

**Bankside, Banbury,
Oxfordshire**

**Archaeology &
Heritage
Assessment**

Bankside, Banbury, Oxfordshire

Archaeology & Heritage Assessment

Client: Hallam Land Management

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Author: Ben Stephenson

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M: 07769 708105 **T:** 01235 536754 **Web:** www.bsaheritage.co.uk

Post: 7 Spring Gardens, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 1AZ.

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Appendix 1

Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record Gazetteer

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Plate 8: Lockkeeper's cottage and Grant's Lock

Figure 1

Identified Archaeology and Heritage

Section 1: Introduction

- 1.1. This archaeology and heritage assessment has been prepared by BSA Heritage Limited on behalf of Hallam Land Management to support a planning application and EIA for the re-development of land at Bankside, east of Bodicote, on the southern edge of Banbury, Oxfordshire. The assessment has been completed in accordance with relevant legislation, the National Planning Policy Framework and local policy.
- 1.2. The site extends across an area of circa 27 hectares and is centred at NGR SP 4715 3790 (Figure 1). Its north western boundary is defined by an earlier phase of residential development. An historic trackway which is also a Public Right of Way marks the site's southern boundary, with agricultural land beyond. Further agricultural land lies east of the site. Bodicote lies west of the site and the A4260.
- 1.3. The land slopes gently down towards the east and from circa 118m Above Ordnance Datum to circa 114m AOD. The land falls more steeply further east, into the north south aligned valley of the River Cherwell in which run the Oxford Canal, mainline railway and M40 motorway. The site itself consists of three arable fields.
- 1.4. The geology of the site is noted as a mix of mudstone, siltstone, limestone and sandstone by the British Geological Survey, with recent investigations confirming clay with limestone brash (Foundations Archaeology 2015).
- 1.5. This report outlines the planning context and the known history and archaeology of the site. An understanding of the evolution and significance of nearby remains has been informed by consultation with the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record, Oxfordshire History Centre and the Historic England Archive in Swindon and their online National Heritage List for England (NHLE). Further online sources and a walkover survey complemented these sources.
- 1.6. The Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) holds records relating to known or suspected archaeological and heritage sites, findspots¹ and the results of past archaeological investigations. The NHLE holds details of designated heritage assets including listed buildings, scheduled monuments and registered landscapes.² The Cherwell District Council website confirmed details for nearby conservation areas. Oxfordshire History Centre and the Historic England Archive hold historic maps, secondary sources and aerial photographs.
- 1.7. This assessment has also been informed by the results of archaeological investigations completed ahead of the construction of new development to the north of the site, which included trial trenching and geophysical survey (Foundations Archaeology 2005 & 2012 and ASWYAS 2005) Following initial assessment in 2014 and given uncertain archaeological potential and policies requiring archaeological evaluation, the site has been subject to fieldwork including geophysical survey and subsequent trial trenching (GSB Prospection 2014 & Foundations Archaeology 2015). The results of this evaluation are summarised below.
- 1.8. Sources have allowed extant heritage assets to be identified within the site and sub-surface archaeological remains to be characterised. The relationship of the closest listed buildings and conservation areas to the site has also been considered and the likely effects on their significance and appreciation confirmed.

¹ Findspots are the location of the recovery of archaeological material only, without associated features.

² NPPF defines 'heritage assets' as designated or undesignated remains, landscapes and structures which are of sufficient significance to be a material consideration in planning decisions.

Section 2: Planning Context

- 2.1. This section summarises the relevant national and local planning policies, as well as other documents, relevant to the assessment of effects on heritage assets, including archaeological remains. The duty to preserve or enhance the setting of listed buildings and conservation areas contained within sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is a statutory consideration for the local planning authority.
- 2.2. A 2014 Court of Appeal ruling in *Barnwell Manor Wind Energy Ltd v East Northants District Council*, English Heritage and the National Trust made clear that to discharge this responsibility, decision makers must give considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings when carrying out the balancing exercise of judging harm against other planning considerations as required under the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF, DCLG 2012).
- 2.3. In terms of national policy, the NPPF sets out the Government's policy on the historic environment. The NPPF sets out core principles at Paragraph 17 and includes a commitment to '*conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance*'. The Historic Environment is considered by the NPPF in more detail under Section 12. At Paragraph 128, the need for an applicant to provide information on the significance of affected heritage as part of an application is noted.
- 2.4. Paragraphs 134 and 135 clarify that, where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including safeguarding its future. Paragraph 135 states that:

'The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.'
- 2.5. Paragraph 137 notes that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably. Paragraph 139 notes that non-designated archaeological remains which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled remains should also be treated as if they were designated heritage assets.
- 2.6. As a minimum, the NPPF suggests planning application be supported by consultation with the relevant Historic Environment Record and the heritage assets themselves should be assessed using appropriate expertise. Where an application may affect heritage assets, an appropriate desk assessment should be provided, and where relevant, field evaluations should be undertaken. This report also considers indirect effects on the setting of nearby heritage assets as required by the relevant sections of the NPPF. Should a scheme be permitted, the NPPF notes that additional investigation might be required to record elements which are to be lost (Para. 141).

Local Policy

- 2.7. The adopted Cherwell Local Plan refers to the historic environment in Policy ESD15 – *The Character of the Built and Historic Environment* (CDC 2015). Under the fifth bullet-point it is noted that development proposals should:

'Conserve, sustain and enhance designated and non-designated 'heritage assets' (as defined in the NPPF) including features, archaeology, conservation areas and their settings, and ensure new development is sensitively sited and integrated in accordance with advice in the NPPF and NPPG.'

- 2.8. Policy ESD 15 confirms that where non-designated heritage assets are affected, the scale of harm or loss together with significance will be considered in accordance with national policy and guidance. The policy also requires suitable assessment to inform applications and encourages retention of historic boundaries.
- 2.9. Policy ESD 16 relates specifically to the Oxford Canal which is confirmed to be designated as a conservation area along its entire north south length through the District. The policy confirms that proposals which would harm the character or appearance of the conservation area will not be permitted.
- 2.10. The adopted Local Plan also contains a policy specific to the allocated development at Bankside: Policy Banbury 4. This requires that hedgerows and a public right of way to the south are protected, that development accord with Policy ESD15 and also that a Heritage Impact Assessment informs the evolution of scheme proposals. That the application should be informed by the results of archaeological field evaluation is also explicit.
- 2.11. The Non-statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011 is also noted as guidance for would-be developers and this deals with heritage under 'policies' EN39, EN40 and EN42 to EN49a (CDC 2006). Of most relevance is EN47: *Archaeology and the Built Heritage – Applications* which confirms that suitable evaluation should precede development and that important archaeological remains should either be preserved in situ or by investigation and reporting prior to construction.

Guidance

- 2.12. The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) is an online document referred to in Cherwell's policy and provides high level supporting information for the NPPF. Historic England also provides two relevant guidance documents on setting and significance.
- 2.13. Historic England's *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Guidance Note 3 – The Setting of Heritage Assets* states:

'Setting is not a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation, though land within a setting may itself be designated. Its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset. This depends on a wide range of physical elements within, as well as perceptual and associational attributes pertaining to, the heritage asset's surroundings.'

The advice note confirms that settings change over time and that it is important to understand this process and that those settings which have experienced least change will often enhance an asset's significance (Historic England 2015a).

- 2.14. The guidance acknowledges that views or inter-visibility is often key to a setting enhancing an asset's significance; sometimes through design and sometimes unintentionally, but that other factors, including noise, dust and light generated by new development can have an adverse effect on an asset's significance when generated within the setting.
- 2.15. That every proposal will have a different effect and that every asset or group of assets will differ in how their setting enhances their significance is explicit in the Guidance. That assessment of effects is a qualitative and 'expert' judgement is also stated. Nonetheless, the Guidance sets out a staged approach for the careful consideration of assets, their setting, how the latter affects the assets' significance and how proposed change would alter this in order to make assessment more systematic. Five steps are recommended:
- Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected;
 - Assess whether, how and to what degree the assets' setting makes a contribution to their significance;
 - Assess the effects of the proposal, whether harmful or beneficial (or neutral);
 - Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm; and
 - Make and document the decision and monitor outcome.
- 2.16. The fifth point is beyond the scope of this assessment as it relates to development once consented. It is also the case that the first element, identifying heritage assets which are affected, is iterative and will initially include some or many which are eventually assessed to be unaffected. Access may not always be available to all assets, with assessment relying on the closest public land, although the Guidance confirms that public access is not a prerequisite of setting enhancing the significance of an asset.
- 2.17. The Guidance provides check-lists of factors to consider as part of both Step 2 and Step 3. That only a small number of these factors might be relevant to each asset or situation is confirmed. In relation to Step 4, changes to location, design and landscape or acoustic screening are suggested as means of mitigating harmful effects. Better access, interpretation or improved views are suggested as possible enhancements.
- 2.18. An approach to the assessment of setting is reiterated in *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Guidance Note 2 – Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment* (Historic England 2015b). This assessment follows both sets of advice and provides an appraisal of heritage assets which might be affected and the extent of their setting which contributes to their significance or supports appreciation of that significance. Section 5 confirms the likely effects of the proposals and confirms mitigation as appropriate.

- 2.19. Perhaps confusingly, the Historic England Guidance encourages assessment of setting informed by the Heritage Values approach set out by English Heritage in their 2008 Conservation Principles document (EH 2008). In summary, this identifies four classes of 'heritage value' which a site may hold and which may be affected by development:
- **Evidential value:** is the potential of a place to yield evidence of past human activity, in the form of physical remains including archaeological deposits, extant structures and features;
 - **Historical value:** derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. Remains can illustrate aspects of history through visibility. Association with a notable family, person, event, or movement gives historical value a particular resonance provided that the asset still retains some semblance of its appearance at the time. Historical value of places depends upon both sound identification and direct experience of fabric or landscape that has survived from the past, but is not as easily diminished by change or partial replacement as evidential value;
 - **Aesthetic value:** derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place and can be the result of the conscious design of a place or the fortuitous outcome of the way in which a place has evolved and been used over time. The latter may include the seemingly organic form of an urban or rural landscape; and
 - **Communal value:** *"..derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory. Communal values are closely bound up with historical (particularly associative) and aesthetic values... In some cases, that meaning can only be understood through information and interpretation, whereas, in others, the character of the place itself tells most of the story."* This value can also apply to spiritual or socially important sites.

Section 3: Historical and Archaeological Context

- 3.1. This section confirms the results of initial assessment of available sources. Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record and History Centre were visited so that their sources could inform an understanding of the development of the site and its surroundings. Information available at the Historic England (HE) Archive and online from the National Heritage List for England and Cherwell District Council also informed initial assessment.

Designated Heritage

- 3.2. No designated heritage assets lie within or close to the site. The closest 'listed buildings' relate to the Oxford Canal and lie at least five hundred metres to the north and east of the site (Figure 1). The nearest ten separately listed structures mainly date to the late 18th century and the construction of the Oxford Canal and all are Grade II listed. They include Haynes', Foxes' and Haddons' bridges west of the M40 (LBs 1 to 3, Plate 1). These simple wooden accommodation bridges are of a standard design and the Oxford Canal has one of the few remaining sets of such 'lift bridges'.
- 3.3. East of the M40, Grant's Lock and an adjacent stone bridge over the canal are both listed and thought to be of late 18th century date (LB 4, Plate 2). Slightly over a kilometre to their south, a further 18th century stone bridge at Twyford Wharf is also listed as are two nineteenth brick kilns close by (LB 7, Plate 3). Two wooden and unnamed 'tilting' bridges lying between Grant's Lock and Twyford Wharf are also Grade II listed (LBs 5 & 6, Plate 1). Only at Twyford Wharf does the bridge carry a road over the canal. Others were to 'accommodate' farmers' access to fields.
- 3.4. As Policy ESD 16 of the Cherwell Local Plan notes, the entire length of the Oxford Canal in Cherwell District is designated as a conservation area. The 2012 Appraisal confirms that the Cherwell Valley forms a natural north to south routeway through the area and that the canal was constructed south of Banbury from 1786, with the canal down to Oxford opened four years later (CDC 2012). The canal was constructed as a contour canal, making use of the most level route on the side of the river valley. As elsewhere, the canal suffered from the advent of railways from the mid-19th century and road traffic in the 20th century and the canal slowly fell out of use.
- 3.5. The Appraisal notes that the unlisted brick and iron Nadkey Bridge is noteworthy as an unusual, albeit later design (Site 10, Plate 4). A section on key views confirms that these differ to those in typical conservation areas, with a focus along the canal itself and, where vegetation allows, of the wider valley. The higher slopes then limit views beyond from the canal. The Appraisal acknowledges that the original character of the canal as a commercial enterprise has been replaced by leisure use.
- 3.6. However, the rural setting and relationship to the River Cherwell are noted as positive factors which enhance the character of the conservation area. The M40 motorway, which also takes advantage of the topography, is highlighted as a detractor. The relevant section of the Appraisal for the area south of Banbury confirms that the only important vista west of the canal (or the 'off-side') is to ridge and furrow on the lower slopes of the valley.
- 3.7. The only other nearby designated heritage assets which might be affected lie in Bodicote, west of the site. Bodicote Conservation Area covers the historic core of Bodicote (Figure 1, CDC 2008). The designated area lies on the western side of Bodicote, more than five hundred metres from the nearest part of the site and with more recent parts of the settlement between the two.

- 3.8. The Appraisal confirms that almost all parts of the village developed by 1875 are included within the designated area. No positive views out from the conservation area and to the east are identified in the Appraisal.
- 3.9. The closest listed buildings to the site lie within Bodicote Conservation Area or close to it. Most are houses which are no higher than more recent townscape and typical of the streets within the conservation area (Plate 5). At the heart of the community, but on the south western edge of the conservation area, lies the parish church of St John the Baptist. The stone church is 13th century and later and the only Grade II* (or Grade I) listed building in the village (Plate 6, LB 9).
- 3.10. Just to the north east of the conservation area is the Grade II listed Bodicote House (Figure 1, LB 8). This is a large stone built 18th century and later house which is now in use as Cherwell District Council offices. Other listed buildings at a greater distance from the site were also considered, but none would be affected by the site given their location and context.

Oxfordshire HER

- 3.11. The Oxfordshire HER only records a small number of finds and sites within a kilometre radius study area around the site, although these records include a range of prehistoric and Roman sites and finds. The earliest artefact recorded in the study area is the chance find of a barbed and tanged arrowhead on the surface by an archaeologist undertaking trial trenching north of the site (Figure 1, HER 26494, '1'). As Figure 1 shows, this find was made close to the site's northern boundary, with the arrowhead dated as Mesolithic.
- 3.12. The earliest period for which sites are recorded is the Neolithic, with a putative 'cursus' identified on aerial photographs (HER 5700). Only two 1972 oblique photographs showing this feature were available, but they suggest that it lies half a kilometre south of the site. It was not considered further as part of a thematic study of the area's cursuses given 'insufficient evidence' (Brereton n.d.).
- 3.13. Such monuments are thought to be ceremonial processional avenues which would have had parallel banks and ditches (English Heritage 2011). The length of cursuses varies widely from tens of metres to kilometres, they are not always exactly parallel and there are not always termini, which can be curved or straight when present. Understanding of this site type is hindered by low levels of associated material, frequent later re-use and an absence of features other than the ditches and ploughed out banks. An increasing number with a wide distribution are being recognised and they are of considerable significance as a reflection of early communal activity despite their limited remains.
- 3.14. The only definite Neolithic features in the study area have been found through evaluation circa 300m south west of the site (Figure 1, HER 26492). The investigation located two Neolithic pits with pottery, worked flints and also remains of hazelnuts and pig bones. These were interpreted as ritual pits used to 'decommission' a domestic site. Residual Neolithic worked flint was also found in later features.
- 3.15. This recent investigation west of the A4260 also identified two likely foci of middle to late Iron Age settlement, concentrated in the north west corner of the area evaluated (Figure 1, HER 26492). Geophysical survey had identified a number of linear anomalies, originally seen on aerial images, and these were dated by trial trenching. Such remains are widespread and of local significance only.

- 3.16. Early Roman settlement was also suggested by investigations west of the A4260 and the largest number of records lying within the study area may date to the Roman period. Two likely settlement sites are recorded west of the site, with a scatter of pottery, burnt stones and skeletons recorded in the 1920s and 1930s as lying 500m south of the site (HER 1747).
- 3.17. More certain is the location of Roman settlement near the Sor Brook, further west (HER 2332). This area where Roman finds and some Iron Age pottery had been found was investigated in the 1990s and the remains of a building and a fine copper item were found, suggesting a high status settlement. Roman settlement may have favoured the less exposed valley west of the present Banbury Road (A4260).
- 3.18. Extensive investigation north of the site found little evidence of archaeological activity (HER 26494, see below). What was recorded was limited to three sub-surface features in one trench in the north east, circa 200m north of the site, containing small amounts of Roman pottery (Foundations Archaeology 2005, '2' on Figure 1). Subsequent trial trenching to define the area of activity found nothing of note and no further work was consequently required (Foundations Archaeology 2012).
- 3.19. It is not clear on what basis a 'verbal informant' notified the Oxon HER that the track running from Weeping Cross westwards is of Roman date (Figure 1, HER 11617). It was a route to Buckingham before post-medieval road improvement and might therefore be of some antiquity.
- 3.20. Other records lying within the study area are of post-Roman date. HER 11372 records the find of Anglo-Saxon pottery in the west of Bodicote. HER 1748, immediately west of the site, records the site of 'Weeping Cross', a medieval cross shaft with stepped plinth which marked the then crossroads. The cross was removed in 1803 and its emotive name is actually thought to be a corruption of 'way marker'. HER 11825, almost a kilometre west of the site, records the site of a medieval rabbit warren.
- 3.21. As noted above, two development sites within the study area have been subject to investigation in the 21st century. Neolithic and Iron Age features and finds from work across circa five hectares west of the A4260 have been noted above (HER 26492, Northamptonshire Archaeology 2010). Vestiges of medieval cultivation were also found.
- 3.22. A larger area north of the site, which is now in the process of being developed, was investigated in 2005 and 2012 (HER 26494). Initial magnetic scanning and areas of detailed survey were completed by Archaeological Services WYAS (ASWYAS 2005). A limited range of anomalies was identified by this work, including the remains of ridge and furrow cultivation. The site was then subject to trial trenching, concentrated in areas to be subject to built development (Foundations Archaeology 2005). Fifty trenches, representing a circa one percent sample, were opened.
- 3.23. Only one trench had any features of note within it, with a likely Roman ditch and two gullies as noted above. In order to satisfy a planning condition, two further trial trenches were investigated in 2012 close to the location of that containing the features and where attenuation ponds were to be excavated (Foundations Archaeology 2012). No significant features were identified by this work and no further investigation has been required across the wider area.

Historic Maps

- 3.24. The earliest map consulted was Davis' map of Oxfordshire dating to the 1790s. This does show the roads in place, Bodicote, the canal and Weeping Cross, with the site itself depicted as arable land, but with little detail.
- 3.25. A detailed map of Bodicote was available dating to 1833 (OHC ref. PCI/i/l). This gives field names to a recognisable, yet changed field pattern. In the north east of the site lay 'The Middle Ground', with 'Weeping Cross Ground' in the west and 'Ploughed ground south east of Weeping Cross Ground' to the south east. The track to the south is marked as 'Weeping Cross Ground Lane'.
- 3.26. The first edition Ordnance Survey maps of 1882 cover the site on sheets VI.13 & X.1. Although the pattern of fields remains, those in the site had two or three north west to south east further divisions at the time. New College Farm and Sandhill Farm were marked to the north east of the site.
- 3.27. No change is shown in 1900, whilst the only change in 1923 is a range of buildings shown as planned north west of the site and which may in fact have been built just within the site (see below). Both farms to the north east appear to be still occupied in 1923. Post-war maps were also viewed, but nothing of note is apparent on these.

Aerial Photographs

- 3.28. A total of a hundred vertical and oblique images were available from the Historic England Archive. These included black and white and colour photographs ranging in year to between 1946 and 1998 and with images from every decade in between.
- 3.29. Two oblique photographs from 1972 are the only images which show parallel linear features likely to be the inspiration for the recorded 'cursus' (HER 5700) south of the site. These show two very straight almost parallel lines running approximately north to south over circa 200m. A possible rounded terminus in the south is apparent as is divergence of the lines.
- 3.30. The site itself seems to have been cultivated since the Second World War, with the loss of field boundaries shown on historic maps apparent over time. Two farms to the north east of the site appear occupied in the 1940s, to later be replaced by copses. Two farm buildings lay just within the site where the north western boundary dog-legs. Although vestiges of ridge and furrow are apparent in fields to the north of the site and further afield, none is clear within the site itself. A Google Earth image of the site does show a dark linear running in from the north of the site and curving round to continue beyond the site to the east. This has since been confirmed as a modern service route.

Other Sources

- 3.31. A search was completed at the Oxfordshire History Centre and its online search facility. Parish histories confirm that Bodicote is mentioned in Domesday, but was part of Adderbury Parish until 1855 (Pugh 1969). The parish was enclosed in the second part of the 18th century. Sources do confirm that the main Banbury to Oxford road was turnpiked in 1755. It is not clear if it was at this time that the track from Weeping Cross ceased to be the road to Buckingham. The Victoria County History notes that it might have been a 'saltway' and hence medieval, if not earlier. The first reference to Weeping Cross is recorded in 1675, although the VCH suggests a 15th century origin for the marker (Smith 1954, Pugh 1969).

Section 4: The Site and Environs

- 4.1. The site was visited in July 2014 and again in August 2016. The visits allowed topography and land use to be considered in terms of both archaeological potential and the setting of nearby designated heritage assets.
- 4.2. Much of the site was under a cereal crop at the time of the initial visit. Nothing of note was apparent within the large fields other than the hedgerows marked on Figure 1. An avenue of trees marks the course of a track in the west.
- 4.3. The old road marking the site's southern boundary and running east from the main Banbury road is a public footpath and has a gravelled surface along much of its course. No structures now lie within the site and there was no indication of the site of Weeping Cross. Development to the north is marked by construction activity and new housing.
- 4.4. The site visit confirmed that there appear to be no setting issues relating to designated heritage. To the west, Bodicote's conservation area lies encircled by more recent residential and other development, principally of twentieth century date. There are open views to the west of the village over open fields, and these enhance the setting of the church, western parts of the conservation area and other listed buildings in those areas. However, it is certainly the case that the site area does not enhance either the significance of the village's listed buildings or the character and appearance of its conservation area given distance and the much changed landscape between.
- 4.5. North of the conservation area, the Grade II Bodicote House was visited too. The original house is encircled by a post-war office building which extends on its eastern side (Plate 7). Again, the setting of the Grade II house is not influenced by the site at all, its significant setting being limited to the adjacent modern building and its grounds.
- 4.6. The section of the Oxford Canal lying to the east of the site was walked to understand its setting. The listed accommodation lift bridges were confirmed to be of a standard form, with the canal narrowing and ramped up to allow canal traffic to pass under the raised bridge (Plate 1). At Grant's Lock, the complex arrangement of lock and bridge, with the towpath ramped beneath the bridge so as to allow uninterrupted towing was noted, as was the survival of a lock-keeper's cottage (Plate 8).
- 4.7. As noted by the Conservation Area Appraisal, the key setting of the canal is the rural landscape of the Cherwell Valley surrounding it and views along the canal to nearby crossing points or locks. Use of the natural corridor north by the railway and M40 motorway have impinged on the canal closest to the site, with the motorway between the site and much of the canal. Nonetheless, the plateau on which the site lies does not constitute part of the canal's context which enhances its significance, which is limited by the topography.

Results of Investigation

- 4.8. Following completion of the initial desk based assessment on which this document is based and consultation with the Oxfordshire County Council archaeological advisor to Cherwell District, a programme of archaeological evaluation was agreed for the site area and also land to its south.
- 4.9. Following agreement of a Written Scheme of Investigation for detailed magnetometer survey, a total of 44 hectares were surveyed at the end of September 2014 (GSB Prospection 2014). The results of this work suggested high archaeological potential across the wider area, including discovery of the northern end of the cursus noted above and potential Roman remains.
- 4.10. Within the site itself, a potential second cursus was identified in the south of the site, running north from an area which lay beyond the site (Figure 1, A). In the south east of the site, a small circular feature suggested a ring ditch feature which often reflects the remains of a ploughed out round barrow or a circular hut (B). A number of likely enclosures were also identified on the north eastern edge of the site (C), and in the west (D).
- 4.11. A number of other likely sub-surface ditches were detected in the north and west of the site which looked to be related to the enclosures indicated in those parts of the site. A more regular pattern of responses across the entire area were interpreted as the result of generally east to west aligned ridge and furrow. Other responses were thought likely to indicate the remains of post-medieval field boundaries. A discrete area between areas A and D was noted as possible 'industrial' activity.
- 4.12. Following the analysis of the geophysics results, targeted trial trenching was completed by Foundations Archaeology in the final quarter of 2014. Overall, this intrusive evaluation suggested more limited archaeological potential than the geophysics. Although some features suggested by the magnetometry were located, others were absent, whilst other features were found which had not been indicated by the geophysical survey.
- 4.13. Within the site area, only one linear feature and no associated archaeological material was found in the vicinity of 'A', limiting the likelihood that the geophysics had located a second cursus. In the east of the site, no ring ditch was found at B, although two likely prehistoric struck flint blades were found in a new ditch south of the circular geophysics anomaly. Although some features were found at C, no dating evidence was recorded and some indicated features were absent.
- 4.14. In the west of the site ditches on both sides of enclosure D were located in trial trenches, although few other features and no dating evidence were located. The greatest concentration of features was revealed west of this possible enclosure, at 'E'. Both Bronze Age and late Iron Age or Roman features were located, although no great concentration of material from either period was recovered.

Section 5: Impact Assessment and Conclusions

- 5.1. An assessment of heritage constraints and archaeological potential was completed for a site located on the southern edge of Banbury, Oxfordshire. The assessment was originally informed by county and national sources and a site visit. Key information was available from the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record and History Centre and Historic England.
- 5.2. Subsequently, the site was subject to phased archaeological evaluation including geophysical survey and trial trenching. The relationship of the site to designated heritage assets including listed buildings and both the Oxford Canal and Bodicote conservation areas was also considered in more detail, although all lie at least half a kilometre from the proposed development.
- 5.3. No HER records lay within the site itself. The possible course of a Roman road which was certainly a post-medieval route from Banbury to Buckingham marks the southern edge of the site. The course of this earlier road will be retained outside the proposed scheme. Surviving early hedgerows will also be retained within the site area in the main and the much altered landscape is of no special significance in itself.
- 5.4. Past archaeological investigation proved that the area has seen activity since the Mesolithic period and it was certainly settled in the Neolithic, given the results of investigations west of Banbury Road. Nearby Iron Age and Roman sites, finds and the identification of the potential Roman route suggested the large site area might contain significant sub-surface remains from these periods.
- 5.5. The site was likely to have been cultivated since the Anglo-Saxon period, with settlement centred at Bodicote to the west. Vestigial remains of ridge and furrow would rate as of negligible significance. It is unlikely that any trace of Weeping Cross remains either.
- 5.6. Geophysical survey did identify several features, including two enclosures, which suggested sub-surface remains of likely prehistoric or Roman date. However, trial trenching found very little archaeological material and confirmed that more recent ploughing was likely to have reduced the archaeological interest of the site significantly. Although trial trenching located widespread ditches as well as a small number of dated Bronze Age and Iron Age to Roman features in the west, the sparsity of related material suggests these features are of no greater than local significance.
- 5.7. Given the characterisation of the archaeological interest of the site, no preservation in situ would seem necessary. It would be appropriate to allow the development to proceed, subject to appropriate planning conditions. Further investigation within the site could focus on areas of interest identified already. Suitable sampling and recording in the west and north of the site should suffice ahead of construction. Post-fieldwork analysis and reporting would ensure that the site's sub-surface remains are dealt with in accordance with current policy, guidance and practice.
- 5.8. The closest listed buildings and conservation areas have all been visited and considered in relation to their histories and the development of the area. The course of the Oxford Canal through the District is all designated as a conservation area and contains eight listed and other heritage assets along the section east of the site. The canal is an important part of the area's industrial heritage and its surrounding landscape, still rural and clarifying the siting of the canal in a topographic corridor, enhances that significance.

- 5.9. However, none of the canal's Grade II structures lies within 500m of the site boundary and all lie in the lowest part of the Cherwell Valley. The site and other higher plateau areas west of the valley slopes do not enhance the significance of the Oxford Canal or any of its listed elements, but are neutral. Even without additional planting proposed on the nearest site boundaries, the proposals would not harm the significance of the canal or appreciation of that significance.
- 5.10. In a similar manner, a number of the older properties and medieval church in Bodicote are important survivals from its history and worthy of their listed status. The historic core of the village is well preserved and deserving of the conservation area designation too. However, it is the immediate surroundings of the listed buildings including other structures, routes and open spaces which enhances their significance. Open land to the west of the settlement, although no longer farmed as open fields, is also a link with the settlement's original context and enhances the assets closest to it.
- 5.11. To the east, extensive 20th century development, including Council offices east of Bodicote House have broken the link between the core of the settlement and its surrounding rural land. In this suburban context, the site does not provide any enhancement of the significance of the assets well to its west and can also be considered neutral.

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Appendix 1: Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record Gazetteer

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| HER ref. | NGR (SP prefix) | Period | Notes |
|----------|-----------------|----------------------|--|
| 1747 | 4693 3720 | Roman | Finds of pottery, burnt stones and skeletons suggests Roman settlement. Noted as circa a mile north of Adderbury and west of Banbury road in 'Court Field'. |
| 1748 | 4671 3780 | Medieval | Site of Weeping Cross until 1803. Shaft and plinth of cross with name derived from 'way pointer cross'. |
| 2332 | 4601 3685 | Roman | Settlement by Sor Brook, finds of material including Iron Age pottery supported by investigations in 1990s which confirmed a simple building and fine objects. |
| 5700 | 4733 3718 | Neolithic? | Possible <i>cursus</i> type cropmark observed on aerial photographs. Runs north west to south east, with southern terminus, but that to north not seen. Not later classified by EH as <i>cursus</i> due to insufficient evidence. |
| 11372 | 4584 3787 | Anglo-Saxon | Pottery sherds found in 1964 during building work on western side of Bodicote. |
| 11617 | 4779 3759 | Roman | Suspected line of Roman road 'between Bodicote and Twyford Mill'. Source noted as 'verbal informant'. |
| 11825 | 4603 3695 | Medieval | Possible rabbit warren in area where one documented in 16 th century and with square enclosure seen on APs. |
| 26492 | 4655 3749 | Neolithic and later | Evaluation of site by geophysical survey and trial trenching located two Neolithic pits with artefacts and residual flints and also two areas of late Iron Age and early Roman settlement activity and later features. |
| 26494 | 4674 3838 | Mesolithic and Roman | Geophysical survey and trial trenching in 2005 and ahead of development recorded limited remains. A likely Mesolithic flint arrowhead was found on surface during trenching. Small number of Roman features in north too, but further work in 2012 found no further remains. |

Plates



Plate 1: Typical lifting bridge on Oxford Canal



Plate 2: Bridge at Grant's Lock



Plate 3: Bridge at Twyford Wharf



Plate 4: Nadkey Bridge



Plate 5: Street view within Bodicote Conservation Area



Plate 6: St John the Baptist Church

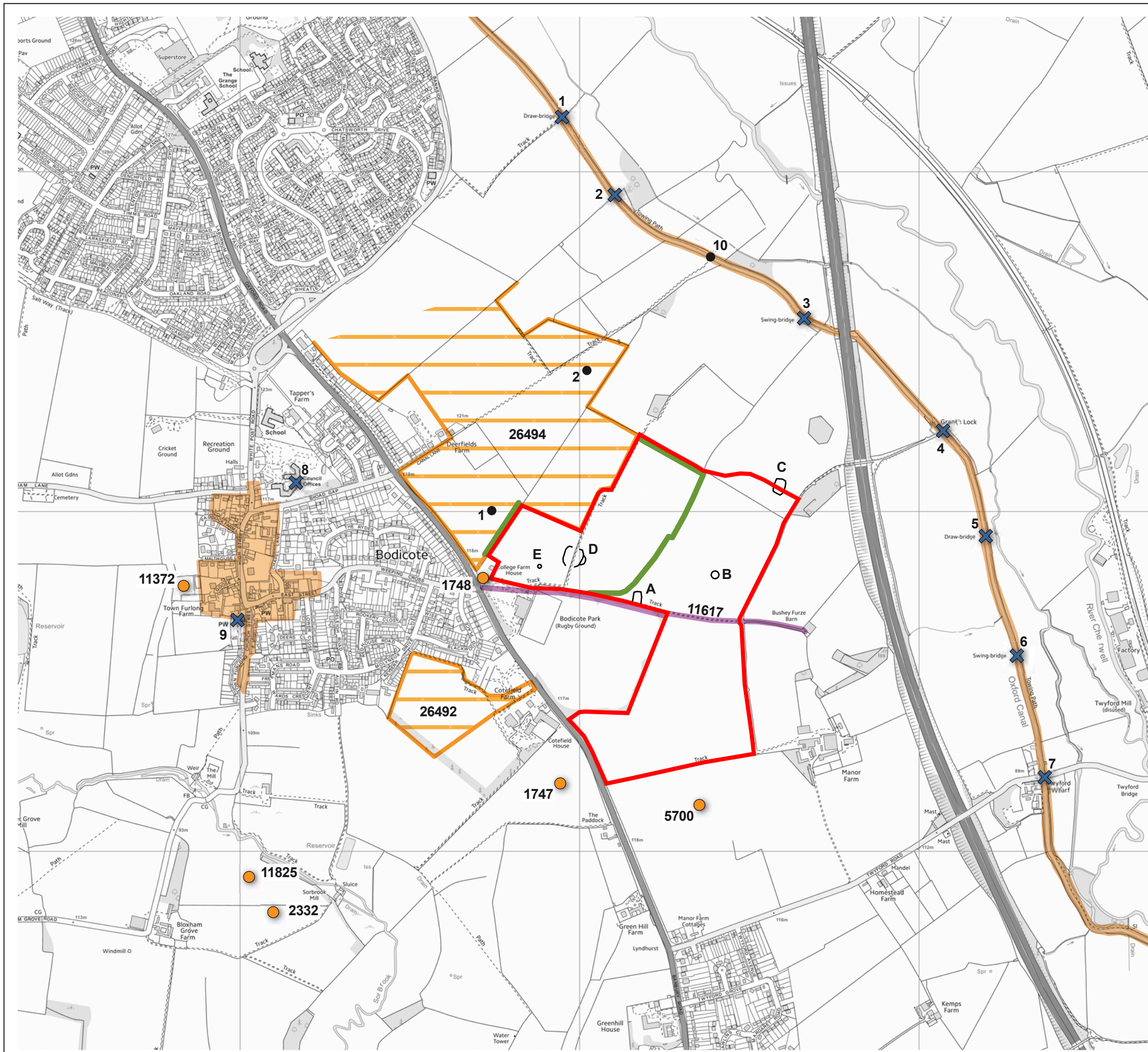


Plate 7: Bodicote House



Plate 8: Lockkeeper's cottage and Grant's Lock

Figure 1: Identified Archaeology and Heritage



- KEY**
- Site boundary
 - 1 X Listed structures
 - Conservation Area
 - HER records
 - Course of old road
 - Older field boundaries
 - A Potential features / activity



Project Bankside, Banbury
 Drawing Title **Figure 1: Identified Archaeology and Heritage**
 Scale As Shown (A3)
 Drawing No. BSA 1434 _f01
 Date December 2016
 Checked BS/MP

