

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**OCTOBER HOUSE, 14 ABBEY CLOSE, ABINGDON,  
OXFORDSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**NGR: 49983 97055**

*On behalf of*

*Paul & Juliet Cheetham*

**JULY 2013**

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## **Summary**

*John Moore Heritage Services undertook an archaeological watching brief as a condition of planning permission for redevelopment at the grade II\* listed building known as October House, 14 Abbey Close, Abingdon, Oxfordshire (Planning ref: P12/V1726/HH). The watching brief was successful in locating and recording archaeological features dating from at least the Roman period onwards. The edge of a possible stone wall set with a sandy mortar was sealed beneath a layer containing only Roman pottery and a fragment of imbrex tile. The wall may have once formed part of a Roman building, close to the River Thames. The pottery assemblage recovered suggests the site was used initially during prehistoric (Iron Age) and Romano-British period and was then abandoned during the late Roman period when 'dark earth' deposits covered this area and other areas of the Abbey. A layer of demolition rubble with a broken decorated floor tile, presumably discarded from the destruction of the Abbey buildings, covered the Roman dark earth deposits. This was in turn cut by post-medieval pitting, deposits and garden walls.*

*The preservation of the archaeological deposits was good in the northern half of the extension only, with the southern side truncated by later post-medieval activity. Excavations beneath the living room inside the house revealed the stone wall foundations of the building which probably dates to the late medieval/early post-medieval period. Post-medieval pottery sherds including a large quantity of 17<sup>th</sup> century drinking vessels and clay tobacco pipes were found during ground reduction in this room leading to the suggestion an earlier building on the site was once used as a 17<sup>th</sup> century tavern. The tavern may have closed when the building changed to residential use in 1698. A confidence rating is high that the best possible results were achieved.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Location (Fig. 1)**

The proposal area is located on the south side of Abbey Close adjacent to the Abbey Close Car Park (NGR SU 49983 97055). The site lies at about 53m OD and the underlying geology is First Terrace Gravel overlying clay. The site is currently in residential use.

### **1.2 Planning Background**

The Vale of White Horse District Council had granted planning permission for internal alterations and construction of new single storey extension, demolition of existing outbuilding and construction of new single storey summer house (P12/V1726/HH). Due to the potential disturbance of archaeological remains a condition was attached to planning consent requiring archaeological monitoring and recording during groundworks. Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (OCAS) issued a *Design Brief* (OCC 2012). This was followed by a *Written Scheme of Investigation* which outlined the method by which the watching brief would be carried out in order to preserve by record any archaeological remains of significance.

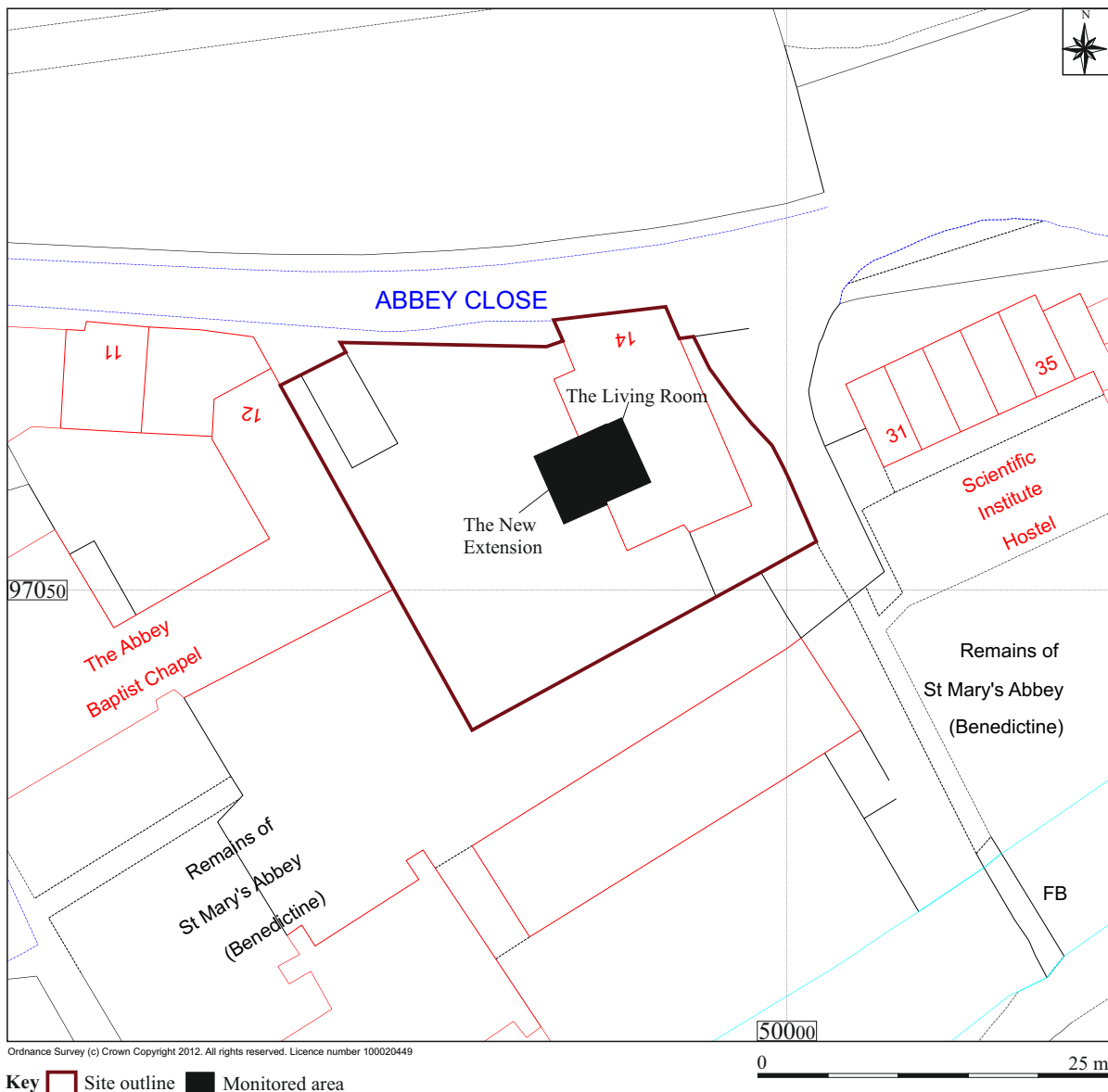
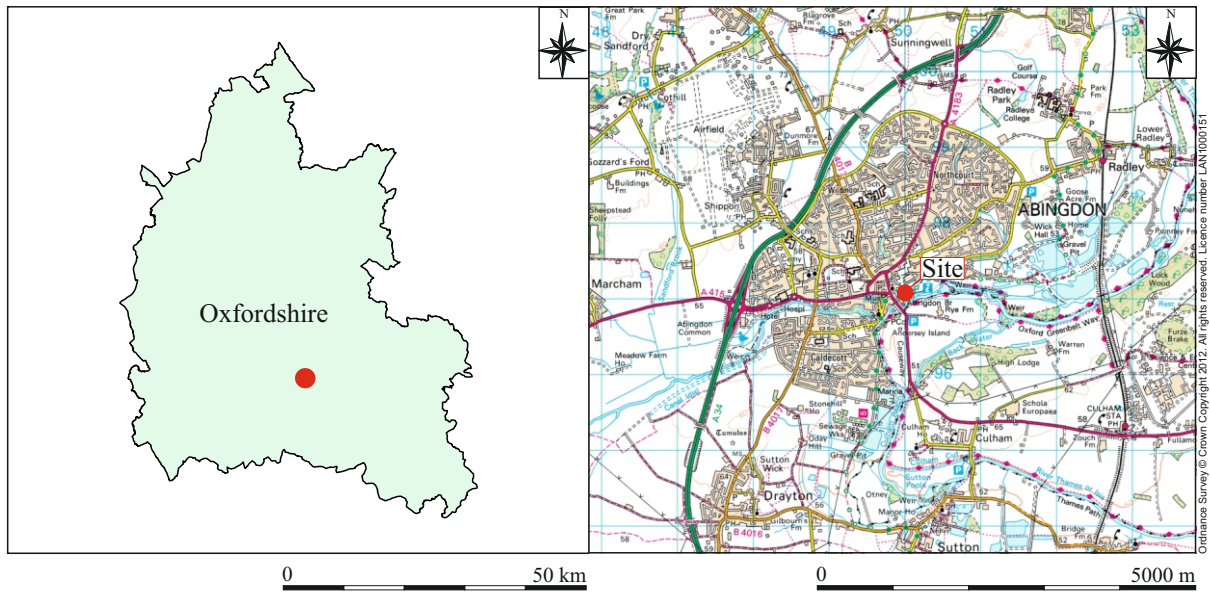


Figure 1. Site location

### 1.3 Archaeological Background

The general archaeological background of Abingdon has already been explored in a number of individual publications (e.g. Biddle *et al* 1968; Allen & Kamush 2008 & Riccoboni 2012a) and should be consulted for a more detailed background to the archaeology of the Abingdon area. In short Abingdon is known to have been occupied from the early Iron Age period when an *oppidum* was established (Allen 1990). Settlement continued throughout the Roman period with Romano-British material being recovered from excavations across various parts of the town (see discussion).

The proposal site is within an area of considerable archaeological potential lying immediately adjacent to parts of a designated asset (Oxon SM 218). This is the site of the former Benedictine Abbey that was originally founded in *c.* 675 AD but was later rebuilt in the later tenth century by Ethelwold (Biddle *at al* 1968). During the late 11<sup>th</sup> century parts of Ethelwold's church had fallen into disrepair and the tower had fallen down. This prompted the building of the new Abbey Church which was begun in Abbot Rainald's time (1084-96 AD) presumably dedicated to St Mary. He built the nave of the church, two towers and the chapel of St Mary Magdalene. Abbot Vincent (1121-30) built the great tower, which may have been a central bell tower and he also gave two bells. Further new works and additions continued until the 15<sup>th</sup> century. For details on the layout of these constructions and subsequent rebuildings see Biddle, Lambrick & Myres (1968). The dissolution of the Abbey happened in 1538.

Excavations of various parts of the Abbey were undertaken in 1922. The results allied to documentary references have led to a conjectural plan of the Abbey buildings (Biddle 1968 *ibid.* Figs. 10 & 11). The proposal site is within the southern part of the Abbey Precinct. Archaeological investigations by JMHS (1999) during a watching brief for a BT trench in 1999 starting just east of the drive to October House and going eastwards found well preserved features. Walls found close to October House were thought to relate to the Abbot's Kitchen. The tops of the walls were only 500mm below the road surface. The amount of Romano British pottery indicated remains of this date exist at a lower level.

14 Abbey Close is grade II\* listed (English Heritage Building ID: 250274). The reset date stone: 1698 with two storeys and attics. Rubble plinth, ground floor of painted brick, upper storeys rough rendered. Brick and dentil cornice between storeys. Two gables break eaves, one window each. Left hand window is modern, right hand one has slightly segmental arch, double hung sash with glazing bars. Three windows, on the first floor two have segmental arches, wood frames, double hung sashes with glazing bars. One flush framed window to left, double hung sash with glazing bars.

On ground floor three windows, two have segmental arches, double hung sashes with glazing bars. One shallow canted bay with glazing bars, tiled roof. Six panel door-two panel rectangular fanlight (Britishlistedbuildings.co.uk).

## **2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

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 remains relating to prehistoric or Roman activity on the site; and
- to record evidence of remains relating to the medieval and post-medieval settlement.

## **3 STRATEGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (1994), the OCAS prepared *Design Brief* and John Moore Heritage Services *Written Scheme of Investigation* (JMHS 2012).

### **3.2 Methodology**

An archaeologist was present on site during all ground reduction with initial topsoil reduction, footing trenches excavation and floor reduction inside the living room of the building. All ground reduction was achieved using a 360° tracked excavator fitted with a ditching bucket. The soakaway was not monitored as JMHS were not informed of the event.

A journal, recorded on specially designed record sheets, was maintained which detailed times and durations of site visits as well as notes on areas monitored by the archaeologist. Deposits (overburden) were recorded on context recording sheets. A general photographic record of the work was kept and will form of the part site archive to be submitted to the Oxfordshire County Museum Service.

All artefacts were collected and retained except for concentrations of building material where a representative sample would be kept if apparent. Finds ranging from pottery, tile, bone, brick and clay pipe were recovered.

## **4 RESULTS**

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers in ( ) indicate feature fills or deposits of material. Those without brackets refer to features themselves. An archaeologist was present during the excavation of all ground reduction and foundation trenches associated with the new extension.



## **4.1 The Excavation Results (Fig. 2)**

### **4.1.1 Roman (43-450AD); Period 1**

#### *General stratigraphic sequence*

The earliest deposit encountered at the base of the footing trench was soft dark brownish black silty clay (12) with a high organic content. The base of the deposit/layer was not ascertained as the ground workers reached the limit of their excavations, but it was a minimum of 0.36m deep. The deposit contained high frequency of Roman pottery sherds dating to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. There were two later sherds of medieval pottery also present within this deposit, but given the narrowness of the footing trench and the disturbance from previous services these two sherds may be intrusive or fallen in from the sides. The remainder of this deposit was left *in situ* beneath the new footing trench.

#### *Wall*

Cut 13 was the construction cut of wall 14 of which no definite orientation could be established. The wall was constructed of closely packed limestone blocks of varying sizes (<50 x 100 x 200mm) set in a yellow sandy mortar. The wall was not fully uncovered or investigated as the excavations came down onto the top of the edge of the wall meaning the wall would not be further disturbed by the new extension. One rim sherd of Roman pottery dating from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century was recovered from within the stones of this wall.

Overlying wall 14 (Fig. 2, S.1) was a 0.15m thick deposit of friable dark brownish black silty clay with frequent Roman pottery sherds throughout (15) dated to after 360/370AD. This deposit may have been the same as deposit (11) except with fewer charcoal flecks. Roman 'dark earth' deposits are often dated to the late 4<sup>th</sup> century AD.

### **4.1.2 Medieval (11<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century AD); Period 2**

Cut through deposits (15) & (11) was pit 08. It had sharp concave sides and a flat base. The pit was filled by a thin layer of dark brownish orange gravelly silt at the base (09) overlain by friable brownish grey mottled silty clay (17) with no finds. This pit was assigned to the medieval period through stratigraphic relationships.

### **4.1.3 Early post-medieval (15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century AD); Period 3**

Overlying pit 08 was a *c.* 0.10m thick deposit of heterogeneous brownish orange sands and gravels with darker mottling (10). The finds include a broken medieval decorated floor tile and other fragments of late medieval pottery. The broken floor tile would indicate this was a demolition layer associated with the dissolution of the Abbey buildings. A layer of firm compacted cobbles set within a mid brownish grey silty clay (16) seemed to cut through the demolition layer (10) close to the existing property. This layer was interpreted as a possible yard or floor layer, perhaps associated with the construction of the original house.

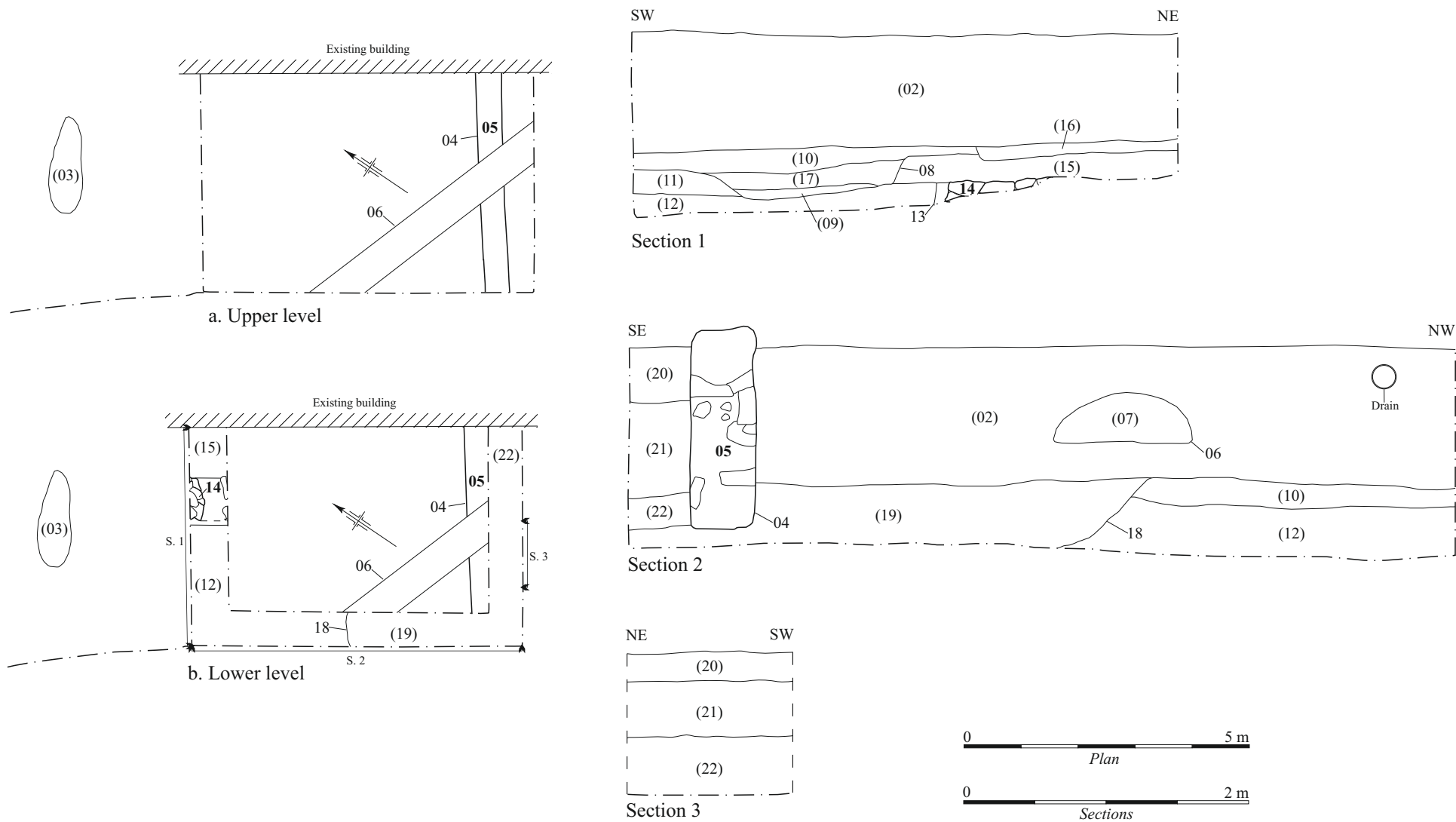


Figure 2. Plans and sections

Cut through post-dissolution destruction layer (10) and Roman dark soil deposit (12) was a large post-medieval pit 18, which had a sharp concave side, with other features undetermined. It was filled by friable mid greyish brown silty clay (19) with pottery sherds, grit, oyster shells and animal bone throughout.

Overlying deposits (10) & (16) was 0.80m thick light-mid brown silty clay (02) with frequent post-medieval throughout such as broken pottery sherds, peg tile and animal bones. Thick deposits of post-medieval made ground (*c.* 1m in depth) are common across other parts of Abingdon, in particular along East St Helen Street.

Cut into or spread into the surface of (02) was a deposit of light cream sandy gritty mortar (03) which must be late post-medieval or modern in origin (Fig. 2). A deposit of recent garden topsoil was the latest deposit across the site (01).

Cut through subsoil (02) and fill of pit 18 (19) was a previous boundary wall 04. It was filled by roughly hewn limestone blocks (05) (size <50-300mm) set within a sandy yellow lime mortar with specks of chalk. The wall was 0.40m wide and 1.40m high and was still existing extant as a retaining wall within the present garden. The wall was earlier than the southern side extension of the existing house as it could be seen to extend underneath the extension.

On the southern side of the boundary wall (05) the sequence was different. Overlying (19) the earliest deposit was a 0.40m thick (min) deposit of organic dark greyish black silty clay with a very high frequency of oyster shells throughout and occasional Roman, medieval and post-medieval pottery and tiles (22). Overlying (22) was 0.40m thick loose mid grey silty clay with high frequency of peg tiles (21). The latest deposit was 0.30m thick dark brownish black silty clay topsoil with modern finds throughout (20).

#### **4.1.4 Post-medieval (15<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> century); Period 3; The Living Room**

Ground reduction was undertaken beneath the living room floor inside the building. The ground reduction was *c.* 0.45m deep within dark greyish brown silty clay (23) which contained a large quantity of broken pottery sherds, animal bones and clay pipes. This was thought to be a similar post-medieval soil accumulation seen across the site. There was only one residual sherd of Roman pottery within this deposit.

##### *Wall*

A stone wall (24) was seen beneath the back wall of the living room, which must have been the original back wall of the property. It was constructed of large limestone blocks (<250mm) in size which had been roughly squared.

#### **4.1.5 Modern; (19<sup>th</sup>- 20<sup>th</sup> century) Period 4**

Cut 06 was through subsoil (02) and was a concrete cover for a ceramic foul drain (07).

## 4.2 Reliability of Techniques and Results

The reliability of results is considered to be good with fair co-operation from the project manager and ground workers during the course of all excavations.

A confidence rating is high that the best possible results were achieved.

## 5 FINDS

### 5.1 The Roman Pottery by Jane Timby

#### 5.1.1 Introduction

The archaeological work resulted in the recovery of 68 sherds pottery weighing 1353 g dating to the Iron Age, Roman and post Roman periods.

Pottery was recovered from six individual contexts. The sherds are moderately well-preserved with relatively fresh edges reflected in quite a high overall average sherd size of 19.9g. There are two larger groups which account for 89.7% of the assemblage (contexts 12 and 15), with three or less sherds from the remaining four contexts.

For the purposes of the assessment the assemblage was scanned to assess the likely chronology and quantified by sherd count and weight for each recorded context. The resulting data is summarised in Appendix 1.

#### 5.1.2 Iron Age

A single possible Iron Age sherd was recovered as a residual finds in cxt (15). This is in a black grog-tempered ware with possible tooled decoration above a carination suggesting an early Iron Age carinated bowl.

#### 5.1.3 Roman

A total 65 sherds of Roman date were recorded, 95.6% of the assemblage by count. Most of the sherds comprise wares of the local Oxfordshire industry, particularly fine or sandy grey wares or grog-tempered wares, notably storage jars. Non-local wares include two pieces of Central Gaulish samian (12; 15) and two sherds each of Midlands late Roman shelly ware (15) and Dorset black-burnished ware (15).

The Oxfordshire products include grey wares, colour-coated wares amongst which is a closed form, mortaria and flanged bowl (Young 2000, form C51) and white-slipped mortaria. There are also sherds of shelly ware and other buff or black sandy wares which are probably local.

Most of the assemblage would appear to date to the later Roman period (mid-later 3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> century although some pieces could be slightly earlier (2<sup>nd</sup> or earlier 3<sup>rd</sup> century) in date. The Midlands shelly ware from context (15) gives a *terminus post quem* of late 4<sup>th</sup> century or later for this deposit.

#### 5.1.4 *Post-Roman*

One body sherd from (12) with a fairly coarse well-sorted temper of rounded quartz sand could be medieval in date. This piece is associated with a sherd of post-medieval glazed red earthenware.

#### 5.1.5 *Ceramic building material*

Three fragments of ceramic building material (CBM) were recovered two of which are probably Roman (16) and (22), the former an imbrex. A second fragment from (16) has a glazed surface and is thus likely to be medieval or later.

#### 5.1.6 *Potential and further work*

The assemblage is rather mixed up and whilst it is dominated by later Roman wares at least two of the six contexts contain post-medieval finds. Context (15) appears to date to after AD 360/370 but whilst layers (14), (19) and (22) exclusively contain Roman pottery the quantities are too small to provide secure dating.

Other than providing evidence of Roman activity at the location the assemblage has little further potential. No further work is recommended.

## 5.2 **The Post-medieval Pottery** *By Paul Blinkhorn*

The pottery assemblage comprised 53 sherds with a total weight of 2,966g. It was all post-medieval, other than a single sherd of residual Roman material. It was recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994), as follows:

**OXCE: Tin-glazed Earthenware**, 1613 – 1800. 3 sherds, 228g.

**OXDR: Red Earthenwares**, 1550+. 23 sherds, 1,343g.

**OXEAH: Midland Blackware**, L 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> C. 2 sherds, 111g.

**OXEST: London stoneware**. c. 1680+. 2 sherds, 55g.

**OXFH: Border wares**, 1550 - 1700. 8 sherds, 300g.

**OXFI: Chinese Porcelain**, c. 1650+. 18 sherds, 131g.

**OXFM: Staffordshire White-glazed English Stoneware**, 1720 – 1800. 1 sherd, 4g.

**OXRESWL: Polychrome Slipware**, 17<sup>th</sup>C. 3 sherds, 62g

**OXST: Rhenish Stoneware**, AD1480 – 1700. 3 sherds, 97g.

**OXSTW: Westerwald-type stoneware**. c. 1590-1800. 4 sherds, 30g.

**WHEW: Mass-produced white earthenwares**, 19<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> C. 3 sherds, 41g.

In addition, a single sherd of residual Romano-British Oxford Ware pottery (weight = 25g) was noted. The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Appendix 2. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. The range of fabric types is typical of sites in the region.

The group of pottery from context (23) is large and well-preserved, comprising sizeable sherds from a wide range of 17<sup>th</sup> century pottery types. Utilitarian earthenwares in the form of OXDR and OXFH are present, as are display wares such as slipware and painted Tin-glazed Earthenware dishes, and drinking pottery in the

form of a Tin-glazed Earthenware handled cup, a Midland Blackware tyg a Westerwald-type mug and two German Stoneware drinking jugs with moulded *Bartmann* face-masks. The Tin-glazed Earthenware is similar to examples from Mark Brown's Wharf in London, and has purple sponged decoration, suggesting a date of the third quarter of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Orton 1988, 309-10 and Fig. 131).

The Westerwald-type mug is a gorge or tavern-mug with somewhat unusual stamped decoration in the form of inverted hearts and lozenges. The only obvious parallel for this is not the products of the German manufactories, but those of potteries at Bouffioulx in Belgium (Gaimster 1997, Fig. 1.6). Another fragment of a gorge, in English Stoneware, was present in context (2), along with a largely complete Chinese Porcelain tea-bowl. It is possible therefore that there may have been a tavern or an inn on the site in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, especially given the high number of clay pipes found associated with the pottery. Alternatively the whole assemblage would not have been out of place in a well-to-do household of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

### 5.3 The post-medieval tile by Paul Riccoboni

Context	No. of Items	Weight (gr)
01	4	638
02	10	587
03	9	759
15	1	100
16	1	29
22	1	147

Table 3; Quantification of all tile

### 5.4 The Animal Bone by Paul Riccoboni

A small assemblage of animal bone was collected from the Roman contexts, which was consistent with the previously excavated examples across the town of varying sized mammals (Riccoboni 2012). The most common identified animals were sheep and cattle. All animal bones were not retained except the worked bone.

Table 4; Quantification of retrieved animal bone

Context	No. of Items	Weight (g)
01	2	7
02	13	273
12	6	709
15	1	3
15 (worked bone)	1	8
16	1	1
19	3	273
22	2	69
23	2	

### 5.5 Clay tobacco pipes by John Moore

Context	Fragments	Weight (g)
01	1	3g
02	12	79g
19	2	22g
23	55	589

Table 5; Quantification of all clay tobacco pipe

#### *The living room*

55 fragments of clay tobacco pipe weighing 589g were recovered from beneath the living room floor in context (023). They have been assigned to Oswald's (1975) simplified general typology.

Eight fragments were parts of stems with one of them exhibiting part of a pedestal foot while another had a spur. Four are parts of bowls that are unidentifiable. The remaining 43 parts were bowls that have been classified as below.

No. of fragments	Base type	Oswald type	Date
2	Spur	G20	c. 1690-1730
5	Spur	G18	c. 1660-1680
4	Pedestal foot	G9	c. 1680-1710
1	Spur	G16	c. 1610-40
21	Spur	G17	c. 1640-70.
10	Pedestal foot	G5	c. 1640-80

Table 6; All clay pipes from context (023)

The type G16 is probably residual or a long-lived favourite pipe that was ultimately broken during use. The others span the period of 1640=1730 but all are probably of the latter half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Such a closely dated relatively large assemblage is unusual and enforces the view resulting after examination of the pottery from the same context that it was the site of a tavern.

#### *The extension*

Fifteen fragments of clay tobacco pipe were recorded from three contexts with a combined weight of 104g. There were three pipe bowls with feet from context (02) and two with feet from context (19). A stem with foot also came from context (02). All other fragments were stems.

### 5.6 The Oyster Shell by Paul Riccoboni

Context	No. of bags	Weight (g)
22	1	163
12	1	6

Table 7; Quantification of oyster shell

### 5.7 The Special Finds by Paul Riccoboni



Plate 1; small Roman bone pick

A small pick made from deer antler measuring (55mm x 20mm) was discovered from Roman context (15) overlying wall (14). It has been worn on the tip and has a groove which seems to have been created with a saw or knife. This may have been an accidental cut before it was sawn. The object may have had a number of uses such as an awl for leather working.



Plate 2; post-medieval Crotal bell

A broken rumbler or crotal bell was discovered in the excavations beneath the living room floor (23). It measured 37mm in length x 35mm in width. There were two holes which were 5mm in size. The bell was broken across the opening and the suspension loop was missing. There was no pellet surviving inside. A similar example can be found in Margeson 1993, pp 213-214 Fig. 162- 1760.

Rumbler or crotal bells in copper alloy and tin became common from the late 13th century. Brass and gunmetal crotal bells generally date to the 13th—15th centuries, although can be later. They tend to be made of 4 components; a suspension loop, 2 halves of the body and a pea. They can have a join around the middle. In the post-medieval period the bells were used most probably for horse harness.

### 5.8 The Special tile by Gwilym Williams

The tile recovered from context (10) at Abingdon consists of a corner fragment measuring  $0.97 \times 0.95 \times 0.30$ mm and weighing 401g. The slightly thicker than usual tile has gently concave chamfered sides, slightly burnished and with some mortar traces adhering. The pinky orange sandy fabric shows no sign of reduction. There is no extant glaze on the upper face and the white inlaid clay shows signs of fracturing, possibly associated with exposure to the elements, rather than due to wear. The inlaid clay is *c* 2mm thick. The base of the tile evidences knife stab-marks, rather than round stab holes; these latter the more often encountered form in the Oxford area. The upper face design consists of a trefoil on a stem in the extant corner with what appear to be lilies on either side of it. The design can be located somewhere between W12 and W42 (Hohler 193X), appearing to comprise elements of both these designs.



## 6 DISCUSSION

The archaeological watching brief was successful in establishing some of the aims and objectives set out at the beginning of the project in the *Design Brief* (OCC 2012) and the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (JMHS 2012) which stated a particular objective to record any evidence of Roman occupation or remains of the Abbey.

The earliest evidence recovered was from the Romano-British occupation of Abingdon, which has never been clearly defined, but certainly existed from East St Helen Street (Ackerman 1865; Riccoboni 2012a & 2012c), as far north as parts of Bath Street (Moore 2005; Ainslie 1999) up to Abingdon School (Evans and Excell 1997; 2000) and across the Vineyard (Allen 1990, 1991, 1993-1996) and Abbey precinct (Biddle *et al* 1968). Wall (14) was considered Roman in origin, as it contained between the stones a Roman pottery sherd dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD and was sealed by a Roman layer above it (15) considered to be characteristic of the commonly referred to 'dark earth'. It was unknown whether this wall formed part of a Roman building as it was observed within a narrow trench. Roman buildings have been found at other locations across Abingdon (Allen 1990; Riccoboni 2012a; 2012b & JMHS 2002) and it is therefore plausible that there could have been a Roman dwelling here; at a favourable location close to the River. The high amount of domestic pottery sherds from organic layers above and below the wall and the fragment of imbrex tile would certainly suggest domestic occupation on or close to the site. Other finds such as the deer antler tip suggest other activities taking place at the site, perhaps leatherworking.

During the 1922 excavations of the Abbey it was noted that 'Roman pottery and other Roman objects have been discovered in a black earth layer 18in (0.45m) to 2 ft (0.60m) thick the top of which was 2.5ft (0.76m) below the surface...it was present perhaps over the whole area investigated...the pottery was rather greater in quantity towards the south and west...the focus of settlement is likely therefore to lie towards the Thames (Biddle *et al* 1968, 62).' This would tie in well with the discoveries at October House. The Roman 'dark earth' layer(s) is probably the same as noted across the Abbey excavations in 1922 and was dated to the late 4<sup>th</sup> century. Roman 'dark earth' was also recorded at the Old Gaol excavations (Riccoboni 2012a) and has comparisons to the 'dark earth' seen in other Roman towns across Britain especially in London. Dark earth implies abandonment in the late Roman period as it generally overlies the latest Roman deposits and is characterised by poorly sorted circum neutral clayey earth with pottery inclusions (Cleary 1990). With pottery dates spanning the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> centuries it would seem that this area of Roman Abingdon was long occupied, perhaps with larger town houses closer to the river.

The closest archaeological observation to have taken place to the site was a BT trench which cut across the Abbey Car Park (JMHS 1999). The trench revealed walls *c.* 500mm from the present ground surface which were assumed to be in the area of the Abbot's kitchen as conjectured by Biddle (1968). Although somewhat problematic the discovered walls within the trench were suggested as of medieval date. Later material had been incorporated into the top of the walls when levelling for the access to buildings in this area was laid out or improved. This was in contrast to the dark earth immediately above wall (14) which contained only Roman pottery sherds. The walls

in the BT trench were of similar sized limestone blocks and mortar as wall (14) discovered at October House. Wall (14) was discovered at a depth considerably deeper (c. 1m from existing ground surface) than the walls recorded in the BT Trench, but this may be as a result of differing levelling activity across Abbey Close and the car park. Due to the deep post-medieval soil covering the site, which is common across Abingdon (Riccoboni 2012a; Riccoboni 2012c; Eeles 2005), we may never achieve a town plan of Roman Abingdon as non intrusive surveying such as geophysics cannot penetrate c. 1m deep soils effectively or disturbed layers as proved in the geophysical survey across the Abbey Car Park (Barlett & Bounder undated).

A layer of post-medieval dissolution rubble (10) was seen in section with a clear contact to the underlying deposit (11). It contained a decorated floor tile which came from the medieval Abbey.

The excavations within the living room reached a depth of c. 450mm beneath the former ground level. The finds from here were all post-medieval (c. 17<sup>th</sup> century). One of the most interesting finds was the crota bell roughly dated 1500-1800 (plate 2). The pottery from this area may indicate the house was originally a tavern, given the high frequency of drinking vessels and clay tobacco pipes. An example of an existing Abingdon building thought to have possibly been a beer house was excavated by the author at 51 East St Helen Street (Riccoboni 2012c), although this was probably of 19<sup>th</sup> century date. If a tavern existed at October House it would have been dated to the 17<sup>th</sup> century (c.1640-70). The tavern probably closed when the building was extended/alterd in 1698. Perhaps then its use became residential. A confidence rating is high that the best possible were achieved.

## 7 ARCHIVE

### Archive Contents

The archive consists of the following:

#### Paper Record

The project brief	The project report
Written Scheme of Investigation	The primary site records
The drawn records	

#### Physical Record

The Finds

The archive is currently maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be deposited with the Museum resource Centre under accession number 2013.9

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*Plate 3; General view of site before works*



*Plate 4; Section 1.1 showing Roman 'dark earth'*



*Plate 5; Roman wall (14)*



*Plate 6; Post-med garden wall beneath house extension*



*Plate 7; General view of site looking north*



*Plate 8; Section's 1.2 & 1.3 showing post-med deposits*

## Appendix 1; Quantification Table of all Roman pottery

Context	IA	Roman							?Med	Pmed	Tot No	Tot Wt	Date	cbm
		Samian	OXFRS	ROBSH	DORBB1	grey wares	Grog	Other						
12	0	1	1	0	0	23	4	4	1	1	35	795	late C3-C4/Pmed	
14	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	38	C2+	
15	1	1	2	2	2	13	5	0	0	0	26	465	late C4+	
16	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	22	mid C3-C4/ pm cbm	2
19	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	Roman	
22	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	31	C2-C4	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>1353</b>		<b>3</b>

## Appendix 2: Later pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

Cntxt	RB		OXDR		OXFH		OXST		OXEAH		OXSTW		OXCE		OXREWL		OXEST		OXFI		OXFM		WHEW		Date
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
1			4	148													1	8					1	35	U/S
2	1	25	11	225	3	138			1	38	1	41					1	47	1	38	1	4	1	2	19thC
3																							1	4	19thC
10			1	17	1	16																			M16thC
23			7	953	4	146	3	192	1	73	2	56	3	228	3	62									M-L17thC
Total	1	25	23	1343	8	300	3	192	2	111	3	97	3	228	3	62	2	55	1	38	1	4	3	41	