

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**AT**

**IVYDENE, HIGH STREET, SOUTH NEWINGTON,**

**NEAR BANBURY, OXFORDSHIRE**

**SP 4072 3318**

*On behalf of*

*Mr M J Maskey*

**JULY 2009**

**REPORT FOR** Mr M J Maskey  
Ivydene  
High Street  
South Newington  
Banbury  
Oxfordshire  
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**FIELDWORK** 8<sup>th</sup> –9<sup>th</sup> June 2009

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## **Summary**

*John Moore Heritage Services undertook an archaeological watching brief between the 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> June 2009 as part of a planning application at Ivydene, High Street, South Newington near Banbury. The work revealed part of the remnants of a former cottage, including the remains of a fireplace and flooring whose walls were incorporated into part of the property boundary for Ivydene Cottage. An associated well was also uncovered beyond the rear of the former property.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

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

The development site is located approximately 150m south of the church of St Peter in South Newington (NGR SP 4072 3318) on the western side of the High Street in the centre of the village. South Newington itself lies south of the River Swere and approximately 3.4km southwest of Bloxham. It is situated at about 122m OD and the underlying geology is Chipping Norton Limestone. This was confirmed during the exercise. The development was within a small parcel of land formerly used as part of a garden area prior to the development

### **1.2 Planning Background**

In September 2007 planning permission was sought from Cherwell District Council to demolish an existing garage and to construct a new garden store and re-site access (07/01789/F). This was withdrawn and a new application was submitted (07/02269/F). Planning permission was subsequently granted but due to the potential of the site to contain archaeological remains a condition was attached requiring that an archaeological watching brief should be maintained during the period of the groundworks. This was in line with PPG16 and Local Plan policies.

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

The application area is located in an area of archaeological potential within the historic core of the village 150m south of the church. Two 17<sup>th</sup> century listed buildings are located 50m to the north of the site, Copper Beach Cottage (County Sites and Monuments Record PRN 17799) and Exeter Cottage (PRN 17796) and it is likely that further buildings of this date and earlier would have existed along this road.

Early maps from the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century show a series of houses along both sides of the High Street and the first edition OS Map shows a cottage located on the site of the development area. This is likely to be of a similar date to the listed buildings.

## **2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

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

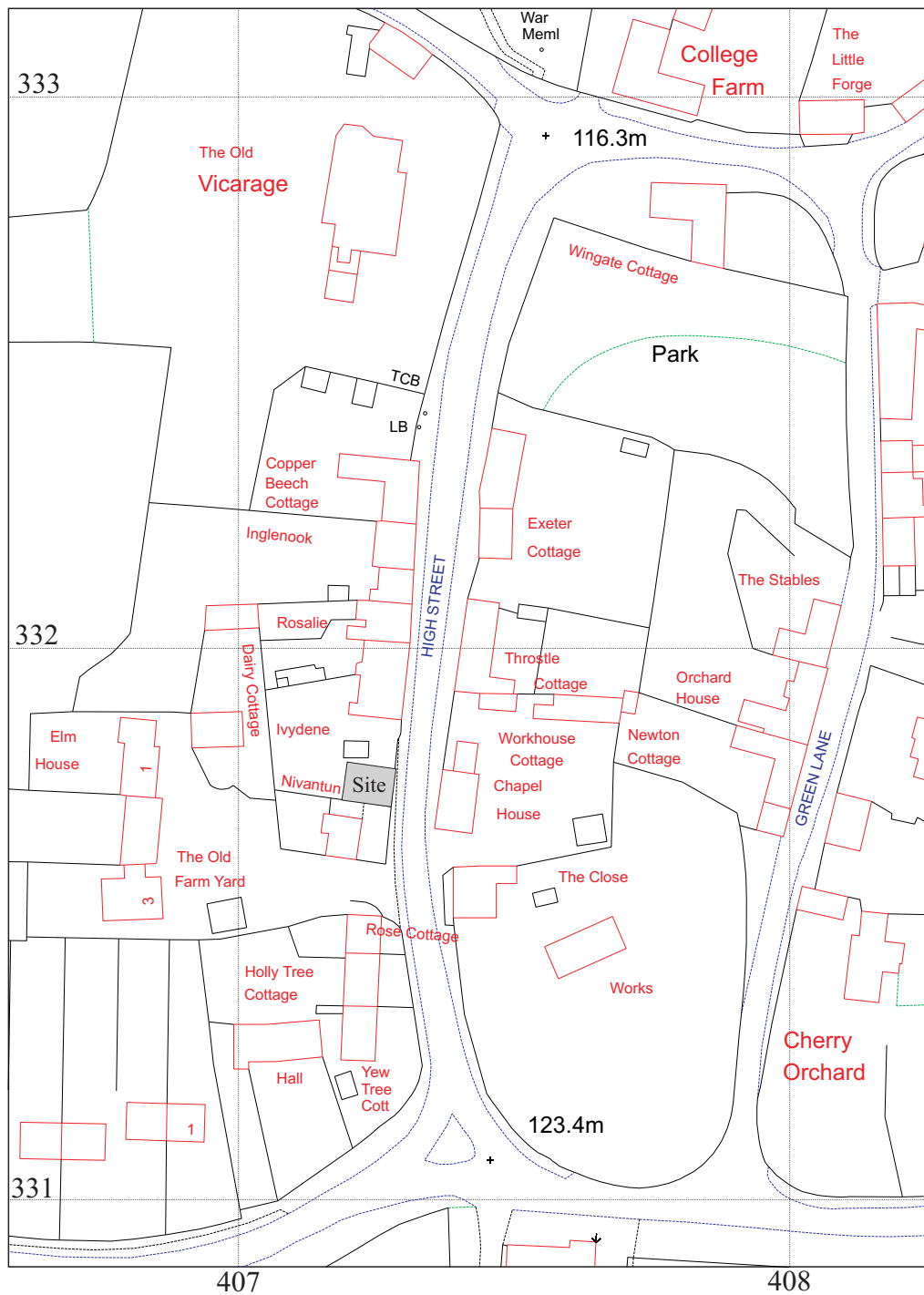


Figure 1. Site location

- To identify and record any archaeological remains exposed during the development works

In particular:

- To record any remains of the suspected 17<sup>th</sup> century building in the development area and any earlier activity

### **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 on behalf of Cherwell District Council and agreed with by the client. 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**

An archaeologist was on site during all operations that had the potential to disturb or destroy archaeological remains during the construction of the new garden store and the levelling of the site. This included surface stripping onto natural geological horizons and overburden removal once any topsoil had partially been removed by a 360° type tracked excavator. The demolition works was not monitored.

Archaeological features or other remains were recorded by written, drawn and photographic record. All artefacts collected were noted but not retained. This included concentrations of building material.

### **4 RESULTS**

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers in ( ) indicate feature fills or deposits of material. Those without brackets refer to features themselves.

#### **4.1 Results (Figure 2)**

The natural geological deposit encountered was a mid brown-orange clayey sand with limestone inclusions and patches of mid orange-yellow sand (03). Above this was subsoil (02) composed of a mid orange-yellow sandy, silty clay 0.15m thick seen only to the west of the site in previously undisturbed ground. Sealing this was a dark grey-brown silty clay topsoil (01) which had been mostly removed prior to the investigation but from available sections was observed to range in thickness between 0.10m in the previously undisturbed area to the west to c. 0.25m elsewhere.

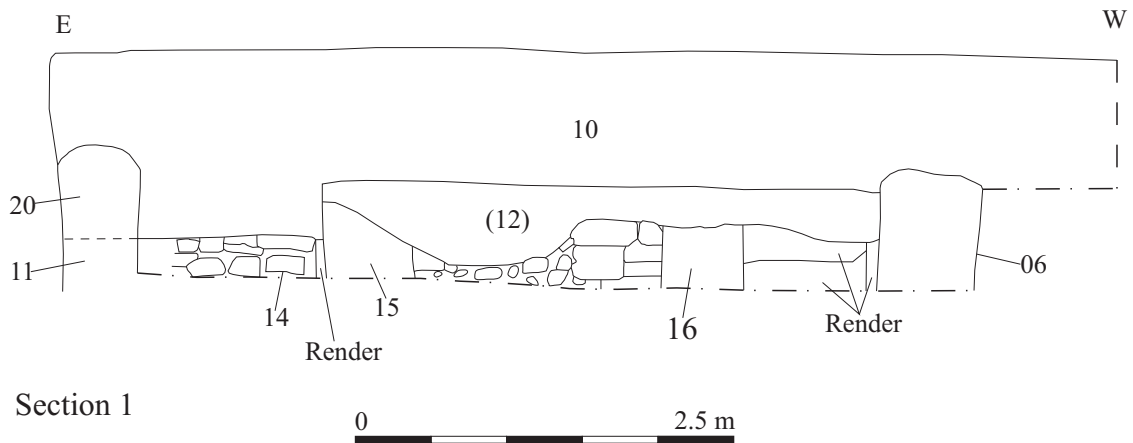
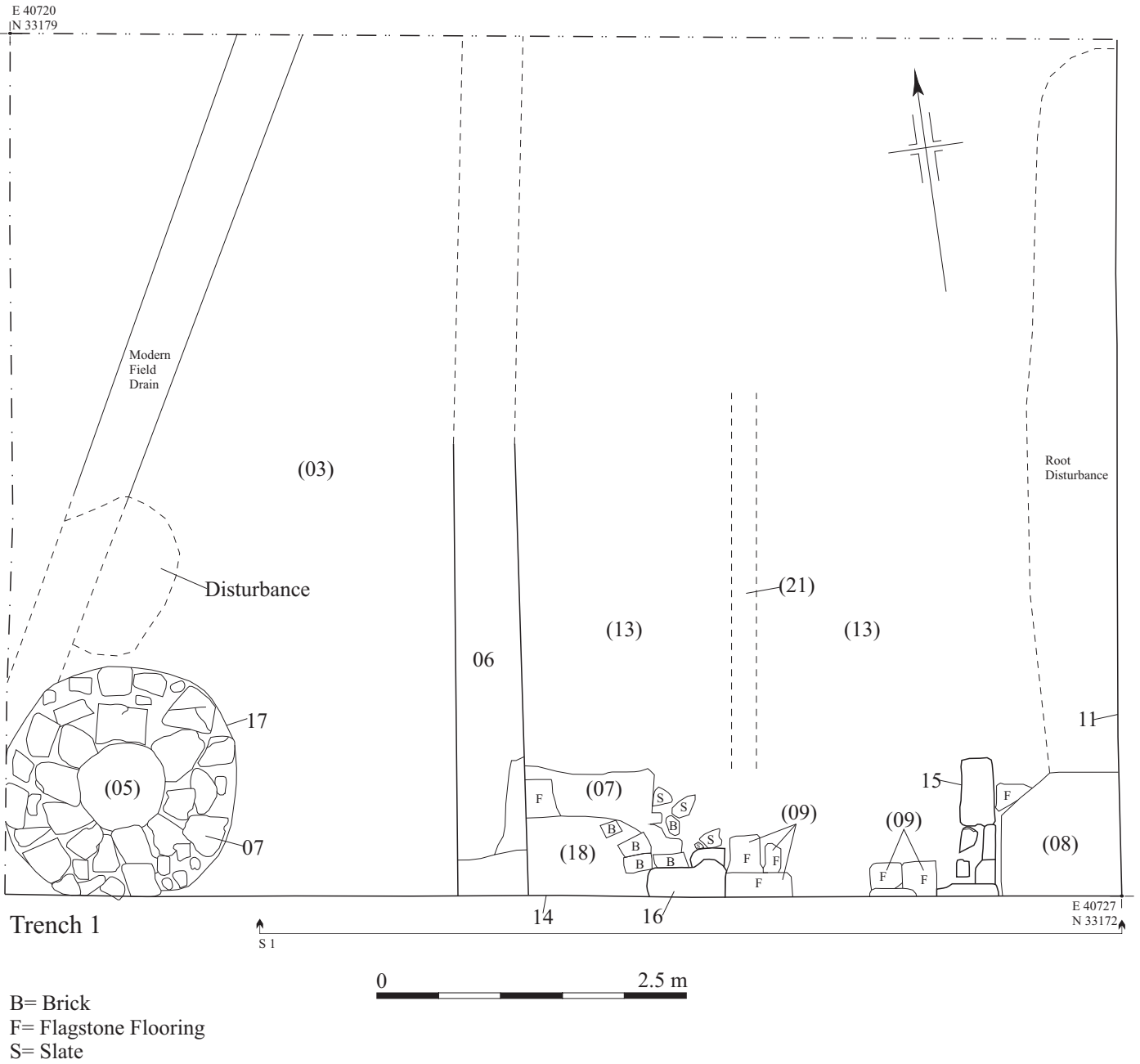


Figure 2. Trench 1 and section

Upon removal of the topsoil (01) and any subsoil (02) the resulting surface was hand cleaned and several potential features were identified and investigated. The remains of a building also became apparent with the partial remains of three walls observed to the SE of the site. Approximately 3.60m in length of wall footing 06 was noted to cut (19) into natural (03). It survived here mostly only as a single course approximately 0.15m in height below the surface of the natural and was constructed of roughly dressed limestone on a N-S alignment and was 0.60m in width. On its inner (east) face the stones had been rendered but no evidence of any bonding material was seen. Towards the south this wall could be seen joining into an E-W wall 14 at right angles made of similar limestone blocks, also with no apparent bonding material, where it survived as a maximum of three courses. The remains of wall 14 form part of the present south plot boundary under later build 10. This wall was approximately 4.70m in length and c.0.60m in width. Remnants of render survived along its inner face close to the join with wall 6. Where wall 6 joined into wall 14, it appeared to survive to maximum height 0.80m. Towards its eastern end wall 14 was also joined at right angles by a further similarly constructed wall 11 on a N-S alignment measuring 7.00m in length and approximately 0.60m in width surviving, although difficult to see, also as three courses. This forms part of the lower courses of the eastern plot boundary. No evidence of render was observed on this wall. These three walls are thought to be part of the former property known to have occupied the southern part of the site that used to front up against the High Street, according to photographic evidence opposite, Chapel House. Are these wall 11 & 14 part of the present boundary walls.

The remains of two further walls 15 and 16 were noted at right angles and joining into wall 14 on a N-S alignment. These are thought to form part of the former fireplace of the building. Wall 15 was 0.45m wide and 1.10m in length whilst wall 16 was 0.55m wide and 0.90m in length. Much of the stonework of 15, 16 and 14 in this area was reddened from exposure to heat. The east facing section of wall 15 was also noted to show evidence of rendering.

The remains of two types of flooring and one possible repair were exposed within the surviving parts of the building. To the east of wall 15 was a layer of flooring (8) made up of a light yellow-brown screed 0.04m thick which overlay large limestone flagstones (09). These flagstones also made up the flooring seen elsewhere. To the west of wall 16 and surrounded by both wall 14 and wall 06 was a layer of concrete (18) presumably making up a flooring repair containing bricks. Both flooring (09) and concrete repair (18) were built upon natural (3) that would have acted as an ideal bedding layer.

To the north of and between the gaps of the flagstone flooring (09) and repair (18) was a mid orange-brown sandy silt with occasional fragments of CBM (13). This is likely to have been laid down to level the area following the demolition of the former property and ranged in depth from 0.10m to 0.30m. During its removal a line of bedded unmortared and frogless bricks (21) on a N-S alignment were observed. Initially, it was thought that these could have been part of a support for a wooden floor, however, as they appeared to form only a single course above a perceived natural without any bonding, these are more likely to have either covered a service (now pulled out), backfilled with redeposited natural which had since been removed or be part of a later garden feature. Deposit (13) also overlay natural (03) and was covered by topsoil (01).



The remains of walls 11 and 14 had been sealed by a modern layer of mortar and subsequently built upon with roughly hewn limestone blocks typically laid in uneven courses, (10) and (20) respectively, to make part of the property boundary for Ivydene House. The rest of wall currently forming the property boundary fronting onto the High Street to the north, including a curving wall and a gated opening appear to be 20<sup>th</sup> century additions where this mortar line delineating the old wall from the new was no longer present. Also, the walls here continued to a greater depth than the remains of the former dwelling to reflect more recent ground reduction of the area.

To the west of wall 6 was circular well 04 with a construction cut 17 into the natural (03). It measured a total of 1.85m in diameter with the internal well opening being c.0.70m in diameter and was made up of roughly hewn and uneven coursed limestone and sandstone blocks with no evidence of mortar. It was filled with a friable dark grey-brown silty loam similar to the topsoil with moderate limestone inclusions (05). This is thought to have served the former house prior to its demolition

Close to well 6 and aligned NE-SW was a gully containing a ceramic field drain which appeared to be dropping downward towards the Ivydene before being truncated completely during the modern garage development. Close to the north of the well and towards the SW end the field drain gully an area of disturbance was also noted, possibly caused by tree roots. Two small fragments of printed willow pattern china were recovered from the area of disturbance but not retained. The field drain was not obvious in the east facing section above the well.

## **4.2 Reliability of Techniques and Results**

The reliability is considered reasonable. The limited space hampered neat grading which in turn hindered recording. The presence of the conifer trees also meant that the area of the site closest to the street front was greatly disturbed. The watching brief took place during periods of sunshine and cloud with some rain showers.

## **5 FINDS**

No finds were recovered from the watching brief apart from those mentioned but not retained.

## **6 DISCUSSION**

The structural remains revealed show that although much of the former building had been removed during demolition work, some had survived, especially closer to the southern end of the site. The mixed silty sand found overlying the natural within the footprint of the building but where no flooring was evident is either where the ground had been built up due to the natural drop in the ground level to the east prior to the laying of the floor or more likely evidence of levelling activity itself following demolition. This deposit was relatively sterile with only the odd fragment of unidentifiable ceramic building material (CBM). Natural stratigraphy noted here was much higher than the road level, indicating that the High Street was formed as a Hollow Way. The remains of a further property between both the one uncovered and Ivydene itself (known from photographic evidence - Oxfordshire County Council

Photographic Archive. Reference D263454a, D263470a, D263509a) were not apparent. This area however had already been subject to redevelopment when the garage was built and the land considerably reduced. The walls in this area reflect the ground reduction and continue to a much greater depth.

## 7 CONCLUSIONS

The watching brief successfully located the remains of a former property to the south of Ivydene Cottage that would have stood opposite Chapel House. Photographic evidence from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (OCCPA *ibid*) clearly shows a building occupying the same plot of land as indicated from the structural remains uncovered, with a chimney in the same position as the uncovered fireplace suggested. The well to the rear of the former property is likely to have been contemporary with and served the building. Remains of the former property appear to just about to be visible above the bank of earth forming the grass verge to the front of the former property with a tell tale line of mortar sealing the remains of this building before the more recent wall was constructed on top. This line of mortar cannot be seen closer to the gated entrance and although another building can be seen between the former cottage joining both this and the surviving example in the photographs, this wall with its curving shape is much more recent.

No earlier evidence was revealed suggesting no earlier activity within the confines of the site.

## 8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

English Heritage 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects*

English Heritage 2006 *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment*

Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1994 (revised 2001), *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*.

### **Photographs consulted**

All held by the Oxfordshire County Council Photographic Archive.

Reference:

D263454a	High Street looking north from Barford Road (1910-1930)
D263470a	High Street looking north from Barford Road. (1920-1930)
D263509a	High Street looking north from Barford Road (1930-1940)