



Notley Abbey Long Crendon Buckinghamshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report



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Notley Abbey, Long Crendon, Buckinghamshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

CONTENTS

Summary.....	1
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Location and scope of work	1
1.2 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	3
3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains	3
4 Discussion and Conclusions	3
Appendix 1 Bibliography and References	4
Appendix 2 Summary of Site Details.....	4

LIST OF FIGURES

- Fig. 1 Site location
Fig. 2 Location of restored section of Wall
Fig. 3 Plates 1 and 2

Cover Plate: View of the garden wall during the it rebuild.

SUMMARY

In June and July 2003 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Notley Abbey, Long Crendon, Buckinghamshire (NGR SP 715 093). The work was commissioned by Kavan Davies Architecture Ltd on behalf of Mrs A Danny in advance of rebuilding of part of the boundary wall and the installation of new storm drainage. The watching brief revealed a post-medieval garden wall containing reused moulded stone from the demolished abbey buildings.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In June and July 2003 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Notley Abbey, Long Crendon, Buckinghamshire (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Kavan Davies Architecture Ltd on behalf of Mrs A Danny in respect of a planning application for the rebuilding of part of the boundary wall and the installation of new storm drainage (Planning Application No. HSD 9/2/5070).

1.1.2 The requirements for the watching brief were outlined by Christopher Welch, Inspector of Ancient Monuments, for English Heritage.

1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief.

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site lies on Purbeck Formation marl and clay overlying Portland Formation sands and limestones (British Geological Survey of England and Wales, Sheet 237) at 80 m above OD. The site is situated 1 mile north of Thame and half a mile west of Haddenham on an east facing slope (NGR SP 715 093).

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 2003) and is reproduced below.

1.3.2 Notley Abbey (SAM no 29409) was founded by the Earl of Buckingham and his wife between AD 1154 and 1164 (Pantin, 1941). Although this building does not have the historical fame of St. Frideswide's it was none the less one of the largest and richest Augustinian monasteries in the Oxford region.

1.3.3 Excavations in 1937 recorded those remains of the abbey complex visible above ground as well as below the topsoil. The abbey comprised in its earliest phase the central crossing, the transepts and the eastern limb of the church. Approximately a century later c 1200-1250, the cloister, the chapter house and the dormitories were added to the eastern part of the church. The next three centuries saw various rebuilds and extensions to the main body of the church culminating in the early 16th century with the completion of the Abbot's house. The whole complex was enclosed in a precinct boundary defined by a ditch. Unfortunately, excavation revealed extensive

robbing of most of the masonry and foundations of the abbey (Pantin, 1941). Very little other than earthworks and a barn survive above ground today.

- 1.3.4 In 2002 OA carried out a watching brief during works at Notley Farm, which lies some 200 m to the west of the Abbey. No archaeological deposits were encountered during this exercise (OA 2002).

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence/absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.
- 2.1.2 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The storm drainage was not carried out under archaeological supervision as the work was mainly above ground and along existing drainage runs. The boundary wall was dismantled and a new foundation trench excavated and filled with concrete. The wall was then rebuilt on the new foundation reusing the old stone. The first phase of this work was monitored by an archaeologist.
- 2.2.2 A general photographic record of the work was made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

Trench

- 3.1.1 The trench for the new footing measured 11.5 m x 1.3 m x 1 m deep (Fig. 2). This cut into a reddish brown clay, which was sealed below a 0.18 m thick layer of light brown silty clay loam topsoil with stone fragments.

Wall

- 3.1.2 The rebuilt wall was built in keeping with the rest of the wall. It had a 0.85 m wide base, which narrowed to 0.55 m. It stood 2.8 m high and was constructed of rough stone on the outer face while the inner garden face of the wall faced with brick in an English running bond. It had a rubble core and was capped with tile.

3.2 Finds

3.2.1 During the dismantling of the garden wall, five fragments of worked limestone were recovered (Fig. 3). These consisted of the following:

Two fragments measuring 0.28 m x 0.16 m x 0.12 m and 0.20 m x 0.22 m x 0.12 m which fitted together to form a moulded base of a window light.

Three fragments of moulded window mullions measuring 0.3 m x 0.18 m x 0.24 m, 0.22 m x 0.18 m x 0.14 m and 0.42 m x 0.32 m x 0.19 m.

These fragments were all dated to the medieval period and are thought to be from the church building, except one of the mullion fragments, which was dated to the late 16th century to early 17th century. The fragments of worked stone were kept on site.

3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

3.3.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified during the watching brief.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1.1 The watching brief did not reveal any archaeological features or deposits relating to the medieval abbey, owing to the non-intrusive nature of the groundworks along the course of the old storm drains. The foundations for the garden wall did not reveal anything of archaeological interest. A number of worked stone fragments were recovered from the wall construction and possibly came from the abbey buildings after they had been demolished after the Dissolution.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

OA 2003 *Notley Abbey & Dovecote, Long Crendon, Buckinghamshire* Written Scheme of Investigation

OA 2002 *Notley Farm, Chearsley Road, Long Crendon, Buckinghamshire* Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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

Pantin, W A, 1941, *Notley Abbey, Oxoniensia VI*, pages 22 - 43

APPENDIX 2 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Notley Abbey, Long Crendon, Buckinghamshire

Site code: LONOT 03

Grid reference: NGR SP 715 093

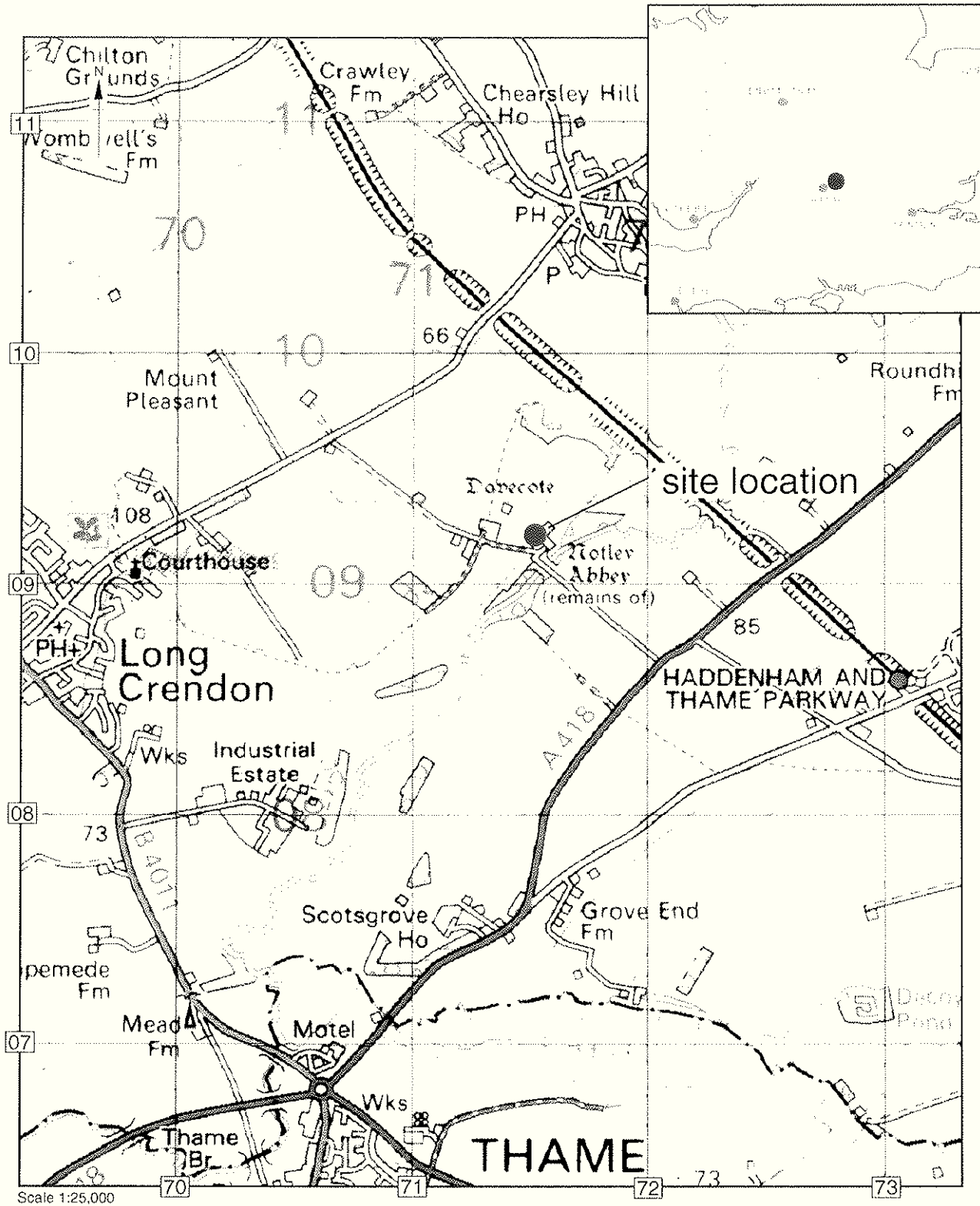
Type of watching brief: Repair to garden wall.

Date and duration of project: Two site visits on the 13/6/03 and 2/7/03.

Area of site: 11.5 m x 1.3 m

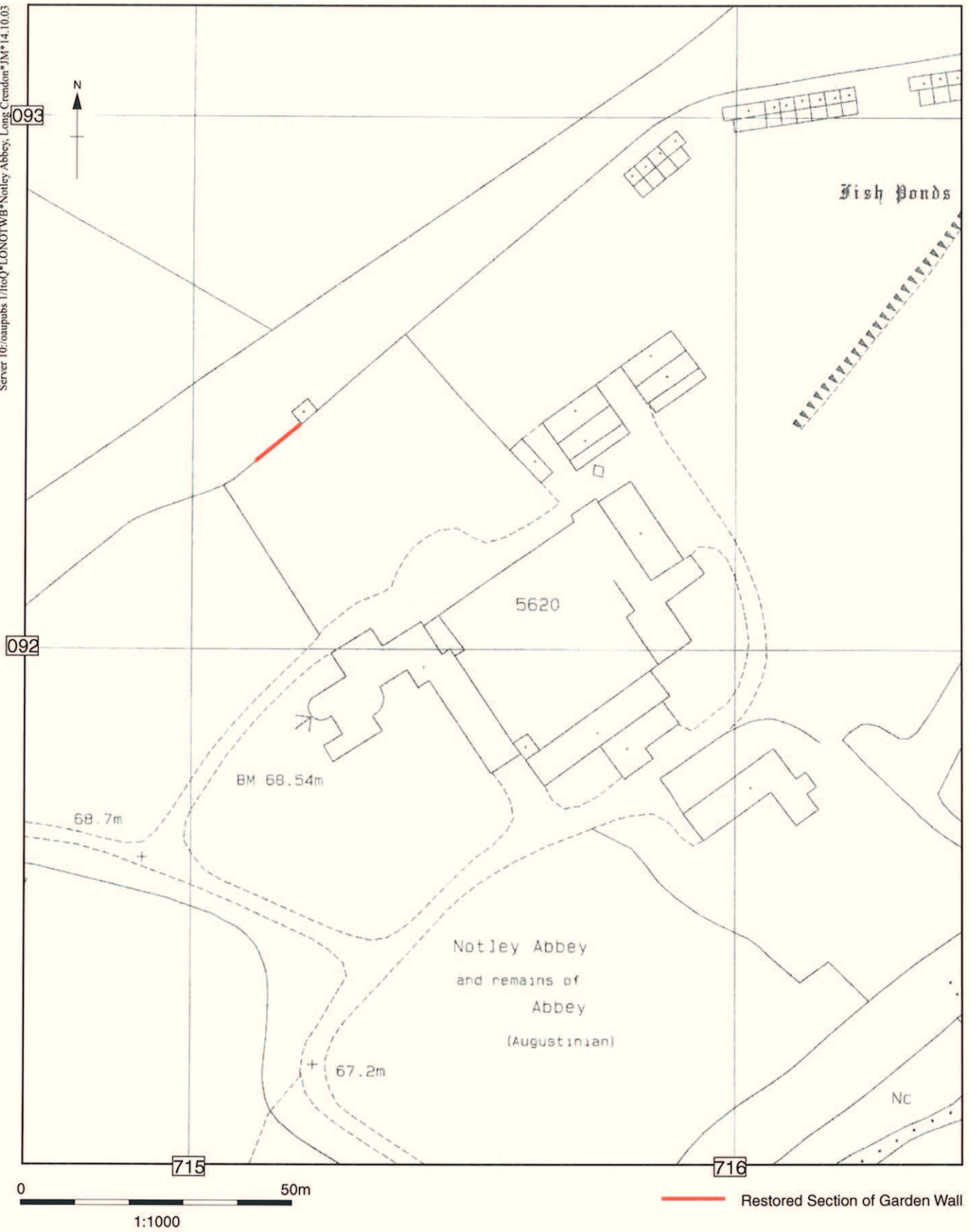
Summary of results: Post-medieval garden wall containing reused moulded stone probably from the demolished abbey buildings.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum, Technical Centre, Tring Rd, Halton, Aylesbury, Bucks HP22 5PJ in due course, under the following accession number: AYBCM 2003.118



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Figure 1: Site location



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Figure 2: Location of Restored section of Wall

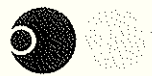


Plate 1 View of the five fragments of worked stone recovered from the wall.



Plate 2 View of the five fragments of worked stone recovered from the wall.

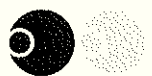
Figure 3: Plates 1 and 2



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