

# Porters' Lodge Corpus Christi College Oxford

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Prepared by:	Jon Gill, Project Manager, Historic Buildings Rebecca Peacock, Project Officer
Checked by:	Julian Munby, (Head of Buildings Archaeology)
Edited by:	
Approved for Issue by:	Gerry Thacker (Senior Project Manager)
Signature:	

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OA South Janus House Osney Mead Oxford OX2 0ES

t. +44 (0)1865 263 800

**OA East** 15 Trafalgar Way Bar Hill Cambridge CB23 8SG

t. +44 (0)1223 850 500

e. info@oxfordarch.co.uk w. oxfordarchaeology.com Oxford Archaeology is a registered Charity: No. 285627 OA North Mill 3 Moor Lane Mills Moor Lane Lancaster LA1 1QD t. +44 (0)1524 880 250

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Director and Chief Executive Gill Hey, 8A PhD F5A MCIIA Private Limited Company, No: 1618597 NT Registered Charlhy, No: 285627 Registered Office: Oxford Archaeology Ltd Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 055



# Porters' Lodge, Corpus Christi College, Oxford Historic Building Watching Brief

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## Summary

Oxford Archaeology (OA) has undertaken an investigation at Corpus Christi College, Oxford during the renovation of the Porters' Lodge in the Grade I listed north range of the Front Quadrangle. This building formed part of the original layout of college buildings constructed in 1516.

The works have included historic building recording in the form of a watching brief during alterations to the buildings, as well as an archaeological watching brief during excavations for an external ramp. The investigation was undertaken as a condition of planning permission and it followed separate Level 2 building recording undertaken by Purcell prior to the start of refurbishment works.

The investigation has enhanced understanding of this part of the college. The principal feature exposed has been a short section of timber framed partition which it is thought survives from the original construction of this range. A primary mid-height rail survives as well as a sill beam, a primary post and primary lath and plaster above the rail.

A series of mortices to the underside of the rail show that the frame would originally have incorporated a series of studs down to the sill but these were removed at some point and replaced by a doorway with nailed post. The doorway was subsequently boarded over but it is now being reopened in the current works.

The historic partition extends from the south wall of the range to a central chimney stack which historic plans suggest was inserted at some point between 1733 and 1848. It is known that an additional storey was added to this building in 1737 and it seems likely that the insertion of the central chimney stack would have been undertaken as part of this phase of works. Historic views and plans show that the original fireplaces and chimneys would have been against the north wall of the range.

Adjacent to the framed partition the works have also exposed evidence of a former single-light window which is shown on a view from 1733 but which was probably also blocked in the c.1737 works. This has been entirely hidden externally by the subsequent refacing of this range. Early views suggest that there was also a single-light window at the corresponding position in the north wall but it was enlarged to form a two-light window.

The project has also allowed an investigation of a set of voids or simple cellar beneath the rooms.



Building Recording and archaeological watching brief



## **1** INTRODUCTION

#### **1.1 Project Background**

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) was commissioned by Corpus Christi College, Oxford to undertake a programme of building recording and archaeological watching brief during a programme of refurbishment works in the north range of the Front Quadrangle, focusing on the Porters' Lodge. The building is Grade I listed (ref: 1369615) and the recording was undertaken as a condition of Listed Building Consent (ref: 20/00672/LBC).
- 1.1.2 Condition 18 of the listed building consent states:
- 1.1.3 No relevant development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work comprising a targeted watching brief and historic building recording in accordance with the written scheme of investigation which has previously been submitted by the applicant and approved by the planning authority. All works shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the approved written scheme of investigation, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
- 1.1.4 Building recording was also undertaken prior to the start of works by Purcell; a separate report on this is being produced.

#### 1.1.5 Scope of refurbishment

- 1.1.6 The current refurbishment has covered the Porters' Lodge and ancillary spaces at Corpus Christi College, in the north range of the front quadrangle. The lodge is immediately to the west of the gatehouse to the college from Merton Street and the works have been at both ground and first floor level.
- 1.1.7 The main works have included:
  - Installation of frameless glazed doors to the lodge
  - Removal of internal partitions and joinery
  - New opening into wall
  - Construction of new ramp
  - Installation of two new gate posts

#### **1.2** Methodology

- 1.2.1 The historic building recording was undertaken in the form of an intermittent watching brief during the soft strip and other intrusive works to the building, to record previously hidden elements of the structure. As referred to above a separate programme of Level 2 building recording prior to the start of refurbishment works was undertaken by Purcell and a separate report on this is being produced.
- 1.2.2 The investigation also included a below-ground watching brief during some minor intrusive works, particularly some excavations for a ramp, adjacent on the south side of the lodge, and for two gate posts.
- 1.2.3 Several visits to site were made during the strip-out and demolition works to record features or historic fabric that were exposed. These visits were undertaken between 8 February and 29 March 2021.



1.2.4 The investigation has also been supported by historical research based on historic maps, previous studies and the principal secondary sources.

#### **1.3 Project aims**

- 1.3.1 The overall aims of the project were:
  - to investigate and record for posterity elements of the college that which will be lost or temporarily exposed during the current works;
  - to enhance understanding of the structure and how it related to the overall college;
  - to make the record publicly accessible through a report (a public document) and a project archive deposited with a public institution.
  - To determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any archaeological remains within the development;
  - To determine or confirm the approximate date or date range of any remains, by means of artefactual or other evidence.
  - To disseminate the results through the production of a site archive for deposition with an appropriate museum and to provide information for accession to the Oxfordshire HER.

## **2** BACKGROUND HISTORY

#### 2.1 Location

- 2.1.1 Corpus Christi College is located to the south-east of Oxford city centre and the Porters' Lodge, which is in the north range of the Front Quadrangle, is adjacent to the main entrance from Merton Street. The site is believed to have been close to the ditch of the late Saxon burh and just inside the southern boundary of the medieval walled town. The southern part of the College incorporates one of the bastions and a section of the town wall.
- 2.1.2 The archaeological and historical background of the site has been described in detail in the design brief (OCC 2020) and in previous OA reports. It is summarised below.

#### 2.2 General background to Corpus Christi College

- 2.2.1 The College was founded in c 1516 by Richard Fox, Bishop of Winchester (although building works for the college had already started by this date), and it extended over a number of 14th century academic halls that fronted onto Oriel Street and Merton Street. These included Urban Hall and St Christopher Hall. The college originally comprised a single quadrangle, the Front Quadrangle, which was accessible from Merton Street and the construction of which was largely complete soon after the foundation of the college. This includes the Porters' Lodge which forms the focus of the current project, as well as the Hall, the Chapel, the Library and a cloister to the south of the Chapel.
- 2.2.2 Archaeological investigations have recorded remnants of the 14th century Canterbury College boundary wall along with the remains of an earlier road and medieval tenements on the western side of the college. Possible evidence of the late Saxon defensive primary burh ditch has also been recorded to the rear of the college. The town wall has also been examined.



- 2.2.3 Archaeological investigations in 2000 at the Emily Thomas Building recorded several rubbish pits and a well containing fragments of 11th-13th century pottery and these may relate to the former academic hall known to have existed on the site. The presence of animal bone of both cattle and sheep along with environmental evidence from the well indicate the excavations were centred in a former farmyard or kitchen area. At the Emily Thomas Building the 11th-13th century evidence was recorded at a depth of 0.4 to 0.5m on the eastern side of the college.
- 2.2.4 An excavation by OA in 2008 on the site of the new college auditorium identified a phase of Late Saxon burials related to the nearby precinct of St Frideswide, a large ditch possibly defensive in character and evidence for industrial activity in the medieval period (tanning), also pit digging likely to be related to the foundation of the college and also elements of the 16th century garden layout.
- 2.2.5 In 2013 archaeological observations during the excavation of an electric cable trench at Merton Grove in the Grove Garden of Merton College, recorded an apparent midden deposit comprising a large quantity of oyster shells, and Brill/Boarstall Ware pottery from the late 14th to 16th century. The midden pit was recorded at a depth of 180mm below ground level. Unstratified material associated with high-status medieval buildings in the form of glazed ridge and floor tiles was also recovered (Jessop Consultancy 2013)
- 2.2.6 Geophysical survey and borehole investigations by OA and limited trial trench excavation by Museum of London Archaeology were undertaken in 2015 in Garden Quadrangle. The fieldwork established a sequence of dumped layers of soil and mortar which were clearly mixed given the residual pottery in the lowest deposits. The earliest layers appeared to date from the medieval period, perhaps the 13th century, though earlier ceramics mixed in suggest early medieval activity elsewhere. The sequence of deposits continues through to the 16th or 17th century and confirmed the sequence identified in the auger holes by Oxford Archaeology. The single feature found was probably an 18th century path. The results of this work suggest that if the primary burh ditch is located under Corpus Christi College then it is likely to be located further east.
- 2.2.7 In 2016 OA carried out an intermittent watching brief at Corpus Christi on works to replace sub-mains cables in the eastern part of the College (OA 2016). Evidence for burials associated with the 16th chapel was encountered, including the capping of a stone and brick burial vault which contained a coffin observable through a void in the structure. Some disarticulated human bone was also recovered and reburied on the site, providing evidence for additional disturbed burials in the area. A rubbish pit dating from 1650-1700 contained pottery and animal bones, including a rare example of a turkey bone from this date. Walls and pillar bases from earlier incarnations of the College buildings were also recorded.
- 2.2.8 A further watching brief on the completion of the sub-main cable replacement in the western part of Main Quad revealed wall foundations thought to belong to the academic halls that's preceded the construction of the College (OA 2019).

## 2.3 North Range of Front Quadrangle

#### 2.3.1 Summary description

**2.3.2** The Front Quadrangle formed part of the initial phase of construction at Corpus Christi and it was largely complete shortly after the foundation of the college in 1516.



- 2.3.3 The range is of two storeys with attics but at the centre is a three storey entrance tower which retains its original oak gates, a vault of 1817 and the late 16<sup>th</sup>-century decorated rooms of the former President's Lodgings. The interior of the range gained and then lost a crenellated parapet when rooms were put into the attic in the 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> century, while the outer face was raised with a full third floor in 1737, enclosing the attic rooms (but only serving as a dummy wall at the head of the Hall). The walls have been refaced and repaired in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- 2.3.4 In addition to the Porters' Lodge this range also now incorporates teaching rooms, residential sets and college offices. The gateway passage has a fine fan vault which is largely restored.

#### 2.3.5 Historic maps and views showing the North Range and Porters' Lodge

- 2.3.6 The north range of the Front Quadrangle is shown on Ralph Agas' map of 1578 with the gatehouse a storey taller than the rest of the range and four regular windows shown to the west of this at ground and first floor levels (Fig 2). The view is clearly useful in showing the general layout of ranges at the college but details such as types of windows are schematic rather than accurate representations.
- 2.3.7 The college is again shown relatively schematically on David Loggan's 1675 view of Oxford and the north range facing Merton Street is shown in great detail in Loggan's *Oxonia Illustrata*, also from 1675 (Fig 3). The two-storey range (with attic) is shown with a plinth, a series of regular windows at ground and first floor and a string course directly above the ground floor lintels which steps over the gateway. There are additional hood moulds over the ground floor windows. The fenestration is similar to that which survives today, combining single light and two-light mullioned windows, although the exact arrangement is slightly different. The third window to the west of the gatehouse is shown on the 1675 view as a single light whereas today it is a twin light.
- 2.3.8 Another valuable source is William Williams' *Oxonia Depicta* from 1733 which includes a plan of the college as well as two birds-eye views which show each main elevation of the north range (Fig 4). The north elevation facing Merton Street is shown almost identical to that on Loggan's view. Williams' view of the south elevation of the north range, facing into the quadrangle, shows the section of wall to the west of the gateway with a pedestrian doorway at each end and three windows between them: two twin lights and a single light window at the centre. Each of these is beneath a hood mould. The central single-light window no longer survives but evidence of it has been exposed in the current project (detailed further below). The fenestration shown immediately above at first floor level is similar but with further single light windows above the doorways.
- 2.3.9 The plan contained in Williams' *Oxonia Depicta* shows the ground floor of the area covered by the current project comprising two main rooms, as it does today, but with various other differences<sup>1</sup>. The plan shows the room in the eastern half accessible from the doorway at the south-east corner and through a lobby. Along the eastern side of this room, parallel to the gateway passage, the plan shows a narrow space accessible from the main room. The plan also shows a similar narrow bay to the west of the main room, which is itself divided into two small rooms, one accessible from the eastern room and one from the room to the west. This bay between the two main rooms is in the current location of the large chimney stack, suggesting

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The plan has not been reproduced in the current report although low resolution versions of it are available on line (eg http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/)

that this stack was a secondary insertion post-dating 1733. Indeed, the plan appears to show two fireplaces within the north wall, one to each main room, and the view of the north elevation facing Merton Street shows chimneys along this wall rather than with a central stack. Loggan's earlier plan shows a similar arrangement. Similarly to today the plan shows the doorway at the western end of the south elevation opening into a short L-shaped lobby at the foot of the staircase.

- 2.3.10 It is useful to note that the 1733 plan shows a single light window towards the centre of the north and south walls, adjacent to the central narrow bay between the main rooms; this is different to the current arrangement.
- 2.3.11 The next available source to provide useful information is a college plan from 1848 and by this date the Porters' Lodge and adjacent room had undergone significant alterations including the insertion of a central chimney stack and the rearrangement of the rooms (Fig. 5). This was clearly undertaken at some point (or points) between 1733 and 1848 and it may well have been as early as 1737 as this was when the second floor was added to this range. It seems likely that if the building was undergoing major works such as adding a new storey then other major improvements such as inserting a central chimney stack would be undertaken at the same time.
- 2.3.12 The 1848 plan still shows the doorway at the south-eastern corner of this area, with a small lobby as on the 1733 plan; this is marked by a number 2 and the index labels this as the Porters' Lobby. The main room [No. 3] is labelled *Porters' Lodge* and along the north side is a narrow room [No.5] accessible through a doorway and labelled Porters' Bedroom. This must have been inserted as part of the post-1733 alterations. To the east of this, and at the north-east corner of the lodge, is a very small space [No.4] which may have been a surviving remnant from the 1733 layout.
- 2.3.13 The 1848 plan shows a doorway in the east wall of the Porters' Lodge, allowing direct access between this room and the covered passage. The earlier 1733 plan does not appear to show a doorway here and thus this was presumably also part of the post-1733 alterations. The large inserted stack is shown on the 1848 plan with fireplaces to each room and the former fireplaces in the north wall are shown infilled. The western of the two main rooms [No.6] is labelled *Sitting Room* and to the north side of this is a further narrow *Bedroom* [No.7). The Sitting Room and Bedroom [Nos 6 & 7] were not accessible from the Porters' Lodge and were clearly separate functionally from it.
- 2.3.14 The alterations prior to 1848 also involved changes to fenestration in the area between the main rooms. As stated above the 1733 plan shows a single light window in this area to both the north and south elevations. By 1848 the central window in the south wall had been infilled and that in the north window had been replaced by a larger two-light window.
- 2.3.15 The next plan to provide any indication of the internal ground floor layout is the Ordnance Survey 1:500 Town Plan from 1876 (Fig.6). It is harder to see the detail on this plan than that of 1848 but the layout appears to be similar with the central stack shown, entrance lobby at the south-eastern corner and narrow bedrooms along the northern side of the range. One difference appears to be that there were two openings between the lodge and the covered passage, unlike in 1848 when there was just a single doorway.
- 2.3.16 In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Edmund Hort New produced a series of views of Oxford colleges in the manner of Loggan's *Oxonia Illustrata* and known as the 'New Loggan' prints (Fig. 7). That of Corpus Christi was produced in 1922 and it is a good record of the Merton Street elevation although it does not provide any new information.



- 2.3.17 The RCHM's *Survey and Inventory of Historical Monuments* (1939) includes a plan of Corpus Christi and this shows a number of minor alterations to the layout of the Porters' Lodge and adjacent room from that shown on the previous plan (Fig. 8). By this date a screen had been formed along the eastern side of the lodge to provide a public corridor or lobby separate from the porter's room. At the northern end this corridor led to a cupboard which would have been beneath a staircase accessed from within the Porters' room. This has now been replaced by a more modern staircase with a slightly different arrangement. To the west of the staircase the plan again shows a small room against the north wall although this is now smaller than that shown on the 19<sup>th</sup>-century plans due to the staircase. The small room to the north of the western room is also by this date smaller than on the 19<sup>th</sup>-century plans. The RCHM plan shows two openings (as now) in the wall between the lodge and the covered passage.
- 2.3.18 It is interesting to note that the RCHM plan shows the external walls, the arrangement of windows and the central chimney stack as all being of 16<sup>th</sup>-century date whereas the current study suggests considerably more phasing to this part of the college.



## **3** RESULTS OF BUILDING RECORDING WATCHING BRIEF

#### 3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The current historic building investigation has comprised a watching brief, undertaken during the soft-strip phase of the refurbishment, and it is intended to complement rather than replicate a separate programme of pre-works recording undertaken by Purcell. It purely focuses on internal areas where historic fabric has been exposed by the soft strip or where the works have made areas accessible.

#### **3.2** Summary description prior to refurbishment

- 3.2.1 The investigation has covered a section of the north range of the Front Quadrangle at Corpus Christi immediately west of the covered gateway into the quad; this structure incorporates the Porters' Lodge.
- 3.2.2 Towards the centre of this area is a large chimney stack which was inserted into the building after 1733 (possibly in 1737) and various partitions now adjoin this to subdivide the space (Fig 9). To the east of the stack is the main Porters' Lodge (G1) together with a reception lobby against the east wall (G2). There are two external doorways into this lobby: one in the east wall from the covered gateway and one at the south end from the quad. To the north of the Porters' Lodge and the chimney stack is a narrow storage area (G3) and at the east end of this is a modern staircase that wraps around the corner of the building.
- 3.2.3 To the west of the chimney stack is a further college room (G4) which is accessed through a lobby at the western end of the range and an external doorway from the quad. A staircase rises from this lobby but this is outside the scope of the current project.
- 3.2.4 At first floor level the current works have just covered the area to the east of the chimney stack: this comprises a single main room (F1) and a small WC (F2) against the east wall. These rooms are accessed by a modern staircase with an L-shaped plan at the north-eastern corner of the Porters' Lodge.

#### 3.3 Watching brief

3.3.1 Specific features exposed in the works are described individually below.

#### 3.3.2 Framed partition

- 3.3.3 The refurbishment works have included the dismantling and modification of part of a section of wall on the north side of the chimney stack to form a new doorway between the main ground floor rooms (G1 & G4). This section of wall was clad in modern plasterboard to each side but the removal of this has shown that the partition is of historic timber frame construction with some earlier plaster also surviving (Pl.2-10). The frame, which is 1.48 m wide, is set on a sill which is sunken into the floor and incorporates a groove along its upper face. At the southern end of the frame there is a full height post  $(13 \times 12 \text{ cm})$  against the external wall and a mid-height rail or lintel  $(17 \times 10 \text{ cm})$  is tenoned into this.
- 3.3.4 Beneath the mid-height rail there is a single central stud (12 x 10 cm) and although this is old (possibly 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century) it is nailed to the rail and must have been a secondary insertion. It is evident that this formed the northern jamb of a former doorway in the southern half of the frame; this is shown by shallow chambers to the edge of this stud as

well as to the lintel/rail directly above and the inner side of the larger post against the south wall.

- 3.3.5 The underside of the lintel/rail is 1.52m above the floor and it incorporates five empty mortices which would have held the heads of former studs before the insertion of the doorway. The bases of these studs would have slotted into the groove referred to above in the upper face of the sill.
- 3.3.6 Above the lintel there are five small studs which extend up to a plate at the ceiling and a set of crossed laths (horizontals and verticals) are fixed to the east side of these. The crossed laths are embedded within a partially surviving daub with a high proportion of straw together with a plaster skim forming a surface (Pl. 5). The use of laths in a cross pattern allows both sides to be plastered although the studs are visible in the western face. The larger post at the south end would have been visible in both faces.
- 3.3.7 The nature of the frame's construction suggests that it was probably a primary feature dating from the college's foundation in 1516 rather than a secondary insertion potentially dating from the major works undertaken in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This is principally suggested by the fact that whereas at its southern end the frame terminates in a full height post at its northern end, against the chimney stack, the frame appears truncated. The end of the rail is supported in a shallow recess in the side of the stack and below this is a stud that appears reset. In addition the straw daub above the rail is more suggestive of a date from the 16<sup>th</sup> century rather than one from the 18<sup>th</sup> century.
- 3.3.8 When the refurbishment proposals were first being prepared the intention had been to entirely remove this section of wall but once it was shown to be of historic interest it was instead agreed to modify the partition rather than remove it. The frame has been dismantled and reconstructed with the former doorway reopened and the lintel set at a higher level to provide the necessary clearance.

#### 3.3.9 Evidence of blocked window

- 3.3.10 At the south-eastern corner of the west room (G4), adjacent to the south end of the exposed section of timber partition, works were undertaken to remove a cupboard within a shallow recess in the external wall. The removal of the shelves and back of the cupboard exposed a relatively modern stud frame and a deeper recess behind with various vertical service pipes and evidence to show that this was formerly the location of a window (PI. 13-14). The window at the rear of the recess has been blocked with rubble stone. There is a timber lintel over the recess and to either side there are sloped jambs with traces of plaster.
- 3.3.11 The recess is c.1m wide although the outer corners of the jambs have been cut back slightly to allow for the modern stud frame, thus removing the plaster in these areas. The recess is almost full height although the base is slightly raised above floor level by stone blocks at base; this has been partially truncated to allow for the service pipes.
- 3.3.12 The exterior of this section of wall has been refaced with ashlar since the window was infilled and there is no visible evidence here of the former opening (Pl. 15). A downpipe now extends down the wall in this location.
- 3.3.13 The surviving evidence of the former window corresponds with the plan and view from 1733 contained in William Williams' *Oxonia Depicta* which also show a single-light window here. The window had been blocked prior to the college plan of 1848 and it is most likely

that this was undertaken at the same time that the chimney stack was inserted. As detailed elsewhere this may have formed part of the wider programme of works known to have been undertaken in 1737.

- 3.3.14 It is important to note that the adjacent section of timber frame partition respects the position of the former window and adjoins the wall immediately adjacent to the jamb.
- 3.3.15 This area is being re-sealed in the current works and little altered.

#### *3.3.16 Other features in Porters' Lodge*

- 3.3.17 The removal of plasterboarding from the north side of the main Porters' room (G1) uncovered the remains of a much altered panel which separated this room from the small separate space to the north (G3). Both sides of this incorporated some simple dark-stained panelling to the lower third as well as lath and plaster above painted a yellow ochre colour (Pl. 20-21). Within the plaster there were the remains of a simple frame which may have formed a notice board or electrical circuit board. This panel was probably 19<sup>th</sup> century in date and it could be seen to post-date the insertion of the 18<sup>th</sup>-century chimney stack by surviving paint to the face of the stack along the line where the panel abutted.
- 3.3.18 The removal of this panel also exposed fragments of an early (probably primary) ceiling with laths and plaster containing a large amount of straw (Pl. 22-23).
- 3.3.19 The remains of a former fireplace was exposed by the removal of plaster from the east side of the chimney stack in G1 (Pl. 18-19). As outlined above this chimney stack was inserted after 1733 (possibly 1737). The surround has been removed but the truncated remains of a stone mantelpiece survives over a relatively narrow hearth and brick infilling to the north side suggests that the fireplace was narrowed, probably in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

#### 3.3.20 Ground floor construction and cellar beneath

- 3.3.21 The ground floor is formed from a patchwork of floorboards from different dates which have probably seen many phases of alteration. Beneath the boards some parts of the ground floor are of solid construction while others incorporate voids or low cellar rooms. The cellar rooms are accessed from two hatches and ladders adjacent to the northern wall (in G3); the hatches and floorboards in this area are modern.
- 3.3.22 The largest cellar room (Pl. 29-37) extends beneath most of the main Porters' room (G1) in the eastern half of this area and measures 4.2 m (N-S) by 4.05 m (E-W). The eastern 1.15 m of this area comprises a separate narrow space, divided by a stone wall with wide opening in it. The northernmost c.2.6 m of the floor in this area is modern (mid or later 20<sup>th</sup> century) and comprises a combination of steel and softwood joists. In the southern c.1.6 m of this cellar the historic floor survives and comprises a principal east-to-west joist together with a short bridging joist tenoned into its south side. East-to-west common joists are tenoned into the bridging joist and lath marks to the underside of these confirm that there was a ceiling. The principal joist and bridging joist are each painted.
- 3.3.23 The floor comprises brick pavers and the walls are constructed from unplastered rubble, other than where modern steel joists have been re-set on brickwork on top of them. At the centre of the north wall there is a 1.2 m wide opening with splayed reveals which has a metal grille to the street immediately above pavement level. This may once have been a coal hole or chute but clear evidence of this has now been lost.

- 3.3.24 Presumably this area has had some simple storage use since the original construction of the building and it now houses a large modern electrical circuit board. The underside of the ground floor is c.1.6 m above the cellar floor.
- 3.3.25 At the southern end of this cellar there is a rubble stone wall set c.1.4 m in from the external wall at ground floor level above. To the south of the wall, this section of the building has a solid floor and no cellar.
- 3.3.26 The second hatch adjacent to the north wall allows access into a smaller cellar void to the west of the larger one (Pl. 38). This space is 2.6 m (N-S) by 2.8 m (E-W) and there is less evidence to suggest that this area has seen any recent use (Pl. 39-46). There are no fixed steps or ladder into the void and unlike the eastern cellar the existence of this void was does not appear to have been known about prior to the current project.
- 3.3.27 This void is roughly L-shaped and set around the stepped corner of the stone chimney stack possibly inserted in 1737. It is divided from the eastern cellar by a 1.58 m thick stone base although there is a small opening through it. All the walls are of rubble stone other than a small simple brick screen towards the southern end of this void forming a separate area 85 cm deep. This section is beneath Room G4 and here there is a half brick arch which supports the hearth of the former fireplace above.
- 3.3.28 The floor above this cellar is historic and comprises north-to-south principal joists as well as east-to-west binders. One of the main principal joists may be primary but most of the other joists are more suggestive of a 19<sup>th</sup> century date and it is likely that the floor was overhauled in this period, reusing some of the older members.
- 3.3.29 Other than the small section at the north-east corner the main floor in G4 is solid, constructed from hard concrete with modern joists embedded (PI 47).
- 3.3.30 It is interesting to note that in 2019 OA recorded another sub-floor void towards the southern end of the west range of the Front Quad. This void was c.3m long by c.1.75 m wide and again it was a relatively crudely constructed space with a low ceiling (c.1.4m). The space may once have been used for storage, and an old ladder had once provided access, but it did not appear to have had any recent use.

#### 3.3.31 First floor features

- 3.3.32 At first floor level the area above the Porters' Lodge comprises a main room (F1) and a smaller area to the east which incorporates the WC (F2), a landing and the staircase at the north-east corner.
- 3.3.33 The main room is divided from the eastern area by a partition which extends the full width of the building. Lath and plaster has been removed from the southern half of this partition, the section which flanked the WC and this has exposed eight softwood studs which are not identical to each other but they generally measure c.12 x 8 cm (Pl. 48). The frame incorporates a rail, approximately two-thirds the height of the partition, and a raking brace beneath this with its base at the southern end. The brace continues across the width of three studs and it is evident that there was formerly a doorway immediately to the north of this. The studs here do not have any lath marks. At the base of the stud which would have formed the opposite (north) side of the doorway there is a short surviving section of a doorway into the frame to allow access to the landing between the stairs and the WC. Immediately to the north of this doorway is a tall cupboard which, it is safe to assume,

was formerly a doorway before the construction of the staircase immediately beyond which would have necessitated the removal of a section of the first floor. The truncated brace referred to above would have adjoined at the top of this doorway. The studs in the partition are nailed rather than tenoned and their form is suggestive of a 19<sup>th</sup> century date.

- 3.3.34 The floorboards in the WC are probably 20<sup>th</sup> century in date but some have been lifted and this has exposed a number of very wide (c.40 cm) and probably primary floorboards beneath (Pl. 51). The stud partition is set on top of the earlier boards and is therefore its sole plate is slightly recessed into the 20<sup>th</sup>-century boards.
- 3.3.35 The wall at the north end of the WC is constructed from concrete block and dates from the mid or later 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- 3.3.36 As indicated above the staircase at the north-east corner of the Porters' Lodge is modern and from the general arrangement it is clear that the floor would formerly have extended up to the windows.
- 3.3.37 Beneath the windows in the north and south walls there are built-in seats with hinged tops and coal boxes (or bunkers) inside (Pl. 53-54).



#### **4** ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

#### 4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The archaeological watching brief was carried out in two locations (Fig 13) as part of the refurbishment works for the Porters' Lodge where the proposed works were likely to impact archaeological remains below the current ground surface. The watching brief monitored the excavation of the foundation for a new access ramp for the north entrance doorway of the Porters' Lodge and two new post foundations for a new gate in the main entrance into the Front Quadrangle from Merton street, immediately adjacent to the Porters' Lodge.
- 4.1.2 The access ramp construction consisted of the removal of existing stone slabs and granite setts used to demarcate the entrance way. The granite sets were retained by the College for re-use in other areas of the College grounds. The excavations for the foundation of the ramp were 0.2m deep and measured 2m wide (E-W) by 3m long (N-S).
- 4.1.3 The gate construction required the excavation of two foundation holes for the gateposts, one in the east and one in the west. The stone paving slabs were removed across the gateway. The east foundation measured 0.8m wide (N-S) and 1.4m long (E-W) and was excavated to 0.40m deep. The western foundation measured 1.1m wide (N-S) by 1.5m (E-W) to a depth of 0.2m with a deeper 0.4m wide channel excavated to a maximum depth of 0.45m.

#### 4.2 Stratigraphic description

- 4.2.1 The gatepost footings both revealed the base of the walls forming the pillars of the arch marking the entrance into the quad. The basal stone of the pillar in both cases rested directly onto a masonry foundation of roughly hewn limestone bonded with lime mortar.
- 4.2.2 The west foundation wall, context 1, (Plate 55) protruded from the west pillar by 1.1m to the east and continued beyond the limit of the foundation hole to both the north and south. It appeared to be truncated at its eastern extent. The foundation was broken out to a depth of 0.45m below the slab and continued below this depth. The rest of the area was filled with a loose rubble deposit, context 3, likely a formation layer for the current paving slabs.
- 4.2.3 The east foundation wall, context 2, (Plate 56) protruded from the east pillar by 0.38m to the west and continued beyond the limit of the footing construction to the north and south. The rest of the area was filled with a loose rubble deposit, context 5, likely a levelling layer, similar to context 3, and used as backfill for a service consisting of an iron pipe, 0.07m diameter and 0.4m below the top of the paving slabs.
- 4.2.4 The area of the Lodge access ramp did not reveal any significant archaeological remains. The layer below the granite setts, context 4, was a mixed deposit of garden soils, gravel and mortar fragments. Under the stone step there was a ceramic pipe aligned N-S and only the surface of the pipe was revealed.

## **5** SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1.1 The Porters' Lodge at Corpus Christi College in Oxford is within the north range of the Front Quadrangle and Oxford Archaeology (OA) has undertaken a watching brief investigation during its refurbishment. The main watching brief has focussed on recording elements of the historic building which have been exposed during the soft strip works but it has also included below-ground recording during minor excavation works for an external ramp.
- 5.1.2 The Front Quadrangle forms part of the original foundation of the college and was constructed in c.1516. An additional storey was added to the range in 1737. Historic maps show that a large central chimney stack was inserted after 1733 and it seems likely that this was also undertaken in the 1737 phase of work. Prior to this there were fireplaces and chimneys against the north wall of the building.
- 5.1.3 The principal feature uncovered during the soft strip was part of a timber framed partition which probably survives from the original construction of the range. A head rail survives as well as a main post, sill beam and a panel of probably primary plaster. The partition had been modified beneath the head rail to remove former studs and to form a doorway but this was subsequently blocked. The doorway is being reopened in the current works.
- 5.1.4 Another feature exposed within the building has been a pair of splayed jambs from a former window in the south wall. This would have looked into the quad but the wall has now been refaced and there is no evidence visible externally of the former window. Historic maps show that the window had been blocked by 1848 and this may also have been undertaken in the 1737 phase of work.
- 5.1.5 Other ground floor features exposed have included evidence of a former fireplace and section of panelling.
- 5.1.6 At first floor level the main feature exposed was a probably 19<sup>th</sup>-century stud partition. At this level this part of the building has clearly seen various alterations in the 20th century (probably mid 20th century) and it is likely that they were all undertaken in the same phase. This includes the construction of the staircase, the addition of a concrete block wall at the north end of the WC, the blocking of two former doorways in the north-to-south partition, the formation of a new doorway to the landing and the laying of new floor boards.
- 5.1.7 Recording has also been undertaken on several voids or cellar rooms beneath the ground floor.
- 5.1.8 The below ground archaeological features of the foundation walls for the pillars, were different in size. The western foundation, context 1, being much larger than the eastern one. This may suggest that the foundation walls are structures relating to previous College buildings and were used as firm bases for the pillar construction. The presence of earlier structures were also found in the Quad in the previous sub-main construction works.
- 5.1.9 The orientation of the larger foundation wall in the west could not be determined as it appeared to have been truncated along its eastern extent, and the impact limit prevented further investigation.
- 5.1.10 No finds were recovered from any of the identified contexts.

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#### APPENDIX A BIBLIOGRAPHY

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OA Corpus Christi College, New sub-main works (July 2016)

OA Corpus Christi College, New Sub Main West: Archaeological Watching Brief (Oct 2019) Historic England Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice (2016) Oxfordshire Museums Service and Oxfordshire County Council Requirements for Transferring Archaeological Archives: 2017/18 (February 2017)

RCHM, City of Oxford - A Survey and Inventory by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (1939)

Oxford City Council Urban Design & Heritage Team. *Brief for an Archaeological Watching Brief and historic building recording: Corpus Christi College.* (Nov 2020)

Purcell Corpus Christ Porters' Lodge: Design, Heritage and Access Statement (March 2020)

#### Maps

1750 Taylor's map of Oxford1789 Faden's map of Oxford1850 Robert Hoggar's map of Oxford1876 Town Plan of Oxford (1:500)

1899 Ordnance Survey 25 inch:1 mile map



## APPENDIX B SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: Corpus Christi College, Oxford

Site code: OXCCPL21

**Grid reference:** SP51617 06082

**Type of project**: Historic building recording and archaeological watching brief **Date and duration of project**: Main site work undertaken intermittently during Feb – March 2021.

**Location of archive**: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES. It will be deposited with ADS.

#### Summary:

Oxford Archaeology (OA) has undertaken an investigation at Corpus Christi College, Oxford during the renovation of the Porters' Lodge in the Grade I listed north range of the front quadrangle. The work included historic building recording in the form of a watching brief during the refurbishment but it also included some minor archaeological watching brief works during the installation of a ramp.

The Front Quadrangle forms part of the original foundation of the college and was constructed in c.1516. The principal feature uncovered during the soft strip was part of a timber framed partition which probably survives from the original construction of the range. The partition had been modified beneath the head rail to remove former studs and to form a doorway but this was subsequently blocked.

Another feature exposed within the building has been a pair of splayed jambs from a former window in the south wall. This would have looked into the quad but the wall has now been refaced and there is no evidence visible externally of the former window. Other ground floor features exposed have included evidence of a former fireplace and section of panelling. At first floor level the main feature exposed was a probably 19th-century stud partition. Recording has also been undertaken on several voids or cellar rooms beneath the ground floor.



## APPENDIX C LISTED BUILDING DESCRIPTION

Principal listed buildings directly impacted by current project

CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE, FRONT QUADRANGLE, NORTH AND WEST RANGE, AND EAST RANGE EXCLUDING THE HALL Grade I NGR: SP5159706079 List Entry Number:1369615 Date first listed:12-Jan-1954

CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE 1. 1485 Front Quadrangle, North and West ranger, and East Range excluding the Hall SP 5106 SE 9/464A 12.1.54. I 2. The quadrangle includes Chapel. Hall and Library and sets of college rooms. Circa 1514. Embattled parapet 1625; North and South walls carried up to mask the attics, 1737; inner walls refaced 1804 in Barrington stone and partly again in 1935 when battlements were removed. The upper outer wall on North East was refaced in Clipsham stone 1949. East range altered 1963.

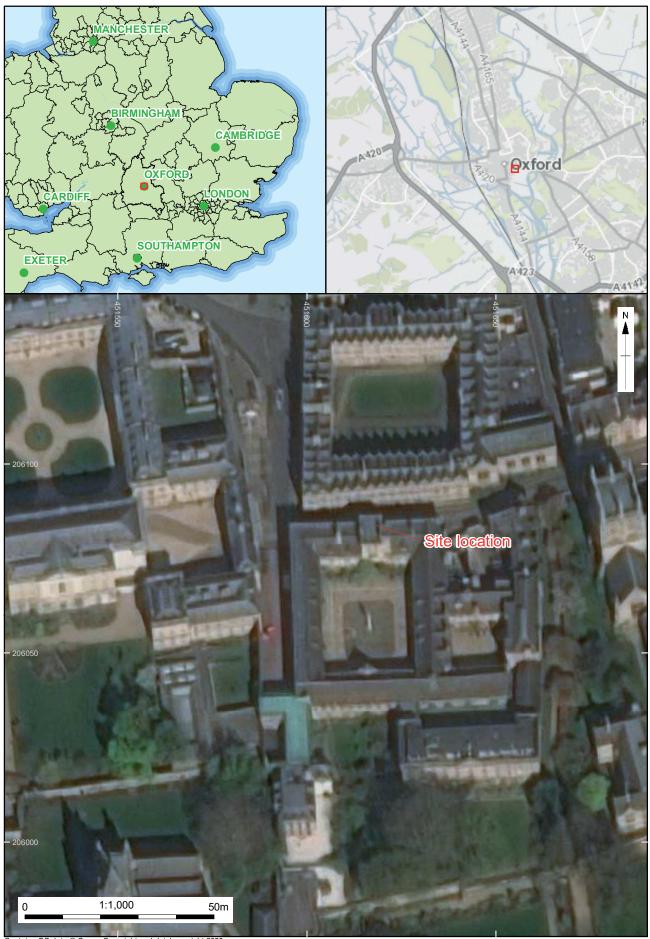
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# Appendix D DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

West Gate Post footing						
General description					Orientation	E-W
The pavin	g slabs wer	Length (m)	1.5m			
lime mor	tar for the e	extant pil	lar. The s	tone foundation was truncated	Width (m)	1.1m
on the east side. The full extent and depth of the stone foundation was below the impact of the gatepost construction.					Avg. depth (m)	0.20
Context No.	Туре	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
1	Masonry	0.36+	0.45+	Limestone and lime mortar; roughly hewn stone blocks, 0.2-0.4m; bond of pale greyish yellow lime mortar. Unclear orientation due to truncation along east side.	-	-
3	Layer	1.1+	0.2+	Rubble layer. Loose, mixed garden soil, gravel and concrete fragments.	-	Modern

Access ramp footing						
General description					Orientation	E-W
The pavir	ng slabs and	Length (m)	1.5m			
and garden soil layer. The existing stone step into the Porters' Lodge					Width (m)	1.1m
was removed and revealed a concrete bedding layer which sealed a ceramic waste pipe.					Avg. depth (m)	0.20
Context No.	Туре	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
4	Layer	1.1+	0.2+	Bedding layer. Loose, mixed garden soil, gravel and concrete fragments.	-	Modern

East Gate Post footing						
General o	description	Orientation	E-W			
The pavin	g slabs wer	Length (m)	1.5m			
lime mor	tar for the e	extant pil	lar. The s	tone foundation was truncated	Width (m)	1.1m
on the east side. The full extent and depth of the stone foundation was below the impact of the gatepost construction.					Avg. depth (m)	0.20
Context No.	Туре	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Finds	Date
2	Masonry	0.36+	0.45+	Limestone and lime mortar; roughly hewn stone blocks, 0.2-0.4m; bond of pale greyish yellow lime mortar. Unclear orientation due to truncation along east side.	-	-
5	Layer	1.1+	0.2+	Rubble layer. Loose, mixed garden soil, gravel and concrete fragments.	-	Modern



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Figure 1: Site location

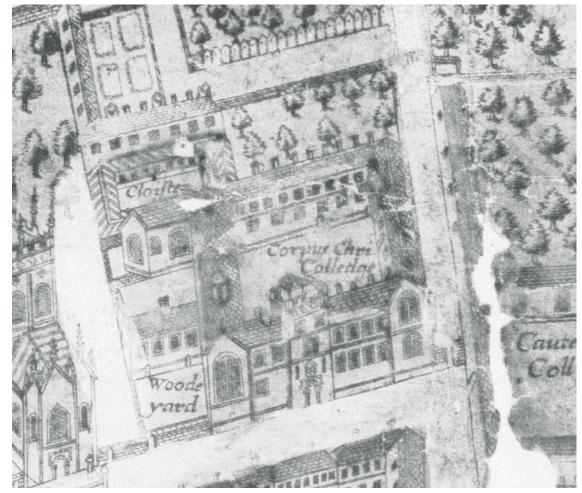
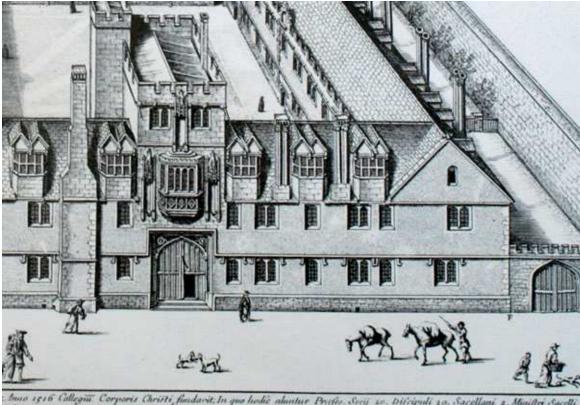


Figure 2: Extract from Ralph Agas' 1578 map of Oxford



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Figure 3: David Loggan's 1675 view of Corpus Christi College

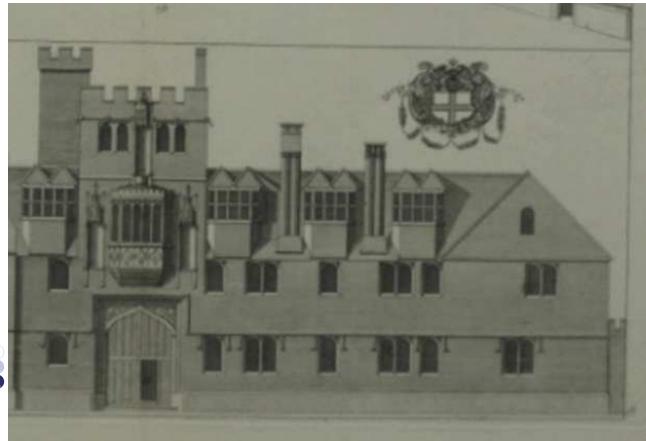


Figure 4: South elevation of north range from William Williams' Oxonia Depicta (1733)

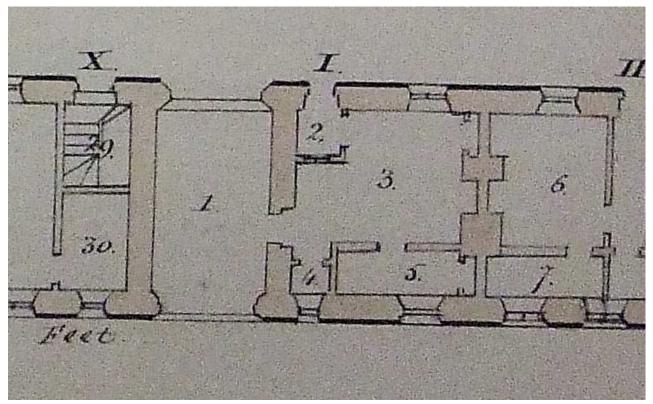


Figure 5: Extract showing plan of Porters' Lodge from Plan of Corpus Christi College (1848)

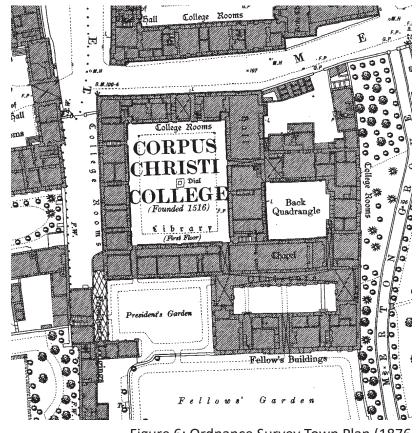


Figure 6: Ordnance Survey Town Plan (1876

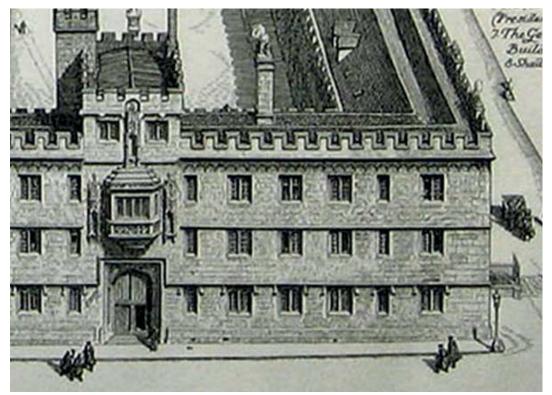


Figure 7: 'New Loggan' view of Corpus Christi (1922) by Edmund Hort New

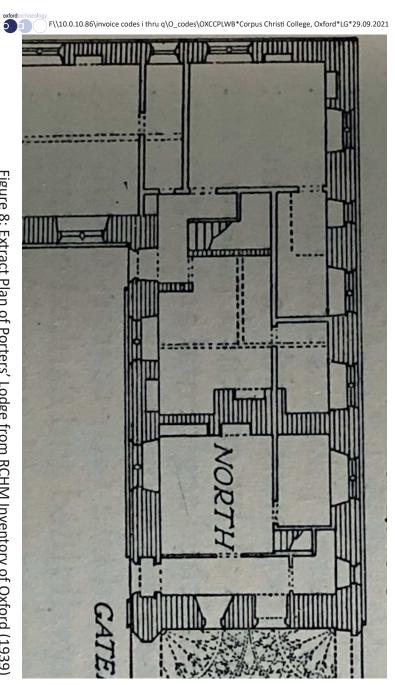
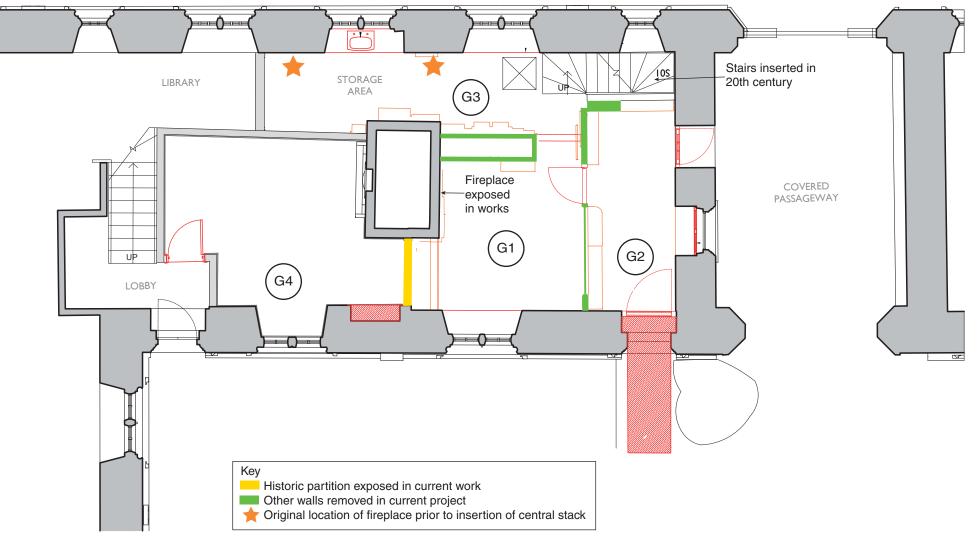


Figure 8: Extract Plan of Porters' Lodge from RCHM Inventory of Oxford (1939)

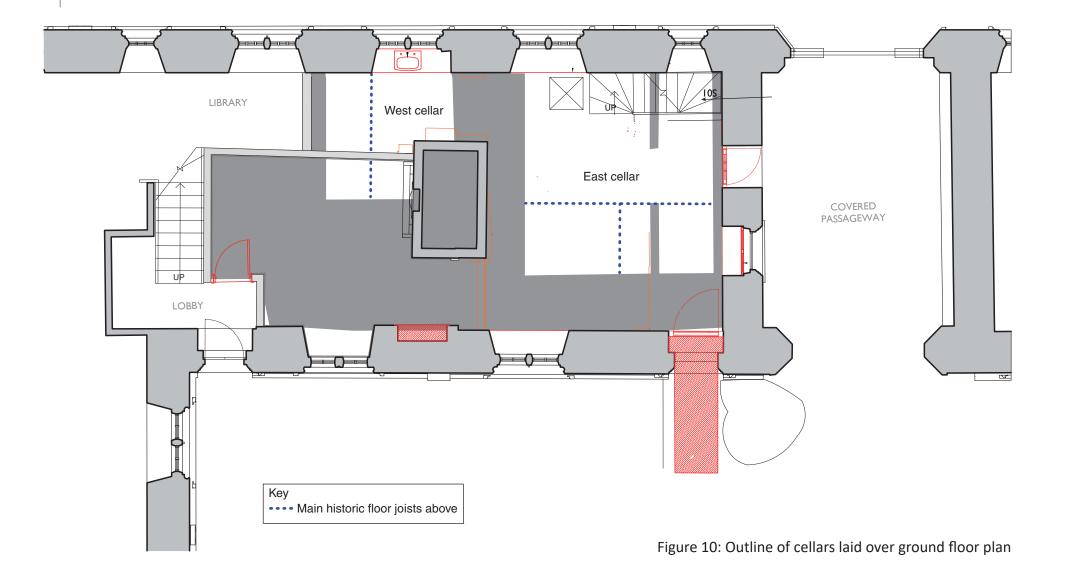




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Figure 9: Ground floor plan





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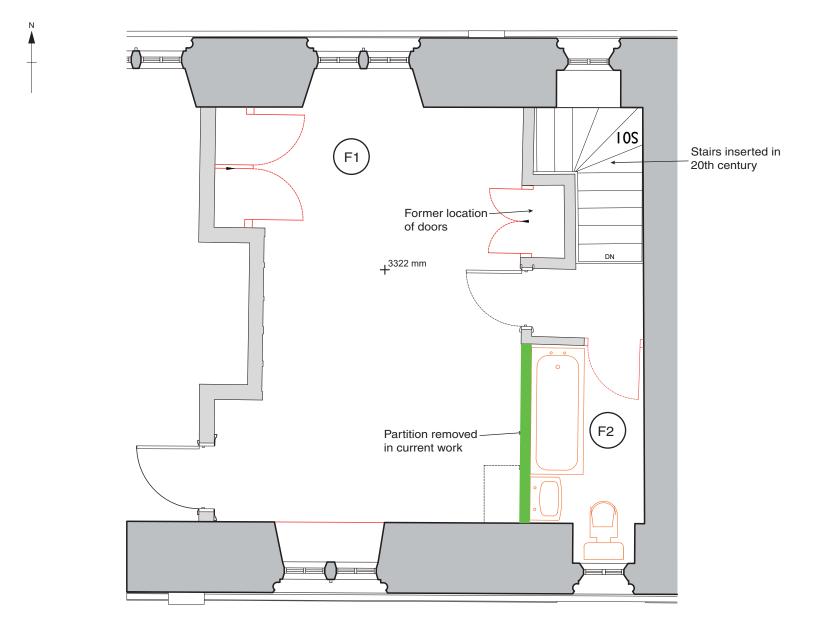


Figure 11: First floor plan

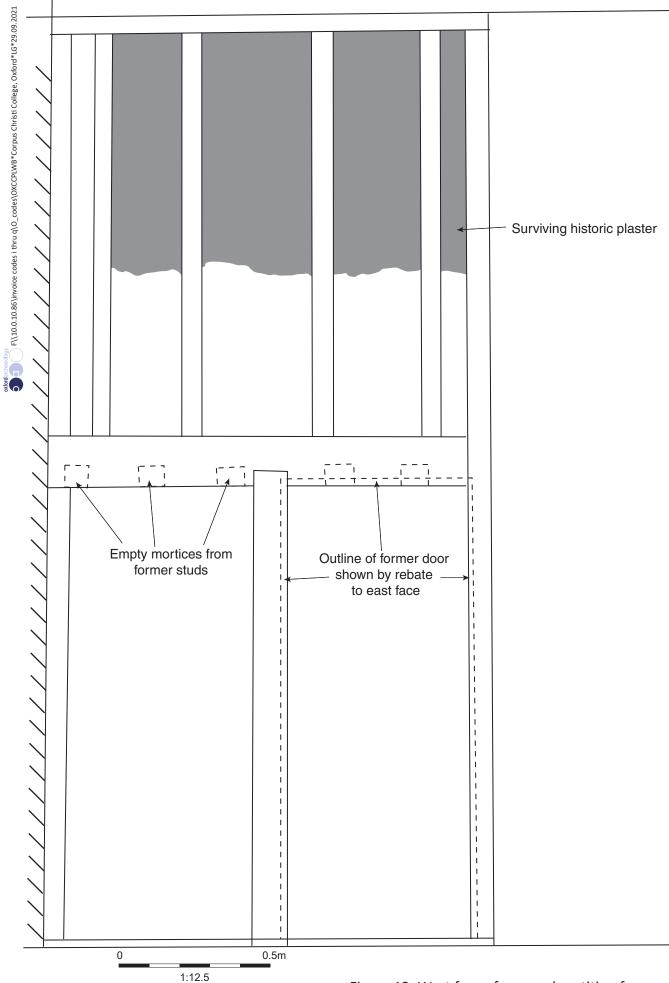


Figure 12: West face of exposed partition frame



Plate 1: Porters Room (G1) looking west with partition frame exposed



Plate 2: East side of exposed frame

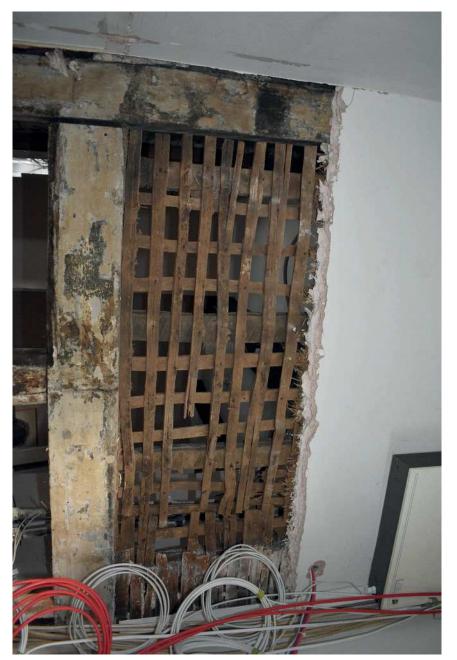


Plate 3: West side of exposed frame







Plate 5: Historic plaster to west side of frame



Plate 6: Empty mortices to underside of rail in frame



Plate 7: Groove to upper face of sill in partition



Plate 8: Mortices in underside of rail after dismantling of frame



Plate 9: Groove in sill after dismantling of frame



Plate 10: Secondary nailed door post after dismantling of frame



Plate 11: View looking west in Porters' Room after removal of frame



Plate 12: Footing by chimney after removal of frame



Plate 13: Location of former blocked window in south wall



Plate 14: Location of former blocked window in south wall





Plate 15: Refaced external wall in location of former window

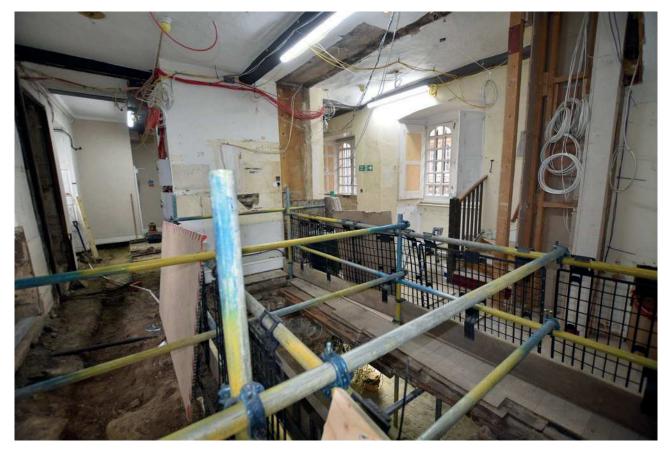


Plate 16: Porters' Room (G1) during works)



Plate 17: West side of Porters' Room during works

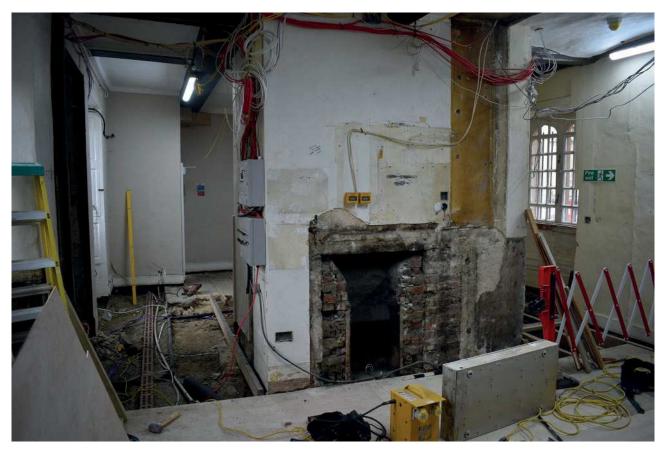


Plate 18: Fireplace exposed by works on west side of Porters' Room





Plate 19: Fireplace exposed by works on west side of Porters' Room



Plate 20: Panel on north side of Porters' Room exposed during soft strip

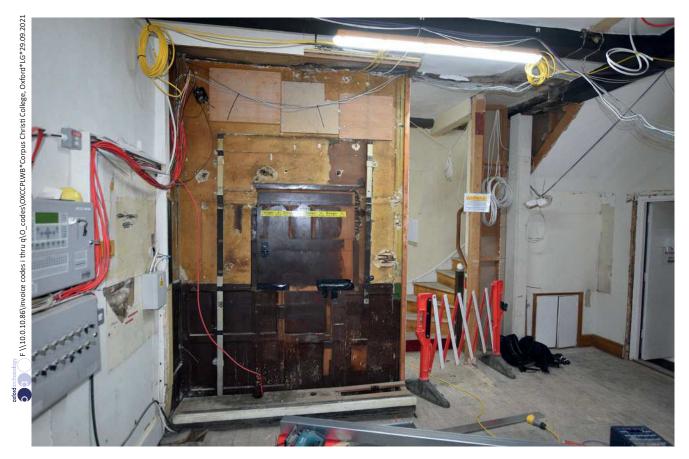


Plate 21: Panel on north side of Porters' Room exposed during soft strip



Plate 22: Line of early plaster to ceiling where panel removed

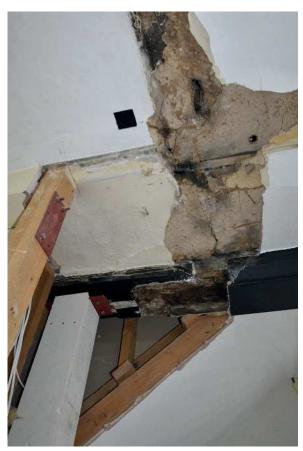


Plate 23: Line of early plaster to ceiling where panel removed



Plate 24: North side of Porters' Room during soft strip



Plate 25: North wall after removal of panel



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Plate 27: South-east corner of Porters' Lodge after removal of wall



Plate 28: Hatch in floor towards north-east corner of Porters' Lodge

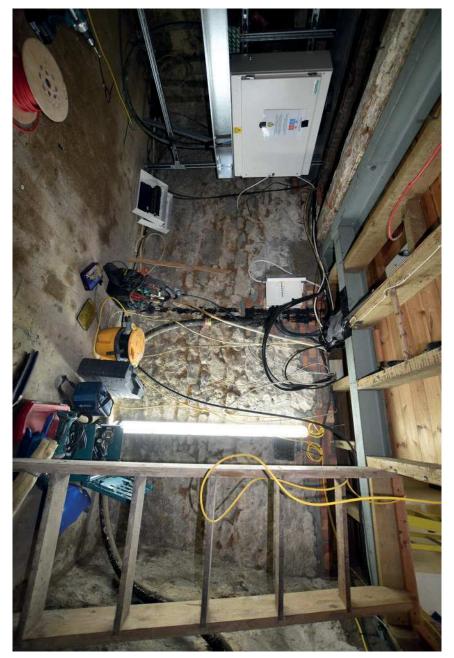


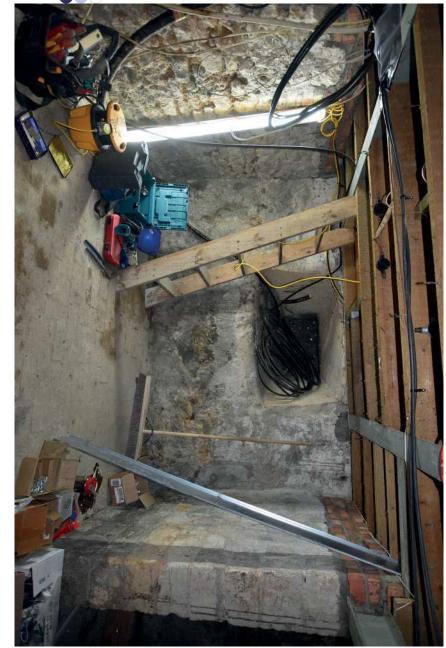
Plate 29: Eastern cellar looking south



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Plate 31: Eastern cellar looking north



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Plate 33: Eastern bay of cellar





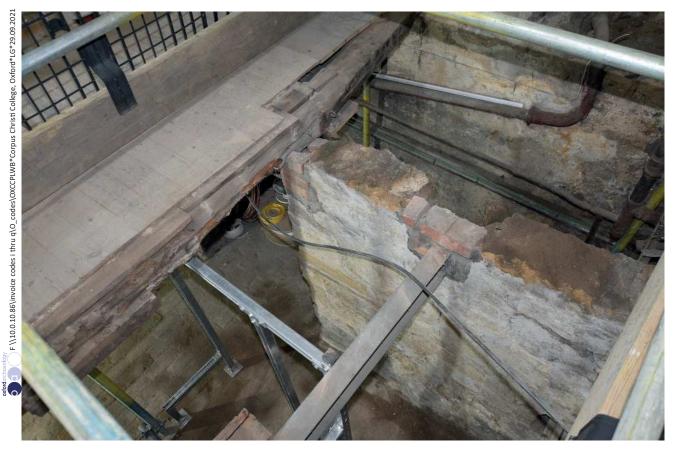


Plate 35: Eastern cellar after removal of ground floor joists



Plate 36: Eastern cellar after removal of ground floor joists



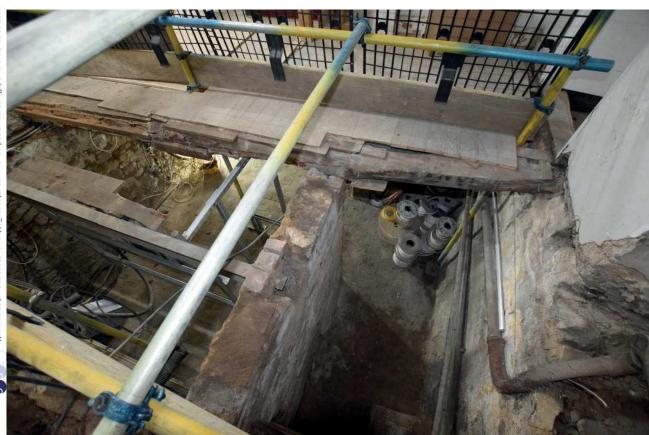


Plate 37: Eastern cellar after removal of ground floor joists



Plate 38: Passage by north wall with ladder down to western cellar

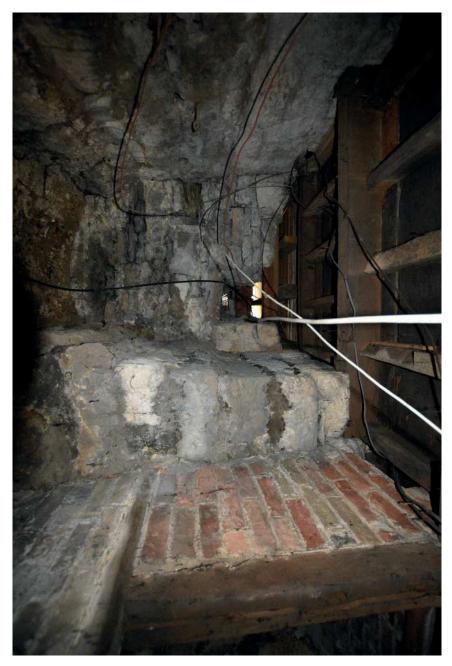


Plate 39: Floor joists over cellar (looking west)





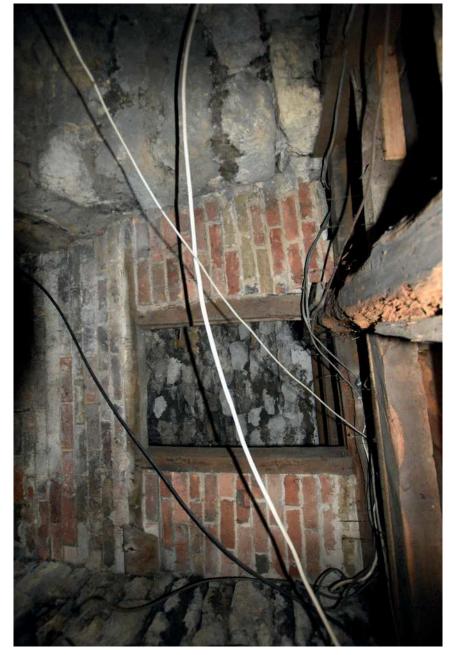
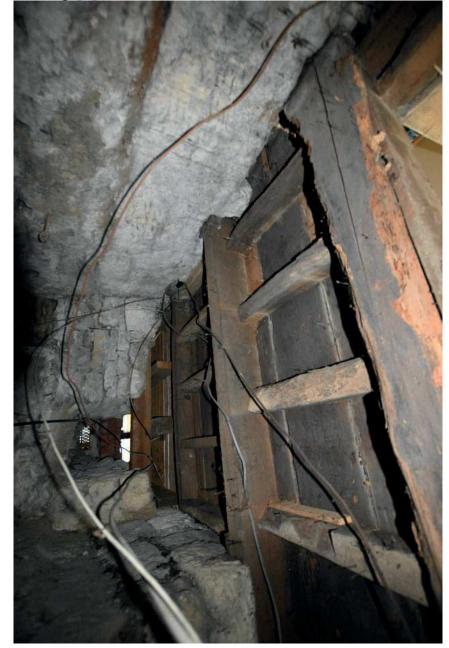


Plate 41: Western cellar looking east



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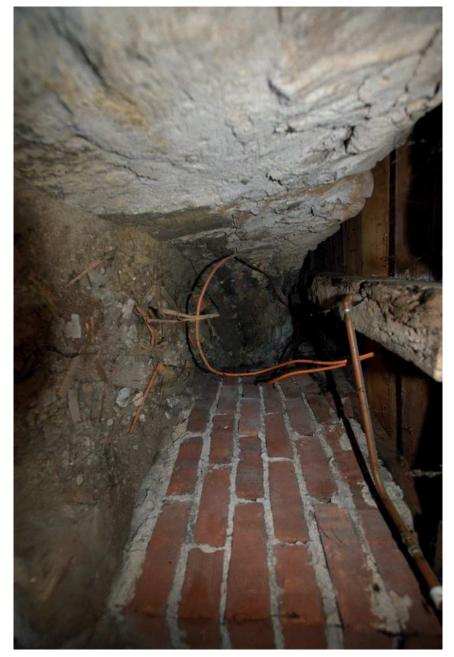


Plate 43: Western cellar looking south



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Plate 45: Joists at north-east corner of G4







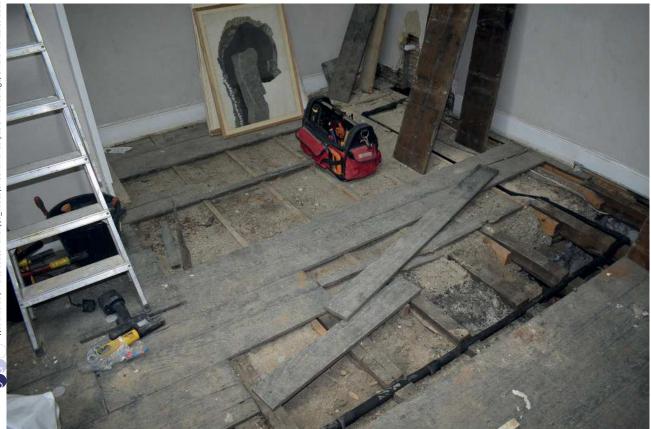


Plate 47: Solid floor in G4 looking north-west



Plate 48: Exposed first floor partition looking east

Plate 50: South wall in former first floor WC



Plate 49: East side of exposed first floor partition





Plate 52: Room F1 looking north



Plate 51: Wide early floorboards exposed in WC beneath later boards



## Plate 54: Coal bunker seat in Room F1

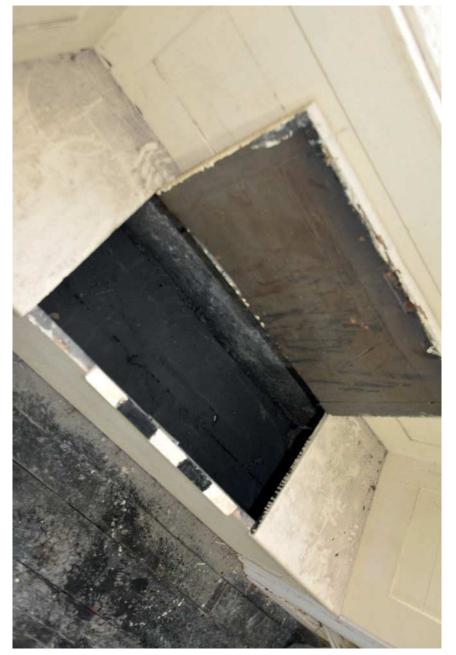
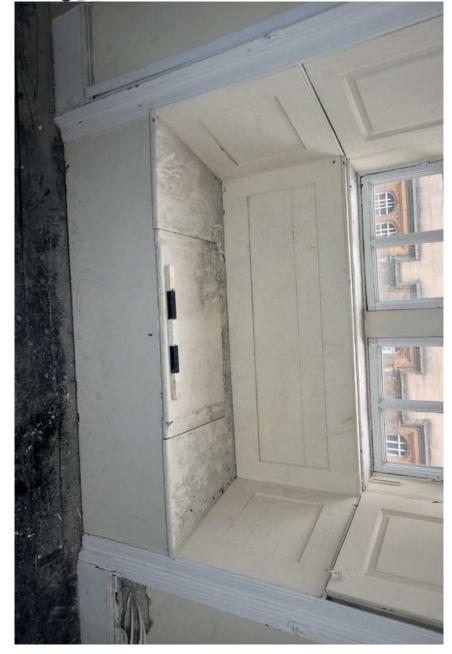


Plate 53: Coal bunker seat in Room F1



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## Head Office/Registered Office/ OA South

Janus House Osney Mead Oxford OX2 0ES

t: +44(0)1865 263800 f: +44(0)1865 793496 e: info@oxfordarchaeology.com w:http://oxfordarchaeology.com

## **OA North**

Mill 3 MoorLane LancasterLA1 1QD

t: +44(0)1524 541000 f: +44(0)1524 848606 e: oanorth@oxfordarchaeology.com w:http://oxfordarchaeology.com

## OAEast

15Trafalgar Way Bar Hill Cambridgeshire CB238SQ

t: +44(0)1223 850500 e: oaeast@oxfordarchaeology.com w:http://oxfordarchaeology.com



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