

# Site of Turkey Sheds South Moreton



## Archaeological Watching Brief Report



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## Site of Turkey Sheds, South Moreton, Oxfordshire

*Archaeological Watching Brief Report*

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## Summary

*Oxford Archaeology conducted a watching brief at the former site of turkey sheds at South Moreton, Oxfordshire between March 2011 and March 2012. Possible post-medieval and modern landscaping layers and modern intrusions were recorded. No significant archaeological deposits were noted.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by the Patricia Newman Practice, Chartered Building Surveyors on behalf of Hall Farm South Moreton Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during construction work related to the creation of a new dwelling.
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken as a condition of planning permission (planning ref: P10/W1034). A brief had been set by Richard Oram (Oram 2010), Planning Archaeologist, Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (OCAS), who also monitored the project, and a Written Scheme of Investigation (OA 2010) was produced by OA to define the works.
- 1.1.3 An area strip for a new driveway, excavation of foundation trenches for a house and separate garage, two rain water storage tanks, drainage trench and a heating trench were observed.

### 1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The development site is located at the southern side of South Moreton, south of the High Street, east of Church Lane and west of Mill Lane at NGR: SU 560 881 (see Figure 1).
- 1.2.2 The area of proposed development currently consists of old farm buildings at an approximate level of 50 m OD.
- 1.2.3 The geology of the area is Valley Gravels (Geological Survey of Great Britain, Sheet No. 254).

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background to the site has been described in the brief and is reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 The construction site lies within an area of some archaeological interest located within the medieval core of the village and 200m NW of the parish Church (PRN 2704). The site is located in the vicinity of a number of listed C17th buildings. The Rocque Map of 1761 shown a number of buildings in the area of the current Turkey Sheds and it is likely that these are also of a C17th date. The site is also located 196m east of the site of an undated enclosure seen on aerial photographs (PRN 15373) and 220m NE of the site of the Scheduled Ancient Monument of the Motte Castle (SAM 28196).



## 2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The brief specified that the Archaeological Watching Brief should, within the resources available, allow the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works.
- 2.1.2 Oxford Archaeology would provide an opportunity, if needed, to signal, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find had been made for which the resources allocated were not sufficient to support a treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.
- 2.1.3 The results of the watching brief would seek to establish, as far as is practical, the chronology, plan, form and function of archaeological features affected by development and interpret the results in terms of the known archaeology of South Moreton and its surrounds.

### 2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The watching brief was undertaken as a series of site visits conducted during ground works activity which had the possibility of impinging upon areas of potential archaeology. These works included topsoil stripping, foundation trenches and service trenching.
- 2.2.2 All features and deposits were issued with unique context numbers, and context recording was in accordance with established OA practices. Bulk finds were collected by context. Black-and-white negative photographs and colour digital photographs were taken of all recorded sections and features together with a general record of the works.
- 2.2.3 Site plans were drawn at an appropriate scale (normally 1:50 or 1:100) with larger scale plans of features as necessary. Section drawings of features and sample sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20.

## 3 RESULTS

### 3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 The following excavations were monitored (see Figure 2):
  - The strip foundation trenches of the house and garage (to a depth of 1 m);
  - The footprint of the driveway (to a depth of 0.2 – 0.3 m);
  - Two rain water tanks (one to a depth of 0.6 m and one to a depth of 2 m);
  - An underground heating trench (to a depth 1 m); and
  - A drainage trench (to a depth of 1 m), not shown on Figure 2, which extended from the house across the farmyard of Hall Farm to the east.
- 3.1.2 The stratigraphy of the site was generally topsoil and subsoil over natural. There were variations in some areas possibly indicating truncation of subsoil and natural in these places. No significant archaeology was located. See Appendix A for a full list of recorded contexts.



- 3.1.3 The natural (4) was a grey/brown sandy gravel. This was observed across the site except in the shallow footprint of the driveway which did not penetrate to the level of the natural.
- 3.1.4 A subsoil (3) was observed overlying natural 4 across most of the west and south of the site. This layer varied in thickness between 0.2 – 0.56 m, being thickest to the west of the site. No artefacts were recovered from this layer and it was cut by modern intrusions. It is possible that this layer represents post-medieval landscaping of the site, but without dating it may just as likely be early modern.
- 3.1.5 A number of pit like disturbances were noted across the site. These were thought to be modern disturbances due to their sharp angular shape and because many contained redeposited topsoil (layer 1) and CBM fragments. These were seen cutting into natural 4 and/or sub-soil 3. A selection of these were recorded and are noted in the context inventory below.
- 3.1.6 A topsoil (1) was observed across the whole site, except where it was absent in the central area of the site and in the footprint of the drainage trench. It overlay sub-soil 3 or, where 3 was absent, natural 4. Topsoil layer 1 varied between 0.4 – 0.9 m thick and was noticeably thicker to the west and south of the site.
- 3.1.7 A modern landscaping layer (2) was observed overlain by a demolition layer (12) in the central area of the site. Layer 12 was also observed to the north of the site and in the footprint of the drainage trench. These layers overlay the topsoil or sub-soil or, where these layers had been truncated away, the natural. Where layers 12 and 2 directly overlay the natural it indicates the natural may have been truncated in these places.
- 3.1.8 No archaeological features were located during the excavation works.

## 3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 Large amounts of post-medieval and modern CBM fragments, concrete fragments and some fragments of animal bone were noted in modern contexts. None were retained.
- 3.2.2 Two copper coins were recovered from the surface in the area of layer 12 between the house and garage. One was in poor condition and was a Hanoverian halfpenny of either George II (1727-1760) or George III (1760-1820). The other coin was in very poor condition and, based on size, also likely to be a halfpenny.

## 3.3 Environmental remains

- 3.3.1 No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling were encountered during the course of the watching brief.

## 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 No significant archaeological features were located during the excavation works. Possible post-medieval and modern landscaping layers and modern cuts were observed and recorded.
- 4.1.2 It is concluded that where modern landscaping layers 12 and 2 were observed directly overlaying the natural 4 there is a possibility that the natural, and any archaeological deposits in those areas, have been truncated.





## APPENDIX A. ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context	Type	Depth	Width	Length	Comments	Finds	Date
1	Layer	0.4-0.9 m	c. 30 m	c. 30 m	Topsoil	CBM. None recovered.	Modern
2	Layer	0.4-0.5 m	c. 5 m	c. 5 m	Modern landscaping layer associated with 12.	CBM. None recovered.	Modern
3	Layer	0.2-0.56 m	c. 20 m	c. 10 m	Sub-soil/landscaping layer.	None	Post-medieval/modern
4	Layer	N/a	N/a	N/a	Natural drift geology	N/a	N/a
5	Cut	0.28 m	0.8 m+	1.06 m+	Modern pit observed in the north of the house footprint. Steep straight sides with sharp break into near flat base suggesting machine excavation. Sealed by Layer 1.	N/a	Modern
6	Fill	0.08 m	0.5 m	1.56 m	Primary fill of 5	None	Modern
7	Fill	0.2 m	0.8 m+	1.06 m+	Secondary fill of 5	None	Modern
8	Cut	0.6 m+	1 m+	1.32 m	Modern pit observed in the south of the house footprint. Angular stepped straight sides suggesting machine excavation. Sealed by layer 1.	N/a	Modern
9	Fill	0.6 m+	1 m+	1.32 m	Single fill of 8.	None	Modern
10	Cut	0.52 m	0.6 m+	1.24 m	Modern pit observed in the south of the house footprint. Section straight sided and bucket 'scoop' shape. Sealed by Layer 1.	N/a	Modern
11	Fill	0.52 m	0.6 m+	1.24 m	Single fill of 10.	None	Modern



12	Layer	0.2-0.4 m	0.6 m+ - 5m+	30 m+	Modern levelling layer composed of crushed CBM, concrete, tarmac and crushed chalk.	CBM (None recovered).	Post-medieval and modern material in a modern context.
13	Cut	0.58 m	0.4 m+	2.06 m	Modern pit observed at the north-west end of the drainage trench. Probably machine excavated. Sealed by concrete surface of farmyard	N/a	Modern.
14	Fill	0.58 m	0.4 m+	2.06 m	Multiple layer fill of redeposited natural and silty clay. Single event backfill likely immediately after excavation of 13.	CBM and animal bone (none recovered)	Modern.



## APPENDIX B. REFERENCES

OA , 2010. *The Turkey Sheds, Hall Farm, South Moreton, Oxfordshire. Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

Oram, R 2010. *The Turkey Sheds, South Moreton – Design Brief for an Archaeological Watching Brief.* Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service Document



## APPENDIX C. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name:	Site of Turkey Sheds, South Moreton, Oxfordshire
Site code:	SMTURK10
Grid reference:	Centred at NGR SU 560 881
Type of watching brief:	Construction work.
Date and duration of project:	Visits between March 2011 and March 2012.
Area of site:	c. 1,400 m <sup>2</sup>
Summary of results:	Possible post-medieval landscaping layer. Modern layers and disturbances related to the construction of the turkey sheds and demolition of some farm buildings pre-1960 and subsequent re-landscaping of site.
Location of archive:	Oxfordshire County Museum Service



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Figure 1: Site location





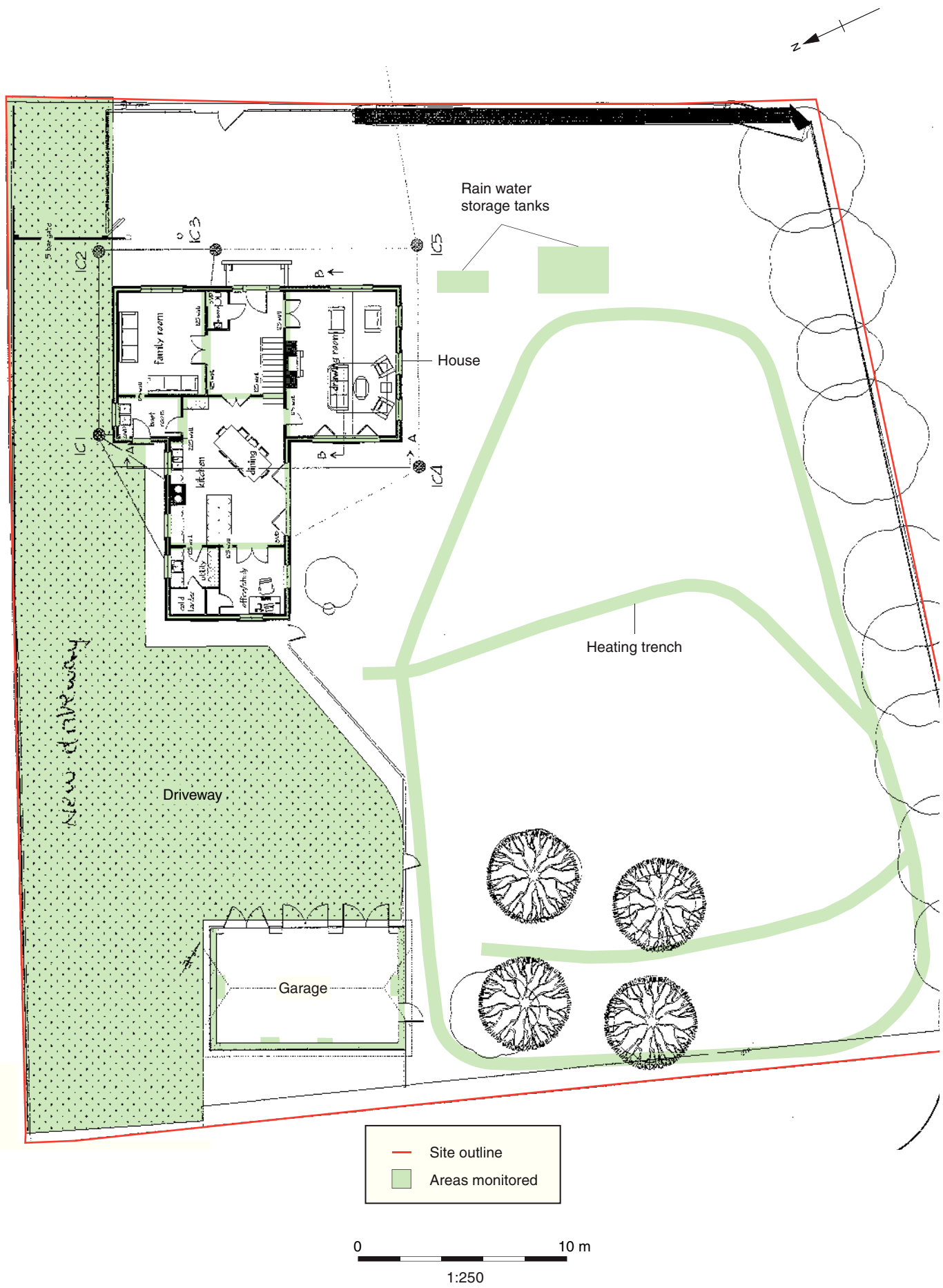


Figure 2: Plan of monitored excavations









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