



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

47 WATLING LANE, DORCHESTER-ON-THAMES,

OXFORDSHIRE

NGR SU 57689406

*On behalf of
Mr A Foley*

MAY 2017

REPORT FOR Mr A Foley
Blackthorne Stables
West End Road
Whaltham St Lawrence
Berkshire
RG10 0NL

PREPARED BY Steve Leech

ILLUSTRATION BY Anne Huvig and Autumn Robson

EDITED BY John Moore

AUTHORISED BY John Moore

FIELDWORK 6th & 21st October 2016, site visit 2nd May 2017

REPORT ISSUED 15th May 2017

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: 3626
Site Code: DOWL 16
Archive Location The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the Oxfordshire Museum Resource Centre with the accession number OXCMS: 2016.177



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	6
5.1 Pottery	6
5.2 Animal Bone	6
5.3 Other finds	7
6 DISCUSSION	9
7 ARCHIVE	9
8 BIBLIOGRAPHY	9

FIGURES AND PLATES

Figure 1. Site location	2
Figure 2. Plan of foundation trench and representative section	5
Plate 1. Foundation trench looking north	4
Plate 2. Representative section in foundation trench	6

SUMMARY

This document represents an investigation of the potential for archaeological remains on land at 47 Watling Lane Dorchester-on-Thames Oxfordshire (NGR SU 57689406). No archaeological features were identified during the groundworks, however the lowest layer (1003) at the base of the foundation trench, although un-dated, could be the vestiges of the destroyed bank material. Various artefacts of a Post-Medieval date were recovered.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site lies approximately 50m east of Watling Lane and the proposed development is within the plot of No. 47 Watling Lane (NGR SU 57689406). The property is accessed from a track leading off Watling Lane to the south. To the east and south is an extensive area of allotments. The site lies at approximately 50m OD and the geology is Thames River Terrace Gravels.

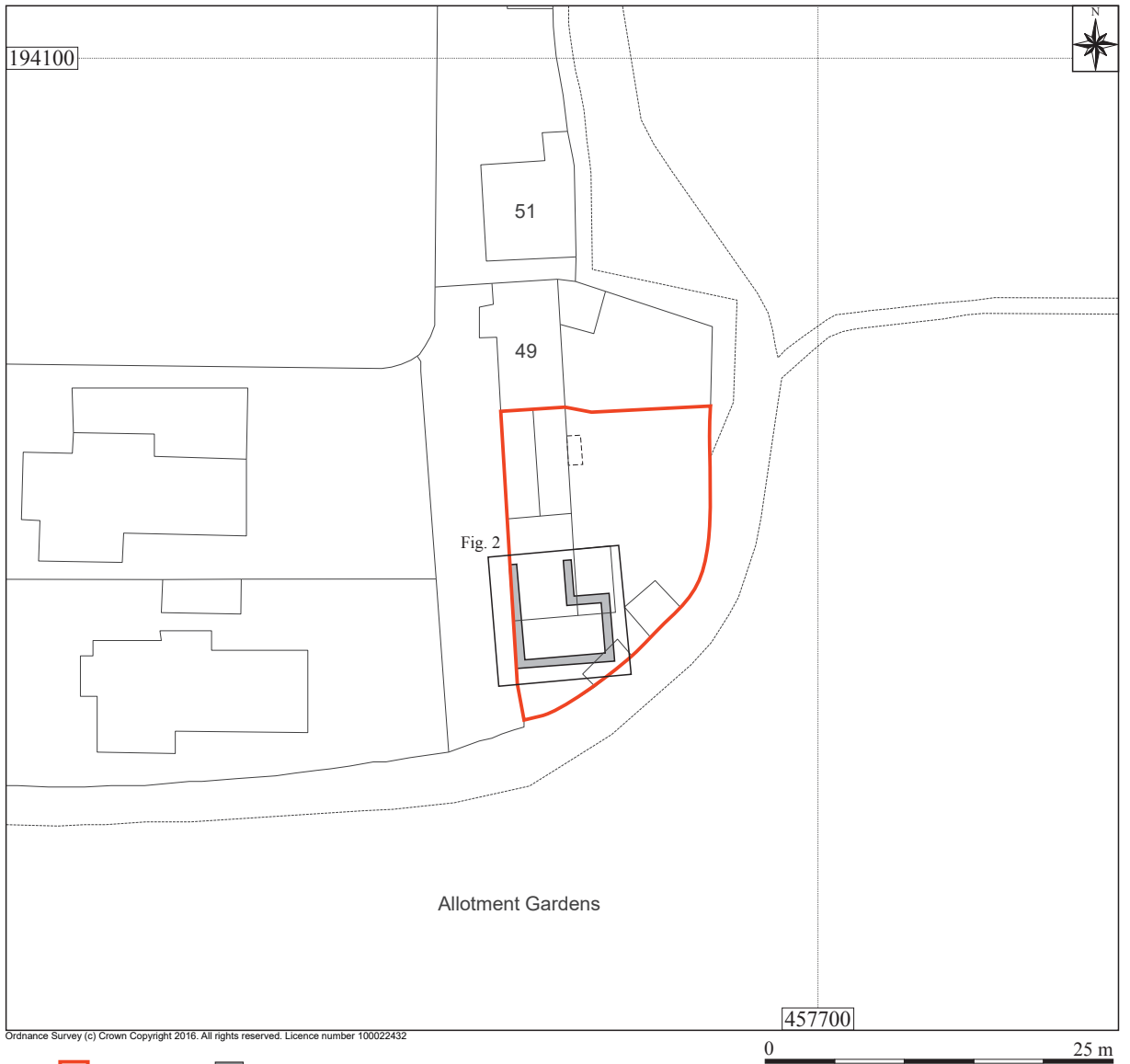
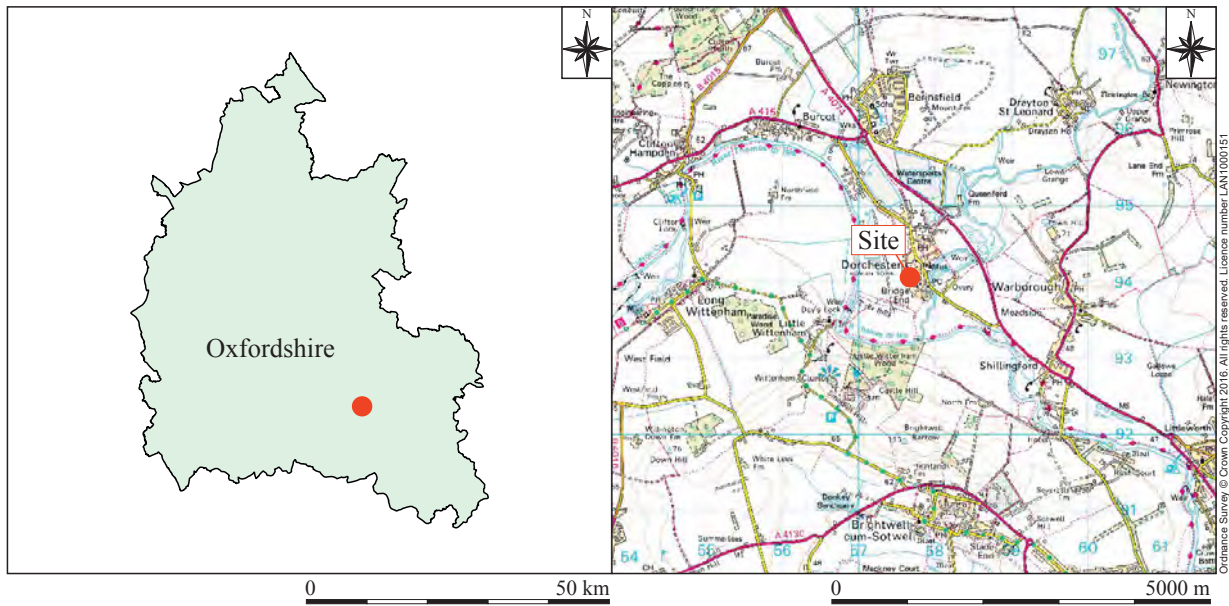
1.2 Planning Background

South Oxfordshire District Council granted planning permission for demolition of existing single storey extension, outbuildings and carport, erection of a new two storey side extension (P16/S3035/FUL-3). Due to the potential for the work to disturb archaeological deposits a condition was attached to the permission requiring the submission and approval of a Written Scheme of Investigation and a condition requiring the implementation of an archaeological watching brief during groundworks. This was in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Oxfordshire Historic and Natural Environment Team (OHANET) had advised on the scope of work required.

1.3 Archaeological Background

Dorchester-on-Thames is situated within the site of a small Roman town, which consisted of roughly rectangular defences enclosing a civil settlement of about 13.5ha. It is generally thought to have been established in the Flavian period and the unusual increase in late Roman (Theodosian) coinage implies a thriving occupation throughout the 4th century and possibly into the 5th century. Parts of the Roman town are a scheduled monument (Ancient Monument Oxon 116), including areas immediately to the east and west of the development site.

The present Watling Lane runs to the west of, and approximately parallel with, the outer ditch of the Roman town defences. The existing access track runs across the line of the infilled outer and inner ditches, and across the line of the destroyed town wall and rampart behind it. The proposed development is over the line of the destroyed rampart as defined by Hogg and Stevens (1937) in their 1935-6 excavations carried out around the environs of the current proposal area. Hogg and Stevens interpreted a light gravelly/clay layer as the vestiges of the destroyed bank material.



Key Site boundary Monitored area

Figure 1: Site location

A burial with pottery was found to the south of the site. A watching brief carried at 51 Watling Lane for a similar type of development found deposits relating to the rampart of the Roman walled town. These had been cut into by post-medieval pits.

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 remains revealed during the course of any operations that may disturb or destroy archaeological remains.

In particular:

- To record any evidence relating to the Roman settlement and defences.

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 South Oxfordshire District Council.

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

An archaeologist was present on site during the course of any groundwork that had the potential to reveal or disturb archaeological remains. This was for any ground reduction including removal of existing foundations, excavation for new foundations and services, and any other significant invasive groundworks.

Any archaeological deposits and features revealed were to be 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 photographic record. Where archaeological features are exposed during any ground reduction but otherwise will remain unaffected they were to be recorded only by plan and written description with any surface finds collected. Where remains were to be impacted on then they will be sample excavated. Any variation to this was agreed with OHaNET, on behalf of the local planning authority.

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.

There were three phases of monitoring of the work on the development site (Fig. 2). The first phase involved the monitoring of the floor removal in the southern area of the existing house prior to demolition. The second phase involved the monitoring of the excavation of the foundation trench for the new house extension (Plate. 1). The third phase was to monitor any service trenches that were to be excavated. There was no archaeologist present during the last phase as the new services were located within earlier service trenches.

The resultant spoil from the works was visually scanned and metal detected, especially for finds relating to the Roman period.



Plate 1. Foundation trench looking north

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 first phase involving the monitoring of the floor removal in the southern area of the existing house prior to demolition (Fig.2). This impacted up to 0.2m into layer (1000), a grey / brown sandy silt that contained eight Iron objects including SF 1, an iron blade, and three copper alloy objects; SF 2 & SF3, copper alloy fittings and SF 4, undetermined, together with three sherds of Late Post-Medieval pottery and three fragments of clay tobacco pipe.

The second phase involving the monitoring of the excavation of the foundation trench for the new house extension (Fig. 2 & Plate. 2). The trench was between 1.2 and 1.3m deep, 0.6m wide and in total length, 22.5m. It consisted of a 0.34m thick layer of a

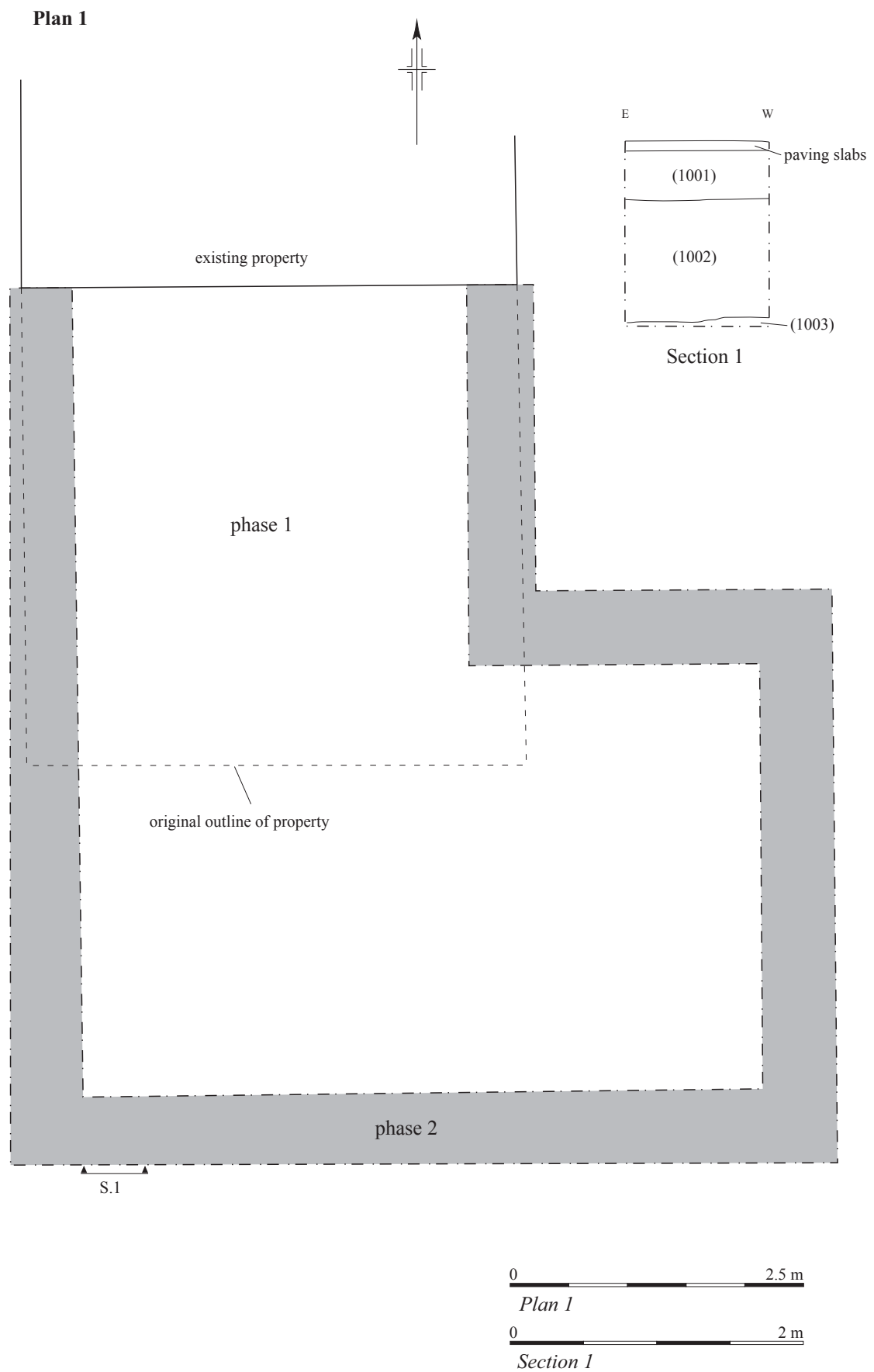


Figure 2 : Plan and section

mid-grey silty clay (1001) topsoil / garden soil that overlay a 0.8m thick layer of an orange / brown silty clay (1002), a subsoil that represents an earlier ploughsoil. It contained three fragments of animal bone. This layer overlay a +0.1m thick layer of a grey / brown silty clay (1003) that occurred only in a couple of patches where the trench went a 0.1m deeper and contained no finds.



Plate 2. Representative section in foundation trench

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery *By Paul Blinkhorn*

The pottery assemblage comprised 3 sherds with a total weight of 26g. It all occurred in context 1000, and is all modern (later 19th – early 20th century). The sherds were all from vessels in mass-produced refined white earthenwares, fabric WHEW of the Oxfordshire type-series (eg. Mellor 1984). One of the sherds is from a brown-glazed teapot handle, the other two are from bowls.

5.2 Animal bone *By Roxanne Blanks BSc (hons), MSc.*

A small assemblage of faunal remains (3 fragments) with a total weight of 120.8g were recovered from a single context (1002). The remains belong to *Cervus* of an unidentified species and most likely represent domestic waste.

The faunal remains consist of a fragment of *Cervus* frontal and a partial antler coronet. These fragments could be pair matched and have a NISP (number of individual specimens) of 1. These fragments display an axial chop mark through the posterior and lateral aspect. In addition to this a proximal tibial fragment was recovered. The tibial fragment displays taphonomic damage and crenulation of the

proximal border and a single transverse chop mark through the mid-diaphysis. The crenulation of the proximal aspect of the tibia is consistent with carnivore modification. The butchery marks evident within the assemblage are most likely associated with domestic butchery activities.

5.3 Other finds *By Simona Denis*

Clay Tobacco Pipe

A small assemblage of three clay tobacco pipe fragments, of a combined weight of 26.2g, was collected from deposit (1000). The material, dated to the post-medieval period, is in a good state of preservation, although fragmentary; only one bowl was found to be complete.

Context	Type	No. of items	Weight (g)	Decoration	Reference	Date range
1000	Stem with flat heel	1	6.7	None	?AO 1969 no.17	?17 th C
	Bowl	1	4.5	5 parallel lines along seams		Post-Medieval
	Bowl with stem and spur	1	15.3	Moulded Leaf motif on shield Incised lines and raised dots ?resembling wood		Post-Medieval

Table 1: Clay tobacco pipe occurrence

Metalwork

A small assemblage of 12 metal object, of a combined weight of 345.8g, was recovered from two different contexts. The most represented material was copper alloy, with 7 items, or 25% of the collection. The remaining 5 items were made of iron. The assemblage was dated to the post-medieval period.

The state of preservation of the objects is generally poor, extremely fragmentary and severely affected by degradation. Extensive oxidation prevented from the observation of manufacturing details of the iron objects; *Verdigris* affected all of the copper alloy items.

Context	Small find No.	Material	Type	No. of items	Weight (g)	Dimensions (mm)	Comments	Date range
1000	1	Wood and Iron	Knife	1	32.2	L:110 W:15	Extremely oxidised Knife blade	?Post-Medieval

							with partial wooden handle	
1000	2	Copper Alloy	Fitting/decoration	1	3.8	L:90 W:10	Open work Repeated vine leaves design	Post-Medieval
1000	3	Copper Alloy	Fitting/decoration	1	12.4	L:70 W:38	Flat strip, rectangular with rounded corners, decorated	Post-Medieval
1000	4	Wood and Copper Alloy	Undetermined	1	2.1	L:27	Wooden object covered by thin copper alloy sheet	?Post-medieval
1000	-	Iron	?General purpose nail	1	11.2	L:65	Extremely oxidised	Undetermined
1000	-	Iron	?Board nail	1	59.6	L:100	Extremely oxidised Flat point Flat square head	?Post-medieval
1000	-	Iron	?Board nail	1	146.6	L:130	Extremely oxidised Flat point Flat round head	?Post-medieval
1000	-	Copper Alloy	Suspension ring	1	6.6	D:30	Complete	Post-Medieval
1000	-	Copper Alloy	Buckle frame	1	41.7	L:50 W:45	Single loop rectangular frame	Post-Medieval
1000	-	Copper Alloy	?Buckle frame	1	5.3	L:38 W:25	Rectangular frame	Post-Medieval
02	-	Copper Alloy	Suspension ring	1	6.1	D:30	Complete	Post-Medieval
02	-	Iron	?Blade	1	18.2	L:75 W:13	Extremely oxidised	Undetermined

Table 2: Metalwork occurrence by context and type

The iron objects comprised three nails and two knife blades; SF1, although largely incomplete, was tentatively identified as a peeling knife on the basis of its curving blade. The item also preserved a degraded, 3cm long part of its wooden handle.

The copper alloy items included two incomplete buckle frames, two suspension rings and two additional items tentatively identified as fittings. The function of SF4 remains undetermined.

Suspension rings were used in medieval and post-medieval periods for a variety of purposes, including the suspension of knives or hones from belts (Ottaway 2002) or as eyelets for fastening cords used with a shroud or a tunic (Cox 1998; Cowie et al. 2008).

SF2, tentatively identified as a fitting or decorative element, is a small, thin strip of copper alloy open work, decorated with a repeated vine leaf pattern.

6 DISCUSSION

No archaeological features were identified during the groundworks, however the lowest layer (1003) at the base of the foundation trench, although un-dated, could be the vestiges of the destroyed bank material. Various artefacts of a Post-Medieval date were recovered from contexts (1000).

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

Finds
Environmental remains

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the Oxfordshire Museum Resource Centre with the accession number OXCMS: 2016.177

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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

Cowie, R., Bekvalac, J., & Kausmally, T., 2008 *Late 17th- to 19th-century burial and earlier occupation at All Saints, Chelsea Old Church, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea* MoLAS Archaeology Studies Series 18

Cox, M. 1998. *Life and death in Spitalfields 1700 to 1850*. Council for British Archaeology, Halifax.

John Moore Heritage Services, 2016 *47 Watling Lane Dorchester-on Thames, Oxfordshire Archaeological Watching Brief Written Scheme of Investigation.* (un-published 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.

Ottaway, P. & Rogers, N., 2002 *Craft, industry and everyday life: finds from Medieval York. The Archaeology of York – The small finds 17/16* York: CBA