



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

ON LAND AT THE GRANARY,

HIGH STREET,

LONG WITTENHAM

NGR SU 5463 9393

On behalf of

Mrs S Kutas

FEBRUARY 2012

REPORT FOR Mrs S. Kutas
The Granary
High Street
Long Wittenham
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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out a watching brief at The Granary, High Street, Long Wittenham. The watching brief identified an undated pit and an undated late post-medieval light building in the footings trench of the new garage.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site location (Figure 1)

The site is located at The Granary, High Street, Long Wittenham, NGR SU 5463 9393. The underlying geology is 1st Terrace Deposits.

1.2 Planning Background

Planning permission (P11/W1131) for the demolition of the existing store and the erection of a new garage with workshop above The Granary, High Street, Long Wittenham, has been granted by South Oxfordshire District Council. A condition of the permission requires an archaeological watching brief to be carried out during the work. Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (OCAS) prepared a Brief for an Archaeological Watching Brief. A *Written Scheme of Investigation*, which proposed a suitable methodology to satisfy the requirements of the Brief, was submitted to and accepted by the OCAS. This is in line with PPS5 and Local Plan Policies.

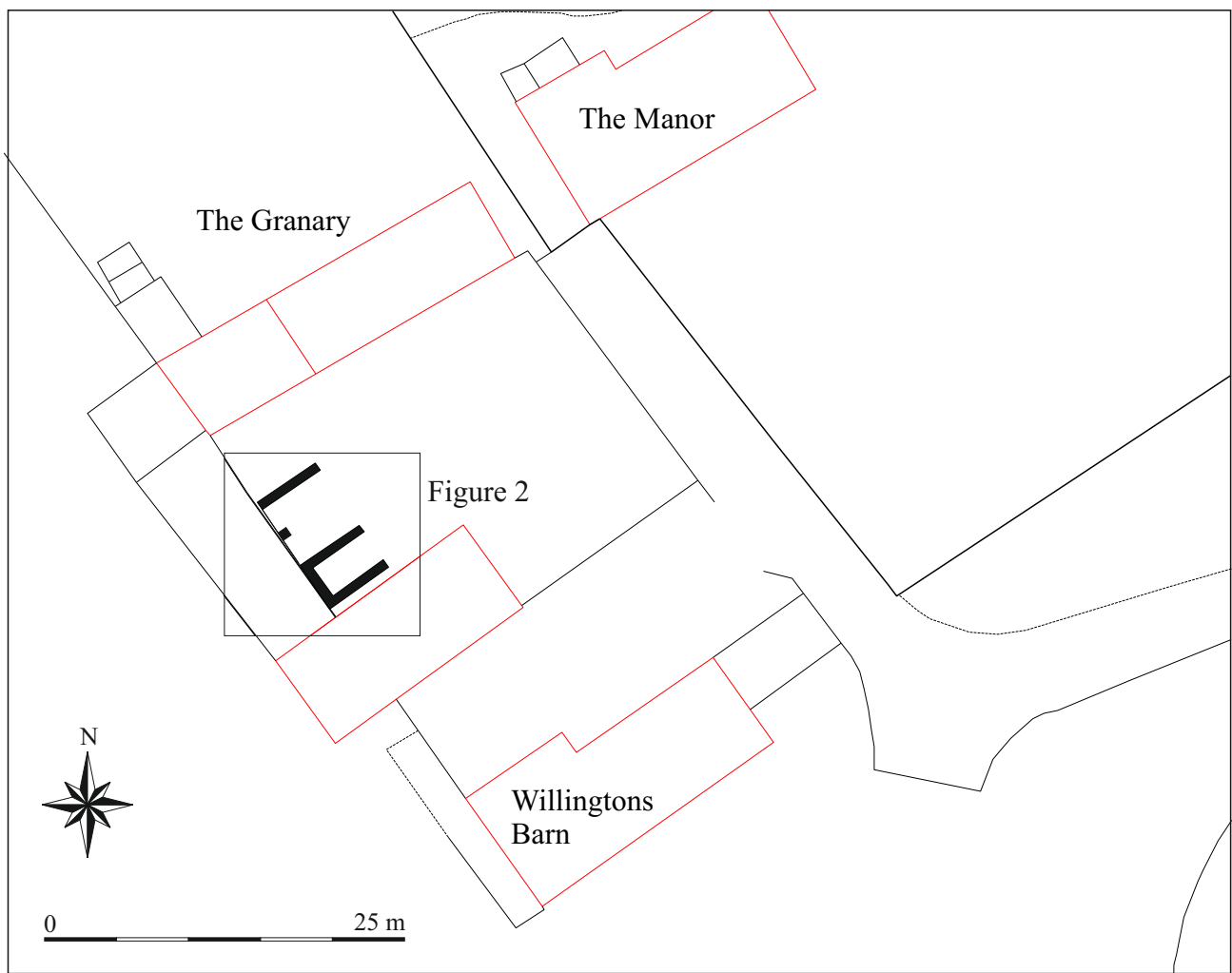
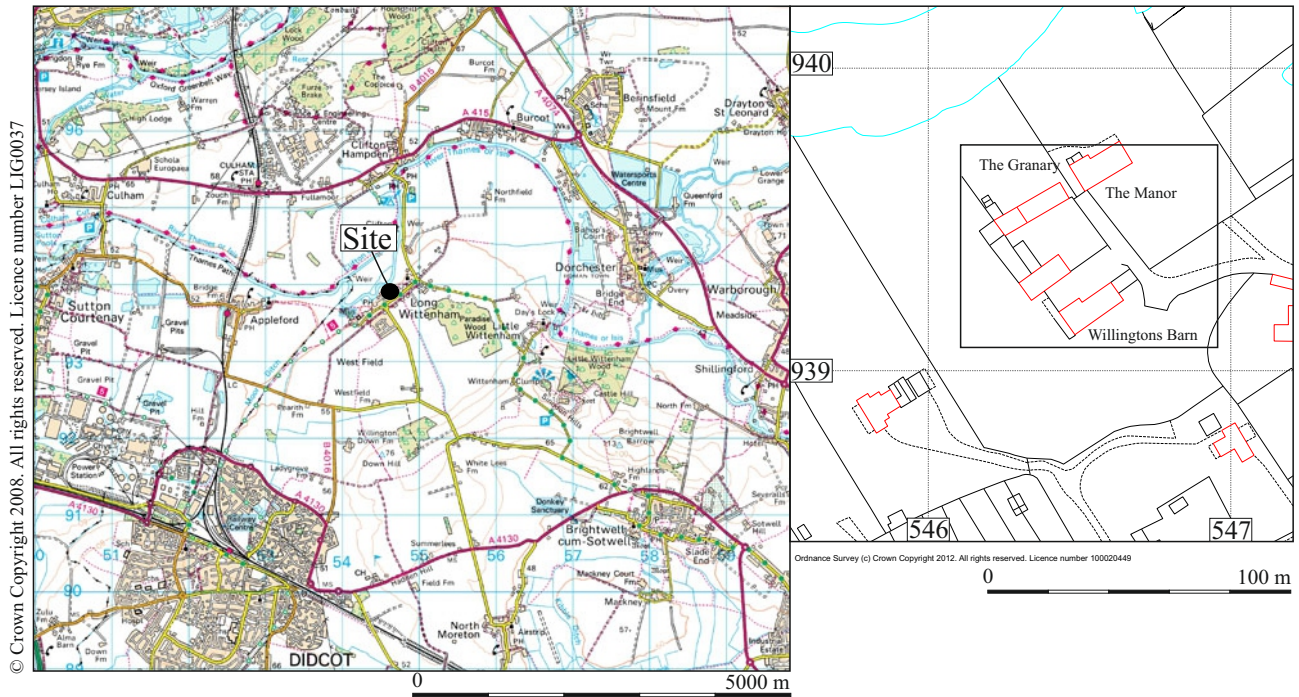
1.3 Archaeological Background

The building concerned lies within an area of some archaeological interest located 40m SW of a C17th grade II listed farmhouse (PRN 21185) and 30m north of a grade II listed C17th barn (PRN 21186). In addition Iron Age and Roman pottery and evidence of 'mud foundations' were recorded on the site in 1898 by the then tenant (PRN 2845). It is therefore possible that this development, despite its small-scale nature, could disturb surviving evidence of Iron Age and Roman settlement.

Long Wittenham itself is located in an area of considerable archaeological interest located 700m west of the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Northfield Farm, a prehistoric and Roman settlement site (SM 180). A second scheduled settlement site is located 900m at Appleford (SM 243). A trackway between these two settlements has been recorded from aerial photographs and crosses along the southern side of the village. Further cropmarks south of the village, 230m south of this application site, record a series of enclosures, trackways and a Saxon Timber Hall (PRN 15311). A Saxon cemetery has also been recorded 349m south of the site (PRN 2850) and a number of prehistoric, Saxon and Roman finds have been recorded within the village.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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



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Figure 1. Site location

- 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 of activity relating to Iron Age or Roman activity in the area.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

In response to a *Brief* from OCAS a Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared by John Moore Heritage Services and agreed with OCAS.

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 of Field Archaeologists (1994) and the principles of MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

3.2 Methodology

Excavation of the footings was carried out by hand by the contractor. Excavation of the footings was carried out to a depth of *c.*1000mm; they were 400mm wide (Fig. 1).

4 RESULTS

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. CBM refers to undifferentiated ceramic building material, which could be brick, tile or daub.

4.1 Fieldwork (Figures 1-4)

The footing trenches for the new garage were broken through extant concrete and excavated by hand.

Natural bright yellow gravel (8) was attained in all footings trenches. On the west side of the area was a large pit 7 measuring >400mm west/east and >1700mm (north/south), which extended beyond the edges of excavation (Fig. 3). The straight-sided pit was filled with mid brown sandy loam (6). No finds were recovered from the pit.

Sealing the pit was a layer of dark brown sandy silt loam (5), a garden soil, seen under the wall 1. The garden soil (5) was truncated beneath the concrete slab, which was present across the entire front of the property. Cut through the garden soil (5) and into the top of the pit 7 was a footings trench 4 *c.* 110mm wide (where its width was

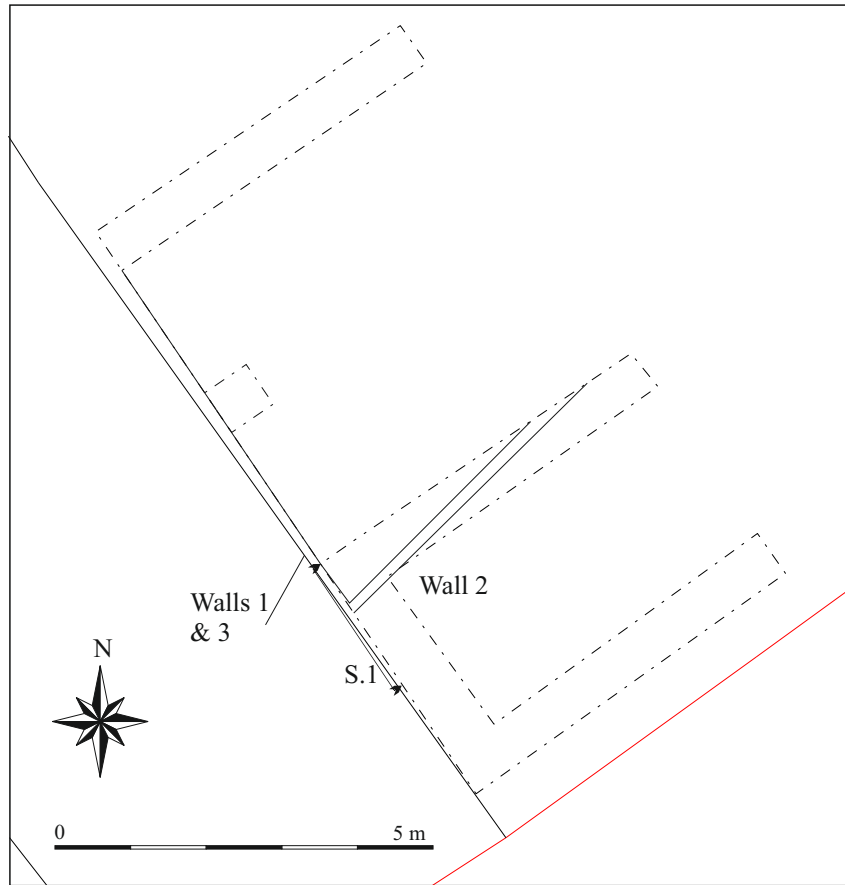


Figure 2. Plan of archaeological features

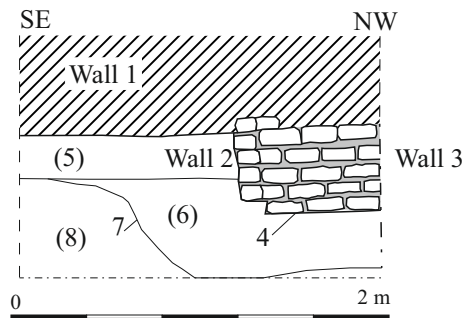


Figure 3. Section 1 of archaeological features



Figure 4. Photograph of footings trench showing walls 2 (located on extreme left of photo) & 3 (within footings trench).



Figure 5. Historic map extract (OS 1st Ed. 1883)

observable), 380mm deep and 3.7m long (Figs 2, 3 & 4). It was filled with a single width of coursed brick, wall 2, which was keyed into the wall 3 at a rough right angle. Wall 2, roughly oriented northeast/southwest, was present to a maximum height of five courses and wall 3, roughly oriented southeast/northwest, to a maximum of six (Fig. 3), although in both cases this was represented by a single brick.

Wall 3 appeared to consist of a double skin of brick (Fig. 4), although this was not absolutely clear and could not be clarified without invasive work, beyond the remit of the watching brief. The base of wall 3, which was a single course deeper than wall 2, appeared to form part of the same build. The brick walls were bonded with the same white grey lime mortar. The roughly-coursed stone wall 1, which was the present boundary wall to the yard in front of The Granary, appeared to be built on top of walls 2 and 3, although as wall 3, which extended beyond the edge of the footings trench, was not present in either the footings pit or in the footings trench to the north its precise relationship with the apparently later wall 1 remains ambiguous.

A course of brick was observed in the footings pit to the north, but whether it is not certain that it should be associated with wall 3. The precise functional relationship between the later wall 1 and the earlier walls 2 and 3 could not be clarified, despite it appearing that the stone wall 1 post-dated the brick walls 2 and 3. There is no apparent reason for why the wall 2 is not at right angles to wall 3 or parallel with other standing walls in the yard. The lightness of construction – indicated by a single skin of brick – may well be indicative of a structure of limited use-life.

4.2 Reliability of Techniques and Results

The reliability of results is considered to be good. The watching brief took place during clement conditions on January 20th and 23rd, with excellent cooperation from the on-site contractors.

5 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS

5.1 Brick by Gwilym Williams

The sole find from the watching brief was a single brick, representative of the bricks observed in walls 2 and 3. The brick, which measured *c.* 224mm × 112mm × 56mm and weighed 2625g, was made of an orange fabric running to some red oxidation on some of the faces, indicating not entirely consistent firing. The brick was unfroged, with sand traces on one face, wiping traces on the upper face; the sides showed folding where the clay had been cast in the mould originally. The brick is an entirely ordinary pre-20th century handmade brick, post-dating the 18th century. There were two different types of mortar on the brick, which is suggestive of the brick having been reused. The later mortar is a grey white lime mortar with small grit and charcoal through it, which overlies a yellow sandy mortar only visible in places where the brick had not been fully cleaned off. The brick was not retained.

5.2 Environmental Remains

No palaeoenvironmental samples were taken as the potential was not felt to be sufficient.

6 DISCUSSION

The watching brief carried out at The Granary, Long Wittenham revealed evidence of what might well be an earlier light brick structure, a single skin of brick wide, where the width was observable, consisting of brick wall 2 adjoining brick wall 3. Brick recovered from wall 2 appeared to be reused brick, from an earlier structure, although whether a boundary wall or a building was not certain. The wall appeared to be earlier than the present stone wall 1, forming the boundary to the west, which was perhaps built on top of the brick walls 2 and 3 (Fig. 3). It is of course equally possible that walls 2 and 3 butt up against the east face of wall 1 although this could not be determined on site due to health and safety reasons. The limited view made available during the watching brief means that it is not possible to say too much about the walls observed or the potential structure associated with them.

Ordnance Survey mapping from 1875 (1st Edition; 1:2500) (Fig. 4) does not clearly indicate any structure commensurate with the remains found. This and later versions indicate that there were small structures along much of the west side of the yard. Only at the north end would there appear to have been just a wall separating the yard from the field to the west of the farmyard complex. While there does not appear to have been significant rebuilding between 1875 and 1912, it is clearly the case that internal work or even replacement *in situ* would not be evident from OS mapping. However, the light nature of the remains – a single skin of brick – are indicative either of a structure which was in use for perhaps only a short period of time, or of an internal division within an outbuilding. No internal surfaces were identified, nor were any earlier structures present.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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