

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**AT**

**GRANGE FARM, SHIPTON LEE,  
QUANTON, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

**NGR SP735208**

*On behalf of*

*Romark Estates Ltd*

**FEBRUARY 2014**

**REPORT FOR** Romark Estates Ltd  
The Coach House  
Thomas Street  
Wallingford  
Oxfordshire  
OX10 0BH

**PREPARED BY** Wayne Perkins  
with contributions by  
David Gilbert and Andrej Čelovský

**ILLUSTRATION BY** Andrej Čelovský

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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](mailto:info@jmheritageservices.co.uk)

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## **Summary**

*A watching brief was undertaken by John Moore Heritage Services over twelve visits to Grange Farm between June and October 2013 with a further two visits in January 2014. The building complex of the Grange was being redeveloped for modern housing which necessitated the wholesale refurbishment, restoration and in some cases, demolition of certain building elements. In the latter case, the buildings were for the most part 20<sup>th</sup> century additions that were considered to be out of keeping with the restoration or which impeded access or development of the site.*

*Internally, certain buildings were to be divided into new configurations as living units where walls were added (or taken away), floors lowered and extra services added. All these works were monitored.*

*Externally, new services had to be provided and service trenches had to be excavated up to and into some of the housing units. These excavations and those for extra footings or underpinning were also closely monitored. Further small-scale remedial works were also undertaken with an archaeologist present.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Location**

The building complex which makes up Grange Farm is located in the hamlet of Shipton Lee, Quainton, Buckinghamshire at NGR SP735208. According to the British Geological Survey maps the underlying geology is alluvial clay underlain by gravel (BGS 2002). However, the site borders the West Walton Formation Mudstone which is a predominantly pale grey in colour and this was observed in several of the deeper excavations.

### **1.2 Planning Background**

Aylesbury Vale District Council had given permission for the conversion of the existing farm buildings to provide four new dwellings and conversion of an existing dwelling to provide two dwellings with associated parking (12/01108/APP). Due to the sites potential to contain archaeological remains and architectural features of historic interest, a condition was attached to the permission for a programme of archaeological work to be carried out during any ground-works, restoration, development and demolition. Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (BCAS) advised that an archaeological watching brief should be carried out during these works.

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

The hamlet of Shipton Lee was recorded in the Domesday Book at which time it was divided into three holdings of one, two and seven hides (Morris 1978). The Place name Shipton derives from “Sheep hill” and has become conflated with Lee or Lee Grange, the former name of Grange Farm (Mawer and Stenton, 1925, 110-111). Shortly before 1146 the manor at Shipton Lee was given to Thame Abbey, a

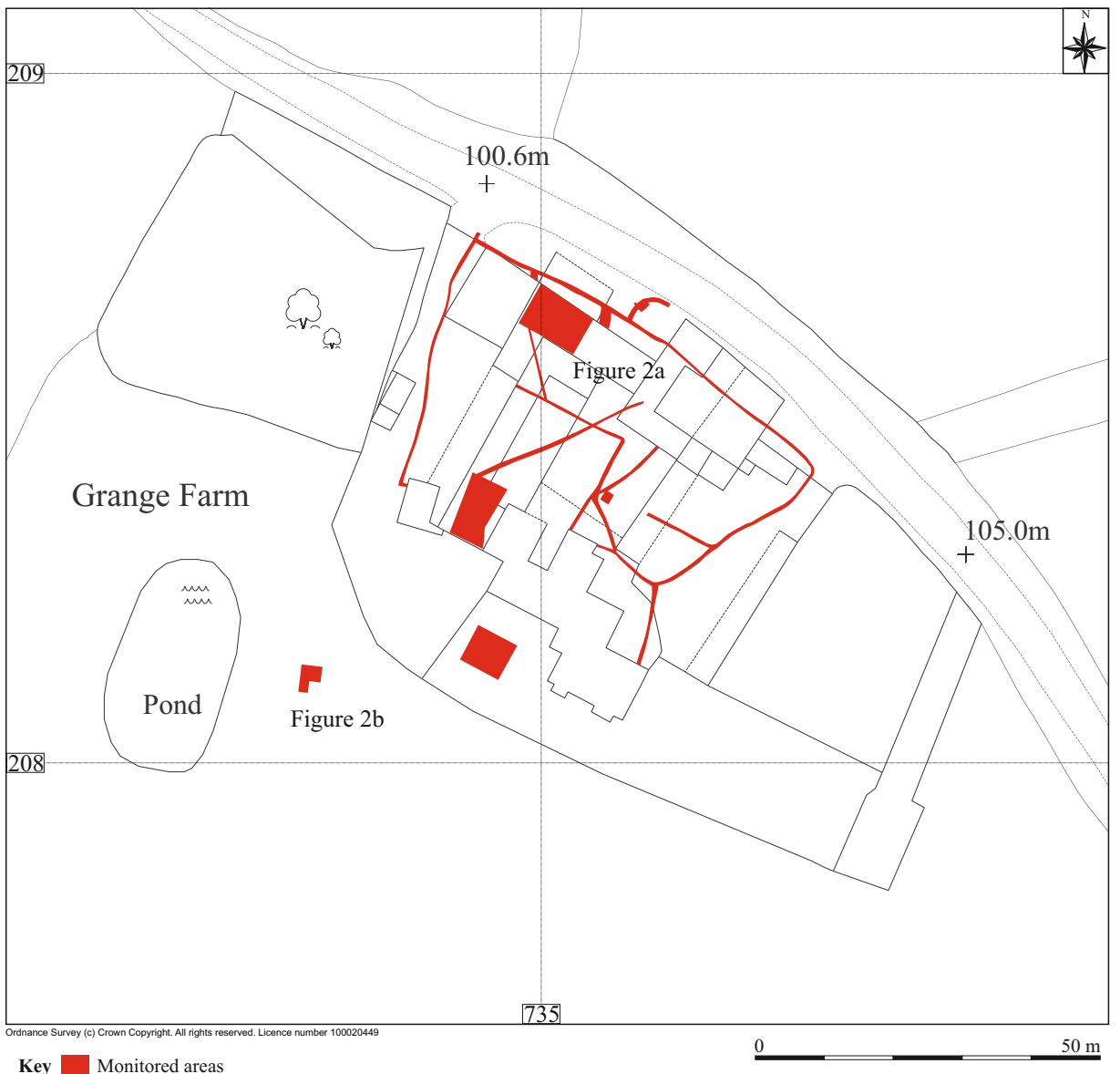
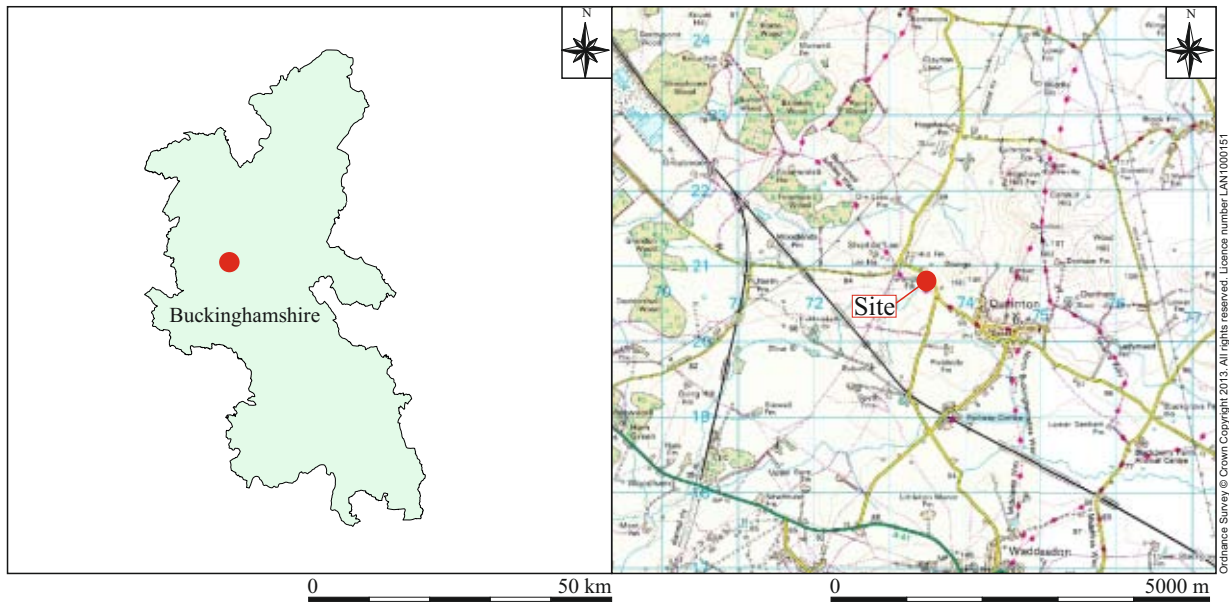


Figure 1: Site location

Cistercian house founded in 1137 by William Fitz Otho, brother of the first abbot. Lee Grange itself appears to have been acquired by the Abbey by the mid 13<sup>th</sup> century. In 1291 a mill and court are mentioned along with the land. In 1365 the Abbot obtained a grant of free warren. Shipton Lee remained with Thame Abbey until its dissolution in 1539 (Page, 1927, 93, 95-97; Rodwell, 1999) and in AD 1540 its possessions in Quainton were granted to Michael Dormer (Page 1927). A chapel appurtenant to Lee Grange was demolished before the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

A survey of the manor from 1624 records a total of 1661 acres with manor house orchards, garden, 2 barns, stables and yards, a warren, dove house and fishponds. In addition to the manor itself, the manor comprised one messuage, 15 tenements, 2 "little cottage houses" and a "house" unoccupied (Rodwell, 1999, 60-67). In the post-medieval period it appears to have become a gentry farm and was subject to architectural embellishment and landscaping of the grounds. Traces of an avenue on Grange Hill running down towards the farm can be seen on the 2<sup>nd</sup> surveyors map from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The site of the Cistercian Grange, which was to become the residence of the Dormers, is thought to have been located in the vicinity of the present farmhouse and buildings at Grange Farm (Page 1927; Kidd 2006). The documents mention a chapel at Lee Grange which was endowed with a chancel in AD 1312 (Page 1927). This was destroyed before the end of the eighteenth century and its location is unknown. A chapel within the grounds may suggest that the Grange also played the role of a retreat as has been proposed for Grange complexes elsewhere (Allen 1994: 447). The positions of the demolished buildings of the monastic grange and mansion house occupied by the Dormer family are similarly uncertain. The only standing early structure is the barn in the northern part of the proposed development area (Rodwell 2006).

Otherwise, features attributed to the medieval period are mainly confined to the fields immediately west and south of the proposed development which were surveyed in 2004 (Kidd 2006). A flight of four fishponds fed by an embanked leat occupies the western side of the complex. The southernmost pond may be later in date, while it has been suggested that an area of depressed ground to the east of the ponds may represent an earlier pond bay. It was common practice for fishpond complexes to have been attached to monasteries and monastic properties to provide fish for the main religious houses and the presence of three is considered 'notable' by Bond (Bond 1988, quoted in Kidd 2006).

Two large platforms are located to the east of this, one immediately to the south of the proposed development area and the other extending into the south-eastern part of the site. The alignment of the surviving scarp on an existing boundary wall in the farm complex has raised the possibility that this easternmost platform may mark the site of the demolished buildings of the monastic grange. The only other earthworks on the eastern fringes of the complex are two low embankments linked to a roughly oval mound. These are thought to be pillow mounds marking the site of a medieval rabbit warren, an interpretation supported by the historic field name of 'The Warren Close' (Kidd 2006; Section 4.4.2).

The farm complex encompasses a diverse and complex range of buildings which vary considerably in terms of plan form, architecture, date and materials. The earliest extant building within the current complex is a Grade II listed timber framed barn attributed to the 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> century. Cut masonry blocks that form the base of the eastern wall of the barn also form the northern wall of an unlisted barn abutting the southeast corner of the barn. It has been questioned as to whether these may represent the remains of earlier medieval buildings or boundary wall, or if they may be re-used elements from the earlier grange buildings. The 16<sup>th</sup> -17<sup>th</sup> century barn has 5 bays, massive queen post trusses and ogee wind braces. A late 18<sup>th</sup>-early 19<sup>th</sup> century stable block attached to the west end is of chequered brick, two stories with unusually high quality timbers for an agricultural building including use of beams with chamfered stops (Rodwell 2006).

The Grade II listed Grange Farmhouse, timber-framed with brick in-fill, is attributed to the 17<sup>th</sup> century with much 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> century alteration. The house is notable for the rare survival of c.18th century blinds. There is also Grade II listed dovecote 10m west of the farmhouse, a square brick building attributed to the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. The modern farm comprises of three courtyards delimited by a combination of the above listed structures and a number of 18<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century farm buildings linked by distinctive red brick walls. A kitchen garden lies to the east of the farm, enclosed by a red brick wall with brick store attached.

During investigate works pre-application a bread oven was found in the farmhouse. This was recorded by JMHS (2012).

## **2 AIMS OF THE WATCHING BRIEF**

- To make a record of any significant remains revealed during the course of any operations that had the potential to disturb or destroy such archaeological remains or architectural features.
- In particular to monitor the trench excavation for the introduction of services to the buildings, the demolition of any buildings (or building components) and the excavation of pits for footings, foundations or underpinning.

## **3 STRATEGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation approved by Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service.

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 (1994 & 1999).



## 3.2 Methodology

In the first phase, the excavation of the services trench was carried out under the supervision of the archaeologist. The layers were excavated incrementally allowing the archaeologist to monitor the soil changes and/or the presence of archaeological features. The removal of the cobbled surface of the Inner Courtyard (A5) was also monitored by the archaeologist.

In the second phase, the excavation of the drainage trench and the pit for the septic tank were carried out under the supervision of the archaeologist

Finally, a series of small-scale renovation operations were monitored and recorded at a variety of locations around the building complex.

## 4 RESULTS

### 4.1 Introduction

All citations relating to the buildings are annotated by the numbering system used in the initial Desk Based Assessment (DBA) by Frances Raymond (2006) and Building Architectural Survey by Rodwell (2006).

A1 Entrance & driveway (Access A)

A2 Southern Courtyard

A3 Farmhouse Courtyard

A4 Garden

A5 Inner Courtyard

A6 Northern Courtyard (Access C)

A7 Outer Courtyard (Access B)

A8 Northern area(s)

B1 The Old Barn

B2 Farmhouse

B3 Dovecote

B4 Stable Block

B5 Cart Shed

B6 South Range

B7 Stables

B8 Cattle Shed

B9 Modern building

Wells A, B, C & D

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.



Figure 2: Site plan

## 4.2 The Services Trench: Area A8 to A1.

The first operation was the removal of the cobbled surface (1001) belonging to the Inner Courtyard (A5) which revealed the cobbles themselves to be large boulders and river pebbles with the occasional limestone block (Plate 1, foreground) which had been lain directly onto a dark grey clay-sand (1002).

To furnish modern services to the building units, a trench had to be excavated to bring the services into each of the buildings from the main road at the northwest corner of the site. It commenced mid-way along the north face of the Stable Block (B4) and was dug westwards along the wall to the northwest corner where it revealed a number of layers, mainly modern.

The first layer to be encountered was layer (1003), which was the modern tarmac lain on a bed of crushed stone (1004). Below this, a mix of hardcore (1005) overlay a layer of degraded limestone blocks and clay (1006). Underneath this sequence, at 0.38m below the present ground surface a brick built rainwater culvert [1007] was discovered which had become blocked by silt (Fig. 2). This culvert was to be uncovered several times during the following service trench digging operations and was seen to run along the entire north face of the building complex. In some cases it had been capped by a stone slab (of differing materials) dependent upon which stretch was exposed.

Excavation of the service trench proceeded between the outer north wall of the Stable Block building (B4) and the well (Well A), situated on the northwest corner of the Grange. Here the trench cut through a number of large, roughly-squared limestone blocks 1010 which acted as the edgings or threshold for the drive leading to the driveway A1. The blocks were set upon a bedding layer about 0.08m thick (1014) which in turn overlaid a bed of re-deposited grey clay (1008). These in turn sealed what appeared to be the cut of a pit 1017 of unknown purpose (Fig 3, S102). The pit itself had cut layer (1015) which was a make-up layer of compacted clay and crushed, degraded stone.

The excavation of the service trench continued from the northwest entranceway (Access A) along the length of the driveway (A1) to the Dovecote (B3) at the southwest corner of the Grange. At approximately halfway down its length, at 22m south of the northwest entrance, two ditches were observed exiting the farm complex radially. It is unknown as to whether they emptied out into a ditch running parallel to the driveway or into the flight of fishponds which are situated along the western edge of the buildings. The former would seem a better proposition as the fill had some of the properties of cess which would pollute the ponds if it had entered untreated.

Two sections were recorded which revealed that the surface of the driveway once consisted of a cobbled surface 1019, 0.16m thick (most of which had been destroyed or lost prior to, and during, the establishment of the building works) which had been lain upon a layer of made-ground consisting of compacted clay and crushed stone (1020) 0.19m thick. This was probably a continuation of layer (1015) which had been observed and noted at the entranceway to the driveway in section S102. Beneath these layers were found a thick layer of what appeared to be mid grey-brownish silty clay (1021) which was re-deposited natural clay due to the presence of ceramic building

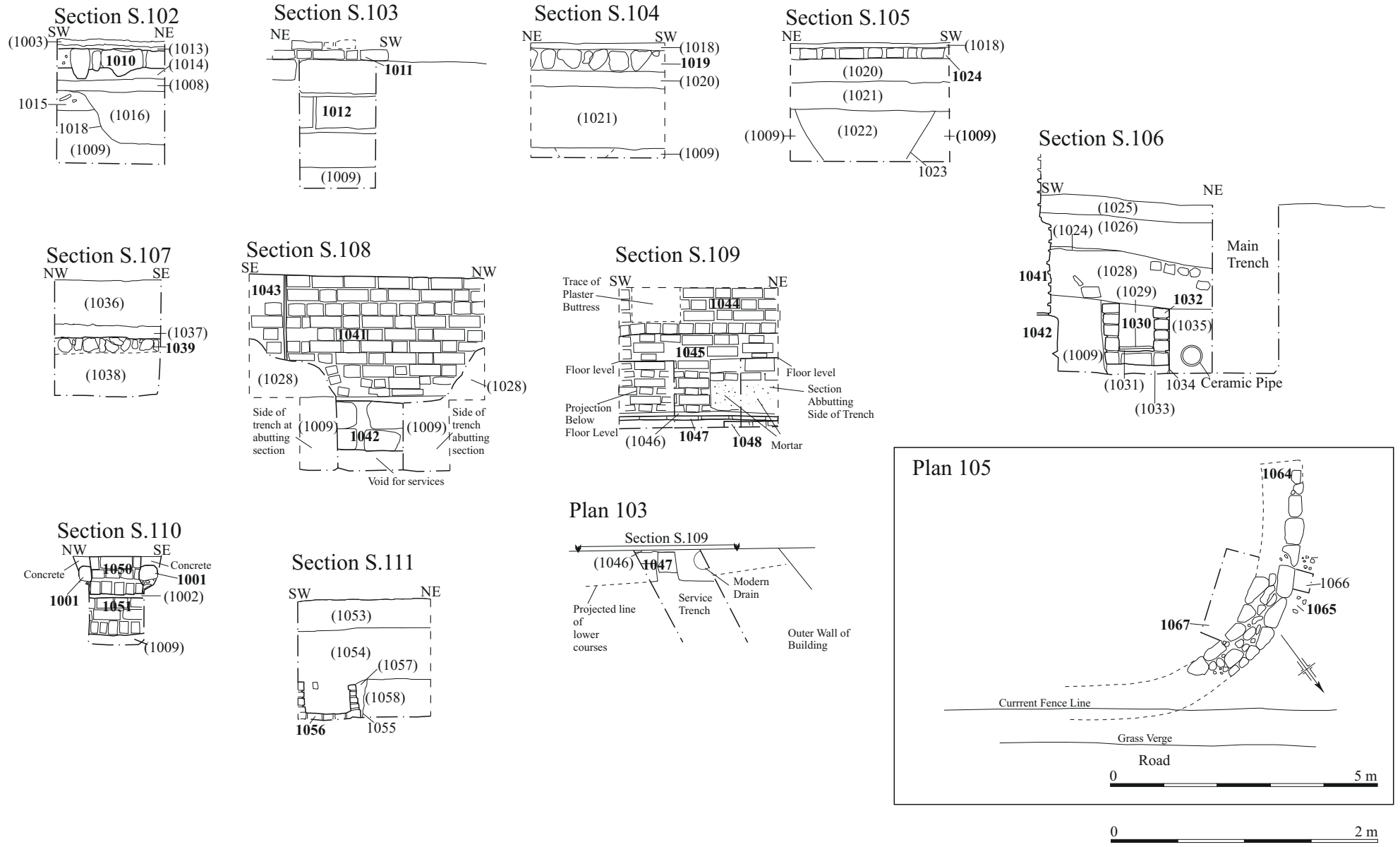


Figure 3: Sections 102-111 & Plan 103 & 105.

material. Here it was around 0.45m in depth but feathered out towards the south at section S105 where at this point it measured only 0.23m in depth.

In section S104 Ditch A (Figs. 2 & 3) was hard to observe, seen only as a dark staining at the base of the trench, which seemed to suggest cess or a high organic content. At this point the depth of the trench was only just cutting the natural geology at 0.80m below the modern ground surface. In the Section S105, a couple of metres to the south, the natural could be seen at a greater depth. Ditch B, context 1023, was clearer in Section S105 (Figs. 2 & 3, Plate 2), and its edges could be perceived as cutting the natural (1009) quite clearly. The fill was tenacious dark grey (blackish) silty clay with flecks of charcoal. The ditch was 1.05m wide at the top and at least 0.34m deep. Upon viewing the buildings from the southwest, it is possible to see that the site has been positioned upon a building platform with the ground falling away gradually to the south. It shows that the Grange has been subtly terraced into this slope.

Finally, for this first phase of the operation, the services trench entered the Dovecote (B3) by its west wall where the foundations were revealed in section S103 (Fig. 3, Plate 4). The brick foundation courses 1011 were laid upon three courses of large, squared and faced limestone blocks (220mm x 55mm) 1012 below the ground surface. These, in turn, sat directly upon the mid brown-greyish clay natural (1009). This building method was observed elsewhere in other buildings across the range as will be detailed later in the report.

### **4.3 The Services Trench: Area A8**

The next section of the service trench to be excavated was from the starting point mid-way along the Stable Block (B4) along the north face of the Grange up to Access Point B at the northeast corner of the building. When a spur was cut to enter the Stable Block (B4), the brick built culvert 1032, previously observed at the northwest corner of the building, was pierced a second time providing a section through the layers abutting the outside wall of the building 1041. Section S106 (Fig. 3, Plate 3) revealed that a modern garden had been laid over the old ground surface, consisting of layers (1025) and (1026) of topsoil and subsoil, being 0.14m and 0.32m in depth respectively. These layers were on top of a thin layer of mortar 'trample' (1027) which lay over a made ground layer of dark brown-greyish silty clay (1028) which contained building rubble and bricks at around 0.41m thick. These layers sealed the brick built culvert which was of a single skin of bricks 1032 with a square, 'U' shaped profile, set upon a thick bed of lime mortar (1033). Inside the culvert, to create a base, reused roofing tiles 1030 were laid upon a mortar bed (1031). The culvert was filled with a tenacious dark brown silty clay (1029).

At this point where the services entered the Stable Block (B4) another Section, S108 was made so as to observe the foundation layers. Here, the bricks of the outer wall of building B4 had been laid in Flemish bond 1041, the last eight courses of which had been stepped out from the vertical of the wall to create a series of foundation courses which looked like a 'step' when viewed in profile. In turn, these courses had been laid upon two courses of faced and squared limestone blocks 1042 similar to those which had been seen at the Dovecote (B3) previously (Plate 5). This suggests a unity of building practices applied to these two buildings.

#### **4.4 The Services Trench: areas A7 to A8**

The last section of the service trench to be dug was from the Farmhouse (B2) and one of its subsidiary buildings to the north-west (B2e) across the exterior courtyard (A7). The trench was dug northwards from the buildings along the eastern edge of the Grange to loop back around the northeast corner and to connect to where it began in front of the Stable Block (B4). At 7m east of Building B2e, a small section, S107 (Fig. 3), was recorded to show the layers in this part of the site. Here again, as observed to the north of the buildings, the original yard surface had been cobbled but it had been buried under a modern garden consisting of topsoil (1036) 0.34m thick and a subsoil (1037) 0.07m thick. Below these layers, the cobbled surface 1039 sat directly upon the natural which was a dark grey clay (or mudstone) that had been contaminated with a dark, oily fluid, possibly diesel. This contamination was present over the entire area of the Exterior Courtyard (A7) up to the entrance at the northeast corner of the buildings (Access B).

Halfway along the excavation of this trench an extra spur was made towards the former Cattle Shed (building B8) and the trench was dug against its outer wall. Here, Section S109 (Fig. 3) revealed a much deeper and wider footing to this building than perhaps could have been expected for a building of this size and function. The traces of brick pilaster buttresses could be seen at intervals along the face of wall which had been laid in Flemish bond 1044. The wall itself sat upon a single course of headers. This header course had been laid upon eight foundation courses of brick 1045. However, beneath this enterprise, further courses of brick could be observed but set on a slightly different alignment, consisting first of all of a layer of mortar (1046) over a 'levelling' layer of tiles 1046. These overlay further brick courses 1048. This difference in alignment can be seen in Plan P103 (Fig. 3) although the sondage was too small to get a clear view. It is possible that the mortar layer (1046), tiles 1047 and brick courses 1048 could belong to a different building or different phase of the building.

No other archaeological features were observed when the trench was excavated between building B8 and the northeast corner of the building complex (Access B). Whilst the trench was excavated along the north face of the buildings back to the point at which it had begun at Stable Block (B8), no other features were observed apart from the brick-built conduit that has previously been mentioned. No further sections were drawn but a photo record of its course was made.

#### **4.5 The Soak-Aways: Inner Courtyard (A5)**

The original plans for the two soak-aways in the Inner Courtyard (A5) were abandoned by the architect in favour of having a series of drainage pipes to take the rainwater away from the centre of the building complex. As a result, excavations by the mechanical digger were not as deep as first planned.

A sondage for one of these rainwater trenches was excavated against the outside south wall of the Stables (building B7) and recorded in section S110 (Fig. 3). This revealed a totally different series of brick courses and foundations as to what had been observed previously. The brick courses of the wall [1050] were laid upon five foundation courses alternating between 'headers,' bricks set on edge and two stretcher

courses set upon a final course of headers. These in turn rested upon the clay natural (1009). No large limestone block foundations were observed and the courses appeared to be *ad hoc* as opposed to having been laid in strictly uniform courses. Both the Stable (B7) and the Cattle Stall (B8) are built on a different alignment to both the Old Barn (B1) and the Farmhouse (B2) buildings.

#### **4.6 Excavation of Trench & Water Treatment Tank (Area A2)**

The excavation of a trench by mechanical digger was required for a new pipe leading from the buildings to the Water Treatment Tank designed to recycle water for re-use. The trench was excavated from a point 10m west of the southwest corner of the Dovecote (B3). The trench then ran for 25m approximately south to the pit excavated to receive the tank which had to be dug to the dimensions 4m x 3m and 3m deep. No archaeological deposits were observed during the excavation of the trench itself but it was noted that the lower layers appeared to be more organic in nature as the trench terminal neared the second pond in the flight of ponds which ran down the west side of the Grange.

However, when the pit was dug to receive the Water Tank another brick built culvert – identical in construction to the one seen to the north of the Grange – was revealed. A number of different layers were observed in Section S111, including the ground surface (1053) at 0.21m thick over layer (1054) which, unusually, overlaid and filled the brick culvert. As there were no signs of capping slabs on this stretch of culvert it is possible to envisage that it was open to the elements and the structure had become buried and filled with soil over time. The culvert itself, 1056 (Fig. 2 plan b), was within cut 1055 and had been backfilled (1057) following construction. The cut for the culvert 1055 had been made into one of the organic-rich layers of the pond (or ponds) at the bottom of the flight which was a mid-brown, greenish silty-clay (1058) that contained brick and tile fragments, animal bone and flecks of charcoal. It would appear refuse, old food stuffs and general detritus had worked their way into the water course over time, intentionally or not.

#### **4.7 Demolition & Remedial Works**

A number of small-scale remedial works were also observed and photographic records made. It had been agreed that a number of the 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings could be removed from the site as they were not in keeping with the original core of the Grange or, in some cases, impeded the renovations and conversion of the buildings into new habitation units.

Demolition of a small section of the curtain wall between buildings B3 (the Dovecote) and B6 (the South Range) was recorded in a series of photographs.

A brick-built water culvert was seen to pass below the floor of the South Range (B6) aligned northeast southwest but it was wider and more substantial than the one previously observed outside the buildings to the north and it possessed a barrel-vault roof in brick.

Four wells were opened during the works. Well A was situated at the northwest corner of the Grange next to the main road. It is interesting to note that only the top courses

are in brick whilst lower down it is made of limestone blocks, ragstone and flint which may indicate that it predates the later brick additions. Wells B & C, south of building B2, were connected with an overflow between them so they may have been in fact water cisterns to collect rainwater as opposed to wells. Well D was situated to the east of the Farmhouse (B2) in the garden (A4). Photographs were taken of each.

A large bread oven was discovered after the removal of a (modern) false wall in building B2c. Its openings are visible in the northwest corner of Building B2c and the semi-circular main body of the oven is visible in the South Range of building B6. This operation allowed further investigation and finessing of the datable elements during a Watching Brief visit (JMHS 2012).

Buildings B2b, B2c & B2d attached to the west of the Farmhouse (B2a), each have a number of interesting features. B2b has a small area of flagstones preserved along with a carved wooden screen at the north doorway (Plate 6). The dividing wall between B2b and B2d is much thicker than any other wall in the entire complex, being made of large, roughly squared and faced limestone blocks. It also contains some 'herringbone' brickwork (Plate 7).

In building B2d – part of the Farmhouse range, the Minton chequered tile floor 1059 was lifted and found to sit upon a bed of sand loosely mixed with mortar (1060). Below this thin bedding layer the stamped earth floor (1061) underneath was reduced by hand and produced a number of modern pot sherds and clay pipe stems.

Directly outside the Old Barn, on the northern strip (A8) next to the main road, a number of large blocks, set in a half-moon plan creating a curving wall (1064) were discovered (Figs. 2, & 3 P105). Either side of the wall was abutted by cobbles of varying quality (1065, 1067). The blocks of the wall were dressed with a curved edge, one of the largest measuring 540mm x 410mm and 140mm deep - a substantial stone. They appear to be blocks recycled to create a decorative entranceway to the pedestrian access to the Old Barn located 3m to the west of the large double doors at the east end. A small sondage cut next to the blocks revealed that brick rubble (1066), ran underneath these blocks and the surrounding cobbles, so it is likely that the structure dates to the time when a crude garden was laid over the strip of ground (A8), in the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century.

#### **4.8 Ground reduction & Footing trench (Area B1)**

Archaeological watching brief was carried out during the ground reduction and excavation of the central footing trench in the northwest part of the Old Barn B1 (Fig. 2a). The ground was reduced to the general level *c.* 101.30m above OD and covered an area of 6.30x7.90m. The footing trench was located 6.9m from the external northwest of the Old Barn. It was 6.30m long, 0.70m to 1m wide and 0.65m deep. The lowest deposit was 0.65m thick (as excavated) bluish mid grey natural clay (1174). Overlying deposit (1174) was 0.20m thick yellowish light brown sandy silt (1173) make up layer, possible bedding for barn floor. Located next to the northwest wall of barn, cut into deposit (1173) was a 'U' shape cut 0.60m wide and 9.5m long in total, which was interpreted as construction cut of an animal feeder. It was backfilled with loose dark brown sandy silt contained occasional 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century bricks. None of bricks were retained. Also were recorded remains of an internal 20<sup>th</sup> century wall



(1176) of uncertain structure. Construction cut (1175) was 3.70m long, 0.24m wide and 0.08m deep, and it was aligned northwest to southeast. Wall foundation (1176) was built of yellowish light brown brick (108x230x72mm) with three parallel rows of eight holes. Bricks were laid down in header coursing with no bonding material. None of bricks were retained.

## 5 FINDS

### 5.1. Introduction

Overall, very few finds were recovered from any of the contexts examined. None of the excavations or ground works that took place uncovered any (usually ubiquitous) refuse pits which may have cast light on the activities in the farm buildings. One has to suspect refuse was well managed and dealt with at some distance from the main buildings.

### 5.2 Pottery (By David Gilbert)

The pottery assemblage comprised 8 sherds with a total weight of 269g from five contexts. It was all medieval or later and not retained after identification. It was recorded using the coding system of the Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit type-series (e.g. Mynard and Zeepvat 1992; Zeepvat et al. 1994), as follows:

Context (1029)		
PM22	<i>White Salt-glazed Stoneware</i> . 18 <sup>th</sup> century	1 sherd 8g
Context (1054)		
PM8	<i>Lead Glazed Earthenware</i> . 17 <sup>th</sup> century +	1 sherd 12g
Context (1058)		
MC3	<i>Olney Hyde 'A' Ware</i> . 13 <sup>th</sup> -14 <sup>th</sup> century	1 sherd 82g
Context (1061)		
PM 25	<i>White Earthenware</i> . Late 18 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup> century	2 sherds 37g
PM8	<i>Lead Glazed Earthenware</i> . 17 <sup>th</sup> century +	2 sherd 107g
PM5	<i>Trailed Slipware</i> . 17 <sup>th</sup> century	1 sherd 55g
Context (1069)		
PM 25	<i>White Earthenware</i> . Late 18 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup> century	3 Sherds 40g
PM23	<i>Creamware</i> . 18 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup> century	1 sherd 54g

## 6 DISCUSSION

### 6.1 Grange Plan & Layout of Buildings

Below is a table from Raymond's Desk Based Assessment (DBA) of 2006 (Raymond 2006: 29) (Table 1: Historical Development of the Farm Buildings) to which we can now add the results of the present fieldwork, Rodwell's architectural analysis in 2006 of the buildings and their phasing as well as the 12-trench evaluation.

In plan, the Grange complex can be seen to consist of four separate groups of buildings on slightly differing alignments linked together by later walls or

outbuildings to form a series of closed yards - which create the cohesive whole seen today. These additions were in fact piece-meal and of differing dates as explained in Rodwell's 2006 survey.

**Table 1: Historical Development of the Farm Buildings after Raymond (2006).**

<b>Building</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Origins</b>	<b>Alterations</b>	<b>Present</b>
B1	The Old Barn	c.15-17 <sup>th</sup> C	19 <sup>th</sup>	19 <sup>th</sup>
B2	The Farmhouse	c.17 <sup>th</sup> C	18/19 <sup>th</sup>	19 <sup>th</sup>
B3	The Dovecote	c.18 <sup>th</sup> C	18 <sup>th</sup>	20 <sup>th</sup>
B4	Stable Block (2-Storey)	c.18/19 <sup>th</sup> C	-	19 <sup>th</sup>
B5	Cart Shed	c.19 <sup>th</sup> C	-	20 <sup>th</sup>
B6	South Range	c.19 <sup>th</sup> C	-	19 <sup>th</sup>
B7	Stables	c.19 <sup>th</sup> C	-	19 <sup>th</sup>
B8	Cattle Shed	c.19 <sup>th</sup> C	-	19 <sup>th</sup>
B9	Modern building	c.19 <sup>th</sup> C	-	19 <sup>th</sup>
B10	Demolished	-		
B11	Demolished	-		
B12	Demolished	-		
B13	Demolished	-		
B14	Demolished	-		

## 6.2 The Old Barn (B1)

The origins of Old Barn has been dated variously as being pre-1517 by Pevsner & Williamson (1994), of 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> in century by the Ordnance Survey, 16<sup>th</sup> century by the DOE and of 17<sup>th</sup> origin by the RCHM (Raymond 2006: 29). Of all the buildings on the site it clearly displays the earliest building techniques compared to the others and has been studied in some detail (Rodwell 2006:16). Although there is variation amongst the interpretations, it is Rodwell's analysis which is the most in-depth and convincing.

The report points to the replacement of the east wall, suggesting that the Old Barn was originally much longer and has been foreshortened, possibly to allow the construction of the Stables (B7) (Rodwell 2006:20). In Rodwell's phasing plan for the buildings, it shows one interpretation where the outer, north wall of B7 - which is made up mixed stone blocks and brick elements 1062 - could have been a continuation of the Old Barn to its original length. This would put the Old Barn's entranceway around midway along the building as opposed to being on the north east corner as it is seen today. However, this interpretation is later reconsidered at the end of the report in favour for this wall as being a re-use of old materials as opposed to being an old wall line (Rodwell 2006:20).

Whatever its later fate, the Old Barn, according to Rodwell, displays elements more in keeping with Post-, as opposed to Pre-, Reformation barns in the region. To support this she cites the ad-mix of re-used roof timbers from earlier structures to support this theory (Rodwell 2006: 16). This observation was confirmed during the watching brief when an internal scaffolding cage was built inside the Old Barn during works and an opportunity was taken to observe the roofing timbers at close quarters which were found to consist of a number of re-used elements and were recorded in a series of photographs.

Evaluation Trenches 7 & 8 excavated by Mick Parsons inside the Old Barn did not find anything to contradict Rodwell's interpretation (Parsons 2007: 15). He noted the absence (or removal) of the floor or surface within the Old Barn and discovered a stone built drain beneath the current earthen floor, which ran along the building's northwest southeast axis. Furthermore, he supported Rodwell's assertion that the Old Barn dates to the later end of the date ranges suggested, that is to say, the 17<sup>th</sup> century (or later) (Parsons 2007: 23).

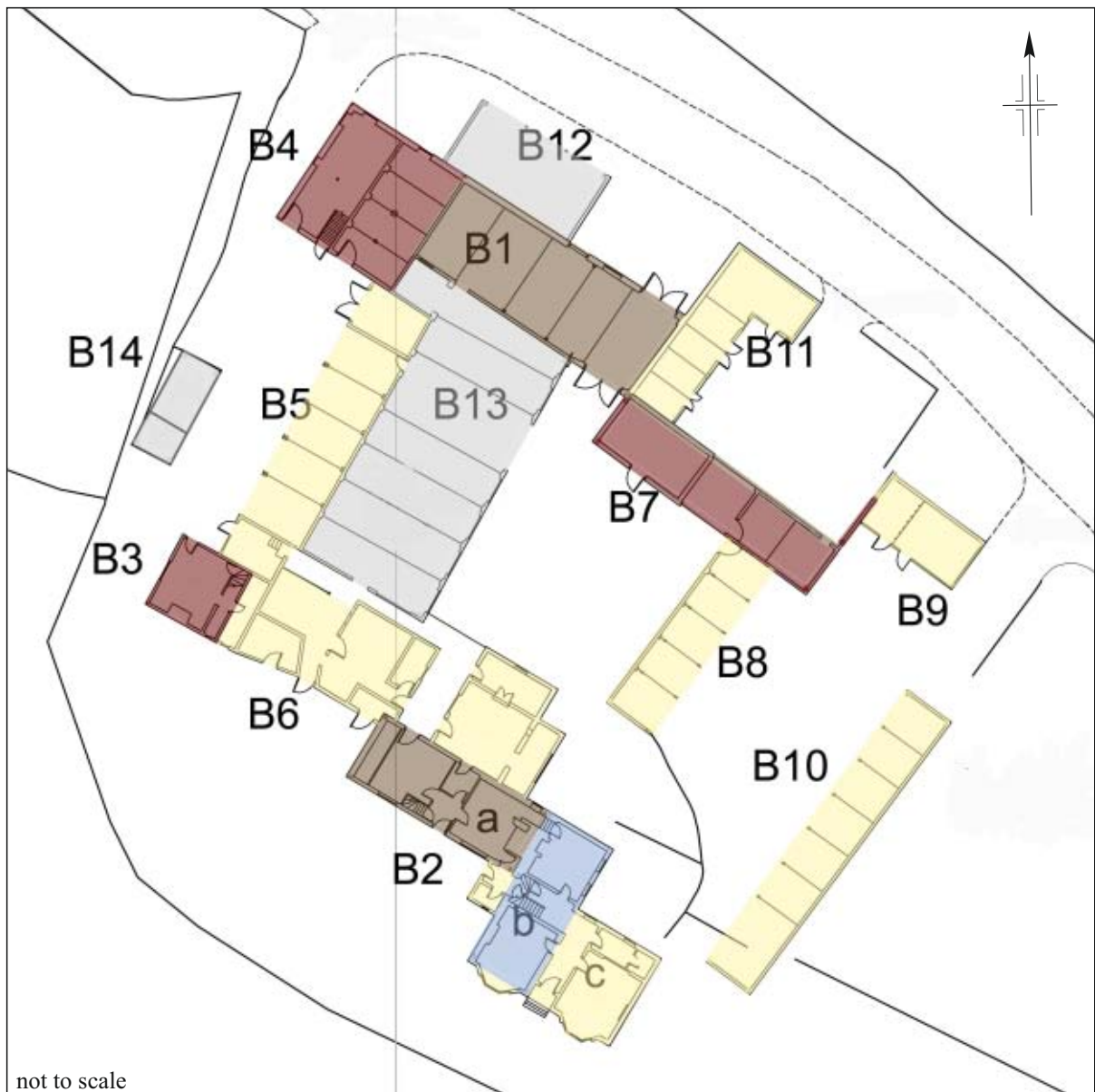
The archaeological watching brief did not reveal any archaeological features related to the earlier use of barn. The construction cut of the animal feeder was built in the 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century and remains of internal wall were associated with mid 20<sup>th</sup> century activities.

### **6.3 The Farmhouse buildings (B2a-B2e)**

The west wing of the Farmhouse (B2a) appears to have been constructed around the same time as the Old Barn (B1) according to Rodwell's architectural sequence (2006: 17). Taken together they are the principal and most substantial buildings of the Grange complex. The Farmhouse appears to have been originally built at the later end of the dates given for the origin of the Old Barn, that is to say the 17<sup>th</sup> century, but drastic rebuilding in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries provide the form we see today, adding first B2b and then B2c. Doubt still exists as to the site of the original Dormer Mansion or house and questions have arisen as to whether the existing Farmhouse was built upon the same spot or if it retained elements of the original building. Records exist that detail its re-building following its demolition; the dismantling of the building included the removal of the old foundation blocks. Furthermore, the rebuilding work in the Farmhouse, B2a phase, is said to have removed much of the original form leaving little to be seen today of the original structure (Raymond 2006: 19). All of which suggests a comprehensive dismantling of the original building – even if it existed on the same spot.

The north wall of B2a that separates it from annexe B2d is considerably thicker than many of the other walls of this building group. It may be all that remains of the earliest phase. At the northwest corner, and square to the Farmhouse, is the large bread oven and chimney discovered during restoration when a modern partition wall was removed. The oven itself has not been securely dated, but its connection to the Farmhouse and its alignment strongly suggests it serviced the main house. Yeates (JMHS 2012:8) has suggested a 17<sup>th</sup>, possible 16<sup>th</sup> century date for the chimney and oven. Therefore, the structures appear to be contemporary with the early phase of the farmhouse itself. Dating for the subsequent phases (B2b-B2c) has been proposed as mid 18<sup>th</sup> century for B2b and mid 19<sup>th</sup> for B2c according to Rodwell's scheme (Rodwell 2006: 18). Yeates generally accords with this view but with the caveat of a little variation in interpretation with regards the dating of certain building elements (JMHS 2012: 9).

In building B2d – part of the Farmhouse range, and dated to the 19<sup>th</sup> century phase of additional buildings- the Minton chequered tile floor 1059 was lifted and found to



**Key**

- Phase 1: pre 18th century
- Phase 2: early 18th century
- Phase 3: mid 18th century
- Phase 4: mid 19th century
- Phase 5: 20th century

Figure 4: Building phases

have been laid upon a bed of sand loosely mixed with mortar (1060). Below this thin bedding layer the stamped earth floor (1061) underneath was reduced by hand and produced a number of pot sherds and clay pipe stems. Both a sherd of Trilled Slipware and one sherd of Lead Glazed Earthenware date to the 17<sup>th</sup> century but they were mixed with sherds of White Earthenware of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The South Range (B6) has been identified as a further 19<sup>th</sup> century addition filling in the gap between the Farmhouse and the Dovecote (B3) thus creating the Inner Courtyard (A5). Of the few sherds recovered from beneath the modern concrete floor, both the White Earthenware and the Cream ware pottery proved to be of the 18/19<sup>th</sup> century.

#### **6.4 The Stable Block (B4).**

According to both the DOE and the Tithe Map of 1842, the Stable Block (B4) has been dated to the late 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, Rodwell points to the inclusion of an inscribed brick in the south elevation with the date '1724,' and believes that the architecture is consistent with this date (Rodwell 2006:19). The Stable Block shares its east wall with the Old Barn (B1) and abuts this older building. During the watching brief the lower courses of this wall were exposed during underpinning operations and large, roughly squared limestone blocks belonging to the Old Barn's foundations were observed and photographed in this trench.

#### **6.5 The Dovecote (B3)**

An early survey of the Manor of Shipton Lee in 1634 records a 'Dovehouse' which may or may not relate to the existing Dovecote on the site. The 'Dovehouse' was said to be located within the land parcel called The Warren. Raymond (2006:19) points out that it may relate to the existing Dovecote (B3) or that it may be a different, earlier structure elsewhere. One candidate may be the 'lost' building that appears to the south east of the current Dovecote on the 1842 Tithe Map and is discussed below.

The Dovecote on the southwest corner of the Grange is set at an entirely different angle to the rest of the buildings, its orientation being northeast southwest. It shares a number of similar architectural features to Stable Block (B4) and has been dated to the same period. Excavations for the service trench at both Section S108 under the Stable Block (B4) and under the Dovecote (B3) at Section S103 revealed a unity of building techniques and materials. Both buildings consisted of brick laid in Flemish bond with black-glazed checkerboard headers whose lower courses are set upon large limestone foundation blocks (3 courses at the Dovecote and 2 – possibly 3 but not visible – at the Stable Block). Today the Dovecote is seen as being connected to the other surrounding buildings (B5, B6) but they are both modern additions made in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. On the Tithe Map of 1842 Raymond points out that it is depicted as a freestanding building (Raymond 2006: 25). It could be suggested therefore, that its orientation was an aesthetic consideration and it had never been conceived to be part of a 'block' of buildings (Raymond 2006:10). Certainly, the 'kink' in the connecting wall between the Dovecote and the south range of B6 illustrates the difficulty the builders had of bringing it in line with the other buildings.

Further observations made during the watching brief of the foundations of both the Stable Block (B4) and the Dovecote (B3) confirmed that they possessed nearly identical architectural styles, building methods and materials. They are listed in Rodwell's phasing plan as belonging to Phase 2, the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. The unity of construction is considered to be, "...a group of good quality, carefully detailed outbuildings constructed in a distinctive chequered brickwork" (Rodwell 2006:22).

## 6.6 The 'Lost' Building

One building which has since been lost is marked on the Tithe Map of 1842. Raymond (2006:25) noted that, "...a square structure of similar dimensions to the Dovecote is shown immediately to the south-west of the (farm) house.." On this map, only the Old Barn (B1), the Stable Block (B4), possibly the Stables (B7) and the Farmhouse (B2a/B2b) are depicted but an anomalous, unrecorded structure can be seen just to the west of the Farmhouse (B2). However, caution is always advised when interpreting old maps and what appear to be representations of 'buildings' may prove to be something else. Frustratingly, the prior maps for the farm and surrounding area lack the detail required for the identification of separate buildings within the Grange complex. Raymond (2006: 32) suggests that this building may be the 'DoveHouse' referred to in the survey of 1634. This supposes that it was eventually demolished and replaced by the building of a new structure on the site of the present Dovecote (B3). Equally, it may be the site of the chapel dismantled in the 1700's. Whatever its true function, the building had disappeared from the maps by the time of the Survey Plan in the Sale Catalogue of 1867.

## 6.7 The Stables (B7) & Cattle Shed (B8)

Both B7 and B8 are listed as being 19<sup>th</sup> century additions according to both the O.S. First Edition and Sale Plans (Raymond 2006: 30). Rodwell has proposed that B7 should be considered as part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century building phase, yet it contains a number of architectural elements that differ from either the Dovecote (B3) or the Stable Block (B4) (Rodwell 2006:22). A sondage made in the south wall of B7 revealed a very different set of foundations to those recorded in either the Stable Block (B4) or the Dovecote (B3) as detailed earlier. Both the building techniques employed and the materials used suggest a different phase of building from B3 & B4, rather than this simply being the work of a different gang. There was no evidence in the sondage for the large limestone foundation blocks seen previously but rather, multiple brick courses set in a variety of bonds which provided the building's foundation. The variation in technique may be explained as a result of an economic decision made to recycle materials to hand, or may indeed represent a different building methodology. As a caveat, it must be stated that it is sometimes difficult to ascertain whether the materials are in fact recycled during limited investigations and in small sondages of this nature, and where samples, for whatever reason, cannot be taken.

The Stables (B7) contains a contentious piece of architecture in its north wall, 1062, which looks like a series of piers made up of mixed stone elements; three courses of large limestone blocks have been in-filled with later brick and other building materials. A question had been raised as to whether it is an original section of wall from the early Grange or a later re-use of recycled materials. Rodwell favours the

latter, unconvinced that it represents a pre-existing, pre Old Barn section of wall (Rodwell 2006:20). Following the demolition of the western section of 4 bays of this wall in November 2013, a number of brick foundation courses underneath were revealed [1070], whose bricks bore the same dimensions as those of the south wall of B7. It can, therefore, be confirmed through fieldwork that 1062 re-used elements and was not the original wall of an older building. The wall, utilising large stone blocks, may have been intended to create an impressive façade at the entrance to the coaching arch leading into the Inner Courtyard (A5). In some ways it could be viewed as a ‘folly.’

The Cattle Shed (B8), along with buildings B5, 6, 9, 10 & 11 can be seen to appear on various maps and plans of the complex within a ten-year window by examining the documents issued between 1856 and 1867 and can therefore be safely assigned to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### **6.8 The Culverts, Ditches & Lower Fishpond**

Of the brick built culvert, 1007/1032, running along the north of the Grange, only a sherd of White Salt-Glazed Stoneware pottery c.18<sup>th</sup> century and fragments of glass were recovered from its fill (1029). A brick sample, <1> was taken from the lowest course as revealed in Section S101 and has been tentatively dated as belonging to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The culvert itself was poorly constructed and utilised recycled roof tiles [1030] as well as ‘capstones’ of varying stone along its course. It would be safer to conclude that the culvert is of 19<sup>th</sup> century (or later) date.

The brick built culvert 1056, discovered 25m to the south-west of the Grange was covered and filled by a layer (1054) produced a single sherd of Lead Glazed Earthenware, which dates to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. However, the culvert displayed identical building practices to that found at the north 1007/1032 so there is no reason to believe that it does not also belong to this period, that is to say, the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the sherd is residual. In fact, here on the lower slope to the south of the Grange, downward movement of materials and colluvium has resulted in the presence of earlier pottery in the top and sub soils.

Of the two ditches, A & B, only small fragments of brick and tile were recovered which are notoriously difficult to date and gives us very little real information. However, the ditches were not canalised culverts as seen elsewhere on the site and may represent earlier, rustic forms of water management. However, no precise date can be given for these features.

During the excavation of the pit for the water tank 25m south of the Dovecote, a single pot sherd of Olney Hyde ‘A’ Ware, which dates to the 13-14<sup>th</sup> centuries, was found in the sediment of a relict pond and was the single find for this context. Therefore, it may be a waterborne artefact from elsewhere or eroded out of one of the layers around the farm over time. It is safe to assume that it is in a secondary context. It is the only piece of evidence of this date to arise during the watching brief but tantalisingly hints at the presence or activities surrounding the original Medieval Grange which had eluded all investigations thus far.

## 7 CONCLUSIONS

The buildings at Grange Farm have been interrogated via an architectural study (Historic Buildings Assessment) (Rodwell 2006), a Desk Based Assessment (Raymond 2006), an Archaeological Evaluation of 12 trenches (Parsons 2007), a site visit (JMHS 2012) and finally, through a number of monitoring visits during the on-going restoration works (this report). Although detail has been finessed in respect to some of the architectural detail, Rodwell's initial phasing for the Grange complex remains definitive as outlined in the table below.

**Table 2: Rodwells Building Phases & Structural Sequence (after Rodwell 2006: 21)**

Phase	Date Range	Buildings
1	16-17 <sup>th</sup> Century	B1, B2
2	18 <sup>th</sup> Century	B3, 4 & B7 (?)
3	19 <sup>th</sup> Century	B5, 6, 8-11
4	20 <sup>th</sup> Century	B12-14

Part of the watching brief was to look for any remains which may have pertained to the Medieval Cistercian Grange and the demolished chapel that had not been detected during either the Historic Building Assessment (HBA), the Desk Based Assessment (DBA) or the Evaluation phases. However, no Medieval deposits or structures were identified during any of the phases of investigation, so one must now conclude that either the Medieval foundations of the Grange were built in less durable wood (Parsons 2006: 23) or that they have been completely obliterated or incorporated into the current buildings (Raymond 2006: 19), or the most likely, that it was situated outside of the evaluation area (Kidd 2006:154).

In her discussion following the research carried out for the DBA Raymond concluded, "*There is no dateable medieval material from Grange Farm or any of the earthworks...*" (Raymond 2006: 31) and in the Evaluation report Parsons concluded, "*...no evidence of medieval activity was forthcoming.*" (Parsons 2006:23). Likewise, during the period of the Watching Brief, no medieval finds or architectural features were discovered or unearthed save for one sherd of pottery recovered from the sediment of a relict fish pond.

If further works bring no medieval remains to light then we have to conclude that the original Cistercian Grange was actually located some distance from the building complex we see today. A number of different documentary sources have all made reference to the Grange being located within this land parcel. Records from the Domesday Book (Morris 1979), analysis of the place-name derivation (Mawer & Stenton 1925), the records of Thame Abbey (Page 1927) and further record-analysis and map regression techniques (Rodwell 1996), have all attested to the possibility of a Grange somewhere on the site.

Taking the above into account we must refer back to Kidd's survey of 2006 which encompassed the grounds and fishponds around the Grange and which recorded two



large platforms to the south and southeast of the site. He noted that, “*The alignment of the surviving scarp on an existing boundary wall in the farm complex has raised the possibility that this easternmost platform may mark the site of the demolished buildings of the monastic grange.*” (Kidd 2006:154). The layout of Grange buildings moving during re-building is not unfamiliar, the Grange of Dean Court Farm in Cumnor, Oxon containing stone buildings of the 12<sup>th</sup> century were moved less than a hundred years later, “*..to a new site in the valley bottom*” (Allen 1994:219).

All the upstanding buildings of the Grange Farm complex are of brick save for the timbers visible on the Old Barn. No architectural elements could be construed as being medieval save for the large limestone blocks found as foundation courses under the Old Barn (B1), the Stable Block (B4), the Dovecote (B3), the larger stone elements of the north wall 1062 of the Stables (B7) and under the outside curtain wall (1063) of the Exterior Courtyard (A7). However, none of these blocks can be removed for further analysis and all are most certainly in secondary (re-used or recycled) contexts. The re-use or incorporation of earlier building materials into later ones was found in a survey of Leicestershire Granges (Courtney 1980:42). There is no reason to suppose the practice was uncommon elsewhere.

If the original Cistercian Grange was indeed located some metres away to the south east, it would have made an ideal quarry for the new buildings. However, the reason as to why the new buildings were re-sited slightly to the west is unknown. There are a number of comparisons to be made with Dean Court Grange at Cumnor, Oxon, where further land acquisition resulted in the re-siting and upgrading of the Grange with the addition of fishponds and a dovecote (Allen 1994: 447).

The fortunes of the Grange and the differing levels of investment over time can be seen reflected in both its building phases and its usage - if it had indeed become a refuge with the addition of a chapel in the 13<sup>th</sup> century then this may have slightly changed its orientation or purpose. However, according to the evidence on the ground, this was a working farm that supplied produce, especially fish, to the Abbey at Thame until its Dissolution in 1539. A year later it was granted to Michael Dormer who began remodelling it to suit his needs - as did the successive owners who, over the next three hundred years, re-shaped the farm and its environs until it gradually took the form that we see today.

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Plate 1. General view - cobbled surface 1001 in foreground.



Plate 2. Section S.105, Ditch B.



Plate 3. Section S.106, brick culvert 1032



Plate 4. Section S.103, Dovecote Foundations.



Plate 5. Section S.108,  
Building B4 foundations.



Plate 6. Building 2b, flagstones and wooden screen



Plate 7. Wall between Building B2b & B2d