

GLNOSTWB

22-26 Northgate Street
Gloucester
Gloucestershire



**Archaeological
Watching Brief Report**



February 2006

**Client: Maslen Brennan Henshaw
Partnership**

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Gloucestershire*****ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT*****CONTENTS**

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SUMMARY

Between 24th and 31st January 2006 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at 22-26 Northgate Street, Gloucester, Gloucestershire (NGR: SO 8322 1857). The work was commissioned by the Maslen Brennan Henshaw Partnership in advance of the excavation of geological test pits prior to redevelopment of the site. The watching brief revealed deep deposits of medieval and post-medieval made ground. No other archaeological remains were encountered.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Between 24th and 31st January 2006 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at 22-26 Northgate Street, Gloucester, Gloucestershire (NGR: SO 8322 1857). The work was commissioned by the Maslen Brennan Henshaw Partnership in respect of the excavation of geological test pits prior the redevelopment of the property.
- 1.1.2 A project brief was set by Phil Greatorex, on behalf of the Gloucester Historic Environment Team (GHET), requesting that a Controlled Archaeological Watching Brief be conducted on the site as part of best practise policy by the City Council (GHET 2005). The work was designed to follow on from previous fieldwork that included an evaluation (Gloucester Archaeology Unit, 2000).
- 1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief (OA 2006).

1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The proposed development is located within the centre of Gloucester, 70 m north of the town cross, centred on NGR: SO 8322 1857. The site is bounded by Northgate Street to the west, New Inn Lane to the north, the Oxeboode to the south and by commercial property and an access road to the east. The site lies on slightly sloping ground, falling to the north-east, at a height of approximately 18 m OD. The underlying geology is alluvium and fan gravel deposits over Lower Lias clay (Geological Survey of Great Britain sheet no 234).

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 2006) and is summarised/reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 Gloucester was founded as a Roman fortress in the 60s AD, and became a colonia in c AD 100, seeing the construction of stone walls and gates, a stone quay and quayside retaining wall at this time. The Roman north and east gates survived until

the 11th century – the east, south and part of the north lengths of the town wall still defended the city in the 17th century (Herbert 1988). Northgate Street, on which the site is situated, follows the line of the Roman city street. Several Roman cemeteries are known in the city, including Brunswick Road, Kingsholm, Barnwood and Wotton.

- 1.3.3 The site is part of a larger Study Area, the Urban Archaeological database for Gloucester, and search of a 70 m radius area centred on the site produced 10 known find spots.
- 1.3.4 A Roman limestone votive tablet was recovered during development at 2-4 Northgate Street, 60 m south-east of the site. A leather sheath, leather scraps and pottery were recovered during a watching brief at 5 Northgate Street 50 m to the east.
- 1.3.5 Excavations at 13-23 Northgate Street, directly opposite the site, produced Roman and medieval street surfaces and ditches. Work during construction of a department store 40 m to the north-east produced Roman street surfaces, carved limestone, building plaster, pottery and a tessellated pavement. Skeletons were recovered from below the pavement as well as an undated copper spearhead.
- 1.3.6 At 5 Eastgate Street, 55 m to the south-east a Roman pavement and pottery were observed and during an evaluation at 13-15 Eastgate Street, 50 m to the south, a Roman surface and well and a medieval building were exposed.

Previous Fieldwork

- 1.3.7 Further to the desk based assessment, an archaeological evaluation carried out on the site (GAU, 2000) revealed that a large degree of truncation caused by post-medieval cellar excavation, with no significant archaeological deposits encountered.

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 deposits or features that may be disturbed or destroyed by the work.
- 2.1.3 To provide information to allow a suitable mitigation strategy to be devised for future development work.
- 2.1.4 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The watching brief was conducted as a series of site visits during work likely to impinge upon archaeological deposits. For this phase of work this comprised 11 hand dug geotechnical trial pits. Pits 1 and 2 were located in the lower, modern, northern range of cellarage. Pits 3, 4, 5 and 6 were located in the earlier, southern range, of cellarage and pits 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 were located on the ground floor within the eastern extent of the building.
- 2.2.2 A plan showing the location of the test pits was maintained at a scale of 1:100 (Fig. 2) and any sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20. All excavations and sections were photographed using 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

Trial Pits 1 and 2

- 3.1.1 These were located in the north-west corner and in the centre of the southern wall of the lower basement respectively. This area was approximately 1.5 m lower than the rest of the basement area, and the water table was encountered directly after breaking out the concrete floor, leading to the abandonment of these pits.

Trial Pit 3 (Section 3)

- 3.1.2 This was located against the western wall of the cellar area, directly under Northgate Street. A stiff blue-grey clay (35) was encountered 0.9 m below the cellar floor. This was a very clean deposit and may represent the underlying natural, but possibly may be a layer of made ground composed of redeposited natural. This was overlain by a 0.4 m thick layer of reddish brown sandy silt clay (34), a probable layer of made ground. Overlying this was a 0.2 m deep layer of grey-brown clay silt (33), also a probable layer of made ground. This was sealed by a 0.18 m thick layer of mixed grey-brown clay silt and stone rubble (32), a probable construction layer. The current cellar floor (31), a 0.08 m thick concrete slab, was laid directly onto layer (32).

Trial Pit 4 (Section 4)

- 3.1.3 This was located against the northern wall of the earlier range of cellars. A very dark grey clayey silt (45) was encountered at a depth of 0.9 m below the cellar floor. This contained charcoal flecking and small fragments of limestone suggesting it was a layer of made ground. Overlying this was a 0.45 m deep layer of pale brown silt clay (44). This produced undiagnostic fragments of brick as well as numerous stone fragments also suggesting it was a layer of made ground. This was overlaid by a 0.1 m thick layer of black clay loam (43), possibly an occupation layer or more likely a layer of made ground. Sealing this was a 0.18 m deep layer of grey-brown silt (42).

This contained many lime mortar inclusions suggesting it was a construction layer, or possibly the base for the brick floor (41). This was constructed using hand made bricks of similar dimensions to those used to construct the cellar walls. A modern concrete floor (40) had been laid directly onto this surface.

Trial Pit 5 (Section 5)

- 3.1.4 This was located in the south-west corner of the earlier range of cellars. A layer of reddish brown sandy clay silt (54) was encountered at a depth of 1.0 m below the cellar floor. This layer was very similar to layer (34), and probably represents a layer of made ground. Overlying this was a 0.3 m thick layer of light grey clayey sand (53), a probable layer of made ground. This was sealed by a 0.4 m deep layer of light grey-brown clay silt (52). This contained many fragments of limestone rubble and produced fragments of glazed earthenware of a possible medieval date, together with residual Romano-British pottery and which represents a layer of made ground. This had been cut by the foundation trench (55) which contained the western wall of the cellar (51), a roughly built limestone and lime mortar construction.

Trial Pit 6 (Section 6)

- 3.1.5 This was located in the south-east corner of the earlier range of cellars. A layer of grey-brown clay silt (62) was encountered at a depth of 0.18 m below the cellar floor. This had been cut by the foundation cut (64) into which the brick built cellar wall (63) had been constructed. This was built using red handmade bricks measuring 0.225 m by 0.105 m by 0.055 m suggesting a late 18th to early 19th century date of construction. Both layer (62) and the toe of wall (63) were overlaid by a 0.1 m thick layer of mixed grey-brown silts and lime mortar (61), a probable construction layer. The current cellar floor, a 0.08 m thick concrete slab (65), had been directly laid on this layer.

Trial Pit 7 (Section 7)

- 3.1.6 This was located in the north-east corner of the ground floor. At a depth of 1.15 m below floor level a layer of reddish brown silt clay (76) was encountered. This contained both charcoal and lime mortar flecking suggesting either an occupation layer or possibly made ground. This was overlaid by a 1.1 m thick layer of black silt loam (72). This contained numerous small brick fragments, both charcoal and lime mortar flecking and fragments of limestone. A fragment of glazed earthenware dating between the 17th and 19th centuries was also recovered. This had been cut by the foundation cut (73), into which the modern concrete underpinning (74) had been poured. A dark grey-brown clay silt (75) had been used to backfill the upper part of cut (73). This was sealed by the 0.08 m thick modern concrete floor (71).

Trial pit 8 (Section 8)

- 3.1.7 This was located against the northern wall of the ground floor, approximately 10 m west of Trial Pit 7. Along the northern edge of the pit and on roughly the same

alignment as the modern brick built northern wall a roughly constructed sandstone and lime mortar wall (84) was encountered. This appeared to have been reduced or truncated in height to a level 0.7 m below the current floor level. Butting up to, and sealing the wall to a depth of 0.2 m, was a layer of dark grey-brown clay silt (83). This contained many fragments of brick as well as fragments of a grey lime/cement mortar mix, suggesting a layer of made ground and demolition debris. Overlying this was a 0.2 m deep layer of grey-brown clay silt (82). This also contained many fragments of brick and tile and represents another layer of made ground. This layer was cut by the foundation trench (85), which contained the modern concrete underpinning (86), part of the same phase of work as (74) within Pit 7. Both the underpinning (86) and layer (82) were overlaid by the modern concrete floor (81), 0.15 m deep.

Trial Pit 9 (Section 9)

- 3.1.8 This was located against the centre of the eastern wall of the ground floor. A layer of dark reddish brown silt clay (95) was encountered at a depth of 1.4 m below the current floor level. This contained both charcoal and lime mortar flecking, and represents a layer of made ground. This was overlaid by a 0.45 m thick layer of dark grey-brown silt clay (94), which contained brick and tile fragments and charcoal and lime mortar flecking. Overlying this was a 0.12 m deep layer of black clay silt (93), which contained large quantities of charcoal flecking and represents a probable occupation layer. This was overlaid by a layer of grey-brown mixed silt and lime mortar, 0.15 m thick (92), a construction layer. This had been cut by the modern underpinning trench (96), containing the modern concrete ground beam (91). Butting up to (91) and overlying (92) was the modern 0.1 m thick concrete floor (97).

Trial Pits 10 and 11 (Sections 10 and 11)

- 3.1.9 These were located against the southern wall of the ground floor, Pit 10 in the south-eastern corner of the building and Pit 11 8 m west of the south-eastern corner. The stratigraphy exposed was identical in each and will be described together.
- 3.1.10 A layer of dark reddish brown silt clay (104 and 114) was encountered 1.15 m below the current ground level. Very similar to layer (95) in Pit 9 it also contained both lime mortar and charcoal flecking and also represents a layer of made ground. These were overlaid by a 0.5 m thick layer of dark grey-brown silt clay (103 and 113) which produced small fragments of brick and tile, small fragments of stone, lime mortar and charcoal flecking similar to layer (94). Layer (103) also contained a large fragment of glazed earthenware suggesting an 18th to 19th century date. The composition and inclusions within these deposits suggest that they were made ground.
- 3.1.11 Overlying these layers was a 0.1 m deep layer of black clay silt (102 and 112). These were rich in charcoal and were also layers of made ground. These were cut by foundation trenches (105 and 115) containing modern concrete underpinning (101 and 111).

3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 Layer (52) produced 6 fragments of animal bone, 4 fragments of Romano-British pottery and 1 fragment of early medieval pottery. Layer (62) produced 1 fragment of animal bone. Layer (72) produced a fragment of post-medieval pottery and layer (103) also produced a fragment of post-medieval pottery.
- 3.2.2 Layers (44), (72), (82), (83), (94), (103) and (113) all produced fragmentary pieces of brick and tile. These were too small to be diagnostic and were evaluated on site but were not retained.

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 deposits of material predating the construction of the cellars and the ground floor still exist in situ, and that the excavations for the existing cellars have not penetrated the natural. This suggests that a deep accumulation of made ground or occupation layers has covered the site in the past.
- 4.1.2 There is the possibility that earlier cellar excavations have truncated the area, and that the layers of made ground were deposited in order to backfill these excavations, or possibly to raise the floor level (ground water ?) prior to the construction of the existing cellars.
- 4.1.3 No evidence for the Roman city other than a few residual finds was encountered during the watching brief. It is unlikely that this was due to the absence of archaeology but more likely that the depth of the excavations failed to impinge upon any significant archaeological horizon.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Test Pit</i>	<i>Ctxt No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i> Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
3						
	31	Surface	0.08 m	Modern concrete floor	-	C20th
	32	Layer	0.18 m	Construction layer	-	C19th
	33	Layer	0.2 m	Made ground	-	-
	34	Layer	0.4 m	Made ground	-	-
	35	Layer	> 0.3 m	Natural clay ? Possibly redeposited natural ?	-	-
4						
	40	Surface	0.08 m	Modern concrete floor	-	C20th
	41	Surface	0.11 m	Original brick floor	Brick	C18th/ C19th
	42	Layer	0.18 m	Construction layer	-	C18th/ C19th
	43	Layer	0.1 m	Made ground	-	-
	44	Layer	0.45 m	Made ground	Brick	-
	45	Layer	> 0.3 m	Made ground	-	-
5						
	51	Wall	> 1.2 m	Cellar wall	Brick	C18th/ C19th
	52	Layer	0.4 m	Made ground	Pottery, bone	C14th
	53	Layer	0.3 m	Made ground	-	-
	54	Layer	> 0.2 m	Made ground	-	-
	55	Cut	> 1.2 m	Foundation trench for wall (51)	-	C18th/ C19th
6						
	61	Layer	0.1m	Construction layer	-	C18th/ C19th
	62	Layer	> 0.8 m	Made ground	-	-
	63	Wall	0.5 m	Footings for cellar wall	Brick	C18th/ C19th
	64	Cut	0.5 m	Foundation cut for footings (63)	-	C18th/ C19th

Test Pit	Ctxt No	Type	Depth (m)	Comments	Finds	Date
6						
	65	Surface	0.08 m	Modern concrete floor	-	C20th
7						
	71	Surface	0.08 m	Modern concrete floor	-	C20th
	72	Layer	1.1 m	Made ground	Pottery	C17th/ C19th
	73	Cut	0.7 m	Underpinning trench	-	C20th
	74	Wall	0.7 m	Concrete underpinning	-	C20th
	75	Fill	0.28 m	Backfill of underpinning trench	-	C20th
	76	Layer	> 0.1 m	Made ground	-	-
8						
	81	Surface	0.15 m	Modern concrete floor	-	C20th
	82	Layer	0.2 m	Made ground	Brick, tile	C19th
	83	Layer	> 0.7 m	Made ground	Brick tile	C19th
	84	Wall	> 0.5 m	Roughly built sandstone wall	-	-
	85	Cut	0.35 m	Underpinning trench	-	C20th
	86	Wall	0.6 m	Underpinning and ground beam	-	C20th
9						
	91	Wall	0.7 m	Modern concrete ground beam	-	C20th
	92	Layer	0.15 m	Construction layer	Lime mortar	C19th ?
	93	Layer	0.12 m	Made ground	-	-
	94	Layer	0.45 m	Made ground	-	-
	95	Layer	> 0.2 m	Made ground	-	-
	96	Cut	0.7 m	Underpinning / Ground beam trench	-	C20th
	97	Surface	0.1 m	Modern concrete floor	-	C20th
10						
	101	Wall	0.5 m	Concrete ground beam	-	C20th
	102	Layer	0.1 m	Made ground	-	C19th ?
	103	Layer	0.5 m	Made ground	Pottery	C19th
	104	Layer	> 0.4 m	Made ground	-	-
	105	Cut	0.5 m	Trench for underpinning / ground beam	-	-

<i>Test Pit</i>	<i>Ctxt No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i> Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
11						
	101	Wall	0.5 m	Concrete ground beam	-	C20th
	102	Layer	0.1 m	Made ground	-	C19th ?
	103	Layer	0.5 m	Made ground	Pottery	C19th
	104	Layer	> 0.4 m	Made ground	-	-
	105	Cut	0.5 m	Trench for underpinning / ground beam	-	-

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

GAU, 2000 *22 -26 Northgate Street, Gloucester (GLRCM2001/27) Archaeological Evaluation*

GHET, 2005 *22 - 26 Northgate Street, Gloucester: Brief for a Controlled Watching Brief*

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

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

OA, 2006 *22-26 Northgate Street, Gloucester, Gloucestershire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: 22-26 Northgate Street, Gloucester, Gloucestershire

Site code: GLNOST 06

Grid reference: SO 8322 1857

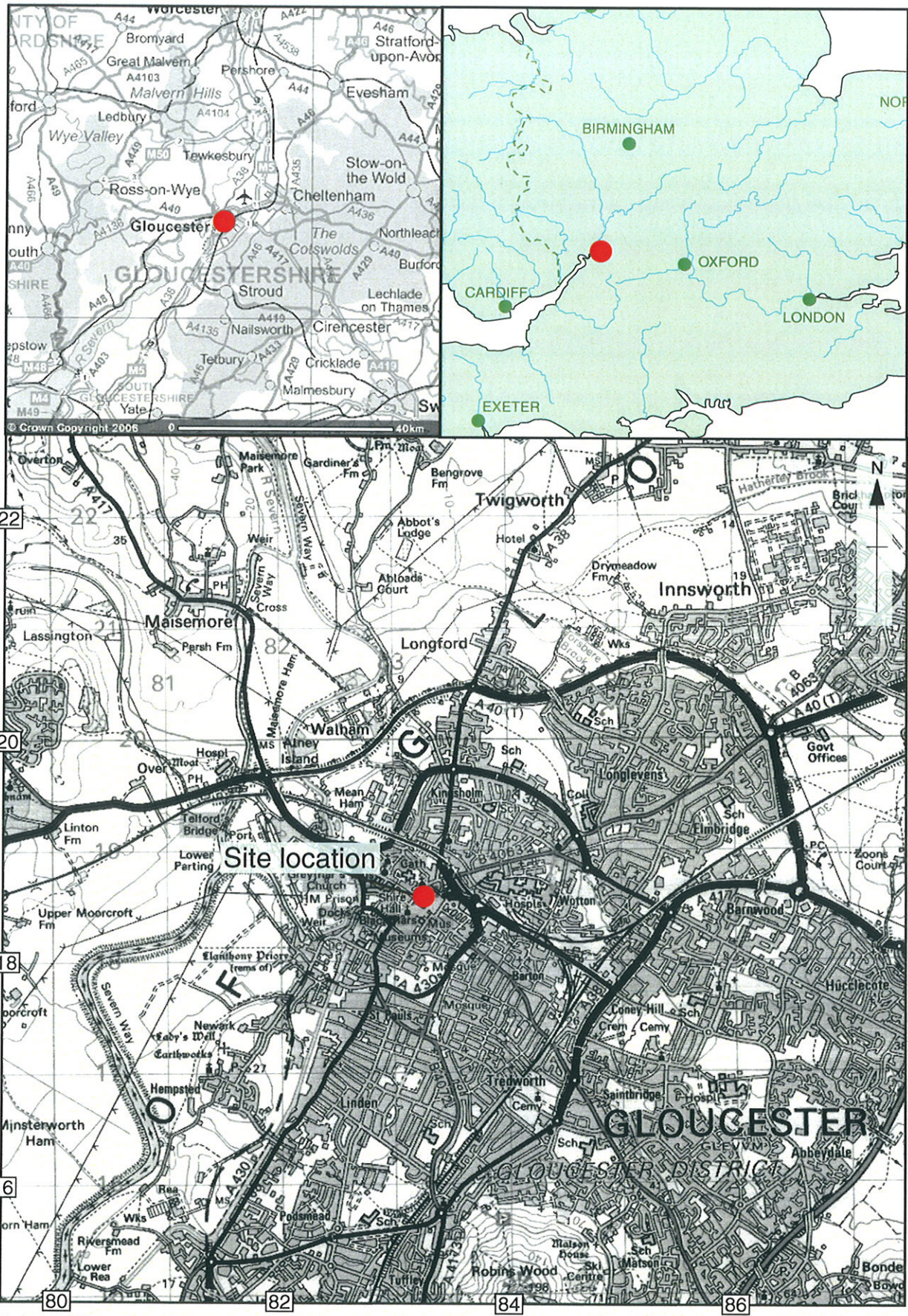
Type of watching brief: Hand excavation of Geotechnical Pits

Date and duration of project: 24th to 31st January 2006, 2.5 days

Area of site: 1350 m²

Summary of results: Deep deposits of medieval and post-medieval made ground surviving below the current cellar and ground floor.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Gloucester City Museum and Art Gallery in due course.



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Figure 1: Site location

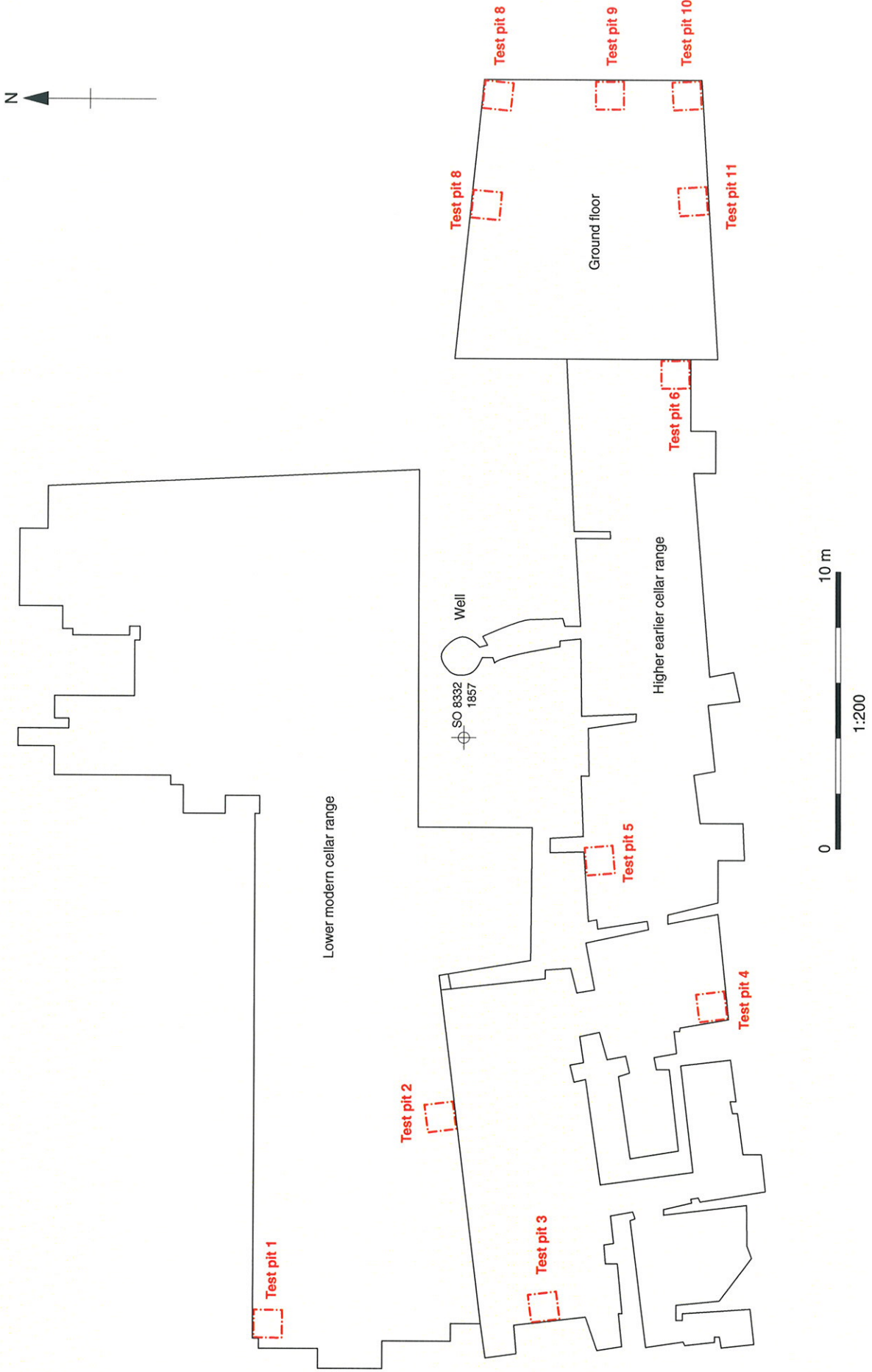
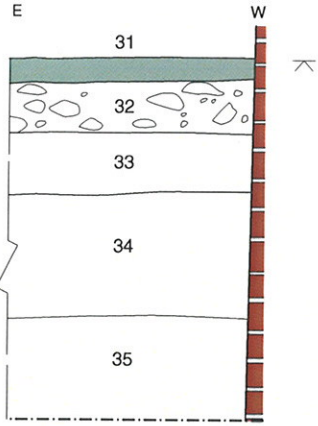
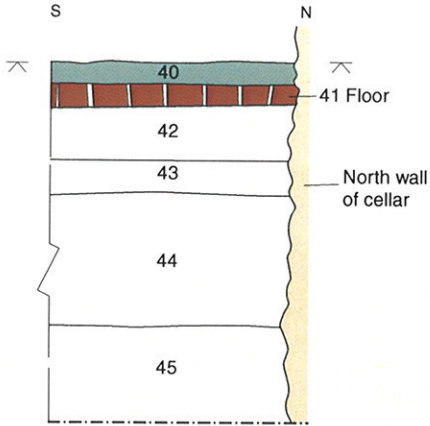


Figure 2: Area of watching brief

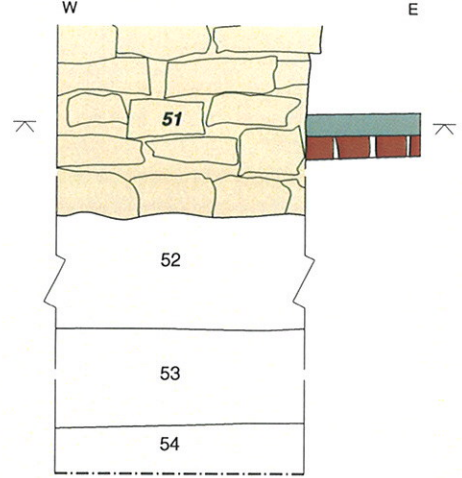
Testpit 3 Section



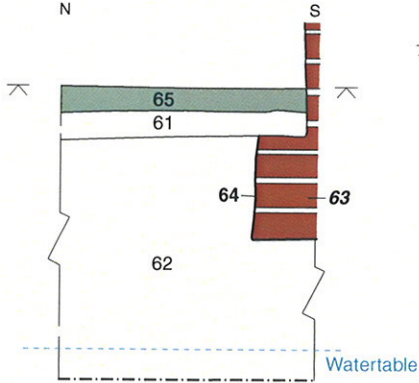
Testpit 4 Section



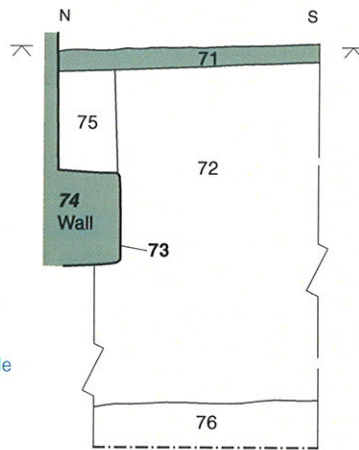
Testpit 5 Section



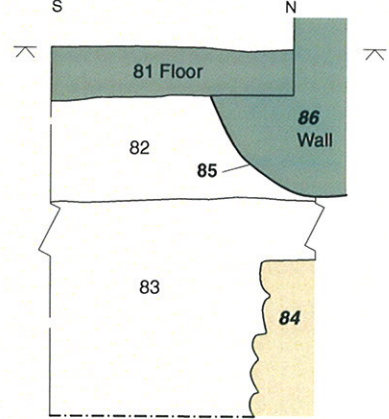
Testpit 6 Section



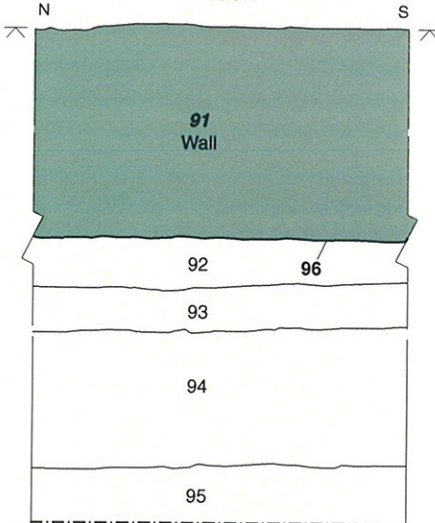
Testpit 7 Section



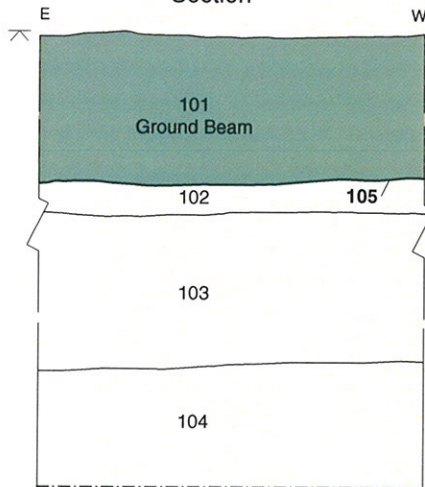
Testpit 8 Section



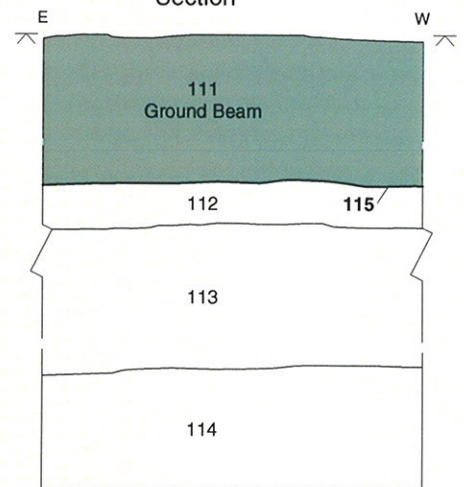
Testpit 9 Section



Testpit 10 Section



Testpit 11 Section



KEY	
	Concrete
	Brick
	Stone



Figure 3: Sections 3-11



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