



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT
BROOKBANK, CHURCH ROAD,
GREAT MILTON, OXFORDSHIRE**

SP 6284 0253

On behalf of

Hall Needham Associates LLP

JANUARY 2013

REPORT FOR Hall Needham Associates LLP
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CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Summary</i>	1
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Site Location	1
1.2 Planning Background	1
1.3 Archaeological Background	1
2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION	1
3 STRATEGY	3
3.1 Research Design	3
3.2 Methodology	3
4 RESULTS	3
5 FINDS	5
6 DISCUSSION	5
7 ARCHIVE	6
8 BIBLIOGRAPHY	6
 FIGURES	
Figure 1 Site location	2
Figure 2 Plan and Sections	4
 PLATES	
Plate 1 Section 1	5
Plate 2 Section 2	5

Summary

John Moore Heritage Services conducted a watching brief during the excavation of foundation trenches within the footprint of a new build at Brookbank, Church Road, Great Milton, Oxfordshire. One small, undated, negative feature was observed in section.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site is located on the south side of Church Road and north of the Manoir aux Quat Saisons (NGR SP 6284 0253). The site lies at about 85m OD and the underlying geology is Kimmeridge Clay Formation comprising grey mudstone with sporadic bands of limestone nodules, and beds of silt and sand developed locally in the upper part (BGS 237 Thame).

1.2 Planning Background

South Oxfordshire District Council has granted planning permission for the demolition of the existing bungalow, garage and greenhouse and the construction of a replacement dwelling and detached garage and minor alterations to access (P10/W0636). Due to the potential disturbance of archaeological remains a condition has been attached requiring a full archaeological watching brief during construction works.

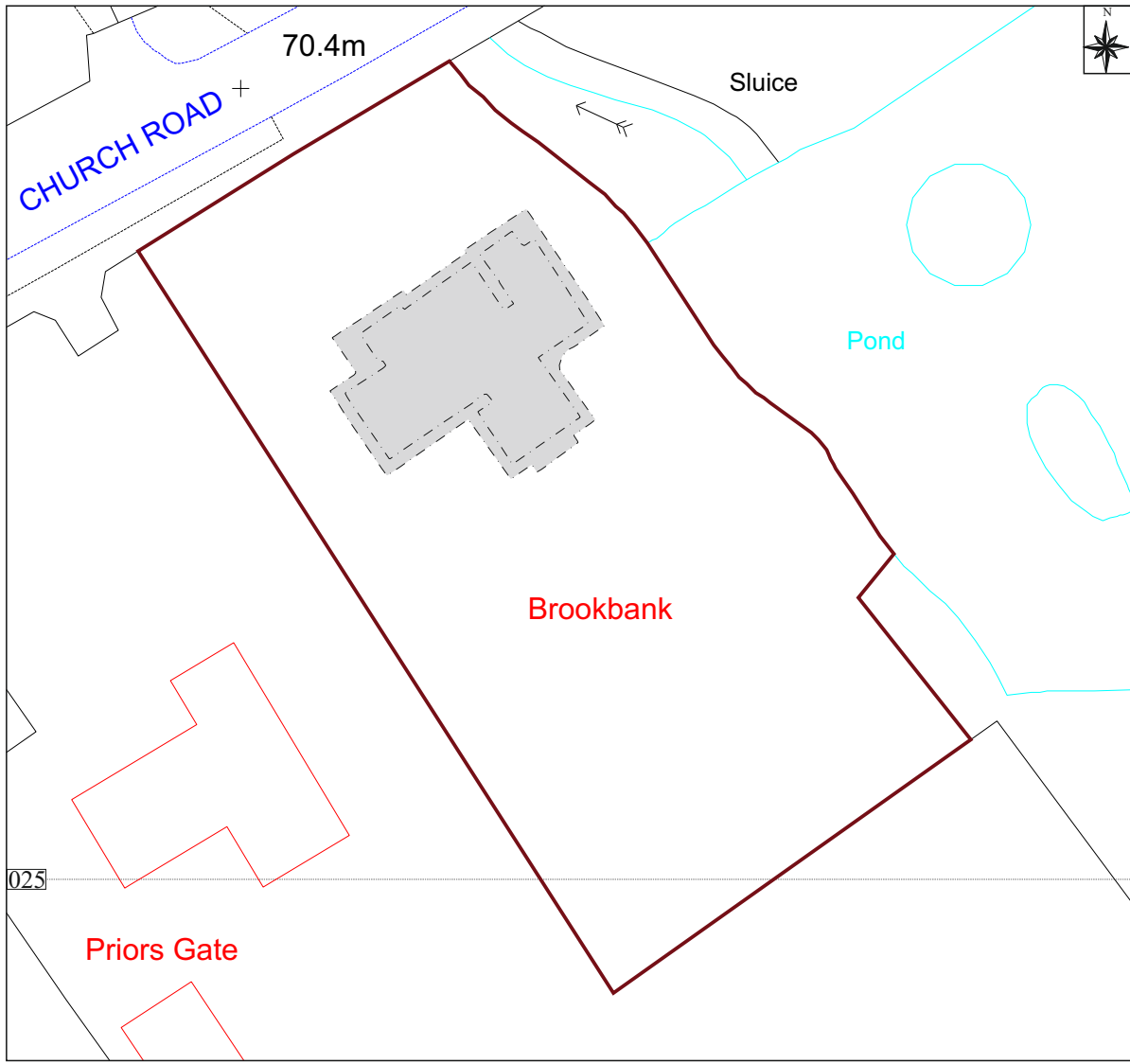
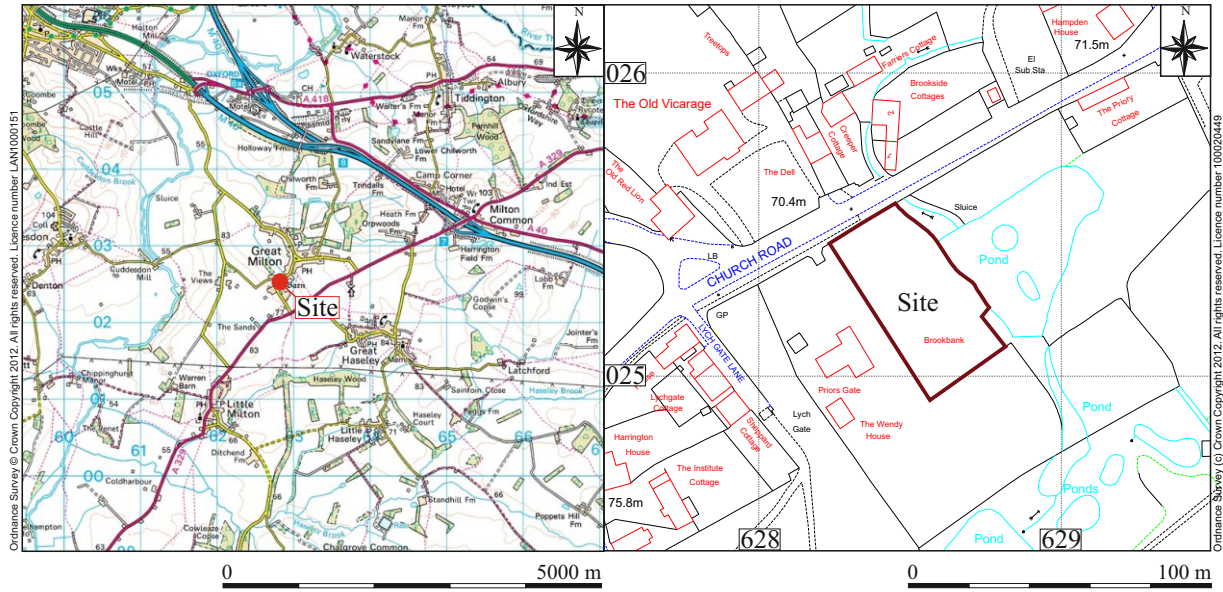
1.3 Archaeological Background

The development lies in the historic core of the village. The site lies 120m NE of the 11th and 12th century church of St Mary (County Historic Environment Record No. PRN 4076) and 150m north of the late 15th century Manor House now known as 'Le Manoir aux Quat Saisons' (PRN 11345). The manor house is thought to have been built on the site of a 13th century house known as Ingescourt. In 1322 Richard de Louche's Great Milton Manor included fish stews and the chain of four ponds 20m east of the proposal site are thought to be the remains of the medieval fishponds of the Manor (PRN 13744). These ponds have been heavily landscaped, probably in the 18th century.

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.
- In particular to record any evidence of the medieval village and/or Manor.



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Key Site outline Monitored area

Figure 1. Site location

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services. 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 (2008).

3.2 Methodology

All groundwork was monitored within the foundation trenches of the new building (Figure 2). The footing trenches were excavated using a mechanical excavator.

4 RESULTS

All features were assigned individual context numbers. This number covered the deposits, and the cut and fill of features. Context numbers in [] indicate features i.e. cuts; while numbers in () show feature fills, deposits of material, and layers. A general description of the feature fills is given.

The excavated area was covered by layer (01) that was a recent layer of angular stone pieces, approximately 100mm in size, which made up to between 60 and 90 per cent of the composition of this layer. Layer (01) also included lesser proportions of broken brick concrete, sand and soil. The depth of this layer was 300mm and down to a depth of 700mm towards the North East of the excavation area.

Over most of the excavated area, layer (01) sat above layer (02) a natural band of sand with a thickness between 300mm and 800mm. In the North and North East of the excavation, however, (01) lay above (07) a subsoil layer that did not survive across most of the excavated area.

Prior to the excavation of the foundation trenches, all the topsoil (06) a dark brown black humus rich soil, and much of the subsoil (07) a soft clayey, sandy loam, had been removed. Layer (06) was present at the edges of the excavation area to maximum thickness of 500mm but was no longer present in the excavated foundation trenches. Layer (07) was also present around the edges of the excavation area to a maximum depth of 500mm. Layer (07) was also seen in the foundation trenches (see figure 2, section 2 7 plate 2) towards the North and North East of the site, below layer (01). Where it survived layer (07) lay above (02).

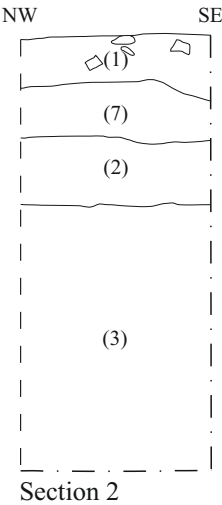
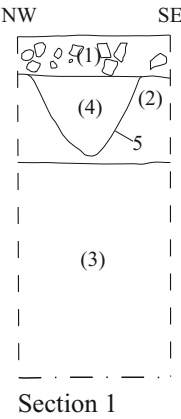
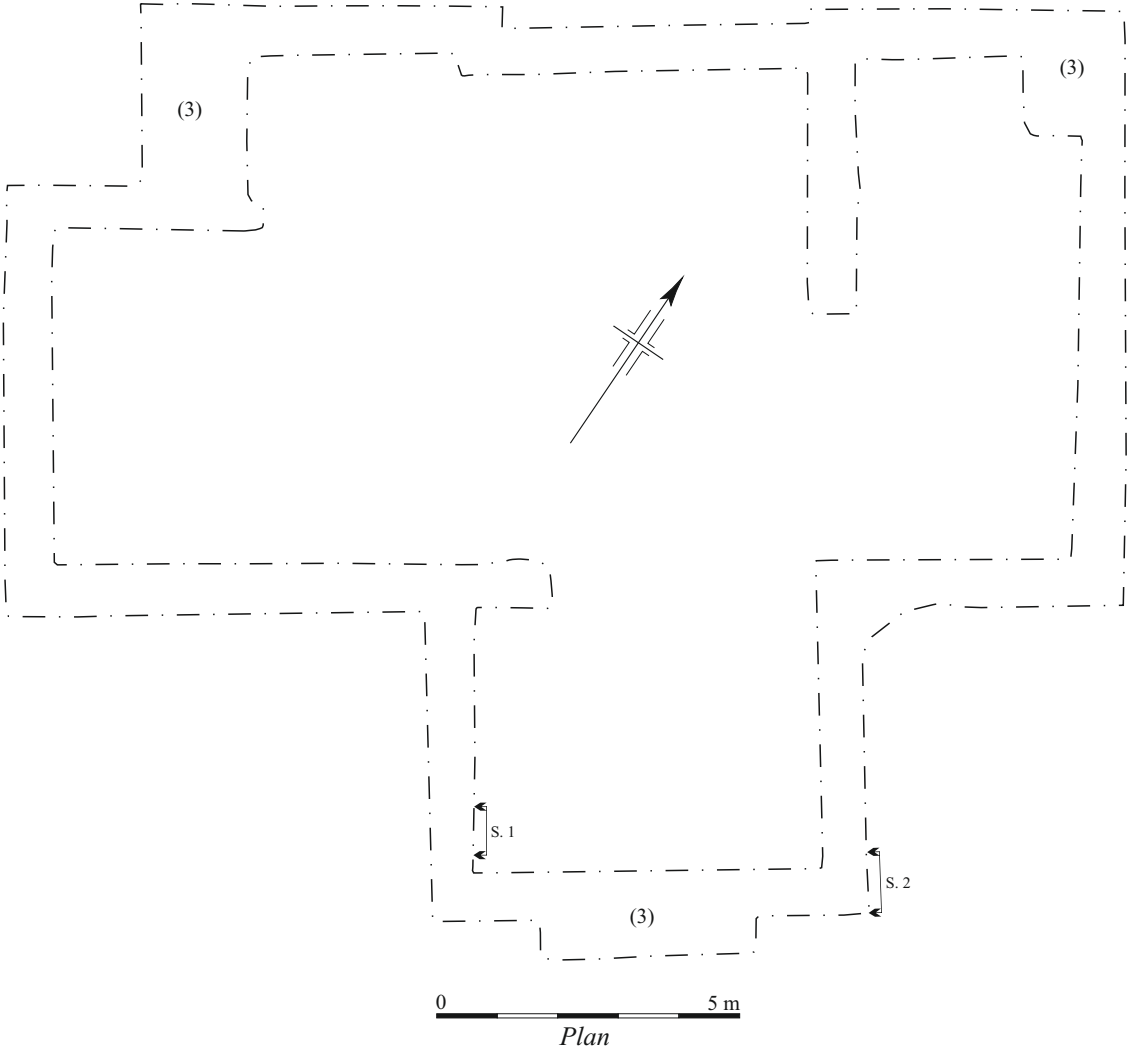


Figure 2. Plan and sections



Plate 1. Section 1 showing layers (01) and (02). Cut (05) and fill (04).



Plate 2. Section 2 showing layers (01) (07) (02) and (03)

Layer (01) also sat above deposit (04) a gravely sandy clayey deposit that filled the V shaped cut [05] of a possible small pit or post-hole (Fig. 2, section1 & plate 1). The cut [05], which cut through layer (03), was observed in the side of the trench but was not visible on the opposite side of the trench. Due to the depth of the trenches and the danger of collapsing sides, a danger which was exacerbated by a large amount of water running through the site, it was not possible to excavate this feature safely.

Layer (02) was above layer (03). Layer (03) was a heavy, dark blue grey clay consistent with the natural geology of the area.

5 FINDS

There were no finds recovered during this watching brief.

6 DISCUSSION

Despite the location of the site in the area of the medieval manor, medieval ponds and later 18th century landscaping, no features were found except for one small pit, which could not be dated. Despite the poor working conditions, and the extreme waterlogged nature of the site, all the sections were clean and easy to observe and showed subsoil, where it survived, with natural sand below and then natural clay. No other features were observed.

7 ARCHIVE

Archive Contents

The archive consists of the following:

Paper record

Design brief

Written scheme of investigation

The project report

The primary site records

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to Oxfordshire Museums Service with accession number OXCMS: 2013.10

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Institute for Archaeologists, 2008 *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief*