



Southampton Archaeology Unit

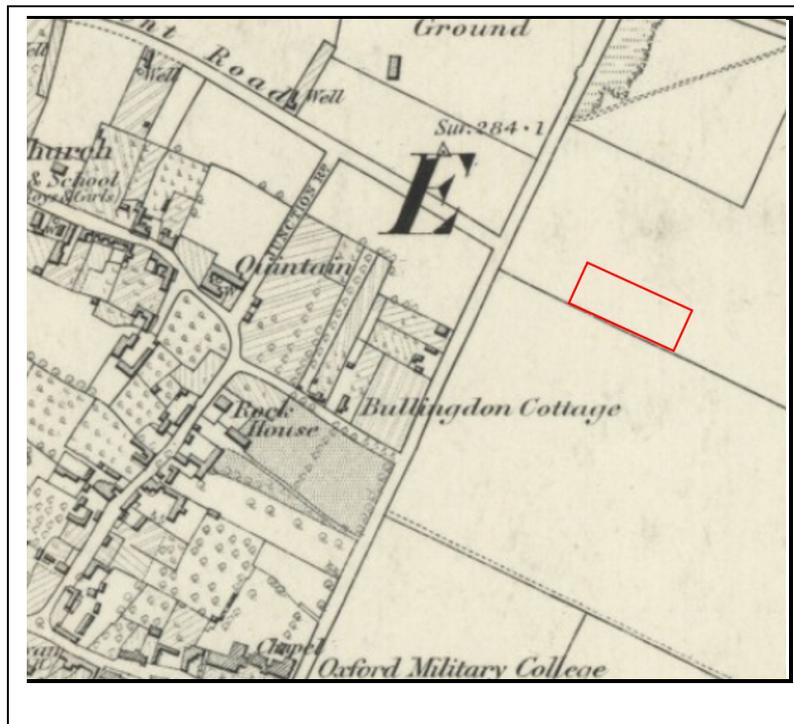
Report 1417

Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment of Land off Marshall Road, Cowley, Oxford

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2020

Client: Drennan International



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Southampton Archaeology Unit report 1416

Ordnance Survey grid reference 454920 204524

1. SUMMARY

The Archaeology Unit of Southampton City Council was commissioned by Drennan International to carry out a desk-based assessment of land at Marshall Road, Cowley, Oxford to support a planning application.

The site lies on a ridge of limestone and clay to the southeast of Oxford. The area has been quarried for stone, sand, and clay for some two thousand years and a number of archaeological excavations have taken place in response to developments in the area.

Some 500m to the west of the present site lies Temple Cowley, which formed around a preceptory of the Knights Templars in the medieval period. The exact site of the preceptory is not known, but it is unlikely to lie within the present site.

Within 500m of the site there is archaeological evidence for prehistoric, Roman and medieval activity.

The prehistoric evidence suggests the area was occupied by small farming settlements in the pre-Roman period. A number of the settlements show continuity into the Roman period when the area is used intensively for pottery production. The evidence includes kilns, clay preparation areas, workshops and waster dumps, forming part of the internationally important Oxford Roman Pottery industry. Four of the Roman sites have produced human remains.

The Oxford Archaeological Research Agenda 2011 for the Roman period has identified a number of themes relating to Roman settlement in the Oxford Area. It identifies the Corallian Ridge area, *which includes the site*, as having High Potential to throw light on aspects of Chronology, Landscape and Agriculture, Settlement, Manufacture and Trade, and Transport and Commerce.

It is considered that the potential of the site to include evidence of prehistoric or medieval activity is Low to Medium.

It is considered that the potential of the site to include evidence of Roman pottery production or other Roman activity is Medium to High.

It is considered that the potential of the site to include evidence of post-medieval or modern activity of archaeological interest is Low

Given this level of potential it is likely that Oxford City Council will require some archaeological fieldwork on the site. This might be a requirement for trial trenches prior to determination in order to provide more details of the archaeology on the site, or might be a requirement for an archaeological watching brief on groundworks associated with the

development. The latter would normally be secured by a condition on the planning permission.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 The Archaeology Unit of Southampton City Council was commissioned by the Cantay Group to carry out a desk-based assessment of the archaeological potential of land off Marshall Road, Cowley, Oxford (fig 1) in advance of a proposed housing development.

2.2 The assessment site lies in the area once known as the village of Temple Cowley in an area that was heavily utilised for pottery production in the Roman period. The name Temple derives from the Knights Templars who held the area in the medieval period.

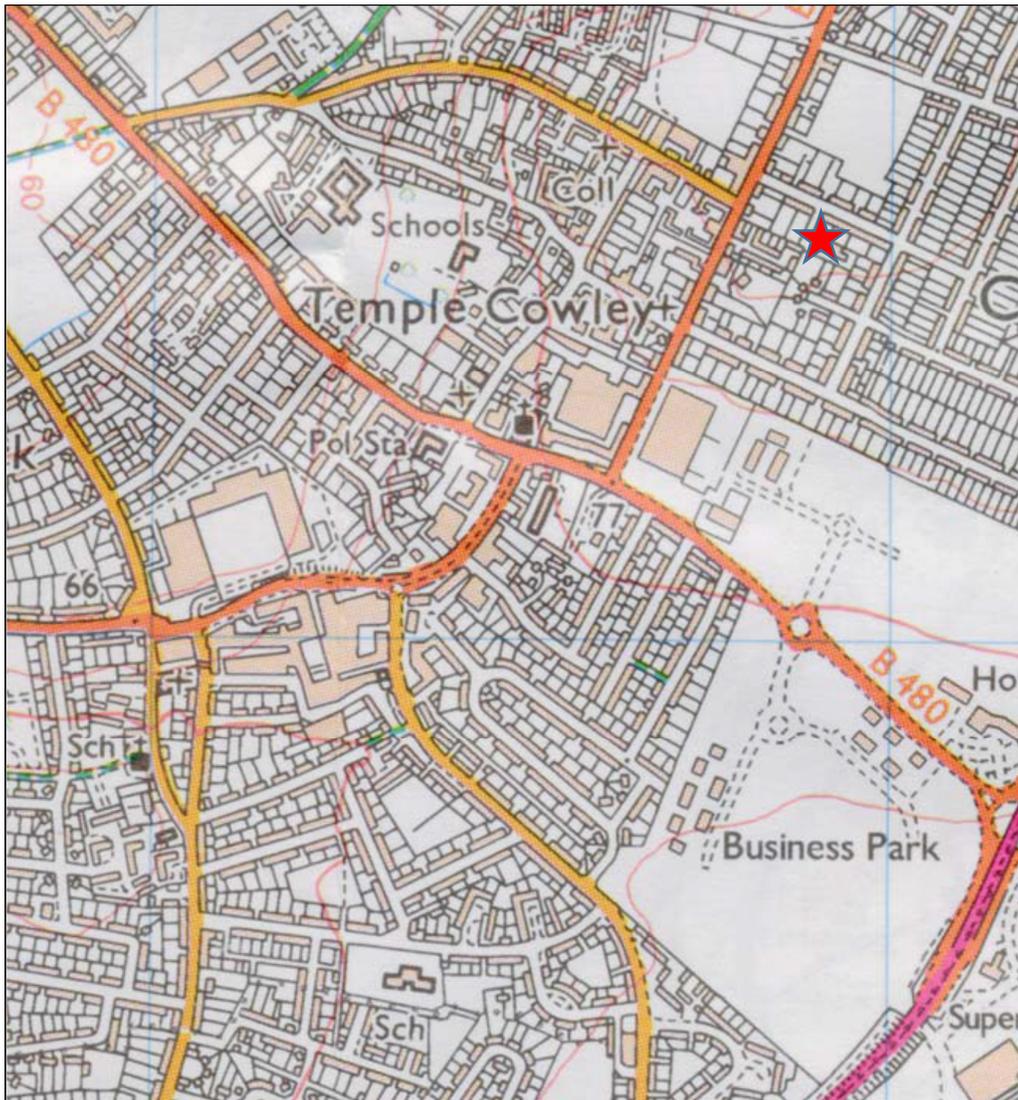


Figure 1. The location of the site, marked by a red star.

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3. AIMS OF THE ASSESSMENT

3.1 The aims of the assessment were to identify the likely scope of the area's archaeological heritage and its sensitivity to development. This was to be done by characterising the

archaeology of the site through all periods to the modern day, suggesting the likely range and locations of the archaeological evidence, and establishing areas where archaeology is unlikely to survive due to modern disturbance.

4. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

4.1 Oxford City Council made available information relating to heritage assets in the vicinity of the site following a search of the Oxford City Historic Environment Record on 15//02/2020. These included old finds of archaeological material and the results of recent archaeological investigations in the area. Historic maps were consulted to gain a view of land use over the last 250 years. Oxford City Council have produced an *Archaeological Resource Assessment* for the main periods of the city's history together with an *Archaeological Research Agenda* which sets out the questions that remain unanswered about the City's past. Both were consulted.

5. SITE LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

5.1 The site lies to the south of Marshall Road and north of Bleache Place at Ordnance Survey Grid reference 454920 204524.

5.2 The natural topography of the area is fairly level. A spot height of 281 feet (equivalent to 85.65m OD) is recorded on Hollow Way to the west of the site on old Ordnance Survey maps.

5.3 The British Geological Survey records that the site lies on the Corallian Ridge to the southeast of Oxford. The bedrock is the Wheatley limestone member, a sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 157 to 164 million years ago in the Jurassic Period. (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

6. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The name Cowley, probably with a meaning of Cufa's clearing or meadow, can be dated back to the Anglo-Saxon period (Ekwall 1960). The Domesday Book records 47 tenants of which 33 or more were probably in Church Cowley (VCH 1957).

By the 12th century the parish had three concentrations of activity and population based around two manors. These were: Church Cowley, located around the parish church; Temple Cowley around a preceptory of the Knights Templars; and Hockmore Street or later Middle Cowley. The land of Church Cowley is recorded in the Domesday Book as held by Roger d'Ivry of Bishop Odo of Bayeux. It was given to the church of St. George in Oxford Castle who in turn gave it with the church of St. James to Oseney Abbey in 1149 (*ibid.*). This manor and rectory seem to have formed one estate, sometimes known after the Dissolution as the rectory manor. In 1542 the whole property was given to Christ Church. Part of Church Cowley was probably called Westbury in the Middle Ages. The historic core of the settlement lay close to the parish church.

Temple Cowley manor was made up of land granted to the Templars by King Stephen's Queen, Maud Countess of Boulogne in 1139 (*ibid.*). On the suppression of the Templars in 1308 their land passed ultimately to the Knights Hospitallers, and in 1541 the Hospitallers were themselves dissolved. It is thought that the early settlement of Temple Cowley was probably situated along Temple Street and part of Temple Road. All traces of the Templars' preceptory which stood near Temple Street, have gone, although their fishpond was discovered when the public library was built to the north of Cowley Road (*ibid.*).

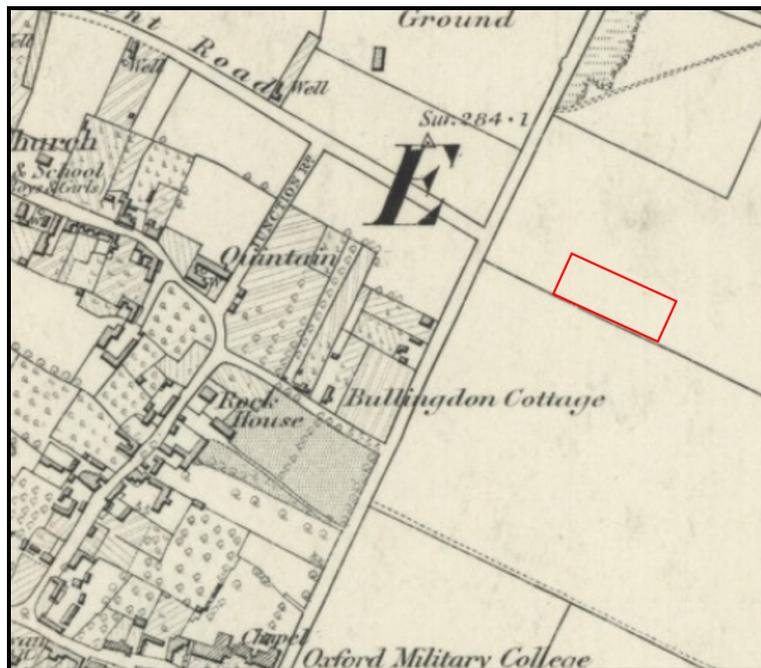
The 19th century saw a general growth of the area and the beginnings of urbanization. The railways arrived in the area with the opening of the line between Oxford and Thame in 1864. Cowley College was established in 1841 and in 1876 the school buildings were sold to the Oxford Military Academy. This was accompanied by the construction of The Barracks, a large building containing a keep, officers' and married men's and men's separate quarters, a canteen and hospital as a military centre for the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry (VCH 1957). The school went bankrupt in 1896 and the site was sold in 1899. Extensive building began to take place at the Oxford end of the parish about the middle of the 19th century and Morris Garages took over the premises in 1912 leading to the start of the area's industrialization (*ibid.*).

The Morris factory led to a need for more housing and much of Temple Cowley was developed for housing in the 1920s and 30s.

7. CARTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

7.1 A brief overview of the cartographic evidence from the late 19th century onwards follows.

7.2 Historic Ordnance Survey maps show the area was still fields in the late 19th century (Map 1).



Map 1. Extract from Ordnance Survey Six-inch England and Wales, Berkshire Sheet VI, Surveyed 1876 to 1878 and published 1886, with the approximate position of the site shown outlined in red.



Map 2. Extract from Ordnance Survey 25 inch sheet XXXIX.4, revised 1937 and published 1945.

7.3 The 1937 6 inch survey shows the area had been developed for housing with the site itself left as an open area behind the Marshall Road frontage (Map 2). The site was shown as open ground with a possible store building in the southeast corner and a vehicle access to the northwest.

8. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

8.1 The Historic Environment Record for Oxford was searched for archaeological sites and findspots on 15/02/20. Each is described below in period order. Figure 2 shows the location of each site.

Neolithic and Bronze Age

Site 1

17002 - MOX12822

An excavation produced Bronze Age pottery
NGR SP 55520 04860

Site 2

1776 - MOX5405

Neolithic artifacts

A Collection of material from Shotover Hill, now in the Pitt Rivers Museum, includes scrapers and flakes. Material includes 13 flint scrapers and flakes collected c 1890s, together with a polished greenstone axe found in clay pits of the brickyard at Shotover Hill, in 1861. Also a triangular flint implement found in a gas main in 1965 between earth and Lower Greensand ironstones. Although described by D Roe as of "Mousterian" type, more probably neolithic/Early Bronze Age.

NGR SP 55 05

Site 3 36102 - MOX9983

Neolithic/Bronze Age Flints near Cowley Marsh

Numerous flint arrowheads, scrapers and flakes found close to Cowley Marsh between footpath leading to Headington Quarry and Mood Ditch in 1893-5. Other flints indicate that this site was probably a flint factory
SP 5451 0513

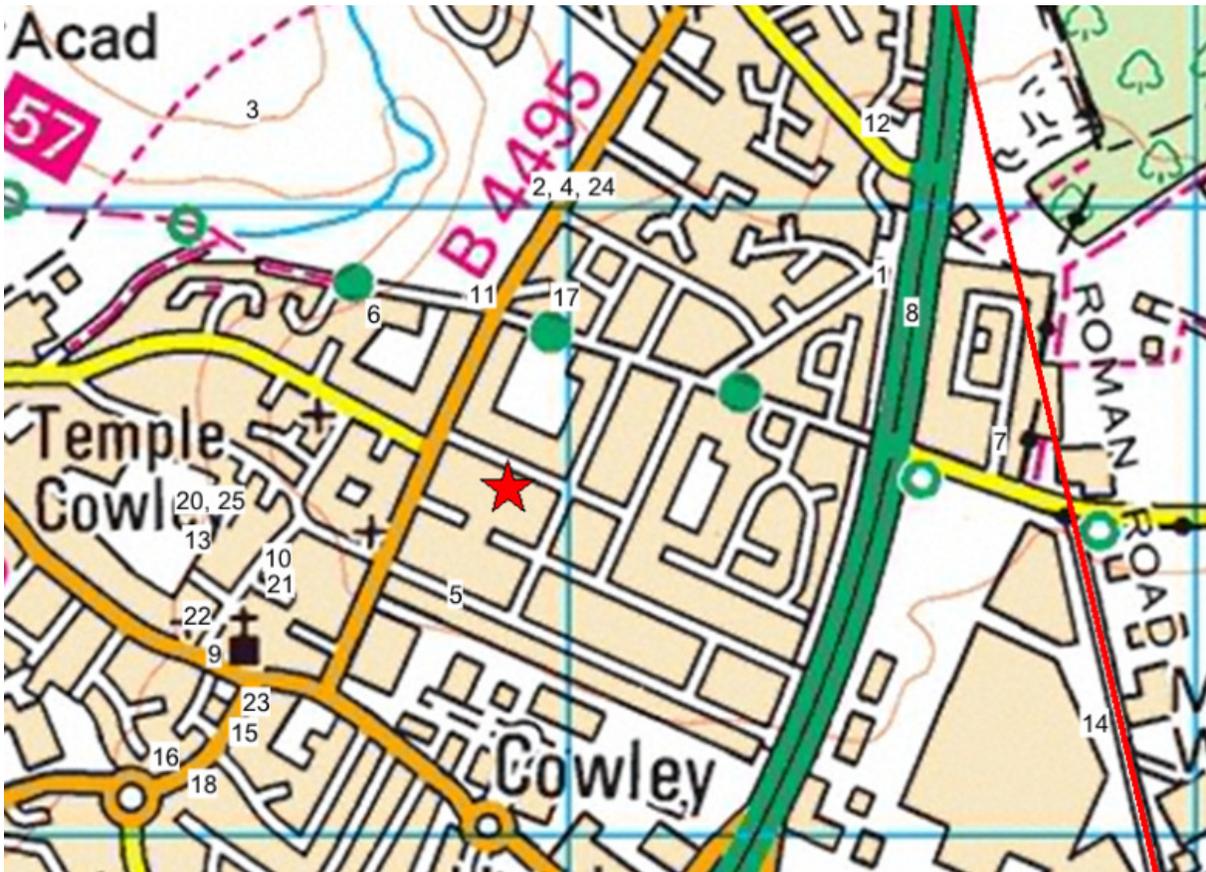


Figure 2. The location of archaeological sites in the vicinity of the site. The archaeological remains found at each site are listed in Section 8. The site itself is marked with a red star. Sites 2, 4, and 24 are located at the southwest corner of a 1km grid square and do not necessarily lie at that exact spot.

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Iron Age

Site 1

17002 - MOX12822

Evaluation and excavation revealed evidence of IA activity beginning around 2nd-1st C BC and continued, perhaps without a significant break, through to C4.

SP 55520 04860

Site 4

1782 - MOX5409

British gold coin found at Moors Farm, Shotover.

NGR SP 55 05

Site 5

3838 - MOX6266

Iron Age Gold Coin, Cowley

British gold coin from Cowley. Uninscribed plain and convex on obverse; horse disjointed to the right with wheel below on the reverse.

SP 5484 0436 (point)

Site 6

26145 - MOX23545

Iron Age quarries at Barracks Lane

Evaluation recorded evidence of Iron Age limestone quarrying pits.

SP 547 048 (point)

Roman

Site 7

1868 - MOX5774

Possible Roman Burials, c.380m SSE of Brasenose Farm

Two un-associated skeletons reported by on the work for a carpark, possibly Roman. Sherds of C3rd/C4th Roman pottery found on same site.

NGR SP 557 046

Site 8

6157 MOX5795

Roman Pottery

C3/4 R/B pottery found on Horspath Road, near Eastern Bypass.

NGR SP 556 048

Site 9

14409 - MOX6253

Roman pit with sherds of C3/4 pottery

SP 5445 0425 (point)

Site 10

15947 - MOX6255

Evaluation trenches revealed backfilled stokehole of C2nd Roman pottery kiln.

NGR SP 5454 0441

Site 11

3818 - MOX6267

Roman Inhumations Cowley Barracks Quarry, Barracks Lane.

On the eastern side of the valley in Cowley parish, in the quarry immediately north of the playground of the Military College there were found some years ago human skeletons with pottery which is described as Roman. Site clearly related to PRN 9932

SP 5487 0483

Site 12.

16300 - MOX8591

Possible Roman Kiln Site (Former Slade Hospital, Horspath)

A watching brief found no features but there was a significant amount of Roman-British pottery, at least one waster, kiln furniture, and large pieces of slag. Material indicated both pottery manufacture and metal working, perhaps copper smithing, were undertaken.

NGR SP 555 051

Site1

17002 - MOX12822

Evaluation and excavation produced evidence of Roman activity continuing from LIA period. Early Roman features consisted of network of gullies, forming a field system, although later Roman realignment of site along lines of rectilinear enclosure. Bone assemblages reveal usual domesticated species, with both butchery and consumption. This might be edge of roadside settlement as Roman road between Alchester and Dorchester lies less than 200m away to the east. No evidence for Roman kilns or pottery production. Two perinatal infants found -- a 2/3s complete skeleton in gully terminus and a single bone of another in Ditch 103 SP 55520 04860

Site 13

MOX26916

Roman ditch at Temple Cowley Pool Site, Oxford

A small ditch containing Roman pottery of 1st-2nd century date, possibly a field boundary.

NGR SP 5442 0435

Site 14

MOX26953

The Alchester to Dorchester Roman Road

Roman road between the towns of Alchester and Dorchester

NGR Centred SP 5591 0499

Site 15

MOX27020

Roman ditches containing pottery manufacturing waste at 1-15 Between Towns Road. Several ditches contained mid-3rd to early 5th? Pottery and were probably part of the adjacent Roman pottery manufacturing compound (PRN3817). The site produced a few grog-tempered sherds of likely Iron Age date along with some burnt flint but there was a complete break of activity before the Roman period. The range of pottery including a number of colour-coat bowls, highly decorated with carefully carved stamps. The absence of any in-situ structural remains or ancillary structures suggests the area was simply a dumping ground for the potteries to the south. Roman animal bone included cattle, sheep, pig, horse and a single deer bone.

SP 5448 0414 (point)

Site 16

MOX27052

Several ditches and pits were identified by evaluation, dateable to the Roman period and probably of agricultural origin, although containing a small amount of pottery that included wares that may have been made at the nearby pottery manufacturing area at St Luke's Road

NGR SP 5437 0409

Site 17

9932 - MOX5804

Roman Inhumation and finds, Cowley Barracks Quarry

Small, bronze spiked 'mace-head', skeleton and pottery found.

SP 5500 0483 (point)

Site 18

3817 - MOX6250

Roman Pottery Kilns and Occupation Site (Between Town's Road/St Luke's Road, Cowley)

Site originally discovered 1934, partially excavated 1939-40 consisting of kilns, puddling holes, dumps and pit and late C1st to mid C4th pottery.

SP 5443 0405 (point)

Site 9

14409 - MOX6253

Roman Pit near Cowley Road Police Station

Roman pit with sherds of C3/4 pottery.

SP 5445 0425 (point)

Site 10

15947 - MOX6255

Roman Kiln

Evaluation trenches revealed stokehole of C2nd Roman pottery Kiln.

SP 5454 0441 (point)

Site 11

3818 - MOX6267

Roman Inhumations (Cowley Barracks Quarry, Barracks Lane)

On the eastern side of the valley in Cowley parish, in the quarry immediately north of the playground of the Military College there were found some years ago human skeletons with pottery which is described as Roman.

SP 5487 0483 (point)

Medieval

Site 10

15947 - MOX6255

Evaluation trenches revealed evidence of medieval pits

NGR SP 5454 0441

Site 6

26145 - MOX23545

Early Medieval quarries at Barracks Lane

Evaluation recorded evidence of early Medieval limestone quarrying pits dated to the C11th.

NGR SP 547 048

Site 9

14409 - MOX6253

Medieval Pits near Cowley Road Police Station

Medieval activity is typical of settlement in the area and shows the spread of domestic activity along the Cowley Road.

SP 5445 0425 (point)

Site 20

15946 - MOX6254

Medieval Features at St Christopher's School

Watching brief during building works identified one C12th ditch, possibly associated with the manor or Knights Templar to the south east. SP 544 045 (point)

Site 21

MOX26892

A watching brief on ground works at 77 Temple Road, found a pit 20m east of the present frontage of Temple Road containing four sherds of 12th-14th century pottery, and 41m

further east of the first pit a large post-hole 800mm across containing three sherds of 12th-14th century pottery.
NGR SP 5455 0439

Site 22

26014 - MOX23124

Evaluation and watching brief revealed three phases of medieval occupation, C11 - C12 pits and an enclosure, the corner of a building related to the Knights Templar Preceptory and a final phase of a paddock and field system. The Templar site probably went out of use after a new Preceptory was built at Sandford in 1240.
NGR SP 54410 04320

Site 23

MOX27021

Site Name Medieval boundary ditches

Excavation revealed two ditches, possibly boundary ditches, containing 13th-14th century pottery on the southern boundary of Temple Cowley village.
NGR 5451 0418

Site 6

26145 - MOX23545

Early Medieval quarries at Barracks Lane

Evaluation recorded evidence of 11th century limestone quarrying pits.
SP 547 048 (point)

Site 24

5188 - MOX5449

Site of Stone Quarry

Quarries in the Corallian beds. Stone used for the building of Oxford Colleges.
SP 55 05 (point)

Site 9

14409 - MOX6253

Medieval Pits near Cowley Road Police Station

Medieval pits. Activity is typical of settlement in the area and shows the spread of domestic activity along the Cowley Road.
SP 5445 0425 (point)

Site 25

15946 - MOX6254

Medieval Features at St Christopher's School

Watching Brief revealed ditch of possibly C12 date, which may have been a field boundary associated with the medieval manor. Post-Medieval wall footing and building debris from demolished ?Med building.
SP 544 045 (point)

Site 10

15947 - MOX6255

Evidence for Medieval Pits

Evaluation trenches revealed medieval pits.
SP 5454 0441 (point)

Post-medieval

Site 11

6265 MOX6251

Site of Temple Cowley Manor

The Manor House opposite the 'Original Swan') was C17th, altered in C18th. It became the Diocesan School in 1841 and a chapel was added in 1870. There is considerable evidence indicating that the site has been occupied in some form since the C13.

Roman pit with sherds

SP 5458 0425 (point)

Site 10

15947 - MOX6255

Evaluation trenches revealed evidence of Post med cottages.

NGR SP 5454 0441

Site 12

17305 - MOX14999

Formerly school and military college, then car factory, then offices for printing works

Listed Grade II.

SP 54639 04264

Site 13

17306 - MOX15011

Site Name NO 74 (MANOR HOUSE), TEMPLE ROAD

Early C18 house. Listed Grade II. Ashlar front, coursed rubble in the gable ends. Band at 1st floor and eaves levels. 2 storeys and attic, 3 windows, with keystones. Moulded eaves cornice. C19 slate roof with 3 gabled dormers and kneelers.

SP 54531 04544

Site 14

17309 - MOX15686

No 48 Temple Road

C17 cottage, modernized

Listed Grade II. Rubble. 2 storeys, 2 windows, tripartite casements. Welsh slate roof with brick stacks and C19 bargeboards and fretted eaves.

NGR: SP 54423 04592

Site 15

17311 - MOX15782

Site Name No 76 Temple Road

Late C18 house Listed Grade II. Coursed rubble with ashlar dressings. Band at 1st floor level. 2 storeys and attic, 3 windows, 4-light casements with keystones. 6-panel door with moulded architrave and keystone, flat hood over; central 2-light window with keystone. Red tile roof with 2 gabled dormers, kneelers, brick end stacks. Single storey rear wing with machine tile roof.

NGR SP54515 04513

Site 16

MOX26651

Site Name Cowley Barracks, Hollow Way

Two ranges of barracks (Napier and Moore barracks) remain within the walled compound of Bullington Barracks, later known as Cowley Barracks built in 1876. NGR SP 5517 0511

Site 17

5169 - MOX5788

Site of Clay Pit and Kilns at Cowley Barracks

Now covered by housing.

SP 550 048 (point)

5176 - MOX5790

Site of Post Medieval Clay Pit

Marked on sketch plan of Oxford clay pits. Site now covered by factory.

SP 553 039 (point)

Site 18

D6270 - MOX5796

Site of Chapel of The Poplars, Cowley

Old Poor Law school in Cowley, founded 1831. Some buildings still remain in the middle of the BL Body Plant although the chapel has been demolished (1975).

SP 5543 0417 (point)

Site 19

5168 - MOX12147

Site of clay pits at Cowley Marsh Pit

Clay pits marked on sketch map on Oxford Clay; area marked now covered by houses and sports ground. Identified as Cowley Marsh Pit.

SP 5470 0476 (point)

Site 20

17305 - MOX14999

The Nuffield Press, East Wing and attached former School House, Hollow Way, Cowley

Formerly school and military college, then car factory, now mainly offices for printing works. Listed Grade II.

SP 54639 04264 (point)

Site 21

17306 - MOX15011

No 74 (Manor House), Temple Road

Early C18 stone-built house. Listed Grade II.

SP 54531 04544 (point)

Site 22

17309 - MOX15686

No 48 Temple Road

C17 stone cottage, modernized. Listed Grade II.

SP 54423 04592 (point)

Site 23

17311 - MOX15782

No 76 Temple Road

Late C18 house in ashlar stone. Listed Grade II.
SP 54515 04513 (point)

Site 24
MOX26651

Cowley Barracks, Hollow Way
Two ranges of barracks (Napier and Moore barracks) remain within the walled compound of Bullingdon Barracks, later known as Cowley Barracks, built in 1876.
SP 5517 0511 (point)

Modern

Site 25

16985 - MOX12807
Air Raid Shelter at St Christopher's First School
Air raid shelter found during building investigation and photographic record at St Christopher's First School.
SP 54420 04450 (point)

9. CONCLUSIONS

16.1 The site lies on a ridge of limestone and clay to the southeast of Oxford. The area has been quarried for stone, sand, and clay for some two thousand years and a number of archaeological excavations have taken place in response to developments in the area.

16.2 Some 500m to the west of the present site lies Temple Cowley, which formed around a preceptory of the Knights Templars in the medieval period. The exact site of the preceptory is not known, but it is unlikely to lie within the present site.

16.3 Within 500m of the site there is archaeological evidence for prehistoric, Roman and medieval activity.

16.4 The prehistoric evidence suggests the area was occupied by small farming settlements in the pre-Roman period. A number of the settlements show continuity into the Roman period when the area is used intensively for pottery production. The evidence includes kilns, clay preparation areas, workshops and waster dumps, forming part of the internationally important Oxford Roman Pottery industry. Four of the Roman sites have produced human remains.

16.4 The Oxford Archaeological Research Agenda 2011 for the Roman period has identified a number of themes relating to Roman settlement in the Oxford Area. It identifies the Corallian Ridge area, *which includes the site*, as having High Potential to throw light on aspects of Chronology, Landscape and Agriculture, Settlement, Manufacture and Trade, and Transport and Commerce.

16.5 It is considered that the potential of the site to include evidence of prehistoric or medieval activity is Low to Medium.

16.6 It is considered that the potential of the site to include evidence of Roman pottery production or other Roman activity is Medium to High.

16.7 It is considered that the potential of the site to include evidence of post-medieval or modern activity of archaeological interest is Low

16.8 Given this level of potential it is likely that Oxford City Council will require some archaeological fieldwork on the site. This might be a requirement for trial trenches prior to determination in order to provide more details of the archaeology on the site, or might be a requirement for an archaeological watching brief on groundworks associated with the development. The latter would normally be secured by a condition on the planning permission.

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