

The Old Barn
East Street
Olney
Milton Keynes
Buckinghamshire



Archaeological Watching Brief



Oxford Archaeology

18th July 2002

Client Name:
Kempston Property Holdings
for Philip Gannon

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OA Job N^o: 1356

Planning Ref N^o: 1/01876/FUL

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The Old Barn, East Street, Olney, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

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SUMMARY

In May 2002 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at The Old Barn, East Street, Olney, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire (NGR SP 8900 5155). The work was commissioned by Kempston Property Holdings for Philip Gannon in advance of the construction of a single storey extension at the rear of the property. The watching brief revealed a number of features and layers relating to occupation and cultivation of the burghage during the medieval period and later.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In May 2002 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at The Old Barn, East Street, Olney, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Kempston Property Holdings for Philip Gannon in respect of a planning application for a single storey extension at rear of the property (Planning Application No. 01/01876/FUL)
- 1.1.2 An archaeological brief was discussed with Brian Giggins, Archaeologist for the Planning Dept of Milton Keynes Council.
- 1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The Old Barn is located in the centre of Olney, at NGR SP 8900 5155, and lies at approximately 50m OD. The geology is Upper Lias (Geological Survey of Great Britain, Sheet 203).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the watching brief was prepared for the WSI for the project (OA,2002) and is reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 The development site is located in an area of archaeological potential as it lies within the medieval core of the town. There is the potential for the survival of deposits and structures associated with medieval and post-medieval burghage plots running eastwards from East Street. The works to the rear of the building may disturb remains such as pits or outbuildings commonly found to the rear of plots such as this.

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 OA wishes to thank John Thomas and his colleagues for their help on site.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence/absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.
- 2.1.2 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 Due to the restricted access to the site the foundations were hand excavated to a depth of 1.5 m, the trench being 0.6 m wide and 6.5 m long in total (Fig. 2).
- 2.2.2 All archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:100 and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20. All excavated features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. A general photographic record of the work was made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 The trench cut through a number of archaeological deposits and features, and into the natural Upper Lias. Once the old concrete surface at the back of the barn was lifted it exposed a brick garden path (1) laid on a cobbled surface (2). This was laid into a 0.4 m thick layer of dark brown silty clay loam (3) ground make up, which sealed two features (Fig. 3, sections 1 & 2).
- 3.1.2 The first of these was the north west corner of an earlier stone building, which was partly exposed in the south end of the trench. The wall (7) was constructed of Limestone fragments laid in rough courses with a rubble core and bonded with a light brown sandy clay. It was built in a trench (6) with vertical sides and a flat base with an infill of dark brown silty clay (8) between cut and wall (Fig. 3, section 1).
- 3.1.3 The second feature was a large sub circular rubbish pit (11) with near vertical sides, whose base was below impact level (Figs 2 & 3, section 2). It contained a fill of very dark greyish brown silty clay loam (12), which contained a number of bone fragments and a piece of early medieval pottery. Both these features cut into a 0.4 m thick dark reddish brown silty clay (4) of cultivated soil, which overlaid the natural (9). Layer (4) sealed a large sub circular cess pit (10) with steep sloping sides rounding to a concave base. This was filled with a compact brown silty clay (5) (Figs 2 & 3, section 1).

3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 From the fill of pit (11) 23 fragments of animal bone from pig, cow and sheep were recovered together with a single piece of pottery.
- 3.2.2 The pottery assemblage comprised a single sherd weighing 3 g, from context 12. This was examined by Paul Blinkhorn using the coding system of the Milton Keynes Archaeological Unit type-series (e.g. Mynard and Zeepvat 1992; Zeepvat et al. 1994), as follows: *MCI: Shelly Coarseware*, AD1100-1400. 1 sherd, 3 g.
- 3.2.3 Also recovered was a small glass bottle from layer 3 dating to the late 19th early 20th century.

3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 3.3.1 No environmental samples were taken during the watching brief.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The results from the trench exposed a large rubbish pit, possibly a cess pit (10) of early medieval date, which had been sealed below a layer of soil (4) from cultivation at the rear of the burghage plots. This had been cut by a medieval pit (11) and then by the construction of the barn (7) in the early to middle medieval period. The area had then been built up and levelled with material (3) for a cobbled surface (2) and later brick pathway (1) to the barn dating to the post medieval period.
- 4.1.2 Limited evidence for medieval activity was therefore recovered from the site.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth/Height</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Length</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i> Finds</i>
1	Layer	0.10 m			Brick Garden Path	
2	Layer	0.14 m			Cobbled Surface	
3	Layer	0.40 m			Ground make up	
4	Layer	0.3 – 4 m			Cultivated soil	
5	Fill				Fill of Pit 10	
6	Cut	0.83 m	0.5 m	0.6 m	Foundation trench	
7	Structure	0.8 m	0.5 m	0.6 m	Wall	
8	Fill				Material filling trench	
9	Natural				Natural	
10	Cut	0.8 m	0.5 m	3 m	Large Cess Pit	
11	Cut	0.7 m	0.7 m	1.2 m	Rubbish Pit	
12	Fill				Fill of pit 11	A Pottery Sherd and Bone fragments

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

OA 1992, *Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, first edition August 1992)

OA 2002, *The Old Barn, East Street, Olney*, Written Scheme of Investigation

Mynard, DC and Zeepvat RJ, 1992 *Great Linford* Bucks Archaeol Soc Monog Ser 3

Zeepvat, RJ, Roberts, JS and King, NA, 1994 *Caldecotte, Milton Keynes. Excavation and Fieldwork 1966-91* Bucks Archaeol Soc Monog Ser 9

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: The Old Barn, East Street, Olney, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire

Site code: OLES 02

Grid reference: NGR SP 8900 5155

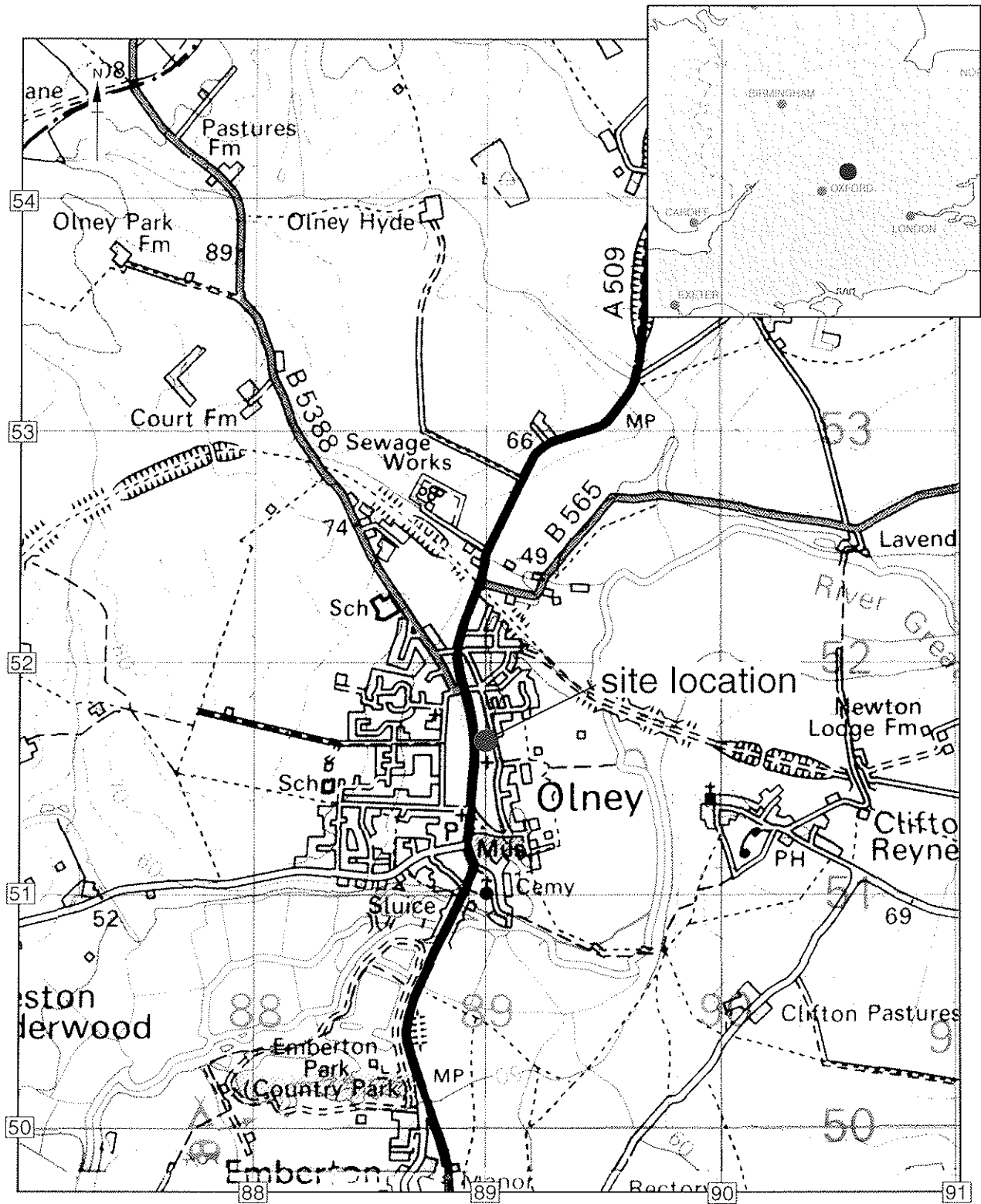
Type of watching brief: Excavation of foundation trench for new extension at rear of property.

Date and duration of project: Three site visits from the 22/05/02 to 30/05/02

Area of site: 4.5 m x 3 m

Summary of results: The watching brief revealed a number of features and layers relating to occupation and cultivation of the burghage during the medieval period and later.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum, Technical Centre, Tring Rd, Halton, Aylesbury, Bucks HP22 5PJ in due course, under the following accession number: 2002.61



Scale 1:25,000

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Figure 1: Site location.

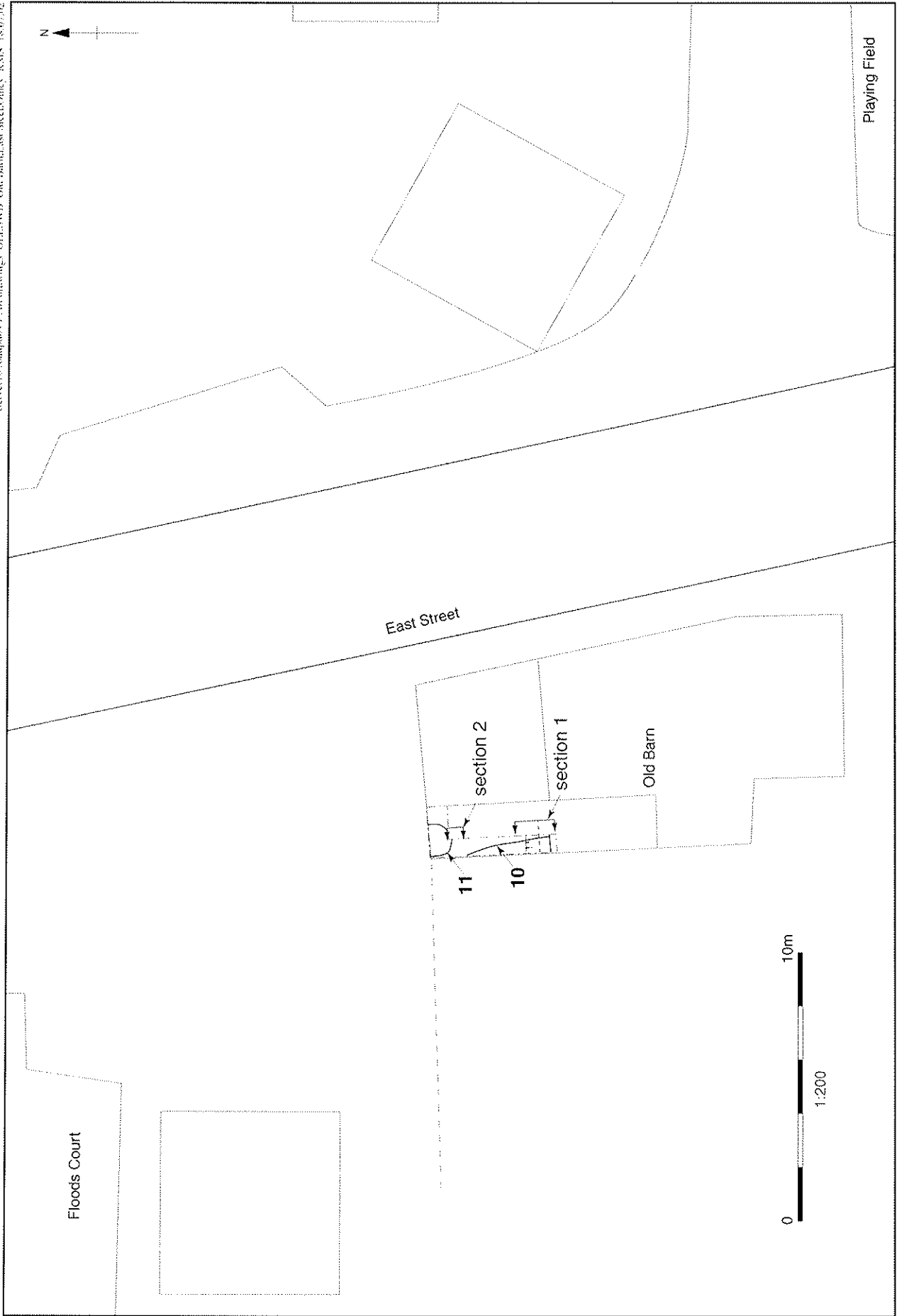


Figure 2 Plan and Locations of Sections.

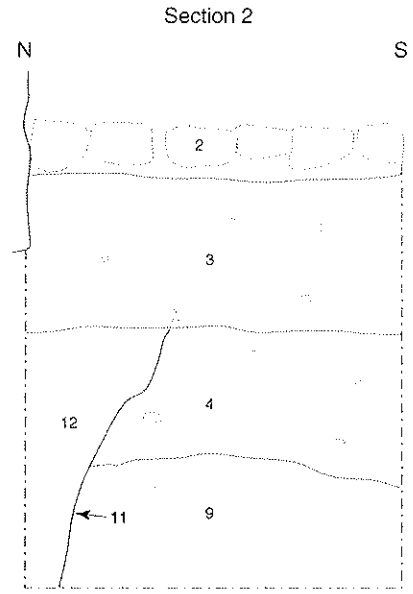
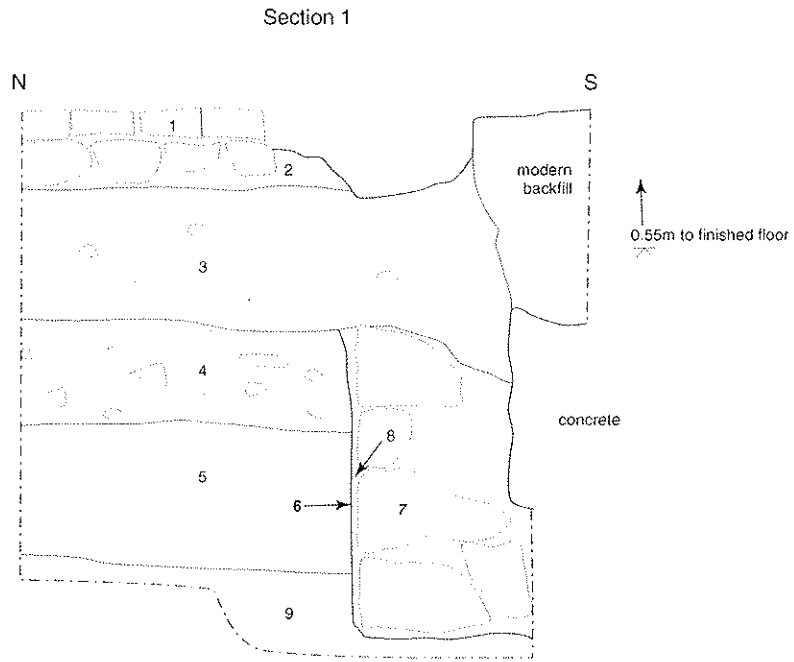


Figure 3 Sections.



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