

Jewell & Co.

Banbury Court, Abingdon

NGR SU 4975 9740

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

Oxford Archaeological Unit

April 1998

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Date: *29/4/1998*

Oxford Archaeological Unit

April 1998

Summary

In late 1997 the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) undertook a watching brief at Banbury Court, the Vineyard, Abingdon (NGR SU 4975 9740). No archaeological features were seen and no finds were retrieved.

1 Introduction

The development proposal comprised the construction of two bungalows to the rear of Banbury Court and fronting Withington Court. As a consequence of poor ground conditions this necessitated piling and excavations for ground beams.

The watching brief was commissioned by Jewell & Co. Chartered Architects and Town Planners on behalf of the Vale Housing Association due to the presence of known sites of archaeological interest in the immediate vicinity. It was undertaken to a WSI agreed with the Deputy County Archaeologist.

2 Background (Fig. 1)

The development area lies just to the north-west of the Vineyard, on the course of the river Stort. Preliminary investigations of the area were undertaken in 1977 - 8 by the Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society (Wilson 1984) and recorded evidence of Roman and medieval occupation. Subsequently, numerous excavations have been carried out by the OAU in the area to the east of the Vineyard, as part of a comprehensive redevelopment scheme (Allen 1989, Allen 1991).

The site lies closest to Vineyard Area 1, the site of excavations in 1988, and to Vineyard Area 6 which was evaluated in 1986. Excavations in Area 1 showed that there had been medieval tenements on the site from the later 12th century, with zones of intercutting medieval and post-medieval pits to the rear of the properties. There also were indications of possible medieval industrial activity predating the tenements. Iron Age and Roman ditches and pits were also discovered, but were largely truncated by later features.

Excavations in Area 6 revealed the back of tenement buildings, with further dense pitting to the rear; Roman and Iron Age features were also located here. The Iron Age Oppidum ditch was located to the south-east of the development site, in Vineyard Area 2.

3 Aims

The aims of the watching brief were to record any archaeological remains exposed on site during the course of the works to established standards (Wilkinson 1992), and to secure the preservation by record of any archaeology, the presence and nature of which could not be established in advance.

4 Methodology

Inspection visits were made to monitor the excavation of the ground beams, which was carried out by JCB. The piling operation was not monitored. Natural subsoil was not seen in any of the excavations monitored.

Within the constraints imposed by Health and Safety considerations the deposits exposed were cleaned, inspected and recorded in plan, section and by colour slide and black and white print photography. Written records were also made on proforma sheets.

5 Results (Fig. 2)

Only one deposit was exposed and recorded in the ground beam trenches; no cut features were seen and no finds were retrieved.

(1) comprised a very mixed mid brown/gray clay loam with 5% medium-coarse subrounded silt and 10% small-medium stones; it also contained irregular lenses of yellow/white medium-coarse subangular sand and coarse subrounded hardcore.

This material was seen to an average depth of 0.60 m in all the ground beam trenches.

6 Discussion

In all likelihood the one deposit seen, although it produced no dating evidence, is modern and relates to the construction of the housing estates at Banbury Court and Withington Court.

No archaeological deposits were exposed or disturbed during the course of the groundworks.

John Dalton
OAU
February 1998.

References.

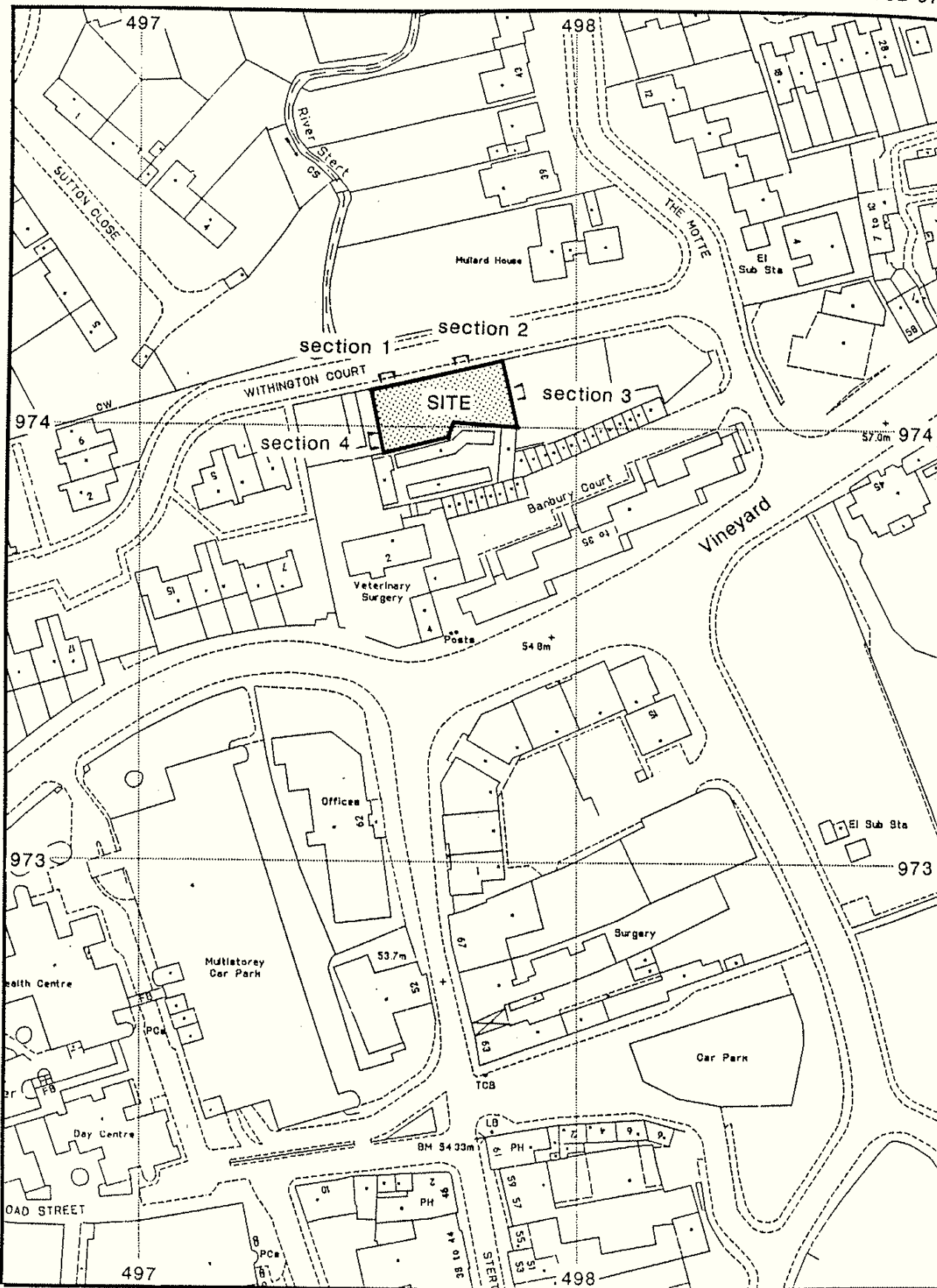
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Wilson, B, 1984 A Romano-British Cremation, an Inhumation, a Medieval Kiln, and Lead Weights at 56-86 The Vineyard, Abingdon, Oxon, *Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society*.

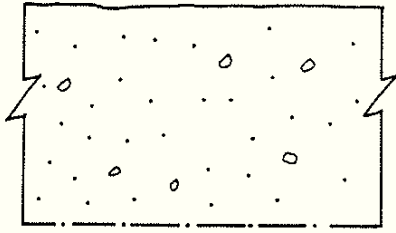


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Location of site

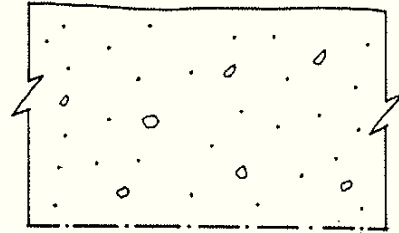
Figure 1

W Section 1 E



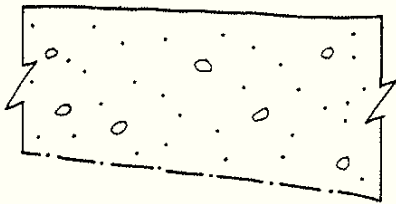
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W Section 2 E



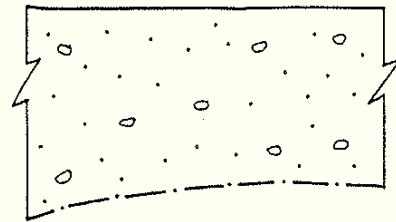
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N Section 3 S

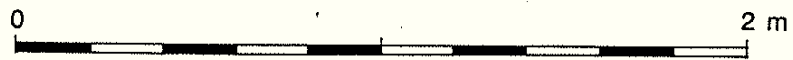


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Sections

Figure 2