

**Thrupp Lane, Radley, near Abingdon,
Oxfordshire, 1998**

An Archaeological Evaluation

for

Kibswell Homes

February 1998

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by Steven D. G. Weaver

Report 98/16

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Thrupp Lane, Radley, Nr Abingdon, Oxfordshire (NGR SU 5205 9855). The work was commissioned by Mr. L. M. Chapman of Kibswell Homes Ltd, 67 Stert Street, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 3LP.

The site consists of a 0.26 ha. area currently occupied by light industrial units and is located between Abingdon and Radley (Fig. 1). The proposed redevelopment of the site is for the construction of six new houses with associated car-parking. The archaeological evaluation was requested by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service, archaeological advisors to the District Council, in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Policy and Planning Guidance Note, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG 16, 1990) prior to the determination of planning permission. The work was carried out to a specification approved by Mr. Hugh Coddington of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Steven Weaver and Andy Smith on the 3rd of February 1998 and the site code is TLA 98/16.

Location, Topography and Geology

The development area is on relatively level ground adjacent to Thrupp Lane, close to the junction with Norfolk Close, and is approximately 59 m. above Ordnance Datum (OD). The underlying geology of the site is indicated by the British Geological Survey (1971) as second

terrace gravels. However, the excavation of the trenches revealed c. 0.45 m. of clay silt (brickearth) overlying the gravels.

Archaeological Background

The site lies within an area for which many archaeological sites and finds have been recorded. A brief provided by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service highlighted the archaeological potential of the site. To the east of the site lies Barrow Hills, a large round barrow cemetery of early Bronze Age date, and to the west of the site a Neolithic oval barrow and causewayed enclosure have been recorded. Elsewhere, a number of cropmarks visible from the air indicate occupation and landscape features probably of Iron Age and Roman date.

Objectives and Methodology

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

The evaluation required the excavation of three trenches, each 10 m. long (1.60 m. wide), located to give a good spatial coverage of the site bearing in mind the presence of standing structures (Fig. 2). The trenches were also positioned to avoid canopy cover of trees to be retained within the development and, where possible, services.

The trenches were excavated using a JCB-type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, supervised at all times by an archaeologist. Certain or probable archaeological features or deposits were to be hand-cleaned and excavated, and spoilheaps monitored for finds.

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Results (Figs. 2 and 3)

Trench 1 (Plate 1)

This trench was located to the rear of the existing buildings, orientated approximately north-south (Fig. 2). It was 0.55 m. deep and its stratigraphy consisted of c. 0.50 m. of modern overburden over a heavily contaminated brown clay silt (brickearth) (Fig. 3). A test-pit at the northern end of the trench (1.35 m. wide by 0.96 m. deep TP1) showed that the clay silt was c. 0.46 m. deep, overlying gravel. There was no evidence of a buried topsoil within the trench, which suggests a certain degree of truncation of the natural geology has occurred in this area, most likely associated with the existing development on the site.

No features or deposits of archaeological origin were observed within the trench and no artefacts were recovered from the spoilheap.

Trench 2

This trench was also located to the rear of the existing buildings in the north-east corner of the site and was orientated north-west - south-east (Fig. 2). It was c. 0.30-0.47 m. deep and revealed a lesser degree of modern disturbance, c. 0.25-30 m. of overburden above the clay silt (brickearth) (Fig. 3). The different level of modern overburden within this trench is probably due to the gentle north-south slope of the site and its location further from the existing structures. Again, there was no evidence of a buried topsoil and in this trench there was no contamination of the natural. A 1.15 m. wide by 0.60 m. deep test pit (TP2) excavated at the north-western end of the trench showed that the silt clay continued to a depth of c. 0.35 m. and overlay a lighter clayey gravel at 57.80 m. above OD.

Two Prehistoric worked flints were recovered from the surface of the trench but no archaeological features were observed and no further artefacts were recovered from the associated spoilheap.

Trench 3 (Plate 2)

The was located at the Thrupp Lane end of the site and was orientated approximately east-west (Fig. 2). The trench was shortened to 8 m. due to the presence of a number of services at the eastern end of the trench. It was 0.50 m. deep and was excavated through an existing tarmac access road. Modern road make-up was 0.45 m. deep, over the clay silt (brickearth) (Fig. 3). Patches of contamination were present within the clay silt natural.

No features or deposits of archaeological origin were observed within the trench and no artefacts were recovered from the spoilheap.

The Finds

Worked flint by Steven Weaver

Two worked flint flakes were recovered from the surface of Trench 2. The undiagnostic character of the flakes means they could date to any period from the Mesolithic through to the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age.

<i>Trench</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Description</i>
2 (3.30 m.)	1	Struck flake
2 (3.60 m.)	1	Struck flake

(0 m. south or west)

Conclusion

The evaluation has indicated that no surviving archaeological features are likely to be present over the proposed development area. The lack of a buried topsoil in any of the three excavated trenches indicates that previous development of the site has possibly truncated the natural geology, which may have resulted in the removal of any archaeological features, had any been present. The recovery of two Prehistoric flint flakes from the surface of Trench 2 after the

removal of the overburden may suggest that truncation over the site is minimal, although this may only be true for the eastern end of the site.

The presence of Prehistoric worked flint is indicative of Prehistoric activity within the general locality, which is also evidenced by the nearby Barrow Hills cemetery, and the Neolithic oval barrow and causewayed enclosure already mentioned above.

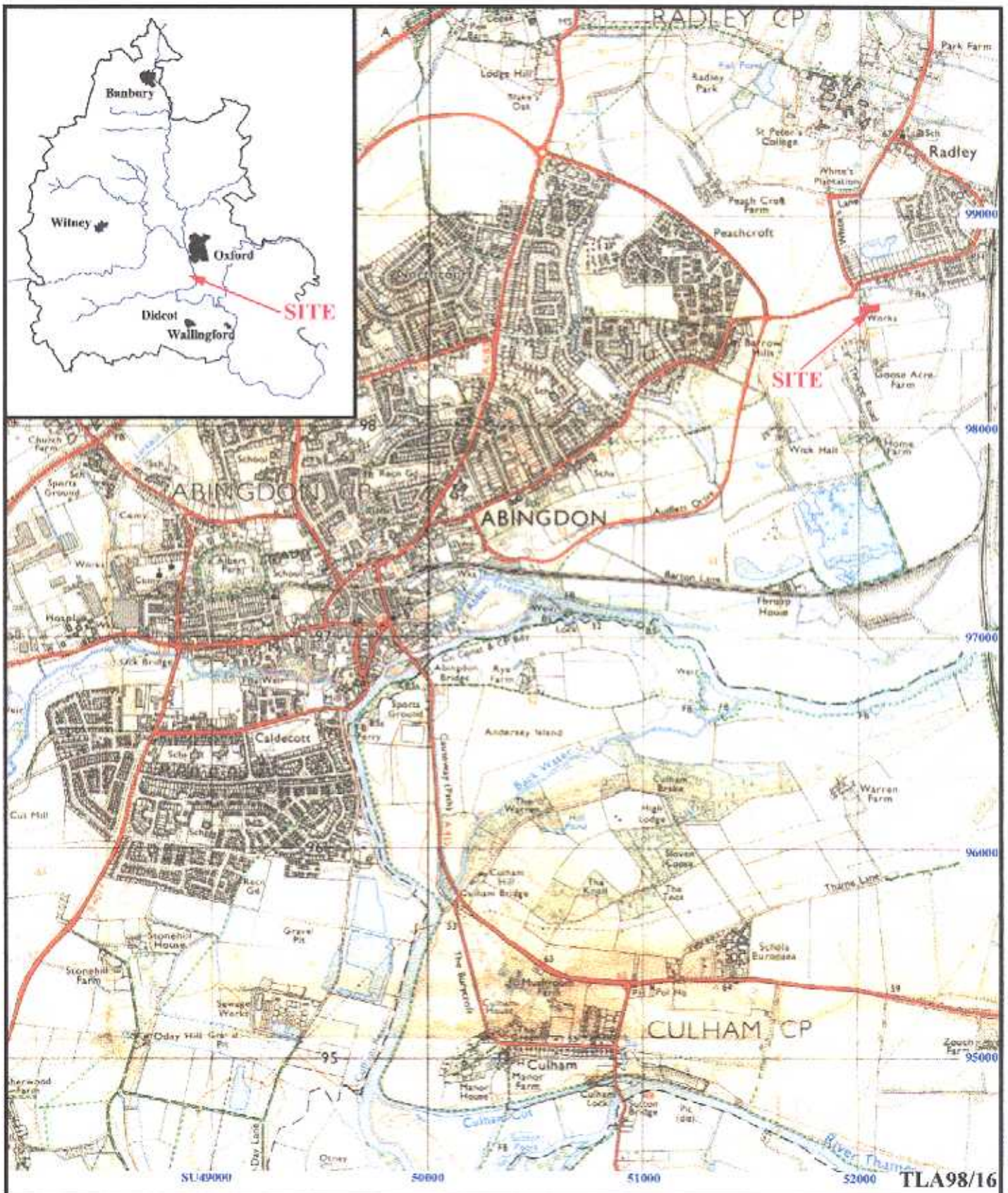
References

BGS, 1971, *British Geological Survey*, 1:63360, Sheet 253, Drift Edition, Keyworth.

PPG 16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance Note 16, HMSO.

APPENDIX 1: Trench Details

<i>Trench No.</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	11.1	1.8	0.55	0.50 m. depth of made-ground over clay silt with rare gravels (brickearth). Staining from contamination. No archaeological features or deposits present.
	TP1 1.35		0.96	Test pit onto gravel
2	10.3	1.8	0.47	0.25-30 m. depth of made-ground over clay silt with rare gravels (brickearth). No archaeological features present. Two residual worked flint flakes recovered.
	TP2 1.15		0.60	Test pit onto clay and frequent gravels
3	8.0	1.8	0.50	0.45 m. depth of made-ground from road levelling over clay silt with rare gravels (brickearth). Staining from contamination. No archaeological features or deposits present.



Thrupp Lane, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, 1998

Figure 1. Location of site within Abingdon and Oxfordshire.

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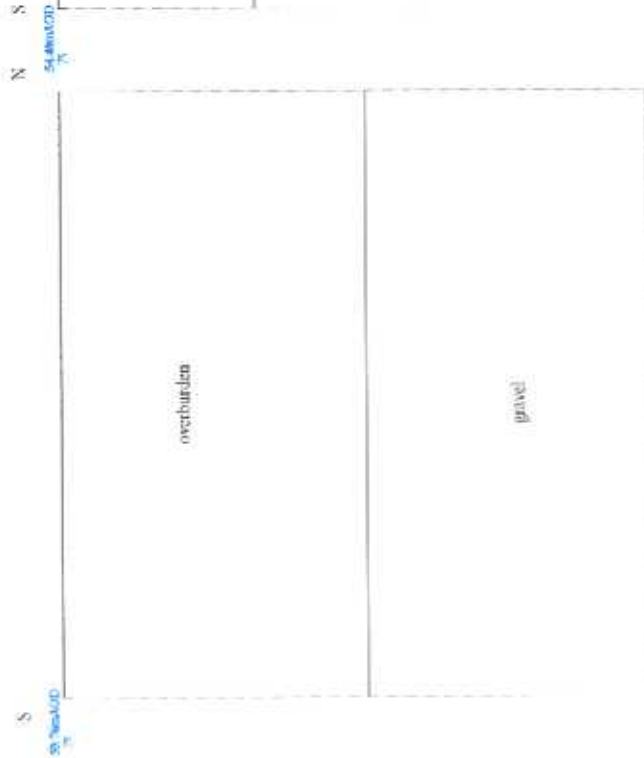
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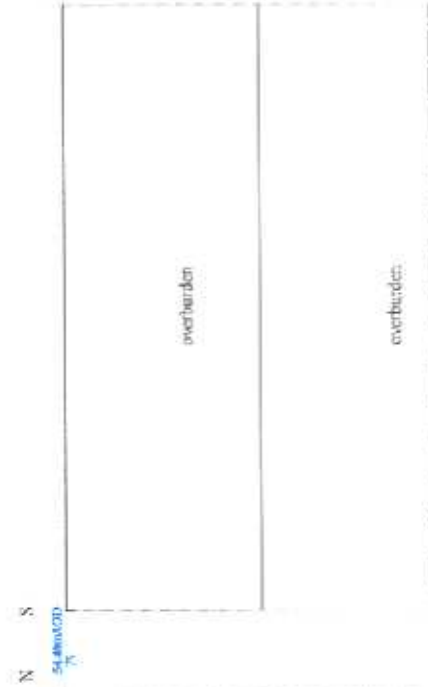
Figure 2. Trench location plan.

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Trench 1, Test-pit 1
Section 1



Trench 2, Test-pit 2
Section 2



Trench 3
Section 3



Figure 3. Representative trench sections.



Plate 1. Trench 1, looking north scale: 2m.



Plate 2. Trench 3, looking east scale: 2m.