

# Stanford House High Street Oxford



## Archaeological Watching Brief Report



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**Stanford House, High Street, Oxford**  
**Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

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*and illustrated by Hannah Kennedy*

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## Summary

*Oxford Archaeology were commissioned by BGS Architects, on behalf of Stanford University, to carry out an archaeological watching brief on a geotechnical trial trench in advance of the erection of a garden building at Stanford House, High Street, Oxford. The work was carried out as a condition of planning permission (planning ref 13/03351/FUL) in accordance with a methodology agreed with David Radford, Archaeologist for Oxford City Council. Late 19th-century and modern services were revealed; no deposits pre-dating this period were observed during the watching brief.*

### 1 LOCATION AND SCOPE OF WORK

- 1.1.1 The site is centred on SP 519 062. The area for the proposed development is within a garden to the rear of Stanford house, 65 High Street, Oxford (Fig.1).
- 1.1.2 The geology of the area is superficial Northmoor Sand and Gravel overlying Oxford Clay (BGS).
- 1.1.3 The proposed works will involve the erection of a new garden building and covered link using a ground slab. Foundation details are yet to be decided. The ground slopes down slightly towards the south. The garden building is c 4.2m x 20.6m and the covered link is c 8.5m x 2.2m. Geotechnical investigation was required to confirm the strength of the made ground, and allow the finalisation of the design of the ground bearing (raft) structural solution.
- 1.1.4 The geotechnical investigation required the excavation of a trial trench running along the line of the west and south walls of the proposed building (see Fig. 1).

### 2 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1.1 The geotechnical trench was hand dug by the groundworks contractor to avoid unnecessary damage to nearby trees. The trench measured 500mm wide and was no deeper than 800mm. It was during this work that the archaeological observations took place, on the 27th, 28th and 31st March 2014.
- 2.1.2 The majority of the excavation with the potential to disturb archaeological deposits or features was closely monitored and time was allowed by the contractor for the archaeological project supervisor to examine the trench and the deposits therein. The east-west trench, corresponding to the south wall of the proposed building, was not monitored as it was felt that sufficient information had been gathered during the monitoring of the north-south trench line.

### 3 DESCRIPTION OF DEPOSITS

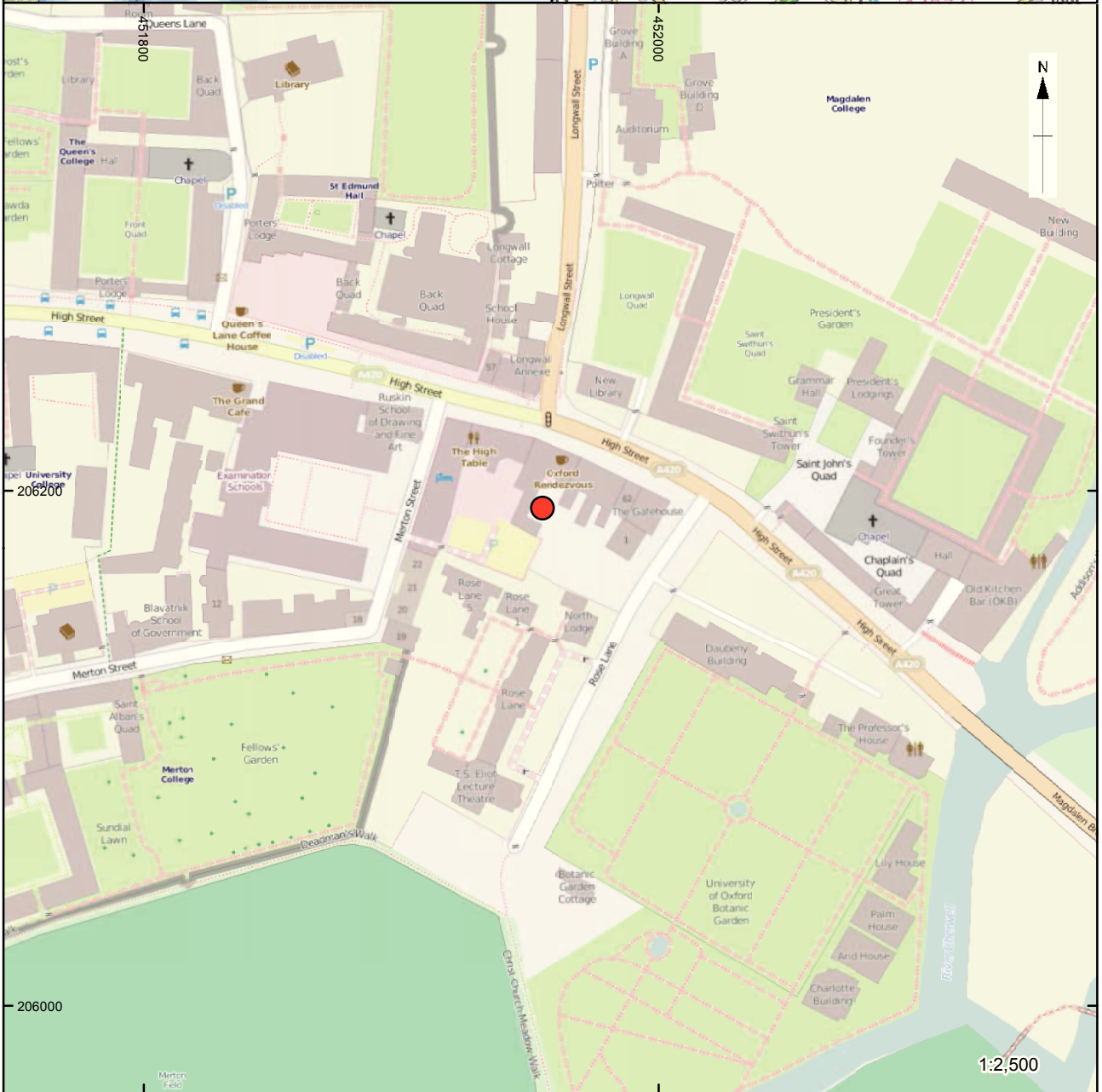
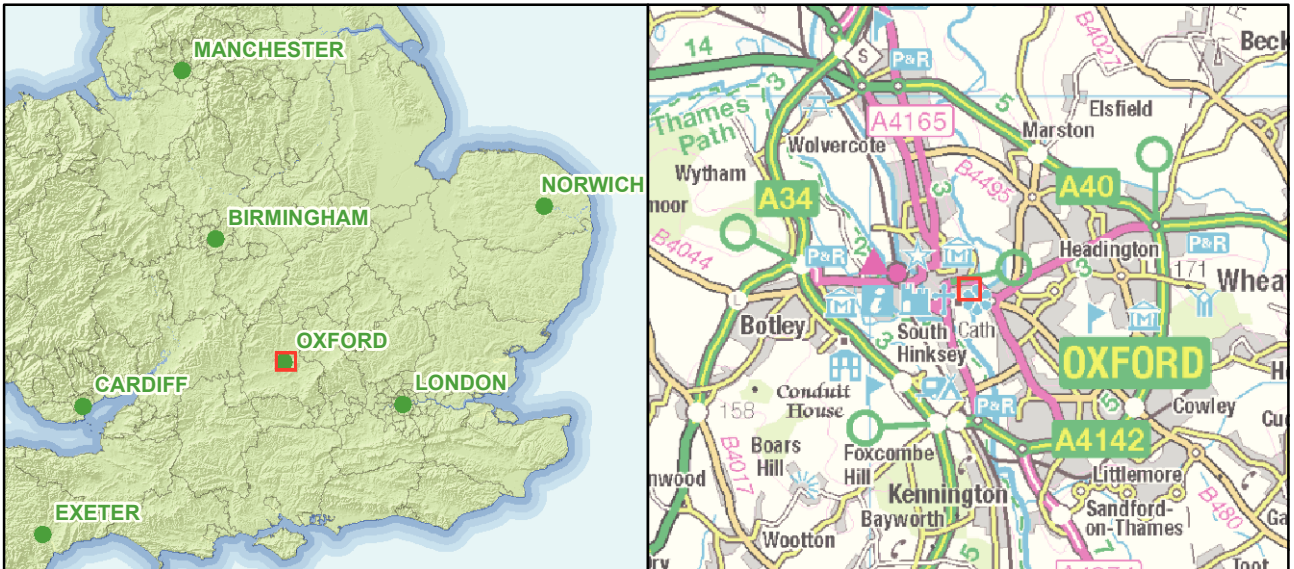
- 3.1.1 The northern end of the trench comprised a topsoil layer overlying made ground. This overlay an east-west oriented brick encased service run of approximately 1m in width that serviced the nearby conservatory building. This was predicted to continue across the garden to the west. This truncated an earlier drain oriented north-south which roughly followed the alignment of the trial trench.
- 3.1.2 A further east-west oriented drain was observed towards the centre of the trench which fed into a manhole and also truncated the north-south drain.



- 3.1.3 The southern half of the trench comprised a topsoil overlying a layer of building rubble containing frogged bricks, mortar and occasional fragments of concrete and plastic. Underlying the rubble layer was a deposit of mid grey sandy-silt that also contained bricks.

#### 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The trial trench revealed no features or deposits dating to before the late 19th century. The deposits observed illustrate a sequence of services associated with the extant structures, with earlier drainage runs being truncated by them. In addition, rubble was observed below the topsoil which may indicate either a pre-existing structure or a dump of building material associated with the construction of the current structures on the site.
- 4.1.2 It therefore seems likely that any significant archaeological horizons at the site lie at depths in excess of 800mm.



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Figure 1: Site location



Figure 2: Plan of site and features





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