

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

AT

LUDGERSHALL FARM, LUDGERSHALL,

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

SP 66411 17342

On behalf of

Mr J. Dinsdale

SEPTEMBER 2005

REPORT FOR Mr J Dinsdale
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Summary

An evaluation of this site was conducted by John Moore Heritage Services from 20th – 21st September 2005. Three trenches, totalling 17.75 metres in length, were excavated to reveal the underlying Oxford Clay geology at a maximum height of 74.26 m OD on the sloping ground.

Archaeological deposits were limited. The only feature located was the 16th century surface of the farmyard, this was uncovered in Trench 2. There was also some limited evidence for pottery production in the area.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site of Ludgershall Farm is located in the southeast of the village of Ludgershall at SP 66411 17342. The farm is currently unoccupied and the out buildings currently unused. The underlying geology is Oxford Clay and the site lies at approximately 75m OD. The property lies on a west-facing slope.

1.2 Planning Background

Outline planning permission has been granted for the redevelopment of the site of Ludgershall Farm. A condition has been placed upon this permission, due to the sites potential for archaeological remains, that an archaeological assessment and excavation be carried out. The Archaeological Officer of Buckinghamshire County Council has recommended that the site should be investigated by trial trenching as a first stage of excavation. If significant deposits are located during this work then a second stage of excavation will be required on the entire footprint of each building. This is in line with PPG 16 and Local Plan Policies.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The site of proposed development lies within an area of considerable archaeological potential. The medieval landscape of Ludgershall is considered to be a national importance because of the exceptional survival of the village's open field system and of the important settlement earthworks with the village. These comprise of a scheduled moated site (CAS0033), the site of a post-medieval mansion and fishponds (CAS2134) and areas of shrunken settlement earthworks (CAS2332 & 2366). To the north of Ludgershall Farm are more earthworks and a possible house platform (CAS2331).

Ludgershall is first recorded in the Domesday Book when it comprised two manors (Morris, 1976). There is documentary evidence for the second manor and possibly, a medieval hospital in the village (Page, 1927). The regionally important Brill/Boarstall pottery industry was also practised in Ludgershall. Recent work in the area to the south of Ludgershall Farm has produced quantities of 13th – 14th century pottery and evidence for two phases of ridge and furrow cultivation (JMHS, 2004).

An examination of aerial photographs of the area show evidence for a hollow way at the rear of the plots going east and another running north to south towards Wotton End. A strong linear feature running east to west is also visible to the north of the farm house. Ridge and furrow is easily recognisable in all the fields to the east of the buildings (British Gas, 1976 - 3362; Farley, 2000 - 523/17, 523/18 & 523/21). These areas of cultivation match the plots of the 1780 map.

A review of the local historic maps suggest that the medieval village had a green-based plan form with a church-manor core in its south-western corner and peasant tenements on both sides of a U-shaped linear green. A pre-1600 (1564-1586) rights of commons lawsuit map (BAS Maps 86 in HEHL) appears to confirm this linear structure. The Inclosure map of 1780 (IR/109.R) shows the linear feature noted on aerial photographs to the north of the farm to be a field boundary dividing plots 37 and 156. This map also shows a smaller farm house than present and the barn aligned north-south with a possible second barn to the east. These buildings are also visible on the first edition OS map of 1885. The 2" surveyors map from the early 19th century shows a densely occupied land running parallel with Solter's Lane. Ludgershall Farm lies at the junction of these two lanes.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

- To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the site.
- To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.
- To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of the archaeological features and deposits.
- To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

In particular

- To establish the presence or absence of pottery production in the area.
- To establish whether late Saxon and/or medieval occupation or boundary features are present.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

In response to a *Brief* issued by Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service a scheme of investigation was designed by JMHS and agreed with the Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Services and the applicant. The work was carried out by JMHS and was to involve the excavation of a total of three trenches across the site (figure 1) as part of a first stage of investigations. A contingency has been allowed for a second stage of investigations with the excavation of the entire footprints of the structures as a second stage of works if significant archaeological deposits are present.

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).

3.2 Methodology

The trenching sample specified within the brief was achieved through the excavation of one 10.0m trench (figure 1) one 5.0m trench and a 2.75m trench. The 10.0m trench (trench 3) was located to the east of the timber-framed barn, in the footprint of the proposed extension. The 5.0m trench (trench 2) was located to the east of the modern extension of the barn, just outside the footprint of the proposed building. This was because access to the interior of this barn was not possible. The 2.75m trench (trench 1) was located within the footprint of the proposed new double garage.

All trenches were 1.3 m wide and were excavated by a mechanical mini-excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The resultant surfaces were cleaned by hand prior to hand excavation of any identified archaeological deposits. The surface located in Trench 2 was hand excavated and cleaned. It was then removed and excavated to the natural clay at both ends of the trench, these *sondages* were 1m wide.

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.

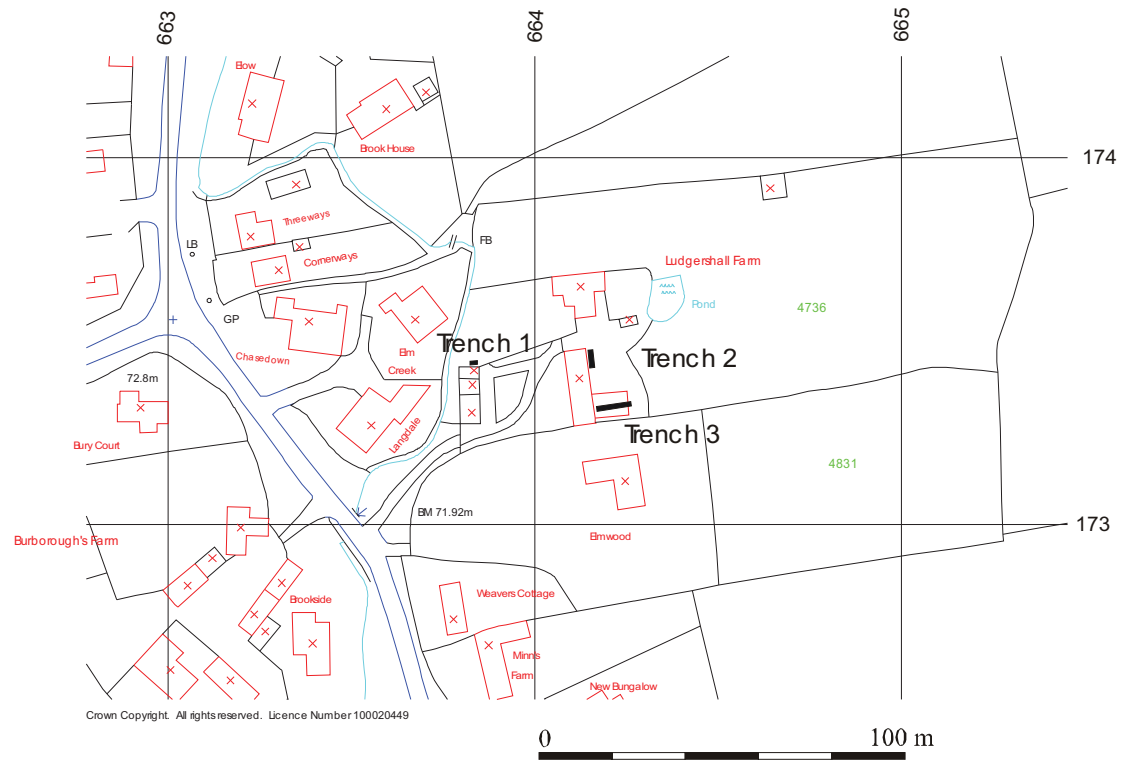


Figure 1. Site and trench location

4 RESULTS

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.

The lowest recorded deposit in all Trenches comprised natural Oxford Clay (1/04), (2/07), (3/02). This natural geology on the site and was seen to slope down slightly from a maximum height of 74.26m OD in the east (Trench 3) to 71.52m OD in the east (Trench 1).

Trenches 1 & 3 (figure2)

Both of these trenches showed a similar sequence of deposits, and were devoid of archaeological features.

Trench 1 had a topsoil of dark brown soil on average 0.05m deep covering the entire area (1/01), at a height of 72.39m OD. Below this was a mid-brown sandy clay loam subsoil (1/02), which was 0.2m thick. This layer covered a secondary subsoil, 0.25m thick, of mid-brown silty clay (1/03). Directly below this was the natural mottled yellow-grey Oxford Clay (1/04) at a height of 71.52m OD. This trench also contained a cut [1/05] for a modern plastic water pipe, aligned east to west. This cut was filled with a mixed brown clay loam (1/06).

In Trench 3 the natural mottled yellow-grey Oxford Clay (3/02), at a height of 74.26m OD, was covered with a compact deposit, 0.4m thick, of dark brown sandy clay (3/01). This layer was at a height of 74.63m OD, and contained small quantities of pottery, bone and CBM. A cut [3/03], 0.5m wide and aligned north-south for a modern drain was located in the west end of the trench. It was filled with a brown sandy clay (3/04) very similar to (3/01).

Trench 2 (figures 2&3)

The upper layer of this trench was a over-grown surface of loose stones and pebbles (2/01), 0.03m thick. This was sitting on a 0.08m thick levelling layer of coarse yellow sand (2/02). Under this sand layer was a compact deposit of dark grey-brown loam containing large quantities of burnt material, coal, ash and charcoal (2/03). This layer varied in thickness from 0.05 to 0.1m, and contained small amounts of pottery and metal. This deposit was sitting on a cobbled surface (2/04). The cobbles were generally small however some large stones were also included, up to about 40cm².

This cobbled surface was sample excavated at each end of the trench. A 1m wide area was excavated to the natural clay. The cobbles were found to be on average 0.1m thick and lying on a layer of orange-brown sandy clay, 0.02 to 0.05m thick (2/05). Under this was a 0.2m thick layer of sticky grey-brown clay (2/06). This contained a small quantity of pottery and bone. This deposit was directly above the natural yellow-grey clay (2/07).

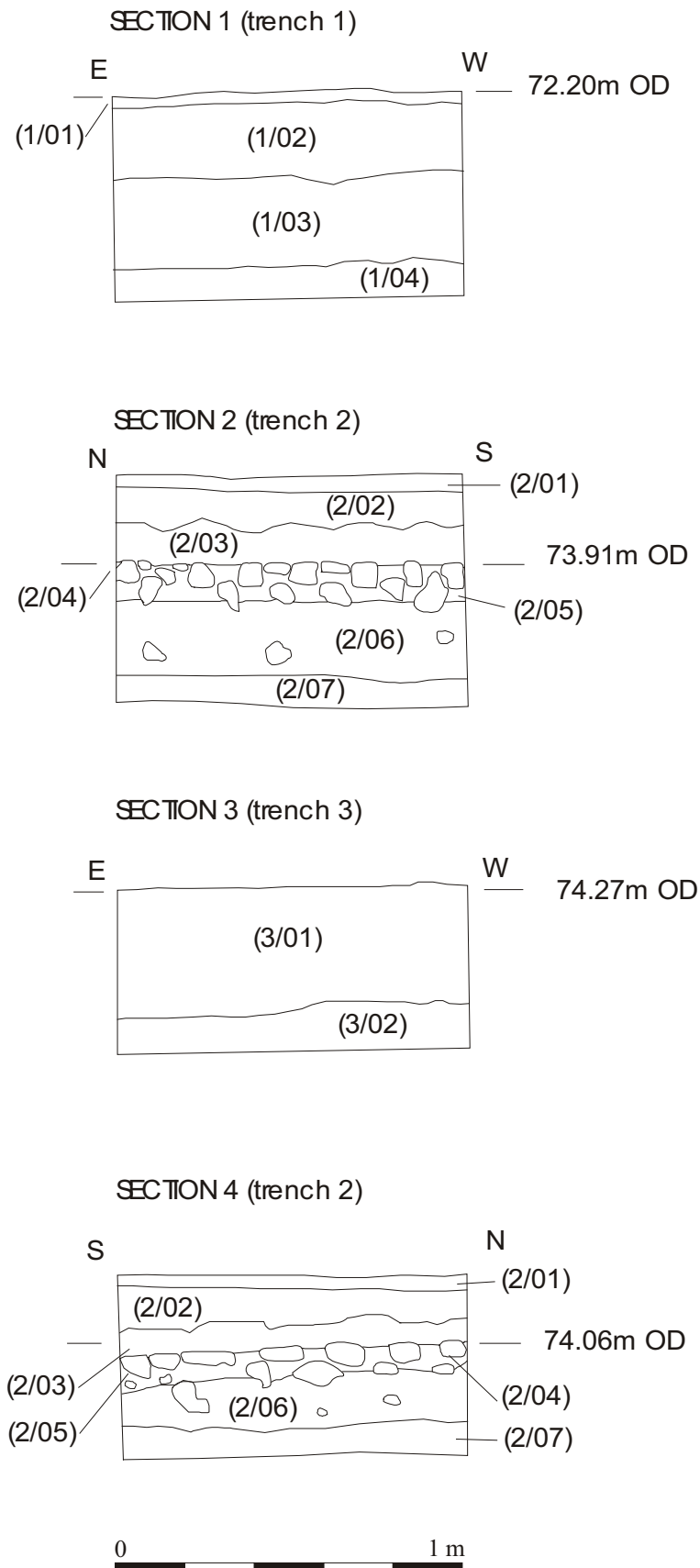


Figure 2. Sample Sections

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery (By Paul Blinkhorn)

The pottery assemblage comprised 16 sherds with a total weight of 379g. It comprised a mixture of medieval and post-medieval wares which are all typical of sites in the region. One sherd may be from a late medieval saggar, suggesting that there is a late medieval pottery manufactory in the vicinity of these excavations.

The material 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:

MSC1: *Sandy and Shelly ware*, late 11th – mid 13th century. 1 sherd, 14g.

MC9: *Brill/Boarstall Ware*. 1200-?1600. 3 sherds, 56g.

PM8: *Red Earthenware*. 17th century. 10 sherds, 306g.

PM25: *White Earthenware*. Late 18th – 20th century. 2 sherds, 3g.

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*.

The sherds of MC9 from Trench 3 context 1 are of some interest. The fabric suggests that they are of 15th – 16th century date. One sherd is from an extremely large thick-walled item which shows signs of cracking and burning, and appears to be pottery manufacturing waste. It may be a fragment of a saggar, a thick-walled cylindrical vessel used for holding delicate pottery during firing.

Ludgershall has recently produced evidence of pottery manufacturing in the form of a large group of kiln waste, with the pots being typical of the late 15th – 16th century Brill/Boarstall tradition, including relatively delicate ‘Tudor Green’ type vessels (Blinkhorn in press). It is known that Brill/Boarstall potters used saggars in the later medieval period (McCarthy and Brooks 1988, 435), so it is possible that there was a late medieval pottery manufactory in the vicinity of these excavations.

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

Tr	Cntxt	MSC1		MC9		PM8		PM25		Date
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
2	1	1	14							M11th C
2	3			1	2			2	3	19thC
2	6					10	306			M16th C
3	1			2	54					15thC
	Total	1	14	3	56	10	306	2	3	

6 DISCUSSION

Trench 1 showed only natural soil formations, with no evidence for a buried ploughsoil in the area. In Trench 3 there was only a made ground over the natural, which had been compacted into a surface for the modern barn. This deposit contained material from different periods, including modern CBM, but did include the late medieval saggar sherd.

A cobbled farmyard was located in Trench 2, covering a thin made ground over the natural clay. The pottery evidence suggests that this yard was constructed sometime after the mid 16th century, and it appears to have been in use until the mid 20th century before being replaced with a loose stone surface or grassed over.

To the east of Trench 2 was a pathway, on further investigation it was found to be constructed with grave footing stones. At the behest of the Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Officer a photographic record of this feature was undertaken. This record will be included with the excavation archive.

The pathway consisted of 25 stones, the majority of these were whole and intact. All stones were left *in situ*. Only nine stones showed an inscription on the upper surface, and many of these inscriptions were just initials. Some also showed a date or dates, the earliest was 1819 the latest 1908.

The church warden of the local St. Mary's Church confirmed that these stones had originally come from the Church and had been given the former owner of Ludgershall Farm about 20 years ago. He also confirmed that the stones were footing stones and not headstones.

As noted on the aerial photographs the paddock to the east of the Farm House contains ridge and furrow, roughly aligned east-west. Unusually there appears to be pairs of ridges that have been turned into single large ridges c. 16-18m wide. This merging of the ridges is perhaps one reason why ridge and furrow on the aerial photographs of this area is less defined.

7 CONCLUSIONS

The investigation of these three trenches provided only limited archaeological evidence. The 16th century cobbled farmyard surface was located, but no earlier structures or surfaces were located. No evidence for agricultural land use in the investigated area was found. There was no evidence for Saxon or medieval boundaries. There is some limited evidence for pottery production in the close vicinity.

Whilst any decision regarding further work on the site must rest with Buckinghamshire County Council Archaeological Services, it is the opinion of John Moore Heritage Services that no further archaeological work (stage 2) needs to be conducted regarding the redevelopment of Ludgershall Farm.

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APPENDIX A – ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Date
Trench 1			0.5	1.3	2.75		
1/01	Deposit	Dark brown silty-sandy loam	0.05	Tr.	Tr.	-	Modern Topsoil
1/02	Deposit	Mid-brown sandy-clay loam	0.2	Tr.	Tr.	-	-
1/03	Deposit	Mid-brown silty clay	0.25	Tr.	Tr.	-	-
1/04	Natural	Mottled yellow-grey clay	-	Tr.	Tr.	-	-
1/05	Cut	Square sided pipe trench	0.45+	0.3	Tr.	-	Modern
1/06	Fill	Dark brown loam	0.45	0.3	Tr.	-	Modern
Trench 2			0.7	1.3	5		
2/01	Deposit	Loose stone chips and pebbles	0.03 - 0.05	Tr.	Tr.	pot	Modern
2/02	Deposit	Yellow sand	0.06 - 0.08	Tr.	Tr.	-	Modern
2/03	Deposit	Dark grey-brown loam	0.05 - 0.1	Tr.	Tr.	pot, metal	
2/04	Feature	Cobbles	0.1	Tr.	Tr.	-	
2/05	Deposit	Orange-brown sandy clay	0.02 - 0.05	Tr.	Tr.	-	
2/06	Deposit	Grey-brown clay	0.2	Tr.	Tr.	pot, bone	
2/07	Natural	Mottled yellow-grey clay	-	Tr.	Tr.	-	-
Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Date
Trench 3			0.4	1.3	10		
3/01	Deposit	Dark brown sandy clay	0.35 - 0.4	Tr.	Tr.	Pot, Bone, CBM	Modern
3/02	Natural	Mottled yellow-grey clay	-	Tr.	Tr.	-	-
3/03	Cut	Straight sided pipe trench	0.35+	0.5	Tr.	-	Modern
3/04	Fill	Dark brown sandy clay	0.35+	0.5	Tr.	-	Modern

APPENDIX B – GRAVE FOOTING STONES

Stone No.	Length (cm)	Width (cm)	Condition	Inscribed	Date
1	40	38	Fragment	yes	1867
2	45	33	Fragment	no	
3	74	36	Whole	no	
4	72	36	Whole	no	
5	75	40	Whole	yes	
6	75	40	Whole	no	
7	75	42	Fragment	yes	
8	72	45	Whole	no	
9	30	33	Fragment	no	
10	40	37	Fragment	no	
11	70	38	Whole	yes	
12	61	30	Whole	no	
13	34	30	Fragment	no	
14	77	45	Whole	no	
15	78	45	Whole	yes	1832
16	80	43	Whole	no	
17	70	36	Whole	yes	1819, 1868
18	74	36	Whole	no	
19	69	34	Whole	yes	1901
20	75	33	Whole	yes	
21	76	38	Whole	no	
22	40	40	Fragment	no	
23	35	38	Fragment	no	
24	55	44	Fragment	no	
25	63	30	Broken	yes	1908