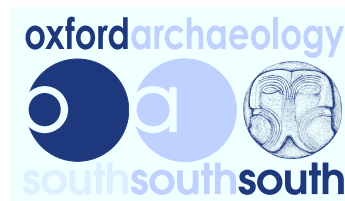


Hampton Court Palace Signage



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



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Hampton Court Palace, Signage

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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Summary

Between the 23rd and 26th March 2009, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Hampton Court Palace, Surrey (NGR TQ 1560 6870). The work was commissioned by Historic Royal Palaces in advance of the installation of the new visitor signposts. The watching brief revealed modern overburden related to the current road and footpath surfaces as well as garden soils within the grassed areas. No archaeological features were observed within the excavated slots.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In March 2009, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Hampton Court Palace, Surrey (NGR TQ 1560 6870). The work was commissioned by Sharon Kerrigan, Building Surveyor, Hampton Court Palace of Historic Royal Palaces .

1.1.2 In total 21 slots were excavated in order to accommodate new visitor signage.

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The sites for the new sign posts are located in the Wilderness Gardens near the access to the Formal Gardens and near Barge Walk, Adam Gate, Lion Gate, Vrow Gate and Trophy Gate entrances.

1.2.2 The site lies on the first Terrace drift geology of the river Thames, which overlies London Clay at c 9 m OD.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 Hampton Court Palace is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Surrey No. 83). The palace, gardens and grounds form a archaeological and historical site of national importance.

1.3.2 The historical background to Hampton Court is well documented and is not repeated here.

1.4 Previously Monitored Sign Installation

1.4.1 A watching brief was carried out during the installation of signage in the Upper Car Park in September 2008. A total of three trenches were monitored and recorded.

1.4.2 Trench 1 (Fig. 2) was excavated at the position of sign post 005, just north of the north-west corner of the Upper Car Park and was 0.8 m deep. The natural subsoil was not reached in this trench and the lowest deposit was a sandy silt containing brick/tile fragments. This underlay a sequence of make-up layers and two earlier tarmac path surfaces.

1.4.3 Trench 2 (Fig.2) was excavated at the position of sign post E034, just outside the north-east corner of the Upper Car Park. The excavation was 0.72 m deep. An orange-brown silty-clay subsoil contained two small fragments of 19th-century or later flower pot, and one small fragment of 19th-century glass. These finds were not retained. Above layer 202 was the garden topsoil.

1.4.4 Trench 3 (Fig.2) was excavated at the position of sign post 004, in the south-west corner of the Rose Garden and just outside the south-east corner of the upper car park; it was 0.52 m deep. There were no finds and the two deposits encountered were as Trench 2.



2 WATCHING BRIEF 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 impacted area.
- 2.1.2 To preserve by record any archaeological remains (if present) that the works may remove or damage within the impacted area.
- 2.1.3 To make available the results of archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 A supervisor was in attendance to monitor the excavation of the post holes for the signs. These were excavated by hand.
- 2.2.2 21 post holes were excavated (Fig. 2). They measured approximately 0.4 x 0.4m to 0.3 x 0.35m, The slots were excavated to an average depth of 0.45m below the ground surface level.
- 2.2.3 A digital CAD plan showing the extent and location of all excavations was prepared (Fig. 2), based on a GPS survey. Hand drawn plans sections of each post hole at a scale of 1:20 were also prepared. A detailed black and white film and digital photographic record was made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D. Wilkinson, 1992).



3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 The stratigraphy observed differed only slightly within all the recorded slots (for numbering see Fig. 2) and therefore a generalised description will be applied throughout.
- 3.1.2 Post holes excavated in the Wilderness Gardens near the entrance to the Formal Garden were dug through both a tarmac path surface and grassed/soil areas (Figs. 2 and 3). Post Holes 1 and 8 revealed a 0.28m thick dark brown/grey silty topsoil deposit overlaying a brown silty/sand make up layer comprising crushed brick inclusions. Post holes 2 to 5 were dug through a 0.06m thick layer of tarmac which overlay a 0.14m thick compacted stone layer, a probable levelling deposit for the path. Beneath the levelling deposits a brown silty/sand make up deposit with crushed brick inclusions was encountered. Post Holes 6 and 7 were excavated in raised earthen beds and were dug to a depth of 0.45 to 0.50m into dark brown silty garden soils with small stone inclusions.
- 3.1.3 The post holes 9 to 11 (Fig. 2) were excavated near to Lion Gate and were dug into a grass verge next to the Maze to an average depth of 0.45m. These post holes were dug through a 0.20m thick dark brown silty topsoil with small sub angular stone inclusions. The topsoil overlay a grey/brown sandy/silt layer with small sub angular stone inclusions.
- 3.1.4 Post holes 12 to 14 (Figs. 2 and 3) were excavated into the tarmac road surface just inside Adam Gate to a depth of 0.46m. The tarmac was around 0.25m thick and sat on top of a sand and stone levelling/make up layer.
- 3.1.5 Post Holes 15 to 19 (Figs. 2 and 3) were all excavated to the west of the palace near Trophy Gate and Barge Walk. The three post holes near Trophy Gate (Fig. 4), post holes 15 to 17, were excavated through a 0.07m layer of tarmac which overlay a 0.06m concrete levelling deposit. Below the concrete layer was a dark brown silty layer with crushed brick and tile inclusions. Post holes 18 and 19 were excavated adjacent to Barge Walk entrance (Fig. 2) to the south-west of the palace to a depth of around 0.40m. Beneath the 0.06m thick tarmac was a brown silty layer with crushed brick and tile inclusions, most probably laid down during episodes of landscaping over the years.
- 3.1.6 Two post holes, 20 and 21 (Fig. 2), were dug into the grass verge just inside Vrow Gate entrance and were dug to a depth of 0.45m. The post holes were dug into a dark brown silty garden soil with small sub angular stone inclusions (Fig. 3).
- 3.1.7 No archaeological features were observed in any of the post holes excavated.

3.2 Finds summary

- 3.2.1 A sample of brick and tile were recovered during the course of the watching brief.
- 3.2.2 No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling were observed during the course of the watching brief.



4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The post holes excavated into the tarmac road and path surfaces mostly revealed both concrete or sand and stone levelling deposits and an underlying layer which consisted of crushed brick and tile rubble. This layer was probably the result of extensive construction and landscaping which has taken place at the palace over the centuries.
- 4.1.2 Post holes excavated into grassed areas or earthen banks have revealed a mixture of garden soils and make up layers, and again could be attributed to extensive landscaping having taken place in these areas.
- 4.1.3 No archaeological features were revealed during the course of this watching brief however a sample of brick fragments and tile were recovered from underlying deposits.



APPENDIX A. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

Hampton Court Palace, 2009, *Brief for Archaeological Observation and Recording*.

IFA, 2008 *Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Watching Briefs*.

OAU, 1992, *Fieldwork Manual*, (Ed. D Wilkinson, first edition, August 1992)



APPENDIX B. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Hampton Court Palace, Signage

Site code: HCP69

Grid reference: NGR TQ 1560 6870

Type: Watching Brief

Date and duration: 23rd to 26th March 2009

Area of site:

Summary of results: All post holes were excavated into modern overburden and garden soil. No archaeological features were encountered during the course of this watching brief.

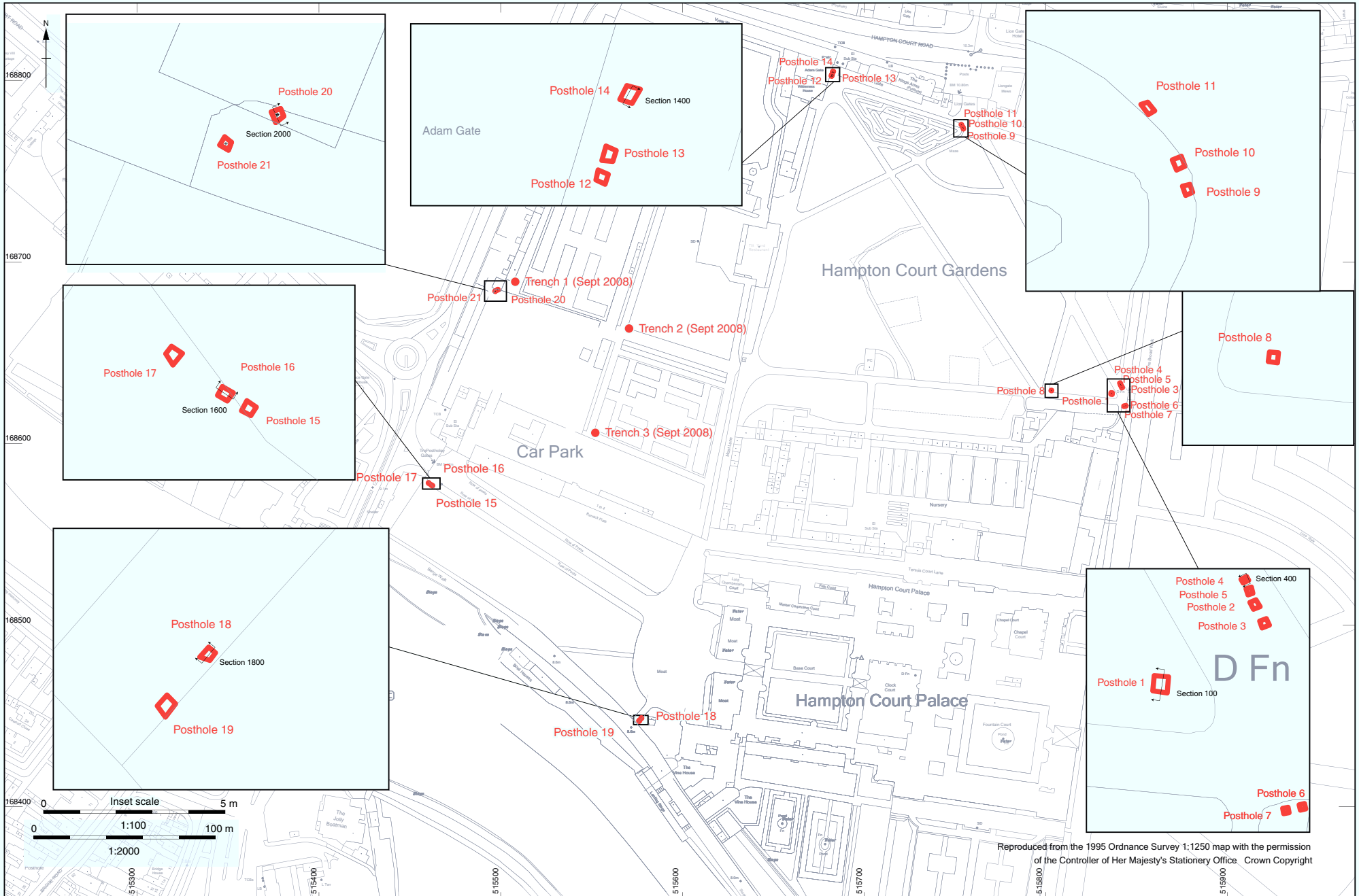
Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Hampton Court Palace in due course.



Scale 1: 25,000

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Figure 1: Site location



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Figure 2: Posthole location overview

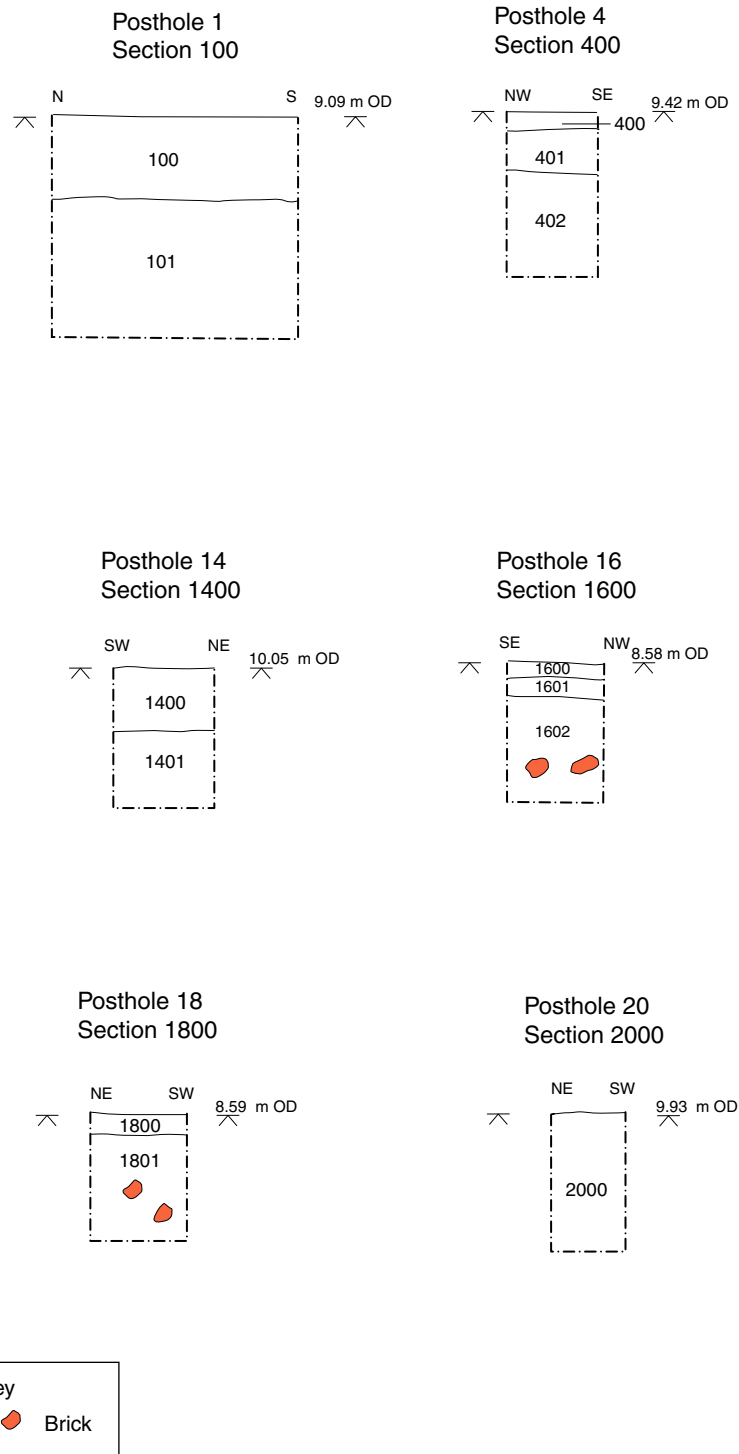


Figure 3: Test pits



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