



Road Maintenance Works at Walton Street, Oxford

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

October 2019

**Client: Skanska Oxford on behalf of Oxfordshire
County Council**

Issue No: 1

OA Reference No: OXWASEWB

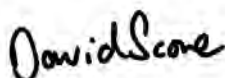
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Road Maintenance Works at Walton Street, Oxford

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Written by Elizabeth Kennard and Joakim Thomasson

*With contributions from Robert McIntosh and illustrations by
Matt Bradley and Magdalena Wachnik*

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Summary

In August 2019, Oxford Archaeology was commissioned by Skanska on behalf of Oxford City Council to carry out a watching brief during road repair works following the appearance of underground cavities in Walton Street, Oxford. The site is located in the vicinity of the medieval settlement of Walton and Worcester College.

The machine excavations to locate and backfill the cavities were monitored. The works encountered modern backfill of service trenches underneath the existing hard standing. No archaeological deposits were observed or finds recovered.

Acknowledgements

Oxford Archaeology would like to thank Paul Roworth of Skanska Oxford for commissioning this project. Thanks are also extended to David Radford who monitored the work on behalf of Oxford City Council.

The project was managed for Oxford Archaeology by Joakim Thomasson and Carl Champness. The fieldwork was directed by Liz Kennard and Robert McIntosh. Survey and digitizing were carried out by Matt Bradley, plates and report was compiled by Magdalena Wachnik. Thanks is also extended to the OA staff that prepared the archive under the management of Nicola Scott.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Skanska Oxford on behalf of Oxford County Council to undertake an archaeological watching brief during road maintenance works in Walton Street, Oxford.
- 1.1.2 A number of underground cavities were detected during road repairs at Walton Street by Worcester College. The contractor Skanska contacted David Radford, the Oxford City Archaeologist, who recommended that the repair works should be monitored by an archaeologist. A specification for the archaeological watching brief was agreed with David Radford, the Oxford City Archaeologist (OA 2019); this document outlines how OA implemented those requirements.
- 1.1.3 All work was undertaken in accordance with local and national planning policies and Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Guidance (CIfA 2014).

1.2 Location, topography and geology

- 1.2.1 Walton Street runs from the district Jericho in the north (previously the medieval settlement of Walton) to Beaumont Street in the south. The site is located in the southern part of Walton Road, near Worcester College, north-west of Oxford historic core.
- 1.2.2 The geology of the area is mapped as the Oxford Clay Formation and West Walton Formation, mudstones of the Jurassic era, overlain by Summertown-Radley sand and gravel deposits in the north-eastern part of the site and Northmoor sand and gravel deposits in the remainder (BGS 2019).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background of the Oxford area has been described in the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the undertaken archaeological watching brief (OA 2019), and will not be referred here.

2 WATCHING BRIEF AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The project aims were to monitor excavations in order to obtain information about the nature and depths of any below ground archaeological deposits that may survive within the site.
- 2.1.2 The specific aims and objectives of the watching brief were to determine or confirm the general nature of any remains present, to determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of any remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence, and to make available the results of the investigation.
- 2.1.3 Any remains of significance within Oxford are related to the Oxford City Archaeological research agendas (2011) for the relevant periods, and Solent-Thames Research Framework for the Historic Environment (Hey & Hind 2014).

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 A mechanical excavator was used to locate the extent of the cavities, which were found to be caused by leaking water services. The works were carried out as an emergency measure to stabilise the street. The hardstanding was removed, and the exposed cavities were immediately filled with gravel. Due to the sometime limited size of the voids, as well as the instability of the trench sides, it was not safe to enter the trenches. Monitoring was therefore undertaken from stable ground adjacent to the trenches.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Introduction and presentation of results

- 3.1.1 Altogether twelve voids were discovered in Walton Street between Walton Crescent in the north and Beaumont Street in the south, labelled as trench 1-12 on Figure 2.
- 3.1.2 The cavities were between 15.5m and 2m in length, 2m and 1m in width and 2.2m and 0.8m in depth. All the voids were located in backfill of existing underground services.
- 3.1.3 Cavities 1 and 2 (Fig. 2, Plate 1-4) had the potential to reveal archaeological deposits, and were monitored by an archaeologist. Once it was understood that all voids were within the backfill of existing services, the watching brief was discontinued.
- 3.1.4 Although deeper features such as pits and wells would have survived modern truncation, no observations of preserved archaeological deposits or finds material were made during the watching brief.

APPENDIX A BIBLIOGRAPHY

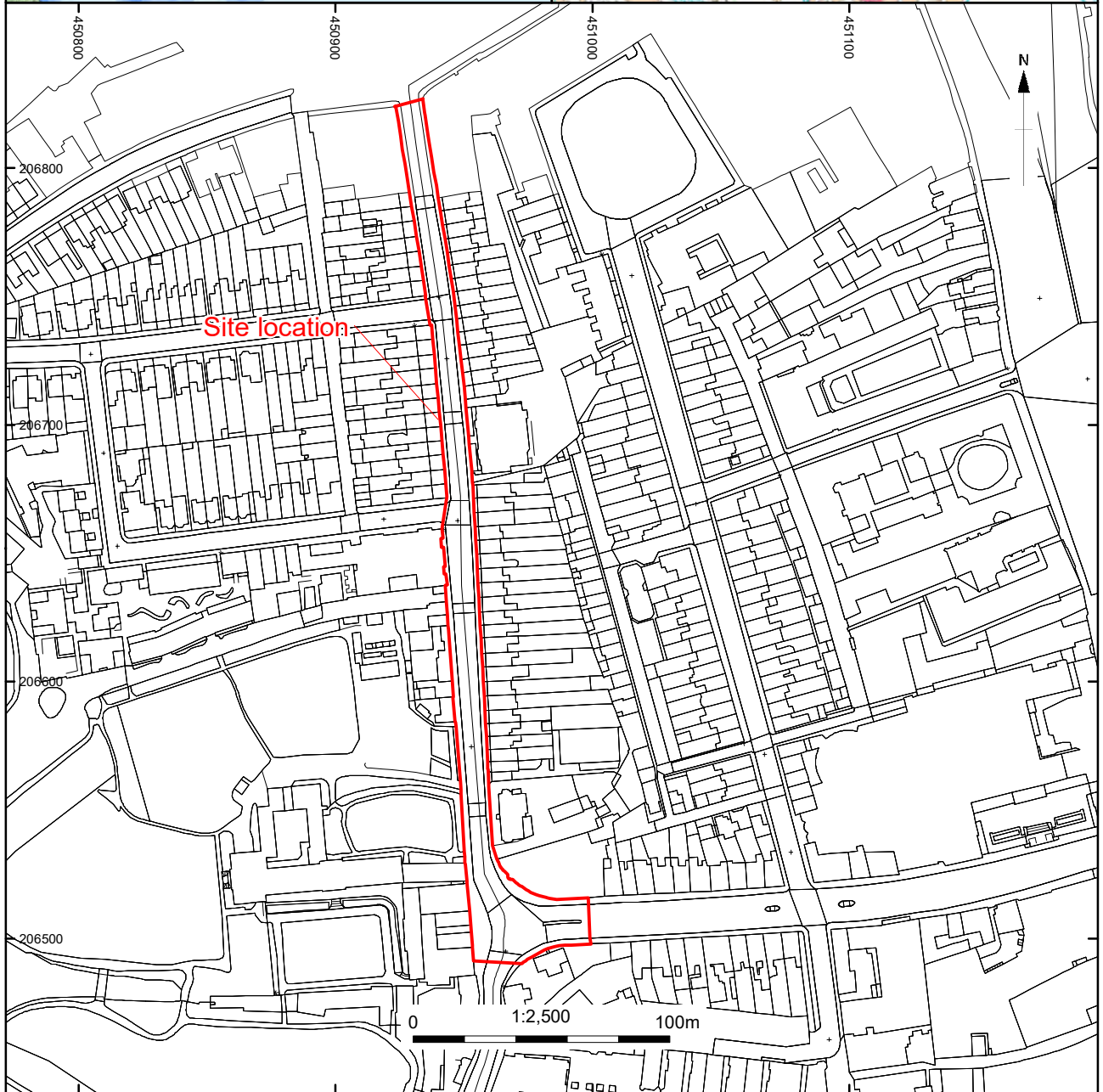
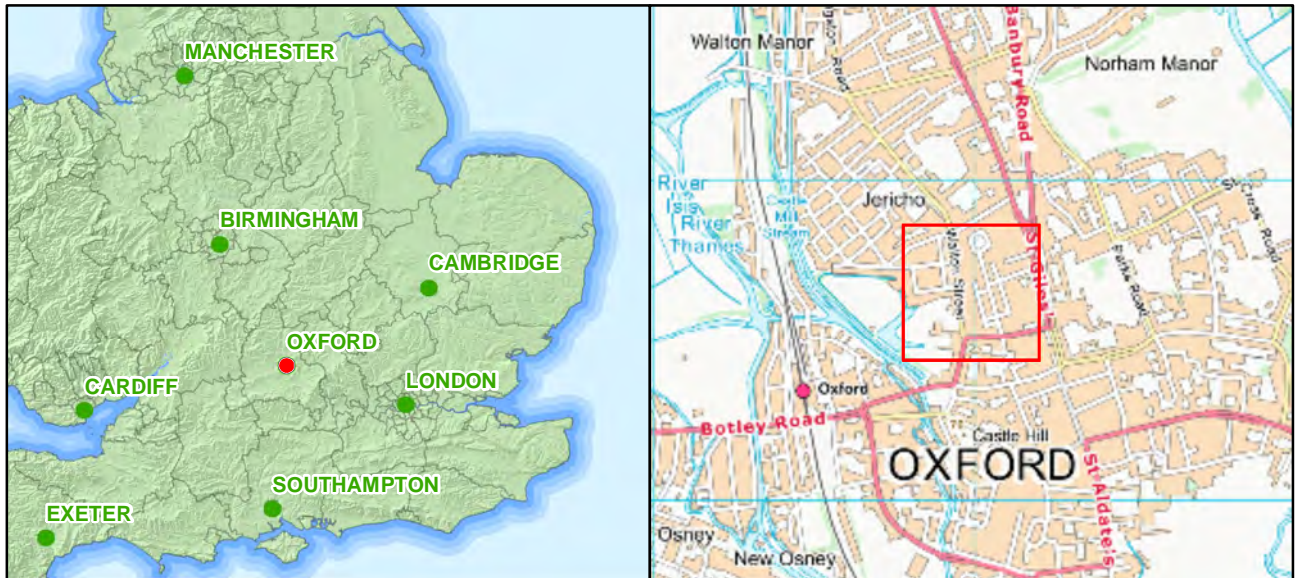
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APPENDIX B**SITE SUMMARY DETAILS**

Site name:	Road Maintenance Works at Walton Street, Oxford
Site code:	OXWASE19
Grid Reference	SP 50956 06528
Type:	Watching Brief
Date and duration:	August 2019 (2 days attendance)
Area of Site	-
Location of archive:	The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford and will be deposited with an appropriate repository in due course.
Summary of Results:	<p>In August 2019, Oxford Archaeology was commissioned by Skanska on behalf of Oxford City Council to carry out a watching brief during road repair works following the appearance of underground cavities in Walton Street, Oxford. The site is located in the vicinity of the medieval settlement of Walton and Worcester College.</p> <p>The machine excavations to locate and backfill the cavities were monitored. The works encountered modern backfill of service trenches underneath the existing hard standing. No archaeological deposits were observed or finds recovered.</p>



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Figure 1: Site location

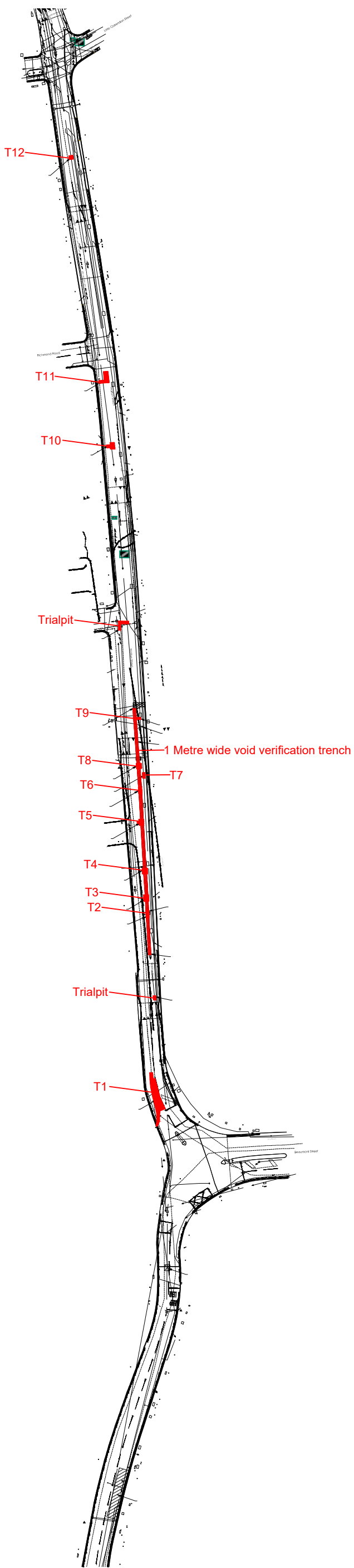
450800
206800

451100
206800



450800
206450

451100
206450



0 50m

Scale at A3 1:1250

Figure 2: Trench location plan



Plate 1: Identifying void 1



Plate 2: Backfilling void 1



Plate 3: Identifying void 2



Plate 4: Backfilling void 2



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