



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

37 TOWNSIDE, HADDENHAM,

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

SP 73880 08393

On behalf of

Mr Russell Cooper

NOVEMBER 2009

REPORT FOR	Mr Russell Cooper 37 Townside Haddenham Buckinghamshire HP17 8BQ
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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological watching brief in November 2009 as part of a condition of planning permission for development at this site.

There was activity on the site in the 13th century and it is possible that the pits are at the rear of a plot occupied at this time. A later cultivation soil is thought to be medieval in date. The lack of later finds suggests that the site was unoccupied until possibly the later post-medieval period when again it appears to have been cultivated. A building is shown on the 1834 Enclosure map on the High Street frontage although this may have been a barn or stable when the site was divided into two plots. A building is shown on the Townside frontage on the OS map of 1899.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site is located in the rear of the garden of 37 Townside in Haddenham (NGR SP 73880 08393). The location is adjacent to High Street. The underlying solid geology is Portland Stone Formation (mainly limestone).

1.2 Planning Background

Aylesbury Vale District Council granted planning permission for the erection of a single storey outbuilding for ancillary living accommodation at 37 Townside, Haddenham. A condition (No. 2) was attached to the permission for a programme of archaeological work due to the site's potential to contain archaeological remains. Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service (BCAS) issued a *Generic Brief for Archaeological Watching Brief*.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The archaeological work was considered necessary because the site lies within the historic core of the village. The town itself has been the subject of a Historic Town Assessment Report (HTAR), which is in the final consultation phase (Beckley & Green 2008). This suggests that there were a number of green-based settlements along a north-south axis between Church End and Townsend that date to the late Saxon period.

A reconstruction of the open fields was carried out in 1880 which showed the absence of ridge and furrow throughout the historic core, suggesting that much of this land was used for settlement or for orchards and closes. Townside appears to follow a path along the furrows to the west of the village. It's origins in the late Saxon to early medieval period is suggested by its truncation by Station Road. It is suggested that Townside was the original route connecting Church End with Fort End. High Street appears to be a later more planned layout with the associated plots being more regular. Stockwell Lane may have been a back lane to plots fronting the east side of High Street. High Street is a dead-end leading south from Fort End at the King's Head pub (Beckley & Green 2008).

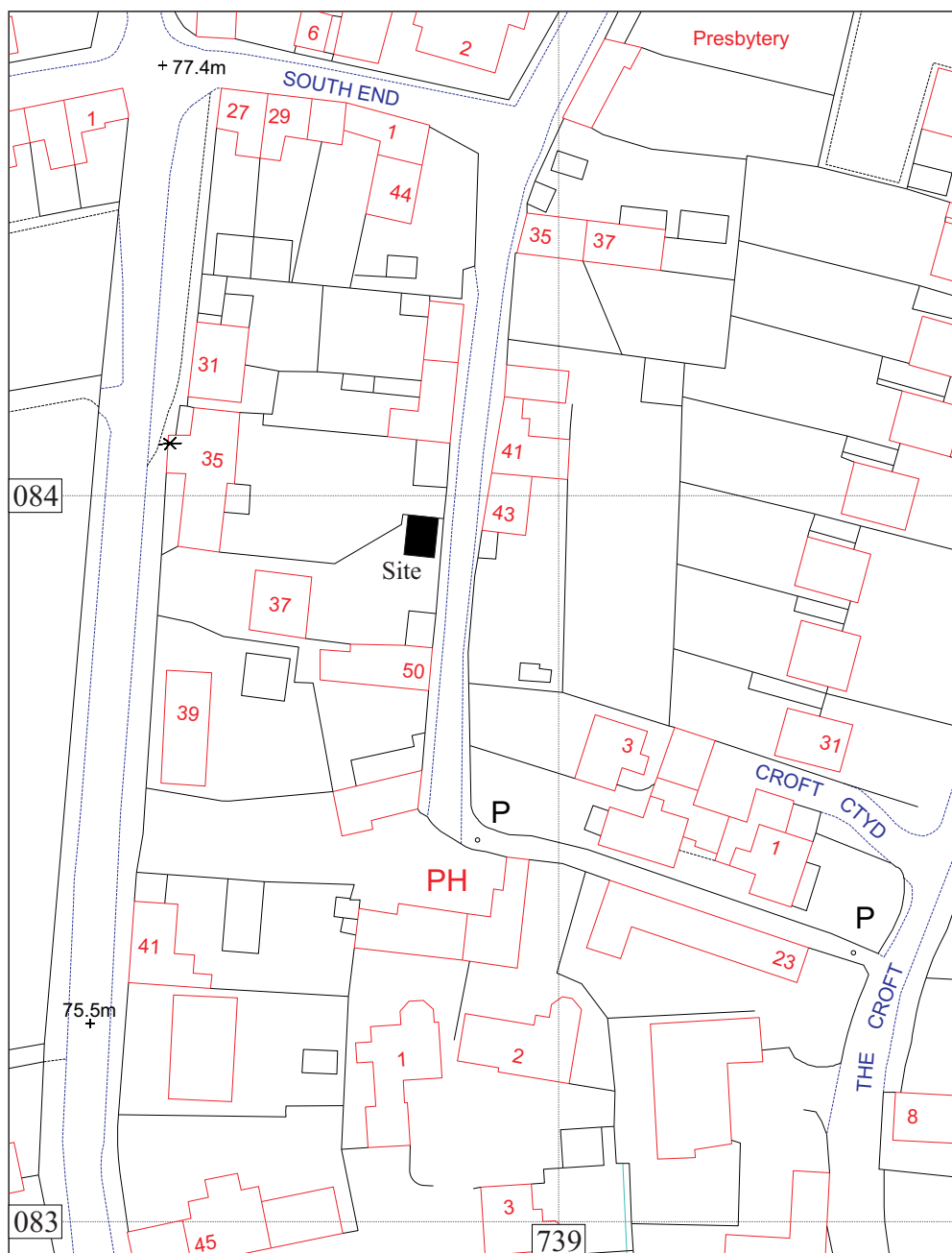


Figure 1. Site Location

The HTAR (ibid) discusses two models for the development of the late Saxon and medieval development and in particular the relative importance of Church End and Fort End. The work on this site has not contributed to this debate.

The 1834 Enclosure map shows the site as two plots with a building on the High Street frontage (HTAR, fig. 27). On the Ordnance Survey 1885 1:10,560 it is shown as single plot with a building added on the Townside frontage by 1899 as indicated on the 1:2500 edition.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

- To record any archaeological remains that will be impacted on by the development.
- Establish whether there is evidence for Saxon and medieval remains at 37 Townside in order to further the research agenda for Haddenham defined in the Historic Town Assessment Report (Beckley and Green 2008).

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, on behalf of Aylesbury Vale District Council. 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 for Archaeologists (1994).

3.2 Methodology

Ground reduction was carried out down to the underside of the base of the raft foundation which was approximately 530-805mm below existing ground level with an additional depth of 200mm around the edges. The work was undertaken using a toothless ditching bucket. An archaeologist was present during the ground reduction.

Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in the *Written Scheme of Investigation*. Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and sections drawings compiled where appropriate.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Results (Figure 2)

All features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers in () indicate feature fills or deposits of material.

The natural Portland Stone Formation (3) was exposed only in the deeper area around the edges of the reduced level dig. Cut into this material were three pits which were not excavated.

Pit 10 in the south east corner was sub-circular in shape and at least 1.15m N/S by at least 650mm E/W, continuing beyond the edges of the excavation. It was filled with pale brown-green silt with 2% by content fine pebble. A sherd of pottery dating to the 13th century was recovered from the top of the fill of the pit.

Pit 11 was at least 2.1m across N/S and filled with mid brown-grey slightly clayey silt with 55 small stone. Pit 12 in the north east corner was sub-circular in plan and at least 1.15m across E/W and at least 1.10m N/S. The fill of the pit was pale brown-grey very slightly clayey silt with 50% limestone pieces of average size 150x100x40mm.

Sealing the pits was a cultivation soil (9) of pale grey silt with degraded wychert forming a large component and areas of large limestone pieces. This was 400mm thick. A sherd of 13th century pottery was recovered from this cultivation horizon along with a small amount of animal bone. Seen cut into the top of this layer but probably originating from the layer above was a pit. This was oval in shape 2.6m E/W by 2.1m N/S. The earliest fill seen (7) was compact pale brown-grey slightly clayey silt with 2-4% small and medium sized stone. The latest fill (8) was loose friable very slightly clayey silt with 10-15% medium sized limestone pieces and occasional charcoal flecking. A sherd of 19th to 20th century pottery came from each fill along with a sherd of vessel glass of the same date from (8).

A further pit 5, although much smaller, was cut into the lower cultivation soil (9). This was 580mm in diameter and 350mm deep filled with pale brown-grey clayey silt and 1-2% small pebble. It was under the modern plot boundary wall.

Above lower cultivation soil (9) and certainly sealing pit 5 was a further cultivation horizon (2) of mid brown-grey very slightly clayey silt with 10-15% small stone and the very occasional roof tile fragment. Above this was the 350mm thick topsoil (1) of mid grey-brown loam. Within this, and extending down into the Portland Stone was a pond 4.

4.2 Reliability of Techniques and Results

The watching brief was conducted under good conditions that allowed sufficient time to record features.

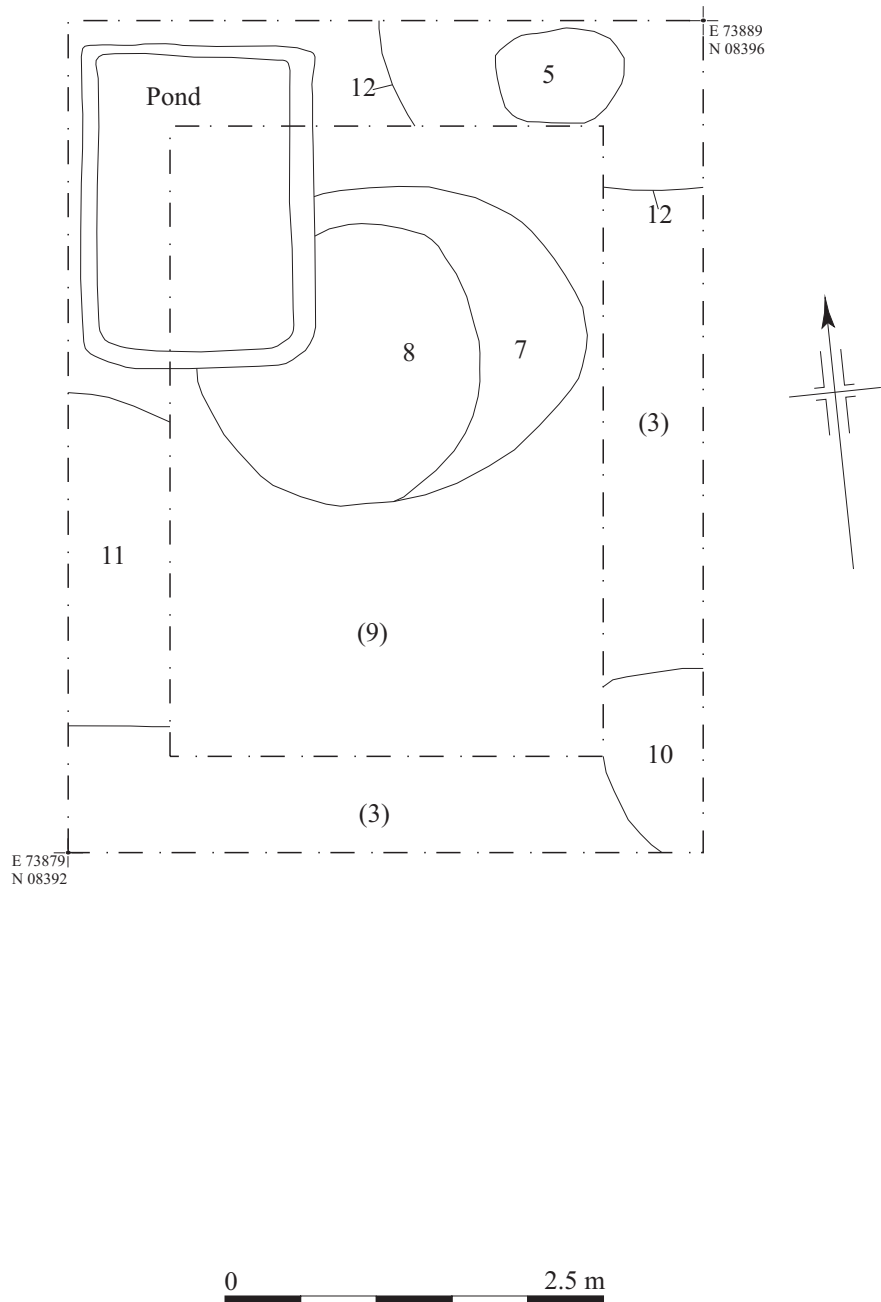


Figure 2. Site Plan

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 4 sherds with a total weight of 23g. It comprised two sherds each of medieval and modern material, and indicates that there was activity at the site in the 13th century.

The assemblage 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:

MS9: *Brill/Boarstall Ware*. 1200 - 1600. 2 sherds, 15g.

PM25: *White Earthenware*. Late 18th – 20th century. 2 sherds, 8g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. The Brill/Boarstall wares are both from glazed jugs, with the fragment from context [8] being a rim. They are in good condition, and appear reliably stratified.

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type.

	MS9		PM25		
Cntxt	No	Wt	No	Wt	Date
7			1	2	19thC
8			1	6	19thC
9	1	3			13thC
10	1	12			13thC
Total	2	15	2	8	

6 DISCUSSION

Activity on the site in the 13th century is shown by the sherd of pottery recovered from pit 10 and also one from the later lower cultivation soil (9). It is possible that the pits are in the rear of a plot fronting Townside that was occupied at this time. Given the soil type and colouring it is probable that this lower cultivation soil is medieval in date. Given the lack of later finds on the site it is possible that the site went out of use and was further cultivated in the later post-medieval period. Pit 5 may be a planting pit on the plot boundary. The large pit filled with (7 & 8) may date from the use of the site from the 19th century. It is possible that the building on the High Street frontage in the early part of the 19th century was a barn or stable when the site in two plots.

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