

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**CHERRYMEAD,
BLEDLOW ROAD,
SAUNDERTON
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE:**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

SP 7985 0222

On behalf of

Mr A Eva

MAY 2004

REPORT FOR Mr A Eva
Cherrymead
Bledlow Road
Saunderton
Princes Risborough
Bucks

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Fieldwork 27-28 April 2004

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief took place during the excavation of foundation trenches for the construction of an extension to Cherrymead, Bledlow Road, Saunderton. A single pit and a ditch were observed within the excavated area. No material relating to the nearby Saxon cemetery or Roman site was observed.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development site (NGR SP 7985 0222) is known as Cherrymead and is located between Bledlow Road and the Wycombe to Bicester railway, with the rear limit of the property bordering the railway embankment. The geology of the site is chalk (British Geological Survey Sheet 237: Thame). The site lies at c. 111 m OD.

1.2 Planning Background

Wycombe District Council has granted planning permission (03/6136) for extensions to Cherrymead comprising a joined single storey rear extension and a two-storey extension between the house and the garage.

Due to the location of the site within 60 to 300 m of three Scheduled Monuments and a number of findspots, a condition for an archaeological watching brief has been attached to the permission in accordance with PPG16.

John Moore Heritage Services (JMHS) in accordance with a *Written Scheme of Investigation* in agreement with the County Archaeological Service carried out such a watching brief.

1.3 Historical Background

The site is situated in an area of extensive archaeological remains covering many periods. Opposite the property, on the eastern side of the railway lies a large scheduled area (SM 29435: CAS2513) that includes part of an Anglo-Saxon cemetery. Finds such as a brooch and an iron shield boss associated with the burials were discovered in the field in 1976. A geophysical survey carried out in 1977 revealed a series of pits, ditches and graves. Further surface finds brought up through ploughing include two disc brooches a strap end and a brooch. The northwestern corner of the scheduled area lies within 60 m of the property being developed.

Three further scheduled monuments are located in the vicinity of the development site: to the northwest at a distance of 300 m is a large moated site (SM 27159: CAS0307). The moat lies within an area of settlement and associated cultivation earthworks, ditches and fishponds. This site is believed to be medieval, possible 13th century in origin. A further moated site (SM 29425: CAS0367) is located c. 400 m to the southwest of the development and also dates to the medieval period. The final scheduled area lies within 250 m to the southwest of the development (SM 29436:

CAS0364). The monument includes a 1st century Romano-British Villa known as 'Saunderton Villa'. One of the villa buildings was part excavated in 1938 but the remainder of the complex is known from aerial photographs of the site.

A number of isolated findspots also occur in the vicinity of the development and include (CAS 0642) a coin of Licinius found in the adjacent property to the north of the site. To the southwest, in a property some 350 m from the development site the tip of a bronze spearhead dating from the middle Bronze Age was recovered.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

- 2.1 To make a record of any significant remains revealed during the course of any operations that may disturb or destroy archaeological remains.
- 2.2 In particular:
 - To define whether the cemetery extends this far
 - To determine whether Roman features, that may be associated with the stray finds, are present
- 2.3 To make public the results of the investigations.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Services, on behalf of the local planning authority. 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.

The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994).

3.2 Methodology

Prior to the watching brief, groundworks to the rear of the property and between the house and garage had already been carried out. This included demolition of an existing modern building extension. The remains of concrete slabs forming a path were also removed and the ground prepared.

The works carried out under observation included the excavation of the foundation footprint using a mini mechanical excavator with a toothed bucket. The footprint of the building extension was excavated to an average depth of 1.20 m. The trench was 0.90 m wide, and the first run excavated was 2.20 m in length perpendicular to the rear of the property before continuing towards the east for c. 8.80 m at a distance of c. 1.30 m parallel to the rear of the building. The return, orientated northwest-southeast measured c. 8.60 m, before turning towards the west for a final stretch of c. 5.00 m terminating at the side wall of the property.

Deposits and fills are referred to in the text and figures in brackets: (02), cut features are numbers in square brackets: [04].

4 RESULTS (Figure 2)

The natural geology was encountered at an average depth of 0.34 m and comprised chalk marl (08) over solid chalk (09). The marl was an average depth of 0.70 m. Above the marl deposit, and occurring over the majority of the foundation trenches, was a deposit of pale light yellowish brown silty clay (05). This deposit had an undulating and irregular interface with the marl below, and the depth of the material varied from 0.14 to 0.42 m. Deposit (05) was cut into by [07], a feature comprising concave sides to a concave base (0.74 m wide by 0.42 m deep) was visible in the western arm of the foundation trenches. A further profile of this feature was visible directly below and truncated by the rear building foundations [11]. The fill (06) of the feature comprised stiff reddish brown clay with rare charcoal and chalk flecks and flint fragments. No artefacts were recovered from the fill.

Also visible in the western side of the trench was cut feature [03]. The feature had concave sides and base and measured 0.14 m wide by 0.16 m deep: the break of slope at the base was not perceptible. The fill of [03] comprised a medium compact reddish brown clay (04) with occasional charcoal flecks, chalk and flint fragments. A piece of modern frogged brick (not retained) was observed within the fill. Above, and sealing the features was a deposit of greyish brown silty clay 0.38 m thick. This deposit (02) was in turn overlain by concrete slab that had formed a path or patio area at the rear of the property.

The foundation trench parallel to the rear of the building and situated c. 1.30 m from the house wall contained a linear feature with concave sides to a rounded but slightly tapered base [12]: the break of slope to the base was not perceptible. The feature was orientated northwest-southeast and the fill (13) comprised medium compact reddish brown silty clay with chalk flecks and flint fragment inclusions. The feature was cut into the chalk marl and the overlying deposit (01), a layer of topsoil sealed the feature.

5 FINDS

Pit feature (03) contained a piece of modern frogged brick. There were no other artefacts.

6 DISCUSSION

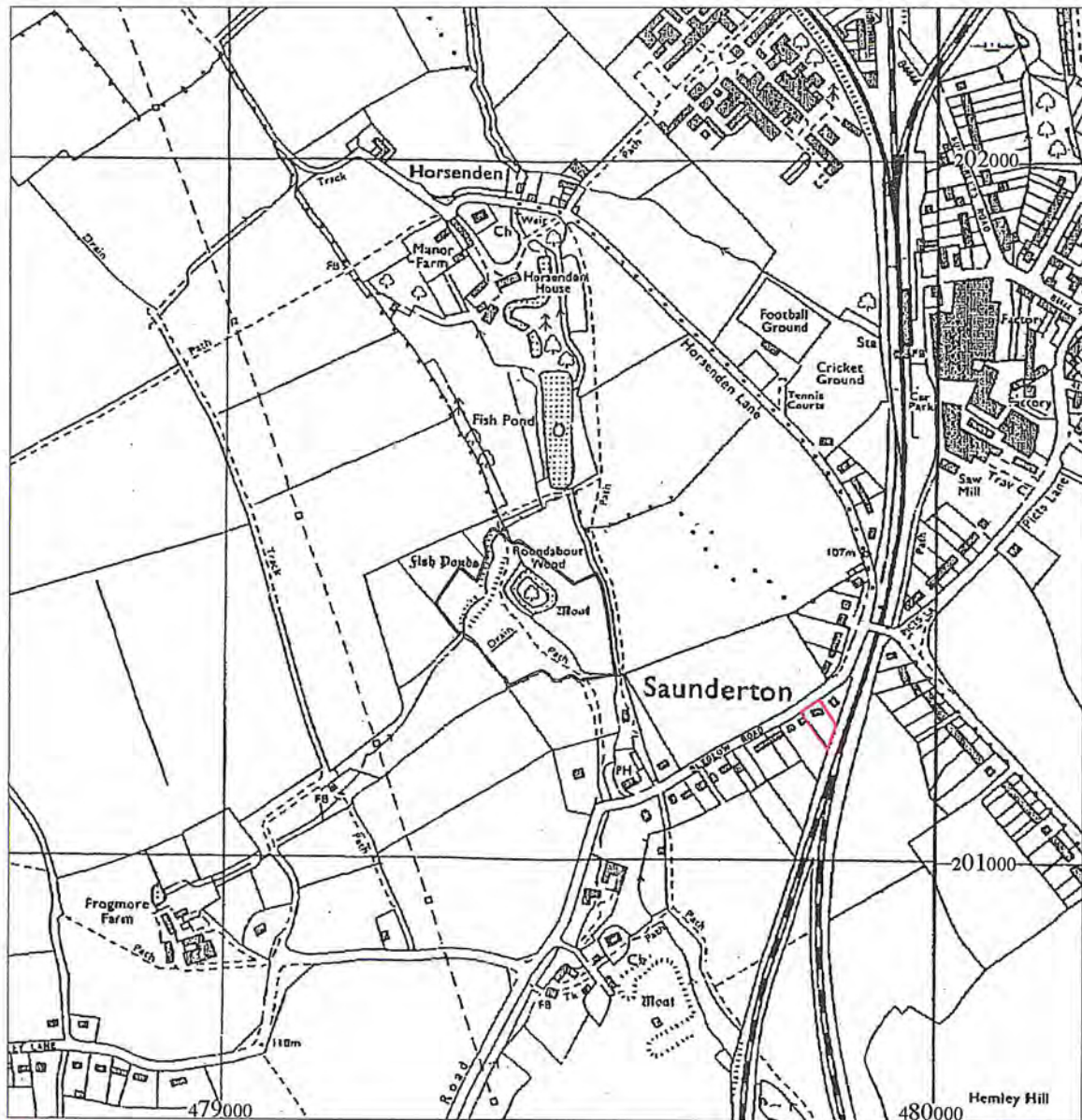
Deposit (05) may represent the remains of a buried land surface of geological origin that had been subject to cryoturbation, which resulted in the irregular character of the layer and the undulating interface with the marl below. The cut features [03], [07] and [12] were a posthole, pit and ditch respectively. As no artefacts were recovered from features [07] and [12], and only a limited area within which they were present was observed, little can be said concerning function or age. Deposits (02) and (01) comprise a garden soil and a topsoil respectively.


7 CONCLUSIONS

Although three features were observed within the watching brief area, one is clearly of modern origin [03] and may have been associated with the construction of the house. No dating evidence was present for the other two features and as a result little can be said as to their origin or function other than that the ditch may represent a drainage channel or a field boundary. No remains relating to the Saxon cemetery or the nearby Roman site were present.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Institute of Field Archaeologists. 1994. *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations*.



 The Site

Scale 1:10000

Figure 1: Site Location

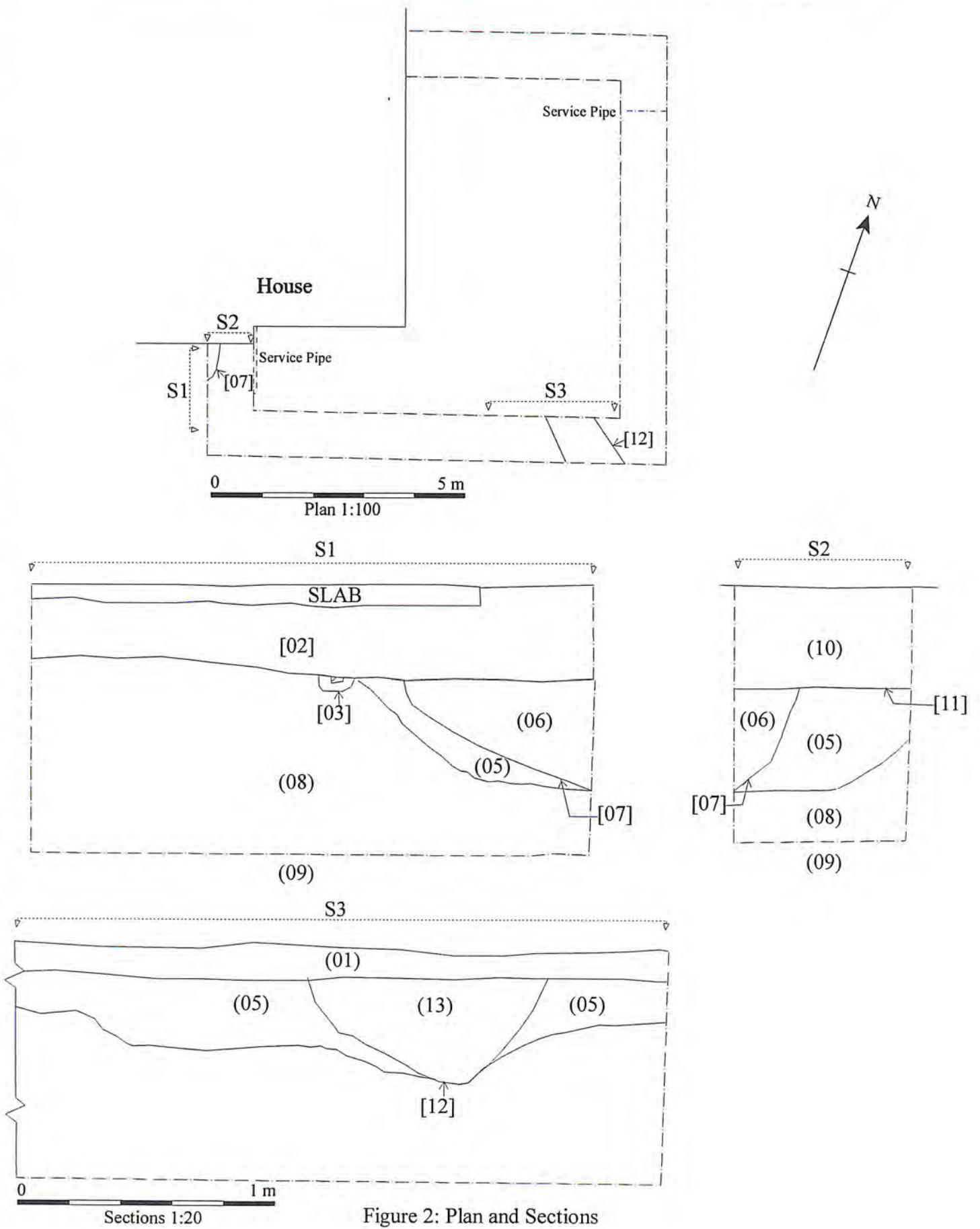


Figure 2: Plan and Sections

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Width (m)	Length (m)	Finds	Date
01	Deposit	Topsoil	0.16	-	>7.0	None	Modern
02	Deposit	Garden Soil	0.36	-	>2.0	None	-
03	Cut	Pit	0.16	0.14	-	-	Modern
04	Fill	Fill of Pit 03	0.16	0.14	-	Brick	Modern
05	Deposit	Buried Land Surface	0.14-0.42	-	Throughout majority of Trenches	-	-
06	Fill	Fill of Pit 07	0.42	0.72	-	None	-
07	Cut	Pit	0.42	0.72	-	-	-
08	Deposit	Chalk Marl	0.74	-	Throughout trenches	-	-
09	Deposit	Chalk	-	-	Throughout trenches	-	-
10	Deposit	Building Foundation	0.40	-	-	-	-
11	Cut	Construction cut for building	0.40	-	-	-	-
12	Cut	Ditch cut	0.40	0.94	>0.90	-	-
13	Deposit	Fill of 12	0.40	0.94	>0.90	None	-