



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING OF GEOTECHNICAL PITS

AT

BLUE BOAR QUAD, CHRIST CHURCH,

OXFORD

SP 5145 0610

On behalf of

PRICE & MYERS LLP

NOVEMBER 2006

REPORT FOR

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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services conducted a watching brief during the excavation of several geotechnical pits.

Medieval pits were found cut into the top of terrace gravel deposits. A 15th or 16th century building was found. This had been partly dismantled and covered by material probably excavated for the cellars of the Peckwater Quad buildings. Layers and features associated with later use of the area as gardens were found.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

Blue Boar Quad is located in the northeast part of Christ Church, to the north of Tom Quad and west of Peckwater Quad (NGR SP 5145 0608) (Fig. 1). This part of the college is situated on the southern extent of the second gravel terrace (BGS 1982).

1.2 Background

As part of a consideration to alter existing buildings in the quad several geotechnical pits and boreholes were excavated. Archaeological recording of the pits was undertaken.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The college was founded as Cardinal College by Cardinal Wolsey in 1525 and required the clearance of numerous medieval buildings and the closing of medieval streets. By the time Wolsey had fallen from power three sides of the Gothic quadrangle had been virtually finished, but only the foundations of the proposed chapel for its north side were in place. After Wolsey's fall and death, Henry VIII took over the fabric and endowments of Wolsey's foundation and re-designated them 'King Henry VIII's College'. On the east side of quadrangle was the former Augustinian St Frideswide's priory. Following a four year period when the dissolved Oseney Abbey acted as cathedral, Henry in 1546 designated the former priory church as Christ Church cathedral of the new Henrician diocese of Oxford, and as the chapel of the new college of Christ Church. It is thought that the west end of the former priory church was demolished to accommodate the symmetrical Gothic quadrangle (Sherwood & Pevsner 1974).

Recent work in the basement of Staircases 3 and 4 on the north side of Peckwater Quad recorded a 13th century building, and pits and deposits from the 10th to 17th centuries. Elsewhere in the college parts of the former medieval roads of St Frideswide's Lane, St Edward Street and Jury Lane have been discovered. Remains of several buildings fronting these streets have been recorded.

Salter shows the area as being south of "New Blue Boar Lane" and to the north of "Little Jewry Street" comprising of several plots of land:

- Plot 125: Eagle Hall survived as late as 1478; it was then merged with Edward Hall in 1493.
- Plot 134: Area Predicatum of St Frideswide's.

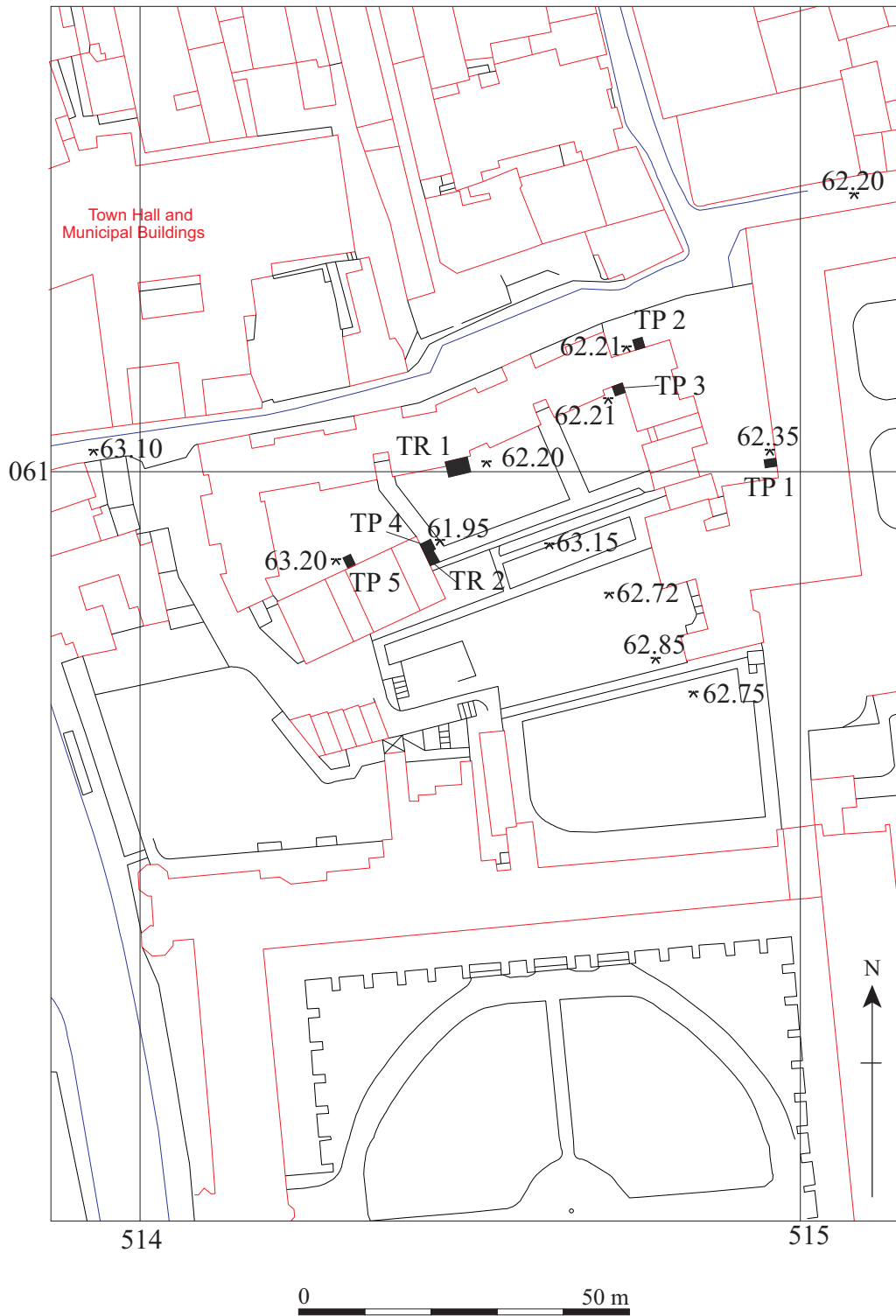


Figure 1 Test pit and trench locations

- Plot 250: A tenement of St Frideswide's, acquired from the Black Friars when they moved to a new site to build their priory in 1237 (Sturdy 2004)
- Plot 251: Civil Law School, belonging to St Frideswide's.

The existing brewhouse on the south side of the quad is thought to be late 16th-early 17th century (RCHM 1939).

1.4 Cartographic Evidence

The Cartographic evidence for this area is summarised below.

Agas's map of c1578: Shows that between the unfinished building of Christ Church and Blue Boar Street (once known as Bear Lane), the area is divided by an E-W wall, which can be seen from the southeast corner of Peck Water Inn across to St Aldates Street (once known as South St & Fish St). A rectangular building with two chimneys is visible on the E-W wall. There were two N-S walls creating three parcels of land on the north side of the E-W wall. There are several buildings on the northwest corner plot, fronting onto St Aldates Street. Peck Water Inn is shown to the east. A square formal walled garden occupies the area of the east part of Blue Boar Quad with a small building just to the west of this walled garden.

Speed's map of 1605: Shows the two building roughly in the same place with further buildings built along the western part of Blue boar Street.

Woods map of 1644: Shows the same arrangement of buildings.

Loggan's map of 1673: Shows the Christ Church quadrangle as having the north range complete. Killcannon building also appears for the first time on this map. The area between the north range and Blue Boar Street has been divided up into gardens and orchards. Blue Boar Street appears to be narrower and straightened with the single building previously fronting Blue Boar Street now set back from the frontage. Additional buildings have been added to the north-western plot fronting onto St Aldates and along the new Blue Boar Street frontage further west in front of the previous buildings which still stand. To the west of Killcannon there is shown a small formal garden. Just west of this garden is seen a rectangular building (Loggan's drawing of college shows this as having its entrance on the south side and a path from it along the north of side of the formal garden and Killcannon). This must be the "Old Brewhouse".

Williams map of 1733: Shows that the area to the west has been developed and has a range of buildings on St Aldates, and a range of buildings on Bear Lane, with a large formal garden in the east part of the present Blue Boar Quad. Peckwater Quad has been built.

Taylor's map of 1751: Shows that the area to the west has been developed yet again with several additional buildings added to the northwest plot (corner of St Aldates and Blue Boar St), with the area to the west of Peck Water and Killcannon shown as orchards and a small garden.

Jeffrey's map of 1768: Does not show sufficient detail to determine any change.

Longmate's map of 1773: Shows the area to the west of Peck Water as totally orchards.

Faden's map of 1789: Shows the area to the west of Peck Water as having been divided in to two plots, the northerly staying as orchard whilst the south used as formal gardens.

Davies map of 1797: Shows the area to the west of Peck Water as a large formal garden.

Hoggar's map of 1850: Shows a different arrangement to the west side of Killcanon with several small buildings to the west of Killcanon, along with an open area dotted with trees to the north in the area of Blue Boar Quad. Several buildings are seen just north of the northern range of Tom Quad.

1st Edition Ordnance survey of 1876: Shows the eastern part of Blue Boar Quad divided up and labelled as Canon's Gardens. The north western corner development can be seen clearly with two large buildings fronting onto St Aldates. A stable block fronts onto Blue Boar Street with several small buildings to the south. The "Old Brewhouse" is clearly marked with just to the northeast is a small coach house.

Ordnance survey map of 1921: An additional rectangular building can be seen up against the wall of Blue Boar Street, within the northern most Canon's garden.

Ordnance survey of 1939: Shows the building in the Canon's garden have been extended along the line of Blue Boar Street. (Photographic evidence shows these building as being garages.)

Christ Church College developed the area and put up the existing buildings of Blue Boar Quad in 1966-7; in the process they demolished the coach house and the range of building that were on Blue Boar Street.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the archaeological recording were to establish the level of survival of earlier buildings and deposits within Blue Boar Quad.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Methodology

All test pits and trenches were excavated up against the existing buildings of Blue Boar, in order to reveal the depth of foundations and the underlying soils. The college excavated some pits in March 2006, while Price & Myers dug others in September 2006. Two boreholes were also excavated.

The test pits were recorded using standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and sections drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was produced.

The work was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994).

4 RESULTS

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers in [] indicate features i.e. pit cuts; while numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material. Natural terrace gravels and sand was encountered at a depth of 58.19m Ordnance Datum (henceforth OD)

Test pits 1-3 were excavated by the college while the others were the Price & Meyers' pits; the bracketed GEA figures refer to the Geotechnical & Environmental Associates' report. Locations are given in Figure 1.

Test pit 1

Located at the eastern side of the investigation area, against the west wall of Peckwater Quad.
This was excavated and back-filled prior to any archaeological observation being made.

Test pit 2 (Fig. 3)

Located on the north side of the existing building at the eastern end of the quad, making it the most northerly of the pits excavated in the area.

It measured 1.20m x 1.20m, and was excavated to a depth of 1.20m to reveal the existing building's foundations. This test pit exposed mixed deposits of made ground (2) and building rubble (1).

Test pit 3

Located in the northeast corner of the quad.

Measured 1.20m x 1.20m located in the corner of the quad, it was excavated to a depth of 0.90m below existing ground surface, and it showed only modern rubble and disturbed soils.

Test pit 4 (GEA TP2)

Located at the east end of the brewhouse building.

Measured 0.50 x 0.50m and was 0.46m deep. This test pit revealed a deposit of dark brown silt with limestone rubble (24). No further excavation was carried out as the foundation of the existing brewhouse was clearly seen at this depth.

Test pit 5 (GEA TP1)

Located on the raised area, against the north side of the brewhouse building.

Measured 1.50m x 0.60m and was excavated to a depth of 2.40m.

Below the existing slab level was a dark brown silty clay with fragments of CBM and shell some 1.05m thick (21), which overlay a brown-black clay silt (22).

Trench 1 (GEA TP3) (Fig. 2)

Located in the central area of the quad up against the south side of the existing Blue Boar building.

This trench was the largest excavated and measured 2.6m x 2.1m x 2.85m deep.

Natural orange gravel (13) was encountered at a depth of 59.44m OD; this was cut into by a large pit [11], which was filled by (12), a firm orange-brown clay silt with 10% gravels. Limited pottery from this feature dates it to some time from the mid 11th century. This pit was cut by another pit [10] filled by a dark brown slightly clay silt (14), from which a single sherd of 11th century pottery along with two fragments of 13th century pottery was recovered; the earlier material is residual.

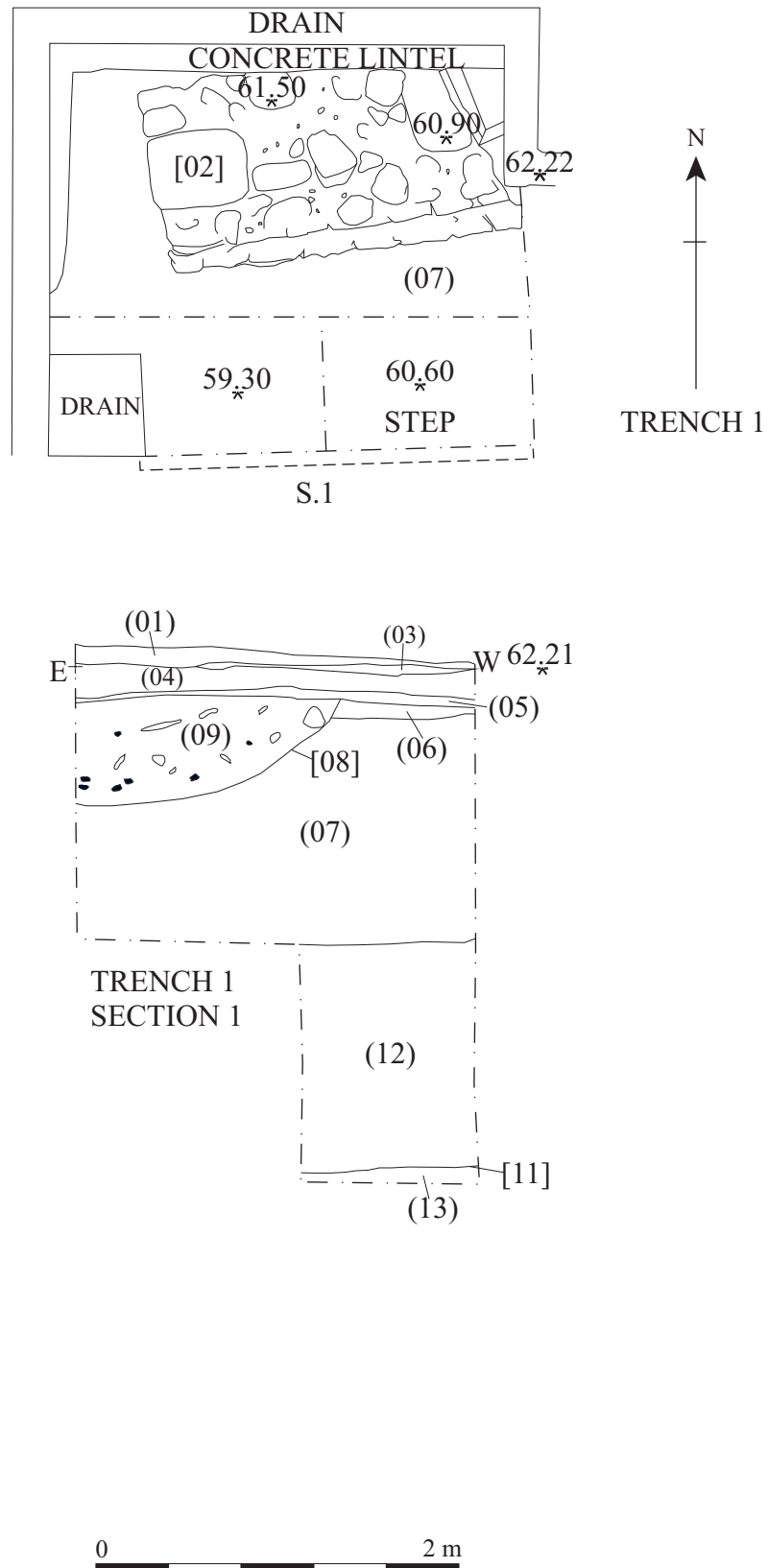


Figure 2. Plan and section of trench 1

A large 1m wide E-W orientated wall [2] was seen to cut through pit [10]. It was constructed from roughly hewn limestone blocks and pieces, measuring 0.75 x 0.40 x 0.20m – 0.20 x 0.20 x 0.10m, it was recorded at a height of 61.50m OD. Only the southern face was seen (north face cut by existing building footings); the southern side had a small 0.15m wide offset footing. Fragments of pottery and tile were recovered from the matrix of the wall as it was being dismantled; these have been dated to the 15th century.

Partly overlaying and partly against the side of the wall was a 0.90m thick deposit (7). This was a firm mid brown clay silt with frequent quantities of charcoal, shell and degraded limestone and mortar. This deposit was then in turn overlain by (6), a 0.08m thick, trampled deposit of mid brown sandy silt, which was cut by a pit that had a shallow concave profile [8]. This pit was filled with a mottled grey-brown clay silt (9). A thin 0.06m deposit of orange-brown sand (5) sealed this pit, which in turn was overlain by (4) a compacted mid brown sandy silt with 20% mixed gravels 0.12m thick. This deposit was topped by a 0.06m thin layer of yellow sand (03), which was underneath the existing turf and topsoil (1).

Trench 2 (Fig. 3)

Located to the south of TP4 cutting through the raised flowerbed.

This trench measured 2.50m x 0.70m and was 0.70m deep.

It revealed the offset footings of the brewhouse building and a small N-S wall [2/02], which was constructed from small pieces of rough limestone; it survived 0.10m high in the bottom of the trench at a height of 61.38m OD. Directly overlaying the wall was a 0.05m thick deposit (2/01). This was a mid brown sandy silt with 20% limestone rubble and a small quantities of pottery, which has been dated to the late 15th century. Deposit 2/03 was thought to be later than the wall as no cut for the wall was seen. The wall was so insubstantial that it may have been a garden bed retaining wall.

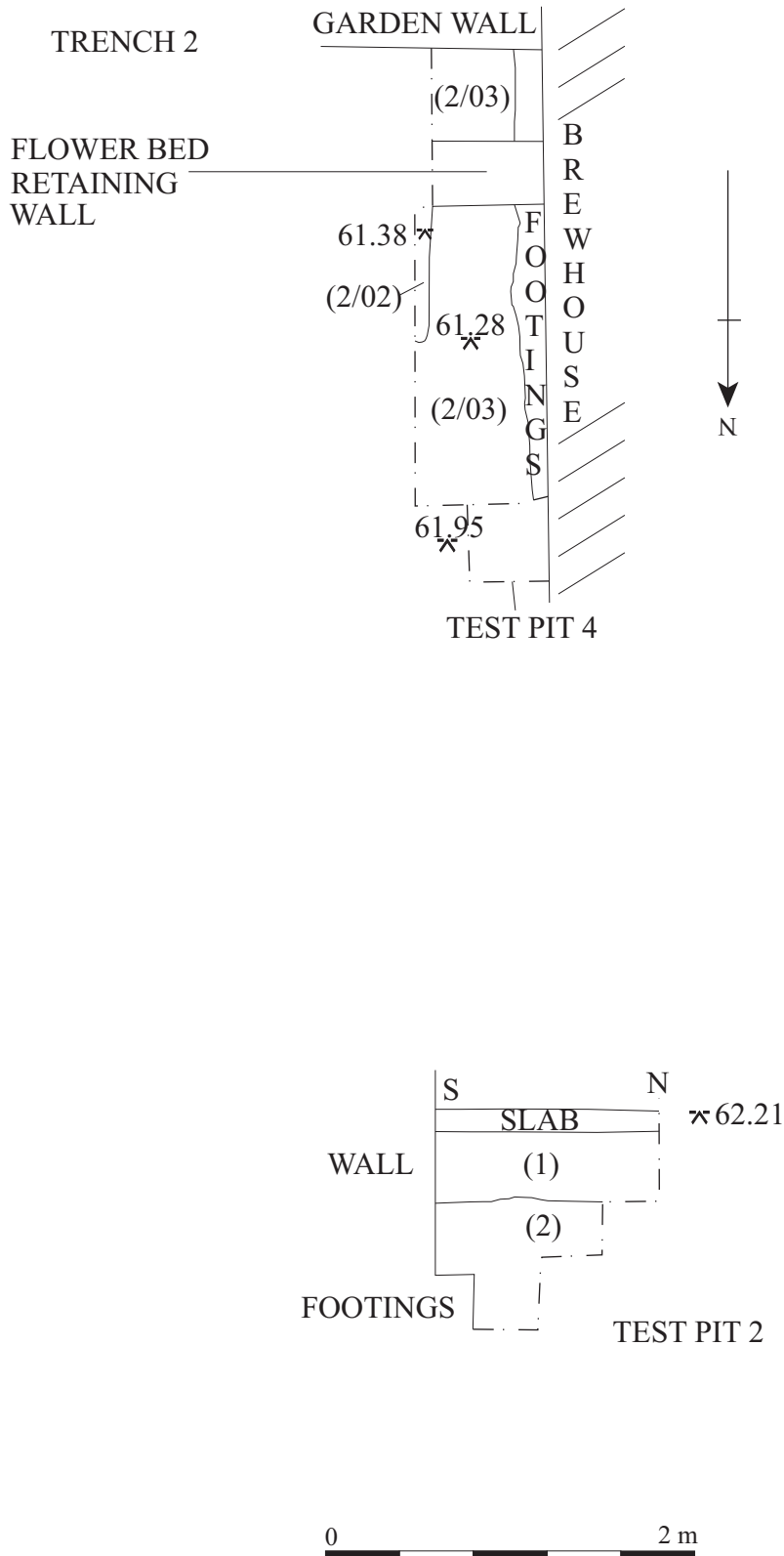


Figure 3. Plan of Trench 2 and TP 4, and section of TP 2

5. FINDS

5.1 Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 66 sherds with a total weight of 1,601g. It consisted of mainly late medieval pottery, mostly from a single context, although both earlier medieval and post-medieval pottery was present.

The group of late medieval pottery from Trench 2 context 1 comprised entirely large, reconstructible fragments of vessels associated with the serving and consumption of drink. These were two large OXAM jugs, possibly cisterns, two OXAM 'Tudor Green' cups, a Rhenish Stoneware mug and a Cistercian ware cup.

The assemblage generally was in good condition and the sherd size reasonably large. There was little obvious evidence of residuality, and suggests that there are very well preserved medieval deposits in the vicinity of these excavations.

The post-medieval pottery was recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994), as follows:

- OXB: *Late Saxon Oxford Shelly Ware*. Late 8th – early 11th C. 1 sherd, 8g.
 OXAC: *Cotswold-type ware*, AD975-1350. 1 sherd, 58g.
 OXBF: *North-East Wiltshire Ware*, AD1050 – 1400. 2 sherds, 28g.
 OXY: *Medieval Oxford ware*, AD1075 – 1350. 5 sherds, 26g.
 OXAM: *Brill/Boarstall ware*, AD1200 – 1600. 34 sherds, 883g.
 OXBN: *Tudor Green Ware*, late 14th century - c. 1500. 1 sherd, 2g.
 OXCL: *Cistercian ware*, 1475-1700. 3 sherds, 22g.
 OXST: *Rhenish Stoneware*, AD1480 – 1700. 3 sherds, 302g.
 OXAM TG: *Brill/Boarstall 'Tudor Green' wares*, 1475-1600. 8 sherds, 202g.
 OXCE: *Tin-glazed Earthenware*, 1613 – 1800. 1 sherd, 32g.
 WHEW: *Mass-produced white earthenwares*, mid 19th - 20th century. 6 sherds, 68g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Appendix 1. Each date should be regarded as a *terminus post quem*.

5.2 Other Finds

Two copper alloy finds were recovered from trench 2 /01.

SF 1: 0.02m diameter circular cu alloy ring, possibly a belt fitment for the suspending of a purse from a belt.

SF 2: a small decorated, cu alloy hooked clasp, possibly 15th – 16th C.

6 DISCUSSION

Natural terrace gravels were found at 58.98m OD in Borehole 1 in the west side of the Quad, at 58.85m in Borehole 2 in the east side of the Quad and 59.44m OD in Trench 1. The lower levels for the boreholes are probably accounted for by the boreholes having gone through pits cut into the top of the gravel deposits. Medieval pits cut into the gravels were seen in Trench 1 dating from some time after the mid 11th century. These were probably rubbish pits, as they contained pottery, animal bone, ceramic building material and oyster shell. From the results of investigations in Staircase 4 of Peckwater Quad it is probable that pits dating back to 10th

century could be present within parts of Blue Boar Quad. Further pits of 12th to 15th century dates were found in excavations during 1956 (Sturdy *et al*, 1961/2)

Due to the limited size of the excavations, very little of what was exposed can be properly interpreted; the wall [1/02] seen in Trench 1 must belong to a substantial building. Pottery recovered from the matrix of the wall has been dated to the 15th century showing that it was built after this time. This probably relates to the building fronting onto Blue Boar Street seen on Loggan's map and drawings dated 1673.

Deposit (07) in Trench 1 was a mixed deposit laid against and over the top of the partly dismantled wall. The building is not shown on Taylor's map which is after Peckwater Quad has been built. It is possible that the material excavated from the cellars was spread over the Blue Boar Quad area. This has been suspected previously (Sturdy *et al* 1961/2, 29).

It would appear that limited stratigraphy, other than intercutting pits, associated with the medieval use of the area survives within Blue Boar Quad. The present open area would have been to the rear of buildings fronting Blue Boar Street and would mainly have been used for cess pits, rubbish disposal, and possibly horticultural use.

Lying above this dump are layers probably associated with the use of the area as gardens (Trench 1, deposits 4-6) with feature [08] either being a pit or possibly a garden bed. The wall in Trench 2 is also thought to be associated with a garden feature.

The western end of Blue Boar Quad has been raised and is made up from soils from elsewhere. This is thought to be during the building of the Blue Boar Quad buildings. To the north of the site Blue Boar Street is at a height of 63.10m OD at the junction with St Aldates; it drops down to 62.50m OD just north of Peck Quad Building, and 61.28m OD further east at Oriel Square. Photographs of the western part of Blue Boar Quad before the building of the present Blue Boar Quad buildings when the area was used as a car park show the ground to be level. As part of the development of the Blue Boar buildings the difference in height between the entrance to Killcanon at 62.00m OD and the area to the west of Blue Boar Quad at 63.04-63.19m has been taken into account. This may have involved lowering of the ground level in the east part of Blue Boar Quad as well as the raising of the western part. Any lowering of the eastern part would probably have only affected eighteenth and nineteenth century garden deposits. At the western side of the site the existing ground level of the quad is 63.20m OD on the raised terrace, the central area is at 62.20m OD, gently sloping south to 61.95m OD.

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APPENDIX 1

Table 1: Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

Context	OXB		OXAC		OXBF		OXY		OXAM		OXBN		OXST		OXAM TG		OXCL		OXCE		WHEW		Date
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	
U/S							2	8											1	32			U/S
TP5									1	16											6	68	19thC
2/1									29	841			3	302	8	202	3	22					L15thC
1/2							3	18	3	16	1	2											15thC
1/10					1	9			1	10													13thC
1/12	1	8			1	19																	M11thC
1/14			1	58																			11thC?
Total	1	8	1	58	2	28	5	26	34	883	1	2	3	302	8	202	3	22	1	32	6	68	

APPENDIX 2 CONTEXT INVENTORY

CTX	Type	Description	Depth (m)	Length (m)	Width (m)	Finds	Date	Comment
TP 1		NO DATA						
TP 2			1.2	1.2	1.2			
1	Deposit	brick rubble	0.5	TR	TR			Rubble
2	Deposit	mid brown silt	0.7	TR	TR			Made ground
TP 3			0.9	1.2	1.2			
1	Deposit	dark brown loam	0.15	TR	TR			Topsoil
2	Deposit	dark brown sand silt	0.75	TR	TR			Made ground
TP 4			0.5	0.5	0.5			
23		Slab	0.25					Surface
24	Deposit	dark brown silt	0.35	TR	TR			Made ground
TP 5			2.2	1.2	0.6			
20		Slab	0.25					Surface
21	Deposit	dark brown clay silt	1.05	TR	TR	P,G,CP	19th C	Made ground
22	Deposit	brown black clay silt	0.9	TR	TR			Made ground
Trench 1			2.8	2.6	2.2			
1	Deposit	dark brown silt	0.2	TR	TR			Topsoil
2	Masonry	limestone wall			1	P, CBM	15th C	Wall
3	Deposit	pale yellow sand	0.06	1.45				
4	Deposit	mid brown sandy silt	0.12	2.2				
5	Deposit	orange brown sand and gravel	0.06	2.2				Make up
6	Deposit	mid brown sandy silt	0.08	0.78				Surface
7	Deposit	mid brown clay silt	0.9	2.2	1			
8	Cut		0.6	1.4	0.3			Pit
9	Deposit	mid brown grey clay silt	0.6	1.4	0.3	B, CBM, SH		Fill of 8
10	Cut		0.7	1.5	1.5	P	13th C	Pit
11	Cut		1.5	1.5	1.5			Pit
12	Deposit	brown orange clay silt		1.5	1.5	P	Mid 11th C	Fill of 11
13	Deposit	yellow orange sand & gravel	0.1	TR	TR			Natural
14	Deposit	dark brown clay silt	0.7	1.5		P	11th C	Fill of 10

Trench 2			0.7	2.5	0.7			
1	Deposit	dark brown sand silt	0.1	TR	TR	P	Late 15th C	
2	Masonry	limestone wall	0.1	0.7				? Wall
3	Deposit	mid brown clay silt	0.3	TR	TR			