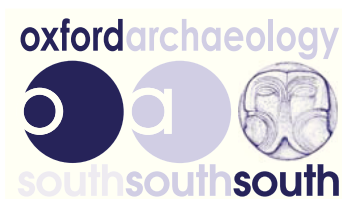


Land to the East of Clacket Lane, Westerham, Kent



Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample Fieldwork Report



April 2014

**Client: Skanska Balfour Beatty Joint
Venture**

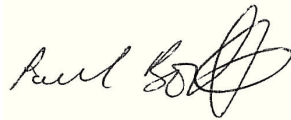
Issue No:1

OA Job No: 5539

NGR: TQ 4315 5473



Client Name: Skanska Balfour Beatty Joint Venture
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Site Code: M25OK 13
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1	Steve Lawrence Senior Project Manager	Paul Booth Senior Project Manager	

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Janus House

Osney Mead

Oxford OX2 0ES

t: +44 (0) 1865 263800

e: oasouth@thehumanjourney.net

f: +44 (0) 1865 793496

w: oasouth.thehumanjourney.net

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Land to the East of Clacket Lane, Westerham, Kent

Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample Fieldwork Report

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Summary

Oxford Archaeology (OA), was commissioned by Skanska Balfour Beatty Joint Venture to undertake recording of potential archaeological remains prior to the construction of a temporary compound area and a permanent noise reduction soil bund on land to the east of Clacket Lane and Cupids Coppice and north of the M25 near Westerham, Kent.

No significant archaeological remains were present. The excavation revealed only very sparse remains. These include treeholes within the western part of the site that appear to have been a result of entirely natural processes. Five small pits scattered sparsely across a large area were recorded with in situ scorching and charcoal rich fills. None produced any artefactual material. These may represent occasional woodland activities such as charcoal production. In addition an undated linear ditch was recorded.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project details

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Skanska Balfour Beatty Joint Venture to undertake recording of potential archaeological remains prior to construction of a temporary works compound and a permanent noise reduction bund to the north of the M25 and to the east of Clacket Lane near Westerham, Kent. The construction work was undertaken through a general permitted development order as part of the programme of carriageway widening along the M25 within Kent and Surrey between Junctions 5 and 7.
- 1.1.2 Prior to the fieldwork attendance, OA had produced a Cultural Heritage Assessment of the potential centred upon the temporary construction compound and bund (OA 2012). The results of the assessment formed the basis for discussions with Wendy Rogers, Senior Archaeological Officer at Kent County Council (KCC) with regard to defining a suitable programme of Strip, Map and Sample (SMS) archaeological recording to mitigate the impacts of the construction and preservation *in situ* possibilities where impacts could be avoided. In January 2013 OA produced a Written Scheme of Investigation (OA 2013) submitted to and approved by KCC immediately before the fieldwork commenced. The fieldwork programme was completed in phases between 21st January and 7th May 2013.

1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The site is centred on TQ 4315 5473 c 560 metres to the north-west of the town of Westerham in Kent and c 440 metres to the east of the Clacket Lane service station on the M25 in Kent (Fig. 1). The site is located wholly within the parish of Westerham, within the district of Sevenoaks, Kent, although the western perimeter is also the Kent / Surrey county boundary. Prior to the construction, the site comprised grazed pasture within the full 9.7 hectare area enclosed by the perimeter boundary.
- 1.2.2 The underlying geology is Gault Clay deposits of the Cretaceous Era (Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales), Sheet 287). The land surface sloped steeply from the south-west to the north and north-east with the central part of the site located at c 125 metres OD.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background to the site was described in detail in the Cultural Heritage Assessment (OA 2012). The following is a summary from that study. The original document should be referred to for further detail and references. It should be noted that the background is limited to the confines of the development boundary and the surrounding 1km although important sites close to the area are also included.
- 1.3.2 There is limited evidence of prehistoric activity at the site although this is located to the south of the North Downs Way, a prehistoric trackway that follows the ridge of the North Downs escarpment. A polished flint axe was discovered to the west of the site suggesting a Neolithic presence within the immediate area. In addition, two circular features were identified during the study of aerial photographs within the site boundary that may represent the remains of ploughed-out Bronze Age round barrow mounds. However, this interpretation was tentative and these may have resulted from other non-archaeological factors.



-
- 1.3.3 Iron Age activity within the vicinity is also relatively limited. 'Belgic' pottery sherds dated between AD 25 and AD 50 were recovered during the excavation at the nearby Roman temple site suggesting that this had an earlier focus. However, more substantial remains of a possible associated settlement have not been identified within the immediate area.
- 1.3.4 The most significant and substantive remains are those of the Roman period. A Romano-Celtic temple is situated c 690 metres to the north-west of the site and was partly excavated in 1879 and then more extensively in 1935. This is located to the west of the London – Lewes road which passes c 8 metres to the east of the temple boundary wall. It also appears to have been linked to a nearby villa site at Titsey, which is also a Scheduled Monument and lies to the west of the temple and approximately 2.5km west of the Site. The temple and associated features survive in relatively good condition although sections of it appeared to have been extensively robbed in the medieval period. The temple and a curtilage of land around it are now a Scheduled Monument.
- 1.3.5 The Roman road from London – Lewes is on a roughly north to south alignment c 650 metres to the west of the Site and runs between Watling Street at Peckham in South London and Lewes in Sussex. A section excavated across the road in 1935 at the site of the temple found this to be 6.7 metres wide and constructed of flint and gravel with a raised agger. Excavations at Moorhouse Sandpit c 840 metres to the south-west of the site also recorded a Roman pottery kiln along with ditches and evidence of a possible building.
- 1.3.6 Saxon occupation and activity is poorly represented within the study area and is limited to historical references from later in the period. The village of Westerham, 1 km to the south-west, is listed in Domesday in 1086 as Oistreham or 'west town', the name pertaining to the parish's location at the extreme western end of Kent. The fact that the village is mentioned in the Domesday survey of 1086 as being held (before the Norman Conquest) by Earl Godwin on behalf of King Edward the Confessor clearly demonstrates the Saxon origins of the settlement.
- 1.3.7 Two medieval manors are known to have existed to the south and north of the site. Squerryes manor was first mentioned during the reign of Henry III. Gaysum or 'Gasum' manor is mentioned as early as the reign of Edward II and was later incorporated into the Squerryes estate. The manor was probably centred on the current site of Gaysham Farmhouse c 600 metres to the north.
- 1.3.8 Medieval pottery kilns have been recorded along the route of the Roman road within the vicinity of Clacket Lane. These appear to have been in production during the 13th century with forms including cooking pots, jugs and dishes made in a range of hard quartz-tempered, often sandy, fabrics. This small industry is represented by several known kilns along this part of the route.
- 1.3.9 In more recent history, the arrangement of boundaries and fields has remained more or less as it was first recorded on the Tithe map produced in 1844.



2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 General

2.1.1 General objectives of the Strip, Map and Sample (SMS) approach were:

- (i) to establish the presence/absence, extent, date, nature, function, and phasing of any archaeological remains present within the compound / bund boundary and to preserve these by detailed archaeological records.
- (ii) to characterise the overall nature of any archaeological remains encountered and to understand the process of their formation.
- (iii) to identify priorities within any areas of exposed archaeological remains that may have warranted more detailed investigation (excavation) and to provide evidence to inform more detailed excavation proposals.
- (iv) to establish the relative archaeological value of any remains encountered and implement an appropriate archaeological recording response to these through agreement with the KCC.
- (v) to recover evidence for the ecofactual and environmental potential of any archaeological deposits and features where this was considered appropriate to investigate.
- (vi) to make available the results of the investigation through appropriate publication.
- (vii) to contribute information to key research objectives based upon the Regional Research Agenda for this location.

2.2 Specific aims and objectives

2.2.1 Where significant remains were encountered of any period, specific aims were discussed and agreed with KCC prior to implementing detailed excavation and recording. In the event no significant remains were encountered and the general SMS approach alone was sufficient to investigate the site.

2.3 Preservation *in situ* aims and objectives

2.3.1 The aims and objectives to be applied to the preservation *in situ* areas were:

- (viii) to establish well defined limits of the areas to be preserved *in situ*.
- (ix) to define clearly the requirements for preservation to the client and contractors and ensure that these are adhered to.

2.4 Methodology

2.4.1 The excavation was undertaken using tracked mechanical excavators fitted with toothless ditching buckets and operating under close archaeological supervision. Spoil was moved around the site using dumpers avoiding movement over the stripped areas. The topsoil was removed in a sequence of phases prioritising the compound area before completing the bund area. Machine excavation ceased upon exposing the surface level of the undisturbed geology in the absence of any later archaeological horizons being present.

2.4.2 The machine stripping produced a clean surface that did not require substantial hand-cleaning and all revealed features and deposits were surveyed to a digital plan prior to



hand excavation and recording. Where necessary, localised hand cleaning of revealed features was undertaken to inform the excavation. The density of features encountered was of a level that did not require substantial review and consideration of detailed research aims and the sampling and characterisation excavation was sufficient to inform the results. All excavation was undertaken in accordance with local and national planning policies and guidelines.

- 2.4.3 The archaeological excavation and recording was completed in a sequence of small areas following the contractors priorities and was handed over for construction following site visits and approval from Wendy Rogers of KCC. OA provided a drawing of the completed areas to KCC. In total 5.85ha was stripped following the above methodology. The remaining c 3.5ha situated within the site boundary defined by the surrounding field margins was not impacted by the development. These largely remained as areas of pasture and hedge line around the field margins and between the bund and the B2024.



3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

- 3.1.1 A description of all features encountered and recorded during the excavation follows below. In addition a full context inventory is presented in Appendix A. The following descriptions include remarks on the environmental remains where appropriate. The full charred plant remains report is presented in Appendix B. A short site summary and interpretation are presented and discussed in Section 4.
- 3.1.2 None of the features produced any artefacts and no stratigraphic sequences were present that would have otherwise provided a relative chronology. All features were sealed by the existing turf, topsoil and subsoil where this existed. Due to the absence of any chronological data the features are described according to type. These are treeholes, pits or pit-like features and ditches.

3.2 Treeholes

- 3.2.1 Three treeholes (1007, 1009 and 1015) were sample excavated during the SMS investigation. These were located within the western part of the site (Fig. 2). Each was clearly identifiable prior to excavation as a probable treehole due to the irregular shape in plan and sequence of redeposited fills visible at the surface level. The excavated features provided a sample to confirm this interpretation and to check for the presence of artefactual material within the fills. The treeholes were between 1m and 2m across and had irregular outlines in plan with the base of each feature also showing evidence of where roots spread out and down from the former trunk. Each was between 0.1m and 0.2m deep and infilled with redeposited clay with gravel inclusions. Treehole 1015 did contain a fill with some very small charcoal fragments although none of the fills produced any artefactual material to indicate human activities in relation to the fallen trees.

3.3 Pits

- 3.3.1 Five pits (1004, 1001, 1013, 1017 and 1019) were present within the western part of the site (Fig. 2). These followed a theme in that each had either a charcoal fill or other evidence of heat affected depositions in the form of *in situ* scorching to the surrounding clay natural. Each was circular or near circular in plan although the diameters varied between 0.3m and 1m.
- 3.3.2 Pit 1004 comprised a well defined pit measuring 0.9m across and 0.12m deep with steep sides and a flat base. This contained a primary 'fill' of scorched clay (1006). This may have been heat affected natural rather than an actual fill within a cut feature. A sample was recovered from this deposit for charred remains and very small fragments of charcoal were present although these may easily have derived from the presumed heat source responsible for the scorching. No identifiable fired clay fragments were present within this deposit suggesting that it was actually *in situ* scorched clay natural rather than fired clay that had been deposited purposefully within the pit. A thin silty clay fill (1005) overlay this that showed no evidence of being heat affected or having derived from a fire.
- 3.3.3 Pit 1011 had similar dimensions to 1004 although this contained a charcoal rich clay and silt fill (1012) which proved to consist almost entirely of oak (Fig. 3). There was no evidence of *in situ* burning within this feature and the fill was otherwise sterile.



-
- 3.3.4 Pit 1013 was more similar to 1004, albeit much smaller with a diameter of 0.26m and a depth of 0.06m. This contained a heat affected flint gravel base sealed by scorched clay (1014). The flint gravel may actually have been a natural coincidence rather than a purposeful deposit as several patches of natural flint gravel were present within this part of the site. There were no deposits present sealing the scorched clay to indicate the heat source.
- 3.3.5 Pit 1017 was unremarkable in appearance and may equally have been the truncated remains of a treehole. This was more kidney-shaped in plan measuring 0.45m by 0.3m and 0.05m deep. It contained a single clay fill with occasional charcoal inclusions (1018).
- 3.3.6 Pit 1019 combined features of each pit described above. This was roughly circular / sub circular in plan with a diameter of 0.6m and 0.1m deep (Fig. 5). It had scorched natural clay edges, although burning was less evident within the flat base of the pit. The pit was filled with an extremely charcoal rich silt clay (1020). The charcoal was entirely oak in origin, as with pit 1011. The fill was otherwise sterile with no artefactual material present.

3.4 Ditch

- 3.4.1 A single linear ditch (1021) was aligned NNW-SSE extending part way into the central area of the site from the northern excavation boundary (Fig. 2). This was up to 0.8m wide and 0.3m deep with a simple V-shaped profile with a narrow flat base (Fig. 5). It contained a single sterile clay fill (1022). The ditch appeared to end or peter out approximately 30m into the site. No related ditches were present elsewhere within the site. The fill was examined at surface level along the ditch and this was consistent in appearance, composition and lacked any artefacts.



4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 4.1.1 Although very wet at the outset, the stripping conditions were generally very good for the majority of the SMS. The geology was also very firm and a clean and visible surface was achieved across the site. Therefore archaeological visibility was very good and the density of features encountered should be seen as a reliable indicator as to the level of activity present at this site.

4.2 Interpretation and significance

- 4.2.1 The remains were very limited and scattered providing little scope for significant interpretation and discussion. Of the few general observations that can be made all of the features appear within the western 1.5ha part of the site. There appears to be no obvious topographical or geological reason for this and the sparse scatter of features does not really help interpret this observation.
- 4.2.2 The treehole features appear to be entirely natural in origin with no artefactual material present and no significant charcoal or burning evidence to suggest purposeful clearance.
- 4.2.3 The pits with clear evidence of *in situ* burning and charcoal fills are slightly more interesting. These have shared characteristics and may represent the same or similar range of activities. These features collectively do not demonstrate any kind of grouping or likely associated spatial arrangement beyond the fact that they are all within the western half of the site. Indeed each is separated from the next by 20-30m or, in the case of pit 1019, by 85m to the nearest similar pit. Due to this and the absence of associated artefacts it is unclear if they are contemporaneous within a single phase or period. The fact that the charcoal fills are derived entirely from oak, along with the *in situ* scorching of the surrounding clay, may suggest that these features are related to charcoal production. However, the pits appear rather small to be related to charcoal clamps unless these are only the truncated remnants or small pits dug to help control the air flow into the charcoal clamp. The scattered arrangement could also support a charcoal production interpretation as the clamps are most likely to have been built where the wood resource was located, rather than moving the timber to a centralised site to process.
- 4.2.4 With regard to the historic landscape, the site has been enclosed fields in their current arrangement since the first half of 19th century based upon the map evidence. Only the modern construction of the M25 has altered the field boundaries (OA 2012). Therefore if the features do represent activities in relation to woodland management this must pre-date the 19th century.
- 4.2.5 The significance of these results is very limited other than in demonstrating the absence of archaeological remains within an area relatively close to the Roman temple and road to the west. The heavy clay subsoil and evidence for woodland activities in the form of possible charcoal production suggest that the site was probably wooded until more recent historical periods.



APPENDIX A. CONTEXT INVENTORY

Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
1001	Layer	-	0.3	Topsoil and turf	-	-
1002	Layer	-	0.1	Subsoil	-	-
1003	Layer	-	-	Natural clay with occasional flint	-	-
1004	Pit	1.0	0.12	Shallow circular pit	-	-
1005	Fill	-	0.04	Clay upper fill of 1004	-	-
1006	Fill	-	0.08	Basal fill of 1004 containing fired clay	-	-
1007	Treehole	1.7	0.15	Irregular shaped treehole	-	-
1008	Fill	1.7	0.15	Clayey fill of 1007	-	-
1009	Treehole	1.3	0.16	Irregular shaped treehole	-	-
1010	Fill	1.3	0.16	Clayey fill of 1009	-	-
1011	Pit	0.9	0.1	Circular pit	-	-
1012	Fill	0.9	0.1	Charcoal rich fill of 1011	-	-
1013	Pit	0.3	0.05	Shallow circular pit or hearth	-	-
1014	Fill	0.3	0.05	Flint and burnt clay 'fill' of 1013	-	-
1015	Treehole	1.0	0.1	Irregular shaped treehole	-	-
1016	Fill	1.0	0.1	Clayey fill of 1015	-	-
1017	Treehole	0.45	0.05	Possible pit or treehole	-	-
1018	Fill	0.4	0.05	Fill of 1017 with charcoal inclusions	-	-
1019	Pit	0.6	0.1	Circular pit	-	-
1020	Fill	0.6	0.1	Charcoal rich fill of 1019	-	-
1021	Ditch	0.8	0.3	Linear ditch	-	-
1022	Fill	0.8	0.3	Clay fill of 1021	-	-



APPENDIX B. ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTS

B.1 Charred plant remains

By Julia Meen

- B.1.1 Three environmental samples <1001-1003> were recovered during the excavation due to the presence of recognisable charred remains within the fills features. None of the features produced artefactual dating evidence.
- B.1.2 Sample <1001>, was recovered from context (1006), the fill of a pit (1004) identified in the field as containing burnt clay and some small charred remains. Eight litres of sediment was processed, producing a flot of 20ml. The flot predominately consisted of modern root fragments and a small number of charcoal fragments of potentially identifiable size. However, the charcoal fragments were not present in sufficient quantity to be of interpretable value.
- B.1.3 Sample <1002> was recovered from context (1012), the fill of a shallow pit (1011). The sample was 11L in volume, producing a flot of 200ml. The flot consisted entirely of charcoal, with no other types of charred remain observed. Approximately 15 items of charcoal were examined and identified as *Quercus* sp. (oak), mostly of sapwood, with three items of heartwood noted.
- B.1.4 Sample <1003> was taken from context (1020), also the fill of a shallow pit (1019). The sample was 9L in volume, producing a flot of 700ml. Scanning approximately 10% of the flot showed that it similarly consisted entirely of charcoal with no other types of charred material observed. A number of items of charcoal were examined and found to be almost exclusively oak, with the exception of a small twig of an indeterminate diffuse porous type wood.



APPENDIX C. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

OA, 2012 Clacket Lane Bund, Kent. Cultural Heritage Assessment Unpublished client report for Skanska Balfour Beatty JV

OA, 2013 Land to the East of Clacket Lane, Westerham, Kent. Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample recording and details of Preservation In Situ. Unpublished client document



APPENDIX D. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Land to the East of Clacket Lane, Westerham, Kent
Site code: M25OK 13
Grid reference: TQ 4315 5473
Type: Strip, Map and Sample Excavation
Date and duration: 21st January 2013 to 7th May 2013
Area of site: 5.85 hectares

Summary of results:

Oxford Archaeology (OA), was commissioned by Skanska Balfour Beatty Joint Venture to undertake recording of potential archaeological remains prior to the construction of a temporary compound area and a permanent noise reduction soil bund on land to the east of Clacket Lane and Cupids Coppice and north of the M25 near Westerham, Kent.

No significant archaeological remains were present. The excavation revealed only very sparse remains. These include treeholes within the western part of the site that appear to have been a result of entirely natural processes. Five small pits scattered sparsely across a large area were recorded with in situ scorching and charcoal rich fills. None produced any artefactual material. These may represent occasional woodland activities such as charcoal production. In addition an undated linear ditch was recorded.

Location of archive:

The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES. There is currently no receiving museum for this area. The archive will temporarily remain in store at OA until a suitable storage solution is provided by the local authority.



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Figure 1: Site location



Figure 2: Site plan

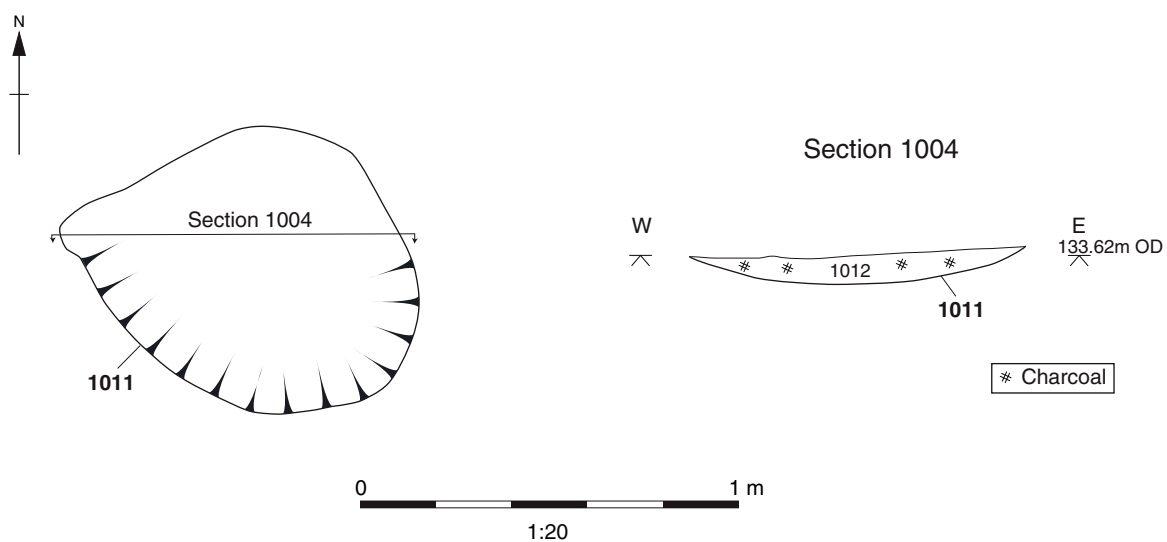


Figure 3: Pit 1011 plan and section

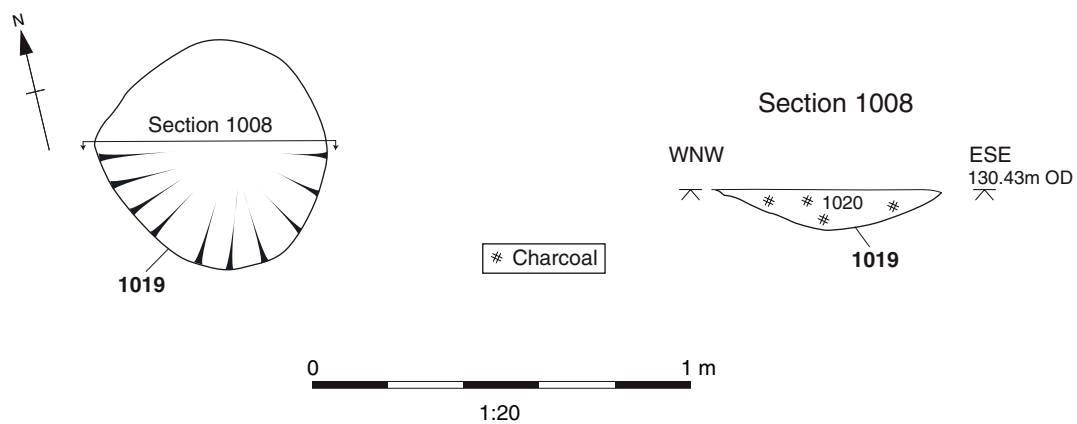


Figure 4: Pit 1019 plan and section

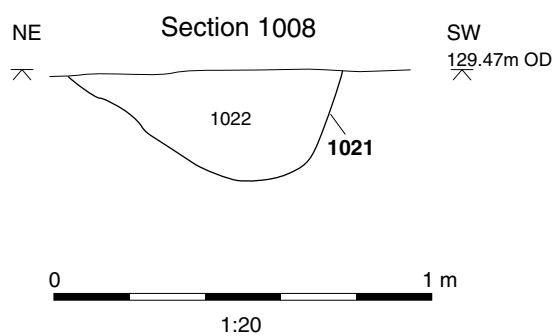


Figure 5: Ditch 1021 section



**Head Office/Registered Office/
OA South**

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES

t: +44 (0) 1865 263 800
f: +44 (0) 1865 793 496
e: info@oxfordarchaeology.com
w: <http://oxfordarchaeology.com>

OA North

Mill 3
Moor Lane
Lancaster LA1 1QD

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

OA East

15 Trafalgar Way
Bar Hill
Cambridgeshire
CB23 8SQ

t: +44 (0) 1223 850 500
e: [oaeast@oxfordarchaeology.com](mailto: oaeast@oxfordarchaeology.com)
w: <http://oxfordarchaeology.com>



Director: Gill Hey, BA PhD FSA MIFA
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