



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**AT**

**THOMLEY BARN, MENMARSH ROAD,  
WORMINGHALL, OXFORDSHIRE HP18 9JZ**

**NGR SP 62853 09376**

*On behalf of*

*Ms P. Field*

**FEBRUARY 2018**

**REPORT FOR** Ms P. Field  
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Menmarsh Road,  
Worminghall,  
Aylesbury  
HP18 9JZ

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**FIELDWORK DATE** 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> February 2018

**REPORT ISSUED** 15<sup>th</sup> February 2018

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**JMHS Project No:** 3686  
**Site Code:** WOMR 17



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## **SUMMARY**

*John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological watching brief at Thomley Barn, Worminghall Oxfordshire (NGR SP 62853 09376). The watching brief consisted of the monitoring of a foundation trench for stables. The trench was only excavated down to a depth that still lay within the subsoil layer, thus any archaeological deposits remained below the level of impact.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)**

The development site is located south of Menmarsh Road and east of the M40 (NGR SP 62853 09376). The geology is shown as Oakley Member Limestone and Sandstone. The site lies at approximately 49m aOD and is currently residential.

### **1.2 Planning Background**

South Oxfordshire District Council granted planning permission for the erection of a single storey garage block comprising 3 bay carport, including a 2 bay temporary stabling for use of owner retired horses, incidental to the enjoyment of the property (P15/S0087/HH). Due to the potential presence of archaeological features conditions have been attached that require a programme of archaeological investigation.

*4. The applicant, or their agents or successors in title, shall be responsible for organising and implementing an archaeological watching brief, to be maintained during the period of construction/during any groundworks taking place on the site. The watching brief shall be carried out by a professional archaeological organisation in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation that has first been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.*

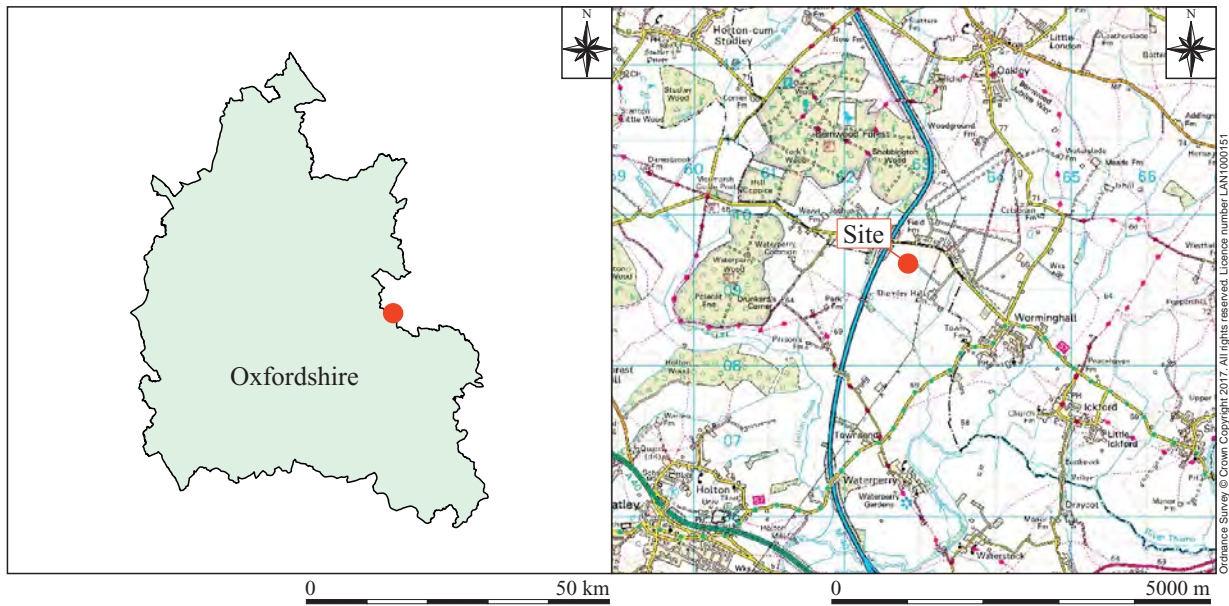
*Reason - To safeguard the recording of archaeological matters within the site in accordance with the NPPF (2012)*

*5. Following the approval of the Written Scheme of Investigation referred to in condition 4, no development shall commence on site without the appointed archaeologist being present. Once the watching brief has been completed its findings shall be reported to the Local Planning Authority, as agreed in the Written Scheme of Investigation, including all processing, research and analysis necessary to produce an accessible and useable archive and a full report for publication.*

*Reason - To safeguard the recording of archaeological matters within the site in accordance with the NPPF (2012)*

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

The proposed development lies in an area of considerable archaeological potential. Immediately south-east of the site is Thomley Deserted Medieval Village, a Scheduled Monument (reference number 01006295). The village earthworks consist



Key  Site boundary  Monitored area

Figure 1: Site location

of crofts, house platforms and other earthworks. Find spots of 12th-14th century pottery have also been recorded. There are also indications of Roman activity in this area; a watching brief undertaken to the south of the site identified a possible Roman ditch, and find spots of Roman pottery have also been recorded within the environs of the site.

A geophysical survey was undertaken on behalf of Oxford University Archaeology Society in 2003 which recorded an area of high resistance which may relate to a yard surface or a collapsed building 40m west of the proposed building.

## **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 former medieval settlement that may be present on the site and/or earlier 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 Oxfordshire Historic Environment Team (OHET), 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).

### **3.2 Methodology**

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

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 and metal detected, especially for finds relating to the Medieval period.

The watching brief consisted of the monitoring of a 6.5m wide, 11m long and between 0.9m – 0.75m deep foundation trench for a concrete slab (Fig. 1). The trench was situated on a gentle south facing slope, thus the trench was deeper in the northern extent to create a level surface.

## 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.

### 4.1 Stratigraphy

The trench contained an up-to 0.8m thick layer of a grey / brown silty clay (01) a topsoil / garden soil. This overlay a 0.15m thick layer of a mid-brown silty clay (02) a subsoil representing a former ploughsoil that overlay the natural clay (03).

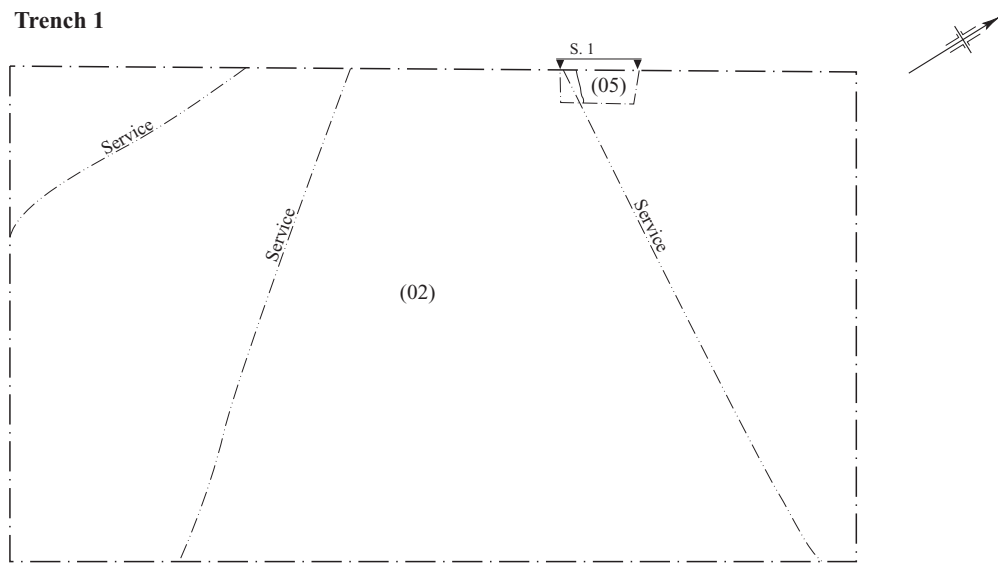
The trench was excavated to a level depth of c. 0.8m and only impacted the upper extent of the subsoil (02). Three service cables were identified within the trench and the small sondage excavated down to the natural clay (03) by the contractors to expose one of the services was recorded (Fig. 2, S.1).



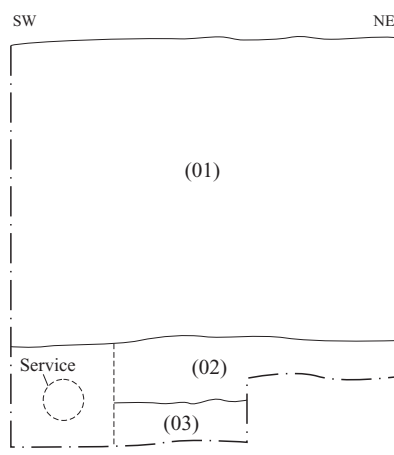
Plate 1. Working photograph of trench looking north

### 4.2 Reliability of Results

The excavation was conducted in fine clear weather and the soil horizons were clear, thus the reliability of the results is considered to be good.



**Section 1**



0 5 m

*Plan*

0 1 m

*Section*

Figure 2: Site plan with section



## **5 FINDS**

No finds were recovered from the trench

## **6 DISCUSSION**

The trench was only excavated down to a depth that still lay within the subsoil layer (02), thus any archaeological deposits remained below the level of impact of the foundations.

## **7 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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

John Moore Heritage Services, 2017 *Thomley Barn, Menmarsh road, Worminghall, Oxfordshire Archaeological Watching Brief Written Scheme of Investigation* (unpublished client report)