

# Peers School Littlemore Oxford



## Archaeological Watching Brief



**Oxford Archaeology**

10th December 2001

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## SUMMARY

*In November and December 2001 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Peers School, Littlemore, Oxford, Oxfordshire (NGR SP 5420 0290). The work was commissioned by Rokbuild Ltd in advance of construction of a new teaching block and car parking. The watching brief revealed no archaeological deposits or features. Pottery sherds were recovered from the subsoil, a piece dating from the Roman period and the rest from the 13<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. These derived from manuring and ploughing in the field.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In November and December 2001 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Peers School, Littlemore, Oxford (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Rokbuild Ltd in respect of a planning application for a new teaching block with car parking.
- 1.1.2 A project brief was set by Paul Smith County Archaeological Officer for South Oxfordshire District 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 site is situated at about 70-72 m OD and the underlying geology is sandstone.

### 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, 2001) and is reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 The development site lies within the area of Littlemore that has produced extensive evidence of Roman settlement. This principally concerns occupational activity associated with a significant pottery industry based in this part of the county. Evidence for a kiln site lies less than 200 metres south of the school complex (HBSMR 1436).

## 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 Topsoil was first stripped from the area by a 360 excavator equipped with a 2 m ditching bucket. The development area (Fig. 2) was then compacted, and stone packed piles were placed at approximately 1.3 m intervals along the line of the foundations. The foundation trenches (Fig. 3) were then machine excavated and filled with concrete.
- 2.2.2 All archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:100 and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20. A general photographic record of the work was made using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

## 3 RESULTS

### 3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 A dark greyish brown fine sandy topsoil (1) with small sandstone fragments 0.20 m to 0.25 m thick extended across the site. This overlay a light reddish brown sand old plough soil (2), which contained a number of sherds of pottery. It was 0.35 m to 0.40 m thick. A number of modern plough marks were seen cutting into this layer. It overlay the natural yellowish brown sand (3) of the site.

### 3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 A total of nine pottery sherds were recovered from ploughsoil layer 2. These were briefly analysed by Paul Booth (OA pottery specialist). The material comprises one sherd of badly abraded greyware of broad Roman date and eight fragments of various pottery types dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> century to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Five of the sherds are glazed with the only sherd of note being a piece of glazed Brill Ware of 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century date.

### 3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 3.3.1 No environmental samples were taken from the site.

## 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The site had not been disturbed by archaeological activity, and had been used as farmland until it became part of the school playing fields. The finds recovered from the old plough soil appears to represent material deposited from manuring and spread around by ploughing.

## 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>Finds</i>
1	Layer	0.25 m			Topsoil	
2	Layer	0.40 m			Subsoil	pottery
3	Layer				Natural	

## APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

D Wilkinson Ed, 1992, *OAU Fieldwork manual*.

## APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

**Site name:** Peers School, Littlemore, Oxford

**Site code:** OXPEER 01

**Grid reference:** NGR SP 5420 0290

**Type of watching brief:** Ground work for the construction of new teaching block.

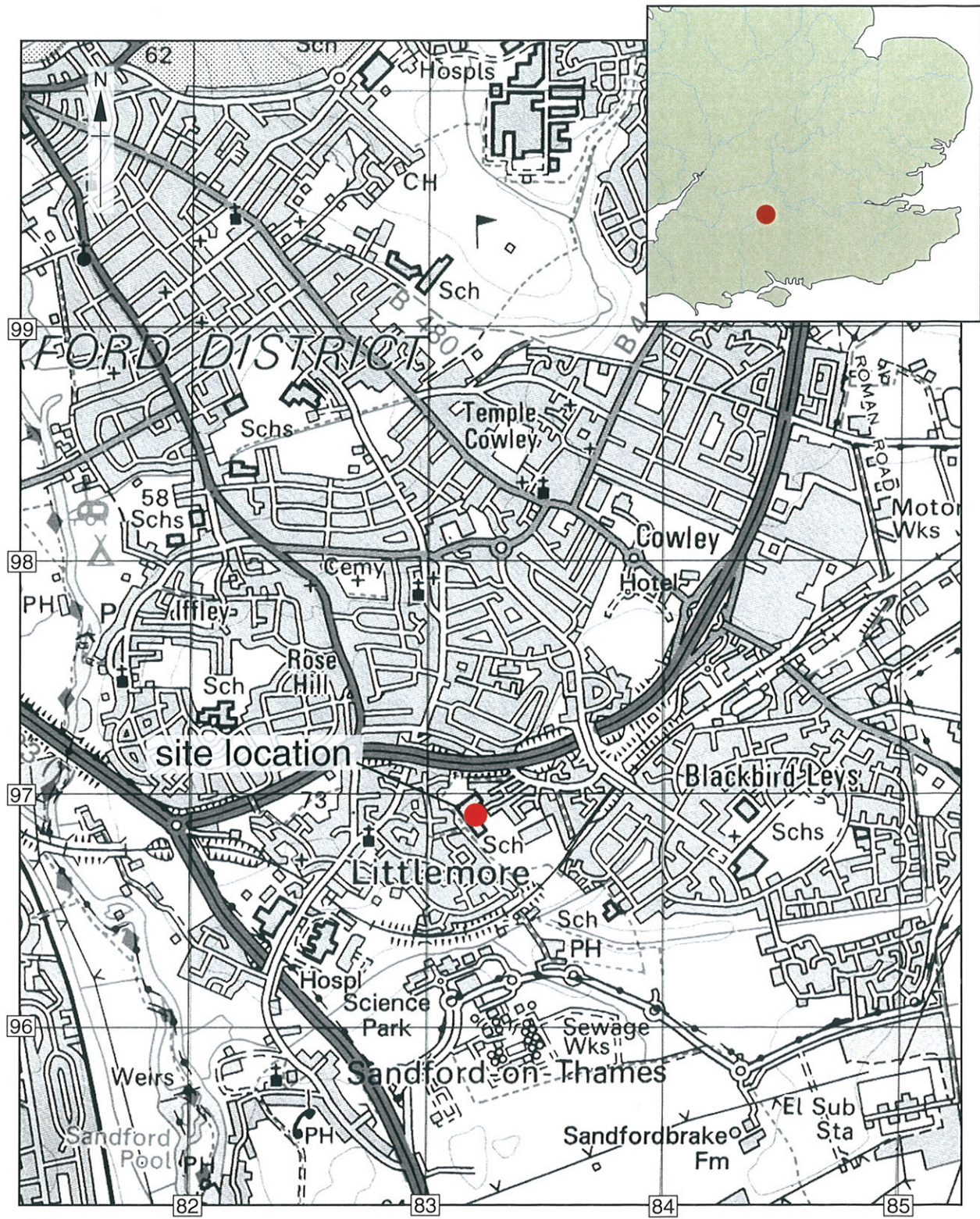
**Date and duration of project:** A total of six visits to site from 13<sup>th</sup> November to 6<sup>th</sup> December 2001 were carried out.

**Area of site:** 25 m x 60 m

**Summary of results:** No archaeological features were discovered. Pottery sherds from the Roman period to the 18<sup>th</sup> century were recovered from the old plough soil.

**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: 2001.186





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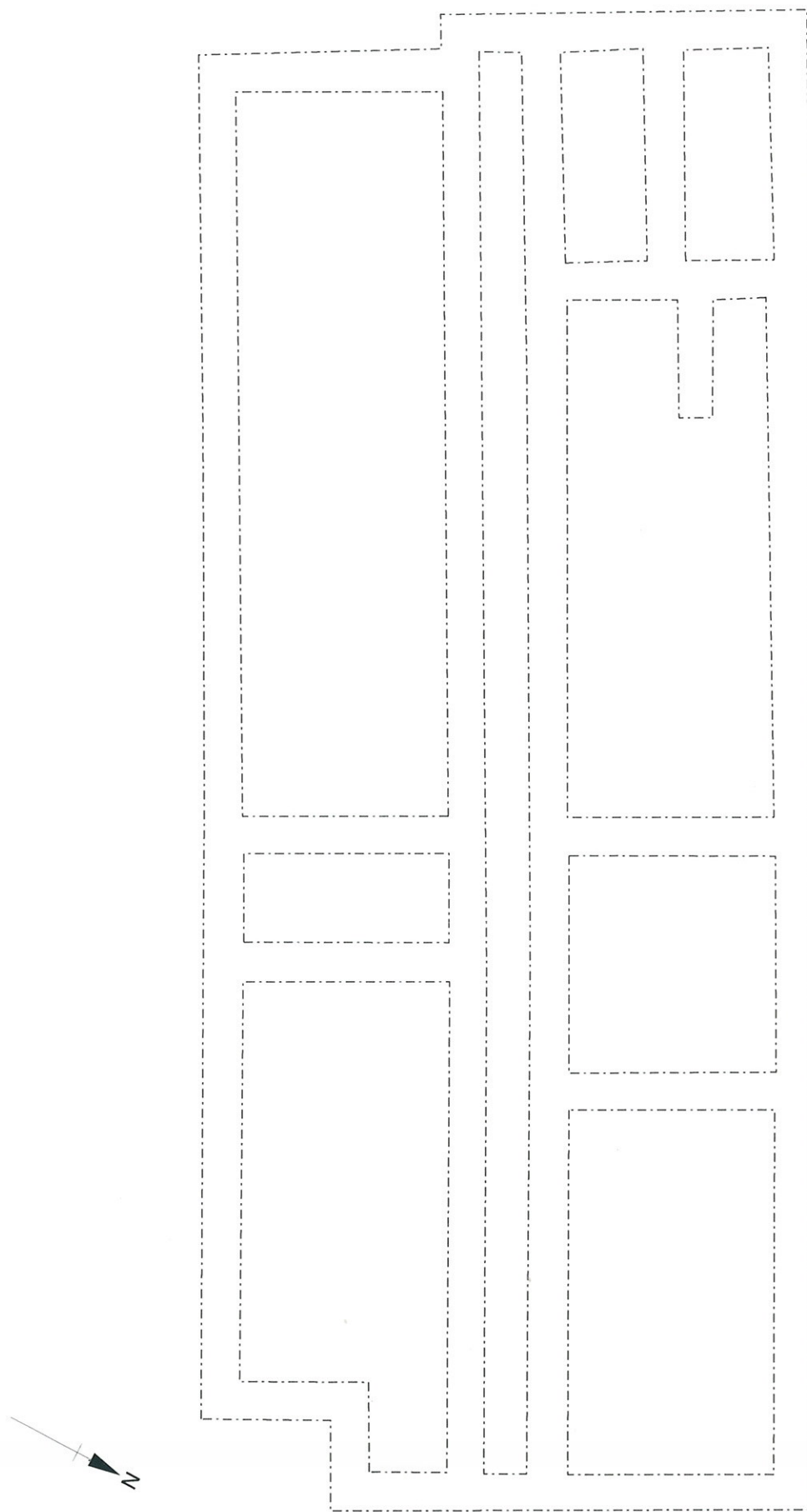
Figure 1: Site location.





Figure 2: Area of Site and Building Footprint





0 10m  
scale 1:200

Figure 3 :Foundation Footprint of the Building



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