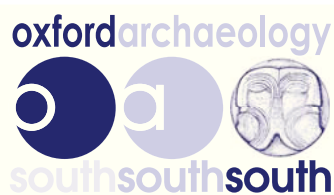


Staircase X

All Souls College Oxford



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



February 2012

Client: All Souls College, Oxford

Issue No:1

OA Job No: 5047

NGR: SP 517 063



Client Name: All Souls College, Oxford
Client Ref No: N/A
Document Title: Staircase X, All Souls College, Oxford
Document Type: Archaeological Watching Brief Report
Issue/Version Number: 1
Grid Reference: SP 517 063
Planning Reference: 10/02394/FUL
Invoice Code: OXSOUWB
OA Job Number: 5047
Site Code: OXSOU 11
Receiving Museum: Oxon County Museum
Museum Accession No.: OXCMS:2011.40
Event No.: N/A

Issue	Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by	Signature
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Document File Location: Projects on server1:\Oxford, All Souls Staircase DBA\Watching Brief\WB Report
Graphics File Location: \\Server8\invoice codes i thru q\O_codes\OXSOULEV_270112\Figures
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Staircase X, All Souls College, Oxford

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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Summary

Between August and September 2011, Intermittent visits to monitor the underpinning of the building, Staircase X, did not reveal any relevant archaeological horizons. In January 2012, a service trench leading from the Redevelopment at All Souls Staircase X to the High Street in Oxford, was excavated. It revealed a single layer of disturbed ground, with no finds.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 All Souls College obtained planning permission (10/02394/FUL) from Oxford City Council for the redevelopment of Staircase X, at All Souls College, High St, Oxford. The proposed works lie on the east side of the college centred on NGR SP 517 063, (Figure 1).
- 1.1.2 The proposal involved the modification to an existing structure to form a new three-storey rear extension by raising the roof to provide additional floors which necessitates strengthening works to the existing foundations, in the form of piles and 'needle beams'.
- 1.1.3 Additionally new services were installed between the Staircase X building and the High Street, along The Wardens Driveway (Figure 1).
- 1.1.4 David Radford, City Archaeologist at Oxford City Council prepared a Brief for an Archaeological Watching Brief at the site (OCC May 2011).
- 1.1.5 Oxford Archaeology (OA), commissioned by Susan Beaver, Bursar of All Souls College to undertake the work prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the works (OA May 2011), and this report details the results of that work.

1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 All Souls College lies on the east side of Oxford City Centre, c 400 m from Carfax. It is located on the north side of High Street, flanked on its west side by Catte Street and on its east side by Queens College. To the north of All Souls College is Hertford College.
- 1.2.2 On its south and west sides the site is bounded by the existing Staircase X and on its north and east by the boundary wall between All Souls College from Queens College. The small courtyard is totally enclosed and only accessible through the ground floor windows of Staircase X. At present it is paved with stone slabs and level at c 62.0 m OD.
- 1.2.3 The service trench was located along the Western side of an alleyway called The Wardens Driveway, leading from the High Street in the South, to the All Souls Staircase X development in the North.
- 1.2.4 The site lies on the second, Summertown Radley, gravel terrace between the River Thames and the River Cherwell. The underlying geology is Oxford Clay.



1.3 Archaeological and historical background

General

- 1.3.1 The archaeological and historical background below is taken from the Desk Based Assessment (DBA) prepared by Oxford Archaeology (OA 2010).

Prehistoric and Roman Period (500,000 BP – 410 AD)

- 1.3.2 There is no known evidence for any activity within the area of proposed development during the prehistoric and Roman periods.

Early Medieval Period (AD 410 – 1066)

- 1.3.3 A burh was established in Oxford around the 9th century. Although the entire line of the Saxon defences have not been identified on the ground, it is believed that until the late 10th century the eastern line ran along the lines of Magpie Lane and Catte Street. During this period the area of proposed development would have lain outside the town. It is possible that there was extra-mural settlement activity within the area of proposed development, but no evidence has been found.
- 1.3.4 Towards the end of this period it is believed that the extent of the fortified town was extended westwards to a line now followed by the line of the later medieval town wall. This would have placed the area of proposed development within the town, which may have encouraged development on the site. However, there is again no evidence for any activity within the area of proposed development from this period.

Later Medieval Period (AD1066-1550)

- 1.3.5 By the early 13th century the north side of High Street between Catte Street and Queens Lane had been laid out in a series of tenements. The area of proposed development was located in the property known as Ing Hall after its occupier (Salter 1960, 136), which was in St Mary's parish, next to the parish boundary. Ing died between 1240-46 and by 1279 it had become the property of St John's Hospital, which later became Magdalen College. Until 1458 Ing Hall appears to have been an academic hall. The eastern and northern boundaries of Ing Hall correspond with the present day boundary between All Souls College and Queens College.
- 1.3.6 All Souls College was founded by Archbishop Chichele in 1437 and at that date occupied the first four tenements east of Catte Street. However by 1440 the archbishop had acquired on at least the leases on another six tenements on Catte Street and the remaining tenements on High Street up to, but not including, Ing Hall (VCH III 1954, 183).

Post-Medieval Period (AD1550-1850)

- 1.3.7 The earliest available historic map showing the area of proposed development is Agas Map of Oxford, 1588 (OA 2010, Figure). This map shows the two 15th century quadrangles of All Souls College on the Catte Street side. Along the High Street frontage is an extension dating from 1553, much of which still survives. In the area to its north, east of the quadrangles there are a few smaller buildings, in roughly the area of the present Staircase IX. One of these was the original Warden's Lodging. The area of proposed development lies to the east, separated from All Souls College by a wall. It lies within the rear garden of a property on High Street, with other gardens to its east and the orchards of Queens College to the north.



- 1.3.8 Thomas Langdon's Plan of All Souls, c 1600, gives more detail of the College buildings, but for the non-College properties to the east it only shows the High Street frontage and therefore the area of proposed development is blank. On the Ing Hall site there is a two-bay buildings with a central passage to the gardens. The medieval part of Staircase IX was built in 1594, a building then known as the 'Woodhouse'. Loggan's Map of 1673 (OA 2010, Figure) does not show any significant alterations. The area of proposed development still lies within an area of garden.
- 1.3.9 The Taylor Map of 1751 (OA 2010, Figure) shows All Souls College after the north quadrangle was demolished in 1703 and rebuilt in 1716-33 to designs by Hawksmoor. This rebuilding included a new hall. It also shows the new Warden's Lodging from 1704-6, along the High Street frontage. The area of proposed development is still in a garden, but the Ing Hall site now has an additional buildings midway between it and the street, including the printing house belonging to Mr Lichfield (Walker 2010). The plan of Ing Hall from the Cartulary of St John the Baptist (Salter 1914, Fig VIII) shows the layout of these buildings with a garden behind. Along the east side is an undeveloped strip, known as Provost's Court, with a 'Bog House' at the north end. The area of proposed development would have extended across the north end of this strip and into the garden area.
- 1.3.10 In 1753 Magdalen College leased the Ing Hall property to All Souls College, who bought it from them in 1776. Faden's Map of 1789 and Davies Map of 1797 do not show any changes to the area of proposed development as a result of this, but they do show that there had been alterations to the buildings around it. The Warden's stable, the 'necessary house' and the Woodhouse were rebuilt in 1753 by Townsend. Further rebuilding took place in 1828. These later changes can be seen on Hoggar's Map of Oxford, 1850. Although the level of detail is not high, it is clear that some buildings now extend into the north part of the Ing Hall property. The buildings on High Street have been demolished to create an access route.

Modern Period (AD1851-present)

- 1.3.11 The 1st Edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map of 1876 (OA 2010, Figure) provides considerable detail about the layout of the buildings on and around the area of proposed development. The Woodhouse, also known as the Manciple's House, is still a separate building. Immediately to its north is a range of buildings containing a lavatory block, coal house and stable, the last occupying most of the area of proposed development.
- 1.3.12 Subsequent editions of the OS mapping show that the layout of buildings remained unchanged until after World War II, although the stables had become a garage by that period. The OS map from 1958 shows that the lavatory block and coal house had been demolished. The western end of the Manciple's House had been rebuilt with a link to the main College buildings, creating the present Staircase IX. The area of proposed development appears unchanged.
- 1.3.13 In 1966 the garage building on the area of proposed development was demolished and the existing Staircase X constructed to provide accommodation for Visiting Fellows. The small enclosed courtyard was created by this building work. All editions of the OS mapping from 1970 onwards show the area of proposed development and its surroundings as they are today.



Previous Investigations

- 1.3.14 Two geotechnical test pits were excavated to the east of the proposed development on 29th September 2010. The archaeological monitoring of geotechnical test pits, No's 3 and 4, observed garden soil down to a depth of 1.2-1.6m below ground level (bgl), (OA 2010). Augering in the two geotechnical pits not observed by Oxford Archaeology suggested that the gravel may vary in depth across the site. In the area of Test Pit 2 it was recorded 2.7m below the current ground level.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To confirm the presence/absence of archaeological features during the underpinning of Staircase X, and within the trench along The Wardens Driveway.
- 2.1.2 To make available the results of the investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 An intermittent watching brief was undertaken during the underpinning of Staircase X and the excavation of a service trench to the High Street .

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 The works involving the underpinning and general ground reduction on the Staircase X building revealed a single layer (1000), of a dark grey – brown silt mixed with rubble, probably representing a garden soil. This layer was revealed to a depth of 0.30 m.
- 3.1.2 The service trench was orientated N–S and measured 0.50 m wide by 42.50 m long, and was 0.45 m deep. A single deposit (1001) was exposed throughout its length, this consisted of a greyish brown silt with frequent small to large limestone inclusions (Figure). This layer probably represents the backfill of the construction trench for the garden and other walls adjacent to the trench. This layer was excavated to a depth of 0.45m.

3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 There were no finds recovered from the deposits.

3.3 Environmental remains

- 3.3.1 Due to the sterile nature and modern date of the deposits, there were no environmental samples taken.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The area of the the works had a high possibility of encountering archaeological remains at depth. However, the nature of the underpinning works on Staircase X did not lend itself to observing any archaeological horizons and no meaningful observations could be made. General ground reduction did not extend below a depth of 0.30m, from the ground surface, and at these depths only previous garden soils were visible.



- 4.1.2 The service trench along The Wardens Driveway, also did not penetrate to any great depth (0.45m) and was located within the backfill of the foundation trench of the wall of the Wardens Garden and later building to the South.



APPENDIX A. ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

Context	Type	Depth	Width	Length	Comments	Finds	Date
1000	Layer ?	0.30m			Garden soil	none	Post-Medieval?
1001	Layer	0.45m	0.50m	42.50m	backfill	none	Post-Medieval?



APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

OA, May 2011, *All Souls College, Staircase X, High Street, Oxford. NGR SP 517 063 Written Scheme of Investigation foran Archaeological Watching Brief* (client document)

OA 2010, Staircase Extension, All Souls College, Oxford, Archaeological Impact Assessment (client report)

OCC, May 2011, Oxford City Council, Brief for an Archaeological Watching Brief; All Souls College High Street, Oxford (David Radford)



APPENDIX C. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name:	Staircase X, All Souls College, Oxford
Site code:	OXSOU11
Grid reference:	Centred at NGR SP 517 063
Type of watching brief:	Intermittent
Date and duration of project:	August - September 2011 and January 2012
Area of site:	c. 1,000 sq m
Summary of results:	Between August and September 2011, Intermittent visits to monitor the underpinning of the building, Staircase X, did not reveal any relevant archaeological horizons. In January 2012, a service trench leading from the Redevelopment at All Souls Staircase X to the High Street in Oxford, was excavated. It revealed a single layer of disturbed ground, with no finds
Location of archive:	Oxford Archaeology, Janus House, Osney Mead, OX2 0ES.



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Figure 1: Site location

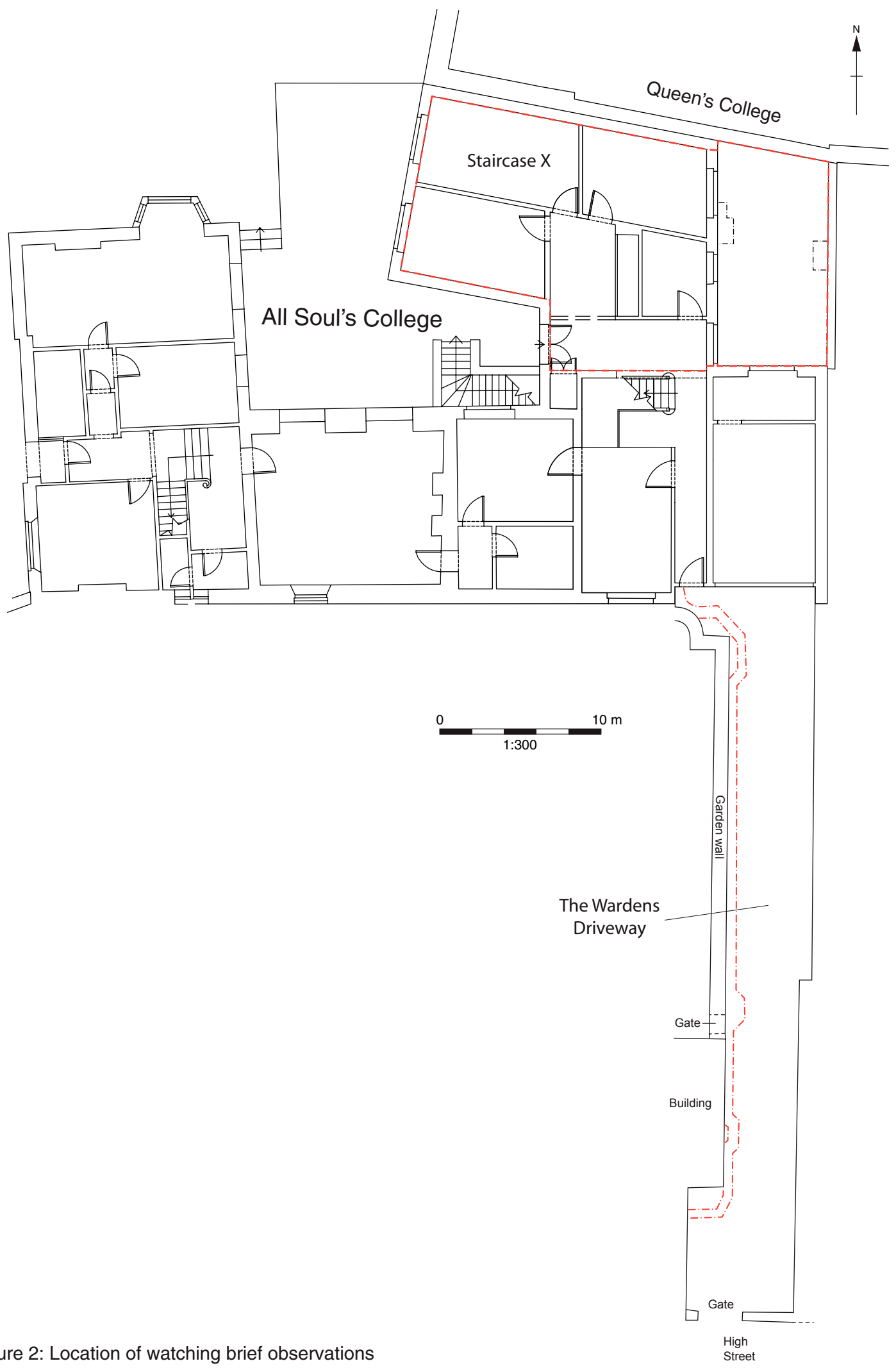


Figure 2: Location of watching brief observations



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