

# Cogges Manor Farm Museum, Witney, Oxfordshire

NGR SP 3626 0964

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Oxford Archaeological Unit

February 1997

COGGES MANOR FARM MUSEUM

WITNEY

OXFORDSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

(WCMF 96)

SP 3626 0964

JOHN DALTON

OAU

## 1. SUMMARY.

- 1.1. The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) carried out a watching brief during the break-up and removal of the concrete courtyard area which formed the main entrance to Cogges Manor farm Museum, Witney, Oxon (SP 3626 0964, Fig.1). The deposition of the new concrete surface was also monitored. Cogges Manor Farm is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and the watching brief was required in accordance with PPG 16 due to the presence of known sites of archaeological interest within the immediate vicinity of the development. The site lies on cornbrash at a height of c 80m OD.
- 1.2. The removal of the existing courtyard surface revealed in plan an uneven dump of hardcore, from which was retrieved what appears to be an iron gate latch of undetermined date. This was, however, found in close proximity to several pieces of modern brick. No archaeology was seen.

## 2. INTRODUCTION.

- 2.1. This watching brief was commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council through the County Archaeological Officer. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with standard OAU procedures.
- 2.2. The aims of the watching brief were:
- 2.3. To monitor the break-up and removal of the existing courtyard surface to ensure no disturbance of any underlying deposits took place.
- 2.4. To identify and record in plan only any deposits that might have been revealed by the above activity.

## 3. BACKGROUND.

- 3.1. The courtyard which was resurfaced is located within a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 183). The Scheduled area comprises a moated castle, a priory, the manor house and associated farm complex and a deserted Mediaeval village. The affected area lies within the Manor farm complex and is on the edge of the deserted village. The farm complex in its present state postdates the village, therefore there is a possibility that earlier structures, relating either to the village or to the manor itself, may underlie the courtyard area. Recent work on the manor house has revealed evidence of Anglo Saxon settlement. Whether this extends below the courtyard area is, to date, unclear.

4.

5. **METHODOLOGY.**

5.1. A series of on-site meetings were agreed with the project's supervising officer, Mr Stuart Parkhurst of W S Atkins in order to discuss specific requirements and to monitor the work in progress. A total of six visits were made to monitor the initial break-up of the courtyard surface, the removal of the resultant material, and the deposition of the new yard surface.

5.2. The existing surface was initially removed by hand. However, due to the amount of time this was expected to take, a small pneumatic drill was used subsequently with great care taken to avoid the penetration of underlying deposits by the drill bit. The resultant material was then removed by lorry, after inspection, which kept to the existing pathway. The exposed areas were then inspected. The insertion of polythene sheeting, A193 reinforcing mesh and the pouring of the new concrete surface were also monitored to ensure no disturbance occurred.

6. **RESULTS.**

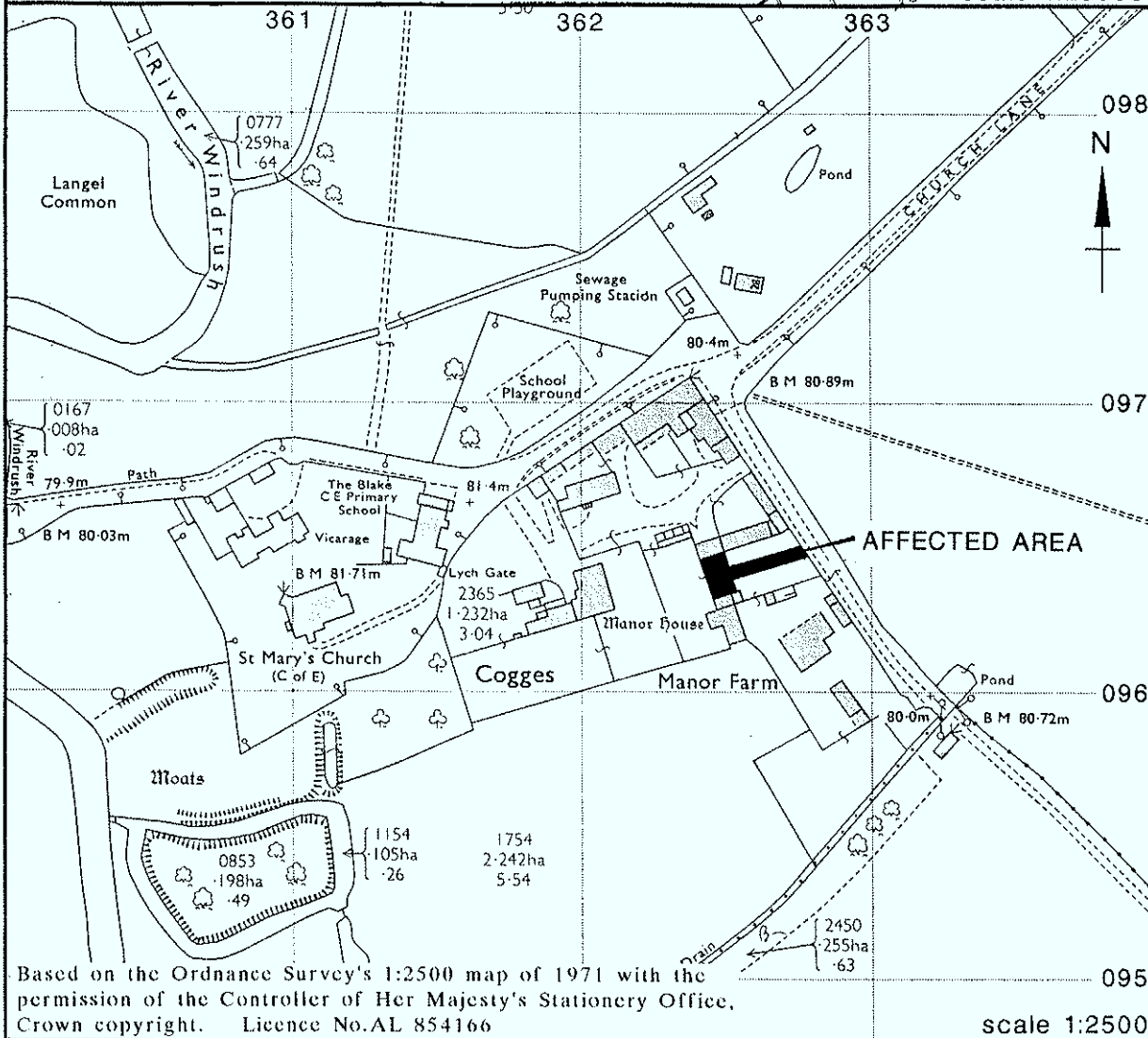
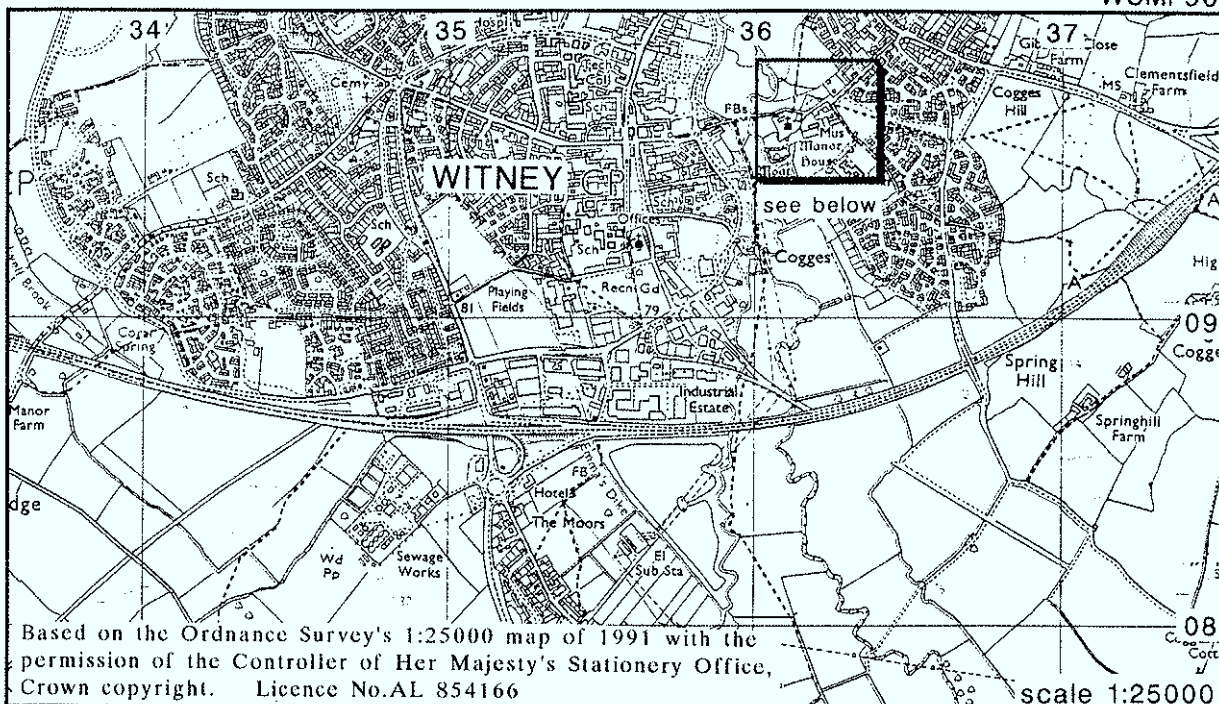
6.1. The material exposed by the removal of the existing surface consisted almost entirely of sand and gravel hardcore, with occasional patches of a friable dark gray clay loam with 2% silt. No cut features nor masonry was seen and only two finds were retrieved, as described above.

7. **DISCUSSION.**

7.1. The exposed sand and gravel hardcore is thought to be contemporary with the deposition of the existing courtyard surface. The friable dark gray clay loam may possibly represent an in-situ deposit, but not enough of it was seen to determine its extent or nature as most of it was masked by the patchy dumps of hardcore mentioned above.

7.2. The watching brief successfully prevented any accidental intrusion into archaeological deposits by the contractors.

John Dalton  
OAU  
December 1996.



Site Location Plan

Figure 1



## OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES  
Telephone: 01865 243888 Fax: 01865 793496



---

Director: David Miles B.A., F.S.A., M.I.F.A.  
Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited. Registered Office: Janus House, Osney Mead  
Registered Charity Number: 285627 Private Limited Company Number: 1618597