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Graham A J Soame & Associates

Pinnocks Farm, Northmoor, Oxfordshire

NGR SP 4124 0296

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

Planning Ref. No. W96/0379

Oxford Archaeological Unit

January 2000

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Prepared by: Kayt Brown & John Dalton

Date: 24/1/2000

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Date: 11/2/00

Approved by:

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Date:

21/2/2000

Oxford Archaeological Unit

January 2000

Summary

In November and December of 1999 and January of 2000 the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) undertook a watching brief at Pinnocks Farm, Northmoor, Oxfordshire (NGR SP). No archaeological features were seen and no finds were retrieved.

1 Introduction

The development proposal (planning application no. W96/0379) comprised the repair and refurbishment of a standing, but derelict, milking parlour prior to its conversion into a holiday cottage with associated services. An archaeological watching brief was required in accordance with the planning consent granted under PPG 16 as, although the structure itself is not listed, the ground on which it stands comprises part of a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM OXON 141), and Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) was therefore required for those works associated with the development which were likely to incur ground disturbance. The Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for this job was produced in support of the SMC application.

The watching brief was commissioned by Graham A J Soame & Associates on behalf of Mr G Reeves, the landowner. It was undertaken to a brief set by and a WSI agreed with the Deputy County Archaeologist for Oxfordshire and English Heritage.

2 Background

The Scheduled Ancient Monument, SAM 141, consists of an extensive area of cropmarks principally identified through aerial photography. The cropmarks include trackways and rectilinear enclosures with probable domestic elements. There is also a highly complex pattern of less regular features, possibly dating from the Iron Age, which lie a little to the west of the scheduled area. Romano-British pottery recovered from the site would seem to suggest a broad Roman date for some of the features. Roman pottery and a coin have been found at SP 413 028 (Oxfordshire SMR PRN 1165), a little to the south of the development site.

A complex sequence of Iron Age and Roman settlement enclosures have been excavated at Watkins Farm, Northmoor, slightly less than 1 km to the north-east of the development site (Allen 1990). In general, the site is located within a continuum of complex cropmarks found across the wide gravel terraces located between the lower Windrush and the Thames in the Stanton Harcourt/Northmoor area.

The milking parlour to be converted lies within the farmyard, immediately to the south-west of the farmhouse. The underlying geology is first terrace gravel overlying clay.

3 Aims

The aims of the watching brief were to identify any archaeological remains exposed on site during the course of the works, and to record these to established OAU standards (Wilkinson 1992), in order to secure their preservation by record.

4 Methodology

The watching brief was undertaken by means of separate inspection visits, scheduled by liaison with the main contractor, undertaken by an archaeological supervisor.

Within the constraints imposed by health and safety considerations the deposits exposed were cleaned, inspected and recorded in plan, section and by colour slide and monochrome print photography. Written records were also made on proforma sheets. Soil description utilises standard charts for the approximation of percentage of inclusion types in soil deposits.

5 Results

Excavations in the vicinity of the barn comprised five column base pits along the line of the north wall and a foundation trench running the length of the south wall. Also a 3 m deep pit was dug prior to the insertion of a new septic tank for the building, together with associated drainage runs.

The five column base pits measured 1.10 m by 0.80 m in plan and 1 m deep; the sequence identified in all of them ran as follows:

- (1) - the concrete farmyard surface, 0.10 m thick.
- (2) - type 1 hardcore makeup, 0.10 m thick.
- (3) - mid gray/brown silty clay loam with 10-20% fine-coarse subrounded gravel, on average 0.55 m thick.

Natural gravel (4) was reached at an average depth of 0.80 m. One intact Victorian glass bottle was retrieved from (3) together with some fragments of red brick, some very few fragments of which were also seen in (2). In the southernmost pit to be dug, deposits were heavily disturbed into the natural gravel by a modern drainage culvert.

An identical sequence of deposits was seen in the foundation trench, with (2) again producing some fragments of red brick and occasional fragments of bottle glass.

The excavation for the new septic tank measured 1.75 m square in plan by c. 3 m in depth; lower deposits were rapidly obscured by groundwater which rapidly rose and settled at 0.95 m, however natural gravel was seen above this point. The sequence identified ran as follows:

- (10) - mid gray silty clay loam topsoil, 0.10 m thick.
- (11) - mid gray/brown silty clay loam subsoil with 15 - 20% fine-coarse subrounded gravel.

Natural gravel (4), as seen elsewhere, was encountered at 0.80 m depth; no features were seen and no finds were retrieved.

6 Finds

No finds were retrieved during the course of the watching brief.

7 Environmental results

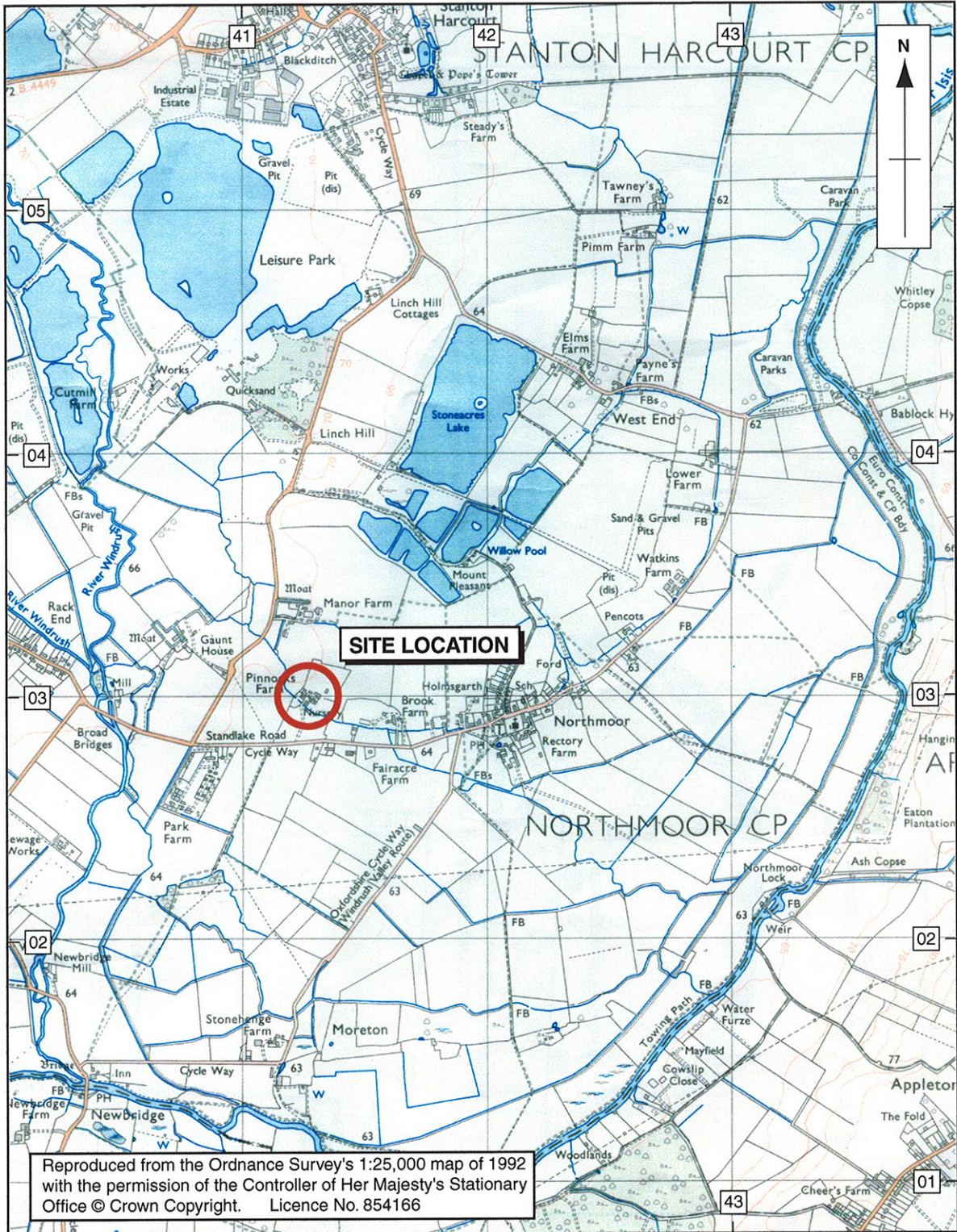
Full consideration was given to various sampling strategies however, due to the absence of suitable deposits, no environmental soil samples were taken.

8 Discussion

The watching brief did not locate archaeology of any significance within the study area; it is thought possible that this may at least in part be due to slight levelling and truncation of the natural deposits during creation and use of the site as a farmyard.

References.

Wilkinson, D (ed) 1992 Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual, (First edition, August 1992).

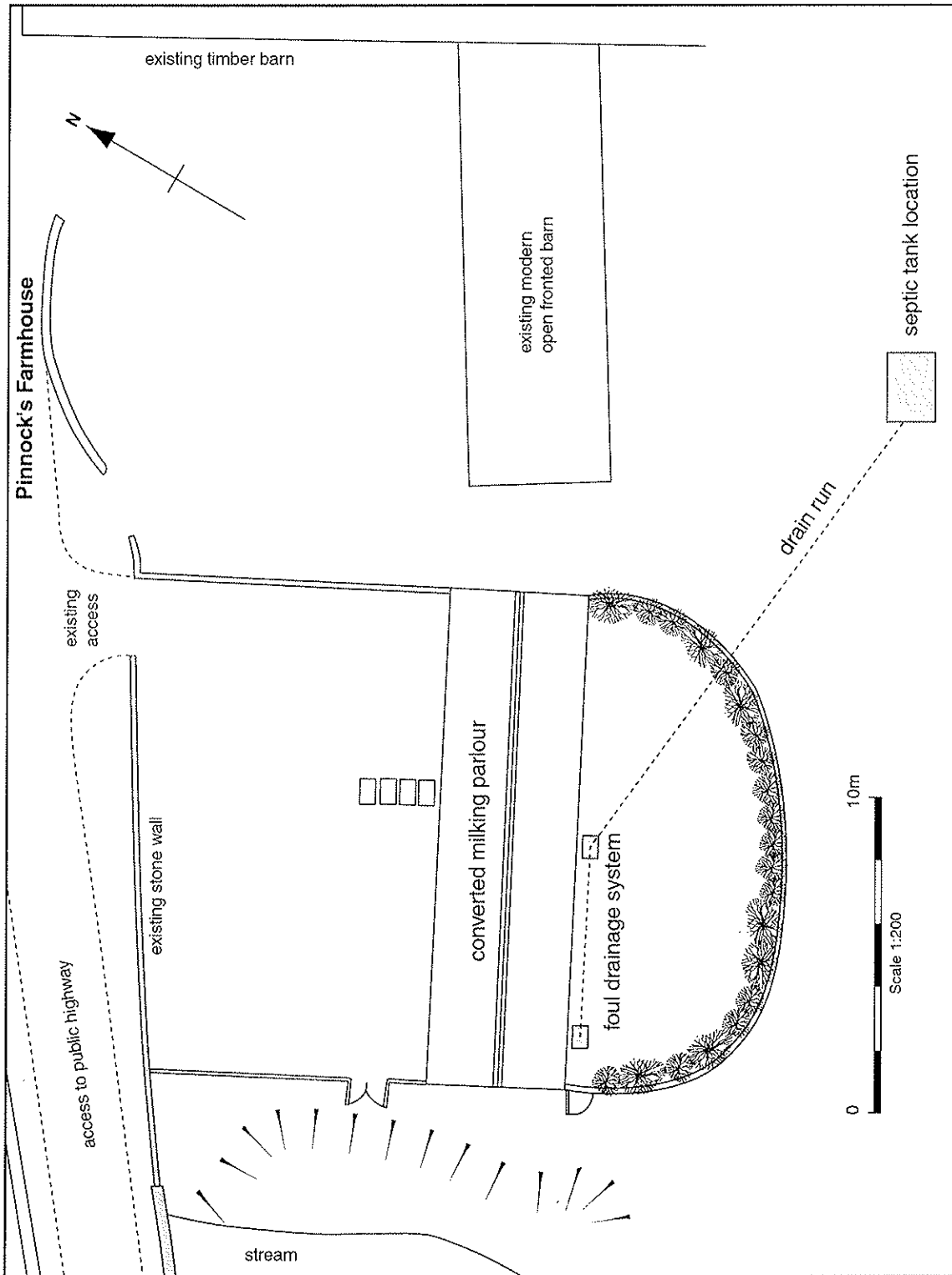


Scale 1:25,000

Location of site

Figure 1

NPIN 98



Site plan

Figure 2



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