

**MOONFIELD HOUSE 12B HIGH STREET,
LONG WITTENHAM,
SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE.**

NGR: - SU 5427 9365 (centred)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

July 2019
Report No. 1308



ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANCY, MANAGEMENT & FIELD SERVICES

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Quality Assurance

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Moonfield House 12B, High Street, Long Wittenham, South Oxfordshire: Archaeological Watching Brief

CONTENTS

Summary

Glossary of Archaeological Terms and Abbreviations

- 1 INTRODUCTION
- 2 PROJECT BACKGROUND
- 3 AIMS
- 4 METHODOLOGY
- 5 RESULTS
- 6 DISCUSSION
- 7 BIBLIOGRAPHY
- 8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FIGURE LIST

- Figure 1: Site Location
- Figure 2: Site Plan
- Figure 3: Trench 3 Plan and Section
- Figure 4: Photographs

Moonfield House 12B, High Street, Long Wittenham, South Oxfordshire: Archaeological Watching Brief

SUMMARY

Between 1st April and 8th April 2019, Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological watching brief during the construction of an outhouse building, garage conversion and extension at Moonfield House 12B, Long Wittenham (NGR: SU 5427 9365 centred). The project was commissioned by Shio-yun Kan and Anna Merton Kan.

The watching brief comprised the archaeological monitoring of any intrusive groundworks which utilised mechanical stripping and area reduction.

A total of six trenches were dug to varying depths in accordance with the approved plan. In the trenches that exposed natural clay and sand, only one potential feature was present [302], which was most likely a planting hole. The only finds were recovered from the topsoil, these were modern in date and consisted of pottery, animal bone and plastic.

However, it should be noted that the natural deposits were only revealed in some of the excavations, so this negative result, does not preclude the possibility of further archaeological remains being present elsewhere within the vicinity of the site.

GLOSSARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Archaeology

For the purpose of this project, archaeology is taken to mean the study of past human societies through their material remains from prehistoric times to the modern era. No rigid upper date limit has been set, but AD 1900 is used as a general cut-off point.

CBM

Ceramic Building Material.

Medieval

The period between AD 1066 and AD 1500.

Natural

In archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site.

NGR

National Grid Reference from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

OD

Ordnance datum; used to express a given height above sea-level. (AOD Above Ordnance Datum).

OS

Ordnance Survey.

Post-medieval

The period between AD 1500 and AD 1900.

Prehistoric

The period prior to the Roman invasion of AD 43, traditionally sub divided into; *Palaeolithic* – c. 500,000 BC to c. 12,000 BC; *Mesolithic* – c. 12,000 BC to c. 4,500 BC; *Neolithic* – c. 4,500 BC to c. 2,000 BC; *Bronze Age* – c. 2,000 BC to c. 800 BC; *Iron Age* – c. 800 BC to AD 43.

Roman

The period traditionally dated AD 43 until AD 410.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Between 1st April and 8th April 2019, Foundations Archaeology undertook a programme of archaeological watching brief during the construction of an outhouse building, garage conversion and extension at Moonfield House 12B, Long Wittenham (NGR: SU 5427 9365 centred). The project was commissioned by Shio-yun Kan and Anna Merton Kan.
- 1.2 This project was undertaken in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for an archaeological watching brief prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2018). The WSI was written in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014) and complies with the principles of NPPF18 (2018).
- 1.3 The code of conduct of the CIfA was adhered to throughout.
- 1.4 This document presents the findings of the archaeological monitoring.

2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Planning permission (**Application Number: P18/S1557/HH**) has been granted for the construction of a single storey rear extension, loft conversion, garage conversion and new outhouse building.
- 2.2 Due to the archaeological potential of the site, the Archaeology Team for Oxfordshire County Council on behalf of South Oxfordshire District Council has advised that a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording would be required during the associated groundworks, as stated in the Planning Permission under Conditions 4 and 5. Condition 4 of the Decision Notice will need to be formally discharged before the commencement of any works on site.
- 2.3 The site is located in the Conservation Area of Long Wittenham. It is bounded to the northeast, southeast and southwest by residential properties, to the west by a mobile home park and to the northwest by the River Thames. Long Wittenham village itself is known to have Saxon origins and is mentioned in the Domesday Book and the Thames Valley is known to be rich in archaeology from all periods.
- 2.4 The geology within the site comprises *Gault Formation - Mudstone*, no superficial deposits of *Northmoor Sand and Gravel Member, Upper Facet - Sand and Gravel* recorded (BGS – on line viewer).
- 2.5 The study area is within an area of high archaeological potential. Approximately 650m to the west southwest of the site and southeast of Appleford Church is a Scheduled Prehistoric settlement site (SM 1004849).

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The round barrow cemetery at Fullamoor Plantation (SM 1421606) is located approximately 1.2km to the northwest of the study area and a further Scheduled settlement site with Prehistoric and Roman evidence is located approximately 1.1km to the east at Northfield Farm (SM 1002925).

- 2.6 Previous archaeological interventions close to the site have revealed further archaeological evidence. A 10th century Viking bracelet was recovered within the immediate vicinity of the site. Work during a previous watching brief on the site in 2002 uncovered a ditch dated to the late Anglo-Saxon period and a Saxon cemetery was also excavated during the mid 19th century less than 100m to the south of the site. Further evidence of Prehistoric and Romano-British activity has also been found in Long Wittenham.
- 2.7 Approximately 70m to the southeast of the site is the Grade II Listed Building Lovegrove Cottage (1181211), which has mid 17th century origins. Approximately 650m to the northeast of the site is the Grade I listed Church of St Mary (1368798), which has 12th century origins. Further Listed Buildings are present, mainly along the High Street, and heading towards the church.
- 2.8 The site therefore contains the potential for archaeological features and deposits, predominately dating to the Prehistoric, Roman, Saxon, Medieval and Post-medieval periods. This will not prejudice the works against evidence relating to other periods.

3 AIMS

- 3.1 The aims of the archaeological monitoring are to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits in order to provide sufficient information to establish the nature, extent, preservation and potential of any surviving archaeological remains; as well as to make recommendations for management of the resource, including further archaeological works if necessary.
- 3.2 This was achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:
 - i) to record prior to their destruction archaeological deposits within the monitored areas, and date these where possible;
 - ii) to attempt to characterise the nature and preservation of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning and extent of features present within the monitored areas;
 - iii) to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence which will attempt to determine the complexity of the horizontal and vertical stratigraphy present, and to recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples;
 - iv) to define any research priorities that may be relevant should further field investigation be required.

4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 All groundworks were conducted whilst under the constant observation of an archaeologist.
- 4.2 Excavation was undertaken by appropriate plant which was equipped with a toothless grading bucket. All spoil tips were investigated both visually and with a metal detector.
- 4.3 All excavation and recording work was completed in accordance with the WSI and the Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 3: Excavation Manual.

5 RESULTS

- 5.1 A series of foundation and service trenches were dug to varying depths (0.4m – 1.4m), as noted in Figure 2.
- 5.2 Trench One was excavated for the foundation of the proposed outhouse building. The trench was excavated to a depth of 0.75m (51.20m AOD) below the Modern ground level, but did not reveal the natural substrates. The earliest deposit present was a light brown silt sand subsoil (102), which was only partially exposed for a depth of approximately 0.05m. This was sealed by a dark grey brown silt topsoil (101), which was present for a depth of 0.7m. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were present within this trench.
- 5.3 Trench Two, was the footing for the extension and was excavated immediately to the northwest of the existing house to a depth of 0.9m. Natural deposit of mid orange brown clays and sands were present within this trench at a height of approximately 51.35m AOD. Within the trench the stratigraphy consisted of a mid grey brown sandy clay subsoil (204) upto 0.8m thick, which was sealed by a dark brown sandy silt topsoil (203), up to 0.15m thick. There was evidence for modern activity in this area through a build-up of modern layers surrounding the location of the existing house, which sealed the topsoil. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were present within this trench.
- 5.4 An area to the northeast of Trench one (2.45m x 2.4m), was excavated to 0.65m onto a yellow grey sandy natural. This was sealed by a dark brown sandy silt topsoil (301), up to 0.15m thick. During this excavation a possible archaeological feature [302] was identified and excavated. It was sub-circular in plan (measuring 0.6m x 0.46m) and 0.17m deep. This feature did not produce any artefacts or charcoal but the frequent rooting in the loose brown sandy silt fill (303) would suggest this was a tree bowl.
- 5.5 A service trench of 25m was excavated near the northeast boundary of the site, which connected the existing house to Trench one. There was no archaeology present in this trench and the stratigraphy was consistent to that identified in Trench one. At the south eastern end of the trench were modern layers of concrete and grit/gravel which sealed the topsoil.

- 5.6 Trench Five was excavated from the southwest of the house to the southwest corner of Trench one. Excavated to a depth of 0.8m the stratigraphy of the trench consisted of a 0.7m deep topsoil sealing a thin layer of subsoil with a small amount of probable natural yellow sand at the trench base. A further 5m long service trench which connected Trenches one and five was excavated to a depth of 0.3m. However, only topsoil was present to this depth.
- 5.7 During the course of the works all spoil tips and exposed soils were scanned by a metal detector, however, no metal artefacts were recovered during the course of these works.

6 DISCUSSION

- 6.1 A total of six trenches were dug to varying depths in accordance with the approved plan. In the trenches that exposed natural clay and sand, only one potential feature was present [302], which was most likely a planting hole. The only finds were recovered from the topsoil, these were modern in date and consisted of pottery, animal bone and plastic.
- 6.2 However, it should be noted that the natural deposits were only revealed in some of the excavations, so this negative result, does not preclude the possibility of further archaeological remains being present elsewhere within the vicinity of the site.
- 6.3 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology. A short note will be submitted for publication in the relevant local archaeological journal and an OASIS form will also be submitted to ADS.

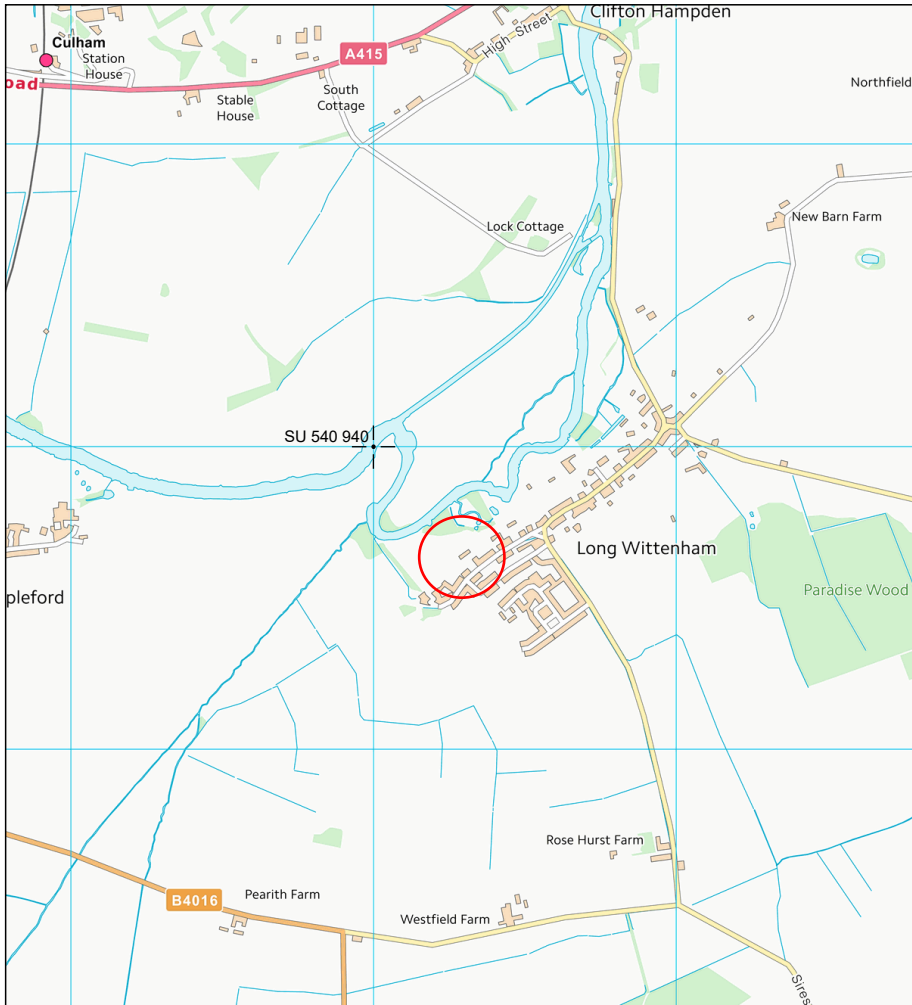
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8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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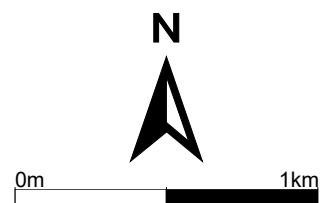
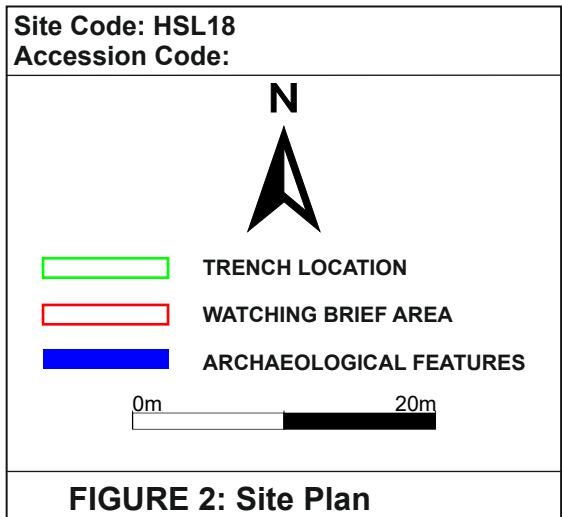
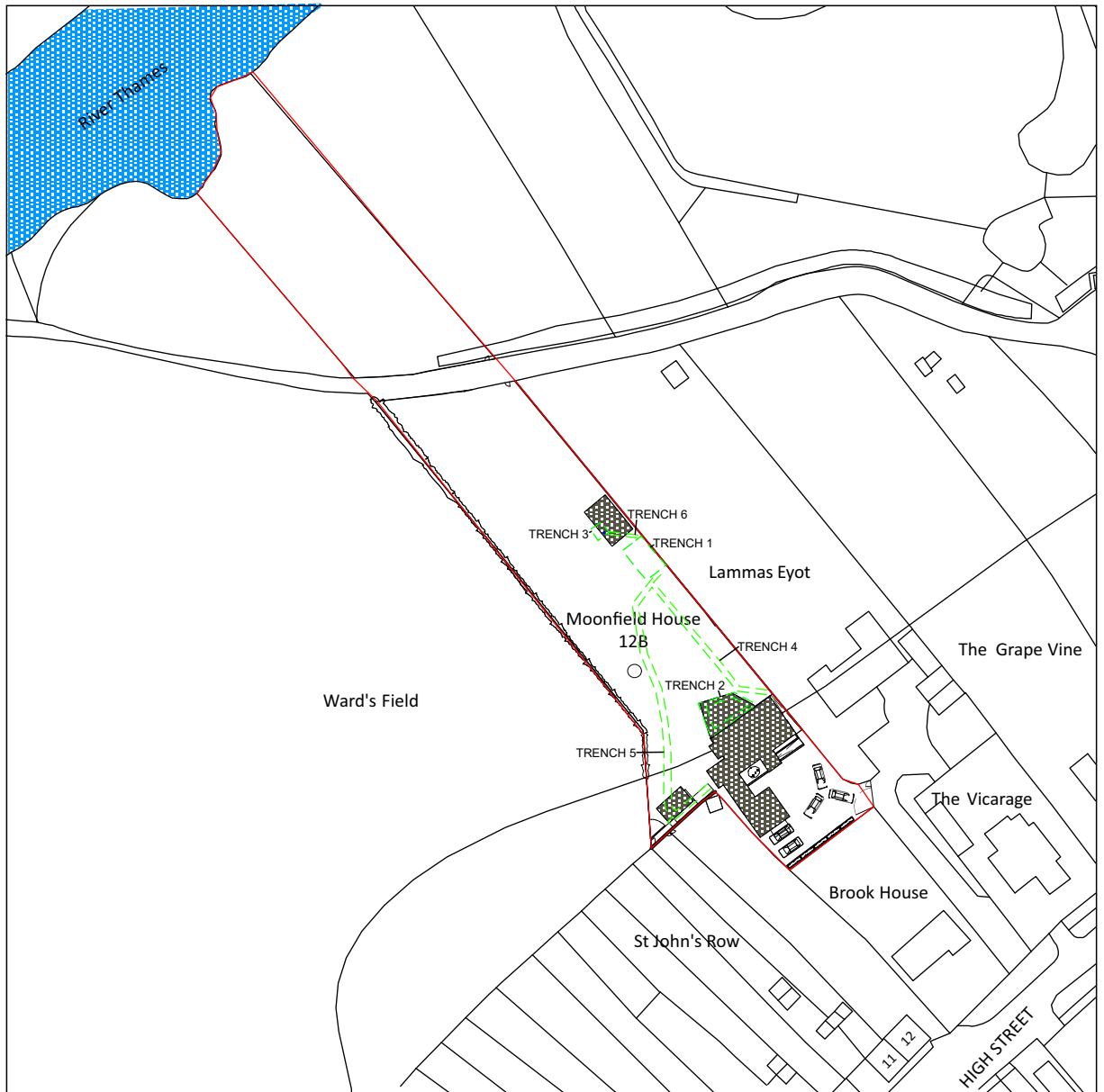
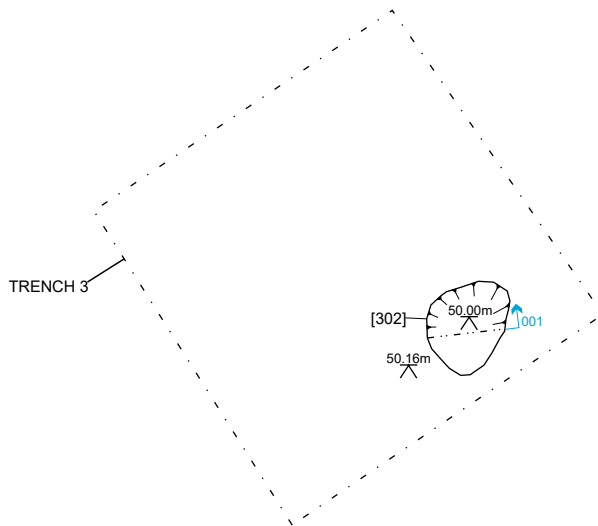


FIGURE 1: Site Location





SEC 001: NORTH NORTHWEST FACING SECTION [302]

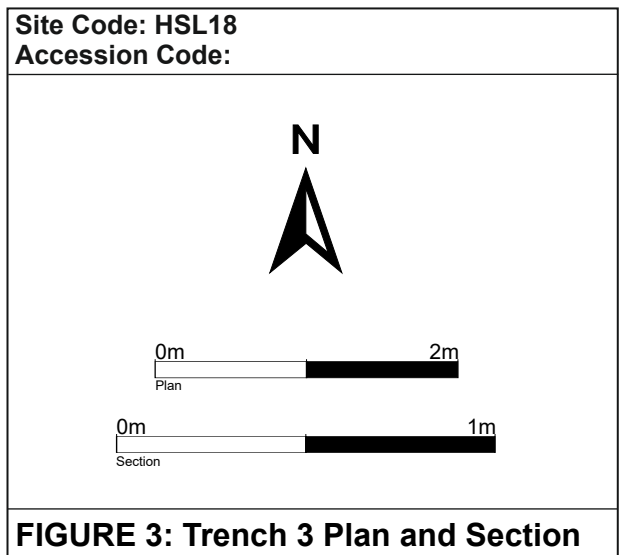
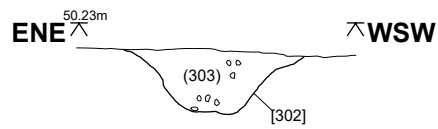




PLATE 1: Northwest Facing Site Shot



PLATE 2: Southeast Facing Shot of Feature [302]



PLATE 3: Northwest Facing Shot of Trench 4



PLATE 4: South Facing Shot of Trench 5

Site Code: HSL18

Accession Code:

FIGURE 4: Photographs