

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**AT**

**COGGES MANOR FARM, WITNEY**

**OXFORDSHIRE**

**NGR SP 36128 09477**

*On behalf of*

*Cogges Heritage Trust*

**JANUARY 2015**

**REPORT FOR** Cogges Heritage Trust  
Cogges Manor Farm  
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## **Summary**

*John Moore Heritage Services undertook an archaeological watching brief on 19th November 2014. 16 postholes were dug for the construction of an adventure playground within the site of Cogges Manor Farm, a scheduled ancient monument. One posthole contained masonry remains of a possible medieval wall.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)**

The site is located at Cogges Manor Farm, Witney, Oxfordshire centred on NGR SP 36128 09477.

### **1.2 Planning Background**

English Heritage granted Scheduled Monument Consent (S00087326) for laying out of mown grass labyrinth, and installation of new adventure trail with play/climbing equipment along the north-south ditch. Due to the potential disturbance of archaeological remains a condition was attached requiring a full archaeological watching brief during construction works. The site is part of a Scheduled Ancient Monument (The remains of a medieval moated manor, priory, settlement and associated features, Cogges, Witney, Oxfordshire. Scheduled Monument No. SM 28177, HA 1016269).

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

The monument includes a series of earthworks and buried remains centred on the present Manor Farm Museum. These features include the remains of a moated manor, priory, settlement, water mill, and fishponds. The monument also includes a World War II pill box. Manor Farm Museum, which is Listed Grade II\*, is excluded from the scheduling, although the ground beneath it is included.

## **2 Aims of the Investigation**

The aims as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were:

- 2.1 To make a record of any significant remains revealed during the course of any operations that may disturb or destroy archaeological remains.
- 2.2 In particular to record any evidence of the medieval manor site and earlier Saxon settlement known in this location.

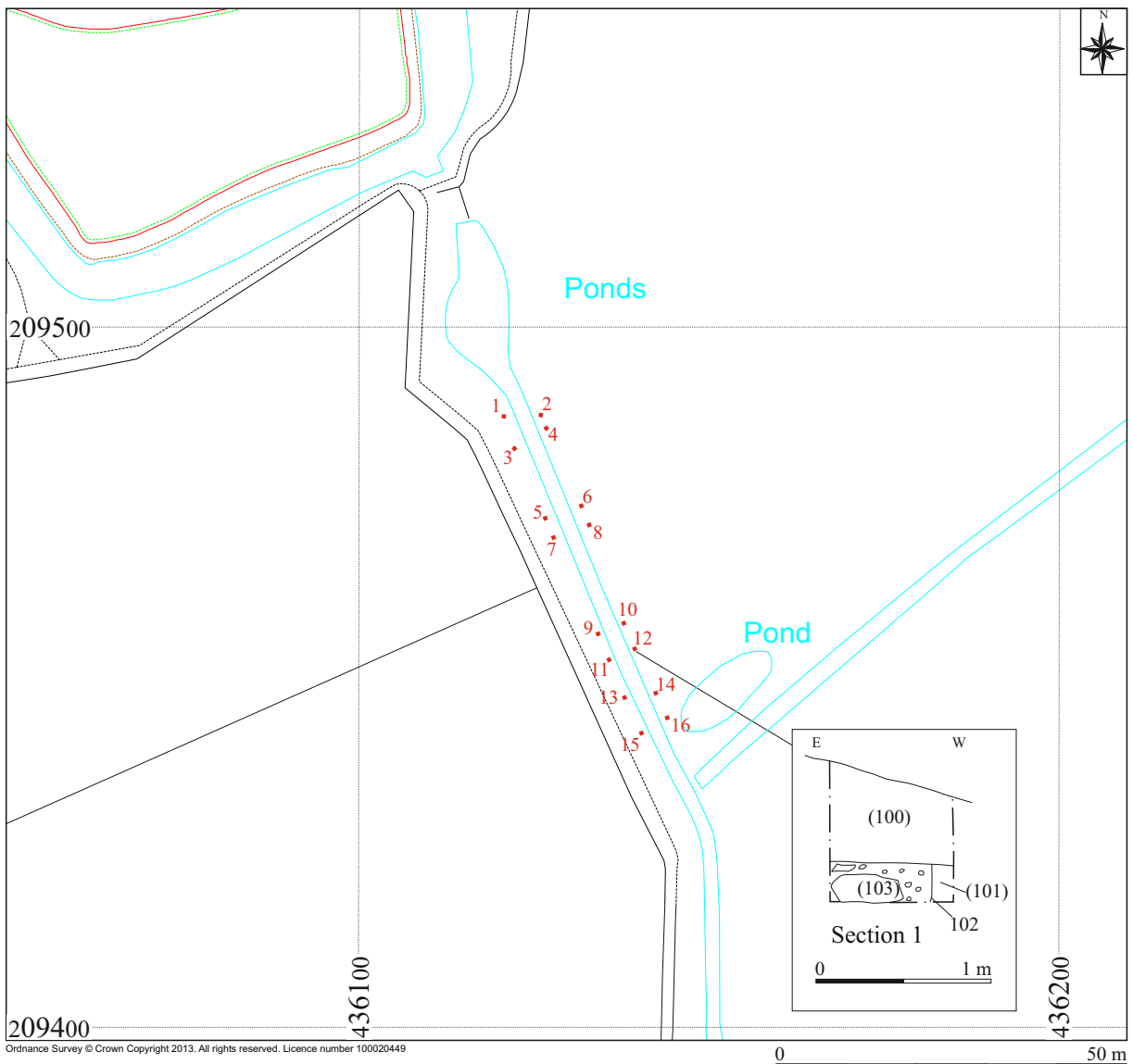
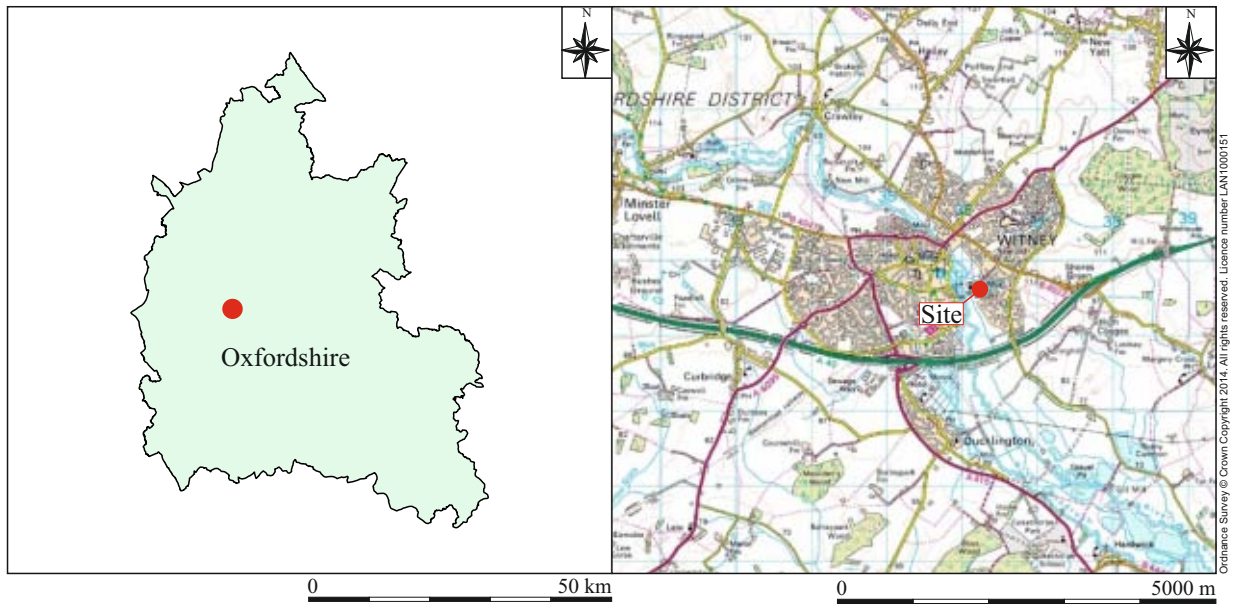


Figure 1: Site location

### 3 STRATAGY

#### 3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with English Heritage. 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

An archaeologist was present on site during the course of all groundwork that had the potential to reveal or disturb archaeological remains. This was for the excavation of the pits for the adventure trail equipment.

### 4 RESULTS (*Figure 1*)

The works were undertaken along a hand dug 'stream' or drainage channel that most likely was constructed in the medieval period. A total of 16 postholes were excavated by a 2.5 tonne machine with a 0.40m wide toothless grading bucket. The majority of postholes were dug to a depth of c.0.80m from the present ground surface. Within each of the holes was a topsoil layer of friable mixed, dark grey silt-clay with a high degree



**Plate 1.** View of section within posthole 12

of organic matter and occasional small rounded stone inclusions (100). This layer was roughly consistent in thickness in each of the holes at around 0.40m-0.60m. This topsoil overlay a natural geological deposit of light yellow-brown sand-gravels (101).

Archaeological remains were noted in a single posthole during this works. Within posthole 12 large to medium sized limestone blocks were only slightly disturbed during the excavation of the southeast posthole of obstacle 7 of the playground. These were roughly hewn with no apparent dressed faces and set with no mortar (103). It was noted in section that there does appear to be a cut, 102, into which these have been set although the blocks and rubble did not appear to be lain in any order.



**Plate 2.** View of posthole 12

No further archaeological remains were seen within these works.

## **5 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Institute for Archaeologists 2008 *Standards and Guidance for Watching Briefs*.