Summary

Site name: Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre, Windmill Road, Headington, Oxford

Grid reference: SP 546 065

Site activity: Watching Brief and stripping exercise

Date and duration of project: 29th July–3rd December 2002

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Stephen Hammond

Site code: NHO 02/30

Area of site: c. 8ha

Summary of results: No archaeological finds or features were discovered

Monuments identified: None

Location and reference of archive: The site archive is currently held by Thames Valley Archaeological Services, 47-49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5NR and will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Service in due course.

This report may be copied for bona fide research or planning purposes without the explicit permission of the copyright holder

Report edited/checked by: Sian Anthony ✓ 24.01.03
Steve Preston ✓ 24.01.03
Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief, a supervised stripping exercise and a desk-based assessment carried out at Nuffield Hospital, Windmill Road, Oxford (SP546 065) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Roger Figg of Morrison Construction Ltd, The Old Brewery, Brewery Courtyard, Draymans Lane, Marlow, Buckinghamshire, SL7 2FF.

Planning permission (99/1222/NO) has been granted by Oxford City Council to construct a new orthopaedic hospital. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site being damaged or destroyed by groundworks, the permission is subject to a condition that requires the implementation of a programme of archaeological work.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment’s Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and Oxford City policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Brian Durham, Oxford City Archaeological Officer. The fieldwork was undertaken by Stephen Hammond with the assistance of Andrew Taylor between 29th July and 3rd December 2002 and the site code is NHO 02/30.

Location, topography and geology

The site is a c. 8 ha parcel of land to the south-east of John Radcliffe Hospital in the Headington District of Oxford and is occupied by various hospital buildings and car parking areas. The land itself slopes towards the north at c. 100m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology is a Beckley Sand Member (sand and calcareous sandstone) (BGS 1994). This was confirmed during the evaluation.

Objectives and methodology

The archaeological monitoring, supervision and evaluation on the site has been designed to be split into two phases. Phase I would consist of an archaeologically supervised strip of Nuffield Hospital’s visitors’ car park
that could be accessed from Windmill Road and a watching brief to be carried out on any other ground intrusive work associated with the first phase of building the new hospital.

This would be implemented after a small scale desk based survey, which involved consultation of the Oxfordshire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), historic maps, and other relevant publications and reports.

Phase II would consist of an archaeological evaluation to be carried out after the demolition in part of some pre-existing buildings to the south of the site in preparation for the second phase of construction of the new building. This is due to commence in the spring of 2004.

The purpose of the archaeological intervention is to determine the presence / absence, extent and condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological or palaeoenvironmental deposits within the area of development.

The specific aims of the project are:

- To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site.
- To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.
- To determine if deposits relating to Roman pottery production are present on the site, such as in the form of pottery waster heaps or kiln sites.
- To determine if occupation deposits of Roman date are present which might reasonably be considered as associated with the nearby pottery production sites.
- The potential and significance of any such deposits located will be assessed according to the research priorities such as set out in *Exploring our past* (English Heritage 1991) and *English Heritage Research Agenda* (English Heritage 1997) or any more local or thematic research priorities as necessary.

**Desk-based assessment**

*Archaeological background*

The site lies in an area from which evidence for extensive Roman pottery production is recorded. Evidence for large scale, industrial production of pottery throughout much of the Roman period has been found on the southern and eastern fringes of Oxford City and these products were traded widely over the Midlands and south central England.

Various sites have been recorded in the Oxfordshire Sites and Monuments Record for the vicinity of the proposal site. Two references refer to post-medieval buildings but the main interest with the development area is documentary references to Roman pottery finds and wasters close to the site indicating the presence of kilns.
nearby. Many sherds of pottery indicating a kiln site producing Sandford ware were picked up at the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre (D S and H Sutermeister 1963, 92) and recovered from builders’ trenches nearby (D S and H Sutermeister 1965, 191).

The SMR shows that a magnetic anomaly located during a geophysical survey within the site area suggested the presence of a pottery kiln. Although test pitting failed to reveal this, eleven sherds of pottery were found showing Roman activity in the area.

Further research from the SMR shows that to the north of the site coarse Roman pottery, probably indicating a kiln producing Sandford ware was found at the Rookery, now Ruskin Hall, from foundation trenches. An extension block of residential accommodation completed between 1976–8 with associated landscaping work also exposed a quantity of Roman pottery that consisted of *mortaria*, parchment ware, grey-ware and some colour coated and coarse wares.

A watching brief carried out at The Churchill Hospital to the south of the development area (CAT 2000) failed to produce any archaeological finds or features to suggest a continuation of any Roman activity connected with the pottery production sites excavated between 1971 and 1974 at the same site.

**Cartographic evidence**

A range of historic and modern maps were consulted at Oxford Record Office in order to ascertain what activity has taken place throughout the site’s later history and whether this may have affected any possible archaeological deposits within the proposal area (Appendix 1).

The earliest map consulted was the Christ Church College Estate Map, 1605, of the Headington area. However, it was not possible to identify the site from this map. A later map by Davis (Fig. 3) dating from 1797 shows the site as an open area of land in the Bullington Hundred, near Titup Hall. An Estate Map for Magdalene College from 1847 also failed to show the site area as it falls outside their interests.

The First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1876 (Fig. 4) shows that as in 1797 the site is still an open area of land except to the eastern side of the development area where Wingfield Home had been constructed. The road running north-west/ south-east to the east of the site is referred to as Windmill Lane differing slightly from its present name of Windmill Road.

By 1899 the Second Edition Ordnance Survey (not illustrated) shows no changes to the proposal area except for some minor additions to Wingfield Home.
By 1921 the Third Edition Ordnance Survey shows some major changes had taken place. An group of buildings had been constructed to form a Military Hospital covering a large area west of the site. The hospital appears to be linked by a pathway to Wingfield Home, which again had been altered and expanded. Windmill Lane had also changed names to Windmill Road.

The 1939 Edition of the Ordnance Survey (not illustrated) shows that Wingfield Home no longer exists and a Nurses’ Home had been constructed over the plot. The Military Hospital had also been altered and expanded and changed names to the Wingfield-Morris Orthopaedic Hospital.

Between 1939 and the present the Hospital has continually undergone alterations and expansion as well as seeing the addition of new buildings which have added to the sites capability and function. By 1965 the Ordnance Survey Map (Fig. 6) begins to refer to the Hospital by its current name of Nuffield Orthopaedic Hospital. The current (2002) Ordnance Survey map shows that almost the entire site has been developed upon. The only large area of undeveloped open land exists in the south of the site running parallel to Old Road.

Results

Both the stripping of the old car park with access to Windmill Road and the ground intrusive work associated with the construction of the new storm water drainage system were observed with the strip under continuous archaeological supervision.

The pipe trench

Typically the trenches for the large drainage pipes were dug to a depth of 2.60m and had a width of 2.50m. The sections showed made ground to a depth of 0.50m over buried topsoil between 0.50-0.80m which in turn overlaid an orange sand natural encountered at a depth of 0.80m which continued to 1.30m. Below this a yellow sand was noted that continued to the bottom of the trench. No archaeological finds or features were found.

The archaeologically supervised strip

The car parking area was stripped down to new formation level to allow the building of the new Hospital. Only areas towards the middle and eastern edges of the new level were stripped deep enough to reveal natural or any potential archaeology. In areas where the new level would be deeper than the natural level, the area was first stripped to the natural and examined in before machining could continue. Toward the western extreme of the strip where the most machining was needed the section revealed 0.10m of Tarmac covering 0.18m of made
ground that overlaid 0.40m of brown/orange natural sand. Below this a mid yellow sand was noted that continued to the total depth of 1.40m. Beyond the eastern limit of the new formation level strip an area of topsoil stripping was also observed. This area was typically taken down 0.36m revealing a patchy brown/orange natural in places. No finds or archaeology were observed in either instance.

Finds
No archaeological finds were encountered during Phase I.

Conclusion
The first phase of ground intrusive work associated with the building of the new hospital failed to produce any evidence of archaeological activity. However kiln sites are known to be relatively small in scale and can be found without any other further signs of contemporary activity nearby. This makes their discovery often very problematic. The absence of evidence therefore should not be taken as evidence of absence and the second phase of the project could still provide important information for archaeological mitigation.

References
APPENDIX 1: Historic and modern maps consulted

1605  Christ Church College Estate Map of Headington
1797  Davis map of the Bullington Hundreds (Fig. 3)
1847  Magdalene College Map of Estates
1876  First Edition Ordnance Survey Sheet XXXIII.16 (Fig. 4)
1899  Second Edition Ordnance Survey Sheet XXXIII.16
1921  Ordnance Survey Sheet XXXIII.16 (Fig. 5)
1939  Ordnance Survey Sheet XXXIII.16 2nd Rev
1956  Ordnance Survey SP5406 and SP5506
1961  Ordnance Survey SP5406 and SP5506
1965  Ordnance Survey SP5406 (Fig. 6)
1977  Ordnance Survey SP50NW
1994  Ordnance Survey SP50NW
2001  Ordnance Survey Landplan SP50NW
Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre, Headington, Oxford, 2003

Figure 1. Location of site within Headington and Oxford.
Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Pathfinder 1116 SP40/50
1:25000
Ordnance Survey Licence AL52324A0001
Figure 2. Location of areas monitored within the site.

- Area taken down to new formation levels
- Area stripped of topsoil
- Pipe trenches observed
Figure 3. Map by R. Davis, August 1797.
Figure 4. First Edition Ordnance Survey, 1876, Sheet xxxiii.xvi.
Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre, Headington, Oxford, 2003

Figure 5. Ordnance Survey, 1921, Sheet xxxiii.16.
Figure 6. Ordnance Survey, 1965, SP5406 and SP5506.