

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

PIPERS MEAD, MERTON

OXFORDSHIRE

SP 5746 1750

On behalf of

Palmerston (Mercantile) Ltd

July 2010

REPORT FOR ?

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FIELDWORK 11th June 2010 – 20th July 2010

REPORT ISSUED July 2010

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Site Code: NMPM 08
JMHS Project No: 1884
Archive Location: Oxfordshire County Museum Service
Accession No: Awaited

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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services conducted an archaeological watching brief during ground works for five new buildings at Pipers Mead, Merton, Oxfordshire. No archaeological features were recorded.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site is located to the southwest of Merton opposite the recreation ground (SP 5746 1750), east of the M40 and north of the River Ray. It is situated at about 59m OD and the underlying geology is Kellaway Clays and Cornbrash. The site lies within a domestic garden following demolition.

1.2 Planning Background

A planning application to demolish an existing two storey dwelling and to construct two new dwellings with parking and access (06/00213/OUT). Outline permission was granted and a full application to construct two detached dwellings and a terrace of three dwellings was submitted in August 2006 (06/01565/F). This was refused and a new application for the construction of two dwellings was submitted in June 2007 (07/01249/F). A revised planning application (09/01518/F) for five residential dwellings was subsequently submitted and planning permission was granted.

Due to the potential for the work to disturb archaeological deposits a planning condition was attached to the permission requiring that an archaeological watching brief should be maintained during the period of the groundworks. This was in line with PPG16 and Local Plan policies.

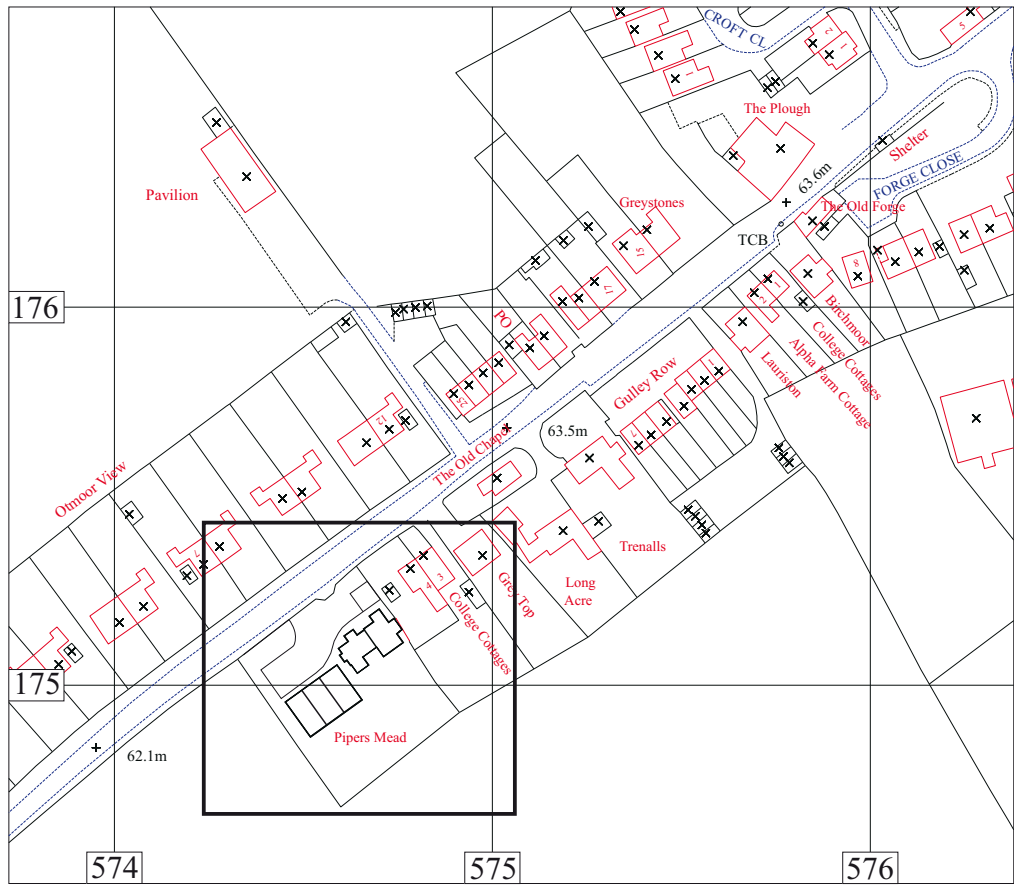
1.3 Archaeological Background

The site is located in an area of archaeological potential due to a number of sites noted on the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record for this area. A Roman road is located 210m to the west of the site (SP 5723 1745) and a N/S aligned V-shaped ditch associated with the road is recorded to the southwest (SP 5721 1718; PRN10599). The ditch probably formed one of the roadside ditches for the road that are visible on aerial photographs. A Roman coin (SP 5750 1758; PRN13189) was found 100m to the east of the site within an area where medieval, Roman and Saxon pottery has been found (SP 5745 1763; PRN13188). Further medieval pottery and a possible house platform have been recorded to the north of the site (SP 5739 1780; PRN9553).

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- To identify and record any archaeological remains exposed during the development works



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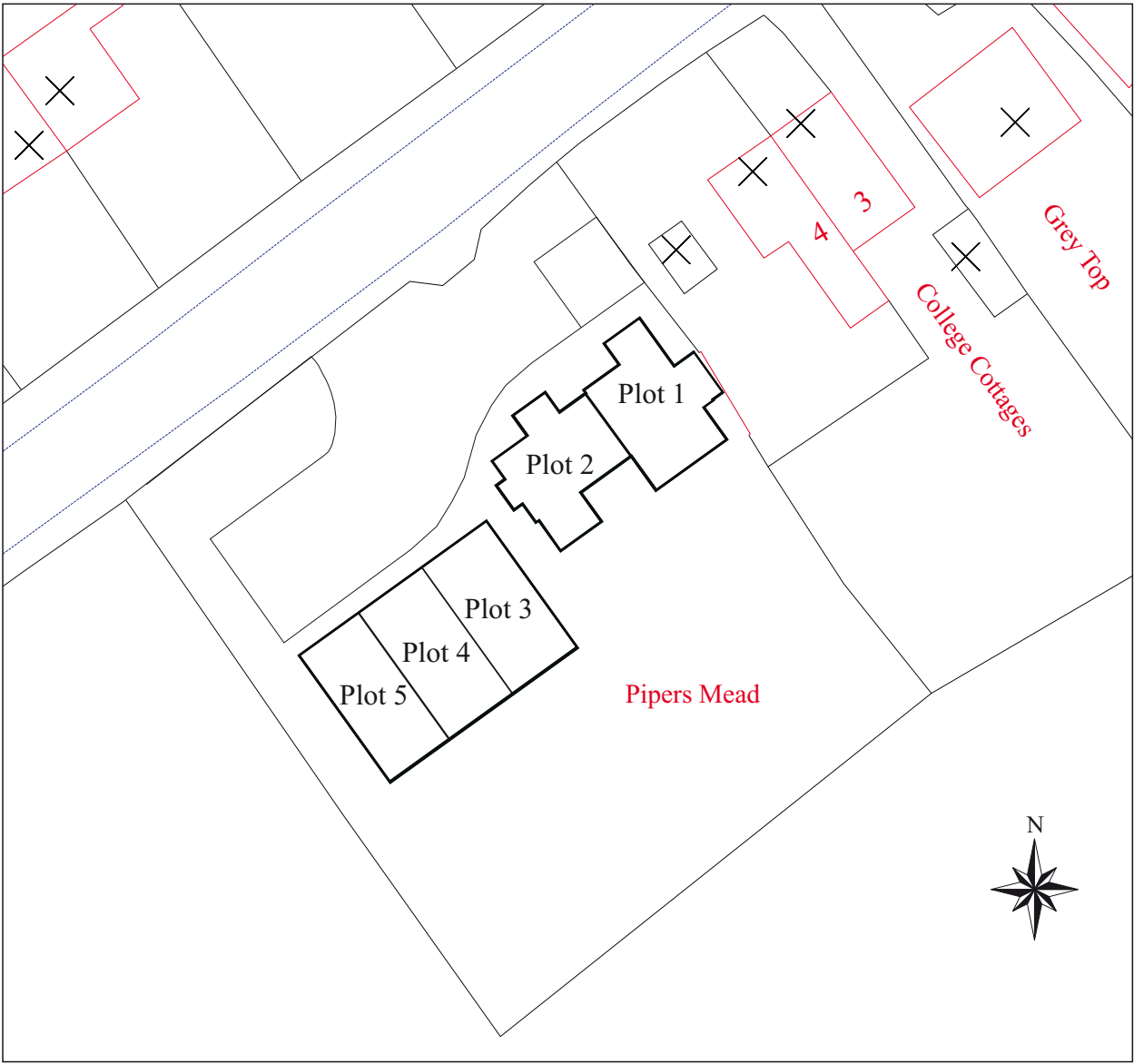


Figure 1. Site location

- In particular:
 - To record any Roman roadside activity,
 - To record any deposits associated with the Saxon and medieval occupation in the vicinity

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (OCAS). Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate and possible.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (2008).

3.2 Methodology

An archaeologist monitored the course of all invasive ground works that had the potential to disturb or destroy archaeological remains. This primarily consisted of the excavation of the foundation trenches for the new buildings, which were all dug to a depth of around 1.5m.

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was also produced.

4 RESULTS

All features were assigned individual context numbers. Numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material. A general description of the feature fills is given.

4.1 Excavation Results

The lowest natural geological deposit in the area was a yellowish-brown sandy-clay with cornbrash stone inclusions (03). This was more than 1.0m thick. Above this was a mid yellowish-brown silty-clay (02) subsoil around 0.25m thick.

Overlying this, across the site was a dark brown silty loam (01) between 0.25m and 0.40m thick. This contained occasional large concrete floor and foundation fragments as well as modern looking brick and tile fragments, representing the construction and demolition of the previous building.

A number of modern service pipes relating to the drainage of the previous building on site were also observed in section during the excavation of the footings, all of which were cut through the topsoil (01) and subsoil (02).

4.2 Reliability of Techniques and Results

The results can on the whole be considered to be good. Archaeologists were alerted to all ground works being undertaken on site and were given full access to the site. The majority of the work took place on dry days.

5 FINDS

No artefacts were recovered.

6 DISCUSSION

The topsoil on-site had been somewhat disturbed during the erection and demolition of the previous building, and was observed to contain large fragments of concrete foundation and brick work. No archaeological features were observed.

7 ARCHIVE

Archive Contents

The archive consists of the following:

Paper record

The project brief

Written scheme of investigation

The project report

The primary site records

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the Oxfordshire Museum Service.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Institute for Archaeologists, 2008 *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief*.