

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

**MANOR FARM HOUSE,
NETHER WINCHENDON,
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

NGR SP 7321 1226

On behalf of

Julia Hess

AUGUST 2010

REPORT FOR Julia Hess
Manor Farm House
Nether Winchendon
Buckinghamshire
HP18 0EA

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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services conducted a watching brief prior to the construction of a new conservatory onto Manor House Farm, Nether Winchendon, Buckinghamshire (NGR SP 7321 1226), a grade II listed building. The trenches uncovered a number of features, of which the major one was the remains of a probable kitchen of probable 16th century date. The remains of a possible earlier limestone structure were also noted, but this was of an unknown date.*

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development site is located at the site of the Manor Farm House, Nether Winchendon (NGR SP 7321 1226). The site lies between 80-85m OD. The underlying geology is Kimmeridge Clay Formation grey mudstone close to the border with the beds of silt and sand (BGS sheet 237).

1.2 Planning Background

Aylesbury Vale District Council granted planning permission for the erection of a conservatory (ref. 10/02323/APP). Due to the archaeological and historical importance of the surrounding area a condition was attached to the permission requiring a watching brief to be maintained during the course of building operations or construction works on the site. This was in line with PPS 5 (the planning policy current at the time) and other Local Planning policies. A Written Scheme of Investigation detailing the work that would be carried to satisfy the condition was agreed with Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service.

1.3 Archaeological Background

Stone age artefacts have been recovered from the Nether Winchendon area. A butt end of a tranchet axe was found 50m to the north of the site (HER 0428300000). A polished flint axe was found about 200m to the north of the site (HER 0667600000). The line of the Viatorres Roman road (HER 0203500000) lies 300m to the north, while Roman pottery has been recovered 250m to the west (Her 0598200000 & 0598200001) along with metalwork (HER 0598200002).

Early medieval (Saxon) pottery has been recovered to the west of Manor House Farm (HER 0598200003). The reference in the Domesday Book, 1086, indicates that the village and manor was in existence in the late Saxon period as the manor as Edith held this manor from Queen Edith (Morris 1978, 14.13). After the Norman Conquest the manor belonged to Walter Gifford and accounted for 10 hides. The estate contained 23 villagers, 8 smallholders and 1 slave. A meadow is also mentioned along with a mill valued at 20s and 80 eels, which is indicative of there being a fishery located on the Thame.

Nether Winchendon shares its name with Upper Winchendon. The earliest forms of the name date back to 1004 but this reference is to Upper Winchendon and the

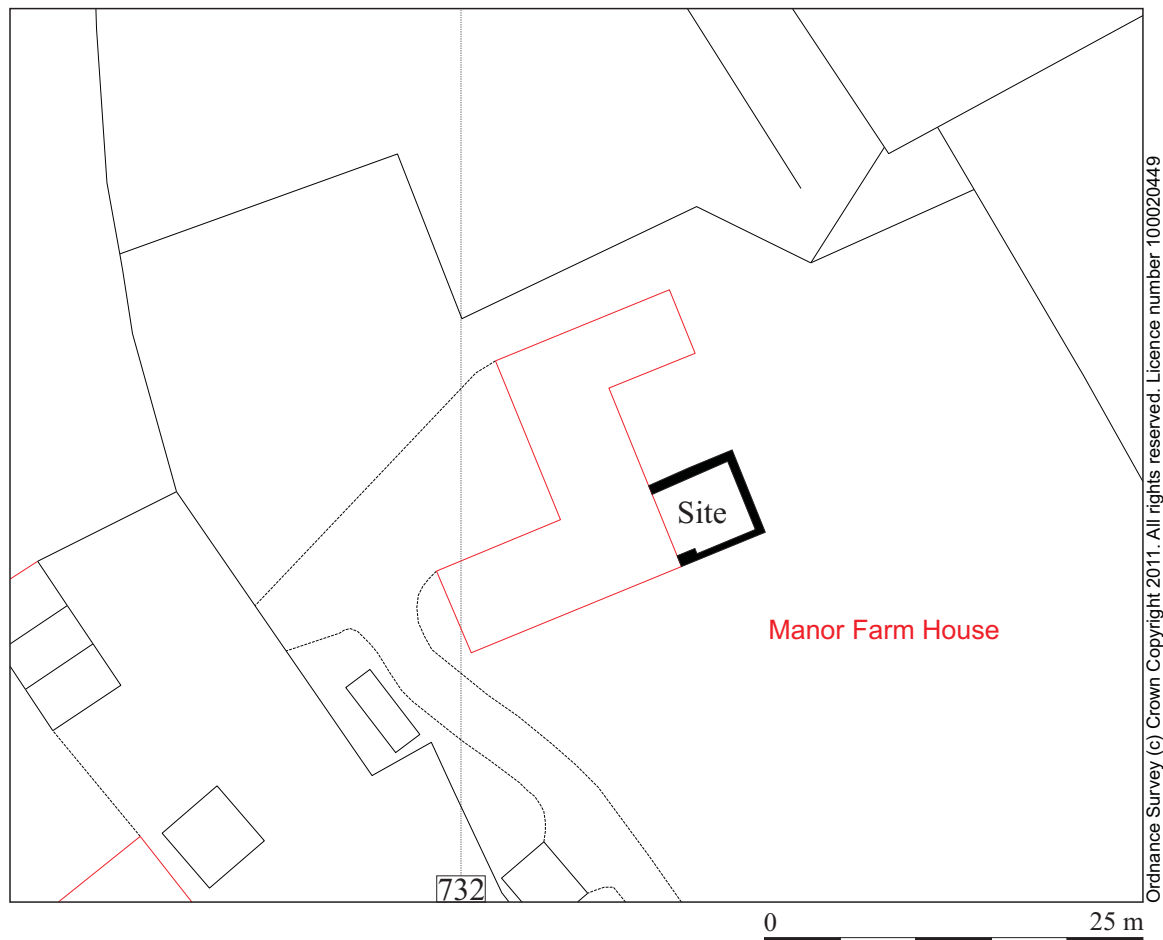
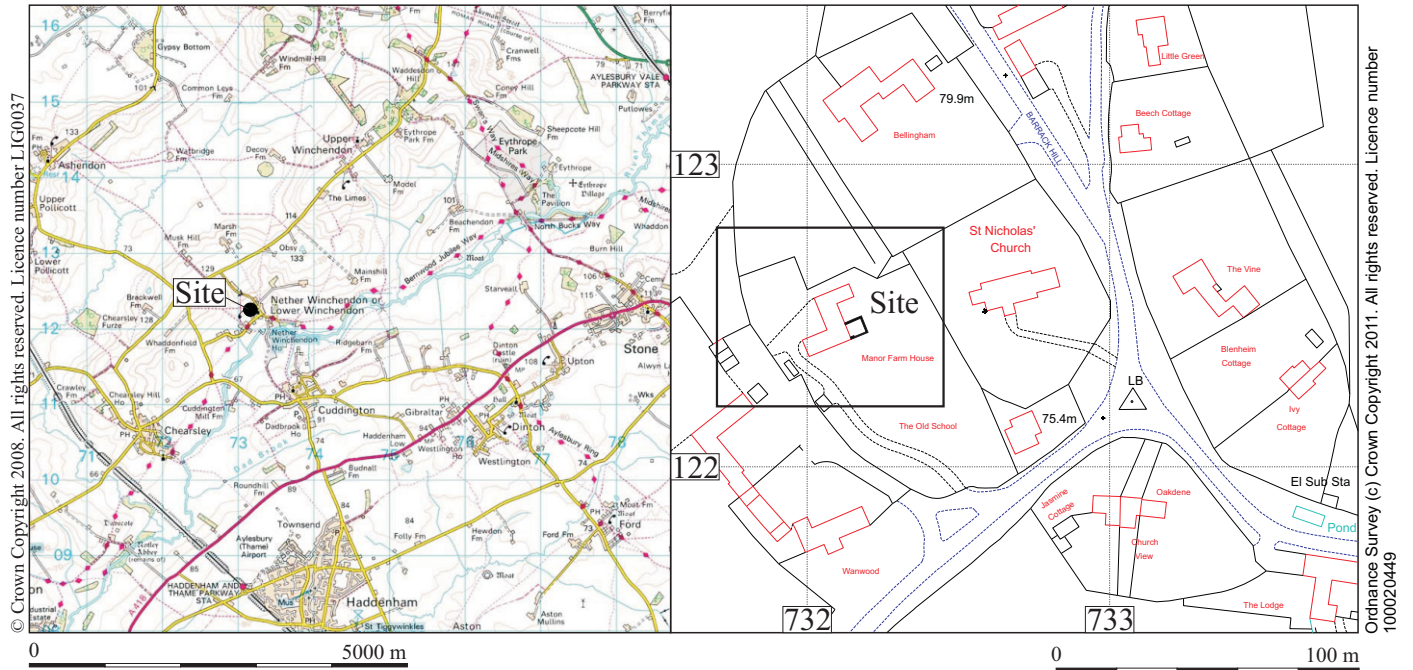


Figure 1. Site location

spelling at that date is *yincandum*, while a later form also of an early medieval date is *wincandon* (Mawer and Stenton 1925, 111-2). The Place-names of Buckinghamshire suggests a possible Old English *Winecan-dūn*, or *Wineca's hill*. Nether Winchendon is also given the prefix Lower or Little.

The site of the manor house mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 has been located at Winchendon Priory a name which it has been known by since the 19th century (VCH 1927, 118-122). The present house is considered to have been built in 1571 and altered into its present winged structure c. 1800. Walter Giffard, who held the manor in 1086, established the abbey at Notley. The manor of Nether Winchendon had passed to the abbey and was held within the honour of Gifford in 1255 and that of Marshalsy in 1302.

However, during Earl Walter's absence part of the manor of Nether Winchendon was granted in 1175 to Richard de Hunez, Constable of Normandy (VCH 1927, 118-122). He passed the manor on to his son William who then passed it on to his daughter Agnes; who subsequently married Baldwin Wales. From 1210 to 1221 there was a dispute over the manor between the descendents of Hunez and Notley Abbey. At this time a message was given to Notley abbey as a form of compensation and in 1234 they were awarded a moiety in the manor. In 1535 the manor was leased by the abbot of Notley to Sir John Dauncey, while in 1547, after the Dissolution of the monasteries, Edward VI granted the manor to John Lord Russell, who sold the manor to William Goodwin in 1560.

The dispute over the manor is indicative of a division of land at the start of the 13th century; further land was alienated from the manor in the 13th and 14th centuries (VCH 1927, 118-122). It is known that the abbot of Warden had rental interests in the parish in 1374; the prior of Chicksand holdings in 1242 and the priory of Studley had their interests granted away in 1540. The division of the manor, although perhaps only temporarily, at the beginning of the 13th century is perhaps significant and may provide a context for the establishment of Manor House Farm. The site of Manor House Farm lies within a large oval shaped group of field or inclosure boundaries which is divided down the middle by a water course or drainage system now filled in or piped at its lower end, but evident at the upper end. The arrangement is similar to early church enclosures in Wales, for example that at Llangors of the 5th century, although no evidence of such a date has been confirmed.

The church at Nether Winchendon was part of a complex parochial and church hierarchical arrangement. Long Crendon was a mother church whose origins are believed to date back to the early medieval period (VCH 1927, 36-45). This church was granted with its chapels at Ashendon, Chearsley and Upper Winchendon (VCH 1927, 3-7, 19-22, 118-122). The church of Long Crendon was originally granted to Saint Faith of Longueville, later being resumed and given to Notley Abbey (VCH 1927, 36-45). The church of Chilton with its chapel of Dorton (VCH 1927, 22-27, 45-48) were granted to Notley Abbey at the same time as Long Crendon and its chapels and it is possible that these also originated as subservient churches. This network of Church holdings could imply that as Notley Abbey held the church and presumably the enclosure in which it and Manor House Farm lay that it would be the perfect location to establish a secondary manor from which the abbey could contest its claims.

Medieval house platforms, hollow-ways and other earthworks were identified in field survey to the south (HER 0224300000) and to the west (HER 0224200000) of the village. Medieval artefacts have been recovered from the back garden of Manor House Farm (HER 0428301000 & 0428302000). Medieval pottery has been recovered from other parts of the village dated to the 11th and 12th centuries (HER 0212700001) and later medieval pottery (HER 0224200001, 0224300001 & 0598200000) along with medieval metal work (HER 0598200004).

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

- To record any archaeological remains that will be impacted on by the development.
- In particular to record the potential for features relating to medieval settlement.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Services (*BCAS*) the archaeological advisors to Aylesbury Vale District Council. Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate and possible.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (1994).

3.2 Methodology

An archaeologist was present to record any archaeological feature uncovered during the cutting of the foundation trench.

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was also produced.

4 RESULTS (Figures 2-3)

The natural (024) was a highly compact light brown clay. This represents one of the two natural deposits identified in the geology above.

4.1 Phase 1: Medieval possibly 13th century?

Cut into the natural was an ephemeral cut 023 a probable linear some 0.4 to 0.5m wide with gently breaking slopes, sharp sides and a rounded base. Set in this cut were the remains of a probable limestone wall 022. This contained limestone blocks approximately 0.3m x 0.2m x 0.15m of a roughly squared shaped but still irregular shape (Fig. 3, Section 1). The limestone if bonded was in a brown clay matrix. The wall foundation was orientated north to south.

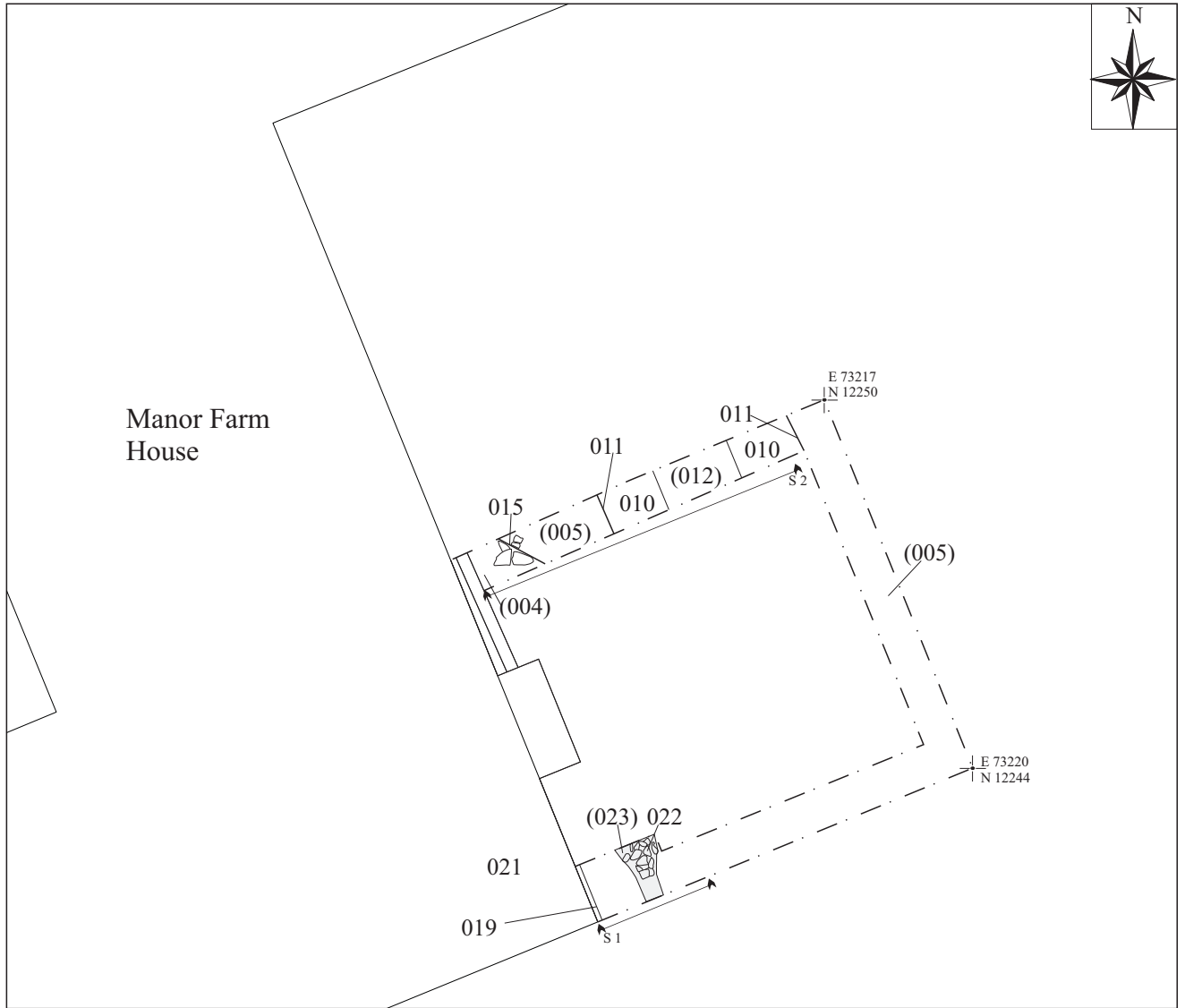
It is difficult to be precise about the exact nature of this feature as so little was uncovered and no finds were recovered from it being 1.4m below ground level. Historically it is possible that at the beginning of the 13th century when the manor of Nether Winchendon was in dispute that Notley Abbey could have established an alternative manorial site in the village, if so the logical place for them to have placed such a site is on the land of their undisputed church holdings; though any positive confirmation of this at present is lacking.

4.2 Phase 2: Late Medieval or early Post-Medieval, 16th century

The potential early wall 022 was sealed by a compact dark blue black grey silt clay (005). This was initially considered to be a natural deposit as it was relatively clean and free of artefacts, however, on digging down through this deposit bones were recovered.

Cut into this deposit were the remains of three foundation cuts relating to the original complex of the original Manor House Farm. The largest of these, cut 019, had to belong to the present structure. The shape of this was not defined, but as evidence of a cellar exists at this end of the house it may be a box shaped cut with linears extending from it for the foundations of the rest of the building. The cut had steep sides but its full profile was not defined only that it extended 1.5m below the present ground layer. This was filled by a rubble limestone wall 021 which was stepped out 0.6m below the present ground surface. It was from this level that the original cut was made. A dressed stone of a plinth lay near the present ground level. Lying across the step in the wall and the cut was deposit (018) a hard white yellow mortar rubble with clay lenses. This deposit was 0.15m deep and extended from the building 1.1m. It is probable that this represents a scatter of building debris deposited at the time of construction of the house.

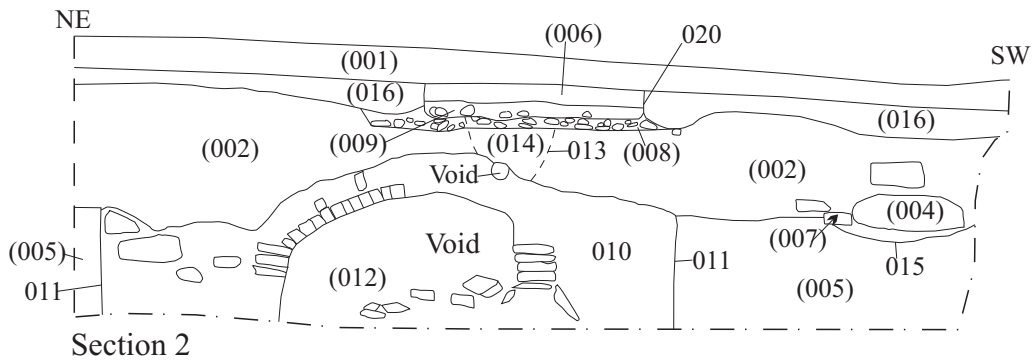
Cut 011 did not have its full extent defined, but had vertical sides and an unrecorded base extending below the natural and this foundation cut. It was filled by masonry structure 010. This structure survived in the foundation cut to a height of 0.7m and contained extremely large limestone blocks, many of which were too large to remove and had to be shattered. One of the blocks removed whole was a piece of sculptured stone probably the remains of a finial from a medieval gable of a church. This feature could be dated to the 14th century, see plates 1 - 4 and figure 4. Within the wall were the remains of a brick arch (fig. 2, section 2), the bricks had a depth of c. 50mm, thus they could easily be placed in the 16th century. The feature was 1.2m wide and 0.6m high, surviving best on the south side to the trench. The arch was either structural or simply decorative. The void was filled by deposit (012) which contained lenses of black clay silt and mortar.



Key:

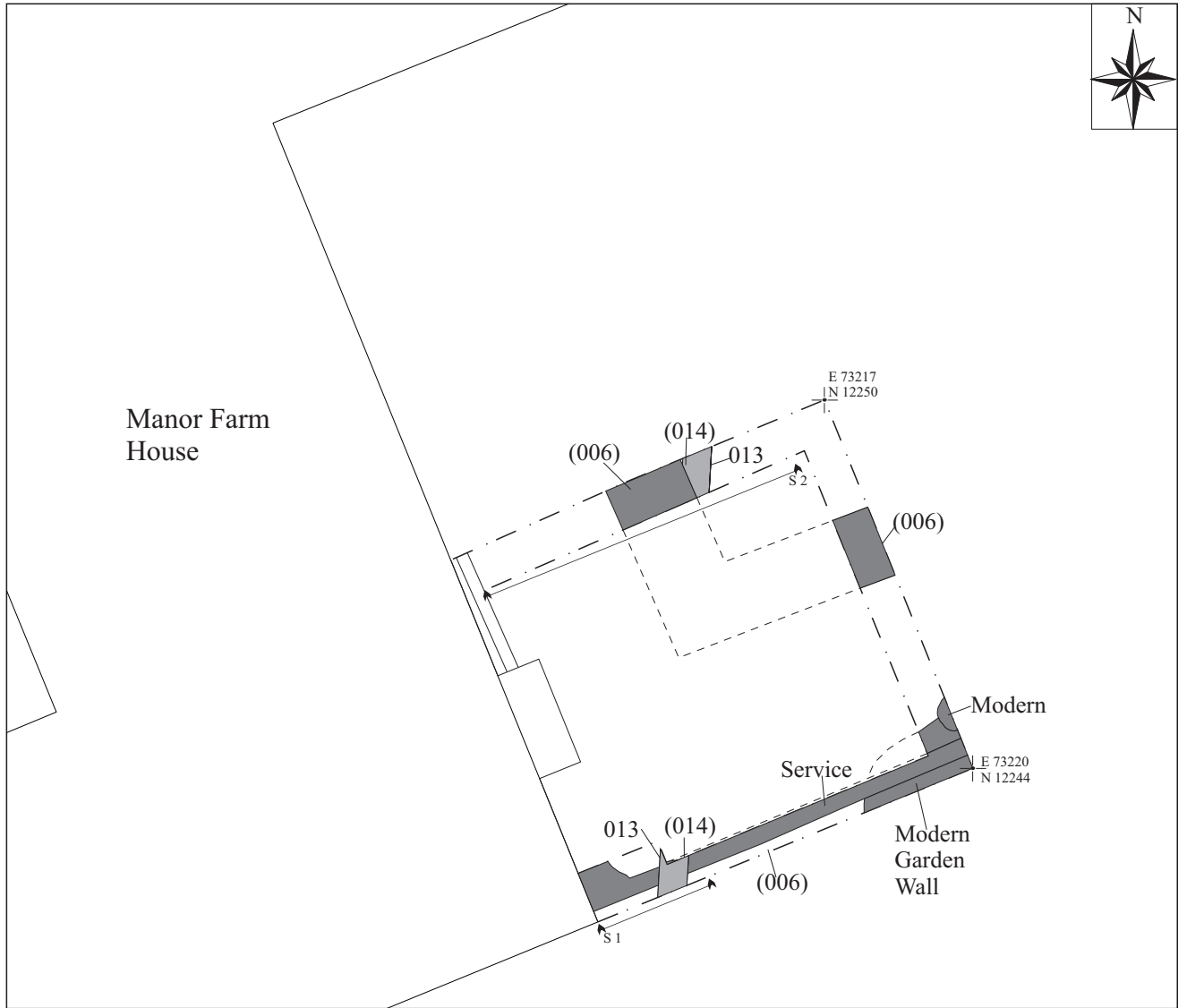
- Phase 1
- Phase 2

0 5 m



0 2 m

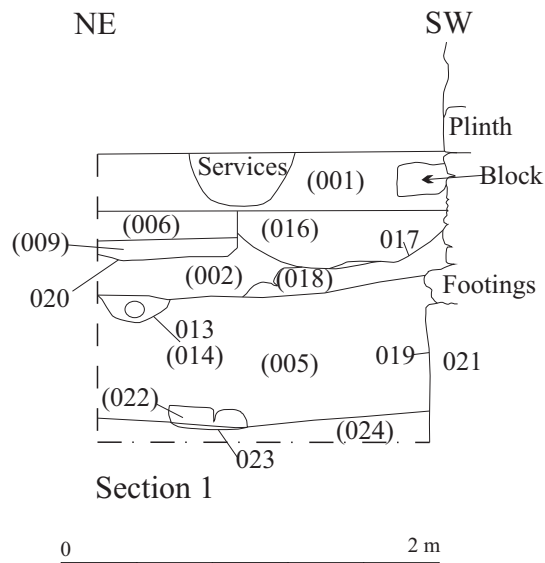
Figure 2. Phase 1 & 2 plan and section



0 5 m

Key:

- Phase 3
- Phase 4



0 2 m

Figure 3. Phase 3 & 4 plan and section

The remains of a further linear cut 015 was also noted. This measured 0.6m across and 0.18m deep the profile was gentle and rounded. This was filled by masonry wall 004, which contained some extremely large stones and also smaller ones surviving to two courses. The depth of the foundation would indicate that this was not intended to maintain a large structure and may simply have gone from one structure to another.

Butting up against this was the remains of a brick surface 007 which contained bricks measuring 210mm x 105mm x 55mm.

4.3 Phase 3: Post-Medieval 19th century

Overlying these features are the remains of a deposit (002) a compact yellow brown silt clay with brick and tile inclusions. This would seem to be part of an extensive and disturbed deposit that lay across the top of walls 010 and 004, and over the top of layer (018). The disturbed nature of the context makes it difficult to ascertain if cut 013 actually goes through this disturbed make-up layer or destruction layer or is cut from below it. The fill (014) contains the remains of the compact yellow brown silt clay with brick, tile and limestone inclusions. The base of the cut and fill contain the remains of a late 19th century land drain. It is highly possible that the laying of the land drain would have uncovered the remains of the structure and would have led to further robbing of this structure. Lying across the top of these deposits are the remains of a tile layer (008).

4.4 Phase 4: Modern 20th century

Overlying these deposits were deposit (016), a moderately compact dark brown silt sand some 0.3m deep. This is the lowest part of the present topsoil, but its categorisation as a separate context is required as a cut (020) with a series of linear sections with steep sides with vertical sides and a flat base. Deposit (009) an orange sand and deposit (006) the concrete path sit within this cut. Further evidence of modern disturbance is the retaining wall and its cut in the southeast side of the foundation cut (not numbered). These features probably relate to the 1970s or 1980s when the swimming pool and other garden features were added.

Covering these deposits was context (001) a moderately compact dark black brown silt sand which contained inclusion of modern brick, pot and bone.

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 6 sherds with a total weight of 77g. It comprised a mixture of medieval and modern material, all of which occurred in the topsoil and subsoil. It was recorded using the coding system of the Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit type-series (e.g. Mynard and Zeepvat 1992; Zeepvat et al. 1994), as follows:

MS9: **Brill/Boarstall Ware**, 1200-?1600. 1 sherd, 3g.
PM14: **Midland Purple ware**, AD1450-1600. 1 sherd, 15g
TLMS18: **Late Medieval Oxidized ware**, AD1450-1550. 1 sherd, 37g.

PM25: **White Earthenware**, 19th – 20th century. 3 sherds, 22g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*.

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type.

Cntxt	MS9		PM14		TLMS18		PM25		Date
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
1	1	3			1	37	3	22	U/S
2			1	15					U/S
Total	1	3	1	15	1	37	3	22	

The range of pottery types is typical of sites in the region. It suggests that there was activity at the site in the medieval period, from the 13th – 15th/16th century, and then it was abandoned until the 19th century.

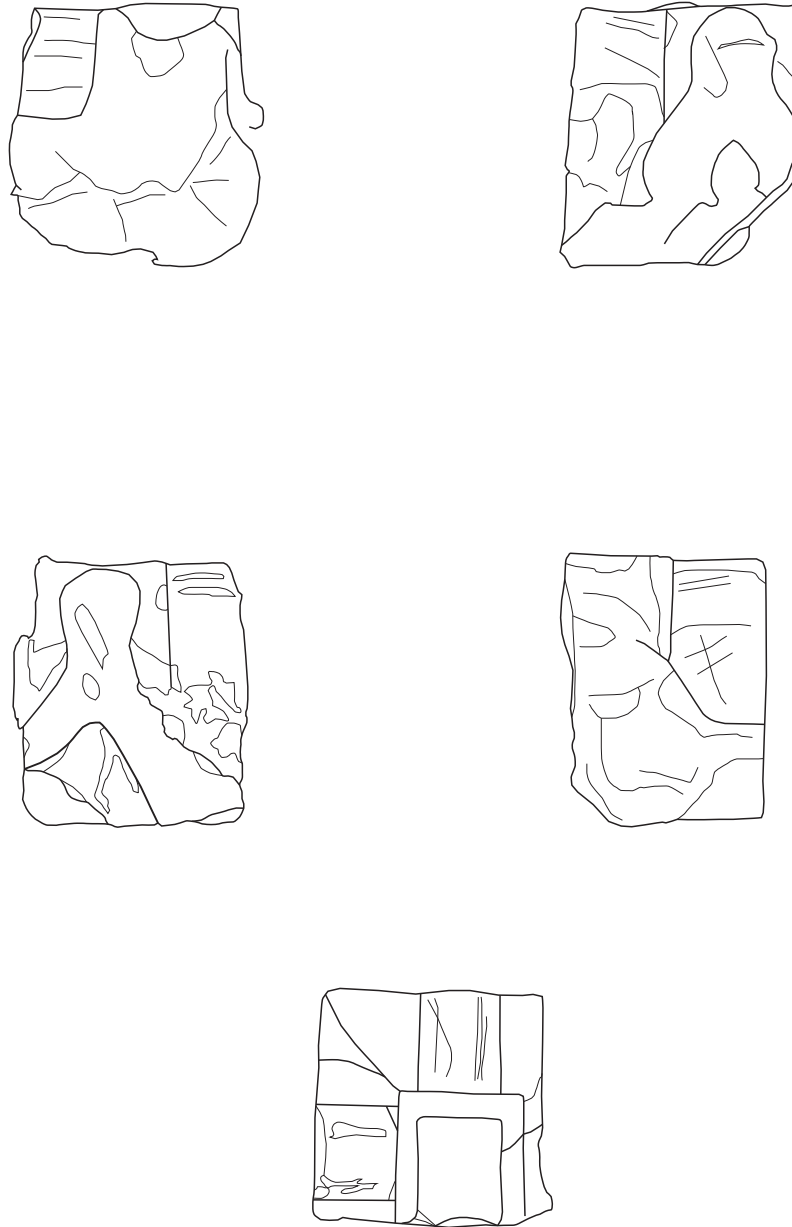
5.2 Worked Stone

One piece of worked limestone stone was recovered from wall 010 (fig 4, plates 1-4); this was a piece of moulded Late Gothic sculpture. Morris (1978, 18-57; 1979, 1-48; 1992, 1-17) has produced a catalogue of mouldings that predominantly focus on internal decoration, mouldings on columns, arches and window tracery.

The sculpture found has a recess carved in the top to hold a further piece of stone or wood. The moulded lip on this recess has a rounded shape and is rectangular in plan. From two of the four sides of this central pillar project gables with a rounded square ridge as though imitating the ridgeline of a roof. There is a step under this in one of the stones in which the top of trefoil or quatrefoil is evident (fig 4, plates 1-4).

There are two possibilities for the purpose of this stone, the first is that it is part of a finial from the gable, similar features can be identified on the transepts of various English cathedrals such as Norwich, Lincoln, Rochester, the west façade at Peterborough; or the base of the gable on the southeast transept of Canterbury (Clifton-Taylor 1967, general pictures). These structures are normally classed as buildings of the Early English or Decorated styles, thus it is appropriate to suggest a 13th or 14th century date for this type of sculpture. The second possibility is that it is derived from a tomb; though the former is more likely.

There are conceivably a number of possible locations where sculpture came from. The church of Nether Winchendon has features dated to the 13th century (Pevsner and Williamson 1994, 449). These are the earliest recognised features and provide a date for the present structure. The finial on the end of the chancel is a later replacement of the 1891 restoration but it shows similarities to the object recovered from context 010. There is no finial surviving on the gable of the nave, if one was ever there. The south porch gable contains another finial. It is possible that the sculpture was taken from the neighbouring church.



0 0.5 m

Figure 4. Views of 14th C Finial of gable end



Plate 1



The other possible argument is that the sculpture was taken from Notley Abbey. The chapel of Nether Winchendon was attached to that of Long Crendon a mother church presented to Notley Abbey. Walter Giffard founded the church of Notley before 1162.

Architecturally what is known of the present building at Notley has been described in the following manner (Pevsner and Williamson 1994, 585-6). The surviving structure or farm was formed out of the Abbot's Lodging built in the 15th and 16th century. Excavations have shown that the original part of the church was built c. 1160, which included the crossing and transepts. The aisles were added c. 1200, while a new east end was constructed c. 1300. The chapter house was constructed in the 13th century. Little of the church survives, so it is apparent that this structure was dismantled after the dissolution of the monasteries and that this material must have been dispersed around the local vicinity. The building is of a period that would suit the stonework. Where this material went is a moot point, but architectural features from such buildings could be taken for reuse on neighbouring churches or manor houses.

5.3 Brick and Tile

A small sample of brick and tile was brought away from the site for analysis. The brick came from context 010, the remains of the stone foundations. The two fragments retrieved weighed 1279g, while the width and depth were 109mm x 49mm. The fabric was an orange red with few inclusions. The length was probably in excess of 220mm. The relatively shallow depth of the brick would suggest a date in the 16th or early 17th century at the latest.

Sample tile was recovered from three contexts. In context (01) there were five sherds weighing 332g, in context (02) one fragment weighing 104g, and from the foundation 010 seven fragments weighing 503g. The tile from context (01) was a red orange fabric in which the inclusions varied considerably, at least one fragment was heavily tempered. The tiles were fired all the way through. This tile was probably relatively recent. The tile fragment from context (02) was similar to that from context (01). The tiles recovered from inside the wall are different from that recovered in the upper contexts. The tiles contain at least three fabric types with different firings and hence degrees of colouration. The one is a pale orange fabric with some inclusion, while a further redder tile has a similar fabric. There is a further orange fabric with frequent inclusions and banding in the clay. The holes in the tiles are relatively large, indicative of large nails, which is suggestive of an early post-medieval date.

5.4 Glass

A bottle rim was recovered from the trench, possibly from context 02 weighing 32g, it was placed in this later context due to the way the deposits were machined. The rim was from an early green wine glass and contained a collar. The bottle top shows similarities to bottles of the 17th century (Hedges 1996, 4).

5.5 Clay Pipe

A single clay pipe fragment was uncovered from context (01) weighing less than a gram. It can only be dated generally to the post-medieval period.

5.6 Animal Bone

Animal bones were recovered from four contexts.

Context	Fragments	Weight (g)
01	7	185
02	3	197
05	5	30
10	10	169

The bones from context (01) consisted of vertebrae, long bones, and ribs with signs of butchery. The bones from context (02) were long bone fragments. Context (05) also produced long bone fragments. Context 010 also produced bones with signs of butchery including vertebrae, ribs and long bones.

5.7 Oyster shell

Three oyster-shell fragments were recovered from contexts (01) and (10), two shells weighing 18g and one 7g respectively. The shell from context 10 was a right valve and the main shell from (01) was a left valve. These oyster shells were discarded.

5.8 Baked Clay

A single fragment of white baked clay was recovered from context (01), weighing 38g. The white fabric has few inclusions in, but one stone inclusion is evident. The exact origin of the fragment has not been determined, but it is possibly a tile with a lip or may be a baked clay object or furniture.

6 DISCUSSION

The watching brief at Manor House Farm has been useful in indicating that earlier phases existed on the site. The earliest phase was a probable limestone wall set in a cut into the natural, though so little of this was uncovered that this is difficult to confirm. A clay deposit sealed this structure.

Phase 2 saw the cutting of the foundation of the front part of the present house, a timber framed structure set on limestone rubble walls extending down around a cellar. A date is not awarded in the Buildings of England to the front part of the house (Pevsner and Williamson 1994, 452), though a date (1620) is carved on the door set between the two builds. The Oxfordshire Buildings of England series states that timber framed buildings with brick infill are a product of the 15th and 16th centuries (Sherwood 1974, 387). It is feasible; therefore, that the front part of the building could date to the 16th century, though some of the features may be a product of a later date.

The structure 010 uncovered to the rear of the main building and to the east has from its design and use of bricks to be of a similar date; 16th century or very early 17th century at the latest. The piece of 14th century sculpture is indicative of the dismantling of part of the church or more likely that of Notley Abbey, a local church quarried away after the dissolution of the monasteries *c.* 1542. Pottery was not securely recovered from feature 010 but that recovered from the contexts above fell into a category of 13th to 16th centuries. The latter range of these dates would also

point to building activity in the 16th century. The glass bottle rim came from the context above and is of a 17th century date. The tile and brick from this context is not extensively diagnostic in itself but would suit a broad range covering this period.

Late 16th century or Tudor houses, such as those investigated at Wormsley Park, have detached kitchens and it is possible that this structure is such a building. The recovery of the carved medieval stone may suggest a 16th century date and indicates that the first phase of the present house post-dates the dissolution of the monasteries, perhaps c. 1550. Weston Manor, Oxfordshire, obtained early 16th century panelling from Notley Abbey (Sherwood 1974, 386).

The present building is Z-shaped, there is a door located in the angle between the Front Range and the north wing which contains a date of 1620. It is conceivable that this date may refer to the construction of the original phase of the building, however, it is located in the angle with the later phases and thus it is also possible that it applies to the northern extension of the house. It is highly likely that the size and extent of the northern building is determined by being built around the earlier kitchen.

A late 17th century date has been applied to the re-facing of parts of the north and east facing part of the building. This is plausible, but could easily be early 18th century.

The subsequent phases include the insertion of the 19th century land drain and the laying out of the garden in the later part of the 20th century.

7 ARCHIVE

Archive Contents

The archive consists of the following:

Paper record

The project brief
Written scheme of investigation
The project report
The primary site record

Physical record

Finds

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the County Museums' Store under accession number 2011.153.

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