

Exeter College, Ruskin Building, Walton Street, Oxford



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



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1	Robin Bashford Site Supervisor	(name) (position)	(name) (position)	

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Janus House
 Osney Mead
 Oxford OX2 0ES

t: +44 (0) 1865 263800
 f: +44 (0) 1865 793496

e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk
 w: oxfordarchaeology.com

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Exeter College, Ruskin Building, Walton Street, Oxford

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Written by Robin Bashford

and illustrated by Markus Dylewski and Conan Parsons

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Summary

Between April 2014 and February 2015, Oxford Archaeology (OA) undertook an archaeological watching brief at The Ruskin Building, Exeter College, Walton Street, Oxford (SP 509 066). The watching brief revealed the banded gravel and clay deposits which are characteristic of the natural geology on the periphery of the second (Summertown-Radley) gravel terrace upon which Oxford is located.

The majority of the site had been subject to heavy truncation, both from the original construction of the Ruskin College building in 1912, and from subsequent re-development of the site in the 1930s, 1960s and 1980s. However, this truncation was less severe in two areas of the site to the rear of the buildings fronting Walton Street and Worcester Place. The watching brief on these two areas revealed a c 4.5m wide roughly east-west aligned ditch which almost certainly corresponds with a section of the 17th century Civil War defences depicted by Bernard de Gomme on his contemporary map of the fortifications around the city.

The lower fills of the ditch were waterlogged and contained organic inclusions which were indicative of fluvial deposition of sediment in the base of the ditch. This may reflect the location of this feature on the edge of the flood plain, and it may have originated as one of a series of drainage channels shown on a number of cartographic sources pre-dating the construction of the defences in the mid 17th century.

The remaining deposits encountered reflect the use of this site as a timber yard in the 19th century until the construction of Ruskin College in the early 20th century.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA), were commissioned by Derek Farrow of Capita on behalf of Collexoncotoo Ltd (Exeter College) to undertake a watching brief at the site of a redevelopment project at the Former Ruskin College Site, Walton St, Oxford (SP 509 066).
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken as a condition of Planning Permission (planning ref: 13/00832/FUL). A brief was set by David Radford (OCC) detailing the Local Authority's requirements for work necessary to discharge the planning condition; a written scheme of investigation (WSI) was then produced outlining how OA would implement those requirements.
- 1.1.3 A detailed watching brief was carried out during initial geotechnical investigations, and on significant earth-moving groundworks in relation to the extension of the footprint of the basemented area during construction phase of the project.
- 1.1.4 All work was undertaken in accordance with the local and national planning policies.

1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The former Ruskin College site occupies an area on the west side of Walton Street centred on SP 509 066. The site was previously occupied by a timber yard and Victorian houses, which over the years have been replaced by purpose built college structures. The main frontage building was completed in 1912 with additional buildings on the site being added in 1939 and during the 1960s and 1980s.



- 1.2.2 The site lies on the north side of Oxford, c 500m from the city's central point at Carfax, and c 350m outside the medieval city walls. The site lies within the historic parish of St Mary Magdalen, but was historically within the parish of St Thomas' with the boundary between the two along the line of Walton Street.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background to the site has been described in a Desk-Based Assessment (DBA) (OA 2013), this is summarised below .

Prehistoric Period (500,000 BP – 43 AD)

- 1.3.2 No archaeological finds or sites of prehistoric date have been identified from within the area of proposed development. A comprehensive account of the current evidence for prehistoric activity in Oxford may be found in Lambrick 2013.
- 1.3.3 Within, and just outside of the study area a significant amount of evidence of prehistoric date has been recovered. To the south-east of the site, the remains of two possible Bronze Age barrows were excavated prior to the construction of the Sackler library. To the north-east of the site, a middle Neolithic enclosure and four late Neolithic to early Bronze Age barrows were revealed during the redevelopment of the Radcliffe Infirmary site (MOLA 2009 and forthcoming). These are likely to have formed part of a ceremonial and funerary complex with it's origins in the Neolithic.
- 1.3.4 A c 155m diameter circular henge monument has recently been revealed during work at the Kendrew Quadrangle of St John's College (Wallis, 2011 in Lambrick, 2013). The ditch was between 6-9m wide and 2.8m deep and, although significantly later than the Neolithic enclosure at the Radcliffe Infirmary site, it seems likely to have been the focus for a series of Bronze-Age barrows, beaker and Bronze-Age burials identified through both excavation and cropmark analysis - the latter predominantly from the University Parks.

Roman Period (AD 43 – 410)

- 1.3.5 No archaeological finds or sites of Roman date have been identified from within the area of proposed development.
- 1.3.6 The area of the modern city centre is lacking in evidence for Roman occupation, and evidence in the area around the site consists only of coin and pottery findspots. The nearest activity is nearly half a kilometre to the north-east and is the route of the Roman Road along the line of Banbury Road.

Early Medieval Period (AD 410 – 1066)

- 1.3.7 No archaeological finds or sites of early medieval date have been identified from within the area of proposed development.
- 1.3.8 A defended burh was laid out at Oxford in the 9th century after this a substantial town developed, but this did not extend as far north as the area of proposed development. In that period the land may have belonged to the manor of Walton in Northgate Hundred. It is likely that in this late Saxon period the area of proposed development was arable land or meadow.
- 1.3.9 Later, the Anglo-Saxon settlement of Walton is known to have been located at the north end of Walton Street as was identified during work at 75 Walton Street (Inskeep, 1998), where work revealed the first material evidence (including pottery, tile, bones and a quern fragment) of the substantial settlement.



- 1.3.10 Burials of this period are known from the Radcliffe Infirmary site, as well as a late-Saxon mass grave found in the top of the ditch of the prehistoric henge monument recorded at St John's College (see above - Wallis 2011 in Lambrick 2013).

Later Medieval Period (AD 1066 – 1550)

- 1.3.11 No archaeological finds or sites dating to the later medieval period have been identified within the area of proposed development.
- 1.3.12 The area of proposed development almost certainly lay within open fields in the medieval period. Evidence of ridge and furrow cultivation, cultivated soils and field boundaries has been found at some sites just outside the study area. A survey of west Oxford undertaken by Julian Munby and Tony Dodd (2006) covers the area of proposed development and records the history of the ownership and use of the site. The first record, from the Hundred rolls, dates from 1279 and records the land as meadow, leased from Osney Abbey. The land remained meadow under various owners until 1573, when it was sold to St John's College. It then remained meadow until the development of Walton Street and Worcester place in the 19th century (Munby and Dodd 2006).

Gloucester College

- 1.3.13 In 1265 Sir Nicholas de Meules granted a house on the west side of Walton Street to the Carmelite Friars (Stevenson and Salter, 1939). This is the first evidence for development within what would become the Worcester College precinct and the Carmelites were granted further lands by Osney Abbey to enlarge their grounds as far as the River Thames where they also had a landing stage near Hythe Bridge. The gateway to the Carmelite land still stands on Walton Street, immediately to the north of the current Worcester College entrance (ibid).
- 1.3.14 Gloucester College was founded in 1283 for the Benedictine monks of the province of Canterbury. The Benedictines had been attempting to find premises in Oxford since 1277 and in 1283 Sir Nicholas Gifford bought a house on the east side of Walton Street for St. Peter's Abbey, Gloucester. Gloucester College took its name from this establishment. In 1315 the monks acquired the palace of Beaumont from King Edward II and extended it into part of Gloucester Green with the main approach through Friar's Entry. In 1321 the Benedictines purchased the site of the former Carmelite house. The oldest extant buildings in Worcester College are the ranges of Camerae or chambers on the south range of the quad, which date from the 15th century.

Gloucester Hall

- 1.3.15 Following the dissolution of the monasteries in 1542 Gloucester College was expropriated to the Crown and then granted to the Bishop of Oxford in 1542. The Bishop sold the site on to Sir Thomas Whyte, the founder of St. John's College, who used it as a storage annexe (renamed Gloucester Hall) for his own college.

Post-medieval period (AD 1550-1800)

- 1.3.16 During the English Civil War, the creation of the King's Oxford Parliament in January 1644 placed the city at the centre of the Royalist cause, and it became the headquarters of the King's forces. It was besieged by the Parliamentarian New Model Army from May 1644 until its final surrender to Thomas Fairfax in June 1646. Prior to the siege, extensive defences were constructed around the city by Dutch military engineer Bernard De Gomme, and his design for the earthworks and associated features are shown on his contemporary map (Fig. 5).



- 1.3.17 The map has been superimposed onto a 1930s Ordnance Survey map (Lattey et al 1936). The line of one of the internal defences probably runs along Walton Street, just to the east of the site and is shown as extant on Loggan's map of 1675 (Fig. 6). Analysis of De Gomme's map (and the 1936 plotting of it) in the desk-based assessment suggested that the main outer ditch might lie just within the site boundary in the west of the area of proposed development, although this isn't shown on Loggan's map, suggesting that it was either never constructed (De Gomme's map shows the planned rather than actual line of the defences, although in most cases these were the same), or that they had been backfilled by the time of Loggan's survey. Therefore there was potential for this ditch to be present on the site. If located, this would be of a significant width and depth and an important find with potential to confirm or refute the reliability of De Gomme's map in relation to modern Oxford, particularly on this western side of Oxford, where the ditch has been little investigated.
- 1.3.18 Other elements of the Civil War defences lie within the study area, including a guard post mapped by De Gomme just north of Rewley Abbey, c 300m south-west of the site. Booms were also constructed at strategic points on the waterways around the city, and one is shown on Castle Mill Stream, c 270m south-west of the site, adjacent to the guard post near Rewley Abbey on De Gomme's map.
- 1.3.19 The area north of Worcester College just south of the area of proposed development is shown as a market garden on Loggan's map (1675) with a row of cottages (probably 17th century) fronting the street; these still survive. Hollar's map (1643) shows the gardens extending further north into the meadows. To the north and west were meadows crossed by streams.
- 1.3.20 The earliest map that shows buildings within the area of proposed development is the Ordnance Survey first edition of 1876, which shows frontage properties in the western half of the site, and a timber yard occupying the eastern half. This timber yard appears to have occupied the site until the construction of the present Ruskin College building in 1912.

Modern period

- 1.3.21 A watching brief undertaken within the area of proposed development at 6-9 Gloucester Place recorded frontage cellars of 19th century buildings and some stone walls in the south-west corner of No. 9 (the westernmost tenement that existed on the plot), which suggest an earlier building here. A Victorian pit was found just outside the area of proposed development, within the grounds of Worcester College, c 80m to the south of the site.
- 1.3.22 The eastern part of the area was developed from 1850 between Walton Manor and Summertown as a residential suburb of large detached and semi-detached houses. The development of Beaumont Street, c 170m to the south-east of the site resulted in the destruction of the remains of Beaumont Palace. The remains of the palace were found during excavations in 1713 and 1830 and much of the masonry remains were relocated to Woodstock Road.
- 1.3.23 Following the construction of the Oxford Canal in 1790, and Lucy's Iron and Brass foundry in 1825, workers cottages were constructed in the area around the development site, marking one of the first 'suburbs' of Oxford, known as Jericho. Oxford University Press moved to its current location in Walton Street in 1830.
- 1.3.24 The area of development is shown on the Ordnance Survey first edition map of 1876 as being occupied by a timber yard in the eastern part of the site, partially surrounded by buildings, and by nine tenement plots in the western part. By the time the second edition map was made in 1900 the building on the north side of the timber yard had



been extended eastwards to meet the frontage of Walton Street, but otherwise, the site was little changed.

- 1.3.25 Ruskin College was moved to the site from its location in St. Giles in 1912. The current frontage building dates from this time. A map of 1922 shows that the frontage properties in the western part of the site were still present. An extension was added to the main building in 1939, almost identical to the original building, and several of the properties fronting Worcester Place were demolished, except for those on the four westernmost plots. In the 1960s a building was inserted between the main building and the remaining tenements, and in the 1980s the western end of the site was redeveloped and a library and new accommodation were constructed after the demolition of the frontage tenement properties. The central area of the site remains undeveloped.
- 1.3.26 The Ruskin College buildings are an L-shaped complex of multi-phased buildings, the frontage of which faces onto Walton Street to the east. The original building was constructed in 1912 and is orientated north to south along Walton Street. It features a fanciful Neo-classical façade of three storeys and attic level across five bays. The ground floor and central bay are of stone and the upper storeys of the four flanking bays are of red brick. The central bay features the large arched main entrance at ground floor level and a Palladian style gable at roof level with a round window. This stands proud of the building, along with the two end bays, by approximately 70cm. In keeping with the Georgian style, the windows are large sash windows with full arches in the second floor of the recessed bays and alternating between segmental arched and square windows across the rest of the façade.

1.4 Previous Archaeological Work

- 1.4.1 The only work undertaken on the site itself was a watching brief carried out in 1980 during building work that had opened up the frontage cellars of the houses situated at the west end of the area of proposed development. These had been backfilled with gravel. Some stone walls were found in the south-western corner of what had been No. 9, the westernmost property that existed on the site (numbers 6 to 9 were extant in 1876). These remains may represent an earlier building. Samples from a pile cap suggested the presence of a silted linear feature.
- 1.4.2 A field evaluation just to the west of the site (behind Nos 10-16a Worcester Place) in 2006 revealed a Victorian pit and a palaeochannel (JMHS 2006).
- 1.4.3 There have been numerous investigations in close proximity to the site. These include an evaluation at Worcester Place c 140m north-west of the site which exposed the fill of a possible palaeochannel (JMHS 2005) and a number of investigations along Walton Street, which runs along the eastern side of the site. The results included a find in 1884 of a Roman coin, and a number of pits. Medieval pottery was found during building work at number 18 in 1976-7.
- 1.4.4 Investigations have also taken place in Little Clarendon Street, which lies c 200m north-east of the site. These uncovered a variety of post-medieval finds and a Roman coin.
- 1.4.5 An excavation and a watching brief undertaken at Rewley House, c 205m north-east of the site by OA in 1994 and 1983 respectively uncovered post-medieval burials and possible evidence of 18th-century quarrying.
- 1.4.6 Work by OA in 2005 on land to the rear of 65-67 St. Giles c 260m to the east of the area of proposed development, revealed numerous pits, and other features of medieval date and a stone foundation pad that may have been associated with Beaumont Palace, or with tenements fronting St. Giles. Post-medieval walls and pits relating to properties fronting St. Giles and footings of a cottage were revealed.



- 1.4.7 Excavations and a Watching Brief conducted by OA at Worcester College in 2011-12 revealed the presence of undated features of possible prehistoric or early medieval date as well as garden soils and features of probable medieval and early post-medieval date.
- 1.4.8 Although outside of the study area, a recent excavation at the Radcliffe Infirmary has provided significant information on the prehistoric landscape of the north of Oxford (Lambrick 2013).

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

General

2.1.1 The aims of the watching brief were to:

- establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the development area,
- determine and confirm the character of any remains present,
- determine or estimate the date range of any remains from artefacts or otherwise,
- characterise any underlying archaeological strata down to undisturbed geology,
- determine the palaeo-environmental potential of archaeological deposits

Specific aims and objectives

2.1.2 The specific aims and objectives of the watching brief were to:

- Establish the character and extent of any archaeological activity (eg was there evidence for ridge and furrow, field boundaries, gravel quarries, Civil War siege related activity etc).

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 A summary of OA's general approach to excavation and recording can be found in Appendix A of the WSI. Standard methodologies for geomatics and survey, environmental evidence, artefactual evidence and burials can also be found in the appendices to that document (Appendices B, C, D and E respectively).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

Watching brief on geotechnical test pits (not illustrated)

3.1.1 Four geotechnical test pits were excavated - the locations of TPs were annotated on Stockley DWG No (EX) 001. All the test pits were around 0.4 - 0.5m square.

TP1

3.1.2 TP1 was excavated in the north-west corner of the basement at the very west end of the building. The base of the concrete slab had not been reached and the test pit appeared to have been aborted.

TP2

3.1.3 TP2 was excavated against the western wall of the basement approximately 6m north of the south-west corner. Construction of the basement walls was the same as in TP4 (see below), with the exception that the boundary wall with the property to the west was



of brick rather than stone. The test pit was not excavated below the base of the slab (ie 0.5m).

TP3

- 3.1.4 TP3 was excavated against the western wall of the basement approximately 14m north of the south-west corner. Construction of the basement walls was the same as in TP2 and TP 4 (see below), but as with TP2, the adjacent wall was of brick rather than stone. The test pit was excavated through 0.5m of concrete slab overlying a fairly sterile mid brown clayey silt c 0.3m thick above a clean looking yellow brown sand. It is possible that the latter two deposits represent the post-glacial loess and natural sand respectively.

TP4

- 3.1.5 TP4 was excavated against and through the southern wall of the basement to 0.9m -1m below the basement slab (slab @ 57.62m OD). The slab was 0.43m thick and was formed over a membrane laid on a mixed silty clay deposit with some loess-like inclusions, some charcoal and ceramic building material - the light was very bad so interpretation is problematic but potentially these represented in-situ archaeological deposits
- 3.1.6 Some 0.38m south of the internal face of the breeze block wall is the stone boundary wall with Worcester College. This is vertical until 0.6m below the slab where it is then offset by 0.08m and continues vertically to at least 1m below the slab.
- 3.1.7 Weathering on the exposed section of the wall suggests that the ground level prior to the construction of the basement was 0.9m above the slab.
- 3.1.8 Below this level, an iron mesh has been placed between the stone wall and the re-inforced concrete wall(s) of the basement. Above the former ground level the basement wall comprises a skin of blockwork overlying the re-inforced concrete and a second skin built directly off the concrete slab.

Watching brief areas (Figs 2 and 3)

- 3.1.9 At it's highest point, natural geology was revealed at approximately 1.25m below the remaining element of the pile mat (at c 57.74m OD - Fig. 3) and comprised a clayey sand with c 35% gravel inclusions. This had been truncated by a 3m-4.5m-wide ditch on a roughly east-west alignment. The ditch was between 0.8m and at least 1.3m deep, although it is likely to have been subject to a degree of truncation.
- 3.1.10 The lower fills of the feature comprised a series of interleaving layers of very dark grey clay silts with organic inclusions (6, 7 and 10), mid-pale bluish grey sandy clays (8 and 11) and mid orangey brown sandy clay (9).
- 3.1.11 The upper fills comprised a localised deposit of re-deposited gravel (12) overlain by a homogeneous clayey sand deposit (13) which also overlay the top of the clay rich lower fills described above. Deposit 13 was overlain by a c 0.34m-thick layer of material almost identical in composition (deposit 14) and this similarity in composition possibly points to an analogous origin. However, as this deposit appeared to directly overlay the natural geology – with a horizontal interface between the two – it seems unlikely that it is a fill within a negative feature cut into the gravels. Consequently, it seems more likely that this deposit represents an accumulation of material post-dating the silting up of the main body of the ditch and partially filling the top of the feature.
- 3.1.12 Deposit 14 was overlain by a c 0.5m-thick mixed deposit which contained concentrations of clinker, brick rubble and charcoal and is likely to represent a

demolition horizon associated with the timber yard which stood on the site prior to the construction of the Ruskin Building in the early 20th century.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 Where not truncated by the basements of the 20th-century development of the site, the east-west aligned ditch proved to be fairly substantial in plan and profile. This almost certainly corresponds with a section of the 17th-century Civil War defences depicted by Bernard de Gomme on his contemporary map of the fortifications around the city (Figs 4 and 5), although the finds recovered were exclusively medieval in date (see Appendix B).
- 4.1.2 The location of the ditch appears to correspond with the junction between the western end of the inner line of defences and the more substantial and symmetrical outer defensive circuit (Fig. 4). The 1644 map shows the inner defences running roughly east-west and then turning to the north-west to meet the outer fortifications. However, no evidence for this change in alignment was observed during the watching brief, and the ditch as found would suggest that the east-west aligned section of the inner defences continued westward to meet the outer defensive ditch on the same alignment, and consequently formed a single continuous channel.
- 4.1.3 The historic maps show that by the post medieval period (possibly earlier) the area was drained by a network of channels in the immediate vicinity of the site, and there is quite compelling evidence that the defences depicted by de Gomme in this location are re-using an existing drainage channel(s) on the edge of the flood plain.
- 4.1.4 The waterlogged lower fills of the ditch were indicative of fluvial deposition of sediment in the base of the ditch, which is consistent with this interpretation. The fills were also similar in composition to those of palaeochannels recorded during two evaluations undertaken to the west and north-west of the site (JMHS 2006 and JMHS 2005 respectively). Whilst these features were undated, it seems likely that they form part of the system of channels shown on the historic mapping, and that the edge of a channel revealed within Trench 1 of the evaluation to the west of the site (JMHS 2006) represented the northern edge of the channel revealed during the recent watching brief. The consistently parallel and perpendicular alignments of these features suggests a deliberate configuration rather than a natural evolution of channels on the edge of the second terrace, and it is possible that they originated as part of a water management system associated with the Carmelite Friary to the south.
- 4.1.5 It is perhaps significant that by 1675, the section of ditch which appears to correspond with the feature revealed during the watching brief is depicted by Loggan as a tree-lined channel, rather than the substantial earthworks which he depicts around the remainder of the extant defensive circuit (Fig. 6). It is possible that this also reflects the fact that this section of the defences utilised a pre-existing ditch which has reverted to its original function following the redundancy of the fortifications. To a certain extent, this is reflected in the fluvial composition of the majority of the fills of the feature – as opposed to the rapid backfilling of the defensive ditch from the levelling of the bank as seen elsewhere around the defensive circuit (eg Bradley et al. 2005).
- 4.1.6 Consequently, it seems very likely that the section of ditch revealed within the watching brief area represents part of the Civil War defences – probably utilising a section of the drainage channels depicted by both Agas (1578) and Loggan (1675) - although unfortunately the section of ditch in question is obscured by an ornamental cartouche in the bottom corner of Agas's plan. By the end of the 18th century, possibly owing to the influence of the Oxford Canal, some of the drainage channels had been filled in, and by



1850 all had been infilled and replaced by the lake in the grounds of Worcester College. The northern arm of lake appears to partially lie on the line of the Civil War defences as depicted by De Gomme in 1644, but on a slightly different alignment. It may be that the line of the defensive ditch was partially extant as an earthwork and incorporated into the new lake (OA 2013).

- 4.1.7 The northern part of the Civil War defensive circuit between the Cherwell to the east and the Thames to the west is characterised by the fact that it has two concentric lines of defences comprising an irregular - apparently less substantial - fortification running exclusively between the two rivers; and an outer ring of defences which appear to encircle the city and are significantly more substantial and regular. Recent work at Mansfield Road (OA 2015) has indicated that the extant inner defensive bank at that location had originated as a late Saxon feature - possibly a headland between two fields - which appears to suggest that the inner line of defence had at least in part utilised existing features in the landscape, and it seems likely that the re-use of the drainage ditch(es) shown on the historic mapping in the vicinity of the site on Walton Street is another example of this.
- 4.1.8 Consequently, it is possible that the irregular and less substantial line of defence formed a preliminary fortification between the Thames and the Cherwell, utilising pre-existing features where possible, and constructed prior to the building of the more structured and substantial circuit of defences depicted by de Gomme.



APPENDIX A. ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context	Type	Depth	Width	Length	Comments	Finds	Date
1	Deposit	1.3			Modern overburden		
2	Layer				Natural geology		
3	Cut	1.3	4.5	25m+	East-west aligned ditch		
4	Fill				Ditch fill	Pottery, CBM, Bone, Flint	1375-1600
5	Fill				Ditch fill		
6	Fill	0.12	1.1		Ditch fill		
7	Fill	0.1	1.2		Ditch fill		
8	Fill	0.4	2.1		Ditch fill		
9	Fill	0.3	2.5		Ditch fill		
10	Fill	0.5	3.3		Ditch fill		
11	Fill	0.3	2.1		Ditch fill		
12	Fill	0.14	0.7		Ditch fill		
13	Fill	0.45	3.7		Ditch fill		
14	Deposit	0.55	5m+		Deposit		
15	Deposit	0.5	5m+		19thC made ground		



APPENDIX B. FINDS

B.1 Pottery by John Cotter

Introduction

- B.1.1 A total of four sherds of pottery weighing 126g were recovered from a single context. All of this is of medieval date. Given the small size of the assemblage a separate catalogue has not been constructed and instead the pottery is simply described and spot-dated below.

Context (4) Spot-date c 1350-1500

- B.1.2 Description: Mixture of fresh and worn sherds. All of these appear to have been discoloured and darkened by waterlogged burial conditions. They comprise a large fresh rim sherd from a jar/cooking pot in Brill/Boarstall ware (OXAM, c 1225-1625) with a very squared rim form suggesting a late medieval date; a large but fairly worn straight handle/wall junction fragment from a pipkin or skillet in the sandier earlier Brill fabric (OXAW, c 1175-1400); two small residual body sherds of Medieval Oxford ware (OXY, c 1075-1300), one from a glazed pitcher (now discoloured black and shiny), one from a cooking pot. Fabric codes referred to for the medieval wares are those of the Oxfordshire type series (Mellor 1994).

B.2 Ceramic building material (CBM) by John Cotter

- B.2.1 Four pieces of CBM weighing 256g were recovered from a single context - the same as produced the pottery above. These have not been separately catalogued but are described below.

Context (4) Spot-date c 1375-1600

- B.2.2 Description: Mixture of fresh and worn pieces. The latest item is a fairly fresh fragment from a dense orange sandy flat roof tile of late medieval character (Fabric 3B, or St Giles's-type). The other three pieces are all fairly worn, residual, and discoloured in a similar way to the pottery. They include a worn and blackened corner fragment from a decorated medieval floor tile of 'stabbed Wessex' type (c 1280-1330). This is unusually thick (28mm) and has traces of decoration in deeply inlaid white slip - evidently a large central quatrefoil delineated by a slip line and with a small fleur-de-lys filler in the surviving corner; the glaze has been worn off. The thickness of this piece and the depth of inlay suggest this may be a late 13th-century piece. Also present are a worn fragment of pinkish (Fabric 7B) roof tile (c 1175-1400) and a small edge fragment from a ridge tile in limestone-tempered Fabric 1B (c 1175-1325).

B.3 Animal bone Identified by Lena Strid

Context	Description
4	1 cattle ulna fused proximally, 1 distal right radius shaft, 1 right sheep radius fused distally, 1 cattle first phalanx, 1 cattle long bone, 2 large mammal vertebra, 1 cattle mandible, 1 cattle mandible including 2 teeth, 1 indeterminate fragment. Total weight 322g

B.4 Burnt unworked flint Identified by Geraldine Crann

Context	Description
4	1 piece of unworked thermally fractured flint, 15g



APPENDIX C. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

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APPENDIX D. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Exeter College, Ruskin Building, Walton Street, Oxford

Site code: OXEXRB14

Grid reference: Centred at NGR SP 509 066

Type of watching brief: Intermittent

Date and duration of project: April 2014 - February 2015

Summary of results: Between April 2014 and February 2015, Oxford Archaeology (OA) undertook an archaeological watching brief at The Ruskin Building, Exeter College, Walton Street, Oxford (SP 509 066). The watching brief revealed the banded gravel and clay deposits which are characteristic of the natural geology on the periphery of the second (Summertown-Radley) gravel terrace upon which Oxford is located.

The majority of the site had been subject to heavy truncation, both from the original construction of the Ruskin College building in 1912, and from subsequent re-development of the site in the 1930s, 1960s and 1980s. However, this truncation was less severe in two areas of the site to the rear of the buildings fronting Walton Street and Worcester Place. The watching brief on these two areas revealed a c 4.5m wide roughly east-west aligned ditch which almost certainly corresponds with a section of the 17th century civil war defences depicted by Bernard de Gomme on his contemporary map of the fortifications around the city.

The lower fills of the ditch were waterlogged and contained organic inclusions which were indicative of fluvial deposition of sediment in the base of the ditch. This may reflect the location of this feature on the edge of the flood plain, and it may have originated as one of a series of drainage channels shown on a number of cartographic sources pre-dating the construction of the defences in the mid 17th century.

The remaining deposits encountered reflect the use of this site as a timber yard in the 19th century until the construction of Ruskin College in the early 20th century.

Location of archive: Janus House



Scale 1:12,500

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Figure 1: Site location



Figure 2: Trench location plan

Section 2

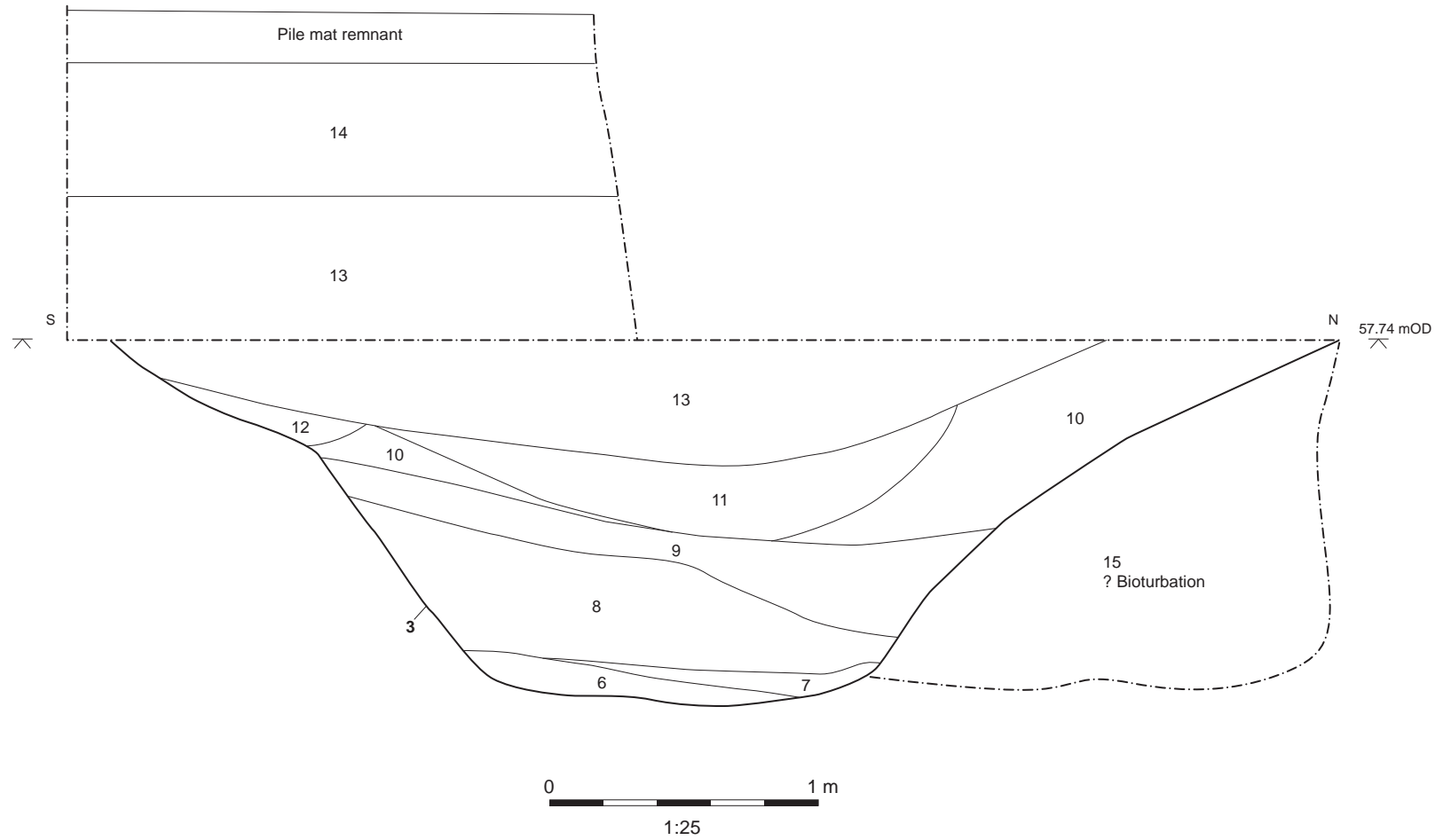


Figure 3: Profile of ditch 3 + overlying deposits



Figure 4: Suggested correlation of De Gomme's 1644 plan of the fortifications with modern mapping, showing the location of ditch 3 and JMHS trenches



not to scale

Figure 5: Bernard de Gomme's 1644 plan showing approximate area discussed in text.

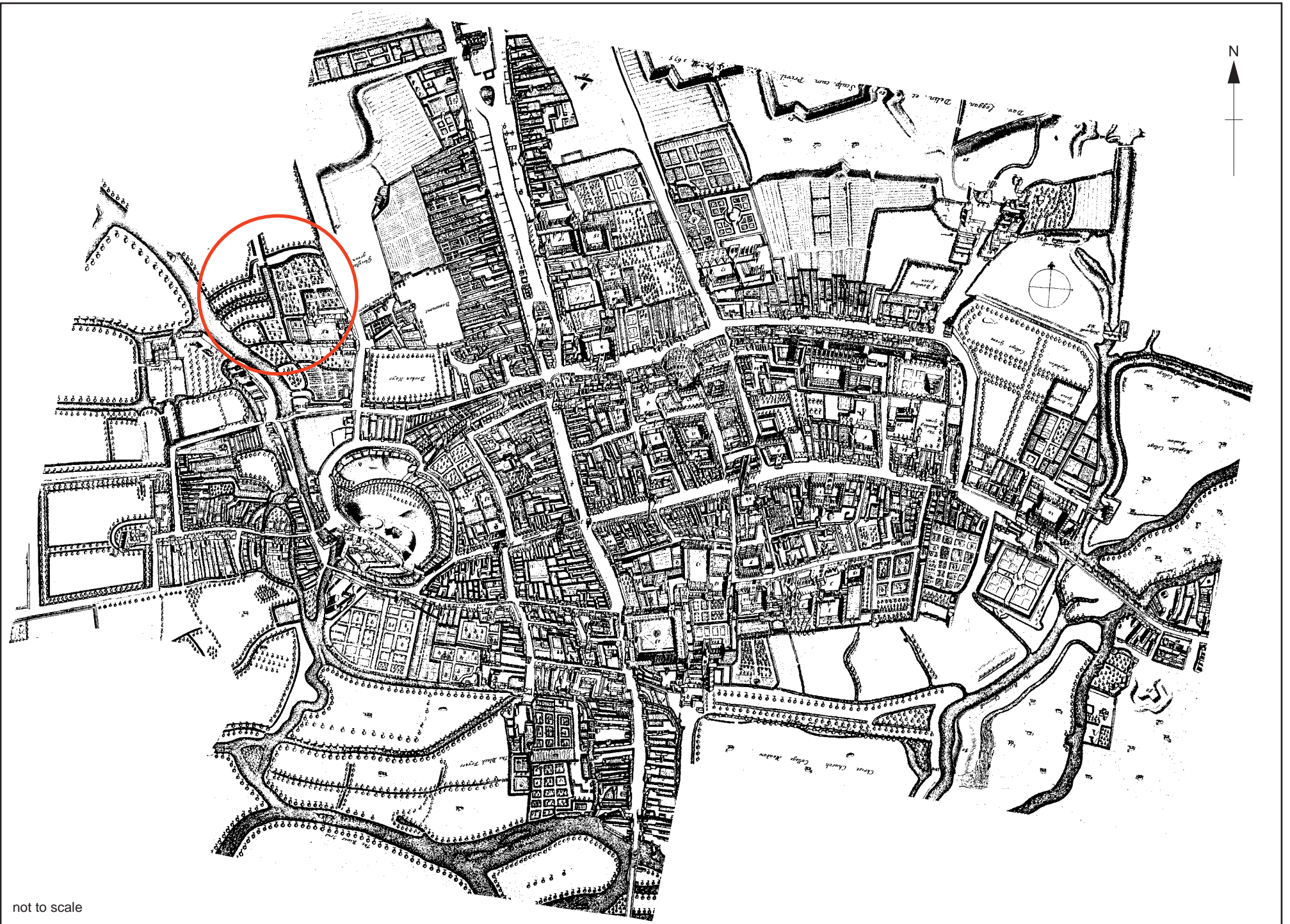


Figure 6: David Loggan's 1675 plan showing approximate area discussed in text (image inverted to show north at top)



Plate 1: Western extent of Ditch 3 in Plan (part of Fig. 2)



Plate 2: Machine excavated slot across Ditch 3 showing profile and overlying deposits (Fig. 3)