

**ORCHARD CLOSE, SIDINGS ROAD,
CHURCHILL, OXFORDSHIRE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

Planning Application No. 0623/94

NGR SP 2802 2438

13 September 1994

SUMMARY

The Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out a Watching Brief on foundation work for an extension at Orchard Close, Sidings Road, Churchill on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council. There were two indeterminate features seen in the side of the foundation trench.

BACKGROUND (Fig.)

The site of the proposed development is located 50 m from the E edge of the surviving upstanding earthworks of the shrunken medieval village of Churchill (Scheduled Ancient Monument SAM 160 PRN 4182). A medieval cistern and medieval artefacts were found 80 m to the S of the site (PRN 2280).

The site had been terraced for the construction of the row of houses which includes Orchard Close. The area under investigation covered some 5x5 m at the rear of the house.

STRATEGY

The mechanical excavation of the foundation trenches was observed and the excavated spoil monitored. The archaeological features were cleaned by hand to determine their nature and depth.

RESULTS

Soils

The general soil type was clay.

Archaeology

Two indeterminate features were recorded at the W corner of the foundation

trenches (see Fig. for location). The clay subsoil (6) was cut by two features (3 and 4). Context 3 was thought to be a posthole (0.11 m wide and 0.11 m deep) and Context 4 was thought to be a shallow pit (0.8 m wide and 0.12 m deep). The edges of these features were ill-defined. They were both filled by material indistinguishable from an old garden soil (2) which was 0.34 m deep. Modern gardensoil (5), up to 0.31 m deep, overlay layer 2 and both were capped by a concrete foundation (1) for a recently demolished structure at the rear of Orchard Close. Gardensoils 2 and 5 were observed in a soakaway and drain extending about 3 m to the N of the foundations.

Finds

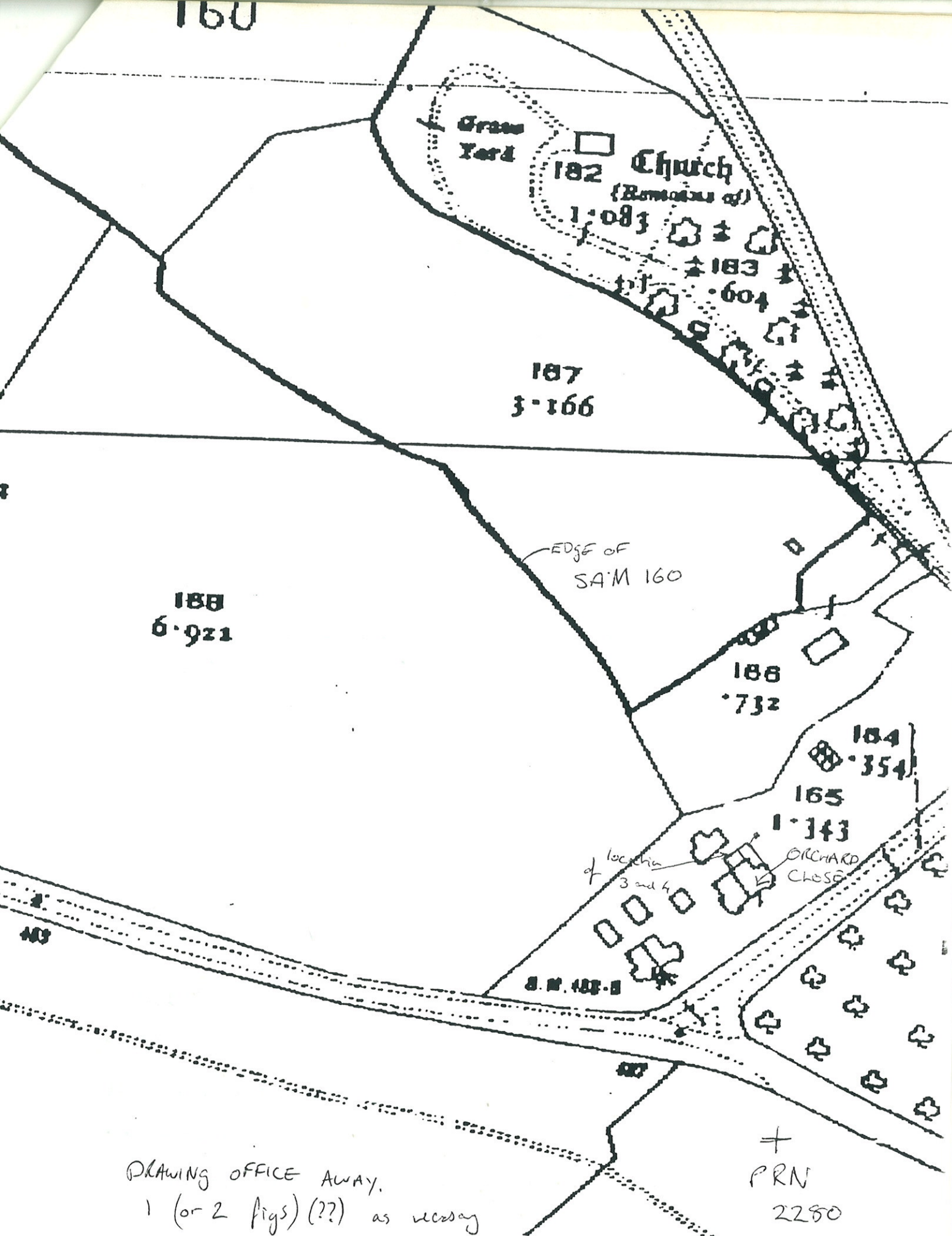
No artefacts were recovered from the site. Modern building material was observed in layers 2 and 5.

COMMENTS ON THE RESULTS

Overall Interpretation

The nature of the two archaeological features recorded was unclear. One (3) may have been a posthole and the other (4) may have been a shallow pit. No similar deposits were seen on the other side of the foundation trench so it is unlikely that they represent linear features. Alternatively, as the edges of the deposits were not clear they could have been the result of root action. The similarity of the fills and the old garden soil coupled with the absence of medieval artefacts may support this view. However, the site lies on the E alignment of the field boundary to the S of the Scheduled Ancient Monument (which appeared to be double banked and hence possibly a trackway) and the interpretation of these features as archaeological is still a possibility.

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DRAWING OFFICE AWAY.
 1 (or 2 figs) (??) as necessary
 to be tied up.