



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

THE CHANTRY, STARTFORD ROAD,

WROXTON, OXFORDSHIRE

NGR SP 4134 4226

On behalf of

Mr M Palin

AUGUST 2008

REPORT FOR

Mr M Palin
The Chantry
Stratford Road
Wroxton
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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological investigation on 3rd July 2008. This involved the inspection of foundation trenches for a new extension to the existing property. No finds of archaeological importance were recovered.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site location (Figure 1)

The development site is located on the north side of the village, north of Stratford Road (NGR SP 4134 4226). Wroxton lies to the west of Banbury. The site is situated at about 154m OD and the underlying geology is Marlstone Rock Beds. The development is within a domestic garden area.

1.2 Planning Background

In December 2007 planning permission was sought from Cherwell District Council, which granted planning permission for the construction of a new sitting room extension, with new single storey porch and a first floor extension above existing utility room (07/02274/F). Due to the potential of the site to contain archaeological remains and the possibility of archaeological deposits being damaged or destroyed during the build, a condition of the planning consent required that an archaeological watching brief be carried out during the course of groundworks.

1.3 Archaeological background

The application area is located in an area of archaeological potential. A Roman silver coin of Gallienus (260-268AD) was found in the garden to the west of the house, then a vicarage, in 1868 (PRN 1608; SP 4136 4199). Although this is a single findspot and is not indicative of a Roman site in itself, a Roman cemetery has been recorded 150m to the south east of the site where three Roman inhumations were recorded during renovation works to a barn (PRN 11870; SP 4150 4187). Further disturbed human remains were encountered in the area and it is thought that the building of the original barn had disturbed more Roman burials. Iron Age artefacts have also been recorded 250m to the north of the site in 1966 consisting of pottery sherds, glass beads and a spindle whorl found in a possible pit (PRN 3193; SP 4134 4227). This is likely to represent some form of settlement in this area.

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 archaeological remains.
- In particular to record any remains relating to the Iron Age and Roman activity known in the area

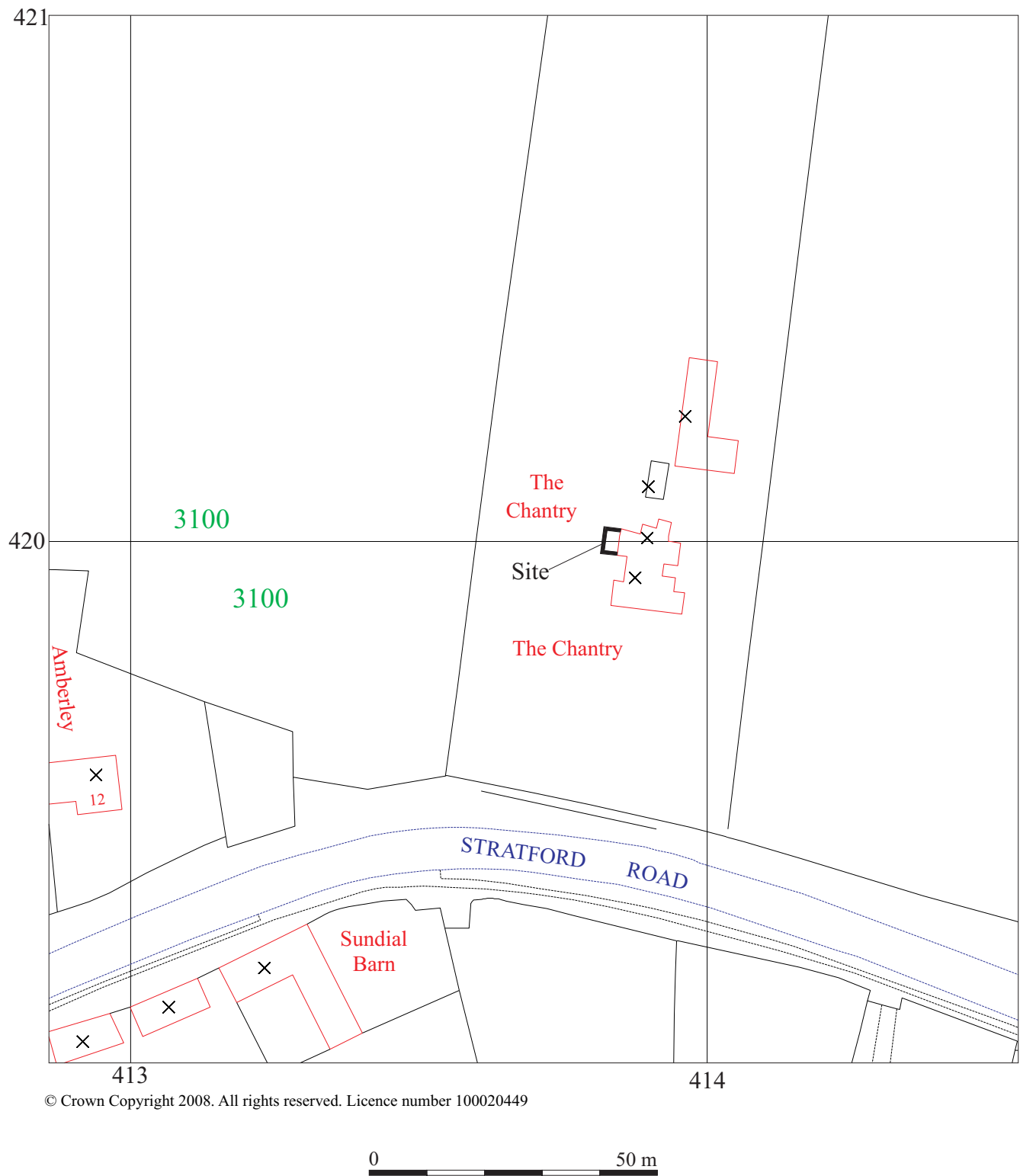


Figure 1. Site location.

3 STRATEGY

An archaeologist was present on site during the excavation for foundation trenches.

Archaeological features were recorded by written, drawn and photographic record. All artefacts were collected and retained.

Site procedures followed IFA guidelines (1994). The work was carried out to a Written Scheme of Investigation approved by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services.

4 RESULTS

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers in [] indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material.

4.1 Foundation trench for new extension (Figures 1& 2)

A continuous archaeological presence was maintained during the digging of the foundation trench. From observations made of the section it could be seen that natural red-brown clay with frequent inclusions of red-brown limestone (03) was overlain by a mid brown clayey silt (02) 0.45-0.65m thick. Lying above this was 0.2m thick mid brown silty topsoil (01) and gravel. In the southern part of the footings a deposit of a single layer of white semi-angular sandstone (04) overlaid the natural (Fig. 2) and continued southerly beyond the foundation trench. The apparent absence of stones in the centre of the spread shown on Fig. 2 is due to over-machining by the operator; the limits depicted are as seen. It was covered by the subsoil deposit (02).

4.2 Reliability of Techniques and Results

The reliability of results is considered to be good. The archaeological investigation work took place during dry and bright weather.

5 FINDS

Only modern finds were seen in the topsoil (01), which have not been retained.

5.1 Environmental results

No environmental samples were taken during the watching brief

6 DISCUSSION

The subsoil deposit (02) must be an earlier cultivation soil overlain by the modern topsoil. The underlying stone deposit appears to be a surface but no dating evidence was found with it. It is possible that it is associated with the postulated Roman settlement in the area.

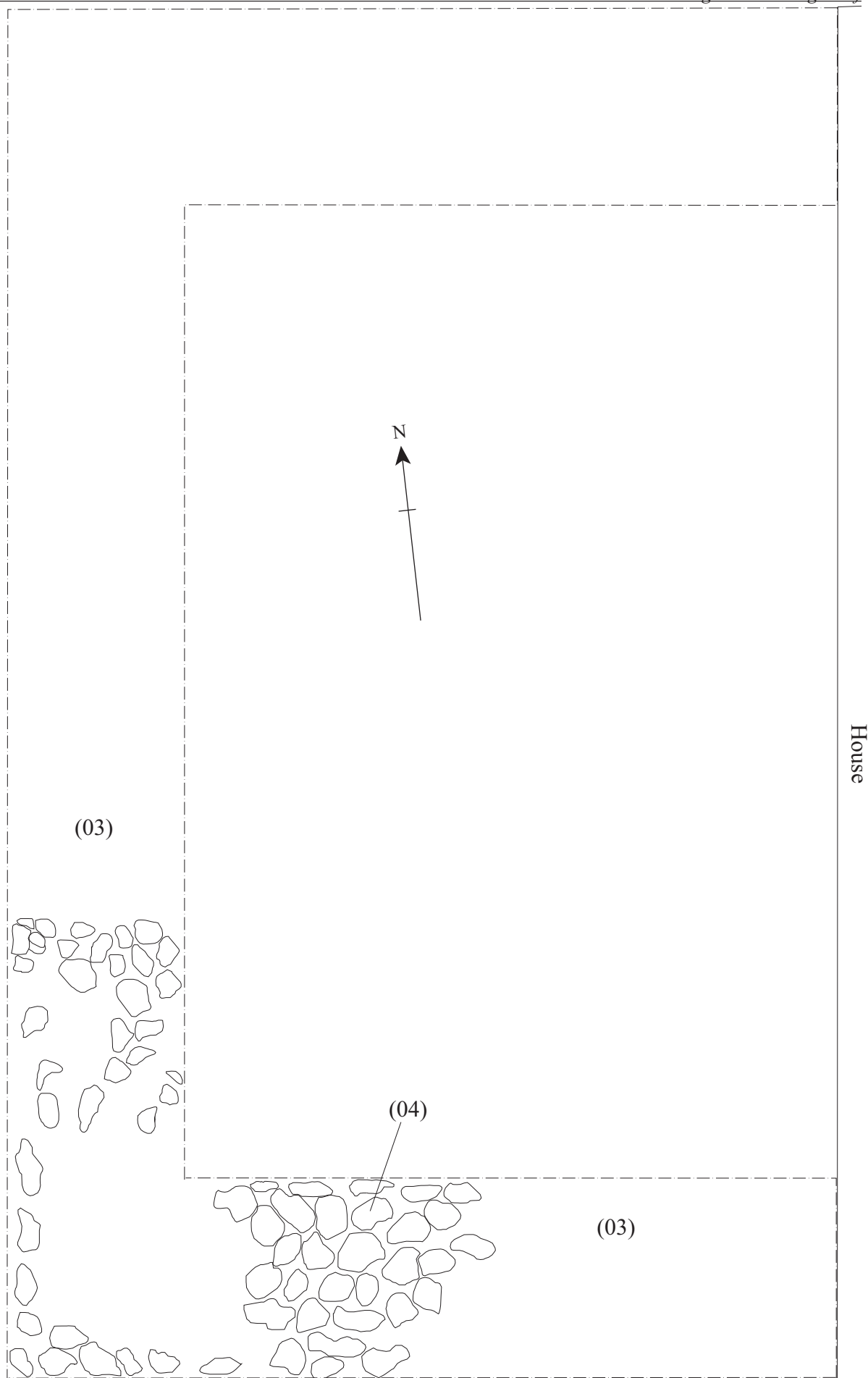


Figure 2. Plan of cobbled surface.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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