

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

**AT**

**MANOR FARM, CHURCH STREET,**

**HAMPSTEAD NORREYS, THATCHAM**

**SP 5300 7624**

*On behalf of*

*The Betts Family Partnership*

**June 2012**

<b>REPORT FOR</b>	The Betts Family Partnership Manor Farm Church Street Hampstead Norreys Thatcham West Berkshire RG18 0TD
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<b>FIELDWORK</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> June 2009
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<b>Site Code</b>	HNMF 09
<b>JMHS Project No:</b>	1967
<b>Archive Location</b>	The archive is currently held by JMHS and will be deposited with West Berkshire Museum under accession number: 2009.33.

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## **Summary**

*John Moore Heritage Services undertook the first phase of an archaeological recording action comprising an evaluation trench at Manor Farm, Church Street, Hampstead Norreys Trench 1 was excavated on the 10<sup>th</sup> June 2009 within the footprint of the extension to the current Stable Block.. No archaeological features were discovered in Trench 1.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

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

Manor Farm lies on the south side of Church Street, east of Manor House and St Mary's church (NGR SU 5300 7624) at an approximate height of 85m Above Ordnance Datum. The site is currently used as hard standing for vehicles and farm machinery. Geologically, the site is situated close to a boundary between Seaford Chalk Formation and Valley Bottom Head. A sand containing pieces of angular and sub angular flint and patches of clay were observed during the investigation.

### **1.2 Planning Background**

West Berkshire Council has granted planning permission for conversion of existing buildings to B1 Office Space, 6 No Self Catering Units and 1 No Dwelling; erection of new buildings of single and 2 storey to accommodate B1 Office Space and 2 No Self Catering Units; demolition and rebuild of Rex's Shed; and demolition of extension to stables. Condition 8 attached to the permission required the implementation of a programme of archaeological work due to the site's potential to contain archaeological remains. This work was to take the form of an Archaeological Recording Action designed to establish the presence/absence and condition of any archaeological deposits thought to present within the site in order to help formulate any future mitigation strategies, if necessary. This is in line with PPG 16 and Local Plan Policies.

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

The development site lies within the historic core of the village of Hampstead Norreys. Evidence from around the village, including pottery from a site opposite the Manor Farm complex, suggests Romano British activity in the area. This indicates the possibility of settlement continuity within the village for up to 2000 years. The settlement has a long recorded history, being first mentioned in the Domesday Book of AD1086, when it was known as *Hanstede*, suggesting late Saxon origins. There are frequent mentions to the village in the medieval records suggesting that the settlement thrived in this period. The parish church contains elements that have been dated to the late Saxon or early post Norman Conquest period, again indicating the antiquity of the settlement.

The Manor Farm complex itself lying adjacent to the medieval parish church would have been an important component of the medieval settlement, forming the social, religious and administrative heart of the village. The survival of the 16<sup>th</sup> century

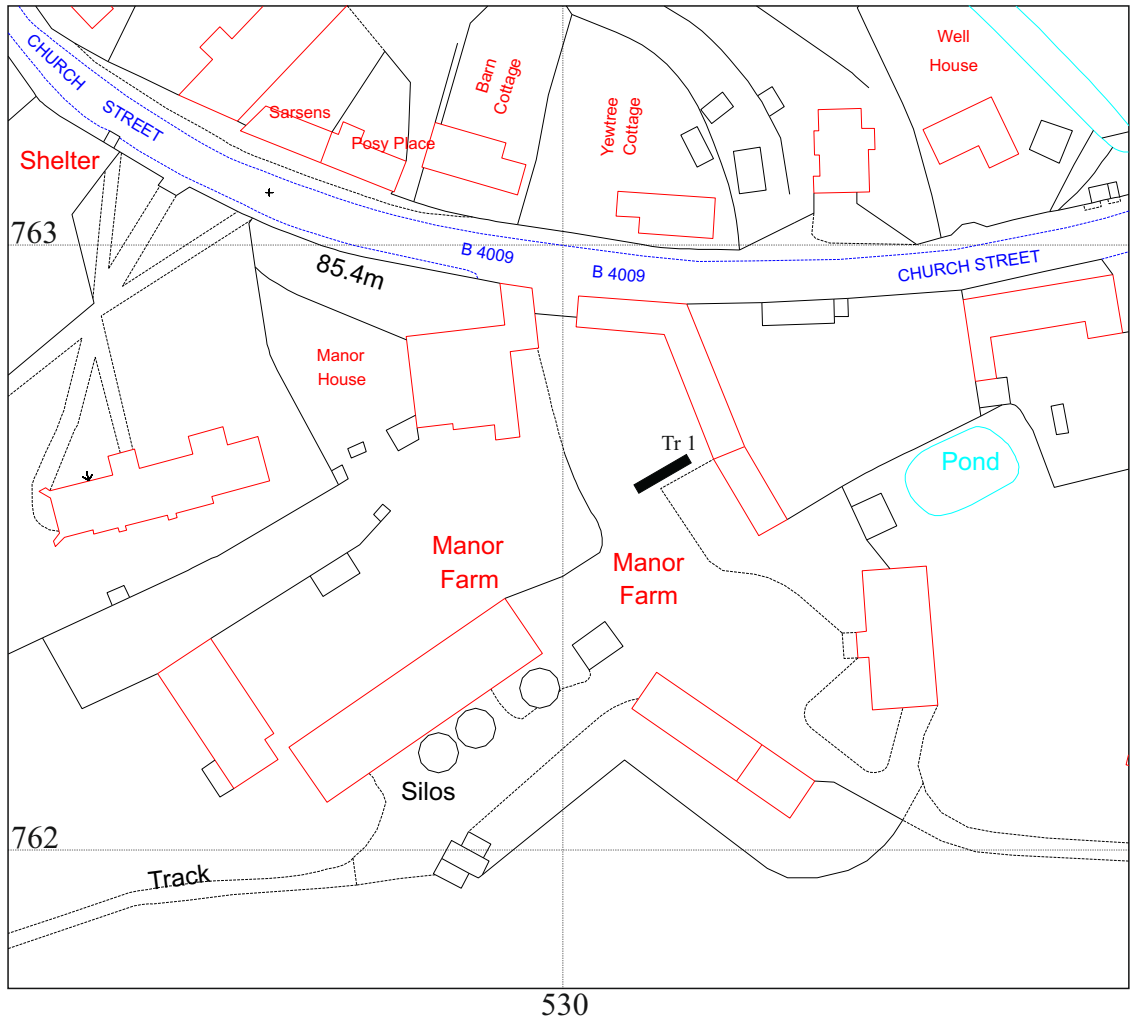


Figure 1. Site location

components in the Manor House and the Great Barn represent a good indication of the historic and archaeological potential of the site.

## **2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

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

- To identify, investigate and record any archaeological remains revealed within the site to an appropriate level.

In particular:

- Is there any Romano British activity on this side of Church Street?
- Is there any evidence of Saxon activity and what form did it take? Is there the possibility of continuity between the Romano British activity and Saxon occupation?
- What evidence of medieval activity remains on the site? How did the site develop over the medieval period?
- Is there evidence for other post-medieval activity or buildings on the site to supplement the existing building evidence

## **3 STRATEGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

In response to West Berkshire Council's request, a scheme of investigation was designed by JMHS and agreed by the Council and the applicants. The work was carried out by JMHS and was to involve the excavation of three trial trenches across two areas and archaeological supervision and recording of the construction of new roads, parking areas and services (Fig. 1).

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in the *Written Scheme of Investigation*. The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1999) and the procedures laid down in MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

### **3.2 Methodology**

Following historic building recording and demolition of Rex's Shed and clearance of the area of proposed new build adjacent to the stables, evaluation trenches would be excavated in order to determine the depth of overburden above potential archaeological horizons in relation to the impact of the new build and to assess the potential presence/absence of archaeological remains. The length of the new building for the replacement of Rex's Shed is *c.* 38m. A trench at each end, parallel to the

length of building, and both 10m x 1.6m would be excavated down to the uppermost archaeological horizon or onto undisturbed 'natural', whichever is higher. For the new build adjacent to the stables a trench 10m x 1.6m would be excavated orientated ENE/WSW. Should no archaeological remains be encountered then discussions will be held with the Archaeological Officer for West Berkshire Council, as to the extent of further archaeological works. Should archaeological remains be encountered then the trenches will be extended to encompass the full extent of the new buildings.

The trenching and, if required, the extended areas would be excavated by an appropriate sized excavator equipped with a toothless bucket, down to the uppermost archaeological horizon or to natural geological deposits, whichever is the higher.

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and sections drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was produced.

Mr Duncan Coe, Archaeological Officer for West Berkshire Council monitored the work.

## **4 RESULTS**

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers in ( ) indicate fills or deposits of material whilst numbers referring to features themselves are shown without brackets.

### **4.1 Excavation Results (Figure 2)**

The trenches were issued with a set of context numbers which, as per normal JMHS recording procedures, had the trench number preceding each context number issued. The made ground observed as deposit (01) in Trench 1 for example was recorded as (1/01).

#### **Trench 1 (Figure 2)**

This trench was orientated ENW-WSW. The earliest stratigraphic horizon encountered within this trench was a geological 'natural' flinty sand with occasional clay patches (1/05) which varied in colour from a mid brown orange at the ENE end to a mid greyish green towards the WSW. A test pit was dug at the eastern end of the trench to confirm this was a geological deposit. Above this were a series of made ground horizons. Overlying (1/05) across the trench was a light orange/brown silty clay (1/08) 0.08m thick. Towards the ENE end of the trench (1/08) was overlain by 0.30m of light yellow/brown sandy silt (1/07) containing frequent brick inclusions. Above this was a light yellow/brown sand (1/06) containing very frequent stone inclusions measuring 0.10m in thickness. Above this and continuing throughout the trench was a dark blackish brown silty clay (1/04) typically 0.30m in thickness containing occasional fragments of brick and tile and three very late post-medieval bottles including a 'Camp Coffee' bottle dating to around the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These were not retained. This was in turn covered by redeposited chalk

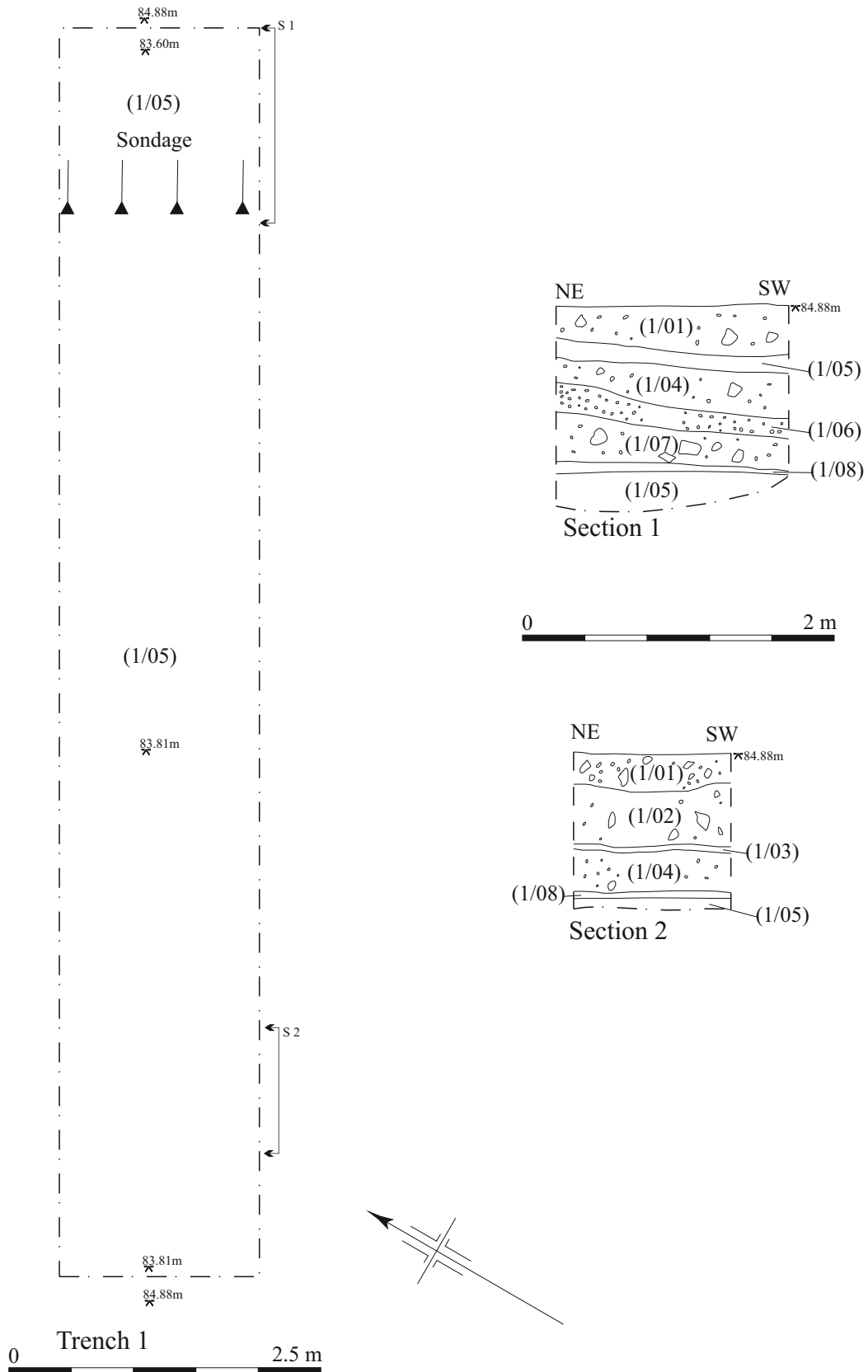


Figure 2. Trench 1 Plan and Section



(1/03) which also continued throughout the trench with a maximum thickness of 0.10m. At the WSW end this was overlain by a dark brown/black silty clay (1/02) containing occasional small angular stone inclusions with a maximum thickness of 0.40m. Sealing this deposit and completing the stratigraphic sequence was a light yellowish/brown gravelly sand metalling layer (1/01) typically 0.30m thick.

No archaeological features were recorded within this trench.

#### **4.2 Reliability of Techniques and Results**

The reliability of results is considered to be good. The excavation of the Trench 1 took place during conditions of sunshine and cloud with occasional showers

### **5 FINDS**

Within the uppermost deposit in Trench 1 were brick and tile and three very late post-medieval bottles including a 'Camp Coffee' bottle. These were not retained.

### **6 DISCUSSION**

Trench1 revealed a series of made ground horizons overlying natural sand with occasional clayey pockets and flint inclusions but no archaeology.

### **7 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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