

Archaeological Work in Oxfordshire, 2018

Between April 2018 and March 2019, County Archaeological Services was consulted on approximately 1,900 planning applications. In addition, the service scanned in the region of 10,000 applications and appraised a further 515 applications from the weekly planning lists. The service also produced fifty-five design briefs for archaeological work including thirty-six for archaeological evaluation. Not all archaeological contractors request a design brief and many produce a written scheme of investigation directly and therefore the number of investigations is higher. In addition to development control work, County Archaeology has responded to 188 Countryside Stewardship schemes within the county.

SELECTED PROJECTS

Crab Hill, Wantage

An Iron-Age and Romano-British settlement was recorded in advance of a housing development on a site to the west of Wantage. This excavation, undertaken by OA, recorded an Iron-Age settlement site consisting of a series of roundhouses, four post structures and pits. A series of Roman enclosures were also recorded along with a well and corn driers, as well as an Anglo-Saxon sunken-featured building.

Land South of Milton Road, Shipton under Wychwood

TVAS recorded an Iron-Age and Roman settlement site adjacent to the school. A series of Iron-Age and Roman pits and enclosure ditches were found across the site. A circular area of hardstanding was also recorded within the site and contemporary with the Iron-Age and Roman features. This contained very little dateable material.

Market Place Mews, Henley-on-Thames

An excavation was undertaken by AOC Archaeology to the north of the Market Place in Henley within the area of the burgage plots. The excavation recorded a large amount of information regarding the post-medieval use of the burgage plots including garden features, out buildings and a possible glass-working site. A number of medieval pits were also found.

Highworth Road, Shrivenham

A previously reported excavation by Wessex Archaeology on land to the north of Highworth Road, Shrivenham in advance of a housing development has now been completed. This excavation recorded a series of enclosures and roundhouses along the line of a Roman metalled trackway. The settlement continued along the road marking the eastern limit of the site. An earlier excavation by TVAS to the east of this road also revealed Roman settlement.

Wallingford Police Station

An archaeological excavation was undertaken by OA on the site of the former police station on the southern side of Wallingford. The excavation recorded two sunken features buildings and a large number of late Anglo-Saxon or early medieval pits. One of the sunken featured buildings was found to have parts of a floor surface surviving in places. The second building also had evidence of internal wooden walls.

Main Road, Stanton Harcourt

An archaeological excavation is being undertaken by JMHS on the site of the former Stanton Harcourt airfield. The site is within an area of cropmarks showing a complex of prehistoric to Roman settlement. An earlier archaeological evaluation had shown that archaeological features survived within the former airfield.

This excavation consists of a series of small areas within the site which has so far recorded a prehistoric enclosure, a probable Roman trackway and field system, and part of the ring ditch of a Bronze-Age barrow. A number of Roman burials have been recorded adjacent to this barrow.

Land East of Chalgrove

OA have recently completed an archaeological excavation on three areas within a housing development to the east of Chalgrove. The excavations recorded an area of Iron-Age settlement adjacent to the site boundary. This consisted of a series of Iron-Age roundhouses, pits and four post structures. The settlement continued outside of the site area. The other two areas investigated a series of Roman field systems and enclosures.

Land South of Park Road, Faringdon

Archaeological excavations were undertaken by JMHS in advance of residential development. These revealed evidence of a Romano-British settlement. The activity includes evidence of substantial quarrying activity with tools associated with the quarrying being recovered. The significance of the quarry is enhanced by the well preserved metalled road leading to it. Other features have included a corn drier with the furnace area surviving in situ, pits, enclosures and kilns (Fig. 3). A circular enclosure was also revealed. The pottery has initially been dated to the late Neolithic or early Bronze Age. No other features of this period was revealed (Figs 1 and 2).

Street Farm, Tackley

Excavations in advance of housing development were carried out by TVAS. The earliest phases of activity date to the later Iron Age. The settlement activity continued into the Romano-British period. Evidence of a Romano-British villa was revealed (Figs. 1 and 2). This is a



Fig. 1. Corn drier at Park Road.



Fig. 2. Aerial photo of Building 2 at Tackley villa. Copyright TVAS.



Fig. 3. Mosaic at the villa.

corridor villa with at least several rooms. An entrance hall has a geometric mosaic that is probably fourth century in date (Fig. 3). A further substantial Romano-British structure was revealed adjacent to the villa. There is evidence of occupation and activity continuing into the early Anglo-Saxon period.

Oxford Road, Woodstock

Archaeological excavation was undertaken in advance of residential development adjacent to the scheduled villa south of Woodstock by CA on behalf of Terence O'Rourke. This revealed two circular enclosures that are probably ring ditches and a burial containing a shield. These are all dated to the Bronze Age, but they have been so truncated and damaged by later ploughing that little remains of them. The two enclosures are not complete, and the shield and burial only survive as very small fragments. Although the excavation area is close to the villa no trace of Romano-British activity was found.

Challow Park, East Challow

After geophysical survey and archaeological evaluation archaeological excavation by CA on behalf of CGMS revealed evidence of later prehistoric and Romano British settlement with enclosures and trackways. There is also evidence of earlier prehistoric activity with linear alignments of post pits or postholes. Over a dozen sunken feature buildings have also been recorded with Anglo Saxon pottery and artefacts.

Thames Water Pipeline, Childrey Down to Lark Hill Reservoir

Geophysical survey in advance of a new pipeline from Childrey Down Pumping station to Lark Hill Reservoir identified several areas where geophysical anomalies suggested the presence of archaeological features. The archaeological investigations recorded two main areas of Iron-Age settlement consisting of roundhouses and enclosure ditches. A series of pits adjacent to one area of settlement were found to contain a number of burials.

London Road, Bicester

CFA Archaeology have undertaken an excavation ahead of a commercial development along the line of Akeman Street to the east of Bicester. The excavation followed an earlier evaluation which recorded a number of Roman ditches and what was thought to be a series of beam slots. A geophysical survey ahead of this evaluation recorded no potential archaeological features. The excavation recorded a large series of linear features across a 4-hectare area on two alignments. The linear features consist of narrow trenches, approximately 400 mm wide and 250 to 300 mm deep and contain a regular series of postholes along their flat base. The bases of these features are heavily disturbed by root action. The ditches contain small fragments of Roman pottery which is previously thought to date from the early Roman period through to the latest Roman period.

Although the post-excavation work has yet to be completed these field systems are thought to be the remains of Roman viticulture and are very similar to the remains of a Roman wine production site recorded in Northamptonshire. A separate evaluation of a much larger site undertaken by OA to the immediate west and north of this site recorded similar linear features which may have been related to wine production but as no postholes were identified within the evaluation they could not be certain.

Cotefield Business Park, Bodicote

MOLA Northamptonshire completed an archaeological excavation of four areas within the business park on the southern side of Bodicote ahead of a housing development. The areas were centred on a large prehistoric enclosure and a cremation deposits found in an earlier evaluation on the site. The excavation recorded further aspects of the Iron-Age enclosure along with a small number of late Iron-Age or Roman pits. In addition, two sunken-featured

buildings were also recorded on the site. One of these contained an Anglo-Saxon bone comb located on the base of the structure. Two further cremation deposits were also recorded.

Hithercroft Road, Wallingford

Rubicon Heritage Services carried out an archaeological evaluation on the southern side of Wallingford which has recorded a considerable number of archaeological features covering most of the site. The evaluation followed on from a geophysical survey which recorded a series of enclosures along a trackway. The evaluation recorded a number of linear features, pits and postholes covering most of the site which are provisionally dated to between the Neolithic and Roman period. A number of the features would initially appear to be dated to the Neolithic or Bronze Age.

A number of Roman features were also recorded, which is fairly rare for the Wallingford area, including one that contained a fragment of tegula. This site is located along a trackway system which appears to link the recently excavated Bronze-Age and Iron-Age settlement sites of Slade End Farm and Winterbrook.

Land North of Culham

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by CA in July and August 2018 at Culham. Thirty-nine trenches were excavated following a geophysical survey which recorded a number of areas of archaeological interest. The evaluation identified a penannular ring ditch from which early Neolithic pottery was recovered. Although it may represent an early round barrow, CA thought that it was more probable that the recovered artefacts are residual in a Bronze-Age barrow. A Neolithic to Bronze-Age boundary ditch and an early to middle Iron-Age enclosed settlement were also identified. There was also evidence for medieval and post-medieval agricultural activity. In general, the results of the evaluation correlated well with those of the preceding cropmark and geophysical surveys, with all of the predicted features being identified within the trenches. A small number of features not identified during the non-intrusive surveys were also revealed during the evaluation trenching.

Grove Airfield

Archaeological excavation by OA on behalf of CGMS revealed evidence of a later prehistoric and Romano-British settlement. A series of enclosures and some hut circles were found. There was also evidence of a metallised surface or trackway, a series of barns or granaries and a possible structure with stone foundations. The features sit within a contemporary field system.

Halls Close, Drayton

Previous archaeological evaluation indicated the presence of archaeological features. Further excavation has revealed several pits and linear ditches. Anglo-Saxon pottery was recovered from several tree throws which had been used for rubbish disposal. Most of the ditches and pits appear to be later Iron Age and Romano-British in date. A number of postholes may form part of a structure.

Land off Ducklington Lane, Ducklington

Geophysical survey (by Magnitude Surveys Ltd) in advance of housing development revealed a series of anomalies that suggested the presence of linear features, pits and enclosures. These tied in with the aerial photographic evidence and the fieldwork undertaken during the construction of the Ducklington by-pass in 1974. A subsequent archaeological evaluation by CA identified a series of rectilinear enclosures, linear features, pits and quarry pits. Two pits appear to be Anglo-Saxon in date whilst the other features date to the later Romano-British period. Further mitigation has been recommended.

Grove, Williams Formula 1, Phase 2

Geophysical survey was undertaken by Magnitude Surveys Ltd. This revealed multi-phase activity across the survey area. The results identified a number of circular and sub-circular anomalies in the southeast of the site, as well as numerous linear responses. Subsequently OA undertook an evaluation. The evaluation uncovered ditches of Bronze-Age, Iron-Age, Roman and medieval date. The Bronze-Age ditches were located within the northern part of the site and may represent a continuation of the system of trackways and field systems identified to the south-east during previous phases of work. Ditches of Iron-Age date were present in the north and east of the site but were of greater density within the south and south-east where a series of potential roundhouses were predominantly of middle Iron-Age date. Pits and postholes associated with this settlement were also present. The ditches of Roman and medieval date were also more prevalent within the southern part of the site and appeared to represent field boundaries.

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