



# Box Farm, Marsh Gibbon, Buckinghamshire

## Archaeological Evaluation Report

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## Box Farm, Marsh Gibbon, Buckinghamshire

### *Archaeological Evaluation Report*

*Written by Rachael Daniel*

*With illustrations by Charles Rousseaux*

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## Summary

In late July 2018 Oxford Archaeology undertook a trial trench evaluation at Box Farm, Castle Street, Marsh Gibbon, Buckinghamshire. The work was undertaken prior to the construction of a proposed new bungalow. The site is located within the conservation area of the historical village and to the rear of a Grade II listed 17th-century farm house and barn, and had the potential to contain medieval and post-medieval remains.

The evaluation consisted of single trench excavated within the footprint of the proposed new building. The trench revealed a general sequence of mixed topsoil and subsoil deposits sealing natural geology. A modern backfilled feature, possible a former pond, was identified in the northern end of the trench.

The evaluation did not identify any archaeological remains and found signs of modern disturbance. Based on the results of the evaluation the site is considered to have negligible archaeological potential.

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## Acknowledgements

Oxford Archaeology would like to thank Mr Steve Beebe for commissioning this project. Thanks is also extended to Phil Markam who monitored the work on behalf of Buckinghamshire County Council for his advice and guidance.

The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology by Carl Champness. The fieldwork was directed by Daniel Sykes and Rachael Daniel who wrote up the report. Thanks are also extended to the teams of OA staff that prepared the archive under the management of Nicola Scott.



## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Mr Beebe to undertake an archaeological evaluation at the site of Box Farm, Castle Street, March Gibbon, Buckinghamshire. The fieldwork was undertaken to assess the archaeological potential of the site in preparation for a proposed new bungalow.
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken as a condition of Planning Permission (planning ref. 16/02887/AOP). Although the local planning authority did not set a brief for the work, discussions with Phil Markam established the scope of work required. A written scheme of investigation was produced by OA detailing the Local Authority's requirements for work necessary to inform the planning process and discharge the planning condition (OA 2018). This report outlines the results of the evaluation.
- 1.1.3 All work was undertaken in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation (2014) and local and national planning policies.

### 1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 The site lies to the south of Castle Street, Marsh Gibbon, Buckinghamshire (centred on SP 6512 2310; Fig. 1). It is situated to the rear of the Grade II listed farm house, Box Farm House and Barn. The area of proposed development consists of a grass area with mature trees, covering a total area of c. 377m<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.2.2 The geology of the area is mapped as Weymouth Member mudstone, overlain by alluvial deposits (BGS website).

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historic background to the site is outlined in the WSI and is briefly summarised below:
- 1.3.2 No Palaeolithic, Mesolithic or Neolithic finds have been recorded within 1km of the site area.
- 1.3.3 Less than 5km to the south-west of the site area, an evaluation and subsequent excavation was carried out in 2006 – 2007 by Cambridge Archaeological Field Unit to mitigate the construction of a gas pipeline. There was extensive evidence of human activity ranging from the Bronze Age to the Late Roman period, although most activity occurred from the Late Iron Age onwards (Thatcher 2008).
- 1.3.4 The village is first mentioned in the Domesday book, which describes a village with a high-water table or marsh. The affix 'Gibbon' derives from the family name 'Gibwen', the lords of the manor here in the 12th century. In manorial rolls of 1292 the village was recorded as Mersh Gibwyne, though earlier (in 1086) it was known simply as Merse. The 13th-century Parish church is located c. 1km to the north-west of the site.
- 1.3.5 The majority of the historical evidence in the Marsh Gibbon area takes the form of 16th-18th-century farm houses in Marsh Gibbon. The site is located close to Box Farm

and Barn, which are Grade II listed (1214395) and date from 17th century but were extended during 18th century. The farm house and barn are constructed of coursed rubble stone, timber lintels and thatched roofs.

## **2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Aims**

2.1.1 The evaluation aims and objectives were as follows:

- i. To determine or confirm the general nature of any remains present.
- ii. To determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of any remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence.
- iii. To assess the impact of previous land use on the site.
- iv. To recover and preserve any archaeological remains which may be related to the grade II listed farm house or barn.
- v. To disseminate the results through the production of a site archive for deposition with an appropriate museum.

### **2.2 Methodology**

2.2.1 The trench was set out as indicated on Fig. 2 with a GPS system. The trench was machine excavated carefully in spits under constant archaeological supervision by a suitably powerful machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The trench was machined to the top of the natural geology or the first significant archaeological horizon, whichever was encountered first. The revealed deposits were photographed and recorded at a suitable level in line with the approved WSI (OA 2018).

2.2.2 Once recording was complete, the trench was backfilled with the permission of the Buckinghamshire County Archaeologist.

## **3 RESULTS**

### **3.1 Introduction and presentation of results**

3.1.1 The results of the evaluation, including a stratigraphic description of the trench, are presented below. The full details of the trench with dimensions and depths of all deposits can be found in Appendix A.

### **3.2 General soils and ground conditions**

3.2.1 The soil sequence consisted of a natural geology of clay, overlain by a mixed clay subsoil, which in turn was overlain by topsoil.

3.2.2 Ground conditions throughout the evaluation were generally good, and the trench remained dry throughout.

### **3.3 General distribution of archaeological deposits**

3.3.1 No archaeological features were recorded within the trench and only modern rubbish material was identified.

### **3.4 Trench 1 (Plates 1 and 2)**

3.4.1 The trench was excavated in a grass field surrounded by trees. The trench was excavated in its proposed location with only slight modifications to its position to avoid tree roots.

3.4.2 The natural clay was encountered in the base of the trench at a depth of 0.50m. It was overlain by mixed subsoil (102) and topsoil (101). The top- and subsoil contained fragments of modern rubbish.

3.4.3 The cut of a large modern feature (104), dug through the topsoil (101) and the subsoil (102), was identified in the northern end of the trench (Plate 2). This feature extended for 5m towards the northern end of the trench and continued beyond its limits. It was filled with a dark brown clay deposit and contained modern finds including a metal bucket, frogged bricks and shot-gun cartridges. The finds from the feature were not retained.

## **4 DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 Reliability of field investigation**

4.1.1 The trench was excavated in reasonable weather conditions and visibility was sufficiently good to identify the presence or absence of archaeological features. It is therefore felt that the recorded absence of archaeological features provides an accurate representation of the evaluation area as a whole.

### **4.2 Objectives and results**

4.2.1 The evaluation was able to achieve the main aims of the evaluation to provide good coverage and characterise the sequences in order to assess the archaeological potential of the site.

### **4.3 Interpretation**

4.3.1 Only modern features and deposits were observed and the absence of any significant archaeological remains within the site boundary was successfully determined. Based on these results the site is believed to have negligible archaeological potential.

## APPENDIX A TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
General description					Orientation	N-S
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil and subsoil overlying natural geology of clay.					Length (m)	15
					Width (m)	1.8
					Avg. depth (m)	0.5
Context No.	Type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
101	Layer	-	0.25	Topsoil – turf.	-	-
102	Layer	-	0.25	Subsoil – mixed clay natural and rubble.	-	-
103	Layer	-	-	Natural – mid yellowish-brown clay.	-	-
104	Cut	-	-	Cut of recently backfilled feature/pond. Filled with modern plastic, shot-gun cartridges, brick and concrete.	-	Modern

## APPENDIX B      BIBLIOGRAPHY

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OA 2018, Castle Street, Marsh Gibbon, Buckinghamshire, Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Evaluation, unpublished client report

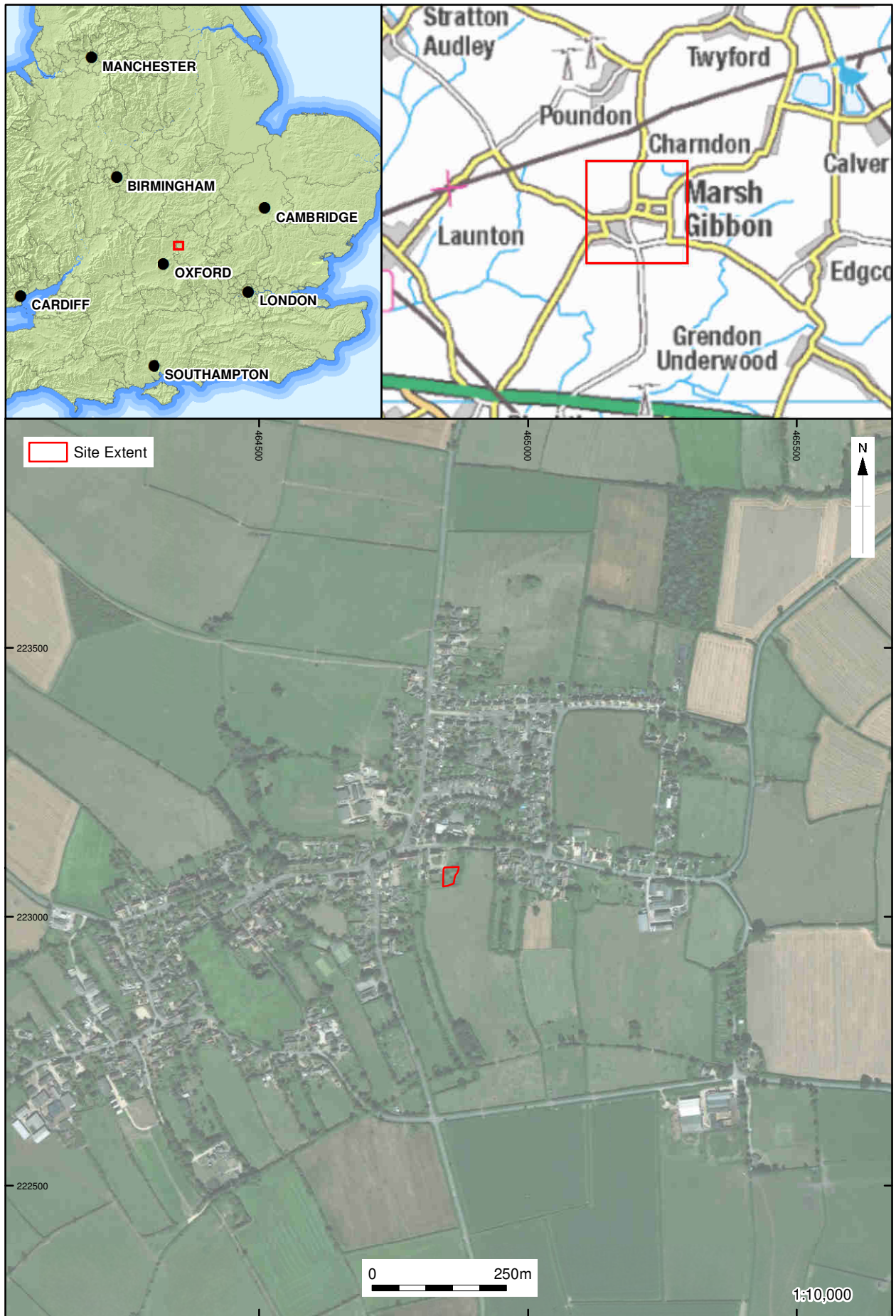
Thatcher, C, 2008 Romano-British Activity at Grendon Underwood: excavations on the Hardwick to Marsh Gibbon Gas Pipeline, Buckinghamshire, CAM ARC

## APPENDIX C      SITE SUMMARY DETAILS

<b>Site name:</b>	Castle Street, Marsh Gibbon, Buckinghamshire
<b>Site code:</b>	MAGBO18
<b>Grid Reference</b>	SP 6485 2307
<b>Type:</b>	Evaluation
<b>Date and duration:</b>	30/07/18, 1 day
<b>Area of Site</b>	377m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Location of archive:</b>	The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum Service in due course, under the following accession number: to be confirmed.
<b>Summary of Results:</b>	During late July 2018, Oxford Archaeology undertook a trial trench evaluation on a grass area situated to the rear of a Grade II listed farm house, Box Farm house and barn, centred on SP 6485 2307. One trench measuring 15m by 1.8m was opened and no archaeology was recovered.



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Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA,

Figure 1: Site location



X:\m\Marsh Gibbon\_Castle Street\_Bucks\10Geomatics\03 GIS Projects\Figure2\_2018-07-23.mxd\gary.jones\23/07/2018



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

Figure 2: Trench location







Plate 1: Trench 1 (2m and 1m scales)    Plate 2: Trench 1, working shot







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