

Greys Court Rotherfield Greys Oxfordshire



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



March 2010

Client: The National Trust


Issue No: Draft

OA Job No: 4589

NGR: SU 724834

Client Name: The National Trust
Client Ref No:
Document Title: Greys Court, Rotherfield Greys, Oxfordshire,
Archaeological Watching Brief Report
Document Type: Client Report
Issue Number: Draft
Grid Reference: SU 724834
OA Job Number: 4589
Site Code: ROGRGC 09
Invoice Code: ROGRGCWB

Prepared by: Simon Underdown
Position: Project Officer - Buildings Archaeology

Checked by: Julian Munby
Position: Head of Buildings Archaeology
Approved by: Julian Munby Signed.....
Position: Head of Buildings Archaeology
Date: March 2010

Document File Location: \\Server21-db\buildings\Projects Ongoing\Greys Court, Phase 3
(WB)\Report\GreysWB_final.odt

Illustrated by: Markus Dyslewski

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 Ltd 2010

Oxford Archaeology

Janus House

Osney Mead

Oxford OX2 0ES

t: (0044) 01865 263800

e: oasouth@oxfordarch.co.uk

f: (0044) 01865 793496

w: www.thehumanjourney.net

Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited is a Registered Charity No: 285627

Greys Court, Rotherfield Greys, Oxfordshire

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Written by Simon Underdown

Table of Contents

Summary.....	1
1 Introduction.....	3
1.1 Scope of work.....	3
1.2 Location, topography, geology and designations.....	3
2 Archaeological and Historical Background.....	3
2.1 Historical background.....	3
2.2 Previous Archaeological Investigations.....	6
3 Evaluation Aims and Methodology.....	6
3.1 Aims.....	6
3.2 Methodology.....	7
4 Results.....	7
4.1 Description of trenches and deposits.....	7
5 Discussion and Conclusions.....	11
Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory.....	13
Appendix 2 Bibliography and references	15
Appendix 3 Summary of Site Details	15

List of Figures

- Fig. 1 Site location map
Fig. 2 Location of trenches and archaeological features
Fig. 3 Sections of Trenches 1 and 2

List of Plates

- Plate 1 Trench 1; cut 113 looking west
Plate 2 Trench 1; cut 133 looking north
Plate 3 Trench 2; looking south
Plate 4 Trench 3; looking north
Plate 5 Trench 4; wall 123 with 124 to right, looking west
Plate 6 Trench 4; wall 123 on left abutting 124 on right, looking west
Plate 7 Trench 4; walls 123 & 124 with culvert 125 to right, looking west
Plate 8 Trench 4; culvert 125 looking east
Plate 9 Trench 4; wall 127 with wall 129 to left, looking east
Plate 10 Trench 4; wall 127 in section after breaking through, looking west
Plate 11 Trench 4; wall 129 (with scale on) with wall 127 to right, deposit 130 to left and 128 at bottom left of 127, looking east
Plate 12 Trench 4; old soil 131 on left with cut 132 and fills 133 and 134 to right, looking west



Greys Court, Archaeological Watching Brief on Drainage Trenches

Summary

A watching brief on trenches for new surface drainage was undertaken immediately north, east and south-east of Greys Court House. One trench was just east of a trench that was monitored in 1997 and many of the features seen then were also exposed and some new elements relating to them were seen.

Several probable medieval features and deposits were seen including a north-south linear feature just north-east of the house which contained one piece of local 12th-13th century pottery, some rubble walls south of the house and a possible buried medieval soil.

The 16th-century lower courtyard wall and a brick conduit south of it probably also of 16th-century date were also exposed and a section of the courtyard wall was removed by contractors to allow the drainage pipes to pass. The conduit was on a slightly different alignment and smaller than one seen in 1997 but they appear to be converging and are probably of similar date (16th century) and connected.

The lower courtyard wall cut a narrow earlier, but also probably 16th century, brick wall showing to the north on a north-west to south-east alignment which had a tile capped flint footing and this was not encountered in the 1997 trench, it is probably not substantial enough to have belonged to a large building but it is difficult to say much more about its possible function.

Parallel and west of this a small area of bricks bedded on mortar was revealed this is adjacent to the brick floor seen to the west in 1997 and appears to be on a similar alignment but possibly about 0.2m higher, such a small area was seen that it is difficult to draw any conclusions about this or the wall but it could be related to the 1997 surface in some way.

North of these structures an east-west feature cut the buried soil and this is on the same alignment as a medieval wall seen just three metres to the west in 1997 and is likely to be robber cut for that wall. Marshall (1998) considered that the corresponding wall in the west trench being similar and parallel to a wall seen 8m to the south might together represent a former medieval building across the line of the lower courtyard wall and therefore demolished by the 16th-century. As the northern of these walls was robbed out in the 2009 trench it is not possible to compare the fabrics and therefore the later trench does not really help to either confirm or deny the earlier theory but shows that both walls probably extended eastwards and the south wall had an earlier phase or was built against an earlier structure.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 In November 2009 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at Greys Court, Oxfordshire centred at NGR: SU 724834 (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Gary Marshall of The National Trust in relation to new storm drain trenches on the north and east sides of the main house.
- 1.1.2 The work is related to the ongoing major conservation works on the house which started with Phase I (roof) in 2006. Phase II (mostly internal asbestos removal, rewiring, works to floors etc.) is nearing an end. Reports on archaeological recording during Phase I and the internal elements of Phase II have been produced by OA. The watching brief is being dealt with in this separate report.
- 1.1.3 The work consisted of monitoring two new storm drain trenches north and east of the house and a couple of smaller interventions near the south porch investigating the routes of the old storm drains (Fig. 2)

1.2 Location, topography, geology and designations

- 1.2.1 Greys Court House is at the centre of a group of walls, buildings, gardens and broader landscape that have been in continuous use and occupation since the late 11th and 12th centuries through to the present day. The house is situated in the Lower Chilterns, four kilometres north west of Henley-on-Thames at the head of and overlooking a dry valley to the south. The underlying geology of the site as shown by BGS map 254 is Cretaceous Upper Chalk.
- 1.2.2 The majority of the buildings within the Greys Court complex are listed and part of the site has Scheduled Ancient Monument status. The park and gardens are on English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest (no: GD2098).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Historical background

- 2.1.1 Greys Court consists of a palimpsest of historic buildings, walls and gardens that reflect the variety of periods of occupation and development of the house and complex as a whole. The core of the house and gardens rests within a 280-acre estate reduced to its present size at the beginning of the 20th century. The complex of buildings is on the south side of a hill facing down a dry valley. They consist principally of a group around the main house, aligned approximately north-south and including the well house, dairy and other subsidiary buildings. These are opposite the second group of complete buildings consisting of the 'Cromwellian stables' the East range and the Dower House. These two groups face each other over grass lawns and gravelled driveways. To the north east of the Cromwellian Stables are ruined remains of early structures, towers and walls. To the east of the buildings are a series of walled gardens, also incorporating ruined remains of other buildings and barns. To the south of the building groups is a Ha-Ha as well as the driveway that leads up from a lodge building on the road into Henley-on-Thames. This is the principal access to the site.
- 2.1.2 The following summary of the development of the buildings is a revised version of that in OA's Phase I report which itself was based on B. V. Jones' Report for English Heritage



in 2005, the English Heritage (EH) phases referred to here are illustrated in Jones 2005 Volume 4; the figures are not numbered.

Early development

- 2.1.3 For the earliest phase of its life Greys Court and the manor of Rotherfield Grey was held by the de Grey family. The earliest fabric on the site is represented by a small stretch of wall encapsulated within the western face of the 'Great Tower', which may represent a range constructed by Robert de Grey in the late 13th century. More substantial remains survive from the period between the late 13th and late 14th centuries. During these years two phases of building were undertaken rendering Greys Court as a defensible house with large curtain walls interspersed with substantial towers, both brick and stone were used in the construction. There was most likely a base court to the south defined, on the east at least, by earlier buildings (EH Medieval Phase IIa and IIb) and an upper court with lodging ranges and the principal accommodation with the large north-east and 'Great' towers on the eastern side. The western extent of the medieval phases is uncertain.

The 15th century

- 2.1.4 In 1422 Greys Court and the manor of Rotherfield Greys passed into the Lovell family (Jones 2005, volume 1, 4). In the early 1450s a timber framed range was constructed within the earlier building's curtilage and forming the western side of the base court (EH medieval phase IV). Part of this range is still preserved within the main building.
- 2.1.5 In 1485 Sir Francis Lovell had his possessions seized by Henry VII, he had fought on the losing side at Bosworth and thereafter fled. By this time a brick range had been constructed across the division between the upper and base courts. A small section of this range is preserved within the end wall of the Cromwellian stables as well as a doorway from the later east range of the upper court that suggests it was still in place once that was constructed.

The 16th century and the Knollys family

- 2.1.6 Between 1495 and 1514 Greys Court remained in the hands of the Crown and was not granted to any specific person, a series of occupants lived there but it was not until Robert Knollys and his wife Lettice were granted the manor, that the next phase of comprehensive development took place. Robert's son Francis inherited Greys Court in 1521 but until Queen Elizabeth's accession from Mary in 1558 Francis was in self imposed exile. On his return Francis was accepted into Elizabeth's court and gained a number of important positions: Treasurer of the Chamber, Member of Parliament for Oxford as well as Stewardship of the town, and after his wife's death in 1569 Treasurer of the Household.
- 2.1.7 Sir Francis Knollys remodelled the medieval house, partly incorporating earlier buildings and partly removing them. This period saw the construction of the service range now enclosed within 'The Keep' in the south west corner (EH 16th-C Phase I), the main range of the house, which has been dated by dendrochronology to felling dates of between 1573-6 (EH 16th-century Phase II), a large lodging range on the east side of the base-court dated 1578 (EH 16th-century Phase III), the extension of a west range enclosing the earlier timber-framed range (EH 16th-century Phase IV), the well house, walls of 'The Keep' and the octagonal south-west tower enclosing the south west corner of the complex (EH 16th-century Phase V), the stable cottage in that area and a building formed from medieval apartments in the north-east corner of the upper court.



- 2.1.8 It is most likely, given the extent of the lodging range beyond the southern line of the medieval curtain wall that the base court was redefined with a new wall with a gatehouse in its centre, now only suggested by parch marks in the grass. The creation of the extended west range also further separated the service courtyards from the other courts. These phases resulted in the completion of the south front, much of which is still visible today. Sir Francis Knollys died in 1596 and Greys Court was never again the focus of quite such an intense period of construction work.

The 17th and 18th centuries

- 2.1.9 The 17th century indeed saw a decline in the investment in the house with the works being additions or slight alterations of existing structures such as the addition of the south porch recently dated by dendrochronology to about 1620. The Dower house and its extension to the rear was built between the lodging range and the south east tower and the extended south west wing was added to the east side of the timber-framed range to the main house.
- 2.1.10 In 1724 Greys Court changed hands again to the Stapleton Family. The 18th-century building work at Greys court was smaller in scale than that in the late 16th century and focussed mainly on improvements and stylistic changes to existing buildings, the interior of the house and to key spaces and points in the park and gardens. Although the architectural works may have been comparatively small in scale the works to the estate resulted in a fashionable landscape park. The Ha-Ha was constructed and the road to Henley moved to its present location away from the house.
- 2.1.11 The early phase of 18th-century work consisted of the romanticising of various existing elements with gothick details such as the new crenelations on the 'Great Tower' or the fake tracery windows on the 'Tithe Barn'. This phase may be linked to Sir Thomas Stapleton's (5th Baronet) bachelor period at Greys (up to 1765) when he was associated with the Hellfire Club and Sir Francis Dashwood. Sir Thomas married Miss Mary Fane in 1765 and it is supposed (Jones 2005, Vol. 1, 18) that the works to the principal reception rooms were carried out in recognition of this event. This involved the addition of the two storey bow window to the northern elevation of the main east range, and the in filling and enlarging of the north west corner of the main house creating a large square reception room - the 'School Room' - and a bedroom above. Felling dates for the timbers of the roofs over these rooms, and for the truss associated with the bow windows, are 1759-60, obtained through dendrochronology. This suggests that even if the timbers seasoned for a few years the building work was underway before the wedding actually took place. Further gothick structures were also part of this phase of work, the dairy and flint-work façade to the 16th-century western range.

The 19th century to the present

- 2.1.12 During the first half of the 19th century the house continued to be occupied by Lady Mary Stapleton and then by her two daughters. The subsequent men of the Stapleton family, Sir Thomas, the 6th Baronet, and the Reverend Sir Francis Jarvis Stapleton, the 7th baronet, preferred to make their main home Mereworth in Kent. Sir Francis Jarvis Stapleton inherited Greys Court in 1863 but his only works were repairs and some works to the stairs and chimneys in order to ensure the house could provide a source of income.
- 2.1.13 In 1874 the house passed to the 8th Baronet, Sir Francis George Stapleton, who did live at Greys Court. He was the last of the Stapletons to make significant alterations - most of which were subsequently removed during the 20th century. He added bay windows to the ground floor of the main house and a billiard room to its west side. He also built the Gate

Lodge on the Henley road. The final alteration by the Stapletons, probably by Sir Miles Stapleton's time was the raising of a small service storey over the timber-framed wing.

- 2.1.14 In 1935 Greys Court was sold by Sir Miles Stapleton to Mrs Valentine Fleming who, although she only owned the house for two years, made extensive alterations to the house. She removed the stucco from the main house as well as the Victorian porch and made many alterations to the fenestration. Substantial changes were made to the service areas including the removal of the 16th century lodging range which still survived, leaving only the flint faced wall and a single storey kitchen behind it. She raised the south west wing to three storeys in height to provide additional accommodation for servants. (see Jones 2005 Vol. 1, 20 and Vol. 4, 62-67).
- 2.1.15 Mrs Fleming sold on Greys Court to the Brunner family who made it their family home continuing to live there even after they had gifted it to the National Trust in 1969. Lady Brunner lived there until her death in January 2003. In 2006 The National Trust started a comprehensive programme of conservation and repairs to Greys Court, Phase I of which was a complete overhaul of the roof. Phase II which involved removal of asbestos from within the house and conservation repairs to most of the floors is still ongoing but is now in the final stages. The replacement of storm drains necessitating this watching brief was part of the ongoing works.

2.2 Previous Archaeological Investigations

- 2.2.1 In 1997 a watching brief was maintained by The National Trust on a water main trench parallel to and slightly west of trench 4 of the current investigation (Marshall 1998). This work revealed the 16th century lower courtyard wall, a brick floor and culvert, and flint walls on a different alignment to the other features that were considered to have probably belonged to a medieval building. The current work found features on the same alignments as these features but with some variations and additional features were also seen. The relationships of all the features exposed with those seen in 1997 are discussed in the descriptions and conclusions of this report.
- 2.2.2 OA undertook detailed recording during Phase I of repairs to the house (the roof) in 2006 and has issued a report on this which also incorporates dendrochronological analysis undertaken by Oxford Dendrochronological laboratories.
- 2.2.3 Over the last two years or so OA has carried out detailed recording and investigation on the Phase II works which have concentrated on the floors within the main house and a report on this work which will also incorporate the results of dendrochronological investigation is currently in preparation.

3 EVALUATION AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims

- 3.1.1 The primary aim was to establish the nature of any surviving archaeological deposits and features exposed within the below ground interventions necessitated by the drainage works.
- 3.1.2 The further aim was to record any such significant archaeological deposits that were revealed and identified by the work and to make the results of the archaeological investigation available through production of this report and to prepare and submit to an appropriate body or institution a site archive.

3.2 Methodology

- 3.2.1 The methodology was agreed in advance as set out in a brief prepared by the National Trust Regional Archaeologist and was modified pragmatically in response to actual conditions during the fieldwork in consultation with the National Trust Archaeologist.
- 3.2.2 The trenches were excavated by the contractors using a mini digger with a 0.5m wide toothed bucket, the trenches were mainly excavated to 0.5m wide and 0.7-0.8m deep, some archaeological features were hand excavated by the archaeologist.
- 3.2.3 Recording of archaeological deposits was undertaken by drawn, photographic and written methods. Drawings (plans and sections) were made on archivally stable permatrace with hard pencil at suitable scales. Colour digital photography was used and where appropriate scale measures were included in the photographs.
- 3.2.4 Due to financial constraints and the methodology employed by the contractors laying the drains which was partly dictated by the weather it was not possible for an archaeologist to monitor every part of the below ground interventions. The majority was seen however and the area where important features had been seen only a few metres to the west in 1997 was monitored and proved to be rich in features.
- 3.2.5 The contractor's methodology and need to minimise delays and backfill each section as they progressed meant unfortunately that it was not practical to draw sections of all features but plans and photographs were made.
- 3.2.6 Archaeological contexts were given sequential context numbers starting at 100 thus distinguishing them from numbers below 100 that were used in the 1997 watching brief.
- 3.2.7 Finds, consisting of pottery, tile and brick and a clay pipe stem, were recovered by hand during the course of the excavation and bagged by context. The finds were assessed by OA finds specialists and their comments incorporated into this report.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Description of trenches and deposits

Trench 1 (Figs. 2-3, Plates 1-2)

- 4.1.1 This was a new storm drain trench located just north of the north wall of the house which ran for about 20m east to west with a short southern return at the east end to connect to an existing 6 inch storm drain running south and a north-east to south-west spur to connect to a downpipe on the north wall. The spur to the downpipe and central three metre section of the trench were not monitored.
- 4.1.2 What appeared to be natural deposits occurred in this trench at only 30cm below the surface. In the other trenches all excavated to 70-80cm deep no natural was encountered and the reason for this would seem to be that the land slopes up to the north and was levelled to create a building platform.
- 4.1.3 The probable natural deposits that were excavated consisted largely of degraded chalk mixed with some patches of reddish brown clay and flints, this is probably a form of glacial till.
- 4.1.4 One feature (113) was seen dug into the natural chalk deposits, 1.0m from the east end of the trench (Plates 1-2). This appeared to be part of a north-south linear feature with very steeply sloping sides extending from 30cm below the surface and continuing below the base of the trench at 90cm thus being more than 60cm in depth. The feature was 66cm



wide at the top and 46cm wide at the base of the trench. The maximum excavated length of the feature was 1.3m and it extended into the sections at north and south.

- 4.1.5 The feature was filled with a, friable, light brown silty sand with occasional small and medium flints (114).
- 4.1.6 One piece of medieval pottery, probably a South-east Oxfordshire ware (fabric OX162) of 13th-14th century date was recovered from the fill. It is uncertain and difficult to say what this feature represents but it is probably medieval in date and if part of a long linear feature it may either be some sort of drainage gully or ditch, it is probably not a robber trench unless for a relatively narrow brick wall.
- 4.1.7 A 20-25cm layer of coarse orange sand and gravel (hoggin) (112) overlay the feature and the natural deposits and this was probably levelling for the modern tarmac (100) which covers the whole area of the driveway on the east and north sides of the house.

Trench 2 (Figs 2-3, Plate 3)

- 4.1.8 This was a small exploration just over 1m square just to the south east of the south east corner of the East wing of the house. This was excavated to investigate and give access to the old storm and surface water drains (Plate 3).
- 4.1.9 This trench revealed only 19th/20th century drainage trenches; the 4" foul water pipe passed through the centre of the trench running north to south at a depth of 0.7m with backfills 106, a light grey brown clay with frequent small chalk flecks and fragments, and 105, a mid orange brown clayey sand with frequent small flints and chalk flecks, above it.
- 4.1.10 A vertical cut 111 separated these fills from the fills of a redundant drain trench on the west the lowest fill of which (109) was a dark brown silty clay containing an old red clay drainpipe with a flanged end protruding from the section. Above 109 was 108, a 7cm thick layer of compacted chalk and over this, 107, a 10cm thick layer of hoggin. Above both 107 and 105 was 104; a thin levelling or bedding layer of light grey brown silty sand. This was cut to the east by a vertical cut (110) for the existing 6" storm drain, this was filled by dark brown silty sand (103) over the pipe, compacted chalk (102) over this and hoggin (101) over the chalk. Above 101 was the 5-6cm layer of modern tarmac that covers the entire drive area. (100).
- 4.1.11 An angled extension on the east side of the trench showed that the 4" surface water drain pipe crosses the storm drain at this point.

Trench 3 (Fig. 2, Plate 4)

- 4.1.12 A further exploration to investigate the old drain runs situated just south east of the south porch of the house. This trench was initially excavated for 4m in length and 0.5m wide north-west to south-east and was extended by an additional 4m length running north and south from the north-west end.
- 4.1.13 The eastern part of the trench contained at base a dark brown silty clay (117) with moderate small to medium flints. This extended from 30cm below the surface to the base of the trench at 60cm and was over 2m in width. This deposit contained some animal bone and one piece of post-medieval stoneware and one clay pipe fragment, the pottery was from a German Frechen stoneware vessel of c1550-1700 probably from a 'Bellarmine' jar and the clay pipe was a piece of worn stem of 17th-century date.
- 4.1.14 The deposit was probably either a post-medieval buried soil or possibly fill of a larger feature or make-up. Above 117 was a 15cm thick layer of chalk (116). At the west end

the deposits were cut by a trench (118) for a 4" drain, backfilled with a mixed light brown sandy silt with frequent small chalk inclusions and fragments of CBM (119). Above this was a levelling layer of hoggin (115) and the tarmac surface (100) (Plate 4).

Trench 4 (Fig. 2, Plates 5-12)

- 4.1.15 This was a new storm drain trench running north-east from the Ha-Ha south of the house then north along the east edge of the drive to the south-east corner of the house. This trench was about 70m long in total, the northern 30m or so were excavated on the line of the existing surface water drain and were not monitored, the southern 10m or so from the Ha-Ha across the lower lawn to the drive were also not monitored. The remaining 30m where the majority of archaeological features had been identified during the 1997 work was intensively monitored. The trench was generally excavated to a depth of 75-80cm and was 50cm wide. Distance measurements given for features in this trench are distances south from the south-east corner of the house.
- 4.1.16 Much of the course of this trench coincided (deliberately) with all or part of the existing surface water drain trench cut (120); this was a simple cut trench approximately 60cm deep with a horizontal base and vertical sides and filled with a mixed backfill (121) that was generally about 30cm thick with 20cm of hoggin (122) over it which was probably levelling/bedding for the modern tarmac (100).
- 4.1.17 The first archaeological feature encountered was the remnant of a south-west to north-east aligned flint and mortar wall (123) at 42.5m-44m from the north (Plate 5). The base of the wall coincided with the base of the trench at about 70cm and the wall survived for a height of only about 20cm in the trench as it was truncated by the existing surface drain trench. This wall which seems to align with wall 035 as recorded in 1997 is of very rough rubble flintwork bonded with relatively hard light yellow brown lime mortar with frequent white chalk flecks. This wall was built against the south face of an earlier structure also a flint and mortar wall (124) little of this survived and the full width could not be ascertained as it had been truncated by later features. The south face (abutted by 123) was clearly either rendered or the lime mortar was smoothed deliberately when built. The mortar in 124 seemed almost identical in appearance and hardness to that in 123 (Plates 6-7).
- 4.1.18 Wall 124 was truncated to the north by a small brick conduit (125) (Plate 8), aligned south-east to north-west, and the modern surface drainage pipe trench (120). The conduit consists of a brick and lime mortar segmental arched vault sitting on a flat brick base. The bricks are of a red fabric and some of those in the base had dark ashglaze on the exposed face, they measured 7cm high by 12cm wide. The conduit measured 75cm wide externally and 36cm wide internally, the internal height was 30cm (Plate 8). The arched top had been truncated by the existing surface drain trench on the west and the new trenching removed a further part of this. The conduit was filled by a very uniform light grey brown silty sand with no inclusions ranging from 20-25cm thick (126).
- 4.1.19 Approximately 3.5m north of the conduit the trenching encountered a south-west to north-east brick, flint and lime mortar wall (127) this was 90cm wide and 55cm thick the top was immediately below the present tarmac drive surface (Plates 9-10). The wall consisted of mostly red brick with some flint filler in the centre. The wall was bonded with a hard cream coloured lime mortar with frequent white chalk flecks and small fragments. The bricks were hand made of a dark red fabric with small dark inclusions bricks measuring 60 x 113 x 245mm and probably date from the 16th century.
- 4.1.20 This was the base of a wall with much mortar adhering to the exterior of the bricks and no particular brick bond could be discerned, this wall is on the alignment of wall 029



recorded in 1997 about 3.0m to the west. In summer the course of the wall is generally visible as a parch mark running east across the oval lawn.

- 4.1.21 Immediately north of this wall, at an angle to it, were two further brick structures, 128 and 129, both aligned north-west to south-east (Plate 11). Feature 128 only showed for a short distance adjacent to wall 127 in the west side of the trench. It consisted of a single course of red bricks 39cm below the ground surface. The bricks were 5cm thick with about 5cm of lime mortar bedding below them and possibly represent part of a brick floor. It is on a similar alignment and in a similar relation to the boundary wall as brick floor 030 recorded in 1997 but that feature was about 0.2m deeper than 128. The south end of 128 physically projected into or partially below wall 127, it was difficult to tell whether it had been built into it or whether 127 had truncated and partially built over 128, the latter seems more likely especially considering that wall 127 clearly cut wall 129 which is parallel to 128.
- 4.1.22 Structure 129 is north-west to south-east aligned and appears to be a wall base consisting of a flint and sand footing capped with pieces of broken red clay tile forming an offset with one surviving course of bricks and mortar laid on the tiles. The tiles were approximately 1.5cm thick with about 9.5cm of sand and flint below on the west but this may have extended deeper. The bricks were laid in a header course which was 0.30m wide and consisted of some whole bricks and some part bricks, the tile and flint footing protruded 0.17m to the west and probably a similar distance to the east, although was not fully seen, which would make it 0.64m wide in total.
- 4.1.23 At the north end of 129 in the base of the trench was a deposit of medium to large flints in a matrix of light grey-brown sand with frequent chalk flecks (130) (Plate 11). The flints were not cobbles and probably too rough to have been a surface, 130 appeared to be later than 129 as it partially overlay 129. Deposit 130 extended for about a metre or so north and north of this was deposit 131. 130 may have been in a cut that truncated 129 and 131 or may have been related to the terminus of wall 129 but this was not certain.
- 4.1.24 Deposit 131 was a mid brown clayey sand with frequent charcoal flecks and occasional small to medium flints; it was seen throughout the base of the trench from the north edge of 130 to the north extent of the trench that was monitored; a distance of about 14m, the deposit is probably a buried medieval soil. It was approximately 0.2m thick in the trench sections being truncated above by the modern surface water drain, a small investigation in the base of the trench showed that it extended for at least 0.2m below the base of the trench and was at that point above a yellowish sandy deposit that was probably the underlying subsoil.
- 4.1.25 At about 3.5m north of wall 127, 131 was truncated by a cut (132) aligned south-west to north-east. The depth of the cut is not known, it was filled by 133 and 134. Context 133 was a coarse pale yellow brown sand with frequent medium to large flints and chalk fragments and frequent small to medium fragments of CBM, this deposit was about 0.5m in width. Context 134 which consisted of a compact plastic mid-brown clay with frequent chalk and charcoal flecks and occasional small flints and pebbles and was about 1m wide (Plate 12).
- 4.1.26 As 132 is on the same alignment as wall 025 seen to the west in 1997 and no trace of that wall was seen in the trench it seems likely that 132 is probably cut where the eastward continuation of that wall has been robbed out. North of cut 132 the probable medieval soil (131) as mentioned above was seen consistently at the base of the trench as far as it was monitored.



5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Trench 1

- 5.1.1 Immediately north of the house Trench 1 showed chalk flint and clay, probably a natural glacial till, at only 0.3m depth this shallowness being due to this area being reduced to create a level platform for building as the land slopes down from the north.
- 5.1.2 A single feature (113) was seen in trench 1, which appeared to be part of a north-south linear more than 1.3m long with very steeply sloping sides, this was not bottomed at 90cm thus being more than 60cm in depth.
- 5.1.3 The feature was filled with a uniform light brown silty sand (114) and one piece of medieval pottery, a local ware of possible 13th-14th century date was recovered from the fill. It is uncertain and difficult to say what this feature represents but it is probably medieval in date and if part of a long linear feature it may either be some sort of drainage gully or ditch, it is probably not a robber trench unless for a relatively narrow brick wall.

Trench 2

- 5.1.4 This small trench just to the south east of the south east corner of the East wing of the house revealed only 19th/20th century drainage/sewage trench backfill and pipes (contexts 101-111) and nothing of archaeological interest was seen.

Trench 3

- 5.1.5 This trench just south of the house revealed on the east a dark brown deposit (117) that contained some animal bone and a piece of post-medieval stoneware, and was probably either a post-medieval buried soil or possibly fill of a larger feature or make-up, this extended from 0.3m and was continuing at the base of the trench at 0.6m.

Trench 4

- 5.1.6 This trench was over 70m long from the Ha-Ha to the south-east corner of the house and only the central section was monitored.
- 5.1.7 The major features seen a few metres to the west in 1997 or features closely related to them were also encountered in this trench. A probable buried medieval soil (131) was seen at the north end of the monitored section extending from about 0.5m to 0.9m below the ground surface. At the south two adjacent phases of medieval rubble wall were seen. The later of the phases (123) is on the line of wall 035 as seen in 1997, the earlier phase (124) was not present in the 1997 trench.
- 5.1.8 Just north of the medieval walls a small brick conduit of probable 16th-century date (125) was exposed this was smaller and on a different alignment to a brick conduit seen in 1997 (032) but the courses of the two conduits if projected would converge and as only one conduit appears in each trench it seems likely that they joined somewhere between the trenches and were part of a connected drainage system.
- 5.1.9 About two metres north of the conduit a substantial brick wall (127) was seen immediately below the surface and this was directly in line with a wall of the same type recorded in 1997 (029). This is the 16th century lower courtyard wall seen on early drawings and which is clearly visible as a parch mark in the lawn in the summer. This wall cut a narrow earlier brick wall (129), showing to the north, on a north-west to south-east alignment which had a tile capped flint footing. This was not encountered in the 1997 trench, it is probably not substantial enough to have belonged to a large building. It is difficult to say much more about the purpose of this wall and although it is



perpendicular to medieval rubble walls seen in this trench and 1997 (025 and 035) it is of different construction and later date so if related to them it would belong to a later phase or alteration.

- 5.1.10 Parallel and west of this a small area of bricks bedded on mortar (128) was revealed this is about two metres east of the brick floor seen to the west in 1997 and appears to be on a similar alignment but possibly about 0.2m higher, such a small area was seen that it is difficult to draw any conclusions about this or the wall but it could be related to the 1997 surface in some way.
- 5.1.11 Brick samples from structures 125, 127 and 129 (the conduit, courtyard wall and wall cut by the courtyard wall) appear to be Tudor, probably 16th century, although dates as late as the early 17th century cannot be ruled out. The tiles used in the footings of wall 129 are peg tiles reused in this context and might be earlier in date than the bricks; possibly from the late 15th to the 16th century.
- 5.1.12 The conduits, courtyard wall and the earlier brick wall thus probably all belong to Francis Knollys' period of major remodelling in the later 16th century.
- 5.1.13 North of these structures a north-east to south-west aligned cut (132) truncated the buried soil (131) and as this is on the same alignment as a medieval wall (025) seen just three metres to the west in 1997 it is likely to be robber cut for that wall. Marshall (1998) considered that the corresponding wall (025) in the west trench being similar and parallel to a wall seen 8m to the south (035) might together represent a former medieval building across the line of the lower courtyard wall and therefore possibly demolished by the 16th-century. As the northern of these walls was robbed out in the 2010 trench it is not possible to compare the fabrics and therefore the later trench does not really help to either confirm or deny the earlier theory but shows that both walls probably extended eastwards and the south wall had an earlier phase or was built against an earlier structure.

Simon Underdown
Oxford Archaeology
March 2010



APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Thickness</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
100	Deposit	0.06m	Tarmac	-	Late C20th
101	Deposit	0.11m	Hoggin- fill of storm drain trench	-	C19th/20th
102	Deposit	0.19m	Chalk- fill of storm drain trench	-	C19th/20th
103	Deposit	>0.35m	Lower fill of storm drain trench	-	C19th/20th
104	Deposit	0.06m	Bedding levelling for tarmac	-	C20th
105	Deposit	0.39	Upper fill of foul water drain trench	-	C19th/20th
106	Deposit	>0.24m	Lower fill of foul water drain trench	-	C19th/20th
107	Deposit	0.10m	Hoggin- upper fill of old drain trench	-	C19th/20th
108	Deposit	0.07m	Chalk- fill of old drain trench	-	C19th/20th
109	Deposit	>0.30m	Lower fill of old drain trench	-	C19th/20th
110	Cut	-	Cut for storm drain trench	-	C19th/20th
111	Cut	-	Cut for foul drain trench	-	C19th/20th
112	Deposit	0.20m	Hoggin, levelling		Late C20th
113	Cut	>0.60m	Feature		?Medieval
114	Deposit	>0.60m	Fill of 113	pot	?Medieval
115	Deposit	0.10m	Hoggin, levelling	-	Late C20th
116	Deposit	0.15m	Chalk ?surface or make-up	-	Post-medieval or modern
117	Deposit	>0.30m	?Old soil	Pot, bone	Post-medieval
118	Cut	>0.40m	Cut for storm drain trench	-	C19th/20th
119	Deposit	>0.40m	Fill of 118	-	C19th/20th
120	Cut	-	Cut for surface water drain	-	C19th/20th
121	Deposit	-	Fill of 120	-	C19th/20th
122	Deposit	-	?Levelling for tarmac	-	Late C20th
123	Structure	>0.20m	Flint and mortar wall	-	Medieval
124	Structure	>0.20m	Flint and mortar wall	-	Medieval



<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Thickness</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
125	Structure	>0.49m	Brick conduit	CBM	
126	Deposit	0.25m	Fill of 125	-	?C16th
127	Structure	0.55m	Lower Courtyard Wall	CBM	?C16th
128	Structure	0.1m	?Brick surface	-	?C15th/16th
129	Structure	>0.18m	Wall footings	CBM	?C15th/16th
130	Deposit	-	-	-	?Medieval
131	Deposit	0.4m	Old soil	Bone	Medieval
132	Cut	-	Probable robber cut	-	?C15th/16th
133	Deposit	-	Fill of 132	-	?C15th/16th
134	Deposit	-	?Fill of 132	-	?C15th/16th



APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

Reports

- Jones, B. V. (2005) *Greys Court: Historic Buildings Report for The National Trust, Volumes 1-4*, English Heritage: Buildings and Landscape Survey and Investigation Division Report Series B/002/2005.
- Marshall G. (1998) *Greys Court, Oxfordshire; An archaeological Watching Brief over a trench for a water main on the west side of the main lawn (report no. Greys/3)*
- OA (Morris J.) (2006) *Greys Court, Rotherfield Greys, Henley on Thames Oxfordshire; Historic Building Analysis During Phase I Roofing Works*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Greys Court, Rotherfield Greys.

Site code: ROGRGC09

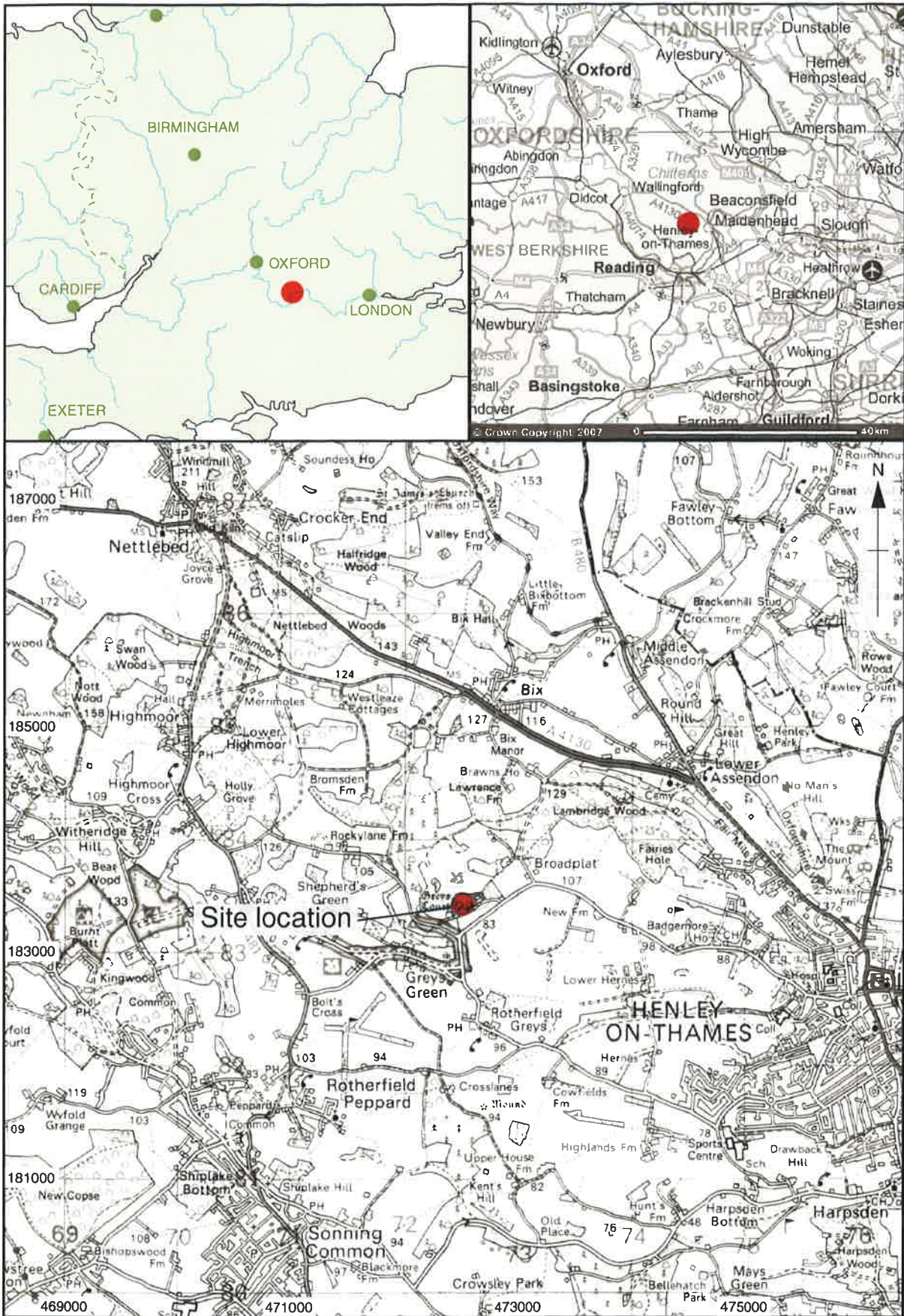
Grid reference: SU 724 834

Type of evaluation: Watching Brief.

Date and duration of project: November 2009

Summary of results: The investigation of new service trenches north and east of the house revealed features of various types and dates from a probable medieval buried soil, a medieval linear feature and medieval rubble walls to a 16th-century brick conduit and walls, post-medieval soil deposits and 19th and 20th century service trenches. Features seen in 1997 or features closely related to them such as the lower courtyard wall, a brick conduit and medieval rubble walls were exposed again further east. The southern rubble wall had an earlier phase not seen in the 1997 trench.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at Oxford Archaeology, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES.



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 1974. All rights reserved. Licence No. AL 100005569

Figure 1: Site location

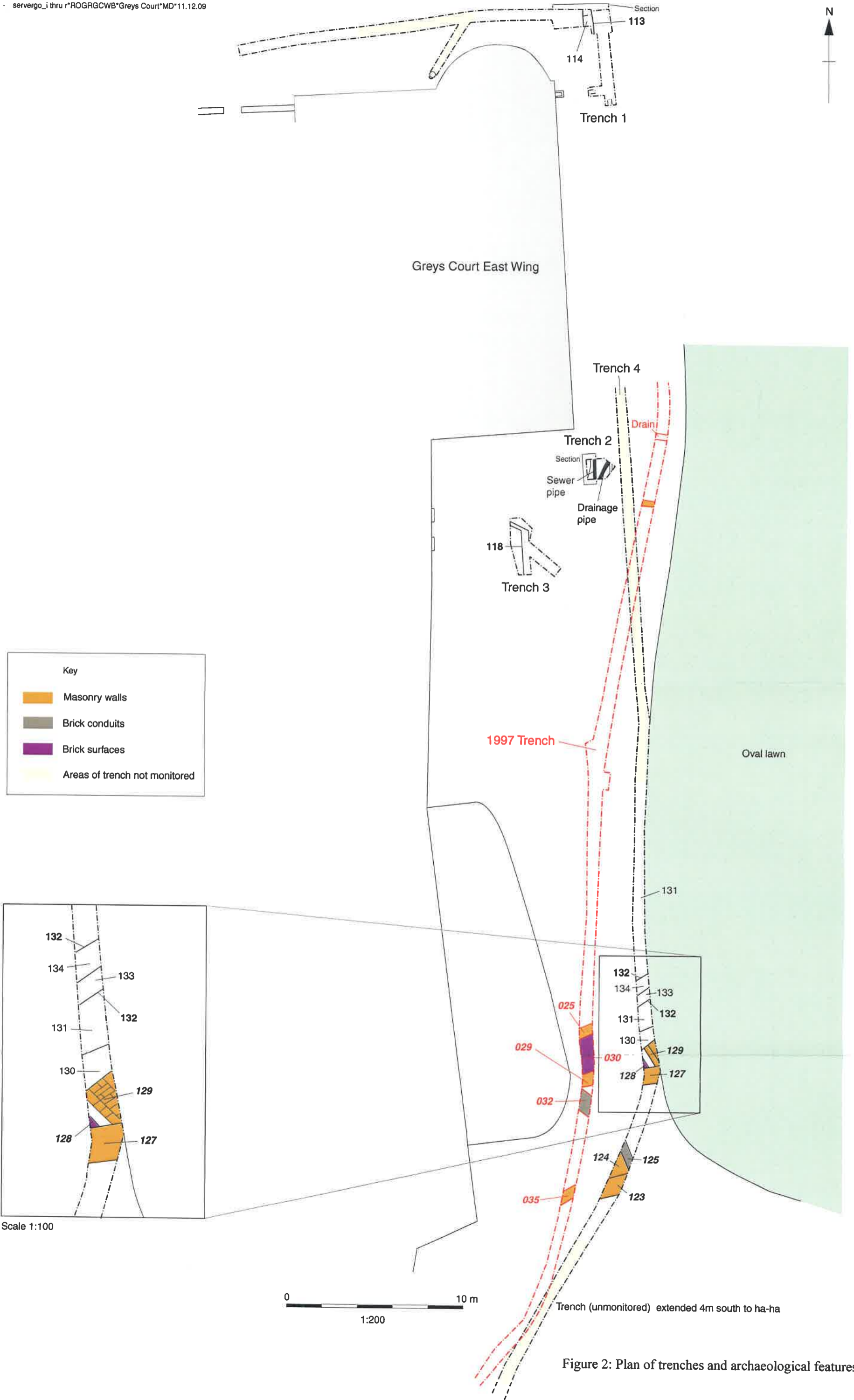


Figure 2: Plan of trenches and archaeological features

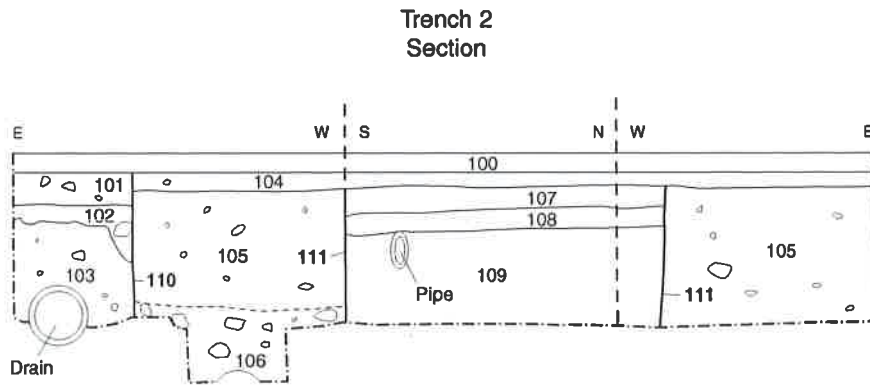
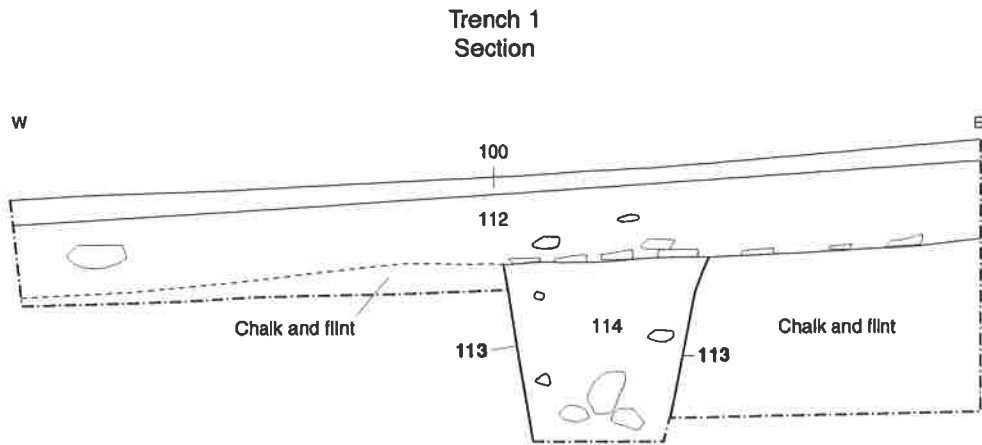


Figure 3: Trenches 1 and 2, sections



Plate 1: Trench 1; cut 113 looking west (prior to westward extension of trench)



Plate 2: Trench 1; cut 113 looking north



Plate 3: Trench 2; looking south



Plate 4: Trench 3; looking north-east



Plate 5: Trench 4; wall 123 with 124 to right, looking west



Plate 6: Trench 4; wall 123 on left abutting 124 on right, looking west



Plate 7: Trench 4; walls 123 & 124 with culvert 125 to right, looking west



Plate 8: Trench 4; culvert 125 looking east



Plate 9: Trench 4; wall 127 with wall 129 to left, looking east



Plate 10: Trench 4; wall 127 in section after breaking through, looking west



Plate 11: Trench 4; wall 129 (with scale on) with wall 127 to right, deposit 130 to left and 128 at bottom left of 127, looking east



Plate 12: Trench 4; old soil 131 on left with cut 132 and fills 133 and 134 to right, looking west

**OA East**

15 Trafalgar Way
Bar Hill
Cambridgeshire
CB23 8SQ

t: +44 (0) 1223 850500
f: +44 (0) 1223 850599
e: oaeast@thehumanjourney.net
w: <http://thehumanjourney.net>

OA North

Mill 3
Moor Lane Mills
Moor Lane
Lancaster LA1 1GF

t: +44 (0) 1524 541000
f: +44 (0) 1524 848606
e: oanorth@thehumanjourney.net
w: <http://thehumanjourney.net>

OA South

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES

t: +44 (0) 1865 263800
f: +44 (0) 1865 793496
e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk
w: <http://thehumanjourney.net>

OA Grand Ouest

7 Rue des Monderaines
ZI - Ouest
14650 Carpiquet
France

t: +33 (0) 249 88 01 01
f: +33 (0) 249 88 01 02
e: info@oago.fr
w: <http://oago.fr>

OA Méditerranée

115 Rue Merlot
ZAC La Louvade
34130 Mauguio
France

t: +33 (0) 4.67.57.86.92
f: +33 (0) 4.67.42.65.93
e: oamed@thehumanjourney.net
w: <http://oamed.fr/>

Director: David Jennings, BA MIFA FSA



*The Oxford Archaeological Unit Ltd is a Private Limited Company, No: 1618597 and a Registered Charity, No: 285627
Head Office: Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, t: +44 (0) 1865 263 800*