



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

OF

DOE BANK FARM, LOWER END,

PRIORS HARDWICK, WARWICKSHIRE

NGR SP 468 560

On behalf of

Mr P. Hands

NOVEMBER 2012

REPORT FOR Mr P. Hands
C/o HB Architects
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FIELDWORK 19th October 2012

REPORT ISSUED 7th November 2012

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Site Code PHDB 12
JMHS Project No: 2610
Archive Location The archive is currently held at John Moore Heritage Services and will be deposited with Warwickshire Museum Services

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SUMMARY

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an evaluation at Doe Bank Farm, Priors Hardwick. No features earlier than the 19th century were recorded.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site location (Figure 1)

The site is centred on national grid reference SP 468 560, in the parish of Priors Hardwick.

1.2 Planning Background

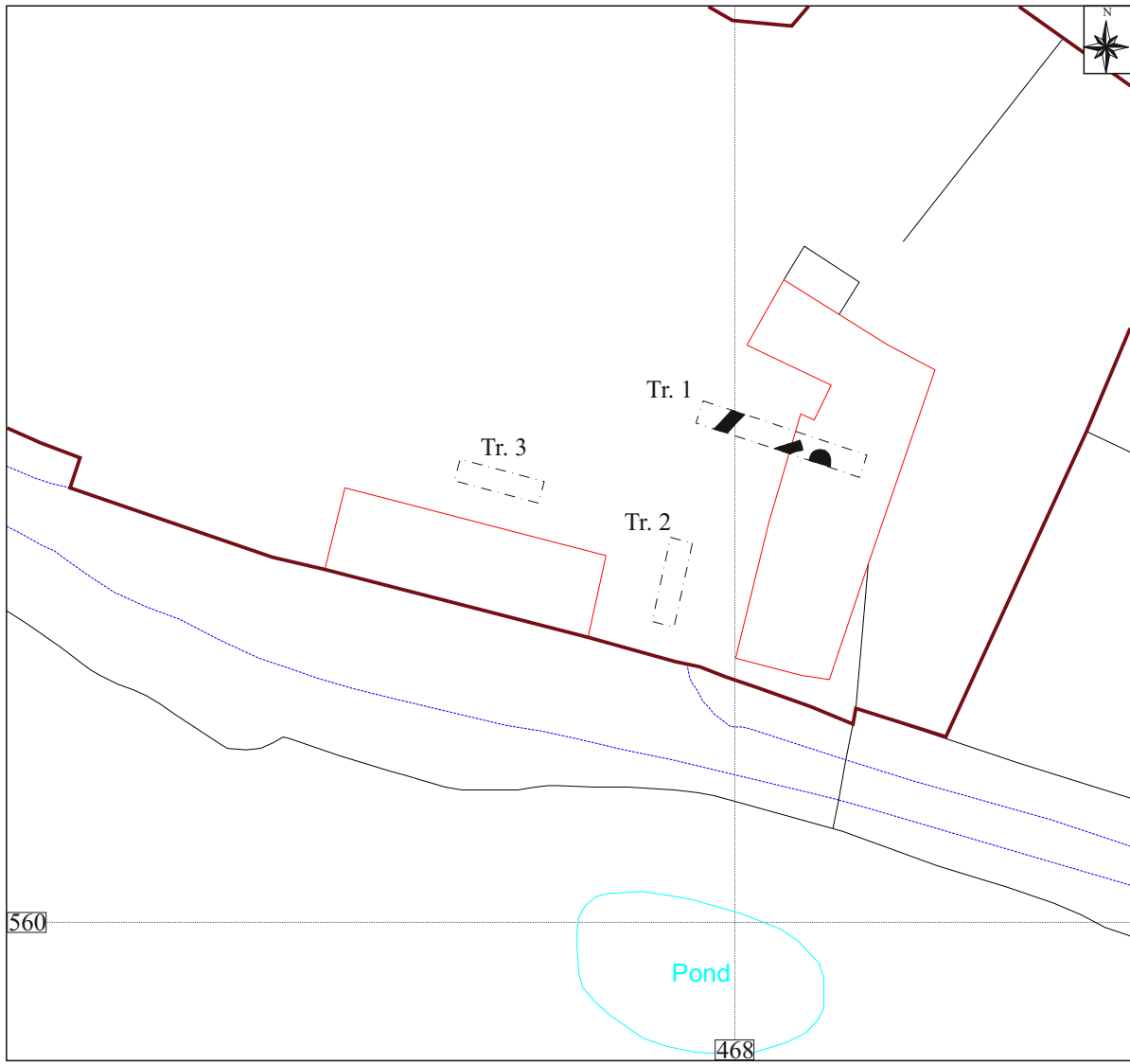
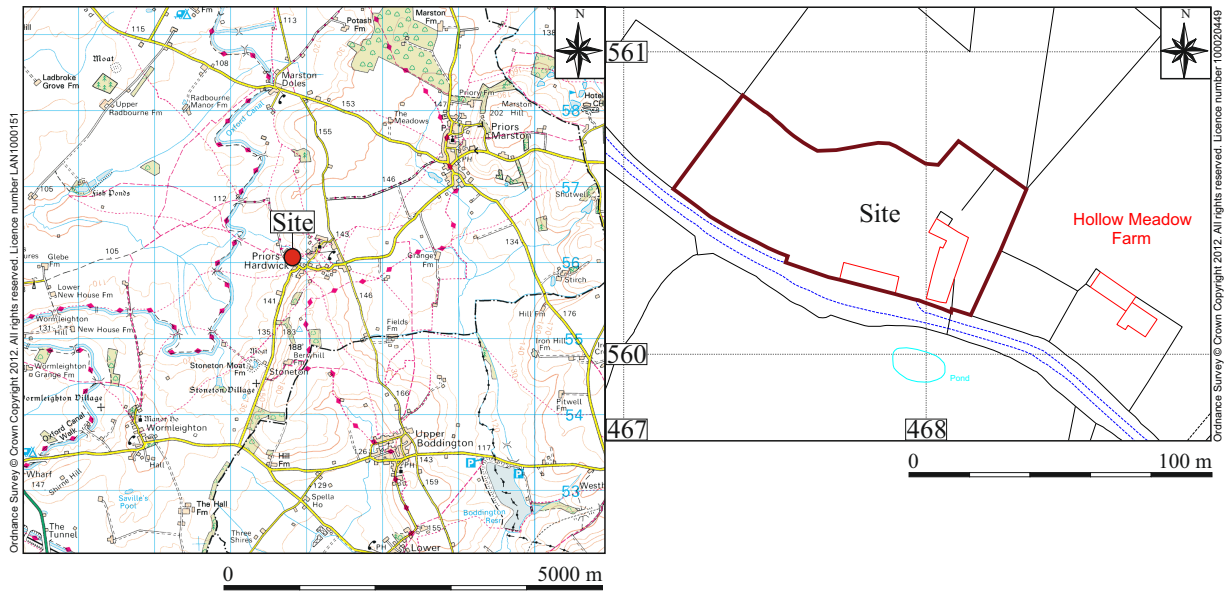
Planning consent has been granted by the Stratford on Avon Borough Council for the erection of a replacement dwelling and the conversion of the existing barn and change of use of land from agricultural land to domestic curtilage at Doe Bank Farm, Lower End, Priors Hardwick, Southam, Warwickshire (09/02627/FUL). A condition of the planning permission requires the applicant to secure the implementation of a phased programme of archaeological work in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation which had been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Planning Authority. This was implemented as the proposed development was within an area of archaeological potential. This is in line with NPPF. Warwickshire Museum's Planning Archaeologist prepared a Brief for the first phase of the work, namely a field evaluation. A *Written Scheme of Investigation* agreed with the county planning archaeologist proposed a method to satisfy the requirements of the Brief.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The settlement of Priors Hardwick is first recorded as one of 24 villas granted to Earl Leofric to found a monastery at Coventry, the grant was confirmed by Edward the Confessor in 1024. By the time of the Domesday Survey the settlement amounted to 15 hides among the Priory estates (Salzman 1965).

In the centre of Priors Hardwick village is a large field called Farm Close or Church Close. Here is a deserted village nucleus in which a rectilinear network of lanes is bounded on the E by a well-marked boundary ditch (MWA728). The Church of St Mary (MWA726) was originally built during the 13th century (Pevsner & Wedgwood 1966).

The manor house (MWA6206) is believed to have lain in the north-western part of the settlement, close to the church in the valley. Here there are a large number of irregular enclosures defined by deep ditches and platforms. The ditches are up to 2 m deep and 4-5m wide. They are believed to represent the hollow ways and boundaries although some may have been water-filled and may have acted as leats to fishponds (MWA6207). The uneven surface suggests the buried remains of buildings may survive, these are believed to include a manor house and its associated agricultural and ancillary buildings. The Manor was in the hands of Coventry Priory and demense land was customarily managed separately from that of the village, allowing more numerous and extensive construction of individual stock pens and garden enclosures.



Key Site outline Limit of excavation Archaeological features

Figure 1. Site location

There are earthwork surrounding the present village representing a series of regular tofts and crofts defined by banks and ditches forming enclosures including some subdivided plots that also contain house platforms (MWA6209, MWA6210, MWA6211, MWA8998). Well-preserved ridge and furrow surrounds the village, most notably to the west (MWA7929).

The population of the village was falling during the 16th century and it is believed that desertion, in favour of sheep pastures, soon followed. The present village contains buildings largely of the 18th century and results from later re-growth of the settlement on a different alignment. Eighteen listed structures are recorded with 500m of the development site the majority of which are clustered around the church.

The Tithe map shows the development area as a Rickyard in 1847. The development site was part of the Hollow Meadow Farm complex marked on the first edition OS map (HWA11619).

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 or 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 determine the impact of the proposed development on any remains present.

In particular:

- To determine whether any remains of the medieval settlement survive on the site

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

In accordance with the *Written Scheme of Investigation* designed by JMHS and agreed with Warwickshire Museum's Planning Archaeologist, JMHS carried out the work, which comprised the excavation of three trenches across 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 for Archaeologists (2008).

3.2 Methodology

The investigation involved the mechanical excavation of three trenches across the site by a 6-tonne excavator equipped with a ditching bucket, supplemented by limited hand investigation of archaeological deposits. One trench was 12m long the other two were both 6m long, all were 1.6m wide (Fig. 1).

4 RESULTS

4.1 Field Results (*Figure 2*)

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers without brackets indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material.

The lowest layer was a mottled grey-yellow clay related to the Lower Lias deposits in the region (1/04), (2/03) and (3/04)

Trench 1

Lying above the natural (1/04) was a 0.2m thick layer of mottled dark grey-brown clay (1/03) containing some brick fragments and animal bone. Some of the brick rubble in this layer may have been pressed into this from the layer above.

This trench was placed partially within a barn. To the exterior of the barn was a layer of brick and stone rubble (1/02) up to 0.25m thick placed as hard standing. This lay directly above layer (1/03) and contained modern fragments of ceramic wall tiles. This was overlain by a topsoil soil 0.05m thick of dark brown loam (1/01).

These layers were not present inside the barn where deposit (1/03) was overlain by the compact mid brown clay (1/11) floor layer c. 0.2m thick.

Cut into layer (1/03) were three features. The first was a sub-circular pit 1/05 approximately 1.6m in diameter and 0.3m deep with steep sides and a flat base. It was filled with a green-grey clay (1/06) that contained a button dated to the late 19th century.

Close to this was a rectangular cut 1/07 that was over 1.6m long, 0.52m wide and 0.3m deep. It was filled with mottled grey clay (1/08) and appeared to be machine excavated, possibly a geo-technical pit.

At the western end of the trench was a rectangular cut 1/10 that appeared to be a drain. It was over 1.8m long, 0.7m wide and 0.25m deep. It was filled with a dark grey clay (1/09) containing fragment of ceramic land-drain.

Trench 2

Lying above the natural (2/03) was a 0.2m thick layer of ironstone rubble in a grey-brown sandy-clay matrix (2/02) which also contained some modern brick fragments. This was overlain by a topsoil soil 0.1m thick of dark brown loam (2/01).

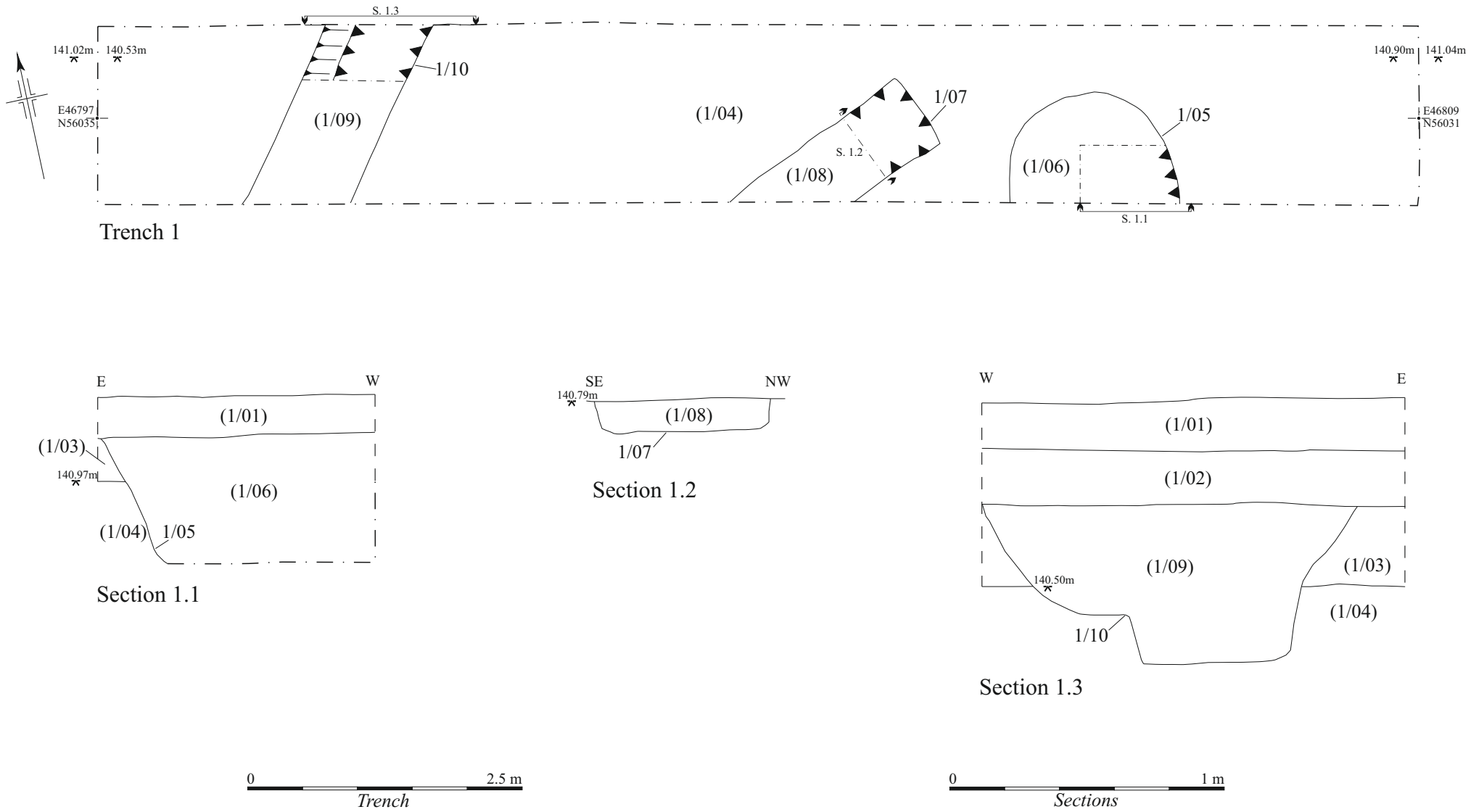


Figure 2. Trench 1 and sections 1.1 - 1.3

Trench 3

Lying above the natural (3/04) was a 0.15m thick layer of dark grey-brown clay (3/03) with stone, brick and a high organic content. This decaying organic material had stained the upper surface of the natural. Above this was a layer of stone rubble (3/02) up to 0.4m thick. Some of this stone could be building material from the nearby barn. The uppermost layer (3/01) was the modern concrete surface 0.05m thick.

4.2 Reliability of Techniques and Results

The reliability of results is considered to be good. The archaeological evaluation took place during good weather conditions. The percentage size of the sample was considered sufficient for the development area.

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery

The pottery was recorded using the codes and chronology of the Warwickshire Medieval and Post-Medieval Pottery Type-Series (Ratkai and Soden, in archive), as follows:

MGW. Modern earthenwares, late 18th century +. Contexts (1/09), (2/02) & (3/03)

The sherds were identified and not retained.

5.2 Metal (*By Andrej Čelovský*)

A Royal Navy officer's button in use between 1891 and 1901 was recovered from context (1/06). It would have been issued to any of the following ranks RN Capt/Commander, Lieutenant, Master, Surgeon, Purser, Midshipman or Warrant Officer (Diana's Buttons, UKDFD).

5.3 Environmental Remains

No environmental samples were taken as the potential of the deposits was not felt to be sufficient to warrant sampling.

6 DISCUSSION

Much of the site appears to have been disturbed in the 19th and 20th centuries, no earlier features were noted and no residual finds of earlier periods were present.

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