

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT
JAMES FARM, SOUTH STOKE ROAD,
WOODCOTE, OXFORDSHIRE**

NGR SU 6432 8217

On behalf of

Mr P Rumsey

JUNE 2013

REPORT FOR	Mr P Rumsey James Farm South Stoke Road Woodcote Oxfordshire RG8 0PL
PREPARED BY	Simona Denis
ILLUSTRATION BY	Andrej Čelovský and Tomasz Moskal
EDITED BY	John Moore
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ENQUIRES TO	John Moore Heritage Services Hill View Woodperry Road Beckley Oxfordshire OX3 9UZ Tel/Fax 01865 358300 Email: info@jmheritageservices.co.uk
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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services undertook a watching brief during the ground reduction following the demolition of the existing single storey side and rear extensions, for the erection of a new extension at James Farm, Woodcote, South Oxfordshire. No archaeological finds or features were found.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

James Farm (NGR SU 6432 8217) is located on the north side of Woodcote, adjacent to St Leonard's Church. The proposed extension is to the east and to the south of the existing building. The site lies at approximately 163m OD and the underlying geology is shown as Clay with Flints and sand and gravels.

1.2 Planning Background

Planning permission has been granted from South Oxfordshire District Council for the demolition of the existing single storey side and rear extensions, erection of two storey side, front and rear extensions and replacement single storey rear extension. (P11/E0869). Due to the potential disturbance of archaeological features a condition has been attached requiring that an archaeological watching brief be maintained during the period of ground works

1.3 Archaeological Background

The building concerned lies within an area of some archaeological interest located immediately west of the Church of St Leonard (PRN 3936). This church was rebuilt in 1846 on the original 12th century footings. The Davis map of the County from 1797 shows the original church on the site and another building in the vicinity of this proposal. Two 17th century grade II listed cottages are located 100m north east of the site (PRN 20340) and another, Church Farm, is located 200m to the east (PRN 20343). Very little archaeological investigation has been carried out in Woodcote, however the location of this site adjacent to the medieval Church may suggest that the medieval settlement was located in this area.

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

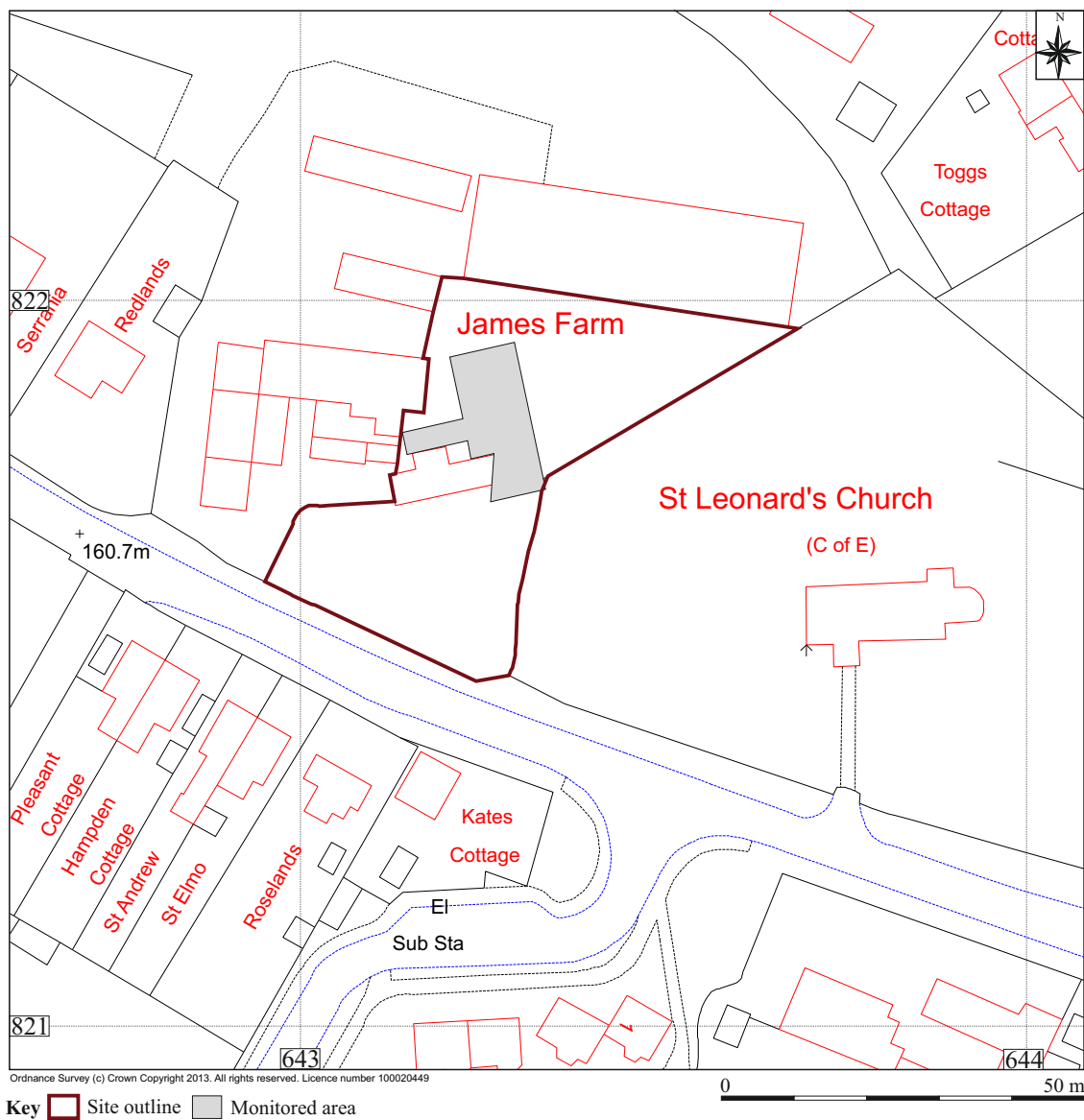
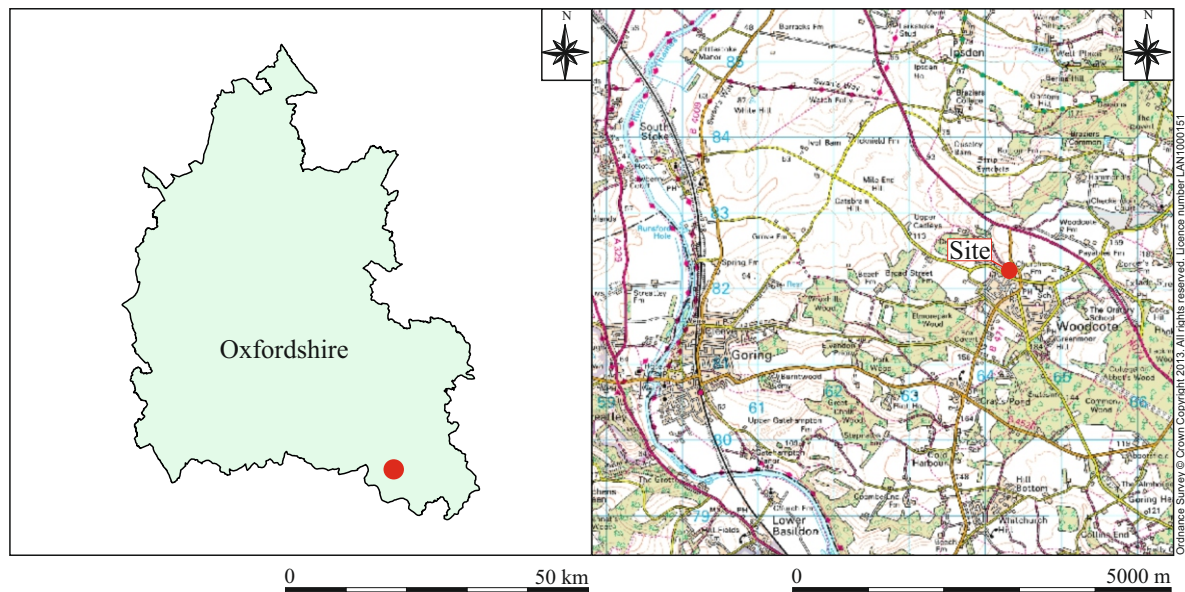


Figure 1. Site location

- To record any evidence of activity relating to medieval activity.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Oxfordshire County Historic and Natural Environment Team. 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 for Archaeologists (2008).

3.2 Methodology

All groundwork was monitored within the area of the extension. The ground reduction was carried out using a mechanical excavator employing a toothless 1.80m ditching bucket.

4 RESULTS

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

The demolition of the existing east side and rear extensions of the building revealed a 0.30m thick sandy silt topsoil (101) covering the whole excavation area. The areas previously occupied by the demolished extensions revealed a concentration of brick rubble and other modern building materials, including metal. The removal of the topsoil showed this layer to overlay a firm light-brown yellowish silty clay layer (102), 0.25 m thick, covering the whole excavation area. This layer contained a small portion, less than 5%, of sub-angular stones ranging from 5 to 10 mm, and an equally small portion of flint. The eastern corner of the excavation area contained a modern pipeline currently in use.

The lowest layer (103) was of heavily compacted, bright light red clay with sand patches and a large portion (ca. 45%) of flint, consistent with the geology of the area. This layer, cut into to a depth of 0.40 m., was identified as the natural (Plates 1-3).

Two modern features connected with the demolished extensions were cut into (103): structure [105], a modern brick-lined rounded pit (1.10m) associated with the demolished cowshed to the east of the existing building (Fig. 2). Pit [105] was filled with loose, black

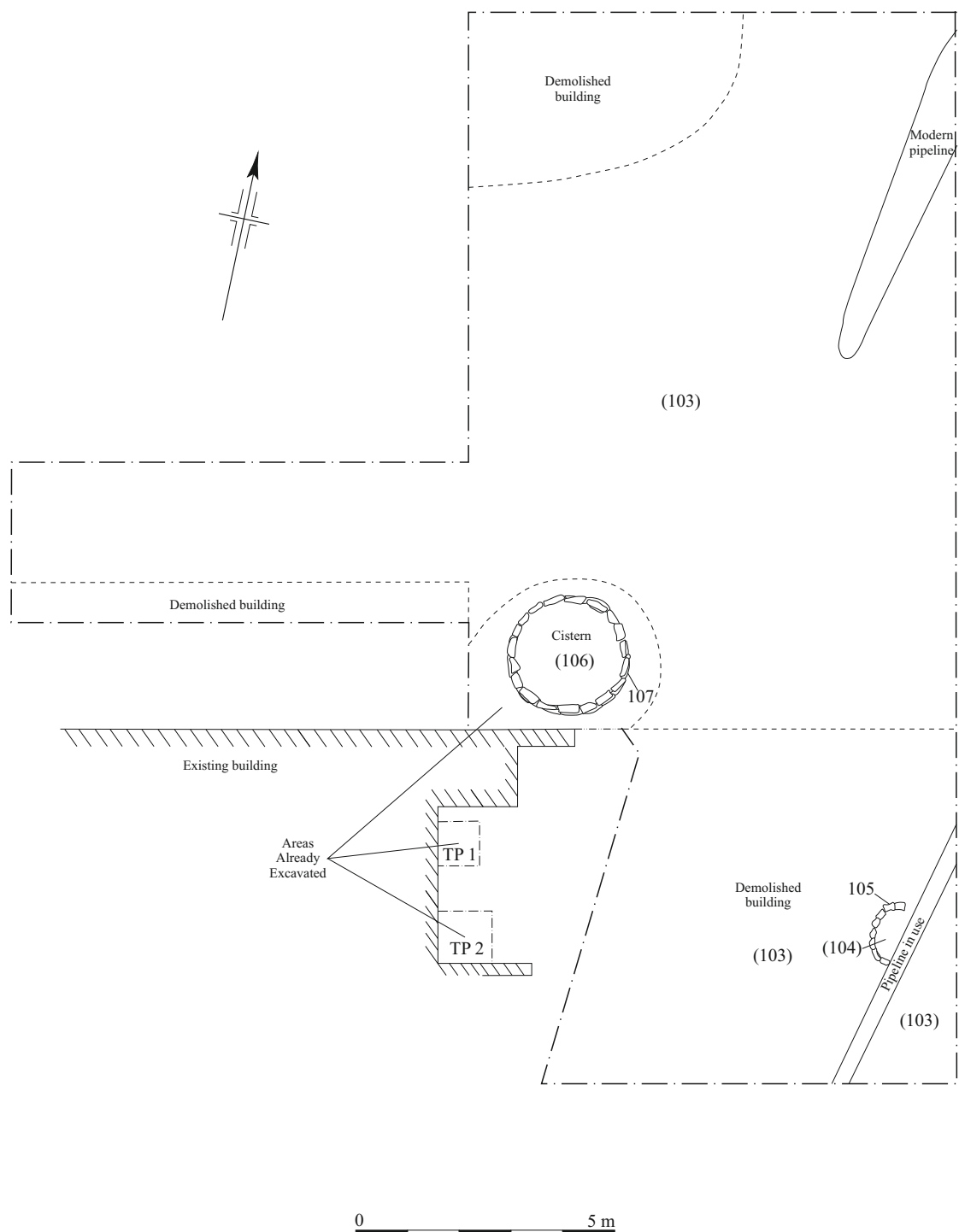


Figure 2. Site plan



Plate 1 - General view of site, east side



Plate 2 - General view of site, west side



Plate 3 - General view of site, north side



Plate 4 – Modern Cistern [107]

sandy silt with a large percentage (90%) of burnt material. The feature was not excavated.

The second feature cut into (103) was a modern cistern [107], to the north of the existing building. Cistern [107], rounded (2.30m in diameter) and brick-lined, was filled with a soft dark-brown sandy silt fill, consisting mainly (70%) of modern building material rubble, with a large portion (15%) of chalk (Plate 4). The feature was not excavated.

5 FINDS

Two modern glass bottles were recovered from the topsoil (101), and a single sheep bone came from modern pit [105]. The finds were not retained.

6 DISCUSSION

The two layers (101) and (102) above the natural (103) failed to reveal any archaeological feature or finds. The two recovered features [105] and [107] are modern and were connected to the demolished extensions to the existing building.

7 ARCHIVE

In agreement with the Oxfordshire County Historic and Natural Environment Team due to the lack of positive results no archive has been created.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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