



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL STRIP, MAP AND RECORD
AT CLACK'S FARM, CLACK'S LANE,
CROWMARSH GIFFORD, OXFORDSHIRE**

NGR SU 63797 89820

On behalf of

BK Grain handling Engineers

MARCH 2016

REPORT FOR BK Grain Handling Engineers

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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological strip, map and record at Clack's Farm, Clack's Lane, Crowmarsh Gifford (NGR SU 63797 89820). This archaeological work was undertaken due to the erection of farm storage buildings. Despite a large area excavated only one archaeological feature was recorded, a 17th century ditch. It was not preserved as the site was excavated lower than top geological horizon for levelling purpose.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development site is located Clack's Farm, Clack's Lane, Crowmarsh Gifford (NGR SU 63797 89820 centred) in the civil parish of Crowmarsh, South Oxfordshire. The site lies between approximately 92 and 95m OD. The underlying geology is Zig Zag Chalk Formation.

1.2 Planning Background

An application has been submitted to South Oxfordshire District Council for the erection of a 26.5m wide x 57.8m long steel portal framed building for the purpose of storing grain and farm machinery. Due to the archaeological and historical importance of the surrounding area a condition was attached to the permission requiring a strip, map and record to be maintained during the course of building operations or construction works on the site. This was in line with NPPF and Local Planning policies.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The site is located in an area of archaeological interest adjacent to the Icknield Way, a prehistoric trackway. A Bronze Age barrow has been recorded from aerial photographs to the south of the site and a Neolithic to Bronze Age scatter has been identified from field-walking 500m to the south of the proposed development. Cropmarks of a Roman rectangular enclosure have been recorded 500m east of the site and prehistoric finds have been recovered from the area. This archaeological background has been taken from HET's advice note.

The evaluation, carried out by the excavation of 56m of trenching 1.65m wide, found only one small pit on the western edge of the proposal area. The pit was 500mm by 420mm (partly under the baulk) and 300mm deep with sides at *c.* 45°. It contained two pieces of burnt flint suggesting a prehistoric date for its origin.

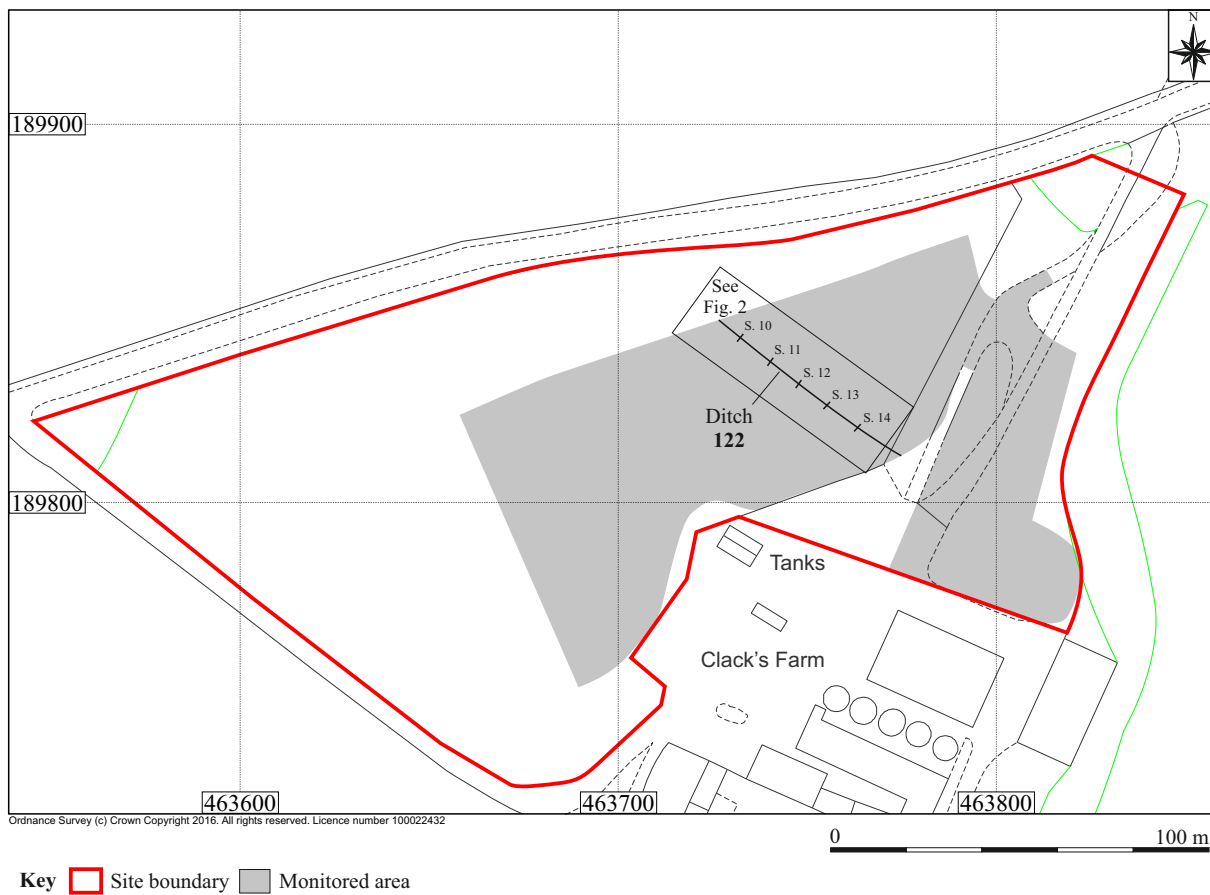
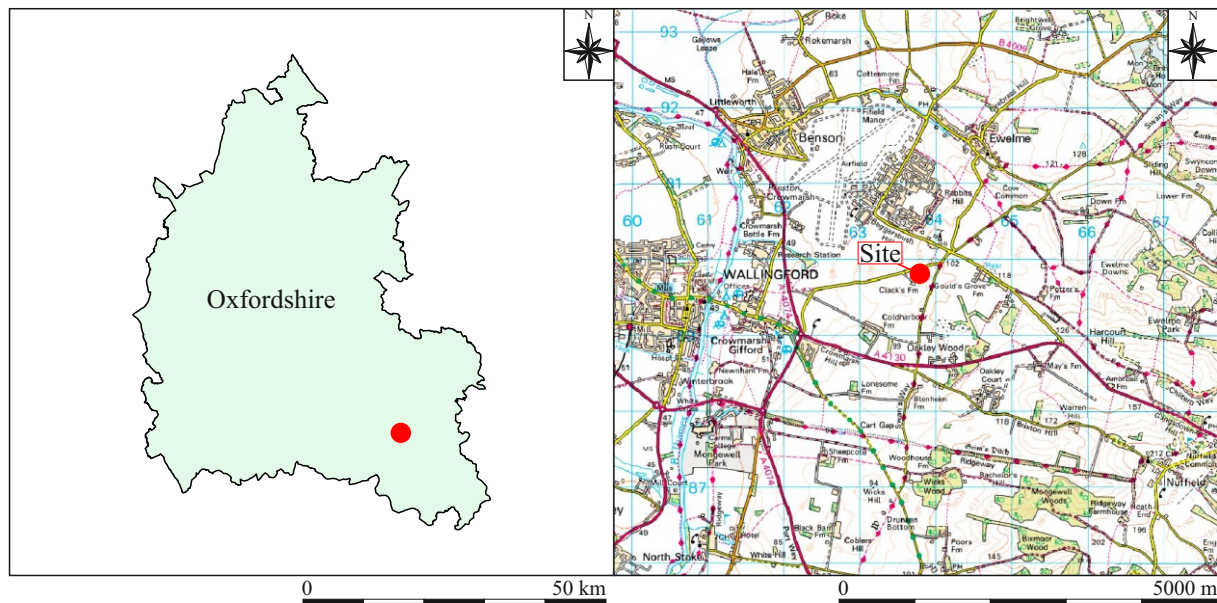


Figure 1: Site location

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

- To make a record of any significant archaeological remains revealed during the course of any operations that may disturb or destroy archaeological remains.

In particular:

- To record any evidence relating to the known Prehistoric and Roman remains 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 the South Oxfordshire District Council.

The first stage of the development will involve the replacement of the overhead cables being buried within a trench. The excavation for this will be under constant archaeological supervision with any archaeological remains being excavated and fully recorded. The area of ground disturbance for the rest of the development will be mechanically stripped of overburden down to the archaeologically relevant horizon under constant archaeological supervision using a toothless bucket. The area will be cleaned and all archaeological features will be recorded on plan. Once the planning phase has been completed a site visit will be arranged with OHaNET and the sampling strategy agreed between JMHS (acting on behalf of the applicant) and the County Archaeological Services. Where stripping of overburden may not go down to the archaeological horizon (indications are that this is possible in the south-east corner of the site) then further evaluation of the area will be carried out and a strategy for this evaluation and subsequent archaeological work will be agreed between JMHS (acting on behalf of the applicant) and the County Archaeological Services.

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

3.2 Methodology

Where archaeological horizons were encountered they were cleaned by hand and excavated appropriately. 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.

The resultant spoil from the works was visually scanned and metal detector used whenever possible. During the course of the excavation, the overhead cables were finally not buried. The machine driver was able to cautiously removed topsoil with his machine without further work on those electric wire. Excavation was carried out by a 12.5 tons Hitachi Zaxis 130 LCN with a 1.80m ditching bucket or by a 30 tons Komatsu PC290LC also equipped with a 2.40m ditching bucket. Spoil was evacuated by two dumpers. A single operator accomplished the whole stripping, insuring a good cooperation and knowledge of the archaeologist's will. An approximately 10500m² area was dug.

4 RESULTS

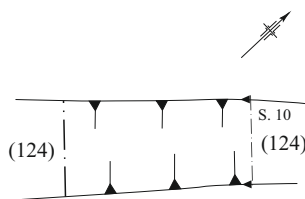
All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers without brackets indicate features i.e. pit cuts, numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material, while numbers in bold indicate structural features.

The topsoil **101** was entirely removed. It was 25 to 30cm thick dark brown clayey silt with scarce bits of chalk and occasional flints. The natural chalk **102** lies directly beneath. We could see that its depth exceeds 1m as it was extracted at some place for levelling reasons. As this top geological horizon was marked by multiple features, a selection of such traces – the ones looking more regular and plausibly archaeological, **103** to **119** - was first investigated but proved to be only natural features and contained neither archaeological deposits nor any find. Thus further stains were not considered worthy of being excavated. The pit **1/05** observed partially in one trench during the evaluation was certainly such a feature.

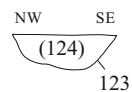
Ditch **122** was observed over almost 60m. It is slightly curved, orientated between 126 and 130 degrees. Five slots were done to examine it. Profile is not very regular. If most of the time its bottom is flat, sides are varying from moderate to sub-vertical. Its depth ranges between 0.18 and 0.25m and its width between 0.50 and 0.80m. We could not see it in the eastern part of the monitored area, presumably too disturbed by the actual farmyard and roads.

The reliability of results is considered to be good. Despite taking place in sometimes bad weather conditions, visibility and light were fair. This hasn't impede the archaeological fieldwork.

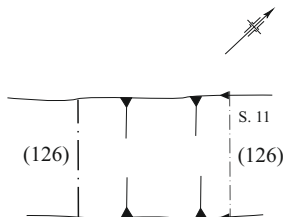
Plan 5



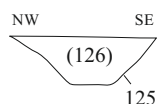
Section 10



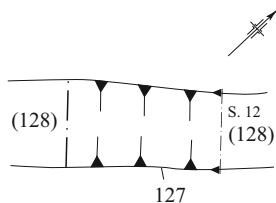
Plan 6



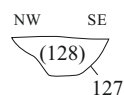
Section 11



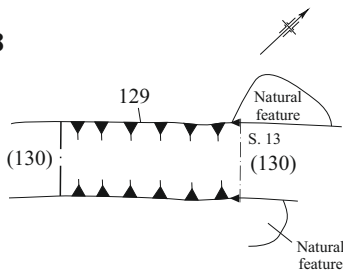
Plan 7



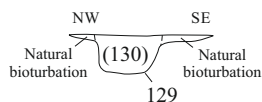
Section 12



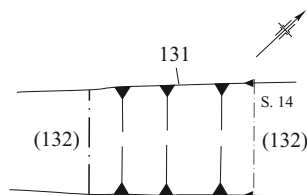
Plan 8



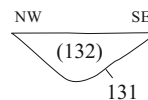
Section 13



Plan 9



Section 14



0 2.5 m

Plans

0 2 m

Sections

Figure 2: Plans and sections of 17th century ditch 122

5 FINDS

5.1 The pottery (by Paul Blinkkhorn)

The pottery assemblage comprised 2 sherds with a total weight of 22g. They occurred in context (124), and were both from the rim and upper body of a single vessel, a jar or jug in Polychrome Slipware, fabric OXREWSL of Oxfordshire County type-series, and dateable to the 17th century (Mellor 1984; 1994). The ware is a common find in the region.

The vessel is slightly unusual for the tradition in that it is a closed form with the decoration on the inner surface. The outer surface is unglazed. The sherds are in good condition, and appear reliably stratified.

5.2 Small find

With the help of the metal detector a cast copper alloy late post-medieval or modern bell was found in the topsoil. The bell is 25mm in height, has a maximum diameter of 34mm and weight 14g.

6 DISCUSSION

The burnt flint found in a pit during the evaluation was unworked and similar flints, burnt or not, but each time unworked, were seen regularly during the stripping process. They occur scarcely in the top deposit and could have been burnt during wood/bushes clearance. Indeed some of the larger features mentioned before could be tree holes.

From what was observed during the evaluation, it was expected that the eastern part, on higher ground, could conceal some archaeology. In this place it looks like a made-up mound that could have been created during the erection of the existing farm building and road. But we confirm what the evaluation had guessed. This was formerly also used as a field as some plough marks were seen but this part contained no archaeology.

The single archaeological feature is a ditch (plate 1, fig. 1 and 2), whose fill is assigned by pottery evidence to the 17th century. This could have been a field boundary, no more visible on the 1883 OS six-inch map (Berkshire XVI).

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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NLS – National Library of Scotland

(<http://maps.nls.uk/geo/find/#zoom=13&lat=51.6040&lon=-1.1049&layers=6&b=1&point=51.5965,-1.1061>, accessed 31/03/2016)



Plate 1 : Ditch 122

Appendix 1 : Context Inventory

| Context No. | Type | Relationships | Description | Depth / Thickness (m) | Extent (m) | Finds | Interpretation | Date | Section No. | Plan No. | Drawing Sheet No. |
|-------------|---------|----------------------------|---|-----------------------|--|------------|------------------------|---------|-------------|-----------|-------------------|
| 101 | Deposit | ol 102, eq. 1/01, eq. 2/01 | dark brown clayey silt with occ. Flint and scarce chalk flakes | 0.25-0.30 | whole area | Δ1 CA bell | topsoil | - | S.15 | - | |
| 102 | Deposit | ul 101, eq. 2/04, eq. 1/02 | firm chalk | >1m | whole area | - | top geological horizon | - | S.15 | P.01 | 4 |
| 103 | Cut | fb 104 | sub-oval cut | 0.20 | 1.12x0.88 | - | natural feature | - | S.01 | P.01 | 4 |
| 104 | Fill | fo 103 | medium compacted mid brown silty clay with occ. Chalk flakes and scarce flint | 0.20 | within 103 | - | fill of feature | - | S.01 | P.01 | 4 |
| 105 | Cut | fb 106 | oval cut | 0.18 | 1.00x0.78 | - | natural feature | - | S.02 | P.01 | 4 |
| 106 | Fill | fo 105 | =104 | 0.18 | within 105 | - | fill of feature | - | S.02 | P.01 | 4 |
| 107 | Cut | fb 108 | sub-oval cut | 0.18 | 0.75x0.90 | - | natural feature | - | S.03 | P.01 | 4 |
| 108 | Fill | fo 107 | =104 | 0.18 | within 107 | - | fill of feature | - | S.03 | P.01 | 4 |
| 109 | Cut | fb 110 | elongated oval | 0.08 | 1.80x0.85 | - | natural feature | - | S.04 | P.01 | 4 |
| 110 | Fill | fo 109 | =104 | 0.08 | within 109 | - | fill of feature | - | S.04 | P.01 | 4 |
| 111 | Cut | fb 112 | oval cut | 0.08 | 1.20x0.65 | - | natural feature | - | S.05 | P.01 | 4 |
| 112 | Fill | fo 111 | =104 | 0.08 | within 111 | - | fill of feature | - | S.05 | P.01 | 4 |
| 113 | Cut | fb 114 | oval cut | 0.08 | 0.50x0.70 | - | natural feature | - | S.06 | P.01 | 4 |
| 114 | Fill | fo 113 | =104 | 0.08 | within 113 | - | fill of feature | - | S.06 | P.01 | 4 |
| 115 | Cut | fb 116 | irregular cut | 0.20 | 1.16x1.85 | - | natural feature | - | S.07 | P.02 | 3 |
| 116 | Fill | fo 115 | =104 | 0.20 | within 115 | - | fill of feature | - | S.07 | P.02 | 3 |
| 117 | Cut | fb 118 | irregular cut | 0.12 | 1.55x1.15 | - | natural feature | - | S.08 | P.03 | 3 |
| 118 | Fill | fo 117 | =104 | 0.12 | within 117 | - | fill of feature | - | S.08 | P.03 | 3 |
| 119 | Cut | fb 120, 121 | sub-rectangular cut | 0.18 | 1.50x1.00 | - | natural feature | - | S.09 | P.04 | 3 |
| 120 | Fill | fo 119 | =104 | 0.15 | within 119 | - | fill of feature | - | S.09 | P.04 | 3 |
| 121 | Fill | fo 119 | medium compacted dark brown clay/silty clay with occ. chalk flakes | 0.08 | within 119 | - | fill of feature | - | S.09 | - | 3 |
| 122 | Group | contain 123-132 | slightly curved ditch, orientated at 126-130 degrees | between 0.18 and 0.26 | >59.60 long, width between 0.50 and 0.80 | - | ditch | 17th C. | S.10-S.14 | P.05-P.09 | 3, 5 |
| 123 | Cut | fb 124 | linear | 0.18 | 0.60-0.65m wide | - | ditch | 17th C. | S.10 | P.05 | 3 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|---------|--------------------------|--|------|------------------------|---------|-------------------|---------|------|------|---|
| 124 | Fill | fo 123 | medium compacted mid brown silty clay with common chalk flakes | 0.18 | within 123 | pottery | fill of ditch | 17th C. | S.10 | P.05 | 3 |
| 125 | Cut | fb 126 | linear | 0.25 | 0.75-0.80m wide | - | ditch | 17th C. | S.11 | P.06 | 3 |
| 126 | Fill | fo 125 | =124 | 0.25 | within 125 | - | fill of ditch | 17th C. | S.11 | P.06 | 3 |
| 127 | Cut | fb 128 | linear | 0.21 | 0.50-0.60m wide | - | ditch | 17th C. | S.12 | P.07 | 5 |
| 128 | Fill | fo 127 | =124 | 0.21 | within 127 | - | fill of ditch | 17th C. | S.12 | P.07 | 5 |
| 129 | Cut | fb 130 | linear | 0.20 | 0.50 | - | ditch | 17th C. | S.13 | P.08 | 5 |
| 130 | Fill | fo 129 | =124 | 0.20 | within 129 | - | fill of ditch | 17th C. | S.13 | P.08 | 5 |
| 131 | Cut | fb 132 | linear | 0.26 | 0.70-0.75m wide | - | ditch | 17th C. | S.14 | P.09 | 5 |
| 132 | Fill | fo 131 | =124 | 0.26 | within 131 | - | fill of ditch | 17th C. | S.14 | P.09 | 5 |
| 133 | Deposit | ul 101, ol 102, eq. 2/02 | dark brown silty clay | 0.20 | only area east of road | - | former ploughsoil | unknown | S.15 | - | 5 |