



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

PLOT 4, HILL FARM, CHARNDON, BUCKS.

SP 6699 2412

On behalf of

Hornwest

AUGUST 2006

REPORT FOR

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Summary

A watching brief was conducted by John Moore Heritage Services during groundworks for a new cottage. A pond, probably associated with the early use of Hill Farm was found along with an outflow channel. Several pits of late 19th century date or later were also recorded.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development site is immediately north of Hill Farm House, Hill Farm, Charndon and is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) SP 6699 2412. An old farm building had been demolished recently. The underlying geology is Oxford Clay.

1.2 Planning Background

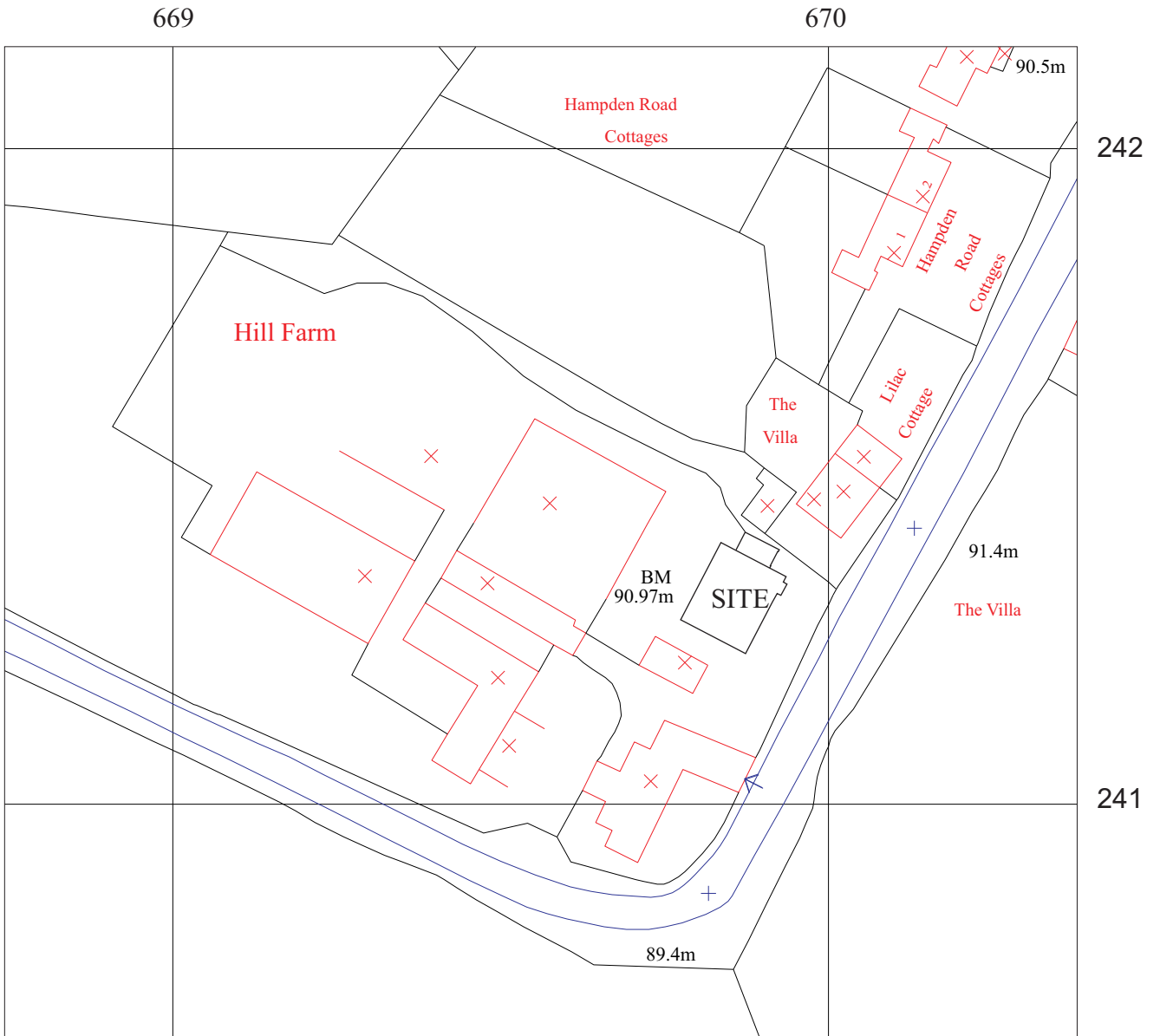
Aylesbury Vale District Council granted planning permission for the demolition of an old farm building and erection of single cottage on a plot north of Hill Farm House, Hill Farm, Chardon (03/1328AOP). Due to the archaeological potential of the area, a condition was attached to the planning consent that required the implementation of an archaeological watching brief during the course of groundworks in order to preserve by record any archaeological remains of significance.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The site lay within the historic core of Charndon. Charndon was a Saxon settlement with according to the Domesday Survey the manor being held by Eingar, Earl Harold's man. At the time of the Survey, Ralph de Fougères held Charndon and it was assessed for 10 hides with land for 10 ploughs; in lordship 2 hides, 2 ploughs. There were 18 villagers with 11 smallholders having 8 ploughs, and 4 slaves. Meadow for two ploughs. Before 1066 the value was £9, while in 1086 it was valued at £8. By the late 12th century Charndon had been incorporated into Bernwood Forest by Henry II, although subsequent kings were forced to reduce the scale of the forest. Jeffreys' map of 1770 shows the village with two principal streets arranged around a village green with a large common to the north. After the parliamentary enclosure of 1774 the village was reduced to a single street. The development site lies at the southern end of the village, in an area that may have lain on the eastern edge of the green.

No buildings in the location of Hill Farm are shown on Bryant's map of 1820 although the present farm house and a building to the rear is shown on a 2" Ordnance Survey surveyor's drawing of ?1801. The recently demolished building in the development area is not present on the 2nd edition map (1885). The 6" 1924 OS map was not available for consultation in the County Record Office.

The village of Charndon is a shrunken medieval village with closes, house platforms, trackways and other features showing as earthworks (CAS2505). Whether this retraction is due to depopulation or re-planning is unknown. There are no known



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village earthworks close to the proposed development site. Ridge and furrow cultivation is known to the north-west.

The above information has been gathered for the Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service's Brief and the County Sites and Monuments Record.

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 determine whether the medieval settlement extended this far south.
- To make public the results of the investigations.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (BCAS) issued a Brief for the work, which John Moore Heritage Services carried out to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with BCAS, on behalf of the local planning authority.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994).

3.2 Methodology

An archaeologist monitored the topsoil strip and the excavation for the foundation trenches. Following this work and the general lack of finds and features, it was agreed with the County Archaeological Service that no further monitoring of the ground works was necessary.

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and sections drawings compiled where appropriate.

4 RESULTS (Figure 1)

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers in [] indicate features i.e. cuts; while numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material.

The geological deposit of Oxford Clay (context 03) comprised firm pale-mid grey and pale yellow clay turning to clayey sand with depth. Overlying this in front of the

entrance to the barn to the northwest of the site and extending eastwards to a point in line with the eastern side of south extension to The Villa was a very compact deposit of hardcore comprising small roadstone, brick and stone rubble (01). This formed a 300-400mm thick surface leading to the barn. Remnants of this surface were traceable towards the road. Elsewhere, the Oxford Clay was overlaid by a compact deposit of mid brown clayey silt with patches of burning, moderate amounts of brick, roof tile, late 19th/ early 20th century glass, transfer wares and pieces of limestone (04). The deposit was very disturbed and included metal tubes used for toothpaste or similar. Above this last deposit and west of the recently demolished outbuilding was a 250-350mm thick deposit of pale-mid brown slightly clayey silt with the occasional brick, pieces of slate and late 19th/early 20th century transfer wares (02). This topsoil deposit appeared to have been imported onto the site.

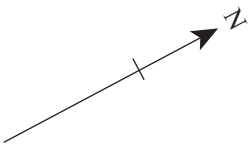
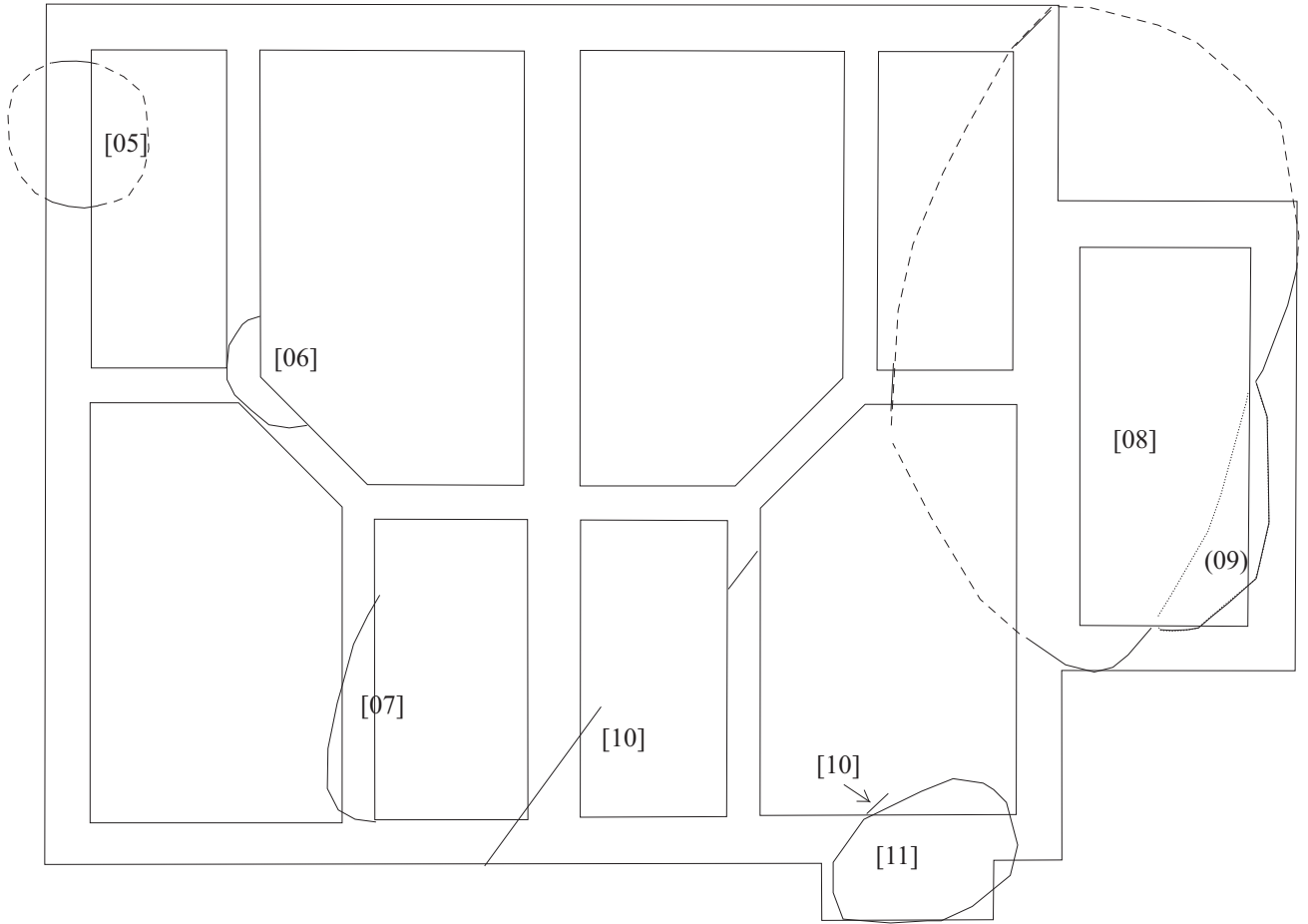
Three pits were found cut into the original ground surface (04). The first pit [05] was sub-circular with an estimated diameter of *c.* 1.80m and a depth of 650mm. It had sides at 45⁰ and a flat base. Its fill was a mid-dark grey-brown sandy silt with some stone, metal sheets, pottery and glass. The feature was Victorian or later in date.

The second pit again was sub-circular with a diameter of *c.* 2m and a depth of 800mm [06]. This had sides at 60⁰ from the horizontal and a slightly rounded base. It was filled by pale grey-brown, pale yellow 50:50 slightly silty clay containing the occasional piece of limestone and at least one brick. The fill appeared in the main to be very clean. The third pit [07] was irregular in shape and at least 3m wide east/west. It was 650mm deep with sides at 30⁰. The primary fill was burnt clay overlaid by pale-mid brown slightly silty clay with dumps of limestone rubble in places. It appeared that this pit had been originally been dug to burn something before being backfilled.

On the north side of the site was an infilled pond [08]. The pond was large and approximately oval in shape with sides at 30⁰ and a slightly rounded base. Lying on the base of the pond were rounded cobbles and some small limestone rubble with the very occasional brick fragment. This was overlaid by dark grey silty clay and water-laid silts to a height of 280mm, in turn overlaid by mid yellow-grey slightly silty clay (140mm thick) and then dark grey silty clay (220mm thick). The upper 420mm of the pond had been deliberately filled with clean redeposited Oxford Clay. The base of the pond was 1m deep and covered by 400mm of the hard surface (01) on the western side. Elsewhere the pond was under deposit (04). The base of the pond was 1400mm below present ground level at 91.50m OD.

On the east side of the pond was a layer of small and medium sized limestone pieces (09) rising from the edge of the pond up to what was ground level. This appeared to be a ramp for animals to use and it was sealed by the layer of redeposited Oxford Clay used to backfill the pond.

Running south-westwards from the pond was an outflow channel [10]. This was 4m wide with sides at 20-30⁰ and a flat base 1200mm below present ground level at 91.57m OD. The basal deposit was a dark grey-black and pale grey slightly clayey sand 100mm with mid grey, yellow-brown and red-brown clay above (200mm thick) covered by mid brown-grey slightly silty friable clay.



Partly cut into the outflow channel and sealed by the hard surface (01) was a pit [11]. This was oval in shape (c. 2.2m x 1.6m) with near vertical sides, and a flat base. It was 1000mm deep and was filled by dark grey clay and brick rubble.

5 FINDS

5.1 The Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised a single sherd of post-medieval Red Earthenware, classified as fabric PM8 in the Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit type-series (e.g. Mynard and Zeepvat 1992; Zeepvat et al. 1994). It weighs 55g, and is dateable to the 17th century or later. It was recovered from the base of the pond (context 08).

5.2 Other finds

All other finds were late 19th century in date or later.

6 DISCUSSION

The site appears to be outside of the limit of the medieval settlement. There were no signs of cultivation but later activity may have destroyed any evidence of such. The original ground surface (04) has been heavily disturbed as would be expected within a farmyard. Pits associated with the use of the farmyard were also found. None appeared to date before the late 19th century.

The pond, which is dated no earlier than the 17th century and potentially could be a lot later, may also have been associated with the farm, and probably with the early use of the farm, with an outflow channel leading to road to run off excess water down the hill to the south.

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