

Holy Trinity Church Finstock Oxfordshire



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Oxford Archaeology

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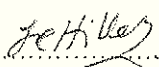
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Holy Trinity Church, Finstock, Oxfordshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

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SUMMARY

In April 2004 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Holy Trinity Church, Finstock, Oxfordshire (NGR SP 359 164). The work was commissioned by Acanthus Clews Architects on behalf of the Parochial Church Council in advance of a new service trench for the internal reordering of the church. The watching brief revealed a Roman quarry pit, but no other features pre-dating the 19th century church.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In April 2004 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Holy Trinity Church, Finstock, Oxfordshire (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Acanthus Clews Architects on behalf of the Parochial Church Council in respect of a new service trench for the internal reordering of the church.
- 1.1.2 A project brief was required and discussed with Julian Munby, Diocesan Archaeological Advisor to the Diocese of Oxford.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies on Marble Forest Clay with Limestone at 144.87 m above OD. The site is situated on the south side of the Witney Road passing through the village.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the watching brief was prepared for the WSI for the project (OA 2004) and is reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 The Holy Trinity church is a small aisleless church built in 1841, with a chancel added in 1905. This was built in a 14th century style by *S. Slingsby* of Reading. In the vicinity of the church and the village there is thought to be the remains of a Roman villa or farmstead (*Pevsner and Sherwood, 1974, 605*).

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence/absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.
- 2.1.2 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The new service trench was excavated from the southern gateway onto the Witney road to the south-west corner of the church. The concrete path was cut and then the trench was excavated with a mini excavator fitted with a 0.5 m wide bucket. This was carried out under archaeological supervision (Fig. 2).
- 2.2.2 All archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:200 and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20. All excavated features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. A general photographic record of the work was made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits (Figs 2 and 3)

- 3.1.1 The service trench was 0.5 m wide and 0.8 m in depth. It ran from the gateway of the graveyard to the south-west corner of the church. It cut into the natural (1), a yellow brown clay with limestone fragments. This had been cut by a large sub circular feature (5), with uneven sloping sides, whose base was below the impact level of the trench. It measured 4.2 m x 0.5 m x 0.8 m and was filled by a dark brown silty clay (6), from which some Roman pottery was recovered. This was sealed below a 0.10 - 0.20 m thick layer of light brown silty clay (7) subsoil, which was overlain by 0.12 m thick very dark brown silty clay (8) topsoil.
- 3.1.2 The topsoil (8) had been cut by the foundation trench (9) for the 1905 chancel. It had near vertical sides with a flat base and contained the foundations (11) of the chancel wall and a backfill of mid brown silty clay loam (10) with mortar and limestone fragments. Sealing fill 10 and cut into the topsoil (8) was the footpath, which consisted of hardcore base (2) of crushed limestone fragments for a gravel and cinder path (3). This had been later resurfaced with concrete (4).

3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 A number of finds were recovered from the fill of feature (5), that was partly exposed in the trench. The finds are consisted of the following:

1 x Fragment of fired clay

1 x Fragment of a body sherd of grey North Oxfordshire Ware dating from the mid 1st to 3rd century.

1 x Fragment of a Roman tabular roof tile.

3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 3.3.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified during the watching brief.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The watching brief revealed a large feature, which was thought to be a quarry pit dating from the Roman period. Part of a roof tile was recovered that hadn't been badly abraded, suggesting that a Roman tiled building was in the vicinity. No other archaeological features or deposits were observed in the trench, pre-dating the construction of the church in the mid 19th century. No burials were encountered along the line of the trench.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Length</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>
1	Natural				Clay and limestone	
2	Layer	0.16 m			Hardcore base	
3	Layer	0.04 - 0.14 m			Gravel and cinder path	
4	Layer	0.07 m			Concrete path	
5	Cut	0.80 m	0.5 m	4.20 m	Quarry pit	
6	Fill				Fill of pit 5	Pottery and CBM
7	Layer	0.1-2 m			Sub soil	
8	Layer	0.12 m			Topsoil	
9	Cut	0.70 m	0.40 m	0.50 m	Foundation cut	
10	Fill				Fill of trench	
11	Structure				Wall of chancel	

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

Pevsner, N and Sherwood, J 1974 *The Buildings of England: Oxfordshire*

Wilkinson, D 1992 *OA Fieldwork Manual*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Holy Trinity Church, Finstock, Oxfordshire

Site code: FIHTC 04

Grid reference: NGR SP 359 164

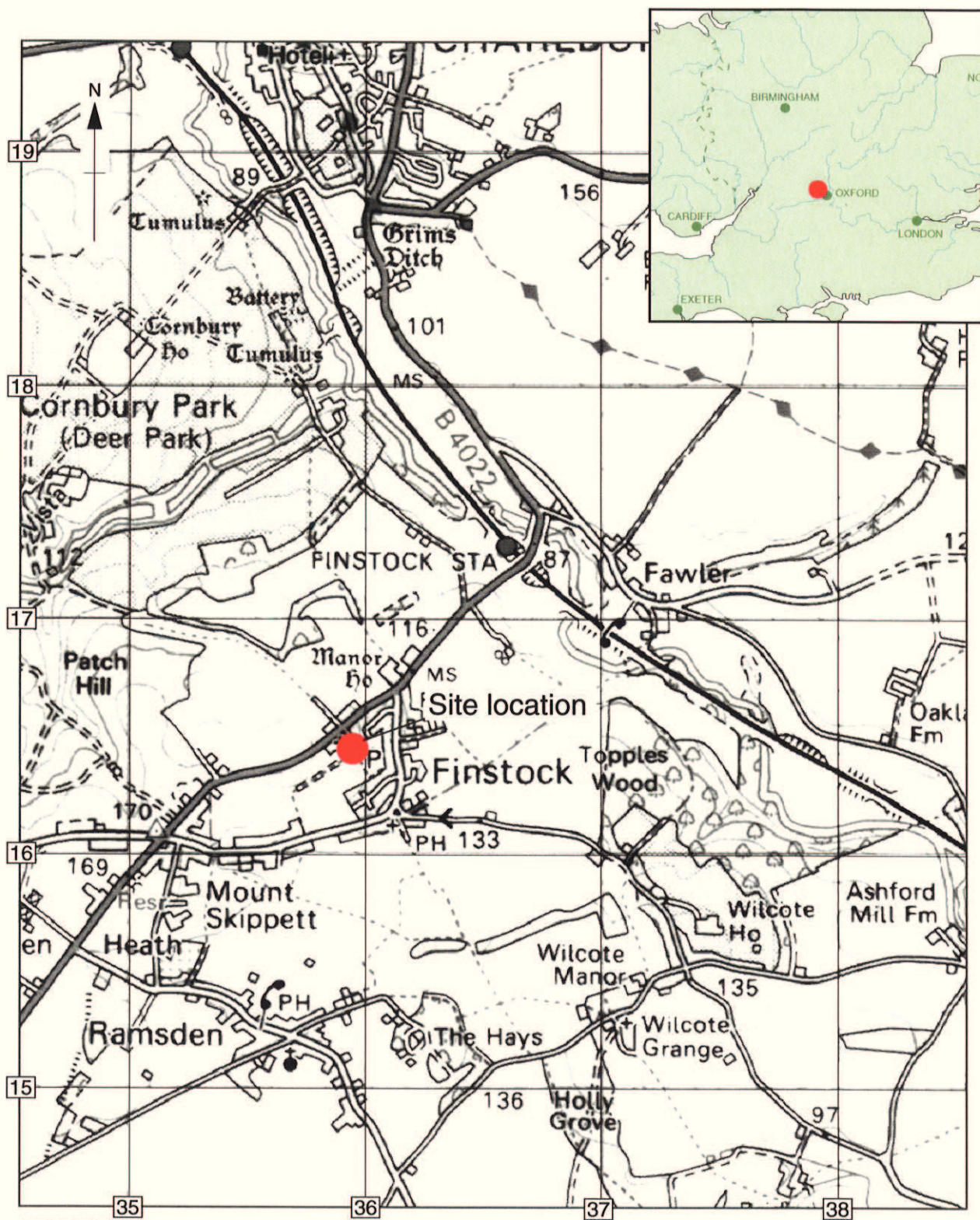
Type of watching brief: Excavation of service trench for internal reordering of the church.

Date and duration of project: Two days on the 26th and 27th April 2004.

Area of site: 23 m x 0.5 m x 0.8 m

Summary of results: The watching brief revealed a Roman quarry pit, but no other features pre-dating the 19th century church.

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

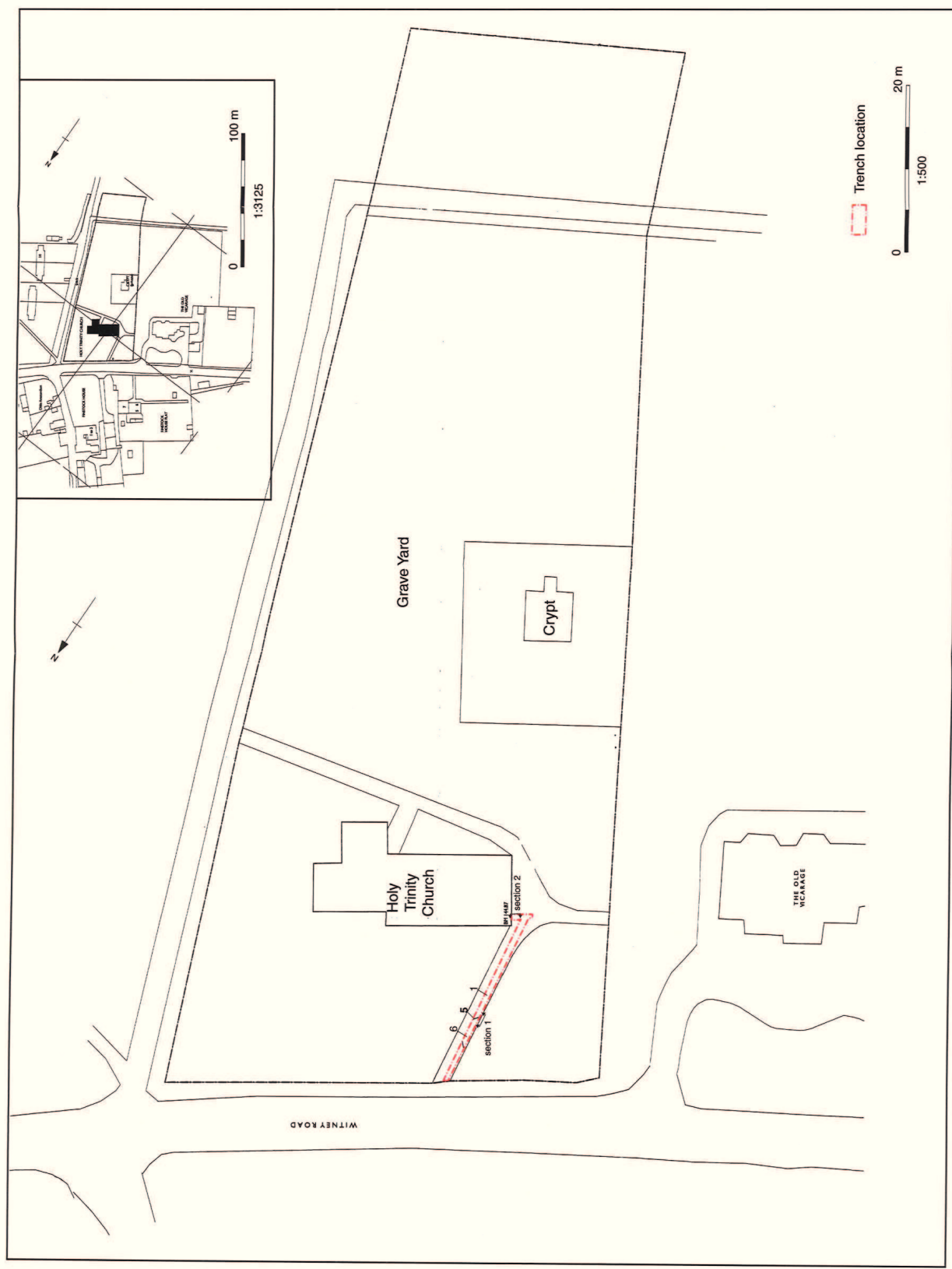


Figure 2: Site plan of features and sections

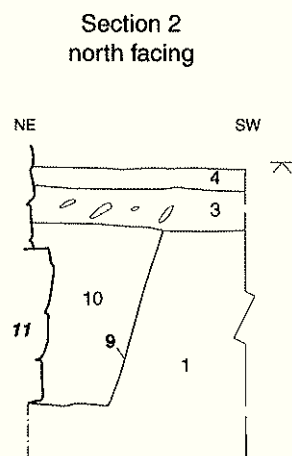
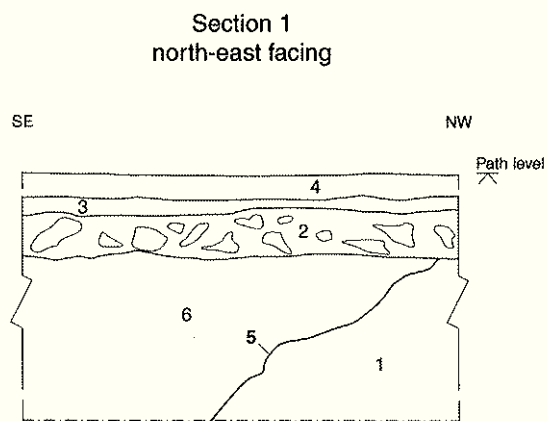


Figure 3: Sections 1 and 2



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