



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

AT

WARNEFORD HOSPITAL, HIGHFIELD UNIT,

WARNEFORD LANE, OXFORD

OX3 7JX

NGR: SP 53873 05979

FEBRUARY 2021

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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an evaluation on land adjacent to the Highfield Unit, Warneford Hospital, Warneford Lane, Oxford OX3 7JX. The evaluation identified a modern topsoil deposit overlying a made ground deposit including aggregates that had formed temporary surfaces for a previous construction site compound. The made ground deposit overlay a loamy sand deposit which was the made-ground for a former sports recreation field. This was deposited over a buried soil horizon that had been the original topsoil/ploughsoil. This contained a fragment of Red Earthenware pottery which was broadly dated to the post-medieval period. The buried soil horizon overlay the natural sand geology

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site is located on the southeastern side of Warneford Lane, immediately east of the SW hospital buildings (SP5387305979 centred). The site lies at approximately 90m OD and the underlying geology is shown as Beckley Sand Member. The site is currently under grass having previously been used as a playing field (and cricket pitch).

1.2 Planning Background

Planning permission has been granted by Oxford City Council (OCC) for Erection of a single storey extension to provide 8no. bed Paediatric Intensive Care Unit. Provision of car parking, ambulance drop off and associated landscaping (additional information) (20/01391/FUL). A new application is about to be submitted for a different arrangement in the same location.

The applicant commissioned John Moore Heritage Services to prepare the Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation (JMHS 2021). The overarching Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) detailed the first phase of the staged programme, an archaeological evaluation, and the general approach to any subsequent mitigation.

1.3 Archaeological Background

An archaeological desk based assessment for the adjacent site by Oxford Archaeology (OA 2009) was re-submitted with the application with text added by GBS Health that no alternations to this site have occurred to change the conclusions of the assessment. This is not correct as subsequent to the production of the dba an archaeological evaluation was undertaken on the adjacent site by OA recording a single Roman ditch and an undated post hole. Subsequently a watching brief undertaken during the construction of the 'Highfield' facility and its access road failed to identify any significant archaeology (OA 2010, OA 2011).

The site likely sits within an extensive Roman field system that has been intermittently identified by geophysical survey and evaluation and on present evidence is located away from known settlement and pottery manufacturing areas,

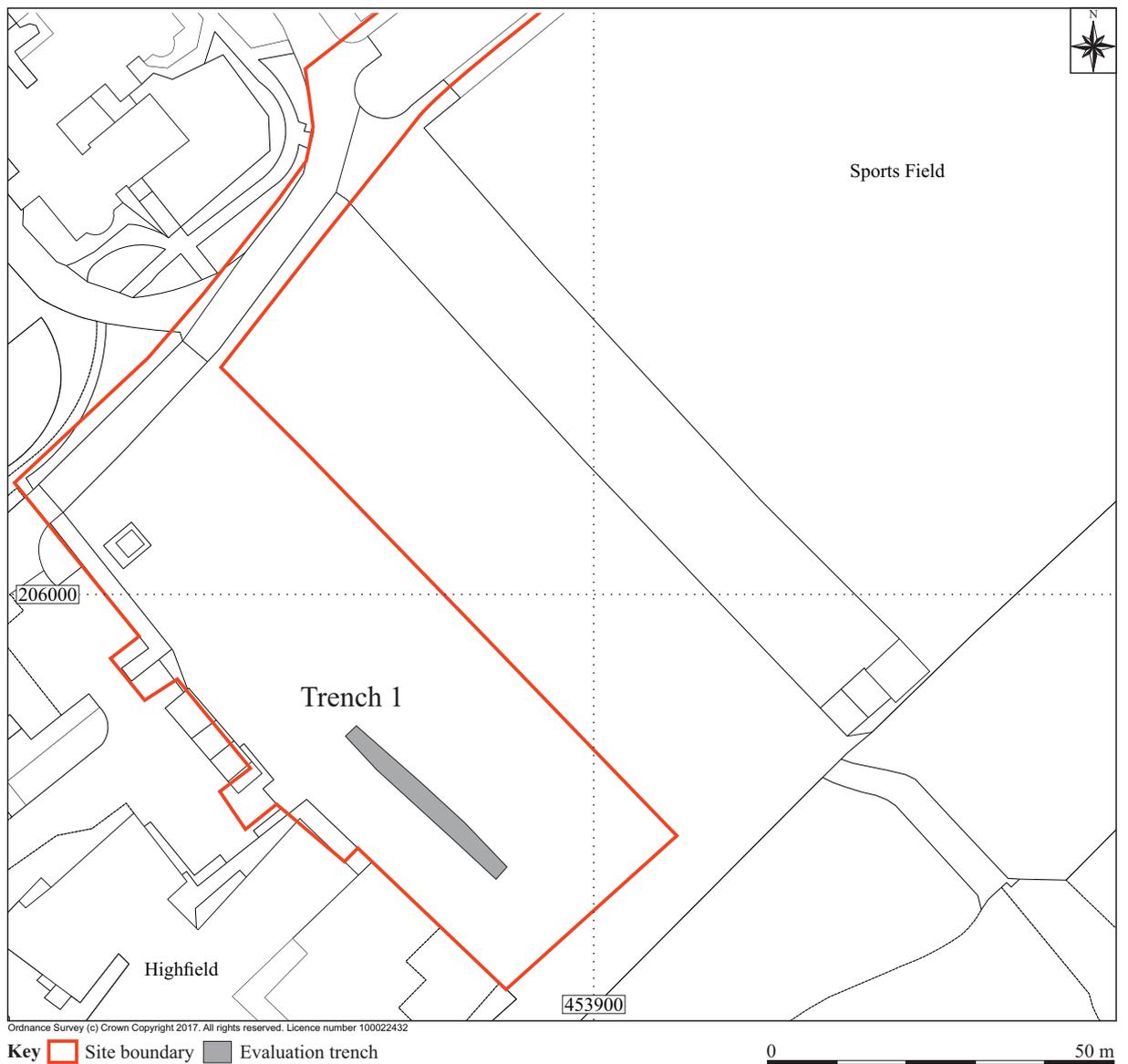
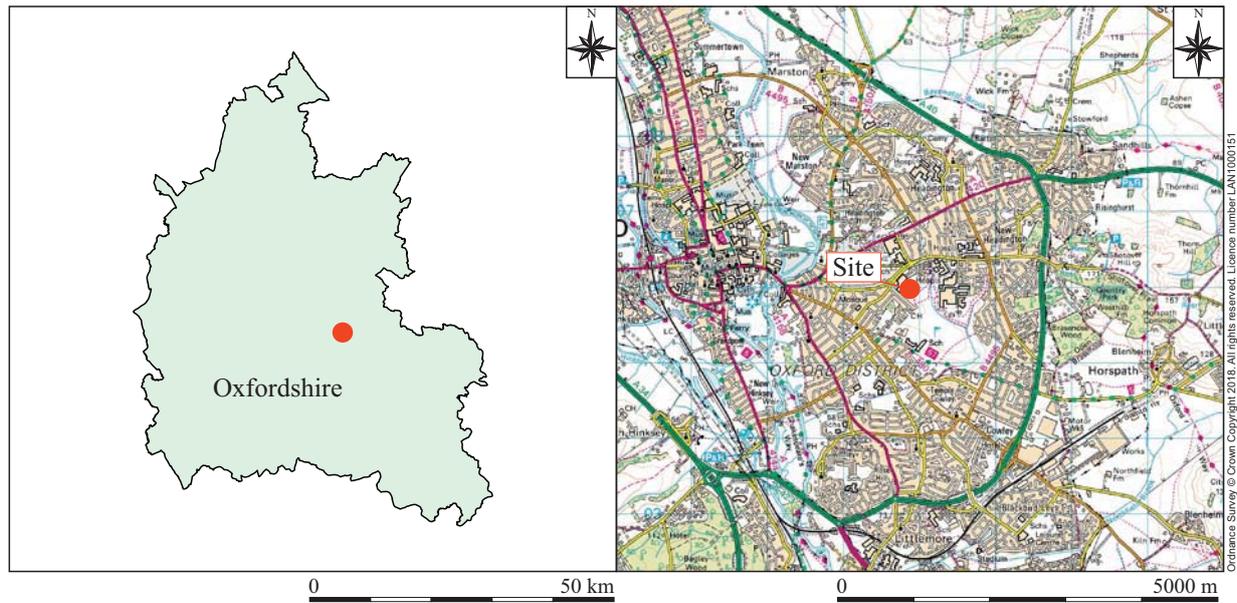


Figure 1: Site location

however, there is a slight potential for Roman features (including field ditches and some limited potential for cremation burials on the edge of the field system).

The above archaeological background has been obtained from the City Archaeological Services' Design Brief.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- To undertake Stage 1 archaeological evaluation of the site as a first stage of a programme of archaeological work.
- To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the site and the depth of soil deposits that overlie these remains.
- To determine the extent, conditions, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.
- To determine the degree of complexity of any horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present.
- To determine the impact of the proposed development on any remains present.

In particular

- To determine whether any Prehistoric or medieval remains are present.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with The City Archaeologist the archaeological advisor to Oxfordshire City Council.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2020).

3.2 Methodology

The archaeological evaluation was by way of one evaluation trench 30m long by 1.9m wide was excavated north-west to south-east along the western boundary the proposed site of the development.

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was also produced.

4 RESULTS (Figure 2; Plate 1)

The lowest deposit identified during the excavation of the evaluation trench was a deposit of mid-orange brown sand which was identified as the natural geology. Deposited above this was a 0.27m thick deposit of mid-grey brown loamy sand (1/04). This deposit was a buried soil horizon and was probably the original topsoil horizon prior to the construction of the overlying deposit. A single fragment of red earthenware pottery was recovered from this deposit which was broadly dated to the post-medieval period. Deposited above the buried soil horizon was a 0.23m deposit of mid-orange brown sand with grey loamy sand patches and occasional concentrations of charcoal flecking (1/03). The deposit was identified as the made ground level for the former sports recreation field. This deposit was overlain by a 0.28m thick deposit of mid to light brownish grey sandy loam with frequent inclusions of aggregate, gravels and moderate inclusions of brick fragments and modern material (1/02). The deposit was identified as made ground which included the remnants of temporary surfaces created for the former constructions site compound which had stood on the site. Deposited above this was a made-ground deposit of mid to dark brown sandy loam topsoil (1/01) which was 0.33m thick.



Plate 1. Trench 1. South-East view.

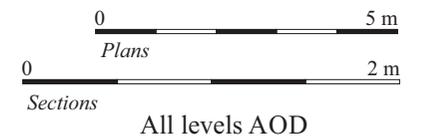
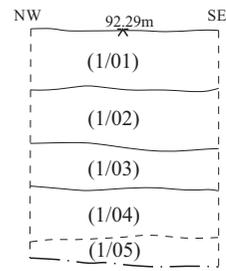
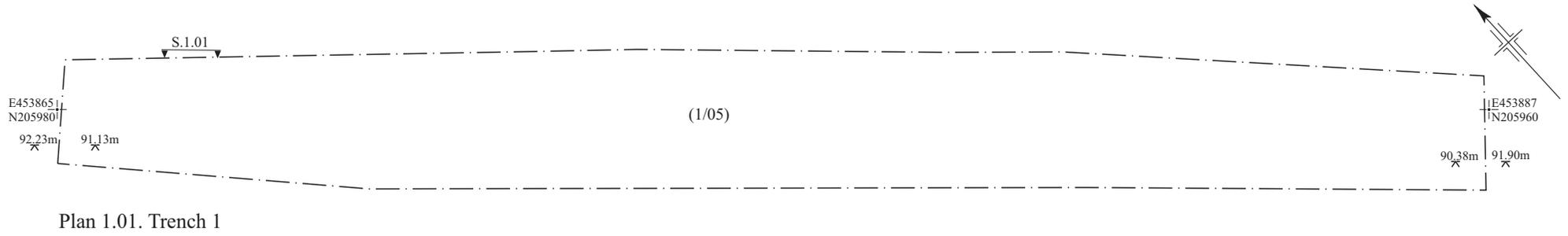


Figure 2: Plan and Section

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery by Stephanie Duensing

The pottery assemblage comprised 1 sherd with a total weight of 15g, recovered from context (1/04), a buried soil horizon. The assemblage was recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994).

OXDR: Red Earthenware. AD 1550 – 1800. 1 sherds, 15g.

A single body sherd of OXDR brown lead-glazed on red earthenware weighing 15g came from a medium vessel, probably a storage jar. This is a very common fabric and form from c. 1600-1900. The sherd shows moderate wear and condition. This along with the dearth of any other material is evidence supporting a theory of redeposition of this fragment within a later deposit.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of the sherd per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. The date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. The fabric type recovered is typical of sites in this region. The assemblage, small as it is, was post-medieval in date. Overall the limited amount of pottery present would indicate post-medieval activity in the wider surrounding area or redeposition of material which has been transported from elsewhere.

Due to the limited size of the assemblage, no further information can be gained from the retention of this material; no further work is recommended.

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

Context	Fabric		Context Date
	OXDR		
	No	Wt (g)	
1/04	2	42	AD 1550 – 1800
<i>Total</i>	2	42	

6 DISCUSSION

The archaeological evaluation did not identify any archaeological features on the site. The excavations identified a series of buried and made ground horizons. The lowest deposit above the natural geology was a buried topsoil/ploughsoil horizon. A fragment of broadly dated post-medieval pottery was recovered from the deposit but would not be considered to closely date the deposit. The soil was buried during the construction of the sports recreation field which was levelled and raised by the addition of sand. It is possible that the underlying soil may have been reduced prior to the deposition of the sports field levelling. Overlying the made ground of the sports field was a mixed deposit containing gravels, aggregates, brick fragments and other modern material. The deposit was identified as made-ground that had been constructed from the demolition of the temporary surfaces which had been created for a construction site

compound. The compound had been constructed within the last 10 years during the construction of the adjacent Highfield Unit. The construction of the compound involved the removal of turf and topsoil from the sports field as no buried horizon was identified above the made ground of the sports field. Following the demolition of the compound the ground level was raised again with the addition of new topsoil which is present across the current site.

7 ARCHIVE

A Digital Archive is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services (ID 4423) and will be made available upon request (to admin@jmheritageservices.co.uk). Digitised copies of all the primary records will be made publicly available as an appendix to the Final Report submitted to OASIS (johnmoor1-415629).

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists. 2020 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation*.

John Moore Heritage Services 2021 Warneford Hospital, Highfield Unit, Warneford Lane, Oxford OX3 7JX. Staged Programme of Archaeological Investigation. Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation.

Mellor, M, 1984 A summary of the key assemblages. A study of pottery, clay pipes, glass and other finds from fourteen pits, dating from the 16th to the 19th century in TG Hassall et al, *Excavations at St Ebbe's Oxoniensia* 49, 181-219.

Mellor, M, 1994 *Oxford Pottery: A Synthesis of middle and late Saxon, medieval and early post-medieval pottery in the Oxford Region Oxoniensia* 59, 17-217

Oxford Archaeology 2009 Warneford Hospital, Oxford: Archaeological Desk Based Assessment

Oxford Archaeology 2010 Warneford Hospital, Oxford: Archaeological field evaluation report

Oxford Archaeology 2011 Warneford Hospital, Oxford: Archaeological watching brief report

Context	Type	Description	Depth	Width	Length	Finds	Interpretation	Date
Trench 1								
1/01	Deposit	Friable mid-dark grey brown sandy loam	0.33m	>1.9m	>30.5m	None	Made ground topsoil	Modern
1/02	Deposit	Mid to light brownish grey sandy loam with frequent inclusions of aggregate, gravels and moderate inclusions of CBM and modern material.	0.28m	>1.9m	>30.5m	Modern material not retained	Made ground deposits including aggregate from previous temporary surfaces from former construction site compound on the site	Modern
1/03	Deposit	Firm, mid-orange brown sand with mid grey loamy sand patches, rare stone and occasional concentrations of charcoal flecking.	0.23m	>1.9m	>30.5m	None	Made ground. Former sports recreation field.	Modern
1/04	Deposit	Soft, mid-grey brown sandy loam-loamy sand with rare stone and occasional charcoal flecking	0.27m	>1.9m	>30.5m	Pottery	Buried topsoil horizon	Post-medieval
1/05	Deposit	Mid-orange brown sand with rare stone inclusions	0.08m	>1.9m	>30.5m	-	Beckley Sand member-Sandstone. Sedimentary Bedrock	Formed approximately 157 to 164 million years ago in the Jurassic Period

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OASIS ID: johnmoor1-415629

Project details

Project name	Warneford Hospital, Warneford Lane, Oxford
Short description of the project	John Moore Heritage Services carried out an evaluation on land adjacent to the Highfield Unit, Warneford Hospital, Warneford Lane, Oxford OX3 7JX. The evaluation identified a modern topsoil deposit overlying a made ground deposit including aggregates that had formed temporary surfaces for a previous construction site compound. The made ground deposit overlay a loamy sand deposit which was the made-ground for a former sports recreation field. This was deposited over a buried soil horizon that had been the original topsoil/ploughsoil. This contained a fragment of Red Earthenware pottery which was broadly dated to the post-medieval period. The buried soil horizon overlay the natural sand geology
Project dates	Start: 04-02-2021 End: 04-02-2021
Previous/future work	Not known / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	OXWL 21 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	4423 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 15 - Other
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	"Targeted Trenches"
Development type	Large/ medium scale extensions to existing structures (e.g. church, school, hospitals, law courts, etc.)
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	Pre-application

Project location

Country England
Site location OXFORDSHIRE OXFORD OXFORD Warneford Hospital, Highfield Unit, Warneford Lane
Postcode OX3 7JX
Study area 0 Square metres
Site coordinates SP 50631 07190 51.760649462591 -1.26631308771 51 45 38 N 001 15 58 W Point
Lat/Long Datum Unknown
Height OD / Depth Min: 9.38m Max: 92.24m

Entered by Gavin Davis (admin@jmheritageservices.co.uk)
Entered on 18 February 2021

OASIS:

Please e-mail [Historic England](#) for OASIS help and advice

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