

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

**S E R V I C E S**

**Land at Old Place Yard,  
Bicester, Oxfordshire**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**by Richard Tabor and Andy Weale**

**Site Code: OPY13/138**

**(SP 5840 2220)**

# **Land at Old Place Yard, Bicester, Oxfordshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
for Cherwell District Council**

by Richard Tabor and Andy Weale  
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code OPY13/138

**October 2013**

## Summary

**Site name:** Land at Old Place Yard, Bicester, Oxfordshire

**Grid reference:** SP 5840 2220

**Site activity:** Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 5th August to 16th August 2013

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Andrew Weale

**Site code:** OPY13/138

**Area of site:** 0.57ha

**Summary of results:** This evaluation exercise has both confirmed the archaeological potential of the proposal site and allowed this potential to be assessed and quantified. The evaluation has demonstrated the substantial survival of the fabric of the medieval priory with wall foundations, floor bedding surfaces and other features including two ovens along with elements of its dissolution namely stone robbing trenches and demolition deposits.

A small volume of finds and features represent activity pre-dating the building of the Augustinian priory complex in the late 12th century with Iron Age and Saxon pottery present and a hollow-way recorded.

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course.

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# Land at Old Place Yard, Bicester, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Evaluation

By Richard Tabor and Andy Weale

Report 13/138

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land at Old Place Yard, Bicester, Oxfordshire (SP 584 222; Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Craig Knight of Cherwell District Council, Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxfordshire, OX15 4AA.

The evaluation was undertaken to inform plans for future development of the site. The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a brief for the project prepared Mr Richard Oram of Oxfordshire County Council (Oram 2013), which noted that the site lies within Bicester's Saxon settlement zone and within the precinct of an Augustinian priory, St Edburga's. Excavations over the past five decades have recorded structural remains of the priory and related features, as well as Saxon and Medieval cemeteries. A field evaluation was requested by Cherwell District Council in order to provide sufficient information on the archaeological potential of the site so as to inform the planning process and if necessary mitigate the effects of the development.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and Cherwell District Council's heritage policies.

The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Council, adviser to the District on archaeological matters. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Weale, Kyle Beaverstock, Aidan Colyer and David Strachan between 5th August and 16th August 2013 and the site code is OPY13/138. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course.

## Location, topography and geology

The proposed development area lies in the south of the market town of Bicester, centred on SP 5840 2220. It comprises two linked irregular parcels of land with a total area of c. 0.57ha sandwiched between the north ends of Old Place Yard and Priory Lane (Fig. 1). At present the site is made up of disused office blocks and a library set in areas of lawn with isolated trees (Fig. 2). A 17th-century dovecot is linked to the western office block (Pl.

1; Fig. 3). The Church of St Edburg stands to the north-west and is flanked to the west by a large cemetery. There are residential areas to the south, east and north. The nearest watercourse is the River Bure draining southwards, issuing from the south end of Priory Lane. The site dips gently from *c.* 73m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) in the north-west to *c.* 71m aOD in the south-east over a distance of *c.* 125m.

The underlying sedimentary Jurassic geology is Cornbrash Formation limestone which is overlain by Quaternary alluvial deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel to the east of the site (BGS 29013). The soils are slightly acid, base-rich loams and clays of moderate fertility only slowly permeable, hence seasonally wet, (NSRI 2013).

### **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its situation within the putative limits of the town's Anglo-Saxon settlement and entirely within the precinct of Bicester's Augustinian Priory founded by Gilbert Bassett between 1182 and 1185 (Hinton 1969; Blair 2003; Hull and Preston 2003). Evidence for earlier activity nearby has been restricted to residual worked flints, found east of the site at Priory Road, where there was also Roman (Wallis 2010) and early Saxon activity (Oram 2006), and Roman and Early Saxon pottery from north of the site at Proctor's Yard (Hull and Preston 2003, 184). Documentary evidence indicates that to the north of the site the Church of St Edburg's occupies land where churches have stood since the mid 7th century. Unexpectedly, predominantly female skeletons radiocarbon dated to the 7th century were found in graves from a cemetery discovered in the car park of the nearby Church of the Immaculate Conception (Lewis *et al.* 2010).

Late Saxon remains have included ditches at Priory Road (Wallis 2010) and Proctor's Yard, the latter possibly forming the eastern boundary of the Minster, appearing to have been filled in during the late 12th century (Hull and Preston 2003). As is typical, the Priory included a church, cloister, refectory, kitchens, dormitory and Prior's lodgings and graveyard set within the precinct wall (Hinton 1969; Chambers 1983); A single skeleton and deeper cuts of other probable graves noted during a watching brief within the current site area itself were considered to be for lower ranking people in the monastic community due to their location outside the west end of the church (Hardy 1995, 3). The ground plan of much of the 12th-century and later church's choir, chapels and chancel was discovered recently on the east side of Chapel Street (Riccoboni 2012, fig. 1). The priory survived until the Dissolution and was demolished soon afterwards.

A ground penetrating radar survey has covered all suitable ground within the site. The results included possibly archaeologically derived S–N, W–E and one NW–SE oriented linear anomalies in the east of the site and more diffuse anomalies in the north-east, centre and south-west (Archer 2006, fig. 5). These interpretations

are correlated with the results of the present evaluation in Figure 8 and in the accounts of findings within the individual trenches (below).

## **Objectives**

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological or palaeoenvironmental deposits within the area of development.

The specific research aims of the project are:

- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;
- to determine if any Saxon deposits are present on the site and, if so, how they relate to the known topography of the town;
- to determine if there are remains of the medieval priory on the site, including fabric from its 12th century foundation;
- to determine the state of preservation and extent of truncation of the priory's fabric where it is identified;
- to determine if elements of the lay cemetery have survived on the site;
- to determine if there are remains of later Medieval and Post medieval date on the site; and
- to provide sufficient information to draw up an appropriate archaeological mitigation strategy.

## **Methodology**

It was proposed to excavate 14 trenches, all 1.6m wide, one of 15m length, one of 5m length and the remainder of 10m length with the intention of providing a 4% sample of the available open ground.

Topsoil and other overburden were removed by a JCB-type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket to expose archaeologically sensitive levels, under constant archaeological supervision.

Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were cleaned using appropriate hand tools. Sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed were excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the brief. In general, all finds and artefacts were retained, though all but a sample of some classes of building material were discarded after recording. Spoil heaps were scanned by eye and with a metal detector for the recovery of artefacts. The fieldwork was carried out in a manner which would not compromise the integrity of any archaeological features or deposits which might warrant preservation *in situ*, or might better be investigated by full excavation. A programme of environmental sampling took place where sufficient well-stratified subsoil deposits were located.

## **Results**

The total of fourteen trenches and two test pits excavated were evenly distributed in open spaces (Fig. 3), their lengths and locations taking into account nearby buildings, services and information derived from the ground

penetrating radar survey (Archer 2006). The scheme was designed after consultation with Richard Oram of Oxfordshire County Council.

The trenches varied in length from 6.00–15.10m. All trenches were 1.60m wide, excepting Trench 9 which was 1.42m wide, giving a total area examined slightly above the intended 4% sample size. The trench depth varied between 0.48m and 0.98m, determined largely by the amount of topsoil and subsoil present, the exception being in Trench 6 where a sondage reached natural geology at a depth of 1.31m. The latter's exceptional depth of overburden was due to Post-medieval and modern levelling up. In other trenches natural bedrock occurred at depths ranging from 0.52m to 0.76m. In Trench 13 excavation ceased when a sterile alluvium was exposed and in trenches 7, 8 and 9 neither natural geology nor alluvium were exposed.

Where encountered, the underlying geology comprised consistently of fractured, angular Cornbrash. Topsoil depth was generally within a range from 0.20m to 0.30m, comprising brown, slightly clayey loam. Layers recorded as subsoil varied in character, depth and stratigraphic location, some occurring over and others under or cut by Medieval deposits or features. The subsoils overlying natural geology tended to have a high stone content.

Details of all trenches giving dimensions and stratigraphy can be found in Appendix 1. A list of all features excavated forms Appendix 2.

#### Trench 1 (Fig. 3)

The trench was oriented SE–NW and was 9m long and 0.80m deep and sited slightly west of a curvilinear geophysical anomaly (Archer 2--6, fig. 5, H). The stratigraphy comprised 0.17m of topsoil (50) overlying 0.35m of made ground of mid brown silt including Cotswold stone and ceramic building material (CBM). The made ground had been deposited on 0.23m of mid red brown silty clay subsoil (51) which sealed natural bedrock (191) at a depth of 0.75m. Modern services were noted towards the south-east end. No archaeological features were observed.

#### Trench 2 (Figs 4 and 6)

The trench was oriented S–N and was 11m long and 0.65m deep. Topsoil (50) of 0.20m depth overlay 0.22m of rubbly made ground of mid brown silt (53) including Cotswold stone and CBM which was cut by a modern soakaway. The made ground had been deposited on 0.12m of mid red brown silty clay subsoil (51) which sealed natural bedrock (191) at a depth of 0.54m.

The trench contained one cut feature. A north-west to south-east oriented, 1m wide ditch (1) survived to a depth of 0.11m, cut into natural geology (190). Its single fill (52) of friable, mid grey brown silty clay including

sparse small to medium stones was sealed by the subsoil (51). Finds included a single sherd of possibly Iron Age pottery, and animal bone.

#### Trench 3 (Figs 4 and 6)

The trench was oriented SW-NE and was 9.20m long and 0.52m deep. Topsoil (50) of 0.19m depth overlay a 0.24m deep rubble layer (180) of abundant gritty to small and sparsely large angular which merged into mixed rubble and yellowish brown silty clay subsoil (181). At the south-west end of the trench layer 181 sealed a buried soil (63) comprising mid brown clayey silt including sparse to frequent medium stones which was excavated to a depth of 0.18m. To the north-east (181) sealed natural bedrock (191) at a depth of 0.52m.

The trench contained one cut feature. A north-west to south-east oriented, 1.09m wide ditch (4) survived to a depth of 0.28m (Pl. 3), cut through buried soil (63) into natural geology (191). Its single fill (62) of friable, mid grey brown silty clay including sparse small to medium stones was sealed by the subsoil (181). Thirteen sherds of possible Saxo-Norman pottery were recovered from ditch fill (62) and buried soil (63), as well as two possible Iron Age sherds from the latter. Both contexts also included animal bone.

#### Trench 4 (Figs 4 and 6)

The trench was oriented W-E and was 10.10m long and 0.84m deep. Topsoil (50) of 0.24m depth overlay a 0.22m deep subsoil with modern disturbance (182) which sealed a 0.09m thick rubble layer (94) of frequent medium stones set in mid to pale grey brown silty clay. The rubble covered a 0.29m deep buried soil (87), made up of friable mid brown silt including rare small to medium stone, set within a depression in natural bedrock (191).

Features included a modern pit towards the west end of the trench, sealed by the topsoil (50), and two linear features, both sealed by rubble layer (94) and cutting buried soil (87). A 0.39m wide, 0.18m deep, vertical-sided linear cut [8] filled with friable mid grey brown clayey silt including abundant medium to large stones (86) was interpreted as a robbed wall trench. It appeared to cut moderately compacted yellowish reddish brown clayey silt (85), including frequent small to medium stones filling a 4.64m wide, 0.14m deep, possible linear or curvilinear depression with a splayed 'U'-profiled [24]. The round surfaces of the smaller stones at the base of hollow 24 (Pl. 4) contrasted with the angular stone of natural geology exposed elsewhere on the site (i.e., Pl. 3) and the depression may best be interpreted as a holloway. The fill was similar in character to that of the buried soil but there was no intersection between the two.

Pottery was exclusively from buried soil (87), comprising 34 possible Saxo-Norman sherds. Animal bone was recovered from deposits 85 and 87.



#### Trench 5 (Fig. 4)

The trench was oriented SSE-NNW and was 9.00m long and 0.65m deep. Topsoil (50) of 0.28m depth overlay a 0.35m deep subsoil (183), covering a 0.12m deep rubble layer (184) which may correspond with a broad linear geophysical anomaly (Archer 2006, fig. 5, J). The rubble sealed a 0.06m thick buried soil (84) made up of moderately compacted, mid reddish brown clayey silt including sparse to moderate, small to medium, stones covering natural bedrock (191). Contexts 184 and 84 are possible equivalents of 94 and 87 respectively in Trench 4. Two sherds of possibly Saxo-Norman pottery and the only bird bone from the site were recovered from buried soil 84.

#### Trench 6 (Figs 4 and 6; Pls 3 and 5)

The trench was oriented W-E and was 8.00m long and 1.31m deep, located immediately west of a linear geophysical anomaly (Archer 2006, fig. 5, A). Tarmac (198) and associated make-up layers (199 and 250) with a combined depth of 0.33m sealed a 0.08-0.18m thick surface of sand and sparse sandstone (251). The surface sealed a local deposit of brown clayey loam (252), possible midden material, and was bedded on a make-up layer (253) of frequent gravelly to moderately large, angular limestones set in yellowish brown silty clay. The depth of layer 253 varied from 0.10m to 0.30m, reflecting the underlying topography determined by earlier deposits.

At the western end of the trench make-up layer 253 sealed dark greyish brown clayey loam (255) filling a 0.25m wide, 0.12m deep, 'U'-profiled cut (28) which was first observed in section and not in plan. This indeterminate feature (possibly a gully) cut a make-up layer of gravelly yellowish grey brown silty clay (256) which lay directly over a further make-up deposit (259) comprising mottled brownish yellow silty clay including sparse gritty and gravelly limestones.

The level at which 28 was cut suggests that it, and possibly the makeup deposits below it, were later than a sequence of oven bases and fills on the northern side of the middle of the trench (Pl. 5). The upper fill (175) of an oval-shaped cut (17) with a diameter varying from 0.74m to at least 0.90m comprised sparsely gravelly yellowish brown clayey loam which together with a stonier sandy clay fill (174) below it may have formed a cap or levelling deposit over the collapsed oven. The lower fill sealed light grey fine silt (173) which was clearly an ash deposit lying directly over the oxidized red baked clay base (172) set into the bottom of cut 17.

The oven slighted yellowish brown infill sandy silt (256) overlying gritty red baked clay of an oven superstructure (178) which had collapsed over light grey, fine silt (177), an ash deposit over the red baked clay of an *in situ* oven base (176). The oven base was set into a cut (18) into yellow brown sandy silt including moderate gritty and gravelly to sparsely medium angular limestones (171) filling a 1.5m long unexcavated cut (16), which may have been a working hollow into which both ovens were set.

A 0.87m wide, 0.11m high, ridge (254) comprising yellowish brown silty clay including sparse gritty to gravelly limestones to the east of the hollow may have been contemporary with it. It lay over a surface (258) of yellow clay and mortar which was cut by the hollow. The western edge of hollow 16 cut a thin lens of slightly gritty dark greyish brown clayey loam (257), possibly a compacted or truncated midden spread. Both 258 and 257 were set over a 0.13m thick levelling deposit (95) of rubble set in yellowish brown silty clay which covered all but the extreme west end of the trench, where another rubbly make-up layer (96) underlying it was set in darkish grey brown silty clay. The latter was excavated to a depth of 0.39m in a sondage (19) at the west end of the trench before bedrock (191) was exposed.

It seems likely that the sand surface (251) was the bed for a Post-medieval or modern surface founded on levelling deposits over ground prone to subsidence due to the underlying features. The ovens (17 and 18) may be associated with the Priory but the scoop (16) in which they were set post-dates the floor bed (258) which may have supported a floor possibly covered by tiles found in the trench. The floor level appears to have been raised by substantial make-up and levelling deposits.

A possible pit (15) which appeared to cut the make-up layer (253) and was sealed by sand surface (251) included a thin, concave lens of baked clay similar to the oven bases within its fill (179). It was only noted in section.

Finds from the trench were exclusively tiles.

#### Trench 7 (Figs 4 and 7; Pl. 6)

The trench was oriented S-N and was 12.90m long and 0.60m deep. Topsoil (50) of 0.25m depth overlay up to 0.68m of rubbly made ground (185). Natural geology was not exposed.

A complex of walls and surfaces was sealed beneath the made ground (185) at the southern end of the trench. Three fills of a 0.72m wide probable robber trench (25) were partially excavated to a combined depth of 0.50m. The 0.25m deep upper fill (151) of mid brown grey silty clay included abundant rubbly stone. It overlay 0.13m of friable, mid reddish brown silty clay and rubble (152) sealing friable, dark to mid brown, slightly reddish silty clay including rubble and cobbles (153) which was partially excavated to a depth of 0.12m. To its north the robber trench (25) cut a 0.20m deep midden layer (150) comprising friable dark grey brown silty clay including cobbles and to its south a possible floor destruction level (154). The 0.05m deep possible floor was made up of firm mid yellow mortar which appeared to seal the 0.03m deep remains of an earlier floor (99) comprising creamy yellow clay and mortar. The earlier floor appeared to butt against a 0.15m wide exposure of S-N oriented wall (97) made up of rough faced stones varying in size from 0.10m to 0.46m (Pl. 6). A right-

angled return wall (98) was that partly robbed by trench 25, only 0.10m width of up to 3 courses remaining *in situ* on the southern side. No finds were recovered from the walls or floors.

A single possible Early to Mid Saxon sherd was recovered from the lowest deposit (153) of the robber trench and 13 sherds of 13th century from the midden layer (150) which also included 963 very fragmentary animal bones with a mean weight of only slightly more than 1g; unsurprisingly hardly any of this was identifiable. Single sherds of medieval and Victorian pottery came from the spoil of this trench.

#### Trench 8 (Figs 4 and 7; Pl. 7)

The trench was oriented S-N and was 10m long and 0.98m deep. It was parallel with but to the east of a north to south linear geophysical anomaly (Archer 2006, fig. 5, D). Topsoil (50) interspersed with charcoal rich and burnt red soil lenses with a combined depth of 0.45m overlay 0.40m of deep brown clay (186). The clay sealed a 0.10m deep possible earthen floor layer (163) of moderately compacted mid brown clay including sparse to frequent stone and a moderately compact brownish yellow silty clay including mortar and stone (162), which overlay a brown soil (194). They butted against the south and north sides respectively of a W-E oriented, 0.67m wide, wall foundation (161), three courses of which were exposed (Pl. 7). The friable, mid yellow mortar and sand fill (164) of a SSW-NNE linear cut (20 through floor 163 was interpreted as a robber trench, possibly also sealed by the clay layer (186).

Natural geology was not exposed.

A single sherd of 16th-century pottery was recovered from 162 and two possibly Saxo-Norman sherds and a scrap of unidentified bone from soil 194.

#### Trench 9 (Figs 4 and 7)

Trench 9 was oriented NW-SE and was 9.40m long and 0.80m deep. Below the turf, pits 21 and 22, associated with recent development in the area, cut through the 0.30m deep topsoil (50) and into a demolition deposit (169) with a maximum depth of 0.45m. The deposit included fragments of masonry and sealed a surface of yellow mortar and clay (167) which retained patches of smoothed tile settings. It overlay a make-up layer (168) but the relationship between surface (167) and a wall complex was not fully explored during the evaluation although it is probable that it would have butted at least one of the walls. A rubble wall core filled the space to the west of both walls 165 and 166, the latter apparently butted by the former.

Architectural stone fragments were the only finds from trench 9 (Pls 9 and 10).

#### Trench 10 (Figs 5 and 7; Pl. 8)

The trench was oriented SSW-NNE and was 9.2m long and 0.76m deep. The turf covered a modern pipe trench, the excavation of which had disturbed the upper 3.50m of the southern end of the trench to a maximum depth of 0.58m. Most of the disturbance was confined to the 0.36m deep topsoil (50) but there was local interruption of the stratigraphic sequence.

At the northern end of the trench, a wedge-profiled build-up of subsoil (187) with a maximum thickness of 0.40m covered friable, red brown silt including rare stones (67), pottery and bone, which had formed over and either side of up to three courses of substantial foundations for a wall (66) (Pl. 9). A possible wall trench (6) cut into natural bedrock towards the north end of the trench. Its relationship with other deposits was unclear.

The stratigraphic position of the wall is more fully represented by the sequence to its south. Contexts 79 and 82 of silty clay including sparse small to medium stones on either side of the modern pipe trench were both interpreted as demolition deposits, overlying earlier demolition deposits (78 and 83 respectively). The relationships of these deposits to a possible floor make-up or repair (77) and a sequence of oven fills, (71) etc. (Pl. 10), is best understood if an episode of truncation is interposed, hence the demolition deposits have been treated as the fills of a cut (26), possibly for levelling.

To the north, cut 26 truncated a slightly stony mid grey brown clayey silt (77), which, given its irregular depth, is best seen as best a patch in an earlier yellow, sandy gravel surface (69), a possible floor. Immediately to the south of 69, cut 26 also removed upper parts of a series of roughly concentric fills within the cut for an oven (23). The latest fill (71), at the centre of the oven, was a moderately compacted mid red brown to dark brown silty clay with rare stone and mortar inclusions. It butted a friable creamy yellow clay with inclusion of mortar (72) which in turn butted a mid red brown silty clay including rare fine gravel (73). The latter butted a ring of fire-reddened stone (74) which had been set into and was supported by mid red brown silty clay including frequent gravelly to medium stones (75) filling the base of cut 23. Two contexts, a layer of pale red baked clay (80) butting a pale reddish brown clayey silt (81), were interposed between 73 and 75 but no clear relationship was established with (74). The oven cut (23) was inserted into grey brown silty clay including sparse to frequent, small to medium stones (76) which was butted by possible floor 69.

On its northern side possible floor patch 77 butted deposit 67 where it had formed against the south of wall 66. A possible clay lining (68) was noted between 66 and 67.

The sequence would allow contemporary or overlapping use of the wall 66, oven 23 and the possible floor and all may have been affected by an initial phase of demolition represented by cut 26.

Mixed pottery, the latest dating to the 13th century, was recovered from wall 66 and the deposit butting it (67), the latter also including bone. Three possibly Iron Age sherds from the trench would all be residual.

#### Trench 11 (Figs 5 and 7)

The trench was oriented S-N and was 15.10m long and 0.48m deep. The stratigraphic sequence for the 2m at the southern end of the trench comprised simply 0.20m topsoil (50) over 0.28m slightly yellowish dark brown subsoil (188) including modern debris which lay directly over natural bedrock (191). Beyond this a progressively thickening stony layer (189) interposed between 188 and 191 had reached a depth of 0.18m at the north end of the trench. The layer may correspond with an amorphous geophysical anomaly (Archer 2006, fig. 5, I). A modern service trench cut across the trench from west to east north of its centre.

The stony layer (189) sealed the single fill (93) of W-E oriented ditch 14 and the fills (91 and 92) of two unexcavated ditches (12 oriented NW-SE and 13 oriented W-E). The stony layer was too thin at the southern end of the trench to assert with confidence its relationship to the fills (89 and 90) of unexcavated features 10 and 11 and did not extend as far as the fill (88) of W-E oriented ditch 9 which was covered by subsoil 188. All the features were cut into natural bedrock (191).

The only stratified pottery from the trench were an possible Iron Age and a possibly Saxon sherds from the fill (93) of ditch 14. A small amount of bone was recovered from the fill (88) of ditch 9.

#### Trench 12 (Fig. 5)

The trench was oriented W-E and was 10.90m long and 0.59m deep. Topsoil (50) of 0.31m depth covered up to 0.18m of stony subsoil (192) which lay directly over natural bedrock (191).

The footings trench for a N-S oriented line of concrete sealed by the turf cut the grey brown silty clay fill (64) of a similarly oriented ditch (5), which appeared to cut the stony subsoil layer (192). Brown soil to the west of the ditch may have been the fill of a pit but this was not excavated.

#### Trench 13 (Figs 5 and 7)

The trench was oriented W-E and was 4.94m long and 0.75m deep. A 0.10m deep sondage was excavated against the western end of its south-facing baulk. The 0.45m deep topsoil (50) covered 0.30m deep alluvium of brown yellow silty clay including abundant gritty, gravelly and small to medium limestones (157). The alluvium overlay further alluvial deposits of stoneless yellow clay (155/159), 0.15m deep, sealing yellow brown silty clay including rare to sparse small to medium stones (156) exposed in the sondage.

No stratified finds were recovered from the trench but the topsoil produced a single possible Saxo-Norman sherd.

#### Trench 14 (Fig. 5; Pls 2 and 4)

The trench was oriented S-N and was 10.36m long and 0.80m deep. Topsoil (50) of 0.20m depth covered a 0.28m deep make-up layer of red brown silt (193) including stone and CBM. In the southern half of the trench layer 193 sealed a stony subsoil (195) which lay directly over natural geology. In the north end it sealed a sequence of deposits associated with a cess pit (54) (Pl. 11) which had been constructed by the cutting of its pit (2) through the subsoil (195).

What appeared to be a robber trench (3), filled with a brownish grey silty clay including sparse medium to large stones (60) was sealed by the make-up layer (193) and cut a levelling deposit (55) of brownish grey silty clay including frequent medium to large stones which capped the uppermost fill (57) of the cess pit. The latter comprised mid to dark greyish brown clayey silt including rare medium stones and covered two rubble deposits of which (56) was set in brownish grey silty clay and (61) was set in brownish yellow gravelly silt. The two contexts may have derived from the collapse of the cess pit's upper wall (54), the surviving lower parts of which they covered and butted. Up to four courses of the wall (54) were exposed by excavation but it was not bottomed.

The wall (54) appeared to have formed a rectangle enclosing an area of approximately 1.00m by 0.88m and had thickness of 0.58m where it had survived to its full width on its southern side. Stones with maximum lengths of 0.41m were roughly faced on the inside of the pit only. The spaces between the outer side of the wall and the pit cut (numbered 2 on the southern side, 27 to the northern), had been filled respectively with reddish brown clayey silt including frequent small to medium stones (58) and yellow sandy gravel (59). On the southern side, cut 2 cut the stony subsoil (195), which lay directly over natural bedrock (191).

Small amounts of animal bone were recovered from the levelling deposit (55) above the cess pit and from the fill (58) between its cut and wall, including the only cat bone identified from the site.

#### Test pit 1 (Figs 5 and 7)

A 1.40m long test pit, oriented S-N, was excavated by machine to a depth of 1.10m. The 0.31m deep topsoil (50) sealed up to 0.33m deep rubble of frequent gritty, gravelly, and small to sparsely large angular limestones set in yellow sandy silt (196) butting the disturbed foundation of wall 160. No wall trench cut was visible in the narrow test pit but the wall butted yellow sandy clay (197) which lay over bedrock (191) at 0.73m depth.

#### Test pit 2 (Figs 5 and 7)

A second pit was excavated by machine against the wall of the disused building. It was aligned N-S and measured 1.30m long and 0.60m wide. Here, topsoil (50) 0.30m thick directly overlay a mixed silt and rubble

made ground layer (foundation trench for the wall), which was observed to the base of the pit at a depth of 1m overall. A single large abraded piece of decorated floor tile of likely 14th or 15th century date was recovered from the topsoil.

## **Finds**

### *Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn*

The pottery assemblage comprised 101 sherds with a total weight of 1,043g (Appendix 3). The post-Roman material was recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994), as follows:

- OXR:** St. Neots Ware type, *c.* AD850–1200. 2 sherds, 11g.
- OXAC:** Cotswolds-type ware, AD975–1350. 29 sherds, 263g.
- OXBF:** North-East Wiltshire Ware, AD1050–1400. 1 sherd, 5g
- OXY:** Medieval Oxford ware, AD1075–1350. 31 sherds, 237g.
- OXAM:** Brill/Boarstall ware, AD1200–1600. 26 sherds, 310g.
- OXDR:** Red Earthenwares, 1550 onwards 1 sherd, 54g.
- OXEST:** English stoneware, *c.* 1680 onwards. 1 sherd, 26g.
- WHEW:** Mass-produced white earthenwares, 19th–20th century. 1 sherd, 23g.

In addition, seven Iron Age sherds (84g) and two fragments of Early/Middle Saxon of pottery (10g) also occurred. The former were in a fine, slightly sandy fabric which also contained sparse fine calcareous material, with the latter very similar but with a greater and slightly coarser quartz content.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Appendix 3. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. The range of fabric types is typical of sites in the region, and suggests that the main period of activity at the site was from around the time of the Norman Conquest to the 14th century, after which time there is no evidence of occupation until the post-medieval period. The two sherds of St Neots Ware and the early/middle Saxon hand-made sherds could be evidence of 9th-century activity, as the latter appears to have still been in use in some areas of Oxfordshire at the start of the late Saxon period (Mellor 1994, 46).

Generally, the assemblage was in fairly good condition, and appears reliably stratified. Some vessels were represented by a number of sherds, especially the OXAM jugs, and the OXAC assemblage included a bowl as well as the more common jar fragments.

### *Animal Bone by Genni Elliott and Richard Tabor*

A modest assemblage of animal bone was recovered from 15 stratified and two unstratified contexts divided between nine of the fourteen evaluation trenches. In all, 1173 fragments were recorded, weighing a total of

2649g (Appendix 4), with a mean fragment weight of 2.3g. The fragment count was increased by the total of 996 recovered from trench 7 but their mean weight was only slightly greater than 1g. Overall the bones were in good surface condition but frequently very fragmented.

Where possible, the remains are identified by species, otherwise the elements are categorized as 'large mammal' (horse and cattle) or 'medium-mammal' (sheep/goat, pig and dog) animals. A single cat bone was recovered but no other small mammal species were identified. A single bird bone was also noted. A small proportion of the material was identifiable by species or size, but the bulk (c. 90%) of the assemblage was found to be too fragmented to confidently assign to any category. Few bones were suited to ageing but two pig and one sheep fragment were, all unstratified finds from Trench 7.

The greatest proportion of bones identifiable to species were from contexts interpreted as buried soils (63), (84) and (87), presumably of slow formation, all of which included pottery dated no later than mid to late 11th century AD, as was the case for ditch fill (62).

Cattle elements included mandible (Trench 7, unstratified); teeth (84, 87); scapula (63); phalange (150); metacarpal (150) and metatarsal (87). Sheep/goat elements included teeth (62, 84, 67); radius/ulna (150), (Trench 7); tibia/fibula (84, 150); phalange (63); metacarpal (87) and a metatarsal (84, 55). Pig elements included mandible (Trench 7); teeth (52, 62, 63, 87, 150), (Trench 7); tibia/fibula (150) and metatarsal (Trench 7). There were also femora from a cat (58) and a dog (84) and a single horse bone from a spoil heap.

Three of four bones with cut marks consistent with butchery were recovered from the midden deposit (150), the fourth from buried soil (84). Five burnt bones were also collected from (150), nine from buried soil (87) and six other distributed between (62, 63 and 84).

The total minimum number of individuals (MNI) was found to be 9: 2 sheep/goat, 2 pig, and 1 each of horse, cattle, dog, cat and bird. This is based on lack of duplicated skeletal elements, and taking into account the presence of both adult and juvenile bones of sheep/goat and pig. No further information could be obtained from the mainly highly fragmented remains.

The assemblage overall appears to reflect kitchen waste, with evidence of butchery limited to four pieces.

### *Ceramic Building Materials* by Danielle Milbank

A total of 4179g of ceramic building material (116 fragments) were recovered during the evaluation. Of this, the majority were tile, with a modest quantity of smaller fragments that were not diagnostic. The ceramic building material is summarized in Appendix 5. Ceramic building material was recorded most frequently in small



quantities, typically 50–200g, in a large proportion of the features and layers which date to the medieval and post-medieval periods.

### Tiles

Fabric ranged from medium (slightly weak or friable) to very hard and well-fired, though at x10 magnification there was little to differentiate the composition of the tiles recovered in the evaluation, and all were fairly consistent, with frequent small well-sorted quartz sand inclusions. The colour varied from pale grey orange to a dark red, with occasional examples of a grey core.

The majority of the tile fragments which were recovered were flat, with no notable marks or features. Many of these are likely to be peg tiles, where the pierced part is not present. Most frequently the fragments had a rough underside, indicating that they were made using a sanded mould. Notable examples are described below.

Deposit 62 contains a piece which is likely to be part of a tegula (roof tile). This is a piece 22mm thick overall, with a flange 45mm high. The fabric is a hard, evenly fired clay with sandy inclusions, with a red colour. A second fragment is thinner (13mm to 17mm) and is a rougher fabric, less evenly-fired and with straw marks. Although *tegulae* are more commonly Roman in date, some flanged roof tile types were produced in the 11th and 12th centuries, and it is possible that it is of early medieval date rather than being a residual or reused Roman piece, although re-use of Roman building materials in later buildings (especially churches) is well attested.

Context 84 contained a large number of small roof tile fragments, of which two have peg holes, and the fabric is a uniform sandy fine well-fired fabric. Deposit 85 contained a fragment with a dark green glaze.

Deposit 96 contained tile fragments of a range of fabrics (homogenous dark red and evenly-fired, examples of a grey core and a piece of a dark red colour with some cream/white marbling), all of which are 22mm thick and some of which have a dark green glaze.

Two small tile fragments (28g) were recovered from 97 which are of a hard sandy clay fabric with a pale pink red colour and grey reduced interior. Overall the fragments are 14mm thick and covered on one side with a dark green (possibly tin) glaze, which suggests a broadly late medieval or early post-medieval date. Traces of white mortar indicate the pieces may have been reused.

## Floor tiles

Decorated floor tile fragments were recovered from several contexts.

A single large piece of two-colour inlaid encaustic floor tile was recovered from context 150, a midden deposit within trench 7. The piece is 22mm thick and decorated with a geometric motif of triangles within a circle. The white clay is very shallowly inlaid into the body of the tile, with a yellowish glaze. The fabric is a hard, evenly-fired red clay with small sparse sand inclusions.

A piece of two-colour floor tile was recovered from the topsoil on the location of Test Pit 2 which has a more intricate decoration comprising circle and floral elements. The decoration has been applied by the 'stamp on slip' method, with a layer of white clay very shallowly imprinted onto the tile body, the covered with a lead glaze which is a pale yellow once fired. The body of the tile is a very hard and well-fired red clay fabric with no visible inclusions. Some traces of white mortar are present on the sides and underside.

Two fragments from surface 258 (trench 6) are 24mm thick, of a hard fabric with sandy inclusions and very occasional large (4mm) flint inclusions. The colour is red with a grey (reduced) core. The upper surface has a yellow white glaze with green speckling, and it is likely to represent an undecorated floor tile of the type often laid alongside decorated examples.

Two contexts from trench 9 contained floor tile fragments, comprising a small fragment with a double chevron pattern in white clay (again, by the 'stamp on slip' method) laid 2mm thick. The side of the fragment has a dark green speckled glaze, and the body is of a slightly friable and sandy fabric with a red colour and a dark grey reduced core.

Three fragments were recovered from deposit 169 which are similar two-coloured floor tiles. The fabric of all three is very similar, hard and evenly-fired with occasional groggy inclusions, and all are a red colour (with one example of a grey reduced core). The motifs on each piece have been applied by the 'stamp on slip' method, with the slip less than 1mm thick. The patterns and consist of a floral or fleur-de-lys on one fragment, a geometric circle and cross with small trefoils on a second piece, and a third, very abraded, piece has a barely visible cross pattern. Floor tiles were produced in this style from the 13th to 16th century, and these examples are more typical of the 14th and 15th centuries (van Lemmen 2000).

## Summary

The brick and tile was recorded in a range of contexts, reflects the ubiquity and durable nature of building materials. Overall, the assemblage was dominated by fragments of probable peg tile, though peg holes were only

present on three fragments. No complete peg tiles were recovered. This type of tile was produced from the late 12th to 19th century, though it did not become widespread until the 13th century and during this period was generally limited to high-status buildings, before becoming more widespread by the 15th century.

The examples of decorated floor tile recovered are all of the type categorized broadly as 'Penn' tiles. A range of different types of geometric and foliage based decoration were present, and no two fragments bore the same motifs. The assemblage overall reflects the types found during previous excavations at the Priory (Hinton 1969), and share characteristics specifically with tiles L to P in their catalogue (Hinton 1969). Although Hinton concedes that the assemblage recovered in the 1960's was not readily dateable, he tentatively ascribes a date in the 14th century for the majority of the forms recorded there.

### *Stone by Danielle Milbank*

Most of the architectural and building stone recovered from unstratified contexts was retained on site, but some was recovered from stratified contexts. Some of the moulded stone has been photographed (eg Pls 9 and 10). Of the recovered pieces, the majority were roof tile fragments or probable roof tile fragments, with one other architectural element present. This was recovered from the topsoil layer in the area of Test pit 2. This consists of a piece of grey white fine shelly limestone weighing 630g. The piece is 70mm tall and moulded, rounded in section with a keel fillet and a cavetto, and probably represents a piece of moulding from a window or door.

A small (10g) piece from context 85 is a dark red grey gritty limestone, and the thickness of 13mm and flat surfaces suggests that it could be a roof tile fragment.

Deposit 87 contained a single small (52g) flattish fragment of a dark grey gritstone, which has a small drilled indentation, presumably intended to be a hole, and the piece probably represents waste from roof tile manufacture.

Deposit 150 contains 30 fragments of a pale, slightly yellowish grey limestone (Cotswold-type stone) which is slightly laminated. The majority of the fragments are featureless and may not be worked, however four examples are present which have one hole drilled though, with one piece showing both the original peg holes. This piece weighs 162g and is 13mm thick.

### *Oyster shell by Danielle Milbank*

A total of 88 pieces of oyster shell were recovered, weighing 500g. This was recovered from three contexts, though the majority was derived from feature 24 in trench 4. The material is summarised in Appendix 6. The

shell is generally highly fragmented, though several complete examples were recovered, and the typical size of these is fairly small (40mm long). The quantity is small, however the assemblage reflects the use of oysters as a food source in the medieval and post-medieval period.

### *A palaeoenvironmental assessment*

Three sub-samples of 5-10L were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential. The samples were floated and wet sieved using a 0.25mm mesh. Sample 1 (Tr 3 cut 4,62) contained a moderate volume of carbonised material which included numerous cereal grain and weed seeds. Sample 2 (Tr 7, 153) contained 2 cereal grains and minute flecks of charcoal. Sample 3 (Tr 8, context 194) also contained very few items but included five unidentified cereal grains and a very little wood charcoal.

### **Conclusion**

This evaluation has confirmed that the site has the archaeological potential implied by documentary evidence and the results of archaeological work in neighbouring areas. In only two of the fourteen trenches and the single test pit was no archaeology identified. The tentative findings of the ground penetrating radar survey have been strengthened in the areas where anomalies were tested (Fig. 8).

The presence of even a very few possible Iron Age pottery sherds is of significance in Bicester as the period is poorly represented in the area. The ditch from which one of the sherds was the exclusive datable find is of a different orientation from most other linear features on the site, so that although a single sherd is scant evidence on which to date a feature it is possible this could be an Iron Age ditch.

The two possible early to mid Saxon sherds would be consistent with evidence for a broadly contemporary cemetery at the (modern) Church of the Immaculate Conception and with documentary evidence for the founding of the Church of St Edburg.

Buried soils encountered in Trenches 3–5, the west central area of the site, yielded pottery of late Saxon and early Medieval date, as did a ditch and hollow-way in Trenches 3 and 4. The soils also included thinly distributed bone and may be evidence of occupation immediately prior to the re-organisation of boundaries and land-use in advance of the construction of the Priory.

Evidence for the fabric of the Priory survives in the substantial walls and robber trenches either side of the building complexes on the western and eastern sides of the site. To these may be added the bedding deposits for floors in the trenches on the eastern side. It is likely that all of these remains formed part of the priory.

The dating of the ovens is less clear cut. Those in Trench 6 clearly cut an old floor level associated with tile inconsistent with industrial use of the area. Hence they must be dated to a period when the function of parts of the Priory had altered, or after it had ceased to be a Priory. However, the material from sealing rubble presumably derives from the demolition of the Priory soon after the Dissolution. No effort was made to excavate these ovens or that in Trench 10 as they would be better served by open plan investigation.

The results of the evaluation suggest that the surviving archaeology is of a quality and extent which would allow a greatly enhanced understanding of the Priory and perhaps the use of land prior to its construction. Information gained about the depth at which significant deposits are likely to occur may usefully inform a future mitigation strategy.

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**APPENDIX 1: Trench details**  
0m at west or south end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	9.00	1.60	0.80	0.00–0.17m topsoil; 0.17–0.52 made ground (mid brown silt including Cotswold stone and ceramic building material (CBM)); 0.52m–0.75m subsoil (mid red brown silty clay); 0.75m–0.80m natural bedrock. Services at 6m and 8.35m–10m, latter requiring a step. No archaeological deposits.
2	11.00	1.60	0.65	0.00–0.20m topsoil; 0.17–0.42 made ground (mid brown silt including Cotswold stone and CBM); 0.42m–0.54m subsoil (mid red brown silty clay); 0.54m–0.65m natural bedrock. Modern soakaway; ditch [1].
3	9.20	1.60	0.52	0.00–0.28m topsoil; 0.28m–0.52m subsoil (mid red brown silty clay); 0.52m+ natural geology (abundant gravelly to medium angular limestone set in light red brown silty clay). Ditch [4]; buried soil (63).
4	10.10	1.60	0.48	0.00–0.25m topsoil; 0.25m–0.48m subsoil (mid red brown silty clay); 0.48m+ natural geology (abundant gravelly to medium angular limestone set in light red brown silty clay). Modern pit 1.10m–2.60m. Robber trench [8]; hollow-way [24]; buried soil (87). <b>[PI 4]</b>
5	9.00	1.60	0.65	0.00–0.26m topsoil; 0.26m–0.60m subsoil (mid red brown silty clay); 0.60m+ natural geology (abundant gravelly to medium angular limestone set in light red brown silty clay). Buried soil (84).
6	8.00	1.60	1.31	0.00m–0.35m Tarmac and make-up layers; 0.35m–0.48m levelling deposit; 0.48m–0.76m demolition/levelling deposit; 0.76–0.80m floor bed; 0.76m–1.31m make-up/levelling deposits; 1.31m+ natural bedrock. Pit or gully [28]; oven complex [16–18]; floor bed (258). <b>[PI s 3 and 5]</b>
7	12.90	1.60	0.60	0.00–0.25m topsoil; 0.25m–0.60+m made ground/subsoil (mid red brown silty clay); natural geology not exposed. Services 3.30m–8.20m. Robber trench [25]; midden deposit (150); floor patches (99, 154). <b>[PI 6]</b>
8	10.00	1.60	0.98	0.00m–0.45m topsoil; 0.45m–0.87m brown clay. Floor deposits (162) and (163); wall (161); robber trench fill (164). <b>[PI 7]</b>
9	9.40	1.42	0.80	0.30m topsoil; demolition deposit 0.30m–0.75m. Floor deposit (167); wall complex (165, 166, 170). <b>[PIs 9 and 10]</b>
10	9.20	1.60	0.76	0.00–0.22m topsoil; 0.22m–0.68m subsoil (mid red brown silty clay); 0.68m+ natural geology (abundant gravelly to medium angular limestone set in light red brown silty clay). Wall trench [6]; linear cut [7]; demolition cut [26]; wall (66); oven complex [23]; demolition deposits (78, 79, 82, 83). <b>[PI 8]</b>
11	15.10	1.60	0.48	0.00–0.22m topsoil; 0.22m–0.48m subsoil (mid red brown silty clay); 0.48m+ natural geology (abundant gravelly to medium angular limestone set in light red brown silty clay). Services 5.50m–6.70m. Ditches [9], [12], [13], [14]; unexcavated cuts [10], [11].
12	10.90	1.60	0.59	0.00–0.31m topsoil; 0.31m–0.59m rubble/subsoil (mid red brown silty clay); 0.48m+ natural geology (abundant gravelly to medium angular limestone set in light red brown silty clay). Modern truncation and services 2.50m–10.90m. Ditch [5].
13	4.94	1.60	0.75	0.00–0.45m topsoil; 0.45m–0.75m stony layer; 0.75m–0.90m yellow clay; 0.90m–1.00m mid brown silty clay including rare to sparse small to medium stones. No archaeological features.
14	10.36	1.60	0.60	0.00–0.20m topsoil; 0.20–0.48 made ground (mid red brown silt including Cotswold stone and CBM); 0.48m–0.54m subsoil (mid red brown silty clay); 0.75m–0.80m natural geology (abundant gravelly to medium angular limestone set in light red brown silty clay). Modern soakaway at 8.90m–10.36m. Pit cut [2]; robber trench [3]; cess pit complex (54) <b>[PIs 2 and 4]</b>
TP1	1.40	0.60	1.49	0.00m–0.31m topsoil; 0.31m–0.64m rubble layer; 0.64m–0.73m sandy clay; 0.73m+ natural bedrock. Wall (160).
TP2	1.50	0.60	1.00	0.00m–0.30m topsoil; 0.30m–1.00m rubble layer

## APPENDIX 2: Feature details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
2	1	52	ditch	IA?	Pottery
14	2	54, 55, 56, 57, 58	pit	Medieval	none
14	3	60	linear cut	Modern	Modern debris
3	4	62	ditch	Late Saxon/Medieval	Pottery
12	5	64	ditch		none
10	6		wall trench		none
10	7	65	linear cut	modern?	none
4	8	86	robber trench?	Medieval/Post medieval	none
11	9	88	ditch		none
11	10	89	unexcavated		none
11	11	90	unexcavated		none
11	12	91	linear cut		none
11	13	92	linear cut		none
11	14	93	linear cut	Saxon?	Pottery
6	15	179	cut	Medieval/Post medieval	Stratigraphy
6	16	171	oven cut	Medieval/Post medieval	Stratigraphy
6	17	172, 173, 174, 175	oven cut	Medieval/Post medieval	Stratigraphy
6	18	176, 177, 178	oven cut	Medieval/Post medieval	Stratigraphy
6	19	95, 96	Rubble deposit	Medieval/Post medieval	Stratigraphy
8	20	164	robber trench	Medieval/Post medieval	Stratigraphy
9	21	Not excavated	pit	modern	Modern debris
9	22	Not excavated	pit	modern	Modern debris
10	23	71, 72, 73, 74, 75	oven cut	Medieval/Post medieval	Stratigraphy
4	24	85	Hollow-way	Late Saxon/Medieval	Stratigraphy
7	25	151, 152, 153	robber trench?	Medieval/Post medieval	none
10	26	78, 79, 82, 83	Demolition cut	Medieval/Post medieval	Stratigraphy
14	27	59, 54	pit	Medieval	none
6	28	205	Pit/gully	Medieval/Post medieval	none

**APPENDIX 3: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type**

Tr	Cut	Deposit	IA		E/MS		OXR		OXAC		OXBF		OXY		OXAM		OXDR		OXEST		WHEW		Date
			No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
2	1	52	1	14																		IA?	
3	4	62							5	44	1	5	3	28								M/L11thC	
3	63		2	17				1	5	2	6	1	3									M/L11thC	
4	87								18	164			16	122								M/L11thC	
5	84											2	21									M/L11thC	
7	U/S													1	48					1	23	19thC	
7	25	153			1	1																E/MS	
7	150													13	87							13thC	
8	50																			1	26	18thC	
8	162																					M16thC	
8	beneath 1																			1	54	M/L11thC	
10	67											2	6									13thC	
10	66		2	10					3	33		4	15	10	117							13thC	
10	70		1	39			1	6				3	42	1	12							IA?	
11	50																					U/S	
11	14	93	1	4	1	9								1	46							E/MS	
13	50																					U/S	
	Total		7	84	2	10	2	11	29	263	1	5	31	237	26	310	1	54	1	26	1	23	



**APPENDIX 4:** Inventory of animal bone by context

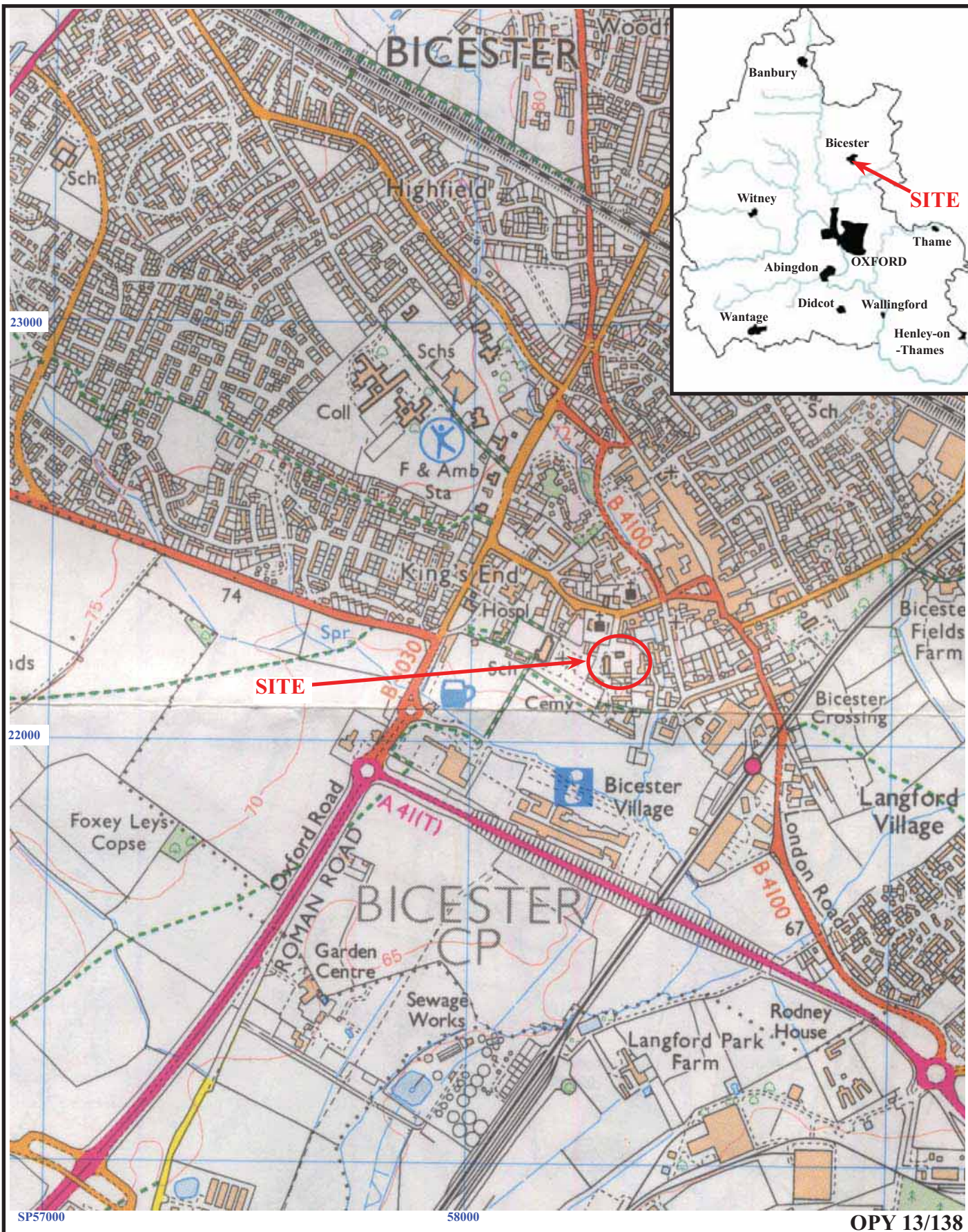
Trench	Cut	Deposit	Wt (g)	Cattle	Horse	Sheep/goat	Pig	Large	Medium	Dog	Cat	Bird	Unidentified
2	1	52	78				2	1	2				
2		53	100	2									
3	4	62				1	2		7				4
3		63	358	1		1	2	4					11
4	7	65	16						1				3
4	24	85	42					3	1			1	12
4		87	206	4		1	2						31
5		84	172	1		7		2	16	1			25
7		97	12										7
7		150	793	2		4	2		3				963
7		U/S	215	4		1	2		7				1
8		194	1										1
10		67	56			2							9
11	9	88	70					3					
14	2	55	20			1							1
14	2	58	162					7			1		
		spoil	284		1								
		Total	2649	14	1	18	12	20	37	1	1	1	1068
		Minimum number of individuals (MNI):		1	1	2	2			1	1	1	
										Total number of fragments:			1173
										Mean fragment wt (g):			2.3

**APPENDIX 5: Catalogue of ceramic building material by context**

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>
TP2		50	Topsoil	1	344
13		50	Topsoil	4	106
3	4	62	Ditch slot	2	188
3		63	Buried soil	4	58
5		84	Buried soil	4	108
4	24	85	Hollow-way	49	1514
4		87	Buried soil	2	20
11	9	88	Deposit	3	14
6		95	Layer	1	114
6		96	Layer	6	410
7		97	Wall	2	28
7			Spoil heap	2	316
7		150	Layer	15	142
8			Spoil heap	3	256
9			Spoil heap	8	314
9		169	Demolition	7	336
9		170	rubble wall	358	3

**APPENDIX 6 Oyster Shell**

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt(g)</i>
4	24	85	Ditch fill?	oyster	35	320
7				oyster	2	8
7		150	Layer	oyster	51	172
					88	500

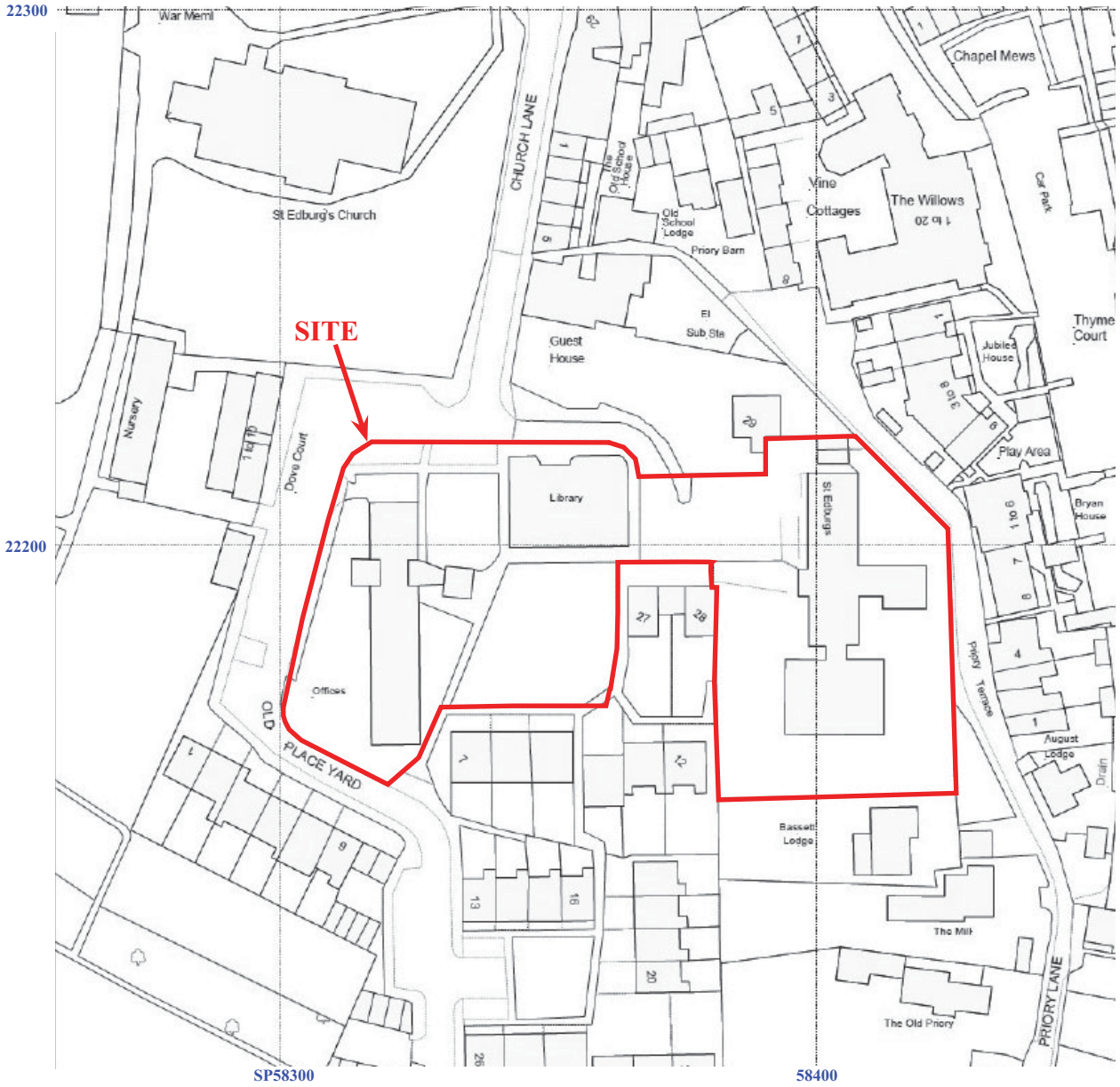


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Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 1. Location of site within Bicester and Oxfordshire.

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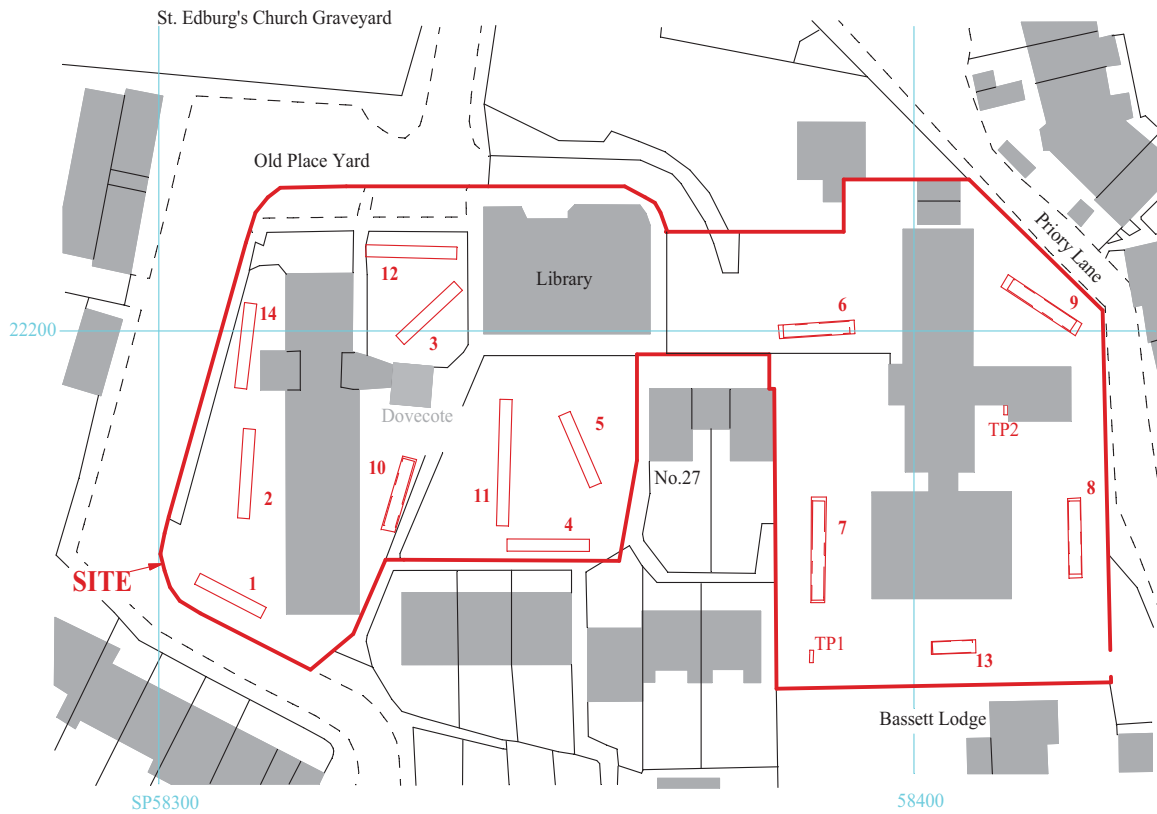
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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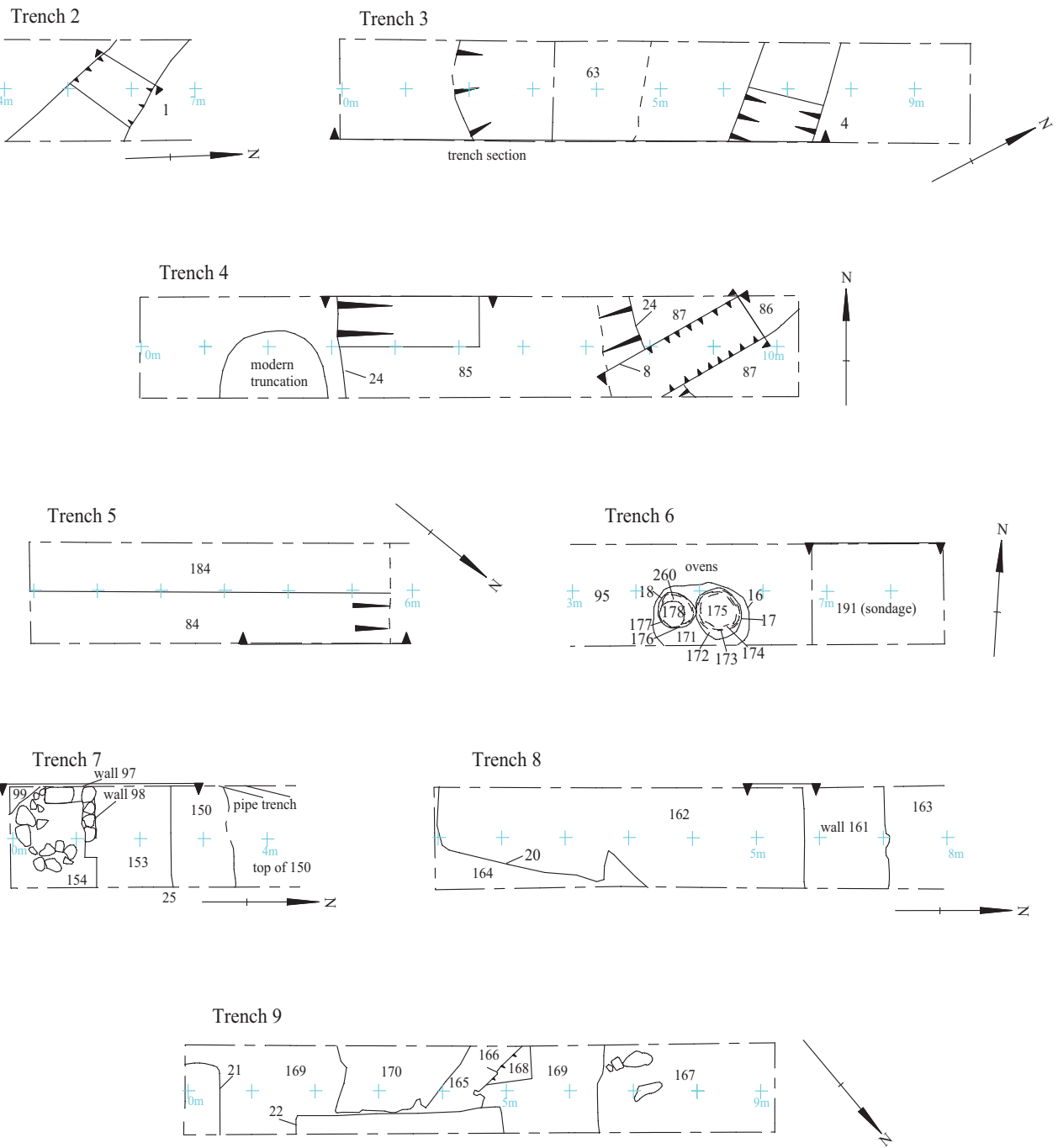
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Figure 3. Location of trenches.



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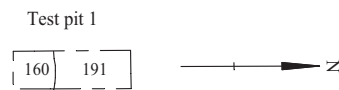
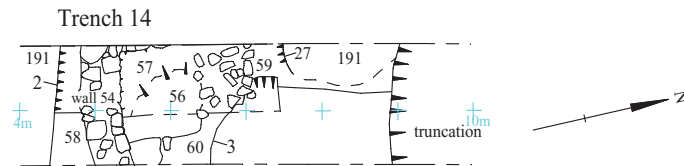
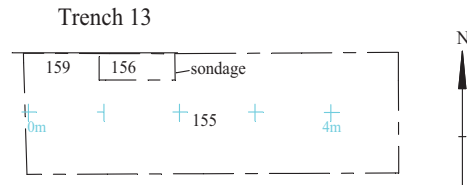
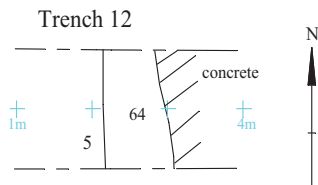
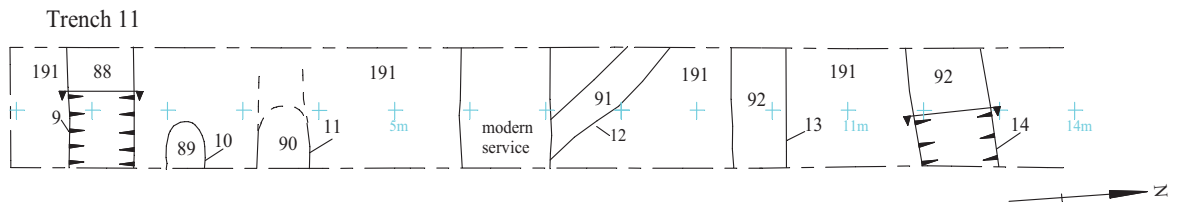
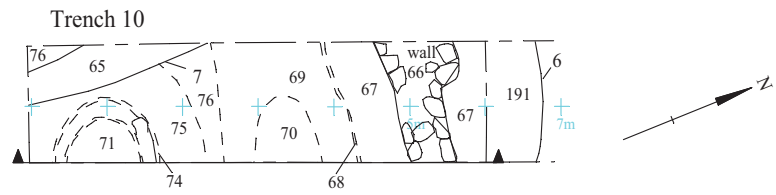


no section

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Figure 4. Detail of trenches.





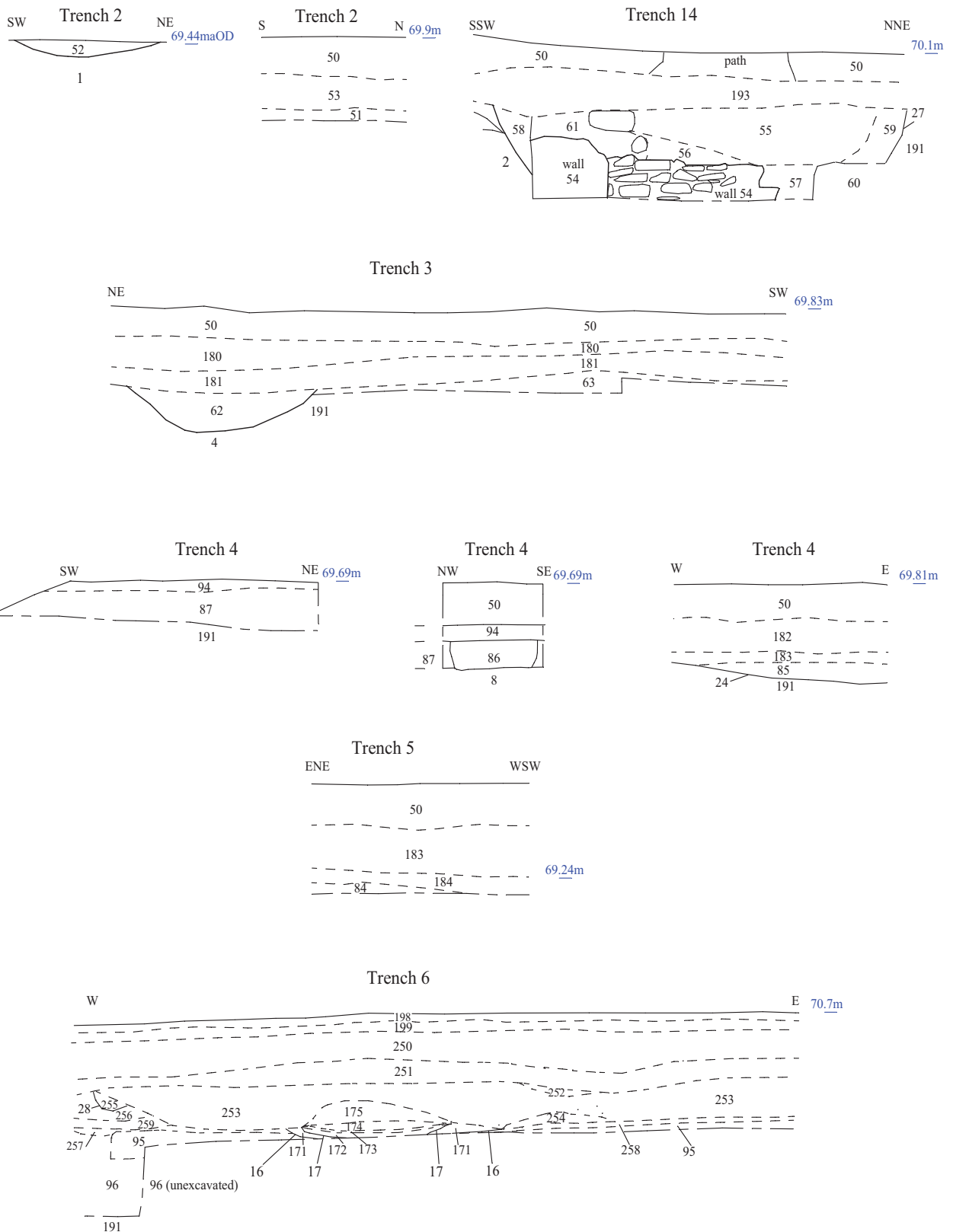
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Figure 5. Detail of trenches.





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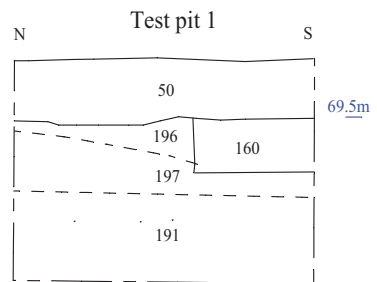
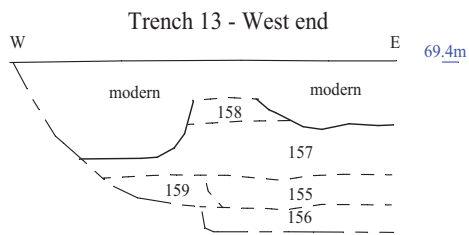
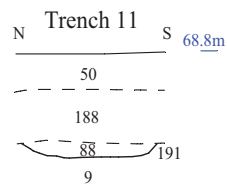
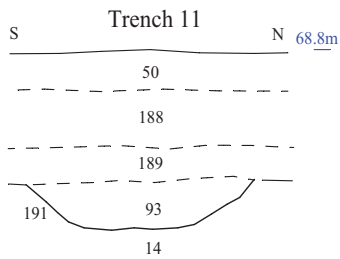
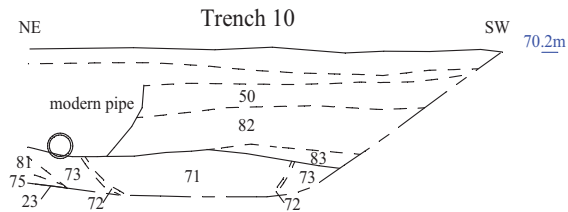
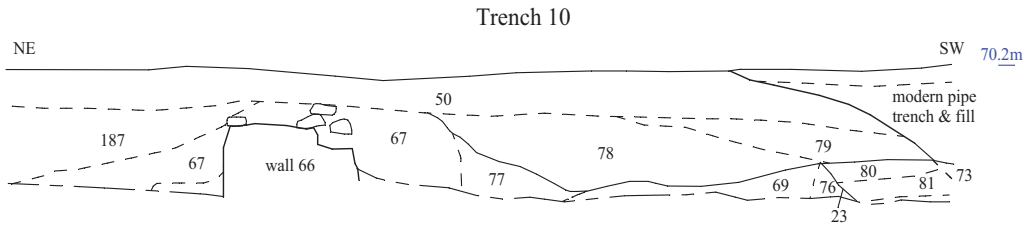
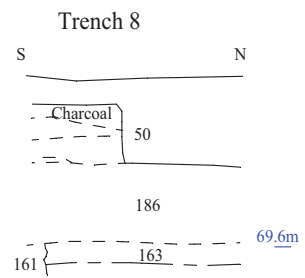
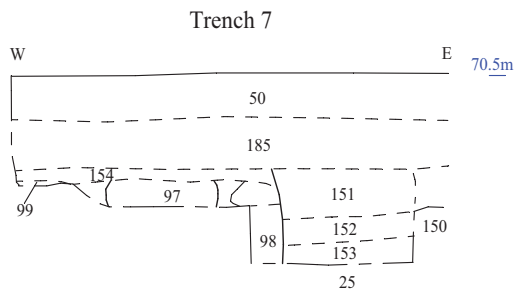
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Archaeological Evaluation**

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Figure 6. Sections.





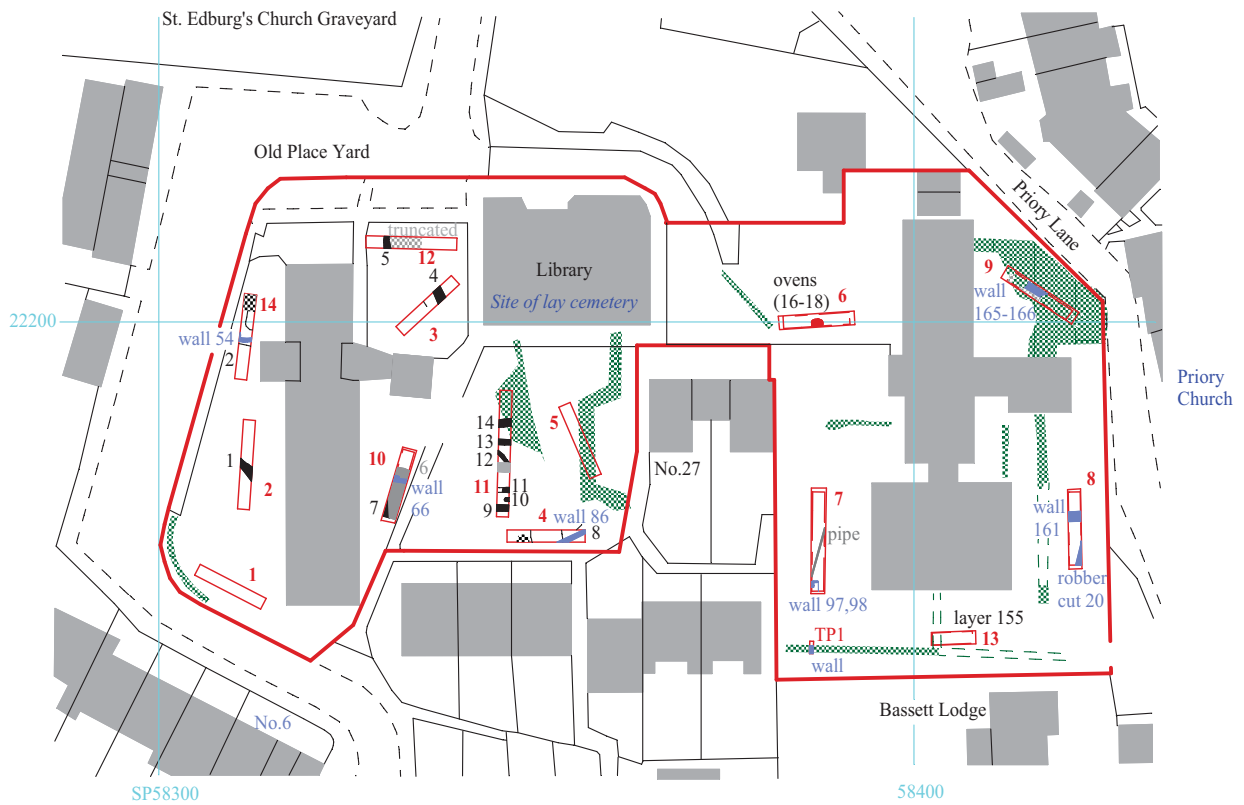


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Figure 7. Sections (continued).





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### Old Palace Yard, Bicester, Oxfordshire, 2013 Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 8. Location of principal features with radar anomalies (green).  
Modern cuts/truncation are grey.



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Plate 1. Existing priory structure, the dovecote.



Plate 2. Trench 14, wall 54 in cut 2, looking west, Scales: 2m and 0.5m.

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**Old Place Yard, Bicester, Oxfordshire, 2013**  
**Archaeological Evaluation**

Plates 1 - 2.

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Plate 3. Trench 6, looking east, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 1m.



Plate 4. Trench 14, looking north, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 1m.

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Plates 3 - 4.

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Plate 5. Trench 6, ovens (cut 16-18), looking south, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 6. Trench 7, wall 93-94, looking west, Scales: 1m and 0.5m.

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Plates 5 - 6.

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Plate 7. Trench 8, wall 161, looking north, Scales: 1m and 0.1m.



Plate 8. Trench 10, wall 66, looking north, Scales: 1m and 0.5m.

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Plates 7 - 8.

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Plate 9. Stone tracery recovered from Trench 9.



Plate 10. Stone tracery recovered from Trench 9.

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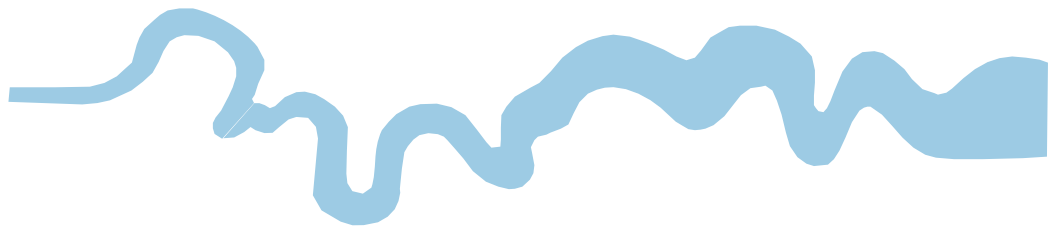
Plates 9 - 10.

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## TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late -----	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle -----	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early -----	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late .....	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early .....	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late .....	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early .....	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper .....	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle .....	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower .....	2,000,000 BC
↓	↓





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