



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
EVALUATION ON LAND AT GODSWELL PARK,  
CHURCH STREET, BLOXHAM, OXFORDSHIRE**

**NGR SP 4311 3572**

**By  
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***On behalf of  
GODSWELL PARK LTD***

**JULY 2012**

**REPORT FOR** Godswell Park Ltd  
Godswell Park Care Home  
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**FIELDWORK** 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2012

**REPORT ISSUED** 10<sup>th</sup> July 2012

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**Site Code** BMGP 12  
**JMHS Project No:** 2662  
**Archive Location** The archive is currently held by JMHS and will be deposited with Oxford Museum Services in due course with Accession Number: awaited

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## **Summary**

*John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological evaluation in advance of development on land at Godswell Park, Church Street, Bloxham, Oxfordshire. Two trenches of cumulative length of 60m were excavated to the surface of the underlying natural geology. The site had been subject to recent topsoil stripping in advance of a temporary compound. No archaeological features or deposits were present.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Location and Geology (Figure 1)**

The development site is located on the western side of Bloxham, north east of the Church of St Mary (SP 4311 3572). The site currently forms part of a garden. The underlying geology is shown as Marlstone Rock Formation.

### **1.2 Planning Background**

Planning permission has been granted for the construction of a two storey building to provide 10 no. close care apartments (12/00214/F). The permission has been granted with a condition requiring a staged programme of archaeological investigation. This is in line with the NPPF and Local Plan Policies.

The condition attached to planning consent stated that:

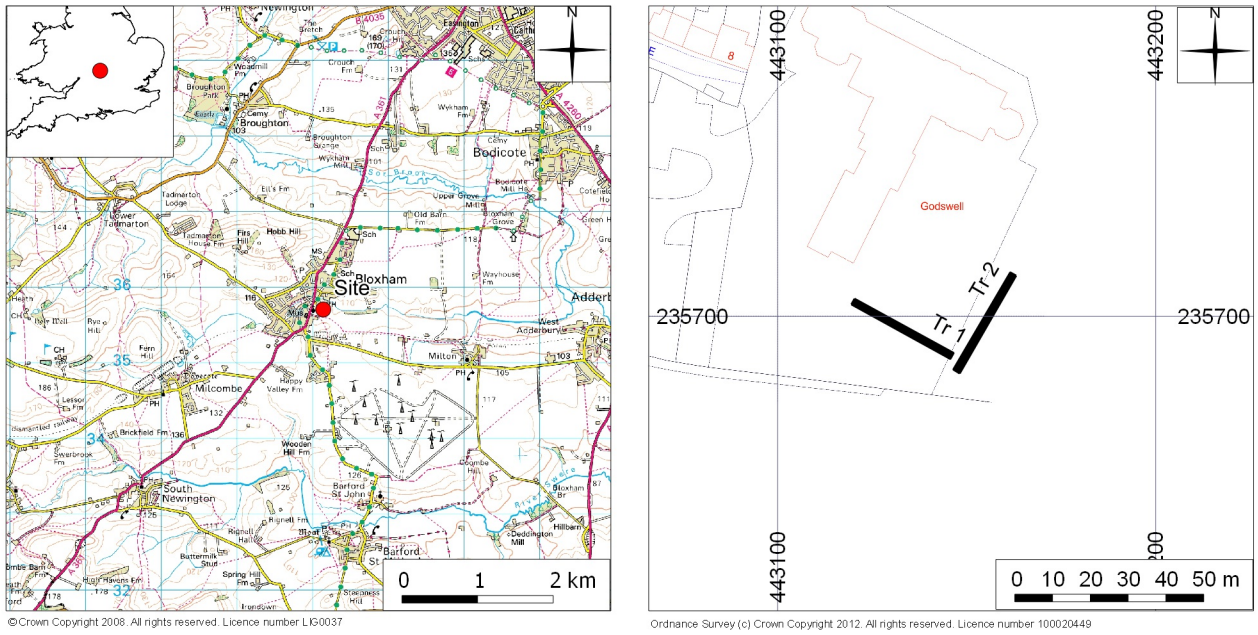
*Prior to any demolition on the site and the commencement of the development and following the approval of the Written Scheme of Investigation referred to in condition 1, a staged programme of archaeological evaluation and mitigation shall be carried out by the commissioned archaeological organisation 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.*

Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (OCAS) prepared a *Brief* for the first stage of the programme of archaeological work, namely a field evaluation. This was followed by a *Written Scheme of Investigation* which outlined the method by which the work would be carried out in order to achieve the aims of the evaluation. The Specification was approved with the counties archaeological advisor Richard Oram.

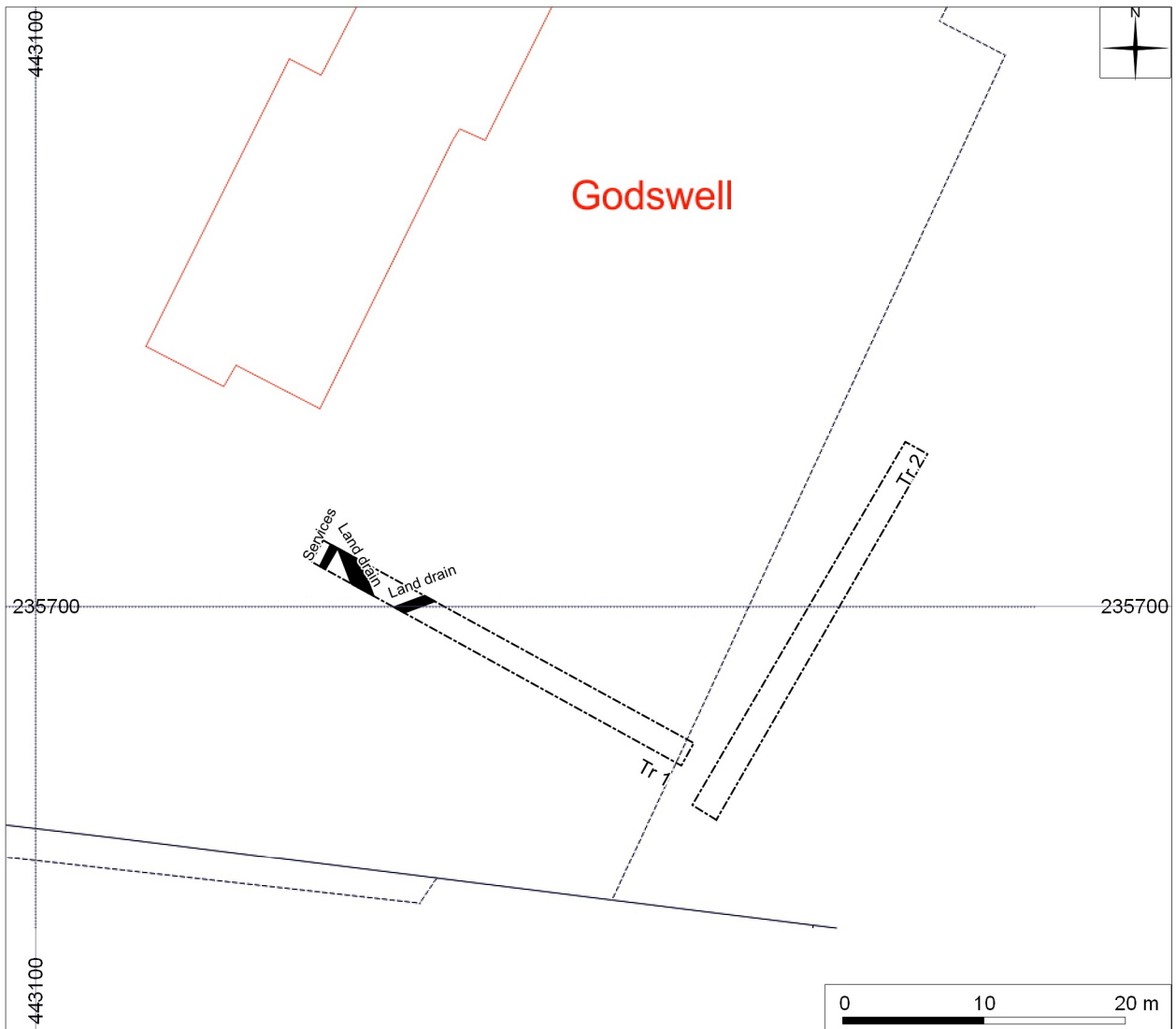
### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

The site is located in an area of archaeological potential within the grounds of the medieval St Amand Manor (PRN 11773). The manor was part of Bloxham Manor held by the St Amand



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Figure 1. Site location and trench location

family from mid C13th to 1418, subsequently passed to Fiennes family. Had a prison attached or within it, which probably served for Bloxham Hundred, of which St Amand's were lords.

The manor house was believed to be located on the site of the current 19<sup>th</sup> century house (PRN 11774) and is known to have a dovecote within the grounds (PRN 11827) although its location is unknown. It is very likely that the manorial complex would have contained a number of other buildings within the grounds.

An evaluation undertaken 70m to the south east of the proposed site recorded a linear features or trackway which was thought may relate to the medieval manor (PRN 16162). The site is also located 120m NE of the site of the Church of St Mary (PRN 4066). The Church contains C12th elements but was first recorded in 1067AD (PRN 4066).

## **2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

### **2.1 Project Objectives**

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

- 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 *Written Scheme of Investigation*. 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 two trenches, each trench measuring 30m long, locations shown on Figure 1. The trenches was excavated by a 360° type tracked excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket.

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.

## **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.

### **4.1 Excavation Results**

The trench was set out across the general area of the proposed new development. The lowest deposit noted within the trenches consisted of natural clays, which was reached between varying heights of 118.23- 118.79m AOD.

### **4.2 Trench 1 (Fig. 1)**

The stratigraphic sequence was simple consisting of natural ground (118.79m AOD) (1/02) overlain by modern grade material on geotextile membrane (118.93-119.06m AOD) (1/01). There were no archaeological features or finds in this trench. Some modern services were noted at the north-western end.

### **4.3 Trench 2 (Fig. 1)**

The stratigraphic sequence was simple consisting of natural ground (118.23- 118.75m AOD) (2/02) overlain by modern grade material on geotextile membrane (118.93-119.06m AOD) (2/01). There were no archaeological features or finds in this trench.

### **4.4 Reliability of Results**

The excavations took place in wet 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**

There were no finds recovered from the evaluation.

## **6. DISCUSSION**

The archaeological evaluation on land at Godswell Park, Church Street, Bloxham, Oxfordshire was successful in establishing that no medieval remains (or earlier) exist at the site. The site had been recently topsoil stripped in advance of a temporary site compound. This action may have removed any shallow or ephemeral features which may have been present. The area was then likely rolled in which could have further impacted on any shallow features which may have survived in this area. The location of the new building is within a seemingly flat or terraced area which may indicate the area was once used for buildings.

An extant retaining wall was visible adjacent to the trenches beyond which the ground level was raised considerably. This further added to the suspicion that topographically the site looked as though it had been levelled for outbuildings, perhaps associated with the manor house. The lack of find or features would seem to refute this theory.

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

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

## 8 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*

Table 1: Summary of all contexts

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Date
1/01	Deposit	Grade 1 hardcore	0.15m	Tr.	Tr.	None	Modern
1/02	Deposit	Mid orange brown stone and clay natural	n/a	Tr.	Tr.	None	Pleinsbachian-Toarchian
2/01	Deposit	Grade 1 hardcore	0.15	Tr.	Tr.	None	Modern
2/02	Deposit	Mid orange brown stone and clay natural	n/a	Tr.	Tr.	None	Pleinsbachian-Toarchian



Figure 2; General shot of Trench 1



Figure 3; General shot of Trench 2

