

36 Shipton Road Ascott-under- Wychwood Oxfordshire



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Oxford Archaeology

May 2003

Client Name: Brian Ridley

Issue N^o: 1

OA Job N^o: 1743

Planning Ref N^o: W2001/1376, 1377

NGR: SP 29731848

Client Name: Mr Brian Ridley

Client Ref No:

Document Title: 36 Shipton Road, Ascott-under-Wychwood, Oxfordshire

Document Type: Watching Brief

Issue Number: 1

National Grid Reference: NGR SP 2973 1848

Planning Reference: W2001/1376, 1377

OA Job Number: 1743

Site Code: ASSR 03

Invoice Code: ASSRWB

Receiving Museum: Oxfordshire County Museum Service

Museum Accession No: OXCMS 2003.46

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Date: 07th May 2003

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Document File Location U:/OAU/wbREPORTS/Oxfordshire/ASSR.doc

Graphics File Location Server 10:/oaupubs 1/AtoH*ASSRWB*36 Shipton Rd,
Asscott-u-Wychwood*LM*29.04.03

Illustrated by Lucy Martin

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Cover Plate: General view of site from the west.

SUMMARY

In March 2003 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at 36 Shipton Road, Ascott-Under-Wychwood, Oxfordshire (NGR SP 2973 1848). The work was commissioned by Mr Brian Ridley in advance of the construction of a two storey building. The watching brief revealed no archaeological features and that the site had been extensively built up in the late 20th century over the old soil horizon.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In March 2003 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at 36 Shipton Road, Ascott-Under-Wychwood, Oxfordshire (Fig 1). The work was commissioned by Brian Ridley in respect of a planning application for the construction of a two storey building (Planning Application No. W2001/1376, 1377).
- 1.1.2 A project brief was set by Hugh Coddington, Deputy County Archaeologist (OCAS 2001).
- 1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief (OA 2001).

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The application site lies on the north side of Shipton Road in Ascott-under-Wychwood. It lies at approximately 100 m OD and the geology is flood plain first terraced gravel. The site is currently residential, including a garden area.

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, 2001) and is reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 The proposal site lies within the bounds of a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 21806). This is the site of the motte and bailey castle of Ascott Earl that was constructed during the early medieval period. The site survives as a pronounced earthwork. Limited investigation in 1946 indicated that the castle lay on the site of both Anglo Saxon and Iron Age activity. Artefactual evidence associated with the castle suggests a construction date of late 11th or early 12th century.
- 1.3.3 The motte has a base diameter of approximately 56 m and stands 3.5 m above the present bailey interior. The summit is flat and had a rampart around its edge. A short section of this survives as a visible earthwork on the northern side. The proposed building lies on the north east side of the motte on the edge of the defensive ditch. The bailey lies to the west of the motte.

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 A watching brief, during demolition was undertaken. The old timber frame stable building was demolished and the concrete slab it sat on was broken up and lifted. The foundations for the new building were marked out (Fig. 2) and excavated by a mini excavator along with two radon holes under the new concrete slab. A number of site visits were carried out to monitor the ground works.
- 2.2.2 All archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:100 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

- 3.1.1 The excavation of the foundations for the new building exposed the natural of light yellowish brown gravel (4), which was sealed below an old soil horizon of brown silty sand loam (1). This was sealed below imported material of dark brown silty sand loam (3) with building debris used to build up garden terrace along south and south west side of garden. Overlying these was a 0.4 m to 0.6 m thick layer of well cultivated topsoil of very dark grey brown silty sand (2) (Fig. 3). No deposits of archaeological significance were recorded.

3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 No finds were recovered during the watching brief.

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 results from the watching brief showed that the area of the new building had been built up with material during the late 20th century to alleviate the problem of flooding in the lower north part of the garden, with garden landscaping along the south-west side of the property. This overlay an earlier soil horizon over natural gravel. No archaeological features or deposits were observed.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Height</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>
1	Layer	0.30 m			Old soil horizon	None
2	Layer	0.55 m			Garden topsoil	None
3	Layer	0.60 m			Ground make up	None
4	Natural				Natural Gravel	

APPENDIX 3 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

OCAS 2001 36 Shipton Road, Ascott under Wychwood SAM 21806 Design Brief for Archaeological Watching Brief

OA 2001 Proposed Building at 36 Shipton Road, Ascott-under-Wychwood, Oxfordshire Written Scheme of Investigation

Wilkinson D (ed), 1992 *Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual*

APPENDIX 4 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: 36 Shipton Road, Ascott-under-Wychwood, Oxfordshire

Site code: ASSR 03

Grid reference: NGR SP 2973 1848

Type of watching brief: Excavations of foundations for new two storey building.

Date and duration of project: Three site visits from the 24/3/03 to 23/4/03.

Area of site: 32 m x 13 m

Summary of results: The watching brief revealed no archaeological features and that the site had been extensively built up in the late 20th century over the old soil horizon.

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 2003.46

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Figure 1: Site location

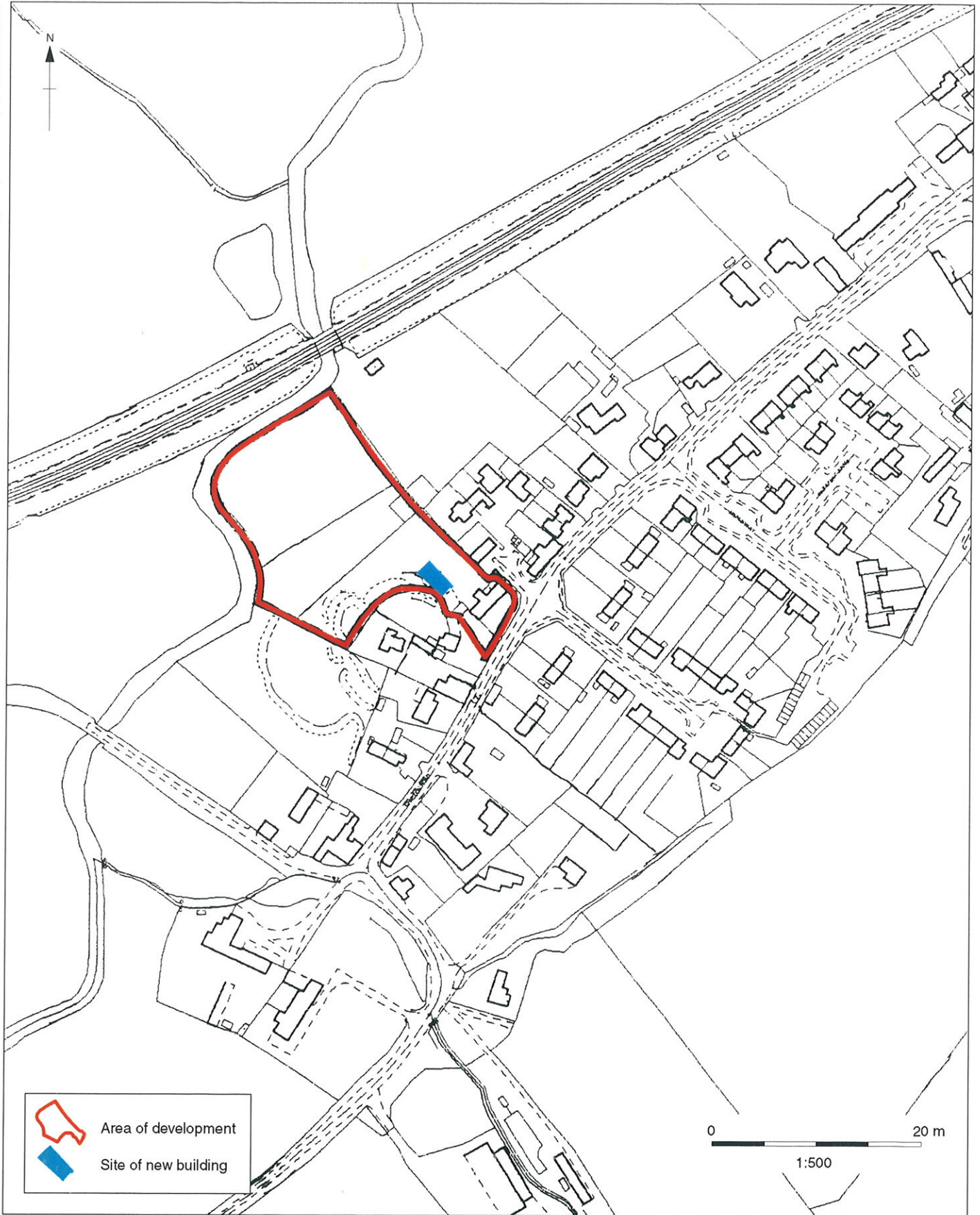
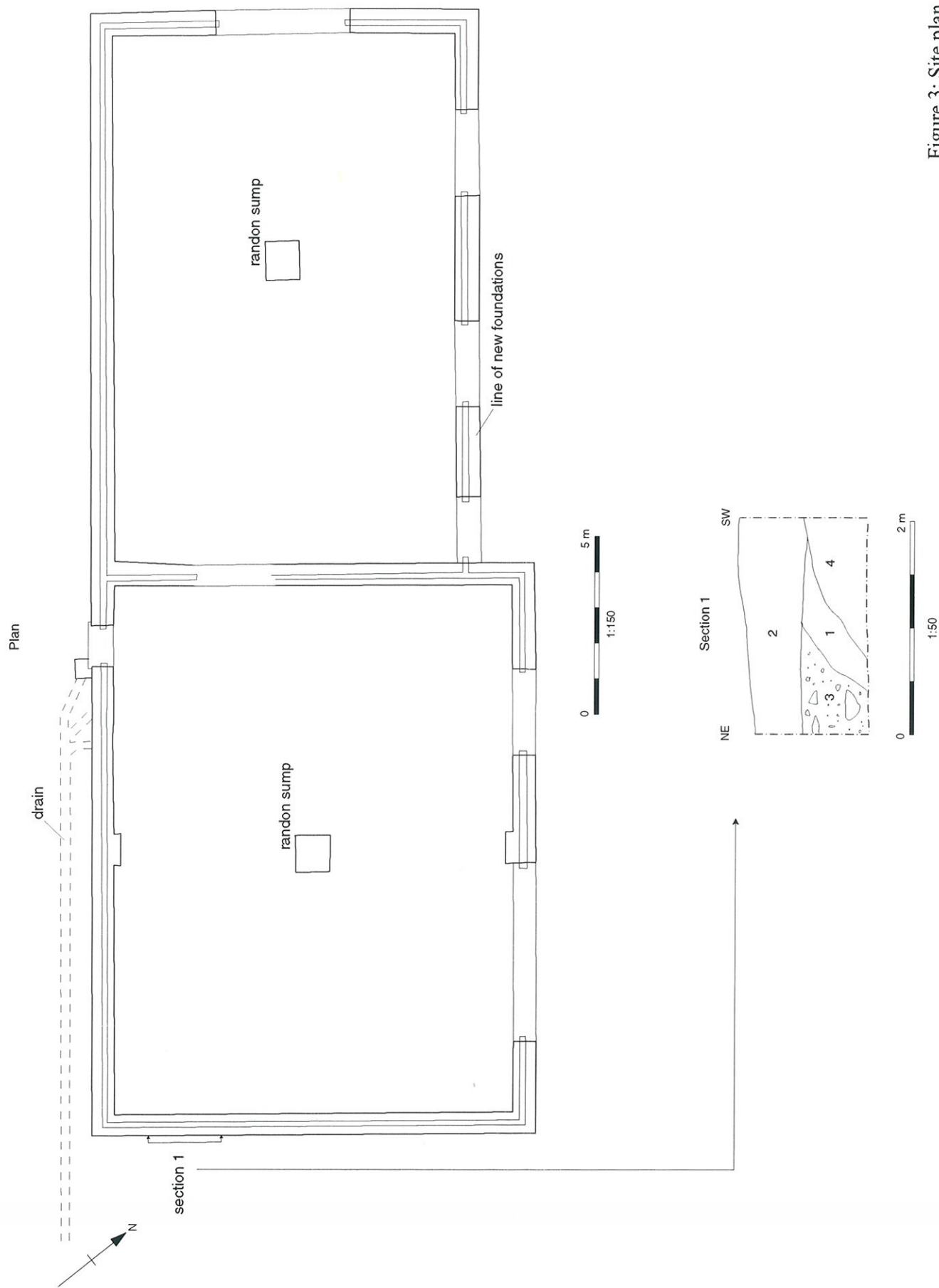


Figure 2: Location of area of watching brief





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