

Cuddesdon House Cuddesdon Near Oxford Oxfordshire



Archaeological Watching Brief



Oxford Archaeology

4th October 2002

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Architects**

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Cuddesdon House, Cuddesdon near Oxford, Oxfordshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

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SUMMARY

In September 2002 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Cuddesdon House, Cuddesdon near Oxford, Oxfordshire (NGR SP 6010 0325). The work was commissioned by Panter-Hudspith Architects in advance of the construction of an outdoor swimming pool. The watching brief revealed evidence of landscaping for the garden and a probable quarry pit and soakaway feature.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In September 2002 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Cuddesdon House, Cuddesdon near Oxford, Oxfordshire (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Panter-Hudspith Architects in respect of a planning application for new outdoor swimming pool (Planning Application No. PO2/NO464).
- 1.1.2 An advice note was prepared by the County Archaeological Service covering the development (OCAS 2002).
- 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 adjacent to Cuddesdon House and is part of the formal garden with trees, at 102 m above OD (Fig. 2). The site is situated on fine loam soils over limestone.

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, 2002) and is reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 The present Cuddesdon House overlies the site of the "Bishop's Palace" that was built in 1679 and burnt down in the 1960s. The original house was symmetrical with projecting wings and a hipped roof of Dutch style. A chapel was built in the grounds of the house in 1846.
- 1.3.3 To the south-east of the house is All Saint's Church which dates to about 1180 and was the property of Abingdon Abbey. It was restored in 1849 (Pevsner and Sherwood, 1974, 563-4).
- 1.3.4 To the north of the site is a recorded Saxon inhumation cemetery, including a probable royal burial.

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 Firstly the topsoil in the northwest corner of the garden was removed to stock pile the spoil from the excavation. Then the extent of the swimming pool and surrounding paving area was reduced by 0.3 m. The area of the swimming pool itself was excavated from the shallow end to the deep end. This was carried out by a 360° machine with a ditching bucket.
- 2.2.2 All archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:100. 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 Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 The excavation for the swimming pool cut through a 0.28 m thick layer of dark greyish brown silty sand loam garden topsoil (1). This was sealing a 0.6 m thick layer of demolition rubble (4) spread out from the old bishop's house after it was destroyed by fire in the 1960's. Sealed below this layer was a small circular cut (5) (measuring 0.9 x 1 x 1.1 m) with a steep sided concave profile which appeared to be a small soakaway. It was filled with reddish brown silty sand (6) with limestone fragments (80%) and tile (1%).
- 3.1.2 The soakaway cut a large sub circular feature (7) with steep sloping sides, whose base lay below impact level and measured 2.8 x 2.9 x 1 m. It was filled by a dark reddish brown silty sand (8) and appeared to be an old quarry pit or garden feature which had silted up. These features cut through a 0.3 m thick dark reddish brown silty sand (2) subsoil overlying a natural (3) of yellowish brown sand with patches of limestone. Also cutting these two layers were a number of large tree holes (9) filled with a dark yellowish brown patchy sand (Fig. 3).

3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 No finds were recovered from the site.

3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 3.3.1 No environmental samples were taken during the watching brief.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The results from the watching brief suggests that the site had been landscaped for the garden of the bishop's house with some probable quarrying. A patch of demolition material from the clearing of the site for the construction of the present house was noted.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Length</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i> Finds</i>
1	Layer	0.28 m			Topsoil	
2	Layer	0.30			Subsoil	
3	Natural				Natural	
4	Layer	0.6 m	3.4 m	4.3 m	Rubble spread	
5	Cut	1.1 m	0.9 m	1 m	Soakaway	
6	Fill				Fill of soakaway	None
7	Cut	1 m	2.8 m	2.9 m	Quarry/Garden feature	
8	Fill				Fill of feature	None
9	Cuts				Tree holes	

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

OA 1992 Fieldwork Manual, (Ed. D Wilkinson, first edition, August 1992)

OCAS 2002 Design Brief for Archaeological Watching Brief.

Pevsner, N and Sherwood L 1974 Buildings of England, Oxfordshire. Penguin.

OA 2002 *Cuddesdon House, Cuddesdon near Oxford, Oxfordshire* Written Scheme of Investigation

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Cuddesdon House, Cuddesdon near Oxford, Oxfordshire

Site code: CUHO 02

Grid reference: NGR SP 6010 0325

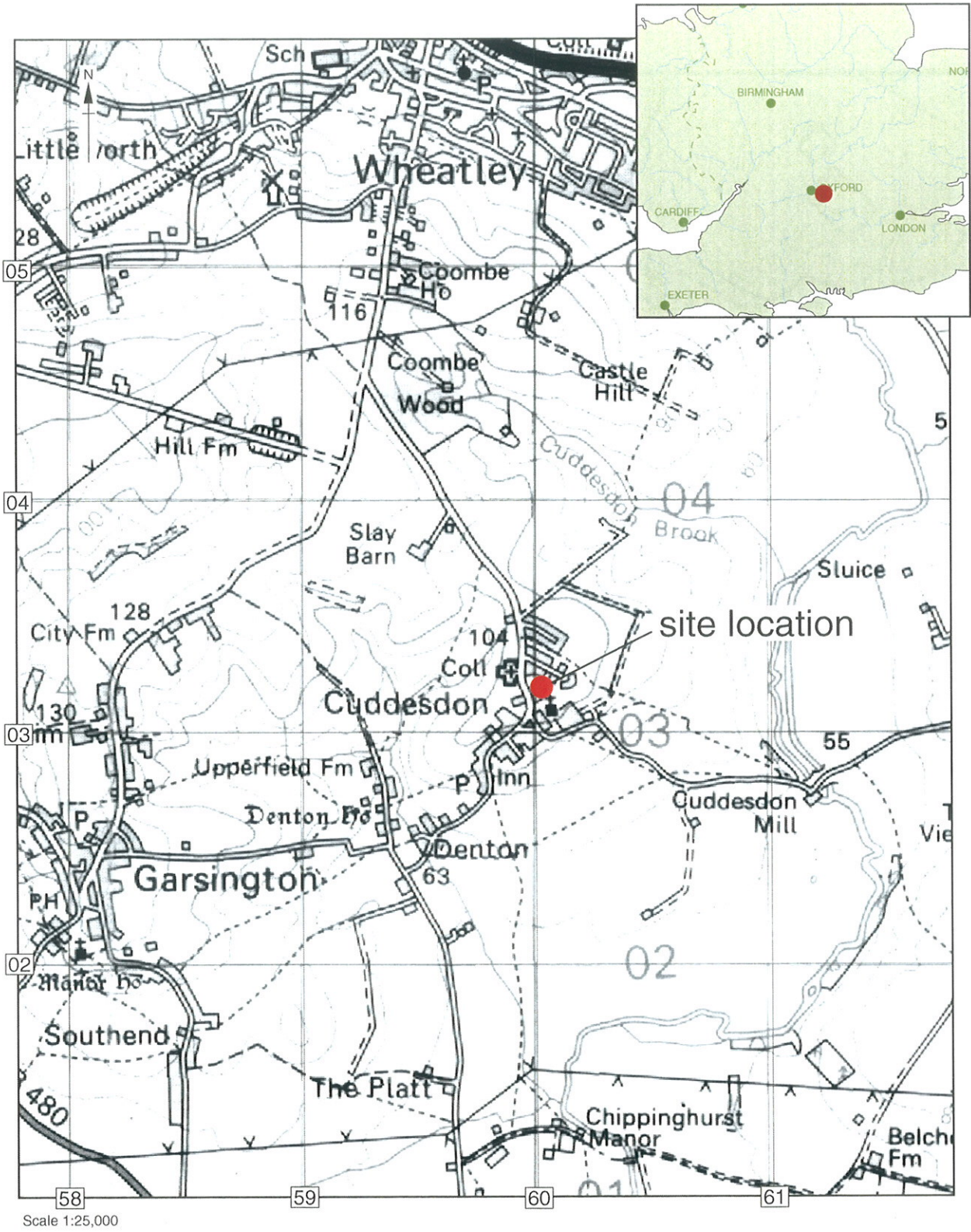
Type of watching brief: Construction of new outdoor swimming pool.

Date and duration of project: One site visit on the 24/09/2002.

Area of site: 15 m x 7 m

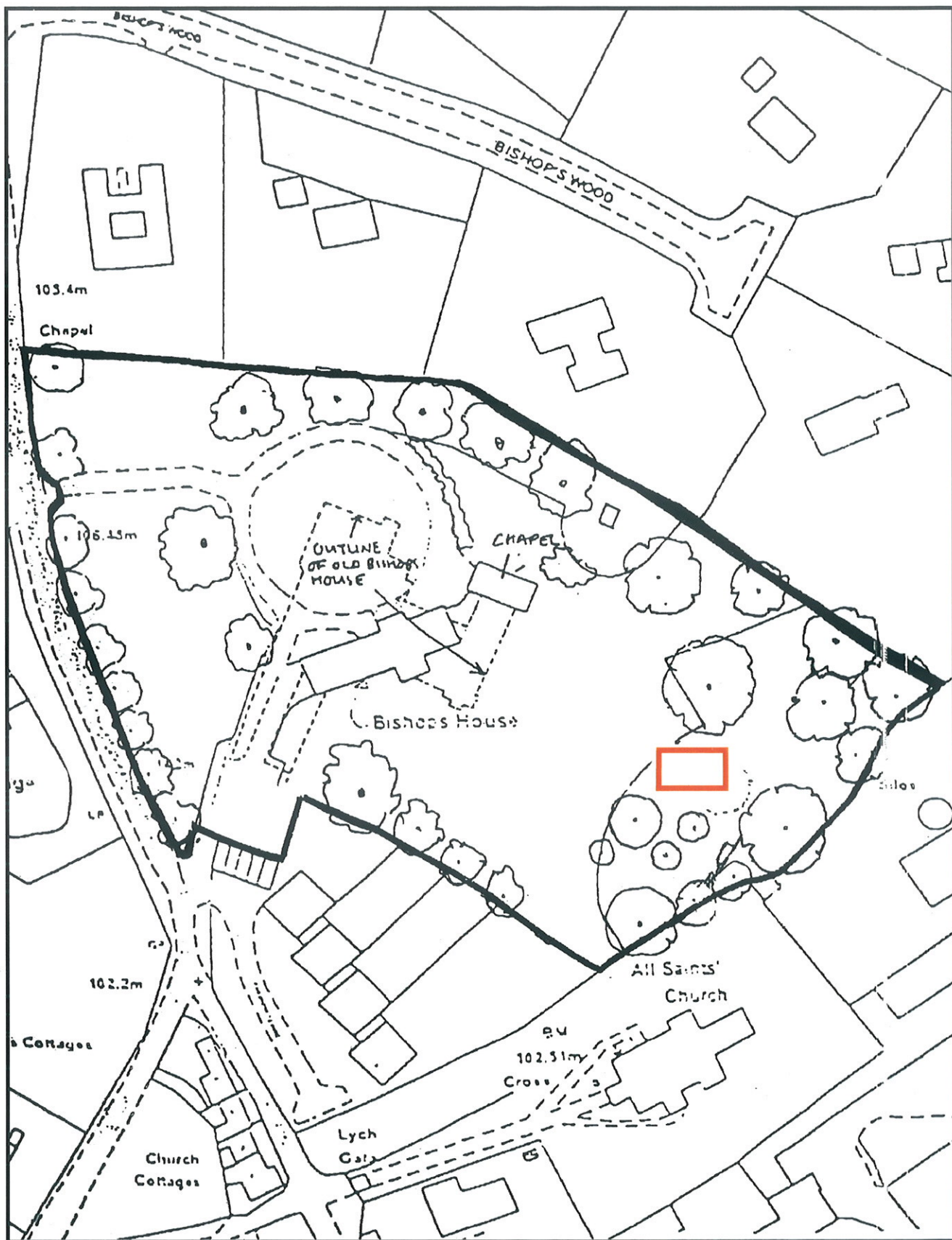
Summary of results: No archaeological features were exposed just evidence of landscaping for garden and probable quarry pit.

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: 2002.196



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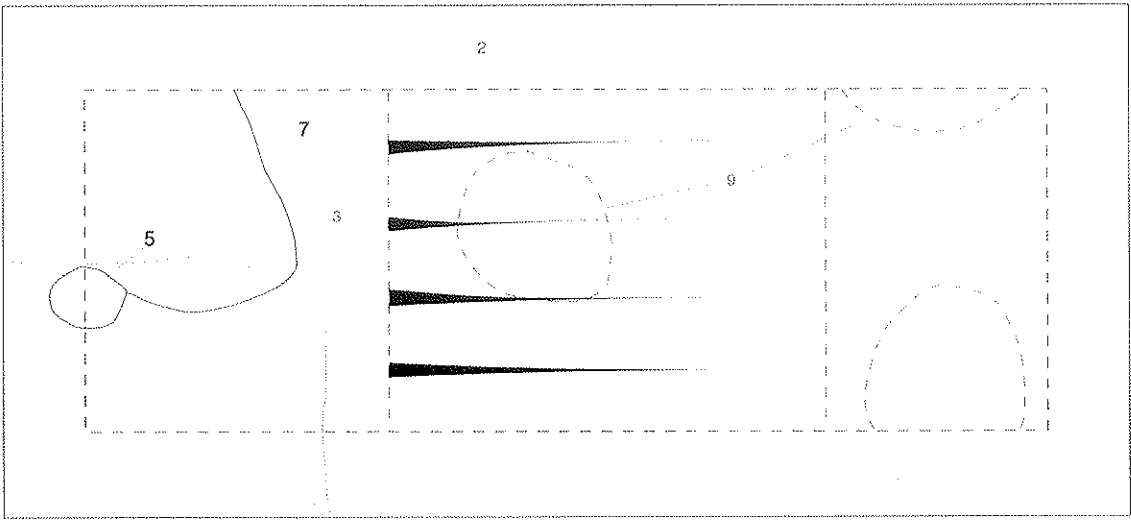
Figure 1: Site location



— Location of proposed pool



Figure 2: Site location



Extent of 4

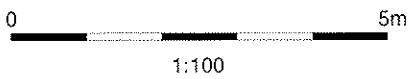


Figure 3: Site plan showing features



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