

**JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
ON LAND AT THE JUNCTION OF  
MARLBOROUGH ROAD AND NEWLAND ROAD,  
BANBURY, OXON.**

**SP 45624027**

*On behalf of*

*Benfield Construction Ltd.*

**OCTOBER 2002**

**REPORT FOR** Benfield Construction Ltd  
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**FIELDWORK** 10<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> October 2002

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## **Summary**

*An archaeological watching brief took place during the excavation of foundation trenches for a new building at the junction of Marlborough Road and Newland Road, Banbury. Small amounts of medieval and post-medieval pottery were found but no significant archaeological deposits were disturbed.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

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

The site of proposed development is situated at the junction of Marlborough Road and Newland Road (NGR SP 45624027) and has recently been cleared of buildings. The underlying geology is Middle Lias Clay.

### **1.2 Planning Background**

Cherwell District Council has granted planning permission for the re-development of this site with an office block. Due to the potential for remains of archaeological interest to be present on the site a condition for a programme of archaeological work has been attached to the permission in accordance with PPG 16 and Cherwell Local Plan Policies. It was agreed with the County Archaeological Service, on behalf of Cherwell District Council, that the programme of archaeological work would include the monitoring of geotechnical pits with a subsequent watching brief. John Moore Heritage Services (JMHS) in accordance with a *Written Scheme of Investigation* agreed with the County Archaeological Service, on behalf of the local planning authority, carried out such a watching brief.

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

The site lies c. 190 m to the south of the East Gate of the medieval town and south of the planned suburb of Newland, which was laid out in the mid 13<sup>th</sup> century.

John Moore Heritage Services monitored the digging of six geotechnical pits. Made ground was found across the site to a general depth of 800-1000 mm. This material was homogeneous generally consisting of mid grey brown silty clay containing occasional fragments of brick, medieval and post-medieval pottery, post-medieval glass, oyster shell, and animal bone. The made ground directly overlay the natural clay.

The geotechnical pits showed that any medieval and post-medieval archaeological sequence on the site had been disturbed by the building, and demolition, of Victorian and 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings, certainly in the areas of the investigation pits and probably generally across the site. It is possible that the bases of deeper features, i.e. large pits or wells, may survive cut into the top of the natural clay.



Figure 1: Site location showing test pits and foundation trenches. Scale 1:1250

## **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 the Medieval and post-medieval town, especially to determine when this part of the town was first established.
- To make available to interested parties the results of the investigation subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

## **3 STRATEGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with the County Archaeology Service, on behalf of the local planning authority. 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.

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

### **3.2 Methodology**

The buildings standing on the site were demolished and the area cleared of rubble and levelled. Six geotechnical test-pits (numbered TP1 to TP 6) and the foundation trenches were excavated by a mechanical excavator fitted with a 600 mm toothed bucket, for locations see Figure 1. The foundations for the new building were confined to the north and east sides of the site. An archaeologist monitored the excavation of the test-pits and trenches.

## **4 RESULTS**

Across the site the earliest deposit encountered, from 500 – 900 mm below ground level, was the natural clay (02), a firm mid reddish brown silty clay changing to a mid greyish blue clay at about 1.5 – 2.0 m below ground level. Overlying this was a mixed deposit (01) that varied from a mid yellowish brown to a mid greyish brown silty clay, c. 500 - 900 mm thick. This contained moderate amounts of brick, post medieval glass, oyster shell, egg shell, animal bone, occasional post-medieval, and 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century pottery. Two sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from this deposit in geotechnical test-pits four and five. The deposit also contained moderate amounts of roughly hewn limestone blocks c. 200 x 100 x 100 mm, a local building material, observed mainly in the north of the site.

This deposit extended across the whole area of the foundation trenches but did not appear to continue into the south and west areas of the site as it was not present in test-pit 1 or in a shallow trench dug for temporary services along the south side of the site. Only the natural clay was observed in these areas.

## 5 FINDS

### *Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn*

The pottery assemblage comprised 3 sherds with a total weight of 66 g. Two of the sherds were medieval, the other later 17<sup>th</sup> century. It was recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1989; 1994), as follows:

Surface find: OX68: Potterspury ware, Late 13th - 17th century. 1 sherd, 7 g.

TP4: OXBEWSL: Staffordshire slip-trailed earthenware, c 1650 – 1800. 1 sherd, 4 g.

TP5: OXAM: Brill/Boarstall ware, AD1200 – 1600. 1 sherd, 55 g. Abraded.

### *Other finds*

A piece of post-medieval bottle glass and one sherd of post-medieval pottery were also recovered from TP4 from context (01) but were not retained.

One piece of tile was recovered from TP5.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

Dating evidence from pottery found during the excavations suggests that there was activity on this site during the medieval and post-medieval periods, however no archaeological features or deposits appear to have survived on the site. The presence of roughly hewn limestone blocks suggests that buildings constructed from this material may have stood on the north of the site prior to the Victorian buildings.

## 7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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