



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION ON LAND AT
FULLAMOR FARM HOUSE, ABINGDON ROAD,
CLIFTON HAMPDEN, OXFORDSHIRE
NGR SU 5335 9510**

On behalf of

Mr & Mrs Mason

**BY
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OCTOBER 2011

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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services conducted an archaeological evaluation in advance of the construction of a new garage block and orangery at Fullamoor Farm House, Clifton Hampden, Oxfordshire (Planning Ref: P11/W1230). One trench, totalling approximately 10 metres in length was excavated to the underlying natural geology. Two features were revealed in the trench comprising two postholes; all were sealed by the subsoil and topsoil. Within one posthole was a belt buckle of probable Post-medieval date. At the rear of the house over the location of a proposed orangery, two positions were hand-augered revealing a c. 0.30m deep overburden before solid ground was reached.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location and Geology (Figure 1)

The application area is located to the south of Culham Science Centre, on the south side of Abingdon Road and north of Fullamoor Plantation (NGR SU 5335 9510). It lies at approximately 60m OD and the geology is River Terrace Deposits on the edge of the Gault Clay. The site is currently in residential use within the grounds of Fullamoor Farm House.

1.2 Planning Background

Planning permission has been sought for an orangery extension to the main house, conversion of existing garage block to annex, and construction of new timber framed garage block (P11/W1230). Due to the potential disturbance of below ground archaeological remains the Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (OCAS) has advised that a pre-determination evaluation of the site should be carried out. This is in line with PPS5 and Local Plan Policies. Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (OCAS) prepared a *Brief* for the field evaluation. This was followed by a *Written Scheme of Investigation* produced by John Moore Heritage Services (JMHS 2011). This document outlined the method by which the work would be carried out in order to achieve the aims of the evaluation.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The site lies within an area of some archaeological interest immediately adjacent to a series of cropmarks identified through aerial photography (Historic Environment Record PRN 5641). The site consists of a series of trackways and enclosures, roughly aligned north-south with a trackway running NW-SE on the western edge. Cropmarks show a continuation of this trackway on the same alignment 700m to the SW. A series of enclosures can be identified between these two trackways and to the north. A further series of enclosures have been identified 250m east of these cropmarks. It is likely that these features are part of an Iron Age and Roman settlement and further aspects of these features may survive on the application site. In the wider area similar dense areas of cropmark tracks and enclosures are recorded 720m west of the site (PRN 8490) and 1km SW of the site (PRN 8488). This latter site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SM147).

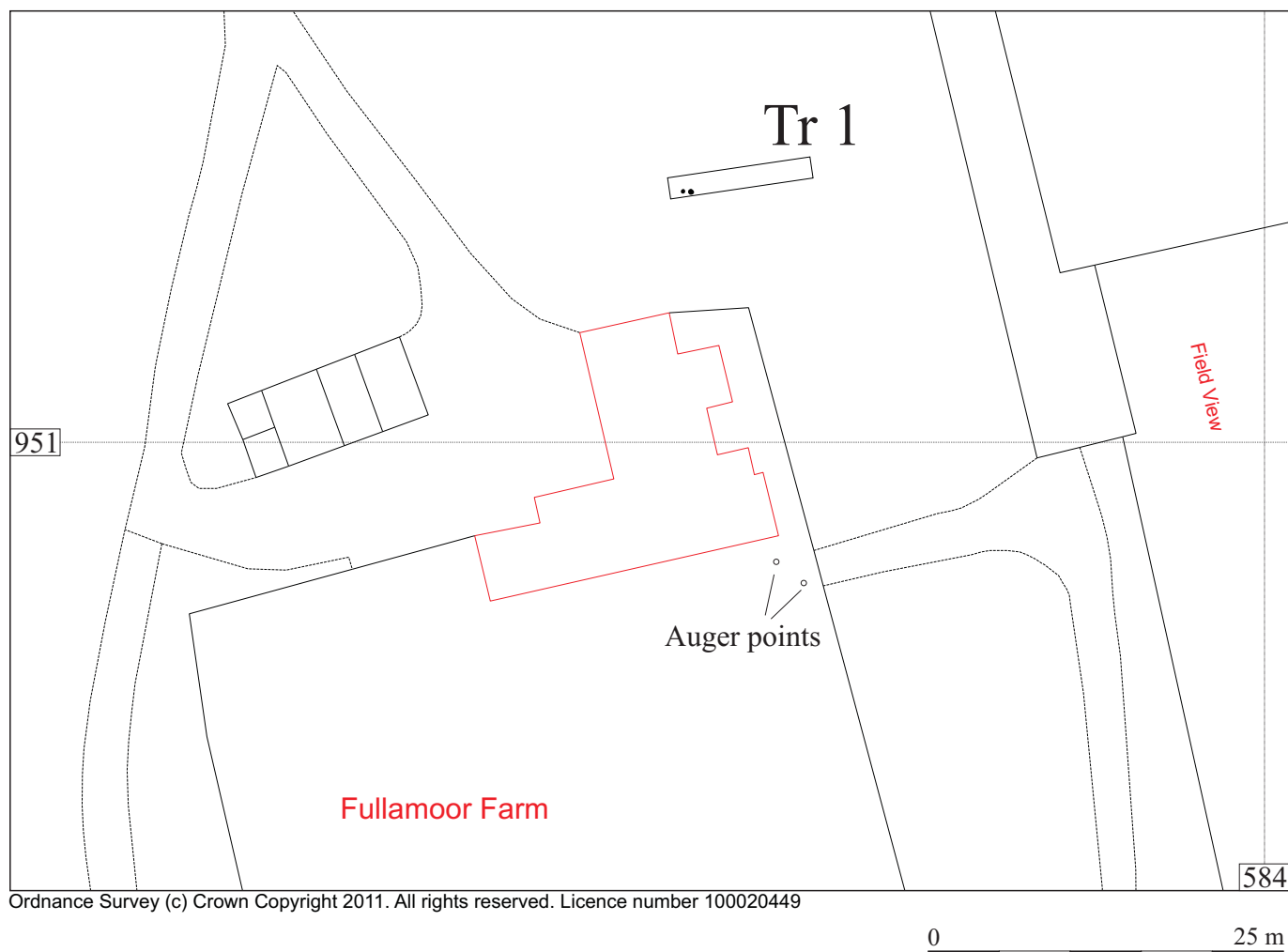
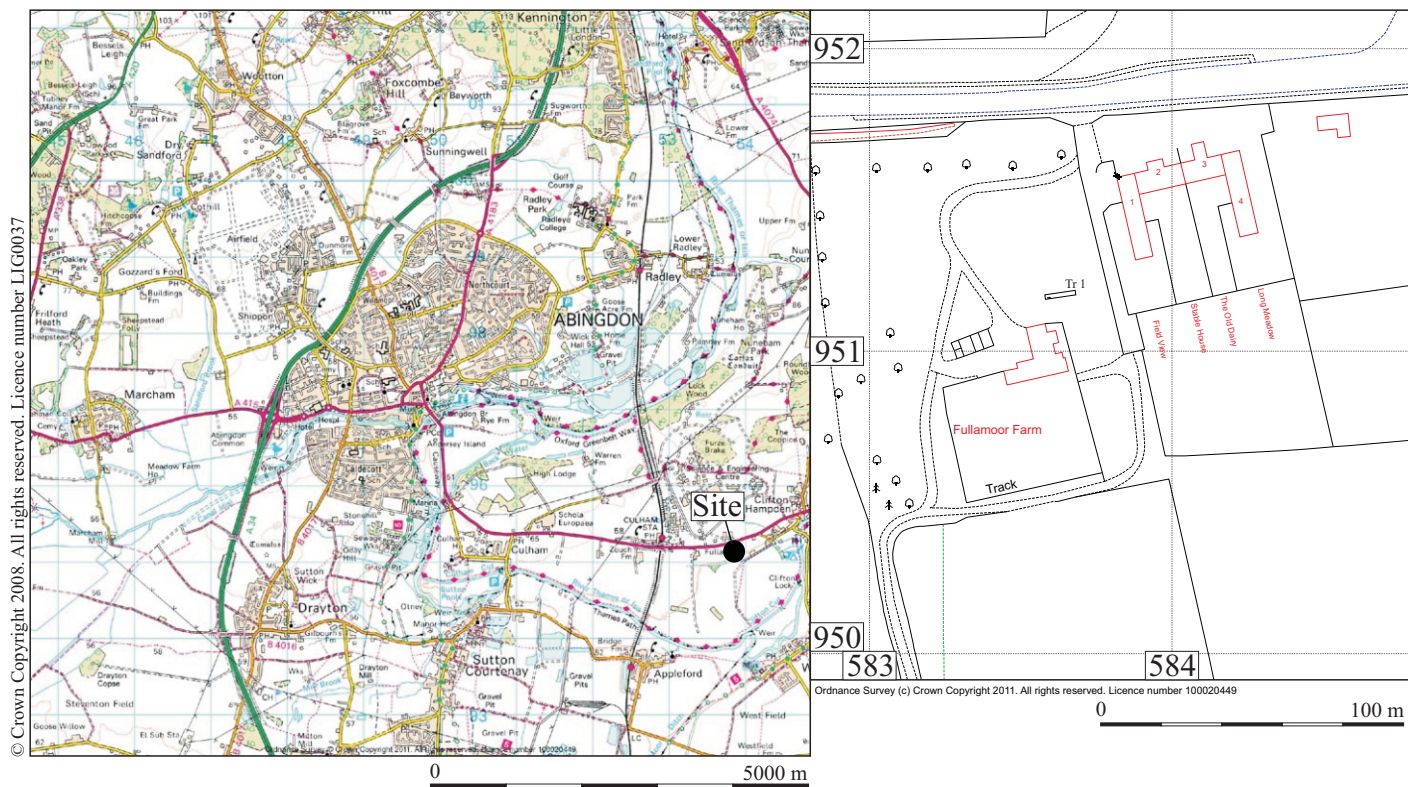


Figure 1. Site location

The site is located approximately 500m north of the Bronze Age barrow cemetery of Fullamoor Plantation (PRN 8500). The site consists of cropmark evidence of at least 10 ring ditches, presumably barrows, and other features. One disk barrow was excavated in 1933, possibly by E T Leeds with assistance from Major Allen. The ring ditch enclosed an area 19.2m in diameter, and was 3.6m wide and 1.2m deep. A central pit with the remains of a cremation was recorded surrounded by seven non-concentric holes. A series of evaluation trenches around the perimeter of this field revealed a Roman trackway, prehistoric pits and an Iron Age linear cropmark boundary. The artefacts recovered mainly reflect Bronze Age occupation.

The above information has been obtained from the OCAS' *Brief* and the JMHS Written Scheme of Investigation.

2.0 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the archaeological evaluation were to:

- To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the site;
- determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered and
- To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of the archaeological features and deposits.

In particular the aim was to:

- To establish whether features relating to the known cropmark activity in the area extend onto this site

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Methodology

The field evaluation comprised the mechanical excavation of 10m of trenching 1.6m wide in the footprint of the proposed garage (Plate 1). The area of the orangery extension was evaluated by use of an auger in two locations, simply to determine the depth of overburden at the proposed location.

Excavation was undertaken by a mechanical excavator using a ditching bucket. Excavation was taken down to the top of the highest significant archaeological horizon, or natural undisturbed geology, whichever was the higher.

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. The trenches were backfilled after recording.

Levels were taken to achieve heights above Ordnance Datum (OD). These were taken to a fixed point on the side of Fullamoor Farm House as no known level has been recorded within the site boundary or even within a larger radius of the site. If this information is required by the planning archaeologist another site visit will have to be organised to tie in the known point.

The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (1999) and the procedures laid down in MAP2 (English Heritage 1991). It was undertaken by Paul Riccoboni AIFA (Project Officer) in one day under the general direction of John Moore MIFA and was monitored by Richard Oram (Planning Archaeologist) at Oxfordshire County Council.

All of the site procedures are listed in the annex of the site procedures in the Written Scheme of Investigation.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Excavation Results (Figure 1; Figure 2)

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.

4.1.1 Trench 1 (Figure 1; Figure 2)

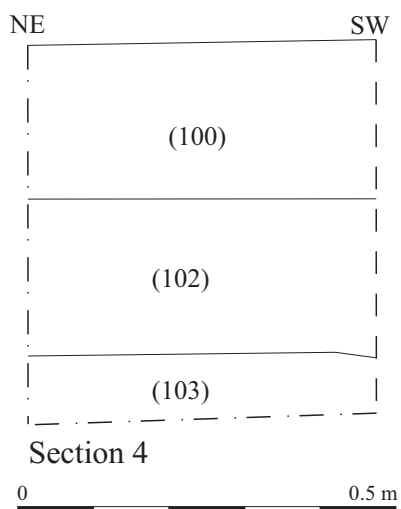
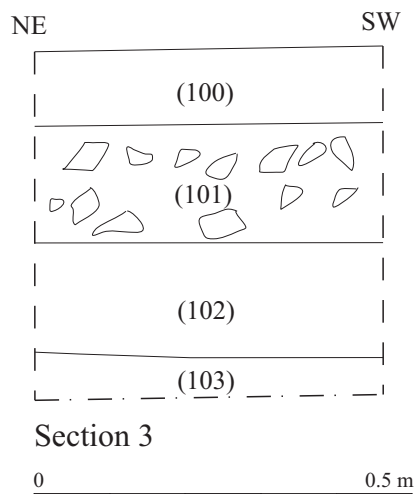
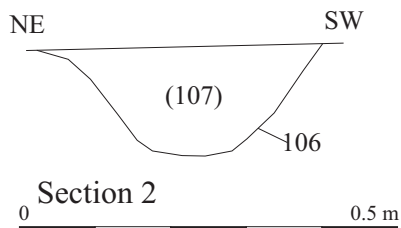
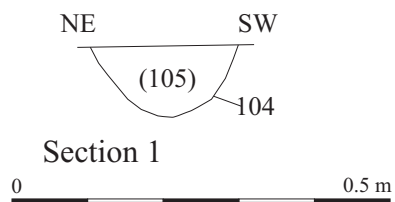
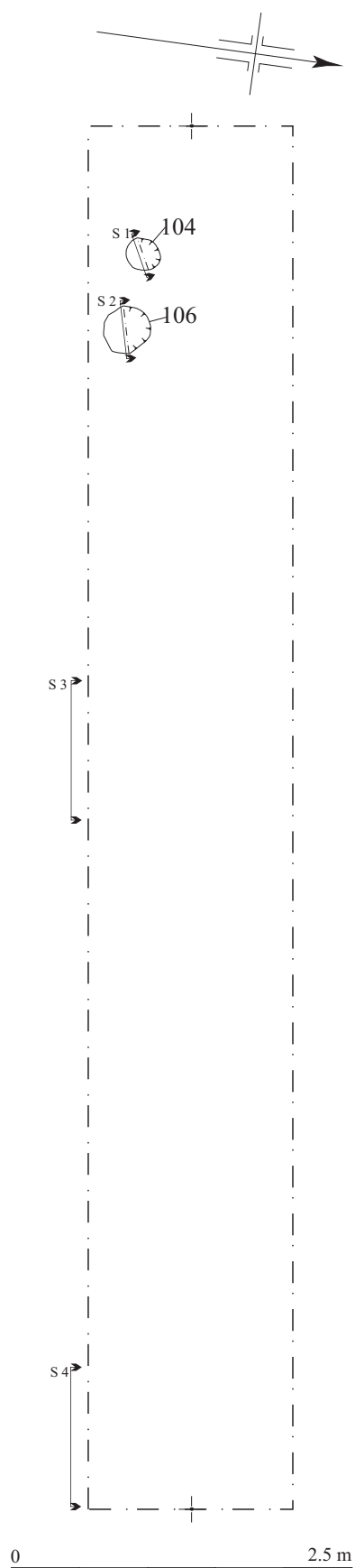
The trench was 10m in length (east west) and located in the grounds of Fullamoor Farm House over the footprint of the proposed new build for the garage. The lowest deposit noted within the trench consisted of natural gravel (103), which was reached at a depth of *c.* 0.40m.

The overburden consisted of the following contexts (earliest to latest). The natural geology was light to mid yellow orange gravels (103). Overlying the natural gravels was *c.* 0.15m thick mid orange brown silty sand subsoil (102). Near the centre of the trench was a made ground deposit (101), which contained a very concentration of dumped roof tile of a modern date (not retained). The latest deposit was *c.* 0.10m thick dark greyish brown silty clay (100) (Fig 2; S. 1 & 2).

The trench contained two features considered to be postholes on their shape and size.

Postholes

Posthole [104] was sub circular in shape *c.* 0.20m in width and 0.10m in depth with concave sides forming a rounded base (Fig 2; S. 4). It was filled by dark greyish brown silty clay (105) with one belt buckle and frequent gravel inclusions.



Posthole [106] was sub circular in shape *c.* 0.35m wide and 0.14m deep with concave sides and a gently rounded base (Fig 2; S. 2, Plate 2). It was filled by dark greyish brown silty clay (107).

4.3 The Augur Results

Two positions were hand-augered over the location of the proposed orangery to the rear of the farmhouse. A depth of 0.30m was reached until solid ground, assumed to be natural was encountered. No archaeological finds were seen.

4.4 Reliability of Techniques and Results

The reliability of results is considered to be good. The excavation of the trench took place in favourable weather conditions. The augur results should not be considered as absolute as the solid ground cannot be confirmed as natural and may have been another type of made ground.

5 FINDS

Only one find was recovered from the archaeological trench. This was a belt buckle considered to be Post-medieval (18th Century?) based on its rectangular shape, size and iron tongue.

6 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

The depth of overburden was as expected and preservation of archaeological features was good. The results of the evaluation suggest that not much modern disturbance has taken place on the land, with a relatively insignificant presence of features. The features may be of Post-medieval date as they were sealed beneath the subsoil and topsoil and one contained a Post-medieval belt buckle. The archaeological features were limited to the western end of the trench, which may indicate a building was once located over this location, perhaps a barn or workshop. The trench did not contain any evidence of a continuation of any important crop marks identified by aerial photography in the adjacent field (see Section 1.3).

The archaeological evaluation was successful in gathering sufficient information to understand the extent, character, date, state of preservation and depth of burial of archaeological remains within the area of study as set out in the JMHS WSI. A confidence rating is high that the best possible results were achieved.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX 1– ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

| Context | Type | Description | Depth (m) | Width (m) | Length (m) | Finds | Date |
|-----------------|---------|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|--------------|----------|
| Trench 1 | | | | | | | |
| 100 | Deposit | Dark grey brown topsoil | 0.10 | Tr. | Tr. | / | / |
| 101 | Deposit | Demolition layer of tile | 0.15 | Tr. | 5 | / | / |
| 102 | Deposit | Mid orange brown silty clay | 0.15 | Tr. | Tr. | / | / |
| 103 | Deposit | Light orange yellow gravels | / | Tr. | Tr. | / | / |
| 104 | Cut | Posthole | 0.10 | 0.20 | 0.20 | / | / |
| 105 | Deposit | Fill of 104 | 0.10 | 0.20 | 0.20 | Copper alloy | Post med |
| 106 | Cut | Posthole | 0.15 | 0.35 | 0.35 | / | / |
| 107 | Deposit | Fill of 107 | 0.15 | 0.35 | 0.35 | / | / |

Plate 1: General overview of Trench: view south east



Plate 2: North facing section of Posthole 106.

