



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

AT

96 WALTON STREET, OXFORD,

OXFORDSHIRE

NGR SP 50647 07212

*On behalf of
Ms E Teo
c/o Riach Architects*

MAY 2017

REPORT FOR Ms E Teo
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SUMMARY

This document represents an investigation of the potential for archaeological remains at 96 Walton Street, Oxford, Oxfordshire (NGR SP 50647 07212). A watching brief was undertaken to monitor a cellar extension. The site was devoid of any archaeological features. A modern service pipe was exposed and a possible construction cut for the house was observed within the cellar excavation.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The site is situated on the east side of Walton Street at the north end of a terrace of houses. 96 Walton Street, Oxford (NGR SP 50647 07212) is a grade II listed domestic Victorian dwelling. The superficial geological deposit of the site consists of a Summertown-Radley sand and gravel member; that is sand and gravel superficial deposited up to 3 million years ago in the Quaternary (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>). The site lies at approximately 60m OD.

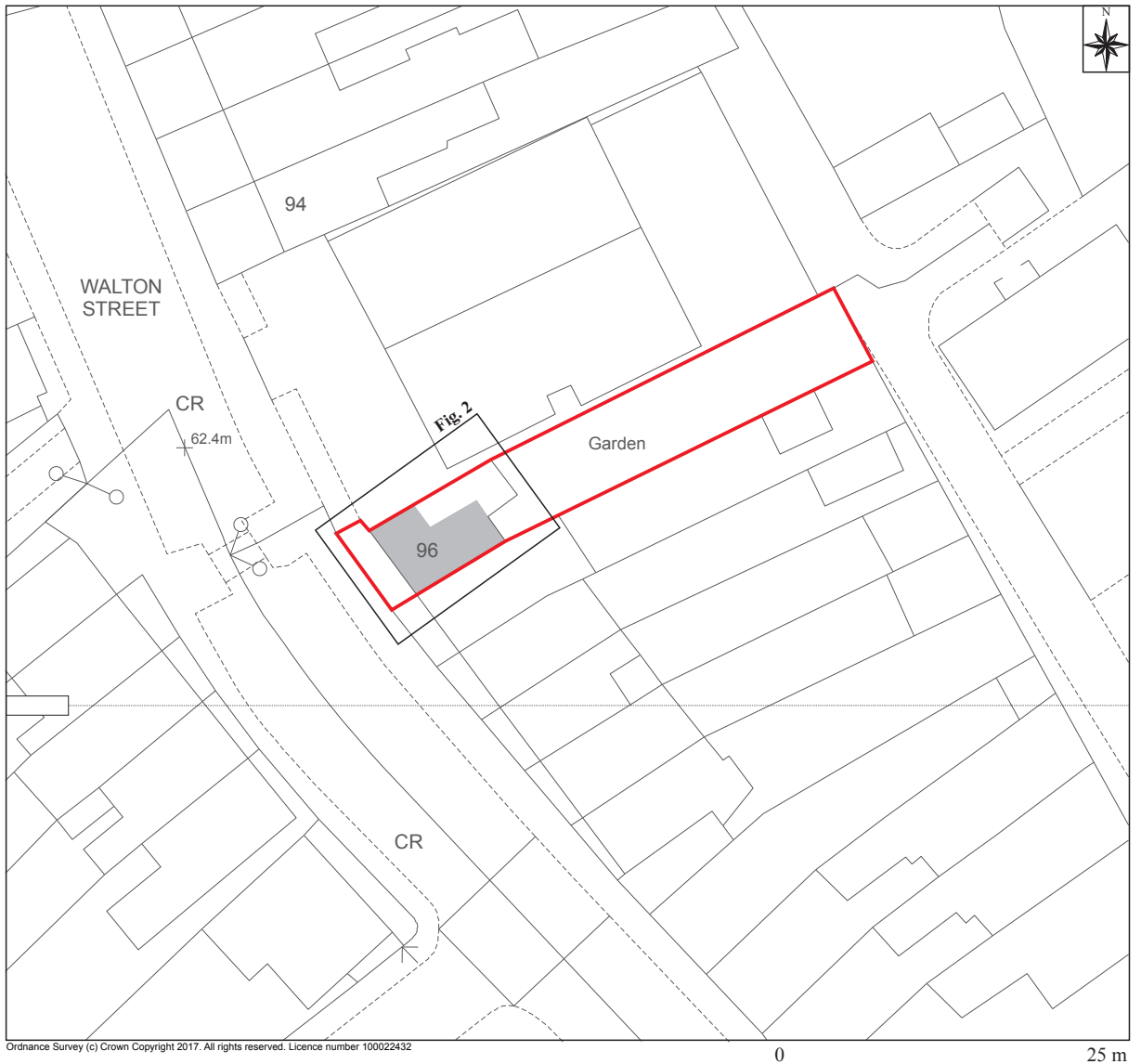
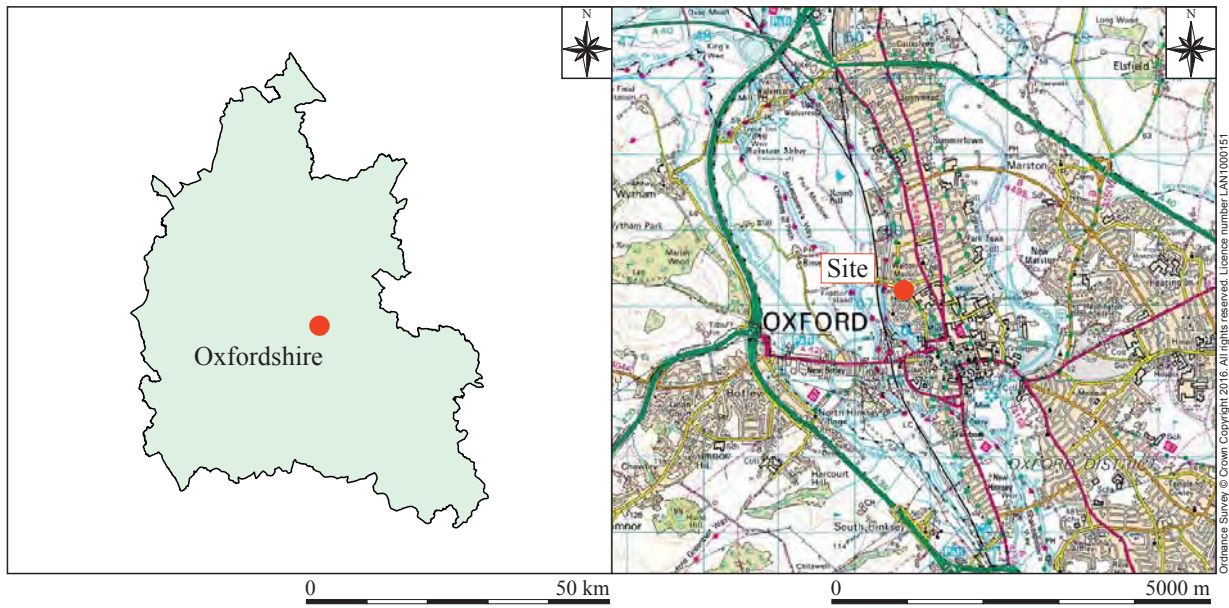
1.2 Planning Background

Oxford City Council has granted planning permission for **16/0140/FUL** Demolition of lean-to rear extension. Erection of a part single, part two storey rear extension. Enlargement of the existing basement to rear, including lowering of the existing floor. Enlargement of front lightwell and insertion of door. Alterations and refurbishment to windows and doors & **16/01041/LBC** Demolition of rear extension. Erection of a part single, part two storey rear extension. Enlargement of the existing basement, including lowering of the floor level. Enlargement of front lightwell and insertion of door. Alterations to windows on rear elevation. Refurbishment of existing windows and doors. Internal alterations to provide ground floor WC and raising of floor level at second floor. Internal alterations.

A condition (no. 7) is attached to **16/01041/LBC** permission:

No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the planning authority. All works shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the approved written scheme of investigation, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: Because the development may have a damaging effect on known or suspected elements of the historic environment of the people of Oxford and their visitors, including medieval, post-medieval and Victorian remains, in accordance with policy HE.4 of the Oxford Local Plan.



Key  Site boundary  Monitored area

Figure 1: Site location

1.3 Archaeological Background

The site is located within the historic core of the medieval settlement of Walton. By the late medieval period Walton Manor formed part of the estate of Osney Abbey. The Hundred Rolls of 1279 recorded some 46 dwellings in the hamlet with later references to a grange belonging to the Abbott of Osney. By the 14th century, Godstow also held land in the village although there is evidence of some decline in the later medieval period with just eight tenants registered in the Godstow Manor in 1541. This decline was likely reflected in the Osney estate and the village appears to have been deserted altogether by the end of the 16th century.

In 1975 a 'midden' or 'pit' to the rear of 75 Walton Street was recorded and included a quantity of sheep and cattle bones, 11th-13th century pottery and a ridge tile post-dating the 12th century, suggesting a substantial dwelling nearby. Medieval pottery was also recovered from upper levels. The site of the manor and later Walton Farmhouse may be located nearby at No 73 Walton Street as this had been recorded as a three-storeyed timber-framed building, out of keeping with the others around it. This difference may reflect its earlier position as the house for the medieval farm. Further medieval finds were made at 82 Walton Street.

No 96 is listed as part of a group of a terrace of 19th century town houses. Nothing is specifically known of the terrace's origins, through its date, character, and location its place in the development of north Oxford can be read architecturally. The listing description notes that 'This is a pleasing and simple terrace with distinctive diaper decoration to the front (used on a good number of buildings of about this date in north Oxford) which survives in a little-altered condition. Because of its architectural quality and distinctiveness, and as a survival of the early growth of north Oxford, the terrace merits being added to the list at grade II'.

An evaluation was carried out in the cellar at 96 Walton Street (JMHS 2015). The trench contained one late Post-medieval pit cut into the natural sand and was overlain by two deposits of made ground and the stone and brick floor of the cellar. A brick relieving arch was noted as forming part of the front wall of the cellar that was created to span the in-filled pit and stop subsidence of the foundations. The evaluation trench was small and designed to evaluate an earlier, smaller development proposal.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- To record any significant archaeological remains revealed by the ground works.

In particular:

- To determine whether any medieval activity is present.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Oxford City Archaeological Officer, the archaeological advisor to the Oxford City Council. The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014).

3.2 Methodology

An intermittent watching brief was undertaken during ground works to **1**) examine the basement once the modern floor had been lifted, **2**) examine the cellar floor once it had been reduced to formation level, **3**) examine the area north of the existing cellar as it was reduced from above. The building contractor excavated this area in at least two spits including one targeted at the interface with the natural geology when an archaeological contractor was to visit at these points to check for any cut features/finds). This was achieved until the final phase of cellar excavation where no monitoring visit was arranged with us.

Where archaeological horizons were encountered they were cleaned by hand and excavated appropriately. Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was also produced.

The resultant spoil from the works was visually scanned, especially for finds relating to the Medieval and earlier periods.

4 RESULTS

All deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers without brackets indicate features i.e. pit cuts, numbers in () show feature fills or deposits of material, while numbers in bold indicate structural features.

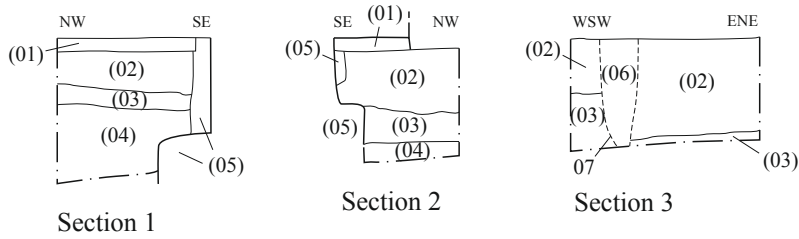
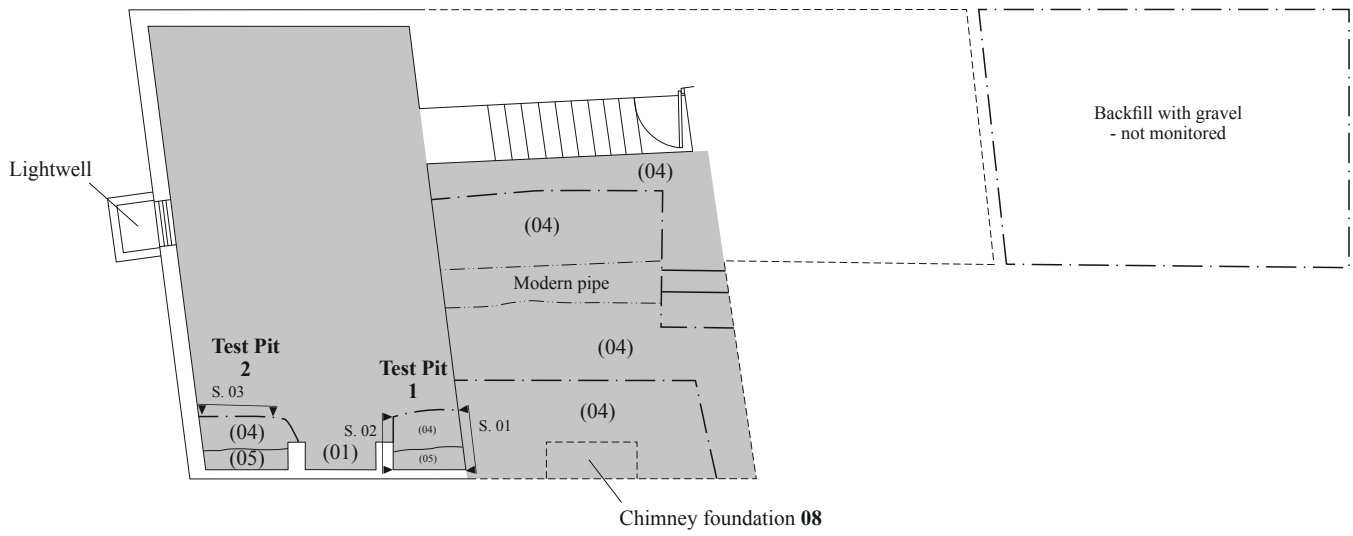
Within the existing cellar excavations (Fig. 2) revealed a 0.2m – 0.5m thick layer of yellowish brown redeposited natural gravels (02) that was overlain by brick floor (01). Layer (02) overlay a 0.08m – 0.3m thick layer of yellowish brown natural sand (03) that overlay natural gravels (04). Cut through layer (02) was feature 07 visible in section only. It had steep – vertical sides and a concave base and was 0.26m wide and 0.56m deep. It was filled with a yellowish brown sandy gravels (06) and was considered to be related to the construction of the house.

A foundation base of a chimney **08** was recorded in the rear ground floor room (Fig. 2 & Plate. 1) before the excavation of the rear cellar.

Excavations to the rear of the cellar, below the rear room of the house (Fig. 2 & Plate. 2) revealed the surface of the natural gravels (04) and it was devoid of any



Plan of basement



Key
 [Grey box] Monitored area

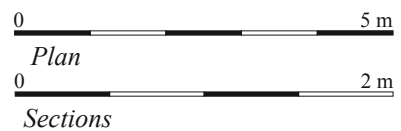


Figure 2: Plan of areas monitored and sections
 5



Plate 1. Chimney foundation **08**



Plate 2. Excavations in the rear cellar

archaeological features. A modern service trench containing a sewerage pipe was cut through the natural gravels.

A further trench 4m wide, 4m long and 0.4m deep had been excavated to the rear of the property (Fig. 2) that had been backfilled with excavated natural gravels at the time of the site visit. A dark grey silty loam garden soil was noted in the trench sides where it was exposed.

5 FINDS

No finds were recovered from the site

6 DISCUSSION

The watching brief was undertaken to monitor a cellar extension. The site was devoid of any archaeological features. A modern service pipe was exposed and a possible construction cut for the house was observed within the cellar excavation.

7 ARCHIVE

Archive Contents

The archive consists of the following:

Paper record

The project brief
Written scheme of investigation
The project report
The primary site record

Physical record

Finds
Environmental remains

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the Oxfordshire Museum Resource Centre under accession number OXCMS: 2015.25.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

John Moore Heritage Services, 2015 *An Archaeological Evaluation at 96 Walton Street, Oxford*. Unpublished client report

John Moore Heritage Services, 2015 *96 Walton Street, Oxford Archaeological Watching Brief Written Scheme of Investigation*. Unpublished client report