



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**AT**

**DUNTHROP HOUSE,**

**HEYTHROP, CHIPPING NORTON,**

**OXFORDSHIRE OX7 5TJ**

**NGR: SP 3540 2820**

**JUNE 2018**

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**FIELDWORK DATE** 30<sup>th</sup> November, 4<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup> December 2017  
& 15<sup>th</sup> May 2018

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

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**JMHS Project No:** 3613  
**OASIS No:** johnmoor1-319998  
**Site Code:** HEDH 16  
**Archive Location** The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to Oxfordshire County Museums Service with the accession number OXCMS:2016.164



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## **SUMMARY**

*John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks ahead of a new build and an excavation of a swimming pool at Dunthrop House, Dunthrop Road, Heythrop, Oxfordshire. OX7 5TJ. The watching brief was concluded and only identified two undated pits and one pit which contained modern material. Of the two undated pits, one contained fragments of slag and the other did not contain finds. The largest pit, identified as a possible quarry pit, was dated as modern and contained modern pottery, a piece of medieval pottery, medieval tile fragments, modern brick, and a post-medieval iron fitting. No other archaeology was present on the site.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

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

Dunthrop House is situated on the east side of Dunthrop Road on the north side of Heythrop, Oxfordshire (NGR SP 35402820). The site lies between approximately 194m and 201m above OD. The underlying geology is Chipping Norton Limestone.

### **1.2 Planning Background**

West Oxfordshire District Council granted planning permission for demolition of the existing curtilage buildings, erection of new single-storey curtilage buildings around a new courtyard, and provision of replacement swimming pool in revised position, together with associated landscaping works. 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 the National Planning Policy Framework, NPPF and Local Planning policies.

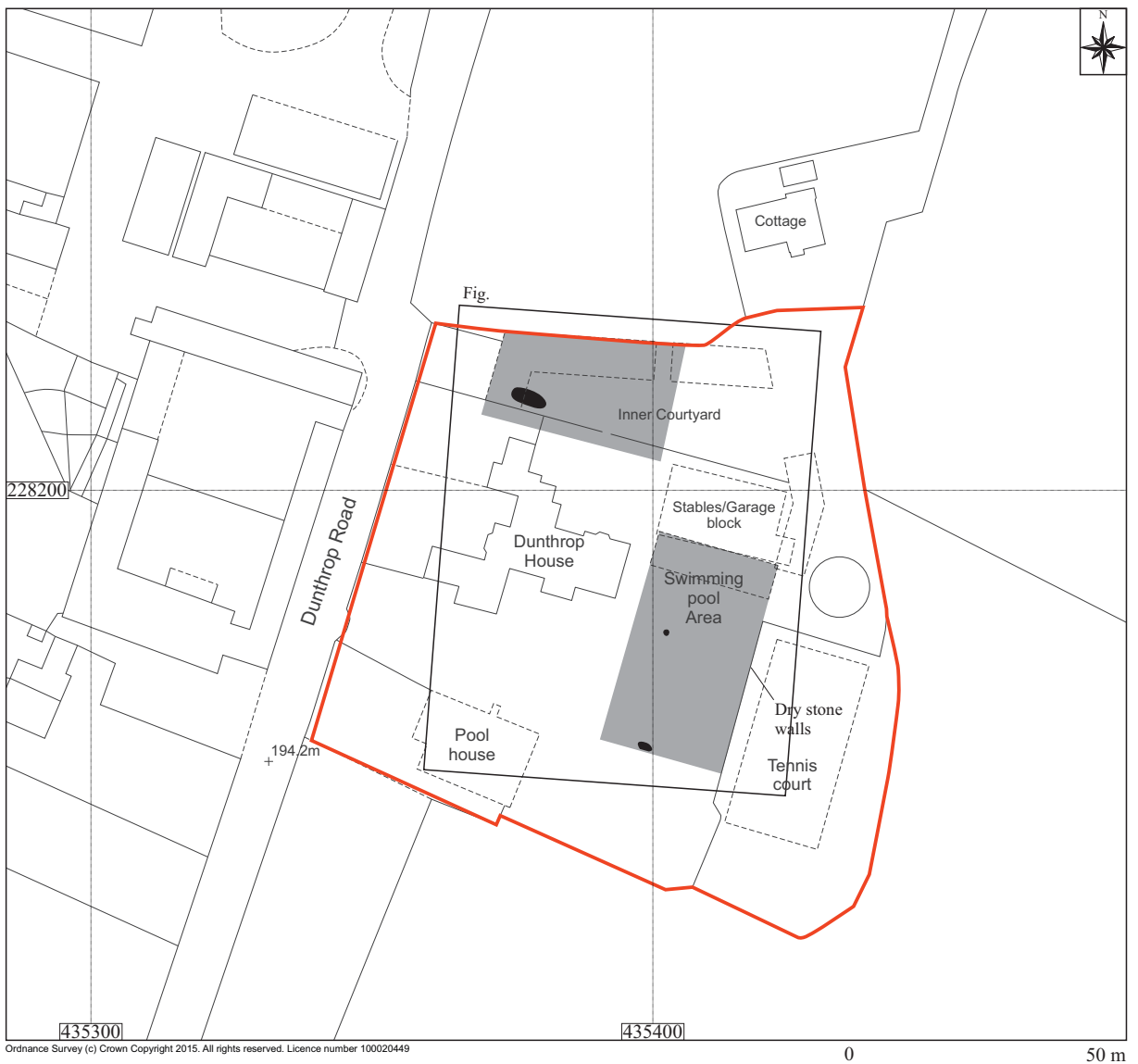
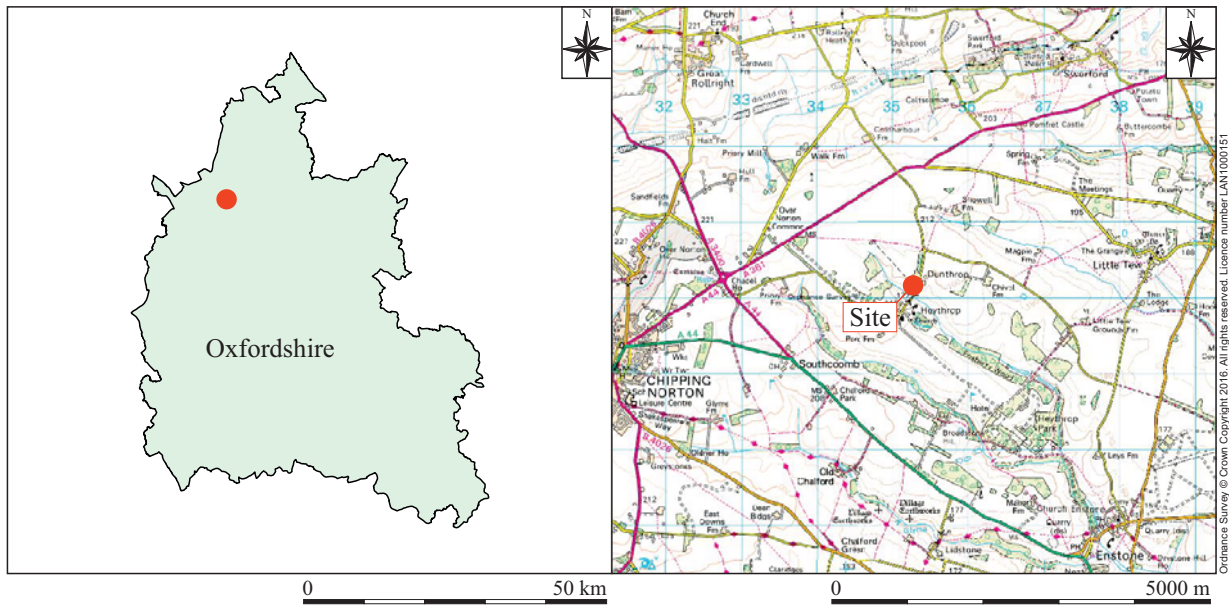
### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

The current development is in the grounds of Dunthrop House, a Grade II Listed Building (LB 1052780). The house is late seventeenth century with later alterations. The village of Dunthrop appears to have been depopulated by at least 1279 AD when records show no tenants. Evidence of the medieval settlement is visible as earthworks to the east of the farm but its full extent is unclear. The farm survived through the medieval period and appears to have increased in size through the purchase of additional farm land. The proposed development may therefore disturb medieval features relating to the earlier village and the medieval farm.

## **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.



Key  Site boundary  Monitored area  Archaeological features

Figure 1: Site location

In particular:

- To record any evidence relating to the medieval development of the village and farm.

### **3 STRATEGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation (JMHS 2015) agreed with Oxfordshire Historic Environment Team, the archaeological advisors to West 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 has the potential to reveal or disturb archaeological remains. This included for ground reduction including for the pool excavation, excavations for new foundations and services/drainage.

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.

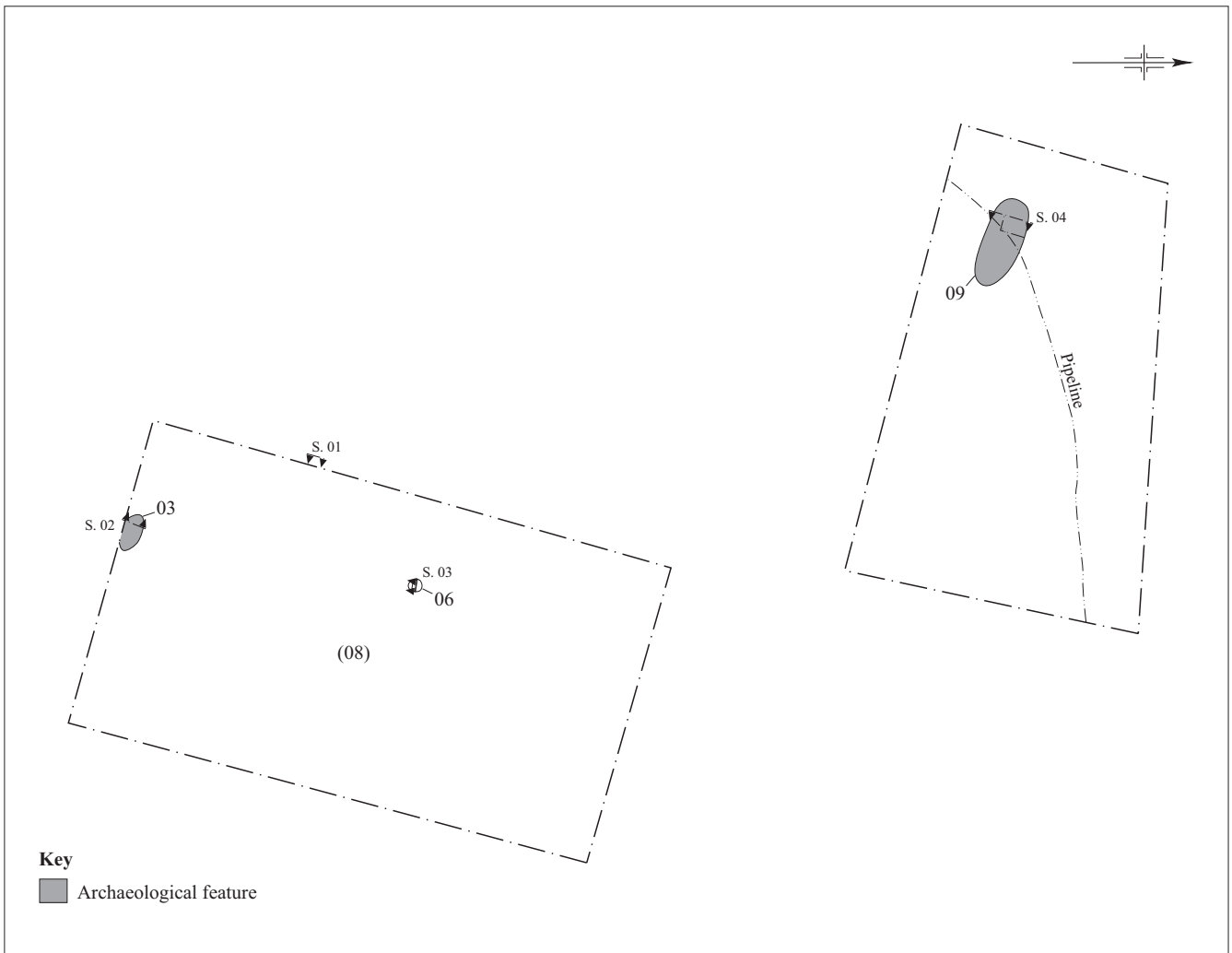
The resultant spoil from the works was visually scanned for finds.

### **4 RESULTS**

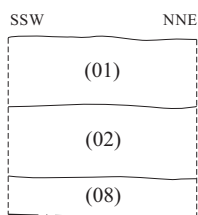
All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers without brackets indicate features i.e. pit cuts, numbers in ( ) show feature fills or deposits of material, while numbers in bold indicate structural features.

The lowest deposit identified was limestone with a matrix of yellow clayey sand bedrock (08) (Fig.2, section 1; plate 1).

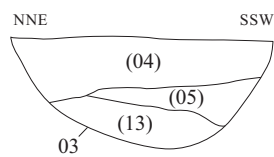
Cutting the limestone were several pits. Towards the south of the site in the area of the new swimming pool was pit 03 (Fig. 1, plan, section 2; plate 2). The pit had an oval shape and a WNW-ESE orientation. It was 2.8m long, greater than 1.4 m wide and 0.6 m deep with concave sides and base. The lowest fill was a 0.25m thick, yellowish mid-brown silty clay deposit with rare fragments of limestone (13). Overlying (13) was a 0.2m thick, light brown silty clay fill (05), which contained rare fragments of fine limestone. The uppermost fill was (04), a 0.35m thick, mid-brown yellowish silty clay fill with rare inclusions of fine to large fragments of limestone and some very crumbly fragments of slag (the only finds in the pit).



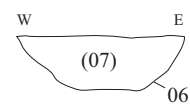
**Section 1**



**Section 2**



**Section 3**



**Section 4**

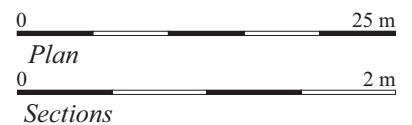
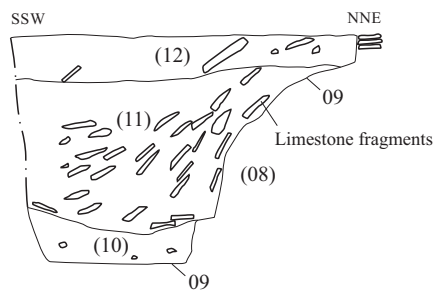


Figure 2: Monitored areas and sections 1 to 4



Plate 1. Representative section of site.



Plate 2. Possible quarry pit [03]



Plate 3. Small pit [06]

A possible quarry pit was located towards the north west of the site in the northern excavation area. Pit 09 had an oval shape and WNW - ESE orientation (Fig.1, plan section 4; plate 4). It was 6.6m long, 2.8m wide and 1.2m deep. It had a straight side on the south-west edge and an irregular edge in the north-east, the base was flat. The lowest fill of the pit was a 0.2-0.3m thick, dark brown sandy clay, (10). Overlaying (10) was a 0.8m thick, dark brown sandy clay deposit with frequent fragments and blocks of well sorted limestone, (11). Fill (11) contained two fragments of medieval glazed ridge tile, two fragments of pottery, and an iron fitting. The uppermost layer of pit 09 was a 0.2m thick fill of dark brown silty clay which contained rare fragments and blocks of limestone of different sizes and two fragments of modern brick.

Above the limestone deposit (08) was the subsoil (02), a soft light brown yellowish clayey silt layer 0.35 m (Fig. 2, section 1; plate 1).

Towards the centre of the area excavated for the new swimming pool and cut into the subsoil was a sub-circular pit 06 that was 0.9m in diameter with a concave base and sides. It contained a single fill of 0.25m thick, dark grey clayey silt (07). The fill contained rare fragments of fine limestone and no finds (Fig 2, plan, section 3; plate 3).

The uppermost layer recorded on the site was the topsoil, (01) a 0.35 m. thick, soft dark brown clayey silt layer (Fig. 1, section 1; plate 1).





Plate 4. Section 04 of Quarry Pit 09

## 5 FINDS

### 5.1 Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn (Table 1)

The pottery assemblage comprised four sherds with a total weight of 82g. It comprised a mixture of medieval and modern wares. The medieval material was recorded using the conventions of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1994), as follows:

**OXAC:** Cotswold-type Ware, AD975-1350. 1 sherd, 11g.

The modern wares were recorded using the conventions of the Museum of London Type-Series (eg. Vince 1985), as follows:

**TPW:** Transfer-printed Whiteware, 1830-1900. 2 sherds, 19g.

**YELL:** Yellow Ware, 1840-1900. 1 sherd, 52g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. The range of fabric types is typical of sites in the region.

*Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type*

Cntxt	OXAC		YELL		TPW		Date
	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	No	Wt (g)	
1					2	19	MOD
11	1	11	1	52			MOD
Total	1	11	1	52	2	19	

## 5.2 Brick and Tile by Paul Blinkhorn (Table 2)

A small assemblage of fired clay building material, consisting of medieval glazed ridge-tile and modern brick, was noted.

Three fragments of ridge-tile occurred, two of which had “cockscorb” crests. They were all in an oolitic limestone fabric with a dull green glaze on the upper surface, and are typical products of the Minety industry in North Wiltshire, and dateable to the 14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> century (Musty 1973). Context 2 produced a small fragment of the top of a tile with a single crest (weight = 127g, as did context 11 (weight = 93g. The latter also produced a large fragment of the end of a tile (weight = 730g).

Context 12 produced two fragments of modern brick (weight = 672g).

*Table 2: Brick and ceramic tile.*

Cntxt	Tile		Brick		Date
	No	Wt (g)	No (g)	Wt	
2	1	127			MED
11	2	823			MED
12			2	672	MOD
Total	3	950	2	672	1622g

## 5.3 Iron

A single iron object was recovered from deposit (11), middle fill of quarry pit 09. The object, severely affected by oxidation, measured 150mm in length and 46mm in width and was made of a flat strip of iron measuring 1mm in thickness.

The object, although fragmentary, was positively identified as a post-medieval casket fitting, specifically a binding strip; three sub-circular fitting holes were also recorded, one of which preserved a partial fastener.

It is not recommended to retain the iron casket fitting, due to its poor state of preservation and very low potential for further analysis.

## 6 DISCUSSION

The presence of archaeology on the site was minimal resulting in the discovery of three pits. Two of these pits were undated and contained no finds. The function of these pits is unknown although pit 03 was interpreted as the possible result of small scale quarrying for limestone. A larger pit, 09, towards the north of the site was also interpreted as the result of quarrying for limestone. The pit contained three fills, the upper two were interpreted as deliberate backfilling. This was evidenced in the lower of these two fills (11) by the presence of a large amount of medium to large limestone fragments. The fill contained medieval finds in the form of a piece of medieval pottery and two fragments of medieval tile. The earliest possible date for the backfilling of the pit was, however, provided by the post medieval finds, a piece of 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery and a post medieval iron casket fitting, the upper fill (12) contained modern brick. A further fragment of medieval tile was recovered from the

subsoil layer (02). The results revealed no evidence for medieval activity although the very small amount of medieval material recovered may originate from the earlier village or the medieval farm.

## 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

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the Oxfordshire County Museums Service with the accession number OXCMS: 2016.164.

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## 8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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

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Musty, JWG, 1973 A preliminary account of a medieval pottery industry at Minety, North Wiltshire. *Wiltshire Archaeology and Natural History Magazine* **68**, 79-88

Vince, AG, 1985 The Saxon and Medieval Pottery of London: A review. *Medieval Archaeology* **29**, 25-93

**APPENDIX 1: Oasis Report Form**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		
Project Name	Dunthrop House, Heythrop, Chipping Norton, Oxon. OX7 5TJ	
Short description	<i>John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks ahead of a new build and an excavation of a swimming pool at Dunthrop House, Dunthrop Road, Heythrop, Oxfordshire. OX7 5TJ. The watching brief was concluded and only identified two undated pits and one pit which contained modern material. Of the two undated pits, one contained fragments of slag and the other did not contain finds. The largest pit, identified as a possible quarry pit, was dated as modern and contained modern pottery, a piece of medieval pottery, medieval tile fragments, modern brick, and a post-medieval iron fitting. No other archaeology was present on the site.</i>	
Project dates	Start: 30-11-2017 End: 15-05-2018	
Project type	Watching Brief	
Previous work	None	
Future work	Not known	
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>		
Site Location		
Study area	93 ha	
Site co-ordinates	NGR SP 35402820 (Point)	
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>		
Name of organisation	John Moore Heritage Services	
Project Brief originator	NPPF	
Project Design (WSI)	John Moore Heritage Services	
Project Manager	John Moore	
Project Supervisor	Carlos Fernández González	
<b>MONUMENT TYPE</b>	None	
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS</b>	Medieval Pottery, Medieval Tile	
<b>PROJECT ARCHIVES</b>	<b>Intended final location of archive</b>	<b>Content</b>
Physical	Oxfordshire County Museums Service	Pottery, ceramic tile
Paper	Oxfordshire County Museums Service	Site records, drawings, report
Digital	Oxfordshire County Museums Service	Photographs
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> John Moore Heritage Services, 2015 16/02235/HHD- Dunthrop House, Heythrop, Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire, OX7 56TJ. Archaeological Watching Brief. Written Scheme of Investigation. Unpublished client report		