

Trophy Gate

Hampton Court Palace



Archaeological Watching Brief



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Illustrated by Julia Moxham

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Hampton Court Palace, Trophy Gate

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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Summary

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 Historic Royal Palaces in advance of the installation of the new pedestrian barriers at the Trophy Gate Drive. The watching brief revealed modern overburden related to the current road surface. Two of the excavated slots revealed foundations for the inner piers of the Trophy Gate, constructed in 1701. No other 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 Toby Cosgrove, Building Surveyor of Historic Royal Palaces, and the watching brief was a condition of Scheduled Monument Clearance for installation of new pedestrian barriers at the Trophy Gate Drive.
- 1.1.2 In total 14 rectangular slots were excavated in order to accommodate proprietary 'shoes' anchoring the new removable barriers in the ground.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site can be defined by the extent of the tarmac roadway leading to the Trophy Gate from Hampton Court Way to the East (Fig. 2). The Trophy Gate is the main entrance to Hampton Court Palace.
- 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 The relevant archaeological background for the site was summarized in the Statement of Significance prepared for Application for Scheduled Monument Clearance by Toby Cosgrove, Building Surveyor, Hampton Court Palace, and is reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 The Trophy Gate is the main entrance to Hampton Court Palace and is prominent to the main road Hampton Court Way.
- 1.3.3 Two central piers of Wren stock brick with Portland stone bases and pedestals were built in 1701. The statuary on the piers was sculpted by Grinling Gibbons. It was then cast in bronze by John Oliver.
- 1.3.4 The two outer piers were carved with a suit of armour with flags, shield and axe, with bow, arrow and trumpet and the inner piers show the two most famous of the heraldic royal beasts: the lion and the unicorn. The lion and the unicorn were erected here in July 1701 and the trophies of armour on either side in November of the same year. The actual gates were not put in place until January 1767.

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 OA extends its thanks to Toby Cosgrove, Buildings Surveyor, Hampton Court Palace for providing digital plans and help throughout the project.



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 slots for the barriers. These were excavated by hand with the aid of power tools.
- 2.2.2 Fourteen rectangular slots, seven at each side of the Trophy Gate drive (Fig. 3-4), were excavated. They measured approximately 0.3 x 0.3m to 0.3 x 0.35m, and were set approximately 1.15m apart (for details refer to Fig. 2). The slots were excavated to a depth of 0.35m below the tarmac level.
- 2.2.3 A digital CAD plan showing the extent and location of all excavations was prepared (Fig. 2), based on a plan hand-drawn at a scale of 1:50. A plan showing the extent of archaeology in slot 8 and all recorded sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10. A detailed digital photographic record was made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed. Dave Wilkinson, 1992).



3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 The stratigraphy observed was similar within all recorded slots (for slot numbering see Fig. 2) and a generalised description can be applied throughout.
- 3.1.2 Below the top layer of tarmac (0.08m thick) a compacted sub-base layer of coarse sand and gravel was found (0.05m thick). The sand layer overlaid a 0.28m thick layer of modern concrete (Fig. 5)
- 3.1.3 Below the concrete a thin (up to 0.02m) layer of compact crushed clinker, coal dust and ash was exposed, presumably serving as a levelling layer. Slots 6 and 9-13 revealed that the clinker layer overlaid an extensive layer of mixed brown clay sands with frequent inclusions of crushed brick and stone, presumably serving as a make-up layer.
- 3.1.4 In slot 14 no concrete layer was exposed. It appears that it was removed by a later truncation of unknown purpose, backfilled with yellow coarse sand and gravel.
- 3.1.5 Slots 1 and 8 located by the base of inner piers of the Trophy Gate yielded evidence for the foundations of the inner piers.
- 3.1.6 Slot 1 (Fig.6) revealed that the Portland stone base of the southern inner pier rested on a layer of crushed sandstone and broken brick, which overlaid a layer of more substantial fragments of yellow and grey sandstone. All brick and stone fragments were bonded as rubble with fairly soft creamy white lime mortar. No construction cut was seen in plan. The foundation probably stepped out c. 0.13m, however it is not clear due to truncation by later concrete.
- 3.1.7 Slot 8 (Fig. 7) revealed that the Portland stone base of the northern inner pier rested on a roughly hewn fragment of grey sandstone, which rested on a brick foundation. Only a small portion of the foundation was exposed, however it appears that an alternating header/stretcher pattern might have been used. Dark red bricks (9-10.5 cm header width; 17-18 cm length; 5 cm high) were consistent with bricks seen in the above-ground portion of the pier. The bricks were bonded with hard grey lime mortar. The foundation appeared to be abutted by the brown clay sand make-up layer observed elsewhere. It is possible, however, that the foundation was flush with the construction cut which might have truncated the clay sand layer. The foundation stepped out 0.16m from the stone base.

3.2 Finds summary

- 3.2.1 No dating evidence or artefacts 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 watching brief exposed a small portion of the foundations for the inner piers of the Trophy Gate. The foundation of the southern and northern piers differed slightly, however it may be concluded that generally they were of mixed stone and brick construction, stepping out beyond the line of stone bases. As no construction cut was revealed, it appears that after the construction of the piers, the ground level was deliberately raised and the area levelled. The bottom of the stone bases of the piers was only c. 0.12m below the top of the modern tarmac, which would suggest that the original, presumably robbed-out, surface was probably laid to a similar level.
- 4.1.2 No dating evidence was retrieved, however it is probable that most of the revealed deposits below the modern surface and make-up layers can be dated to Sir Christopher Wren's construction of the gate piers in 1701.
- 4.1.3 All archaeological remains were sealed by the extensive modern concrete layer onto which the current tarmac surface was laid.



APPENDIX A. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

English Heritage, 1991, Management of Archaeological Projects.

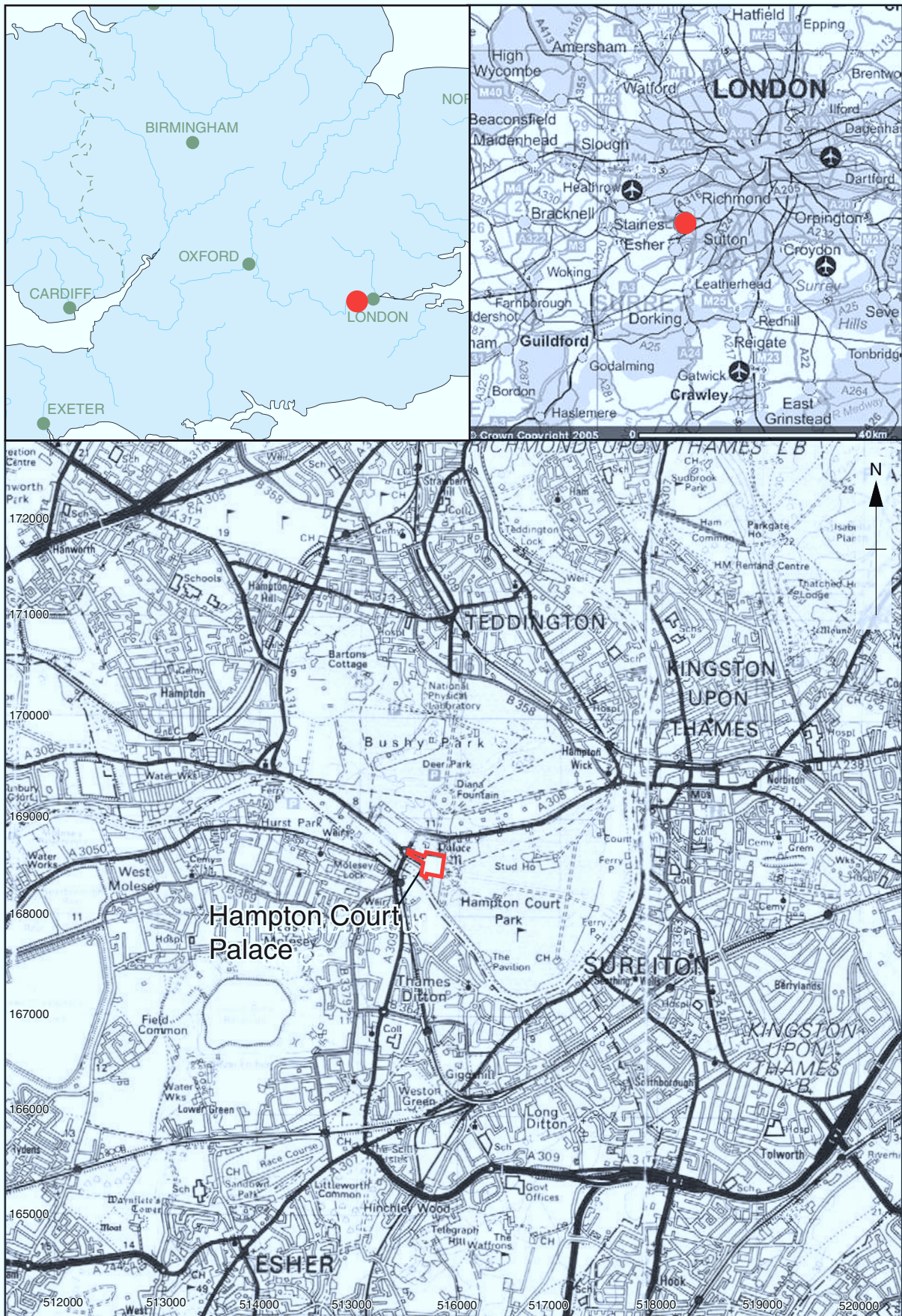
Hey, G. and Lacey, M. 2001, Evaluation of Archaeological Decision-making Processes and Sampling Strategies.

Oxford Archaeology, 1992, Fieldwork Manual, (Ed. D Wilkinson, first edition, August 1992)



APPENDIX B. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name:	Hampton Court Palace, Trophy Gate
Site code:	HCP67
Grid reference:	NGR TQ 1560 6870
Type:	Watching Brief
Date and duration:	16 th - 18 th March 2009
Area of site:	106 m ²
Summary of results:	Inner piers foundations for Trophy Gate and related levelling deposits recorded. Modern overburden recorded.
Location of archive:	The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Historic Royal Palaces at Hampton Court Palace, Surrey, KT8 9AU.



Scale 1:50,000

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Figure 1: Site location

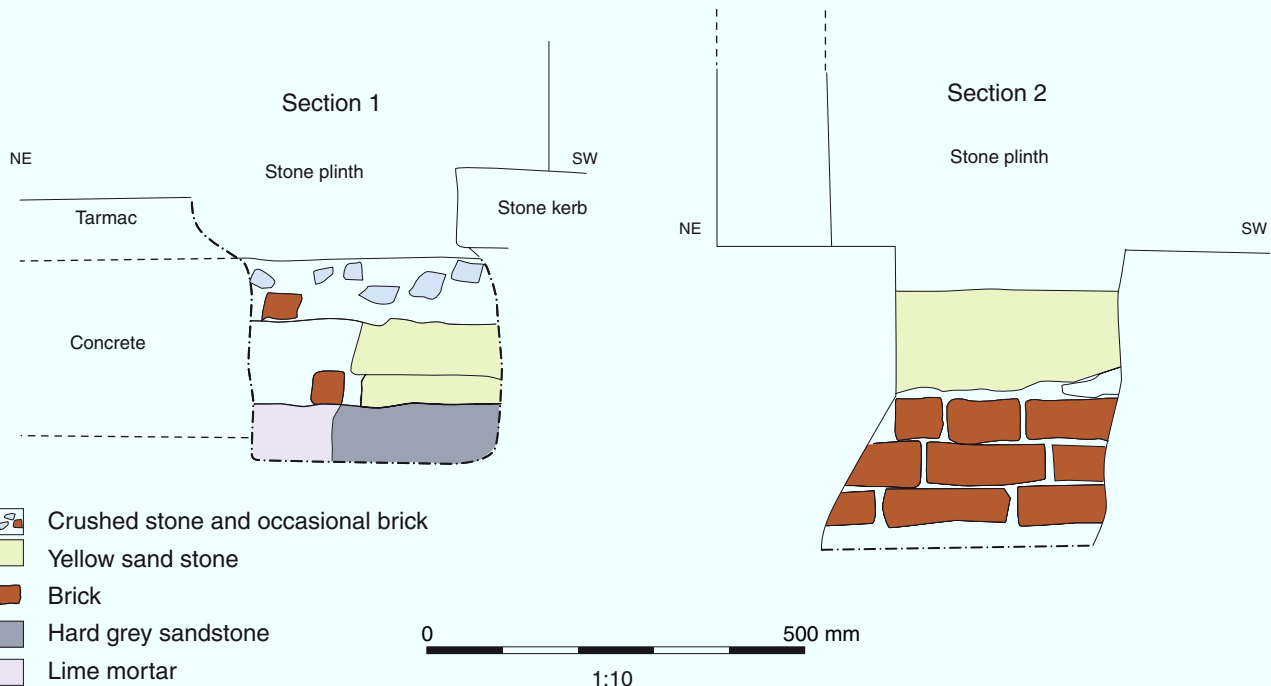
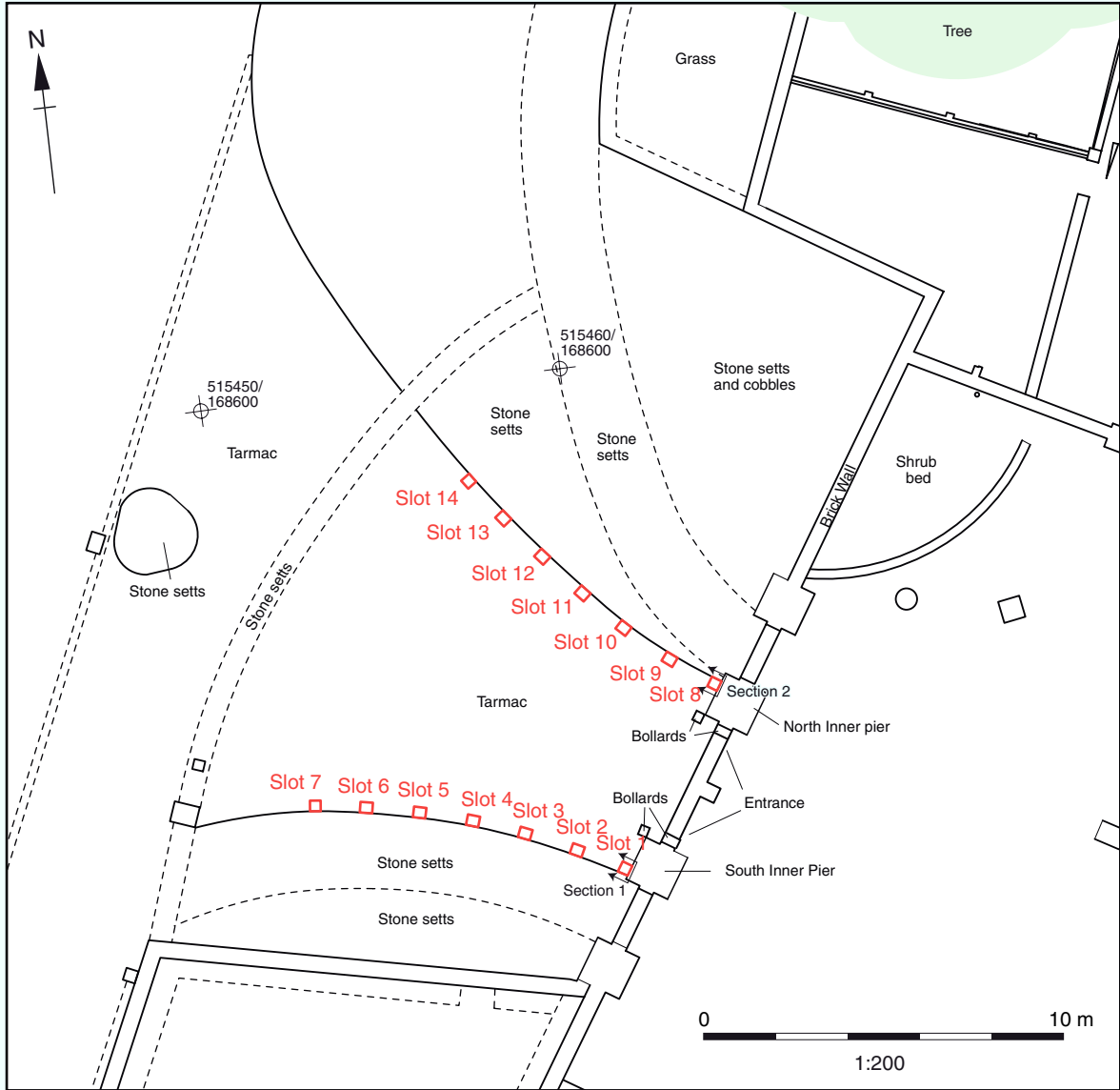


Figure 2: Site plan and sections



Plate 1: Northern slots (general)

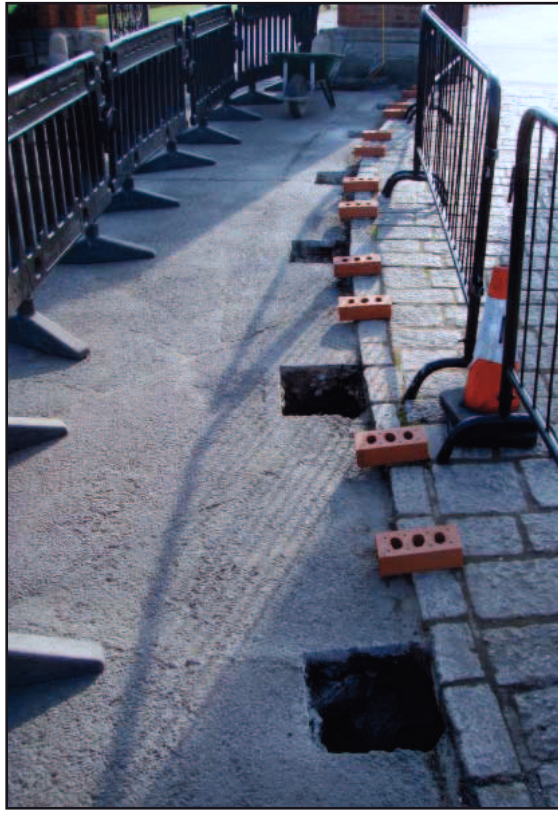


Plate 2: Southern slots (general)



Plate 3: Typical modern overburden



Plate 4:
Southern pier
foundation



Plate 5:
Northern pier
foundation



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