

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**AT**

**WOODLAND VIEW, AKEMAN STREET,**

**RAMSDEN, OXFORDSHIRE**

**NGR SP 3538 1510**

*On behalf of  
Mr and Mrs Crowther*

**MAY 2015**

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<b>Site Code:</b>	RAWV 15

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## **SUMMARY**

*John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological watching brief on behalf of Mr and Mrs Crowther at land adjacent to 5 Akeman Rise, Ramsden, Oxfordshire. Groundworks consisted of a topsoil strip and excavation of footings trenches. Despite the area's potential, no archaeological features or deposits were encountered.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

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

The proposed development site is located immediately to the west of Akeman Rise in Ramsden (NGR SP 3538 1510). The underlying geology is Forest Marble and Cornbrash and the site lies at approximately 140m OD. Prior to development the site was an area of rough grassland.

### **1.2 Planning Background**

West Oxfordshire District Council refused a planning application (14/0343/P/FP) for a detached dwelling at Land adjacent to 5 Akeman Rise, Ramsden. Permission was granted on appeal. Due to the potential for the work to disturb archaeological deposits a condition was attached to the permission requiring a watching brief to be maintained during the course of building operations or construction works on the site. This was in line with The NPPF and other Local Planning policies.

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

The development site lies immediately north of Akeman Street, the Roman road that ran from Verulamium to Corinium and formed the early lines of the province after the invasion. It was considered possible that features associated with the road, for instance the agger and ditch could survive on the site. Elsewhere in the region, at Wilcote, Asthall and Sansons Platt roadside settlement is located either side of the road and the presence of structural features was also a possibility. However, a watching brief at Akeman Rise had not revealed any archaeological evidence.

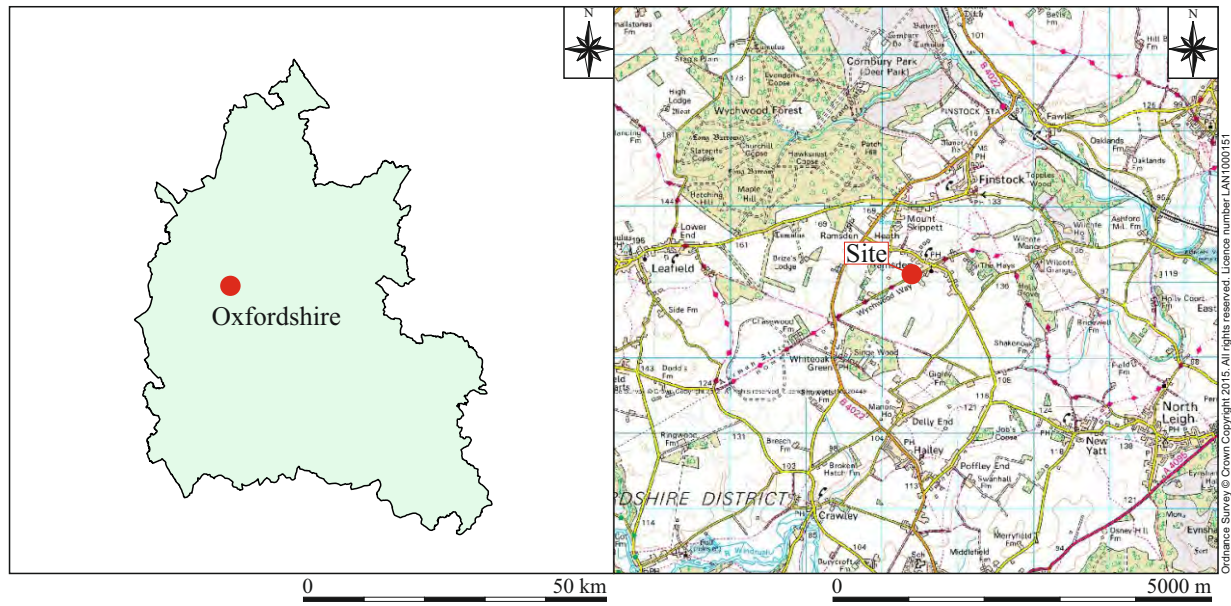
## **2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

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 record any evidence relating to, or associated with, Akeman Street.



Key  Site boundary  Monitored area  Footing trenches

Figure 1: Site location

### **3 STRATEGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Oxfordshire Historic and Natural Environment Team (OHaNET) advisors to West Oxfordshire District Council.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014).

#### **3.2 Methodology**

An archaeologist was present on site during the course of any groundwork that had the potential to reveal or disturb archaeological remains.

Any archaeological deposits and features revealed were to be cleaned by hand and recorded in plan before being excavated and recorded at an appropriate level. Any archaeological features or other remains i.e. concentrations of artefacts, were to be recorded by written, drawn and photographic record. Where archaeological features were exposed during any ground reduction but otherwise would remain unaffected they were recorded only by plan and written description. Where remains would be impacted on then they would be sample excavated. Any variation to this was to be agreed with the County Archaeological Services, on behalf of the local planning authority. All artefacts would be collected and retained except for concentrations of building material where a representative sample will be kept.

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. A photographic record was also produced.

### **4 RESULTS**

#### **4.1 Topsoil Strip**

Initial groundworks consisted of a topsoil strip within the footprint of the proposed development, including the access road. The topsoil was stripped to a maximum depth of 0.15m. Topsoil (1) was a soft mid grey brown clayey silt loam that varied in thickness from 0.08 – 0.1m.

#### **4.2 Footings Trenches**

The excavated footings trenches were 0.5 – 0.6m in width, and had a maximum depth of 1.2m.

The lowest deposit encountered was the bedrock geology, a limestone identified as the Forest Marble Formation; the footings trenches were excavated to the top of this deposit. The bedrock was overlain by a compact light yellowish brown silty clay (3) with frequent sub-angular limestone and moderate bands of compact mid blueish grey

clay. The deposit varied in thickness between 0.5 - 0.6m and was interpreted as a layer of superficial geology, deposited during the quaternary period. This deposit was overlain by subsoil (2), a stiff mid grey brown silty clay with frequent rounded stone, 0.4m thick.

## **5 FINDS**

No artefactual evidence was recovered.

## **6 DISCUSSION**

No archaeological features or deposits were encountered during groundworks.

## **7 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

John Moore Heritage Services 2015 14/0343/P/FP – *Woodland View, Akeman Street, Ramsden, Oxfordshire. Archaeological Watching Brief, Written Scheme of Investigation*. Unpublished