



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

**P16/S3920/FUL – LAND TO SOUTH OF THE OLD
SCHOOL HOUSE ACCESS ROAD TO STOKE
TALMAGE,**

STOKE TALMAGE, OXFORDSHIRE OX9 7EU

NGR SU 67843 99224

On behalf of

Mud Hut Management Ltd

NOVEMBER 2017

REPORT FOR Mud Hut Management Ltd
The Vicarage
Pyrton
Oxfordshire
OX49 5AN

PREPARED BY Carlos Fernández González with contributions by
Simona Denis

ILLUSTRATION BY Autumn Robson

EDITED BY John Moore

AUTHORISED BY John Moore

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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: 3691
Site Code: STSH 17



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SUMMARY

This document represents the results of a watching brief for archaeological remains on land south of the Old School House, Stoke Talmage (NGR SU 67843 99224). This involved monitoring the excavation of the new house foundation trenches and the adjacent parking area which was devoid of any archaeological features. Some artefacts of a Post-Medieval date were recovered from the topsoil (06), mainly from the 18th and 19th century.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development site is located in the small village of Stoke Talmage, southeast of the church of St Mary Magdalen's Church (NGR SU 67843 99224). The site lies at approximately 91 m above OD. The underlying geology is Gault (BGS, sheet 254).

1.2 Planning Background

South Oxfordshire District Council granted planning permission for dwelling house with garden, parking and access and associated works (P16/S3920/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.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The site is located in an area of archaeological interest 50m south east of the 13th century St Mary Magdalen's Church. A 17th century listed farmhouse, Manor Farm, is located 50m south east of the proposed site. A possible medieval Grange site is located 60m south of the proposed development site. Several small fishponds survive and a medieval barn was recorded as standing in the 1850s. The original village was larger than the current settlement and it is therefore possible that archaeological evidence relating to the medieval development of the settlement could survive on the site

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 medieval settlement that may be present on the site.

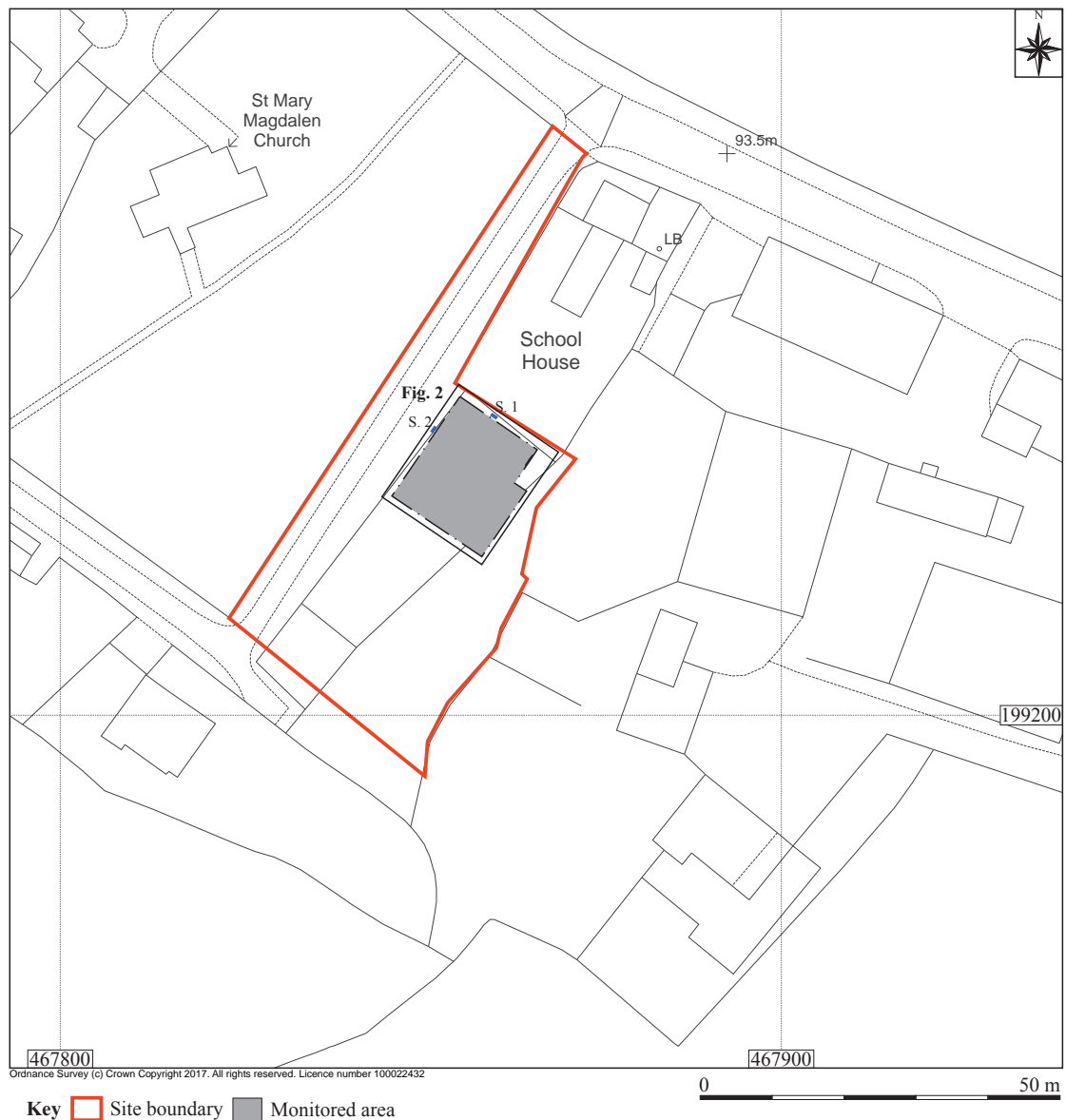
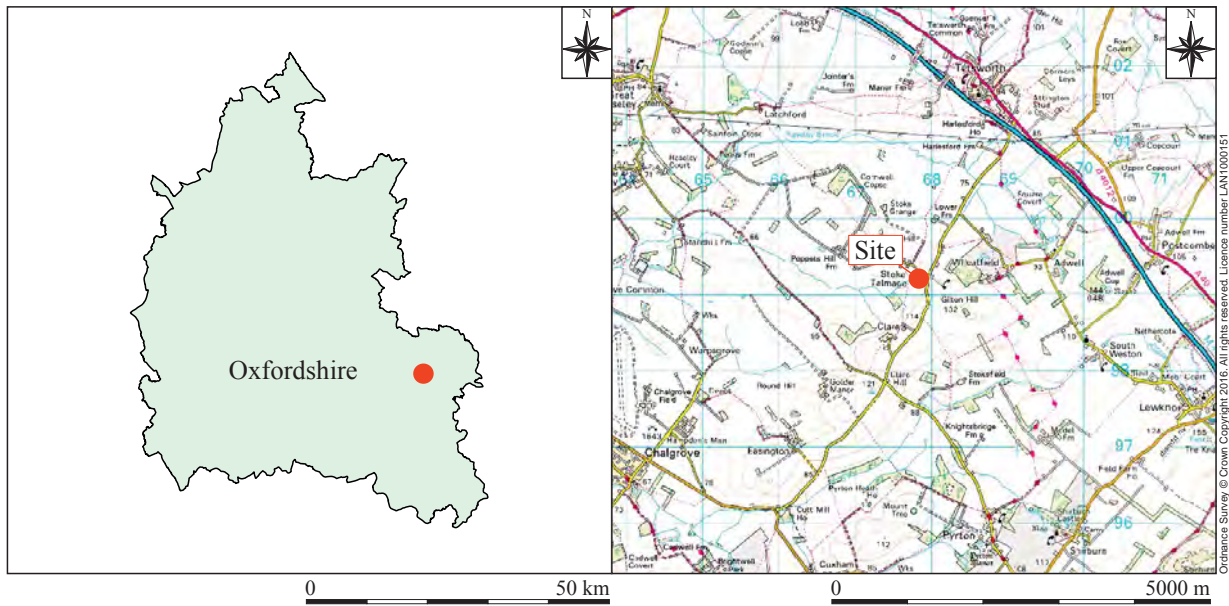


Figure 1: Site location

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Team (OHET). The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014).

3.2 Methodology

The watching brief involved monitoring the excavation of the foundation trenches for a new house and a parking area in the property (Fig. 1). The area was stripped by a 360° excavator under the continuous watch of the archaeologist.

All deposits were recorded identified. Archaeology was checked for in both plan and section. The resultant spoil from the works was visually scanned for finds. 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.

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.



Plate 1. Representative Section S.02

The results of the excavation revealed no archaeological remains. The lowest layer recorded was the light grey limestone geological horizon (04). Above the natural was the subsoil, a silty clay layer of mid grey greenish colour (05). This layer varied in depth from the 0.5 m at the flat top of the building area to the 0.15 m on the slope

(Fig. 2). Above it, finally, was the topsoil (06), a dark brown layer 0.38m thick of clayey silt which showed a high degree of bioturbation. The topsoil contained some archaeological artefacts (animal bones and some clay tobacco pipes), mainly located on the slope where the foundation trenches were dug for the new building.



Plate 2. View of the N area

No archaeological features were identified in plan or section neither in the parking area, located in the NNW of the property, nor in the foundation trenches for the building (Fig.2).

Two elements of ethnographic interest were found in the area. First, a septic tank was recorded that had been in use until very recently. It was built in two phases, initially using rough limestone 01 and in a second phase using bricks 02. The septic tank had a square shape and the length of the walls was 1.6m. The feature was located in the NE of the property (Fig. 2) and was covered by a layer of concrete (03).



Plate 3. Septic tank



Plate 4. Metal windlass

Plan 1

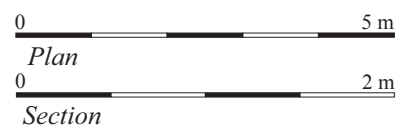
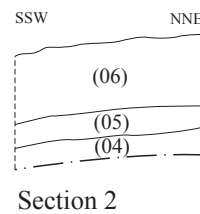
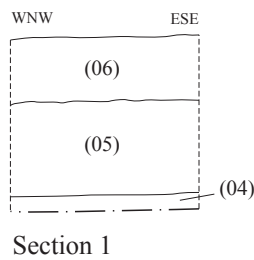
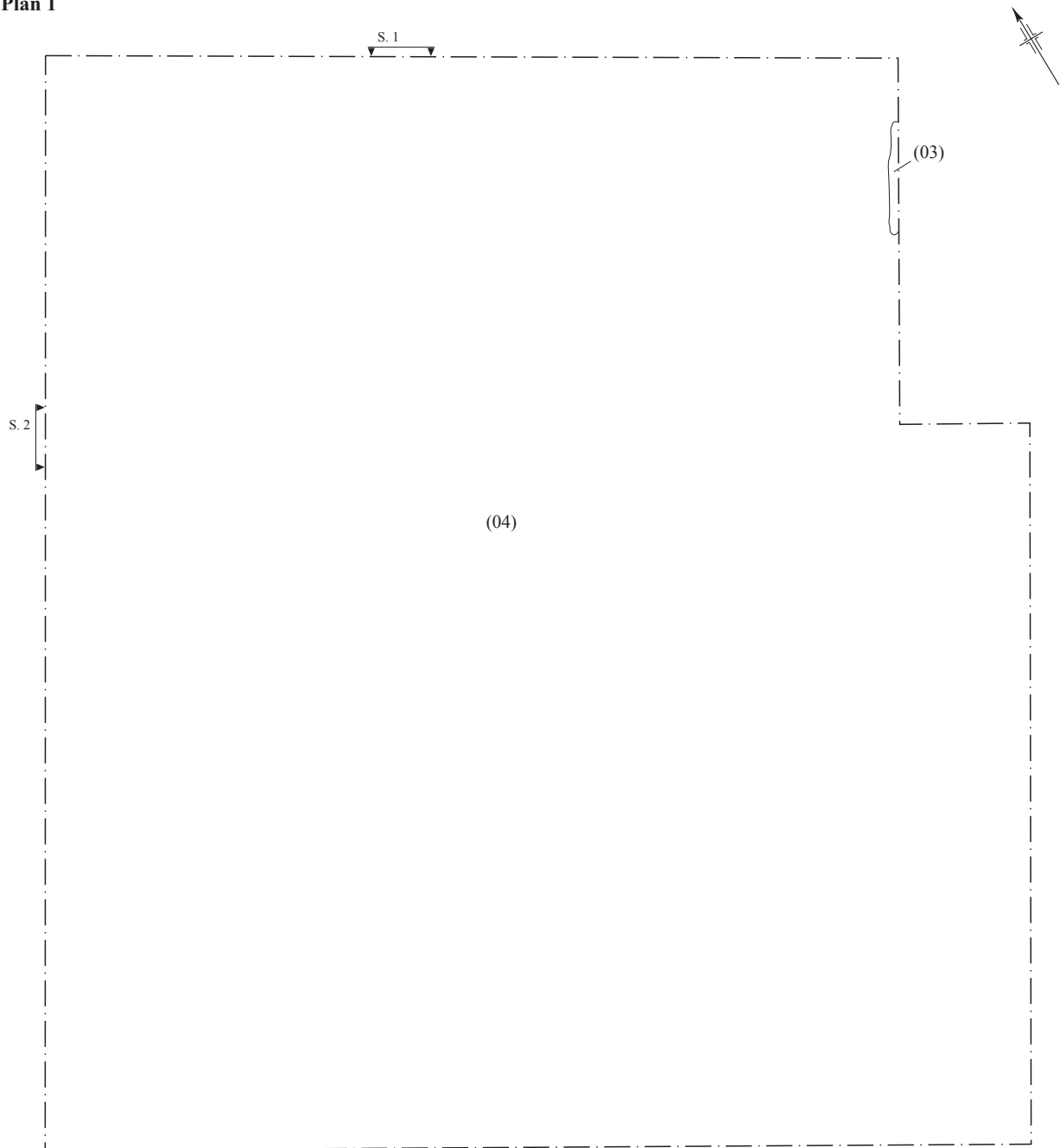


Figure 2: Site plan and sections

Secondly, in the south corner of the property a metal windlass was still preserved, used to raise water from a well 07. The well had a circular shape and was 1m in diameter. It was made using regular bricks.

5 FINDS

5.1 Ceramics by Simona Denis

Pottery

A very limited assemblage of 2 pottery sherds, of a combined weight of 26.8g, was recovered from context (06) and identified as modern. The assemblage was recorded using the conventions of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994), as follows:

TPW: Transfer-Printed Ware, 19th-20th century
WHEW: Mass-produced White Earthenwares, 19th-20th century

Context	TPW		WHEW		Date
	No. of Items	Weight (g)	No. of Items	Weight (g)	
06	1	9.4	1	17.4	MOD

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by context

The sherds were in good condition and appear to have been the subject of very little disturbance or transportation.

It is not recommended to retain the pottery assemblage due to its very limited potential for further analysis.

Clay Tobacco Pipe

A small assemblage of 4 clay tobacco pipe fragments, weighing 13.8g in total, was recovered from a single context (06). The material, although extremely fragmentary, is generally in a good state of preservation.

Context	Type	No. of Items	Weight (g)	Comments	Date Range
06	Stem	2	4.9		Post-Medieval
	Mouthpiece	1	3	Traces of red wax	Post-Medieval
	Bowl with stem and spur	1	5.9	Maker's mark II/LI?	Possibly 1730-1780

Table 2: Clay tobacco pipe occurrence by context and type

50% of the collection was composed of plain, undiagnostic and unmarked stem fragments, a regular occurrence in clay tobacco pipe assemblages. The remaining stem fragment, although poorly preserved, shows traces of red wax, usually painted on the mouthpieces in order to prevent the smoker's lips from sticking to the pipe (Weldrake).

The single bowl fragment, although largely incomplete, bore a similarity to Oswald's simplified general typology type 12 (Oswald 1974; 37). It has a medium-tall bowl with thin walls and stem, and a small, square base; the type is dated to c. 1730-1780. The example from Stoke Talmage preserved the maker's initials 'I I' or 'L I' moulded on the sides of the base.

It is not recommended to retain the plain, unmarked and undiagnostic clay tobacco pipe stem fragments due to their very limited potential for further analysis.

5.2 Faunal Remains

Animal Bone

Context (06) contained a single, complete animal bone, positively identified as an unfused sheep/goat metacarpus weighing 57.1g. No butchering marks were observed on the item.

The animal bone is not recommended for retention due to its extremely limited potential for further analysis.

5.3 Miscellaneous

Glass

A single fragment of glass, weighing 1.3g and measuring 17x15mm was recovered from context (06). A partial decoration made of embossed diamond pattern was observed; the aqua-coloured item, although extremely incomplete, was positively identified as modern.

It is not recommended to retain the modern glass fragment due to its very limited potential for further analysis.

Stone

One stone object, weighing 2.5g, was also recovered from context (06). The item was a faceted cylinder measuring 32mm in length and 5mm in diameter, with a hexagonal cross-section. One of the ends was tapered to form a point; one of the faces showed a series of parallel, linear marks, oblique to the length of the cylinder.

Function and dating of the object remain undetermined; however, the general aspect of the item suggests it might have been used as a marking implement.

6 DISCUSSION

The house foundation trench and the new parking area were devoid of any archaeological features. Some artefacts of a Post-Medieval date were recovered from the topsoil (06), mainly from the 18th and 19th century

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