

Beckley View Barton Oxfordshire



Archaeological Evaluation Report



March 2006



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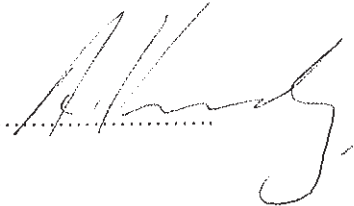
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Prepared by: Dave McNicol
Position: SWD Project Supervisor
Date: 24th January 2006

Checked by: Dan Dodds
Position: Head of Small Works
Date: 3rd March 2006

Approved by: Alan Hardy
Position: Senior Project Manager
Date: 15th March 2006

Signed.....



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Oxford Archaeology

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Janus House

Osney Mead

Oxford OX2 0ES

t: (0044) 01865 263800

f: (0044) 01865 793496

e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk

w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk

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Lovell

**Beckley View, Barton,
Oxford**

NGR SP 553 079

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**CONTENTS**

Summary.....	1
1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Location and scope of work.....	1
1.2 Geology and topography.....	1
1.3 Archaeological background.....	1
2 Evaluation Aims	2
3 Evaluation Methodology.....	2
3.1 Scope of fieldwork.....	2
3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording	2
3.3 Finds.....	2
3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence	3
3.5 Presentation of results.....	3
4 Results: General.....	3
4.1 Soils and ground conditions.....	3
4.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits	3
5 Results: Descriptions	3
5.1 Description of deposits	3
5.2 Finds.....	5
6 Discussion And Interpretation	5
6.1 Reliability of field investigation	5
6.2 Overall interpretation.....	5
Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory.....	6
Appendix 2 Bibliography and references	7
Appendix 3 Summary of Site Details	7

LIST OF FIGURES

- Fig. 1 Site location
Fig. 2 Trench location

SUMMARY

Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at Brome Place and Fettiplace Road, Barton, Oxford, on behalf of Lovell. The evaluation revealed a large amount of modern building debris throughout the site, overlying Oxford Clay. Several of the trenches were unable to be fully excavated due to the discovery of a number of gas pipes throughout the site. No significant archaeology was observed during the course of the evaluation

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In January 2006 OA carried out a 6-trench field evaluation at Brome Place and Fettiplace Road (NGR SP 553 079) on behalf of Lovell in respect of a planning application for 41 new dwelling units (Planning Application No. 05/00641/FUL). An archaeological condition was attached to the planning permission by Brian Durham the City Archaeologist for Oxford City Council and OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) showing how it would meet these requirements (OA, 2005). The development site is situated in the suburb of Barton to the east of the city of Oxford (Fig. 1).

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site itself is approximately 0.8 hectares in area and bounded to the west by residential dwellings, to the north, east and south by Ilsley Road, Fettiplace Road and Brome Place respectively. The site lies on fairly flat ground and is currently disused, but used to be the site of an old persons nursing home. It is situated at approximately 70 m above OD. The site has undergone terracing associated with the old persons nursing home, and as such the natural stratigraphy of the site has been disturbed. The underlying geology uncovered on the site is Oxford Clay.

1.3 Archaeological background

1.3.1 The development site lies close to the known route of a Roman road running south from Beckley which was identified during recent excavations at the corner of Stowford Road and Grenoble Road (OA, 2005). A known Roman Villa is known at Wick farm c. 800 m north of the development site on the north side of the Bayswater brook (OA, 2005).

1.3.2 Recent investigations to the immediate south at Bernwood School revealed Romano-British burials and settlement activity (OA, 2005). The potential for prehistoric activity within the site is also to be expected. The site itself has produced no archaeological evidence.

2 EVALUATION AIMS

- 2.1.1 To establish the presence or absence, extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of archaeological remains within the proposal area. In particular, to establish the date range and phasing of remains within the trenches.
- 2.1.2 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features.
- 2.1.3 To attempt to establish a clear sequence of chronology for this site, lying as it does between two known archaeological sites (Wick Farm and Bernwood School).
- 2.1.4 To make available the results of the investigation. To place the results of the evaluation in a wider local and regional context.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork

- 3.1.1 The evaluation consisted of six trenches (Fig. 2). Trenches 1 and 2 were located in the north of the site, parallel to Ilsley Road, and measured 3.5 m by 1.5 m and 10.8 m by 1.5 m respectively. Trench 3 was located just north-east of the centre of the site and measured 14.7 m by 1.5 m. Trench 4 was located adjacent to the southern end of Trench 3 and measured 3 m by 1.5m. Trench 5 was located approximately in the centre of the site and measured 14.8 m by 1.5 m. Trench 6 was located parallel, and to the south-west of Trench 5 and measured 20 m by 1.5 m.

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

- 3.2.1 The overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision by a mechanical excavator (JCB) fitted with a 1.5 m wide toothless grading bucket. Excavation by machine proceeded in spits down to either undisturbed natural deposits or to the highest significant archaeological horizon, whichever was encountered first.
- 3.2.2 The trenches were cleaned by hand and the revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds and environmental samples. The trenches were planned at a scale of 1:100 and any archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:50 with the sections drawn at a scale of 1:20. All features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

3.3 Finds

3.3.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and generally bagged by context. No finds of special interest were recovered during the evaluation.

3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence

3.4.1 No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling were encountered during the course of the evaluation.

3.5 Presentation of results

3.5.1 The results of the evaluation are presented below, with the stratigraphic accounts of each trench described individually, followed by an overall discussion and interpretation.

4 RESULTS: GENERAL

4.1 Soils and ground conditions

4.1.1 The site is located on fairly level ground, consisting of building debris over natural in Trenches 5 and 6, with a layer of dark brownish black silty loam overlying the building debris in Trenches 1 - 4. Gas pipes were located within Trenches 1 and 3 so complete excavation was impossible. The weather conditions were fair.

4.2 Distribution of archaeological deposits

4.2.1 No significant archaeological deposits were encountered in any of the trenches.

5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

5.1 Description of deposits

Trench 1

5.1.1 A modern gas pipe was located at 0.59 m below the ground surface, which stopped further investigation. The gas pipe was located within a layer of modern building debris (101), which was overlain by a 0.1 m thick layer of dark brownish black silty loam (100).

Trench 2

5.1.2 Trench 2 was placed so as to avoid the gas pipe which was identified within Trench 1. Natural light greenish grey clay was located at the base of the trench (202), at approximately 69.5 m above OD. This was excavated to a depth of 2.4 m below the ground surface at the western end of the trench to determine if there was any change in the natural. No change was observed. A 0.7 m thick layer of modern building debris (201), consisting of mortar, stone and brick, overlay the natural, and was in turn overlain by a 0.1 m thick layer of dark brownish black silty loam (200).

Trench 3

- 5.1.3 The presence of two gas pipes meant that this trench was only partially excavated, and only the south-western corner of the trench was able to be excavated down to the natural. The stratigraphy within this trench was similar to Trench 2. In the south-western corner of this trench a layer of greenish grey natural clay (302), was reached at 0.1 m below the ground surface, at 69.9 m above OD. This was overlain by a 0.1 m thick layer of mid grey silty loam (300). Throughout the rest of the trench a layer of modern building debris (301), was reached at 0.1 m below the ground surface, at 69.9 m above OD, but further excavation was not possible to the presence of gas pipes. This was overlain by a 0.1 m thick layer of mid grey silty loam (300).

Trench 4

- 5.1.4 Trench 4 was located parallel to the southern end of Trench 3 since the presence of the gas pipes allowed only partial excavation of Trench 3. The stratigraphy within this trench was similar to the south-western corner of Trench 3. A layer of light brownish orange sandy clay (402) was reached at 0.42 m below the ground surface, at approximately 69.6 m above OD. This was overlain by a 0.29 m thick layer of building debris (401), consisting of greyish brown silty clay mixed with mortar and brick. Sealing this layer was a 0.13 m thick layer of mid brownish grey clayey loam (400).

Trench 5

- 5.1.5 Natural clay, which varied in colour from a mid brownish grey to a light bluish orange to a dark greenish grey, was reached at 0.75 m below the ground surface (502). This was excavated to a depth of 2.35 m below the ground surface, to a level of 67.65 m above OD, at the south-eastern end of the trench to determine if there was any change in the natural. The natural clay gradually got darker with depth, and at 2.30 m below the ground surface the natural clay turned a dark bluish grey-green. Within the deeper natural clay deposits a number of intact oyster shells were observed. A 0.4 m thick layer of mottled dark black and orange silty clay (501), which represents a modern levelling layer, overlaid the natural clay. This was overlain by a 0.35 m thick layer of modern building debris (500).

Trench 6

- 5.1.6 The stratigraphy within this trench was similar to Trench 5. Natural greyish green mottled clay was reached at 0.70 m below the ground surface (603). This was excavated to a depth of 2.30 m below the ground surface at the south-eastern end of the trench to determine if there was any change in the natural. The natural clay gradually got lighter as it went down, and at 2.20 m below the ground surface the natural clay turned a dark bluish grey-green. Within the deeper natural clay deposits fragments of oyster shells were observed. A 0.15 m thick layer of dark greyish black clay (601), which represents a modern levelling layer, overlaid the natural clay. This was overlain by a 0.45 m thick layer of modern building debris (600). A number of

features were observed cutting into the natural clay, but on excavation these turned out to be root disturbance.

5.2 Finds

- 5.2.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and bagged by context. All the finds recovered were of late post-medieval date (19th and 20th century) and comprised of fragments of slag and pottery.

6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Reliability of field investigation

- 6.1.1 The positioning and excavation of the trenches was severely restricted due to the presence of trees around the perimeter of the site and the location of a number of gas pipes. The foundation remains of the nursing home also restricted the positioning of the trenches.

6.2 Overall interpretation

- 6.2.1 The results of the evaluation show that the majority of the site has been at least partially disturbed by the building and demolition of the nursing home. Excavation down to the natural was only possible in 4 of the 6 trenches due to the presence of gas pipes. It is possible that the natural clay uncovered accumulated as a result of gradual hill-wash but excavation wasn't able to confirm this. All the datable deposits fell within the 19th and 20th centuries. No significant archaeological deposits were observed during the course of the evaluation.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Ctxt No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Thick. (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>No./ wt</i>	<i>Date</i>
001							
	100	Layer	0.1	Modern topsoil			
	101	Layer	0.6	Building debris			
002							
	200	Layer	0.1	Modern topsoil			
	201	Layer	0.7	Building debris			
	202	Natural	>1.6	Clay			
003							
	300	Layer	0.1	Modern topsoil			
	301	Layer	>0.1	Building debris			
	302	Natural	>0.45	Clay			
004							
	400	Layer	0.13	Modern topsoil			
	401	Layer	0.28	Building debris			
	402	Natural	>0.27	Clay			
005							
	500	Layer	0.35	Building debris			
	501	Layer	0.4	Modern levelling layer			
	502	Natural	>1.6	Clay			
006							
	600	Layer	0.45	Building debris			
	601	Layer	0.15	Modern levelling layer			
	602	Natural	>1.7	Clay			
	603	Layer	0.26	Bioturbation	Pot		C20th
	604	Cut	0.05	Bioturbation			
	605	Fill	0.05	Bioturbation	Slag, Pot		C20th
	606	Cut	0.05	Bioturbation			
	607	Fill	0.05	Bioturbation	Slag		C20th

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

IFA, 2001 *Standard and Guidance for archaeological evaluations*

OA, 2005 *Beckley View, Barton, Oxford: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation*

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

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Client name: Lovell

Site name: Beckley View, Barton, Oxford

Site code: BABEV

Grid reference: SP 553 079

Type of evaluation: 6 machine excavated trenches

Date and duration of project: 16th - 20th January 2006, five days

Area of site: 0.8 hectares

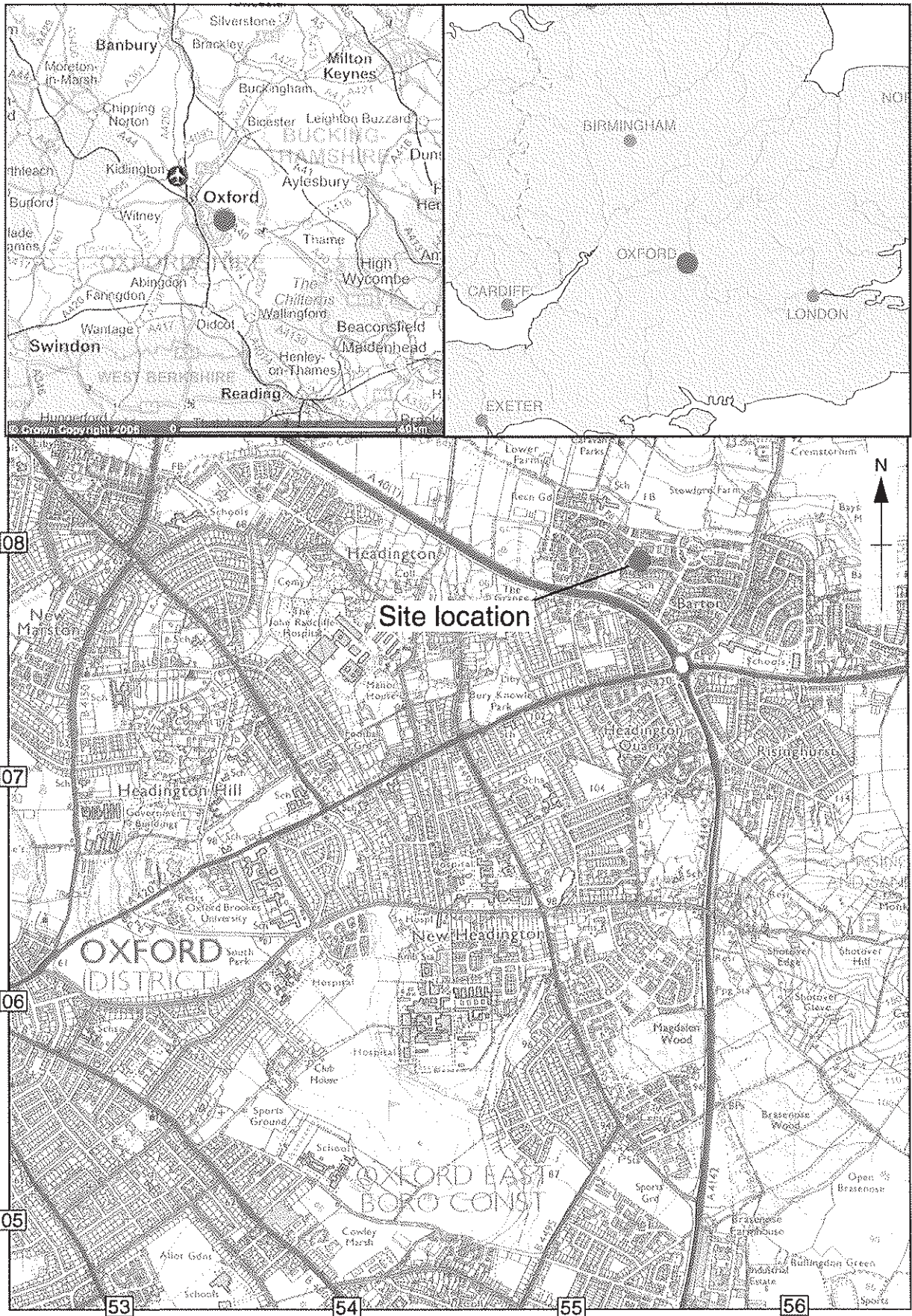
Summary of results: Modern building debris overlying natural clays

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:

Illustrations

Fig 1 Site Location

Fig 2 Site Plan showing trench locations



Scale 1:25,000

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Figure 1: Site location

OS 455460 E
OS 286072 N

OS 455310 E
OS 286012 N



OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY
 Oxford Archaeology
 100a Park Road
 Oxford, OX2 0ES
 Tel: 01865 263800 Fax: 01865 733456
 email: mail@oxfordarch.co.uk
 Web: www.oxfordarch.co.uk

BABEVY 05
 Beckley View, Barton

Drawing No. BABEVY/05/figure02
 Date printed 15 Mar 2006
 Drawing title

Figure 2: Trench Location

0 10 m
 Scale at A3 1:4000

Survey Data supplied by:
 Lovell Partnerships

site extent
 trial trench
 basement

CHECKED BY: M.Brady 14.02.06

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