

St Christophers First School
Temple Cowley
Oxford
OXfordshire



Archaeological Watching Brief



Oxford Archaeology

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St Christopher First School, Cowley, Oxford

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

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SUMMARY

In September 2001 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at St Christophers First School, Cowley, Oxford (SP 5433 0450). The work was commissioned by WS Atkins in advance of the construction of a new four classroom extension, computer room, nursery and covered walk to existing school buildings. The watching brief revealed a deposit of made up ground, presumably associated with the construction of the existing school buildings and post medieval land drains.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In September 2001, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at St Christophers First School, Cowley, Oxford (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by WS Atkins Consultants Ltd in respect of a planning application for the construction of a new four classroom extension.
- 1.1.2 A project brief was set by Paul Smith of Oxfordshire County Council Archaeological Services.
- 1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies on the junction of the Oxford Clay and Kellaway Beds at 70 m above OD. The site is situated on land currently utilised as a school playing field.

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, 2001) and is summarised below.
- 1.3.2 The development site is located within a manor of the Knights Templar dating from the 12th and 13th centuries. The later manor house was at the angle of Hollow Way and the Oxford Road, though the Victoria County History for Oxfordshire suggests that an earlier preceptory stood on Temple Road. An archaeological watching brief in 1994 produced evidence for limited medieval and post-medieval activity (OAU, 1994). A ditch containing 12th-century pottery may relate to a field boundary associated with the medieval manor to the south-east. A possible 12th-13th-century occupation horizon was also noted here, together with a 19th century wall footing.

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 development area (Fig. 2) was reduced using a 360° excavator to remove topsoil and made up ground to the subsoil.
- 2.2.2 All archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:100. All 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 Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 The excavator removed the topsoil and 1 m of made up ground west of the present site of the school. This exposed subsoil with land drains and service trenches (Fig. 3). These were filled with a mid-dark grey clay which included post medieval and modern CBM. The land drains and services were observed in plan and not excavated. Where the footings were excavated it showed that the natural clay was 0.3 m below the subsoil.

3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 No finds were recovered from site.

3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 3.3.1 No environmental samples were taken.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The east side of the site consisted of made up ground from the construction of the school. A number of post medieval and modern services and land drains were seen cutting into the subsoil and natural.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

Wilkinson D, 1992 OAU Fieldwork manual

OAU, 2001, *St Christopher First School, Cowley, Oxford WSI*

APPENDIX 2 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: St Christophers First School, Oxford

Site code: OXCHRIS 01

Grid reference: NGR SP 5433 0450

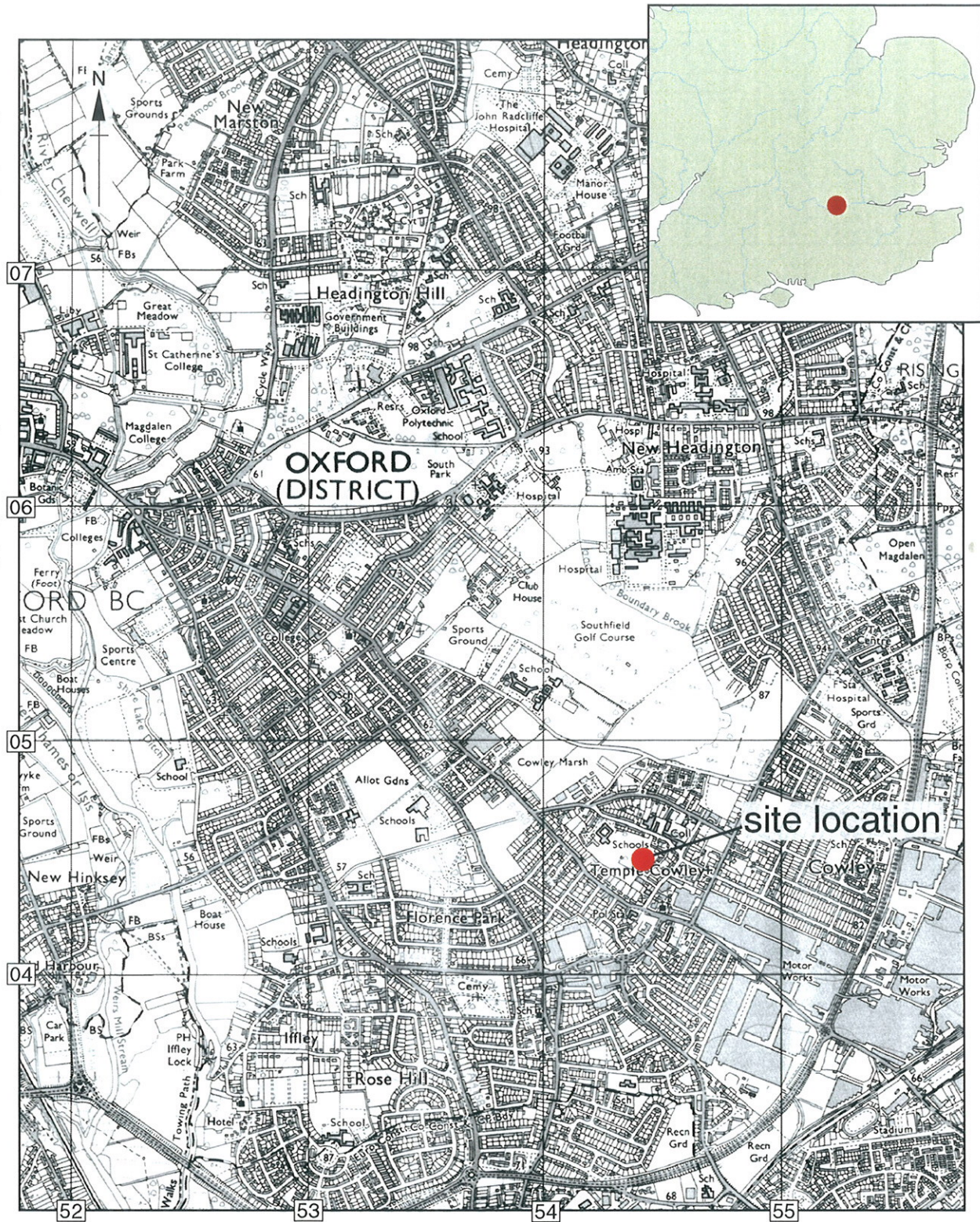
Type of watching brief: Watching topsoil strip prior to building.

Date and duration of project: Site visit

Area of site:

Summary of results: Field drains and service trenches observed. No archaeological features found.

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: 2001.139



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Figure 1: Site location.

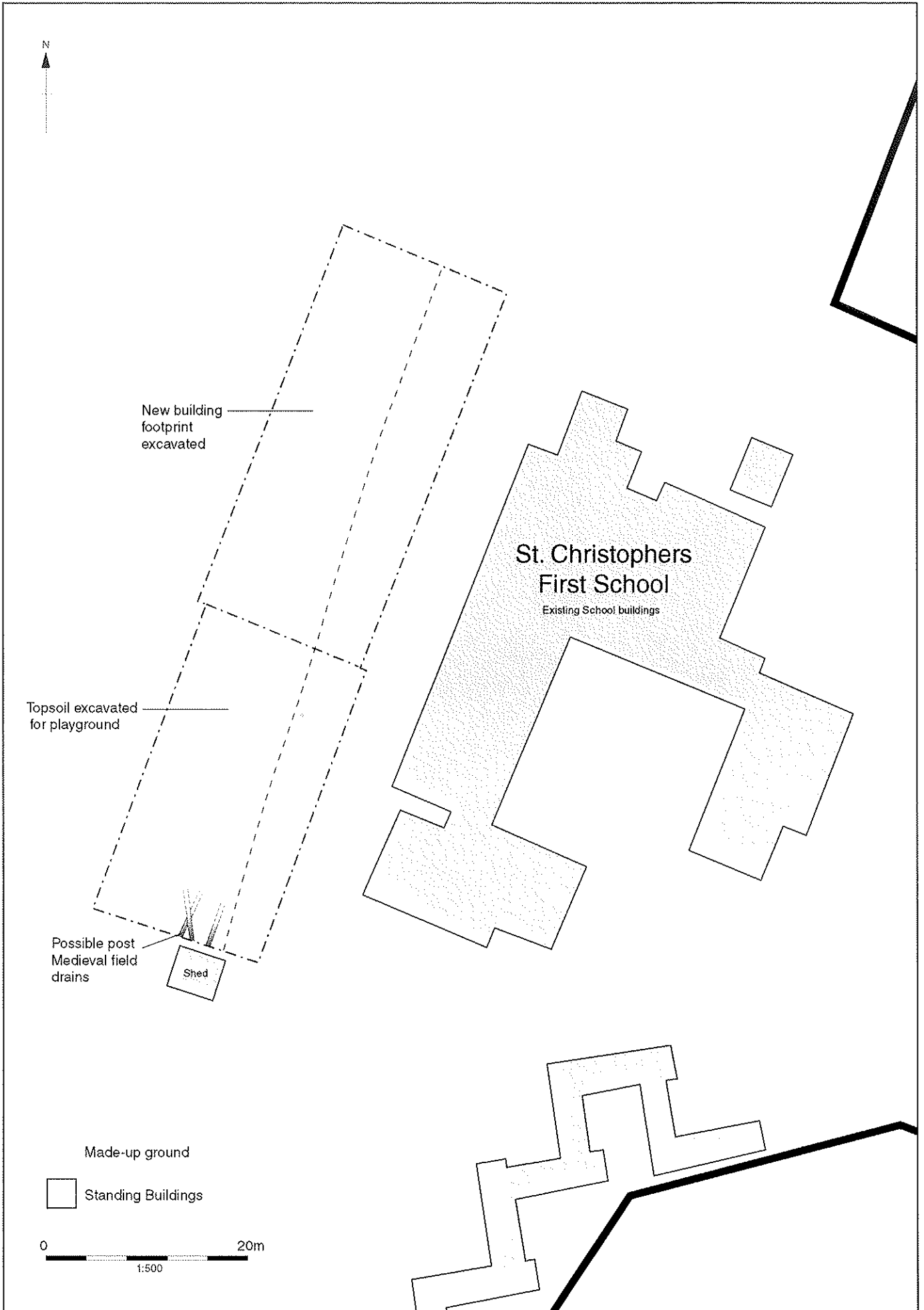


Figure 3: Site plan.



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