

St Laurence Church South Hinksey Oxford



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



February 2009

Client: Parochial Church Council

Issue No: 1
OA Job No: 4306
NGR: SP 5096 0398

Client Name: Parochial Church Council

Client Ref No:

Document Title: St Laurence Church, South Hinksey, Oxford

Document Type: Watching Brief

Issue Number: 1

National Grid Reference: SP 5096 0398

Planning Reference:

OA Job Number: 4306

Site Code: SHSTLC 08

Invoice Code: SHSTLCWB

Receiving Museum: Oxfordshire County Museum Service

Museum Accession No: OXCMS:2009.6

Prepared by: Mike Sims
Position: SWD Supervisor
Date: 16th January 2009

Checked by: Dan Dodds
Position: Head of Small Works
Date: 18th January 2009

Approved by: Nick Shepherd Signed.....
Position: Head of Fieldwork
Date: 6th February 2009

Document File Location W:PROJECTS \Oxfordshire OX\Oxford City OC\8337 St
Laurence Church WB\wbREP.doc

Graphics File Location Servergo:/oapubs
1_lthruQ*SHSTLC08*SHSTLCWB*St Laurence
Church, South Hinksey, Oxfordshire*GS.02.02.09

Illustrated by Georgina Slater

Disclaimer:

This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and should not be relied upon or used for any other project without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and prior written authority of Oxford Archaeology being obtained. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for the consequences of this document being used for a purpose other than the purposes for which it was commissioned. Any person/party using or relying on the document for such other purposes agrees, and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Oxford Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the person/party by whom it was commissioned.

Oxford Archaeology

© Oxford Archaeological Unit Ltd 2009

Janus House

Osney Mead

Oxford OX2 0ES

t: (0044) 01865 263800

f: (0044) 01865 793496

e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk

w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk

Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited is a Registered Charity No: 285627

Church of St Laurence, South Hinksey, Oxfordshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

CONTENTS

Summary.....	1
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Scope of work.....	1
1.2 Location, geology and topography	1
1.3 Archaeological and historical background.....	1
2 Project Aims and Methodology.....	2
2.1 Aims	2
2.2 Methodology	2
3 Results	2
3.1 Description of deposits.....	2
3.2 Finds	4
3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains	4
4 Discussion and Conclusions.....	4
Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory	5
Appendix 2 Bibliography and References	5
Appendix 3 Summary of Site details.....	6

LIST OF FIGURES

- Fig. 1 Site location
- Fig. 2 Plan of works
- Fig. 3 Site plan and sections

Front cover: St Laurence Church

SUMMARY

In January 2009, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at the Church of St Laurence, South Hinksey, Oxfordshire (NGR: SP 509 039). The work was commissioned by the Parochial Church Council in advance of the construction of a new toilet block, storeroom and associated service trenches. The watching brief revealed deposits of earlier churchyard soil and three 19th-century inhumations. No evidence for any earlier phases of the church's construction was encountered.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 In January 2009, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at the Church of St Laurence, South Hinksey, Oxfordshire (NGR: SP 509 039). The work was commissioned by the Parochial Church Council in advance of the construction of a toilet block and storeroom on the north side of the church and the excavation of a new drainage trench (Fig. 2).
- 1.1.2 A project design was agreed between OA and the PCC prior to the commencement of works.

1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The village of South Hinksey lies approximately 1 km south of Oxford (Fig. 1). The Church is located on the southern edge of the village and is sited on a gentle north-east facing slope at approximately 58 m above OD. The underlying geology is Oxford Clay over Kelloways beds (Geological Survey of Great Britain, sheet no. 236)

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 South Hinksey is first mentioned as a separate village in 1316, when the abbot of Abingdon Abbey was returned as lord of North Hinksey and South Hinksey. At the Dissolution South Hinksey came to the Crown.
- 1.3.2 The church of St Lawrence consists of a chancel 5.1 m square, a nave measuring 8.03 m by 5.35 m, west tower 3.89 m square, and a north porch.
- 1.3.3 The nave and chancel appear to have been built early in the 13th century. In the 14th century a window was inserted in the north of the nave, the west tower was added in the following century. The chancel was largely reconstructed in the 18th-century including the replacement of the windows in the east, north and south walls. The 13th century chancel arch has survived. The church has been restored and the timber north porch is modern.

- 1.3.4 The nave has a 14th-century window in the north wall and the north doorway probably dates to the 13th century. The first and third windows of the south wall are simple 13th-century lancets while the second window is of modern design. The 15th century tower is three stages high, with a plain moulded parapet, and a square turret staircase rising to the base of the belfry on the north side. It contains three bells.
- 1.3.5 The font is of the 13th century, and has a circular bowl tapering slightly to the base, which is moulded and rests on a square plinth.
- 1.3.6 In the churchyard, to the north of the nave, are the base and three steps of a stone cross.

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 any groundworks.
- 2.1.3 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The watching brief was undertaken as a continuous archaeological presence during those works that were likely to impinge or damage any potential archaeological deposits or features.
- 2.2.2 A plan showing the extent of any excavations was maintained at a scale of 1:100 (Fig. 2, Plan of works and Fig. 3, Site plan) and any recorded sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20 (Fig. 3, Sections). All excavations, any features and any recorded sections were photographed using digital photography, colour slide and black and white print film. A general photographic record of the work was also made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OA Field Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

West of the porch

- 3.1.1 This consisted of an excavation 2.4 m long by 1.7 m wide located adjacent to the porch (Fig. 2 and Fig. 3). This was excavated to a depth of up to 1.2 m below the current ground level.

- 3.1.2 The undisturbed natural, a red-brown silt clay (3) was encountered at a depth of 0.8 m below the current ground level (Fig. 3, Section 1). This was overlaid by a 0.5 m deep layer of light grey-brown silt clay (2). This contained fragments of 18th and 19th-century clay pipe stems and probably represents a layer of churchyard soil.
- 3.1.3 Cutting this deposit was a rectangular east-west aligned grave cut (7). This contained the skeleton of an adult male (9) and iron coffin fittings suggesting that it probably dates to the 18th or 19th-century. The northern side of this grave cut was truncated by a later grave cut (5). This measured 1.9 m long by 0.45 m wide. This contained the skeleton of an adult female aged 45 plus (6) who showed evidence of severe curvature of the spine (Scoliosis). A number of iron coffin handles and gilt dome head nails were also recovered suggesting that the burial dates to the 18th or 19th centuries. The grave had been backfilled with a grey-brown silt clay (4). Cut into the western part of this deposit was a 0.7 m wide vertical-sided cut filled with a grey-brown clay silt (12) and redeposited bones. Its shape suggests that it represents another probable grave cut.
- 3.1.4 On the northern edge of the excavation a vertical-sided flat bottomed cut (11) was observed in the section also cutting layer 2. This was filled by a dark grey-brown clay silt (10), measured 0.7 m deep and was over 1.5 m in length. Its shape and alignment suggests that it was also a grave cut.
- 3.1.5 Sealing fills 10 and 12 was a 0.3 m deep layer of dark brown silt loam (1), the present day churchyard soil.

East of the porch

- 3.1.6 This consisted of an excavation also 2.4 m long by 1.7 m wide located adjacent to the porch and a service trench leading to an access chamber adjacent to the churchyard boundary wall (Fig: 2 and Fig. 3). This was excavated to a depth of up to 1.25 m below the current ground level in the area next to the porch deepening to 2.5 m below ground level during the excavation of the access chamber.
- 3.1.7 Within the area next to the porch, the natural (3) was encountered at a depth of 0.8 m below ground level (Fig. 3, Section 2). This was overlaid with a 0.5 m deep layer of light grey-brown clay silt, a continuation of the earlier churchyard soil (2). Cutting this deposit was a vertical sided cut (14), in excess of 0.9 m deep and over 1.6 m long. This feature was east-west aligned with straight edges indicative of a grave cut and was filled by a grey-brown silt clay (15). Sealing this was a 0.4 m deep layer of dark brown silt loam, a continuation of the present day churchyard soil (1).

Service trenching

- 3.1.8 The excavations for the access chamber measured 1 m by 1.3 m and were dug to a depth of 2.5 m below the current ground level (Fig. 3, Section 3). The natural, 3, was encountered at a depth of 1.2 m below the level of the current churchyard. This was overlaid by a continuation of the earlier churchyard soil (2), 0.8 m deep. Overlying

this was a 0.35 m layer of silt loam (1), a continuation of the present day churchyard soil. No inhumations were encountered during this phase of work.

3.2 **Finds**

- 3.2.1 Dating evidence consisting of clay pipe stems dating to the 18th and 19th centuries was recovered from layer 2. Fragments of tile were observed within layers 1 and 2 but the fragments were considered to be undiagnostic and were not retained. Coffin fittings were encountered within grave cuts 5 and 7 but were re-interred within their respective burials. No other finds were encountered.

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 the areas adjacent to the porch within the area of the proposed storeroom had been used for a succession of inhumations. The coffin furniture recovered from the earliest of these graves suggests a date range of between the 18th and 19th centuries. The later graves post-date this. The closeness of the burials may possibly represent a family plot. The other grave cuts observed both within this area and the area east of the porch had also been cut from the same level suggesting a similar date. All the burials were cut through the layer of earlier churchyard soil (2) which produced finds suggesting an 18th to 19th century date. The fragments of tile recovered from layers 1 and 2 probably originate from original construction of the church or more likely from the reroofing of the church during the 18th-century.
- 4.1.2 No evidence was observed for any phases of church construction predating the standing structure.

APPENDICES**APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY**

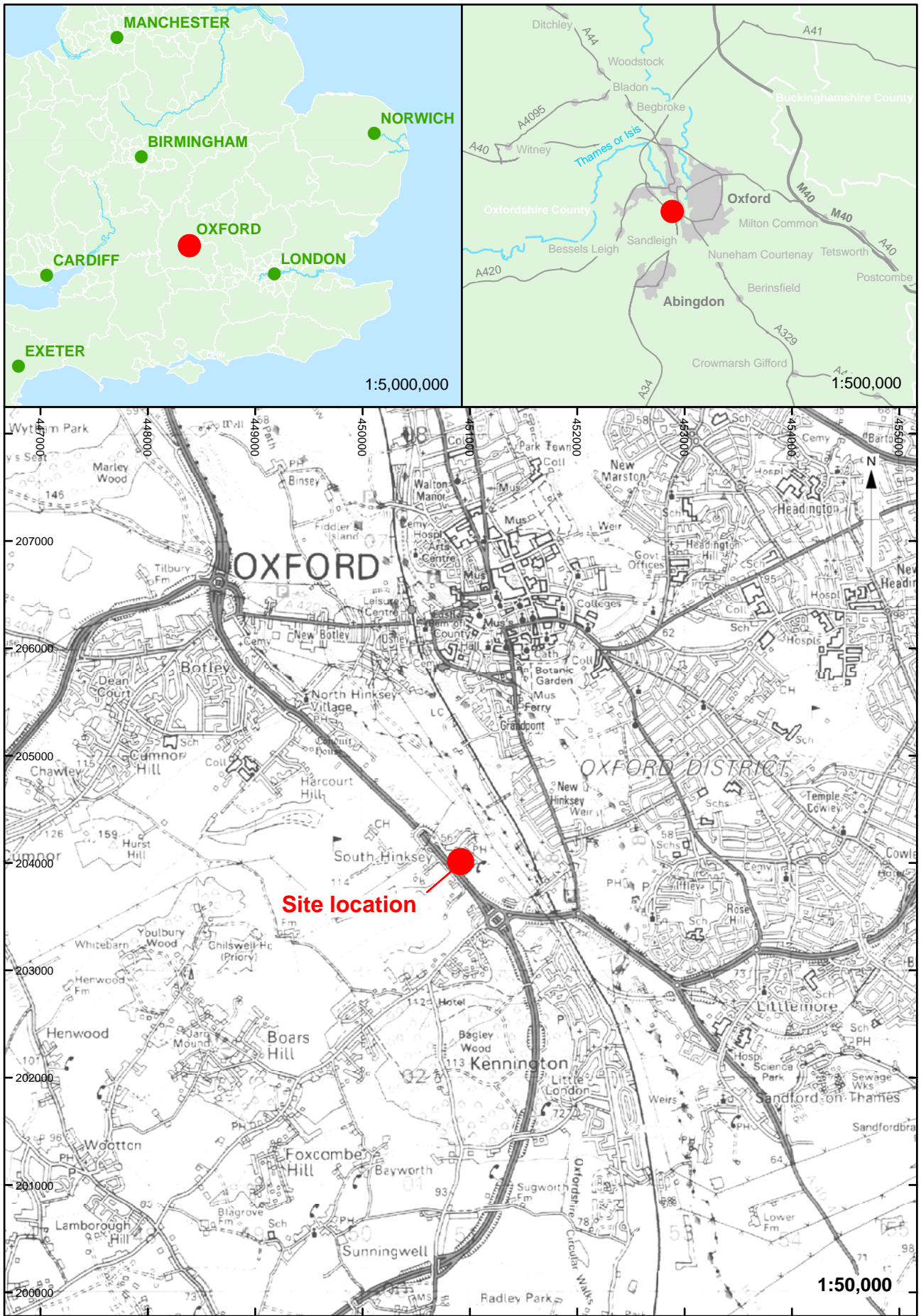
<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i> Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	Layer	0.3 m	-	Topsoil and turf, present day churchyard soil	Tile	C19th/ C20th
2	Layer	0.5 m	-	Earlier churchyard soil	Tile, clay pipe stem	C18th/ C19th
3	Layer	> 1.5 m	-	Natural, probable alluvial deposit	-	-
4	Fill	0.9 m	0.75 m	Grave fill	-	C18th/ C19th
5	Cut	0.9 m	0.75 m	Grave cut	-	C18th/ C19th
6	Skeleton	-	-	Articulated adult skeleton	Coffin fittings	C18th/ C19th
7	Cut	1 m	0.7 m	Grave cut	-	C18th/ C19th
8	Fill	1 m	0.7 m	Grave fill	-	C18th/ C19th
9	Skeleton	> 0.4 m		Articulated adult skeleton	Coffin fittings	C18th/ C19th
10	Fill	0.7 m	-	Grave fill	-	C19th ?
11	Cut	0.7 m	-	Grave cut	-	C19th ?
12	Fill	0.65 m	0.8 m	Grave fill	-	C18th/ C19th
13	Cut	0.65 m	0.8 m	Grave cut	-	C18th/ C19th
14	Cut	> 0.9 m	> 0.5 m	Grave cut	-	C18th/ C19th
15	Fill	> 0.9 m	> 0.5 m	Grave fill	-	C18th/ C19th

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

IFA, 2001 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

OAU, 1992 *Field Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson)

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS**Site name:** St Laurence's Church, South Hinksey, Oxfordshire**Site code:** SHSTLC 09**Grid reference:** SP 509 039**Type of watching brief:** Hand excavation of foundations and new drainage trenches**Date and duration of project:** 8th to 21st January 2009, 3 site visits**Area of site:** 300 m²**Summary of results:** The watching brief exposed evidence of 5 18th or 19th century burials. No evidence of any earlier phases of the churches construction was observed.**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 under the following accession number :OXCMS:2009.6

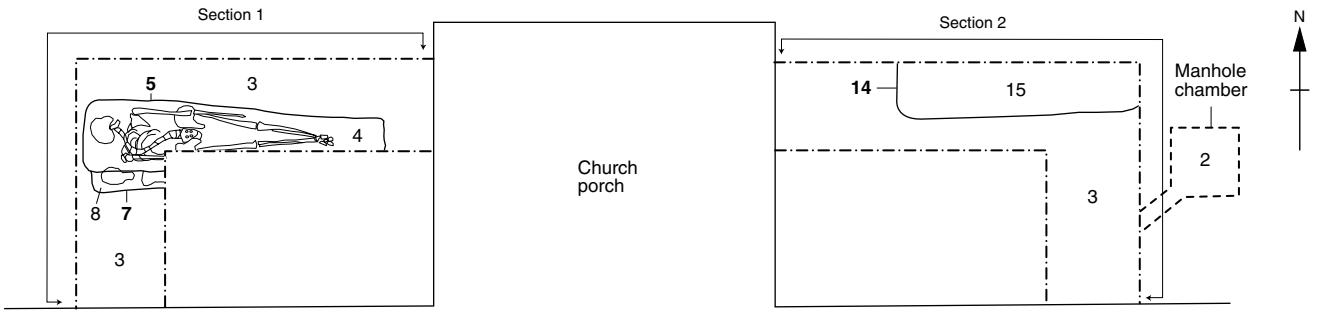


Reproduced by permission of the Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office (c) Crown Copyright. 1996 All rights reserved. License No. AL 10005569

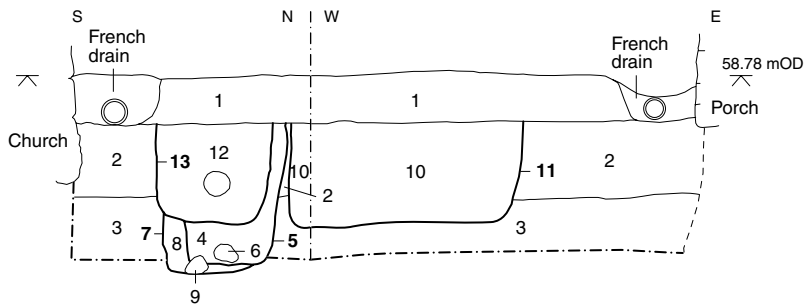
Figure 1: Site location



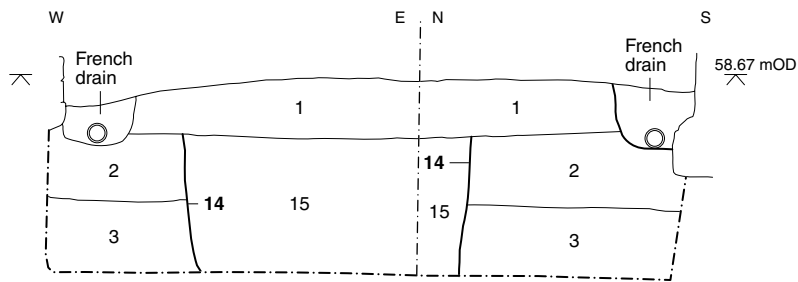
Figure 2: Plan of works



Section 1



Section 2



Section 3

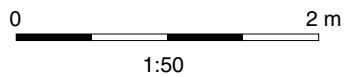
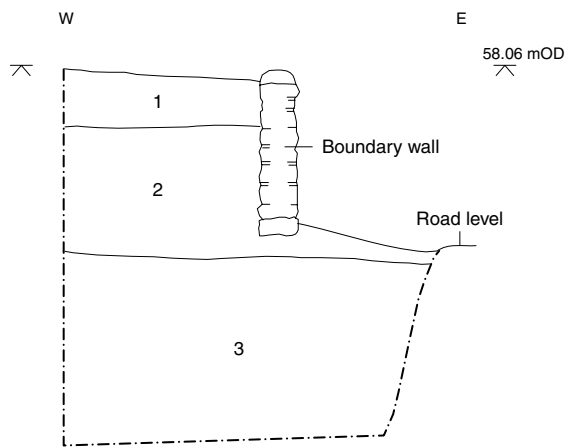


Figure 3: Site plan and sections



Head Office/Registered Office

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES

t: +44 (0) 1865 263 800
f: +44 (0) 1865 793 496
e: info@thehumanjourney.net
w: <http://thehumanjourney.net>

OA North

Mill 3
Moor Lane
Lancaster LA1 1GF

t: +44 (0) 1524 541 000
f: +44 (0) 1524 848 606
e: [oanorth@thehumanjourney.net](mailto: oanorth@thehumanjourney.net)
w: <http://thehumanjourney.net>

OA East

15 Trafalgar Way
Bar Hill
Cambridgeshire
CB23 8SQ

t: +44 (0) 1223 850500
f: +44 (0) 1223 850599
e: [oaeast@thehumanjourney.net](mailto: oaeast@thehumanjourney.net)
w: <http://thehumanjourney.net/oaeast>

OA Méditerranée

115 Rue Merlot
ZAC La Louvade
34 130 Maugeio
France

t: +33 (0) 4.67.57.86.92
f: +33 (0) 4.67.42.65.93
e: [oamed@oamed.fr](mailto: oamed@oamed.fr)
w: <http://oamed.fr/>



Director: David Jennings, BA MIFA FSA

*Oxford Archaeological Unit is a
Private Limited Company, N°: 1618597
and a Registered Charity, N°: 285627*