

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

THE CROWN INN, HIGH STREET, BLOCKLEY,

MORETON-IN-MARSH,

GLOUCESTERSHIRE

SP 164 348

On behalf of

Mr Tony Powell

May 2010

REPORT FOR Mr Tony Powell
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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services (JMHS) conducted an Archaeological Watching Brief at The Crown Inn, High Street, Blockley, Moreton-in-Marsh. The Watching Brief was successful in locating three features; one of which was a pit dating to 13th – 15th century, a posthole dated to the late 17th – 18th century and a pit of indeterminate date.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The proposal site lies in the rear of the property of The Crown Inn, High Street, Blockley (SP 164 348). The area of the proposed development is level, having been formerly used for car parking and the location of two outbuildings. Originally the area appears to have been on a relatively steep natural slope and has been terraced up at the southeast side. The outbuildings have been demolished. The geology is Whitby Mudstone Formation.

1.2 Planning Background

Cotswold District Council has granted planning permission for the demolition of outbuildings and erection of single storey building for staff accommodation. Due to the presence of potential remains of archaeological interest in the proposal area a condition of the planning consent required the implementation of a programme of archaeological work. This was in line with PPG16 (in place at the time of work) and Local Plan policies.

1.3 Archaeological Background

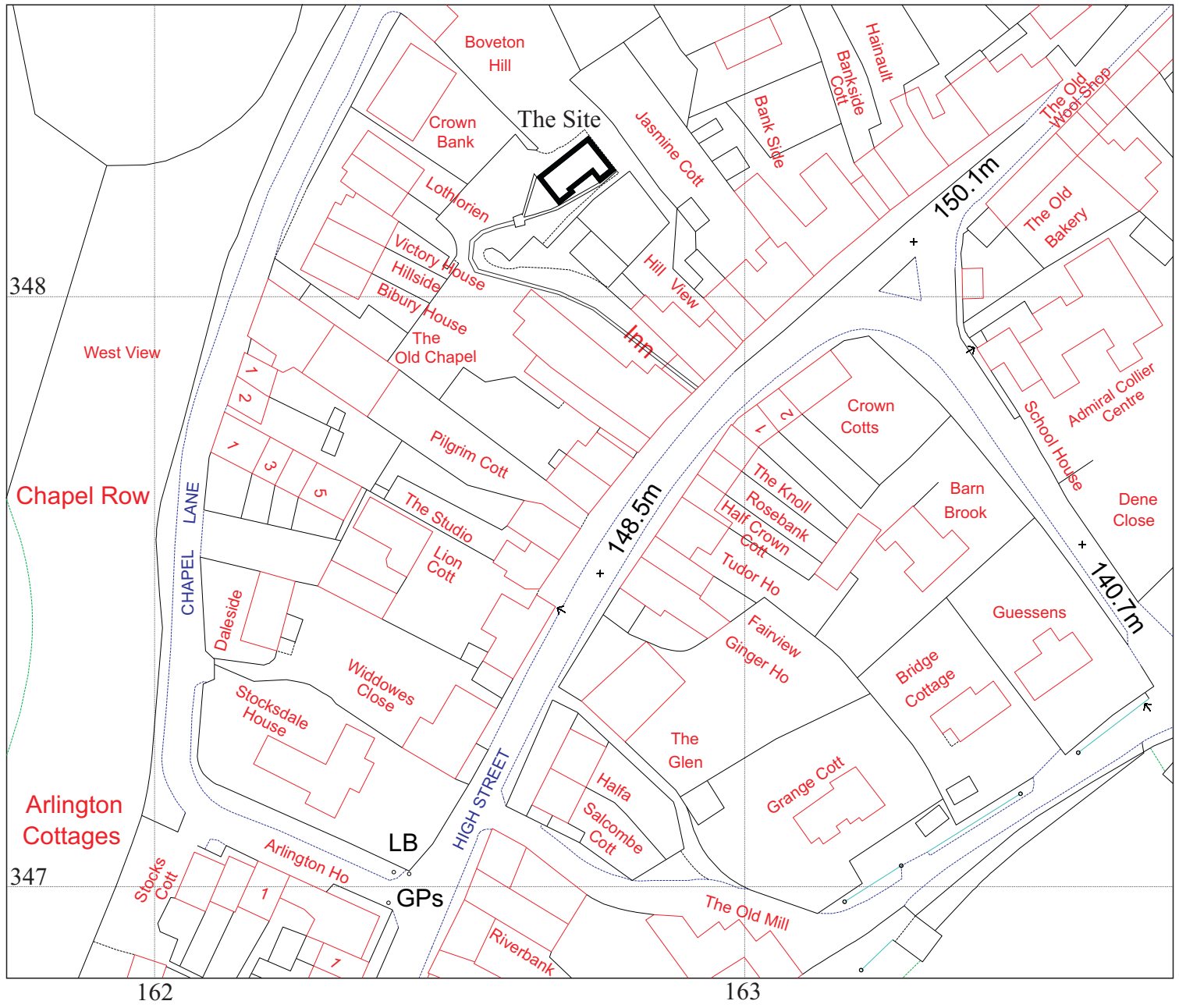
The application site is potentially archaeologically sensitive, since it is located within the historic core of Blockley. However, landscaping has occurred within the rear part of the plot forming a series of terraces for buildings and car parking.

Blockley was formerly in the County of Worcestershire. Burhred, King of the Mercians, granted a monastery at Blockley in 855 to Aelhun, Bishop of Worcester. At the time of the Domesday Survey the Bishop of Worcester held 38 hides belonging to the Manor of Blockley. The manor continued into the possession of the Bishops of Worcester until 1648 (VCH 1913). The Crown Inn dates to the 16th and 17th century.

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 archaeological remains.



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Figure 1. Site location

In particular:

- To record any evidence relating to the medieval and post-medieval settlement.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation submitted by the applicant and approved by Charles Parry, archaeological advisor to Cotswold 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 was on site during all operations that had the potential to disturb or destroy archaeological remains. This included the digging of foundations and service trenches on to natural geological horizons with a 360° type tracked excavator (Fig. 2).

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. A photographic record was also produced.

4 RESULTS

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers in () indicate feature fills or deposits of material. Those without brackets refer to features themselves.

4.1 Results of Fieldwork (Figures 2 and 3)

Cutting into a mid brown-orange clay mixed with limestone natural (04) were three archaeological features. The earliest datable feature was pit 13 measuring 1.00m wide and 0.30m deep with moderately steep slightly curving sides and a curving base. This was filled with mid orange grey-brown silty clay containing moderate small fragments of limestone with occasional charcoal flecking (14). Four sherds of pottery were recovered from this fill dating from the 13th century.

To the southeast of pit 13 was a posthole 09. This feature was 0.50m wide and 0.40m deep with steep, slightly curving sides and a slightly curving base. Its fill was

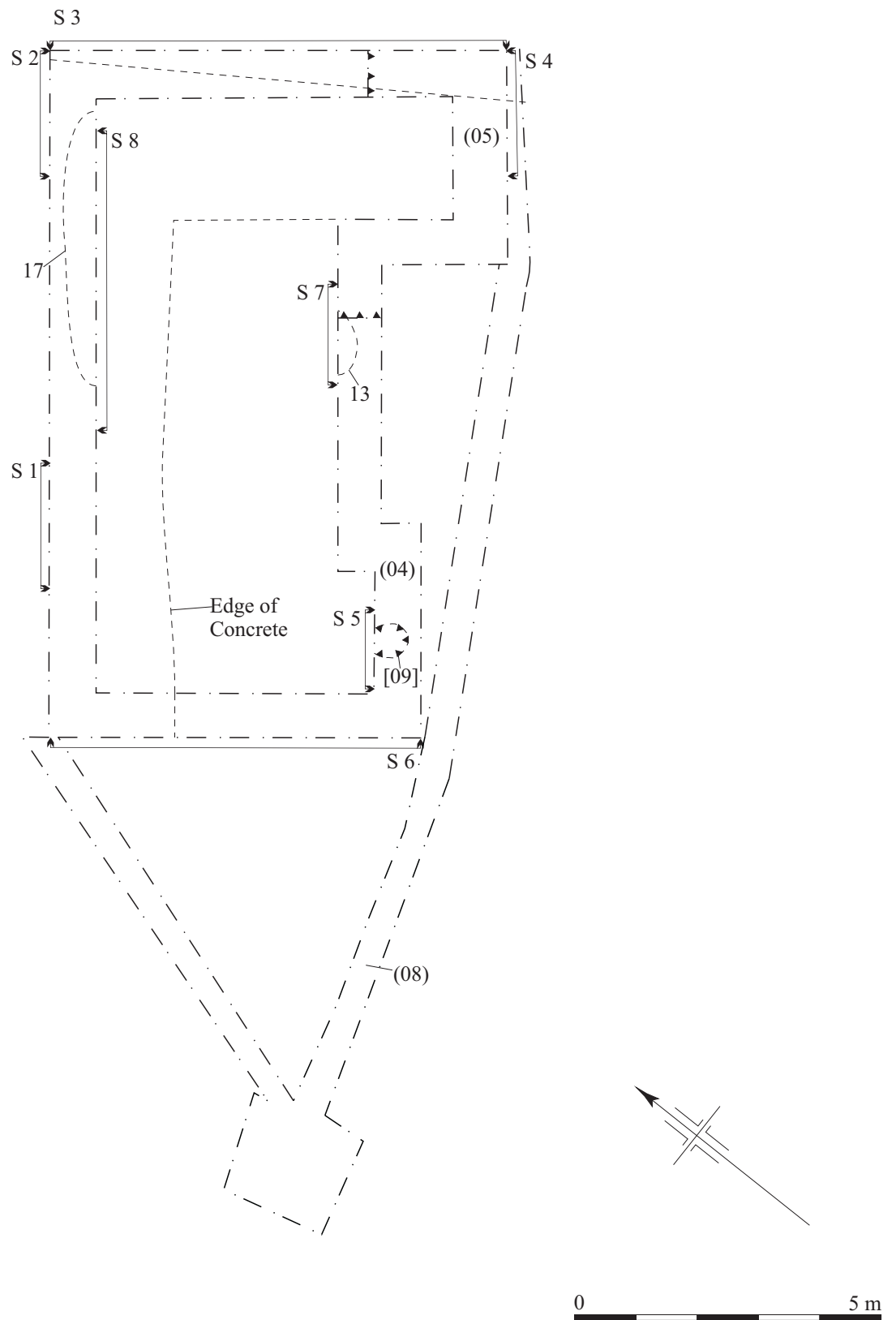


Figure 2. Trench location

composed of a mid grey-brown silty clay with moderate limestone inclusions (10). A single sherd of pottery dating to the late 17th century was recovered from this fill.

Towards the north, a relatively shallow large pit 17 was revealed measuring 4.55m in width and 0.45m in depth. Pit 17 contained two fills. The earliest fill was composed of mid orange grey-brown silty clay with moderate to frequent limestone fragments (16) 0.25m thick. This was overlain by a dark brown-grey silty clay with occasional to moderate fragments of limestone (15) 0.20m thick. No pottery was recovered from this pit.

Stratigraphically above these features was a mid grey-brown silty clay containing occasional small fragments of limestone (03). This deposit was only seen in patches towards the northwest of the site and is likely to be an interface between the natural (04) and deposit (08) (the same as deposit (02) seen physically overlying the features themselves).

Deposit (08) was a maximum of 0.45m thick towards the southwest and was composed of a mid grey-brown silty clay with moderate limestone inclusions. This was overlain by a mid brown-grey silty clay containing moderate small fragments of limestone and charcoal flecking (07) with a maximum thickness of 0.25m towards the southwest, petering out further northwest.

Deposit (07) was covered by a levelling layer of limestone mixed with clinker (12) with a maximum thickness of 0.20m towards the southeast and southwest which in turn was covered by a layer of concrete (11) 0.13m thick and evidence of shallow concrete foundation trenches.

A layer of redeposited natural (01) covered the majority of the site thought to be the same as deposit (06). This was c. 0.26m thick and was laid down as a compacted layer for the tarmac that formed the car parking area following a period of ground reduction. This was evident towards the northwest where the majority of deposit (02)/(08) had been removed prior to its deposition.

Beyond the boundary of the former car park area to the northeast, completing the stratigraphic sequence, was a mid reddish grey-brown silty clay (05) forming part of a planted border.

4.2 Reliability of Techniques and Results

The reliability is considered reasonable. The limited space hampered monitoring the footing trenches during excavation, as too did periods of heavy rain.

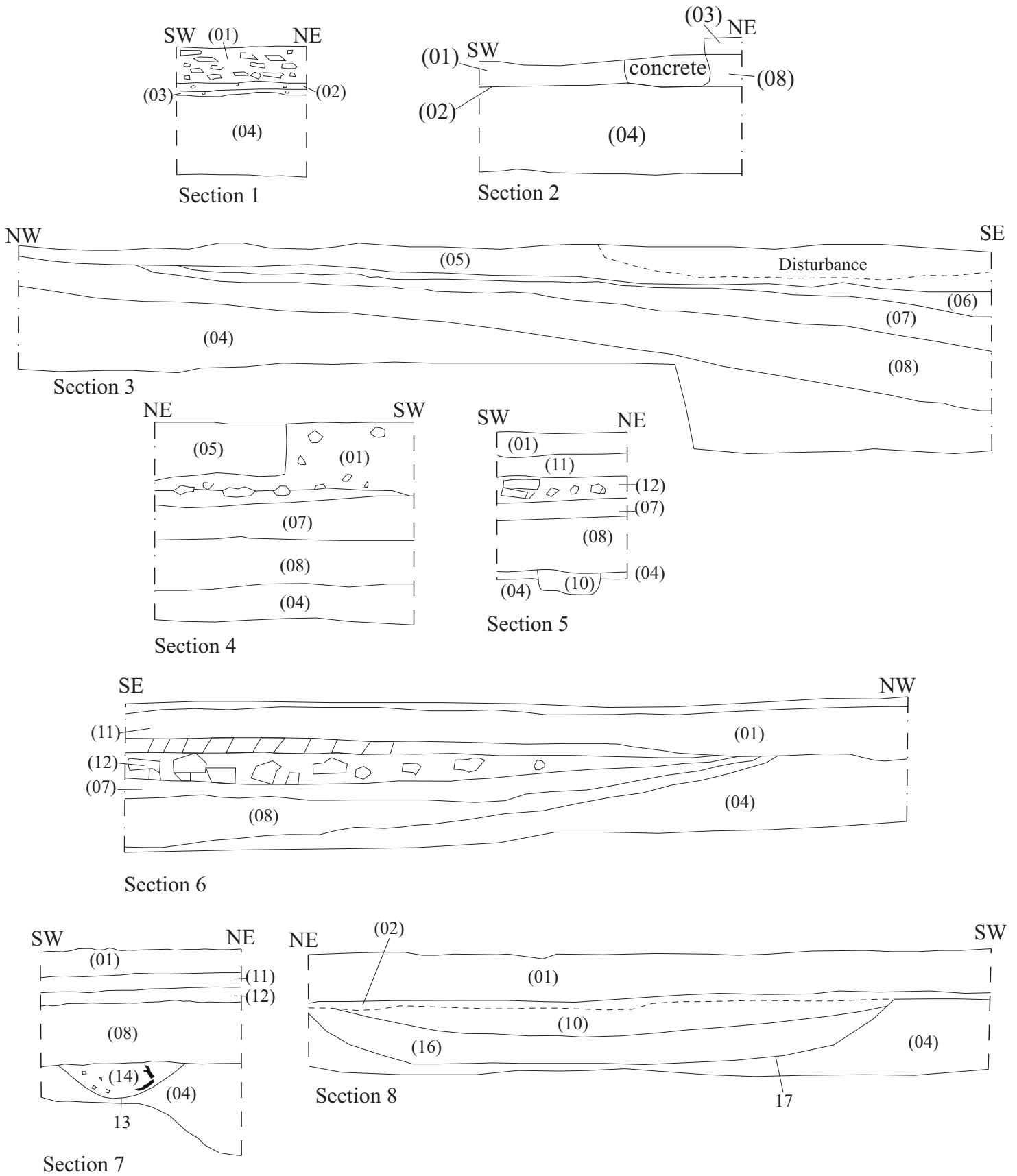


Figure 3. Sections 1-8

0 2 m
Scale for all sections

5 FINDS

5.1 Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 11 sherds with a total weight of 815g. It comprised a mixture of medieval and later wares which are typical of sites in the region with the bulk of the group consisting of large fragments of a 13th century jug. Where possible, the fabrics were cross-referenced to the classification system of the Gloucester City type-series (Vince 1984). The following fabric types were noted:

F352: **Brill/Boarstall ware.** AD1200 – 1600 (Mellor 1994). Fine, wheel-thrown sandy ware, with the earlier products of the industry typified by glazed jugs, some highly decorated, with production sites at a small number of villages on the Oxfordshire/Buckinghamshire border. 1 sherd, 22g

F355: **Minety-type Ware:** Gloucester fabric TF44. Early/Mid 12th - 15th century (Mellor 1994). Cotswolds-limestone-tempered ware, usually jars or jugs with a dull green glaze. 4 sherds 761g.

F414: **Bristol/Staffordshire manganese wares.** c late 17th – 18th century. A uniform buff-fired fabric in a moderately sorted matrix. The inclusions are occasional sub-angular and rounded black ironstone up to 0.6mm. This ware is characterised by its brown 'tiger striped' manganese glaze. 2 sherds, 14 g.

F418: **Creamware.** c 1740-1880. A cream-coloured earthenware, made from a calcinated flint clay (eg. Jennings 1981, 227), and with a lead glaze, resulting in a rich cream colour. Range of tableware forms. 2 sherds, 14g.

F443: **Staffordshire White Salt-Glazed Stoneware,** AD1720-1780 Hard, white fabric with a distinctive white 'orange peel' textured glaze. Range of fine tablewares such as mugs, tea bowls and plates. 2 sherds, 4g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Table 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*. The assemblage is generally fairly well preserved, and typical finds in the region. The medieval material mainly comprises Minety ware, with the sherds all coming from the body of a large globular jug with a dull green glaze which is a typical product of the industry.

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

Cntxt	F355		F352		F414		F443		F418		Date
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
7					1	11	2	4	2	14	M18thC
10					1	3					L17thC
14	4	761	1	22							13thC
Total	4	761	1	22	2	14	2	4	2	14	

6 CONCLUSION

Due to the topography of the site it was initially thought that any archaeological features would have been truncated away when the site was terraced. However, the fall of the natural (04) observed appeared similar to the general slope of the topography overall. It seems from observations made that the site has been built up towards the southeast to help level the land rather than the terrace being dug into the slope completely, with the only evidence of truncation as part of this terracing happening only towards the northwest.

The Watching Brief was successful in locating three archaeological features. The earliest being a medieval pit dating to 13th century onwards, with a later post-medieval posthole dating to the late 17th century and another undated larger pit.

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.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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