

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

**AT**

**KEMPSON'S COTTAGE,**

**3 CHURCH HEADLAND LANE, WHITCHURCH,**

**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

**NGR SU 8035 2095**

*On behalf of*

*Mr. D Skinner*

**JULY 2011**

**REPORT FOR** Mr D Skinner  
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## **Summary**

*John Moore Heritage Services carried out a three-trench evaluation on land at Kempson Cottage, 3 Church Headland Lane, Whitchurch. Quarry pits dating from 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> centuries were present.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site location (Figure 1)**

The site is located at Kempson Cottage, 3 Church Headland Lane, Whitchurch (NGR SU 8035 2095). The underlying geology is Portland Sand Member.

### **1.2 Planning Background**

Planning permission was granted by Aylesbury Vale District Council for the erection of a replacement dwelling and a new detached triple garage and stores (08/01563/APP). Due to the potential for archaeological remains to be present on the site Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (BCAS) recommended that a condition be applied requiring the applicant to secure the implementation of a two-stage programme of archaeological work in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation. This was submitted by the applicant and approved by the Planning Authority. The first stage was an archaeological evaluation. BCAS prepared a Brief for the work and recommended that the site should be evaluated by trenching. A *Written Scheme of Investigation* proposing the methodology by which the archaeological evaluation was to be carried out by John Moore Heritage Services to satisfy the requirements of the Brief and agreed with BCAS.

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

The earliest historical reference to Whitchurch is in Domesday, where it is recorded as *Wicherce* (Mawer and Stenton 1925, 86). Before the Conquest two thegns of King Edward held Whitchurch as two manors. In 1085 it was assessed at 8 hides, and formed part of the lordship of Walter Giffard.

The site lies to the east and just outside the Whitchurch Conservation Area (DBC8015). Many buildings date from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries and twelve listed buildings are recorded within 250m of the development site. Bolbec Castle (DCB7138) lies 400m to the west.

The church of St John the Evangelist lies 100m to the southwest. It is medieval, with a 13<sup>th</sup>-century nave and 14<sup>th</sup>-century chancel, tower and aisles, restored in 1657 and 1911 (HER 0457600000). Some of the earliest domestic buildings include the 15<sup>th</sup> century Priory Hotel (HER 0299800000) and the 15<sup>th</sup> century Old House (HER 0299700000). Also of note is the 16<sup>th</sup> century dovecote (HER 0299900000). In 1909 a hoard of coins was found in the roof of the Old Court House, probably hidden here during the Civil War period (HER 0299800001).

The only known pre-Ordnance Survey map of the parish survives from 1771 when the parish was inclosed; the actual inclosure map does not survive but the commissioners

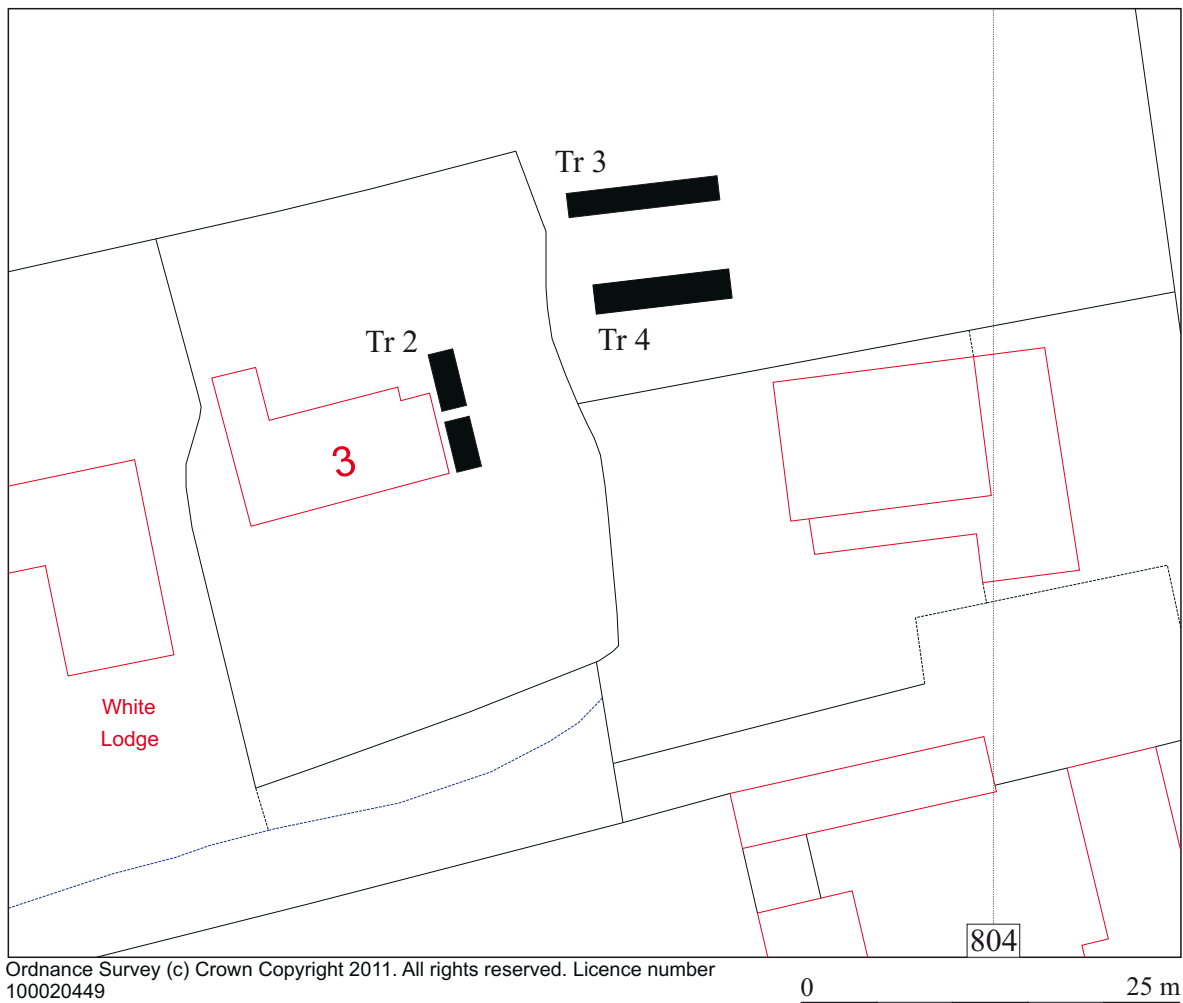
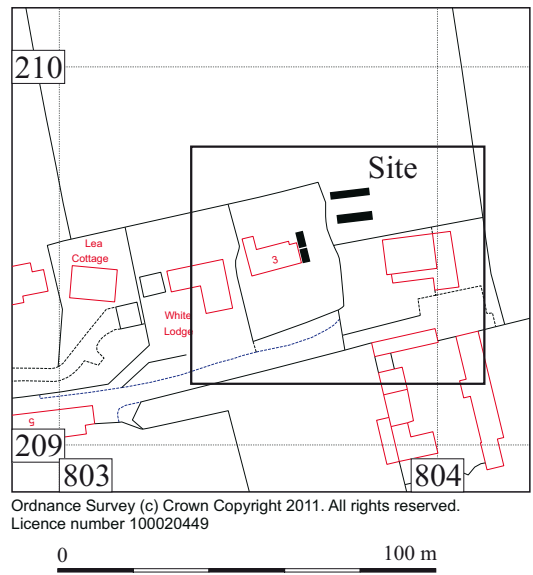
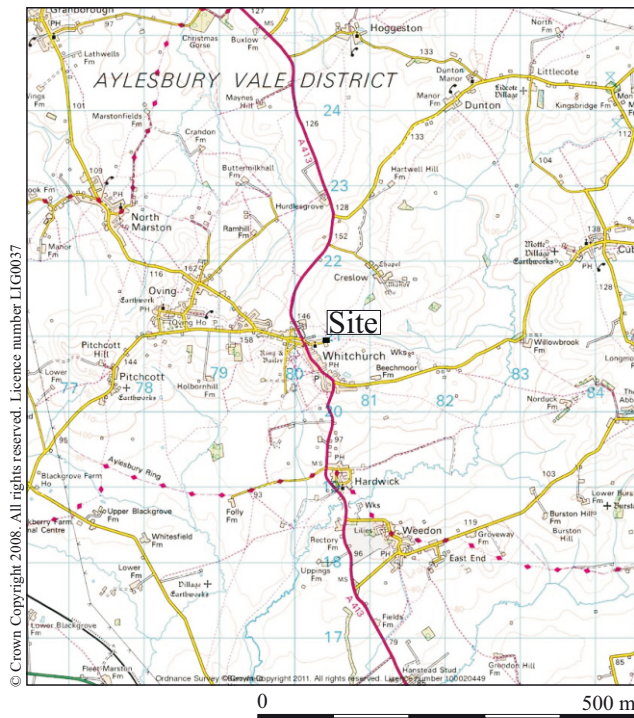


Figure 1. Site location

working copy does (BRO 1/R/144b). The Historic Landscape Characterisation of the county places the site with an area of 20<sup>th</sup> century enclosures (HC2834). The site of a 19<sup>th</sup> century limekiln is marked on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map 200m to the north (SMR 051310000).

The road Church Headland Lane must indicate a division between the open field system and the church land; no such indicator exists on the south side of the church. Ridge and furrow has been recorded in the fields to the north and east of the site. Metal detectorists have recovered a 1<sup>st</sup> Roman brooch (MBC31717) and possible 5<sup>th</sup> century Saxon metalwork (MBC29090). As well as medieval and post-medieval artefacts including coins (MBC2887, MBC28878, MBC29025 and MBC29039), harness fittings (MBC29056, MBC31805) and a pilgrim badge (MBC29041).

Incendiary bombs were dropped in the garden of Kempson House in 1941 (SMR 1161100000) approximately 150m to the west and possibly at other locations as well (SMR 0945800000).

## **2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

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

- To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the site.
- To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.
- To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of the archaeological features and deposits.
- To determine the impact of the proposed development on any remains present.
- In particular to identify and characterise any evidence for medieval activity.

## **3 STRATEGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

In response to a Brief issued by BCAS, JMHS carried out the work, which comprised the excavation of three trenches within the proposal area (Fig. 1). Originally, four trenches were proposed by BCAS, but due to site constraints excavation of the fourth was postponed. Due to the results obtained during the evaluation, the County Archaeologist indicated that further trenching will not be required.

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in JMHS's *WSI* agreed with BCAS.

## 3.2 Methodology

The investigation involved the mechanical excavation of three trenches, two measuring 10m in length and one measuring 7m in length all 1.6m at the base, by a 2.5-tonne excavator equipped with a ditching bucket, supplemented by hand investigation of the revealed deposits. This comprised a total of 27m of trenching.

Site procedures carried out followed IfA guidelines. The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994) and the principles of MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

## 4 RESULTS

### 4.1 Field Results (Figs. 1 & 2)

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers without brackets indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in ( ) show feature fills or deposits of material. All context numbers are preceded by trench number and /. Details of individual trenches are in Appendix 1 – the context inventory – at the rear of report.

Trench 1 was not excavated.

Trench 2 measured 7m in length, with a *c.* 1m break for a service pipe in the middle. The trench was excavated onto natural sand (2/2). No features were present. Overlying the sand natural was a deposit of garden soil (2/1), *c.* 0.6m thick. A single find, a half penny coin of George VI (1945), was recovered from (2/1), during machining, just above the natural sand.

Trenches 3 and 4 can be considered together. Trench 3 yielded the cut of a quarry pit 3/05 which had been backfilled with limestone-rich rubble, which extended south into Trench 4 as 4/05. The west end of the cut 3/05 was cut by the later quarry pit 3/06, which extended to the west, from which a sherd of red earthenware and an undated piece of clay tobacco pipe stem, both of which date from after 1600, were recovered.

### 4.3 Reliability of Techniques and Results

The reliability of results is considered to be good. The archaeological evaluation took place in clement conditions. Sandy Kidd, of BCAS, the County Archaeologist for Buckinghamshire County Council, monitored the work.

## 5 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS

### 5.1 Finds by Gwilym Williams

#### Pottery

A single fragment of red earthenware (PM 8), weighing 19 g, was recovered from (3/09) the fill of a quarry pit.

#### Clay Pipe

A single fragment of clay pipe, weighing 2 g, was recovered from layer (3/07).

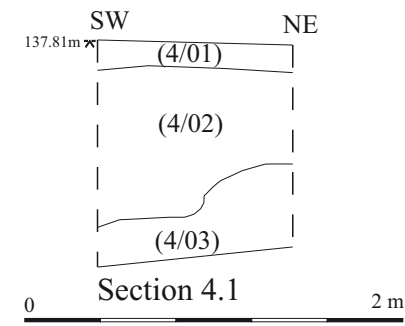
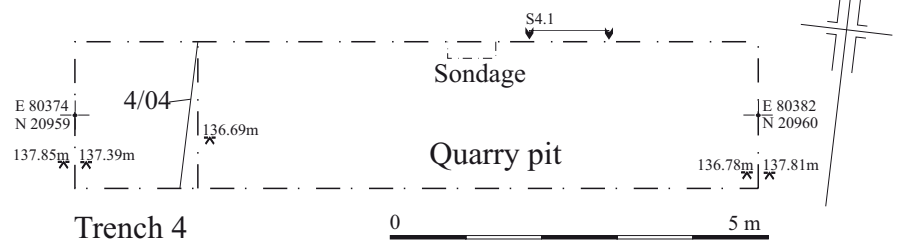
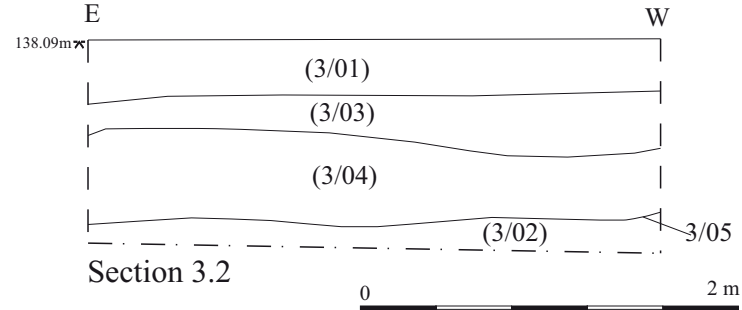
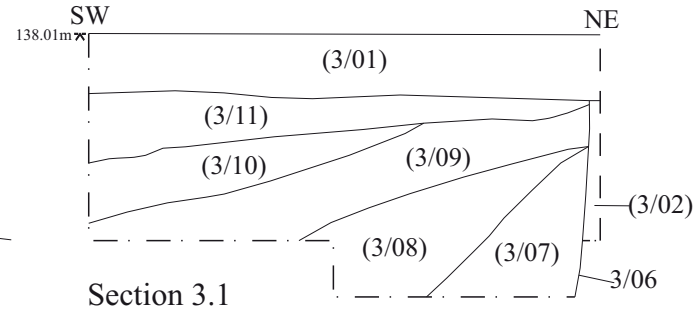
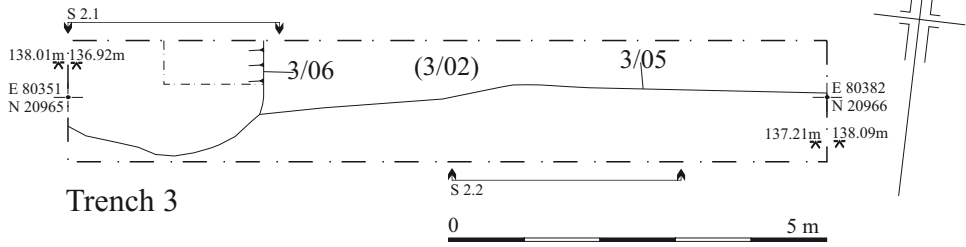
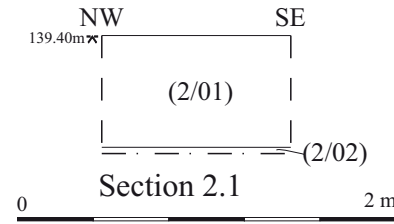
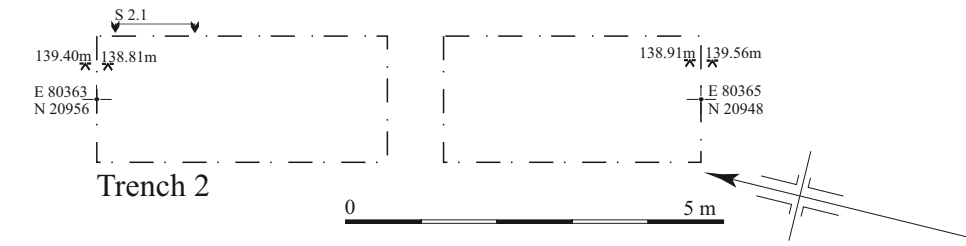


Figure 2. Trenches 2-4 plans and sections



### **Coin**

A coin, weighing 5 g, was recovered from layer (2/01). The coin was a half penny of George VI, dated 1945.

## **5.2 Environmental Remains**

No environmental samples were taken as the potential of the deposits was not felt to be sufficient to warrant sampling.

## **6 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS**

The evaluation carried out at Kempson Cottage, Whitchurch, revealed an area of double dug ground in the immediate vicinity of the present cottage. Trench 2, which was located on Portland Sand Member, yielded no evidence for earlier activity. The house at Kempson Cottage was built between the surveys for the 1900 and 1958 1:10 560 Ordnance Survey maps. The date from the coin of George VI suggests a date after WWII.

There was evidence in Trenches 3 and 4 for quarrying. Red glazed earthenware was recovered from quarry 3/06 which cut the earlier quarry pit 3/05. The quarrying may well be associated with the marked terracing visible at the east end of Church Headland Lane. Kempson Cottage is located on a higher plateau, associated with the Portland Sand Member, overlooking the farmyard and farm buildings. This yard was created recently by the dumping of concrete and other materials into an old pond, visible already on the 1880 1:2 500 OS, which itself is possibly a result of quarrying. The pond was cut into chalky or soft limestone deposits; calcareous mudstone and limestone overlie the Portland Stone and Sand Members here.

The archaeological remains at Kempson's Cottage, Church Headland Lane were in keeping with the earliest mapping, and appear to indicate that the lane was not intensively used until the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## **7 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

English Heritage 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects 2*

English Heritage 2006 *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment*

Institute for Archaeologists 2008 *Standards and Guidance for an archaeological evaluation*

**Appendix 1: Archaeological Context Inventory**

Context	Type	Description	L (m)	B (m)	D(m)	Finds	Date	Interpretation	
<b>Trench 2</b>									
	(2/1)	Layer	Moderate dark brown silty humus	>8.	>1.6	c. 0.6?	Y	Modern	Topsoil
	(2/2)	Layer	Moderate yellow brown slightly silty sand	>8	>1.6	Unk.		Natural.	Natural
<b>Trench 3</b>									
	(3/01)	Layer	Moderately compact brown clay humus	>10	>1.6	c. 0.3		Modern	Topsoil
	(3/02)	Layer	Firm white calcareous mudstone and degraded soft limestone	>7.4	>1.6	Unk.		Natural	Natural
	(3/03)	Fill	Moderate mid grey brown clay; white limestone mottling	>7.4	>1.6	0.38		Post-med	Fill of quarry pit
	(3/04)	Fill	Moderate mid grey brown clay; 8-10% small stone, 40% degraded limestone fragments	>7.4	>1.6	0.26		Post-med	Fill of quarry pit
	3/05	Cut	Unk. shape in plan; straight sides @ c 80°, flat bottomed	>7.4	>1.6	0.26		Post-med	Quarry pit
	3/06	Cut	Unk. shape in plan; straight sides @ c 90°, not bottomed	>2.7	>1.6	0.26		Post-med	Quarry pit
	(3/07)	Fill	Moderate dark grey brown clay, 10% small stone	>07	>1.6	0.26	Y	Post-med	Fill of quarry pit
	(3/08)	Fill	Moderate light orange brown clay, 25% small stone	>1	>1.6	0.60		Post-med	Fill of quarry pit
	(3/09)	Fill	Moderate white grey clay, 8% small stone	>2.7	>1.6	0.38	Y	Post-med	Fill of quarry pit
	(3/10)	Fill	Moderate mid grey brown clay; 8-10% small stone	>1.7	>1.6	0.32		Post-med	Fill of quarry pit
	(3/11)	Fill	Moderate dark grey brown clay; 10-12% small stone	>2.9	>1.6	0.38		Post-med	Fill of quarry pit
<b>Trench 4</b>									
	(4/01)	Layer	Moderately compact brown clay humus	>10	>1.6	0.3		Modern	Topsoil
	(4/02)	Layer	Grey brown silty clay with degraded limestone	>10	>1.6	03		Post-med	Fill of quarry pit
	(4/03)	Fill	Mixed grey brown silty clay with degraded limestone	>10	>1.6	0.4		Post-med	Fill of quarry pit
	(4/04)	Layer	Firm white calcareous mudstone and degraded soft limestone	>10	>1.6	Unk.		Unk.	Natural
	4/05	Cut	Unk. shape in plan; straight sides @ c 80°, flat bottomed	>7.5	>1.6	Unk.		Post-med	Quarry pit