

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
ON
THE NEW DRIVE AT GREAT TEW ESTATE,
GREAT TEW, OXFORDSHIRE

NGR SP 3970 2906

On behalf of
Great Tew Estate

OCTOBER 2015

REPORT FOR Great Tew Conservation and Restoration LLP
The Estate Office
Great Tew
Chipping Norton
Oxfordshire
OX7 4AH

PREPARED BY David Gilbert

ILLUSTRATION BY David Gilbert

AUTHORISED BY John Moore

REPORT ISSUED 26th October 2015

ENQUIRES TO John Moore Heritage Services
Hill View
Woodperry Road
Beckley
Oxfordshire OX3 9UZ

Tel: 01865 358300
Email: info@jmheritageservices.co.uk

JMHS Project No: 2290
Site Code: GTTP10
Archive Location: The archive will be deposited with the Oxfordshire
Museums Store under accession number OXCMS:
2010.66

CONTENTS

	Page
SUMMARY	1
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Site Location	1
1.2 Planning Background	1
1.3 Archaeological Background	1
2. AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION	4
3. STRATEGY	4
3.1 Research Design	4
3.2 Methodology	4
4. RESULTS	5
5. FINDS	9
5.1 Pottery	9
5.2 Environmental Remains	9
6. DISCUSSION	9
7. ARCHIVE	9
8. BIBLIOGRAPHY	10
FIGURES AND PLATES	Page
Figure 1. Site Location	3
Figure 2. Sections	8
Plate 1. Earthwork (118) looking east before excavation	6
Plate 2. Drains in the Wilderness area	7
Plate 3. Drain in the Wilderness area	7
Plate 4. Remnant of ridge	8

SUMMARY

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological watching brief at the Registered Historic Park of Great Tew. Remnants of ridge and furrow agriculture predating the late 16th century were seen across a large part of the area monitored.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

Great Tew House is located to the south of Great Tew village within Great Tew Park (NGR SP 3970 2906). The underlying geology is Marlstone Rock Bed and Upper Lias Clay and the site lies at approximately 170m OD. The development is within the grounds of the Registered Historic Park.

1.2 Planning Background

West Oxfordshire District Council has granted planning permission under 10/0024/P/FP to create a new drive at Great Tew Estate. 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.

1.3 Archaeological Background

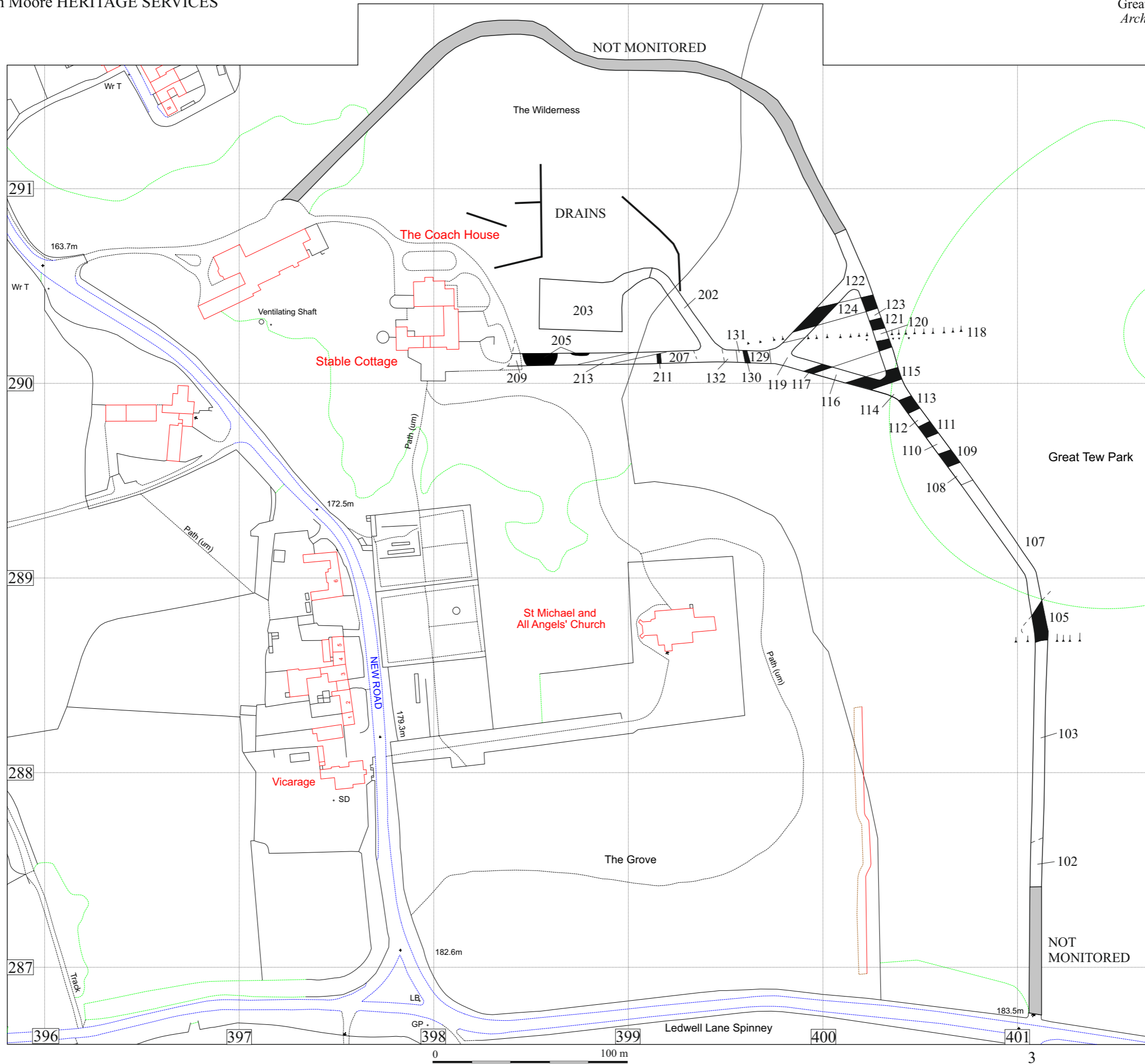
The permitted development is within Great Tew Park that is a Grade II Park and Garden (4972). The almost square old park lies to the east of the house, pleasure grounds, and village and is enclosed by a stone wall which has been breached in places. A gateway flanked by tall stone piers stands at the centre of the north wall, providing access to the agricultural land to the north. At the centre of the old park lies a small wood, The Warren, which is surrounded by parkland laid to pasture with many trees scattered in singles and in clumps. A broad avenue, probably laid out in the 17th century, formerly extended northwards from the centre of the park for c 2.5km, terminating at the B4031 (Loudon 1812). It may have been aligned on the gateway in the north boundary. The avenue was shortened in the early 19th century, its northern end terminating after that time at the stream which runs through the valley bottom. All trace of the avenue trees has been lost in the late 20th century. Long views extend northwards from the park across the valley to the detached parkland of Horse, Cow and Walker's Hills, and east and north-east towards distant hills. Repton's suggestion for rebuilding the house was to place it close to the west side of what is now The Warren, with the attached garden adjacent to the east of the house, leading into The Warren, and aligned on the south end of the avenue.

The park is separated by the village and an area of agricultural land to the north from the early 19th century parkland on the opposite side of the valley on which Horse, Cow and Walker's Hills run contiguous from west to east respectively. This detached area of parkland is laid to pasture with mature trees and copses, and contains a network of broad tracks laid out by Loudon which largely follow the contour at the level of the stream. The detached parkland is bounded to the south-west by Mill Lane, and immediately to the south of this by the stream in the valley bottom, along which

stand several mature yews. Mill Lane leads south-east as a path from the B4022, c 1.2km north-west of the house, and is overlooked by the parkland of Horse and Cow Hills to the north. Some 700m north of the house, having broadened out into a track, Mill Lane meets The Avenue, a lane giving access from the village to the south. Mill Lane curves around to the north-east at the bottom of Cow Hill meeting the west end of Groveash Lane, another estate track, 1.3km north-east of the house. Close by to the east, Groveash Lane crosses the remains of Lodge Ponds, a series of narrow ponds, now largely silted up and enclosed in trees, which were formed by Loudon from widening the stream for c 500m. The Ponds provided water to power his mill (Lambert 2001). The parkland extends north from Groveash Lane, bounded to the west by the continuation northwards of Mill Lane. At the north end of Lodge Ponds formerly stood Loudon's Tew Lodge, which was demolished by the 1830s. North of the site of Tew Lodge stands the 19th century Cottenham Farm, set in undulating parkland which extends north to a point adjacent to the B4031.

By the end of the 16th century a park at Great Tew had been created, divided into Inner, Middle, and Outer Parks. Further related enclosure took place in the early 1620s, when Sir Lawrence Tanfield enclosed land including Cow Hill. By this time Great Tew was almost all in single ownership (VCH 1983). In 1626 Lucius Cary (1610-43) inherited the Great Tew estate from Tanfield, his grandfather, and in 1633 inherited his father's title, becoming the second Viscount Falkland. Falkland was a poet and renowned philosopher who was influential at nearby Oxford University, and it is likely that the three linked, stone-walled gardens which were erected close to the manor house were constructed and laid out under his direction. The 17th century manor landscape, which included the manor house, walled gardens, The Grove, and the park, enclosed the parish church and churchyard (Lambert 2001). A great avenue was probably created at this time, running northwards from the centre of the park across the valley below to high ground beyond. Falkland died at the age of thirty-three at the Battle of Newbury, fighting for the Royalists, and his heirs sold the estate in 1698 to Francis Keck. After Keck's death in 1728 his nephew John Tracy, who took the name Keck, inherited the estate and was responsible for the enclosure of the remainder of the parish in 1763. This resulted in many small parcels of land being amalgamated under his management and ownership. John Keck died in 1774, and subsequently a substantial part of the estate was bought by the nabob George Stratton, who bought the remainder in 1793, amassing an estate of several thousand acres.

Following Stratton's death in 1800, his son, George Frederick, inherited what was generally considered to be one of the finest estates in the county and quickly demolished much of the manor house which stood on a platform north-west of the church. G F Stratton moved into the Keck dower house to the north, which at that time stood at the top of the street running up from the village green (VCH 1983). In 1803 G F Stratton consulted Humphry Repton (1752-1818) about improvements to the estate, particularly on the construction of a new mansion. Repton's advice was presented in a Red Book dated 1804 containing written suggestions and watercolour illustrations of his suggestions. He suggested that the new mansion should be built in the centre of the walled park, aligned very close to the south end of the old avenue. His principal landscape improvements concerned the south-facing valley-side to the north of the park, as this would form such a prominent feature in the view from the new mansion. The new house was never built, and it appears that Repton's landscape suggestions were not immediately implemented.



Ordnance Survey (© Crown Copyright 2011). All rights reserved. Licence number 10002648

In 1808 Stratton leased much of his farmland to the young John Claudius Loudon (1783-1843) for a demonstration of 'Scotch husbandry', having read Loudon's treatise *An immediate and effectual mode of raising the rental of landed property* (1808). Loudon only stayed until 1811, and his tenure was not a success, with Stratton spending large sums for little return. Loudon did however lay out a series of substantial farm roads on the north side of the valley, north of the house and main park, centred on Tew Lodge, a model farmhouse built for him by Stratton and demolished by the 1830s (OS 1833). Loudon may also have laid out the adjacent Cow Hill and its environs as parkland, incorporating Repton's general suggestion, and widened a brook into a narrow lake close to the Lodge. The Lodge Ponds, as the lake was called, had also been suggested by Repton, but Loudon's purpose was to form the reservoir for a threshing mill. Loudon went on to become the foremost influence of his day on landscape design.

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.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services. 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) current at the time of work.

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 recorded only by plan and written description. Where remains would be impacted on then they would be sample excavated. 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 (Figures 1 and 2)

To the south the natural geological deposit was a tenacious green-grey clay (102) that was mottled with orange clay that became more frequent the further north the deposit was encountered, it also contained bands of stone. This gave way to a deposit of mid orange-brown sandy clay (103) which increasing became stony towards the north. Although this initially appeared to overlie deposit (102) it would appear to be a natural geological layer as it was seem to be quiet homogeneous and over 0.5m thick at a point c. 200m from the southern entrance.

At this point a noticeable lynchet or low linear earthwork was visible on the surface. Immediately to the north of this was a ditch or natural hollow. This feature had either been created or filled recently. The full depth was not seen but the lowest deposit encountered was a dark brown-grey clay loam (105) c.0.05-0.1m thick that contained straw and other organic material that had not decayed. Above this was a deposit of mottled orange-brown to blue-grey clay (104) up to 0.4m thick that contained 20th century pottery, brick fragments, glass and bitumen felt (Fig. 2 S.2).

To the north of this feature the natural geological deposit was a pale yellow-brown clay with sandstone fragments, banding was noticeable with blue-grey clay and stone (107). Above this was a subsoil of pale grey to orange-brown silt-clay (106) up to 0.4m thick in places but on average 0.2m. Towards the north this subsoil had a higher sand content (119).

A series of ridges and furrows were recorded across the flat parkland before it sloped away to the north, near the centre of the road. These were noted to roughly follow the topographic contours of the area (Plate 4).

Context	Interpretation	Description
108	Ridge	Stone in an orange-brown soil matrix c. 11.5m wide
109	Furrow	Orange-brown silt-clay c.8m wide
110	Ridge	Stone in an orange-brown soil matrix c. 11m wide
111	Furrow	Orange-brown silt-clay c.8m wide
112	Ridge	Stone in an orange-brown soil matrix c. 9m wide
113	Furrow	Orange-brown silt-clay c.8m wide
114	Ridge	Stone in an orange-brown soil matrix c. 10m wide
115	Furrow	Orange-brown silt-clay c.7m wide
116	Ridge	Stone in an orange-brown soil matrix c. 12m wide
117	Furrow	Orange-brown silt-clay c.6m wide
120	Ridge	Stone in an dark brown soil matrix c.5m wide
121	Furrow	Dark brown sand-clay c.7m wide
123	Ridge	Stone in an dark brown soil matrix c.5m wide
124	Furrow	Red-brown sand-clay c.7m wide

At right angle to the ridge and furrow were two ridges (129) & (131) and a furrow or ditch 130 that may mark a field boundary or headland to this agricultural feature. A disturbed area (132) lay adjacent to ridge (131) and may represent material from it spread out during landscaping.

A slight earthwork (118) was still visible running east to west (Plate 1) following the line of the break of slope (north to south). This was originally thought to be a lynchet associated with the ridge and furrow agriculture seen in the area, however it is more likely to be a later feature associated with the landscaping in the area that had truncated the ridge and furrow (Fig.2 S.3).



Plate 1. Earthwork (118) looking east before excavation

Further north again the natural geological deposit appeared as brown-yellow sand with stone (122) that slowly merged with a yellow-orange sand and stone (203) further north and west. Deeper excavation in the area of the proposed garage revealed a lower natural band of mottled mid grey sand-clay (204) that is probably related to the Upper Lias Clay formation in the area.

North of furrow 124 and lower down the slope the subsoil (125) overlying the natural (122) was a dark brown sandy clay roughly 0.25m thick. While the natural layer (203) was overlain by a mid-dark brown sand-silt clay (202) that contained sparse fragments of brick.

The area along the stretch of new road that connected the triangular junction with the area of the Stable Cottage had been heavily disturbed by landscaping in recent years. A buried topsoil (206) was seen in places overlying layer (202) but had been cut through with several features, before being covered by later deposits (Fig. 2 S.1).

An area of compact small stone mixed in a dark orange-brown sandy clay matrix (207) was thought to represent a deposit of imported stone that had been dumped in the area.

A possible ditch was seen running north-south, although it was not fully excavated. Originally identified as a deposit during the initial soil strip it consisted of a dark grey sandy clay (211) 0.1m thick that was later seen to overlie a pale grey-brown sandy clay (210) that was at least 0.1m thick.

A track way (213) was seen on a similar alignment to the ridge and furrow seen the east. The upper surface of this track consisted of small cobbles 0.05m thick, although some larger stones were included in the matrix (0.6m by 0.6m). This surface sat on a bedding layer (212) of yellow-brown clay-sand and stone 0.1m thick that also contained small fragments of brick. A deposit (209) was seen at the western end of the spur road that appeared very similar to deposit (213), but it was uncertain if this represented another track.

A large recent cut was also encountered in this area that was irregular in plan and not fully excavated, but at least 1.8m deep and it appeared to extend to the area of the new garage. This cut was filled with dark grey silt-clay mixed with re-deposited natural (205) including 20th century pottery, plastic, wood and metal. This was capped with an imported subsoil (208) that also covered the buried land surface (206).

To the north of the garage area in the wooded area known as the wilderness new drains were excavated that uncovered a series of brick built drains or small culverts (Fig.1, Plates 2 & 3).



Plates 2 & 3. Drains in the “wilderness” area

Reliability of Techniques and Results

The reliability of results is considered to be relatively good. The archaeological monitoring took place during good weather conditions. Unfortunately JMHS was not informed of all stages of the work and some areas were not monitored.

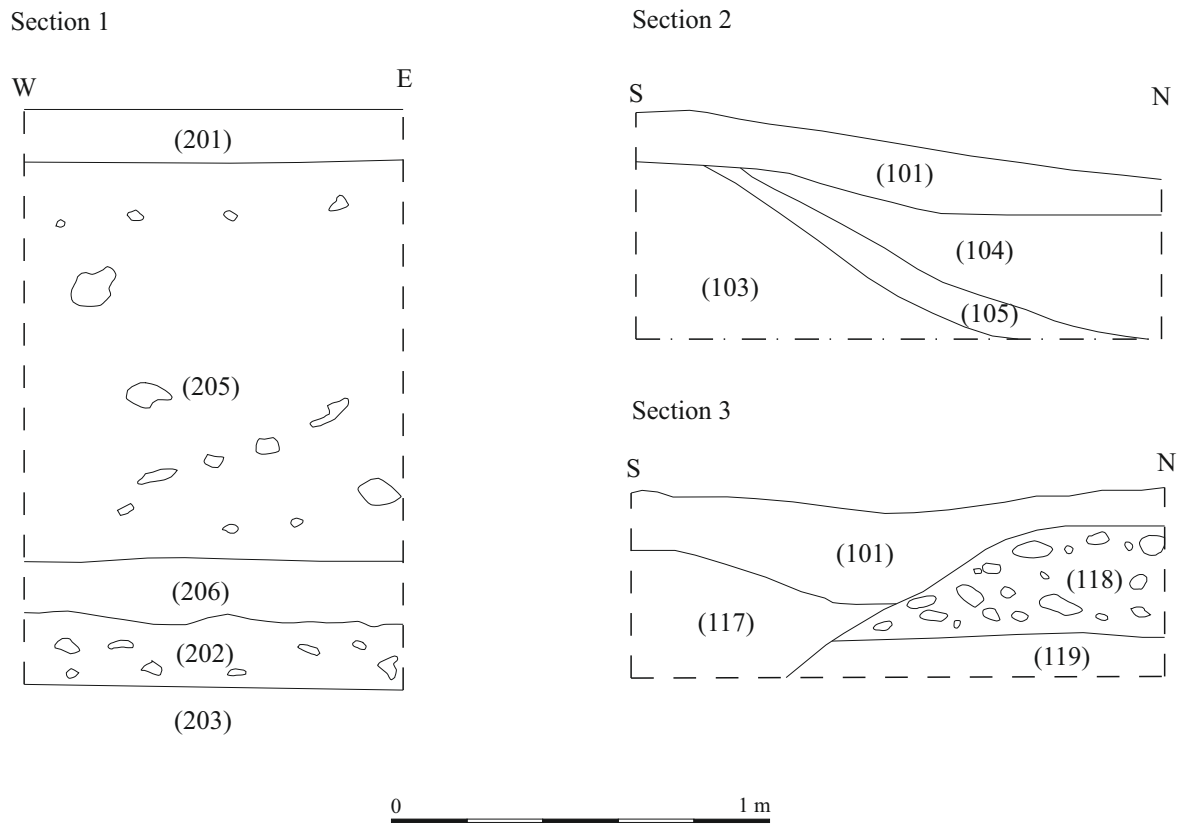


Figure 2. Sections



Plate 4. Remnant of ridge

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery

The pottery assemblage comprised 2 sherds with a total weight of 19g. It was recorded using the conventions of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994), as follows:

OXBB: **Minety-type ware.** L12th – 16th century. 1 sherd, 18g.

This sherd of OXBB from context 119 is very abraded, and appears highly likely to be residual,

In addition, a single small (1g) and very abraded sherd of probable Roman pottery occurred in context 115.

5.2 Environmental Remains

No environmental samples were taken as the potential of the deposits was not felt to be sufficient to warrant sampling.

6 DISCUSSION

The majority of the features recorded were associated with ridge and furrow agriculture. The track (213) is on a similar alignment and is likely to be related to this activity. By the end of the 16th century a park at Great Tew had been created and divided into Inner, Middle, and Outer Parks. Jeffrey's map of 1766 is the earliest available for the area and shows the site to be within the formal park at this point. The ridge and furrow activity recorded must therefore be earlier than the later 16th century and contemporary with the single sherd of Minety Ware recovered from a furrow. It is recorded that in 1279 the village had 75 households, and in 1377 some 165 adults paid poll tax (VCH 1983, 223-47).

Other features recorded are later landscaping features such as the low earthwork (118) or from far more recent activity.

7 ARCHIVE

Archive Contents

The archive consists of the following:

Paper record

The project brief
Written scheme of investigation
The project report
The primary site record

Physical record

Finds

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the Oxfordshire Museum Resource Centre.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Institute for Archaeologists. 2008. *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*.

Lambert, D 2001 Tew Park the Development of the Historic Landscape, (Historic survey 2001)

Loudon, J C 1812 Observations on laying out farms in the Scotch style

Mellor, M, 1984 A summary of the key assemblages. A study of pottery, clay pipes, glass and other finds from fourteen pits, dating from the 16th to the 19th century in TG Hassall et al, Excavations at St Ebbe's *Oxoniensia* **49**, 181-219.

Mellor, M, 1994 Oxford Pottery: A Synthesis of middle and late Saxon, medieval and early post-medieval pottery in the Oxford Region *Oxoniensia* **59**, 17-217

Victoria History of the County of Oxfordshire XI, (1983), pp 223-47