

Springfield House 76 Temple Road Oxfordshire



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



September 2008

Client: Vivienne Cuffolo

Issue No:1
OA Job No: 4165
NGR: SP 545 045

Springfield House, 76 Temple Road, Oxford

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

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SUMMARY

In August 2008, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Springfield House, 76 Temple Road, Oxford (NGR: SP 545 045). The work was commissioned by Vivienne Cuffolo in advance of the development and alteration of the listed building, including lowering the windows, alteration of the chimneys and the lowering of the cellar floor. Other works included the removal of a partition and rebuilding of the south gable of a barn situated to the rear. The watching brief observed a 19th-century refurbishment of the cellar, but no evidence of reused building material was observed during the alterations and rebuilding of the structures. No other significant archaeology was observed.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 In August 2008, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Springfield House, 76 Temple Road, Oxford (NGR: SP 545 045). The work was commissioned by Vivienne Cuffolo in respect of an application for Listed Building Consent to lower the windows and rationalise the chimneys for Springfield House, to remove a partition and reconstruct the south gable of a barn/coach house situated to the rear (Listed Building Consent 07/01085/LBC) and to lower the basement floor within the house (Planning Application No. 07/01086/FUL)
- 1.1.2 A project brief was agreed with Brian Durham, the Oxford City Archaeologist, which required that an archaeological watching brief be undertaken during the period of groundworks.
- 1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief (OA, 2008).

1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site is located on the south-eastern edge of the City of Oxford within a suburban conurbation (Fig. 1). The site is bounded to the south-east by an access road leading off Temple Road, to the south-west by a private residence and to the north-east and north-west by domestic gardens.
- 1.2.2 The site lies on a gentle slope rising to the east at approximately 78 m OD. The site lies on the boundary between the Beckley and Temple Cowley sand and sandstone beds (British Geological Survey Sheet 237).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the watching brief was prepared for the WSI for the project (OA, 2008) and is reproduced overleaf.

- 1.3.2 Land within the area was given by Queen Matilda to the Knights Templar in 1139 with the land then becoming known as *Temple Couele*. The area was home to an important Preceptory dedicated by the knights.
- 1.3.3 Little remains of the Knight's occupancy with the area becoming a rural settlement by the 18th-century and incorporated into the 19th and 20th-century expansion of Oxford. The area now comprises stone houses and cottages from this era interspersed with stone and brick religious, manufacturing and educational institutional buildings dating from the time of this expansion.
- 1.3.4 All the buildings are linked by boundary walls, predominately of stone which unify the area.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence or absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.
- 2.1.2 To preserve by record any archaeological features or deposits that may be disturbed or destroyed during the course of the groundworks.
- 2.1.3 To examine any removed stone for evidence of earlier working such as moulding.
- 2.1.4 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

Stonework

- 2.2.1 The stone removed during the course of the building work was separated and examined for evidence of earlier building forms and for altered or adapted tool marks. Attention was paid any for any evidence of moulding work which might indicate that the stone had been reused.

Basement floor lowering

- 2.2.2 This work consisted of the removal of the existing stone flag floor and the removal of the underlying material sufficient to lower to cellar floor by 0.5 m. This work was accomplished by hand.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Basement floor lowering: Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 The underlying natural, a green sand (3), was encountered at a depth of 0.22 m below the original cellar floor (Fig. 2, Section 1). This was overlaid by a 0.15 m deep layer of dark green silty sand (2). This deposit produced numerous fragments of 19th-

century brick. This layer was cut by 2 south-east to north-west running trenches, each 0.28 m wide, 0.18 m deep and approximately 3.6 m long (4 and 6). Built into these trenches were brick lined channels (5 and 7) constructed using a plain hand moulded red brick measuring 0.225 m by 0.105 m by 0.07 m. These channels consisted of a brick floor and lines of brick laid on edge down either side. These were presumably dug in order to provide drainage of the underlying aquifers. Also cut within this layer was a 0.8 m square pit (8) containing a brick built plinth (9) supporting a brick built pier. This was constructed using similar hand-moulded bricks to the brick channels.

- 3.1.2 Laid on top of layer 2, butting up to the brick plinth (9) and forming the top of the channels was a stone slab floor (1). This consisted of sandstone slabs measuring 0.55 m by 0.55 m by 0.1 m thick, smoothed on the upper surface but only roughly dressed elsewhere.

3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 All finds recovered were of a late post-medieval date (19th and early 20th centuries) and included fragments of brick and salt-glazed pottery. The presence of these artefacts was recorded but they were not retained.

3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 3.3.1 No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling were encountered during the course of the watching brief.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The watching brief showed that there was no significant archaeology present underneath the existing cellar floor. The deposits and features observed were consistent with a 19th-century refurbishment of the cellar, which included the insertion of a brick pillar and plinth in the centre of the cellar, brick piers added to the south-east and north-west walls and the insertion of a brick arch into the fireplace in the south-west wall. The bricks used to construct the brick channels underneath the original cellar floor are identical to the bricks used for the pillar and piers and it would be reasonable to assume that they were also part of the refurbishment.
- 4.1.2 The stone slabs removed from the cellar floor showed some evidence to suggest that the flat face may have been cut using either a circular stone saw or possibly a rotary grinder to smooth the upper face, which is consistent with late 19th-century technology.
- 4.1.3 The fragments of brick observed in layer 2 are similar to the bricks used for the above works and are presumably construction debris arising from these works.
- 4.1.4 The absence of earlier deposits within this area may be explained by the depth of excavation for the original cellar which would have truncated all but the deepest

foundations or excavations. The refurbishment of the cellar in the 19th-century had also removed evidence for the original cellar floor construction.

- 4.1.5 No evidence for the incorporation of reused stone within the walls of the barn or house was observed. The architecture of the barn and house bear similarities, particularly the arches above the door and window frames, suggesting that they are contemporary. This style of arching known as a “four-centred arch” was common between the 17th and early 19th centuries, which agrees with the known construction date of the house (The date 1761 is visible on the north gable). The dating of this architectural style indicates that they were not reused from an earlier building such as the Knights Templar Preceptory.
- 4.1.6 All the stone observed removed from the buildings and also that still incorporated, is of a similar material (sandstone) suggesting that it originated from the same quarry area. Although any earlier buildings would have also used local stone, they may have used different materials such as limestone for selected features. The absence of any differing material within the fabric of the house may also suggest that no reused material was used.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	Surface	0.1 m	3.6 m	Sandstone slab floor	-	C19th
2	Layer	0.18 m	-	Levelling layer/construction debris	Brick, pottery	C19th
3	Layer	> 0.3 m	-	Natural sand	-	-
4	Cut	0.18 m	0.3 m	Cut for drainage channel	-	C19th
5	Structure	0.18 m	0.25 m	Brick built drainage channel	-	C19th
6	Cut	0.18 m	0.3 m	Cut for drainage channel	-	C19th
7	Structure	0.18 m	0.25 m	Brick built drainage channel	-	C19th
8	Cut	> 0.4 m	0.8 m	Foundation pit for plinth 9	-	C19th
9	Structure	> 0.4 m	0.8 m	Brick built plinth supporting central brick pillar	-	C19th

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

OCC, 2007 Brief for Archaeological Fieldwork

IFA, 2001 *Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

OA, 1992 *Fieldwork Manual, (Ed. D Wilkinson, first ed, August 1992)*

OA, 2008 Springfield House, 76 Temple Road, Oxford: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Springfield House, 76 Temple Road, Oxford

Site code: OXSPHO 08

Grid reference: SP 545 045

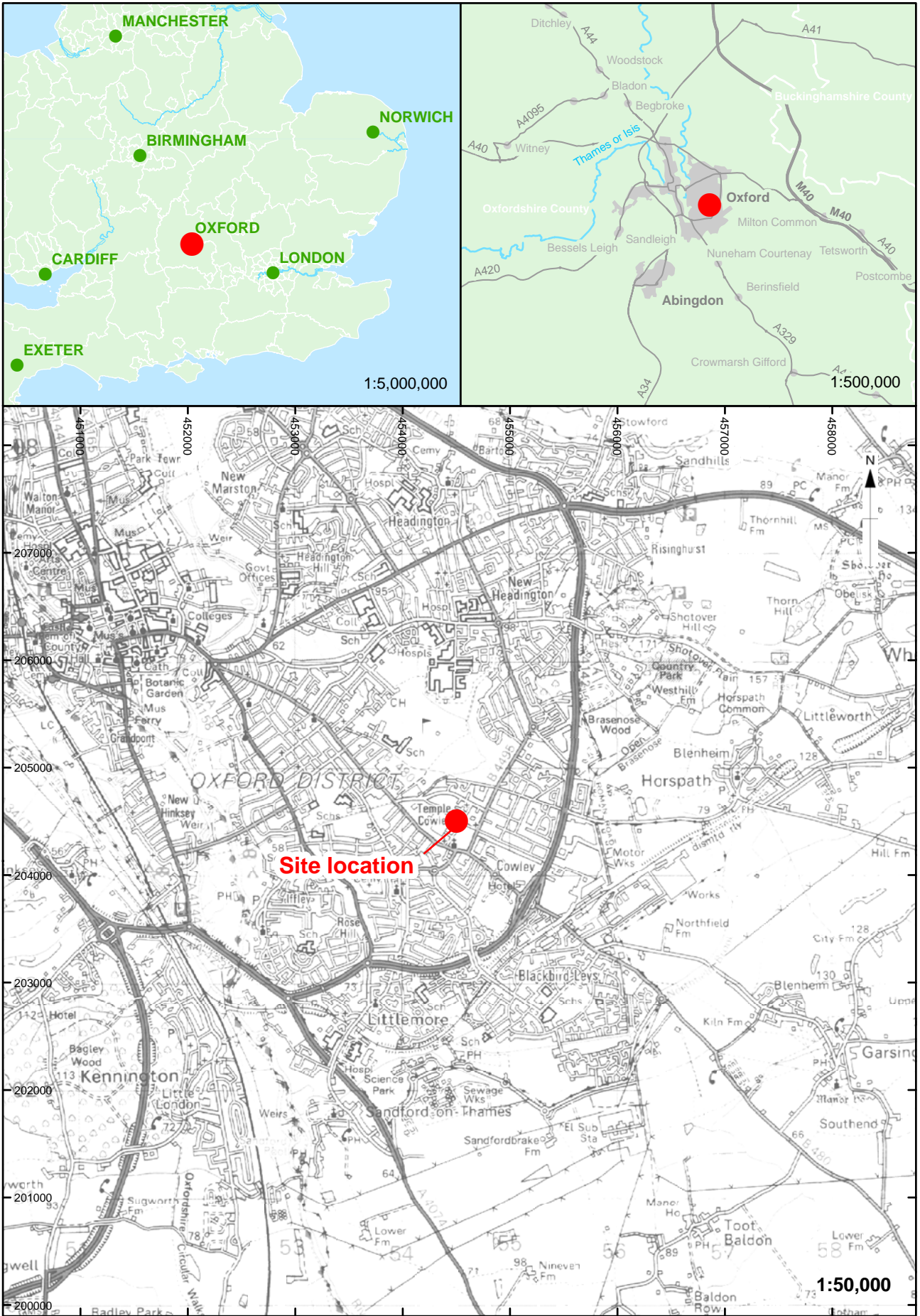
Type of watching brief: Hand excavation during the lowering of the cellar floor. Removal of structural stone.

Date and duration of project: August 2008, 3 site visits

Area of site: 300 m²

Summary of results: The watching brief revealed 19th-century construction directly overlying natural sand.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course.



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Figure 1: Site location

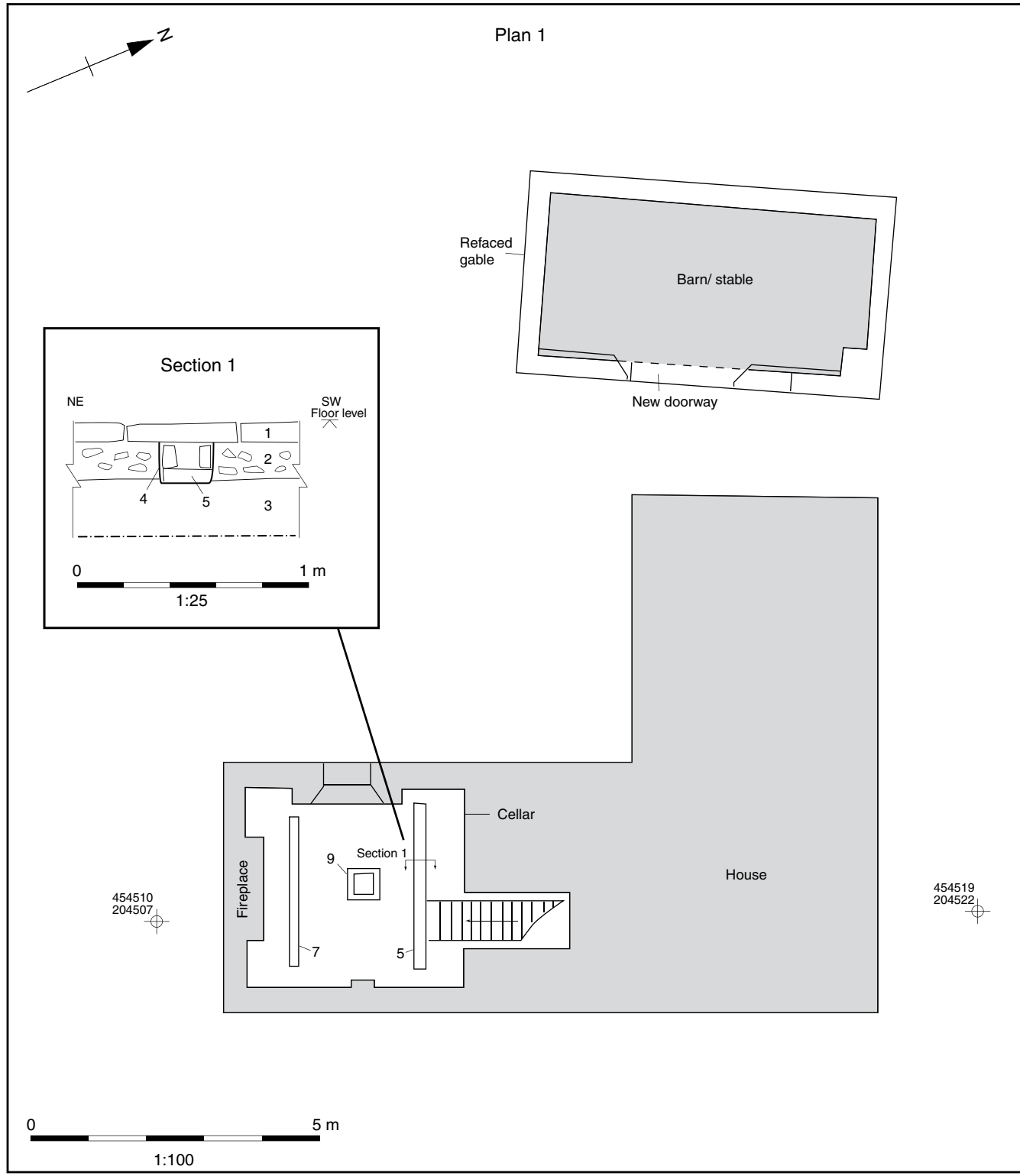


Figure 2: Site plan and section