Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Cherry’s Yard, Station Road, Cropredy, Oxfordshire (NGR SP 4670046450) (Fig 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Jon Neville of Berkeley Homes (Oxford) Ltd, 20 Marcham Road, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 1AA.

Planning permission has been granted by Cherwell District Council for the construction of ten new houses with associated access road (Appl. no. P95/00085/OUT) subject to a planning condition requiring a watching brief to be undertaken during groundworks for the proposed development. This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment’s Policy and Planning Guidance Note, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG 16 1990). The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Paul Smith, County Archaeological Officer for Oxfordshire County Council Archaeology Section, who advise the local planning authority on archaeological matters. The fieldwork was undertaken by Alan Ford and Simon Loaring between November 3rd 1998 and February 15th 1999 and the site code is CYC98/70.

Location, Topography and Geology

The site is located on a plot of land formerly occupied by the builders yard of Cherry & Son Limited (Fig 2). The development is bounded to the east by Station Road, to the west by the grounds of Elm Grove, to the north by gardens of dwellings fronting onto Station Road and to the south by an access track to Elm Grove. The area is level at a height of c103 m above
Ordnance Datum and the underlying geology is recorded as permeable loam over Lower Lias clay and mudstone (BGS 1982).

**Archaeological Background**

The site lies to the south-west of the present centre of Cropredy. Directly to the south-east lies the Medieval moated site of Manor Farm. A recent evaluation and earthwork survey (Ford 1997) in a paddock immediately to the north of the development area examined a number of raised platforms and ridge and furrow. The former were thought to represent a series of paddocks or garden plots, partly overlain by the ridge and furrow. All these features were attributed a Medieval date. A linear hollow running across the site on a north-south axis represented what was thought to be a late Saxon or Medieval boundary to the village on its western side. Cropredy has been suggested as the site of a late Saxon Minster which could have had an associated settlement of significant size and which may have existed in the immediate pre-Conquest period. An excavation at Poplars Farm by the Oxford Archaeological Unit during 1993/4 produced evidence for early, mid and late Saxon settlement, with a later Medieval bank and ditch, perhaps redefining the western boundary of the settlement. It is supposed that this is the same boundary as the one represented in the paddock to the north of the site discussed above (Ford 1997). It is not known whether Station Road is an original Medieval feature of the village or a Victorian creation and it is likely that the historic core of the village lies to the north of the development and that the present development area lies on the southern periphery of the original settlement.
Objectives and Methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to observe, excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks for the new development. This was achieved by monitoring the clearance of topsoil and inspecting the excavated foundation and service trenches.

Results and Conclusions

Monitoring took place during the excavation of the foundation trenches for the ten houses and excavation of the service trenches (Fig 3). These were typically between 1.20 m and 1.50 m deep and 1.0 m wide and the stratigraphy consisted of topsoil and subsoil onto a yellowish clay natural. General building debris consisting of brick, tile and slate fragments was present within the topsoil and subsoil. No archaeological features were present and no artefacts were recovered from the spoil. From the results of the watching brief it would appear that no archaeological features or deposits have been damaged or destroyed by the groundworks for the new development.

References

PPG 16, 1990, Archaeology and Planning, Department of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance Note 16, HMSO
Cherrys Yard, Cropredy, Oxfordshire, 1998

Figure 1. Location of site within Cropredy and Oxfordshire.

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Cherry's Yard, Cropredy, Oxfordshire, 1998

Figure 2. Location of site.
Figure 3. Location of Foundation trenches.