

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

LAND TO REAR OF 114-116 HIGH STREET,

CHALGROVE,

OXFORDSHIRE

NGR SU 6381 9670

On behalf of

Spitfire Property Group Limited

JANUARY 2011

REPORT FOR Spitfire Property Group Limited
The Manor
Haseley Business Centre
Warwick
CV35 7LS

PREPARED BY Stephen Yeates

ILLUSTRATION BY Eoin Fitzsimons

FIELD WORK 30th August 2010 to 19th January 2011

REPORT ISSUED 20th January 2011

ENQUIRES TO John Moore Heritage Services
Hill View
Woodperry Road
Beckley
Oxfordshire OX3 9UZ

Tel/Fax 01865 358300
Email: info@jmheritageservices.co.uk

JMHS Project No: 2264
Site Code CGHS 10
Oxon Museums Archive No.2010.75

CONTENTS

	Page
Summary	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Site Location	1
1.2 Planning Background	1
1.3 Archaeological Background	1
1.3.1 Historical Account	1
1.3.2 Previous Archaeological Activity	3
2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION	4
3 STRATEGY	4
3.1 Research Design	4
3.2 Methodology	4
4 RESULTS	4
4.1 Palaeolithic	4
4.2 Medieval	5
4.3 Post-Medieval to early 20 th Century	5
4.4 Modern	5
5 FINDS	5
6 DISCUSSION	8
7 ARCHIVE	8
8 BIBLIOGRAPHY	8
FIGURES	
Figure 1 Site location	2
Figure 2 Plot 1 Plan and Section	6
Figure 3 Plot 2 Plan	7

Summary

John Moore Heritage Services conducted a watching brief during the excavation of geological test pits and building footings on land to the rear of 114-116 High Street (SU 6381 9670). Only natural deposits of the Palaeolithic ice age and medieval agricultural deposits were encountered.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development site is located to the rear of nos. 114 and 116 High Street, Chalgrove (SU 6381 9670). The underlying geology is Gault Clay covered with glacial gravels containing flint. The site lies at approximately 65m AOD.

1.2 Planning Background

South Oxfordshire District Council granted planning permission for the construction of four houses and covered parking (ref. P09/W1227). The site was considered to have a high potential for buried archaeology due to its location to the north of Chalgrove medieval church and other medieval sites to the west.

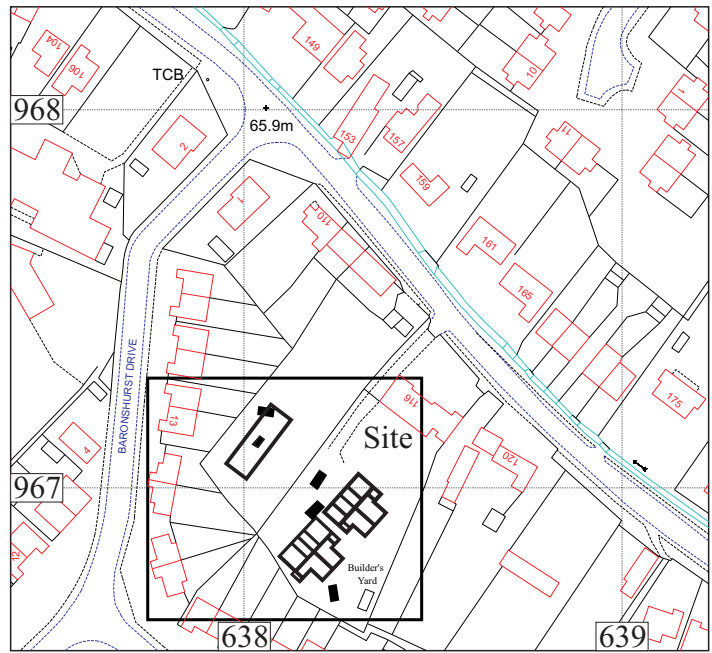
1.3 Archaeological Background

1.3.1 Historical Account

The name Chalgrove was first recorded in 1086 as *Celgrove*, of which the etymology has been given as *c(e)alc græf*, 'at the grove near the chalk or limestone pits' (Gelling 1953, 122-3). The Tithe Award map of 1840 contains a place-name that may be associated with the location of this early activity, namely Devils Pit Corner (Gelling 1953, 124).

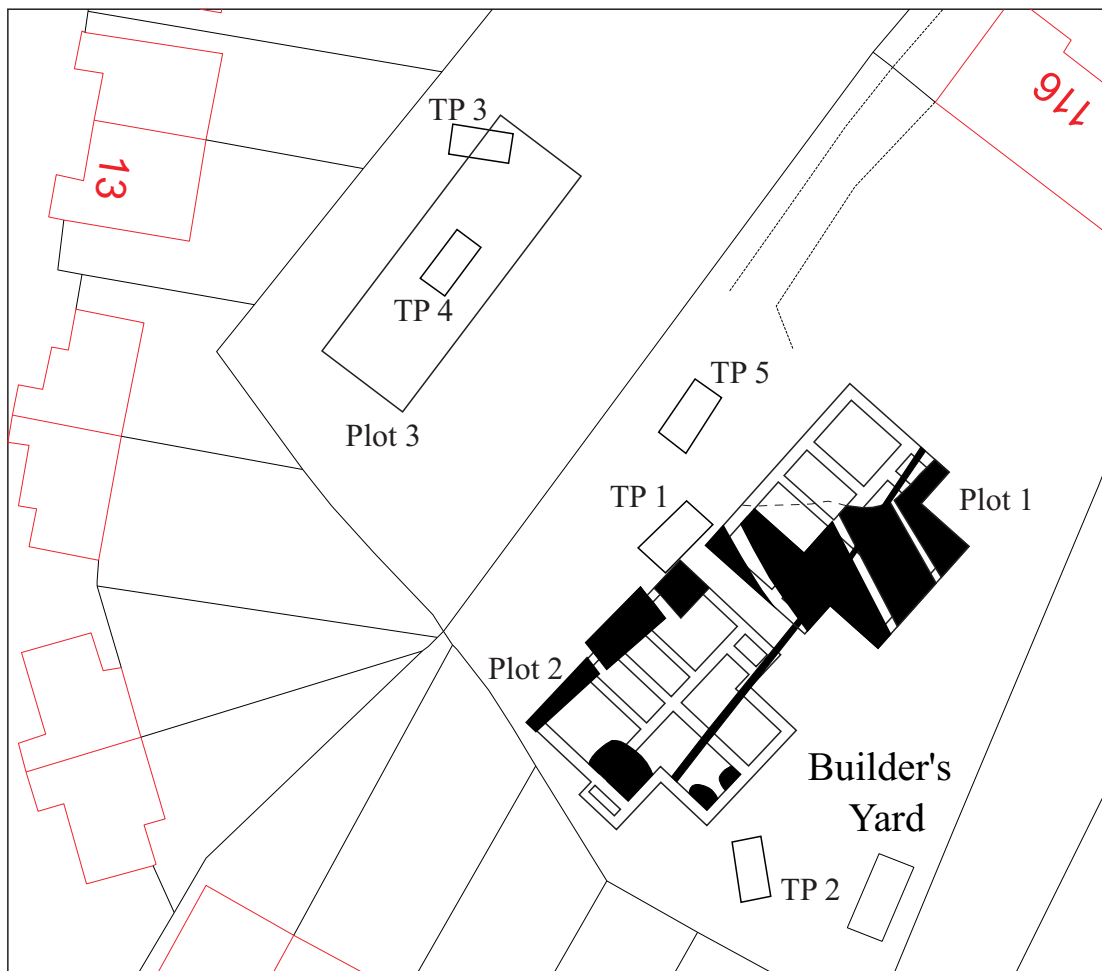
Miles Crispin held the estate of Chalgrove in 1086 and Thorkell had held this before him (Morris 1978, 35.6). The estate covered 10 hides and had enough land for 12 ploughs, of which 4 were in lordship. The inhabitants included 23 villagers, 10 smallholders, and 9 slaves. The further assets of the village included 5 mills, meadowland 3 furlongs square, besides 60 acres of pasture. The estate was valued at £12 but had before the Conquest only been worth £10. One dwelling in Chalgrove is described as being attached to Wallingford and was valued at 4d (Morris 1978, Ebe.2).

The manor was then granted to the Boterel Family *c.* 1100 for 3 knight's fee, and by the end of the 12th century the estate had been split (Blair 2005, 9-10), one at 2 knight's fee and the other at 1 knight's fee. The crown initially granted the larger of the manors to Hugh Malaunay along with the advowson, this reverted back to the crown and was then re-granted to Malaunay. Thomas Keret held the smaller part of the estate. The Malaunay holding passed to his son Peter before being granted in 1224 to Hugh de Plessis, Drew de Barentin and Nicholas de Boterel, at the same time the smaller part of the estate passed to Hugh le Despenser. The crown soon regained the land and re-granted it in 1229 Hugh and John de Plessis and Drew de Berentine.



Ordnance Survey (c) Crown Copyright 2010. All rights reserved. Licence number 100020449

0 100 m



0 25 m

Figure 1. Site location

The manor had by 1233 been shared out by John de Plessis and Drew de Barentine in 1233 (Blair 2005, 9), and this is still apparent in 1235-6 when the division of the manor became permanent held by the Barentine and Plessis families.

The account of the manors given in the *Rotuli Hundredarum* of 1279 (Blair 2005, 9-14) give almost identical land holdings for the two manors in respect to arable acres, meadow acres, pasture acres, mills, un-free land and cottages. This was more or less reproduced in 1336. The only means by which this could occur is that there was a systematic partitioning of the manor of Chalgrove. The Barentin manor continued to pass down the family line but momentous events occurred for Chalgrove at the very end of the 14th century in that the manor at Little Haseley was bought and sumptuous Haseley Court was built. The Plessis manor passed to Sir Edmund de Bereford who married Margaret de Plessis in 1293. De Bereford died in 1354 and the moiety was split between his three daughters. One third of the Beresford manor (the Argentines lands) along with the Barentin manor were purchased by Thomas Danvers for Magdalen College in 1487.

The advowson of the church was initially invested in the manor, but by 1317 this had passed to Thame Abbey (Blair 2005, 13), while the church became the main burial location of the Barentin family.

Davis' map of 1793-4 shows the High Street as one of the two main centres of settlement. Frogmore Lane, which leads to the church, was one of the other main roads of medieval and post-medieval Chalgrove; the site to the rear of 114 and 116 High Street is located between these two roads. The estate map of 1822 shows the remains of a building located on the north side of the development area (Page, Atherton et al. 2005, 4 fig. 1.2, 6 plate 1.3), but the main part of the area was made up of open garden plots.

1.3.2 Previous Archaeological Activity

The earliest settlement at Chalgrove may date to the Iron Age, as a gold coin of that period was recovered (PRN 2037) and a few pottery sherds of this date were recovered from excavations at Harding's Field (Hind 2005, 1). A number of cropmarks show up in the area, three of which have been associated with Roman material (PRN 4490, 11133, 12491). These finds are suggestive of small-scale occupation in the Chalgrove area.

Anglo-Saxon material has been recovered from the village, a sherd from a cottage west of the church, which was demolished in 1977 (PRN 11143). In the Harding's Field excavation further sherds of Early Medieval pottery were recovered (Hind 2005, 8). One of the Saxo-Norman mills mentioned in 1086 is thought to have been located under the present Post Office, which straddles the stream alongside the High Street, and from where a millstone has been recovered (PRN 11132, Hind 2005, 8). The church of Saint Mary has at least Norman origins, but the structure has been considerably altered (Sherwood and Pevsner 1974, 525-6). Major excavations were carried out in Harding's Field on the site of the Barentin's Manor between 1976-9 (Page, Atherton et al. 2005), which lay in a field some 200m to the West of the present 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.

In particular:

- To identify evidence relating to the medieval development of the village of Chalgrove.
- To identify the remains of post-medieval occupation.

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) the archaeological advisors to South Oxfordshire 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

An archaeologist monitored the course of the groundwork, which involved the excavation of geological test pits and the foundations of the new builds.

4 RESULTS

A watching brief was carried out over the excavation of five geological test pits and the trenching for the house and carport foundations (see figures 2-4). These identified fragmentary evidence of medieval agricultural activity.

4.1 Palaeolithic

The Gault Clay (109) was a firm and highly compact layer of sedimentary rock, which was reached by the excavation of the geological test pits, of which the depth varied from 2.2 to 3m. Sealing this was a deposit (108) that was a firm-hard grey-yellow clay with gravel (flint) inclusions of 50% or more, which was approximately 1.1m deep. These formed a glacial river terrace but no evidence of human activity was noted in these Palaeolithic deposits. The glacial gravels are covered by a further deposit (107) of a firm light white-grey clay with flint inclusions at 5-10%. The depth of this deposit varied across the site 0.3-0.8m in depth. Covering deposit (107) in places across Plot 2 was a further layer (111), which was a loosely compact black-

grey silt sand with numerous gravel inclusions. In certain places (GTP 3 and 4, and Plots 1 and 2) a deposit (106) covered (111). Deposit (106) was a firm white-grey clay with flint inclusions at approximately 0.2m deep. All of these are presumed to be natural deposits of the Palaeolithic, although the later clay layer may well be an alluvial deposit.

4.2 Medieval

Layers (106) and (111) had only partial coverage across the site. Each of these deposits, where they lay beneath the subsoil, had been truncated by a series of furrows. In the area of house Plot 1 layer (111) was not capped by deposit (106) and here some three dips could be discerned in the stratigraphy that were interpreted as furrows. The cuts identified on Plot 1 included 112, 113 and 114 (Fig. 2). In Plot 2 the remaining cuts were into deposit (106) which here could be seen overlaying layer (111). Here the cuts were labelled 115 and 116 (Fig. 3). The fill in these cuts comprised the subsoil (see below).

Layer (106) continued across Plot 3 the car part, but here no ridge and furrow was apparent. This lay in the garden of no. 114 one of four thatched cottages of a presumed post-medieval date, and hence potentially the area of a long-term croft enclosure. This may mean no ridge and furrow was ever established.

4.3 Post-Medieval to early 20th century

Two other features cut into deposit (106) were oval in shape. Cut 117 was 2m by 2.5m with a depth of 0.25m. The second cut 118 was also oval in shape but was more elongated at 3m by 1.75m. The purpose of these pits is unknown, it is presumably post-medieval and possibly a bowl for taking trees or may even have been a quarry to extract clay or a pit for tree planting.

4.4 Modern

Sealing these earlier deposits and cuts were a number of later ones. Deposit (105) was a firm light black-grey sand clay with a variable depth between 0.05-0.5m. This was interpreted as the remains of the subsoil. This deposit had accumulated over some time, filling the furrows and also the two later pits. Cut into the subsoil was a linear gully (119) some 0.3m deep (Fig. 3)

The deposit (104) overlying this was a firm dark brown-black sandy clay that varied in width from 0.2-0.4m. This deposit was interpreted as the topsoil. In the area of plot 3 the topsoil lay directly onto layer (106). In certain trenches the topsoil and subsoil had been truncated by cut 103, which was made for the laying of a road surface and turning area. This was filled initially by deposit (102) a firm brown-yellow clay gravel with inclusions and lenses of grey ash, brick and limestone. Sealing this was deposit (101) tarmac.

5 FINDS

The finds included four fragments of post-medieval ceramic building material (77g) and a fragment of post-medieval red earthenware (13g) from the base of the topsoil of plot 3. This was not retained.

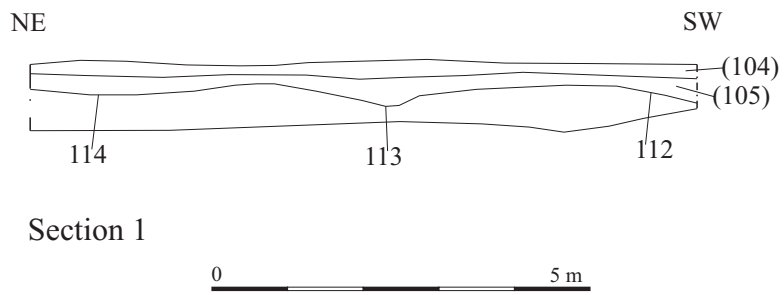
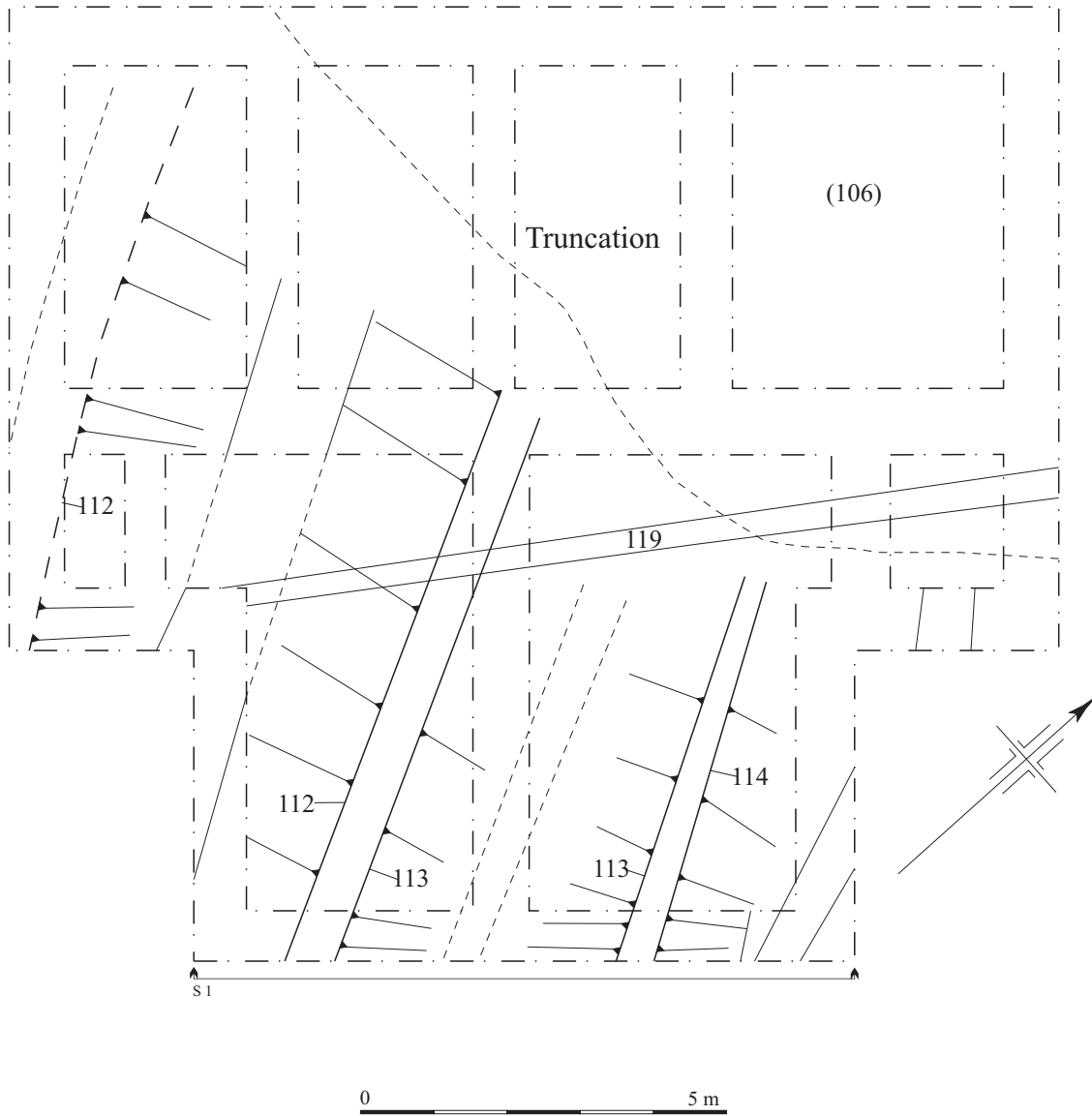


Figure 2. Plot 1 plan and section

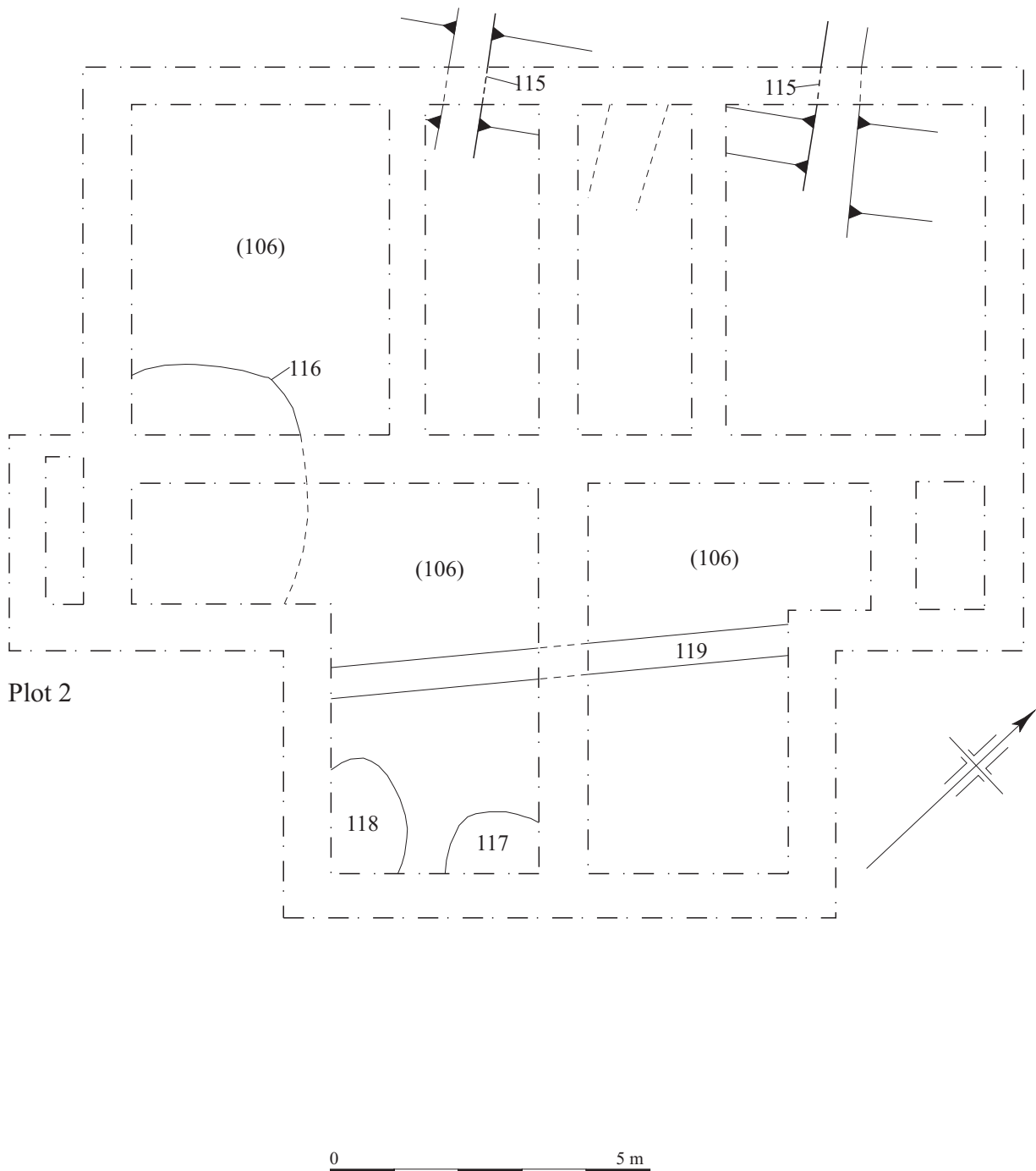


Figure 3. Plot 2 plan

6 DISCUSSION

The fieldwork by John Moore Heritage Services determined that although the potential for archaeology in this area of Chalgrove existed, this was not confirmed by investigation. Plot 3 that lay to the rear of 114 High Street had a topsoil overlying the alluvial clay (106). No. 114 was an early post-medieval house and thus the plot of land may have been worked as a garden plot extensively over time, hence removing the subsoil with double digging. To the rear of 116 High Street evidence of medieval cultivation was identified, the date of this activity was not determined but the width between the tops of the ridges was 4-5m. This size may suggest later cultivation in the high medieval period of the 12th-13th centuries. The width of ridge and furrow is considered to have broadened as the medieval period progressed.

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 under accession number 2010.75.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Blair, J 2005 The Manorial History of Chalgrove, in Page, P, Atherton, K and Hardy, A (Ed), Barentin's Manor: Excavations of the moated manor at Harding's Field, Chalgrove, Oxfordshire 1976-9, 9-14, Oxford: Oxford Archaeology Monograph 24

Gelling, M 1953 The Place-Names of Oxfordshire, part 1, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Hind, J 2005 Archaeological and Historical Background, in Page, P, Atherton, K and Hardy, A (Ed), Barentin's Manor: Excavations of the moated manor at Harding's Field, Chalgrove, Oxfordshire 1976-9, 1-9, Oxford: Oxford Archaeology Monograph 24

Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1999 Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs revised 2008

Morris, J 1978 Domesday Book: Oxfordshire, Chichester: Phillimore

Page, P, Atherton, K and Hardy, A 2005 Barentin's Manor: Excavations of the moated manor at Harding's Field, Chalgrove, Oxfordshire 1976-9, Oxford: Oxford Archaeology Monograph 24