St Peter's College, Linton Quad



Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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St Peter's College, Oxford

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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Summary

During August to November 2015 Oxford Archaeology conducted a watching brief on ground works centred on Linton Quad, St Peter's College, New Inn Hall Street, Oxford. During the excavation of a service trench adjacent to New Inn Hall Street a wall footing and associated void representing a cellar were uncovered. The wall footing would have formed the side wall of a building that would have fronted onto New Inn Hall Street, and is potentially represented on the historic maps of the early post-medieval period. Within the quad a new soakaway was excavated, and a sequence of post-medieval layers encountered. These were equivalent to those recorded during a previous evaluation test pit. The quad surface was renewed, but no deposits other than those relating to its construction were present.

1 Introduction

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) were instructed by Andy Waterman of Waterman Project Management Ltd on behalf of St Peter's College to undertake a watching brief on ground works at St Peter's College Oxford (Fig. 1). The work was undertaken to a written scheme of investigation (OA 2014a) informed by a design brief for the works (OCC 2014).
- 1.1.2 Oxford City Council have granted planning permission to St Peter's College, Oxford for the erection of a single storey extension to Linton Lodge, including the removal of existing windows, alteration to front porch columns and alterations to front boundary wall and railings; the erection of a single storey extension to the chapel including the installation of new doors in the north wall; erection of a new covered passage to the Besse Building. Additionally the erection of a single storey extension to the Latner Building, the excavation of a new soakaway pit and landscaping within the curtilage of buildings at their site at New Hall Street, Oxford (Planning Permission 14/01106/FUL).
- 1.1.3 The watching brief monitored the ground works ahead of construction which included the reduction of the existing quad surface by *c* 500mm, the excavation of the soakaway and associated drainage trenches, and drainage works adjacent to New Inn Hall Street (Fig. 2). No additional impacts are anticipated from any further construction works.
- 1.1.4 The excavation of the test pit ahead of the new soakaway forms the contents of a previous report (OA 2014b).

1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies towards the western edge of Oxford, approximately 250m west of Carfax Tower and approximately 100m inside the medieval city walls (Fig. 1). It is centred on National Grid Reference SP 5111 0625, and is situated within the southern half of the St Peter's College campus adjoining New Inn Hall Street, Oxford.
- 1.2.2 The college is bounded to the north and south by buildings, to the west by Bulwark Lane and by New Inn Hall Street to the east.
- 1.2.3 The development area itself consists of the quads, areas of paving and hard standing together with standing buildings within the precinct of the college itself.



1.2.4 The geology of the area is the Summertown-Radley Sand and Gravel Member overlying the Oxford Clay Formation (Geological Survey of Great Britain, sheet no. 236). The area of proposed development lies at *c.* 65m OD.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background to the site has been complied using a Desk Based Assessment (DBA) previously prepared for the Wesley Memorial Church, New Inn Hall Street, immediately adjacent to the site to the north (OA 2013), and a previous DBA for St Peter's College (OA 2008).
- 1.3.2 The immediate area can demonstrate a level of activity during the prehistoric period, most notably from the Bronze and Iron Ages. A Bronze Age brooch and early Iron Age pottery were found in deposits thought to have come from the Twinings Building in George Street, c175m north of the area of proposed development. A Bronze Age barrow ditch was excavated at 24a St Michael's Street in 1985, 150m north-east of the site, and two more were identified during the building of the Sackler Library 350m to the north.
- 1.3.3 A Roman urn was uncovered when the Wesleyan Methodist Church was built in 1870. If this was related to a burial, there is the potential for other burials in the vicinity.
- 1.3.4 Further evidence of Romano-British activity has come from the nearby area in St Michaels Street and Queen Street, including a figurine, a patera and guern and pottery.
- 1.3.5 Oxford had long been an important river crossing. In the early 10th century it was added to the West Saxon system of defensive burhs, and the town was laid out inside the walls with a regular street pattern centred on Carfax, 280m from the area of proposed development. Evidence for settlement has been recovered from many archaeological investigations from the Castle eastwards.
- 1.3.6 An earthwork bank and ditch were constructed around the town, some remains of which have been found in archaeological investigations. These results suggest that the later medieval City Wall was constructed over the late Saxon defences for the most part. The turf rampart was found in the centre of St Michael's Street, north-east of the site, during drainage work in 1976 and at No 24 St Michael's Street in 1985. St Michael-at-the-Northgate church was founded during the Late Saxon period. Its tower dates to the 11th century and formed part of the gate. It lies c 250m north-east of the area of proposed development.
- 1.3.7 During excavations at 40 George Street in 1977-8, 150m to the north, a large north-south ditch was found, which pre-dated the line of the medieval stone wall, and which first appeared in the documentary record in 1226. It is thought that this ditch was the Saxon defensive ditch.
- 1.3.8 During the later medieval period the area was occupied by Elm Hall, a City Property, and some Osney Abbey properties, mostly tenements.
- 1.3.9 Although the properties boundaries around the area of proposed development are fairly well understood, little is known about what activity was taking place within the plots at that time. Elm Hall had been an academic hall, but had ceased to serve this function by the 15th century. Tenements usually had houses on the street frontage with backyards behind.
- 1.3.10 By the later part of the 17th century a considerable amount of development had taken place across Oxford. Loggan's Map of 1675 shows Elm Hall and its neighbouring properties as still mainly gardens, but in the north-east corner, close to the area of



proposed development, a building has been constructed close to the City Wall. Taylor's 1751 Map shows little change with the site still represented as part of a garden at that date. The next map to show the area of proposed development is based on a survey carried out for the Oxford Canal Company, who brought the canal to Oxford in 1790. This shows that the medieval division between Elm Hall and the property to its south had been restored.

- 1.3.11 The Wesleyan Methodists purchased the property south of Elm Hall in the early 19th century. The Oxford Canal Company's 1838 plan does not show the details of the then Methodist site, but to the north where the Church Hall now stands are some buildings including a stable and Elm cottages built into the Bastion.
- 1.3.12 During the 19th century part of the footprint of the Latner Building was located within the grounds of the Methodist Chapel.
- 1.3.13 The 1939 OS map is the first to show St Peter's College. The Emily Morris Building, which adjoins the area of proposed development, was begun in December 1929 after the college had purchased the old Wesleyan school and the surrounding land. The former Wesleyan Methodist Chapel itself was bought by the college in 1932.

Previous Archaeological Work

- 1.3.14 In 1980 an excavation for St Peter's College at the south end of Bulwarks Lane, c100m south-west of the proposed developments, found an area of turf stripping, which was attributed to the Saxon rampart, and suggested a continuation of the north-south alignment of the defensive ditch.
- 1.3.15 A 2003 watching brief undertaken by Oxford Archaeology during the construction of a new seminar room 100m north-west of the site recorded post-medieval garden soils cut and sealed by 19th century constructions and modern services (OA, 2003).
- 1.3.16 In June 2010 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a single trench evaluation against the south side of the Oxford City Wall at the rear of the Wesley Memorial Church, north of the proposed developments. The evaluation revealed a 17th-century garden soil and a robber trench for the 13th-century City Wall. The wall had been subject to at least two repairs/alterations, one of which may have comprised the creation of a doorway. The construction deposits were overlain by two thick soil horizons deposited prior to the 19th-century redevelopment of the site (OA, 2010).
- 1.3.17 In August 2014, OA undertook the excavation of an evaluative test pit on the site of a proposed soakaway pit in the Linton Quadrangle of the college (OA 2014b). The evaluation revealed a 16th-17th century pit cutting through a series of earlier deposits of uncertain provenance. The pit is likely to represent occupation associated with properties fronting on to New Inn Hall Street (formerly Little Bailey). The fills of the pit were overlain by a series of fairly homogeneous 18th-19th century deposits which were likely to represent landscaping contemporary with the construction of Wyaston House (now Linton House) in 1797. The remaining deposits were likely to represent a second phase of landscaping, possibly associated with the construction of St Peter's Church (now the college chapel) in 1874.
- 1.3.18 The evaluation established a level below which significant archaeological deposits were likely to be encountered. This level was used to inform the design of the soakaway pit.



2 Project Aims and Methodology

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The aims of the watching brief were:
 - To determine the presence or absence of any archaeological remains which may survive.
 - To determine or confirm the approximate extent of any surviving remains
 - To determine the date range of any surviving remains by artefactual or other means.
 - To determine the condition and state of preservation of any remains.
 - To determine the degree of complexity of any surviving horizontal or vertical stratigraphy.
 - To assess the associations and implications of any remains encountered with reference to the historic landscape.
 - To determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence, and the forms in which such evidence may survive.
 - To determine the implications of any remains with reference to economy, status, utility and social activity.
 - To determine or confirm the likely range, quality and quantity of the artifactual evidence present.
 - Identify any evidence for an early defensive boundary of the "primary burh", thought to run along the break in slope running north-south and parallel with New Inn Hall Street;
 - Investigate the potential for multi-period tenement occupation activity within this location;
 - Determine if there are burials within the vicinity of the old 19th century Methodist Chapel garden.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The watching brief was undertaken during October and November 2015. In total six visits were undertaken to monitor excavation work, or to record the results of previously undertaken excavations.
- 2.2.2 All revealed deposits were recorded in line with the Appendices in the approved WSI (OA 2014a).

3 Results

3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 The watching brief comprised the monitoring of three main excavations within and around around Linton quad (Fig. 2).
 - The removal of the quad surface, prior to replacement.
 - The excavation of the soakaway and related service trenches.
 - The excavation of a new service trench adjacent to and parallel with new Inn hall Street.



The quad surface

- 3.1.2 The paved quad surface was reduced throughout by 500mm (Figs. 2 And 3; Plate 1), prior to its replacement with a new concrete foundation. The excavation revealed a series of layers, all of recent date. The lowest deposit encountered was a crushed concrete layer which was sealed by a layer of gravel topped with tarmac, potentially an earlier service, but certainly of 20th century date. The tarmac was sealed by sand and then the current paving of the quadrangle path surface.
- 3.1.3 During this work the top of the wall footings of the chapel were revealed (Figs. 2 and 3). The footing was constructed of red house bricks, of which two courses were revealed, each brick having dimensions as revealed of 230mm long by 70mm deep. These were overlain by the ashlar limestone of the chapel wall.
- 3.1.4 No deposits or structures of archaeological significance were revealed during this phase of works.

The soakaway and service trenches

- 3.1.5 The soakaway excavation measured 4.2m by 3.1m and was excavated to a depth of 1.5m below the grass surface (Figs 2 and 3; Plates 2 and 3). The earliest deposit encountered, 123, was a brown sandy silt, thought to represent a levelling deposit, possibly of imported garden soil, and may be equivalent to layer 012 form the previous evaluation (OA 2014b). Pottery recovered during the evaluation dated to 1780-1840, although no additional finds were recovered during this phase of work. Layer 123 was sealed by 122, a fairly thick mid brownish-grey gravelly silt deposit from which a single sherd of transfer printed pottery dating to 1800-1840 was recovered. This layer may be equivalent to a combination of deposits 09, 010, and 111 from the previous evaluation.
- 3.1.6 Layer 122 was partially overlain by a gravel deposit (121) which may either represent a further episode of levelling, or perhaps the surface of a path, running in a west-east direction. This deposit was also identified in the service trench that extended from the eastern side of the soakaway (Figs 2 and 3). If 121 does represent a path then this would suggest that the quad surface at this time was level with the top of deposit 122, with a hiatus in activity prior to the deposition of overlying layer 120, which sealed both 122 and 121.
- 3.1.7 Layer 120, also interpreted as a levelling deposit, and perhaps equivalent to 004 from the evaluation, was a mid to dark grey-brown silty clay. No datable material was recovered from this layer in either the evaluation or watching brief works. This was sealed by layer 119, a compact yellow brown sandy silt, which was in turn sealed by topsoil and grass (118).
- 3.1.8 The service trenches, which connected the soakaway to existing drainage, were sited to the west and east of the soakaway trench (Figs 2 and 3). The sequence of deposits was essentially the same as that described above.

Service trench adjacent to New Inn Hall Street

- 3.1.9 A service trench was excavated parallel and adjacent to New Inn Hall Street, in the grassed area adjacent to the College entrance (Fig. 2; Plate 4). The trench measured up to 2.2m wide and 16m long. The trench was around 0.4m deep, with a narrow deeper central section reduced to a maximum of 1.85m (Section 106, Fig. 4). Many of the deposits encountered had been partially disturbed by existing services (Plate 4).
- 3.1.10 The earliest deposit encountered was a mid orange-brown clay silt (112) the top of which was uncovered at around 1.35m below the current ground surface. This was overlain by a mid yellow-brown sandy silt with frequent degraded mortar inclusions (102). Layer 102 had been cut by a service trench filled with a gravels (110) and was overlain at the southern end



- of the trench by a layer of crushed brick and limestone rubble (109). At the northern end of the trench layer 102 was sealed by topsoil (101/124).
- 3.1.11 At the southern limit of the trench a wall footing 100, was constructed of limestone bonded in a sandy mortar 107 (Figs 3 and 5; Plates 5 and 6). The footing, which was orientated broadly WSW-ENE, was perpendicular to the line of New Inn Hall Street, and measured 0.6m wide. The stones that formed the wall did not appear to have been laid in courses, and averaged 250mm on a side. The revealed section of the wall footing measured 1.1m in height, and a length of c 1.9m was present within the excavated area. To the south of the wall a void allowed a glimpse into a cellar (106), which would have been contemporary with the wall. The roof of the cellar was only briefly observed, but was constructed of slightly smaller limestone blocks than the wall, and was bonded with what appeared to be the same mortar (105). Only around 500mm in depth of the cellar was observed, the remainder appearing to have been backfilled with rubble.
- 3.1.12 Following a site visit and advice from David Radford, The Oxford City Archaeologist, the cellar void was infilled with fine gravel, and not further impacted upon.
- 3.1.13 Wall 100 was abutted by deposit 104, a dark greyish-brown sandy silt with frequent inclusions of limestone fragments. The wall and cellar were overlain by deposit 105 (not shown on section), which appeared to relate to the demolition phase of the building, and was composed of around 30% limestone rubble in a brownish red sandy soil matrix. This was sealed by layer 103, a thin peaty layer, potentially the remnants of a possible former wood-chip surface, and layer 102 (above) in turn sealed by topsoil and turf surface 101.

3.2 Finds

3.2.1 Only layer 122 within the soakaway excavation contained pottery that could be clearly ascribed to a definite deposit. This sherd of transfer printed tea cup was dated to 1800-1840. (Appendix B).

3.3 Environmental remains

3.3.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were uncovered during the course of the watching brief.

4 Discussion and Conclusions

- 4.1.1 The excavations to replace the Linton quad surface did not impact on any archaeological deposits, with only modern layers associated with the previous stone set surface encountered. The excavation for the new soakaway, the maximum depth of which was informed by the previous evaluation test pit (OA 2014b), did not impact on any significant archaeological deposits, with the earliest layers encountered likely, from pottery recovered, to be of late post-medieval date (early 19th century).
- 4.1.2 The wall and cellar uncovered during the drainage works adjacent to New Inn Hall Street represent the remains of a building that would have fronted onto the Street. In the absence of any direct dating evidence for either the wall or other revealed deposits, the cartographic evidence suggests that the wall either formed part of 'Newe Inn' as shown on Aga's map of 1578 or, perhaps more likely on the grounds of its position, which perhaps lies slightly to the north of the shown position of Newe Inn, one of the buildings depicted on Loggan's view of Oxford (1675) fronting on to New Inn Hall Street.



APPENDIX A. ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context	Туре	Depth	Width	Length	Comments	Finds	Date
100	Structure	0.6m +	0.74m	2m +	Wall	-	-
101	Layer	0.2m	-	-	Topsoil	-	-
102	Layer	0.4m	-	-	Garden soil	-	-
103	Layer	0.02m	_	_	Garden soil	-	-
104	Layer	0.53m +	-	-	Levelling	-	-
105	Deposit				Mortar and rubble	-	-
106	Structure				Cellar wall	-	-
107	Deposit				Mortar	-	-
108	Layer				Levelling	-	-
109	Layer	1.0m	0.9m		Crushed brick	-	-
					layer		
110	Fill	1.0m	0.9m		Fill of 111	-	-
111	Cut				Service	-	-
112	Layer	0.5m +	-	-	Levelling deposit	-	-
113	Layer	0.28m	-	-	Quad lawn	-	-
114	Fill	0.16m	-	-	Fill of 114	-	-
115	Cut	0.16	-	-	Services	-	-
116	Fill	1.5m +	1.7m +		Fill of 118	-	-
117	Structure	0.22m	0.16m		Ornamental	-	-
					edging of walnut		
					tree		
118	Cut	1.5m +	1.7m +	-	Walnut tree bole	-	-
119	Layer	0.22m	-	-	Garden soil	-	-
120	Layer	0.12m	-	-	Levelling deposit	-	-
121	Layer	0.11m	-	-	Gravel path	-	-
122	Layer	0.46m	-	-	Levelling deposit	Pottery	1800-
							1840
123	Layer	0.34m +	-	-	Levelling deposit	-	-
124	Layer	0.09m	-	-	Topsoil	-	-
125	Layer	0.08m	-	-	Levelling	-	-
126	Layer	0.23m	-	-	Garden soil?	-	-



APPENDIX B. FINDS REPORTS

B.1 Pottery

Identified by John Cotter

Context	Description	Date
122	Single sherd of transfer printed Pearl ware (PEAR TR) teacup with houses on external surface and foliage border on internal surface, 3g	1800 -1840

Discussion and recommendations. The assemblage is of low potential and requires no further work. The sherd should be retained with the assemblage from the first watching brief phase.

APPENDIX C. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

OA 2003 St Peter's College, New Inn Hall Street, Oxford: Archaeological Watching Brief Report. Unpublished client report. Oxford Archaeology.

OA 2010 Wesley Memorial Church, New Inn Hall Street, Oxford: Evaluation Report. Unpublished client report. Oxford Archaeology.

OA 2014a New Soakaway and Building Works, St Peter's College, Oxford. Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Test Pit and Watching Brief. Unpublished client report. Oxford Archaeology.

OA 2014b Soakaway Test Pit, St Peter's College, Oxford. Archaeological Evaluation Report. Unpublished client report. Oxford Archaeology.

OCC, 2014, St Peter's College, New Inn Hall Street, Oxford: Brief for an Archaeological Test Pit and Watching Brief

Geological Survey of Great Britain 1982. Sheet 236 Witney (Oxford).



APPENDIX D. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: St Peter's College, Oxford

Site code: OXPETE14

Grid reference: Centred at NGR SP 5111 0625

Type of watching brief: Intermittent

Date and duration of project: October to November 2015

Area of site: $c \cdot 1000 \text{m}^2$

Summary of results: During August to November 2015 Oxford Archaeology conducted

a watching brief on ground works centred on Linton Quad, St Peter's College, New Inn Hall Street, Oxford. During the excavation of a service trench adjacent to New Inn Hall Street a wall footing and associated void representing a cellar were uncovered. The wall footing would have formed the side wall of a building that would have fronted onto New Inn Hall Street, and is

potentially represented on the historic maps of the early post-

medieval period. Within the quad a new soakaway was excavated, and a sequence of post-medieval layers

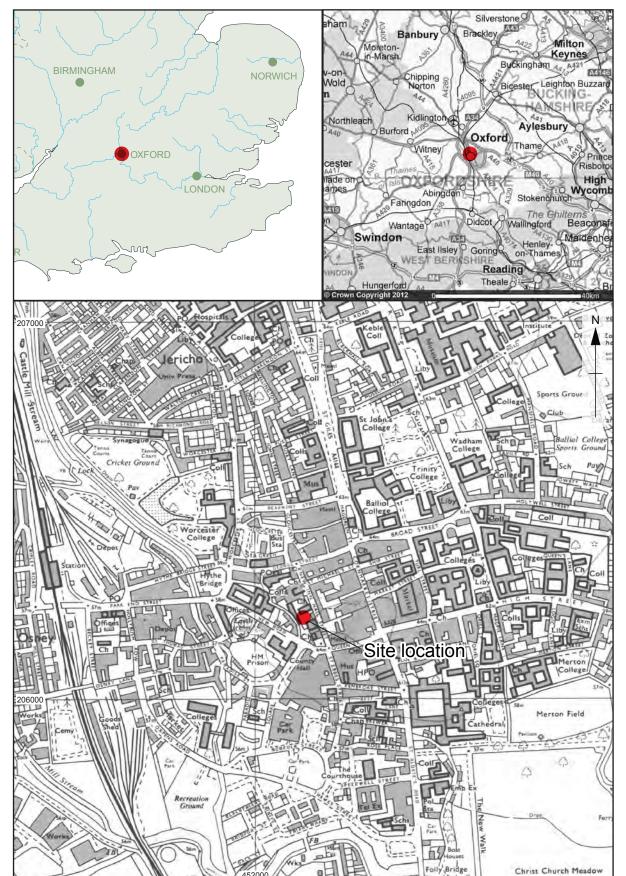
encountered. These were equivalent to those recorded during a previous evaluation test pit. The quad surface was renewed, but no deposits other than those relating to its construction were

present.

Location of archive: The archive is currently stored at Janus House, Osney Mead

Oxford, and will be deposited with the Oxfordshire Museum

Service in due course.



Scale 1:10,000

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Figure 1: Site location

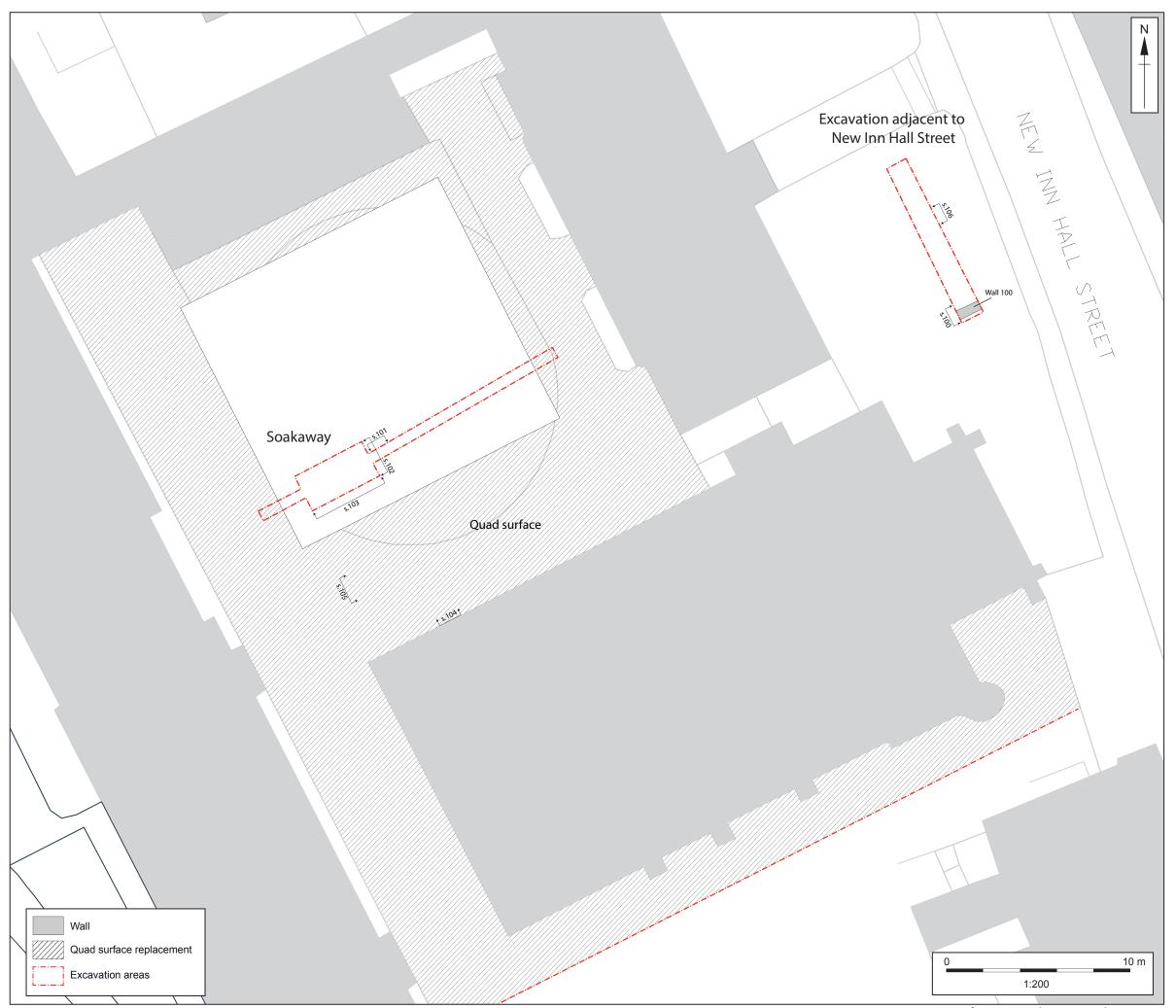
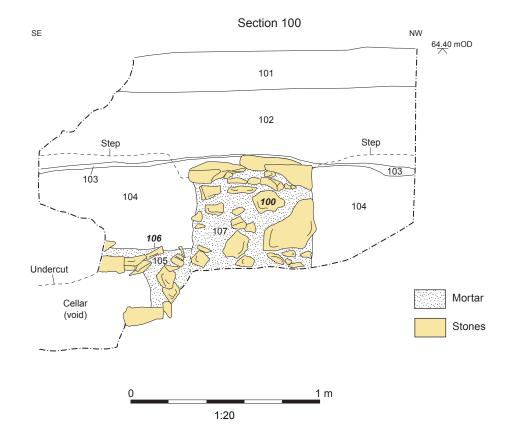
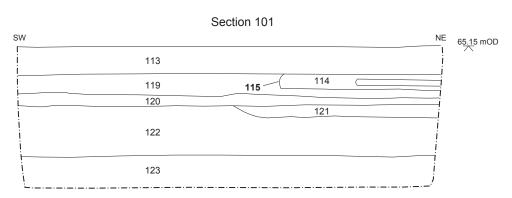


Figure 2: Location of excavated areas and sections





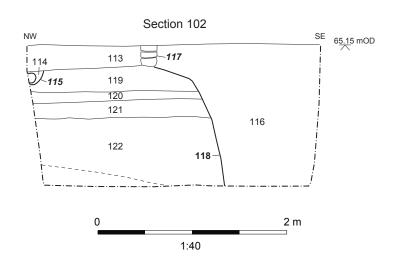


Figure 3: Sections 100, 101 and 102

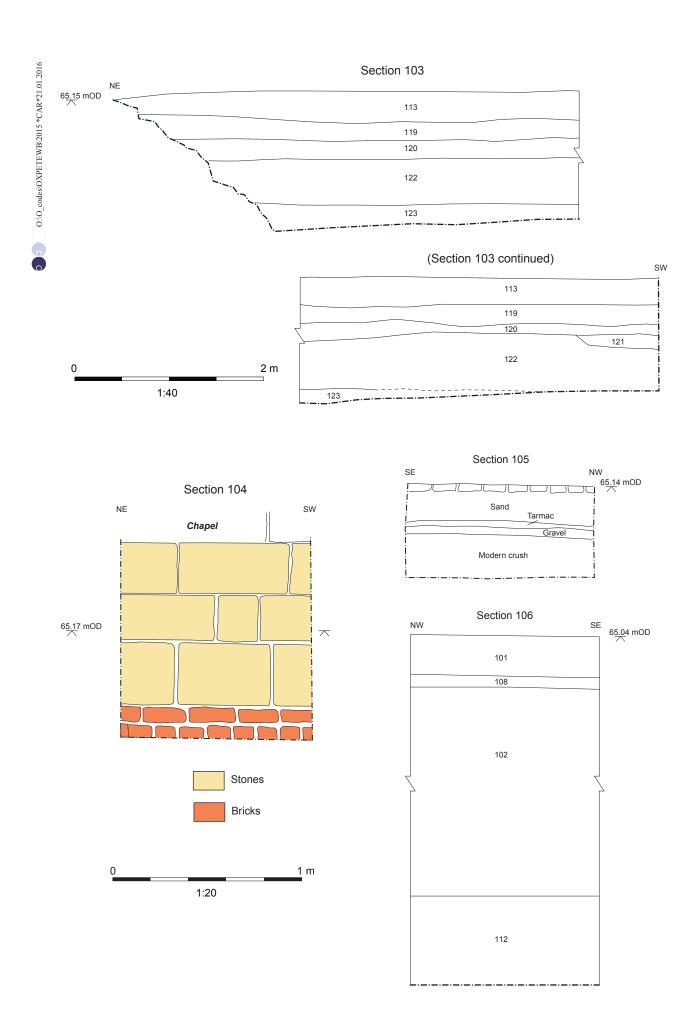


Figure 4: Sections 103, 104, 105 and 106

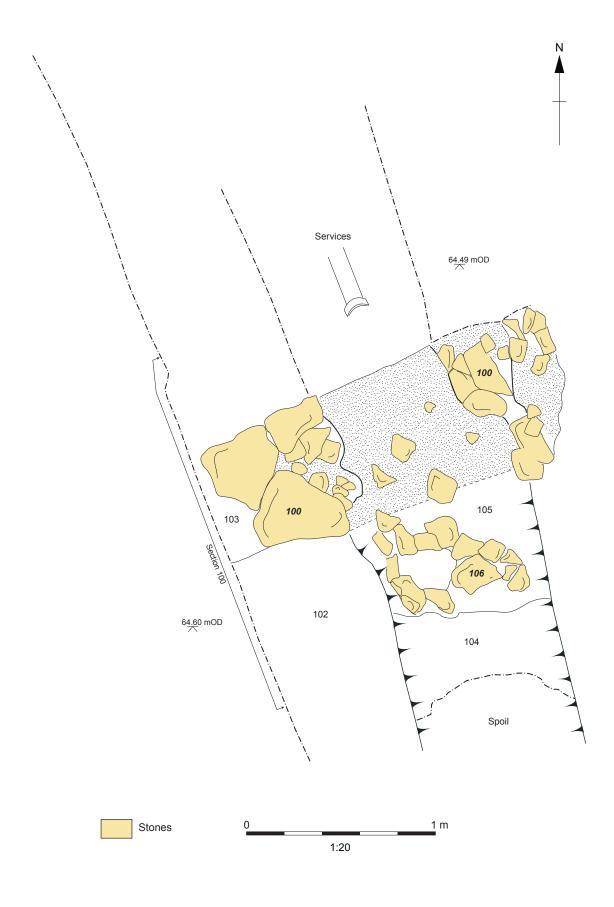


Figure 5: Plan of wall 100



Plate 1 Section through deposits uncovered during removal of quad surface



Plate 2 Soakaway and service run general shot



Plate 3 Soakaway section



Plate 4 New water pipe and previous services adjacent to New Inn Hall Street



Plate 5 Wall 100 and cellar void



Plate 6 Wall and cellar void close up



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