



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

THE BARNS, NORTHFIELD FARM,

WOODSTOCK ROAD, WITNEY, OXFORDSHIRE.

INTERIM REPORT

NGR SP 36835 10415

On behalf of

Mr G Derham

FEBRUARY 2010

REPORT FOR Mr G Derham
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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out a watching brief at The Barns, Northfield Farm, Witney as part of the initial phase of work. No archaeological remains were encountered.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The development site is located at The Barns, Northfield Farm, south of Woodstock Road, Witney (NGR SP 3683 1042) in the Madley Brook area. The underlying geology is Cornbrash and the site lies at approximately 87m OD. The site was formerly a farmyard and currently is a garden.

1.2 Planning Background

West Oxfordshire District Council granted planning permission under 03/1293/P/FP to demolish an existing outbuilding and to construct two residential units with associated garaging. 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.

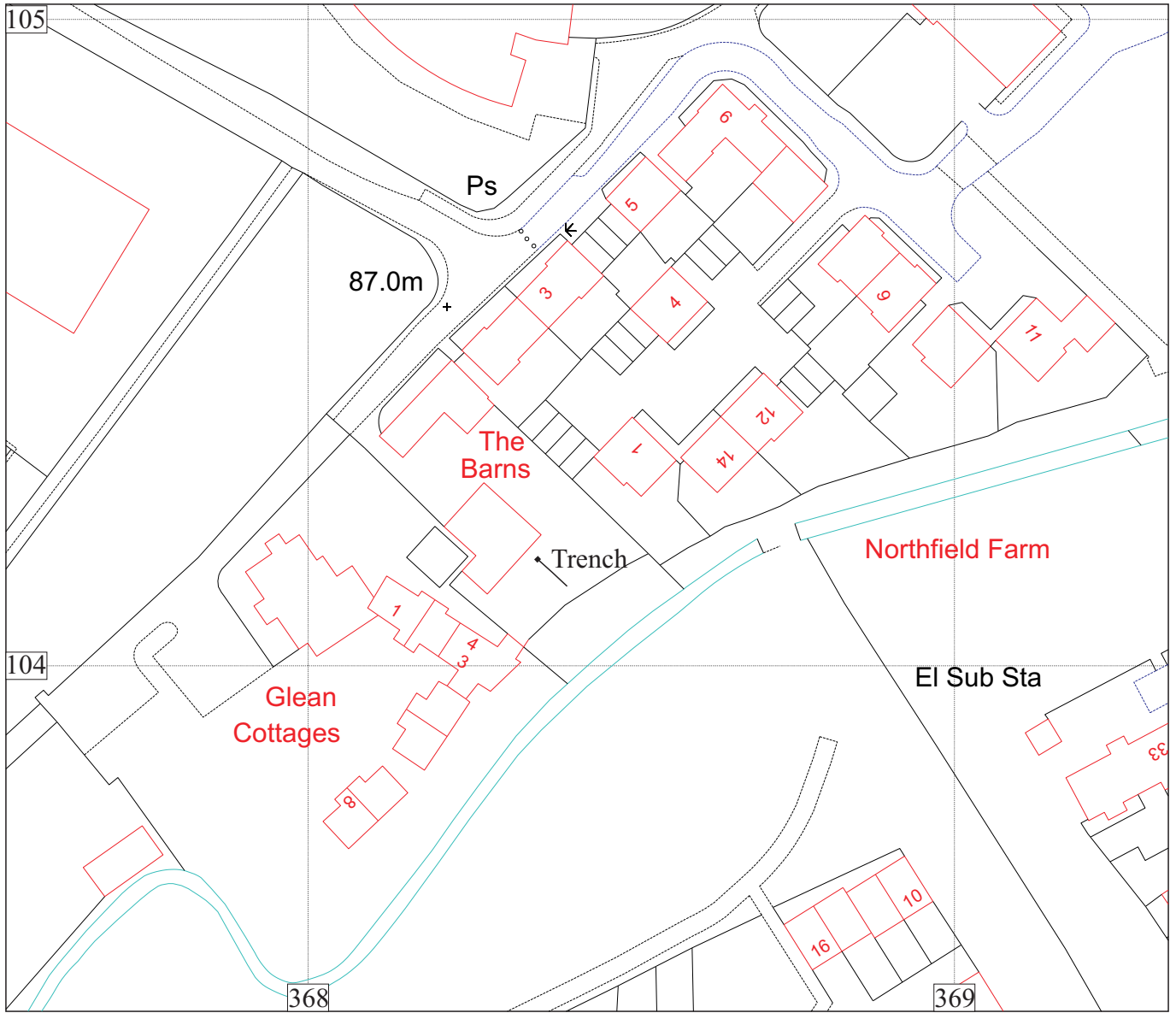
1.3 Archaeological Background

The development site lies to the south of a Bronze Age barrow that survives *in situ* beneath the school play area. The barrow forms part of a larger barrow cemetery that is roughly aligned on a north south axis. Geophysical survey before the construction of the Madley Brook housing estate identified the area adjacent to the farm as having a high magnetic susceptibility suggesting that earlier activity had taken place. There is a possibility that satellite burials may be associated with the cemetery.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the 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 prehistoric activity in the vicinity



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Figure 1. Site and service trench location

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with 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) and the principles of MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

3.2 Methodology

An archaeologist monitored the excavation of a 6m length of service, and manhole, trench.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Watching Brief Results

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 lowest deposit was a compact pale yellow, mottled brown, clay with stone outcropping at the north end (03) that was related to the Cornbrash. Above this was a 0.25m thick subsoil of pale yellow-grey slightly silty clay with occasional pebble (02). This is likely to have been an old ploughsoil. The uppermost layer was 0.25m thick topsoil composed of dark grey-brown silty clay with the occasional brick (01).

4.2 Reliability of Results and Techniques

The work was conducted in good weather.

5 FINDS

The spoil was examined and no artefacts other than modern material were present from any of the layers. No environmental samples were taken due to the nature of the deposits encountered.

6 DISCUSSION

No archaeological features were encountered during this phase of the watching brief.

7 ARCHIVE

The archive is currently maintained by John Moore Heritage services.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

English Heritage, 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects*

Institute for Archaeologists. 1994 (revised 2008): *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*.