

Camp Hopson  
Department Store  
6-12 Northbrook Street  
Newbury  
Berkshire



**Archaeological  
Watching Brief Report**



**Oxford Archaeology**

January 2005

**Client: Sutton Griffin Architects**

Issue N<sup>o</sup>: 1  
OA Job N<sup>o</sup>: 14585  
NGR: SU 470672

**Client Name:** Sutton Griffin Architects

**Client Ref No:**

**Document Title:** Camp Hopson Department Store, 6-12 Northbrook Street,  
Newbury, Berkshire

**Document Type:** Watching Brief

**Issue Number:** 1

**National Grid Reference:** SU 470 672  
**Planning Reference:**

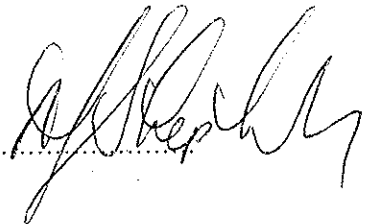
**OA Job Number:** 2410  
**Site Code:** NECHNS 04  
**Invoice Code:** NECHNSWB  
**Receiving Museum:** West Berkshire Heritage Service  
**Museum Accession No:** NEBYM 2004.52

**Prepared by:** Mike Sims  
**Position:** Project Supervisor  
**Date:** 7th January 2005

**Checked by:** Andrew Holmes  
**Position:** Head of Small Works  
**Date:** 12th January 2005

**Approved by:** Nick Shepherd  
**Position:** Head of Fieldwork  
**Date:** 19th January 2005

Signed.....



**Document File Location** h:\projects\Berkshire BR\West Berkshire WB\Newbury  
NW\5422 6-12 Northbrook Street, Newbury  
WB\wbREP.doc

**Graphics File Location**  
**Illustrated by** Georgina Slater

**Disclaimer:**

*This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and should not be relied upon or used for any other project without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and prior written authority of Oxford Archaeology being obtained. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for the consequences of this document being used for a purpose other than the purposes for which it was commissioned. Any person/party using or relying on the document for such other purposes agrees, and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Oxford Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the person/party by whom it was commissioned.*

**Oxford Archaeology**

© Oxford Archaeological Unit Ltd 2005

Janus House  
Osney Mead  
Oxford OX2 0ES  
t: (0044) 01865 263800  
f: (0044) 01865 793496

e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk  
w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk

Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited is a Registered Charity No: 285627

**Camp Hopson Department Store  
6-12 Northbrook Street  
Newbury, Berkshire**

***ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT***

**CONTENTS**

Summary.....	1
1 Introduction .....	1
1.1 Scope of work.....	1
1.2 Location, geology and topography.....	1
1.3 Archaeological and historical background.....	1
2 Project Aims and Methodology.....	3
2.1 Aims .....	3
2.2 Methodology.....	3
3 Results .....	4
3.1 Description of deposits .....	4
3.2 Finds .....	5
3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains .....	5
4 Discussion and Conclusions .....	5
Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory .....	6
Appendix 2 Bibliography and References .....	7
Appendix 3 Summary of Site Details.....	7

**LIST OF FIGURES**

- Fig. 1 Site location  
Fig. 2 Plan of the watching brief area, showing location of sections  
Fig. 3 Sections 1-4

## SUMMARY

*Between the 12th September and 16th November 2004 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at the rear of the Camp Hopson Department Store, 6-12 Northbrook Street, Newbury, Berkshire (NGR: SU 470 672). The work was commissioned by Sutton Griffin Architects for the partial demolition and replacement of existing buildings.*

*The watching brief revealed extensive deposits of 17th-19th century made ground (most likely used to reclaim this former marshland area) and demolition debris( possibly representing the former 18th century buildings known to exist along Northbrook Street). These deposits were observed overlying an earlier cultivated soil, possibly medieval in date. Alluvial deposits associated with the River Kennet to the south-east were also recorded at the base of the sequence.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Scope of work

1.1.1 Between the 12th September and 16th November 2004 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at the rear of the Camp Hopson Department Store, 6-12 Northbrook Street, Newbury, Berkshire (NGR: SU 470 672). The work was commissioned by Sutton Griffin Architects in respect of a planning application for partial demolition and replacement of existing buildings .

1.1.2 Duncan Coe, Principal Archaeologist for the West Berkshire Heritage Service, outlined the requirements of the watching brief for the development. In response to Mr Coe's requirements OA prepared and had approved a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) detailing how it would undertake the watching brief (OA 2004).

### 1.2 Location, geology and topography

1.2.1 The development site is located on level ground to the east of Northbrook Street within the valley of the River Kennet (NGR SU 470 672). The site is bounded to the north and south by retail premises, to the west by Northbrook Street, to the south-east by the River Kennet and to the east by Wharf Road (Fig. 1). The site lies at approximately 77 m OD and occupies an area of approximately 1.44 hectares. The underlying geology is alluvium overlying river gravel.

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The following is an abridgement of the entry for Newbury in G.G. Astill's book *Historic Towns in Berkshire: an archaeological appraisal*.

1.3.2 The town of Newbury lies on river gravels which have been covered in places by alluvial deposits and peat, indicating that areas must have been marshy and badly drained. Work undertaken by Newbury Museum has shown that most of the River Kennet valley, including the site of Newbury, was extensively occupied during the

Mesolithic period. A quantity of Mesolithic finds have been recovered from the Victoria Park area, while recent excavations in the town centre have also produced Mesolithic material.

- 1.3.3 Other occasional isolated Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age finds have been found in or near the town centre, while timber piles found below Northbrook, Bartholomew and Cheap Streets have been interpreted as Iron Age “pile dwellings” or alternatively, as possible piles driven into the alluvium in order to stabilise medieval buildings.
- 1.3.4 Occasional finds of Roman coins and pottery have been recovered near the market place and a large cemetery discovered in 1865 at the railway sidings suggest some Roman settlement existed in the vicinity of the town. A Roman building with wall plaster and hypocausts was found to the south of the town while a Roman pottery kiln was excavated to the north-east of the town. There is, however, insufficient material to consider that the medieval town overlies a Roman settlement.
- 1.3.5 Newbury, or the “new market town”, is first mentioned in a grant dated to c.1080, though it is not recorded in Domesday. It is possible, however, that the town was founded shortly after the Conquest by its Norman lord, Arnulf de Hesdin. According to Domesday, de Hesdin held the manor of Ulvritone, which in 1066 was valued at £9, by 1086 its value had risen to £24, and 51 *hagae* were mentioned. The increase in value over 20 years and the number of houses suggest that “Newbury” came into existence on this manor at this time.
- 1.3.6 Once established the town developed swiftly. Burgesses are first mentioned in 1189, and an account of 1204 records not only burgage rents but also a market, fulling mill and corn mill. Town bailiffs were also mentioned in 1204, and it seems that a form of independent town government was developing in the early 13th century. In 1215 a yearly fair in Newbury was granted to the Hospital of St. Bartholomew and by 1225 the borough was represented at assize by its own bailiff and jury.
- 1.3.7 It is possible that the town suffered a decline in the late 13th and 14th centuries, but by the 15th century it rose in fortune and by 1466 had three additional annual fairs. The heyday of Newbury as a prosperous wool and cloth producing town was reached in the late 15th and 16th centuries when the industry was controlled by a few substantial mercantile families, the Dolmans, the Blandys and John Smallwood known as “Jack of Newbury”.
- 1.3.8 24 Northbrook Street, to the immediate north of the development area, is known to have been the site of “Jack of Newbury’s” cloth works, which is said to have employed a thousand men, women and children at two hundred looms and stretched from Northbrook Street to what is now as Victoria Park (Higgot 2001).
- 1.3.9 During the English Civil War the two battles of Newbury (1643 and 1644), the town was occupied by both sides and led to a temporary disruption of town life. However, the town was already suffering from a more serious and permanent dislocation of the

cloth trade and by the end of the 16th century the industry had entered a decline from which it never recovered.

- 1.3.10 The decline in the cloth industry was later offset by the growth of industries stimulated by the new transport systems. From 1752 the mail coaches operating between London and Bath led to establishing of a large number of coaching inns, the opening of the Newbury - Kintbury section of the Kennet and Avon Canal in 1797 brought more trade to the corn mills and the founding of a brewing industry. By the 1830s silk and paper mills and foundries operated in the town and the opening of the Great Western Railway in 1847 consolidated Newbury's position in the transport network.
- 1.3.11 The medieval Northbrook Street was a wide street with tenements either side and may have replaced an earlier road. On both sides the plots ran down to common pasture, to Northcoft on the west and on the east to the Marsh. The street was probably the main cloth working area of the town. Many clothiers are documented as having houses and shops there. The medieval bridge over the Kennet, which led to Northbrook Street, was built of timber and included many shops as part of its build until its collapse in 1643.
- 1.3.12 The earliest maps show the backs of some plots containing outbuildings, possibly workshops or warehouses, and the Marsh was used as a *tenter* ground. The 1768 plan also shows an open stream running down the centre of Northbrook Street, and was probably channelled into the shops for the fulling and dyeing of cloth (Astill 1978).

## 2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To preserve by record any archaeological remains that the development may remove or damage during site preparation, the excavation of ground beams and pile heads and any additional services.
- 2.1.2 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features, if present, through implementation of an environmental sampling strategy.
- 2.1.3 To make available the results of the investigation.

### 2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 Monitoring was done on the basis of site visits during ground works likely to expose, disturb or damage archaeological deposits. During these site visits the edges, bases and sections of any excavations were closely examined and where appropriate the sections recorded. The spoil was also examined for dating evidence.
- 2.2.2 A plan showing the extent of the excavations (Fig. 2) and the location of the sections was prepared at a scale of 1:100 and recorded sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20. All recorded sections were photographed using colour slide and black and white print

film. A general photographic record of the work was also made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Field Manual* (OAU 1992).

### 3 RESULTS

#### 3.1 Description of deposits

##### *Section 1 (Fig. 3)*

- 3.1.1 This was within a 0.9 m deep trench whose base cut 0.24 m deep into the top of a layer of dark grey silty clay loam (13). This layer produced fragments of mortar and charcoal flecking and represents an undated cultivated soil. Overlying this was a 0.4 m deep layer of dark greyish brown clay silt (12) containing brick fragments and both charcoal and mortar flecking and is a layer of probable post-medieval made ground. This was sealed by a modern demolition layer 0.26 m thick consisting of a reddish brown silty loam (11) containing numerous brick and concrete.

##### *Section 2 (Fig. 3)*

- 3.1.2 This was recorded within a 1 m deep trench. Excavation cut 0.28 m deep into a layer of dark grey silty clay loam (23) which sloped away to the south and produced charcoal and mortar flecking. As in section 1 this is a probable cultivated soil.
- 3.1.3 Overlying this layer was a 0.25 m deep dump of mid brown silty clay (24) containing mortar, brick and roof tile fragments and representing a tipline of made ground. Butting up to this deposit was a 0.25 m thick lens of very dark greyish brown silty clay (25) containing plaster, brick and slate fragments, representing another tipline of made ground.
- 3.1.4 These deposits were overlaid by a 0.4 m deep layer of a dark greyish brown clay silt (22) containing mortar and brick fragments, representing a probable layer of post-medieval made ground. This was sealed by a 0.35 m thick layer of reddish brown silty loam and building debris (21), the same as layer 11.

##### *Section 3 (Fig. 3)*

- 3.1.5 This was recorded within a 1.3 m deep trench. The base of the excavation cut 0.1 m deep into the top of a layer of dark brown silty clay alluvium (36). This was overlaid by a 0.1 m thick layer of light brown silty clay (35) containing fragments of plaster, a continuation of cultivated soil 13 seen in section 1.
- 3.1.6 This had been sealed below a layered sequence of post-medieval made ground. This included a 0.27 m deep layer of dark brown silty clay loam (34) containing fragments of roof tile, a 0.15 m deep layer of dark reddish brown silty clay (33) containing chalk and charcoal flecking, a 0.25 m thick layer of dark greyish brown clayey loam (32) containing fragments of plaster, brick and tile, and a 0.4 m deep layer of dark grey clay loam (31) containing mortar and brick fragments.

### **Section 4 (Fig. 3)**

- 3.1.7 This was recorded within a 2.2 m deep excavation for a lift shaft. The base of this excavation cut 0.58 m deep into the top of a dark greyish brown clay and peat mix (43) representing an undisturbed alluvial deposit. This was overlaid by a 0.23 m thick alluvial layer of dark greyish brown silty clay (42) containing gravels and chalk flecking.
- 3.1.8 Sealing this was a 0.4 m thick layer of dark greyish brown clay loam (41) producing chalk and charcoal flecking and brick fragments, the same as layer 13. This was overlain by a 0.8 m deep layer of 20th century made ground (45), which in turn was overlain by a 0.2 m thick concrete slab (44).

### **3.2 Finds**

- 3.2.1 Late 17th-20th century CBM, pottery and glass was retrieved during the course of the watching brief. These find were evaluated on site, but were not retained.

### **3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains**

- 3.3.1 Deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental sampling were observed within section 4, however, the depth and stability of the excavations precluded sampling *in-situ*. Furthermore, spoil removed during excavation was very disturbed and OA was advised it was also contaminated.

## **4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1.1 The presence of alluvial deposits, seen sloping towards the river to the south-east, highlights the potential for palaeo-environmental evidence to be retrieved. However, contamination of such deposits may prevent samples being taken as was the case during the watching brief.
- 4.1.2 The undated cultivated soil (13, 23, 35 and 41) noted in all the sections may relate to the medieval common ground, or marshland, noted running eastwards down from Northbrook Street by Astill (Astill 1978).
- 4.1.3 The extensive post-medieval made ground deposits suggest this area was reclaimed former marshland before being used for residential and industrial purposes during the period following the Civil War. Evidence of demolition layers noted in sections 1 and 2, possibly represents the former tenements and outbuildings recorded on the 1768 map of the area.



## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i> Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
11	Layer	0.26 m	Modern demolition layer	Brick, concrete	C20th
12	Layer	0.4 m	Post-medieval made ground	Brick	C17th - C19th
13	Layer	> 0.24 m	Undated cultivated soil	Mortar	Medieval?
21	Layer	0.38 m	Modern demolition layer	Brick, concrete	C20th
22	Layer	0.4 m	Post-medieval made ground	Brick	C17th- C19th
23	Layer	0.28 m	Undated cultivated soil	Mortar	Medieval?
24	Lens	0.28 m	Tipline within post-medieval made ground	Mortar, brick, tile	C17th- C19th
25	Layer	0.28 m	Tipline within post-medieval made ground	Plaster, slate, brick, tile	C17th- C19th
31	Layer	0.38 m	Post-medieval made ground	Mortar, brick	C17th- C19th
32	Layer	0.25 m	Post-medieval made ground	Plaster, brick	C17th- C19th
33	Layer	0.15 m	Post-medieval made ground	Chalk	C17th- C19th
34	Layer	0.25 m	Post-medieval made ground	Roof tile	C17th- C19th
35	Layer	0.1 m	Undated cultivated soil	Plaster	Medieval?
36	Layer	>0.1 m	Alluvial deposit	-	-
41	Layer	0.4 m	Undated cultivated soil	Brick	Medieval?
42	Layer	0.23 m	Alluvial deposit	-	-
43	Layer	0.57 m	Alluvial clay and peat	-	-
44	Surface	0.2 m	Concrete slab	-	C20th
45	Layer	0.8 m	Modern made ground	Brick, concrete	C20th

**APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES**

- Astill, 1978 *Historic Towns of Berkshire: an archaeological appraisal*
- Higgot, 2001 *The Story of Newbury*
- IFA, 1992 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*
- OA, 2004 *6-12 Northbrook Street, Newbury, Berkshire: Written scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*
- OAU, 1992 *Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson)
- VCH, 1972 *Berkshire* 4, 153.

**APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS**

**Site name:** Camp Hopson Department Store, 6-12 Northbrook street, Newbury, Berkshire

**Site code:** NECHNS04

**Grid reference:** SU 470 672

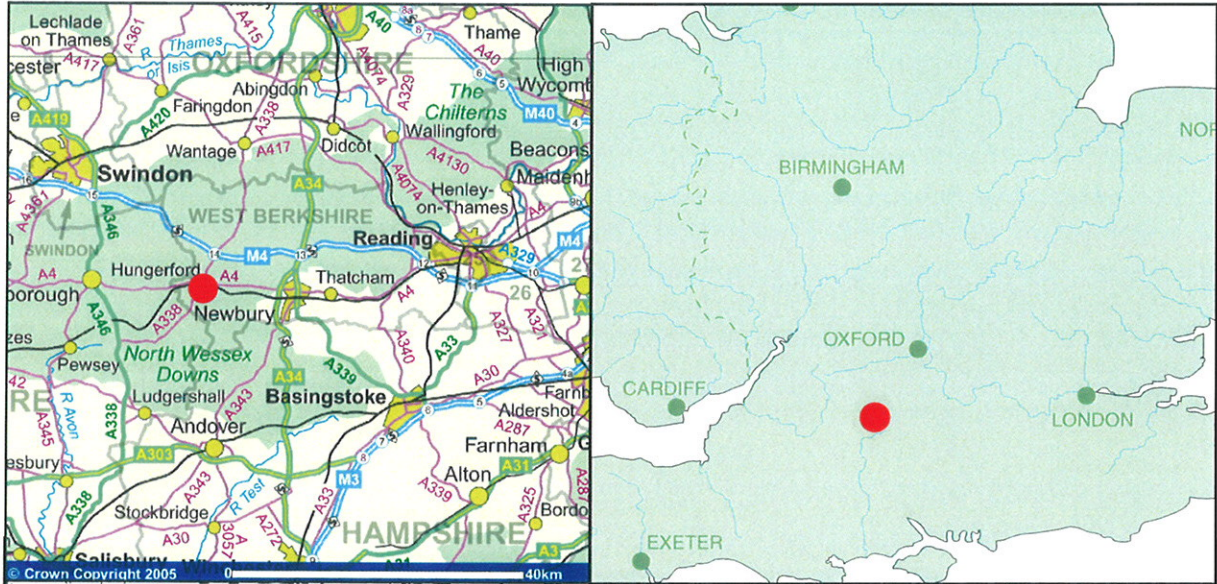
**Type of watching brief:** Monitoring of intrusive groundworks.

**Date and duration of project:** 12.08.04 to 16.11.04, 6 site visits.

**Area of site:** 1.44 hectares

**Summary of results:** Extensive deposits of 17th-19th century made ground overlying an earlier cultivated soil which sealed river deposits sloping south-eastward.

**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Berkshire County Museums Service in due course.



Scale 1:25,000

Reproduced from the Landranger 1:50,000 scale by permission of the Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office  
© Crown Copyright 1988. All rights reserved. Licence No. AL 100005569

Figure 1: Site location

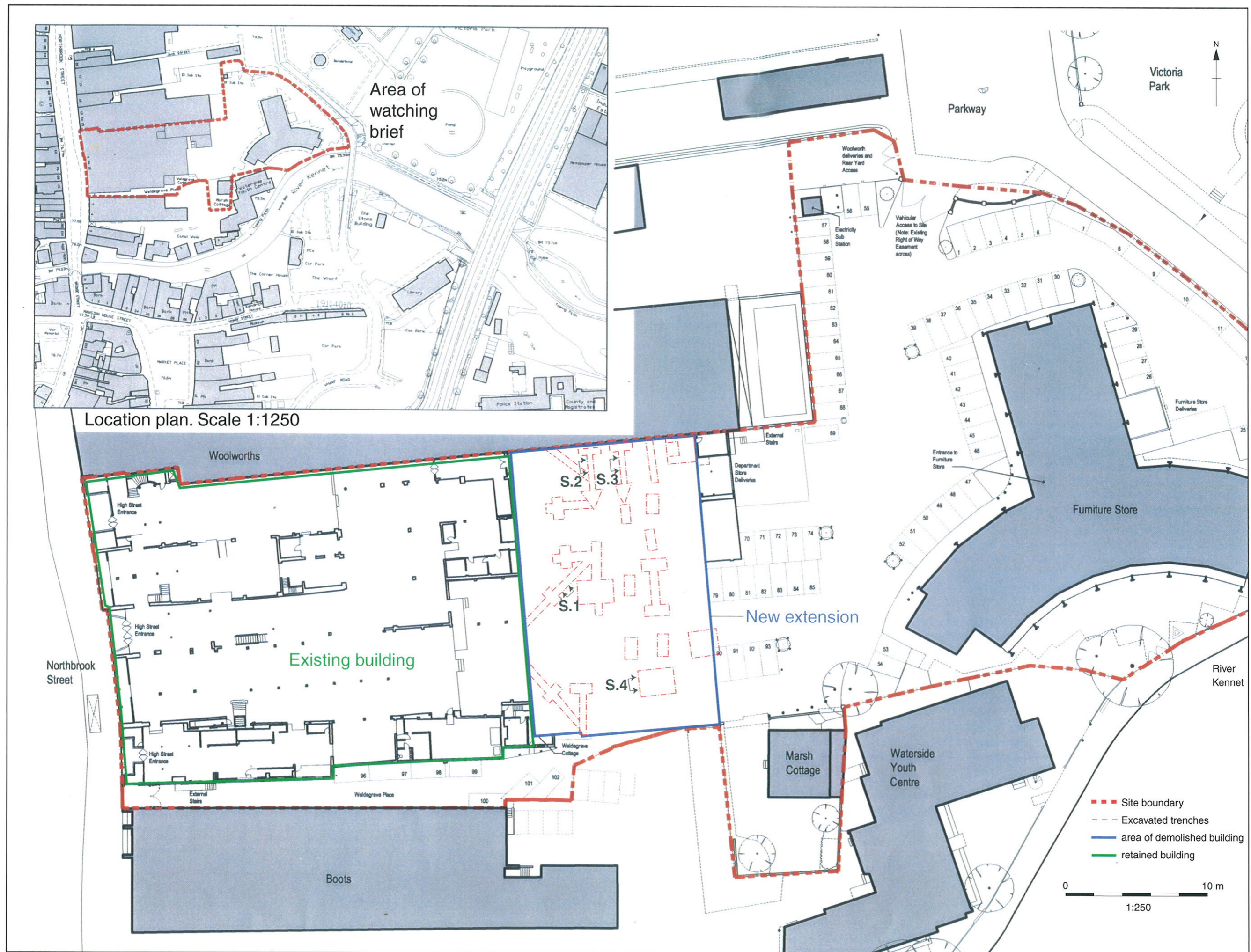


Figure 2: Plan of watching brief area, showing locations of sections

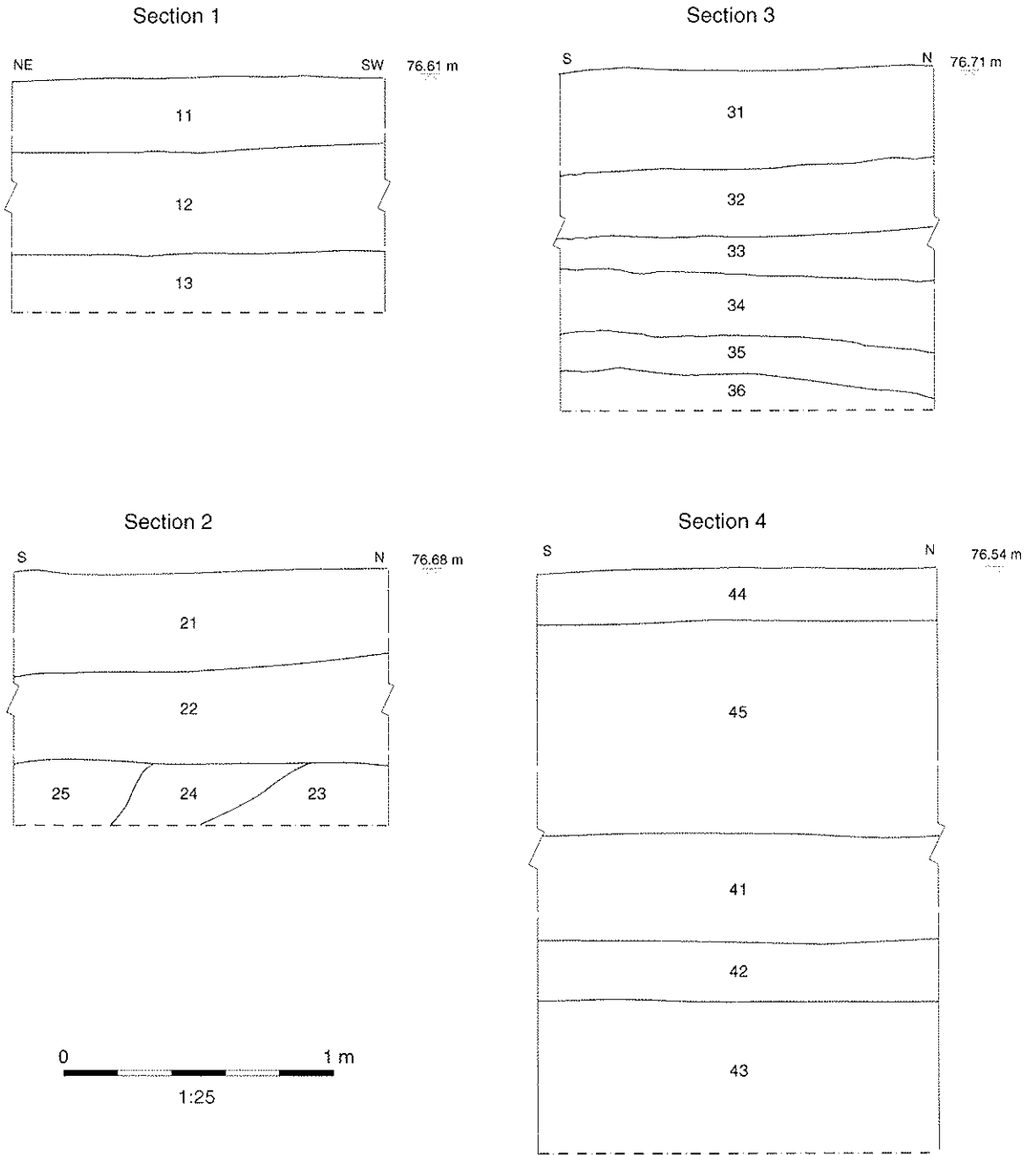


Figure 3: Sections 1-4



Plate 1: North-west view of site



Plate 2: Trench section



### **Oxford Archaeology**

Janus House  
Osney Mead  
Oxford OX2 0ES

t: (0044) 01865 263800  
f: (0044) 01865 793496  
e: [info@oxfordarch.co.uk](mailto:info@oxfordarch.co.uk)  
w: [www.oxfordarch.co.uk](http://www.oxfordarch.co.uk)



### **Oxford Archaeology North**

Storey Institute  
Meeting House Lane  
Lancaster LA1 1TF

t: (0044) 01524 541000  
f: (0044) 01524 848606  
e: [lancinfo@oxfordarch.co.uk](mailto:lancinfo@oxfordarch.co.uk)  
w: [www.oxfordarch.co.uk](http://www.oxfordarch.co.uk)



**Director:** David Jennings, BA MIFA FSA

Oxford Archaeological Unit is a  
Private Limited Company, N<sup>o</sup>: 1618597  
and a Registered Charity, N<sup>o</sup>: 285627

**Registered Office:**

Oxford Archaeological Unit  
Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES