



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

7 NORHAM GARDENS,

OXFORD OX2 6PS

NGR SP 5128 0737

On behalf of

Mrs M Willetts

MARCH 2017

REPORT FOR Mrs M Willetts
7 Norham Gardens
Oxford
OX2 6PS

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SUMMARY

This document represents an investigation of the potential for archaeological remains on land at 7 Norham Gardens, Oxfordshire (NGR SP 5128 0737). No archaeological remains were encountered during the programme of works carried out.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location

The development site (Figure 1) is located at 7 Norham Gardens, Oxfordshire (NGR SU 41692 85717).

The site lies at approximately 62m OD. The building was constructed as a family house but was converted into a school in the 1950s; it is currently a house. The underlying geology is the boundary of the 1st (Flood Plain) and 2nd (Summertown-Radley) Terrace Deposits.

No 7 Norham Gardens is a grade II listed building, built in 1862 and extended in 1867 with a minor service extension in 1895. The building was the first house on the new Norham Manor Estate by the chief estate architect William Wilkinson. It contains a number of original features of note including staircase and fireplaces.

1.2 Planning Background

Oxford City Council granted planning permission for demolition of existing garage, and erection of single storey double garage at 7 Norham Gardens, Oxford (16/01922/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

Evidence from aerial photographs and archaeological excavations indicates the presence of an extensive prehistoric ritual and agricultural landscape across this part of the Oxford gravel terrace, involving Neolithic/Bronze Age ritual and funerary monuments, Iron Age /Roman agricultural field systems and subsequent Saxon settlement. An extensive cropmark complex recorded in the University Parks to the south incorporates a possible Neolithic/Bronze Age linear barrow cemetery and later Iron Age/Roman agricultural enclosures. A Neolithic/Bronze Age henge monument and three Bronze Age ring ditches belonging to this complex have recently been excavated at Queen Elizabeth House, St Giles and at the Radcliffe Infirmary site (TVAS and MoLAS, forthcoming).

A Bronze Age burial was recorded c. 300m to the east of the application site during a watching brief in 2005 (JMHS, 2005; UAD No 1673) and another likely Bronze Age burial was recorded in 1864 approximately 240m to the north (County HER No 3592). Furthermore an Iron Age pit was recorded to the north of the application site at No 6 Crick Road in 1968 (County HER No 3593). The pit contained bones of an ox, red deer antlers and sherds of Iron Age pottery. More recent archaeological investigations to the east and south of the application site have produced ephemeral evidence for prehistoric activity. A gully of likely prehistoric date was recorded to the south of the application site during an evaluation in 2005 at 15 Norham Gardens (TVAS, 2005; UAD No 1711). Furthermore an undated gully was recorded during at evaluation in 2007 at Lady Margaret Hall (Oxford Archaeology, 2007; UAD No 1708).

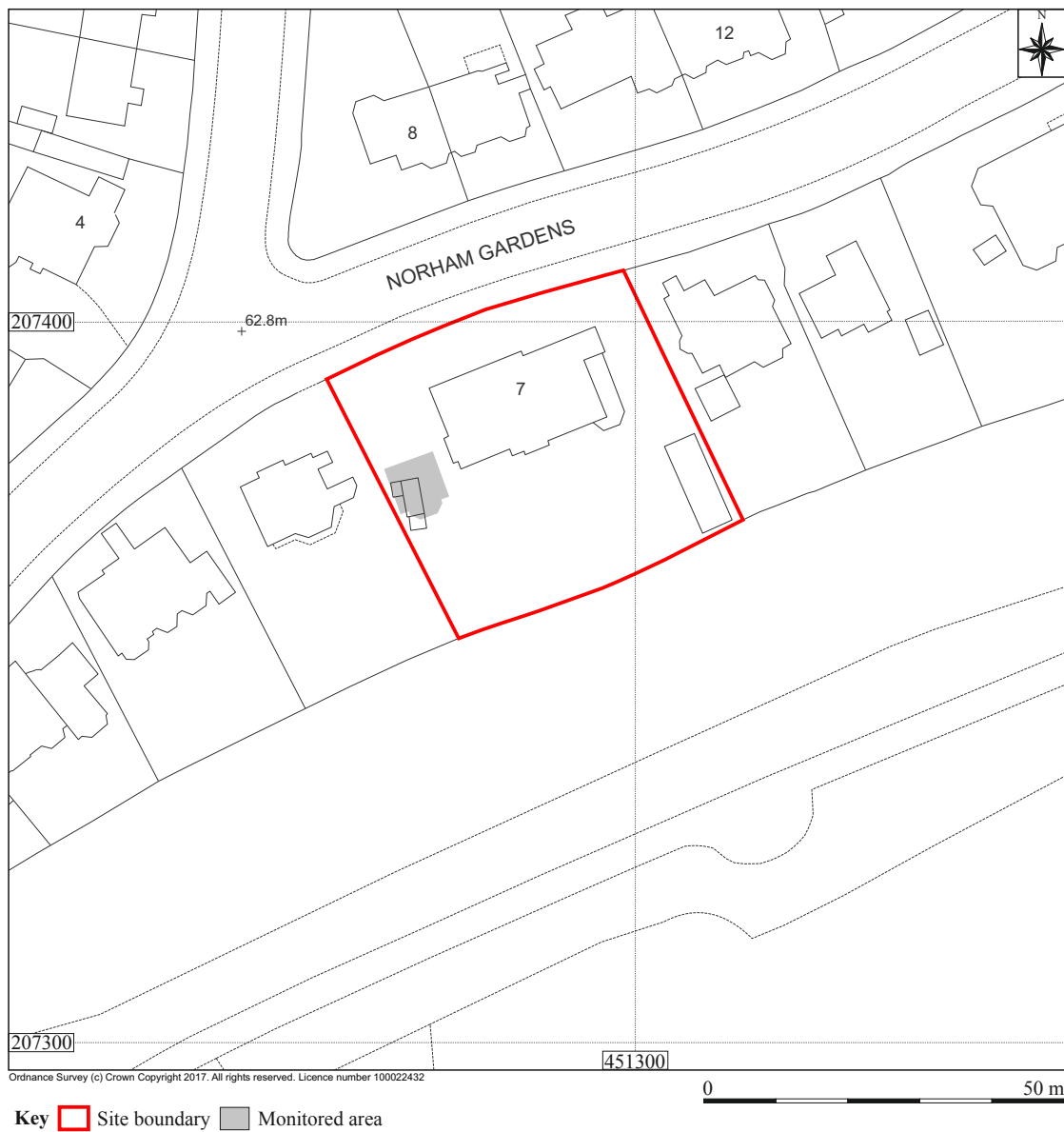
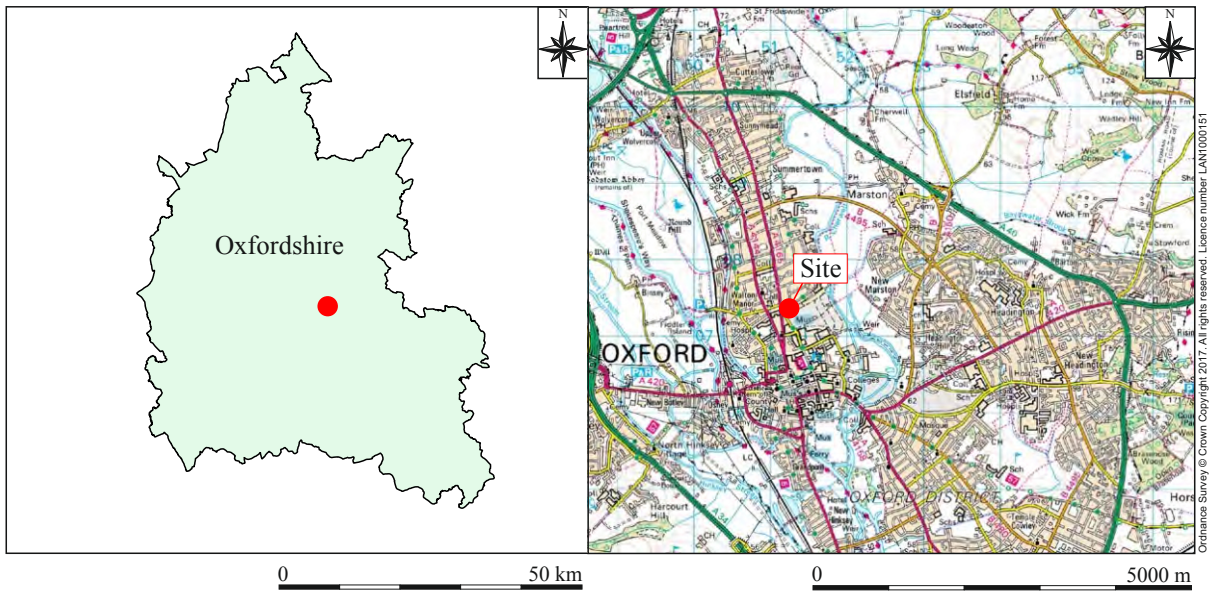


Figure 1: Site location

In the near vicinity an inhumation/knife burial of possible Saxon date (HER No 5775) was recovered from the garden of No 10 Crick Road. The burial was reported in the Oxford Times in 1903 and is cited in Tania Dickenson's Anglo Saxon Burial Sites of the Upper Thames Basin (1972).

An evaluation in 2009 at No. 22 Norham Gardens found only 19th-20th century pits and a posthole (JMHS 2009).

A Historic Building Assessment and a Watching Brief were undertaken previously on this site (JMHS 2015). The watching brief found two wells and earlier foundations of rear extensions during work in the garden.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- To record any significant archaeological remains revealed by the groundworks, paying particular regard to the potential for prehistoric and Roman remains.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with the Oxford Archaeological Officer, the archaeological advisor to Oxford City Council.

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

3.2 Methodology

The area of impact was watched for archaeological horizons but none were encountered. 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 to Roman and Prehistoric periods. Again, none were found.

4 RESULTS

All deposits 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.

Stripping of the top layer of made ground (01) revealed a layer of buried topsoil (02) about 6cm below the gravel level. It was comprised of a high amount of humic organics and rooting. The excavation into (02) was minimal and no finds were recovered. The result of piles for the new single storey double garage revealed a maximum depth of 0.19m of (see Plate 1).



Plate 1. Post-excavation of the representative pile, S.1.

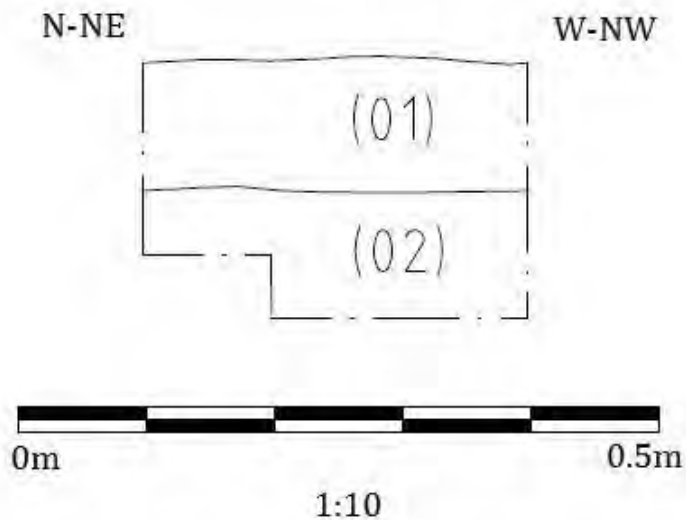


Figure 2. Representative section (S.1) of pile, facing S-SE.

5 FINDS

There were no finds of any kind recovered from the area excavated.

6 DISCUSSION

Owing to the fact that the area under observation had most recently been utilized as a garage with a gravel drive, very little alteration was required in terms of excavation in the area.

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

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the Oxfordshire Museums Service with accession number OXCMS: 2017.13.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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

John Moore Heritage Services 2009 *An Archaeological Evaluation at 22 Norham Gardens, Oxford*

John Moore Heritage Services 2015 *Building Assessment and Watching Brief on 7 Norham Gardens, Oxford*

Oxford Archaeology 2007 *Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford. Archaeological Evaluation*

TVAS 2005 *15 Norham Gardens, An Archaeological Evaluation*