



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
AT
DOWNS EQUESTRIAN CENTRE, BAYDON,
WILTSHIRE SN8 2JS
NGR SU 28266 78129

On behalf of
Mr A Giugni

FEBRUARY 2017

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SUMMARY

This document represents an investigation of the potential for archaeological remains on land adjacent to Downs Equestrian Centre, Baydon, Wiltshire SN8 2JS (NGR SU 28266 78129). No remains of significance were present.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site is located on the east side of the main complex of Downs Equestrian Centre in Baydon (NGR SU 28266 78129) and had been used until recent development as a paddock (Figure 1).

The site lies at approximately 228.54m AOD. The underlying geology is Seaford Chalk Formation - Chalk. Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 84 to 89 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period. These rocks were formed in warm shallow 'Chalk' shelf seas with little sediment input from land (BGS 2017).

1.2 Planning Background

Planning permission has been granted by Wiltshire Council for erection of 2 no. semi-detached dwellings for ancillary residential accommodation. Due to the archaeological and historical importance of the surrounding area a condition (No. 3) 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 lies on the outskirts of the medieval settlement of Baydon with field systems to the north and earthworks to the east. However, the area under investigation has no known historical use beyond that of a paddock and other uses related to the horse livery. As such, chances of archaeological activity was low.

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 remains revealed during the course of any operations that may disturb or destroy archaeological remains.

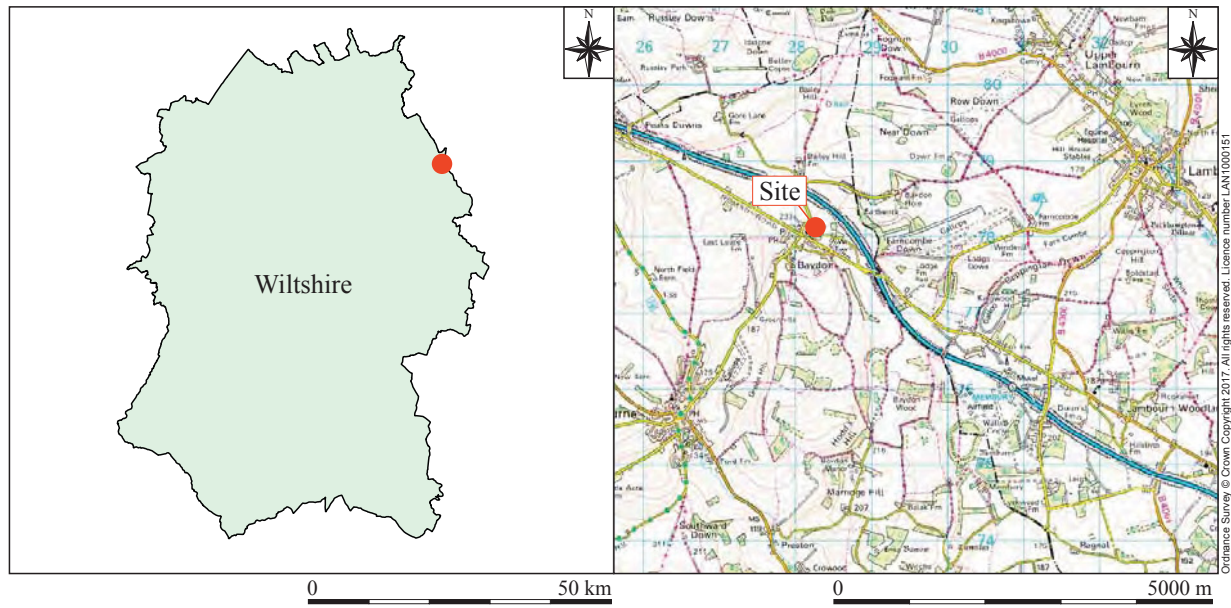
In particular,

- To record any evidence for activity associated with the medieval settlement of Baydon.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with the archaeological advisors to the Wiltshire Council. The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014).



Key Site boundary Monitored area

Figure 1: Site location

3.2 Methodology

No archaeological horizons were encountered during the topsoil reduction or excavation of the foundation trenches. Representative sections were cleaned by hand, photographed and recorded 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, especially for finds relating to medieval occupation or activity.

4 RESULTS

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

Topsoil (01) was a dark to mid brown clayey silt with occasional sub-rounded flints 3-10cm in diameter. This layer was reduced prior to the excavation of the foundation trenches and therefore does not appear on the representative section drawings. At its maximum depth in the NE corner of the area of impact, the topsoil was 0.17m thick.

Subsoil (02) was a mid reddish brown silty clay with patches of very common flint gravel and cobbles across the layer. The flint was sub-rounded and ranged from 3-25cm in diameter. The patches made up less than 25% of the layer. At its maximum depth, this layer was 0.37m thick (see Plate 2).

Natural (03) was a mid orange brown clay, with a high amount of sub-angular flints appearing in larger pockets throughout, some as densely packed as 60% flint. The flints ranged from 4-15cm in diameter. There were also intermittent patches of chalk (<15%), only seen in the SE sections of the foundation trench. At its maximum depth, this layer was 0.85m thick and extended beyond the limit of excavation (see Plate 1).

5 FINDS

The only material observed across the site was in the topsoil layer (01) which was an intentional deposit for levelling the area. The material noted was mostly CBM fragments (i.e. brick and drain pipe) and a couple of 19th century pot sherds mixed in with modern waste (food wrappers, alcohol and plastic bottles, etc.). These were not kept.

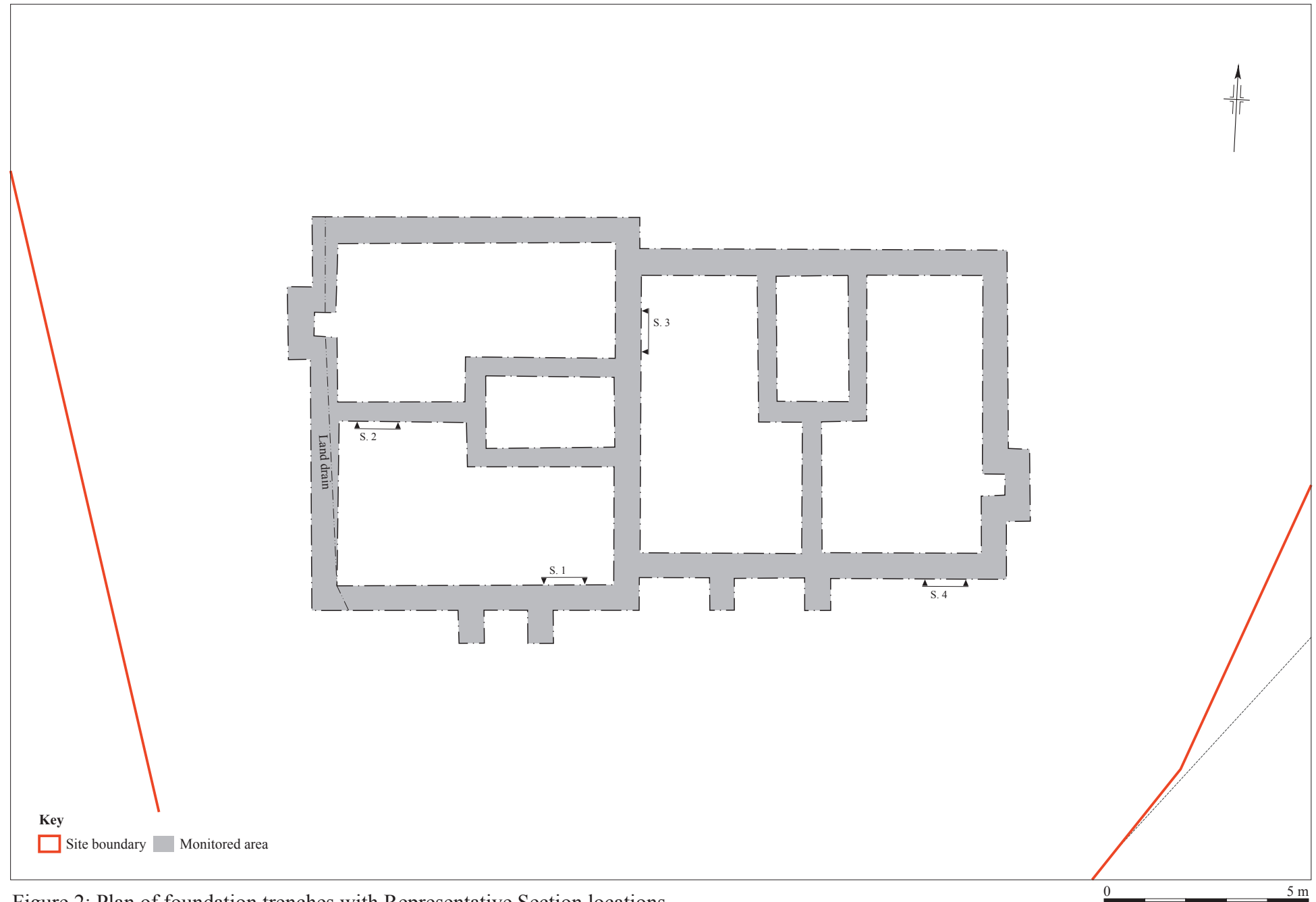


Figure 2: Plan of foundation trenches with Representative Section locations



Plate 1. Representative section 2 of foundation trench facing SE.



Plate 2. Representative section 4 of foundation trench facing S-SE.

6 DISCUSSION

The topsoil was composed of an intentional deposit which appears to be associated with dumping and subsequent levelling of the area at some point in the 20th century. No archaeology was found, but a modern water service was encountered in the SW corner of the foundation trench. The pipe ran the entire length of the western foundation trench. This pipe belonged to the landowner and though it was broken during excavations on 23 January 2017, the contractor on site was able to mend it and work continued the following day.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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