

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

13 HIGH STREET, ABINGDON,

OXFORDSHIRE

SP 4970 9708

On behalf of

Mr A. Christosi

JUNE 2010

REPORT FOR Mr A. Christosi
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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services concluded an Archaeological Watching Brief on the 6th May 2010 as requested by CTG Surveyors Ltd during a borehole survey at 13 High Street, Abingdon, Oxfordshire. A sequence of modern “made-ground” was recorded that could represent infilling of a quarry pit.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site was located at 13 High Street, Abingdon, Oxfordshire (NGR SP 4970 9708).

1.2 Background

It is proposed to construct a two-storey extension to the existing property. The borehole investigation was undertaken to assess the ground conditions for foundation and floor slab design.

Local knowledge had suggested that the site would be underlain by a significant thickness of Made Ground (Cooke 2010).

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 archaeological remains.

3 METHODOLOGY

An archaeologist observed the cores of c.100mm diameter extracted from the digging of boreholes to depths of c.5m. Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (1994).

4 RESULTS

4.1 Field Results

BH1: Core from borehole in South corner

Natural gravels deposits (1/01) are present from a depth of around 4.4m below present ground surface. Above this was a 0.6m thick layer of dark grey clay-silt (1/02) that

was in turn overlain by a 0.4m thick layer of brown-grey clay-silt (1/03). Above this was a 1m thick layer of orange-brown sand and gravel (1/04). It is likely that these deposits are also part of the natural stratigraphy.

Overlying these deposits was a 0.9m thick layer of black silt and gravel (1/05) that contained fragments of modern concrete. Above this were four distinct layer (1/06),(1/07),(1/08) and (1/09) that were 1.5m thick combined. All contained modern ash, brick and concrete fragments.

BH2: Core from borehole in West corner

Natural gravels deposits (2/01) were present from a depth of around 4.5m below present ground surface. Above this was a 0.75m thick layer of brown - dark grey clay-silt (2/02) that was in turn overlain by a 0.15m thick layer of orange-yellow sand (2/03). Above this was a 0.9m thick layer of grey-brown sand-silt and gravel (2/04). As seen in BH1 it is likely that these deposits are also part of the natural stratigraphy.

Overlying these deposits was a 1.4m thick layer of black-dark brown silt and gravel (2/05) that contained fragments of modern brick. Above this was a 1.3m layer of dark brown clay-sand and gravel (2/06) that contained modern concrete and brick fragments.

BH 3: Core from borehole in East corner

Natural gravel was present at a depth of around 4.80m (3/01). Above this was a 0.4m thick layer of brown - dark grey clay-silt (3/02) that was in turn overlain by a 0.9m thick layer of brown clay-silt (3/03). Above this was a 0.8m thick layer of grey-brown sand-silt and gravel (3/04). Again these deposits are similar to those seen in BH1 and BH2.

Overlying these deposits was a 0.7m thick layer of black to red-brown silt and some gravel (3/05). It was not possible to tell if this was a natural deposit, but its depth, colour and similarity to deposits within the other boreholes may indicate a more recent date.

Above this was a 1.65m layer of dark brown sand-silt and gravel (3/06) that contained modern concrete and brick fragments. The uppermost layer was a dark brown-black topsoil (3/07) that was 0.35m thick with bone and modern brick fragments.

4.2 Reliability of Techniques and Results

The reliability is considered reasonable, there are always difficulties associated with monitoring such small samples as boreholes.

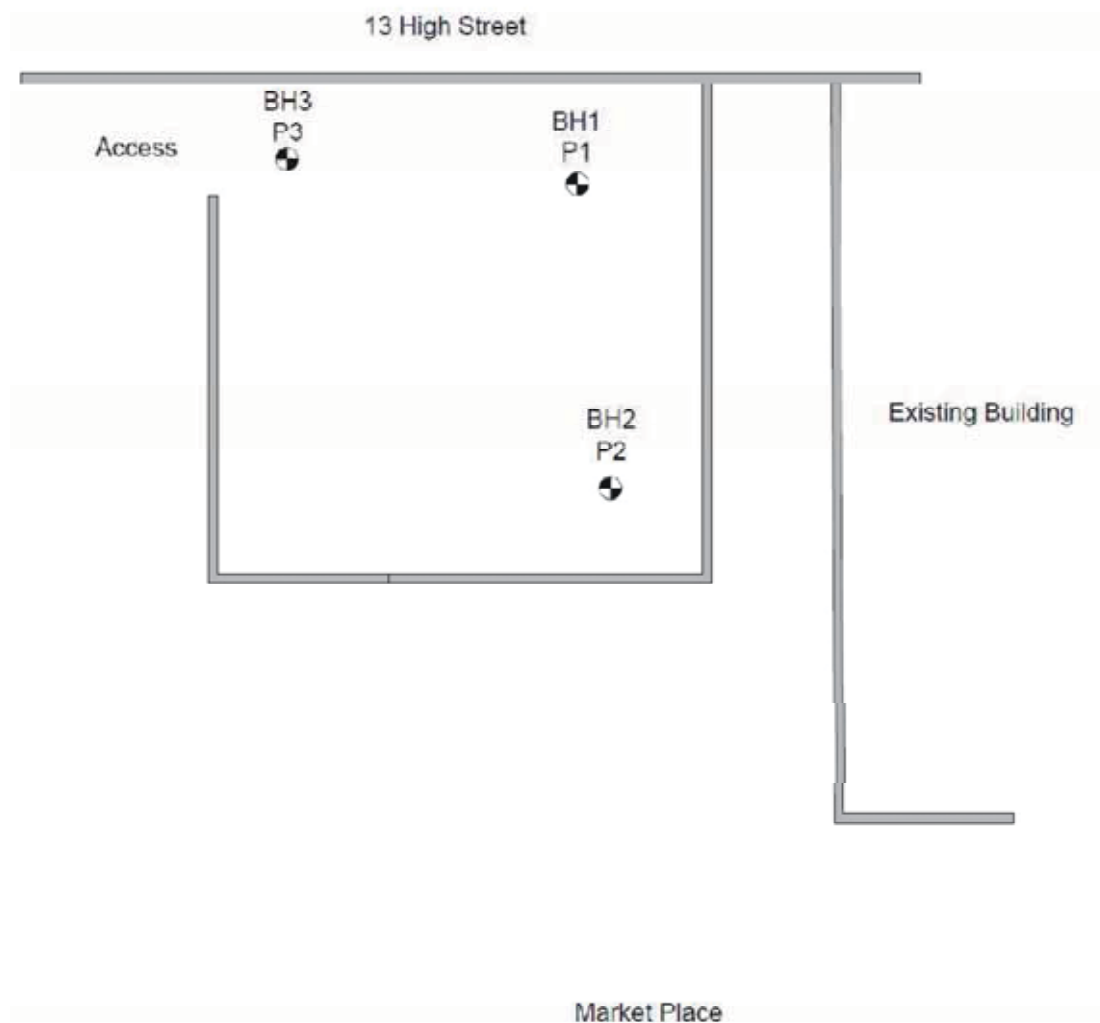


Figure 1. Site Plan

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery (*By D. Gilbert*)

The assemblage consisted of a single sherd weighing a total of 55g. The pottery was recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994), as follows:

OXAM: Brill/Boarstall type Ware, 13th Century +.

This sherd was recovered from context (2.05) and layer of made ground and may have been imported on to the site.

5.2 Environmental Remains

No deposits were considered to warrant environmental sampling.

6 DISCUSSION

All three cores displayed a similar sequence of natural deposits with layers of modern made ground up to 2.7m thick above. The individual layers of the made ground seen in Borehole 1 may indicate separate dumping sequences, while the more homogeneous layers in Boreholes 2 and 3 may indicate rapid raising of the ground level.

No indication of a buried topsoil was seen within the cores and it is possible that the area had been stripped or heavily truncated before the ground level was raised at a later date. It is possible that quarrying had taken place in the area and the deposits seen are associated with its infilling.

7 ARCHIVE

Archive Contents

The archive consists of the following:

Paper record

The project report

The primary site records

Physical record

The finds

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

8 Bibliography

Cooke, S. 2010 *Site Investigation Report: 13 High Street, Abingdon, Oxfordshire*. Report No. SAC10-113

Institute for Archaeologists. 1994. *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*. Revised 2008