



# Bicester Heritage Hotel

## Bicester

## Oxfordshire

### Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Date: 08/06/2018  
Prepared by: Bernadetta Rzadek (Site Supervisor)  
Checked by: Stuart Foreman (Senior Project Manager)  
Edited by: Andrew Simmonds (Senior Project Manager)  
Approved for Issue by: David Score (Head of Fieldwork)  
Signature:



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**OA South**

Janus House  
Osney Mead  
Oxford  
OX2 0ES

t. +44 (0)1865 263 800

**OA East**

15 Trafalgar Way  
Bar Hill  
Cambridge  
CB23 8SG

t. +44 (0)1223 850 500

**OA North**

Mill 3  
Moor Lane Mills  
Moor Lane  
Lancaster  
LA1 1QD

t. +44 (0)1524 880 250

e. [info@oxfordarch.co.uk](mailto:info@oxfordarch.co.uk)  
w. [oxfordarchaeology.com](http://oxfordarchaeology.com)

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## Bicester Heritage Hotel, Bicester, Oxfordshire

### *Archaeological Evaluation Report*

*Written by Bernadetta Rzadek*

*With contributions from John Cotter and Geraldine Crann  
and illustrations by Magdalena Wachnik, Conan Parsons and  
Matt Bradley*

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## Summary

Between 14th and 18th May 2018 Oxford Archaeology carried out an evaluation on behalf of Bicester Heritage on the site of a proposed hotel development. Twelve evaluation trenches were excavated within Bicester Aerodrome, Oxfordshire (now known as Bicester Heritage and formerly RAF Bicester). The site lies alongside the A4421, which follows the line of the Roman Road from Alchester to Towcester.

The site was first developed in the later stages of WW1 as a Royal Flying Corps (RFC) Training Depot Station. By the end of hostilities in 1918 facilities within the site boundary comprised a row of three hangars and associated workshops, stores and taxiways. The site was demolished in 1920 and for a short time returned to agriculture. From 1925 the site was redeveloped as part of the RAF Bicester bomber station.

The evaluation revealed one significant archaeological feature pre-dating construction of the WW1 airfield – a Roman ditch in Trench 3, which lay parallel to the Roman Road. It is set too far back from the road to be interpreted as a roadside ditch and is likely to be a field boundary. There was no sign of a continuation of the ditch in trenches to the north or south, and it could have been truncated in these locations by the WW1 or later developments.

Traces of buildings relating to the RFC Training Depot Station were identified in eleven trenches, mostly comprising drains, electrical services and occasional concrete strip foundations. The WW1 features appear to be poorly preserved, the site having been thoroughly demolished at the end of WW1. Some of the utilities encountered could relate to the later RAF station.

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The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology by Stuart Foreman. The fieldwork was directed by Bernadetta Rzadek, who was supported by BJ Ware, Tamsin Jones and Alexandra Caples. Survey and digitizing were carried out by Bernadetta Rzadek, Conan Parsons and Matt Bradley. Thanks are also extended to the teams of OA staff that cleaned and packaged the finds under the management of Geraldine Crann and prepared the archive under the management of Nicola Scott.

# **1 INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Scope of work**

1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Bicester Heritage to undertake a trial trench evaluation at the site of a proposed new hotel development on part of Bicester Aerodrome, Oxfordshire (now known as Bicester Heritage and formerly RAF Bicester). The work was undertaken to inform a forthcoming planning application for the hotel development. Although the Local Planning Authority did not set a brief for the work, discussions with Richard Oram (Planning Archaeologist, Oxfordshire County Council) established the scope of work required, which was set out in a written scheme of investigation produced by OA (OA 2018b). This report outlines how OA implemented the specified requirements.

## **1.2 Location, topography and geology**

1.2.1 The site is situated on the northern edge of Bicester, 2.5 km north-east of Bicester town centre (Fig. 1). The proposed development site is 3.7 hectares in extent and currently comprises a green field on the western side of the aerodrome, bounded by taxiways to the north and east, the A4421 to the west, and buildings associated with the WW2 airfield to the south.

1.2.2 The site is flat and lies at a height of 83m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying bedrock geology is mapped as Cornbrash Formation, a limestone bedrock formed approximately 164 to 168 million years ago in the Jurassic Period when the local area was dominated by shallow seas (BGS no date).

## **1.3 Archaeological and historical background**

1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background of the site has been described in detail in a desk-based assessment (OA 2018a).

1.3.2 The site is situated adjacent to the line of the Roman Road from Alchester to Towcester. Remains of three villa/settlement sites and burials have been identified within the study area and there was considered to be potential for remains of this date within the site.

1.3.3 The site appears to have remained undeveloped through recorded history until the beginning of the 20th century when it formed part of a Royal Flying Corps (RFC) Training Station Depot and then RAF Bicester. The site was extensively developed during the later stages of WW1 with hangers, workshops, other technical buildings and taxiways constructed within the site boundary. These were demolished in 1920, but aerial photographs from the 1960s suggested that buried remains may survive.

## **2 EVALUATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Aims**

2.1.1 The project aims and objectives were as follows:

- i. To determine the presence or absence of any archaeological remains which may survive in the site;
- ii. To determine or confirm the approximate extent of any surviving remains;
- iii. To determine the date range of any surviving remains by artefactual or other means;
- iv. To determine the condition and state of preservation of any remains;
- v. To determine the degree of complexity of any surviving horizontal or vertical stratigraphy;
- vi. To assess the associations and implications of any remains encountered with reference to the historic landscape;
- vii. To determine the potential of the site to provide paleoenvironmental and/or economic evidence, and the forms in which such evidence may survive;
- viii. To determine the implications of any remains with reference to economy, status, utility and social activity;
- ix. To determine or confirm the likely range and quality of the artefactual evidence present.

### **2.2 Methodology**

2.2.1 Twelve trenches measuring 30 x 2m were laid out as shown on Figure 2 using a GPS with sub-50 mm accuracy. The trench location was scanned using a Cable Avoidance Tool both prior to and during the machine excavation. The trenches were excavated using an appropriately powered 13T mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket under the strict supervision of an archaeologist. Spoil was stored adjacent to, but at a safe distance from, the trench edges. Machining was continued in spits down to the top of the undisturbed natural geology or the first archaeological horizon, depending upon which was encountered first. The exposed surface was sufficiently cleaned to establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains. A sample of each potentially significant archaeological feature was excavated by hand and recorded. Samples of each modern features found in trenches 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 were also excavated by hand and recorded.

2.2.2 All features and deposits were issued with unique context numbers, and context recording was in accordance with established best practice and the OA Field Manual. Digital photographs were taken of the deposits, features, trenches and evaluation work in general. Plans were drawn at a scale of 1:50. Section drawings of features were drawn at a scale of 1:20 and 1m wide and were located on the appropriate plans. The absolute height (m. OD) of all principal strata and features, and the section datum lines have been calculated and indicated on the drawings. The trench and sample sections were located using a GPS unit. Co-ordinates relative to Ordnance Survey and Ordnance Datum were obtained for each sampling location.

2.2.3 Following agreement with Richard Oram (OCC), the trenches were backfilled.

## **3 RESULTS**

### **3.1 Introduction and presentation of results**

- 3.1.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below and include a stratigraphic description of the trenches that contained archaeological remains. The full details of all trenches with dimensions and depths of all deposits can be found in Appendix A. Finds data and spot dates are tabulated in Appendix B.
- 3.1.2 Context numbers reflect the trench numbers unless otherwise stated, eg pit 102 is a feature within Trench 1, while ditch 304 is a feature within Trench 3.

### **3.2 General soils and ground conditions**

- 3.2.1 The soil sequence was fairly uniform in all trenches. The natural geology comprised light yellowish grey cornbrash. The subsoil was a soft, dark yellowish brown silty sand. The topsoil was uniform across site, consisting of a soft, dark greyish brown, silty sand.
- 3.2.2 Ground conditions throughout the evaluation were generally good, and the trenches remained dry throughout. Archaeological and modern features, where present, were easy to identify against the underlying natural geology.

### **3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits**

- 3.3.1 The only archaeological feature pre-dating the WW1 airfield was a Roman ditch in Trench 3. Modern features associated with the airfield were present in Trenches 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12. Trench 7 (Plates 12 and 13) was completely devoid of archaeological or modern features and is not described further.

### **3.4 Trench 1 (Plates 1 and 2)**

- 3.4.1 Trench 1 was excavated in the northern part of the site and was oriented WNW- ESE. The trench contained one tree-throw hole (103) and one modern pipe trench (105, not excavated).

### **3.5 Trench 2 (Plate 3)**

- 3.5.1 Trench 2 was excavated in the northern part of the site and was oriented NNE- SSW. The trench exposed one levelling layer (203), three modern (WNW- ESE) drain trenches (204, 206, 208) and one modern feature containing the remains of a concrete strip foundation (210), probably the base of one of the former hangars or an associated structure.
- 3.5.2 Ditch 206 was cut by ditch 208, from which a fragment of cast iron was recovered, possibly from a stove of 19th-20th century date.
- 3.5.3 Layer 203 was situated in the centre of the trench, between ditches 204 and 208, and represented the remains of a taxiway constructed during the First World War.

### **3.6 Trench 3 (Figs 3 and 5: Plates 4 and 5)**

- 3.6.1 Trench 3 was excavated in the northern part of the site and was oriented WNW-ESE. The trench contained one levelling layer (308), one natural feature (306), one modern pipe trench (303, not excavated) and one Roman ditch (304).

- 3.6.2 Ditch 304 (Fig. 5, section 300) extended on a NNE-SSW alignment parallel to the Alchester-Towcester road. It contained a single fill 305, a soft, mid dark orange brown, sandy silt. One small fragment of pottery, dating to the late Iron Age/early Roman (c 50 BC-50 AD), was recovered from the fill.
- 3.6.3 Layer 308 was the remains of a levelling layer for a footpath between the technical buildings of the First World War RAF base.

### **3.7 Trench 4 (Plates 6 and 7)**

- 3.7.1 Trench 4 was excavated in the centre of the site and was oriented WNW-ESE. The trench exposed an electricity cable trench (404) and a pipe trench (not excavated).

### **3.8 Trench 5 (Plates 8 and 9)**

- 3.8.1 Trench 5 was excavated in the centre of site and was oriented WNW- ESE. The trench contained one modern electrical cable trench (not excavated).

### **3.9 Trench 6 (Plates 10 and 11)**

- 3.9.1 Trench 6 was excavated in the centre of the site and was oriented NNE-SSW. The trench contained one levelling layer (606), two postholes (602, 604) and two modern pipe trenches.
- 3.9.2 Posthole 604 was located in the middle of trench and posthole 602 was located in the southern part. The postholes were shallow cuts with sloping sides and flat bases. The function of the postholes is unclear.
- 3.9.3 Layer 606 was recorded in section in the southern part of the trench and represents the remains of the taxiway constructed for Training Station Depot and RAF base during the First World War.

### **3.10 Trench 8 (Figs 4 and 5; Plates 14-16)**

- 3.10.1 Trench 8 was excavated in the south-eastern part of the site and was oriented WNW-ESE. The trench exposed one tree-throw hole (809), a modern pipe trench (not excavated), the foundation of a technical building (803) and the foundation of a hangar (806).
- 3.10.2 Ditch 803 (Fig. 5, section 800) had vertical sides and a flat base and contained traces of a concrete strip foundation, above which were fills (804, 805) that contained four pieces of 20th century CBM. It corresponded with a workshop shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1922 (Fig. 2).
- 3.10.3 Ditch 806 (Fig. 5, section 801) had a similar profile to ditch 803 and similarly contained traces of a concrete strip foundation, overlain by a fill (808) that contained a piece of 18th/19th century pottery and five pieces of 20th century CBM. It corresponded with a hangar shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1922 (Fig. 2).

### **3.11 Trench 9 (Plates 17 and 18)**

- 3.11.1 Trench 9 was excavated in the south-eastern part of site and was oriented NW- SE. The trench contained two modern pipe trenches (not excavated). The ditches contained asbestos tiles so were not excavated.

### **3.12 Trench 10 (Plates 19-21)**

- 3.12.1 Trench 10 was located in the southern part of site and was oriented WNW- ESE. The trench exposed a pipe trench (not excavated) and the foundation of a hangar (1004), and the remains of a concrete structure (1003).
- 3.12.2 Ditch 1004 appeared to correspond with a hangar shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1922 (Fig. 2) and may be a grubbed-out foundation trench. The shallow trench containing traces of concrete strip foundation.
- 3.12.3 Concrete structure 1003 was exposed in the northern face of the trench and had a large metal spring of unknown function.

### **3.13 Trench 11 (Plates 22 and 23)**

- 3.13.1 Trench 11 was excavated in the southern part of the site and was oriented NNE-SSW. The trench exposed one modern service pipe trench, which was not excavated.

### **3.14 Trench 12 (Plates 24 and 25)**

- 3.14.1 Trench 12 was excavated in the southern part of site and was oriented WNW- ESE. The trench contained one modern levelling layer (1203) and two modern pipe trenches (1204, 1205), which were not excavated.
- 3.14.2 Layer 1203 was located in the centre of the trench, between the ditches, and represented the remains of a levelling layer for a footpath between the technical buildings of the RAF base.

### **3.15 Finds summary**

- 3.15.1 The few finds that were recovered from the evaluation were modern, apart from a small fragment of pottery dating to the late Iron Age/Early Roman (c 50 BC-50 AD) from ditch 304.

## **4 DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 Reliability of field investigation**

- 4.1.1 The excavation was undertaken in dry weather and was not adversely affected by any other environmental conditions. The features were easy to distinguish from the surrounding natural geology.

### **4.2 Evaluation objectives and results**

- 4.2.1 In summary, the aims of the evaluation were to establish the presence or absence of any archaeological features or deposits, including remains of the RFC Training Depot Station established during the First World War. If present, the aim was to determine their character, date range and significance.
- 4.2.2 The evaluation revealed one significant archaeological feature which pre-dated the 20th century, a Roman ditch in Trench 3.
- 4.2.3 Remains of the WW1 Training Depot Station, including service trenches and traces of removed concrete foundations, were identified in Trenches 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12. Trench 7 was completely devoid of archaeological and modern features. In general, the 20th-century features associated with the Training Depot Station were poorly preserved, having been thoroughly demolished and removed down to the solid geology. The only features surviving comprised buried service trenches and infrequent concrete strip foundation trenches from the hangars and workshops. In many cases wall foundations expected on the basis of the historic map evidence were not apparent in the trenches, suggesting a high degree of truncation in some parts of the site.

### **4.3 Interpretation**

- 4.3.1 The probable Roman ditch (304) produced a single sherd of late Iron Age/early Roman pottery. Although a single sherd cannot be relied upon as dating evidence, the ditch was aligned parallel to the Roman road from Alchester to Towcester, which forms the western boundary of the site. The ditch is set back c 25 m from the modern road, and is likely to represent part of a Roman field system laid out in relation to the road, rather than a roadside drainage ditch. There was no sign of the ditch continuing in Trenches 1 or 4, to the north and south of Trench 3; it may have been a short feature, or turned before reaching these trenches, or it could have been truncated during construction or demolition of the WW1 Training Depot Station.
- 4.3.2 Trenches 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 contained modern service trenches for electrical cables (Trenches 4 and 5), water pipes (Trenches 2, 4, 6, 9, 10, 11) and large concrete pipes forming part of the sewerage system (1, 3, 6, 12). These utilities mostly appear to have been installed to serve the RFC Training Depot Station during the First World War (Fig. 2).
- 4.3.3 Most of the WW1 features encountered were drains and other service trenches so would not necessarily match closely with features shown on the 1922 OS map. The three concrete strip foundations in the trenches don't exactly match the historic map, but two are sufficiently close to mapped building wall lines that they could be a match, allowing for a few metres discrepancy in the rectification of the historic map. The third

strip foundation is inside a hangar so could be an internal division or structural support not shown on the OS map.

- 4.3.4 Trenches 8 and 10 exposed three shallow trenches containing traces of concrete strip foundations (Features 803, 806 and 1004). These appear to correspond with a hangar (806, 1004) and a workshop (803) shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1922 (Fig. 2).
- 4.3.5 Trenches 2 and 6 had thickened soil sequences which correspond with taxiways constructed for the RFC Training Station Depot, as shown on the 1922 OS map (Fig. 2).
- 4.3.6 Trenches 3 and 12 contained levelling layers 308 and 1203, probably base layers of footpaths between the technical buildings marked on the 1922 OS map (Fig. 2).
- 4.3.7 In 1920 the RFC Training Depot Station buildings were demolished and returned to agriculture. Remains of the hangars appear to have been thoroughly cleared from the site, as only buried features such as service trenches and foundations survived.

#### **4.4 Significance**

- 4.4.1 Given the very limited evidence for date or function, the Roman ditch in Trench 3 is of no more than local significance as indirect supporting evidence for the line of the Roman road.
- 4.4.2 All other features identified in the trenches appear to relate to the WW1 RFC Training Depot Station. The archaeological significance of these remains is more difficult to assess. The site is poorly preserved, having been thoroughly demolished and returned to agriculture after the end of WW1. Soil sequences in the trenches were generally shallow, leaving only very occasional evidence for taxiway surfaces or internal features in hangars and technical buildings.
- 4.4.3 The foundations of some (but not all) of the hangars and other buildings appear to survive as shallow strip foundation trenches, a few of which have concrete foundations surviving at least partly *in situ*.
- 4.4.4 Some of the utilities encountered could relate to the later RAF station.

## APPENDIX A TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
General description					Orientation	WNW-ESE
Trench contained one tree throw and one modern (NE-SW) ditch with concrete pipe - not excavated. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying cornbrash geology.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	2
					Avg. depth (m)	0.43
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
100	Layer	-	0.18	Fine-grained sediment, soft, dark greyish brown, silty sand. Topsoil	-	-
101	Layer	-	0.25	Fine-grained sediment, soft, dark yellowish brown, silty sand. Subsoil	-	-
102	Layer	-	-	Coarse-grained, compact, light yellowish grey-cornbrash. Natural	-	-
103	Cut	2.09x1.20	0.18	Tree throw	-	-
104	Fill	2.09x1.20	0.18	Fill of cut 103. Fine-grained sediment, soft, mid orange brown, sandy silt, sub angular poorly sorted stones- a secondary deposit placed by natural processes.	-	-
105	Structure	2.00	-	Large modern concrete pipe forming part of the sewerage system- not excavated.	-	c 20th-WWI

Trench 2						
General description					Orientation	NNE-SSW
Trench contained three modern (WNW-ESE) ditches for pipes, one modern feature and one levelling layer. Soil sequence consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying cornbrash geology.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	2
					Avg. depth (m)	0.44
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
200	Layer	-	0.12	Topsoil	-	-
201	Layer	-	0.32	Subsoil	-	-
202	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
203	Layer	2.00	0.08	Fine-grained sediment, soft, light brownish yellow, silty sand, sub angular,	-	c 20th-WWI

				poorly sorted stones – leveling layer – remain of taxiway constructed for Training Station Depot and RAF base.		
204	Cut	0.58	0.44	Modern, construction cut, possibly a pipe ditch, linked to RAF base. Quite similar in profile and plan to ditch 208.	Metal	c 20th-WWI
205	Fill	0.58	0.44	Fill of cut 204. Fine- grained sediment, soft, mid orange brown, sandy silty clay, sub angular, poorly sorted stones – a secondary deposit placed by human processes.	Metal	c 20th-WWI
206	Cut	0.60	0.46	The linear ditch truncated by ditch 208. No datable evidence-probably modern in date. The use of it is unclear – probably ditch for pipe.	-	c 20th-before or from WWI
207	Fill	0.60	0.46	Fill of cut 206. Fine-grained sediment, soft, mid orange brown, sandy silty clay, sub angular, poorly sorted stones – a secondary deposit placed by natural processes.	-	c 20th-before or from WWI
208	Cut	0.60	0.42	Construction cut, possibly a pipe ditch, related with RAF base. Quite similar in profile and plan to ditch 204. The ditch recuts ditch 206.	Metal	c 20th-WWI
209	Fill	0.60	0.42	Fill of cut 208. Fine- grained sediment, soft, mid orange brown, sandy silty clay, sub angular, poorly sorted stones – a secondary deposit placed by human processes.	Metal	c 20th-WWI
210	Cut	1.20	0.10	Modern, construction cut of a concrete strip foundation. Probably the base of one of the former	-	c 20th-WWI

				hangars or an associated structure.		
211	Fill	1.20	0.10	Fill of cut 210. Fine-grained sediment, soft, mid orange brown, clayey sandy silt, sub angular, poorly sorted stones – a secondary deposit placed by natural processes. Modern in date.	-	c 20th- WWI

Trench 3						
General description					Orientation	WNW- ESE
Trench contained one linear NNE-SSW, Roman ditch in date, one natural feature and one modern ditch (NNE-SSW) with two concrete pipes (not excavated). Soil sequence consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying cornbrash geology.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	2
					Avg. depth (m)	0.42
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
300	Layer	-	0.12	Topsoil	-	-
301	Layer	-	0.30	Subsoil	-	-
302	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
303	Structure	1.30	-	Two large modern concrete pipes forming part of the sewerage system – not excavated.	-	c 20th- WWI
304	Cut	1.63	0.29	Linear cut of ditch in date due to presence a piece of roman pottery found in the ditch. The ditch goes in the same direction and along like the roman road, running on the west side of the site.	Pottery	Late Iron Age/early Roman
305	Fill	1.63	0.29	Fill of cut 304. Fine- grained sediment, soft, mid dark orange brown, sandy silt, sub angular, rare poorly sorted stones – a secondary deposit placed by human processes. In date due to presence piece of roman pottery found in the ditch.	Pottery	Late Iron Age/early Roman
306	Cut	0.46x0.42	0.14	Natural feature, circular in shape of plan.	-	-

307	Fill	0.46x0.42	0.14	Fill of cut 306. Fine-grained sediment, soft, mid reddish brown, sandy silt, rare sub angular, poorly sorted pebbles – a secondary deposit placed by natural processes.	-	-
308	Layer	-	0.06	Fine- grained sediment, soft, light yellowish grey, silty sand-gravel leveling layer – remains of footpath between the technical buildings constructed for Training Station Depot and RAF base.	-	c 20th- WWI

Trench 4						
<b>General description</b>					<b>Orientation</b>	WNW-ESE
Trench contained two modern ditches, one with a concrete pipe in it (WNW-ESE) and the second for electrical cables (N-S). Soil sequence consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying cornbrash geology.					<b>Length (m)</b>	30
					<b>Width (m)</b>	2
					<b>Avg. depth (m)</b>	0.65
<b>Context No.</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Width (m)</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Finds</b>	<b>Date</b>
400	Layer	-	0.24	Topsoil	-	-
401	Layer	-	0.41	Subsoil	-	-
402	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
403	VOID	-	-	-	-	-
404	Cut	0.25	0.08	Modern, linear ditch for electric cables.	-	c 20th- WWI
405	Fill	0.25	0.08	Fill of cut 404. Fine-grained sediment, soft, mid brownish grey, sandy silt, small stones inclusions moderate sorted – a secondary deposit placed by human processes.	Pottery- tobacco pipe, CBM	c 20th- WWI

Trench 5			
<b>General description</b>		<b>Orientation</b>	WNW-ESE
Trench contained one modern ditch with bricks for electrical cables- not excavated. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of cornbrash.		<b>Length (m)</b>	30
		<b>Width (m)</b>	2
		<b>Avg. depth (m)</b>	0.33

Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Findings	Date
500	Layer	-	0.13	Topsoil	-	-
501	Layer	-	0.20	Subsoil	-	-
502	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 6						
General description					Orientation	NNE-SSW
Trench contained one leveling layer, two possible postholes, two modern concrete waste water pipe trenches on a parallel (WNW-ESE) alignment (not excavated). Soil sequence consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying cornbrash geology. Part of the trench had a thin gravel layer (606) that coincided with a WW1 taxiway.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	2
					Avg. depth (m)	0.33
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Findings	Date
600	Layer	-	0.12	Topsoil	-	-
601	Layer	-	0.18	Subsoil	-	-
602	Cut	0.48x0.40	0.08	Posthole No datable evidence. The use of it is unclear.	-	-
603	Fill	0.48x0.40	0.08	Fill of cut 602. Fine-grained sediment, soft, mid orange brown, sandy silt, sub angular, poorly sorted stones – colluvial fill over time.	Charcoal	-
604	Cut	0.56x0.43	0.10	Posthole No datable evidence. The use of it is unclear.	-	-
605	Fill	0.56x0.43	0.10	Fill of cut 604. Fine-grained sediment, soft, mid orange brown, sandy silt, sub angular, poorly sorted stones – colluvial fill over time.	-	-
606	Layer	-	0.03	Fine-grained sediment, soft, light yellowish grey, silty sand-gravel leveling layer – remain of taxiway constructed for WW1 RFC Training Station Depot.	-	c 20th- WWI
607	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
608	Structure	1.00	-	Large modern concrete pipe forming part of the waste water system – not excavated.	-	c 20th- WWI

#### Trench 7

<b>General description</b>					<b>Orientation</b>	NNE-SSW
Trench devoid of archaeology. Soil sequence consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying cornbrash geology.					<b>Length (m)</b>	30
					<b>Width (m)</b>	2
					<b>Avg. depth (m)</b>	0.25
<b>Context No.</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Width (m)</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Finds</b>	<b>Date</b>
700	Layer	-	0.13	Topsoil	-	-
701	Layer	-	0.12	Subsoil	-	-
702	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

<b>Trench 8</b>						
<b>General description</b>					<b>Orientation</b>	WNW-ESE
Trench contained one modern (NNE- SSW) pipe trench, not excavated, two modern (NNE- SSW) construction cuts for foundations for a workshop and adjacent hangar and three other modern cut features of uncertain not excavated. Soil sequence consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying cornbrash geology.					<b>Length (m)</b>	30
					<b>Width (m)</b>	2
					<b>Avg. depth (m)</b>	0.34
<b>Context No.</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Width (m)</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Finds</b>	<b>Date</b>
800	Layer	-	0.14	Topsoil	-	-
801	Layer	-	0.20	Subsoil	-	-
802	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
803	Cut	0.62	0.76	Modern linear construction cut linked to the RAF base quite similar to ditch 806. The ditch was the construction cut for the foundation of a workshop. .	-	c 20th- WWI
804	Fill	0.54	0.30	Lower fill of cut 802. Fine-grained sediment, soft, mid orange brown, clayey sandy silt, angular, poorly sorted stones – a secondary deposit placed by human processes.	CBM	c 20th- WWI
805	Fill	0.62	0.46	Higher fill of cut 802. Fine-grained sediment, soft, mid orange brown, clayey sandy silt, sub angular, poorly sorted stones – a secondary deposit placed by natural and human processes.	CBM	c 20th- WWI
806	Cut	0.74	0.66	Modern linea, construction cut linked to the RAF. Quite similar in profile and plan to ditch 803. The ditch was the construction cut for the foundation of a hangar. The	-	c 20th- WWI

				ditch was part of the same construction cut for foundation for a hangar as ditch 1004.		
807	Fill	0.56	0.08	Lower fill of cut 806. Fine-grained sediment, soft, mid yellowish brown, clayey sandy silt, sub angular, poorly sorted stones – a secondary deposit placed by human processes.	-	c 20th-WWI
808	Fill	0.74	0.58	Higher fill of cut 806. Fine-grained sediment, soft, mid orange brown, clayey sandy silt, sub angular, poorly sorted stones – a secondary deposit placed by human and natural processes.	Pottery, CBM	c 20th-WWI
809	Cut	1.50	0.14	Tree throw.	-	-
810	Fill	1.50	0.14	Fill of cut 809. Fine-grained sediment, soft, mid orange brown, clayey sandy silt, sub angular, poorly sorted stones – a secondary deposit placed by natural processes.	-	-

Trench 9						
<b>General description</b>					<b>Orientation</b>	NW- SE
Trench devoid of archaeology. Contained two modern, linear ditches for pipes- not excavated. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of cornbrash.					<b>Length (m)</b>	30
					<b>Width (m)</b>	2
					<b>Avg. depth (m)</b>	0.27
<b>Context No.</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Width (m)</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Finds</b>	<b>Date</b>
900	Layer	-	0.13	Topsoil	-	-
901	Layer	-	0.14	Subsoil	-	-
902	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
903	Fill	0.50	-	Fill of cut 904. Fine-grained sediment, soft, mid yellowish grey, silty sand, angular, moderate sorted stones and asbestos tiles – a secondary deposit placed by human processes. Deposit not excavated-asbestos in side.	Asbestos tiles	c 20th-WWI

904	Cut	0.50	-	Modern linear construction cut, linked to the RAF base and used as a pipe ditch.	Asbestos tiles	c 20th- WWI
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Trench 10						
General description					Orientation	NNE-SSW
Trench devoid of archaeology. Contained one modern, linear (NW-SE) ditch for pipe- not excavated, one modern linear (NE- SW) construction ditch for foundation of a hangar, and remains of concrete construction with metal spiral- remain of barbed wire. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of cornbrash.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	2
					Avg. depth (m)	0.38
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
1000	Layer	-	0.20	Topsoil	-	-
1001	Layer	-	0.10	Subsoil	-	-
1002	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
1003	Structure	0.80	0.12	Remains of concrete construction with embedded large metal spring of unknown function.	Metal spring	c 20th- WWI
1004	Cut	0.70	0.66	Modern, linear, construction cut, linked to the RAF base. The ditch was the construction cut for the foundation of a hangar. The ditch was part of the same construction cut for foundation for a hangar as ditch 806.	-	c 20th- WWI
1005	Fill	0.70	0.66	Fill of cut 1004. Coarse-grained, compact, dark yellowish grey, silty sand, with limestone inclusions, moderate sorted – a secondary deposit placed by human processes.	-	c 20th- WWI
1006	Cut	0.80	0.12	Modern, construction cut for concrete structure 1003 which linked to RAF base.	-	c 20th- WWI

Trench 11						
General description					Orientation	NNE-SSW
Trench devoid of archaeology. Contained one modern, linear (NNE-SSW) ditch for pipe- not excavated. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of cornbrash.					Length (m)	30
					Width (m)	2
					Avg. depth (m)	0.27

Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
1100	Layer	-	0.12	Topsoil	-	-
1101	Layer	-	0.15	Subsoil	-	-
1102	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

Trench 12						
<b>General description</b>					<b>Orientation</b>	NW-SE
Trench devoid of archaeology. Contained two modern, linear (NNE-SSW) ditches for concrete pipes- not excavated. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of cornbrash.					<b>Length (m)</b>	30
					<b>Width (m)</b>	2
					<b>Avg. depth (m)</b>	0.57
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
1200	Layer	-	0.14	Topsoil	-	-
1201	Layer	-	0.31	Subsoil	-	-
1202	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-
1203	Layer	-	0.13	Fine-grained sediment, soft, mid orange brown, silty clay, angular, poorly sorted stones – remain of leveling layer for footpath between the technical buildings of the RAF base.	-	c 20th- WWI
1204	Structure	0.60	-	Large modern concrete pipe forming part of the sewerage system – not excavated.	-	c 20th- WWI
1205	Structure	2.50	-	Large modern concrete pipe forming part of the sewerage system – not excavated.	-	c 20th- WWI

## **APPENDIX B      FINDS REPORTS**

### **B.1 Pottery**

*By John Cotter*

B.1.1 Two sherds of pottery weighing 7g were recovered from two contexts. Fabric codes referred to for late Iron Age/early Roman wares are those of the Oxfordshire type series (Booth 2017), whereas post-medieval pottery codes are those of the Museum of London (MoLA 2014).

#### ***Context 305***

B.1.2 1 sherd (4g). Grog- and shell-tempered ware (Fabric E820; identified by Edward Biddulph). Small, very abraded body sherd exhibiting some curvature – possibly from the shoulder area of a jar or shouldered bowl? Maximum thickness 6mm. Weakly oxidized light brown surfaces/margins with a dark grey core. This has a soft, almost sand-free, grog-tempered fabric. The grog inclusions have mostly been dissolved-out from the more oxidized outer surface but some survive on the internal surfaces as weathered light orange-pink inclusions and as coarser inclusions in the sherd section. The inclusions probably contain a high proportion of calcareous matter which has caused them to be easily dissolved-out from exposed surfaces. The fabric also contains some linear voids created by the dissolving-out of shell and organic inclusions. Late Iron Age/early Roman (c 50 BC-50AD).

#### ***Context 808***

B.1.3 1 sherd (3g). Staffordshire-type plain Pearlware (Fabric PEAR). Small very abraded body sherd. Flattish – possibly from a dish or the flat basal area of a tableware form. Fine white fabric with a very pale bluish-tinted clear glaze surviving on one side only. c 1780- 1840.

### **B.2 Clay tobacco pipe**

*By John Cotter*

#### ***Context 405***

B.2.1 1 piece (3g). A very abraded stem fragment (length 26mm). Fairly 'chunky' early-style stem with stem bore diameter of 2.9mm. Late 17th or early 18th century.

### **B.3 Ceramic building material**

*By John Cotter*

B.3.1 Ten pieces of CBM weighing 923g were recovered from four contexts.

#### ***Context 402***

B.3.2 1 piece (142g). Body sherd from a brown salt-glazed stoneware drain pipe. c 1820-1900+.

### **Context 804**

B.3.3 3 pieces (163g). Includes 1x cupped or socketed rim fragment from a brown salt-glazed stoneware drain pipe (c 1820+). This has incised horizontal grooves on the inside of the rim for 'keying' with a connecting pipe. 2x flakes of very hard, light orange-brown 'engineer's' bricks - identical to those in (805) and (808) below. Probably 20th century (c 1880- 1950+).

### **Context 805**

B.3.4 1 piece (212g). Corner fragment from a machine-made 'engineer's' brick - identical to those in 804 above and 808 below. Very hard, light orange-brown, granular fabric with white Coal Measures inclusions (ie. non-local). Very sharp straight corner angles. Complete thickness of brick survives (74mm). Smooth molded side surfaces with rough machine-cut upper and lower surfaces. Probably 20th century (c 1880- 1950+).

### **Context 808**

B.3.5 5 pieces (406g). Four very fresh fragments from a minimum of three machine-made 'engineer's' bricks - identical to those in 804 and 805 above. Very hard, light orange-brown, and red-brown, granular fabrics as above. Very sharp straight corner angles. Includes a complete side fragment with a thickness of 72mm. Smooth molded side surfaces with rough machine-cut upper and lower surfaces. No evidence of frogging. Grey mortar adhering to one example. Bricks probably 20th century. 1x small fragment (9g) of peg tile, broadly post-medieval (possibly 16th to 18th century?). Fairly abraded. Flattish (11mm thick), with a trace of a nail hole for suspension. Oxidized orange-brown surfaces, fairly rough, with a grey core streaked through with bands of darker and lighter grey clay resulting from poor clay mixing and variable firing conditions in the kiln. Fairly sandy with large rounded inclusions of grey and reddish iron oxide or iron compounds. The fabric is very distinctive, and the sample has been added to the Oxford tile fabric reference collection housed at Oxford Archaeology South. Probably 20th century (c 1880- 1950+).

## **B.4 Metal**

*By Geraldine Crann*

B.4.1 Three pieces of iron were recovered from three contexts.

### **Context 205**

B.4.2 Nail, slightly tapered cut nail with no head and with slightly broadened chisel point. L: 78mm. c 19th-20th.

### **Context 208**

B.4.3 Fragment of cast iron, possibly from stove of range. 95mm x 55mm. c 19th-20th.

### **Context 1003**

B.4.4 Picket post with 8 coil screw thread. The upper four coils are not as tight wound as the lower four, and may have been distorted, but were possibly deliberately formed that way. The post is topped by a tightly formed and closed doubled loop. L: 990mm (3ft 3in). The standard Great War picket post had a spiral screw to secure post into the ground and four loops or eyes

for securing the barbed wire coils. This example has a longer spiral screw thread and is topped a single closed loop. It may have served an anchor post at the end of a fence or entanglement.

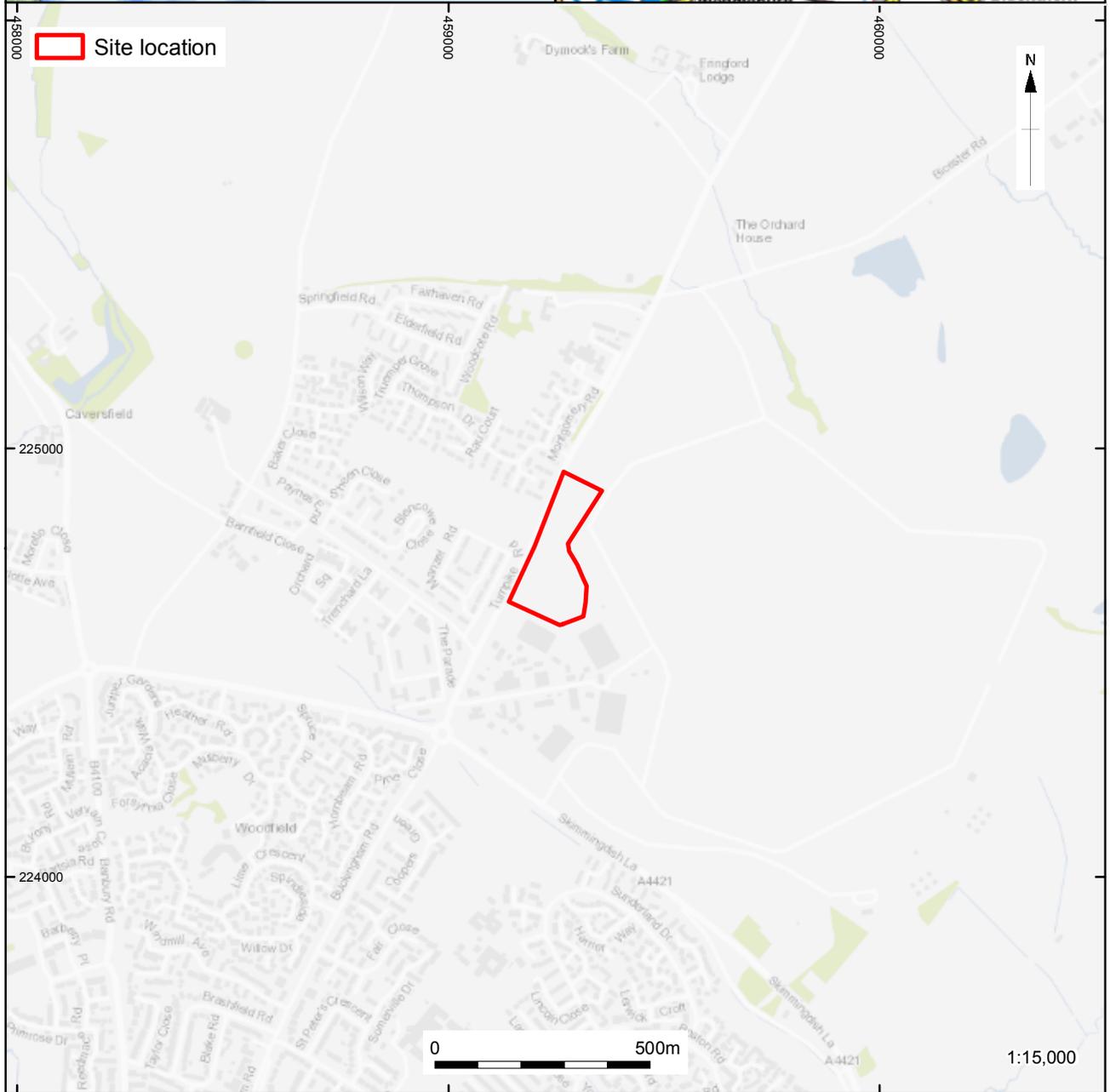
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## APPENDIX D

## SITE SUMMARY DETAILS

<b>Site name:</b>	Bicester Heritage Hotel, Bicester, Oxfordshire
<b>Site code:</b>	BIHH18
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 59250 24783
<b>Type:</b>	Evaluation
<b>Date and duration:</b>	14/05/2018- 18/05/2018
<b>Area of Site</b>	3.7ha
<b>Location of archive:</b>	The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxford County Museum in due course, under the following accession number OXCMS: 2018.48.
<b>Summary of Results:</b>	<p>Between 14th and 18th May 2018 Oxford Archaeology carried out an evaluation on behalf of Bicester Heritage on the site of a proposed hotel development. Twelve evaluation trenches were excavated within Bicester Aerodrome, Oxfordshire (now known as Bicester Heritage and formerly RAF Bicester). The site lies alongside the A4421, which follows the line of the Roman Road from Alchester to Towcester.</p> <p>The site was first developed in the later stages of WW1 as a Royal Flying Corps (RFC) Training Depot Station. By the end of hostilities in 1918 facilities within the site boundary comprised a row of three hangars and associated workshops, stores and taxiways. The site was demolished in 1920 and for a short time returned to agriculture. From 1925 the site was redeveloped as part of the RAF Bicester bomber station.</p> <p>The evaluation revealed one significant archaeological feature pre-dating construction of the WW1 airfield – a Roman ditch in Trench 3, which lay parallel to the Roman Road. It is set too far back from the road to be interpreted as a roadside ditch and is likely to be a field boundary. There was no sign of a continuation of the ditch in trenches to the north or south, and it could have been truncated in these locations by the WW1 or later developments.</p> <p>Traces of buildings relating to the RFC Training Depot Station were identified in eleven trenches, mostly comprising drains, electrical services and occasional concrete strip foundations. The WW1 features appeared to be poorly preserved, the site having been thoroughly demolished at the end of WW1. Some of the utilities encountered could relate to the later RAF station.</p>



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Figure 1: Site location



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Figure 2: Trench location plan

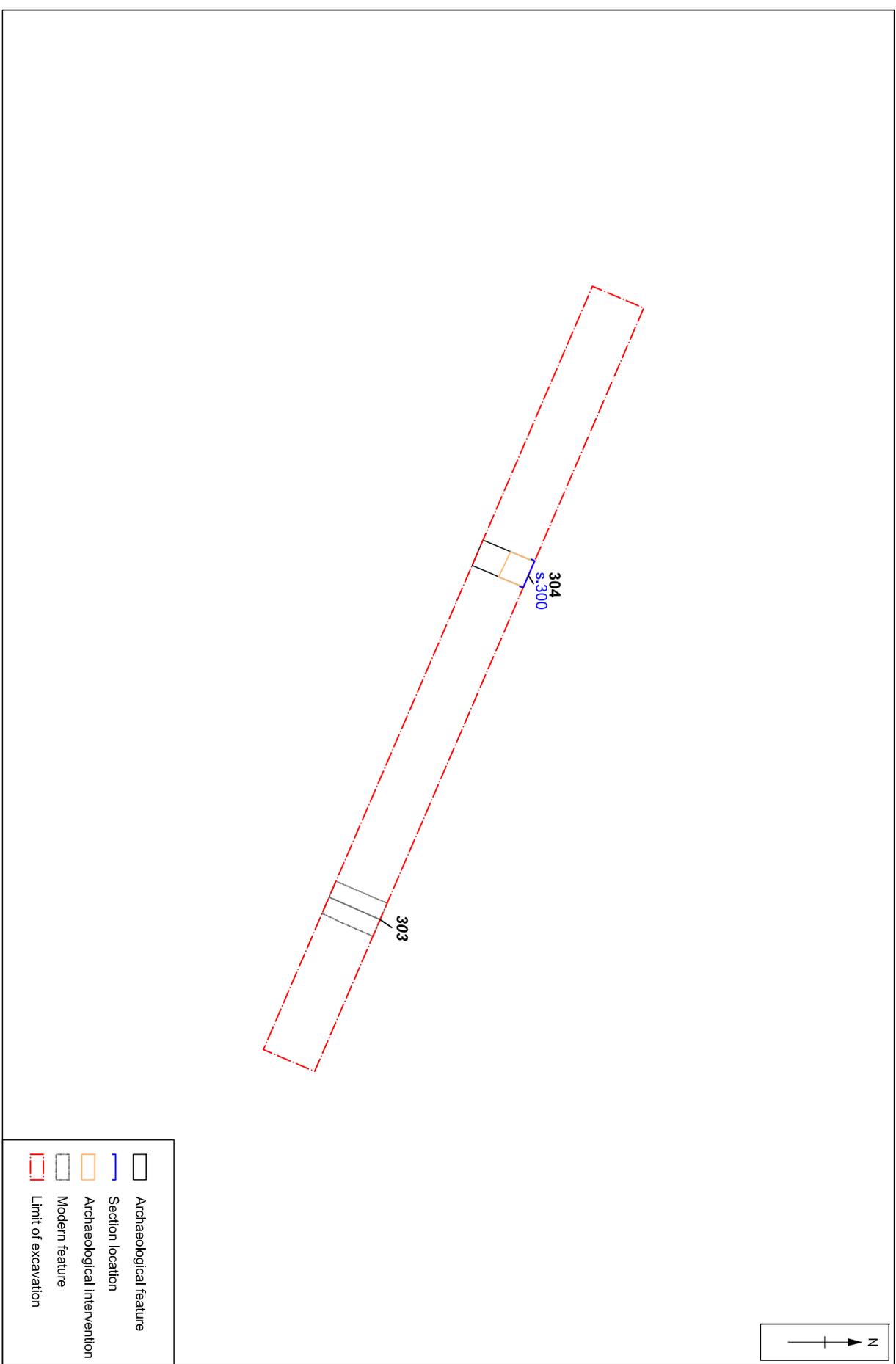


Figure 3: Trench 3

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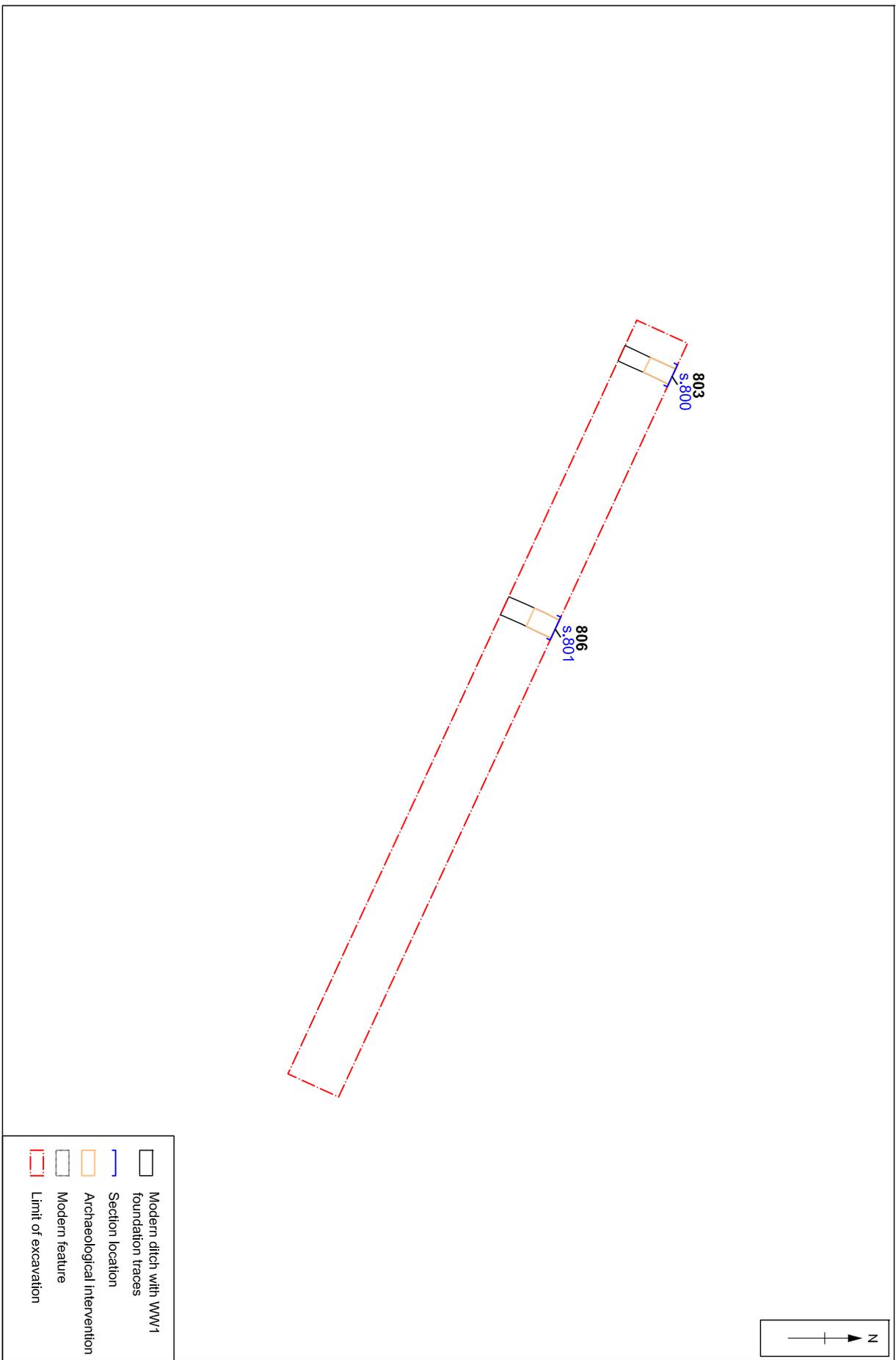
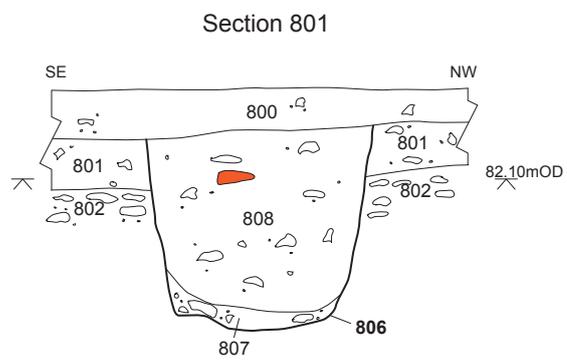
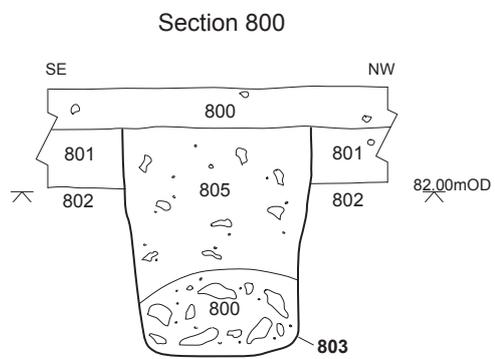
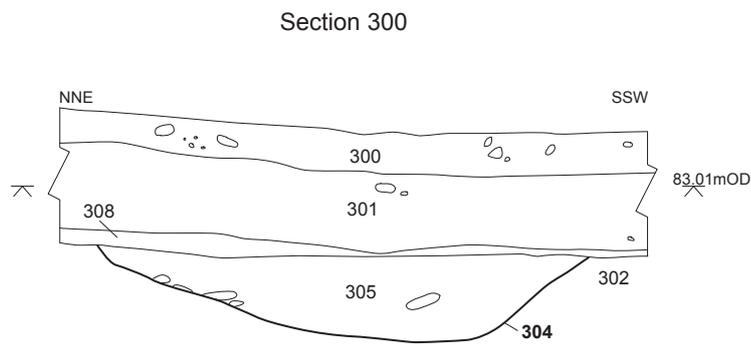


Figure 4: Trench 8

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Key:  
○ stone  
■ brick

Figure 5: Sections 300, 800 and 801



Plate 1: Trench 1, general view



Plate 2: Trench 1, representative section



Plate 3: Trench 2, general view

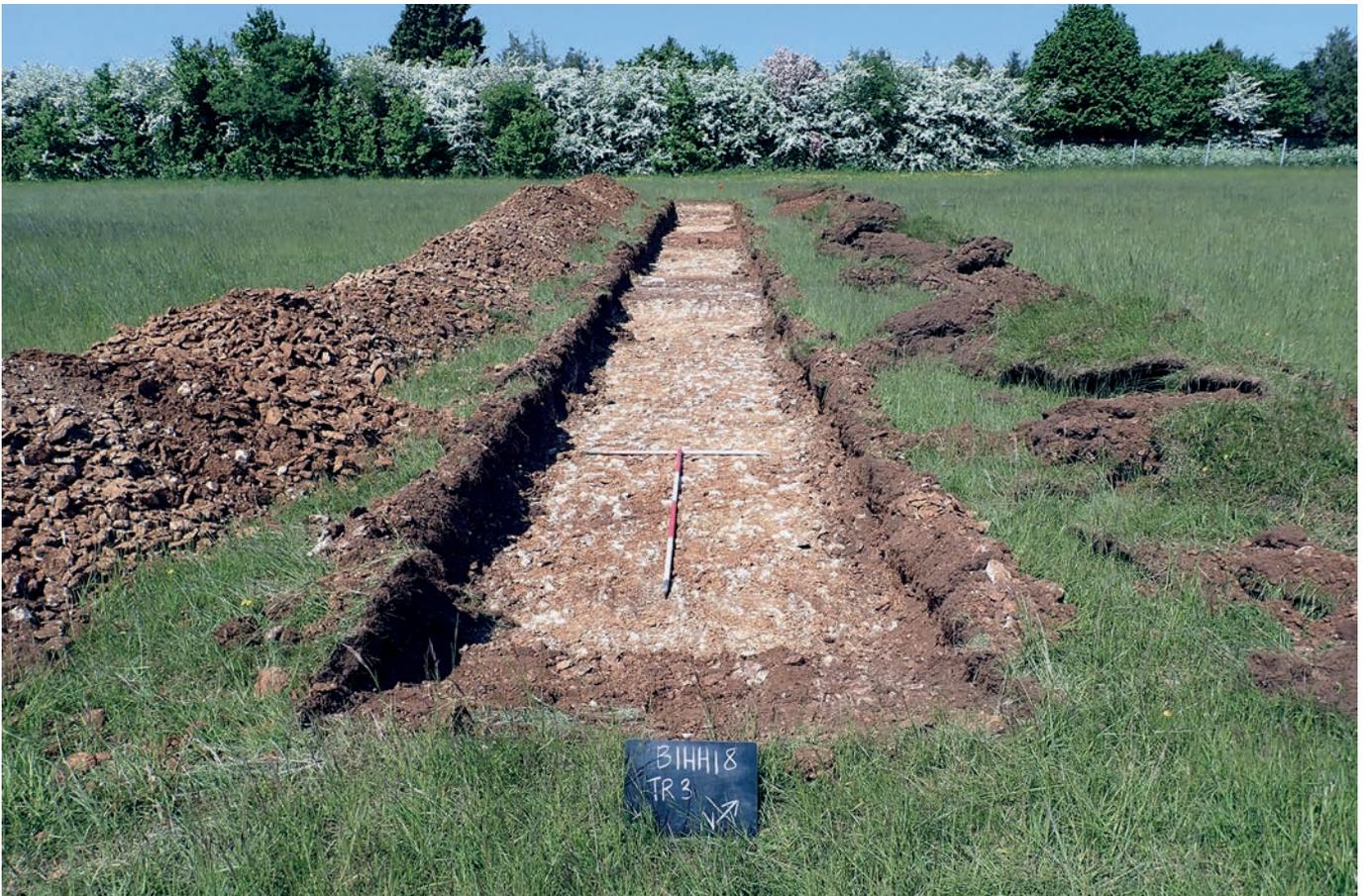


Plate 4: Trench 3, general view



Plate 5: Trench 3, section 300, ditch 304



Plate 6: Trench 4, general view



Plate 7: Trench 4, representative section



Plate 8: Trench 5, general view



Plate 9: Trench 5, representative section



Plate 10: Trench 6, general view



Plate 11: Trench 6, representative section



Plate 12: Trench 7, general view



Plate 13: Trench 7, representative section



Plate 14: Trench 8, general view



Plate 15: Trench 8, section 800, foundation 803



Plate 16: Trench 8, section 801, foundation 806



Plate 17: Trench 9, general view



Plate 18: Trench 9, representative section



Plate 19: Trench 10, general view



Trench 20: Trench 10 representative section



Plate 21: Trench 10, section 1001, concrete structure 1003



Plate 22: Trench 11, general view



Plate 23: Trench 11, representative section



Plate 24: Trench 12, general view



Plate 25: Trench 12, representative 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](mailto: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 850500  
e: [oaeast@oxfordarchaeology.com](mailto: oaeast@oxfordarchaeology.com)  
w: <http://oxfordarchaeology.com>



**Director:** Gill Hey, BA PhD FSA MCifA  
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