

Julian Bagwell

MANOR COTTAGE
HAMPTON GAY
OXFORDSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

NGR SP 4863 1647

Planning Application No. 01/00448/F

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October 2001

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| Prepared by: Robin Bashford Date: September 2001 |
| Checked by: <i>J. Huer</i> Date: <i>17/10/01</i> |
| Approved by: <i>R. Williams</i> Date: |

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CONTENTS

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Summary | 4 |
| 1 Introduction..... | 4 |
| 2 Background..... | 4 |
| 3 Watching Brief Aims..... | 6 |
| 4 Methodology..... | 7 |
| 4.1 Scope of fieldwork..... | 7 |
| 4.2 Recording..... | 7 |
| 4.3 Finds | 7 |
| 4.4 Presentation of results..... | 7 |
| 5 Results..... | 7 |
| 6 Discussion And Interpretation | 7 |

LIST OF FIGURES

- Fig. 1: Site Location
- Fig. 2: Site Location in relation to scheduled area
- Fig. 3: Site Plan

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SUMMARY

Between August and September 2001, the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) undertook a watching brief at Manor Cottage, Hampton Gay, Oxfordshire (SP4863 1647). No archaeological features or deposits were observed during the groundwork for the new development.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Permission had been granted by Cherwell District Council for the installation of services and alterations to Manor Cottage, Hampton Gay (Planning Ref. 01/00448/F). The development concerns minor alteration to the historic fabric of the building and the excavation of underground rooms and service trenching. Due to the potential disturbance of below ground archaeological deposits, a condition for an archaeological watching brief was attached to the permission, in line with PPG16 and local plan policy.
- 1.2 Manor Cottage is part of the Manor Farm complex (the house, gate-piers and barn of which all date from the 17th century and are Grade II Listed) which is located within the western edge of the parish of Hampton Gay, (NGR SP 4863 1647). The parish of Hampton Poyle to which it was united in 1932 bounds it to the south. The site is situated c 15m from the River Cherwell that bounds it to the north, c 400m east of Hampton Gay parish Church of St Giles, c 250m east of Hampton Gay Manor House, and is immediately east of the Deserted Medieval Settlement of Hampton Gay. The latter two are Scheduled Ancient Monuments and have been the subject of an archaeological desk based assessment (OAU 1999).
- 1.3 Manor Cottage lies at around 70 m OD. The geology of the area is Second Gravel Terrace, bounded to its north, east and south by a narrow band of Cornbrash that gently rises from the alluvium of the River Cherwell. It is bounded to the west by Oxford clay.

2 Background

2.1 The surrounding area is mainly rural, with little modern development, and this is reflected in the lack of archaeological sites and finds. The topographical position of Manor Cottage, which lies upon the well drained gravel terrace close to the River Cherwell, would suggest that the location would have been attractive to settlement from the prehistoric period onwards

2.2 *Prehistoric period*

2.2.1 The region contains one area of known prehistoric activity, a group of possible ring ditches, visible as cropmarks on archaeological photographs dating from the 1940s. These comprise a group of eight circles, including four in a row, which lie c.500m south east of Manor Cottage. The area may contain further prehistoric sites but none have so far been identified.

2.3 *Roman period*

2.3.1 There are no known sites or finds dated to this period within the locale, although the general area can demonstrate some evidence of Roman settlement. The remains of the Roman small town of Alchester lie in the fields to the south of Bicester, approximately 10km to the north-east of Hampton Gay and the line of the Roman Road from Verulamium (St Albans) to Alchester runs (c 3.5km) north-west of the development area. Kidlington, which lies c 2km to the south of the site, contains a number of likely Roman sites including the (Scheduled) site of a Roman villa and a number of find-spots of Roman material.

2.4 *Early Medieval period*

2.4.1 Evidence for this period within the area comes from a Saxon find, and from documentary evidence for a settlement at Hampton Gay. The Saxon find, a spindle whorl, was found on the River Cherwell's bank c 300m east of Manor Cottage. An Anglo Saxon bronze clasp was also apparently found in the River Cherwell at Hampton Gay, although the exact find-spot is uncertain. The settlement at Hampton Gay is mentioned in Domesday (1086) suggesting that it can demonstrate a pre-Conquest foundation.

2.5 *Medieval period*

2.5.1 The principal medieval remains within the vicinity of the proposed development site are the earthwork remains of the deserted medieval settlement of Hampton Gay. The medieval settlement pattern of the area is fairly well understood. The area contains three small villages with medieval origins (Shipton-on-Cherwell, Thrupp and Hampton Gay). To the south of Thrupp aerial photographs from 1954 have shown evidence of deserted medieval village earthworks.

2.5.2 Aerial photographs from the 1940s to 1980s show extensive ridge and furrow earthworks in nearly every field within the area suggesting that these fields were in arable cultivation during this period. These earthworks are situated to the south, east and north-east of Hampton Gay Deserted Medieval Village earthworks; south of

Thrupp village and around the site of the deserted medieval earthworks, and to the west, north and north-east of Shipton-on-Cherwell village.

2.6 Hampton Gay Village

2.6.1 The derivation of the place-name 'Hampton' is not entirely clear. It may derive from the Old English *Hamtun* ('home farm') or it may mean the enclosure within which the home farm stood.

2.6.2 The hearth tax of 1665 indicated that the village contained seven taxable houses, the manor house, two largish farmhouses, and a small farmhouse with three hearths and three cottages. The location of the majority of these houses is unclear: the location of the Manor House is certain and Manor Cottage probably represents one of the 1665 houses.

2.7 The Manor House

2.7.1 The earliest map of the area is Davis's 1797 map of Oxfordshire, which broadly confirms the relationship between the Manor House and village to its west. This plan appears to show two buildings on the Manor House site, although it would appear likely that these represent the Manor House and the group of farm buildings to its east.

2.8 The Village Earthworks

2.8.1 The earthworks can be seen in aerial photographs from the 1940s to the 1980s, but are not marked on any historic or OS maps. The Oxfordshire Sites and Monuments Record hold a rapid (unpublished) survey of the village conducted by Michael Aston in 1972.

2.8.2 The extant settlement remains of the village lie to the west in the fields between the Manor House and the area of relatively well preserved ridge and furrow which lie in the field to their south. The demarcation between the two areas is fairly clear, marked by a prominent ditch and a roughly east-west orientated holloway.

3 Watching Brief Aims

3.1 To record the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of archaeological remains within the entire area affected by development.

3.2 If exceptional archaeological remains were discovered, for which the resources allocated were insufficient to support a treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard, the OAU would signal to all parties that such an archaeological find had been made.

3.3 To make available the results of the investigation.

4 Methodology

4.1 Scope of fieldwork

The watching brief was undertaken on all areas of ground disturbance.

4.2 Recording

4.2.1 Archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:100, sections were drawn at 1:20. All excavated features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures lay down in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (Wilkinson, 1992).

4.3 Finds

4.3.1 No finds were recovered during the watching brief.

4.4 Environmental Results

4.4.1 Although full consideration was given to various sampling strategies, due to the absence of any suitable deposits, no environmental soil samples were taken.

5 Results

5.1 As the majority of the new extension will be underground, the groundwork for the development involved the removal of topsoil over an area approximately 15 m x 6 m (max), prior to the excavation of the underlying gravel and installation of a concrete retaining wall (See Fig. 3).

5.2 The gravel was exposed within the entire footprint of the new extension and, although a number of probable tree throw pits and evidence of a recent bonfire were revealed, no significant archaeological features or deposits were observed.

6 Discussion And Interpretation

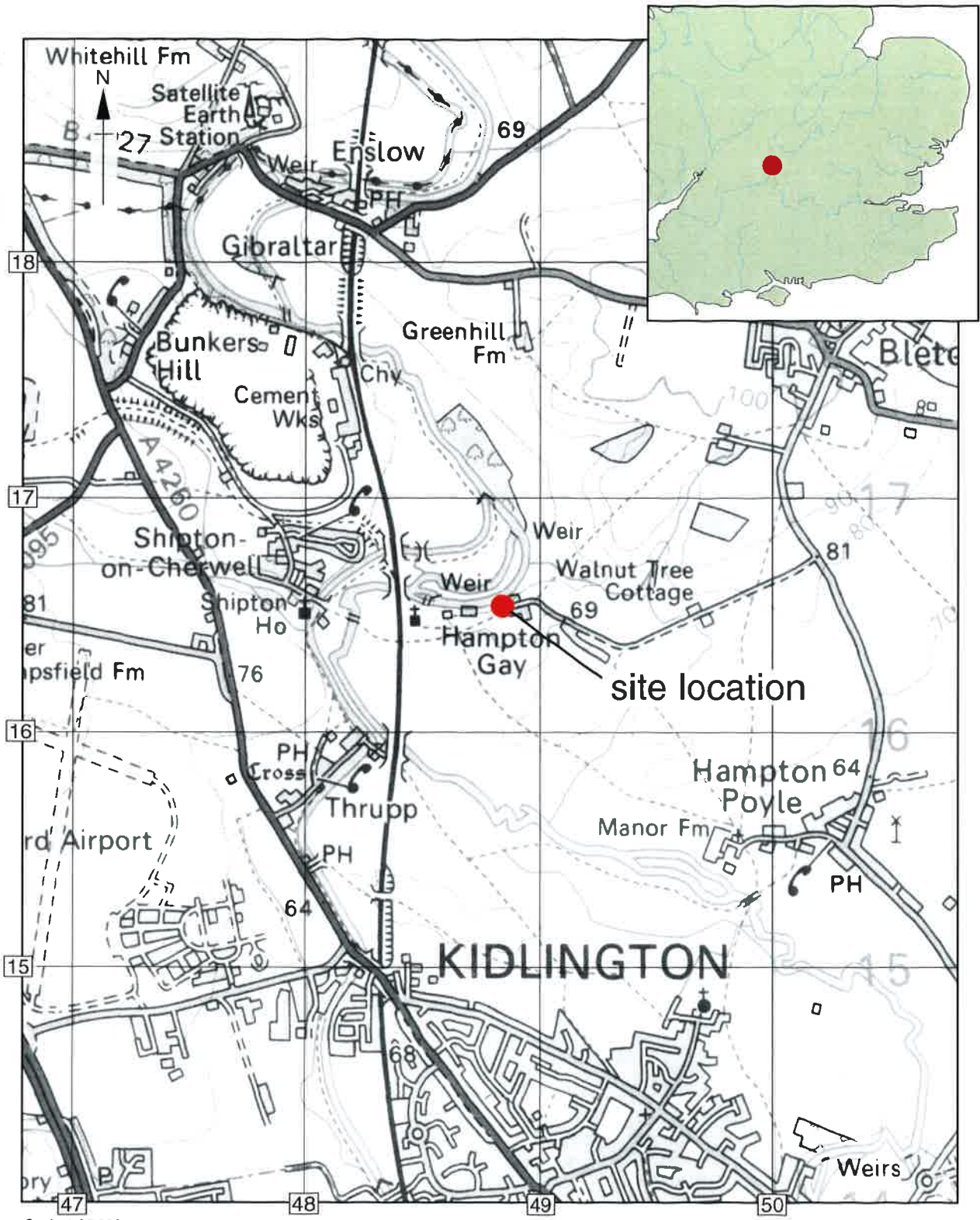
6.1 Although the groundwork for the new development was closely monitored, no archaeological features or deposits were recorded during the watching brief.

References.

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

Hampton Gay: Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (OAU, 1999)

HGM/CWB*Manor Cottage, Hampton Gay*AMD*11.10.01.



Scale 1:25,000

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Figure 1: Site location.

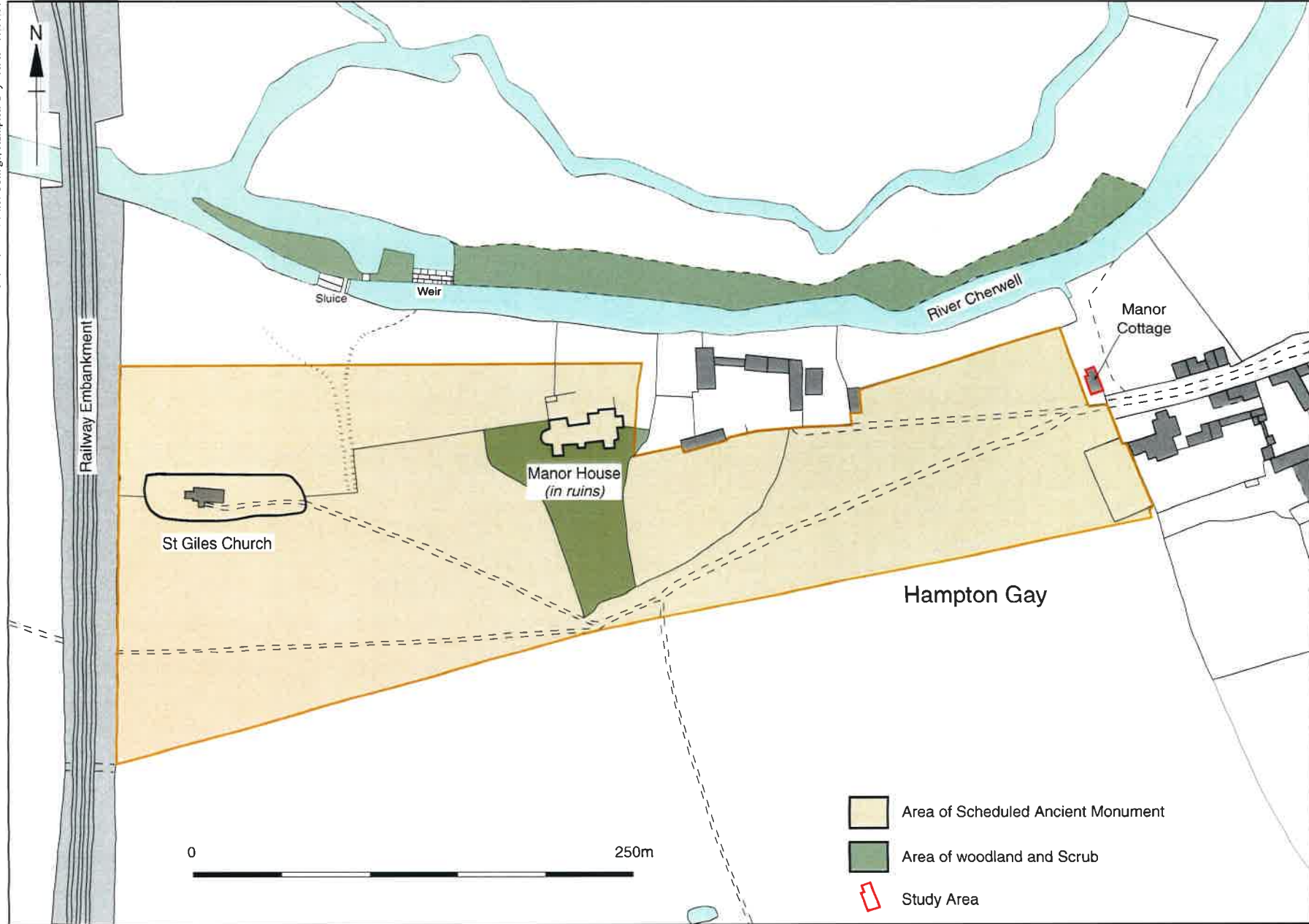
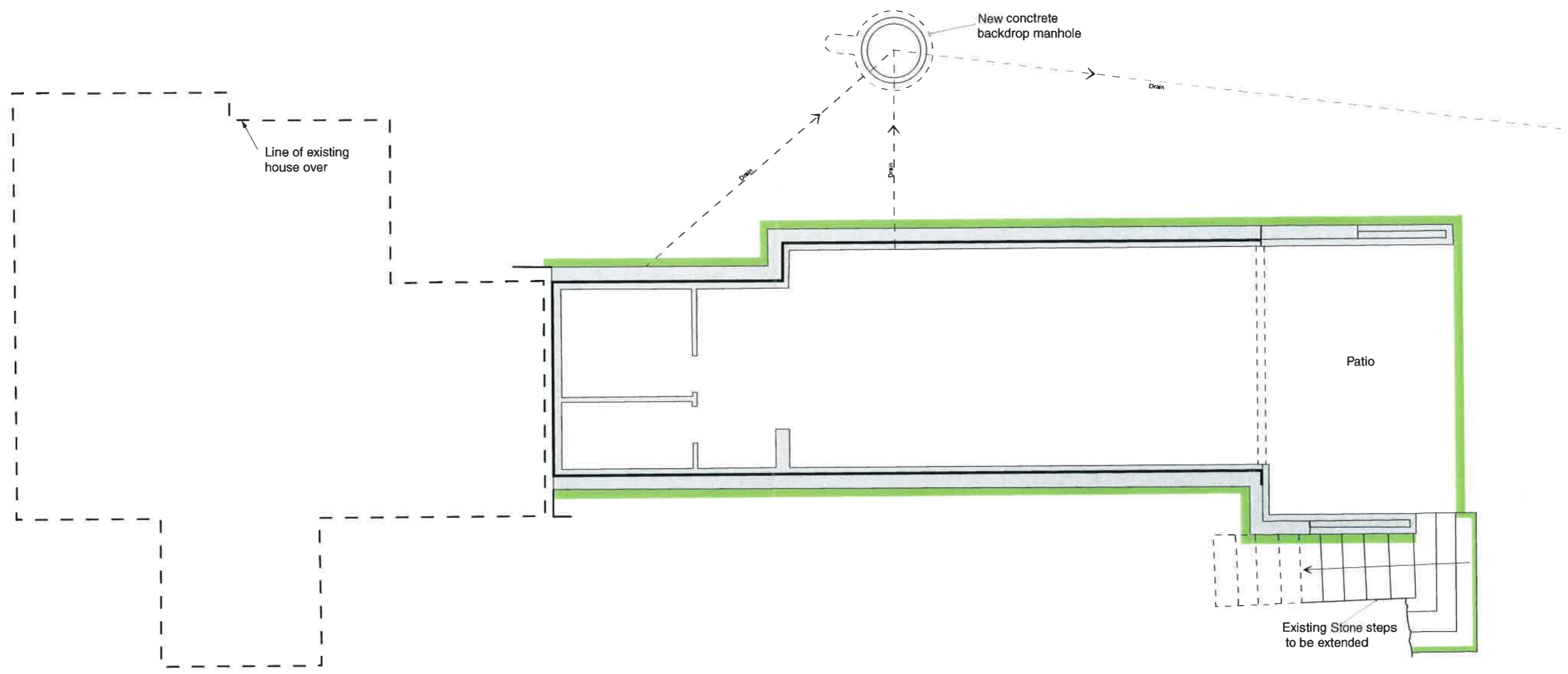


Figure 2: SAM Location Plan

HGM/CWB*Manor Cottage, Hampton Gay*AMD*03.10.01





-  Area stripped of topsoil
-  Proposed construction

Figure 3: Foundation plan



OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES

Tel: 01865 263800 Fax: 01865 793496

email: postmaster@oau-oxford.com www.oau-oxford.com



Director and Chief Executive: David Jennings B.A., M.I.F.A. Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited.
Private Limited Company Number: 1618597 Registered Charity Number: 285627.
Registered Office: Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES