



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

**AT**

**LAND TO THE REAR OF THE GEORGE INN,**

**5 SANDFORD ROAD, LITTLEMORE**

**NGR SP 53669 02675**

**DECEMBER 2020**

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## **Summary**

*John Moore Heritage Services carried out an evaluation at the land to the rear of The George Inn, 5 Sandford Road, Littlemore, Oxfordshire (NGR SP 53669 02675). The evaluation comprised two trenches, both of which revealed substantial disturbance from bioturbation. All other observed deposits and features were modern.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

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

The development site is located on land to the rear of The George Inn, 5 Sandford Road, Littlemore, Oxfordshire (NGR SP 53669 02675). The site lies at approximately 67m OD. The underlying geology is the Beckley Sand Member, a sedimentary sandstone bedrock formed approximately 156 to 161 million years ago in the Jurassic Period ([mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html](http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html)). No superficial deposits are recorded. The area is currently the car park for The George Inn pub, which is covered in tarmac and rough grass.

### **1.2 Planning Background**

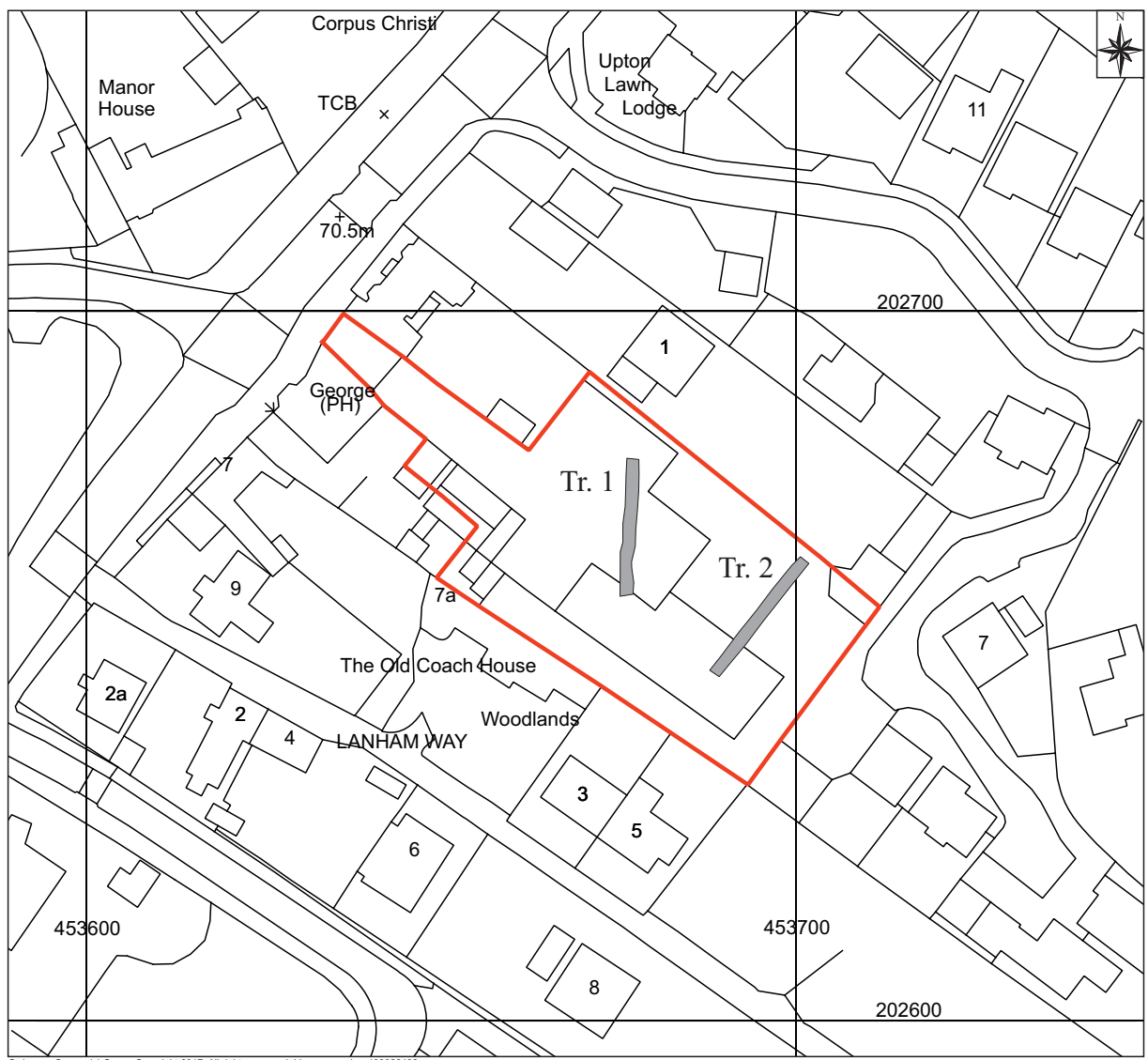
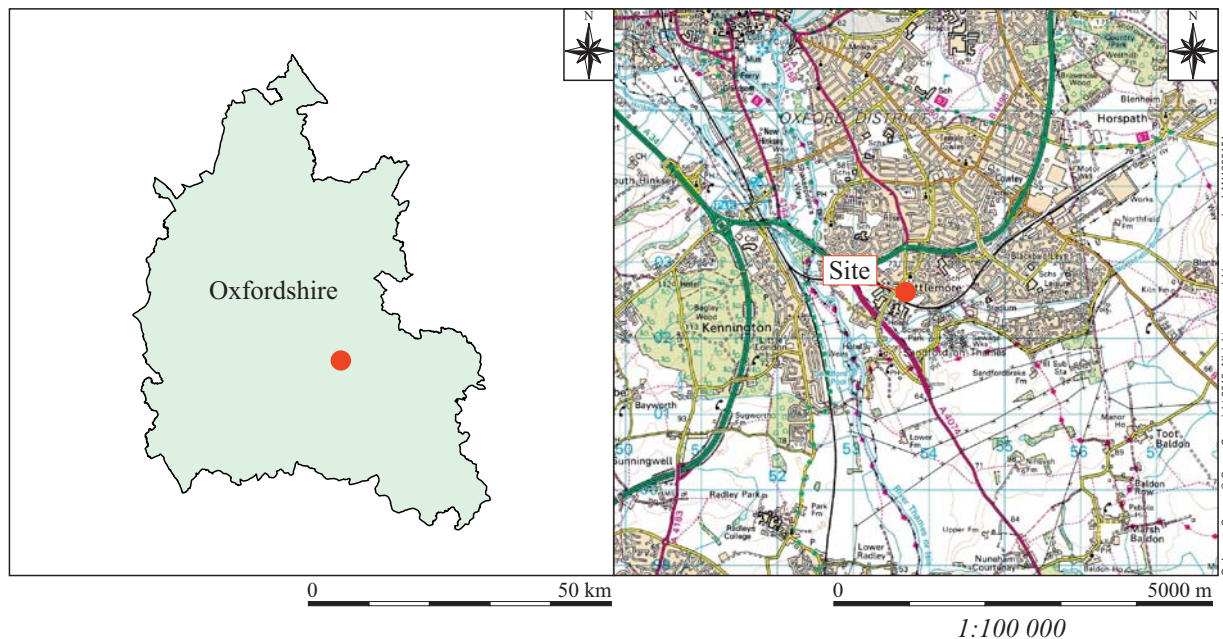
A planning application has been made to Oxford City Council for *the erection of 2 x 1 bed, 3 x 2 bed and 3 x 3 bed dwellings with associated off-street parking, private amenity, secure bicycle parking and recycling and refuse storage provisions (20/00934/FUL)*. Due to the potential for Roman, Late Saxon and medieval remains in this location, an archaeological evaluation was required to determine the presence/absence of archaeological remains. The City Council Archaeologist prepared a Brief for an Archaeological Field Evaluation.

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment of the site has been carried out (Oxford Archaeology 2020). In summary, this site is of interest because it is located close to recorded Roman remains and within the historic core of the Late Saxon and medieval settlement of Littlemore.

The application site lies within an extensive and dispersed landscape of Roman manufacturing activity related to the local Roman pottery industry which was of regional significance and is nationally important in the field of Roman studies. In 1995, an archaeological evaluation for a housing development at David Nichols Close by Thames Valley Archaeological Services identified two small pits and a ditch along with a small amount of residual 12th-15th century pottery and a piece of possible Roman kiln daub (Thames Valley Archaeological Services 1995). These features were located 15m east of the application site.

The township or hamlet of Littlemore is not mentioned at Domesday and there was no ancient parish. The township was divided at an early date between the parishes of Iffley and St. Mary the Virgin, Oxford; the smaller part belonging to Iffley and the larger to St. Mary's. The connexion with St. Mary's is thought to date from pre-Norman times and that with Iffley from the 12th century (VCH v, 206-214). Within



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Key  Site boundary  Evaluation trenches

0 50 m  
1:1000

Figure 1: Site location

the historic core a quantity of St Neots type ware has been recovered from the Ashurst Clinic site, Sandford Road, indicating 10th-11th century activity in this area (Mellor 1996). The settlement is likely remained small throughout the medieval period with the 1279 Hundred Rolls recording just 26 dwellings in the hamlet, its origins and evolution are currently poorly understood.

Some of the above has been taken from the City Council Archaeologist's Brief.

## **2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

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

- To undertake an archaeological evaluation of the site.
- 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 and palaeoenvironmental 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 establish the character and extent of any Roman or post-medieval activity.
- To inform the need for, and scope of, further phases of work to mitigate the impact of the development on any archaeological and palaeoenvironmental remains.

The following regional and city resource assessments and research agendas has been taken into account:

Regional

<http://oxfordarchaeology.com/aboutus/our-archive/news-archive/301-solent-thames-researchframework-for-the-historic-environment>

City

<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decP/OxfordArchaeologicalPlan.htm>

## **3 STRATEGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with the City Council Archaeologist, the archaeological advisor to Oxford City Council.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2020).

## 3.2 Methodology

Two evaluation trenches each 20m long by 1.65m wide were excavated across the proposed site of the development area within The George Inn pub car park. Where archaeological horizons were encountered, they were cleaned by hand and excavated 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 for finds relating to the Roman and post-medieval periods.

## 4 RESULTS (Figure 2)

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. Descriptions of the deposits and fills are given in the context inventory (Appendix 1).

Both of the trenches revealed evidence of substantial disturbance from bioturbation, as well as other deposits and features which were modern. No earlier archaeological features or deposits were encountered in either trench.

### 4.1 Trench 1

The lowest deposit encountered in Trench 1 (Figure 2, Plates 1 and 2) was the natural sand (1/04); this was a loose to friable mid brownish yellow sand, with occasional to frequent natural sandstone inclusions, which had a maximum size of 0.10m. This deposit had a thickness of 0.22m.

Stratified above this was a subsoil deposit (1/03), which was a loose light greyish brown clayey sand, with a thickness of approximately 0.20m across the trench. This deposit contained occasional natural sandstone inclusions, which had a maximum size of 0.06m.

Overlying the subsoil was a garden soil deposit (1/02); this was a friable mid greyish brown clayey silt, with occasional to rare irregular stones, approximately 0.03m in size. This deposit had a thickness of 0.30m.

Above this, were the tarmac and associated levelling deposits for the carpark (1/01), which comprised three layers: a black tarmac layer; below this, a yellow crush layer; and a hardcore layer below this. In total, these three layers had a thickness of approximately 0.28m across the trench.

All other observed deposits and features in this trench were modern, including tree root activity, resulting from the close proximity to the extant tree within the carpark, and several modern pits, evinced by dark homogenous fills containing abundant modern pottery, brick, tile, and rubbish.

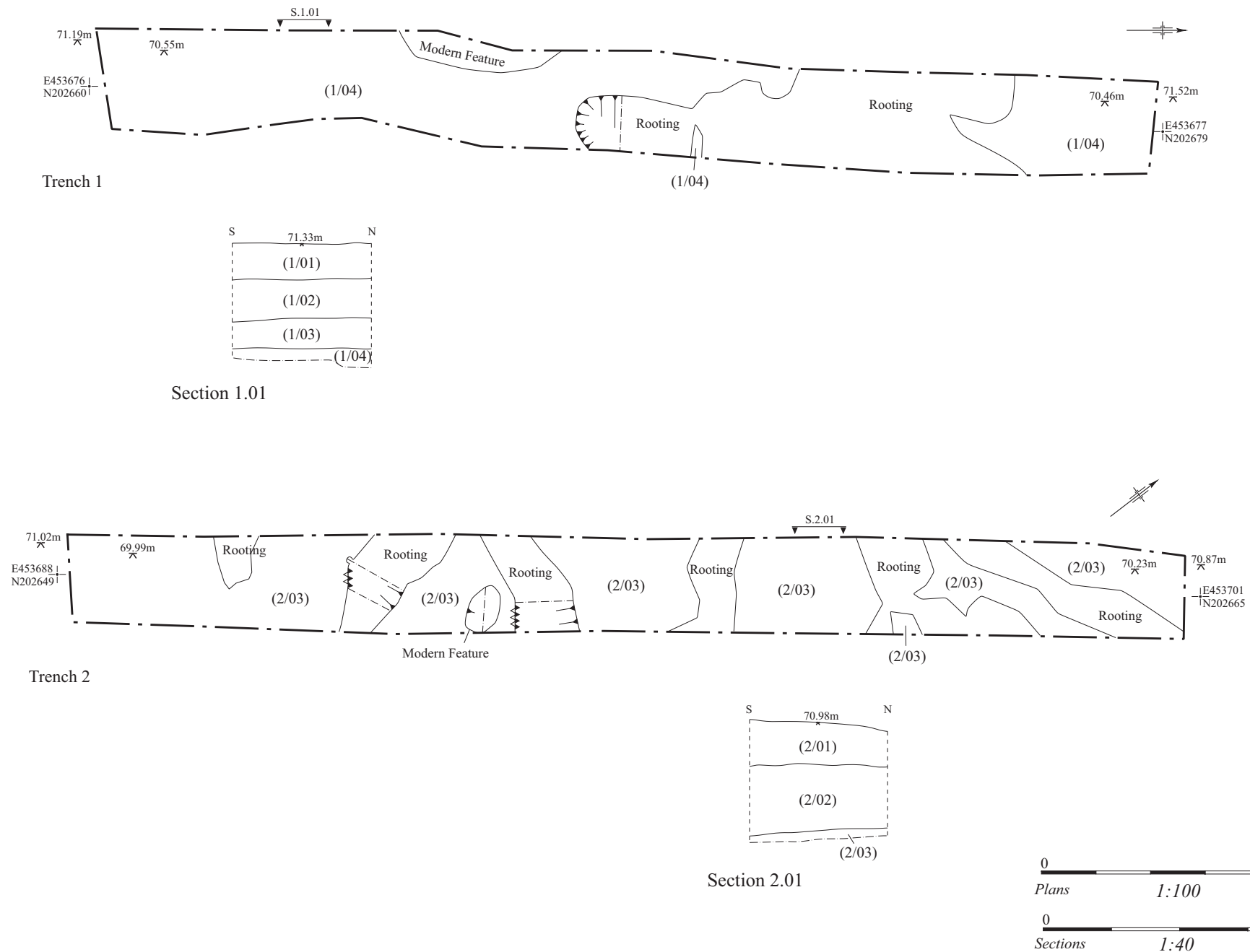


Figure 2: Trenches 1 and 2, and their Representative Sections





Plate 1: Trench 1



Plate 2: Trench 1, Section 1.01

## 4.2 Trench 2

The lowest deposit encountered in Trench 2 (Figure 2; Plates 3 and 4) was the natural sand (2/03); this was a loose to friable mid brownish yellow sand, with occasional to frequent natural sandstone inclusions, which had a maximum size of 0.06m. This deposit had a thickness greater than 0.18m.

Stratified above this was a subsoil deposit (2/02), which was a friable mid to dark reddish brown clayey sand, with occasional tree and plant roots, and rare natural stone inclusions, less than 0.04m in size. This deposit had a thickness of 0.30m.

Overlying the subsoil was a garden soil deposit (2/01); this was a friable dark blackish brown clayey sandy loam, with frequent tree and plant rooting. At the south west end of this trench, this garden soil deposit also had occasional to frequent sub-angular gravel, especially within the upper 0.15m of the deposit, ranging between 0.02m-0.08m in diameter, which forms part of the hard standing for the pub car park.

All other observed deposits and features in this trench were modern, including tree and plant root activity, as well as a modern pit evinced by a very dark black homogenous fill containing modern pottery.



Plate 3: Trench 2





Plate 4: Trench 2, Section 2.01

### 4.3 Reliability of Results

The monitored work during the evaluation was undertaken in good conditions, with good cooperation from site staff, ensuring that the archaeological investigation could be undertaken without impediment.

## 5 DISCUSSION

Across both of the trenches, a series of natural and modern deposits were observed, demonstrating both the geological processes which formed the landscape, and modern development within the area of the site.

Across the entirety of Trench 1, and the south west end of Trench 2, there is evidence for modern deposits in the form of tarmac and associated levelling layers, and the presence of hardcore within the topsoil in Trench 2, both of which relate to the current use of the site as a car park for the George Inn pub.

Both of the trenches contained substantial disturbance from bioturbation, evidenced by frequent large roots within both trenches, and irregular features within the natural deposits, indicative of tree-throws and rooting/bioturbation disturbance. Several modern features were also identified, evidenced by the inclusion of modern material and dark homogenous fills. The evaluation did not identify any evidence of archaeological activity at the site.

## 6 ARCHIVE

A Digital Archive is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services (ID 4382) and will be made available upon request (to [admin@jmheritageservices.co.uk](mailto:admin@jmheritageservices.co.uk)). Digitised

copies of all the primary records will be made publicly available as an appendix to the Final Report submitted to OASIS (johnmoor1-409462).

## **7 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists. 2020. *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation*.

<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>  
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Oxford Archaeology, 2020. Land to the Rear of the George Inn, 5 Sandford Road, Littlemore, Oxford. Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment. Unpublished client report.

Thames Valley Archaeological Services, 1995. Sandford Road, Littlemore, Oxford. An Archaeological Evaluation.

**APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INVENTORY**

Context	Type	Description	Depth	Width	Length	Findings	Interpretation	Date
<b>Trench 1</b>								
1/01	Deposit	Tarmac and associated levelling deposits for the car park, which comprises three layers: 1) tarmac; 2) yellow crush; and 3) hard core	0.28m	1.70m	19.90m	n/a	Tarmac and associated levelling deposits for carpark	Modern
1/02	Deposit	Friable, mid greyish brown clayey silt, with occasional to rare irregular stones $\leq 0.03\text{m}$ .	0.30m	1.70m	19.90m	n/a	Garden soil	n/a
1/03	Deposit	Loose, light greyish brown clayey sand, with occasional natural sandstone inclusions, $\leq 0.06\text{m}$ .	0.20m	1.70m	19.90m	n/a	Subsoil	n/a
1/04	Deposit	Loose to friable, mid brownish yellow sand, with occasional to frequent natural sandstone inclusions, $\leq 0.10\text{m}$ .	$>0.22\text{m}$	1.70m	19.90m	n/a	Natural	n/a
<b>Trench 2</b>								
2/01	Deposit	Friable, dark blackish brown clayey sandy loam, with frequent rooting, and occasional to frequent gravel (especially within the upper 0.15m of the deposit), 0.02m-0.08m.	0.30m	1.70m	20.30m	n/a	Garden soil with gravel at top for hard standing at SW end	Modern
2/02	Deposit	Friable, mid- to dark reddish brown clayey sand, with occasional roots throughout, and rare natural stone inclusions, $\leq 0.04\text{m}$ .	0.30m	1.70m	20.30m	n/a	Subsoil	n/a
2/03	Deposit	Loose to friable, mid brownish yellow sand, with occasional natural sandstone inclusions, $\leq 0.06\text{m}$ .	$>0.18\text{m}$	1.70m	20.30m	n/a	Natural	n/a

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**OASIS ID: johnmoor1-409462**

### Project details

Project name	LAND TO THE REAR OF THE GEORGE INN, 5 SANDFORD ROAD, LITTLEMORE
Short description of the project	John Moore Heritage Services carried out an evaluation at the land to the rear of the George Inn, 5 Sandford Road, Littlemore, Oxfordshire (NGR SP53669 02675). The evaluation comprised two trenches, both of which revealed substantial disturbance from bioturbation. All other observed deposits and features were modern.
Project dates	Start: 30-11-2020 End: 30-11-2020
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	johnmoor1-409462 - OASIS form ID
Any associated project reference codes	4382 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	20/00934/FUL - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 15 - Other
Monument type	PIT Modern
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	""Sample Trenches""
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
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 OXFORD LITTLEMORE LAND TO THE REAR OF THE GEORGE INN, 5 SANDFORD ROAD, LITTLEMORE
Postcode	OX4 4PU
Study area	68 Square metres

Site coordinates SP 53669 02675 51.719770619342 -1.222990752913 51 43 11 N 001 13 22 W  
Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 66.99m Max: 70.56m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation John Moore Heritage Services

Project brief originator Oxford City Council

Project design originator JMHS

Project director/manager John Moore

Project supervisor Stephanie Duensing

Type of sponsor/funding body client

### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No

Digital Archive recipient John Moore Heritage Services

Digital Archive ID 4382

Digital Contents "Stratigraphic","Survey","other"

Digital Media available "GIS","Images raster / digital photography","Images vector","Survey","Text"

Digital Archive notes A copy of the digital archive is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services (ID 4382) Digitised copies of the primary records are available on OASIS

Paper Archive Exists? No

### Project bibliography

1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

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Entered on 2 December 2020

SITE NAME <i>The George Inn, 5 SANFORD RD, LITTLEMORE, OXFORD</i>				SITE CODE <i>LESR20</i>		Trench No. <i>1</i>	
DATE <i>30.11.20</i>		Recorder <i>SND/GG/SG</i>		Trench size <i>19.90M x 1.70M</i> <del>19.90M x 1.70M</del>		Co-ordinates at SW corner <i>E453676</i> <i>N: 202660</i>	
Type of machine <i>360° 1.5m</i> Bucket size/type <i>Bladed bucket</i>		Plan Nos. <i>GPS</i> Section Nos. <i>S.1.01</i>		Conditions <i>Overcast</i>			
End: <i>S</i> Level at Top: <i>71.19m</i> <i>π</i>		Level at Bottom: <i>70.55m</i> <i>π</i>		End: <i>N</i> Level at Top: <i>71.52m</i> <i>π</i>		Level at Bottom: <i>70.46m</i> <i>π</i>	
Context	Layer thickness	Extent	Over	Under	Detailed Soil/Feature Description	Interpretation	
<i>(01/01)</i>	<i>0-0m →</i> <i>0.23m</i> <i>(0.23m) Thickness</i>	<i>TR</i>	<i>(1/02)</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>Tarmac / levelling deposits for car park</i> <i>1 - Tarmac</i> <i>2 - yellow crush</i> <i>3 - hardcore</i>	<i>Tarmac &amp; associated levelling deposits for car park</i>	
<i>(01/02)</i>	<i>0.23m →</i> <i>0.53m</i> <i>(0.3m) Thickness</i>	<i>TR</i>	<i>(1/03)</i>	<i>(1/01)</i>	<i>mid greyish brown clayey silt, occasional to rare irregular stones upto 0.03m diam friable</i>	<i>Garden soil</i>	
<i>(01/03)</i>	<i>0.53 →</i> <i>0.73m</i> <i>(0.2m) Thickness</i>	<i>TR</i>	<i>(1/04)</i>	<i>(1/02)</i>	<i>Light greyish brown <sup>clayey</sup> sand, loose, occasional natural Sandstone up to 0.06m diam</i>	<i>Subsoil</i>	
<i>(01/04)</i>	<i>0.73m →</i> <i>0.95m<sup>+</sup></i> <i>(0.22m) Thickness</i>	<i>TR</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>(1/03)</i>	<i>mid <sup>brannish</sup> yellow sand, loose to friable, occasional to common natural sandstone up to 0.10m diam</i>	<i>Natural</i>	
<del>(01/05)</del>						<del>Subsoil</del>	
<del>(01/06)</del>						<del>Subsoil</del>	





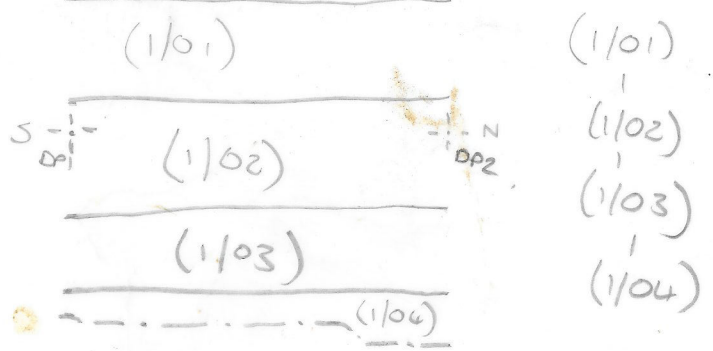








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REP SEC TRENCH 2

