

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

ROSEMARY COTTAGE, MAIN STREET,

FRINGFORD

NGR SP 6049 2891

On behalf of

Ms. S. Ward

FEBRUARY 2012

REPORT FOR Ms S. Ward
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FIELDWORK 13th, 23rd and 30th January 2012
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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out a watching brief on ground works at Rosemary Cottage, Main Street, Fringford on the 13th, 23rd and 30th January 2012, during the removal of topsoil and the digging of footings trenches for two new residential buildings. No archaeological deposits or features were identified.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location

The groundwork took place on land (hereafter referred to as ‘the Site’) formerly occupied by Rosemary Cottage on the northern side of Main Street, near the centre of Fringford village (NGR SP 6049 2891; Figure 1). It is bordered to the south by Main Street and to the east, west and north by existing residential properties.

The Site is situated on relatively flat ground at approximately 75 metres above Ordnance Datum (OD), and the underlying geology is fluvio-glacial drift deposits of gravel, silt and sand. The building work involved the demolition of the existing house, the removal of rubble and topsoil, and the machine excavation of footing trenches for the two new properties.

1.2 Planning Background

Cherwell District Council granted planning permission for the construction of two new residential premises on land formerly occupied by Rosemary Cottage, Main Street, Fringford (11/01160/F). Due to the potential presence of below ground archaeological remains, a condition for an archaeological watching brief was attached to the permission by the Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (OCAS), who also prepared a *Design Brief* for the archaeological work programme. The *Written Scheme of Investigation* (JMHS 2518/01) was prepared in response to the Design Brief, and outlined the methodology by which the watching brief was carried out.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The Site is situated near the centre of the village of Fringford, on the northern side of Main Street (NGR SP 6049 2891). The Site is situated within an area of some archaeological interest close to the core of the historic village. Approximately 60m to the north of the Site, evidence of Romano-British occupation was recorded during the development of Crosslands and the Paddock (OAU 1997; Historic Environment Record PRN 15925). Excavations there revealed a complex and extended sequence of Romano-British inhabitation from the late 1st or early 2nd century AD until the 4th century, mostly comprised of low-status settlement. Early medieval field boundaries dated to the 10th and 11th centuries were also identified, and these were similar to the alignments of major late Roman ditches. There was evidence for the survival of some of these boundaries into the 19th century, and evidence for Roman and medieval settlement was also recorded in further archaeological investigations 100m of the Site.

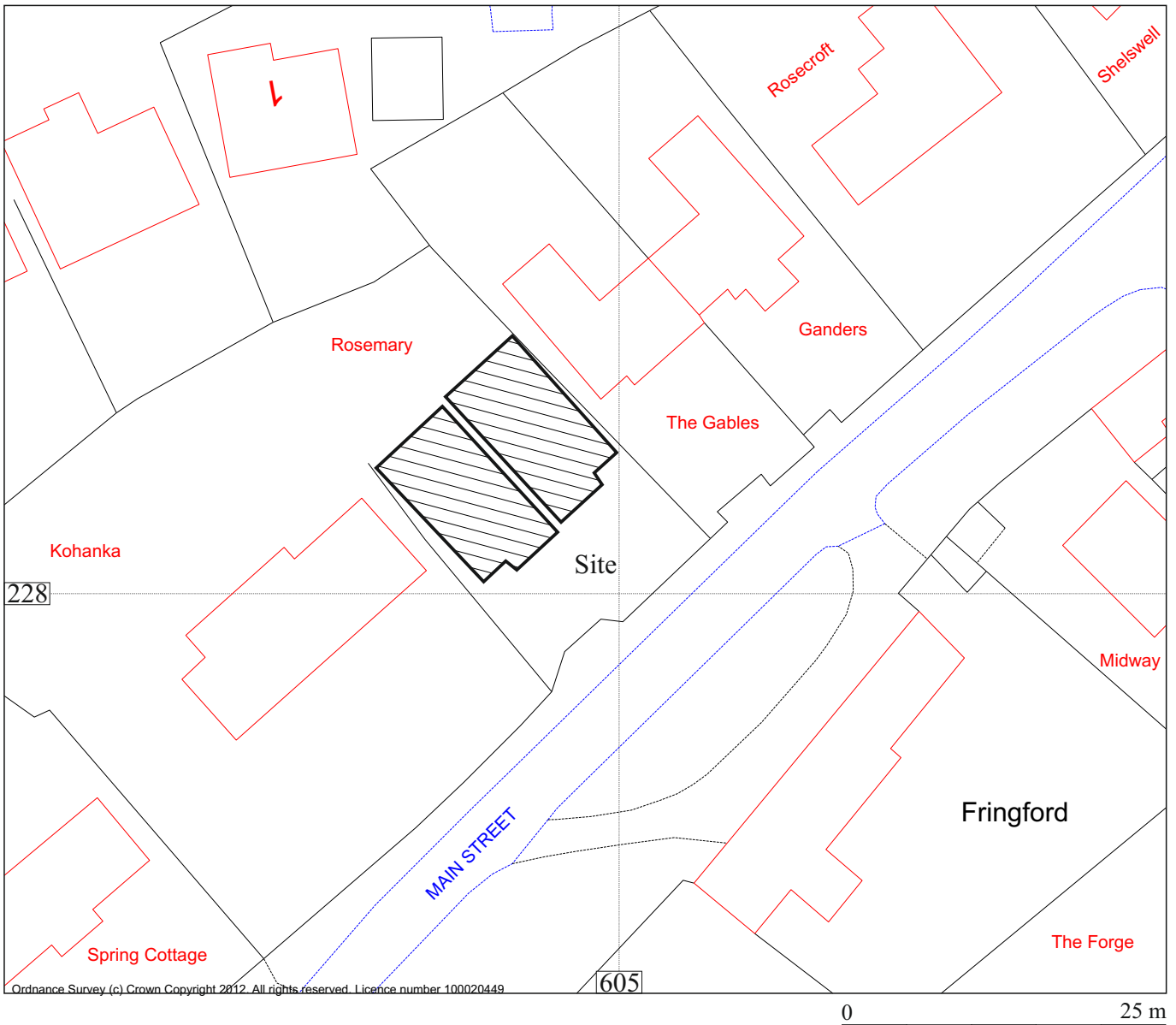
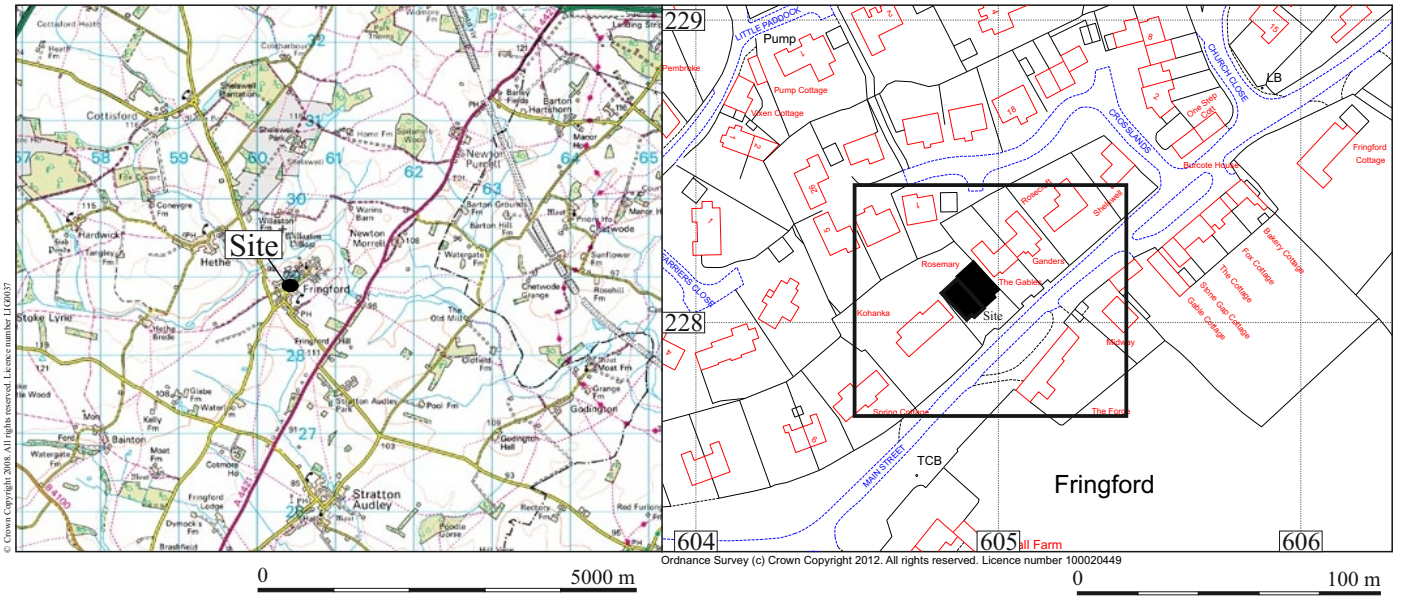


Figure 1. Site location

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

- To make a record of any significant remains revealed during the course of any operations that may disturb or destroy archaeological remains;
- In particular to record any evidence associated with the known Roman settlement, and the medieval and post-medieval village.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

An archaeologist would be present on Site during the course of any groundwork that had the potential to reveal or disturb archaeological remains, including any reduction in ground level, excavations for foundations and services and any additional intrusive works.

Any archaeological deposits and features revealed would be cleaned by hand and recorded in plan before being excavated and recorded at an appropriate level. Archaeological features or other archaeological remains such as a concentration of artefacts would have written, drawn and photographic records made of them. Where archaeological features were exposed during any reduction in ground level but were otherwise unaffected, these would only be recorded through written descriptions and plans, whilst any surface finds would be retained. Where archaeological features or remains would be impacted by any groundwork, they would be sample excavated. Any variations to this would be agreed with the Oxford City Archaeologist.

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in the *Written Scheme of Investigation*. The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2008).

3.2 Methodology

An archaeologist monitored all the invasive groundwork; and all resulting surfaces were then inspected for any significant archaeological features. The only service trench was for foul sewer and it was very unlikely that it would have revealed anything and therefore was not monitored.

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 produced where appropriate.

4 RESULTS

An archaeologist was present on Site to monitor the removal of topsoil and the last of the building rubble, and also the machine excavation of new footing trenches. This work was undertaken using a small tracked 1.5 tonne 360-degree mini-digger with a 0.50m toothed bucket, in addition to a much larger 17 tonne 360-degree excavator equipped with a 0.80m toothless ditching bucket or a 1.50m wide toothed bucket. No archaeological features or deposits were identified.

The friable, dark grey brown sandy silty loam topsoil in the garden was up to 0.80m thick at the rear of the property, probably where it had been banked up during the construction of the previous house. It contained modern brick and tile fragments, some subangular limestone fragments, charcoal, and unstratified fragments of late 19th century and early 20th century porcelain, pottery and glass vessels, the latter including fish paste jars and soda water bottles. Only two worn sherds of post-medieval pottery were identified from this layer, probably 16th or earlier 17th century in date, but these were again unstratified finds and were not retained. There was considerable conifer root disturbance towards the rear of the Site.



Figure 2. The machine excavation of one of the new footing trenches along the eastern side of the Site.

The footing trenches were 0.50m wide and up to 1.10m deep. Below the topsoil was a natural subsoil layer of dark orange brown to dark brown sand up to 0.40m thick. This did not produce any finds. It lay above natural subsoil consisting of a mixture of compact orange brown and brown sands and gravels with iron panning and

manganese staining and occasionally interspersed with irregular, natural fissures that were probably the result of periglacial activity, filled with sterile grey clay. No artefacts were observed.

5 DISCUSSION

No archaeological features or deposits were recorded during the watching brief. The only artefacts identified were unstratified topsoil finds.

6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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