

## **Oxford City Council Urban Design and Heritage**

### **Brief for an Archaeological Watching Brief**

**Project:** Somerville College, Woodstock Road, Oxford

**Description:** Removal of internal partitions and refurbishment of kitchen and servery, including renewal of rooftop plant.

**Brief issued:** David Radford

**Prepared by:** 7/1/2020

#### 1. SUMMARY

*This brief sets out the requirement for an archaeological watching brief at this site. The work is required to record any significant archaeological deposits revealed by development bearing in mind the potential for prehistoric and early Saxon remains in this location.*

#### 2. DEFINITION

The definition of an Archaeological Watching Brief is a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons. This will be within a specified area or site on land ....or underwater, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the preparation of a report and ordered archive. (ClfA, 2014a)

#### 3. SITE DESCRIPTION

The kitchen is adjoined to the 1911-13 Dining Hall and together they are Grade II listed. During the late 1950s the kitchen was enlarged and modernised and the current layout is very little altered since that period. The slab of the kitchen and servery is believed to date from the 1950s.

#### 4. PLANNING BACKGROUND

- a. This brief relates to planning application no 19/02710/LBC to Oxford City Council.
- b. The National Planning Policy Framework states that where appropriate local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible.
- c. Watching briefs should be undertaken in accordance with a "written scheme of investigation" which has been agreed in writing by the City Council Archaeologist prior to commencing fieldwork. The "written scheme of investigation" should comprise this brief combined with the archaeological contractor's project design (see below). The project will be completed only when all fieldwork and post-excavation work has been

undertaken, the archive has been deposited and any required publication secured.

## 5. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

This application is of interest because it involves ground works (slab removal and new services) close to the extensive Middle Neolithic - Early Bronze Age ritual and funerary landscape excavated at the Radcliffe Observatory Quarter encompassing a Middle Neolithic enclosure and subsequent linear barrow cemetery, an outlying barrow and satellite burials. Early Saxon remains were also recorded at the ROQ site.

*NB The Radcliffe Observatory Quarter site Post-Excavation Assessment is held by the City Council Archaeologist and a revised publication draft is being prepared by MOLA for submission in 2020. Should features be observed this can be supplied to provide context.*

A Heritage Statement has been produced for this site by Purcell (2019) which deals primarily with the heritage Interest of the listed building.

## 6. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- Identify and record any significant archaeological remains exposed during the removal of the current kitchen/serverly slab or the new service runs bearing in mind the potential for prehistoric and early Saxon features. Any such remains should be interpreted with reference to the known archaeology of the ROQ site.
- If applicable the report should refer to the city, county and regional period based resource assessments and research agendas available on the web:

*Regional*

<http://oxfordarchaeology.com/aboutus/our-archive/news-archive/301-solent-thames-research-framework-for-the-historic-environment>

*City*

<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decP/OxfordArchaeologicalPlan.htm>

## 7. PROCEDURE AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Archaeological Watching Briefs must be undertaken in accordance with the *Standard and Guidance for archaeological watching briefs* published by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (CIfA, 2014a). Each watching brief must be governed by a project design which has been agreed in writing by the City Council Archaeologist. The project design should be based on a thorough study of all relevant background information. It should conform to the requirements set out in paragraph 3.2.12 of the CIfA guidelines and should in particular include:

- The project's objectives.

- A description of the proposed works and an assessment of their archaeological impact with an accompanying plan.
- Details of the methodology for implementing the watching brief indicating those works which are to be observed, the frequency of observation (permanent/daily visits etc) and any archaeological control over the developer's operating procedures.
- An assessment of the potential for, and possible nature of, any "unexpected discoveries"<sup>1</sup> with details of contingency arrangements for salvage recording.
- Procedures for project management (to follow the principles set out in the Historic England Guidance [Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment](#) (Morphe 2015)).
- The expertise of the project team. The project manager should be a named Member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (MCI fA) who is adequately qualified to manage the required archaeological work in line with the guidance set out in the ClfA code of conduct. The composition and experience of the project team should be described. Specialists should be identified where required (e.g. for finds and environmental work). In some cases it will also be necessary to identify academic advisors. CVs should be supplied outlining the relevant qualifications and experience of key personnel - where relevant this should include specific reference to knowledge of particular periods and local/ regional traditions.
- *Note: Specialists should be able to demonstrate a relevant qualification and track record of at least 3 years continuous relevant work (or equivalent) and appropriate publication. In appropriate circumstances, less experienced staff may conduct work under the supervision of well-established and widely recognised specialists.*
- An outline of the proposed timetable and staff resources - this must be non-binding and presented "for information only"
- Reporting and Archiving arrangements.

## 8. FIELDWORK METHODOLOGY

### a. Procedure

Watching briefs require that the archaeologist(s) are present on site during works in the following circumstances: comprehensive/detailed (present

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<sup>1</sup> The term "unexpected discovery" covers features whose existence and/or significance was unknown at the outset of the watching brief but subsequently prove to be potentially of county or national importance.

during all works which may affect archaeological remains); intensive (present during specified sensitive works); intermittent (viewing immediately after each specified phase of works).

**NB In this case an intermittent watching brief should be maintained during slab removal (for the kitchen and servery) and the removal of existing drainage runs (should this be required) and a detailed watching brief should be maintained during the excavation of the proposed new foul sewer service runs and inspection chamber.**

The presence/absence of archaeological features should be noted. If features are identified then sufficient work should be done to date, characterise and record the remains in accordance with the project objectives. An adequate contingency should be provided to cover the eventuality that features exposed in the section of the trench can be adequately recorded.

If an "unexpected discovery" is made then the City Council Archaeologist should be informed as soon as possible. Initially consideration should be given to preservation in-situ but if this is not practical then such discoveries may give rise to a salvage excavation funded from the contingency (see below).

b. Recording

In principle, recording standards should be the same as for formal excavations but the particular practical difficulties and constraints of watching brief recording are acknowledged. Features should be recorded in plan at an appropriate scale and accurately located in relation to the National Grid. Each context should be recorded on pro-forma records which should include the following minimum details: character; contextual relationships; detailed description (dimensions and shape; soil components, colour, texture and consistency); associated finds; interpretation and phasing as well as cross-references to the drawn, photographic and finds registers. Normally each context should be recorded on an individual record. Sections should be drawn through all significant cut features and levelled to ordnance datum.

A black and white photographic record should be maintained including photos of all significant features and overall photos of each watching brief area. Selected colour transparencies should also be taken. ii. Digital photographs should not be taken instead of 35mm film. Where selected digital photographs are taken to supplement 35mm film they should adhere to the National Monuments Record's Digital Imaging Guidelines which requires that only cameras of ten mega pixel specification (or greater) should be used. Digital Image capture and file storage should be compliant with Historic England's guidelines (2015c).

c. Artefact and Ecofact collection and recording

All stratified finds should be collected by context or, where appropriate, individually recorded in 3 dimensions. Unstratified finds should only be collected where they contribute significantly to the project objectives or are of particular intrinsic interest. Finds of "treasure" must be reported to the Coroner in accordance with the Treasure Act procedures.

Collection policies for structural remains and industrial residues have been set out by the Society of Museum Archaeologists (SMA, 1993). The presence of such materials within a context should always be recorded and, where they are considered to be of importance, the watching brief should aim to quantify their occurrence, even where comprehensive retention is not considered appropriate.

d. Contingency and salvage excavation

Contingency arrangements must be specified in the project design and should take account of the nature of possible "unexpected discoveries" and the likely impact of the development upon them. Arrangements should include the demarcation of the area for excavation, the period of temporary cessation of development works within this area and the resources (expressed in person-days, specialist input etc.) available to undertake the excavation.

In the event of discovery of any human remains the archaeological contractor should inform the client, the City Council Archaeologist, the Coroner, the Police and the Ministry of Justice via the submission of an application form for the 'Archaeological/Accidental/Site Investigation Licence regarding the disturbance of human remains'. The Human remains should be left in-situ, covered and protected. Where a licence for their excavation is issued by the Ministry of Justice, the requirements of that licence should be followed. Where the Ministry of Justice is unable to issue a licence and it is reasonably determined that the remains are likely to be subject to further unavoidable disturbance or deterioration the archaeological contractor should inform the client and Ministry of Justice of their intention to excavate the remains with due decency and in accordance with the general conditions formerly attached to licences issued for excavation of human remains under similar circumstances.

Human remains should be treated in accordance with the advice set out in *Guidance for best practice for treatment of human remains excavated from Christian burial grounds in England* (English Heritage, 2005).

Provision should be made within the contingency for: conservation (lifting and treatment) of fragile objects and the collection and analysis of environmental and scientific (including dating) samples. Sampling is to be carried out in accordance with a strategy which is related to the project objectives and has been agreed with English Heritage's Regional Adviser in Archaeological Science.

## 9. POST-EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

- a. For most watching briefs it will be sufficient to complete an archive report for the Oxford UAD & HER, publish a summary note and deposit the archive (see below).
- b. For projects which have produced results of significant county, regional or national importance, an illustrated interim report together with a post-excavation assessment and updated project design (MAP Stage 3) should be submitted by the archaeological contractor and approved by the City Council Archaeologist within 6 months of the completion of fieldwork .
- c. Post-excavation analysis and report preparation should proceed in accordance with the agreed updated project design unless subsequent variations are agreed by the City Council Archaeologist.

## 10. PUBLICATION

- a. For all projects, a summary report (including illustrations where appropriate) should be sent to the editors of ***South Midlands Archaeology*** not later than three months after the end of the calendar year in which the work is undertaken.
- b. For projects which have produced results of significant county, regional or national importance, an illustrated final report which meets the guidelines set out in MAP Appendix 7 and is suitable for publication in an approved archaeological journal should be provided to the City Council Archaeologist within one year of the completion of fieldwork (unless a longer time period has been agreed in the updated project design). The overall content of the report should be agreed with the City Council Archaeologist.
- c. The report should be clearly referenced in all respects to all work on the site. It should place the site in its local archaeological, historical and topographical context and include a clear location map. Each plan included should clearly relate to some other included plan of an appropriate scale and should normally include national grid references.
- d. Two bound offprints of the final publication and a digital copy of the text, in PDF format, must be supplied to the City Council Archaeologist. A copy of any specialist papers relating to the site should also be supplied. A further offprint should accompany the archive.
- e. A publication grant should be provided to the publishers of the report in accordance with their requirements.

## 11. OASIS

Once the final report has been accepted contractors should complete an OASIS fieldwork summary form and submit it to the Archaeology Data Service. The form and guidance for its completion can be found at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/first.html>.

## 12. ARCHIVING

- a. The archaeological contractor should endeavour to ensure that the site archive (including any artefacts recovered) are deposited in an acceptable condition with a museum which is registered with the Arts Council and approved for the storage of archaeological archives. The preferred archive for Oxfordshire is the County Museum (N.B. certain University of Oxford sites fall within the Ashmolean Museum collection area, if in doubt please contact the City Council Archaeologist).
- b. The procedures and requirements which must be followed for the deposit of archaeological archives with Oxfordshire County Museum are available from the Collections and Information Manager (Oxfordshire County Museums 2014). A storage grant should be provided to the museum in accordance with their requirements.
- c. Archives must be prepared in compliance with the Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives (CIFA, 2014b).
- d. The archaeological contractor should arrange for the archive to be copied on microfiche to the standard required by the Historic England Archive and copy should be deposited with the HEA.

## 13. MONITORING

- a. Monitoring is carried out by the City Council Archaeologist to ensure that projects are being carried out in accordance with the brief and approved project design, to enable the need for modifications to the project to be independently considered and validated and to control and validate the use of available contingencies.
- b. A programme of monitoring should be agreed with the City Council Archaeologist prior to the commencement of fieldwork. The archaeological contractor should keep the CCA regularly informed of the project's progress and facilitate the monitoring of the project at each stage, including post-excavation. In particular, there should be no substantial modification of the approved brief and project design without the prior consent of the CCA and no fieldwork should be carried out without the service's knowledge and approval.
- c. All monitoring visits will be documented by the CCA and the archaeological contractor will be informed of any perceived deficiencies.
- d. The CCA should be informed at the earliest opportunity of any unexpected discoveries, especially where there may be a need to vary the project design. The archaeological contractor should carry out such reasonable contingency works as requested by the CCA within the resources defined in the project design.

## 14. HEALTH AND SAFETY

### **Health and Safety must take priority over archaeological requirements.**

It is essential that all projects are carried out in accordance with safe working practices and under a defined Health and Safety Policy. **Risk Assessments must be carried out for every field project.** If the risk assessment indicates it is necessary, the requirements of the brief can be varied in the interests of health and safety (the City Council Archaeologist must be consulted and the proposed changes agreed in such cases).

The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM) will apply to archaeological work undertaken on many construction (and demolition) projects.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- Historic England 2015a *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment*



- Historic England 2015b      Digital Image Capture and File Storage Guidelines  
for Best Practice
- Oxfordshire County 2014      *Requirements for Transferring Archaeological  
Museum Service                  Archives*
- Purcell 2019                      Somerville College, Oxford: Refurbishment of  
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- SMA, 1993                         *Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological  
Collections.*

## **CONTACTS**

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