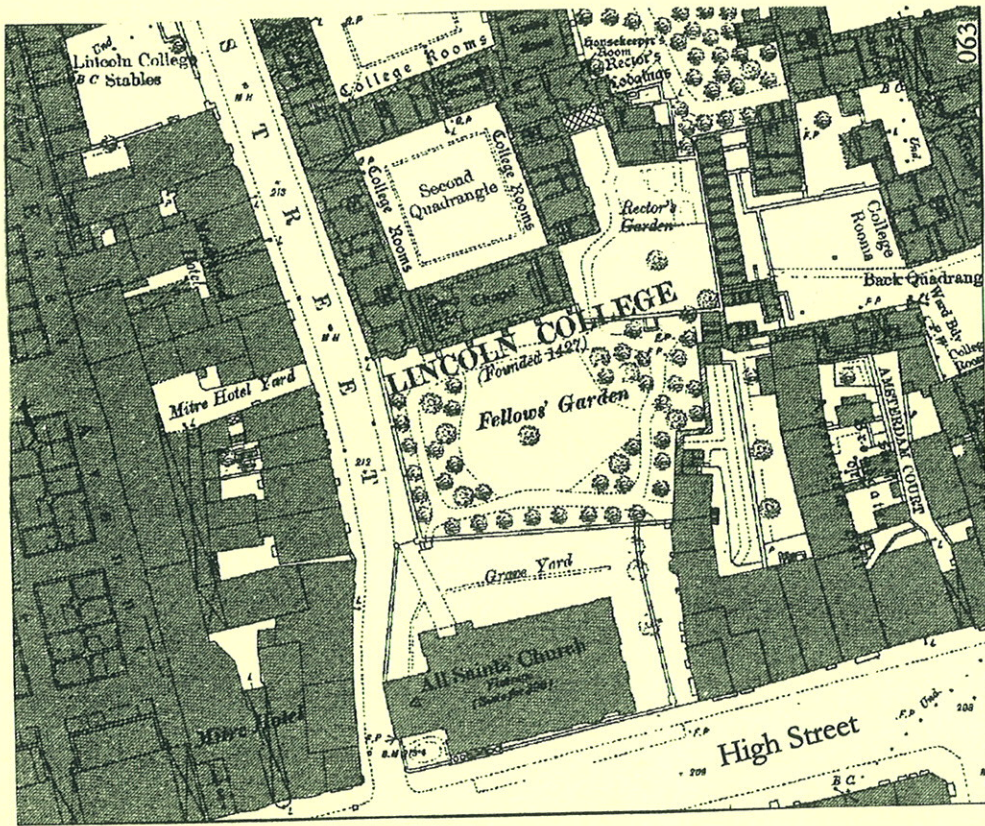


Lincoln College

**The Rector's Garden
Lincoln College, Oxford**

NGR SP 5160 0640

Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Lincoln College

**The Rector's Garden
Lincoln College, Oxford**

NGR SP 5160 0640

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Prepared by: A Bingham/J Hiller

Date: 23rd March, 2001

Checked by:

A. Hardy

Date:

26.3.01

Approved by:

R. Williams

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Date:

30/3/2001

The Rector's Garden, Lincoln College Oxford

NGR SP 5160 0640

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Summary

In March 2000, the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) was commissioned by Lincoln College to undertake a watching brief within the college grounds during the excavation of trench runs for new heating and service ducts. The service trench extended through the Fellows' Garden and the Rector's Garden.

The excavations established the presence of parts of two walls forming a probable building aligned east-west immediately south of the college chapel. The exact date of construction of the building was not established, though the walls were set within deposits containing a range of post-medieval material.

Part of a third wall on a NNE-SSW alignment corresponds with that of a building depicted on Taylor's 1750 map of Oxford. Pottery and glass from associated deposits was of post-medieval date. No evidence of medieval buildings or occupation was recovered from the service trenches. Deposits overlying the demolished structures indicate that the site was levelled in the 19th century in preparation for the gardens that exist on the site today.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 In March 2000 the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) carried out a formal watching brief during the excavation of new service trenches in the Rector's Garden, within the grounds of Lincoln College, Oxford.
- 1.2 Previous excavations at the college by OAU had identified the general area as being rich in archaeological remains, and following discussions with the Oxford Archaeological Advisory Service (OAAS), OAU prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) detailing how it would implement a watching brief during the works.

2 Topography and Archaeological Background

- 2.1 Lincoln College is located towards the centre of Oxford and is bounded to the north by Brasenose Lane, to the west by Turl Street and to the east by Brasenose College (Fig. 1). The college is sited on the second gravel terrace of the Thames, and at the time of this watching brief the ground surface lay at c 64.7 m OD. The Rector's garden is situated to the south of the college buildings and due north of the site of All Saint's Church.
- 2.2 Historically the site of Lincoln College lies within the defensive circuit of the original Saxon settlement, rather than the later eastern suburb of the town to

the east of the Bodleian Library. By the late 12th century the eastern part of the original Saxon *burh* had been divided up into plots of land forming part of Oxford's fledgling academic society and by the early 15th century, the site of the future college was covered by a patchwork of halls, houses, tenements and gardens (Salter, 1960, 49-52, 61-3).

- 2.3 The site of the present Rector's Garden lies within the area formerly occupied by a 'T' shaped early medieval tenement in the ownership of the Hospital of St. John, and later Magdalen College (Salter, *ibid.*).
- 2.4 Agas' map of the site (1578) shows the area north of All Saint's Church as an open plot containing two small buildings, possibly associated with the church. At this time the south range of the college including the chapel had not been constructed. Loggan's map of 1675 (Fig. 5) shows a range of buildings alongside the south range of the college, although it is unclear if the buildings here were part of the college or an adjacent tenement. By the time of Taylor's 1750 map (Fig. 6), there appears to have been a substantial building on the site including a long range alongside the college chapel and a central courtyard.
- 2.5 Lincoln College acquired the site under investigation in 1772 and by the time of the O.S. maps of the late 19th century (see Fig. 1), all of the buildings here had gone and the site was open gardens in the keeping of the college.
- 2.6 Two trial pits were excavated by the site contractors in advance of the works, revealing deposits containing 18th century material.

3 Aims

The aims of the watching brief as specified in the WSI are summarised below:

- 3.1 To record the presence/absence, extent, condition and date of any archaeological deposits within the entire area affected by the groundwork
- 3.2 To highlight any significant discoveries made during the fieldwork, should the available resources prove insufficient to record the find to a satisfactory and proper standard
- 3.3 To record all features and deposits to established OAU standards and to make available the results of the watching brief

4 Methodology

- 4.1 The excavations involved a machine-excavated trench in the Fellows' Garden, extending through the Rector's Garden. The trench was for the installation of a new heating main and other service ducts. An archaeological supervisor attended the works as they progressed.
- 4.2 All structures, features and deposits were recorded in plan and section, and a black and white and colour photographic record was made of the work. A

written record was also made on pro-forma sheets, and a daily record of all activity on site was maintained.

5 Results (Figs 2, 3 and 4)

- 5.1 The service trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 1 m and was 0.9 m wide. Four stretches of trench were excavated, here given identifying letters A, B, C, and D (see Fig. 2).
- 5.2 The eastern length of the trench (A) extended north-south past the chapel, and revealed a number of existing live services; no archaeological deposits or features were present in this part of the trench.
- 5.3 At the base of the east-west leg of the trench (B) was a layer of mid-brown clay-silt (8), containing occasional stones and patches of crushed mortar. Finds from this layer included animal bone, two bowls from clay pipes, the top of an 18th-century wine bottle, a sherd of post-medieval window glass, and a mixed assemblage of pottery including 16th-17th century Bellarmine, parts from a large red earthenware pot of 17th-18th century date and later white china fragments. The layer was 0.5 m thick, and was cut by a construction trench (6) for a structure (7) aligned NNE-SSW (Section 1: Fig. 3). The stonework consisted of several courses of un-bonded stones and occasional brick fragments. The wall was evidently substantial, as it was 1.7 m wide and was observed to be 0.44 m tall within the excavated trench. The full depth of the structure was not ascertained. The wall and layer 8 were overlain by topsoil (3).
- 5.4 Trench run C extended off length B and ran north towards the wall of the chapel. The remains of an east-west aligned wall (5) were discovered (Section 2: Fig. 3). The structure comprised un-bonded stone rubble with occasional brick fragments, set within a construction cut (4) that cut layer 8. The wall was exposed to a height of 0.3 m; two modern service pipes had disturbed the top of the stonework. The wall was 1 m wide and was overlain by a layer of reddish-brown orange gravel (2) that was 0.44m thick; this deposit extended along the length of the trench for *c* 6 m.
- 5.5 The fourth leg of the trench (D) was excavated from the Junior Common Room southward to the Rector's Lodgings. At the base of the trench was a layer of light-brown sandy loam (10) with crushed mortar and occasional rubble inclusions. Finds from this layer were mixed and included German stone wares of 16th-17th century date, red earthen wares and willow pattern china of 18th and 19th century date. This layer was cut by a construction cut (9) for a wall (1) measuring 1 m wide and exposed to a depth of 0.24m, consisting largely of stone rubble and occasional brick fragments (Fig. 3, section 1). Unlike the other walls, this stonework exhibited remnants of a fine sandy reddish mortar (11) on its upper surface (Fig. 4). The wall and layer 10 were sealed by a similar gravel layer (2) seen overlying wall 5 to the north.

6 The Finds

6.1 The finds from the excavated deposits are summarised in tabular form below, with dating information:

Context	Finds	Date Range
7	Animal bone x 2 3 sherds white china 1 sherd red earthenware	- 17th/19th century Post-medieval
8	Window glass x 1 Animal Bone x 3 Fe Nail Clay pipe x 2 Glass wine bottle top 15 sherds red earthenware pottery vessel 11 sherds mixed, red earthenware, Bellarmine, white china, willow pattern	Post-medieval - - 17th/18th century 18th century 17th/18th century 16th-19th century
10	Glass wine bottle top 15 sherds mixed, red earthenware, Bellarmine, white china, willow pattern	17th/18th century 16th-19th century

7 Discussion

7.1 No pre-15th century medieval material was recovered, which suggests that activity in the post-medieval period had either removed these deposits, or more likely, that they remain *in situ* at a greater depth than the excavations reported on here. The earliest soil horizons within the trenches were probably tenement garden soils formed after the medieval period; these contained a reasonable number of dateable pottery sherds and glass artefacts of post-medieval date.

The remains of three walls were encountered within the service trenches. Two (walls 1 and 5) probably formed part of a structure aligned east-west alongside the south side of the chapel range. The date of the construction of the walls is unknown, though they are probably post-medieval in date, as they cut deposits containing a mixed collection of post-medieval pottery. Loggan's map of 1675 (see Fig. 5) depicts several small buildings extending alongside the south range of the college (the chapel), so it is possible that these walls relate to these buildings, which may have been college lodgings. Taylor's map (see Fig. 6), however, seems to indicate that a property/tenement here in c 1750 was separate to the college. Given the alignment of wall 7 and its substantial size, it seems reasonably certain that wall 7 belonged to the building depicted at that time, with walls 1 and 5 perhaps belonging to the structures adjacent to the chapel. Further interpretation of the structures was not possible within the limited confines of the service trenches.

The deposits overlying the demolished structures appear to have been deliberate levelling layers, presumably laid down in order to create the gardens in the later 19th century.

A. Bingham/J Hiller
OAU, March 2001

References and maps consulted

OAU 1992 Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual (Wilkinson, D, ed.)

Salter, H E 1960 *Medieval Oxford*, Oxford

Agas map of Oxford 1578

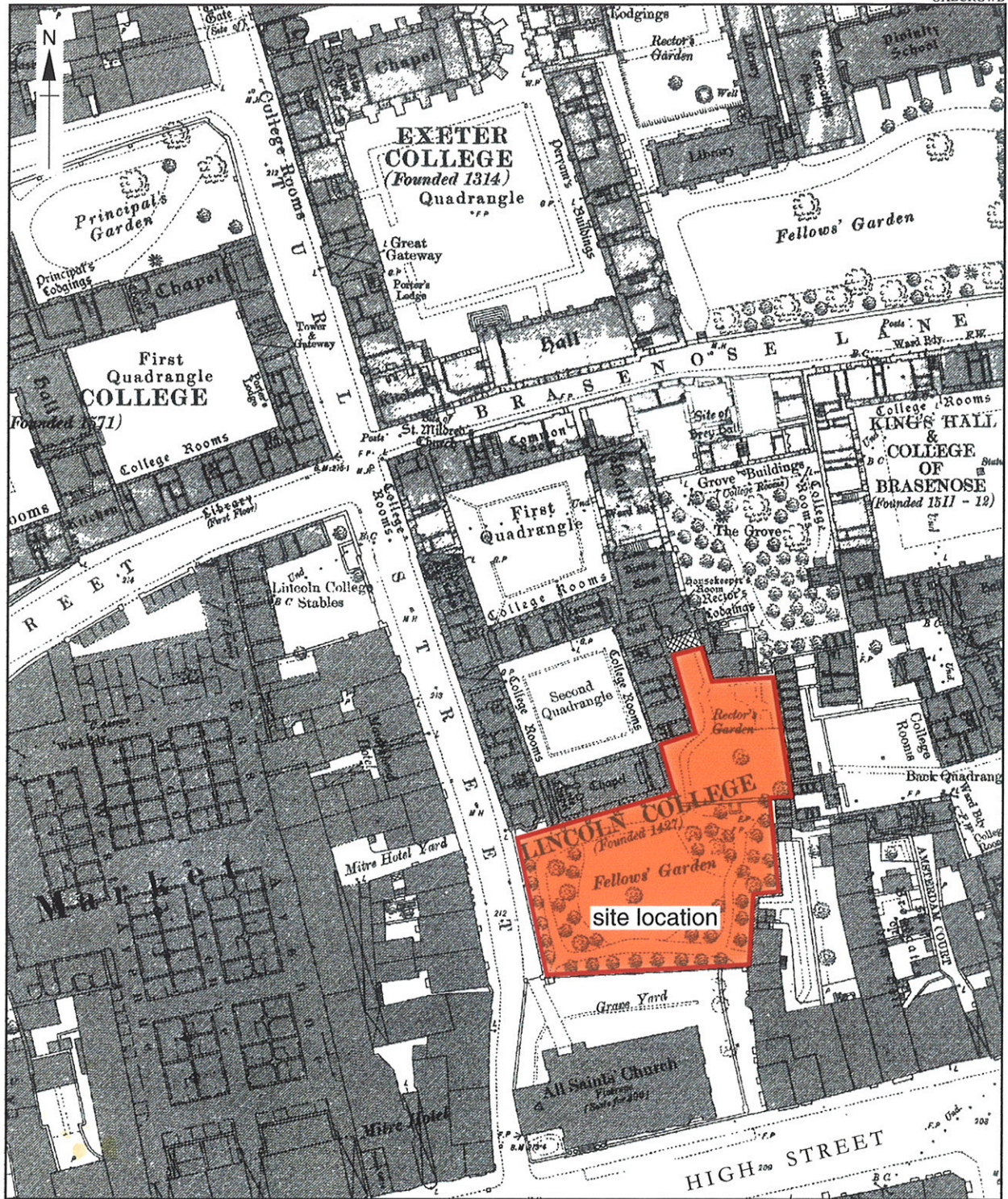
Loggan's map of Oxford, 1675

Taylor's Map of Oxford, 1750

O.S. map of Oxford, 1878

Appendix: Table of Contexts

Context	Type	Width	Depth	Comments
1	Structure	1 m	0.24 m	East-west rubble wall
2	Deposit	-	0.44 m	Gravel ballast layer
3	Layer	-	0.5 m	Modern top soil
4	Cut	1 m	0.3 m	Construction cut for wall 5
5	Structure	1m	0.3 m	East-west rubble wall
6	Cut	1.7 m	0.44 m	Construction cut of wall 7
7	Structure	1.7 m	0.44 m	North-south rubble wall
8	Deposit	-	0.5 m	Clay silt deposit
9	Cut	1 m	0.24 m	Construction cut for wall 1
10	Deposit	-	0.26 m	Sandy loam, mortar and rubble
11	Deposit	-	0.01 m	Fine sand mortar



scale 1:1500

Figure 1: Map of college area

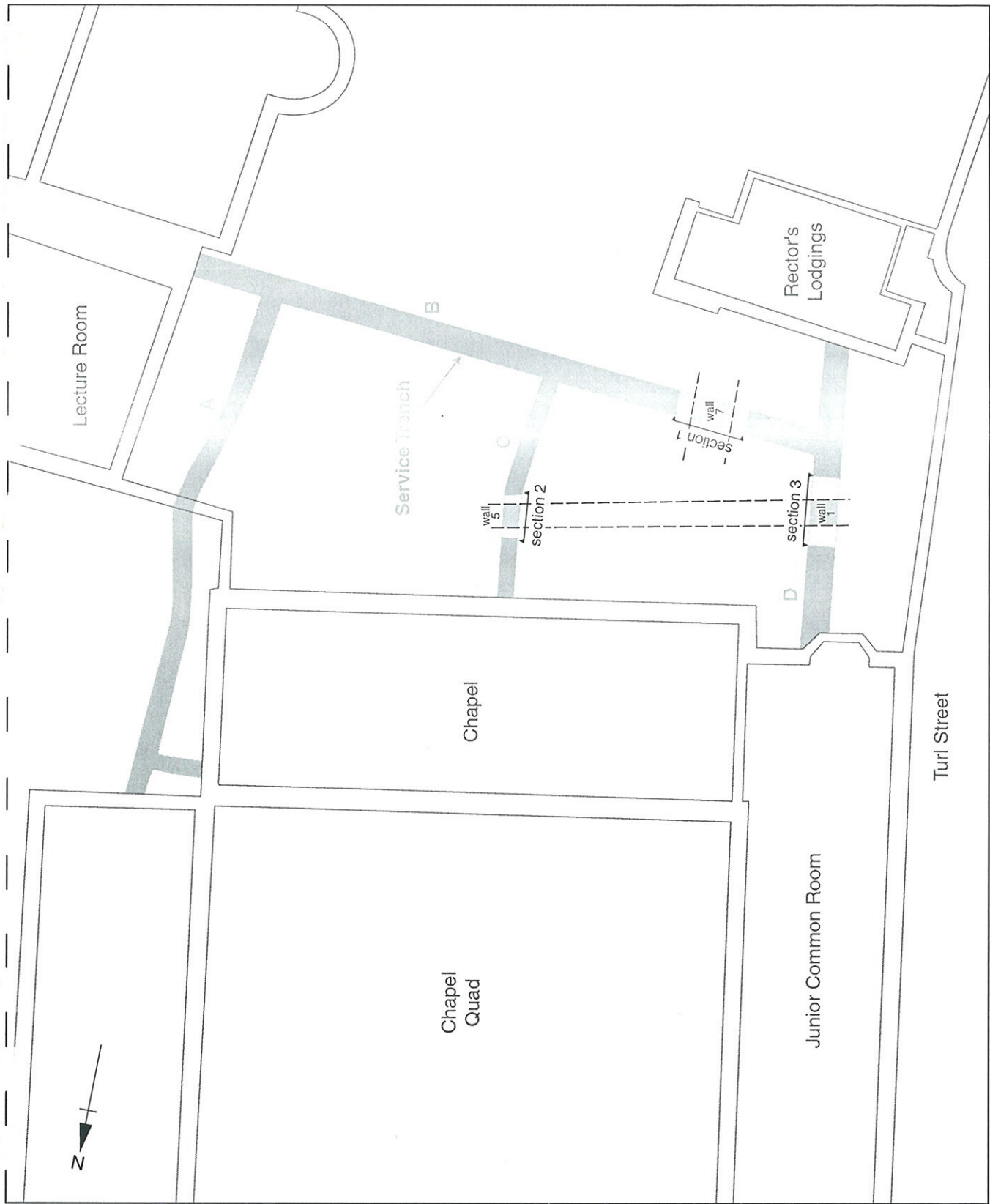


Figure 2: Location of service trench and sections



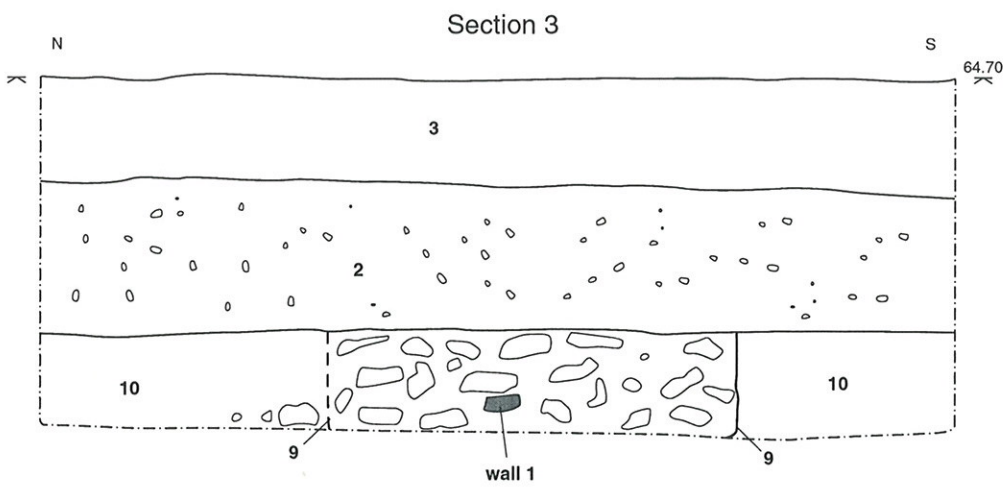
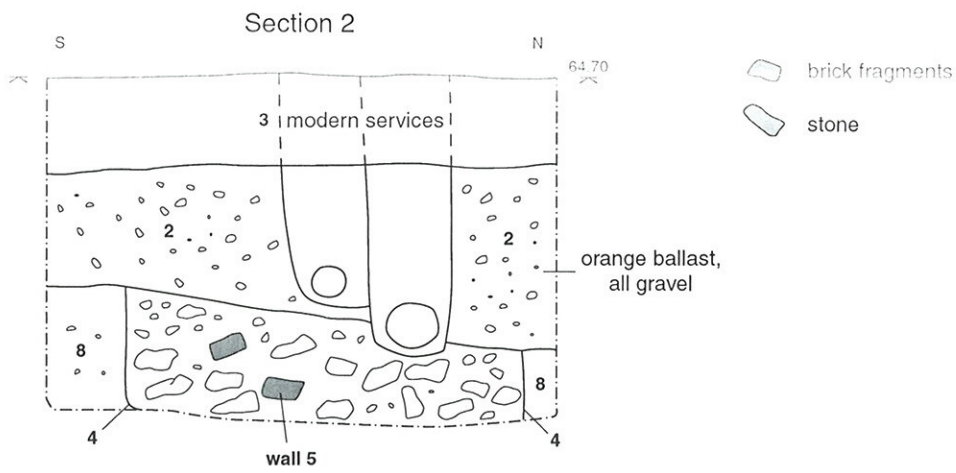
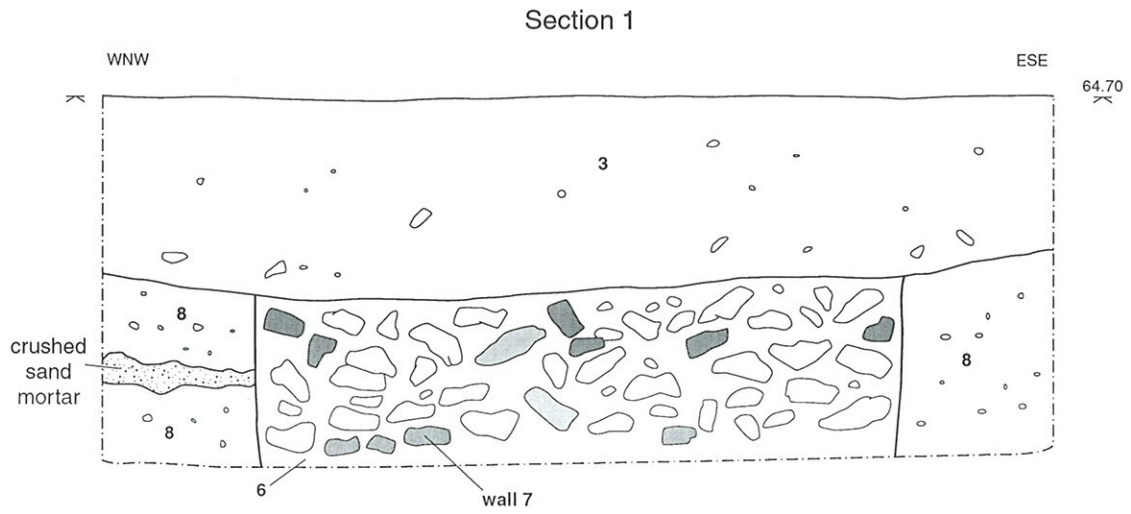


Figure 3: Sections

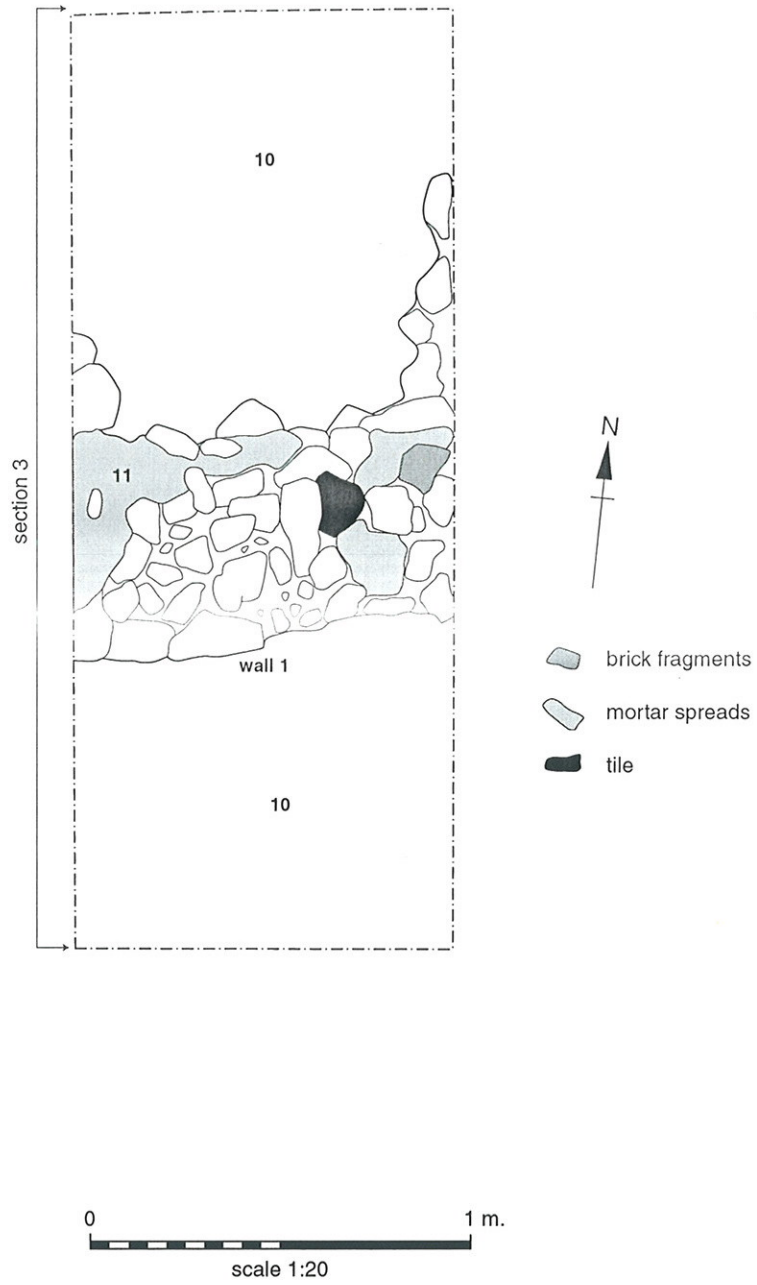


Figure 4: Plan of Wall 1

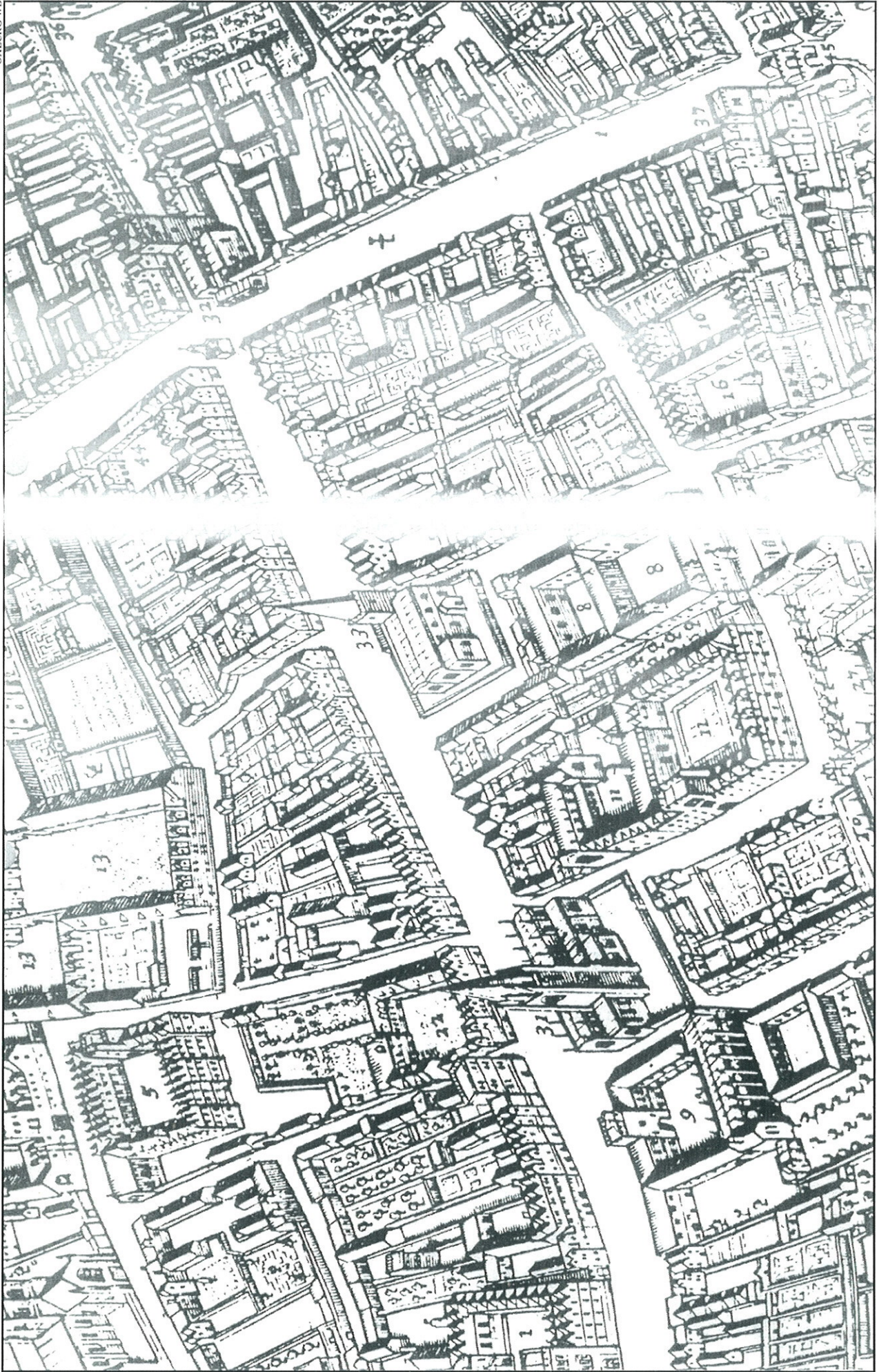


Figure 5: Loggan's Map of Oxford 1675 showing All Saints Church as no. 33 and Lincoln College as no. 8.

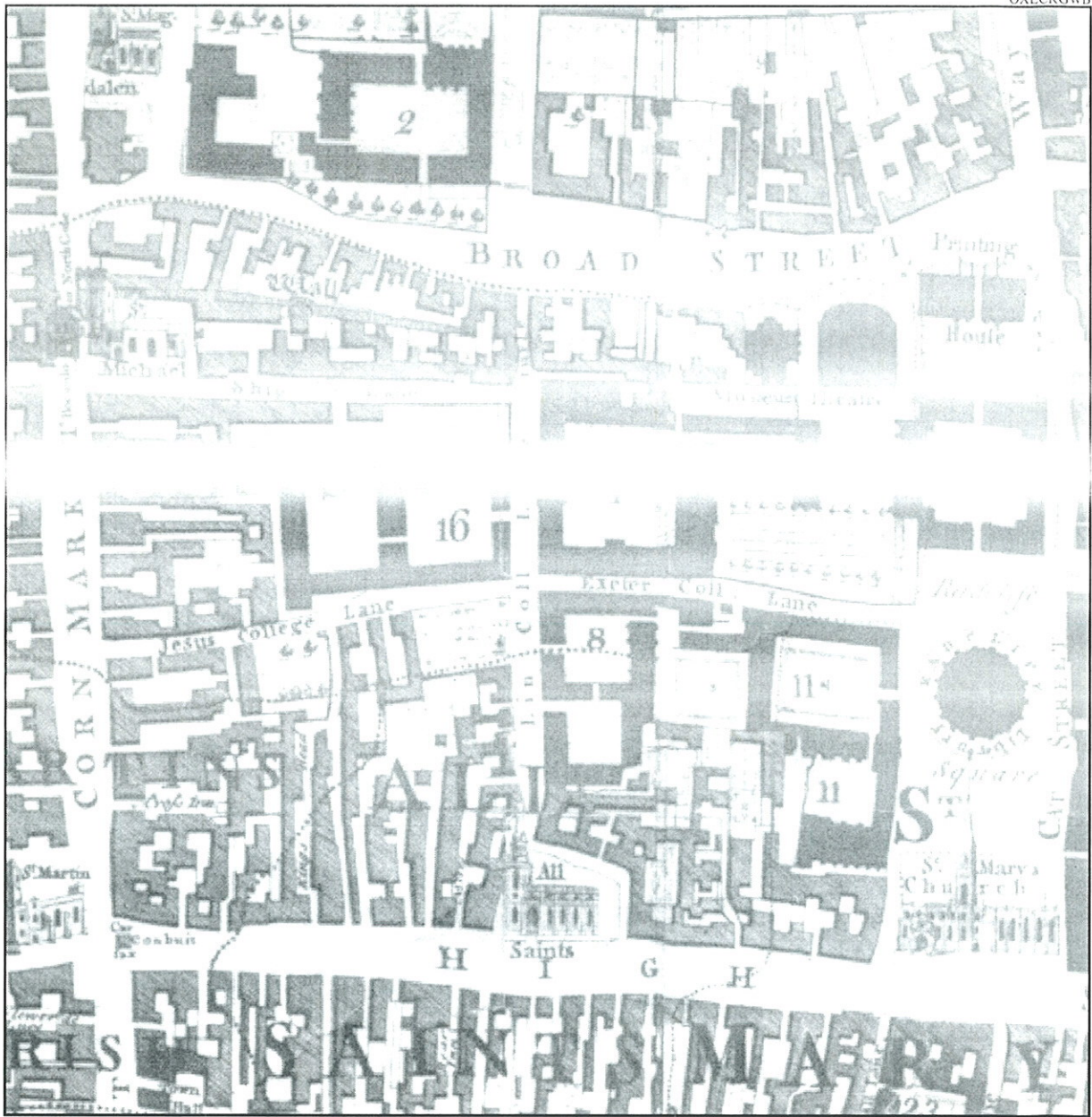


Figure 6: Taylor's Map of Oxford, 1750.



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

