



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

12 CRICK ROAD,

OXFORD OX2 6QL

NGR SP 51395 07573

JULY 2021

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SUMMARY

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological watching brief at 12 Crick Road, Oxford (NGR SP 51395 07573). A series of archaeological remains were recorded, the majority of which were undated. However pottery of middle Iron Age date comparable to that recorded during a previous evaluation on the site was recovered from a pit. As such it appears that 12 Crick Road is situated within an area of middle Iron Age occupation. The Iron Age and undated features were truncated by a series of later features associated with the construction and occupation of 12 Crick Road from the 19th century onwards.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development site is located on the south side of Crick Road, Oxford (NGR SP 51395 07573). The site lies on the 2nd Terrace (Summertown-Radley) gravel terrace deposits. The site is currently a residential dwelling and garden, which lies at approximately 60m aOD.

1.2 Planning Background

Oxford City Council granted planning permission for **Demolition of the existing conservatory and part of upper ground floor. Erection of a single storey rear extension and alterations to the roof. Demolition of part of front boundary wall and insertion of railing and gate to front boundary. Erection of bin and cycle store. Associated landscaping to front and rear gardens** (20/00664/FUL). A condition relating to archaeology was attached:

No development shall take place until a written scheme of investigation (WSI) has been [submitted to and] approved by the local planning authority in writing. For land that is included within the WSI, no development shall take place other than in accordance with the agreed WSI, which shall include the statement of significance and research objectives, and

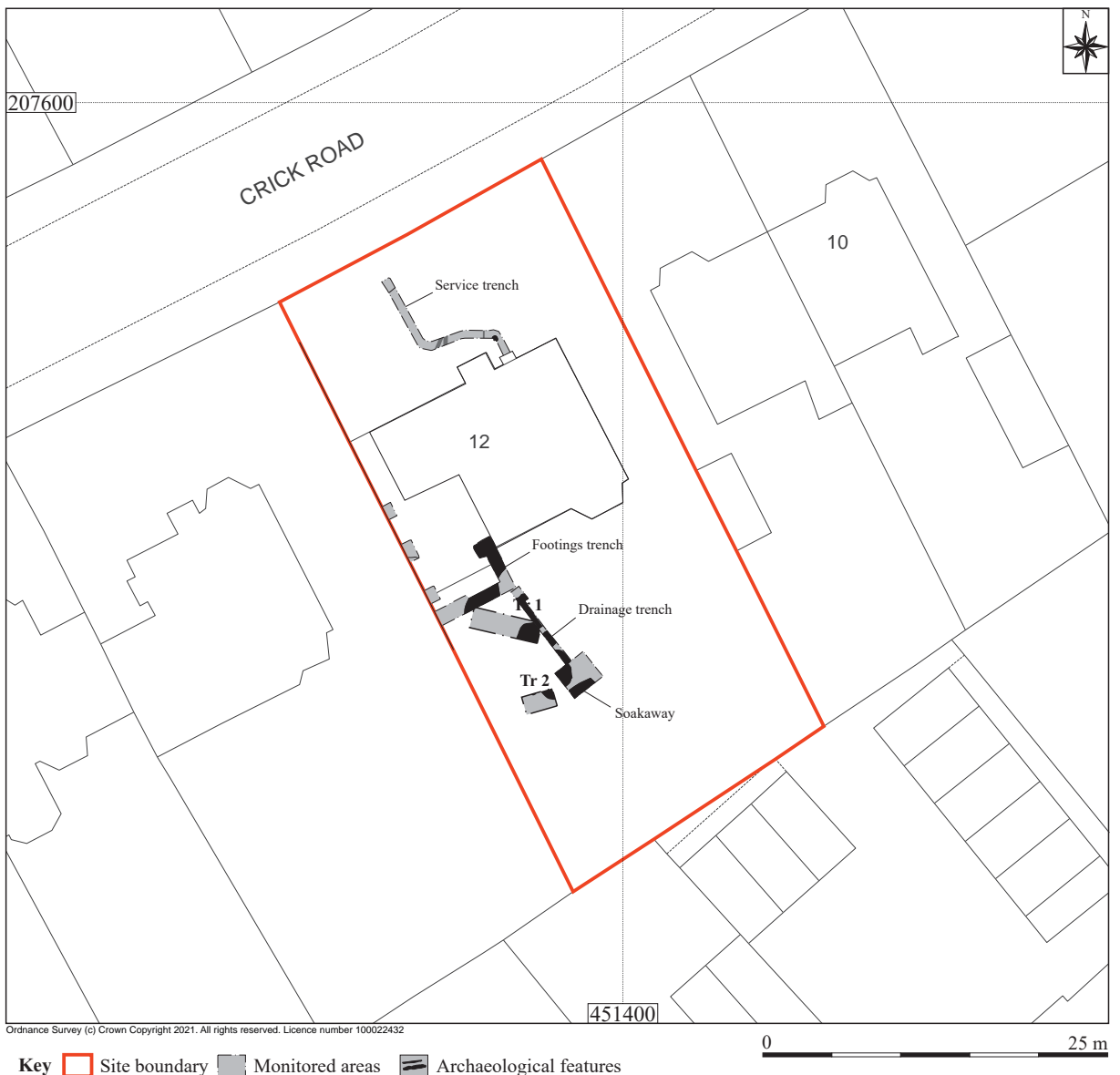
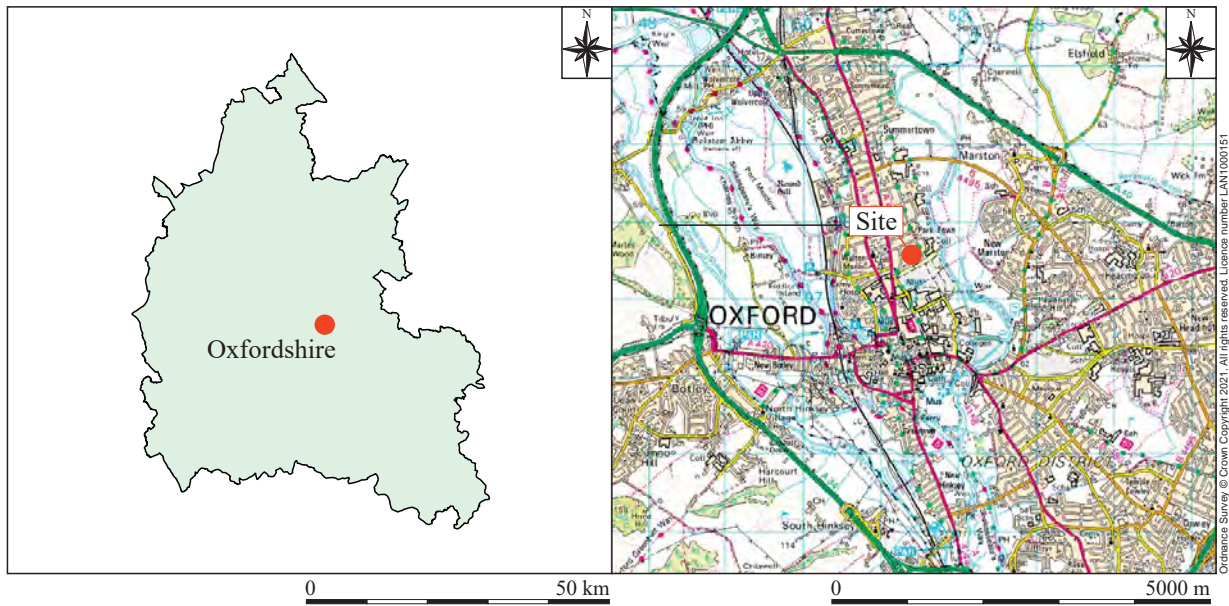
- The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording and the nomination of a competent person(s) or organisation to undertake the agreed works.

- The programme for post-investigation assessment and subsequent analysis, publication & dissemination and deposition of resulting material. This part of the condition shall not be discharged until these elements have been fulfilled in accordance with the programme set out in the WSI

Reason: Because the development may have a damaging effect on known or suspected elements of the historic environment of the people of Oxford and their visitors, including Iron Age and early Saxon remains (Local Plan Policy DH4).

1.3 Archaeological Background

Evidence from aerial photographs and archaeological excavations indicates the presence of an extensive prehistoric ritual and agricultural landscape across this part



Key Site boundary Monitored areas Archaeological features

Figure 1: Site location

of the Oxford gravel terrace, involving Middle Neolithic – Early Bronze Age ritual and funerary monuments, Iron Age /Roman agricultural field systems and subsequent Saxon rural settlement. An extensive cropmark complex recorded in the University Parks to the south incorporates a possible Neolithic/Bronze Age linear barrow cemetery and later Iron Age/Roman agricultural enclosures. A Neolithic/Bronze Age henge monument and three Bronze Age ring ditches belonging to this complex have been excavated at Queen Elizabeth House, St Giles and at the Radcliffe Infirmary site.

Crick Road lies in a poorly understood part of the gravel terrace located between the known find clusters of Bronze Age and Saxon material south of Park Town and an extensive landscape of monuments and field systems recorded in University Parks. An undated, but probable prehistoric, gully was recorded during at evaluation in 2007 at Lady Margaret Hall (Oxford Archaeology, 2007; UAD No 1708). An Iron Age pit has been found at 6 Crick Road and a burial of possible Anglo-Saxon date accompanied by a knife was encountered at the adjacent property of 10 Crick Road.

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by John Moore Heritage Services (2017). This found a middle Iron Age pit and a pit of Post-medieval date (18th – early 19th century).

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

- Identify and record any significant archaeological remains revealed by the ground works, paying particular regard to the potential for Iron Age settlement remains.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Oxford City Council's 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

Several phases of work were monitored, comprising:

- Excavation of footings trenches
- Excavation of service and drainage trenches
- Excavation of soakaways

All excavation was undertaken under archaeological supervision and 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, especially for finds relating to the Iron Age period.

4 RESULTS (Figures 2-4)

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.

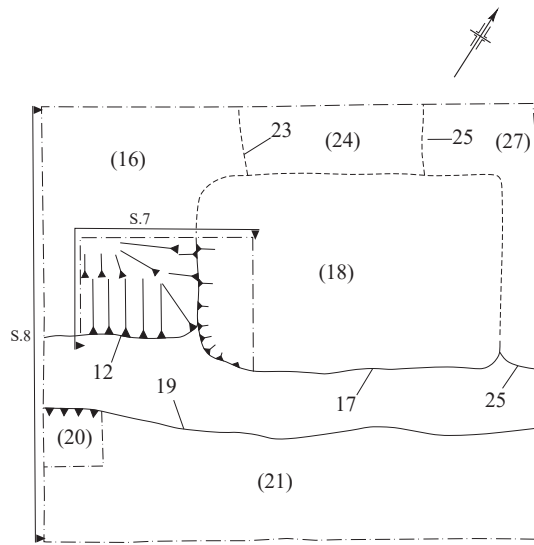
The lowest deposit encountered across the site was the natural geology. This was recorded variously as (3) and (11) and varied from a compact mid brownish yellow sandy gravel to a loose light greyish yellow sand with streaks of silty clay.

Across the site the natural geology was truncated by a series of archaeological features.

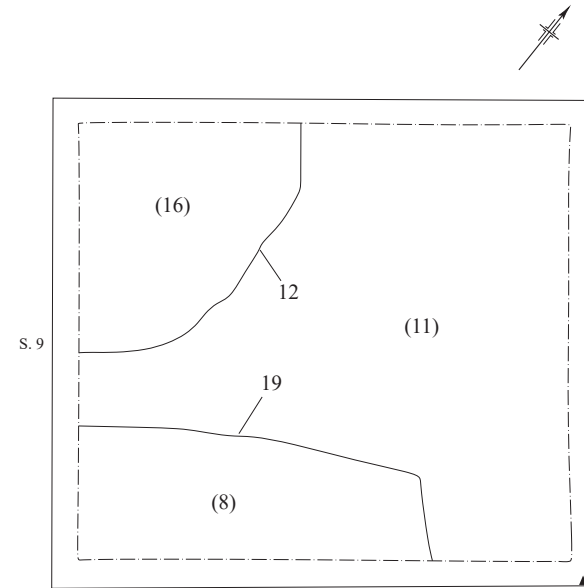


Plate 1: Footings trench. Looking west

Soakaway

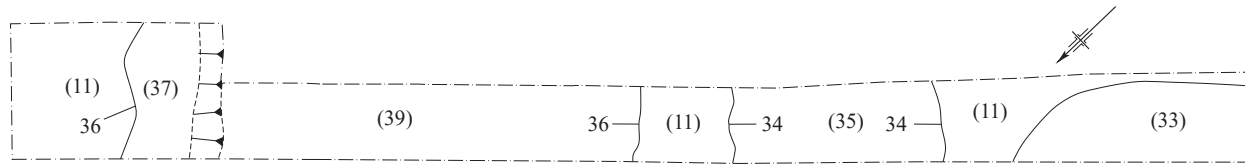


Plan 2



Plan 3

Drainage trench



Plan 4

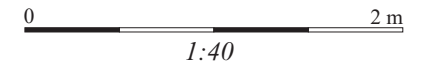


Figure 2: Plans 2 - 4

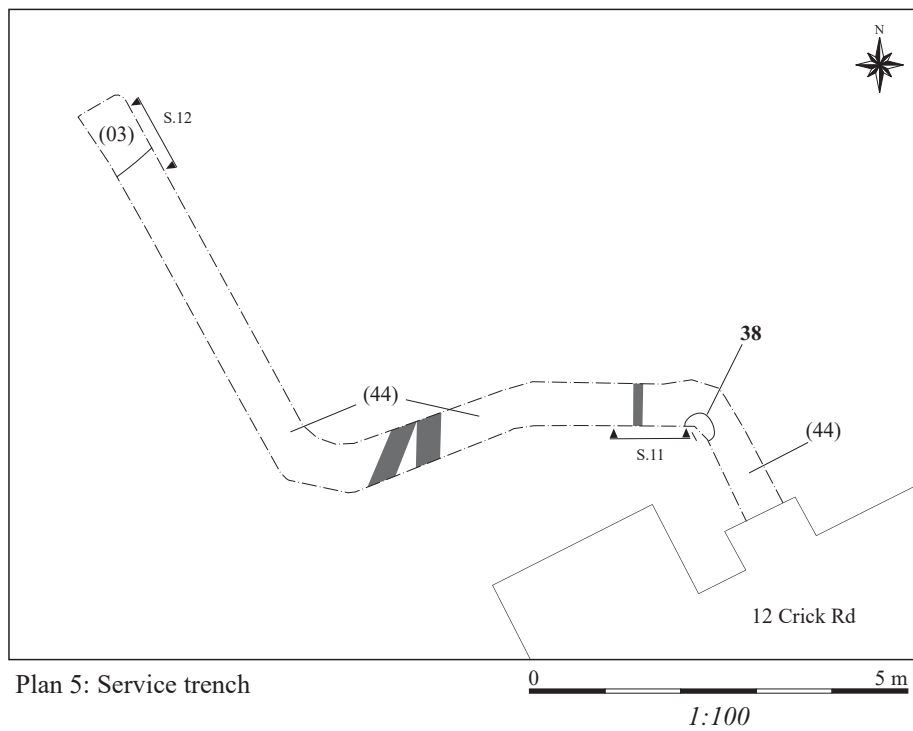
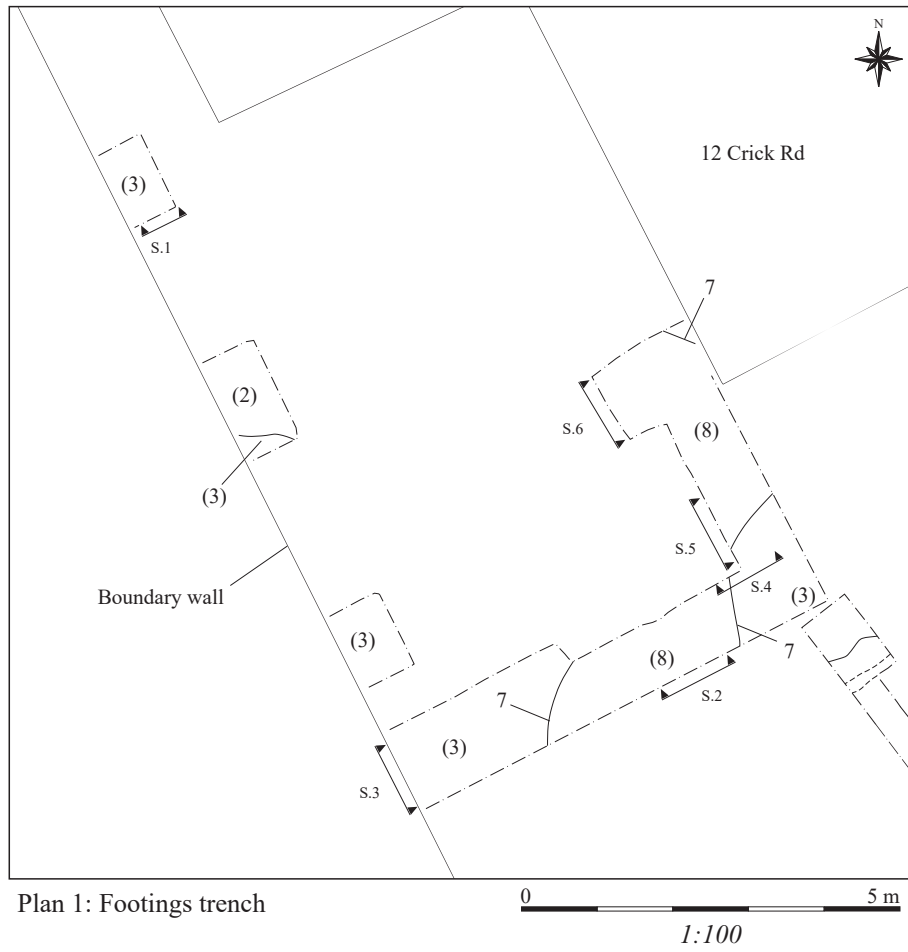


Figure 3: Footings trenches and service trench

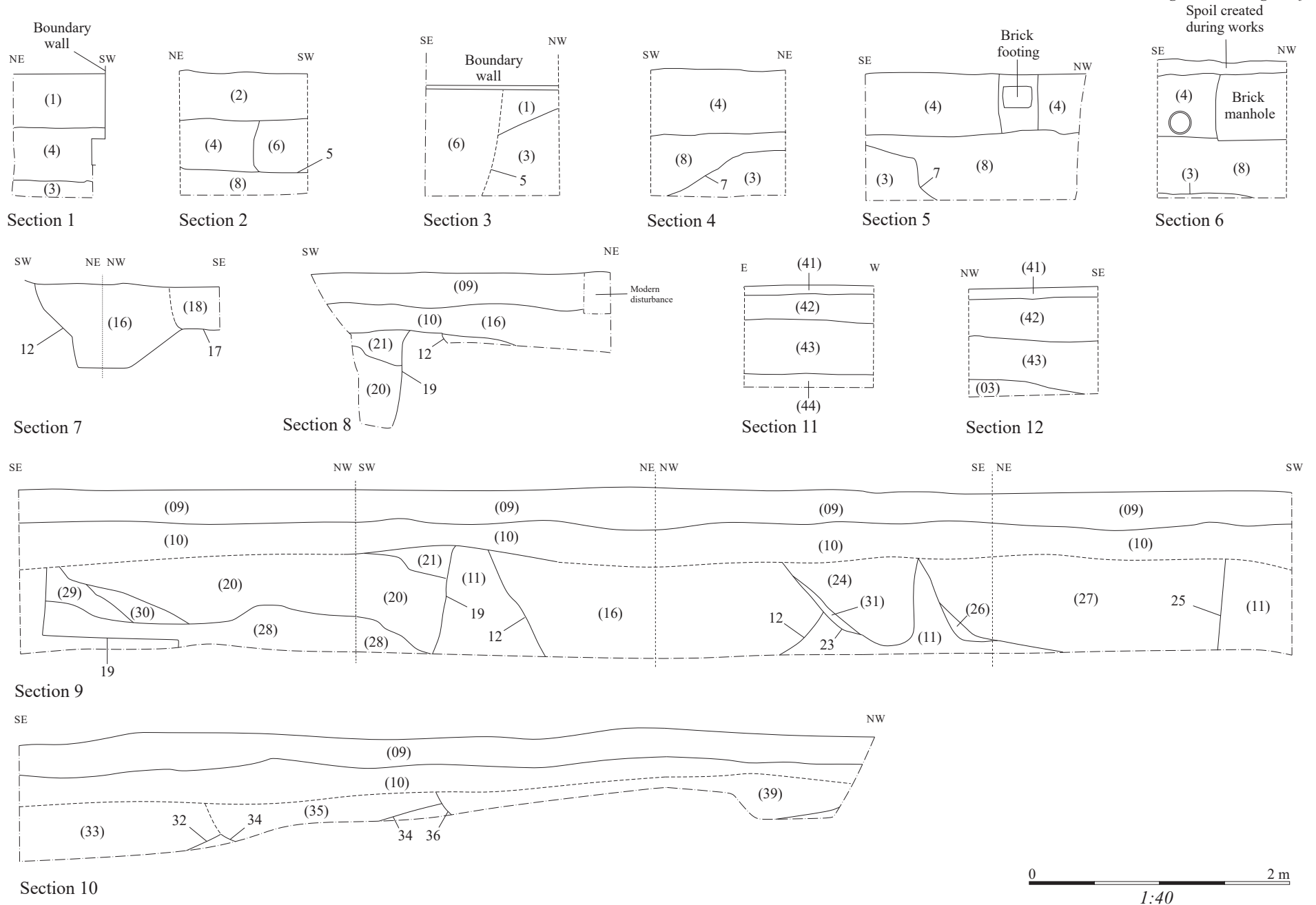


Figure 4: Sections

4.1 Prehistoric

Footings Trench

Recorded in the footing trench to the west of the house was an irregularly shaped feature 7 (Figures 3, 4; sections 4, 5). Though recorded as one feature due to the similar fill seen throughout, it is possible that the feature represented at least two intercutting pits, or more likely the junction of two ditches curving to form one ditch orientated to the north east. The total size and plan of the feature was not recovered due to the features' location within the footing trench; however, where recorded it measured >6m in length by >3m in width, extending beyond the limit of excavation (l.o.e.) in both directions. The cut, at least 0.5m in depth, and extending below the l.o.e., had moderately sloping concave sides. Fill (08) was a friable mid reddish brown silty clay. Feature 7 has been assigned to the prehistoric period by the nature of the fill.

Soakaway and Drainage Trench

Pit 12, recorded in the soakaway, was of uncertain plan due to truncation (Fig. 2, Plans 2 & 3; Fig. 4, sections 7, 9; plate 2); the cut measured >1.8m in length by >1.3m in width and >0.7m in depth, extending beyond and below the l.o.e. The feature had steep regular sides and was filled by (16) a friable mid yellowish brown sandy silt containing occasional charcoal flecks. Sherds of pottery recovered from the fill were dated to the middle Iron Age.



Plate 2: Middle Iron Age pit 12, post-excitation. Looking south west

Truncating pit 12 was 23 (Figures 2, 4; section 9). The cut, which had regular steeply sloping sides, measured >0.76m in length by >0.15m in width and >0.71m in depth, extending beyond and below the l.o.e. Fill (24) was a friable mid yellowish brown sandy silt with moderate inclusions of small stone and occasional charcoal flecks. The proximity of this feature to pit 12 and general morphology perhaps indicates that it

may be a broadly contemporary but later pit partly cutting through the fill of pit 12, though no dating evidence was recovered.

Recorded in the drainage trench adjacent to the soakaway was cut 32 (Figures 2, 4; section 10). This is likely to have been a continuation of pit 12, though the small area exposed forbids certainty. Where recorded the features measured >0.43m in length by >1.48m in width and 0.4m in depth. Fill (33) was a friable mid yellowish brown sandy silt.

Located to the north of probable pit 32 was ditch 34 (Figures 2, 4; section 10). This was linear in plan with steep concave sides and was aligned north east – south west. The feature measured >0.44m in length by 1.76m in width and >0.27m in depth, extending beyond and below the l.o.e. Fill (35) was a friable mid yellowish brown sandy silt that contained frequent small stones.

4.2 Post-medieval to modern

Soakaway and Drainage Trench

Also recorded within the soakaway were a series of regular rectangular and linear features associated with a former outbuilding or similar feature. Truncating pit 12 was construction cut 17 (Figure 2; section 7); this was rectangular in plan, measuring >1.61m in length by 1.04m in width and 0.26m in depth. Fill (18) was a friable mid yellowish brown sandy silt containing moderate small stone.

Linear feature 19 was located on the south east side of the soakaway and truncated the natural geology (11) (Figures 2, 4; sections 8, 9). This was aligned north east – south west and measured >2.6m in length by >0.58m in width and >0.75m in depth, extending beyond and below the l.o.e. The feature was steep sided and contained a series of fills, the lowest of which was (28), a friable dark greyish brown loamy silt 0.35m in thickness. This was overlain by (29) a friable loamy silt 0.28m in thickness, which was in turn overlain by (30) a slump of friable sandy silt 0.16m in thickness. Fill (20) occupied the majority of the feature; this was a friable mid to dark yellowish brown sandy silt 0.48m in thickness that contained moderate charcoal flecks and clay pipe fragments. Fill (20) was overlain by (21), a small deposit of friable mid to dark yellowish brown sandy silt 0.25m in depth.

Feature 25, which also truncated natural geology (11), had steep regular sides. The cut measured >1.76m in length by >0.38m in width and >0.71m in depth, extending beyond and below the l.o.e. (Figure 2, 4; section 9). The feature was filled by (26) a friable mid reddish brown sandy silt 0.13m in thickness with occasional inclusions of small stone and chalk. This was overlain by (27) a friable mid to dark yellowish brown sandy silt with moderate inclusions of small stone and occasional chalk flecks, >0.71m in thickness, extending below the l.o.e.

Possible ditch 34 was truncated by large irregular cut 36. Where recorded the feature measured >0.71m in length by 3.1m in width and >0.35m in depth. Fill (37) was a friable mid yellowish brown clayey silt that contained moderate sub angular stone and sherds of 19th century pottery.

The above features were overlain by subsoil (10), a friable mid yellowish brown sandy silt 0.36m in thickness that contained moderate inclusions of small rounded stone.

Footings Trench

Within the footings trench modern made ground deposit (4) overlay fill (8) of probable Iron Age feature 7. This deposit was a friable mid brown silty clay 0.5m in thickness. Truncating this deposit were a series of modern walls 6 associated with 12 Crick Road; these sat within construction cut 5 (Figures 3, 4; sections 1-3)

Service Trench

The lowest deposit recorded during the excavation of a service trench at the front of the house was natural geology (03). This was overlain by buried soil horizon (44). This was a compact dark brown silty clay >0.1m in thickness and was present throughout the service trench (Figure 3, 4; sections 11, 12).

Soil horizon (44) was truncated by construction cut 39 for small stone well 38 (Figure 3). Cut 39 was sub-circular in plan, and measured >0.35m in diameter and >0.4m in depth, extending beyond and below the l.o.e. Well 38 was built from roughly hewn stone of varying size; no coursing was visible, though this was due to the small area exposed. The well had an internal diameter of 0.25m and was filled by (40) a soft dark greyish brown silty loam.

Well 38 was overlain by made ground deposit (43), a compact mid to dark brown clayey silt 0.4m in thickness that was present throughout the trench. This was in turn overlain by (41) a layer of tarmac and (42) its associated gravel bedding layer that had a combined thickness of 0.27m.

4.3 Reliability of Results

The archaeological watching brief was undertaken with good cooperation from site staff and all intrusive groundworks were monitored. As such the results are considered to be reliable.

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery by Jane Timby

A small group of eight sherds of pottery weighing 406 g and dating to the later prehistoric and post-medieval periods was recovered from four defined contexts.

The post-medieval component of the assemblage is quite well preserved but the later prehistoric sherds are quite small with no featured pieces.

For the purposes of the assessment the assemblage was scanned to assess the likely chronology and quantified by sherd count and weight for each recorded context. The later prehistoric sherds were coded following recommendations in PCRG 1997 where letters denote the main fabric constituents. Freshly broken pieces were counted as single pieces where joins could be made. The resulting data can be found in Table 1.

Later Prehistoric

Some four sherds have been provisionally dated to the later prehistoric period, more specifically the Iron Age. Three sherds came from the 2nd fill of pit [12] and one from the garden soil (2).

Each of the four sherds presented a slightly different fabric: three are calcareous; one with fossil shell and Jurassic limestone (LISH); one with fine shell probably of alluvial origin (LI2) and one with possible grog/clay pellets and limestone (GRLI?). The sherd of LI2 has two small dots on the edge of the fracture suggesting it was possibly decorated. The fourth sherd from the garden soil is a fine sandy dark brown-black handmade sherd with a smoothed finish.

The character of the three sherds from the pit is broadly similar to material previously recovered from the location and considered to date to the middle Iron Age. The sherd from the garden soil could be contemporary but with so few sherds and no diagnostic pieces dating can only be provisional. An alternative possibility is that the sherd from the garden soil is Saxon but additional material would be needed to confirm this and on balance a later prehistoric date is proposed at present.

Post-medieval/modern

Industrial transfer decorated china and three sherds of red earthenware flowerpot were recovered from linear [36] and subsoil (10).

Potential and further work

This is a very small group of material which indicates the presence of a single later prehistoric pit within the area investigated. No further work is recommended on this particular assemblage unless additional work is undertaken at the location.

The post-medieval finds could be discarded.

Context	Fabric	Weight (g)	No. of Items	Date
2	BWFSY	26	1	?IA
10	REW	71	1	PM/mod
10	REW	173	1	PM/mod
16	LISH	4	1	IA
16	GRLI?	4	1	?IA
16	LI2	3	1	IA
37	china	19	1	PM/mod
37	REW	106	1	PM/mod
TOTAL		406	8	

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by context and fabric

5.2 Other finds by *Simona Denis*

Glass

A single fragment of glass, weighing 269.8g, was recovered from subsoil (10). It was positively identified as the base of a machine made bottle of olive green glass; H RICKETTS & CO BRISTOL was embossed on its base. The bottle was produced by Henry Ricketts & Co., a Bristol based company operating between 1811 and 1852 (<https://sha.org/bottle/pdffiles/RickettsFirms.pdf>).

The glass bottle base is not recommended for retention, due to its provenance and to its very limited potential for further analysis.

Clay Tobacco Pipe

Two fragments of clay tobacco pipe were found during the archaeological monitoring. A fragment of pipe stem, weighing 9.2g and measuring 64mm in length, was collected from subsoil (10). No decorations or marks were observed on this example, and the mouthpiece was not preserved; furthermore, the fragmentary state of the object precluded any attempt to reconstruct the original overall length or attempt a precise dating. Unmarked stem fragments without diagnostic features or decorations have very little dating value, and can only generally be assigned to the Post-Medieval period.

One complete bowl with heel and partial stem, weighing 13g, was found in deposit (20), the fill of ditch 19. It was identified as No.12 of Oswald's simplified typology (Oswald 1975) and dated between 1730 and 1780.

The clay tobacco pipe stem fragment is not recommended for retention, due to its extremely limited potential for further analysis.

6 DISCUSSION

The archaeological watching brief was successful in meeting the aim laid out in the WSI. A series of archaeological remains were recorded, the majority of which were undated. However, where pottery was recovered it appeared comparable to that recorded during the previous evaluation (JMHS 2017). The small size of the area excavated limits the extent to which the remains can be interpreted, though it appears that 12 Crick Road is situated within an area of middle Iron Age occupation that comprises pits and probable ditches. The Iron Age and undated features were truncated by a series of later features, typically regular in form, that are likely to be associated with the construction and occupation of 12 Crick Road from the 19th century onwards.

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 record

Physical record

Finds

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the Oxfordshire County Museums Service with accession number OXCMS:2017.34.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Project details

Project name	ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT 12 CRICK ROAD OXFORD
Short description of the project	John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological watching brief at 12 Crick Road, Oxford (NGR SP 51395 07573). A series of archaeological remains were recorded, the majority of which were undated. However pottery of middle Iron Age date comparable to that recorded during a previous evaluation was recovered from a pit. As such it appears that 12 Crick Road is situated within an area of middle Iron Age occupation that comprises a series of intercutting pits. The Iron Age and undated features were truncated by a series of later features associated with the construction and occupation of 12 Crick Road from the 19th century onwards.
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Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	4334 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	OXCR 20 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Monument type	PIT Middle Iron Age
Monument type	ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURE Post Medieval
Monument type	WELL Post Medieval
Significant Finds	SHERD Middle Iron Age
Significant Finds	SHERD Post Medieval
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

Project location

Country	England
Site location	OXFORDSHIRE OXFORD OXFORD 12 Crick Road

Postcode OX26QL
 Study area 20 Square metres
 Site coordinates SP 51395 07573 51.764023510723 -1.255186402482 51 45 50 N 001 15 18 W Point

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
 Project supervisor Natasha Djukic
 Project supervisor Tom Rose-Jones
 Type of sponsor/funding body Client

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