

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

HAMILTON BARN

ROAD BETWEEN LITTLE WITTENHAM ROAD AND

NORTHFIELD FARM

LONG WITTENHAM, OXFORDSHIRE

NGR SU 5501 9411

*On behalf of
Miss J Stephens*

JUNE 2015

REPORT FOR Miss J Stephens
Hamilton Barn
Northfield Barn
Long Wittenham
Oxfordshire
OX14 4QW

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SUMMARY

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological watching brief on behalf of Miss J Stephens at Hamilton Barn, Long Wittenham, Oxfordshire. Groundworks consisted of the excavation of footings for an extension to the north eastern end of Hamilton Barn. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development site is located at the north eastern end of Hamilton Barn, on the road between Little Wittenham Road and Northfield Farm, Long Wittenham (NGR SU 5501 9411). It lies at approximately 50m OD, and the underlying geology is Northmoor Sand and Gravel Member, Upper Facet.

1.2 Planning Background

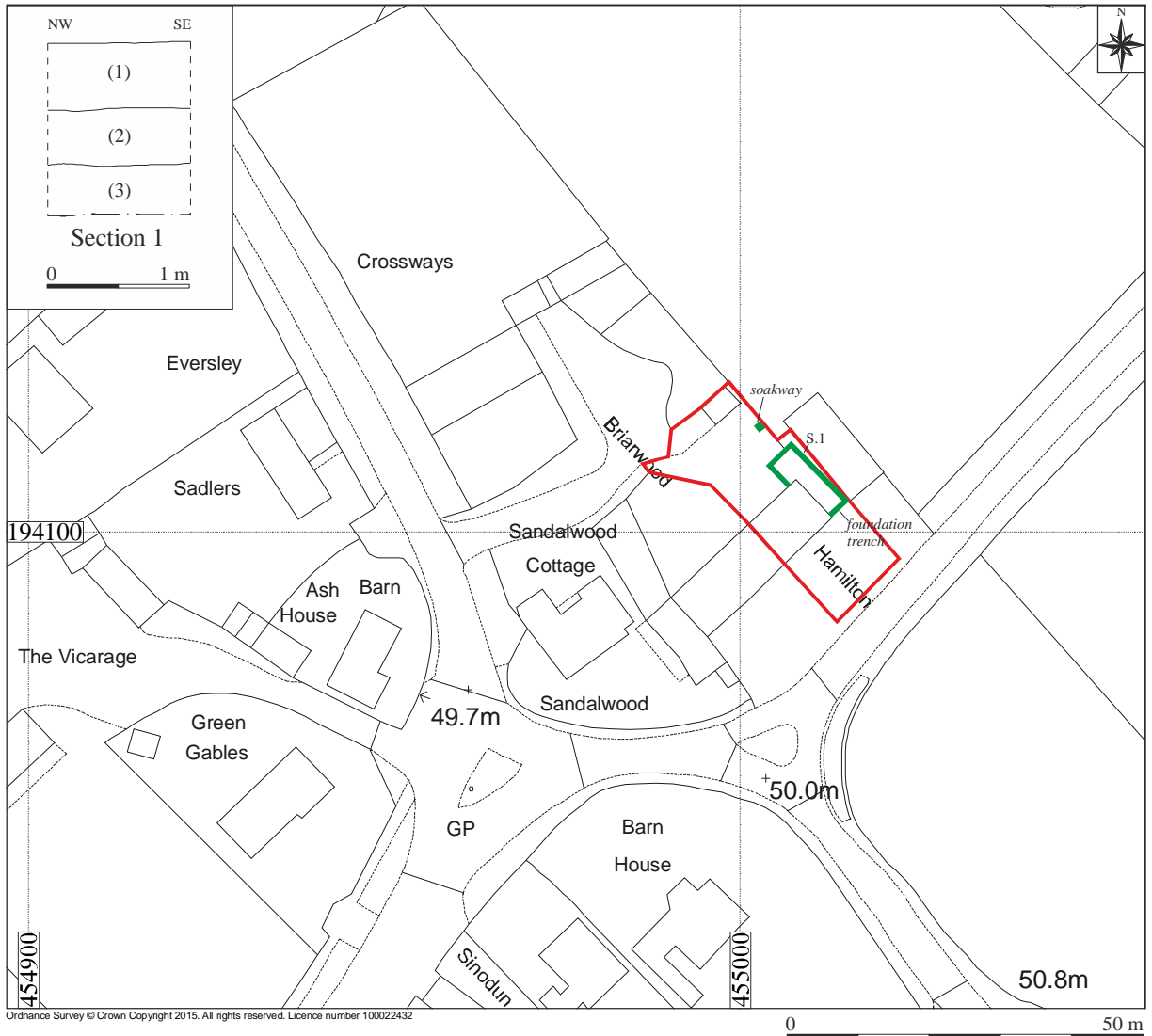
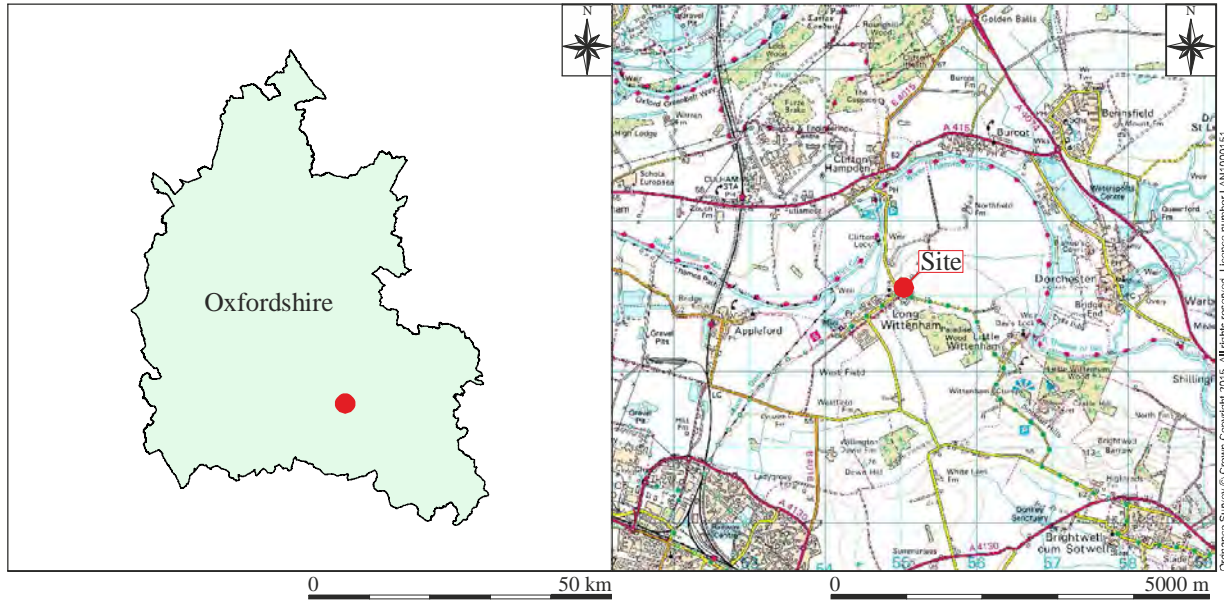
South Oxfordshire District Council granted planning permission for a two storey side and rear extension to Hamilton Barn and a change in land use from agricultural to residential P15/S0083/HH. Due to the archaeological and historical importance of the surrounding area a condition was attached to the 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 proposed development, whilst small, lies in an area of considerable archaeological potential, surrounded by archaeological sites which are visible as cropmarks. To the east of the site is settlement site at Northfield Farm, a Scheduled Monument (reference number 1002925). This is an Iron Age and Romano-British settlement site, with burials dating from the Bronze Age through to the 3rd century AD. Further settlement exists to the south, with features including trackways, enclosures and pits. Initially identified from cropmarks, archaeological evaluation excavations have confirmed, and dated the features to the Early Iron Age, Roman and Saxon periods. A later prehistoric enclosure complex is also recorded to the north-west, originally identified by cropmarks and confirmed by recent geophysical survey and evaluation excavations. A possible Palaeolithic lithic scatter is also recorded within the immediate environs of the site, as are findspots for Roman and Saxon pottery.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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



Key Site boundary Monitored areas

Figure 1: Site location, monitored areas and representative section

- 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 prehistoric, Roman and Saxon activity known in the area.

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), the archaeological advisors to South 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 to be 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 to be 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 OHaNET, 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

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers without brackets indicate features i.e. pit cuts, numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material, while numbers in bold indicate structural features.

The footings trenches were excavated using a tracked excavator fitted with a bladed bucket. The trenches were 0.6m in width, and varied in depth from 1m to 1.2m. A small soakaway, 1m by 1m in size and 0.8m in depth was excavated in the northern corner of the back garden.

The lowest deposit encountered was the geological horizon (3); a compact light brownish yellow fine sandy gravel. This was interpreted as the Northmoor Sand and Gravel Member. This was overlain by subsoil (2); a firm dark brown clayey silt with occasional small rounded stone. This deposit varied in thickness between 0.3 to 0.4m. The subsoil was overlain by topsoil (1); a soft dark greyish brown silty loam that varied in thickness between 0.4 to 0.5m.

No archaeological remains were present.

5 FINDS

No artefactual evidence was recovered.

6 DISCUSSION

No archaeological features or deposits relating to prehistoric, Roman or Saxon activity in the area were encountered during the course of the groundworks.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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

John Moore Heritage Services 2015 *Hamilton Barn, Road Between Little Wittenham Road and Northfield Farm, Long Wittenham, Oxfordshire. Archaeological Watching Brief. Written Scheme of Investigation.* Unpublished