

**Bear Inn,
6 Alfred Street,
Oxford**

Archaeological Watching Brief



for
Fuller, Smith & Turner

CA Project: 770796
CA Report: 18435

August 2018



**Bear Inn,
6 Alfred Street,
Oxford**

Archaeological Watching Brief

CA Project: 770796
CA Report: 18435



Document Control Grid						
Revision	Date	Author	Checked by	Status	Reasons for revision	Approved by
A	August 2018	Sharon Clough	Ray Kennedy	Internal review	General Edit	Ray Kennedy

This report is confidential to the client. Cotswold Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability to any third party to whom this report, or any part of it, is made known. Any such party relies upon this report entirely at their own risk. No part of this report may be reproduced by any means without permission.

CONTENTS

SUMMARY	2
1. INTRODUCTION.....	3
2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND.....	3
3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	4
4. METHODOLOGY	5
5. RESULTS (FIGS 2-4).....	5
6. THE BIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE	6
7. DISCUSSION.....	7
8. CA PROJECT TEAM.....	9
9. REFERENCES.....	10
APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS	11
APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM.....	12

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Fig. 1 Site location plan (1:10,000)
- Fig. 2 Site Plan showing archaeological investigations (1:20)
- Fig. 3 Trench 1: plan, photographs and sections (1:20)
- Fig. 4 Photographs

SUMMARY

Project Name: Bear Inn, Oxford
Location: Oxford, OX1 4EH
NGR: 451476 206145
Type: Watching Brief
Date: 19 July 2018
Location of Archive: To be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum
Accession Number: OXCMS: 2018.87
Site Code: BIAS18

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in the cellar of the Bear Inn, Oxford. This was in response to an unexpected discovery of human remains during drainage works to alleviate flooding within the cellar of the pub. After initial Police investigation the remains were considered to be archaeological in nature and a rapid recording of the excavation was undertaken.

The human remains are thought to relate to the burial ground of the church of St Edward (12th-14th century), which is no longer extant. The remains were of at least three separate individuals, determined by the recovery of three different tibiae.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In July 2018 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for Fuller, Smith & Turner at Bear Inn, Oxford (centred at NGR: 451476 206145; Fig. 1). The watching brief was undertaken at the request of David Radford, Archaeologist at Oxford City Council.
- 1.2 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) produced by CA (2018) and approved by David Radford (Oxford City Council). The fieldwork also followed *Standard and guidance: Archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014). It was monitored by David Radford, including a site visit on 19th July 2018.

The site

- 1.3 The site is located on the corner of Alfred Street and Blue Boar Street in Oxford city centre (Fig. 1). The site lies at approximately 62m AOD.
- 1.4 The site was located in the cellar of the building called the Bear Inn. Access was down the winding steep steps through the first cellar room, along a very narrow corridor into the second room. Part way along and abutting the external wall, located before the slight change in angle, was a rectangular pit, a sump cut for drainage (Fig. 2). It was approximately 0.45 x 0.40m cut through the concrete cellar floor. The cellar was used for storing beer barrels.
- 1.5 The underlying bedrock geology of the area is mapped as Oxford Clay Formation and West Walton Formation, mudstone, with superficial deposits of Summertown-radley sand and gravel (BGS 2018). As the impact level of the works did not require natural to be reached; only the top horizon was possibly encountered.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The archaeological background given below is a succinct summary of information garnered from open source online resources such as Wikipedia and British History online and National Heritage List for England.

- 2.2 A tavern known as The Bear Inn has been in existence since at least 1242, and is considered to be the oldest or one of the oldest pubs in Oxford. The earliest mention of the Inn is in the Cartularies of St Frideswide in the mid-13th century when Christina Pady bequeathed the property in *frankalmoign* (free alms) to the Priory of St Frideswide. It is thought that the properties bequeathed by Christina Pady formed the yard of the Inn (which was located on the corner of High Street, numbers 123-4, and Alfred Street).
- 2.3 The next mention is in the tenancy agreement of Thomas Pope in 1277, who with his wife and son were assured tenancy for the rest of their lives for a sum of two marks per year, with a deposit of 30 marks. The original building burnt down in 1421. In 1432, the inn was leased to John and Joan Berford, at which time it was known as Le Tabard. It was known as The Bear Inn by 1457. A lease from the pub dating from 1523 states that the Bear was bounded on the south by the cemetery of St Edward's Church.
- 2.4 The present building (List entry 1047357 Grade II) was possibly built in the early 17th century, altered and modernised. It was originally the residence of the coaching inn's ostler (stableman), and then converted into a separate tavern, The Jolly Trooper, in 1774. The Bear Inn premises at the High street were rebuilt and converted into housing in 1801, with the name being transferred to the Jolly Trooper. The present Bear Inn has existed on the site of the former Jolly Trooper since then.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The objectives of the archaeological works were:
- to monitor groundworks, and to identify, investigate and record all significant buried archaeological deposits revealed on the site during the course of the development groundworks;
 - at the conclusion of the project, to produce an integrated archive for the project work and a report setting out the results of the project and the archaeological conclusions that can be drawn from the recorded data.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2018). An archaeologist was present following intrusive groundworks comprising the excavation of a sump for drainage in the cellar of the building (Fig. 2). Upon discovery of human remains Thames Valley police were informed. Once it was established that the remains were archaeological in nature, recovery and recording took place.
- 4.2 Where archaeological deposits were encountered written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.3 The archive and artefacts from the watching brief are currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the human remains will be deposited with Oxfordshire museum under accession number OXCMS: 2018.87, along with the site archive. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix B, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

5. RESULTS (FIGS 2-4)

- 5.1 The natural geological substrate, sands and gravels were possibly revealed in the sump at 0.4m, but since a greater depth was not required for the works, this was not investigated further. The Deposit 3 extended across the entire area to a depth of 0.1-0.15m. This is the graveyard soil from which the human remains were recovered. It was a loose mid-brown with charcoal flecks and occasional rounded pebbles. It continued underneath the cellar wall (section BB, Fig 3). This was overlain by rubble (2) averaging 0.1m in thickness, which was in turn sealed by concrete (1) 0.1m in depth and was the cellar floor (Fig 3 section AA).
- 5.2 There were no features revealed in the sump (4) and the human remains had already been disturbed prior to attendance on site. However, articulated remains were visible in section (AA) and represented the lower leg and ankle of an individual. The orientation of the leg indicated that the remains were supine extended with head to the west. This is a typical position for Christian burials. The

small area and number of skeletal remains recovered is also typical of a Christian graveyard in use for an extended period of time, where remains are tightly packed, often inter-cutting.

- 5.3 The depth of the sump was 0.4m and the cellar lay approximately 2.1m below current street ground level. The remains were therefore approximately 2.5m below ground level.

6. THE BIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Human Bone

- 6.1 The disarticulated human bone was recovered from the loose soil already removed by the workmen. It is considered to have originally been articulated, and probably lay in a west-east direction with the feet at the eastern end. There were a minimum of three individuals present, identified from the three tibiae (lower leg), of which two were right and one left (which was a significantly different size to the other rights). Further bones recovered related to the feet, rib, shoulder area and one cheek fragment (zygoma). Retained within the section (**AA**) of the sump was the articulated skeletal remains of a tibia, calcaneus and metatarsals (lower leg and ankle). These ran under the external wall of the cellar. Further bone (not identified) could be clearly seen directly under the wall of the cellar in section BB.
- 6.2 Listed in Table 1 are the identified fragments of bone with their metrics. Lower leg bones are not particularly diagnostic for age or sex estimation, but the large size of one tibia with a corresponding fibula may indicate a male individual. This tibia on the lateral side mid-shaft had smooth periostitis, which indicates the site of infection, now healed. This is a common finding in all time periods due the shallow depth of tissue on this surface. There was also a prominent soleus line, an attachment site for fascia associated with soleus muscle and popliteus on the posterior of the tibia. This may be associated with excessive use of the lower leg, or damage to the muscles, but aetiology is currently poorly understood.

Table 1: Human bone recovered from the cellar of Bear Inn

Bone	Side	Measurement	Notes
Tibia	Right	Ant/post nutrient foramen 34 / 26	
Tibia	Right	Ant/post nutrient foramen 33 / 22	
Tibia	Left	Ant/post nutrient foramen 43 / 29	Lateral mid-shaft healed periostitis. Large soleal line
Calcaneus	Right		Large
Metatarsal 1			Large
Metatarsal x3	2 right and 1 left		
Rib fragment			
Distal joint surface of femur	Left		(not match tibiae)
Scapula glenoid fossa	left		
Navicular	Right		
Zygomatic (broken)	Left		

6.3 Animal bone was mixed with the human. One fragment of bird long bone and one fragment of small mammal rib.

7. DISCUSSION

7.1 The human skeletal remains recovered from the Bear Inn pre-date the erection of the cellar wall as demonstrated by the continuation of the bone underneath the wall. The Bear Inn building which is presently extant dates from the late 17th century (List Entry 1047357). The history of the site indicates that the original Bear Inn building lay to the north of the present one and that this building lay in the yard and stable area. Alfred Street was formerly known as Bear Lane and before this Vine Hall Street and in 1220 *Venella Sancti Edwardi* after St Edwards Church which lay on the west side.

7.2 St Edward's Church was said to have been given to St Frideswide's in 1122, dispute of possession ensued, but by 1298 the parishes were united and St Edward's became the church of the united parish (Chance *et al.* 1979). The church was

certainly closed by 1428 and probably much earlier than this c.1388. We can then assume that any associated churchyard was extant from c.1122-1388, approximately 300 years of use.

- 7.3 Human remains have been found in the area of Blue Boar Lane since 1874 (EOX3940) when Professor Rolleston acquired two skulls from this area. 1899 H. Hurst recorded an old road surface at a depth of c.2.5m from the Wheatsheaf passage (which lay west of the Bear Inn, off Blue Boar Street) (EOX4224). This depth is directly comparable to the depth at which the present human remains were recovered at.
- 7.4 The exact location of St Edward's is unknown, but was in the area of the present St Columba's Presbyterian Church. This building was erected 1915 and during excavations (assumed to be for the footings) in 1914 medieval pottery was recovered (EOX5132). From the site of the former St Edward's church it is reported in 1937 that a number of medieval skulls were recovered (EOX3577). However, it is not made clear from the report (Dudley Buxton 1937) when these were found, only that "some of which I excavated myself [L.H.Dudley Buxton]". He goes on to describe "two males from Blue Boar Lane, found during work on St Columba's Church Hall". So these may in fact be from the 1914 excavations. Unfortunately the rest of Dudley Buxton's report is only concerned with the dimensions of the crania and the current whereabouts of these two individuals is unknown (they were located in the University museum department of human anatomy in 1937).
- 7.5 In 1963 the building next door to Bear Inn, 5 Alfred Street, had an extension built and rubble wall footings and burials were found (EOX3893). The Bear Inn had the west wall rebuilt in 1955 (Planning application Oxford City Council 55/04161/A_H) and it is assumed this was down to the footings, but there is no mention of skeletal remains. In 1972 a Planning application for an extension to improve toilet accommodation and enlarge the kitchen for the Bear Inn (72/26938/A_H) may be related to the 1974 anonymous record (EOX4886) of excavations in "Albert" Street (assumed meant to be "Alfred"), where workmen are described as on the site of the Bear Inn and skeletons were uncovered when concrete was laid in the basement. If this is the case then the human skeletal remains from the present work are further evidence of these remains and of the cemetery associated with St Edward's Church which had previously been identified as located in the cellar of the Bear Inn.

- 7.6 From the evidence we can surmise that St Edward's church (HER 3534) lay in the vicinity of the present day St Columba's and that the land to the south was the cemetery (HER 6138), whether this extended beyond Blue Boar Lane (formerly Tresham's Lane c.1550) is not known. Excavation on the site of the former Ebor house (Hiller and Wilkinson 1997), west of the Bear Inn along Blue Boar Street (NGR SP5142 0612) did not recover any human remains so either they were completely truncated or land west of the Wheatsheaf passage was not part of the cemetery.

8. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Sharon Clough. The report was written by Sharon Clough. The biological evidence reports were written by Sharon Clough. The illustrations were prepared by Tom Brown. The archive has been compiled by Zoe Emery, and prepared for deposition by Hazel O'Neill. The project was managed for CA by Ray Kennedy.

9. REFERENCES

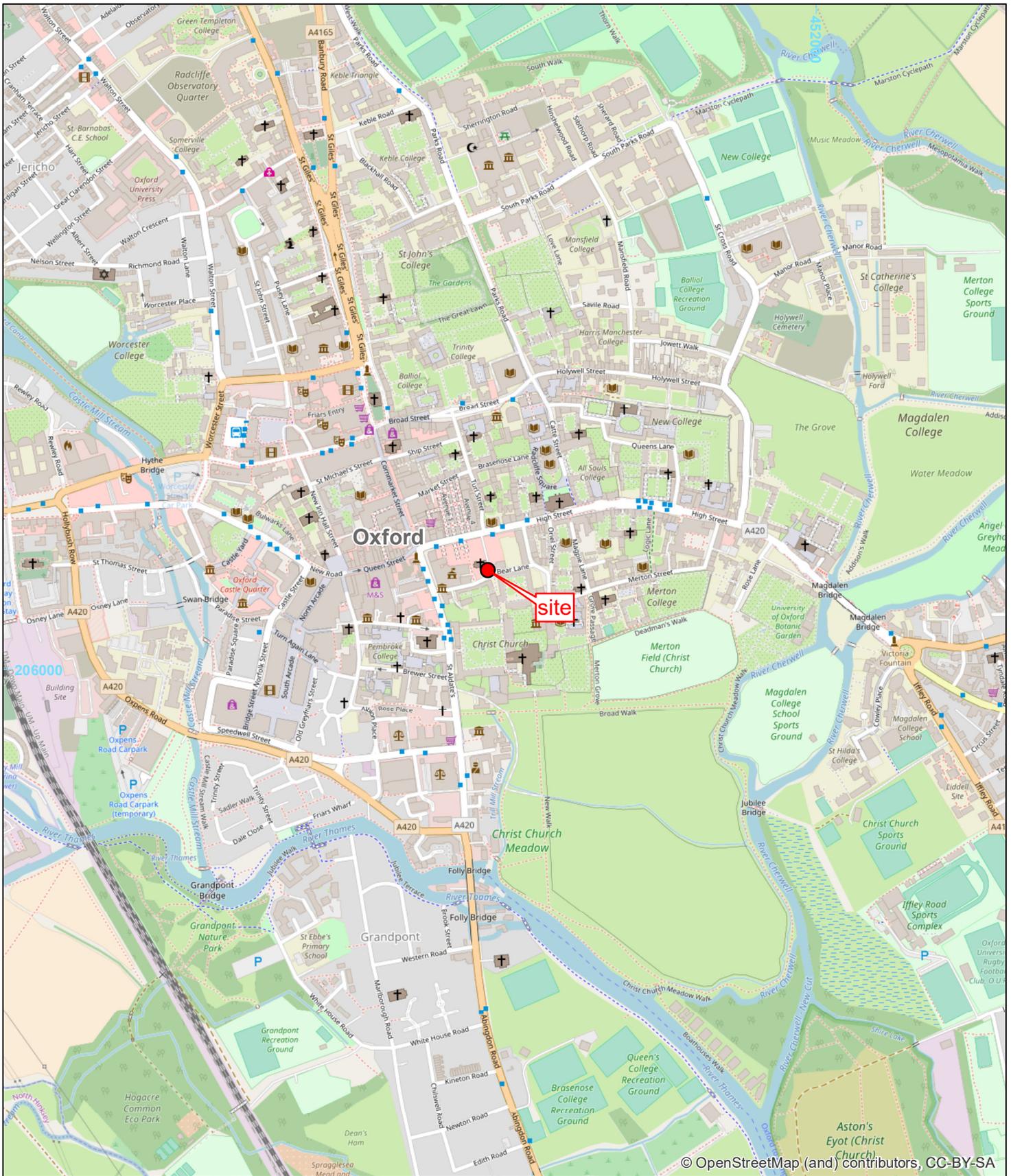
- BGS (British Geological Survey) 2018 *Geology of Britain Viewer* <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> [Accessed August 2018]
- CA 2018 Bear Inn, 6 Alfred Street, Oxford, Written Scheme of Investigation for an archaeological watching brief, Cotswold Archaeology
- Dudley Buxton, L. H. 1937, The Anthropology of Medieval Oxford. *Oxoniensia* 2: 118-120
- Hiller, J. and Wilkinson, D. R.P. 1997, Excavations at Ebor House, Blue Boar Street, Oxford, 1995. *Oxoniensia* 62 pp145
- Oxford City Historic Environment Record Event ID – EOX3893, 4886, 3577, 5132, 3940, 4224
- Oxford City Historic Environment Record 3534 UAD – Site of St Edward's Church, Alfred Street, 6138 UAD- Possible site of St Edward's medieval churchyard, The Bear, Blue Boar Street
- Chance, E., Colvin, C., Cooper, J., Day, C.J., Hassall, T.G., Jessup, M., Selwyn, N. 1979, 'Churches' A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 4, the City of Oxford, Ed. Alan Crossley and C. R Elrington (London 1979) pp 369-412
- List Entry 1047357 Bear Inn Public House. Grade II 12-Jan-1954 Historic England. <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1047357> [accessed August 2018]
- Bear Inn, Oxford, Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bear_Inn,_Oxford [accessed August 2018]

APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

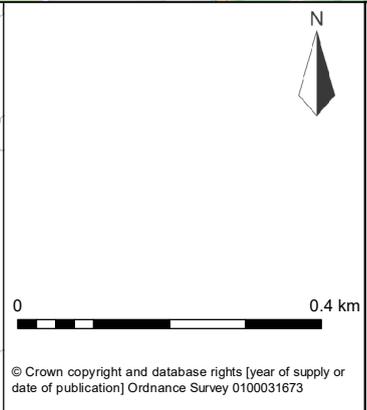
Context No.	Type	Fill of	Context interpretation	Description	L (m)	W (m)	Depth/thickness (m)	Period
1	Layer		Cellar floor	Concrete Floor			0.1	1974
2	Layer		Rubble under cellar floor	Rubble Fill			0.1	1974
3	Fill/layer		Graveyard Soil	Loose mid-brown silty sand with charcoal and pebble inclusions			0.1-15m	medieval
4	cut			Cut for Sump	0.4	0.4		modern

APPENDIX B: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS	
Project Name	Bear Inn, 6 Alfred Street , Oxford
Short description	<p>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in the cellar of the Bear Inn, Oxford. This was in response to an unexpected discovery of human remains during drainage works to alleviate flooding within the cellar of the pub. After initial Police investigation the remains were considered to be archaeological in nature and a rapid recording of the excavation was undertaken.</p> <p>The human remains are thought to relate to the burial ground of the church of St Edward (12th-14th century), which is no longer extant. The remains were of at least three separate individuals, determined by the recovery of three different tibiae.</p>
Project dates	19 July 2018
Project type	Watching Brief
Previous work	Not known
Future work	Unknown
PROJECT LOCATION	
Site Location	Bear Inn, Oxford
Study area (M ² /ha)	
Site co-ordinates	451476 206145
PROJECT CREATORS	
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology
Project Brief originator	David Radford
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology
Project Manager	Ray Kennedy
Project Supervisor	Sharon Clough
MONUMENT TYPE	
Cemetery	
SIGNIFICANT FINDS	
Human Skeletal Remains	
PROJECT ARCHIVES	
Intended final location of archive (museum/Accession no.)	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)
Oxfordshire Museum	Human Bone
OXCMS: 2018.87	
Physical	Human bone
Paper	Trench sheets, photographic sheets
Digital	Photographs
BIBLIOGRAPHY	
<p>CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2018 <i>Bear Inn, 6 Alfred Street, Oxford: Archaeological Watching Brief</i>. CA typescript report 18435</p>	



© OpenStreetMap (and) contributors, CC-BY-SA



**Cotswold
Archaeology**

Andover 01264 347630
Cirencester 01285 771022
Exeter 01392 826185
Milton Keynes 01908 564660
www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

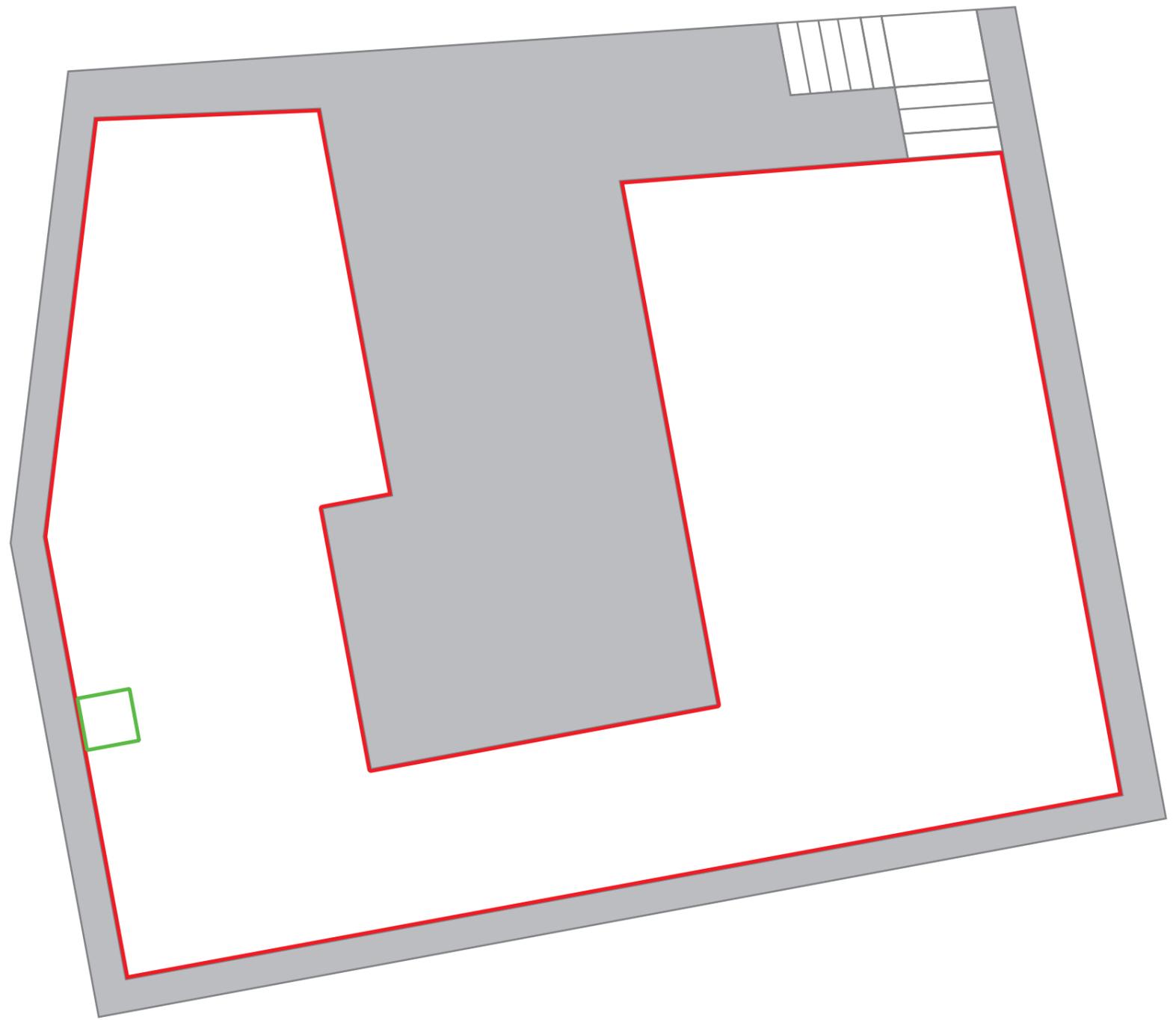
PROJECT TITLE
 Bear Inn, 6 Alfred Street, Oxford

FIGURE TITLE
 Site location plan

DRAWN BY	JB	PROJECT NO.	770796	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	RK	DATE	19/07/2018	1
APPROVED BY	RK	SCALE @ A4	1:10,000	



-  Site boundary
-  Excavated sump



Alfred Street (above)

Blue Boar Street (above)



 Cotswold Archaeology
Andover 01264 347630
Cirencester 01285 771022
Exeter 01392 826185
Milton Keynes 01908 564660
www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE
Bear Inn, 6 Alfred Street, Oxford

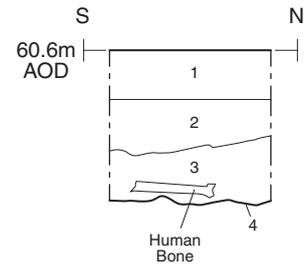
FIGURE TITLE
Site plan showing archaeological excavations

DRAWN BY	TB	PROJECT NO.	770796	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	24.08.18	2
APPROVED BY	RK	SCALE@A3	1:20 & 10	



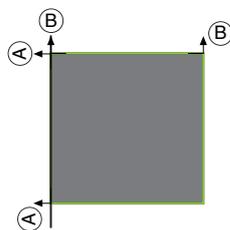
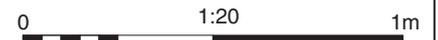
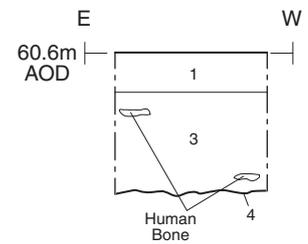
Trench 1: section AA looking west

Section AA



Trench 1: section BB looking north

Section BB



Trench 1: plan



Andover 01264 347630
 Cirencester 01285 771022
 Exeter 01392 826185
 Milton Keynes 01908 564660
 www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
 enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE

Bear Inn, 6 Alfred Street, Oxford

FIGURE TITLE

Trench 1: plan, photographs & sections

DRAWN BY TB PROJECT NO. 770796
 CHECKED BY DJB DATE 24.08.18
 APPROVED BY RK SCALE@A4 1:20

FIGURE NO.

3



On Blue Boar Street: Exterior of The Bear Inn, looking north-east. Sump located to the rear of the building.



Sump location in basement, looking west



Andover 01264 347630
 Cirencester 01285 771022
 Exeter 01392 826185
 Milton Keynes 01908 564660
 www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
 enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE

Bear Inn, 6 Alfred Street, Oxford

FIGURE TITLE

Photographs

DRAWN BY TB PROJECT NO. 770796
 CHECKED BY DJB DATE 24.08.18
 APPROVED BY RK SCALE@A4 NA

FIGURE NO.

4

Andover Office

Stanley House
Walworth Road
Andover
Hampshire
SP10 5LH

t: 01264 347630

Cirencester Office

Building 11
Kemble Enterprise Park
Cirencester
Gloucestershire
GL7 6BQ

t: 01285 771022

Exeter Office

Unit 53
Basepoint Business Centre
Yeoford Way
Marsh Barton Trading Estate
Exeter
EX2 8LB

t: 01392 826185

Milton Keynes Office

Unit 8 - The IO Centre
Fingle Drive
Stonebridge
Milton Keynes
Buckinghamshire
MK13 0AT

t: 01908 564660

