

A REPORT ON A WATCHING BRIEF CARRIED OUT AT 101 HIGH STREET, WALLINGFORD

Introduction

At the beginning of April 1994 a watching brief was carried out at the rear of 101 High Street, Wallingford at the request of Carol Rosier of Oxfordshire County Council. The owner of the property, Ian Barnett, had uncovered a complete cooking pot while refurbishing a brick built shed (probably of Victorian date) at the rear of his property.

Results of the watching brief

The shed which was the last in a series of three running back from the rear of 101 High Street, enclosed an area of approximately 3m. sq. The concrete floor had been broken out and two small foundation inspection trenches had been excavated beside the walls prior to my arrival. The surface beneath the concrete debris was cleaned. This consisted of a beaten earth floor which still retained remnants of floor tile on its surface. This material appeared to date from the 17th-18th century and may represent the floor of a building pre-dating the existing brick structure.

Mr Barnett had recovered the cooking pot from one of the foundation inspection trenches. This trench was cleaned, inspected and recorded in plan and profile as part of the watching brief.

The trench exposed a section through all deposits down to the natural sand. The earthen floor was c. 0.20m in depth and sealed a linear feature which measured c. 0.50m in depth by c. 0.80m in width. In profile the feature was V shaped and the fill consisted of green and brown cess; possibly an open sewer. It was from this feature that the cooking pot was recovered. The pot dated (according to Lucy Bown) to the early 12th or possibly late 11th century. This linear feature cut the natural sand and no other features were identified.