

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES AT TCS OAKHANGER, HAMPSHIRE

INTRODUCTION

In August 2006 Oxford Archaeology undertook an excavation on behalf of Defence Estates in advance of the erection of a structure within the grounds of the Telemetry and Command Station (TCS), Oakhanger, Hampshire (Fig. 1). The site lies to the west of the village of Oakhanger and is centred on NGR SU 766357. The solid geology comprises Lower Cretaceous Upper Greensand and Gault Clay. The site is located on level ground at c 85m OD, and was previously used as a sports field. The excavation comprised a single 'banjo'-shaped trench c 35m in diameter located in the footprint of the proposed installation (Fig. 2). This report presents a summary of the results; further details are available in the excavation archive.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The site lies within an area of high archaeological potential, demonstrated by consultation of the Hampshire Archaeological and Historical Building Record (AHBR). While no archaeological remains are listed within the site boundary, a significant number are located in the immediate vicinity. Mesolithic encampments and flint scatters are known in the area over 1km to the east and north of the site at Whitehill (AHBR 17187–17192), Selbourne (AHBR 17232, 17296, 17298) and Kingsley (AHBR 17232–17233). Bronze Age barrows have been recorded at Whitehill (AHBR 17207–17215 and 17228) and Kingsley (AHBR 17232, 17296, 17298). Iron Age pottery has been recovered from sites at Selbourne (AHBR 17240) and Kingsley (AHBR 17232, 17296, 17298). Roman pottery has also been recovered at Kingsley (AHBR 17261, 17267,

17254 and 17290). The line of the Roman road between Silchester and Chichester is thought to pass close to the north-east corner of the site, and is attested nearby at Worldham (AHBR 29776). Pottery of medieval date has been recovered from Oakhanger (AHBR 17242, 36993 and 36999) and a medieval chapel is thought to have existed at Chapel Farm (AHBR 17283).

RESULTS

The work revealed evidence for Mesolithic activity in the form of redeposited flint tools, including a microlith and a microburin. This activity may have included flint knapping.

Later prehistoric use of the site is indicated by worked flint and pottery ranging in date from the late Bronze Age to the Iron Age. Most of the pottery was recovered from three parallel gullies aligned E-W across the site. Twelve sherds from these features were dated to the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age and were sandy with flint temper, while four sherds dated to the middle to late Iron Age were of a glauconitic sandy ware.

A small amount of medieval pottery was also recovered from the northernmost of the gullies. Two small sherds from the upper part (possibly a recut) of the gully are from medieval cooking pots. The fabric is of a type common in Winchester and Southampton. The middle gully also contained an annular glass bead of indeterminate date.

Thirteen postholes were revealed, possibly the remains of a fence aligned NE-SW that post-dated the gullies. One posthole contained a sherd of middle to late Iron Age pottery and

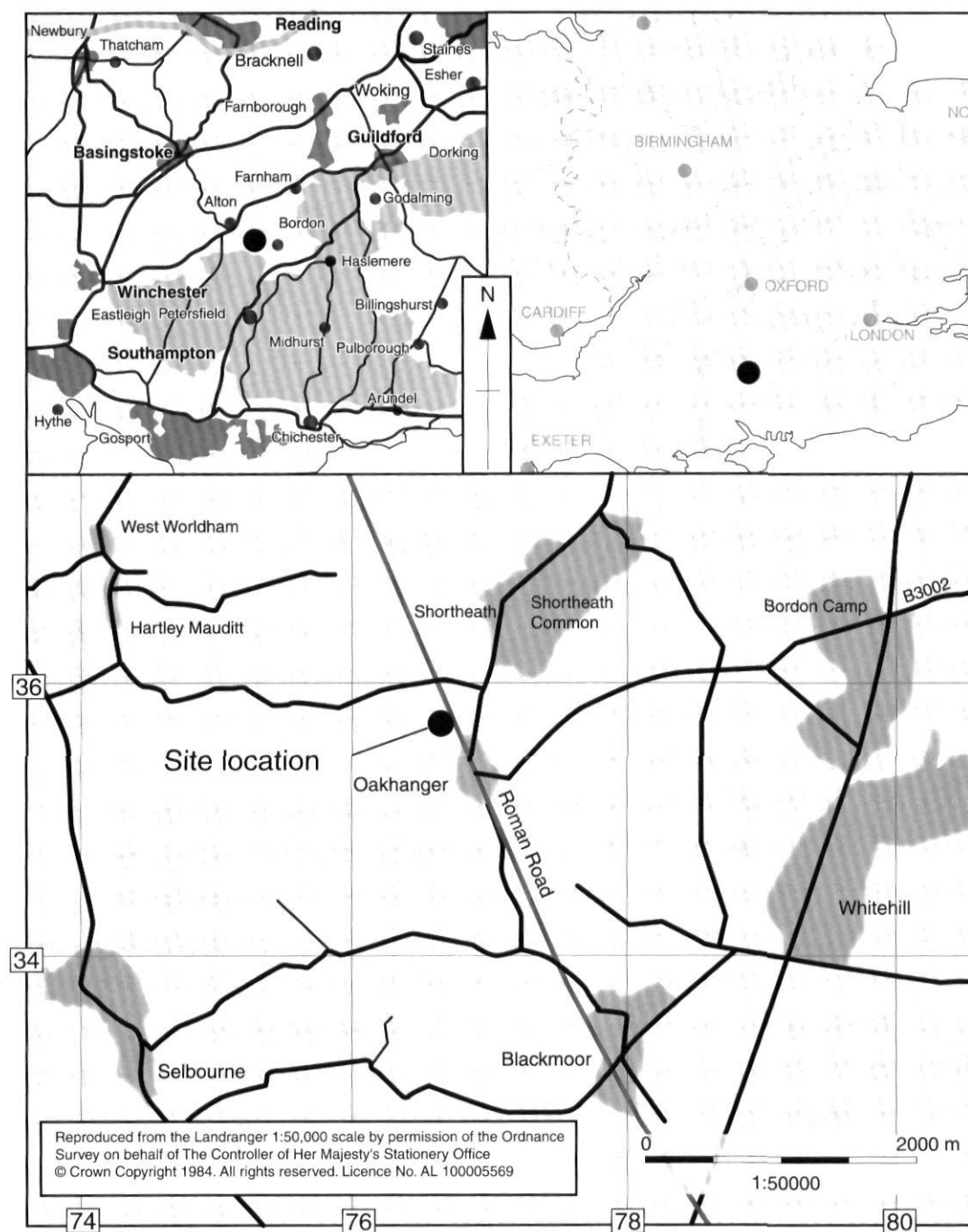


Fig. 1 Site location

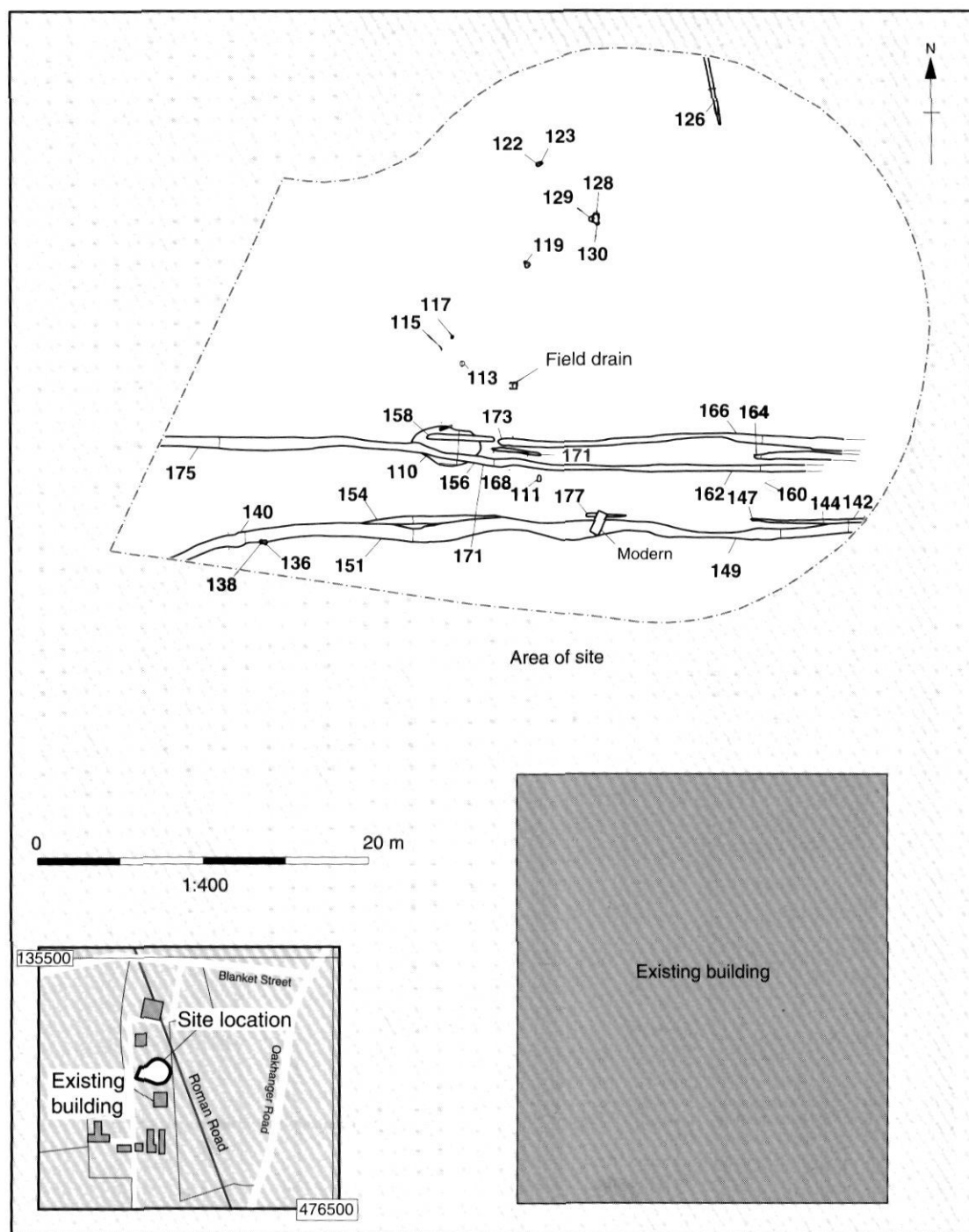


Fig. 2 Site plan

a small amount of iron working debris (hammerscale). Several of the postholes were recut, implying longevity.

Possible plough scars that ran parallel with the gullies were also identified. Their date is not known, although they were stratigraphically later than the gullies. A brown glazed sherd from the subsoil probably dates to the late 16th or 17th century.

DISCUSSION

The dating of the gullies has not been conclusively established, as the finds were few and abraded, and could be largely residual. One possibility is that the ditches flanked a trackway extending from the Roman road to the east, suggesting a Roman or later date. The parallel 'plough scars' could in this scenario be wheel ruts.

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Thanks are due to Defence Estates for funding the work. Site work and the subsequent client report were completed by Alan Marshall and Rebecca Peacock. The report was edited for publication by Kate Brady. The project manager was Tim Haines. Specialists were Lisa Brown (pottery), Hugo Landin-Whymark (flint), Tim Haines (glass), and Marta Perez (environmental). The illustrations were produced by Markus Dylewski.

Location of the Archive

The finds and archive will be deposited with Hampshire County Museum Service under the accession code A2006.45.