



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

SHIPTON MANOR, SHIPTON-ON-CHERWELL,

KIDLINGTON, OXFORDSHIRE

NGR SP 47998 16550

DECEMBER 2021

REPORT PREPARED BY Tom Rose-Jones BSC ACIfA

ILLUSTRATION BY Tom Rose-Jones

EDITED BY John Moore

AUTHORISED BY John Moore

FIELDWORK Tom Rose-Jones

FIELDWORK DATE 20th – 21st September 2021

REPORT ISSUED 3rd December 2021

ENQUIRES TO John Moore Heritage Services
Unit 16, Wheatley Business Centre,
Old London Road,
Wheatley
OX33 1XW

Tel: 01865 358300
Email: info@jmheritageservices.co.uk

JMHS Project No: 4573
OASIS No: johnmoor1-502515
Site Code: SCSM 21
Archive Location: The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to Oxfordshire Museums Service with the accession number OXCMS: 2021.97. The Digital Archive will be deposited with Archaeology Data Service.



CONTENTS

	Page
SUMMARY	1
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Site Location	1
1.2 Planning Background	1
1.3 Archaeological Background	1
2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION	1
3 STRATEGY	3
3.1 Research Design	3
3.2 Methodology	3
4 RESULTS	3
5 FINDS	7
5.1 Pottery	7
5.2 Ceramic Building Material	8
5.3 Animal Bone	8
5.4 Metal	9
6 DISCUSSION	9
7 ARCHIVE	10
8 BIBLIOGRAPHY	10

FIGURES AND PLATES

Figure 1.	Site location	2
Figure 2.	Plan of monitored area and sections	4
Plate 1.	Ditch 07, section 5; looking N.	5
Plate 2.	Ditch 12; section 7; looking NW.	5
Plate 3:	Ditches 07 and 12; looking SSW.	6
Plate 4:	SW end of trench, showing Section 2 and deposit (02). Looking SSW.	6

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. OASIS Report Form

SUMMARY

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological strip, map and sample investigation during groundworks for a swimming pool at Shipton Manor, Shipton-on-Cherwell, Kidlington, Oxfordshire (NGR SP 47998 16550). The area of the new pool was located partially within the footprint of an earlier swimming pool, the construction of which extended below the geological horizon and had therefore truncated any remains present. Despite this, a number of extant archaeological features were encountered. These appeared to represent a ditched trackway or path that extended towards the Church of the Holy Cross. Pottery found within the fill of one ditch dated exclusively to the late Saxon period, though a sherd of glazed roof tile that dated to the medieval period was also present. A shallow ditch and ovoid pit were also associated with this feature; pottery from the ditch dated to the early to mid-Saxon period. Later deposits were predominantly medieval garden soils, though a thick levelling deposit was also encountered, possibly laid in order to create a level surface to the south east of Shipton Manor.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development site is located on the southern edge of Shipton-on-Cherwell, immediately north west of the Church of the Holy Cross (NGR SP 47998 16550).

The site lies at approximately 70m OD and the underlying geology is Cornbrash Formation limestone.

1.2 Planning Background

Cherwell District Council granted planning permission for **The installation of a swimming pool in the location of a swimming pool removed in 2016. The construction of a plant room designed as a simple rural building.** Due to the archaeological potential of the site the following condition was attached:

4. No groundworks associated with the development hereby approved shall be undertaken, other than in accordance with the agreed and submitted Written Scheme of Investigation RPS Archaeology WSI 1 ref: JAC27393 dated 23 June 2021, a staged programme of archaeological evaluation and mitigation shall be carried out by the commissioned archaeological organisation in accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation. The programme of work shall include all processing, research and analysis necessary to produce an accessible and useable archive and a full report for publication which shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority within two years of the completion of the archaeological fieldwork.

Reason – To safeguard the identification, recording, analysis and archiving of heritage assets before they are lost and to advance understanding of the heritage assets in their wider context through publication and dissemination of the evidence in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

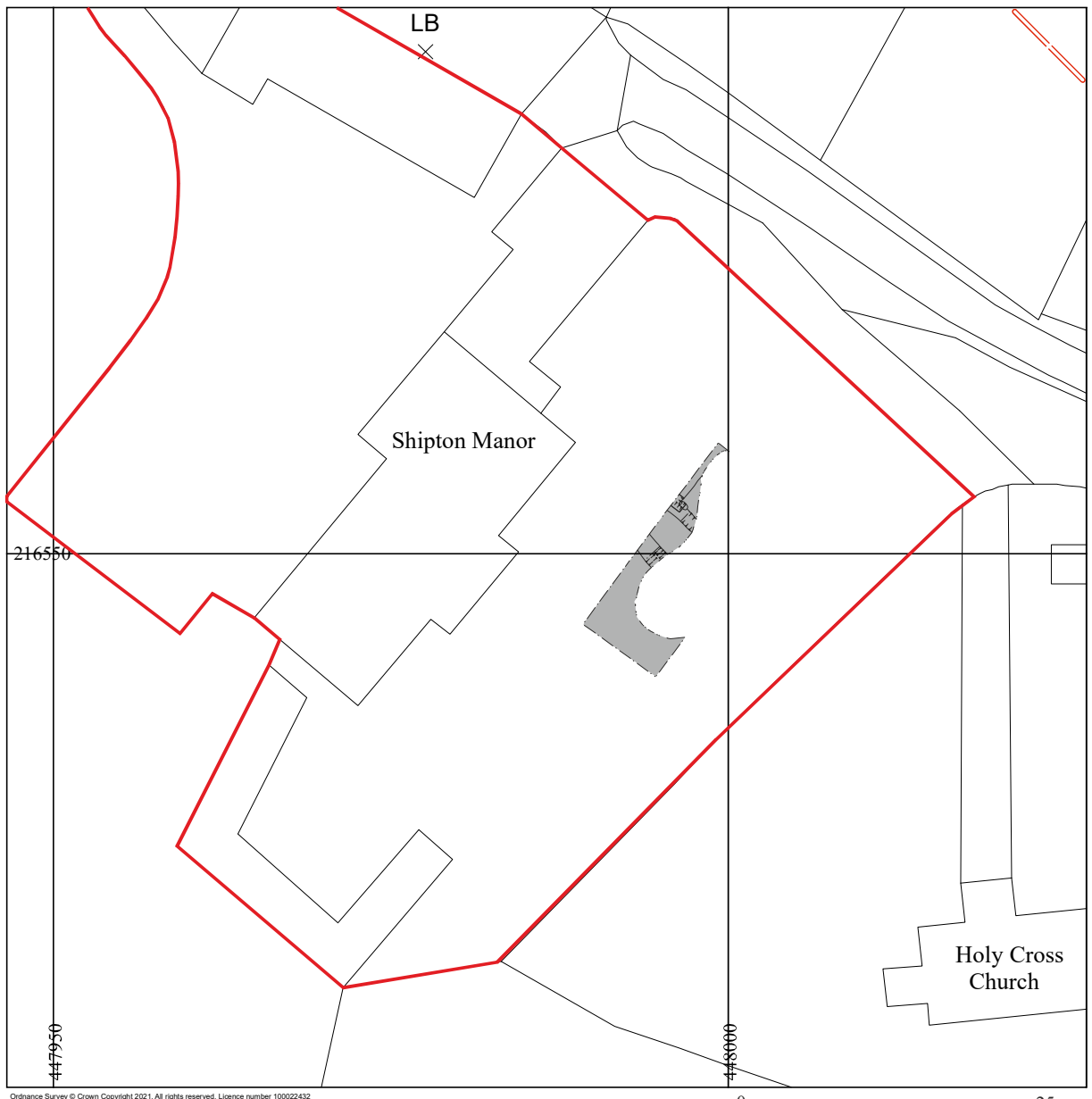
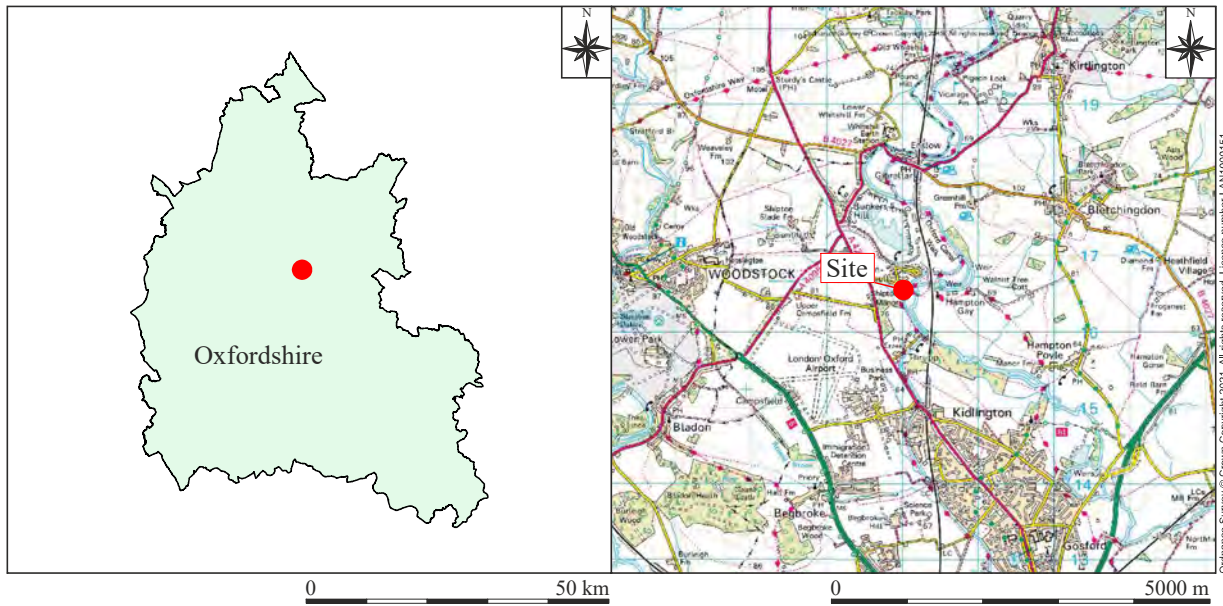
1.3 Archaeological Background

The site is located within the historic core of Shipton-on-Cherwell; Shipton Manor dates to the 16th century and is located immediately adjacent to the medieval Holy Cross Church. The church, extensively rebuilt, contains a number of 14th century elements though historical documents indicate that a church has been present in the village from the early 13th century at least.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

- To mitigate through recording action the loss of known and potential archaeological features as a result of the proposed development.



Key Site boundary Monitored area

Figure 1: Site location

Specific aims include:

- Has the construction and subsequent backfilling of the previous swimming pool removed archaeological remains from the area?
- Is there any evidence for medieval activity in the area of the new swimming pool?
- Is there any evidence for archaeological remains pre-dating the medieval period in the area of the proposed swimming pool?

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation authored by RPS Ltd (RPS Archaeology WSI 1 ref: JAC27393 dated 23 June 2021) and a Detailed Method Statement, both agreed with Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services, the archaeological advisors to the Cherwell District Council.

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

3.2 Methodology

The excavation of the pool footprint was undertaken using a mechanical excavator fitted with a bladed bucket. The excavated area measured 16.5m in length by 6.5m in width, though this was limited by the footprint of the previous pool building, which had resulted in extensive truncation.

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 medieval period.

Excavation of the plant building foundation and services between this building and the pool were not monitored due to the shallow depth of excavation proposed, which would have not extended beyond the garden soils encountered in the area of the swimming pool.

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.

The lowest deposit encountered was the geological horizon (05); this was a compact mid whitish yellow to yellowish brown angular limestone gravel bedded in a clayey silt and silty sand matrix. The geological horizon was truncated by a number of archaeological features.

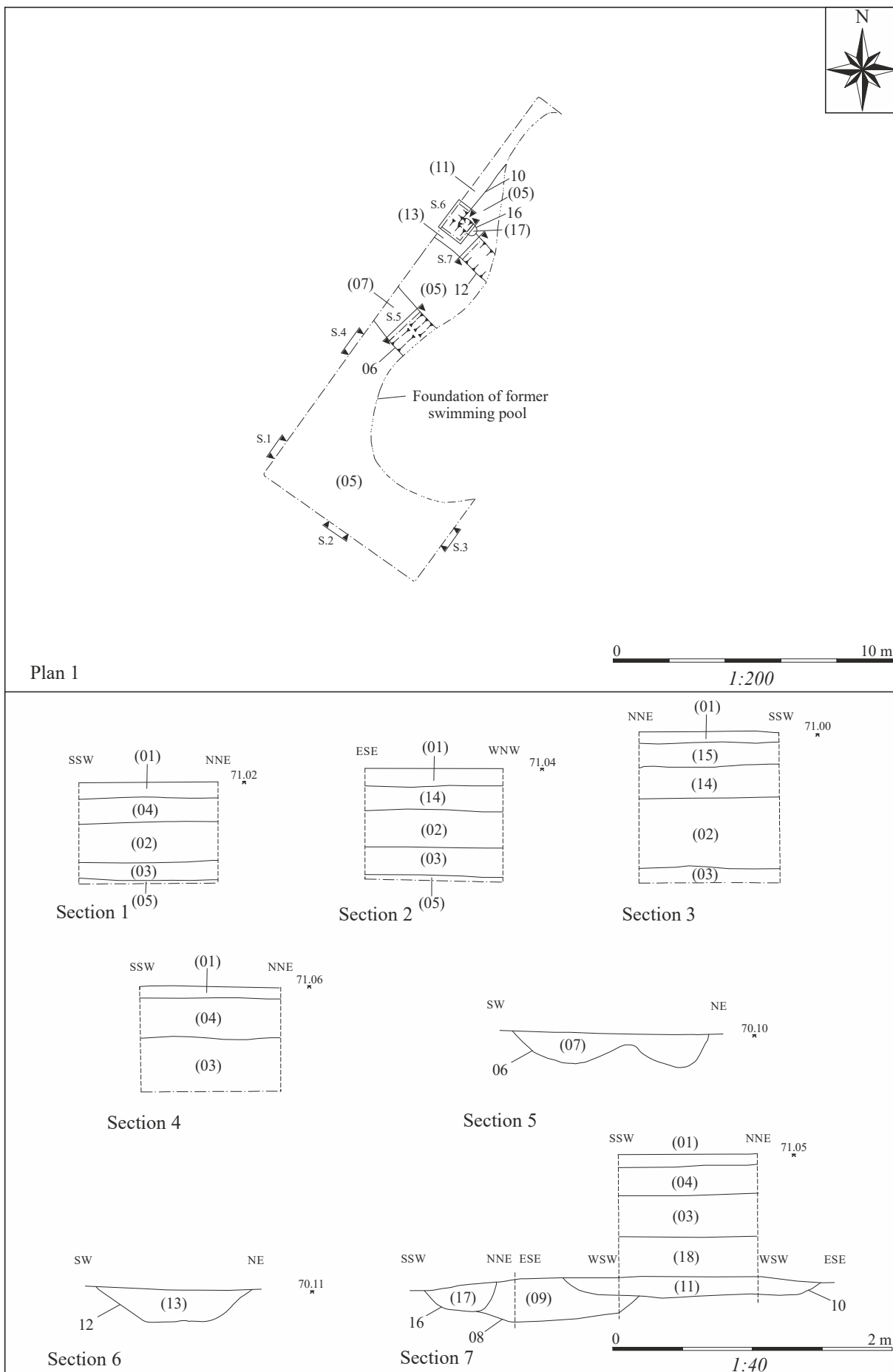


Figure 2: Plan of monitored area and sections

Linear ditch 06, aligned NW-SE, had steep sides and a concave base (Figure 2; Section 5); the cut was W-shaped in profile, perhaps indicating it had been recut, though there was no differentiation within the fill (07) which appeared homogeneous. Within the footprint the ditch measured 2m in length by 1.4m in width and 0.24m in depth; the ditch was truncated at its SE end by the former swimming pool and extended beyond the limit of excavation (l.o.e.) to the NW. Ditch fill (07) was a compact mid brownish grey clayey silt containing frequent sub-angular stone; pottery recovered from the fill provided an early medieval date.



Plate 1: Ditch 07, section 5; looking N.

Located c. 2.5m NE was ditch 08 (also recorded as 12) (Figure 2; Sections 6 and 7). This was also aligned NW-SE, had steep sides and a flat base. Within the footprint the ditch measured 2.5m in length by 1.1m in width and 0.3m in depth; the ditch was truncated at its SE end by the former swimming pool and extended beyond the limit of excavation (l.o.e.) to the NW. Fill (09) (also recorded as 13) was a compact mid greyish brown clayey silt containing frequent sub-angular stone.



Plate 2: Ditch 12; section 7; looking NW.

This feature was truncated by linear ditch 10, which intersected it at a 90° angle (Figure 2; Section 7); ditch 10 was aligned NE-SW, with moderately sloping concave sides and a flat base. The cut measured 5.4m in length, 0.5m in width and 0.15m in

depth, terminating where it intersected ditch 08 and extending beyond the l.o.e. to the NE and NW; fill (11) was a stiff dark grey silty clay. Two sherds of pottery recovered from the fill provided an early medieval date. Also truncating ditch 08 was ovoid pit or post hole 16; this had steep concave sides, a concave base and measured 0.7m in length, 0.5m in width and 0.2m in depth. Fill (17) was a compact mid greyish brown clayey silt containing occasional sub-angular stone.



Plate 3: Ditches 07 and 12; looking SSW

Ditch 10 was overlain by a firm light reddish brown sandy silt that contained a number of angular limestone slabs (18); this deposit followed the length of the ditch, measuring 0.5m in width and 0.3m in depth, and appeared to be a capping deposit ((Figure 2; Section 7). Deposit (18) was overlain by a layer of soft mid grey clayey silt (03), with occasional charcoal flecks and sub-angular stone, which was interpreted as a layer of garden soil. This deposit measured up to 0.4m in thickness and extended throughout the footprint. Towards the southern end of the footprint deposit (03) was overlain by (02), a firm mid brownish grey clayey silt that contained frequent sub-angular stone (Figure 2; Sections 1 to 3); the deposit increased in thickness from 0.2m to 0.5m from NW to SE. The deposit increased in thickness as the geological horizon dropped in height from NW to SE and as such may have represented an attempt to level the area; pottery recovered from the deposit dated to the 15th century.



Plate 4: SW end of footprint, showing Section 2 and deposit (02). Looking SSW.

This deposit was in turn overlain by two layers of garden soil; towards the NW was (04), a compact mid reddish brown clayey silt 0.3m in thickness (Figure 2; Sections 1 and 4) and to the SE was (14) a firm mid greyish brown clayey silt up to 0.24m in thickness (Figure 2; Sections 2 and 3).

In the SE corner of the area of excavation deposit (14) was overlain by a deposit of loose mid brownish yellow sand (15), a deposit of bedding material for a modern paving slab surface associated with the former pool (Figure 2; Section 3). Elsewhere deposits (14) and (04) were overlain by topsoil and turf (01), a friable mid greyish brown clayey silt up to 0.1m in thickness.

Reliability of Results

The archaeological investigation was undertaken in clement conditions with full cooperation from site staff; adequate time was allowed for the excavation and recording of archaeological features. As such the results are considered to be reliable, with a high level of accuracy.

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

Pottery

The pottery assemblage comprised 19 sherds with a total weight of 309g. It was all early/middle Anglo-Saxon or later. The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*.

Early/Middle Anglo-Saxon

The following fabric was noted

F1: **Quartz and Limestone**. Sparse to moderate angular quartz up to 0.5mm, limestone, including ooliths, up to 1mm, rare flint. 9 sherds, 74g.

The fabric is fairly typical of sites in the region (eg. Blinkhorn 2007, 230). The entire assemblage consisted of plain bodysherds. The dating of Anglo-Saxon hand-built pottery is mainly reliant on the presence of decoration, which is usually of 5th and/or 6th century date, with 7th century and later pottery being mostly plain (Myres 1977, 1). However, it cannot be said with certainty that an assemblage which produces only plain sherds is of 7th century and or later date, as decorated hand-built pottery generally comprises just 5% or less of domestic assemblages (eg. Hamerow 1993, 51). Thus, small assemblages consisting of only undecorated pottery such as this one can only be given a broad early/middle Anglo-Saxon date, *ie* of the 5th – 9th century.

Late Anglo-Saxon and Medieval

The Late Anglo-Saxon and medieval material was recorded using the conventions of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1994), as follows:

- OXAC:** Cotswold-type Ware, AD975-1350. 5 sherds, 141g.
OXBX: Late Medieval Brill/Boarstall Ware, 15th – early 17th century. 1 sherd, 5g
OXY: Medieval Oxford Ware, AD1075–1350. 1 sherd, 20g.

The wares are all common finds in the region. Context (3) produced a large fragment of the rim of a pitcher in OXAC, a fairly unusual vessel type in the tradition. It had a pulled lip as the pouring mechanism. Mellor saw such vessel as a 12th-century innovation in the tradition, with a very similar example of mid-late 12th century date known from Witney Bishop's Palace (ibid. 1994, fig. 13 no. 3).

One of the sherds of St Neots Ware is from a bowl with a flat-topped rim, a form which can be quite early (Denham 1985, 54), and suggests that the deposit may date to the second half of the 9th century. However, the same context, (7), produced a fragment of glazed medieval roof-tile (see below), so either all the pottery from that deposit is residual, or the tile is intrusive.

The sherd of OXY from context 14 is from a jar rim with a thumbled “piecrust” profile, a fairly typical produce of the tradition (eg. Mellor 1994, fig. 18).

Post-medieval

The post-medieval pottery were recorded using the conventions of the Museum of London Type-Series (eg. Vince 1985), as follows:

- PMR:** Post-medieval Redware, 1550+. 1 sherd, 3g.

The material is a very common find in the region.

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

Cntxt	F1		OXR		OXAC		OXY		OBX		PMR		Date
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
2					1	23			1	5			15thC
3					4	118							12thC
7	7	61	2	66									LSAX
11	2	13											E/MSAX
14							1	20			1	3	16thC
Total	9	74	2	66	5	141	1	20	1	5	1	3	

5.2 Ceramic Building Material by Paul Blinkhorn

A single fragment of medieval roof-tile weighing 53g occurred in context (7). It is in a hard, red, iron-rich sandy fabric, has a small pool of copper-speckled orange glaze on one side, and is 12mm thick. It is a fairly typical product of the Penn tile industry of Buckinghamshire (Zeepvat 2009).

5.3 Animal Bone by Rebecca Gordon

A total of 24 animal bone fragments were recovered from Shipton-on-Cherwell. The bones were in good condition and displayed minimal signs of weathering and

abrasion. Taphonomy modifications included chop and gnawing marks on a sheep/goat femur (02).

This small assemblage comprises cattle (*Bos taurus*), sheep/goat (*Ovis aris/Capra hircus*) and pig (*Sus scrofa*) and unidentifiable fragments. The size of the assemblage is below the recommended 100 fragments for basic analysis.

Table 2: Faunal remains by context, taxa and quantity

Taxa	(02)	(07)	(11)	(14)	Total
Cattle	1	2			3
Sheep/goat	1		1	4	6
Pig	1				1
Unident. Large	2	4	4		10
Unident. Med		4			4
Total	5	10	5	4	24

5.4 Metal by Simona Denis

A single iron object, weighing 37g and measuring 142mm in length, was recovered from layer (18), a deposit capping ditch 10. The item was positively identified as a knife blade; although severely affected by oxidation, it was found to be complete. It was tentatively dated to the Post-Medieval period based on its general appearance.

Due to its poor state of preservation and very limited potential for further analysis, the iron knife blade is not recommended for retention.

6 DISCUSSION

The watching brief was successful in meeting the aims laid out in the Detailed Method Statement. Construction of the previous swimming pool had resulted in significant truncation within the area of the new pool, however archaeological remains were identified and excavated within a small area that had avoided disturbance.

The archaeological remains present appeared to represent a ditched trackway or path that extended towards the Church of the Holy Cross, aligned in a north-west – south – east direction. Pottery found within the fill of one ditch dated exclusively to the late Saxon period, though a sherd of glazed roof tile that dated to the medieval period was also present, although could be intrusive. A shallow ditch and ovoid pit were also associated with this feature; pottery from the ditch dated to the early to mid-Saxon period.

These features were overlain by a series of later medieval garden soils. Towards the south east of the site a thick levelling deposit was encountered, also dating to the medieval period on the basis of residual pottery sherds and possibly laid in order to create a level surface to the south east of Shipton Manor.

The early medieval material encountered is significant, being rare within the area Shipton-on-Cherwell; the features encountered appear to extend towards the church, perhaps indicating the presence of early medieval activity in the area of the later medieval church.

7 ARCHIVE

The archive consists of the following:

Paper record	Physical record	Digital files
Written scheme of investigation	Finds	Digitised primary records
The project report		Digitised versions of primary drawings
The primary site records		GPS raw data
		QGIS files
		Report text files

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the Oxfordshire County Museum Service with accession number OXCMS:2021.97. The digital archive will be transferred to Archaeology Data Service.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Blinkhorn, P, 2007 *Anglo-Saxon Pottery in R Chambers and E MacAdam, Excavations at Radley Barrow Hills, Radley Oxfordshire. Vol 2: The Romano-British Cemetery and Anglo-Saxon Settlement* Oxford Archaeology Thames Valley Landscapes Monograph **25**, 229-48
- Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2020 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*
- Hamerow, HF, 1993 *Excavations at Mucking Volume 2: The Anglo-Saxon Settlement* English Heritage Archaeol Rep **22**
- 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
- Myres, JNL, 1977 *A Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Pottery of the Pagan Period* 2 vols, Cambridge
- Vince, AG, 1985 *The Saxon and Medieval Pottery of London: A review* *Medieval Archaeology* **29**, 25-93
- Zeepvat, R (ed), 2009 *Rose Cottage, Tylers Green: excavation of a 15th to 17th century tiliary* *Records of Buckinghamshire* **49** 189-218

Summary for johnmoor1-502515

OASIS ID (UID)	johnmoor1-502515
Project Name	Watching Brief at SHIPTON MANOR, SHIPTON-ON-CHERWELL
Activity type	Watching Brief
Project Identifier(s)	4573, SCSM 21, OXCMS: 2021.97
Planning Id	21/02405/F
Reason For Investigation	Planning requirement
Organisation Responsible for work	John Moore Heritage Services
Project Dates	20-Sep-2021 - 21-Sep-2021
Location	SHIPTON MANOR, SHIPTON-ON-CHERWELL NGR : SP 48016 16680 LL : 51.8466612613652, - 1.30437398656813 12 Fig : 448016,216680
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Oxfordshire District : Cherwell Parish : Shipton-on-Cherwell and Thrupp

<p>Project Methodology</p>	<p>The excavation of the pool footprint was undertaken using a mechanical excavator fitted with a bladed bucket. The excavated area measured 16.5m in length by 6.5m in width, though this was limited by the footprint of the previous pool building, which had resulted in extensive truncation. 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.</p> <p>The resultant spoil from the works was visually scanned, especially for finds relating to the medieval period. Excavation of the plant building foundation and services between this building and the pool were not monitored due to the shallow depth of excavation proposed, which would have not extended beyond the garden soils encountered in the area of the swimming pool.</p>
----------------------------	---

Project Results	<p>The watching brief was successful in meeting the aims laid out in the Detailed Method Statement. Construction of the previous swimming pool had resulted in significant truncation within the area of the new pool, however archaeological remains were identified and excavated within a small area that had avoided disturbance.</p> <p>The archaeological remains present appeared to represent a ditched trackway or path that extended towards the Church of the Holy Cross, aligned in a north-west – south – east direction. Pottery found within the fill of one ditch dated exclusively to the late Saxon period, though a sherd of glazed roof tile that dated to the medieval period was also present, although could be intrusive. A shallow ditch and ovoid pit were also associated with this feature; pottery from the ditch dated to the early to mid-Saxon period.</p> <p>These features were overlain by a series of later medieval garden soils. Towards the south east of the site a thick levelling deposit was encountered, also dating to the medieval period on the basis of residual pottery sherds and possibly laid in order to create a level surface to the south east of Shipton Manor. The early medieval material encountered is significant, being rare within the area Shipton-on-Cherwell; the features encountered appear to extend towards the church, perhaps indicating the presence of early medieval activity in the area of the later medieval church.</p>
Keywords	<p>Ditch - EARLY MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types</p> <p>Sherd - EARLY MEDIEVAL - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus</p> <p>Ditch - UNCERTAIN - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types</p> <p>Pit - UNCERTAIN - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types</p> <p>Ditch - MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types</p> <p>Sherd - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus</p>
HER	Oxfordshire HER - unRev - STANDARD

HER Identifiers	
Archives	Physical Archive, Documentary Archive - to be deposited with Oxfordshire Museums Service Digital Archive - to be deposited with Archaeology Data Service Archive