

**RADCLIFFE CAMERA
(UNDERGROUND BOOK STORE)
RADCLIFFE SQUARE
OXFORD**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

For

DPDS LTD

CA PROJECT: 3077
CA REPORT: 10147

MARCH 2010

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CA PROJECT: 3077
CA REPORT: 10147

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date	25 March 2010
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date	
approved by	name (of Senior Manager approving) and job title
signed	
date	
issue	01

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CONTENTS

SUMMARY	2
1. INTRODUCTION.....	3
2. RESULTS (FIGS 2-3).....	4
3. DISCUSSION.....	5
4. CA PROJECT TEAM.....	6
5. REFERENCES.....	6
APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS	7
APPENDIX B: THE FINDS.....	8
APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM	9

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Fig. 1 Site location plan (1: 25,000)
- Fig. 2 The site, showing location of groundworks (scale).
- Fig. 3 Trial pit 1 section and photograph (1:50)

SUMMARY

Project Name: Oxford Camera (Underground Book Store)
Location: Radcliffe Square, Oxford
NGR: SP 5159 0633
Type: Watching Brief
Date: 22-24 March 2010
Location of Archive: To be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Service

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the refurbishment of the below-ground stack library at Radcliffe Camera, Radcliffe Square, Oxford.

The natural gravel substrate was encountered at between 2.95m and 3.8m below the modern ground surface. This was sealed by the foundations of the Radcliffe Camera building in trial pit 1 and by post-medieval make-up or demolition deposits in boreholes 1 and 2. No further features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during the groundworks.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In March 2010 Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological watching brief for DPDS Ltd at Oxford Camera, Radcliffe Square, Oxford (centred on NGR: SP 5159 0633; Fig. 1). The watching brief was undertaken to fulfil the requirements of planning consent associated with the refurbishment of the below-ground stack library. The objective of the watching brief was to record all archaeological remains exposed during preliminary geotechnical works.

1.2 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a detailed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by CA (2010). The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (1992) and the *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)* (English Heritage 2006).

The site

1.3 The proposed development area lies within the grounds of the Radcliffe Camera in the centre of Radcliffe Square, Oxford (Fig. 2). The square is bounded to the south by the University church, to the east by All Soul's College and to the west by Brasenose College.

1.4 The underlying solid geology of the area is mapped as Second (Summertown-Radley) Terrace Deposits of the Quaternary Era (BGS 1982). This was encountered in trial pit 1 and borehole 2. Borehole 1 was stopped at 3.1m bpgl, before reaching the natural substrate, due to a solid obstruction preventing further excavation. Excavation of trial pit 2 was stopped at 0.35m bpgl as it had reached the concrete ceiling of the existing underground book store.

Archaeological background

1.5 The development area lies in an area of high archaeological potential being located within the historic core of Oxford.

Archaeological objectives

1.6 In the absence of any evidence regarding the presence or nature of any archaeological remains on the site, the objectives of the archaeological works were summarised as follows:

- record the nature of the main stratigraphic units encountered
- assess the overall presence, survival and potential of structural remains
- assess the overall presence, survival, condition and potential of artefactual and ecofactual remains

Methodology

1.7 The fieldwork followed the methodology set out within the WSI (CA 2010). An archaeologist was present during intrusive groundworks comprising the excavation of two trial pits and two boreholes (Fig. 2).

1.8 Where archaeological deposits were encountered written, graphic and photographic records were compiled in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual* (2007).

1.9 The archive and artefacts from the evaluation are currently held by CA at their offices in Kemble. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the artefacts will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museum along with the site archive. A summary of information from this project, set out within Appendix C, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

2. RESULTS (FIGS 2 & 3)

Borehole 1

2.1 Demolition/make-up deposit 102, comprising clayey silt with frequent charcoal flecks and abundant limestone fragments, was revealed in borehole 1 at a depth of 1m below present ground level. This was overlain a further make-up or demolition deposit, 101, averaging 0.82m in thickness.. This was similar in composition to deposit 102 but contained less frequent limestone fragments. This deposit was sealed by 0.18m of modern topsoil and turf, 100.

Borehole 2

- 2.1 Natural geological substrate 202, comprising mid orange-brown sand and gravel, was revealed in borehole 2 at a depth of 2.95m below present ground level. This was overlain by homogenous make-up or demolition deposit containing frequent charcoal flecks and frequent tile/red brick fragments 201, averaging 2.85m in thickness, which was in turn sealed by 0.10m of modern sand and gravel, 200.

Trial pit 1

- 2.1 The natural gravel substrate, 104, was revealed in trial pit 1 at a depth of 3.8m below present ground level. It was sealed by the foundations of the Radcliffe Camera, comprising rubble courses 108 and 105, foundation walls 106 and 109 and quoin 107. These were, in general, constructed from roughly hewn limestone blocks, bonded by friable yellow sandy mortar. A possible later insert, 110, was also identified which comprised limestone rubble and red brick fragments bonded by a friable light grey mortar. It was overlain by post-medieval demolition or make-up deposits, 102 and 103, which were in turn sealed by modern gravel and slab footpath 100/101.

Trial pit 2

- 2.1 Concrete slab 201, probably relating to the ceiling of the existing underground book store, was revealed at a depth of 0.35m below present ground level. This was overlain by modern topsoil and turf (200).

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 The stratigraphic sequence identified in borehole 2 and trial pit 1 indicated that the natural gravel substrate survived at depths of between 2.95m and 3.8m below the modern ground surface. This was sealed by a post-medieval make-up or demolition deposits, measuring up to 3.8m in thickness, which was also identified in borehole 1. The foundation courses of the Radcliffe Camera were identified in trial pit 1.
- 3.1 Despite the archaeological potential of the application area (see archaeological background above), the watching brief identified no further archaeological remains within the area of observed groundworks. The absence of archaeological deposits may indicate that structural remains associated with earlier buildings in Radcliffe

Square either do not extend as far as or were not exposed by the development, or that they may have been removed during the construction of the Radcliffe Camera and underground book store.

4. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Steven Sheldon. The report was written by Steven sheldon. The illustrations were prepared by CA illustrator. The archive has been compiled by Steven Sheldon, and prepared for deposition by Jon Hart. The project was managed for CA by Cliff Bateman.

5. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey) 1982 *Geological Survey of Great Britain (Solid and Drift edition), Sheet 236: Witney, 1:50 000*

CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2010 *Radcliffe Camera (Underground Book Store), Radcliffe Square, Oxford: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS**Borehole 1**

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
100	Layer	Modern topsoil and turf			0.18	
101	Layer	Greyish brown silt/sand. Probable make-up or demolition deposit			0.82	
102	Layer	Greyish brown silt/sand containing abundant limestone rubble. Probable demolition deposit			>2.01	

Borehole 2

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
200	Layer	Modern sand and gravel bedding for slab footpath			0.1	
201	Layer	Greyish brown silt/sand containing sparse limestone rubble. Probable make-up or demolition deposit			2.85	
202	Layer	Natural substrate: Mid brownish orange sand and gravel			>1.2	

Trial pit 1

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
100	Layer	Modern footpath			0.15	
101	Layer	Sand and gravel bedding deposit for 100			0.1	
102	Layer	Greyish brown silt/sand containing sparse limestone rubble. Probable make-up or demolition deposit			1.1	
103	Layer	Greyish brown silt/sand containing abundant limestone rubble. Probable demolition deposit			2.45	
104	Layer	Natural substrate: Mid brownish orange sand and gravel			>0.2	
105	Wall	Rubble foundation course underlying 106: random coursed, roughly hewn limestone bonded by yellow sandy mortar		>2.2	0.4	
106	Wall	Foundation wall: roughly hewn limestone blocks bonded by yellow sandy mortar, regular coursing		>2.2	1.18	
107	Wall	Quoin/pillar: rough hewn, limestone blocks. Bonded by yellow sandy mortar		>0.6	0.4	
108	Wall	Rubble foundation course underlying 109: random coursed, roughly hewn limestone bonded by yellow sandy mortar		>1.5	0.62	
109	Wall	Limestone quoin: regular coursed, rough hewn limestone blocks bonded by yellow sandy mortar		>1.5	1.4	
110	Wall	Wall repair/insert: limestone rubble and red brick fragments bonded by a friable light grey mortar		>0.6	0.9	

Trial pit 2

No.	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Spot-date
200	Layer	Modern topsoil and turf			0.35	
201	Layer	Modern concrete slab, ceiling of existing underground book store			L.O.E	

APPENDIX B: THE FINDS

The Finds team will paste their edited and approved finds report here, if required.

APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project Name	Radcliffe Camera (Underground Book Store), Radcliffe Square, Oxford	
Short description (250 words maximum)	The natural substrate was encountered at between 2.95m and 3.8m below the modern ground surface. This was sealed by the foundations of the Radcliffe Camera building in trial pit 1 and by post-medieval make-up or demolition deposits in boreholes 1 and 2. No further features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed during the groundworks.	
Project dates	22-24 March 2010	
Project type	Watching Brief	
Previous work	N/A	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
Site Location	Radcliffe Camera, Radcliffe Square, Oxford	
Study area (M ² /ha)		
Site co-ordinates	SP 5159 0633	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Name of organisation	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Design (WSI) originator	Cotswold Archaeology	
Project Manager	Cliff Bateman	
Project Supervisor	Steven sheldon	
PROJECT ARCHIVES		
	Intended final location of archive	Content
Physical		Glass, animal bone
Paper	Oxfordshire County Museum	Context sheets, trench recording forms, plans and sections, groundworks plan
Digital	Oxfordshire County Museum	Digital photos
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2010 <i>Radcliffe Camera (Underground Book Store), Radcliffe Square, Oxford: Archaeological Watching Brief</i> , CA Report No 10147		



COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

PROJECT TITLE

Radcliffe Camera, Radcliffe Square
Oxford

FIGURE TITLE

Site location plan

DRAWN BY

LG

SCALE

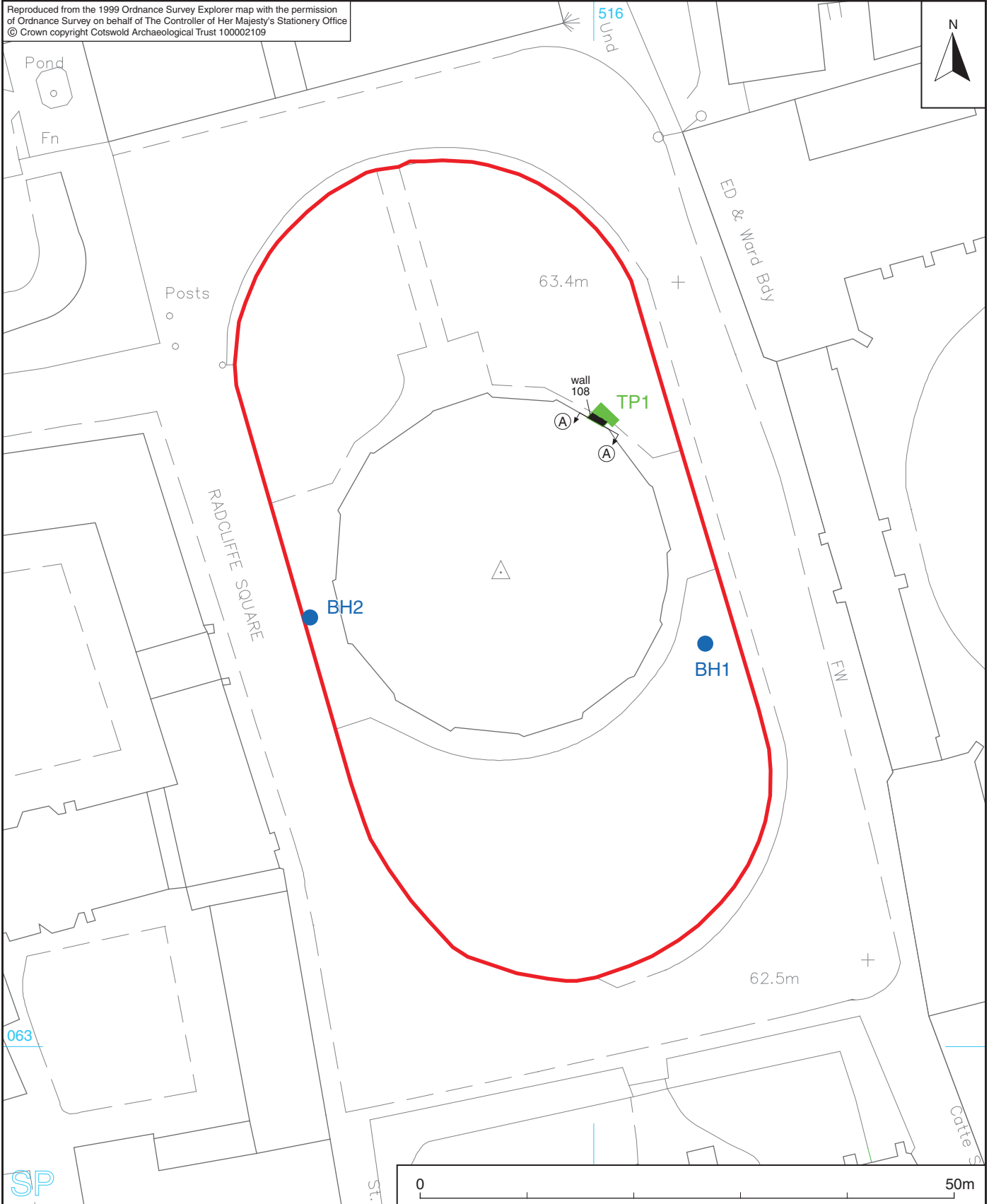
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PROJECT NO.

3077

FIGURE NO.

1



- site
- trial pit showing archaeological feature
- borehole



COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

PROJECT TITLE

Radcliffe Camera, Radcliffe Square
Oxford

FIGURE TITLE

Site location plan

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LG

SCALE

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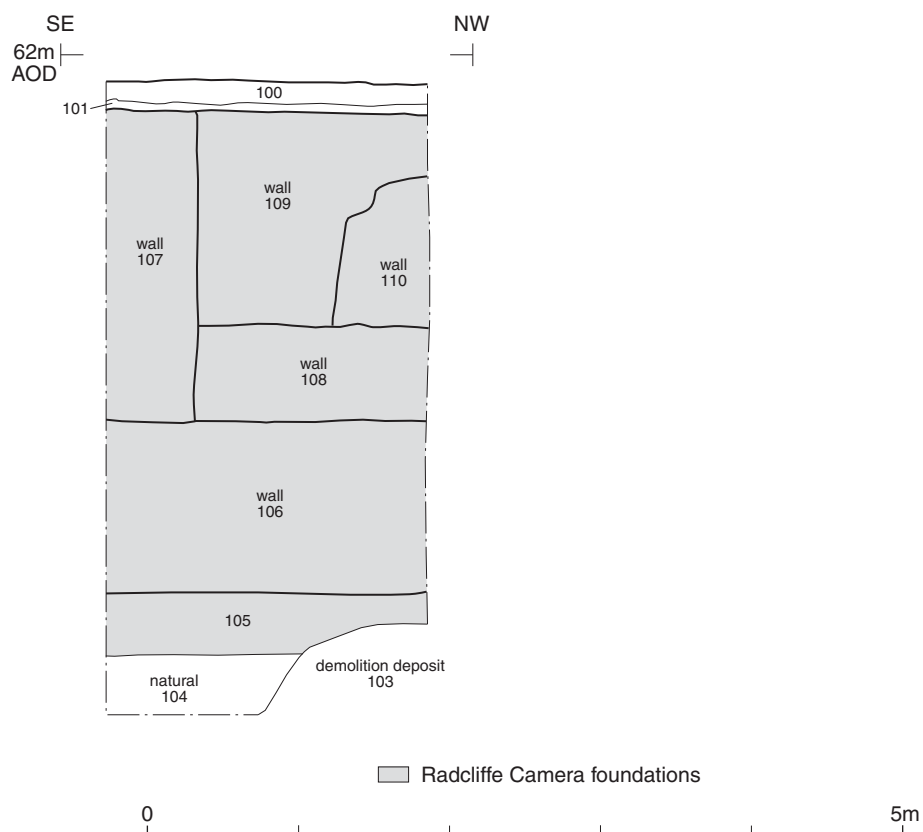
PROJECT NO.

3077

FIGURE NO.

2

Trial pit 1; section AA



Trial pit 1, view looking south-west. Scale 1m.



COTSWOLD ARCHAEOLOGY

PROJECT TITLE

Radcliffe Camera, Radcliffe Square
Oxford

FIGURE TITLE

Trial pit 1; section and photograph

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SCALE

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PROJECT NO.

3077

FIGURE NO.

3