

SSP Trench Cliveden Buckinghamshire



Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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SSP Trench, Cliveden, Buckinghamshire

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) were commissioned by the National Trust to undertake a small archaeological watching brief investigation at Cliveden in Buckinghamshire. These works were to monitor the digging of a cable trench (called the SSP Trench) in the grounds to the north-east of the house. The trench extended through the eastern part of the overflow car park as well as alongside the Grand Avenue to the north of the house. In some sections the cable was fixed to the wall and thus these areas were not monitored.
- 1.1.2 Cliveden is a Grade I listed building and a site of national significance. This significance is based on various factors including its architecture, its setting, its history and its associations with a series of prominent figures.
- 1.1.3 In recent years OA have undertaken a number of other investigations at Cliveden for the National Trust, particularly focusing on the South Terrace and the late 19th-century Generator House.

1.2 Aims and objectives

- 1.2.1 The aim of the current project was to undertake archaeological monitoring during works to dig the trench and to record for posterity any features exposed.
- 1.2.2 A wider aim was to add to the evidence gained during previous archaeological projects at Cliveden and to enhance the overall understanding of the development of the site.
- 1.2.3 The final aim was to produce a report detailing the results of the project and to create an ordered archive which will be deposited with the National Trust.

1.3 Methodology

- 1.3.1 The work was undertaken in the form of an intermittent archaeological watching brief while the SSP trench was dug. The visits were timed so that stretches of trench would be inspected after they had been excavated rather than during the excavations themselves.
- 1.3.2 The trench, which was for a fibre-optic cable as well as other services, was relatively shallow (only c.60 cm deep). Therefore, although OA remained in contact with the contractors some sections were not monitored if the make up of the trench was the same as previous sections which had been monitored.
- 1.3.3 The only area where the excavations went significantly deeper was towards the south-eastern corner of the overflow carpark where a large pit for a soakaway drain was dug.
- 1.3.4 The site work was undertaken intermittently 16 September and 27 October 2016.
- 1.3.5 The investigation was complemented by an outline programme of historical research based on maps, easily available historic photographs and the principal secondary sources.
- 1.3.6 In due course the records relating to the investigation will be deposited with Buckinghamshire Museum (site code: TASSP16).

2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The research for this historical background has utilised the principal secondary sources as well as Wendy Hitchmough's historical study from December 1997 and articles from *Architectural History* by Gervase Jackson-Stops.

2.2 Cliveden House

2.2.1 The Cliveden estate was purchased in the 1660s by George Villiers, 2nd Duke of Buckingham, and between 1674-7 construction works progressed on a new mansion at the site, probably to the designs of William Winde a well-connected gentleman architect of some importance in the later 17th century. Building works slowed or ceased towards the end of the 1670s and in the years before the Duke's death in 1682 the house, which was probably unfinished, was abandoned.

2.2.2 In 1696 Cliveden was purchased by Lord George Hamilton, the 3rd Earl of Orkney, although it appears that in the following decade little substantial work was undertaken to the house or gardens due to some financial constraint and the Earl's military career.

2.2.3 In 1705 plans for the mansion were prepared including reducing the height of the building by a storey and the construction of two flanking wings. The wings were constructed in c.1705-6 by Thomas Archer and they survive today (albeit stuccoed in the 19th century by Sir Charles Barry).

2.2.4 When the Earl of Orkney died in 1737 the estate passed to his daughter, the 2nd Countess of Orkney, and in the same year it was then leased to Frederick, Prince of Wales who remained at Cliveden until his death in 1751. It is not believed that any substantial alterations were undertaken to the house or terrace during this period but it has been said that the end chambers (or possibly one of the chambers towards each end) of the terrace were used as aviaries (Hitchmough).

2.2.5 From 1751, when The Prince of Wales died, the Cliveden estate appears to have been little occupied and somewhat neglected. The estate remained with the Countess of Orkney and her husband Lord Inchiquin but they continued to live at Taplow Court. In 1777 the estate passed to their daughter Mary and her husband and then in 1790 it passed to their daughter the 4th Countess of Orkney. Accounts suggest the mansion and gardens were old fashioned and neglected.

2.2.6 Historic views from the mid 18th century suggest that the terrace was refronted at some point between 1759 and 1782 and some evidence in the views also suggest the more speculative possibility that the height of the whole terrace was slightly raised.

2.2.7 In 1795 the house burned to the ground. Proposal schemes for the reconstruction of Cliveden were drawn up in the early 19th century although it is unclear to what extent these were executed. In 1818 the estate was offered for sale and the auction particulars refer to 'the celebrated TERRACE 360 feet in length (lately restored to its original magnificence).' The house failed to sell in 1818 but it was subsequently purchased in 1824 by Sir George Warrender and the Scottish architect William Burn designed a new mansion.

2.2.8 Sir George Warrender died in 1849 and the estate passed to his brother John who sold it to the Duke of Sutherland. In November 1849 the house burnt to the ground again shortly after the sale of the estate to the Duke of Sutherland and the family commissioned the great Victorian architect Sir Charles Barry to design the new house.

- 2.2.9 In 1867 the 3rd Duke of Sutherland inherited the estate and he sold it to his brother-in-law the 1st Duke of Westminster.
- 2.2.10 In 1893 Cliveden was sold to William Waldorf Astor who used the house and grounds to exhibit his artistic taste as well as his collection of sculpture, art and artefacts. In 1942 Astor donated the estate to the National Trust.

2.3 Historic development of areas relevant to current project

- 2.3.1 Little is known of whether the Duke of Buckingham laid out formal gardens in the later 17th century to surround his new house and it may be that the focus of this phase of works was so firmly on the house that relatively few alterations were undertaken to the landscape. It is known however that the Duke's works included major earth-moving operations from the north side of the house to the south side to create the 'step' for the house and terrace.
- 2.3.2 The origins of the formal landscape which survives today lay in the works undertaken by the Earl of Orkney in the first half of the 18th century. Orkney commissioned numerous proposals for the gardens, particularly from the celebrated French landscape designer Claude Descot, although many of these were not carried out and the most substantial works were to the south of the terrace, away from the areas affected by the current project.
- 2.3.3 The earliest map consulted in the current project has been John Richardson's map of 1749 (Fig 2). Richardson's map is understood to be an accurate representation of what existed at Cliveden, as opposed to being a proposal drawing, and Wendy Hitchmough's historical study of Cliveden describes it as '*a meticulous account of the entire estate as it was laid out in 1749*'.
- 2.3.4 Richardson's map shows the landscape as laid out by Lord Orkney, with some probable refinements by the Prince of Wales who had lived at the estate since 1737. The parkland to the north of the house is shown with some features which are immediately recognisable today, particularly the Grand Avenue to the north of the house, but in many areas the landscape shows great differences to that of today.
- 2.3.5 The road from Bourne End appears to terminate in a half circle at the north end of the Grand Avenue (presumably the current location of the fountain). From here the map shows a partially tree-lined avenue extending to the east and it appears that this avenue would have been broadly parallel with the current Bourne End Road but slightly to the south of it. This avenue is coloured yellow on the map, the same as the grand avenue and the area immediately surrounding the house, so presumably it had a hard (compacted) surface.
- 2.3.6 At the eastern end of this avenue the map shows a grassed *rond-point* from which radiates five other grass avenues. This *rond-point* is probably roughly on the line of the current public road which passes to the east of Cliveden and the road itself was probably aligned with one of the avenues. The east-to-west avenue is likely to have passed through the area which is now the overflow car park, where a section of the SSP Trench was located. The 1749 map suggests that relatively little formal landscaping had been undertaken in the area immediately to the south of this avenue (including the current site of the overflow car park).
- 2.3.7 Other than the overflow car park the other main area which is relevant to the current project has been the east side of the Grand Avenue and Richardson's 1749 map shows this broadly as it is today. Immediately to the west of this, in the area which is now a

woodland walk, there was an area with a series of regular buildings (greenhouses?) and it is likely that this was a nursery.

- 2.3.8 The next map studied in the current project is the Taplow Inclosure map of 1787 (Fig 3) and the evidence of this map suggests that much of the formality of the early 18th-century garden design had been lost in the period since 1749. This may have been a deliberate move away from the earlier style of formal landscaping but it may also reflect the fact that after the death of the Prince of Wales in 1751 Cliveden entered a period of neglect. The Inclosure map suggests that by 1787 the *Rond-Point* had been largely lost, although the radiating avenues to the east can still be traced on the map in lines of trees. By this date the east-to-west road from Bourne End had been extended past the northern end of the Grand Avenue and the construction of the new road appears to have resulted in the removal of the previous avenue immediately to the south. Only the outline of the western end of this former avenue is still visible on the 1787 map and much of this area is shown as a field ('Captain's Field, Earl of Inchquin'). This includes the current area of the overflow car park.
- 2.3.9 The Grand Avenue is again shown on the 1787 map although there no longer appears to be formal lines of trees to each side and the area to the east of this is labelled as 'The Old Nursery, Earl of Inchquin'.
- 2.3.10 A survey from 1818 to accompany the auction sale of the house shows few significant differences with the 1787 map: the area which now includes the overflow car park is again shown as a field although the Taplow parish map of 1838 shows it more wooded. Neither the 1838 parish map or the 1818 auction map are reproduced in the current study but copies are included in Wendy Hitchmough's study.
- 2.3.11 The first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1874 (Fig 4) shows the large area to the north-east of the house, bounded by the two public roads, as a relatively featureless parkland other than at the north-western corner where there were two walled yards, one of which encloses the recently constructed gas works. The north-to-south road to the east of this parkland is still shown as being lined with trees, a reminder of when this was an avenue on the 1749 map. The Grand Avenue is again shown on the map, lined with trees, and the area which had previously been a nursery is by 1874 shown as woodland, similar to today. At this date the fountain had not yet been constructed at the north end of the Grand Avenue and this area, close to the Hedsor lodge was an awkward junction.
- 2.3.12 The Second Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1897 (Fig 5) also shows the large area to the north-east of the house, bounded by the two roads as relatively featureless parkland and it is interesting to note that by this date the main north-to-south road immediately to the east of this was no longer tree lined. Possibly the increased traffic using this route had led to the removal of the trees and the widening of the road. An irregular border comprising a thin band of trees had however been added around the eastern edge of this area.
- 2.3.13 The gas works had seen some changes and a maze had been constructed immediately to the south of it. A new ornamental lake had also been established a short distance to the south of this.
- 2.3.14 By this date the circle at the north end of the Grand Avenue had been established.
- 2.3.15 The next OS map of 1910 (Fig 6) shows no significant differences of relevance to the current project but by the edition of 1923 (Fig 7) a large portion of the parkland close to the north-to-south road appears to have been cleared. There are two distinct areas, separated by a path or track and they are entirely featureless. No buildings are shown and no indication is given of its use but they appear to be yards with a hard-standing surface.

They are certainly not garden features or part of the picturesque landscape and presumably they had a utilitarian function. It is possible that they had a use in the First World War. It is well known that Lady Astor constructed a military hospital during the war for injured soldiers and although the main site of this was well to the south it is known that the hospital expanded greatly after its original construction and it is possible that the current site of the overflow car park could have formed a small overflow site from the main hospital. It could have had some use related to the hospital but subsidiary to it, or some other function related to the war but not directly associated with the hospital. If there had been buildings on the site they could have been demolished at the end of the war.

- 2.3.16 The OS map of 1938 shows a very similar arrangement to the 1923 map with regard to the areas in the current study.
- 2.3.17 Aerial photographs held at the Historic England Archive at Swindon have been analysed. The earliest photographs to show the area which is now the overflow car park date from the Second World War and these images do not show clear evidence of the large rectangular areas which appear to have been laid out during the First World War. They do however show the much smaller and roughly triangular shaped area towards the corner which now forms the overflow car park itself. The photographs suggest that this was laid out as a distinct area during the Second World, with the same track along the south-western edge which is now used as the main exit route for NT visitors to Cliveden. Several photographs from 1943-1946 show this as a distinct area with a simple grid of tracks and apparently a small number of low buildings. Presumably these were simple temporary buildings (single storey huts) and they had been removed prior to aerial photographs from 1954. There are several images from 1954 until 1969 which show the distinct area which later became the overflow car park, steadily become more overgrown and with a scrub land appearance. There was however a thick band of trees around the northern and eastern edges.
- 2.3.18 An aerial photograph from 1996 confirms that by this date the current overflow car park had been laid out and was in use.

3 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The watching brief can be divided into two distinct sections: 1) the trench through the overflow car park and 2) the trench alongside the Grand Avenue.

3.1.2 *Trench in Overflow car park*

- 3.1.3 The overflow car park is located towards the north-eastern corner of the main estate, bordered by the Borne End Road and Cliveden Road. The main National Trust public exit gate is at the south-eastern corner of this area and the area itself is rough grassland divided by tracks.
- 3.1.4 As outlined above this area was part of the parkland and in the first half of the 18th century a tree-lined avenue passed through it on an east-to-west axis. This avenue was removed in the second half of the 18th century and the site then formed part of a field. Through the 19th century the area appears to have been parkland but at some point between 1910 and 1923 (almost certainly during the First World War) some form of a surface appears to have been laid.

- 3.1.5 The southern end of the trench in this area was located adjacent to a man-hole just to the south-west of the exit gates. From here it continued in a north-westerly direction before crossing the main exit road within the car park and then extending in a NNW direction as far as the north boundary wall. The trench was c.60 cm deep and it was infilled with shingle as well as a drainage pipe, cable and backfilled soil.
- 3.1.6 The south-eastern section of the trench, on the south side of the road was c.13 m long (Pl 1-5). The surface of this section was a modern, light grey compacted screed layer and below this, in the south-eastern half of this section there was a distinct layer of terracotta coloured ballast, c.15 cm deep. Beneath the ballast was a 20 cm deep layer of hard-core formed from broken bricks, small stones, ash etc and below this was a darker chocolate-brown loam which may have been a topsoil layer before the later deposits were added on top. The base of this section of the trench was formed from an ochre coloured sandy-silt which was interpreted as natural.
- 3.1.7 At the western end of this c.13 m section the trench kinked northwards across the exit road and at this point the ground was much harder, presumably from the road make up (Pl.6-7) . In this section there was a tarmac surface, then below this there was 20 cm of a hard compact ochre coloured material (like hoggin material). Below this was another compact layer with lumps of concrete and below this was a brown soil.
- 3.1.8 On the north side of the exit road the trench continued in a roughly straight line as far as the northern boundary wall although there was also a separate branch trench which led to a soakaway (detailed separately below). The southern end of the main trench (ie the section immediately north of the exit track) was largely comprised of a stoney made-ground (ballast) which probably dates from the first half of the 20th century when a surface appears to have been laid out.
- 3.1.9 Through the central part of the overflow car park the trench was found to contain a dark brown top soil with a light brown loam beneath and then a darker ochre-coloured stoney loam beneath this (Pl. 9-11). This loam was interpreted as natural and this section did not have the same modern layer as the section further to the south.
- 3.1.10 The northern section of the trench, up to the boundary wall, was similar, again with topsoil and an ochre loam beneath (Pl. 19-20).
- 3.1.11 The branch trench to the soakaway was c.1.1 m deep and therefore slightly deeper than the main trench. Beneath the topsoil the uppermost c.30 cm of the trench was formed from a stoney chocolate brown subsoil and below this was an ochre colour, stoney/sandy layer (natural). There were no archaeological features present.
- 3.1.12 The soakaway itself was by far the deepest excavation in the current investigation. It was located just to the west of the north-to-south track on the east side of the car park and it was c. 4 m deep by 4 m by 4 m.
- 3.1.13 The four sides of the soakaway pit had a similar series of geological layers but without any archaeological features (See Fig 9, Appendix B, Plates 12-18). The pit contained a dark topsoil above a deep, ochre coloured sandy deposit, above a similar but slightly more henna-coloured loam. Beneath this were various other gravel layers.
- 3.1.14 *Trench by Avenue***
- 3.1.15 The other main section of trench was orientated north to south and it was located within the eastern grass verge of the side track which is parallel to (and immediately east of) the Grand Avenue. The Grand Avenue is known to have been an early landscape feature, established at Cliveden by Lord Orkney in the first half of the 18th century. Some historic maps (particularly the 1849 and 1878 maps) suggest that in its original form it may have

been a single much wider avenue rather than a relatively narrow central path with clearly separate tracks to the side. The first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1874 shows an arrangement similar to today, other than at the northern termination of the avenue.

- 3.1.16 The trench in this area was again c.60 cm deep by c.40 cm wide and it was dug in sections c.50 m long. Sections were dug and then inspected for features before the pipes were laid and the trenches back filled. The whole track is c.240 m long and it is relatively featureless although there is a small compound area on the east side, approximately two thirds of the way south along the track. This compound area has various utilitarian functions such as to let service vehicles to park temporarily and to store some of the spoil from the current trench. Other than in this area there is a low hedge which borders the rest of the track on its east side.
- 3.1.17 The northernmost 50m of the trench was found to almost entirely comprise top soil and a subsoil for its full depth (Plate 21, 23). Approximately 14 m from the north end of the trench there is a slight hump in the road, edged in cobbles across the road, and this hump appeared to comprise four thin layers on top of the subsoil (Pl. 22- 25). In total the four layers were c.25 cm in depth. The uppermost layer was a soft, sandy, ochre colour layer while beneath that there was a stoney grey layer, then beneath that it was brown soft soil then at the bottom it was a soft salmon pink layer. There are also several other areas nearby where the salmon pink layer is found in patches near to the surface (beneath top soil) as if some waste material has been dumped. Similarly there are also some thin patches of a grey material. It is unclear what the function of the hump is. It could be there are (or were) service pipes extending beneath the road but no pipes were seen in the trench by the side of the hump. There is a drain pipe to the north of the hump and although this is outside the line of the hump it may be that the slight rise was intended to guide rain water running along the northern part of the track into this drain.
- 3.1.18 In the next sections to the south as far as the compound (ie c.50m – 150 m from the north end) the trench was again comprised of top soil and subsoil was much thinner than further to the north and beneath it there was a hard-core layer (brick/concrete/rubble) which filled the rest of the trench (Pl.26-27). The depth of the hard core compared to the subsoil increased towards the southern end of this section. Again there were some thin patches of a salmon-pink layer which appeared to be waste material dumped in a hole and within the hard-core there were also a number of thin bars mixed in which appeared to be reinforcing bars which had come away from the concrete.
- 3.1.19 The trench to the section to the south of the compound was also found to comprise top soil and largely hard core beneath. At the southern end of the avenue the trench returned to the east and then connected through to the north end of the orangery and kitchens (Pl. 28-29). The trench on the north side of the road was made up of uniform top soil and regular stoney made ground. The top soil was a dark grey/brown colour and a sandy/silt texture. The made ground below was a dark orangey brown sandy silt material with 40% cobbles up to c.8 cm across.
- 3.1.20 The trench which crossed the road towards the orangery kitchens cut through a variety of made-ground deposits. Beneath the lawn on the north side of the road was a continuation of the make up noted above while beneath the road was a layer of grey/brown silty clay and stones overlaid by a firm orangey brown silty clay and stones with some modern broken bricks mixed in. Beneath the cobbles outside the kitchen it was a mixed deposit of construction related material in a dark grey brown silty clay matrix. At the southern end of the trench (by the kitchen) the foundations of the building were exposed as brick on a deposit of crushed brick and cement.

4 CONCLUSION

- 4.1.1 Cliveden is a Grade I listed mansion with an associated Grade I listed park surrounding it. Intrusive works to dig a long SSP trench through areas of the ground to the north of the house were monitored archaeologically although partly due to the shallow depth of the trench no significant archaeological features were encountered. The two main areas of investigation were within the overflow car park and on the east side of the Grand Avenue.
- 4.1.2 The trench in the overflow car park passed through an area where a tree-lined avenue is shown on a plan from 1749 but no clear evidence of this avenue was found. From laying the historic map over a modern one it appears that the trench may have been just to the east of the main avenue which would have had a hard surface in the early and mid 18th century. It appears that the trench would have been located at the corner of a field and also on the western side of the grassed 'rond-point'. This would have been the type of surface feature which would leave little archaeological evidence.
- 4.1.3 Historic maps suggest that the area which now comprises the overflow car park may have had a temporary use during the First World War and then probably during the Second World War a distinct smaller area was laid out with simple tracks and this area later became the National Trust's overflow car park.
- 4.1.4 The current investigation has uncovered evidence of various 20th-century alterations and it is likely that they relate more to the Second World War phase than the First World War. The evidence includes modern make-up layers beneath the main exit road and also in the section of trench immediately to the south of it. The section of trench immediately to the north of the road also contained a large quantity of ballast which was probably laid down during the Second World War phase to level the ground but in the sections further to the north the trench had less modern material.
- 4.1.5 The trench alongside the Grand Avenue was found to largely comprise made ground (rubble, concrete etc).

Jonathan Gill

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APPENDIX A. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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2nd ed Ordnance Survey Map (25 inch: 1 mile) (1997)

Ordnance Survey Map (25 inch: 1 mile) (1910)

Taplow Inclosure Map (1787)

Aerial photographs held at the Historic England Archive in Swindon

9 July 1943 (RAF/16C/AC396)

18 June 1945 (RAF/106G/UK/409)

4 Jan 1946 (RAF/106G/UK/1101)

3 Dec 1954 (RAF/542/90)

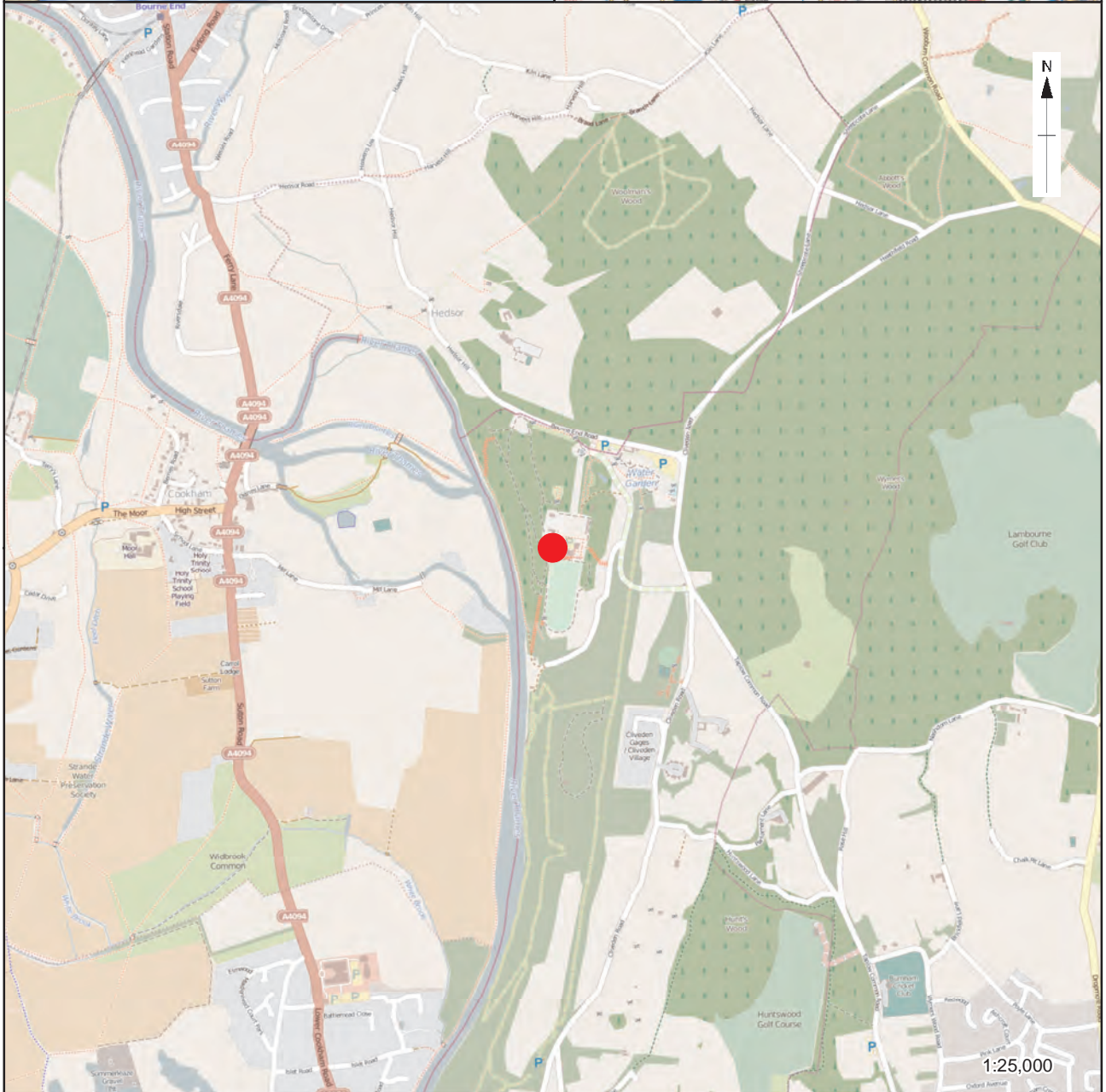
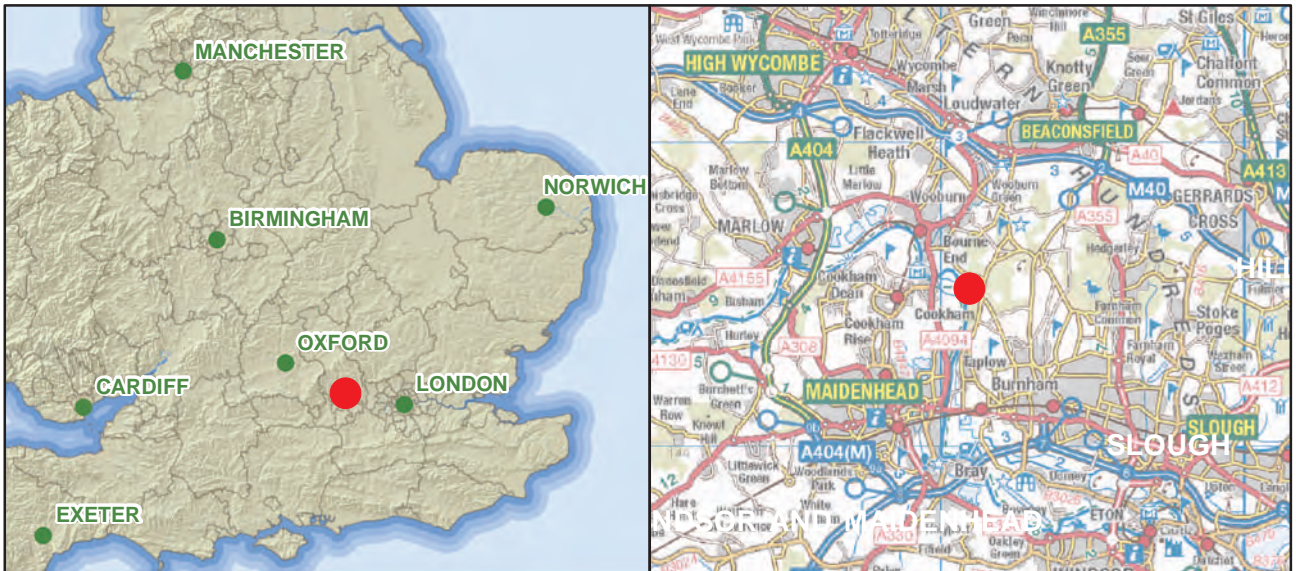
28 August 1961 (RAF/58/4646)

30 June 1969 (OS/69312)

16 June 1996 (OS/96643A)

APPENDIX B. LAYER RECORD IN SOAKAWAY PIT (SEE FIG 8)

Layer No.	Description
[1]	Top soil and subsoil. Dark brown loam with stones inclusions.
[2]	Deep, ochre-coloured stoney/sandy loam
[3]	Thinner darker stoney layer. Loam.
[4]	Ochre loam with gravels and stones mixed in.
[5]	Finer sandy layer. Few stones
[6]	Dark loam layer.
[7]	Light coloured layer. Stoney clay. Light grey.
[8]	Dark loam/silt layer. Fairly fine and with few stones.
[9]	Gravelly ochre loam.
[10]	Similar to 2 but slightly more henna coloured. Brick red patches and with patches of grey clay mixed in.
[11]	Distinct layer in east side. Pure gravel without any sand mixed in. Small gravel stones quite different to other layers.
[12]	Grey/ochre coloured layer. Generally with large stones mixed in.



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Figure 1: Site location

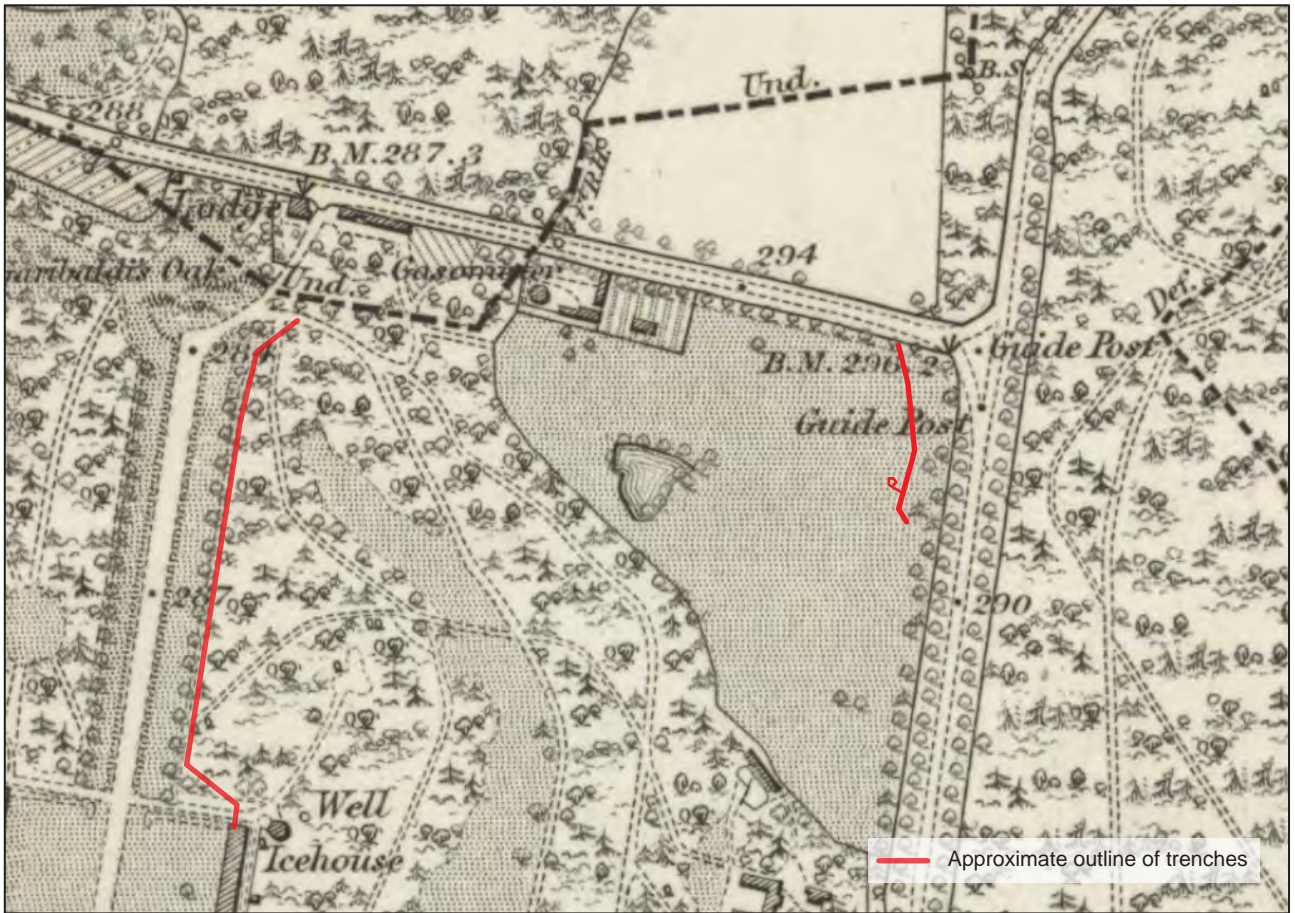


Figure 4: First edition 6 inch Ordnance Survey map (1876)

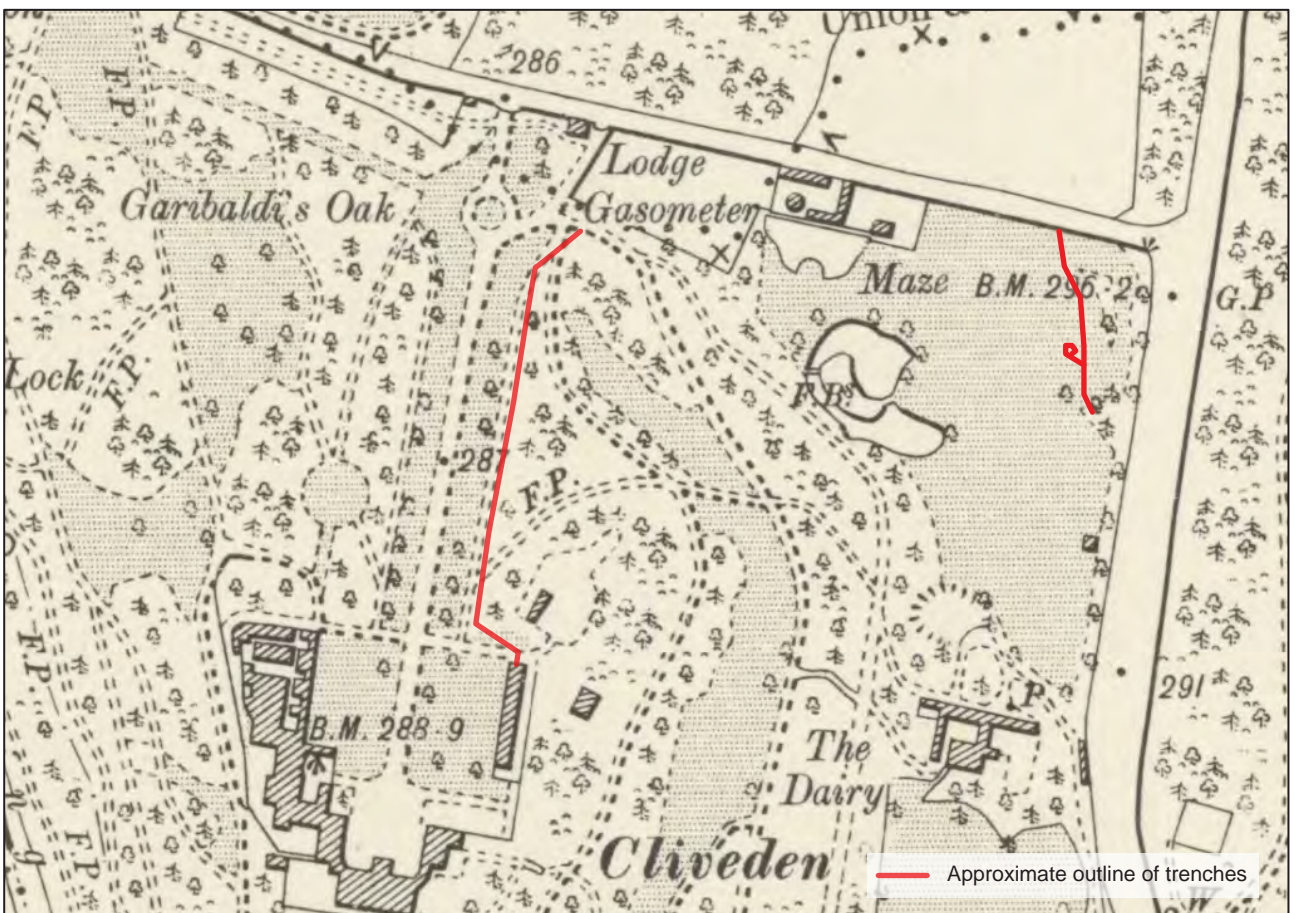


Figure 5: Second edition 6 inch Ordnance Survey map (1897)



Lady astor gate to orangery_rev 1_20160912

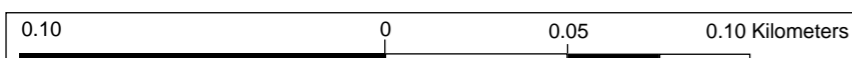


- Legend**
- ▲ Definitive Properties (GB)
 - NT Ownership (GB)
 - NT Leasehold (GB)

— Approximate outline of trenches



Scale 1:2,047



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THIS MAP IS NOT TO BE USED FOR NAVIGATION

Notes
This map was automatically generated using Geocortex Essentials.

Figure 8: Site plan showing location of SSP trench

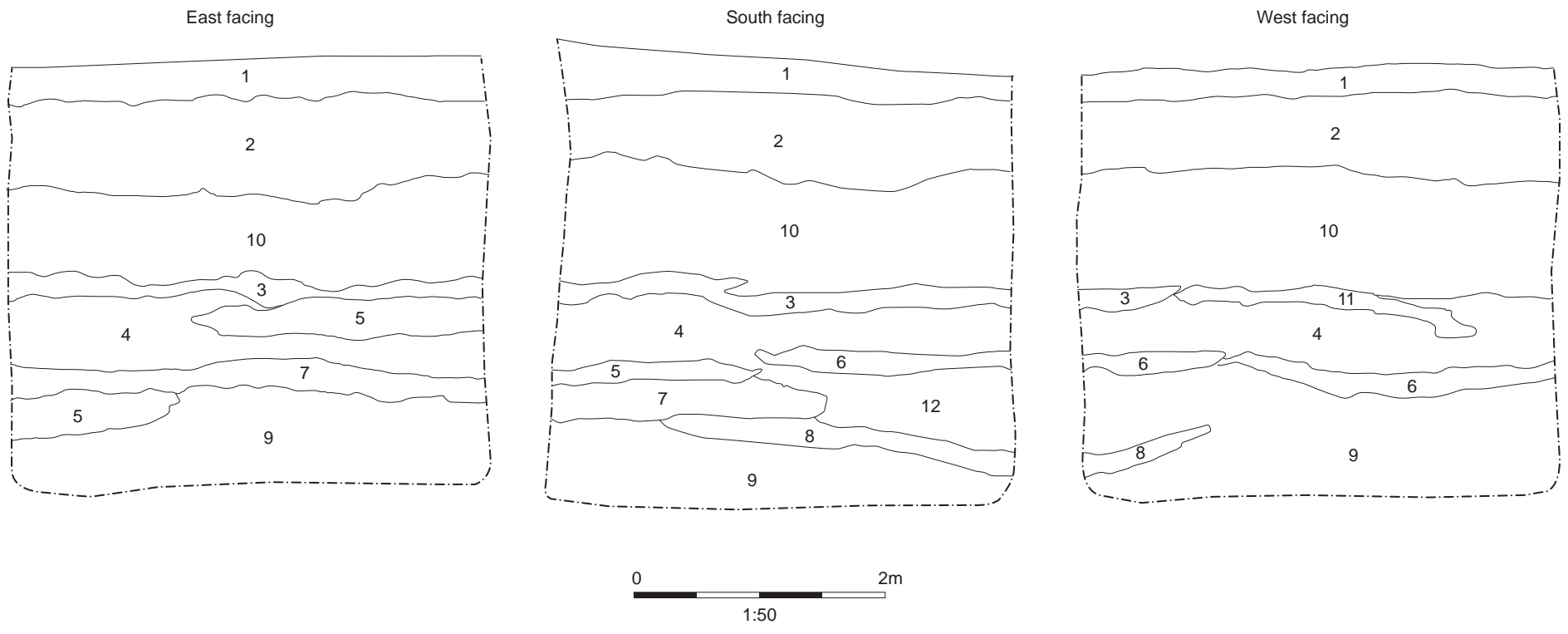


Figure 9: Sections through soakaway pit



Plate 4: Southernmost section of trench in overflow car park, looking south



Plate 5: Brick rubble in southernmost section of trench, looking north



Plate 6: Side of trench where it crosses road at S end of car park, looking south west



Plate 7: Where trench crosses road at S end of car park, looking south west



Plate 8: Section of trench immediately N of road in car park, looking south



Plate 9: Trench towards centre of car park (c.50 m N of S end), looking north



Plate 10: Trench section towards centre of car park (c.50 m N of S end), looking south west



Plate 11: Area c.55 m to north of south end of trench in car park, looking north



Plate 12: General view of soakaway hole (c.35 m to N of S end of trench), looking south west



Plate 13: North face of soakaway



Plate 14: North face of soakaway



Plate 15: West face of soakaway



Plate 16: West face of soakaway



Plate 17: South face of soakaway



Plate 18: East face of soakaway



Plate 22: Section towards N end of trench by avenue (by hump, east side of trench)



Plate 23: Typical section c.50 m to S of N end of avenue trench, looking south



Plate 28: Southern end of avenue trench



Plate 29: Southern end of avenue trench, looking east



Plate 30: Southern end of avenue trench



Plate 31: Trench in cobbled area immediately north of kitchen



Plate 32: Trench in cobbled area immediately north of kitchen, looking south



Plate 33: Trench to north of kitchen where it crosses road, looking north



Plate 34: trench crossing road immediately north of kitchen



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