



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

2 DEANERY COTTAGE, HIGH STREET, SONNING,

WOKINGHAM RG4 6UP

NGR SU 75729 75550

OCTOBER 2022

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SUMMARY

*John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological watching brief at 2 Deanery Cottage, High Street, Sonning, Wokingham, Berkshire (NGR SU 75729 75550). The natural geology of Seaford Chalk Formation and Newhaven Chalk Formation (undifferentiated) was not reached. Post-Medieval homogenous yellow mottled very dark brown clay loam deposit (03) was encountered instead. The depth of development impact measured 0.66m-1.50m BGL. Post-Medieval deposit (03) was heavily truncated by Modern garden terracing deposits (02), (05), **06** and (07) especially in northern north-eastern part of the development area. Remains of a possible Post-Medieval collapsed garden wall **06** were encountered and evidently used in forming the later garden terracing. Due to heavy truncation caused by the terracing deposits no finds could be safely assigned to a secure context. No other archaeological remains were encountered.*

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site was located towards the middle of High Street, Sonning on the eastern side of the road at approximately 26m aOD (NGR SU 75729 75550). The underlying geology is Seaford Chalk Formation and Newhaven Chalk Formation (undifferentiated). The site is currently a residential garden.

The site is located in area of high archaeological potential under Policy TB25 (WBC 2013, 64) and on the Policies Map for Wokingham Borough. (<https://wokingham.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=b3256c174df642999bb4d55c5993ef2e>).

1.2 Planning Background

Wokingham Borough Council has granted planning permission and listed building consent **for the proposed erection of a single storey rear extension with 1 no. rooflight and internal alterations to the existing kitchen to form a utility/cloakroom** at 2 Deanery Cottage, High Street, Sonning, Wokingham, RG4 6UP (Planning ref. 214186 and 214147). A condition has been attached to the permissions requiring a programme of archaeological work

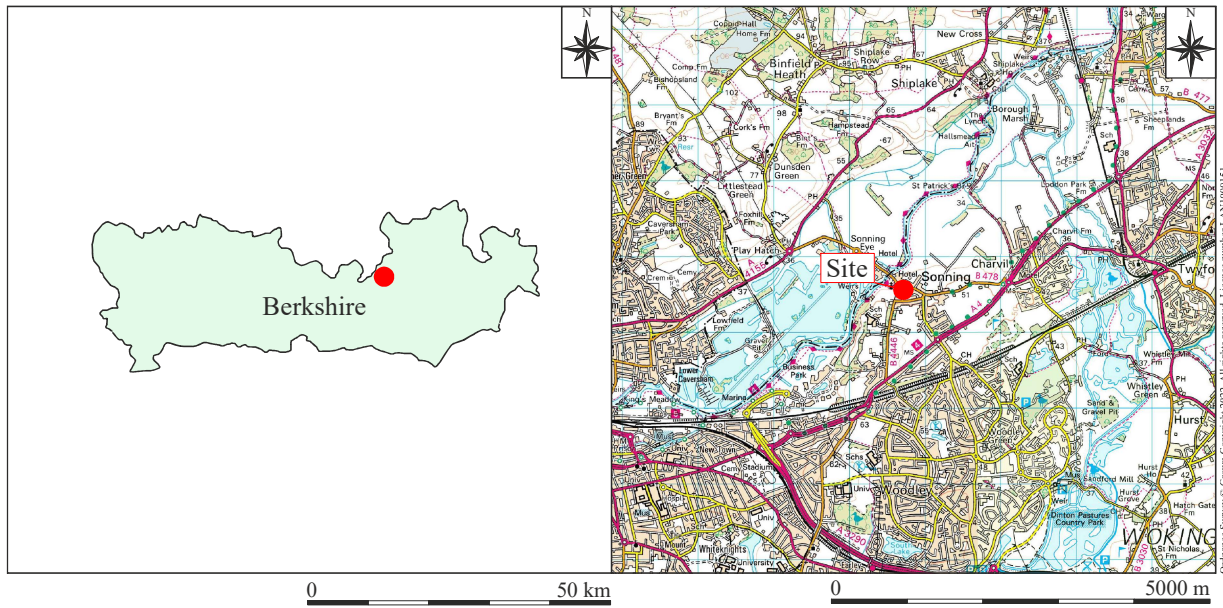
6. Scheme of Archaeological Works No development shall take place until the applicant or their agents or successors in title have secured the implementation of a phased scheme of archaeological works (which may comprise more than one phase of works) in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the planning authority. The development shall only take place in accordance with the detailed scheme approved pursuant to this condition.

Reason: The site lies within an area of archaeological potential. The condition will ensure that any archaeological remains within the site are adequately investigated and recorded in order to advance our understanding of the significance of any buried remains to be lost and in the interest of protecting the archaeological heritage of the Borough.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The majority of the below historic and archaeological background is taken from the Sonning Conservation Area Appraisal (Sonning & Sonning Eye Society/Sonning Parish Council 2015, 54-55).

The village of Sonning lies on the east bank of the River Thames. There is evidence of activity on the Valley Gravels in Prehistoric times. This includes Mesolithic and Neolithic stone tools, Bronze Age metalwork and Iron Age pottery. Stray finds of pottery and a coin also indicate a Roman presence in the area.



Key Site boundary Excavated Areas
 Archaeological features

Figure 1: Site location

Sonning is an Anglo-Saxon place name, indicating the settlement of Sunna's people. Documentary evidence for a settlement at Sonning is recorded in a charter dated AD 964. Saxon activity includes spearheads and a brooch dredged from the nearby river and archaeological investigations at St Andrew's Vicarage have also revealed a ditch containing Saxon pottery. An archaeological excavation at The Bull Inn, approximately 50m WSW of the current site, revealed a late Saxon inhumation cemetery. These burials may relate to pilgrims, clergy or monks as Sonning was an important Saxon religious centre, being a see in itself. Documentary evidence refers to a shrine to St. Sarik at Sonning in 1220. It is possible that there was an important shrine to St. Sarik at Sonning during the Saxon period. It is also possible that the Saxon Minster church was located on, or very close to the site where the burials were found, or on the site of the present Church of St Andrew which is located approximately 123m west of the site.

Investigations at the Bull Hotel revealed a ditch-type feature, two pits and a substantial hearth, containing late 12th-14th century medieval pottery all indicating either domestic or industrial use of the area.

Archaeological Investigations at St Andrew's Vicarage revealed a concentration of 'rubbish' pits and other features containing pottery and animal bone representing several phases of use from the 10th to 14th century. The artefacts are indicative of occupation of a fairly high status establishment somewhere nearby. It is suggested that the site may relate to a medieval vicarage mentioned in an undated deed, with the boundary of the medieval vicarage approximately equating with the modern property.

At Greendown, Pearson Road a medieval pit was found and a ditch, pits and gullies at Bishops Close.

From the 11th century to 1574 the manor of Sonning belonged to the Bishops of Salisbury, who maintained a residence there. The former medieval 'Palace of the Bishops of Salisbury' is located to west of the present village, beside the River Thames. It dates from the 13th century and was enlarged in the 14th and 15th centuries. When the manor of Sonning and Eye was given to the crown in 1574, the palace seems to have been allowed to fall into decay and a new house built using the old materials. This was demolished by 1760. Early 20th century excavations recorded the well preserved foundations of a complex of buildings centred on a courtyard and a forecourt to the west with a gatehouse, defended by a moat on three sides and by the river on the north. The full extent of this important high status episcopal settlement has not been fully established.

An undated ditch and chalk rubble wall, observed in a foundation trench for an extension to Bishop's Close, are thought to be associated with the palace, which may be indicative of its scale. Located to the south of this is 'Holme Park'. During the 12th century reign of Henry II a park seems to have been created (or perhaps extended) and then later was split into East Park and Holme or (Home) Park. The historic core of the village around The High Street, Thames Street and Pearson Road is lined with listed buildings of 15th to 18th century date.

Located approximately 61m NNW of the site is The Deanery built in 1901 by Lutyens. It is Grade I listed with its Grade II* listed garden which is directly opposite the site on the west side of High Street.

No. 2 Deanery Cottage forms part of an 'L' shaped group of three joined dwellings that have held Grade II Listed Building status. The main portion of this group faces west and is of an 18th century date, being mainly two-storey, built in chequer brickwork and a hipped tiled roof, thought to have been originally a single building (Deanery Cottage). The building was apparently divided into two dwellings in the latter half of the 20th century, with No. 2 Deanery Cottage being formed from the northern portion, with a brick-built end bay being added later.

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 related to early medieval and medieval activity.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Wokingham Borough Council.

It has been agreed that an archaeologist will be present on site during the course of any groundworks that has potential to reveal or disturb archaeological remains. The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2020).

3.2 Methodology

All aspects of the fieldwork were conducted in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' 'Code of Conduct' (CIfA 2019) and the 'Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief' (CIfA 2020).

All recording followed CIfA's 'Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief' (2020) and the methodology outlined in the Written Scheme of Investigation (John Moore Heritage Services 2022) All contexts were given unique numbers. All excavated contexts were recorded in plan and section with details of location, composition, shape, dimensions, relationships, finds and samples, and cross referenced to other contexts where appropriate. All recording was undertaken on John Moore Heritage Services pro forma paper sheets. Digital images were taken with a

camera with a resolution of at least 10 Megapixels and followed Historic England guidance (2015).

Post-excavation plan of the works including spot heights and an overall site plan, were recorded on drafting film at a scale of 1:20. The site plan is accurately linked to the National Grid.

Excavation works were carried out with a 1t tracked excavator suitably equipped with a 0.50m wide toothless ditching bucket and by hand where machine excavation was not possible. Machine excavation was subject to constant archaeological monitoring whilst hand excavations were monitored intermittently.

Monitored works comprised of excavation of 0.5m wide 0.66-1.5m deep footings in back garden and ground reduction up to 0.70m in the centre of the extension. The entire area of impact measured 3.48m long by 4.60m wide by 0.66-1.50m deep. Depth of excavated footings varied from 0.66m deep in the west south-western end dropping to 1.50m in the north north-west.

The excavated spoil was visually scanned for any finds, metal detector survey was also carried out. Finds of modern date were noted and discarded on site.

4 RESULTS

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 area of development was a terraced residential garden (Plates 1 and 2). The underlying geology of Seaford Chalk Formation and Newhaven Chalk Formation (undifferentiated) was not reached in the entirety of the development area. Post-medieval yellow mottled very dark brown homogenous clay loam (03) was encountered instead. No finds could be safely allocated to the context (03) due to heavy disturbance but it can be postulated that deposit is of Post-Medieval date.



Plate 1: Area of development, pre-ex, looking north-west.

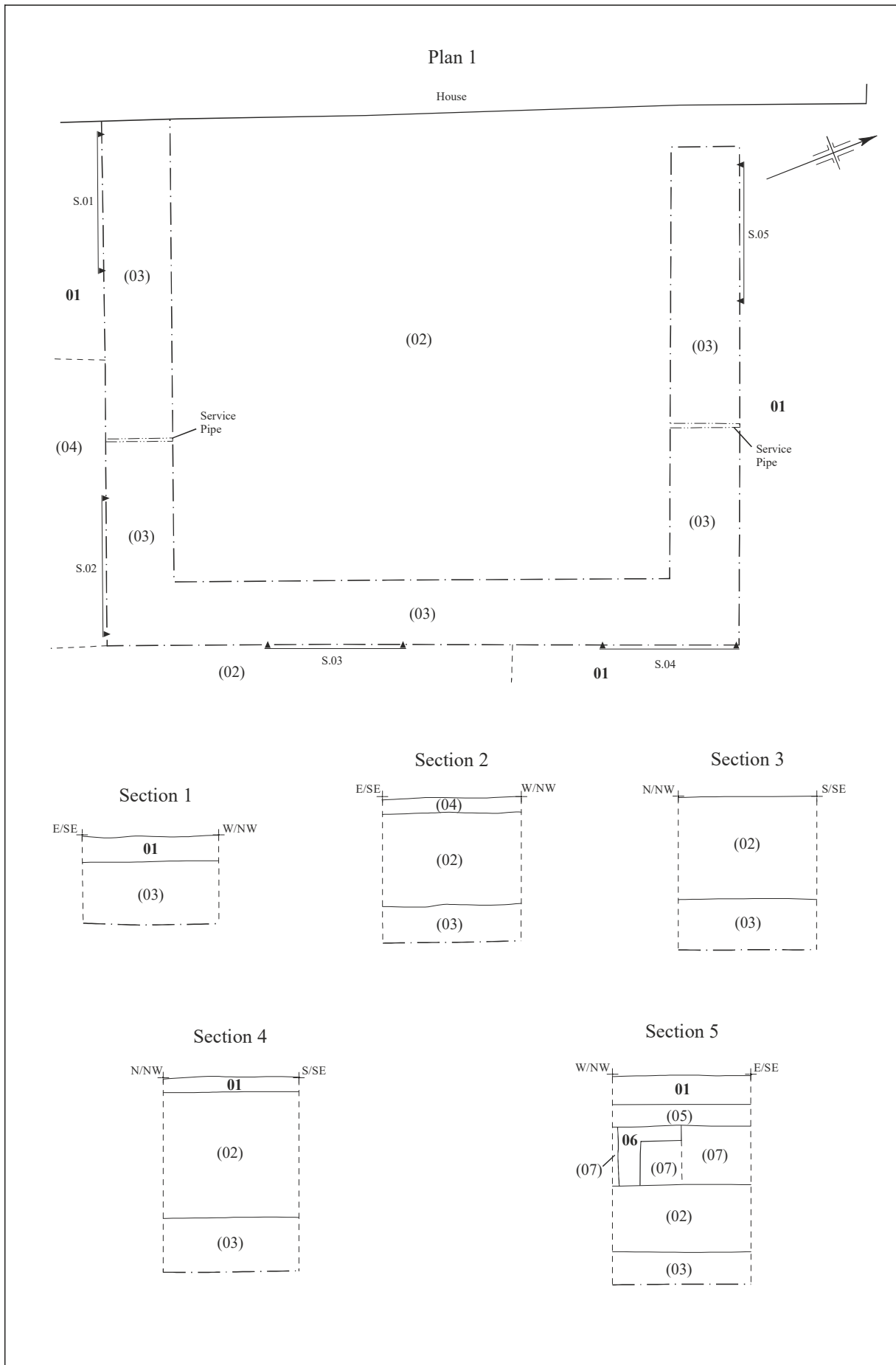


Figure 2: Plan of excavated area and sections



Plate 2: Area of development, post-ex panorama, looking north north-

In the west south-western end of the development area (Plate 3) the stratigraphy comprised 0.26-0.46m thick deposit of homogenous yellow mottled very dark brown clay loam (03) which was overlain in the north-western end by 0.18m thick paving slabs (01); in the south-eastern end deposit (03) was overlain by 0.66m thick deposit of modern mixed soils (02) which in turn was overlain by 0.11m of turf (04). The impact depth in this area measured 0.66-1.03m BGL (below ground level). At the eastern most extent of the site, the footings (Plate 4) measured 1.03m BGL in the southern end and 1.40m BGL north north-eastern end. Stratigraphy comprised a 0.37m-0.39m thick deposit of homogenous yellow mottled very dark brown clay loam (03) which was overlain by 0.74m-0.91m of modern mixed soils (02). Modern deposit (02) was overlain by 0.10m thick paving slab (01) in the north north-eastern end.



Plate 3: Sections 1 and 2, post-ex, looking south south-west.



Plate 4: Sections 3 and 4, post-ex, looking east.



Plate 5: Section 5, showing collapsed wall 06, looking north-east.

The northern most part of the footings (Plate 5) measured 1.50m BGL. Stratigraphy comprised 0.23m of homogenous yellow mottled very dark brown clay loam (03) which was overlain by 0.49m of modern mixed soils (02). Deposit (02) was overlain by 0.42m thick layer of rubble and mixed soil (07) that contained structural remains/collapsed wall **06** (Plate 5). Structural remains **06** measured 0.16m-0.46m wide and 0.43m deep. The remaining six course collapsed wall **06** was most likely part of the earlier garden layout, but have been demolished in order to build up the ground to establish a terraced garden. No further continuation of structural remains **06** was encountered. Structural remains **06** and deposit (07) were in turn overlain by 0.15m thick deposit of modern builders' sand which was overlain by two layers of 0.20m thick of paving slabs (01).

The centre of the footings were reduced by 0.70m BGL, to the depth of modern mixed soil deposit (02), no archaeological remains were encountered. A modern domestic water pipe was also uncovered and it continued across the development area (Figure 2).

5 DISCUSSION

The impact depth of development ranged from 0.66m-1.50m BGL. The natural geology of Seaford Chalk Formation and Newhaven Chalk Formation (undifferentiated) was not encountered. A deposit of homogenous yellow mottled very dark brown clay loam (03) was encountered instead of the natural geology. No finds could be securely attributed to deposit (03) but it can be postulated that it is of Post-medieval date. Deposits (02), (05), **06** and (07) are Modern and were deposited in order to form a terraced garden, most likely in the latter half of the 20th century. Modern terracing deposits (02), (05), **06** and (07) heavily truncate Post-medieval deposit (03) especially in the northern north-eastern part of the development area. The structural remains **06** encountered within Section 5 (Figure 2) were most likely part of

the earlier garden arrangement and have been demolished in order to form a terraced garden. The continuation of **06** could not be established.

6 ARCHIVE

Digitised copies of all the primary records, 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 johnmoor1-510240), 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 4693) and will be made available to the public upon request (to admin@jmheritageservices.co.uk). 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.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

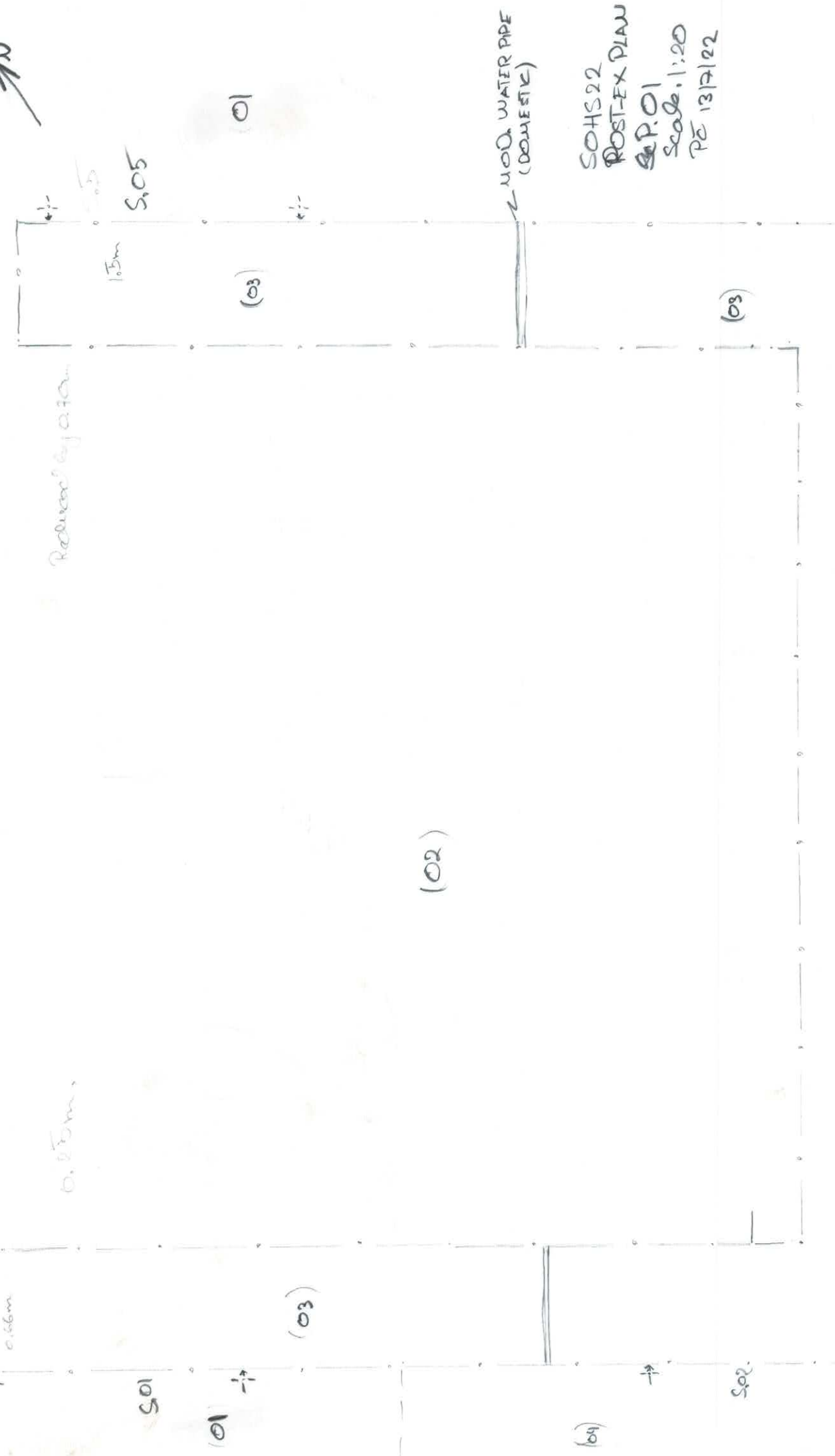
Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2020 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 2019 *Code of Conduct*

Historic England, 2015. *Digital Image Capture and File Storage: Guidelines for Best Practice*.

John Moore Heritage Services, 2022 214186 & 214147 – 2 Deanery Cottage, High Street, Sonning, Wokingham, RG4 6UP. *Archaeological Watching Brief Written Scheme of Investigation* (Unpublished client report)

HOUSE



SOHS22
 POST-EX PLAN
 S.P. 01
 Scale: 1:20
 PE 13/7/22

SHEET 01

5.04

1.04m

1.0m

5.08

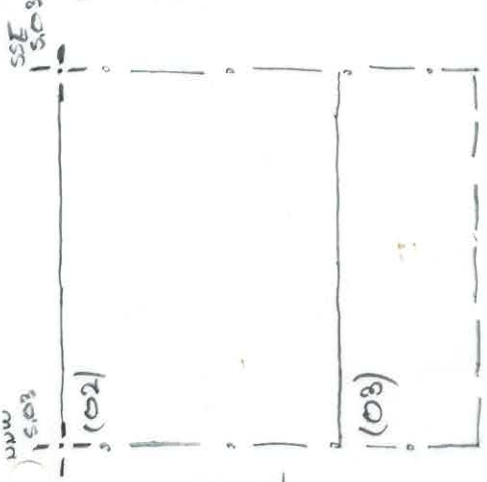
1.09m

1.09m

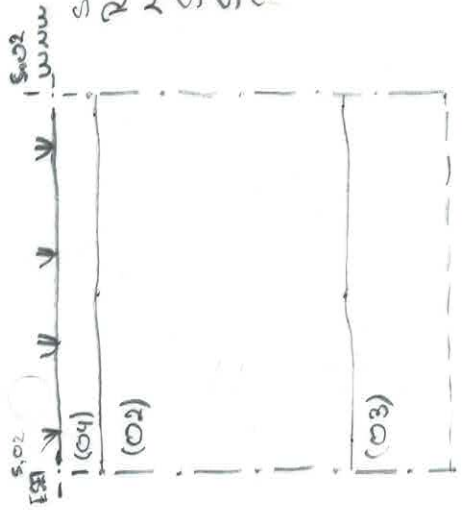
5.04

SHEET 02

SOHS 22
REP. SEC. III
NW FACING
S. 03
Scale 1:20
PE 13/7/22



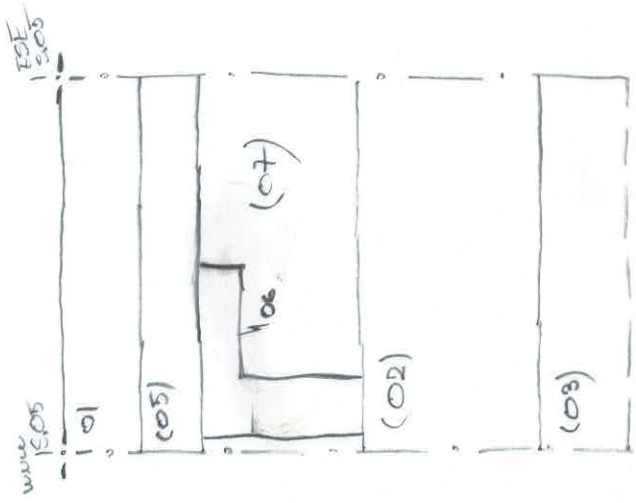
SOHS 22
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NNE FACING
S. 02
Scale 1:20
PE 13/7/22



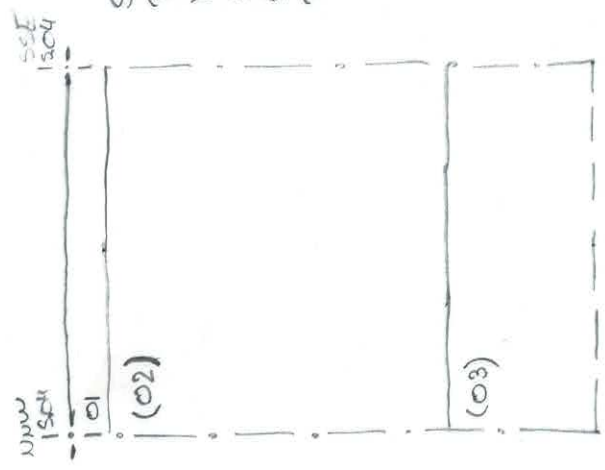
SOHS 22
REP. SEC. I
NNE FACING
S. 01
Scale 1:20
PE 13/7/22



SOHS 22
REP. SEC. V
SE FACING
S. 05
Scale 1:20
PE 13/7/22



SOHS 22
REP. SEC. IV
NNE FACING
S. 04
Scale 1:20
PE 13/7/22



Summary for johnmoor1-510240

OASIS ID (UID)	johnmoor1-510240
Project Name	Sonning, 2 Deanery Cottage
Sitename	2 Deanery Cottage, Sonning
Activity type	WATCHING BRIEF
Project Identifier(s)	SOHS 22, 4693
Planning Id	214147, 214186
Reason For Investigation	Planning requirement
Organisation Responsible for work	John Moore Heritage Services
Project Dates	27-Jun-2022 - 13-Jul-2022
Location	2 Deanery Cottage, Sonning NGR : SU 75729 75550 LL : 51.4738543140302, -0.911036605644712 12 Fig : 475729,175550
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Berkshire District : Wokingham Parish : Sonning
Project Methodology	Excavation works were carried out with a 1t tracked excavator suitably equipped with a 0.50m wide toothless ditching bucket and by hand where machine excavation was not possible. Machine excavation was subject to constant archaeological monitoring whilst hand excavations were monitored intermittently. Monitored works comprised of excavation of 0.5m wide 0.66-1.5m deep footings in back garden and ground reduction up to 0.70m in the centre of the extension. The entire area of impact measured 3.48m long by 4.60m wide by 0.66-1.50m deep. Depth of excavated footings varied from 0.66m deep in the west south-western end dropping to 1.50m in the north north-west. The excavated spoil was visually scanned for any finds, metal detector survey was also carried out. Finds of modern date were noted and discarded on site.
Project Results	The impact depth of development ranged from 0.66m-1.50m BGL. The natural geology of Seaford Chalk Formation and Newhaven Chalk Formation (undifferentiated) was not encountered. A deposit of homogenous yellow mottled very dark brown clay loam (03) was encountered instead of the natural geology. No finds could be securely attributed to deposit (03) but it can be postulated that it is of Post-medieval date. Deposits (02), (05), 06 and (07) are Modern and were deposited in order to form a terraced garden, most likely in the latter half of the 20th century. Modern terracing deposits (02), (05), 06 and (07) heavily truncate Post-medieval deposit (03) especially in the northern north-eastern part of the development area. The structural remains 06 encountered within Section 5 (Figure 2) were most likely part of the earlier garden arrangement and have been demolished in order to form a terraced garden. The continuation of 06 could not be established.
Keywords	
Funder	
HER	Berkshire Archaeology HER - unRev - STANDARD

Person Responsible for work	P, Cepauskas
HER Identifiers	
Archives	