

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**AT**

**HENDRED HOUSE, EAST HENDRED,**

**OXFORDSHIRE**

**SU 4610 8865**

*On behalf of*

*The Hendred Estate*

**November 2009**

**REPORT FOR** The Hendred Estate,  
Estate Office,  
High Street,  
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## **Summary**

*A watching brief was conducted by John Moore Heritage Services during ground works for a swimming pool and pump house at Hendred House, East Hendred. The area of the garden located features associated with earlier garden layouts and at least one, possibly two, wells. The second area to the north of the first revealed the foundations of a post-medieval but otherwise undated building.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

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

The development site is located to the north of Hendred House in East Hendred within an enclosed garden (NGR SU 4610 8865). The underlying geology is Upper Greensand and the site lies at approximately 88m OD.

### **1.2 Planning Background**

The Vale of White Horse District Council granted planning permission for the construction of a swimming pool and pump house at Hendred House (EHE/4797/31 & EHE/4797/32-LB). Due to the potential of the site to contain buried archaeological remains a condition was attached requiring that an archaeological watching brief be carried out during the period of groundworks. This was in line with PPG 16 and Policy HE11.

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

The site of the development is adjacent to Hendred House and the Chapel of St Amand. The Manor House is early 15<sup>th</sup> century and with the chapel is a Grade II\* Listed Building (LB250115). The chapel is thought to be earlier with a foundation around 1265. The Manor was in the possession of the Turbeville family at that time. It is possible that an earlier manor house stood on or close to the site of the current Manor House.

## **2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

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

- To identify and record any archaeological and historic remains exposed during the course of works on the site.

In particular:

- to record any evidence of earlier medieval remains.

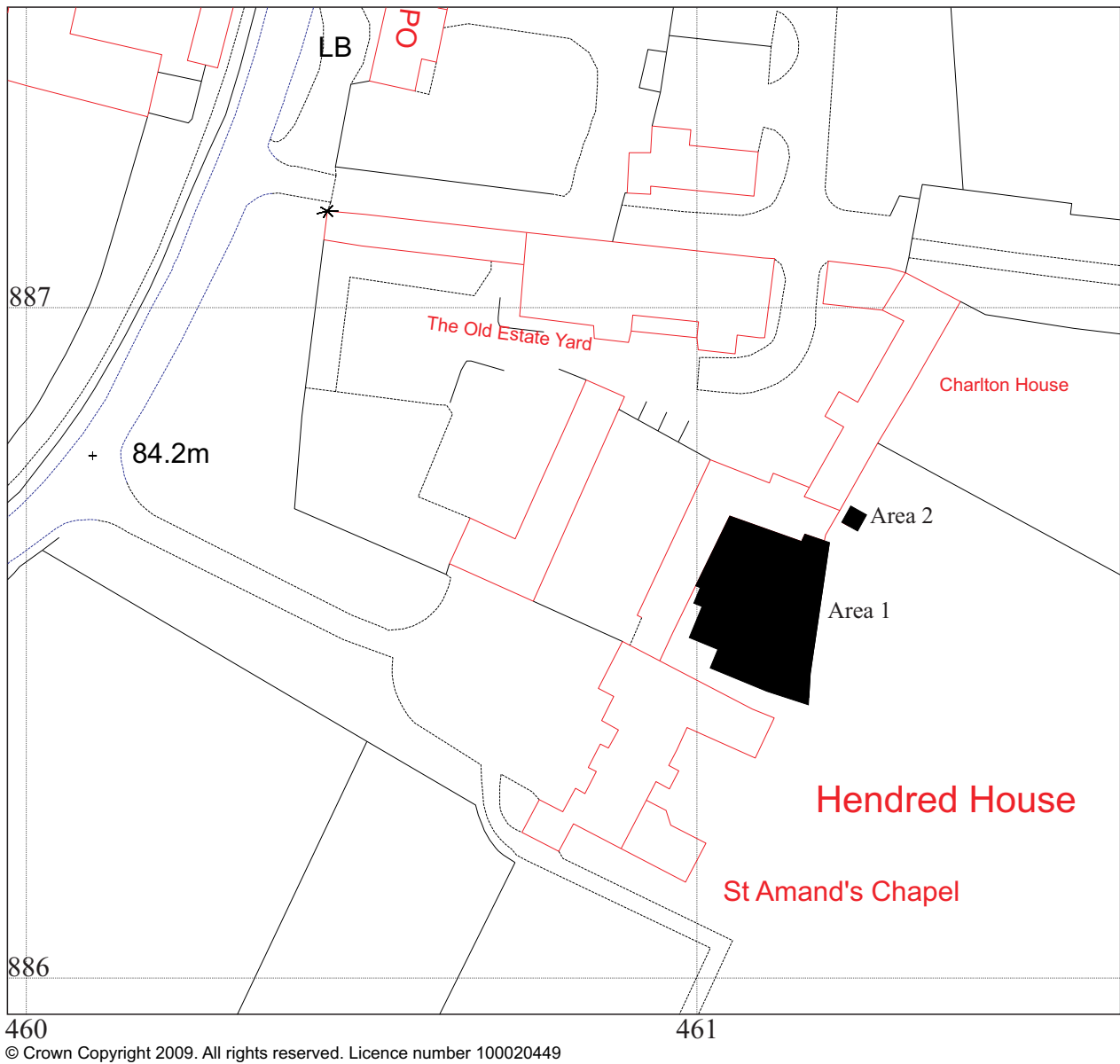


Figure 1. Site location

### **3 STRATEGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

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

An archaeologist monitored the course of the groundwork, which involved the ground reduction of the area of the swimming pool and pump house.

### **4 RESULTS (Figures 2 and 3)**

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.

#### **Area 1 - Swimming Pool (Figure 2)**

The natural geological deposit in the area consisted of compact Upper Greensand (03). Over this was a moderately compact yellow-grey to green silty clay (02) flecked with charcoal that was on average 0.1m thick. This layer displayed considerable bioturbation and contained small quantities of post-medieval pottery.

It was sometimes difficult to be sure but it appeared that all features noted were cut into this layer (02). The majority of these were garden features, such as planting pits and beds.

#### Planting Pits

A double row of 10 planting pits was visible across the centre of the area, although the compactness of the fill varied it was a mid to dark grey silty clay that contained small fragments of brick and often considerable intact roots. These pits varied in depth from 0.1 – 0.2m.

These planting pits took two forms, either circular or square in plan. The circular ones appeared to have a more concave profile while the square ones near vertical edges. The two types opposed each other in the two rows.

Two later planting pits for trees were recorded on a similar alignment to the northerly line of pits. These had only recently had the trees removed to facilitate work.

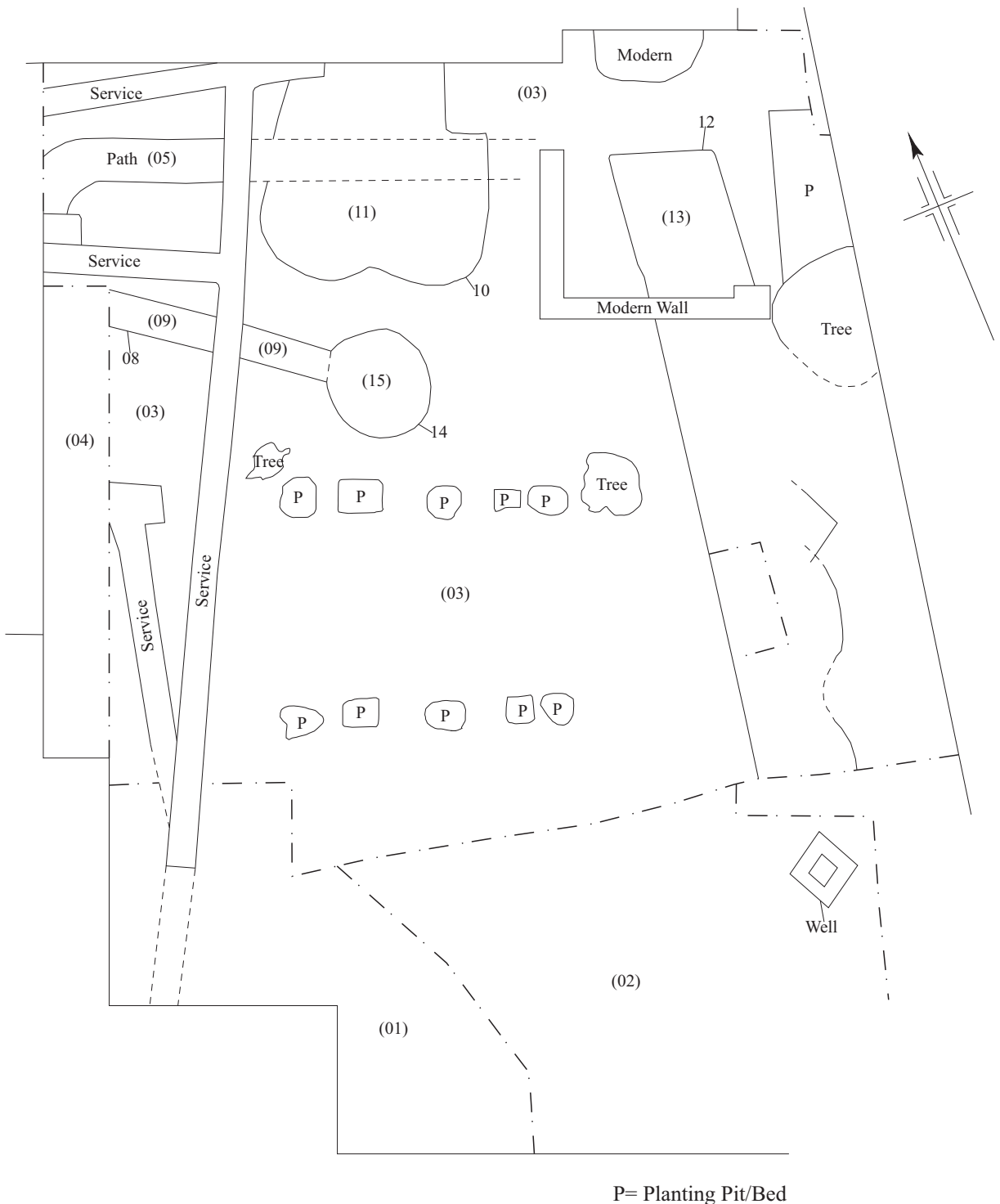


Figure 2. Plan 1

### Planting Beds

To the east of the area adjacent to the rear wall of the property was a large area of heavily disturbed ground that incorporated a linear cut 12 that measured over 12m long by 2m wide and was 0.67m deep with a flat base. It contained a compact dark grey clay mottled with small fragments of greensand (13) and contained charcoal and brick fragments. After excavation it was thought to be a planting bed that ran parallel to the rear wall at approximately 2m distance from it.

A second planting bed was recorded next to the rear wall. The outer edge of this bed was not parallel to the wall but roughly parallel to that of the building to the west, creating a wedged shape in plan. The cutting of this planting bed had removed any trace of a cut for the foundations of the rear wall.

These two beds conjoined approximately 5m from their northern ends, however later planting of trees and shrubs in the area meant it was impossible to distinguish which was earlier.

It seems likely that the second planting bed is probably contemporary with the double row of planting pits previously described.

A third planting bed 10 was recorded to the north of the area. This was irregular in plan, but covered roughly 4m by 4m. It is probable that this is in fact several inter-cutting pits or beds, but it was impossible to distinguish any individual cuts. The entire feature was filled with a loose, very dark grey-black silty-clay (11), containing brick fragments, coal and the rare stone. Sample excavation showed the edges of the cut to be vertical to undercutting and at least 0.2m deep.

It is possible that this planting bed may have pre-dated the building to the north, however the area also displayed disturbance due to the construction of the building and modern services and these explanations are more likely.

### Other Features

A circular cut 14 was seen near to the centre of the area. This was approximately 2m in diameter. It was cut by a linear feature 08 that was 0.68m wide and ran for over 5m in a north westerly direction towards the house. The linear feature 08 was filled with a mid-dark grey silty clay (09), flecked with charcoal and containing stone, brick fragments and post-medieval pottery.

Upon sample excavation it was found that the circular cut was for a well (15). The upper 1m was constructed of red brick in a dome, the lower portion appeared to be stone lined. It was over 7m deep. A pipe entered the well approximately 0.8m down from the linear cut 08. This pipe was supported on the well sides by timber planks and descended vertically to the water.

Following the line of cut 08 towards the house it was discovered that a hand-pump was fixed to the outer wall of the building, this was contained in a wooden case with a protruding iron handle and spout.

A second possible well, constructed in red brick was seen to the south-east of the area.



An old garden path (05) was recorded running parallel to the building in a roughly east –west alignment, it noticeably turned to the south to follow the buildings corner before being truncated by a cut for modern construction. The stone of this path was pressed into layer (02) and it post-dated planting bed 10.

A semi-circular cut was seen against the building in the northeast corner of the area. This was considered to be modern due to the finds of pottery and plastic on its surface. It is possibly related to work on the doorway of the building at this point, as its width is the same. Modern services were also seen to the west of the area and a modern garden wall to the northeast of the site.

The uppermost layer across the majority of the area was a dark brown-grey-black clay loam with the rare small stone that formed the topsoil (01) this was 0.1m thick. Closer to the house was a 1m-2m wide pathway (04) of flagstones that formed a border to the modern garden.

### **Area 2 - Pump House (Figure 3)**

The natural geological deposit in the area consisted of compact Upper Greensand (23), the same as recorded in Area 1 as (03).

Sitting in a linear foundation cut 32 in the natural was a wall (24). This was 0.55m wide, over 2.5m long and survived to a height of 0.85m. It was constructed of roughly dressed stone with a rubble core that also contained large brick fragments and bonded with a sandy mortar. This wall was truncated by a cut for the modern wall to the west.

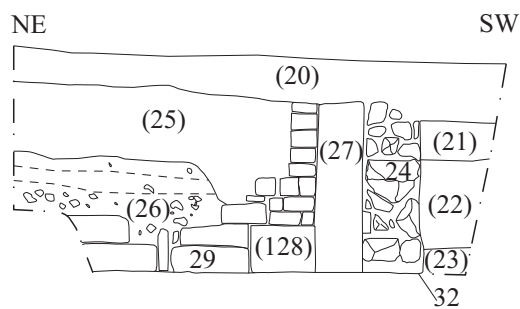
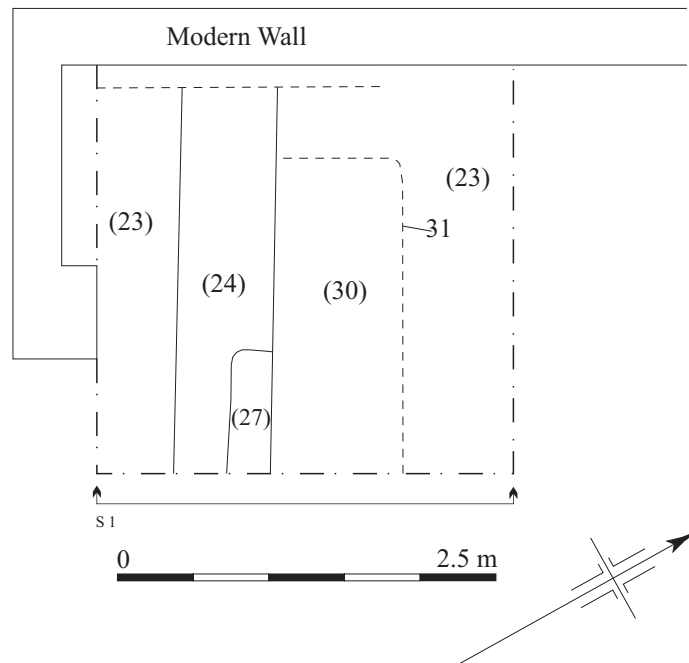
A section of this wall (24) had either been constructed or replaced with red brick (27). This section was over 0.8m wide and intruded into the wall by 0.25m, the length of a single brick. The bricks appeared to be machine made and were “un-froged”.

To the south of the wall (24) overlying the natural was a deposit of greensand mottled with grey silty clay (22) and containing chalk and brick fragments. This was approximately 0.45m thick. It was unclear if the wall was cut into this layer or if it was built up later against it.

Above this was a 0.2m thick layer of mid-dark green-grey clay (21) containing rare charcoal flecks, slate and brick fragments. Again it was unclear if the wall was cut into this layer or if it was built up later against it.

To the north of the wall (24) was a perpendicular wall (28) of red brick that butted against wall (27). It was 0.25m wide and extended one brick length (0.25m) before its construction was continued in dressed stone (29). The brick section survived to a height of 0.9m while the stone section only 0.36m. No cut was evident for this wall, both the brick and stone sat directly up on the natural (23). Wall (28)/(29) was left in situ.

The brickwork of both walls probably represents a strengthening of the corner joint perhaps to support a second storey.



Section 1



Figure 3. Plan 2 and Section 1

The level of the natural (23) on the northern side of wall (24) was lower than the level to the south. On the northern side no cut for the foundation could be seen and the wall sat directly on the natural greensand (23).

A depression or shallow cut 31 in the greensand was seen against the wall, it was 2m long, 0.9m wide and 0.08m deep. It was filled with dark brown-grey to black loam (30) with a very high proportion of ash and cinder.

Covering this and also seen in section to cover wall (29) was a loose dump of brick rubble in a pale grey silty clay matrix (26) up to 0.7m thick that also contained un-corroded metal reinforcing wire for construction. Several dumping or tipping lines could be identified in this deposit, but due to its modern nature was recorded as a whole.

The deposit (26) contained patches of dark ash and cinder and it is likely that cut 31 and the fill (30) form part of this modern activity. The size of cut 31 would suggest that a mechanical ditching or grading bucket formed it.

Above deposit (26) was a layer of “dirty” re-deposited natural (25) that on close inspection contained rare brick fragments. This was up to 0.6m thick.

The uppermost layer that sealed both deposits (21) and (25) was a dark grey-black loamy topsoil (20).

## **5 FINDS**

### **5.1 Pottery**

The post-medieval pottery was recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994), as follows:

Sherds of mid 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> century Mass-produced White Earthenwares (WHEW) were noted from several contexts (01), (02), (09), (13) and (20)

Sherds of Red Earthenware (OXDR), dated 1550+ were also present in contexts (01), (02) and (13). Although this type of pottery can date from the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century the examples seen were thought to be much later due to their glaze.

These were not retained.

## **6 DISCUSSION**

Area 1 closest to the house mainly displayed features associated with garden layout, planting pits and beds. There are at least three phases of garden layout present, however there is very little dating evidence for these.

The earliest phase incorporates planting bed 12 that runs parallel to the rear wall of the property. The next phase replaces this planting bed 12 with a wedge shaped one that makes its out edge parallel to the house and probably incorporates the double row

of planting pits across the centre that run at 90° to it. In the last recognisable phase the rows of pits are removed and two trees planted, trees are also planted along the rear wall. It is not known how the path (05) and planting bed 10 fits into this pattern.

The building's type and function represented by the walls located in Area 2 are not known. A 19<sup>th</sup> century eastern wing was demolished in the 1970's (Currie 1992), the maps clearly indicate that this building is not related to the foundations in Area 2.

The OS 1:10,560 map of 1883 appears to show a small building in the area, however this is not present on the OS 1:10,560 map of 1938. If this building was demolished prior to 1938 then it would appear likely that the area was excavated subsequently and more recently due to the un-corroded metal in deposit (26).

The OS 1:10,560 map of 1883 has a 'P' for pump marked close to the building, but as it is to the west of the house it may not indicate the pump and well 14 located in Area 1.

## 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

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

## 8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Currie, C.R.J. 1992 Larger Medieval Houses in the Vale of the White Horse. *Oxoniensia* **LVII**, 81-244

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