

Box Vicarage Box Wiltshire



Archaeological Evaluation Report



April 2007

Client: Hookway Partnership LLP

Issue N^o: 1
OA Job N^o: 3349
NGR: ST 823 685

Client Name: Hookway Partnership LLP

Client Ref No:

Document Title: Box Vicarage, Box, Wiltshire

Document Type: Evaluation

Issue Number: 1

National Grid Reference: ST 823 685

Planning Reference:

OA Job Number: 3349

Site Code: BOXVIC 07

Invoice Code: BOXVICEV2

Receiving Museum: Wiltshire Heritage Museum

Museum Accession No:

Prepared by: Mike Sims
Position: SWD Supervisor
Date: 12th April 2007

Checked by: Dan Dodds
Position: Head of Small Works
Date: 13th April 2007

Approved by: Nick Shepherd Signed.....
Position: Head of Field work
Date: 16th April 2007

Document File Location H:\PROJECTS\Wiltshire WI\6991 Box Vicarage
EV\RevisedevREP.doc

Graphics File Location Servergo:/oaupubs 1_a thru
h*BOXVIC07*BOXVICEV*Box Vicarage,
Wiltshire*AH*12.04.07

Illustrated by Amy Tiffany Hemingway

Disclaimer:

This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and should not be relied upon or used for any other project without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and prior written authority of Oxford Archaeology being obtained. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for the consequences of this document being used for a purpose other than the purposes for which it was commissioned. Any person/party using or relying on the document for such other purposes agrees, and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Oxford Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the person/party by whom it was commissioned.

Oxford Archaeology
© Oxford Archaeological Unit Ltd 2007

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

Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited is a Registered Charity No: 285627

**Box Vicarage,
Box, Wiltshire*****ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT*****CONTENTS**

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

LIST OF FIGURES

- Fig. 1 Site location
 Fig. 2 Box Vicarage drainage plan
 Fig. 3 Trial pit, plan and section

SUMMARY

On 20th February 2007, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at Box Vicarage, Box, Wiltshire (NGR: ST 823 685) on behalf of the Hookway Partnership LLP, in advance of new drainage work and the installation of a replacement septic tank. The evaluation revealed the continuation of a previously encountered septic tank and deposits of post-medieval garden soil. Evidence for the continuation of the villa within this area was not encountered.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

1.1.1 On 20th February 2007, OA carried out a field evaluation at Box Vicarage, Box, Wiltshire (NGR: ST 823 685) on behalf of the Hookway Partnership LLD, in respect of proposed new drainage works and a replacement septic tank. The site itself occupies part of the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Box Roman Villa (SAM 30299) and an application was submitted to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) for Scheduled Monument Consent. Two previous trial pits had already been dug (OA, 2006) and DCMS had requested that a further trial pit be dug as part of the scheduled Monument Consent.

1.2 Location, geology and topography

1.2.1 The site is located 6.6 km north-east of Bath on the north side of the village of Box (Fig. 1). The development area is located to the east of the Vicarage on a gentle north facing slope, and is currently used as a garden. The site lies between approximately 46 m and 43 m above OD and occupies an area of 0.1 hectares. The site lies at a junction of Inferior Oolite limestone to the west and Lias clays to the east and the underlying geology is mixed and includes a deposit of Mesolithic spring deposited tufa.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological background to the evaluation has been the subject of a separate desk study (OA, 2006), the results of which are presented below. The site itself has produced significant archaeological evidence.

1.3.2 Archaeological evidence for the Roman remains at Box has been accumulating since the earlier parts of 19th century. Excavations to investigate their extent and nature have been carried out at intervals since the 1880s when the scale of the villa became apparent. Since 1982 a further series of excavations have taken place to the west of Box Vicarage, extending beyond the Scheduled area of the Roman villa. Work was carried out at The Hermitage to the south in 1983-4 (Carless 1984), along Church Lane in 1993-4, at Box House in 1989 and 1995 (WRAP 1989, BAT 1995) and at Box House Cottage in 1994. A Desk-based Assessment carried out in 1997 combined

information from the reports produced with discussions with the excavators involved (Matthews 1997). Again Roman material was found in all locations. In the 21st century when Selwyn Hall was extended in 2003 a watching brief was carried out (BAT 2003). In addition, a geophysical survey was carried out in the gardens north of The Wilderness in 1998-9 (Payne 1999).

- 1.3.3 There have been two archaeological investigations during which excavations have been carried out within the garden of Box Vicarage. In 1968-9, when Selwyn Hall was built, a trench was dug on the south side of the boundary wall to help link the known villa remains in the south-west with the results from Selwyn Hall (Hurst *et al* 1987). More extensive work was carried out in 1994 to evaluate the location of a proposed new Vicarage, not subsequently constructed, within the garden (WA 1994). Evidence connected to the Roman villa was found on both occasions.
- 1.3.4 The late 20th century and early 21st century reports were examined for information on surface levels and the depths at which the archaeological horizon and Roman remains were encountered. This data was used to prepare the composite section shown in Figure 3. These results demonstrate that, where below-ground archaeological deposits dating from the Roman period survive, they can lie as little as 0.4 m below the present ground surface.
- 1.3.5 In 2006 OA excavated two 1m square trial pits within the proposed route of the new sewer. Evidence of the extent of the villa was encountered within the southernmost trial pit. The alignment of the structural feature is consistent with those previously encountered and it is probable that it may form part of an outbuilding associated with the villa. The area around the trial pit in the north-west corner of the garden produced no demolition debris nor finds, suggesting that it was outside the main area of activity, or possibly that the area has been truncated or reduced in depth. The presence of a buried soil horizon suggested that the area was under cultivation prior to the construction of the present day vicarage.

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, evidence relating to the known Roman villa.
- 2.1.2 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features.
- 2.1.3 To make available the results of the investigation.

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork

3.1.1 The evaluation comprised a single trial pit measuring 1.55 m (east-west) and 0.8 m (north-south). The pit was excavated 2 m east of one of the previous trial pits over the area of the existing septic tank (Fig. 2).

3.1.2 The test pit was excavated by hand by the site supervisor. Excavation was continued until either natural deposits were encountered or to the first archaeologically significant horizon, whichever was encountered first.

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

3.2.1 The pit was cleaned by hand and any revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature, and, where possible, to retrieve finds and environmental samples. The pit was planned at a scale of 1:20 and any recorded sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20. The pit and sections were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OA Field Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

3.3 Finds

3.3.1 Finds were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and bagged by context.

3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence

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

4 RESULTS: GENERAL

4.1 Soils and ground conditions

4.1.1 The site is located on a gentle north facing slope and comprised of garden soils.

5 RESULTS: DESCRIPTIONS

5.1 Description of deposits

5.1.1 The trial pit was located within a flower bed at the southern end of the existing soakaway, approximately 1.8 west of the boundary wall.

5.1.2 The underlying natural, a yellow brown clay with limestone fragments (27) was encountered 0.45 m below the current ground level (Fig. 3, plan and section). This was cut by a curvi-linear feature (26) which ran out into the western, southern and northern baulks of the pit.

5.1.3 Within this feature was a geotextile membrane ("Terram") which was covered by a very loose grey-brown silt (25) which contained many large fragments of limestone.

5.1.4 Sealing the feature and the natural was a 0.44 m deep layer of dark grey-brown silt loam (24) which produced examples of post-medieval pottery, animal bone and residual Romano-British pottery and is indicative of a cultivated garden soil.

5.2 Finds

5.2.1 Fragments of Romano-British pottery were recovered from the trial pit. These were however, within worked soils and must be considered to be residual finds. Many fragments of post-medieval (18th and 19th century) pottery were also recovered. These were probably deposited after the vicarage was constructed.

6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Reliability of field investigation

6.1.1 While the trial pit can only give a "snap shot" of the potential of the site, the results are broadly similar to those from earlier excavations and give an indication of the scale of activity within this area of the villa site.

6.2 Overall interpretation and recommendations

Summary of results

6.2.1 Evidence for the continuation of the known existing soakaway pit (26) was encountered. No evidence for the continuation the villa or it's outbuildings was observed and the presence of undisturbed natural (27) was established.

Recommendations

6.2.2 As a result of presence of undisturbed natural it is recommended that the proposed route of the sewer trenching be altered to run through this area (as shown in Fig. 2), minimising the potential for disturbance of archaeological deposits.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Thick/Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
24	Layer	-	0.44 m	Modern garden soil	Pottery, brick, tile glass	C19th/ C20th
25	Fill	0.8 m	> 0.2 m	Backfill of soakaway		C19th
26	Cut	0.8 m	> 0.2 m	Existing soakaway pit	-	C19th
27	Layer	0.8 m	> 0.1 m	Natural	-	-

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

Bath Archaeological Trust, 1995, *An Archaeological Evaluation of grounds adjacent to Box House Hotel, Box, Wiltshire*

Bath Archaeological Trust, 2003, *Archaeological Watching Brief at Selwyn Hall, Box, Wiltshire*

Carless K, 1984, *Finds From Ditch at Hermitage House, Box*

Hurst H R, Dartnall D L & Fisher C, 1987, 'Excavations at Box Roman Villa, 1967-8' in *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine* **83**, 19-51

IFA, 2001 *Standard and Guidance for archaeological evaluations*

Matthews T, 1997, *A desk-based assessment and suggested revised Scheduled area of the Roman Villa at Box, Wiltshire*

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

OA, 2006 *Box Vicarage, Box, Wiltshire: Archaeological Impact Assessment*

OA, 2006 *Box Vicarage, Box, Wiltshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological evaluation*

OA, 2006 *Box Vicarage, Box, Wiltshire: Archaeological Evaluation Report*

Payne N, 1999, *An Earthwork and Resistivity Survey Near Box Roman Villa, The Wilderness, Box Wiltshire*

Wessex Archaeology, 1994, *Box Roman Villa, Wiltshire, Archaeological Evaluation Report*

Wiltshire Rescue Archaeology Project, 1989, *Box House*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Box Vicarage, Box, Wiltshire

Site code: BOXVIC 07

Grid reference: ST 823 685

Type of evaluation: 1 hand dug test pit, 1.55 m by 0.8 m

Date and duration of project: 20th February 2007, 1 day

Area of site: 0.1 hectare

Summary of results: The continuation of an existing soakaway pit was encountered with post-medieval garden soils overlying natural. **Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with the Wiltshire Heritage Museum in due course.

\\Servergo\invoice codes\BOX\VOICE2\BOX\VOICE7\BOX\VOICE*Box Vicarage, Box, Wiltshire*MD*18.04.07



Scale 1:25,000

Reproduced from the Landranger 1:50,000 scale by permission of the Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office
© Crown Copyright 1998. All rights reserved. Licence No. AL 10000569

Figure 1: Site location

\\Server\goinvoice codes & thru h\B_invoice codes\BOX\VICEV2*BOX\VIC07*Box Vicarage, Box, Whitshire*MD*18.04.07

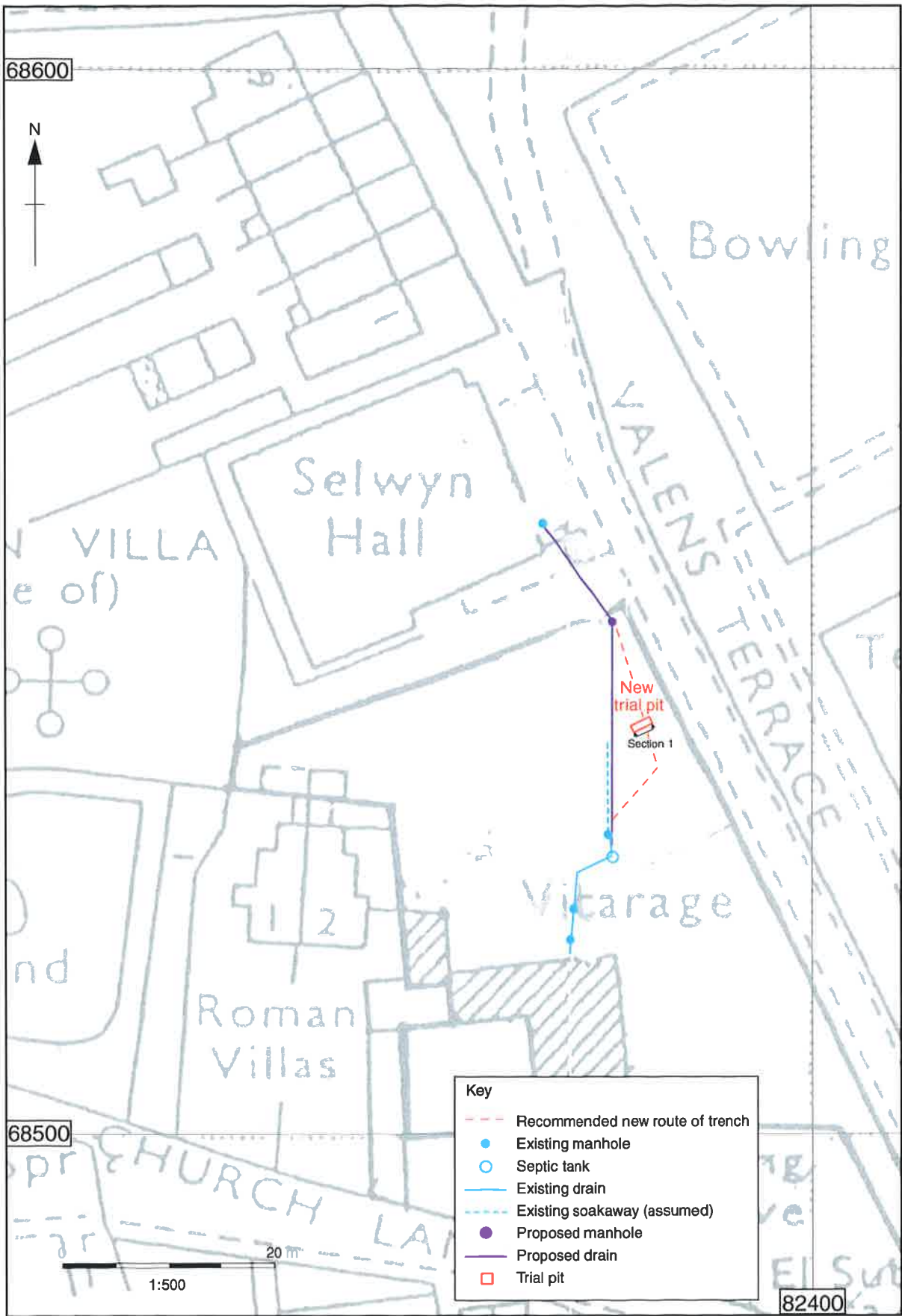


Figure 2: Box Vicarage drainage plan

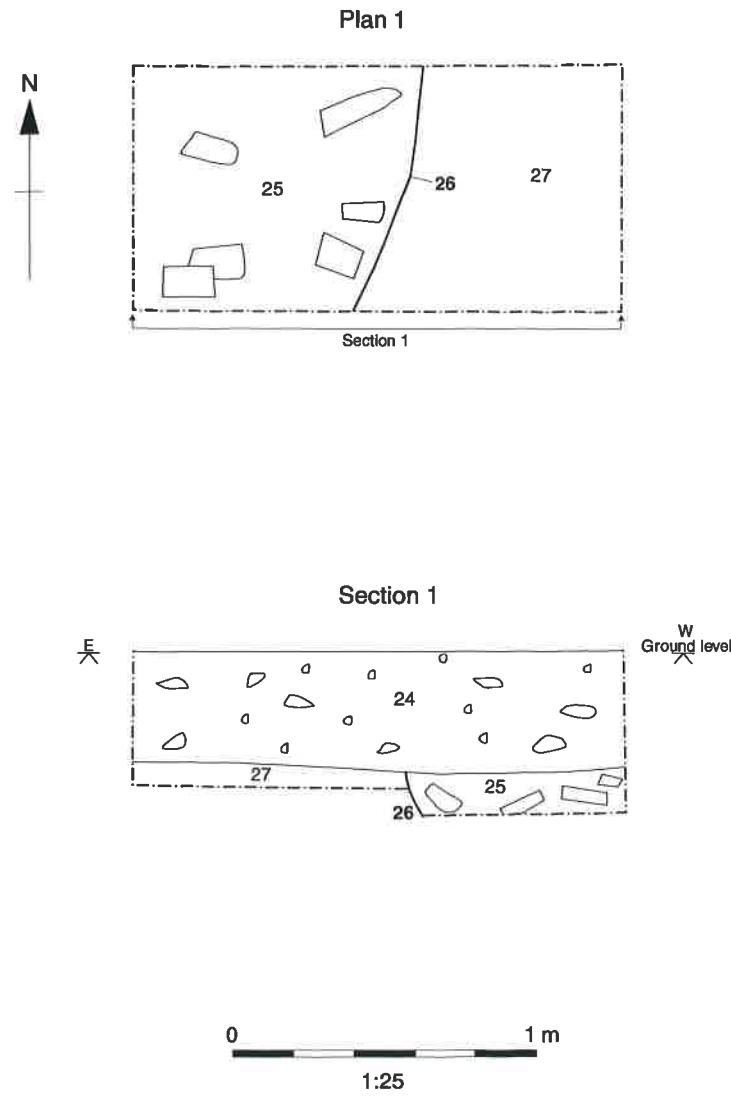


Figure 3: Trial pit plan and section



Oxford Archaeology

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



Oxford Archaeology North

Storey Institute
Meeting House Lane
Lancaster LA1 1TF

t: (0044) 01524 541000
f: (0044) 01524 848606
e: lancinfo@oxfordarch.co.uk
w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk



Director: David Jennings, BA MIFA FSA

Oxford Archaeological Unit is a
Private Limited Company, N^o: 1618597
and a Registered Charity, N^o: 285627

Registered Office:

Oxford Archaeological Unit
Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES