

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

## **AT**

# WANSBECK, 16B CASTLE STREET, WALLINGFORD, OXFORDSHIRE, OX10 8DL

# **NGR**

SU 60678 89676

**NOVEMBER 2021** 

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JMHS Project No: 4176

OASIS No: johnmoor1-502942

Site Code: WACS21

**Archive Location:** A copy of the digital archive is maintained by

John Moore Heritage Services (ID 4176). Digitised copies of the primary records are

available on OASIS



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Archaeological Watching Brief

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#### **SUMMARY**

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological watching brief at 16B Castle Street, Wallingford, Oxfordshire (NGR SU 60678 89676). Within the footings' trenches a large cut was encountered which may be the result of quarrying action. The uppermost deposit (02) was dated to the later post-medieval period and no dateable material was recovered from the other deposits. No archaeological horizons were encountered in the pad foundation pit.

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

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

The site is located on the west side of Castle Street, Wallingford (NGR SU 60678 89676), and is a residential property. The site lies at approximately 55m OD and the underlying geology is Second Terrace River Gravels.

#### 1.2 Planning Background

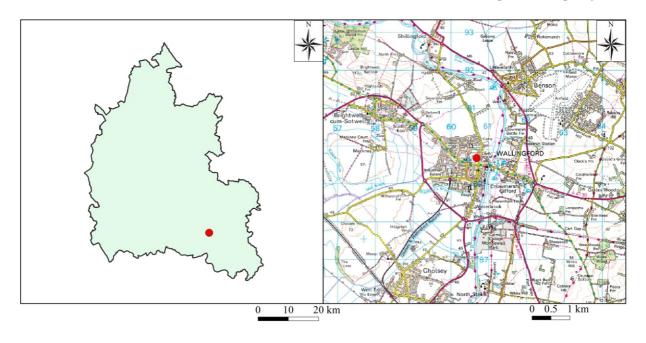
South Oxfordshire District Council granted planning permission for the demolition of the existing garage; and the erection of a carport, workshop, and garden storage unit (P19/S2556/FUL). Due to the potential of the site to contain archaeological remains conditions were attached to the permission requiring a watching brief to be maintained during the course of building operations or construction works on the site.

#### 1.3 Archaeological Background

The site is located in an area of considerable archaeological potential on the west side of the historic north south route through the town and within the 10th century Saxon walled town (PRN 7797). The site is located between two Scheduled Ancient Monuments, The Saxon Town 50m to the west (SAM OX182) and Wallingford Castle 70m to the east (SAM OX 176). Surviving Saxon occupation deposits have been recorded in an archaeological investigation 85m to the north of the proposal site (PRN 16415) on the west side of Castle Street. Evidence of early medieval occupation has been recorded 50m to the north west of the site dating to the 11th to 13th century (PRN 16545) and 100m to the south of the site at Lamb Garage (PRN 16481).

The proposal area is also only 22m to the west of the site of the Norman All Hallows Church, believed to have been built before 1101 and demolished in 1643 during the siege of Wallingford (PRN 7786). Its associated graveyard was in use until 1859. It is likely that this would have been a focus for medieval occupation in this part of the town. In addition to this archaeological investigation during the excavation of two foundation trenches on the present street frontage revealed deep and relatively undisturbed medieval stratified deposits extending beneath the pavement at 1m depth (PRN 13314).

It is therefore possible that this proposed development could It is therefore possible that this proposed development could impact on significant archaeological deposits related to the development of the town.



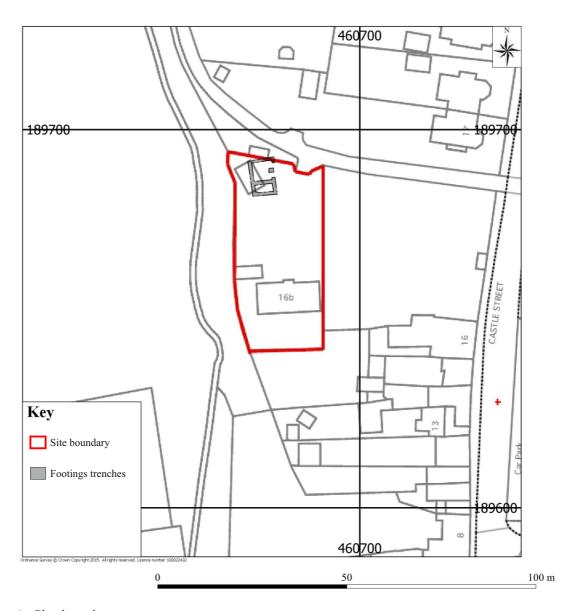


Figure 1: Site location

#### 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 archaeological remains revealed during the course of any operations that may disturb or destroy archaeological remains.

In particular:

• To record any evidence relating to the Saxon and medieval occupation of Wallingford to further enhance the understanding of the development of the town.

#### 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 (OCAS), the archaeological advisors to the South Oxfordshire District Council.

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

#### 3.2 Methodology

The groundworks consisted of the excavation of footings' trenches and the pad foundation pit for the carport.

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 Saxon and medieval periods.

#### **4 RESULTS** (Figure 2; Plates 1 -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.

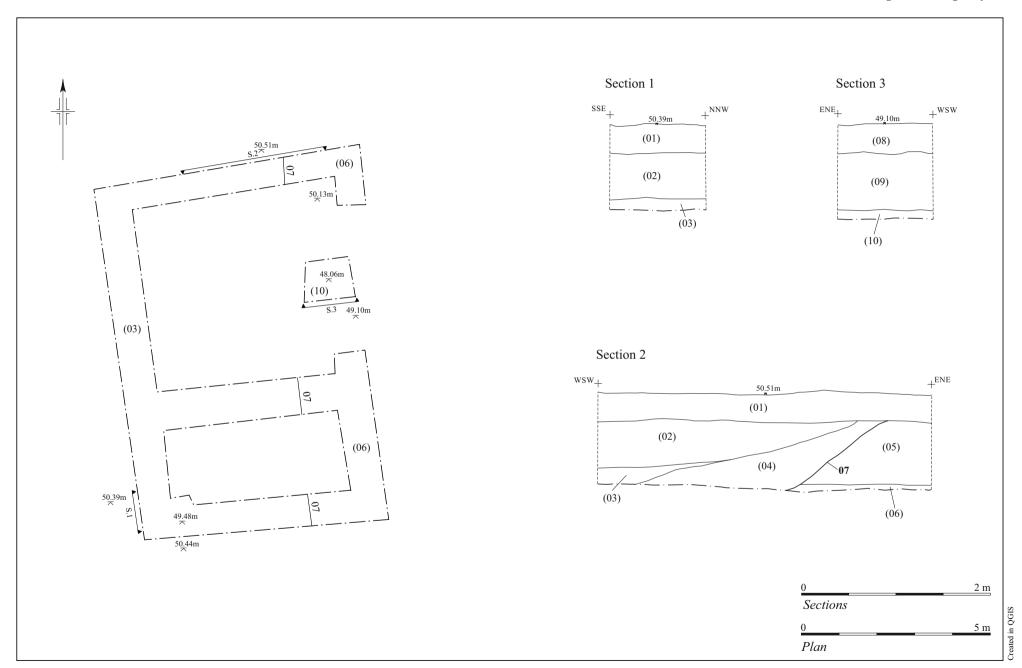


Figure 2: Site plan, showing footings trench and footings pad; and representative sections 1, 2, and 3.

#### **4.1** Footings Trenches

The footings trenches for the new carport were observed, which enclosed an area approximately 9.40m in length by 5.40m in width. The footings were excavated to a depth of approximately 1m and measured 0.60m in width.

In the eastern area of the footings, the lowest deposit encountered was a natural sand layer, (06), which was probably the same as deposit (10) within the pad foundation pit. Natural deposit (06) was a friable to loose mid yellowish brown sand, >0.06m thick, with occasional sub-rounded pebble inclusions, 10-20mm in size.

Overlying (06) was natural deposit (05), which was probably the same as deposit (09). Natural deposit (05) was a 0.67m thick compact mid reddish orange gravel in a sand matrix, which contained abundant sub-angular gravel, 10-40mm in size.

A north-south cut 07 was seen in the western two thirds of the footprint. The side was at 45° and the base was not seen. The lowest fill layer encountered was (04), which was a sterile friable to loose light greyish yellow sand, with no inclusions, >0.45m thick. Overlying this was (03), which was a >0.16m thick friable to compact mid yellowish brown silty sand with frequent sub-rounded chalk pebbles, 10-40mm. Deposit (03) also contained frequent flecks of charcoal, and was heavily disturbed by rooting action. Above deposit (03) was a 0.49m thick friable mid yellowish brown silty sand, (02), which contained occasional sub-rounded chalk pebbles, 10-30mm in size. Similar to deposit (03), this deposit also contained frequent flecks of charcoal, and disturbance from rooting action. Several fragments of pottery, and ceramic building material were recovered from this fill.

Above the natural and the uppermost fill of the cut was a 0.29m thick topsoil deposit (01). This was a friable to loose mid blackish brown silt with frequent bioturbation disturbance, and occasional small shingle inclusions, resulting from the previous gravel driveway. This deposit was the same as topsoil deposit (08).



Plate 1: Representative Section (S.2) of Footings, showing fill layers (02), (03), and (04) within cut **07**.



Plate 2: Completed Footings Trenches (southern extent).



Plate 3: Completed Footings Trenches (northern extent).

## 4.2 Footing Pad

The footing pad pit excavation for the new carport was observed, which enclosed an area approximately 1.30m in length by 1m in width. The pit was excavated to a depth of approximately 1m.

The lowest deposit encountered was a natural sand layer, (10), which was probably the same as deposit (06) within the Footings Trench. Natural deposit (10) was a friable to loose mid yellowish brown sand, >0.08m thick, with occasional subrounded pebble inclusions, 10-20mm in size.

Overlying the natural sand was another natural deposit, (09), which was probably the same as deposit (05). Natural deposit (09) was a 0.59m thick compact mid reddish orange gravel in a sand matrix, which contained abundant sub-angular gravel, 10-40mm in size.

Above this was topsoil (08), which was the same as topsoil deposit (01); this deposit was a 0.31m thick friable to loose mid blackish brown silt with frequent bioturbation disturbance, and occasional small shingle inclusions, resulting from the previous gravel driveway. Within deposit (08) the remains of concrete footings for the previous garage were removed.



Plate 4: Representative Section (S.3) of Footing Pad.

#### 4.3 Reliability of Results

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

#### 5 FINDS

#### **5.1 Pottery** *by Paul Blinkhorn*

The pottery assemblage comprised 3 sherds with a total weight of 26g. It was all medieval or later, and all occurred in a single context, (02). The medieval material

was recorded using the conventions of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1994), as follows:

**WA38: Wallingford Ware**, AD1050 – 1250. 1 sherd, 12g

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

**PMR:** Post-medieval Redware, 1550+. 1 sherd, 8g.

**TPW:** Transfer-printed Whiteware, 1830-1900. 1 sherd, 6g.

The range of fabric types is typical of sites in the region. The sherd of WA38 is from the neck of an unglazed jar, and the fragment of PMR is from the rim of a similar vessel with an internal glaze. They are both typical products of their respective traditions.

#### **5.2 Building Materials** by Simona Denis

#### **5.2.1** Slate

A single fragment of slate, weighing 32g and measuring 73x38mm, was recovered from levelling layer (02). The item retained traces of mortar and, although fragmentary, was positively identified as originating from a post-medieval roof tile.

The slate tile fragment is not recommended for retention due to its very limited potential for further analysis.

#### 5.2.2 Ceramic Building Material

A very limited assemblage of 9 ceramic building material fragments, weighing 430g in total, was hand-collected from two deposits. Though extremely fragmentary, the state of preservation of the material was good and allowed the identification of the type for the vast majority of the fragments. The material was dated to the post-medieval period.

Context	Type	No. of	Weight	Fabric	Comments	Date Range
		Items	(g)			
01	?Floor tile	2	128	Pink-orange, sandy with rare small inclusions	Dark-red slip, mortar	Post- Medieval
		1	70	Dark pink-reddish with grey core, sandy with occasional small inclusions	Dark-red slip, mortar	
	Undetermined	1	18	Pink-orange, sandy with occasional small inclusions	Mortar	Undetermined
02	?Roof tile	1	50	Orange-pink gritty with moderate small inclusions	Side	Post- Medieval
		1	100	Pink-orange, gritty with moderate small inclusions	Side	
	Brick	1	52	Pink-orange, sandy with very rare small	Angle. Mortar	

				inclusions	
	Undetermined	2	12	Pink-orange, sandy	Undetermined
				with occasional small	
				inclusions	
Total		9	430		

Table 1: Ceramic building material occurrence by context and type

Five of the fragments originated from tiles. The items found in topsoil (01) were tentatively identified as floor tiles, due to the presence of traces of a dark-red slip on one face, similar to Victorian tiles, and a thick layer of mortar on the opposite face.

The fragments recovered from levelling layer (02) probably originated from roof tiles, although neither preserved diagnostic elements. Roof tiles are almost totally functional and their characteristics change very little over time; also, good quality roof tiles were often reused. Hand-made peg tiles were also commonly used until the 19<sup>th</sup> C, when machine-made tiles became popular. Consequently, the potential for dating evidence of plain roof tiles remains limited, and only a broad post-medieval date can be suggested.

A single fragment of brick, preserving one of the arris, was also found in deposit (02). The original function of the remaining four items remains undetermined due to the extremely small size of the fragments and the lack of any diagnostic feature.

It is not recommended to retain the fragmentary ceramic building material due to their very limited potential for further analysis.

#### 6 DISCUSSION

The watching brief identified a large cut covering the western area of the footprint of the car port. The fill contained late post-medieval pottery and building materials. A single sherd of residual medieval pottery was recovered from the latest fill of the cut. The purpose for the cut is unknown. It may have been the remains of quarrying action for sand and gravel.

Overlying the entire site was a topsoil deposit, which contained modern intrusions of concrete and shingle from the most recent use of the site, and extensive disturbance resulting from rooting action within the site.

#### 7 ARCHIVE

Digitised copies of all the primary records and drawings, as well as a selection of digital photographs, will be made publicly available as an appendix to the Final Report submitted to information-gathering tool OASIS (ID johnmoor1-502942), for public release in the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) Library.

Additionally, the most recent version of all digital files is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services (ID johnmoor1-502942) and will be made available to the public upon request (to <a href="mailto:admin@jmheritageservices.co.uk">admin@jmheritageservices.co.uk</a>). Security copies of all primary records will be made in digital format and stored on the Company's server, together with final versions of all born-digital files.

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

#### 8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

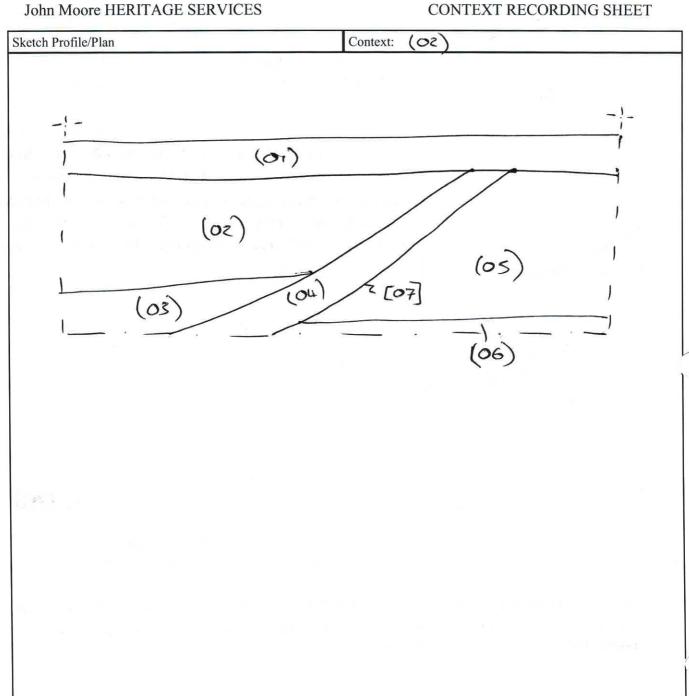
- Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2020 Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs
- Mellor, M, 1994 Oxford Pottery: A Synthesis of middle and late Saxon, medieval and early post-medieval pottery in the Oxford Region, *Oxoniensia* **59**, 17-217
- Vince, AG, 1985 The Saxon and Medieval Pottery of London: A review, *Medieval Archaeology* **29**, 25-93

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OU)	D69051T	1. 103		5.2				OCCUPATION/
(05)	DEPOSIT	11 (04)						NATURAL SAND AND GRAVELS
	DEPOSIT	U (05)						NATURAL SANO
(07)	CUT	0 /03/03		1				POSSIBLE CUT FOR LARGE FEATURE!
(08)	DEPOSIT	0 (09)	71	5.3				TOPSOIL SAME AS (OI)
(09)	DEPOSIT	0(10)						NATURAL SAND & GRAVELS SAME AS (05)
(10)	DEPOSIT	0 (09)	V	1	1	V	1	NATURAL SANÓ SAME AS (OG)
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3 Break of slope-top 4 Sid 5 Break of slope-base 6 Bas 7 Orientation 8 Inclination 9 Truncation 10 Fill 11 Other comments  Length: > 1.30 \times	rners es of axis Nos.	08AN	GE JNDA LOMM	S. GRA NT S NE EX	BELOW  PORT OF Filled by:	NO MATRIX AR GRAVEN NIA	<del>-</del>
Stratigraphic matrix  This context is:	(or	1)			CONTEMPORARY  Group No.:  ABOVE  Over: (10) Fill of:	Same as: (05)	Physical Relationship
Interpretation & Discussion: Internal External Structural Other (specify)  NATURAL GRAVEL							
Environmental Samples Nos:  Small Finds:				pot CBM  nds (specif	fauna flora flint g	glass metal burntmat.	AT .
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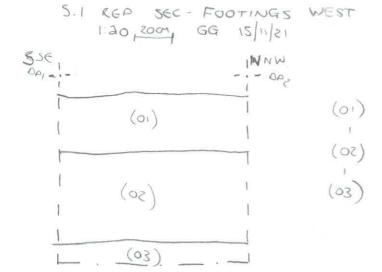
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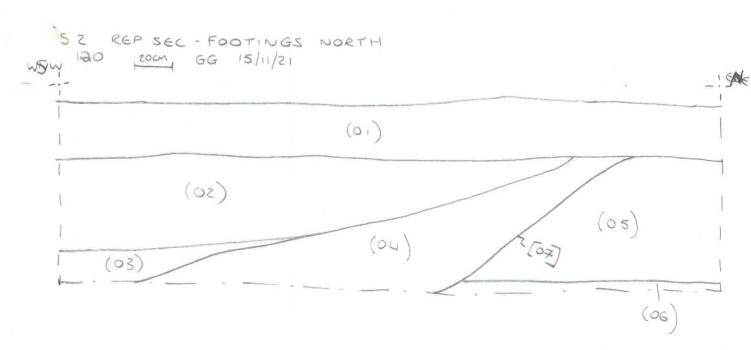
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Environmental Samples Nos: Small Finds:				pot CBM		glass metal burntmat.	
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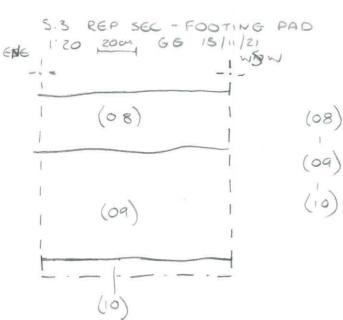
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SITE NAME: N	6B CASTLE STREET	SITE	E CODE: WACS 21	SHEET No: /	
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Site Nan	ne: 16B (ASTLE STREET	Site Co	ode: 🗸	<i>IACSTI</i>		Sheet No.	1
Section No.	Contexts/description		Scale	Drawn By/ Date	Sheet Size A1, A4 etc	Drawing Sheet Number	On plan Number
5.1	REP SEC - FOOTINGS WEST			GG 15/11/21	ALL	1	GP5
5.2	REP SEC- FOOTINGS NORTH	Н	1:20	15/11/21	Au	1	GPS
5.3	REP SEC - FOOTING PAD		1:20	GG 15/11/21	AL	1	GPS
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# **OASIS Summary for johnmoor1-502942**

OASIS ID (UID)	johnmoor1-502942
Project Name	Castle Street, Wallingford, Oxfordshire, England
Sitename	16B Castle Street, Wallingford
Sitecode	WACS 21
Project Identifier(s)	4176, WACS 21
Activity type	Watching Brief
Planning Id	P19/S2556/FUL
Reason For Investigation	Planning requirement
Organisation Responsible for work	John Moore Heritage Services
Project Dates	15-Nov-2021 - 15-Nov-2021
Location	16B Castle Street, Wallingford
	NGR : SU 60678 89676
	LL: 51.6026635708612, -1.12528164447806
	12 Fig : 460678,189676
Administrative Areas	Country : England
	County: Oxfordshire
	District : South Oxfordshire
	Parish : Wallingford
Project Methodology	The groundworks consisted of the archaeological monitoring of mechanical excavation of footings trenches and a footing pad for the carport, supplemented by hand-sampling of archaeological deposits and features.
Project Results	The watching brief identified a large cut covering the western area of the footprint of the car port. The fill contained late post-medieval pottery and building materials. A single sherd of residual medieval pottery was recovered from the latest fill of the cut. The purpose for the cut is unknown. It may have been the remains of quarrying action for sand and gravel.  Overlying the entire site was a topsoil deposit, which contained modern intrusions of concrete and shingle from the most recent use of the site, and extensive disturbance resulting from rooting action within the site.
Keywords	Sherd - MEDIEVAL - FISH Archaeological Objects Thesaurus
	Quarry - UNCERTAIN - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types
Funder	Private individual
HER	Oxfordshire HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	J Moore
HER Identifiers	HER Event No - EOX7106
Archives	

Report generated on: 08 Aug 2023, 12:42