



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

RECTORY HOUSE, CHURCH LANE,

WARFIELD, BERKSHIRE

SU 87995 72155

On behalf of

Mr. A. Fall

September 2008

REPORT FOR Mr. A. Fall
100 Archel Road,
West Kensington,
London
W14 9QP

PREPARED BY David Gilbert

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ENQUIRES TO John Moore Heritage Services
Hill View
Woodperry Road
Beckley
Oxfordshire OX3 9UZ
Tel/Fax 01865 358300
Email: info@jmheritageservices.co.uk

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Summary

A watching brief was conducted by John Moore Heritage Services during the ground work for a new swimming pool at Rectory House, Church Lane, Warfield. An undated hedge-line and a small pit were recorded that may be medieval, as well as a large pit probably associated with the construction of the house.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site is located behind St Michael and All Angels Church, Warfield. It is accessed from Church Road via a lane to the west of the church (SU 87995 72155). The site lies at approximately 61m OD and the underlying geology is shown as London Clay. The development was carried out within a domestic garden area.

1.2 Planning Background

A planning application number 08/00381 had been submitted to Bracknell Forest Borough Council to erect a two storey side extension and uncovered swimming pool: entrance steps to the north elevation, following demolition of the existing extension, erection of stone steps and terrace to south elevation. A condition was attached to the planning permission requiring the implementation of an archaeological watching brief during groundworks. This is in line with PPG 16 and Local Plan policies.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The site is located in an area of archaeological potential having a particular significance during the medieval period. Warfield is first mentioned as *Warwelt* in Domesday in 1086. Medieval and post-medieval pottery has been recovered from a cable trench around St Michaels Church Parish Rooms during a watching brief in 2006.

St Michael and All Angels Church is a listed building originally of 13th century date with later additions and refurbishments. The nearby St Michaels Cottage is a grade II listed building of 16th century or earlier date and the Parish Rooms is also a grade II listed building of 17th century date.

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 or destroy archaeological remains.

In particular:

- to record any remains associated with the medieval settlement

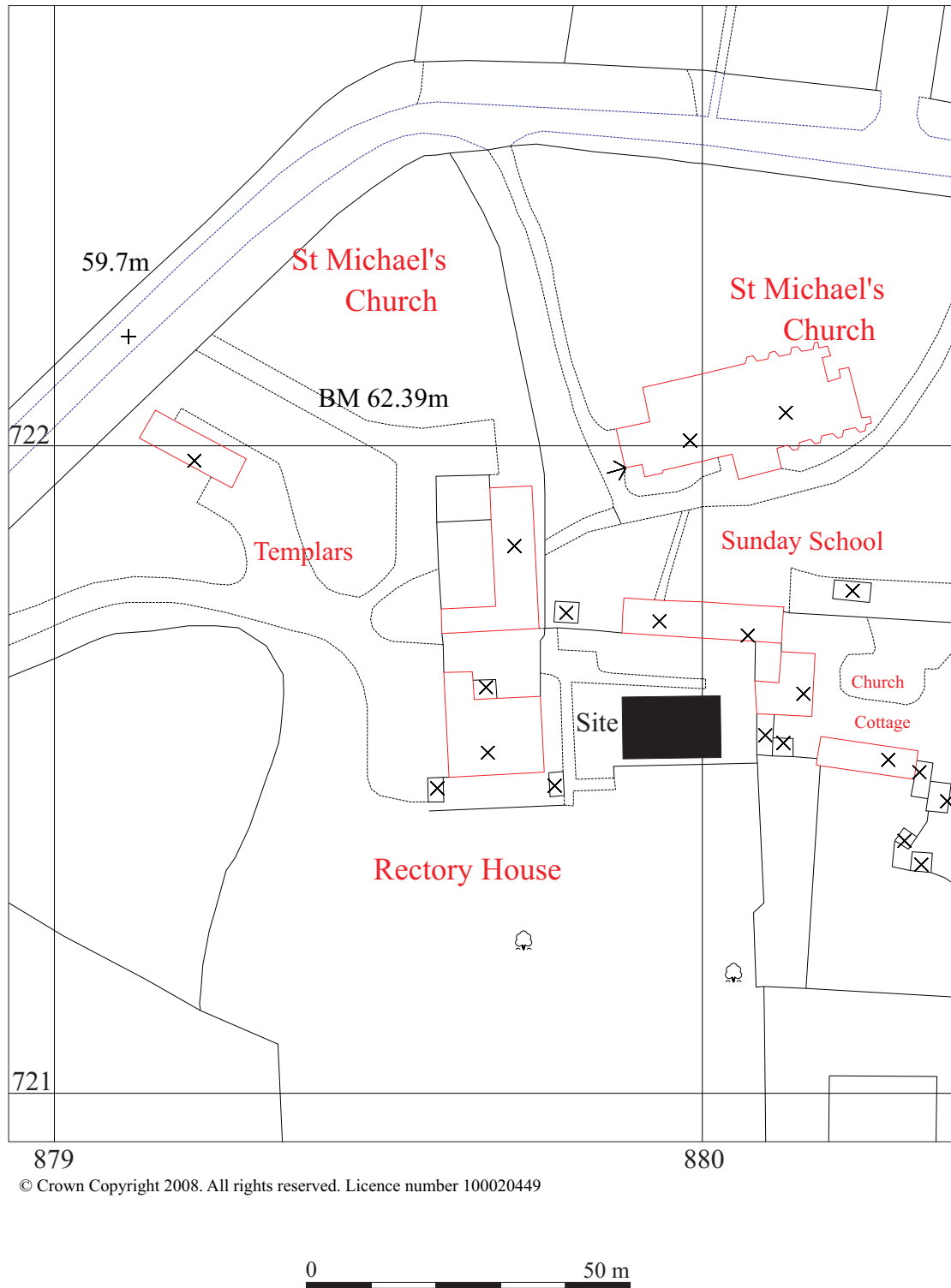


Figure 1. Site location

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Berkshire Archaeology. 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 and possible.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994).

3.2 Methodology

All groundwork was monitored during the strip, map and record exercise. This work was conducted using a mechanical excavator employing a toothless 1.8m ditching bucket for soil stripping to the natural horizon.

4 RESULTS (Figure 2)

All features were assigned individual context numbers. This number covered both the feature cut and the fill for pits, unless the feature was sample excavated by hand. Context numbers in [] indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material. A general description of the feature fills is given.

The natural geological deposit in the area was a mottled orange-grey clay (London Clay) with localised patches of orange-grey-yellow clayey sand with gravel (03).

To the east of the area was a linear feature aligned north to south that showed heavy signs of root action; this was interpreted as an old hedge-line. It was up to 0.1m deep and contained a very loose wet grey-brown clayey-sand with gravel.

Cut into the natural (03) was a small circular pit [04]. It was 0.6m in diameter and 0.3m deep with steep sides and a slightly uneven base. This was filled with a dark grey clayey-sand (05) with charcoal flecks and the odd flint pebble.

Above both features was 0.2m of brown-grey sandy clay (02) with the odd charcoal fleck and small pebble. This layer spread across the entire area.

Cut into this was a large oval or sub-rectangular pit [06] that was at least 3.5m by 4m in plan and over 0.2m deep. It was not fully excavated, but contained a dark grey-black sandy clay with some ash and charcoal and considerable quantities of roof tile and construction debris.

Overlying this was the topsoil of dark brown sandy loam (01) that was 0.65m thick. This represented a horticultural soil for a kitchen garden.

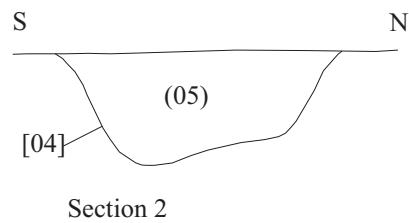
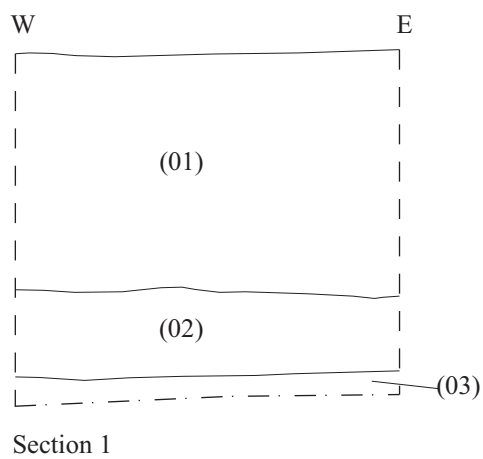
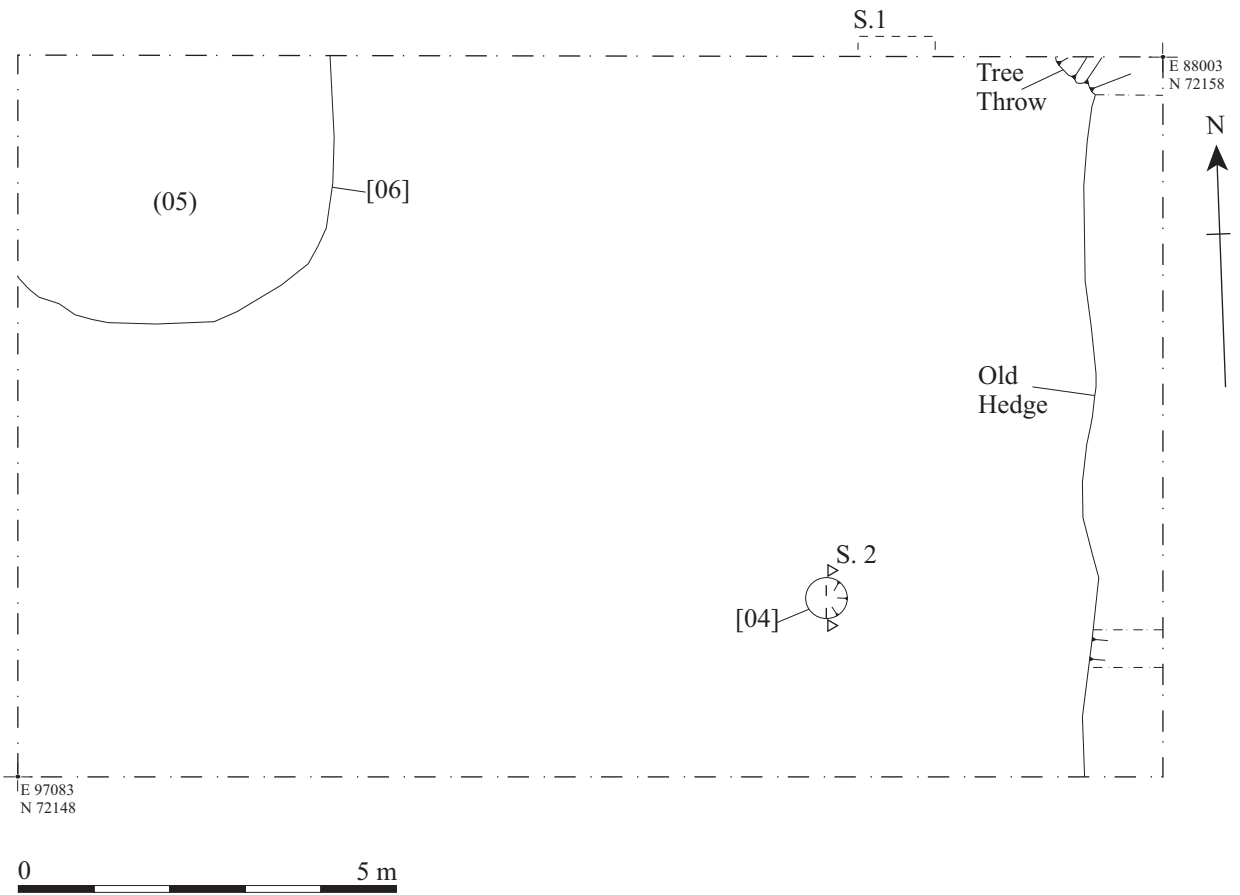


Figure 2. Plan and sections

5 FINDS

5.1 Tile

Samples of tile were taken from (01) and (07). The type and fabric of these matched those seen on rectory House and other buildings in the area.

5.2 Environmental Remains

Due to the nature of the deposits encountered no environmental samples were taken.

6 DISCUSSION

The large pit [06] located is probably associated with either the construction of Rectory House or later refurbishment of it or adjoining buildings.

The small pit [04] and hedge-line that were sealed by layer (02) and had not been disturbed by kitchen garden activities dating from 1842 onwards, could possibly be of medieval date. Unfortunately no dating evidence was found to confirm this.

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 records

Physical record

Finds

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the Reading Museum.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1994 *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief*. Revised Sept 2001