

South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group

in association with the
Oxfordshire Buildings Trust

Project design for a research excavation on the presumed site of the 17th century

**ASCOTT MANOR HOUSE
ASCOTT PARK
Stadhampton, Oxfordshire
2018-20**

Ian Clarke and Roelie Reed

SUMMARY

Ascott Park was once a country seat of the Dormer family who resided there for many generations. William Dormer (d.1683) commissioned a new manor house and extensive remodelling of the grounds c.1660 but the house burnt down in 1662 when close to completion and was never occupied. Despite much recent research and fieldwork by and for the Oxfordshire Buildings Trust, culminating in an excavation in 2009 on the 'traditional' site of the 1662 house, its location remains disputed and unconfirmed. A geophysical survey by the South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group in 2013 determined that the 'traditional' site is still by far the most likely location, and following a critical review of the earlier fieldwork, an alternative interpretation of the archaeology was proposed that supports that conclusion. This project design outlines a further excavation to try to prove 'beyond reasonable doubt' that William Dormer's new house was built on the 'traditional site' and that the archaeology on that site is what remains of that house.

1 LOCATION AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 Ascott Park is centred at SU 611 981, close to the village of Stadhampton and about 12km south-east of Oxford. The park is on the Historic England (HE) Register of Historic Parks and Gardens, registered Grade II. Various buildings and structures are also listed Grade II or II* including a dovecot and a 'granary/icehouse', the latter also being a Scheduled Monument. The park is owned by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) who commissioned Oxfordshire Buildings Trust (OBT) to carry out extensive historical and archaeological research, preparatory to improving public access with the opening of an Historical Trail in 2011 (OCC 2010).
- 1.2 The Historic England listing for the park and the Victoria County History of Oxfordshire, both record uncertainties about the precise location of the historical Ascott manor house (HE 1984; VCH 1962). The history of the post-medieval occupants of Ascott Park, the Dormers and their successors, and the problems surrounding where they lived, was ably researched and summarised by John Sykes of OBT. His research showed that Ascott Park Cottage (now in private ownership) is a surviving remnant of the medieval/Tudor Ascott manor house. William Dormer (d.1683) commissioned a new manor house c.1660 but the house accidentally burnt down in 1662 when close to completion and there is no known record of it ever having been rebuilt. Following the fire, William Dormer and his descendants lived on in the old manor house until the estate passed out of family ownership in 1760. (Sykes 2008/2012a/b).
- 1.3 The park is well marked from the B480 between Stadhampton and Chalgrove by a group of stone gate piers, the remains of a grand entrance leading into a wide, double avenue of lime trees stretching south into the distance but with no sign of a great house. Local tradition (Judge 2001) places the 1662 house on an axial alignment with this formal entrance and avenue at a point some 200m in, where a large rectangular hollow, sited between the dovecot and granary/icehouse, fronts a linear earth bank overlooking formal garden terraces to the south (Fig 1). The hollow and bank are assumed to be what remains of a cellar and raised ground-floor terrace. Despite much recent field research initiated by OBT,

culminating in an excavation on the hollow and bank site, the precise location of the 1662 house remains disputed and unconfirmed.

- 1.4 In 2013 the South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group (SOAG) accepted an earlier invitation from OBT to continue fieldwork at Ascott Park with the primary aim of finally confirming the location of the 1662 house. Work started with a preliminary geophysical survey from which it was concluded that the ‘traditional’ site of the hollow and bank is still the most likely location (Clarke & Latham 2015). **This project design is for a research excavation to test a working hypothesis: that the 1662 house was located at the ‘traditional’ site and that the archaeology of the hollow and bank is what remains of that house.** The excavation will build on the substantial foundation of earlier fieldwork carried out or commissioned by the Oxfordshire Buildings Trust, as outlined in section 2 below.
- 1.5 The project design has been prepared in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for archaeological excavation* (CIfA 2014a) and with the helpful assistance of the local archaeological curator: OCC Planning Archaeologist, Richard Oram.

2 EARLIER FIELDWORK

- 2.1 In 2007, Mark Bowden of Historic England (formerly English Heritage, EH) led an archaeological survey and investigation of Ascott Park on behalf of OBT. The survey elucidated the post-medieval history of the park, of particular interest here being those features relating to the extensive remodelling of the site at the time of the building of the new house by William Dormer. Mark Bowden confidently locates the house at the traditional site: the rectangular hollow (or cellar) (21) fronting a linear earth bank (or terrace) (22) overlooking formal gardens to the south (Bowden & Rardin 2007). [Note: The numbers in brackets are identifiers from the EH report, included here for cross-referencing.]
- 2.2 Also in 2007 and on behalf of OBT, a geophysical survey was carried out by Abingdon Archaeological Geophysics (AAG). Earth resistance and magnetometer techniques were used to survey much of the area of the 17th century gardens, including the earth bank (22) and hollow (21) thought by EH and OBT to be the location of the 1662 house. Both methods detected important archaeological features: the magnetometry showed linear features relating to the garden layout and possible rubble spreads; the resistivity gave better results for both garden and possible building remains (Ainslie *et al* 2007). In the report, Roger Anslie of AAG proposes that “...areas of probable rubble and linear features...north of the earth bank” (22) indicate a large house arranged around a rectangular courtyard, perhaps open to the east. This is thought unlikely by Mark Bowden who interprets the area as an ‘entrance courtyard’ for the house (Bowden & Rardin 2007, p16). In Anslie’s proposal the hollow is only a small part of a much larger building.
- 2.3 In 2009, an excavation was organised by OBT and directed by Brian Dix, a well-known specialist in the archaeology of historic parks and gardens. A number of trenches were opened to examine remains of the 17th century formal gardens, the earth bank (22) and hollow (21). Dix’s report summarises the results and findings but he is unable to offer any firm conclusion regarding the location of the 1662 house. His long Trench 7 that sectioned the bank and western end of the hollow (Fig 2) revealed clear evidence for a robbed-out surrounding wall in the hollow and possible flagstone floor, but he records that the deposits in the hollow were notably clean and that: “There was no evidence for burning nor of a quantity of remains consistent with the demolition of a substantial and largely complete building ...”; the limited finds of pottery and bottle glass from the terrace bank: “... suggest an 18th century *terminus ante quem*, however.” He concludes that the archaeological evidence: “... is consistent with the creation of a former basement or cellar in the early 18th century ... [but] that the project was unfinished, and possibly abandoned at an early stage.” Dix suggests that the 1662 house was perhaps located elsewhere and that the hollow may represent a second attempt to build a new house sometime in the early 18th century. (Dix 2010/2012). An area of ‘building rubble’ east of the hollow (21) and towards the ‘granary/icehouse’ (34) is suggested as worth investigating as a possible site (Dix 2009).
- 2.4 The results of the 2009 excavation may be usefully compared with those of an earlier excavation in 1969 led by Susanna Everett (now Dr Susanna Wade-Martins of the University of East Anglia) when a long trench also sectioned the bank (22) and hollow (21) but at the eastern end (Fig 2). Here significant quantities of rubble, mortar, burnt tile, ash, charred wood and melted lead were found within the bank. Rubble, brick, tile and mortar were also found in the hollow immediately north of the bank but the rest

of the hollow was relatively clean. On the south side of the hollow a coursed limestone and mortar wall 0.9m thick was revealed surviving to a height of c.2m, but no evidence was found for a wall on the north side of the hollow. Everett concluded that: "It is certain ... that contrary to local tradition, there were no buildings in the hollow to the north of the bank". (Everett 1969).

2.5 One other possibility, put forward in response to Dix's unsettling findings, was that the house might have been located at the southern end of the main avenue, looking across a formal garden towards the terrace; in which case the hollow could be the site of a grotto/pavilion (Clarke 2011).

2.6 In summary, the fieldwork prior to 2010 resulted in four hypothetical locations for the 1662 house:

- H1: A house with a cellar in the hollow and fronting a raised terrace. (The 'traditional' location as accepted by EH (Bowden & Rardin 2007) and initially by OBT)
- H2: A house 'elsewhere', perhaps towards the granary, with the remains in the hollow representing a second attempt to build in the early C18. (Dix 2010/2012)
- H3: A large courtyard house north of the terrace, perhaps open to the east. (Ainslie 2007/2008)
- H4: A house at the south end of the main avenue. (Clarke 2011)

In 2013 SOAG carried out a preliminary geophysical survey to extend the AAG 2007 resistivity survey over a much larger area, so placing Ainslie's data in a significantly wider context. A detailed analysis of the combined AAG/SOAG data enabled the elimination of locations H4 – H2 on a balance of probability, leaving H1 as the first choice; and this not simply by default but because it is the only one for which there is convincing geophysical and archaeological evidence (Clarke & Latham 2015). This represents a firm return to the position taken by EH and held by OBT before the 2009 excavation.

3 DESIGNATIONS

3.1 Ascott Park is owned by OCC and the archaeological work can only be carried out with its written approval and with the knowledge and agreement of the tenant farmer.

Management of the smallholding estate is the responsibility of Property and Facilities, County Hall, New Road, Oxford, OX1 1ND.
Contact: Ruth Kerry 07786 023378 ruth.kerry@oxfordshire.gov.uk

3.2 The Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record reference for the manor house site is **HER 1797**.

Conservation of the archaeology is the responsibility of the County Archaeology Team, County Hall, New Road, Oxford, OX1 1ND.
Contact: Richard Oram 07917 001026 richard.oram@oxfordshire.gov.uk
HER: archaeology@oxfordshire.gov.uk

3.3 The park is on the HE Register of Historic Parks and Gardens registered Grade II, list number 1001086, and various buildings and structures are also listed Grade II or II* including the dovecote and granary/icehouse (for the full list see the HE website). The granary/icehouse is a Scheduled Monument, list number 1020969, with a two metre exclusion zone. The nearest planned trench is some 15m outside this exclusion zone. HE (South East) has confirmed that the excavation does not require Scheduled Monument Consent (Section 42 Licence).

The regional archaeological curator is Historic England (South East), Eastgate Court, 195-205 High Street, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 3EH.
Contact: Lesley Godbolt 01483 252033 lesley.godbolt@HistoricEngland.org.uk

4 SITE CONDITIONS, RESTRICTIONS, ACCESS AND FACILITIES

4.1 Ascott Park is open parkland used for countryside recreation and occasional pasture. The superficial geology is river terrace sand and gravel, overlying Gault clay. The landscape is sensibly flat, gently sloping towards the south but with various low earthworks as described by Bowden & Rardin (2007). There are two standing buildings related to the manor house: the dovecote and granary/icehouse, and

the presumed manor house site is midway between these two buildings, defined by a large rectangular hollow fronting a linear earth bank on the south side.

- 4.2 The granary/icehouse is a Scheduled Monument with a two metre exclusion zone.
- 4.3 A definitive footpath runs through the excavation site (shown green in Fig 2) and a permissive footpath, the Ascott Park Historical Trail, passes close to the northern edge of the hollow, so visits are to be expected and public safety must be maintained. Footpaths must be kept clear at all times.
- 4.4 The privacy of the occupants of the nearby Ascott Park Cottage must be respected. The ancient brick wall defining the western boundary of the curtilage of that property is listed and must not be undermined by excavation. Drones must not be used for overhead photography.
- 4.5 Access for vehicles is from the B480 through a new gate at the north-east corner of the park. By prior arrangement with OCC and the tenant farmer, there will be parking on-site at this point. The excavation site is 300m SSE of this gate.

5 AIMS OF THE EXCAVATION

- 5.1 SOAG's working hypothesis is that the 1662 house was located at the traditional site and that the archaeology of the hollow and bank is what remains of that house. For this to be true there must be a convincing alternative interpretation of the archaeology revealed by Dix in 2009, which must also be compatible with that from Everett's excavation in 1969. In 2013-14 a critical review of the earlier fieldwork was completed and an alternative interpretation proposed that is entirely consistent with this being the site of William Dormer's new house. The new interpretation rests upon two premises: (i) that the basement (cellar) of the house was stone or brick vaulted and thus escaped destruction in the fire, and (ii) that the terrace was not finally backfilled until after the fire and so contains evidence of the fire and subsequent clear up. It is further proposed that the basement level and terrace continued in use as a feature of the gardens for some decades after the fire, with final demolition and robbing out taking place much later. (Clarke 2014).
- 5.2 The principal aim of the project is to test the working hypothesis and try to prove 'beyond reasonable doubt' that the archaeology of the hollow and bank is that of the 1662 house. To achieve this the work will focus primarily on three research areas:
 - 1) Establishing the ground plan for both terrace and house (including an 'annexe' on the east side) and examining the structural relationships between house and terrace
 - 2) Determining the constructional style of the basement
 - 3) Re-examining the archaeology of the terrace fill

These are described in more detail in 5.3-5.5 below. A maximum of three seasons of fieldwork is envisaged over 2018-20. It is considered unlikely that we will complete sufficient work on all three research areas in one year to achieve the principal aim, so work not completed will be carried forward. The later years will also incorporate any adjustment of the project design resulting from post-excavation assessment, which for convenience will be defined by means of an annexe to this document.

A secondary aim of the project is to further improve our understanding of details of the house site, including its relationship to the earlier manor house and gardens, and to the formal garden layout of the 17th century. The later years will therefore include work on additional areas of research that do not have a direct bearing on the principal aim. Three of these are listed below in 5.6 but others may well arise in the course of the work.

5.3 Establishing the ground plan, etc.

- 5.3.1. The starting point is where the earlier archaeologists left off, so parts of the Dix trenches 5, 6 and 7 and Everett trenches I and II (see Fig 2) will be located and reopened to record coordinates for the surviving building archaeology and to measure/confirm the following:
 - the depth of the house
 - the depth (and length) of the terrace

- the alignments between terrace and house walls
- the location of the north wall in Everett's Trench I (not found at the time)
- the location of a circular pit recorded by Everett (see 5.4.2 below)

In support of this, a section of surviving masonry on the central north side of the hollow (noted in Dix 2009) will be located and part excavated to confirm that it belongs to the building. Also masonry visible at the west end of the terrace will be examined to confirm that it is part of the end retaining wall.

5.3.2. Working from the known archaeology and data of Dix's and Everett's trenches, new trenches will be opened to locate the east and west walls of the main house and the walls of the annexe, always noting that some masonry will have been robbed out leaving walls to be located by foundation/robber trenches and/or the construction cuts bounding the hollow. The structural relationships of house, annexe and terrace walls will be examined as far as is possible, this being in part dependent upon the survival of masonry. Regarding the annexe, the existence of this was established by the EH 2007 survey which recorded a sub-rectangular, shallow depression of uneven ground abutting the east side of the hollow (see Fig 2) and by the AAG geophysics which showed a buried rectilinear feature. A drawing of an earthwork survey by Everett has recently come to light which reveals that in 1969 the annexe was then an extension of the hollow, i.e. it had a deep basement/cellar (Fig 3). It appears that over the intervening time this area of the hollow was gradually filled up by the former tenant farmer using it for silage making (pers.com.).

5.4 Determining the construction of the basement

5.4.1. We are testing the premise that the basement was of stone or brick vaulted construction. The simplest forms for cellars are barrel vaults and groin (or ribbed) vaults. These have quite distinct foundation signatures: in the former the weight is supported by linear walls and in the latter by pillars on discrete foundation pads. In both, the lateral thrust of the arches is transmitted to the outer walls of the house. We may note here that neither Everett nor Dix encountered linear wall foundations crossing their trenches but that would not rule out barrel vaults which ran parallel to the trenches. The geophysics of the hollow, however, shows clear evidence of the surrounding walls (or their foundation trenches) but no evidence for any dividing walls crossing the central floor area. This suggests a groin vault is more likely, with the pillar base foundations being too small to show up on the geophysics.

5.4.2. Everett found a circular pit in the floor of the hollow at the intersection of her trenches I and II, about 0.7m dia. x 0.3m deep, which was excavated but not mentioned in her final report. The fill contained bones and pot (possibly the large 'pot with holes in the bottom' that she notes) which may indicate a foundation deposit (e.g. Merrifield 1987; Hukantaival 2007). The pit is potentially in the right place for a pillar base, but this is dependent on its position relative to the basement walls which we will only know from the ground plan. If it is confirmed as a probable pillar base then the location of the other pillars will be mapped for excavation; if it is not, then a likely pattern for pillars will be mapped instead for trial excavation. Should we fail to confirm a groin vault by either of these means then a large area excavation of the floor will be needed, which would be planned for 2019.

5.5 Re-examining the terrace fill

5.5.1. Everett completed a full section of the terrace bank and reported that: "... as the section went through the bank, patches of rubble continued to occur. Brick, mortar, layers of ash, burnt wood and melted lead were all found *in abundance*" (my italics). Her section drawing shows a large and deep deposit of mortar and ash at ground level, three further lenses of ash within the section and a note indicating that the other inclusions of building materials were found throughout the section. Dix did not fully section the bank but usefully noted for his trench 5 that the north-east corner of the terrace "... contains [a] series of dumps of soil, flint, gravel and sand making up the terrace bank", and for trench 7 that the variety of materials observed "... may represent different fills – cart loads of material making up the bank."

5.5.2. Everett's description offers compelling evidence for the 1662 fire, with the terrace apparently providing a convenient repository for fire damaged materials and unwanted debris from the subsequent clear up. However, there is insufficient stratigraphic detail, quantification and analysis

of the inclusions/finds to reach a firm judgement: it may well be evidence for the fire but equally it might simply represent waste disposal over time on a large building site. A further sectioning of the bank is desirable to: (a) examine the building material in detail to determine whether it has come from a finished building or is simply wastage, (b) examine the stratigraphy and sequence of the fill more closely to follow up on Dix's observations, and (c) look for dating evidence. Indeed, it is within the terrace that we are most likely to find undisturbed, stratified dating evidence.

5.5.3. One obvious choice for the location of this section might be to complete the one started by Dix in his trench 7 but the north side of the bank here is unsupported by masonry and is decaying; any sectioning here to the 17th century ground level would risk exacerbating the local collapse. Dix also found an earlier V-shaped ditch below the bank which would confuse the archaeology of immediate interest. The preferred choice is therefore to reopen Everett's trench II section, where the north side of the bank is well supported and contained by a substantial stone wall. Everett's one metre wide backfill will be removed quickly and progressively in deep spits, stepped on the steep sides of the bank, and the bank stratigraphy examined in detail in the sections and by widening Everett's trench by a further 0.6m westwards as it is excavated. This will offer safer and more comfortable working for the diggers and minimise the incremental damage to the site. Everett's backfill will also be re-examined for finds.

5.6 Additional areas of research (not having a direct bearing on the principal aim)

5.6.1. Dix showed that the east end retaining wall of the terrace continued beyond the end of the north retaining wall and appeared to be earlier than the latter (Dix 2012, trench 5). The geophysics suggests it continues northwards for several metres, then curves round to the west and runs parallel to the terrace towards the front of the house, appearing to enclose the annexe (Clarke & Latham 2015). Dix also noted that this wall is on a slightly different alignment to the surviving boundary wall, which appears to be borne out by the geophysics. The course and level of survival of this wall will be verified by probing and partial excavation, and its relationship to the 17th century house walls examined to see whether it predates the house or is part of it. If it predates the house, is it an earlier garden wall and to what extent was it incorporated into the new design?

5.6.2. Dix's trench 6 revealed a possible threshold just above ground level with a shallow step down into the formal garden, suggesting an access through the east end of the terrace wall. If correct, then there may have been steps within the terrace leading up to the raised level. There is a distinct slope of the south-east corner of the terrace at this point, quite noticeable when compared to the level of the rest. Is this a consequence of some deliberate human action when the site was robbed out or simply the result of cattle activity, or is it a part of the original design? Investigation will require area stripping of the turf and top soil and cleaning of the underlying archaeology.

5.6.3. Dix confirmed (trench 8) that the upper terrace of the formal garden had a wide, central gravel path following the main axial alignment and proposed further investigation to check for central steps along the southern edge of the raised terrace (Dix 2009). Dix also confirmed (trench 10) that there was a gravel path along the west wall, so we may also add an investigation of the west end of the terrace to check for steps there, corresponding to the access suggested by trench 6.

6 FIELD METHODOLOGY

6.1 Site preparation

In advance of the excavation, key-points will be located for the partial reopening of the Dix trenches 5, 6 and 7 and Everett trenches I and II. A site grid will be established aligned with the main axis of the house and formal garden and mapped onto the National Grid.

6.2 Trenches

The site will be explored initially by a sequence of relatively small rectangular and strip trenches – 'keyhole' style. Area excavation will be used later if found necessary to achieve the aims. Selected parts of the earlier trenches will be reopened first to provide a known reference; new trenches will then be positioned from the data recovered. Trenches will be orientated with reference to the site grid rather than to the national grid.

- 6.3 Excavation method
Hand tools only in 2018. Possible use of machine excavation in 2019-20 if found necessary in order to achieve the principal aim, in consultation with the local curator.
- 6.4 Finds recovery policy
The previous excavations have indicated that the site has been comprehensively robbed of useful building materials and is not rich in finds, apart from fragmentary stone, brick and tile, so a large finds archive is not expected. The early identification of Special Finds, i.e. those that may provide special information about past activities and dating, is therefore critical. Excavators must be instructed to err on the safe side and report any unusual and potentially dateable finds before removal.
In general:
- Special Finds (e.g. coins, dress ornaments, glassware, unusual or decorated earthenware, delftware and stoneware, metal and bone tools, glass bottles, etc.) to be 3-D plotted within the context and bagged for off-site cleaning, analysis and appropriate conservation and storage.
 - Bulk Finds recovery policy is 10mm plus.
 - Finds showing evidence of burning must be recorded. Recovery of charcoal and charred timber for later analysis is important as potential evidence of burned structural timbers.
 - All loose moulded masonry to be recovered and recorded.
 - Other loose stone masonry, brick and tile to be set aside for quantifying and possible analysis.
 - Mortar to be selectively sampled for later analysis.
 - Soil will not be sieved unless directed otherwise on site.
- 6.5 Finds discard policy
On completion of the project, Oxfordshire Museums Service will be consulted over the selection of finds for archiving. Those not required will be re-buried on site in an identifiable location.
- 6.6 Environmental sampling
Environmental samples to be taken if considered appropriate and bagged and tagged for later analysis.
- 6.7 Recording
SOAG context, finds recording and other pro-forma sheets will be used. (Note: These are based on the now well-established MoLAS system.)
- 6.8 Conservation of masonry and constructional deposits
- All surviving masonry will be conserved in situ by reburial. Constructional deposits/fills, e.g. the terrace fill, may be sectioned down to the 17th century ground level or constructional cuts.
 - The Project Director will consult with the local curator or outside specialists over any deposit he believes to be outside the knowledge and capabilities of the excavation team, or which he believes should be drawn to curatorial or specialist attention.
- 6.9 Professional backup and monitoring
Professional advice and backup will be sought in the first instance from *Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services*, the *University of Oxford Institute of Archaeology* and *Oxford Archaeology*.
- 7 POST-FIELDWORK METHODOLOGIES
- The onsite collection and initial treatment of finds and post-fieldwork methodologies will conform in general to the *CIfA Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (CIfA 2014b).
- 7.1 Cleaning
- Pot washing will take place both on and off site.
 - Marking, sorting and weighing of bulk finds will take place off site, post-excavation.
 - Cleaning of special finds will be done off-site under supervision, or passed to specialists in the case of sensitive items.

7.2 Conservation and packaging

Initial treatment will follow well-established archaeological field practice, as usefully summarised by the Portable Antiquities Scheme *Artefact Conservation Guide* (PAS 2005). In general for small finds prior to full analysis and conservation:

- Non-metallic finds to be dried slowly and stored in vented plastic bags or boxes.
- Iron and copper alloy finds to be dried slowly and stored in sealed plastic boxes with silica gel.
- Lead, pewter and silver finds to be dried slowly and stored in vented plastic bags or boxes.
- Use only archival quality ‘acid free’ containers and packaging materials. Provide padding to separate objects in the same container and prevent them moving about.

Long term conservation and packaging is to be in accordance with ICON (Institute for Conservation) Archaeology Group guidelines.

7.3 Dating and analysis

Volunteers will be encouraged to research small finds and produce reports on their investigations, rather than relying entirely on external experts. This way we build a knowledge base and local expertise that will be of increasing value in future investigations. For many classes of object, e.g. coins, buckles and other metal items, clay pipes, etc., this is entirely possible. Pottery can be more difficult, so for this we may arrange for specialist advice.

8 POST-EXCAVATION, REPORT PREPARATION, CONTENTS AND DISTRIBUTION

8.1 Post-fieldwork analysis and report preparation will be carried out, as far as is practicable, in accordance with the *CIfA Standard and guidance for archaeological excavation* (CIfA 2014a). Clause 3.5.2 notes that a post-excavation assessment (interim) report will normally contain:

1. Introduction
2. Original research aims
3. Summary of the documented history of the site
4. Interim statement on the results of fieldwork
5. Summary of the site archive and work carried out for assessment
6. Potential of the data to meet the research aims and to develop new research aims
7. A summary of the potential of the data in terms of local, regional, national and international importance

Additional information will normally include:

- supporting illustrations at appropriate scales
- supporting data, tabulated or in appendices
- index, references, acknowledgements and disclaimers

8.2 An interim report for each year will be issued within six months and published in the following year’s editions of the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) *South Midlands Archaeology* and *SOAG Bulletin*, with copies circulated (as a minimum) to the following interested parties:

- Oxfordshire Buildings Trust
- Oxfordshire Gardens Trust
- Oxfordshire County Council – Historic Environment Record
- Historic England (South East)
- Mark Bowden – Historic England, Swindon
- Brian Dix – Independent Archaeologist
- Roger Ainslie – Abingdon Archaeological Geophysics; Secretary of the Oxford City and County Archaeological Forum

9 COPYRIGHT

Under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 and with the agreement of the *South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group*, the copyright of all written and graphic material in this project design and in any subsequent reports remains with the authors and originators.

10 ARCHIVE DEPOSITION

The complete archive, including selected finds, will be deposited at the Oxfordshire Museums Resource Centre, Cotswold Dene, Standlake, OX29 7QG, in accordance with Oxfordshire Museums Service *Requirements for Transferring Archaeological Archives 2017/18* (OMS 2017) or later issue.

11 PUBLICATION AND DISSEMINATION

11.1 In accordance with CIfA 2014a, Appendix 4, a decision as to where the final report will be published and the form it will take will be included in the post-excavation project design. For convenience, this will be prepared as an annexe to this document when appropriate.

11.2 Public talks will be arranged for presentation of both work-in-progress and final results to the interested parties and local community. Opportunities will be sought to present the final results at local (OXPAST) and regional (CBA South Midlands) archaeology and local history conferences.

12 HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health and Safety on site takes priority over archaeological matters. It must comply with the relevant legislative standards and be in accordance with the *SOAG Health and Safety Policy*. A Risk Analysis will be carried out in accordance with *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992*; for convenience, the former Institute for Archaeologists: *IfA Risk Assessment Template and Guidance Notes* and rating system will be used.

13 INSURANCE

Policy Type:	Export and General Archaeologist Scheme
Insurance Agency:	Export & General Insurance Services Ltd
Agency Number:	PUUK/16/100001
Policy Number:	EGAG-58 Expiry Date: 31/03/2019
Insurance Provider:	China Taiping Insurance (UK) Co Ltd

14 MONITORING PROCEDURES

14.1 Monitoring of the fieldwork will be by the Ascott Park Project Director: Ian Clarke, Vice-President of the *South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group* and an Affiliate member of the CIfA.

14.2 Monitoring of this specification and of the final report will be by the local curator: Richard Oram, OCC Planning Archaeologist and a Member of the CIfA.

GENERAL STANDARDS AND GUIDANCE

CIfA 2014a: *Standard and Guidance for archaeological excavation*,

http://archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/CIfAS&GExcavation_1.pdf

CIfA 2014b: *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials*,

http://www.archaeologists.net/sites/default/files/CIfAS&GFinds_1.pdf

ICON: Institute for Conservation Archaeology Group resources

<https://icon.org.uk/groups/archaeology/icon-archaeology-group-resources>

OMS 2017: Oxfordshire Museums Resource Centre, *Requirements for Transferring Archaeological Archives 2017/18*,

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/leisureandculture/museums/museumsresourcescentre/archaeology/archaeologicalarchivettransferprocedures.pdf>

PAS 2005: Portable Antiquities Scheme *Artefact Conservation Guide*, York Archaeological Trust 2005

<https://finds.org.uk/conservation/index>

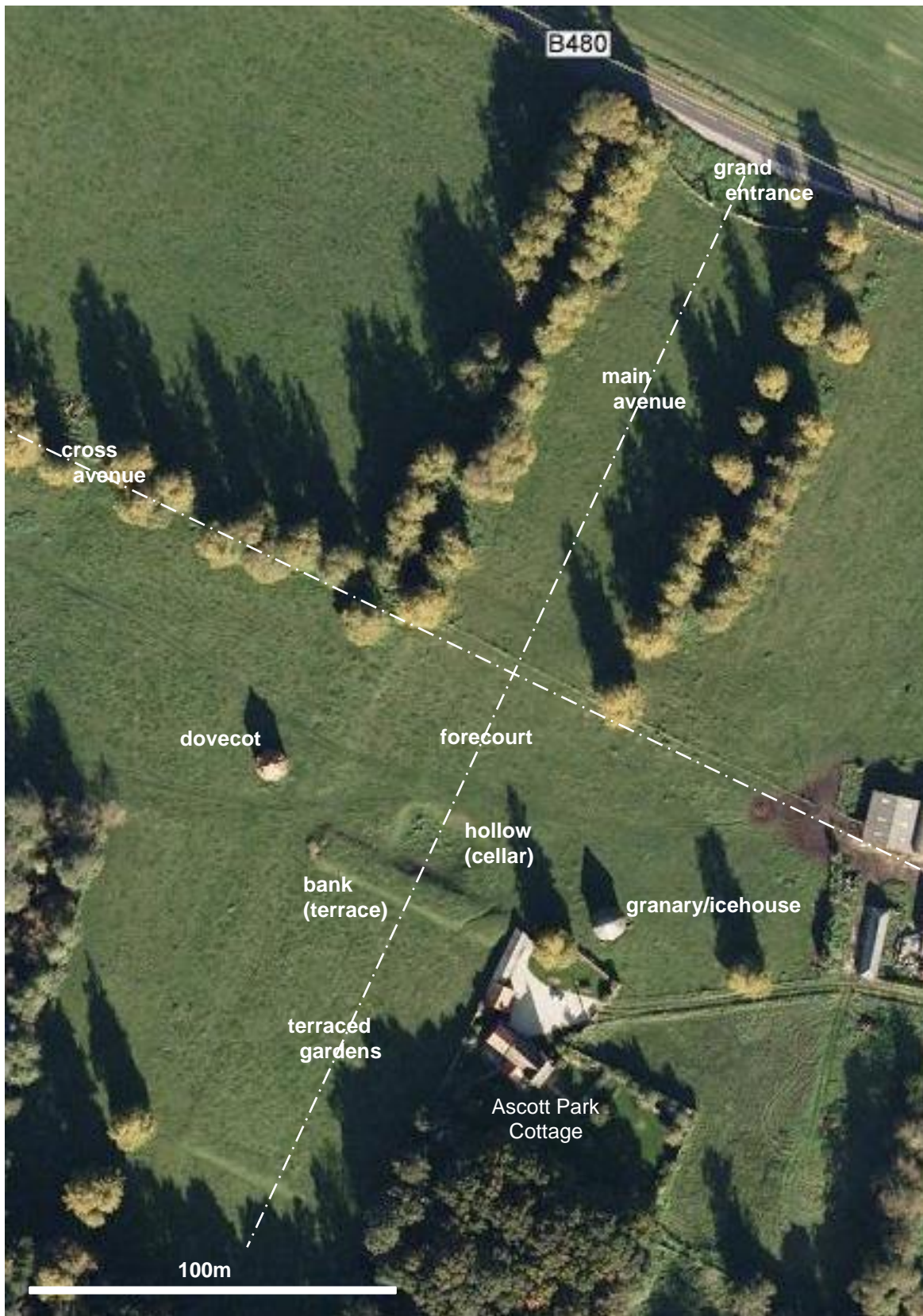
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DOCUMENT HISTORY

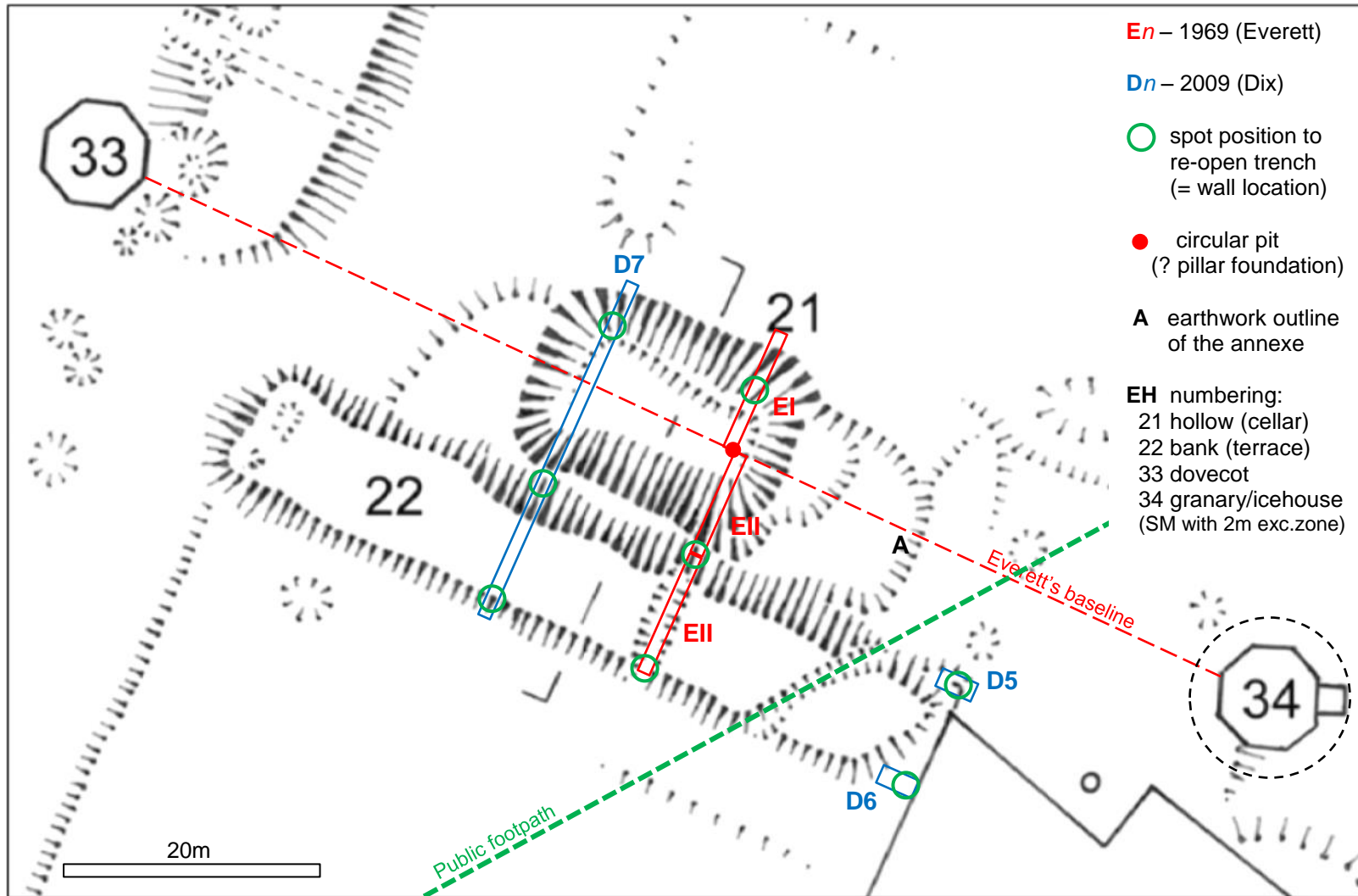
Issue	Date	Change
1.0	03/04/2018	1 st draft for comment
1.1	12/04/2018	Minor revisions and additions – Final Draft
1.2	04/05/2018	4.6 deleted; 4.1, 4.3, 4.5, 5.6.2, 5.6.3 & Fig 2 revised

Fig 1 Ascott Park – principal features of the 17th century remodelling surrounding the hollow and bank, the ‘traditional’ site of the new manor house



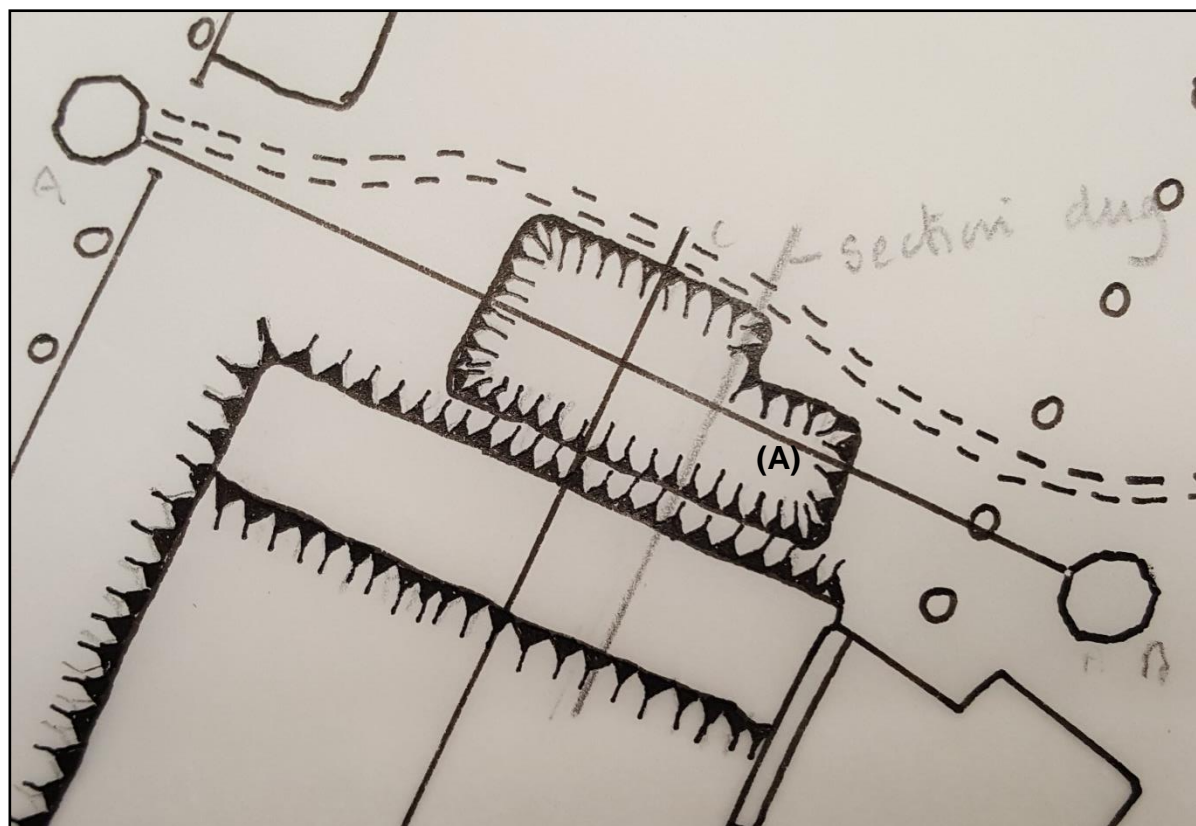
Satellite image: Google Earth

Fig 2 English Heritage survey of the hollow and bank site, with locations of the 1969 (Everett) and 2009 (Dix) trenches



Survey image: Bowden & Rardin (2007, Fig 5(part)), © Historic England

Fig 3 Everett's 1969 survey of the hollow and bank site, revealing the basement level of the annexe (A)



Survey image: © Oxfordshire Museums Resource Centre

ANNEXE 1

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