

BANBURY (OX)

BAHIGHWB

C A Middleditch

24 HIGH STREET
BANBURY
OXFORDSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

NGR SP 4554 4046

© OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

October 2001

C A Middleditch

24 HIGH STREET
BANBURY
OXFORDSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

NGR SP 4554 4046

Prepared by: Robin Bashford

Date: September 2001

Checked by: J. Hillier

Date: 2/10/2001

Approved by: R. Williams
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Date: 4/10/2001

© OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

October 2001

24 HIGH STREET
BANBURY
OXFORDSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

CONTENTS

Summary	4
1 Introduction.....	4
2 Background.....	4
3 Watching Brief Aims.....	5
4 Methodology.....	5
4.1 Scope of fieldwork.....	5
4.2 Recording.....	5
4.3 Finds	5
4.4 Environmental Results.....	5
5 Results.....	5
6 Discussion And Interpretation.....	6

LIST OF FIGURES

- Fig. 1: Site Location
Fig. 2: Site Plan

C A Middleditch

24 HIGH STREET
BANBURY
OXFORDSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

NGR SP 4554 4046

SUMMARY

Between August and September 2001, the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) undertook a watching brief at 24 High Street, Banbury (SP 4554 4046). A possible cobbled surface associated with the 19th-century listed building was recorded during the groundwork, although this lay below the final impact level and was only partially revealed.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Permission had been granted by Cherwell District Council for alterations, improvements and an extension to the existing shop premises at 24 High Street, Banbury (Fig. 1 - SP 4554 4046). Due to the potential disturbance of below ground archaeological deposits, a condition for an archaeological watching brief was attached to the permission, in line with PPG16 and local plan policy. The proposed development is situated within the historic core of Banbury. The geology of the site is fine loamy soil over ironstone and lies at c. 96 m OD

2 Background

- 2.1 Settlement at Banbury is suggested by its place name to have its origins in the Anglo Saxon period. The early settlement is thought to have been focused around the early Minster church, possibly dated to the 7th century, now the site of St. Mary's Church. The medieval parish of Banbury appears to have been established before the 10th century when Banbury became the centre of a large estate belonging to the Bishops of Dorchester and later of Lincoln after the see was removed there in 1072. Alexander Bishop of Lincoln (1123-48) is known to have constructed the castle and to have laid out the town between the river and the older settlement. Modern Banbury has retained much of its medieval street pattern and the proposal area is situated within the core of the medieval settlement.
- 2.2 The proposed development area contains a grade II listed building and an open yard to the rear that has been the subject of previous development. This is illustrated on both the 1:2500 1st edition (1882) and 2nd edition (1900) Ordnance Survey maps for Banbury.

3 Watching Brief Aims

- 3.1 To record the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of archaeological remains within the entire area affected by development.
- 3.2 If exceptional archaeological remains were discovered, for which the resources allocated were insufficient to support a treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard, the OAU would signal to all parties that such an archaeological find had been made.
- 3.3 To make available the results of the investigation. These should be briefly stated. They should be reproduced from the WSI, Desk Study, or Brief, for the work.

4 Methodology

4.1 Scope of fieldwork

- 4.1.1 The watching brief was undertaken on all areas of ground disturbance.

4.2 Recording

- 4.2.1 Archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:100, sections were drawn at 1:20. All excavated features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures lay down in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (Wilkinson, 1992).

4.3 Finds

- 4.3.1 A number of 20th century finds were observed within the construction debris but were not retained.

4.4 Environmental Results

- 4.4.1 Although full consideration was given to various sampling strategies, due to the absence of any suitable deposits and the tight constraints of the excavation, no environmental soil samples were taken.

5 Results (Fig. 2)

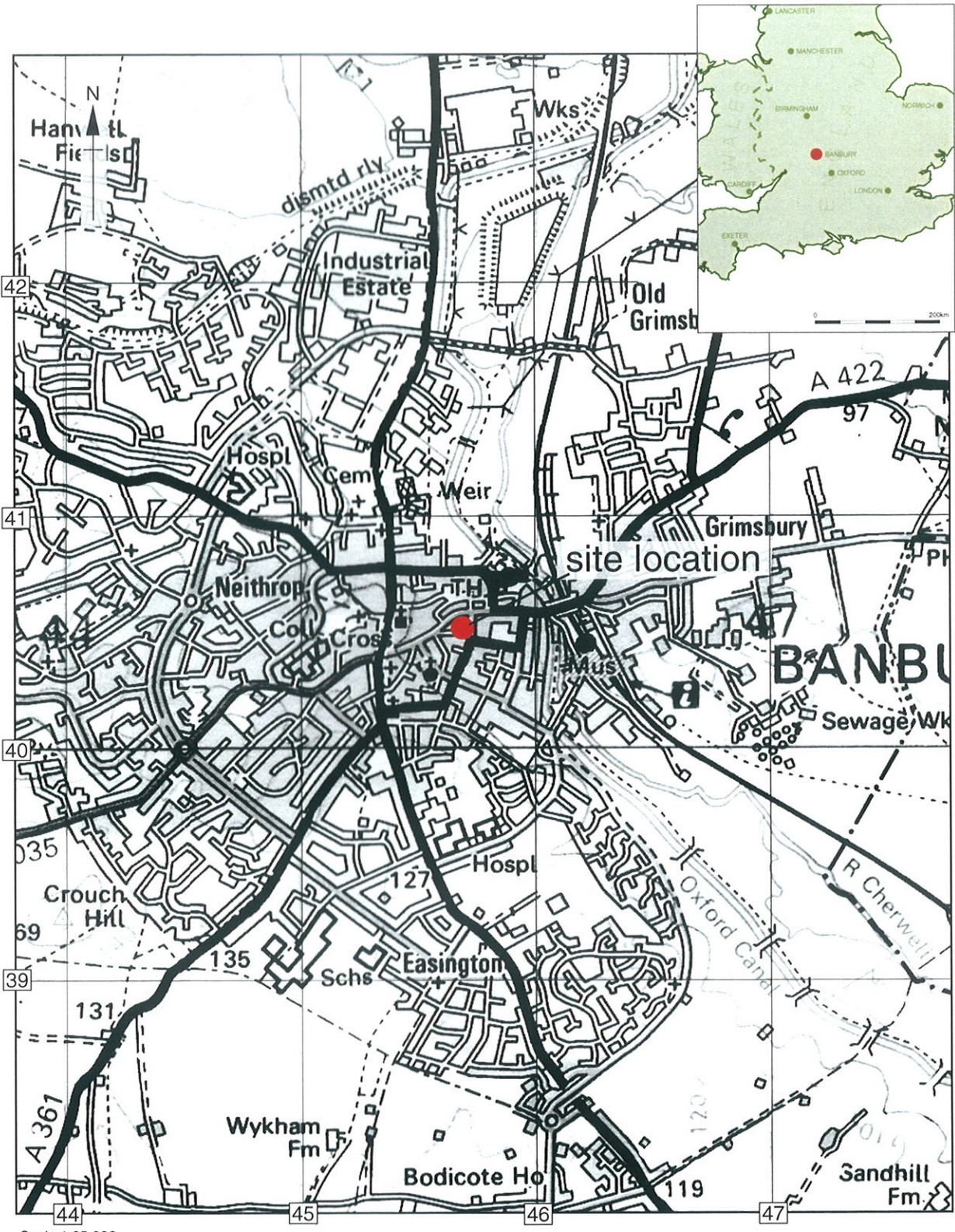
- 5.1 Prior to the excavation of the footings for the new extension, the existing 'courtyard' at the rear of 24 High Street, was reduced by *c* 0.3 m. Generally, no impact was made below a deposit of construction debris, presumably associated with the construction of the brick walls which currently enclose the courtyard. However, a layer of unmortared stone was revealed following the excavation of a small test pit, which was dug to gauge the nature of the ground. The stones were of varying size (a maximum of 0.4 m x 0.25 m x 0.08 m) and appeared to be laid flat - possibly forming a surface.
- 5.2 The foundation trench for the shop extension was excavated around the existing limit of the courtyard, which had been heavily disturbed during construction of the existing boundary walls, and no further archaeological deposits or features were observed. The reduced area and footings were then concreted and no further impact was made.

6 Discussion And Interpretation

- 6.1 Although no overall impact was made below the construction debris, it is possible that the small section of stonework revealed may represent an earlier courtyard surface associated with the listed building. As the extent of the stonework was not revealed, this is by no means certain and no evidence was recovered to suggest a date for the potential surface.

References.

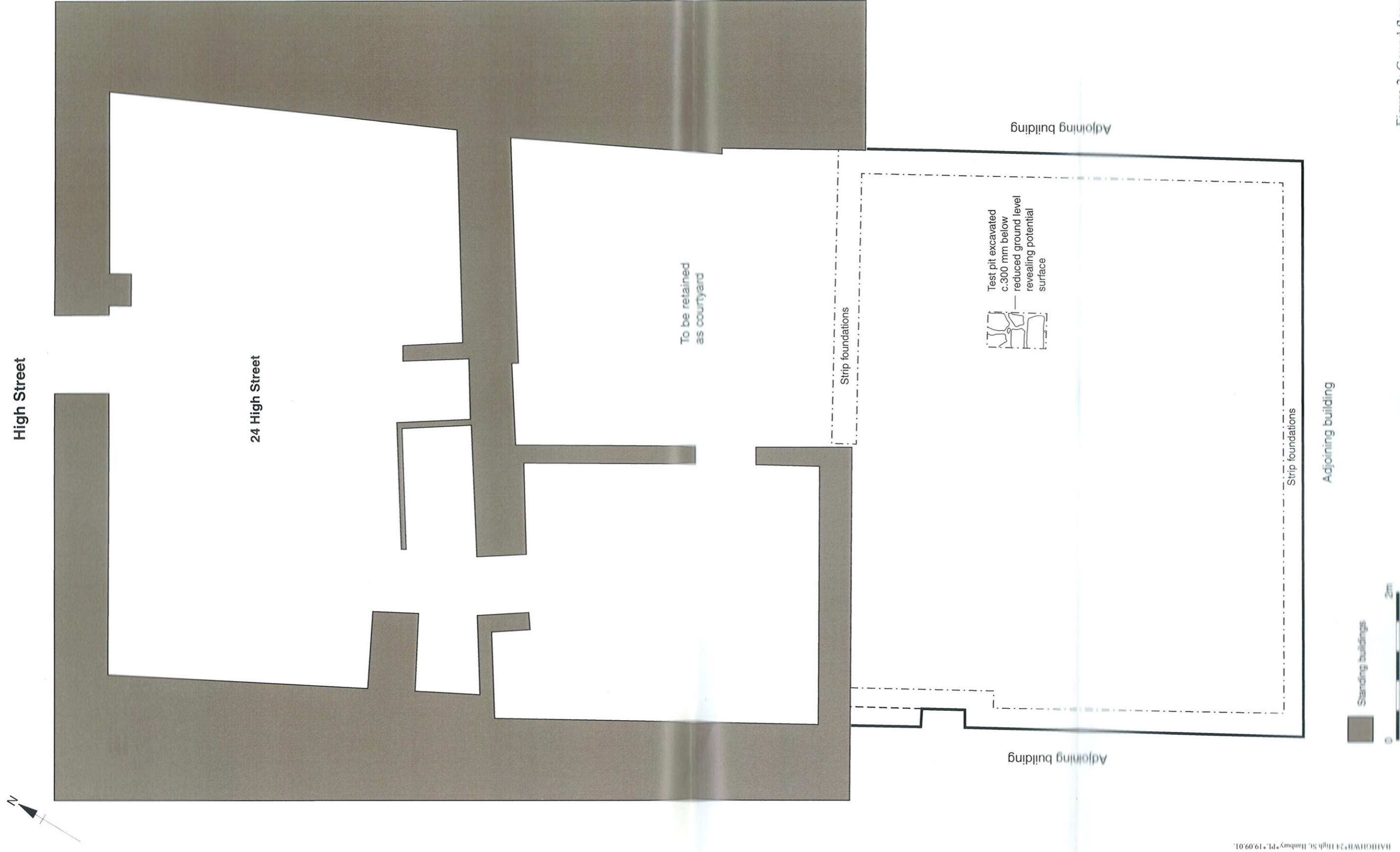
Wilkinson, D (ed) 1992 Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual, (First edition, August 1992).



Scale 1:25,000

Reproduced from the Landranger 1:25,000 scale by permission of the Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown copyright 1990. All rights reserved. Licence No AL 10000569

Figure 1: Site location.



BAHQHWB*24 High St, Barbury*PL*19.09.01.

Figure 2: Gound floor layout plan



OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES

Tel: 01865 263800 Fax: 01865 793496

email: postmaster@oau-oxford.com www.oau-oxford.com



Director and Chief Executive: David Jennings B.A., M.I.F.A. Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited.
Private Limited Company Number: 1618597 Registered Charity Number: 285627.
Registered Office: Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES