

College Farm

College Farm Close
Oddington
Oxfordshire



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



May 2009

Client: Mrs V. Robinson

Issue No:1

OA Job No: 4414

NGR: SP 5529 1492

College Farm, Oddington, Oxfordshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

CONTENTS

Summary.....	1
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Scope of work.....	1
1.2 Location, geology and topography	1
1.3 Archaeological and historical background.....	1
2 Project Aims and Methodology.....	3
2.1 Aims	3
2.2 Methodology	3
3 Results	3
3.1 Description of deposits.....	3
3.2 Finds	4
3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains	4
4 Discussion and Conclusions.....	4
Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory	5
Appendix 2 Bibliography and References	5
Appendix 3 Summary of Site Details.....	5

LIST OF FIGURES

- Fig. 1 Site location
Fig. 2 Site plan and sections

Front cover: College Farm House

SUMMARY

On May 13th 2009, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at College Farm, Oddington, Oxfordshire (NGR: SP 5529 1492). The work was commissioned by Mrs V Robinson in advance of the construction of a new extension. The watching brief revealed modern disturbed ground overlying colluvium and weathered limestone. No significant archaeology was observed.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 On May 13th 2009, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at College Farm, College Farm Close, Oddington, Oxfordshire (NGR SP: 5529 1492). The work was commissioned by Mrs V. Robinson (Planning Application 08/02053/F).
- 1.1.2 The site lies within an area of archaeological potential and as part of the planning permission, an archaeological watching brief was requested during the course of the groundworks. This is in line with PPG16 and Policy C26 of the Local Plan.
- 1.1.3 Richard Oram, the County Planning Archaeologist, part of the Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (OCAS), produced a brief specifying the work required (OCAS 2009).
- 1.1.4 OA produced a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) showing how it would meet these requirements (OA 2009).

1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The village of Oddington lies approximately 7 km north-east of Oxford (Fig. 1). The site itself is located in the centre of the village, while the development area is situated to the south-east of the main house at approximately 66 m above OD. The underlying geology consists of Glaciofluvial deposits over Cornbrash formations (British Geological Survey sheet no. 237).
- 1.2.2 The site was previously part of the old farmyard. The new extension occupies part of the footprint of the old extension (demolished prior to work starting). The old yard surface consisting of concrete over a hardcore base, 0.2 m to 0.25 m in depth, had also been removed prior to commencement of work.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background to the watching brief was prepared for the project using published sources and is summarised below.

- 1.3.2 The parish of Oddington lies some 8 miles north-east of Oxford and on the western edge of Otmoor. The River Ray forms a natural boundary to the south, with its tributaries marking the greater part of the eastern and western boundaries with a branch of the river flowing through the centre of the parish. Within the parish there are a number of springs noted for their mineral properties and their supposed capacity to cure cattle of a disease known as “the Otmoor evil”.
- 1.3.3 There are several disused quarries south of Oddington village which once provided a good quality limestone for house-building and road-making.
- 1.3.4 The name Oddington suggests an early settlement, the name meaning in Old English “Ot(t)a’s hill” and the site was probably settled by the same man who gave his name to Otmoor and Otley. The discovery in 1815 of a pre-Christian Saxon cemetery in the Rectory garden suggests that there was a settlement there in the 6th-century.
- 1.3.5 By the time of Edward the Confessor the Manor of Oddington was assessed at 3 hides and half a virgate (c140 hectares) and was held by a man named Alwi. By 1065 Edward had granted this estate, together with Islip to the Abbey of Westminster, although the King died before the Abbey had taken possession.
- 1.3.6 William the Conqueror appears to have granted possession to Hugh de Grantmesnil, Sheriff of Leicestershire, where it passed to his daughter Adeline, wife of Roger d’Ivry. In 1086 Adeline was recorded as holding it herself.
- 1.3.7 A papal bull of 1146, confirming the exemption of Thame Abbey from paying tithes on its lands and including those of its Oddington Grange implies that there was a church in Oddington by the 12th century.
- 1.3.8 The current church, the Church of St. Andrew, is a plain stone building dating mainly from the end of the 13th and the beginning of the 14th centuries, but has been much restored. The nave has 13th-century buttresses, and the tower also probably dates to this period. The chancel retains part of a late 14th-century window and an elegant 14th-century piscina.
- 1.3.9 The current village itself is a mixture of late post-medieval farm houses and modern terraced housing.
- 1.3.10 The development site is located within the medieval core of the village and a recent evaluation and subsequent watching brief carried out 75 m to the south of the development site recorded settlement evidence dated to the late Saxon and early medieval period (PRN 26177) (SP 5526 1484). The investigation also located what is thought to be the route of an early road through the village, aligned east-west.
- 1.3.11 South-east of the site is a series of well preserved earthworks of the Deserted Medieval Village (PRN 5847) (SP 5540 1474). Previously it was thought that the earthworks did not extend as far as the limited area of the site, but archaeological work during the excavation of a new cable trench in June 2007 (OA, 2007) recorded

archaeological deposits, including two ditches (one possibly Saxon) to the south-east of the site.

- 1.3.12 This ditch is thought to be part of the Saxon enclosure ditch, which can be seen on the surface as a slight earthwork, running to the east of the site and turning to the south of the late 13th-century church (PRN 5285) (SP 5525 1480). The development area is located 40 m north of the church and it is possible that the development site is located within this enclosure.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence or absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.
- 2.1.2 To preserve by record any archaeological features or deposits that may be disturbed or destroyed during the course of the groundworks.
- 2.1.3 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The trench was dug by a tracked excavator fitted with a 0.8 m wide bucket. Excavation proceeded in spits until the required depth of excavation (0.8 m – 0.9 m) was achieved. The sides and base of the trench were closely examined for archaeological evidence and the spoil was examined for dating evidence.
- 2.2.2 A plan showing the extent of the excavations and the location of any archaeological features was maintained at a scale of 1:100 (Fig. 2) and any recorded sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20. All excavated features were photographed using digital photography, colour slide and black and white film. A general photographic record of the work was also made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OA Field Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 The stratigraphy was similar throughout the length of the trenching and a detailed account will be given for each recorded section.

Section 1

- 3.1.2 The underlying solid geology, consisting of fractured tabular oolitic limestone (3), a natural cornbrash, was encountered at a depth of 0.45 m below the current ground level. This was overlaid by a 0.22 m deep layer of red-brown clay silt (2). This contained many very small sub-angular fragments of limestone. Overlying this was a

0.18 m deep layer of grey-brown clay silt loam (1). This produced fragments of brick and modern finds such as plastic.

Section 2

- 3.1.3 A continuation of the cornbrash (3) was encountered at a depth of 0.4 m below ground level. Sealing this was a 0.25 m deep continuation of the red-brown clay silt (2). This was overlaid by the grey-brown silt loam (1), 0.15 m deep.

3.2 **Finds**

- 3.2.1 Dating evidence was only recovered from layer 1 and consisted of brick fragments, animal bone, plastic fertilizer bags and offcuts of metal piping. All these were considered to be of post-medieval origin and were recorded but not retained.

3.3 **Palaeo-environmental remains**

- 3.3.1 No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling were encountered during the course of the watching brief.

4 **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1.1 The stratigraphy observed during the course of the watching brief produced no evidence for direct occupation such as foundation trenches, boundary ditches or rubbish pits.
- 4.1.2 The depth of the topsoil (1) appears to be very thin and it may be that this layer had been reduced in depth when the concrete yard surface was originally laid. The presence of modern finds such as the fertilizer bags also suggests that it had been heavily disturbed, probably when it was in agricultural use.
- 4.1.3 The presence of the layer of red-brown clay silt 2, a probable glaciofluvial deposit, running unbroken throughout the length of the trench suggests that no intrusive activity has taken place within the development area.
- 4.1.4 It is possible that the footprints of the current buildings mask any evidence of earlier occupation on the site.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	Layer	0.15 m - 0.2 m	-	Worked soil, probably truncated and heavily disturbed by modern activities	Brick, plastic, metal piping	C20th
2	Layer	0.18 – 0.25 m	-	Glaciofluvial deposit	-	-
3	Layer	> 0.5 m	-	Limestone cornbrash	-	-

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

IFA, 2001 *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

OA, 1992 *Field Manual* (ed. D. Wilkinson)

OA, 2007 *New Power Cables, Oddington – Archaeological Watching Brief Report*

OA, 2009 *College Farm, College Farm Close, Oddington - Written Statement of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

OCAS 2008 *College Farm, College Farm Close, Oddington - Design Brief for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

Victoria History of the Counties of England: Oxfordshire Volume VI, p277-286

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: College Farm, College Farm Close, Oddington, Oxfordshire

Site code: ODDCOF 09

Grid reference: SP 5529 1492

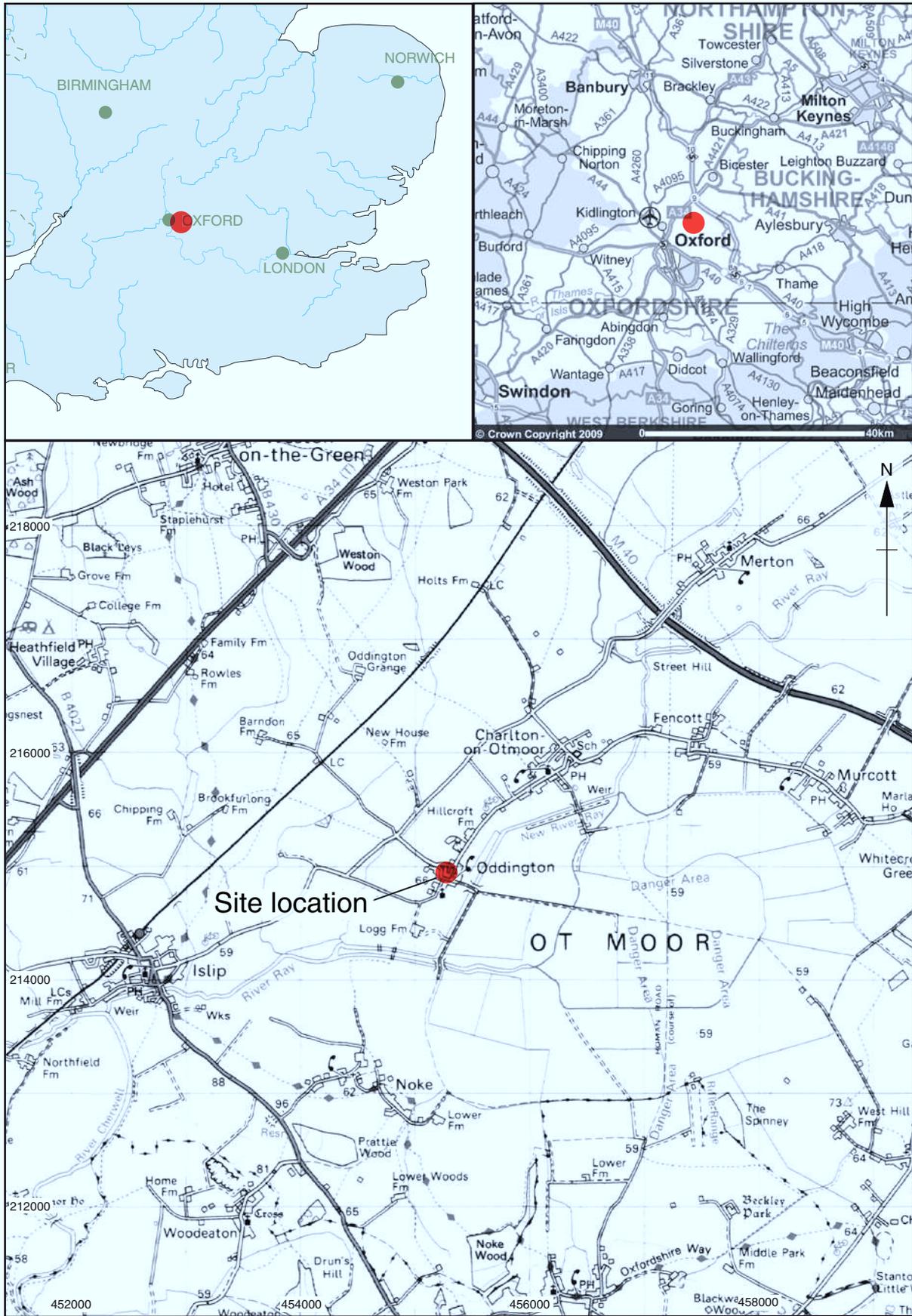
Type of watching brief: Machine excavation of foundation trench

Date and duration of project: 13th May 2009, 1 day

Area of site: 250 m²

Summary of results: The watching brief revealed no significant archaeology.

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: OXCMS:2009.43



1:50,000

Reproduced from the Landranger 1:50,000 scale by permission of the Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright 1997. All rights reserved. Licence No. AL 100005569

Figure 1: Site location

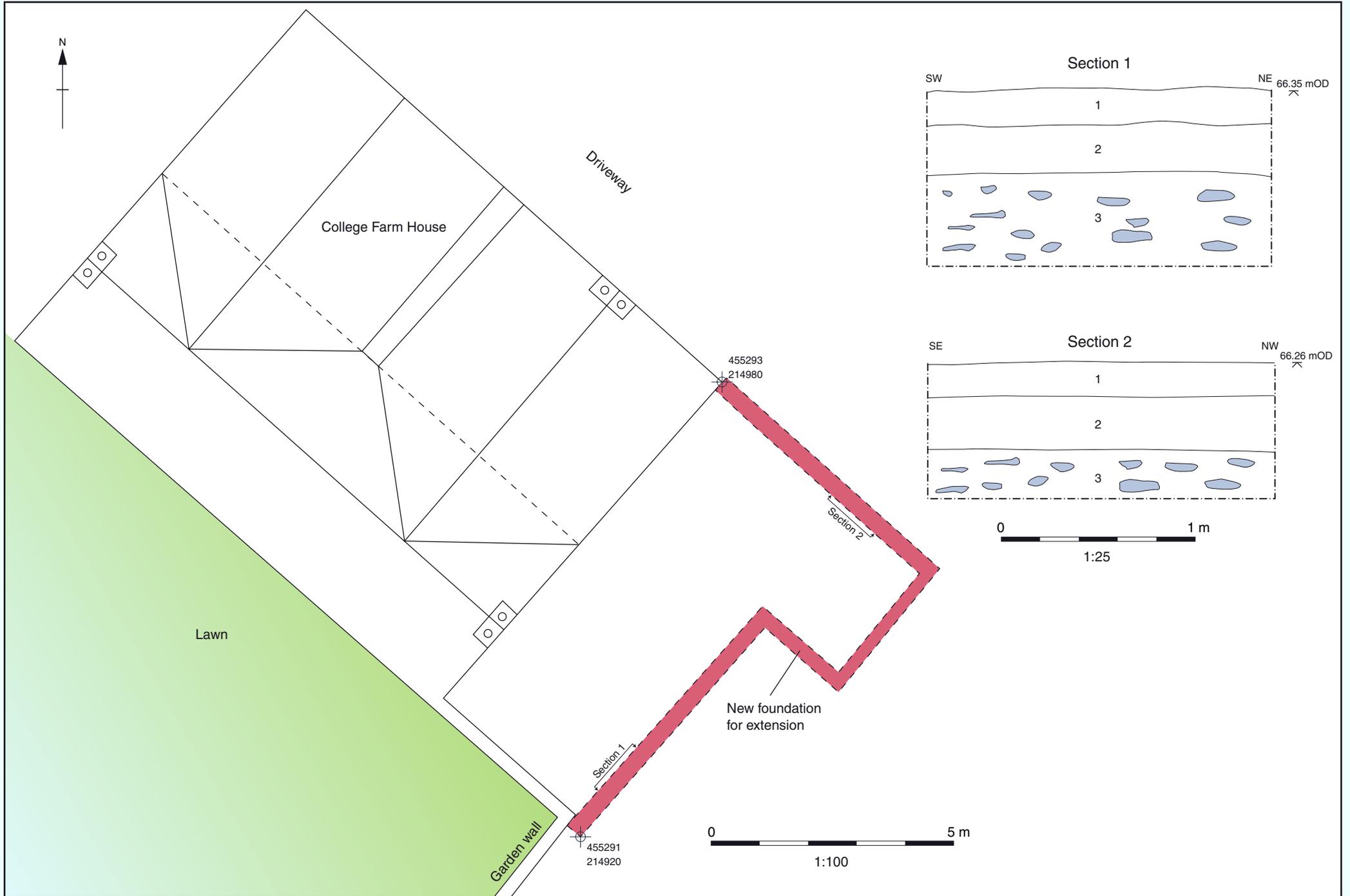


Figure 2: Site plan and sections



OA South

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES

t: +44 (0) 1865 263 800
f: +44 (0) 1865 793 496
e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk
w: <http://thehumanjourney.net>

OA North

Mill 3
Moor Lane Mills
Moor Lane
Lancaster LA1 1GF

t: +44 (0) 1524 541 000
f: +44 (0) 1524 848 606
e: [oanorth@thehumanjourney.net](mailto: oanorth@thehumanjourney.net)
w: <http://thehumanjourney.net>

OA East

15 Trafalgar Way
Bar Hill
Cambridgeshire
CB23 8SQ

t: +44 (0) 1223 850500
f: +44 (0) 1223 850599
e: [oaeast@thehumanjourney.net](mailto: oaeast@thehumanjourney.net)
w: <http://thehumanjourney.net>

OA Méditerranée

115 Rue Merlot
ZAC La Louvade
34 130 Maugeio
France

t: +33 (0) 4.67.57.86.92
f: +33 (0) 4.67.42.65.93
e: [oamed@thehumanjourney.net](mailto: oamed@thehumanjourney.net)
w: <http://oamed.fr/>

Director: David Jennings, BA MIFA FSA



The Oxford Archaeological Unit Ltd is a Private Limited Company, N^o: 1618597 and a Registered Charity, No: 285627 Registered Office: Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES