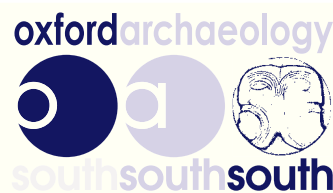




# Fingerpost Signage Hampton Court Palace

## Archaeological Watching Brief Report



May 2012

**Client: Historic Royal Palaces**

Issue No: 1  
OA Job No: 5324  
NGR: TQ 15736 168702





Client Name: Historic Royal Palaces  
Client Ref No: N/A  
Document Title: Fingerpost Signage Hampton Court Palace  
Document Type: Archaeological Watching Brief Report  
Issue/Version Number: 1  
Grid Reference: [TQ 515736 168702](#)  
Planning Reference: N/A  
Invoice Code: HCP90WB  
OA Job Number: TBC  
Site Code: HCP90  
Receiving Museum: Historic Royal Palaces  
Museum Accession No.: HCP90  
Event No.: N/A

Issue	Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by	Signature
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Document File Location:

Graphics File Location: Server 10:/oaupubs1\_AtoH\*HCP89\*Trophy Gate Trench Hampton Court Palace\*jc\* and GS

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## Fingerpost Signage Hampton Court Palace

*Archaeological Watching Brief Report*

*Written by Paul Leader*

*Illustrated by Georgina Slater and Paul Leader*

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## Summary

*On the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>st</sup> March 2012, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief at Hampton Court Palace during the installation of new signposts in and around The Wilderness. Nine foundation holes were excavated, seven within The Wilderness to the north of the main Palace complex, one on the Broad Walk to the north of the East Front, and one on the eastern side of the former Tiltyard. The work which was commissioned by Historic Royal Palaces (HRP) only revealed modern topsoil and subsoil deposits.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) were commissioned by Sharon Kerrigan of Historic Royal Palaces to undertake an Archaeological Watching Brief during the installation of external signage at Hampton Court Palace, near Hampton, Surrey. The Site is centred on National Grid Reference TQ 515736 168702 (Fig. 1).
- 1.1.2 The works, which took place on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> March 2012, consisted of the excavation of eight foundation holes for 'fingerpost signs' and one foundation hole for a normal sign-post (henceforth all locations will be referred to, and labelled on the figures as, 'signposts'). Nine foundation holes were excavated, seven within The Wilderness to the north of the main Palace complex, one on the Broad Walk to the north of the East Front adjacent to the entrance to The Wilderness, and one on the eastern side of the former Tiltyard, to the south of the Tiltyard Cafe. The foundation holes measured between 0.3 and 0.5 m square and 0.7 m deep, and in two locations these replaced existing signs (Fig. 2).

### 1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The Site is situated on the First Terrace Drift Geology in the flood plain of the River Thames, which overlies London Clay.
- 1.2.2 The Site is relatively level and lies at a height of c 9 m above OD.

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 Hampton Court Palace is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Surrey No. 83) of outstanding national importance. The wider historical background to the Palace has been well documented and is not necessary to repeat here.

## 2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims

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

### 2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 All of the foundation holes were hand excavated with the attending archaeologist present. Signposts 2 and 7 (Fig 2) involved the removal of an existing sign followed by



deepening the existing foundation hole. The other foundation holes were hand excavated through lawned areas, flanked by pathways.

- 2.2.2 All of the foundation holes were located on a plan at a scale of 1:1250. All excavated features were photographed using a digital camera. A general photographic record of the work was made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

Table 1: Details off Fingerpost numbers, size and positions

Signpost number	Size (Square)	Depth	Location
1	0.3 m	0.7 m	North-west of the palace, south of the Tiltyard Cafe, at pathway junction
2	0.5 m	0.7 m	North-west of the Palace, north-east of Moat Lane, at pathway junction, replaced existing sign
3	0.3 m	0.7 m	North of the Palace, south-west of the toilet block, at entrance to male toilet
4	0.3m	0.4m	North of the palace, immediately west of the Works Yard entrance, single sign post rather than finger post
5	0.3m	0.7m	North of the Palace, south-east of the toilet block, at entrance to female toilet
6	0.3m	0.7m	North of the East Front, at entrance to gardens from the Wilderness
7	0.3m	0.7m	North of the Palace, east of the toilet block, at pathway junction, replaced existing sign
8	0.3m	0.7m	North of the Palace, south-east of Lion Gate, at pathway junction
9	0.3m	0.7m	North of the Palace, north-east of the Tiltyard Cafe, at pathway junction

### 3 RESULTS

#### 3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 Signpost foundation holes 1 and 2 only showed evidence of the existing, silty topsoil.
- 3.1.2 Signpost foundation holes 3, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 all contained the current topsoil to a depth of between 0.3 and 0.5m. This overlay a clayey, silty sandy buried soil or subsoil which continued beyond the bottom of the excavations.
- 3.1.3 Signpost 4 consisted of 0.4m of modern, silty topsoil overlying the foundations to a twentieth century garden wall which the sign abutted to the east.

#### 3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 No finds were recovered

### 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 Although the watching brief provided limited access or visibility of the deposits within The Wilderness, there was consistency within the deposits seen, with c. 0.4 m of



current topsoil overlying 0.3 m of buried soil or subsoil suggests there has been little disturbance throughout the area.

- 4.1.2 The origins of the buried soil or subsoil are difficult to ascertain due to the conditions in which it was seen. It is possible that it is either an undisturbed subsoil overlying the natural gravel deposits, or it is a consistent levelling deposit spread throughout the area, possibly dating from a period of significant redevelopment of the Palace, both have been excavated within the Palace Gardens previously.





## APPENDIX A. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

OAU, 1992. *Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson).



## APPENDIX B. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name:	Fingerpost Signage Hampton Court Palace
Site code:	HCP90
Grid reference:	Centred at NGR TQ 515736 168702
Type of watching brief:	Fingerpost foundation hole excavation
Date and duration of project:	29-30 <sup>th</sup> March 2012
Area of site:	9 holes, c. 0.3 x 0.3m X 0.7m deep
Summary of results:	Only the current topsoil and sub-soil/buried soil was encountered
Location of archive:	The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Historic Royal Palaces at Hampton Court Palace, Surrey, KT8 9AU in due course.

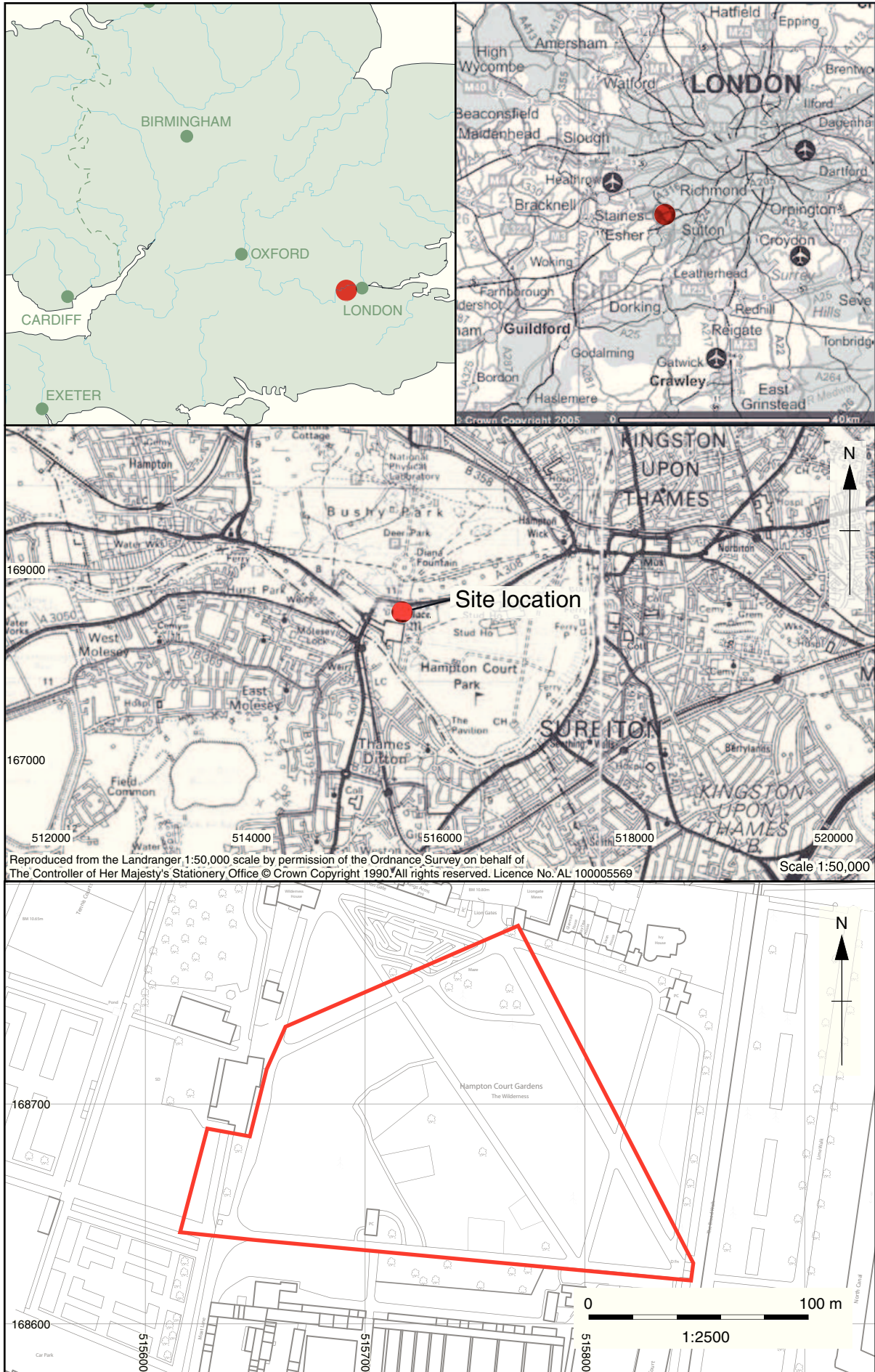


Figure 1: Site location





CHECKED BY: Draft

Figure 2  
Fingerpost Locations







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