

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

LONG HOUSE, ARDLEY, OXFORDSHIRE

SP 5425 2757

On behalf of

Wells Developments Ltd.

MAY 2006

REPORT FOR Wells Developments Ltd.
6 Glyme Close,
Woodstock
Oxon
OX20 1LB

PREPARED BY David Gilbert

FIELDWORK 3rd – 13th April 2006

REPORT ISSUED 4th May 2006

ENQUIRES TO John Moore Heritage Services
Hill View
Woodperry Road
Berkley
Oxfordshire OX3 9UZ

Telephone/Fax 01865 358300
Email: info@jmheritageservices.co.uk

Site Code; AYLH 06
JMHS Project No: 1618
Archive Location Oxfordshire County Museum Service
Accession No. 2006.29

CONTENTS

	Page
<i>SUMMARY</i>	1
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Site Location	
1.2 Planning Background	
1.3 Archaeological Background	
2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION	1
3 STRATEGY	3
3.1 Research Design	
3.2 Methodology	
4 RESULTS	3
5 FINDS	5
6 DISCUSSION	5
7 ARCHIVE	5
8 BIBLIOGRAPHY	6
Figure 1 Site Location	2
Figure 2 Plan of Trenches	4

Summary

A watching brief was conducted by John Moore Heritage Services during the ground work for new buildings in the area previously occupied by Long House, Ardley. The investigation revealed numerous modern service trenches, but few archaeological features, a well and a small ditch that were probably associated with the previous dwelling.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development site lies on the south side of Ardley Road, west of the junction with Station Road, Ardley (SP 5425 2757). The existing use of the site was a house, demolished prior to ground work, and garden that is situated at about 118m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology is Middle Jurassic Limestone.

1.2 Planning Background

Cherwell District Council granted planning permission under application number 04/02550/OUT for the demolition of the existing dwelling and the erection of four new dwellings on this site. The planning permission had a condition attached requiring the implementation of an archaeological monitoring and recording action (watching brief) to be maintained during the period of construction. This is in line with PPG 16 and Cherwell District Local Plan policies.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The site lies within the historic core of Ardley. Previous archaeological investigations at the Corner Garage to the south of the proposed development (centred SP 5427 2751) have recorded evidence of a sunken roadway and two boundary ditches relating to the shrunken medieval village (Event EOX 1369/HBSMR 16826). Extensive earthworks relating to the shrunken medieval settlement comprising tofts and crofts and holloways (centred on SP 542 275) are visible in the Greenfield area immediately to the south of the proposal site (HBSMR 1159 & 9015). In addition, Roman pottery and coins were found in a nearby garden at SP 5434 2748 (HBSMR 2525).

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 remains associated with the medieval settlement.

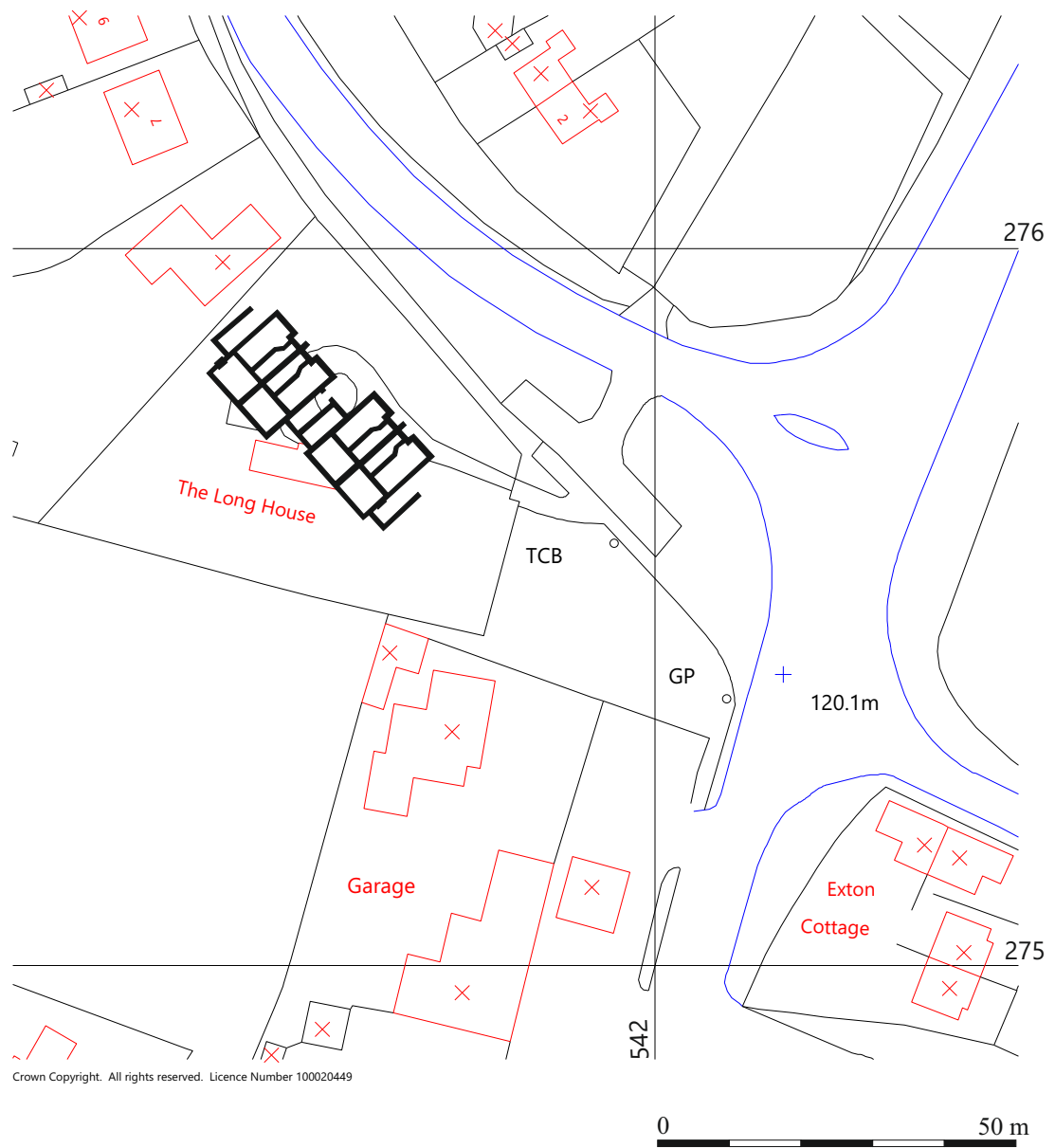


Figure 1: Site location

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 of Field Archaeologists (1994).

3.2 Methodology

The excavation of the foundation trenches was monitored. This work was conducted using a JCB excavator employing both a toothless 1.5m ditching bucket for topsoil stripping and a toothed 0.7m bucket to dig the footings and services.

4 RESULTS (Figure 2)

All features were assigned individual context numbers. This number covered both the feature cut and the fill for pits, unless the feature was sample excavated by hand. Context numbers in [] indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material. A general description of the feature fills is given.

The upper layer consisted of dark grey-brown sandy loam topsoil (1). This was between 0.05m to 0.15m thick. In other areas this topsoil was replaced with a modern drive way (5), constructed of banded layers of flint pebbles, fine sand, tarmac and course sand, it was 0.1m thick in total.

Across the majority of the site the topsoil and driveway was overlying a thin grey-brown sandy clay (2) with about 5% small limestone fragments and flecked with charcoal. This layer was between 0.03m and 0.1m thick.

The natural reddish-brown sandy clay (3) with 25-30% limestone fragments lay directly under (2). It was up to 0.4m thick and heavily disturbed by roots. Under this another natural layer of mustard yellow sand with some clay and up to 50% limestone blocks (4) was recorded.

The concrete foundations of the previously demolished garage of Long House were noted within the foundation trenches to the west of the site. The foundations of the house itself had already been demolished, but were described as shallow and slight by the contractor. Other modern features associated with the garage and house included several services and a soak-away.

To the west of the site a stone built well (7) was excavated within the foundation trench. It was approximately 1.5m in diameter and at least 1.9m deep, water was noted at this depth. The well walls were 0.25m – 0.3m thick. It was built within a sub-

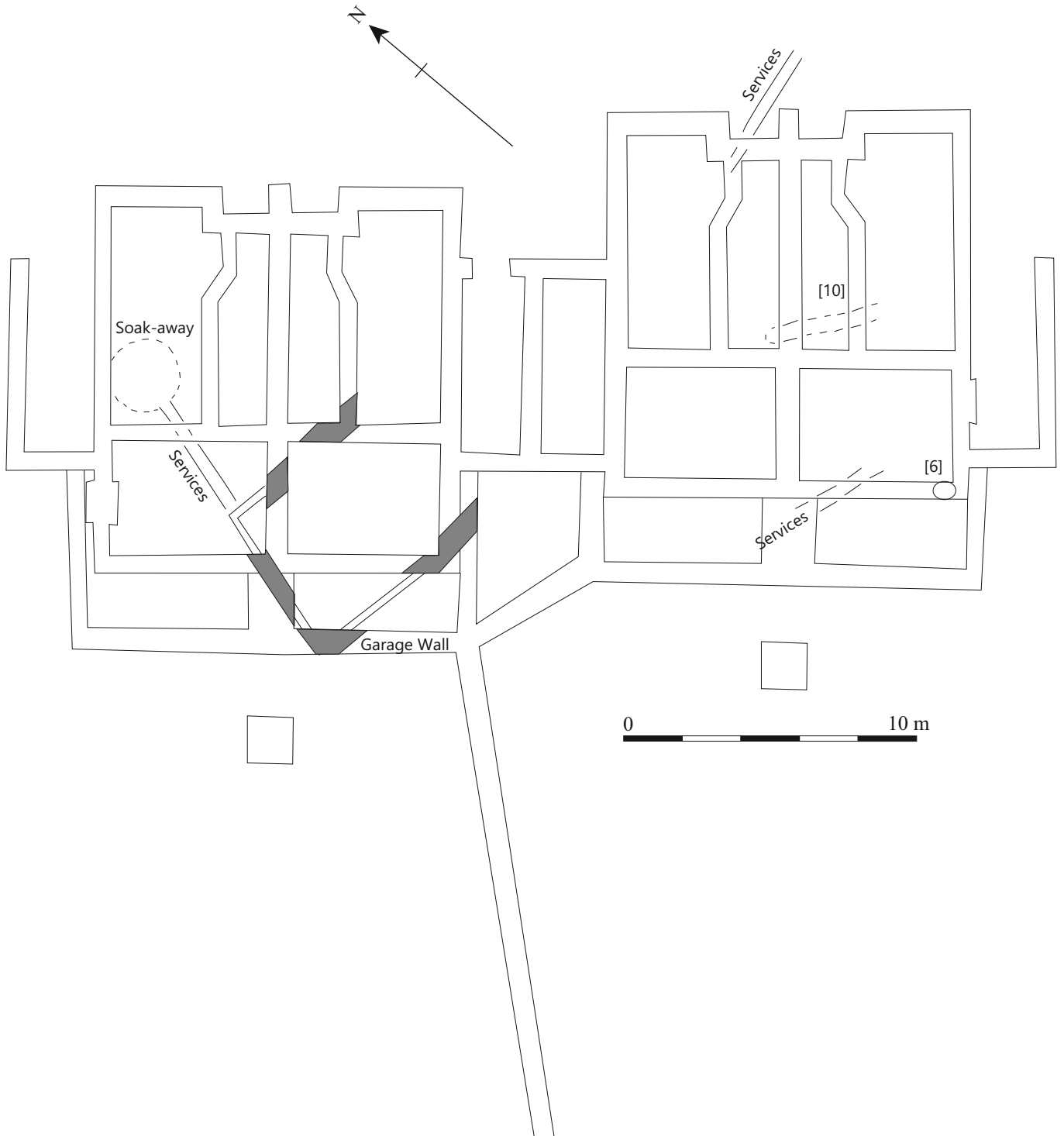


Figure 2: Plan of trenches

circular cut [6] about 1.8m in diameter, with clay and rubble packed behind the wall against the edge of the cut. The well was filled with a loose mid-brown clay deposit with grit and large stones (8). This deposit had a number of voids within it which collapsed during excavation. It also contained a small quantity of animal bone, which was not retained.

In the centre of the site a short linear feature [10] was recorded. It was seen in section within two separate foundation trenches. The shallow U-shaped ditch was at least 2m in length and 1m wide. It was up to 0.4m deep and filled with a dark brown sandy clay loam (9) with about 10% small stone fragments.

The main foundation trenches were excavated to an average depth of 1.5m following the bedrock. The service trenches to the south of the proposed new houses were only 0.5m deep. Two soakaways were also excavated to the south, to a depth of 1.9m.

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery

Sherds of 19th – 20th century Mass-produced White Earthenwares (WHEW) were noted from the topsoil (1) and also from the fill (9) of the linear cut [10]. Also sherds of Red Earthenwares (OXDR) dated from 1500 onwards were noted in the subsoil (2). These sherds were recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1994).

6 DISCUSSION

The watching brief uncovered few archaeological features; a well and a shallow ditch. The only other features located were modern service trenches, including a soak-away.

The well was probably associated with the Long House, which was present on the OS map of 1885. Although the well is not marked one just to the south is. The ditch was probably also associated with this building.

7 ARCHIVE

Archive Contents

The archive consists of the following:

Paper record

The project 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 the County Museums' Store.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1994 *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief*. Revised Sept 1999

Mellor, M, 1994 Oxford Pottery: A Synthesis of middle and late Saxon, medieval and early post-medieval pottery in the Oxford Region *Oxoniensia* 59, 17-217