



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

**AT**

**THE WOODYARD, BAINTON,**

**BICESTER, OXFORDSHIRE OX27 8RL**

**NGR SP 5773 2708**

**JULY 2019**

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## **Summary**

*John Moore Heritage Services carried out an evaluation at The Woodyard, Bainton, Bicester, Oxfordshire (NGR SP 5773 2708). The site was located approximately 40m to the north of previously investigated medieval houses dated to the 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> centuries. In this single evaluation trench, only one ditch was found running on a N-S alignment, and yielded 30 sherds of early medieval pottery.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

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

The development site is located at The Woodyard, Bainton, Bicester, Oxfordshire (NGR SP 5773 2708). The site lies between 102m to 107m OD. The underlying geology is Cornbrash and clay.

### **1.2 Planning Background**

Cherwell District Council granted planning permission for the erection of a building for the dry storage of forestry products and associated machinery (17/01856/F). Due to the archaeological and historical importance of the surrounding area two conditions were attached to the permission:

*3 Prior to any demolition and the commencement of the development a professional archaeological organisation acceptable to the Local Planning Authority shall prepare an Archaeological Written Scheme of Investigation, relating to the application site area, which shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.*

*Reason - To safeguard the recording of archaeological matters within the site in accordance with Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.*

*4 Following the approval of the Written Scheme of Investigation referred to in condition 1 (sic), and prior to any demolition on the site and the commencement of the development (other than in accordance with the agreed Written Scheme of Investigation), a staged programme of archaeological evaluation and mitigation shall be carried out by the commissioned archaeological organisation in accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation. The programme of work shall include all processing, research and analysis necessary to produce an accessible and useable archive and a full report for publication which shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority.*

*Reason - To safeguard the identification, recording, analysis and archiving of heritage assets before they are lost and to advance understanding of the heritage assets in their wider context through publication and dissemination of the evidence in accordance with Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.*

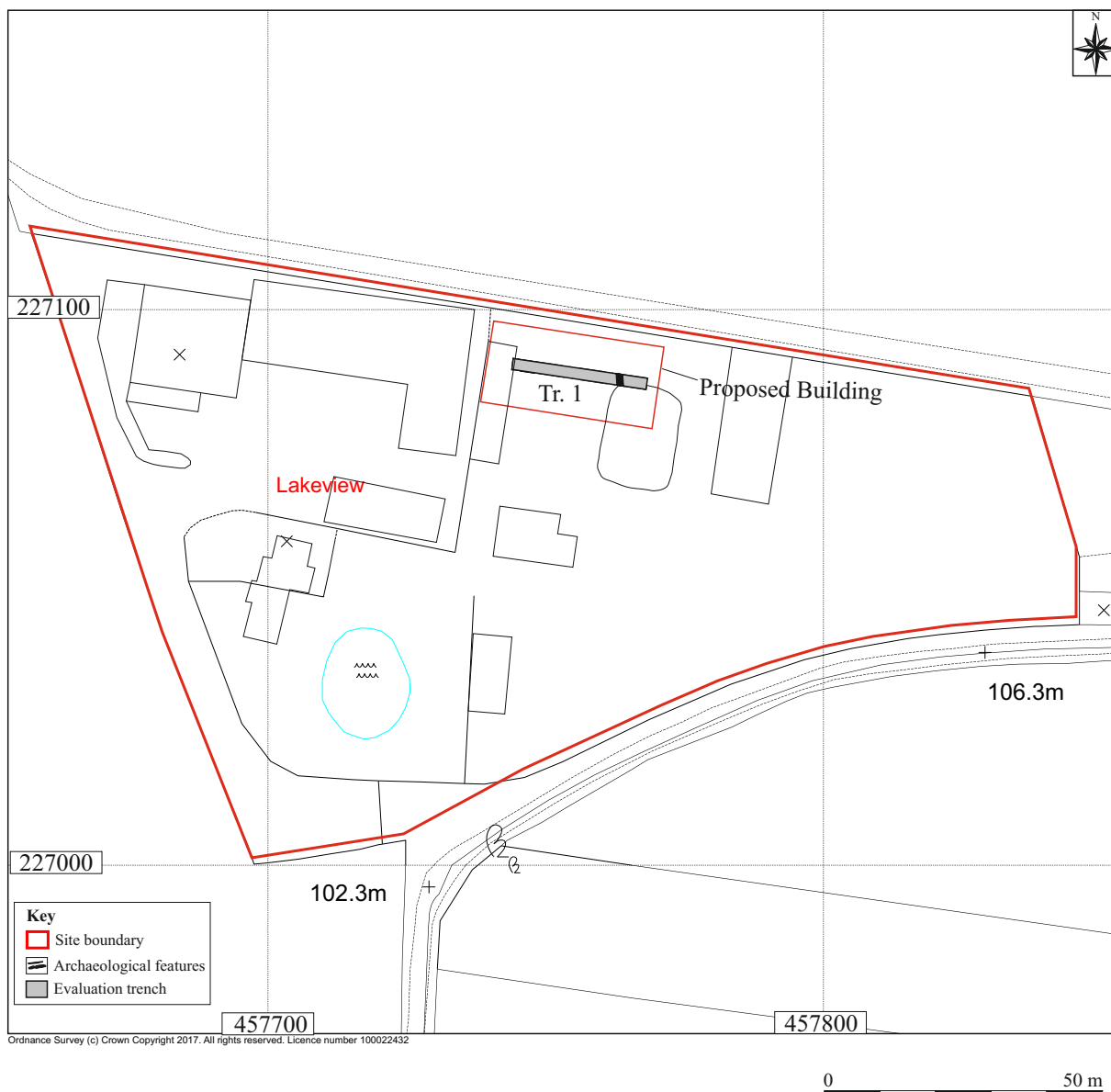
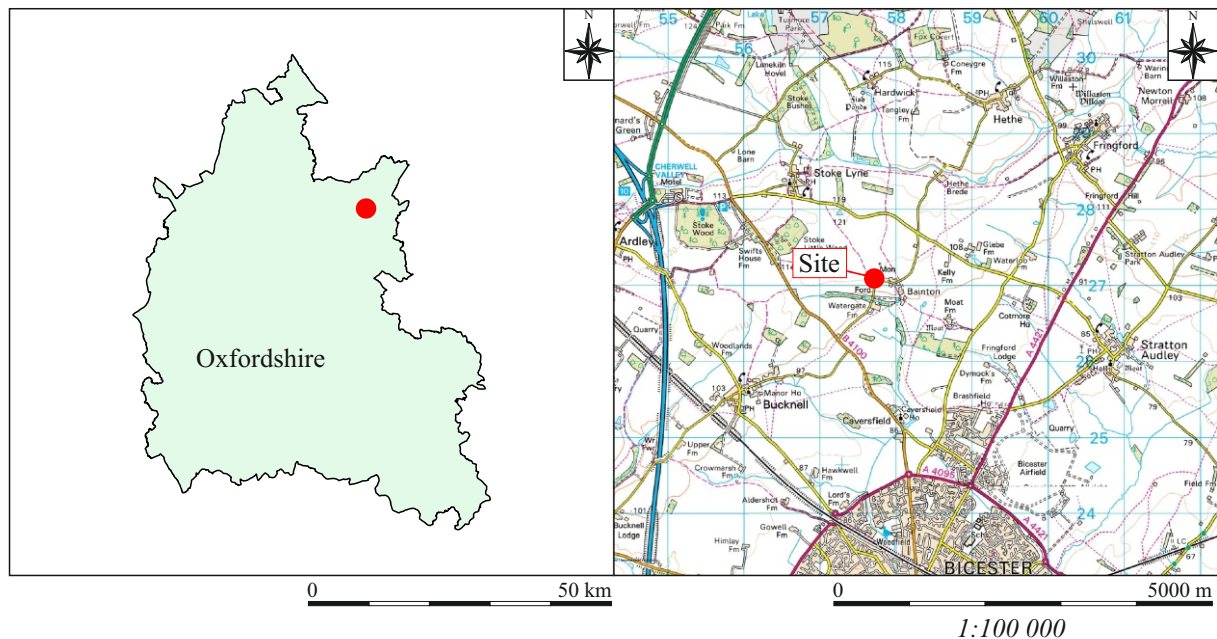


Figure 1: Site location

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

The proposed site of the new building is located in an area of considerable archaeological potential located on the northern side of the deserted medieval village of Bainton (PRN 856). The village was depopulated between 1450 - 1700 and four farmhouses remain along with excellent quality earthworks. A clear pattern of earthworks recognisable as road and croft boundaries with house platforms under grass are visible on the 1961 Fairey Aerial Survey. Three archaeological evaluation trenches were excavated 40m to the south of the proposed development, and within the area of cropmarks, in advance of an earlier planning application which recorded evidence of at least two medieval houses dated to the 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The above archaeological information has been taken from the OCAS advice note dated 25 October 2017.

## **2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

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

- To undertake Stage 1 archaeological evaluation of the site as a first stage of a programme of archaeological work
- To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the site and the depth of soil deposits that overlie these remains.
- To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.
- To determine the degree of complexity of any horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present.
- To determine the impact of the proposed development on any remains present.

In particular:

- To determine whether any remains relating to the deserted medieval village are present on the site of the new building.
- To inform the need for any Stage 2 mitigation resulting from the evaluation report.

## **3 STRATEGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Richard Oram of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (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

One evaluation trench 25m long by 1.8m wide was excavated within the footprint of the proposed building (see Figure 1).

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 (Figure 2)

All contexts that were identified have been described below and in the context inventory (see Appendix). Rounded brackets, (), denote layers or deposits while no brackets indicate the context is a cut number.

### 4.1 Trench 1

Trench 1 was 24.3m long at the base and 1.8m wide. It was excavated down onto the natural geology which was (1/02) a mid-yellowish brown clay with a high concentration of Cornbrash Limestone throughout, mottled with mid-reddish brown clay patches. This was seen across the full extent of the trench.

Into the natural geology was cut a ditch, 1/03, which was >1.9m in length, 0.9m in width. It ran on a N-S alignment and was seen to survive to a maximum depth of 0.2m. There were two fills within this ditch. The lowest fill (1/04) was a mid-yellowish brown, compact silty clay, >1.9m long, 0.66m wide, and 0.12m thick, and contained animal bones and pottery. The upper fill (1/05) was a mid-greyish brown, compact silty clay, >1.9m long, 0.9m wide, and 0.08m thick, and also contained a large amount of pottery sherds and a couple animal bones.

Above this ditch was a levelling action for the current use of the area as a trackway (1/01), which was 0.38m thick and extended across the whole trench and was comprised of a mid to dark greyish brown compact silty clay and included a surface of hardcore rubble.

### 4.2 Reliability of Results

The evaluation and excavation were undertaken in relatively clement conditions. Given the time of year adequate time was taken in order to ensure that both the excavation and recording were carried out to a high standard on this site. As such the reliability of the results achieved is considered high.

## 5 FINDS

### 5.1 Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 29 sherds with a total weight of 310g. It was recorded using the conventions of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1994), as follows:

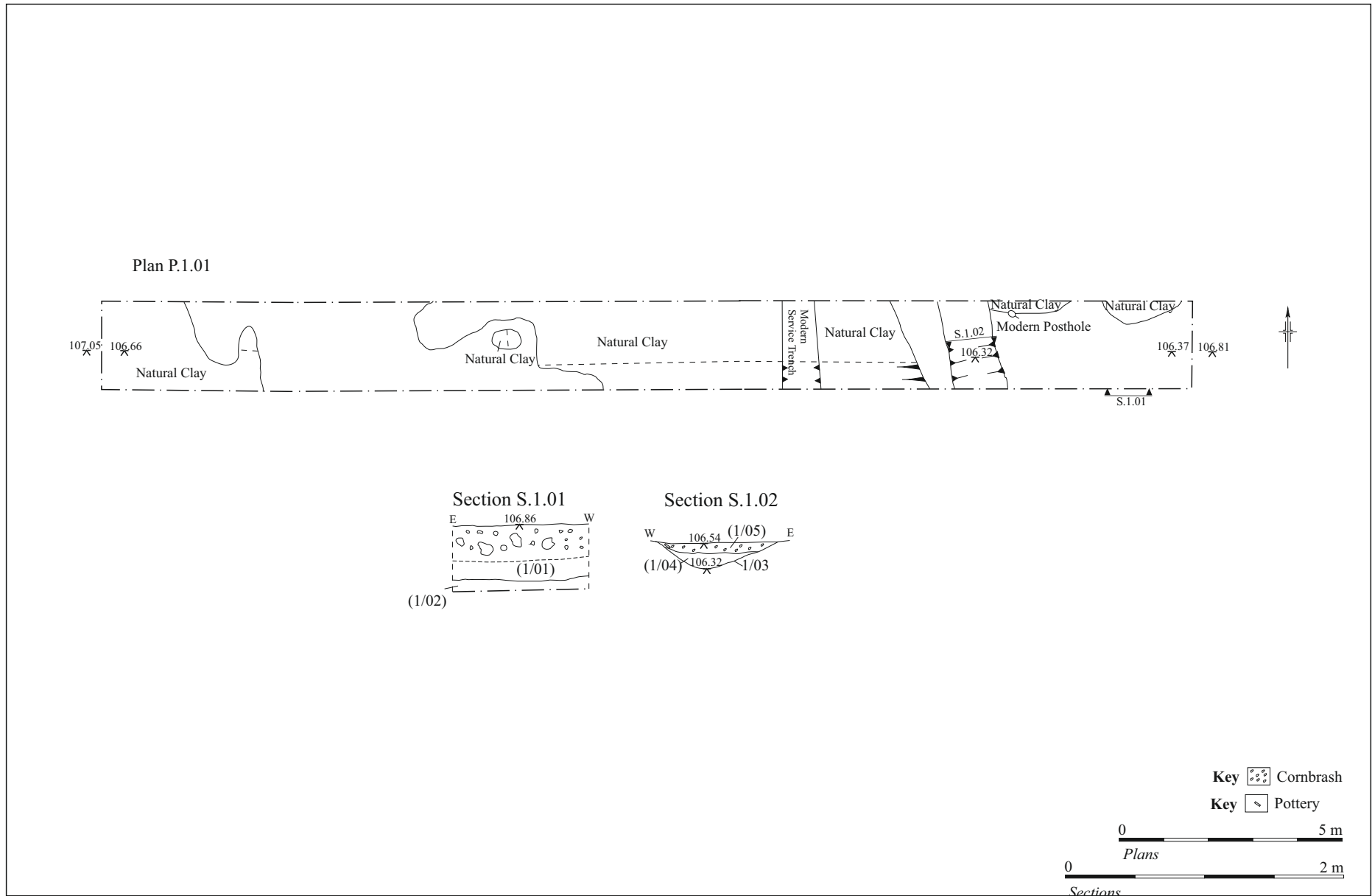


Figure: Trench 1 and sections



**OXR:** St. Neots Ware, AD850-1200. 28 sherds, 303g,  
**OXAM:** Brill/Boarstall Ware, AD1200 – 1600. 1 sherd, 7g.

The range of fabric types is typical of sites in the region. It all occurred in just two contexts. Three sherds (33g) of OXR occurred in context 1/04, the lower fill of ditch 1/03, with the rest (25 sherds, 270g) being from context 1/05, the upper fill of the same feature. Almost all of it was from a single vessel, a fairly large jar, suggesting it is the result of primary deposition. The sherd of OXAM, from a glazed jug, occurred in the upper context, and seems likely to be intrusive given the level of deposition of the St Neots Ware.

## 6 DISCUSSION

The single evaluation trench opened at The Woodyard, Bainton added a small piece of information to the medieval occupation in the area in the early medieval period. From the cropmarks, the N-S aligned ditch [1/03] likely relates to the field systems to the north of the settlement. The dating of this ditch is comparable to the dating of the houses found in the earlier evaluation.

It appeared that the ditch [1/03] had been initially left open to be filled by slow erosion processes, likely during the phase of use. It then appears to have been intentionally backfilled, possibly only in part, with surrounding refuse including the pottery recovered in this intervention.

## 7 ARCHIVE

### Archive Contents

The archive consists of the following:

#### Paper record

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 Museum Service; accession number awaited.

## 8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 2014 *Standards and Guidance for an archaeological field evaluation*

Mellor, M, 1994 Oxford Pottery: A Synthesis of middle and late Saxon, medieval and early post-medieval pottery in the Oxford Region *Oxoniensia* **59**, 17-217

**Appendix 1**

## Context Inventory

Context	Type	Description	Depth	Width	Length	Finds	Interpretation	Date
<b>Trench 1</b>								
1/01	Deposit	Mid to dark greyish brown silty clay, with large staves of up to 0.1m diameter throughout.	0.38m	1.8m	24.3m	/	Trackway Made ground / hardcore	modern
1/02	Deposit	Mid yellowish brown with patches of reddish brown Cornbrash and clay; compact.	0.09m	1.8m	24.3m	/	Natural / Cornbrash and clay	
1/03	Cut	Linear, aligned north-south, east of the area where medieval settlement found previously for excavation of house foundation.	0.2m	>1.9m	0.9m	/	Cut of Ditch	Early medieval
1/04	Deposit	Mid yellowish brown silty clay, compact.	0.12m	>1.9m	0.1m	/	Lower fill of ditch [1/03]	Early medieval
1/05	Deposit	Mid to dark greyish brown silty clay, compact.	0.08m	>1.9m	0.9	/	Upper fill of ditch [1/03]	Early medieval

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**OASIS ID: johnmoor1-359174**

### Project details

Project name	The Woodyard, Bainton, Bicester, Oxfordshire
Short description of the project	John Moore Heritage Services carried out an evaluation at The Woodyard, Bainton, Bicester, Oxfordshire (NGR SP 5773 2708). The site was located approximately 40m to the north of previously investigated medieval houses dated to the 10th to 12th centuries. In this single evaluation trench, only one ditch was found running on a N-S alignment and yielded 30 sherds of early medieval pottery of the same date.
Project dates	Start: 03-07-2019 End: 03-07-2019
Previous/future work	Not known / No
Any associated project reference codes	SLTW 19 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	3921 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	OXCMS2019.65 - Museum accession ID
Any associated project reference codes	17/01856/F - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 1 - Industrial
Monument type	DITCH Early Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Early Medieval
Methods & techniques	"Targeted Trenches"
Development type	Rural commercial
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	OXFORDSHIRE CHERWELL BICESTER The Woodyard, Bainton, Bicester, Oxfordshire
Postcode	OX27 8RL

Study area 210 Square metres  
 Site coordinates SP 5773 2708 51.938793348631 -1.160131299371 51 56 19 N 001 09 36 W Point  
 Height OD / Depth Min: 106m Max: 107m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation John Moore Heritage Services  
 Project brief originator Cherwell District Council  
 Project design originator John Moore  
 Project director/manager John Moore  
 Project supervisor Stephanie Duensing  
 Type of sponsor/funding body client

### Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Oxfordshire County Museum Service  
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 Physical Contents "Ceramics"  
 Digital Archive recipient Oxfordshire County Museum Service  
 Digital Archive ID OXCMS:2019.65  
 Digital Contents "Ceramics","Stratigraphic","other"  
 Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography","Images vector","Spreadsheets","Text"  
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