

RED HOUSE BOOKS LIMITED,
COTSWOLD BUSINESS PARK,
WITNEY, OXFORDSHIRE

An archaeological evaluation in advance of the
proposed warehouse extension

for
RED HOUSE BOOKS LTD.
and
LICHTHOME LTD.

Red House Books Ltd, Witney, Oxfordshire

An archaeological evaluation in advance of the proposed
warehouse extension. Report 92/18

by Leigh Torrance

Introduction

In October of 1992, Thames Valley Archaeological Services were commissioned by Jessop and Cook architects, on behalf of Red House Books Limited and Lighthome Limited to carry out an archaeological evaluation on the site of a proposed warehouse extension.

The intention of the evaluation was to discover what, if any, archaeological deposits exist in the proposal area, and the date, nature, extent and state of preservation of any such deposits.

Archaeological background

The proposed extension of the warehouse lies in an area of considerable archaeological potential with evidence of settlement from several periods being represented. Prehistoric struck flints and pottery sherds of Roman date are recorded as having been found on fields to the west of the site. The pottery was present in sufficiently large quantities to suggest a Roman settlement. A Middle Iron Age settlement site has recently been located to the east and aerial photographs reveal

a ring ditch to the south west which is probably the site of a levelled Bronze Age burial mound.

Geology and topography

The proposal area lies 2 Km. west of the centre of Witney (Fig. 1), immediately to the south of the Cotswold Business Park (Fig.2 SP330100). The site is at a height of 100 m. above OD. and is located on gently undulating arable land. The local geology is Cornbrash.

Method

Four 30 m. x 1.80 m. trenches were dug using a JCB fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. An additional trench 11 m. x 1.80 m. was also dug which intersected with trench 1 (Fig.3). All potential archaeological features were examined and the trench spoilheaps were searched for artefacts.

A series of engineers test pits (0.5 x 1 m.) were dug at the same time as the evaluation trenches. These were also monitored for archaeological material.

Results

Beneath the topsoil a variable geology was encountered of calcareous silty material and limestone pavements.

Only towards the centre of trench 3 was a thin layer of colluvium present. Several irregular patches filled with an orange-brown silty-clay were observed.

In trench 1 (Fig. 3) a land drain running east-west, filled with blocks of the limestone was located at the northern end of the trench. A stripe of orange clay running north west-south east was excavated as a possible feature but produced no finds. Trench 5 was positioned with the intention of tracing this possible ditch, but failed to find it (Fig.3). None of the patches investigated proved to be of archaeological origin. None of the spoilheaps produce any finds.

A scatter of modern brick and building debris was observed just to the south east of trench 1.

Conclusion

No areas of archaeological potential were identified by the evaluation.

Appendix 1

Trench details

Trench	Length	Depth	Comment
1	30m	0.3m	Several orange clay patches investigated. Land drain at north end.
2	30m	0.25m	Several orange clay patches investigated.
3	30m	0.5m	Colluvium present.
4	30m	0.30m	
5	11m	0.25m	

Fig.1

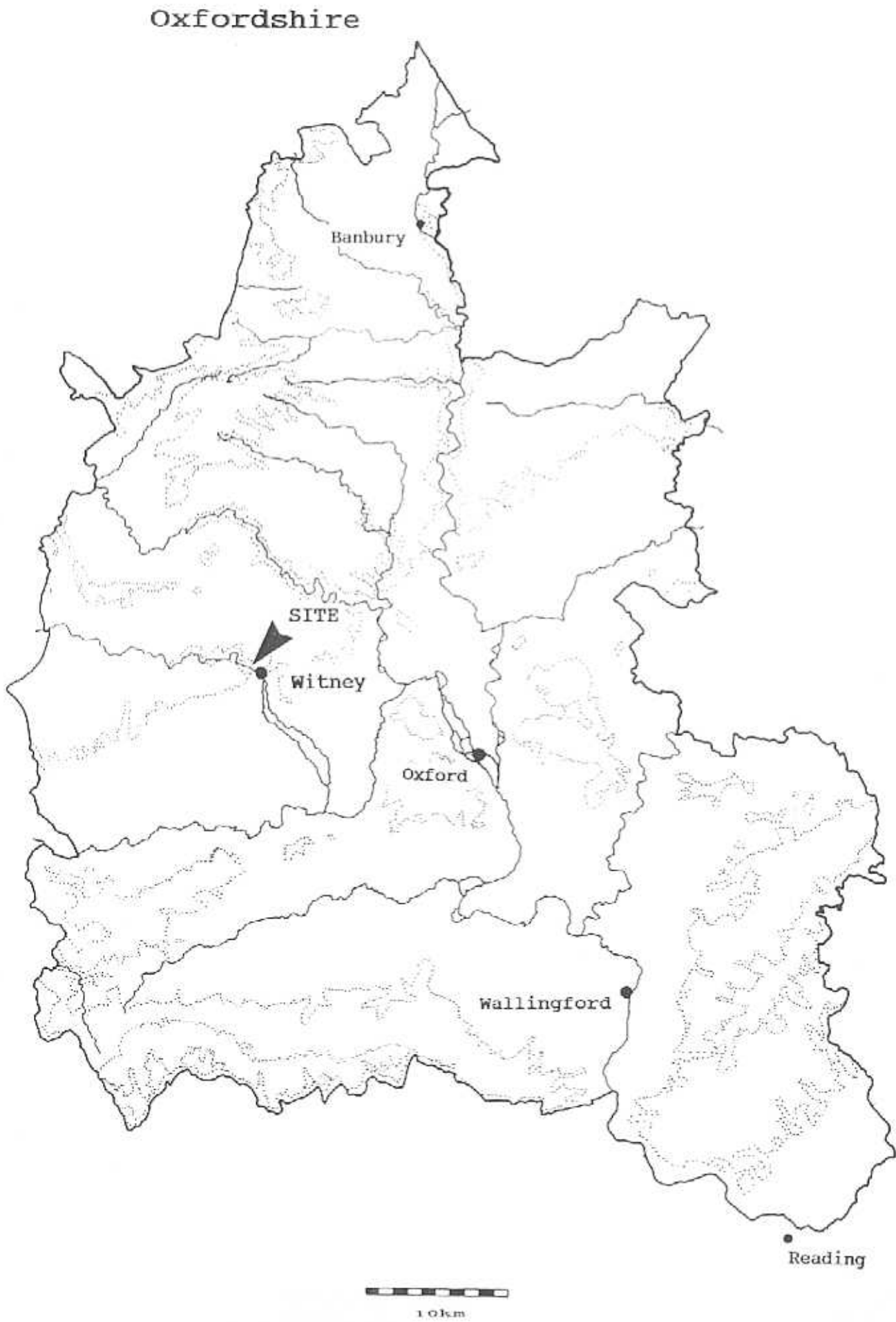


Fig.2

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