



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTERVENTION**

**ON LAND AT FOX LANE,**

**BRACKLEY**

**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

**NGR SP 58086 36996**

*On behalf of*

*Mr. Robert Gray*

**DECEMBER 2012**

**REPORT FOR** Mr. Robert Gray  
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## **Summary**

*John Moore Heritage Services carried out a watching brief on land at Fox Lane, Brackley. The watching brief identified that a significant part of the proposal area had been previously disturbed during previous building works. No archaeology was present.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site location (Figure 1)**

The site is located at Fox Lane, Brackley (NGR SP 58086 36996). The site is a vacant plot. It lies at approximately 112m AOD and the underlying geology is Great Oolite Limestone (Taynton Formation).

### **1.2 Planning Background**

Planning permission (S/2012/1119/FUL) has been granted for residential development at Fox Lane, Brackley. Due to the possible presence of archaeological features, a condition was attached requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The Assistant Archaeological Advisor of Northamptonshire County Council prepared a *Brief* for such archaeological work. A *Written Scheme of Investigation*, which proposed a suitable methodology to satisfy the requirements of the Brief, was submitted to and accepted by the Assistant Archaeological Advisor of Northamptonshire County Council. This is in line with PPS5 and Local Plan Policies.

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

The proposed new dwelling is located in an area of archaeological potential, within the area of Castle Side Open Field, the medieval field system belonging to the New Town.

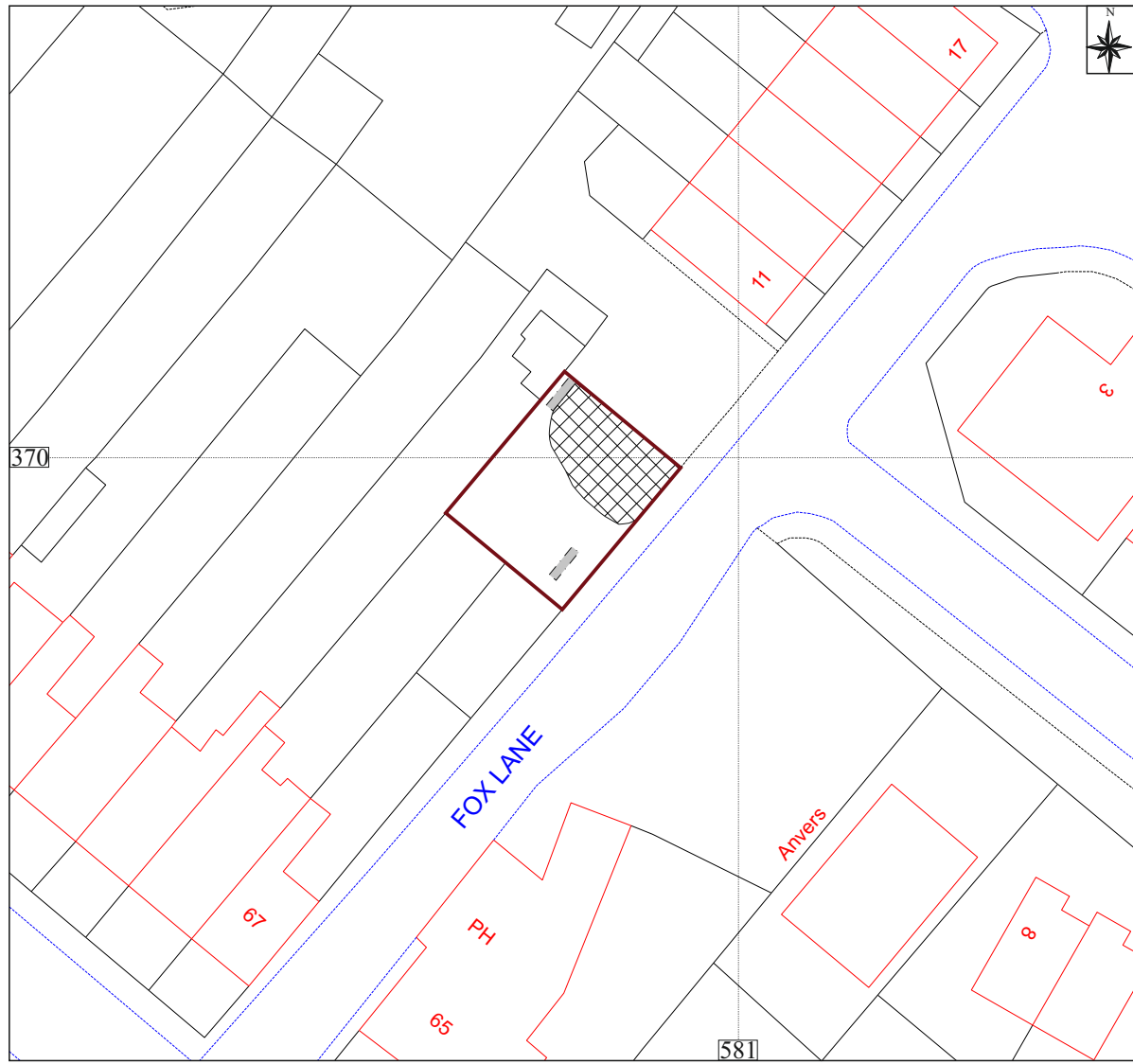
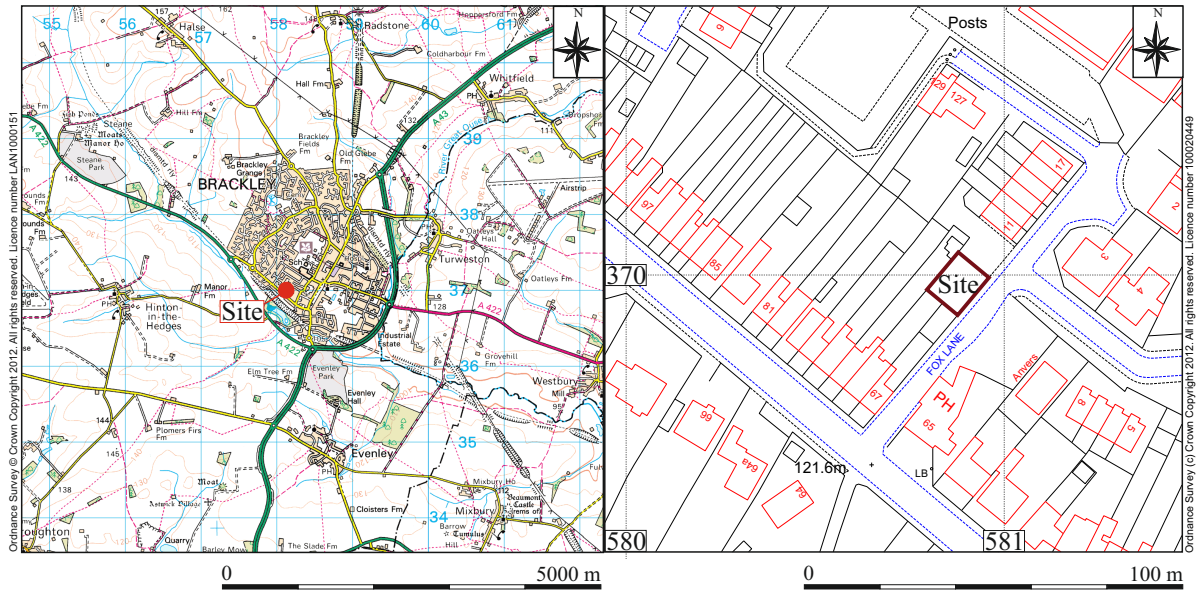
The County Historic Environment Record indicates that numerous finds have been reported in the area, including a Bronze Age axe, Iron Age and Saxon coins, and Saxon and medieval knives or daggers. The exact findspots however are unreported.

The above information has been obtained for the Northamptonshire County Council's Brief.

## **2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

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

- To make a record of any significant remains revealed during the course of any operations that may disturb or destroy archaeological remains.



Key Site outline Monitored areas Modern disturbance

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

- o to record any evidence of activity relating to the finds located in the area
- o to record any evidence relating to the Castle Side Open Field

### **3 STRATEGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

In response to a *Brief* from Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) a Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared by John Moore Heritage Services and agreed with NCC.

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 (2008) and the principles of MoRPHE (English Heritage 2006).

#### **3.2 Methodology**

Excavation of the footings was carried out with a 3-tonne 360° by the developer, to a depth of *c.*1000mm; the footings were *c.* 600mm 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 site was cleared by the developer of the rubbish and dump of building materials, which previously occupied the site, prior to excavation of footings for the new-build. There was a large hole filled with corrugated iron, building materials and other rubbish in the access to site, on the east side of the plot (Fig. 2).

Natural yellow brown limestone fragments in a clay matrix (103) was revealed in both investigated footings trenches. This was overlain in the eastern footings trench by a deposit of pale grey brown silty clay with limestone fragments (102), measuring *c.* 100mm thick (Fig. 3). The northern footing trench did not show this deposit. Rather, the dump of building materials extended into the footings trench. Dark brown to blackish brown clay loam (101) – *c.* 300-450mm thick – sealed the site.





*Figure 2. Investigation area, showing dumped building materials at rear next to gate.*



*Figure 3. Footings trench adjacent to Fox Lane, showing Taynton Formation natural (103), overlain by subsoil (102) and topsoil (101).*

## **4.2 Reliability of Techniques and Results**

The reliability of results is considered to be good. The watching brief took place during cold, but reasonably clement conditions on December 11<sup>th</sup>, with excellent cooperation from the on-site contractors. The Assistant Archaeological Advisor was contacted when the two footings trenches were opened and the situation was discussed. It was agreed to discontinue the action.

## **5 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS**

### **5.1 Finds**

No finds were present, apart from modern building materials associated with the adjacent development.

### **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 Fox Lane failed to reveal any indication of previous archaeological activity. The area investigated was already very small, and the extensive previous impact from the sub-surface dumping of building materials had proportionally reduced any archaeological potential.

Fox Lane was laid out between 1884 and 1900, and is undoubtedly named after the adjacent pub on the Banbury Road. The lane is not present on the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition OS 1:2500 (1884), but is shown on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition OS 1:2500 (1900). On the earlier map the development site is in open fields, whereas on the later map it is shown at the end of the garden of the house fronting onto Banbury Road.

There is no evidence either shown on the OS mapping or present during the watching brief of the medieval open field, to which the development site formerly appertained.

## **7 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

English Heritage 2006 *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide*

Institute of Field Archaeologists, 2008 *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*