



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
AT  
72 ABINGDON ROAD, STANDLAKE,  
OXFORDSHIRE**

*On behalf of*

*Mrs S Kittle*

**JUNE 2011**

**REPORT FOR** Mrs S Kittle  
72 Abingdon Road  
Standlake  
Oxfordshire  
OX29 7RN

**PREPARED BY** Juan Moreno

**EDITED BY** David Gilbert

**ILLUSTRATION BY** Eoin Fitzsimons

**FIELDWORK** 12<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> April 2011

**REPORT ISSUED** 8<sup>th</sup> June 2011

**ENQUIRES TO** John Moore Heritage Services  
Hill View  
Woodperry Road  
Beckley  
Oxfordshire OX3 9UZ

Tel/Fax 01865 358300  
Email: [info@jmheritageservices.co.uk](mailto:info@jmheritageservices.co.uk)

**Site Code** STAR 11  
**JMHS Project No:** 2391  
**Archive Location** The archive is currently held by JMHS and will be deposited with Oxford Museum Services in due course.

**CONTENTS**

	<b>Page</b>
<b><i>SUMMARY</i></b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Site Location	1
1.2 Planning Background	1
1.3 Archaeological Background	1
<b>2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>3 STRATEGY</b>	<b>3</b>
3.1 Research Design	3
3.2 Methodology	3
<b>4 RESULTS</b>	<b>4</b>
4.1 Initial Strip	4
4.2 Footings	5
4.3 Reliability of Results	5
<b>5 FINDS</b>	<b>7</b>
5.1 Pottery	7
5.2 The Environmental Remains	7
<b>6 DISCUSSION</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>7 ARCHIVE</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8 BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>7</b>
 <b>FIGURES</b>	
Figure 1      Site location	2
Figure 2      Site Plan	4
Figure 3      Sections	6

## **Summary**

*John Moore Heritage Services carried out a watching brief on ground works at the site between the 12th and 13th April 2011. Observed during the stripping phase of the groundwork were a Victorian era bottle dump and a probable late 19 early 20th C boundary garden wall. During the excavation of the footings for the build by machine a potential prehistoric linear ditch was uncovered.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Location**

The proposed groundwork took place on land to the eastern side of Croft Lane and to the rear of 72 Abingdon Road, Standlake (NGR SP 3881 0316, Figure 1). Before the groundwork commenced the site was formerly in use as a garden. The eastern side of the property was bordered by common land, where a barrow is located. The underlying geology is First Terrace River Gravels and lies at approximately 66m OD.

### **1.2 Planning Background**

West Oxfordshire District Council had granted planning permission for the erection of a new bungalow on land to the rear of 72 Abingdon Road, Standlake (08/1015/P/FP). Due to the potential presence of archaeological remains a condition for an archaeological watching brief was attached to the permission. The condition was a result of advice given to West Oxfordshire District Council by Oxford County Archaeological Services (OCAS) who prepared a Design Brief for the archaeological work programme. The *Written Scheme of Investigation* was subsequently prepared in response to the Design Brief and outlined the method by which the watching brief was carried out.

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

The area of development lies within an area of archaeological interest abutting a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SM 140). This is an extensive Bronze Age and Iron Age settlement visible as an extensive spread of crop marks that include track ways, huts, enclosures, pits and Bronze Age funerary monuments. The crop marks do not extend into the proposed development area but this may be due to the build up of later overburden around the properties fronting onto Abingdon Road. To the southeast and rear of 94 Abingdon Road, a watching brief revealed a Bronze Age barrow although while not visible as a crop mark it was well preserved and was located less than 500m below the current ground surface.

## **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 during the course of any operations that may disturb or destroy archaeological remains.

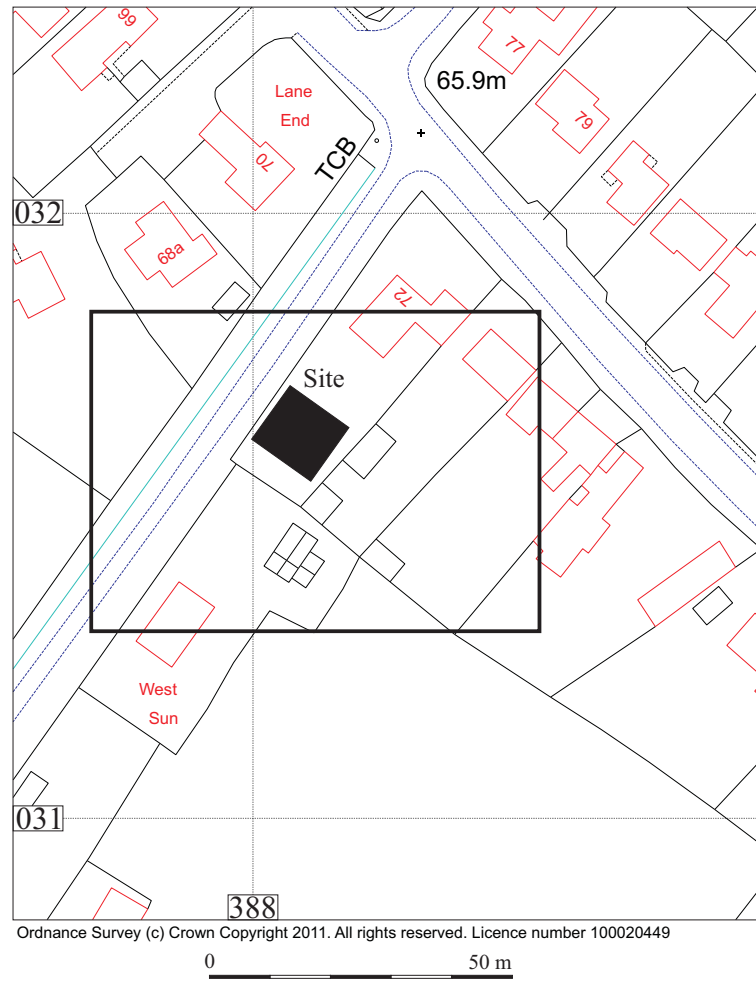


Figure 1. Site location

- To record any evidence associated with the Bronze or Iron Age settlements on the adjacent land.

### **3 STRATEGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

In response to advice issued by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (OCAS) a scheme of investigation was designed by JMHS and agreed with the OCAS. The work was carried out by JMHS and involved the monitoring of all groundwork on the site.

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 (1994).

#### **3.2 Methodology**

All invasive groundworks were monitored by an archaeologist and all resulting surfaces were then inspected for any significant archaeological 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.

### **4 RESULTS**

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers in [ ] indicate features *i.e.* pit cuts; while numbers in ( ) show feature fills or deposits of material.

#### **4.1 Initial Strip**

During the initial strip, the depth of topsoil (100) across the site varied, being recorded at c.0.18m to the southeast and c.0.50m to the west-northwest of building footprint. The topsoil colour was dark brown and mainly consisted of silt-loam. There were occasional very small well-rounded stones and a few angular gravels contained within it. The subsoil (102) below was an orange to brown coloured clayey slit containing small sub-angular and angular gravels (<3cm). In the southeastern area of the site, at the interface with the topsoil there was a thin 0.02-0.03m layer of small pea sized gravels (101). The subsoil increased in thickness from the southeast to the northwest of the site. The natural horizon (107) consisted of First Terrace River Gravel deposits. The clay bearing these deposits was a loose yellowish orange colour and contained fine grain sand. The gravels were fairly rounded with few of an angular appearance.

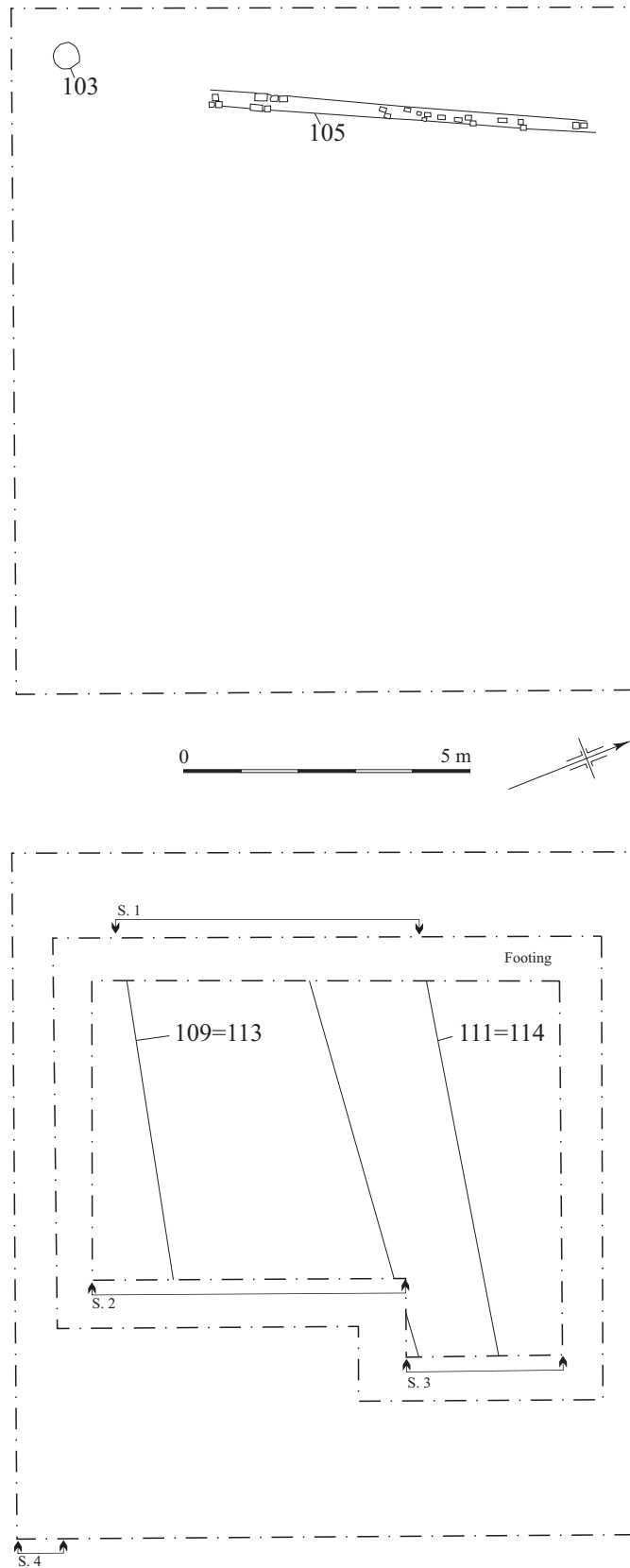


Figure 2. Site plan

Identified during the initial strip was a rounded feature [103] in plan approximately 0.45m in diameter. The fill (104) consisted of an orange/brown slightly clayey slit and contained glass fragments, bottle fragments and whole bottles. Since the feature or probable bottle dump was located at the impact level the feature was recorded in plan but was not excavated. The bottles are a type of Peck's paste glassware available during the mid to late Victorian into the 1940's.

Also located to the west and running northeast were the remnants of a small garden wall with a very shallow (0.03m-0.04m deep) footing [105]. The wall was very narrow with only a 4.25m segment remaining. The wall may have been a boundary marker demarcating the orchard that once existed where the property is now located (pers. comm.; Tony Brooks-local contractor). The fill (106) of the shallow footing was a very loose medium to dark brown silt. This fill contained some small stone and brick fragments.

## **4.2 Footings**

The footings for the building foundation were excavated to a depth of 1m. In some segments of the footings, for purposes of health and safety, the contractor felt it was necessary to install shoring (topsoil and sub-soil were dealt with in section 4.1).

Within the footing a re-cut ditch was recorded cut into the natural (107) and sealed by the subsoil (102). Only the north-eastern shoulder of the earliest ditch cut [111] was visible in section (figure 3; section 1), though the cut does appear to be truncated higher up towards the northeast. The visible portion and shape of the cut was curved towards a slightly rounded base. The fill (110) was also sticky, forming soil clumps and is bound by cut [111]. The fill colouring is a whitish grey and consists of chalky clay. The fill also contains fine grain sand, pockets of orange brown clays and is c. 0.90m thick, extending to a length of c. 2.40m.

The first ditch was re-cut [109] by a second. The shoulders of this cut are initially steep sided and lead to a gentle rounded slope and ending in a slightly curving base, which is truncated by an additional, ditch cut [111] (see Figure 3; Section 1). The width of the cut [109] is oriented southeast to northwest. The fill (108) was sticky and a medium orange brown silty sandy clay. The fill contained infrequent small angular and sub angular gravels. Some bone fragments were recovered from the fill. The thickness of the fill was 0.75m and extended to c. 2.85m.

Both ditches appeared to run across the site from west (section 1) to east (sections 2 and 3). Here ditch [109] was recorded as ditch [113] and ditch [111] as ditch 114. The fill (112) of ditch [113] was the same material as fill (108) and likewise fill (115) of ditch [114] was the same as fill (110)

## **4.3 Reliability of Results**

The archaeological work was carried out in good conditions with sunny and dry weather. The results are therefore felt to be representative of the extant archaeology.



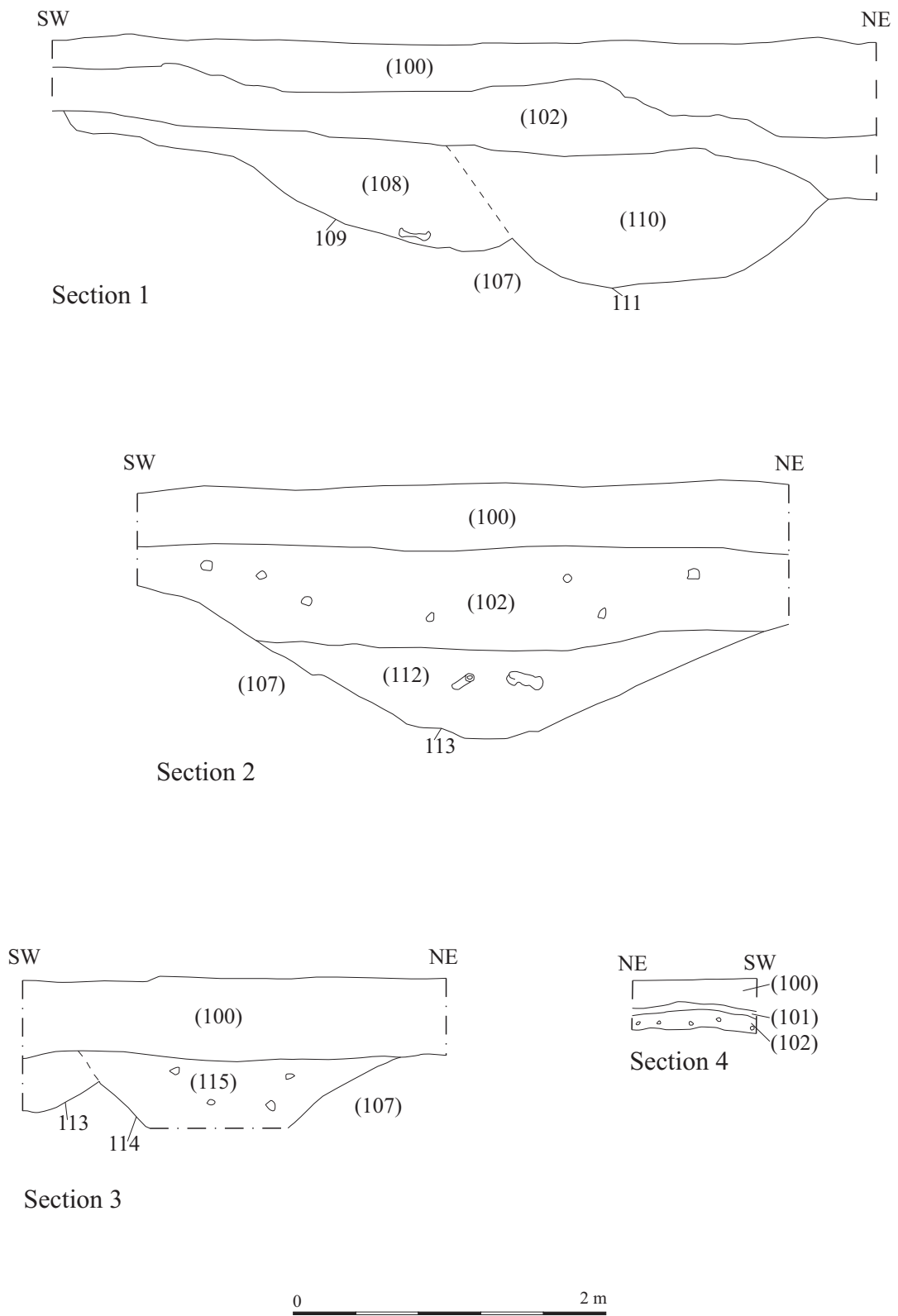


Figure 3. Sections

## 5 FINDS

### 5.1 Pottery

Sherds of Mass-produced White Earthenwares (Mellor 1984 - WHEW) dating to the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were observed during the initial strip within the topsoil.

### 5.2 Environmental Remains

No environmental samples were taken.

## 6 DISCUSSION

Identified during the initial strip was a rounded pit [103] containing glass fragments, bottle fragments and small complete bottles. This feature was presumed to be a bottle dump based on the glassware found within the feature and its availability during the mid to late Victorian on into the 1940's. Additionally, the remnants of a small garden wall [105] were observed. Discussions with the contractor would suggest the wall may have been a boundary marker demarcating the orchard that once existed where the property is now located.

The two linear ditches are oriented northwest to southeast. It is possible that the earlier ditch [109=113] has been re-cut resulting in the later ditch [111=114]. Only friable and fragmentary bone was recovered; there were no pottery finds present in either ditch. With virtually no dating evidence it is tenuous at best to link these features to the extensive Bronze Age or Iron Age settlements (SM 140) located to the northwest and within close proximity to the 72 Abingdon Road, Standlake development.

## 7 ARCHIVE

### Archive Contents

The archive consists of the following:

<u>Paper record</u>	The primary site record
The project brief	
Written scheme of investigation	<u>Physical record</u>
The project report	Finds

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the County Museums' Store.

## 8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Institute for Archaeologists. 1994 Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (revised 2008).

Mellor, M, 1984 A summary of the key assemblages. A study of pottery, clay pipes, glass and other finds from fourteen pits, dating from the 16th to the 19th century in TG Hassall, CE Halpin and M Mellor, Excavations at St Ebbe's *Oxoniensia* **49**, 181-219