

# Our Lady's School Temple Cowley Oxford



## Archaeological Watching Brief



**Oxford Archaeology**

4th April 2002



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## SUMMARY

*In February and March 2002 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Our Lady's School, Temple Cowley, Oxford (NGR SP 5453 0417). The work was commissioned by Kingerlee Ltd in advance of alterations and extension at the school. The watching brief revealed no archaeological features or deposits.*

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In February and March 2002 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Our lady's School, Temple Cowley, Oxford (Fig 1). The work was commissioned by Kingerlee Ltd in respect of a planning application for alterations and extension to the school.
- 1.1.2 A project brief was set by Paul Smith the County Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Council.
- 1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief (OA 2002).

#### 1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The school lies off the Oxford Road, close to the junction with Between Towns Road.
- 1.2.2 The site is situated at about 75 m OD and the underlying geology is calcareous grit and sand of the Corallian ridge deposits.

#### 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 development site lies within an area of Oxford known to contain evidence of Roman pottery manufacture. In 1934, a Roman pottery 'waster' dump was found under the Cowley Conservative Club and pottery has also been found either side of St. Luke's Road: In 1934-40 a kiln site was excavated beneath the telephone exchange on St. Luke's Road. Further work in 1981-2 confirmed that the production site was operative in the 2nd-4th centuries (PRN 3817).
- 1.3.3 In 1989 a field evaluation was undertaken by the Oxford Archaeological Unit on the corner of Oxford Road and Between Towns Road on land adjoining Cowley Police Station. Roman activity (PRN 14409) and late medieval (PRN 14408) deposits were identified.

## 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 The work was carried out in a number of phases. First a service trench was excavated for new gas pipe (Fig. 2). The old swimming pool and class rooms were then removed and the site levelled. When the site was cleared and levelled, the foundation trenches were excavated with a mini excavator with 0.6 & 0.9 m wide buckets to a depth of 0.9 m below the surface.
- 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. 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 site was covered by a 0.25 m thick layer of dark greyish brown silty sand topsoil (1), which overlay a dark reddish brown silty sand subsoil (2). The subsoil overlay an irregular shaped feature (4) (Fig. 3) with sloping sides and flat base (1 x 0.4 x 0.45 m) with a fill of light reddish brown silty sand (5) with charcoal flecks and limestone fragments. This was a natural feature disturbed by later ploughing and cut into a natural of yellowish brown sand (3). A number of these were observed in section.
- 3.1.2 A number of modern services from the old school buildings were observed cutting through to the natural at depths from 0.6 –1 m. At the north end of the site it was covered by a 0.3m thick layer of stone hardcore and tarmac for the car park.

### 3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 No finds were recovered during the watching brief.

### 3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 3.3.1 No environmental samples were taken.

#### 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The results from watching brief showed no archaeological features within the area of the foundations or in the service trench. The only features were naturally formed hollows. The spoil heaps were also examined for pottery and artefacts due to the location of nearby Roman pottery kilns, but none were found.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1 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       | 0.25 –<br>0.3m |              |               | Topsoil overlying the site | None          |
| 2              | Layer       | 0.5 –<br>0.6m  |              |               | Subsoil of site            | None          |
| 3              | Layer       |                |              |               | Natural                    | None          |
| 4              | Cut         | 0.45 m         | 0.4 m        | 1 m           | Natural feature            |               |
| 5              | Fill        |                |              |               | Fill of feature            | None          |

## APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

Oxfordshire County Council Cultural Services, 2001 *Design brief for an archaeological watching brief*

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

OA, 2002 *Our Lady's School, Temple Cowley, Oxford* Written Scheme of Investigation

## APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

**Site name:** Our Lady's School, Temple Cowley, Oxford

**Site code:** OXOLS 02

**Grid reference:** NGR SP 5453 0417

**Type of watching brief:** Ground work for extension to school.

**Date and duration of project:** Six site visits were carried out from the 11<sup>th</sup> February to 13<sup>th</sup> March 2002.

**Area of site:** 67 m x 10 m

**Summary of results:** No archaeological features or deposits were recorded.

**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: 2002.53







Scale 1:20,000

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Figure 1: Site Location

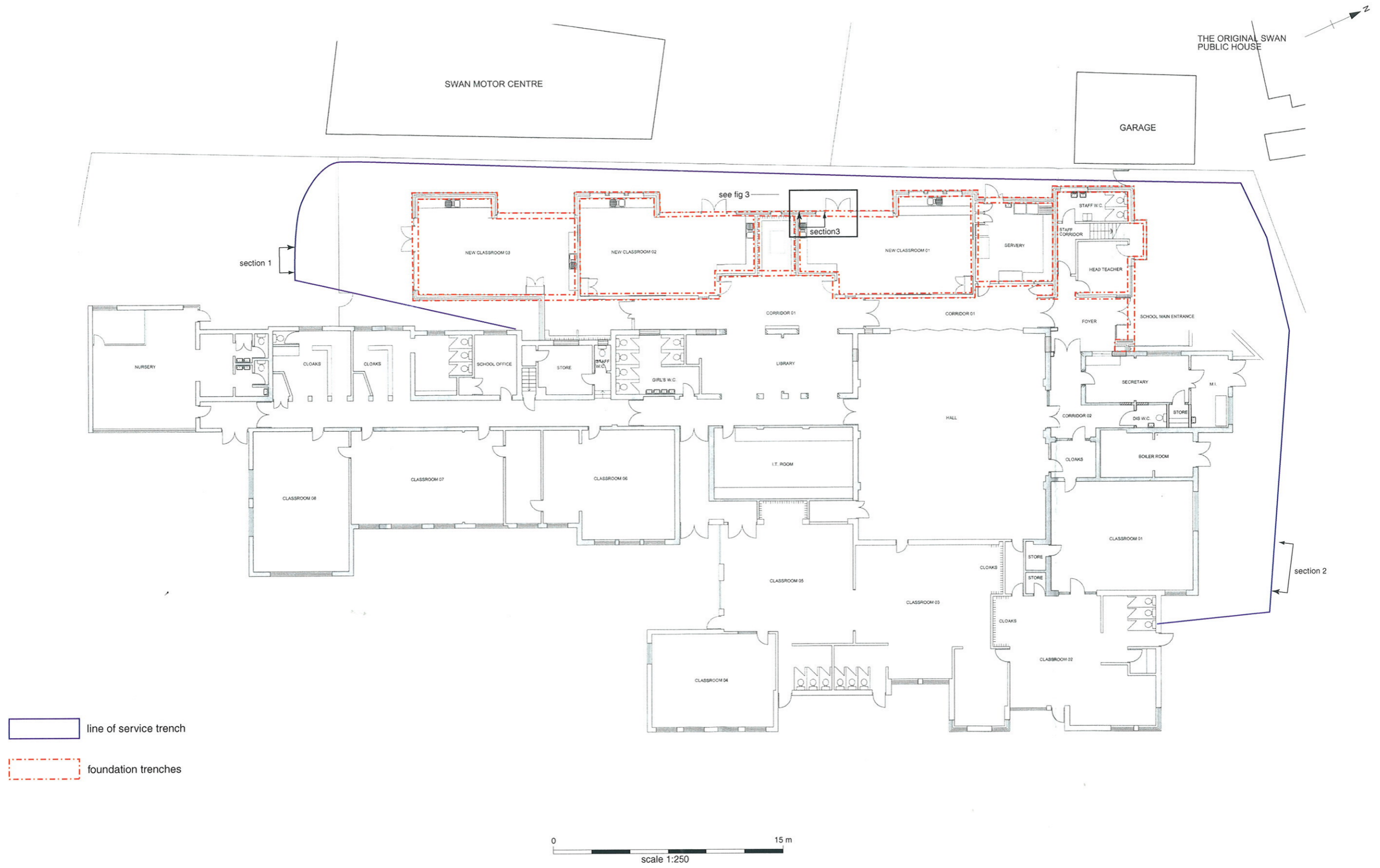


Figure 1: Site Plan of New Building, Service Trench and Section Locations

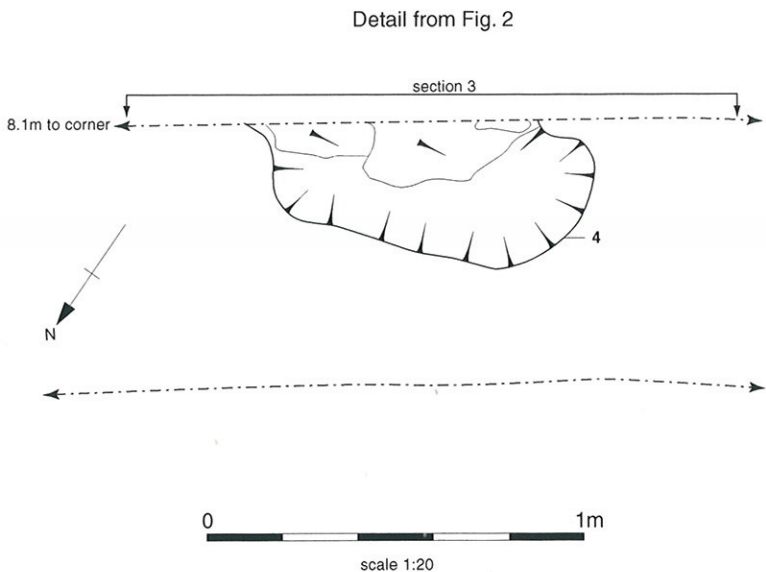
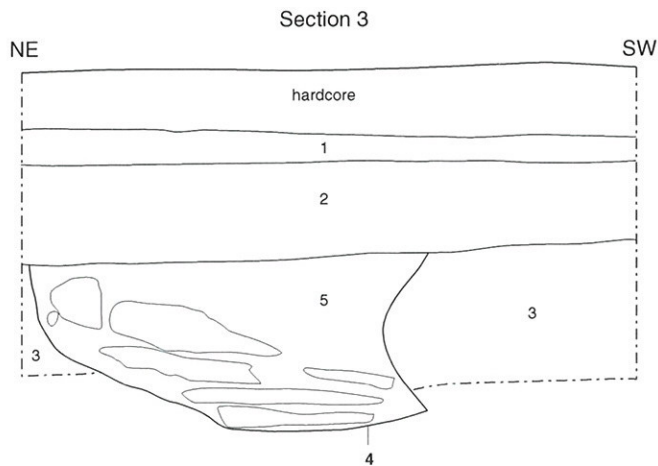
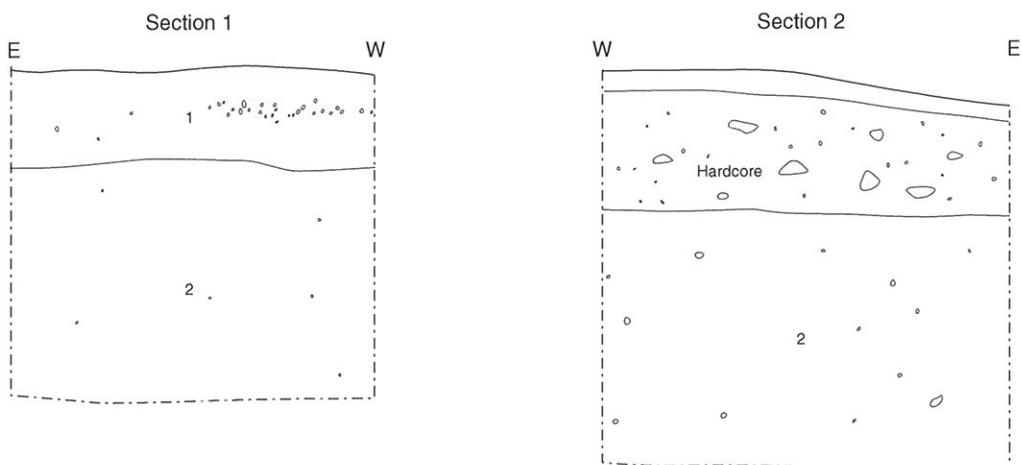


Figure 2: Sections and Plan of Cut 4



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