

Rosicrucian Garden  
Clarence House  
St James's Palace  
London



**Archaeological  
Watching Brief Report**



**Oxford Archaeology**

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# Rosicrucian Garden, Clarence House, St James's Palace, London

## *ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT*

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## SUMMARY

*On the 24th and 25th February 2005, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Clarence House, London (NGR: TQ 293 799). The work was commissioned by Historic Royal Palaces in advance of construction of a proposed Rosicrucian garden. The watching brief revealed layers of made ground probably associated with the refurbishment of Clarence house during 1873-5 sealed by 2 phases of garden soils.*

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 On the 24th and 25th February 2005 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Clarence House, St James's Palace, London (NGR: TQ 293 799). The work was commissioned by Historic Royal Palaces in respect of the proposed construction of a new Rosicrucian garden.

#### 1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies on level ground to the south of Clarence House within the grounds of St James's Palace (Fig. 1). The site is situated on River Brickearths over Terrace gravels (British Geological Survey Sheet 270) at 7 m above OD and was 30 m<sup>2</sup> in area

#### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background to the watching brief was prepared for the project and is reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 Clarence House, which stands beside St James's Palace, was built between 1825 and 1827 to the designs of John Nash for Prince William Henry, Duke of Clarence, who resided there as King William IV from 1830 until 1837. During its history the house has been altered, reflecting the changes in occupancy over nearly two centuries.
- 1.3.3 The house created by Nash was a bright, stuccoed, three storey mansion of classical proportion and incorporated the south-western corner of the Tudor buildings of St James's Palace. It was arranged to face the west on to Stable Road, at that time a public thoroughfare. The interior of Clarence House was plainly decorated and furnished in comparison to Buckingham Palace and York House. The final cost, after fitting out was completed at the being of 1829, was £22,232.
- 1.3.4 Clarence house was occupied by William IV until his death in 1837 when it became the home of his unmarried sister, Princess Augusta until her death in 1840. The next occupant was Queen Victoria's mother, Victoria, Duchess of Kent who lived there from 1841 to 1861.
- 1.3.5 The house was left vacant for five years until 1866, when Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, Queen Victoria's second son moved in. After marrying the daughter of Tsar

Alexander II, the Grand Duchess Marie Alexandrovna in 1874 in St Petersburg, Alfred began the enlargement and redecoration of Clarence House. The house was reoriented towards the south, with a new entrance featuring cast iron Doric columns.

- 1.3.6 After 1900 the house was occupied by Arthur, Duke of Connaught and Strathern until his death in 1942. Clarence House was then made available for the use of the War Organisation of the British Red Cross for the duration of the war. Two hundred staff of the Foreign Relations Department maintained contact from Clarence House with British prisoners of war abroad, and administered the Red Cross Postal Message Scheme. In 1949 it returned to Royal use when it became the London home of the then Princess Elizabeth. When she became Queen in 1952 the house was prepared as accommodation for Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother.

## 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 gain further knowledge of the archaeology within this area in particular any earlier garden features or structures which may have occupied this area.
- 2.1.3 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 works likely to impact on any archaeology, in order to monitor the progress and extent of the excavations, and to record the stratigraphy and any features exposed during the work.
- 2.2.2 A plan of the extent of the excavations was drawn at a scale of 1:100 (Fig. 2) and sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20. The sections were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. A general photographic record of the work was made Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Field Manual* (OAU, 1992).

## 3 RESULTS

### 3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 Towards the north-west corner of the excavations a layer of brown sandy silt (9) was reached at a depth of 0.3 m below ground level (Fig.3). This layer produced many fragments of brick and mortar inclusions and represents a layer of made ground and building debris probably associated with the refurbishment of Clarence House. Cut into this layer was the foundation cut (2) into which the brick plinth (4) was built. This supports a Doric cast iron column, part of the 1873 porch structure. Overlying the north-west side of the brick plinth was a light brown sandy silt (3) in excess of 0.2 m deep. This also containing building debris and may represent an area of made ground. Overlying 3 and the brick plinth 4 was a layer of grey-brown silty loam (1)

greater than 0.2 m thick. This produced brick fragments and mortar flecking, and was a probable landscaping layer of imported topsoil. Overlying this was a 0.15 m deep layer of brown silty loam (5), a possible turf border running alongside the porch.

- 3.1.2 The southern edge of this turf was cut by a steeply sloping straight edge (6) which ran parallel to the porch. This was the edge of an existing flower bed. The base of this cut was filled with a dark grey silty loam (7) in excess of 0.15 m deep. This was overlaid by 0.2 m deep layer of grey silty loam (8). Both these deposits represent cultivated soils.

### 3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 Fragments of brick were noted within all the deposits. These were evaluated on site but not retained. No other finds were recorded.

### 3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 3.3.1 No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling were observed during the course of the watching brief.

## 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The deposits observed probably all relate to the 1873-5 refurbishment of Clarence House. The lowest deposits represent layers of made ground used to raise the ground level around the porch, while the upper layers comprise landscaping features and deposits probably established closely after the refurbishment.
- 4.1.2 The depth of the excavations was such that earlier deposits were not impinged upon.



## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	Layer	> 0.2 m	Made ground, imported topsoil	Brick, mortar	C19th
2	Cut	> 0.4 m	Foundation cut for brick plinth 4	-	C19th
3	Layer	> 0.2 m	Made ground	Brick, mortar	C19th
4	Structure	> 0.6 m	Brick plinth for cast iron pillar supporting the 1873-5 porch	Brick, mortar	C19th
5	Layer	0.15 m	Topsoil and turf edging	Brick, mortar	C19th
6	Cut	> 0.4 m	Edge of flower bed	-	C19th/C20th
7	Layer	> 0.2 m	Layer of cultivated soil within flower bed	Brick, mortar	C19th/C20th
8	Layer	0.2 m	Layer of cultivated soil within flower bed	Brick, mortar	C19th/C20th
9	Layer	> 0.1 m	Made ground	Brick, mortar	C19th

## APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

IFA, 1992 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

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

## APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

**Site name:** Clarence House, St James Palace, London

**Site code:** CH0105

**Grid reference:** TQ 293 799

**Type of watching brief:** Excavation of base for path and new flower beds

**Date and duration of project:** 24th and 25th February 2005

**Area of site:** 30 m<sup>2</sup>

**Summary of results:** Layers of made ground associated with the 1873-5 refurbishment of Clarence house, 2 phases of landscaping/gardening activity

**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with the Royal Household Museums Service in due course.





Figure 1: Site location



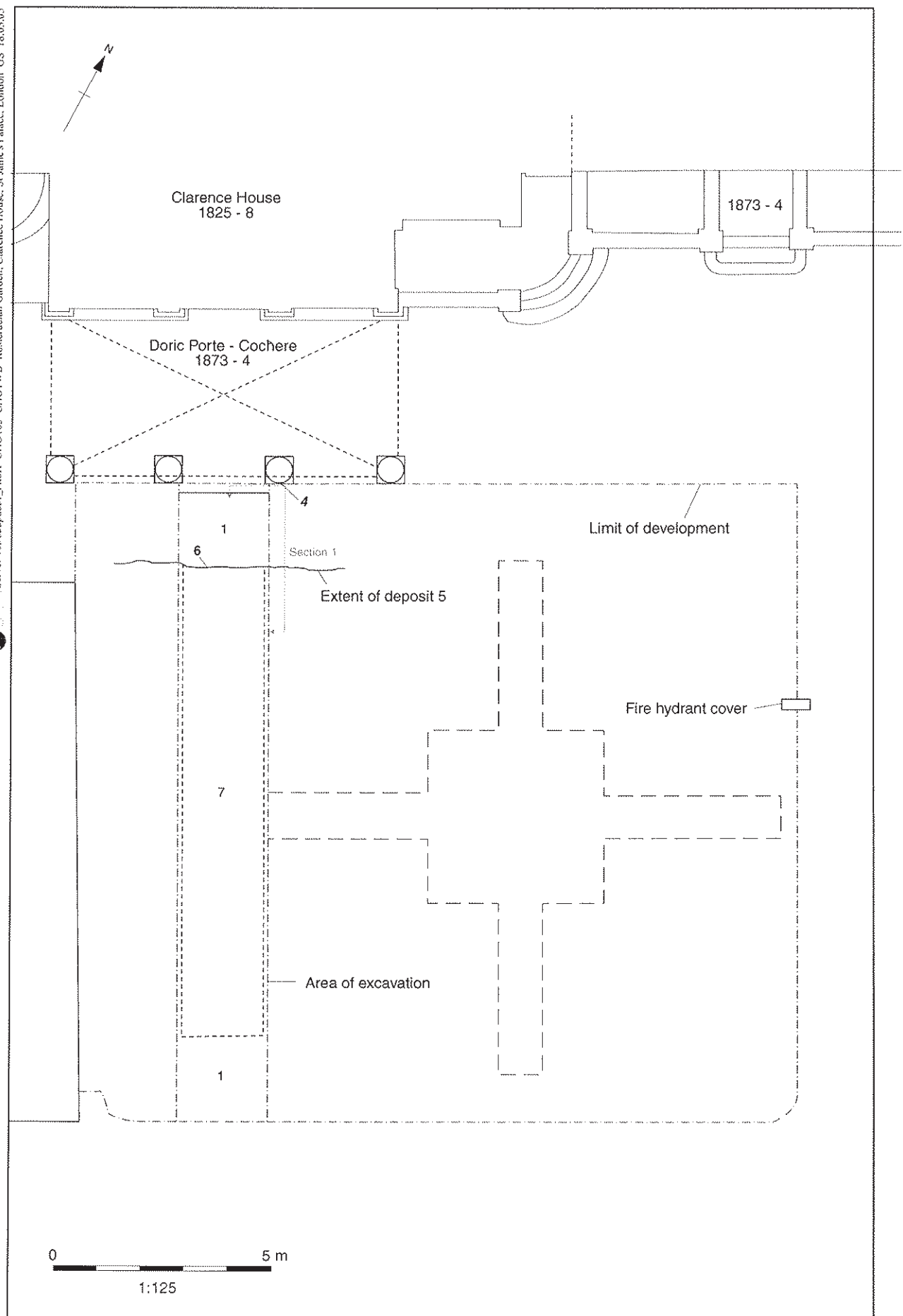


Figure 2: Area of watching brief

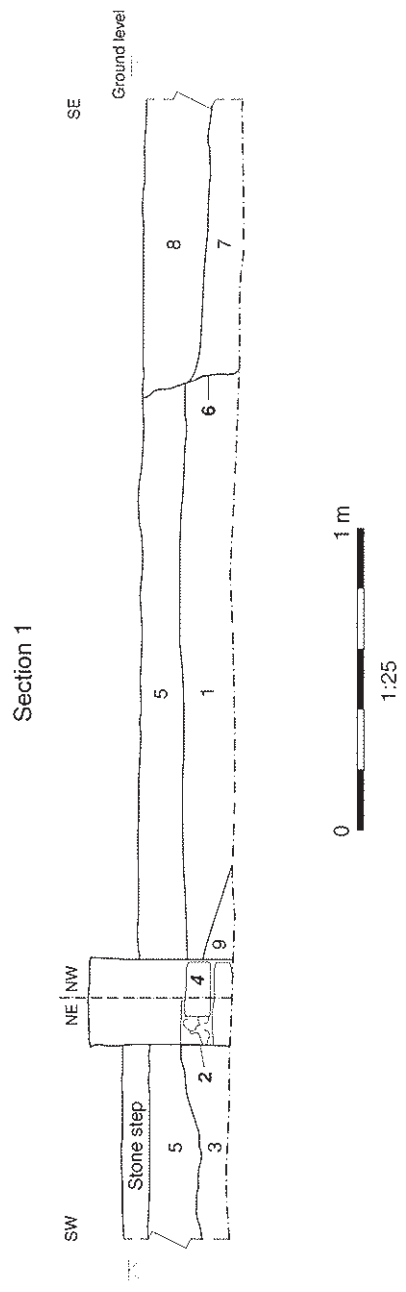


Figure 3: Section 1



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