

**Land at Clifton Road,
Deddington,
Oxfordshire**
Archaeological Evaluation

Date: January 2020
By: Mike Jones
Client: Blue Cedar Homes
Project Code: RRDO19



**Red River
Archaeology**

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Deddington, Oxfordshire
Archaeological Evaluation**

Client	Blue Cedar Homes
Project Code	RRDO19
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1.1 This report presents the results of a programme of archaeological evaluation on Land at Clifton Road, Deddington, Oxfordshire (NGR 447123 231768).
- 1.1.2 Site work was carried out on 15th and 16th January 2020. The archaeological evaluation across the site revealed the remains of a single medieval pit within one of the trenches which contained two sherds of 11th to 14th century pottery, a piece of residual Roman pottery and two pieces of faunal bone, one of which was butchered. No other trenches contained signs of archaeological remains.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Project Background

- 2.1.1 Red River Archaeology Ltd. was commissioned by Blue Cedar Homes to undertake a programme of archaeological investigation trenching associated with the proposed residential development at the site of Land at Clifton Road, Deddington, Oxfordshire (NGR 447123 231768).
- 2.1.2 Archaeological investigation trenching of the site was undertaken by Red River Archaeology Ltd. from January 15th to January 16th 2020.

2.2 Site Location & Description

- 2.2.1 The village of Deddington is located on the western side of the River Cherwell valley. The Site is approximately 5000m² in area and comprises the north-western part of a paddock situated to the south of Clifton Road, Deddington. The Site is located on the eastern side of the village, north of Deddington castle, and is bounded to the west by buildings fronting Castle Street, to the south by the remaining part of the paddock, to the east by residential properties fronting Clifton Road and a field to their rear, and to the north largely by trees lining the southern side of Clifton Road.
- 2.2.2 The Site lies on higher, relatively flat ground above small, east flowing, tributary streams of the River Cherwell, at an elevation of around 125mAOD in an area which is characterised by a series of low ridges (CgMs 2013).
- 2.2.3 The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as Marlstone Rock formation, a ferruginous limestone and ironstone. This is a sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 174 to 191 million years ago in the Jurassic Period, in a local environment previously dominated by shallow seas (BGS 2020). No superficial deposits are recorded.

2.3 Proposed Development and Planning Background

- 2.3.1 The proposed development consists of a retirement development comprising seven new houses, with associated landscaping and an access road off Clifton Road, Deddington, Oxfordshire.
- 2.3.4 A *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) was submitted to Cherwell District Council in December 2019 (Red River Archaeology Ltd 2019) and approved by Richard Oram as Archaeological Advisor to the Local Planning Authority.

3. AIMS & METHODOLOGY (EVALUATION)

3.1 Aims of Works

3.1.1 The aims of the archaeological works were to:

- Determine the extent, condition, nature, character, date and significance of any archaeological remains encountered.
- Establish the nature of the activity on the site.
- Identify any artefacts relating to the use of the site.
- Provide further information on the archaeology of the site from any archaeological remains encountered.
- Determine the geological and soil formation at the site and establish the depths of topsoil.
- To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

3.2 Scope of Works

3.2.1 The scope of the work was to carry out a programme of archaeological evaluation which comprised 5 x 20m long by 1.8m wide evaluation trenches. The overall objectives were to:

- Establish the presence and condition of potential features identified from the previous desk-based assessment.
- identify all archaeological remains revealed during the excavation of the evaluation trenches;
- ensure the preservation by record of all archaeological remains revealed during the course of the evaluation trenching;
- prepare an appropriate archaeological archive of the site, including the treatment and preservation of any finds, and an appropriate report describing the results and their significance.

3.3 Methodology

3.3.1 All fieldwork was undertaken in accordance with current best practice and the Cifa's *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (Cifa 2014a). All invasive ground-breaking works were monitored by a suitably experienced and qualified archaeologist. The final position of the trenches was adjusted slightly on site due to ground conditions to avoid vegetation, tree cover and to maintain access, up to a maximum of c.5m while still retaining orientation and targeting the potential features.

- 3.3.2 The ground work was undertaken by an 8-tonne 360 degree tracked excavator equipped with a flat bladed grading bucket, under archaeological supervision. Overburden was removed in shallow spits until the first archaeological horizon or undisturbed geological levels were exposed. Any identified deposits were cleaned by hand to define their extent, nature, form and, where possible, date.
- 3.3.3 Where potential archaeology was encountered the mechanical excavator was halted in the affected area to allow appropriate investigation by hand.
- 3.3.4 All information identified in the course of the site works was recorded stratigraphically, with sufficient pictorial record created to identify and illustrate individual features, had any been encountered. It should be noted that, where possible, data will be collected and stored digitally and in a format suitable for long term storage by the Archaeological Data Service (Richards et al, 2000). Primary records are available for inspection at all times.
- 3.3.5 All potential archaeological deposits encountered were planned and recorded. The work included, as a minimum, the recording of individual contexts on appropriate pro-formas; plan and section drawings of appropriate single contexts and features (at 1:20 and 1:10 scales, as deemed commensurate with the subject); photographs and other appropriate drawn and written records.
- 3.3.6 The recording included where appropriate:
- The recording of individual contexts on pro-formas
 - Overall excavation plans at 1:50 scale; planning and section drawing of single contexts and features (usually at 1:20 scale for plans and 1:10 scale for inhumations and sections)
 - Photographs; and other drawn and written records.
- 3.3.7 Site photography was by high resolution (12 megapixel or greater) colour DSLR photography. Photography includes general site shots, shots of each trench, and shots of individual features and groups of features. All photographs were recorded on a photographic register detailing as a minimum the subject, feature number, location and direction of each shot.
- 3.3.8 A Monitoring visit was conducted by Simon Cox of Bristol & Bath Heritage Consultancy (BBHC) on 16th January 2020 and secured sign off from Richard Oram, the archaeological advisor to the local planning authority.

Reporting and Archiving

- 3.3.9 The preparation of the report follows the standard and guidance published by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014a). Details of style and format were determined by Red River Archaeology Ltd.

- 3.3.10 The results of the archaeological work form the basis of a full archive to professional standards, prepared in accordance with the ClfA *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials, Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-Term Storage* (United Kingdom Institute for Conservation, 1990), the *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections* (Museums and Galleries Commission, 1994) and the Archaeological Archives' Forum *Archaeological Archives: a best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation* (Brown, 2007), as well as current Historic England guidelines (Historic England 2015). It has been compiled in line with ADS digital records.
- 3.3.11 The archive from the archaeological works carried out on the scheme and will be deposited with the artefacts (subject to the agreement of the legal landowner) with the Oxfordshire Museums Service. A copy of the final report will be submitted to the regional HER.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE BASELINE

4.1 Historic Baseline Data

4.1.1 The information in this section is compiled from a desk-based assessment undertaken by CgMs (2013) and from the *Specification for an Archaeological Evaluation* written by BBHC (2019), which is summarised below:

Undated

4.1.2 No Undated remains are known within the immediate vicinity of the site.

Prehistoric

4.1.3 No prehistoric remains are known within the immediate vicinity of site.

Romano-British

4.1.4 No Roman remains are known within the immediate vicinity of site. In the wider area, Roman finds and a human skeleton were found in a rubbish pit c.215m east of the Site.

Early Medieval

4.1.5 No early medieval remains are known within the immediate vicinity of site. The origins of Deddington (*lit.* village of Deda's people) are unknown but the settlement is thought to have formed around a manor, possibly situated to the west of the later castle. The castle dates from shortly after the Norman Conquest and by Domesday the village was one of the largest and most valuable settlements in Oxfordshire. By 1275-6 the village was a borough and was taxed at a higher rate in 1296.

Medieval

4.1.6 No medieval remains are known within the immediate vicinity of site. The castle dates from shortly after the Norman Conquest and by Domesday the village was one of the largest and most valuable settlements in Oxfordshire. The village is thought to have reached its maximum extent by the late 13th or 14th century. Burgage plots are known around New Street southwest of Site, and there is evidence for early crofts west of Earl's Lane, northwest of Site.

Post-medieval and Modern

4.1.7 Post-medieval houses were located along the Clifton Road in the northwest of Site, according to an Enclosure Award map dated 1808. These had been demolished by 1881 and the Site appears to have been agricultural until present day.

4.2 Previous Archaeological Works in the Area

- 4.2.1 The Site has not been subject to any previous archaeological investigation. Archaeological investigations in the surrounding area found a Roman find and human skeleton in a rubbish pit c.215m east of Site (CgMs 2013). Ridge and furrow was located within the bounds of the castle during an investigation on the route of a water pipeline. Medieval wall foundations and 12th-14th century pits were found during a watching brief c.165m southwest of Site at Mews House (JMHS 2007).

5. RESULTS

5.1 Summary results

5.1.1 The trenches were numbered 1-5 in a clockwise direction from the northernmost trench. Archaeological remains were revealed only in Trench 3. The superficial geology was found to be uniform across Site, with occasional rises of limestone bedrock within the natural clays. The trenches in the northern extent of Site showed an increased level of bioturbation due to the presence of bramble patches in the area. The topsoil across Site consisted of a dark brown, loose, silty clay. Underlying the topsoil was a subsoil comprised of a greyish brown, friable, silty clay. The natural consisted of a yellowish brown, firm clay, with frequent small to medium angular and sub-angular limestone.

Trench 3

5.1.2 Excavation of Trench 3 revealed the presence of a sub-rounded pit feature [3004] within the eastern extent of the trench (Figures 2 and 3; Plates 1, 2 and 3). The pit was aligned north-south and measured >0.8m in length, 0.5m wide and 0.2m deep with a moderate break of slope top, shallow sloped sides and irregular concave base. Pit [3004] contained a single fill (3005) which consisted of a grey, loose silty clay with no inclusions. A small quantity of pottery sherds and faunal bone was recovered.

5.2 Finds

Pottery (by Dave Gilbert)

5.2.1 The pottery assemblage consisted of 3 sherds all recovered from context (3005), weighing a total of 14g. It consisted of 2 medieval sherds and a residual abraded Roman piece. The material was cleaned, identified and discarded.

5.2.2 The Roman pottery was recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire type series (summarised in Booth 2011, 366–7) as follows:

R11: Oxford Fine Reduced Ware, 1st -2nd Century CE, 1 sherd 5g

5.2.3 The medieval pottery was recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994) as follows:

OXAC: Cotswold-type ware, 975-1350 CE, 1 sherd 4g

OXBF: North-East Wiltshire Ware, 1050–1400 CE, 1 sherd 5g

5.2.4 The range of fabric types is typical of sites in the region, indeed similar material was recovered during the archaeological work at Mews House, Castle Street (JMHS 2007).

Faunal Bone (by Rose Calis)

- 5.2.5 Two fragments of animal bone were recovered from context (3005) in pit [3004]. The material was cleaned and identified, and any pathology noted.

Methodology

- 5.2.6 Bone was identified using Schmid (1972).

Results

Context	Species	Element	Butchery	Gnawing	Quant
3005	Cattle	Thoracic vertebrae	1		1
3005	Unidentified large mammal	Rib		1	1
Total					2

- 5.2.7 A total of two bones were recovered from the single fill (3005) of a truncated pit [3004] in Trench 3. Both bones are in moderate condition and the rib shows evidence of root etching. The cattle thoracic vertebrae presented two diagonal chop marks across the spinous process. This appeared to have been made by a heavy, blunt blade such as a cleaver. Rodent scratch marks covered the unidentifiable large mammal rib, with additional canid toothmarks and gnawing visible at the proximal end. This bone appeared to be unfused on the proximal end.
- 5.2.8 The butchery on the vertebrae appears to date from the Roman or medieval periods onwards. The presence of butchery marks implies meat consumption. Two pottery sherds recovered from the same fill were dated to the later medieval period, with an additional single residual Roman sherd. The butchery marks support the medieval date of the pit suggested by the pottery. The heavy gnawing on the rib implies the bone was either initially deposited in an open refuse area and then later deposited in the sealed pit, or the pit was not immediately sealed, and so left open for a while. Given only one bone shows signs of heavy gnawing, the former is perhaps the more likely.
- 5.2.9 In light of these very limited findings there is no need for further analysis.

6. DISCUSSION

6.1 Evaluation Results

- 6.1.1 The evaluation trenching across the Site only revealed a single pit [3004] in the central area of excavation. The pit contained two sherds of pottery dated to the Medieval period and one residual Roman fragment, along with two fragments of faunal bone.
- 6.1.2 A Romano-British settlement is reportedly located east of the Oxford Road close to South brook (Baggs *et al* 1983) with additional finds a mile north, along with the Roman find and skeleton c.215m east of Site. The single residual sherd of Roman pottery corroborates activity in the area in the c.1st to 2nd century AD, however the lack of features or further finds indicates any activity took place at a distance from the immediate vicinity of Site.
- 6.1.3 The single pit dates from the Medieval period, with the two pottery sherds suggesting a date between the 11th to 14th century, a time when the village was at its zenith in terms of prosperity. The pottery could contribute to a large-scale analysis of material culture from the area, and thereby contribute to paragraph 16.13 of the Solent-Thames Research Framework which recommends further study of the varieties and quality of pottery and how that can be indicative of consumer activity (Munby and Allen 2014). Any contribution would be to a limited extent due to the small size of the assemblage.
- 6.1.4 Paragraph 16.5.3 of the Solent-Thames Research Framework recommends the routine quantitative and pathological analysis of faunal bone for indication of diet. (Munby and Allen 2014). The cattle vertebrae showed signs of butchery, with the unidentified rib suggesting an open refuse area in the nearby area. The faunal bone could also contribute to a larger-scale analysis of diet in the area during the later medieval period, although to a limited extent due to the small size of the assemblage.
- 6.1.5 The pit, pottery and faunal bone could be connected with Deddington Castle to the immediate south of Site due to being broadly contemporary, however no direct connection between the sites could be established in the context of this evaluation. The pottery and faunal bone are not indicative of a high-status site, however the Castle was known to be in disrepair from the late 13th century onwards (Baggs *et al* 1983).
- 6.1.6 The potential post-medieval boundaries for housing along the northwest and southwest side of site which were targeted by Trenches 1 and 5 were not identified. This could be due to the nature of the boundaries themselves which may have constituted hedgerows rather than dug features and therefore be more ephemeral within the archaeological record. The subsoil and natural within Trench 1 especially were noted to contain frequent rooting throughout which may have obscured any previous concentration of rooting remaining from 19th century hedges. The boundaries may also not have been located due to inaccurate survey during the creation

of the 1808 Enclosure Map, or disturbance caused by ploughing of the field after the boundaries were removed which resulted in any remains being truncated away.

7. ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

7.1 Known Heritage Resource

7.1.1 The Site had not been subject to any previous recorded archaeological investigation and the only remains known from Site are two potential post-medieval houses in the northwest corner which were demolished by 1881. No known prehistoric remains are present within the vicinity of Site and Roman remains in the area are discrete finds and a skeleton found within a nearby rubbish pit. The village of Deddington was founded before the Norman Conquest possibly around a manor located west of the Norman Castle, with known medieval burgage plots in the village, medieval wall foundations and pits southwest of Site, and ridge and furrow located near the castle. The village peaked in the 13th-14th centuries and subsequently declined in population and wealth until the 20th century, with the local economy relying on local agriculture.

7.2 Potential Archaeological Resource and Significance

7.2.1 The results of the archaeological investigations identified a single pit of medieval date. This broadly corresponds with the known history of the village and with the known archaeological resource in the vicinity of Site. The single pit is of low local significance as no function or relationship with other features in the surrounding area could be discerned.

7.3 Impact of Development

7.3.1 The proposed development will impact on the feature identified during the course of the archaeological investigations. However, as this is of low local significance and has been recorded in line with the WSI for this project, the predicted impact has been mitigated.

8. REFERENCES

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Appendices

APPENDIX 1 ARCHIVE STATEMENT

The site archive is comprised of the following materials:

Item	Quantity
Field recording sheets	7
Plans	1
Sections	1
Photographs	29
Registers (Context, finds, drawing, sample, photo)	4
Notebooks	

The archive material is contained within one box.

The archive is currently stored in the offices of Rubicon Heritage Services Ltd, Unit 3, Ringside Business Park, Heol Y Rhosog, Cardiff, CF2 3EW, Wales.

APPENDIX 2 CONTEXT REGISTER

Context No.	Type	Fill of:	Filled by:	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Interpretation
1001	Layer	-	-	>20	>1.8	0.2	Dark brown, loose silty clay with frequent bioturbation	Topsoil
1002	Layer	-	-	>20	>1.8	0.1	Brown, friable silty clay with occasional bioturbation	Subsoil
1003	Layer	-	-	>20	>1.8	-	Light reddish brown, firm clay with frequent angular and sub-angular stone inclusions.	Natural
2001	Layer	-	-	>20	>1.8	0.3	Dark brown, loose silty clay with occasional bioturbation	Topsoil
2002	Layer	-	-	>20	>1.8	0.34	Brown, friable silty clay with occasional bioturbation	Subsoil
2003	Layer	-	-	>20	>1.8	-	Light reddish brown, firm clay with frequent angular and sub-angular stone inclusions.	Natural
3001	Layer	-	-	>20	>1.8	0.35	Dark brown, loose silty clay with occasional bioturbation	Topsoil
3002	Layer	-	-	>20	>1.8	0.17	Brown, friable silty clay with occasional bioturbation	Subsoil
3003	Layer	-	-	>20	>1.8	-	Light reddish brown, firm clay with frequent angular and sub-angular stone inclusions.	Natural
3004	Cut	-	3005	>0.8	0.5	0.2	Sub-circular pit, aligned N-S, moderate break of slope top with shallow sloped sides and an irregular concave base	Cut of pit

Context No.	Type	Fill of:	Filled by:	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Interpretation
3005	Deposit	3004	-	>0.8	0.5	0.2	Grey, loose silty clay, no inclusions	Single fill of [3004]
4001	Layer	-	-	>20	>1.8	0.17	Dark brown, loose silty clay with occasional bioturbation	Topsoil
4002	Layer	-	-	>20	>1.8	0.12	Brown, friable silty clay with occasional bioturbation	Subsoil
4003	Layer	-	-	>20	>1.8	-	Light reddish brown, firm clay with frequent angular and sub-angular stone inclusions.	Natural
5001	Layer	-	-	>20	>1.8	0.25	Dark brown, loose silty clay with occasional bioturbation	Topsoil
5002	Layer	-	-	>20	>1.8	0.25	Brown, friable silty clay with occasional bioturbation	Subsoil
5003	Layer	-	-	>20	>1.8		Light reddish brown, firm clay with frequent angular and sub-angular stone inclusions.	Natural

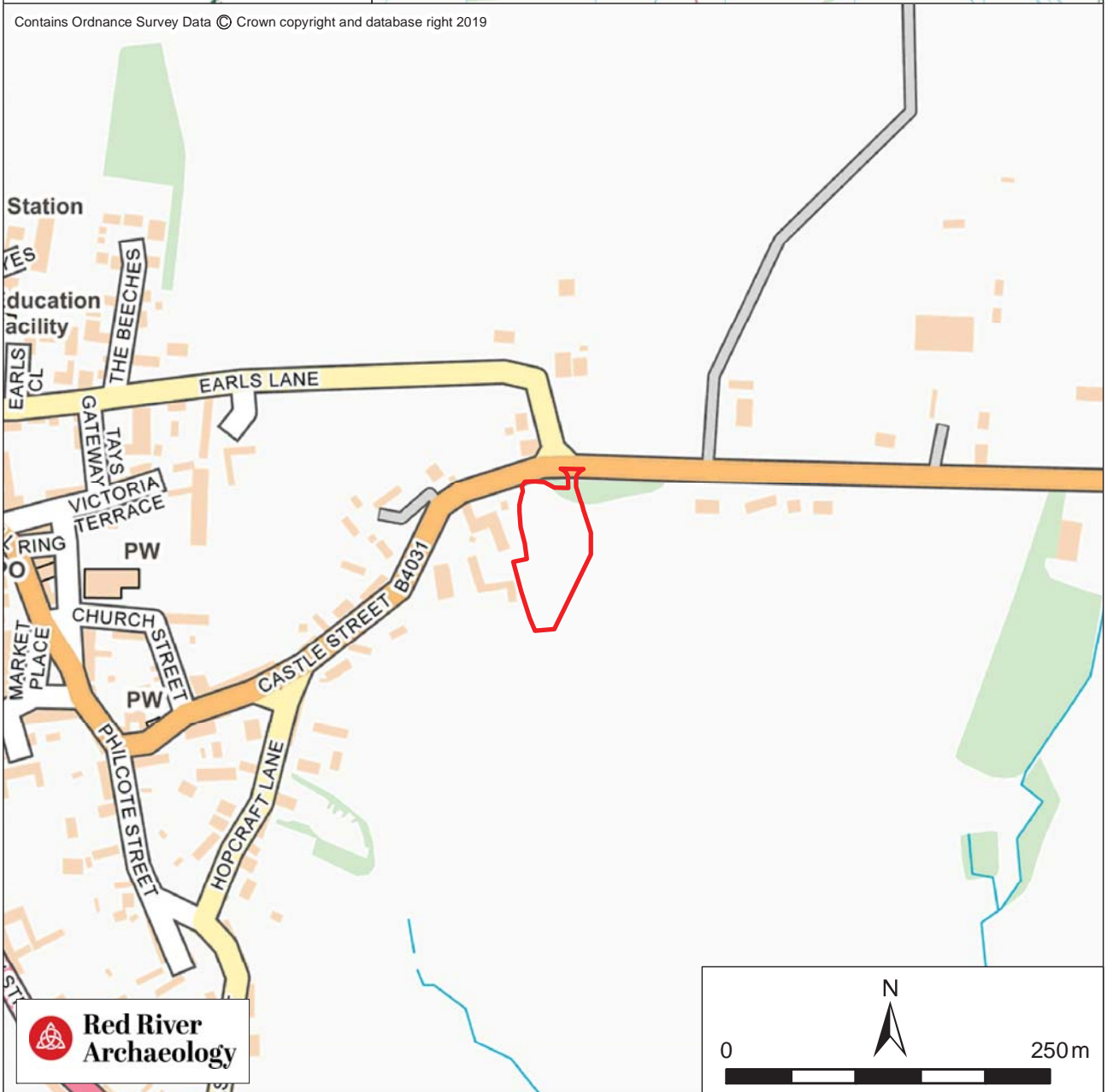
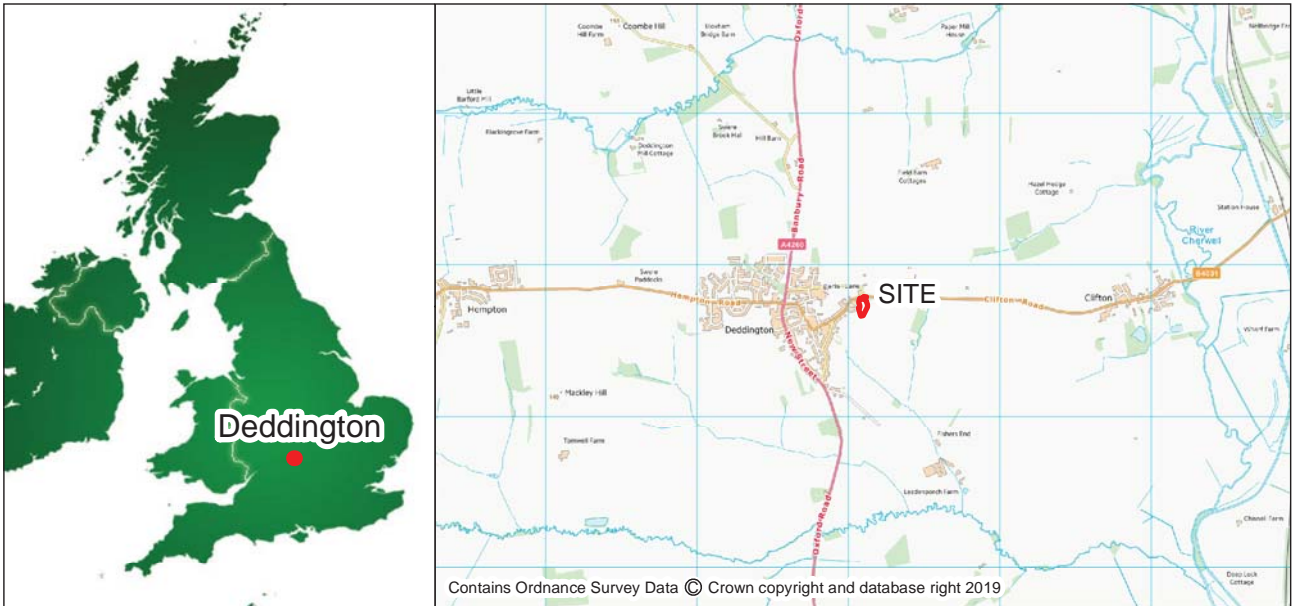
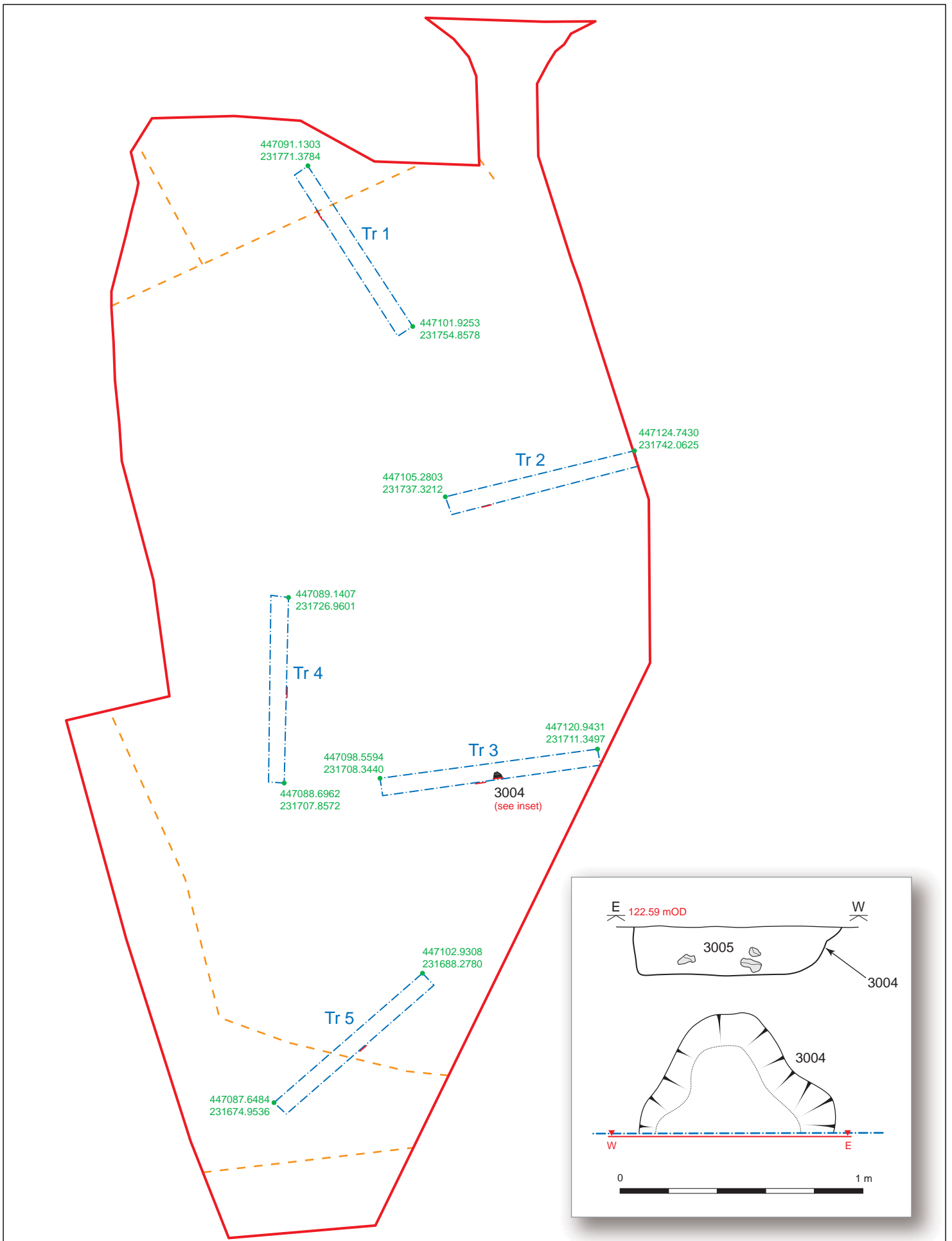


Figure 1 - Land at Clifton Road, Deddington, Oxfordshire: Site location.



KEY Site boundary Section line Excavated trench Enclosure map boundaries Archaeology	 N	Project Code: RRDO19 - Clifton Rd, Deddington	Scale: 1:500 @A4
		Drawn By: HS Date: 21-01-2020	 0 25 m

Figure 2 - Excavated trench layout.



Plate 1 - Overview of Trench 3, looking west



Plate 2 - Plan view of Pit [3004]