



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION**

**AT**

**BERRY COTTAGE, 15 TOWNSEND,  
HADDENHAM, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

**(NGR SU7407 0920)**

*On behalf of*

*Mrs M Harrison*

**June 2009**

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## **Summary**

*An archaeological investigation was conducted to the rear of 15 Townsend, Haddenham by John Moore Heritage Services. This comprised a small area excavation that located two post-medieval postholes, covered by a sequence of later garden soils.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

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

The site is located to the rear of 15 Townsend in Haddenham (NGR SP 7407 0920). The proposed extension is approximately 9m in length and 4.5m in width. The underlying solid geology is Portland Stone formation (mainly limestone) close to the junction with Purbeck Limestone.

### **1.2 Planning Background**

Aylesbury Vale District Council has granted planning permission for the erection of a replacement single storey extension to the rear of the existing house at 15 Townsend, Haddenham. The extension is significantly larger than the current single storey structure to the rear of the house. A condition has been attached to the permission for a programme of archaeological work due to the site's potential to contain archaeological remains. This is in line with PPG 16 and Local Plan policies.

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

The application was considered to be in an area of archaeological potential. A recent study of Haddenham (Beckley and Green 2008) has been undertaken for the Buckinghamshire Historic Town Project suggesting that Townsend may have been one of a series of green-based settlements along a north-south axis between Church End and Townsend that date to the late Saxon period. Recent excavation at Townsend (No. 5) has produced evidence of 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> century activity along with some Saxon pottery evidence. The listed building at 15 Townsend is also a 15<sup>th</sup> century witchert house.

There are modest quantities of prehistoric flintwork recovered from the north and west of Haddenham (HER 4401, 4241). An Iron Age brooch fibulae (HER 2551) was recovered from a garden off the High Street. These finds indicate prehistoric activity in the area, albeit at a low density. Roman material is also scattered to the north and west again in low densities. An excavation at Church End in 1979 revealed a number of unstratified Roman pottery sherds (Beckley & Green 2008).

Beckley and Green (2008) have noted that, "documentary evidence indicates that the original church in Haddenham was a late Saxon Minster with a sizeable estate. However limited excavation within the grounds of the church in 2002 has so far proved little direct evidence to support the presence of an early church. Small quantities of Saxon pottery have been found at three sites in the area immediately surrounding the church indicating a possible focus of activity at Church End. A few sherds of St. Neots type ware have also been found at Church End with a single

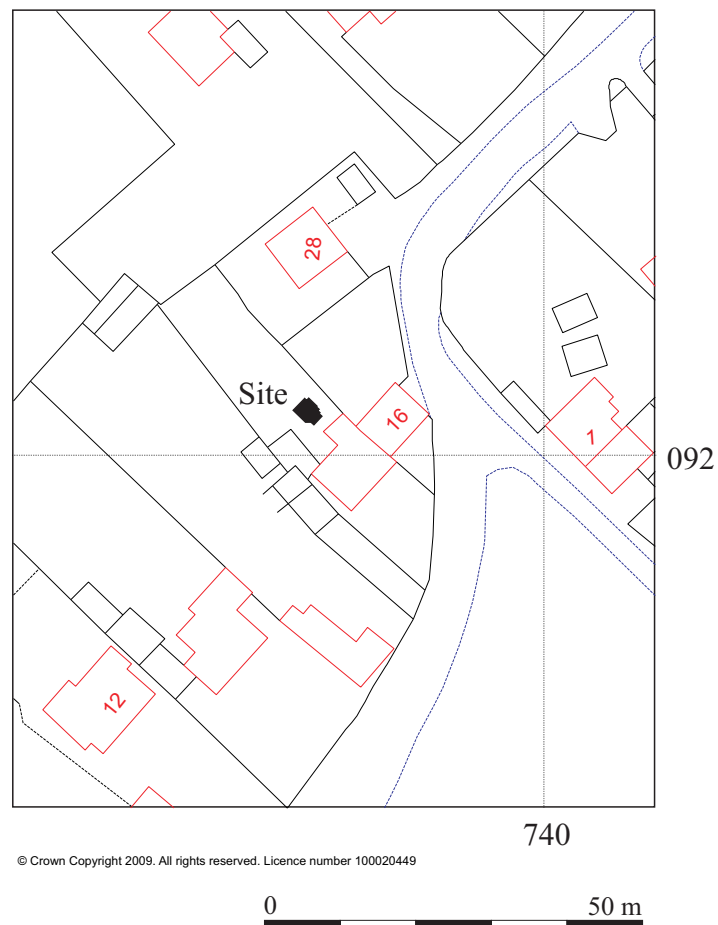


Figure 1. Site Location

outlier at Towns End”.

The recent evaluation at 5 Townsend revealed significant evidence of 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> century settlement activity including numerous pits and postholes along with late Saxon to post-medieval pottery (Wallis 2007).

The house at 15 Townsend is a listed building constructed of Witchert material, and is one of seven 15<sup>th</sup> century listed buildings in Haddenham. The village is distinctive in its extensive use of Witchert in its buildings and boundary walls. The Historic Environment record records a post-medieval well at 12 Townsend (HER 1043401).

During the reign of Edward the Confessor, Haddenham was held by Earl Tostig the brother of Harold. The Domesday Book records that in 1086 it was a settlement of 40 villagers with 16 smallholders and 15 slaves in the hands of Archbishop Lanfranc. At the request of Lanfranc William II Rufus gave the manor to the Priory of Rochester. Later Bishop Ernulph (d.1194) gave the monks of Rochester the church of Haddenham.

In 1294 Edward I granted a charter for a Thursday market to Rochester Priory and a three day fair for the festival of the Assumption; however in 1301 this market was put down as it was found to prejudice the market at Thame. Haddenham remained in the possession of the Priory until the Dissolution, apart from a short time when Edward III had control early in his reign before it passed back to the priory. In May 1539, the Prior of St Andrew's, Rochester, obtained a licence to alienate the manor to Sir Edward North. Henry VIII confirmed this, but in 1543 he obtained possession from Sir Edward North and his wife. It was then leased out from time to time by the crown until the reign of James I.

James I assigned Haddenham to Henry Prince of Wales in 1611, until his death. The rental income was then paid to Prince Charles from 1617. The town of Haddenham has suffered at least two major fires destroying 30 houses in 1701 and at least 60 in 1760.

The Jeffrey's map of 1770 shows buildings in Towns End but not on this site, although this must have been an omission. The Building is seen on the 1820s OS 2'' Surveyors map. The 1st edition 1:10,560 OS map of 1885 shows that a well is noted to the rear of the property.

## **2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

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

### Stage 1

To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the site.

To aim to gather sufficient information to generate a reliable predictive model of the extent, character, date state of preservation and depth of burial of important archaeological remains within the study area. Particular objectives are:

- Establish whether there is evidence for Saxon and medieval remains at 15 Townsend in order to further the research agenda for Haddenham defined in the town Report (Beckley and Green 2008)

## Stage 2

If required, should, subject to the results of the trial trenching seek to establish, as far as practical, the chronology, plan form and function of archaeological features affected by the development.

## **3 STRATEGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (BCAS). 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**

The Stage 1 work comprised an evaluation by the mechanical excavation of a single trench supplemented by limited hand investigation of any archaeological deposits.

The trench was originally designed to be 5m in length and 1.6m wide and located within the footprint of the proposed extension. However, due to constraints on site this was modified to be roughly 3.4m by 2.6m (Fig. 1). This gave a similar sized area within the footprint of the proposed extension.

Alexander Kidd and Ruth Beckley of Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (BCAS) monitored the work. They deemed that Stage 2 of the work programme would not be required.

## **4 RESULTS (Figure 2)**

### **4.1 Excavation Results**

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 ( ) show feature fills or deposits of material.

The natural geological deposit in the area was a pale yellow-grey clay containing limestone fragments (04) that was related to either the Portland Stone or Purbeck Limestone formations in the area.

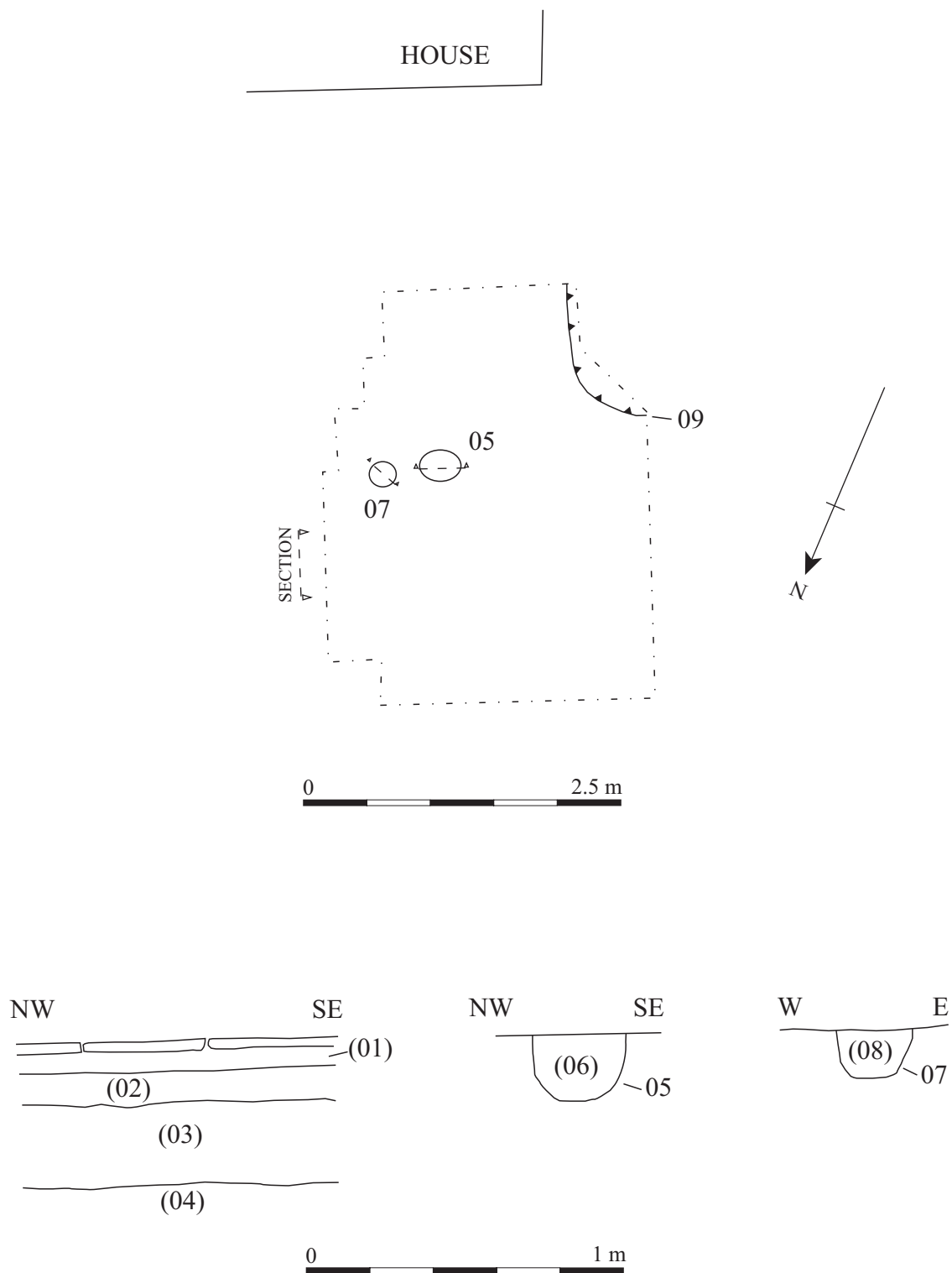


Figure 2. Plan and Sections



Above this was a 0.25m thick subsoil of mid yellow-grey silt-clay (03) containing a small quantity of stone fragments and flecked with charcoal. Above this was a layer up to 0.1m thick of grey-black silty-loam (02) that contained brick fragments.

These layers appear to represent a buried soil sequence for the previous land use as a garden, before being converted into a paved patio area.

Apparently cut into the subsoil (03) were two small pits or postholes. The fill of these was indistinguishable from the subsoil, but the pottery recovered from the base of both would suggest that they were cut from this level.

The first posthole 05 was roughly circular in plan 0.3m in diameter, with a U-shaped profile that extended 0.2m into the natural (04). It was filled with a mid yellow-grey silt-clay (06) flecked with charcoal and containing a small quantity of stone and brick fragments probably used as packing.

The second posthole 07 was also roughly circular in plan and 0.2m in diameter with a U-shaped profile that extended 0.15m into the natural (04). It was filled (08) with a similar material to that seen in the first posthole 05. This fill (08) also displayed small packing stones.

Also cut 09 into the subsoil was a relatively modern soak-away. This appeared to be roughly rectangular in plan with a rounded corner. It was filled with stone rubble and capped with corrugated tin sheets.

The uppermost layer was the modern flagstone of the patio area. These stones were about 0.03m thick and sat upon a 0.07m thick coarse orange sand bedding-layer (01).

## 4.2 Reliability of Results and Techniques

Considerable bioturbation was noted on both the surface of the natural (04) and throughout the buried subsoil (03). While this was noted it was not thought to have impinged upon the identification of archaeological features.

## 5 FINDS

### 5.1 Pottery

The material was recorded using the coding system of the Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit type-series (e.g. Mynard and Zeepvat 1992; Zeepvat et al. 1994), as follows:

**PM8:** *Red Earthenware*. 17<sup>th</sup> century +.

**PM25:** *White Earthenware*. Late 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Sherds of red earthenware were recovered from the subsoil (03), and white earthenware from the buried topsoil (02). A single sherd of each of the types was also recovered from both fills of the postholes (06) and (08).

## 5.2 Environmental Remains

No environmental samples were taken due to the nature of the deposits encountered.

## 6 DISCUSSION

The area of investigation revealed a buried old garden soil beneath the present patio area. The two postholes 05 and 07 are probably related to garden features, either a fence-line, prop for a washing-line or the like. It is unlikely that these are supports for saplings or bushes as no planting pits were noted nearby.

## 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 record

#### Physical record

Finds

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the County Museums' Store.

## 8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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