



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

**THE OLD BAKEHOUSE, SOUTH GREEN,
KIRTLINGTON, OXFORDSHIRE**

SU 4996 1971

On behalf of

Mr. G. J. Keetley

JULY 2007

REPORT FOR

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CONTENTS

	Page
<i>SUMMARY</i>	1
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Site Location	
1.2 Planning Background	
1.3 Archaeological Background	
2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION	1
3 STRATEGY	3
3.1 Research Design	
3.2 Methodology	
4 RESULTS	3
5 FINDS	5
6 DISCUSSION	5
7 ARCHIVE	6
8 BIBLIOGRAPHY	6
Figure 1 Site location	3
Figure 2 Plan of features	4

Summary

A watching brief was conducted by John Moore Heritage Services during the ground work for new buildings in the area previously occupied by the garden of the Old Bakehouse, Kirtlington. The investigation revealed an undated ditch just over a metre wide, aligned northeast to southwest. Also revealed were two post-medieval pits, one possibly containing the demolition material of an earlier structure.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site is located at the junction of Heyford Road and Dashwood Mews, Kirtlington (NGR SP 4996 1971). The underlying geology is Fourth (Hanborough) River Gravel Terrace Deposits and the site lies at approximately 100m OD. The existing use was as a house and garden.

1.2 Planning Background

Cherwell District Council granted planning permission for the erection of two new cottages with driveway and parking. A condition was attached to the planning permission requiring the implementation of a watching brief during groundworks. This was in line with PPG 16 and Cherwell District Local Plan policies.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The site lies within the historic core of Kirtlington on the north-west side of South Green. The proposed development site is shown as empty closes on both the 1793/4 Davis Map and the 1st edition OS. Any medieval or earlier remains could therefore have a good quality of survival. Medieval pits and a wall were recorded during the digging of a soakaway on the east side of South Green (HBSMR 16824, SP 5009 1964) and Scheduled Monument Oxon 154 (HSBMR 5358, SP 501 198), an important moated site and fishponds, is situated behind the Primary School on the east side of Heyford Road.

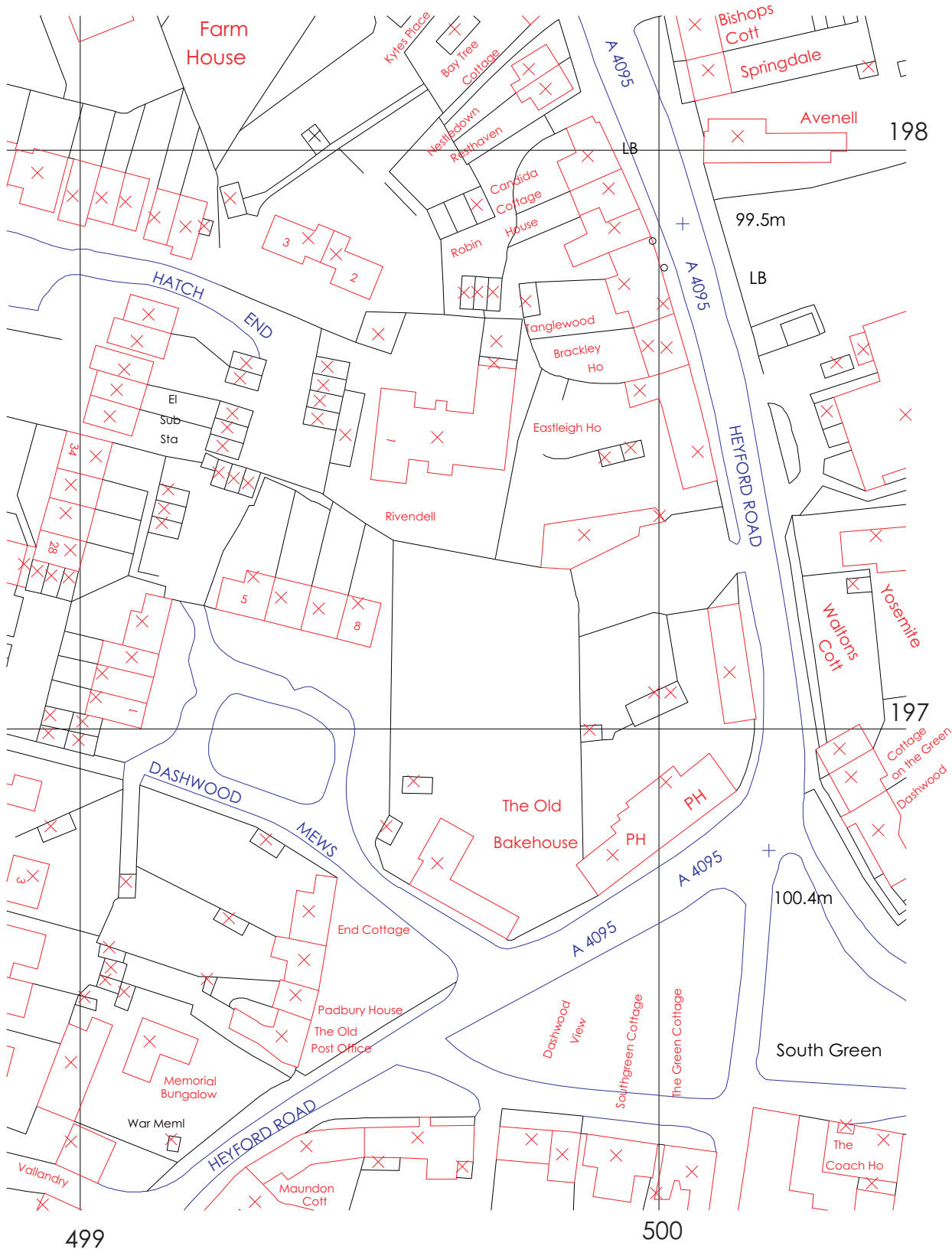
2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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 remains associated with the medieval settlement.



3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services. 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 and possible.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994).

3.2 Methodology

The excavation of the foundation trenches was monitored. This work was conducted using a mini-excavator employing both a toothless 1.5m ditching bucket for topsoil stripping and a toothed 0.7m bucket to dig the footings and services.

4 RESULTS (*Figure 2*)

All features were assigned individual context numbers. This number covered both the feature cut and the fill for pits, unless the feature was sample excavated by hand. Context numbers in [] indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material. A general description of the feature fills is given.

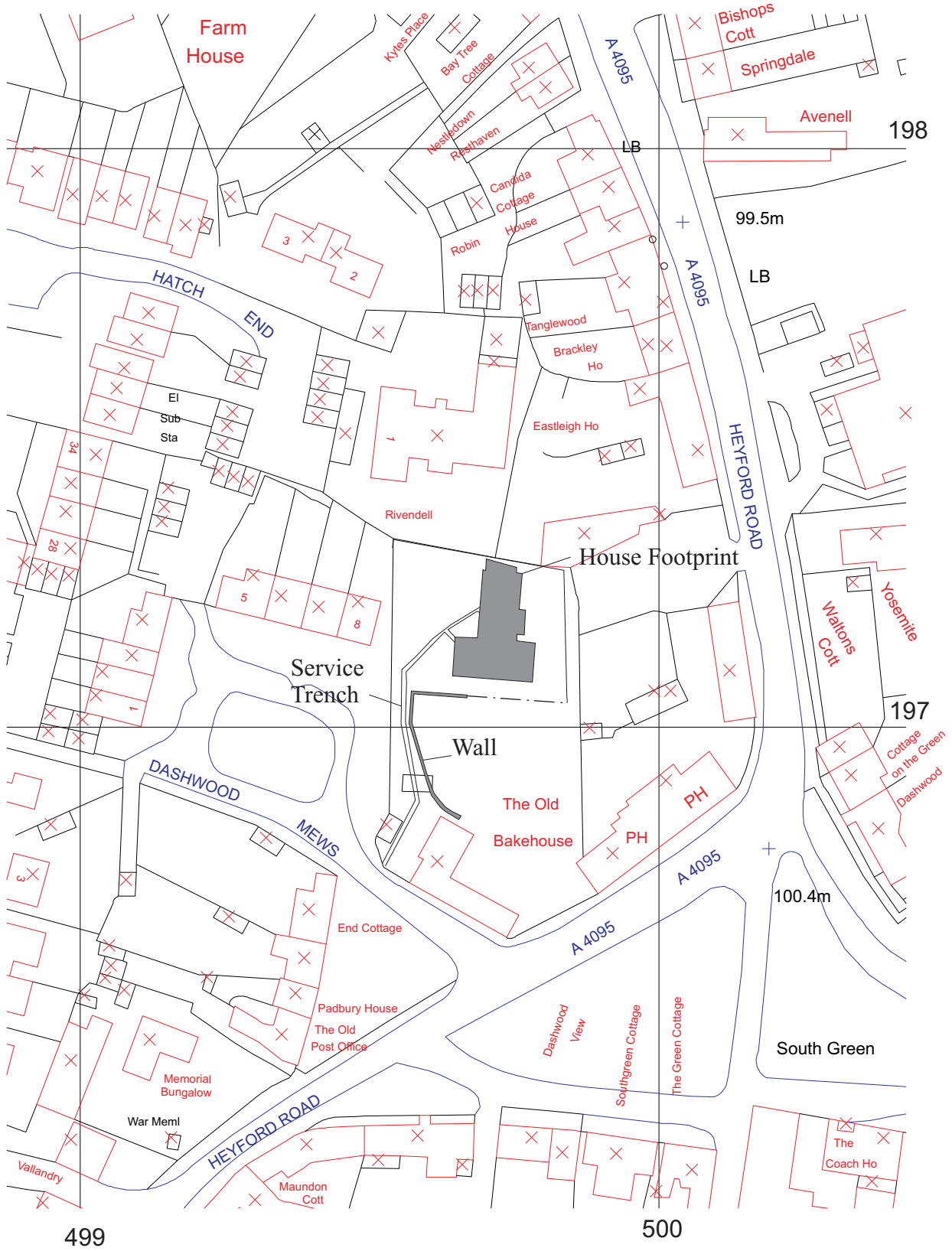
The upper layer consisted of dark brown sandy loam topsoil (1). This was between mainly 0.1m to 0.15m thick but was up to 0.5m in the south of the site.

In the area of the modern driveway this was overlain by a layer of gravel that was 0.03m thick. Part of the drive area was constructed with a concrete surface (6) edged in red brick 0.1m thick. This had a make up layer of yellow sand, gravel, some larger stone fragments. This concrete slab was constructed within a larger cut into the subsoil (2) and had been back-filled around the edge with sandy loam and ash.

Across the majority of the site the topsoil was overlying a light brown sandy loam (2) flecked with charcoal. This layer was 0.35m thick.

The natural light orange-brown sandy clay (3) with 25-30% flint pebbles and gravel lay directly under (2). It showed some root penetration and disturbance by animal burrows.

The main foundation trenches were excavated to an average depth of 1.2m, although the more southerly ones were at least 1.6m. The foundations of the new garden wall were on average about 0.6m deep. The service trenches to the south and west of the proposed new houses were only 0.5m deep, although in the south of the site they extended to 0.8m.



When the foundations for the new garden wall were excavated a modern post hole [4] measuring 0.45m by 0.35m was noted. Also revealed by these foundations was a ditch [5] cut into the natural (3) and covered by the sub-soil (2). This ditch was 1.1m wide and contained a compact mid brown sandy clay with 30% flint pebbles and was flecked with charcoal. It appeared to be aligned roughly north-east to south-west. Its full extent is not known, however it was also seen in the cutting for the services 1.5m to the west.

Also revealed during the excavation of the trench for the services were two pits. The first pit [7] was 0.8m wide and 0.3m deep. It was only seen in section and had a shallow U-shaped profile. It was filled with a pale orange-brown sandy clay with 25% flint pebbles and lenses of coal dust and ash. These were thicker near to the base.

The second pit [8] appeared to be roughly circular in plan and was 2.2m wide and at least 0.8m deep with side approximately at 60°. Large quantities of stone rubble appeared to have been deposited against the sides of the pit with the centre being filled with coal dust and small coal fragments.

Both pits were cut into the natural (3) and both were covered by sub-soil (2).

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery

Sherds of 19th – 20th century Mass-produced White Earthenwares (WHEW) were noted from the topsoil (1). A few small sherds were also noted from the fill of pit [7]. Sherds of Red Earthenwares (OXDR) dated from 1500 onwards were also noted from this context (1). These sherds were not retained. They were recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1994).

6 DISCUSSION

No features were recorded in the main area of the site. It is possible that early features could have been disturbed or masked by the later animal and root activity, but more likely is that the area was always open ground.

The two pits are of a post-medieval date. The second [8] may be the result of demolition of a previous out building used as a coal store. The area of hard standing (6) is shown in recent maps as a building (see figure 1)

The ditch [5] although undated may well pre-date the pits and possibly marks a boundary between land that was built upon from that left open. Its alignment would also appear to match that of the A4095 Heyford Road, just to the south. This road would appear to follow the same route as the Medieval track-way.

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 records

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the County Museums' Store.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1994 *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief*. Revised Sept 1999

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