

John,

Thank you for your email.

The evaluation report shows that the archaeological remains of a Romano British settlement site is located across part of the site. These remains however do not appear to be of national importance but would have required a further programme of archaeological mitigation in the form of a set piece excavation if there was to be any impact on them.

This would have had a further cost implication and I suspect that the cemetery plans were altered to avoid the requirement for this excavation. The evaluation was undertaken to provide a rapid assessment of the potential of the site to contain archaeological deposits and to assess their significance but, due to the limited nature of the evaluation work, did not mitigate the impact of this proposal on these remains.

There would however still be the option to undertake a programme of archaeological excavation across the area of this Roman settlement to mitigate these remains in advance of burials. Once this has been done then there would be no further archaeological constraints to the use of the site as a cemetery. This can however be a fairly expensive option.

The remains were fairly close to the ground surface, less than 300mm in some places, which is likely to affect whether or not ashes can be buried on the site.

Do you know how deep such interments would need to be? Could they be limited to less than 200mm to provide cover for the archaeological remains?

This would be a similar issue with any pathways or roads across the site. It may be possible if the total depth of the impact could be limited to 200mm, including any drainage. We would also however need to consider any indirect impact from compaction of the remains so this is less likely to be an option for a roadway but may be possible for pathways etc.

I assume that any structure to allow above ground interments would need to have footings and so would also impact on any remains. This would also require a formal archaeological excavation ahead of any construction but this would be a more focused and smaller area which may reduce the costs of such archaeological investigation.

There would be no impact on the remains from the scattering of ashes however and so this would not pose any issues archaeologically.

Regards

*Richard*

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**To:** Archaeology - E&E <[Archaeology@Oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Archaeology@Oxfordshire.gov.uk)>

**Subject:** Web form contact from: John Hickman

## What do you want to contact us about?

**What do you want to contact us about?**

An archaeological site

## Your contact form

**First name**

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**Your message**

I am the Operations and Estates Advisor at Witney Town Council, we currently own and operate a cemetery at Oxford Hill in Witney before the cemetery open in May 2000 as advised by the CAS an Archaeological Evaluation was carried n May 2000 out on the councils behalf by John Moore Heritage Services in accordance with a written scheme of investigation agreed with the CAS.

The result of that evaluation it was decide that, the layout of the cemetery was designed to limit the potential damage to known archaeological remains on the site. The core area of the remains will be left as

meadow with paths crossing it. This has left the cemetery where approx. 1/3 of the cemetery should not be used for burial.

The question has arisen that given that suitable burial sites etc. are extremely difficult to find and the amount of this cemetery is currently unusable as any form of burial if there was any way this issue could be resolved, by perhaps allowing the area to be used for burial of ashes, the scattering of ashes, above ground interment of ashes within columbarium or similar. Would Witney Town Council also be able to create roadways or footpaths on the

area, or perhaps is it possible that the artefacts could be excavated and removed from site allowing full burials etc. to take place.

Any guidance you could provide would be extremely helpful moving forward as to what the possibilities may be for this area of the cemetery.

Kind regards

John

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