



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

148 OCK STREET, ABINGDON,

OXFORDSHIRE

NGR SU 49143 96935

*On behalf of
Phil Crowther*

NOVEMBER 2016

REPORT FOR Mr P Crowther,
c/o Jack McNaney Design,
25 Cricket Road,
Oxford
OX4 BDQ

PREPARED BY Steve Leech

ILLUSTRATION BY Autumn Robson

EDITED BY John Moore

AUTHORISED BY John Moore

FIELDWORK 17th & 18th October 2016

REPORT ISSUED 8th November 2016

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: 3628
Site Code: ABOS 16

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	3
3. STRATEGY	3
3.1 Research Design	3
3.2 Methodology	3
4. RESULTS	4
5. FINDS	5
5.1 Pottery	5
5.2 Faunal Remains	5
5.3 Ceramic Building Material	6
6. DISCUSSION	6
7. BIBLIOGRAPHY	6
 FIGURES AND PLATES	
Figure 1. Site Location	2
Plate 1. General shot of foundation trench looking northeast	4
Plate 2. Representative section within foundation trench	5

Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological watching brief on land at the rear of 148 Ock Street, Abingdon, Oxfordshire (NGR SU 49143 96935). The foundation trench cut through a 1m thick garden soil, dated to the Post-Medieval period, and was devoid of any archaeological features.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development site lies on the south side of Ock Street, on the corner with and on the west side of Meadowside. The extension is to the rear of the existing property at NGR SU 49143 96935 in an area of former car park. The geology is First Terrace River Gravels and the site lies at approximately 51.9m OD.

1.2 Planning Background

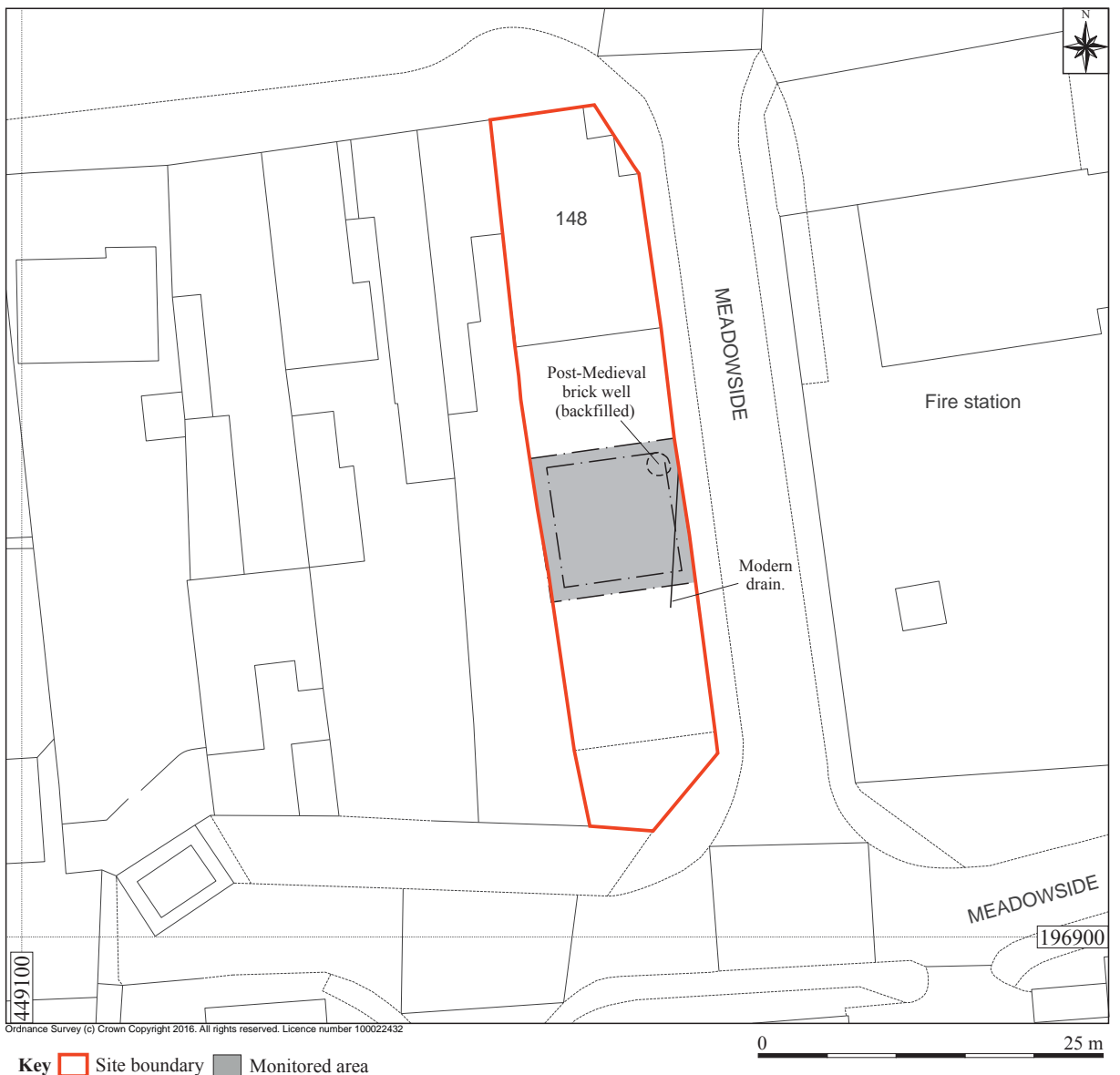
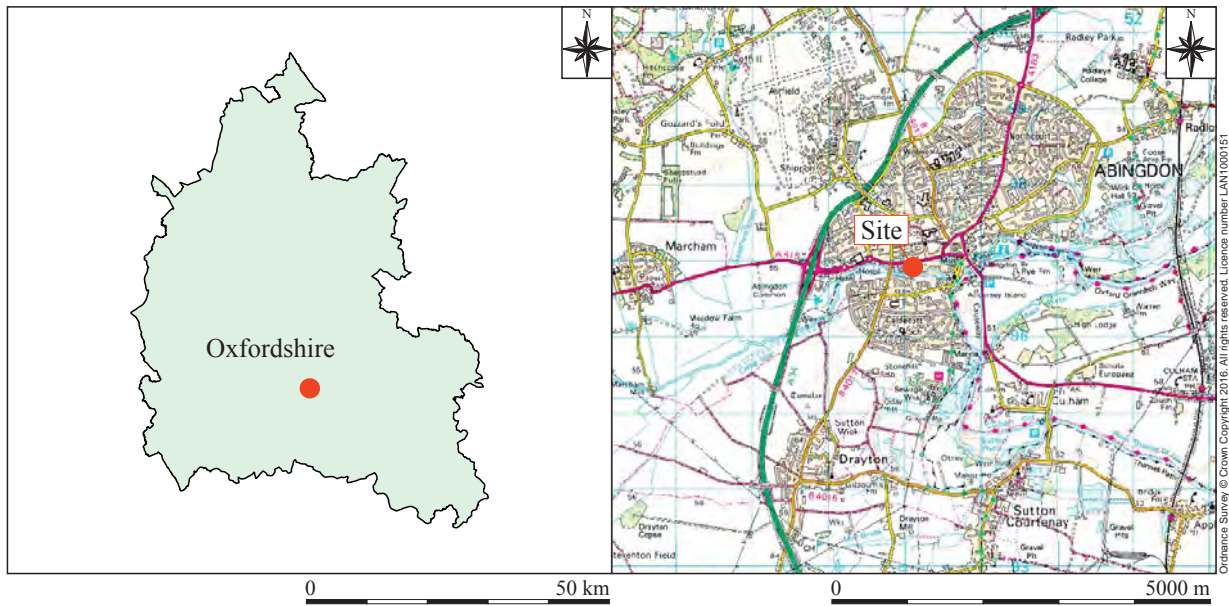
The Vale of White Horse District Council has granted planning permission for extension and conversion of existing public house to form 4x1 bedroom flats, 1x1 bedroom maisonette and erection of one bedroom attached dwelling (P15/V2824/FUL). Due to the archaeological and historical importance of the surrounding 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 NPPF and Local Planning policies. The Oxfordshire Historic Environment Team (OHET) advised on the need and reason for such a watching brief.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The development site is within an area of considerable archaeological potential. Investigations approximately 70m to the east at Mayott House found features and deposits that dated from late 11th century up to present day. The medieval period was represented by four pits and one posthole dated from late 11th to late 14th century. Material recovered from the features indicated predominantly domestic activities with some indication of industrial activities during this period. Earlier post-medieval period was represented by a solitary cesspit dated to the 17th century. Later post-medieval period/early modern period was represented by thick layers which were interpreted as garden deposits. One ditch related with the boundary clearly visible on the historic map dated from 1874 to 1960 and the remains of a stone foundation related to long building shown on historic maps from 1874 to 1899 were investigated during the watching brief (JMHS 2015).

Archaeological investigations on the north side of Ock Street either side of the junction with Conduit Street have revealed the presence of timber framed buildings fronting Ock Street during the medieval period. Here there was evidence for domestic and light industrial activities, especially tanning, being undertaken.

It is unclear whether this was part of the spread of medieval Abingdon or a separate settlement west of Abingdon.



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 medieval and later settlement activity in this part of Abingdon.

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, 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

An archaeologist was present on site during the course of all significant groundwork that had the potential to reveal or disturb archaeological remains. This was for the excavation for new foundations.

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, especially for finds relating from the Medieval to Post-Medieval periods.

The watching brief involved the monitoring of the foundation trench for an extension on the rear of the building. The trench was 0.6m wide, 1m deep and extended by 6.4m x 6.4m (Fig. 1 & Plate. 1). No further work was required as all the required services were to be connected into the existing services.



Plate 1. General shot of foundation trench looking northeast

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 foundation trench consisted of a 0.3m thick layer of modern stone hardcore overlying a 0.7m thick layer of a dark grey / brown silty clay (01) that contained modern 20th century concrete fragments, glass and metal together with five sherds of Post-Medieval pottery (See 5.1 below) . This layer overlay layer (02), a mid-grey / brown silty clay (Plate. 2). This layer was not investigated as its depth was on the limit of excavation.

The trench partially revealed the wall of a Late Post-Medieval infilled brick well that was located near the north-eastern extent of the trench (Fig. 1). A modern water pipe ran through the eastern extent of the trench (Fig. 1).



Plate 2. Representative section within foundation trench

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery *By Paul Blinkhorn*

The pottery assemblage comprised 5 sherds with a total weight of 45g. It is all post-medieval, and occurred in the topsoil (01). It was recorded using the conventions of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994), as follows:

OXDR: Red Earthenwares, 1550+. 3 sherds, 23g.

OXST: Rhenish Stoneware, AD1550 – 1750. 2 sherds, 22g.

The wares are typical finds at sites in the region. The sherds of OXDR are all from large bowls or pancheons, while the fragments of OXST, which are of Frechen type, are from jugs. This is typical of the respective industries.

5.2 Faunal Remains *By Dr Simona Denis*

Animal Bone

Two fragments of animal bone, weighing 85g in total, were recovered from context (01). The items were positively identified as sheep/goat proximal metacarpus and proximal humerus. Clear fine slice marks focussed around the bone extremities were observed on both fragments, possibly indicating skinning (Seetah 2009).

Oyster Shell

A single shell was found in context (01). The item, weighing 6.6g, was identified as a right or upper oyster shell valve on the basis of the aspect of its surface (Winder 2011).

5.3 Ceramic Building Material *By Dr Simona Denis*

Two fragments of roof tile were also collected from context (01). Both objects, weighing 102.6g in total, preserved one complete corner and partial rounded peg holes.

Only a broad dating to the post-medieval period can be suggested for the roof tile fragments.

It is not recommended to retain any of the finds.

6 DISCUSSION

The foundation trench was devoid of any archaeological features and consisted of a 0.7m thick layer of Post-Medieval garden soil (01) overlying an un-dated mid-grey / brown silty clay (02). The trench partially revealed the wall of a Late Post-Medieval infilled brick well that was located near the north-eastern extent of the trench. A modern water pipe ran through the eastern extent of the trench.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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

John Moore Heritage Services, 2016, *148 Ock Street, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 5DT Archaeological Watching Brief Written Scheme of Investigation*. Unpublished client report.

John Moore Heritage Services, 2015, *An Archaeological Watching Brief at Mayott House, Ock Street, Abingdon, Oxfordshire*. Unpublished client report.

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.

Seetah, K. 2009 The importance of cut placement and implement signatures to butchery interpretation (http://www.alexandriaarchive.org/bonecommons/archive/files/archivefiles_downloadseetah_textimages_204_7cd9b26908.pdf accessed 30/09/2015)

Winder, J. M. 2011 *Oyster shells from archaeological sites: a brief illustrated guide to basic processing* (<https://oystersetcetera.files.wordpress.com/2011/03/oystershellmethodsmanualversion11.pdf> accessed 17/07/2015)