

MJ Brain, Surveyor

**Manor Court, Manor Farm
Duns Tew, Oxon**

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

NGR SP 4541 2841

Oxford Archaeological Unit
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Prepared by: J Dalton/J Hiller Date: September 2000/August 2001
Checked by: J. HILLER Date: 13/8/01
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Summary

In the summer of 2000 the Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out a watching brief at Manor Farm, Duns Tew, Oxon (NGR SP 4541 2841) during the construction of new buildings and conversion of barns for new use. A probable 19th century area of cobbling may represent part of the former farmyard. A stone built well was also found during the excavation of service trenches; the well was undated.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Permission was granted by Cherwell District Council for the construction of 3 new dwellings and the conversion of barns into 4 dwellings at Manor Farm (Fig. 1), Duns Tew, Bicester (NGR SP 4541 2841). A condition requiring an archaeological watching brief was attached to the planning permission in line with PPG16 and local plan policy.
- 1.2 Manor Farm is to the west side of the village of Duns Tew (NGR SP 4541 2841). The site lies at 137.5 m OD and is c 0.75 ha. in extent. The site is currently occupied by farm buildings. The underlying geology consists of fine loamy soils over clay.
- 1.3 The development site lies within the historic core of the village. Place name evidence indicates that the village may have Anglo-Saxon origins. This is supported by artefactual evidence in the form of a 9th century brooch which was recovered within the village. The village is mentioned in Domesday and earthworks identified as the surviving remains of medieval archery butts lie to the east of the site. Some of the existing buildings of the farm, including the farmhouse, are 18th century in date and are Listed Grade II. The original medieval manor house is thought to lie just to the east.
- 1.4 The County Archaeological Services prepared a brief for the project on behalf of Cherwell District Council and OAU prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) detailing how the OAU would implement the requirements of the brief.

2 Aims

The aims of the project were as follows:

- 2.1 To preserve by record any archaeological remains (if present) which the works will remove or damage within the development area, including below ground

archaeological deposits and the historic fabric. Any archaeological remains exposed on site during the course of the redevelopment to be recorded to established OAU standards (OAU, 1992).

2.2 In the event of significant archaeological remains being discovered, OAU would signal to all parties that an archaeological find has been made, for which the resources allocated are not sufficient to support a treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.

2.3 To make available the results of the investigation.

3 Strategy

3.1 The Watching Brief comprised the monitoring of above and below ground works, including surface stripping, the excavation of foundation and service trenches (Fig. 2).

3.2 The watching brief was undertaken by means of separate inspection visits; all digging was undertaken by mechanical excavator.

3.3 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.

5 Results

The excavation of foundation trenches for new buildings were monitored.

5.1 Plot 6

The foundation trenches for Plot 6 were examined after their excavation. Topsoil was removed over the area of the building. A thin (0.05 m) layer of reddish-brown subsoil sealed the natural sandy clay. The trenches were 1 m deep at the west side of the new plot and 1.35 m deep at the east end, cut down into the natural clay. 19th century willow pattern china was examined from the excavated spoil, but was not retained.

5.2 Plot 7

The footings for plot 7 were examined during excavation. The trench depths were between 1.18 m and 1.3 m. Beneath the removed topsoil here lay an area of small limestone pieces (Fig. 3) up to 0.3 m in depth. The stones were in a matrix of clay silt and may have formed the former yard surface here in the 19th century. The stones overlay the subsoil that was up to 0.8 m thick, sealing the natural sandy clay. No finds were recovered from the trenches.

5.3 *Site access/well structure*

During stripping for the new access road to the site and the excavation of new service trenches adjacent, a limestone built well was identified adjacent to the extant boundary wall flanking the access path. The well was up to 2.5 m deep and constructed in dry-stone fashion. The stones measured 250 mm x 100 mm by 150 mm. The service trench cut through the well, which was undated. Of note was the fact that the boundary wall had an access point that led directly to the well, suggesting that the two features were contemporary. The boundary wall was demolished as part of the redevelopment.

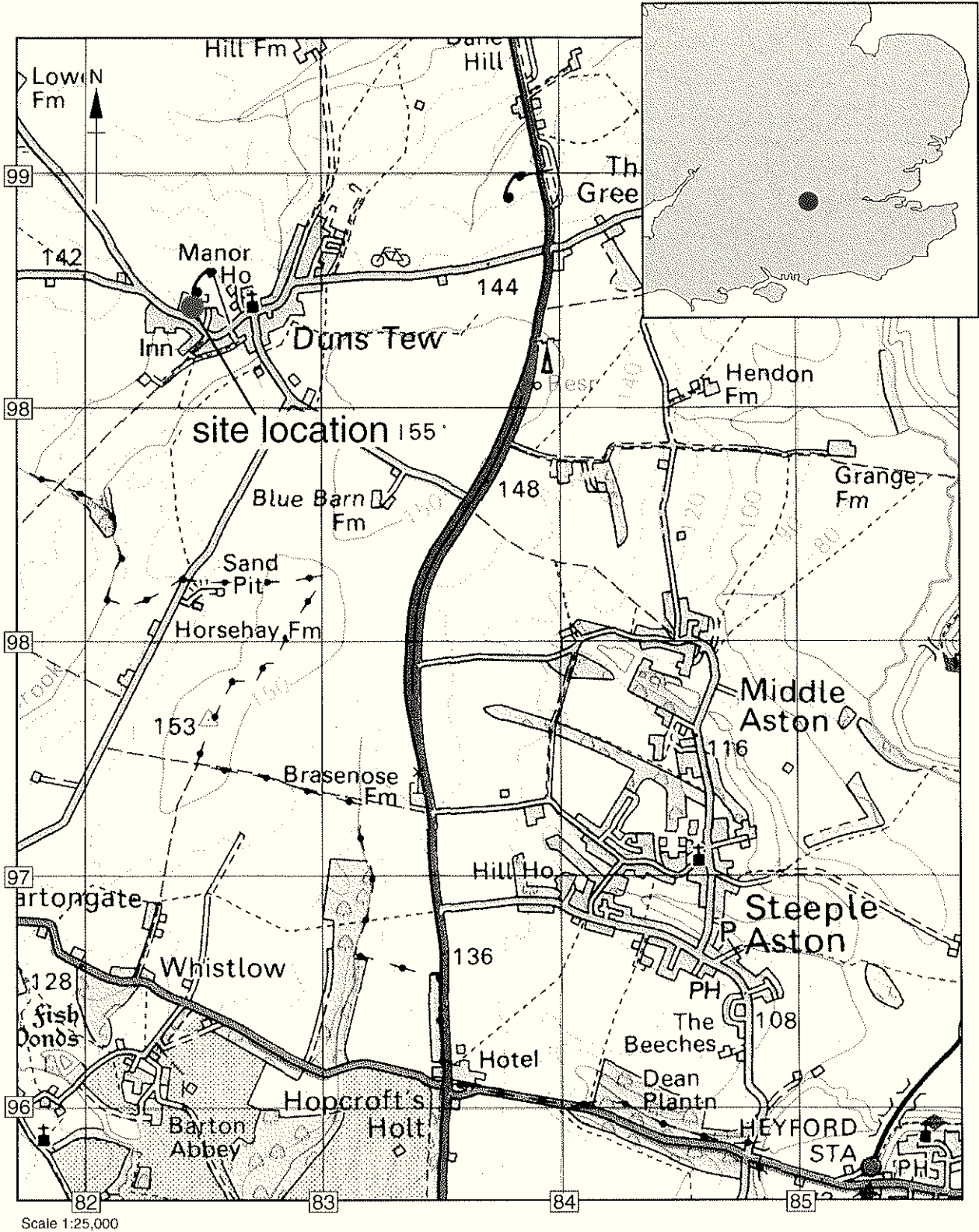
5.4 No other features or finds were recovered in the course of the watching brief.

6 **Finds**

6.1 No finds were recovered in the course of the works.

7 **Conclusions**

7.1 Limited results were obtained from the watching brief. No evidence of Saxon or medieval activity was certainly proved - it is probable that the yard surface in the area of Plot 7 is relatively recent, and probably dates to the 19th century. Willow pattern china in the upper soil levels in Plot 6 suggest reasonably late activity in the farm. The date of the well is uncertain as it was not excavated.



Scale 1:25,000

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Figure 1: Site location.

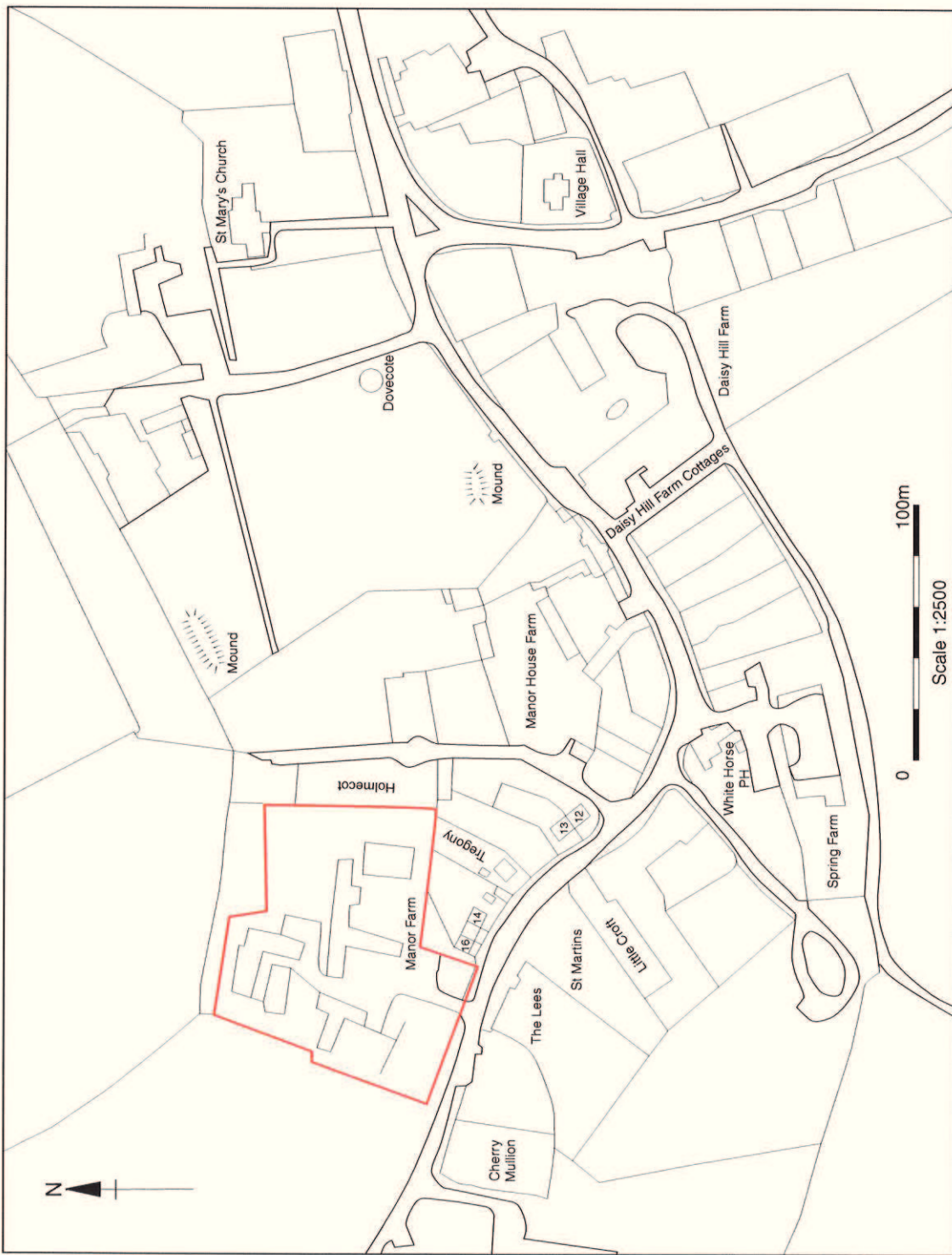


Fig 2 : Site Location Plan

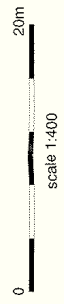
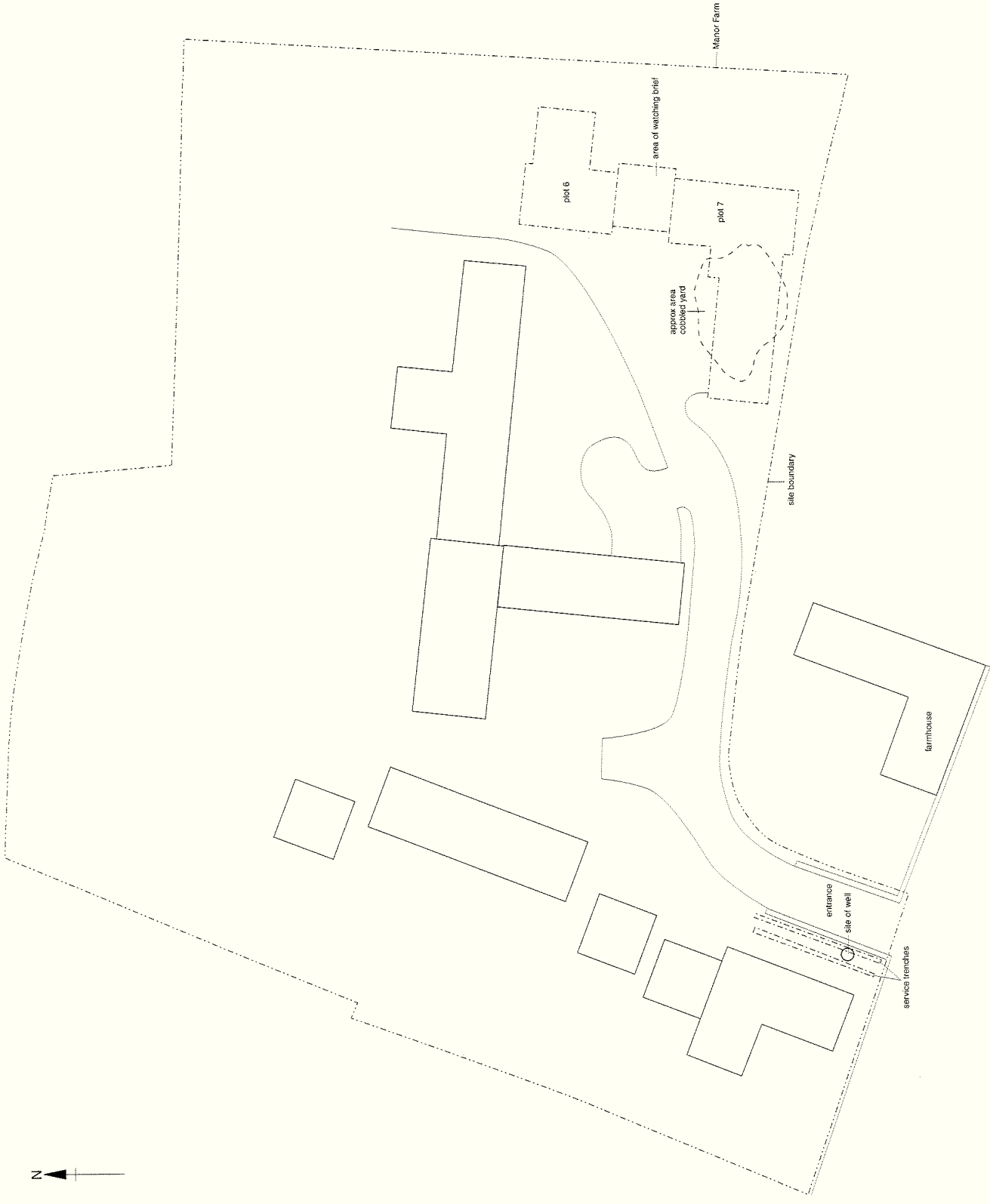


Fig 3 : Trench Location Plan



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