

Barrack Block Trench Hampton Court Palace



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



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Summary

On 23rd January 2012 Oxford Archaeology South (OA) undertook a watching brief at Hampton Court Palace, Hampton, on behalf of Historic Royal Palaces (HRP).

The watching brief was to over see the excavation of a service trench crossing the west end of Tennis Court lane, running from the eastern end of the Barrack Block to the north-west corner of the main palace complex.

Due to the shallow depths to which the trench was excavated and the truncation of the area by previous services, no significant archaeological remains were encountered.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 The excavated trench was c. 14 m long and ran from the western end of the Barrack Block to the north-west corner of the north-west projecting wing of the main palace complex, where an access chamber was installed (Fig. 1). The trench measured 0.4 m wide and 0.4 m deep, the chamber measured 1.5 m north-south and 1 m east-west, and was 0.75 m deep.

1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The trench was excavated across the western end of Tennis Court Lane and the exit from the Lower Car Park (Fig. 2). Tennis Court Lane and the other carriageways are surfaced with tarmac.
- 1.2.2 The site lies at c. 9 m a OD on the First Terrace Gravels of the River Thames

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The historical background to Hampton Court Palace is well documented, information pertinent to these works are only briefly summarised below.
- 1.3.2 During the medieval period the area of the site would have sat within c. 100 m to the NW of the central moated[?] *camera* or *grange* of the the Knights Hospitallers. Excavations in Base Court (OA, 2008) have demonstrated that the area to the west of the *camera* contained a barn building, a yard[?] surface, pondlike features and deposits indicative of farm or stabling waste, all dating from the 13th - 14th centuries – and these lie some 50 m to the SE of the site.
- 1.3.3 During the tenure of Cardinal Wolsey, between 1514 and 1528, the site would have lain just outside of the moat that was excavated (1517-18) along the western facade of Base Court which he constructed as the new entrance courtyard and accomodation block for his palace.
- 1.3.4 The western side was further developed by Henry VIII, between 1528 and c. 1540, who added projecting wings which extended over the line of the moat both to the north and south of Base Court. Henry also added the Tiltyard to the northwest of the main palace complex. The site lies between the SE corner of the Tiltyard and the NW corner of the north wing, a gap that provided an access to the Great Orchard.
- 1.3.5 The original timber framed barracks was built in 1662 and probably located on the site of the present barracks. The construction of the present range of barracks was ordered



in 1689 and originally consisted of two ranges. A small court, containing a well or hay pit lay between the two, and this was infilled with the Sutlery in 1700 (other renovations and refitting of the Barrack Block were probably undertaken in 1717, 1731 and c. 1794).

- 1.3.6 The continuation of the moat immediately to the north of the palaces west front (in the location of the present Tennis Court Lane and just to the north of the current site) seems to have been partly infilled from the 1690's onwards (OA, 2000), probably during Wrens remodelling works. The cartographic evidence shows an interruption in the continuation of the moat immediately to the north of the west front in the location of the present Tennis Court Lane but it is unclear as to whether this 'gap' represents some form of bridging structure, rather than an infilling of the moat *per se*.
- 1.3.7 A major remodelling of the barracks was undertaken at the close of the 19th century. The courtyard formed to the north of the barrack blocks was again developed in the 1930s as a car park.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence/absence, extent, condition, quality and date of any archaeological remains in the area affected by the works.
- 2.1.2 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The trench was excavated using a pneumatic breaker and hand tools under archaeological monitoring.
- 2.2.2 All archaeological features, where encountered, were planned at a scale of 1:20 and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20. All excavated features were photographed using blank and white print film and digitally. A general photographic record of the work was made. Recording followed the procedures detailed in the OAU Fieldwork Manual (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 A homogeneous make-up deposit (101), of silt and sand with gravel, brick and tile inclusions was cut by six service trenches (containing pipes and cables etc), which in turn were overlain by the current tarmac road surface (100) (Fig 3).

3.2 Finds and Environmental

- 3.2.1 No finds or environmental samples were recovered from the works.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 Deposit (101) represents a make-up or dump layer which underlies the current tarmac surface and was cut by existing service trenches. It was possibly originally laid down to form an base for previous carriageway surfaces (such as granite setts or cobbles?) that have since been removed and replaced with the present day tarmac.



4.1.2 No significant archaeology was encountered due to both the shallow nature of the trench and the extent of previous truncation.



APPENDIX A. ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context	Type	Depth	Width	Length	Comments	Finds	Date
100	Layer	0.18m	N/A	N/A	Current Tarmac Surface		Modern
101	Layer	<0.55m	N/A	N/A	Make-up for tarmac		Modern



APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

- B.1.1 Historic Royal Palaces, February 2005 The Barrack Block, Hampton Court Palace - Statement of Significance.
- B.1.2 Oxford Archaeology, 2000, Lower Car-park and Tennis Court Lane, Hampton Court Palace, Hampton Court Road, Twickenham, Surrey: Archaeological Evaluation Report
- B.1.3 Oxford Archaeology, 2008 Base Court, Hampton Court Palace, Archaeological Assessment Report
- B.1.4 OAU Fieldwork Manual (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).



APPENDIX C. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name:	Barrack Block Trench, Hampton Court Palace
Site code:	HCP086
Grid reference:	Centred at NGR TQ 15611 68538
Type of watching brief:	Service Trench
Date and duration of project:	23 rd January 2012
Area of site:	14x0.4x0.4m Trench
Summary of results:	Service trench excavated between Barrack Block and north-west corner of the Palace. No archaeology encountered, only the modern tarmac and associated make up
Location of archive:	Oxford Archaeology, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES



Figure 1: Site location

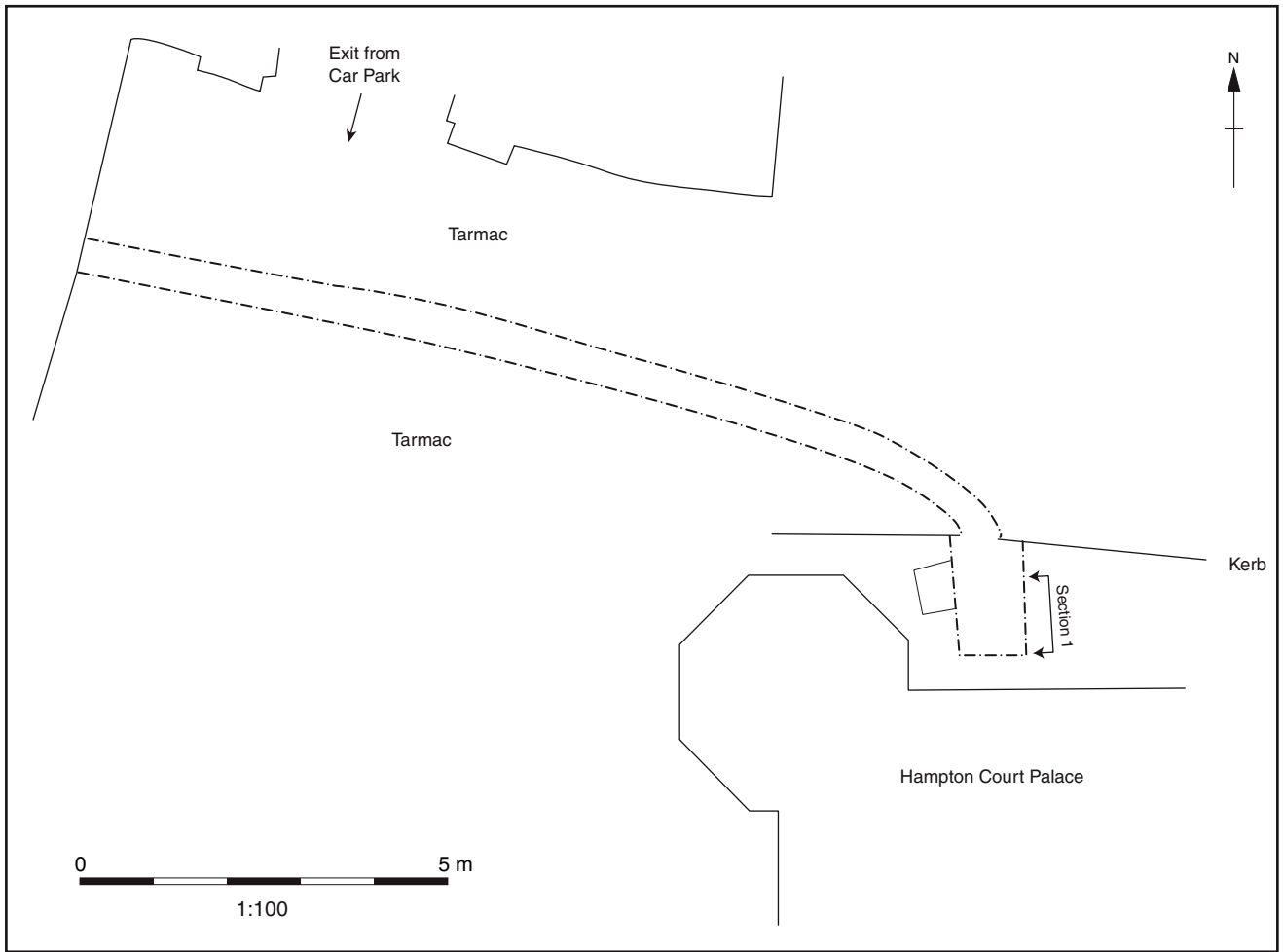


Figure 2: Trench plan

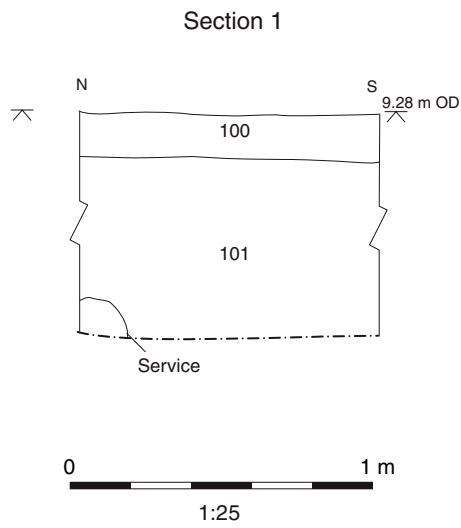


Figure 3: Sample section through service chamber



Plate 1: Section 1



Plate 2: Trench



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