



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**HALF ACRE, MAIN STREET,
EAST HANNEY, OXFORDSHIRE OX12 0JE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

NGR SU4145 9257

*On behalf of
Lemon Tree Properties Ltd*

JANUARY 2016

REPORT FOR Lemontree Property Improvements Ltd
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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological watching brief at Half Acre, Main Street, East Hanney, Oxfordshire. The watching brief was conducted during the removal of the concrete platform to the demolished building and the removal of the concrete footings. The footings were very shallow, only around 0.6m below the current ground level in places. The excavation revealed a deep dark brown topsoil of sandy loam which was deposited above a layer of mid bluish grey, sandy clay loam. No features were identified and the only material recovered was a small amount of pig and sheep bone from just below the topsoil imbedded into the top of the subsoil.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

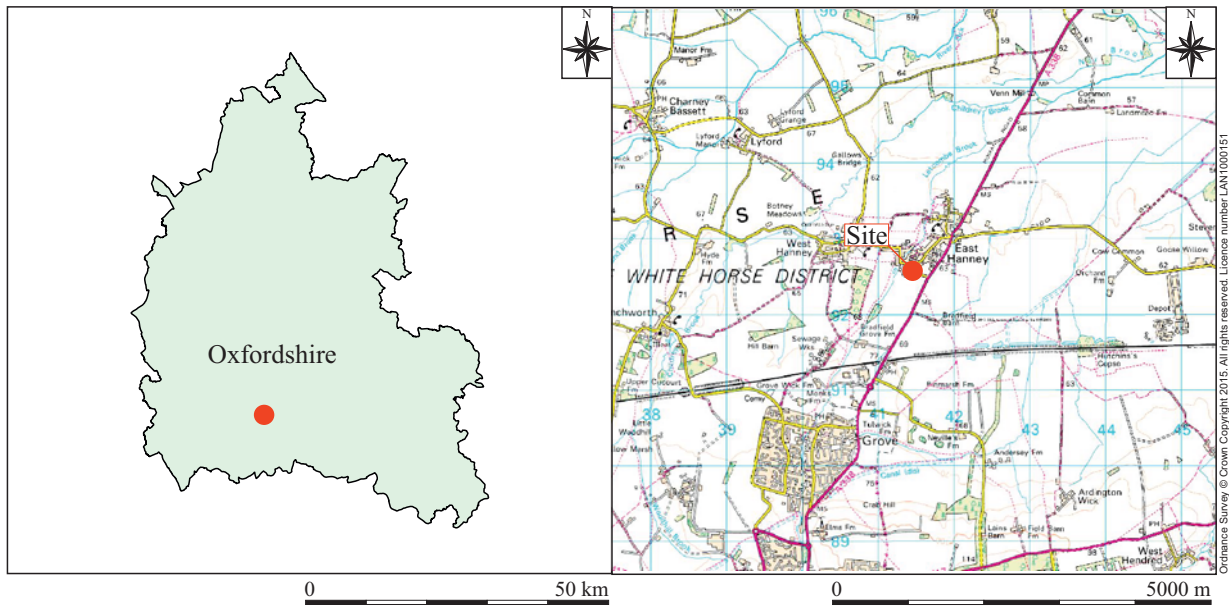
The site is located at the western end of Summertown off the A338 in East Hanney (NGR SU41459257). The geology is sand and gravel overlying Kimmeridge Clay and it lies at approximately 65m OD. The site contained a single dwelling that is was being demolished within a residential garden.

1.2 Planning Background

The Vale of White Horse District Council has granted planning permission for the development of the site with two dwellings (P15/2200/FUL). Due to the potential for the work to disturb archaeological deposits a condition was attached to the permission requiring the maintaining of an archaeological watching brief during the period of demolition/construction/ground works. This is in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological watching brief during the demolition of the original building on the site. The work was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation. The Oxfordshire Historic and Natural Environment Team (OHaNET) produced a Design Brief for the watching brief.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The field to the south of Summertown, East Hanney has hosted a series of metal detector rallies during the past few years. Significant numbers of metal artefacts, including coins and jewellery dating from the later prehistoric period to the medieval period have been retrieved. The bulk of the artefacts are however Romano British in origin. The quantities are far higher than would be normally found and strongly suggest the presence of activity during those periods. Subsequent archaeological evaluation has revealed an extensive spread of Romano British features across the entire field and includes linear features, pits and post holes along with vast amounts of Roman pottery. Human burials have also been found. There is no reason to believe that these features do not extend north of the road and as such this development may disturb Romano British features and possibly human skeletal remains dating to that period (taken from OHaNET Design Brief).



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Key Site boundary Monitored area

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 Roman British remains just to the south.
- To ensure that no damage is made to any human remains encountered during the demolition works.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation (JMHS 2015) agreed with Oxfordshire Historic and Natural Environment Team, the archaeological advisors to the Vale of White Horse District Council.

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

3.2 Methodology

Following the demolition of the building and the removal of rubble, the concrete platform to the building was broken out by machine. This was followed by the machine removal of foundations and cleaning out the backfill from the excavated trenches in order to observe any underlying archaeology which may have been there. Any rubble, hardcore or aggregate below the platform was also removed by machine and the area was reduced down with a ditching bucket to the top of the subsoil. This was all conducted under the observation of the archaeological project officer. The spoil was also scanned for possible artefacts.

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered. 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 removal of the concrete platform and footings revealed two layers of stratigraphy. The lowest layer was a bluish grey layer of sandy clay loam, displaying more of a brownish colour places (2). This layer was excavated though by c.0.1m but the footings or the platform were not deep enough for the excavation to identify any

lower soil horizons. Deposited above this subsoil layer was a 0.6m layer of dark brown sandy loam topsoil (1). No features were identified and the only recovered finds was a small collection of pig and sheep bone from the SW corner of the plot.

5 FINDS

5.1 Animal Bone

A small collection of pig and sheep bone was recovered from the SW corner of the excavated plot. It was imbedded into the top of the subsoil (2) but was considered to have probably originated from the topsoil (1). The material was not retained.

6 DISCUSSION

The footings to the buildings were not very deep, only around 0.7m from the current ground level. Nonetheless there was a possibility that any surviving features may have been cut into the subsoil layer. However, despite cleaning the area with a toothless ditching bucket, no features were identified. Removed soil was checked for archaeological material but the only material found was a small collection of sheep and pig bone which was considered to have originated in the topsoil.

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

Not retained

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the Oxfordshire Museum Service with the accession number OXCMS: 2016.5.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*.

John Moore Heritage Services (2015) *P15/V2200/FUL- Half Acre, Main Street, East Hanney, Oxfordshire. OX12 0JE. Archaeological Watching Brief. Written Scheme of Investigation*. Unpublished. JMHS.