

**Land north-east of Foxley Fields Farm,
Finnere, Oxfordshire**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr Steve James

by Stephen Hammond

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code FFFF 02/44

June 2002

Summary

Site name: Land north-east of Foxley Fields Farm, Finmere, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SP 6340 3255

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 31st May 2002

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Clare Challis

Site code: FFFF 02/44

Area of site:

Summary of results: No archaeological finds or features were found

Monuments identified: None

Location and reference of archive: The site archive is currently held by Thames Valley Archaeological Services, 47- 49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5NR and will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Service in due course.

This report may be copied for bona fide research or planning purposes without the explicit permission of the copyright holder

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 12.06.02
	Steve Preston ✓ 12.06.02

Land north-east of Foxley Fields Farm, Finmere, Oxfordshire. An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Stephen Hammond

Report 02/44

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out on land north-east of Foxley Fields Farm, Finmere, Oxfordshire (SP 6340 3255). The work was commissioned by Mr Steve James, Galwin House, Avenue Road, Maids Moreton, Milton Keynes, MK18 1QA.

Planning permission (99/02223/F) has been granted by Cherwell District Council for the building of a single house with an associated garage at land north-east of Foxley Fields Farm, Finmere. As a condition on the planning consent an archaeological watching brief was to be maintained during groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the District and County Councils' policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Stephen Weaver, Conservation Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Clare Challis on the 31st May 2002 and the site code is FFFF 02/44

Location, topography and geology

The site is located to the north-east of Foxley Fields Farm, Finmere, south of the recently realigned B4031. It lies at a height of *c.* 120m above Ordnance Datum and is currently used for equestrian and agricultural purposes. The underlying geology according to the British Geological Survey (IGS 1977; 1979) is boulder clay and morainic drift over cornbrash. Clay was noted during the watching brief.

Archaeological background

The site lies within an area containing known archaeological sites. Previous archaeological investigation revealed the remains of a probable Bronze Age funerary monument, a large Iron Age settlement enclosure and Neolithic or Bronze Age flintwork scatters around Foxley Field Farm to the west. Also, a series of cropmarks representing a possible enclosed settlement have also been identified to the west. This information led to a number small-scale excavations along the route of the Finmere B4031 diversion that lies *c.* 120m to the north of the proposal area. This revealed a probable farmstead settlement that dates from the Late Iron Age to the early

Roman period (Grundon 1999, 31). It was therefore deemed possible that the proposed development could disturb archaeological features and deposits dating from prehistoric times onwards.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to record and excavate any archaeological deposits that would be threatened by the new development, with sufficient time being allowed to do this within the groundworkers' schedules without causing undue delay. This would be achieved by monitoring any ground intrusive work, such as surface stripping which exposed the subsoil and the digging of trenches for foundations and services. Spoilheaps would also be examined for finds.

Results

Stripping of topsoil prior to reformation with gravel for the access road and car park area was superficial (c. 0.2-0.25m) and did not reach sufficient depth to expose the archaeologically relevant levels. The site of the proposed dwelling with its associated garage had also been stripped down, in parts by up to 0.60m, adjacent to the eastern hedged boundary, and re-levelled with a layer of gravel 0.30m thick. All of the foundation trenches for the house were examined. These were 0.70m wide and were dug to a depth of 0.90m. A typical section revealed 0.30m of gravel over 0.50m of mixed orange mottled clay with gravel inclusions. Below this could be seen 0.10m of mottled orange clay. No archaeological finds or features were revealed.

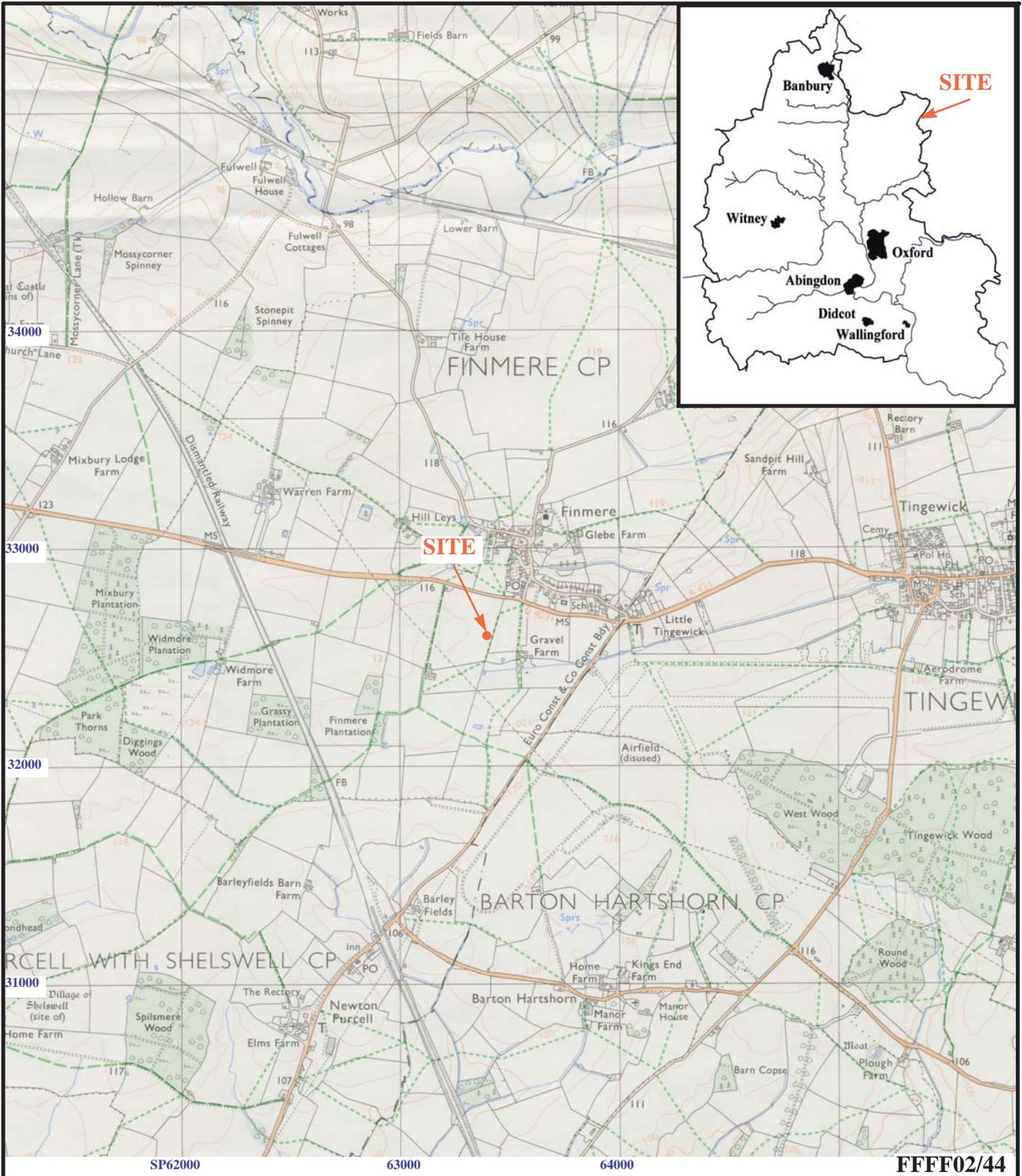
The foundations for the new garage were not monitored as this structure was to be a lightweight concrete pad construction which did not require deeply invasive foundation trenches.

Conclusion

The results of the watching brief were negative and no archaeological finds or deposits were discovered. Much of the proposal site had been only partially stripped of overburden and thus the work had little impact on the archaeologically relevant levels. For the invasive groundworks associated with the house, examination of the footing trenches did not reveal any cut archaeological features.

References

Grundon, I, 1999, 'Finnere Gravel Farm and Foxley Fields Farm', *South Midlands Archaeology*, **29**, 31–5
IGS, 1979, *Geological map of the United Kingdom South, Solid Edn*, 1:625000, Inst Geol Sciences, Keyworth
IGS, 1977, *Quaternary map of the United Kingdom South*, 1:625000, Inst Geol Sciences, Keyworth
PPG 16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO

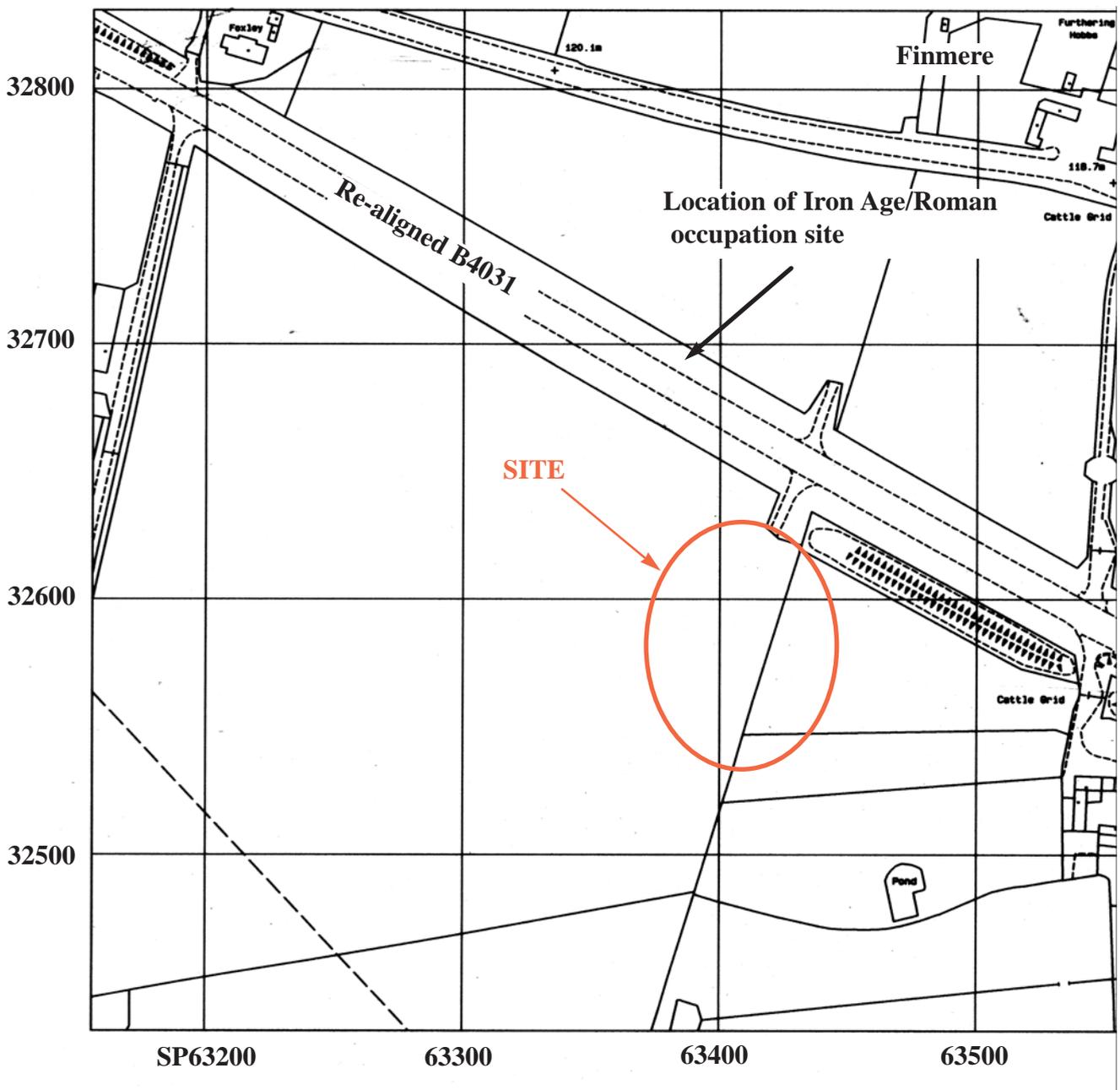


Foxley Fields Farm, Finmere, Oxfordshire 2002

Figure 1. Location of site at Finmere and within Oxfordshire.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Pathfinder 1046 SP 63/73
 1:25000
 Ordnance Survey Licence AL52324A0001





FFFF02/44

Land north east of Foxley Fields Farm, Finmere,
Oxfordshire 2002

Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES

Land north east of Foxley Fields Farm, Finnere, Oxfordshire, 2002

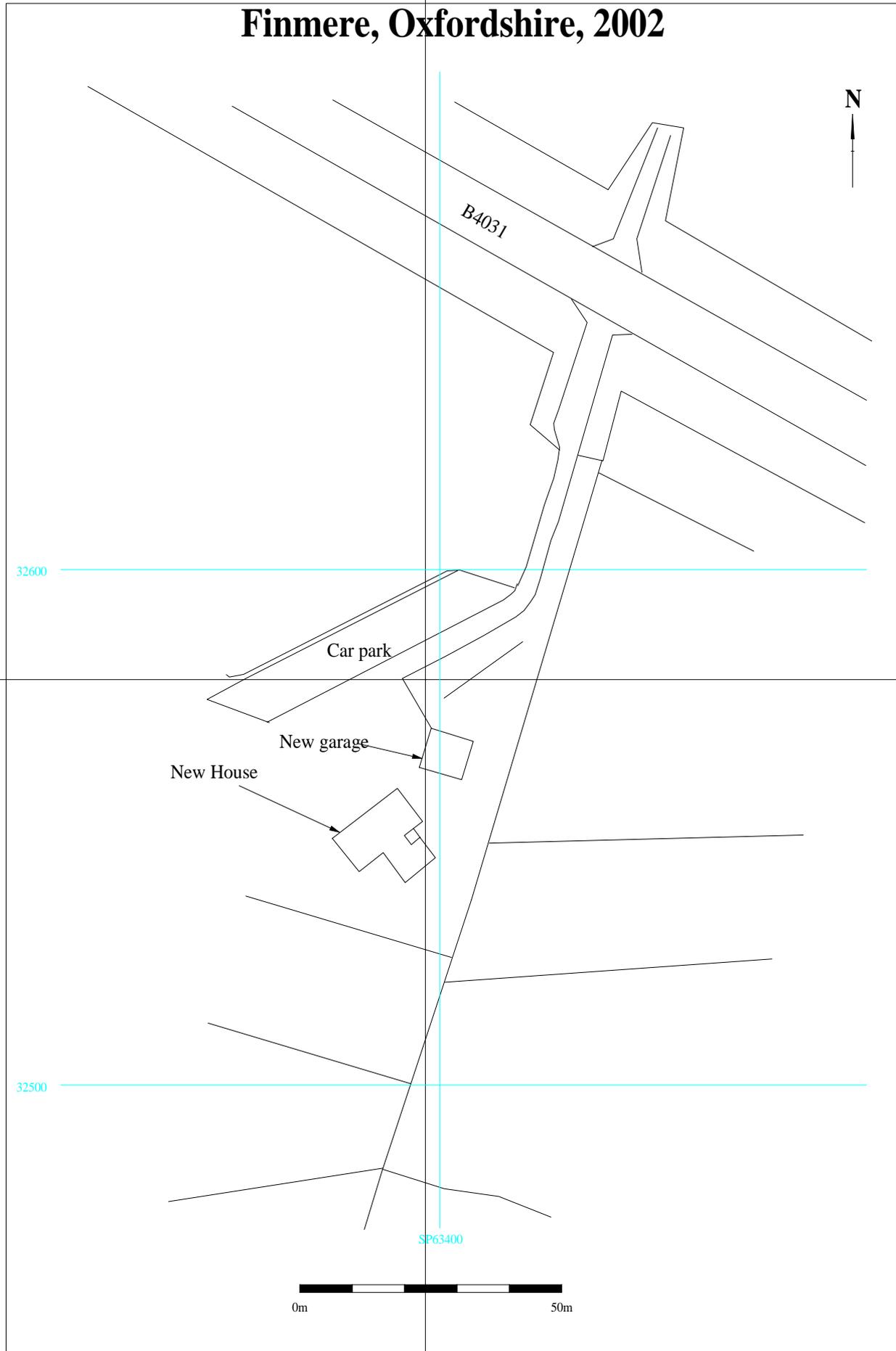


Figure 3. Area of Watching Brief