

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

**1, FARMINGTON, FARMINGTON,
CHELTENHAM, GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

NGR SP 1315 1542

On behalf of

Chris Saunders

MAY 2008

REPORT FOR Chris Saunders
1 Farmington
Farmington
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL54 3NQ

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FIELDWORK 6th May 2008

REPORT ISSUED May 2008

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Site Code FAFA 08
JMHS Project No: 1923
Archive Location The archive will be deposited with Cirencester Museum
Services in due course.

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Summary

A watching brief was carried out on the site by John Moore Heritage Services on May 2008 during work for two extensions. All ground disturbance work was monitored; no remains, except for a century soakaway and associated pipework, were observed.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site was located at 1, Farmington and is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) SP 1315 1542. The site was bordered to the north and south by residential properties.

The geology was a cornbrash-type deposit overlying Taynton Limestone Formation, a Bathonian deposit of the Middle Jurassic. The site lies at approximately 184m OD.

1.2 Planning Background

Cotswold District Council has granted planning permission for the erection of a front and rear two-storey extension to 1 Farmington, Farmington, Cheltenham (CDC 07/00477/FUL). Due to the potential presence of remains of archaeological interest in the proximity of the proposal area a condition of the planning consent required that an archaeological watching brief be carried out during the course of groundworks. Gloucestershire County Council, on behalf of Cotswold District Council, prepared a *Brief for Archaeological Recording*. A *Written Scheme of Investigation* was subsequently prepared in response to this document, which outlined a methodology that would satisfy the requirements of the brief.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The application site was archaeologically sensitive, since it is located along the line of the eastern defences of Norbury Camp visible north of the road east into the village. The majority of Norbury Camp is classified as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Therefore, any ground-works undertaken in connection with the above development may have adversely affected significant archaeological deposits and/or finds. The site lies just outside the scheduled area.

The site is located in Farmington meaning ‘thorn-tree pool farm/settlement’, from ‘Tormerrtone’ in Domesday (1086). The village lies at the east end of a spur of land overlooking tributaries of the Sherborne Brook; springs are located at several places in the valley to the north, such as Clearcupboard and Blackhill Barn. The site itself is located on the very west edge of the village and the parish at Wales End, possibly a corruption of Walls End (VCH, 2001), referring to the defences at western side of Norbury Camp.

A Neolithic long barrow is located in the south-west corner of Norbury Camp. Flint work of the same date has been found in the parish including an axe-head now in Cheltenham Museum.

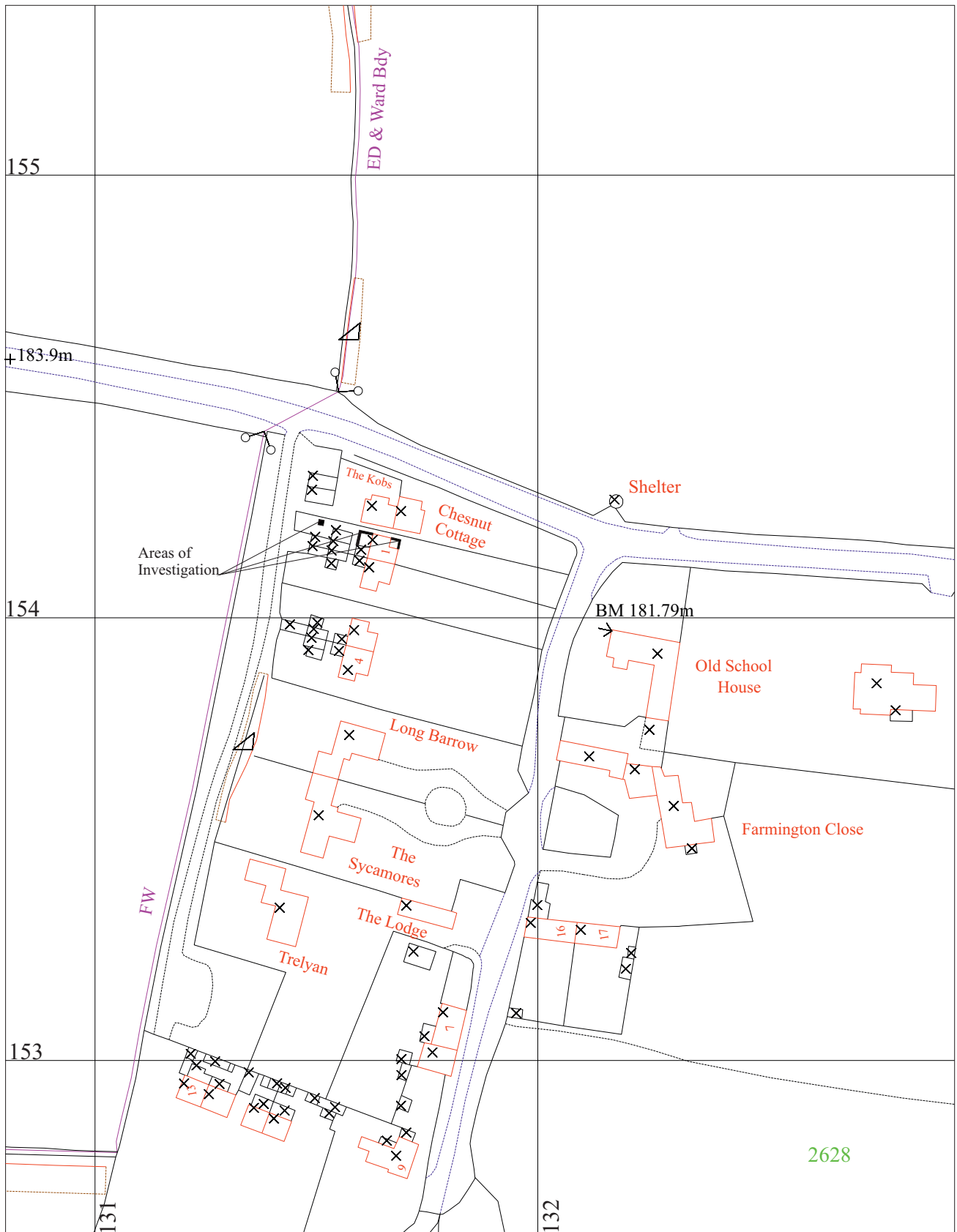


Figure 1. Site Location

Gravel extraction has also revealed Middle Bronze Age cremation urns in the area, possibly associated with barrows. West of Norbury Camp is a Bronze Age bowl barrow (O' Neill & Grinsell, 1960).

Norbury Camp lies immediately west of the site forming the parish boundary between Farmington and Northleach parishes. It is defended by a single bank and ditch on the west and east sides, while the north and south sides are formed partly by scarps (Verey & Brooks 2000). Recent work carried out by Cotswolds Archaeological Trust, however, indicates the strong possibility of the hillfort being multivallate (Kenyon D, 1999). Cunliffe (2005) classifies Norbury Camp as one of the earliest hill-top enclosures. It covers an area of 32ha. Its interior has been sampled excavated. The defences are slight, but little occupation debris or structures were recovered; only a few small four-post structures were found, apparently unconnected with the hillfort.

Roman activity was recovered from Norbury Camp and has been also noted elsewhere in the area. There is believed to be a villa at Clearcupboard roughly 300m to the north of the Camp, although work in the 1970s only recovered a dump of building material, rather than *in situ* evidence of a structure. Work at Court Hey yielded Roman material as well as medieval. Further Roman finds were made west of Monarch's Way north of the village in the 1950s.

Domesday states of Farmington "there are 2 ploughs in demesne at Tormerrtone and 25 villagers with 12 ploughs and 4 serfs". It records ownership of the manor by Doge FitzPoyntz, son of William of Poyntz, who also had holdings in Gloucestershire, Herefordshire., Wiltshire and Worcestershire, as well as 73 holdings in Devon, as under-tenant of Bishop of Coutances.

North of the site in a field known as Lords Court Hey are a number of earthworks shown on the Ordnance survey 1:25 000, which may well be indicative of the manor of Muttones Court believed to be located in the vicinity (VCH, 2001). These comprise several buildings arranged round a courtyard. The manor was absorbed into Farmington manor in the century. Further medieval earthworks are visible east and southeast of Wales End (VCH, 2001).

The parish church is of Norman date with additions in the 13th, 14th and 16th centuries. In the mid 16th century church communicants state that the windows were "without glasing".

Cox (1720) records Farmington as "... anciently called Thormarton, a Parish of Seven Miles in Compass, consisting most of Arable. A small Brook rises here, and runs into the Windrush. This Manor did anciently belong to the Priory of Eddington in Wiltshire, given to it by the Founder, William de Eddington, Bishop of Worcester. At the Dissolution of this Priory, it was granted to Sir Michael Ashfield, whose Posterity sold it to Sir Rice James, whose Descendant, Sir Henry, leaving only one Daughter, married to the Earl of Scarborough, that Lord is in her Right, Owner of this Manor. The Church is a Rectory worth £120 per Annum, and the Earl of Scarborough is Patron. The Building is small, but hath a little Tower at the West End: There are two inscriptions in the Chancel for Thomas Cox, Barrister of Lincolns-Inn, and Humphrey Smith, who was Rector forty-six Years. In this Parish is an exceeding large Roman

Camp, called Norbury, 850 Paces long, and 473 Paces broad, now a Corn-Field; and not far from it Westward is a Barrow.”

The proposal site is located at Bunkershill, Wales End, and is one of four cottages which front onto a short lane, leading south from the road west out of the village. The national school was built further south along the lane in 1856 by the landlords, the Waller family. The cottages face Bedwell Farm (now Bedwell House), which like the cottages themselves were part of the Farmington Estate (VCH, 2001). The proposal site ceased to be an estate cottage in the late 1970s.

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 archaeological remains.

Particular aims will be:

- to record any evidence relating to the defences and occupation of the Camp.

The results of the investigations will be made public

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

In response to a *Brief* issued by Gloucestershire County Council a scheme of investigation was designed by JMHS and agreed with the County and the applicant. The work was carried out by JMHS and was to involve the monitoring of all groundwork on the site.

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

All invasive groundworks were monitored by an archaeologist and all resulting surfaces were then inspected for any significant archaeological features.

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.

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.

4.1 Field Results

The footings were excavated to a depth of c.1.2m on the west side of 1, Farmington. On the east side of the house the footings were c.0.8m deep. The natural was pale yellowish white silty clay with limestone rubble through it. Overlying this was a layer of 0.4m orange brown silty clay with occasional limestone fragments through it. This was sealed by brown clay loam topsoil, c. 0.25m thick.

To the west of the cottage the site of a soakaway was also excavated measuring c. 1.6m by 1.6m; the full depth was not observed, but excavation to a depth of c. 0.25m revealed the natural below a gravel drive.

4.2 Reliability of results and methodologies

The results are felt to be representative of the remains observed on site.

5 FINDS

No finds were recovered from the site.

6 DISCUSSION

Despite the close proximity of the SAM Norbury Camp, c. 20m to the west of the proposal area and both Roman and medieval activity, no archaeological remains were observed within the footprint of the new build. Evidence of late or early century activity associated with the construction of an annexe (extension on west side) to the estate cottages was observed. This comprised a soakaway and two pipes entering it from the main body of the cottage and a mid- century extension for a bathroom.

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