

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**AT**

**16 CRICK ROAD,**

**OXFORD,**

**NGR SP 5127 0769**

*On behalf of*  
**Mr G Roberts**

**FEBRUARY 2016**

**REPORT FOR** Mr G Roberts  
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**JMHS Project No:** 3019  
**Site Code:** OXCR14

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## **SUMMARY**

*John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological watching brief at 16 Crick Road, Oxford between 10<sup>th</sup> August 2015 and 14<sup>th</sup> August 2015. Work consisted of groundworks for an extension to the house and the construction of a basement. No significant archaeological features or deposits were encountered during the watching brief.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

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

The development site is located at 16 Crick Road, Oxford, Oxfordshire. (NGR SP 5127 0769). The site is at 62.3m Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology is 2<sup>nd</sup> (Summertown-Radley) Terrace Deposits close to the boundary with the 1<sup>st</sup> (Flood Plain) Terrace Deposits.

### **1.2 Planning Background**

Oxford City Council granted planning permission for the erection of a two storey extension to rear and side elevations; erection of double garage; roof alterations, insertion of 1 no dormer window and 2 no velux windows to rear roof slope and gable protection; re-arranged parking; new gate and railings to street frontage (10/00962/FUL). 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**

Evidence from aerial photographs and archaeological excavations indicates the presence of an extensive prehistoric ritual and agricultural landscape across this part of the Oxford gravel terrace, involving Middle Neolithic – Early Bronze Age ritual and funerary monuments, Iron Age /Roman agricultural field systems and subsequent Saxon rural settlement.

An extensive cropmark complex recorded in the University Parks to the south incorporates a possible Neolithic/Bronze Age linear barrow cemetery and later Iron Age/Roman agricultural enclosures. A Neolithic/Bronze Age henge monument and three Bronze Age ring ditches belonging to this complex have recently been excavated at Queen Elizabeth House, St Giles and at the Radcliffe Infirmary site.

An undated, but probable prehistoric, gully was recorded during an evaluation in 2007 at Lady Margaret Hall (Oxford Archaeology, 2007; UAD No 1708). An Iron Age pit has been found at 6 Crick Road and a burial of possible Anglo-Saxon date accompanied by a knife was encountered at 10 Crick Road.

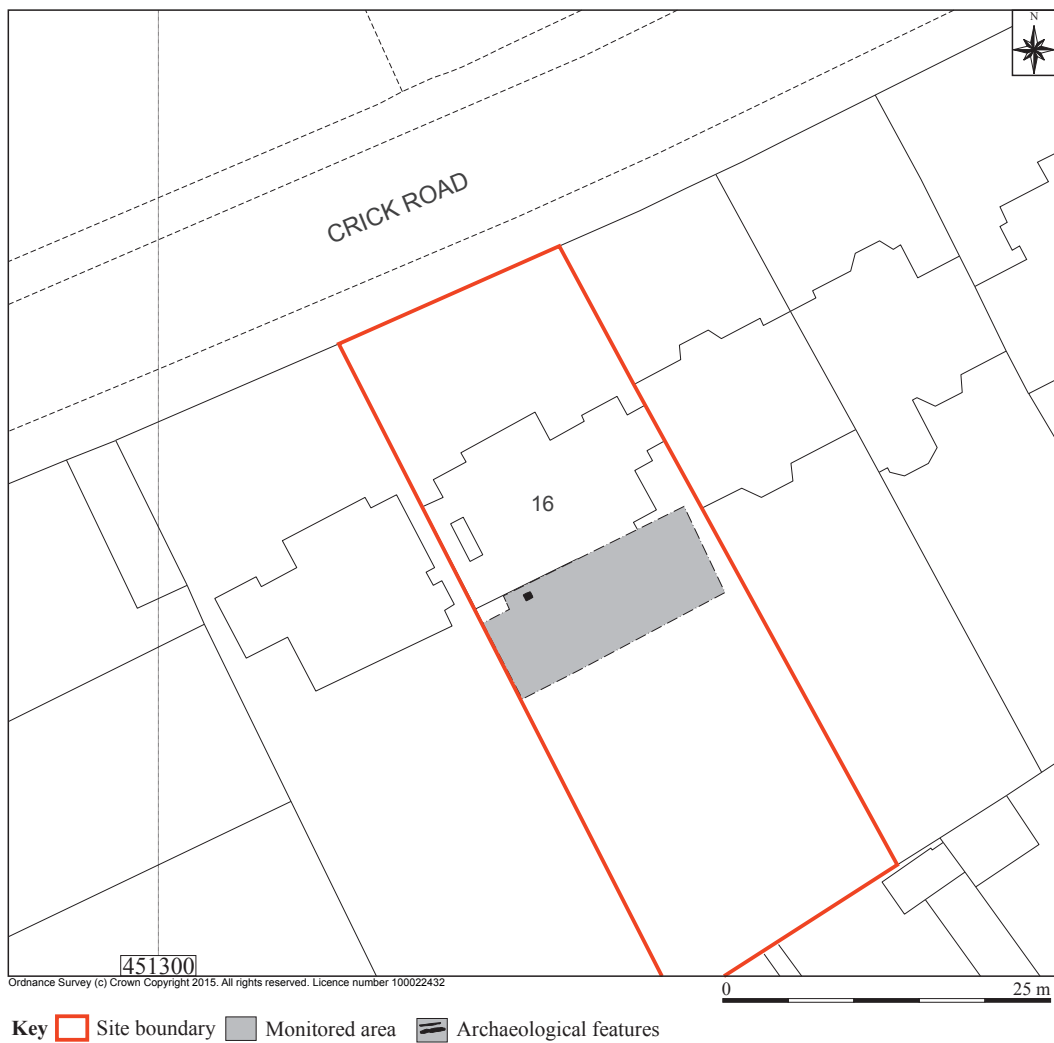
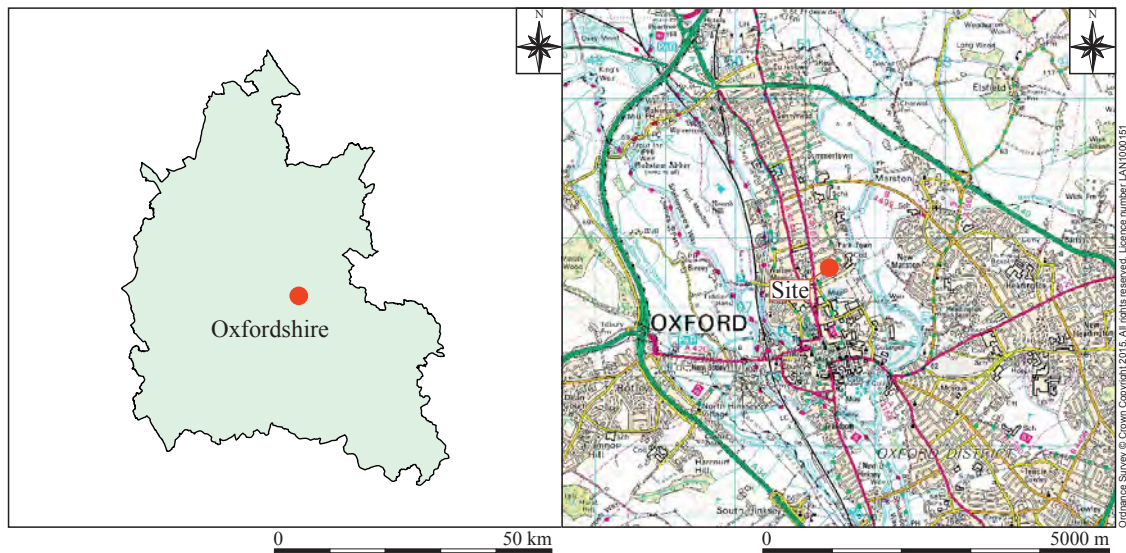


Figure 1: Site location

## **2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

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

- To record any archaeological remains that will be impacted on by the development.

In particular:

- To determine whether any Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman or Saxon activity is present.

## **3 STRATEGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with the Oxford City Archaeological Officer, the archaeological advisor to Oxford City 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.

Excavation was undertaken by a tracked 360 excavator. The topsoil was initially removed with a toothed bucket, which was then changed to a bladed bucket, used to excavate down onto the archaeological horizon. Where archaeological features or deposits were encountered they were cleaned by hand and recorded in plan before being excavated and recorded at an appropriate level. Any archaeological features or other remains were given individual context numbers and recorded by written, drawn and photographic record.

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 denote features i.e. pit cuts, numbers in ( ) show feature fills or deposits of material, while numbers in bold denote structural features.

#### **4.1 Ground Reduction for Extension**

The area of excavation measured 6.5m x 15.7m (102.05m<sup>2</sup>), and directly abutted the southern side of the property (Fig. 1).

The lowest deposit encountered was the geological horizon (05); this was a natural deposit composed of a friable light yellow sandy gravel, interpreted as the Summertown-Radley sand and gravel.

This deposit was overlain by an upper natural deposit (02); this was composed of a silty sand, mid brown orange in colour with less inclusions throughout, in contrast to the lower natural deposit (05), and measured 0.56m in depth. The thicknesses of this deposit varied very little across the site. This deposit was interpreted as the loess supra-natural, commonly found to overlie the terrace gravels in this area (Plate 1).

Cut into deposit (02) was a shallow, square pit 04 (Fig. 1, Plate 2). The pit was located to the north of the excavated area, 1m from the southern wall of the property. The feature measured 0.54m x 0.55m and 0.23m in depth and contained one sherd of 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century pottery and one fragment of window glass. The location and shape of this feature suggested that it was associated, and contemporary, with the construction of the house; this is further evidenced by the finds recovered from fill (03), which was a mid-dark brown sandy silt with infrequent inclusions of charcoal and small sub-rounded stones.

Overlying the whole site was a thick layer of garden soil (01), a mid-brown sandy loam. The deposit measured 0.42m in depth.

#### **4.2 Soakaway**

Excavation of the soakaway took place without the presence of an archaeologist, due to lack of notification by site operatives.

### **5 FINDS**

#### **5.1 Pottery**

One sherd of Mass-produced White Earthenware of 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century date, recovered from pit fill (03) was noted and discarded.

#### **5.2 Glass**

One sherd of window glass of presumed 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century in date, recovered from pit fill (03) was noted and discarded.

### **6 DISCUSSION**

The watching brief was successful in meeting the aims of the investigation laid out within the written scheme of investigation. A single post-medieval pit was discovered,

presumably relating to the construction of the house itself, but no earlier features pre-dating this activity were found during the watching brief.

## 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

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the Oxford County Museums Service under accession code OXCMS:2014.214.

## 8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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

John Moore Heritage Services, 2014 *14/00962/FUL – 16 Crick Road, Oxford. Archaeological Watching Brief Written Scheme of Investigation*. Unpublished



**Plate 1:** Overall post-excavation site shot. Looking south-west.





**Plate 2:** *Pit 04, section 1. Looking north-west.*