

Trinity School Shaw House Newbury Berkshire



Archaeological Watching brief



Oxford Archaeology

9th November 2001

Client Name:
West Berkshire Council

Issue N^o: 1

OA Job N^o: 3430

Planning Ref N^o: 201/98/44.10

NGR: SU 475 684

West Berkshire Council

Trinity School, Shaw House, Newbury, Berkshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

NGR SU 476 684

planning ref. 201/98/44.10

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October 2001

Client Name: West Berkshire Council

Client Ref No: 201/98/44.10

Document Title: Trinity School, Shaw House, Newbury, Berkshire

Document Type: Watching Brief

Issue Number: 1

National Grid Reference: SU 475 684
Planning Reference: 201/98/44.10

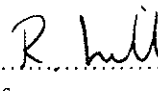
OA Tender Number: 3430
Site Code: NETS
Invoice Code: NETSWB
Museum Accession No: NEBYM 2001.13

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Date: 6th November 2001

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Date: 6th November 2001

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Document File Location U:\OAU\wbREPORTS\BERKSHIRE\trinity2.doc
Graphics File Location oau all drawings - *NETSWB*trinity
School,Terrapins*RMS*18.1.01

Illustrated by Anne Dunkley

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SUMMARY

In September 2001 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Trinity School, Newbury, Berkshire (NGR SU 476 684). The work was commissioned by West Berkshire Council during the removal of existing terrapins and associated services. The watching brief recorded the limited intrusion into the garden soil during the removal of the terrapins.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In September 2001 the Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Trinity School, Newbury (NGR SU 476 684) (see Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by West Berkshire Council in respect of a planning application for the removal of terrapins and associated services (Planning Ref. 201/98/44.10.)
- 1.1.2 A project brief was set by Veronica Fiorato, Principal Archaeological Officer, West Berkshire Council.
- 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 parish of Shaw lies on the north side of the valley of the river Lambourn, a little to the west of the junction of that stream with the river Kennet. The underlying geology of the area is upper chalk. This is dissected by two shallow valleys running NNE and SSW. Overlying the chalk ridges are layers of the Reading Beds and these are in turn covered with London Clay and a capping of plateau gravels. The present Shaw House and church are on river and valley gravels sitting on the alluvium bordering the river Lambourn.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 There is evidence that the valley of the rivers Kennet and Lambourn was utilised throughout the prehistoric period. A Mesolithic tranche axe and flint flakes have been recovered from the river bank (*Ford, 1991, 5*). The Neolithic and Bronze Age periods are represented within the parish by a stone axe found in the churchyard and by concentrations of flint flakes and scrapers in the fields north of Love Lane, immediately to the north of Trinity School. A ring ditch is also visible on aerial photographs to the south west of High Wood (approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile to the north of the site). Nothing has so far been found in the parish of Pre-Roman Iron Age date but the Iron Age fort at Bussock Wood is nearby.
- 1.3.2 The London-Cirencester Roman road is claimed (*Ford, 1991, 6*) to pass through Shaw and further more tangible remains include tiles in the pre-1841 church, pottery

in a field to the west and two pottery kilns of the first century and part of a tile kiln were uncovered during the construction of the M4 link road. Remains of a Roman building were found in the municipal cemetery.

- 1.3.3 The place name Shaw and certain field name elements imply occupation in the middle-late Saxon period (*Gelling, 1973 and Leamon, 1991*). The church of St Mary before its destruction in 1841 is claimed to have had Saxon features but the round tower is more likely to have been Norman, together with the south doorway and the font (*Shadlock, 1992*). The manor of Shaw is mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086, although it is not possible at present to determine where this settlement was. However, several features mentioned in the Chieveley and Beedon charter (*Gelling, 1976*) still appear to coincide with the present parish boundary (Rhodes et al, 1998).
- 1.3.4 The site of the medieval manor is at present unknown, although it is likely that it was near the church. The buildings are listed in the *Inquisition Post Mortem* of Ralph Basset taken in 1386. The document mentions a house with two chambers under one tiled roof; a stable for six horses with a kitchen roofed with tiles at the end of the stable; a thatched cowshed of three bays in bad condition and a tiled barn of three bays in a bad and ruinous state.
- 1.3.5 Shaw House was built by Thomas Dolman between 1557 and 1581. The bricks for the house were made from local clay and the resulting quarry pit was still visible in the 1950's (BFWI, 1951) - presumably in the vicinity of Brick Kiln Wood which lies ½ a mile to the north. To the east of Shaw House lie Clay Hill and Kiln Road, the names of which are probably connected to local brick production. The limestone would have originated from Headington and Bath (Rhodes et al, 1998).
- 1.3.6 There was presumably a garden attached to Shaw House from Elizabethan times but nothing is known of its original form. The earliest description dates from around 1730 (see Fig. 2) in the map of Speen Manor which may have been surveyed soon after the property was bought by James Brydges, 1st Duke of Chandos. It might therefore denote the arrangement of the grounds that Sir Thomas Dolman (d. 1711) bequeathed, as well as indicate more recently introduced features.
- 1.3.7 The map shows the house surrounded on three sides by formal gardens, with stabling and other outbuildings to the west. Each main garden contains a geometric design of paths, in most instances linked to a central circle, possibly around a fountain or statue.
- 1.3.8 In 1751, the estate was purchased by Joseph Andrews. The Newbury Museum notebook of Joseph Andrews, apparently begun in 1750 (before his purchase of Shaw House) includes plans of the house and garden as he found them, with ideas for remodelling them. The notebook shows the abandoning of the south garden to lawn and the substitution of a ha-ha for the previous southern boundary. In addition, the north garden was similarly grassed over. The layout of the 'Great Garden' was also simplified. The northern parterre still comprised four plots around a central circular feature, but now there was only a simple rectangle to the south, with an unenclosed

'Bowling Green' occupying the area in-between - the terrapins to be removed during the watching brief are located over the 'Bowling Green' which was still being utilised as such in the early 20th century, as evidenced by a photograph accompanying an article in Country Life from 1910.

- 1.3.9 The Great Garden, which was placed symmetrically on the east side of the house, continues to be bounded by a large, flat topped bank or terrace, 1.5 m - 2 m high. A kitchen garden ran around the outside of the terrace on the north and east sides of the Great Garden. It has sometimes been thought that the terrace began as a Civil War earthwork, possibly denoted by its name, 'The Rampart' (see Fig. 3), but it seems more likely that military use was made of an existing feature. Such terraces, or raised walks, were common garden features from the early to mid sixteenth century onwards (Rhodes et al, 1998).
- 1.3.10 Despite modern redevelopment of the former estate and the encroachment of school-buildings, the historic core of the garden remains recognisable and typical elements of rigid landscape design from around the beginning to the middle of the eighteenth century can still be traced.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To record the presence/absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains that may be exposed by ground disturbance during the removal of the terrapins and associated services (see Fig. 3).
- 2.1.2 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 A photographic record was made of the terrapins before and during thier removal. A 1:500 scale plan was used to mark the location of the services after they were removed and capped. Each cut around the service was photographed, dimensions taken and a record made of the topsoil they cut through.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 All the cuts (see Fig. 4) around the services cut through a friable dark greyish brown silt sand loam with charcoal flecks, chalk flecks and fragments and odd small fragments of CBM. This represent well cultivated garden soil.
- 3.1.2 It was found that the supports for the terrapins and pathways were laid on to the ground surface with little or no ground impact at all.

3.2 Finds

3.2.1 No finds were recovered.

3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

3.3.1 No environmental samples were taken.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1.1 The results from the watching brief indicate that there has been no intrusion into the archaeological deposits in the garden. The ten cuts made for access to cap the old services cut into the top of the garden soil only.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Height</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Find</i>
1	Cut	0.25m	0.30m	0.50m	Cut for services	None
2	Cut	0.20m	0.30m	0.30m	Cut for services	None
3	Cut	0.20m	0.30m	0.30m	Cut for services	None
4	Cut	0.25m	0.40m	0.50m	Cut for services	None
5	Cut	0.30m	0.40m	0.65m	Cut for services	None
6	Cut	0.15m	0.50m	0.50m	Cut for services	None
7	Cut	0.15m	0.40m	0.30m	Cut for services	None
8	Cut	0.25m	0.30m	0.40m	Cut for services	None
9	Cut	0.30m	0.50m	0.50m	Cut for services	None
10	Cut	0.20m	0.35m	0.45m	Cut for services	None
11	Deposit	0.30m			Garden soil	None

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

Rhodes, Ayres, Dix, Munby and Steane, Shaw house: Conservation Plan, 1998
 Victoria County History of Berkshire, Vol.IV, 1972
 Pevsner, N, 1966, *The Buildings of England: Berkshire*, Penguin,
 OAU, 1989, *Shaw-cum-Donnington Village settlement, Archaeological Assesment*,
The Berkshire Book, 1951, Berkshire Federation of Women's Institutes,
 Mills, A.D, 1991, *Dictionary of English Place-names*, OUP
 Wilkinson, D (ed) 1992 OAU Field Manuel, (First edition, August 1992)

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Trinity School, Shaw House, Newbury, Berkshire.

Site code: NETS

Grid reference: NGR SU476 684

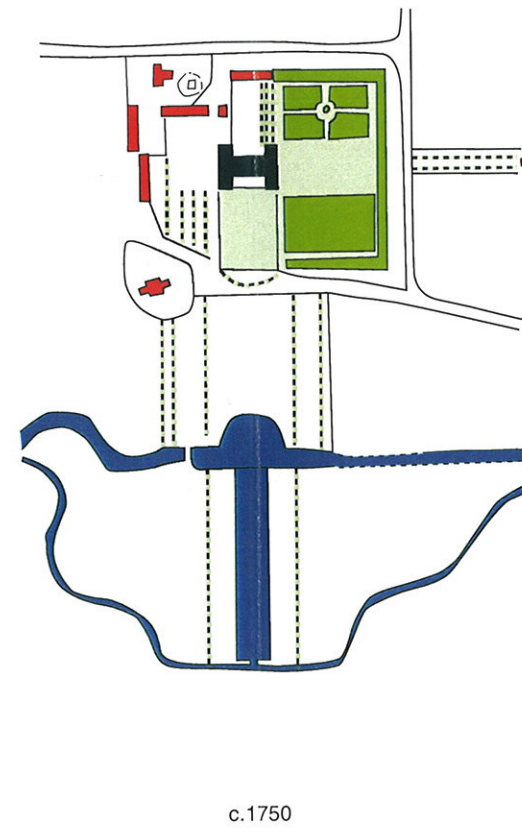
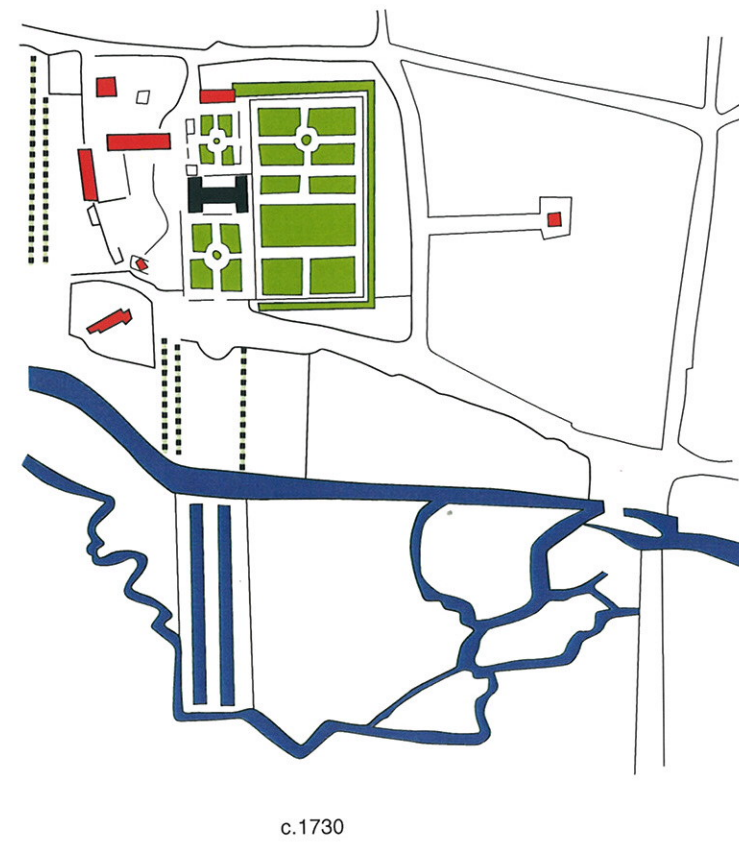
Type of watching brief: Monitoring visits

Date and duration of project: Three site visits were carried out to monitor the progress of work and record and impact on the archaeology.

Summary of results: A number of small cuts were made into the garden topsoil. No archaeological features or deposits were observed.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OAU, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with West Berks. Heritage Service, The Wharf, Newbury, Berks, RG14 5AS in due course.

Figure 1: Site location.



0 200 m
scale 1:5000

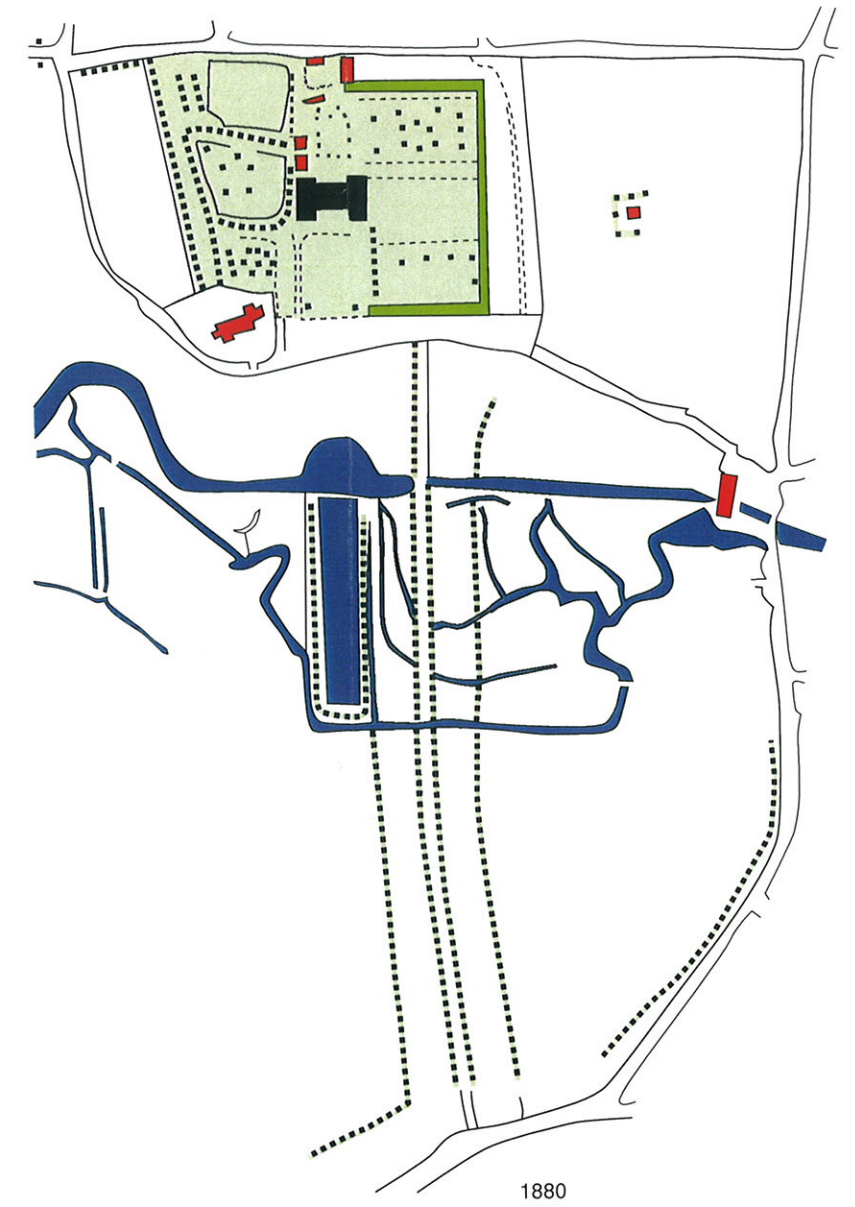


Figure 2 : Garden Development at Shaw House :1730-1880

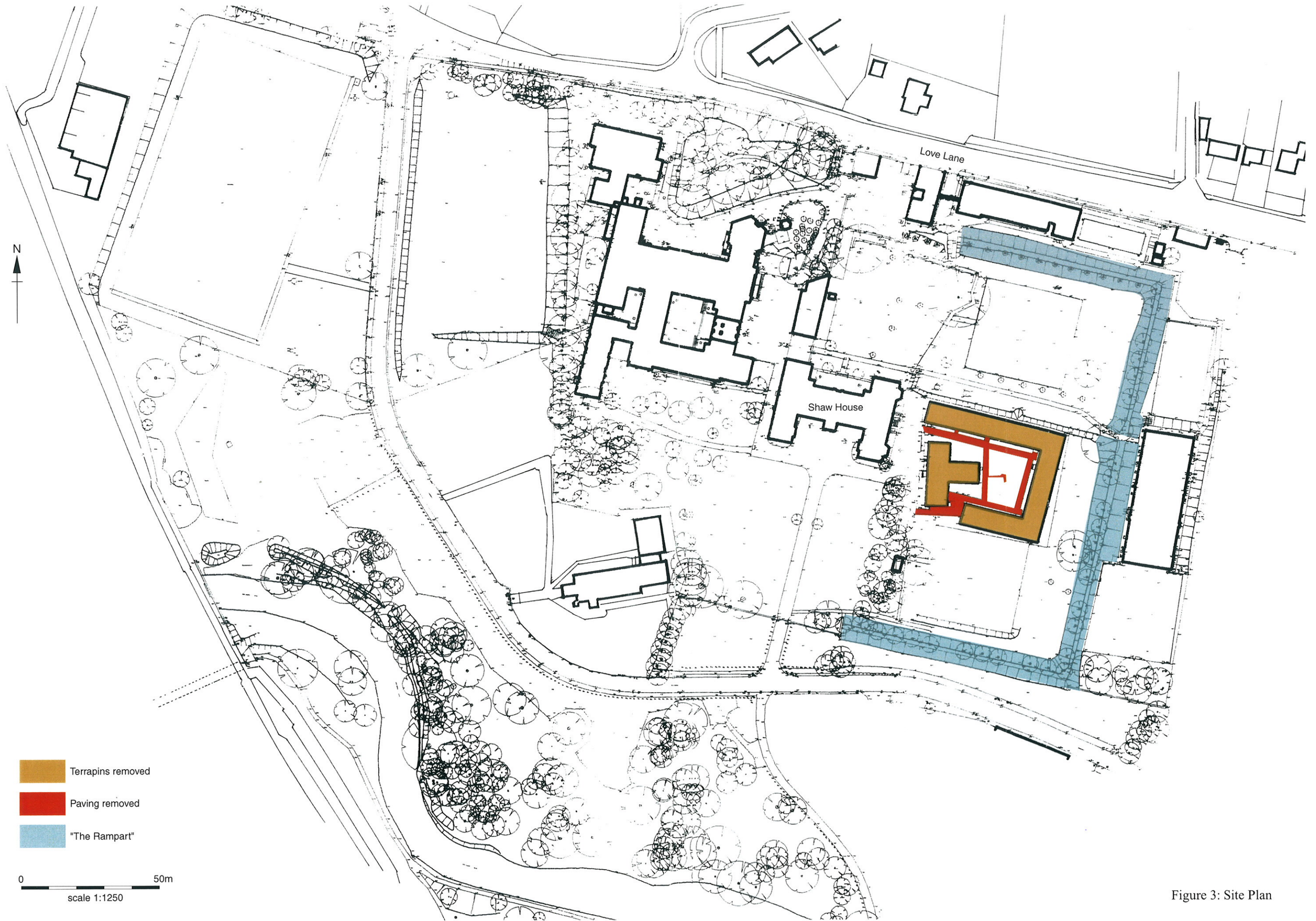


Figure 3: Site Plan



Figure 4: Site plan.



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