



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION ON LAND ADJACENT AND WEST OF
17-19 FREEHOLD STREET, LOWER HEYFORD,
OXFORDSHIRE**

NGR SP 4869024810

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On behalf of

The Historic Environment Consultancy

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REPORT FOR The Historic Environment Consultancy
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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services conducted an archaeological evaluation in advance of development on land to the rear of 17-19 Freehold St, Lower Heyford, Oxfordshire (SP 4869 24810). One 20m trench was excavated to the underlying natural geology or uppermost surface of the archaeology.

The earliest feature was a pit, which contained Victorian industrial waste presumably from a nearby forge. Other garden features were noted cut into natural all with modern finds. A greenhouse or large garden shed once occupied the plot as concrete pads were pulled out of topsoil along the length of the trench. A confidence rating is high that the best possible results were achieved.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location and Geology (Figure 1)

The site is located on land adjacent to and west of 17-19 Freehold Street, Lower Heyford, Oxfordshire (SP 4869 24810). The site is a field (now private garden) on the edge of the Cotswold Hills. The underlying geology according to the British Geological Survey Sheet 219 is on the boundary of Northampton Sand Formation and the Whitby Mudstone Formation.

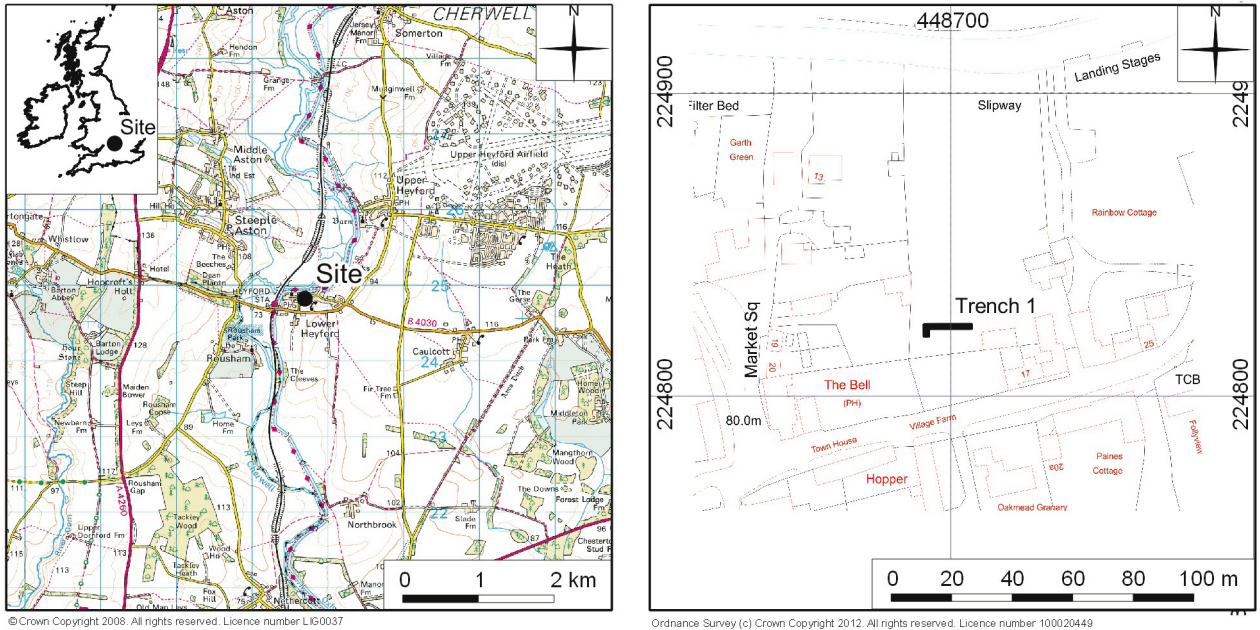
1.2 Planning Background

Planning permission has been granted for 1 No. new dwelling and repositioning of front boundary wall (Planning Ref: 12/00059/F). Due to site's location close to the historic core of Lower Heyford, the local planning authority's archaeological advisor, Richard Oram of Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) advised that a programme of archaeological evaluation should be carried out in a letter dated 7th February 2012, in order to establish the presence/absence, extent, condition, character and date of any archaeological deposits within the area affected by invasive development.

A condition was attached to planning consent which stated that:

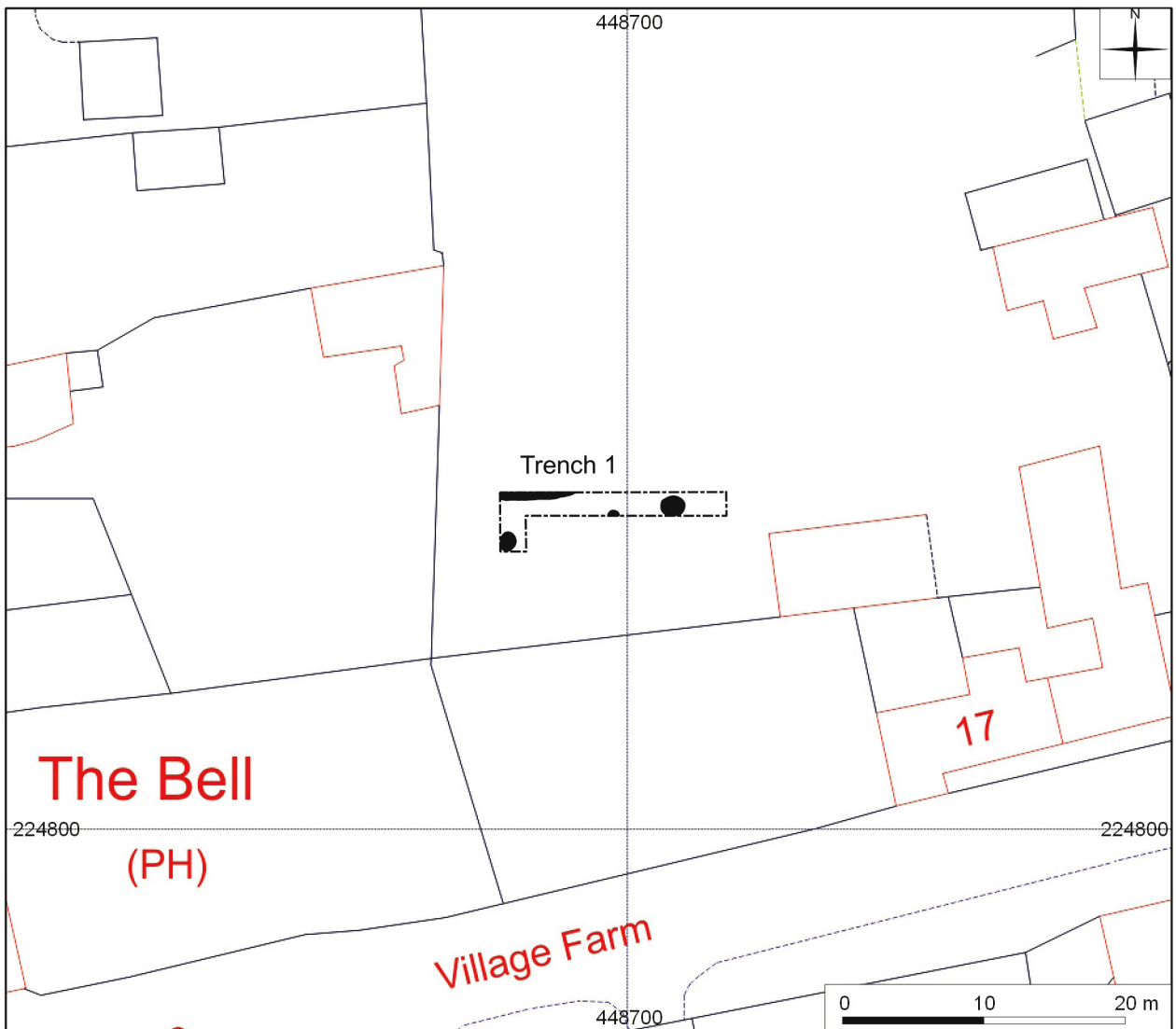
Prior to any demolition on the site and the commencement of the development and following the approval of the Written Scheme of Investigation referred to in condition 1, a staged programme of archaeological evaluation and mitigation shall be carried out by the commissioned archaeological organisation in accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation. The programme of work shall include all processing, research and analysis necessary to produce an accessible and useable archive and a full report for publication, which shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority.

Reason - To safeguard the identification, recording, analysis and archiving of heritage assets before they are lost and to advance understanding of the heritage assets in their wider context through publication and dissemination of the evidence in accordance with PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment Application No: 12/00059/F4 of 713



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Figure 1. Site location

Prior to any site works the Historic Environment Consultancy prepared an *Archaeological Specification* for an archaeological evaluation (Wardle 2012), which proposed a method to satisfy the standard requirements of Oxfordshire County Council. The Specification was approved with the county's archaeological advisor Richard Oram.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The archaeological background is summarised from the *Archaeological Specification* (ibid) as:

Prehistoric

A lithic scatter of Neolithic date was found c. 800m south of the site

An Iron Age habitation site is known at the nearby village of Steeple Aston.

At Harborbough Bank c. 650m ESE of the site, crop marks of a possible hillfort are located. The earthwork was completely leveled at the time of enclosure in 1801/2.

Roman

A number of Roman coins were found around 0.4km east of the railway station, c. 250m WSW of the site. Roman pottery has been found in the village of Steeple Aston, where a habitation site is suggested.

Post-Roman/Medieval

An Anglo-Saxon inhumation cemetery was discovered in 1801 at the site of a henge monument during leveling work at the time of enclosure. Artefacts including beads, Brooches, spears and a knife were found. The find spot is recorded as c. 400m south the site.

A medieval manor house has been located via map evidence c. 300m west of the site. Excavations at nearby Steeple Aston revealed medieval ditches.

Post medieval

A number of post-medieval listed buildings are present in the vicinity of the site.

The site is located adjacent to a former forge, marked as 'smithy' on the 1922 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map. Whilst the building is depicted on earlier maps, the title is not included.

Negative archaeological evidence

No archaeological features or artefacts were found during the 1973 excavation of a sewer pipe trench in the area of the find of Roman coins noted above. The above archaeological background was taken from the archaeological specification (Wardle 2012).

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

2.1 Project Objectives

- To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the site.
- To assess the condition, survival, quality and significance of any archaeological remains found.
- If archaeological remains are found further, more comprehensive examination may take place if they will be disturbed by the development.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in the *Archaeological Specification*. The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (2008) and the procedures laid down in MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

3.2 Methodology

The trenching was achieved through the excavation of one trench measuring 20m long, location shown on Figure 1.

The trench was excavated by a 360° type tracked excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The resultant surfaces were cleaned by hand (where necessary) prior to hand excavation of the archaeological deposits and features.

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and sections drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was produced using colour transparency, black and white and digital cameras. The trenches were backfilled after recording.

The work was monitored by the archaeological advisor to the Local Planning Authority, Richard Oram and Peter Wardle from the Historic Environment Consultancy.

4 RESULTS

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers without brackets indicate features i.e. pit cuts or walls; while numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material.

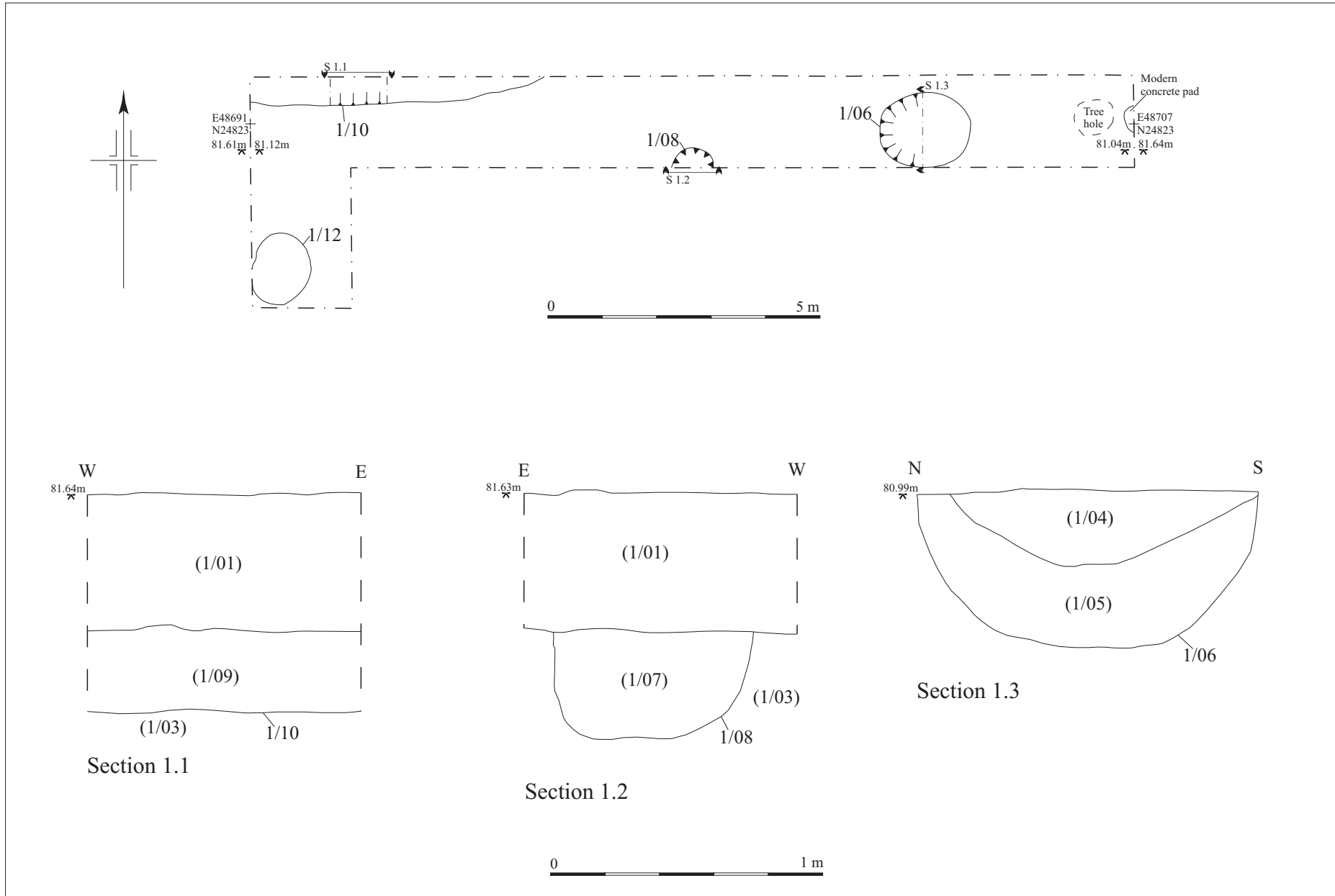


Figure 2. Trench and sections

4.1 Excavation Results (Figure 2)

The trench was set out across the general area of the proposed new development. Trench 1 was excavated to a length of 20m (1.8m wide) and to varying depths of between 0.49m (81.12m AOD) at the eastern end and 0.60m (81.04m AOD) at the western end at which point the natural clays were encountered and excavation ceased. A summary of all the contexts within this trench is provided in Table 2.

4.2 Trench 1 (Figures 1 & 2)

The stratigraphy within the trench consisted of the following layers (earliest to latest). The natural yellow-orange clay was seen at the base of the trench (1/03). Overlying this was *c.* 0.10-0.15m thick mid greyish brown silty clay subsoil (1/02) overlain by *c.* 0.40-0.50m thick dark black-brown silty clay topsoil (1/01). The subsoil was only apparent at the eastern end of the trench.

Pits (all cut into natural clay 1/03)

Pit 1/06 (top 80.99m AOD) (Figure 2; Section 1.3) was discovered 1.2m wide and 0.52m in depth with sharp concave sides and a flattish base possibly lined with limestone. The pit was filled by 0.40m thick mid greyish brown silty sand with limestone inclusions, slag, tile and one nail (1/05), overlain by a final filling of 0.20m thick black ash and soot (1/04) with tile, brick, iron objects and slag (see finds quantification table). The pit was sealed by topsoil (1/01).

Pit 1/08 (Figure 2; Section 1.2) was sub circular in shape 0.60m wide and 0.24m deep with sharp concave sides and a flat base. It was filled by friable greyish black silty clay with frequent charcoal flecks (1/07). The pit was sealed by topsoil (1/01).

Pit 1/10 (Figure 2; Section 1.1) was probably sub circular in shape but mostly extending outside the area of the trench. It had shallow concave sides with a suspected flattish base, filled by mid greyish brown silty clay with modern pottery (1/09). The pit was sealed by topsoil (1/01).

Other features

Another pit 1/12 was seen cut into natural 1/03 at the western end of the trench, which contained modern glass bottle and crockery. This feature was therefore not excavated but noted on plan. The pit was sealed by topsoil (1/01).

A tree hole was seen at the eastern end of the trench (again noted on plan) which was cut into subsoil (1/02) and sealed by topsoil (1/01).

4.3 Reliability of Results

The excavations took place in favourable weather conditions with an experienced machine driver. There was adequate space to excavate the trench safely and the reliability of the results is considered to be good to excellent.

5. THE FINDS

5.1 The Pottery *By D. Gilbert*

A small quantity of pottery sherds was recovered from contexts (1/04 fill of pit 1/06 and 1/09 fill of pit 1/10); these were examined but not retained. These were recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994).

Pottery fabrics consisted of:

OXAM:	Brill/Boarstall type Ware, 13 th C+.	1 sherd (1/04)
CRM:	Creamware, late 18 th – early 19 th century	2 sherds (1/09)
WHEW:	Mass-produced white earthenwares, 19 th - 20 th C.	3 sherds (1/04)

5.2 Other finds *by Paul Riccoboni*

A varied selection of finds from the features all date to the late post-medieval period or modern period. They have been examined and catalogued in Table 1 in accordance with the Museum of London Term Lists.

Table 1; Summary of all other recovered finds

Context	Material Type	Object	Quantity	Weight (g)	Comments	Discarded
1/04	ceramic	tile	4	1409	Late post medieval (19th century)	Yes
1/04	ceramic	brick	3	3259	Late post medieval (19th century)	Yes
1/04	Iron	various	8	839	Late post medieval (19th century)	Yes
1/04	Iron	Slag	599	14	Late post medieval (19th century)	Yes
1/04	Mortar	Mortar	1	27	Late post medieval (19th century)	Yes
1/05	Mineral waste	Slag	2	189	Late post medieval(19th century)	Yes
1/05	Iron	Nail	1	22	Late post medieval (19th century)	Yes
1/05	ceramic	Tile	3	44	Late post medieval (19th century)	Yes
1/05	glass	Window?	3	10	Late post medieval (19th century)	Yes
1/05	ceramic	Clay pipe	4	5	Late post medieval (19th century)	Yes
1/07	Iron	nail	1	30	Late post medieval(19th century)	Yes
1 /07	Animal remains	Bone	5	46	Late post medieval (19th century)	Yes

6 DISCUSSION

The archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to 17-19 Freehold Street, Lower Heyford was successful in establishing that no medieval remains (or earlier) exist at the site. The presence of a nearby forge was evidenced by pit 1/06, which contained industrial metalworking waste of the late post-medieval period.

Other discrete features were likely created as a result of general waste disposal or gardening over the past two centuries. A greenhouse or garden shed once occupied the plot evidenced by the concrete slabs noted across the general area beneath the topsoil.

A confidence rating is high that the best possible results were achieved and that no important archaeological remains will be affected by the development.

7 ARCHIVE

Archive Contents

The archive consists of the following:

Paper Record

The project brief	The project report
Written Scheme of Investigation	The primary site records
The drawn records	

Physical record

The Finds all discarded.

The archive is currently maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Service under accession number awaited

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Figure 3; General shot looking East (1m scales)



Figure 4; Pit 1/06 looking east (1m scale)



Figure 5; Pit 1/08 looking south (1m scales)



Table 2: Summary of contexts within Trench 1

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Date
1/01	Deposit	Dark greyish black silty clay with modern finds	0.45-0.50	Tr.	Tr.	Pot, metal	Modern
1/02	Deposit	Mid greyish brown silty clay with occasional modern finds	0.10-0.15	Tr.	10m	Pot, metal	Modern
1/03	Deposit	Light orange yellow clay silt	/	Tr.	Tr.	/	/
1/04	Deposit	Black ash soot	0.20	1.4	1.4	Pot, bone, glass	Post-medieval
1/05	Deposit	Light grey brown silty clay	0.40	1.4	1.4	Pot, glass, brick, slag, Fe	Post-medieval
1/06	Cut	Sub circular shaped pit with stone lining	0.60	1.4	1.4	/	/
1/07	Deposit	Greyish black silty clay	0.24	0.60	/	Animal bone, Fe nail	Post-medieval-modern
1/08	Cut	A sub circular pit	0.24	0.60	/	/	/
1/09	Deposit	Mid greyish brown silty clay	0.13	unknown	1.2m (min)	ceramic	Modern
1/10	Cut	Sub circular? pit	0.13	/	1.2m (min)	/	/
1/11	Deposit	Dark greyish black	/	0.90	0.90	Ceramic glass/	Modern/
1/12	Cut	Sub circular garden waste pit	/	0.90	0.90	/	/