

Broughton Castle Broughton Oxfordshire



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Oxford Archaeology

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SUMMARY

From November to December 2004 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Broughton Castle, Broughton, Oxfordshire (NGR SP 4178 3819). The work was commissioned by Hockley & Dawson Consulting Engineers in advance of underpinning and masonry repair to wall, which formed the north-south boundary from the moat to the fortified manor. The watching brief revealed the extent of the wall and its relationship to the moat.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 From November to December 2004 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Broughton Castle, Broughton, Oxfordshire (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Hockley & Dawson Consulting Engineers in respect of underpinning and masonry repair to wall, which formed the north-south boundary from the moat to the fortified manor.
- 1.1.2 A project brief was set by Hannah Fluck, Planning Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Council (OCAS 2004) after consent and specification by Chris Welsh of English Heritage was approved.
- 1.1.3 OA prepared and had approved a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief.

1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The castle is located to the south-west of Broughton village off the B4035 and is a medieval fortified moated site, (Scheduled Ancient Monument (30882). The wall being repaired lies on the edge of the moat and garden to the south of the castle (Fig. 2), which lies on Oxford Clay at 104 m above OD.

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 2004) and is reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 Broughton Castle is a fortified manor located in Broughton village. It was originally constructed in the early 14th century and is attributed to Sir John de Broughton who died in 1315. In 1377 William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester acquired the house. A licence to crenellate was granted to Sir Thomas Wykeham in 1405, even though the house was moated before that date. In 1451 the granddaughter of Sir Thomas Wykeham married Sir William Fiennes, second Lord Saye and Sele, whose family still own. The main alterations to the house were carried out by Richard Fiennes in 1554 and continued after his death by his son, also Richard Fiennes. The house remained untouched thereafter and in the early 19th century accounts described the house as dilapidated.

- 1.3.3 In the 1860s repairs were carried out by Giles Gilbert Scott, but with no important structural alterations. The site is now a Scheduled Monument; however, the scheduled area excludes the extant house and the ornamental wall, although all the ground below these structures is included in the scheduled area (Pevsner 1960).
- 1.3.4 The wall is Grade I listed and is included on the English Heritage Buildings at Risk Register.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To preserve by record any archaeological remains (if present) that the works may remove or damage within the area of site being investigated.
- 2.1.2 To signal, before the destruction of the material in question, the discovery of a significant archaeological find, for which the resources allocated are not sufficient to support a treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard. All groundworks will be halted until the remains have been suitably investigated and dealt with by the attending archaeologist.
- 2.1.3 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The wall was to be supported on a 1 m thick reinforced concrete foundation, which was 3 m wide with a 1.7 m deep and 0.5 m wide toe along the east side as a counter balance. This was constructed by first excavating an area for the toe along the east side and then excavating under the wall. This work was divided into five sections, which were excavated consecutively and filled with reinforced concrete. These phase's of work was carried out under archaeological supervision.
- 2.2.2 The extent of the excavated area was planned at a scale of 1:50 and the sections drawn at a scale of 1:20. All excavated features 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 (*Figures 3 and 4*)

- 3.1.1 The excavations for the new foundations exposed a number of features and deposits relating to the construction of the wall and moat. These works cut into the natural, a reddish brown silty clay (3) containing occasional sandstone fragments. This had been cut by the edge of the moat (10) at the south end of the wall (Figure 4, section 2). Only the upper 0.7 m of this vertical cut was exposed with a rough cut timber lining (11) forming a revetment against it, with a grey brown silty clay (12) filling in behind it.

- 3.1.2 To the north of this revetment a compacted light reddish brown silty clay (17) with a high proportion of sandstone fragments was observed. This formed the base of the roadway from the eastside of the moat through to the gateway to the rear of the castle. Overlying 17 was 0.25 - 0.5 m of dark reddish brown silty clay (2) with sandstone fragments representing upcast from the moat excavations.
- 3.1.3 Make up layer 2 was cut by foundation trench 4, which contained wall 5. This wall measured 4.8 m long by 0.8 m wide by 3.5 m high. Following the trench cut for the wall to the moat edge, an extension of 5 could be seen partially jutting into the moat (Fig. 3). This measured 1.7 m long by 0.75 m wide with foundations extending more than 2 m into the moat. At approximately 0.8 m below ground level, north of the wall extension the remaining foundations were laid on large rough cut sandstone blocks. The foundation trench in this area was filled by a compact light reddish brown silty clay (18) containing sandstone fragments.
- 3.1.4 The wall itself was constructed of roughly hewn sandstone blocks containing a rubble core bonded with a light brown coarse sandy mortar. The wall was built to a height of 0.6 m from its foundation before it was stepped in 0.1 m with worked chamfered course just above ground level. The wall continued for a further 3.2 m above ground level, although at the south end it was shortened by 0.7 m. A dark-brown silty clay loam (6) filled the space in between the foundation cut (4) and the wall (5) (Figure 4, sections 1, 3 - 6).
- 3.1.5 A 0.2 m thick layer of dark grey brown silty clay (7) containing brick, slate and building debris was recorded on the east side of the wall. This consisted of 19th century material built up to form a small terrace in the corner for a former boathouse that was situated in the garden in the late 19th to early 20th century. Layer 7 had been disturbed by a root hole (8) filled with a dark grey brown silty sand (9). Towards the moat and abutting the wall was a spread of loose rubble (14) containing pottery and bottle glass waste, which overlay 7. Where this material had spilt into the moat it sealed the moat revetment (11) and very dark grey-brown silty clay deposit (13). This organic rich deposit represented the gradual silting up of the moat (Figure 4, section 2). A sample was taken for analysis and is described in section 3.3.
- 3.1.6 In the north-west area of the wall, just south of the archway a large pit (15) was recorded cutting layer 2 (see section 3). It had steep concave sides, however, the base continued below the level of impact. It measured 1.7 m x 0.5 m x 0.75 m and was filled by a dark grey brown silty clay (16), which had been cut on the eastern edge by the foundation trench for the wall. This pit may have been a rubbish or cesspit relating to the construction of the castle. Sealing all these features and layers was a 0. - 0.2 m thick layer of dark grey-brown silty sand loam topsoil (1).

3.2 Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

- 3.2.1 The pottery assemblage comprised 11 sherds weighing 325 g. It was all medieval or later, and all came from the same context, 14. It was recorded utilising the coding

system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994), with the following types noted:

OX68: Potterspury ware, Late 13th - 17th century. 1 sherd, 21 g.

OXST: Frechen Stoneware, AD1550 - 1700. 1 sherd, 16 g.

OXFH: Border wares, 1550 - 1700. 3 sherds, 77 g.

OXEST: English Stoneware, 1680 +. 1 sherd, 42 g.

WHEW: Mass-produced white earthenwares, mid 19th - 20th C. 3 sherds, 40g.

- 3.2.2 In addition, two sherds (129 g) of modern earthenware flowerpots were also present. The range of fabrics is generally typical of contemporary sites in the region. The sherd of Potterspury ware is a medieval type, a jar rim, and probable dates to the later 13th or 14th century.
- 3.2.3 The fragment of glass that was recovered from fill 18 was a fragment of late 17th to 18th century wine bottle body. This was intrusive from later garden activity against the wall.

3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

Assessment of waterlogged plant remains by Elizabeth Huckerby

Introduction

- 3.3.1 A single sample was taken during the watching brief at Broughton Castle, Oxford from the edge of the 14th century moat for the assessment of waterlogged plant remains. The sample, from against the wooden revetment, was taken from the upper deposits of the moat, which were sealed beneath the 19th-century fill and so untouched by late 20th-century dredging.

Methodology

- 3.3.2 A one-kilogram sub-sample was hand floated; the flot was collected on a 250 micron mesh and retained in water. Because the flot was large only a representative sample of it was scanned with a Leica stereo microscope and plant material was provisionally identified and recorded as present or abundant. Other material in the flot was noted. The data are shown in Table 1 and botanical nomenclature follows Stace (1991).

Results

- 3.3.3 Very abundant and well preserved waterlogged plant remains were recorded in the sample. Woody twigs and fragments formed the bulk of the flot together with amorphous plant material. Insect remains were also abundant together with some fly puparia.
- 3.3.4 Seeds were abundant and five immature seed cones of *Pinus* were recorded together with fragments of *Pinus* leaves (needles). Large numbers of *Taxus baccata* (yew) seeds were also recorded. Other woody taxa identified include seeds of *Prunus cerasifera* (cherry), *Ilex aquifolium* (holly), *Alnus* (alder) and *Sorbus* sp

(whitebeam/rowan) together with abundant *Rubus fruticosus* agg (blackberry) and *Sambucus nigra* (elderberry). The plant taxa recorded suggested that there was an area of open woodland or scrub either within the castle grounds or beyond.

- 3.3.5 Weed seeds recorded include *Ranunculus repens*-type (buttercups), large grass seeds, *Urtica urens* (small nettle) and *Potentilla* sp (cinquefoils). Aquatic plants and those from wet ground were not frequent although *Potentilla palustris* (marsh cinquefoil), *Schoenoplectus lacustris* (common club rush) and a single *Nymphaea* seed (waterlily) were recorded. Some fish scales were also recorded in the sample.

Discussion

- 3.3.6 The assessment of waterlogged plant remains from the sample taken from a deposit at the edge of the 14th century moat has demonstrated that they were abundant. The plant taxa identified in the assessment suggest that material from an area of woodland/scrub accumulated or was thrown into the moat when it was silting up. The high numbers of *Taxus* seeds together with the *Pinus* cones suggest that both yew and pine were growing within the grounds of Broughton Castle or in the surrounding landscape. The low numbers of aquatic or plants from wet ground suggest that the water of the moat was relatively clear of floating or marginal vegetation when the fills were accumulating and this is supported by the presence of fish scales.

Potential

- 3.3.7 The assessment has demonstrated that the fills of the 14th century moat have a very high potential to inform about the environment in and around Broughton Castle, Oxford.

Context number	13
Sample number	1
Sample size (kg)	1
Amorphous organic	+++
Monocot fragments	++
Wood	++++
Buds	+
Charcoal	+
Insect remains	++
Fly puparia	+
Fish scales	+
Brick/tile	+
Woodland	
<i>Alnus glutinosa</i> - alder	+
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i> - holly	+
<i>Pinus</i> - pine cones	++
<i>Pinus</i> leaves - pine needles	++
<i>Prunus cerasifera</i> - cherry	+
<i>Rosa</i> sp - rose	+
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> seed - blackberry	++++
<i>Sambucus nigra</i> - elderberry	++
<i>Solanum</i> sp - nightshades	+

Sorbus sp - whitebeam/rowan	+
Taxus baccata - yew	++++
Arable weeds	
<i>Urtica urens</i> - common nettle	+
Grassland	
Poaceae >4mm - large grasses	+
Wet ground	
<i>Nymphaea</i> - waterlily	+
<i>Potentilla palustris</i> - marsh cinquefoil	+
<i>Schoenoplectus lacustris</i> - common clubrush	+
Broad ecological requirement	
Apiaceae undiff - Carrot Family	+
<i>Mentha</i> - mints	+
<i>Ranunculus repens</i> type - buttercups	+
Solanaceae - Nightshade Family	+
Unknowns	++

Table 1 Broughton Castle, Oxford: assessment of waterlogged plant remains.
Key + present, ++ frequent and ++++ very abundant

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The watching brief discovered a number of features relating to the wall and its construction. The wall and gateway are of 14th century construction and are of similar construction to the lower gatehouse, which formed the north-south boundary to the rear (south) of the manor. This gateway allowed access to the manor's kitchens from the east, across the moat. The wall was found to be 0.7 m longer, extending into the moat itself, but had been reduced in height to below the moat water table and shortened to its present length by later works to the wall and the moat edge during landscaping of the garden.
- 4.1.2 During the excavations on the east side of the wall, a wooden revetment of the inner moat bank was recorded 1.7 m back from the end of the extended wall. This had been damaged and covered by later landscaping in the 19th century. On the western side of the wall the moat's edge was not exposed during the works, and only the natural (3) and make up layer (2) was observed continuing to the south. The wooden revetment seen on the eastern side of the wall may therefore have continued on supporting the inner moat bank. However, this revetment may just have been specific to the stretch of the bank between the moat crossing to the wall. It would then have made it impossible to gain access around the wall where it meets the moat, forcing access only through the gateway.
- 4.1.3 The base of the wall at ground level was corbelled using chamfered sandstone blocks. These were badly worn and exposed on the west side, but below ground level and better preserved on the east side. The appearance to the gateway would have originally been similar in style to the northern entrance, but the top of the wall has been lowered and recapped with stone slabs at a later date.

- 4.1.4 The sample taken from the upper moat deposits showed the moat was well managed, with regular intervals of clearance along with maintenance of the castle grounds. Fish within the moat would also have been evidence of good land management practice, making sure the moat did not become clogged with debris. The only evidence of material dumped into the moat came about in the 19th century during landscaping of the garden in the south-west corner of the grounds.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Length</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	Layer	0.1-2 m			Topsoil		Modern
2	Layer	0.5 m			Re deposited material		Post-medieval
3	Natural				Natural		
4	Cut	1.7 m	0.9 m	4 m	Foundation Trench		Medieval
5	Wall				Wall		Medieval
6	Fill				Backfill		Medieval
7	Layer	0.2 m			Make up		19th Century
8	Cut	0.4 m	1 m		Root Hole		Modern
9	Fill				Fill of root hole		Modern
10	Cut				Edge of moat		Medieval
11	Structure	0.8 m			Wood revetment		possible Medieval
12	Fill				Backfill		possible Medieval
13	Fill				Fill of moat		
14	Layer	0.7 m			Make up	Pottery	13th-20th Century
15	Cut	0.75 m	0.5 m	1.7 m	Pit		Medieval
16	Fill				Fill of pit		Medieval
17	Layer	0.28 m			Roadway make up		Post-medieval
18	Fill				Foundation make up	Glass	17th-18th Century

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

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Mellor, M, 1994 Oxford Pottery: A Synthesis of middle and late Saxon, medieval and early post-medieval pottery in the Oxford Region *Oxoniensia* **59**, 17-217

Nickolaus Pevsner, N, 1960 *The buildings of England: Oxfordshire*

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

OA 2004 *Broughton Castle, Wall repairs, Oxfordshire* Written Scheme of Investigation

OCAS 2004 *Broughton Castle, Oxfordshire, Wall Repairs* Design Brief for Archaeological Watching Brief

Stace, C, 1991, *New Flora of the British Isles*, Cambridge

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Broughton Castle, Broughton, Oxfordshire

Site code: BRCAS 04

Grid reference: NGR SP 4178 3819

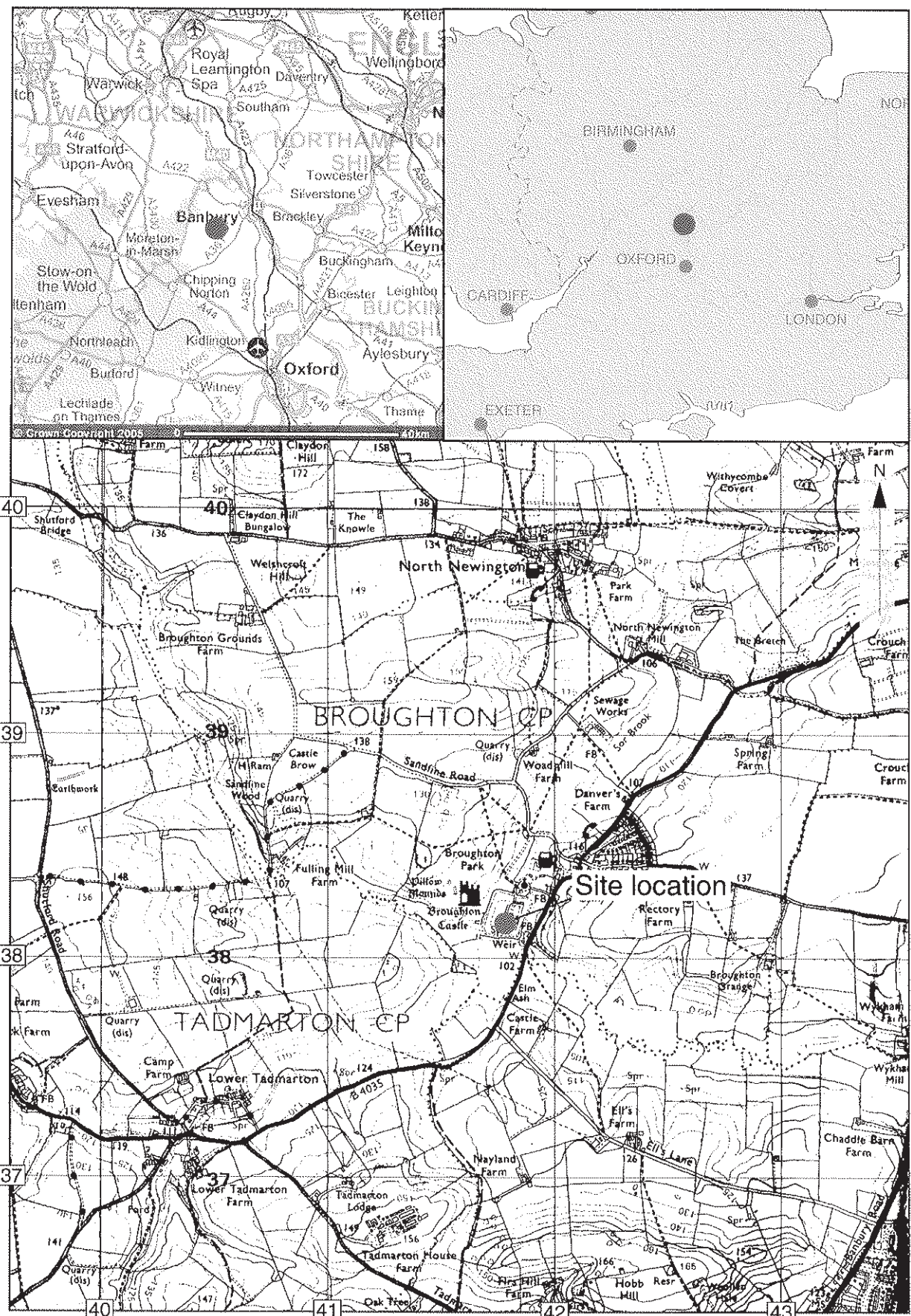
Type of watching brief: Excavation for underpinning under collapsing wall of castle.

Date and duration of project: A total of fourteen visits from the 15th November to the 22nd December 2004.

Area of site: 5 m x 3.6 m

Summary of results: The watching brief revealed the full extent of the wall into the moat, revetting and an undated pit.

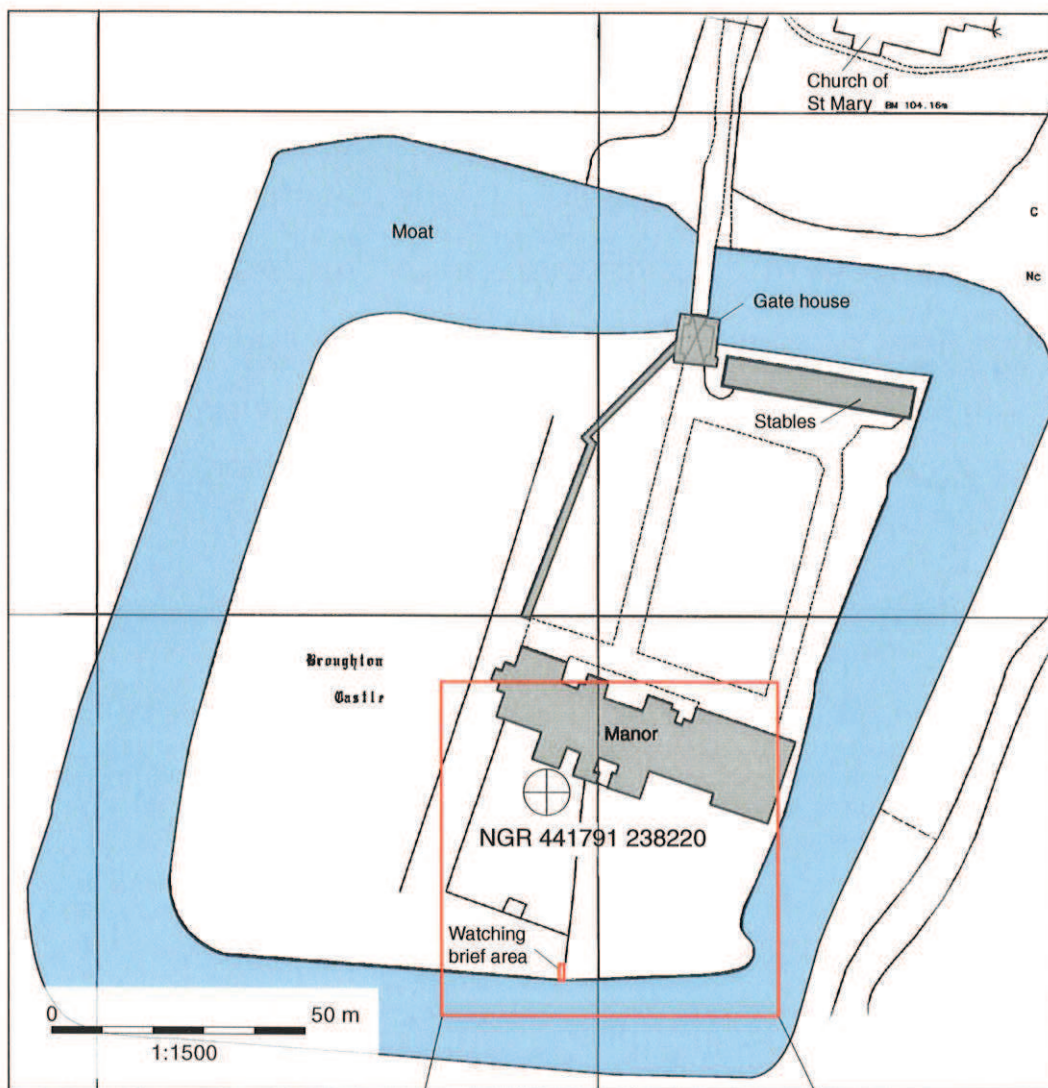
Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course, under the following accession number: OXCMS: 2004.147



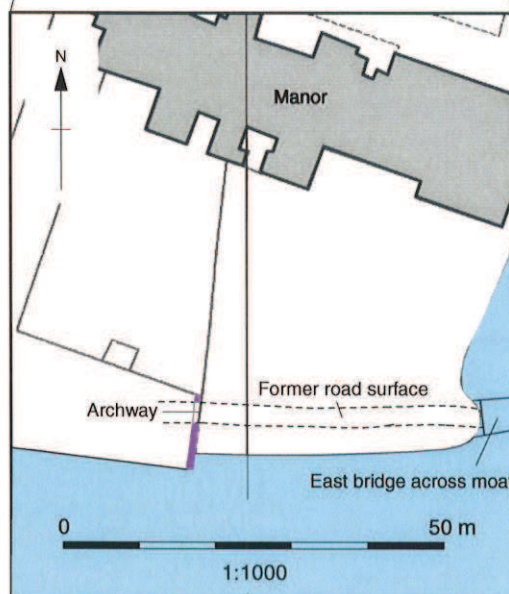
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Figure 1: Site location



Inset shows plan of wall and moat with roadway from east crossing to archway prior to 19th century garden landscaping



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Figure 2: Site location with insert showing layout prior to 19th century

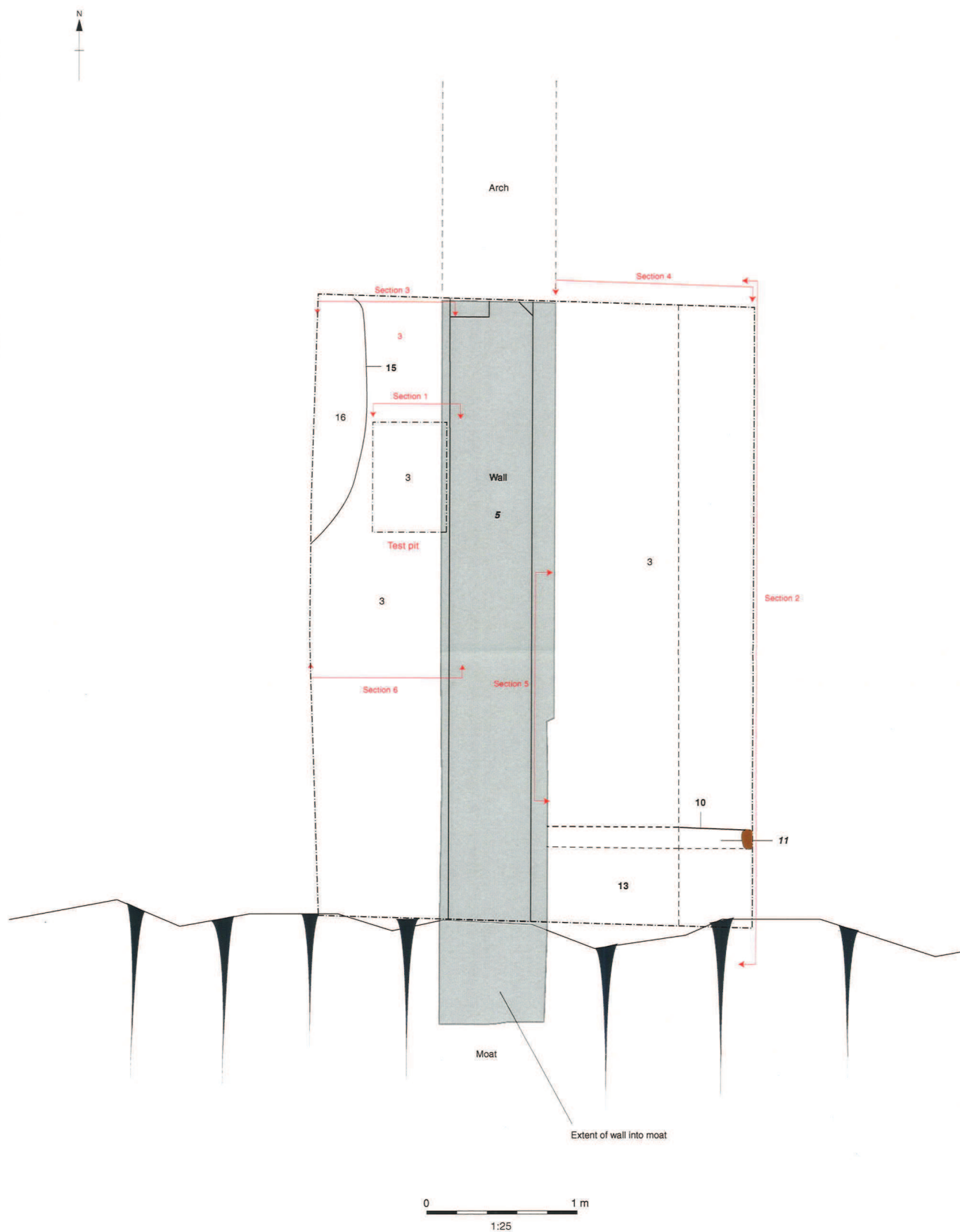


Figure 3: Plan showing features and location of sections

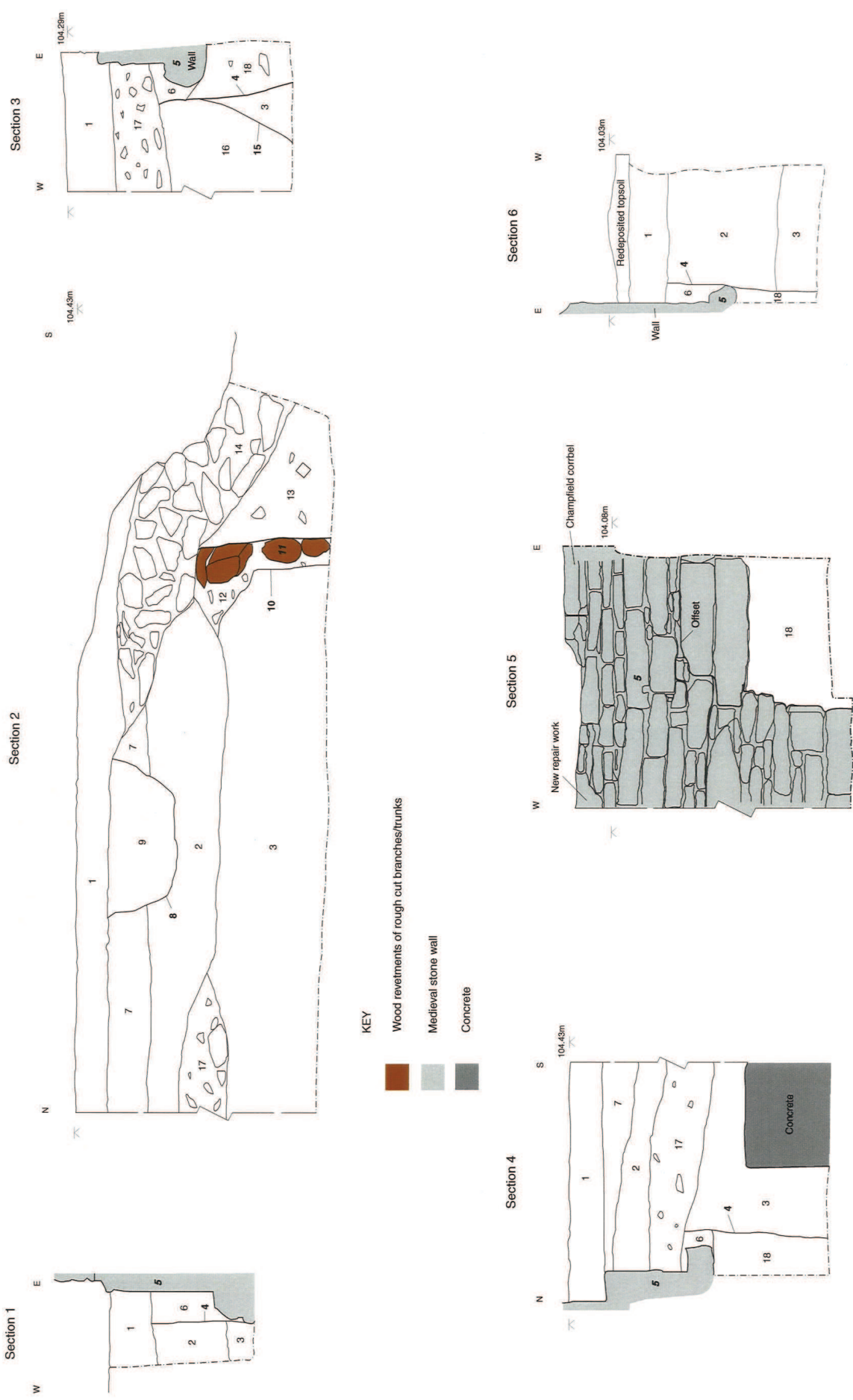


Figure 4: Sections 1-6



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