



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**HANWELL CASTLE, MAIN STREET,
HANWELL, OXFORDSHIRE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
ADDENDUM REPORT**

NGR SP 4356 4356

On behalf of



JULY 2017

REPORT FOR

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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out a further phase of watching at Hanwell Castle, Hanwell Oxfordshire, during the excavation of a trench for an oil tank and the excavation of six soakaways. The excavations revealed the fragmentary remains of two walls on the north side and north-east side of the building. The 'wall' on the north-east side of the building appeared to have a wide cavity and may have been a culvert of Tudor date, similar to those found during the earlier archaeological excavations. On the south side of the site an apparent stone filled linear ditch was identified that may have been the backfilling of a robbed out feature. This feature cut a dark linear feature which may have been the line of a boundary hedge.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

Hanwell Castle is located to the south-east of Main Street and north-east of St Peter's Church, Hanwell (NGR SP 4363 4360). The underlying geology across Hanwell village is marked in the following form on the British Geological Survey maps (mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html). In the valley to the east this is classed as Charmouth Mudstone Formation, a sedimentary rock that laid down some 183million to 197 million years ago in the Jurassic. Above this and lying in the area of Hanwell Castle is the Dyrham Formation, a siltstone and mudstone that are interbedded. This sedimentary bedrock was formed 183million to 190million years ago in the Jurassic. Capping this there is the Marlstone Rock Formation, a ferruginous limestone and ironstone sedimentary rock laid down some 176million to 190million years ago.

1.2 Planning Background

Cherwell District Council granted planning permission (ref. 11/01876/F) and listed building consent (ref. 11/01877/LB) for the erection of an underground garage and new wing. Due to the archaeological and historical importance of the surrounding area a condition was attached to the permission requiring an Excavation of the area to be destroyed by the new build, and also a Watching Brief to be maintained during the course of building operations on the site This was in line with NPPF (the planning policy current at the time) and other Local Planning policies.

1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

Hanwell Castle is a former great house of which only the south-west tower and south range remain of a 2-storey house built round a courtyard with the main entrance on the west. It was begun c. 1489 for William Cope, cofferer to Henry VII. It was mostly demolished in the 18th century (<http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk>).

Further archaeological and historical background for the site can be found in the main body of the report (See JMHS 2014).

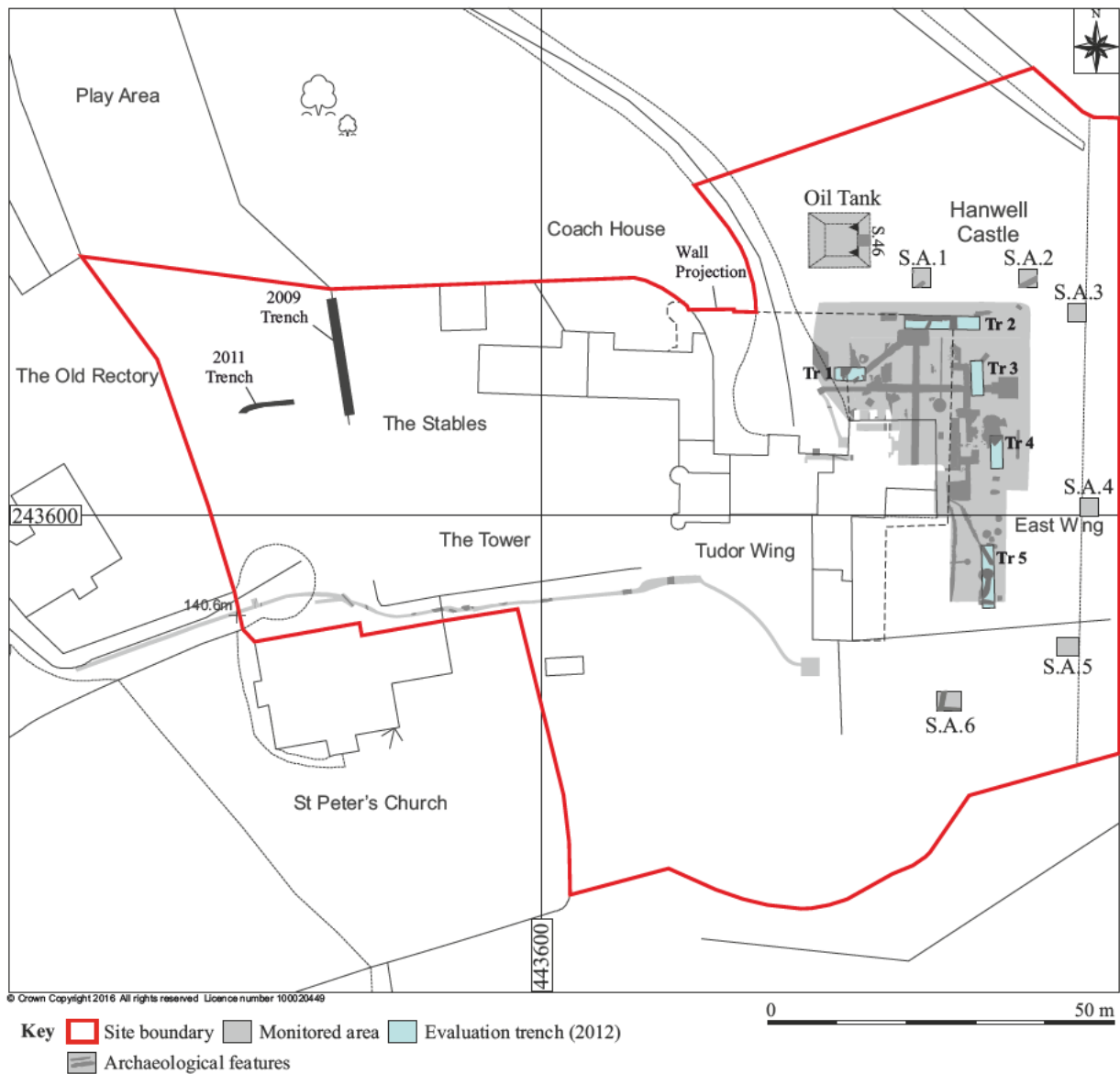
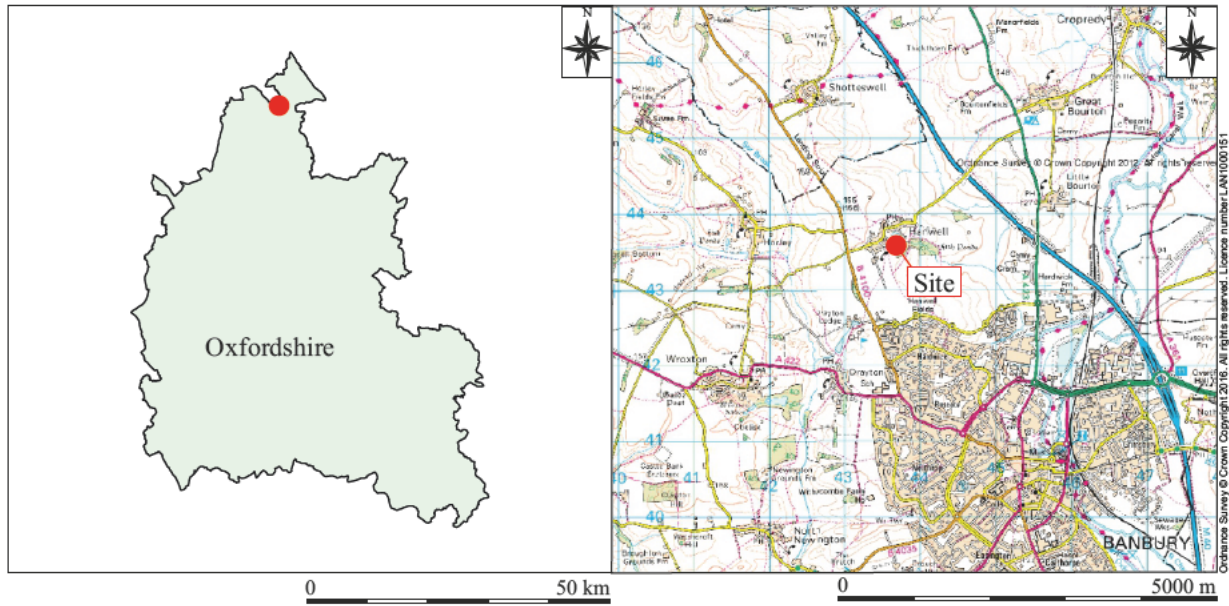


Figure 1: Site location

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

To make a record of any significant remains revealed during the course of any operations that may disturb or destroy archaeological remains.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Oxford Historic and Natural Environment Team (OHaNET), the archaeological advisors to Cherwell 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 to observe all the excavations and any other groundworks likely to disturb archaeological remains.

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.

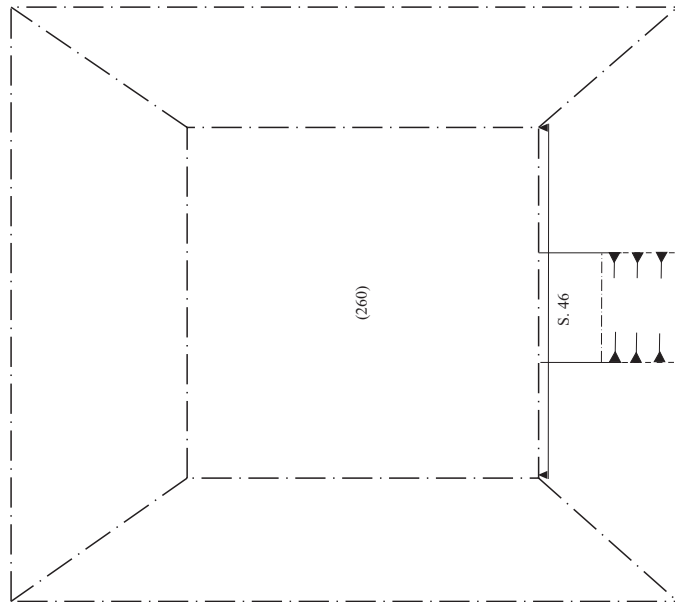
4 RESULTS

A trench for an oil tank was excavated at Hanwell castle, an archaeologist was present during the excavations to record any features that were identified.

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 oil tank trench was excavated to the north side of Hanwell Castle to a depth of 1.8m (Fig.2, Plan and Section 46). The lowest layer identified was (260) (Fig.2, Section 46). This was red, light grey and yellow clay layer that was identified as natural geology. It was greater than 0.3m deep and had a diffuse upper horizon with (262). Layer (262) was a 0.6m thick layer of greyish yellow clay that was 0.6m thick. It appeared to be similar to natural layer (249) which was identified during previous excavations. Layer (249) was considered to be similar to contexts (47) and (54) (See JMHS 2014) and was probably part of the Dyrham formation. Deposited above this was a mid reddish brown clay layer (261). Layer (261) was 0.1m to 0.3m thick and was overlain by a layer of light yellow and grey clay that was 0.4m thick, (259). Overlying this layer and observed in the east section was a 0.2m thick layer of mid reddish brown sandy clay loam (267). This layer was cut by undated ditch 266. Ditch 266 was greater than 1m in length and 1.4m wide. It had a concave base but the edges were unclear in plan and section. It was not been observed in plan over the majority of

Oil Tank Trench



Section 46

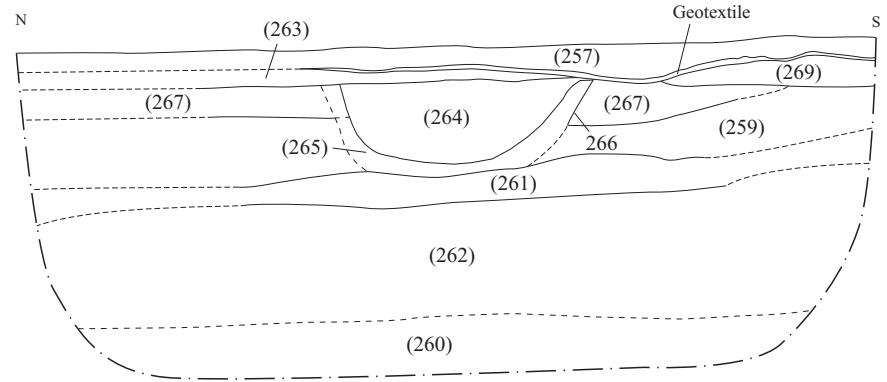


Figure 2: Oil Tank Trench Plan and Section 46

The excavation and was not visible in the opposing section. The ditch would have continued west into this area of the excavation but would have terminated before the west section. The ditch was filled by a yellow clayey primary fill (265) that was similar in appearance to (259). This layer was up to 0.1m thick and deposited above this was a 0.4m thick fill of mid reddish brown sandy clay loam (264). A piece of modern pottery was recovered near to the surface of the (264) along with a fragment of clay tobacco pipe stem and a piece of brick or tile. Deposited above the ditch was a layer of mid brown sandy loam with dominant pea gravel (263). Deposited above (267) was a mixed deposit of grey yellow clays and gravels. These upper disturbed layers were overlain with geotextile which was in turn was overlain by mixed clay and sand with dominant gravels (257).

Following the excavation of the oil tank six soakaways were excavated round the perimeter of Hanwell Caste These trenches were excavated from the north entrance to the castle and then along the east around the perimeter driveway.

The first soakaway excavated was Soakaway 1 (Fig. 3, Plan and Section 47). The lowest layer identified in Soakaway 1 was a yellow clay that was greater than 0.6m thick (283). Above this was a dirtier yellow clay layer that was 0.5m thick (282). This layer was cut by the wall cut for Wall **284**. This was a fragmentary stone wall that was 1.2m long and 0.5m wide and approximately 0.5m thick. It was orientated north-east to south-west and had been cut by a modern service trench, 287, at the north-east end. This service was a narrow trench that was 0.45m wide and greater than 1.10m deep. It was orientated east-west and filled with gravel (286). In the north-west of Soakaway 1 was what may have been the fragmentary remains of a wall protruding from the west section, **279**. This possible wall would also appear to sit above deposit (282). Deposited above (286) was a mixed clayey layer that was 0.45m thick (281). This was overlain by geotextile and mixed gravels of the driveway surface (280).

Further towards the east, Soakaway 2 was excavated to a depth of 2.1m (Fig. 3, Plan and Section 48). The lowest layer identified was a dark brown, yellow and red, heterogeneous clayey deposit that was greater than 0.2m thick (293). It contained flecks of brick or tile and a small fragment of tile which was possibly medieval.

Cut into the lowest layer in the trench was the wall cut to Wall **291**. This was a stone wall was orientated ENE to WNW, many of the stones were dressed and faced. The wall was greater than 3m in length, 0.7m wide and 0.5m deep. Deposited above the wall and around it was deposit (290). This was a mid brown clayey deposit with fragments of brick or tile. Overlying (290) was a 0.5m thick layer of mixed yellow brown and grey, sandy clay (289). This in turn was overlain by a 0.9m thick layer of very compact, orange brown sandy loam (288). The uppermost layer were a layer of geotextile overlain by driveway gravels (280).

In Soakaway 3, the lowest layer identified was a dark grey sandy clay (300) (Fig. 3, Plan and Section 49). Deposited above this was a 1.1m thick layer of mid greyish brown sandy clay with medium to large flattish stones (299). The layer appeared to be sloping down to the east, indicating that it may be a tip line of rapidly deposited material. Deposited above this was a layer of yellow sandy loam which also appeared to sloping towards the east (298). Deposited above this was a deposit of mid reddish brown sandy loam (297) and above this was a topsoil deposit (296). The topsoil had been cut by the cut for the adjacent driveway and this had been filled with two layers

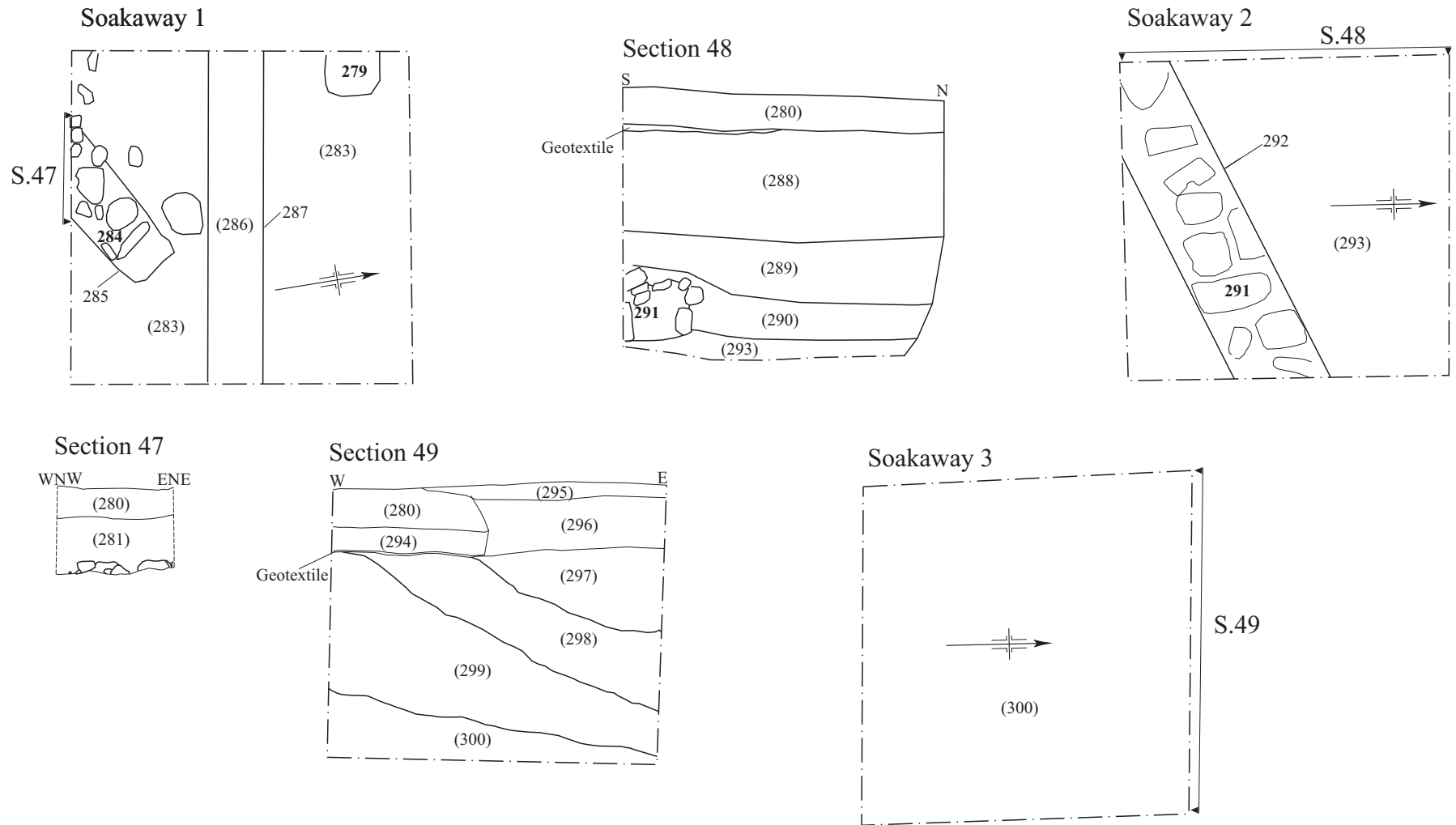


Figure 3: Soakaways 1 to 3 and Sections

of gravel (294) and (280). The gravel had been partially overgrown by the turf layer (295) at the eastern edge of the drive.

Four deposits were identified in Soakaway 4 (Fig. 4, plan and Section 50). The lowest layer was a 0.65m thick mid yellow grey loamy sand (303). Deposited above was a grey yellow sand with brick fragments which was 0.85m thick (302). Above this was a mixed layer of mid grey brown sandy clay loam (301) and above this the driveway stone layer (280).

Soakaway 5 was located towards the south east of Hanwell Castle (Fig.1). The soakaway was 2.1m deep and contained several layers some of which sloped towards the east (Fig.4, plan and Section 51). The lowest layer was a 0.6m layer of dark brown sandy clay loam with rare inclusions of ceramic tile or brick fragments, rare inclusions of stone, and a small number of oyster shell fragments (308). The deposit also contained a two fragments of late Post-medieval stoneware pottery. Overlying this layer was a mid yellow brown layer of sandy clay loam with rare fragments of brick or tile (307). Both of these bottom two layer were sloping and the land appeared to levelled out above this layer by a 0.4m to 0.8m thick layer of mixed yellow and brown sandy loam (306). Overlying this levelling deposit was a dark brown sandy loam (305) that appeared to be a recently buried soil horizon. This was overlaid by a deposit of yellowish white sand and stone (304) and above this a layer of purple and pink sand and stone (318).

The lowest layer excavated in Soakaway 6 was a 0.28m thick deposit of mid-reddish brown clay (313) (Fig.4, Plan and Section 52). Deposited above this was a 0.4m thick layer of mixed red yellow and grey clay (312). This layer had fragments of brick and tile and fragments of oyster shell. Deposited above this was a 0.55m thick mid-grey mixed clay layer (311). Deposit (311) was overlain by a mid-dark brown grey sandy loam that was 0.15m thick (310). This was cut on the south side by a possible ditch 317. The feature was orientated east-west across the south side of the trench. It had unclear edges but was around 0.5m wide and possibly up to 1m deep although the lower boundary was unclear. It was filled by a clayey dark brownish black fill with burning (316). The feature was a possible former field boundary hedge line. Cutting this linear feature was cut 315. The cut was orientated north-south and was filled by a stone rubble back fill (314). The feature was identified as a possible backfilled robber trench, it was not possible to discern any original cut. Overlying the backfill was a very dark brown sandy silt loam with burning (309). The uppermost layer observed were the gravel layers of the driveway (304) and (318).

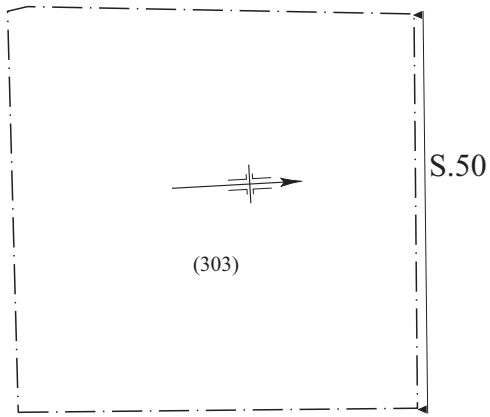
5 FINDS

A piece of modern pottery was recovered near to the surface of ditch (264) along with a fragment of clay tobacco pipe stem and a piece of brick or tile.

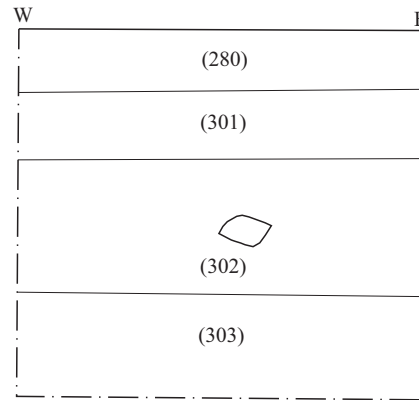
In context (293) a small fragment of glazed tile was identified which was possibly medieval.

From the lowest excavated layer in Soakaway 5, (293), two fragments of late post medieval stoneware were identified alongside fragments of oyster shell.

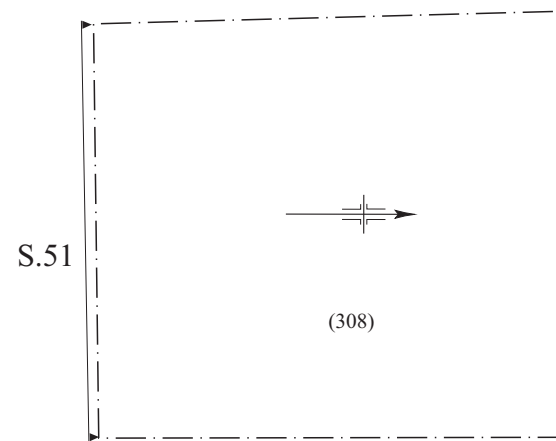
Soakaway 4



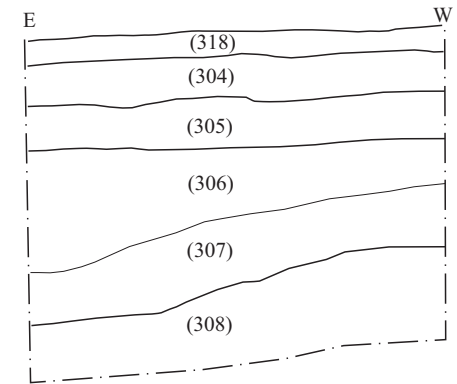
Section 50



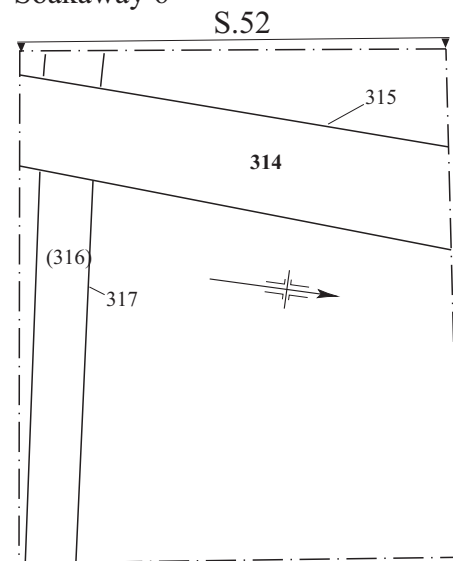
Soakaway 5



Section 51



Soakaway 6



Section 52

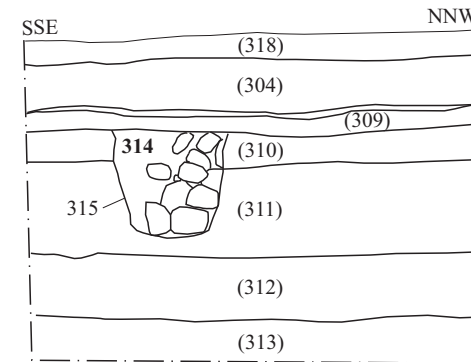


Figure 4: Soakaways 4 to 6 and Sections.



Oyster shell was also identified in deposit (316) in Soakaway 6.

None of the finds were removed from site.

6 DISCUSSION

Most of the lowest layers on the east and south side of the site appeared to be anthropogenic with only the lowest layer in soakaways 3, 4, and 6 representing natural soil horizons. The lay of some of these horizons would suggest sloping landscaping towards the east that are overlaid with later phases of levelling. Pottery observed in the lowest layer of Soakaway 5 would suggest a later Post-medieval date or later due to the presence of stoneware fragments.

Deep natural soil horizons were identified in Soakaway 1 and the trench for the oil tank and these were associated with the Dyrham formation.

The east-west ditch identified in the oil tank trench would be of Victorian date at the earliest due to the pottery recovered from this feature and may have been later,

In Soakaway 2 it was observed that the wall there, in section, had a large cavity and it is possible that this was a similar feature to culvert 77 that had been constructed to carry spring water away from the site (JMHS 2014). This would give the culvert a possible 15th century date. The wall or culvert showed evidence for some worked stone that was smooth faced. However the dressing on one of the stone blocks that was removed by the machine would suggest that this material had been reused from an earlier period. The deposit below the wall/culvert in Soakaway 2 contained a fragment of medieval floor tile but no other dateable material was observed

The fragment of wall identified in Soakaway 1 was undated and does not align with any features in the earlier archaeological work on the site. The robbed out feature in Soakaway 6 aligned with culverts identified during the excavation and may be the robbing of a culvert of 18th or 18th century date, although the alignment be fortuitous. This robbing cut though the line of an apparent former hedge boundary.

7 ARCHIVE

The records will be added to those of the earlier work under accession no. OXCMS: 2011.21

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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

John Moore Heritage Services *Archaeological Excavation and Watching Brief at Hanwell Castle, Main Street, Hanwell, Oxfordshire*. Unpublished. JMHS.