Eastway (Fig.2). Groundwork was carried out by Dominic Builders of Abingdon.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The site of the proposed development is situated c 200 m NW of a number of enclosures identified through aerial photography. The enclosures may be of prehistoric date. To the east of these enclosures is a further dense concentration of cropmarks, scheduled as Oxfordshire Scheduled Ancient Monument 248. These include features ranging in date from the Neolithic period up to Anglo-Saxon times. The most significant feature of this group is the Drayton cursus, a 'ritual' monument over 1000 m long and 70 m wide. A radio-carbon date of c 2900 BC has been obtained from a sample from the cursus.

Immediately to the east of the development site a series of small rectangular enclosures, presumably field boundaries, of uncertain date, is also known from the air.

The underlying geology of the area is gravel, which lies at approximately 59 m O.D., and the area has been subjected to periods of alluviation owing to the nearby presence of the river Thames.

3. RESULTS

Topsoil was partly stripped using a 360° Hymac machine equipped with a toothless ditching bucket. Only the upper (vegetation) part of the topsoil was truncated and no archaeological features were revealed.

Foundation trenches were cut down to natural gravel (103), approximately 1m below the existing surface level. All the trenches were observed while open and a number of sample sections through the deposits were recorded. The section records are contained in the project archive.

Overlying the gravel subsoil was a mid yellow-brown clay sand with 40% gravel, possibly also a natural deposit (102). This was overlaid by a dark grey-brown sandy-clay with poorly sorted stone and pebbles (101) which in turn was overlaid by the surviving topsoil (100).

Two modern features were observed. These were a brick-built soakaway pit in cut 105, and a rubbish dump of bottles and building material contained within cut 107. No finds from the latter feature were retained.

No archaeological deposits were apparent in the sections of the trenches.

Spoil heaps were searched for finds but none were recovered.

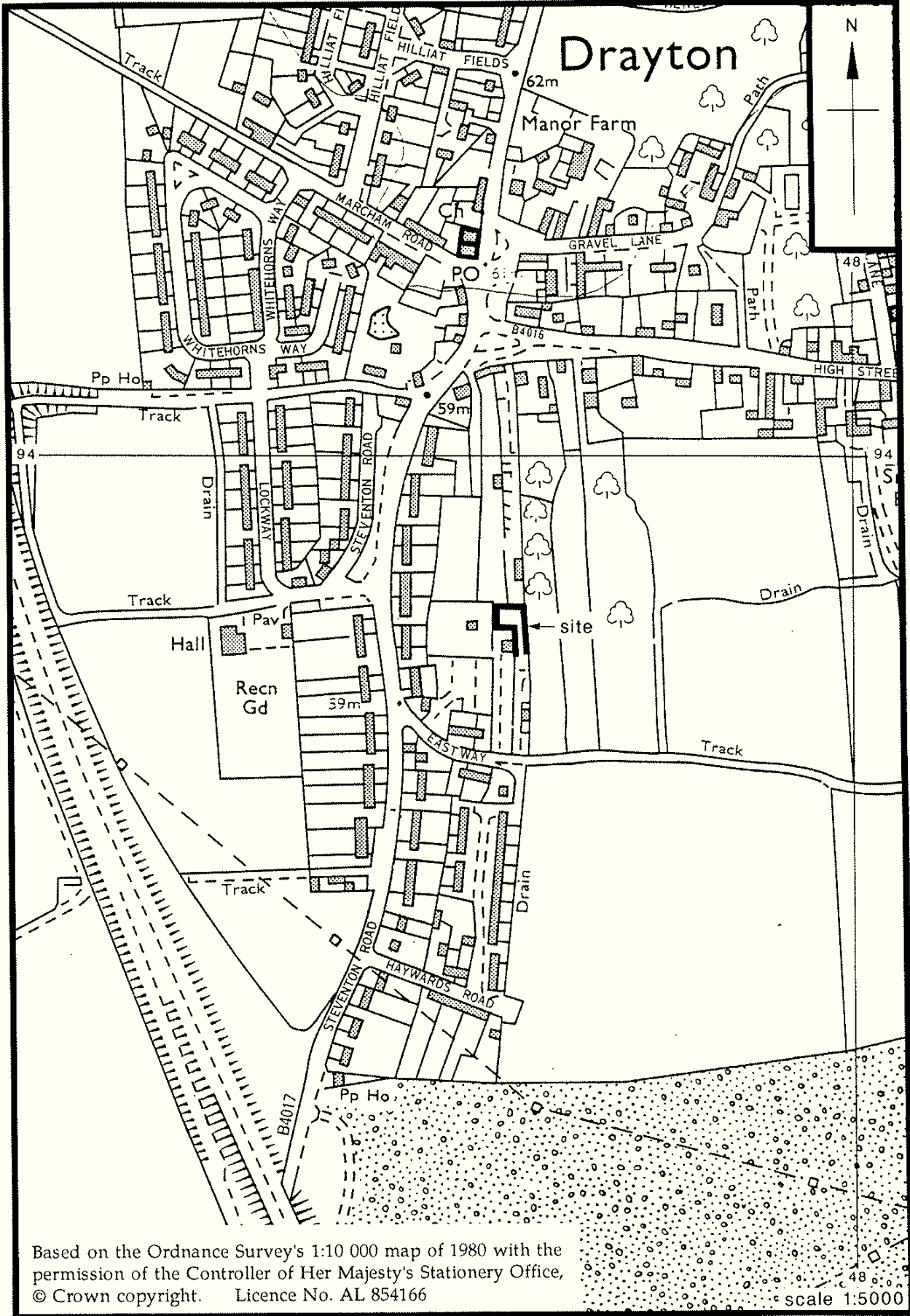
4. CONCLUSIONS

No archaeological remains or deposits were found during the course of the watching brief. It is apparent from the nature of the soils that no truncation causing the removal of any archaeological features has occurred.

R.BROWN.
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JULY 1995

Appendix: Table of context information

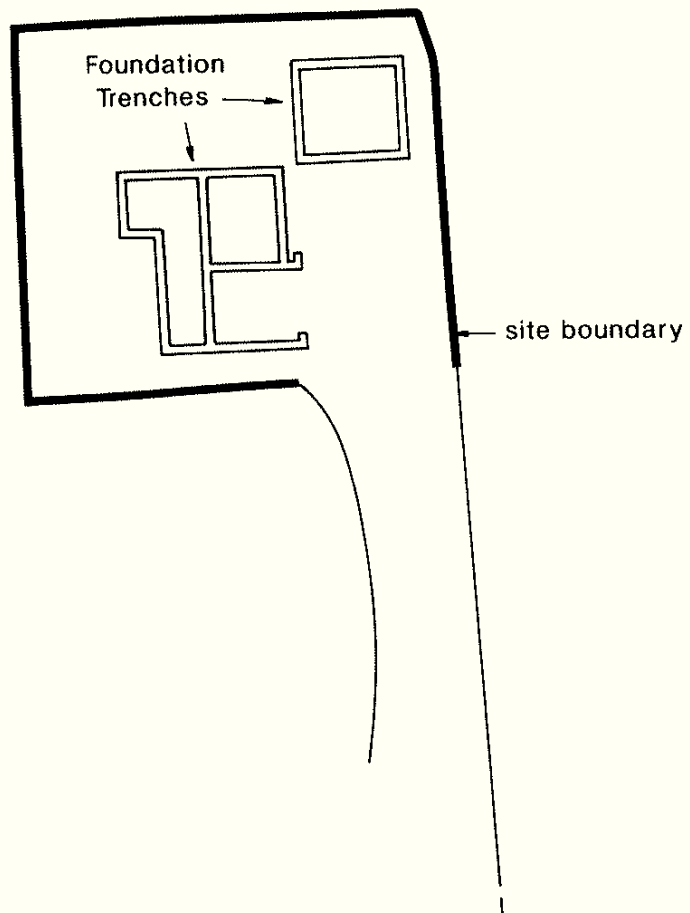
Ctx	Type	Depth	Comments
100	Deposit	0.25m	topsoil, dark grey-brown sandy loam
101	Deposit	0.25m	subsoil, dark grey-brown sandy clay
102	Deposit	0.50m	mid yellow-brown clay sand with 40% gravel
103	Layer		light yellow-brown sandy gravel, natural subsoil
104	Structure		modern brick-built soakaway
105	Cut		cut for 104
106	Deposit	1m+	buried modern rubbish
107	Cut		cut containing 106



Based on the Ordnance Survey's 1:10 000 map of 1980 with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, © Crown copyright. Licence No. AL 854166

scale 1:5000

figure 1



scale 1:500

figure 2



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