



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

**BLACK BARN FARM,
IPSDEN, OXFORDSHIRE**

SU 6265 8652

On behalf of

D C & R J Allen

DECEMBER 2009

REPORT FOR D C & R J Allen
c/o B K Grain Handling Engineers
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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out a watching brief during surface stripping for an extension to a barn. No archaeological remains were present.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development was located at Black Barn Farm, Ipsden (NGR SU 62645 8652), to the north of the village and in the parish of Crowmarsh. The underlying geology is Lower Chalk and the site lies at approximately 73m OD. The site was formerly wooded.

1.2 Planning Background

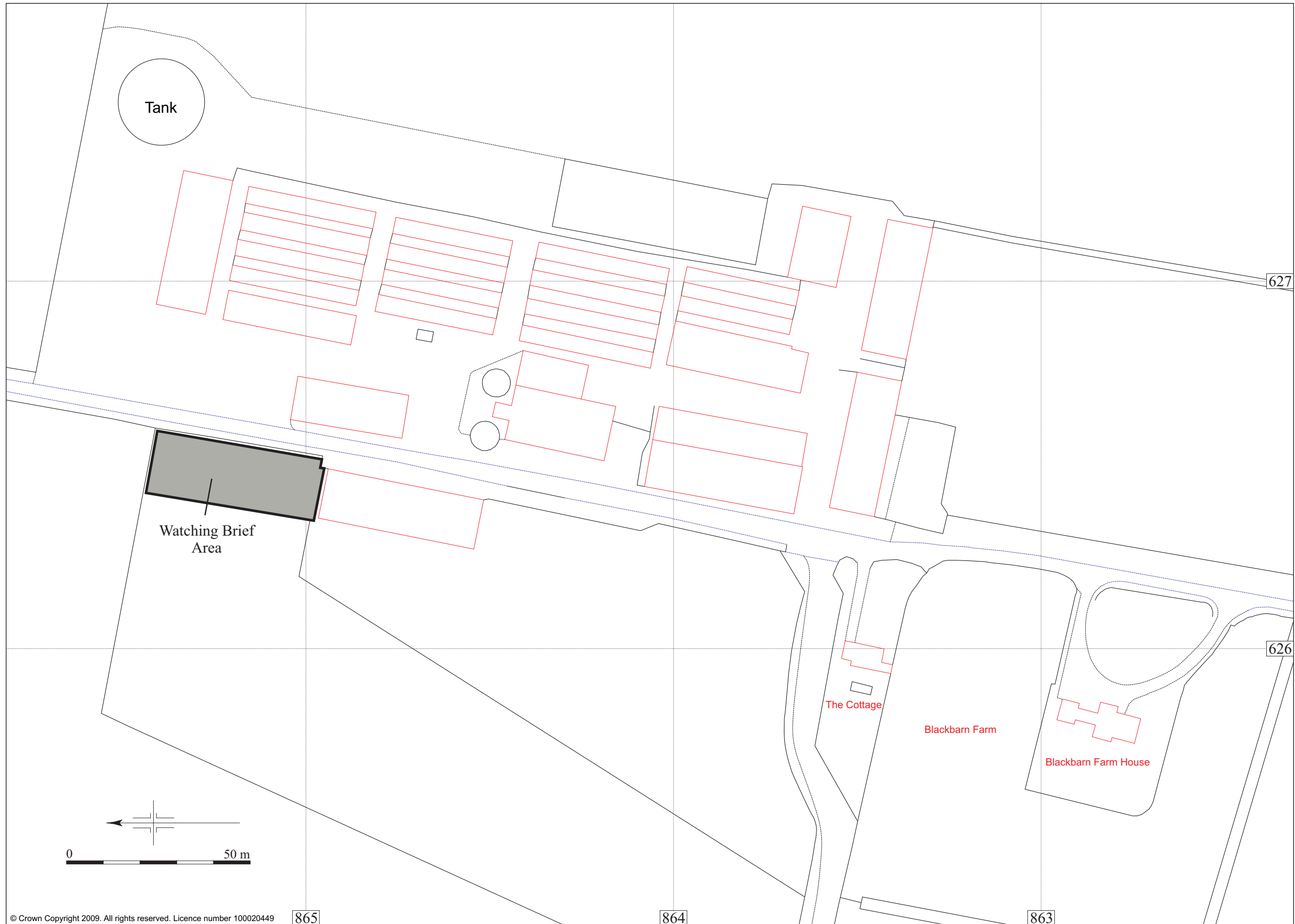
South Oxfordshire District Council granted planning permission under P09/W0893 for the extension and conversion of existing building, together with new grain handling facility (resubmission of planning application P09/W0571). Due to the potential of the site to contain buried archaeological remains a 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 local plan policies. Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (OCAS) prepared a *Brief* for such archaeological work. The archaeological work was carried out to a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by John Moore Heritage Services and approved by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (OCAS)

1.3 Archaeological Background

400m west of the site is an area of cropmarks showing a prehistoric or Roman field system and farmstead (PRN 13047; NGR SU 62088656). These features are thought to continue into the field adjacent to the proposed development site. A trackway, visible on aerial photographs, can be seen to head towards the development site. The cropmarks also show a square enclosure around a circular feature that may represent a round house (PRN 8607; SU 61958647). A Bronze Age ring ditch is also visible as a cropmark 900m west of the farm which is considered to be related to the North Stoke Barrow Cemetery 1.5km to the SW (PRN 15393; SU 61718639).

The site is also located in an area where an extensive amount of worked lithic tools have been recorded through fieldwalking and is just 60m north of the centre of one of these concentrations (PRN 15480; SU 62598639). Other concentrations have been recorded 190m ESE of the site (PRN 15482; SU 62808640) and 190m SE (PRN 62698630). Late prehistoric pottery has also been found from fieldwalking 800m west of the site (PRN 17421; SU 61798639).

The archaeological background information has been taken from the OCAS's Brief.



2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

- To make a record of any significant remains revealed during the course of any operations that may disturb or destroy archaeological remains.
- In particular to record any evidence:
 - relating to the concentration of lithics just to the south
 - of remains associated with the prehistoric or Roman field system, farmstead and trackway to the west

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the archaeological watching brief to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with OCAS.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994) and the principles of MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

3.2 Methodology

The site was monitored during the initial phase of topsoil stripping and inspected after completion of the topsoil strip. The southern quarter of the subsoil strip was continuously monitored. The next quarter was inspected after completion of the subsoil strip and the northern half was examined after all the stripping had been finished.

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

The ground slopes down naturally north to south and west to east. The Lower Chalk (3) was found covered by very pale slightly orange-brown clayey silt (2) in the northern 8m of the site. In the north-west corner it was 200-250mm thick tailing out southwards and at a point 10m from the east side of the stripped area. Similar, but paler, material was bedded between the upper layers of chalk in the north-west corner.

The uppermost deposit was a topsoil of pale grey-brown slightly clayey silt with the very occasional small fragment of chalk. This was on average 200-250mm thick increasing to 350-400mm on the west side of the area. Along the south edge the

topsoil was 600mm thick with the increased thickness resulting from work during the building of the existing barn.

5 FINDS

No finds were seen.

6 DISCUSSION

The area had probably been cultivated before being the plantation was established. No signs of prehistoric or Roman activity were present.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

English Heritage, 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects*

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