

T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Lincoln College Garden Building,
Lincoln College, Oxford**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Jamie Lewis

Site Code: LCO10/102

(SP 5150 6208)

Lincoln College Garden Building, Oxford

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Lincoln College**

by James Lewis
Thames Valley Archaeological Services
Ltd

Site Code LC010/102

November 2010

Summary

Site name: Lincoln College Garden Building, Lincoln College, Oxford

Grid reference: SU 5150 6208

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 1st–16th November 2010

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: James Lewis

Site code: LCO 10/102

Area of site: c. 500 sq m: Test pits total 73 sq m

Summary of results: Seven test pits were dug which revealed the nature and extent of the current buildings and adjacent deposits on the site. No deposits pre-dating late post-medieval times were revealed though the full depth of build-up above the natural geology did not take place. Residual pottery of medieval and later date was recovered.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Service

This report may be copied for bona fide research or planning purposes without the explicit permission of the copyright holder. All TVAS unpublished fieldwork reports are available on our website: www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 07.12.10
	Steve Preston ✓ 03.12.10

Lincoln College Garden Building, Oxford An Archaeological Evaluation

by James Lewis

Report 10/102

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Lincoln College Garden Building, Oxford (SU 5150 0628) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Stephen Oliver, of Rodney and Melville Partners, 10 Euston Place, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV32 4LJ on behalf of Lincoln College, Oxford.

Planning permission has been sought from Oxford City Council for the demolition of the existing lecture theatre and its replacement by a new structure which is to have a basement and a slightly larger building footprint. The potential of the site was summarized in a brief provided by Mr David Radford (Radford 2010) which drew on the results of a desk-based assessment (Coppack 2010). Due to the potential of damaging or destroying archaeological deposits during construction work, the planning application is to be supported by the results of an archaeological evaluation.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's Planning Policy Statement, *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5 2010), and Oxford City Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr David Radford, Oxford City Council Archaeologist. The fieldwork was undertaken by James Lewis and Steven Crabb, between 1st–16th November 2010 and the site code is LCO 10/102. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Oxfordshire Museum Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

Lincoln College is located in the centre of the city of Oxford which lies on an area of high ground between the Rivers Thames and Cherwell. Immediately north and east are the Colleges of Exeter and Brasenose. Beyond these are more university colleges, commercial and residential buildings. Approximately 600m to the east is the River Cherwell. Located to the south of Lincoln College is High Street and approximately 750m beyond that is the River Thames (Isis). The underlying geology is 2nd (Summertown-Radley) Terrace deposits (BGS 1982) and the site is 64m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

Oxford city centre as a whole has a rich and varied archaeological heritage, with a long and distinguished history of research (Hassall 1986; Dodd 2003). There is evidence for settlement from Neolithic times onwards. Nevertheless, new discoveries are made regularly, and can shed surprising new light even on such a well-studied town (Wallis 2010). The site lies within the historic centre of Oxford within both the late Saxon and early medieval towns. The history of the site all relates to its use by Lincoln College which was founded in 1427 with several surviving buildings present from this period. A desk-based assessment, drawing on previous archaeological work carried out in and around the college and the present structure (Coppack 2010) suggested that there is considerable evidence that the site has been in constant use since the 10th century with major alterations occurring in the early 15th century coinciding with the foundation of the college. A range of archaeological investigations and observations have taken place in and around the college, many of which recorded late Saxon, medieval and post-medieval remains. A watching brief undertaken in the Rectors Garden carried out in association with an excavation of the medieval kitchen found the remains of three post-medieval walls and probably relate to the buildings depicted on Taylors 1750 map (Kamash 2002). Many of the college buildings are Listed.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development. The specific research aims of the project are:

- to determine if archeologically relevant levels have survived;
- to determine if archaeological deposits from any period are present;
- to determine if any deposits relating to the Late Saxon and medieval (pre-college) town are present;
- to determine if any deposits relating to the medieval and later use of the site by the college are present on the site;
- to determine if any deposits relating to the postulated prehistoric landscape are present on the site; and
- to provide information to help formulate a mitigation strategy.

Seven test pits were to be excavated: five (1 and 4-7) geotechnical test pits were dug in order to investigate the foundations of the present buildings with the condition that these test pits were excavated to archaeological standards; two test pits (2 and 3) were excavated purely for archaeological investigation. Five of the pits were to be excavated in the grounds and buildings of Lincoln College and two in the grounds of Brasenose College.

The test pits were to be excavated to the following dimensions; four were to be 2 x1m, two 1x1m and one 1.5x1m. The test pits were to be hand dug and spoilheaps were to be metal detected and monitored for finds. All archaeological deposits were to be hand cleaned and recorded.

Results

The seven tests were dug as intended and were positioned in the locations indicated on Figure 3, which targeted those areas which are accessible pre-demolition, avoid tree roots and are areas affected by the proposed development. Due to the restricted area within which the some of the test pits were located the final dimensions differed from those proposed. Furthermore, a number of the test pits had to be re-located with the agreement of the Mr David Radford the Archaeological Officer and Mr Mark Kettringham the Chartered Structural Engineer with SFK Consulting. All alterations are described below. A complete list of test pits giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections is given in Appendix 1. A catalogue of excavated features and deposits forms Appendix 2.

Test pit 1 (Fig. 5; Pl. 1)

Test pit 1 was located along the south side of the chapel and it measured 1.50m by 1.12m wide and 1.35m deep. The location of this test pit was moved 1m west because a cremation burial dating to the 1930s was found. This was not removed but its position was recorded. The north side of the test pit exposed the chapel wall foundation which was built upon large, dressed limestone blocks. Two of these were exposed and measured 450mm wide by 620mm deep and 300mm wide by 620mm deep, respectively. The blocks were set upon a wall (82) of irregular stones bonded with a loose mortar. The wall measured at least 600mm deep and the stones displayed varying dimensions between 100–410mm long and 50–250mm thick.

The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of topsoil (50) which overlay 0.25m of subsoil (51). Underneath this was possibly a linear feature (1) which was aligned east-west and truncated by the chapel wall on its north side. This measured at least 0.50m wide and 0.20m deep. It contained a single fill of loose grey brown sandy silt (54) but without any artefacts. Cut 1 truncated a thin loose white sandy mortar layer (52), 0.05m thick. This overlay grey brown sandy silt with moderate gravel inclusions, 0.50m thick. Underneath this was a white/yellow sandy mortar with frequent gravel and limestone inclusions. This layer was not fully excavated but extended down at least 0.25m.

Test pit 2 (Figs 4 and 5, Pls 2 and 3)

Test pit 2 was located along the north side of the present building (proposed to be replaced) and it measured 1.75m by 1.55m and was between 0.80–1.15m deep. This test pit contained the majority of archaeological deposits found during the excavation. The south side of the test pit exposed the foundations of the north wall of the present lecture theatre. The exposed wall is set upon a concrete base which measured 0.20m thick above a smooth wall which measured 0.55m thick and below this was a foundation of loose irregular blocks which extended below the base of the test pit and was at least 0.15m deep. The blocks measured 150mm long by 80mm deep.

The west side of the test pit consisted of 0.12m of topsoil (50) above 0.34m of subsoil (57). Located at the northern edge of this side was a modern pipe cut (3), 0.75m deep and containing dark grey sandy clay (68). Underneath the subsoil (57) was found a wall (66) overlain by three deposits (64, 65 and 67). The three deposits comprised: a compact dark grey sandy clay which contained frequent mortar and gravel and occasional brick inclusions(65): a compact limestone and mortar fill with occasional small red brick and some residual 13th century pottery inclusions (64), and beneath; a layer of loose limestone with occasional red brick inclusions (67).

Wall 66 was aligned north-south and constructed of limestone blocks with a slightly rough finish, bonded with a brown sandy mortar. The blocks measured 240mm by 214mm by 210mm. The wall truncated or abutted a compact white mortar surface (62) which contained very occasional red brick inclusions and measured 20-30mm thick. It extended beyond the northern and eastern edge of the test pit, however the eastern edge was partially truncated by a small pit (2, see below). Lying directly on the surface (62) in the centre of the test pit was a pile of loose stones (81) which might have been collapse from the wall (66). The largest stone measured 500mm by 260mm by 260mm. Abutted by the mortar surface in the south of the test pit was very compact mortar and limestone layer (63). It measured between 400–500mm wide and was truncated by the present wall foundations. It was not excavated so its thickness was not established.

The east side of the test pit presented a different profile to the west side: 0.13m of topsoil (50) overlay the pipe cut (03) at the north end. Cut by the pipe trench but below the topsoil was a layer of brown-yellow gravel and sand (56) which extended 0.58m across the test pit and was 0.13m at its thickest. Underneath this was a 0.66m thick layer of subsoil (57) which contained 19th century pottery. Below the subsoil in the northern half of the section was moderately compact light brown silty clay (58), up to 0.20m thick. This overlay a loose limestone and mortar fill (59) of pit 2 (see below). The latter contained occasional hand made red brick inclusions. Pit 2 extended beyond the eastern side of the test pit and measured at least 0.3m wide, 0.80m long and 0.2m deep. The pit truncated surface 62, deposit 61 and deposit 63 (see below).

The test pit was initially 0.80m deep, terminating at a compact mortar surface (62). After discussion with Mr Radford it was decided that a small sondage should be excavated in order to investigate the deposits below the surface. The sondage was placed in the north side of the test pit and measured 1.30m long, 0.65m wide and 0.35m deep. Under the surface two fills were found; Layer 60 comprised 0.20m of compact dark silty clay which contained occasional pot and red brick and 19th century pottery. Underneath this was compact dark grey sandy clay with significant limestone and small red brick inclusions (61) only the top of the fill was excavated down to approximately 50mm depth.

Test pit 3 (Fig. 5)

Test pit 3 was located along the west side of the lecture theatre, 1.90m long, 1.00m wide and 0.90m deep. The east side of the test pit exposed the foundations of the modern wall. The wall was set upon a single course of red bricks which measured 60mm by 50mm and these lay upon a concrete layer which was at least 0.50m thick.

The stratigraphy here showed paving slabs 0.10m thick above a thin lens of loose concrete (74), 0.02m thick, over loose grey/brown loam (72) with frequent inclusions of limestone, brick and concrete fragments, 0.32m thick. This overlay 0.10m of grey/brown silty clay (73) with frequent concrete, brick and 18th century pottery inclusions. Below this was brown/grey silty clay (75) with occasional limestone fragments and 17th century pottery. This layer was not fully excavated but extended to a depth of at least 0.4m.

Test pit 4 (Fig. 5, Pls 4 and 5)

Test pit 4 was located in Brasenose College to the east of the proposed development and measured 1.5m long, 0.92m wide and 0.94m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.34m of topsoil (50) overlying subsoil (57) which measured 0.21m deep. Under this was 0.46m of made ground consisting of bricks, concrete and rubble (83). Beneath this was a level concrete surface (84). The foundations on the west side of the test pit comprised the exposed wall set upon four courses of concrete breeze blocks, 200mm thick and 450mm long. The depth of the concrete wall measured 850mm. The wall was built on a layer of red bricks which were approximately 60mm thick and these were set upon the concrete surface.

Test pit 5 (Fig. 5)

Test pit 5 was also located on the west side of Brasenose College and it measured 1.30m long, 1.00m wide and 0.69m deep. The stratigraphy comprised: 0.08m topsoil (50), over 0.20m thick subsoil (57) overlying 0.35m of made ground (85). Below this was a level concrete surface (86). The west side of the test pit exposed the east wall of the modern building which was set upon four courses of concrete breeze blocks, 0.57m long and 0.20m deep. These were set upon a concrete surface (85).

Test pit 6 (Fig. 5)

Test pit 6 was located within the present lecture theatre and it measured 1.00m long, 1.20m wide and 0.80m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 50mm of paving slab (76) over a concrete bedding (77) 0.20m thick which overlay 0.20m of made ground (78) above a layer of concrete (79).

Test pit 7 (Fig. 5)

Test pit 7 was located on the west side of the library and was 0.76m wide, 0.92m long and 1.16m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.24m of topsoil (50), which overlay 0.35m of made ground (70), above a layer of brown grey silty clay, which was not fully excavated but extended down at least 0.60m. The east side of the test pit consisted of the exposed brick wall with brick which measured 270mm by 100mm and this was set on a concrete base, 0.1m thick. Underneath the concrete base was a smooth faced wall, 0.75m thick. Beneath this two courses of roughly dressed stone which was not fully exposed but extended down at least 250mm and the stones measured 250mm by 120mm.

Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 21 sherds with a total weight of 693g. It comprised a mixture of medieval and later wares. It was recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994), as follows:

OXY: Medieval Oxford ware, AD1075–1350. 2 sherds, 17g.
OXAM: Brill/Boarstall ware, AD1200–1600. 4 sherds, 35g.
OXST: Rhenish Stoneware, AD1480–1700. 2 sherds, 230g.
OXFH: Border wares, 1550–1700. 1 sherd, 7g.
OXDR: Red Earthenwares, 1550 onwards. 4 sherds, 167g.
OXFI: Chinese Porcelain, 1650 onwards. 1 sherd, 4g.
OXEST: London stoneware. c. 1680 onwards. 1 sherd, 63g.
CRM: Creamware, mid 18th - early 19th century. 3 sherds, 82g.
WHEW: Mass-produced white earthenwares, 19th–20th century. 3 sherds, 88g.

The range of fabric types is typical of sites in Oxford. The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Appendix 3.

Animal Bone by Ceri Falys

A single piece of animal bone, weighing 7g, was recovered from context 60. This left rib shaft fragment of an unidentified medium sized animal (e.g. sheep/goat or pig) was well preserved with little damage to the cortical bone. Three small cut marks were present on the visceral surface of the rib, suggestive of butchery practices. No further information could be derived from this single animal bone.

Metalwork by Steve Crabb

A small assemblage of metalwork totalled 34g. Of this the majority by weight is two pieces of lead window frame recovered from deposit 57 measuring 90mm and 70mm in length and 4mm thick. The remainder of the finds are an iron nail measuring 60mm and two fragments which are probably the corroded remains of smaller nails.

Conclusion

The evaluation found evidence relating to the later post-medieval and modern periods only. No deposits earlier than the 17th century (at the earliest) were found, probably due to the relatively shallow depth that the test pits could be dug to. The wall (66) in Test Pit 2 may relate to a small building west of the south wall of the chapel and not the same walls as those found in the previous watching brief. The small building is depicted on maps of 1793, 1789, possibly 1768, but not present by 1886 (Coppack 2010) and this date would be in line with the sparse artefactual evidence recovered.

References

- BGS, 1982, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50 000, Sheet 236, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Coppack, G, 2010, 'The Garden Building, Lincoln College, Oxford, pre-application desk based assessment', unpubl rep
- Dodd, A, 2003, *Oxford Before the University*, Oxford Archaeology Thames Valley Landscapes Monogr **17**, Oxford
- Hassall, T, 1986, 'Archaeology of Oxford City', in G Briggs, J Cook and T Rowley, (eds), *The Archaeology of the Oxford Region*, Oxford, 115–34
- Kamash, Z, Wilkinson, D R P, Ford, B and Hiller, J, 2002, 'Late Saxon and Medieval Occupation: Evidence from Excavations at Lincoln College, Oxford 1997-2000', *Oxoniensia*, **67**, 199–286
- Mellor, M and Oakley, G, 1984, 'A summary of the key assemblages, a study of pottery, clay pipes, glass and other finds from fourteen pits, dating from the 16th to the 19th century', in T G Hassall, C E Halpin and M Mellor, 'Excavations in St Ebbe's, Oxford, 1967–1976: Part II: Post-medieval domestic tenements and the Post-Dissolution site of the Greyfriars', *Oxoniensia*, **49**, 181–211
- Mellor, M, 1994, 'Oxfordshire Pottery: A Synthesis of middle and late Saxon, medieval and early post-medieval pottery in the Oxford Region', *Oxoniensia*, **59**, 17–217
- PPS5, 2010, *Planning for the Historic Environment*, The Stationery Office, Norwich
- Radford, D, 'Brief for an archaeological field evaluation, The Garden Building, Lincoln College, Oxford', Oxford City Council
- Wallis, S, 2010, 'Former Queen Elizabeth House, (Kendrew Quadrangle), St John's College, Blackhall Lane, Oxford, archaeological post-excavation assessment', Thames Valley Archaeological Services rep 07/135, Reading

APPENDIX 1: Test pit details

Test pit	Length (m)	Breadth (m)	Depth (m)	Comment
1	1.5	1.12	1.35	0–0.3m topsoil, 0.3–0.55m subsoil, 0.55–0.6m white mortar, 0.6–1.1m grey brown sandy silt, 1.1– 1.35+ yellow sandy mortar. Feature 1. [Pl. 1]
2	1.75	1.55	1.15	0–0.13m topsoil, 0.13–0.79m subsoil. 0.79–0.99m light brown clay, 0.99–1.19m mortar fill, 0.94–1.21m, dark grey sandy clay 1.21m+ Features 2, 3 and Wall 66. [Pls 2 and 3]
3	1.9	1.00	0.90	0–0.4m topsoil, 0.4–0.6m made ground, 0.6–0.1m+ made ground.
4	1.5	0.92	0.94	0–0.34m topsoil, 0.34–0.45m subsoil, 0.45–0.91m made ground, 0.91m concrete surface. [Pl. 4]
5	1.3	1.0	0.69	0–0.08m topsoil, 0.08–0.28m subsoil, 0.28–0.63m made ground, 0.63m concrete surface.
6	1.0	1.0	0.80	0–0.1m paving slab, 0.1–0.3m concrete bedding, 0.3–0.5m made ground, 0.5+ reinforced concrete
7	0.92	0.76	1.16	0–0.24m topsoil, 0.24–0.59m made ground, 0.59–1.19m+ brown grey silty clay.

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

Test pit	Cut	Fill (s)	Type	Date	Dating evidence
1	1	54	Linear feature	unknown	none
2	2	59	Pit	19th century	stratigraphic
2	-	66	Wall	18 th century	Cartographic
2	3	68	Pipe Trench	Modern	

APPENDIX 3: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

Context	OXY		OXAM		OXDR		OXST		OXFH		OXFI		OXEST		CRM		WHEW	
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
57			1	10	2	111	2	230							1	22	2	33
60			1	8	2	56											1	55
64	2	17	1	15														
73													1	63	2	60		
75			1	2					1	7	1	4						
Total	2	17	4	35	4	167	2	230	1	7	1	4	1	63	3	82	3	88

APPENDIX 4: Finds details

Clay Pipes

Test pit	type	Cut	Fill(s)	length	diameter	Borehole diameter	date
2	stem	-	60	62mm	9mm	3mm	Unknown
3	bowl	-	73	34mm	9mm	2mm	18 th cent
3	stem	-	73	40mm	9mm	3mm	Unknown
3	stem	-	73	45mm	8mm	2mm	Unknown

Common Building Material

Test pit	CBM	Cut	Fill(s)	length	width	thickness	date
2	Red brick	2	59	100mm	100mm	62mm	Unknown
2	mortar	-	64	30mm	30mm	54mm	Unknown

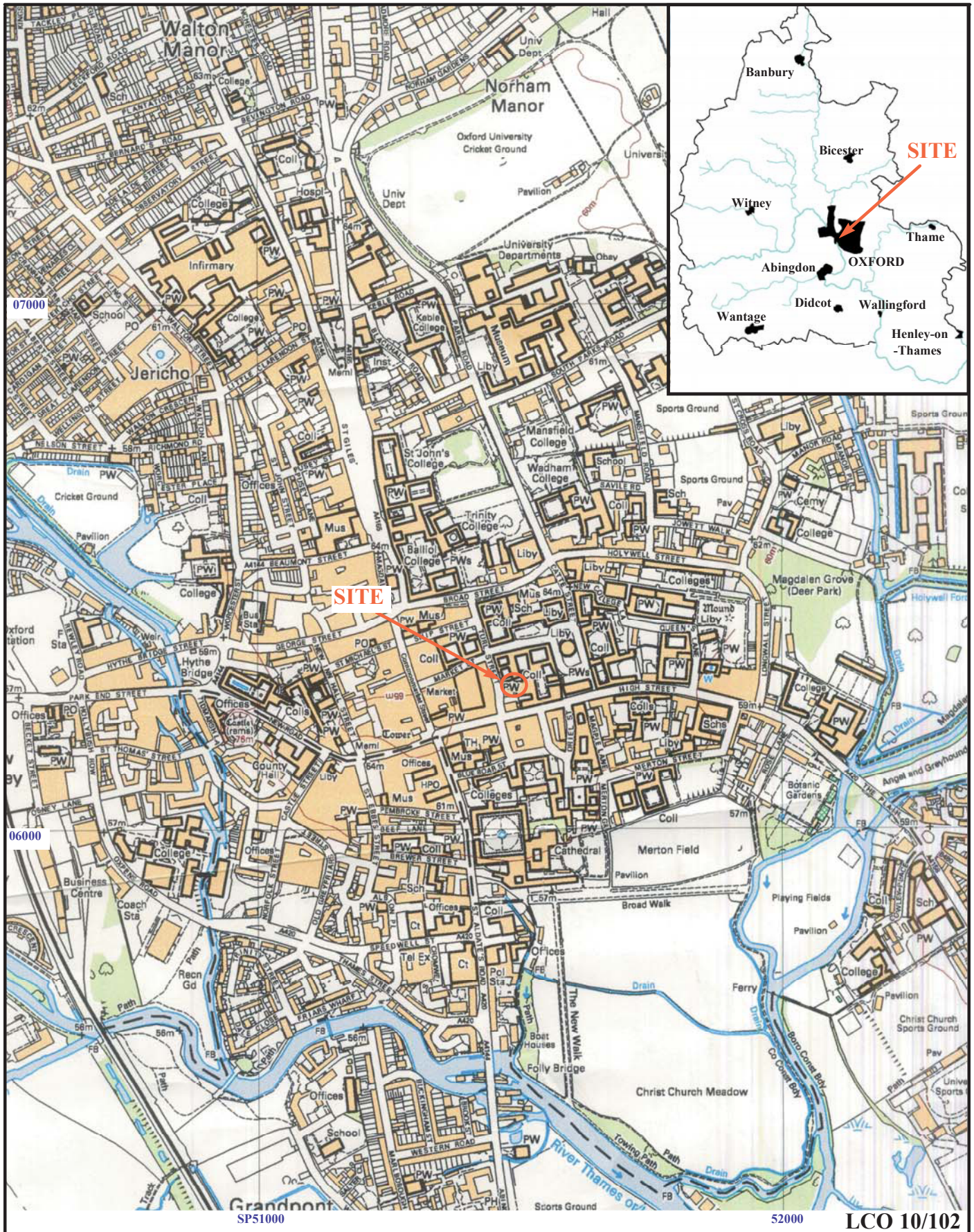
Oyster Shells

Test	Nos	Cut	Fill(s)	Diameter	date
------	-----	-----	---------	----------	------

<i>pit</i>					
2	1	-	60	65mm	Unknown

Glass

<i>Test pit</i>	<i>Colour</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill(s)</i>	<i>length</i>	<i>width</i>	<i>thickness</i>	<i>date</i>
2	clear	-	57	52mm	40mm	3mm	Unknown
2	clear	-	57	30mm	20mm	3mm	Unknown
2	green	-	64	32mm	7mm	2mm	Unknown

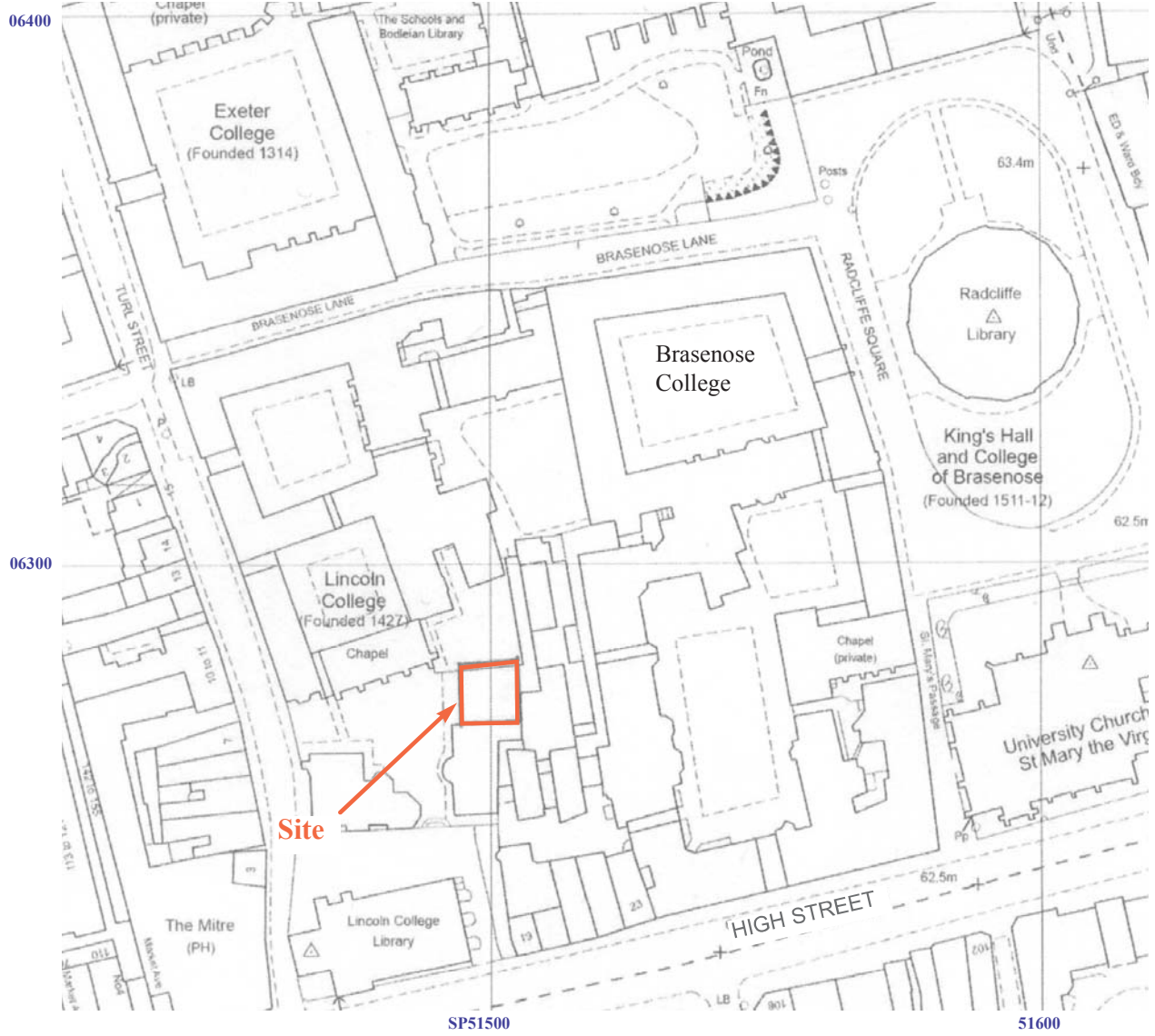


**Lincoln College Garden Building, Oxford, 2010
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 1. Location of site within Oxford

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Landplan SP50NW at 1:10 000
Ordnance Survey Licence 100025880

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



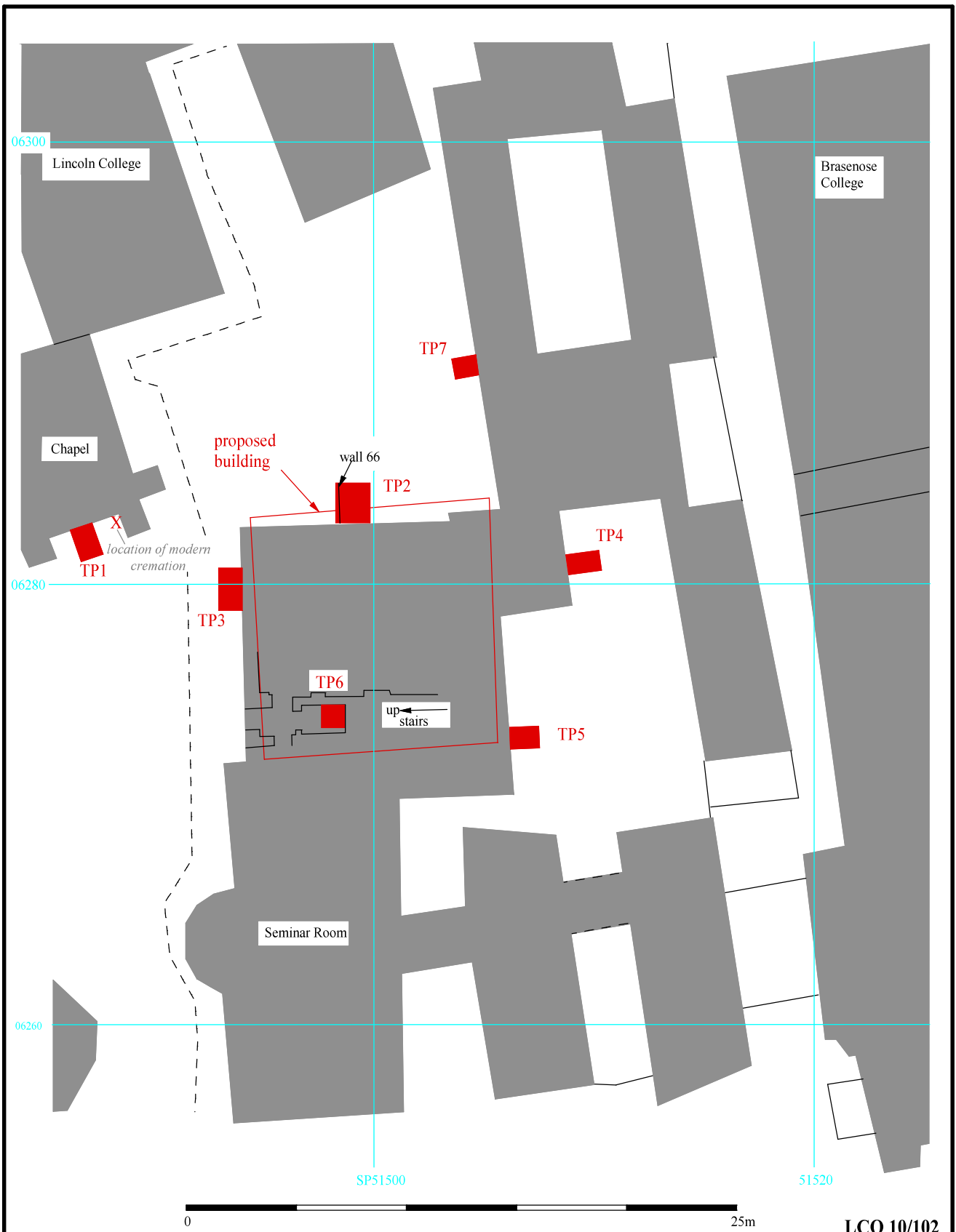
LCO 10/102

**Lincoln College Garden Building, Oxford, 2010
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 2. Detailed location of site within Lincoln College.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey digital mapping under licence.
Crown copyright reserved. Scale: 1:1250



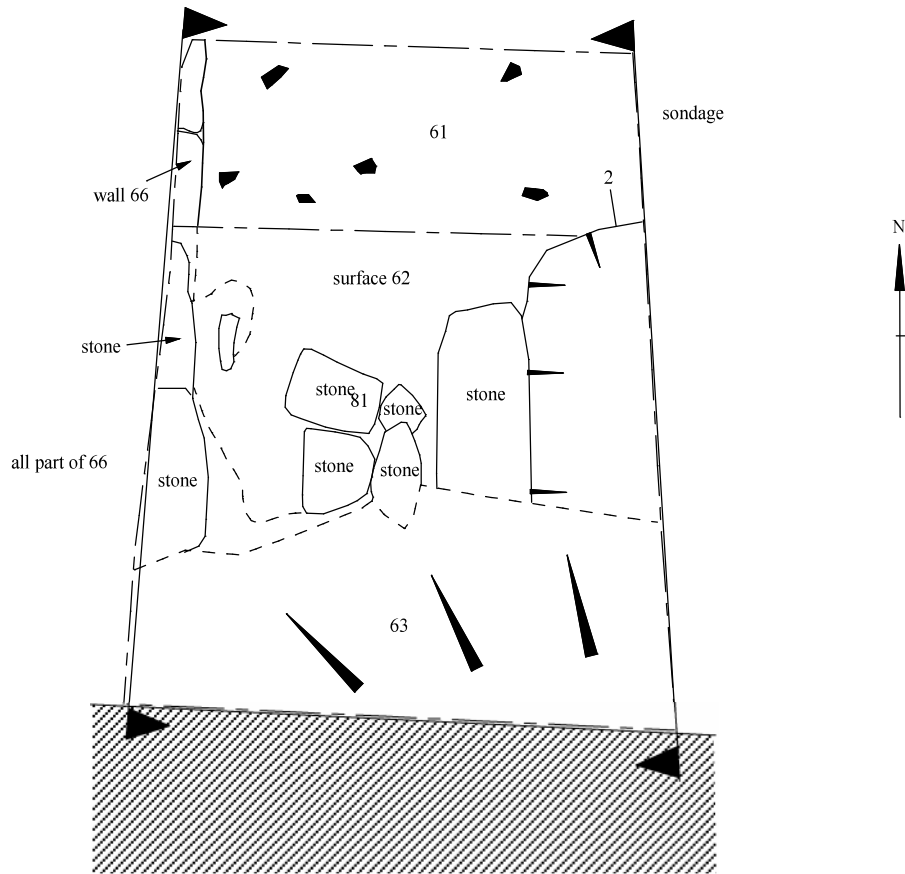


LCO 10/102

**Lincoln College Garden Building, Oxford, 2010
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 3. Location of test pits.





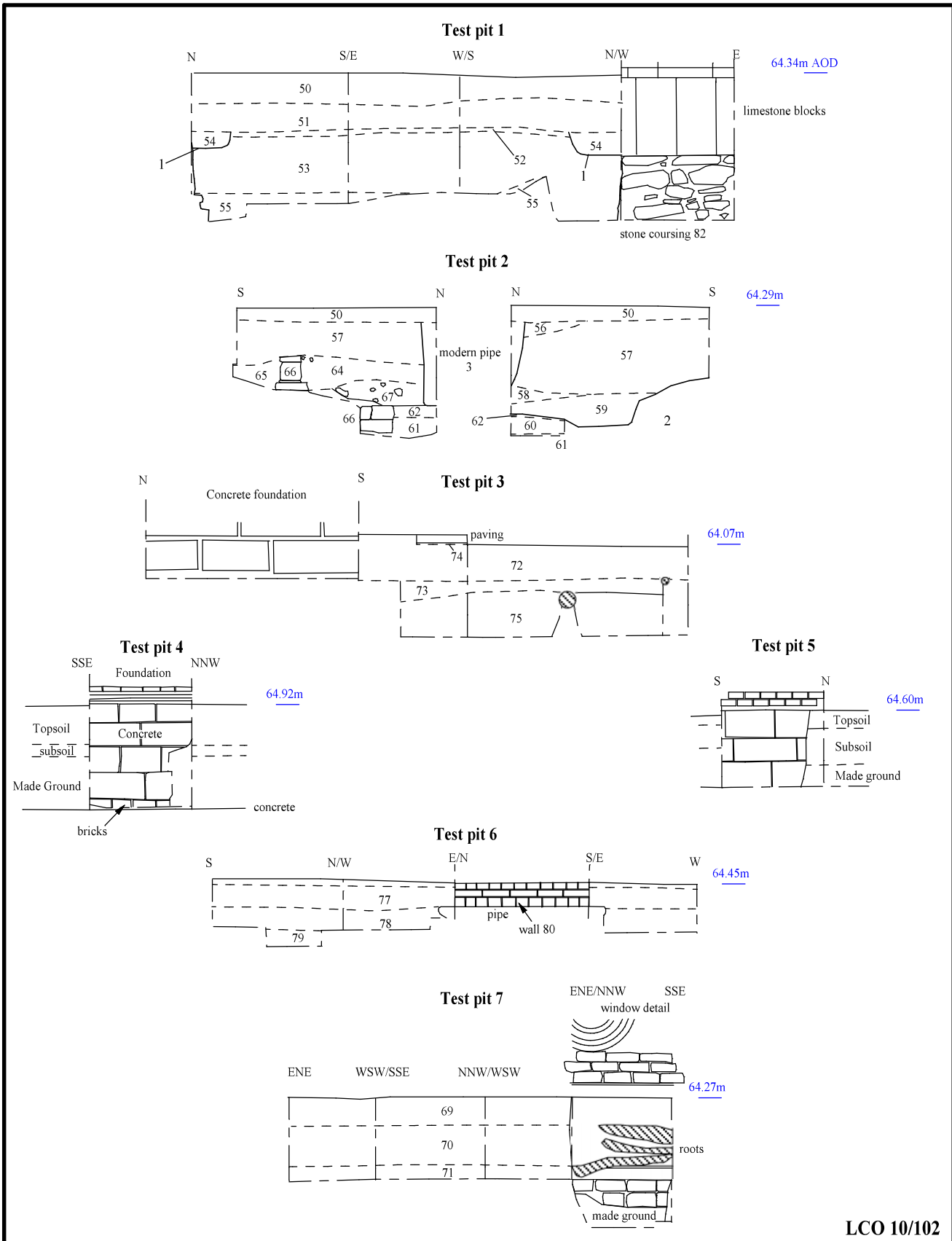
LCO 10/102

**Lincoln College Garden Building, Oxford, 2010
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 4. Plan of Test Pit 2.



THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



LCO 10/102

**Lincoln College Garden Building, Oxford, 2010
 Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 5. Sections.





Plate 1. Test pit 1, looking north-west. Horizontal scales: 0.5m and 1m, vertical 2m.



Plate 2. Test pit 2 looking east, scale: 1m.

LCO 10/102

**Lincoln College Garden Building, Oxford, 2010
Archeological Evaluation**

Plates 1 and 2

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES



Plate 3. Test pit 2, base showing rubble, wall 66, cut 2, and sondage, looking east, scale: 1m.



Plate 4. Test pit 4, looking east, scale: 1m.

LCO10/102

**Lincoln College Garden Building, Oxford, 2010
Archaeological Evaluation**

Plates 3 and 4

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES

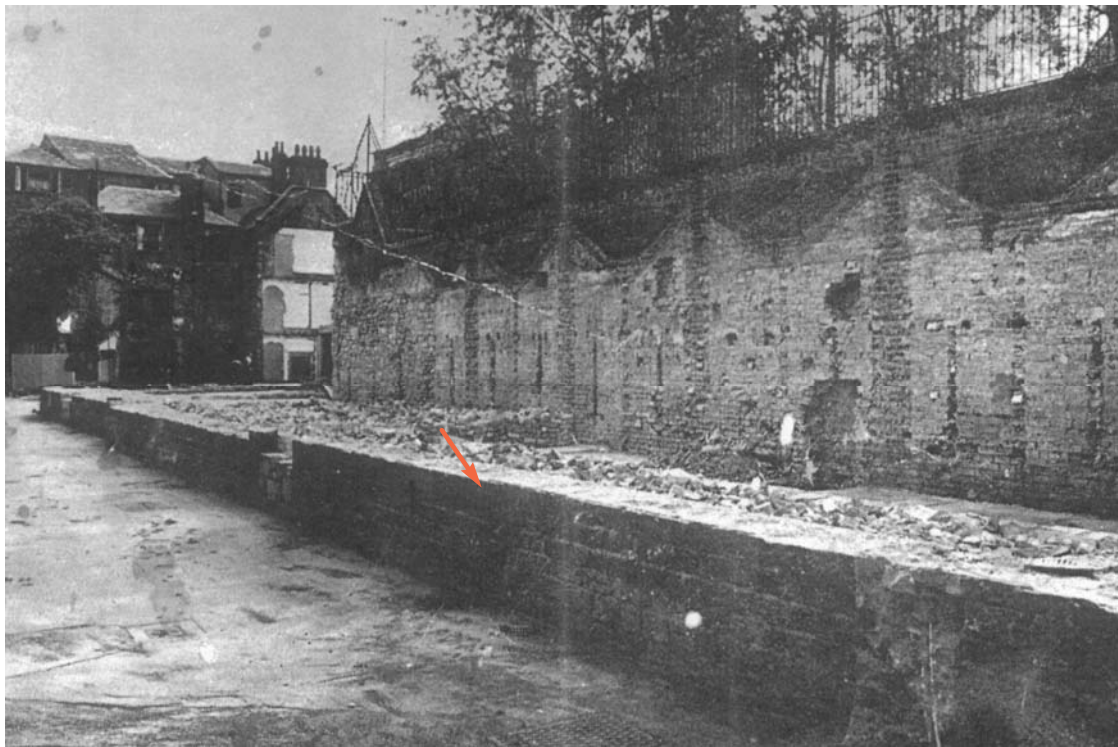


Plate 5. Early view of wall noted in test pit 4, looking south west.

LCO10/102

Lincoln College Garden Building, Oxford, 2010
Archaeological Evaluation

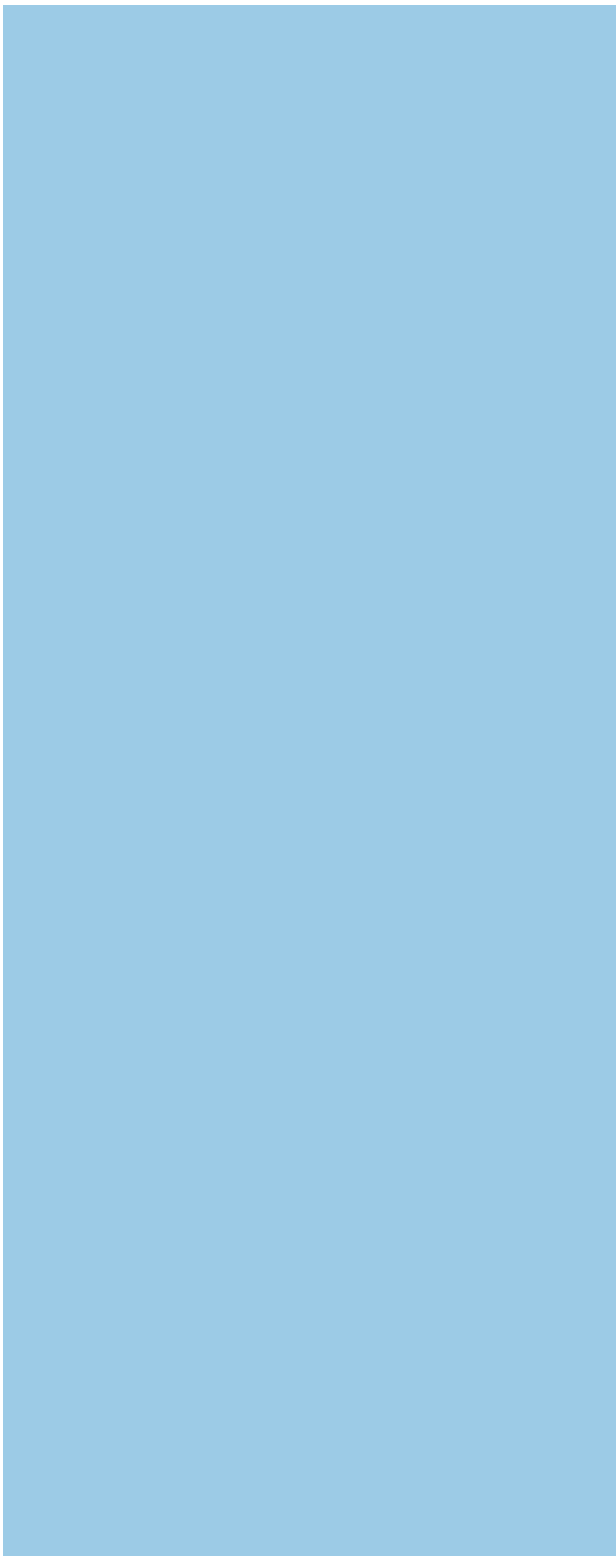
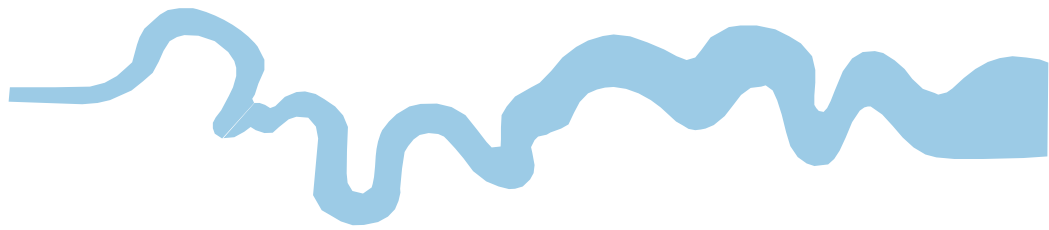
Plate 5.

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES

TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late _____	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle _____	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early _____	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC





**Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd,
47-49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading,
Berkshire, RG1 5NR**

**Tel: 0118 9260552
Fax: 0118 9260553
Email: tvas@tvas.co.uk
Web: www.tvas.co.uk**