



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**AT**

**2 NORMAN WAY, WALLINGFORD,**

**OXFORDSHIRE**

**SU 24805 99068**

*On behalf of*

*R.J. Leighfield & Sons Ltd.*

**November 2009**

**REPORT FOR** R.J. Leighfield & Sons  
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## **Summary**

*A watching brief was conducted by John Moore Heritage Services during the ground works at 2 Norman Way, Wallingford. An undated ditch was recorded.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

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

The development site is located on the western side of Wallingford, north of St John's Road and south of Borough Avenue (NGR SU 6016 8924). The underlying geology is First (Floodplain) Terrace Deposits and the site lies at approximately 47m OD. The previous garages in the area had been demolished recently.

### **1.2 Planning Background**

South Oxfordshire District Council granted planning permission under planning application number P07/W0061 for the demolition of existing garages and construction of 3 two-bedroom houses and 1 three-bedroom house along with associated access and parking. Due to the potential of the site to contain archaeological remains a condition was attached requiring that an archaeological watching brief be carried out during the period of construction works. This was in line with PPG 16 and Local Plan policies.

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

The site is located 240m west of the Scheduled Ancient Monument of The Saxon Town Walls (OX182; NGR SU 6034 8925). The walls are believed to have been constructed around c. 900AD. While the site is located outside the enclosed area of the town an archaeological watching brief carried out 190m to the north-east of the site recorded a series of medieval and early post-medieval pits suggesting settlement outside of the walls in the medieval period (County Historic Environment Record PRN 16094, NGR SU 6034 8924). Further medieval settlement has been recorded 130m to the north-east of the site in the form of linear ditches and medieval pottery and tile (PRN 10595, SU 6020 8930). A Saxon inhumation cemetery is recorded 290m to the south-east of the site which was excavated as a number of sites (PRN 7791, SU 6043 8908). Iron Age and Roman settlement has been recorded to the north of the site (PRN 3901, SU 6014 8939). The usage of the site as garages would not have caused much truncation of the ground and it was thought possible that aspects of the Saxon and medieval deposits recorded in the area could survive on the site.

## **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 building operations or construction works on the site.

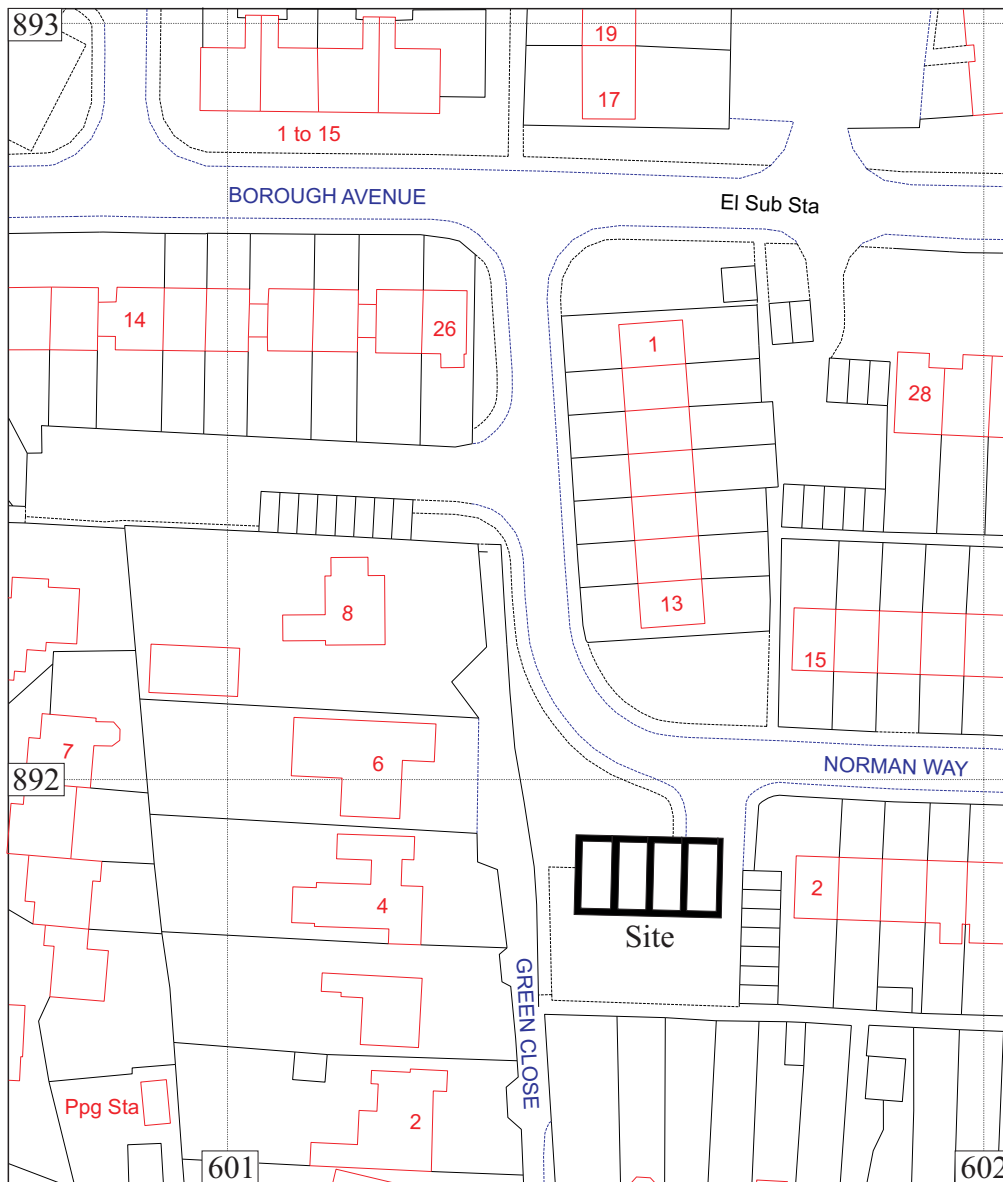


Figure 1. Site Location

In particular:

- to record any evidence of Saxon or medieval settlement known to exist in the area

### **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 machine excavation of foundation trenches.

### **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 ( ) show feature fills or deposits of material.

The natural geological deposit in the area consisted of yellow-orange-grey clay-sand and gravel (04). Over this was a compact light orange-brown clay-sand (03) that varied in thickness across the site from 0.2m to 0.5m. It was thickest towards the west of the site. This was a very sterile layer and probably represents a subsoil, but could be part of the natural geological sequence.

Cut into this layer, towards the north-east of the site, was an undated feature 05. It was only seen in section but could be a linear ditch. It was between 1.3m to 1.5m wide and 0.25m deep with a shallow U-shaped profile and filled with a mid-dark brown sandy clay. It had been truncated by a modern service.

Above this was a dark grey-brown sandy loam (02) containing brick fragments and 20<sup>th</sup> century pottery. This layer was on average 0.1m thick.

The uppermost layer was a dark brown-grey-black sandy loam with gravel that formed a topsoil (01) this was between 0.25 and 0.6m thick. It was thicker to the west of the site, where it appeared to be banded as if dumped or layered to raise the ground height.

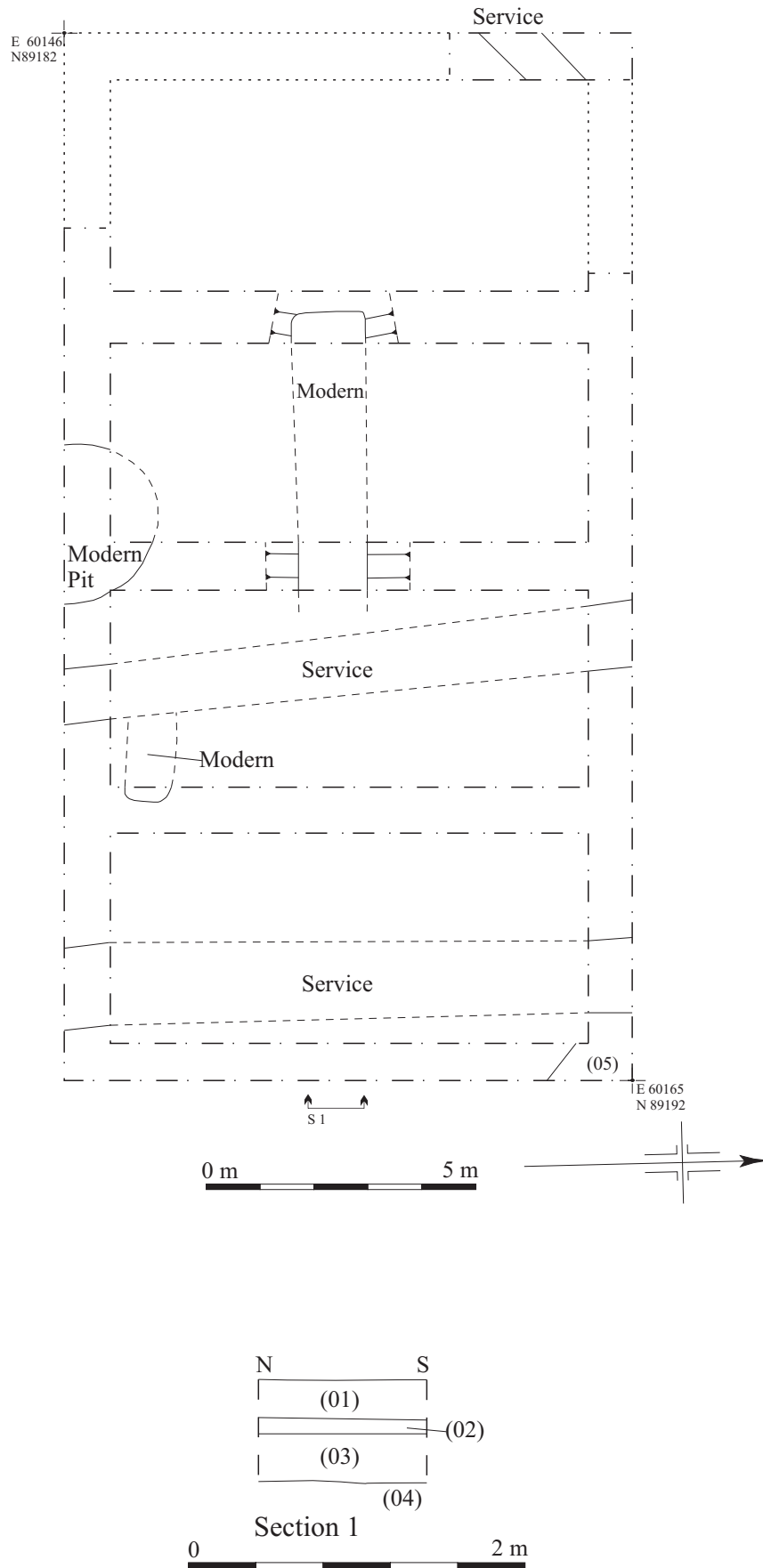


Figure 2. Plan and section

It must be noted that the majority of the area had been stripped by 0.1-0.15m prior to the archaeological monitoring taking place.

## **5 FINDS**

### **5.1 Pottery**

Sherds of 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> century Mass-produced White Earthen-wares were noted from the topsoil (01) and the layer (02) below. These were not retained.

## **6 DISCUSSION**

The area showed minimal disturbance due to demolition, but was crossed several times by modern services. It would also appear that a relatively recent geo-technical pit had been excavated across the centre of the area.

The only potential archaeological feature was the undated ditch 05, unfortunately very little of this was uncovered to properly identify or date the feature.

## **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**

Institute for Archaeologists, 1994 *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief*. Revised 2008