

Land north of

# Church Farm

Stoke Lyne, Oxfordshire

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Archaeological recording

SP 56730 28388

Site code: CFSL17

OASIS ID: 110archa1-286091

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one ten archaeology

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Front cover; Church Farm, view to the east

## SUMMARY

Archaeological recording was carried out during January and March 2017 at land north of Church Farm, Stoke Lyne, Oxfordshire during the construction of a new stable block.

The site is in an area of archaeological interest, within the core of the medieval village and earthworks located in the area of the proposed development as recorded from Environment Agency lidar images, may have been related to a shrunken medieval village recorded on the Historic Environment Record (HER) 140m north west of the proposed site.

No archaeological deposits were observed during excavation of the foundations associated with the stable block, but the soakaway drainage trench revealed a shallow linear ditch aligned north-south which was interpreted as a probable drainage/plot boundary. The position and orientation of the ditch conforms with a feature identified on the lidar image. Pottery finds indicate a mid-16<sup>th</sup> century date for the ditch feature suggesting that it is related to later phase of occupation. This may indicate that the earthworks are a later extension or movement of the 11<sup>th</sup> century settlement recorded at Lower Farm.

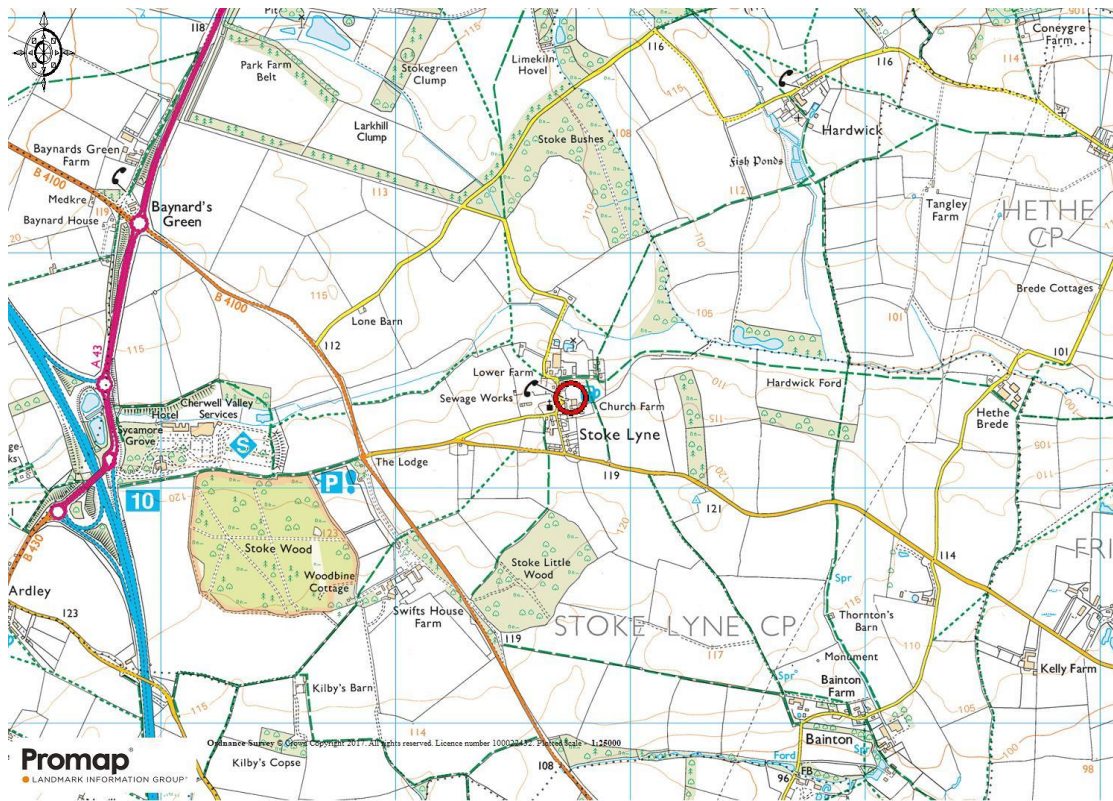


Fig. 1; site location (circled in red)



Fig. 2; area of study (outlined in red)

## INTRODUCTION

### *Location and scope of works (Figs. 1 & 2)*

This document sets out the results of archaeological recording ('watching brief') carried out during 9-10<sup>th</sup> January and 12<sup>th</sup> March 2017 at land north of Church Farm, Stoke Lyne, Oxfordshire, OX27 8RU. The development comprised the creation a new stable block with drainage on the site.

The archaeological recording was required in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and was carried out as a condition of planning permission granted in respect of an application (Ref: 16/02042/F), super-ceded by a revised application (17/00680/F) to Cherwell District Council which was undertaken in accordance with a brief issued by Richard Orton (19<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2016).

The site is in an area of archaeological interest within the core of the medieval village. Earthworks related to a shrunken medieval village are recorded on the Historic Environment Record (HER) 140m north west of the proposed site. Further earthworks are located within the area of the proposed development as recorded from Environment Agency lidar images. The site is also located 100m north east of the 12<sup>th</sup> century St Peters Church and a medieval or early post medieval floor surface was recorded during an archaeological evaluation immediately south of the Church. Medieval features were recorded during a separate archaeological investigation 90m north of the proposal site including 11<sup>th</sup> century ditches and industrial activity. Although this development was of a small scale it was considered likely to encounter further archaeological features related to the medieval development of the village.

### *Geology and topography*

Stoke Lyne is a village and formerly a large parish (reduced in size in 1948), lying about 4 miles north of Bicester, Oxfordshire. Estimated at ten miles in circumference, it stretches right from Fritwell on the west to Fringford on the east, with Bicester four miles to the south-east as its nearest market-town. The parish is well irrigated by a series of streams. The Ockley Brook forms the boundary with Northamptonshire in the north; a small stream divides Stoke Lyne from Tusmore Park; another stream, the Bure, flowing south-east from Bainton Spinney, marks the southern boundary for a short way; while the Birne, a small

tributary of the Great Ouse, demarcates the parish for a stretch on the north-east.

The parish lies mostly on the Great Oolite belt which crosses the county, but there are small areas of Cornbrash. On the eastern boundary, the land is low-lying and liable to flooding, but the rest of the parish is upland, nearly 120m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD).

The parish is crossed by the main roads from Oxford to Brackley and from Bicester to Banbury. They intersect at Baynard's Green, the modern name for the historic Bayard's Green.

The site itself which comprised a total excavation area of about 170m<sup>2</sup> is located north of Church Farm in the south-east corner of a large field at approx. 112m AOD. Excavation confirmed the underlying geology as Alluvium clay (BGS, 2001), although a change to cornbrash occurs along the southern edge of the excavation.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A total of 14 monument records and 6 event records were identified from the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) within a 500m search area centred on the study site. A summary of the more significant information is outlined below.

### *Prehistoric*

SMR12582 - MOX4909; find spot. Late Bronze Age palstave found while harrowing a ploughed field in Spring 1977 by Mr P H Curtis.

### *Roman*

SMR8922 - MOX4783; Margary Road 160a; section of Alchester to Towcester road. Clearly visible as wide agger through centre of Alchester. Excavations at SP 6385 3245 failed to establish the location of the Roman road or any roadside ditches or structures (AOC, 1998).

### *Medieval*

SMR5100 - MOX4892; Church of St Peter, Church Lane. C12 nave and chancel with C12 figure and C14 porch. Major restoration in 1868.

A single evaluation trench was excavated (EOX113) outside the north wall of the nave of St Peter's church. The trench revealed the existence of a robbed-out wall that belonged to an external north aisle (OAU, 1992).

A watching brief (EOX114) confirmed the alignment of the robbed-out wall identified during the evaluation carried out in April 1992. Its location and orientation would suggest an originally larger lay-out for the church. No return for this wall was observed in the service trenches. The watching brief also revealed further possible structural foundations and several inhumations, although no dating evidence was recovered (CAT, 1992).

SMR12770 - MOX4910; Medieval Shrunken Village. Prominent and extensive series of earthworks north of church and along stream. Some of the earthworks represent ponds and quarrying disturbance, but there are still several 'islands' with buildings, the largest of which is occupied by Lower Farm. The whole area seems to represent a considerable contraction of the medieval village. Davis map of 1797 shows most of village north of church on what may have been an open green. NMR AP holdings were examined during the Cherwell District cropmark survey. Earthworks are clearly visible in 1999 photos. Possible earthworks west of the village were also photographed.

SMR14324 - MOX4918. Medieval-post medieval features on land opposite Lilac Cottage. Evaluation south of the church revealed post medieval cobbled floor or yard with associated post-hole and gulleys with a deep feature, possibly a well of medieval date. Finds include pottery, animal bone, building materials, iron nails, slag, glass and clay pipe (OAU, 1993).

SMR16543 - MOX12272. Watching brief revealed activity associated with the deserted medieval village dating from C11th to C13th along with an area of industrial activity in the form of lead smelting of an earlier date (John Moore Heritage Services, 2002).

*Undated*

SMR15613 - MOX4919. Undated Old Oak Well. In 1910 the well was preferred to the public supply.

SMR17456 - MOX23339. Possible Banjo Enclosure northwest of Stoke Lyne. One side of possible banjo enclosure and a short section of associated trackway visible as cropmarks in NMR aerial photos. Identified during North Oxon cropmark survey and sketched on cropmark overlay.



SMR17459 - MOX23342. Two conjoined ring ditches east of Stoke Lyne. Two ring ditches, slightly overlapping, identified as cropmarks in NMR aerial photos. Identified during North Oxon cropmark survey and sketched on cropmark overlay.

SMR17460 - MOX23343. Rectangular enclosure east of Stoke Lyne and associated linear feature identified in NMR aerial photos. Identified during North Oxon cropmark survey and sketched on cropmark overlay.

## RESULTS (Fig. 3)

### *Method and nature of the excavation*

Archaeological recording was undertaken to obtain a record of any archaeological deposits or finds disturbed or exposed during excavation of the site. Excavation of the two areas was carried out by machine using a toothless bucket removing the site overburden under archaeological supervision. Sample excavation of exposed archaeological deposits was undertaken by hand. Trench 1 comprised the area of the proposed stable block and its revised location including access road whilst trench 2 (2m<sup>2</sup>) was the location of the soakaway. This was connected to the stable block via a narrow 0.30m trench to a depth of about 0.25m within the existing topsoil.

### *Description of deposits*

#### TRENCH 1

*Contexts 102 (natural substrate); context 101 (relict subsoil); context 100 (topsoil)*

The surface of the natural substrate (context 102), comprising mostly of Lias clay, but changing along the southern edge to cornbrash (fragmented limestone) sloped down from 113m AOD at the south (at section 1b) to approx. 111.30m AOD mid-way at trench 1 (at section 1a). At the north end of the trench, for a about a 10m length, the natural clay was not reached, excavation instead ending at the surface of 101. No archaeological features or deposits were observed cut into or overlying the natural clay and limestone. The natural substrate was sealed by a 0.15-20m thick deposit of mid-greyish-brown, silty-clay, representing a relict subsoil deposit. Finds recovered from this layer comprised about a dozen residual sherds of mid-16<sup>th</sup> century pottery and three fragments of unglazed roof tile of a

type usually dating from the late 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century, but the ridge tiles can be as early as the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The upper topsoil layer was 0.20-30m thick deposit of dark greyish-brown loam. Finds ranged in date from the 14<sup>th</sup> century to modern.

## TRENCH 2

*Context 202 (natural substrate); context 204 (ditch cut); context 203 (ditch fill); context 201 (relict subsoil); context 200 (topsoil)*

The surface of the natural clay (202) was reached at 112.66m AOD. A single linear ditch cut (204) was recorded aligned north-south within the surface of this deposit. It was 1.36m wide and 0.34m deep with gently sloping sides leading to a to an approx. 0.20m wide flat base. It was filled by a single deposit (203) comprising a mid-greyish brown silty clay. There was a very small component of charcoal flecking and the occasional small fragment of limestone. Sample hand excavation produced finds consisted of two small fragments of animal bone and two sherds of mid-16<sup>th</sup> century pottery. Sealing the clay and ditch fill to a depth of 0.26m was the relict subsoil deposit (201). This was undated and overlain by the existing topsoil to a depth of 0.24m.

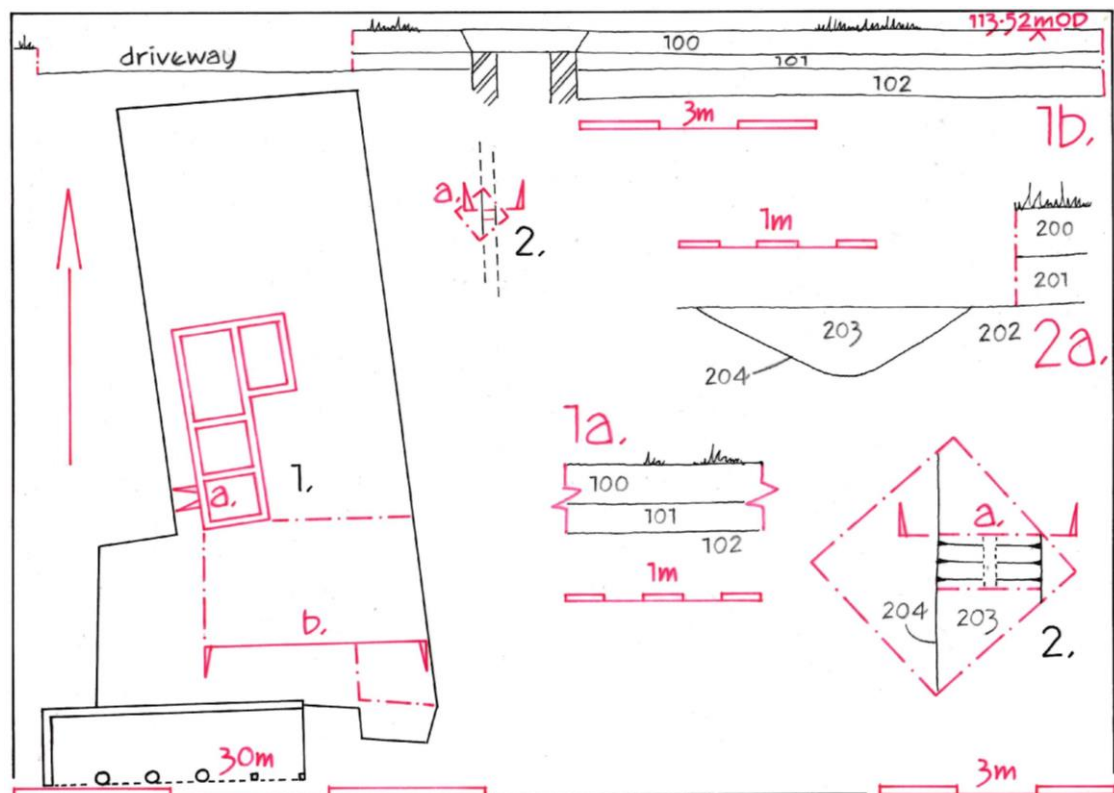


Fig. 3; site plan and sections showing trenches 1 & 2

## FINDS

### Pottery and ceramic building material (CBM) by *Paul Blinkhorn*

The pottery assemblage comprised 22 sherds with a total weight of 330g. It was all medieval or later, and was recorded using the conventions of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994), as follows:

OXAC: Cotswold-type Ware, AD975-1350. 1 sherd, 4g.

OXBX: Late Medieval Brill/Boarstall Ware, 15<sup>th</sup> – early 17<sup>th</sup> century. 2 sherds, 50g.

OXCE: Tin-glazed Earthenware, 1613 – 1800. 1 sherd, 8g.

OXDR: Red Earthenwares, 1550+. 12 sherds, 208g.

OXY: Medieval Oxford Ware, AD1075–1350. 2 sherds, 29g.

WHEW: Mass-produced White Earthenwares, 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century. 4 sherds, 31g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. The range of fabric types is typical of sites in the region. The stratified material is largely in good condition.

The medieval assemblage consisted of unglazed bodysherds from jars. The post-medieval material comprised a typical range of products of the represented traditions; the OXDR was mostly fragments of large bowls, the sherd of OXCE was from a small jar with polychrome painted decoration, and the fragments of WHEW were from table-wares.

### CBM

Context 100 produced 12 fragments of modern roof-tile weighing 315g. Context 101 produced a very abraded fragment of hand-made brick (weight = 61g) of uncertain date, and three fragments of unglazed roof tile weighing 118g. They are all 14mm thick, and have a typical Malvernian fabric, being sandy with occasional rock fragments. Flat roof tile of this type usually dates to the late 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> century, but the ridge tiles can be as early as the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Vince 1977, 274-5). The small size of the fragments means the exact type of tile cannot be stated with confidence.

*Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type*

	OXAC		OXY		OXBX		OXDR		OXCE		WHEW		
Cntxt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	Date
100	1	4					2	73	1	8	4	31	MOD
101			2	29	1	33	9	127					M16thC
203					1	17	1	8					M16thC
Total	1	4	2	29	2	50	12	208	1	8	4	31	

#### *Environmental data*

A single ditch fill 103, date to the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century was recorded in trench 2. The fill deposit revealed some charcoal flecking, but little indication of organic remains and the potential for palaeo-environmental sampling was considered low.

#### *The Animal Bone by Jennifer Wood*

##### *Introduction*

A total of 46 (1246g) refitted fragments of animal bone were recovered by hand during a scheme of archaeological works undertaken by One Ten Archaeology at land north of Church Farm, Stoke Lyne, Oxon. All the remains were recovered from a topsoil deposit (100), subsoil deposit (101) and ditch fill (203). All the archaeological activity on site was attributed to the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century

##### *Results*

The remains were generally of a good overall condition, averaging between grades 2 and 3 on the Lyman criteria (1996).

A single fragment of large mammal rib recovered from ditch fill (203) displayed evidence of cut marks. The butchery mark evidence appears consistent with meat removal.

No evidence of pathology, gnawing or burning was noted on any of the remains.

*Table 1, Summary of Identified Bone*

<b>Context</b>	<b>Cut</b>	<b>Taxon</b>	<b>Element</b>	<b>Side</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Weight</b>	<b>Comments</b>
100	N/A	Cattle	Innominate	R	1	17	Ishium

		Sheep/Goat	Radius	R	1	19	Shaft fragment
		Cattle	Astragalus	R	1	32	Lateral condyle missing
101	N/A	Cattle	Innominate	R	1	70	Acetabulum fragment
		Sheep/Goat	Tooth	R	1	4	Lower M1=e
203	Ditch?	Cattle	Scapula	L	1	263	Mostly complete, in 7 pieces SLC=53mm, GLP=73mm, LG=62mm, BG=48mm
		Large Mammal Size	Rib	X	1	14	Blade, two chop marks on the blade surface
		Large Mammal Size	Skull	X	5	32	Skull fragments vault
		Large Mammal Size	Long Bone	X	1	23	Shaft
		Sheep/Goat	Femur	R	1	9	Distal Shaft
		Medium Mammal Size	Long Bone	X	1	2	Shaft

As can be seen from Table 1, cattle are the most abundant species identified within the assemblage followed by Sheep/goat. The remaining assemblage was not identifiable beyond size category.

Due to the limited size of the assemblage, little further information can be gained, beyond the presence of the remains on site. No further work is required on this assemblage.

## DISCUSSION (Fig. 4)

Documentary sources show that a settlement had been established at Stoke Lyne before the Conquest, it being one of the two Oxfordshire manors held by Tostig, Earl of Northumbria, who was killed at Stamford Bridge in 1066. The name Stoke was derived from the Old English *stoc* meaning 'cattle-farm'. It was once called Stoke Insula or Stoke de Lisle after the medieval lords of the manor, but after it passed into the Lynde or Lyne family in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the suffix Lyne came into use (VCH, 1958). The mother village of Stoke Lyne is centrally placed and lies in the valley of the Bure stream, but at an early date colonizing settlements were made at Bainton, or 'Bada's farm', on the southern boundary, and at Fewcot, 'few cottages' close to two springs in the extreme west of the parish. By the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century Stoke Lyne had been divided into two manors, the other was Bainton and in the 14<sup>th</sup> century both are considered to have been fair-sized villages.

The manor-house, thought to have been built by William Lyne in the 15<sup>th</sup> century had become a ruin by 1808 and was pulled down. The only trace today of the former hamlet of Bainton is four farm-houses and a cottage. The sometime manor house is the present Bainton Manor Farm, a late 16<sup>th</sup>-century or early 17<sup>th</sup>-century house.

In 1797 Davis's map shows that most of the village of Stoke lay north of the church on what once may have been an open green and in 1881 the stocks were still standing there, with the public house (Peyton Arms) to the south. Church Farm, the smithy, the post office, and the school were all built in 1858.

The HER records a series of monuments within the search area. Evidence of prehistoric activity is from outside of the village and comprises a single Bronze Age palstave (SMR12582) found in a field to the south of the village although undated cropmark features identified from aerial photographs indicate the location of a possible Iron Age Banjo enclosure (SMR17456) to the north-west and two undated enclosures to the east comprising a rectangular enclosure (SMR17460) and two conjoined ring ditches (SMR17459). The distribution of these enclosures suggests that the prehistoric landscape was characterised by dispersed farmsteads settlements.

Current evidence suggests that the village was established during the early medieval period and that the historic core may have originally been located to the north of the village where aerial photographs show evidence of a shrunken village (SMR12770) in a prominent and extensive series of earthworks north of

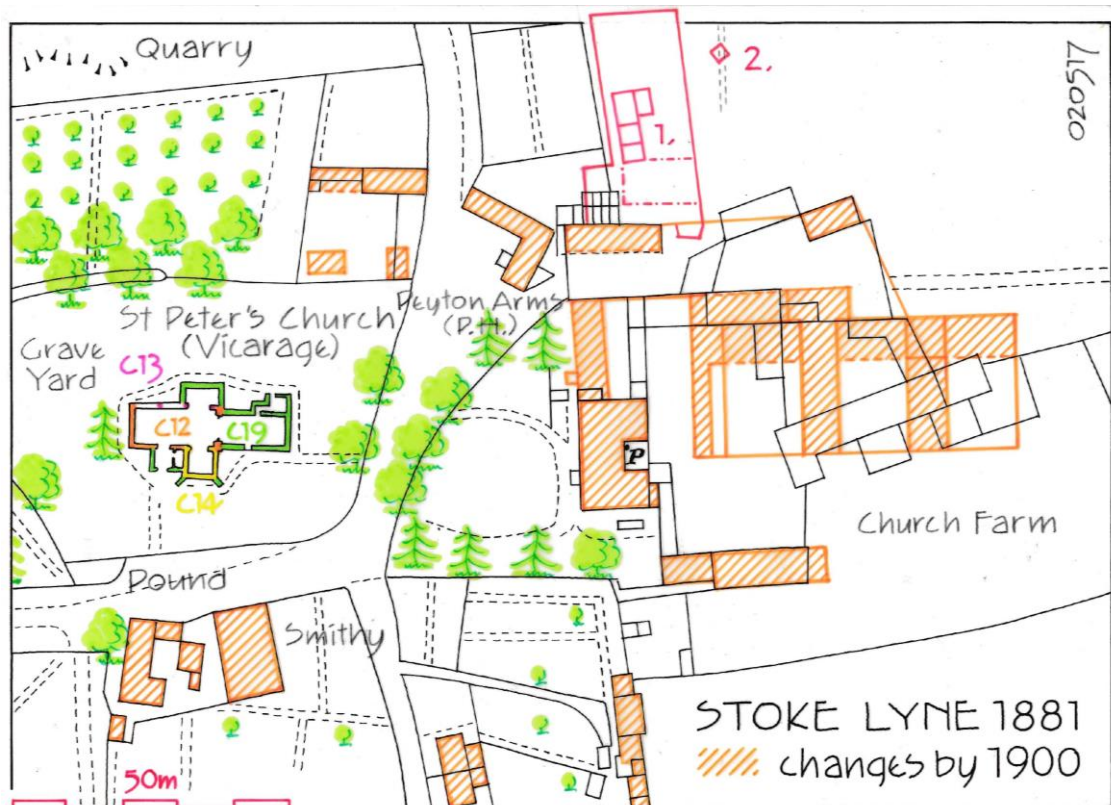


Fig. 4; Stoke Lyne (centre) historic environment plan based on OS 1881 & 1900. Showing the development of St Peters Church & Church Farm. Application site and areas of excavation outlined in red.

the church and along a stream. Archaeological recording at the nearby Lower Farm (SMR16543) revealed activity associated with the deserted medieval settlement dating from 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> century along with an area of industrial activity in the form of lead smelting of an earlier date. (John Moore Heritage Services, 2002).

To the south of the 12<sup>th</sup> century church of St Peter (SMR5100), medieval/post-medieval features (SMR14324) have been found on land opposite Lilac Cottage (OAU, 1993).

No archaeological deposits were observed during excavation of trench 1. Instead a stratigraphic sequence of two layers comprising a relict subsoil overlain by the existing topsoil were recorded overlying the natural clay throughout most of the excavation apart from the north end of trench 1 and the access road, where topsoil (100) was reduced to the surface of the underlying subsoil layer (101). A large square brick modern structure had truncated the deposits mid-point along the southern edge of the trench.

Trench 2 revealed a linear ditch (204) aligned north-south and interpreted as a probable drainage/plot boundary. Pottery finds recovered from sample

excavation indicate a mid-16<sup>th</sup> century date. The position and orientation of the ditch conforms with a feature identified on the Environment Agency lidar image which shows a series of earthworks and filled-in cut features of unknown date indicative of early settlement within the surrounding field. Some of the earthworks are clearly visible at ground level. The post-medieval date for the ditch feature suggests that the associated earthworks are related to a later phase of occupation. It is unclear if this represents north of an earlier at Lower Farm.

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*Archive Location*

A digital (pdf) copy of the report (referenced with OASIS) will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service. A pdf copy of the report will also be deposited with the Historic Environment Record (HER). The documentary and finds archive will be deposited with the Oxfordshire Museum Service.



Plate 1; excavation for the proposed stable block (north end of trench 1), view to the north



Plate 2; excavation for revised stable block location (south end of trench 1), view to the south-west



Plate 3; section 1b, detail



Plate 4; ditch cut feature 204, view to the north

## APPENDIX 1: OASIS

Project name	Land north of Church Farm, Stoke Lyne, Oxfordshire; archaeological recording
Project dates	Start: 09-01-2017 End: 12-03-2017
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	CFSL17 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Monument type	DITCH Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Significant Finds	CBM Post Medieval
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Country	England
Site location	OXFORDSHIRE CHERWELL STOKE LYNE Land north of Church Farm
Postcode	OX27 8RU
Study area	170 Square metres
Site coordinates	SP 56730 28388 51.950656349621 -1.174461991631 51 57 02 N 001 10 28 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 112.66m Max: 113m
Name of Organisation	one ten archaeology
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	one ten archaeology
Project director/manager	sean cook
Project supervisor	sean cook
Type of sponsor/funding body	Landowner
Physical Archive recipient	county museum
Physical Contents	"Animal Bones","Ceramics"
Digital Archive recipient	OASIS
Paper Archive recipient	county museum

Paper Media available	"Notebook - Excavation"," Research"," General Notes","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section"
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Land north of Church Farm, Stoke lyne, Oxfordshire; archaeological recording
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Cook, S
Date	2017
Issuer or publisher	one ten archaeology
Place of issue or publication	Warks.
URL	<a href="http://www.oasis.ac.uk">http://www.oasis.ac.uk</a>
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