

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

5 MILTON MANOR DRIVE, LITTLE MILTON

OXFORDSHIRE

NGR SP 61896 00778

On behalf of

Mrs Lamb

NOVEMBER 2015

REPORT FOR Mrs Lamb
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Little Milton
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OX44 7PT

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JMHS Project No: 3269

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	1
3 STRATEGY	3
3.1 Research Design	3
3.2 Methodology	3
4 RESULTS	3
4.1 Field Results	3
4.2 Reliability of Results	5
5 FINDS	5
6 DISCUSSION	6
7 BIBLIOGRAPHY	6
 FIGURES, TABLE AND PLATES	
Figure 1 Site location	2
Figure 2 Plan and sections	4
Table Context inventory	7
Plates Sections 1-3	9

SUMMARY

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological watching brief at 5 Milton Manor Drive in Little Milton, Oxfordshire. Groundwork consisted of the excavation of a foundation trench for a two storey side extension. Only modern foundation trenches, a potential large modern pit, another undated pit and a possible natural feature were found. The site shows a very low archaeological potential, although it is set in the vicinity of prehistoric remains.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development site is located west of 5 Milton Manor Drive, Little Milton, Oxfordshire (NGR SP 61896 00778). The site is at approximately 69.50m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology is Portland sand and limestone. Prior to development the site was a garden with grass.

1.2 Planning Background

South Oxfordshire District Council granted planning permission for a two storey side extension (ref. P14/S3774/HH). 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

The proposed development site lies in an area of archaeological interest just south-east of a site of recorded human remains. During landscaping works, human bones were noted which came from an unusually large grave-pit of prehistoric date. The site is also located within the historic core of the settlement, and east of the Dorchester to Fleet-Marston Roman road.

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 be aware of the possibility of finding human remains, or associated features, such as found to the north-west.

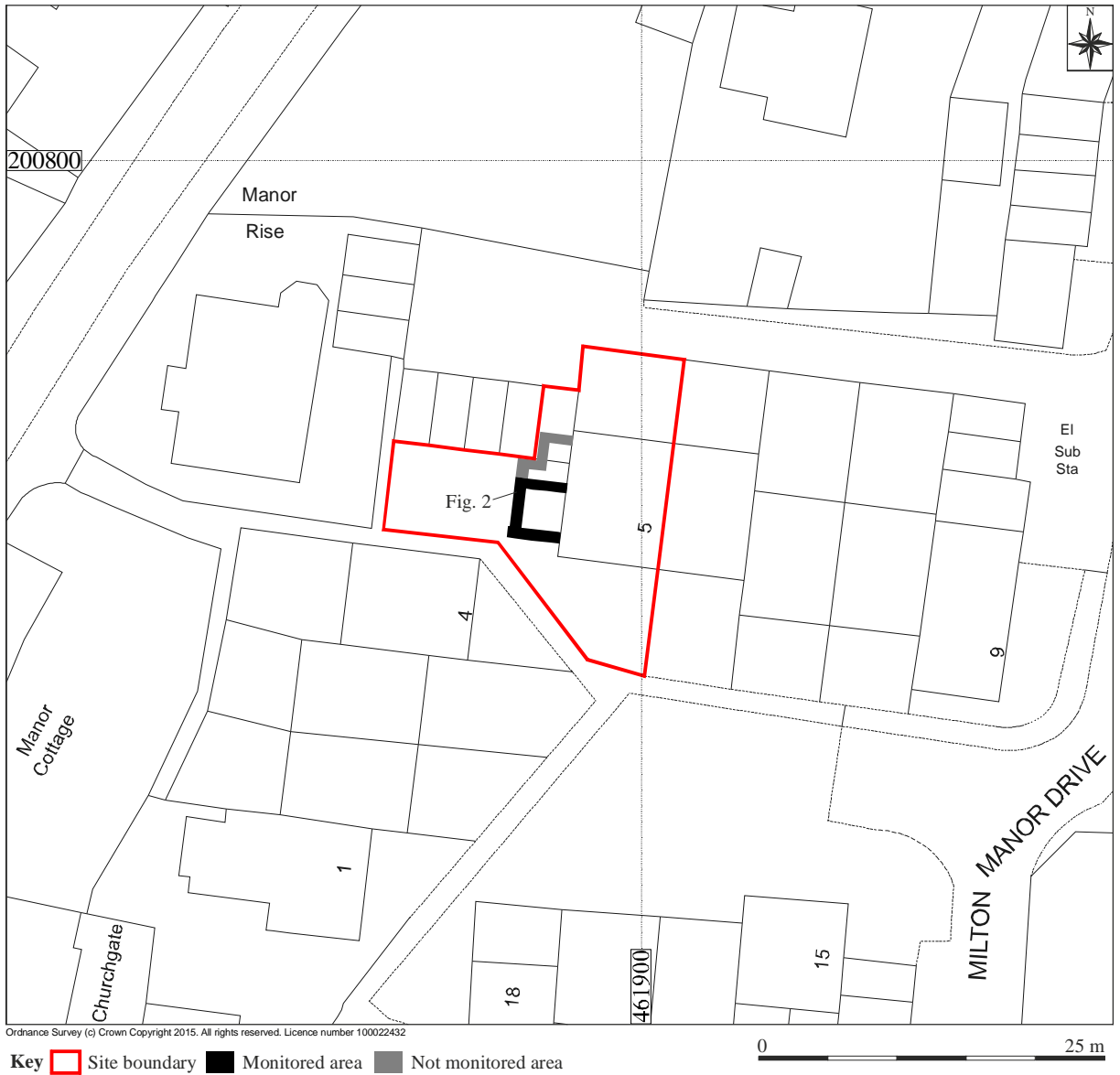
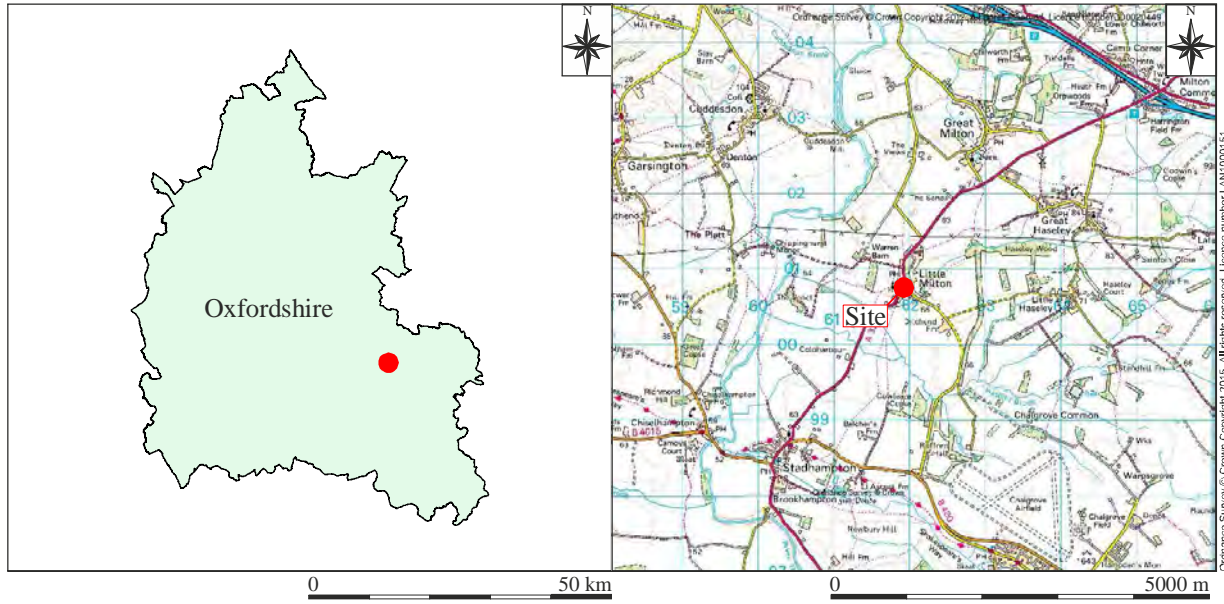


Figure 1: Site location

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (JMHS 2015) agreed with Richard Oram (Historic and Natural Environment Team, Infrastructure Planning) the archaeological advisor to South Oxfordshire District Council.

3.2 Methodology

An archaeologist was present on site during the course of any groundwork that had the potential to reveal or disturb archaeological remains. A 1.6 tonne JCB excavator, fitted with a 0.60 wide bucket was used to excavate the foundation trench. Spoil was heaped around the trench and checked for finds. The unobserved area was under the previous garage and had been disturbed by its construction.

Any archaeological deposits and features revealed were 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 recorded by written, drawn and digital photographic record. Where archaeological features were exposed during ground reduction but otherwise would remain unaffected they were recorded only by plan and written description. All artefacts were collected and retained.

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 recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014) and the principles of MoRPHE (Historic England 2015).

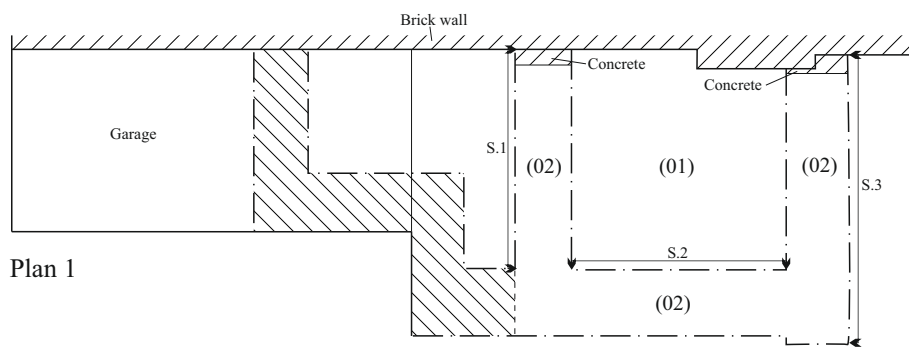
4 RESULTS (Figure 2)

All features and deposits were assigned individual context numbers, except concrete slabs. Context numbers with no brackets indicate feature cuts, while numbers in round brackets () show feature fills or deposits of material and numbers in bold indicate any form of masonry.

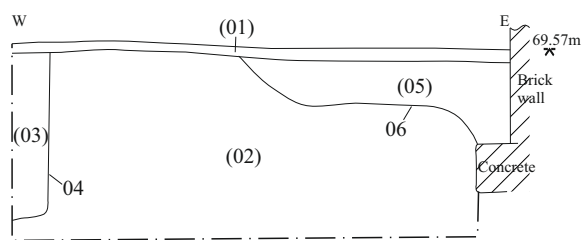
4.1 Field Results

The excavated footings trench, forming the U-shaped footprint of the extension, was of average width 0.7m, for a maximum depth of 1.20m from the ground surface and a total length of 10.35m.

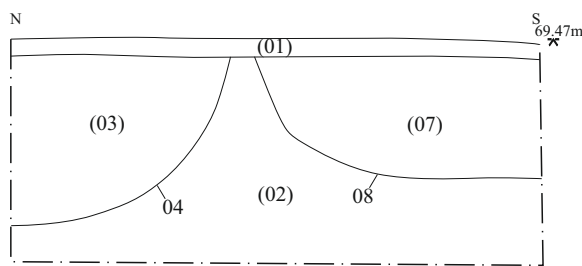
The lowest deposit encountered was a soft mid-yellow sand (02), identified as Portland Sand. This natural formation was reached very quickly, even just under the



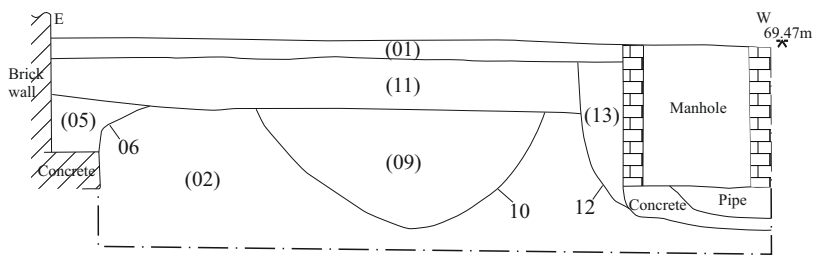
Plan 1






Section 1



Section 2



Section 3

- Key**
-  Not monitored
 -  Existing building
 -  Brick

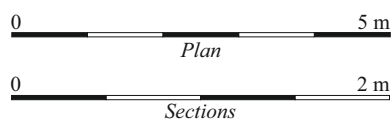


Figure 2: Plan and sections

thin 0.10m topsoil (01) in some places (Fig. 2, Section 1). There was no subsoil. Directly cut into this natural deposit were a few noticeable features, all disturbed by rooting.

Archaeologically irrelevant but nonetheless visible was the foundation trench 06 for the main building's west brick wall. Its fill (05) started just above a concrete slab. Its extent is variable as you can notice on Fig. 2, section 1 and 3. Also of modern date are the contexts 12 and its heterogeneous backfill (13), related to the installation of a manhole (Fig. 2, section 3).

In the north-west corner, observed in Section 1 and Section 2, is feature 04, cut into the natural. It is a potentially large rubbish pit, whose fill (03), a dark brown silty sand, contained a varied but scarce array of building material (brick, tile, square concrete block, slate; not retained), as well as a few animal bones and modern pottery (Victorian or 20th century). Due to the trench shape, no complete dimension was seen (south and east limits only), except for its depth, 0.87m. It is at least 3.29m x 0.90m in area. This could be the result of the dismantlement of earlier structures to install the current garages to the north.

Another pit, 08, lay just to the south of the former feature. Here again, the complete dimensions are not known, between 1.5 and 2.25m wide with a depth of 0.64m. The fill (07) is much like (03) except for the lack of any finds. The resemblance suggests a similar modern date.

The last occurring feature 10 had a concave shape, approximately 1.40 wide by 0.60 thick. The fill (09), a mid-brown orange sand, had a very natural-looking appearance. It was interpreted as a possible tree bowl or planting pit. It is overlaid by deposit (11), certainly a levelling layer which was also on top of (05), fill of construction cut for the main house.

4.2 Reliability of Results

The reliability of the results is considered to be good despite the archaeological watching brief taking place in rainy conditions. Light and visibility were good. Excellent cooperation from the ground workers ensured that sufficient time was allowed to investigate and record the archaeological deposit to the appropriate standards.

5 FINDS

The representative sample of material retained at first consists of:

Type	Context	No of items	Size (LxWxH) in cm	Weight in g	Notes
Pottery	03	3		50	1 whiteware; 1 creamware; 1 TPW stamped Lilly from Stoke-on-Trent
Pottery	05	1		5	TPW, possible rim of a tea cup
Slate	03	1	11.5*8.5*0.5	75	Fragmentary
Concrete block	03	1	21.5*20.5*9.7	8000	
Tile	03	1	6.1*5*1.35	49	Fragmentary
Brick	03	1	5.5*5.6*5	183	Fragmentary
Bones	03	8		23	Too small or fragmentary to allow determination
Glass	11	1	Diameter of base 3.7 Diameter of rim : 3.5-4.5	147	1 small complete colourless bottle

As modern finds are not recommended to be kept, all finds have been discarded.

6 DISCUSSION

The archaeological field evaluation was successful and meets the aims of the investigations, which were laid out in the WSI. Overall, no medieval or earlier features and finds were found during the fieldwork. The area with prehistoric remains does not appear extend to this small development area. The features present must be relate to the construction of the existing house and garages, which might have disturbed or destroyed any earlier archaeological features.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Context No.	Type	Relationships	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Interpretation	Date	Section No.	Plan No.	Drawing Sheet No.
01	DEPOSIT	overlays 02, 03, 05, 07, 11, 13	very dark brown soft silty sand with lots of rooting	0.10	all site	all site	NO	topsoil	modern	01, 02, 03	01	01, 02
02	DEPOSIT		soft light yellow sand with a few roots	>1.04	all site	all site	NO	natural	n/a	01, 02, 03	01	01, 02
03	FILL	Fill of 04	medium compacted mid brown silty sand, occ. Unsorted stones + roots	0.87	>0.9	>3.26	YES	fill of pit	modern	01, 02	n/a	02
04	CUT	Filled by (03)	possible large pit or trench with irregular sides, flat bottom, sharp edges on top	0.87	>0.9	>3.26	n/a	large modern pit?	modern	01, 02	n/a	02
05	FILL	Fill of 06	soft dark brown silty sand, occ. unsorted stones (5-20cm), discarded burnt(?) concrete, tile sherds (not kept), mortar, scarce charcoals	0.44	range between 0.5 and 1.44	>4.30	YES	backfill of foundation's trench	modern	01	n/a	02
06	CUT	Filled by (05)	N-S Linear corresponding to the foundation trench of main house west wall. Irregular side, flat bottom	0.44	range between 0.5 and 1.44	>4.30	n/a	foundation's trench cut for main house west wall	modern	01	n/a	02
07	FILL	Fill of 08	soft dark brown silty sand, occ. unsorted stones (5-20cm), roots	0.64	>1.5	>1.5	NO	fill of feature	uncertain	02	n/a	02
08	CUT	Filled by (07)	possible oval or circular pit, with steep then moderate slope and a flat bottom	0.64	>1.5	>1.5	n/a	undetermined feature	uncertain	02	n/a	02

09	FILL	Fill of 10	soft mid brown orange sand + roots	0.60	1.40	unknown	NO	fill of feature	unknown	03	n/a	02
10	CUT	Filled by (09)	possibly subcircular, sharp edges, moderate sides, concave bottom	0.60	1.40	unknown	n/a	natural feature (treehole?)	unknown	03	n/a	02
11	DEPOSIT	Overlays (02), (05), (09)	soft mid brown silty sand, occ. Charcoals and unsorted small stones (<10cm)	0.28	3	unknown	YES	levelling layer?	modern	03	n/a	02
12	CUT	Filled by (13)	trench surrounding manhole, with steep sides	0.72	0.22	unknown	n/a	backfill of foundation's trench	modern	03	n/a	02
13	FILL	Fill of 12	patchy fill (dark brown silty sand, yellow sand, mid brown silty clay)	0.72	0.22	unknown	NO	foundation's trench cut for a manhole	modern	03	n/a	02

PLATES



Section 1



Section 2



Section 3